Greek Rhodope

An Alpine Garden Society Trip

A Greentours Tour Report

23rd - 30th April 2016

Led by Ian Green

Day 1 April 23rd to Volakos

We met up at the airport and picked up our minibus and drove out from the city as the sun shone warmly on the northern Greek landscapes. Even quite close to Thessaloniki we found the rural areas to be rather beautiful though there was little time for stopping as were late for lunch! Eventually we pulled up in a sleepy looking village and found a restaurant and enjoyed some excellent Souvlaki.

Then it was past lakes and hills until we reach the flat valleys below Drama. Now the landscapes to our north were becoming quite dramatic! The word of course comes from here and presumably arose from the scenery. The great blocks of Falakron and Orvilas promised much to come whilst the green valleys in between would have made anyone want to settle and live here. We stopped to photograph a wonderful display of Corn Poppies and found a great range of rather colourful weed species in the same field. Now we rose up into more natural habitats. Time was pressing as we wanted to get to the hotel good and early after such an early start from the UK so we chose only one roadside stop. This was to admire both puple and yellow forms of the lovely *Iris reichenbachiana*. Growing with them were plenty of other nice flowers including *Ornithogallum expansum*. Then it was up to the ski resort of Volakos, on the sunlit western flanks of Mount Falakron, and to our lovely hotel, the Aloni, where Aggelos, Maria, Panos and little Dimitri welcomed us warmly.

Day 2 April 24th Mount Falakron

The route up to the mountain starts right from the village and so we had only driven five minutes or so before we were out of the minibus and botanising on the roadside! After acquainting ourselves with *Helleborus cyclocphyllus* we moved up the road a little and started to enjoy all sorts of good plants on the marble road cutting. The local endemic *Saxifraga friderici-augusti* loves this marble and the little glaucous rosettes were topped by drooping panicles of dusky red flowers. *Genista lydia* and *Astragalus monspessulanus* made little yellow, blue and pink carpets on the rocks and we also saw yellow and brown-flowered *Chamaecytisus supina*. Cuckoos called loudly and continuously from the beech trees on the slopes here. We looked at the understorey where Ian W soon found us some fine Sword-leaved Helleborines and here also were the seedheads of Birdsnest Orchid, and the leaves of *Lilium rhodopaeum*.

We drove on up to a little meadow which descended into open and magnificent beech forest. Here the turf was alive with beautiful flowers. Both yellow and magenta forms of *Dactylorhiza romana* grew amongst patches of *Viola perinensis* whilst the seeheads of *Pulsatilla halleri* showed what a picture this spot must have been a week or so ago. Nevertheless there was much to enjoy with striking blue groups of *Gentiana verna* open in the cool sunlight along with groups of fresh yellow *Primula veris*. The striking lousewort *Pedicularis friderici-augusti* had pink flowers in whorls, each flower nestled in a white woolly calyx. A fine sight here was abundant *Fritillaria drenovskii*, the little brown and orange bells common amongst *Ranunculus sprunerianus*.

A little higher and we stopped to see the only recently known hybrid between the two saxifrages we were to find higher on the slopes, sadly this was over, but we enjoyed the mats of *Globularia* cordifolia around it.

We took a picnic lunch above the treeline, we were now at around 1600m, and then spent the next couple of hours exploring a botanical heaven. Rocks were plastered with two saxifrages, the lovely red *Saxifraga sempervivum* and the striking mats of *Saxifraga ferdinandi-coburgi* splattered with yellow blooms. A flock of Alpine Choughs noisily flew over and there were Northern Wheatears and the odd Black Redstart. In the gullies we found *Frangula rupestris* and *Cotoneaster nebrodensis*. However it was the open slopes covered with a spectacular display of *Dactylorhiza romana*, *Pedicularis friderici-augusti* and *Viola perinensis* that really took the biscuit. Further upslope we found *Gageas fistulosa* and *Gagea minima*.

We moved up to the last spot of the day. Here we were met by Panos and the landrover which took us up a rough road to almost 2000m, almost the top of Falakron. By now the weather ewas starting to look dodgy, the cloud was whisking past us and exposed spots were windy, but we managed to stay dry and the cloud only really closed in just as we left. There were snow patches on the north-facing slopes around us and near them we found a paradise for Erythronium denscanis. There were many hundreds in bloom. Growing with them were many Crocus veluchensis though few were open in the cloudy weather. There were marvellous patches of Corydalis solida subspecies incisolobata and acres of Scilla bifolia glowing even without the sun. The views down to the Kato Nestos valley and towards the Bulgarian border to the north were sublime with wooded hills hardly broken by agriculture stretching all the way from the reservoir below to the border. Water Pipits and Shorelark braved the cool wind. Back among the flowers we started finding a yellow crocus, Crocus chrysanthus, and there were bright patches on the rocks where an Alyssum and Draba lasiocarpa bloomed. Walking back down to the vehicle conditions started to worsen and mist swept in and it became decidedly cool, nevertheless we were still wowed by the amazing show of Viola perinensis. There were clumps on the shattered marble of the trackside that had wall to wall flowers, tight bunches with no room to see the leaves. But it was the sheer abundance over acres of mountainside that was really impressive with the mostly bare soils at this altitude coloured purple over large areas with this pretty species.

Then it was back to the Aloni where we enjoyed pastitsio and then had our first session at the checklist – we'd seen lots of beautiful plants today!

Day 3 April 25th Simida and Despatis River

After enjoying the Aloni's excellent breakfast spread we were on our way at nine, the sun shining beautifully, with just a little cloud down in the valleys. This area is strikingly green and after the overnight rain it positively shone. A male Red-backed Shrike sat perfectly right by the road as we stopped next to it.

We headed north, dropping into the Kato Valley where we met the Nestos River where it had widened into a reservoir. A stop on the bridge was entertaining for watching the very busy Cormorants fishing, and an Osprey with Mount Falakron for a background. Then we started to rise up into the hills that rise gently to the Bulgarian border. It wasn't long though before we stopped and found ourselves amongst lots of orchids. Most spectacular amongst these were the Lady Orchids with a goodly number of very large and very tall specimens nestling under the hazels and oaks. With them were a few Birdsnest Orchids and White Helleborines and with diligent searching Celia and Ian spotted a little bee orchid *Ophrys cornuta*. Also under the trees here were several *Arum orientale* and the lovely *Scutellaria altissima* in fine blue and white flower.

