

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Peloponnese recce 2 – 9 November 2010

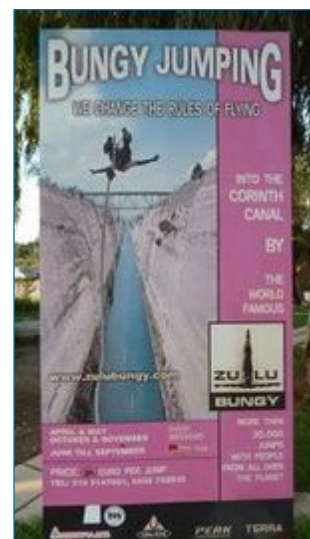
This is an account of a recce visit to the Peloponnese peninsula on the southern tip of the mainland of Greece. Honeyguider Sue Davy has lived here since 2006, and between us we had concluded it could have potential for a typically Honeyguide mixed natural history holiday in spring. Ideally a recce visit would be in spring, but time is tight then and Sue's local exploration continues to back up what she already knows and what we did during this week. The mix of wildlife in November – though fewer and largely rather different species to April – bears out its potential for a group holiday. Read on ...

Chris Durdin
November 2010

Daily diary

Tuesday 2 November – travel to the Peloponnese

EasyJet's 9 am service left a little late but otherwise it was a smooth flight of about 3½ hours to Athens. Sue was there to meet me and we left the airport at 3.20 – clocks were two hours on. The journey to Tyros¹ on the eastern coast of the Peloponnese peninsula took almost exactly three hours. The first hour was on the motorway, following signs to Elefsina and, sometimes, Corinth/Korinthos. After that first hour we took a small detour off the motorway to see the amazing Corinth Canal² (and activities on offer!). There are a couple of cafés here, so a stop for drinks and food with a group would be possible. The motorway divided soon after and we headed for Tripoli and Nafplio. The last half hour of journey on the coast road to Tyros – Sue's house is in Tyros – was in darkness. [Directions: see appendix 1.] A taverna dinner tonight – squid, Greek salad and tsatsiki.



Wednesday 3 November – Upper Tyros

The sun rose over the mountain and it was warm enough for tea and breakfast in the garden. Olive, carob and fig tree emphasised the Mediterranean feel; a hummingbird hawkmoth fed on the jasmine and honey bees on lantana. A robin sang – like the many black redstarts, winter visitors having arrived about two weeks ago – and a Cetti's warbler gave quick bursts of song from a dried-up river bed area down the hill.



The plan was to see several local spots today, which we did, though the first was so absorbing that we saw less than we might have. From 10 am to 1:30 we potted very slowly along a wide track through open olive groves and partly cultivated scrubby hillsides at Ano (Upper) Tyros (above)³ leading to a spot with a fine view over the bay and Lower Tyros.

There were lots of flowers, but the most obvious were cyclamens *Cyclamen graecum* and *Crocus boryi*, especially where there had been no cultivation for the last year. There were also Colchicums, and with the help of the two-volume *Flowers of Greece*⁴ we concluded there were two species, *Colchicum cupanii* with two well-grown and quite thick leaves, and the smaller *Colchicum peloponnesiacum* (above). A cirl bunting sang. Chunky southern

¹ Tyros, or Tiros, is pronounced Tee-ros. Like many Greek words, spelling varies, depending on how you transliterate from Greek.

² The Corinth Canal cuts through the narrow Isthmus of Corinth and separates the Peloponnesian peninsula from the Greek mainland, thus effectively making the former an island. The canal is 6.3 kilometres in length and was built between 1881 and 1893. It saves a 700-kilometre journey around the Peloponnese for smaller ships, but since it is only 24 metres wide it is too narrow for modern ocean freighters. The canal is nowadays mostly used by tourist ships; 11,000 ships per year travel through the waterway. The water in the canal is 8 metres (26 ft) deep. At the maximum, the walls are 52 metres high. Information from Wikipedia.

³ Scrub / trees (not in flower) at Upper Tyros: lentisc, olive, wild olive, strawberry tree *Arbutus unedo*, smoke tree, carob, funeral cypress, kermes oak, evergreen maple, sage-leaved cistus *Cistus salvifolius*, spiny burnet, smilax.

