

Uproar in Greece as mascot seal killed in protected area

25 July 2021



Mediterranean seal monks are critically endangered.

A young endangered monk seal who became the mascot of a Greek island in a marine protected area after surviving a cyclone and endearing himself to locals has been killed, sparking an uproar.

Kostis, who was named after the fisherman who saved him as Cyclone Zorbas lashed the Aegean Sea in 2018, was "deliberately killed" off the coast of Alonissos island, the MOm NGO for the protection of the Mediterranean monk seal said Saturday.

The island is part of the Alonissos and Northern Sporades marine park, Greece's first such park where sea life is protected by law.

It is the largest such protected area in Europe, according to the [marine park's](#) website.

"The innocent and unaware seal was executed at close range with a spear gun that had a large spear for exactly that purpose," MOm said in a Facebook post.

According to the group, Mediterranean monk seals are endangered, and almost half of the remaining population lives in Greece.

The group had taken Kostis under its wing after his rescue, moving him to a first aid centre before returning him to his natural environment in the Aegean Sea.

But Kostis proved to be very sociable and was often seen lying on boats in the port of Alonissos island, posing for photos.

News of his death caused an uproar, with many people taking to [social media](#).

"We don't deserve this planet. We spoil all beauty," one Facebook user said.

The Athens News Agency reported there is a mobilisation to locate the perpetrator.

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