We made many stops over the next couple of hours as we rose through thermophilous oak woodland into a mixed woodland of birch, pine and beech. The lovely dark red *Silene atropurpurea* was a spectacular plant that we saw much of during the day. Wherever we went there were 'brooms' with *Cytisus* and *Chamaecytisus hirsutus* noted. There were great stands of pretty *Ajuga genevensis* often growing with even greater stands of the local form of Green-winged Orchid, *Orchis picta*. On roadside banks there were both *Saxifraga carpetana* and *Saxifraga rotundifolia* as well as a little *saxifraga tridactylites*. Butterflies were numerous with many blues, Speckled Woods and Clouded Yellows. Beetles were everywhere too with rose chafers shimmering green as they flew and brilliant blue-hued ground beetles a frequent sight. Lizards scurried hither and thither with Balkan Green Lizards the most noticeable. Cuckoos called all the time and Hoopoes were heard and seen too.

We took a walk along a track into the birch forest, a unique presence in Greece, this being the only significant area of birch forest. We noted the lovely red *Pulmonaria rubra* and also *Viola canina* and *Viola reichenbachiana*. By streams grew *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* and the Townhall Clock *Adoxa moshatellina*. As we drove back down to the valleys a Black Vulture sailed over us and we also stopped for a lovely stand of a *Stachys*.

We met Panos for lunch. He cooked us potato and mushrooms, sausage and egg, and they had made a salad and there was yoghurt too, and even a little strong alcohol! It was an excellent lunch enjoyed in beautiful surroundings. Indeed just thirty metres away were rocky bluffs covered in a superb display of *Haberlea rhodopaea*. This stunning gesnerid was in perfect flower. On the shaded slope below *Liliums* were in bud and there were spreads of *Ajuga reptans*, *Polygonatum odoratum* and also *Dentaria bulbifera*. *Geranium maccorhizum* formed patches on the cliffs.

We took a walk up the valley. Plants were limited to what we'd seen already but the butterflies were excellent. We saw Wood Whites, Common Glider, Powdered Brimstone, Green Hairstreak, Small Copper, Hungarian Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Little Blue and Adonis Blue. A Black Stork flew over as we walked down.

We drove back up the valley and spent an hour wandering some more orchidy slopes. Here there were unbelievable numbers of *Orchis morio/picta*, thousands either side of the road, and here were

good numbers too of Toothed Orchids and Lady Orchid. Many spikes of Violet Limodore were about to bloom. *Ononis pusilla* was new. A heavy rain storm brewed over Falakron. As we drove back we encountered a flock of Turtle Doves. Tonight's meal featured a superb pasta dish with cheese and wild boar.

Day 4 April 26th Mount Pangeio

It was a bit of surprise this morning when we woke to rain. Not just rain. There was snow lying just outside the hotel. Apparently there had been an almighty thunderstorm about 4.30 in the morning (I'd missed it) which had dumped the snow, it later turning to rain in Volakos. However as we left the warm hotel we found that the snow was indeed lying not far above us. So we changed plans and headed down to the coast! Or rather Mount Pangeio which rises directly from the coast. In fact it is a high mountain, but more of that later!

We made several stops in the first section of the mountain in the Mediterranean scrub. Here we found *Ophrys mammosa* to be really widespread. It was in magnificent form and there were hundreds of plants. Here and there we found the pretty *Ophrys reinholdii* too. There was a very striking large-flowered *Serapias orientalis* in a meadow by the road and another had *Serapias bergonii*. Under the Turkey Oak woodlands were Sword-leaved Helleborines. Other nice species here included a bewildering array of vetches and medicks and the lovely *Aristolochia rotunda*. The Turkey Oaks soon gave way to a beautiful beech forest where we saw just one *Quercus ilex* too.

Suddenly we spotted a red globe on the bank above the road – a peony. Needless to say we were soon out of the vehicles and up the bank to admire our find, and pleased to see quite a few more under the beech trees. Wandering along further we found one or two more in good open flower. Little were we to know what lay in store for us up the slope! Meanwhile we enjoyed out first *Fritillaria pontica* as well as *Symphytum ottomanum* and a nice *Lamium*. A hundred metres up and we found ourselves amongst a marvellous show of a few hundred peonies in full open bloom. They looked wonderful with the beech trees, and the limestone pavement. Nearby were Birdsnest Orchids. However all this was eclipsed when a couple of hundred metres away we found thousands of *Paeonia peregrina* flowering thickly in a clearing. They were so thick on the ground! We wandered amongst them photographing the spectacle, individual blooms, groups of them, and each other amongst this sensational display. Some rudimentary quadrating suggested there were at least 15,000 blooms in this clearing! We bought our lunch over. Green Lizards posed amongst them and a snake slithered away. Chiffchaffs and Cirl Buntings sang above them. We found a group of pink *Anenome coronaria* and there were some fine *Verbascum rupestris* and striking *Euphorbia verrucosa*.

We continued up the mountain. Some superb *Ornithogalum nutans* prompted a stop and soon after we explored a great slope where there some surprises in store. There were just a few orchids, but they were all new to us on this trip – first there was some *Orchis provincialis*, then a little *Orchis quadripunctata* and then we even managed to find a couple of spikes of *Orchis pauciflora*. Further up the slope *Fritillaria pontica* held sway with some very fine large green and brown bells. *Aristolochia elongata* proved common here and we also saw Common Swallow-wort.

Eventually we reached the tree line which on this mountain is at about 1700m. Suddenly it was open craggy landscapes. We explored this high area for a while. Birds noted up here included

Ortolan Bunting, Linnets, Black Redstarts and a pair of Rock Partridges that arced away from us. Along road cuttings we started noting a great display of *Saxifraga sempervivum* and higher we found the yellow *Saxifraga ferdinandi-coburgi*. Just one or two *Fritillaria drenowskii* were seen and a little *Androsace villosa* and *Hippocrepis glauca*. By the road was a great display of the stock *Matthiola fruticulosa* in vibrant pink flower as well as the elegant white-topped *Iberis saxatilis*. Little patches of pansies were the endemic *Viola grisebachii*, known only from this mountain.

