

LIFE MareNatura Project - Brief for Journalists

LIFE MareNatura: Protecting Marine Life in a Changing World

The LIFE MareNatura project (July 2023 – June 2029) aims to mitigate the threats that affect nine (9) of the most threatened EU priority species of seabirds, marine turtles and marine mammals. These species are the Mediterranean Monk seal, the Loggerhead turtle, the Green turtle, the Sperm whale, the Harbour porpoise, the Cuvier's beaked whale, the Common dolphin, the Yelkouan shearwater and the Audouin's gull. So far, the majority of the conservation efforts have targeted the breeding areas of these species and thus their offshore habitats (feeding grounds, congregation sites and migration corridors) remained to a large degree unexplored. The goal of the LIFE MareNatura Project is to significantly contribute to the conservation of these offshore habitats, through the identification of biodiversity hotspots in the Ionian, Southern Adriatic and Aegean Seas, strongholds of the target species populations, by employing a massive multidisciplinary survey effort through innovative technologies and methods.

Subsequently, the identified biodiversity hotspots will be proposed for designation as Natura 2000 sites in Greek waters and the exclusive economic zone. The designation of new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) will enlarge the EU Natura 2000 network, implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which sets under protection at least 30% of the EU's land and sea areas (30x30).

The project's concrete methodology consists of research (data collection), conservation, policy and awareness raising activities that work in a complementary way to address the threats that affect marine vulnerable species like bycatch, underwater noise, intensive marine traffic, uncontrolled coastal development, pressures from tourism, hydrocarbon platforms, underwater gas pipelines, offshore wind farms etc.



Specifically, the project's main pillars of action are:

- Establishment and implementation of a systematic monitoring mechanism to identify marine biodiversity hotspots and development of a Marine Biodiversity Hotspots Inventory (MOBI).
- Development of a decision support tool that will facilitate the identification of spatial zones for marine uses.

- Setting up of a monitoring scheme, which will provide data for the regular assessment of the conservation status of the targeted species, and an early warning system for threats.
- Awareness raising of marine biodiversity conservation, through targeted communication activities.
- Lobbying policymakers in Greece, Italy and the EU to support the official designation of the new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and put into effect the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy.

The LIFE MareNatura project is being implemented by twelve partners under the coordination of [HCMR](#), namely, [ARCHELON](#), [ISPRA](#), [NECCA](#), [UAegean](#), [UoC](#), [NOA](#), [HOS](#), [MOM](#), [MEDASSET](#), [NCC](#) and [Waterproof Marine Consultancy & Services](#). The project is funded by the [EU LIFE Programme](#).

Notes to Editors

1. For further information /interviews please contact: Dr. Michalis Probonas, Communication Officer, University of Crete - Natural History Museum of Crete (email: mprobonas@nhmc.uoc.gr, Tel: +30 2810393265)
2. Please find the project's photo material [HERE](#)
3. Follow us on Social Media:
 -  <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61557166352873>
 -  <https://www.youtube.com/@LIFEMareNatura>
4. Website: www.lifemarenatura.eu

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