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Archipelagos

Institute of Marine Conservation

Action for the conservation of the Aegean



Work Placements





ABOUT ARCHIPELAGOS

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Archipelagos, Institute of Marine Conservation, is a Greek non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to conservation of the marine and terrestrial environments of the Greek seas and islands. Archipelagos has been active since 1998 in several parts of the Greek seas (Ionian, Sporades, Central Aegean, Lybian and Eastern Aegean). Since 2000, Archipelagos' field of action has focused on the eastern Aegean. Our main terrestrial research base is located on the island of Ikaria and our main marine research base is on the island of Samos.

We also maintain research stations in 3 islets of the eastern Aegean. Archipelagos provides two research sailing boats Pinelopi and Nireas, as well as 2 small speedboats, for marine research and conservation work. These vessels can operate even in the difficult weather conditions of the winter. In this way we are able to extend our activities throughout the Greek seas and NE Mediterranean. Archipelagos combines scientific research with efficient conservation work in which local communities share an active part.



The islet of Marathi where Archipelagos maintains a small research station

The work of Archipelagos is divided into two main fields:

1. **Marine wildlife conservation:**
Covering fields such as marine mammals, fisheries, coastal ecosystems, oceanographic research, as well as water quality and pollution assessment.
2. **Terrestrial wildlife conservation:**
Covering fields such as island fauna and flora, the creation of the Aegean Seed Bank for the preservation of local varieties of agricultural plants, as well as pollution and human impact assessment and management.

At Archipelagos we use the scientific knowledge we gain to (1) develop and apply, in collaboration with the local authorities, pilot management and conservation schemes, protecting habitats and species of the Aegean Sea – schemes that can later be applied in other regions of the Greek seas and the NE Mediterranean overall, (2) launch environmental actions and campaigns at local, national and EU levels, and (3) inform local communities, the wider Greek public and tourists how to better preserve and actively protect their natural resources. We also directly work to stop human behaviours that are destructive to the Aegean, such as illegal fishing practices, explosions at sea, waste dumping, maritime pollution and erosive overgrazing.

In addition, Archipelagos produces and distributes environmental awareness and educational materials, such as web-based materials, videos, animations, posters and flyers.

How We Work



Archipelagos research boat Pinelopi

Archipelagos operates away from city centres and commercial interests, offering a pure, direct approach to environmental conservation actions in Greece. The research team works in the field throughout the year, directly in the environments we strive to protect. Despite adverse weather conditions that can occur, especially in the winter months, the team's enthusiasm and commitment to environmental conservation enable us to conduct valuable research and achieve notable results. We carry out scientific research by means of laboratory work, fieldwork, research expeditions and other methods of study.

About Our Team

Scientists, experts and students, work (mostly on a volunteer basis) at Archipelagos' research bases, on projects throughout the year. Volunteers from Greece and other European and Mediterranean countries also work closely with Archipelagos on particular projects. At any one time, approximately 25 - 65 people can be seen working at our bases and represent a rich network of environmental specialties, backgrounds, countries and skills.

Archipelagos has collaborations with universities and research institutes in Greece, UK, France, Romania, Turkey and America. Scientists from various other institutions also collaborate on our projects.



BIODIVERSITY & THREATS

Biodiversity

The Aegean Sea has been a particularly important area for thousands of years. As a marine route, it has contributed to the exchange of ideas and goods and the development of civilisations, while, as a collection of ecosystems, it has maintained (and still maintains) a rare diversity of living organisms. Nowadays, where most seas all over the world have been significantly degraded, the Aegean continues to support important populations of rare and protected species.

