

# Final Project Report 2025

Effective protection of Formicula and long-term monitoring  
in the Inner Ionian Archipelago



THESSALONIKI 2025



### **Suggested citation**

Athinaïou, I., Pyloridou, K., Cecconi, F., Leonard, C., Chouliaras, T. *Effective protection of Formicula island and long-term monitoring in the Inner Ionian Archipelago*. iSea, Greece, 2025. 32pp.

### **Graphic design:**

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### **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to thank the people and businesses that support our actions in the Inner Ionian including, the M/S Christina and Sunsail Lefkas for their strong support to the initiative and event participation; Ionian Pro Dive for their participation in the dive activities, Anemos Villas for their hospitality; the local authorities including the port authority of Lefkada for their collaboration and attendance to the project events; the municipality of Xiromero and Myticas community for supporting the event organisation in Myticas. Furthermore, Blue Marine Foundation and Tethys Research Institute for the collaborative work in the area and support. Finally, we would like to thank our intern Charles for his input into the laboratory activities and analysis of the project



The present report was produced in the context of the project Protecting the Inner Ionian Archipelago and Formicula implemented by iSea in collaboration with Blue Marine Foundation and Tethys Research Institute. The project is funded by Blue Marine Foundation.



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# Baseline information

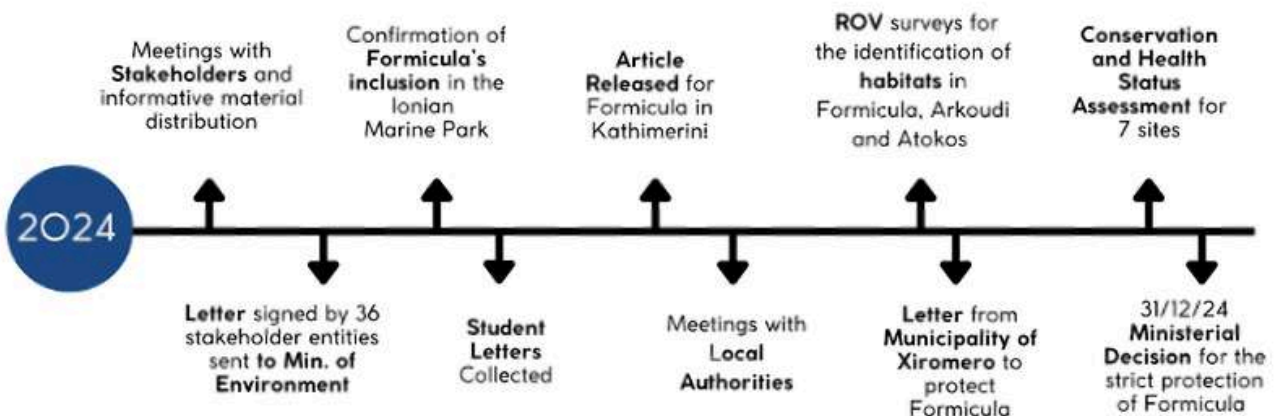
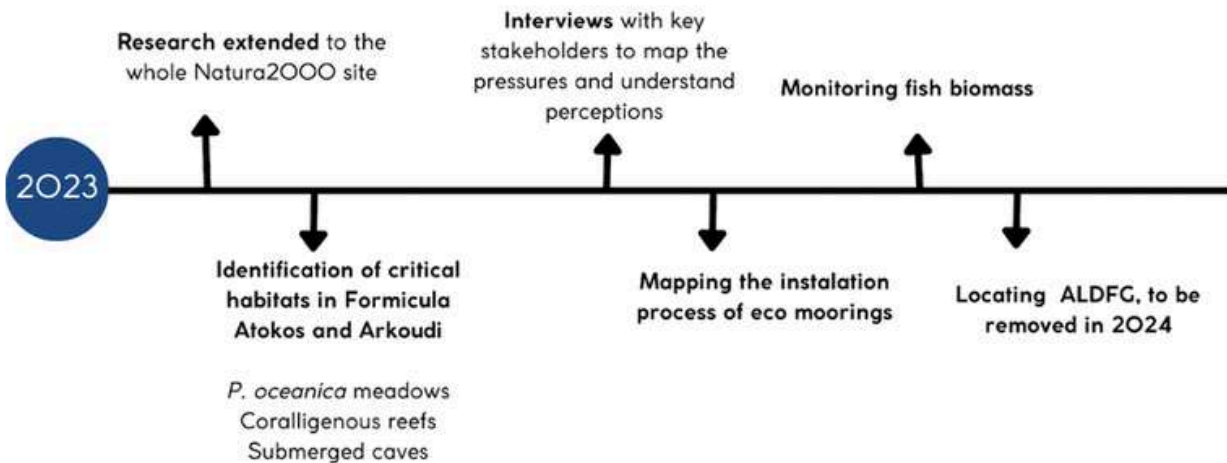
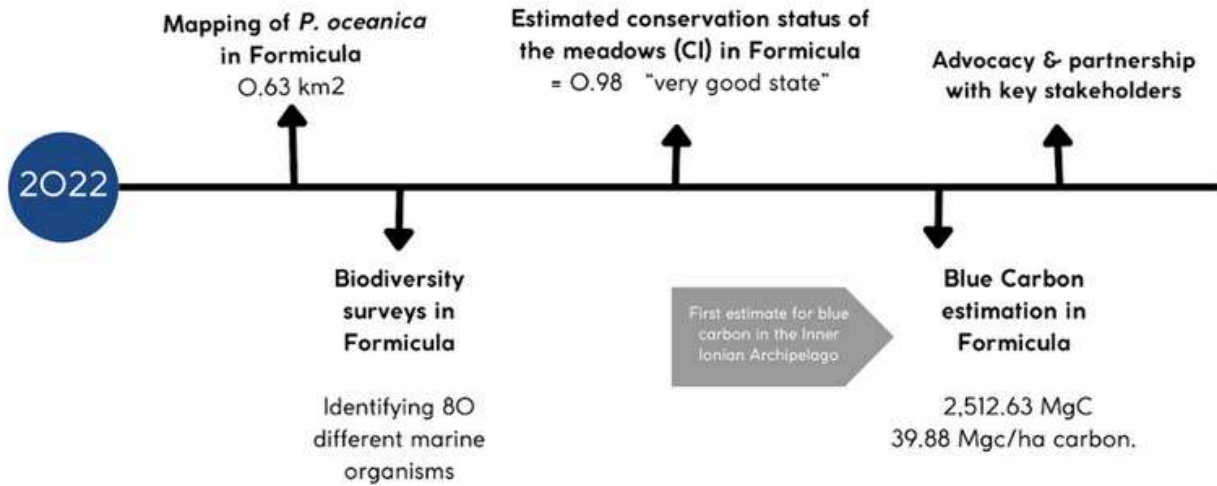
The **Inner Ionian Archipelago (IIA)** is located in the Ionian Sea, spanning from the western coast of Lefkada, down to the islet Vromonas, including Meganisi, Kalamos, Kastos and a series of small uninhabited islets. The IIA is a Natura2000 site (Area of Community Interest) and designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The region has great ecological value due to the presence of critical habitats including extended *Posidonia oceanica* meadows [1], biogenic reefs and sea caves [2], while a significant number of marine megafauna species inhabit these waters. The site is part of the wider Ionian Archipelago Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA), while also designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) and an Areas of Interest (Aoi) for sharks and rays.

