

REPORTS OF ACCOBAMS PARTNERS



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Note of the Secretariat:

Pursuant to the "Rules and commitments of ACCOBAMS Partners", reflected in Annex 2 of Resolution 7.9, adopted by MOP7: *"Before each Meeting of the Parties, ACCOBAMS Partners shall report on the implementation of their activities and on the use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo. To this end, their reports shall reach the Permanent Secretariat and the relevant National Focal Point at the latest two months before the Bureau meeting held to prepare the Meeting of the Parties."*

In this context, the Secretariat invited ACCOBAMS Partners to complete the ACCOBAMS Partner Report template with a view to presenting their reports at the Sixth Meeting of ACCOBAMS Extended Bureau held in April 2025.

This document presents the activities undertaken by ACCOBAMS Partners within the framework of the 2023-2025 ACCOBAMS Work Programme, in relation to capacity building, public awareness and research activities.

Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation



Name of the Representative: Anastasia Miliou

Capacity building activities:

The Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation is dedicated to protecting the biodiversity of the Aegean Sea and the NE Mediterranean region through hands-on research and conservation efforts. Our teams work year-round at sea, conducting field and laboratory research, with the use of 4 equipped research vessels and 2 research bases in the eastern Aegean Sea. Our conservation actions are based on 25 years of close cooperation with local communities and authorities in the Aegean Sea and other coastal regions of Greece. Also, through the cooperation with international NGOs, universities and other institutions, we strive to achieve tangible results in applied marine conservation.

Capacity Building with Local Communities Archipelagos fosters strong, long-term collaborations with local communities built on trust—a foundation that enhances and sustains our conservation efforts. For over 25 years, we have worked closely with small-scale artisanal fishers, a key stakeholder group in marine conservation. We collect vital Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) on their marine environment, including habitat mapping, species distribution, illegal industrial and IUU fisheries, and historical data, which also become part of peer-reviewed publications. Together with the local fishing communities and with the islands' authorities, we develop solutions to pressing conservation challenges in their region.

Capacity Building with International Students Throughout the year, Archipelagos hosts approximately 500 scientists, researchers, graduates, and students to the Aegean Sea islands for hands-on educational and training programs. These experiences of applied marine conservation help the new generation of marine scientists develop practical skills, expand their knowledge through immersive fieldwork and develop a good comprehension of the real life situation related to long-term cooperation with local communities. Our collaborations with universities and research institutions continue to grow, integrating diverse expertise into our conservation initiatives. Our multidisciplinary approach spans marine mammal research, marine ecology, fisheries, GIS & remote sensing, media and communication, graphic design, law and policy, and environmental education.

Public awareness activities:

The results of Archipelagos research and conservation work and the media material collected during the year-round research and conservation work at sea is used as a basis for multiple public awareness activities in local, national and international levels, with the focus on the following target groups:

- **Local communities** of the Greek islands and coastal regions. We carry out on-site awareness raising activities year-round, mainly out of the tourist season, typically in the locations where the research boats are active for the various projects. Target specific stakeholder groups (fishermen, schools, teachers, local authorities, professionals of the tourism sector) have specific themes according to the key marine conservation priorities of the various regions.

Equivalent awareness raising activities are also carried out via online platforms in many other areas where the research boats do not survey.

- **General public** is reached through our frequent features in mainstream Greek media (i.e. tv, newspapers, radio, social media), where Archipelagos has the platform to inform people and communities from far-reaching corners of the world about issues related to marine conservation. Documentaries and articles in international media (TV, newspapers and online media) are also released and reach the international public.

Other important public awareness activities involve citizen science - targeting both the local communities and the visitors.

For example, the Archipelagos' Eco-Navigation project records valuable data on marine life, through engaging with sailors and sea enthusiasts, fishermen, divers and other members of the local communities and visitors of the island. They share their observations and photographic materials, advancing our efforts for the conservation of the wildlife in our study area and contributing to our goal of building both an international online community and a significant database.

Research activities:

Through year-round surveys between 2023 – 2025, one of the main goals of the marine mammal research at Archipelagos has been to improve the understanding of the soundscape and how noise pollution can potentially affect the species of marine mammals in the study area. Also, continue monitoring the resident cetaceans (*D. delphis*, *T. truncatus*, *S. coeruleoalba*, *Z. cavirostris*) as well as the sporadic visitor populations (*P. macrocephalus* and *G. griseus*). The monitoring includes a PhotoID catalog of all the species which allows to estimate abundance of populations and encounter rates analysis of the area. As well, behavioural and acoustic data collection to understand habitat use and possible threats. The main potential threats which our research is focused on are fisheries, marine traffic including noise pollution, and plastic debris.

From 2023 – 2025 Archipelagos has performed 182 boat-based surveys and 80 land surveys in the study area.

Archipelagos is part of a stranding network in the Aegean Sea and has collected data on 37 dead strandings of dolphin, sea turtle and monk seals.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

Accobams partner logo is being displayed on all 4 Archipelagos' research boats, as well as in all stakeholder presentations in topics related to marine mammal research.

Other activities:

The results of Archipelagos' research on marine mammal populations, are coupled by other research activities that we carry out in the same region including fisheries, IUU fisheries studies and fish stock assessment, mapping of the distribution and biodiversity of *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass and deep-water coralligenous reefs, studies on microplastic pollution in various levels of the food chain.

A related key activity of Archipelagos Institute is the creation of the Aegean Marine Life Sanctuary on the island of Lipsi, for the long-term hosting of *T. truncatus* to be translocated from captive facilities, which currently is in the last phases of development. While the construction and licensing process is ongoing, our experts board are completing all standard operation protocols following among others the recommendations issued recently by Accobams on this matter.

DELPHIS NGO

Name of the Representative: Dr. Eyal BIGAL

Capacity building activities:

Delphis holds quarterly volunteer meetings to provide updates on organisational activities, highlight key milestones, and share information on upcoming events. Each meeting includes an enrichment activity, such as a lecture, which has recently been opened to the public. On average, 30 participants attend each gathering.

In October 2024, Delphis NGO launched a unique citizen science initiative, offering specialised training for volunteers to become marine surveyors. This programme enables participants to actively contribute to dolphin surveys conducted as part of marine mammal research in Israel. Since its inception, 50 volunteers have been trained, including 16 photographers who completed an additional workshop focused on photographing dolphins for research purposes. Training sessions are held quarterly, in accordance with the organisation's regulations. The next session is scheduled for 8 April 2025, with an estimated 20 additional surveyors expected to be certified. Monthly surveys have been conducted as part of this project, with five completed to date and 36 volunteers participating.

Public awareness activities:

In 2024, Delphis NGO inaugurated an annual photography competition to raise awareness about marine conservation. The first competition attracted hundreds of amateur and professional photographers. Nine winners were awarded across three categories, with prizes announced at a live event at Herzliya Marina, featuring a guest lecture. The 2025 competition will conclude on International Dolphin Day, 14 April 2025, again at Herzliya Marina. Registration closes at the end of March. The competition page has attracted over 5,000 visitors, and social media promotions have reached more than 16,000 people.

From January 2023 to March 2025, Delphis' marine mammal conservation content has reached over 1.5 million users on social media, generating approximately 80,000 unique interactions.

Delphis continues to advance environmental education through hands-on activities. Project 'Yulia the Monk Seal,' now in its second year, involves over 140 schools in collaboration with Israel's Ministry of Education. The programme offers lesson plans, teacher training, and an online platform, deepening students' understanding of marine mammals.

In 2024, the Dolphin and Sea Centre welcomed 2,000 visitors, including school groups and retirees, who engaged in guided tours and activities highlighting marine biodiversity and conservation. Additionally, 15 kindergarten classes participated in the "Feeling the Sea - Sea Kindergartens" programme in Ashdod, learning about dolphins, marine life, and environmental responsibility. Specialised seminars for Ministry of Education staff provided further training on integrating marine conservation into school curricula.

Research activities:

After a 50-year absence, the Mediterranean Monk Seal (MMS), once considered locally extinct, has returned to Israel's coast. Since 2010, over 100 sightings have been documented, with reliability assessments conducted as per Roditi-Elasar et al. (2021). Photographs collected by Delphis researchers have identified four individual seals. A habitat survey found a shortage of suitable caves along the coast due to limestone cliff collapse, sea-level rise,

and increased tourism. Visiting seals currently find only a few resting sites. Delphis is promoting the creation of protected habitats by restoring natural caves. Efforts are focused on obtaining permits for restoring two caves within the Rosh Hanikra marine protected area.

Delphis provides an immediate response to all marine mammal strandings. If a specimen is found in a low state of decomposition, it is collected for necropsy to determine the cause of death and gather biological data. If decomposition is advanced, the animal is sampled, measured, and documented on site. Between January 2023 and March 2025, 24 stranded marine mammals were recorded along Israel's Mediterranean coast, including six dolphins with evidence of entanglement in fishing gear:

- 17 Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*)
- 4 Common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*)
- 1 Striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)
- 1 Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)
- 1 Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*)
- 1 Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*)

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

Delphis NGO displays the ACCOBAMS Partner logo on its official website. However, the logo has not been used in any other media or publications during the reporting period.

DelTa APS - Delfini e Tartarughe nel Golfo di Trieste, Italia
(Dolphins and Turtles in the Gulf of Trieste, Italy)

Name of the Representative: Ms Karin SCHLAPPA - President

Capacity building activities:

Since DelTa has always been focused on educational activities and promoting ocean literacy, we apply successfully to become member of the [EU4Ocean Platform](#) and EU4Ocean Coalition for Ocean Literacy.

DelTa members were invited to give introductory lectures at the University of Trieste for second-year students of the Science and Technology for the Environment and Nature course. The lectures are focused on information about the presence of cetacean in the Gulf of Trieste over the years and the activities done by DelTa in support to raise awareness and involved volunteers.

Public awareness activities:

The biologists of DelTa have worked to engage passengers of the ferry line, operating during summer in the Gulf of Trieste, in so-called "Citizen Science," raising awareness about the importance of studying the presence of cetaceans and turtles and understanding the dangers they face.

Research activities:

From June to September, we take advantage of the tourist ferry line operating daily in the Gulf of Trieste as a platform of opportunity to collect sighting data of cetaceans in the area. However, during the summer of 2023, technical issues with the ferry disrupted the service, and similar problems at the start of the 2024 season led to the suspension of the ferry line for the remainder of the summer. As a result, DelTa's activities were hindered.

Despite this setback, we continue gathering sighting data through citizen science via the AvvistApp, social media, and collaboration with the local Coast Guard, scientific institutions, and sea user associations.

The database of cetacean and sea turtle sightings, as well as strandings, has continued to be updated. The recorded data comes from direct observations by DelTa researchers, reports from scientists affiliated with other research institutions, and contributions from tourists and boaters who share information via phone calls, messages, videos, or the app. All reports have been verified before being added to the database, from which final data are extracted annually.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

The ACCOBAMS partner logo is displayed on the DelTa webpage.

Other activities:

Thanks to the collaboration with the Veterinary Service of the FVG Region, it has been possible to support the authorities responsible for the first aid of stranded cetaceans.

We are currently developing a card-based board game to raise awareness about marine litter as a threat to marine species, not just marine mammals. This game will be distributed to local schools, libraries, youth associations, and other educational spaces as a tool for game-based learning in a non-formal educational context.

DMAD - Marine Mammals Research Association

Name of the Representative: Dr. Aylin AKKAYA



Capacity building activities:

Türkiye

- Eight online workshops with more than 100 students about marine mammals' species identification and photo identification techniques were conducted in Türkiye
- A total of 30 students-prioritising female students- were invited to five different scientific field surveys in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea where they learned distance sampling techniques, acoustic and visual survey protocols, and photo-identification.

Montenegro

- We have provided five monthly workshops; cetacean identification, how to operate software such as Pythagoras, Pamguard, GIS, Discovery and Flukebook, how to work the theodolite, how to do photo identification, cetacean acoustics.

