

We would be based at the Filoxenia hotel in Kalavrita a small town on the slopes of Mount Chelmos. Breakfast is currently included in their rates (55 euros for a double) and is taken in the Hotel, Packed lunches would be purchased locally and dinner would be taken in a suitable taverna.

We intend to fly early morning by Easyjet to Athens from Gatwick Airport picking up one or more hired vehicles from the airport for the 3 hour journey to the Hotel. Alternative flights from other airports may suit other people and members of the expedition would book their own flights.



COST: We estimate the cost as £750 approx. per person sharing. Because of the package tour regulations we are unable to offer an inclusive price. Members would book their own flights and hotel accommodation and settle their own hotel bills. We would organise car hire amongst the group. Easyjet do not allow bookings that far ahead so estimated costs are only approximate at the moment and early flight bookings are often cheap. We will advise you of which flight to book as soon as we book. The number of persons participating would affect the cost of transport. There is a rail connection from Athens.

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GREECE 2008

**MOUNT CHELMOS,
PELOPONNESE, GREECE
JUNE 21st - JULY 1st 2008**

A research and conservation working holiday is being planned in mainland Greece mapping the habitat of certain rare butterflies and surveying for them on Mount Chelmos.



The Project



Mount Chelmos is the only site for the rare Chelmos Blue (*Agrodiaetus iphigenia*) in Europe. This species feeds as a larva on Sainfoin (*Onybrichis alba*) which is vulnerable to overgrazing and is never abundant. We would map the distribution of the adult butterfly

using a GPS and also map the foodplant. Mount Chelmos also has an unusual habitat of *Acantholimon androsaceum* which grows in dwarf cushions amongst the rocks at high altitude. This allows it to withstand extreme desiccation and high winds as well as browsing goats. This unusual plant is the larval foodplant of both Fiery Copper (*Lycaena thetis*) and Odd Spot



Blue (*Turanama endymion*) which occur together in the few hectares of this habitat found on Mt Chelmos and some nearby mountains. A major purpose of the trip would be to map these habitat

patches. These last two species are two of the few European species vulnerable to collectors despite being protected by presidential decree and the known sites are regularly visited by collectors. The Peloponnese endemic Pontic Blue *Neolysanda coelestina* feeds on a vetch *Vicia tenuifolia* often growing under the protection of *Crataegus* bushes. This species is widespread on Chelmos and neighbouring mountains but we would endeavour to assess its range. Mount Chelmos is a Natura 2000 site and we would hope both the publicity associated with our visit and a confidential report supplied to the authorities in Athens might help to put the case for it to be a national park. All butterflies would be recorded by the expedition and there will be opportunities to see many of the 109 species recorded on Chelmos above 1500m as well as others found at lower altitude.

The 2007 fires in the Peloponnese (see Map) devastated many semi natural areas including the parts of the gorge linking Kalavrita to the coast along the track of the narrow gauge railway and also the neighbouring Mount Glokhos. We would try to make some assessment as to whether the damage has significantly affected the rarest butterfly species.



We have been in contact with a number of local organisations and individuals in Greece including the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) and the Hellenic Zoological Society and also Tristan Lafranchis who lives locally. We would invite some of these people to visit us as our guests if they are available. We may get help with mapping using GIS from AUA.

We are looking for a team of 10-12 people to undertake this project.

Applicants would need to be fairly fit as we would be spending long days in the field and much of the interesting habitat is on the top of the mountain. Temperatures above 40C are not uncommon. Proper walking boots and suitable clothing would be essential. As elsewhere in Greece there is a risk from snakes etc and shepherd's dogs. Applicants would need full insurance. We would be working in small teams and team members would need to look after each other, adopt safe working practices and not take risks. Persons with GPS or mapping experience would be useful as would persons with experience of driving in Greece. Applicants with a good knowledge of Botany or others specialist skills such as written Greek or mountaineering would be especially welcome. We would expect a reasonable expertise on European butterflies from most of the group but not necessarily experience of Greek butterflies. The expedition will be led by Simon Spencer and the decision as to who would make a suitable member of the team will be up to him. Though there will be opportunities to see and photograph a number of rare butterflies this will not be the primary aim of the expedition. A number of tour companies run led tours to the Peloponnese and for some people these may be a better alternative.