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OUR PROJECT

The Malta National Aquarium is currently involved in the following projects and collaborations to spread awareness on marine conservation and integrate marine education in schools.

Perseus@School

This programme in collaboration with Perseus@school is linked with our Marine Education competitions for students. The winners of the competition will be invited to attend an interactive morning with Alan Deidun (Local Marine Biologist and Associate Professor) and Greg Nowell (Sharklab founder) where we will provide the students with resources, a detailed tour of the Aquarium and the chance to attend a shark release of our nurse hounds that have been developing for the last couple of months in the Aquarium.

Panacea

This project formed part of the Italia -Malta Programme (2007-2013) which in collaboration with the University of Malta produced a series of documentaries and institutions representing the importance of spreading awareness about the MPAs (marine protected areas) in Malta and Sicily. At the Malta National Aquarium, we display the documentaries for our visitors to learn about the biodiversity and conservation of the MPAs in Malta.

Genetic characterisation of the Mediterranean Box jellyfish (*Carybdea marsupialis*). Kristian Pulis

The aim of this project is to analyse if there is genetic correlation between populations of *Carybdea marsupialis* in a variety of location around the Maltese Islands and to see if there are any relationships between other populations found in the Mediterranean Sea. The study will also monitor abiotic factors to determine what/ when triggers populations of this species to bloom.

Currently development is taking place at the University of Malta to obtain the secondary polyp stage of this species. Once this is established, abiotic factors may be simulated to the cultures in order to see what induces these blooms and compared to those in the wild.

The Aquarium plans to assist Kristian with this project by providing the facilities required to continue this project.

The measure of microplastic uptake shown by holothurian species at varied concentrations. Kristina Edwards

The aim of this project is to measure the uptake of microplastics by holothurian species at different concentrations and to observe their physiology and behaviour. Monitoring of both males and females will be analysed to determine if this causes any differentiation. The study of stomach content will determine what has been ingested.

The Aquarium plans to assist Kristina with this project by providing the facilities and assistance required to continue this project.

MED-JellyRisk

This project is assessing the socio-economic impacts of jellyfish blooms and the implementation of mitigation countermeasures. MED-JELLYRISK addresses an integrated coastal management approach into 10 Marine Coastal Zones (MCZs) in the western and central Mediterranean Sea basins faced with increased jellyfish proliferations. In these areas, jellyfish outbreaks represent a growing threat for humans and coastal activities (including leisure and aquaculture).

At the Aquarium, we have a poster, which was a product of the project, to inform visitors about the species they may come across when swimming in local waters and how to get involved and record the tracking of such species.

The following projects are in collaboration with NGOs and other entities

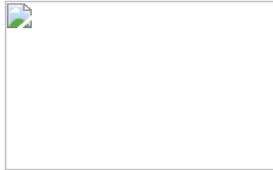
Sharklab Malta



The Aquarium has been collaborating with Sharklab Malta in a recovery and release programme of two species of local cat shark species, Nurse hounds and Lesser spotted cat sharks. Sharklab Malta visit the fish market in Valletta daily to report the amount of shark species that are landed and check whether or not they have egg cases inside them. These egg cases are taken out and brought to the Aquarium for further development until they hatch naturally, where they are displayed to the public visiting the Aquarium. Both Sharklab Malta and the Aquarium have since organised three shark releases in order to give these species a second chance at life in the Sea.

Sharklab Malta spend a couple of weekends a year promoting awareness of shark conservation at the Aquarium by bringing egg case specimens, shark jaws and activity sheets for kids to learn. They also have been promoting an 'Adopt a shark' programme for kids who want to donate to the NGO and monitor the progress of their pup. This can also be purchased at the Malta National Aquarium, along with membership information to become a member of Sharklab Malta.

Birdlife Malta



The Aquarium has been collaborating with Birdlife Malta by providing an area within the attraction to showcase their research on seabirds. This includes research summary boards, a display donated by the Natural History Museum and a number of documentaries filmed by Birdlife during their research.

They have also joined us in spreading awareness on marine conservation during our Anniversary fair on the 5th October 2014.



Dinja wahda is an environmental initiative organised and run by Birdlife Malta whereby schools receive points for completing related activities. Two of the activities relate to local marine species and impacts on the marine environment which link to the Aquarium and can be worked on during/ after the students' visits.

Fish4tomorrow



Their main aim is to create awareness about importance of acquiring seafood from sustainable sources. They have created a local documentary highlighting the changes that have been seen by local fishermen, divers etc due to overfishing in Malta. Whilst their latest project was the production of a pocket sized Quickfish guide which summarised the availability of local fish species based on environmental sustainability. This guide was launched at the Malta National Aquarium on the 18th September 2014.

We are currently working on a display area where they can showcase their work in the Aquarium and reach out to the visitors at the Aquarium.

EU Life+ project Migrate