⁴ *Flowers of Greece*, by Tristan Lafranchis and George Sfikas, 2 volumes - with DVD. A photo field guide.

daisies – a winter flower – were in most shady places, whereas the heather *Erica manipuliflora* that was often still out was more of a late summer flower. The penny dropped that there were two species of heliotrope.

Lunch was a toasted sandwich by the beach, after which we drove for a little less than half an hour to the brackish lake at Moustos. There's a viewing area right by the road, from which coots, moorhens and little grebes were immediately obvious, and a kingfisher darted away towards the reeds on the left of the lake. A marsh harrier hunted lazily and a sparrowhawk dashed through. Flowers included golden samphire, sea aster and lots of squirting cucumber. We drove down the unmetalled road to the south of the lake, past two viewing screens and a hide. A ringtail hen harrier was difficult to see well, but a perhaps rather late spotted flycatcher was more obvious. There were lots of chiffchaffs flycatching too, and quite a few stonechats, crested larks and corn buntings. After looking at the beach in a couple of other places, we returned home. Sue's friends Nigel and Wendy joined us for dinner.

Thursday 4 November – Mount Kosmas area

It was overcast by the coast but cloudless and warm inland. We started by driving round Livadi, just up the coast, where there are rooms with potential to accommodate a group. Most of the day for Sue, Wendy and I was spent inland and up at the highest we'll be in this area, around 1000 metres. Agioritiko Gorge is an attractive gorge, rather like many in southern Europe, if rather birdless due to a combination of the season (martins, swifts, short-toed eagle and other summer visitors gone) and geography (no vultures, for example). After one roadside stop, where I collected some *Acer sempervirens* seed, we stopped by the monastery of Elonis (right). Wendy explained how monasteries are obliged to offer accommodation and food to travellers, and you could see the row of rooms ready for that eventuality. From here we could look over the way up Kosmitiko Gorge, which feeds into Agioritiko Gorge. Immediately there were small white crocuses, of which we saw many thousands today: *Crocus laevigatus*, rather smaller than the *Crocus boryi* we'd seen at a lower altitude yesterday.



Moving on up, into the black pine zone, with scattered sweet chestnuts and juniper scrub, we stopped for a walk along a waymarked trail that follows an old transhumance route – where livestock were once moved from high to low pastures before the roads were built and moving them by truck was an option. As well as countless *Crocus laevigatus* and cyclamen, Sue was alert to a subtlety different crocus with styles that were yellow with dark strips, petals with well-defined purple stripes on the underside, plus thin leaves with a pale central canal – *Crocus biflorus* subsp. *melantherus*. We had some good view of firecrests in a juniper and several Peloponnese wall lizards, distinguished by bold stripes and a blue patch of spots on the side of adults. Sue found a praying mantis, coal tit was a new bird too and a group of five buzzards came over as we ate our spinach pies.

As we left this area we found our first bright yellow *Sternbergia sicula* (photo on page 10). There were many more of these as we returned by a different route, making a circuit, eventually along what would be the river Mourias, only it was dry. This included a stop at a little chapel in an old monastery, where there was a freshwater crab in a large square artificial pond. Mistle thrush and long-tailed tit were other new birds along the way, plus several ravens. Overall this longer return route was probably too long a drive, though. We stopped for a drinks and *mezes* in Leonidion, where a candidate in the coming weekend's mayoral elections came with his entourage and shook our hands. We heard early the following week that he was elected, which pleased Tyros as he was 'their' candidate for a new council that, as an economy measure, is newly created from three smaller ones.

Another excellent taverna meal this evening in the next village of Sapounakeika, with a notably varied and large salad, sprinkled with pomegranate.

Friday 5 November – Nafplio

First stop as we headed north this clear and increasingly hot day was at Moustos Lake, which had similar birds to before plus three wigeons and a cormorant. There was a rock nuthatch on a roadside sign as we went farther north up the coast road, plus our first linnets and jackdaws.

