

Elpida 39

September 2016



GREEK ANIMAL WELFARE FUND

Over 57 years of action for animals in Greece



Striving to improve the welfare of animals in Greece

Welcome to our Autumn issue!



Dear friends,

Each Summer the influx of visitors to Greece brings with it a perfect storm of reports of animal suffering and 2016 has been no exception. It is not only holiday makers from abroad who contact us. Athenians, escaping the heat of the city, head out to ancestral homes in the islands and rural areas of the mainland. They, too, reach out to us with cries for help.

We can tell, from the cases all these people bring to us, that the economic crisis, which is still deepening in Greece, has hit animals hard. The quality of their lives has tracked the downward spiral of the lives of the people who are meant to care for them but increasingly are struggling to cope themselves.

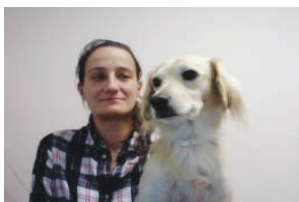
The betrayal of trust that confronts us in the gaze of every abandoned pet is heart-breaking, and it's not only the animals that are suffering. We have been working in Greece for over 50 years now and we know Greeks to be warm, friendly and generous people. You only have to look at how the people of the Eastern Aegean islands opened their homes to thousands of refugees pouring in across the sea from the shores of Turkey to understand that. But everyone reaches their limits eventually.

We are there to pick up some – just some – of the pieces and help rebuild a little of the animals' lost faith in the goodness of humanity. Working nationally with a small team we can't hope to cover every need, but while we can't make a difference for the whole world, we can make a whole world of difference to the animals we *do* reach!

In this edition of *Elpida* you will find a report from our Equine Team, describing how it works to alleviate the suffering of horses, mules and donkeys all over the country, and my own account of some of the policy work we are doing at European level to improve the lives of animals in Greece. We also consider our awareness-building and educational work to be vitally important, as it seeks to affect and modify the attitudes of future generations until we reach the point at which no young Greek will tolerate the mistreatment of an animal at the roadside or consider for a moment abandoning their pet, no matter how tough things get.

We are also continually promoting the concept of responsible ownership through our neutering programmes that offer specially discounted treatment to people caring for stray cats. You will notice from our map (pages 8 and 9) that we were particularly active in the Athens area (which is where 3m of the Greek population of 11m live) while also offering support to local welfare groups, shelters and volunteers in more remote locations. We could not do this without the cooperation and support of the highly professional small animal vets like Irini and Alexandros (page 4) who give up their weekends to travel with us to remote locations time and time again.

We have lost some of our loyal team both at Board and staff level this year, and we bid them farewell in gratitude and sadness while at the same time we welcome the new energy, commitment and passion that our latest "recruits" have already started providing! We hope through these pages, our website, and posts on social media you will soon find you feel you have met them too! That matters to us more than anything, because without you and your generous support of our work, we would not be in a position to keep fighting for lasting improvements in the lives of animals in Greece. Thank you, from all of us and from the animals, for everything you do.



Sincerely

Daphne



Daphne Mavrogiorgos, CEO, GAWF/Animal Action

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Campaigning

CAMPAIGNING FOR ANIMALS IN EUROPE 2016

Daphne Mavrogiorgos, CEO



“Eurogroup for Animals” has been the leading advocate for animal welfare in the European Union (EU) for many years, speaking up for billions of animals kept in laboratories, farms, homes or living in the wild. Based in Brussels, Eurogroup for Animals has 50 member-organisations... including Animal Action! Our aim this year has been to re-energise our engagement with the group and we are now an active member of three of its Working Groups; the ones for Pets, Transport and Wildlife. Through these, we are calling on the European Commission (EC) and Member States to:

End the illegal trade in pets via the #ProtectOurPets campaign (www.protectourpets.eu), which has resulted in over 500,000 e-mails being sent to MEPs from right across Europe since its launch in September 2015. By February, this pressure on the European Parliament saw it adopt a Resolution formally calling on the EC to take action to stop the growing illegal trade in pets by harmonising the national identification and registration systems and other requirements for pets across the EU. This would provide greater certainty around the age of and vaccination status of any given animal as well as allowing for effective cross-border traceability.

