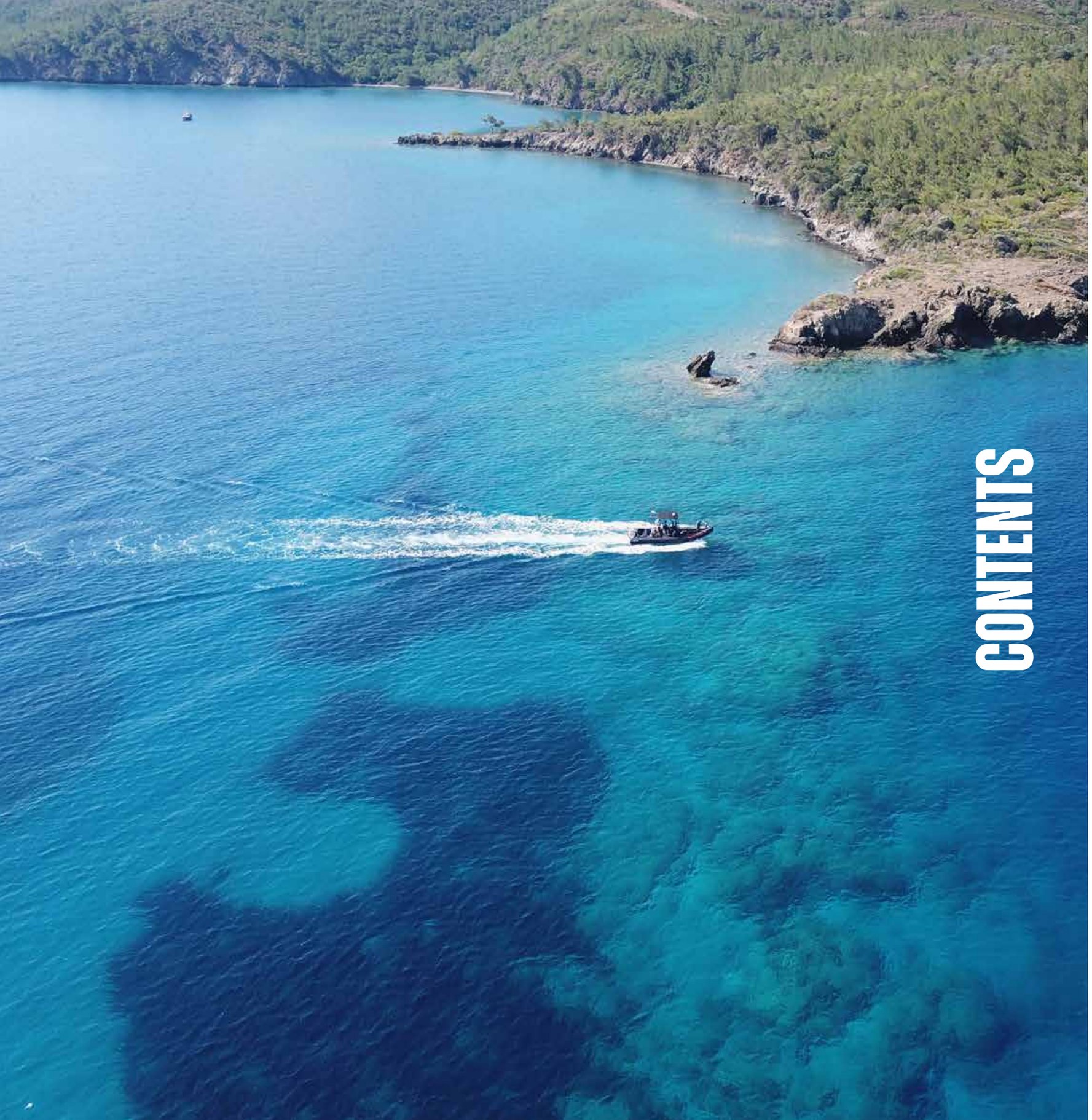
AKDENİZ KORUMA DERNEĞİ
Mediterranean Conservation Society

2024 Annual Report



CONTENTS

Vision

Working towards a Mediterranean ecosystem where all living beings coexist in harmony and balance.

Mission

Carrying out science-based projects to raise awareness of and protect the biodiversity, ecosystem and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean.

VALUES

Science based:

We use science and nature-based solutions to ensure habitats and species can sustain their lives and to increase their resistance to the effects of climate change.

Inclusion:

We share responsibility with every person and institution we can meet on the common ground of nature conservation, act together with local stakeholders, and establish national and international collaborations with expert institutions and individuals.

Harmony:

We work to preserve biodiversity while prioritizing the economic and cultural needs of local communities, supporting the sustainable use of resources in harmony with nature.

Transparency:

We share the processes and results of our work with our members, volunteers and donors; we accept responsibility to present all concrete outputs from our research and activities to the public.

Equity and Respect:

Just as we respect diversity in nature, we ensure there is no room for discrimination in our organizational culture or the programs we implement.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following individuals who supported our work by joining our team for a period during 2024:
Ayşenur Ölmez
Bengi Atay
Prof. Bülent Miran
Elif Yerebakan İncedemir
Ömer Balcı
Özkan Anıl
Tolunay Tabak
Vahit Alan
Funda Bayraktar
İskender Demirel

FOREWORD BY

2024 has been a year in which the steps we took toward protecting the Mediterranean ecosystem created even greater impact, and where we continued to make a difference both in the field and in society, guided by science. Our determined efforts to protect marine and coastal ecosystems progressed further in collaboration with local communities, scientists, and international stakeholders.

Our Marine Rangers, operating from five different stations, conducted 1,462 patrols across 18 Fisheries Restricted Areas, covering 29,368 km in a total of 4,095 hours. With the establishment of our new station in the Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area, we expanded our protection network even further.

Through our documentary *"Is There Fish for Tomorrow?"*, which tells the story of the threats facing our seas from the perspective of fishers, we raised awareness about the importance of a future in harmony with nature. To better understand and reduce plastic pollution in the seas, we completed microplastic sampling at 17 stations and macro- and mesoplastic sampling at 5 stations. Over the next four years, we will continue monitoring plastic pollution through scientific methods.

2024 was also a year in which our scientific monitoring and conservation projects deepened. We continued tracking Mediterranean monk seals and achieved the milestone of recording 7 seals simultaneously in one cave, yielding valuable data for the protection of this critically endangered species. We also analyzed more than 6,500 hours of underwater footage on sandbar sharks, shedding new light on conservation efforts for this species.

Our efforts to combat invasive species also intensified. In 2024, we collected 4 tons of edible non-indigenous fish from small-scale fishers in Muğla, helping to reduce their ecological impact. These fish were introduced to consumers in 22 restaurants and businesses. Thanks to our collaborative project with Ege University, we began monitoring the behavior of the devil firefish using acoustic tagging methods.

Our education and awareness programs reached a wider audience in 2024. As part of the *"Eco Champions"* program, we engaged with 1,637 students and 58 teachers. We took tangible steps to increase public awareness through coastal cleanups and educational events. We also led the Turkish localization of *"The Sea We Breathe"*, an interactive education platform initiated by the Blue Marine Foundation, making this valuable tool accessible to a broader audience.

Our scientific work gained recognition internationally, with 11 oral presentations and 7 international academic publications, allowing us to share our knowledge on Mediterranean conservation with the world.

In December, during our 7th Ordinary General Assembly held in İzmir with the participation of many members, our beloved founder Zafer Kızılkaya was re-elected as Chairperson of the Board. With his visionary leadership, we are confident that Mediterranean Conservation will continue to achieve even greater success.

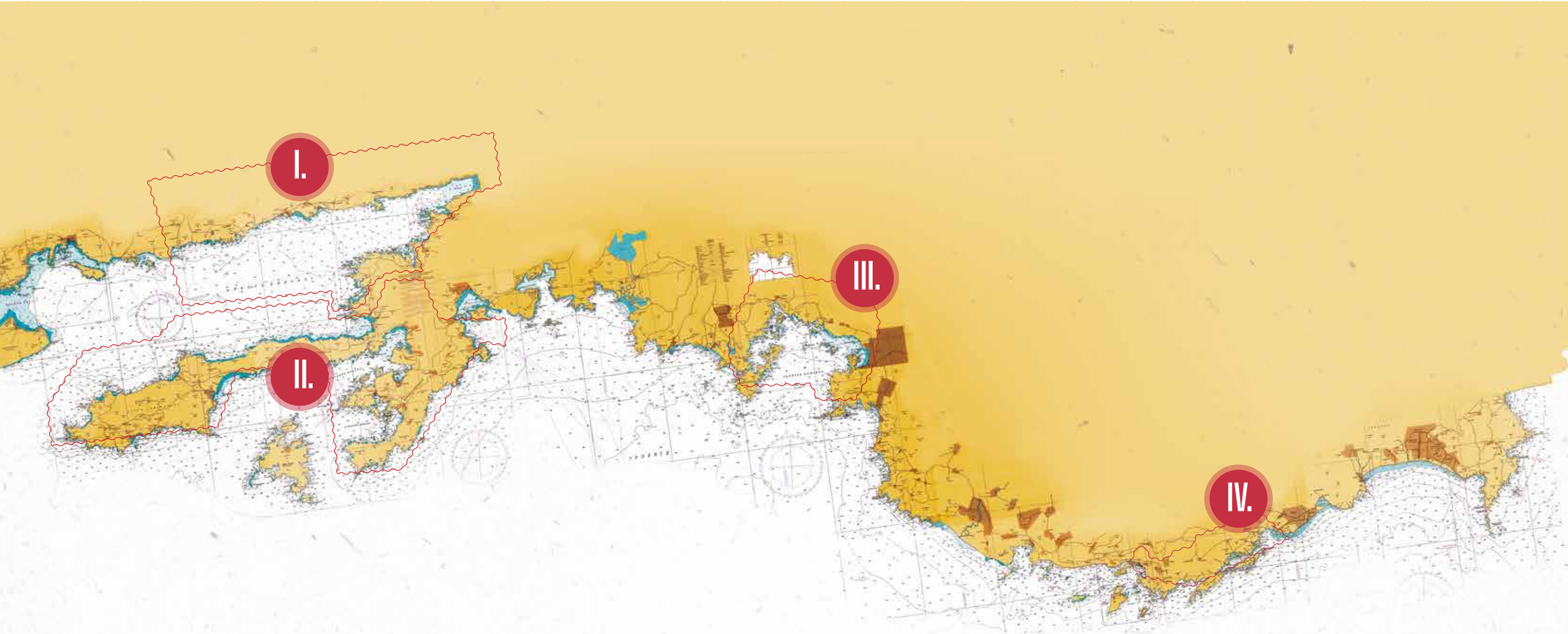
All these efforts were made possible through the collaboration of our expert team, international and local partners, members, volunteers, and all friends of the Mediterranean. We believe that our struggle to protect the Mediterranean—where environmental and marine threats are escalating day by day—is just beginning. In 2025 and the years ahead, our goal is to expand protected areas, enhance monitoring and education efforts guided by science, and continue building a future in harmony with nature.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our supporters, volunteers, and everyone who cares about nature. Together, we will protect the Mediterranean!

Kayhan Güçeli

General Manager

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 ÖZEL SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AREA

2024-2029 STRATEGY

As the Mediterranean Conservation Society, we are strengthening our mission of leaving a more livable and sustainable environment to the world and future generations by taking our successful work one step further in nature and Marine Protected Areas. As we expand our goals, we aim to take more comprehensive and effective steps for the protection of marine ecosystems and the sustainability of biodiversity. By increasing our consciousness raising efforts, we encourage communities to protect the value of natural resources and create awareness on environmental sustainability. We are also actively involved in policy-making processes, working to expand nature conservation areas and strengthen conservation policies. Through these efforts, we aim to play a leading role in nature and Marine Protected Areas globally, preserving the unique ecosystems of the Mediterranean.

PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

Protecting and enhancing the size and quality of populations and habitats of species aspired by the Mediterranean Conservation Society by identifying threats to biodiversity that stem from climate change and human activities.

REMOVAL OF NON-INDIGENOUS SPECIES FROM THE SEAS

Monitoring the non-indigenous marine species that have emerged in the Mediterranean and evaluating their impacts. Transferring the market of edible species, which MCS has contributed to the formation of in the last 10 years, to Fishery Cooperatives and market actors.

