

Prospero

Beach and underwater cleanup in Thessaloniki



Thessaloniki, 2026

Suggested Reference Doumbas, N., Kokkali, K., Charitou, A., Touzot, M., Giovos, I. Beach and Underwater Cleanup in Thessaloniki. iSea, Greece, 2026.

Program Manager:
Nikos Doumbas

Graphic Design Editing:
iSea

Photos:
Tosidis Dimitris, iSea

License:
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

This interim report concerns actions implemented within the framework of the 23rd wave of Prosero.

At the same time, we thank the Friends of New Beach of Thessaloniki, the NGO Move It, the Sea World Scuba Diving Center, the 1st and 8th High School of Kalamaria, HANTH, the United Societies of Balkans (USB), the Alumni of the Thessaloniki Municipal Youth Council, ThessNetwork, SolidarityNow, the AUTH Environmental Team, the E. Mantoulidis Schools, the volunteers who participated in the actions, the Municipality of Thessaloniki and Kalamaria, the Thessaloniki Port Authority, as well as the Thessaloniki Land Service for their cooperation and participation.





Until now

322 beach & underwater cleanups

96,5 tons of litter have been removed

Cleanups

1st Action (D1): Underwater Cleanup, White Tower

2nd Action (D2): Beach Cleanup, Karabournaki Beach

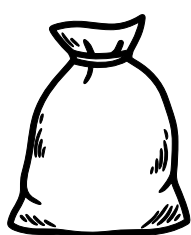
Table 1: Data on cleanups in the context of the project, March 2026.

Action	Action date	Number of volunteers	Kilos of litter
D1	11-03-2026	60	414
D2	11-03-2026	70	146
Total		130	560



Beach litter recording results

As part of the actions to study the abundance of marine litter in the area, the marine litter on the beaches we visited was recorded and measured, in accordance with the protocol established by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.



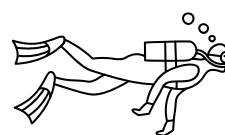
560 kg

Litter Removed



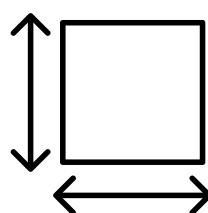
130 Volunteers

6 Divers



**64.9% benthic
plastics**

96.8% beach



3.133 m²

Total Area of
Cleanups

These results are in line with the findings of the international literature, according to which plastics are the dominant type of litter in marine and beach ecosystems. Their high proportion confirms the need for targeted actions to prevent and reduce plastic pollution in the areas under consideration.

Benthic litter recording results

A total of 414 kg of litter was removed from the Thermaikos Gulf, while 188 items were recorded, of which 64.9% were plastic.

