

Life BaHAR for Natura 2000

LIFE 12 NAT/MT/00845

Konservazzjoni taħt l-Ilma

In-network tan-Natura 2000

In-Natura 2000 huwa netwerk ta' żoni protetti mifruxa mal-Unjoni Ewropea kollha li kienet mahluqa fl-1992 permezz tal-Habitats Directive. L-ghan fuq żmien twil hu li jkunu protetti l-iktar speċi u abitati vulnerabli u mhedda. L-iskop ewljeni ta' dan in-netwerk hu s-sostenibilità ekoloġika u ekonomika f'din in-nisġa ta' siti li tkopri madwar 20% tal-art fl-Unjoni Ewropea.

Il-Kuntest Malti

Sal-lum il-gżejjer Maltin għandhom 39 sit li jiffuraw parti minn-Natura 2000. Fosthom 34 huma fuq l-art, filwaqt li 5 jinstabu fil-baħar. Filwaqt li s-siti tal-art jkopru 13.5% tal-art Maltija, dawk tal-baħar ikopru biss 1.6% tal-ibħra li jaslu sa 25 mil nawtiku 'l barra mill-kosta Maltija.

Minħabba n-nuqqas ta' informazzjoni xjentifika, il-hames siti marittimi eżistenti huma ibbażati l-aktar fuq il-preżenza tal-Posidonja (*Posidonia oceanica*) li hi ikkunsidrata bhala ambjent naturali ta' priorità minħabba li tħajnejx livell għoli ta' biodiversità. Minbarra l-Posidonia hemm ambjenti oħra li jistħoqqilhom protezzjoni taħt is-sistema ta' Natura 2000. Dan iwassalna ghall-ghan ewljeni ta' dan il-proġetti tal-Life BaHAR for N2K

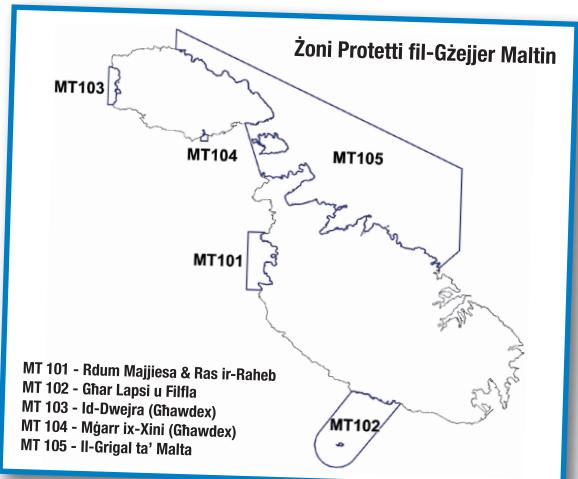
Il-proġetti tal-Life BaHAR

Dan l-istudju finanzjat mill-Unjoni Ewropea beda f'Ottubru 2013 u se jkun qed jinvestiga tliet ambienti ta' importanza ekoloġika, jiġifieri l-imfieriex tar-ramel, is-sikek, u l-gherien tal-baħar. L-iskop ta' dan l-eżercizzju hu li jintlaħqu l-miri ta' suffiċċenza Ewropej, jitkabbru s-siti marittimi tan-Natura 2000 eżistenti u jigu identifikati oħrajn godda ibbażati fuq informazzjoni xjentifika l-aktar recenzi.

Il-mira ta' Life BaHAR hija li tingabar informazzjoni li s'issa hija nieqsa jsir xogħol fuq problemi oħra li bħalissa qiegħdin ixekku il-harsien tal-biodiversità marittima madwar il-gżejjer Maltin.

Dan il-proġett qed jiġi mmexxi minn l-Awtorită, ta' Malta dwar l-Ambjent u l-Ippjanar fil-waqta li twettaq uħud mill-azzjonijiet b'kollaborazzjoni ma' erba' beneficiarji oħra: il-Ministeru ghall-Iżvilupp Sostenibbli, l-Ambjent u t-Tibdil fil-Klima, id-Dipartiment tas-Sajd u l-Akwakultura, l-Universita' ta' Malta u Fundación Oceana.

Il-proġett għandu 'budgħit' ta' 2.6 miljun ewro, 50% minnhom ġejjin mill-programm ta' fondi tal-UE LIFE maħsub biex jitwettqu proġetti ambjentali.



