

An underwater photograph showing two divers in orange gear. One diver is in the foreground, and another is further back. A large, dark, textured net hangs vertically from the top left. A red buoy is visible at the very top. The water is dark blue with some light filtering through.

HEALTHY SEAS®

a journey from waste to wear

Activity & Communications Report 2021

**“Keep Ithaca always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you’re destined for.
Hope your road is a long one.” ~ C.P. Cavafy**

This look back at 2021 serves to remind us of the accomplishments, the challenges, the milestones and new friends we made while pursuing our conservation efforts.

Through coincidence or fate, Ithaca is more than the location of the standout project of the past year and of our history. Since Homer’s Odyssey, Ithaca symbolises the destination of a long journey, the ultimate aim that each of us tries to fulfill during our life. For Healthy Seas, it is a symbol for the protection of the Planet.

With 4 main events in 4 different countries, the expansion of our activities to 5 new countries and keeping up with our regular activities with divers, schools and fishers, this was the busiest and hardest working year yet!

On behalf of our team, I wish to thank all our partners and volunteers for making our journey possible. We are proud to be on this long road together with you.



Veronika Mikos, Director

Mission Statement

Healthy Seas was founded in 2013 to tackle the ghost fishing phenomenon that is responsible for the needless death of marine animals. Through cleanups with volunteer divers and by working with stakeholders of the fishing sector toward marine litter prevention, Healthy Seas collects waste nets and ensures they become a valuable resource.

Nylon fishing nets are regenerated together with other nylon waste by Aquafil into ECONYL® yarn while the other types of plastics are also reused or recycled. Founded on the principles of circular economy, Healthy Seas champions the three pillars of sustainability and strives to make a positive and long-lasting impact to the marine environment, as well as the development of society, through education and awareness raising.

