

MONITORING VESSEL PRESENCE AND ANCHORING IN THE IIA 2025

**A comparison with 2024
results for Formicula and
Atokos islets**





iSea, 2025

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The present report was produced and self funded by iSea in the context of monitoring the implementation of the new protection measures in Formicula island. The project represents a continuation of the Drone surveys project in 2024 funded by the Ionian Environment Foundation titles 'Evaluating anchoring pressure on posidonia meadows in the IIA and Erimitis'.

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INTRODUCTION

As part of this year's surveys in the area, Atokos was visited only during August and September, unlike in 2024, when surveys also took place in July. This reduction was due to limited resources and time. To ensure the collection of comparable data before and after the publication of the Ministerial Decision for Formicula, iSea self-funded the activity. Beyond monitoring vessel activity in relation to the Ministerial Decision, this year's surveys were particularly important, as an increase in boat traffic was anticipated due to the growing promotion of 'pig cruises' in Bay 1 of Atokos. These surveys were therefore essential to understand the protection status of the Posidonia meadows across the area.

A total of eight survey visits were carried out in Atokos and Formicula—four in August (02/08/25, 03/08/25, 04/08/25, 06/08/25) and four in September (13/09/25, 14/09/25, 16/09/25, 17/09/25). During each visit, three flights were conducted, one per bay, resulting in a total of 24 flights for each islet. This year's flights were respectively compared to last year's surveys, carried out approximately during the same periods.

