

A short presentation on the nature of Greece.



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Maria Kalliga, Nefeli Kotretsou, Dimitris Vargiamidis, Vangelis Voulgaridis.

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Greece. I. Geographical location

Greece, officially Hellenic Republic and known since ancient times as Hellas (Ελλάς/Ellas) is located in Southern Europe, at the crossroads of Europe Asia and Africa.



Greece. I. Geographical location



Greece occupies the southern-most end of the Balkan Peninsula. It is surrounded on the north by Albania, the Republic of Macedonia (F.Y.R.O.M.) and Bulgaria; to the east by the Aegean Sea and Turkey, to the south by the Mediterranean Sea and to the west by the Ionian Sea and Italy.

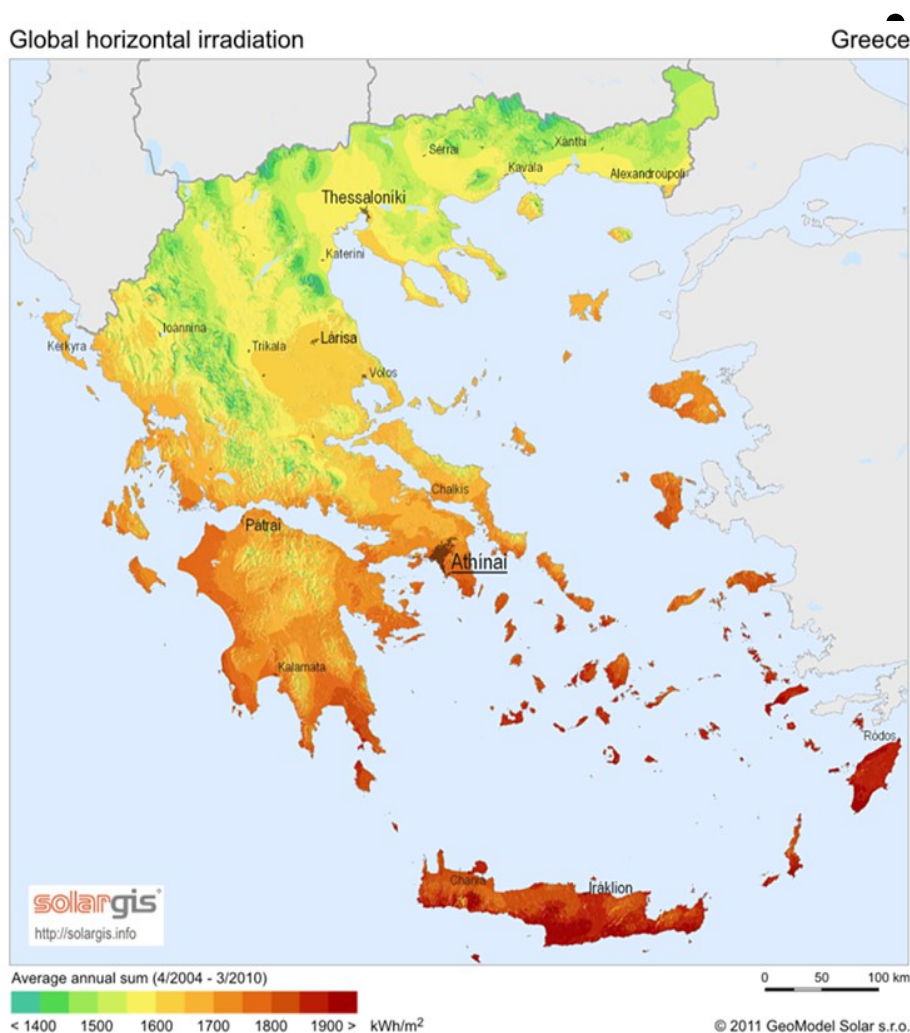
CLIMATE OF GREECE I. A general description



The climate in Greece is typical of the Mediterranean climate:

- mild and rainy winter
- relatively warm and dry summer
- generally, extended periods of sunshine throughout most of the year

