

**AKDENİZ
KORUMA
DERNEĞİ**

Mediterranean Conservation Society



2025

Annual Report

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MEDITERRANEAN

CONSERVATION

SOCIETY

Vision

A Mediterranean ecosystem where all living beings coexist in harmony and ecological balance.

Mission

To develop and implement science-based projects that conserve the biodiversity, ecosystems, and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean Basin while raising awareness.



Values

Science

To develop nature-based solutions grounded in scientific methods to conserve species and ensure the continuity of their habitats, while strengthening their resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Inclusivity

To share responsibility with all individuals and institutions committed to nature conservation, work collaboratively with local stakeholders, and establish national and international partnerships with experts and relevant organizations.

Harmony

To support the sustainable use of natural resources in harmony with nature while safeguarding the economic and cultural needs of local communities alongside biodiversity conservation.

Transparency

To openly share the processes and outcomes of our work with our members, volunteers, and donors, and to uphold our responsibility to communicate all tangible outputs to the public.

Equality and Respect

To respect the diversity of nature and reject all forms of discrimination within our organizational culture and throughout the programmes we implement.

OUR TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Zafer Ali Kızılkaya
Erol Güren
Taner Özcan
Dr. M. Tunca Olguner
Hakkı Caner Bayrak

BOARD OF AUDITORS

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Bahadırhan Gökmen
Mehmetcan Görgün

OUR TEAM

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Ayşenur Kurşun – Project Manager
Berre Akgün – Gökova Project Manager
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Nuri Tekin – Datça-Bozburun Marine Ranger
Osman Aydın – Karacasöğüt Marine Ranger
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Kayhan Güçeli – Technical Advisor
Nejdet Bozkurt – Project Coordinator, Lycian Orchid Project & Wetlands Project
Prof. Dr. Kerim Çiçek – Scientific Advisor, Wetlands Project

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Prof. Dr. Zafer Tosunoğlu

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We would like to thank the following colleagues who were part of our team and contributed to our work during 2025:

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Emre Güren
Engin Taşkaya
Gizem Akdoğan
Gizem Cansever Güleç
Güner Şencan Peynirci
Hamdi Türkmen
İlknur Elbeye
Kerem Gökdağ
Mehmet Özdemir
Sedef Korkmaz
Serena Pennetti
Sinem Mutlu

FOREWORD BY

A NEW MILESTONE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN: INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION AND GLOBAL IMPACT

For the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD), 2025 represents not only another successful year of conservation efforts but also a year of strategic transformation, marking the next stage in a journey built on more than a decade of experience. What began as a modest initiative in Gökova Bay in 2012 has evolved into a nature conservation model recognised internationally for its innovative and effective approaches.

One of the most significant milestones of the year was the official launch of the Mediterranean Conservation Foundation (AKV), whose establishment we initiated in 2023. Building on the knowledge, experience, and expertise developed within the Society, the Foundation will provide a more inclusive, sustainable, and strategic framework for our work, supported by a distinguished Board of Trustees comprising respected leaders from across Türkiye.



Zafer Kızılkaya
Chairperson of the Board

Every achievement highlighted in this report is the result of the collective efforts of our scientists, marine rangers, fishers, partners, and the supporters who believe in our mission.

AKV will serve as a cornerstone of our long-term vision, strengthening our capacity to develop and scale nature-based solutions that address the challenges of climate change and safeguard the Mediterranean's unique natural and cultural heritage.

Our achievements in 2025 once again demonstrated the impact of our field-based conservation efforts through tangible results. Under our Marine Ranger System, our teams carried out 1,022 patrols, covering more than 24,000 kilometres and detecting over 1,000 incidents of illegal fishing activity. These consistent enforcement efforts not only strengthened the protection of marine ecosystems but also contributed directly to improving the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and increasing the biomass of our marine ecosystems.

We also continued to break new ground in scientific research. For the first time in the Mediterranean, we began monitoring the movements and behaviour of lionfish (*Pterois miles*) using acoustic telemetry. As our New Fish Programme entered its tenth year, we removed nearly 19 tonnes of invasive species from the ecosystem, supporting marine biodiversity while creating a circular economic model that benefits local communities.

Our work also gained greater international recognition throughout the year. At the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, we shared Türkiye's experience in community-based marine conservation and invasive species management with global leaders and conservation practitioners.

As we begin this new chapter with the Mediterranean Conservation Foundation, we invite you to join us in sharing the responsibility of protecting the Mediterranean's blue natural heritage.

Together, we will continue working towards a more resilient Mediterranean and a more hopeful future.

MEDITERRANEAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION: A NEW CHAPTER FOR NATURE CONSERVATION ALONG TÜRKİYE'S MEDITERRANEAN COAST

Since 2012, the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD) has been developing and implementing science-based projects to monitor and conserve marine ecosystems in Special Environmental Protection Areas (SEPAs), primarily in Muğla, as well as in İzmir and Antalya.

Over the past decade, we have delivered numerous successful initiatives contributing to the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems along Türkiye's Mediterranean coast. Our work has been recognised internationally as a model for effective nature conservation and has received several prestigious awards. Yet, our greatest achievement has always been witnessing the positive impact of our work on both marine ecosystems and the local communities that depend on them.

Through our projects, we have generated measurable and lasting outcomes for the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems. Our Marine Ranger System, established within officially designated Marine Protected Areas, has become a cornerstone of effective marine conservation, while the scientific monitoring programmes we have carried out for threatened species have generated critical data to support their long-term protection.

By monitoring the ecological changes associated with the ongoing tropicalisation of the Mediterranean, we have contributed to identifying the actions needed to strengthen ecosystem resilience and support climate adaptation. At the same time, our ecosystem restoration initiatives have focused on restoring degraded marine habitats and enhancing the ecological integrity of coastal ecosystems.

Beyond field conservation, our communication, education, and public awareness programmes have encouraged positive behavioural change within local communities, helping to foster broader public engagement in nature conservation.

Together, these achievements demonstrate the value of combining science-based research with active, field-based conservation to deliver tangible and lasting conservation outcomes.

Over the years, our Society has grown into a multidisciplinary team of experts while building an extensive network of partners. By sharing the responsibility for conservation with public institutions, civil society organisations, local communities, and other stakeholders, we have demonstrated that collaborative action is essential to achieving lasting conservation outcomes.

Yet, the accelerating impacts of climate change and increasing human pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems demand faster, more effective, and more ambitious action than ever before.

Recognising this responsibility, we initiated the establishment of the Mediterranean Conservation Foundation (AKV) in 2023, and in 2025 the Foundation officially began its operations.

Guided by a vision rooted in nature-based solutions, the Foundation aims to provide a stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable platform for protecting Türkiye's Mediterranean coastline. Our Board of Trustees brings together respected leaders from across Türkiye who share a deep commitment to nature conservation and our mission.

The Mediterranean Conservation Foundation builds upon the knowledge, expertise, and collaborative approach that the Mediterranean Conservation Society has developed over more than a decade. Effective scientific monitoring, strong national and international partnerships, leadership in marine conservation projects, and internationally recognised achievements form the foundation of this new institution.

Building on this experience, we will expand the reach of our conservation efforts and strengthen our capacity

to develop long-term, nature-based solutions to the challenges posed by climate change. Through AKV, we are extending our vision with a more strategic, long-term approach to nature conservation.

The Foundation seeks to unite individuals, institutions, and communities around the shared responsibility of safeguarding the unique natural and cultural heritage of Türkiye's Mediterranean coast while securing its future for generations to come. Supporting conservation initiatives, raising public awareness, and encouraging participation across all sectors of society—particularly at the local level—will remain among our highest priorities.

Acknowledgements and Call to Action

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the supporters, partners, and communities who have stood beside us throughout this journey. None of our achievements would have been possible without your trust and commitment.

At the same time, we recognise that the challenges facing the Mediterranean continue to grow, and there is still much work to be done.

We invite you to become part of the Mediterranean Conservation Foundation and to join us in sharing the responsibility of protecting one of the world's most remarkable marine regions.

Together, through collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to nature conservation, we will continue working towards a more resilient Mediterranean and a sustainable future.

MAP OF OUR FIELDS OF WORK

I. GÖKOVA SPECIAL
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AREA

II. DATÇA-BOZBURUN SPECIAL
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AREA

III. FETHİYE - GÖCEK SPECIAL
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AREA

IV. KAŞ-KEKOVA SPECIAL
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AREA

* V. FOÇA SPECIAL
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AREA

STRATEGY

At the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD), we are building on the success of our work in nature conservation and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to strengthen our commitment to leaving a healthier, more resilient, and sustainable environment for future generations.

As we expand our ambitions, we aim to take more comprehensive and effective action to protect marine ecosystems and ensure the long-term conservation of biodiversity. By strengthening our outreach and awareness-raising efforts, we encourage communities to recognise the value of natural resources and promote environmental sustainability.

We are also committed to contributing actively to policy development processes, advocating for the expansion of Marine Protected Areas and the strengthening of conservation policies. Through these efforts, we aspire to play a leading role in advancing nature conservation and effective Marine Protected Area management at both the national and international levels, while safeguarding the Mediterranean's unique ecosystems.



CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY

Identify and assess threats to biodiversity arising from climate change and human activities, while safeguarding and enhancing the population size, habitat extent, and habitat quality of AKD's priority species.