One of the uninhabited islets in the IIA, Formicula is recognised as a hotspot for biodiversity, characterised by submerged caves, that provide important habitat for the reproduction of the Mediterranean monk seal. The area has historically been important for them [3] with their presence appearing to have increased in recent years [4] with more than 40 individual monk seals photo-identified as utilising the area as a refuge for hunting, socialising and pupping. The condition of monk seals in the waters around Formicula is very exciting, but in parallel very worrisome due to disturbance caused by overtourism. Although Formicula is an uninhabited island of just 0.15 km<sup>2</sup>, in the summer months it is characterised by heavy traffic of boats, which often stop for leisure purposes [5]. The regular presence of Mediterranean monk seals on the island has made it a destination for their observation, which is done in an uncontrolled and often intrusive way.

Some of the human activities regularly seen during summer include people chasing seals, attempting to swim with them and entering the breeding or resting caves. At the same time, the uncontrolled anchoring from recreational vessels within the boundaries of *Posidonia* meadows results in the fragmentation and degradation of the habitat, with characteristic signs of anchorage at the upper (shallow) boundary of the existing meadow while on the main beach of the island, where boats normally concentrate, *Posidonia* meadows are absent. In response to the situation and to avoid incidents of human-wildlife conflict and the species abandonment of the site, a new **Ministerial Decision** (MD 123711/3066 / Official Government Gazette 953/31.12.2024) has been enacted since December 2024 that regulates human activities and enhances the protection of feeding and breeding sites around Formicula Island. This Decision is a result of longstanding efforts of several organisations and local stakeholders [2]. The Ministerial Decision establishes 3 regulated zones a) a regulated access zone, b) a strict protection zone, and c) a regulated passage zone; proposed by iSea, Tethys, Blue Marine Foundation and Lefkada Municipality in 2022.

A brief timeline of iSea's work in the region follows. The activities of the project in 2025 work complementary to the findings so far and are utilised to support the science-based management of the wider area and long-term monitoring of priority species and habitats in the IIA, in line with the changes in the site's protection status and inclusion in the newly developed National Marine Park of the Ionian, announced during Our Oceans Conference 2024 by the Greek Prime Minister.

# Timeline of iSea's work in the IIA



# Actions for 2025

**Aim:** Contribute to the effective implementation of the Ministerial Decision for the strict protection of Formicula through awareness raising and authority collaborations, while continuing systematic monitoring of priority species and habitats in the Inner Ionian Archipelago islets.

## Summary Achievements

### Stakeholder achievements



8

Meetings with local authorities



2

Nautical apps updated with regulations in Formicula.

### Formicula Material Distribution



250

Contacts associated with sailing businesses have received the electronic materials



80

from these, Companies have also received the printed material



6,065

### Further Engagement

videos



2

views



234,368

info kiosk



11

local events



2

news articles



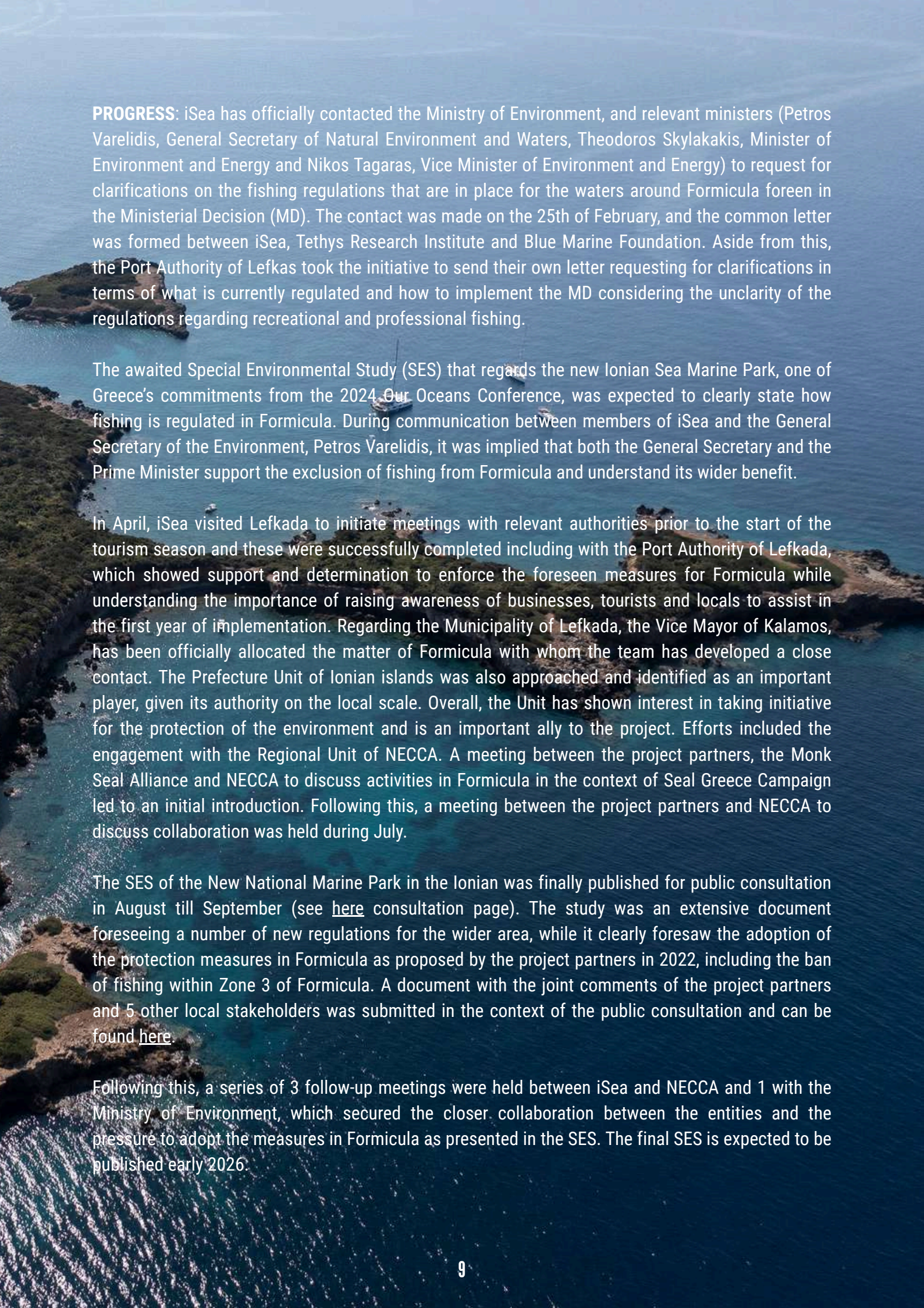
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# A. Advocacy for effective protection:

A.1 Engagement with authorities to support the implementation of the Ministerial Decision in Formicula.