Extensive Areas of Protected Habitats

Posidonia seagrass beds

Posidonia seagrass beds are protected habitats, with a fundamental role in the health and productivity of the Mediterranean. *Posidonia oceanica* is a rooted, flowering plant, which forms dense meadows, from the intertidal zone to depths down to 60m. It is estimated to occupy between 25000 and 45000 km² of the Mediterranean basin, where it is endemic. The NE Mediterranean still supports extensive areas of Posidonia meadows, in comparison with the western Mediterranean where they have been downgraded due to the urbanisation of the coastal areas. Posidonia meadows play a crucial role as breeding and nursery grounds; over 300 species of flora and 1000 species of fauna live within Posidonia meadows, including a large number of commercially important fish species. Apart from supporting productive marine ecosystems, Posidonia meadows also have a great socio-economical importance by providing protection against beach erosion, through the stabilization of sediments through their complex network of rhizomes and roots.

Coralligenous algal reefs

Coralligenous algal reefs are considered the Mediterranean's best kept secret. This has led to these productive, biodiverse habitats being overlooked with regards to conservation. They are currently under threat from destructive fishing practices, mainly from trawling. Bottom trawling on these habitats, is unfortunately legal in Greece today, as the areas covered with coralligene, have not been mapped and it is therefore impossible to apply any measures for their sustainable management and conservation. Their degradation is a major concern as they have a very slow growth rate (0.006 - 0.83 mm/year). Studies have shown that the age of the reefs range from 520 to 7760 years old; once destroyed, these reefs will take thousands of years to recover. Coralligenous reefs are a biodiversity hotspot, highly important fishing grounds and are often a spectacular sight: the coralline algae is covered with large gorgonian fans, coral, and a diverse array of sponges and other organisms. It is estimated that there are approximately 1666 species of flora and fauna living on coralligenous assemblages.

Rare and Protected Species

Marine Mammals

The Aegean Sea is considered to support one of the most important remaining marine mammal populations in the Mediterranean. Several different species can be seen regularly in the region including: Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), Common Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), Risso's Dolphin (*Grampus griseus*), Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Cuviers Beaked Whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) and the Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*).

Rare visitors to the Aegean Sea are the Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) and the Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*). Despite the fact that all these species are protected under national and EU legislation, they face various threats, and if no real action is taken, some species such as the highly endangered Mediterranean Monk seal, might soon be lost forever.

BIODIVERSITY & THREATS

Sharks

There are 47 species of shark inhabiting the Mediterranean Sea, over 1/3 of which are classified as threatened. Although only a few species are directly targeted by fisheries in Greece, populations are declining as a result of indirect threats. Mediterranean shark stocks are considered close to being fully exploited. Sharks are of ecological importance to marine ecosystems; as keystone top predators their presence in the food web maintains species diversity and abundance. Shark removal has complex and unpredictable implications, including the decline of important commercial species as sharks keep other fish populations under control. Sharks are slow growing, late to mature, have low reproduction rates, and long life spans. When populations are reduced they have a limited capacity to recover.

Marine Turtles

Loggerhead, Green and Leatherback turtles are all encountered in Greek waters throughout the year, where they find productive feeding grounds. The Greek seas support the most important nesting sites for the Loggerhead in the Mediterranean. The Loggerhead and Green turtle species are characterized as endangered; the Leatherback is critically endangered. All 3 species have recently undergone rapid population declines. The main factors of threat include: highly reduced reproductive success, due to increased coastal development impacting nesting areas, entanglement in fishing gear and collisions with speedboats, causing severe injury or death and the ingestion of plastic debris, leading to death by starvation or suffocation.

Threats

Overfishing

Fish stock levels in the Mediterranean Sea are alarmingly low, with 65% of all fish stocks in the region being outside safe biological limits. The uncontrolled use of towed fishing gear, such as trawlers, has a great impact on the productive marine ecosystems of Posidonia sea grass beds and Coralligene reefs.

Pollution

The rapid development of tourism in coastal areas has caused increasing pollution and erosion levels, which affects Posidonia sea grass beds, as well as disturbing sea turtle and monk seal habitats. A considerable amount of debris ends up in the sea and this is particularly harmful to sea turtles, who frequently ingest plastic bags, mistaking them for jelly fish, leading to starvation.