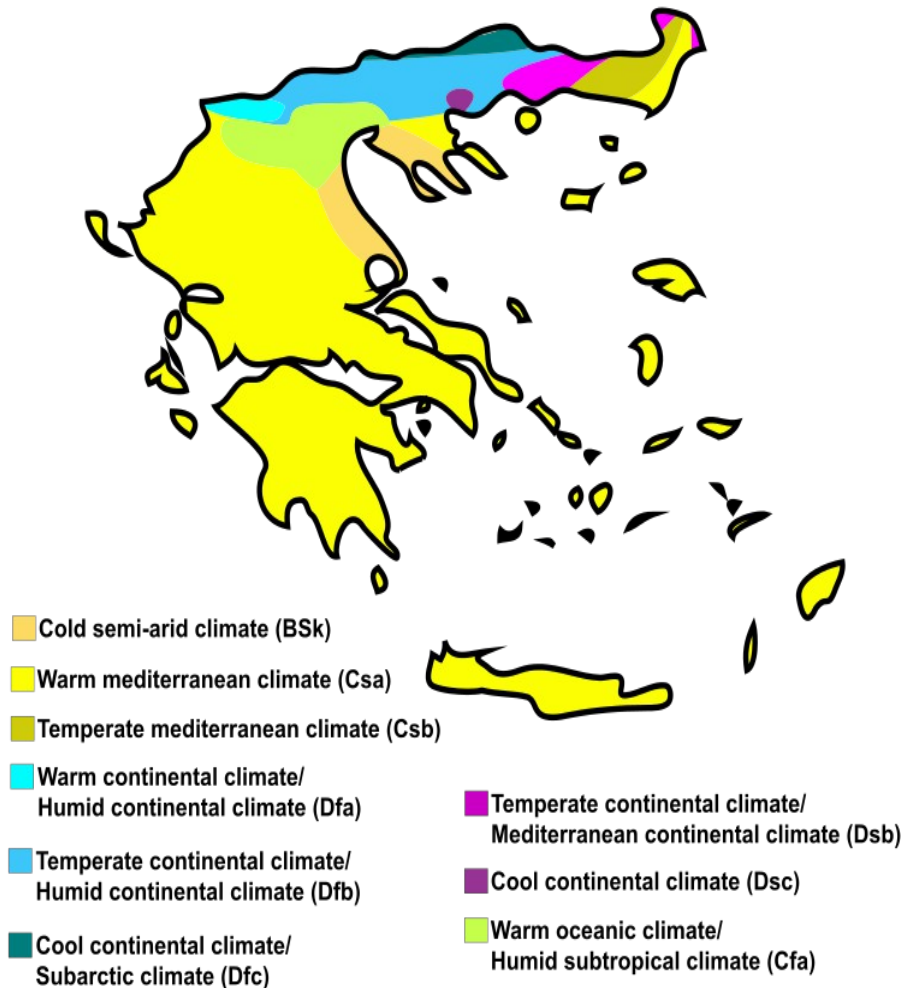
CLIMATE OF GREECE II. Climatic diversity



A great variety of climate subtypes, always within the Mediterranean climate frame, are encountered in several regions of Greece. This is due to the influence of great mountain chains along the mainland and other mountainous bodies on the air masses coming from the sources of the central Mediterranean Sea.

