



ACTIVITY REPORT

2025



We can all LIVE TOGETHER!

our history

1983

ARCHELON is founded

1985

Environmental Education Programs are established

1991

National Rescue Network is established

1995

The Koroni Project begins

2002

The Amvrakikos Project begins

2010

The Romanos Project begins

2019

The National Management Plan for the Sea Turtle is established

2022

The Sea Turtle Beach Walk is established

1984

Zakynthos & Kyparissia Projects begin

1990

Crete Projects begin

1994

The Sea Turtle Rescue Centre opens

1999

The National Marine Park of Zakynthos is established

2007

First Green sea turtle nest recorded in Greece

2018

Kyparissia Bay is declared a Nature Protection Area

2021

Online educational presentations begin

2024

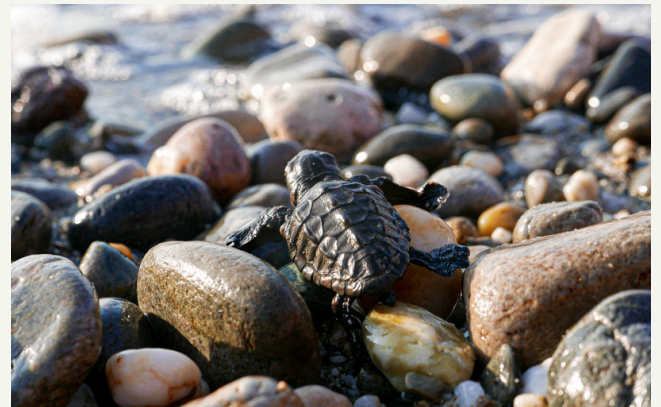
Nesting record

In 2025, nature showed us in the clearest way that it responds when we care for it consistently.

Continuing our work for the 42nd consecutive year on Greece's most important sea turtle nesting beaches in the Peloponnese, Zakynthos, and Crete, we recorded and protected more than 10,000 nests.

At the Rescue Centre in Glyfada, Attica, we admitted 47 injured turtles suffering from entanglement in fishing gear, boat strikes, or deliberate harm. After persistent and dedicated efforts, 30 turtles were successfully rehabilitated and returned healthy to their natural environment. At the same time, approximately 14,300 students from 470 schools participated in our educational programs.

None of this would have been possible without the 590 volunteers from every corner of the world who offered their energy and commitment to the protection of sea turtles. Their invaluable contribution forms the core of our mission to promote sustainable development and responsible tourism in our activity areas, ensuring that the protection of our marine heritage remains a cornerstone for the future of local communities.



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2025 Projects & activities

- Our Conservation Projects that monitor and protect sea turtle nesting on the beaches of Zakynthos, the Peloponnese, and Crete were successfully completed.
- Our project that monitors the sea turtle population in Amvrakikos Gulf was also completed.
- The National Sea Turtle Rescue Network continued its work across Greek waters, alongside a nationwide survey of sporadic nesting activity.

- Care and rehabilitation of injured and sick turtles continued at the ARCHELON Rescue Centre in Glyfada.
- Environmental education and public awareness activities were carried out both at the Rescue Centre and on the nesting beaches.
- Online educational presentations continued for schools all over Greece and beyond.



2025 at a glance...



