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**A Strategy for Raising Public Awareness and Inviting Local Participation:  
The Example of Stavros, The Green Turtle in Lakonikos Bay, Greece**

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Achieving acceptance and local participation has been shown to play an important role in species conservation on a worldwide basis. Conservation efforts that are limited to forming necessary legislative measures, without first establishing bonds and raising awareness within the local community, are less likely to be successful in the long term.

Following 15 years of experience, the Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece (STPS) has developed a strategy for approaching local communities with the objective of raising public awareness and invoking local participation in sea turtle conservation. The STPS strategy includes interacting with different levels in society: 1)

school children through specially prepared environmental education programmes, 2) fishermen through incidental catch monitoring and public awareness programmes, and 3) the local government and authorities.

This strategy is currently implemented in Lakonikos Bay in a project funded by the European Commission (LIFE-Nature) and the Ministry of Environment. The case of Stavros, a juvenile green turtle, that was released in Lakonikos Bay, after having been treated at the Sea Turtle Rescue Centre in Glyfada, is a prime example of how such a strategy can aid in changing people's attitudes and finally motivate them to partake in nature conservation.