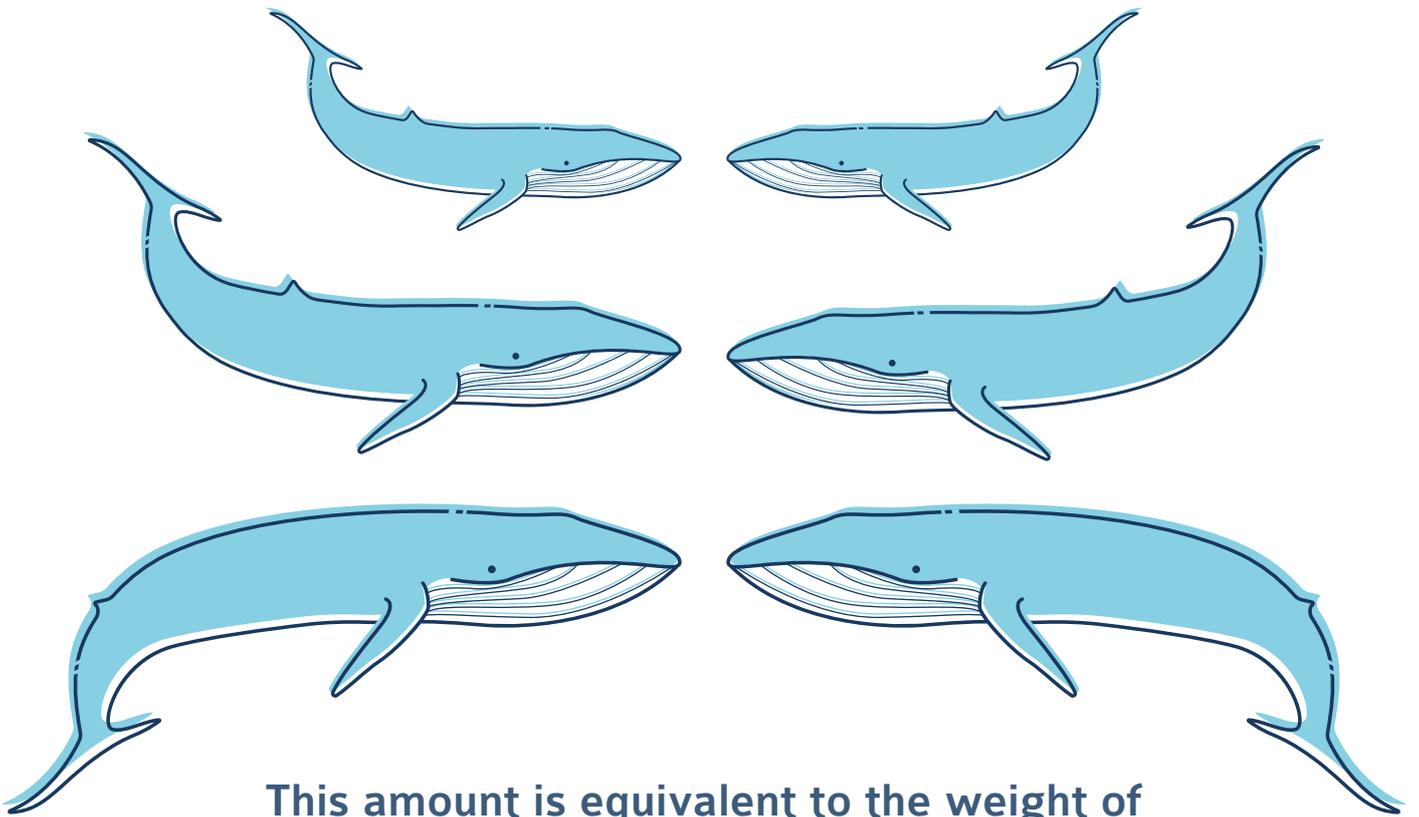
Founded by



Total Figures

Since our founding in 2013
we have collected over

773 tons of fishing nets
and other marine litter



This amount is equivalent to the weight of

6 blue whales
the biggest mammals on Earth

2021 Activity Results

188,500 kgs
of fishing nets
& other waste

1250 fishers
& fish farmers
involved

250
volunteer
divers

108
cleanup
days



1870
school children
involved



Cleanups

6 regions = 1 goal

We work in regions important for biodiversity and tourism, seas that are heavily fished and at the same time hold shipwrecks and other objects where waste fishing nets tend to accumulate.

An underwater photograph showing a diver in silhouette on the left, holding a thick rope that runs diagonally across the frame. A large, dark log is visible on the right, partially submerged. The sun is shining brightly from the top center, creating a lens flare effect. The water is a deep blue color.

2021

Volunteer divers were active
every 3 days!

Recording
108
cleanup
days

→ **+130%**
from 2020

In
12
countries

→ **+140%**
from 2020

Despite the pandemic or, on the contrary, extra motivated because of the lockdowns, volunteer divers demonstrated even more commitment to our cause. With their help, we carried out more cleanups than ever before, recovering a record number of fishing nets and other marine litter. In collaboration with Ghost Diving, we expanded our sea cleanup activities to Cyprus, Lebanon, Egypt, Poland, Spain and Germany.



North Sea

Partners:



Mediterranean Sea

Partners:




Adriatic Sea

Partners:





Red Sea

Partners:



**SCUBA
SEEKERS**



Baltic Sea

Partner:



Pacific Ocean

Partner:





Awareness Raising & Education

Healthy Seas champions the three pillars of sustainability and strives to make a positive and long-lasting impact to the marine environment, through education and awareness raising. In 2021, working alongside esteemed partners, we were proud to see our educational programmes reach more children and adults in 9 countries: the UK, Italy, Belgium, Greece, Germany, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland.

Tossa der Mar, Spain

In October 2021, over 600 children, parents and teachers, including students from the local school 'Escola Pública Ignasi Melé i Farré' participated in educational activities that included a beach cleanup, interactive presentations and games.





Sylt, Germany

On October 21 and 22, we organised a beach cleanup and educational activities for 60 students attending schools in Sylt. The programme included the Healthy Seas Virtual Reality Experience as well as presentations about the harmful impact of marine litter and ghost nets to the environment.

Ghost Urchin

Amy Lewis, Marine Biologist studying at the Design Academy Eindhoven

The Ghost Urchin is made of 10 panels of woven ghost fishing gear retrieved from the North Sea by Healthy Seas and Ghost Diving. It is filled with a sandbag interior, designed to be used at the seafront as public seating. As Amy says, the Ghost Urchin is made from our neglect of the oceans and she hopes one day one that these ghosts that haunt our oceans will become land creatures that live alongside us instead of the seas.



Credit: Amy Lewis



Healthy Seas Surface Squad

After the successful completion of a further 4 in-depth training sessions, a highly motivated and skilled team of professionals was formed. This special ocean literacy course provided insights on pressing global issues such as ghost fishing, marine litter and the connection to climate change while also focusing on the circular economy.

In May 2021, DWS staff members from the EMEA and North Atlantic regions attended an online session to learn more about the cooperation between Healthy Seas and DWS and were offered the opportunity to join the ambassador programme which was designed especially for DWS.

The aim of the Healthy Seas Surface Squad is to take action with us to protect the seas and oceans by being involved in our efforts to educate and spread awareness.