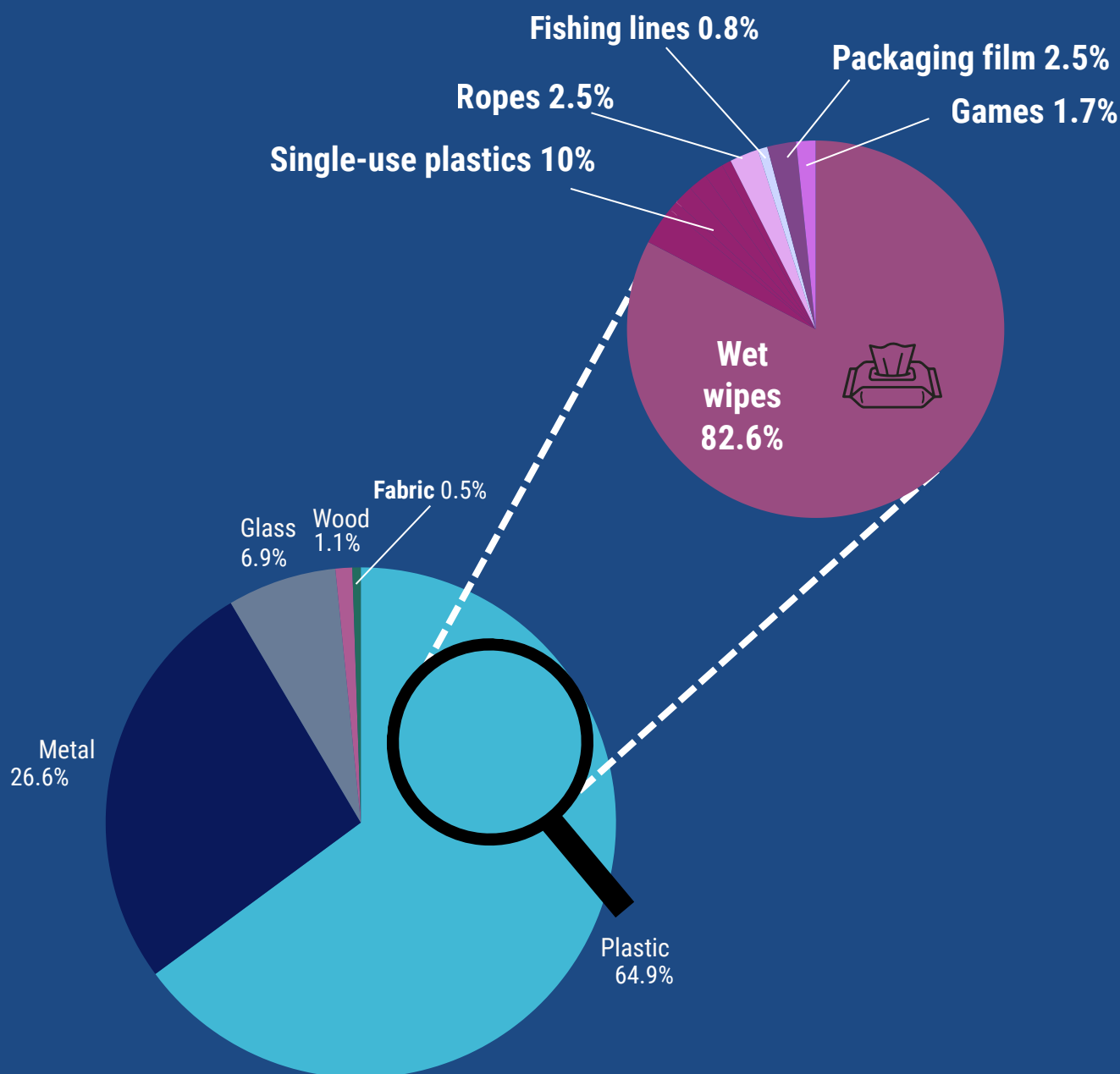


Figure 1: Litter categories in percentage (%), as derived from underwater cleanup in Thessaloniki.