Risk of maritime accident

More than 60,000 commercial vessels cross the Aegean annually, out of which 6,000 are oil-tankers that transport between 100,000 to 200,000 tons of heavy petroleum products. The current inefficient mechanism to deal with a potential major oil spill puts the rare biodiversity of the Greek seas at great risk.



Productive Posidonia sea grass bed & the effects of destructive fishing

Explosions at sea

Small explosions still take place illegally by a minority of "fishers" for an easy catch. However the problem of most concern is the continued and uncontrolled usage of real ammunition from the armed forces throughout all habitats of the area. Firing in the open sea in the Aegean is not only carried out by the Greek armed forces, but also from those of Turkey and NATO, since the waters are characterised as international. The result has a dramatic impact on marine ecosystems, millions of organisms are killed, severe underwater noise pollution is produced from the use of military sonar (impacting greatly marine mammals), while large amounts of toxic substances are released into the environment.





EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

PLACEMENTS

Archipelagos' Placements

These placements are designed to familiarise participants with the work carried out by Archipelagos Institute, who have been on the front line of conservation and research in Greece for over a decade. The placements have been created with the aim of communicating the experience obtained through this ongoing conservation work carried out throughout the year, in various parts of the NE Mediterranean.



Placements

During the placements participants can utilize knowledge and experience they have obtained from their university degree and other work experience. This knowledge will aid them in collecting data, preparing reports and designing environmental awareness material to support Archipelagos' work in research and conservation.

Placements are offered in a variety of disciplines and involve a wide range of practical and research work. Archipelagos is involved in a wide range of conservation and research projects and volunteers have the opportunity to contribute to important scientific research, conservation actions, campaigns and promotions using a range of media.



At the end of the placements there is assessment and evaluation of the work produced and references are awarded to all participants, describing the work experience they have obtained.

Marine Research and Conservation

Due to the immense importance of marine ecosystems, Archipelagos has spent more than 10 years collecting data and monitoring the Aegean Sea. The high productivity of coastal zones attracts many organisms to this region, and the biodiversity of marine ecosystems still requires further research to be fully understood. Monitoring the marine environment will help understand the effects humans are having on the marine ecosystems. This knowledge enables the development of successful and targeted management plans. Current research and projects focus on several fields of activity:

- Visual-census surveys assessing fish, algae and invertebrate biodiversity of the littoral ecosystems.
- Visual-census surveys assessing the effects of factors impacting on littoral ecosystems.
- Collection and analysis of data on the ecology of fish, algae and invertebrate species.
- Study of marine mammal populations (migration, ecology, threats) through visual-census and acoustic observation.
- Participation in various experimental applications and usage of experimental aquaria.
- Collection of information in related conservation activities for the development of environmental awareness within the local community.

Forest and Freshwater Ecosystem Management

The Eastern Aegean islands contain a large variety of unique and important habitat types. Among those habitats present are thick pine forests, dense oak forests, and green riparian valleys linked to freshwater ecosystems. These areas, in the past, have been seemingly disregarded by the wider scientific community and as such are largely understudied. By collecting scientific data we can create effective management plans in order to protect these valuable habitats. Some of the work involved with such a placement could include:

- Field surveys assessing the biodiversity of forest and freshwater ecosystems, as well as the factors impacting them.
- Projects combating the desertification of small islets.
- Office work, including management proposals, as well as collecting and analysing information data on the species recorded.
- Collection of information and participation in related conservation activities for the development of environmental awareness in the local communities.