We had to go – it was already late. We'd had such a marvellous day that we'd been unable to tear ourselves away from the mountain. So it was seven-thirty by the time we rolled up at the Aloni, Aggelos and Maria were beginning to wonder where we were!

Day 5 April 27th Orvilos

It was a beautiful sunny morning on which we said farewell to Aggelos and Panos our wonderful hosts at the Aloni. We had really enjoyed our stay with these most accommodating of hosts. We drove up the hill looking back on a sunlit Volakos, Falakron shimmering still with the previous morning's snow speckle.

We headed west stopping by an old church and taking a short wander in the woods where we acquainted ourselves with the weird and wonderful and almost completely over *Lathraea rhodopaea*, a very strange relative of the Toothwort. We did find one just starting to flower and one or two more in flower. With it was *Dentaria bulbifera* and lots of Yellow Archangel. There were some impressive Sweet Chestnuts here.

We drove through some sulime scenery on the way to Orvilos, there not being too many people about. Green forests and maquis stretched to the horizon though as we neared Orvilos things became drier and rather barren-looking. We explored tracks near the reservoir (Black Stork flying over) trying to find a way up, spotting a Roe Deer as we did so. We found some great specimens of *Iris reichenbachiana* with both plum and yellow forms in fine bloom. There were orchids too with many Toothed Orchids and a scatter of already familiar species. The mats of *Globularia cordifolia* were quite beautiful and also the yellow mounds of *Genista depressa*. Also noted were fine plants of *Matthiola fruticulosa*, some *Linum elegans* and lots of seedheads of *Pulsatilla!* Cirl Bunting was seen. Butterflies were numerous on these dry slopes with Berger's Clouded Yellows abundant and there were a good number of European Swallowtails too. We drove down and onto another track finding a big group of mud-puddling butterflies that included Green-underside Blues and Scarce Swallowtail as well as Queen of Spain Fritillary. The trip up this track didn't prove productive but as we started down a Green Woodpecker flew across the track then, as we watched fresh Deer tracks on the road (they hadn't been there when we came up some minutes before!) a large male Wild Cat sauntered across the road!

We descended to take lunch at a bench by the river. Here Weaver's Fritillaries and Green Hairstreaks joined us. We found Otter footprints in the little stream. Next we stopped at some ponds where frogs were the main thing. There were hundreds of them! There were also some fine Odonates with at least four damselfly species and also Wide-bodied Chaser and an Emerald. Aristolochias and Walnut had both suffered from recent frost! Sombre Tit was seen and further down the road Black-headed Yellow Wagtail. Eastwards we drove until Cecelia said 'cat'.... A pause as I continued driving then 'I think it really was a Wild Cat'... I turned around perhaps not

overly optimistic but within seconds we'd see the Wild Cat sauntering along the road edge. Another rapid 3-point turn down the road (the motorcyclist was not pleased) and we were soon watching the cat, a female, walk across the road. She didn't rush, and reaching the far side she stopped to look at something and only gradually moved out of sight, giving us a great view of her tail and back end. We got out of the vehicle on the off chance we might see her and amazingly Cecelia came face to face with her under a bush. They exchanged looks for a good while then I came over and the cat moved just a little but this time both Cecelia and I watched her as she moved very slowly through the dead leaves and plants in the woodland, we were barely 3m from her. We were able to get a number of photos over the next couple of minutes before she melted silently into the forest... wow!

Then it was on to Drama where we stopped for icecreams and then another hour and a bit eastwards to our hotel spotting male and female Golden Oriole and female Red-backed Shrike on the way. We pulled into 'the castle' at around six and settled into our own little castles.

Day 6 April 28th Haidou Forest

This morning we met up with Eirini and Alexander just near to the hotel. Eirini works for the Rhodope National Park and she, Alex and both Peter and Georgios were to spend the day driving us around and guiding us to various superb spots in the forests in the general region of Haidou.

We would our way up the hairpins into the higher reaches of the national park to a viewpoint where Eirini oriented us with a description of the landscape and locations we could see – and we could see a lot! We learnt that the national park covers a staggering two million aces. We continued to a village where we all switched to the jeeps. These took us through perhaps fifteen kilometres of totally beautiful forest. We were accompanied on our drive by two dogs who ran all the way! One was superbly wolf-like, the other, his more exuberant companion kept encouraging the old boy on. We learnt that one of these dogs had joined the runners in last years 'iron man' event here – and had run the entire 160km course! We meanwhile enjoyed the everchanging forest with beech, spruce, pine, willow, aspen and silver birch changing places and making a different pastiche of green every few metres.

Eirini called a halt and took us down into the forest on foot. We were soon shown a boulder where *Soldanella rhodopaea* was growing, but sadly it had finished. She showed us a few more spots where the plant lived but in all of them it was over. She also found one in bud! After a while Celia spotted a perfect flower lying on the ground and threaded it back onto its bloom – it looked great. We were happy! But then after a little more searching we found another flower on a mossy boulder, and then two more, and then, a whole load of plants with perhaps forty still in bloom. We all gathered here and enjoyed this rare and beautiful plant for a while. Walking back to the car somebody spotted more on a roadside bank – in fact there were very many with around a hundred still in good flower. We drove back to the village stopping for the lovely *Viola demetria* only to find better plants of this at the village and indeed for the rest of the day.

We took our picnic in a cafeteria where our host allowed Eirini and Alexander to make us tea and coffee. Refreshed we headed out again, this time to an unusual landscape where on a plateau we came across a peaty stream flowing down between large granitic rocks. Eirini showed us diminutive *Drosera rotundifolia* plants. *Anemone nemorosa* was common as was *Ranunculus serbicus*.

We found the large orange flowered *Geum coccineum* and Tormentil! There was a delicate little *Muscari* which we cannot put a name to. As we drove out Red Admirals, Painted Ladies and one or two Silver-washed Fritillaries landed on the road. Our last stop of the day was by a slope covered in *Lilium rhodopaeum*. They were for the most part some distance from flowering, however one or two would be opening in just a few days.

Then it was down to the lowlands and to the Nemesis. Here we said farewell to our excellent local guides and then, after a break, we sat down for dinner – venison.

