

The Reptiles & Amphibians of the Peloponnese

Naturetrek Tour Report

21st – 28th April 2026



African Chameleon



Glass Lizard



Cat Snake



Loggerhead Sea Turtle

Tour report by Gary Powell
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Tour participants: Gary Powell (leader) with six Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Tuesday 21st April

After a few short delays, we finally set off from Athens to begin our herping adventure. We took the opportunity to stop at a lake near to our first hotel, where we had very fleeting glimpses of a European Glass Lizard (*Pseudopus apodus*) and Balkan Whip Snake (*Hierophis gemonensis*), and, under a small rock, our first Eurasian Worm Snake (*Xerotyphlops vermicularis*). A nearby spot had several Epirus Water Frogs (*Pelophylax epeiroticus*) in a small water trough, while we were serenaded by hundreds of Marsh Frogs (*Pelophylax ridibundus*) calling on the large lake. After settling into our lovely hotel and having our first dinner together as a group, some of us went on a nighttime visit to a nearby amphibian hotspot; unfortunately, the normally inundated and humid habitat was incredibly dry, and the only activity noted was more Marsh Frogs calling.

Day 2

Wednesday 22nd April

After a well-earned rest, we started the day as the sun rose over the nearby lake. Although we didn't see any reptiles or amphibians, everyone enjoyed the beautiful setting and the abundant bird life, with many Black-winged Stilts, as well as Great and Little Egrets, Wood Sandpiper and, in the distance, a few Dalmatian Pelicans. We then spent most of the day exploring Strophilia Forest, where everyone was delighted to find abundant Hermann's Tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*). We had quick views of very active Balkan Emerald Lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*) and, in the leaf litter, the diminutive Snake-eyed Skink (*Ablepharus kitaibelli*). As the temperature soared, we eventually had a wonderful encounter with a large adult Glass Lizard, before we moved on to the local sand dune area for a quick look at the area that we were to visit later at night.

After a brief rest we went out for a pre-dinner walk and, despite the attention of clouds of mosquitoes, it was well worth it, as we were rewarded with a Dahl's Whip Snake (*Platycephalus najadum*) basking on a rock, another Emerald Lizard, and both juvenile and adult Common Tree Frogs (*Hyla arborea*) sheltering in vegetation. Finding Tree Frogs during the daytime would become one of the specialities of this group! A fantastic day of wildlife experiences was capped off after dark when we found three African Chameleons (*Chamaeleo africanus*), the last one only a few metres from our van!

Day 3

Thursday 23rd April

A few of the team had missed out on the chameleon trip last night, so we went back and located one of the individuals just as it was moving away from its nighttime refuge. We then began our journey south towards Lake Kaiafas, stopping during the journey to explore a lagoon, where we found a few Greek Keeled Lizards (*Algyroides moreoticus*), as well as more Black-winged Stilts, Greater Flamingoes, and Northern Wheatear. Another treat was a Hoopoe near the road as we drove. At Lake Kaiafas we had our lunch and watched European Pond Terrapins (*Emys orbicularis*), Balkan Terrapins (*Mauremys rivulata*) and the widely-introduced and invasive Red-eared Sliders (*Trachemys scripta*) as we explored the lake edges. We also had good sightings of very colourful Peloponnese Wall Lizards (*Podarcis peloponnesiacus*), and a momentary look at a Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) as it disappeared into the reedbeds.

After locating our hotel for the night and dining out in the town, we had another nighttime search for African Chameleons. It proved a lot harder than last night, but we had just decided to call it a night when we found a lovely specimen in the bush next to where we had parked!

Day 4

Friday 24th April

Continuing south, we had a pleasant stop for a quick bit of herping (Peloponnese Wall Lizard and Greek Keeled Lizard) and a relaxed coffee at a bar on the beach, before moving on to one of the highlights of any trip to the Peloponnese: a few hours watching Loggerhead Turtles at very close quarters. These magnificent creatures are always a joy to watch, and they were present in good numbers today (some fifteen individuals).