## ACTIONS

- ➔ Letter to the Ministry of Environment regarding unclear fishing restrictions in Formicula foreseen in the Ministerial Decision.
- ➔ Meetings with competent authorities before and after the tourism season

An aerial photograph of a coastal area. In the foreground, there's a rocky coastline with some greenery. A small boat is visible in the water. In the background, there's a bay or inlet with a small island or peninsula. The water is a deep blue color.

**PROGRESS:** iSea has officially contacted the Ministry of Environment, and relevant ministers (Petros Varelidis, General Secretary of Natural Environment and Waters, Theodoros Skylakakis, Minister of Environment and Energy and Nikos Tagaras, Vice Minister of Environment and Energy) to request for clarifications on the fishing regulations that are in place for the waters around Formicula foreen in the Ministerial Decision (MD). The contact was made on the 25th of February, and the common letter was formed between iSea, Tethys Research Institute and Blue Marine Foundation. Aside from this, the Port Authority of Lefkas took the initiative to send their own letter requesting for clarifications in terms of what is currently regulated and how to implement the MD considering the unclarity of the regulations regarding recreational and professional fishing.

The awaited Special Environmental Study (SES) that regards the new Ionian Sea Marine Park, one of Greece's commitments from the 2024 Our Oceans Conference, was expected to clearly state how fishing is regulated in Formicula. During communication between members of iSea and the General Secretary of the Environment, Petros Varelidis, it was implied that both the General Secretary and the Prime Minister support the exclusion of fishing from Formicula and understand its wider benefit.

In April, iSea visited Lefkada to initiate meetings with relevant authorities prior to the start of the tourism season and these were successfully completed including with the Port Authority of Lefkada, which showed support and determination to enforce the foreseen measures for Formicula while understanding the importance of raising awareness of businesses, tourists and locals to assist in the first year of implementation. Regarding the Municipality of Lefkada, the Vice Mayor of Kalamos, has been officially allocated the matter of Formicula with whom the team has developed a close contact. The Prefecture Unit of Ionian islands was also approached and identified as an important player, given its authority on the local scale. Overall, the Unit has shown interest in taking initiative for the protection of the environment and is an important ally to the project. Efforts included the engagement with the Regional Unit of NECCA. A meeting between the project partners, the Monk Seal Alliance and NECCA to discuss activities in Formicula in the context of Seal Greece Campaign led to an initial introduction. Following this, a meeting between the project partners and NECCA to discuss collaboration was held during July.

The SES of the New National Marine Park in the Ionian was finally published for public consultation in August till September (see [here](#) consultation page). The study was an extensive document foreseeing a number of new regulations for the wider area, while it clearly foresaw the adoption of the protection measures in Formicula as proposed by the project partners in 2022, including the ban of fishing within Zone 3 of Formicula. A document with the joint comments of the project partners and 5 other local stakeholders was submitted in the context of the public consultation and can be found [here](#).

Following this, a series of 3 follow-up meetings were held between iSea and NECCA and 1 with the Ministry of Environment, which secured the closer collaboration between the entities and the pressure to adopt the measures in Formicula as presented in the SES. The final SES is expected to be published early 2026.

## **A. Advocacy for effective protection**

**A.3 Urging for the development of an effective Eco-mooring model for Formicula to ensure the protection of Posidonia meadows**

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Support the development of an eco-mooring model for Formicula by providing site-specific scientific advice and sharing of the Eco-moorings policy brief to NECCA and relevant authorities with the goal to ensure placement of eco-moorings in Formicula in 2026.

**PROGRESS:** Regarding the Policy Brief for Eco-Moorings developed during 2023 an updated version was made, including the review from the Greek Law Firm (Potamitis Vekris). Contact was made with WWF Greece, which were in parallel developing their own Policy Brief to regulate anchoring over Posidonia and support the placement and management of moorings. The project partners were initially running efforts to move forward in a collaborative manner, however, in June 2025, a new Ministerial Decision was published which gave a new legal framework for the placement and management of moorings in Greece. The Policy Officer of iSea was allocated the review of the new legal piece, which mandates among other things i) certification of the chemical suitability of the mooring materials, ii) a study from a Marine Architect iii) the approval of a Civil Engineer or Topographer and vi) a site inspection by a commercial diver along with the approval of competent authorities such as NECCA for sites within Protected Areas. Given the complexity of the matter and multiple unclarities in the legal text, the Policy Officer of iSea has led communications with the relevant authorities to clarify the necessary steps for the placement of eco-moorings within Formicula. Furthermore, discussions with NECCA are actively occurring to discuss the timely placement of these in Formicula in a collaborative manner.



## B. Engagement with other stakeholder groups

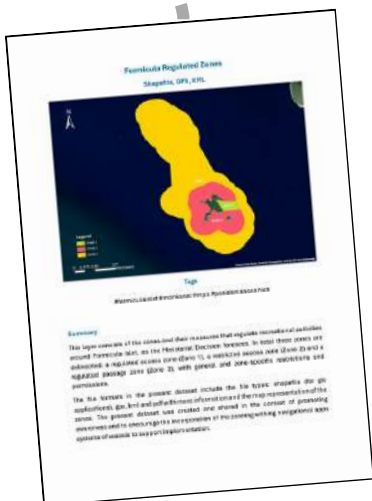
### B.1 Sailing Businesses: Incorporation of Formicula protection zones into nautical charts and apps.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Creating a gpx file that includes the protection zones of Formicula and urging sailing businesses to download these into their standard navigational apps. The file will be made accessible via the project website and sent to all sailing business contacts. Popular navigational apps will be approached to also incorporate these maps into their databases.

**PROGRESS:** An online resource was created in the form of GIS files (shapefile, kml, kmz) presenting the coordinates/polygon of regulated zones in Formicula with information of the permitted activities in each of these zones as outlined in the MD. The resource can be found in the open-access platform of Zenodo [here](#).