STUDY AREA

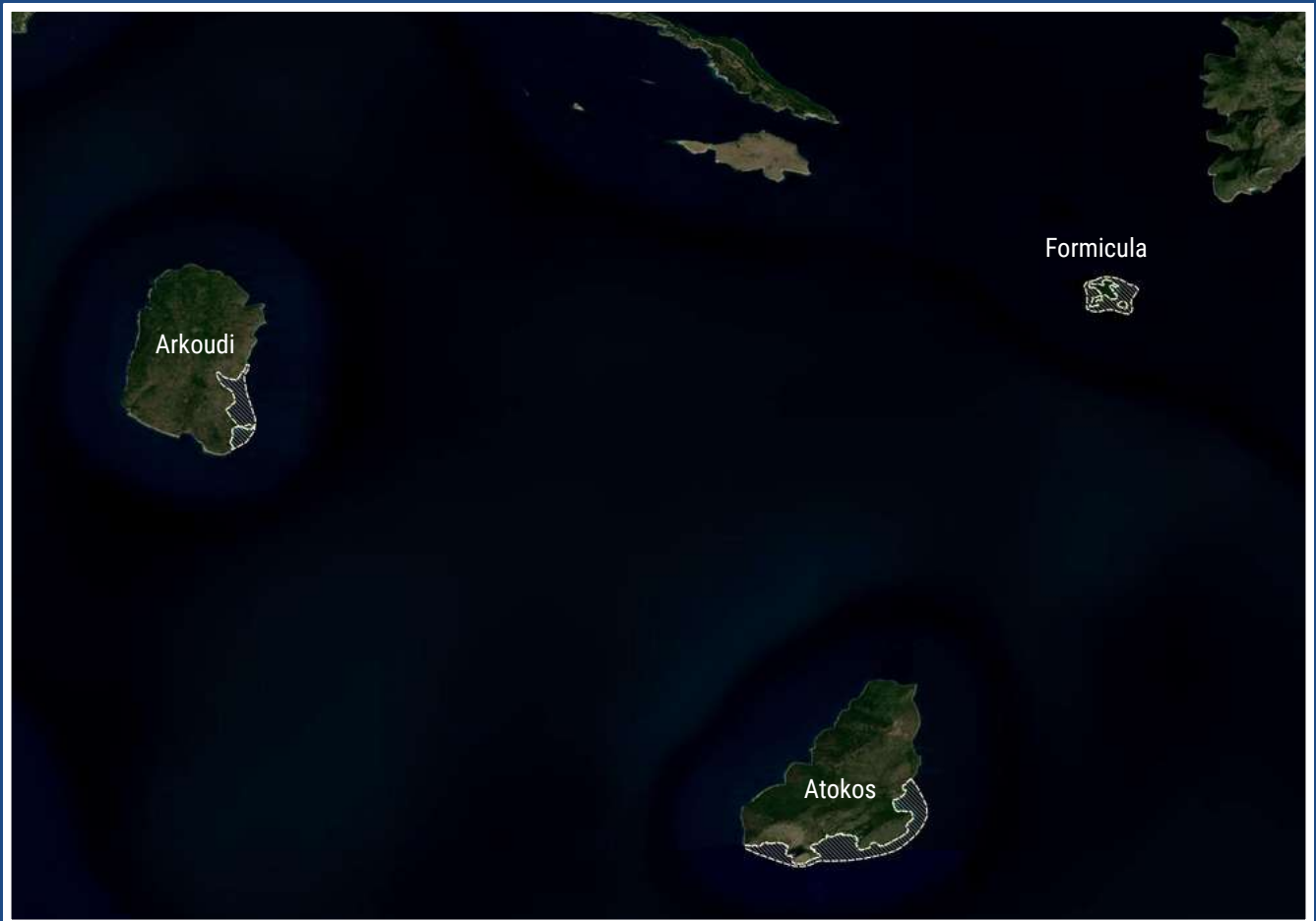
