

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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LOŠINJ MARINE EDUCATION CENTRE

During the 2013 Lošinj Marine Education Centre (LMEC) was visited by a total of 8718 people. Of the total number of visitors in the past year there were 6266 individual visitors and 2452 were students who took part in lectures and workshops on the marine environment. In order to be more efficient and available to all our users, during the summer months we hired two students to work in LMEC.

As every year, this year we also tried to refresh part of the LMEC and this time it was Kid's corner that has been renewed. It has got a whole new look with cheerful colourful table and chairs for young visitors and a new shelf for books and toys.

One of the most important activities in preparation for the summer season was the translation and printing of educational workbooks in English, German and Italian, to make them available to a wider range of visitors who showed great interest in them.

MARINE SCIENCE CENTRE – PLANS & PREPARATION

As the preparation of project documentation for the new Marine Science Centre (MSC) in Mali Lošinj is still ongoing, we decided to start involving the local community in our plans and do something visible on the existing old building. So, on the Earth Day, 22 April, we organized the clean-up of the environment and the interior of the old military building which will accommodate future MSC. Numerous volunteers from the City and County institutions joined us by participating in the action. This way we can thank them once again for the great effort they made so that this place situated in a very busy location gets at least a little bit better appearance before the tourist season. Also, after completion of the clean-up action, on the wall next to the entrance to the building we placed the panel with the information and the vision of the future MSC. The centre will provide education programs in cooperation with the Croatian and foreign universities, modern multimedia permanent exhibition, licensed secondary and primary school programs and the Sea Turtle Rescue Centre. In addition to a range of facilities and advanced programs for research, education and conservation, MSC will be great tourist attraction and give a significant boost to the local community.

SEA TURTLE RESCUE CENTRE

The biggest event for Blue World Institute in 2013 was opening of the Sea Turtle Rescue Centre (STRC) in Mali Lošinj, in the tourist complex Sunčana uvala. STRC was opened by Croatian President Ivo Josipović on 19th July 2013. The opening of this important facility was founded as part of the Network for the Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic (NETCET), a project co-funded by the IPA CBC Adriatic Programme. Great help in realization of this project was provided by the City of Mali Lošinj, Tourist Board of Mali Lošinj and Jadranka group, who donated space for STRC in the pool complex Vespera. STRC is a place where injured sea turtles get all the help they need before returning to the sea. Another important role of the STRC is education. Our mission includes making it easier for the public to understand the reasons for conservation and protection of the sea turtles. There are several touch screen applications in STRC providing information to visitors. Educative panels provide information about biology and anatomy of sea turtles as well as the threats they encounter. Last summer, we hired a team of biologists and biology students to provide our visitors with all the information. In total, this year STRC was visited by around 900 people in just two summer months.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL GROUPS

The popularity of BWI is growing every year, both among scientific community and among preschools and schools, which are taking more and more interest in our education program. During the 2013th our lectures and workshops were attended by over 2.400 children and young people of different ages. As expected, the most of these groups visited us in May and June. What makes us especially satisfied is that, other than having visitors from Croatian schools and preschools, the number of school groups visiting from other European Union countries is on the rise. This year 5 groups of high school students from Germany participated in specialized day-long programs. Moreover, LMEC has become an unavoidable stopover for many Austrian high school groups on their field education program. Additionally, in 2013 five students completed internship and training for marine research in BWI.

With the beginning of the school year, we started with new project of “Little School of Natural Sciences”. This is an extracurricular activity for the local children. A few groups of children have been included in this project led by BWI’s education team and an external associate teacher Marinela Cukrov. A group of 25 elementary school students from Mali Lošinj gathers every Thursday in STRC in Mali Lošinj. Around ten children from Veli Lošinj meet every Tuesday at LMEC. The youngest beneficiaries are children from the local kindergarten Cricket, which is also our partner in this project. Our educators are visiting kindergarten once a week to teach children about the nature through games. The program is split up into three sections: botany, zoology and ecology. The content is presented to the children during thematic and creative workshops, presentations, field education, and practical work and through numerous entertaining games. It is important to mention that the “Little School of Natural Science” is taking place under the auspices of the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund and the City of Mali Lošinj.

As children from other communities on the island of Lošinj and neighbouring islands would not be left out, in collaboration with Elementary School Mario Martinolić from Mali Lošinj we created another project for regional schools of the archipelago "Our Island's Living World". During this year, we visited regional schools in Veli Lošinj and Nerezine. In the spring of 2014 the project will follow with visits to regional schools on the islands of Ilovik, Susak and Unije. The plan is to organize lectures and workshops for these children, with the goal of familiarizing them with our island's living world. The Project is being financially supported by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds and the City of Mali Lošinj.

After the end of the main tourist season, we started developing new offer of lectures and workshops for school and preschool groups. Besides that, during the winter months we will work intensively on the refreshments of the existing lectures and workshops. For all the content of our educational programs we asked for the expert opinion and certificate of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency.

21ST DOLPHIN DAY

On 1st July 2013 we organized Dolphin Day event for the twenty-first time. This year we decided to expand the event area from Veli Lošinj to Sunčana uvala in Mali Lošinj and organize some of the activities in the animation area of Family Hotel Vespera and our STRC. The program started with an Open Door event in Family Hotel Vespera where all the children could participate in art workshops using natural material collected on the beach. The main theme was marine life. At the same time we placed the traditional exhibition of children's drawings in Veli Lošinj, The winner of this year's drawing competition was Lena Kunda from Mali Lošinj. The main program began with the art workshop "Do it yourself" in front of the LMEC. There was preparation of marine animals in origami technique, making sea turtles from paper plates and temporary tattoos with characters marine animals. A record number of 100 children of different age participated this year in "Treasure Hunt" game. Traditionally, during the afternoon, at bay Rovenska, Water Polo Tournament was organized in cooperation with the Water Polo Club Lošinj – Jazon. In the evening hours in front of the LMEC youngest students of the Language School "Agora" sung the songs about marine life in English. The 21st Dolphin Day ended in the late night hours with a great and relaxing acoustic concert by a young songwriter Irena Žilić.

AQUAMARINE

At the end of the year we were busy with preparation, publication and sending of a new issue of Aquamarine, newsletter for dolphin adopters, members and associates of the BWI which is available on our website http://www.blue-world.org/media/files/Akvamarin_2013_EN.pdf.