

Area of Lošinj Dolphin Reserve is not only important for the resident bottlenose dolphin community. Within the area there are rich submarine life, historical artifacts, bird nesting sites and marine turtle over-wintering sites. Designation will not only help protect these aspects of the environment but also help maintain fish stocks and promote a more sustainable use of the resources of the archipelago.



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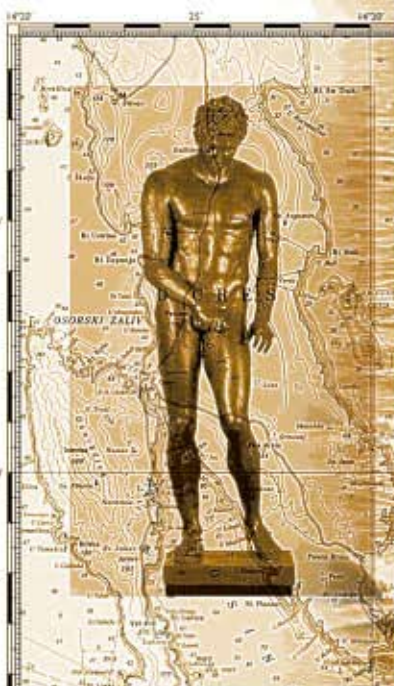
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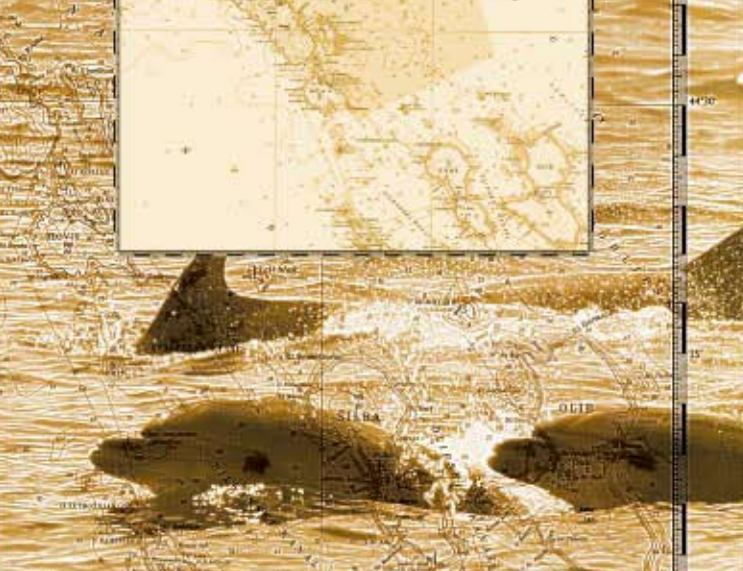
Strengthening the civil society sector  
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# Lošinj dolphin reserve

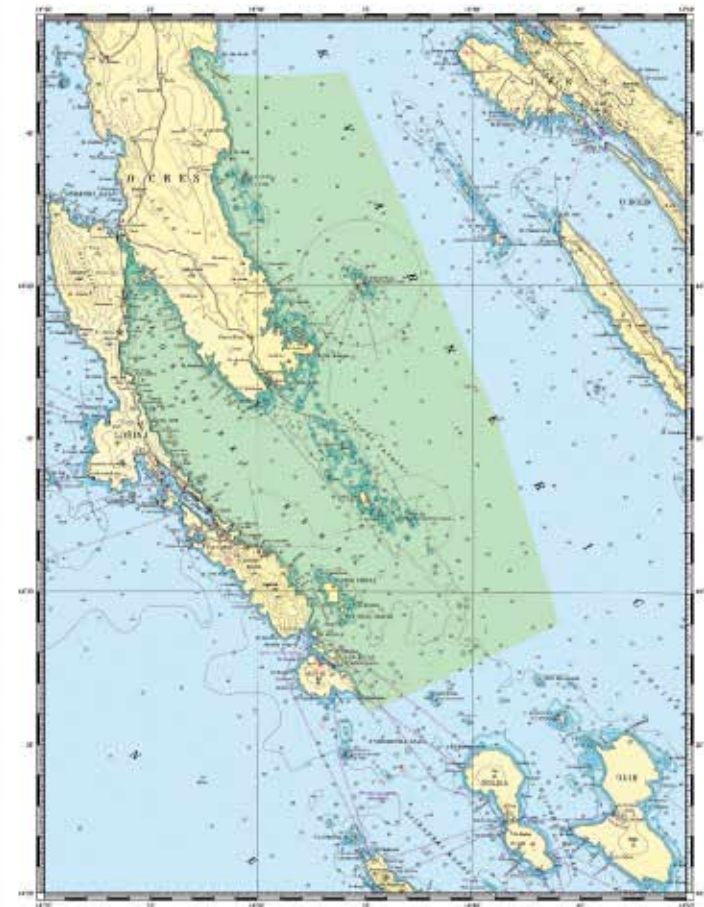




The bottlenose dolphins in the Cres-Lošinj area are the only known resident population of dolphins found in Croatian waters. Scientific research of this population that is being conducted by Blue World Institute for Marine Research and Conservation estimates that there are about 100 bottlenose dolphins living in the area. The research also suggests that this population has declined dramatically during the last 10 years. The population of Lošinj bottlenose dolphins is very small, isolated, vulnerable and rare in the Mediterranean. According to the criteria set by World Conservation Union (IUCN), this population should be regarded as critically endangered.

Overexploitation of many species, loss of biodiversity, habitat destruction and pollution are just a few major results of human activities. In order to stop or try to reverse our destructive activities to our environment we should change the way we are using and managing its use. A step towards sustainable use and conservation of the environment is creation of the marine reserves. Nevertheless, the health of the dolphins and their habitat depends on more than laws and regulations - it depends on everybody.

Disturbance by boats in the summer months, industrial fishing and land based pollution, including marine litter are considered to be the biggest threats to this population. According to generally accepted concept, protected area should be managed by a public institution or organisation that brings together all those involved in using of the area.



Not all of the area has the same importance for the dolphins or the people that live there. By identifying areas that are important, we can modify the type of protection that is needed for each particular part of the protected area through zonation. Zonation can help to preserve the ecological processes that are required to maintain the dolphin population at a viable level but also to allow for the regulated human activities like fishing or recreation to take place within the protected area.

In January 2002 Blue World submitted a proposal for the establishment of the Lošinj Dolphin Reserve to the Croatian Ministry of Environment. In August 2006 preventive protection was declared for the period of three years. The aim of this declaration is to conserve the bottlenose dolphins and their habitat for future generations to enjoy whilst maintaining the area's economic and social resources.

Efforts can then be better co-ordinated and directed towards the long-term conservation of the dolphins, together with social and economic interests. When setting the rules and regulations the well being of the dolphins and other marine life as well as sustainable using of the resources should be taken in consideration.

