



# GREECE: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of *Caretta caretta* in Laganas Bay, Zakynthos

*43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, 27 November-1 December 2023*



In view of the recent recommendations/clarifications requested by the Bureau, Greece would like to provide the following information:

1. The funding of NECCA/OFYPEKA
2. The competencies of NECCA/OFYPEKA
3. The current status in Laganas Bay
4. The conservation targets for *Caretta caretta*
5. Other developments



## Funding of surveillance and monitoring activities of NECCA/OFYPEKA

- The funding of surveillance and monitoring activities in the area of the National Marine Park of Zakynthos (e.g., surveillance, wages of the scientific staff, cost of fuel for the vehicles, equipment, infrastructure, maintenance, etc.) has been secured by the **NECCA\*/OFYPEKA**, through the uninterrupted operation of the recently (2022) established Management Unit of National Parks of Zakynthos, Ainos and Protected Areas of Ionian Islands-Headquarter Zakynthos (PAMU 11), thus allowing the continuity of mitigation measures which have been implemented in the protected area since 2000

*\*Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency. A public entity under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment & Energy.  
NECCA consists of local Management Units for Protected Areas throughout Greece*



## The staff of NECCA: extra authorities

- **Art. 182** of the **new national law no. 5037/2023** (Government Gazette, no. 78/A/29.03.2023) stipulates that the **surveillance and scientific staff** of NECCA/OFYPEKA Management Units of Protected Areas & their Annexes throughout the country, are from now on **authorized** to conduct **environmental inspections** within their jurisdiction, draw up **on-the-spot appraisal reports**, summon people against whom on-the-spot appraisals have been carried out or even issue any **certificates of violation** that may include recommendations addressing to the involved people or a fine proposal to the competent authorities. These certificates are subsequently forwarded to the prosecutor in charge of these cases, if needed
- A first **training video conference** involving the surveillance and scientific staff of NECCA took place on **25 May 2023** with the participation of representatives from several national authorities (e.g., the Hellenic Coastguard, Forest Service, Department for Environmental Inspection, the Police) introducing the main aspects of control in case of infringements to the **trainees**



## The staff of NECCA: extra authorities

Specific guidelines on drawing up on-the spot-appraisal reports, issuing certificates on violation and conducting environmental inspections within the jurisdiction of the Management Unit were sent to all members of the staff of NECCA by the Directorate-General of the latter in July 2023

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## Laganas Bay: An update

- The number of rangers in Laganas Bay is quite satisfactory in terms of reducing the impact of visitors and recreational activities on the reproduction process of sea turtles through the dissemination of information on site and the whole public awareness infrastructure in place (e.g., cameras, panels, barriers, leaflets, information center, etc.)
- Illegal activities are recorded and official complaints are made to the local authorities (e.g., the Hellenic Coastguard, Public Estate Service)
- Any infringement having immediate impact on loggerhead sea turtles is addressed due to the close cooperation between the local Management Unit of NECCA/OFYPEKA in Zakynthos and the NGO 'ARCHELON'
- Therefore, under a specific research permit issued for the **NGO 'ARCHELON'**, the staff must report any infringement to the local Management Unit immediately; the latter, in turn, is obliged to undertake all necessary measures dealing with any issue affecting sea turtles



## Laganas Bay: An update

- Light pollution, the occurrence of stray dogs and cats, night intrusion in protected beaches, boat intrusion in forbidden marine areas, marine speed issues, placing of illegal umbrellas are among the issues addressed through cooperation with the competent entities
- The same also applies for the **NGO 'WWF Hellas'**, especially when it comes to the strictly protected area of Sekania, since the everyday presence of their staff in the area aims to prevent fires in summertime. The close cooperation between this NGO and the local Management Unit is **crucial**, since the latter is called to act immediately in case of illegal entering the protected area, particularly the adjacent strictly protected marine area
- The use of camera-monitoring systems in significant nesting beaches for sea turtles, namely Sekania and Gerakas, has undoubtedly increased the quality of protection provided by the Management Unit



