

Audouin's Gull breeding population in Greece rapidly declined in the last ten years

Title

The breeding populations of the Audouin's Gull in Greece have experienced a rapid decline from estimated 750-900 pairs in late 1990s to 350-500 pairs in 2010. The Hellenic Ornithological Society (BirdLife Greece) is carrying out a series of actions to assess its major threats and to improve its breeding performance in its most important colonies. Audouin's Gull is a flag species of the Aegean Sea. It breeds on uninhabited islands in colonies ranging in size from few pairs to several tens of pairs. The distribution as well as the size of these colonies has been reduced over the last decade resulting in smaller local and national populations. Although the main threats, including depletion of food sources due to overfishing, competition with other species, bycatch in longline fisheries and predation at breeding colonies, have been identified, their overall impact on the population of Audouin's Gull still remain insufficiently known. In scope of the problems and recent population decline the Audouin's Gull is facing in Greece, immediate actions need to be taken to stop the population decline and to increase the quality of its breeding and foraging habitats. The current LIFE Nature Project *Concrete conservation actions for the Mediterranean Shag and Audouin's Gull in Greece, including the inventory of relevant marine IBAs* addresses the major threats, either by taking direct measures to improve breeding sites by rat eradication and gull population control operations or by providing a scientific basis for future mitigation and conservation measures through delineation of marine IBAs and assessment of seabird bycatch in fishing gear says Jakob Fric, HOS Project Coordinator. Watch here [an informative drawing on Audouin's Gulls](#) belonging to HOS (BirdLife Greece)
