

# NEWSLETTER



## LIFE CONCEPTU MARIS

LIFE20 NAT/IT/001371  
"CONservation of CEtaceans and  
Pelagic sea TURtles in Med:  
Managing Actions for their  
Recovery In Sustainability",

The project is supported by the  
financial instrument of the  
European Union, for the  
environment:  
the LIFE Programme.



Partnership: ISPRA, Capo Carbonara  
MPA, CIMA Research Foundation,  
CMCC Climate, ÉcoOcéan Institut,  
Anton Dohrn Zoological Station,  
Triton Research, University of  
Milano-Bicocca, University of  
Palermo, Universitat de València,  
University of Turin.



## LAST UPDATES

Three months full of event and  
big steps achieved!

### Milestones reached:

- Review and implementation  
of protocols for data collection
- First event of networking
- The CITIZEN SCIENCE  
activities on board have  
started!

## NETWORKING ACTIVITIES



**34<sup>th</sup> ECS Conference**  
**WORKSHOP & NETWORKING EVENT**

**Crossing the trail of cetaceans: harmonising and improving EU transborder monitoring of cetacean using ferries/large vessels as multidisciplinary research vessels to support the EU Nature Legislative framework**

📅 April 17, 2023      🕒 15.00 - 18.30      📍 Eurostars Isla de La Toja  
 Rúa Cortegada, s/n, 36991 A Toxa,  
 Pontevedra, Spain

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP/NETWORKING event, thanks to the collaboration between Conceptu Maris LIFE project and IMPEL, which cofounded the event.

➔ **KEY ISSUE:** reach a valuable, well-structured system of data collection, analysis, and management for conservation of cetacean and marine life in offshore waters within the EU legal framework.

We had had 18 speakers, 35 attendees in presence, and 23 followed from home, belonging to different types of entities and projects, with universities, NGOs, public institutions, enterprises, all dedicated to safeguarding biodiversity and to environmental monitoring.

After a first introduction of the **LIFE Conceptu Maris** and **Impel** MTT network, followed three different thematic sessions that presented all stages of the information chain, from harmonizing data collection to the most effective analytical approaches to support the requirements of the legislative framework.

We had speakers representing **France** and **Spanish** policies to review their principal ongoing initiatives, trajectories, and to highlight the legislative requirements and possible information gaps in the scientific knowledge.

It followed, the block on the data collection, underlaying the process to define common protocols. LIFE **Conceptu Maris & IMPEL MTT**, **University of Leeds**, **IWDG**, **CIIMAR**, **ULL** and other projects presented their own experiences and actions.

During the session on **data management**, different tools for harmonization of data were presented and issues on the necessity on a long term supported/funded data management. Please look also at the presentation by **Nikki Taylor from JCDP**.

The **last block** of talks explored the different analysis and test the different indicators that can be applied to better assess the status and detect trends in cetaceans for risk assessment.

**Final consideration:**

The European Environmental Agency (EEA) Report (No 55 10/2020) states that “marine mammals (including cetaceans) are among the species with the highest proportion of unknown assessments (over 78%)”. The WS further highlighted that, despite the large gaps still existing, numerous initiatives for long term systematic data collection on large marine region exist that are worth to be further harmonized and valorized. As well, more effort can be direct to harmonize the whole information chain, including the management of existing dataset, assuring interoperability and accessibility of FAIR data. Effort is also needed to improve metrics to assess cetacean species conservation status as required by the legislative framework.

In general, the WS further confirmed the high potential of the scientific community to overcome the lack of information on cetacean species conservation status, and to help defining the needed standard analytical procedures, providing that the objective is well understood. Often, the absence of common languages and objectives between the two communities prevent the possibility to directly use the output of the research for the legislative requirements. Strengthening the connectivity between decision-maker and scientific community should therefore be considered as a strategic priority to improve the level of assessment required.



**GIVE US  
YOUR FEEDBACK  
and leave comments  
or suggestions at:**

**GOOGLE FORM** 



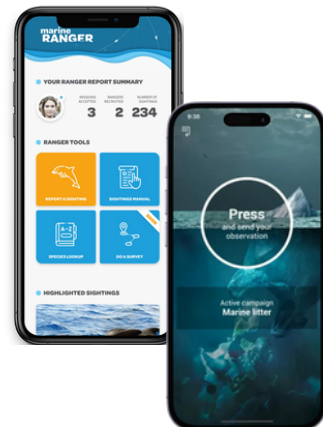
**May 4th**

LIFE Conceptu Maris participated in the networking session of the **LIFE A-MAR NATURA2000** project, dedicated to the enhancement of marine sites of the Natura 2000 network.



