

Healthy Seas Foundation - Press Kit

Who We Are

Healthy Seas is a **global foundation** dedicated to protecting the world's oceans by addressing the critical issue of marine litter and advancing circular economy solutions. **Founded in 2013** by a coalition of businesses and non-profits, Healthy Seas was born out of a shared passion for marine conservation and the urgent need to combat plastic pollution.

Over the years, we have grown into a leading force in ocean protection, with a mission to remove harmful **marine litter, particularly ghost nets**, from our seas and transform this waste into valuable, sustainable products with our partners. Our work is guided by **three core pillars: Clean-Ups, Education, and Prevention.**

The Problem of Marine Litter

Marine litter is one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time, posing severe threats to marine ecosystems, wildlife, and human activities. The scale and impact of this problem are staggering:

- **“If we don’t act now, by 2050 there could be more plastic than fish in the oceans.”**
— Ellen MacArthur Foundation
- Approximately **640,000 tons of fishing gear are lost or abandoned in the ocean each year.** — UNEP/FAO 2009.
- **Over 75% of plastic in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch originates from fishing activities.** — The Ocean Cleanup 2024
- More than **500 species of marine and coastal animals are affected** by ingestion of, or entanglement in, marine debris, including ghost nets. — UNEP 2016

Further impacts to keep in mind:

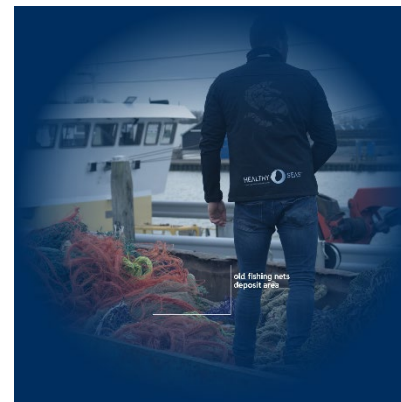
- **Ghost Nets Continue to Fish**
Ghost nets remain in the seas for hundreds of years and continue to catch and kill marine life, needlessly contributing to biodiversity loss and the overexploitation of fish populations.
- **Marine Litter Becomes Microplastics**
The nets left on the bottom of the sea for a long-time start degrading and break into pieces that eventually become microplastics, further polluting the marine environment.
- **Marine Litter is Costly**
Marine debris is estimated to cost the international community more than 60 billion

euros in clean-ups, repairs, and losses. The problems are connected to the entanglement of boats and other nets, pollution on beaches, and a loss of tourism.

Our Goals

Our overarching goal is to safeguard marine ecosystems by tackling the problem of marine litter and advancing sustainable practices. We aim to:

- **Restore Ocean Health:** Through targeted clean-up missions, we remove ghost nets and marine litter, ensuring the protection and revitalization of marine life.
- **Inspire Action Through Education:** We aim to inform and inspire individuals and communities to take action for the oceans, fostering a deeper understanding of marine conservation through comprehensive educational programs.
- **Promote Sustainable Practices:** By engaging with industries, fishing communities, and global partners, we work to prevent pollution at its source and advance circular economy solutions that turn waste into valuable resources.



Our Pillars and Activities

1. Clean-Ups:

Our clean-up activities are at the heart of what we do. We collaborate with volunteer divers of Ghost Diving, local communities, and international partners to remove ghost nets and other marine litter from the coast and seas. These operations often focus on high-impact areas, such as shipwrecks, coastlines, and even abandoned fish farms.

2. Education:

We believe that education is key to long-term change. Healthy Seas organizes workshops, school programs, and public awareness campaigns to educate the next generation about ocean conservation, the dangers of marine litter, and the benefits of a circular economy. Our educational efforts also include interactive tools like quizzes, videos and podcasts that engage audiences of all ages.