Day 7 April 29th Nestos

We awoke to dull rainy weather, the kind you see regularly in the English shires! In other words it wasn't about to change quickly. However today we were mostly in the lowlands so conditions were not too bad. The rain was light as we made a couple of stops along the road that rises up over the pass south of the hotel. The roadside cutting was alive with flowers. Most prominent were tufts of pale yellow *Onosma heterophyllum* and there were very fine plants too of *Iberis carnosula* with purplish flat-topped blooms.

The top of the pass didn't look too hospitable so we decided to come back later however we'd barely started descending before some fine roadside Monkey Orchids caused us to halt. The *Polygalas* here were so richly coloured.

Down in the lowlands it was still raining so we headed out to the coast and low dunes that stretch to the rivermouth. Common and Sandwich Terns flew along the coast, the sea was like glass. We pulled up next to some fine Yellow-horned Poppies. Medicagos and clovers, all new to us, were speckled across the sand between clumps of Sea Daffodil leaves. We found some fabulous Silkvine with lovely brown and yellow flowers draped across the *Quercus hartwissiana*, a curious oak with rather giant leaves.

The rain was now stopping so we headed inland taking a track to the river. This proved brilliant for birds. We saw perhaps a dozen Red-footed Falcons, a Purple Heron and a White Stork. There was a Bee-eater perched on a wire and a couple of Hoopoes. We drove along the river embankments for many kilometres, the poplar plantations dominating with their wispy seeds drifting along the track. We stopped for a Syrian Woodpcker and then had a good but short look at a Golden Jackal.

After lunch amid the trees we headed back to the entrance to the Nestos Gorge. We spent the afternoon walking up this fantastically scenic river valley, high cliffs rose on every side and the river looking magnificent, the wide sand bars backed by tall trees. Golden Orioles called all the time and Nightingales sang. Crag Martins whizzed along the cliff faces and a Short-toed Eagle drifted over. Cirl Buntings, Subalpine Warblers and Blue Rock Thrushes were seen. The weather kept the butterflies down but there was a wealth of fascinating insect life, especially Orthoptera and bugs. The flora was a wonder. The path is hewn into the side of the cliff in places so there are species that like cliffs, and then on the slopes a wonderful mix of Mediterranean flora. Tassel Hyacinths and Pyrenean Star of Bethlehem (Bath Asparagus) lined the track. *Iris reichenbachii* was over, but the *Ophrys oestrifera* was in fine form. Fabulous *Verbascum rupestris* hung its delicate sprays from the cliffs alongside a *Stellaria* and *Dianthus gracilis*. We saw lots of tall *Campanula*

lingulata and *Linaria genistifolia* as well as *Scabiosas* and *Streptoramphus tuberosus*. There was tiny *Campanula delicatula*, little tufts of *Polygala supina* and lots of lamiaceae. *Scutellaria albida* was a pretty sight, and we enjoyed four species of broomrape – lilac *mutelli*, showy *crenata*, abundant purplish-brown *pubescens* and also *alba*, the Thyme Broomrape. There were Mastic Trees, Olives and lovely pink-flowered Judas Trees. A marvellous place – and with an ice-cream waiting for us at the end of the walk!

It was time to head back to the hotel but not before we'd stopped at the viewpoint on the pass. This was a great spot with atmospheric views with cloud and fog hanging in shrouds across the landscape. Unfortunately the rain was coming on again! We still had time to enjoy rocks covered in gorgeous groups of *Achillea ageratina*. The iris was here in flower and there was a very large *Cerastium* amd also *Saxifraga stribryni*. Then it was down to the hotel with some time to relax before we had a most delicious evening meal

Day 8 April 30th Departure

We had a seven o'clock breakfast and departed a little after eight, the hotel showering us with gifts of jam and liquor! We went over the pass much more quickly this time, the landscape looked stunning after the rain – we passed from fog to sun at regular intervals. Descending to the plain we caught the motorway to Thessaloniki. This was almost empty until we reached the city and were soon to the airport in good time.

Systematic List Number 1 Flora

Pteridophyta

Asplenium adiantum-nigrum Black Spleenwort scattered Rustyback Fern Asplenium ceterach widespread Irish Spleenwort Asplenium onopteris Pangeio Asplenium ruta-muraria Wall Rue widespread Asplenium trichomanes Maidenhair Spleenwort Falakron Athyrium filix-femina Ladv-fern Panegeio Brittle Bladder-fern Cystopteris fragilis widespread Dryopteris expansa Orvilas

Dryopteris filix-masMale-fernPangeioGymnocarpium dryopterisOak FernHaidou

Notholaena marantaeNestos GorgePolypodium vulgareCommon PolypodySimidaPolystichum aculeatumHard Shield-fernSimida

Polystichum aculeatumHard Shield-fernSimidaPteridium aquilinumBrackenwidespread

Equisetaceae

Equisetum arvense Field Horsetail Orvilas

Cupressaceae

Cupressus sempervirens Italian Cypress neasr Nestos

Juniperus communis Common Juniper Quite common on Falakron

Juniperus excelsaNestos GorgeJuniperus oxycedrusPrickly Juniperbelow Volakos

Juniperus sabina Falakron

Ephedraceae

Ephedra foemina Nestos Gorge

Ephedra distachya Beach by Nestos Delta

Pinaceae

Picea abies common Haidou

Pinus halepensisCorsican PineNestosPinus nigraBlack PineOrvilasPinus pineaStone PineNestos

Pinus sylvestris frequent at mid-altitudes

Monocotyledons

Amaryllidaceae

Pancratium maritimum Sea Daffodil leaves on the each at the Nestos Delta

Araceae

Arum italicum Italian Lords-and-Ladies Nestos Delta Arum orientale widespread

Cyperaceae

Many seen, not identified

Dioscoraceae

Tamus communis Black Bryony widespread

Iridaceae

Crocus chrysanthus Falakron

Crocus veluchensis common Falakron Iris germanica below Volakos Iris reichenbachii scattered throughout

Liliaceae

Allium sphaerocephalon Nestos Gorge

Asparagus acutifolius Nestos Asparagus officinalis Nestos

Asphodeline lutea Yellow Asphodel scattered throughout in bud on Pangeio Asphodeline taurica

