



Report on the Aerial Inspection of the Northern Ionian Sea Coastline



March 2022

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Introduction

An aerial inspection of the Northern Ionian Sea coastline was conducted on the 14th and 15th of March 2022, following seismic surveys conducted in the wider marine area.

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 Survey Area

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 western and northwestern coastline of Lefkada island (from Cape Doukato at the south, to Cape Kastro at the north), the coastline from Cape Aktion to Syvota, all the western, southwestern coastline of the island of Corfu (from Asprokavos at the south to Cape Drastis at 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).



Photo 1 The aircraft used, at Corfu airport on the 15th February 2022

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).



Photo 2 View from the aircraft's cockpit

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

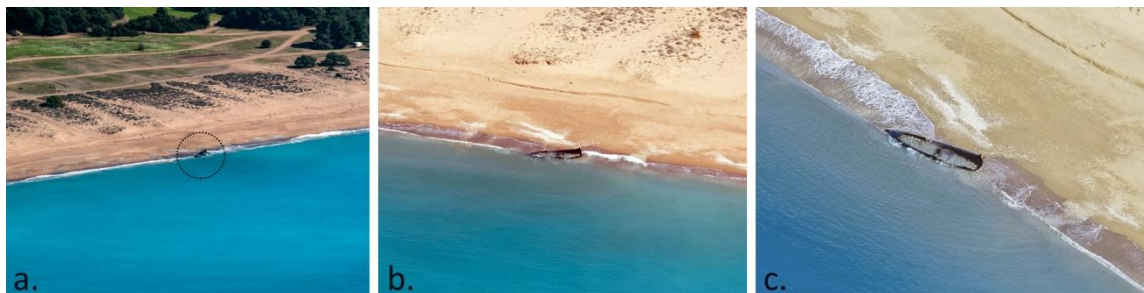


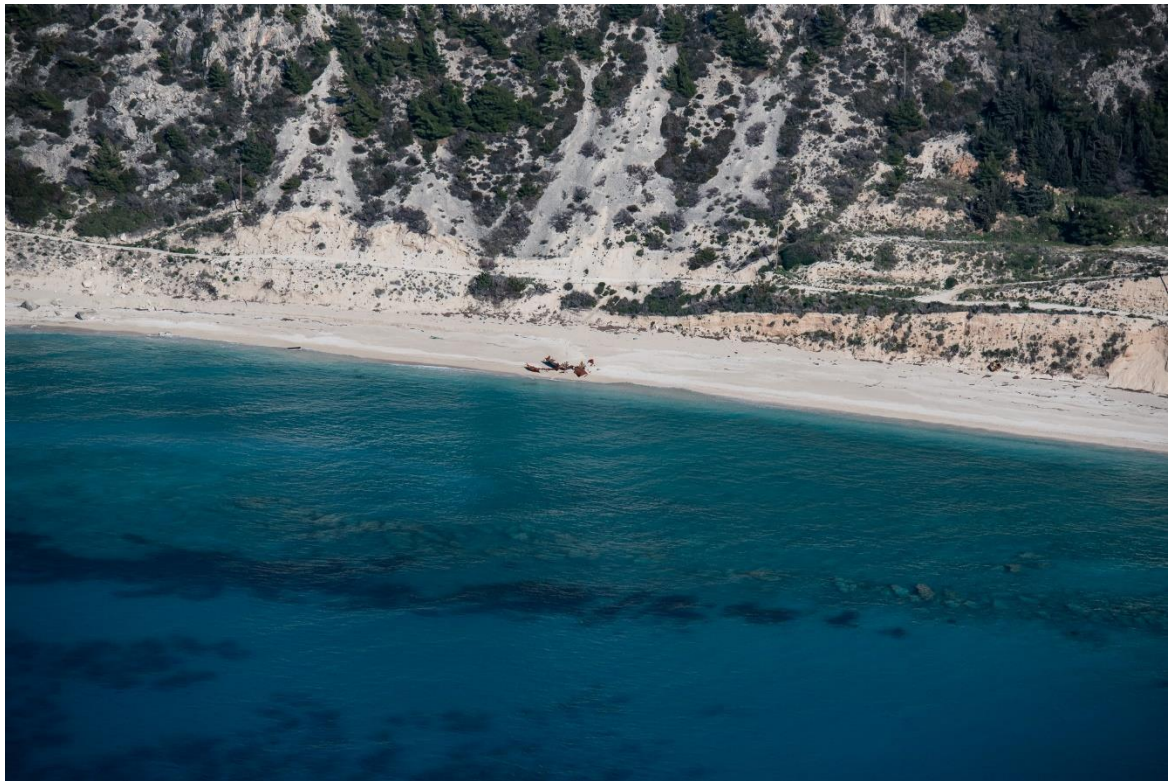
Photo 3 A: Recording an "object of interest", B: Approaching, C: Identifying

