

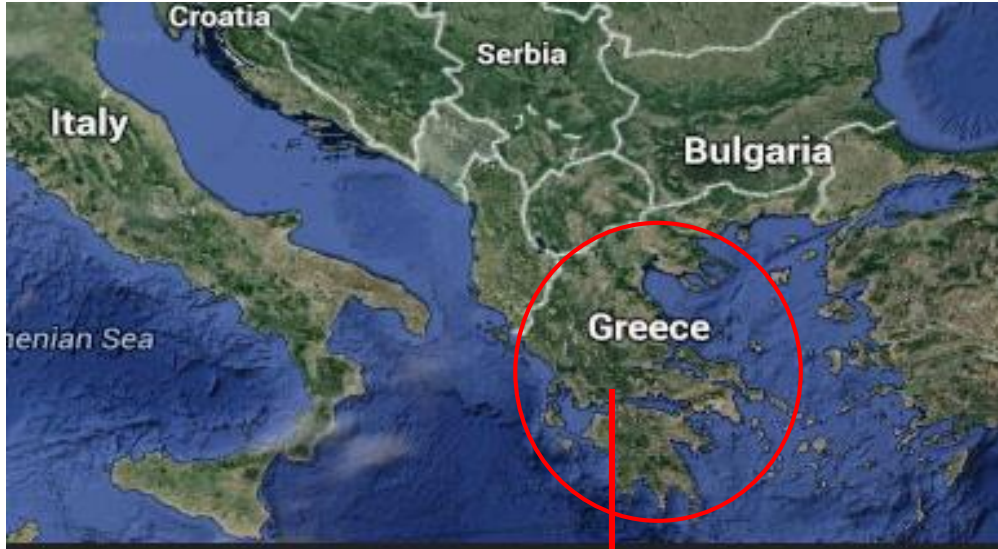


Agenda Item 6.1: Files opened

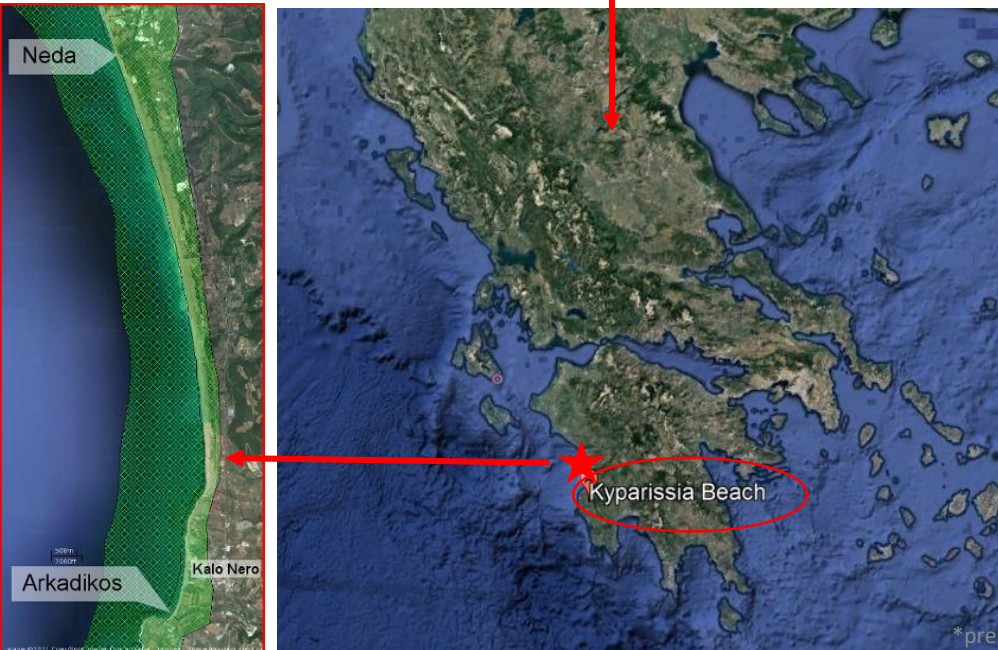
Greece: Threats to Marine Turtles in Thines Kiparissias

40th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Bern Convention
30 November – 4 December 2020

Habitat Degradation due to Uncontrolled Development in a Protected Sea Turtle Nesting Area