After checking in at our fantastic hotel in Pylos, we spent the late afternoon looking at different habitats around Gialova Lagoon; we found Common Tree Frogs among the reedbeds and spent a while observing Cetti's and Sardinian Warblers. Another location gave us a Turkish Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*) under some refuse, and then we had fantastic views of Squacco Herons. We then took advantage of the very comfortable and beautifully located hotel, and after a leisurely evening meal, had the night off.

Day 5

Saturday 25th April

Refreshed after a restful and early night, we were up and out after an early breakfast, and keen to track down our main target for the day: Sand Boa (*Eryx jaculus*). It took some time, but eventually we located one: a juvenile under a rock. With a wide range of interests and expertise in the group, the clients were also fully engaged with the massive variety of invertebrate and plant species which were evident here.



Greek Keeled Lizard



Common Tree Frog



Marsh Frog



Greek Rock Lizard

We moved on to a shaded stream area, where we found a few Greek Stream Frogs (*Rana graeca*), some subadult Emerald Lizards, a Greek Keeled Lizard and, in the humid leaf litter, a few freshwater crabs. After a hike up to a chapel with stunning views over the beaches and lagoons, we revisited our birding spot from yesterday for an enjoyable few hours, closely observing Squacco and Grey Herons, Little Egrets and Common Sandpipers.

Day 6

Sunday 26th April

Another early night meant we were prepared for a long day of travelling north, and we arrived at Lake Doxa, at about 900m elevation, in the early afternoon. It being a beautiful Sunday, the area was buzzing with visitors, but we managed to remove ourselves from the crowds (after watching several very tame Common Wall Lizards, *Podarcis muralis*) and explore some of the surrounding woodlands. We had a few brief sightings of Emerald Lizards, and then found ourselves a new species for the trip under a piece of rotting wood: a juvenile Aesculapian Snake (*Zamenis longissimus*). Our search for Fire Salamanders (*Salamandra salamandra*) was unsuccessful, but we did find lots of subadult Marsh Frogs. We continued our trip through very different scenery compared to the first part of the week; we moved through the mountains (and seeing the aftermath of some huge wildfires which have unfortunately happened since our last tour) until we arrived at Lake Styμφalia.

We went straight for one of my favourite spots, and very quickly found a Worm Snake, a Balkan Whip Snake and a handful of Common Tree Frogs, while watching a Short-toed Snake Eagle overhead and listening to the thousands of Marsh Frogs in the lake. We also flushed two Glass Lizards and a Grass Snake from the vegetation near the water, all of them too close and rapid to have a close look at.

After checking in to our cosy and welcoming hotel, we had a last trip of the day to scout out a few locations, and found an Ionian Wall Lizard (*Podarcis ionicus*) and another Snake-eyed Skink. It had been a long but rewarding day, and after a delicious dinner, we had a well-earned rest, some of us serenaded to sleep by a Scops Owl in the large, ancient tree outside the hotel.

Day 7

Monday 27th April

Our last full day was spent exploring a selection of great wildlife spots around Lake Styμφalia. We very quickly added to our species list while searching in a beautiful rocky meadow: we found Kotschy's Bent-toed Gecko (*Mediodactylus kotschy*) and the endemic Limbless Skink (*Ophiomorus punctatissimus*). Shortly afterwards, we found a few more Hermann's Tortoises, and then some Greek Rock Lizards (*Hellenolacerta graeca*) on the walls of an abandoned building. At an archaeological site, we found both Peloponnesian wall lizards; adding the Eastern Peloponnese Wall Lizard (*Podarcis thais*) as well as the more familiar species from our coastal locations.

Returning to our first lakeside stop from yesterday, we found two juvenile Dice Snakes (*Natrix tessellata*), more Tree Frogs, including one sleeping on a very warm rock face, and another, very striking, Eastern Peloponnese Wall Lizard. The temperature was now higher than it had been for the whole trip, and after a short hike around a section of lake we sought shelter and cold drinks at a nearby roadside cafe. Just before this we had spent time watching a pair of Marsh Harriers over the extensive reedbeds and discovered a small Peloponnese Slow Worm (*Anguis cephalonica*) under a piece of discarded board.

