



19 - 28 June 2009

23 October – 1 November 2009

10 days of excursions to discover the region and one of the last and most important Mediterranean Monk Seal breeding area, together with the staff of the successful conservation project.

THE PROGRAMME

We believe the local people of the area are the main stakeholders. It is important for the success of the sustainability of the conservation project and the survival of the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal, that they feel an integral part. Therefore, during this trip local involvement is hoped to be encouraged whenever possible. We would like to use local guides, accommodation, transport, and especially for coastal trips, use simple fishing boats rented from the artisanal fisherman. Please note that all will be in simple ordnance and a list of recommended equipment during the trip will be provided before your departure. With all our combined efforts, we hope that low-impact ecotourism will be the effective tool to ultimately reach that point where the habitat will accommodate both the monk seal and its human populace in peace.

Day 1

Arrival to Adana airport (from Rome or from other airports: please contact the organizer for details). A minibus will be ready there to meet our guests and this vehicle will be available throughout the trip.

From Adana to Bozyazi the journey will take approximately 6 -7 hours (~ 310 km). After Tasucu - Silifke a narrow, winding coastal road will start. Although the scenery will be wild, the minibus will relatively reduce its speed. Dinner will be on the way. On arrival to Bozyazi, late in the night, the group will check into Zeysa, a locally owned rustic hotel.

Day 2

Breakfast at the Hotel.

An early morning boat trip from Bozyazi to Kizilliman Marine Protected Area will be organized. Prior to departure, during a briefing the conservation project will be introduced. During the journey our guests will not only enjoy the spectacular scenery of a mixture of steep coastal cliffs, pristine beaches, and pine forests, but also will be informed and familiarized with this important Mediterranean Monk Seal habitat. If the weather conditions are permitting, the boat will stop at some of these beaches for swimming and snorkeling. So, wetsuit, mask - snorkel, and sun lotion are recommended. During the journey

information on the behaviour and habits of this rare and very shy animal will be given.

Lunch will be a picnic on the beach. After lunch we will have a return journey to Bozyazi.

The afternoon will be spent seal watching along the coast.

After sunset, the Bozyazi project office will be visited.

A relaxed dinner will be held at the pension, which will be prepared by the owners from a selection of local dishes.

Following dinner at the pension, few of the identified seals of Kizilliman will be introduced by a slide show, and the project's progress over the years will be presented by a short documentary film. During the following discussions our conservation project leader Ali Cemal Gucu will inform our guests on the fragility of this shy animal and point our attention on some of the codes we should follow throughout the trip... or in any monk seal habitat we might encounter in the future.

Day 3

Early morning, before breakfast there will be two optional activities:

Option one: For those interested in taking part in a fishing operation, a small group will accompany a local fishermen during his early morning fishing practice.

Option two: Seal watching. (Our guides will give briefings about the codes of conduct at these set vantage points to observe seals and seal activities)

Breakfast at Zeysa hotel.

Seal watching will continue throughout the day especially from two coastal archaeological sites that provide the best seal sightings. The first site is Mamure Kalesi and a small Turkish hamam (in ruins). Here, monk seal watching and archaeology will continue hand in hand. The castle is located ~ 6 km west of Bozyazi and is a maze of crenellated walls and towers with one foot in the Mediterranean. There has been a fortress since the Romans built one in the 3rd century AD, but the present structure dates from the time of the crusades when it was used as by the crusader rulers of Cyprus and later in the 13th century by the Karamanoglu emirs.

Following the visit lunch will be held at a local restaurant in the vicinity.

Following lunch, Anamurium located 20 km west of Bozyazi and 8.5 km west of the town Anamur will be visited. The point where the ancient city is also the southern most tip of the Mediterranean Anatolia. From here, in clear days it is even possible to view Cyprus. The historic site, founded by the Phoenicians, is thought to be flourished through the Roman Period and had its Golden Age around 250 AD. Today, it is an authentic Byzantine ghost town with well-preserved baths and a necropolis perched eerily on the rocky hillside above an unsullied pebble beach. Appropriately, it was named Anamurium since in Latin, anem defines point and orium wind, translating into Windy Point. So, it is a windy and steep climb to the top of the hill for the best monk seal sightings. For this reason, there will be two stages to the hike with two optional viewpoints. Those who wish to have a relatively easy climb could stay at the end of stage one, resting at the Lighthouse and enjoy the view. The cliffs also allow those interested in bird watching to observe some Kestrel behaviour and

if lucky view the threatened Elanora's Falcon, so don't forget to bring your binoculars and field guides.

The paths are at times covered with thorn bushes. Therefore, proper hiking shoes and long socks/trousers are recommended. Also, please don't forget lots of drinking water.

