

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:



## The butterflies of Crete / Greece Hiking through the “Red Butterfly” canyon

### Short details about the butterflies:

Previously 45 butterfly species are known from the Mediterranean island Crete. Large and conspicuous species are the sail swallowtail [*Iphiclides podalirius*], the swallowtail (butterfly) [*Papilio machaon*], the Admiral and the painted lady (butterfly) [*Vanessa cardui*]; in advance the large white (butterfly) [*Pieris brassicae*] as well as the small white (butterfly) [*Pieris rapae*] are widely spread. Other species show a characteristic south(east)European-near eastern distribution, such as the brimstone butterfly similar Cleopatra Butterfly [*Gonepteryx cleopatra*]. Nevertheless, Crete does have regional distinctions to show, e.g. a especially beautiful butterfly, to be seen between March and June, the Crete-Easterluzei butterfly [*Zerynthia cretica*]. He is widespread and often to be seen. Of the processionary moth, here the pine processionary moth [*Thaumetopoea pinivora*], the huge hibernation nests of the grub attract attention within the pines, which are trimming the roadside. From here they move in an ordered formation to feeding.



Picture left: the *Crete Easterluzei* butterfly, well be seen particular in the region around *Plakias* (south coast)

Picture right: hibernation nest of *Pine processionary moth*, often 5 to 10 nests can be seen within a pine crown

### Quick guide about the hike:

A good opportunity to observe butterflies in large variety at Crete, combined with a gorge walk offers the "Red Butterfly". The Village Koutsouras is about 12 miles east of the city of Ierapetra at the south coast. The entrance of the so called “Butterfly Canyon” can be found around a half mile before the village, at the parking area “Dasaki Butterfly Gorge Spring”. Between May and September lots of the occurring butterflies can be observed at several places within the Canyon. The gorge itself is barely tapped for tourist therefore once in a while some rock climbing is needed. The hike through the gorge takes a bit more than 2 hours.

In 1993 a fire destroyed most of the "Koutsouras Communal Park"; now the tree population has been recovered and beside the birds the butterflies are back.



The pictures show some impressions from the hidden idyll of the butterfly canyon. The port of the canyon starts with a trail, sometimes right, sometimes left of a beck. You must hike over bole, climb rocks – once in a while the shortest path is directly through the beck or brush. The way through the canyon is sometimes rather a climb when a hike – sturdy shoes, little baggage, enough water, ability and condition is needed. The earning is an unforgettable great experience.

**PLEASE NOTE:** because of the large quantity of water a complete hike through the canyon is possible in May at the earliest.



Photos: H. Eikamp 07.05.03 / 27.04.04 [Art.-No. 2.772, Cit.-No. 4.768]

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Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

At this point 3 Tips for car rental, accommodation and food in Crete in Gouves, on the North coast:



Manos stands for excellent service



tasteful furnished apartments caring support



the insider's tip for excellent food primary for Meze