

# The Wildlife of Delphi, Mount Parnassos & Mount Oiti

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

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### Outline itinerary

**Day 1** Fly Athens & transfer Delphi.

**Day 2/4** Delphi & Mount Parnassos.

**Day 5/7** Mount Oiti from Ypati.

**Day 8** Fly London.

### Departs

June.

### Focus

Plants of central Greece & the history of Delphi (plus butterflies & birds).

### Grading

Grade A. Day walks only.

### Dates and Prices

Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) (tour code GRC14) or see the Naturetrek brochure.

### Highlights:

- Visit Delphi, one of Greece's most important Classical sites.
- Explore the varied altitudes of Mount Parnassos National Park in search of spring flowers.
- Greek endemics such as *Draba parnassica*, *Satureja parnassica* & *Stachys swainsonii*.
- Rüppell's Warbler, Western Rock Nuthatch & Rock Thrush.
- Butterflies including Grecian Anomalous Blue, Balkan Marbled White & Lattice Brown.
- Explore the beautiful coastal town of Galaxidi.
- Dramatic scenery of the Mount Oiti National Park.
- Led by expert naturalist guides.



From the top: Delphi, Naked Man Orchid & *Campanula topaliana* and Cretzschmar's Bunting. Images by C Kyriakopoulou and under license from Shutterstock Ltd.



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## Itinerary

**NB.** Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

### Day 1

### Delphi

We depart London Heathrow early morning on a scheduled British Airways service to Athens, arriving early afternoon. Upon our arrival in Athens, the Greek capital, we will transfer by road to the village of Delphi located on the slopes of Mount Parnassos and close to the famous archaeological site. The journey should take around 3 hours and will take us through an attractive landscape of forested hills and olive groves. On arrival we will check into our comfortable family-run hotel in Delphi which offers dramatic views and wonderful Greek hospitality. This will be our base for the next 4 nights while we explore the wildlife and history of Delphi and Mount Parnassos.

### Day 2 - 4

### Delphi & Mount Parnassos

We now have 3 full days to explore the varied habitats and archeological treasures in the vicinity of Mount Parnassos and Delphi. We will slowly ascend the imposing dome of the mountain itself and go in search of the plants, butterflies, birds and other wildlife that lives in the alpine meadows, forests and other habitats that cloth its slopes. Snow permitting, we hope to reach a height of 2,400 metres! During our time on Mount Parnassos (Apollo's mountain) we will be looking for such flowers as *Campanula rupicola*, *Draba parnassica*, *Stachys swainsonii*, *Achillea umbellata*, *Satureja parnassica*, *Inula parnassica* and *Nepeta parnassica*. Butterflies may include Balkan Marbled White, Scarce Swallowtail, Grecian Anomalous Blue, Meleager's Blue and Southern White Admiral, plus birds such as Golden Eagle, Black Woodpecker, Rock Thrush, Alpine Chough and Cretzschmar's Bunting.



A highlight of our stay here will be the time exploring Delphi's world-famous archeological site and museum, one of the finest Classical sites in the whole of Greece. During its heyday, Delphi was not only considered the centre of the known world – the place on Earth where man was closest to the Gods – but was the home of the high priestess Pythia, the 'Oracle of Delphi', who spoke for the god Apollo and foretold the future. Today, the



predictions of Pythia have been replaced by the whistles of Western Rock Nuthatches, the scratchy songs of Rüppell's Warblers and the trill of Cirl Buntings. Around the ruins grow orchids, such as the Naked Man Orchid and *Orchis spitzelii* whilst a colourful mix of butterflies, including Zephyr Blue, Cleopatra and Camberwell Beauty dance overhead. During our time in Delphi we will explore the history of the site with an expert licensed guide and enjoy the wildlife with our Naturetrek tour leaders.

On one afternoon we will drop out of the mountains for a little time wandering the narrow cobbled streets of Galaxidi, one of Greece's most beautiful coastal towns. Galaxidi sits on the shore of the Gulf of Corinth and is steeped in history. Many of its buildings date back to the 19th Century when Galaxidi was a well-established maritime town with a large fleet of sailing ships. We will end the day here with an 'al fresco' dinner in one of the town's waterfront restaurants before heading back inland to our base in Delphi. It may even be possible to have a quick dip in the sea!



Western Rock Nuthatch

## Day 5 - 7

## Ypati, Mount Oiti

From Delphi we transfer to the village of Ypati which sits in the foothills of Mount Oiti (also called Mount Oeta) and will be our base for the final 3 nights of the tour. Rising up to 2,152 metres, Mount Oiti is an offshoot of the Pindos Range and is also known as the 'mountain of flowers' due to the abundance of colourful flora that carpets its slopes in the spring. Over 70 square kilometres of the mountain, a quarter of its surface area, was designated as Greece's sixth national park in 1966 and much of the rest has been declared a protected area under the 'Natura 2000' initiative. The vast fir forests (dominated by *Abies cephalonica*), steep gorges and high meadows are home to over 1,250 species of higher plant, some of which are endemic to the area. The mountain is easily explored via a good, albeit winding, road which weaves its way upwards through the forests that cloth Oiti's lower slopes to the high rocky plateau on the top.



Viola aetolica spp Oiti

Plant species to look out for include *Cerastium candidissimum*, *Lilium calchedonicum*, *Pterocephalus perennis*, *Centaurea raphanina*, *Daphne oleoides*, *Viola aetolica* spp Oiti, *Morina persica* and Red Helliborine. Although the flowers are bound to take centre stage we will not ignore the butterflies and birds, which may include Black Ringlet, Blue-spot Hairstreak, Amanda's Blue and Queen of Spain Fritillary, plus Sombre Tit, White-backed Woodpecker, Black-eared Wheatear, Crag Martin, Blue Rock Thrush, Tawny Pipit and Woodchat Shrike.

The Balkan race of the Chamois is also seen from time to time, but although Wolves and Bears are also present, they are rarely sighted and only seen by the fortunate few! After each day in the field we will return to our comfortable hotel in Ypati for an evening meal.

## Day 8

## Fly London

After a final early morning walk for those who wish we will head back to Athens for our return flight home. The journey of 250 kilometres is likely to take in the region of four hours and will aim to be back in time to catch an early to mid-afternoon British Airways flight to London Heathrow's Airport, arriving back at around 1700 hours.

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## Tour grading

This tour is graded A, consisting of day walks only. We will travel to each site by minibus, then take leisurely walks to explore the area, generally over easy terrain, although some paths can be steep and rough in places. The holiday is therefore suitable for anyone who enjoys walking in the countryside and is of an 'average' level of fitness.

## Focus

This is a general wildlife holiday with a particular focus on plants. Birds, butterflies and the history of Delphi will also be enjoyed.

## Food & accommodation included in the price

All food and accommodation are included in the price of this holiday from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8. We will be based in two comfortable, hotels for the duration of the tour, one in Delphi and the other in the village of Ypati. All rooms have private facilities. Single occupancy can be secured for the supplement cost outlined on our website.

## Your safety & security

Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/greece](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/greece) or telephone 0870 6060290 prior to travel.

## How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read the Naturetrek terms and conditions in the back of our brochure or on our website, and then book either online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), by calling us on 01962 733051, or by completing and returning the booking form in the brochure together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost. If you do not have a copy of this brochure, please call us on 01962 733051.

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