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Seabird LIFE Project Closing Workshop 3-4 December 2012, Athens



Concrete conservation actions for the Mediterranean Shag and Audouin's Gull in Greece, including the inventory of relevant marine IBAs

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LIFE project for seabirds in Greece

Jakob Fric





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LIFE project closing workshop



Objectives:

- Present and share results and know-how achieved through the LIFE project
- Discuss continuation of LIFE project actions after its end
- Discuss knowledge gaps and needs for future research and conservation actions

Main topics:

Day 1: Marine IBAs

Day 2: Assessment and mitigation of threats for seabirds



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Project partnership



Coordinating beneficiary

- Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS)

Associated beneficiaries

- Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal (MOM),
- Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR),
- Technological Institution (TEI) of Ionian Islands
- Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA)

Duration: 1/1/2009-31/12/2012

Total estimated cost: 2.357.922 €

Financial support of the European Commission: 1.768.442 €
(75%) and co-financing by A.G. Leventis Foundation



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Project objectives



Overall objective:

Significant improvement of the Mediterranean Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*) and Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*) conservation status in Greece



by implementation of concrete conservation actions in 17 SPA sites in Greece, according to the guidelines and priorities of the international Action Plans for the species and by the identification of Marine IBAs for these species.



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Project objectives





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Project actions



Series of concerted action groups:

- Delineation of Marine IBAs
- Assessment of seabird bycatch and chemical pollution
- Rat eradications
- Pilot Yellow-legged gull population control
- Raising public awareness and environmental education



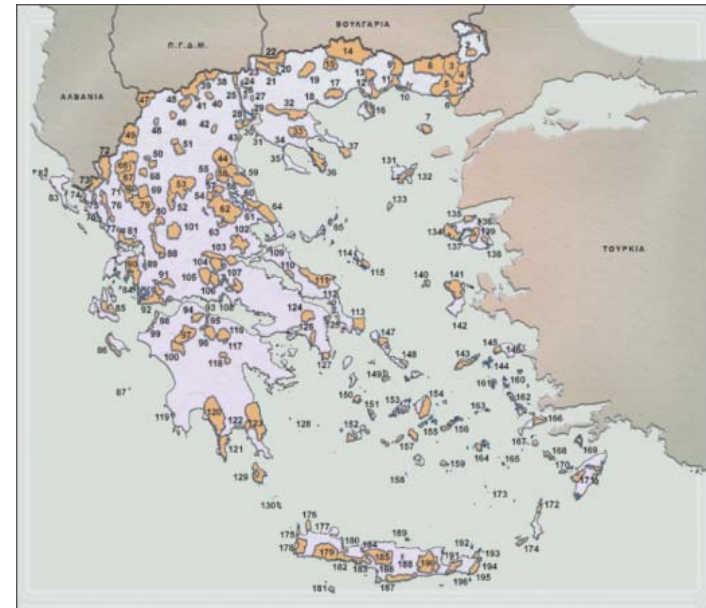


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Marine IBAs



- **Important Bird Areas (IBAs)** are areas of **international importance** for the conservation of biodiversity and especially for birds since they host in a regular basis significant populations of one or more, **threatened, endemic or gregarious species**.
- IBAs are selected based on **20 internationally accepted and scientifically standardized criteria** established by BirdLife International.
- The IBA network can be considered as the **minimum prerequisite** for the safeguarding of their survival in their distribution range.
- The **marine IBAs** aim at securing the **marine habitats for birds vital for**
 - Feeding
 - Resting and maintenance
 - Migration and local movements
- **IBAs constitute the baseline reference for the determination of Special Protection Areas (European Court of Justice decision)**





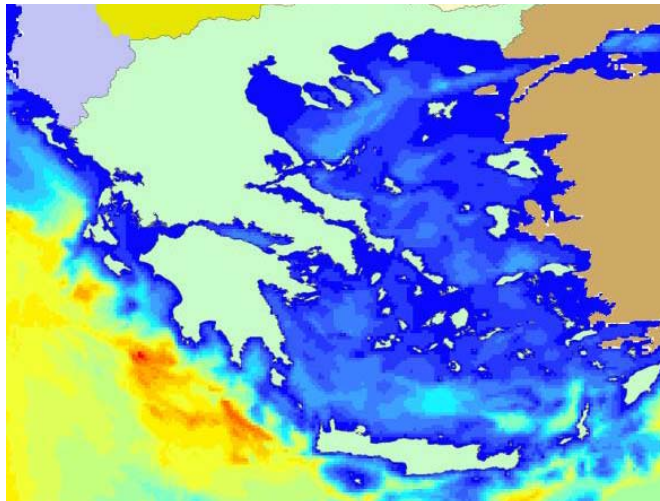
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Actions for Marine IBAs