STRENGTHENING THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK

Supporting the increase of numbers of scientifically designated and ecologically connected Marine Protected Areas of ideal size, and protecting these areas fully and effectively; integrating these conservation methods into existing/new Marine Protected Areas.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

Organizing communication and awareness-raising activities to increase the participation and support of communities and partakers in conservation efforts.

SUPPORTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Detecting Early Bronze Age and Hellenistic remains and wrecks that have strong cultural links, located near Marine Protected Areas and to supporting underwater excavations.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

IN 2024, OUR MARINE RANGERS CONDUCTED

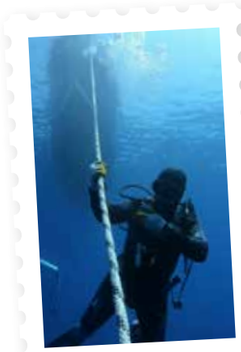
1,462 PATROLS

ACROSS 18 FISHERIES RESTRICTED AREAS, OPERATING FROM FIVE DIFFERENT STATIONS. OVER THE COURSE OF 4,095 HOURS, THEY COVERED A DISTANCE OF

29,368 KM.

THIS YEAR, WE ALSO BEGAN REGULAR PATROLS FROM OUR NEWLY ESTABLISHED STATION IN THE DATÇA-BOZBURUN SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA.

We produced a documentary titled "Yarına balık var mı?", whose title can be translated "Is There Fish for Tomorrow?" capturing the threats to the seas and fisheries through the voices of small-scale fishers in the Datça-Bozburun SEPA.



We carried out underwater cleanup operations in three regions, conducting eight dives in total. As a result, approximately 2.5 tons of waste were documented and removed from the marine environment.

The analysis of underwater footage recorded in 2023 as part of our sandbar shark monitoring efforts was completed in 2024.

OVER 6,500 HOURS OF FOOTAGE

were reviewed and analyzed by our team.

11 international oral presentations

7 international scientific papers

We conducted four coastal cleanups with local stakeholders, volunteers, and community members, collecting a total of 482 kg of waste.

We purchased approximately 4 tons of edible non-indigenous species from small-scale fishers in eight different regions of Muğla, contributing to the reduction of their ecological impact. These fish were introduced to consumers through 22 restaurants and businesses.

To determine sources of plastic pollution, we completed microplastic sampling at

17 STATIONS AND MACRO- AND MESO PLASTIC SAMPLING AT 5 STATIONS

in the Datça-Bozburun SEPA. We will continue scientific monitoring of plastic pollution in the region over the next four years.

We launched a project titled "Non-Indigenous Species Revitalizing the Blue Economy", supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In collaboration with Ege University's Faculty of Fisheries, we began monitoring the spatial and temporal behavior of the devil firefish using acoustic tagging methods.

1607 STUDENTS
58 TEACHERS

Through the "Eco Champions" education program, we reached 1,637 students and 58 teachers, increasing awareness about the role and importance of marine ecosystems. With engaging and inquiry-based education activities, students explored the causes and impacts of climate change and pollution and developed solutions through games promoting creative and critical thinking. A total of 362 students participated in educational sessions, 609 in seminars, and 506 joined extracurricular activities such as Coastal Macro Litter Sampling. This year, we organized training sessions, seminars, and events in 22 different schools. Additionally, 302 students were introduced to the "Eco Champions" board game. We also took part in three festivals, including the 4th International Children's Rights Festival in Istanbul, where we hosted workshops for children and youth.

THE SEA WE BREATHE

We led the Turkish localization process of "The Sea We Breathe", an interactive education platform launched by the Blue Marine Foundation. Both the text and audio narration were translated into Turkish, and the Turkish version, voiced by Mazlum Kiper, was officially launched in 2024.

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), **United States**
- 2017 — Whitley Gold Award for Nature Conservation, Whitley Fund for Nature, **United Kingdom**
- 2017 — Changemakers Award, Sabancı Foundation, **Türkiye**
- 2018 — Best Practice Award for Co-management of Small-scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, **Malta**
- 2022 — Marine Conservation Leadership Award, Marsh Charitable Trust, **United Kingdom**
- 2023 — Goldman Environmental Prize, **United States**

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

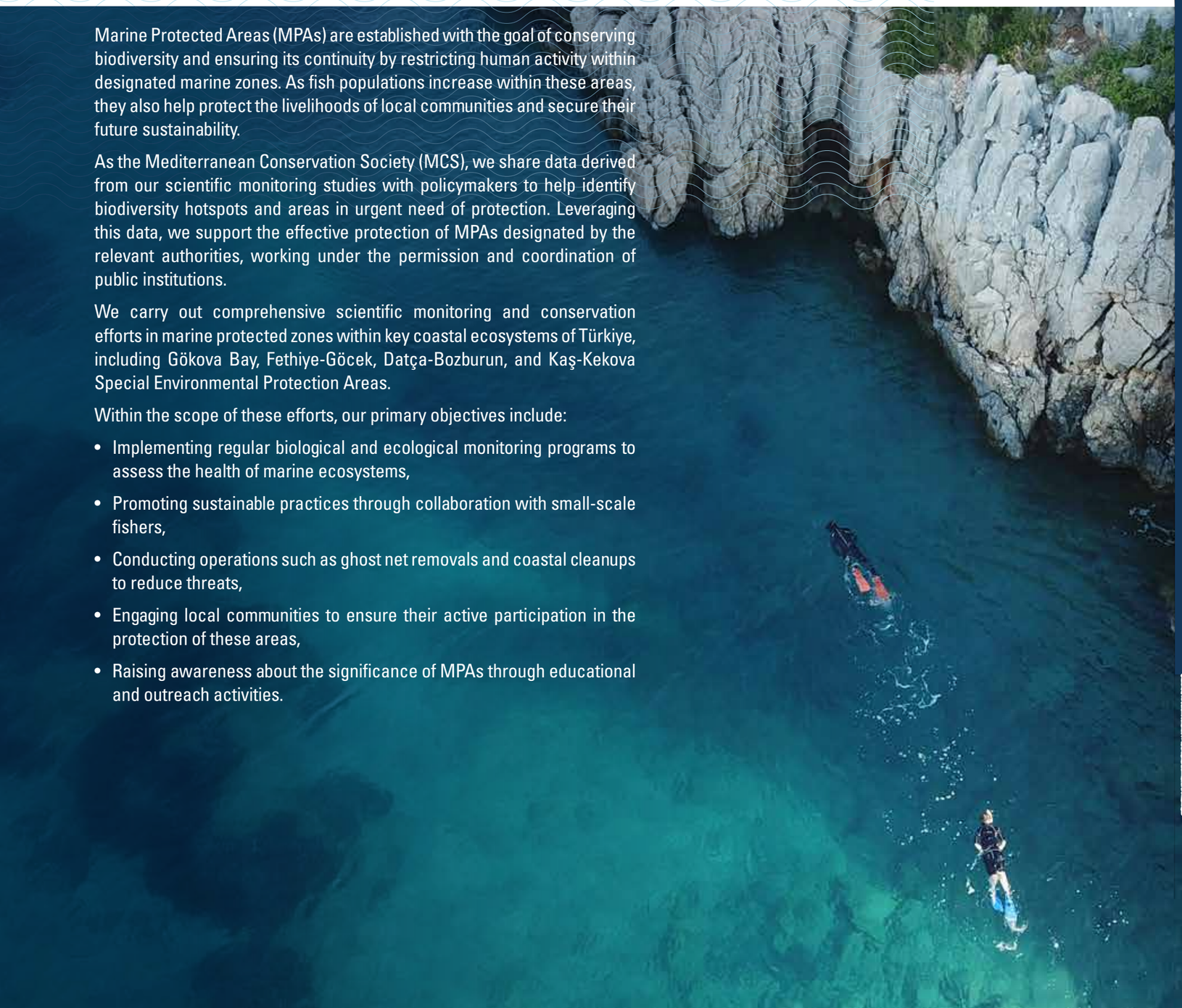
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are established with the goal of conserving biodiversity and ensuring its continuity by restricting human activity within designated marine zones. As fish populations increase within these areas, they also help protect the livelihoods of local communities and secure their future sustainability.

As the Mediterranean Conservation Society (MCS), we share data derived from our scientific monitoring studies with policymakers to help identify biodiversity hotspots and areas in urgent need of protection. Leveraging this data, we support the effective protection of MPAs designated by the relevant authorities, working under the permission and coordination of public institutions.

We carry out comprehensive scientific monitoring and conservation efforts in marine protected zones within key coastal ecosystems of Türkiye, including Gökova Bay, Fethiye-Göcek, Datça-Bozburun, and Kaş-Kekova Special Environmental Protection Areas.

Within the scope of these efforts, our primary objectives include:

- Implementing regular biological and ecological monitoring programs to assess the health of marine ecosystems,
- Promoting sustainable practices through collaboration with small-scale fishers,
- Conducting operations such as ghost net removals and coastal cleanups to reduce threats,
- Engaging local communities to ensure their active participation in the protection of these areas,
- Raising awareness about the significance of MPAs through educational and outreach activities.



The Med Sea Alliance Annual meeting, where our Chairperson Zafer Kızılkaya serves as a Steering Committee Member, was held in Mallorca. The meeting gathered 19 organizations from Mediterranean countries to align strategies, develop new project ideas, and coordinate upcoming actions.

Based on our experience managing MPAs in Gökova and Datça-Bozburun, we launched the “Highly Protected Mediterranean Initiative” in the Fethiye-Göcek SEPA, in partnership with The MedFund. The project, which began in 2024, will be implemented over five years and continue through 2029.

We organized a stakeholder meeting in the Fethiye-Göcek MPA to strengthen cooperation with the tourism sector and promote sustainable development. The event brought together tourism professionals, civil society representatives, and volunteers to explore joint conservation strategies of the region.

As a member of MedPAN (the Mediterranean Protected Areas Network) we co-hosted a Marine Protected Areas Workshop in Akyaka, Muğla. The workshop welcomed participants from France, Türkiye, Montenegro, South Cyprus, Albania, Monaco, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Italy, the USA, and North Macedonia

We also presented our work at the “Planning and Monitoring of Regional MPAs” panel during the Regional Ocean Summit held in Jordan. This panel included speakers from UNESCO, IUCN, and other key institutions. The panel served as a platform for evaluating outcomes of MPA efforts in the Red Sea and Mediterranean, facilitating experience-sharing among participants, and discussing the actions needed to ensure that 30% of MPAs are effectively protected by 2030. The session emphasized moving beyond symbolic designations to truly impactful marine protection.

We are a partner of MedPAN, the Mediterranean Protected Areas Network, which brings together 127 institutions and non-governmental organizations from 21 countries to collaborate on the management of Marine Protected Areas.

As an accredited partner of the United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), we monitor the implementation of the plan in Türkiye and represent it at the international level.

MARINE RANGER SYSTEM

Implemented for the first time in Türkiye by our organization, the Marine Ranger System documents illegal activities encountered in Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs), such as unauthorized fishing, improper anchoring, and waste dumping. These incidents are recorded and reported—along with official documentation—through our established communication network to the local units of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change.

Through these efforts, we aim to take responsibility for the effective protection of Marine Protected Areas, reduce pressure on marine ecosystems, and support coastal fisheries affected by biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, and the climate crisis.

The Marine Ranger System is grounded in Article 56 of the Turkish Constitution, which emphasizes environmental protection as a civic duty. The role of Marine Rangers is limited to informing public authorities about violations and providing support, when necessary, to help prevent illegal activities.

Our Marine Rangers are members of the local community, often small-scale fishers, and receive regular training. In 2024, we conducted two training sessions to enhance both the capacity of our Marine Rangers and the effectiveness of our conservation methods.

To measure the impact of the Marine Ranger System, we conduct simultaneous monitoring inside and outside FRAs. These monitoring activities cover:

- Mediterranean monk seal,
- Sandbar shark,
- Seagrass *(Posidonia oceanica)*,
- Macroalgae and coral species,
- Fish biomass,
- Daily fisheries data.