Public awareness activities:

Türkiye

- We built a sighting network and received more than 52 marine mammal observation reports, including dolphins and whales, in Turkish waters
- We conducted four boat tours under the project called "Scientist for a Day" program. It has also been a significant public outreach effort, allowing participants to join researchers in the field and gain hands-on experience in marine mammal research
- During our GGDS expeditions, to reach more locals, "DOLPHIN WATCH GUIDELINE", "WHALE XING!" and "KEEP THE UNDERWATER NOISE DOWN, LET ME BE HEARD!" stickers were handed out in Fethiye, Mersin, Kaş, and Alanya, while also providing information to interested parties about our seas and the marine mammals inhabiting them
- We have conducted six different presentations on cetaceans of Istanbul and existing threats to spread the knowledge to the local communities
- We have organised multiple dolphin watch tours under WWF-Türkiye with close collaboration with Istanbul Municipality and reached over 1000 public.
- We were in total of 40 media releases and interviews
- We have created a documentary movie titled as "What it Takes to Find a Sperm Whale in Turkey?" on our research effort. The documentary was published on Youtube and reached 1 million Viewers
- We have organized a total of 12 stakeholder meetings where we talked about the activities of our NGO, cetacean importance and how we can come together to create a difference for marine conservation in Türkiye.
- We have organized four different meetings with fishers to start mutually respectful corporations on marine conservation

Montenegro

We developed a citizen-science platform, the Montenegro Dolphin Sightings Network and received almost 200 sightings.

- We created a dolphin watch guideline for the tour boat operators in Türkiye.
- We demonstrated several art works in front of the Kotor Old Town for public awareness.

- We successfully collaborated with the Tourism Organization of Kotor with a project under “Blue Operation”. Throughout the project, we organized seven boat surveys with locals and tourists.
- We have organised two round tables targeting multiple stakeholders within Montenegro and discuss the development of sighting and stranding networks.
- We organized 12 different presentations and activities in schools and education centres.
- To increase the interest of the youngest locals to wildlife, we organized a “Wildlife Photography Competition” for kids.

Research activities:

Türkiye

- We have conducted seasonal surveys in 2023, covering both cold and warm seasons, following distance sampling methodology as well as acoustic and visual surveys. We have covered the entire coastal and offshore waters of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea of Türkiye.
- We have conducted a summer survey effort in 2024 with the same methodology above.
- We have conducted opportunistic surveys in the Istanbul Strait between 2023 and 2025.

Montenegro

- Ongoing weekly land-based surveys and monthly boat-based surveys were conducted throughout Montenegrin territorial waters to assess the bottlenose dolphin populations.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

We have used the ACCOBAMS Partner logo during our outreach activities.

Other activities:

As part of our ongoing efforts to understand and mitigate threats to cetaceans, we have published “Threat Assessment for Cetaceans of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea of Turkey.” This assessment provides a detailed analysis of the various threats facing cetaceans in the region, including habitat degradation, fishing activities, and environmental changes. By examining the findings from this report, we can better tailor our conservation strategies and stakeholder engagement efforts to address the most pressing issues. The report highlights the need for targeted actions and continued research to ensure the long-term protection and conservation of cetacean species in Turkish waters.

EcoOcéan Institute

Name of the Representative: Léa DAVID



Capacity building activities:

Several actions have been carried out in the area of skills development.

‘ACCOBAMS highly qualified MMO/PAM’ training: 20 people certified

School presentations on cetacean study techniques, species present, threats and solutions to limit impacts on animals (Lycée de la Mer in Sète).

2 training/awareness-raising sessions for professionals working on marine construction sites (e.g. ports). These training courses provide theoretical knowledge on cetacean species in the Mediterranean, conservation status, threats and impacts related to anthropogenic noise, legal frameworks governing species protection and measures to limit these impacts.

Public awareness activities:

Two week-long sea trips were organised as part of the Nouvel Horizon programme. Children with cancer or in remission boarded a sailing boat to discover the marine environment and its inhabitants (cetaceans, birds, turtles, etc.), study techniques and individual and collective means of action to limit the impact of human activities on this fragile environment.

In addition, we had the opportunity to appear several times in the local, national and international media (TV, press, radio), during which we raised awareness about the fragility of cetaceans and the need to protect them.

A conference for the general public was held, attended by nearly 200 people, as part of the Conceptu maris project, during which the legislative frameworks, including ACCOBAMS, were presented, as well as the species and the threats they face.

Research activities:

We conduct several research activities related to the ACCOBAMS work programme:

Our partnership with the Fix Line Transect Network, FLT Med Net, as the French partner aboard ferries, continues. We are active at the Mediterranean level in this network (via the FLT MedOcci and CoExist MedOcci projects, funded by the OFB, as well as the Life Conceptu maris project, funded by the European Union), to ensure standardised long-term monitoring of cetaceans, turtles and macro-waste over large areas. This collection via opportunity platforms is part of the ACCOBAMS LTMP.

We are currently in phase 3 of the REGALCEMED project, which aims to determine the diets of cetacean species in the PELAGOS Sanctuary. Beyond improving our knowledge, which is still incomplete, these results will enable us to determine trophic communities and identify whether there have been any changes in diet since the 2000s, in the context of global warming.

Finally, we are working on pressures by mapping marine macro-waste (collected from ferries and sailing boats) and recreational boating (the ‘Plaisance’ project, funded by the PELAGOS Initiative).

In addition, as part of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, we have research partnerships on various topics, including Cetacean Co-occurrence with Human activity (CCH) (identification of areas important for cetaceans that may be exposed to human activities) and the coordination of trainers and ‘ACCOBAMS highly qualified MMO/PAM’ training courses.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

We don't advertise it much, but we're going to restore its prestige!

Other activities:

Intervention as cetacean experts, notably with:

- SPA/RAC
- The French Office for Biodiversity
- Various technical meetings within the framework of the MSFD
- Member of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS
- Expert, advisor, coordinator for the Conservation and Management Plan for Risso's Dolphin, for Algeria's National Action Plan

EDMAKTUB Association

Name of the Representative: Eduard DEGOLLADA



Capacity building activities:

Team formation activities. Meetings in which each team member presents his or her research within the project and the progress made, followed by a constructive discussion for further progress.

Public awareness activities:

Research days where people can join and learn about the state of the Catalan coast, the cetaceans, their threats and the importance of working for their conservation.

Talks and workshops to schools to bring science and cetaceans closer to the young generations.

Interviews on TV and radio programmes to disseminate the information on the situation of the fin whale and the progress of the Fin Whale Project.

Research activities:

Implementation of the Fin Whale Project. Study the presence of fin whales from Catalan waters in spring to Galician Atlantic waters in August and September.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

We are not using the ACCOBAMS logo for this project as it's a private initiative from EDMAKTUB Association and no extra funding is received.

Other activities:

Conducting training courses for the study of cetaceans in different areas and training in the use of drones for the study of cetaceans.

Green Balkans NGO

Name of the Representative: Dimitar POPOV, PhD - Project Manager and Management Board Member.



Capacity building activities:

Lectures on cetaceans' biology and ecology as well as methods for research and conservation were presented to the students from Biology Faculty of the Plovdiv University as part of their optional subjects in the curriculum. These were made in both 2022 and 2023. Green Balkans' expert participated in two meetings of the ICES Working Group on Bycatch (WGBYC) in 2023 and 2024; in the ASCOBANS Workshop to recommend small cetacean conservation objectives in relation to anthropogenic removals in May 2023 and ECS Workshop: Current cetacean bycatch issues in European waters in April 2023. Two experts participated in the Meeting of the Working Group on cetacean monitoring under MSFD within ABIOMMED project in June 2023.

Public awareness activities:

Black Sea Action Day was celebrated with several events in 2023 at schools and kindergartens where children book "Kaya the Dolphin" was distributed. A special event for children was organized at Muzeiko Science Museum in Sofia in June 2024. Radio interview to BNR Varna on the occasion of the Black Sea Action Day in 2024 when one of the vessel surveys started.

Research activities:

Vessel surveys using distance sampling line transect method were regularly organized in Bulgarian territorial waters in the Black Sea with coverage of 7%. In June 2023, the survey covered shelf waters up to 100m depth while two surveys in 2024 (September and November) were in territorial waters only. Abundance and density were estimated using Distance software. A paper on summer abundance and distribution in Bulgarian waters was published. Data on strandings for the period 2010-2022 was summarized and published in a paper.

In 2023 and 2024, in collaboration with GFCM further trials of PAL Wideband pingers were made in the Bulgarian waters of the Black Sea during fishing of turbot with the riskiest type of gear – bottom set gillnets. In total 15 trials were made (9 in 2023 and 6 in 2024). Observed bycatch was 21 porpoises and 1 bottlenose dolphin in control nets and 5 porpoises in the active nets. Higher bycatch was observed in summer than spring. Additional data on bycatch was also collected. Data from pinger trials in Bulgarian turbot fishery was presented with poster at ECS conference in 2023. Collaboration with Dr. Karina Vishnyakova on the age structure of Black Sea harbour porpoise continued and 53 teeth samples were collected in 2023 and 2024. Collaboration with IO-BAS continued and 17 stomach samples were collected from bycaught porpoises for analysis of microplastics and prey items.

Acoustic data on cetaceans has been continuously collected since October 2020 within the collaborative project BlackCeTrends deploying FPODs. In the reported period, three devices were operated along Bulgarian coast with additional fourth used shortly during a turbot gillnet operation in 2024. Acoustic data confirmed that presence of porpoises was much higher compared to dolphins in the Bulgarian Black Sea waters.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo: it was used during the presentations made and described in capacity building and public awareness activities above.

Groupe de Recherche sur les Cétacés

Name of the Representative: Alexandre GANNIER



Capacity building activities:

In 2022, 2023 and 2024, we held our cetology course in Antibes. This course lasts one week (6 days) and covers various subjects (biological sciences, humanities, physics). We have welcomed between 16 and 18 trainees each year. Five people are in charge of teaching.

In 2023, we ran the first edition of a training course on noise pollution and cetaceans, welcoming 9 trainees for two full days in Antibes. The two trainers are Adrien and Alexandre GANNIER.

Public awareness activities:

Our website www.cetaces.org continues to be regularly updated with articles on cetology and conservation. It receives over a hundred visits per day. Between 2022 and 2025, hundreds of letters were received, almost all of which were answered. It is shared on social media (Facebook, Instagram).

As part of a study for PELAGOS (French section), Adrien Gannier (D-Vet) has led several thematic meetings on the feeding habits of cetaceans in the Mediterranean (Alpes-Maritimes, Var, Corsica).

Alexandre Gannier has given several lectures as part of a partnership with SOS-Grand Bleu.

Research activities:

In the Mediterranean, two areas of field research have been pursued each year:

- Three-week spring surveys off the coast of Liguria and Provence (sailing boat, 5-6 people on board)
- Day-long surveys in the 6-mile coastal strip, aboard a motorboat, in all seasons; main objective: presence and activity of bottlenose dolphins

Passive acoustics used in both cases; compliance with French legislation (approach limited to 100m).

Development of versions of the PADOC app (behavioural observation of cetaceans) continued. The app is FREE and available in FIVE languages (English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese).

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

None

Other activities:

Photo-identification monitoring work on sperm whales and Risso's dolphins.

Extensive autopsy work conducted by Adrien Gannier (D-Vet) in cooperation with LVD 06, as RNE correspondent.

GREC participated in the 2023 ECS conference (3 poster presentations).

Since 2020, GREC has been conducting a study of cetaceans off the French coast of the Bay of Biscay.

IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

Name of the Representative: Mercedes MUÑOZ CAÑAS



Capacity building activities:

Public awareness activities:

The following publication gives an overview of the status of the Mediterranean Cetacean. It could be both included as public awareness activity or research activity.

[The conservation status of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea | IUCN Library System](#)

Research activities:

See above

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

Other activities:

KYMA Sea Conservation & Research

Name of the Representative: Silvia FREY



Capacity building activities:

Within the framework of our citizen science research cruises in the Mediterranean non-experts in cetacean research learn about the different research methods and how they are properly used.

Public awareness activities:

We regularly do social media posts about marine topics and cetaceans in particular to inform the public about actual news from research and conservation policy. Furthermore, we do presentations at schools and other events on marine topics and cetacean conservation. Last year (2024), for example, we helped organize the public exhibition of a lifelike sperm whale dummy on Lake Zurich, which raised awareness of marine conservation and caused quite a stir in Switzerland and abroad.