Data collection

- Boat based surveys, coastal counts
- Telemetry, ringing/ring recoveries
- Analysis of seabird diet with conventional and genetic techniques
- Collection of oceanographic and marine biological data





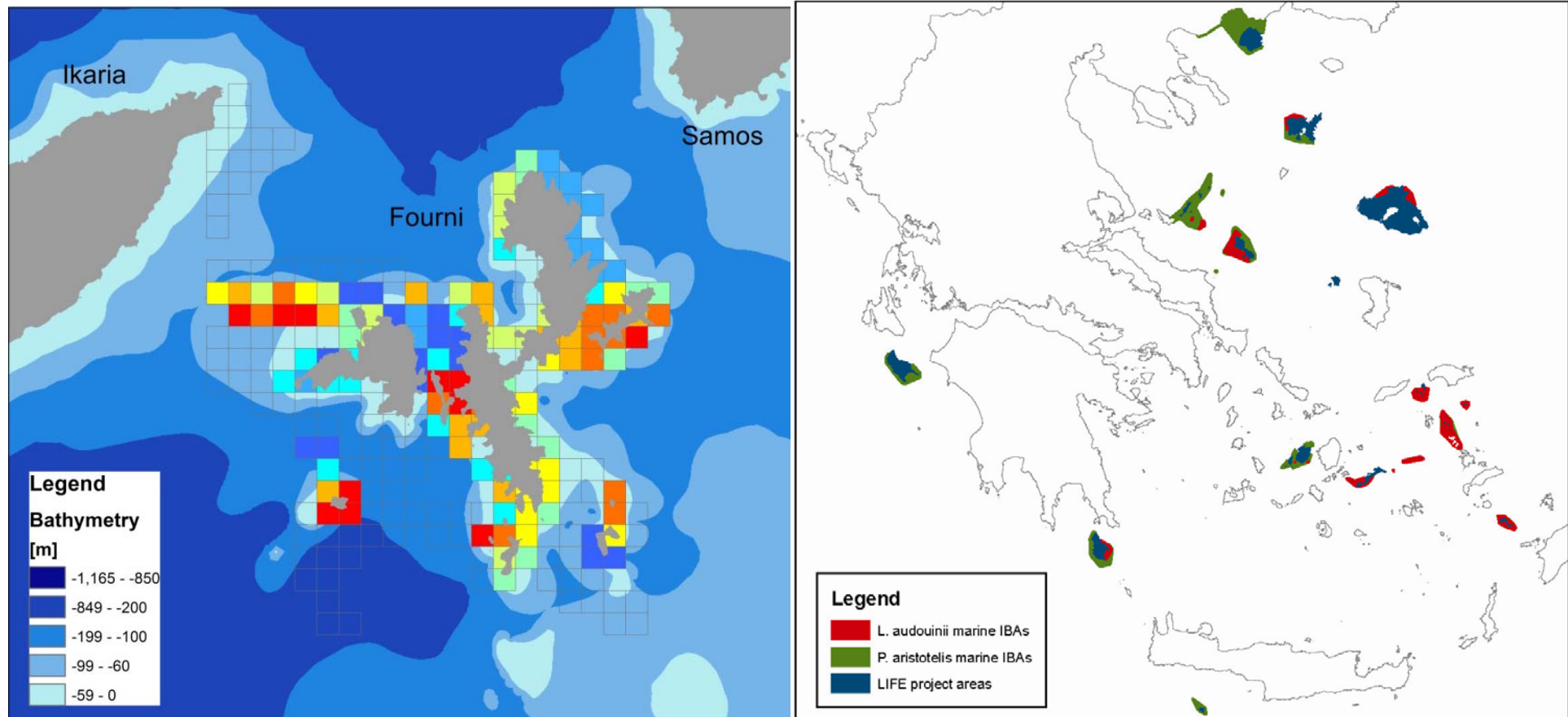
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Actions for Marine IBAs



Data analysis and marine IBA delineation

- Statistical and geographical analysis of seabird distribution and behaviour
- Production of marine IBA inventory