328

turtles
tagged



76

turtles
under care



30

turtles
released



10.700

nests
recorded



490.000

hatchlings
protected



180

hotels
approached



590

volunteers
trained



180.000

volunteering
hours



14.000

students
educated



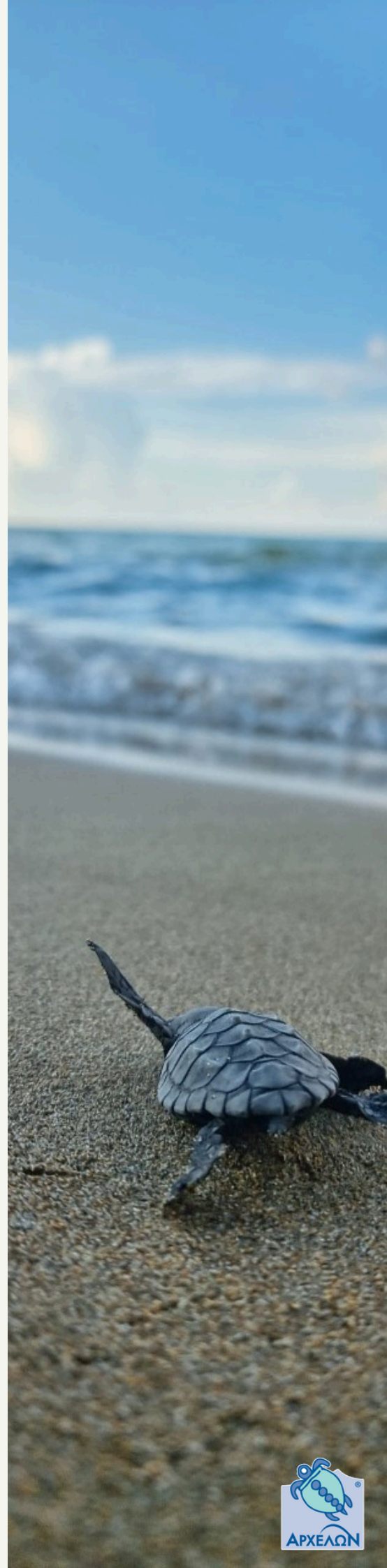
113.000

visitors
informed



€737.000

raised for sea turtle
conservation



More than 10,700 loggerhead nests recorded across Greece

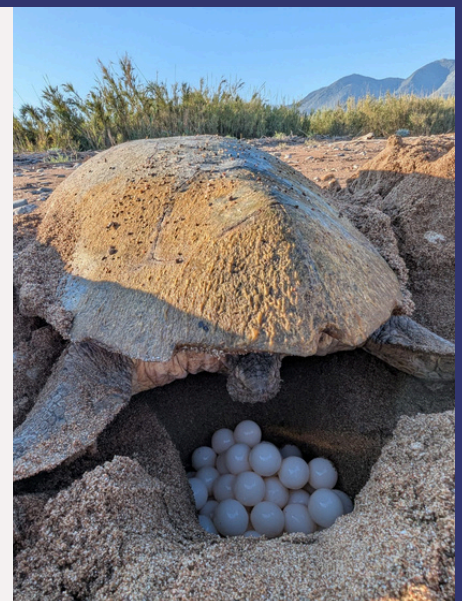
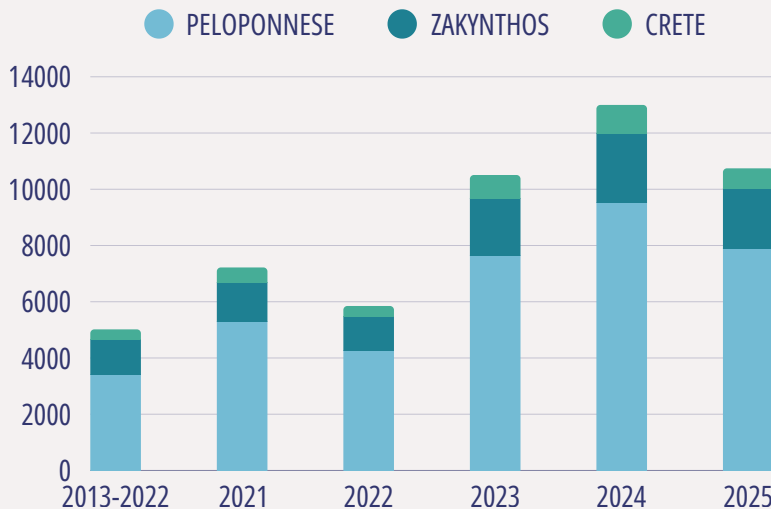
From early May to early October, ARCHELON researchers and volunteers carried out over 3,700 monitoring shifts, patrolling a total of 96.8 km of coastline in the Peloponnese, Zakynthos, and Crete.

Their goal was to record and protect the nests of the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*). Specifically:

- In Kyparissia Bay 6,181 nests were recorded, marking a 74% increase compared to the average of the previous twelve years.
- In Laganas Bay of Zakynthos, nest numbers remained high for the third consecutive year, with 2,155 nests recorded.
- An additional 1,561 nests were recorded across the rest of the Peloponnese (Romanos, Koroni, Lakonikos Bay), and 143 nests in southeastern Laconia, with the support of the Tulipa Goulimi Association.
- Another 704 nests were recorded in Crete (Rethymno, Chania, Messara Bay).



Long-term trends in the number of nests recorded by ARCHELON by region



Sporadic Nesting: Citizen Science

ARCHELON runs monitoring and protection projects on the beaches with the highest number of nests in Greece. However, a smaller number of nests also appear in other areas of the country. These “sporadic nests” can occur anywhere in Greece, a common phenomenon given the country’s extensive coastline. Recording these cases is made possible with the help of the public, who report sightings to us.

In 2025, ARCHELON received 433 citizen reports of potential sea turtle nesting activity! The highest number of reports (91) came from the Municipality of Preveza.



Two Green Turtle Nests found on Naxos island!

While the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) nests on many beaches across Greece, the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) prefers warmer waters. Typically, its nesting areas in the Mediterranean are limited to the easternmost regions, mainly Turkey, Cyprus, and Syria.