Limitazzjonijiet	Deskriżzjoni	Azzjonijiet tal-proġetti Life BaHAR
Nuqqas ta' informazzjoni xjentifika fuq l-ambjent marittimu.	F'dawn l-ahħar snin l-ispejjeż involuti, in-nuqqas ta' hiliet u tagħmir speċjalizzat xekklu l-ġbir tal-informazzjoni.	Issir valutazzjoni kompreksiva tal-pożżizzjoni ġegħiġi, id-dags u l-istat ta' konservazzjoni tal-ambjenti marittimi protetti.
Is-siti protetti taħt in-Natura 2000 huma ftit wiśq.	Huwa biss 1.63% tal-baħar sa 25 mil nawtiku madwar il-gżejjer Maltin bħalissa jaqqa' taħt is-siti ta' Natura 2000.	Is-suffiċċenza tintlaħaq billi jkunu identifikati u proposti siti ġoddha u estensjonijiet ta' siti eżistenti.
Nuqqas ta' ik-ordinament bejn il-partijiet ikkonċernati.	Attivitajiet fuq il-baħar mhux ikkordinali bejniethom qiegħdin joħolqu kunflitti.	Il-partijiet ikkonċernati se jkunu mistiedna biex jikkontribwixxu lejn il-konservazzjoni ambjentali. L-informazzjoni xjentifika li tingabar se tkun centralizzata.
Ħsara ambientali minħabba attivitajiet tal-bniedem.	Dawn għandhom x'jaqsmu l-iktar ma' rkapti tas-sajd, ankar tad-dghajjes, u żvilupp strutturali.	Ikunu identifikati theddid u impatti fuq l-ambjenti naturali ekoloġikament importanti li se jkunu eżaminati.
Nuqqas ta' miri ta' konservazzjoni għall-abitati tal-baħar.	Fid-dawl ta din il-lakuna, ma jistgħux jittieħdu miżuri ta' gestjoni għal dawn l-abitati.	Ikunu stabiliti miri ta' konservazzjoni. Dawn il-miri, jippermettu li jittieħdu miżuri gestjonarji permezz ta' Pjanjet ta' Ĝestjoni jew Mandati ta' Konservazzjoni.
Nuqqas ta' għarfien tassiti tan-Natura 2000 ambjenti naturali fil-baħar u speċi tal-baħar.	Huwa rikonoxxut li n-nuqqas ta' għarfien ġenerali dwar is-siti tal-baħar tan-Natura 2000, it-twaqqif tagħhom u l-benificċċi li għandhom hija ta' preokkupazzjoni fil-gżejjer Maltin.	Titnieda u titwettaq strategija imfassla apposta ta' trawwim ta' kuxjenxa u ta' tixrid ta' għarfien.

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Conservation Under Water

The Natura 2000 network

Natura 2000 is a network of protected areas throughout the EU; it was created in 1992 under the Habitats Directive, with the long term aim of protecting Europe's most vulnerable and threatened species and habitats. Sustainable ecological and economical management is the primary focus of this network covering around 20% of the total land area of the EU.

The Maltese Context

To date the Maltese Islands have 39 Natura 2000 sites; out of which 34 are terrestrial and 5 are marine. Whereas the land sites cover approximately 13.5% of the Maltese land area, the marine protected areas only occupy 1.63% of the waters around the Maltese Islands up to 25 nautical miles.

Due to limited scientific information, the existent 5 marine areas were based primarily on the presence of Posidonia beds (*Posidonia oceanica*) which is considered as a priority habitat since it sustains a high biodiversity. However besides Posidonia beds there are other habitats which merit designation of marine Natura 2000 sites. This leads us to the scope of the Life BaHAR for N2K project

The Life BaHAR project

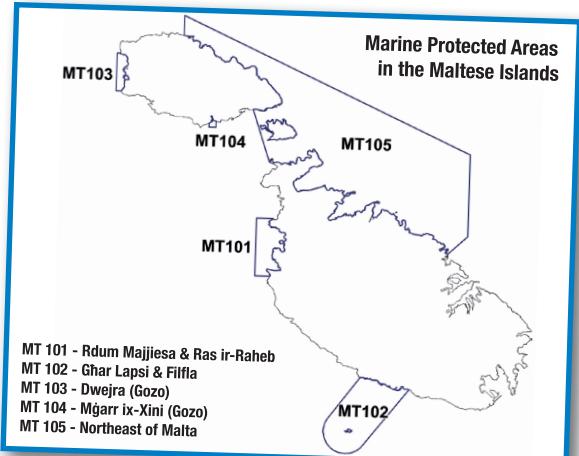
This EU funded project which took off in October 2013, will be investigating 3 particular ecologically important habitats, namely: underwater sandbanks, reefs and caves, with the aim of fulfilling EU sufficiency targets by extending the existent marine Natura 2000 sites and designation of new ones based on latest data gathered.

Life BaHAR for N2K aims to address data gaps and similar limiting issues, which are currently restricting further protection of marine biodiversity around the Maltese Waters.

This project is being coordinated by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority which is also carrying out certain actions of

the project in collaboration with four associated beneficiaries: the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the University of Malta and Fundación Oceana.

The project budget is of 2.6million euro, 50% of which is co-financed by the EU LIFE funding programme set up to help implement and develop environmental projects within the EU. With the help of this initiative, the Maltese Islands will have an adequately coherent network of marine protected areas



Limiting Factor	Description	Life BaHAR Action
Lack of scientific data on marine habitats.	Costs involved and specialised skills and equipment have restricted data gathering for the past years.	Provide a comprehensive assessment of location, extent and conservation status of protected marine habitats.
Insufficiency of marine Natura 2000 designated sites.	Only 1.63% of all the Fisheries Management Zone is presently covered by Natura 2000 sites.	Site selection for new sites and updates to existing ones.
Lack of coordination between stakeholders.	Activities on the sea are not coordinated often giving rise to conflicts.	Stakeholders will be invited to contribute towards conservation. Scientific data will be centralised.
Damage to habitats through human activities.	These are mainly related to fishing gears, anchoring and infrastructural developments.	Identification of threats and impacts on ecologically important habitats.
Lack of conservation measures.	In view of this lacunae management measures cannot be carried out.	Establish conservation objectives on which to set up management measures through Management Plans or Conservation orders.
Lack of awareness of marine Natura 2000 sites and marine habitats and species.	A general lack of awareness on marine Natura 2000 sites, their establishment and benefits is recognised as one of the key issues in the Maltese Islands.	Dissemination of knowledge through a tailor-made awareness raising strategy.