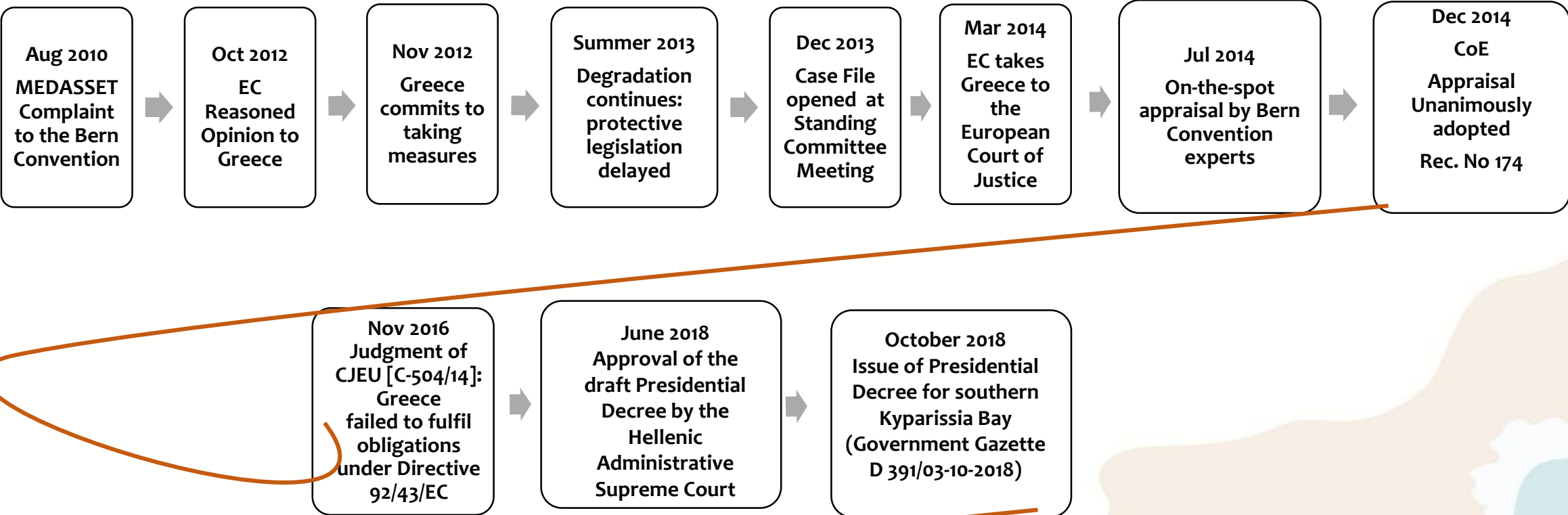
- A **NATURA 2000 site**: GR2550005 “Thines Kyparissias: Neochori – Kyparissia”
- The **largest reproductive population in the Mediterranean** for the protected loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*). During the 2020 nesting season over 3,800* nests were recorded in the core area (from Neda to Arkadikos River 9,5 km)
- Extensive sand **dune system** with **Juniperus spp**



*preliminary data given from ARCHELON

Issue of the Presidential Decree

Overview



7 motions of annulment were filed against the Presidential Decree, opening the legal proceedings at National level on the 3rd of June 2020, a ruling is awaited

Presidential Decree a positive step but not ensuring adequate protection



- The **Presidential Decree does not address** some important issues for the adequate protection of southern Kyparissia Bay & its turtles, and **includes permissions for offshore oil activities** in the sea adjacent to the newly protected area
- **The urgent Adoption & Implementation of a Management Plan** for Kyparissia Bay is crucial for its protection
- There was very **low enforcement & implementation of the Presidential Decree** regulations (management and protection measures) during the 2020 nesting season
- If **motions for annulment of the Presidential Decree** get approved, Kyparissia Bay will be again totally unprotected again

