Survey of the Status of Important Fauna Species in the Kyparissiakos Lease Area

Interim Progress Report

May 2023

[This page intentionally left blank]

Contents

Project Team

Name	Company	Expertise	Role
Tasos Dimalexis	NCC Ltd.	PhD Biologist, Ornithologist	Coordinator, field & drone surveys
Jakob Fric	NCC Ltd.	Physicist, Ornithologist	GIS & Data management
Thanos Kastritis	NCC Ltd.	PhD Oceanographer, Ornithologist	Field surveys
Manolia Sergi	NCC Ltd.	Biologist	Field surveys
Ortac Omnus		PhD Conservation Biologist, Ornithologist	Field surveys
Konstantinos Margaris	NCC Ltd./BIOTOPIA	MSc Marine Resource Management, Certified Marine Mammal Observer, Certified Passive Acoustic Monitoring Operator	Marine Mammal Observer, PAM Operator
Alan Rees	NCC Ltd	PhD Biologist/Sea Turtle Expert	Sea Turtle Satellite Tagging
Panagiotis Dendrinos	MOm/BIOTOPIA	PhD Marine Biologist	Coordinator, Marine and Aerial Surveys Expert
Kimon Koemtzopoulos	MOm	MSc Marine Biologist, Certified Marine Mammal Observer	Marine Mammal Expert/ Certified MMO
Odysseus Paxinos	MOm	MSc Oceanographer	Sea Turtle Satellite Tagging
Styliani Adamantopoulou	MOm/BIOTOPIA	Biologist/Marine Mammal Expert	Reporting
Kostas Papakonstantinou	NCC Ltd.	Boat skipper	Boat skipper

Abbreviations and scientific names

Calonectris diomedea	Scopoli's Shearwater
Caretta caretta	Loggerhead Turtle
Chelonia mydas	Green Turtle
Delphinus delphis	Short-beaked Common Dolphin
Grampus griseus	Risso's Dolphin
Hydrobates pelagicus	European Storm-Petrel
ESAS	European Seabirds At Sea (survey method)
Larus audouinii	Audouin's Gull
Larus michahellis	Yellow-legged Gull
Monachus monachus	Mediterranean Monk Seal
n.m.	nautical mile
Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii	Mediterranean Shag
Physeter macrocephalus	Sperm Whale
Puffinus yelkouan	Yelkouan Shearwater
Stenella coeruleoalba	Striped Dolphin
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (Natura 2000 network)
SPA	Special Protection Area (Natura 2000 network)
SDF	Standard Data Form (Natura 2000 datasheet)
Tursiops truncatus	Common Bottlenose Dolphin
WP	Work Package
Ziphius cavirostris	*Cuvier's Beaked Whale*

1 Introduction

In the context of Environmental Monitoring and Recording of Critical Environmental Indicators of Biodiversity, such as marine mammals (cetaceans and monk seals), sea turtles and seabirds, the Hellenic Petroleum Exploration & Production of Hydrocarbons Kyparissiakos Gulf Single Member S.A. company has assigned to Nature Conservation Consultants (NCC) Ltd a contract for conducting the present Project, namely the "Survey of the Status of Important Fauna Species in the Kyparissiakos Lease area" (Block 10).

The Project consists of 4 work packages (WP):

I. **Pelagic Surveys for marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles, nearshore and in the open sea**, using an open water RIB vessel, a single engine aircraft, in combination with drone surveys.
II. **Coastal surveys for monk seals, Scopoli's shearwater and Mediterranean shag breeding sites in the coastal zones of the adjacent Natura 2000 sites,** using inflatable RIB boats.
III. **Marine turtle telemetry** by putting transmitters to record the adult turtle distribution in the lease area, during inter-nesting intervals, as well as their occurrence in the wider region.
IV. **Telemetry for seabirds and marine mammals** at Strofades islets SPA and the surrounding project area using a marine ornithological radar**.**

The present document consists of the **Interim Progress Report** of the **Work Packages WP I-IV.** It presents the field surveys carried out during the first trimester of 2023 and the preliminary results in each Work Package of the project "Survey of the Status of Important Fauna Species in the Kyparissiakos Lease area".

The present project is the 2023 continuation of the ongoing project "Survey of the Status of Important Fauna Species in the Kyparissiakos Lease area", implemented in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

2 Description of the Project Area

The **Project Area** is located in the Ionian Sea, southeast of Zakynthos Island and west of Peloponnese, approximately from the latitude town Zacharo in the north and town Methoni in the south. It extends between latitudes of 36°50'N in the south and 37°30'N in the north and between latitudes of 20°55'E in the west and 21°30'E in the east. Its total surface area is 3,422.5 km^2 (Figure 2-1).

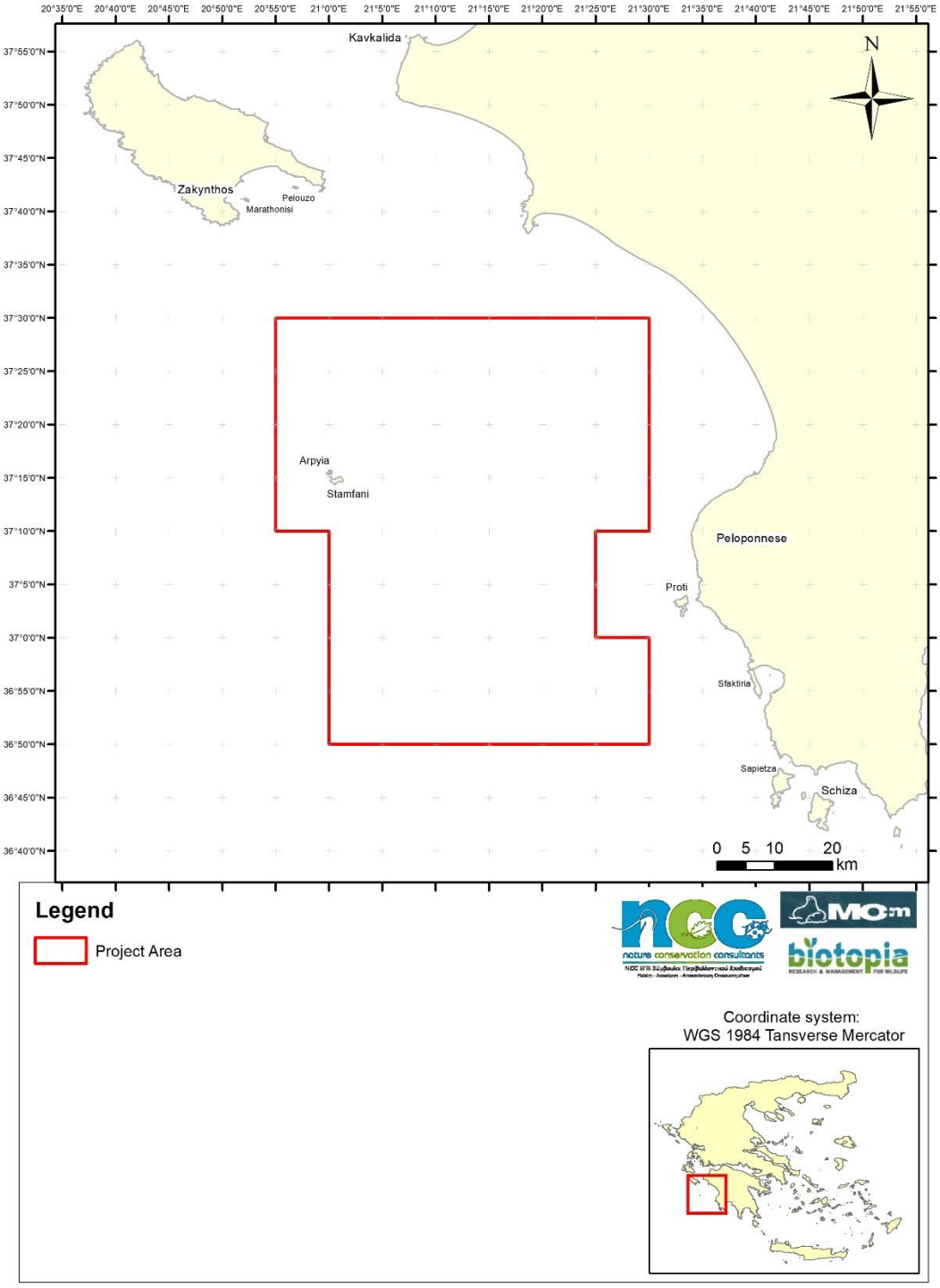

Figure 2-1. Project Area

The **Wider Project Area** envelops the project area and extends further north and east to additionally include the southwestern, south-eastern and eastern coast of Zakynthos, and the western coast of Peloponnese south of Kyllini, together with their neighbouring islets (Figure 2-2). The **Pelagic Survey Area**, where pelagic surveys are carried out includes the primarily the Project Area together with neighbouring waters to the east.

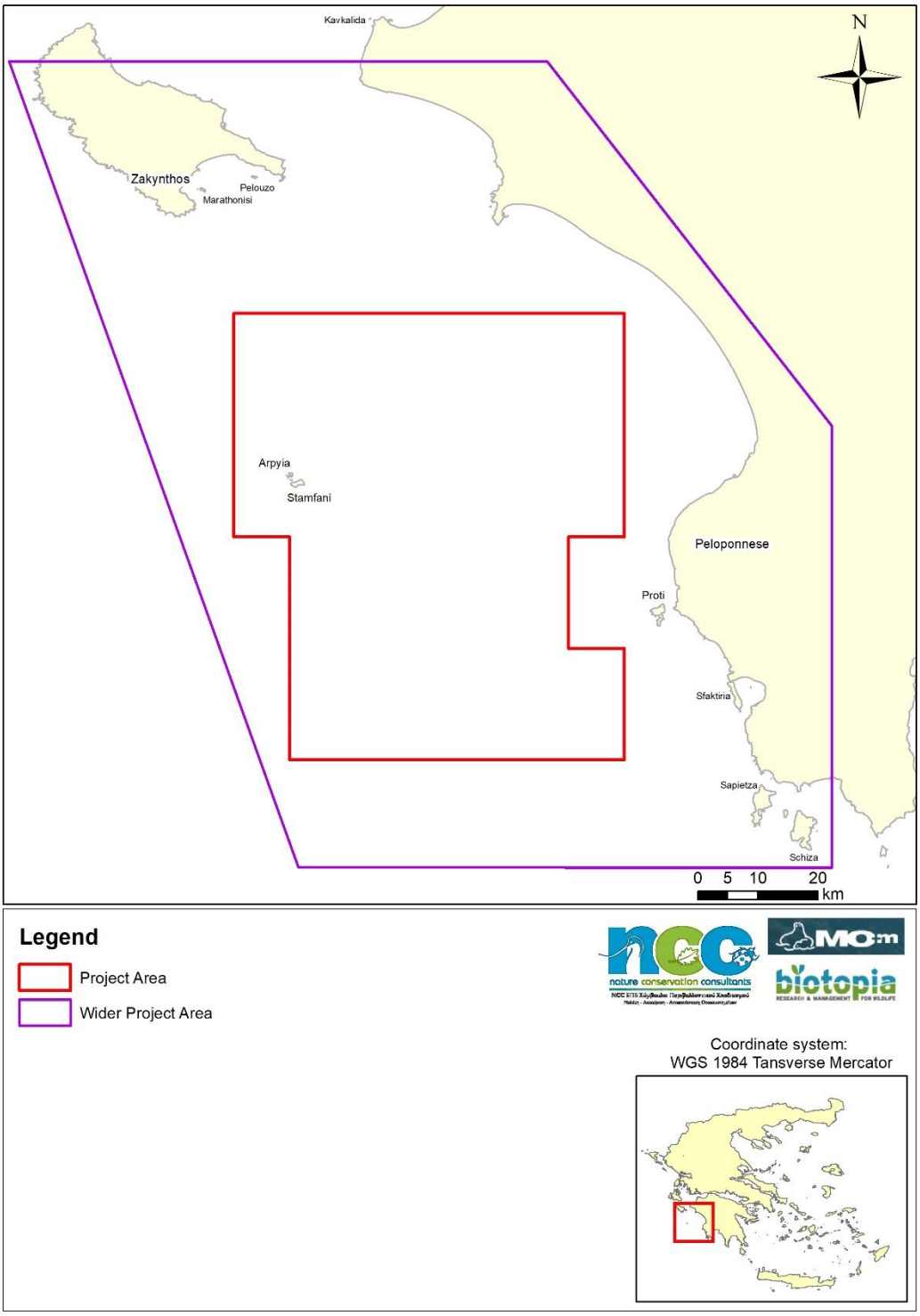

Figure 2-2. Wider Project Area

2.1 Oceanographic characteristics of the Project Area

The sea depth within the Project Area exceeds 500m and reaches more than 3,500m at its southwestern corner. The only exception are the Strofades islets in the west, which are surrounded by a narrow belt of coastal waters (Figure 2-3).

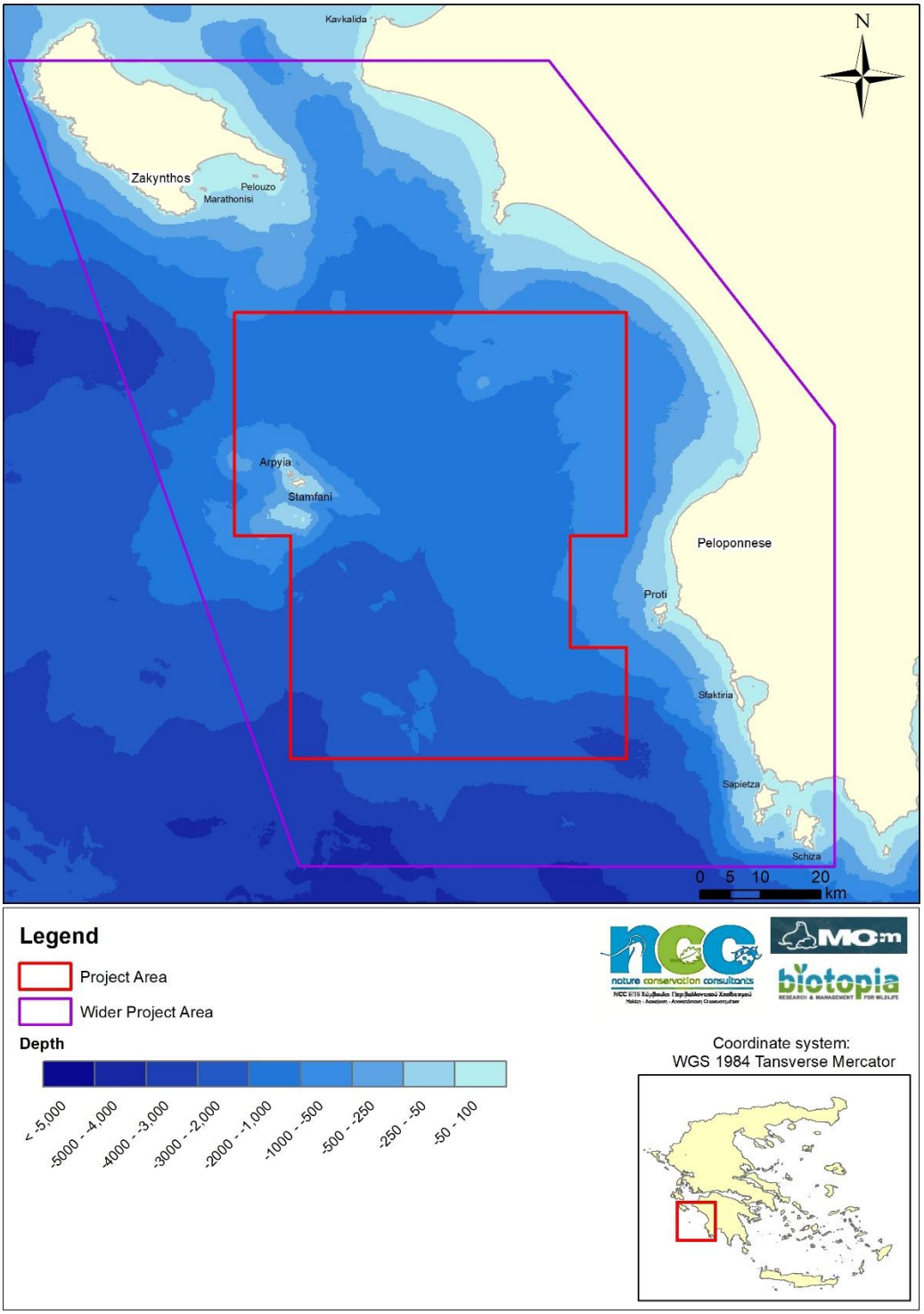

Figure 2-3. Bathymetry in the Project Area

In northern, north-eastern and eastern part of the Wider Project Area the slope of the sea floor descends gradually, without abrupt breaks towards southwest, however the southern and the western part exhibit numerous abrupt descends of the sea floor, accompanied by step slopes of the sea floor reaching up to 53^{o} (Figure 2-4).

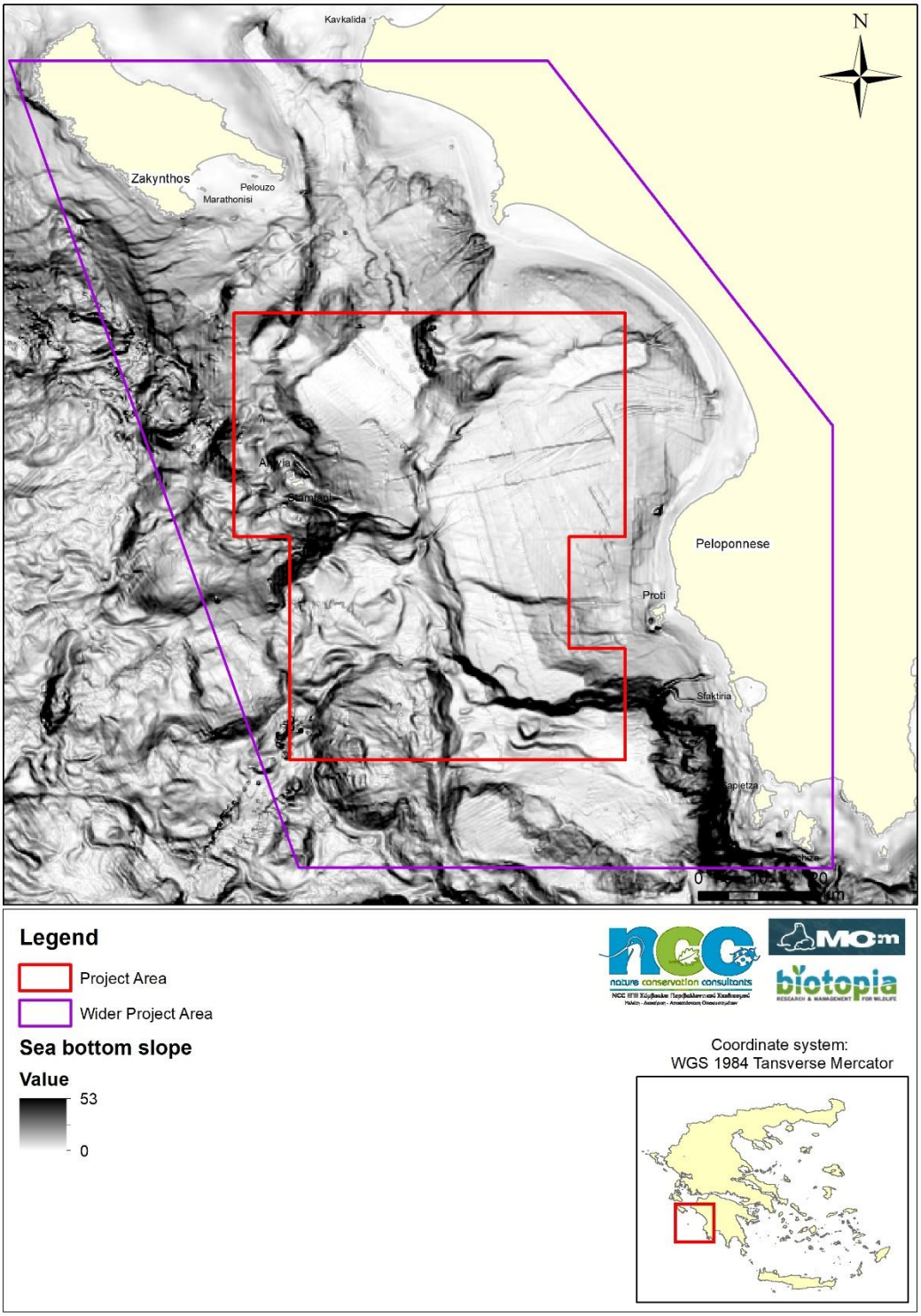

Figure 2-4. Slope of the sea floor in the Wider Project Area

2.2 General information of the main cetacean, seabird and sea turtle species in the Project Area

2.2.1 Cetaceans

Hellenic seas host an unexpectedly high diversity of cetaceans with eight (8) species that are resident in the area, seven (7) of which belong to the Odondoceti suborder: Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Cuvier's Beaked Whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*), Risso's Dolphin (*Grampus griseus*), Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), Short-beaked Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) along with one representative of the Mysticeti suborder: Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*). The Harbour Porpoise is restricted to the Thracian Sea and North Aegean Sea, while the others are present one or more seas in Greece (Frantzis et al. 2003).