TARGETED REMOVAL OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES FROM MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

Monitor the spread of non-native marine species in the Mediterranean and assess their ecological impacts. Facilitate the transition of the market for edible non-native species—developed with AKD's support over the past decade—to small-scale fisheries cooperatives and other market actors.



SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

Strengthen participation and support for conservation efforts by implementing communication, outreach, and public awareness activities that engage communities and stakeholders.



SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Support the identification of archaeological remains and shipwrecks from the Early Bronze Age and Hellenistic Period located in and around Marine Protected Areas, and contribute to underwater archaeological research and excavations.



STRENGTHENING THE MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

Support the designation and expansion of scientifically identified, ecologically connected, and effectively sized Marine Protected Areas (MPAs); ensure their effective protection; and promote the integration of proven conservation approaches into both existing and newly established MPAs.

ANOTHER YEAR FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN: THE MEDITERRANEAN CONSERVATION SOCIETY IN 2025

In 2025, the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD) continued its work towards a vision of a Mediterranean ecosystem where all living beings coexist in harmony and ecological balance. Throughout the year, we advanced our science-based approach to nature conservation by combining robust scientific research with local knowledge and community participation. Our work extended across marine and coastal ecosystems, protected areas, scientific monitoring programmes, and environmental education initiatives, delivering tangible conservation outcomes on the ground.

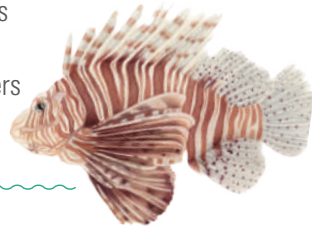
Together with our professional team, local stakeholders, and volunteers, we implemented a wide range of initiatives to conserve marine ecosystems, monitor biodiversity, identify the sources of plastic pollution, reconnect children and young people with the sea, and address the impacts of non-native marine species.



In 2020, we established New Fish, our social enterprise, to transform an initiative that began in 2015 with the "Tasty Invaders Festival", organised in collaboration with the Akyaka Fisheries Cooperative to introduce the goldband goatfish (*Upeneus moluccensis*), into a sustainable model with lasting impact.

As our programme marked its tenth year in 2025, we worked alongside small-scale fishers to remove nearly 19 tonnes of edible non-native marine species from the ecosystem, contributing both to biodiversity conservation and to the development of sustainable livelihood opportunities.

As part of our acoustic telemetry study on the invasive lionfish (*Pterois miles*), we monitored 10 tagged individuals across nine receiver stations in Aydın Bay and retrieved data from the acoustic receivers every six months.



OUR MARINE RANGERS CONDUCTED

1,022 PATROLS

ACROSS DIFFERENT REGIONS.

THEY SPENT MORE THAN 3,579
HOURS AT SEA AND COVERED OVER

24,115 KILOMETRES

WHILE CARRYING OUT THEIR PATROLS.

THROUGH THESE REGULAR PATROLS, OUR
MARINE RANGERS DETECTED 1,650 ILLEGAL
ACTIVITIES AND REPORTED THEM TO THE
RELEVANT AUTHORITIES.

OF THESE REPORTED INCIDENTS,

1,014

WERE RECORDED AS ILLEGAL FISHING
ACTIVITIES.



Throughout 2025, we carried out a total of eight dive operations across our project sites, successfully removing

1.750 KG

of marine litter from the seabed. denizel atığı başarıyla kıyıya çıkardık.



Throughout 2025, we conducted monthly water quality monitoring at 10 designated stations, including Gökçe, Akçapınar Stream, Azmak Stream, and Akyaka. To monitor changes in groundwater levels within the Gökçe Wetland, we deployed dedicated groundwater monitoring equipment and methodologies. We completed the installation of three groundwater monitoring wells at three designated stations, each installed at a depth of approximately one metre, and continue to monitor groundwater level fluctuations through regular measurements.

To identify the sources of plastic pollution within our project sites, we carried out seasonal field surveys at a total of

23 MONITORING STATIONS.

Macroplastic and mesoplastic sampling was conducted at four monitoring sites, comprising two beach stations and two underwater stations.

These efforts not only provide a baseline assessment of current conditions but also establish the foundation for a long-term monitoring programme that will continue in the years ahead.

505 STUDENTS

Through activities organised in schools, field sites, and festival venues, we engaged 505 students, fostering a stronger connection between young people and the sea.



In 2025, the Mediterranean Conservation Society published and contributed to a total of

9 SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS.

These included four peer-reviewed articles published in international scientific journals, two books and book chapters, and three additional publications arising from scientific research supported by AKD.



AWARDS

- 2012**
Marine Conservation Leadership Award
Marsh Charitable Trust, **United Kingdom**
- 2013**
Whitley Award for Nature Conservation Whitley Fund for Nature, **United Kingdom**
- 2014**
Equator Prize United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), **USA**
- 2017**
Whitley Gold Award Whitley Fund for Nature, **United Kingdom**
- 2017**
Difference Makers Award Sabancı Foundation, **Türkiye**
- 2018**
Best Practice Award for Co-management of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM-FAO), **Malta**
- 2022**
Marine Conservation Leadership Award Marsh Charitable Trust, **United Kingdom**
- 2023**
Goldman Environmental Prize, **USA**
- 2025**
Mediterranean Guardian Award Bluewave Alliance, **Spain**



EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are established to conserve marine biodiversity by regulating or restricting human activities within designated marine areas. By protecting these ecosystems and ensuring their long-term health, MPAs help replenish fish populations, support sustainable fisheries, and safeguard the livelihoods of local communities for future generations.

At the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD), we share the findings of our scientific monitoring programmes with decision-makers to support the identification of biodiversity hotspots and priority areas requiring protection. Building on this scientific evidence, we work in coordination with the relevant public authorities to strengthen the effective management of officially designated Marine Protected Areas.

We carry out comprehensive scientific monitoring and conservation activities within the Marine Protected Areas located in the Special Environmental Protection Areas (SEPA) of Gökova Bay, Fethiye–Göcek, Datça–Bozburun, and Kaş–Kekova—some of Türkiye's most ecologically significant coastal ecosystems.



We are a member of the MedPAN Network, which brings together 127 institutions and civil society organisations from 21 countries to strengthen the effective management of Marine Protected Areas across the Mediterranean.



As an accredited partner of the United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), we contribute to the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan in Türkiye and represent the country in relevant international platforms.

UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE (UNOC3)

From 9–13 June 2025, we participated in the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, France, where we showcased the Mediterranean Conservation Society's marine conservation initiatives and represented our work on the international stage.

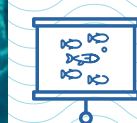
Throughout the conference, four AKD representatives—Zafer Ali Kızılkaya, Chairperson of the Board; Gizem Akdoğan, Secretary General; Caner Bayrak, Resource Development and Administrative Affairs Coordinator; and Serena Pennetti from our Scientific Monitoring Team—actively contributed as speakers, moderators, facilitators, and participants across a range of thematic sessions.



On 3 June, our Secretary General, Gizem Akdoğan, participated in the roundtable discussion "Climate Change and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean," hosted by the City of Nice and Muğla Metropolitan Municipality, where she shared AKD's experience in managing invasive species with international representatives.

The event, held aboard STS Bodrum—the first school ship in the history of the Republic of Türkiye—was one of the conference's notable gatherings, highlighting maritime heritage and the importance of local and international collaboration. As part of the United Nations Ocean Wonders Fleet, STS Bodrum sailed from Türkiye and berthed at the Port of Nice during the conference.

Our Scientific Monitoring Specialist, Serena Pennetti, was also among the participants aboard the vessel.



On 10 June, at the "Successful Marine Protected Area Governance Models" event held in the Green Zone, we presented successful conservation practices from Türkiye, highlighting that the effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) contributes not only to biodiversity conservation but also to the well-being of local communities.

Caner Bayrak participated as a speaker in the civil society panel titled "From Shore to Summit," where he emphasised the importance of participatory policies and multi-stakeholder collaboration in marine conservation.

At the "Grassroots Action for Marine Conservation" event, Zafer Ali Kızılkaya shared Türkiye's community-based conservation model, demonstrating the positive impact of local stewardship on conservation outcomes. Later that day, at a session highlighting The MedFund's ten years of experience in sustainable conservation finance, he spoke about the importance of long-term financing mechanisms for effective marine conservation.

Throughout UNOC3, AKD contributed not only through presentations and panel discussions but also by actively engaging in policy dialogue. On 10 June, we participated in the "Protected Species" roundtable, where we discussed the integration of local communities into international marine protected area governance systems. For AKD, participation in UNOC3 2025 represented more than international visibility—it marked an important opportunity to bring the conservation of the Mediterranean's unique biodiversity to the global agenda.

MARINE RANGER SYSTEM

The Marine Ranger System, introduced by the Mediterranean Conservation Society as the first initiative of its kind in Türkiye, aims to support the effective protection of no-take zones by documenting and reporting illegal activities encountered in the field, including illegal fishing, inappropriate vessel mooring, and the discharge of waste into the sea.

All recorded incidents are documented and reported, together with official field reports, through an established communication network to the local authorities of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change.

Through this system, we contribute to the effective management of Marine Protected Areas by reducing pressures on marine ecosystems, addressing habitat degradation and biodiversity loss, and supporting the resilience of small-scale coastal fisheries in the face of climate change.