Research activities:

KYMA is conducting cetacean surveys in the southern Tyrrhenian Sea as well in the western part of the Ionian Sea along the coast of Calabria and Sicily. Furthermore, we also conduct research on the distribution of floating macro plastics at sea and microplastic on the water surface.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

We use the ACCOBAMS Partner Logo on our website.

Madeira Whale Museum

Name of the Representative: Luís Freitas



Capacity building activities:

- Participation in the WGWW meetings (including Revision of the Guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching in the ACCOBAMS Area)
- Organisation of several training sessions for WW operators in Madeira to implement the data collection protocol in collaboration with the WWWG and other ACCOBAMS partners, using the APP Ilogwhale
- Co-organisation of a webinar in November 2023 with the objective to improve data collection on cetacean population genetics in the ACCOBAMS Area, and to develop the genetic identification of population structure (particularly in the Mediterranean Sea) by disseminating databases and guidelines to stakeholders.

Public awareness activities:

- Organisation of a hybrid workshop in Madeira within project MARCET 2, to improve data collection from WW companies
- Organisation of a public awareness event “Arraial da Baleia” as part of the Madeira Whalefest in October 2024, within the Whale Heritage Area Initiative

Research activities:

- Leading cetacean monitoring efforts (in particular for MSFD) in Madeira by collecting data on cetaceans and seaturtles via distance sampling surveys and photo-ID. In 2025-2026 new monitoring surveys for the project LIFEBEST MARVEL.
- In charge of the cetacean stranding network in Madeira
- Implementation of the data collection protocol in collaboration with the WWWG and other ACCOBAMS partners, including the APP Ilogwhale, with WW operators in Madeira

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

- Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo in the training sessions of WW operators to use Ilogwhale app to implement the data collection protocol.

Other activities:

- Participation in the 2023 ECS joint workshop on bycatch (ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS)
- Co-organisation of the 2023 ECS workshop: Setting up an international network to reinforce the collaboration with Marine Mammal Tourism companies and enhance their sustainability
- Participation in the 2023 IMMA workshop about the eastern Atlantic area
- Participation in the 2024 ECS workshop: Mapping human activity data in the ACCOBAMS area (an ACCOBAMS workshop)
- Co-organisation of the 2024 ECS workshop: Advancing knowledge on fin whales in the Mediterranean Sea
- Online participation in the SC14 in December 2024
- Co-organisation of the 2025 ECS workshop: Enhancing Whale-Watching Practices for Cetacean Conservation (an ACCOBAMS Workshop)

Mare Nostrum NGO

Name of the Representative: Marian PAIU



Capacity building activities:

Part of the SIPOC funded national training program (lead by NIMRD) for authorities and stakeholders involved in the implementation of MSFD in Romania as trainers for the D1-Marine mammals. With over then Trainings in schools and online material.

Training of the stranding monitoring network members.

Training of the new volunteers.

Public awareness activities:

Within the NGO Mare Nostrum, the main public awareness activities regarding marine cetaceans were carried out as follows:

Dolphin Day (celebrated each year in August), during which the general public participated in demonstrations on how cetaceans can be monitored, why their protection is important, and how they can get involved in their conservation.

In addition, media channels and other social platforms were used to inform the public about the program and its activities (newspapers, TV, internet). And to complete the whole process, awareness campaigns were also carried out on the beach. A dedicated facebook page was kept running @Black Sea dolphins/Delfinii din Marea Neagră. Other awareness activities were placed within the working groups we are part in, eg. Black Sea Advisory Council, Ocean Literacy Network etc.

Promoting the “Citizen science” concept, Mare Nostrum created a group on a social platform where people who are sailing in the territorial waters of Romania can join and share their encounters with dolphins.

Research activities:

Mare Nostrum has conducted monitoring actions for Black Sea cetaceans using F-POD acoustic devices as well as photo-identification observations on water*. In 2023 and 2024, five expeditions were carried out, during which the following specimens were identified: 84 *Tursiops truncatus ponticus*, 47 *Delphinus delphis ponticus*, and 7 *Phocoena phocoena relicta*. Data collected is used for abundance and distribution assessment and evaluation of the groups. Mare Nostrum Stranding Monitoring Network and Task Force functioning 24/7, consisting of students, teachers, and professionals from local institutions, to monitor stranded cetaceans along Romanian beaches. The network includes approximately 75 teachers and over 800 students. Volunteers are trained through video tutorials and practical sessions for data collection and rapid response in case of strandings.

- Cetacean monitoring on dedicated sea surveys with a focus on abundance, distribution and trends (Mare Nostrum NGO Program for Monitoring and Conservation Cetaceans from the Black Sea)
 - Monitor trends and presence-absence of cetaceans via passive acoustic devices – BlackCeTrends initiative
- Also, the experts are involved in the Environmental Assessment for the refurbishing of Romanian coastline against erosion infrastructure project, leading the marine mammal component, with weekly surveys.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

All the above-mentioned activities include the promotion of ACCOBAMS Partner logo and directly the ACCOBAMS. Supporting the agreement resolution implementation at national and regional level.

Other activities:

As part of the research activities, numerous awareness initiatives were carried out. These included:

- SUMMIT on Underwater Noise, Cartagena, Spain (2023)
- European Cetacean Society (ECS) Conference, Galicia, Spain (2023)
- Workshop on Developing Knowledge in Aquatic Medicine, USAMV Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania (2023)
- FINS Magazine by ACCOBAMS (2023)
- Scientific Communications Session, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Agricultural Sciences, Ovidius University, 28th Edition, Constanța, Romania (2024)
- European Cetacean Society (ECS) Conference, Catania, Italy (2024)
- International Black Sea Day Conference, INCDM Grigore Antipa, Constanța, Romania (2024)
- MARBLUE CONFERENCE 2024, Constanța, Romania (Co-organizers)
- ZOOLOGYCON – An international zoological congress organized by the Grigore Antipa Museum and Romanian Academy of Science (2024).
- Third Natura 2000 biogeographical seminar for the Mediterranean and Black Sea marine regions (2024), Marseille, France.
- Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea Stakeholder Conference (2024), Chisinau, Moldova.
- DOORS Stakeholder Conference (2024) Bucharest, Romania.
- Publication in FRONTIERS in Marine Sciences of the articles:
 - a) Density and abundance estimates of cetaceans in the Black Sea through aerial surveys (ASI/CeNoBS)
 - b) Shipping noise assessment in the Black Sea: insights from large-scale ASI CeNoBS survey data
 - c) Assessment of the bycatch level for the Black Sea harbour porpoise in the light of new data on population abundance
 - d) The ACCOBAMS survey initiative: the first synoptic assessment of cetacean abundance in the Mediterranean Sea through aerial surveys
- Contributing to the other articles. If needed, we can share further information.

Marecamp Associazione ODV

Name of the Representative: Dr Alessandra RAFFA



Capacity building activities:

Marecamp has expanded its reach and influence by enhancing collaborations, training initiatives, and engagement with various stakeholders. Our efforts have reinforced cetacean conservation by combining scientific research, education, and community involvement. We have developed new partnerships with academic institutions, research centres, and environmental organizations at both national and international levels. These connections have facilitated interdisciplinary collaborations, merging marine biology with data analysis and ecological monitoring to improve conservation methodologies.

One of our key achievements is the continuation of specialized training programs for students and early-career researchers. These programs include internships, field-based research opportunities, and professional workshops on cetacean observation, marine bioacoustics, and sustainable marine tourism.

Marecamp has also been actively involved in policy advocacy, engaging with governmental and international bodies to promote more substantial marine protection initiatives. Our research contributions have been presented at prominent conferences and published in academic journals, strengthening discussions on Mediterranean marine biodiversity. With these advancements, Marecamp continues to drive positive change in marine ecosystem protection while encouraging collective environmental stewardship.

Public awareness activities:

Marecamp has strengthened its public awareness initiatives, focusing on education, citizen science, and community engagement. We have organized new editions of "European Maritime Days In My Country" in Sicily, offering interactive workshops, sea cleanups, and guided dolphin-watching tours to educate the public on marine conservation, publicized how to conduct a sustainable lifestyle, how to respect the code of good conduct for observing dolphins, what to do in case of strandings.

In 2023, Marecamp was actively involved in the Interreg Italia-Malta SEA MARVEL (Save, Enhance, Admire Marine Versatile Life) project, which aimed to protect marine biodiversity and enhance Natura 2000 sites. Through its services, Marecamp has raised awareness among hundreds of students, recreational boaters, and control entities such as the Coast Guard and firefighters.

In April 2024, Marecamp hosted the 35th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society in Catania, transforming the city into the European Capital of Cetaceans for that year. The conference, themed "Marine mammals and human activities: how to reach a sustainable development of coastal areas?" brought together experts from all over the world to discuss the impact of human activities on marine mammals and strategies for sustainable coastal development. This event significantly heightened public awareness about marine conservation, emphasizing the importance of protecting these species and their habitats.

Our presence on social media and digital platforms has also grown, allowing us to engage with a broader audience. Additionally, our interactive reporting system continues to collect valuable data from local communities on marine species observations.

Research activities:

Marecamp has intensified its research efforts on cetacean populations in the Gulf of Catania and surrounding waters. Through the volunteer program "Dolphin Watching and Conservation in the Gulf of Catania," we study cetacean population dynamics in eastern Sicilian waters, focusing on the Gulf of Catania year-round. The most frequent species in the area are bottlenose dolphin (decreasing) and striped dolphin (increasing); common dolphin and sperm whale are sighted too. Less frequently, we observed fin whale and rough-toothed dolphin. Risso's dolphins have returned to the Gulf of Catania after a six-year absence in July 2024.

Research collaborations have been renewed and established to study the interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities. The "Monitoring Activities And Mitigation Measures For The Reduction Of Dolphin Depredation In Small-Scale Fisheries – Western Ionian Sea (GSA19)" project, also known as the "Depredation 3" project, in partnership with ACCOBAMS and funded by FAO-GFCM, continues to explore innovative solutions to mitigate conflicts between vulnerable species and fisheries, with trials with different solutions and gear modifications. Our works and achievements were presented at various international events, like the ECS Conference 2023, Fish Forum 2024, ECS Conference 2024, and at various joint workshops and meetings like the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Bycatch Working Group (JBWG2) of ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS and the Together for the Meds Workshop 2024.

Marecamp facilitated internships and supervised university theses focusing on cetacean distribution in Sicily, photo-identification, bioacoustics, and interactions between cetaceans and fisheries, and continued participating in ISPRA's FLT network, conducting marine surveys along strategic routes to monitor the cetacean presence and migratory patterns in the central Mediterranean.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

Marecamp has utilized the "Partner of ACCOBAMS" logo on official documents, scientific reports, and outreach materials related to cetacean conservation. It has also been displayed on our website, social networks, conference presentations, and educational materials for training programs and public awareness campaigns. Additionally, the logo has been featured during official events to reinforce Marecamp's role within the ACCOBAMS framework.

Other activities:

Despite the challenges posed by environmental and economic factors, Marecamp remains committed to advancing marine conservation efforts. Our researchers and volunteers have worked tirelessly to adapt to emerging conservation challenges and secure additional resources for ongoing projects.

We are mainly focused on increasing monitoring activities in underrepresented areas, advocating for the inclusion of the Gulf of Catania in ACCOBAMS-designated conservation zones. Strengthening protections for vulnerable species remains a priority, and we continue to seek new funding opportunities to expand research and conservation activities in the region.

Apart from this, Marecamp continues other activities related to sailing, such as training new generations of sea sentinels not only for the protection of cetaceans but in general of the marine environment and our coasts, actively collaborating with other local entities. By fostering collaboration and public participation, Marecamp aims to build a more sustainable future for marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

Morigenos - Slovenian Marine Mammal Society

Name of the Representative: Tilen Genov



MORIGENOS
SLOVENIAN MARINE MAMMAL SOCIETY

Capacity building activities:

Morigenos actively supports researchers from the ACCOBAMS region and beyond by providing expert advice, practical training, and sharing protocols and know-how. Our capacity-building activities focus on enhancing knowledge and skills in marine conservation, particularly related to marine mammals and their ecosystems. Through collaborations with universities, research institutions, and educational organizations, we offer opportunities for students and professionals to engage in hands-on research, fieldwork, and scientific analysis. As part of this effort, we launched the Morigenos Academy, providing educational opportunities for young people, and established the Dolphin Centre, a key capacity-building initiative that fosters research, education, and community engagement.