It is important to note that due to the semi-enclosed nature of the Mediterranean basin, in combination with its very particular oceanographic features and oligotrophic waters especially moving towards the east of the basin, cetacean species populations of the Mediterranean (which occur elsewhere in the world also) are treated separately by the IUCN, when it comes to the designation of their threat status and population trends. In the majority of cases, the Mediterranean subpopulation of cetacean species have at least one level higher in their designated threat status than the global population for the same species or are classified as Data Deficient.

The Wider Project Area is located along the Hellenic Trench, which is one of the most important areas for cetaceans in Greece. With the exception of the Harbour Porpoise (found only locally in the north-eastern Aegean) and the Fin Whale (observed mainly in the Ionian Sea, along the Hellenic Trench, north of Kefallonia), the remaining 6 commonly occurring species of cetaceans inhabiting Greek waters have been sighted or recorded as stranding in the Wider Project Area.

Table 2-1. General types of habitats, bathymetric characteristics and distance from coast of recorded presence in Greek seas of common cetacean species that are present in the Wider Project Area (from Frantzis 2009).

Species	Common name	Habitat		
		Type	Depth	Distance from coast
Physeter macrocephalus	Sperm whale	Slope, secondarily pelagic	1235 m (510-2933 m)	8.1 km (1.6-25.2 km)
Ziphius cavirostris	Cuvier's beaked whale	Slope, probably pelagic as well	1066 m (491-2279 m)	8.6 km (2.1-26.5 km)
Grampus griseus	Risso's dolphin	Slope, probably over its shallower part	737 m (165-1717 m)	8.2 km (0.3-28.3 km)
Tursiops truncatus	Common bottlenose dolphin	Typically, coastal, also over shallow waters "offshore"	121 m (1-1504 m)	3.0 km (0.0-26.0 km)
Stenella coeruleoalba	Striped dolphin	Typically, pelagic and slope	1024 m (75-2920 m)	8.7 km (0.6-37.1 km)
Delphinus delphis	Short-beaked Common dolphin	Coastal and shallow, ("pelagic" and deep only in the Gulf of Corinth)	86 m (11-274 m) Gulf of Corinth: 713 m (275-935)	8.7 km (0.6-37.1 km)

The Wider Project Area includes, coastal areas, continental shelf and slope, as well as pelagic areas. For the purpose of the present study and based on the types of marine habitats typically used by the species present in the Wider Project Area, the focus of pelagic surveys is primarily on the species with regular presence in the Wider Project Area, namely the **Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Cuvier's Beaked Whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*), Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)** and **Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*)** in the pelagic and continental slope areas, and **Short-Beaked Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)** and **Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)** in coastal areas. Accounts on the biology, ecology, as well as conservation and threat status of the cetacean species of interest are provided below. It should be noted that large data gaps are still present regarding the distribution and abundance of cetaceans in the eastern Mediterranean (Mannocci et al. 2018).

2.2.1.1 Sperm Whale (Physeter macrocephalus)

Figure 2-5. Sperm Whale (Physeter macrocephalus) (© Massimo Demma/ICRAM)

The second largest cetacean found in Greece and the largest Odondocetus found globally is the Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). The Sperm Whale prefers deep water habitats particularly deep continental slope water where they hunt their preferred prey, large mesopelagic cephalopods (Frantzis 2009, Notarbartolo di Sciara et al. 2012).

The Hellenic Trench is considered to be the species core habitat for the eastern Mediterranean sub-population (Frantzis et al. 2014). The total species population size in the Greeks Seas is estimated at 180 – 280 individuals (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting at https://nature-art17.eionet.europa.eu/article17/), the population size in the Hellenic Trench 200 – 250 individuals (Frantzis et al. 2014) and the estimated population size in the Ionian Sea, including international and Italian waters 62 individuals (95% CI: 24-165 individuals, in Lewis et al. 2003), however this is likely to be an underestimation (Frantzis 2009).

2.2.1.2 Cuvier's Beaked Whale (Ziphius cavirostris)

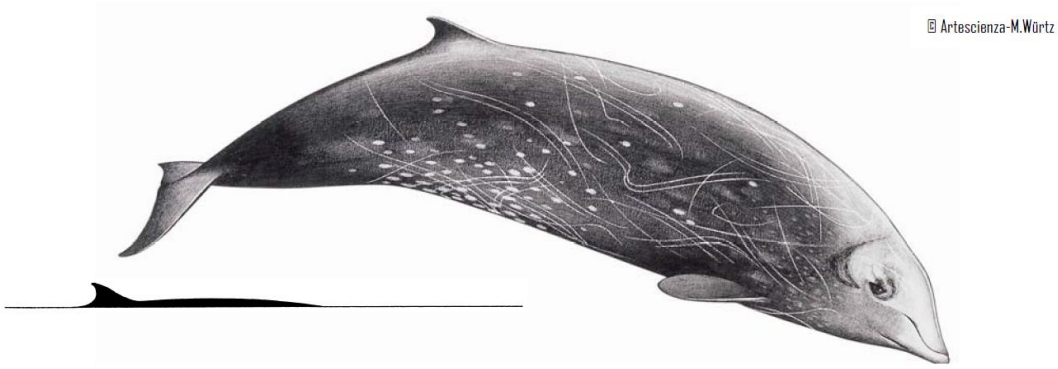

Figure 2-6. Cuvier's Beaked Whale (Ziphius cavirostris) (©Artescienza-M.Würtz)

Cuvier's Beaked Whale, a medium sized odondocetus, shares the same habitat and distribution as that described for the Sperm Whale, namely the continental slope. Almost all past species sightings occurred above depths of 500-1,500m (Frantzis et al. 2003). It is the only beaked whale common in the Mediterranean Sea. In Greece, the majority of past sightings are associated with the Hellenic Trench, from eastern Rodos Island to northwest Corfu Island (Frantzis et al. 2003, Frantzis 2009) with the highest number of sightings south of Crete and west of Lefkada (Frantzis et al. 2003, Podestà et al. 2016). Along the Hellenic Trench the species feeds almost exclusively on mesopelagic and bathypelagic cephalopods (Frantzis

2009). Several sightings and numerous strandings have been recorded in the Wider Project Area (based on Frantzis 2009).

The Hellenic Trench is one of the species high-density areas in the Mediterranean. The total species population size in the Greeks Seas as well as in the Wider Project Area is unknown (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting at https://nature-art17.eionet.europa.eu/article17/). It is worth noting that Greek seas are considered to host quite a significant portion of the Mediterranean population (Frantzis 2009).

2.2.1.3 Risso's Dolphin (Grampus griseus)

Figure 2-7. Risso's dolphin (Grampus griseus) (© Massimo Demma)

Risso's dolphin is the largest dolphin that commonly occurs in the Greek Seas. The sightings and strandings records indicate that the species is present in all parts of the Greek Seas, however the only known area where the species is predictably present is the Myrtoon Sea extending south to the north-western Crete. The species is present in the Ionian Sea, as confirmed by strandings which have been recorded from north Corfu Island to south Peloponnese. No sighting records have been made in the Ionian Sea which indicates that either the species is present in low numbers or it is present outside warm period when past surveys have been made. The strandings in the Ionian Sea have been recorded from the end of September until late April. The species is present primarily along the continental slope, preferably deep water and shelf break where the slope is the steepest, but also close to the coast, particularly when the shelf is narrow (Frantzis 2009). The species feeds mainly with squid and occasionally with fish.

The total species population size in the Greeks Seas is estimated to be 100 – 600 individuals (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting at https://nature-art17.eionet.europa.eu/article17/). The population size in the in the Wider Project Area is unknown.

2.2.1.4 Bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus)

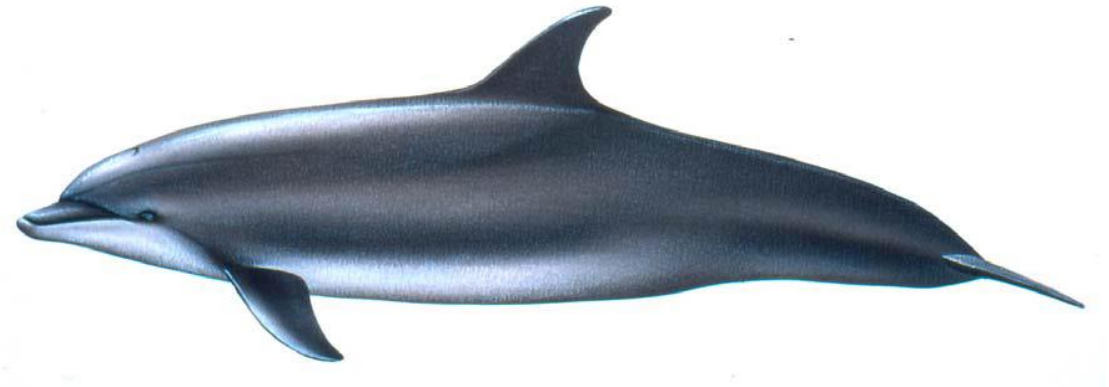

Figure 2-8. Common bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus) (© Artescienza-M.Würtz)

The bottlenose dolphin is the most common species of dolphin found in coastal shallow waters of the Mediterranean (Frantzis 2009). It is homogeneously distributed across all Greek Seas as it has been sighted in most coastal areas, straights and gulfs. (Frantzis 2009). The Bottlenose Dolphin in Greece, similar to Short-beaked Common Dolphin prefers the continental shelf usually staying within a depth of up to 200m (Frantzis 2009). It is known to consume a variety of prey items being quite adaptive.

The total species population size in the Greeks Seas is estimated to be 3,800 – 9,000 individuals (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting at https://nature-art17.eionet.europa.eu/article17/). The population size in the in the Wider Project Area is unknown.

2.2.1.5 Striped dolphin (Stenella coeruleoalba)

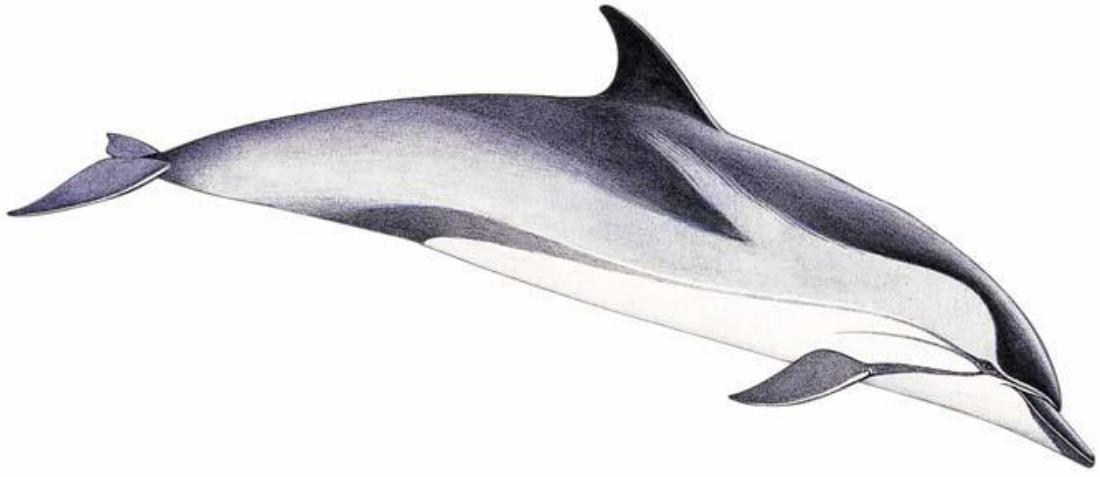

Figure 2-9. Striped dolphin (Stenella coeruleoalba) (© Massimo Demma/ICRAM)

The Striped Dolphin, a small delphinid, has a year-round presence in Greek waters. It is the most abundant dolphin species in Greece and the Mediterranean overall (Frantzis 2009). Its distribution in Greece is widespread and it occurs in all deep (>500m), pelagic waters and the continental slope but it can also inhabit intermediate depths of 200-500m (Frantzis 2009). The Striped Dolphin is frequently sighted along the length of the Hellenic Trench. The species diet includes mainly cephalopods, as well as fish and crustaceans.

The total species population size in the Greeks Seas is estimated to be 20,000 – 80,000 individuals (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting at https://nature-art17.eionet.europa.eu/article17/). The population size in the in the Wider Project Area is unknown.

2.2.1.6 Short-beaked common dolphin (Delphinus delphis)

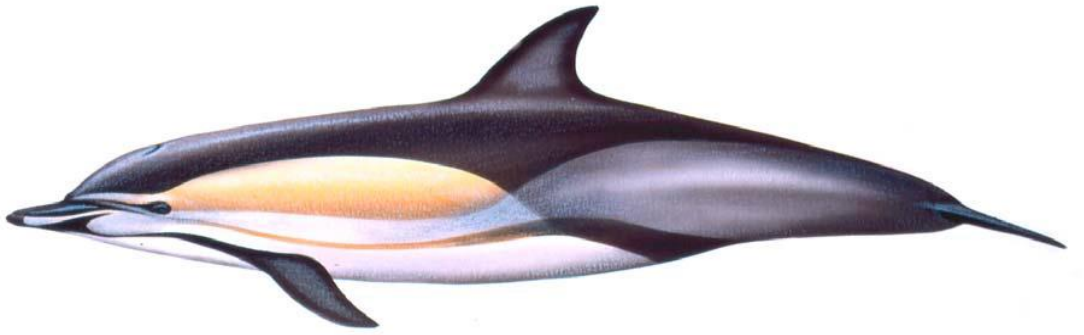

Figure 2-10. Short-beaked common dolphin (Delphinus delphis) (© Artescienza-M.Würtz)

The Short Beaked Common Dolphin (or simply Common Dolphin) is a small delphinid with a year-round presence in Greek waters. Its distribution in Greece is patchy and their presence seems to be mostly limited to the central and northern Greek Seas (Frantzis 2009). In general, it prefers shallow (<200m) and coastal waters, with exception of Gulf of Corinth where it exhibits preference to pelagic habitats (Frantzis 2009). It exhibits flexible feeding habits. The distribution of the Common Dolphin in the Ionian Sea the is limited to shallow waters between north Lefkada, Kefallonia and south Zakynthos and the mainland. In the Inner Ionian Sea, the main prey includes shoaling fish e.g., anchovies and sardines.

The total species population size in the Greeks Seas is estimated to be 750 – 4,200 individuals (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting at https://nature-art17.eionet.europa.eu/article17/).

The population of Common Dolphins of the Inner Ionian Sea has been the focus of regular surveys for years and has been well documented (Bearzi et al. 2008B). The local population counted 150 individuals until the mid-90s and their range seemed to cover the entire Inner Ionian. Since then, the population has declined dramatically with only an estimated 15 individuals encountered over the past years mostly sighted in southern Lefkada (Bearzi et al. 2008B).

2.2.2 Seals

2.2.2.1 Mediterranean Monk Seal

Figure 2-11. Striped dolphin (Stenella coeruleoalba) (© Massimo Demma/ICRAM)

The Mediterranean Monk Seal is the only pinniped (seal) living in the Mediterranean region, the rarest extant member of the Phocidae family and one of the rarest marine mammals in the world.

Mediterranean monk seals were once widely and continuously distributed in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, and in the North Atlantic waters from Morocco to Cap Blanc, including the Canary, Madeira and the Azores Islands. A few individuals have been recorded in Senegal, the Gambia and the Cape Verde Islands in the southern end, as well as in Portugal and Atlantic France in the northern end of the species' distribution. Today the distribution of the Mediterranean is highly fragmented and consists of three to four isolated subpopulations (Karamanlidis et al. 2016). In the Mediterranean Sea, the stronghold of the species has been on islands in the Ionian and Aegean Seas, and along the coasts of Greece and western and southern Turkey ((Güçlüsoy, Kiraç, Veryeri, & Savaş 2004, Gücü, Gücü, & Orek 2004, Anonymous, 2007). In the North Atlantic, two subpopulations exist: one at Cabo Blanco (also known as Cap Blanc) at the border of Mauritania and Western Sahara (González & Fernandez de Larrinoa 2012, Martínez-Jauregui et al. 2012), and one at the Archipelago of Madeira (Pires, Neves, & Karamanlidis, 2008). An unknown number of monk seals might still survive at the Mediterranean coasts of eastern Morocco (and perhaps Algeria) (Mo, Bazairi, Bayed, & Agnesi, 2011), but without on-going systematic conservation actions the fate of this subpopulation is unknown.

The total species population size in the Greece is estimated to be 300 – 400 individuals (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting at https://nature-art17.eionet.europa.eu/article17/).

2.2.3 Sea turtles

There are three species of sea turtles that regularly occur in the Mediterranean: **Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)**, **Green Turtle (Chelonia mydas)** and **Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*).** The sea turtles live almost exclusively in the marine environment with females returning to land for dig nests and lay eggs, while males almost never return to

land. The range of all three species extends along the Wider Project Area (Legakis & Maragou 2009, 2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting: species range), however only Loggerhead Turtle and Green Turtle have been recorded in the area (2013-18 Habitats Directive Article 17 Reporting: species distribution). Among these two the Loggerhead Turtle is the species of interest due to its regular presence and nesting in the Wider Project Area of the Kyparissia Bay, while the Green Turtle is regular but rare visitor in the area. The Leatherback sea turtle to is only considered in Greece to be a visitor from the Atlantic (Casale & Margaritoulis 2010).

2.2.3.1 Loggerhead turtle (Caretta caretta)

Figure 2-12. Loggerhead Turtle (Caretta caretta)

The Loggerhead turtle is an oceanic turtle with a global distribution. It is a migratory species and may travel thousands of kilometres to forage and to return to its breeding sites. After hatching, logger-head turtles adopt an oceanic lifestyle in major current systems (Bolten and Witherington 2003). After 4-19 years spent in the oceanic zone, they move to neritic areas where they forage and mature over 10-39 years (Avens and Snover 2013). After attaining sexual maturity, they migrate between neritic foraging grounds and nesting areas. The Mediterranean, where the species is nesting in the eastern basin (Legakis & Maragou 2009), the breeding population of the loggerhead turtle is spread over tens of rookeries which are estimated to produce over 7,200 nests annually (Casale & Margaritoulis 2010) with the majority of nests being found in Greece. The country's two most important nesting beaches are located in the Wider Project Area, namely on Zakynthos (Laganas Bay) and on Peloponnese (Kyparissia Bay), which host 43% and 19% of all nests in Greece, respectively (Legakis & Maragou 2009). The average number of nests per season for the period 1984-2007 at Laganas Bay and at Kyparissia Bay are 1,244 nests/season (range: 833-2,018 nests/season) and 621 nests/season (range: 286-927 nests/season) (Casale & Margaritoulis 2010). Currently, Kyparissia Bay hosts the largest Loggerhead turtle nesting aggregation in the Mediterranean Sea (Rees et al. 2020).