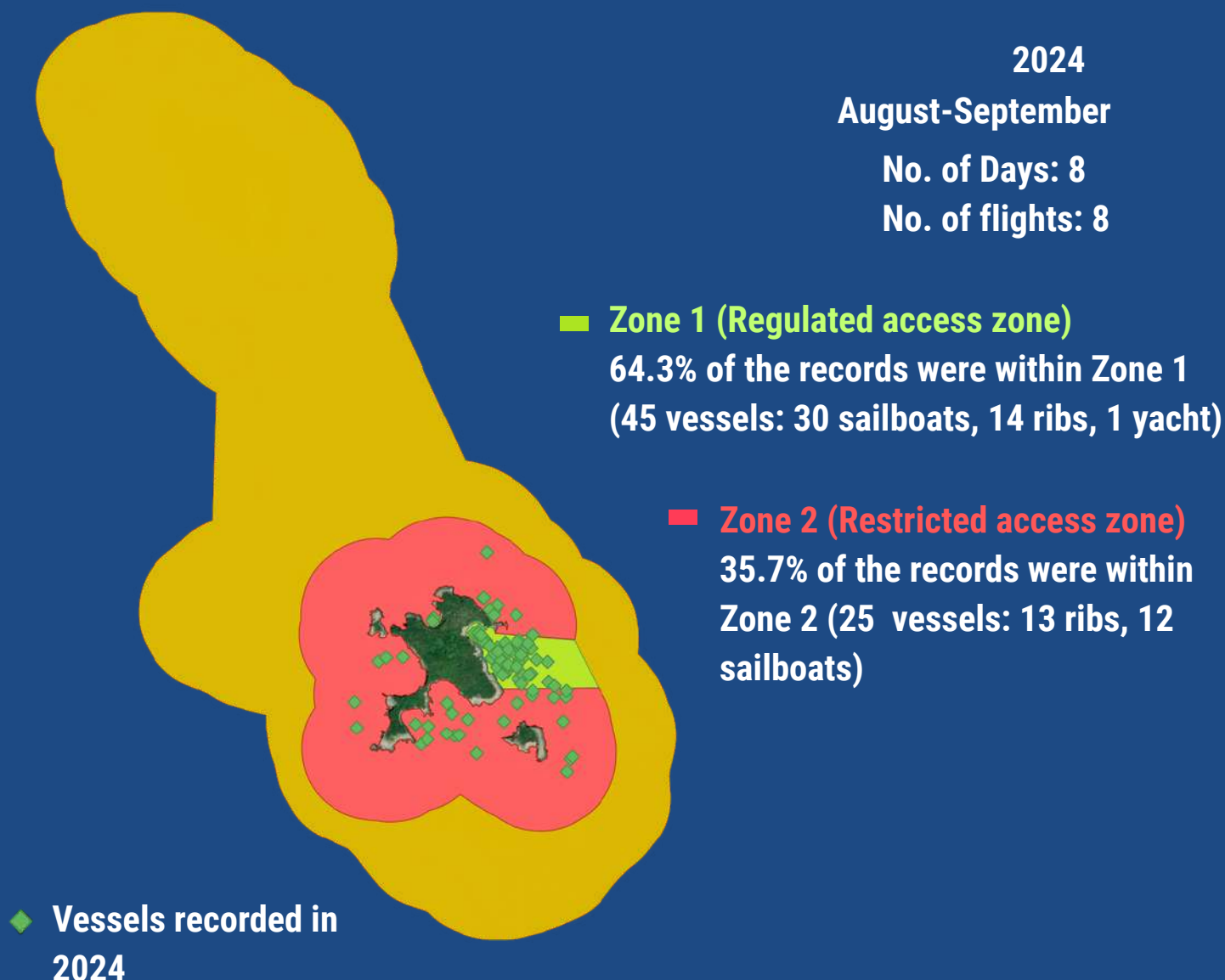