WE ARE
NATURE

HERPETOFAUNA



TRUE TRIBE
WILD BY NATURE

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CONSCIOUSWIMMER

re.wild

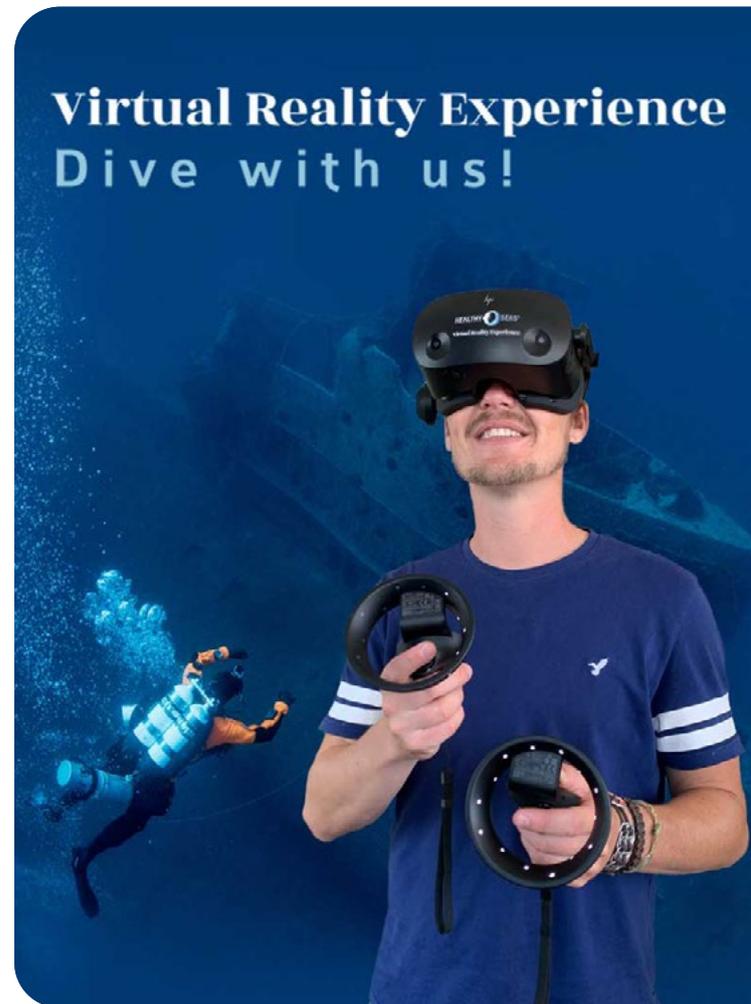


OCEAN

Healthy Seas Virtual Reality Experience

Utilising state-of-the-art technology, the Healthy Seas Virtual Reality Experience puts you in the flippers of the Ghost Diving volunteers, on a mission to remove ghost nets from the HMS Perseus, one of the biggest WWII submarines, sunken in the Ionian Sea, in Greece.

You also have a chance to hop on board our first ghost net recovery vessel, the MAKO and visit an underwater dome to find out more about our journey from waste to wear.



Developed together with Morild Interactive and A.W.S.O.M.E. Technologies

Ten customized experiences were made for our Associate Partner Members while there is also a version tailor made for schools, circulating Europe.



Prevention

Now cooperating with 1250 fishers and fish farmers

Engaging the fishing sector in prevention activities is an important part of curing the ghost fishing problem.

Ghost nets can be detrimental to marine wildlife and ecosystems. They put pressure on the maritime industry, impair navigation safety and can deteriorate beach quality.

Ghost nets are a major issue of concern also for fishers:

- They place significant costs on them because of lost fishing time and damage to their active nets.
- They keep fishing uncontrollably and lead to unnecessary catch of fish stocks: a financial loss for both fishers and the fishing industry.



The Netherlands

We are proud to cooperate with the fishers of Den Oever that joined Healthy Seas at our very start in 2013. To this day, they continue being great ambassadors for clean and healthy seas in the Netherlands.

Partners:



Greece & Italy

In 2021 we increased the number of fishing communities we work with, thanks to our continued cooperation with DIOPAS S.A and Enaleia.

The central collection points in Lavrio and Thessaloniki are receiving end-of-life nets as well as ghost nets from 4 fish farms, 29 ports and 230 fishing vessels from all over Greece.

Partners:



Enaleia is also working in Italy, collecting end-of-life nets as well as ghost nets from fishers based in the harbours of Ancona, Rimini, Cattolica and Cesenatica.



Croatia

Since 2020, we have been collecting old nets from 2 fisher communities in the northern part of Croatia: Plomin and Krnica.

Seventy percent (70%) of the nets are trawlers and the rest are gill nets, made of nylon and perfect for regeneration.



Contributing to positive social impact in Greece

Thanks to our partner Enaleia, unemployed young people in Greece are educated about sustainable fisheries and fishing tourism. In the framework of our cooperation, they are taught about responsible handling of waste fishing nets, recycling and circular economy.



