

# Environmental Law Enforcement in Greece

## *Experiences from the Long Term Efforts for the Conservation of the Mediterranean Monk*

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**INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON PREVENTING WILDLIFE CRIME**  
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Project Beneficiaries:



[www.lifethemis.eu](http://www.lifethemis.eu)

 **LIFE Themis**

The Mediterranean monk seal is one of the **rarest** marine mammal species in the world and the most endangered marine mammal in Europe, with a total population of less than 700 individuals.

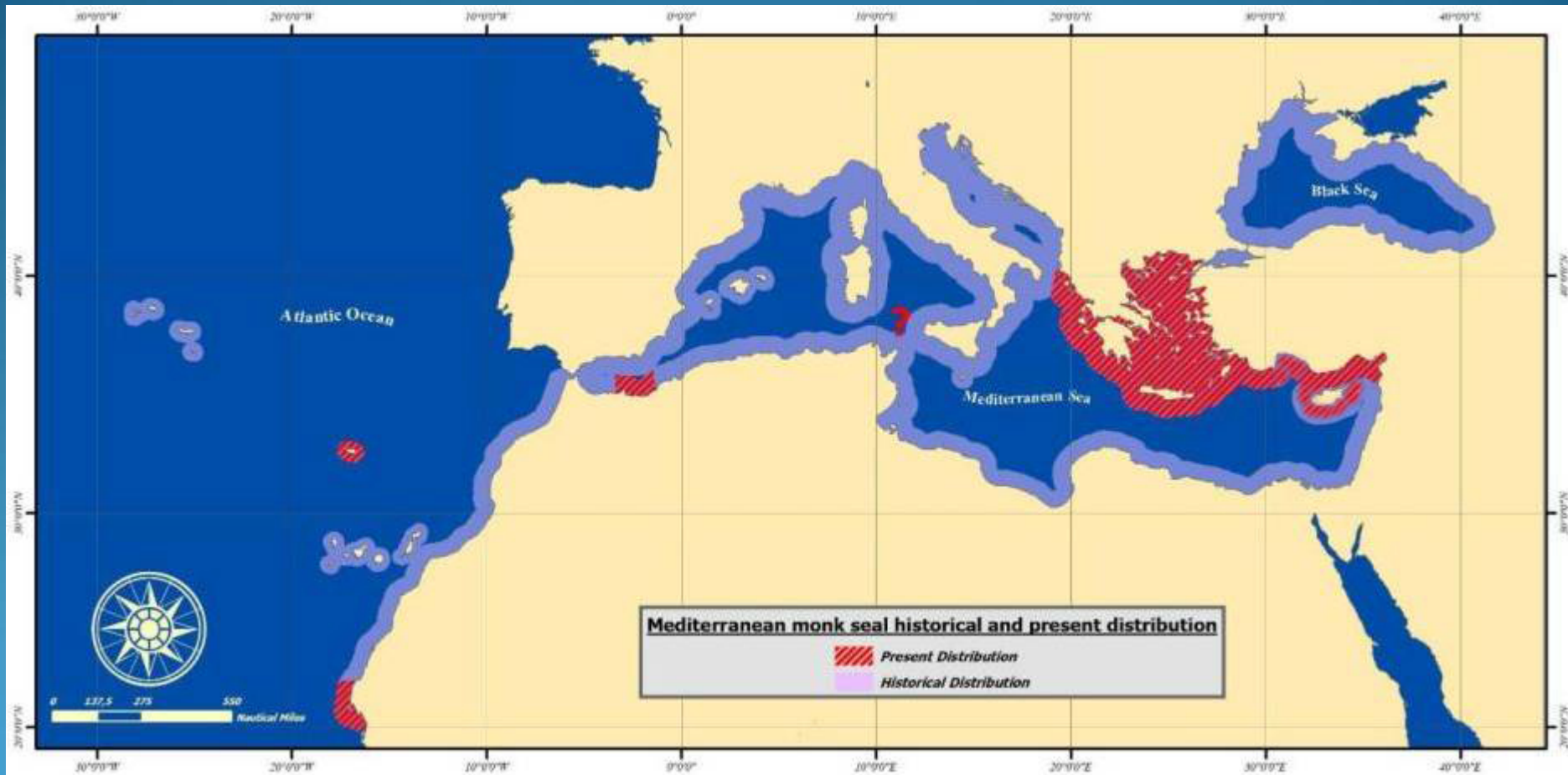
The species is considered endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2018). The species is of communal interest to the European Union and is listed as a priority species on Appendix II of the European Union Council Directive 92/43 of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitat Directive). In addition it is legally protected by:

- The Bonn Convention on Migratory Species (1979),
  - The Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979),
  - The Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (1977),
  - The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 1973), and
  - The 1995 Protocol Concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean.
- **In Greece, the Mediterranean monk seal is included as an endangered species in the Red Data of Greece and is protected by the Presidential Decree 67/1981**



# Distribution of the species. Historical review

In the recent past, populations of Mediterranean monk seals could be found throughout the entire Black and Mediterranean Sea, the north-western coasts of North Africa and the islands of the Azores, Madeira and Cape Verde. The continued exploitation of the species in the past two centuries led to the disappearance of the Mediterranean monk seal from the Black Sea and many countries in the Mediterranean Basin.

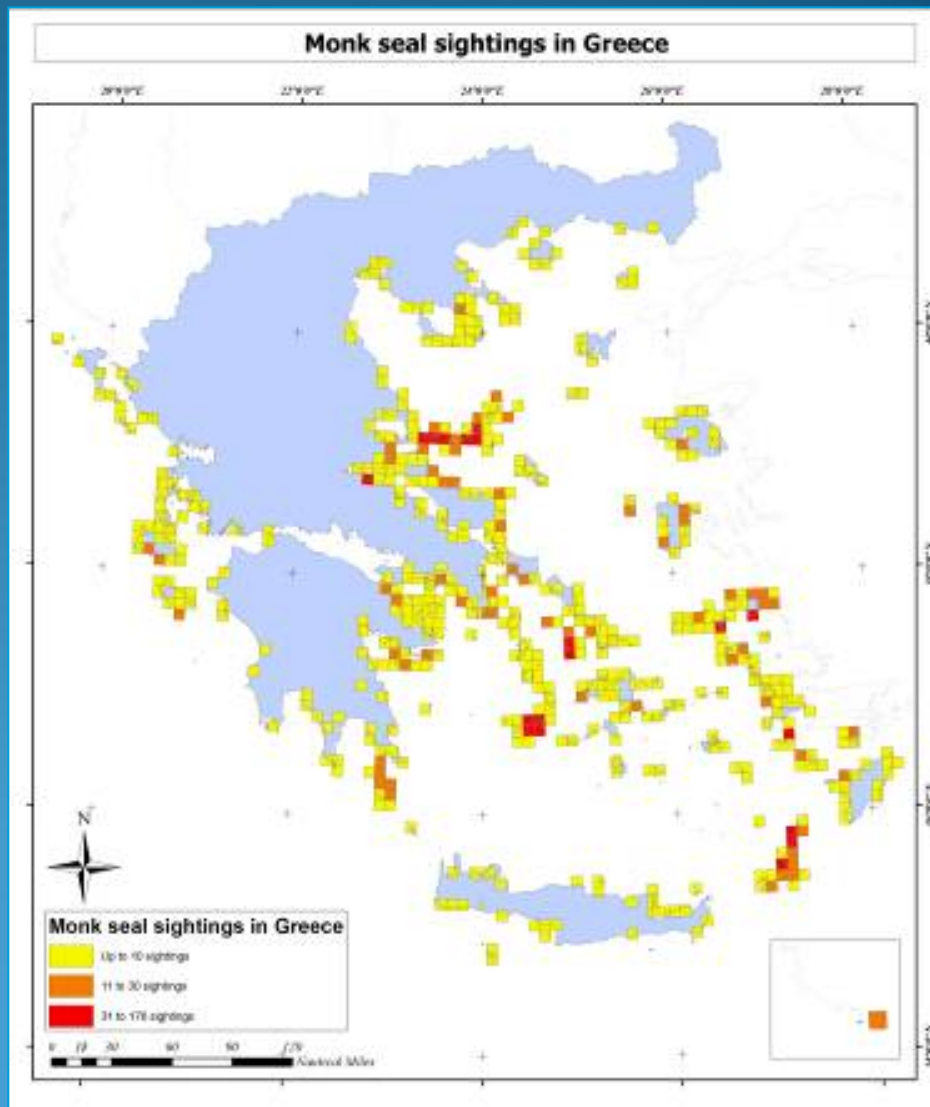





## Distribution of the species in Greece

- Mediterranean monk seals are still widely distributed in Greece. Detailed information on the presence of the species throughout the country has been collected by MOM through the operation of the national Rescue and Information Network (RINT) and on-site surveys/monitoring of local sub-populations.

*Population of about 400 individuals representing 90% of the total European population and 50% of the world population*



# Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal

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- A large, stylized white outline of a monk seal is positioned in the center of the slide, behind the list of bullet points. The seal is depicted in a swimming posture, with its head turned slightly to the left and its flippers extended.
- **MOM**, is a national, non-profit, non-governmental organization established in 1988 in Athens, Greece.
  - **MOM** is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1996.
  - **MOM** is a CITES officially registered Scientific Institution
  - The financial resources of **MOM** originate from supporter memberships, donations, as well as selected partnerships with the private sector, the Hellenic State and the European Commission.
  - Currently more than 4.000 people from Greece and abroad support the mission of the Society.

