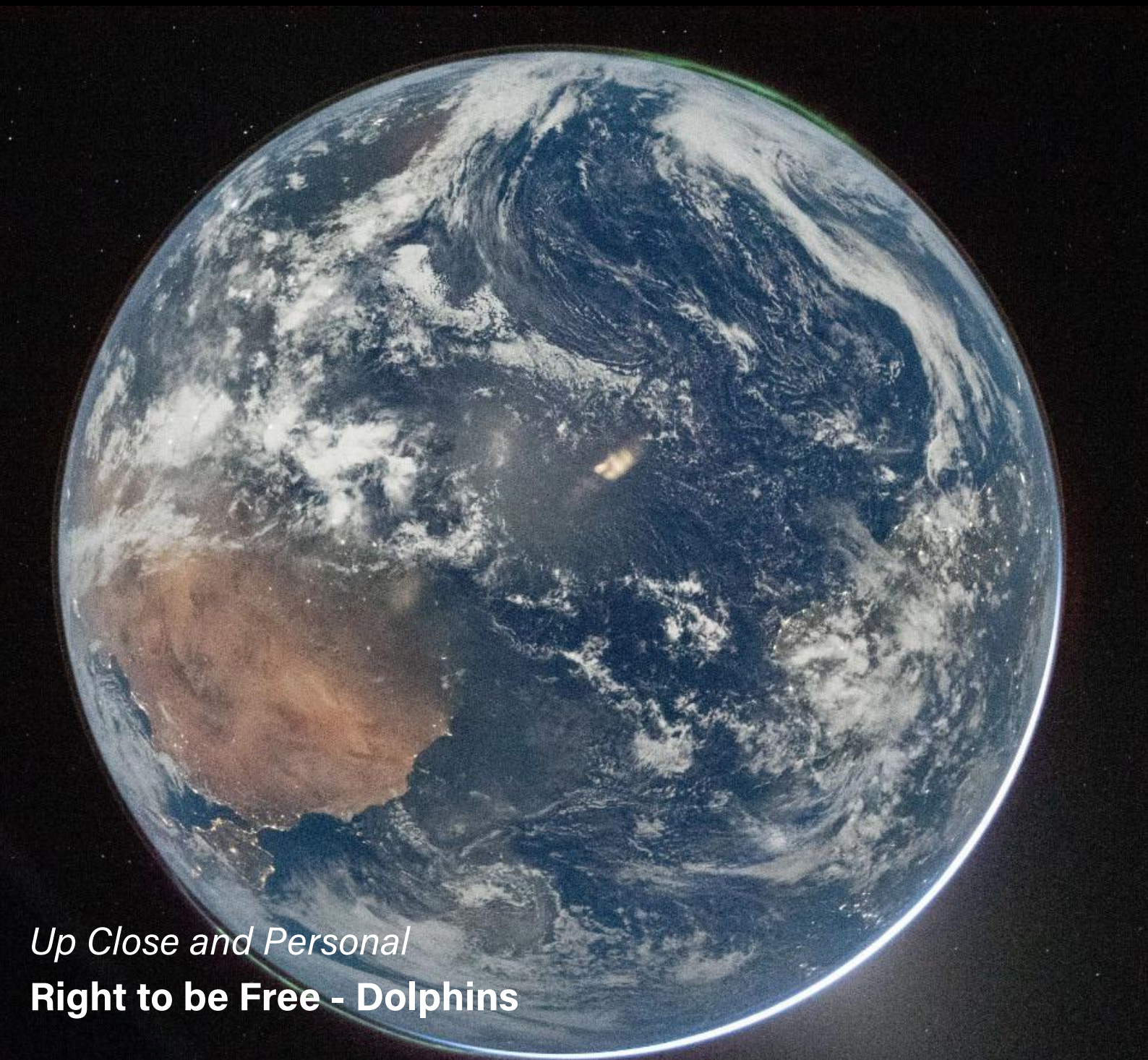
Sea Sense



Up Close and Personal

Right to be Free - Dolphins

Events

World Earth Day 2026

Sustainability

Sharks - beyond the myth

ISSUE 3
MAY 2026

Published By
VO Nr 2640

bahar wieheb

Editorial - Welcome to Sea Sense #3!