The Marine Ranger System is based on the civic responsibility established under Article 56 of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye, which recognises the protection of the environment as a shared responsibility. The role of Marine Rangers is limited to observing, documenting, and reporting illegal activities, and, where necessary, supporting the relevant public authorities.

We provide regular training to our Marine Rangers, who are selected from local communities—primarily among small-scale fishers. Through two dedicated training programmes delivered in

2025, we further strengthened their capacity and enhanced the effectiveness of our conservation approach.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Marine Ranger System, we conduct simultaneous scientific monitoring inside and outside no-take zones.

Monitoring programmes focusing on the Mediterranean monk seal, sandbar shark, seagrass meadows, macroalgae, coral species, fish biomass, and daily fisheries data provide the scientific evidence needed to guide future conservation planning while also enabling us to assess the ecological and socio-economic impacts of the Marine Ranger System.

1650

ILLEGAL
ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year, our Marine Ranger System monitored illegal activities within no-take zones, including illegal fishing, inappropriate vessel mooring, and the discharge of waste into the sea.

In 2025, Marine Rangers carried out 1,022 patrols across different regions, spending more than 3,579 hours at sea and covering over 24,115 km.



During these patrols, they detected **1,650 illegal activities** and reported them to the relevant authorities. Of these incidents, 1,014 were recorded as illegal fishing activities.



We thank Northstar for its valuable support in maintaining and upgrading our patrol vessel, AKD-7. Their contribution enables us to continue protecting the Mediterranean more effectively.

Sustaining the activities of small-scale fisheries depends not only on the conservation of fish stocks but also on the resilience of coastal ecosystems. In line with this understanding, we continued to work alongside small-scale fishers in Akyaka, Akçapınar, Gökova, Çamlı, Söğüt, Bozburun, and Kaş throughout 2025, supporting both marine conservation and local livelihoods.

As in previous years, we purchased edible non-native marine species directly from small-scale fishers through local fisheries cooperatives, contributing to the development of a sustainable market. We also continued to support fishers in improving the value chain and expanding market opportunities for these species.

To strengthen data collection and sustainable fisheries management, we continued to record catch data through our digital fisheries logbook application, TÜRİB. In collaboration with the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, we regularly shared these data with the relevant authorities, contributing to fisheries management and evidence-based decision-making.

The data collected through these activities provide an important foundation for assessing both the ecological and socio-economic impacts of our conservation efforts.

SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES



WOMEN IN FISHERIES

Although women have played an essential role in fisheries for generations, their contributions have often remained overlooked. Across the world, women are most commonly engaged in family-run fishing businesses or support their families' fishing activities. Women who fish at sea continue to face numerous social and economic challenges, including the limited visibility and recognition of their labour.

At the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD), we work with women engaged in small-scale fisheries in Gökova Bay, Datça-Bozburun, and Fethiye-Göcek to address professional challenges, strengthen their capacity through training and organisation, and increase the visibility of women fishers in the sector. We also share the knowledge and lessons generated through these initiatives with decision-makers and the wider public.

In 2025, we brought together small-scale fishers from the Akyaka, Cumalı, Mordoğan, Karaköy, Dalaman, Akbük, and Söğüt Fisheries Cooperatives for a Financial Literacy Training held in Marmaris.

The training primarily focused on women, whose contributions to the fisheries sector often remain under-recognised. Strengthening women's participation in financial decision-making and supporting their economic empowerment within the sector are among our key priorities.

The training brought together women fishers from different coastal communities, their families, and representatives of public institutions. The programme, designed by Agricultural Economist İpek Topuzoğlu, covered financial management, access to credit, record-keeping practices, fisheries cooperatives, and existing support mechanisms, while also providing participants with an opportunity to exchange experiences and learn from one another.

MONITORING

THE IMPACTS OF

CLIMATE CHANGE

At the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD), we monitor the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems and coastal communities. By collecting scientific data on the scale and pace of these changes, we generate evidence that supports decision-makers and stakeholders in developing effective measures to reduce impacts, strengthen resilience, and inform adaptation strategies.

Through our communication and outreach activities, we also work to increase public understanding of climate change and encourage behavioural change that contributes to the protection of marine and coastal ecosystems.

SEAGRASS MONITORING

Posidonia oceanica seagrass meadows, one of the Mediterranean's most important coastal habitats, play a critical role in maintaining the functioning of marine ecosystems and protecting coastal environments. Our monitoring programme, designed to assess the condition of these sensitive habitats and track long-term ecological changes, reached a new level of regional coverage and consistency in 2025.

We conduct our monitoring programme across the Special Environmental Protection Areas (SEPs) of Gökova Bay, Fethiye-Göcek, Datça-Bozburun, and Kaş-Kekova, located along Türkiye's south-western coast. As of 2025, we regularly monitor 13 active monitoring stations, forming an integrated monitoring network that represents a wide range of environmental conditions and pressure levels.

In 2025, our monitoring programme was further strengthened in terms of both spatial coverage and data continuity. Across all monitoring stations, we systematically recorded the distribution, meadow cover, shoot density per square metre, and ecological condition of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows. By comparing these data with those collected in previous years, we were able to evaluate long-term ecological trends and changes over time.



siğ istasyonda
sürgün/m²

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

Our findings demonstrate that *Posidonia oceanica* meadows exhibit different ecological responses depending on water depth and environmental pressures. A clear inverse relationship was observed between depth and shoot density. While the shallow monitoring station (9 m) recorded the highest density, with approximately 311 shoots/m², values at the lower depth limit stations (24–31 m) ranged between 106 and 184 shoots/m². These results highlight the influence of increasing depth and reduced light availability on seagrass meadow structure.

The data collected also demonstrate that the relationships between depth, human pressures, and habitat characteristics can be effectively assessed through long-term monitoring. These findings provide valuable scientific evidence to support conservation planning and the adaptive management of Marine Protected Areas.

By maintaining a continuous monitoring programme, we not only establish a robust baseline for assessing the current status of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows but also improve our understanding of long-term ecological change, strengthening future conservation and management strategies.

***Posidonia oceanica* meadows:**

- Provide essential habitat and nursery grounds for juvenile fish and numerous marine species.
- Support marine biodiversity.
- Help reduce coastal erosion.
- Contribute to climate change mitigation by storing and sequestering carbon.

As slow-growing habitats that are highly sensitive to environmental change, *Posidonia oceanica* meadows can only be effectively assessed through long-term, systematic monitoring programmes.



MONITORING INVASIVE SPECIES

Our invasive species monitoring programme conducted throughout 2025 aimed to quantify the increasing biological pressure exerted by invasive species on coastal ecosystems in the eastern Mediterranean and to provide scientific evidence to support adaptive management and conservation planning.

The programme adopted an integrated monitoring approach combining underwater visual fish censuses, fish biomass assessments, and acoustic telemetry.

Priority invasive species monitored included:

- *Pterois miles* (Devil firefish / Lionfish)
- *Siganus luridus* ve *Siganus rivulatus* (Dusky and Marbled Spinefoot)
- *Parupeneus forsskali* (Red Sea Goatfish)
- *Sargocentron rubrum* (Redcoat Squirrelfish)
- *Fistularia commersonii* (Blue-spotted Cornetfish)

Throughout the monitoring programme, we regularly assessed the relative contribution of these species to total fish biomass as well as their spatial distribution across the study areas.

ACOUSTIC TELEMETRY

As part of our 2025 monitoring programme, we applied acoustic telemetry to better understand the behavioural ecology of invasive marine species.

- A network of nine acoustic receiver stations, deployed across different depth zones, continuously collected movement data.
- Ten *Pterois miles* (lionfish) individuals were fitted with acoustic transmitters.

This study represents the first successful acoustic tagging of *Pterois miles* in the Mediterranean, enabling the collection of long-term movement data. It also constitutes one of the first behavioural monitoring studies of an invasive marine species in the Eastern Mediterranean using acoustic telemetry.

Telemetry analyses focused on:

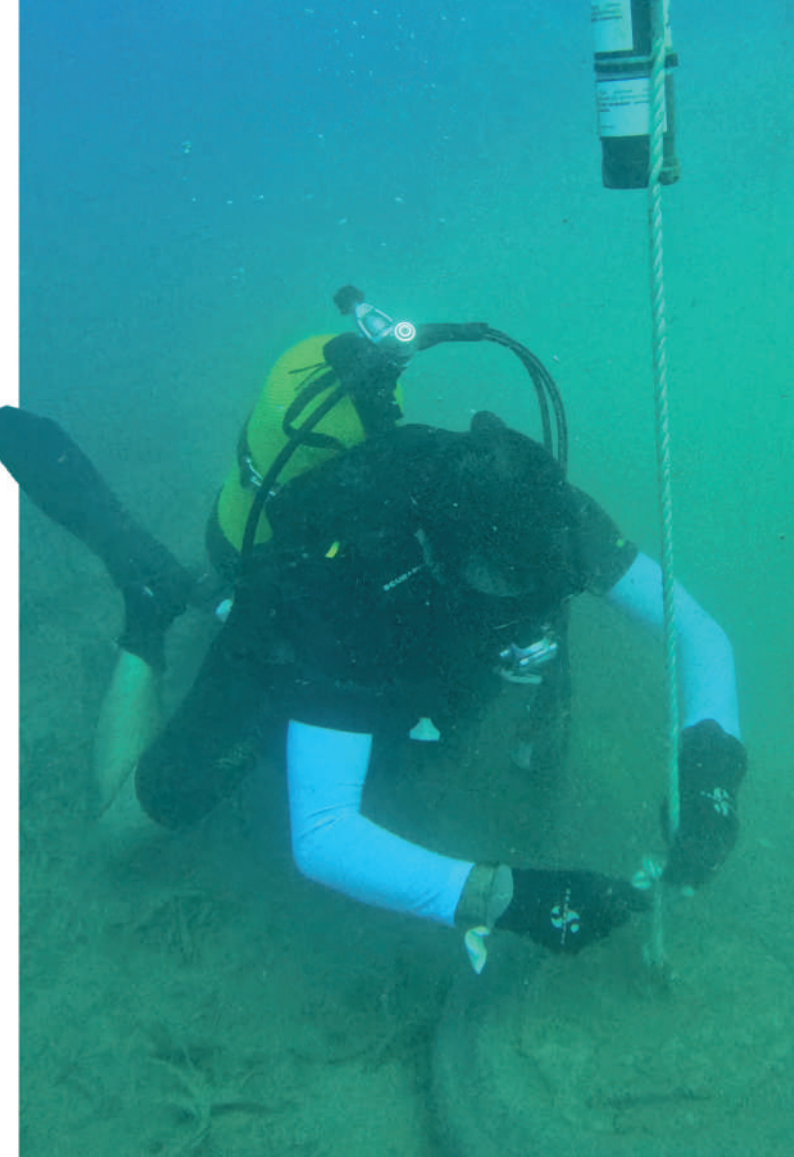
- Daily and seasonal movement patterns
- Depth-use patterns
- Habitat-use hotspots
- Space use and habitat preferences

Preliminary results indicate that some individuals showed strong site fidelity, remaining associated with specific reef structures, while others displayed considerably larger home ranges. These findings provide valuable information for optimising targeted control and management strategies.

The 2025 monitoring programme demonstrated that:

- The relative contribution of invasive species to total fish biomass was quantified through regular comparative assessments.
- Differences in species composition between no-take zones and areas open to fishing were identified.
- *Pterois miles* (lionfish) was acoustically tagged and monitored through a network of nine acoustic receiver stations, marking the first documented application of acoustic telemetry for this species in the Mediterranean.
- Behavioural and spatial data were generated to support evidence-based invasive species management.

Maintaining integrated, long-term monitoring programmes is essential for assessing the ecological impacts of rapidly spreading invasive species. Combining acoustic telemetry with biomass assessments provides a robust scientific foundation for developing adaptive, evidence-based management strategies.



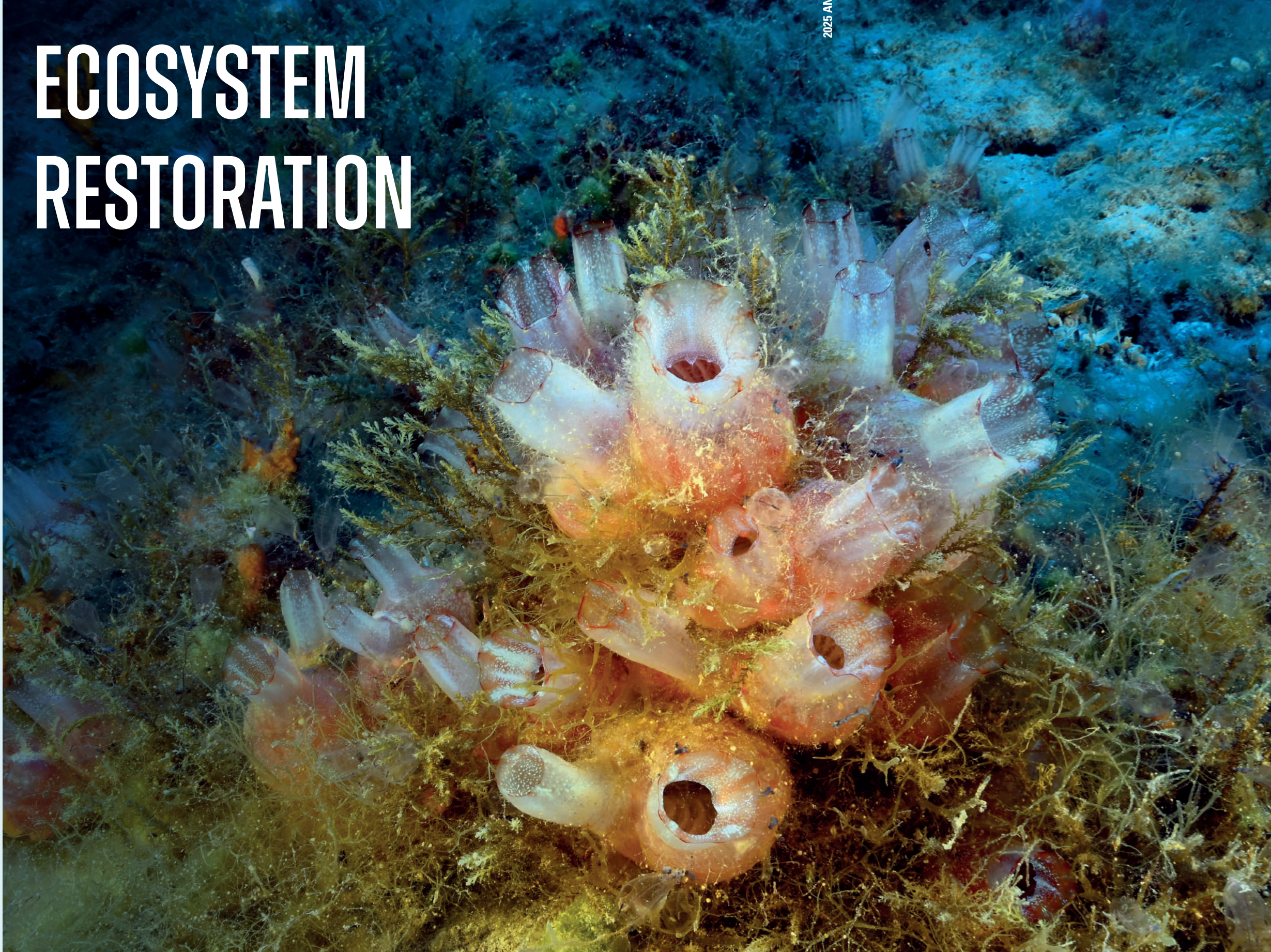
UNDERWATER VISUAL CENSUS AND BIOMASS MONITORING

Monitoring surveys were conducted using standardised 50 x 10 m (500 m²) underwater visual census transects.

- Comparative surveys were carried out inside no-take zones (NTZs) and in adjacent areas open to fishing.
- Species-specific length measurements were converted into biomass (g/m²) using established length–weight relationships.
- The relative contribution of invasive species to total fish biomass (%) was calculated.
- The biomass contribution of herbivorous invasive rabbitfish (*Siganus* spp.) was assessed separately.

Our findings showed increasing abundances of *Sargocentron rubrum* (redcoat squirrelfish) and *Pterois miles* (lionfish), particularly in rocky reef habitats, while grazing pressure was primarily associated with *Siganus* spp. (rabbitfish). Comparisons between no-take zones and adjacent fishing areas demonstrated that native fish biomass was higher within protected areas, whereas invasive species can become dominant in certain microhabitats.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION



Ecosystem restoration encompasses a range of measures and interventions designed to restore degraded or damaged ecosystems to their original condition, or to a state that closely resembles their natural ecological function. These approaches help prevent the loss of plant and animal species resulting from habitat degradation, enhance ecosystem functioning, and conserve biodiversity.

Ecosystem restoration is also fundamental to understanding how both ecosystems and human communities can become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Since 2012, the Mediterranean Conservation Society has adopted an ecosystem-based approach to restoration, integrating ecological objectives with socio-economic considerations to ensure that conservation actions deliver long-term benefits for both nature and local communities.

NON-NATIVE SPECIES THE NEW FISH PROGRAMME

Since 2015, the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD) has implemented the New Fish Programme along Türkiye's south-western coast to improve the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and coastal households, create new markets for edible non-native marine species by increasing their economic value, and encourage higher harvesting rates through growing consumer demand. By promoting the sustainable utilisation of these species, the programme contributes to ecosystem restoration and supports the management of invasive marine species.

To strengthen this approach, in the summer of 2020 we established the Mediterranean Conservation Society Social Enterprise, creating a nature-based business model that demonstrates how edible non-native marine



© Fatih Şahin-Sepia Restoran

species can be sustainably utilised while generating environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Through our collaboration with small-scale fishers, we have improved livelihoods, generated scientific knowledge on the utilisation of edible non-native marine species, and contributed to the development of new markets. Our work began in 2015 with efforts to promote the goldband goatfish (*Upeneus moluccensis*), followed by the Tasty Invaders Festival, and evolved into a sustainable model with the establishment of the New Fish Social Enterprise in 2020.