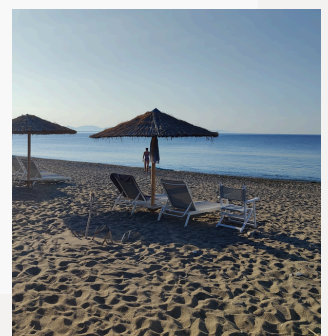
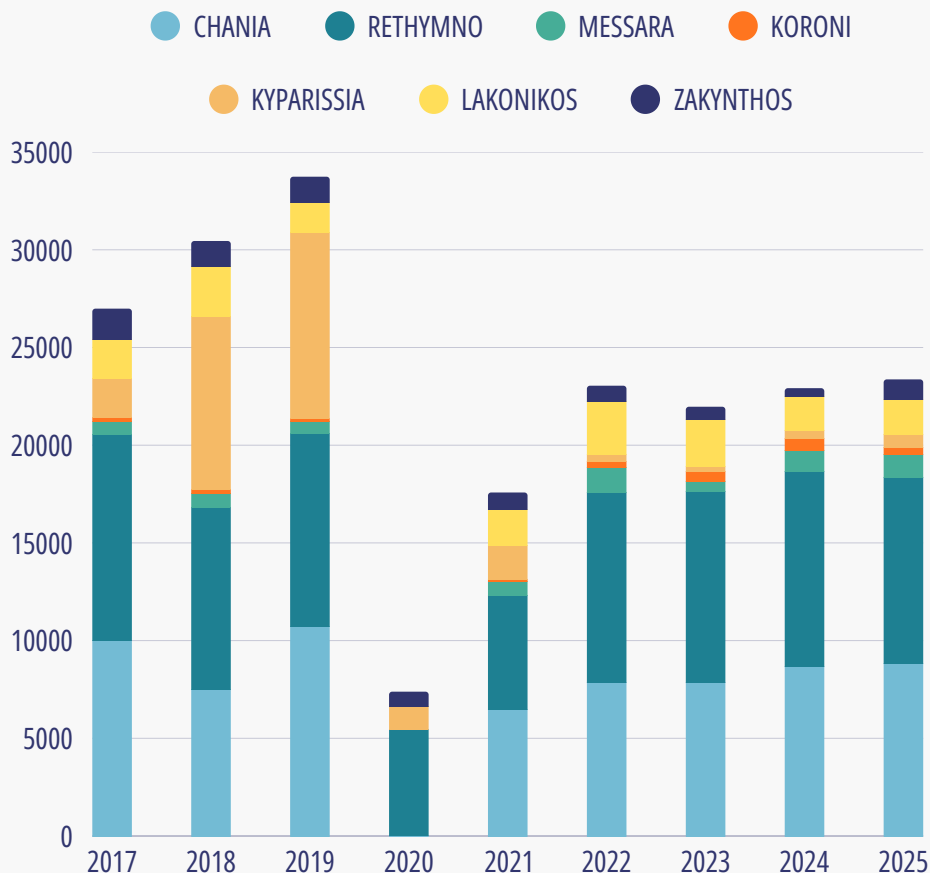
However, in recent years, a few green turtle nests have also been recorded in Greece, indicating that the species’ nesting range in the Mediterranean is beginning to expand. The first green turtle nest was recorded by ARCHELON in Crete in 2007 on a beach in Rethymno, confirmed by the hatchlings that emerged. Since then, a few more nests have been documented in Greece, and in 2025, two nests were found on the island of Naxos!



Pressures on the Nesting Habitats

- Private equipment left overnight
- Beach umbrellas and sunbeds left overnight
- Sand leveling or smoothing
- Vehicle traffic
- Recreational fishing at night
- Camping on the beach at night
- Speed boats near the shore
- Campfires
- Horse riding
- Light pollution

Number of beach furniture recorded by ARCHELON on the nesting beaches by region through the years



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To curb the pressures on nesting beaches, ARCHELON volunteers/researchers implemented actions such as: (a) the placement of protective cages/grids and informational signage on nests to protect them from trampling and human activity or predation by wild animals, (b) the relocation of nests at risk of flooding to safer locations, (c) the shading of nests to address light pollution and avoid hatchling disorientation.

4.416 *nests protected with grids or cages*

427 *nests moved to a safer location*

820 *nests shaded against light pollution*



The 2025 hatching season started earlier than ever before!

On July 9, 2025, the first hatching of the year was recorded at Elaia Beach in Kyparissia Bay, marking the earliest start of the hatching season in the 42 years of ARCHELON's records! The earlier start of the hatching in the year is likely an effect of climate change.

Towards the end of the summer, ARCHELON teams excavated the nests to calculate the hatching success. Thus, from the nests recorded in 2025, it is estimated that 490,000 loggerhead hatchlings ultimately managed to reach the sea thanks to the efforts of ARCHELON volunteers and researchers.



490.000 *hatchlings*

Night shift and sea turtle tagging on the nesting beaches

134 *six-hour night shifts*

352 *turtles observed and recorded*

249 *turtles recorded and tagged for the first time*

20 *turtles fitted with satellite tags*



The night shifts were carried out during the peak nesting months on the beaches of Zakynthos, Kyparissia Bay, Lakonikos Bay, Chania and Messara Bay. Working silently and with minimal lighting, the trained volunteers/researchers walked along designated sections of the beach, ready to observe and collect data without disturbing the turtles. When they encountered a nesting female, they recorded important data and tag the turtles with a metal tag. In the summer of 2025, 249 turtles were tagged for the first time on the nesting beaches, while another 103 turtles that had already been tagged from previous years were observed.

In selected cases, ARCHELON places satellite transmitters on the turtles' shells. These devices send location data every time the turtle surfaces to breathe, allowing scientists to track migrations across the Mediterranean in near real time. In the summer of 2025, as part of the European LIFE MareNatura project for the conservation of marine megafauna, transmitters were placed on 20 nesting turtles found in Crete and the Peloponnese.