Events, Talks and Exhibitions

Healthy Seas was part of the following events

- Duikvaker, the Netherlands, (6-7/2/2021)
- GGGI Annual Meeting, (11/3/2021)
- Green Deal Fisheries, (18/3/2021)
- Gdynia Aquarium Exhibition with Ghost Diving Poland, (29/5/2021- ongoing)
- EU Green Week, (31/5-4/6/2021)
- IONIQ 5 Pan European Test Drive, Valencia, (28/6 – 3/7/2021)



- European Maritime Day in your country, (25/7/2021)
- GGGI Mediterranean Virtual Roundtable, (27/7/2021)
- DWS Blue Economy – Investing to Protect our Seas, Switzerland, (21-22/9/2021)
- Inter Dive, Germany, (23-26/9/2021)
- The Future of Digital Events, (30/9/2021)



Podcasts

The Healthy Seas team was invited to tell our story



“Healthy Seas: Heroicity, Strong Community and Synergy.”

CIKIS, (6/5/2021)



“Ocean Blindness and a Journey from Waste to Wear.”

Traces.Dreams, (20/5/2021)



“How We Are Cleaning the Oceans for a More Sustainable Future.”

Are We There Yet? Hyundai, (4/6/2021)



“Preserving Marine Resources”

Circularity.com, (8/6/2021)



“The Other 70%”

Nortek, (17/6/2021)

Main Events

Journey to Ithaca, Greece
(June 8-16, 2021)

JOURNEY TO
ITHACA
— JUNE 8TH - 16TH GREECE —
WORLD OCEANS DAY



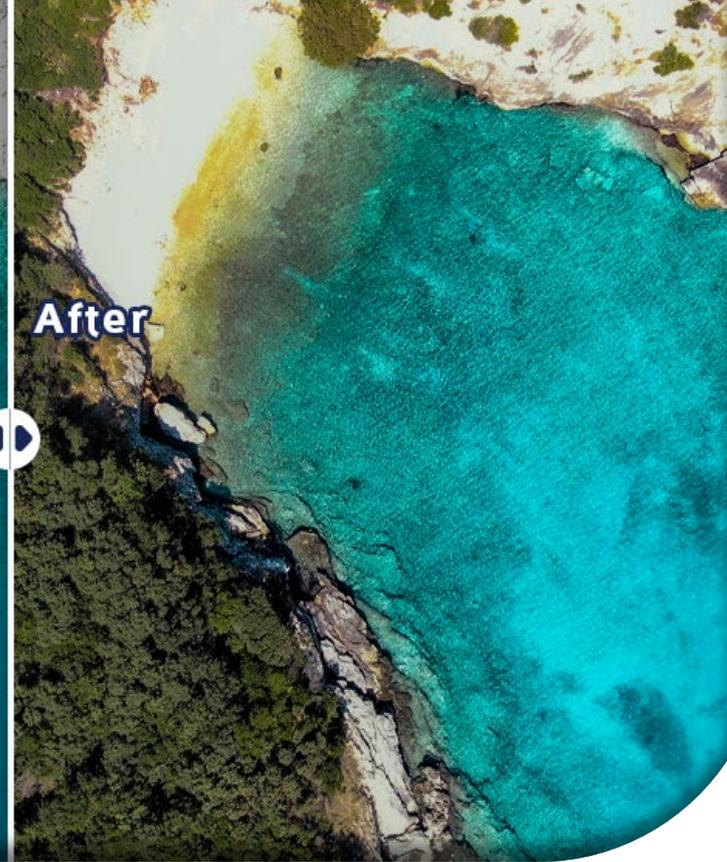
In just over a week, a team of 45, most of which volunteers including 20 divers, undertook an unprecedented cleanup removing 76 tons of debris from the sea, coastline, and 4 beaches on the Southwest of Ithaca, an island in Greece famous for being the home of King Odysseus and a universal symbol of home yearning.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of the team and the support from our partners, we were able to cleanup an abandoned fish farm that over the last 10 years had caused an environmental catastrophe.





Before



After



On World Oceans Day, we hosted a public event at the main square of the island to inform the locals about the project while 75 children took part in educational activities aiming at raising awareness about the ghost fishing phenomenon.



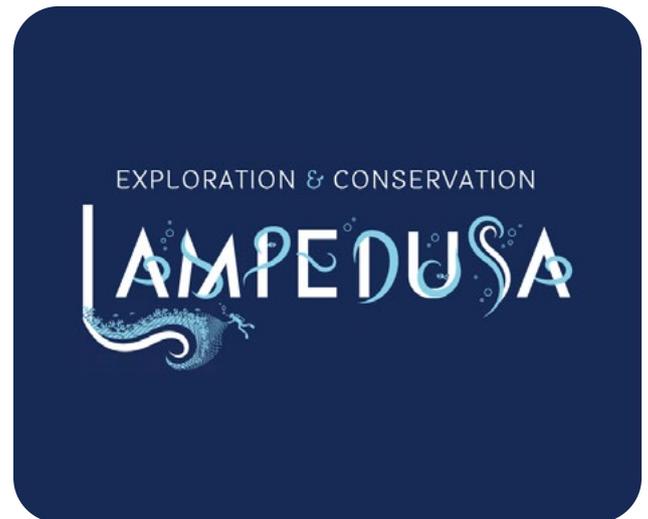
Marine biologist Erik Wurz, working for Wageningen University, conducted scientific research to assess the interaction of the nets with the marine environment. The preliminary results showed that abandoned fish farms in shallow water habitats are damaging *Posidonia* seagrass ecosystems by destroying the plants, providing settlement grounds for invasive seagrass species competing for space and nutrients, and contributing to the mortality of *Pinna nobilis*.