CLIMATE OF GREECE II. Climatic diversity

Greece map of Köppen climate classification



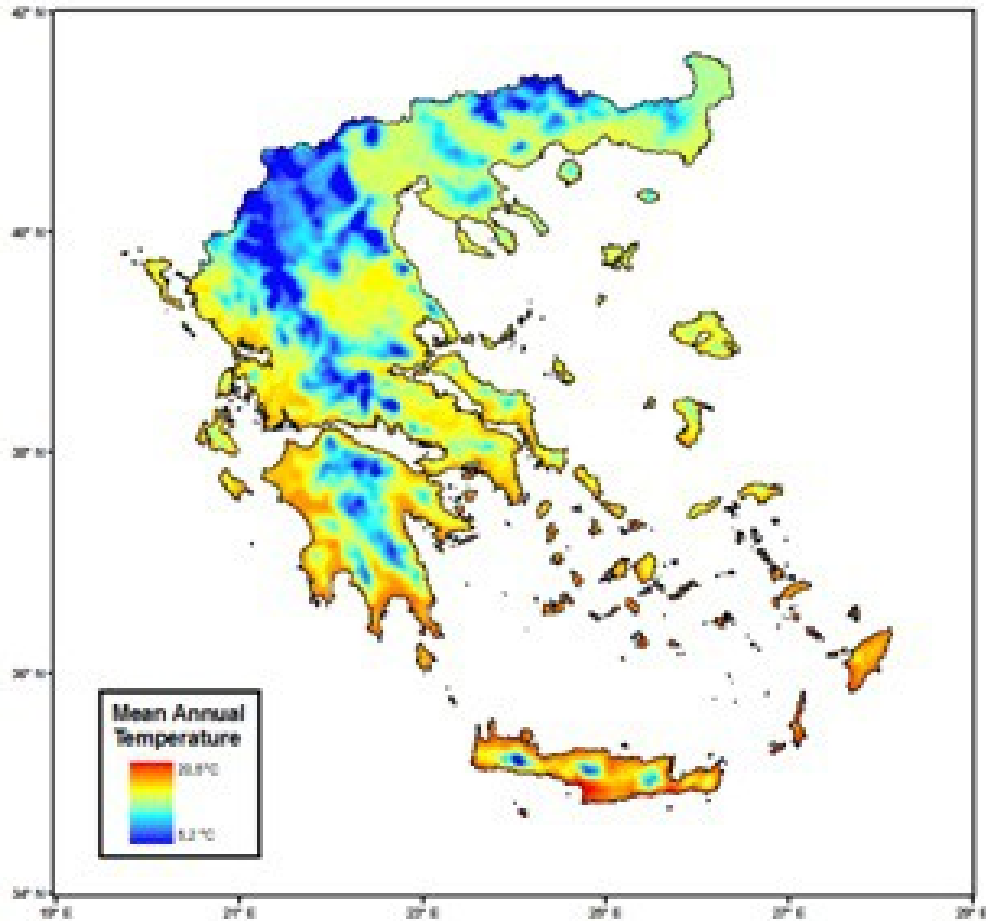
- Thus, the weather in Greece varies from the dry climate of Attiki and East Greece in general, to the wet climate of Northern and Western Greece.
- In climatological terms, the year can be broadly subdivided into two main seasons: The cold and rainy period lasting from mid-October until the end of March, and the warm and dry season lasting from April until September.