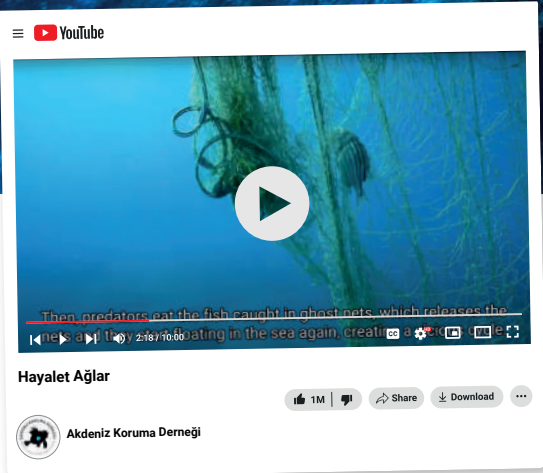
By 2025, together with small-scale fishers, we had contributed to the removal of nearly 19 tonnes of edible non-native marine species from marine ecosystems. This model has not only helped reduce pressure from invasive species across a wide geographical area, but has also fostered ecological sustainability by supporting a transformation in the fisheries sector. Through international collaborations, we have also advanced scientific knowledge on the behavioural ecology of these species.

SEABED CLEAN-UP REMOVAL OF GHOST NETS

Ghost fishing refers to the continued capture of marine life by abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear. Fishing nets that become entangled on underwater obstacles, cannot be retrieved due to currents, are lost, forgotten, or deliberately discarded may continue to trap marine organisms long after they have been abandoned. These fishing gears are commonly referred to as ghost nets.

Remaining underwater for years, ghost nets continue to entangle and kill marine life while smothering sensitive benthic habitats, causing significant damage to marine ecosystems. They also pose a serious threat to endangered species, many of which become entangled and are unable to survive.

Throughout 2025, we continued underwater and coastal clean-up operations across our project sites, including Gökova Bay, Datça–Bozburun, and Fethiye–Göcek, removing marine litter and abandoned fishing gear to help restore the health of these valuable marine ecosystems.



What is a Ghost Net?
Ghost nets are abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing nets that continue to capture marine life after they have been abandoned.
<https://youtu.be/9apCWAtz3WM>



Underwater Clean-up Locations	 Fishing Line (kg)	 Metal (kg)	 Plastic (kg)	 Glass	 Rubber (kg)	 Rope (m)	 Textiles (kg)	 Other (kg)	 Ghost Nets (kg)
Marmaris (Bencik Bay)	0.1	0	0.9		1	0	5	1	
Marmaris (Çamlı Bay)	0.1	1	10	24		3			
Marmaris (Orhaniye)	0.1	1	43	28		5		2	
Marmaris (Çamlı Bay)	0.1	5	2	3					
Datça (Ata Island)									400
Göcek (Boynuzbükü Bay)	0.5	32	13	55		14	46	17	
Marmaris (Çamlı Bay)	1	5	2	3					
Marmaris (Çamlı Bay)	1	2	11	24		3	3		

WETLANDS

Wetlands are among the world's most valuable ecosystems, playing a vital role in maintaining biodiversity, regulating the water cycle, and supporting ecosystem resilience. However, the impacts of climate change, increasing human pressures, and unsustainable water use continue to threaten the ecological integrity of these habitats. Protecting wetlands is therefore essential not only for biodiversity conservation but also for climate adaptation and sustainable water resource management.

Since 2021, the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD) has been implementing wetland conservation and restoration activities under the Wetland Protection Fund, supported by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. In 2025, we continued our work to strengthen ecosystem resilience and support biodiversity conservation.

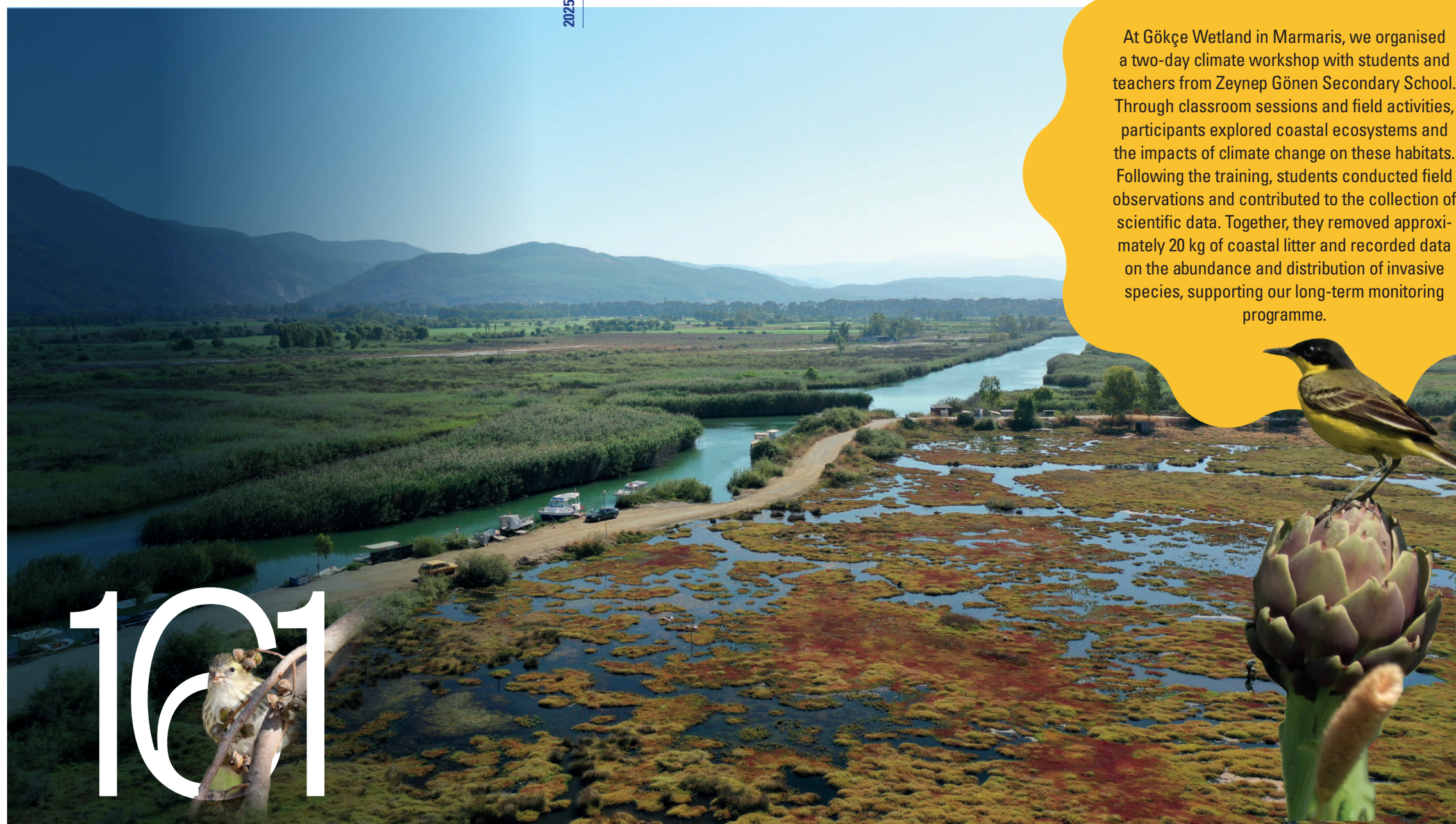
As part of our monitoring programme, we continued to assess groundwater dynamics, water quality, and biological diversity. Groundwater monitoring wells installed in previous years enabled us to collect long-term hydrological data, while regular field surveys generated valuable information on wetland ecological conditions.

During 2025, seasonal bird monitoring was carried out at Gökçe Wetland, where 161 bird species were recorded throughout the year. Observations confirmed that the wetland provides important breeding, feeding, and resting habitat for numerous species, underlining its ecological significance for both resident and migratory birds.

Monitoring of groundwater levels and water quality also revealed spatial and seasonal variations in hydrological conditions. These findings contribute to understanding the ecological sensitivity of the wetland and provide scientific evidence to guide future conservation and restoration planning.

Through communication and awareness-raising activities, we also continued to engage local communities and decision-makers, highlighting the ecological importance of wetlands and promoting their long-term conservation.

As part of the project, we continued to analyse the socio-economic impacts of climate change on coastal communities through field research carried out in 2025.



At Gökçe Wetland, we recorded 43 bird species and observed 161 individual waterbirds during our monitoring surveys.

Throughout the project, we also strengthened our knowledge and experience by reviewing international good practices. In this context, our team visited the Gökova region with experts from the Doğa Association, followed by a study visit to the Camargue region of France.

These visits enabled us to examine ecosystem restoration practices and wetland monitoring activities on site,

while exchanging knowledge and experience with international experts.

In 2025, we also took part in the launch event of the Living Lakes initiative in Gökova, contributing to international cooperation on wetland conservation. Through this event, we further strengthened our efforts to conserve and restore wetlands by sharing knowledge with local and international stakeholders.



www.instagram.com/reels/DTBBNtDwMC/



MONITORING PLASTIC POLLUTION

We conduct comprehensive monitoring and research activities in the Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area (SEPA) to determine the current status and potential sources of land- and marine-based plastic pollution. Within this scope, we carry out microplastic sampling from the sea surface, water column, sediment, and beaches, as well as macro- and mesoplastic sampling on coastlines and the seafloor. We also analyse the presence of microplastics in commercially important fish species and engage local stakeholders in the process through citizen science initiatives.