Exploration & Conservation in Lampedusa, Italy

(June 27 - July 22, 2021)

Mario Arena has been scouring the international and high seas for archeological artifacts since 1994. His projects through the years have made him a legend in the diving community so we jumped at the chance to work with him in 2021, to combine exploration and conservation.

He and a team of 14 volunteer divers from The Society for the Documentation of Submerged Sites (SDSS) explored the marine area around Lampedusa, Italy to identify and document, in order to ultimately protect, various wrecks sunk during WWII Battle of the Convoys (1941-1943).



Descending to 76 meters, about 20 miles off the shore of Lampedusa, the divers spotted a huge trawl net that was recently lost on the postal steamer Egadi. It was so massive that they were able to retrieve half of it. The second net was 40 miles away from shore, on the wreck of the Narval, a French submarine that sank 3 months after it launched during WWII.





Our first own boat, the MAKO, is docked in the Ijmuiden harbour, in the Netherlands. It was acquired through a generous donation by DWS and is operated by Dutch Ghost Diving volunteers. COVID restrictions lasted until July in the Netherlands so when they were lifted, we were finally able to take the MAKO on her maiden ghost net recovery voyage and plan a big event around this milestone.



Meet MAKO, The Netherlands (July 22-25, 2021)

Besides the sea cleanup, which resulted in the removal of 150 kgs ghost nets, the programme also included a 2-day cleanup of the beautiful beach of Ijmuiden as well as educational activities for over 60 children. Our partner Hyundai, brought their new Hydrogen Fuel Cell truck and bus for the occasion, highlighting their commitment to sustainability and future mobility.



Healthy Seas in Costa Brava, Spain

(October 1-3, 2021)

Studies indicate that the sea surrounding Barcelona is one of the three areas in Spain most polluted with plastics from fishing activity. So, in 2021, we made it a priority to begin work in this area of the world. In the first year of our cooperation with Ghost Diving Spain, we accomplished a lot, especially during the main event we organised together in October.



Over 600 children, parents and teachers participated in educational activities that included a beach cleanup, interactive presentations and games. Eight volunteer divers recovered a fishing net that was covering the “Muladera Rock” like a thick blanket, preventing marine life from accessing food and shelter in its holes and crevices. It measured 100 m² and weighed 450 kgs!



New Endeavour

The Healthy Seas Shop

Another milestone in 2021 was the launch of the Healthy Seas Shop, featuring a selection of items hand-picked or designed in some cases, by our very own team.

www.healthyseas.shop



BECOME AN OCEAN SUPERHERO

By choosing gifts from the Healthy Seas shop, you have the power to save marine life.



Navy Breaching Dolphins tshirt (unisex)
€29.00



Ghosty the Diver organic cotton doll
€44.00



White Breaching Dolphins tshirt (unisex)
€29.00



Favourite Mug Stingray
€14.95

Communication Highlights

Turning Tides, a BBC documentary

To document our biggest mission to date and to raise awareness about marine protection and the circular economy, Hyundai partnered with BBC StoryWorks to tell the story of the Ithaca clean-up.

The film, called "Turning Tides," introduces the scale of the pollution from the fish farm, explaining its impact on aquatic life, before turning to the clean-up efforts.



Turning Tides

a BBC documentary with Hyundai

[Watch here](#)

Documentary series about MAKO

This three-part series, produced by our partner DWS, explains how we came to own our first ghost net recovery vessel and how it will help us become more efficient in our operations in the Netherlands. Get to know the people who made it possible and follow the MAKO's maiden voyage.

[Watch here](#)



Blogging for the Planet

Series of articles by Marine Biologist & Conservationist, Gala Podgornik, that examine how Healthy Seas contributes to the global priorities for marine conservation and a circular economy: Climate Change, 30X30, SDGs.





Earthshot Nominator

Healthy Seas was invited by The Royal Foundation to be an official nominator for The Earthshot Prize, a new global prize for the environment led by Prince William and Sir David Attenborough.

They are engaging a diverse and credible group of not-for-profit and academic organisations from across the world, who will be critical in enabling them to achieve the 'Earthshot' goals for 2030.

