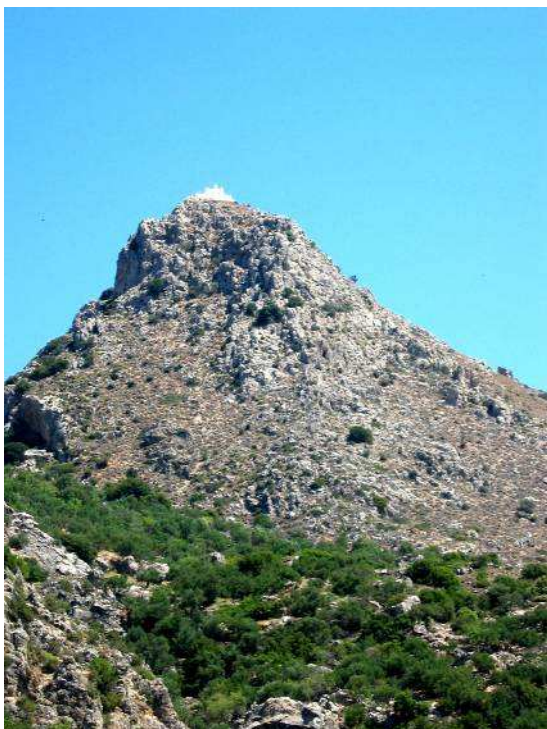


Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

Excursion to the Apoloustres Cave and Chapel of Stavromenos
“Arcalos”: the Cretan badger (*Meles meles arcalus*)

The way to the Chapel as well as to the Cave is as already described within leaflet No. 018-04/E “[Excursion to Vreiko-Cave](#)” (close to the Village *Pefkis* [Πεύκοι]). Here as well use the something around 1 mile before *Pefkis* right branching road towards the next branch with below left shown sign. Than do not follow the right way towards the Vreiko-Cave but the left way to *Apoloustres* Cave, which is a good navigable gravel road. It’s about 1.5 miles to the Chapel (without the steep ascent (about 300 m) to the peak of where the Chapel is) and from there again around 1.5 miles to the *Apoloustres* Cave. Whether you take the slightly over 3 miles long way "by foot" or by an off-road car should be decided before; the runway is not "easy" to drive; especially in the section "after the chapel" are some "risky" parts, without any turning capability. A "compromise" is to drive to the Chapel by car and walk from there to the cave. From the chapel on the peak, you have a wonderful view over the wild mountain countryside and mountain villages of the region; with good weather you can also look at the Libyan sea. Tight experiences of "Mountain wild romance" with impressive valleys are on the way to the cave. For the cave of *Apoloustres* applies the same as for the neighbouring Vreiko cave; however it is already widely visible (is therefore not "hidden"). *Apoloustres* cave is small and unspectacular; a walk there is therefore only conditionally (apart from the extremely charming mountain scenery on the way).



Picture left: the Chapel *Stavromenos* on the peak, seen from the valley exit of *Pefkis*.

Picture right: "Roadway damages": road parts flushed away by a torrent are filled with concrete. Those than are “under flushed” during the next “water phase” and hollows arise which break during over driving. Backfilling with large stones allow a careful continuation of the journey.

Photos:
U. Kluge (2004)



The figure above left shows the cave entrance under the dome formation; the figure right shows the remains of an ancient settlement in the valley below the cave. The figure below left shows a badger's burrow access in a rock niche on the road; the figure to the right shows a Cretan badger which unfortunately was a "victim of traffic": in the "circulation of nature", the bearded vulture will care about the carcasses. **Photos: H. Eikamp (2004)**

“Arcalos”: the Cretan badger (*Meles meles arcalus*)

The Cretan badger is often found at Crete and occurs most often in the south of the island. The Cretan name for the badger is “Arcalos”. Cretan subspecies differ by their lower height from the typical race. Stone, mountain and coastal landscapes are the Habitat of badgers in Crete. As Fox large, but harder and plumper, especially the black white grey mask is identifying it. The foreleg has long, strong claws. Usually several earth buildings with many entries and exits serve as lair of the crepuscular and nocturnal animals. It is an omnivore which fed primarily snails, but also small mammals. Also it is not rejecting carcass. The mating season is from February to October, the cubbing season from January to may of the following year. The litter size is up to 5. Young badgers stay around until autumn or spring in association of the parent family; the sexual maturity occurs in the second year. Lifetime (under normal conditions) is up to 20 years.