THERMAIKOS DOLPHIN PROJECT

2023 REPORT

THESSALONIKI, 2023

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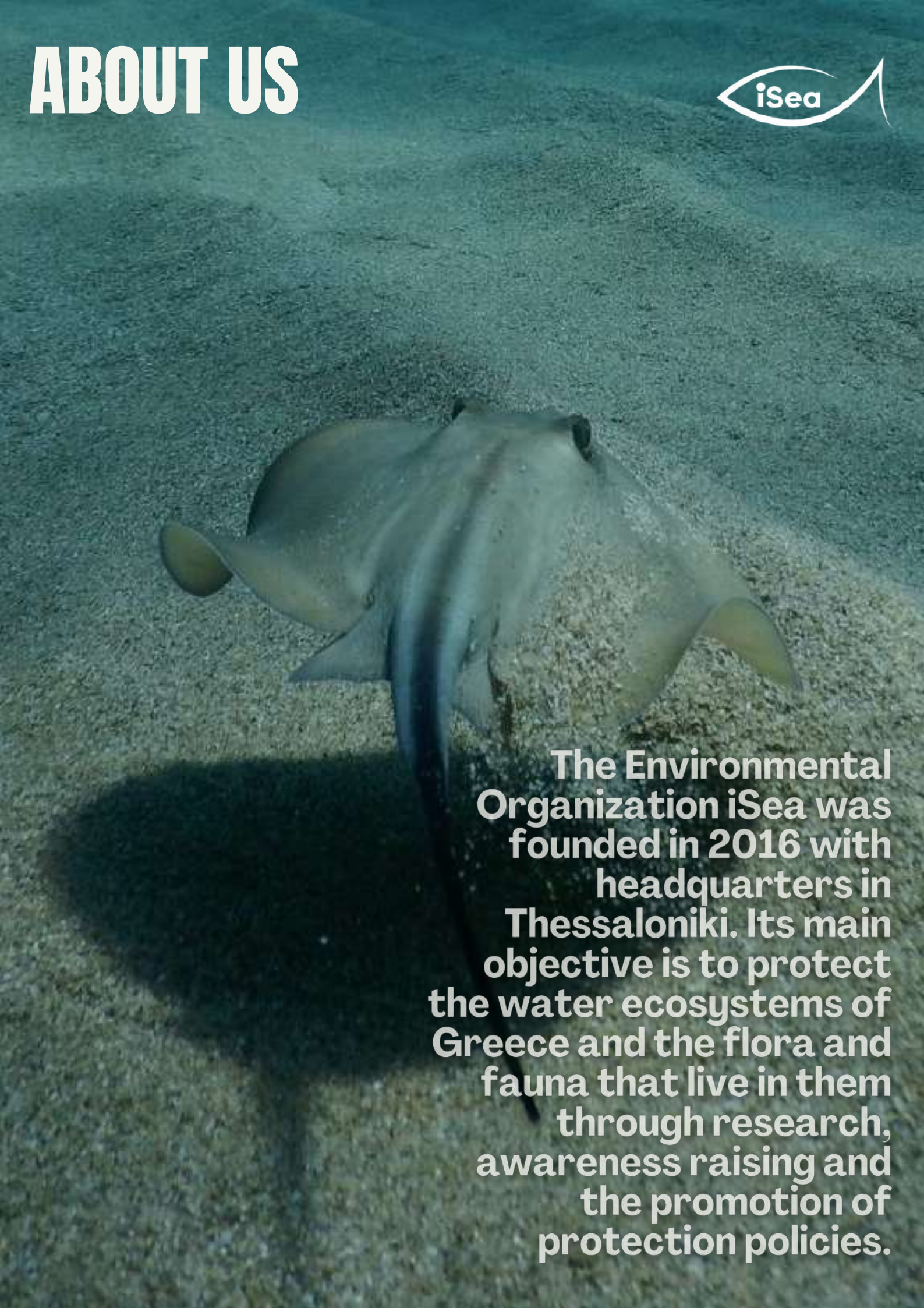
ABOUT US



The Environmental Organization iSea was founded in 2016 with headquarters in Thessaloniki. Its main objective is to protect the water ecosystems of Greece and the flora and fauna that live in them through research, awareness raising and the promotion of protection policies.

