



## Greece

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Butterfly Conservation Europe Partner	None
Local Recording Scheme.	Please send records to Lazaros Pamperis: <a href="mailto:pamperis@otenet.gr">pamperis@otenet.gr</a>
EBG Butterfly List and Spreadsheet for Greece	<a href="http://www.european-butterflies.org.uk/downloads/EBGRecordingFormGreece.zip">http://www.european-butterflies.org.uk/downloads/EBGRecordingFormGreece.zip</a>

Greece has about 234 species of butterflies and one of the richest butterfly faunas of any country in Europe with its own endemic species and many species with their European distribution largely restricted to Greece. The Greek mainland, particularly the mountains, is of greatest interest for butterflies though there are specialized endemic species on many of the islands including Crete, e.g. Cretan Festoon (*Zerynthia cretica*). The season is very long with butterflies on the wing from February to November. The foremost authority on the butterflies of Greece, Lazaros Pamperis, has spent a lifetime both recording all over Greece but also collating the records. His *Butterflies of Greece* is the seminal work on Greek butterflies and is available in both Greek and English. It is also available as a free downloadable App on Play Store.

Most butterfly watchers visit fairly well trodden paths and butterfly holiday companies such as Greenwings and Naturetrek run annual trips.

Some of the most visited sites include (see outline map below):



Map of Greece © INTUTE



Chelmos Blue (*Polyommatus iphigenia*)



Odd-spot Blue (*Turanana taygetica*)

1. Mount Chelmos, near Kalavrita in the north of the Peloponnese, is perhaps the most famous. It is the only site in Europe for Chelmos Blue (*Polyommatus iphigenia*) and one of two sites for Odd-spot Blue (*Turanana taygetica*). It used to be a good site for Fiery Copper (*Lycaena thetis*), which shares the same foodplant as Odd-spot Blue, namely *Acantholimon androsaceum*, but this has not been seen for some years. All three species have suffered from collecting and are highly localised. Pontic Blue (*Neolysandra coelestina*) is also found there and there is an abundance of other species including Grecian Copper (*Lycaena ottomana*).



Taygetos Blue (*Polyommatus eros menelaos*) Photo Nigel Peace

2. Mount Taygetos in the south of the Peloponnese has Fiery Copper (*Lycaena thetis*) and also Odd-spot Blue (*Turanama taygetica*), as well as Greek Mazarine Blue (*Cyaniris semiargus helena*) which can often be abundant mud-puddling on hot afternoons. The Taygetos Blue (*Polyommatus eros menelaos*) was previously considered by some a full species. EBG has conducted surveys for Odd-spot Blue and its foodplant on both Chelmos and Taygetos. June is the best time to see it.
  
3. Mount Parnassos near Delphi has many species including White-banded Grayling (*Pseudochazara amalthea*), Krueper's Small White (*Pieris krueperi*), Lesser Fiery Copper (*Lycaena thersamon*) and Powdered Brimstone (*Gonepteryx farinosa*) and many other species. Delphi is a good place to see Grass Jewel (*Freyeria trochilus*).
  
4. The northern Pindos mountains, including Zagoria, were rarely visited by tourists until recently but are also rich in butterflies. Look out for Clouded Apollo (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), Southern Festoon (*Zerynthia polyxena*), Southern Swallowtail (*Papilio alexanor*), Freyer's Fritillary (*Melitaea arduinna*), Greek Clouded Yellow (*Colias aurorina*), and Grecian Copper (*Lycaena ottomanus*). The wonderful Freyer's Purple Emperor (*Apatura metis*) can be found along rivers in the region.





Southern Swallowtail (*Papilio alexanor*) Photo Nigel Peace

5. The northern mountains bordering Albania and Macedonia are also rarely visited but very rewarding, having Balkan Copper (*Lycaena candens*), Balkan Fritillary (*Boloria graeca*), Eastern Festoon (*Zerynthia cerisy*), Eastern Greenish Black-tip (*Euchloe penia*), Russian Heath (*Coenonympha leander*), and Balkan Clouded Yellow (*Colias caucasica*). Further east the mountains of northern Greece bordering Bulgaria are particularly good for butterflies with Bosnian Blue (*Agriades dardanus*) just being found in Greece on Mount Orvilos.



Eastern Greenish Black-tip (*Euchloe penia*) Photo Nigel Peace



Eastern Festoon (*Zerynthia cerisy*) Photo Simon Spencer

6. Mount Phalakron has several anomalous blues and Black Ringlet (*Erebia melas*). Dil's Grayling (*Pseudochazara orestes*) is only found in this region both in Greece and Bulgaria and Eastern Festoon (*Zerynthia cerisy*) occurs locally. Nearby mountains have Higgins' Anomalous Blue (*Polyommatus nephohiptamenos*).