Dinner will be Lahmacun. It is minced meat, onions and spices spread on a thin dough and cooked in an oven. So, this dish is actually the grand father of pizza.

Day 4

Breakfast at the Hotel.

The group will be driven to Aydıncık by the minibus. Aydıncık, known as Kelenderis in ancient times, was found by the Phoenician Sandakos coming from Syria in the year 2000 BC. It is believed that Ionians developed the town as a colony. Kelenderis, which was an important Cilician harbour, lived Ionian, Hittite, Assyrian, Phoenician, Roman, Byzantine, Emevi Arab, Armenian, Selcuk and Ottoman period.

Here, a boat trip will be organized to visit the regions magnificent limestone cave, Aynalı Göl Magarasi, with a large turquoise pool inside. The cave has been discovered only recently by a goat herder, and the whole area of it is 15 000 square meters. Two local guides will join us in Aydıncık to assist in the cave. The boat trip to the cave will be approximately one hour traveling east. On the way, for those interested in bird watching we might be able to see Audouin's gull. Once there, following a short, but a steep climb the caves entrance can be reached. Strong hiking boots are recommended, especially once inside the cave. Although, there will be a generator and light, personal torches are also recommended. This cave has been used in ancient times, and there are still remains of a stairway made from stalactites and stalagmites. The hike to the lake at the bottom will take approximately one hour.

Those who are claustrophobic or do not wish to enter the cave can relax on the rocks or on the boat.

Lunch will be a picnic on the boat after the hike in the cave.

On our return journey to Bozyazı, first the local Fisheries Cooperative in Aydıncık will be visited. The cooperative has been reactivated by the efforts of the conservation project and, a patrol boat Deniz Koruma 01 has been provided to support action against illegal fishing activities especially in Kizilliman. Here, we will purchase fish caught according to protection measures and hope to encourage such further responsible harvest.

Last stop on our way to Bozyazı will be near another monk seal cave named "Charlie's" to observe any seal activity from set vantage points. Here, the group will be divided into small teams of two persons with an additional guide.

Dinner, the green-fish ?, will be cooked at the hotel.

Day 5

Early morning, before breakfast there will be two optional activities:

Option one: For those interested in taking part in a fishing operation, a small group will accompany a local fishermen during his early morning fishing practice.

Option two: Seal watching. (Our guides will give briefings about the codes of conduct at these set vantage points to observe seals and seal activities)

Breakfast will be at Zeysa hotel.

After breakfast, the minibus will take us to Kizilliman's land entrance point. Following a one-hour hike through a maquis covered terrain, the steep cliffs hanging over some of the seal caves will be reached. The cliffs are approximately 80 meters high in places. The view is magnificent here. There will be a great chance to observe seals, other marine mammals and especially birds of prey.

Lunch will be held at Bozyazi.

Following lunch, the day will be spent leisurely, visiting the local market "pazar", and relaxing.

Day 6

Breakfast at the Hotel.

The minibus will take the project team and our guests to Mellec. Here, a boat trip will be organized to visit some of the breeding caves of the seals. We will take caution in this trip since this is the most fragile period for the mother and the pups. Therefore, only a member from the project team will investigate the caves and hopefully record and photograph, if any, the newly born seal pups. It will be an exciting day for all of us.

Lunch will be held at a traditional Yoruk (nomad) style restaurant with a spectacular view, sitting on a talfar (a wooden terrace covered with carpet and pillows) and served kavurma, a stir fry dish of chicken or meat.

Return to Bozyazi.

Day 7

This day will be full of terrestrial sight seeing and will continue to offer an experience into authentic local lifestyle. Early morning before breakfast the group will be taken to a nearby "yayla" (highlands) to Bozyazi, in the Taurus Mountains. Here a traditional breakfast will be prepared.

The local community has a pastoralist background and is the descendents of "Yoruk" nomads. They have settled and started agriculture around the 1920 – 30s in the area. Today, most of the economy depends largely on the yield from greenhouses, and this is the main source of income for nearly all the local population (26,314) living in the periphery of the protected site. The sea, generally, is not seen as part of their culture and is traditionally foreign to them. Starting from May until September, after the yield from greenhouses is sold, the local population migrates to the ancestral sites in the highlands in the Taurus Mountains. There they continue subsistence farming, with few animals, fruit trees, and vegetables.

Following breakfast, there will be a hike into the forest, where also at places the sea can be viewed. A typical yayla village will be visited.

Lunch will be a sophisticated picnic by a river. Return route will be different and a natural old Cedar forest will be visited.

Dinner will be at Zeysa hotel. This will be the last night here in Bozyazi.

Day 8

After breakfast we will say our goodbyes to our local friends and checkout from the hotel in Bozyazi.