Litter categories

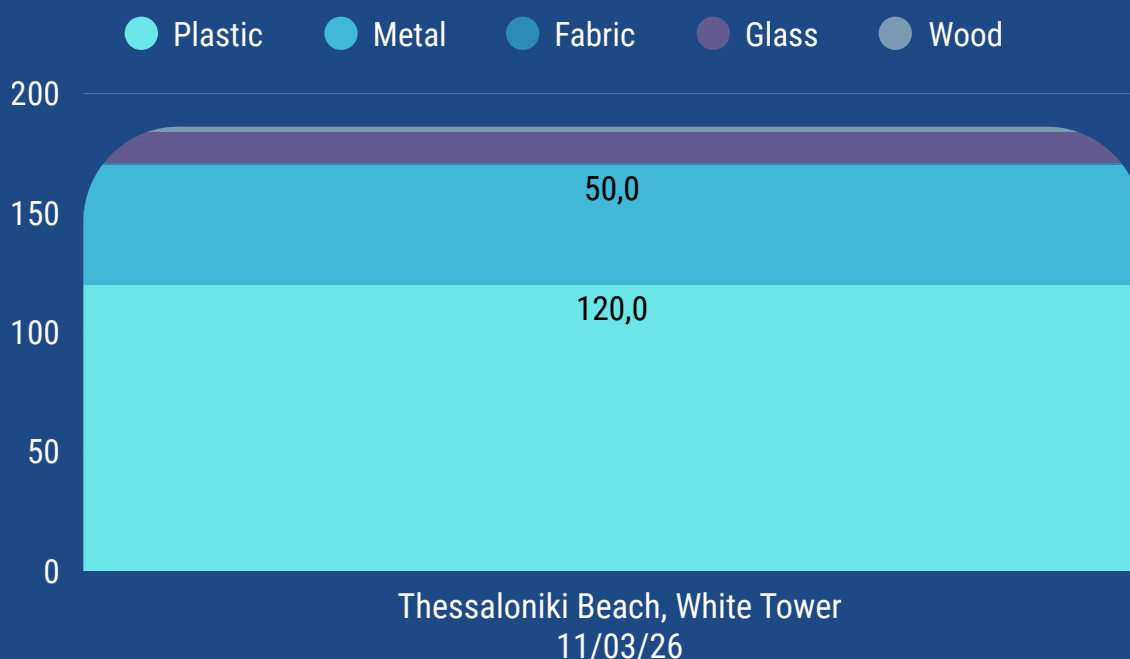


Figure 2: Total number of litter items, by category, collected during underwater cleanup.

The underwater cleanup carried out in the coastal zone of Lefkos Pyrgos in Thessaloniki revealed a significant presence of litter, with plastics being the dominant category (120 pieces), followed by metal items (50 pieces). According to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the acceptable environmental condition is defined as less than 1 piece of litter per 1.000 m². In this case, the area cleaned was 2.713 m², which theoretically corresponds to approximately 3 pieces of litter. However, the total number of pieces of litter removed amounted to 186, which indicates a strong burden on the marine environment and a significant deviation from the prescribed limits, highlighting the need for more intensive pollution management and prevention measures.

Litter categories

In total, more than 100 wet wipes, 21 soda and beer cans, 13 vehicles and vehicle parts (electric scooters and bicycles), 5 kitchen utensils and 5 bottles & pieces (glass) were removed during the underwater cleanup, which constitute the most numerous litter categories. The vehicle category included bulky items, such as electric scooters and scooters, as well as skateboards, which highlights the intensity of anthropogenic pressure on the marine environment of the area.

Table 2: The most abundant litter from underwater cleanup in %.

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Wet wipes	55,2%
Soda and beer cans	11,6%
Vehicles and vehicle parts	7,2%
Kitchen utensils	2,8%
Bottles & pieces (glass)	2,8%



Litter of local interest and suggestions

During the underwater clean-up in the coastal zone of Lefkos Pyrgos, litter was identified that can be characterized as of local interest, as it is directly linked to specific sources of pollution. Particularly notable was the presence of a large number of wet wipes, which appear to come from a specific point of outflow, indicating a possible connection to the sewage system or inadequate urban wastewater management. Their concentration in a specific area indicates continuous and repeated entry into the marine environment.

To address the phenomenon, it is proposed to investigate and control potential points of discharge that contribute to the entry of wet wipes into the marine environment, as well as to improve sewage infrastructure. Targeted intervention can significantly reduce pollution and prevent the recurrence of the problem.

Litter of local interest and suggestions

In the same area of the White Tower, the presence of bulky objects, such as electric scooters and bicycles, which are not consistent with natural transportation processes and are likely related to intentional dumping or unfortunate incidents within the urban fabric, was recorded. The existence of such objects highlights the intense human impact and shortcomings in the management of public space.

To address the issue, it is necessary to implement preventive measures for the disposal of bulky objects, such as strengthening environmental information and awareness among citizens, placing appropriate collection points, holding rental companies accountable, and stricter enforcement of regulations. The combined implementation of these measures can substantially contribute to reducing pollution and improving the environmental image of the area.

