

Presentation of the natural wealth of Gyaros at the Consortium of Stakeholders

The second meeting of the Consortium of Stakeholders was organized at the Sailing Club of Ermoupoly, Syros, on Monday the 11th of July 2016. During the meeting, the scientists who for the purposes of CYCLADES Life studied for the first time the natural environment of Gyaros, presented their impressive findings, of the infamous island with the well hidden treasures, to the members of the Consortium. They in turn, learned about the current condition of the terrestrial and marine environment of the island, asked questions and discussed the findings at working groups.

More explicitly, during the meeting Dr. Peter Lyberakis of the Museum of Natural History of Crete presented the findings concerning the terrestrial flora and fauna of the island. Several species of brushwood, 20 species of snails, two species of spiders that have never been recorded before in Greece, the snake of Gyaros *Hierophis vividiflavus* that lives only in Gyaros and few, but important, wetlands are but a few of the findings. The island, even though small in size is an indispensable part of the biodiversity of the Cyclades archipelago. More impressive were the findings of avifauna that were presented by Dr. George Catsadorakis, biologist ornithologist management specialist and environmental interpretation expert, who stressed that Gyaros is an island full of surprises! Several species of raptors such as Bonelli's eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* nest on the island and more importantly a very important breeding colony of the threatened with extinction seabird Yelkouan shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*, that were brought to light by Dr. George Catsadorakis, the Hellenic Ornithological Society and the ecological consultancy NCC.



In Gyaros lives and breeds more than 14% of the population of the threatened with extinction Mediterranean monk seal. According to Dr. Panos Dendrinis of MOm/Society for the Study and Protection of the Mediterranean Monk Seal, the cameras have shown something unique: Mediterranean monk seals are behaving similarly to the behavioral descriptions that Greek ancient authors had noted. Gyaros is a national asset stressed Dr. Papatheodorou, Professor of Oceanography at the University of Patras and head of the team that studied the marine environment of the island. The marine area of Gyaros is the best mapped area of Greece with over 50% of its surface covered with posidonia meadows (which are in excellent condition) and coralligenous formations (*traganes*) that were formed 12.000 years ago. It is our national marine register as stated Professor Papatheodorou, which has barely been studied in Eastern Mediterranean added Dr. Vaggelis Tzanatos, lecturer of biology from the University of Patras. Dr Tzanatos presented the results of the research in relevance to the fish association at the *tragana* of Gyaros. According to the findings, it is characterized by high fish biodiversity equally distributed between the species.

The members of the Committee, that is comprised of fishermen, members of the local government, the national state authorities, research institutes, professionals from the local development sector, universities and NGOs, asked questions, and formed groups in order to work on what they learned but also issues that were not clear and at the same time information that made an impression on them and discussed how the above mentioned data could contribute to the protection and management of the island. The groups then presented the results of their work at the plenary and the scientists answered their questions. “The presentation of the important scientific findings of the natural environment that for the first time came to light through the CYCLADES Life project, gave the members of the Consortium a comprehensive view of the natural treasure and the importance of Gyaros” stated Dr. Spyros Kotomatas, CYCLADES Life Coordinator. “These facts, together with those related to the socioeconomic environment that will be presented to the Committee, will form the baseline information for the discussion on the measures for the protection and management of the island” he concluded.



The goal of the Consortium is to formulate and decide upon the measures that will be applied at the area of Gyaros taking into account the protection of nature but also human activities that take place in the area.

Notes for journalists:

You can find [here](#) more for the program CYCLADES Life.

More information:

Livanou Maria, CYCLADES Life Communications Officer, m.livanou@wwf.gr

The project is being materialised by WWF Greece together with the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Decentralised Administration Authority of the Aegean, the Development Corporation of Cyclades SA, Harokopio University, MOm and Tethys Research Institute. For more: www.cycladeslife.gr/en

The project CYCLADES LIFE, “Integrated monk seal conservation of Northern Cyclades”, is being implemented with the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation (<http://www.fpa2.com/home.html>).