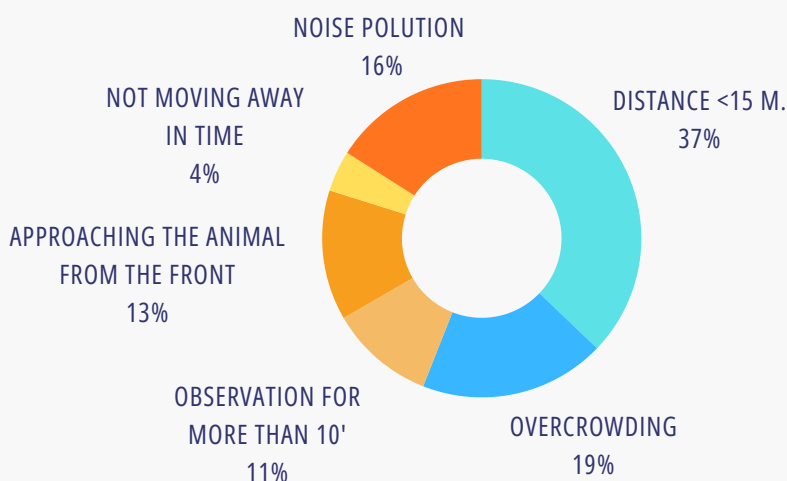


Turtles as a tourist attraction

Sea turtles are wild animals protected under national and international law. Treating them as a tourist attraction has serious consequences for them. In Laganas Bay, Zakynthos, many boats crowd around the turtles in order for tourists to observe and photograph them, often disregarding the rules of proper observation, causing disturbance and stress to the animals. In other parts of the country, such as Limeni in Mani, some people are feeding the turtles with the aim of attracting tourists. This practice alters their natural behavior; the turtles associate human presence with food and become more aggressive towards bathers in the area.

ARCHELON implements targeted information campaigns against feeding and holding presentations on boats that adhere to the rules of proper turtle observation, aiming to raise awareness among visitors and professionals about respecting wildlife.

Incidents of non-compliance with the proper turtle observation guidelines recorded in 2025 in Laganas Bay, Zakynthos (the guidelines apply by decision of the Zakynthos Port Authority)



Increased turtles strandings

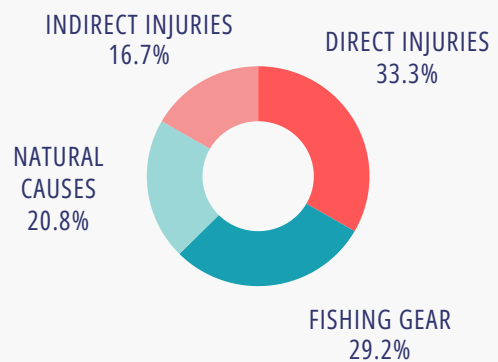
In 2025, 28 sea turtle strandings (25 dead) were recorded in Zakynthos, of which 14 were within the Marine Park. Examination of the stranded animals showed that in several cases their injuries were caused by collisions with boats (7 cases) or fishing gear (3 cases). The three turtles that were found alive were transferred for treatment to the ARCHELON Sea Turtle Rescue Centre in Glyfada, Attica.

30 turtles returned to the sea after successful treatment

The **ARCHELON Sea Turtle Rescue Centre** in Glyfada, which has been operating continuously since 1994, hosts sick or injured sea turtles from all over Greece. There, ARCHELON's staff and trained volunteers provide daily care and treatment to the turtles until they fully recover and can safely return to their natural environment.

During 2025, 48 sea turtles were rescued and transported to the Centre for treatment, while treatments continued for 28 more turtles that had arrived at the Centre in previous years.

The main reasons for the introduction of sea turtles to the Rescue Centre in 2025 were direct injuries (33%), which usually result from deliberate human action, as well as ingestion or entanglement in fishing gear (29%), such as hooks and fishing lines. Other reasons for introduction in 2025 were indirect injuries (17%), mainly associated with collisions with speedboats, as well as natural causes (21%), such as pneumonia. Of the total number of turtles introduced in 2025, unfortunately 18 died, 28 remain under care at the Centre, while 30 turtles (40%) managed to fully recover and successfully return to the sea.



Percentage of turtles released



Percentage of turtles that remain under care in 2026



Percentage of turtles that died

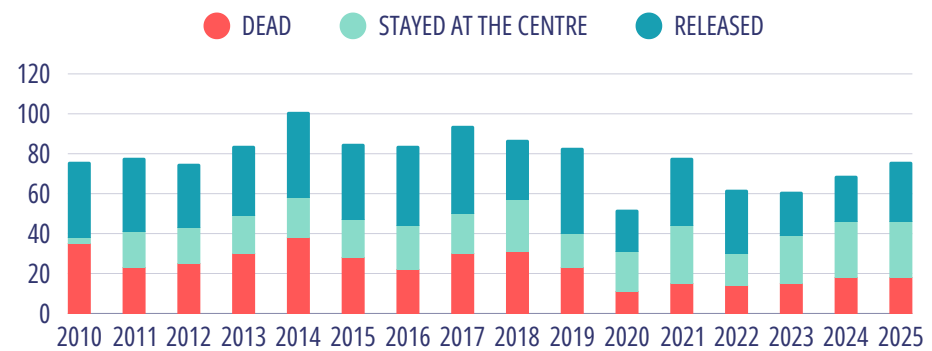
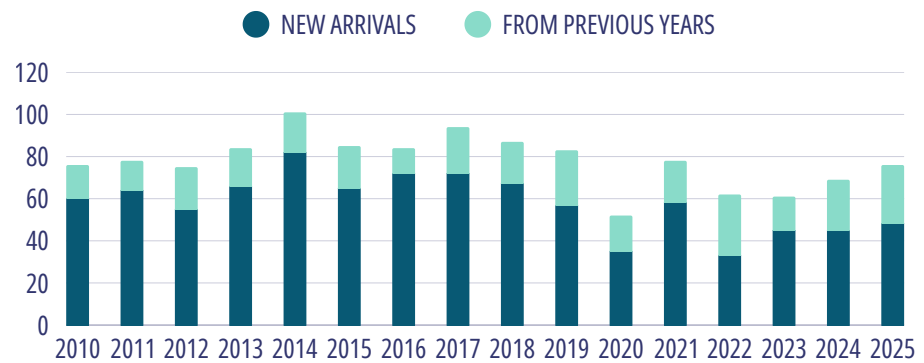