In Greece and in the Central Mediterranean, the turtles after hatching disperse mainly in the Ionian, south-central Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas (Casale & Mariani 2014). Loggerhead turtles, especially juveniles, forage in almost all oceanic areas in the Mediterranean. Water circulation system has the greatest effect on their distribution (Casale et al. 2018). The neritic foraging areas (i.e., those located above continental shelf) are more frequently used by larger turtles, including adults (Casale et al. 2018, Figure 2-13). Loggerhead turtles generally

overwinter within or close to their foraging areas, however some may move from cold areas e.g., Adriatic Sea during winter (Casale et al. 2018).

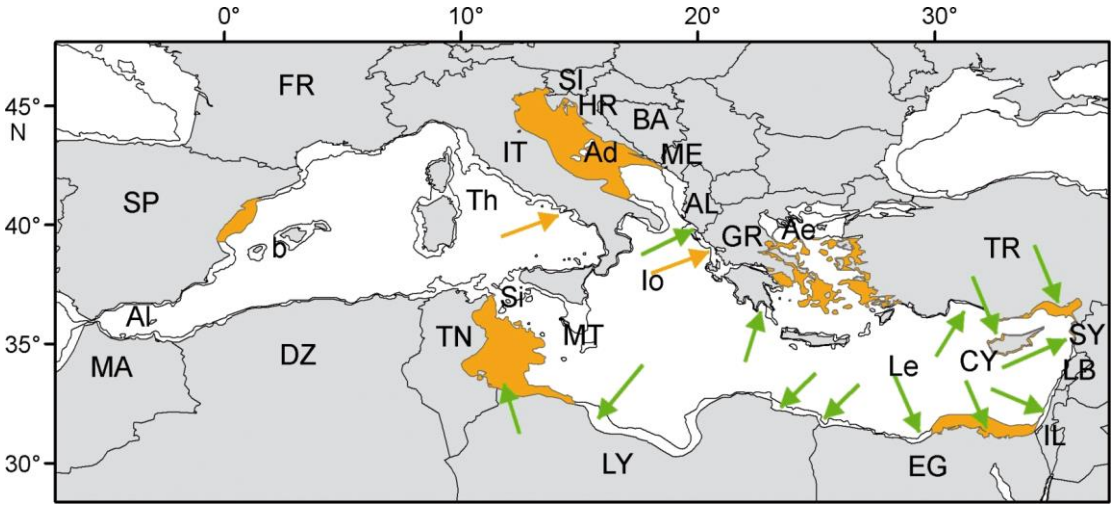

Figure 2-13. Neritic foraging and wintering sites for loggerhead turtles (orange areas and arrows) and green turtle (green arrows) (adopted from Casale et al. 2018).

Migration corridors, are areas which are frequently used by migrating turtles, mainly for adult breeding migration and particularly for post-breeding migration from breeding areas to foraging grounds. Therefore, these migratory corridors are used at the end of the breeding season, in May and June by males, while in July and August, mostly by females (Casale et al. 2018). The main migration corridors are presented in Figure 2-14.

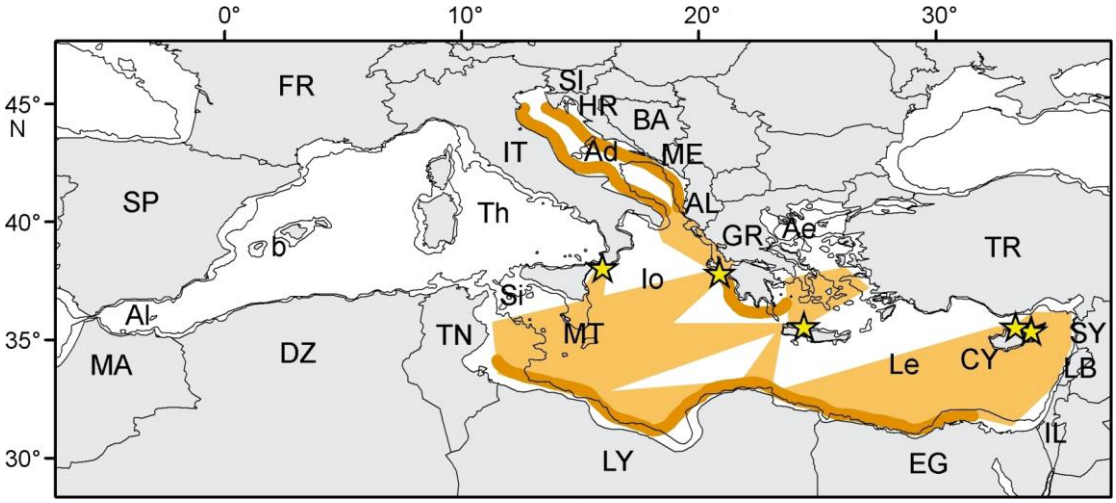

Figure 2-14. Main known migratory corridors for adult loggerhead turtles to and from breeding sites (stars). Light brown areas represent migratory funnels in the open sea while darker strips represent paths along the coasts, typically in shallow waters (adopted from Casale et al. 2018).

The movements of the Loggerhead turtles nesting in the Ionian Sea, particularly those from Zakynthos has been well studied by satellite or GPS telemetry (e.g., Zbinden et al. 2008, Schofield et al. 2010a-c, Schofield et al. 2013, Luschi & Casale 2014). The data from 75 tracked turtles breeding on Zakynthos showed after breeding the turtles migrate to neritic sites with waters shallower than 100m, with the majority of turtles migrate north to the Adriatic Sea and Amvrakikos Gulf (42%) or south-west to Libya and Tunisia (32%), while the remaining either

stay in the Ionian Sea or move to the eastern or western Mediterranean (Zbinden et al. 2008, Schofield et al. 2013). After leaving their foraging areas (in October – November) the tracked turtles move to their overwintering areas further south (Zbinden et al. 2008). The main foraging and overwintering areas are presented in the Map 11, below. The main foraging areas are located over the continental shelves and slopes (Ullmann & Stachowitsch 2015) in the Northern and Southern Adriatic Sea, Ionian Sea, the Strait of Sicily and the Tunisian shelf. A small proportion (~7%) were resident to Zakynthos. Significantly more males than females remain within 100km of Zakynthos (Schofield et al. 2013).

2.2.3.2 Green turtle (Chelonia mydas)

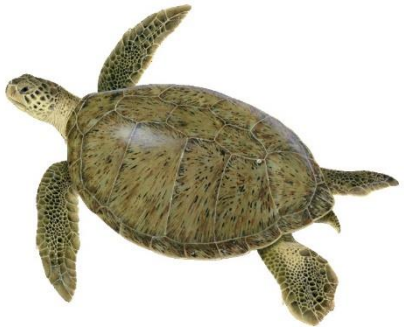

Figure 2-15. Green turtle (Chelonia mydas)

The green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) is an migratory oceanic turtle with a global distribution. Their nesting sites in the Mediterranean are located mostly in Turkey, Cyprus and Syria (Figure 2-13) with an average of 1500 nests per year. No regular nesting areas are located in Greece. They use mostly marine areas in the Levantine basin, but also forage in Greece and Libya, as well as occasionally in the Adriatic Sea and the western Mediterranean basin (Figure 2-16). In Greece local concentration have been found in Lakonikos Bay, southern Peloponnese. Stranding data indicate that there is a more frequent presence of adult green turtles in southern Aegean (Casale & Margaritoulis 2010). The species has been recorded in the Wider Project Area.

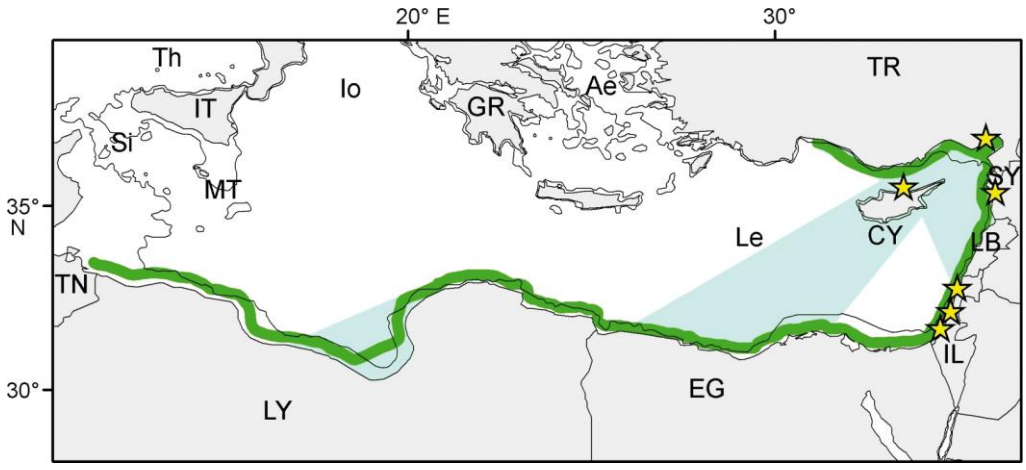

Figure 2-16. Main known migration corridors for adult female green turtles during reproductive migrations from the breeding sites (stars) (adopted from Casale et al. 2018).

2.2.4 Seabirds

For the purpose of the present study, only those seabird species which are exclusively associated with the marine environment and the pelagic area, that have been recorded in the Ionian Sea in the past and their presence in the wider Project area has been either confirmed. These species include pelagic seabird species**: Scopoli's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*), Yelkouan Shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*)** and **European Storm-petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*)**, as well as, coastal seabird species which could be present in the pelagic areas due to shallow waters in the Project area or due to human activities, i.e. **Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) and the Mediterranean Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*).**

2.2.4.1 Scopoli's's Shearwater (Calonectris diomedea)

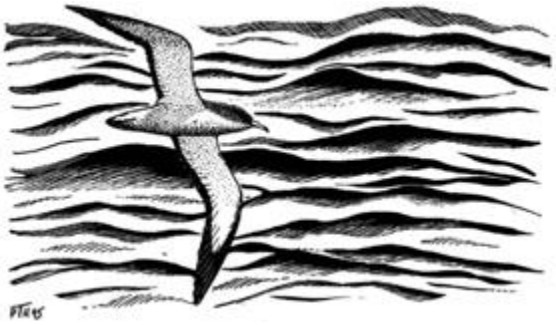

Figure 2-17. Scopoli's Shearwater (Calonectris diomedea) (© Paul Hirst)

Scopoli's Shearwater (C*alonectris diomedea*) breeds across Mediterranean with the majority of the population spending the non-breeding season in the Atlantic. In the past it was considered conspecific with the Cory's Shearwater (C*alonectris borealis*) which breeds in the Atlantic. In Greece the species breeding in the Aegean and Ionian Sea with the largest known colony being located at Strofades Islets (within the Project Area), south of the Zakynthos Island in the Ionian Sea, with an estimated breeding population of 5,550 pairs (Karris et al. 2017). Other large colonies occur mainly in the southern, central and eastern Aegean Sea although breeding has also been confirmed in the northern Aegean Sea (Fric et al. 2012). The only other known breeding area in the Ionian Sea s at Diapontia islands at Kerkyra with much smaller breeding population of 60-100 pairs (Fric et al. 2012).

2.2.4.2 Yelkouan Shearwater (Puffinus yelkouan)

Figure 2-18. Yelkouan Shearwater (Puffinus yelkouan) (© Paul Hirst)

Yelkouan Shearwater is an endemic species to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The known species colonies in Greece are located in the Aegean Sea, while no colonies have been found so far in the Ionian Sea. The main known colonies are located the North, East and Central Aegean Sea (Fric et al. 2012), with the largest being on Gyaros island in the Northern Cyclades (Fric & Portolou 2016). During the non-breeding season Yelkouan Shearwaters disperse widely within the Mediterranean Sea (mainly Adriatic and Aegean Seas) and the Black Sea. Additionally, 4,000-6,000 individuals are estimated to overwinter in the Aegean Sea The main foraging areas of the Yelkouan Shearwaters are rich coastal and pelagic fishing grounds in the North, Central and East Aegean Sea, while the species is less common in the South Aegean and Ionian Seas (Fric et la. 2012).

The global species population is estimated at 15,337-30,519 pairs with a decreasing population trend (30% in the next 54 year i.e., three generations). Ten colonies in the Mediterranean Sea have disappeared during the last 60 years (Derhe 2012B, BirdLife International 2015, Birdlife International 2018B). The national population is estimated at 4,000-7,000 pairs (without the inclusion of the Gyaros colony which is estimated at 3,090-7,450 pairs), equivalent to 22% percent of the global population (more than 38% with the inclusion of the Gyaros population). The national population trend is estimated to be stable.

2.2.4.3 European Storm-petrel (Hydrobates pelagicus)

Figure 2-19. European Storm-petrel (Hydrobates pelagicus) (© Paul Hirst)

European Storm-petrel is the smallest seabird species in the Western Palaearctic. Its distribution is limited mainly to the Northeast Atlantic Ocean and the West Mediterranean Sea, while the Aegean Sea comprises the easternmost part of its range. The Mediterranean

subspecies *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis* comprises less than 5% of the overall global population (i.e., 12,000-17,500 breeding pairs) with the main colonies located in Malta, Sicily and the Balearic Islands. The species occurs in all Greek seas mainly in spring and summer during the breeding period. Up to date only two colonies have been located, one in the Central Aegean Sea and another in the Cyclades. Storm-petrels, usually individual birds, or very small groups, are regularly observed in the Cyclades, Dodecanese, Central and southwest Aegean Sea and the Karpathian Sea suggesting potential existence of other breeding colonies (Fric et al. 2012).

2.2.4.4 Mediterranean Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii)

Figure 2-20. Mediterranean Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii) (© Jens Overgaard Christensen)

Mediterranean Shag is a cormorant species, resident and widely spread in Greece which usually occurs in coastal waters. Shags breed colonially, forming small, loose (rarely dense) colonies, on cliff ledges or small caves or even under thick vegetation. Nesting sites are re-used in successive years by the same birds. They often roost in large groups (Fric et al. 2012). It is a good swimmer and a foot-propelled diver which feed on benthic and pelagic fish in waters with depths up to 80 m which are usually located in coastal zones within a 20 km radius around their colony or roosting sites (Wanless *et al.* 1991; Velando and Friere 1999).

The Greek national population size is 1,300 -1,450 pairs (Fric et al. 2012), equivalent to 2% of the species European population (BirdLife International 2015, BirdLife International 2018D). The population in Greece is considered to be stable (Fric et al. 2012). The island of Zakynthos hosts an important population of the Mediterranean Shag (i.e., 44-46 adult and juvenile individuals) (Portolou et al. 2009, Fric et al.2012). The species breeds along the western coast of the Zakynthos and forages in coastal waters along the western and eastern coast, including the Bay of Laganas. Therefore, the major breeding and foraging areas of the Mediterranean Shag around Zakynthos Island are located outside the Project Area and within the Wider Project Area.

2.2.4.5 Yellow-legged Gull (Larus michahellis)

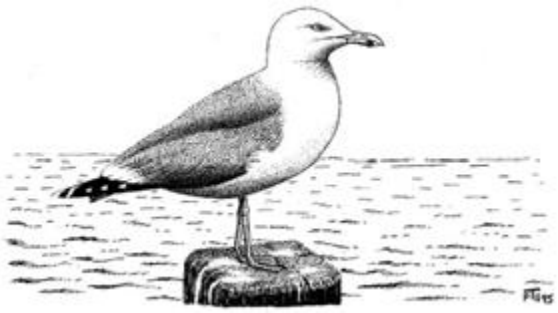

Figure 2-21. Yellow-legged Gull (Larus michahellis) (© Paul Hirst)

The Yellow-legged Gull is the most common gull species in Greece. It is widely distributed around the southern regions of the Palaearctic, from the western part of the Black Sea across to the Mediterranean, Iberian Peninsula, and reaching the Macaronesian region. Breeding grounds are centred mainly around the Mediterranean but reach also the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and eastern Atlantic. In Greece, the species is resident and widespread all along the coastline of mainland Greece and of the islands of the Aegean and Ionian Seas.

In Greece, the largest breeding colonies are located on uninhabited islets of the Evvoikos and Saronikos Gulfs that surround Attica, the most urbanised area in the country, although colonies occur on most Greek islets (Fric et al. 2012). Wintering grounds include the coast of southwest Asia, most of the European coast up to Denmark and the coast of Africa from Western Sahara through the eastern Mediterranean (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996).

3 Methodology

3.1 Pelagic surveys

Pelagic surveys for cetaceans, sea turtles and seabirds were carried out using i) a 13m sailing boat, ii) a 7,5m RIB boat, iii) a Cessna C172 Skyhawk 2 high wing, ultralight aircraft and iv) a DJI drone.

3.1.1 Boat surveys

Visual-based surveys

The method applied for visual surveying seabirds, cetaceans and sea turtles in the Pelagic surveys area was the **European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS)**, based on Tasker *et.al* 1984 and Champhuysen & Garthe 2004 and adopted to Greek/Mediterranean conditions through the LIFE-Nature project for the Identification of Marine Important Bird Areas (marine IBAs) in Greece, entitled "Concrete Conservation Actions for the Mediterranean Shag and Audouin's Gull in Greece, including the Inventory of Relevant Marine IBAs", LIFE07 NAT/GR/000285, (http://www.ornithologiki.gr/en/seabirds), as described in Fric & Gaganis 2009.

In summary, the method is aiming at systematically recording seabirds, cetaceans and sea turtles as well as human activities in the survey area, in transects by trained observers, from a boat which is moving at a constant low speed (<15 knots). Swimming seabirds, cetacean, fish and sea turtles are being recorded continuously in a 300m wide strip transect in **5-minute intervals**, while flying birds are recorded with **1-min snapshot**. Scanning angle is 180° (*i.e. in front of the survey vessel*). The perpendicular distance of swimming fauna is recorded relative to the transect line ahead of the ship: **A = 0-50m, B = 50-100m, C = 100-200m, D = 200-300m, E = >300m, W = within 300m, but no distance recorded**. For flying birds, coded with **F**, there is no distance indication. Boat position (**poskey**), namely geographical longitude and latitude, are recorded every 5 min. The marine species are spotted by a naked eye or binoculars and are identified by binoculars.

A method described by Heinemann (1981) is used to determine the distances at sea and more particularly the distance of 300*m* from the observing platform which determines the width of the line transect by using a calliper or a ruler. During ESAS surveys data is recorded regarding (A) boat route, (B) marine species and (C) human activities in the survey area, which may have an effect on the presence and behaviour of the marine species.

Survey boat data include: start and end location date, time and geographical location of each line transect, sea state, visibility and floating matter (including fishing vessels). Species data recorded include: species, number of individuals, age (if applicable), distance from the observation vessel, location within or outside 300m line transect, flight direction (for birds), behavior and association with human activities or other species. Datasheets for observation vessel data and species data are provided in Annex I.