The data gathered not only informs future conservation strategies but also helps assess the ecological and socio-economic impacts of the Marine Ranger System on marine biodiversity and the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Additionally, we launched the Marine Ranger System in Orhaniye and Selimiye, two FRAs located within the Datça-Bozburun SEPA. Beyond monitoring illegal activities, our Marine Rangers also warned individuals engaging in unauthorized recreational activities such as picnicking and barbecuing, helping to mitigate the risk of forest fires in the region.

In 2024, our Marine Rangers conducted 1,462 patrols across **18 different** FRAs, operating from five stations, covering a total of **29,368 kilometers** over **4,095 hours**. During these patrols, they identified and reported **842 cases** of illegal fishing to the relevant authorities.

CONSERVATION FRIENDLY BOAT PROGRAM

Through the Conservation Friendly Boat Program initiated by our organization, boats that exhibit environmentally responsible behavior at sea are awarded the Conservation Friendly Boat Flag. Boats that receive this flag agree to the principles outlined in a Goodwill Agreement and are responsible for informing their passengers about these commitments.

Boat owners participating in the program do not engage in illegal fishing, do not approach or swim near Mediterranean monk seal caves, do not anchor on seagrass meadows, do not discharge waste into the sea. They also demonstrate other responsible behaviors that help protect marine life.

As of 2024, we have awarded the Conservation Friendly Boat Flag to 21 individual and tour boats under this program.

SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

While the protection of species and habitats remains the core priority of our marine conservation efforts, these actions also directly contribute to the sustainability of small-scale coastal fisheries. To support the implementation of sustainable fishing practices in Türkiye, we work to improve fisheries cooperatives' access to the information and infrastructure they need.

We collaborate closely with fisheries cooperatives and the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on multiple fronts, including the collection of daily fishing data, which is used both for species monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the Marine Ranger System.

- In 2024, we conducted fish biomass at 21 different stations across Gökova, Göcek, and Bozburun regions. In Gökova Bay, where our protection efforts are most intensive, the results showed a 24% decrease in total fish biomass outside FRAs compared to 2023, while a 14% increase was observed inside FRAs

This contrast highlights the value and impact of active protection efforts within FRAs and gives us hope for the future of sustainable small-scale fisheries.

FISHERIES AND STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE MEETINGS ON CURRENT ISSUES FACED BY FISHERS

To promote cooperation for a healthy marine ecosystem, we are working to establish a communication network where regional fishers can share their views and suggestions on the current state of fisheries with one another, public authorities and civil society organizations. This platform provides a space to discuss joint efforts to protect marine species and biodiversity, to evaluate both the support systems and challenges within the fishing sector, and to gather collaborative proposals to strengthen sustainable fisheries.

MEETING WITH FISHERS FROM SÖĞÜT AND SELIMIYE

We organized two separate meetings with small-scale fishers operating in Söğüt and Selimiye, both located within the Datça-Bozburun SEPA. With participation from the District Directorate of Agriculture and several local fishers, the discussions provided valuable insights into the challenges they face in the region.

To further amplify their voices and raise awareness about the threats faced by fisheries and marine life, we also produced a documentary titled **"Yarına Balık Var Mı?"** (Is There Fish for Tomorrow?), highlighting the perspectives and lived experiences of small-scale fishers in the Datça-Bozburun SEPA.

MEETING WITH FISHERS FROM BODRUM

As part of the project "Strengthening the Blue Economy through Non-Indigenous Species," carried out in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), we brought together small-scale fishers and representatives of public institutions and organizations in Yalıkavak, Bodrum. The meeting served as a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences related to newly observed species in our seas and along the Bodrum Peninsula. Our aim was to provide an environment where regional fishers could exchange ideas and recommendations regarding the current state of fisheries with each other, public authorities, and civil society organizations.

MEETING WITH FISHERS FROM KARATAŞ

In 2024, we conducted a series of fisher training sessions and stakeholder meetings in Karataş, Adana, marking a significant step forward in promoting sustainable fisheries and the protection of marine ecosystems. The project, carried out in partnership with EnerjiSA and Karataş Municipality, involved direct interviews with local fishers to hear about the challenges they face in the field and to develop solutions together.

During preliminary meetings held in April, we engaged with representatives from the Karataş District Governorate, District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry, Coast Guard Command, and Karataş Fisheries Cooperative. Fishers shared their experiences related to discarded fishing gear, invasive species, economic challenges, and threats to the marine ecosystem.

In the training program held in May 2024, we provided information on marine waste management, energy efficiency, and the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems. To encourage the disposal of fishing waste on land rather than at sea, we promoted the use of Waste Collection Centers and adopted an approach that emphasizes the recycling of old nets, ropes, and floats.

Led by the Karataş Fisheries Cooperative, and supported by EnerjiSA and local authorities, actions were taken to regularly collect these materials, reintegrate them into the circular economy, and support local fishers. This direct engagement with fishers strengthened the effectiveness of field operations and contributed to the adoption of sustainable practices.

Although women have long been present in the fisheries sector globally, their labor is often overlooked or overshadowed by those of men. In many cases, women's roles in fisheries are limited to working in family-owned operations or assisting their families' fishing activities. Women who actively engage in fishing at sea face a range of social and economic challenges, including the lack of visibility and recognition of their contributions.

We are working to address the professional challenges faced by women fishers in the Gökova Bay, Datça-Bozburun, and Fethiye-Göcek regions, enhance their organizational capacity and technical knowledge, and increase their public visibility. The findings from these efforts are shared with the public and relevant decision-makers.

In 2024, we convened a meeting with women in fisheries in Fethiye-Göcek to present data from our fieldwork, demonstrating how conservation efforts and FRAs have positively impacted small-scale fisheries. During the session, the women shared their insights into the dynamics of being a woman in the fishing sector, discussed sustainability and cooperativism, and exchanged knowledge about declining fish stocks and the emergence of new species.

One of the key goals of the meeting was to conduct a needs assessment for women in the fisheries profession and to evaluate the socio-economic aspects of fisheries from a gender perspective.

FETHİYE- GÖCEK

PRODUCTIVE WOMEN OF THE SEA PROJECT

The Productive Women of the Sea Project, carried out in collaboration with the İzmir Commodity Exchange Foundation for Education, Culture and Social Integration (BORSAV) and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Sabancı Foundation, was successfully completed in 2024. The project aimed to provide vocational training for women who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and to support the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

Within the scope of the project, vocational courses were organized in fields such as seafood processing and retail, helping women improve their professional skills. To support their entry into the workforce, partnerships were established with private sector companies, ensuring that graduates were guided toward employment. Additionally, panels and workshops were held to address barriers to women's employment, and the project outcomes were shared with relevant institutions.

A total of 36 women, including 26 NEET participants, received vocational training certificates and were integrated into employment processes.

At the graduation ceremony held at the İzmir Commodity Exchange Experience Center in Alaçatı, participants were awarded their certificates. The event concluded with a tasting session as part of our New Fish Program, where attendees were served sandwiches prepared with lionfish, one of the non-indigenous species in our seas.

MONITORING THE IMPACTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

As the Mediterranean Conservation Society, we monitor the impacts of the climate crisis on marine ecosystems and those who depend on them. By collecting data on the extent and pace of degradation, we provide valuable insights to decision-makers and stakeholders who can take action to mitigate and prevent these negative effects.

In addition, through our communications efforts, we take responsibility for ensuring that the public is better informed about this issue and encouraged to adopt behavioral changes that contribute to climate resilience and ecosystem protection.

PRESENTATION AT COP29

At COP29, the Mediterranean Conservation Society participated in the Multilevel Action & Urbanization Pavilion session organized by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, where we presented our ecosystem restoration efforts.

During the session titled “A Start-Up Under the Climate Crisis: Bringing Invasive Species to Market,” we introduced the details of our New Fish Program with participants. We emphasized how this initiative supports fishing communities by assigning economic value to invasive species, thereby helping to reduce pressure on the ecosystem.

We also highlighted that the program not only advances sustainable fisheries, but also contributes to the control of invasive species, offering an innovative, nature-based solution to the climate crisis.

SEAGRASS MONITORING STUDIES

Our seagrass monitoring program, which began in 2020 with 6 stations in Gökova Bay, continued in 2024 at a total of 13 monitoring stations.

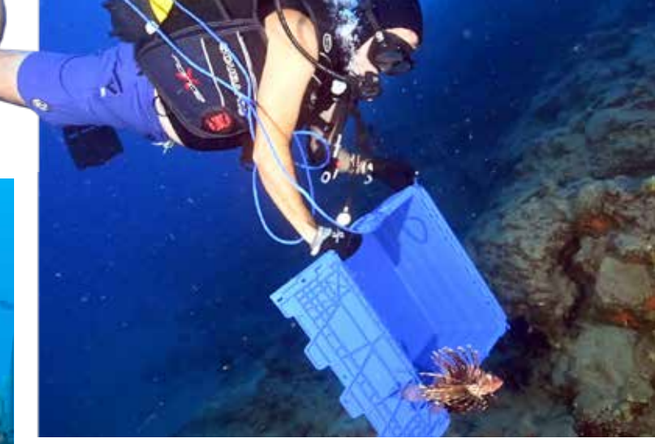
As part of the "TUI Sea The Change Türkiye" project, supported by the TUI Care Foundation, we established a new monitoring station in the Sarıgerme region to monitor the distribution of seagrass meadows. Monitoring activities at this station have continued throughout 2024.

In addition to scientific efforts, we also carried out communication, awareness-raising, and educational activities to promote public understanding of the ecological importance of seagrasses.

At Marmaris Evren Paşa Middle School, we delivered the educational program "Protecting Underwater Life" to 60 students, focusing on the ecological role of seagrass habitats. The session addressed topics such as the importance of marine protected areas, biodiversity hotspots of the Mediterranean, the function of FRAs in Gökova, and species banned from fishing. These concepts were effectively conveyed through gamified learning methods.

Through these ecological education efforts, we continue to take meaningful steps toward fostering conservation awareness among students and empowering younger generations to care for the marine environment.

MONITORING INVASIVE SPECIES



Within the scope of the “Supporting the Blue Economy through Non-Indigenous Species” Project, led by our organization and supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), we conducted acoustic tagging studies to monitor the spatial and temporal behavior of the lionfish *(Pterois miles)* in Gökova Bay, in collaboration with the Faculty of Fisheries at Ege University.

This study aims to contribute to understanding the ecological impacts of invasive species and to developing strategies for their management and control.

To track the seasonal migration behavior of lionfish, we used acoustic telemetry. In this method, acoustic transmitters were attached to fish, and their movements were tracked using receivers placed at various depths. Between September 2024 and January 2025, the study recorded a total of 54,759 detections from 10 tagged lionfish.

The data revealed that lionfish preferred to remain in shallow coastal habitats, even as sea temperatures dropped. These findings allow us to evaluate the potential effectiveness of control strategies such as promoting regional consumption and organizing fishing competitions targeting invasive species.

Additionally, the study provided detailed insights into the movement patterns and habitat preferences of lionfish. These findings are expected to contribute national and international initiatives aimed at combating invasive species in the Mediterranean.

This research marks an important step in our efforts to protect Mediterranean biodiversity. The results will guide our future work to reduce the ecological damage caused by invasive species and to safeguard the Mediterranean ecosystem.

We participated in the 4th European Telemetry Network (ETN) Symposium, held in Barcelona, which focused on sharing scientific advancements in understanding the movements of aquatic species and their interactions with the environment through telemetry methods.

At the symposium, MustafaTunca Olguner, PHD from our team presented findings on the distribution and seasonal behavior of the invasive lionfish *(Pterois miles)* in Gökova Bay, based on data collected through acoustic telemetry. The research was carried out in partnership with Ege University as part of our project on Non-Indigenous Species along the Turkish coast, supported by the FAO.

Our consultants Prof. Altan Lök and Assoc. Prof. Aytaç Özgül from Ege University’s Faculty of Fisheries also attended the symposium and contributed to discussions.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Ecosystem restoration refers to a set of methods and activities designed to return a degraded or damaged ecosystem to its original or most natural possible state. These methods are used to prevent the loss of plant and animal species resulting from the degradation of natural habitats, to enhance the functionality of ecosystems, and to preserve biodiversity.

Restoration also plays a vital role in understanding how both ecosystems and human communities can become more resilient to climate change.