**The mission of MOM is:**

***“the conservation of the marine environment, through the protection of the Mediterranean monk seal”.***

## Key fields of activity are:

- Operation of a National Rescue & Information Network
- Treatment and rehabilitation of animals in distress
- Scientific Research
- *In situ* conservation of habitat/management of MPAs
- Public awareness campaigns at the local, national and international scale
- Environmental education for children
- Policy at national and European level





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## RINT: Rescue and Information network

Established by MOM in 1991, it has been developed to monitor the overall status of the Mediterranean monk seal in Greece. Since its establishment, RINT constitutes an extremely valuable conservation tool in:

- ✓ Monitoring the status and health of the Greek monk seal population
- ✓ Identifying major changes in the distribution of the species in Greece
- ✓ Involving the local fishing communities in the conservation efforts for the species
- ✓ Identifying important areas for the species and proposing conservation measures
- ✓ Acting immediately when needed; In cases of live animals needing treatment, In cases of dead animals, by performing necropsies.

***The operation of the RINT is based on the continuous communication with more than 2.000 "Network members" (authorities and inhabitants of coastal and island communities) that provide information on monk seal sightings.***





# The Mediterranean monk seal

## Threats

The main threats for the Mediterranean monk seal nowadays in Greece are following:

### **Human related mortality**

Deliberate killing of animals (in Greece most common death cause in adults - 54%)

Entanglement in fishing gear (in Greece most common death cause in subadults 47%)

### **Habitat destruction**

Increased and unregulated touristic  
Development of the coastline  
Increased boat traffic  
Increased pollution  
Decrease of fish-stocks

### **“Natural” factors**

Spread of disease  
Natural catastrophes  
Climate change



# MOM Necropsies

356 reported dead animals, 143 necropsies performed by MOM

## DEATH CAUSES

**DK: Deliberate Killing**

**AD: Accidental death**

**ND: Natural death**

**U: Unknown**

*-Pups: 90% of the pups died of natural causes, mainly bacterial and parasite infections (36,6%) and premature birth (16,6%).*