Research and Conservation of Island Flora and Fauna

The islands of the Aegean are home to a multitude of flora and fauna. The Eastern Aegean has a rich biodiversity, yet our knowledge of these areas is very limited. Both the islands of Icaria and Samos are home to vast amount of plants and animals, including invertebrates and reptiles, some of which are endemic to the region and are therefore important nationally and internationally. Archipelagos is working hard to document all the species on the islands and conduct research into their biology and ecology. Work involved with this project may include:

- Field surveys assessing island flora biodiversity and herbarium work.
- Field surveys assessing the biodiversity of bird, reptile and small mammal populations, as well as the factors impacting them.
- Office work, including preparation of management reports for the conservation of island fauna, as well as collecting and analysing information data on the species recorded.
- Collection of information and participation in related conservation activities for the development of environmental awareness in the local communities.





PLACEMENTS

Fisheries Research and Management

With over 18,000 km of coastline and one of the largest fishing fleets in the world, monitoring of fishing activities in Greece is no simple task. As a result a great deal of the catch data goes unreported, giving very little insight into the health of the fisheries. Archipelagos are working with small-scale fishermen in an attempt to accurately characterise the small-scale fisheries of the area. It is hoped that through continuous data collection, an appropriate management scheme can be implemented to mitigate the effects of overfishing and allow the recovery of the dwindling fish stocks in the area. Some of the work involved in this project includes:

- Collecting daily catch data on a rotary basis. This includes accurately identifying species and recording the size of each individual.
- Learning appropriate questions and responses in Greek in order to obtain information from the fishermen regarding where they fished and the types of gear they used.
- Researching into illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing activities being carried out in Greek waters.

Agronomic Research and Seed Bank Projects

Across Greece and its islands there has been a reduction in the number of local varieties of crops being cultivated. Archipelagos created, in the spring of 2005, the Aegean Seed Bank with the aim to collect and preserve local seed varieties from around the Aegean as well as the propagation of these seeds under suitable conditions. Archipelagos also aims to promote the benefits of traditional and organic agricultural practices. Projects therefore relating to the seed bank may include:

- Research into traditional agricultural farming techniques practiced by the communities within the Aegean islands.
- Experimental application of these practices as well as organic farming practices.
- Collection, classification and analysis of local varieties of seeds donated to the Aegean Seed Bank.
- Experimental cultivation of seeds in order to study their morphological characteristics.
- Collection of information and participation in conservation activities in relation to the development of environmental awareness within local communities.

Chemical Assessment of Environmental Impacts

Archipelagos is home to the first non-governmental, non-profit, laboratory in Greece. Our laboratory facilitates studies, which detect and analyse potential sources of pollution that are harming marine and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as the public health of inhabitants living on the islands and coastal regions of Greece and the NE Mediterranean. Work that volunteers on a laboratory placement can expect to do may be as follows:

- Chemical and microbiological analysis of potable and marine water samples.
- Analysis of soil samples for nutrient content.
- Analysis of the chemical profiles of terrestrial plants, marine algae and invertebrates via Thin Layer Chromatography (TLC) techniques.
- Carrying out experiments (bioassays) using the chemical extracts from selected organisms.
- Participation in other relevant experiments.
- Collection of information and participation in related conservational activities for the development of environmental awareness in local communities.

PLACEMENTS

Applications of Renewable Energy Sources

Energy demand is constantly increasing in Greece as well as in the rest of the world. Archipelagos is working towards developing projects that involves the application and use of renewable energy sources that are sustainable and beneficial for the island communities of the eastern Aegean. The aim is to examine the efficient and inefficient examples of renewable energy resources and to develop an optimum proposal that could have successful applications across the Greek islands. Some of the work involved in this area includes:

- Carrying out general research on applications of renewable energy sources for the island communities, using solar, wind, river water, biomass and geothermal energy.
- Creating informational material and participation in related conservation activities with the aim of raising public awareness in the island communities for the use of renewable energy sources.
- Launching a campaign to promote the re-use of waste cooking oil for producing biodiesel. In the coming months, a small unit for bio diesel production will be setup within Archipelagos' research base on the island of Samos.
- Research into a pilot project to power a boat completely from hybrid renewable energy sources in combination with hydrogen fuel cells. The aim of this project is to demonstrate that hydrogen power can be used as alternative and viable fuel for transportation, and to highlight the challenges of this technology.
- Establishing contacts and partnerships with researchers in Greece and the rest of Europe, in order to identify coastal environmental impacts of large scale renewable energy developments.
- Research into a project promoting energy self-sufficiency in islands, using the islands of the eastern Aegean an example. This project aims to promote sustainable and efficient use of renewable energy technologies.