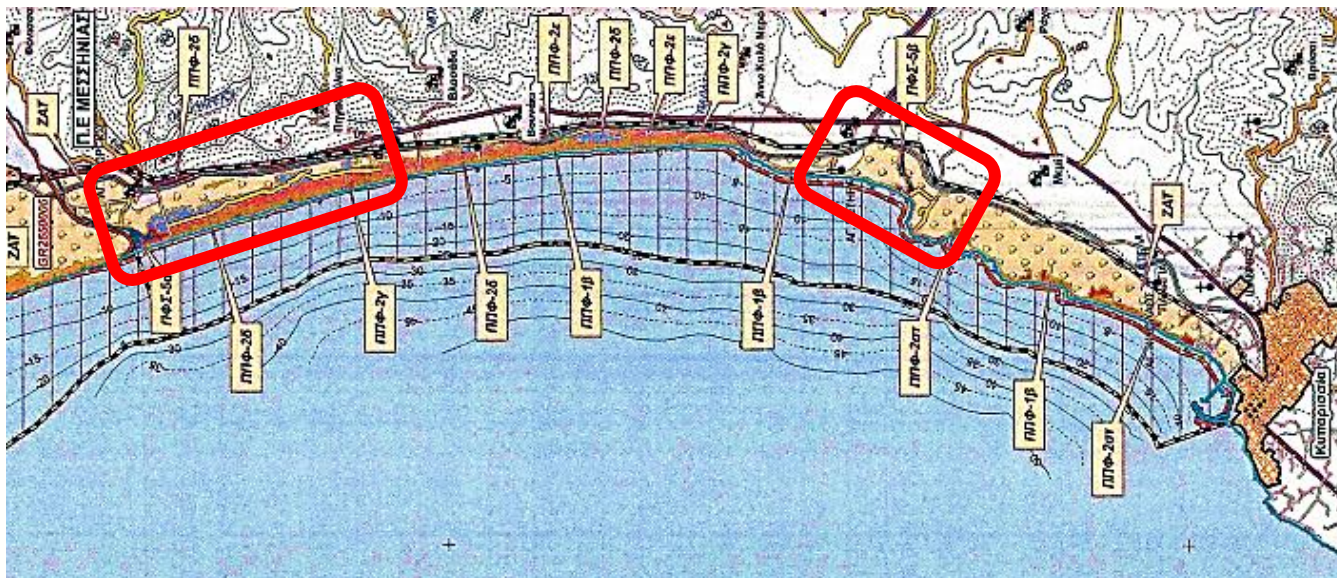


Rec. No 174. Measure No 1: Appropriate Protection status

Presidential Decree designates Kyparissia Bay as a Nature Protected Area and NOT as a National Park

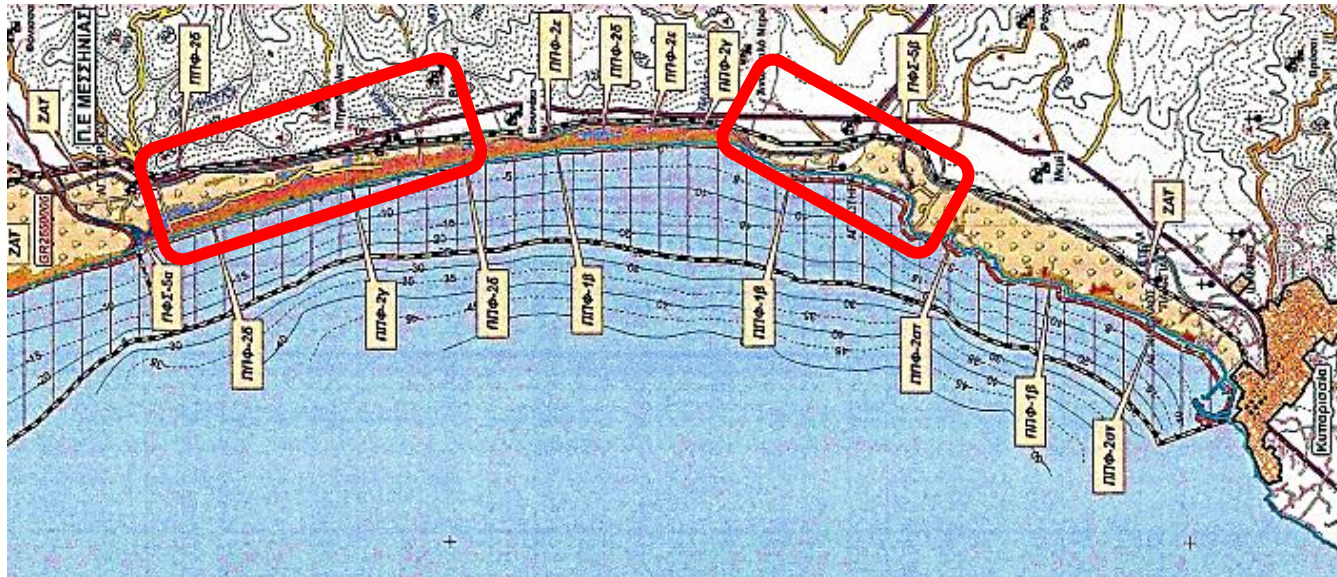
Areas adjacent to the Nature Protection Areas, are designated as Agricultural Landscape Zones where **construction is permitted**