The south-facing coast at Nafplio (right) is unusual along this predominantly rocky coast in being shallow, quite tidal by Mediterranean standards and with a fair bit of beach next to the road that includes some



saltmarsh vegetation. We were able to pull off the coast road onto the beach at three places. Great white egrets were the most immediately obvious birds, plus a few grey herons, little egrets and two cattle egrets at one point. Gulls were mostly yellow-legged and black-headed but a little searching was rewarded with five slender-billed gulls and, near a group of 20 Sandwich terns, one Mediterranean gull. There was nice sprinkling of waders of seven species on the intertidal area and a solitary short-toed lark on the beach. Several clouded yellow butterflies flew by at their usual fast pace.

Nafplio is the biggest local town with a harbour and long seafront, along which there is lots of parking. Out at sea is the small Venetian castle of Bourtzi (*below*) guarding the port, later used by the Turks as a retirement home for executioners, safe from vengeance, says one guidebook. It was also a hotel from 1930 to 1970; there are no plans to try it out for Honeyguide! The large 18th century fortress of Palamidi dominates part of the skyline. The old town of Nafplio has pretty streets and shopping opportunities; we wandered into the main Syntagma (Constitution) Square, made some purchases in a shop selling books and maps, and had a drink and a salad in a café. From here the town slopes up steeply towards a row of old fortifications, up to which we walked. One way takes you into an upmarket hotel, but there's also a longish walk that we followed that takes you right round the town, tucked under town walls and along the coast. Here, painted lady butterflies were taking nectar from lantana, and Lang's short-tailed blues were fairly common too. We found another praying mantis (*right*) and little patches of friar's cowl were coming into flower (*photo on page 10*).



A small detour on the return journey took us to the outside of the archaeological site of Tiryns. Sue says it's a good place for rock nuthatch but our timing today was out: it's open 8:30 – 15:00. Dinner with Nigel and Wendy.

Note: Palamidi Castle is open 08:30 to 14:45 (we missed it), entrance 4 euros or 2 euros concessions. Long low wall outside it, could have lunch here, though a lack of shade.



Saturday 6 November – Prastos and Kastanista

Inland today, with Wendy and Nigel, a drive of about 90 minutes that took us to the sleepy village of Prastos on another hot day. At a stop on route by a water fountain there were several Greek rock lizards, dark with spots, compared with the stripy Peloponnese wall lizards, and we saw many of these today. We parked in Prastos by some dreadful public loos. Nigel pointed out the traditional stone slabs on roofs, like large rough-hewn slates. There was a steep climb in the village to follow the waymarked walk to Kastanista, which we'd been told takes about two hours. A shepherd kindly pointed out that we'd missed the start of the route, but even taking that into account we concluded after an hour or so that two hours was unrealistic, especially at Honeyguide pace. Wendy and Nigel continued to Kastanista, on the steepest bit of the route, while Sue and I retraced our steps to retrieve the car. Sue was alert to yet another crocus, *Crocus cancellatus* subsp *mazziaricus*, as well as many *C. boryi* and *C. biflorus* subsp *melantherus*. Blue rock thrush and dunnock were new birds for the week, and there were many wild (almond-leaved) pear trees.

Having concluded plan A wouldn't work with a group, a 20 minute drive took us to Kastanista, the village of the chestnuts, which was much more alive than Prastos with many weekend visitors. The village is much-renovated and recently had enjoyed a very busy chestnut festival. We met up at the taverna for a splendid late lunch, which included pork with chestnuts and chickpeas with chestnut purée. Enquiries led us to a man who showed us a

newish ecology/interpretation centre, which Sue, Wendy and Nigel haven't yet seen inside, but then he couldn't find the key which he thought was hidden where he could retrieve it, so that idea remains unexplored. We drove above Kastanista so I could see some of the chestnut forest that Wendy and Nigel had walked through. The autumn colours were glorious and the marked trail leads you from the woodland – where the recently fallen chestnuts were just huge – into open maquis-type scrub. This scrub includes helpfully labelled fir trees that are *Abies cephalonica*, Grecian fir, then opens out into fields where Wendy has seen wild tulips in spring.