GIS Mapping of Marine and Terrestrial Habitats and Biodiversity

In order to effectively preserve and manage areas of the Eastern Aegean we need to be able to accurately identify our areas of study. Unfortunately much of this region has not previously been mapped in enough detail to allow us to do this. During all field surveys, both marine and terrestrial, our paths, locations and relevant points of interest are all marked and recorded so that we can build up a database of GIS material. Archipelagos GIS volunteers can expect to work on some of the following things:

- Participation in field work in order to log tracks, locations and points of interest on the GPS Device.
- Creation of maps for various in-house and external projects using both raw and secondary GIS data.
- GIS analysis of both marine and terrestrial habitats and ecosystems.
- Collection of additional GIS information from external sources.
- Collection of information and participation in conservation activities in relation to the development of environmental awareness within local communities.





PLACEMENTS

Illustration of Flora and Fauna of the Aegean Sea

Focusing on the illustration of a range of marine and terrestrial biodiversity, from mammals to flora, this placement will give the volunteer an opportunity to work on a large range of projects, to help towards a dynamic personal portfolio, whilst contributing to environmental conservation. Main fields of activity include:

- Creation of black & white and colour illustrations of the marine species of the Greek seas, i.e. marine mammals, fish, algae and invertebrates, as well as terrestrial species, e.g. of flora, mammals, birds, reptiles and insects on the Aegean islands.
- Participation in field surveys, when observation of the organisms to be drawn is necessary.
- Opportunity to write and illustrate children's books on wildlife and environmental issues.
- Illustrations to be used within video production – mainly for children's DVDs.
- Creation of illustrations to be used towards achieving environmental conservation: Environmental awareness campaigns, promotional and educational material, in the form of posters, leaflets, books, videos.
- Possibility of making identification guides for a newly funded project promoting biodiversity of the Aegean through use of island Kiosks.

Graphic Design for Environmental Awareness Material

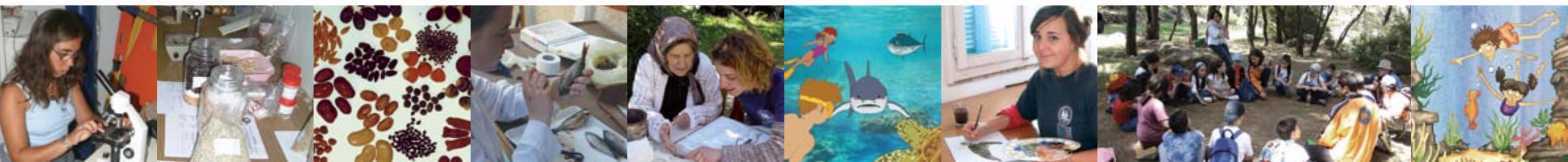
This placement involves creating graphic design for use in environmental awareness campaigns, educational material and promotion of environmental conservation through a variety of media. Main fields of activity include:

- Design of material for lectures and presentations on marine and terrestrial biodiversity of the Aegean.
- Leaflet and booklet designs for information on species in the Mediterranean, and environmental threats.
- Design of posters to build awareness of local biodiversity and threats through the presentation of the biodiversity of the special natural environment of the region.
- Possibility to design information leaflets and posters for a newly funded project promoting biodiversity of the Aegean through use of island Kiosks.
- May be required to work with other members of the media team, such as integrating illustrations into posters, or using technical skills to design templates or images for use within video production.
- Design of other printed material on environmental issues for the development of environmental awareness in local schools & communities.