## Laganas Bay: An update

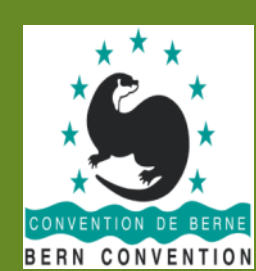
- It is also expected that **extra seasonal personnel will be hired** in the future, particularly during summertime, to strengthen the existent staff who are in charge of surveillance and public awareness
- When it comes to the number of people visiting the area, **this is the average number within the specified limits**
- In the cases of Gerakas and Daphni, **strict adaptive management measures** are implemented limiting considerably the interaction between visitors and the nesting areas (e.g., delineation of the nesting area with ropes, banning of umbrellas in some areas, dissemination of environmental information to tourists) in order to ensure the normal process of egg maturation during the day
- Although some peaks in marine traffic might also occur in summer, the local Division of the **Hellenic Coastguard** is in place to **constantly monitor marine traffic and impose fines accordingly**
- Finally, due to the close cooperation between the Coastguard and the Management Unit, the number of dead or injured turtles found in Laganas Bay was significantly low this year (one dead and one injured individual due to a collision with a boat; both cases were filed by the Coastguard)





## The conservation of *C. caretta* in Laganas Bay: An update

- In **2023** the number of nests (>**2050** nests based on provisional data) reached a **peak over a 39-year monitoring period**, a fact that is also supported by a **positive trend in the nesting activity** recorded during the last decade
- The **conservation targets**, which were recently adopted by a recent **Ministerial Decision** for the protection of *C. caretta* in Greece, clearly set a target value of **940 nests/year** in the area of Laganas Bay, a Natura-2000 protected area with the code name 'GR2210002', (Government Gazette No. 1807/B/2023, see 'Table GR2210002\_2.1. *Caretta caretta* (1224)', p. 16909)
- This number can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the management measures taken and provide concrete protection for the species



## Other developments

- The case of the **illegal road**: The offender was recently criminally condemned by the appeal court. A further appeal was made about 2 months ago to 'Areios Pagos', which is the Supreme court serving as the second-instance court. This appeal was eventually rejected
- Other alleged **illegal developments** in the area have been brought to justice and the national authorities will implement the rulings, when the latter order specific actions to be taken by the authorities
- In the same spirit, a number of other alleged illegal actions have been brought to justice. **National Authorities are ready to intervene for ensuring implementation** of future Court decisions
- **Clarification** is needed on whether claims made by the complainant concern the above cases or other cases. If the latter is true, the complaining NGO is kindly requested to provide **specific geographic coordinates and precise relevant information** regarding the alleged illegal developments to the National Authorities without further delay



Gerakas Beach on 18/08/2023 without activities in the back part of the beach



New information panels on the nesting beaches



Buoys that prohibit the access in the maritime zone A (summer months)



Eco Guards from the M.U. of Zakynthos informing visitors for the regulation measures in the nesting beach of Gerakas



Gerakas Nesting Beach during the night without human activities



Nesting beach cleaning by the Eco Guards from the M.U. of Zakynthos in collaboration with NGO WWF, Archelon and Ionian University



Eco Guards from the M.U. of Zakynthos informing visitors for the regulation measures in the nesting beach of Gerakas





Implementation of management measures on the nesting beach of Kalamaki regarding the prohibition of approaching vehicles, horses, etc at the beach by placing new poles.



Eco Guards from M.U. informing visitors about the physical environment of the National Marine Park, at the information center of Gerakas



Delineation of the acceptable upper limit of beach furniture presence on the nesting beach as a management measure for nest protection. (Kalamaki nesting beach)



Organization of a capacity building seminar by MU Zakynthos, for Greeks PAMU/NECCA, regarding the protection and management of sea turtles



Placement of two underwater hydrophones in Lagana's bay for the measurement of noise and its impact on sea turtles





Sekania Beach during the night, recorded by one of the nine surveillance cameras installed by WWF Hellas in cooperation with the Management Unit

2023-07-26 21:51:34



Sekania Beach during the day, recorded by one of the nine surveillance cameras installed by WWF Hellas in cooperation with the Management Unit

2023-07-31 13:50:53



Aerial photos (drone) of Agios Sostis and Keri's Lake in Laganas bay for the monitoring and surveillance of marine traffic



***Photos taken during the summer period 2023 and provided by courtesy of the PAMU 11/NECCA***

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Thank you very much for your  
attention!

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