Part of the **coastal area behind the core nesting beaches (red rectangles)** is designated as Agricultural Landscape Zones, adding extreme **danger** to the reproduction of turtles and for adequate protection of their habitat



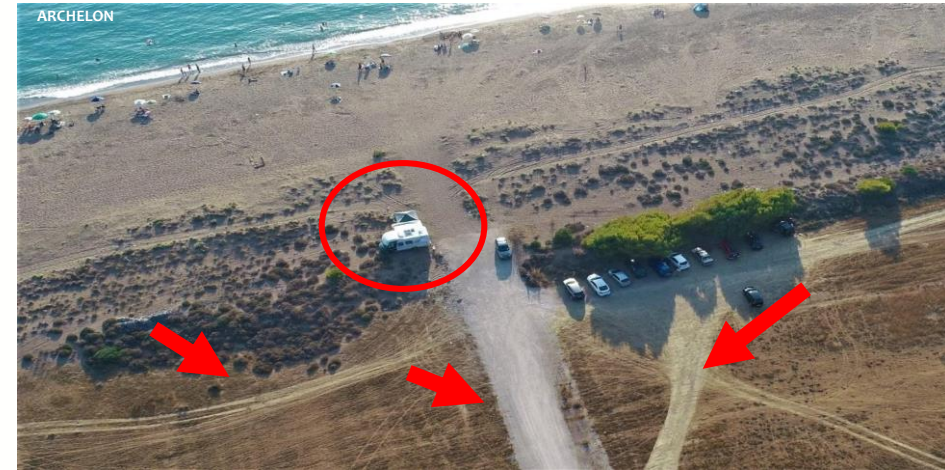
Rec. No 174. Measure No 2: Permanent Prohibition of Construction (buildings, roads, etc.)

Presidential Decree fails to adequately protect Kyparissia Bay from constructions

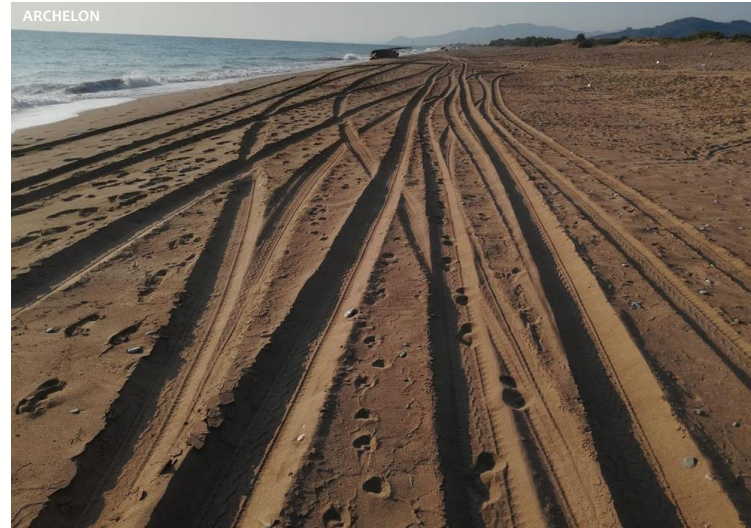


- **There is no buffer zone** between the Nature Protection Area & Agricultural Landscape Zone
- The Presidential Decree addresses the existing illegal road network, but no action has been taken for its removal and restoration of the area
- Existing illegal constructions have not been demolished (eg. Platforms at Kalo Nero), on the contrary **2 new houses have been constructed since 2019, without intervention by the Authorities**

Rec. No 174. Measure No 3: Restoration of Original Dune and Forest Habitats



Illegal road system & caravans parking overnight on the sand dunes in B and C sectors. Caravan shown remained there for over 3 weeks