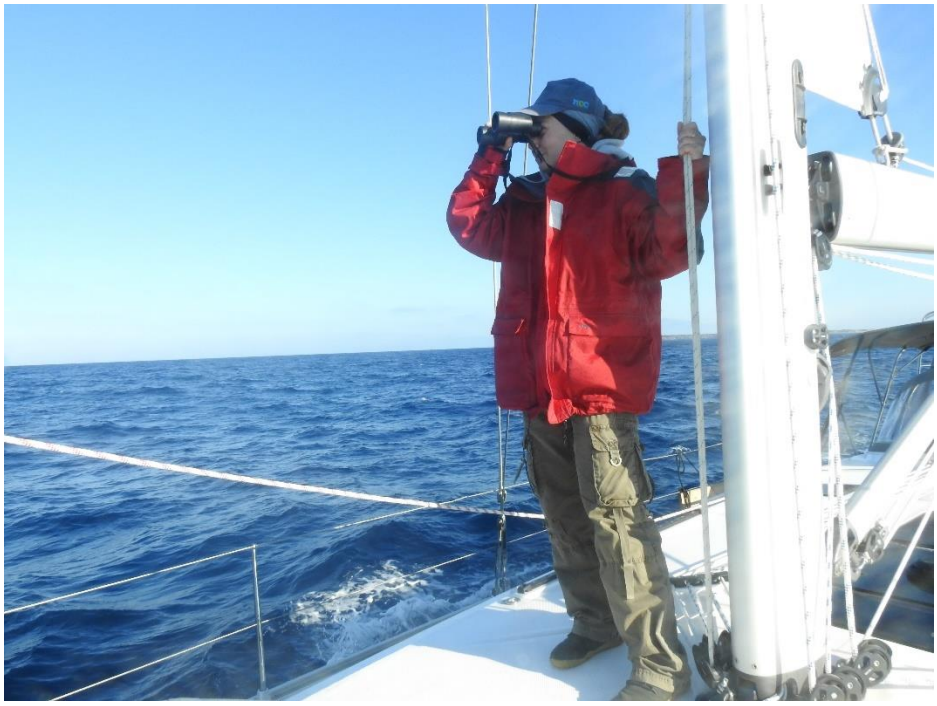

Figure 3-1. ESAS field work

The **survey design for cetaceans** is similar to the established methodology designs for such surveys, used over the past 4 decades (Buckland et al. 2001, Buckland et al. 2004) and used a grid of parallel line transects, that provided comprehensive coverage of the study area.

The transect lines acted as the basis for the daily track line followed by the vessel providing a roughly uniform coverage of the study area. Attempts were made when selecting the orientation of the transect lines, to have them move across (at an angle to) the depth gradient in the area as opposed to moving along (parallel to) the depth gradient. This was done to allow for the coverage of different depth levels during navigation of each transect, in order to minimize detection bias on individual transect lines when mapping sighting data.

When a group of cetaceans is sighted (group defined 'dolphins observed in apparent association, moving in the same direction and often, but not always, engaged in the same activity' (Bearzi et al. 2005) by any of the on-effort observers, the systematic search effort is interrupted while the vessel diverted from the track line toward the sighted animals in order to achieve more accurate determinations of the species, the group size, group age class composition and group activity of the group sighted. In addition to basic environmental data (e.g., Beaufort sea state, visibility conditions etc.) collected at regular 1 hour intervals as well as at the start and at the end of each transect line, data collected for each sighting includes the time, GPS coordinates, initial bearing and radial distance to the cetacean group (used to calculate the perpendicular distance of the sighting to the track line), species identity, group size, group age class composition (3 age classes: Calf < 1/2 length of adult, Juvenile < 2/3 length of adult and adult) and the general activity in which the group is engaged in at the time of approach (e.g. foraging, travelling, milling). For the purpose of the correct identification of the species as well as the correct recording of group size and group age class composition

attempts are made to approach the animals to obtain photographs. Where possible the photographs taken are also used for the photo-identification of individuals. This is done to ensure the same group of animals was not counted twice during the same survey day.

Encounter Rates are calculated as the number of encounters / 100km of "on effort" navigation.

The navigation schedule coincided with the Visual boat-based surveys.

In case a group of cetaceans or seabirds was spotted, a drone was used in order to more accurately identify the species and assess the number of the individuals, record their behaviour and gather the relevant photographic evidence.

The numbers of individuals of each species recorded by ESAS surveys were transformed into species densities per km^2, taking into account the *2x300m=600m* transect survey width and the distance travelled by the survey vessels per 5-minute time interval *distance travelled = boat speed x 5 min*. The locations of number of recorded individuals per species and the density of individuals per species were overlaid 4 geographical minutes (4'x4') reference grid in WGS84 projection coordinate system (Map 5).

Taking into account that more than one may have crossed each 4'x4' reference grid cell, for each cell the following variables were calculated:

- The **average** over all survey trips of the **total number of individuals per species** recorded in a 4'x4' grid cell per trip
- The **maximum** over all survey trips of the **total number of individuals per species** recorded in a 4'x4' grid cell per trip
- The **average** over all survey trips of the **average density of individuals per km^2 per species** in a 4'x4' grid cell per trip
- The **average** over all survey trips of the **maximum density of individuals per km^2 per species** in a 4'x4' grid cell per trip
- The **maximum** over all survey trips of the **average density of individuals per km^2 per species** in a 4'x4' grid cell per trip
- The **maximum** over all survey trips of the **maximum density of individuals per km^2 per species** in a 4'x4' grid cell per trip

It should be noted that individuals recorded outside transect are excluded from density calculation. The densities of the species per reference grid cell are representative of the **habitat suitability**. The variable "**average** over all survey trips of the **average density of individuals per km^2 per species** in a 4'x4' grid cell per trip" was used as a measure of habitat suitability for each species. This variable was classified into 4 classes:

- ***Most suitable habitats*** – top 5% of positive (i.e., non-zero) densities in grid cells
- ***More suitable habitats*** – 25-5% top values of positive densities in grid cells

- ***Suitable habitats*** – 75-25% top values of positive densities in grid cells, and
- ***Presence*** – remaining grid cells with species presence (bottom 25% values).

To further analyse the **patterns of seabird movements** in the area for each grid cell the **prevailing flight directions** were calculated. Additionally, **locations of interactions of seabirds with fisheries** were identified in association with their abundance in absolute numbers.

Finally, for each grid cell the **number of species of interest recorded** in the grid cell was calculated to identify those areas where the **species richness** is the greatest.

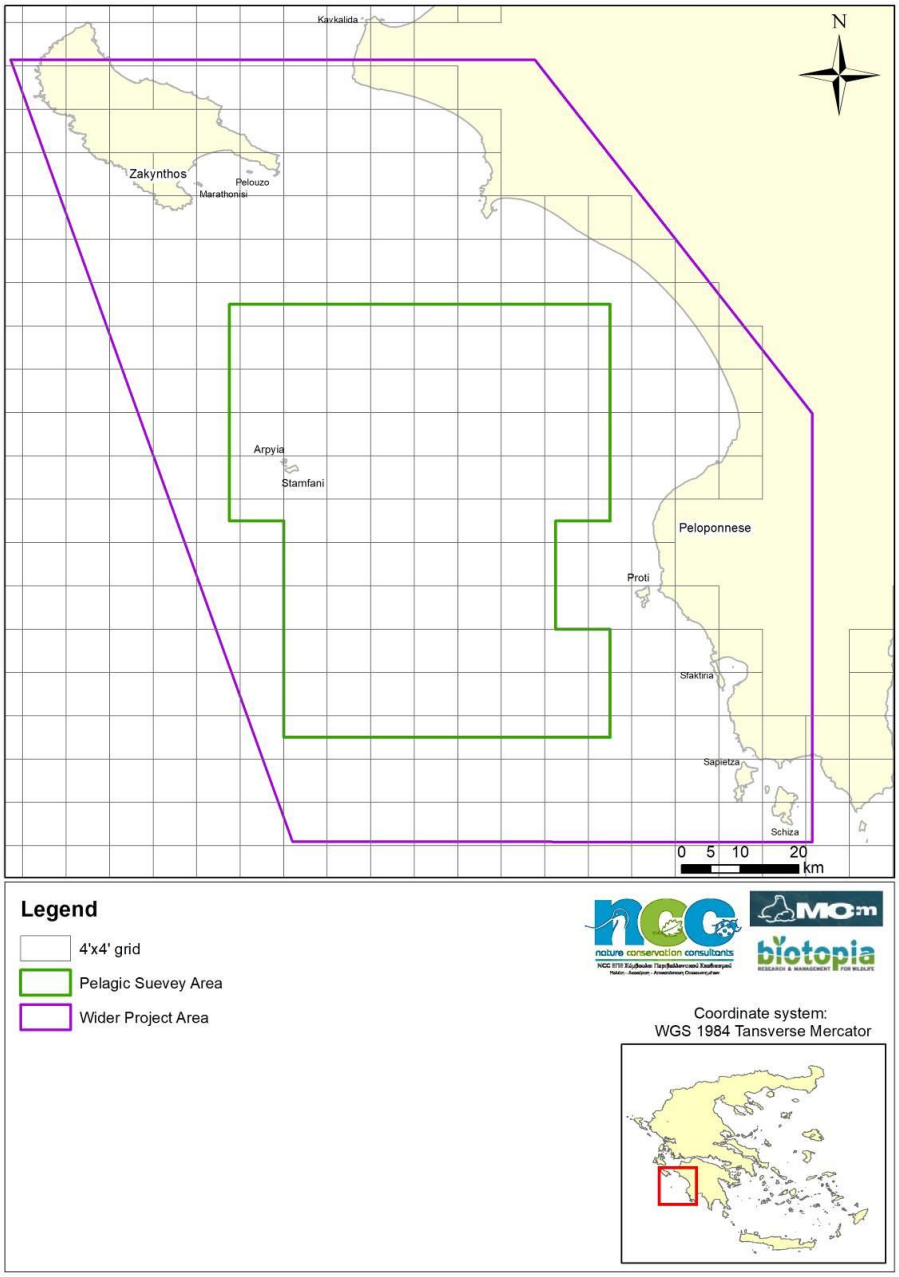

Figure 3-2. Four decimal minute (4'x4') reference grid in WGS84 coordinate system.

Acoustic surveys

The acoustics detection team worked in cooperation with the visual observers, detecting cetacean vocalizations by using a hydrophone array towed behind a sailing boat. The hydrophone array system consisting of High Frequency Magrec HP03 hydrophone elements, comprising a HP03 preamp (Low cut filter set at 2kHz) with a nominal sensitivity of 1.5kHz – 150kHz along with a topside Magrec HP/27ST Amplifier along with a Lenovo Thinkpad Laptop using the PAMGUARD acoustic analysis software specifically developed for cetacean monitoring, covering the range of possible vocalizations for species likely to be encountered during our surveys. The towed hydrophone system was submerged and active, and a PAM operator was active on the equipment during all "On Effort" times during the survey. The hydrophone system consists of 2 hydrophones which record in 2 different channels. The visual observers and PAM operator rotated every 1.5 hour to minimize fatigue.

The PAM operator immediately informed the visual observer team of any acoustic detection.

The hydrophone recordings were analysed by PAMGUARD software using "*whistle and moan detector"* module.

Figure 3-3. Part of the hydrophone array towed behind a sailing boat

3.1.2 Aerial surveys

A high wing, ultralight aircraft (Cessna C172 Skyhawk 2) was used, based at Messolonghi airfield (ICAO designator GR-0008). This four-seater aircraft offers an excellent view from its cockpit and thus was considered suitable and cost-effective for such a medium range mission. The flights were performed along the project area at an altitude of 800 ft and an average Speed Over Ground of 80 knots. The flights were performed under ideal weather conditions (wind speed less than 7 knots, clear sky and visibility more than 10 km).

Figure 3-4. The aircraft used, at Messolonghi airfield

In every case where an "object of interest" was spotted, the airplane left its track and performed one or more circles over the object to visually identify it. Furthermore, the object was photographed so that a proper record of its observation and identification is kept. The photographic operation was performed using a full frame DSLR (Nikon D750) with a 70-200mm F/2.8 Tamron SP lens. All photographs were georeferenced since the camera was equipped with a GPS Unit (Nikon GP-1A).

Figure 3-5. View from the aircraft's cockpit

In the following example, the staged photographic identification process of an initially "object of interest" located on the shore is clearly shown.

Figure 3-6. A: Recording an "object of interest", B: Approaching, C: Identifying

3.1.3 Drone surveys

Drones have been deployed from the sailing or the RIB boat, during the ESAS surveys, to improve the spatial coverage of the transects grid in specific areas of interest.

Drone flights were performed only in calm sea conditions (0-2 BF) and the flight altitude varied between 30m and 200m depending on the target species.

Two different deployment protocols were followed:

1. Transects of a total length of 1km each, perpendicular to the main transect lines of the ESAS Surveys, were performed in certain sites, where suitable habitats for marine mammals and sea turtles existed. The flight altitude was determined to 200m, and the drone camera was set vertical to the flight direction. Georeferenced 4K video footage was recorded to be further analyzed for the presence of target species.
2. In cases when encounter of the target species was obtained through the ESAS transects or through boat transport movements, the drone was deployed in altitudes of 30-50m, depending on the species, to record the numbers and characteristics of the animals of interest. This method has been used to record marine mammals, seabirds and sea turtles.

Figure 3-7. Drone deployment near Strofadia islands

3.2 Coastal surveys

3.2.1 Coastal surveys for the Scopoli's Shearwater

Coastal surveys for the Scopoli's shearwater were performed using the RIB boat and the drone. At known colonies of the species, such as the one at Strofades islands, an adaptation of the existing raft counting method has been developed, with the RIB boat following the birds gathering in front of the colony before sunset, to create the raft. When a raft was spotted, the number of birds was counted using binoculars and ZOOM cameras. The DJI Mini 2 drone was then deployed flying at 30m above sea level to take photos and 4k video of the raft, in order to provide more accurate estimations.

At a second stage, after sunset, the raft was further monitored using a 640x480 thermal camera, to assess the movements of birds from the rafts to the colonies, as well as the timeline of the birds entrance and flights to the colony sites. In this respect, breeding birds were distinguished from prospectors to provide more precise estimates of the colony size.

Additionally, a visit on the island was carried out in order to locate accessible nests of the species.

Figure 3-8. Searching for Scopoli's Shearwater nests on Strofadia islands

3.2.2 Coastal surveys for the Mediterranean Shag

Coastal surveys for the Mediterranean Shag involve the recording of the species individuals, age and activity while the survey vessel travels at a low speed along the survey coastline at a distance of 50-100m from the shore. The species are identified by binoculars, data is recorded on field maps and their locations are recorded by a portable GPS unit. Simultaneously, apparently active or suspected nesting sites are recorded.

The data recorded during field surveys included:

- Date / time of the observation
- Location of the observation (GPS waypoint name, latitude, longitude)
- Seabird species
- Number of individuals
- Number of adult and juvenile individuals (for the Mediterranean Shag)
- Identification of colony/nest sites, number of nests, suitable nesting habitat, roosting sites
- Potential localised threats
- Comments

3.2.3 Coastal surveys for the Mediterranean Monk Seal

Evaluating Habitat Availability and Suitability

To evaluate habitat availability and suitability for the Mediterranean monk seal in the project area its entire coastline is circumnavigated with an inflatable boat, at a distance of about 50 m from the shoreline to locate all potentially suitable coastal caves for resting and/or pupping. Once a cave is located, it is approached swimming and its suitability evaluated, based on a set of physical and environmental features (Dendrinos et al., 2007).

If a cave is evaluated as suitable monk seal habitat, geotagged photos are taken and its GPS position is recorded. It should be noted that Mediterranean monk seals tend to be more selective in their choice of caves used for pupping than for resting (Karamanlidis, Pires, Silva, & Neves, 2004).

Previous research has indicated that the physical and environmental features used in this study are the most important predictors of the selection of a coastal cave as a pupping site by monk seals in Greece. Suitable pupping sites tend to have among other, multiple entrances, beaches in their interior with a soft substrate, a low risk of pup washout and are not easily accessible to humans (Dendrinos et al., 2007).

During the aforementioned research efforts the field team of MOm tries also to collect information that could lead to a preliminary assessment of the demographic composition of the Mediterranean monk seal population in the area (Dendrinos, Kotomatas, & Tounta, 1999). During the cave inspections, researchers search for the presence of recent signs of cave use,

such as tracks, scats, pieces of fur or blood. If a seal is encountered, photographs or video are taken in order to enable future individual identification.

Finally, during the circumnavigation of the coastline the research team collects information on human activities and threats to the Mediterranean monk seal in the region, and more specifically information on the overall intensity of human activity and to a lesser extent on fishery – seal interactions in the area.

Collection of reports on Mediterranean monk seal sightings

Apart from performing visits to the seal shelters the researchers MOm collect and evaluate reports of seal sightings conducted by other observers (such as local citizens, tourists, divers, professional and amateur fishermen). Location, date and time of the observation, behaviour of the animal, as well as visible characteristics (size, developmental stage, coloration, external pelage marks or scars, overall status of the animal) are recorded. This method of data collection is based on the methodology of the operation of the National Rescue and Information Network (Adamantopoulou et al., 1999). Although this information originates from non-scientists, it forms a considerable source of relevant data, which, upon careful evaluation and analysis, complements the work conducted directly in the field. In addition, the collection of data by non-scientists in combination with the data collected by researchers allows for the immediate reaction of the field team of MOm in cases of emergency, such as animals needing aid or dead animals.

3.3 Sea turtle telemetry

The objective of the activity is to track three adult male loggerhead turtles from the Kyparissiakos Gulf breeding population and investigate the oceanographic conditions they inhabit – with a focus on the variability of temperature with depth.

The SPLASH10-385C Argos tags manufactured by Wildlife Computers were selected. These devices have depth (pressure) and temperature sensors in addition to the usual location fixing capability of Argos tags. The tags were programmed so that they measured temperature and depth in a contemporaneous manner which will result in acquisition of data highlighting the variation of sea temperature with depth that the turtles are experiencing during the anticipated 12-month operation of the tags.

Tracking devices were deployed as per manufacturer recommendations, as has been successfully employed in western Greece in recent years (see Rees et al. 2020).

To capture the turtles a team of three or four people embarked upon a mid-sized rib in the shallow coastal waters near Kyparissia Town, during the first days of May which was deemed to be prime breeding season for the population of turtles that breed locally.

In order to be certain that we were capturing adult males, and to avoid capturing sub-adult males or possibly resident males no in breeding condition, we only sought to catch males that were mounted on females. These were obvious to spot as the couples were mostly at the surface and the process involved conspicuous splashing.

We slowly approached the mating pairs from behind and one researcher jumped into the water to secure the male. A second researcher ensured the one holding the turtle remained at the surface by means of holding a rope that was around the jumper's shoulders. A third researcher then either from the boat or in the water wrapped a tangle net around the captured turtle to prevent it from being able to swim away.

The turtle was then brought ashore by the boat, still in the water, under constant observation by the first researcher to ensure no complications occurred during the brief transport.

Figure 3-9. Wildlife Computers SPLASH10-385 satellite transmitter used in the project.

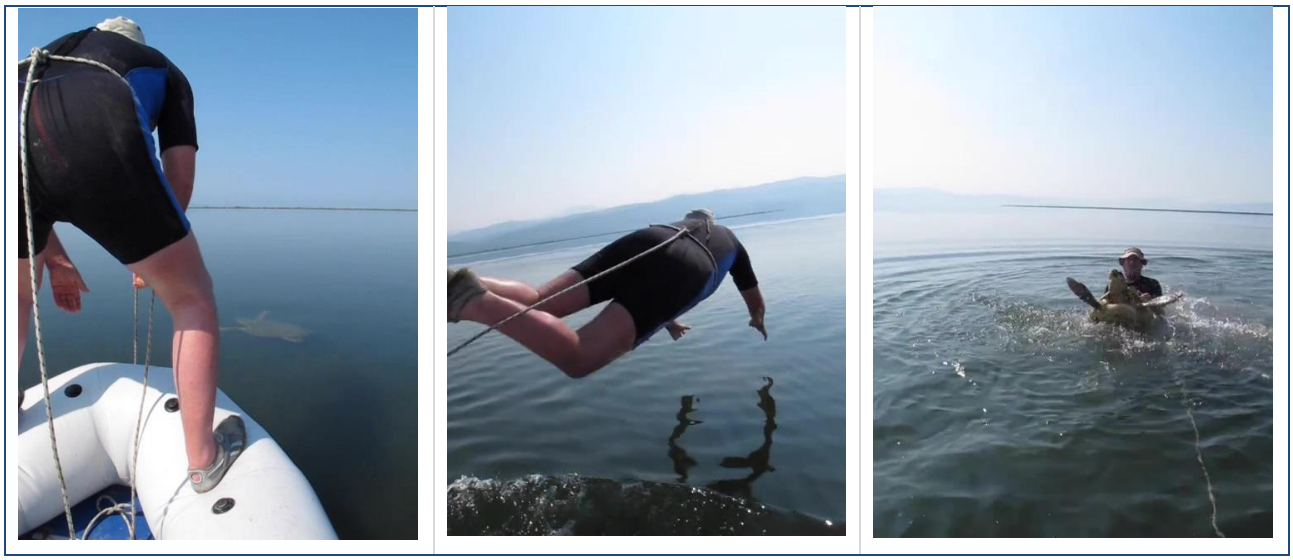

Figure 3-10. "Rodeo" technique to capture turtles: a) Turtle spotted…, b) Jumping for the turtle…, c) Turtle caught.