Here today there were extensive wild boar rootings, which was a puzzle as both mammal books we referred to show there are no wild boar in the Peloponnese. The following day we quizzed Dimitri about this and he was clear that they are here and told us of one killed about a fortnight ago; he says they are in all the forested areas throughout the Peloponnese. Sue later heard more about wild boar from other local people who consider them a nuisance as they dig up fields and disturb things that have been planted.

I concluded that a drive to Kastanista, missing out Prastos, with stops on the way up and this area in the afternoon, should work out well for a Honeyguide day.

Our evening meal was at Manoleas taverna, two or three minutes walk from the apartments at Livadi. We had a long chat with Canadian Greek Sophia, and a good meal of souvlaki with tomato and cucumber salad. It'll do nicely as the regular taverna for probably five of seven evening meals for a Honeyguide week, with a couple of meals out elsewhere for variety. See http://www.goodtimes.gr/manoleas/index_eng.html

Note: there were signs today saying Parnonas Ecological Park, extending across most of the area inland of Tyros, but also touching the coast in places, such as Moustos lake. It's a Site of Community Importance (SCI) and Special Protection Area (SPA), part of the Natura 2000 network. See www.fdparnonas.gr, which includes maps; another name is Ecological Park of Mount Parnon and Moustos Wetland.

7 November 2010 – Livadi, Tsitalia area and Fokianos cove

Down to the serious business of checking accommodation arrangements this morning. This started by meeting Sue and Wendy's friend (and builder) Dimitri and his family in Livadi, which is about 10 minutes from Sue's house in Tyros. The apartments (www.elenasrooms.gr) are his mother Elena's, but mostly his sister Maria took us round as she speaks some English, though we had Wendy there to translate, too.

All is well: there are 10 twin/double rooms, with two of the bedrooms sharing a bathroom (maybe for leaders). The others have en suite facilities (with traditional Greek sanitary arrangements) and all have a small kitchen; no kettle (typical for Greece), but small saucepans are provided which would do for early morning tea. Two bedrooms are on the ground floor and so do not enjoy balconies with sea views which the first floor rooms have, but otherwise are the same, and there are also two additional rooms that may or may not have yearly rents. Anyway, enough for a typical Honeyguide group, and there are more apartments just round the corner if need be. It's not typical for breakfast to be provided but the staff are happy to make an exception and there is a communal reception room which would suit. Sue will arrange picnics!



Eastern strawberry tree (above, left), fruits with a netted effect; strawberry tree (centre and right), with cone like points and also in flower.

We headed southwest to a semi-plateau area close to the village of Tsitalia. Among the open scrub there are small terraced areas and some larger open areas. It certainly has the feel of somewhere that will be botanically very rich in spring. Unusually both strawberry tree and eastern strawberry tree were common, both in fruit, the former also in flower.

Almond-leaved pear was also common, bearing many fruits that look like crab apples. There were cirr buntings, woodlarks and our first brimstone butterfly, any number of red-winged and blue-winged grasshoppers, and lots of ivy-leaved cyclamen. As for the many crocuses, as well as the small *Crocus biflorus* subsp *melantherus*, there were plenty of the much larger *Crocus niveus* – our fifth white crocus species!

We left Wendy in the village of Amigdalia to run the 13½ kilometres down to the coast. The sleepy cove at Fokianos has a near perfect looking beach of white cobbles and pebbles, ideal for picnic lunch, and is where Princess Diana and Dodi Al Fayed were once photographed on his yacht. Behind the beach is a tamarisk- and reed-fringed lagoon, today partly dry mud and partly wet, yet there was not a wetland bird on it, though the tamarisks were alive with the usual selection of warblers, black redstarts and stonechats. Wendy had finished her run and a dip as Sue and I returned.

South tonight to the harbourside Delfini taverna in Plaka where Sue's moustachioed friend Yannis served Sue 'little shoes' – aubergines with minced meat, onions and cheese sauce – and me, moussaka.

Monday 8 November - mountain plain near Vaskina and Paleochora

After several hot days, today was cloudier, and we started at Livadi so I could try to get my head round the local walks we can do from the apartments, including down to the shore (*right*). There were some out of season crown anemones in flower, lots of the alien marvel-of-Peru (or 4 o'clock plant) and several hummingbird hawkmoths feeding on lantana.

