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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



advancing marine conservation
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March 22, 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

As Chair of the IUCN Seahorse, Pipefish and Stickleback Specialist Group (SPS SG), I am writing to endorse Vasilis Mentogiannis and the Underwater Film and Research team for their commitment to the seahorses of Stratoni, Greece. I acknowledge and applaud the notable contribution made by Vasilis and his team in undertaking a pioneering seahorse study in Greece.

Stratoni provides an important opportunity to establish a long term monitoring study of both seahorse species in local waters: *Hippocampus guttulatus* and *Hippocampus hippocampus*. Both have been assessed globally as Data Deficient on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and both have been assessed as Near Threatened in the nearby Mediterranean Sea. The designation of Data Deficient means we lack the information to assess their conservation status or risk of extinction, making information on the Stratoni seahorse population very important.

The SPS SG is very glad of Vasilis' commitment to maintaining healthy seahorse populations in Greece. He has managed to enlist the support of local stakeholders and prominent researchers and has innovative plans for protecting Stratoni's seahorses. In response to his valued engagement, we have asked Vasilis to serve as an Ambassador in Greece for the global iSeahorse citizen science programme; he will help increase public awareness of seahorses and marine conservation... and empower citizens to take action for seahorses and the seas.

The SPS SG is keen to assist colleagues such as Vasilis in their vitally important front line conservation projects. We sincerely hope you will also support Stratoni's seahorses and the passionate work of Vasilis Mentogiannis. Thank you for your generous time and attention.

Please do contact us if you have questions or can help support seahorses and their ocean communities.

Yours truly,

Amanda Vincent, PhD

Director, Project Seahorse

Chair, IUCN SSC Seahorse, Pipefish and Stickleback Specialist Group