Vehicle tracks on C sector of the nesting beach



One of five illegal roads constructed in 2012, has not been restored to date



Protective measures are not effective to prevent cars and caravans from reaching the nesting beaches

Rec. No 174. Measure No 4: Adjustments to existing buildings



Panoramic view of illegal planting activities in proximity to the beach



In Agiannakis introduced alien plants are maintained. No steps have been taken so far to remove them and reinstate the natural dune system



Vounaki: houses built in 2019, arrows show newly planted introduced aliens species, used as a border inbetween houses



Kalo Nero: Newly planted young trees and the spreading of the invasive species *Carpobrotus*, at the back of this high density nesting area, destroy the nests and eggs. *Carpobrotus* roots observed inside nests



Rec. No 174. Measure No 5: No agriculture on public land & the dune area

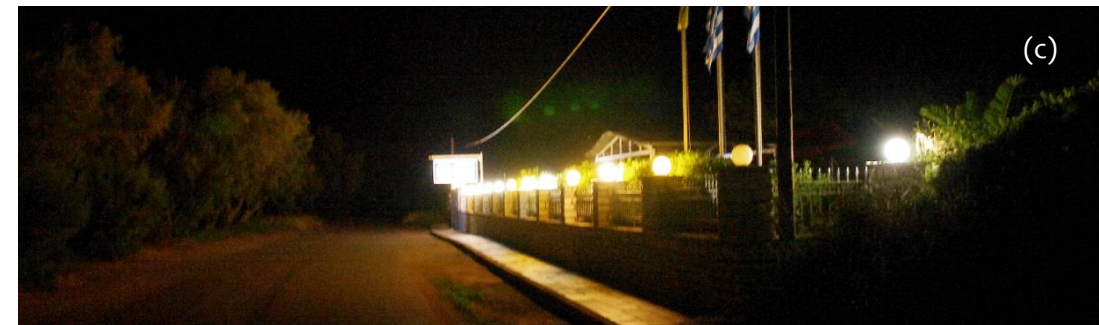


On-going watermelon cultivation is destroying the sand dune system



Sand dune destruction behind sectors A and B by agricultural use

Rec. No 174. Measure No 6: Light Pollution reduction



Kalo Nero: Large number of caravans on the nesting beach also remain at night

Kalo Nero: (a) Light pollution from Tavernas along the beachfront, (b) Streetlights and (c) Local hotel

Rec. No 174. Measure No 7: Beach Equipment management



Kalo Nero: Large amount of bulky beach equipment, rubbish bins, and showers on protected beach. Runoff from the shower flows on to the protected nesting beach and nests (encircled)



Beach equipment not removed during the night



Nesting turtle trapped between a bulky sunbed and wooden platform

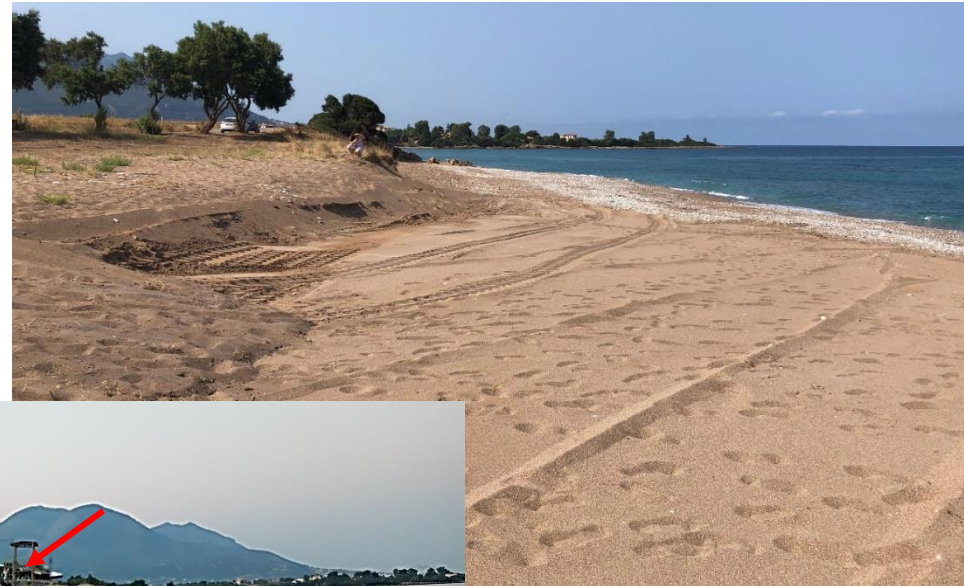
Rec. No 174. Measure No 7: Beach Equipment management