3.4 Telemetry for seabirds and marine mammals

A marine ornithological radar (HALO 24) is used to track and record the flights of Scopoli's shearwaters from and to the Strofadia islands colony, assess their seasonal distribution/occurrence within the project area, the use of this area as foraging habitat, the interaction with marine mammals in foraging aggregations, and to further assess the overall sensitivity of the Strofadia islands breeding population to the potential impacts of the hydrocarbon research/exploration activities.

Marine radar surveys were carried out during day and night using a sailing boat. Bird flights were recorded by the marine radar and stored in a geodatabase using specialised software.

Combining the data of the radar, with the boat surveys and the existing telemetry data, the patterns of space use by the species for foraging in the "Ionian block" lease area will be further explored.

4 Results

4.1 Pelagic surveys

4.1.1 Boat surveys

A total of **425 nautical miles** of boat-based visual surveys and cetacean surveys were carried out on 24-26/3/2023, 01/04/2023, 12-13/05/2023 and 16-18/05/2023 in Pelagic Survey Area, as well as, surrounding areas in the Wider Project Area to assess the presence, abundance and distribution of the cetacean, sea turtle and seabird species of interest.

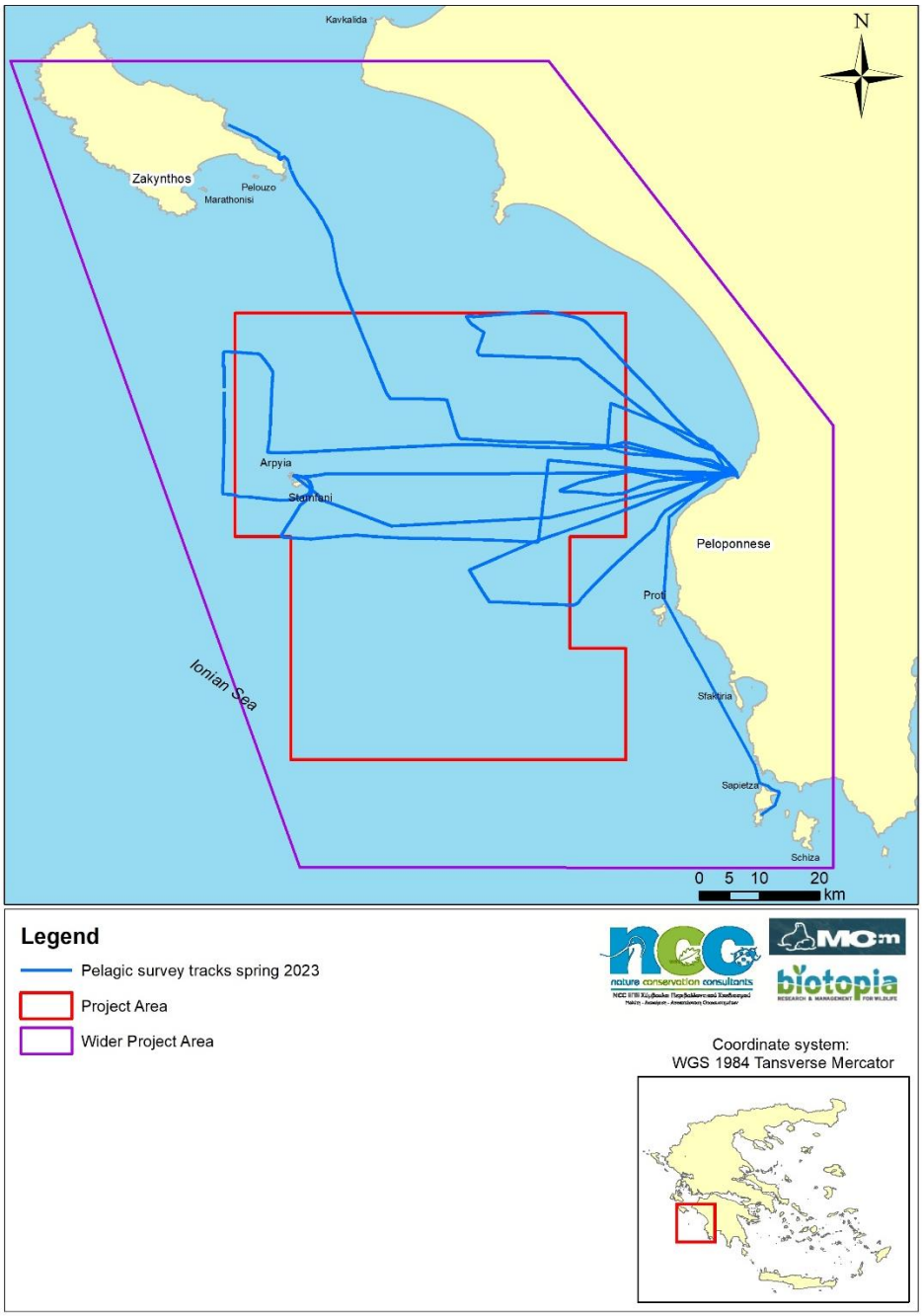

Figure 4-1. Visual boat-based survey tracks in spring 2023

The pelagic surveys covered systematically the entire Pelagic Surveys Area. During these surveys 5 seabird species (**Scopoli's Shearwater** (*Calonectris diomedea*), **Yelkouan Shearwater** (Puffinus yelkouan), **European Storm-Petrel** (*Hydrobates pelagicus*), **Mediterranean Shag** (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*)) and **Yellow-legged Gull** (*Larus michahellis*), 1 cetacean species (**Striped dolphin** (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)) and 1 sea turtle species (**Loggerhead turtle** (*Caretta caretta)* were recorded. All species of interest were recorded within the Pelagic Surveys Area, with some also outside in the Wider Project Area.

*Table 4-1. Species and number of individuals recorded in the Pelagic surveys area and the project area (species of interest are marked with **bold**).*

Species	Common name	Number of individuals	Project Area	Wider Project Area
Caretta caretta	Loggerhead Sea Turtle	5	√	√
Stenella coeruleoalba	Striped dolphin	12	√	√
Calonectris diomedea	Scopoli's Shearwater	407	√	√
Puffinus yelkouan	Yelkouan Shearwater	56	√	√
Hydrobates pelagicus	European Storm-petrel	2	√	√
Phalacrocorax aristotelis	Mediterranean Shag	1		√
Larus michahellis	Yellow-legged Gull	145	√	√

Provided on the maps below are the locations of the recorded species and their abundance.

Additionally, during acoustic surveys using towed hydrophone cetaceans were recorded in at the northern and eastern edge of the Project Area.

Sea turtles

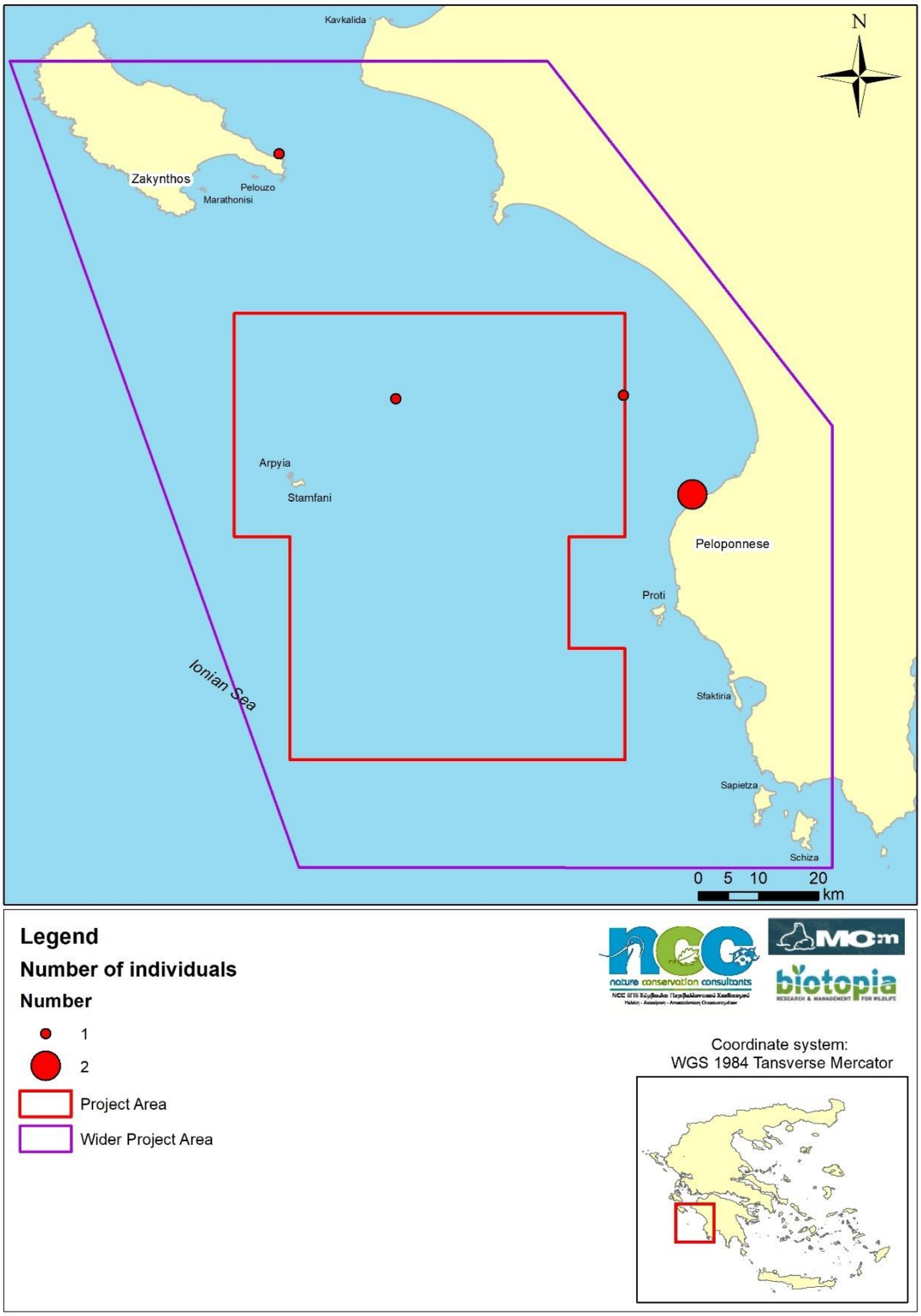

Figure 4-2. Locations of Loggerhead turtle records

Cetaceans

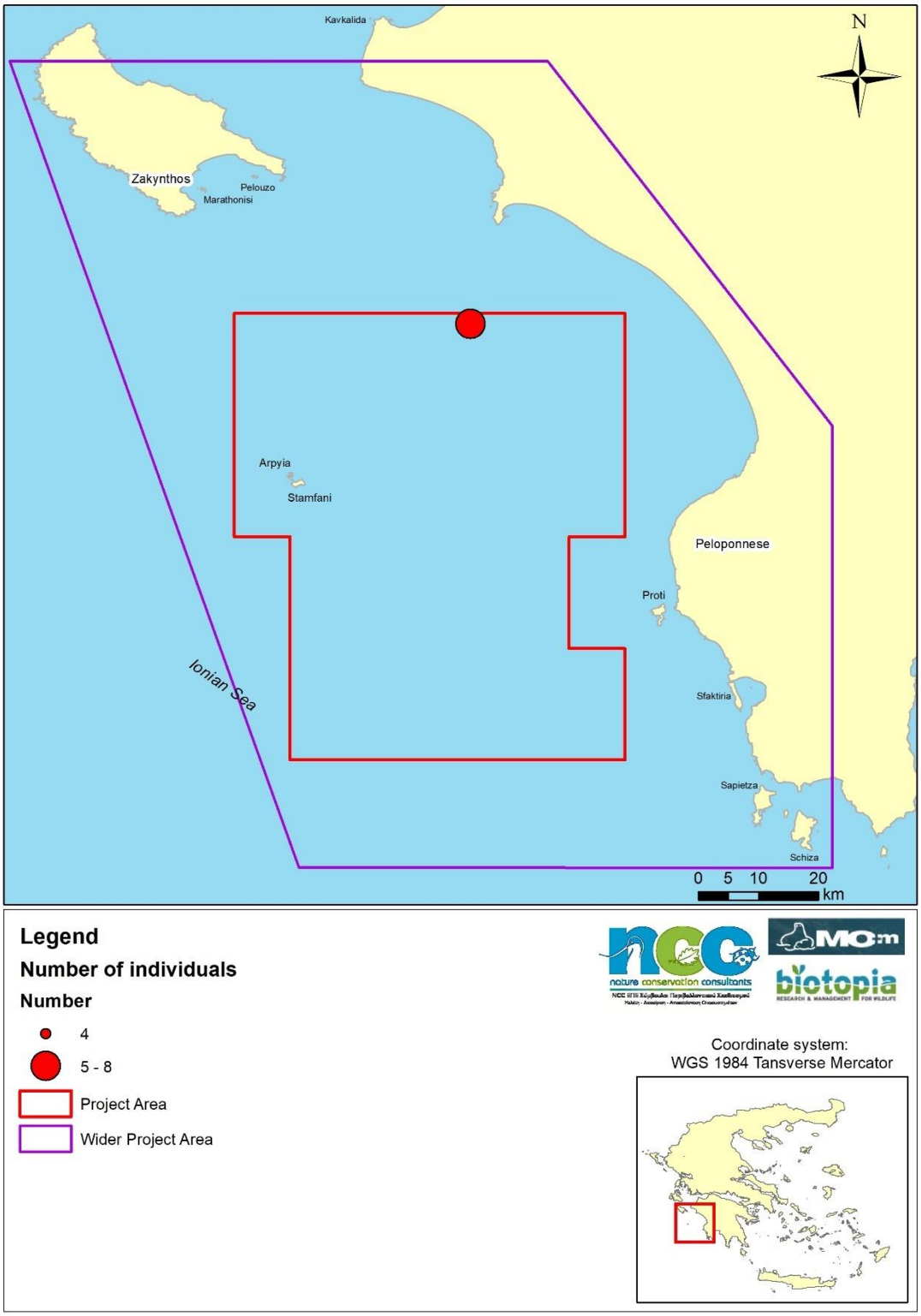

Figure 4-3. Locations of Striped dolphin records

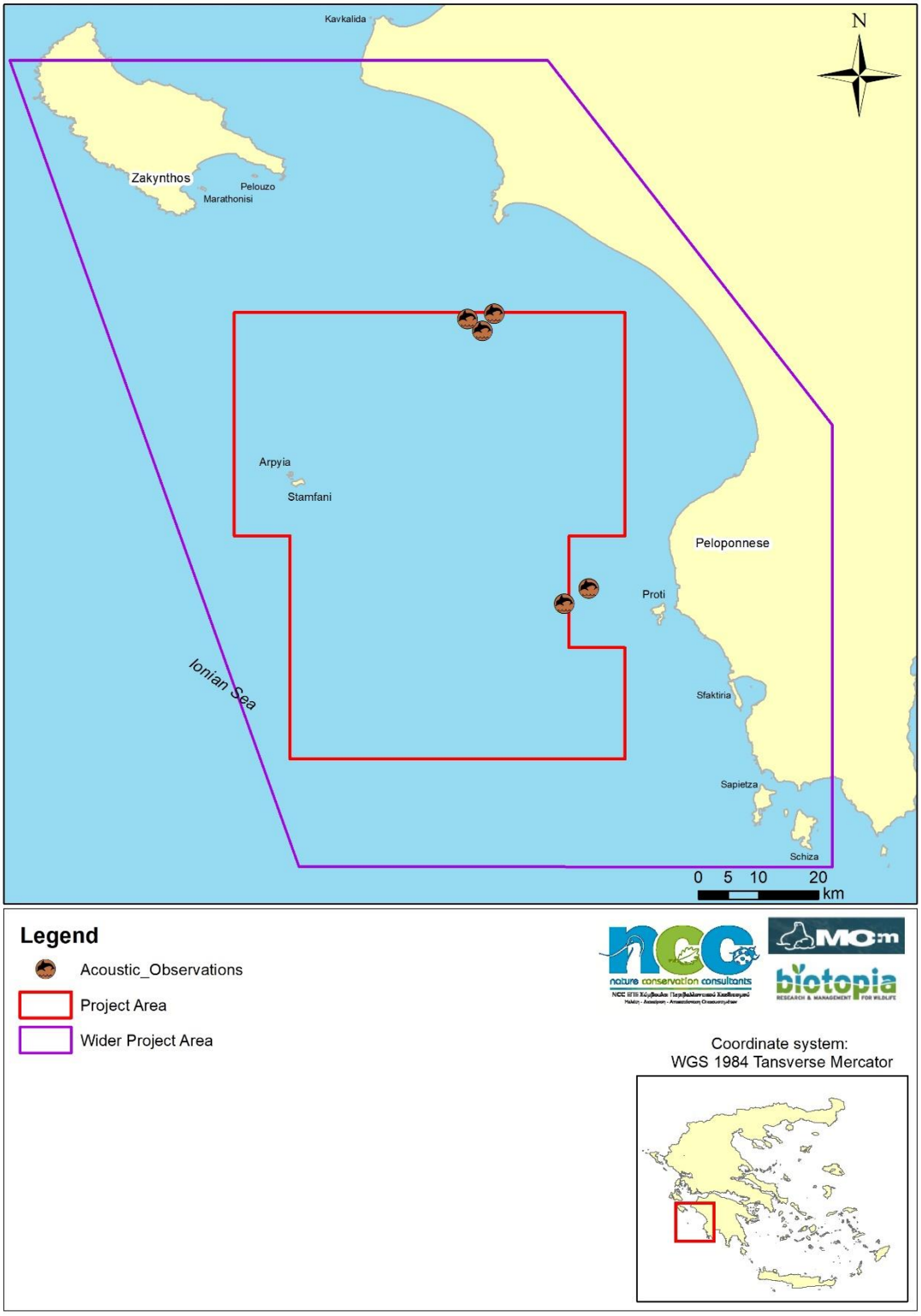

Figure 4-4. Locations of cetaceans recorded by acoustic surveys.