We spent most of the day on the mountain plain – or plateau, you could say – inland from Tyros, which is at around 700m. It's a mixture of thick scrub, again with both species of strawberry tree, especially on slopes, open scrub with scattered rocks and tiny cultivations, more open, grazed areas and some larger cultivations where it looks most like a plateau. One area is fenced for cattle. The area's botanical richness isn't that apparent in November, though as usual there were thousands of crocuses, certainly of two species. It's a metalled road going up, then good quality unmade roads across the plateau.



Just before the descent to Tyros, by a steep route we wouldn't take by minibus, there was a particularly rich area for cyclamen, including *Cyclamen graecum* (*below*), which plainly flower slightly earlier than the more numerous *Cyclamen hederifolium* as the latter out numbered the *graecum* and were at their best, where the *graecum* were mostly fading or just patches of leaves. We added two new birds to the list: what was almost certainly a merlin dashing through, so a winter visitor, and two house martins, late summer birds.



Tuesday 9 November – Tyros, Athens and home

A 9:30 rendezvous with Wendy who was heading back to work and her Athens base, close to the airport, so she kindly drove me back there, which took about 2½ hours. Directions: see appendix 1. All smooth and safely home.

Wildlife lists

BIRDS

Little grebe	c30, Moustos Lake
Great crested grebe	1, at sea at Nafplio
Cormorant	1 at Moustos Lake, c5 Nafplio
Heron	Moustos Lake, Nafplio
Cattle egret	2, Nafplio
Little egret	c3 Nafplio
Great white egret	c6, Nafplio
Mallard	c40, Moustos Lake, a few at sea, Nafplio
Teal	c20, Moustos Lake
Marsh harrier	Moustos Lake
Hen harrier	ringtail, Moustos Lake
Buzzard	commonest raptor, seen daily
Sparrowhawk	seven sightings, various localities/dates
Kestrel	several sightings, all south of Tyros on 7/11 and 8/11
Merlin (probable)	1 dashed through on the mountain plain near Vaskina 8/11
Coot	100s, Moustos Lake
Moorhen	c40, Moustos Lake
Ringed plover	2, Nafplio
Kentish plover	2, Nafplio
Grey plover	10, Nafplio
Dunlin	c100, Nafplio
Common sandpiper	1, pool at beach near Moustos Lake
Redshank	8, Nafplio
Greenshank	1, Nafplio
Curlew	10, Nafplio
Black-headed gull	c60, Nafplio, also farther south
Slender-billed gull	5, Nafplio
Mediterranean gull	1, Nafplio
Yellow-legged gull	100, Nafplio, sprinkled in small numbers elsewhere
Sandwich tern	20, Nafplio
Feral pigeon	
Collared dove	villages
Kingfisher	3, Moustos Lake
Crested lark	coastal open areas
Woodlark	Upper Tyros
Short-toed lark	1, Nafplio beach
House martin	2 on 8/11
Meadow pipit	a few here and there
White wagtail	fairly common
Grey wagtail	resident, a few
Wren	here and there
Robin	winter visitor, common
Black redstart	winter visitor, abundant
Stonechat	winter visitor, common
Song thrush	winter visitor, scarce
Mistle thrush	in the mountains
Blackbird	resident, scarce
Blue rock thrush	Prastos
Blackcap	winter visitor, common, a few breed

Sardinian warbler	resident, common
Cetti's warbler	resident, heard in Tyros seen Moustos Lake
Chiffchaff	common winter visitor
Firecrest	excellent views in black pines at Kosmas
Blue tit	fairly common, fewer than great tits
Great tit	fairly common
Coal tit	in pine/fir woodland
Long-tailed tit	in the hills
Nuthatch	heard in the chestnut forest at Kastanista
Rock nuthatch	roadside north of Tyros; mountain village of Prastos
Magpie	common, mostly at lower altitudes
Jay	common at all altitudes
Hooded crow	common
Raven	widespread, ones and twos
Jackdaw	a group by the road north of Tyros
Starling	a small winter flock at Moustos Lake
House sparrow	widespread
Chaffinch	common in woodland
Goldfinch	occasional
Linnet	occasional
Serín	occasional
Greenfinch	occasional
Girl bunting	most open areas; in song
Corn bunting	higher ground, e.g. round Prastos