End the long distance transportation of livestock via the ongoing, pan-European #StoptheTrucks campaign (www.stopthetrucks.eu), which was launched in March. It aims to inform consumers across Europe about the detrimental impacts on the health and welfare of billions of animals and to mobilise citizens to send a letter to their Minister calling for revision of Transport Regulations.

End illegal trade in wild animals and ensure development of an effective EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking in view of the EC's recent decision.

End Trophy Hunting via various actions, such as requesting Member States to ban the importation of hunting trophies. Achieve circus bans in more member countries and ensure a transparent Fitness Check of the Zoo Directive. In addition, we are lobbying for the establishment of 'Positive Lists' of suitable pet species in more Member States in order to regulate the sale and keeping of exotic animals as pets.

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Campaigning

March also saw the adoption of the new Regulation on Transmissible Animal Diseases (Animal Health Law), which is the first law to establish the link between animal well-being and public health. The law will serve as an important toolbox with which to improve good husbandry practices and to fight against antimicrobial resistance. Furthermore, thanks to several key amendments proposed by Eurogroup, the law will also require all pet breeders and sellers to be registered with competent authorities, providing a key pillar of support for the improved transparency and traceability of these animals.

Every change to European regulation won through our involvement with Eurogroup for Animals will bring direct and lasting benefits to animals in Greece.



To Sign the Petition visit goo.gl/dCwNsF

GAWF Moments



During our educational programme



Vets Popi and George neutering



Vets Alexandros (in green) and Irine (in pink) with volunteers and our CEO, after a successful day of neutering at Astypalaia.

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Equine Project News

Chionoula in Skyros



Mr Stratos studies the prescription while Chionoula waits patiently.

We have been visiting Skyros once a year since 2007 but although we have our “regulars” there, every year we come across new cases to add to our “client base”! This year as we were on our way to revisit equines we had seen before, we came across a small donkey with an elderly owner slowly making their way along the road. We stopped and introduced ourselves. Mr. Stratos is in his 90s and his donkey, “Chionoula” (Snowy) is herself over 30 years old.

Mr Stratos explained to us that he has owned his donkey for at least 20 years and in all that time she has been his constant companion as well as his means of transport, faithfully carrying him and his produce on his daily journeys between his home and his fields. Mr Stratos admitted that lately he has stopped riding Chionoula as she is getting old and seems now to be having trouble walking. We examined the donkey to see if we could identify the problem and possibly help ease her discomfort. We were quickly able to determine that Chionoula was showing the classic signs of suffering from laminitis.

Our farrier got straight to work, trimming her overgrown hooves and adjusting their imbalances. Once the corrective work was done, our vet gave Mr Stratos instructions about care over the next few days and provided the appropriate anti-inflammatory treatment, which would relieve Chionoula’s pain. After that our vet checked Chionoula’s teeth. To add to her mobility problems, the poor donkey was found also to have a loose and rotten tooth, which had meant that she would not have been able to eat properly for the last few months. Owners often mistake the signs of dental problems for a normal consequence of aging. Often it’s not. Our vet extracted the one painful tooth and rasped the sharp edges of the rest – to Chionoula’s immediate relief. Mr Stratos thanked us a million times as he and his “old lady” went on their way.

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Equine Project News

Equine team 2015



Aris Vlachakis farrier (L) and Michalis Gaganis vet (R) working in perfect harmony.

What a busy year it was!

Our team crisscrossed Greece from Stavros in the north to Crete in the South while in between it was also to be found in Poligiros, Soufli, Chalkidiki, Paros, Antiparos, Naxos, Rhodes, Kasos, Symi, Kos, Santorini, Ios, Amorgos, Hydra, Aegina, Kea, Markopoulo, Serifos, Patmos, Leros, Evia and Skyros! In total we treated 1,490 equines. Every year we make conscious efforts to get to places where we have never been before, in particular targeting areas where there are no equine professionals working, and where the care our vets, farriers and dentists can offer may be the only chance the animals get to be treated in the whole year.