The minibus will drive the group to Ovacik. Here, the archaeological site of Tisan, Aphrodisias - the ancient Roman ruins and mosaics will be visited.

The journey will continue to Bogsak and here a boat trip will be organized to take the group on a seal-sighting trip to some important monk seal habitats, especially to Dana island. Lunch will be picnic on the boat. Once at Dana island, we will swim, snorkel and if preferred will have a short hike. On the way to the island and once there, check cave dives by a project member might take place, depending on weather and other variables.

Dinner will be held at a local fish restaurant.

After dinner, we will drive to Tasucu – Silifke and check into Lades Motel. This location is close to Goksu Delta, which will be visited tomorrow.

Day 9

After breakfast (preferably not so early), we will checkout from the hotel in Tasucu. The minibus will take us to Goksu Delta, Silifke. The delta ecosystem, sheltering many endangered species of birds and reptiles as well as endemic plants is the ideal place to visit for local and foreign travelers and explorers. On our way there, a ranger from the Specially Protected Areas Department will join the group. The whole day will be spent here, especially bird watching and relaxing.

The Goksu river flows to the Mediterranean at a place between Tasucu and Silifke forming the delta. It is indisputably one of the most intensively studied Important Bird Areas in Turkey, and 332 bird species have been recorded of which 70 are proven to breed and another 20 suspected to do so. In 1990 it was declared as a Specially Protected Area (SPA) in recognition of its importance. Most of the delta is now intensively used by man and consists of irrigated and non-irrigated agricultural land, settlements, wetlands, dunes and beaches (total 2000 ha). Wetlands include Akgol lake, a 1245 ha freshwater lake (max 40 cm deep), Paradeniz lake, 402 ha lagoon (max 1.75 m deep), a number of smaller shallow and principally seasonal lakes totaling 540 ha, and several thousand of hectares of salt marshes surrounding the major lakes. The dunes have been identified as a particular conservation interest due to their intact and dynamic character. The 35 km of beaches form one of the most important nesting areas in Turkey for two species of sea turtle, loggerhead *Caretta caretta* and green turtle *Chelonia mydas*.

For bird watching, field guides and binoculars are recommended.

A list of species and more information will be provided prior to our visit to the Delta. However, if interested, for more detailed information on the bird species please visit http://www.eurobirding.co.uk/goksu_delta.HTM

Fishing here is a major economic activity involving 140 fishermen (in 1997) and is practiced with traditional techniques such as traps, lines and nets. Dinner will be held at a simple fish restaurant in the delta.

After dinner, at a late hour, the group will be driven to Adana airport. On the way, there will be a stop to taste some Turkish desserts.

Day 10

Departure.

Flight from Adana to Istanbul and from Istanbul to Rome or other destinations

OVERALL COST OF THE TRIP: 850 euros, excluding flights

"Panda Avventure" will provide, upon request, flight tickets from Rome Fiumicino airport and/or from Istanbul to Adana and return at the lowest market fares. The group will be coordinated by an expert Italian tour leader, the official trip languages are Italian and English (but French speaking people are welcomed). The meeting points will be both Rome Fiumicino Airport or Istanbul Airport. For details, agreements and information, please contact **prenotazioni@pandaavventure.it** (phone: +39-06-44291587 +39-06-44362315) from Monday to Friday, from 10 am to 6 pm

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

1. This itinerary only sets the frame of activities generally applied. However, depending on weather conditions and other parameters, some day's activities may change place, and therefore participants must be ready to be flexible.
2. Please remind a valid passport for Turkey
3. During the trip, the Monk Seal project staff will provide information about the places to be visited and lists of species to be seen each day, and inform you about what equipment necessary for that day's activities.

YOUR PERSONAL EQUIPEMENT

The list is only recommendations:

- . Swimsuit, wet suit, snorkel, fins & goggles
- . beach shoes or bootee (if available)
- . towels
- . sunglasses
- . sun hat / cap
- . sun protection cream
- . small rucksack
- . pocket knife (remember not to bring it on the plane!)
- . torch
- . Binocular
- . Field guides for natural history, birds, mammals, reptiles, etc.
- . Small notebook
- . Light Wind / raincoat
- . 1 warm clothing
- . Long trousers (for instance jeans)
- . Good hiking shoes (suitable for rocky coast)
- . Insect repellent
- . First-aid kit - water resistant bandage
- . Necessary medicines

For more information on the Mediterranean Monk Seal, please visit

www.monachus.org and for more information on the country, please visit **www.turkeyguide.com**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Please, be culturally sensitive. Acquaint yourself with local customs. What is courteous in one country may be quite the reverse in another. The project team and the local people here will be happy to help you.

Please, respect the religious sensitivities of the country. As mostly a Muslim country, we may have different beliefs and ways.