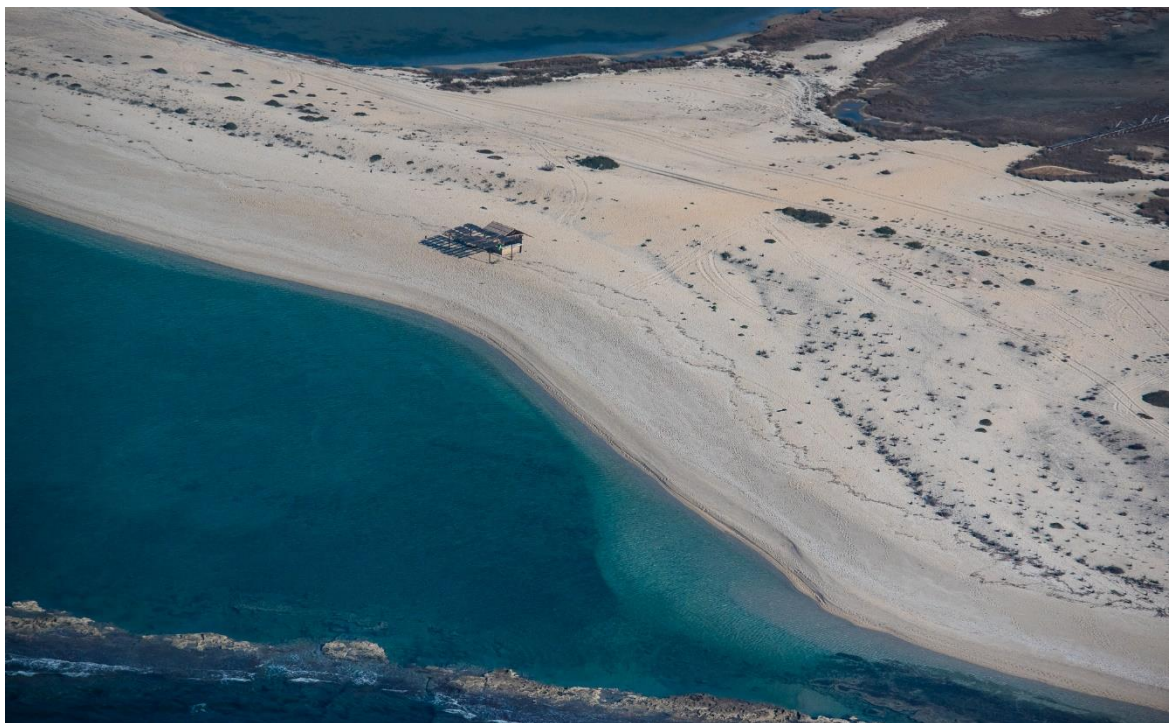
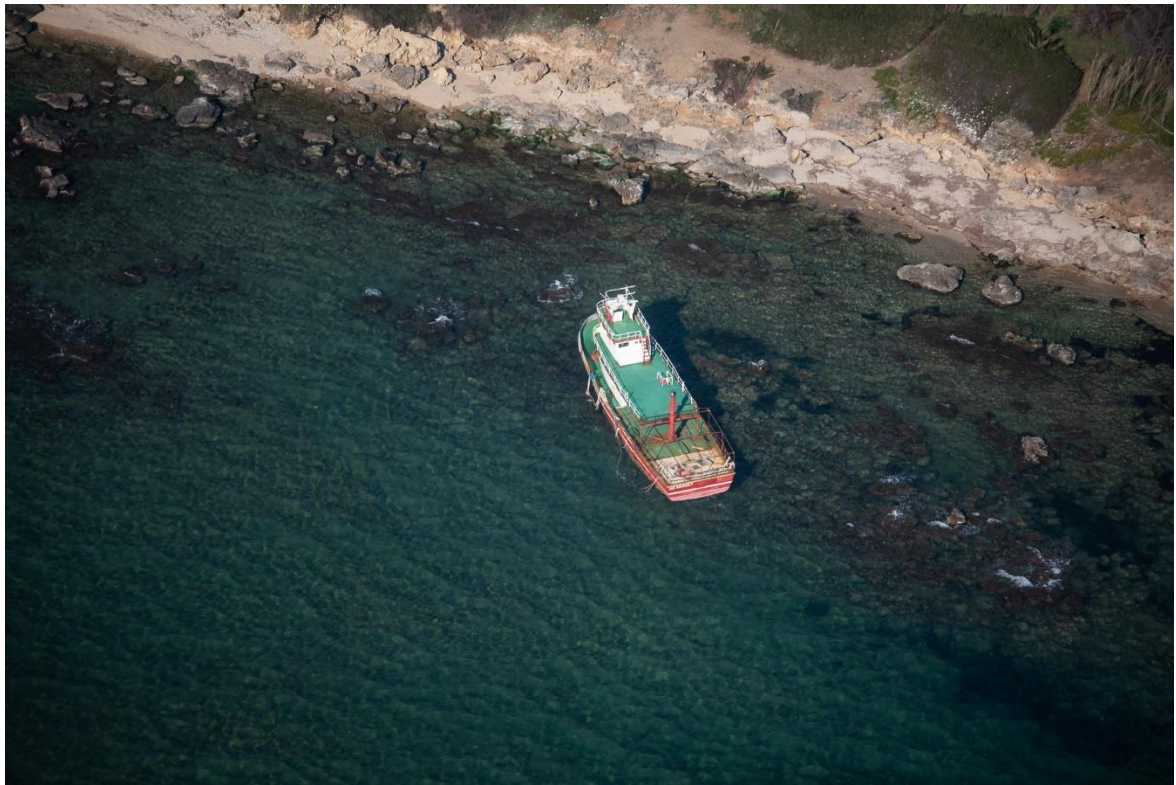
Results