73 species



The viewing area at Moustos Lake

MAMMALS

Fox
Stone marten droppings/dead on road
Eastern hedgehog, dead on road

Wild boar rootings
(above the chestnut forest at Kastanista,
see diary notes 8/11)

REPTILES

Turkish gecko
Marginated tortoise – a shell found
Green lizard sp., probably (on distribution)
Balkan green lizard
Greek rock lizard (*top right*) - distinctly spotted
Peloponnese wall lizard (*bottom right and below*) -
stripy when seen from above, with blue
spotting on the flanks of the male



BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are noted in some detail as we noticed that the Butterflies of Greece book draws on a wide range of references, including several Honeyguide reports, and that this area is under-recorded.

Clouded yellow.	Common, mostly by the coast, e.g. Nafplio, 5/11
Bath white	Inland at lower altitudes e.g. Ana Tyros
Large white	
Small white	
Brimstone (probable)	One dashed through on the mountain plain near Vaskina 8/11
Wall brown	Inland at lower altitudes e.g. Ana Tyros
Lang's short-tailed blue	Easily the commonest butterfly, especially near the coast.
Small skipper	Photographed at Nafplio, 5/11
Painted lady	Nafplio, 5/11, and daily from then on, e.g. at Livadi, 7/11
Red admiral	

OTHER NOTABLE INVERTEBRATES

Hummingbird hawkmoth
Silver-Y moth
Violet carpenter bee
Praying mantis

Freshwater crab
Red-winged grasshopper *Oedipoda germanica*
Blue-winged grasshopper *Oedipoda caerulea*
Dark bush-cricket *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*

FLOWERING PLANTS

This list is just of those which were actually in flower, unless NiF (not in flower) is noted. It's a mixture of autumn specialities, such as the crocuses and cyclamen, last lingering blooms, and spring flowers tempted into a few unseasonal blooms.

<i>Urtica membranacea</i>	membranous nettle
<i>Parietaria officinalis</i>	pellitory-of-the-wall
<i>Arthrocnemum perenne</i>	perennial glasswort
<i>Phytolacca acinos</i>	American pokeweed NiF
<i>Clematis cirrhosa</i>	maiden's bower
<i>Anemone coronaria</i>	crown anemone
<i>Glaucium flavum</i>	yellow horned poppy
<i>Sinapsis alba</i>	white mustard
<i>Matthiola sinuata</i>	sea stock
<i>Linum sp hologynum?</i>	a blue flax, tbc
<i>Euphorbia dendroides</i>	tree spurge NiF
<i>Fumana thymifolia</i>	
<i>Ecballium elaterium</i>	squirting cucumber
<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>	prickly pear
<i>Erica manipuliflora</i>	a purplish heather
<i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i>	
<i>Cyclamen graecum</i>	
<i>Limonium vulgare</i>	sea lavender
<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	pink convolvulus
<i>Ipomoea purpurea</i>	morning glory
<i>Heliotropium suaveolens</i>	a heliotrope
<i>Heliotropium europaeum</i>	heliotrope
<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	chaste tree
<i>Lantana camara</i>	lantana
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	white horehound NiF
<i>Calaminta nepeta</i>	lesser calamint
<i>Micromeria</i> sp, probably <i>Micromeria juliana</i>	micromeria
<i>Salvia pomifera</i>	a wild sage
<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	wild clary
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	thorn-apple
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	tree or shrub tobacco
<i>Mirabilis jalapa</i>	marvel of Peru / four o'clock flower
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	ivy-leaved toadflax
<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	southern daisy
<i>Aster tripolium</i>	sea aster
<i>Inula crithmoides</i>	golden samphire
<i>Dittrichia viscosa</i>	aromatic inula
<i>Calendula arvenis</i>	field marigold
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	chicory
<i>Urginea maritima</i>	sea squill NiF
<i>Scilla autumnalis</i>	autumn squill
<i>Smilax aspera</i>	smilax / sarsparilla - berries
<i>Allium callismischo</i> (photo on next page)	an allium from west Greece, the Peloponnese and Crete
<i>Colchicum cupanii</i>	
<i>Colchicum peloponnesiacum</i>	
<i>Sternbergia sicula</i> (photo on next page)	
<i>Crocus boryi</i>	Ano Tyros
<i>Crocus laevigatus</i>	Mount Kosmas
<i>Crocus biflorus</i> subsp <i>melantherus</i>	Mount Kosmas and Kastanista area
<i>Crocus niveus</i>	Tsitalia
<i>Crocus cancellatus</i> subsp <i>mazziaricus</i>	Prastos
<i>Arisarum vulgare</i> (photo on next page)	friar's cowl