Since 2012, our organization has adopted an ecosystem-based approach in all its restoration efforts, always taking socio-economic components into consideration.

NON-INDIGENOUS SPECIES – NEW FISH PROGRAM

Since 2015, the Mediterranean Conservation Society has been implementing the New Fish Program to support small-scale fishers and household livelihoods along Türkiye's southwestern coast. The program aims to assign economic value to edible invasive species, create new market opportunities, and encourage higher catch rates of these species by fishers in response to increasing consumer demand — thereby contributing to ecosystem restoration efforts.

To strengthen this model, we established the Mediterranean Conservation Society Enterprise in the summer of 2020, showcasing a nature-based business model focused on the trade of invasive species.

In 2024, we continued our work on market creation for edible invasive species across Türkiye. We purchased approximately 4 tons of invasive fish from small-scale fishers and fisheries cooperatives in the Muğla region, effectively removing them from the Mediterranean ecosystem. These fish were introduced to consumers in 22 restaurants across Muğla, İzmir, Antalya, and Istanbul.

To further support fisheries cooperatives, we adopted the Participatory Market Systems Development (PMSD) approach and organized several stakeholder meetings throughout the year. These gatherings brought together fishers, private sector representatives, and public officials to assess the market potential of invasive species. The discussions helped identify gaps between food safety standards in the retail sector and the current capacities of cooperatives, paving the way for the development of new road maps.

In collaboration with members of our Scientific and Technical Advisory Board, we continued efforts in 2024 to develop effective fishing gear targeting invasive species. One of the largest lionfish ever recorded in the region was documented and is now the subject of a scientific publication.

Our promotional and tasting events also continued throughout 2024. At events held in Istanbul, İzmir, and Muğla, 2,164 participants were introduced to the New Fish Program. A total of 165 kg of lionfish, redcoat, Lessepsian lizardfish, goldband goatfish, and Red Sea goatfish were served to consumers.

In partnership with Mide Lobisi, a culinary community with more than 31,000 members, we organized two major events to present the New Fish Program to chefs, food sector professionals, and gastronomy enthusiasts.

To raise broader public awareness of non-indigenous species, we hosted a tasting event during the Gökova Half Marathon, where we explained how consuming lionfish can contribute to biodiversity conservation. Over 600 participants were served lionfish, accompanied by discussions about how responsible consumption of invasive species can support biodiversity conservation.

www.yenibaliklar.com

Two Major Projects Successfully Completed by the End of 2024 under the New Fish Program

1. "Delicious Invasives" Project, launched on August 15, 2021, in partnership with the UK-based Gen EM Foundation
2. "Supporting the Blue Economy through Non-Indigenous Species" Project, conducted in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

As part of our outreach activities, our Chairperson Zafer Kızılkaya delivered a presentation on the Blue Economy at the 4th Global Gastro Economy Summit, organized in Istanbul by the Turkish Tourism, Restaurant Investors and Gastronomy Businesses Association (TURYİD). .

We also participated in the first edition of the MedBodrum Festival, which centered around the themes of gastronomy, art, and sustainability. At the event, held at Maçakızı Hotel in Bodrum, Chef Aret Sahakyan prepared lionfish ceviche and fish sandwiches, which were served to guests.

The "Mide Lobisi" Facebook group, established in 2014 and now boasting approximately 31,000 members, celebrated its 10th anniversary with a special event. As the Mediterranean Conservation Society, we joined the celebration through our New Fish Program. During the event, which hosted 150 participants, a lionfish-based dish was served, accompanied by insights about our program.

During our visit to Plateforme Stella Mare (Sustainable Technologies for Littoral Aquaculture and Marine Research), a renowned research center affiliated with the University of Corsica, we toured their laboratories and shared our experiences on invasive species — particularly the long-spined sea urchin. The Stella Mare team introduced their research on species such as the purple sea urchin, European lobster, and dentex, fostering a rich exchange of knowledge and experience on ecosystem conservation and invasive species management across Mediterranean coasts.

SEABED CLEANING
REMOVAL OF GHOST NETS

Fishing gear that becomes entangled during use, cannot be retrieved due to currents, or is lost, forgotten, or deliberately discarded, yet continues to catch marine life, is referred to as ghost gear, and the process is known as ghost fishing. The nets responsible for this ongoing, unattended activity are known as ghost nets.

These nets, which remain underwater for various reasons, continue to trap marine life passively and smother seabed habitats, causing significant damage to the marine ecosystem. In some cases, endangered species become entangled in these nets and die as a result.

In 2024, we continued our underwater cleanup operations, primarily in our core working areas while extending to other locations, to remove ghost nets and reduce their ecological impact.

Waste removed from marine life during seabed cleanup operations in 2024:

Areas	Fishing Line(kg)	Metal (kg)	Plastic (kg)	Glass	Rubber (kg)	Rope (m)	Textile (kg)	Other (kg)	Ghost Net (kg)
Bodrum (Türkbükü Bay)	0	400 pcs.	100 pcs.	350 pcs.	4 pcs.	0	0	2 pcs.	0
Göcek (Yaz Limanı Bay)	0	0,25	63,5	5	0	1,05	10	0,1	3
Göcek (Osmanağa Bay)	0,05	10,67	6,6	53.6	3,165	7,5	14	2,7	1,14
Datça (Fener Island)	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1040

WE DIVE FOR A CLEAN SEA!

In 2024, we conducted underwater cleanups in the Datça-Bozburun and Fethiye-Göcek regions to protect marine life from pollution.

- On June 8, in celebration of World Oceans Day, we carried out an underwater cleanup operation in Datça. Led by the Mediterranean Conservation Society, and supported by Datça Municipality and Uçanbalık Diving Center, a team of expert divers removed marine debris from the seabed around Fener Island. With the strong presence of female divers, the operation involved a total of 11 divers from our organization and Uçanbalık Diving Center. A ghost net that had remained underwater for 14 years was successfully removed. In addition, 39 kg of waste, including ropes and fishing lines, was collected.

What is a Ghost Net?

Ghost Nets are fishing gear that have been abandoned, lost, or discarded, and continues to trap marine life, posing a serious threat to marine ecosystems.

- We also conducted a two-day seabed cleanup in Aktur Site, located within Kovanlık National Park in Datça, as part of our Plastic Pollution Monitoring and Awareness Project (PLASMAP). The objective was to assess the quantity and distribution of large plastics within a 500 m^2 area.

Region	Ghost Net (kg)	Estimated Area (m^2)
Göcek (Yaz Limanı Bay)	3.0	4.3
Göcek (Osmanağa Bay)	1.14	1.6
Datça (Fener Island)	1040.0	1485.7

Note: An average value of 0.7 kg/m^2 (wet weight) was used for estimating area coverage. This calculation excludes additional components such as lead, floats, and ropes.

- In Fethiye-Göcek, we carried out two underwater cleanups in cooperation with Fethiye Municipality's Directorate of Climate Change and Zero Waste. Collected waste was sorted, and recyclable materials were sent to recycling facilities.
- Additionally, as part of the first edition of the MedBodrum Festival, themed around gastronomy, art, and sustainability, we conducted a seabed cleanup in Türkbükü to contribute to cleaner and healthier coastal waters.

MONITORING PLASTIC POLLUTION

The Mediterranean Conservation Society conducts research in the Datça-Bozburun SEPA to assess the current state and sources of plastic pollution from both land-based and marine origins, with the aim of protecting and sustaining the local coastal ecosystem.

Our research includes the assessment of microplastic pollution on the sea surface, within the water column, and in marine and beach sediments. The findings contribute to both national and regional awareness and action on marine pollution. Within the SEPA, our research focuses on:

- The presence of macro- and mesoplastics on coastlines and the seabeds,
- The presence of microplastics in seawater and in the digestive systems of economically valuable fish,
- Citizen science initiatives aimed at raising awareness among local communities and stakeholders.

On World Oceans Day (June 8), we held a beach cleanup at Taşlık Beach in Datça, with the participation of volunteers. The collected waste contributed valuable data to our plastic pollution monitoring research.

As part of our citizen science activities, we partnered with the UCPA Water Sports Center in Datça to begin paddleboard-based microplastic sampling on the water's surface. These sampling efforts continued throughout the summer and winter seasons of 2024, and will remain active through 2025.

We also took part in the Plastics-Free Türkiye Platform's invitation meeting, which aims to shed light on the extent of plastic pollution in Türkiye and to identify ways to prevent it. We contributed our findings and experiences from our fieldwork in the Datça-Bozburun SEPA and exchanged insights with other NGOs.

In cooperation with the Datça City Council and the Datça Municipality's Women, Youth and Sports Center, we organized a Citizen Science Workshop at Taşlık Beach as part of PLASMAP. The workshop included both theoretical and practical sessions:

- In the theoretical session, we introduced participants to citizen science, its alignment with European standards, and its role in increasing environmental awareness.
- In the practical session, we demonstrated water and beach sampling methods at Taşlık Beach.

At the end of the workshop, digital certificates were awarded to participants. During the lunch break, attendees also enjoyed lionfish sandwiches, creating a meaningful link between ecological education and our New Fish Program.

We also engaged students from Orhaniye İnci Narin Yerlici School to raise awareness about the threats of plastic pollution to marine ecosystems. After a classroom-based session, students participated in a beach sampling activity at Kızkumu Beach under the citizen science model. The data collected became a valuable contribution to our scientific study.

Finally, we provided internal training to Marmaris Municipality's Department of Sanitation staff on plastic waste. During the training, we presented our ongoing monitoring and conservation work in the region and shared insights on plastic's life cycle, marine debris, and our Marine Ranger System. Municipal staff also shared their own field observations and experiences with waste and public behavior, reporting that the training improved their awareness of marine pollution issues.

ICSLR'24

The International Conference on Salt Lake Research (ICSLR'24), which addresses the ecological, managerial, and economic aspects of salt lakes around the world, brings together participants from across the globe to exchange scientific knowledge and develop solutions related to saline lakes. This year's conference, held in Antalya, also extensively discussed the challenges faced by saline lakes and potential solutions.

Representing the Mediterranean Conservation Society, our presentation titled "Bacterial Biofilm on Microplastics in Inland Saline Lakes" highlighted the impact of microplastics on saline lake ecosystems and contributed to ongoing research in this field. The conference provided a vital platform for strengthening scientific collaboration and raising awareness for the conservation of salt lakes.

To learn more about the results of our research on microplastic pollution and its potential sources in the Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area, you can access the scientific article we published on this topic: Koraltan, İ., Gökdağ, K., Olguner, M.T., & Güven, O. (2024). Microplastic Pollution and Potential Sources in the Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area. Turkish Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 24, TRJFAS26711.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, second only to tropical rainforests in terms of biodiversity. However, they are rapidly disappearing due to the climate crisis, agricultural activities, pollution, development projects, and hydrological changes.

In the second year of the "Green Light for Mediterranean Wetlands" project, coordinated together with Tour du Valat (TdV) and funded by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation (FPA2), we continued our scientific monitoring, awareness-raising, and education activities to protect the wetlands in Gökova.

In 2024, we monitored water levels and vegetation cover in wetland ecosystems. With support from the TdV, we installed three piezometer stations in Gökçe Wetland and collected data across four periods. Measurements revealed water level drops of up to 80 cm during summer, , especially in areas near agriculture. These findings are critical for understanding the site's hydrological regime.

We carried out the Mid-Winter Waterbird Census in Gökova Bay, recording 41 species and a total of 885 individuals. Based on the Wetlands International list and criteria used by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, we identified 17 waterbird species and 105 individuals. The highest bird diversity was observed along the Kadın Azmağı and surrounding coastal areas. Throughout the year, across spring and autumn fieldwork over eight grid cells and 40 observation points, we recorded 143 bird species and 11,829 individuals in total.

Six bird species we documented fall under conservation concern categories on the IUCN Red List:

- Red-footed Falcon *(Falco vespertinus)* and European Turtle Dove *(Streptopelia turtur)* – Vulnerable (VU) globally and in Europe
- Woodchat Shrike *(Lanius senator)* and Curlew Sandpiper *(Calidris ferruginea)* – Near Threatened (NT) globally; Curlew Sandpiper is also VU in Europe
- Ruff *(Calidris pugnax)* – Least Concern (LC) globally but Near Threatened (NT) in Europe
- Common Snipe *(Gallinago gallinago)* and Northern Pintail *(Anas acuta)* – VU in Europe
- Notably, The Red-footed Falcon is listed as Critically Endangered (CR) for the Mediterranean region

We also launched Odonata (dragonfly and damselfly) monitoring, as these species are key biological indicators of wetland health and water quality.