CLIMATE OF GREECE III. Mean annual temperature



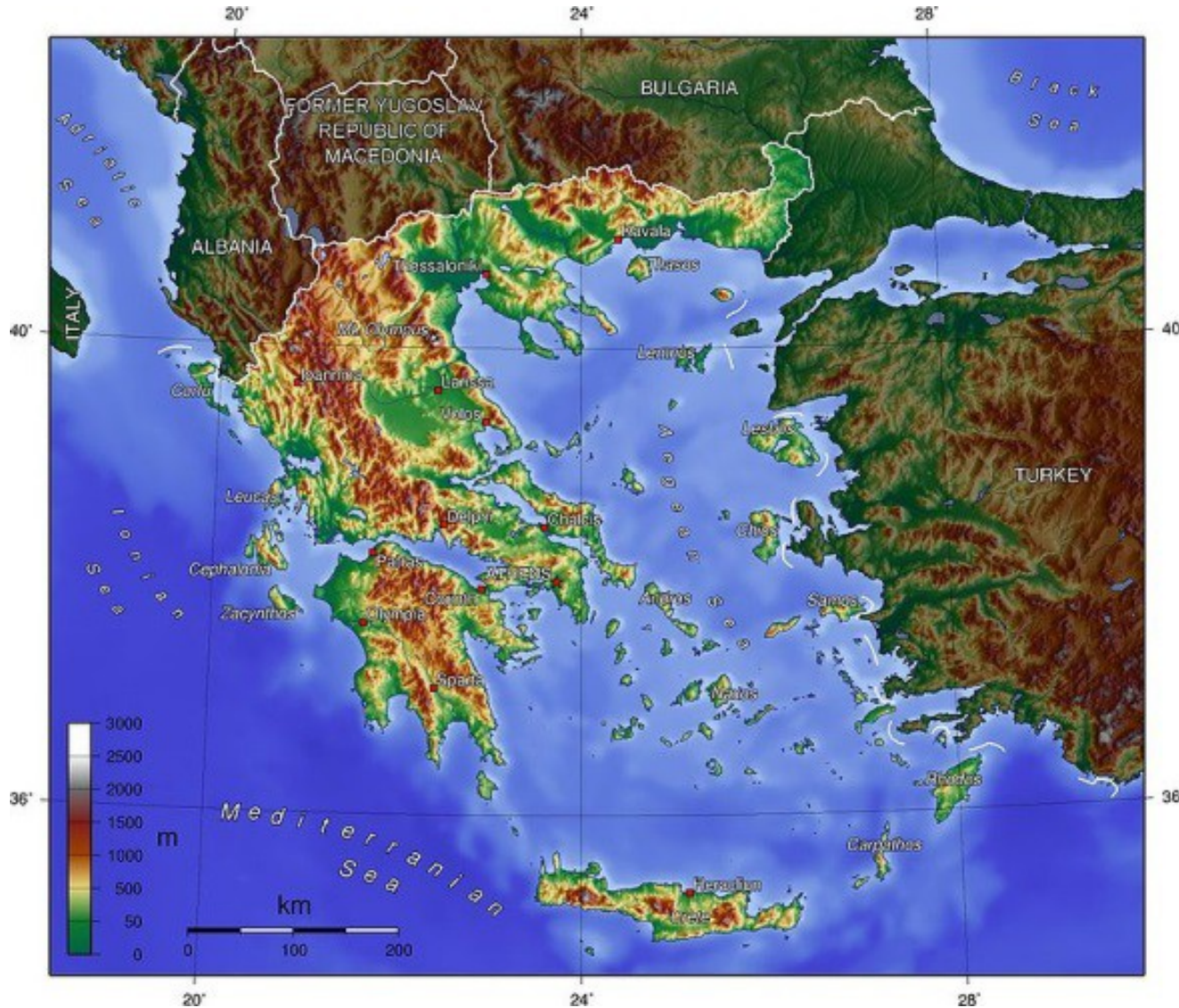
- During the first period, the coldest months are January and February, with, a minimum temperature ranging, on average, between 5-10 degrees Celsius near the coasts and 0-5 Celsius over the mainland, with lower values over the northern part of the country.
- Long stretches of consecutive rainy days are infrequent in Greece, even during the winter, and the sky does not remain cloudy for more than a few days in a row. “Bad weather” days in winter are often interrupted, during January and the first fortnight of February, with sunny days, known as ‘**Halcyon days**’ since ancient times.

CLIMATE OF GREECE III. Mean annual temperature



- The winter is milder in the Aegean and Ionian Islands compared to Northern and Eastern mainland Greece.
- During the warm and dry period the weather is usually stable, the sky is clear, the sun is bright and there is generally no rainfall. There are, however brief intervals of rapid rain or thunderstorms over mainland areas. The warmest period occurs during the last ten days of July and the first ten days of August, when the maximum temperature lies between 30 and 40 degrees Celsius. During the warm period the high temperatures are tempered by sea breezes in the coastal areas of the country and from the north winds, blowing mainly in the Aegean.

Main features of Greek flora and fauna. I. An introduction



Due to the great range of climatic and geomorphologic conditions, species and ecosystems diversity is high.

Main features of greek flora and fauna. I An introduction.



Greece entirely lies in the Mediterranean biogeographical region, with ecosystems ranging from semi-desert and maquis, to cold climate mountain forests of birch (=σημύδα/simida) , scots pine (=πεύκο/pefko) and spruce (=έλατο/elato).

Main features of greek flora and fauna I. An introduction



- About two-thirds of the Greek territory is covered by a hilly or mountainous terrain, with the typical landscape being rugged and steep. Greece has a very extensive coastline of about 15.000 kilometres and about 3.000 islands, which represent 20% of the land area. The coastline is mainly rocky and sandy with about 5% wetlands

Main features of greek flora and fauna

I. An introduction



- Greek flora and fauna are among the richest in Europe: more than 5.500 plant species have been recorded, with a large number of endemic species, due to the isolation of mountains and islands. Nearly all mammal species recorded are indigenous, as well as 85% of freshwater fish species.