3. Prevention:

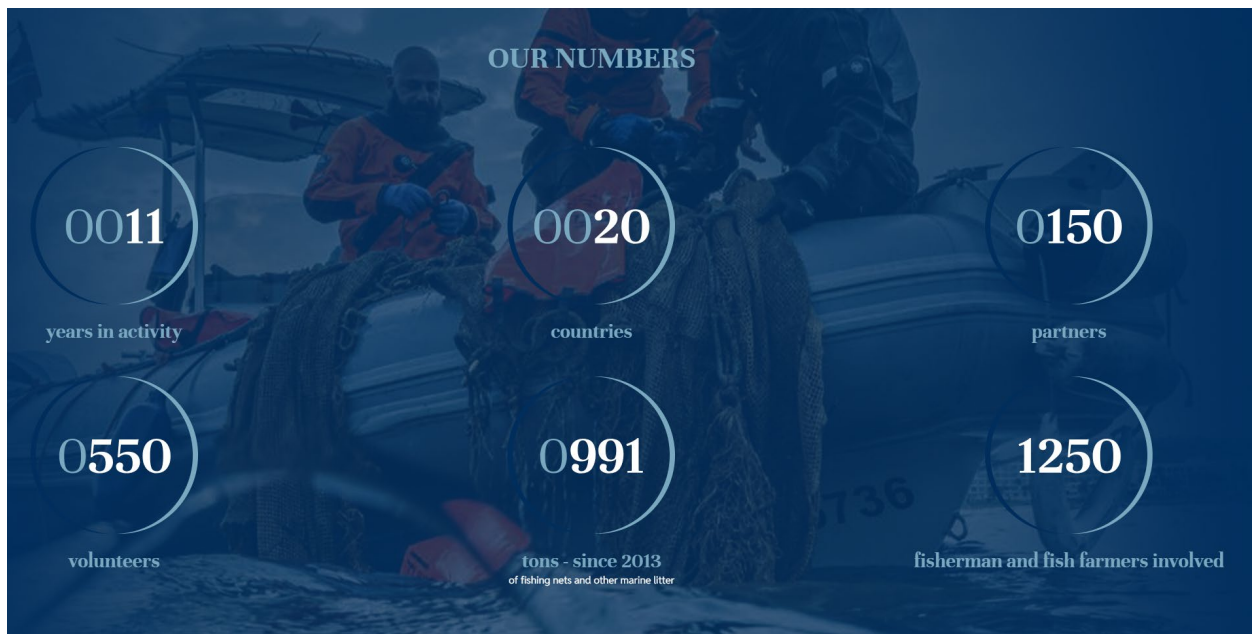
Prevention is crucial to our mission. We partner with the fishing industry, fish farmers, and other stakeholders to prevent marine litter at its source. This includes collecting end-of-life

nets before they reach the ocean and promoting best practices in net use and disposal. We also support our partners in innovative recycling projects that turn waste into new products, helping to close the loop in a circular economy.

Our Partners ([LINK](#))

Healthy Seas collaborates with a wide range of partners across various industries to achieve our goals. These partnerships are vital to our success, providing the resources, expertise, and support needed to carry out our mission. Our founding partner, [Aquafil](#), plays a key role in our recycling efforts by transforming recovered fishing nets that are suitable for recycling into ECONYL® yarn, which is then used to create sustainable products like clothing, carpets, and accessories. Another partner, [Bracenet](#), uses other recovered nets to make accessories and bracelets.

We also work with local recyclers, educational institutions, and environmental organizations, all of whom share our commitment to marine protection and sustainability. Our partnerships extend **across the globe in more than 20 countries**, from the US to Korea, and include over 150 organizations and nearly 550 dedicated volunteers.



