

What have we produced thanks to NETCET?

13 partners from 5 different countries facing the Adriatic Sea have worked side by side in order to become a compact coherent team with the same aim: **to develop common strategies for the conservation of the cetaceans and sea turtles living in our sea.**

Step by step, one project activity has led to another: **monitoring by plane, boat and satellite** has provided fundamental data to identify the distribution and abundance of these protected species; the creation of tailored **databases** to collect information on stranded animals along the Adriatic coast has become a platform for exchange between experts and specialists trained within the project. All of these activities have led to the proposal for an **Adriatic Emergency Task Force** capable of intervening in the event of a mass stranding.

NETCET has also facilitated the development of **emergency and rehabilitation centres** for sea turtles and contributed to the improvement of existing equipment. Finally, the project has increased general public awareness on cetacean & sea turtle conservation through **dissemination activities** targeting fishermen, boat drivers, students and citizens.

Thanks to the IPA Adriatic CBC Programme, we have been able to finance all of these activities and develop baseline data as a starting point for future projects aimed at ensuring the future of biodiversity of the Adriatic Sea.



Throughout the implementation of the NETCET project, partners have organized consultation meetings in their countries (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and Albania) with Ministers and all the stakeholders dealing with cetaceans and sea turtles in order to:

- detect the key elements to improve in the existing NAPs
- define new NAPs and receive official approval from the competent Ministers
- give impetus for the implementation of the existing NAPs.

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPs) FOR SEA TURTLE AND CETACEAN CONSERVATION IN THE NETCET COUNTRIES

At present the national nature conservation governmental bodies, institutions and non-governmental organisations are managing the conservation of sea turtles and cetaceans in the Adriatic Sea. However, there is no international institution/organisation responsible for the development and implementation of common strategies for conservation of these species. For this reason **it is important to make sure that the proposed objectives and actions are included into other strategies and documents developed for the Adriatic Sea.** In addition, these strategies, which are being prepared or revised under the NETCET project, should be used as **guidelines for the development of National Action Plans in each Adriatic country.**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIES

A plan of action was prepared to achieve each objective. For example, in order to reduce the impact of threats, one of the targets is "to decrease mortality rate and injuries caused by humans". Since interactions with fisheries, such as by-catch, are identified as the most significant threat, a number of high priority activities were proposed to address this issue. **The common Strategies for Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles will be available in the form of two booklets on the project website (www.netcet.eu/ (dissemination).**

IDENTIFYING ACTIONS AND PRIORITIES

PARTNERS

- City of Venice (IT) - coordinator
- University of Padua, Department of Comparative Biomedicine and Food Science (IT)
- City of Pescara (IT)
- Cetacea Foundation (IT)
- Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (IT)
- State Institute for Nature Protection (HR)
- Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation (HR)
- Herpetofauna Albanian Society (AL)
- Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife of Albania (AL)
- Institute for Marine Biology (MNE)
- University of Primorska, Science and Research Centre (SI)
- WWF Italy (IT)
- Marine Educational Centre Pula (HR)

ASSOCIATES

- Institute for Nature Conservation of the Republic of Slovenia (SI)
- Veneto Region – Forestry and Parks Department (IT)
- Emilia Romagna Region – General Directorate for Environment and for Soil and Coast Protection (IT)
- Marche Region – Animal Protection, Regional Ecological (IT)

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netcet

Network for the Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic

OUR RESULTS



www.chalgroup.it

These objectives are linked to global and regional strategies, such as the Aichi targets 2011-2020, the EU biodiversity strategy 2010-2020, the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region and the ACCOBAMS strategy for cetaceans 2014-2025.

- 1 Improve knowledge about cetaceans and sea turtles
- 2 Reduce impacts of threats, particularly interaction with fisheries
- 3 Enhance cooperation between different stakeholders
- 4 Establish a common conservation legal framework within the Adriatic Sea
- 5 Ensure effective conservation of important habitats for cetaceans, and understand the adequacy of targeted protected areas for the conservation of sea turtles in the Adriatic Sea
- 6 Improve human capacities for consistent conservation within the Adriatic Sea
- 7 Raise awareness
- 8 Ensure adequate funding

The analysis of the present state of knowledge and capacity has allowed us to identify an ideal future for cetaceans and sea turtles in the Adriatic Sea: for each group of species, **8 objectives** and related targets were defined.

OBJECTIVES

The activity began with the preparation of a complete **overview of the present state of knowledge of cetaceans and sea turtles** in the Adriatic Sea: abundance, distribution and threats. Furthermore, information on the **existing human capacity** was collected: implementation systems were reviewed in the five NETCET Adriatic countries.

"The Adriatic is a safe place for cetaceans, sea turtles and humans to coexist"

NETCET partners have identified the future conservation needs of cetaceans and sea turtles in the Adriatic Sea, developing appropriate Strategies for the next decade (2016 – 2025). The purpose of these documents is to transform existing resources into concrete conservation actions in order to realize the following **common vision**:

Development of common conservation strategies for cetaceans and sea turtles in the Adriatic Sea



Conservation developments for the Adriatic Sea

Handling and emergency tools

One of the first NETCET initiatives was to create a scientific network with experts from different research fields within the Adriatic basin in order to share knowledge and experience, and develop **common databases for reporting strandings**. This network helps scientists to observe any increase in mortality of animals living in the Adriatic Sea and to follow common protocols and strategies to face emergencies.