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Seabird bycatch



- Seabird bycatch = accidental trapping of seabirds in fishing gears
- Causes
 - losses to fishermen (bait losses, reduced catches)
 - mortality of seabirds
- More than 200.000 birds estimated to die in Europe annually
- Seabird bycatch recorded in the past but not assessed systematically



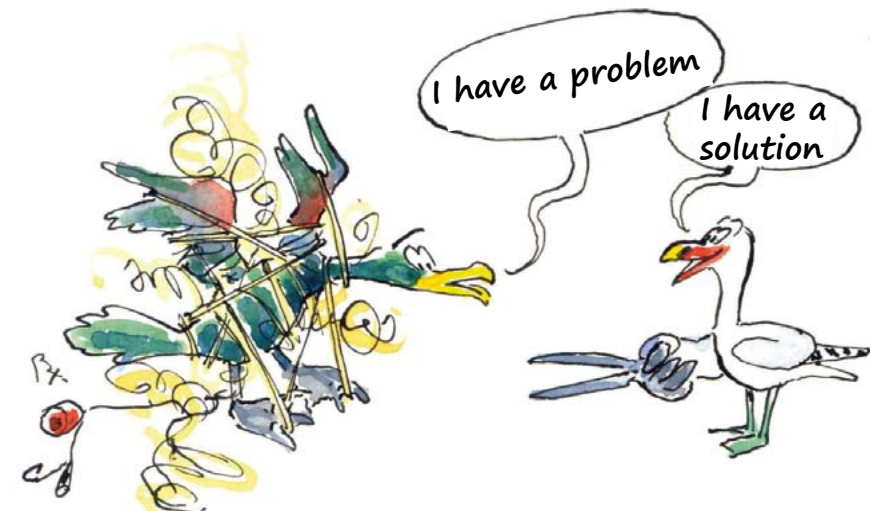
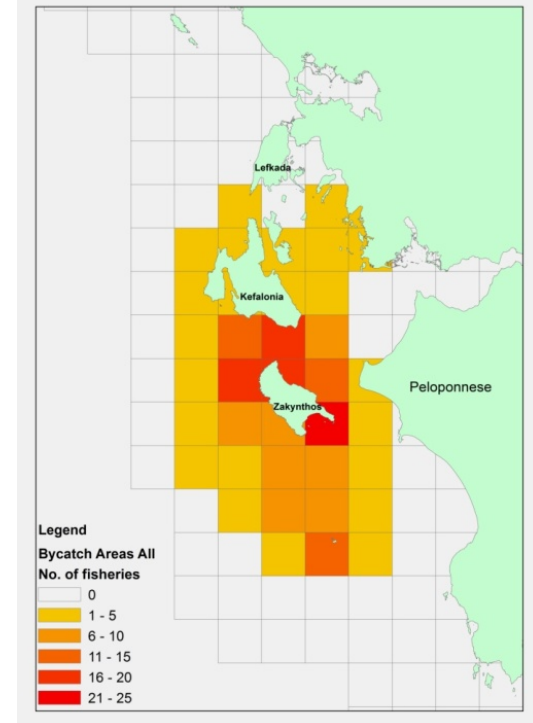


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Actions for seabird bycatch



- On board surveys in the Aegean and Ionian Sea
- Questionnaires for fishermen
- Data analysis and assessment of impacts
- Contribution to European Plan of Action for Seabirds
- Proposal for mitigation measures





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Rat predation



- Invasive alien species pose one of the main threats to bird breeding on isolated islands
- The Black rat (*Rattus rattus*) is the main predator of seabird eggs and chicks on Greek islands
- Rats were introduced accidentally to most of uninhabited Greek islands and islets disrupting original sensitive ecological equilibrium





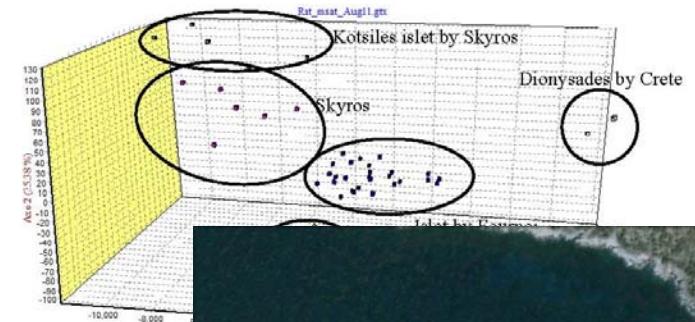
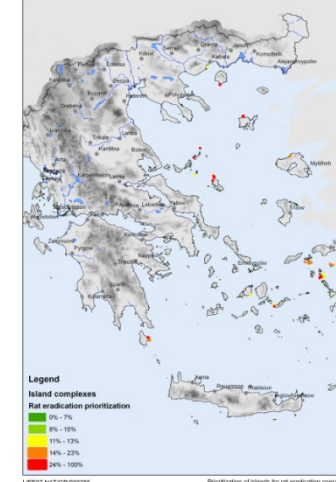
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Actions for mitigation of rat predation