As part of our 2025 activities, in collaboration with Akdeniz University, we conducted seasonal sea surface sampling at 17 stations throughout the year, as well as macroplastic monitoring at two coastal and underwater stations. We also published the results of our 2024 microplastic monitoring study in a peer-reviewed scientific paper and presented our findings at national conferences and symposiums, sharing them with public institutions, universities, and civil society organizations.

Based on the data collected, we continue to investigate the sources of plastic pollution and develop solution-oriented approaches to address the issue. We also continue our education and collaboration activities to raise awareness, particularly among young people.

Our findings indicate that microplastic pollution within the Datça-Bozburun SEPA is particularly concentrated in areas with intensive settlements, harbours, and agricultural activities. In some relatively undisturbed natural areas, however, pollution appears to be driven by marine currents transporting plastics from elsewhere. These results demonstrate that plastic pollution represents a significant pressure on the region's ecosystems and underline the importance of continuing long-term monitoring to better understand pollution sources and support the development of effective management measures.

Koraltan, İ., Gökdağ, K., Olguner, M.T., & Güven, O. (2024). *Microplastic Pollution and Possible Sources in Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area*. Turkish Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 24 <http://doi.org/10.4194/TRJFAS26711>



CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Gökdağ, K., Koraltan, İ., Olguner, M.T., Güven, O. Seasonal Distribution, Monitoring and Assessment of Microplastics in the Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area. *4th International Symposium on Marine Research*, Istanbul, 3–6 November 2025.



Koraltan, İ., Tomaş, K.E., Gökdağ, K., Olguner, M.T., Güven, O.

Datça-Bozburun Assessment of Mesoplastic Pollution Along the Coasts of the Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area. *4th International Symposium on Marine Research*, Istanbul, 3–6 November 2025.

PROTECTING THE MEDITERRANEAN'S CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

As Mediterranean Conservation Society, we continued our efforts in 2025 to support the protection of cultural heritage, one of the strategic priorities outlined in our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan.

In 2025, the Bozukkale, Çamçalık and Kızlan Underwater Excavations, carried out by a team led by Prof. Dr. Harun Özdaş under the Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology and the Research Center for Maritime History and Underwater Cultural Heritage (SUDEMER) at Dokuz Eylül University, yielded significant archaeological findings.

During the underwater excavation of the Ottoman Shipwreck off the coast of Kızlan, Datça, conducted with the permission of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a number of archaeological artefacts were uncovered that ranked among Türkiye's ten most significant archaeological discoveries of 2025. The 17th-century shipwreck revealed a collection of rare artefacts that had never before been documented.

Meanwhile, ongoing excavations at the Çamçalık Bronze Age Harbour continue to uncover one of the most comprehensive underwater collections of Bronze Age artefacts discovered to date. Both excavation projects will continue in 2026.

Archaeological artefacts uncovered during the underwater excavation of the Ottoman Shipwreck were recognized among Türkiye's ten most significant archaeological discoveries of 2025.

10

Established through the efforts of the Carian Trail Team in 2009, the Carian Trail preserves the Mediterranean's rich natural and cultural heritage while carrying it into the future. Stretching 850 kilometres, it is Türkiye's longest hiking trail, passing through ancient cities of the Carian civilization, hills covered with olive and almond trees, and unspoiled coves.

As Mediterranean Conservation Society, we collaborate with the Carian Trail Team on the section of the trail located within the Datça–Bozburun Peninsula, carrying out joint efforts to register and protect the trail network and cultural heritage sites while supporting the conservation of the region's biodiversity.

As part of the Carian Trail Cleanup Campaign, initiated by the Datça Governorship and the Datça District Directorate of Culture and Tourism, we contributed to the campaign at the request of the Governorship. Within this framework, we coordinated the cleanup operation at Gebekum Beach in collaboration with DAÇEV (Datça Environment and Tourism Association).

Approximately 20 participants, including representatives from Flow Beach, UCPA, DAÇEV, Mediterranean Conservation Society (Akdeniz Koruma Derneği AKD), the Datça Municipality Cleaning Services Directorate, and three volunteers from Australia, took part in the cleanup. Over the course of three hours, the team collected and removed 2.5 tonnes of waste.

This initiative marked an important step toward protecting the Carian Trail, a route valued not only for its outstanding natural beauty but also for its rich cultural and historical significance.



MONITORING AND CONSERVING THREATENED MEDITERRANEAN SPECIES

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2024 identifies the major short- and long-term risks facing the world. According to the report, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse rank among the most severe long-term global risks over the next decade. In addition to environmental pollution and the critical depletion of natural resources, significant changes in Earth's systems, biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and shortages of natural resources are highlighted as key challenges that the world is expected to face in the years ahead.

MEDITERRANEAN CONSERVATION SOCIETY SPECIES OBSERVATION & REPORTING HOTLINE

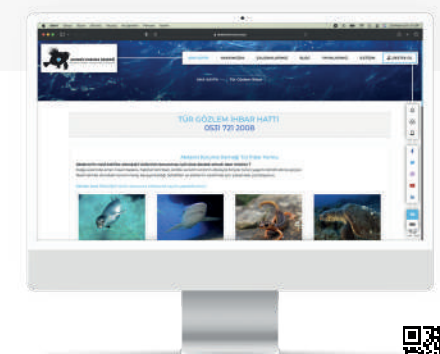
The Mediterranean is home to many species facing the risk of extinction.

To support the conservation, monitoring, and management of these species, Mediterranean Conservation Society has established a Species Observation & Reporting Hotline.

If you encounter a Mediterranean species or observe a situation that may threaten its survival, you can report it to us via akdenizkoruma.org.tr or by calling +90 850 307 25 12.

By reporting species observations, you can:

- Contribute to the protection of endangered species.
- Help ensure that observations are shared with the relevant institutions and experts.
- Support species monitoring and individual identification studies.
- Enable the identification and assessment of threats affecting species.
- Contribute to the planning and implementation of conservation activities.



Scan the QR code to access the Species Observation & Reporting Form:

<https://akdenizkoruma.org.tr/tr/akdeniz-koruma-ihbar-formu>



DIVERSEA – CITIZEN SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

In October 2025, Mediterranean Conservation Society marked the second year of the DiverSea Project -*Integrated Observation, Mapping and Monitoring of Functional Biodiversity in Coastal Seas*- supported under Horizon Europe, the European Union's flagship research and innovation programme. As a consortium partner, we continued to fulfil our responsibilities by participating in the project's second annual meeting and advancing our work on communication, dissemination, and citizen science.

The DiverSea Project aims to enhance biodiversity monitoring in coastal marine ecosystems, strengthen ecosystem-based approaches, and reinforce the link between science, policy, and on-the-ground implementation.

Drawing on our local ecological knowledge, extensive field experience, and strong partnerships with local stakeholders, Mediterranean Conservation Society actively contributes to the project's implementation and impact-oriented activities, particularly in the areas of citizen science and stakeholder engagement.

IUCN KIRMIZI LİSTESİ NEDİR?

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is the world's most comprehensive source of information on the global conservation status of animal, plant, and fungal species. It assesses species against a set of scientific criteria to determine their risk of extinction.

The Red List classifies species into categories ranging from Least Concern (LC) to Critically Endangered (CR) and Extinct (EX). Beyond identifying extinction risk, it serves as an essential scientific resource for guiding conservation actions, informing policy development, and supporting the sustainable management of biodiversity.



MEDITERRANEAN MONK SEAL

(Monachus monachus)

The Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) is the only seal species native to the Mediterranean Sea. According to the 2023 assessment of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the species is classified as Vulnerable (VU) globally and Endangered (EN) in the Eastern Mediterranean.

At Mediterranean Conservation Society, we carry out a range of conservation activities to reduce the threats facing this rare marine mammal and mitigate

their impacts. We work closely with the relevant authorities to protect both the species and its critical habitats, while continuing long-term monitoring and public awareness initiatives highlighting the importance of the Mediterranean monk seal.

We continue to monitor the use of 10 coastal caves located in Foça and along approximately 710 kilometres of coastline stretching from Gökova Bay to Kaş using motion-triggered camera traps and remote monitoring

systems that provide real-time image transmission.

In early 2025, images obtained from one of the monitored caves in Gökova Bay documented two adult females and two pups, including one newborn, providing valuable information on cave use and maternal care. In Foça, monitoring revealed that three Mediterranean monk seals used the same cave simultaneously during 2025. In November, we also recorded a mother-pup pair using the same cave.



ENDANGERED MEDITERRANEAN
SPECIES

LIKYA

ORCHID

(*Ophrys lycia*)



Laboratory studies enabled orchid seeds to be cultured and their germination process to be monitored.



The Likya orchid (*Ophrys lycia*) is a species endemic to the Kaş district of Antalya and is found nowhere else in the world. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, it is classified as Critically Endangered (CR). Its extremely small population size, habitat degradation, and pressure from illegal collection pose significant threats to its survival, making scientific research and conservation efforts critically important.

In collaboration with Ege University, Mediterranean Conservation Society has been conducting doctoral research on the conservation of the Likya orchid. As part of this work, seeds collected from the species have been analysed in detail. Germination tests have demonstrated that the seeds remain viable for extended periods under suitable storage conditions, providing an important scientific basis for ex situ conservation.

Laboratory studies have shown that seeds stored under appropriate conditions can later be germinated under controlled laboratory conditions and successfully acclimatised to natural conditions. Although some losses occur during this process, a proportion of the individuals continue to develop under suitable conditions and can eventually be reintroduced into their natural habitats.

