

Eco sailing and exploration holidays on s/y Tahita in the Cyclades islands

On your trip we will aim to do the following:



Dolphin Spotting: Plenty of time for **dolphin spotting** with the aid of our **hydrophone** which can pick up the sound of them 'talking' to each other from a long distance.

Birdwatching: While sailing we will be on the look out for sea birds like gulls (*Larus genei*, *L. auduini*, *L. cachinans*) and cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) that hang around in these waters.

At the very heart of the Aegean, in the "**small Cyclades**" complex there are some 50 islands, islets and rocks, which create the illusion of an deserted wilderness to the untrained eye, but which conceal an impressive variety of life.

Nature trekking on the unspoilt fishing port of **Iraklia**: the typical vegetation of the ecosystems here is **phrygana**. You will be surprised to discover that even a tiny rocky islet may be the home to tens of invertebrate species and even to many vertebrates including **birds** [chukar (*Alectoris chukar*) and **shag** (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*)] and **reptiles** [gecko (*Cyrtopodion kotsyii*), **Aegean rock lizard** (*Podarcis erhardii*), **sand boa** (*Eryx jaculus*)].

Using some simple methods and techniques of **field biology** we will try to estimate the **magnificent biodiversity** during our stay in the area.

Despotiko, another small island, a favourite meeting point for sailors in the Aegean, is where we will compare and analyse our results and photos, breaking the work with plunges in the crystal clear waters of the bay.

At night you will be a witness to a unique spectacle: **the glowing sea**. Thousands of minuscule **planktonic crustaceans** produce light thanks to the phenomenon of **bioluminescence**.

Sailing towards the unspoilt island of **Kimolos**: The area north of Kimolos and the neighboring uninhabited island of **Polyegos** harbor one of the most **critically endangered marine mammal** species in Europe, the **Mediterranean Seal** *Monachus monachus*.

MOM, (www.mom.gr) the Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal, a Greek NGO, has been working for the protection of *Monachus monachus* since 1998, through field research, conservation and public awareness actions. After years of research and lobbying, MOM aspires to see Kimolos amongst the protected marine areas of Greece, as the second largest European population of the Mediterranean monk seal lives and breeds in the Kimolos - Polyegos island complex.



We will visit MOM's Info Kiosk, where you will hear the latest news concerning their work. Though the Mediterranean monk seal is not exactly sociable, who knows... We may be lucky!



Sailing towards **Milos** with its quite unique fauna. **Milos viper** *Macrovipera hanschweizeri* is certainly the most interesting and rare animal in Europe. Its population is estimated to be less than 4,000 individuals and the Greek Law protects it with a special Presidential Degree. Milos **wall lizard** *Podarcis milensis*, the extremely rare grass snake *Natrix natrix schweizeri* and Milos green lizard *Lacerta trilineata schweizeri* are the three more endemic species of the Milos group.

Milos is the intermediate station for many migratory birds that use the Aegean corridor to reach Africa. Our visit point will be the small subsaline **lake of Chivadolimni** (lake of shells in Greek). Trekking time! All the aforementioned animals, plus the **stripe-neck terrapin** *Mauremys caspica*, could be found here, in this small oasis of water and vegetation in the midst of the general Cyclades aridness.

Please note that all the photographs and specimens that you may collect during the week will be offered to scientists to assist them in their data collection and research.

We're as flexible as the weather!

The above itinerary is an example of what you can experience in our Wild Tale trips in the Aegean Sea. We don't follow the same route every week and every itinerary may slightly change due to the weather and other factors beyond our control. Remember that we cannot go against the weather! We will do our best. Everything else is KISMET!