



### Full speed ahead for the CYCLADES LIFE project

The CYCLADES LIFE project is getting into full speed: designation of safe hiking paths, mapping of the flora and fauna, socio economic study of the wider area, monitoring of the mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* and brand new communication tools are the actions that are currently being implemented in Gyaros.

Based at the Cycladic capital Ermoupolis in Syros, the project field team of WWF Greece, is coordinating the preparatory actions. What is the ultimate goal of these actions? According to Dr. Spyros Kotomatas, Coordinator of the project:

“The CYCLADES LIFE project, brings a breath of fresh air in conservation not just for the Greek Seas but for the whole Mediterranean. For the first time, notions such as ecosystem based management and marine spatial planning are introduced to the Greek society. Our vision is to succeed in designing and effectively managing an innovative marine protected area in the Northern Cyclades. At the heart of this endeavour, is the deserted island of Gyaros. The ultimate goal is to create a model marine protected area that will ensure the protection of the marine environment of the area and at the same time support the sustainability of the local societies. A model that we hope will prove viable and successful, paving the way for the whole Mediterranean.”

So far, for the purposes of the project, the Museum of Natural History of Crete has organised a number of field survey on the island of Gyaros, identifying and recording the flora and fauna of the island. At the same time, MOM/the Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the mediterranean monk seal, continues to monitor the local population of monk seal, *Monachus monachus*. All the actions, goals and expected results of the project are presented in the newly aired website [www.cycladeslife.gr](http://www.cycladeslife.gr)

“The project is gearing up to full speed with the aim to ensure the sustainability of the natural environment and of the local societies of Syros and Andros through the creation of a marine protected area around the island of Gyaros” continues Dr. Spyros Kotomatas.

In the months to come, multitude of actions will follow such as mapping of the important marine habitats of Gyaros, open public events for all and capacity building seminars to name but a few. Stakeholders from both islands will be asked to participate and actively contribute to the design of a set of measures for the protection of the marine environment of Gyaros, the support of the fisheries sector and the societies of Andros and Syros overall. “It is a very innovative project for Greece since it sets at the heart of the design and the establishment and operation of the marine protected area. Towards this, we can all work together for a living sea” concludes Dr. Spyros Kotomatas.

Partners in the above endeavour will be the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change, the Decentralized Administration Authority of the Aegean, the Development Corporation of Local Authorities of Cyclades S.A, Harokopio University of

Athens, the Italian Tethys Research Institute and the NGOs MOM/Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal and WWF Greece.

**More information**

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**Notes for journalists:**

You can visit our website for more information: [www.cycladeslife.gr](http://www.cycladeslife.gr)

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