The project has also identified the mycorrhizal fungi associated with the Likya orchid, providing important insights into the species' biology. Genetic material obtained from seed germination has been deposited in the National Gene Bank, ensuring the long-term conservation of its genetic diversity. Individuals propagated under laboratory conditions are planned to be reintroduced into suitable natural habitats, where their survival and population development will be monitored.

As Mediterranean Conservation Society, we believe this research represents a significant contribution to both science and conservation. It enhances our understanding of the threats facing the species while generating knowledge that supports future conservation actions. The integration of laboratory research, field monitoring, and conservation practice serves as an important model for the protection of threatened plant species in Türkiye.

© Nejdett Bozkurt

ECOLOGY EDUCATION

6 Eğitim
293 students

During 2025, we carried out a series of ecology education programmes for students of different age groups, aiming to increase awareness of marine and coastal ecosystems.



GÜLBAHÇE BAY – PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITIES

In 2025, as part of the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP)-funded project “Ensuring the Sustainability of Gülbahçe Bay through Collaborative Management”, we carried out a series of participatory activities in cooperation with the Gülbahçe Fisheries Cooperative.

Throughout the project, meetings and workshops were organised with the participation of fishers, public institutions, academics and civil society representatives. These activities aimed to evaluate the ecological characteristics of the bay and identify local needs related to the sustainable use of marine areas, water quality, and fisheries.

Participation records and observations were systematically documented and mapped using geographic information systems (GIS). In addition, training sessions and awareness-raising activities were organised to strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders. The project also produced recommendations and a roadmap to support the sustainable use and biological diversity of marine areas.

Through this process, collaboration among local stakeholders was strengthened, contributing to the development of a more participatory approach to the management of Gülbahçe Bay.

THE PROTOCOL UNDER THE MUĞLA PROVINCIAL DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION'S BLUE-GREEN SCHOOLS PROJECT HAS BEEN RENEWED

The Blue-Green Schools Project Protocol, signed with the Muğla Provincial Directorate of National Education, has been renewed to continue strengthening children's and young people's connection with nature and raising ecological awareness.

Through this collaboration, we aim to:

- Increase students' awareness of marine ecosystems.
- Highlight the importance of fisheries and marine protected areas.
- Raise awareness of invasive species and marine pollution.

EVENTS



PRESENTING THE GÖKOVA MODEL IN BRUSSELS AT THE CLIENTEARTH & MEDSEA ALLIANCE EVENT

At an event hosted by ClientEarth and the MedSea Alliance, we presented the Gökova Model and discussed marine ecosystems, environmental policies, and sustainable fisheries. Our Chair of the Board, Zafer Kızılkaya, delivered a presentation introducing the MedSea Alliance and participated in a panel discussion on the Gökova Bay model.

The event brought together representatives from the European Parliament, the European Commission, the United Nations, civil society organisations, and the fisheries sector, providing an important opportunity to increase the visibility of marine conservation efforts in Türkiye at the European level.

A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR WORLD SEAL DAY

A NEWBORN IN GÖKOVA BAY!

On 22 March, World Seal Day, we were delighted to share exciting news. Images captured by our camera traps revealed that one of the caves we monitor in Gökova Bay was being used by a newborn Mediterranean monk seal pup and its mother.

Every image we obtain through our long-term monitoring efforts provides valuable insight into the survival of this endangered species and reinforces the importance of continued conservation actions.



REVIVE OUR OCEAN TÜRKİYE



**REVIVE
OUR
OCEAN**



Revive Our Ocean (ROO) is a global initiative launched by Dynamic Planet, the National Geographic Society, and Oceana to support not only the conservation of marine ecosystems but also the sustainable management of local communities. The initiative aims to promote the effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), strengthen community participation, and encourage the wider adoption of participatory governance models.

By 2030, the initiative seeks to support the establishment of 30 million hectares of new marine protected areas and contribute to the achievement of global conservation targets.

Revive Our Ocean is built on a broad international partnership. In collaboration with the Dynamic Planet Foundation, the initiative places marine conservation at the centre of global efforts to protect biodiversity, address the climate crisis, and promote sustainable ocean governance.

The programme brings together public institutions, local governments, civil society organisations and local communities, working with diverse stakeholders to develop effective and sustainable management models under a common vision. These collaborative approaches are shared globally as examples of best practice.

As Mediterranean Conservation Society, we are proud to be among the programme's implementing partners in Türkiye. Through this collaboration, we are bringing the participatory marine conservation model we have successfully implemented in Gökova Bay for many years to an international platform while contributing to the exchange of knowledge and experience.

At the same time, we continue to play an active role in coordinating Revive Our Ocean activities in Türkiye, helping to adapt globally developed conservation approaches to local conditions and strengthen their implementation.



As part of the Revive Our Ocean (ROO) programme, we continued to implement activities focused on the management of marine protected areas, the dissemination of the Gökova Bay model, and strengthening stakeholder engagement. Through the Marine Ranger System and shared governance approaches developed in Gökova Bay, we demonstrated the positive impacts of participatory marine conservation on fisheries, marine biodiversity, and effective management.

Throughout 2025, we carried out a range of communication and awareness-raising activities within the scope of the programme. A documentary prepared under the Revive Our Ocean initiative, titled "Ocean with David Attenborough," was screened in Türkiye. The documentary highlighted the remarkable richness of marine ecosystems while drawing attention to the urgent need to protect marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

During the year, we organised a project meeting in Gökova Bay, bringing together programme partners to evaluate the work carried out under Revive Our Ocean. The meeting provided an important platform for dialogue among local stakeholders and for discussing field experiences and future activities.

The knowledge and experience gained through the programme continue to contribute to strengthening marine conservation efforts in Türkiye and to promoting participatory approaches to marine protected area management.

Looking ahead, we plan to expand our communication activities under the programme, continue building stakeholder capacity, and further strengthen collaboration with local communities. By increasing the visibility of our work and fostering greater public engagement, we aim to enhance the programme's long-term impact both nationally and internationally.

THE STORY BEHIND OUR LOGO: THE JOHN DORY FISH

Since its establishment in 2012, Mediterranean Conservation Society has proudly used the John Dory (Zeus faber) as its logo. As we celebrated our 10th anniversary in 2022, our founder and current Chair of the Board, Zafer Ali Kızılkaya, reflected on the story behind this meaningful symbol: *"All fish have beautiful eyes. While alive, their scales are worthy of adorning women's dresses, earrings, and necklaces..."*

These are the opening words of Sait Faik Abasıyanık's short story The Death of the John Dory. Yet, the John Dory itself has no scales. Instead, its body is covered by a delicate membrane that shifts in colour from green to cream, marked by a distinctive dark spot at its centre. According to legend, this mark was left by the touch of Jesus Christ, transforming the once fearsome fish into the gentle creature known today.

In his story, Sait Faik encounters a dying John Dory hanging outside a fisherman's café. He describes its fragile membrane trembling softly in the wind—a movement he calls *"a dance of death."* Through the fish's final moments, he reflects not only on mortality but also on one of humanity's most universal emotions: the fear of death.

As the story unfolds, the author imagines the fish becoming one of us and wonders how people might mistreat it, eventually turning this innocent creature back into the monster it was once believed to be. Beginning with the death of a single fish, the story evolves into a profound reflection on humanity itself.

For us, this story—and the continuing decline of the John Dory in the Mediterranean—made the species a powerful symbol of why our organisation exists. It became the emblem of Mediterranean Conservation Society, reminding us every day of the responsibility we share to protect marine life before it disappears.

We are also grateful to Miraç Göldoğan, who designed our logo while still a university student and generously contributed his creativity to the early years of our organisation.



FISHING RESTRICTED AREAS

Fishing Restricted Areas (No-Take Zones) were officially established through the Official Gazette No. 31221, published on 22 August 2020. Recreational and commercial fishing is prohibited within the mapped areas and their designated coordinates, in accordance with the relevant fisheries legislation.



DATÇA-BOZBURUN SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA



FETHİYE - GÖCEK SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA



GÖKOVA SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA



KAŞ - KEKOVA SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA



FOUNDATIONS & DONORS

- Fauna & Flora International
- Blue Marine Foundation
- Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme
- Sigrid Rausing Trust
- Audemars-Watkins Foundation
- The MedFund
- TUI Care Foundation
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Rufford Small Grants Programme
- GEF Small Grants Programme
- Gen EM Foundation
- The Prince Bernhard Nature Fund
- Manne Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas (MERCES)
- Arcadia
- MedSea Foundation
- BeMed
- Pinwheel
- Whitley Fund for Nature
- Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition
- Tour du Valat Foundation

NETWORKS

- Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) / UN Environment Programme
- MedPAN
- Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC)
- MedSea Alliance
- European Boating Network
- Revive Our Ocean
- International Ranger Federation