Asphodelus albus White Asphodel below Volakos

leaves seen on Falakron Colchicum triphyllum

Erythronium dens-canis marvellous displays on Falakron

Fritillaria drenovskii Falakron and Pangeio

Fritillaria pontica Pangeio Gagea fistulosa Falakron Falakron Gagea minima

Lilium rhodopaeum almost in flower below Haidou Muscari sp nova Haidou Forest and Nestos Gorge

Muscari comosum Tassel Hyacinth scattered

Muscari neglectum widespread and common

Ornithogalum expansum below Volakos Ornjithogalum nutans Pangeio

Ornithogalum pyrenaicum Nestos Gorge Polygonatum odoratum scattered Ruscus aculeatus Butcher's Broom scattered

Scilla bifolia scattered throughout

Smilax aspera scattered

Orchidaceae

Cephalanthera damasonium White Helleborine scattered throughout Cephalanthera longifolia Sword-leaved Helleborine scattered throughout Cephalanthera rubra Red Helleborine in seed on Orvilas Dactylorhiza romana Roman Orchid widespread

Limodorum abortivum Violet Birdsnest scattered Listera ovata Falakron Twayblade Neottia nidus-avis Bird's-nest Orchid scattered Ophrys mammosa Pangeio

Ophrys oestrifera scattered Ophrys reinholdii Reinhold's Bee Orchid Orvilas

Orchis mascula scattered throughout Early Purple Orchid

Orchis morio Green-winged Orchid widespread. Whether we were seeing

true *morio, picta* or *caucasica* I'll leave for

others to decide!

Orchis paucifloraSparse-flowered OrchidPangeioOrchis provincialisProvence OrchidPangeio

Orchis purpurea Lady Orchid scattered throughout

Orchis quadripunctataFour-spotted OrchidPangeio and the Nestos GorgeOrchis simiaMonkey Orchidpass above the Nestos Gorge

Orchis tridentataToothed OrchidwidespreadSerapias bergoniiPangeioSerapias orientalisPangeio

Poaceae

Many seen, not identified

Typhaceae

Typha latifolia Despatis River

Aceraceae

Acer hyrcanum subspecies intermedium. Pangeio

Acer monspessulanumMontpellier MapleSimidaAcer negundoNestos DeltaAcer platanoidesNestos Delta

Adoxaceae

Adoxa moschatellina Town Clock Simida

Anacardiaceae

Pistacia terebinthus Terebrinth Nestos

Apiaceae

Chaerophyllum temulentumprobably this species in HaidouEryngium maritimumleaves on the beach at the Nestos DeltaMalabaila aureumnear Drama

Oenanthe silaifolia Narrow-leaved Water-Dropwort Nestos Delta

Orlaya grandifloraNestos GorgeSanicula europaeaPangeioTordylium apulumTordyliumscattered

Apocynaceae

Nerium oleander lowland roadsides

Araliaceae

Hedera helix Ivy Widespread

Aristolochiaceae

Aristolochia clematitis Pangeio and common around the Nemesis

Aristochia elongata Pangeio
Aristolochia pallida Despatis

Aristolochia rotunda Pangeio

Asclepiadaceae

Periploca graeca Silk-vine Nestos Delta Vincetoxicum fuscatum Despatis

Vincetoxicum hirundinaria Swallowwort widespread

Asteraceae

Achillea ageratifolia Nestos Achillea ageratina Nestos Achillea millefolium Haidou

widely scattered Centaurea napulifera

Centaurea scabiosa Nestos Cirsium arvense Creeping Thistle lowlands

Crupina crupinastrum Nestos Doronicum orientale Pangeio Hieraceum umbellatum Falakron Leontodon crispus Nestos

Petasites hybridus Butterbur Simida Scorzonera cana scattered Scorzonera laciniata Nestos Sonchus tenerrimus Pangeio Streptorhamphus tuberosus Nestos Taraxacum officinale agg. scattered Tragopogon dubius Nestos

Falakron in seed Tragopogon pratensis

Tragopogon porrifolius Nestos Tussilago farfara Coltsfoot scattered

Xanthium strumarium Rough Cocklebur in seed Nestos

Betulaceae

Alnus glutinosa Alder widespread Alnus incana Grey Alder Simida Betula pendula Silver Birch scattered

Boraginaceae

Alkanna sp Nestos Anchusa hybrida Pangeio

Cerinthe minor Orvilas Cynoglossum creticum Blue Hound's-Tongue scattered

Lithospernum arvensis Corn Gromwell Falakron Lithospernum purpurocaeruleum Purple Gromwell widespread Myosotis ramosissima Early Forget-me-not Nestos Onosma heterophyllum Nestos Onosma rigida scattered Pulmonaria officinalis Lungwort Orvilos

Pulmonaria rubra scattered Orvilos Symphytum bulbosum

Symphytum ottomanum Pangeio and Nestos

Symphyum tuberosum scattered Brassicaceae

Aethionema saxatileBurnt CandytuftOrvilosAlliaria petiolataGarlic MustardSimida

Allysoides utriculata Nestos Gorge

Alyssum murale Nestos Gorge
Arabis turrita Towercress scattered

Aubretia deltoidea Nestos Gorge

Aurinia rupestris Nestos Gorge Capsella bursa-pastoris Shepherd's-purse widespread

Cardamine bulbifera widespread
Cardamine impatiens Pangeio

Cardaria draba lowland roadsides

Draba lasiocarpaFalakronDraba subnivalis???FalakronErophila vernaNestos – in seed

Erysimum repandum Nestos

Hesperis laciniata ?probably this species

Iberis carnosaNestosIberis saxatilisPangieoLunaria annuaHonestyscatteredMalcolmia chiaNestos

Malcolmia chiaNestosMatthiola fruticolosaPangeioNeslia apiculatalowlands

Thlaspi ochroleucum Falakron & Nestos

Campanulaceae

Campanula delicatula Nestos Gorge
Campanula lingulata scattered

Cannabaceae

Humulus lupulus Hop Nestos Delta

Caprifoliaceae

Sambucus nigra Elder scattered

Caryophyllaceae

Cerastium banaticumFalakronCerastium fontanumFalakronDianthus gracilisNestosDianthus strymonisDespatisMinuartia vernaOrvilosMoenchia manticaPangeio