Results of beach litter recording

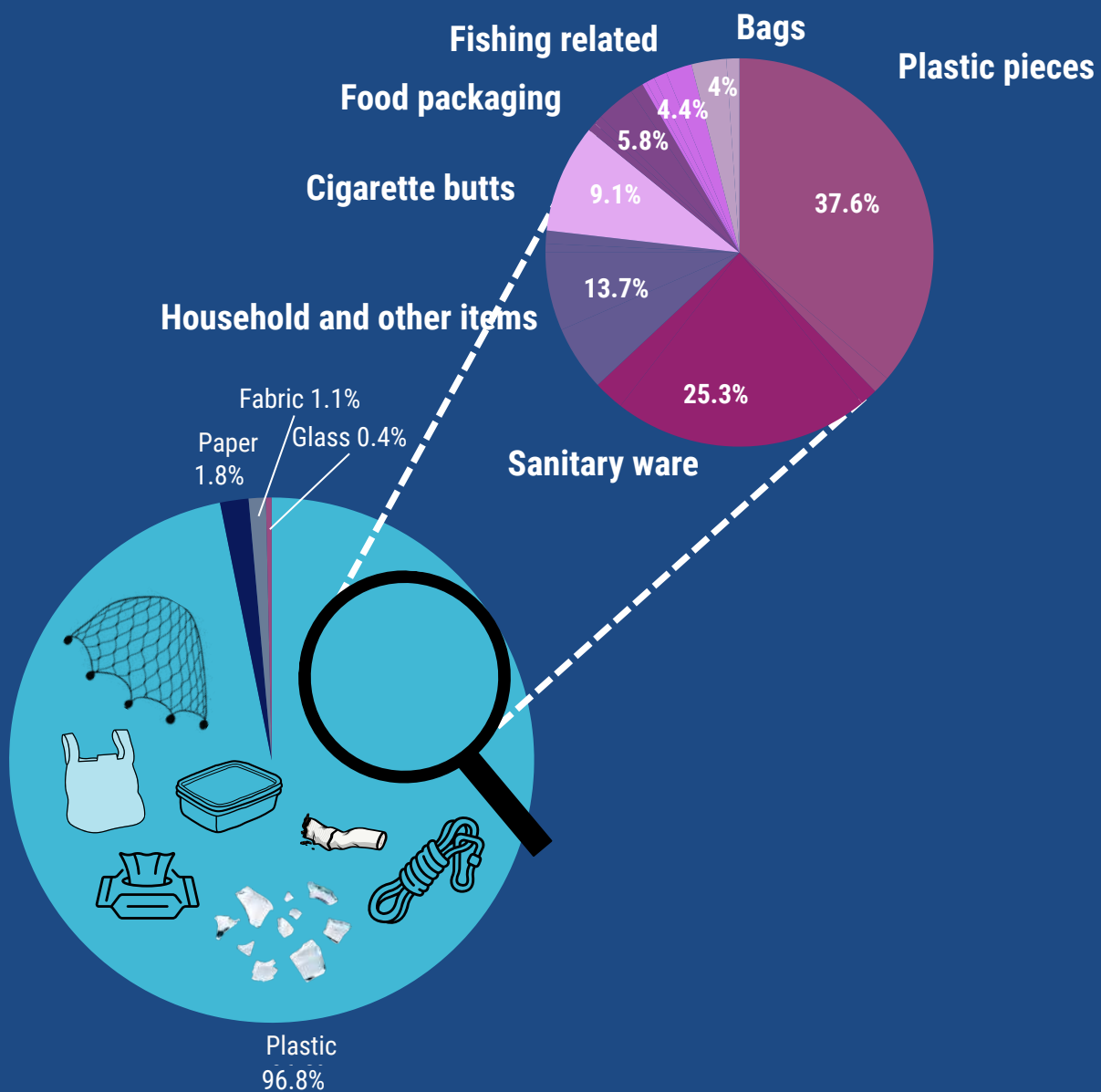


Figure 3: Categories of litter collected in beach cleanup, as percentages (%).