INSTITUTIONS

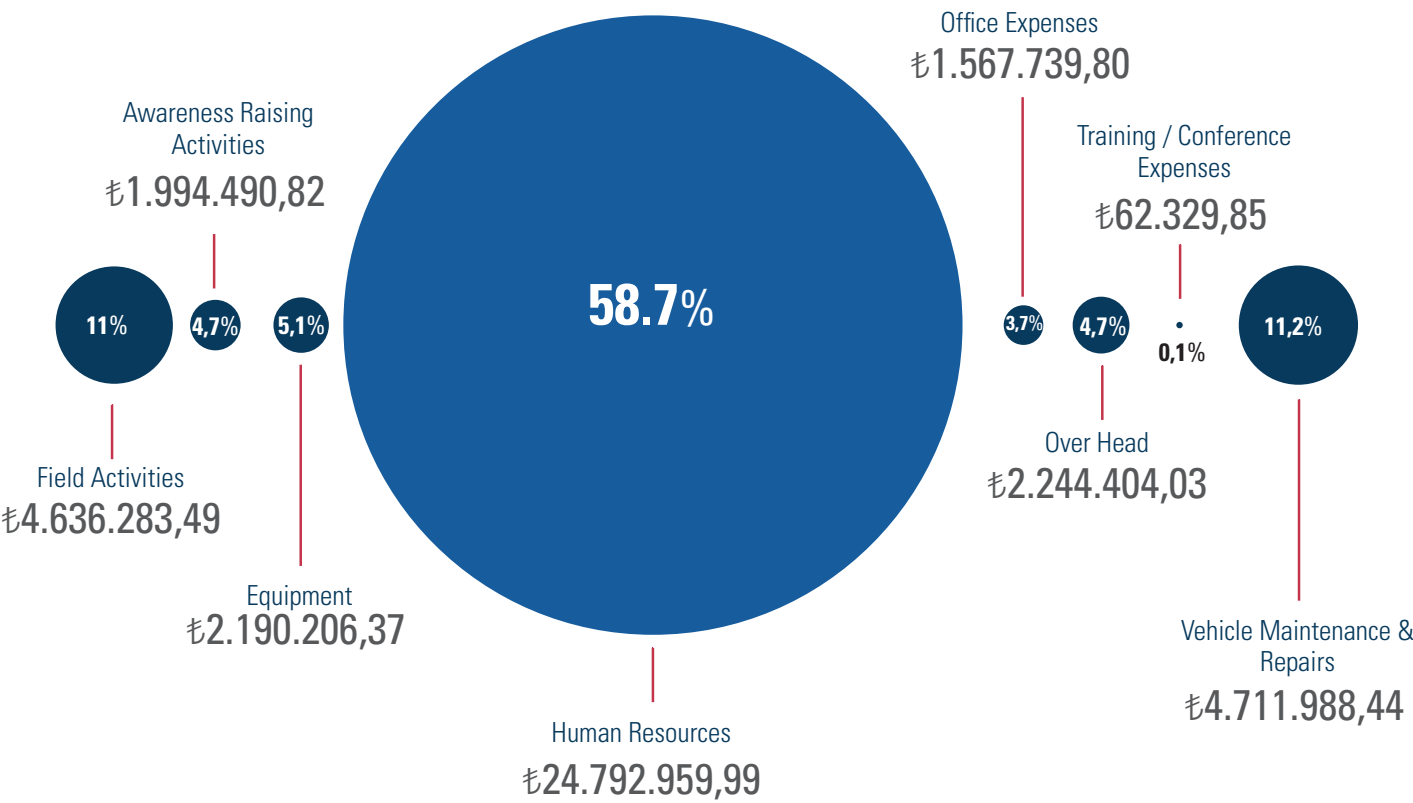
- Martı Marina
- Ula District Education Directorate
- Members of the Board of Directors
- Northstar

FELLOWS / INTERNS

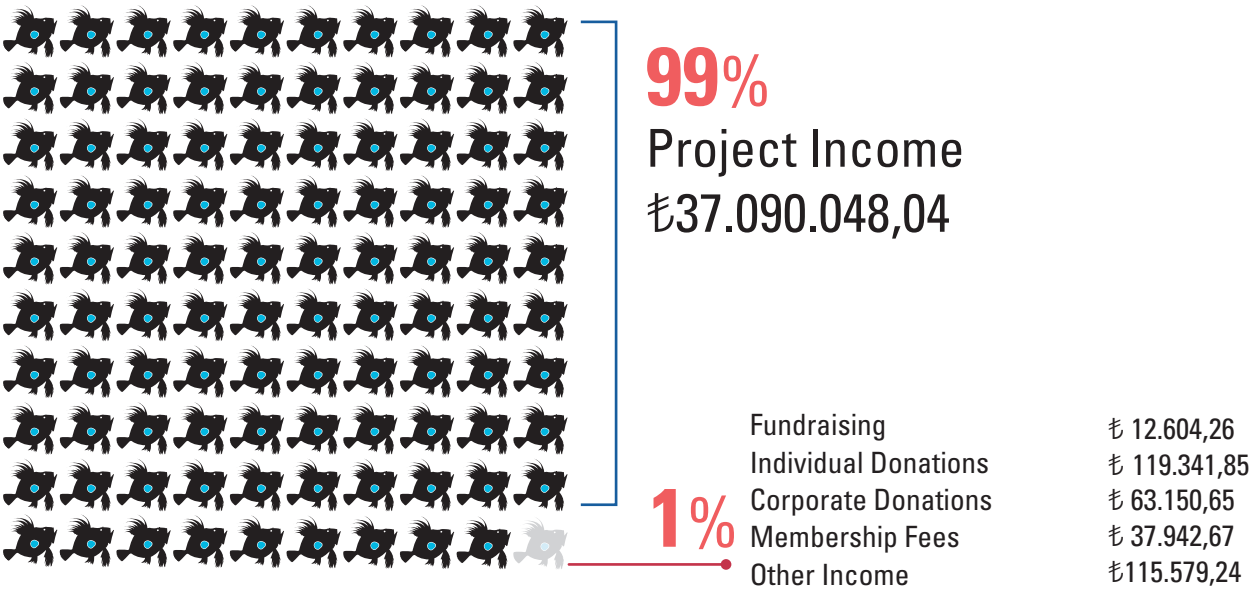
- Nisanur Çaygöz
- Buse Özbay
- Büşra Kuruoğlu
- Tuna Ölçek
- Nisanur Çetin

BUDGET

EXPENDITURE REPORT



INCOME REPORT



WHO DO WE

WORK WITH?

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

Turkish Coast Guard Command

Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Mediterranean Fisheries Research, Production and Training Institute

Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, 4th Regional Directorate

Muğla Governorship

Muğla Provincial Directorate of National Education

Marmaris Governorship

Fethiye Governorship

Ula Governorship

Datça Governorship

Menteşe Governorship

Ortaca Governorship

Dalaman Governorship

Kaş Governorship

Demre Governorship

Foça Governorship

Dokuz Eylül University

Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University

İzmir University of Technology

Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology

Dokuz Eylül University Research and Application Centre for Maritime History and Underwater Cultural Heritage (SUDEMER)

Ege University Research and Application Centre for Underwater Studies (EKAMER)

Ege University Research and Application Centre for Fisheries (SUMAE)

Latmos and Herakleia Excavation Presidency

MUNICIPALITIES

Muğla Metropolitan Municipality

İzmir Metropolitan Municipality

Ula Municipality

Fethiye Municipality

Marmaris Municipality

Datça Municipality

Menteşe Municipality

Foça Municipality

SİVİL TOPLUM KURULUŞLARI

DEKAMER

İzmir Commodity Exchange Education, Culture and Social Integration Foundation

Nature Association

KuzeyDoğa Society

COOPERATIVES

Gökova Fisheries Cooperative (S.S. GÖK-SOOP)

Muğla Fisheries Cooperatives Regional Union

Marmaris Fisheries Cooperative

Akköy Fisheries Cooperative

Akyaka Fisheries Cooperative

Akçapınar Fisheries Cooperative

Karacasöğüt Fisheries Cooperative

Datça Fisheries Cooperative

Selimiye Fisheries Cooperative

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Demre Fisheries Cooperative

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Ula İskele Fisheries Cooperative

Mordoğan Fisheries Cooperative

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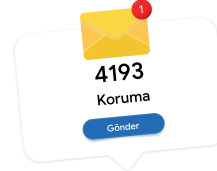
Özdaş, A.H., & Kızıldağ, N. (2025). 2023 Season of the Aegean Coastal Underwater Research Project. 44th International Symposium on Excavation, Research and Archaeometry.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT US?

DÜZENLİ BAĞIŞ

As threats to the Mediterranean ecosystem and the species that depend on it continue to grow, the need for sustained conservation efforts—and regular donor support—has never been greater.

By becoming a regular donor, you can help us continue our work to protect the Mediterranean Basin and its unique biodiversity while enabling us to develop and implement new conservation projects. You can make a lasting impact by choosing a monthly donation amount or increasing your existing contribution. - Support Us!



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PRINTED PUBLICATIONS

The Last Algae Pie Children's Book:

The Last Algae Pie is a children's book that tells the story of an endangered seagrass species found in the Mediterranean. Through this story, children discover the importance of marine ecosystems and conservation. You can support our work by purchasing the book for yourself or as a meaningful gift for your loved ones.



Guide to Marine Life of the Mediterranean: Whether you enjoy snorkelling or scuba diving, this field guide will help you identify the species you encounter underwater while supporting marine conservation. By purchasing The Marine Life of the Mediterranean, you will not only have a valuable reference for your underwater explorations but also contribute to our conservation efforts through your donation.

ABBREVIATIONS

Mediterranean Conservation Society	MCS
Fisheries Restricted Area	FRA
Marine Protected Area	MPA
Special Environmental Protection Area	SEPA
United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP
International Union for Conservation of Nature	IUCN
Fauna&Flora	FF
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FAO

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