Public awareness activities:

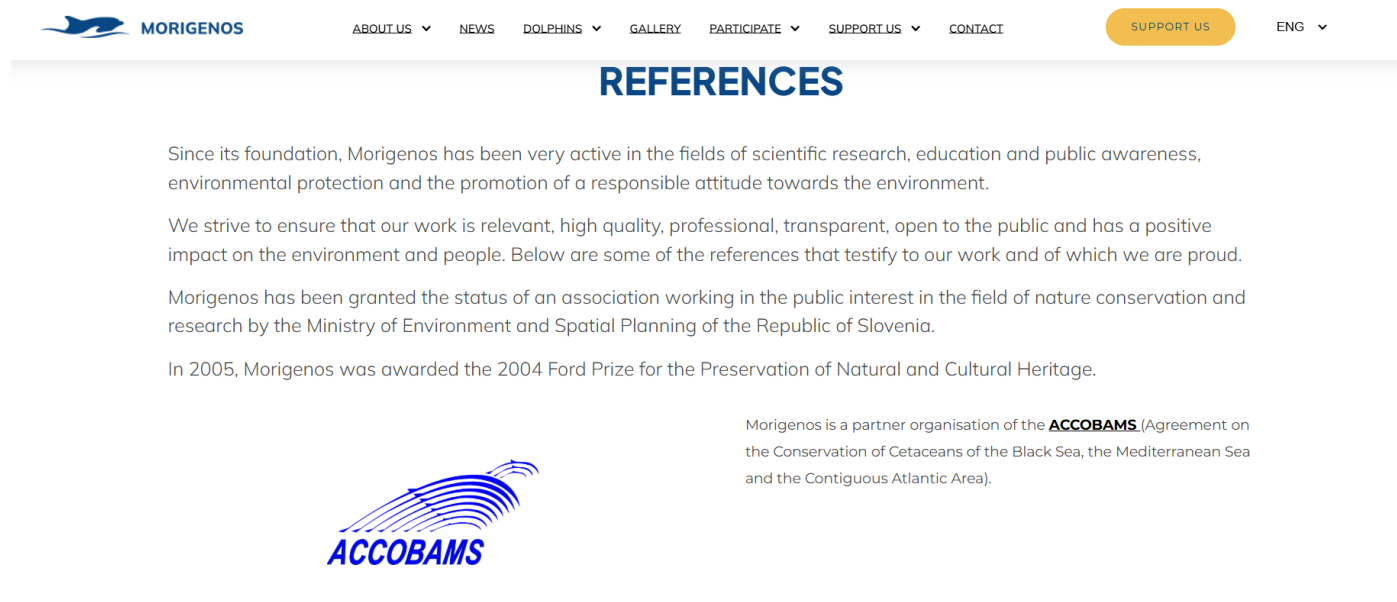
Morigenos carried out a range of public awareness activities, including annual summer Dolphin Day in Piran, “Adopt a dolphin” campaign, morigenos.org website, social media (Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn), mainstream media, popular articles and interviews, and various events and lectures. In 2023 and 2024, Morigenos organized and participated in numerous public awareness activities to engage and educate the wider community about marine conservation and dolphins. These included events such as SPAMI Day, Health Day, Dolphin Day, and European Mobility Week, where we hosted educational activities like PHOTO-ID games, dolphin quizzes, and treasure hunts. We collaborated with various local organizations and institutions to raise awareness about the importance of marine biodiversity. Additionally, we held educational boat trips and invited the public to visit the Dolphin Centre for further learning and engagement.

Research activities:

Morigenos carries out year-round research and monitoring programme on common bottlenose dolphins in the northern Adriatic Sea (and occasionally other species occurring in the area). This includes studies of population abundance, survival and reproductive ecology via photo-identification and mark-recapture techniques, social structure, interactions with fisheries, habitat use, acoustic behaviour and underwater noise via passive acoustic monitoring, genetic population structure, the effects of chemical pollutants and feeding ecology via biopsy sampling, and behaviour and body condition via the use of unmanned aircraft. Investigations of stranded cetaceans are also carried out. We are partner in Interreg Italia-Slovenia SeaInsights and Interreg IPA ADRION SAMESEA projects. In SeaInsights project, Morigenos leads the work package on "Development and testing of innovative tools for sampling and individual eDNA genotyping" to improve the identification of marine mammals, focusing on dolphins in the Gulf of Trieste. We also contribute to other work packages, including eDNA biodiversity assessments, merging dolphin databases for better population estimates, assessing dolphin health non-invasively, and creating transnational monitoring protocols. Additionally, Morigenos actively participates in the SAMESEA project, which promotes the sustainable management of marine indicator species and their interactions with human activities. Through data collection, protocol development, pilot testing, and stakeholder collaboration, Morigenos is strengthening regional efforts to conserve marine biodiversity.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

We have placed the ACCOBAMS logo on our website, which can be viewed here:
<https://www.morigenos.org/en/references>

**Other activities:**

Dialogue and communication with national and local stakeholders was developed and/or maintained. This includes the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia, Institute of Nature Conservation of the Republic of Slovenia, municipalities along the Slovenian coast, various universities and research institutes, local museums, local fishermen and the local community.

Morigenos actively participated at various key activities of ACCOBAMS, including the meetings of the Scientific Committee, the development of species Conservation and Management Plans for bottlenose and common dolphins, workshops on Cetacean Critical Habitat and genetics, etc.

OceanCare

Name of the Representative: Nicolas ENTRUP



Capacity building activities:

By providing significant support towards researchers and conservation organisations, institutions and individuals in numerous Range States (incl. Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Venezuela), OceanCare contributes significantly also to capacity building initiatives. The activities carried out by OceanCare and its associated partners encompass a variety of initiatives, including organising workshops that address issues such as ocean noise, risk reduction of vessel strikes, plastic pollution, and dolphin interactions with fisheries. OceanCare also supports stakeholder engagement in conservation efforts, contributes to the development of conservation management plans within established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) - seeking to include truly effective conservation measures (in particular, to avoid ship strikes and reduce underwater noise) -, highlights gaps in implementation, and provides scientifically grounded information to stakeholders, policymakers, and the private sector. OceanCare through its partner organisations furthermore continuously trains personnel and volunteers to expand the stranding network and respond to stranding events.

OceanCare has been invited by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat to jointly develop sector specific workshops with the shipping industry, port authorities and regulatory bodies to promote measures to reduce the risk of collisions with endangered whales with a focus on the NW Mediterranean Sea PSSA. A first in-person workshop took place on 14th of March 2025 in Marseilles, France, inviting representatives from the CARGO shipping sector. Continued engagement with representatives from the shipping sector is ongoing addressing ways forward to reduce risk of collisions and reduce ocean noise emissions. In addition, targeted joint events with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat have also been taken place at different occasions, including at the UNEP/MAP COP, Monaco Ocean week, with the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and others.

Public awareness activities:

OceanCare communicates various topics across all its existing communication tools, including the bilingual website, social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn), media communication and briefings towards stakeholders and decision makers. The content includes information and news about the status of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the threats they face, as well as initiatives and solutions. OceanCare also hosts events and visits schools to present their work and educate the public on topics such as marine ecosystem health, and the impact of ship speed and plastic pollution on ecosystems (and cetaceans). Furthermore, numerous publications, including peer reviewed papers, reports and articles have been released by the organisation, as well as partner organisations funded and cofounded by OceanCare. Some of the Publications related to cetaceans include:

- Bearzi, G., Bonizzoni, S., & Reeves, R. R. (2024). The trawl supremacy: hegemony of destructive bottom trawl fisheries and some of the management solutions [Report]. OceanCare. https://www.oceancare.org/wpcontent/uploads/2024/10/TrawlSupremacy_Report_OceanCare_2024.pdf
- Bonizzoni, S., Gramolini, R., Furey, N. B., & Bearzi, G. (2023). Bottlenose dolphin distribution in a Mediterranean area exposed to intensive trawling. *Marine Environmental Research*, 188, 105993. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marenvres.2023.105993>
- Genov, T., Centrih, T., Kotnjek, P., & Hace, A. (2018). Behavioural and temporal partitioning of dolphin social groups in the northern Adriatic Sea. *Marine Biology*, 166(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00227-018-3450-8>
- OceanCare, Alnitak, ClientEarth, Ecologistas en Accion, Greenpeace, GOB, Marilles Foundation, Save the Med, WWF. (2024). Whales and ships: a fatal relationship? [Fact sheet]. https://www.oceancare.org/wpcontent/uploads/2024/07/240702_Factsheet-QA-Speed-reduction-in-the-Cetacean-Migration-Corridor.pdf

A more complete list of scientific publications by OceanCare can be found under **PUBLICATIONS** below.

Research activities:

OceanCare is funding and co-funding field research on various cetacean species. This includes

- a) Investigating the status and distribution of dolphins in the Adriatic Sea
- b) Monitoring of cetaceans in the Inner Ionian Sea Archipelago and the Gulf of Ambracia
- c) Field work on Sperm Whales and Beaked Whales along the Hellenic Trench, including sample and data analysis
- d) Documenting the distribution and abundance of cetaceans in the Bulgarian waters including the establishment of a database with population trends
- e) Accompanied research to develop and implement a detection system of Sperm Whales in the Strait of Kythira (see SAvE Whales under “other activities”)
- f) Identifying critical habitats for bottlenose dolphins in the Bulgarian sea
- g) Studying the interaction of Bottlenose Dolphins with trawlers and the potential behavioural adaptations, as well as overlapping of dolphin habitat with specific fisheries
- h) Development and implementation of the world’s first integrated acoustic observatory to locate sperm whales and to inform ships to avoid collisions.

Other activities:

Sigrid Luber, president of OceanCare, acts as co-chair of the Joint Noise Working Group (JNWG) of CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS, but in her private capacity.

Launch of the SAvE Whales implementation period. SAvE Whales stands for “System for the Avoidance of ship-strikes with Endangered Whales”. It shall serve as a complementary response measure to the threat of vessel strikes. A Memorandum of Understanding, signed in June 2024, by the Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency, OceanCare and The Green Tank provides for the scaling up and the full implementation of the system in the Kythira Strait by 2028. Respective field work by the scientific partners of the PCRI and FORTH has been launched and undertaken in July 2024.

Towards the private sector a Coalition of NGOs – IFAW, OceanCare, Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute and WWF Greece – collaborate closely to make shipping companies decide to re-route and implement science-based measures for the navigation purposes. OC also engages in activities within the wider ACCOBAMS area. A project progress update has been submitted to the Scientific Committee in December 2024.

OceanCare commissioned an analysis of maritime traffic speed in 2023 in the NW Mediterranean PSSA and published its results, including presenting them to the Scientific Committee in December 2024. OceanCare furthermore engages in providing input towards the development of the management plan of the Marine Protected Area – the Cetacean Migration Corridor – in Spain.

OceanCare submitted an information document about the direct and indirect impacts of bottom trawling in the Mediterranean Sea to the Scientific Committee.

As an official partner organisation, OceanCare engages within FAO/GFCM to address the problem of marine plastic pollution, ghost gear and FADs.

PUBLICATIONS

Expert reports, book chapters and Policy briefings by OceanCare and supported Partners 2023

Bravo, C. (2023, March 8). The best solution to protect whales from the impact of maritime traffic is within reach. Progress in ship speed reduction is too slow despite its many environmental benefits. *El diario*.

Müller, J. (2023). Internationaler Schutz der Ozeane und ihrer Biodiversität. *Vereinte Nationen*, 71(1), 9–14.
<https://doi.org/10.35998/vn-2023-0002>

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-31965038-8_108-1

Weilgart, L. (2023). Ocean noise pollution. In F. Obaidullah (Ed), *The ocean and us* (pp. 153–160). Springer Nature.
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Scientific Publications of OceanCare and supported Partners 2023

Andrés, C., Gonzalvo, J. (2023, April 18–20). Reproductive parameters of a critically endangered Mediterranean subpopulation of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) [Conference presentation]. European Cetacean Society, O Grove, Spain.

Baerzi, G. (2023, March 21–24). Adriatic Sea cetaceans: Past and present [Conference presentation]. EU Horizon Project, Ravenna, Italy.