A special case that the Rescue Centre had to deal with this year was the loggerhead turtle **"Lucky"**. The young Loggerhead, weighing less than one kilogram, was found floating in the sea in April 2025, with an extensive load of barnacles covering almost her entire body. Barnacles are marine arthropods that usually attach to the shell of turtles. When a turtle is weakened, these organisms can multiply to abnormal levels, seriously affecting its health. After many hours of intensive care, "Lucky" made a full recovery and returned to the sea healthy in September.





Number of turtles under care at the Rescue Centre through the years

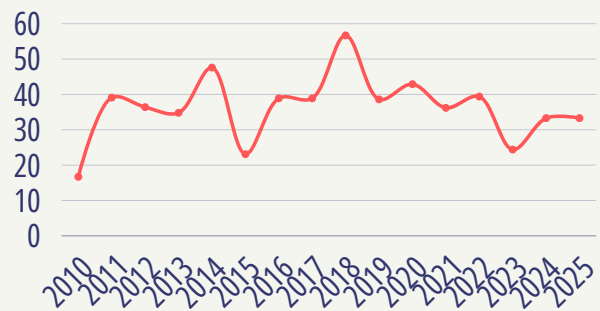


Serious and Intentional Head Injuries: A Continuing Challenge for the Rescue Centre

Head trauma represents the most common type of injury at the ARCHELON Sea Turtle Rescue Center. These injuries are usually caused by collisions with boats or, more commonly, by intentional blows to the head by humans.

Unfortunately, over 30% of the incidents in 2025 involved turtles with such injuries. These injuries can cause difficulty in buoyancy and swimming, anorexia and/or vision loss in turtles. The recovery of sea turtles is often long and requires many hours of rehabilitation. However, many of the injured turtles respond well to treatments and are able to recover fully, demonstrating how resilient they are as a species.

% of Turtles with Intentional Trauma



113.000 people informed

- 1.700+ three-hour shifts at the 8 Information Stations
- 500+ presentations at partner hotels
- 380+ sea turtle beach walks
- 300+ presentations on boat rides
- 200+ public nest excavations



"We had an incredible time participating in the beach walk and I highly recommend it! The tour was so informative, shedding light on the amazing conservation work that ARCHELON does to protect sea turtles!" - Alan



"We attended a public excavation and we were lucky enough to see live baby turtles! Thank you to all the helpful volunteers who were very friendly and informative." - Andrew

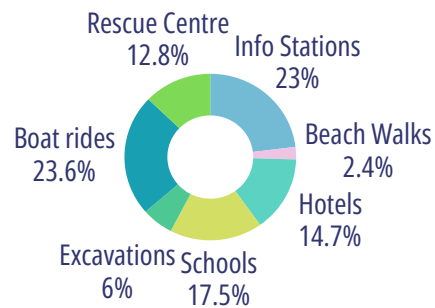
In Zakynthos, **48,500 visitors** were informed through the Info Station in the central square, the presentations given in hotels or on the boats that take trips in Laganas Bay!

In Glyfada, **13,000 visitors** from Greece and abroad toured the facilities of the Rescue Centre, while **15,600 students** and teachers participated in the educational activities!

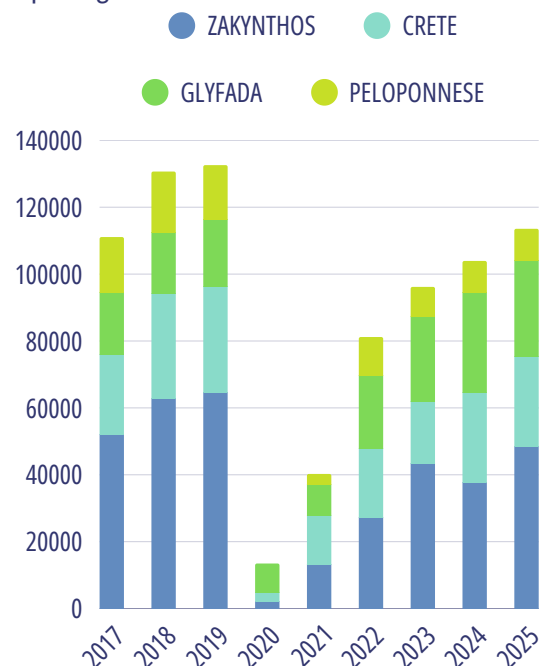
In Crete, **26,700 visitors** were informed at the seasonal Info Stations that operate in the cities of Rethymno, Chania and Matala, on the nesting beaches, and in the partner hotels!

