

Wildlife on Skopelos

Domesticated Animals

- Skopelos Goat: The island has its own acknowledged breed of goat named the "Skopelos". The Skopelos goat is one breed in the Southern Multicolored Group. It is a relative of the wild goat of the island of Gioura. The main occurrences of this species are in Skopelos, Alonissos, and Skiathos. Skopelos Goat, by EEAAP / Animal Genetic Data Bank

- Skopelos Sheep: Sheep herds on the island belong to a distinctive group called the "Skopelos Sheep" breed. Prolific dairy sheep breeds in Greece

Birds

Skopelos has a variety of fauna - including about 60 species of wild birds-native and migratory. There are several birds of prey, most common are the Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco Eleonora*), the European Scops Owl (*Otus Scops*) and the Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*). Also kestrels, eagles, and vultures can be seen. Very obvious throughout the island is the Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*). Occasionally Grey Herons and kingfishers and more commonly the Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), the Herring gull (*Larus argentatus*) and the Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) are seen along the coast. Severe winter weather can introduce rarely seen mainland birds temporarily. In March 2007 the Municipal Authorities cleaned a wetland habitat near the town beach at the outlet to the sea of Skopelos' only permanently flowing stream. The area had been home to frogs and the birds that fed on them. A large section of the area surrounding and including Mt. Palouki is posted as a no-hunting zone by the Skopelos Hunters Association. Bird species missing from other parts of the island such as the Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) have flourished in the protected area.

Mammals

The Northern Sporades are one of the prime breeding areas of the Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*) an endangered species. The main threat to *Monachus monachus* is man and his activities. It is deliberately killed or accidentally caught in fishing equipment, and its food sources are being reduced. In addition, marine pollution and uncontrolled tourism are causing the destruction of its natural habitat. The establishment in 1992 of the National Marine Park of Alonissos-Northern Sporades was an effort to protect this species by restricting human encroachment on seal breeding areas. Wild land mammals include Pine Martens (*Martes martes*), Brown Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) and mice, the Southern White-breasted Hedgehog (*Erinaceus concolor*), bats and, though declining in numbers, European Hares. A mating pair of Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*) have been privately reintroduced to the island. An evolving population of feral cats exists in and around areas of human habitation.

Reptiles

The island is home to a variety of reptiles. The Balkan Terrapin (*Mauremys rivulata*) can be found near fresh water along with the Greek Marsh Frog (*Pelophylax kurtmuelleri*) though this habitat is slowly disappearing due to development. The Balkan Wall Lizard (*Podarcis taurica*) is seen regularly in daylight in warm weather and the *Hemidactylus turcicus* at night. A larger lizard is the Balkan Green Lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*). Several varieties of snakes can be observed: the Montpellier Snake (*Malpolon monspessulanus*), the Leopard Snake (*Elephe situla*), the Large Whip Snake (*Coluber jugularis*), the Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*), and the Viper (*Viperidae ochia*).

Amphibians

In or near or fresh water there is sometimes found the Balkan Frog (*Pelophylax kurtmuelleri*) and the European tree frog (*Hyla arborea*). Near or away from water there are Common Toads (*Bufo bufo*).