



TARTALIFE - Reduction of sea turtle mortality
in commercial fisheries

LIFE12 NAT/IT/000937



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Project description:

Background

The conservation of the sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) – an EU priority species, listed in annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive, and protected under various international conventions – is of strategic importance for the whole Mediterranean basin. Fishing represents the main threat to the species' survival.

Researchers (Casale, 2011) estimate that around 130 000 turtles are accidentally caught in fishing nets every year in the Mediterranean: approximately 70 000 in open sea longlines, 40 000 by bottom trawling and 23 000 in fixed nets. This results in over 40 000 deaths annually. However, the official data does not include all fishing boats, and probably also underestimates the number of smaller vessels. A more realistic number, therefore, is thought to be around 200 000, with a proportionally higher number deaths also.

The negative impacts of fishing occur mainly in seven of the 21 Mediterranean countries, which are collectively responsible for 83% of the total number of turtle by-catches: with the Italian fishing fleet responsible for 18% of the total, thus presenting the biggest threat in the Mediterranean. These figures, together with accounts from fishermen, and the increasing number of interventions by Italian sea turtle rescue centres, highlight the urgent need for action.

Objectives

The project, which involves 15 Italian regions on the Mediterranean, aims to reduce the mortality of the sea turtles by two main actions: 1. Reducing turtle by-catches caused by the use of open sea longline, bottom trawl and fixed nets by:

- Encouraging the use of circle hooks (which are less damaging to fish) and turtle excluder devices, or TEDs (special devices that allow a captured sea turtle to escape if caught in a fisherman's net);
 - Testing a new sea turtle acoustic repellent, or STAR, and a new type of gill net.
2. Reducing post-capture turtle deaths by training and raising awareness among fishermen, and by strengthening the rescue/ first aid centres for the sea turtles.

Expected results:

- The use of 18 circle hooks by c. 250 boats and 1 500 fishermen and training on using circle hooks for c. 500-700 fishermen (15 regions);
- The use of 10 new TEDs by c. 38 boats and 200 fishermen, and training on the use of TEDs for 300-450 fishermen (eight regions);
- Testing of STAR and the new type of gill net by six boats covering 120 fishing activities over 10 areas;
- Training of 500-750 fishermen on reducing post-capture sea turtle deaths (15 regions);
- Strengthening of seven sea turtle rescue centres, re-training of c. 200-250 staff, a new first aid centre (Lampedusa) and 15 first aid points (Emilia Romagna/Marche);
- The creation of eight information desks and 15 contact points (technical assistance) to support fishermen in requesting funds to replace traditional fishing gear with low-impact equipment (15 regions);
- Participation of c. 350-400 fishermen in information days (15 regions);
- Increased awareness among people (tourists, young people, administrators ...) on the need to protect the marine environment and on the conservation and sustainable management of marine resources.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Information - Governance - Awareness raising - Information
Species - Reptiles

Keywords

marine environment, preventive measure, endangered species, fishing industry, environmental awareness, environmental training

Target species

Caretta caretta

Natura 2000 sites

Not applicable

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - Istituto di Scienze Marine
Type of organisation	Research institution
Description	The Institute of Marine Sciences (ISMAR), in Ancona, Italy, carries out research in a broad range of fields, from physical oceanography, to chemical oceanography, environmental ecology and fisheries and fishing technology. The institute is organised into several research units, including marine fishery biology, the environment, oceanography, marine geology and marine microbiology.
Partners	Provincia Regionale di Agrigento, Italy Ente Parco Nazionale dell'Asinara, Italy Fondazione Cetacea Onlus, Italy Associazione Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile, Italy Area Marina Protetta "Isole Egadi", Italy Legambiente Onlus, Italy Area Marina Protetta Isole Pelagie Ente Gestore Comune di Lampedusa e Linosa, Italy Consorzio UNIMAR Società Cooperativa, Italy

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE12 NAT/IT/000937
Duration	01-OCT-2013 to 30-SEP -2019

Total budget	4,228,000.00 €
EU contribution	3,171,000.00 €
Project location	Piemonte(Italia) Valle d'Aosta(Italia) Liguria(Italia) Lombardia(Italia) Trentino-Alto Adige(Italia) Veneto(Italia) Friuli-Venezia Giulia(Italia) Emilia-Romagna(Italia) Toscana(Italia) Umbria(Italia) Marche(Italia) Lazio(Italia) Campania(Italia) Abruzzo(Italia) Molise(Italia) Puglia(Italia) Basilicata(Italia) Calabria(Italia) Sicilia(Italia) Sardegna(Italia)

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Read more:

Project web site

[Project's website](#)

Video link

[Link to the project's video: "Progetto TartaLife per la riduzione della mortalità della tartaruga marina Caretta caretta in Mediterraneo" \(8'05"\)](#)

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