Seabirds

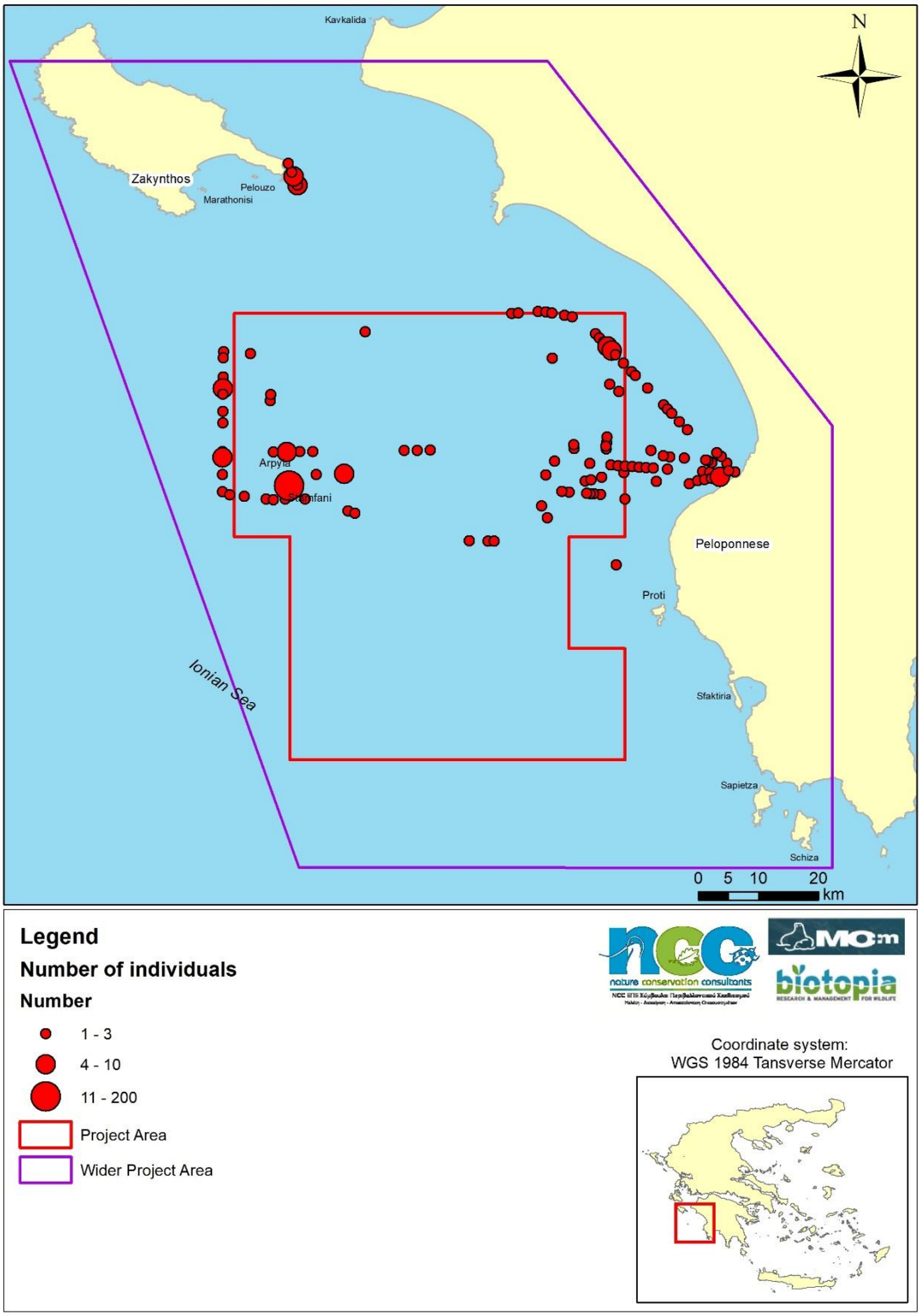

Figure 4-5. Locations of Scopoli's Shearwater records

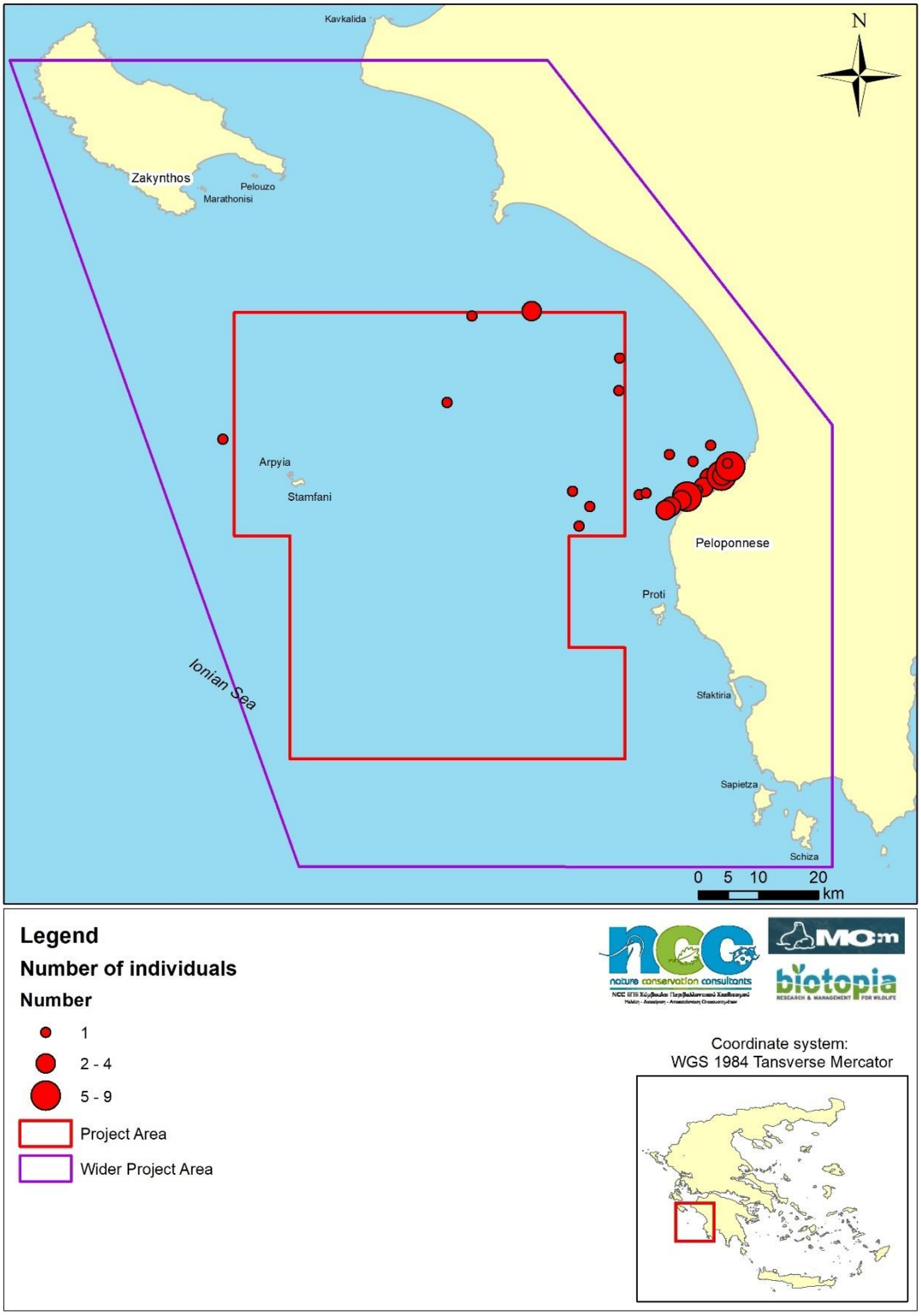

Figure 4-6. Locations of Yelkouan Shearwater records

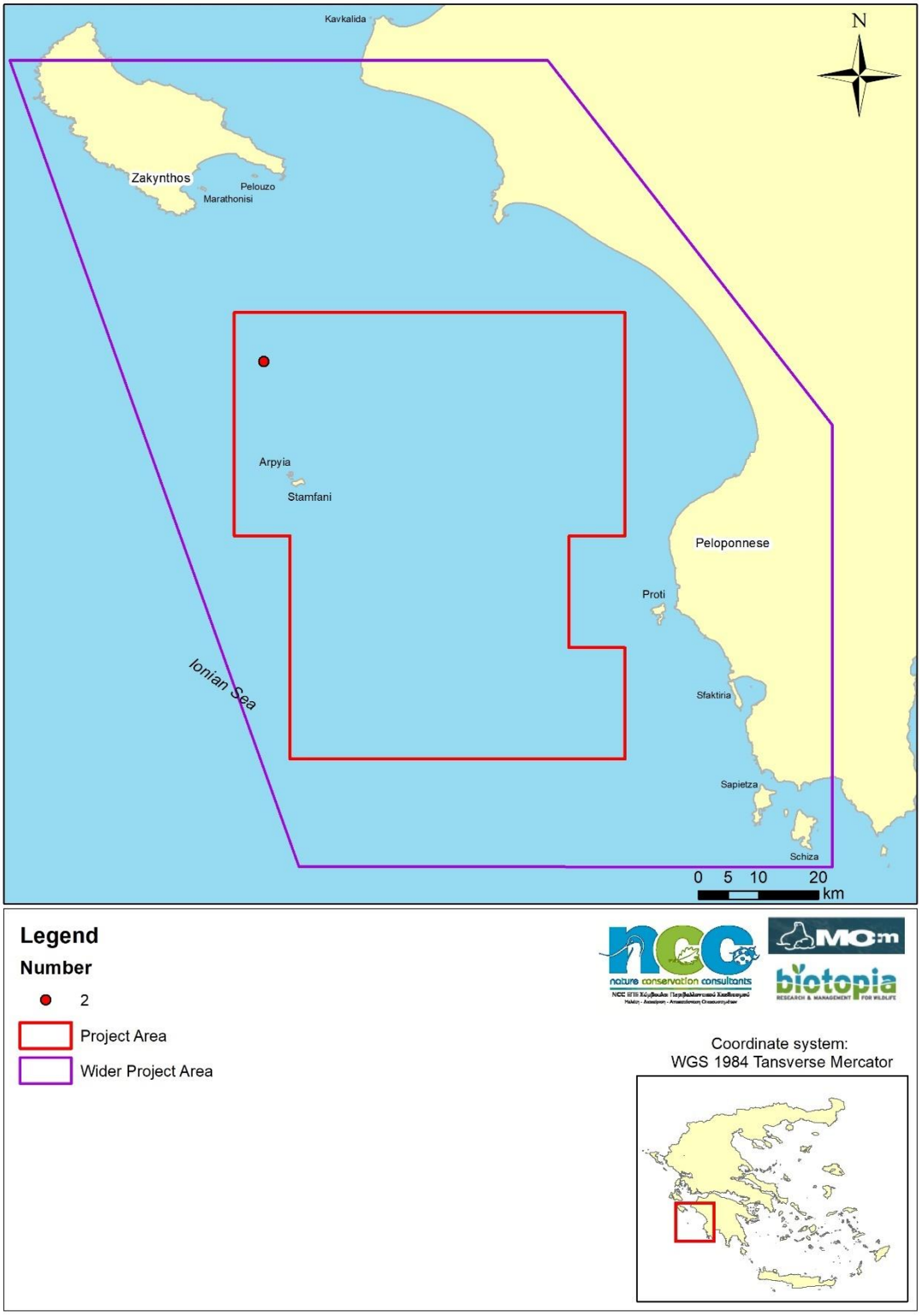

Figure 4-7. Locations of European Storm-petrel records

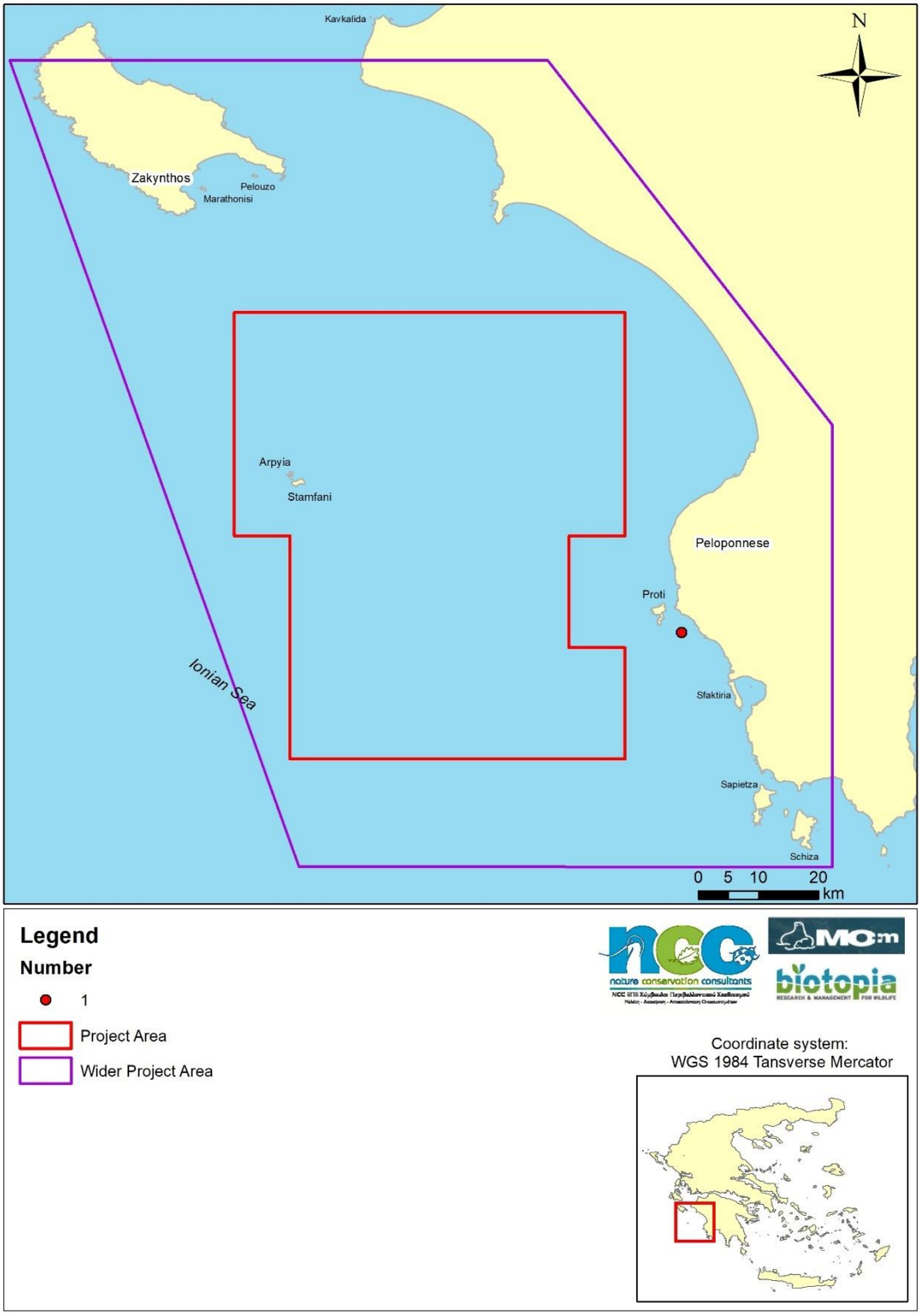

Figure 4-8. Locations of Mediterranean Shag records

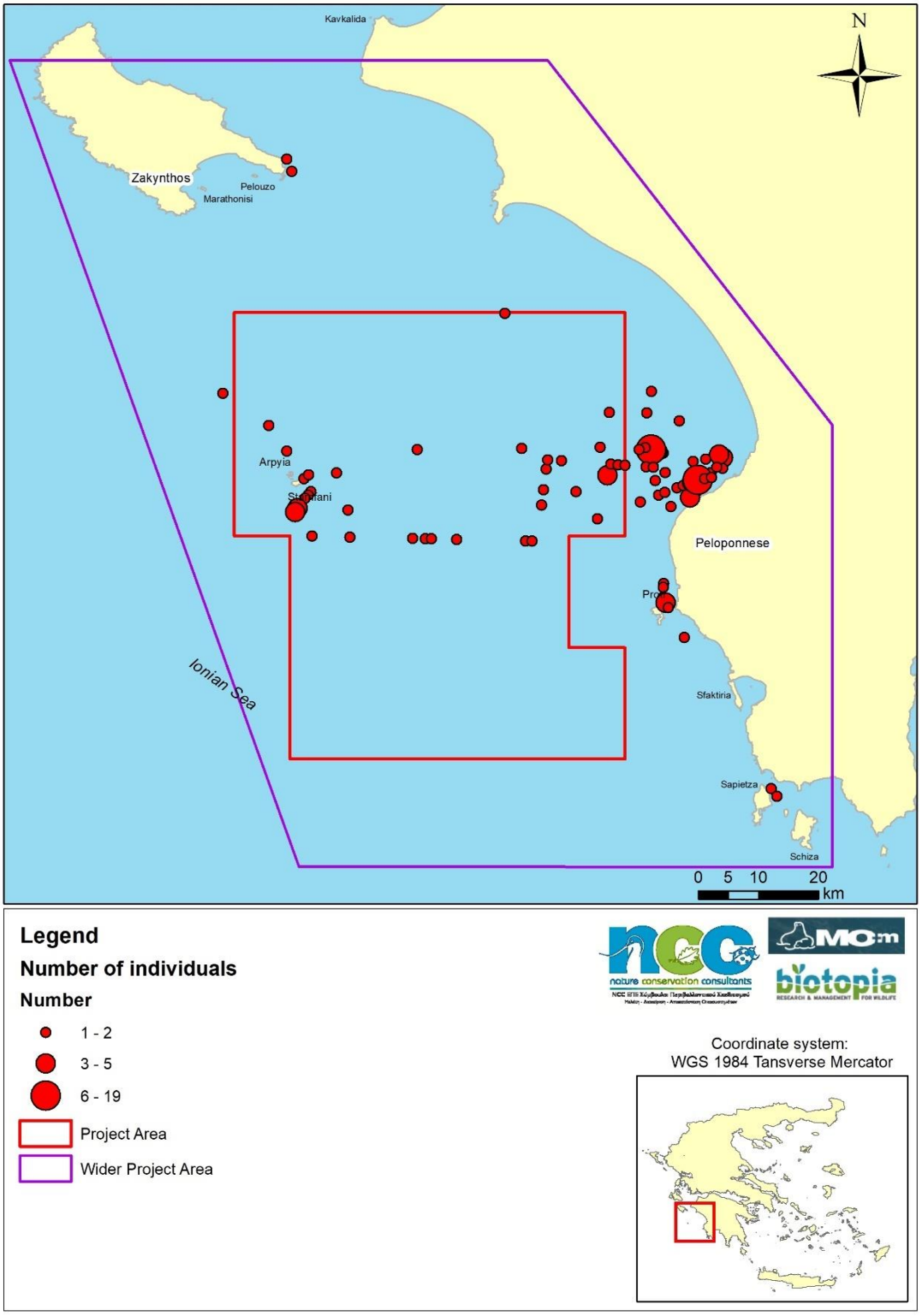

Figure 4-9. Locations of Yellow-legged Gull records

Figure 4-10. Striped dolphins and Scopoli's Shearwater during the boat surveys

4.1.2 Aerial surveys

The aerial survey was conducted on the 7th of May 2023. A total of **531 km** of coastline were inspected, covering the project area, as well as the western coast of Zakynthos Island and the northwestern coast of Peloponnese.

