Marine Notes Journal
Conservation News
Vol. 1 | Issue 1 | 2026
www.marinenotesjournal.com

Juvenile Humpback Whale Recorded in the Pagasetic Gulf, Greece.

CHRISTOS TAKLIS[1] *orcid.org/0000-0001-9181-0292 (ctaklis@gmail.com),*

[1] *Merman Conservation Expeditions Ltd, Edinburgh, Scotland*

Abstract

On 24 January 2026, multiple independent reports confirmed the presence of a juvenile humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) inside the Pagasetic Gulf, an area where sightings of large baleen whales are considered extremely rare. Winter swimmers between Volos and Agria first observed the animal, and later the same day, by a small fishing boat near Almyros, recorded it on video, where it appeared to be moving slowly and was possibly injured or distressed. According to eyewitness accounts and local media coverage, this is the first confirmed appearance of a whale in the Pagasetic Gulf in approximately 87 years, highlighting the exceptional nature of the event. The sighting has generated both scientific interest and serious conservation concern.

Keywords: Humpback Whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae, Pagasetic Gulf*

Marine Notes Journal (MNJ), Vol. 1, Issue 1, pp. 6-8 (2026)
Received: January 26, 2026 | Accepted: February 9, 2026 | Published: February 12, 2026
Christos Taklis. (2026). Juvenile Humpback Whale Recorded in the Pagasetic Gulf, Greece.. Marine Notes, 1(1), 6-8.

On 24 January 2026, multiple independent reports confirmed the presence of a juvenile humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) inside the Pagasetic Gulf, an area where sightings of large baleen whales are considered extremely rare. Winter swimmers between Volos and Agria first observed the animal, and later the same day, by a small fishing boat near Almyros, recorded it on video, where it appeared to be moving slowly and was possibly injured or distressed.

According to eyewitness accounts and local media coverage, this is the first confirmed appearance of a whale in the Pagasetic Gulf in approximately 87 years, highlighting the exceptional nature of the event. The sighting has generated both scientific interest and serious conservation concern.

A critical factor in assessing the risk to the animal is the bathymetry of the Pagasetic Gulf. The gulf is a semi-enclosed and relatively shallow marine system, with a maximum depth of only around 100 to 102 meters, while extensive coastal zones are significantly shallower. Such depths are highly atypical for humpback whales, even juveniles, which normally utilize deeper offshore or continental shelf waters that allow safe diving, navigation, and avoidance of human activity.

The shallow depth of the gulf substantially increases the risk of disorientation, exhaustion, vessel collision, and entanglement with fishing gear. For a young whale, limited depth also restricts natural diving behavior, potentially worsening stress or pre-existing injuries. These conditions raise the likelihood that the animal entered the gulf accidentally, possibly due to navigational error, environmental disturbance, or compromised physical condition.

Public authorities and marine experts emphasize the importance of non-interference by the public and maritime users. Vessels should maintain a safe distance, avoid any attempt to approach or follow the whale, and immediately report sightings to port authorities or established marine

Marine Notes Journal (MNJ), Vol. 1, Issue 1, pp. 6-8 (2026)
Received: January 26, 2026 | Accepted: February 9, 2026 | Published: February 12, 2026
Christos Taklis. (2026). Juvenile Humpback Whale Recorded in the Pagasetic Gulf, Greece.. Marine Notes, 1(1), 6-8.

mammal rescue networks. Any indication of injury, abnormal behavior, or potential stranding requires a rapid and coordinated response by qualified professionals.

This rare event highlights the need for systematic monitoring of marine megafauna in Greek coastal waters, including semi-enclosed gulfs that are not traditionally associated with large cetaceans. As climate change, underwater noise, and increasing human activity continue to alter marine ecosystems, unexpected occurrences such as this may become more frequent and require improved preparedness, early detection, and public awareness.

Video documentation of the sighting, recorded in the Pagasetic Gulf, is available through local media and can be viewed at Magnesia News, where the original footage and report were published in the newspaper: https://magnesianews.gr/volos/falaina-emfanistike-meta-apo-87-chronia-ston-pagasitiko-vinteo.html.

Marine Notes Journal (MNJ), Vol. 1, Issue 1, pp. 6-8 (2026)

Received: January 26, 2026 | Accepted: February 9, 2026 | Published: February 12, 2026

Christos Taklis. (2026). Juvenile Humpback Whale Recorded in the Pagasetic Gulf, Greece.. Marine Notes, 1(1), 6-8.