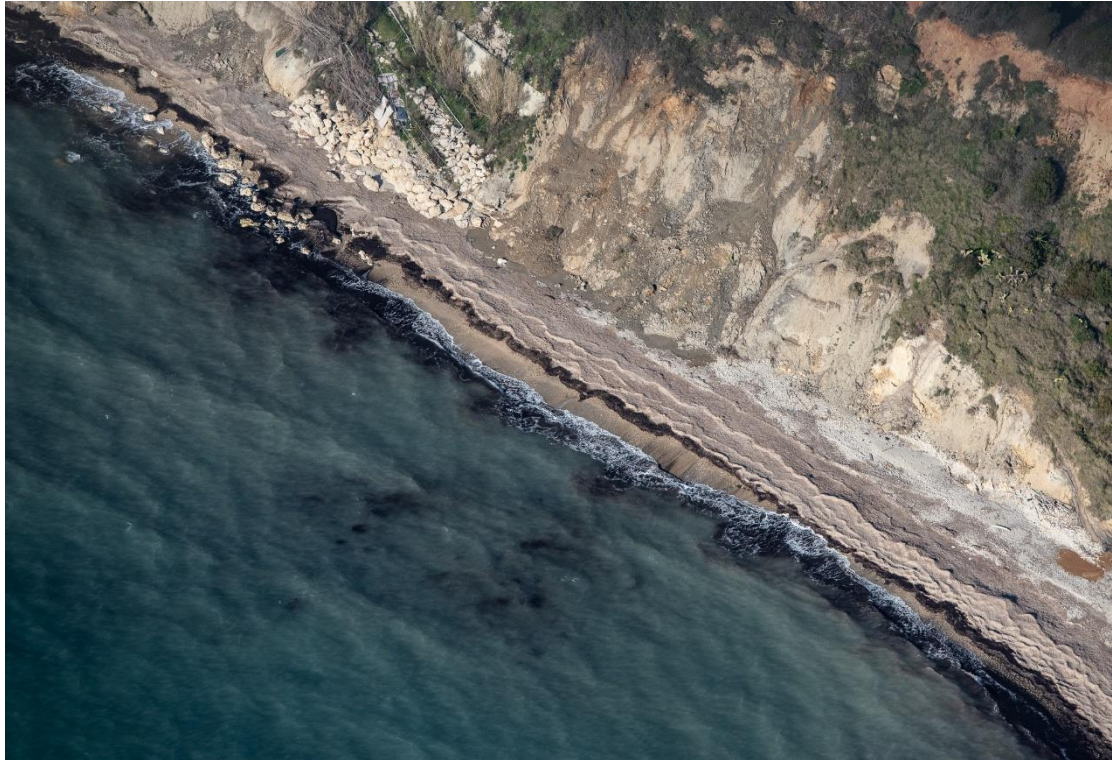
The aerial investigation was conducted on the 14th of March 2022, (see blue track on Map 1) and on the 15th of March 2022 (see red track on Map 1). A total of 325 km of coastline were inspected thoroughly, covering a zone of about 2 nautical miles from the shoreline to the open sea. During the survey 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.