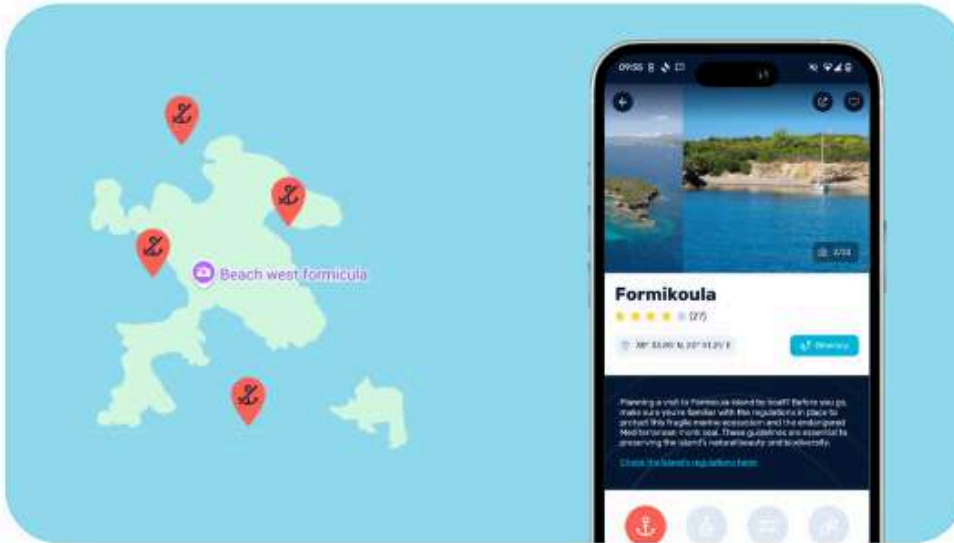
In total, 14 relevant companies and entities were mapped and have been approached requesting for the immediate update of their maps and nautical charts in order to reflect the new measures on the island and inform all visiting sailors and boaters. These include [Navionics](#), [Navily](#), [Donia](#), [C-MAP](#), [iNavX](#), [Seapilot](#), Marine traffic, [Wavve Boating](#), [Savvy Navy](#), [Ankeralarm](#), [Orca](#), [Argo](#) and [TimeZero](#). Furthermore, an official letter was sent to the [Hellenic Navy Hydrographic Service](#) on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, proposing an update of the national nautical charts. The official response stated that updates will be made after the acceptance of the SES for the new National Marine Park of Ionian to incorporate all foreseen regulations within the update.

As a result, firstly since June 12<sup>th</sup> Navily, an app that provides point information on anchorages (anchoring locations), has updated its information in Formicula by clearly mentioning that the site as a whole is a no-anchor zone. A relevant detailed article has been linked within each of the anchorage information page which describes the regulations that are in place and refers to the information produced by iSea, Tethys and Blue Marine Foundation. The article can be seen [here](#) and has been uploaded in the apps Blog regarding the Environment.





## Navily has been updated



All anchorages on Navily around the island have been marked as forbidden. Links to this resource article have been added to the anchorages description to make sure our community is informed about the restrictions in place.



Figure 1: Preview of the updated information on Navily regarding the no-anchor regulations in Formicula and the relevant notice that links a detailed article outlining the permitted activities (left). Preview of the update of Navionics Nautical Charts with the new zones in Formicula islet (right).

Finally, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, **Navionics**, the biggest nautical chart provider on a national and international level, updated their nautical charts to include the new regulations in Formicula with a detailed visualisation of the zoning and labelling of foreseen restriction in each. Given the update, a social media post and email contact to all local sailing businesses was completed, requesting users to update the Navionics applications to reflect the new change. The charts can be previewed [here](#).

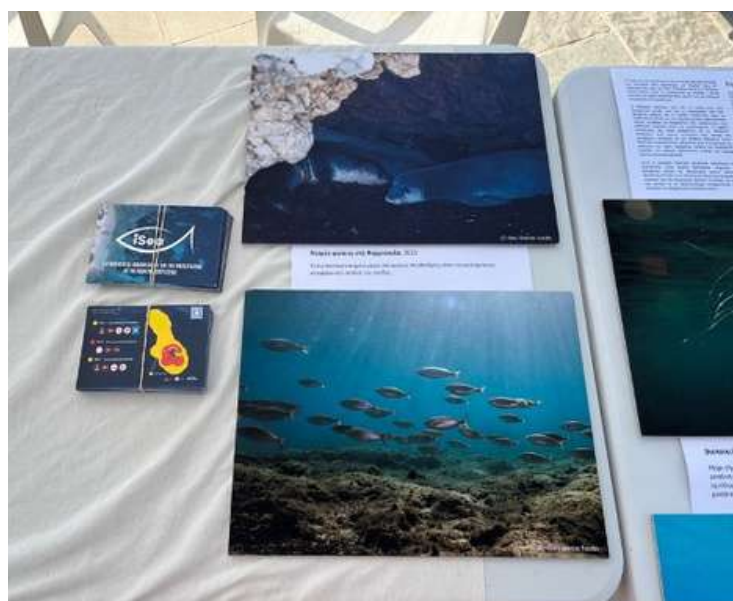
## B.2 Schools: Formicula School's campaign continuation

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- o Utilising the 'letters to the minister' collected in 2023 and 2024 schools campaign action into informative events.
- o Adaptation of 2024 schools' material to the state-of-art for the area

**PROGRESS:** The letters that were collected in 2024 were displayed during the 2-day informative kiosk in Lefkada, the event in Myticas and in the context of the 'Seal Greece' Campaign at iSea's info kiosks in Lefkada Marina, Sivota, Nidri, Vasiliki and Ithaca (see section D for details). During the informative presentations in Lefkada and Myticas, a relevant presentation was made showcasing the work and outputs of the Schools campaign that was implemented by Nautilus Dive Centre, bringing an emotional and inspiring aspect to the events.

Regarding the update of the material to reflect the current state of protection, a simple activity was produced and utilised in the context of the Connect Ionian Festival, a festival for kids and youth to participate in a number of activities that took place in Lefkada on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June. The activity, presented in an A3 document (see [here](#), in Greek) outlined the current regulations that now exist in Formicula island and urged the kids to write their own message through writing a letter or drawing (find the letter [here](#)), for the protection of monk seals, Formicula and/or their local marine environment, to selected stakeholders (Mayor, Port Police, Researcher, Diver, Captain, Fisher or visitors). In total 29 letters and drawings were collected during the event. The activity was also included in the Seal Greece campaign info Kiosks of iSea resulting in the handout of at least 150 blank letters for kids to complete at the spot, or at home.





Photos from the Connect Ionian Festival on the 13th of June in Lefkada where iSea was present with an infokiosk and kids activity related to Formiculas protection.

# C. Science and Research Actions

## C.1 Systematic monitoring of Posidonia meadows Health.

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Monitoring the status of Posidonia meadows utilising the index CI, an index that represents the continuity of the Posidonia meadows accounting for effects of anchoring. This will be undertaken in the shallow areas of the Posidonia meadow to accompany the data collected in 2024 and improve representation of the shallow areas of Posidonia that are most impacted by uncontrolled anchoring.

Fieldwork activities took place from the 12/09/25 to the 18/09/25 under the research permit ΥΠΕΝ/ΔΠΔ/26906/1818; ΑΔΑ: ΨΩΝ64653Π8-ΞΔΧ.