Animation

This placement focuses on the development of animation to help build awareness of environmental issues. The work will primary be focused on educational DVDs, but may also include animation for general video production projects. Main fields of activity include:

- Animation to highlight marine biodiversity (mammals, fish, algae and invertebrates) of the Greek seas and issues related to their ecology, behaviour and conservation.
- Animation to highlight terrestrial biodiversity (plants, insects, birds, reptiles and mammals) of Aegean island ecosystems and issues related to their ecology, behaviour and conservation.
- Creation of animations on various environmental issues, showing biodiversity and factors threatening the natural environment for the development of environmental awareness in local schools & communities.
- Animation for the use in general video production.



PLACEMENTS

Environmental Photography

This placement focuses on environmental photography and documenting activities of scientific researchers, offering the opportunity of building a diverse portfolio with a wide range of subject matter whilst working towards conservation. Main fields of activity are:

- Wildlife and nature photography of species found in the eastern Aegean.
- Landscape photography on the islands of eastern Aegean.
- Knowledge of PhotoShop for work such as panoramic photography.
- Portrait photography.
- Photography of research subjects and activities carried out by the research teams.
- Advising members of the research team on basic photography and editing techniques relevant to their field of research.

Documentary Film Production

This placement focuses on environmental filming for use within various genres, from children's DVDs to serious documentaries, presenting the possibility to develop a varied show-reel and portfolio. Main fields of activity are:

- Filming of research subjects and activities carried out by the research teams.
- Wildlife, nature and landscape filming on the islands of eastern Aegean.
- Video journalism on issues related to biodiversity and factors impacting the natural environment.
- Editing underwater videos using archive material.
- Filming and editing material for different media (TV, internet).
- Producing promotional and educational material and a variety of awareness material of local biodiversity and threats to it.
- Working with the science and media teams for research or creative purposes, and incorporating other forms of media into the production process where appropriate e.g. illustrations or graphic design.
- Maintaining and organizing the media library and keeping an archive of interviews from volunteers.
- Maintaining the care and cleanliness of the filming and production equipment.

Environmental Education

Archipelagos plays an active role in the teaching of children within the local communities it is based in. We are looking for a qualified teacher who is passionate about the environment and wants to expand their knowledge by creating educational material and teaching within small island communities. Work will include:

- Collaborating with other Archipelagos teams, including the Media Team, in the creation and development of teaching packs.
- Creation of lesson plans and presentations for a variety of school ages.
- Participating in school visits to test out the teaching material and lesson plans.



PLACEMENTS

Information Technology

Archipelagos has a number of sites online including its main website, a wildlife library as well as pages on social networking sites. These sites and pages need to be continually maintained and updated. This placement focuses on general system administration as well as the programming of such websites and pages. Current projects are focused around the following fields:

- Content management system administration, in particular dotNetNuke.
- Network administration – design and implementation of an intranet website for ease of information and file sharing.
- Database design and implementation.
- Web site design and implementation.

Legal Work

Due to the dynamic nature of Archipelagos' work we often need to have an understanding of both national and international laws and policies. This knowledge is required so that we can better implement our proposals and management strategies for both terrestrial and marine environments. We also collaborate with a large quantity of external organisations and occasionally we need to draw up agreements between us and them regarding the use of research, documents and photographs. Some of the work involved may include:

- Research into legislations regarding shipping, ship traffic and maritime accidents.
- Research into the creation, implementation and management of protected areas.
- Research into EU fisheries legislations along with IUU (illegal, unregulated and unreported) fishing legislation.
- Look at combating the trade in endangered plants and animals, through CITES.
- Writing of collaboration agreements between Archipelagos and external organisations, universities and institutes.

