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, 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 cetaceans & 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.

What have we produced thanks to NETCET?

• City of Venice (IT) - coordinator
• University of Padua, Department of Comparative Biomedicine and Food Science (IT)
• City of Pula (HR)
• 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 (IT)
• Institute for National Institute for Environmental Protection 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)
• Institute for Marine Biology (MNE)
• City of Venice (IT) - coordinator
• Marche Region – Animal Protection (IT)
• Emilia Romagna Region – General Directorate for Environment and for Soil and Coast Protection (IT)
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The common Strategies for Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic

Among the goals of the project, the following are especially important:

1. The common Strategies for Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic
2. Identifying actions and priorities
3. Implementation of the strategies
4. Establishing a common conservation legal framework within the Adriatic Sea
5. Development of common conservation practices in the Adriatic Sea

The common Strategies for Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic

• The Adriatic is a safe place for cetaceans, sea turtles and humans to coexist
• Ensure effective conservation of important habitats for cetaceans, and understand 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 plan of action was prepared to achieve each objective. For example, in order to reduce interactions with fisheries, one of the targets is “to decrease mortality rate and injuries caused by humans”.

Implementation of the Strategies

Throughout the implementation of the NETCET project, partners have organized consultation workshops to carry out these activities. Activities are included into other strategies and documents developed for the Adriatic Sea. However, there is no international institution/organisation responsible for the Adriatic Sea. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the proposed objectives and actions are included into other strategies and documents developed for the Adriatic Sea.

Our Results

The common Strategies for Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic

Goals

1. Establish a common conservation legal framework within the Adriatic Sea
2. Development of common conservation practices in the Adriatic Sea
3. Establishing a common conservation legal framework within the Adriatic Sea
4. Implementation of the strategies
5. Development of common conservation practices in the Adriatic Sea

The common Strategies for Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic

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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.

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 logoopherate llamas (ALT) and 3 green turtles (GT) which proved that ALT 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 levels, stranded animals were also examined and causes of death analysed for both mass and individual beached.

Awareness campaigns around the Adriatic

100 public releases of sea turtles attended by over 10,000 people.
2 million inhabitants reached by means of a handbook 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.

More than 4,000 leisure boat owners informed about how to drive and behave around cetaceans and sea turtles to minimize their disturbance.

Over 3,000 schoolchildren living along the Adriatic coast taught about the conservation of these species using a dedicated educational kit.

Conservation developments for the Adriatic Sea

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

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

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 capability to treat 4 injured turtles, for short term recovery.

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

Follow the "NETCET" turtles

www.adriaticseaturtles.eu

www.marine-mammals.eu/database_spaggiamenti

Sea turtles and cetaceans databases

Sea turtles and cetaceans databases

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