There are always a few heartbreaking cases... in Kasos we had to put to sleep a donkey that had suffered a fall and had a badly broken foreleg, while in Hydra we found a horse that was suffering from an open, complete fracture. Neither was able to stand. Both animals would have died in agony had our teams not been there to give them a peaceful end. In a way they were fortunate. At the other end of the spectrum, while in Kos our vet managed to save a foal that was experiencing seizures caused by a subdural haematoma – probably after being accidentally trodden on by his mother. He would certainly not have survived for more than a few more hours without our intervention. The same is true of a case of serious colic in Hydra. Those animals too were lucky that our vet was there just when they needed her.

Wherever possible we invite trainees to come on our outreach visits to follow what we do and assist when they can, offering them an opportunity to work on real cases and gain valuable experience. We like to involve the very young as well, where possible. Public safety is always an issue around equines, nevertheless last year we were able to take advantage of a one or two suitable opportunities informally to present our work to groups of primary school children. But our educational work extends to more formal teaching as well: In 2015 our team held 2 seminars that included elements of farriery and equine dentistry. All levels of ability and knowledge were catered for, from beginners to more advanced practitioners, the aim always being to help the equines through improving the skills and understanding of the people that care for them on a daily basis.

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Word has spread and people now travel from all over Greece to be trained at our seminars. In addition, we delivered a lecture to students at the Aristotelian University in Thessaloniki where Greece's leading veterinary school is based. Our educational work in 2015 was complemented by a demonstration of electric fencing and alternative methods of restraining equines on one of the Cycladic islands where hobbling is very extensively used. It is a practice we are working hard to stamp out and one of our new tools is a leaflet on the topic, which – together with our other educational material on equine care and management – we handed out to owners at every opportunity.

Finally, this year was the year that the “Greek mountain mule shoe” specially designed by our farrier, Giannis Bratsianos, was first tried and used in many areas of Greece. Giannis, being all too familiar with the problems that working mules face all over Greece as a result of traditional sealed shoes, decided to design one that would be durable, safer and healthier for the feet of these hard-working animals. Some owners have taken it up with enthusiasm while others take a bit longer to come around. They can be an obstinate lot but we know that, in time, their own good sense will prevail.

In general, 2015 was a very fulfilling year in many aspects of equine care. In a country whose people are struggling desperately to weather an economic crisis that only seems to be deepening, the animals are suffering. GAWF is the only charity that actively provides care to the equines of Greece on a nationwide basis.



Farrier Giannis Bratsianos doing some heavy lifting!

Congratulations



GAWF's equine vet Kleo Triantafyllou

We would like to offer our congratulations to the fabulous Kleo (Kleopatra Triantafyllou) who has regularly been working with GAWF, as one of the vets on our Equine Team, for years. Kleo, having just completed a Residency in Equine Medicine at the University of Liverpool, is now the only equine vet working in Greece who is so highly qualified.

We are proud to be associated with her and to have played a small part in supporting her training over the years. We confidently expect the horses, mules, donkeys and ponies of

Greece to go on benefitting from her care and expertise for a long time to come!