Dil's Grayling (*Pseudochazara orestes*) Photo Nigel Peace



7. Samos is an island in the Dodecanese near Turkey that is definitely worth a visit. It has its own Samos Grayling (*Hipparchia mersina*) and a few Orange-banded Hairstreaks (*Satyrium ledereri*) which are very local on Mount Karvouni, their only site in Europe. The mountain also has Eastern Brown Argus (*Kretania eurypilus*) and the Southern Swallowtail (*Papilio alexanor*) can be found in several places at lower altitude. These are found in June and July but earlier in the year the False Apollo (*Archon apollinus*) also flies.



Orange-banded Hairstreak (*Satyrium ledereri*) Photo Nigel Peace

8. Crete has four endemic species: Cretan Grayling (*Hipparchia cretica*), the only species of this group on Crete; Cretan Small Heath (*Coenonympha thyrasis*), which is also the only *Coenonympha*; Cretan Festoon (*Zerynthia cretica*); and Cretan Argus (*Kretania psylorita*). It is possible to see the four Cretan endemics in a week but the Cretan Festoon (*Zerynthia cretica*) is virtually over by late June and though the Cretan Grayling (*Hipparchia cretica*) flies theoretically all summer, it is best found in July. The Cretan Argus (*Kretania psylorita*) is found on stony areas on the higher mountains in June and July and the Cretan Small Heath is widespread over a long period. Crete is well worth a visit with a few other interesting butterflies but it does not have not the rich fauna of mainland Greece

Even at sea level near tourist resorts you will find the magnificent Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*) and the Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*) which can be abundant. Both are common on Cephalonia but are widespread in coastal Greece and many islands. Pigmy Skipper (*Gegenes pumilio*) and Mediterranean Skipper (*Gegenes nostradamus*) can also be abundant in warm places at low altitude.



Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*) Photo Neil Thompson

One or two scarce Graylings are found in Greece, including Freyer's Grayling (*Hipparchia fatua*) and Grecian Grayling (*Pseudochazara graeca*) which are more widespread than the very local and elusive Dark Grayling (*Pseudochazara tisiphone*) found on Mount Smolikas. Dil's Grayling (*Pseudochazara orestes*) is only found near Mount Phalakron both in Greece and Bulgaria. The Grey Asian Grayling (*Pseudochazara geyer*) is found right on the border with Albania at its only site in Europe. Brown's Grayling (*Pseudochazara amymone*), originally only found near Ioannina, has now been found in Albania and Lesser Lattice Brown (*Kirinia climene*) can be found near Albania to the west of Lake Prespa.

**The Butterflies of Greece** by Lazaros Pamperis 1997 Bastas-Plessas (in English). This is the life work of one individual totally dedicated to documenting the butterflies of his native country. It is a beautiful book with some stunning photographs and lots of useful information. Because of the problem of collecting exact localities are not given for some species. However, it is the only major work on the butterflies of Greece. An enlarged version was published in 2009 in both Greek and English which is available as a free download for smartphones on Playstore. A new version will be available in 2021.

**Corfu Butterfly Conservation** run by Dr Dan Danahar aims to produce a Corfu Butterfly Atlas once sufficient data has been collated and analysed. BC has worked with Dan to help raise funds to make the project a reality. A Corfu Butterfly Conservation website (<https://corfubutterflyconservation.org>) has been established, and an identification guide to and poster of the island's 75 known butterfly species (there may well be more) have been produced for distribution in 2022.



### **EBG Newsletters on Greece**

Greece 6-21, 11-21, 12-8, 13-32, 19-22, 22-24, 25-11, 26-21, 26-25; Corfu 11-14, 26-23; Crete 19-24; Epirus 16-9; Ikaria 25-7; Mt Chelmos 2-6, 4-9; Mt Phalakron 8-17; Mt Taygetos 6-23; Peloponnese 1-10, 6-28, 21-4; Samos 10-26, 25-7; Skiathos 8-21; Tzoumerka – Peristeri National Park 18-23, 20-25, 21-6; Vikos Gorge 26-23.

Bibliography including many scientific papers

<http://users.auth.gr/~efthymia/Butterflies/References.html>

### **Holidays**

Greenwings organise several butterfly holidays in Greece

<https://greenwings.co>

Naturetrek also organise butterfly trips to Greece

[www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Our members recommend as bases for butterfly watching holidays:

Hotel Filoxenia, Kalavrita for Mount Chelmos

Hotel Bourazani, North of Ioanina for Zagoria and the Northern Pindos

Marila Apartments, Volakas for Phalakron

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Simon Spencer October 2021