Welcome
to another issue of Sea Sense, the e-magazine published by NGO Baħar Wieħed. This issue is instigated by two events that happened over the past few months, The Artemis 2 Space mission and World Earth Day.

The photos sent back from the Artemis 2 Space mission were undoubtedly striking. In very rare instances did we ever see the earth from such a perspective. Every person that came across such images could only wonder in awe about the beauty of our planet. But the one thing that struck us most was the importance of the seas and ocean - Beautiful, Majestic, Vast, Unknown. It not only connects the World together , its our Lifeline.
Protecting the Ocean protects life on Earth

Yet the clean up organised for World Earth Day struck a different cord. It showed how we humans actually treat the Earth and the Ocean around us. And its a completely different picture. Litter, pollution , waste of resources complete disrespect for life around us . What a contrast .

Lets take this opportunity to think about these two events and how we too can help look after Mother Earth

As always we would like to thank the contributors for sharing their thoughts, experiences and offer a glimpse of the very valuable work they carry out be it academics, NGO's, pressure groups or individuals .

Thank you for your hard work.

Baħar Wieħed Editorial Team

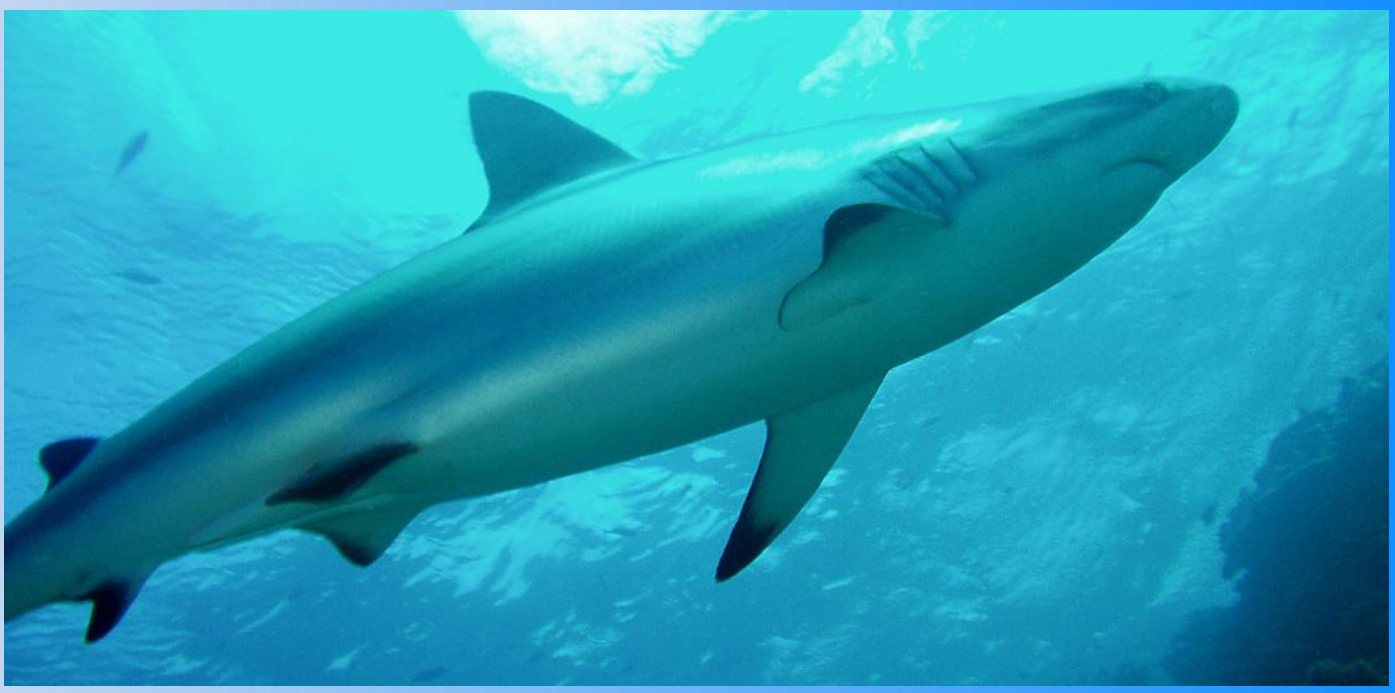
email : info@baharwiehed.org.mt
www.baharwiehed.org.mt
facebook.com/baharwiehed
Instagram: baharwiehed