NETCET has also put in place an **Adriatic Emergency Task Force**. It is a group of experts (biologists and veterinarians) in cetacean and sea turtle (C&ST) sciences such as behaviour, physiology, rescue and medicine, trained to intervene in case of environmental incidents, such as unusual mortality events or mass strandings. They act as a specialist team to support national authorities. The first incident took place in September 2014 in Vasto (Italy) where seven sperm whales stranded on the beach. More than eighty members of the task force worked together to try to save these stranded animals.

In parallel 133 veterinarians have benefited from **training programmes on veterinary operations** and stranding management for cetaceans and sea turtles.

Standard protocols for post-mortem and physical examination of C&ST were produced and distributed.

Reference textbooks on veterinarian operations for specialists working with cetaceans and sea turtles were produced and distributed to the relevant users.



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Sea turtles and cetaceans databases



www.adriaticseaturtles.eu



www.marinemammals.eu/database_spiaggiamenti

Adriatic Sea monitoring

The results of the **NETCET monitoring activities inform us that the Adriatic Sea is more important for cetaceans and sea turtles than ever imagined before.**

The **aerial survey** (over 14,000 km in 100 hours surveys) has provided an overview of the use of the Adriatic Sea by these species and revealed that the Northern Adriatic is particularly important for sea turtles. This was confirmed by the **satellite tracking of 20 juvenile loggerhead turtles (JLT) and 3 green turtles (GT)** which proved that **JLT remain in the Adriatic Sea** with seasonal movements strongly dependent on the Northern Adriatic foraging grounds, and **GT move to warmer waters of the Southern Adriatic during winter.**

Through an on-line system, everyone can follow the movements of the "NETCET" turtles: www.seaturtle.org/tracking/?project_id=1021

The aerial survey also showed a **diversity of cetaceans** in the region with **large numbers of striped dolphins** and the presence of **Cuvier's beaked whales** in the Southern Adriatic Sea. **Bottlenose dolphin** populations were monitored through consistent **photo-identification studies** (over 500 hours of boat surveys) in all the Adriatic countries. Analysis shows that **each of these population is unique with little mixing between them.**

At individual level, stranded animals were also examined and causes of death analysed for both mass and individual beaching.



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Follow the "NETCET" turtles



Awareness campaigns around the Adriatic

100 public releases of sea turtles attended by over 10,000 people.

2 million inhabitants reached by mass-media about the conservation of sea turtles and cetaceans.

More than 700 fishermen made aware of the impact of their activity on sea turtles, and of the correct procedures to rescue animals accidentally captured in their fishing gear.

NETCET City Network

A network of cities along the Adriatic coast with the aim of raising awareness for the conservation of sea turtles and cetaceans. See more at: www.netcet.eu/city-network

Emergency centre

First aid for injured sea turtles (maximum stay: 48 hours before the transfer to a rehabilitation centre)

Rehabilitation centre

Assistance for sea turtles in the hospitalization or convalescence phase

VENICE - ITALY

The sea turtle emergency centre is composed of 3 tanks and a laboratory equipped with veterinary first aid tools. An office has also been set up to collect data on sea turtles.



RICCIONE - ITALY



© CNR-Ancona

NUMANA - ITALY

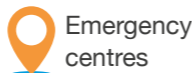
A protected marine area has been set up to monitor recovering sea turtles before their release.



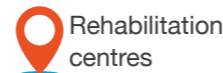
PESCARA - ITALY

The sea turtle rehabilitation centre has been set up with a convalescence and isolation area equipped with 15 tanks. The centre has also an area dedicated to educational activities and a space for conferences and trainings addressed to professionals.

Centres set up thanks to the NETCET project:



Emergency centres



Rehabilitation centres

Existing emergency or rehabilitation centres improved thanks to the NETCET project:

- 1 Brač Island (Croatia)
- 2 Rijeka (Croatia)
- 3 Zadar (Croatia)
- 4 Pag Island (Croatia)
- 5 Šibenik (Croatia)
- 6 Split (Croatia)
- 7 Dubrovnik (Croatia)
- 8 Korčula Island (Croatia)
- 9 Lošinj (Croatia)
- 10 Krk (Croatia)
- 11 Pula (Croatia)
- 12 Riccione (Italy)

and two centres in Zagreb (Croatia): Croatian Veterinary Institute (CVI) & University of Veterinary Medicine (UVM)

NETCET City Network



MALI LOŠINJ - CROATIA

The Blue World Institute sea turtle rehabilitation center is located in the middle of the tourist complex in 'Sunny Bay' Mali Lošinj and has the capacity to host 4 injured turtles, for short term recovery.

PULA - CROATIA



© Blue World Institute

PATOK - ALBANIA

The centre is composed of 2 rooms: a laboratory equipped with veterinary first aid tools and 2 two tanks, a conference room with a capacity of 50 people for awareness raising lectures.



Kotor
Tivat
Budva
Ulcinj
Patok
Vlore
Orikum



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