Silene atropurpurea widespread – beautiful species

Silene conica Sand Catchfly Pangeio
Silene dichotoma Nestos
Silene fabarioides Despatis

Silene fabarioidesDespatisSilene flavescensNestosSilene italicaItalian Catchflyscattered

Silene subconica Despatis
Silene supina Pangeio

Stellaria mediaCommon ChickweedwidespreadStellaria nemorumscattered

Cistaceae

Cistus creticus locally abundant

Cistus salvifoliusSage-leaved CistusPangeioFumana procumbensPangeioFumana thymifoliaNestos

Helianthemum nummulariumCommon Rockrosebelow VolakosHelianthemum oelandicumwidespread

Convolvulaceae

Calystegia soldanellaSea BindweedNestos DeltaConvolvulus althaeoidesMallow-leaved BindweedPangeio

Cornaceae

Cornus mas Volakos
Cornus sanguinea Dogwood scattered

Corylaceae

Carpinus betulusHornbeamscatteredCarpinus orientalisOriental Hornbeamloally dominantOstrya carpinifoliaHop HornbeamwidespreadCorylus avellanaHazelscattered

Crassulaceae

Sedum eriocarpumNestosUmbilicus rupestrisNavelwortscattered

Cucurbitaceae

Bryonia albalowlandsEcballium elateriumSquirting Cucumberlowlands

Dipsacaceae

Scabiosa triniifolia below Volakos

Droseraceae

Drosera rotundifoia below Haidou

Ericaceae

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi in bud below Haidou
Bruckenthalia spiculifolia in seed below Haidou

Erica arborea Pangeio
Vaccinium myrtilis Haidou

Euphorbiaceae

Andrachne telephioidesFalakronEuphorbia amygdaloidesWood SpurgecommonEuphorbia characiasLarge Mediterranean SpurgeNestos

widespread Euphorbia cyparissias Cypress Spurge Euphorbia myrsinites Broad-leaved Glaucous Spurge widespread Euphorbia oblongata Pangeio Euphorbia peplus Despatis Euphorbia seguieriana widespread Euphorbia verrucosa Pangeio Nestos Delta Mercurialis annua Mercurialis perennis scattered

Fabaceae Anthyllis hermanniae widespread Anthyllis montana widespread Anthyllis vulneraria pulchella Kidney Vetch Nestos Astragalus angustifolius Pangeio Astragalus monspessulanus widespread Astragalus onobrychis scattered Bituminaria bituminosa Pitch Trefoil Nestos Hairy Broom Falakron Chamaecytisus hirsutus Chamaecytisus supinus Falakron Colutea cilicica Nestos Coronilla scorpioides scattered Orvilas Genista depressus Falakron Genista lydia Orvilas Hippocrepis comosa Hippocrepis emerus widespread Hippocrepis glauca Pangeio Hymenocarpus circinnatus Disc Trefoil scattered Lathyrus laxiflorus Pangeio Lathyrus nissolia Nestos Lathyrus sphaericus below Volakos Lathyrus vernus Falakron Lens nigricans Pangeio Spotted Medick Medicago arabica Pangeio Medicago disciformis Pangeio Medicago marina Sea Medick Nestos Delta Medicago minima Pangeio Medicago orbicularis Large Disk Medick below Volakos

Medicago polymorpha scattered Nestos Medicago praecox

Medicago truncatula Nestos Melilotus indicus Small Melilot Nestos Onobrychis aequidentata Nestos Cockscomb Sainfoin Onobrychis caput-galli Nestos

Ononis pusilla Despatis Ornithopus compressus locally common

Pisum sativum Wild Pea Pangeio Robinia pseudacacia False Acacia scattered Securigera cretica Pangeio Securigera parviflorus scattered Spanish Broom Spartium junceum widespread

Trifolium arvense Haresfoot Clover Nestos

below Volakos Trifolium campestre Hop Trefoil

Trifolium globosum Pangeio

Trifolium nigrescens below Volakos

White Clover Trifolium repens scattered Trifolium stellatum Star Clover Pangeio Trifolium tomentosum Nestos

below Volakos Trigonella monspeliaca

Vicia cuspidata **Nestos**

Vicia hirsuta Hairy Vetchling scattered Hairy Yellow Vetchling Vicia hybrida scattered

Vicia lathyroides Pangeio

Yellow Vetch Vicia lutea widespread Vicia melanops Haidou

Vicia pannonica Haidou

Vicia sativa Common Vetch widespread

Vicia tetrasperma **Despatis** Vicia villosa Fodder Vetch widespread

Fagaceae

Castanea sativa Sweet Chestnut scattered throughout Fagus sylvatica widespread in the hills Common Beech

Quercus cerris Turkey Oak Pangeio

Kermes Oak widespread & locally dominant Quercus coccifera

Quercus frainetto Hungarian Oak Simida & Orvilas

Quercus hartwissiana Nestos Delta – behind the beach

Quercus ilex Holm Oak Pangeio and the Nestos Gorge

Quercus petraea widespread

Fumariaceae

Corydalis solida Falakron

Gentianaceae

Cross Gentian Gentiana cruciata leaves noted on Falakron

Gentiana verna subsp. balcanica Spring Gentian Falakron

Geraniaceae

Erodium ciconium **Nestos** Common Stork's-bill Erodium cicutarium Falakron Geranium dissectum Cut-leaved Cranesbill Pangeio

Geranium lucidum Shining Cranesbill locally common

Geranium macrorrhizum scattered throughout

Geranium molle **Dovesfoot Cranesbill** Pangeio Geranium pusillum scattered

Herb Robert scattered

Geranium robertianum Geranium sanguineum scattered

Gesneraceae

Haberlea rhodopensis Despatis & Nestos Globulariaceae

Globularia bisnagarica widespread Globularia cordifolia Orvilas

Hypericaceae

Hypericum cerastoideswidespreadHypericum perforatumNestos

Juglandaceae

Juglans regia Walnut widespread

Lamiaceae

Acinos arvensis

Acinos rotundifolius

Acinos rotundifolius

Falakron

Aiuva chamaenitus

Ground Pine

widespread

Ajuga chamaepitysGround PinewidespreadAjuga genevensisBlue BuglewidespreadAjuga pyramidalisscattered