Blue Friday

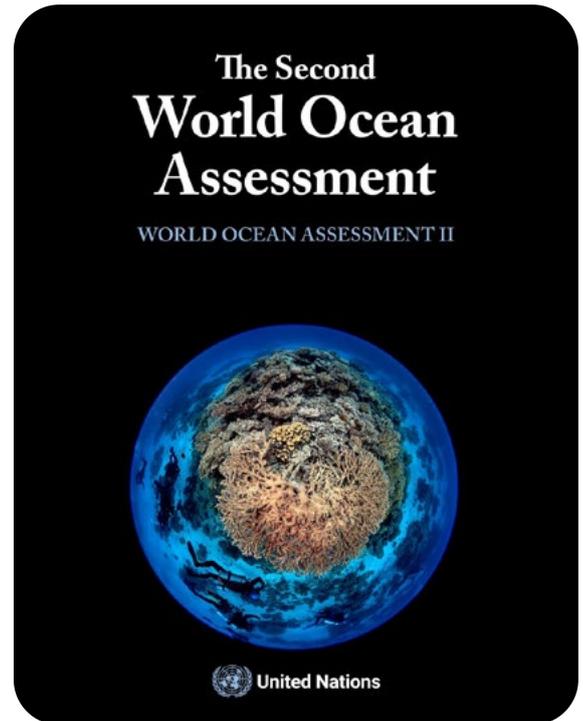
Between November 22-26, together with our partners and Laura in Waterland, an Ocean and sustainability advocate, we raised awareness about conscious consumption and invited our followers to evaluate their needs and make sustainable choices.



The UN's Second World Ocean Assessment Video

Healthy Seas was happy to support the creation and distribution of a short video for the United Nations that highlights their 2nd World Ocean Assessment. This 520 page report finds that the key to a healthy ocean is international collaboration as well as combining environmental, social and economic knowledge.

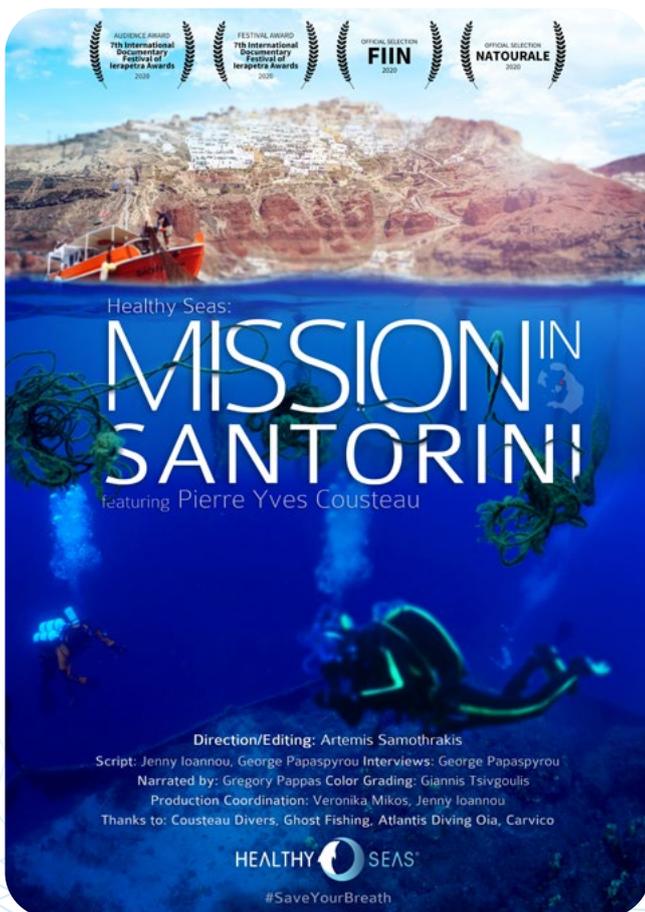
[Watch here](#)



Healthy Seas: Mission in Santorini

The documentary about our impressive cleanup in Santorini, Greece with Pierre-Yves Cousteau, finally became available online in 2021, while also becoming a regular feature on Greek television!

[Watch here](#)



Healthy Seas Web Lab with Gelareh Darabi

Two more episodes dedicated to marine conservation aired during 2021 with guests from the Blue Marine Foundation, Enaleia, CPF and Mission Blue!



[Watch here](#)