Bearzi, G. (in press). The Mediterranean I used to know. *OceanCare; Stormbird Press*.

Dolphin Biology and Conservation. (2023, March 9). Abbondanza, distribuzione e adattamenti dei tursiopi *Tursiops truncatus* nel settore nord-occidentale del Mare Adriatico [Seminar Presentation]. 5° Seminario di ecologia costiera, Taglio di Po, Italy.

Bonizzoni, S., Gramolini, R., Furey, N. B., & Bearzi, G. (2023). Bottlenose dolphin distribution in a Mediterranean area exposed to intensive trawling. *Marine Environmental Research*, 188, 105993.
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Bonizzoni, S., Santostasi, N. L., Eddy, L., Riley, M. A., Da Silveira, M. F., Würsig, B., & Bearzi, G. (2023). Social and community structure of striped dolphins in a semi-enclosed Mediterranean embayment. *Marine Mammal Science*, 40(1), 143–163. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mms.13060>

Bravo, C. (2023, October 17). The multiple environmental benefits of ship speed reduction [Roundtable]. Certified Shipowners Reveal 2023, Bilbao, Spain.

Dolphin Biology and Conservation. (2023). Matching of dorsal fin photographs [Workshop]. Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy.

- Foskolos, I., Alexiadou, P., Koutouzi, N., Frey, S. R., Thompson, K. F., Boisseau, O., & Frantzis, A.** (2023). Insights into the distribution and ingestion of prey-like plastic fishing lures in Mediterranean rough-toothed dolphins. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 188, 114701. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2023.114701>
- Gaspari, S., Dooley, C., Shreves, K., Silva, C. S. E., Chapman, N., Genov, T., Gonzalvo, J., Holcer, D., & Moura, A. E.** (2023). Connectivity patterns of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in the north-east Mediterranean: implications for local conservation. *Conservation Genetics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10592-023-01577-4>
- Genov, T., Centrih, T., Kotnjek, P., & Hace, A.** (2018). Behavioural and temporal partitioning of dolphin social groups in the northern Adriatic Sea. *Marine Biology*, 166(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00227-018-3450-8>
- Genov, T., Zeleznik, J., Blasi, M. F., Bruno, C., Ascheri, D., Fontanesi, E., Andrés, C., & Gonzavlo, J.** (2023, April 18–20). Movements of bottlenose dolphins: Challenging the existing narratives? [Poster presentation]. European Cetacean Society, O Grove, Spain.
- Gonzalvo, J., Andrés, C., & Genov, T.** (2023, April 18–20). The great escape: Long-distance movements of two bottlenose dolphins between the Gulf of Ambracia (eastern Ionian Sea) and Gulf of Trieste (northern Adriatic Sea) [Poster presentation]. European Cetacean Society, O Grove, Spain.
- Ivanchikova, J., Tregenza, N., Popov, D., Meshkova, G., Paiu, M., Timofte, C., Amaha Ozturk, A., Tonay, A., Ozsandikci, U., Kopaliani, N., Dekanoidze, D., Gurieladze, Z., Vishnyakova, K., Hammond, P., & Gol'din, P.** (2023, April 18–20). Seasonal and diel patterns in Black Sea harbour porpoise acoustic activity in 2020–2022 [Conference presentation]. European Cetacean Society Conference, O Grove, Spain.
- Morigenos.** (2023, July 3–6). Dolphin ecology and conservation [Workshop]. Piran, Slovenia.
- Nunny, L.** (2023, April 16). Human-wildlife interactions: Solitary-sociable dolphins [Conference presentation]. European Cetacean Society Conference, O Grove, Spain.
- Patton, P. T., Cheeseman, T., Abe, K., Yamaguchi, T., Reade, W., Southerland, K., Howard, A., Oleson, E. M., Allen, J. B., Ashe, E., Athayde, A., Baird, R. W., Basran, C. J., Cabrera, E., Calambokidis, J., Cardoso, J., Carroll, E. L., Cesario, A., Cheney, B.,... Bejder, L.** (2023). A deep learning approach to photo-identification demonstrates high performance on two dozen cetacean species. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 14(10), 2611–2625. <https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210x.14167>
- Petitguyot, M. A. C., Baerzi, G., van den Hurk, Y., Tejedor Fuentes, M., & Pierce, G. J.** (2023, March 21–24). Intentional killings and culling campaigns of small cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea and Northeast Atlantic between the 18th and 20th century [Conference presentation]. EU Horizon Project, Ravenna, Italy.
- Petitguyot, M. A. C., Bearzi, G., van der Hurk, Y., Tejedor Fuentes, M., Pierce, G. J.** (in press). International killings and culling of small cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea and Northeast Atlantic between the 18th and the 20th century. *Oceanography and Marine Biology: An Annual Review*.
- Pimentel, V.** (2023). La amenaza a la biodiversidad marina por colisiones y ruido submarino: Analisis legal y estudio de caso en el Area Marina Protegida Corredor de Migracion de Cetaceos del Mediterraneo (1st ed.). Publicacions URV.

Popov, D. (2023). Abundance and distribution of cetaceans (Cetacea) in Bulgarian territorial waters of the Black Sea [Doctoral dissertation, Plovdiv University].

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Popov, D., & Meshkova, G. (2023, September 20). Monitoring and mitigation of cetaceans' bycatch in Bulgarian turbot gillnet fishery [Conference presentation]. Meeting of the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species, Sukkarieta, Spain.

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Rae, F., Nicol, C., & Simmonds, M. P. (2023). Expert assessment of the impact of ship-strikes on cetacean welfare using the Welfare Assessment Tool for Wild Cetaceans. *Animal Welfare*, 32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/awf.2023.7>

Simmonds, M. P. (2023, March). The evolution of the international whaling commission into a modern threats-focused treaty body [Seminar]. University of St Andrews, Scotland.

Simmonds, M. P. (2023, March). Whaling and the role of multilateral environmental agreements in the management of living resources [Seminar]. University of Bristol, England.

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Expert reports, book chapters and Policy briefings by OceanCare and supported Partners 2024

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Bravo, C. (2024, February 19). El Convenio de la ONU sobre especies migratorias advierte de los riesgos ambientales de la minería submarina. EFEVerde. <https://efeverde.com/el-convenio-de-la-onu-sobre-especies-migratoriasadvierde-de-los-riesgos-ambientales-de-la-mineria-submarina-por-carlos-bravo-oceancare/>

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Scientific Publications of OceanCare and supported Partners 2024

Andrés-Hervías, C., Gazo, M., Bejder, L., & Gonzalvo, J. (2024, November 11–15). Mother-calf pre- and post-weaning associations in a critically endangered sub-population of bottlenose dolphins [Poster presentation]. 25th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Perth, Australia.

Andrés-Hervías, C., Vivier, F., Bejder, L., Fertitta, K., & Gonzalvo, J. (2024, April 10–12). Evaluation of UASPhotogrammetry accuracy in determining age-class structure of critically endangered bottlenose dolphins [Conference presentation]. 35th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Catania, Italy.

Bearzi, G., Bonizzoni, S., Genov, T., & Di Sciara, G. N. (2024). Whales and dolphins of the Adriatic Sea. *Acta Adriatica*, 65(1), 75–121. <https://doi.org/10.32582/aa.65.1.1>

Bonizzoni, S., & Bearzi, G. (2024, April 10–12). Widespread social adaptation to foraging and scavenging behind trawlers: the case of bottlenose dolphins in the NW Adriatic Sea [Conference presentation]. 35th Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Catania, Italy.

Bonizzoni, S., Santostasi, N. L., Eddy, L., Riley, M. A., Da Silveira, M. F., Würsig, B., & Bearzi, G. (2024). Social and community structure of striped dolphins in a semienclosed Mediterranean embayment. *Marine Mammal Science*, 40(1), 143–163. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mms.13060>

Bravo, C. (2024, October 8). NGOs' proposal for the introduction of a mandatory vessel speed reduction measure in the management plan for the Cetacean Migration Corridor [Workshop presentation]. OceanCare & Spain's Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO), Madrid, Spain.

Bravo, C. (2024, February 14). SDG14, underwater noise, ship strikes and the need to introduce ship speed reduction measures [Conference presentation]. Conferences on the 2030 Agenda and the SDG targets, Spanish Diplomatic School, Madrid, Spain.

Folegot, T., Bravo, C., & Pimentel, V. (2024, July 9). Presentation of results from analysing vessel traffic in the Northwestern Mediterranean Sea. The role of ship speed reduction for the protection of large whales in the MPA and SPAMI "Mediterranean Cetacean Migration Corridor" [Press conference]. OceanCare & Quiet Oceans, Espacio Margarete, Madrid, Spain.

Gonzalvo, J., Costa, M., Andrés-Hervías, C., Pierantonio, N., Vivier, F., & Bejder, L. (2024, November 11–15). The Natural Laboratory Posed by the Critically Endangered Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* Gulf of Ambracia Subpopulation [Conference presentation]. 25th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Perth, Australia.

Ivanchikova, J., Tregenza, N., Popov, D., Meshkova, G., Paiu, R., Timofte, C., Öztürk, A. A., Tonay, A. M., Dede, A., Özsandıkçı, U., Kopaliani, N., Dekanoidze, D., Gurielidze, Z., Vishnyakova, K., Hammond, P. S., & Gol'din, P. (2024). Seasonal and diel patterns in Black Sea harbour porpoise acoustic activity in 2020–2022. *Ecology and Evolution*, 14(10). <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.70182>

Lüber, S. (2024, December 3). Report of the Joint CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group [Presentation]. 6th meeting of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS, Barcelona, Spain.

Miketa, M. L., Simmonds, M. P., Nunny, L., & Nicol, C. (2024, November 11–15). Assessing the impacts of anthropogenic noise using the Welfare Assessment Tool for Wild Cetaceans (WATWC) [Conference presentation]. 25th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Perth, Australia.

Nunny, L. (2024, April 6–7). Recent IWC, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS marine debris workshops [Workshop presentation]. ECS ASCOBANS Workshop, University of Catania, Sicily, Italy.

Petitguyot, M. A., Bearzi, G., Van Den Hurk, Y., Fuentes, M. T., & Pierce, G. J. (2024). Intentional Killings and Culling of Small Cetaceans due to Perceived Competition with Fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea and Northeast Atlantic between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries. In *CRC Press eBooks* (pp. 120–162). <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003477518-2>

Pimentel, V. (2024, July 8). Mandatory Speed Reduction for Ships: Legal Aspects [Presentation]. OceanCare & Spain's Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO), Madrid, Spain.

Popov, D., & Meshkova, G. (2024). Cetacean Strandings along the Bulgarian Coast of the Black Sea in 2010–2022. *Oceans*, 5(3), 429–441. <https://doi.org/10.3390/oceans5030025>

Ritter, F., Simmonds, M. P., Baerzi, G., Dolman, S., Cipriano, F., Iñíguez Bessega, M., & Stachowitsch, M. (2024). Wild animal populations are not "stocks": does language bias hamper conservation efforts by the International Whaling Commission? Paper SC/69B/O/04 presented to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission. 8 pp.

Simmons, A. (2024). Capture and killing of small cetaceans in the Faroe Islands is inhumane and offers little scope for improvement. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2024.1368524>

Simmonds, M. P. (2024, September 2–5). Presentations on the work of three intersessional working groups on beaked whales, marine debris and climate change to the Conservation Committee of the International Whaling Commission.

Simmonds, M. P. (2024, April 8). Risso's dolphins [Workshop presentation]. ECS-ASCOBANS Workshop, University of Catania, Sicily, Italy.

Simmonds, M. P., Arrow, N., Jarvis, D., & Nunny, L. (2024, April 10–12). Assessing the welfare challenges posed by climate change to European marine mammals, with a focus on seals [Conference presentation]. 35th Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Catania, Italy.

