

# Cyprus

## Wildlife at Leisure

### A Greentours Itinerary

The Troodos separated from the mainland just over 5 million years ago when waters suddenly fill the previously dry Mediterranean basin. In that time new forms of many plants have developed and thus Cyprus has a rich endemic flora, notably amongst the orchids.

#### Day 1

##### Arrival Paphos

After our arrival at Paphos Airport its just a short journey into town and to our hotel.

#### Day 2

##### The Tombs of the Kings and Paphos Archaeological Area

We'll visit the Tombs of the Kings and Paphos archaeological area. These are a World Heritage Site but are also excellent areas for plants such as *Cyclamen persicum*, the endemics *Helianthemum obtusifolium* and *Ornithogalum pedicellare*, *Moraea sisyrinchium*, *Ephedra foeminea*, *Convolvulus althaeoides*, *Fumana arabica*, *Fumana thymifolia*, *Ruta chalepensis*, *Ricinus communis* and many others. *Glebionis coronaria*, Crown Daisy, dominates the fields along with *Papaver rhoeas*. The coastal sands at the Tombs of the Kings are host to an interesting flora of *Medicago marina*, *Paronychia argentea*, *Echium angustifolium*, *Centaurea aegialophila* and *Thymus capitatus*.

#### Day 3

##### Diarizos Valley

*Orchis italica*, *Ophrys flavomarginata* and *Orchis sezikiana* should be out in force along with many other orchids in the picturesque Diarizos Valley. We should see the pretty *Convolvulus coelesyriacus* and also other common Mediterranean plants such as *Cistus creticus*, *Fumana arabica*, *Pistacia terebinthus* and *Quercus coccifera*. The interesting *Aristolochia parviflora* should still be in flower here. We will make stops to look at the field plants and will end up in Omodos, a mountain wine village with characteristic architecture and a most impressive wine press.

#### Day 4

##### to the Akamas via the Pegeia Forest and Episkopi Environmental Centre

We'll start in Pegeia forest where there are many orchids such as *Ophrys levantina*, *Ophrys elegans*, *Ophrys iricolor*, *Ophrys sicula* and *Anacamptis morio*, these all occurring in profusion. We will also look at the specialist habitat of vernal pools and

their associated flora such as *Ranunculus peltatus*. After visiting the Episkopi environmental centre we will look at the chasmophytes that grow on a most impressive cliff below the centre. *Verbascum orientale*, *Polypodium cambricum*, *Arisarum vulgare* and *Bosea cyprica* grow here on the African Reef limestone cliffs where Peregrines nest.

## **Day 5**

### **Polis**

This morning we'll explore the fields right above our hotel. Again we shall find many orchids, a particular highlight being the unusual yellow-orange and green *Orchis punctulata*. There's also much *Cyclamen persicum*, *Bellevalia trifoliata* and *Lotus purpureus*. We also expect to see Eastern Festoon, Cleopatra, and the endemic Paphos Blue. We will make a circular route via an area of rock pools with interesting plants and also see some sea-shore plants such as *Anthemis rigida*.

## **Day 6**

### **The Baths of Aphrodite and Akamas Coast**

We start at the botanical garden at the Baths of Aphrodite and then walk along a beautiful coastal path on high cliffs with the sea below. We go through *Pistacia lentiscus* and *Juniperus phoenicea* maquis and then *Pinus brutia* forest with much *Arbutus andrachne*. The route is lined with *Cyclamen persicum* and *Asphodelus ramosus*. We will see *Bellevalia trifoliata* and *Bellevalia nivalis* as well as orchids such as *Anacamptis syriaca* and *Himantoglossum robertianum* amongst others. Many colourful annuals such as *Lathyrus blepharicarpus*, *Vicia hybrida* and *Vicia sativa* will be in flower. Orange tip, Cleopatra and the endemic Paphos Blue will be on the wing. Sardinian Warblers are common and Cyprus Warbler should start arriving at this time. The hotel garden is full of birds such as Black Restart and various finches, and Hoopoe is commonly seen.

## **Day 7**

### **Smygies**

Above the picturesque village of Neochrio we will find many orchids including *Ophrys mammosa*, *Ophrys morio* and *Ophrys flavomarginata*. *Cyclamen persicum*, *Bellevalia trifoliata*, *Lotus purpureus*, *Anchusa undulata* subspecies *hybrida*, *Geranium* and *Erodium* species will be in flower. Here we'll see some of the endemic plants of the Akamas peninsula such as *Alyssum akamasicum*, *Onosma fruticose* and *Thymus integer*. Several species of *Cistus* including the rarer *Cistus monspeliensis* should be in flower, as well as other plants such as *Lithodora hispidula*, *Bellevalia nivalis* and *Polygala venulosa*.

## Day 8

### Mandria Beach and departure

Before departing we'll visit Mandria beach where we'll see a nice coastal flora with plants such as *Glaucium flavum*, *Eryngium maritimum*, *Echium angustifolium*, *Medicago marina* and *Limonium sinuatum*.

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