



PRESS RELEASE

April 20th, 2022

Fishers and divers join forces to cleanup the island of Odysseus

A big, international marine protection endeavor on the island of Ithaca, in Greece, is announced for Earth Day (April 22nd).

2021 is known throughout Ithaca as the year of “The Cleanup”! The organisations responsible for removing [76 tons of marine litter](#) from the island’s seas and beaches last year, return in 2022 to create an even greater impact on the local community and environment.

Between March and June, [Healthy Seas](#) and [Enaleia](#) with its Mediterranean CleanUp project are spearheading “Fishing for Litter”. During the kickoff phase, 2 local fishers have been mobilized to limit their regular activity and instead collect marine plastic from remote coastlines, helping the breeding and reproduction of fish.

At the end of May, volunteer technical divers from the [Ghost Diving](#) organisation will travel to Ithaca to recover ghost nets and other marine litter from several locations throughout the island. A cleanup of the Vathy harbour will be carried out with the involvement of the locals, giving the community a chance to witness the volunteers in action!

A significant part of the marine litter will be recycled while the nylon fishing nets will be handed to [Aquafil](#) to be transformed, together with other nylon waste, into [ECONYL®](#) regenerated nylon, the basis for new sustainable products such as socks, activewear, swimwear, carpets, and more. Hyundai Motor Europe is the main supporter of the project. Other key partners include [Odyssey Outdoor Activities](#), the Municipality of Ithaca, the Hellenic Coast Guard. The project is held under the Auspice of the Hellenic Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Hellenic Ministry of Environment & Energy.

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About ghost fishing

It is estimated that 640,000 tons of fishing gear is lost or abandoned in the seas and oceans each year. It is plastic waste that does not biodegrade, remaining hundreds of years in the environment, all the while losing tiny particles called microplastics that end up in the food chain. The phenomenon takes the name “ghost fishing” because the nets appear almost invisible underwater trapping and killing all species of marine animals including turtles, fish, mammals and birds that get entangled, suffer and eventually die.

About Healthy Seas

The mission of Healthy Seas is to remove waste from the seas, in particular fishing nets, for the purpose of creating healthier seas and recycling marine litter into textile products. The recovered fishing nets will be transformed and regenerated by Aquafil into ECONYL® yarn, a high-quality raw material used to create new products, such as socks, swimwear, sportswear or carpets. Since its founding in 2013, Healthy Seas has collected over 773 tons of fishing nets and other marine litter with the help of volunteer divers and fishers.

<https://www.healthyseas.org/>

About Enaleia

Enaleia is a social, non-profit organization with a vision to make the marine ecosystem sustainable through circular and social economy solutions. It started as the first school for professional fisheries in Greece and is now dedicated to research, education, and mega marine plastic clean-up projects, from the "Mediterranean CleanUp" in the Mediterranean Sea to the "Bahari Safi" in the Indian Ocean. For our exceptional work, the Co-founder and Director of Enaleia Lefteris Arapakis has been awarded by the United Nations Environment Program as "Young Champion of the Earth" 2020 and as "Ambassador of the Mediterranean Coast" 2021.

enaleia.com

About Ghost Diving

Ghost Diving is an international non-profit organization of volunteer technical divers specialized in the removal of lost fishing gear and other marine debris since 2009. To this day, the Ghost Diving team has carried out diving projects independently or in collaboration with several international environmental and/or diving organizations like: Healthy Seas Foundation, Greenpeace, WWF, Global Ghost Gear Initiative and Global Underwater Explorers.

<https://ghostdiving.org/>

Photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/g7g0kkmwomkmkj3/AADY-rjX-ppczcDNCB6xhG8na?dl=0>

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