



Report on the Aerial Inspection of the Northern Ionian Sea Coastline



December 2022

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Introduction

An aerial inspection of the Northern Ionian Sea coastline was conducted on the 21st and 22nd of December 2022, after the completion of seismic surveys conducted in the marine area of Northern Ionian Sea.

The aim of the inspection was to record the existence of any stranded animal/s and especially cetaceans along the coasts of the area where the seismic surveys were conducted.

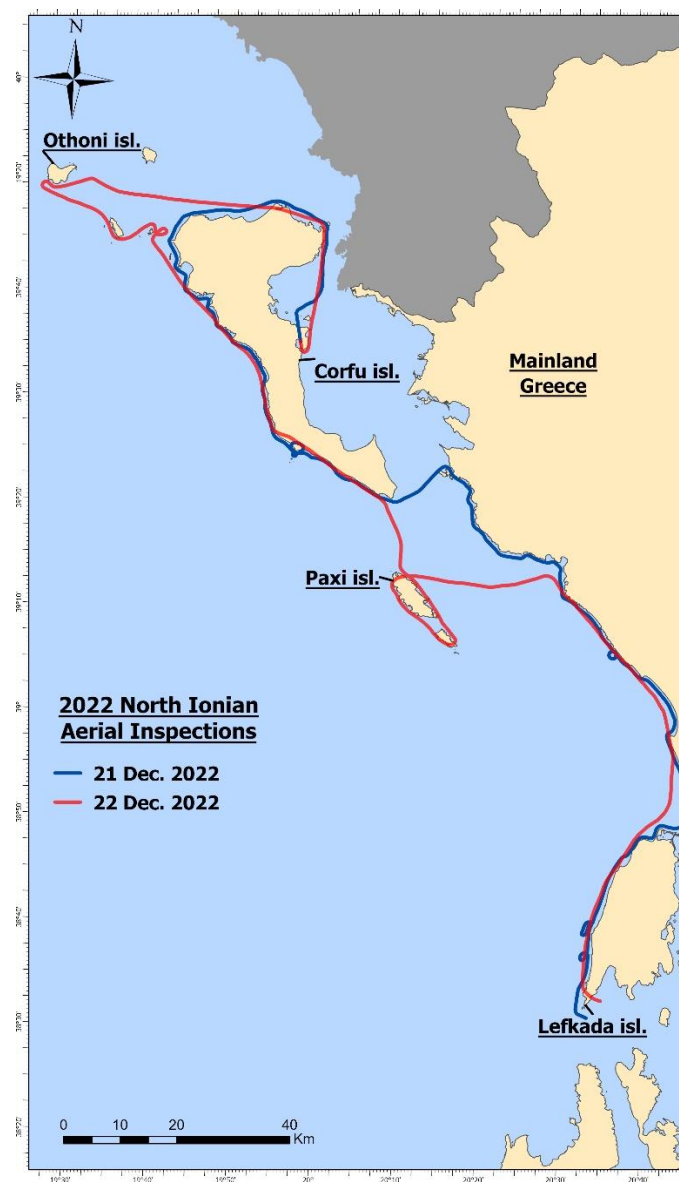


Figure 1 Map of the inspected area with the tracks of the airplane

Methodology

A high wing, light aircraft (Cessna C172 Skyhawk 2, see Photo 1.) was used, based at Megara General Aviation Airport (ICAO designator LGMG). This four-seater aircraft offers an excellent view from its cockpit (see Photo 2) and thus was considered suitable, reliable and cost-effective for such a mission. The flight was performed along the coasts of the Northern Ionian Sea at an altitude of 1000 ft and an average Speed Over Ground of 90 knots. The area investigated included all the western and northwestern coastline of Lefkada island (from Cape Doukato to the south, to Cape Kastro the north), the coastline from Cape Aktion to Syvota, all the western, southwestern coastline of the island of Corfu (from Asprokavos to the south to Cape Drastis to the north) as well as the entire coastline of the islands Paxi and Antipaxi (see Map 1). The flights were performed under ideal weather conditions (wind speed less than 10 knots, clear sky and visibility more than 10 km). The Corfu International Airport (ICAO designator LGKR) was used for the overnight stop and refueling of the aircraft.



Photo 1 The aircraft used, at Corfu International Airport

During the flights and in every case where an “object of interest” was spotted, the airplane left its track and performed one or more circles over the object in order to visually identify it. Furthermore, the object was photographed so that a proper record of its observation and identification is kept. The photographic operation was performed using a full frame DSLR (Nikon D750) with a 70-200mm F/2.8 Tamron SP

lens. All photographs were georeferenced since the camera was equipped with a GPS Unit (Nikon GP-1A). In addition, the flight was monitored and recorded with the use of the specialized software GARMIN PILOT version 8.2.9 loaded on a SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB S7



Photo 2 View of the coastline of Lefkada island from the aircraft's cockpit



Photo 3 Flight parameters recording with the GARMIN PILOT software

In the following example, the staged photographic identification process of an initial “object of interest” located on the shore is clearly shown.



