

The rare horse and pony breeds in Greece

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The Greek horse and pony breeds are originated from the Balkan pony, which has been transformed in two types, the mountainous and the lowland type.

Pindos pony. Its height is 1.15 – 1.25 m. The body is narrow with lack of muscle in the neck and quarters. The predominant colors are bay, brown and gray. **Peneia pony.** Are raised in N.W. Peloponnesus. Its height is 1.25-1.40 m. They are pacers. **Creta pony.** They are raised in island of Creta. They are pacers. Its height is 1.25-1.40 m. **Skyros pony.** The smallest pony, its height is 0.90-1.10 m. It developed in the island of Skyros. **Thessalian pony.** It is bigger than Pindos pony. Unfortunately this ancient Greek breed from which the horse of the “Alexander the Great” the “Bucephalus” was originated, is under extinct. **Ainos pony.** They are lived in semi-wild condition in the Cephalonia island, in the forest of Ainos mountain. Its height is 1.15-1.25 m. These ponies are descended from Pindos pony breed. **Andravidia horse.** It is developed in the region of Andravidia (near Olympia) by crossing native mares with anglo-norman stallions. Its height is 1.50 –1.60 m. They are bay, chestnut, brown, black and roan. **Zante horse.** This beautiful horse are raised in the island of Zante, its height is 1.45-1.55 and they were produced by crossing with Anglo-Arabs stallions early in this century. Its color is black.

The **Rodope breed.** This horse is bred in the northern mountainous communities of mountain Rodope in Thrace. Its height is about 135 cm, the dominant colors are bay, gray and roan gray, with markings on head and legs. The body is cylindrical with normal dimensions that give a handsome phenotype.

The last two breeds are not registered yet.

The semi-wild horses in Greece

In Greece today there are about six regions where semi - wild horses, mainly of Pindos breed are raised.

In **Cephalonia island**, on Ainos mountain there is a herd of 25 animals.

In **South – west Greece**, near the delta of the Achelous river there is a herd of about forty. Another herd of semi – wild horses also exists in Epirous region, near the delta of the river Kalama.

In **West Greece**, a herd of about two hundred animals is found in the mountainous region of the city of Amphilochia.

In **North Greece** another one herd exists on the delta conformation of Axios and Aliakmon rivers and a second one of about four hundred horses on Rodopi mountain, near the city of Drama. Finally a third one is found in the delta of the Evros river.

No owner exists for all these horses. It is suggested that these herds of semi – wild horses could be of value for the equestrian tourist development of Greece.