Figure 1: Study area for the drone surveys in the Inner Ionian Archipelago (IIA) sites.

For the surveys in 2025, only the islets of Atokos and Formicula were included in the study due to time and resource constraints. The data for Formicula islet were re-evaluated to include non-anchored vessels given that the focus of the study has moved from an anchoring focus to a vessel presence only. This happened to understand the use change of Formicula considering the designation of 3 protection zones. The analysis for Atokos remained the same for 2024 and 2025 and only accounts for anchored vessels.

RESULTS 2024 FORMICULA

Records of vessel presence in Formicula using UAV's (drones) and compliance with the measures foreseen in the recent Ministerial Decision for the strict protection of the island.



During August and September 2024, before the issuance of the Ministerial Decision, a total of 70 vessels were recorded in Formicula island, specifically 50 vessels during August while 20 during September. The majority (60%) of the records were sailboats (42 vessels), while 38.6% were ribs (27 vessels).

RESULTS 2025 FORMICULA

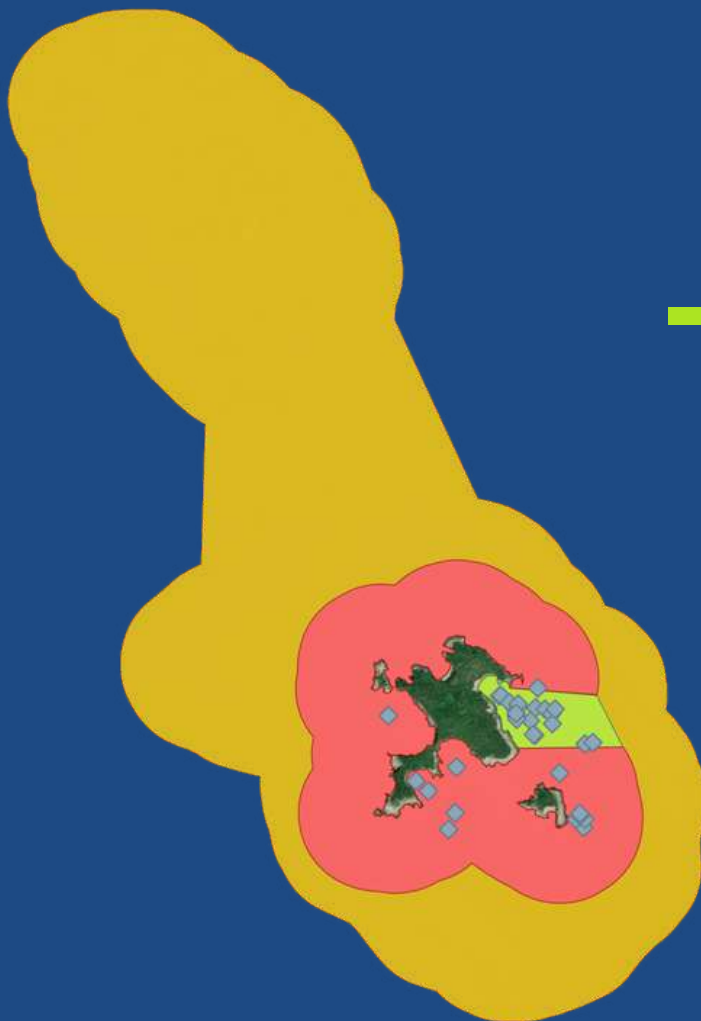
Records of vessel presence in Formicula using UAV's (drones) and compliance with the measures foreseen in the recent Ministerial Decision for the strict protection of the island.