Photo 4 A: Recording an “object of interest”, B: Approaching, C: Identifying

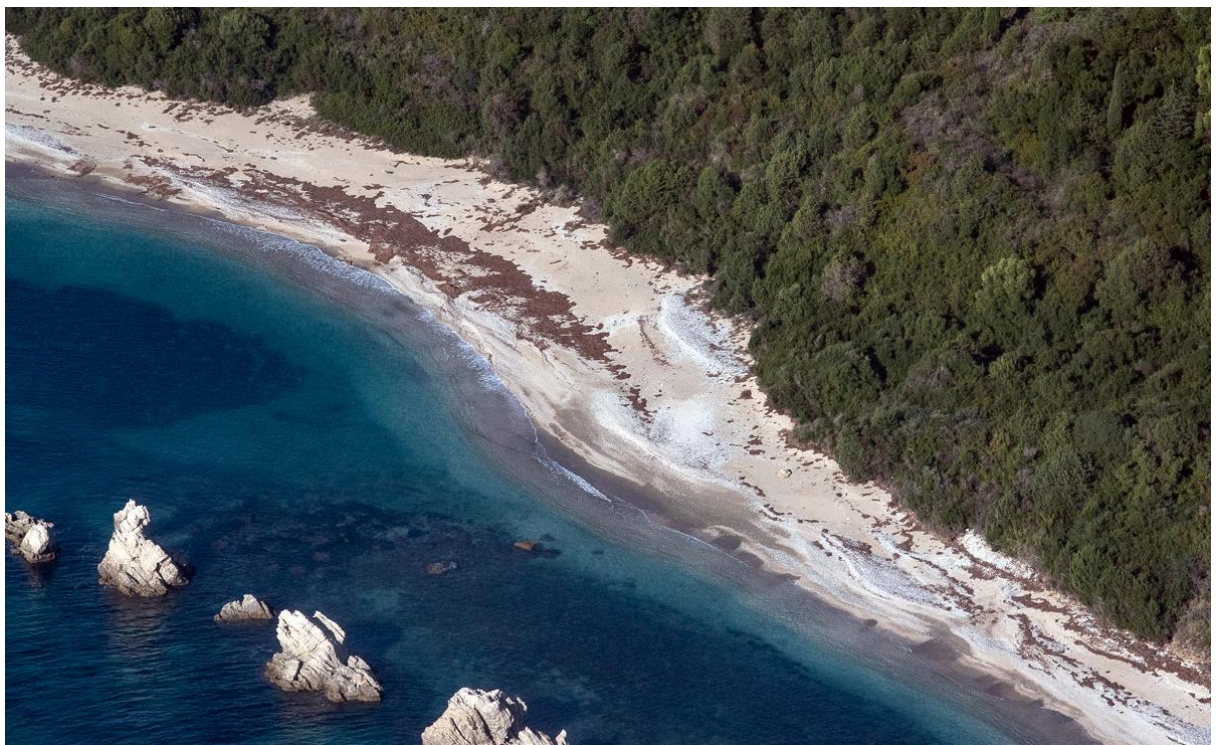
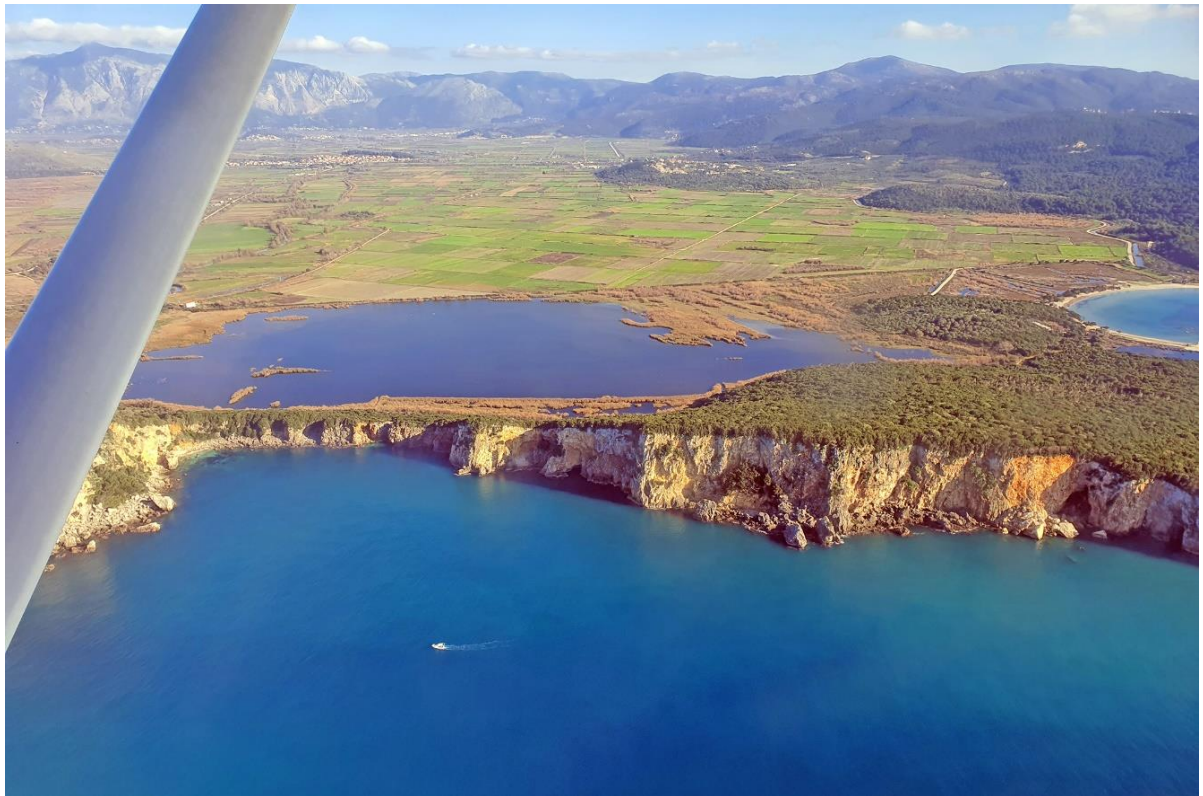
Results