### May 16th

Networking session with the project LIFE Delfi and INFO RAC: "Collecting data using apps", for the use and promotion during the CONCEPTU MARIS citizen science activities of "Marine Range" and "SeaWatcher", to collect data on cetacean and marine litter.



**DOWNLOAD THE APP**

## THE CITIZEN SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

### May 16th

Launch of the Citizen Science campaign (ISPRA): "Get on board with researchers"



Thanks also to the great effort in disseminating the activities (more than 10 public events in Italy, Spain, and France, and as many posts on socials), the citizen's possibility to get on board and to become part of the research has aroused a lot of interest from the public: we have received hundreds of questions, many more than expected.



### May 26th

The importance of citizen science in the monitoring of cetacean and sea turtles (MPA CC).



26 May 2023  
h 10:00 – 11:15  
(CET)

The importance of citizen science in the monitoring of cetaceans and sea turtles: Conceptu Maris and other good practices and networks in the marine environment

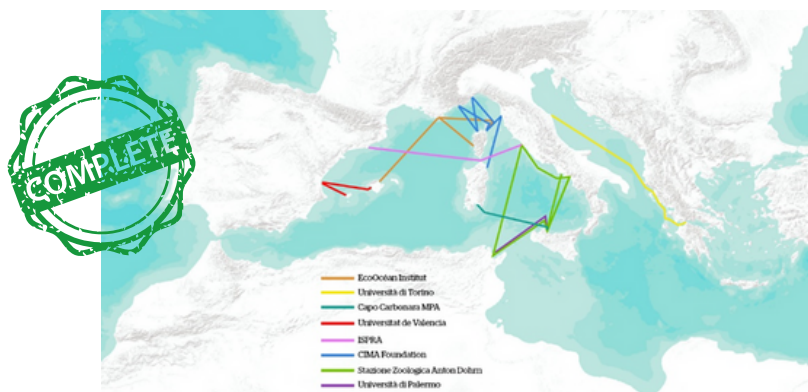
On Friday 26 May, Capo Carbonara Marine Protected Area organised an event to talk about the importance of Citizen Science in monitoring cetaceans and sea turtles.

The meeting, which is included in the European Maritime Day in My Country 2023 calendar, focused on the activities promoted by the Conceptu Maris project to promote "citizen science" as a support to researchers in the monitoring of cetaceans and sea turtles on board the line ferries. The occasion also included a networking session with other interventions for the protection of biodiversity: the **Autonomous Region of Sardinia**, which illustrated the crucial role of the local regional network for the conservation of marine fauna.

The Jonian Dolphin Conservation, leader of the **BioTourS** project, explored alternative methods of raising awareness on cetaceans based on a new model of tourism. The **OTTERS project** explained how to promote citizen science activities in the marine environment and use citizen-generated data. Finally, the **European Citizen Science Association** (ECSA) presented the EU-Citizen Platform and its role in the growth of Citizen Science in research processes in the Old Continent.



**ALL THE ROUTES ARE CLOSED AND FULL**, the first volunteers have been selected and trained, and the first boardings have already started.



16 different routes have been selected in the Western Mediterranean Basin (core and transfer areas E.2.2), and available for the citizens boarding during this coming summer.

## THIRD MULTIDISCIPLINARY MONITORING

**IN THE CORE AREA** along the routes Salerno -Palermo – Tunisi – Civitavecchia – Salerno, on board of Grimaldi Lines.

**May 22nd – 26th** by SZN, ISPRA, UNIPA, UNIMIB

After two days with few sightings, including a large group of honey buzzards, on the third day of navigation the observers literally no longer knew where to look: over forty turtles, five sunfish, a dozen groups of cetaceans, including two striped dolphins and bottlenose dolphins, but also a swordfish and a ray. Without forgetting that, on **World Turtle Day** (May 23), a small specimen of loggerhead was found trapped in a fishing net.



## DISSEMINATION

At the **34th Annual ECS, European Cetacean Society** conference, O’Grove (Spain) “Our oceans, Our future” (April 18th- 21st), the LIFE Conceptu Maris team participated in force.