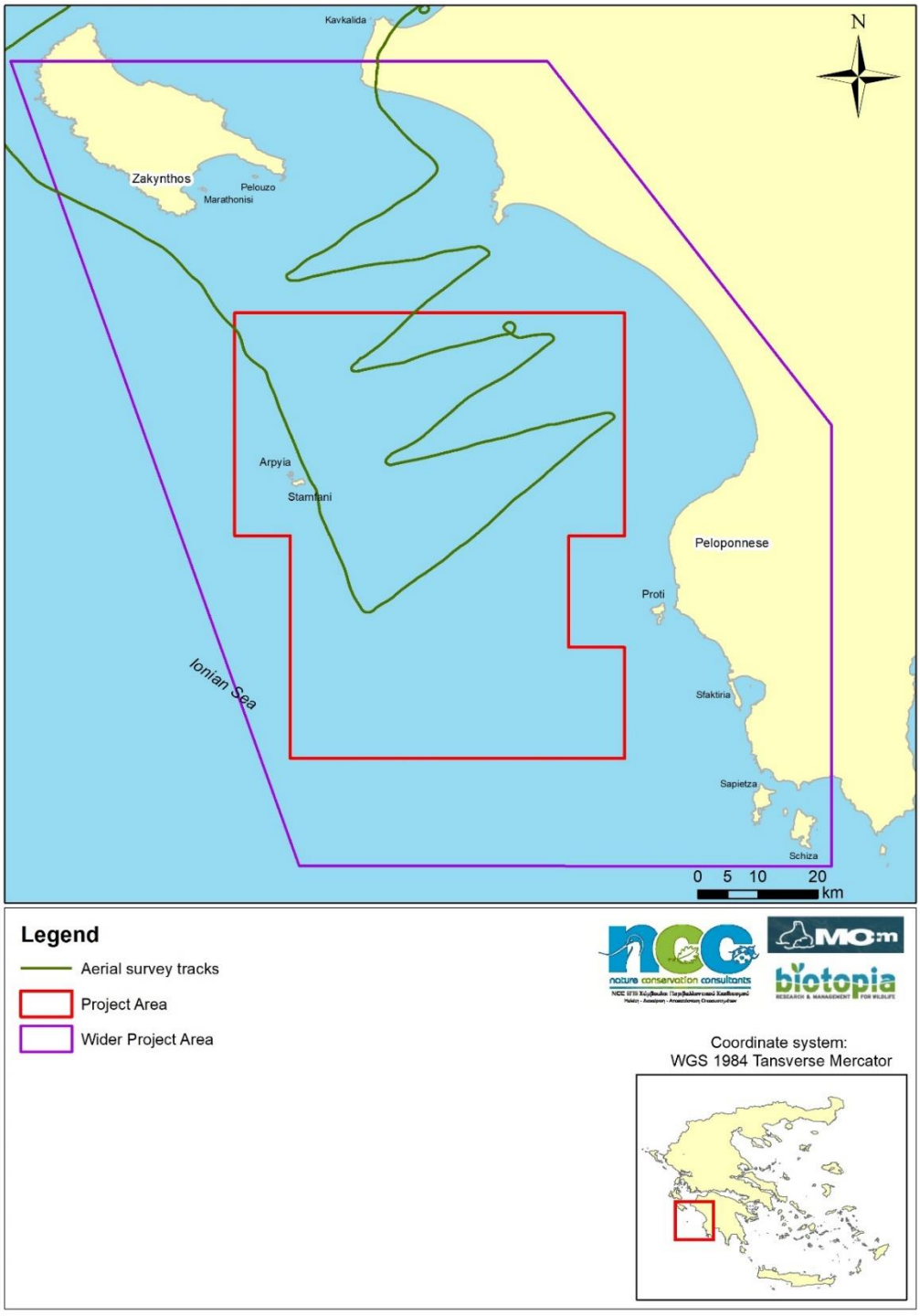

Figure 4-11. Aerial surveys track.

During the surveys no cetaceans were recorded, however floating marine debris and trawlers were recorded in the northern part of the Project Area.

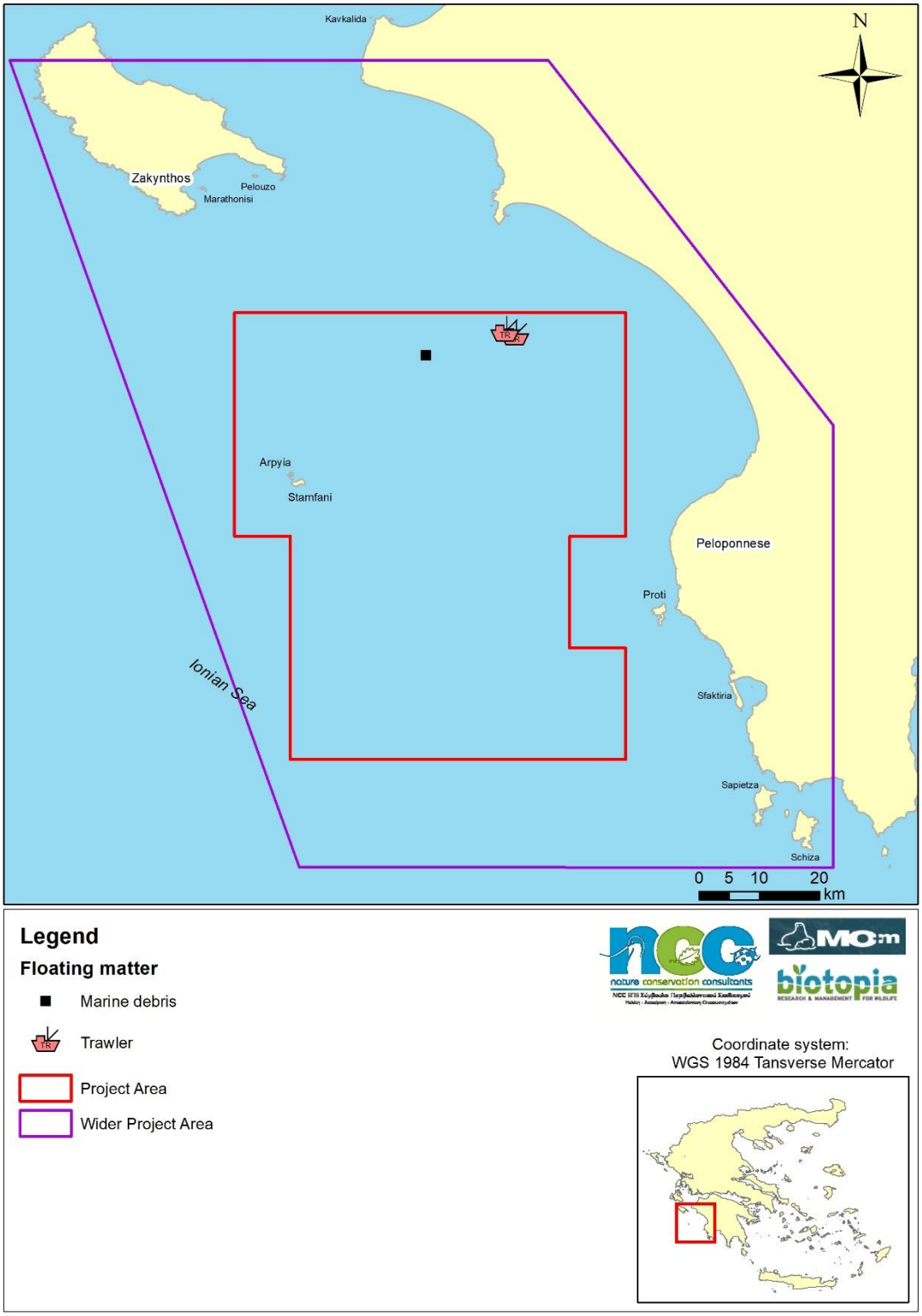

Figure 4-12. Floating matter and trawler recorded during aerial surveys.

Figure 4-13. Trawler and marine debris during aerial surveys.

4.1.3 Drone surveys

A drone transect survey took place on the 14th of May at the coastal zone of Kyparrissia, to record marine turtles (total transect length 6 km).

The first drone survey revealed a number of 4 marine turtles using the transect zone.

4.2 Coastal surveys

4.2.1 Coastal surveys for the Scopoli's shearwater

Coastal surveys of Scopoli's shearwaters took place at the colony of Strofades islets on 12-13 May 2023. Both drone surveys and thermal camera monitoring took place, as well as a visit to the colony on the islet of Stamfani to locate nests of the species.

Two rafts of the species were spotted during dusk, with 50 and 150 individuals respectively. The rafts were spotted both with visual observation from the boat and with the drone. The relatively small number of birds on the raft indicate that the nesting period of the species has not been started yet. This was also confirmed during the visit on the colony, where no active nests were found. Moreover, a few number of birds (approximately 10 individuals) were spotted flying around the colony with the thermal camera.

The drone was also used to produce an orthomosaic of the two islets of Strofadia (Stamfani and Arpyia), where the Scopoli's shearwater is located. The detailed orthomosaic photo of the colony will allow the accurate spotting and mapping of the species' nests during the second trimester of 2023.

Nest monitoring on Stamfani islet confirmed that the egg laying period of the species has not started in mid-May and probably the breeding period of the species has been postponed.

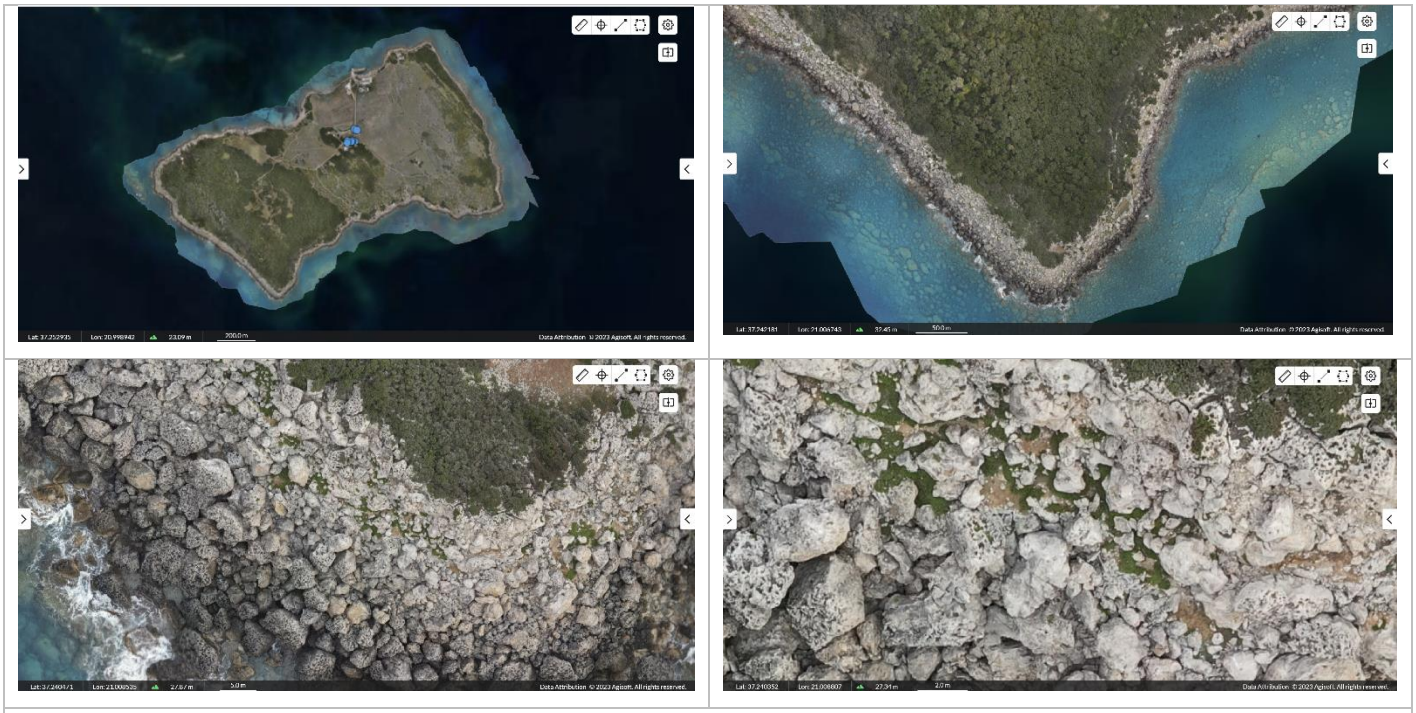

Figure 4-14. Orthomosaic photo of Stamfani (scale graduation)

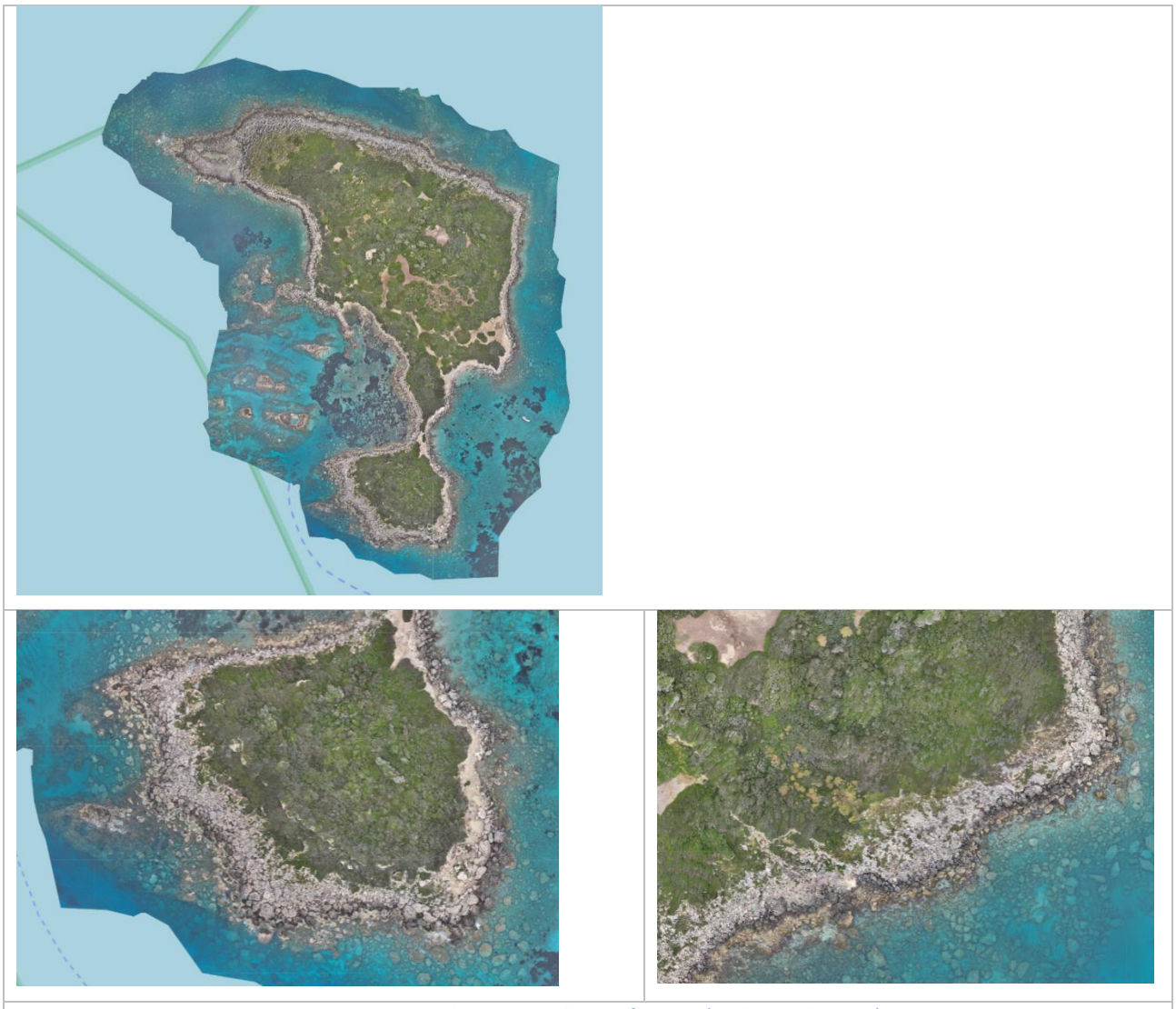

Figure 4-15. Orthomosaic photo of Arpya (scale graduation)

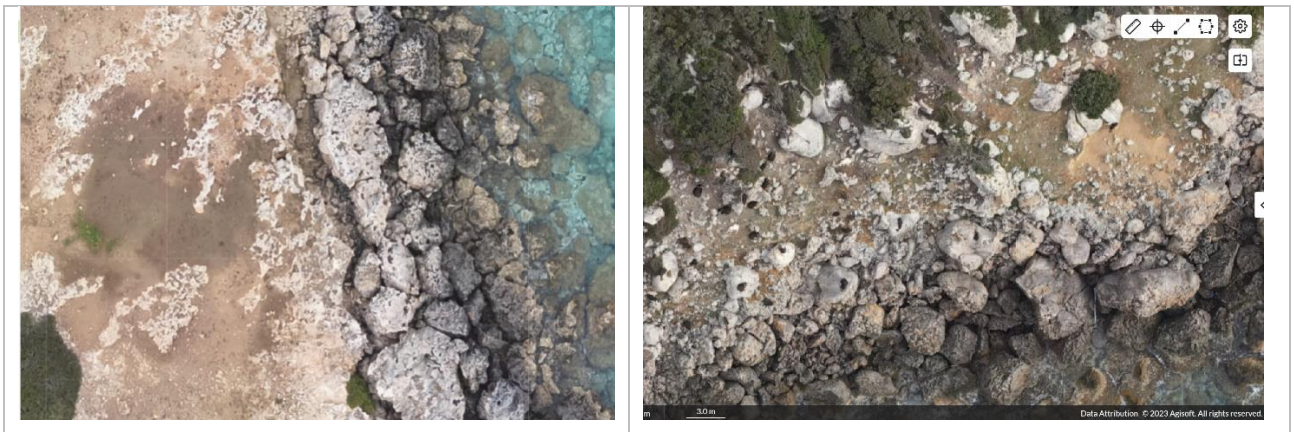

Figure 4-16. Detail of Scopoli's Shearwater nests locations on Stamfani and Arpyia islets.

4.2.2 Coastal surveys for the Mediterranean Shag

Coastal surveys for the Mediterranean shag at the Kyparissia coastline and the Strofades islets revealed no birds. This is attributed to the very low densities of the species in the project area, due to the unsuitable habitat (Kyparissia) or the offshore character of the project sites. During the second trimester of 2023, the survey effort will expand to the wider project area and it is expected to encounter a number of individual animals.

4.2.3 Coastal surveys for the Mediterranean Monk Seal

Similar to the case of the Mediterranean Shag, the coastal surveys carried out during the first trimester of 2023 did not reveal any individual animals. This is attributed to the unsuitable habitat of the surveyed area. During the second trimester of 2023, the survey effort will expand to the wider project area and it is expected to encounter a number of individual animals.

4.3 Sea turtle telemetry

Three Argos satellite transmitters were deployed on male Loggerhead turtles in May 2023 and are operational as of 15 May 2023. A total of 8 working days was dedicated to the acquisition of nesting sea turtles for WP III, with a further 2 boat-days used in attempt to deploy transmitters on adult male turtles as per original plans.

Table 4-2. Details of the turtles and tracker deployment from May 2023. CCL = Curved Carapace Length.

Device ID	Turtle size (CCL)	Deployment	Departed area
241043	91.5 cm	2 May 2023	Yes
241044	86.0 cm	3 May 2023	Yes
241045	80.5 cm	3 May 2023	Yes

Figure 4-17. Turtle is captured at-sea and secured in the tangle net.

Figure 4-18. The turtle is transferred into a container where is will be secure for the tagging process. The areas where the satellite tag is to be attached is cleaned of barnacles, algae and other epibionts.

Figure 4-19. A base layer of epoxy and fibreglass is stuck to the turtle's carapace before more layers of epoxy and fibreglass are used to secure the tag in place.

Figure 4-20. Once the epoxy has dried the turtle is released close to the sea to let it make its own way.

4.4 Telemetry for seabirds and marine mammals

Marine surveillance radar in association with SPx Target Tracker Server Software was used to detect and record seabirds and marine mammals in pelagic areas, as well as seabirds in the vicinity of seabird colonies where other long-range detection methods at night are not available. The initial stage involved testing and setting up of the SPx Target Tracker Server Software.

Marine surveillance radar supported by a thermal camera was used at Strodafes Scopoli's Shearwater colony. The results of the abundance of shearwaters arriving to the colony at night revealed that lower than initially expected number of birds were present. The present results in association with nest monitoring suggest that in 2023 the breeding season might be postponed, suspectedly due to prevailing bad weather during spring 2023.

5 Conclusions

During the first trimester of the project, most of the scheduled tasks have been performed on time.

Four boat surveys (both visual-based and acoustic) and an aerial survey were carried out in the project area. In total 12 individuals of Striped dolphins were recorded. It is worth mentioned that calves of Striped dolphins were also spotted, which is a strong indication that the wider project area is used by the species as a breeding ground.

Additionally, during the surveys, 5 species of seabirds and one species of sea turtle were recorded.

The tagging activity of sea turtles was successful as, for the first time during the 3-year duration of the project, 3 male loggerhead turtles were fitted with GPS transmitters. Monitoring the movements of the tagged males, combined with the relevant data of the female turtles tagged in 2021 and 2022, will provide very important information regarding the ecology of the species.

At the same time new innovative field methods were tested, such as the surveys with the ornithological radar. The combination of the data of the radar with the ones of the boat and aerial surveys will provide a more integrated spatial information for the species ecology and movements, within the project area.