II. Greek Flora

Plant life in Greece is very rich with many different species. Most are typically Mediterranean such as

- evergreen oak (=δρυς/βελανιδιά/dris, velanidiá) ,
- cypress(=κυπαρίσσι/kiparissi), and
- pine (=πέυκο/pefko) and shrubs such as
- juniper (=άρκευθος/κέδρος/kedros)
- myrtle (=μυρτιά/mirtiá) , and
- oleander(=πικροδάφνη/pikrodafni).



II. Greek Flora

- The northern mountains have forests of deciduous trees such as
- oak (βελανιδιά=velanidia')
- chestnut(=καστανιά/kastania')
- ash(=φλαμουριά/flamou riá/tilio), and
- beech (=οξιά/oxia'), with
- fir (=έλατα/elata) and
- pine(=πεύκα/refka) on the upper slopes.



II. Greek flora

- Another feature of the Greek flora is the big number of wild aromatic and medicinal plants. Aromatic plants mainly give us the essential oils very useful in perfumery, soap, food industry, confectionery etc., like rosemary (=δεντρολίβανο/dentrolivano), thyme(=θυμάρι/thymari), lavender(=λεβάντα/levanta), peppermint(=δυόσμος/dyosmos), sage(=φασκόμηλο/faskomilo), mountain tea(=τσάι του βουνού/tsai tu vunū), diktamos(=δίκταμος).



II. Greek Flora



- The most common wildflowers in the country are the anemones (=ανεμώννα/anemona), the gladiolus (=γλαδιόλα/gladiola) , the cyclamens (=κυκλάμινο/kyklamino) , the irises(=ίριδες/irides), the tulips(=τουλίπες/tulipes) , and the lilies(=κρίνα/krina), etc.,

III. Greek Fauna



In the mountain forests of central Greece, bears (=αρκούδα/ες/arkouda/es), wolves(=λύκος/οι/likos/i) , wildcats (=αγριόγατες/agriogates) , martens (=κουνάβια/kunavi/a) , wild boars (=αγριογούρουνα/agrioguruna) and deer (=ελάφια/elafia) can be found.

III. Greek fauna



- In the south and the coastal areas, Mediterranean animals such as the jackal(=τσακάλι/tsakali) , wild goat(=αγριοκάτσικο/agriokatsiko) , and hedgehog(=σκαντζόχοιρος/skantzohiros) are common.
- Greece has a variety of birds, including the heron (=ερωδιό/erodios) , stork (=πελαργός/pelargos) , and pelican(=πελεκάνος/pelekanos).

III. Greek fauna

Reptiles include snakes, lizards, and tortoises.

- Salamander is an amphibian and endemic specie.





Protected areas of Greece

- Since 1937, Greece has started to identify natural areas of specific ecological importance (forests, wetlands etc.) and place them under special protection. National parks include Olympus (border of Thessaly and Macedonia), Parnassos and Iti (central Greece), Prespa and Vikos-Aoos (Continent), Parnitha (Attiki) and Samaria (Crete). There are also 11 wetlands, 51 preserved natural monuments, 113 important bird sanctuaries and 300 nature reserves.

Rare and protected species



Among the protected species is the Mediterranean loggerhead turtle and the Monachus - Monachus seal. The last hosted in the waters of Zakynthos and Kefalonia, while the first is found in the waters of the Aegean and Ionian seas.

The dense forests and especially the Forest of Dadia, rising Evros River in Thrace, is a shelter for the largest variety of game bird in Europe. The Small Prespa in Macedonia has the richest colony of fish-eating birds in Europe, and we can also meet cormorants, moorhens, greylag goose and Goosander.

The brown bear (the largest mammal in Europe) breeds in the mountains of Pindos and at border mountains with Albania, FYROM and Bulgaria. The northern forests offer shelter to the wildcat, the sable and the chamois and occasionally wolves, while European chamois and hedgehogs live in the south.

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