OUR VALUES

iSea

Collaboration

Transparency

Teamwork

Scientificity

OUR VISION

A healthy Mediterranean Sea supporting the sustainable development and resilience of the local coastal communities

OUR MISSION

We work with local communities for preserving and restoring Mediterranean marine life

PILLARS

AQUATIC LITTER

CITIZEN SCIENCE

HUMAN & AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

VULNERABLE SPECIES

VULNERABLE SPECIES PILLAR

Biodiversity is fundamental for healthy ecosystems. Limited knowledge of Mediterranean species populations indicates the problem, as 1/3 of marine species cannot be assessed due to insufficient data. According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14, "Life on Water", sustainable management and protection measures for marine and coastal ecosystems must be taken to achieve the goal of healthy and productive oceans. In this context, iSea aims to increase and disseminate existing knowledge about vulnerable species to enhance scientific-based management and ensure their conservation, protection, and restoration to the extent that they fulfill their ecological role in achieving healthy and functional ecosystems.

CETACEANS IN GREECE

In Greece, there are 8 resident cetacean species which are: the fin whale (Balaenoptera physalus), the sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus), the Cuvier's beaked whale (Ziphius cavirostris), the Risso's dolphin (Grampus griseus), the bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus), the common short-beaked dolphin (Delphinus delphis), the striped dolphin (Stenella coeruleoalba) and the harbor porpoise (Phocoena phocoena). Besides the fin whale that belongs to baleen whales, the rest of the resident species that live in Greece belong to toothed whales.

Additionally, there are more visitor or vagrant species that can be found occasionally in Greek waters such as the humpback whale (Megaptera novaeangliae, which is one of the most popular and well-studied cetacean species worldwide.

Cetaceans nowadays face a variety of threats around the globe. Ocean pollution, noise pollution, collision with vessels, entanglement in nets and other fishing gear, overfishing-induced prey depletion are some of the greatest threats they face. Additionally, in some places, cetaceans are still directly targeted either for their meat or for their transfer in zoos and dolphinaria.

THERMAIKOS DOLPHIN PROJECT

Thermaikos Dolphin Project focuses on the systematic study of Thermaikos Gulf's cetaceans as well as environmental education and sensitizing of the public about marine mammals and the marine environment.

Thermaikos Gulf is an important area for both Greece's biodiversity and economy. Thus far, only a handful of studies have been conducted in the area about cetaceans.

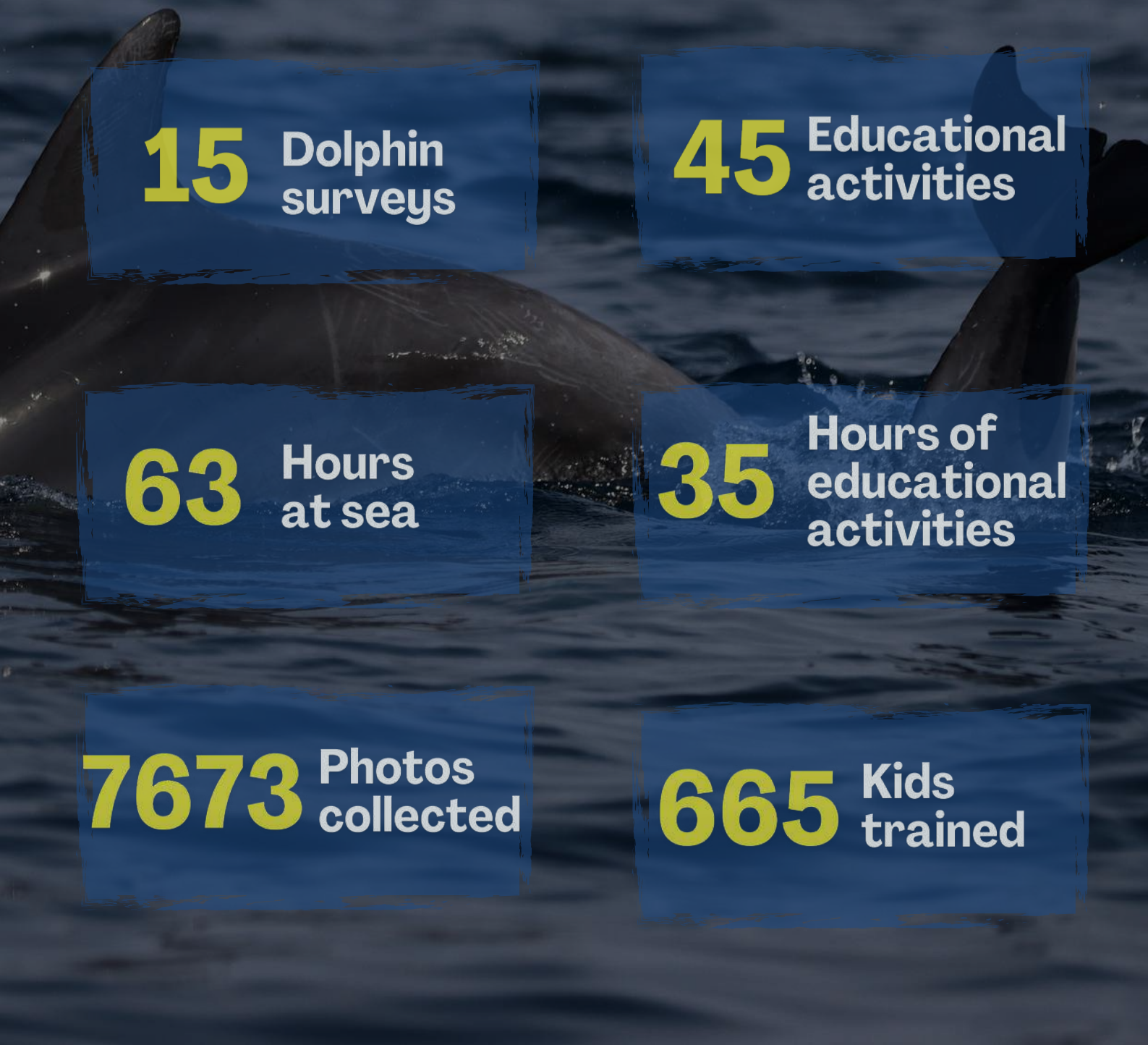
Through Thermaikos Dolphin Project, the area's dolphin populations' abundance and distribution are studied for the first time in a systematic way for species that regularly or occasionally occur in the gulf. The broadly used photo-identification method is used to estimate the abundance of the species and the behaviour of individuals.