Online Presence

over
40
videos dedicated
to our activities

58,630
unique website views

64
blog posts



+ 6%
Facebook
followers



+ 30%
Instagram
followers



+ 70%
YouTube
views



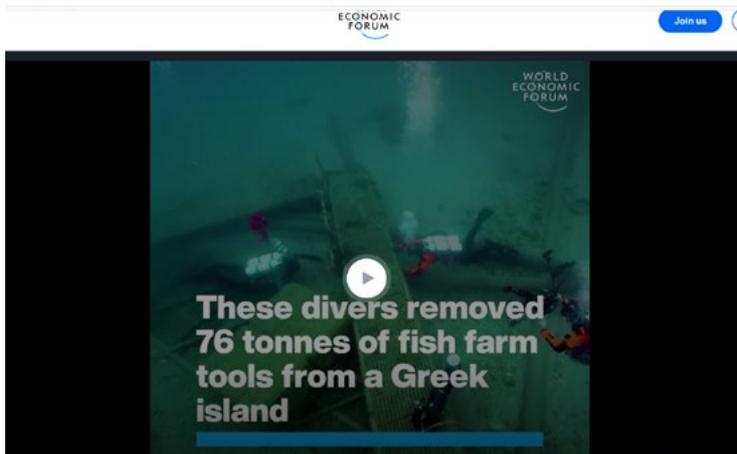
+ 92%
LinkedIn
followers



+ 654%
Twitter views
and over 200K
impressions

Significant Press

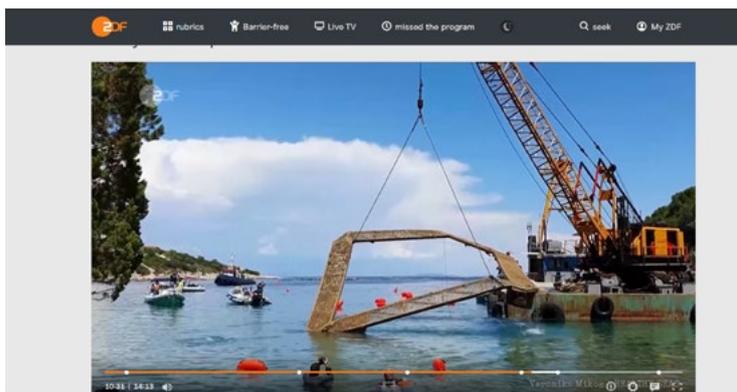
These divers removed 76 tonnes of fish farm tools from a Greek island
World Economic Forum



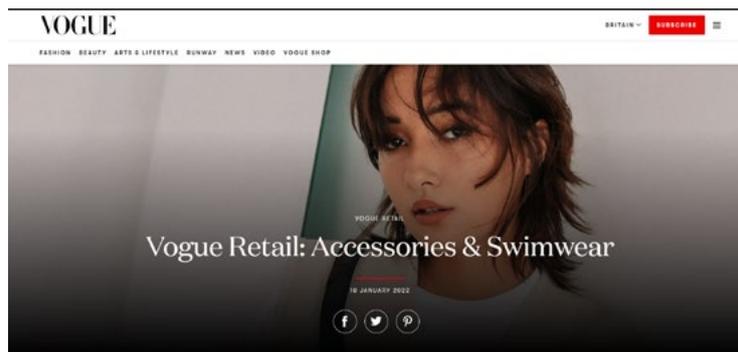
Retiran 76 toneladas de basura de las costas de la isla griega de Itaca
EFE Verde



Reportage about Journey to Ithaca
ZDF



Vogue Retail : Accessories & Swimwear
VOGUE



Redes abandonadas: los fantasmas del mar
EL CORREO



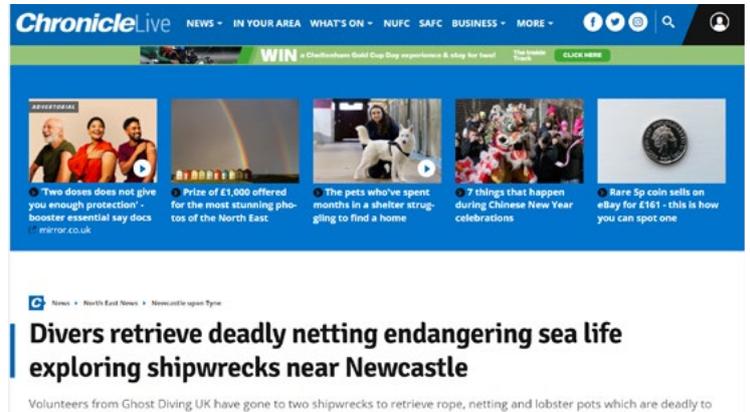
Geisternetze, die Plageder Meere
DIE PRESSE



Ghost nets is the Argosaronic Gulf
Euronews



Divers retrieve deadly netting endangering sea life exploring shipwrecks near Newcastle
Chronicle Live



How ghost nets become death traps for sea creatures
Der Tagesspiegel



Buceadores retiran una red de pesca de 450 kilos en aguas del mediterráneo
EFE Verde



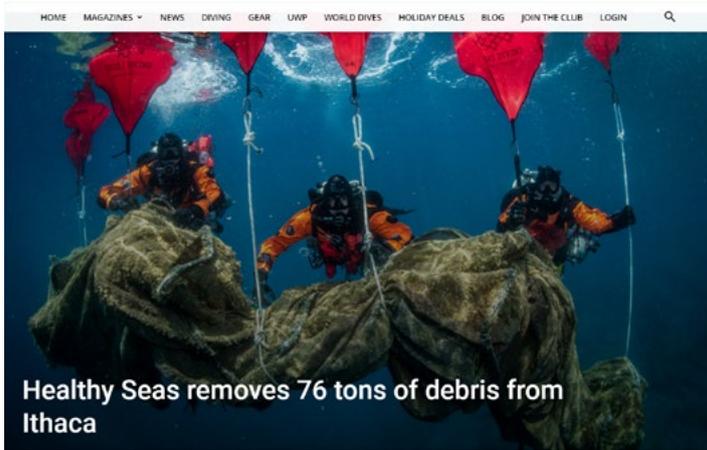
Buceadores comprometidos
Antena 3 TV Spain