Litter categories



Figure 4: Total number of litter items, by category, collected during beach cleanup, and comparison with the maximum litter limit for achieving Good Environmental Status.

The most numerous litter items recorded according to the protocol belong to the category of plastics (276 pieces), followed by paper items (5 pieces).

A total of 285 items of litter were recorded. The horizontal orange line shows the maximum litter limit for achieving Good Environmental Status set by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive at 20 items per 100 meters of coastline. As can be seen, the beach far exceeds the Limit Value set.

Litter categories

Table 3: The most abundant beach cleanup items in %.

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Plastic pieces	35.1%
Wet wipes	30.7%
Cigarette butts	9.5%
Caps	6.3%
Other plastic items	5.3%

In total, 100 plastic pieces, 59 wet wipes, 25 cigarette butts, 18 bottle caps and 15 other plastic items were removed during the beach cleanup, which constitute the most numerous categories of litter.

The beach at Karampournaki is an urban coastal zone, with a strong human presence throughout the year. The area is mainly used for recreation, walking and amateur fishing, while due to its proximity to the urban fabric of Thessaloniki it receives significant and constant pressure from visitors.

Informative event

As part of the "Prosfero" program and in parallel with the cleaning actions, an informative event was held at the Statue of Alexander the Great under the auspices of the Municipality of Thessaloniki.

iSea representatives informed 120 passersby about the program's goals and actions and distributed information material with information on marine pollution and proposed measures to prevent and address it.

Adults and children who participated in the informative event had the opportunity to learn about the most common types of litter found on Greek beaches, to see up close indicative items that have been removed as part of underwater and beach cleanups, and to see iSea divers in action.

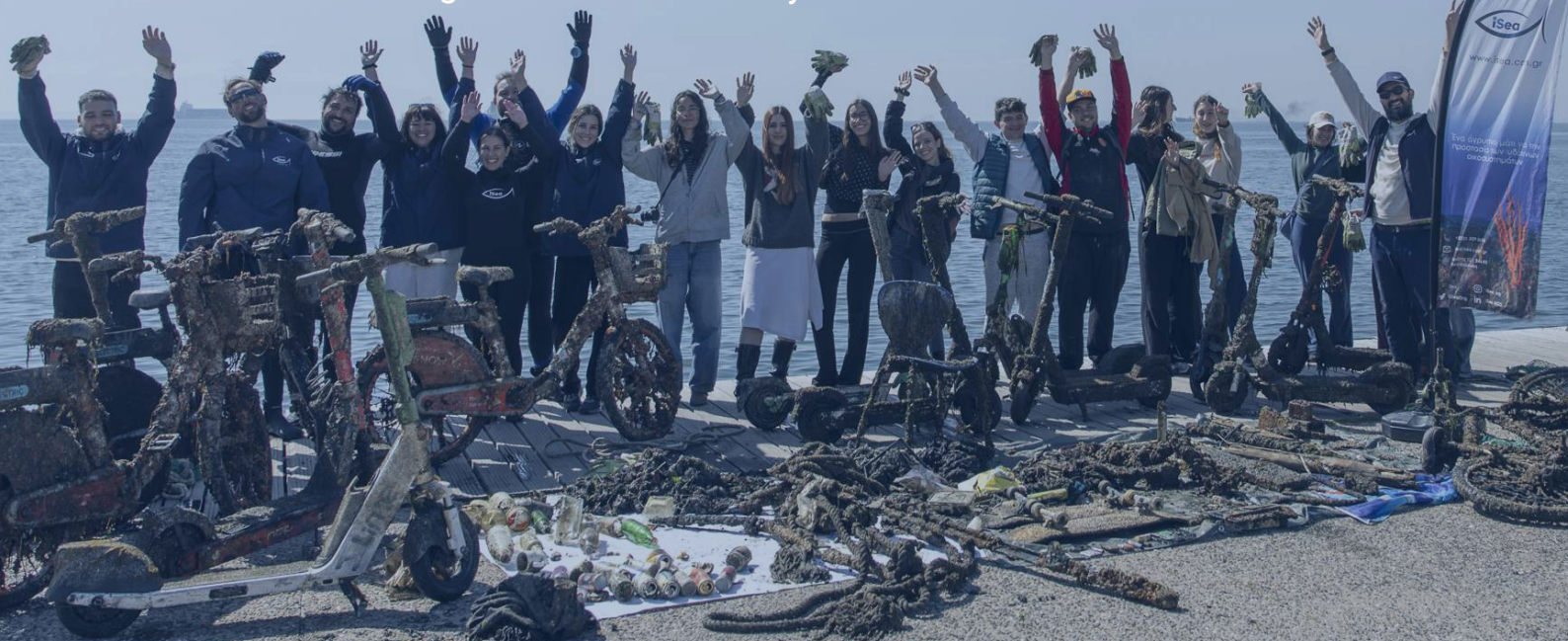
The participation of children was particularly interesting, as they learned through the floor-based question game about ways in which they can adopt environmentally sound and responsible habits.