2025

August-September

No. of Days: 8

No. of flights: 8



■ Zone 1 (Regulated access zone)

59.37% of the records were within Zone 1

(19 vessels: 9 sailboats, 8 ribs, 1 fishing boat, 1 cruise)

■ Zone 2 (Restricted access zone)

40.62% of the records were within Zone 2

(13 vessels: 11 ribs, 2 sailboats/small yachts)

◆ Vessels recorded in 2025

This year during August and September, a total of 32 vessels were recorded in Formicula island, specifically 27 vessels during August while 5 during September. The majority (56.2%) of the records were ribs (18 vessels), while 31% were sailboats (10 vessels).

RESULTS 2025 FORMICULA

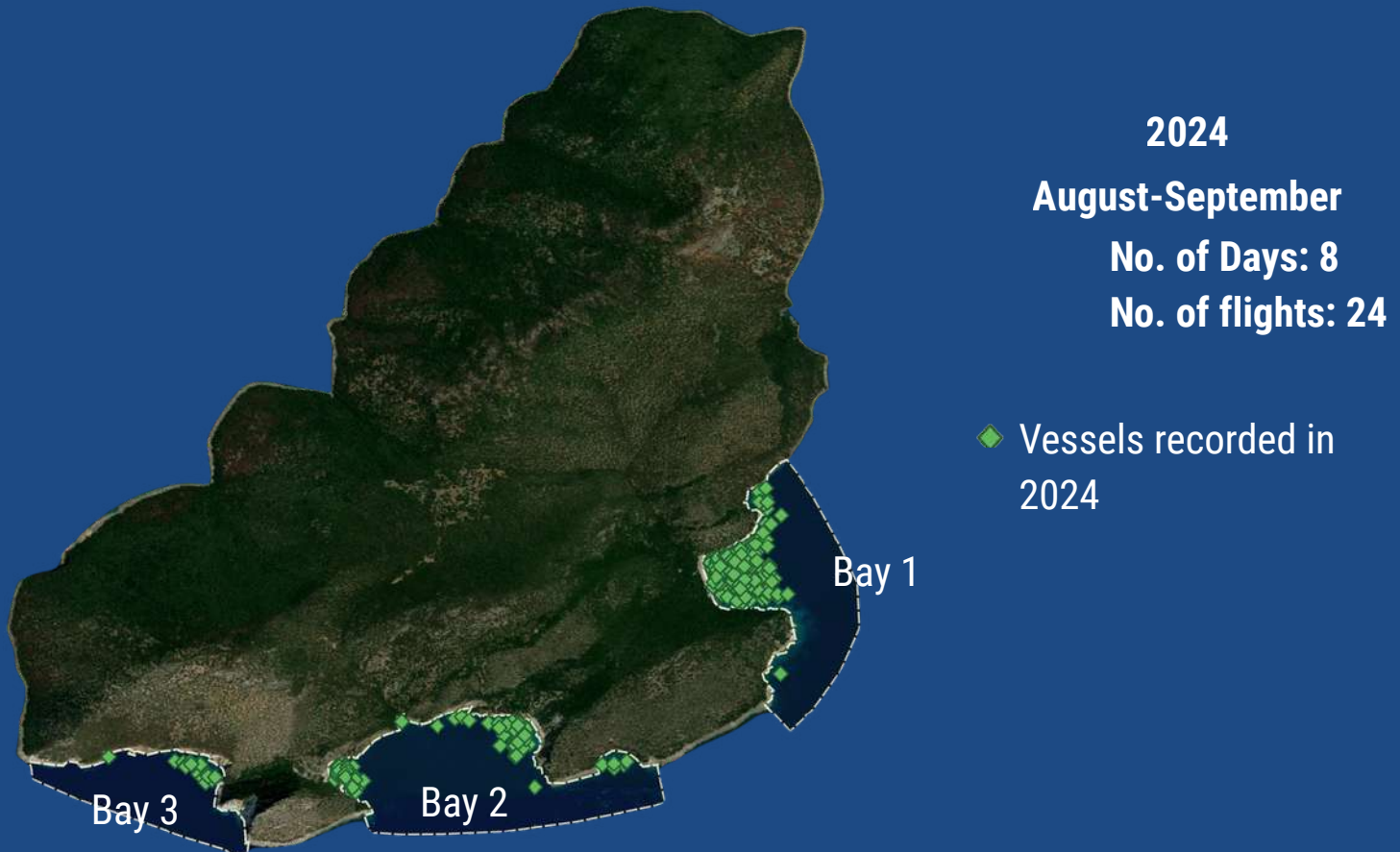
Records of vessel presence in Formicula using UAV's (drones) and compliance with the measures foreseen in the recent Ministerial Decision for the strict protection of the island.