Allium callismischon
The leaves are sage-leaved
cistus



Sternbergia sicula



Arisarum vulgare
Friar's cowl

SOME NOTABLE TREES (incomplete, and mostly ignoring planted trees)

<i>Pinus halapensis</i>	aleppo pine
<i>Pinus nigra</i>	black pine
<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	Italian cypress; also many funeral cypresses
<i>Juniperus drupacea</i>	Syrian juniper
(in Greece, 'very local in S Peloponnese (Mt Parnon)' and cited as a key species on www.fdparnonas.gr/en/home)	
<i>Abies cephalonica</i>	Grecian fir
<i>Ephedra fragilis</i>	joint-pine
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	sweet chestnut
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	kermes oak
<i>Quercus ilex</i>	holm oak
<i>Quercus aegilops</i>	Valonia oak
<i>Platanus orientalis</i>	Oriental plane
<i>Pyrus amygdaliformis</i>	almond-leaved pear
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judas tree
Judas trees were common in leaf/seed, but surprisingly several were in flower near the coast.	
<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>	carob
<i>Citrus</i> trees	various, e.g. oranges and lemons
<i>Acer sempervirens</i>	evergreen maple
<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	lentisc or gum mastic
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	strawberry tree
<i>Arbutus andrachne</i>	eastern strawberry tree
<i>Olea europaea</i>	olive
<i>Olea europaea</i> subsp. <i>oleaster</i>	wild olive

NON-FLOWERING PLANTS

<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Bermuda grass
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	reed
<i>Arundo donax</i>	giant reed
<i>Selaginella denticulata</i>	Mediterranean selaginella
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	maidenhair spleenwort
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	rustyback fern

Some crocus pictures

Here's a selection of some of the crocuses in flower this week.
Crocus cancellatus subsp *mazziaricus* pictures were not so good, so have been left out.



Crocus biflorus subsp *melantherus*
Styles yellow with dark strips, petals with well-defined purple stripes on the underside, plus thin leaves with a pale central canal



Crocus boryi
Large, goblet-shaped, white anthers, style yellow, unscented



Crocus laevigatus
Similar to *boryi* but smaller and scented



Crocus niveus
Leaves short at flowering time, stamens yellow, style with three orange to red branches, somewhat flared at the tips

Appendix 1 – directions

Athens to Tyros/Livadi - directions

The first hour was on the motorway, following signs to Elefsina and, sometimes, Corinth/Korinthos. After that first hour we took a small detour off the motorway to see the Corinth Canal. The motorway divided soon after and we headed for Tripoli and Nafplio. Next turn was for ancient Nemea and Nafplio. In Argos (the town, not the shop) we turned right down a tiny one way back street by the hospital, which led back onto a more main road. Just after Myli, turned left towards Kiveri, then followed the coast road to Tyros.

Tyros to Athens

In Argos, Wendy avoided Argos by turning left just before the JetOil petrol station, a little farther up also on the LHS. This initially unsigned road, which at first takes you the wrong direction, then has signs to Αθήνα (Athina) taking you below and left of the castle. The road emerges onto the main road again at a T-junction (there is another JetOil as you look right). Toll roads then to Corinth and Corinth-Athens. Passed Akro (high) Messina Castle to the left; impressive. Approaching Athens, generally stick to left/centre lanes as the airport is on that side of Athens; the airport is well signed. Especially stick to the left just after the port at Elefsina, to avoid being swept into Athens. Only at final junction that leads to the airport do you fork right.