**Table 1. Sampling stations in Inner Ionian Archipelago and the equivalent actions.**

Sampling station	Area	Date	Coordinates	Actions
SS1	Arkoudi	12/09/2025	38°33'00.3"N 20°42'53.7"E	Density, CI
SS2	Formicula	13/09/2025	38°33'49.4"N 20°51'18.5"E	Density, CI
SS3	Atokos	16/09/2025	38°28'59.7"N 20°49'16.9"E	Density, CI
SS4	Formicula	18/09/2025	38°33'56.3"N 20°51'00.1"E	BiPo, PREI, CI

**METHODOLOGY:** Following the methodology of RAC/SPA - UNEP/MAP (2014) [6], for shallow Posidonia meadows monitoring, a total of 3 sampling stations were completed, 1 for each islet: Arkoudi (SS1), Formicula (SS2) and Atokos (SS3). The sites were chosen considering the results of anchorage hotspots in each islet [5]. The parameters assessed included shoot density ( $m^2$ ) and meadow coverage (Conservation Index; CI) using four 10m transects in opposite directions with a central start point, and random sampling with 10 quadrats (40x40cm, divided in 4 equal subquadrats of 20x20cm).

During the survey, the different habitat types were recorded including Posidonia, sand and rocks, and the presence of alien/invasive species along visual observations from signs of direct impacts on the meadows. All the surveys were performed at the depths <10 meters. The resulting values for shoot density were compared with the limits of UNEP/MAP-RAC/SPA, 2011 modified while for the resulting CI value, were compared with limits of Montefalcone (2009) [8] that follow the WFD requirements and Moreno et al. (2001) [7] using their regional limits, as currently no Greece-specific limits have been estimated. **SS4** in Formicula related to a remaining project deliverable from 2024 due to loss of data and was completed along with the 2025 fieldwork. For this station the indices BiPo, PREI and CI were assessed, as done in the methodology of 2024 [2].

**Table 2. Resulting status from shoot density values**

Stations	High Status	Good Status	Moderate Status	Poor Status	Bad Status
SS1 Arkoudi	0%	0%	8%	40%	52%
SS2 Formicula	0%	0%	9%	23%	69%
SS3 Atokos	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%

**Table 3. Resulting CI status from limits of Moreno et al., 2001 (Status 1) and Montefalcone, 2009 (Status 2).**

Stations	CI average	Status 1	Status 2
Arkoudi - SS1	0.11	Advanced degree of regression	Bad conservation status
Formicula SS2	0.87	High state of conservation	Good conservation status
Atokos - SS3	0.43	Impacted meadow	Poor conservation status

**Table 4. Resulting health indices for SS4 in Formicula.**

CI	Conservation Status	EQR	BiPo Ecological Status	EQR	PREI Ecological Status
1	High state of conservation	0.666	Good ecological status	0.743	Good ecological status

**Table 5. Mean values for phenological parameters for SS4.**

Mean Foliar Surface (cm <sup>2</sup> /shoot)	STD	Mean Photosynthetic Surface (cm <sup>2</sup> /shoot)	STD	Grazing signs (%)	Broken leaves (%)	Coefficient A (%)	Plagiotropic (%)	Mean Matte morte (%)	Mean Burial (cm)	Mean E/L
207.68	138.18	36.4	17.82	1.10%	42.86%	38.46%	4.49%	0%	6.25	0.045

## C.1 Systematic monitoring of Posidonia meadows Health.

**RESULTS:** Regarding **shoot density** (Table 2) all areas showed a **“Moderate”** to **“Bad Status”**. Between the sites, unsurprisingly, the lowest status was observed in **Atokos** with a total of 90% of the quadrants having a **“Bad status”** and only 10% with a **“Poor status”**. Following this, in **Formicula** almost 70% of the quadrants had a **“Bad status”**, 23% a **“Poor”** and 9% a **“Moderate”**. Finally, **Arkoudi** was the station that showed an improved shoot density in comparison with the other two, with 52% of quadrants with **“Bad Status”**, 40% a **“Poor”** and 8% a **“Moderate”**.

When looking at the **conservation status (CI)** the highest results were seen in **Formicula**, with the value of 0.87 corresponding to a **“High state of conservation”**. The lowest value was seen in **Arkoudi** with 0.11 resulting to an **“Advanced degree of regression”**. Atokos results were also poor with a resulting CI of 0.47 corresponding to an **“Impacted meadow”**.

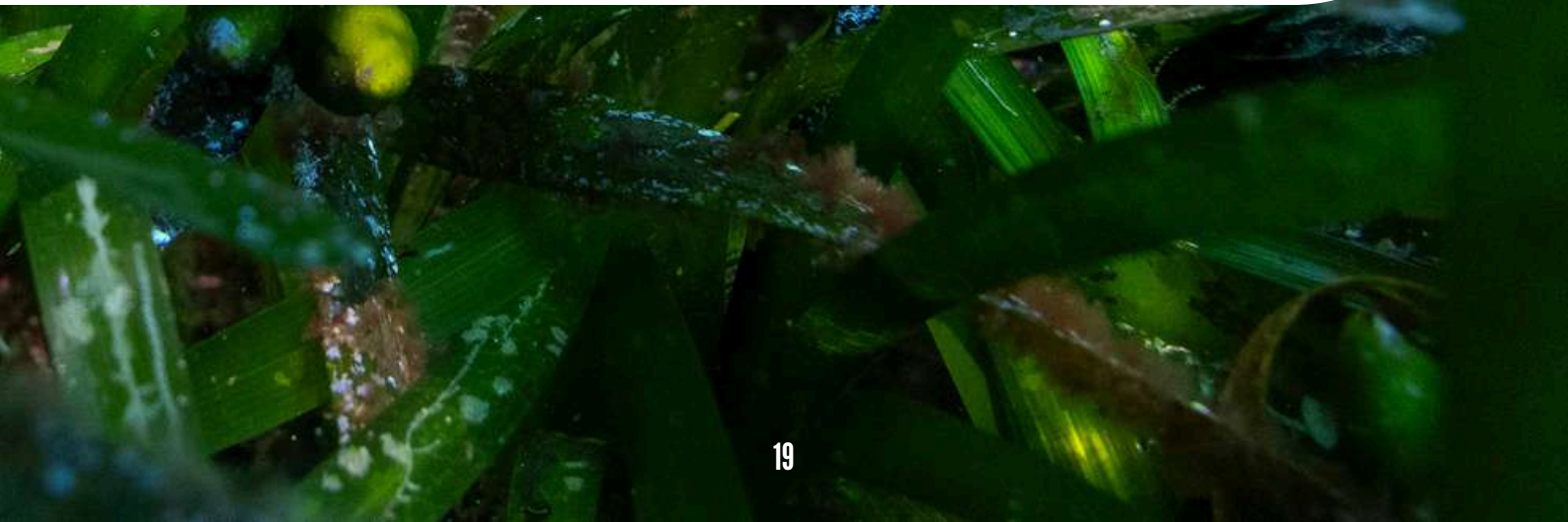
When comparing this with the results of 2024, we see conflicting results in Formicula that has systematically shown a Good to High health status when surveying at depths of 15m. The present results confirm that shallow depths of Formicula, specifically the eastern sandy bay, is highly impacted by anchoring, agreeing with drone surveys identifying the bay as the hotspot of the island for vessel activity.