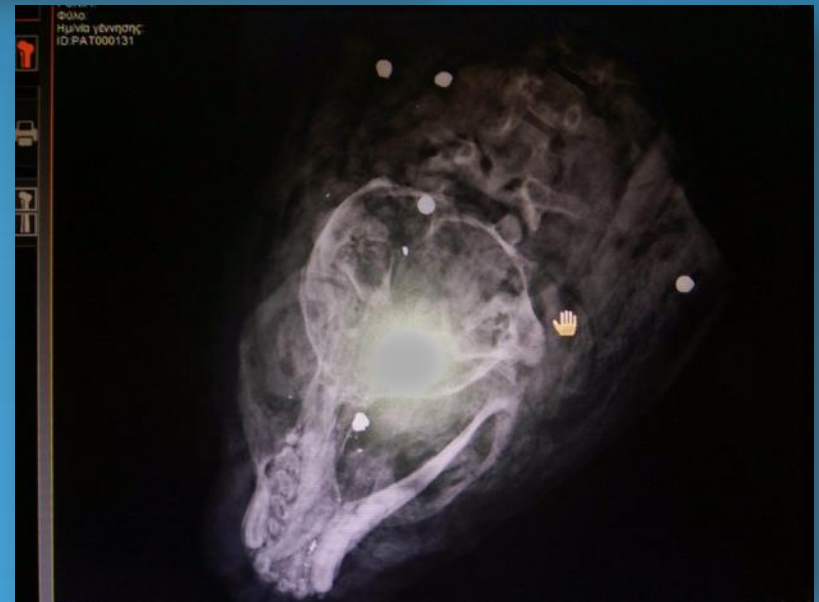
*-Sub-adults: the main cause of death was drowning due to entanglement in fishing nets*