Recycling and Circular Economy ([LINK](#))

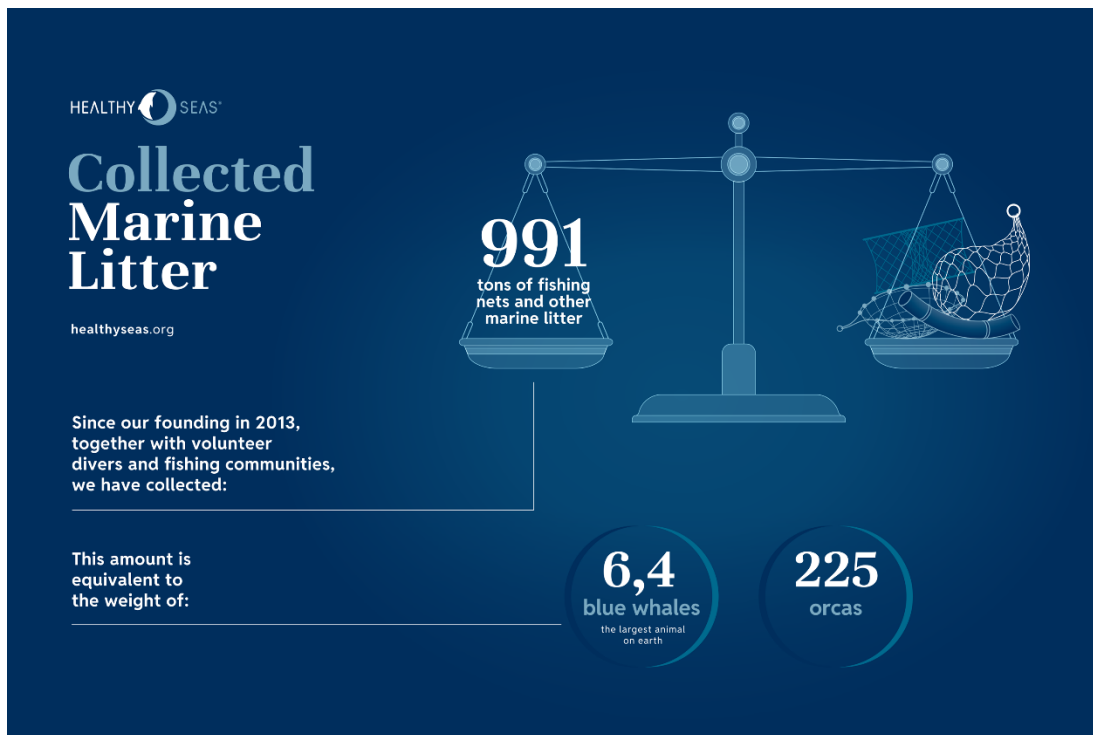
One of the key aspects of Healthy Seas' work is our commitment to the circular economy. We believe that marine litter should not be viewed as waste but as a valuable resource. The recycling initiatives we are part of focus on turning recovered ghost nets and other marine litter into new materials that can be used to produce new products.

Through our partnership with Aquafil, they transform nylon waste, including the suitable fishing nets we recover, into ECONYL® yarn. This innovative recycling process not only helps to reduce plastic pollution but also supports the development of sustainable products.

Additionally, we collaborate with the fishing community to repurpose fishing nets that are in a good state and with local recyclers to ensure that other collected litter is processed and recycled according to regional standards.

Impact and Results

Since our inception, Healthy Seas has made a significant impact on marine conservation and sustainability. Here are some of our key achievements:



- **991 tons of marine litter removed:** Through our global clean-up operations, we have successfully removed over 900 tons of ghost nets and other debris from the ocean.
- **Global reach:** Our work spans across continents, with projects and partnerships in countries like Greece, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Poland, Germany, the United States, and South Korea.
- **Innovative recycling:** With our partners we have turned thousands of tons of recovered marine litter into valuable materials from new products.
- **Educational outreach:** We have reached thousands of people through our educational programs, helping to raise awareness about marine conservation and the circular economy.
- **Partnership-driven success:** Our collaborations with industry leaders, local communities, and environmental organizations have been instrumental in driving our mission forward.

Ghost Farms: A Unique Threat to Our Oceans ([LINK](#))

Ghost Farms are **abandoned fish farms** that, like ghost nets, continue to harm marine ecosystems long after they have been deserted. The deteriorating structures release **debris, plastics, and harmful chemicals** into the surrounding waters, contributing to pollution and posing a threat to marine life.