Regarding SS4 in Formicula, where the indices BiPo, PREI and CI were assessed at 15m, unsurprisingly the meadow exhibited good health status, with a CI of **“High state of conservation”** (highest status). Both Ecological Indices resulted in a **“Good Ecological Status”** (PREI EQR: 0.743; BiPo EQR: 0.666; Table 4) which is a lower status comparing with the sampling of 2024 in Formicula’s eastern bay which had a High Ecological Status (0.81, BiPo; 0.94, PREI) but a lower CI of 0.98 [2].

Other parameters, including the foliar surface (total leaf surface area), photosynthetic leaf surface (leaf surface excluding brown areas and base), rhizome stripping (length of exposed roots), percentage grazed leaves, number of plagiotropic (lateral growth) shoots and absence of apex leaf (coefficient A) (Table 5). The low value of photosynthetic leaf area observed highly related to the season of the sampling due to the concentration of brown leaf surface, which is correlated with the cycle of Posidonia. Almost 40% percentage of the leaves had either a broken part or had lost their upper part. No significant results of herbivore activity and epiphytic growth were observed.



Figure 2. Sampling locations for Posidonia shoot density and CI status in Arkoudi, Formicula and Atokos.



## C.2 Systematic monitoring of fishfauna.

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Ichthyofauna underwater visual census annual survey which includes three transects in selected isobaths (<10m, 10-20m, >20m) over a) rocky reefs and b) Posidonia meadows. Surveys will be completed for each islet (Atokos, Arkoudi, Formicula), one dive per habitat type (6 dives total)

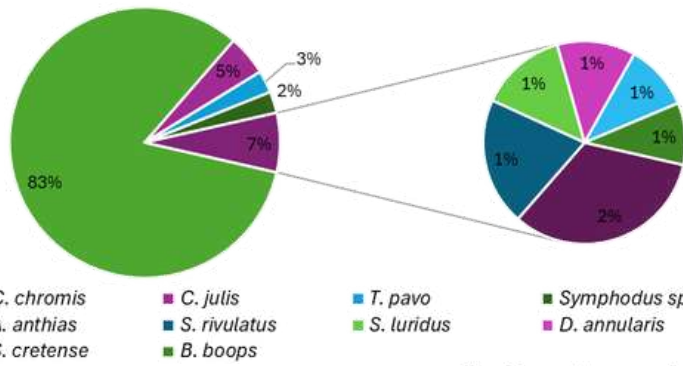
Underwater Visual Census (UVC) was used to assess biodiversity and fish biomass. The Underwater Visual Census (UVC) was completed from the 11/09/25 to the 17/09/25 in three sites of the Inner Ionian Archipelago (Formicula islet, Arkoudi island and Atokos island). Three transects of 25 m. long by 5m. wide were employed in selected isobaths (<10m, 10-20m, >20m) over Posidonia meadows, and rocky reefs. During the surveys, habitat affiliation was taken into consideration for the assessment of the ichthyofauna on Posidonia meadows and rocky reefs. This included taking notes on the length of the species observed, along with identifying the species and recording the number of individuals observed. For the estimation of the biomass, the equation of length-weight ( $W=aL^b$ ) was utilized, determining the weight of the species recorded in kg. From the above-mentioned equation, the constant parameters of “a” and “b” were derived from the online database Fishbase (version 06/2024), and from published bibliography. For the analysis of the fishfauna a bootstrap methodology was followed.

A total of 54 transects were carried out. In total, **39** different species were recorded, with most of them identified at species level (n=36). Formicula presented the highest number of species with 27 followed by Atoko and Arkoudi with 26 and 23 respectively. Of the 39 species recorded *Chromis chromis* had the highest abundance in the three location (83% in Arkoudi, 72% in Atoko and 50% in Formicula), followed by *Coris julis* in Arkoudi and Atoko (5% and 6% accordingly), but in Formicula *Atherina boyeri* was the second highest with 27% of the abundance.

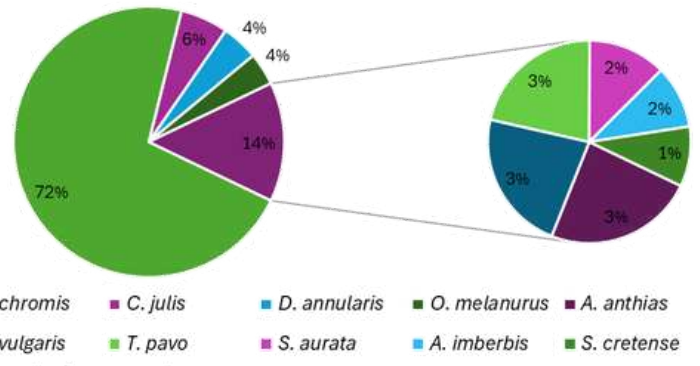
The analysis showed that the density per 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, in Posidonia meadows in Atoko and Formicula was higher with values reaching **944** and **1385** individuals respectively. However, this trend was the opposite in Arkoudi where rocky habitats had the highest density observed (1543 individuals), more than the double showed in Posidonia meadows (428 individuals) (Figure 3). On the other hand the biomass across all three locations displayed a consistent trend. In Arkoudi, Atoko and Formicula the rocky reef habitats consistently presented higher mean biomass (24.4 kg, 23 kg and 74.8 kg per 1000m<sup>2</sup>, accordingly) (Figure 4).

These results provide a strong evidence and support for the ecological role of Posidonia as a nursery area. In Atoko and Formicula, the results are an evidence of a nursery habitat, indicating large population of small, juvenile individuals. Although, the density in Arkoudi is higher, the consistently lower biomass in Posidonia meadows suggest that they primarily host smaller individuals.