*-Adults: the main cause of death is deliberate killing*



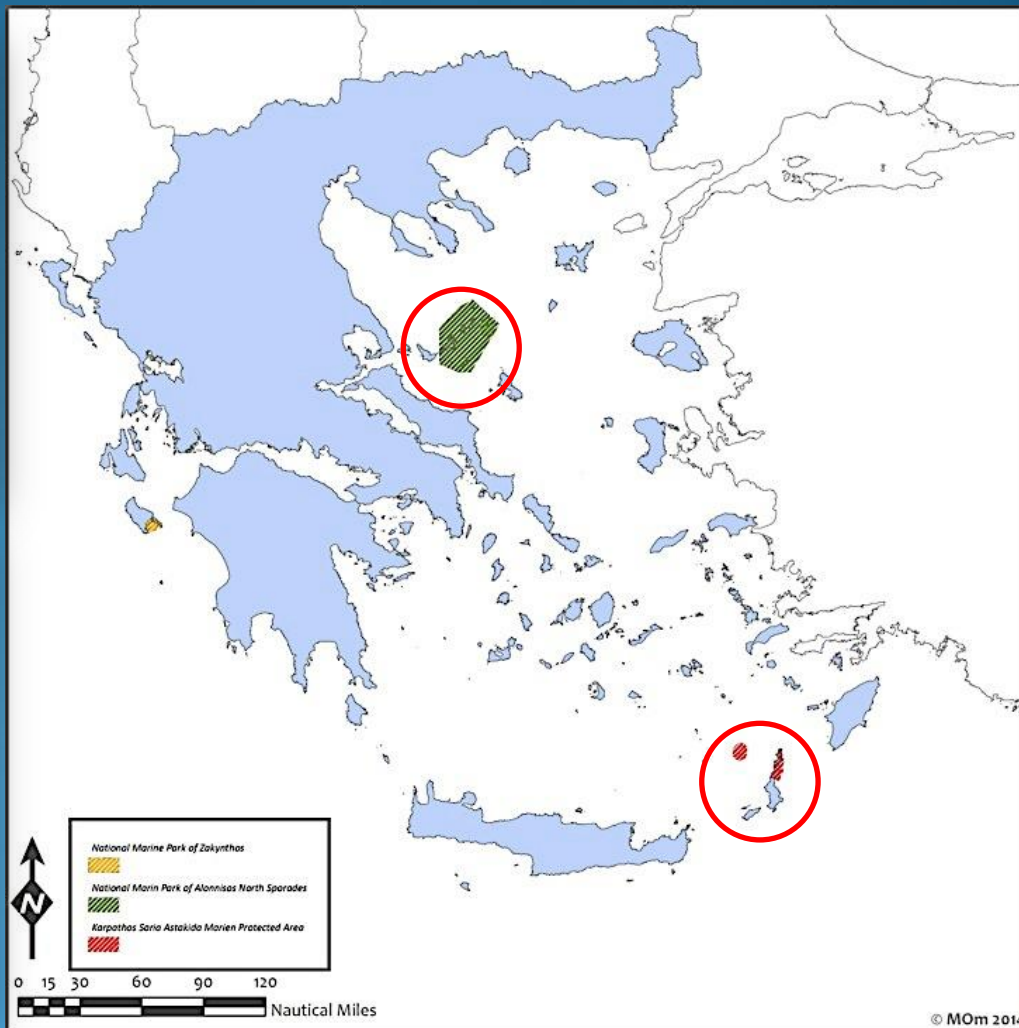


# MOM Necropsies



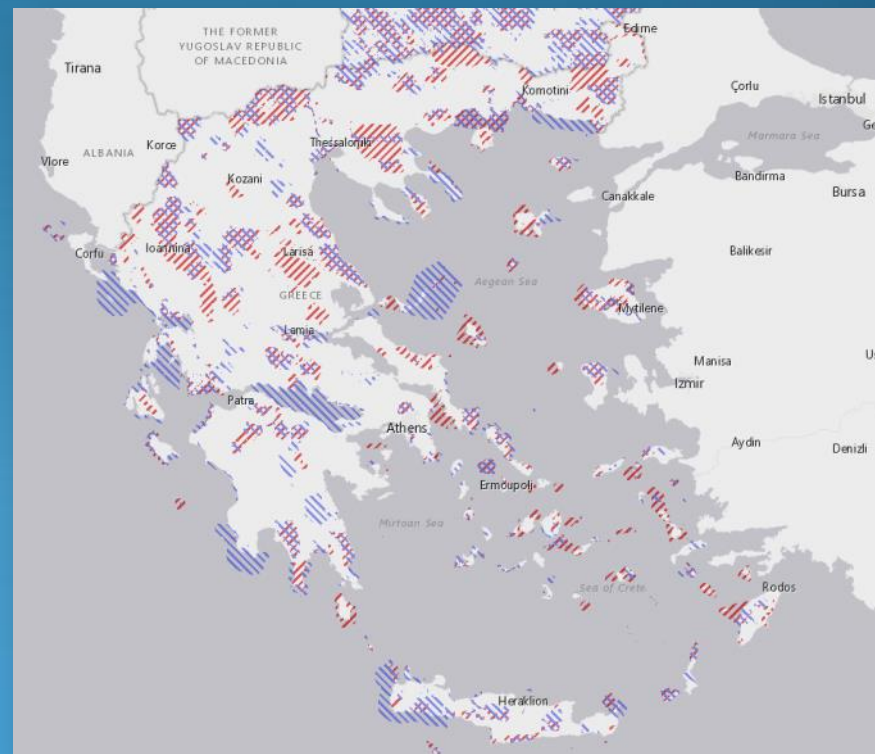


# Law enforcement in to MPAs



- Difficulties in completing legal procedures in cases of deliberate killings of animals
- No penalties for monk seal harassment up to date
- Lack of authority of PAs Management Bodies and their Guards (also within the framework of the new **Law 4519/2018**)

- More education of Competent Authorities on environmental protection Law issues
- Authority to PAs Management Bodies and Guards
- Formulation of Nature Rangers Service to combine all existing guarding schemes (hunting guards, forestry guards, PAs guarding staff)







Thank you for your attention