Kalo Nero: New beach equipment and wooden platforms placed on core nesting areas at the peak of the nesting season in July 2020

Rec. No 174. Measure No 8: Sand & Gravel Extraction

Sand extraction at Kalo Nero in preparations of the new 'beach bar'. The nesting beach was 'flattened' with heavy machinery, tracks of the machines are visible on the nesting beach



The beach was cleaned 3 times with heavy machinery in July 2020 during the peak season of nesting activity

Rec. No 174. Measure No 9: Further construction outside the urban-planning areas



Disregarding the Presidential Decree which does not allow the expansion of settlements or buildings within the Nature Protection Areas, further on-going building was observed taking place during our 2020 survey



Vounaki: an illegal road, ongoing construction and some cultivation of watermelons continues



In Agiannakis a new villa (red circle) and a shower (yellow circle) construction on the beach, and further planting and maintain of introduced alien plant species

Rec. No 174. Measure No 10:

Regulation of vessel navigation & fishing practices

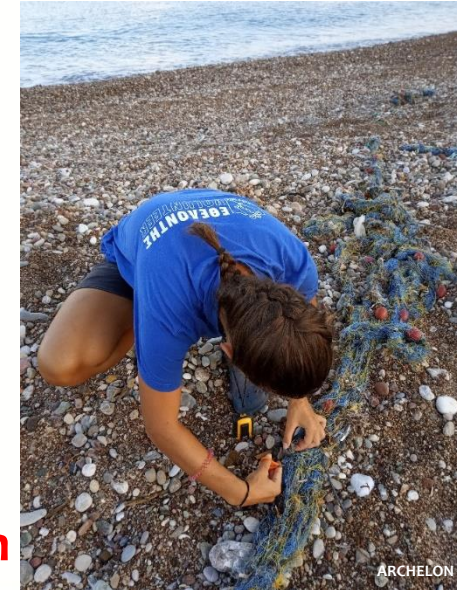
Fisheries regulations are not addressed in the Presidential Decree, there is urgent need for a Management Plan



Fishing boat setting it nets very close to the shore



Recreational fishing at Agiannakis core nesting beach along the shoreline



A young turtle caught in discarded fishing gear on the beach

Human presence on the nesting beach at night



Elaia: Free camping on the nesting beach



Elaia beach bar operating & furniture not removed at night

During August over than 3,000 visitors were estimated behind the core nesting area at night



Elaia: Camping on the beach and beach equipment remained overnight on the nesting beach



Agiannakis : Beach bars operating at night time increased human presence on the core nesting area. No signs or barriers exist to prevent human presence during the night

Rec. No 174. Measure No 12:
Control of feral or stray dogs



No attacks by feral dogs have been recorded during 2020

Conclusions



Rec. No 174 was not fully implemented

- **Covid-19 & travel restrictions did NOT stop** the long-term conservation **problems**
- **Issue of a Presidential Decree** for Kyparissia Bay (Government Gazette D 391/0310-2018) is a **positive development**
- Several major conservation issues are not addressed by the Decree. The **immediate elaboration and urgent adoption of a Management Plan** is the only way to resolve these important conservation issues
- Actual **poor enforcement & implementation of the Presidential Decree** led to **habitat degradation & direct or indirect damage to sea turtle's nesting areas**
- **7 motions of annulment** filed against the **Presidential Decree** on the 3rd of June 2020. The decision of the court is still pending

Calls on the Greek Government to:

- **Safeguard & Enforce implementation of the Presidential Decree regulations**
- **Urgently adopt & implement a Management Plan**, which will also cover unresolved issues not addressed in the PD (e.g. fishing activities and nighttime beach use)
- **Impose fines and penalties** in order to stop illegal activities & restore the habitat
- **Keep the Standing Committee informed** about progress in the implementation of the above Recommendations

Calls on the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention to:

- **Keep the Case file of Rec. No 174 open**
- **Continue following progress** made on the implementation of Rec. No 174, with the Greek Government