Top 10 species recorded in Arkoudi express in percentage



Top 10 species recorded in Atoko express in percentage



Top 10 species recorded in Formicula express in percentage

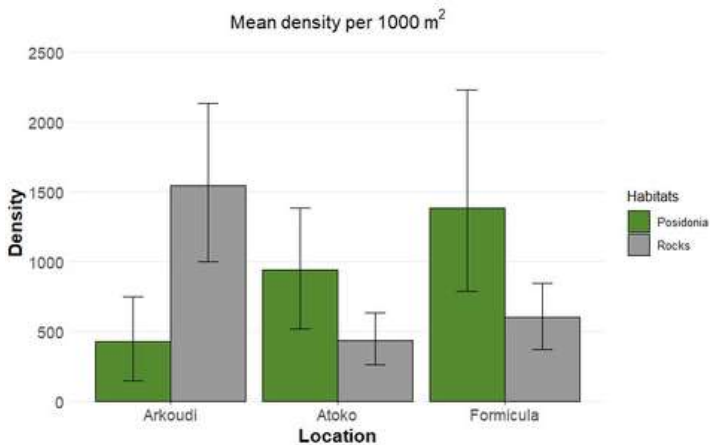
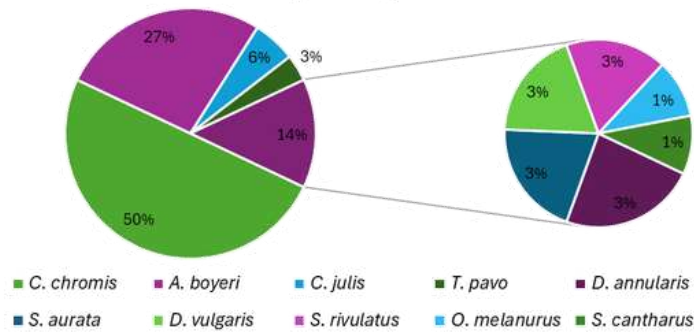


Figure 3. comparison of the fish density per 1000m<sup>2</sup> between two habitats and the 3 areas surveys

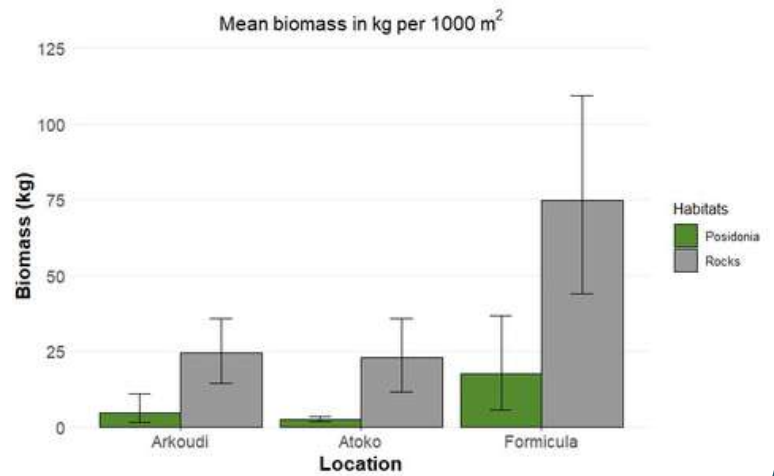


Figure 4. comparison of the biomass per 1000m<sup>2</sup> between two habitats in the 3 areas surveys



### **C.3. Scientific publication related to current and past conservation and research work in the IIA.**

#### **PROPOSED ACTIONS:**

The topic of the scientific publication is to be confirmed after internal evaluation and identification of priorities.

**PROGRESS:** Regarding a scientific publication for the work in the Inner Ionian Archipelago and Formicula, there is no progress to report. The topic of the paper will be discussed over the following months and could possibly involve the monitoring of the first year of implementation of the MD measures using AIS. Instead, the project was presented during the Mediterranean Posidonia Network seminar in Tunisia in May 2025.

# D. Communication and informative events/ materials

## D.1 Creation and dissemination of informative materials.

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Creation of informative signs with the protection zones in Formicula targeted for businesses and sea users. The informative signs with the map of Formicula to be placed in the main ports/marinas of the area (Lefkada Marina).



**PROGRESS:** A number of informative materials were created in the context of the project that have been printed and shared with local businesses, authorities and the general public. Firstly, an **info card** (15.5cm x 10.5cm) and A3 poster was developed that presented a map of Formicula, the different regulated zones, and the measures in place for each specific zone and the site overall. See the cards and posters in Greek, English and Italian [here](#). The material was distributed throughout the local events and visits of iSea in the area. In total **6,065** printed cards have been handed out, from which more than half have been given specifically to sailing/boat rental businesses in Lefkada, Palairos, Myticas and Ithaca. In total **80** businesses of this nature have received a pack of the printed copies and now include them in their office spaces, into info packs of customers that hire boats, or have the A3 poster on display within their office. Electronic versions of the material have been emailed to a total of **215** contacts associated to boat rental businesses. Along with this, a form was created where individuals could express interest in receiving the printed materials (both the cards and posters) to anyone that has not yet received the material. During July and August the team of iSea joined forces with the campaign 'Seal Greece' an initiative of Monk Seal Alliance and NECCA, for which 5 info kiosks were placed in Lefkada marina, Nidri port, Vasiliki and Ithaca. During this, the materials developed in the context of Formiculas campaign were utilised.

Regarding the **informative signs**, it was identified that priority would be given to the locations: Lefkas Marina, Nidri Port, Myticas Port, Palairos Port. Negative responses have been received by Lefkas Marina that have instead displayed the A3 map poster within the information board in the office of the marina; and Palairos Port that despite the initial discussions, now do not support the placement of a metal sign due to lack of space, which have again instead placed a printed A3 poster within the info-kiosk of the Port Authority. A positive sign placement response was received by the community of Myticas however, the final municipal decision is still being awaited. Similarly, the application for sign for Nidri has still to be reviewed within the upcoming Port Fund meeting. Aside from these 4 locations, Preveza Port, Kalamos Port and Vounaki Marina should be contacted to request for the placement of the informative signs prior to 2026 summer season.



Some of the Formicula signs on display at Marine point store Lefkada, Port authority Kiosk in Palairos and Alsalos sailing shop in Palairos

## D.2 Communication campaign for implementing the Ministerial Decision for the strict protection of Formicula.

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- o 10 Social Media posts plus 15 stories on Instagram and Facebook
- o 2 National Press release
- o 2 Local PR
- o Updating Formicula page on iSea's website

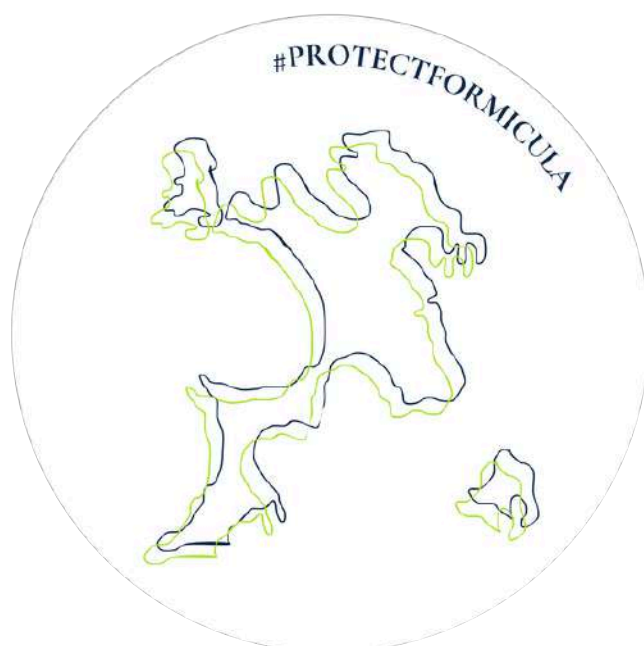
**PROGRESS:** A communication campaign was developed in order to achieve the goals set out by the project in terms of raising awareness on the measures that protect Formicula ahead of the summer. The campaign included the production of a **series of posts, 2 YouTube videos, a campaign logo and a series of local events and press releases.** The detailed outputs and results of the communication campaign are presented within a report attached with the present document. The campaign posters (OR campaign) have been attached along with the present report while the 2 Videos developed are publicly available on YouTube and have been emailed to the list of contacts of Formicula to encourage sailing businesses to display on screens.