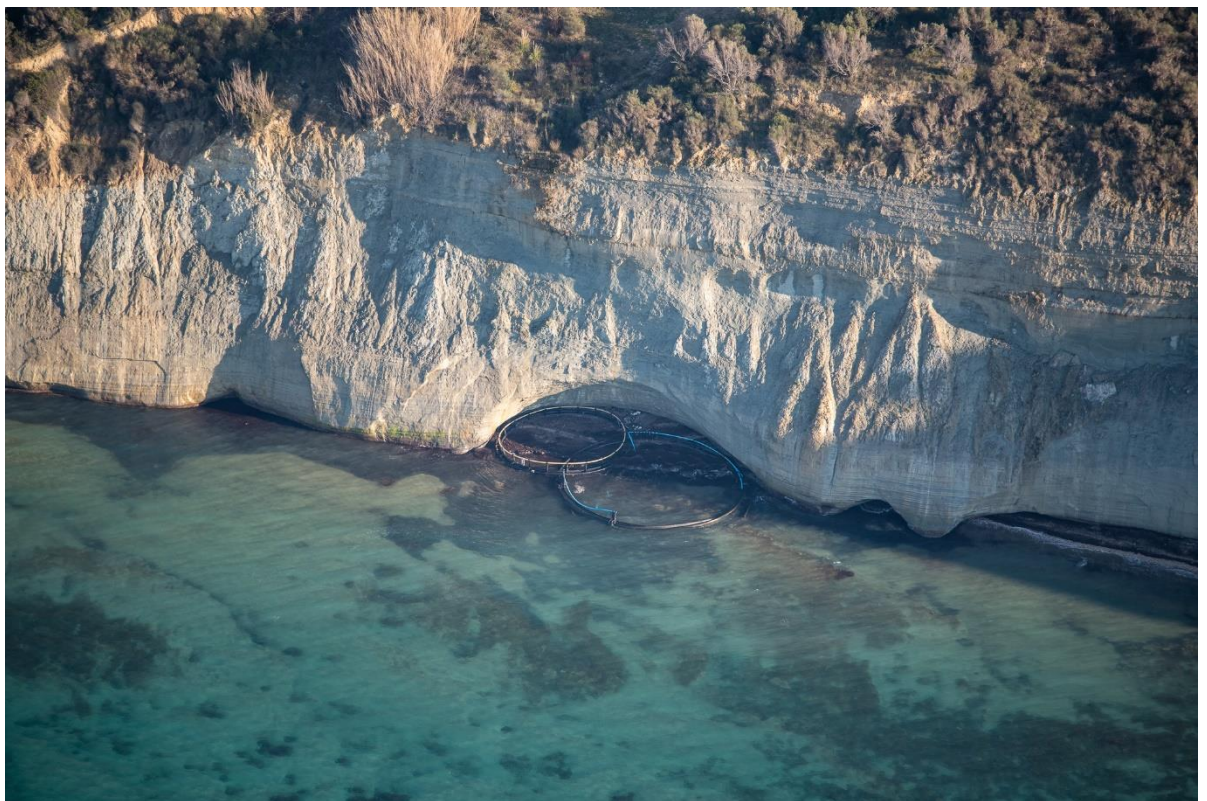