Healthy Seas has recognized the severity of this issue and has dedicated **five major missions over the past few years in Greece** to address and mitigate the impact of ghost farms. These operations involved extensive clean-ups, the removal of hazardous materials, education and awareness raising activities and the restoration of affected marine environments.

Through our ghost farm missions, we have not only removed significant amounts of debris but also raised awareness about this pressing issue, encouraging stakeholders to take preventive measures and adopt more sustainable practices in aquaculture.

Awards

- 2023 - **Best Environmental Film** at the Cannes World Film Festival for the short documentary “Journey to Ithaca” - [LINK](#).
- 2019 - **Circular Economy award** by the Green Carpet Fashion Awards, Milan, Italy.

Contact Information

For more information, media inquiries, or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Samara Croci

Communications Manager, Healthy Seas Foundation

samara.croci@healthyseas.org | +39 3314436962
[healthyseas.org](https://www.healthyseas.org) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Facebook](#)

Visuals and Downloads

High-resolution images, logos, and additional resources are available for download here:

PICTURES: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ljwo1kps1epug3ge8kg2u/AIBzWrBVfkn-tYqNf_ABp_E?rlkey=okx2uq3wf16yzhakpmcvwqa2y&st=oe4tbfix&dl=0

VIDEOS:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/yw13ddgyz34dwrs/%CE%97S%20Press%20Reel%202021%20watermarked.mp4?st=y8nukgv4&dl=0>

LOGOS:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/13i2wiq95n47i4fc09g94/AI8HXKFFBTVMKHnwcOAzRVQ?rlkey=idx7tes72rt7dj0mrh4um6ydv&st=iveb6d5b&dl=0>

2023 Activity Report: <https://www.healthyseas.org/assets/uploads/Healthy-Seas-Report-2023-final-compressed-1.pdf>

Boilerplate

Healthy Seas Foundation is dedicated to safeguarding the world's oceans and seas through three key pillars: clean-up, education, and prevention of marine litter.

Our primary mission is to tackle the problem of marine debris, with a particular emphasis on fishing nets, to promote healthier aquatic ecosystems. Over the past decade, we have forged collaborations with volunteer divers, educators, fishermen, harbour authorities, and waste managers on a global scale. While we are engaged in repurposing marine litter into innovative products through partnerships, our core focus remains on marine conservation. Together with 150 partners and nearly 550 dedicated volunteers, we have collected 991 tons of fishing nets and other marine litter since our inception in 2013.

The Foundation's Director – BIO and quote

VERONIKA MIKOS, Director ([LinkedIn](#))



Veronika Mikos, an economist with over two decades of experience, has been at the helm of the Healthy Seas foundation since its founding, leading the organization for the past decade. Under Veronika's guidance, Healthy Seas has emerged as a leading force in combating marine litter, particularly lost fishing gear. Through innovative clean-up initiatives, prevention strategies, and educational programs, the Healthy Seas team has significantly reduced the impact of marine debris on ocean ecosystems.

Veronika has cultivated strategic partnerships with industry leaders and stakeholders, facilitating clean-ups and the recycling and repurposing of recovered fishing nets into sustainable products. This circular economy model has not only mitigated environmental harm but also promoted sustainability across industries.

Passionate about marine conservation and environmental stewardship, Veronika remains dedicated to preserving our oceans for future generations. As Director of Healthy Seas, she continues to drive impactful change, leveraging her expertise and passion to protect our planet's precious marine ecosystems.

QUOTE: “At Healthy Seas, our focus is on tangible results. We believe that actions speak louder than words, which is why we prioritize impactful clean-ups, effective partnerships, and sustainable solutions. By removing marine litter and turning it into valuable products with our partners, we’re not just protecting our oceans—we’re driving real change for the planet and future generations.”

Media Coverage Highlights

[World Economic Forum](#)

[Euronews](#)

[BBC](#)

[National Geographic](#)

[Earthrise/Al Jazeera](#)

[Reuters](#)

[Vogue](#)

[Sky News](#)

[Newsweek](#)

[Spiegel Video](#)