With our time drawing to a close, we were all keen to keep experiencing as many different habitats as possible, and at a new location we were all delighted finally to find one of our main targets, a Marginated Tortoise (*Testudo marginata*)! There were also two large Glass Lizards, one with a large chunk of its tail missing. After our final group supper together, a few of us couldn't resist a last walk around the village; we expected to find geckos, and indeed we did see a few Turkish Geckos on the hotel walls. But also, just as we were about to turn in for the night, we found an absolutely stunning Cat Snake (*Telescopus fallax*) on the exterior wall of a house at the edge of the village. It was the perfect ending to an incredible day!

Day 8

Tuesday 28th April

Today was mainly about getting us all to our various flights in good time, but we had to have one last quick session in the field, tracking down our Marginated Tortoise from yesterday for the benefit of a few who hadn't there at the time. One of the features of this trip was the sheer variety of wildlife that we had collectively found, photographed and appreciated; not just the reptiles and amphibians, which were obviously our main targets, but a huge range of birds, dragonflies/damselflies, beetles, spiders and plants. There really was something for everyone on this tour, and we went home tired but very pleased with our Peloponnese experience.

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Species lists

Reptiles

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		April 2026								
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Loggerhead Sea Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>				✓					
Hermann's Tortoise	<i>Testudo hermanni</i>		✓					✓		
Marginated Tortoise - N	<i>Testudo marginata</i>							✓	✓	
Balkan Terrapin	<i>Mauremys rivulata</i>			✓						
European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>		✓	✓		✓				
Red-eared Slider - I	<i>Trachemys scripta</i>			✓						
African Chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo africanus</i>		✓	✓						
Turkish Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i>				✓			✓		
Kotschy's Bent-toed Gecko	<i>Mediodactylus kotschy</i>							✓		
Greek Keeled Lizard - N	<i>Algyroides moreoticus</i>			✓		✓				
Greek Rock Lizard - E	<i>Hellenolacerta graeca</i>							✓		
Balkan Emerald Lizard	<i>Lacerta trilineata</i>		✓			✓	✓			
Ionian Wall Lizard - N	<i>Podarcis ionicus</i>						✓			
Common Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis muralis</i>						✓			
Peloponnese Wall Lizard - E	<i>Podarcis peloponnesiacus</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓	
Eastern Peloponnese Wall Lizard - E	<i>Podarcis thais</i>							✓		
European Snake-eyed Skink	<i>Ablepharus kitaibelii</i>				✓	✓	✓			
Limbless Skink - E	<i>Ophiomorus punctatissimus</i>							✓		
Peloponnese Slow Worm - N	<i>Anguis cephallonica</i>							✓		
European Glass Lizard	<i>Pseudopus apodus</i>	✓	✓			✓		✓		
Eurasian Worm Snake	<i>Xerotyphlops vermicularis</i>	✓				✓				
Javelin Sand Boa	<i>Eryx jaculus</i>					✓				
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>			✓						
Dice Snake	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>							✓		
Balkan Whip Snake	<i>Hierophis gemonensis</i>						✓			
Dahl's Whip Snake	<i>Platyceps najadum</i>		✓							
Cat Snake	<i>Telescopus fallax</i>							✓		
Aesculapian Snake	<i>Zamenis longissimus</i>						✓			

Amphibians

N=Near-endemic, D=Dead		April 2026							
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Green Toad	<i>Bufo viridis</i>							D	
Common Tree Frog	<i>Hyla arborea</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Epirus Water Frog - N	<i>Pelophylax epeiroticus</i>	✓							
Marsh Frog	<i>Pelophylax ridibundus</i>			✓		✓	✓		
Stream Frog	<i>Rana graeca</i>					✓			

Birds

		April 2026								
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>					✓				
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>					✓	✓			
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>			✓						
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓				
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			✓						
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>			✓		✓	✓			
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>		✓							
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>					✓				
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>					✓				
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓		✓	✓				
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>				✓	✓	✓			
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓							
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>			✓		✓				
Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>		✓							
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>					✓	✓	✓		
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>							✓		
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓		
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>			✓						
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>						✓			
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>							✓		
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>				✓		✓	✓		
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓		
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>			✓	✓					
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>				✓	✓				
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>				✓	✓				
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>							✓		
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			✓		✓				
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>					✓				
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓		✓					
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>					✓				
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>					✓				
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>				✓					
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>				✓					
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>					✓				