Ajuga orientalisOriental BuglescatteredAjuga reptansBuglewidespreadLamium amplexicauleHenbit DeadnettlePangeioLamium galeobdolonYelow ArchangelOrvilas

Lamium maculatum widespread
Lamium purpureum Red Deadnettle Pangeio

Salvia hormonioidesscatteredScutellaria altissimaNestosScutellaria columnaeSimida

Linaceae

Linum elegansOrvilasLinum tenuifoliumNestos

Malvaceae

Lavatera cretica Nestos

Meliaceae

Melia azedarach Indian Bead Tree Planted

Moraceae

Ficus carica Fig scattered

Oleaceae

Fraxinus ornus Manna Ash locally common throughout

Jasminum fruticansWild JasmineOrvilasLigustrum vulgareWild PrivetNestos

Olea europea Olive widely cultivated

Syringa vulgaris scattered

Orobanchaceae

Orobanche alba Nestos Orobanche crenata Stavroupoli Orobanche mutelii Nestos Orobanche pubescens Nestos Orobanche ramosa Branched Broomrape Pangeio

Oxalidaceae

Oxalis acetosella Wood Sorrel Simida

Paeoniaceae

amazing colony on Pangeio. A Japanese Paeonia peregrina

> expert on the genus has given the plants on Pangeio a specific name as they are rather intermediate in form between peregrina and

mascula...

Papaveraceae

Glaucium flavum Yellow Horned Poppy Nestos delta Papaver rhoeas Corn Poppy scattered

Plantaginaceae

Plantago major Greater Plantain scattered Plantago media Hoary Plantain Pangeio

Platanaceae

Platanus orientalis Oriental Plane widespread

Polygalaceae

Polygala nicaeensis ?maybe this species. Falakron. Didn't

> really get to grips with the rather showy Polygalas in the lowlands notably the fine

plants above the gorge at Nestos

Polygala supina Nestos

Polygonaceae

Rumex acetosella scattered

Primulaceae

Anagallis arvensis Scarlet Pimpernel below Volakos

Androsace villosa Pangeio

Primula veris Cowslip widespread

Soldanella rhodopaea some fine colonies at Haidou - a rare

plant

Pyrolaceae

Orthilia secunda in bud on Falakron

Ranunculacae

Anemone coronaria scattered

Anemone nemorosa Haidou Caltha palustris Marsh Marigold Haidou

Helleborus cyclophyllus scattered

Pulsatilla halleri already in seed on Falakron and on

Orvilas

Ranunculus ficaria Lesser Celandine Simida

Ranunculus gracilis scattered throughout

Ranunculus lanuginosus below Volakos
Ranunculus millefoliatus Falakron

Ranunculus millefoliatus Falakron
Ranunculus repens Creeping Buttercup scattered
Ranunculus sarduous scattered

Ranunculus serbicus widely scattered

Ranunculus sprunerianus scattered

Thalictrum aquilegifolium in bud, Haidou

Thalictrum minus Lesser Meadow-rue 2, 3

Rosaceae

Cotoneaster nebrodensis Falakron

Crataegus monogynaHawthornPangeioCydonia oblongaQuinceHaidou areaFragaria vescaWild StrawberryFalakron

Fragaria viridisFalakronGeum coccineumNestosGeum rhodopaeumPangeio

Herb Bennet Geum urbanum scattered Malus sylvestris Crab Apple scattered Potentilla argentea Pangeio Potentilla erecta Haidou Potentilla micrantha Falakron Potentilla recta Pangeio Prunus avium scattered

Prunus aviumscatterePrunus domesticaOrvilas

Rosa canina below Volakos Sanguisorba minor Salad Burnet below Volakos

Sorbus torminalis Falakron

Rubiaceae

Cruciata laevipes Cross-wort Pangeio

Salicaceae

Populus canescensGrey PoplarNestosPopulus nigraBlack PoplarOrvilas

Populus tremula Aspen locally common

Santalaceae

Osyris alba Osyris Orvilas
Thesium arvense Despatis

Saxifragaceae

Chrysosplenium alternifolium Simida and Haidou

Saxifraga carpetana Simida

Saxifraga ferdinandi-coburgii Falakron & Pangeio

Saxifraga federici-augusti Haidou

Saxifraga sempervivum Falakron & Pangeio

Saxifraga sempervivum X Saxifraga federici-augusti a lovely orange and yellow flowered

hybrid noted on Falakron

Saxifraga stribryni Falakron and pass above Nestos

Scrophulariaceae

Lathraea rhodopea west of Volakos, also near the Nemesis

Linaria genistifoliaNestosLinaria pelisserianaJersey ToadflaxPangeioParentucellia latifoliaSouthern Red BartsiawidespreadPadicularia faduiti successiFalalman

Pedicularis federici-augusti
Scrophularia nodosa
Verbascum orientale
Verbascum rupestris
Veronica chamaedrys

Souther Red Bartsia
Widespre
Falakron
Pangeio
Nestos
Pangeio
Scattered

Tamaricaceae

Tamarix smyrnensis Nestos

Tiliaceae

Tilia cordata Orvilas
Tilia argentea scattered

Ulmaceae

Ulmus laevisscatteredUlmus minorSmall-leaved ElmPangeio

Urticaceae

Urtica dioica Stinging Nettle scattered

Valerianaceae

Valeriana officinalis scattered throughout

Violaceae

Viola alba Falakron

Viola canina subspecies montana. Falakron

Viola demetrii Haidou Viola grisebachii Pangeio Viola odorata Falakron Viola perinensis Falakron Viola pyrenaica Falakron Viola reichenbachiana Pale Dog Violet Simida Haidou Viola riviniana Common Dog Violet

Viola tricolor Simida

Systematic List Number 2 Butterflies

Papilionidae

SwallowtailPapilio machaonscatteredScarce SwallowtailIphiclides podalirius1 OrvilasSouthern FestoonCerynthia polyxena1 Orvilas

Pieridae

Small White Pieris rapae scattered Green-veined White Pieris napi scattered Orange-tip Anthocharis cardamines widespread Clouded Yellow Colias crocea widespread Berger's Clouded Yellow Colias alfacariensis Orvilas Powdered Brimstone Despatis Gonepteryx farinosa Wood White sp Leptidea sp **Despatis**