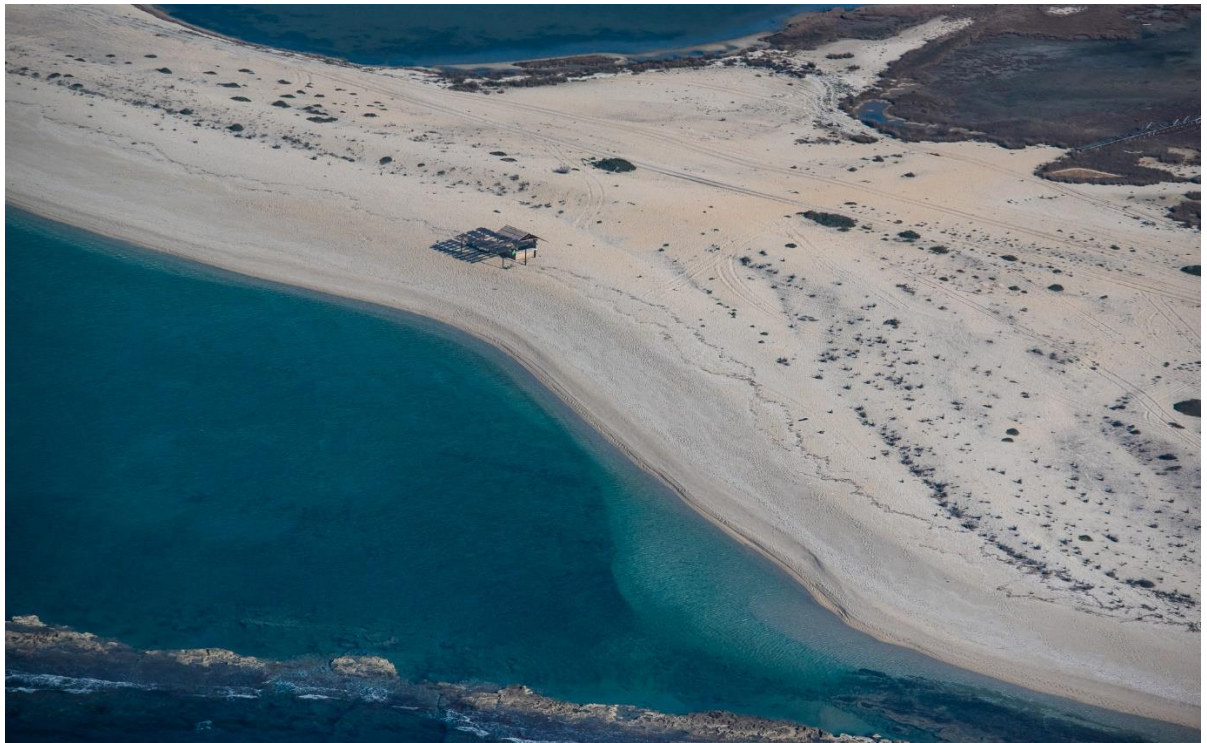
Sample Photos

