



Strasbourg, 26 February 2024

T-PVS/Files(2024)26

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Bureau of the Standing Committee

18-19 March 2024
Strasbourg

Complaint on stand-by: 2014/08

**Presumed large-scale exploitation and marketing of
protected marine-shelled molluscs
(Greece)**

- GOVERNMENT REPORT -

*Document prepared by
Ministry of Environment & Energy*

Ministry of Environment & Energy
Directorate-General of Environmental Policy
Directorate for Natural Environment Management & Biodiversity
Department for Biodiversity

Athens, 9 February 2024

To the Secretary of the Bern Convention

Dear Mr POUTIERS,

Subject: Complaint No. 2014/8: Complaint on stand-by: Greece: Presumed large-scale exploitation and marketing of protected marine-shelled molluscs

In response to your letter of the 20th of April 2023, Greece would like to provide the following updated information to the attention of the upcoming Bureau Meeting concerning the complaint on stand-by entitled ‘Presumed large-scale exploitation and marketing of protected marine shelled molluscs’.

Pursuant to the latest information submitted by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Insular Policy (The Headquarters of the Hellenic Coastguard/ Directorate for Fishery Control) to the Directorate-General for Fishery of the Ministry of Rural Development & Food, during controls carried out between 01/01/2023-31/01/2024:

- Ten violations for illegal fishing of date shells (*Lithophaga lithophaga*) were recorded and appropriate sanctions (fines, withdrawal of fishing permits and confiscation of products) were imposed
- No illegal fishing of fan mussels (*Pinna nobilis*) took place during the afore-mentioned period of time

The Directorate for Fishery Activities & Product Inspections of the Ministry of Rural Development & Food inspected five restaurants including shelled molluscs in their menus in order to check if they violated the legislation on protected marine-shelled molluscs. However, no violations of the related legislation were recorded, especially as regards date shells and fan mussels. The entrepreneurs running these restaurants stated to the national authorities that they were aware of the relevant legislation.

Furthermore, the intensification of inspections to fight illegal trafficking and trading of protected marine shelled molluscs will be pursued in 2024 within the jurisdiction of the Directorate for Fishery Activities & Product Inspections of the Ministry of Rural Development & Food, prioritizing concurrently massive inspections in restaurants serving shelled molluscs. The Directorate-General for Fishery of the same Ministry has also taken the initiative to involve more Fishery inspectors in the upcoming inspections from Directorates/Departments for Fishery of Regional Units and Regions across Greece. The aim of the current initiative is to reinforce inspections of fishery activities from ‘fishing to retail’.

Finally, the Department for Biodiversity of the Ministry of Environment & Energy (MEE) hosted a teleconference in February 2023 with the participation, among other participants, of the complainant, representatives of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research¹ and the contractors of the Special Environmental Studies (SESS)² on Lesbos Island and Amvrakikos Bay in order to investigate future ways to protect fan mussels in these two areas. The

¹ Governmental Research Organization under the supervision of the Hellenic Ministry for Development & Investment

² SESSs are being carried out in order to provide the scientific basis for the issuance of updated Presidential Decrees, Management Plans and Action Plans for the ‘Natura-2000’ Network of Greece

proposals of the complainant at the meeting were accepted and will be seriously taken into consideration for drawing up the SESs.

I remain at your disposal for any clarification you may need.

Yours sincerely,

The National Focal Point to the Bern Convention

Dr Evangelos Badieritakis

Cc: Secretariat-General for Natural Environment & Water of MEE
Directorate-General for Environmental Policy of MEE
Directorate for Fishery Activities & Product Inspections of the Ministry of Rural Development & Food
Department for Biodiversity of MEE
Permanent Representation of Greece to the Council of Europe