In the Peloponnese, **9,600 visitors** were informed at the nesting beaches, at the Info Stations operating in the towns of Kalo Nero, Kyparissia, Koroni, and at the Environmental Station in Agiannaki, Messinia.

Percentage of people who participated in the different information activities in 2025



Timeline of the number of people who participated in the various information activities per region



Turtles & Tourists: Can the Tourism industry be sustainable?

Tourism and nature are often at odds, especially in popular destinations, where beaches are critical nesting grounds for protected species. However, the sustainable tourism approach is the biggest challenge in order for the two worlds to coexist and support each other. This sustainability challenge is at the core of ARCHELON's new initiative, which is aimed at beach hotels and businesses.

In 2025, ARCHELON distributed information material to approximately 180 tourism businesses that operate at the nesting beaches and organized informational activities and staff trainings at their facilities. We thank all the tourism businesses that in 2025 supported our mission for a better and sustainable planet.



Can Hotels be Turtle-Friendly?



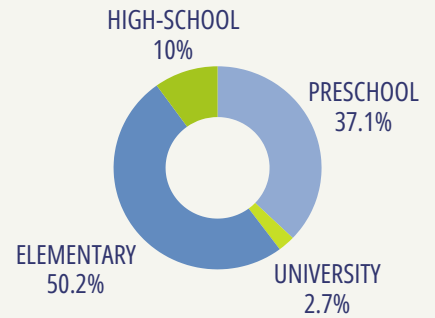
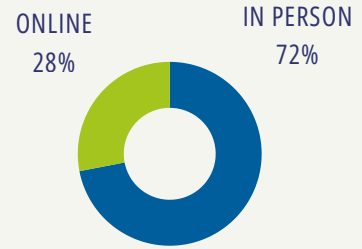
Since 2023, ARCHELON in collaboration with the TUI Care Foundation, has launched the pilot implementation of an innovative Turtle-Friendly Hotel Certificate. The purpose of the certificate is to encourage sustainable development in tourism, to provide guidelines for businesses committed to the protection of sea turtles and to assist tourists in choosing turtle-friendly accommodation and excursions. ARCHELON has an active role in this initiative, providing guidelines and support for the 8 hotels that participated.



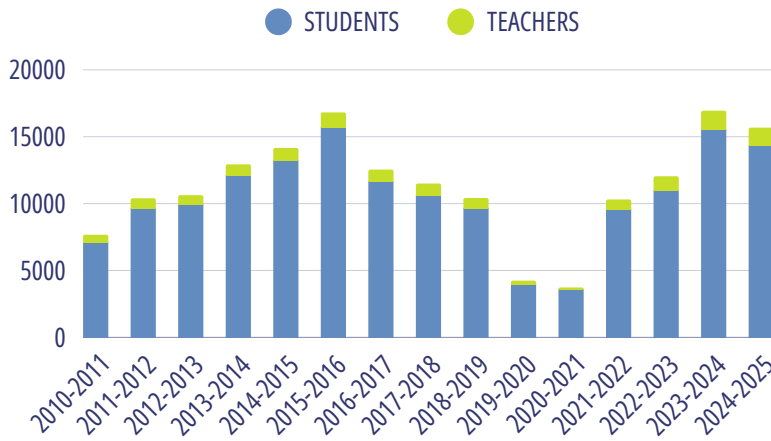
16,000+ students participated in ARCHELON's educational activities!

During the 2024-2025 school year, the Rescue Centre welcomed 14,316 students and 1,362 teachers through the Environmental Education Program. Most programs were held in person (72%), while the Online Presentations brought sea turtles to 132 classrooms outside Attica, sometimes even outside Greece.

Most of the school classes participating in the educational programs consisted of primary school students (50%) and preschool children (37%). Additionally, 41 groups of middle/high school students and 11 groups of university students participated in the educational programs.



Number of students and teachers who participated in the Rescue Centre's Educational Programs through the years



On May 24, 2025, the Rescue Centre welcomed dozens of young friends of sea turtles for the annual **Sea Turtle Kids Festival**. Through interactive games and educational activities, the children learned about all the stages of a sea turtle's life and the threats it faces!

Environmental Education on the nesting beaches of the Peloponnese and Crete

ARCHELON field researchers organized 23 educational presentations at the **Agiannakis Environmental Station** in Messinia, Peloponnese for **1,015 local students**.

Crete's team also carried out 42 educational presentations in local schools, informing and raising awareness among **1,030 students**.





A different project in Amvrakikos Gulf

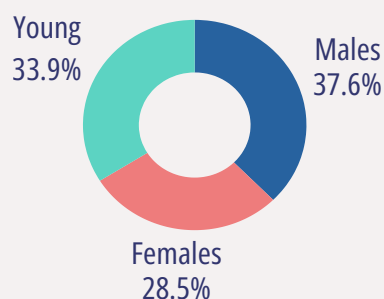
The Sea Turtle Population Monitoring Project in the Amvrakikos feeding grounds operated during July and August 2025. The researchers captured, recorded, measured and tagged 242 individual turtles. Most were Loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*), but one green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) was also found.