Vivier, F., Andrés, C., Gonzalvo, J., Fertitta, K., Van Aswegen, M., Foroughirad, V., Mann, J., McEntee, M., Wells, R.S., & Bejder, L. (2024). Inferring dolphin population status: using unoccupied aerial systems to quantify age-structure. *Animal Conservation*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acv.12978>

Oceanomare Delphis APS

Name of the Representative: Barbara Mussi



Capacity building activities:

- Strengthening of the partnership with the MPAs “Regno di Nettuno” and “Isole di Ventotene e S. Stefano” to protect the common Important Marine Mammal Area “Water of Ischia and Ventotene”.
- Strengthening of the research partnerships with [Bottlenose Dolphin Research Institute](#), [Tursiops](#), [Associazione Filicudi Wildlife Conservation](#), [Menkab](#), [Jonian Dolphin Conservation](#), [SeaMe Sardinia](#) to study sperm whale movements, identifying and modeling the whale critical habitat.
- Ongoing interdisciplinary partnership with the University of Nottingham, UK, Schools of Computer Science, Mathematical Science, and Psychology: development of advanced deep learning approaches to automate the identification of single sperm whales.
- In the frame of the Ischia Dolphin Project we involved students directly in our field research, and helped students develop their conservation project ideas and concepts offering direct networking and mentoring experiences.
- In the ACCOBAMS network (MMO/PAM WG) we worked to strengthen the collaboration among active trainers and review the existing forms and modules.
- One-month team building on our research vessel in October to train the new members of the team and test new equipment.

Public awareness activities:

- Realization of two short documentaries on our work in Ischia, among dolphins and sperm whales, directed by Alessandro Portante and Adlai Salcedo.
- Participation at the Natural and Physical Sciences Museum Center in an event dedicated to the biodiversity of the Gulf of Naples. Our talk focused on cetacean conservation in the waters of the MPA Regno di Nettuno, the MPA Isole di Ventotene e S. Stefano, as well as the Important Marine Mammal Area these regions share.
- Participation in the MAREtica cultural event on the island of Procida, where Oceanomare Delphis was awarded the 2023 Sea Ethics Award in recognition of its efforts over 30 years of study and outreach for cetaceans in the Mediterranean.
- Participation in Greenpeace Italy's expedition. Our researchers supervised the monitoring of cetaceans and other pelagic fauna during the step between the Pontine and Campanian islands.
- Together with the MPA “Regno di Nettuno”, participation in Procida in the second edition of the Science Festival organized by the Vivara APS Association - Friends of Small Islands.
- Managing our social media accounts (FB, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube).

Research activities:

- Regular development and reporting of the Ischia Dolphin Project (since 1991).

Publications:

- Di Paola AI, Mussi B, Violi B, Ascheri D, Bittau L, Bellomo S, Blasi M (2023) Mark-recapture analysis of sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Linnaeus 1758) movements in the Tyrrhenian Sea and Gulf of Taranto through photo-identification analysis. European Cetacean Society, 2023
- Violi B, Guidi C, Mussi B, Verga A, Fontanesi E, Negri M, Calogero G, Biasissi E, Pignata E, Principato G, Kulikovskiy V, Sanguineti M (2023). Survival in the Mediterranean Sea: the sperm whale *Atlante*. European cetacean Society, 2023 DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.13443.27688/1

- Maselli V, Mussi B, Di Nocera F, Norcia M, Illiano A, Di Cosmo A (2024). High-Resolution Melting (HRM) as Novel Tool to Improve Cetaceans Species Identification in the Mediterranean Sea. 83° Congresso Unione Zoologica Italiana. 2024 Pisa.
- Mussi B, Iacono AG, Staffelli A, Russo GF, Lucidi P (2023). Fishing activities overlap with bottlenose dolphin core habitats of Ischia and Procida islands. *Biologia Marina Mediterranea* (2023), 27 (1): 281-284.
- Gnone G, Bellingeri M, Airoidi S, Gonzalvo J, David L, Di-Méglio N, Cañadas AM, Akkaya A, Awbery T, Mussi B, Campana I, Azzolin M, Dede A, Tonay AM, Monaco C, Pellegrino G, Tepsich P, Moulins A, Arcangeli A, Labach H, Scheinin AP, Mevorach Y, Carlucci R, Santacesaria FC, Chicote CA, Gazo M, Tintore B, Alessi J, Mandich A, Bittau L, Diaz Lopez B, Azzinari C, La Manna G, Pace DS, Decandia D, Castelli A, Nuti S, Santoni M-C, Verga A, Tomasi N, Giacomina C, Costantino M, Falabrino M, Azzellino A (2023). Cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea: Encounter Rate, Dominant Species, and Diversity Hotspots. *Diversity*. 2023; 15(3):321. <https://doi.org/10.3390/d15030321>
- Fuller S, Pound M, Mussi B, Kypraios T, Maggi S (2024) Protecting Mediterranean sperm whales: AI powered identification and insights. *European Cetacean Society*, 2024: 345
- Jankauskaite G, Raga J.A., Airoidi S, Arcangeli A, Bellingeri M, Cañadas A, David L, Gnone G, Gozalbes P, Lanfredi C, Mussi B, Sagarminaga R, Sánchez A, Tepsich P, Vighi M, March D (2024) Modelling the spatio-temporal distribution of cetaceans in the Western Mediterranean. *European Cetacean Society*, 2024:313

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

The use of ACCOBAMS logo was limited to the web page and to the MMO/PAM Courses.

Other activities:

The following teaching projects were completed:

- Supervision of a master thesis, Biological Sciences at the University of Perugia (Department of Chemistry, Biology and Biotechnology), entitled “Photo-identification analysis of *Tursiops truncatus* in the waters of the islands of Ischia and Procida (Gulf of Naples, Italy).”
- As part of the ACCOBAMS (Working Group MMO/PAM) network, we organized three MMO/PAM courses in collaboration with CIBRA (University of Pavia), the first in Ischia (May 16-21, 2023), the second and the third in Genoa (October 16-21, 2023, and November 18-23, 2024) in which a total of 82 certifications were issued.
- Data loading on the Intercet platform within the project ProMed: 2020-2023

SWISS CETACEAN SOCIETY - SCS

Name of representative: Max-Olivier BOURCOUD



Activities related to skills development:

As part of its **Ligure Research program**, the Swiss Cetacean Society-SCS has been working since 2005 with its partner **ÉcoOcéan Institut**, led by Dr Léa David and Dr Nathalie Di-Meglio. The mission is to collect data on cetacean distribution and maritime traffic. The program aims to understand the impact of anthropogenic activities on cetaceans, and to establish a strategy to protect cetaceans and reduce collisions with large ships (**IMPACT-CET program**). The study also aims to determine the location, quantity and type of macro-waste present in the study area (**MACRO-DECHETS program**).

Since 2011, SCS has also been supporting the **BSW program (Balearic Sperm Whale Project)** led by Dr. José Maria Txema Brotons Martinez of the **Tursiops Association** (Balearic Islands). This program focuses on studying the bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), in order to reduce the potential nuisance, it causes to local fishermen, as well as to the sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). The aim of this collaboration is to gain a better insight into the presence of cetaceans in the Balearic Islands, in order to establish a conservation strategy.

In addition, since 2019 the SCS has been supporting the **Mediterranean Monk Seal** conservation program in Cap Blanc (Mauritania) run by its partner **CBD-Habitat association**, in collaboration with the Mauritanian NGO *Annajah*. This program aims to protect the population of the “*Côte des Phoques*” reserve, through activities such as the protection of breeding caves, continuous monitoring of the reserve and the collection of demographic data on the colony.

Public awareness activities:

The Swiss Cetacean Society-SCS organizes educational and awareness-raising activities in the form of conferences, school talks and public conservation events. The SCS also regularly organizes marine ecology awareness camps for young people. With its headquarters in Switzerland, SCS's awareness-raising and educational activities reach beyond the ACCOBAMS Agreement area. In addition to supporting the IMPACT-CET, MACRO-DECHETS and BSW programs, SCS Eco volunteers also raise their own awareness of cetacean and habitat conservation issues in the ACCOBAMS zone.

Research activities:

For the period 2023-2024, the Swiss Cetacean Society-SCS organized **13 data collection expeditions** from St-Mandrier-sur-Mer (Toulon) as part of its *Ligure Research program*, representing **65 effective working days** and the participation of 60 Eco volunteers.

For 2025, 8 expeditions (40 effective working days) are planned, in which 35 Eco volunteers will participate.

SCS also offers its ecovolunteers the opportunity to take part in scientific expeditions under the BSW program, to help its partner Tursiops Association study the bioacoustics of the Bottlenose Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) and define more precisely the distribution of cetaceans in these waters, mainly bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), but also notably blue and white dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) and fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*).

In addition, since 1997 the SCS has been taking advantage of its presence in the Ligurian zone in July and August **to monitor the interactions of yachtsmen and whale-watching operators with cetaceans**, and to report to authorities any abuses if necessary.

Funding for this work in the ACCOBAMS zone has always been offered free of charge to the international scientific community.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partners logo:

The ACCOBAMS Partners logo is used on the SCS website (<https://www.swisscetaceansociety.org>), in its activity reports and on its letterhead.

Other:

The Swiss Cetacean Society-SCS or *Société suisse d'étude et de protection des cétacés* is a non-profit environmental organization of public interest founded in 1997, dedicated to the conservation of marine mammals and marine biodiversity.

With over 300 data-gathering expeditions at sea since 1997, the SCS has acquired solid experience in logistics for scientific research.

It is a member of the IUCN, as well as of the World Cetacean Alliance (WCA), and was awarded the distinction of *Champion of the Earth* by the Earth Champions Foundation for its achievements in marine mammal protection.

The SCS is convinced that the implementation of effective protection measures begins with a better scientific understanding of the animals in their natural environment, hence the logistical support it offers to marine biology organizations that request it.

With this in mind, SCS provides logistics support at sea for scientific environmental programs, distributes popularized information on marine biodiversity in Switzerland, organizes awareness-raising camps at sea for young people, and promotes access to specialized training for students of biology or environmental science.

Tethys Research Institute

Name of the Representative: Joan Gonzalvo



Capacity building activities:

Capacity-building and education activities, including lectures and direct involvement in fieldwork and data analysis, have benefited a large number of students, researchers, and participants in the citizen-science programmes conducted by Tethys' long-term projects in Italy and Greece (see below).

As part of a 2025 project funded by the Italian Ministry for the Environment (MASE), Tethys researchers conducted a training course for primary and secondary school teachers from four Ligurian municipalities that signed the Partnership Charter with the Pelagos Sanctuary. The course focused on Mediterranean cetaceans and the anthropogenic pressures threatening them.

Public awareness activities:

Public awareness is fuelled through the institute's presence on media as well as through the involvement, as project participants, of thousands of people from across the world in its citizen science programmes: Cetacean Sanctuary Research (CSR) and Ionian Dolphin Project (IDP). Tethys manages a website (<http://tethys.org>) as well as Facebook and Instagram accounts to disseminate relevant information related to marine mammal research and conservation.

The IDP website (<http://ioniandolphinproject.org>), firstly created in 2012 and updated in 2022 hosts basic information about the project activities and general information about the conservation of cetaceans of the Ionian Sea. It facilitates to report sightings of cetaceans, through a user-friendly on-line form. So far, we have received 500+ reports. It includes the BE DOLPHIN SMART initiative with basic guidelines on how to behave when encountering cetaceans at sea. Significant information on the Mediterranean monk seal has also been added.

CSR has updated, expanded, and redesigned the graphic styling of an interactive web platform with over 200 pages for primary and secondary schools. *Pelagos Mission* is an educational project dedicated to Mediterranean cetaceans, with a special focus on the Pelagos Sanctuary.

As part of a project funded by the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, the CSR created a video about the cetaceans of the Sanctuary and a comic book on its history, both available in four languages.

In 2025, CSR researchers will also conduct two online seminars, one for sea stakeholders and another for the staff of four Ligurian municipalities, and four public meetings.

Research activities:

The IDP (since 1991) aims to ensure the long-term viability of marine mammals living in coastal waters of the eastern Ionian Sea. Currently, research is concentrated in three Natura 2000 areas: The Inner Ionian Sea Archipelago, the Paxoi and Antipaxoi Islands and surrounding waters, and the Gulf of Ambracia. While in open Ionian waters the research is concentrated mostly on the endangered common dolphins (and the Mediterranean monk seal), in the semi-enclosed waters of the Gulf of Ambracia we work with a sub-population of bottlenose dolphins, recently classified as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals. Research methods include: sea surveys (both ad libitum and by line-transect), photoidentification, remote biopsy sampling, application of UAVs (drones) to conduct behavioural observations and photogrammetry and questionnaires to look at fishers' knowledge.