2025 vs 2024

Overall fewer vessels of all categories were recorded in Formicula during 2025 (54.3% reduction). The largest reduction was seen in sailboats that were reduced by 76.2%, while ribs only reduced by 33.3%. Furthermore, a 75% reduction in records in September compared to last year, possibly related to the increased efforts in local public awareness campaigns. An increased proportion of vessels within Zone 2 is noted, from which a similar number of ribs (13 vs 11), but much fewer sailboats (12 vs 2) compared to 2024. Seal-targeting behaviour was observed in many occasions in Zone 2.

RESULTS 2024 ATOKOS

Records of vessel presence in Atokos using UAV's (drones)



Bay 1: 68.24% of the records were within Bay 1 (101 vessels: 60 sailboats, 18 ribs, 13 catamarans, 9 yachts, 1 cruise boat)

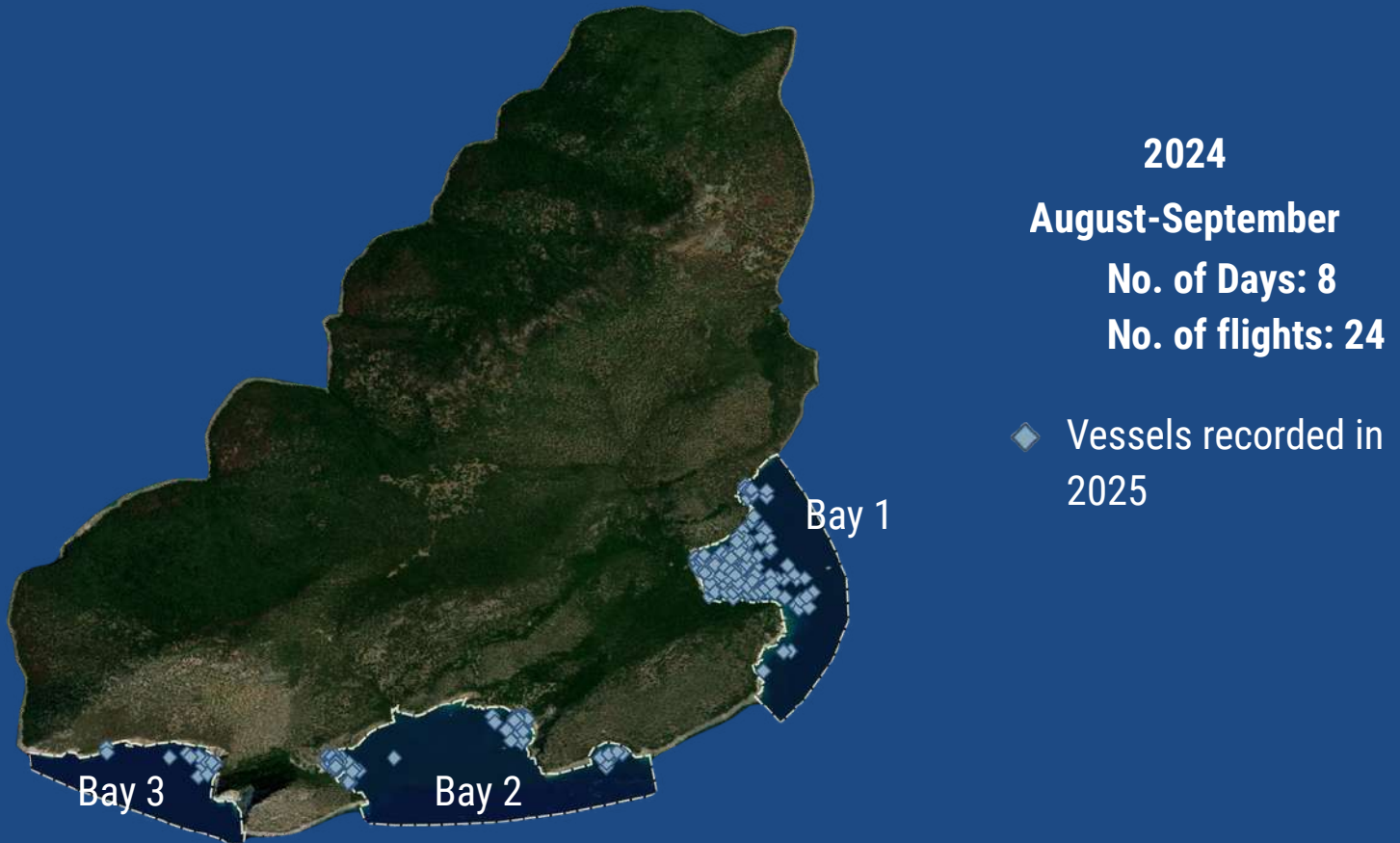
Bay 2: 27.70% of the records were within Bay 2 (41 vessels: 16 sailboats, 12 ribs, 8 catamarans, 5 yachts)

Bay 3: 4.05% of the records were within Bay 3 (6 vessels: 5 catamarans, 1 yacht)

During August and September 2024, a total of **148** vessels were recorded in Atokos island, specifically **110** vessels during August while **38** during September. The majority (51.35%) of the records were **sailboats** (76 vessels), while 20.27% were **ribs** (30 vessels).

RESULTS 2025 ATOKOS

Records of vessel presence in Atokos using UAV's (drones)



Bay 1: 67.47% of the records were within Bay 1 (168 vessels: 63 ribs, 67 sailboats, 27 catamarans, 10 cruise boats, 10 yachts)

Bay 2: 27.31% of the records were within Bay 2 (68 vessels: 22 ribs, 19 catamarans, 17 sailboats, 10 yachts)

Bay 3: 5.22% of the records were within Bay 3 (13 vessels: 6 ribs, 3 sailboats, 2 catamarans, 2 yachts)

This year during August and September, a total of **249** vessels were recorded in Atokos island, specifically 142 vessels during August while **107** during September. The majority (36.55% of the records were **ribs** (91 vessels), while 29.32% were **sailboats** (73 vessels).

RESULTS 2025 ATOKOS

Records of vessel presence in Atokos using UAV's (drones)

2025 vs 2024

Overall in Atokos vessel observations increased for 68.24% during 2025 from 2024. In Bay 1 & 2 the increase reached 66%, while in Bay 3 the vessel observations almost doubled (116.67% increase).

A 29.09% increase in records was noticed in August (142 vessels), while 181.58% in September (107 vessels) compared to last year.

All boat categories noticed an increase in records compared to last year, while the most important increases were noticed in cruise boats (900%), ribs (203.33%) and catamarans (84.62%), while yachts recorded a high increase (46.67%), too.