Continuing our reptile and amphibian monitoring in Gökova with Ege University, we also partnered with Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, we conducted four-season water quality monitoring at 10 stations along the Kadın and Akçapınar streams. These efforts will be expanded to other parts of the Gökçe Wetland in the next phase.

As part of our efforts to combat one of the region's biggest threats—waste pollution—we collected 395 kg of human-derived waste in partnership with Ula Municipality and Marmaris Nature Volunteers. The majority consisted of plastics and construction debris. To prevent the area from being used as an illegal dump, we designed and installed four awareness-raising billboards in collaboration with the municipality, now visible in strategic locations.

To build stakeholder collaboration for protecting Gökçe Wetland, we organized meetings and a field visit to the Gediz Delta with Doğa Derneği, inviting public institutions from İzmir and Muğla. This was a significant step in discussing best practices in wetland management and developing restoration strategies.

We also conducted an interactive education program for 5th-grade students, focusing on the importance of wetland ecosystems. Students participated in field observations using scientific forms and joined bird watching activities in Gökçe Wetland.

To increase awareness of ecosystem services provided by wetlands, we prepared informative brochures, and distributed calendars and tote bags during stakeholder meetings to further spread awareness for the year 2025. In 2024, we also launched a dedicated wetlands section on our website (available in both Turkish and English), reaching 8,958 visitors.

Our partners from the Tour du Valat Foundation, Lisa Ernoul and Antoine Gazaix, visited Akyaka between April 1-4. Together with our team, they toured the project sites and conducted assessments on key indicators to be monitored in wetland ecosystems.

PRESERVING THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

As part of our strategic objectives for 2024–2029, the Mediterranean Conservation Society continued its work in 2024 to support the preservation of cultural heritage. Under a protocol signed with the Bozukkale, Çamçalık, and Kızlan Underwater Excavation Directorate, we contributed to the excavation and protection of newly discovered and unprotected Early Bronze Age and Hellenistic period remains and shipwrecks.

In addition to documenting, protecting, and researching cultural heritage in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, we also contribute to identify and address the challenges facing these assets. In this context, we completed the mapping and identification of the 850 km-long ancient Carian Trail, which stretches across the Datça and Bozburun Peninsulas, Gökova Bay, Latmos (Beşparmak) Mountains, and surrounding areas of Muğla. Our findings revealed that portions of this trail within forested areas are at risk of disappearing. New developments in the region were also found to pose threats to the unique historical landscape and cultural heritage, which spans from the Neolithic era to the present. These findings have been shared with the relevant authorities.

Following our application, the 4th Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye formed a commission to assess and document the natural and cultural assets in the area and to consider expanding the boundaries of Bafa Lake Nature Park north and northeast and designating it as a national park due to its ecological richness and uniqueness. The commission met on May 17 and June 10, 2024, in the ancient city of Herakleia. The meetings, hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the excavation directorates of Latmos and Herakleia, marked the beginning of the necessary feasibility and inventory studies.

Latmos Mountain, continuously inhabited since 6500/5500 BCE, has a cultural history spanning 8,500 years. Considered a sacred mountain in Anatolia since the Neolithic era, its spiritual significance endured through the Middle Ages despite various religious transitions . The prehistoric rock paintings discovered in the region are exceptional in theme and style. With nearly 200 documented examples, these artworks are distinct in their focus on human life, setting them apart from contemporaneous depictions in Europe and surrounding regions.

According to mythology, Latmos is a legendary meeting place of the moon goddess Selene and the shepherd Endymion —a tale that has captured imaginations for centuries. This myth is embodied in sites like the Endymion Sanctuary and Tomb in Latmos, and the Temple of Endymion in Herakleia. Recent archaeological excavations in Herakleia have yielded significant findings in a short period, boosting the area's visibility, encouraging tourism, and providing additional income opportunities for local businesses and communities.

With 500-million-year-old rock formations, diverse flora and fauna, and unique geomorphological features such as dunes, lagoons, tombolos, and coastal bars, Latmos Mountain attracts nature lovers from across the region. The area is home to 325 plant species —16 of them endemic— as well as 261 bird species, 22 reptiles, and 19 mammals.

For all these reasons, it is essential that the area proposed for national park designation be preserved holistically, protecting both its natural beauty and cultural heritage to ensure long-term sustainability.

CARIAN TRAIL

Unearthed through the efforts of the Carian Trail Team since 2009, the Carian Trail preserves and carries the rich historical and natural heritage of the Mediterranean into the future. Stretching 850 km, it is Türkiye's longest marked hiking route, winding through ancient cities of the Carian civilization, hills covered with olive and almond trees, and pristine coves.

As the Mediterranean Conservation Society, we collaborate with the Carian Trail Team on the Datça-Bozburun Peninsula section of the route. Together, we work to register footpaths and cultural assets and to protect the region's biodiversity through joint initiatives.

UNDERWATER EXCAVATIONS

These excavations are led by a team led by Assoc. Prof. Harun Özdaş within Dokuz Eylül University's Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology and the Research Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage and Maritime History (SUDEMER). They are part of the long-running "Blue Heritage Project", which aims to identify, map, document, and manage Türkiye's underwater cultural heritage.

The excavations span three distinct archaeological sites discovered under this project and are conducted with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and financial support from the Presidency of Strategy and Budget. Since 2023, under an officially approved protocol, the Mediterranean Conservation Society has been actively supporting these efforts, contributing to the preservation and protection of underwater cultural heritage.

BOZUKKALE UNDERWATER EXCAVATION

Located in Bozukkale (ancient Loryma), Marmaris, this excavation features the only known shipwreck in the Mediterranean carrying a group of Archaic period statues. Dating back to the late 7th century BCE, the wreck is believed to be a medium-sized seafaring vessel that carried artifacts from Egyptian, Syrian, Cypriot, and Aegean cultures. The recovered items are currently displayed in a dedicated gallery at the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology.

ÇAMÇALIK UNDERWATER EXCAVATION

This excavation site is located on the western side of the Bozburun Peninsula, where the oldest known harbor ruins in Anatolia are submerged due to sea level changes. The site holds the largest Bronze Age ceramic collection ever discovered in the waters of Anatolia and the Aegean Sea. The findings are dated to the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, corresponding to the Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I periods. Among the most remarkable discoveries are artifacts inscribed with Linear A, the still-undeciphered script of the Minoan civilization.

KIZLAN UNDERWATER EXCAVATION

This excavation concerns the remains of a 17th-century Ottoman shipwreck located off the coast of Kızlan, near Datça. Among the findings are Janissary muskets, hand grenades, bullets, cannonballs, swords, and pipes, as well as exquisitely preserved Chinese porcelain, some still enclosed in wooden chests. It is believed the ship was en route to Istanbul when it sank. Türkiye's Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, has personally dived at this excavation site.

MONITORING AND PROTECTING ENDANGERED MEDITERRANEAN SPECIES

Our in-house developed data dashboard application, designed to manage and visualize monitoring data, was selected as a best practice example among projects supported by Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme (ELSP). During an international webinar attended by ELSP partners, we shared our experience in developing the dashboard and our Data Management Strategy.

We have also begun research and model development focused on integrating AI-assisted technologies into our conservation and monitoring efforts, aiming to improve the efficiency and accuracy of our data collection and analysis.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2024 identified the key short- and long-term risks facing our planet. Among the top long-term (10-year) threats, the report highlights concerns over habitat degradation and the loss of nature, including extreme weather events, critical shifts in planetary systems, biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and natural resource shortages—issues that directly relate to the mission of protecting endangered species and their habitats.

MEDITERRANEAN CONSERVATION SOCIETY SPECIES OBSERVATION REPORTING LINE

We carry out ongoing monitoring and conservation efforts for endangered Mediterranean species, including the Mediterranean monk seal, sandbar shark, Marmaris salamander, and Lycian orchid. To help reduce threats and impacts faced by these species, we established the Species Observation Reporting Line as part of our citizen science initiatives.

If you encounter any endangered Mediterranean species, you can report your observation through the MCS website (www.akdenizkoruma.org.tr) or by calling 0850 307 25 12.

By submitting a report, you contribute to:

- Informing relevant authorities so they can intervene in cases where animals may be injured or in distress,
- Monitoring and identifying individual animals to support long-term species tracking,
- Understanding where and how often threats occur, and their impacts,
- Planning of targeted conservation measures for these species.

You can scan the QR code to access the Species Notice Form.

CITIZEN SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

Citizen science is an approach that actively involves volunteers in scientific research. It not only valuable data to scientific studies but also streghthens public engagement with scientific processes. In Türkiye, where citizen science is still an emerging concept, the Mediterranean Conservation Society has taken significant steps to promote its adoption. Our aim is to encourage the participation of local communities and nature enthusiasts in conservation efforts.

Species Reporting Line: We invited local stakeholders to share sightings of Mediterranean monk seals and other species with us, allowing us to gain more insights into their habitats.

Ghost Net Notifications: Divers and fishers in the region shared information about the ghost nets location, enabling us to target cleanup operations to specific locations.

Citizen Science Workshops: At community events, we emphasized the importance of citizen science and established collaborative relationships with individuals interested in contributing to our work.

Through these initiatives, we successfully involved citizens in conservation activities and enhanced local knowledge exchange. Moving forward, we aim to make our citizen science initiatives more systematic and structured.

DIVERSEA 2024 ACVITIES

The project titled "Integrated Observation, Mapping, and Monitoring for Assessing the Functional Biodiversity of Coastal Seas," known as DiverSea, completed its first year in October 2023. As the organization responsible for public outreach and citizen science activities within the project, the Mediterranean Conservation Society participated in the first-year consortium meeting held in October and continued fulfilling its role.

DiveeSea's fifth objective focuses on creating an interactive stakeholder interface to support evidence-based policymaking, while its sixth objective aims to strengthen interdisciplinary marine sciences and communication within governance mechanisms.

In line with these objectives, MCS has completed its stakeholder mapping activities and organized numerous meetings and workshops to promote DiverSea's mission. These engagements emphasized:

- The effective management of marine protected areas,
- The integration of scientific data into policy-making processes,
- And the importance of collaboration for marine ecosystem conservation.

To support outreach and fieldwork in our project sites, we designed a Citizen Science Workshop tailored specifically for dissemination under DiverSea framework.

The steps taken by MCS contribute significantly to the protection and sustainable management of Türkiye's marine ecosystems. At the same time, they foster knowledge exchange with national and international stakeholders, while anchoring decision-making in scientific data.

WHAT IS THE IUCN RED LIST?

The IUCN Red List is a global inventory prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It assesses the conservation status of species worldwide and determines whether a species is at risk of extinction.

The Red List categorizes species into nine conservation status categories, reflecting the level of threat each species faces:

- Extinct (EX)
- Extinct in the Wild (EW)
- Critically Endangered (CR)
- Endangered (EN)
- Vulnerable (VU)
- Near Threatened (NT)
- Least Concern (LC)
- Data Deficient (DD)
- Not Evaluated (NE)

The IUCN Red List is an essential tool used by scientists, conservation organizations, governments, and other stakeholders to set conservation priorities and to develop policies aimed at protecting biodiversity natural resources.

ENDANGERED MEDITERRANEAN SPECIES

MEDITERRANEAN MONK SEAL

(Monachus monachus)

The Mediterranean monk seal is an endemic species to the Mediterranean, and according to the IUCN Red List, it is classified as "Vulnerable (VU)" globally, and "Endangered (EN)" within the Mediterranean region.

As the Mediterranean Conservation Society, we implement various initiatives to reduce the threats facing this rare species and mitigate their impacts. We work in close coordination with relevant authorities to protect both the species and its habitats, while continuing our active monitoring efforts and awareness-raising campaigns about its ecological importance.

We continue to gather data on cave use by monk seals along a 710 km coastal stretch from Gökova Bay to Kaş, using motion-triggered camera traps and remote monitoring systems that transmit real-time footage.