The CSR (since 1990) focuses on population dynamics, spatial distribution, habitat preferences, ecology behaviour, bioacoustics and on the evaluation of long-term environmental changes and monitoring of anthropogenic pressures affecting the Pelagos Sanctuary. Target species include: fin and sperm whales, striped dolphins, long-finned pilot whales, Risso's dolphins, common bottlenose dolphins, Cuvier's beaked whale and common dolphin. Most of these are listed as Endangered, except the Cuvier's beaked whale (Vulnerable), and the common bottlenose dolphin and striped dolphin (Least Concern). In 2024, numerous water samples were collected eDNA analyses, along with fecal samples to study parasites and the microbiome of various individuals. Additionally, samples were gathered for a study on Blue Carbon Assessment within the Pelagos Sanctuary ecosystem.

Others:

Tethys Research Institute is contributing to the ACCOBAMS effort on place-based conservation through the support provided by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force. A series of Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) has been identified in the ACCOBAMS Region through dedicated workshops and these IMMAs may serve as a basis in the overlap between cetaceans' habitat and anthropogenic pressures. A new assessment of IMMAs in the Mediterranean Sea is foreseen for the near future, 10 years after the first IMMA workshop in October 2016. The Tethys Telemetry Lab is also collecting data through the deployment of satellite transmitters on fin whales to provide robust evidence of movements and habitat use in the North Western Mediterranean Sea, to support the ongoing effort to mitigate vessel strikes and other pressures related to maritime traffic in the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA), recently established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV)

Name of the Representative: Ayaka AMAHA ÖZTÜRK



Capacity building activities:

TUDAV participated in the online meeting for establishing national stranding network, organized by Ministry. We are also collaborating with other experts to update the guidelines for cetacean monitoring in Turkish waters.

Public awareness activities:

TUDAV translated and published joint press release of ASI/CENOBs online and through social media platforms. TUDAV has organized dolphin watching activities in the Istanbul Strait for the primary school children in BRIDGE-BS Project.

Research activities:

TUDAV continued the passive acoustic monitoring study in the Istanbul Strait with A-tag. We also monitor with F-Pods as a partner of the BlackCeTrends in the Black Sea with other colleagues in Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Ukraine.

TUDAV continues monitoring of cetacean strandings on the Turkish coast.

TUDAV started regular sighting cruises in the northern half of the Istanbul Strait since February 2022 to assess the cetacean population status in the Strait and to further develop the photo ID study of bottlenose dolphins in the area.

TUDAV helped to necropsy during mass stranding Cuvier's beaked whales in 2023 in Cyprus.

Publications:

Amaha Öztürk, A., Tonay, A.M., Dede A. 2023. Crime scenes at sea: Deliberate killing of marine mammals in Türkiye (2014-2022). 34th Conference of the European Cetacean Society, O'Grove, Spain, pp 238.

Amaha Ozturk A., Gülenç, Z., Dede, A., Tonay, M. A. 2024. A conspicuously white common dolphin sighted in the Istanbul Strait and Black Sea, Türkiye. 35th annual European Cetacean Society Conference, Catania, İtalya, 8 - 12 Nisan 2024, ss.134.

Aytemiz Danyer, I., Tonay, A.M., Biskin Turkmen, M., Danyer, E., Dede, A., Amaha Öztürk, A. 2023. First report of vaginal stone in the common dolphin from the Black Sea coast of Türkiye. 34th Conference of the European Cetacean Society, O'Grove, Spain, pp 354.

Çanakcı, T., Özden, Ö., Fuller, W., Erkol, I.L., Tonay, A.M. 2023. Plastic lure ingestion by rough-toothed dolphin *Steno bredanensis* stranded on the northern coast of Cyprus. J. Black Sea/Mediterranean Environment 29(1): 127-134

Gnone, G., Bellingeri, M., Airoidi, S., Gonzalvo, J., David, L., Di-Méglio, N., Canadas, A.M., Akkaya, A., Awbery, T., Mussi, B., Campana, I., Azzolin, M., Dede, A., Tonay, A.M.... & Azzellino, A. (2023). Cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea: Encounter Rate, Dominant Species, and Diversity Hotspots. Diversity 15(3): 321.

Ivanchikova, J., Tregenza, N., Popov, D., Meshkova, G., Paiu, M., Timofte, C., Amaha Öztürk, A., Tonay A. M., Dede, A., Özsandıkçı, U., Kopalini, N., Dekanoidze, D., Gurielidze, Z., Vishnyakova, K., Hammond, P., Goldin, P. 2023. Seasonal and diel patterns in Black Sea harbour porpoise acoustic activity in 2020-2022. 34th Conference of the European Cetacean Society, O’Grove, Spain, pp 113.

Paiu, R.-M., Cañadas, A., Dede, A., Meshkova, G., Murariu, D., Öztürk A.A., Popov, D., Tonay, A.M., Timofte, C., Kopaliani, N., Gol’din, P., Panigada S. 2024. Density and abundance estimates of cetaceans in the Black Sea through aerial survey (ASI/CeNoBS). *Frontiers in Marine Science*. 11: 1248950.

Popov, D., Meshkova, G., Vishnyakova, K., Ivanchikova, J., Paiu, M., Timofte, C., Amaha Öztürk, A., Tonay, A.M., Dede, A., Panayotova, M., Düzgünes, E., Gol’din, P. 2023. Assessment of the bycatch level for the Black Sea harbour porpoise in the light of new data on population abundance. *Front. Mar. Sci.* 10:1119983.

Tonay, A.M., Uzun, B., Dede, A., Danyer E., Danyer Aytemiz, I., Amaha Öztürk A., Archer, F.I., Öztürk, B., Bilgin, R. 2024. Population genetic structure of the bottlenose dolphin in the Turkish waters based on mtDNA sequences with implications for the Black Sea subspecies *Tursiops truncatus ponticus*. *Mitochondrial DNA Part A*. doi: 10.1080/24701394.2024.2427216.

Tonay, A.M., Karaman, K., Dede, A., Danyer, E., Aytemiz Danyer, I., Uzun, B., Taşkaya, İ., Deval, C., Amaha Öztürk, A., Bilgin, R. 2024. Genetic investigation of Cuvier's beaked whale, *Ziphius cavirostris*, along the coast of Türkiye and Northern Cyprus, based on mtDNA sequences. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom* 104, e14, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025315424000079>

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Tonay, A.M., Aytemiz Danyer, I., Taşkaya, İ., Danyer, E., Öznur, N., Dede, A., Gülçubuk, A., Yüzbaşıoğlu Öztürk, G., Hacıoğlu, S., Çanakçı, T., Amaha Öztürk, A. 2024. Preliminary findings on Cuvier’s beaked whale mass stranding in Northern Cyprus. *Journal of the Black Sea/Mediterranean Environment* 30 (1): 1-19.

Tonay, A. M., Güler, A., Dede, A., & Amaha Öztürk, A. (2024). Epimeletic behaviour of a bottlenose dolphin in the Marmara Sea, Türkiye. *Journal of the Black Sea/Mediterranean Environment*, 30(2): 160-167.

Tonay, A.M., Güler, A., Dede, A., Aytemiz Danyer, I., Amaha Öztürk, A. 2024. Infanticidal behaviour of a bottlenose dolphin in the Marmara Sea, Türkiye. *Journal of the Black Sea/Mediterranean Environment* 30 (3): 190-199.

Tonay, M. A., Salman, M. A., Taşkent, İ., Danyer, E., Dede, A., Aytemiz Danyer, I., Çanakçı, T., Amaha Ozturk, A. 2024. Stomach Contents of Stranded Cuvier’s Beaked Whales on the Turkish Aegean Sea and Northern Cyprus (Eastern Mediterranean Sea) Coasts. 35th annual European Cetacean Society Conference, Catania, İtalya, 8 - 12 Nisan 2024, ss.362.

Vishnyakova, K., Tonay, A.M., Popov, D., Meshkova, G., Paiu, M., Aytemiz Danyer, I., Danyer, E., Özsandıkçı, U., Timofte, C., Golubev, O., Rubanov, A., Dede A., Amaha Öztürk, A., Uludüz, N., Dimitrov, K., Kopaliani, N., Morell, M., Siebert, U., Hoyt, E., Mazzario, S., Goldin, P. 2023. An unusually high number of cetacean strandings in the Black Sea, 2022 - is it the consequence of war? 34th Conference of the European Cetacean Society, O’Grove, Spain, pp 256.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

<https://tudav.org/en/from-us/press-releases/joint-press-release-the-results-of-the-asi-cenobs-aerial-survey-now-published/>

<https://tudav.org/bizden/basin-bultenleri/uluslararası-ortak-basin-bildirisi-karadeniz-yunuslarının-yogunluk-ve-bolluk-tahminleri/>

Other activities:

TUDAV is involved in the preparation of a new IMMA from Aol in the Black Sea; Black Sea Eastern Anatolian Coast IMMA.



Name of the Representative: Juan Antonio RAGA

Capacity building activities:

Participation in World/European Congress/workshops

García-Gallego, A., Fraija-Fernández, N., Raga, J. A. & Aznar, F. J. (16-20 de abril de 2023). *Significant multi-decadal changes in the intestinal helminth fauna of Mediterranean striped dolphins, Stenella coeruleoalba: what do they reveal?* [Presentación formato póster]. 34th European Cetacean Society Conference, O' Grove, España

González-Campos, S., Ten, S., Aznar, F.J. 2023. Patterns of specificity in whale lice: determinants of cyamid body size. 34th annual European Cetacean Society Conference O' Grove, España

Izquierdo-Serrano, M.; Revuelta, O.; Míguez Lozano, R.; Gozalbes, P.; Jankauskaite, G.; Raga, J.A.; Tomás, J. (2023). Fisheries and delphinids: a conservation issue at Eastern Spain waters. 34th annual European Cetacean Society Conference O' Grove, España

Ten, S., Dobson, A., Aznar, F.J. (2023). "Heterogeneties in the long-term population dynamics of the epibionts of striped dolphins, Stenella coeruleoalba"; EEID Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases Conference (Pennsylvania, USA)

García Bustos V, Raga JA, Rosario Medina I, Acosta-Hernández B. Medina, Inmaculada (5); Acosta-Hernández, B. (2024). A new threat for the Med? Triazole-resistant *Aspergillus sydowii* in cetaceans from the Spanish Mediterranean. European Cetacean Society (ECS) Conference, Catania, Sicily, Italy, poster presentation. Oral presentation

Gozalbes Aparicio P, Aznar FJ, Pons Bordas C, Jiménez J, Tomás J, Raga JA. (2024). Evaluating the effectiveness of the Valencian Community Stranding Network (central Spanish Mediterranean) to detect stranded cetaceans and sea turtles. 35th European Cetacean Society Conference, 10-12 April 2024, Catania, Italy. Poster presentation

Izquierdo-Serrano M, Gozalbes P, Aznar FJ, Raga JA, Tomás J. (2024). Signos de captura accidental en delfines de la Comunidad Valenciana: aplicación a ejemplares varados. XIV Congreso de la Sociedad Española de Cetáceos, 7-9 de noviembre de 2024. Castelldefels, Barcelona, España. Libro de resúmenes del XIV Congreso de la Sociedad Española de Cetáceos, p. 25.

Jankauskaite, G., Raga, J. A., Airolidi, S., Arcangeli, A., Azzellino, A., Bellingeri, M., Campana, I., Cañadas, A., Castelli, A., David, L., Di-Méglio, N., Gnone, G., Gozalbes, P., Lanfredi, C., Mussi, B., Sagarminaga, R., Sánchez- Jones, A., Tepsich, P., Vighi, M., & March, D. (2024). Modelling the spatio-temporal distribution of cetaceans in the Western Mediterranean. 35th European Cetacean Society Conference, 10-12 April 2024, Catania, Italy. Poster presentation.

Pool RV, Pons-García N, Consoli F, Rivero M, Bombardi C, Raga JA, Aznar FJ. (2024). Fine-scale distribution of the lungworm *Halocercus delphini* in the lungs of the striped dolphin, *Stenella coeruleoalba*: implications about migration pathways and functional significance. European Cetacean Society (ECS) Conference, Catania, Sicily, Italy, poster presentation.