In Lampedusa 40 wrecks World War II
ANSA



Healthy Seas removes 76 tons of debris from Ithaca
Scubadiver Mag



World Oceans Day starts in Ithaca
ELLE



Healthy Seas' environmental action in Ithaca
Ert 3



They took out 76 tons of marine litter in Ithaca (Greece)
Greek Youtuber- Vasilis Sarimpalidis



Why the ghost nets from the North Sea off Sylt have to disappear
SHZ



«Spectacular» shipwreck discovery in Italy sparks potential
for underwater tourism
Forbes

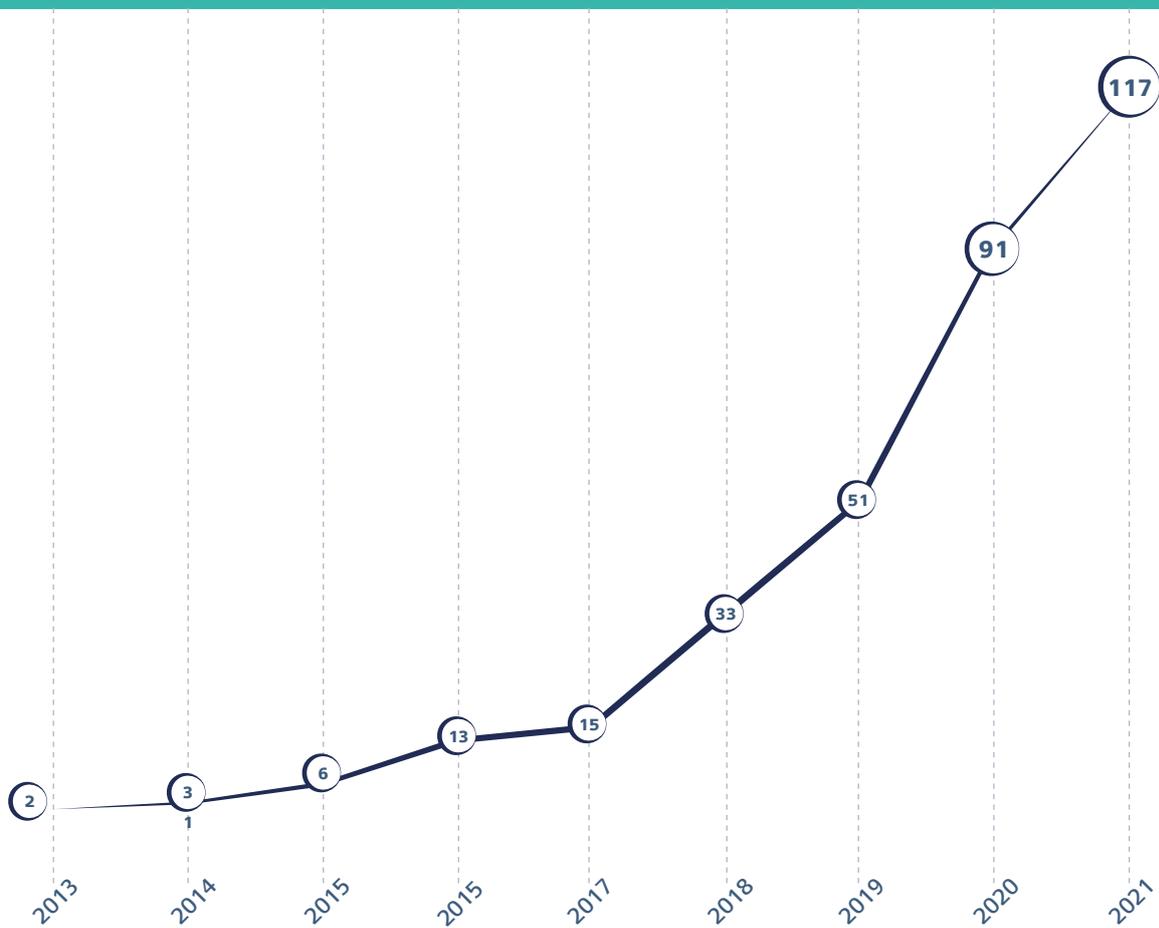




Our Partners

We are Growing!

The last 5 years have brought us
8 times more partners!



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Associate Partner Donors



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**You can be next.
Join our journey!**





Thank you for your attention!

www.healthyseas.org