2023 GOALS

1. STUDY DOLPHIN ABUNDANCE IN THE STUDY AREA
2. STUDY DOLPHIN INTERACTION WITH FISHERIES
3. IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS
4. RAISE KID'S AWARENESS ON CETACEANS

THERMAIKOS DOLPHIN PROJECT

IN NUMBERS for 2023



15 Dolphin surveys

45 Educational activities

63 Hours at sea

35 Hours of educational activities

7673 Photos collected

665 Kids trained

TEAM 2023

FIELD TEAM

Nikos Doumpas

Roxani Naasan Aga Spyridopoulou

Giorgos Rallis

Ioannis Giovos

EDUCATION TEAM

Sofia Litsiou

Anastasia Charitou

SURVEYS 2023

We identified 10 new dolphins from last year

The two catalogues in total number 59 different dolphins

Our effort

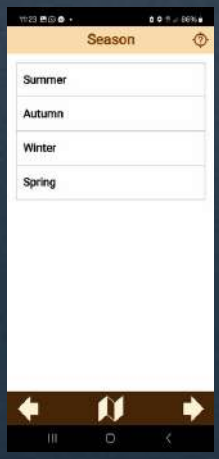
SURVEYS 2023

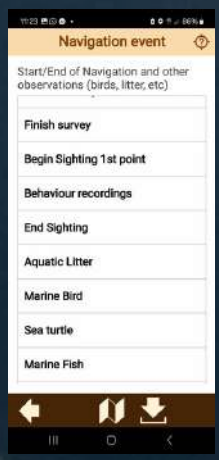
IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

In the context of the project, we created a new application for logging the data in real-time. With the use of the Cyber tracker platform, we manage to automatically log all data in the field with geolocation. This:

1. MAKES DATA COLLECTION FASTER

2. ALLOW US TO PERFORM SOCIAL STRUCTURE STUDIES





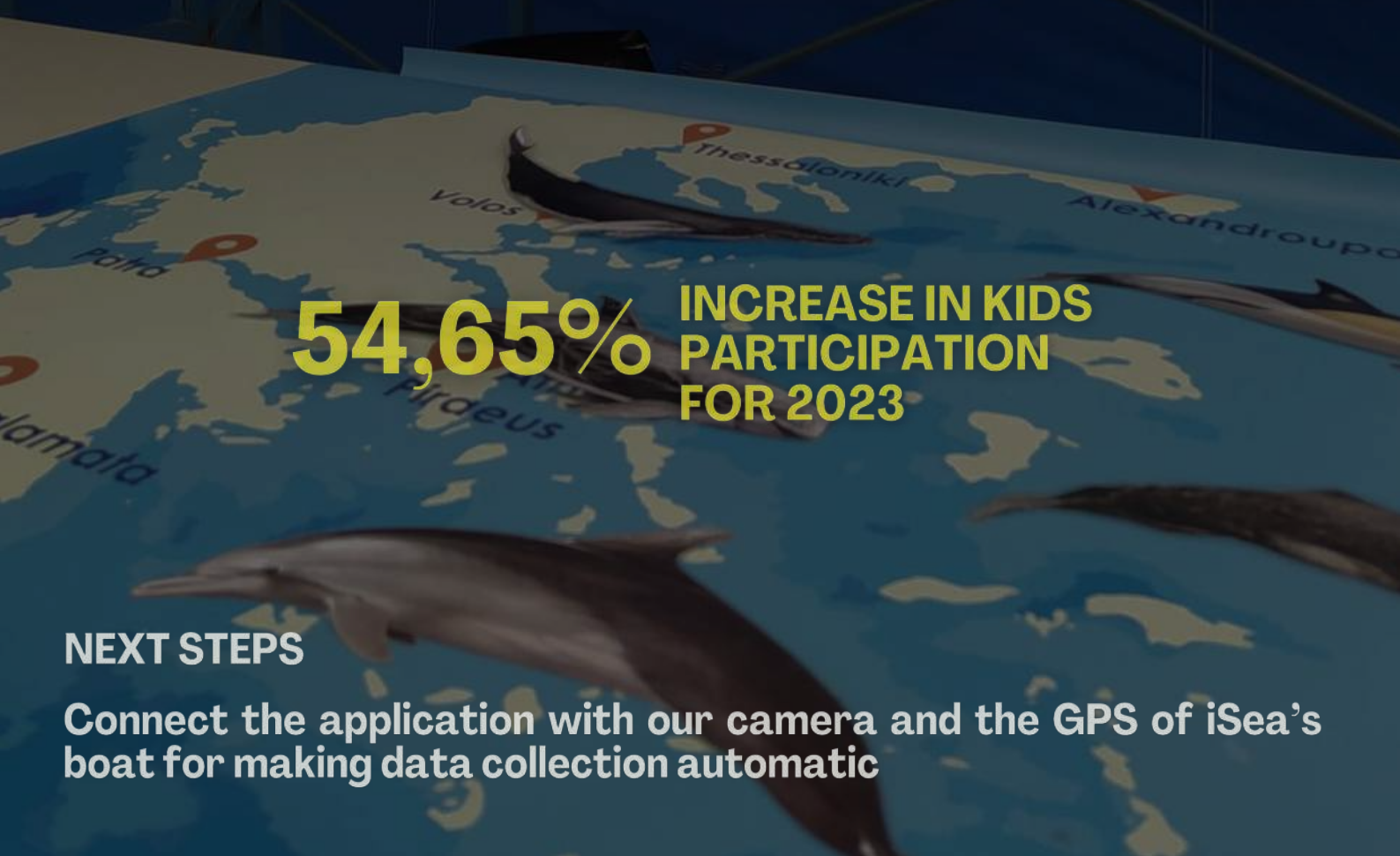
NEXT STEPS

Connect the application with our camera and the GPS of iSea's boat for making data collection automatic

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS 2023

A total number of 22 visits were implemented from iSea, resulting in 45 educational workshops. From May to October the educational activities were implemented outdoors with the participation of the kids' clubs. A total number of 665 kids in more than 35 hours of educational workshops.

In addition, 1 more educational workshop took place outside kid's club in 1st Eukarpia's Primary School, with the participation of 50 kids.



54,65% INCREASE IN KIDS PARTICIPATION FOR 2023

NEXT STEPS

Connect the application with our camera and the GPS of iSea's boat for making data collection automatic

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS 2023

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The activitities included table puzzles and games, presentation of informative material from different cetacean species and their characteristics, photo ID activities from the catalogue of Thermaikos Dolphin Project and coloring pages.

iSea produced hard copies of scientific illustrations of the cetaceans of the Greek Seas to complement the educational activities, in order for the children to idenitify differences in shapes and colors of the animals from scientifically correct illustrations. The team of iSea is also communicating new research on dolphin biology and behaviour with children of all ages.

RESEARCH ON PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

iSea and Best Buddies Greece, since 2022 have started a collaboration to promote the inclusion of people in the autistic spectrum in research and conservation of biodiversity and examine sensory hypersensitivity in high-functioning autism, as a solution to wildlife monitoring data accumulation.

To achieve this test the efficiency of people with high-functioning autism (HFA) was tested in the process of dolphin photo identification. Case groups of 15 individuals with HFA and yet 6 participants without HFA were studied and compared. Preliminary results of the study show significant differences in efficiency on dolphin photo identification with the HFA group scoring higher than the group without HFA.

COMMUNICATION 2023

9 POSTS

1,200

10,000

800

1000

*Average reach

PARTNERS

iSea


iSea