### Campaign Report



The project page 'Formicula' has now also been updated. Regarding press releases, a total of 3 press releases have been produced to date (1 national, 1 local and 1 both national and locally distributed) the first one was national-level and included an announcement of the new protection measures in Formicula, while the other 2 were associated with the 2 informative events and new restrictions.

Further posts followed throughout the summer period and in autumn to continuously encourage enforcement of measures and awareness.



# The Communication Campaign

Campaign Videos



Video 1: The first video of the campaign introduces Lela, a young monk seal found in Formicula.



Video 2: the second and longest video of the campaign talks about Formicula's biodiversity and the sites importance to Mediterranean monk seals along with a clear description of what regulations are in place today.

Over 70k Views!

In total, 11 posts have been created and shared across the platforms of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Bluesky. Aside from this, 22 stories on Instagram and Facebook were created, resulting in a total of 16,740 views. The post's context and Facebook links are included:

SoMe Posts



**Post 1: Announcement of the new protection measures of Formicula**



**Post 2: Introducing Lela, a young monk seal in Formicula**



**Post 3: Campaign 'OR' Overtourism and Monk seals**



**Post 4: Campaign 'OR' Regulating anchoring in Formicula**



**Post 5: Campaign 'OR' Biodiversity protection**



**Post 6: Event invitation Lefkada**



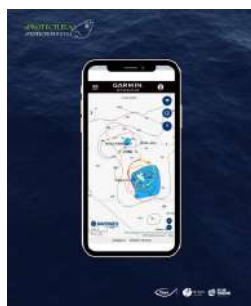
**Post 7: Press Release and outcomes of the Lefkada awareness days**



**Post 8: Press Release and outcomes of the Lefkada awareness days**



**Post 9: Formicula video**



**Post 10: Nautical charts update**



**Post 11: SES consultation joint comments**

## D.3 Awareness event in Lefkada and Palairos.

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

An awareness event with an info-kiosk in the main squares of Lefkada and Palairos presenting the results of the project and explaining the new protection measures in Formicula. The presentation will be accompanied by visual content (infographics, pictures, video and letters of children), aiming to attract the attention and create a feeling of admiration for the marine environment of Formicula urging the public to protect this vital ecosystem. During the event, efforts will include the collection of signatures for the strict protection of Formicula against unregulated fishing. Relevant resources (reports, infographics) will be translated (inc. Report: Fisheries in the IIA) and printed for the event.

**PROGRESS:** A two-day informative event took place in Lefkada between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of April. The event included the placement of an info-kiosk at a central location in Lefkada for both days from 9am to 9pm. Initially effort was made to place the info-kiosk at the central square of Lefkas, but after the municipality declined the application, a different location was identified. The kiosk was set in front of the National Bank (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/hbPGArYAEvCW8JF18>) a central location with high passage of residents and tourist. The info kiosk included the A3 posters of the Formicula map, the OR campaign posters in A3, printed letters from 2024 Schools Campaign plus a photography exhibition with photographs captured in Formicula island by the photographer of iSea, Dimitris Tosidis. Aside from the info kiosk in the centre of Lefkada, another Kiosk was set-up in the Marina of Lefkas on the 25<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon in order to engage with sailing businesses that were present in the marina due to Annual Charter Meetup was taking place in parallel. During the info kiosk, over 1,250 cards were handed out to local bystanders.

Aside from the mentioned materials developed, a campaign t-shirt was designed and given to the key project partners while small stickers with the shape of Formicula and campaign logo was handed out to passing kids and parents.



On the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> an informative event and open discussion took place at Ionian Star Hotel. The event agenda included presentation from project partners, presentation of the Formicula video and an open discussion with participation from a number of supporters of the initiative (MS Christina, Sunsail, Nautilus Diving Centre) and statements from the Port Authority. A second informative event of the same nature as the first event in Lefkada, this time in Myticas community centre took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May with the support of the Municipality of Xiromero. The event included participation of the community of Myticas and the owner of tourism accommodation of Anemos villas that had supported Formiculas protection. As mentioned, further infokiosks were completed in the context of the 'Seal Greece' Campaign, results of which are analysed in the communications report.

## E. Capacity Building

### E.1 Site visit SAVETHEMED/MER Lab



**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Co-financing of the visit to the organisation SAVETHEMED / Mer Lab Cyprus, to talk about their initiatives for MPA implementation, Posidonia research, logistics and expertise in working with communities for the protection of marine habitats, and how the baseline experience they have can be applied in the protection of Formicula and the wider area of the IIA.

**PROGRESS:** Two members of iSea participated in a capacity-building and knowledge exchange visit to Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain, from June 16th to 20th. The trip was hosted by Save the Med, an organisation working on marine conservation, community engagement, monitoring and education in the Balearic Islands. Activities included collaborative sessions among stewardship projects from the Canary Islands, Minorca, Ibiza, Mallorca, and Greece; field-based learning through diving in the Sa Dragonera marine reserve to observe the positive biodiversity outcomes of long-term protection; connecting with a wide range of practitioners working on marine protection and posidonia conservation, including other members of the Mediterranean Posidonia Network Posidonia Social Club; and site visits, including the local fish auction market and the headquarters of Save the Med. Through these activities, iSea members gained valuable insights into participatory governance models, applied marine ecological monitoring, and community-driven conservation approaches. The exchange contributed to strengthening regional collaboration and enhancing transferable skills in stakeholder facilitation, science communication, and adaptive marine management.



## **F. Project management, coordination and reporting**

### **F.1 Monitoring the project actions, ensuring high-quality deliverables, communication with funder, overall coordination, planning and reporting.**

A project manager has been assigned to the project who is closely monitoring the project's actions and ensures the timeline and the actions of the project are being met. While a broader team is involved in the implementation of various actions of the project. The project manager works with the team and coordinates the implementation of the project. Regarding project progress, the timeline has been kept in line with the proposed activities without significant delays.

### **F.2 Financial monitoring.**

The project manager, the conservation officer, and the financial officer are following the finances of the project, ensuring that the expenses follow the budget. All original receipts are kept in iSea's headquarters and copies can be given to the funder upon request.



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