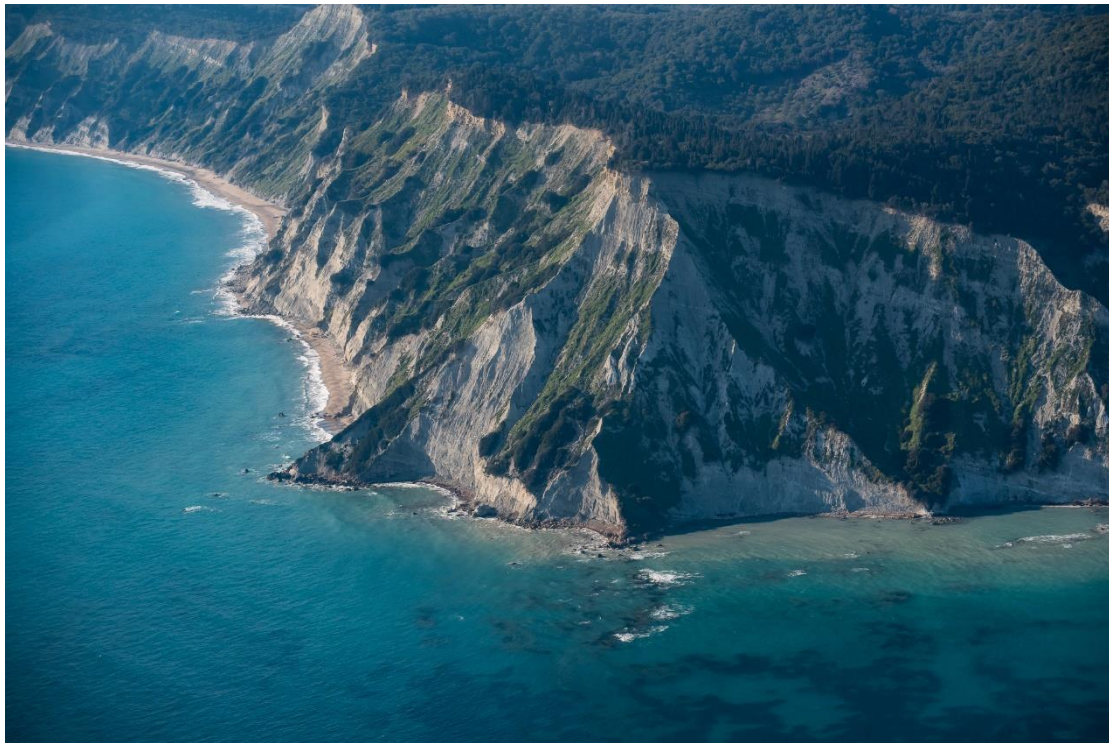


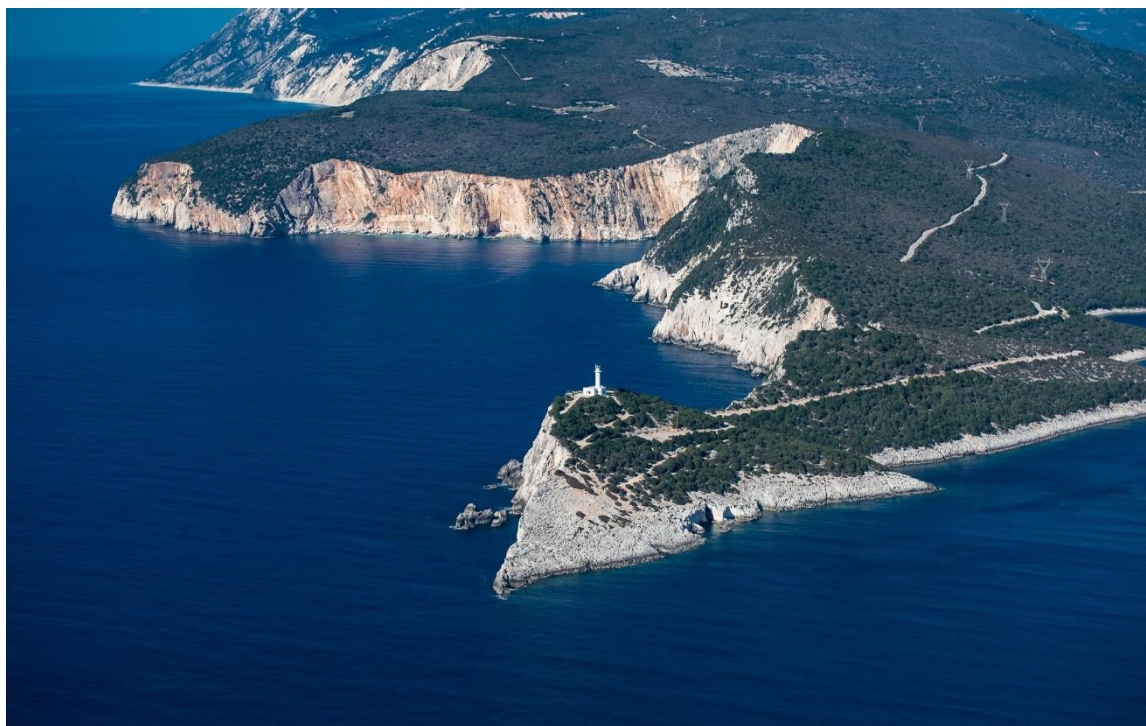












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