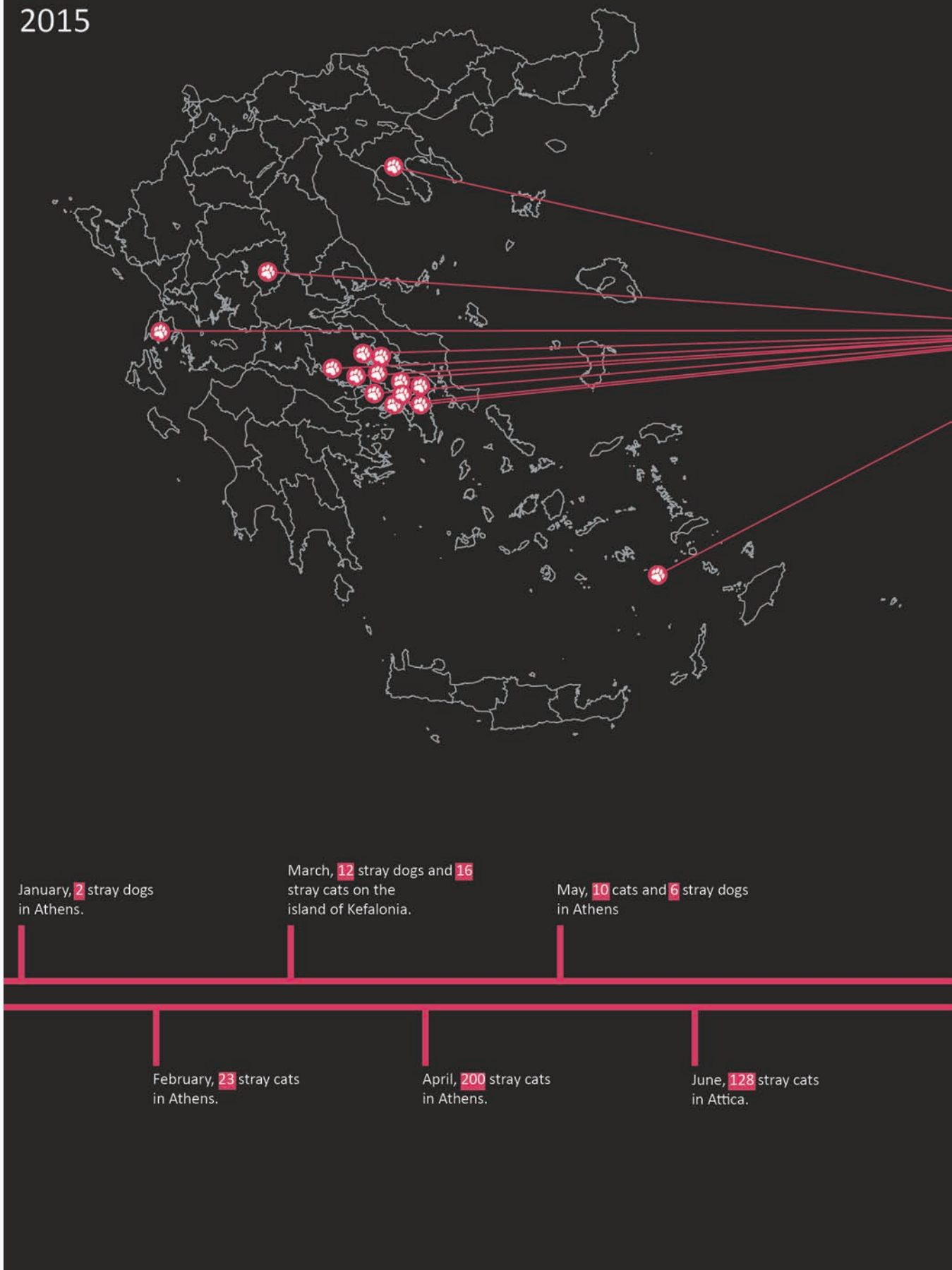
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Neutering Project

2015



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July, **29** stray dogs and **10** stray cats in Chalkidiki.

October, **8** stray cats in Athens.

December, **15** stray cats and **17** stray dogs in Attica and Kalampaka.

September, **6** stray cats in Athens.

November, **77** stray cats in Attica and Astypalaia.

Throughout the year, **26** stray dogs and **78** stray cats, around Greece.

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Operating in Greece as:

Educational Programme

A battle for hearts and minds

A personal view of our educational work by GAWF/Animal Action Trustee, Anna Stamatiou



Educating the next generation of Greeks.

Why, 50 years and counting from when Eleanor Close founded GAWF, are we still fighting to improve the lives of animals in Greece? Why is it that we still can't 'shut up shop' and declare "Job Done"? Perhaps the answer is just this: It's because we have taken on nothing less than the task of changing a whole society's attitudes to animals. It often feels like we're chipping away at a monumental block that has many granite-hard boulders embedded in it... apathy, tradition, ignorance, poverty, even religious beliefs – they each offer resistance, and each needs to be tackled.

We could use all our resources on these challenges alone but as welfare people we can't walk away from an animal that is suffering. So we are out there with our teams on the ground on a nationwide basis, bringing relief, treating, neutering, supporting local groups, and leading by example. This direct, hands-on work is right at the heart of who we are, but if I were forced to choose *just one area of activity*, and had to abandon all the rest, I might keep the efforts we make to educate and raise awareness. Because if we're ever going to win the day for animals in Greece, that's how we're going to do it.

Our educational work has taken various forms over the years. One of the most important is the ongoing Equine Project, which sees professionals from the UK as well as Greece visiting isolated communities and caring for working horses, ponies, donkeys and mules. Through the seminars they run, our teams demonstrate best practice in farriery, dentistry and general care, passing on their skills and knowledge to the people that are in a position to make a daily difference to the lives of the animals – and that means their owners.