In 2024, we conducted a total of 9 field missions in our study areas including Foça SEPA and the coastal zone from Gökova to Kaş. These field visits, carried out every 3–4 months, support the regular analysis of footage collected from monk seal caves. In one of the monitored caves, we recorded seven monk seals resting together, highlighting the critical need to protect the limited number of suitable caves used by the species.

Efforts to integrate artificial intelligence into the monitoring systems for both the Mediterranean monk seal and the sandbar shark gained momentum in 2024. Full implementation of AI into these systems is expected in 2025.

In November 2024, one of our camera traps in Gökova Bay recorded a newborn Mediterranean monk seal. The footage shows a healthy female pup alongside her mother. With the population of this species continuing to decline in the Eastern Mediterranean, such sighting brings renewed hope and reinforces the importance of our ongoing conservation work.

As part of our project with the TUI Care Foundation, and with the support of Ortaca Municipality, we installed a sculpture of the Mediterranean monk seal at Sarıgerme Public Beach to raise public awareness about the species and its protection.

GLOBAL RISK

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	EW	EX

RISK IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	EW	EX

ENDANGERED MEDITERRANEAN SPECIES

SANDBAR SHARK

(Carcharhinus plumbeus)

As one of the oldest species on the planet, sharks are among the most important indicator species for healthy marine ecosystems. Despite their portrayal in popular media as aggressive predators, most shark species are generally shy. However, their populations are increasingly threatened by human activities.

One of the greatest threats to the sandbar shark is bycatch—being unintentionally caught during fishing activities. Due to fishing pressure, low reproductive rates, and human-induced stressors, sandbar sharks are especially vulnerable. According to the IUCN Red List, this species is currently classified as Endangered (EN) both globally and within the Mediterranean Basin. Additionally, 37% of shark and ray species worldwide are currently threatened with extinction.

In Türkiye, our efforts to protect the endangered sandbar shark focused on Boncuk Cove, located within the Gökova Bay SEPA. These activities are conducted under the coordination of the General Directorate for the Protection of Natural Assets under the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change.

GLOBAL RISK

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	EW	EX

In 2024, as the Mediterranean Conservation Society, we continued making significant progress in the AI integration phase of our sandbar shark monitoring initiative. The hardware integration required to apply the AI model to the real-time monitoring system is expected to be completed by 2025.

We also completed the analysis of over 6,500 hours of underwater footage recorded by two cameras in 2023. The data has been systematically logged, with some notable findings—such as the detection of 11 individual sharks within a single 45-second video clip.

Footage collected through 2024 is currently under analysis. These efforts are significant for strengthening our monitoring strategies and conservation measures for this threatened species.

At the 3rd National Workshop on Developing Türkiye's Elasmobranch Conservation Strategy, organized by the Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TÜDAV), we presented our sandbar shark monitoring and conservation efforts as a key case study.

The data has been systematically logged, with some notable findings—such as the detection of 11 individual sharks within a single 45-second video clip.

RISK IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	EW	EX

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LYCIAN ORCHID

(Ophrys lycia)

Named after the "Land of Light" — Lycia, the Lycian orchid *(Ophrys lycia)* is one of the Mediterranean's endemic orchid species. It is found only in Kaş, Antalya, and was first discovered in 1980 by Swiss botanist Jany Renz in a village cemetery. According to the IUCN Red List, the species is classified as Critically Endangered (CR), with fewer than 1,000 individuals remaining in the wild. If left unprotected, the species could disappear entirely, even from its remaining populations in cemeteries.

In collaboration with Ege University, the Mediterranean Conservation Society is carrying out the project "Pollination Biology, In Vitro Propagation, and Conservation of the Endemic Species *Ophrys lycia* (Lycian Orchid)". The project aims to ensure the short-term conservation of live specimens in their natural environment and the long-term preservation of pollen and seed samples in Türkiye's National Gene Bank.

The conservation strategy includes:

- Controlled cross-pollination for seed production,
- In vitro cultivation of seeds,
- Adaptation of propagated individuals to natural habitats.

Now in its third year, the project began with identifying and documenting individual plants in their natural habitat. Selected parent plants were artificially pollinated, and seeds were successfully harvested over three years. A mini seed bank has been established at the Ege University Botanical Garden and Herbarium Research Center, housing one of the most valuable genetic sources of the species. Once the project is completed, these seeds will be transferred to the National Gene Bank for future scientific research, while some are being used for regeneration of the species.

In the laboratory, exciting developments are underway. Orchid seeds, initially 0.1–0.2 mm in size, have germinated and grown into 5–6 cm seedlings. Some have even begun forming tubers. The next phase involves transitioning these plants to greenhouse conditions, followed by reintroduction into their natural habitat. If successful, this multi-faceted project will secure the long-term conservation of *Ophrys lycia.*

To protect this endemic species found only in Kaş, we launched a meaningful collaboration with Haremlique Istanbul. Through the "Lasting Conversation" project, we aim to raise awareness about the endangered Lycian orchid and help secure its survival for future generations.

As part of this project, botanical illustrator Işık Güner created a scientific illustration of *Ophrys lycia*, giving the orchid a lasting presence through art. During an exhibition hosted at her studio in the Fırtına Valley of the Kaçkar Mountains, she supported our conservation efforts and contributed to public awareness.

This project bridges culture and nature, highlighting the importance of protecting Türkiye's unique biodiversity. Together with Haremlique Istanbul, we are committed to ensuring the Lycian orchid continues to exist for generations to come.

In 2024, we reached 1,637 young people

ECOLOGY EDUCATION

As the Mediterranean Conservation Society, we deliver a range of education programs to raise ecological awareness. These programs not only help young people explore the marine environment, but also enable them to understand ecosystems through scientific observation methods.

In 2024, we reached 1,637 young people: 362 students participated in structured training sessions, 609 attended our seminars, and 506 took part in out-of-school activities. We played our Mediterranean Eco Champions board game with 302 children, who now share the game with their classmates at school.

Together, we:

- Discussed the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment with a focus on climate change.
- Wondered about the gestation period of the Mediterranean monk seal.
- Imagined new actions to add by 2030 under Sustainable Development Goal 14 – Life Below Water.
- Used Jenga blocks to learn about the food chain.
- Introduced the Marine Ranger as a new profession to help meet the UN 30x30 goal.

We continue learning from one another as we move forward.

In addition to working with students, we conducted a Blue Skills Trainer Training for school teachers in Ortaca, as part of the Mediterranean Monk Seal Monitoring and Awareness Project supported by the TUI Care Foundation. Teachers from 27 schools across various disciplines in Ortaca participated in the program.

STUDENTS USE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH METHOD

COASTAL MACRO LITTER SAMPLING

With nearly 40% of the world's population living along coasts, these areas face intense human pressure. To monitor the impacts, we trained students in macro litter sampling—collecting, categorizing, and measuring trash on coastlines of their choice. This activity empowered students to analyze long term trends over time and encouraged them to develop creative local solutions.

MEASURING WATER CLARITY WITH A SECCHI DISK

In our educational sessions, we introduced students to the Secchi disk, a tool used by scientists to measure water clarity. Using simple materials, they constructed their own Secchi disks and practiced taking Secchi depth measurements at the shoreline. Observing changes in clarity helped students better understand the natural dynamics of ecosystems and the roles of both biotic and abiotic factors. This activity also enabled early detection of human-induced impacts. As part of the program, we used learning designs that encouraged students to identify local environmental issues and develop citizen-led solutions.

BIRDWATCHING IN WETLANDS

As part of the Tour du Valat "Green Light for Mediterranean Wetlands" project, students explored the significance of wetlands, how they differ from other ecosystems, and which species they support. They visited the Gökçe Wetland in Gökova Bay SEPA, spotting barn swallows, storks, little egrets, robins, and Eurasian jays. To continue their learning, students built natural bird feeders to turn their schoolyards into observation zones.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

We organised workshops to explore the impacts of climate change on the Mediterranean, introducing data platforms and international organizations involved in tracking change. Using thought-provoking questions—Why are fish gasping for breath? Why are sea plants fleeing? What unwanted medals are we earning?—we encouraged critical and creative thinking. Students developed solutions aligned with to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

USING QUADRAT FOR SPECIES COUNTING

We introduced students to the quadrat method, used by scientists to study the distribution of *Posidonia oceanica,* a seagrass species endemic to the Mediterranean. Students practiced using quadrats in their schoolyard to count local species, and learned about *Posidonia oceanica* as the "lungs of the sea" emphasizing its critical role in ecosystem services.

MEDITERRANEAN ECO CHAMPIONS BOARD GAME

Our "Mediterranean Eco Champions" board game engaged children aged 7–14 group-based learning through fun and interactive play. Featuring educational cards, the game promotes awareness about coastal and marine ecosystems, the Mediterranean monk seal, and seagrass meadows. In 2024, we began collaborating with a group of young developers to digitize the game and expand its reach.

FESTIVALS

In 2024, we engaged with 388 children and young people through the Istanbul Children's Rights Festival, the Datça Almond Festival, and the 24th Göcek Children's Festival. These events provided a creative and joyful platform to explore marine ecosystems together—through colors, sounds, and imagination.

MARMARIS SALAMANDER AND A MODEL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECT

Social development involves learning the values and behaviors of both local society and global culture. A strong example of this is the student-led initiative focused on the Marmaris salamander (*Lyciasalamandra flavimembris*)—one of only seven Lycian salamander species in the world. Endemic to Muğla and listed as Endangered (EN) on the IUCN Red List, the species' habitat has become increasingly critical following recent wildfires.

Students from Ula Hüseyin Ercan Ermaş Mermer High School launched a social responsibility campaign at the Ula local market to counter local misconceptions. Supported by scientific data and visuals from MCS, students set up booths and posters, spoke with locals from nearby villages, distributed brochures, and raised awareness about pesticide use and the importance of preserving salamander habitats.

PROTECTING UNDERWATER LIFE

We delivered educational activities to raise awareness about MPAs, their species, and functions, using examples from Türkiye. We introduced Marine Rangers as a new profession under the UN 30x30 goal, and invited students to develop their own national/international project ideas in support of ocean conservation.

THE SEA WE BREATHE: A MARINE LITERACY PLATFORM

In 2024, we took a important step for marine education by localizing "The Sea We Breathe", the digital learning platform, originally developed by the Blue Marine Foundation. This interactive platform helps young people explore the underwater world and understand its critical role in climate change resilience.

The platform was fully translated and narrated in Turkish by MCS. The narration, voiced by renowned actor Mazlum Kiper, brings the learning experience to life with added depth and emotional engagement. This impactful tool is set to become a key resource for nature-based marine education across Türkiye.

The Sea We Breathe features interactive videos organized under three main themes:

- **The Ocean's Web of Life**
- **Rainforests of the Sea**
- **Protecting Underwater Life**

These videos are supported by activity suggestions for students and teachers, offering a deep and engaging learning experience. While K–12 students can use the platform at their own pace and schedule, teachers can integrate it into group activities, project-based learning, and curriculum-aligned activities.

The Sea We Breathe is not only a digital learning platform but also a space where students:

- Enhance their creative and critical thinking skills,
- Practice working with scientific data,
- And develop nature-based solution ideas.

Aligned with 21st-century skills and core literacies, the platform supports youth in becoming informed global citizens, while raising awareness about the role of oceans and seas in addressing global environmental challenges.

EVENTS

DATÇA IN 2024

As part of the "Integration of Marine and Cultural Conservation" Project, which we launched in the Datça-Bozburun SEPA in 2022, we presented our work carried out in the region up to 2024 with representatives from public institutions and organizations.

At the Datça Almond Blossom Festival, we hosted an information stand in Republic Square for two full days, and we also held a session with children at the Women's, Youth, and Art Center to play the Mediterranean Eco Champions board game.

We participated in the Can Yücel Culture and Arts Festival, with the theme of "migration" from May 23–26, in collaboration with the Datça Culture and Arts Solidarity Network and Datça Municipality. Alongside our information stand, we also organised a tasting event for 300 festival attendees to edible invasive species.

On July 1, we joined the Maritime and Cabotage Day celebrations in Datça. These events attracted strong interest from both locals and tourists. We participated with an exhibition and information stand to highlight the importance of protecting the sea and to raise awareness about marine ecosystems.