Lycaenidae

Green Hairstreak

Callophrys rubi

Scattered

Small Copper

Lycanea phlaeas

1 Despatis

Little Blue

Cupido minimus

scattered

Green-underside Blue

Glaucopsyche alexis

Eastern Baton Blue

Pseudophilotes vicrama

Despatis

Chequered Blue Scolitantides orion ?probably this species Despatis

Brown ArgusAricia agestisDespatisAdonis BlueLysandra bellargusDespatisCommon BluePolyommatus icarusscattered

Nymphaldiae

Common Glider Neptis sappho 2 seen Despatis
Red Admiral Vanessa atlanta scattered throughout

Painted LadyCynthia carduiHaidouSmall TortoiseshellAglais urticaeDespatisSouthern CommaPolygonia egeascatteredSilver-washed FritillaryArgynnis paphiaHaidou

Queen of Spain FritillaryIssoria lathoniawidely scatteredWeaver's FritillaryClossiana diaOrvilas and Haidou

Glanville Fritilliary Melitaea cinxia scattered Knapweed Fritillary Melitaea phoebe Despatis

Satyridae

Small Heath Coenonympha pamphilus scattered throughout

Speckled Wood Pararge aegeria locally frequent – shady places

Wall Brown Lasiommata megera scatterd

Northern Wall Brown Lasiommata petropolitana ?probably this species around

Hesperidae

Hungarian SkipperSpialia orbiferscatteredDingy SkipperErynnis tagesscattered

Systematic List Number 3 Birds

Numbers refer to the number of days a species was seen on the tour e.g. 7/8 means it was seen on seven days out of eight.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Despatis Reservoir Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* wetlands. 4/8

Pygmy Cormorant One at Ioannina Lake and a few at Rodia 2/8

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea Nestos Delta
Purple Heron Area purpurea Nestos Delta
White Stork Ciconia ciconia scattered. 3/8
Black Stork

Black Stork scattered. 2/8

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* Dead one at Angelochori. Lefkada 1/8 Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* 1 Despatis Reservoir

Black Vulture Aegypius monachus 1 Simida
Short-toed Eagle Circaetus gallicus 1 Nestos
Marsh Harrier Circus aeruginosus scattered. 2/8

Montagu's Harrier Circus pygargus a female in the lowlands on the first day

Common BuzzardButeo buteowidespread 7/8OspreyPandion haliaetus1 DespatisCommon KestrelFalco tinnunculusscattered. 3/8

Red-footed Falcon Falco vespertinus c.12 Nestos Delta and 2 en route to the airport. 2/8

Rock Partridge Alectoris graeca 2 Pangeio Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus 4 Nestos Delta Kentish Plover Charadrius alexandrinus 2 Nestos Delta Tringa erythropus Spotted Redshank 2 Nestos Delta Common Redshank Tringa totanus Nestos Delta Yellow-legged Herring Gull Larus cachinnans at all wetlands 5/8 Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis 1 Nestos Delta Common Tern Sterna hirundo 2 Nestos Delta

Rock Dove Columba livia habitation throughout

Wood PigeonColumba palumbus4 Nestos DeltaCollared DoveStreptopelia decaoctoever-present 8/8Turtle DoveStreptopelia turturscattered. 3/8

Common Swift Apus apus only noted on the last day
European Bee-eater Merops apiaster 1 Nestos, 2 on the last day. 2/8

Roller Coracias garrulous 1 on last day
Hoopoe Upupa epops scattered. 3/8
Green Woodpecker Picus viridus 1 Orvilas
Syrian Woodpecker Dendrocopus syriacus 1 Nemesis

Crested Lark Galerida cristata widespread and common 8/8
Woodlark Lullula arborea 2 Simida, heard elsewhere

Skylark Alauda arvensis Falakron Shore Lark Eremophila alpestris 1 Falakron Sand Martin Riparia riparia 1 Nemesis Crag Martin Ptyonoprogne rupestris 2 Nestos Gorge Hirundo rustica Swallow very common 8/8 Red-rumped Swallow Hirundo daurica common 8/8 House Martin Delichon urbica common 8/8 Water Pipit Anthus spinoletta 2 Falakron Black-headed Wagtail Motacilla (flava) feldegg 1 Orvilas

Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea streamsides 4/8

Wren Troglodytes troglodytes Haidou

Nightingale Luscinia megarhynchos heard very often rarely seen

Black Redstart Phoenicurus ochruros Pangeio

Northern Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe upland areas 5/8
Black-eared Wheatear Oenanthe hispanica scattered. 2/8
Blue Rock Thrush Monticola solitarius Nestos Gorge
Blackbird Turdus merula widespread 8/8
Mistle Thrush Turdus viscivorus widespread. 8/8

Cetti's Warbler Cettia cetti Heard often seen once Nestos

Subalpine Warbler Sylvia cantillans 2 Nestos Gorge

Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca Orvilas
Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita scattered. 2/8
Long-tailed Tit Aegithalos caudatus scattered. 2/8
Sombre Tit Parus lugubris Orvilas
Coal Tit Parus ater common. 7/8

Blue Tit Parus caeruleus common. 7/8
Great Tit Parus major common. 7/8

Golden Oriole Oriolus oriolus Heard frequently and seen on three dates. 3/8

Red-backed Shrike Lanius collurio scattered. 3/8
Jay Garrulus glandarius widespread 8/8
Magpie Pica pica common 8/8
Alpine Chough Pyrrhocorax graculus Falakron

Jackdaw Corvus monedula lowland inhabitated areas

Hooded Crow Corvus (corone) cornix ubiquitous 8/8

Raven Corvus corax gorges and uplands. 3/8
Starling Sturnus vulgaris scattered throughout. 5/8
House Sparrow Passer domesticus common near habitation. 8/8

Tree Sparrow Passer montanus scattered. 2/8
Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs very common 8/8

Serin Serinus serinus Despatis Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis **Nestos River** Carduelis cannabina scattered. 2/8 Linnet Cirl Bunting Emberiza cirlus scattered. 3/8 Rock Bunting Emberiza cia scattered. 3/8 Emberiza hortulana Ortolan Bunting A male on Pangeio Miliaria calandra Corn Bunting scattered. 3/8