Among the oral presentations of the conference, two involved many of the project partners:

- Antonella Arcangeli, Fabrizio Atzori, Marta Azzolin, Lucy Babey, Ilaria Campana, Laura Carosso, Roberto Crosti, Odey Garica-Garin, Martina Gregorietti, Aranna Orasi, Alessia Scuderi, Paola Tepsich, Morgana Vighi, Alberto Castelli, Giovanni Paolo Mancuso, Clara Monaco, Eugenia Pasanisi, Miriam Paraboschi, Giulian Pellegrino, Gianluca Sarà, Lea David - “*Testing methodologies for range/habitat assessment of three low density cetacean species in the Mediterranean Sea*”;
- Qi-fan Wu, Antonella Arcangeli, Cristina Giacoma, Marco Gamba, Livio Favaro, Pepjin Bakker, Marta Azzolin, Roberto Crosti “*Machine learning algorithm selection for modelling striped dolphin (Stenella coeruleoalba) distribution in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas*”.

Also in the poster section, Conceptu Maris was well represented. The complete list can be found in the abstract book:

**LIST OF ABSTRACT** 

During the "video night" of April 19, the video "The floating lab", created by ISPRA and Triton Research, was also screened, which tells the experience of the first multidisciplinary outing on the ferries of Conceptu Maris in October 2022.



### **"In defence of giant of the Pelagos Sanctuary" (Genoa, May 23rd)**



During the Genova Blue District, on the occasion of the "European Maritime Day in My Country" campaign, CIMA Research Foundation organised the meeting "In defense of giants of the Pelagos Sanctuary", to officially inaugurate the involvement of LIFE Conceptu Maris in the Pelagos Sanctuary, one of the areas with the highest density of whales and dolphins in the Mediterranean.

**9:30 - 10:00 Registration**

**10:00 - 10:30 Welcome**

- CIMA Foundation
- Genoa Municipality
- ISPRA
- Environmental Ministry IT
- Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement
- Coast Guard

**10:30 - 11:40 CONCEPTU MARIS in Pelagos**

- Presentation of LIFE Conceptu Maris Project (A. Arcangeli, ISPRA)
- Starting of activities in Pelagos (L. David, Eco Ocean Institut)
- Training course in Marine Biodiversity and ship strike risk (P. Tepsich, CIMA Foundation)
- The ferry Companies involved in the project
- Citizen Science Activities (F. Azori, AMPCC)
- Life Conceptu Maris photo contest (F. Tomasinelli, Triton Research)

**11:45 - 12:30 LIFE in Pelagos**

- Life Pinna (F. Tomasinelli)
- Life A-Mar Natura 2000 (D. Mattioli)
- Life Delli (A. Lucchetti)
- ELife su squali (M. Bottaro)
- Re-Life (MC. Chiantore)
- Lifermuscles (E.Scocchera)
- Lifeseanet (F. Barbera)

**12:30 - 13:30 Light lunch**

**Programme**

[FILL OUT THE FORM TO REGISTER](#)






All the partners who give life to LIFE Conceptu Maris, representatives of other projects to safeguard biodiversity (LIFE Pinna, LIFE Amar Natura 2000, LIFE Delfi, LIFE Elife, RE-LIFE, LIFE Muscles and LIFE SEA.NET), Corsica Sardinia Ferries, and also numerous institutions such as the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security, ISPRA, the Municipality of Genoa, the Coast Guard, ACCOBAMS and the Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement.

## NEW PUBLICATION

Arcangeli A., Atzori F., Azzolin M., Babey L., Campana I., Carosso L., Crosti R., Garcia-Garin O., Gregoriotti M., Orasi A., Scuderi A., Tepsich P., Vighi M. and David L. (2023) Testing indicators for trend assessment of range and habitat of low-density cetacean species in the Mediterranean Sea. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 10, 893.

[DISCOVER THE PAPER](#)

## COMMUNICATION

On May 15th the new "Profondo blu" **photo contest** competition has been launched!



["Deep blue"](#)

It will be promoted during summer 2023 to achieve even wider participation than the previous 2022 edition.



[PRESS REVIEW](#)





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## UPCOMING EVENT



- **June 10th - 11th** Participation to the **POSIDONIA FESTIVAL**, with Conceptu Maris talks, photo galleries of 2022 edition of Conceptu Maris photo contest "Profondo Blu".
- **June 27-28th** Participation to the **Ocean Race** final event in Genoa, Italy, with Conceptu Maris talks. A special space will be available for lectures about nature, conservation, and sustainability in marine ecosystems.



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