From September 27–29, we attended the Sarıca Summer Festival, themed "One summer ends, another begins." Through our information stand, we engaged with festival visitors and shared updates about our ongoing conservation efforts in the region.

"BIODIVERSITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN THROUGH TIME AND SPACE" TALK

This thought-provoking event took place in Izmir, featuring renowned marine biologist Gilles Boeuf and Goldman Environmental Prize recipient Zafer Kızılkaya. The conversation explored the evolution, richness, and threats to Mediterranean biodiversity from a global and local perspective.

6TH NATIONAL MARINE SCIENCES CONFERENCE – RIZE

Held under the theme "The Past, Present, and Future of Our Seas", the 6th National Marine Sciences Conference took place May 15–17, 2024, at Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University in Rize. Representing the MCS, Mustafa Tunca Olguner, PhD, Vahit Alan, and İdris Koraltan shared insights into our marine conservation efforts.

GÖKOVA HALF MARATHON SPONSORSHIP & PUBLIC OUTREACH

From October 25–27, 2024, the Mediterranean Conservation Society served as an official sponsor of the Gökova Half Marathon, organized by the Muğla Metropolitan Municipality. As part of our New Fish Program outreach, we organized a series of public engagement activities in Akyaka. Key activities included:

- Hosting information booths to educate visitors about our ongoing projects,
- Organizing a New Fish Talk on Saturday evening, emphasizing lionfish as a sustainable seafood alternative,
- Serving lionfish sandwiches to over 600 attendees during the tasting event,
- Participating in the marathon on Sunday, with team members running to show support and raise awareness.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN İZMİR

In 2024, we participated the Project Writing Camp and the Climate and Sustainability Camp, organized by the Youth Assembly of the Izmir City Council. At the Project Writing Camp, we shared our experiences in developing conservation-focused projects with young participants. During the Climate and Sustainability Camp, we delivered a presentation and workshop on the impacts of climate change on marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

SUIC – INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY IN LIFE CONGRESS – KUŞADASI

We proudly served as one of the main sponsors of SUIC (International Sustainability In Life Congress), hosted by Ege University from May 19–22 at Pinebay Hotel, Kuşadası. The congress brought together national and international scientists working on sustainability-related themes such as: health, energy, environment, biotechnology, agriculture, food, and social Life.

Our team member, Mustafa Tunca Olguner, PhD, delivered a presentation highlighting our organization's conservation initiatives. Throughout the congress, our booth functioned as an information hub, where we engaged with participants and hotel guests, sharing insights into our ongoing work and impact.

AKDENİZ KORUMA DERNEĞİ
Mediterranean Conservation Society

THE STORY OF OUR LOGO
THE JOHN DORY FISH

Since our founding in 2012, we have used the John Dory fish *(Zeus faber)* as our emblem—a logo that marks its 10th anniversary in 2022. The story behind this choice is shared by Zafer Ali Kızılkaya, one of our founders and current President of our Board:

"They all have beautiful eyes. Their scales, while still alive, are worthy of adorning women's dresses, ears, and chests…"

— begins Sait Faik Abasıyanık in his short story "The Death of the John Dory."

In reality, the John Dory has no scales. Its body is covered by a thin membrane that shifts from green to cream tones, with a dark spot at the center that gave rise to its nickname, "St. Peter's Fish." According to legend, this fish—once a monster—was transformed into a meek and humble creature by the touch of Jesus.

In Sait Faik's story, the narrator comes across a John Dory hanging from a tree outside a fisherman's café—dying, suspended by a rope.

"Its color was like the moment it emerged from the sea. Only the delicate, silk-soft membranes around it quivered incessantly. I had never seen such a motion before… This trembling was, in truth, a dance of death. It was as though the soul of John Dory was drifting out through those membranes on the breeze—there was not an ounce left of it..."

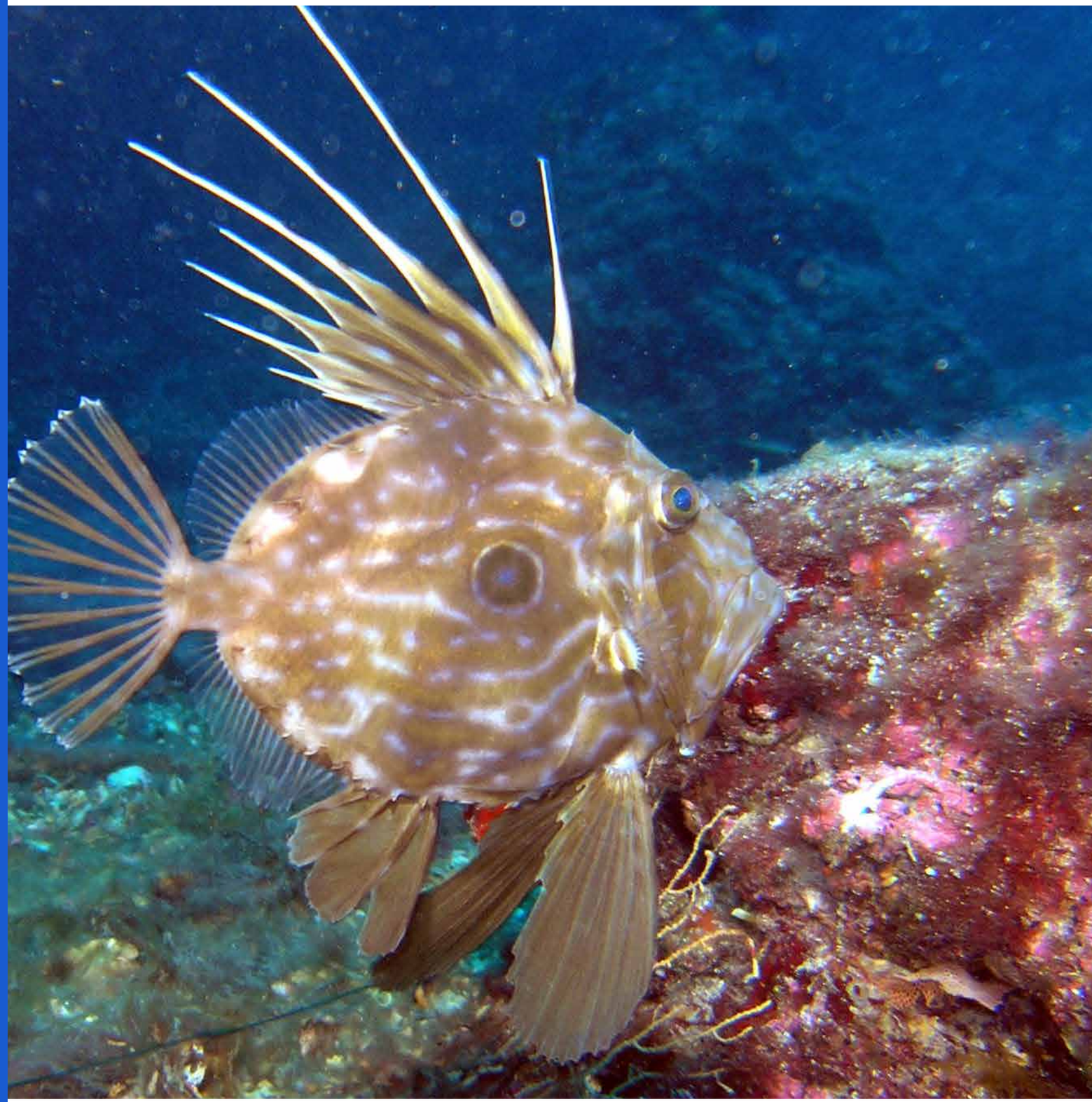
Through this powerful imagery, the story captures not only the fish's suffering, but deeply human emotions.

"I felt the fear that filled the heart of John Dory. It was a fear we all know: the fear of death."

Sait Faik then imagines the fish as part of human society, questioning how we might torment or sadden it, and how we might even turn this innocent being back into a monster.

Inspired by this powerful metaphor—of death, compassion, and a critique of humanity—and deeply moved by the decline of John Dory in the Mediterranean, we chose it as the symbol of the Mediterranean Conservation Society. And we're glad we did.

We extend our thanks to Miraç Güldoğan, who supported the design of our logo while still a student.



FISHERIES RESTRICTED AREAS

Fisheries Restricted Areas were declared and published in the Official Gazette No. 31221 on August 22, 2020. Fishing for aquatic products, both for recreational and commercial purposes, is prohibited in the areas marked on the maps and specified by coordinates, according to the relevant fisheries regulations.

DATÇA-BOZBURUN SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTED AREA

FETHİYE - GÖCEK SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA

GÖKOVA SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA

KAŞ - KEKOVA SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA

BUDGET

EXPENSE REPORT

Human Resources
₺ 22,575,617.95 — 49.6%

Travel, Transportation, Fieldwork
₺ 10,196,492.87 — 22.4%

Equipment
₺ 4,013,100.21 — 8.8%

Vehicle Maintenance & Repair
₺ 2,717,856.88 — 6.0%

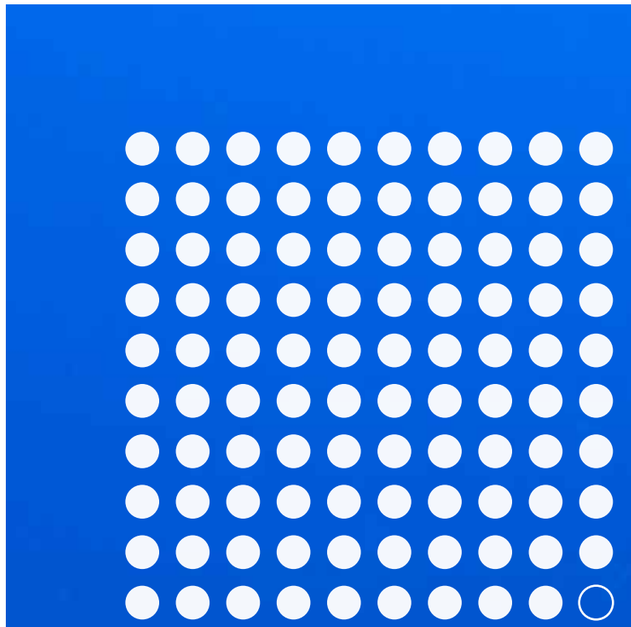
Awareness-Raising Activities
₺ 2,576,430.67 — 5.7%

Other Expenses
₺ 2,339,984.38 — 5.1%

Training / Conference Expenses
₺ 576,560.85 — 1.3%

Office Expenses
₺ 493,302.70 — 1.1%

INCOME REPORT



99%
Project Revenue

₺ 33,802,590.97

1%

Fundraising	₺ 150,158.28
Individual Donations	₺ 111,711.72
Membership Fees	₺ 35,790.85
Other Income	₺ 15,936.74

THANK YOU

We are thankful to all our individual donors who support the work of the Mediterranean Conservation Society through their contributions.

A special thank you to our social media followers who support us by helping our work reach wider audiences, and who encourage us with every like, comment, and share.

