




Letters to the Editor

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Seal sighting on Alonissos

While sailing off Mourtia Bay, Alonissos [Greece] on Monday 21 June 2004, we saw an injured seal on the beach. We reported this to "Sunsail", our yacht charter company who telephoned the coastguard. The sanctuary [Monk Seal Rescue & Rehabilitation Centre] at Steni Vala was also contacted.



I would very much like to know if you found the seal, and if so how it is.

Is there any way we can help the sanctuary? We have visited Alonissos and Steni Vala many times and are keen to help.

– Jill and Miles Butler, U.K.

✓ Editor's reply:

The seal you observed near Mourtia is well known to MOm (Hellenic Society for the Study & Protection of the Monk Seal) researchers on Alonissos; I believe he was first sighted hauling out on a beach near Votsi in September 2003. He had sustained wounds to the rear flippers – a reasonably common injury amongst competing adult male monk seals. MOm researchers have since inspected the animal several times and have concluded that the wounds are healing of their own accord and do not require intervention. Sightings (such as yours) are followed up on a regular basis – and are, indeed, very important in the overall conservation of the species. As such, if you ever happen to spot another monk seal during one of your sailing trips, please don't hesitate to let us know.

We published a brief, illustrated, news item on the Mourtia seal in the June issue of TMG. [["Seal on Alonissos trades shyness for the beach"](#)]

You can read more about the monk seal in the National Marine Park of Alonissos-Northern Sporades (NMPANS) in various issues of TMG, particularly the Greek news section.

If you would like to help the conservation programme while on Alonissos, you should get in touch with [MOM](#), the organisation leading those efforts in the NMPANS, or visit the exhibition centre at the harbour front in Patitiri.

Population data

I would be grateful if you could inform me about the development of the monk seal population at the Sporades Marine Park, Greece (especially the development of

animals' births and deaths per year). Could you please also refer me to the background studies from which the original figures originate (e.g. is it your own research or does it originate from other researchers/authors)?

– *Dr. Iosif Botetzagias*, Research Assistant, University of Patras, Greece.

✓ **Editor's reply:**

Data on monk seal births and deaths within the area of the NMPANS are part of a well-established and long-term research and monitoring programme implemented by [MOM](#) biologists. Summaries of findings are often published under the Greek section of TMG's Mediterranean News. More comprehensive reports are available from the Society.

Orphaned pups in need

As a long-time founding member of the Kauai Monk Seal Watch Program, I am very interested in the process used to preserve the life of [orphaned monk seals] Hippocrates and Dimitris.

Can you direct me to a source for this information?

– *Donna Lee*, Kauai, Hawaii.

✓ **Editor's reply:**

We continue to publish news and updates on the rescue and rehabilitation of orphaned monk seals at MOM's intensive care station at Alonissos, Greece. Please check out our Greek news section for information on the recent rescue of seal pup "Hippocrates" on the eastern Aegean island of Kos, and on the post-release satellite tracking of orphaned seal "Dimitris".

More detailed scientific information on the development of pups undergoing rehabilitation can be found in the following poster publication:

Androukaki, E., E. Fatsea, L. 't Hart, A.D.M.E. Osterhaus, E. Tounta, and S. Kotomatas. 2002. [Growth and development of Mediterranean monk seal pups during rehabilitation](#). Monachus Science Posters. The Monachus Guardian 5 (1): May 2002.

The proceedings of the ECS seal rehabilitation workshop was also published on the Society's web site in 2003 [[Seal rehab proceedings published online](#), TMG 6 (2): December 2003]. The reference is:

Androukaki, E. and Y. Larondelle (eds). 2003. [Seal rehabilitation in theory and practice workshop: protocols, techniques, cases](#). 16th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, 7 April 2002, Liege, Belgium.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters for the sake of clarity and space

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