- Assessment and cost-benefit prioritization of candidate islets for rat eradication operations
- Implementation of rat eradication operations for the improvement of the breeding success of the Mediterranean Shag and Audouin's Gull on 8 islet complexes (19 islets, 250ha) on Skyros, Thasos, Fourni, Amorgos, Kythera and Paros
- Determination of eradication units and assessment of rat reinvasion risk using molecular methods
- Implementation of measures for prevention rat reinvasions

All project sites





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Yellow-legged gulls



- Multitude of anthropogenic food sources (rubbish dumps, fisheries discards, agriculture) leads to superabundance of the Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) populations
- Yellow-legged Gulls predate on and compete for food and nesting sites with other seabird species e.g. Audouin's Gull and Mediterranean Shag





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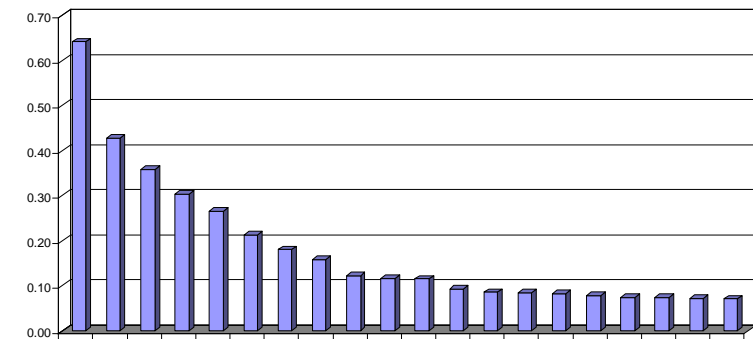
Pilot gull population control



- Assessment and cost-benefit prioritization of candidate islets in 17 project SPA sites for Yellow-legged Gull control operations
- Evaluation and selection of suitable gull population control methods
- Implementation of pilot Yellow-legged Gull population control operations at 5 colonies on Skyros, Thasos and Kythera

Priority	Region	Island	<i>L. michahellis</i> population size [breeding pairs]	Estimated cost [€]	Size of the island [ha]
1	Thasos	Panagia	2560	22624€	20.1
2	Skyros	Kotsiles	25	14553.75€	7.9
3	Limnos	Sireditis (Sergitsi)	284	17782.6€	102.2
4	Agathonisi	Kounelonisi	129	27169.35€	22.5
5	Skyros	Lakkonisi I	85	18062.75€	1.6
6	Skyros	Koulouris	32	15454.8€	28.6
7	Amorgos	Petalidi (AMO)	40	25006€	7.4
8	Thasos	Nisida I	150	15462.5€	0.3
9	Arkioi	Psathonisi	75	22051.25€	5.2
10	Skyros	Rineia	90	18063.5€	53.3

Larus audouinii & *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* cost/benefit





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Raising public awareness



- Production of information material
- Information dissemination





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Raising public awareness



- Direct communication with key stakeholder groups



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ΝΑΟΥΣΑΣ

ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΓΟΝΕΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΗΛΕΜΟΝΩΝ
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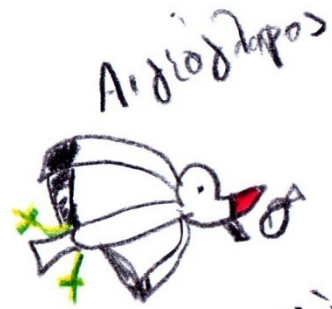
Other important seabird issues



- Collapse of the Mediterranean Shag breeding performance during 2010-2011 in the Northern Aegean
- Decline of the Audouin's Gull national breeding population in Greece
- Discovery of a new European Storm Petrel colony in Greece
- Importance of particular sites for seabirds



Εμπροσθεν
Παρού



Μην ληστέ
δουλήσει

Υποβαρής

Μύχος

Υποβαρής



Welcome and
enjoy the
workshop



Θαλασσοκόπος