242 unique turtle captures

79 turtles found for the first time



The 242 turtles examined in Amvrakikos Gulf in 2025 by sex



A unique survivor

Among the turtles found in Amvrakikos Gulf is a turtle that has been surviving for at least six years without a lower jaw! The animal was first recorded in 2019. Despite its shocking injury, the turtle was not weak. On the contrary, its wounds had healed naturally and its physical condition was excellent. Since then, the turtle has been spotted four more times in the same study area, with most recent in the summer of 2025. During this six-year period, the turtle continues to show good physical condition and grow at an average rate of about 0.2 centimeters per year!



592 volunteers dedicated their time and energy to ARCHELON's mission

At ARCHELON we know that every success and every result is based on the dedication, experience and passion of dozens of volunteers who come from far and near to participate in our projects and support our mission for a better and sustainable planet. In 2025, a total of 592 volunteers from Greece and abroad participated in ARCHELON's activities.



86% full-time volunteers

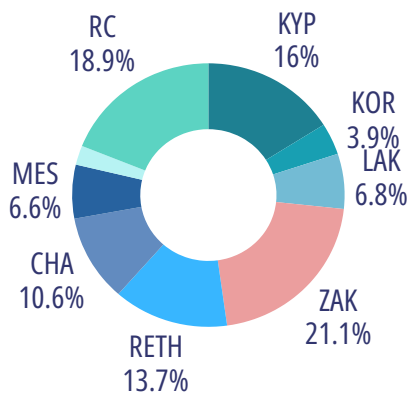


60% female volunteers



93% young volunteers (18-29 yo)

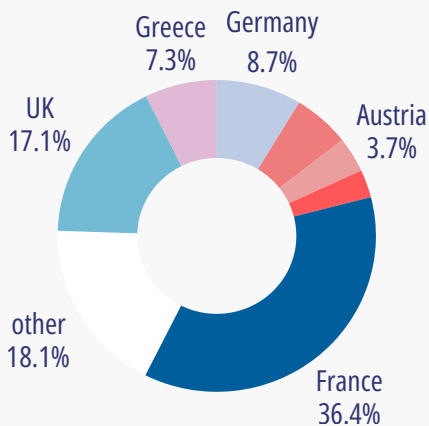
How the volunteers were distributed at the different ARCHELON Projects:



Most volunteers participated in the Projects of Zakynthos (125), the Rescue Centre (112) and Kyparissia Bay (95). A significant number of volunteers also joined the Projects of Rethymno (81) and Chania (63). Smaller groups of volunteers participated in the projects of Lakonikos (40), Messara (39), Koroni (23) and Amvrakikos (14).



Where did the 2025 volunteers come from?

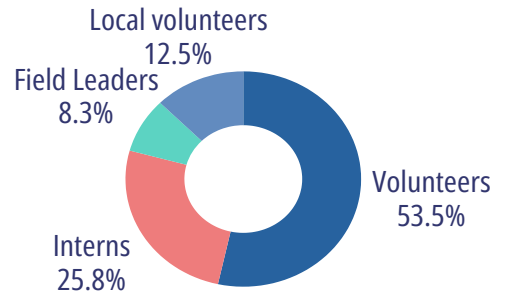


Most volunteers who participated in the Projects in 2025 came from France (189), the UK (89), Germany (45) and the Netherlands (30), while several were also from Greece (38) and other European countries. We also had participants from the USA (15), Canada (6) and Mexico. A few volunteers also came from Asian countries like Syria, Singapore and Indonesia. We even had 4 volunteers travelling from Australia!

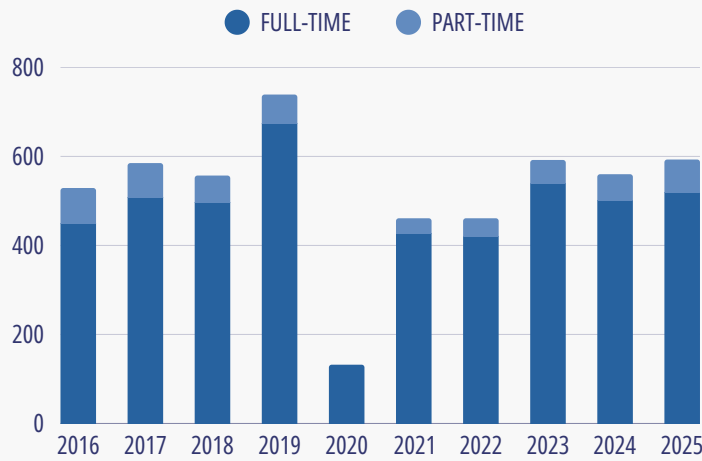
180.000+ volunteering hours

Among the 592 volunteers, 153 students (25%) completed their internships in collaboration with their University, while 74 (12%) were local residents of the areas where the projects were conducted.

In addition, 49 experienced volunteers (8%) took on the duties of Field Leaders, guiding the teams on a daily basis and ensuring that our mission is implemented with consistency and enthusiasm.



Evolution of the number of ARCHELON volunteers over time



"I had the opportunity to join a passionate team, working day and night to preserve this fragile ecosystem. This experience not only taught me the importance of wildlife protection, but also allowed me to develop skills in conservation project management and cross-cultural cooperation."

- Alex



"Working different shifts, I was able to see the entire process of a conservation project, from raising awareness and fundraising to working with adult sea turtles and hatchlings. The camp soon became my second home, and I was deeply saddened when it was time to leave."