Public Relations

The work of Archipelagos is well within the public eye and we require help in broadcasting our work to the general public through contacts with agencies and the creation of newspaper and web articles. We know that education is one of the best ways to get our views of conservation and management across and we are actively involved in the creation of educational material, not only aimed towards children but to adults, tourists and the general public also. Work may involve:

- Creation of press releases for newspapers, internet, television and radio.
- Collaborating with Archipelagos' Terrestrial, Marine and Media teams in order to create educational material for children and the general public.
- Extending Archipelagos' collaboration links by getting in contact with international universities, institutions and embassies.

Administrative Work

As an expanding organisation Archipelagos is looking for an experienced secretary to work with us to organise the office work on the bases and aid with general secretarial tasks. Work may include:

- Organisation of all volunteer and student files and documents, both historical files and new applications.
- Creation of standardised protocols for the storing and organisation of all paperwork and files.
- Aiding in the organisation of the general upkeep of the bases and research stations.

THE REGION

Samos and Ikaria

The islands of Ikaria and Samos are located in the eastern Aegean Sea. Both islands are highly vegetated with mountainous landscapes. A richly diverse range of ecosystems are supported on the islands and many protected animal and plant species are being recorded in these habitats. These islands constitute important migratory stations for a large number of rare and protected bird species. Both islands are characterized by their diverse landscapes and geomorphology. There are windy mountain peaks, huge rugged plateaus, craggy and colourful maquis slopes, sunny beaches and verdant river valleys. The islands are also forested in places with pine and oak trees and there are many rivers, streams and small lakes. Rainfall can be intense in the winter months and the streams, rivers and reservoirs support diverse freshwater ecosystems, which are rare in the Aegean islands.

Samos is a large islands in the eastern Aegean with a permanent population of approximately 34,000 inhabitants. In the smaller villages of the island, the main livelihoods are agriculture, livestock farming and fisheries, while in the larger villages and towns a significant proportion of the population is also occupied in the commerce sector. Tourism is also relatively developed on the island and during the past few years efforts have started on organising ecotourism activities.

Ikaria has approximately 8,300 inhabitants. Most of the island's residents lead a traditional way of life. The main livelihoods are agriculture, livestock farming and, to a lesser degree, fisheries. A significant proportion of the population is also occupied in the commerce sector, as well as in tourism related businesses.

The Archipelagos Bases



Pythagorio– Samos base location

The traditional village of Pythagorio is located on the south-east coast of Samos and is situated on a long tranquil coastline with the generally calm sea providing good swimming and snorkelling conditions. In the village, there is a small port, which is mainly used by local fishermen and tourist boats. The south coast offers many pebbled beaches to be used by tourists and locals alike. Archipelagos' base is a 40 minute walk, or 5 minute drive, from Pythagorio vilagge and connected by a main roadv a main road and a local bus to other villages on the island.



Area of Rahes – Ikaria base location

The area of Rahes is located in the centre of the island in the low mountains. The village of Christos in Rahes is a traditional, mountainous village that has a small but active center. The road from Christos to Kastanies, where the Archipelagos' base is located, is a meandering mountain road lined with a rich diversity of flora and fauna, as well as goat farms and traditional Ikarian homes. Given the high altitude, temperatures at the Archipelagos base are generally warm to hot in the summer and can reach colder temperatures in winter. The area experiences a significant amount of rainfall during the winter months.





The north-east Mediterranean region is one of the last remaining parts of Europe that supports an exceptional biodiversity of marine and terrestrial flora and fauna – including many protected and endangered species. However, immediate action is necessary to stop environmental destruction and degradation, due to negative human influences in this region.

Significant scientific research and effective management programs, which include the participation of the local communities, must be developed in order to establish effective sustainable conservation programs that will preserve and protect the natural wealth of this region.

You can help Archipelagos achieve our sustainable conservation goals in the north-east Mediterranean by volunteering with Archipelagos today, and participating in one or more of our placement programs.

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