Complementing the work of the Equine Team, is the work we have done with children over the years – aiming to challenge prejudices and inherited practices – inviting them imaginatively to place themselves in the position of, say, a street dog, a zoo animal or perhaps even a caged songbird. A writing competition was one vehicle we used to reach our audience. It grew into a successful annual event but also took up a huge amount of staff time. For the last two years we have partnered with a well-known cultural centre, Hellenic Cosmos, in Athens, that is visited by hundreds of school children. Our specially-developed programme, centred on an ancient story, was delivered to enthusiastic groups of primary age pupils by the museum's own, trained staff. The youngsters engaged in movement games, role play, and were guided to come up with their own arguments for the ethical treatment of animals. To date, that programme – The Animals' Lawsuit – has reached 1300 children but we want more.

While we have been busy teaching, we have been busy learning too. We have seen that the young respond best when they are not being spoon-fed information but are on their own, individual journeys of discovery; that inspiring them works better than criticising or lecturing them; that when they're having fun, they are eager for more. So now we are exploring more ways to make them think and learn as they play. We intend to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the next generation – and it won't even notice that we've done it!

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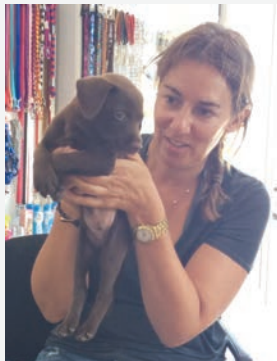
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Team news

Hellos and Goodbyes

Brian Cowie has served GAWF for more years than even he cares to remember! At one time he was the CEO and then joined the Board which he has led as Chairman. He expressly forbade us to “make a fuss” about his departure but now we can’t resist marking it and acknowledging that we are losing someone who cares very deeply about what we do – animal welfare. Brian continues to be a Board Member of



Maria Marinos

Animal Action in Greece and to be involved with some of his other welfare work in China and France.

Stepping in to replace Brian is our new Chairman, Phyllis Dunipace. Since she was away while this issue was being prepared, we will be introducing her more fully in the next one. In the meantime, we would just like to thank you for your tremendous response to her Appeal Letter, which went out in the Spring, in which she described the joint refugee and economic crises in Greece and the effect these are having on both people and animals.

We have a new recruit to the GAWF Board, Maria Marinos, who comes to us with a background in financial reporting, editing and Public Relations for major institutions both in the UK and in Hong Kong. Maria was brought up in Essex surrounded by both horses and dogs and is the proud owner of “Leo”, whom she rescued from a life on the streets of a Greek island, and who is now living the life of Riley with the family in Islington.

Lucy Westmore, Head of UK Operations, has left us to pursue a career in counselling and to look after her young family in Brighton. In her place we welcome Nestor Rousodimos. Nestor will be concentrating on looking after our supporters... and finding new ones. Speak to him about volunteering, and bring him your suggestions for any brilliant fund-raising initiatives you have thought of!



Nestor Rousodimos.

After years of loyal service Barbara Honeysett decided it was time for a change. We are grateful for all



Bunmi Shogade

her work in the London office. We wish her well. We are delighted to welcome our new Finance and Administration Officer, Bunmi Shogade. Bunmi has served in the finance departments of various charities in the UK and as she gets to grips with our accounting procedures her cheery smile will be brightening even the greyest London day!

Equine vet, Janet Eley, will be familiar to our long-standing supporters through the years of unparalleled professionalism and knowledge she has brought to our Equine Project as its Leader. Now that she is confident that the team in Greece is completely on top of things, she is stepping back from the day to day running of the Project. But we will continue to benefit from her wisdom and experience, as she has agreed to join the Board.

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Please help animals in Greece—renew your membership or send a donation today

Name:

Address &
Postcode:

Email/phone:

I would like to join GAWF/renew my annual membership (& receive this magazine twice a year) & enclose:

☐ £20 ☐ Retired/Student/Under 18/Unwaged £15 ☐ Lifetime £200

I enclose a donation of: ☐ £100 ☐ £50 ☐ £25 ☐ £10 ☐ Other £

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