- Ayesha

Collaborations move us forward



Since 2023, ARCHELON is a partner in the project **LIFE MareNatura - Conservation of priority species of marine megafauna in Greece and Italy** for the protection of 9 emblematic marine species; the Mediterranean Monk seal, the Loggerhead turtle, the Green turtle, the Sperm whale, the Harbour porpoise, the Cuvier's beaked whale, the Common dolphin, the Yelkouan shearwater and the Audouin's gull. The ultimate goal of the project is to declare new marine protected areas, which will expand the Natura 2000 network of Greece.

In 2025, ARCHELON completed research and communication activities within the framework of the project, such as satellite monitoring of turtles, collection of samples for stable isotope analyses, research with drone flights, research with fishermen, filming for the project's Documentary and the establishment of a new LIFE MareNatura Information Station in Kyparissia, Messinia.



The first year of the project **LIFE ADAPTS - Climate Change Adaptations for the Protection of Sea Turtles and the Mediterranean Seal** has been completed, a new European initiative that aims to develop adaptation strategies to the climate crisis, for the protection of the green turtle, the loggerhead sea turtle and the Mediterranean seal.

In 2025, activities like autopsy visits to potential new nesting areas, the collection of turtle hatchling samples for gender identification, the protection of nests, as well as the creation of videos and communication material for the project were completed.



ARCHELON participated for another year in the **Greek Wildlife Alliance**, a collective effort of 11 environmental NGOs coordinated by WWF Greece to maximize the impact of their action, with a common vision of the well-being of wildlife and humans.

In 2025, ARCHELON completed the rapid assessments of the conservation status of sea turtle nesting areas in Greece (Zakynthos, Kyparissia Bay, Methoni, Koroni, Lakonikos Bay, Chania, Rethymno, Messara Bay, Corfu, Preveza), while we also contributed in the creation of communication material for the project.



We continued our participation in the **Amvrakikos Alliance - Contributing to the effective management of the Amvrakikos Gulf Wetlands National Park**, in collaboration with other bodies and NECCA's Management Unit, with the aim of improving the management of the wetland. In September 2025, we participated in a relevant conference on the present and future of the Amvrakikos Gulf in Menidi, Amfilochia.

We can all **LIVE TOGETHER!**

We contributed to scientific research with 17 new publications!



Microplastics Study on Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches

ARCHELON participated in a recent global study (Botterell et al.) which revealed alarming levels of microplastic contamination on sea turtle nesting beaches around the world. Specifically, it was found that out of 209 sea turtle nesting sites surveyed worldwide, almost 45% were contaminated with microplastics!

New global study shows signs of recovery for sea turtles worldwide

The findings from 145 experts from 50 different countries suggest that the conservation status of sea turtles appears to be improving, although significant challenges remain. While many populations, such as green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Atlantic, are recovering, others, such as the critically endangered leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), continue to face significant challenges.



Artificial Intelligence at the Service of Sea Turtle Photo-ID Research

Sea turtle researchers exploit the unique geometric patterns of their faces to identify them and study their ecology and biology. In a new scientific study, Costas Papafitsoros (member and researcher at ARCHELON) used artificial intelligence methods to expand the capabilities of the photo-identification method.

Citizen Science: 40 Years of Recording Sporadic Sea Turtle Nesting in the Aegean and Ionian Seas

Two new ARCHELON publications have brought to light for the first time data from 40 years (1985–2024) of sporadic loggerhead nesting in the Ionian and Aegean Seas! Recording all these incidents is made possible with the help of the public who inform us. More eyes on the beaches, online platforms, and new reporting tools are expanding our understanding of turtle nesting beyond the beaches we monitor.



Unprecedented Appearance of Leatherback Turtle on Mediterranean Beach

A new scientific record brings to light an extremely rare event for Mediterranean marine life: the first confirmed appearance of an adult Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) attempting to lay eggs in the Mediterranean basin. The incident occurred in July 2024 in northern Syria, on Wadi Kandil beach, and was documented with photographic and video footage.

50+ companies and foundations supported ARCHELON's mission with small and large donations





As we share the results of 2025, we look forward with gratitude, responsibility and determination. We sincerely thank every volunteer who stood on the front lines of sea turtle conservation. Every citizen who alerted us to a nest or a turtle in need. Every organization, partner, and supporter who aligned with our mission. **Protecting sea turtles is the result of collective action** and each of your contributions has been decisive.

As 2026 is declared the **International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development**, we renew our commitment to strengthen this vibrant network of people protecting sea turtles. At the same time, Europe's **30x30 target** to protect at least 30% of the seas by 2030, as well as the creation of two new **Marine Parks in the Ionian and Aegean Seas**, create a critical window of opportunity to strengthen marine protection in our country.

Also in 2026, the **8th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles** is coming to Greece, a great honor for the country and recognition of its long-standing contribution to turtle conservation. The Conference, organized by ARCHELON with the support of international organizations, will be a meeting point for the scientific community throughout the Mediterranean, strengthening cooperation and collective action.

In this environment of change and opportunity, we continue with consistent research, population monitoring, awareness raising, rescue and rehabilitation for injured animals, and the protection of nesting beaches.

Together, we continue fighting for the seas, for the turtles, for the future.

— Daphne Mavrogiorgos, ARCHELON Director

We can all **LIVE TOGETHER!**