Pons-Bordas C, Palacios Otero MM, Aznar F.J. (2024). Far away from home: gastrointestinal parasites as indicators of the geographical origin of a grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) stranded in Western Mediterranean Sea. 35th European Cetacean Society (ECS) conference: “Marine mammals and human activities: how to reach a sustainable development of coastal areas?”, Catania, Sicily (Italy). Poster presentation.

Ten, S., Dobson, A., Raga, J.A., Aznar, F.J. (2024). Los patrones temporales de epibiosis reflejan cambios en la abundancia del delfín listado asociados a las epidemias de morbillivirus en el Mediterráneo occidental. XIV Congreso de la Sociedad Española de Cetáceos (SEC), 7-9 November 2024, Castelldefels (Spain).

Reports of Cetacean Abundance, Distribution and main research done to Local and National Governments. Students training: Courses to all levels of education: Primary School, High School and to foreign students at University and Master students of the University of Valencia.

Public awareness activities:

- EXPOCIÈNCIA: Expociència is the annual open day of the University of Valencia Science Park (PCUV) aimed to bring science and technology closer to the public (more than 4.000 citizens). During this event there are 100 activities, organised by researchers from the different institutes and professionals from the companies of the Park aimed at all audiences and their theme is always related to science and technology. We present different workshops related to cetaceans and our work.
- Talks in the Annual Events “Fishermen's Day” awards ceremony for fishermen for their collaboration in marine conservation, and Dissemination of the different Conservation projects that are being carried out. The Event is organized by the NGO Xaloc.
- Talks were given to groups participating in the Strandings Network, such as the Civil Guard and Civil Protection, receiving information from these two institutions and offering participation to other institutions in the Network, such as the Oceanogràfic Foundation and the Regional Ministry of the Environment. In addition to training, these conferences have served to reinforce the Strandings Network. 2023/2024
- Participation in Books for the General Public

Raga, J.A (2023). La conservación de los cetáceos del Mediterráneo. En: E. Barba (Ed.). La Biodiversidad Valenciana ante el reto del cambio global. Universitat de València, 369-395. ISBN: 978-84-9133-555-9

Research activities:

Strandings:

The University of Valencia coordinates the stranding network in Valencian Community. The objectives are:

- Strandings Register information of the stranded species, numbers and trends
- Collect and conserve biological samples: tissues, teeth, parasites, and stomach content
- Analyse parasitological content, develop genetic studies and studies of feeding habits

- Studies of health status of cetaceans from western Mediterranean: CeMV on Mediterranean dolphin populations
- Tissues and parasites collection.

Spatial Modeling

- Use ASI dataset for habitat modelling
- Synoptic surveys in Ibiza Channel combining aerial, boat, gliders, UAV and eDNA
- Monitoring human activities with AIS and satellite imagery; monitoring underwater noise from gliders; modelling human pressures
- Spatiotemporal of ship strike risk in the Western Mediterranean
- Numerical modelling of marine litter; monitoring with UAV

Surveying

- Surveys in ferry lines from Valencia to Palma de Mallorca and Ibiza

Water sampling

- Water sampling of eDNA in Ibiza Channel from oceanographic cruises.

Publications

- Ten, S., Fusar Poli, F., Konishi, K., Pastene, L.A., Martín, V., Raga, J.A., Aznar, F.J. 2025. The epibiont *Xenobalanus globicipitis* indicates differences in swimming kinematics among cetaceans. *Marine Biology*, 172, 7. doi: 10.1007/s00227-024-04555-7
- Ten, S.; Pool, R.; Raga, J.A.; Sweet, A.D.; Aznar, F.J. (2025). Phylogeography of the world's largest copepods indicates interoceanic gene flow mediated by the dispersal of their cetacean and fish hosts. *Parasitology*. 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031182025000101>
- Pool RV, Pons-García N, Consoli F, Rivero M, Bombardi C, Raga JA, Aznar FJ. (2024). Fine-scale distribution of the lungworm *Halocercus delphini* in the lungs of the striped dolphin, *Stenella coeruleoalba*: implications about migration pathways and functional significance. *Marine Mammal Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mms.13111>.
- García-Gallego, A., Fraija-Fernández, N., Raga, J. A. & Aznar, F. J (2023). Temporal and geographical changes in the intestinal helminth fauna of striped dolphins, *Stenella coeruleoalba*, in the western Mediterranean: a long-term analysis (1982 - 2016). *Frontiers in Marine Science*. DOI: 10.3389/fmars.2023.1272353

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

MEDACES (<http://medaces.uv.es/>)

Other activities:

-MEDACES Mediterranean Database of Cetacean Strandings. This database has been set-up to co-ordinate all national and regional efforts for riparian countries. This project was created under the Barcelona Convention extended to the ACCOBAMS area. It is currently supported by the Spanish Ministry of the Environment, ACCOBAMS and the UNEP-MAP-SPA/RAC.

ESTUDIO PARA LA CONSERVACIÓN DE LOS CETÁCEOS Y TORTUGAS MARINAS DE LAS COSTAS VALENCIANAS.
Conselleria d'Agricultura, Desenvolupament Rural, Emergència Climàtica i Transició Ecològica funding

RELATED PROJECTS

CONCEPTU MARIS

Promote the CEPTU flagship role (cetaceans and sea turtles) to raise awareness among EU citizens on the shared Mediterranean Sea environment, common heritage of human culture and natural marine resources values. Supports the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 by contributing to the EU-wide network of offshore N2000 sites identification. Contributes to Marine Strategy Framework Directive, since it aims at setting a strategic approach to integrate assessment of D1 elements (CEPTU) and D10 (marine litter).

Reference code: EU LIFE20 NAT/IT/001371

Start date: January / 2022.

End date: January / 2026.

Project type: EU - LIFE

VARACOMVAL

This project is based on the coordination and development of the "Generalitat Valenciana's protocol for attending to strandings", which involves close collaboration between the University of Valencia (UV), the Generalitat Valenciana (GVA) and the Oceanogràfic Foundation (FO), as has been the case in recent years. Attention to sea turtle nesting events has been coordinated within the same protocol and between the same institutions.

Start date: January / 2022.

End date: December / 2025.

Project type: National/EU - NextGenerationEU

IOS4DOM

Integrated ocean observing systems for dynamic ocean management

This research proposal aims to swiftly advance the development of new marine biodiversity observing systems and move towards new frontiers in operational ecology to support the adaptive management of marine resources. The research focuss through a multidisciplinary approach, combining recent advances in quantitative methods and technological developments, which offer unprecedented opportunities to simultaneously monitor marine animal movement and biodiversity, ship-based activities and the marine environment. This project will provide an innovative and cost-effective approach for non-invasive monitoring of marine ecosystems using autonomous underwater vehicles, which will contribute to the sustainable development of the blue economy and marine management.

We Are Méditerranée

Name of the Representative: Greg LECOEUR

Capacity building activities:

Public awareness activities:

Research activities:

DALONGEVILLE Alicia. Analyses VigiDNA M pour l'inventaire des Poissons, Mammifères et Crustacés en milieu marin pélagique [We Are Méditerranée](#)

FULLGRABE L., WOEHREL A., FONTAINE Q., LECOEUR G., CHABRIER N., CHAPAT, M., JEGLOT S. & MARENGO M. (2023). Etude des paramètres physico-chimiques et planctoniques de la colonne d'eau du front liguroprouvençal et des dynamiques côte-large au cours de l'Expédition Pelagos du projet We Are Méditerranée.
E10-23 : 52 pages [We Are Méditerranée](#)

WOEHREL A¹, FULLGRABE L. ¹, CHABRIER N. ¹, LECOEUR G.², & MARENGO M.¹ (2024). We Are Méditerranée : Prospection et inventaire de la biodiversité sous-marine des substrats meubles infralittoraux - Rapport final. Contrat STARESO/We Are Méditerranée. E12-23 : 118 pages [We Are Méditerranée](#)

We Are Méditerranée, 2024. Expédition Pelagos. Valorisation de la biodiversité méditerranéenne et sensibilisation. Rapport final. 111 pages. [We Are Méditerranée](#)

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

Le logo est sur le site internet : <https://wearemediterranee.com/>

¹ STARESO - STATION de REcherches Sous-marines et Océanographiques de Calvi - Pte de la Revellata - BP 33 - 20260 Calvi (Corse) – France

² Association We Are Méditerranée - 06300 Nice - FRANCE

Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)



Name of the Representative:

Please note, WDC has undergone a period of transition during the 2023-2025 period, including significant change in personnel. While this report reflects the period of change, WDC is actively looking to reconnect with ACCOBAMS and identify strategic opportunities to work within the agreement to provide genuine value and impact.

Capacity building activities:

WDC attended the joint Marine Debris Workshop for ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS held in April 2023, where a representative from WDC provided an overview of developments since 2020, including updates on a new publication³ and the UN Plastics Treaty, in addition to a presentation on the issue of waste and environmental impact caused by fishing gear in the UK and Europe.

Public awareness activities:

N/A

Research activities:

WDC has been working with ACCOBAMS and OceanCare to explore the role of cultural transmission for cetacean conservation in the ACCOBAMS region. WDC will be contributing, via CMS, to organizing and participating in a joint workshop on cetacean culture at the 36th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society in the Azores in May 2025.

Use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo:

WDC has not used the ACCOBAMS Partner logo in any publications during the 2023-2025 period.

Other activities:

WDC is a member of the Joint Bycatch Working Group for ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS and participates in meetings and document writing for the group. Most recently, WDC attended the 2nd meeting the working group held in February 2025.

WDC is also a member of the ASCOBANS Discussion Group on the Iberian Harbour Porpoise and the intersessional IWC group on Iberian Harbour Porpoise within the Human Induced Mortality subcommittee of the Scientific Committee. This population of harbour porpoise occurs in the north-west Iberian Peninsula within the ACCOBAMS extension area.

³ Eisfeld-Pierantonio, S.M., Pierantonio, N., and Simmonds, M.P., 2022. The impact of marine debris on cetaceans with consideration of plastics generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Environmental Pollution, 300,118967, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2022.118967>

YACHT CLUB OF MONACO

Name of the Representative: Bernard d'Alessandri



1. SEA Index®:

We are pleased to present our flagship environmental initiative, the SEA Index, which aims to reduce CO2 emissions in the yachting sector (vessels of 24 metres and above) through impartial and independent certification, already deployed in the ports of Monaco (Hercule, Fontvieille and Cala del Forte), bringing the number to 16 ports to date. As part of the development of the SEA Index, we have recently established a partnership with Bureau Veritas to raise awareness and reduce noise pollution and vibrations (Underwater Radiated Noise). Our project will therefore incorporate a specific index for superyachts, comparable to the one developed by Bureau Veritas in the shipping sector.

We would be honoured to discuss this topic with you in order to identify together the best way to promote ACCOBAMS in our approach to stakeholders in the recreational boating sector.

2. Sea Festival

Every year, in close collaboration with Monegasque institutions – notably the Prince Albert II Foundation, the Oceanographic Museum, the Monaco Underwater Exploration Club and the Monegasque Association for the Protection of Nature – we organise the Sea Festival.

We are pleased to announce that this year's event will be held on 21 June 2025 and will bring together more than 500 participants. This event is an ideal opportunity to showcase your initiatives and raise awareness among the public in Monaco and the wider region.

3. Races organised by Yacht Chili de Monaco

Every year, the Yacht Club de Monaco organises sailing races that attract hundreds of enthusiasts. Among these events, the 'Parlemo-Monte Carlo' race from 19 to 24 August 2025, launched in 2005, has become a real institution in the Mediterranean and attracts a particularly large audience.

During the competitions, and more specifically during the skippers' briefings, we implement various awareness-raising initiatives aimed at participants. In this context, we would be delighted to be able to highlight the values and actions promoted by ACCOBAMS.

4. Raising awareness among young people

Every Wednesday afternoon, our sailing school welcomes around a hundred children for ongoing training. We are considering incorporating awareness-raising activities dedicated to the protection of cetaceans into these sessions. We would also be delighted to discuss with you the possibility of organising themed camps and distributing educational kits to reinforce our shared commitment to the environment.