FOUNDATIONS AND DONORS

Fauna & Flora

Blue Marine Foundation

Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme

Sigrid Rausing Trust

Audemars-Watkins Foundation

The MedFund

TUI Care Foundation

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO)

Rufford Small Grants Programme

GEF Small Grants Programme

Gen EM Foundation

The Prince Bernhard Nature Fund

Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas- MERCES

Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC)

Arcadia

MedPAN

Med Sea Alliance

Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) - UN Environment Programme

Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition

Tour du Valat Foundation

Seacology

Global Fishing Watch

DiverSea

INSTITUTIONS

Martı Marina

Slow Food Gökova

Hadi Balık

Göcek Kültür ve Turizm Derneği

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

Ercüment Altınsoy

Ramazan Çepel

Metin Yılmaz

Ali Akboyun

Cihan Şen

Adalet Kılıç

Coşkun Kılıç

Murat Draman

Ezgi Yıldırım

Uğur Atalay

Özge Atalay

Ülkü Ölmez

Atıf Ölmez

Lale Orhan

Oben Orhan

Ovel Orhan

Burhan Urkun

Tuncay Kayan

Mehmet Can Görgün

Selma Akad

Haluk Bozkurt

FELLOWS / INTERNS

Cemre Balkı

Gamze Hasanoğlu

Nisanur Çaygöz

Ilgaz Yıldırım

Büşra Nur Kuruoğlu

Abdullah Enes Göksal

Alper Bayrak

İrem Kokulu

Zeynep Sude Akçay

Utku Şaybakhan

WHO WE WORK WITH

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

Ministry of Interior – Coast Guard and Gendarmerie Commands

Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

General Directorate for the Protection of Natural Assets

Mediterranean Fisheries Research, Production and Training Institute

General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture

General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums

General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks

Muğla Governorship

Muğla Provincial Directorate of National Education

District Governorships of Marmaris, Fethiye, Ula, Datça, Menteşe, Ortaca, Dalaman, Kaş, Demre, and Foça

UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES:

Ege University

Dokuz Eylül University

Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University

DEU Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology

DEU Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage and Maritime History (SUDEMER)

Ege University Environmental Problems Research and Application Center (ÇEVMER)

Ege University Herbarium Research and Application Center

Latmos and Herakleia Excavation Directorates

MUNICIPALITIES

Muğla Metropolitan Municipality

İzmir Metropolitan Municipality

Ula Municipality

Fethiye Municipality

Marmaris Municipality

Datça Municipality

Menteşe Municipality

Karataş Municipality

Dalaman Municipality

Ortaca Municipality

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

DEKAMER (Sea Turtle Research, Rescue and Rehabilitation Center)

İzmir Commodity Exchange Foundation for Education, Culture and Social Integration (BORSAV)

COOPERATIVES

Central Union of Fisheries Cooperatives (SÜR-KOOP)

Regional Union of Muğla Fisheries Cooperatives

Marmaris Fisheries Cooperative

Akbük Fisheries Cooperative

Akyaka Fisheries Cooperative

Akçapınar Fisheries Cooperative

Karacasöğüt Fisheries Cooperative

Datça Fisheries Cooperative

Selimiye Fisheries Cooperative

Söğüt Fisheries Cooperative

Palamutbükü Fisheries Cooperative

Cumali Fisheries Cooperative

Karaköy Fisheries Cooperative

Fethiye Çalış Fisheries Cooperative

Göcek Fisheries Cooperative

İnlice Fisheries Cooperative

Demre Fisheries Cooperative

Kalkan Fisheries Cooperative

Urla İskele Fisheries Cooperative

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

Öndes, F., Özden, U., Alan, V., Irmak, E., & Güçlüsoy, H. (2024). Comparative feeding habits of the invasive non-indigenous devil firefish (Pterois miles) and the indigenous scorpionfishes (Scorpaena porcus, Scorpaena scrofa, and Scorpaena notata) on the southwest coast of Türkiye, eastern Mediterranean. Mediterranean Marine Science, 25(3), 753–767. https://www.medit-mar-sc.net/index.php/marine/article/view/26711

Dinçtürk, E., Öndes, F., Alan, V., & Dön, E. (2024). Mass Mortality of the Invasive Sea Urchin Diadema setosum in Türkiye, Eastern Mediterranean Possibly Reveals Vibrio Bacteria Infection. Marine Ecology, e12837.

Güçlüsoy, H. & Onmuş, O. (2024). Diversity of marine tetrapods (reptiles, seabirds, and mammals) along the coasts of Türkiye. Turkish Journal of Zoology, 48(6), 617-629. https://journals.tubitak.gov.tr/zoology/issues/zoo-2024-48-6/zoo-48-6-11-2210-40.pdf

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, TRJFAS26711. http://doi.org/10.4194/TRJFAS26711

SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS

Olguner, M. T. (2024). Monitoring the distribution and seasonal behaviour of the invasive lionfish (Pterois miles) in Gökova Bay using acoustic telemetry. European Tracking Network Symposium. October 16–18, Mallorca, Spain.

Olguner, M. T. (2024). Boosting climate change resilience: Restoring marine ecosystem connectivity in south western Türkiye. INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY IN LIFE CONGRESS (SUIC). May 19-22, Kuşadası - Türkiye.

Özkan, A., Alan, V., & Olguner, M. T. (2024). Marine litter: Distribution and composition along the southwestern coast of Turkey. 6th National Marine Sciences Conference, Rize-Türkiye.

Koraltan, İ., Gökdağ, K., Olguner, M. T., & Güven, O. (2024). Microplastic pollution and possible sources in Datça-Bozburun Special Environmental Protection Area. 6th National Marine Sciences Conference, May, Rize-Türkiye. https://nmsc2024.org/abstracts

Alan, V., Kennedy, H., Tüney, İ., Austin, W., Kurt, T., Olguner, M. T., Kuruoğlu, B. N., Walker, K., Mulligan, B., & Akçalı, B. (2024). Blue carbon: Studies on determination of organic carbon (OC) stocks in Posidonia oceanica sediments in south-western coasts of Türkiye. 6th National Marine Sciences Conference. May, Rize-Türkiye.

Alan, V., & Akçalı, B. (2024). Monitoring of Posidonia oceanica seagrass meadows on the south-west coast of Türkiye by the Balisage method. 6th National Marine Sciences Conference. May, Rize-Türkiye.

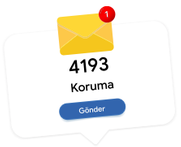
Walker, K. (2024). Marine restoration in Gökova Bay, Türkiye: Understanding socio-ecological responses in a Mediterranean marine protected area network. 14th European Conference on Ecological Restoration: Bridging Science, Practice, and Policy of Nature Restoration, August 26–30, Estonia.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US?

MONTHLY DONATIONS

The growing threats to the Mediterranean ecosystem and its inhabitants increase the urgency of our conservation efforts. Regular donations are more vital than ever. With your monthly support, we can continue our protection projects across the Mediterranean Basin and launch new initiatives. You can become a regular donor by choosing a monthly amount—or increase your contribution to maximize your impact. - Support Us!

SMS DONATION



To support our work, you can send an SMS with the word "Koruma" to 4193, donating 50 TL per message. Your contribution will help us deliver educational programs on marine ecosystems in primary and secondary schools and raise a new generation of ecologically literate students.

SPECIAL OCCASION CERTIFICATES

Purchase a donation certificate for birthdays, anniversaries, or special occasions to contribute to the protection of species such as the Mediterranean monk seal and the sandbar shark, while also supporting our coastal conservation work. These certificates can also be tailored for corporate gifting and partnerships. Donation Certificates

CHARITY RUNS

By joining national or international charity runs, you can create a fundraising campaign for the Mediterranean Conservation Society. As a volunteer runner, you can participate in marathons, promote our mission, and raise donations via email and social media. All contributions directly support related conservation projects.

PRINTED MATERIALS

The Last Algae Pie (Children's Book):

Support us by gifting "The Last Algae Pie", a children's book we supported in printing and translating. The story highlights the importance of ecosystems and seagrass meadows. You can make a donation in exchange for copies to give to your employees or community.

Guide to Marine Wildlife of the Mediterranean:

Our "Marine Wildlife of the Mediterranean" guidebook helps you identify species while snorkeling, diving, or even shopping at the fish market. By purchasing this useful reference, you're not only gaining a valuable tool, but also supporting our conservation work through your donation.

ABBREVIATIONS

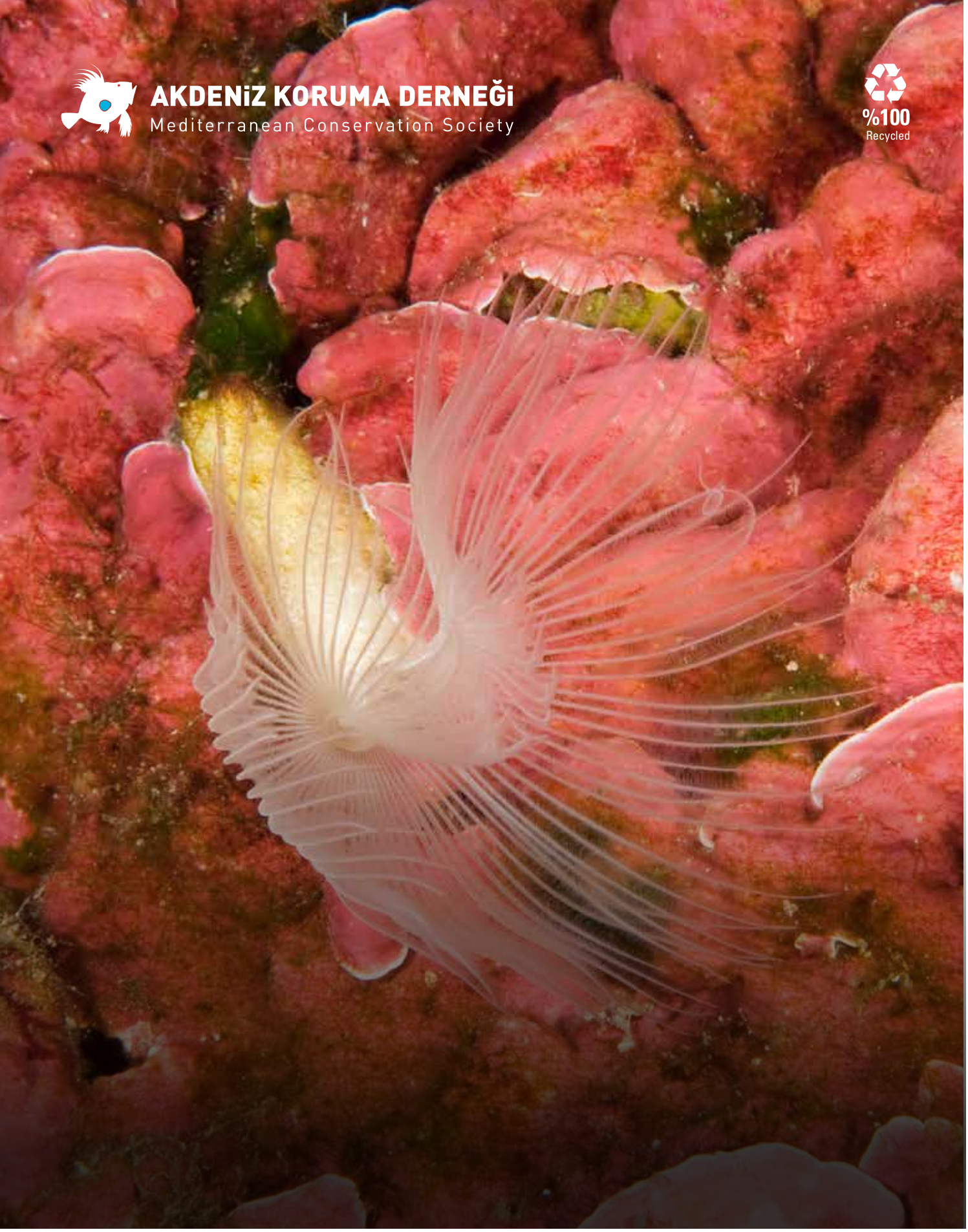
Mediterranean Conservation Society	**MCS**
Fisheries Restricted Area	**FRA**
Marine Protected Area	**MPA**
Special Environmental Protection Area	**SEPA**
United Nations Environment Programme	**UNEP**
International Union for Conservation of Nature	**IUCN**
Fauna&Flora	**FF**
Food and Agriculture Organization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

Prepared by:
İlkay Kavak, Engin Taşkaya

Photography:
Zafer Ali Kızılkaya
Mediterranean Conservation Society

Design:
Cihan Uyanık, Printworld

Translation Assistance provided by
Gizem Akdoğan, Kayhan Güçeli



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Mediterranean Conservation Society

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contact

info@akdenizkoruma.org.tr
akdenizkorumadernegi@hs01.kep.tr

İZMİR OFFICE
Kazımdirik Mah. 296 Sok.
Folkart Time 1 Blok No: 812
Bornova/İzmir 0232 504 07 02

GÖCEK OFFICE
Göcek Mahallesi İskele
Meydanı No:5/A Fethiye/
Muğla

GÖKOVA OFFICE
Atatürk Caddesi No.14 Kat.2
Akyaka-Ula/Muğla

DATÇA OFFICE
İskele Mah. Hasan Efendi Cad.
No:1/21 Datça/Muğla