During the second and third trimester of the project more intense fieldwork is planned, including boat, aerial, radar and coastal surveys.

Bibliography

Adamantopoulou, S., Androukaki, E. & Kotomatas, S. (1999). The distribution of the Mediterranean monk seal in Greece based on an information network. *Contributions to the Zoogeography and Ecology of the Eastern Mediterranean Region*, 1, 399-404

Aguilar, A. & Gaspari, S. 2012. *Stenella coeruleoalba*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2012: e.T20731A2773889.

Aguilar, A. & Lowry, L. (IUCN SSC Pinniped Specialist Group). 2010. *Monachus monachus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2010: e.T13653A4305567.

Anonymous (2007). Status of the population of the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) in Greece. pp. 1-42. MOm/Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk seal, Athens, Greece.

Avens, L. and M.L. Snover (2013) Age and age estimation in sea turtles. In: J. Wyneken, K.J. Lohmann & J.A. Musick (ed.), *The biology of sea turtles. Volume III.*, pp. 97-133. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL, USA.

Bearzi, G. 2003. *Delphinus delphis* (Mediterranean subpopulation). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2003: e.T41762A10557372.

Bearzi, G., Reeves, R.R., Notarbartolo di Sciara, G., Politi, E., Cañadas, A., Frantzis, A. and Mussi, B. 2003. Ecology, status and conservation of Short-beaked Common Dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Mediterranean Sea. *Mammal Review*. 33(34): 224-252.

Bearzi, G., Politi, E., Agazzi, S., Bruno, S., Costa, M. and S. Bonizzoni (2005) Occurrence and present status of coastal dolphins (Delphinus delphis and Tursiops truncatus) in the eastern Ionian Sea. *Aquatic Conserv: Mar. Freshw. Ecosyst*. 15: 243–257

Bearzi, G., Fortuna, C. M. and R. R. Reeves (2008A) Ecology and conservation of common bottlenose dolphins *Tursiops truncatus* in the Mediterranean Sea. *Mammal Rev*. 39(2): 92-123.

Bearzi, G., Agazzi, S., Gonzalvo, J., Costa, M., Bonizzoni, S., Politi, E., Pirroddi, C. and R.R. Reeves (2008B) Overfishing and the disappearance of short-beaked common dolphins from western Greece. *Endang. Species. Res*. 5: 1-12

Bearzi, G., Fortuna, C. & Reeves, R. 2012. *Tursiops truncatus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2012: e.T22563A2782611.

BirdLife International (2015) European Red List of Birds. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

BirdLife International (2018A) *Calonectris diomedea*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2018: e.T45061132A132667885. Downloaded on 15 November 2018.

BirdLife International (2018B) *Puffinus yelkouan*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2018: e.T22698230A132637221. Downloaded on 15 November 2018.

BirdLife International (2018C) *Hydrobates pelagicus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2018: e.T22698477A132650209. Downloaded on 15 November 2018.

BirdLife International (2018D) *Gulosus aristotelis*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2018: e.T22696894A133538524. Downloaded on 15 November 2018.

BirdLife International (2018E) *Larus audouinii*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2018: e.T22694313A132541241. Downloaded on 15 November 2018.

BirdLife International (2018F) *Larus michahellis*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2018: e.T62030970A132234755. Downloaded on 15 November 2018.

Bolten, A.B. and B.E. Witherington (2003) *Loggerhead Sea Turtles*. Smithsonian Books, Washington, D.C., USA.

Bourgeois, K. & E. Vidal (2008) The endemic Mediterranean yelkouan shearwater Puffinus yelkouan: distribution, threats and a plea for more data. *Oryx* 42(2): 187-194.

Buckland, S.T., Anderson, D.R., Burnham, K.P., Laake, J.L., Borchers, D.L. and L. Thomas (2001) Introduction to Distance Sampling: Estimating Abundance of Biological Populations. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Buckland, S.T., Anderson, D.R., Burnham, K.P., Laake, J.L., Borchers, D.L. and L. Thomas (2004) Advanced Distance Sampling: Estimating Abundance of Biological Populations. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Cañadas, A. & Notarbartolo di Sciara, G. 2018. *Ziphius cavirostris* (Mediterranean subpopulation). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2018: e.T16381144A50286386.

Carboneras, C., Derhé, M. & I. Ramirez (2013) Update on the population status and distribution of Mediterranean shearwaters. Report to Seventh Meeting of the ACAP Advisory Committee, La Rochelle, France, 6-10 May 2013.

Casale, P. & D. Margaritoulis (Eds.). (2010). Sea turtles in the Mediterranean: distribution, threats and conservation priorities. IUCN.

Casale, P. & P. Mariani (2014) The first 'lost year' of Mediterranean sea turtles: dispersal patterns indicate subregional management units for conservation. *Mar Ecol Prog Ser* 498: 263–274

Casale, P. (2015) *Caretta caretta Mediterranean subpopulation*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*2015: e.T83644804A83646294.

Casale, P. & A.D. Tucker (2017) *Caretta caretta* (amended version of 2015 assessment). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2017: e.T3897A119333622.

Casale, P., Broderick, A. C., Camiñas, J. A., Cardona, L., Carreras, C., Demetropoulos, A., Fuller, W. J., Brendan, J. G., Hochscheid, S., Kaska, Y., Lazar, B., Margaritoulis , D., Panagopoulou , A., Rees , A.F., Tomás , J. & Türkozan, O. (2018). Mediterranean sea turtles: current knowledge and priorities for conservation and research. *Endangered species research*, 36, 229-267.

Champhuysen, C. J. & S. Garthe (2004) Recording foraging seabirds at sea: Standardized recording and coding of foraging behaviour. *Atlantic Seabirds 5(si)*

Dendrinos, P., Karamanlidis, A.A., Kotomatas, S., Legakis, A., Tounta, E. & Matthiopoulos, J. (2007). Pupping habitat use in the Mediterranean monk seal: a long-term study. *Marine Mammal Science*, 23, 615-628.

Dendrinos, P., Kotomatas, S. & Tounta, E. (1999). Monk seal pup production in the National Marine Park of Alonissos-N.Sporades. *Contributions to the Zoogeography and Ecology of the Eastern Mediterranean Region*, 1, 413-419.

Derhé, M. A. (2012A) Developing a Population Assessment for Scopoli's and Cory's Shearwaters *Calonectris diomedea/Calonectris borealis*. In: Yésou, P.; Baccetti, N.; Sultana, J. (ed.), *Ecology and Conservation of Mediterranean Seabirds and other bird species under the Barcelona Convention – Proceedings of the 13th Medmaravis Pan- Mediterranean Symposium. Alghero (Sardinia) 14-17 Oct. 2011*, pp. 29–38. Medmaravis, Alghero

Derhé, M. A. (2012B) Population assessment for the Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*. In: BirdLife International (ed.), Methodology for Bird Species Recovery Planning in the European Union. Final Report to the European Commission. BirdLife International for the European Commission, Cambridge, UK.

Dimalexis, T., Kastritis, Th., Grivas, K., Manolopoulos, A., Kardakari, N., Kakalis, L., Xirouchakis, S., Tsaitouridis, S., Papazoglou, C. and B. Barov (2009) Definition of compatible activities with respect to the species for the designation of the Special Protection Areas for birds. [In Greek]

del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. and J. Sargatal (1996) Handbook of the Birds of the World, vol. 3: Hoatzin to Auks. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain.

Diogou, N., Klinck, H., Frantzis, A., Nystuen, J. A., Papathanassiou, E., & Katsanevakis, S. (2019). Year-round acoustic presence of sperm whales (Physeter macrocephalus) and baseline ambient ocean sound levels in the Greek Seas. Mediterranean Marine Science, 20(1), 208-221.

Frantzis A., (1998) Does acoustic testing strand whales? *Nature* 392:29

Frantzis A., Alexiadou P., Paximadis G., Politi E., Gannier A., Corsini-Foka M., 2003. Current knowledge of the cetacean fauna of the Greek Seas. *The Journal of Cetacean Research Management* 5(3): 219-232.

Frantzis A. (2009) *Cetaceans in Greece: Present status of knowledge*. Initiative for the Conservation of Cetaceans in Greece, Athens, Greece, 94 pp.

Frantzis, A., Alexiadou, P., & Gkikopoulou, K. C. (2014). Sperm whale occurrence, site fidelity and population structure along the Hellenic Trench (Greece, Mediterranean Sea). Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems, 24(S1), 83-102.

Frantzis, A., Leaper, R., Alexiadou, P., Prospathopoulos, A., & Lekkas, D. (2019). Shipping routes through core habitat of endangered sperm whales along the Hellenic Trench, Greece: Can we reduce collision risks?. *PloS one*, *14*(2), e0212016.

Fric J. & K. Gaganis 2009. European Seabirds at Sea Methodology. LIFE-Natura project LIFE07 NAT/GR/000285, Hellenic Ornithological Society. [In Greek]

Fric, J., Portolou, D., Manolopoulos, A. and T. Kastritis (2012). *Important Areas for Seabirds in Greece*. LIFE07 NAT/GR/000285 - Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS / BirdLife Greece), Athens.

Fric, J. & D. Portolou (2016). Population study of the Yelkouan Shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan)* in the area of Gyaros. 2015 annual report. Nature Conservation Consultants (NCC) Ε.Π.Ε. & Hellenic Ornithological Society [In Greek].

García-Barcelona, S., Ortiz de Urbina, J. M., de la Serna, J. M., Alot, E. & D. Macias (2010) Seabird bycatch in Spanish Mediterranean large pelagic longline fisheries, 2000-2008. *Aquatic Living Resources* 23: 363–371.

Gaspari, S. & Natoli, A. 2012. *Grampus griseus* (Mediterranean subpopulation). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2012: e.T16378423A16378453.

González, L.M. & Fernandez de Larrinoa, P. (2012). Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* distribution and fisheries interactions in the Atlantic Sahara during the second half of the 20th century. *Mammalia*, 77, 41-49.

Granadeiro, J. P., Dias, M. P., Rebelo, R., Santos, C.D. & P. Catry (2006) Numbers and population trends of Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* at Selvagem Grande, Northeast Atlantic. *Waterbirds* 29: 56-60.

Güçlüsoy, H., Kiraç, C.O., Veryeri, N.O. & Savaş, Y. (2004). Status of the Mediterranean monk seal, *Monachus monachus* (Hermann, 1779) in the coastal waters of Turkey. *E.U. Journal of Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences*, 21, 201-210.

Gücü, A.C., Gücü, G. & Orek, H. (2004). Habitat use and preliminary demographic evaluation of the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) in the Cilician Basin (Eastern Mediterranean). *Biological Conservation*, 116, 417-431.

Heinemann D. 1981. A range finder for pelagic bird censusing. J. Wildl. Manage. 45(2), pp. 489-493.

Haywood, JC, Fuller WJ, Godley BJ, Magaritoulis D, Shutler JD, Snape RTE, Widdicombe S, Zbinden JA, Broderick AC (2020) Spatial ecology of loggerhead turtles: Insights from stable isotope markers and satellite telemetry. Diversity and Distributions 26: 368-381.

IUCN (2012). Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Gland, Switzerland and Malaga, Spain: IUCN. 32 pages.

Karamanlidis, A.A., Dendrinos, P., Fernández de Larrinoa, P., Gücü, A.C., Johnson, W.M., Kiraç, C.O. & Pires, R. (2016). The Mediterranean monk seal Monachus monachus: status, biology, threats, and conservation priorities. Mammal Review, 46, 92-105.

Karamanlidis, A. & Dendrinos, P. 2015. Monachus monachus (errata version published in 2017). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: e.T13653A117647375

Karamanlidis, A.A., Pires, R., Silva, N.C. & Neves, H.C. (2004). The availability of resting and pupping habitat for the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* in the archipelago of Madeira. *Oryx*, 38, 180-185.

Karris, G., Xirouchakis, S., Grivas, K., Fric, J., Dimalexis, T. and S. Sfenthourakis (2011) Migratory behaviour of Cory's Shearwaters, *Calonectris diomedea*, from an Ionian Sea colony: An

application of miniature geolocation technology. In: Fusani L., Coppack T. and M. Stradzs (eds.) *Programme and Abstracts of the 8th Conference of the European Ornithologists' Union*, 27-30 August 2011, Riga, Latvia. Latvian Ornithological Society, 432 pp.

Karris, G., Xirouchakis, S., Grivas, C., Voulgaris, M. D., Sfenthourakis, S., & S. Giokas (2017). Estimating the population size of Scopoli's Shearwaters (Calonectris diomedea) frequenting the Strofades islands (Ionian Sea, western Greece) by raft counts and surveys of breeding pairs. *North-Western Journal of Zoology*, *13*(1).

Karris, G., Xirouchakis, S., Maina, I., Grivas, K., & Kavadas, S. (2018). Home range and foraging habitat preference of Scopoli's shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* during the early chick-rearing phase in the eastern Mediterranean. *Wildlife Biology*, 2018(1).

Laneri, K., Louzao, M., Martínez-Abraín, A., Arcos, J.M., Belda, E., Guallart, J., Sánchez, A., Giménez, M., Maestre, R. & D. Oro (2010). Trawling moratoria influences longline seabird bycatch in the Mediterranean: new insights from a small scale fishery. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 420: 241–252.

Legakis, A. and P. Maragou (2009) The Red Book of endangered animals of Greece. Athens, GR : Hellenic Zoological Society. 525pp

Lewis, T., Gillespie, D., Lacey, C., Matthews, J., Danbolt, M., Leaper, R., McLanaghan, R. & Moscrop, A. (2007). Sperm whale abundance estimates from acoustic surveys of the Ionian Sea and Straits of Sicily in 2003. Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom, 87(1), 353-357.

Luschi, P., & Casale, P. (2014). Movement patterns of marine turtles in the Mediterranean Sea: a review. *Italian Journal of Zoology*, *81*(4), 478-495.

Mannocci, L., Roberts, J. J., Halpin, P. N., Authier, M., Boisseau, O., Bradai, M. N., ... & Fortuna, C. M. (2018). Assessing cetacean surveys throughout the Mediterranean Sea: a gap analysis in environmental space. *Scientific Reports*, *8*(1), 1-14.

Margaritoulis, D. and A. Rees (2001) The Loggerhead Turtle, *Caretta* caretta, population nesting in Kyparissia Bay, Peloponnesus, Greece: results of beach surveys over seventeen seasons and determination of the core nesting habitat. *Zoology in the Middle East* 24: 75-90.

Margaritoulis, D. (2005) Nesting activity and reproductive output of loggerhead sea turtles, *Caretta caretta*, over 19 seasons (1984-2002) at Laganas Bay, Zakynthos, Greece: the largest rookery in the Mediterranean. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*4: 916-929.

Martínez-Jauregui, M., Tavecchia, G., Cedenilla, M.A., Coulson, T., Fernández de Larrinoa, P., Muñoz, M. & González, L.M. (2012). Population resilience of the Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* at Cabo Blanco peninsula. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 461, 273-281.

Mo, G., Bazairi, H., Bayed, A. & Agnesi, S. (2011). Survey on Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) sightings in Mediterranean Morocco. *Aquatic Mammals*, 37, 248-255.

Notarbartolo di Sciara, G. and J. Gordon (1997) Bioacoustics: A tool for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea. *Marine & Freshwater Behaviour & Phy.* 30: 125-146

Notarbartolo di Sciara, G., Frantzis, A., Bearzi, G. & Reeves, R. 2012. *Physeter macrocephalus* (Mediterranean subpopulation). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2012: e.T16370739A16370477.

Oppel S., Raine A.F., Borg J.J., Raine H., Bonnaud E., Bourgeois K.& A.R. Breton (2011) Is the Yelkouan shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan* threatened by low adult survival probabilities? *Biological Conservation* 144(9): 2255-2263.

Pires, R., Neves, H.C. & Karamanlidis, A.A. (2008). The Critically Endangered Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* in the archipelago of Madeira: priorities for conservation. *Oryx*, 42, 278-285.

Podestà, M., Azzellino, A., Cañadas, A., Frantzis, A., Moulins, A., Rosso, M., Tepsich, P. & Lanfredi, C. (2016). Cuvier's Beaked Whale, Ziphius cavirostris, distribution and occurrence in the Mediterranean Sea: high-use areas and conservation threats. In *Advances in Marine Biology* (Vol. 75, pp. 103-140). Academic Press.

Portolou, D., Bourdakis, S., Vlachos, C., Kastritis, T. and T. Dimalexis (eds.) (2009). *Important Bird Areas of Greece: Priority sites for conservation*. Hellenic Ornithological Society, Athens. [In Greek].

Rees, A. F., Theodorou, P., & Margaritoulis, D. (2020). Clutch frequency for Loggerhead Turtles (*Caretta caretta*) nesting in Kyparissia Bay, Greece. *Herpetological Conservation and Biology*, *15*(1), 131-138.

Reeves, R. R., & Notarbartolo di Sciara, G. (2006). The status and distribution of cetaceans in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea.

Ristow, D., Berthold, P., Hashmi, D. and U. Querner (2000) Satellite tracking of Cory's shearwater migration. *Condor* 102: 696-699.

Santostasi, N. L., Bonizzoni, S., Gimenez, O., Eddy, L., & Bearzi, G. (2018). Common dolphins in the Gulf of Corinth are Critically Endangered. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*.

Schofield, G., Hobson, V.J., Fossette, S., Lilley, M.K.S., Katselidis, K.A. & Hays, G.C. (2010a) Fidelity to foraging sites, consistency of migration routes and habitat modulation of home range by sea turtles. Diversity & Distributions, 16, 840–853.

Schofield, G., Hobson, V.J., Lilley, M.K.S., Katselidis, K.A., Bishop, C.M., Brown, P. & Hays, G.C. (2010b) Interannual variability in the home range of breeding turtles: implications for current and future conservation management. Biological Conservation, 143, 722–730.

Schofield G, Lilley MKS, Bishop CM, Brown P, Katselidis KA, Dimopoulos P, Pantis JD, Hays GC. (2010c). Conservation hotspots: Implications of intense spatial area use by breeding male and female loggerheads at the Mediterranean's largest rookery. Endangered Species Research 10:191–202.

Schofield G, Dimadi A, Fossette S, Katselidis KA, Koutsoubas D, Lilley MKS, Luckman A, Pantis JD, Karagouni AD, Hays GC. (2013). Satellite tracking large numbers of individuals to infer

population level dispersal and core areas for the protection of an endangered species. Diversity and Distributions 19:834– 844.

Seminoff, J.A. (Southwest Fisheries Science Center, U.S.). 2004. Chelonia mydas. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2004: e.T4615A11037468.

Tasker, M.L., Jones, P.H., Dixon, T. & B.F. Blake (1984) Counting seabirds at sea from ships: A review of methods employed and suggestion for a standardized approach. *The Auk 101:567-57*

Ullmann, J., & M. Stachowitsch (2015) A critical review of the Mediterranean sea turtle rescue network: a web looking for a weaver.

Valeiras, J. & J. A. Caminas (2003) The incidental capture of seabirds by Spanish drifting longline fisheries in the western Mediterranean Sea. *Scientia Marina* 67: 65–68.

Velando, A. and J. Freire (1999) Inter-colony and seasonal differences in the breeding diet of European shags on the Galician coast (NW Spain). *Marine Ecology Progress Series* **188**: 225–236.

Wanless, S., Harris, M.P. and J.A. Morris (1991) Foraging range and feeding locations of Shags *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* during chick rearing. *Ibis* **133**: 30-36.

Temple, H.J. and Terry, A. (Compilers) (2007) *The Status and Distribution of European Mammals*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. viii + 48pp, 210 x 297 mm.

Zbinden, J. A., Aebischer, A., Margaritoulis, D., & R. Arlettaz (2008) Important areas at sea for adult loggerhead sea turtles in the Mediterranean Sea: satellite tracking corroborates findings from potentially biased sources. *Marine Biology*, *153*(5), 899-906.