Participation

In total, 130 volunteers participated in the cleanup actions that took place in Thessaloniki.

Members of the environmental organization iSea, as well as representatives of local organizations and educational structures, participated in the actions, contributing decisively to the success of the cleanups and raising awareness among the local community.



New Beach of Thessaloniki - White Tower



Civil Society and Professionals

Sea World Scuba Diving Center

YMCA of Thessaloniki

United Societies of Balkans (USB)

SolidarityNow



Partners

Friends of New Beach Thessaloniki

ThessNetwork

Move It NGO



Educational Institutions

1st High School of Kalamaria

Environmental team of AUTH

Alumni of the Thessaloniki Municipal Youth Council

Participation



Karabournaki Beach



Partners

ActionAid

Move It NGO



Educational Institutions

8th High School of Kalamaria

E. Mantoulidis Schools

YMCA of Thessaloniki

The “Prosfero” program removed a total of 560 kg of litter, while at the same time uniting the local community, offering experiential education to the new generation and demonstrating in practice that collective action brings immediate and measurable results.



Communication

A total of 5 “stories” were created and shared on iSea’s Social Media during the actions, with the aim of informing the public about the progress of the actions, maintaining interest in the program and raising public awareness about the problem of marine litter and its impacts on the marine ecosystem. In addition, a Facebook event was created to inform the public about the upcoming actions.

INSTAGRAM

HISTORY

REACH

iSea 1	1.450
iSea 2	293
iSea 3	451
iSea 4	1.677
iSea 5	295
Total	4.166

FACEBOOK

PUBLICATION

REACH

iSea 1	<u>1.056</u>
--------	---------------------

Communication

During the implementation of the cleanups, 3 interviews were conducted on television, substantially contributing to the promotion of the program and the dissemination of the results of the actions to the general public.

Specifically, one interview was broadcast on the show Perimetros, while two more were held on Pontos TV. At the same time, footage from the actions was shown on an ERT news bulletin, further enhancing the impact of the initiative.

INTERVIEWS

iSea 1

[Link 1](#)

iSea 2

There is no link.

iSea 3

There is no link.

Communication

A Press Release was created and shared with local media and posted on the iSea website, inviting the local community to participate in the program and providing information about the planned actions.

Table 4: Press articles regarding the program's actions in Thessaloniki.

MEDIA	LINK
Thitanews	Link 1
Ertnews	Link 2
OlaKala	Link 3
Voria	Link 4
GreenAgenda	Link 5

Learn more about the
Prosfero program



Environmental Organization for
the Protection of Aquatic
Ecosystems

Head offices
Kritis 12, Thessaloniki, Greece,
54645, +30 2313090696
info@isea.com.gr

Research base Western
Greece
Menidi, Aitolokarnania,
30016

Research base North Aegean
Panagia, Lemnos, 81401

[BECOME A SUPPORTER](#)

iSea.org



isea_org



iSea NGO



iseango2016