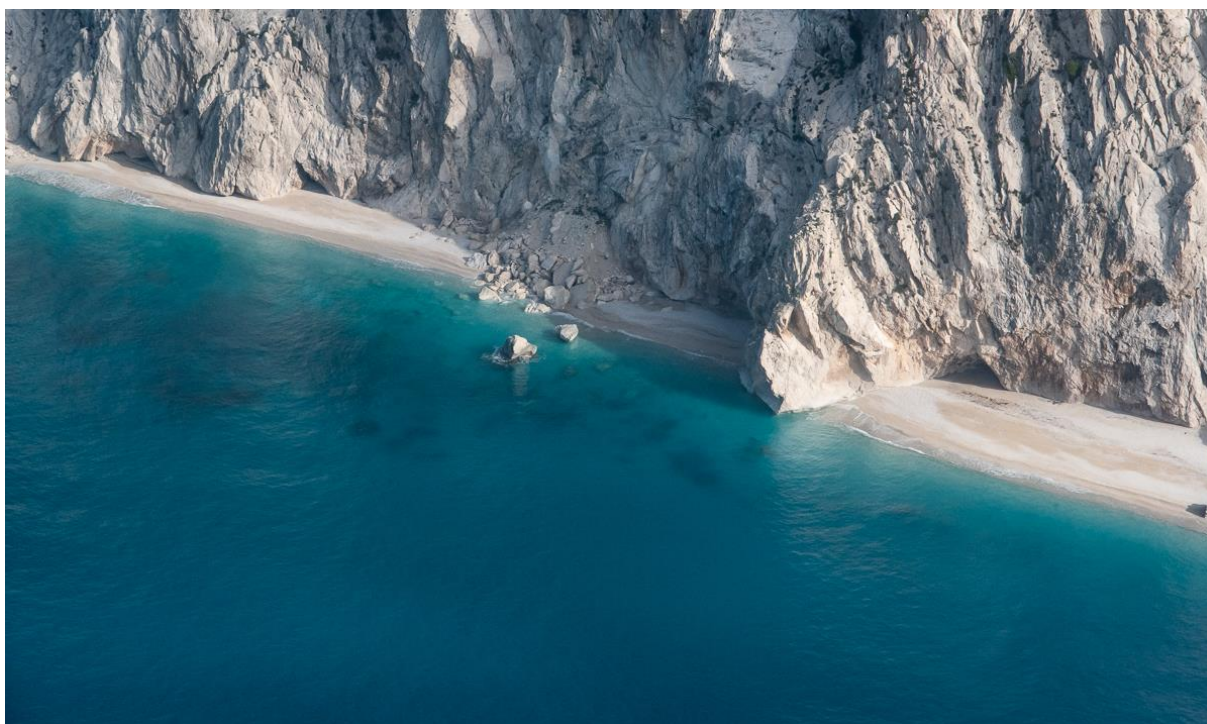
The aerial investigation was conducted on the 21st (see blue track on Map 1) and on the 22nd of December 2022 (see red track on Map 1). A total of 370 km of coastline were inspected thoroughly, covering a zone of about 2 nautical miles from the shoreline to the open sea. The aircraft covered 646 km in total (296 km during the first survey day and 350 during the second survey day). During the surveys no cetaceans were recorded (swimming/floating in the marine zone or stranded ashore) as well as no other species of marine megafauna (monk seals, sea turtles) along the entire coastline inspected.

Sample Photos of the Surveys













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