SHARKS - Beyond the Myth

Alexander "The Sharkman" Buttigieg - Sharkman's World

Sharks have ruled the oceans long before the dinosaurs ruled the earth. Most creatures have since become extinct, yet Sharks have continued to evolve and survive. Sharks have smooth, streamlined bodies, graceful movements, and a timeless presence shaped by millions of years of evolution. No wonder they are the ocean's top predators.

But how long will they survive? Will us humans allow such majestic creatures to survive?



Unfortunately these magnificent, mysterious and misunderstood creatures, have been wrongly perceived with images of shark attacks in the minds of many people. Like every other animal, sharks must hunt for their food to survive. Research has showed us that although Sharks are very good hunters, they can also survive for weeks without eating.
There are over 556 different species of shark but only a handful are considered as a risk to humans. Shark attacks are very rare and there are reasons behind these attacks . Large shark species might attack because they mistake humans for their staple food (i.e. a surfer looks like a seal from below) rather than for their will of eating humans. Sharks might attack because they feel threatened when humans invade their breading or hunting grounds. Sharks also bite when they investigate if an item is edible or not.
The average annual number of Shark attacks is less than a hundred worldwide, and out of these, less than 8% are fatal. To put this in perspective, far more people are injured by dog attacks or by slipping on wet surfaces than by sharks. So Sharks are not the monsters that media make them out to be! There is minimal danger to humans but now let us look at the other side of the issue.

The Human Factor

Most Shark species are now facing extinction due to the direct impact of human beings. Pollution, habitat loss and by catch by fishermen cause a large number of sharks to be killed worldwide.

But the major contributor to the sharp decline in shark populations world wide is over-fishing more specifically shark finning. Millions of Sharks are being massacred every year just for their fins which is than used for "Shark Fin Soup".

Sharks are being caught in their hundreds of thousands to have their fins cut off .The mutilated bodies are thrown back into the water for the sharks to die a slow and painful death. Sharks need water to flow through their gills to produce oxygen to live.
Without fins, sharks suffocate.

Photos - Sharks without fins left to die a long painful death

Over 700,000 sharks are killed each year for shark fin soup, pushing many shark species on the brink of extinction. No shark species is left untouched. China, Indonesia, Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, are the largest consumers of Shark Fin Soup. With these countries becoming wealthier more people are consuming shark fin soup. The shark fin in itself is tasteless but adds texture to the soup and considered a symbol of wealth and status .

A number of Countries have already banned shark finning including the USA , EU etc and Shark conservation groups continue lobbying for a world wide ban . But shark finning is still happening. A huge illegal trade to satisfy this growing market is pushing prices for shark fines even higher making them more enticing for gangs and criminals.

Sharks mature very late in life (between 7 to 30 years) and that the reproduction cycle can take as long as 2 years. So their reproduction rates are very low. Shark populations cannot sustain such an onslaught and is pushing Sharks on the verge of extinction. Also other large amounts of sharks are being caught as a bycatch by fishermen, plus others end up in Aquariums and do not survive for long. Something needs to be done and we have to act fast.

Photos: Illegally caught Shark Fins. How many sharks would that be ?

It was for this reason that I set up Sharkman's World Organization (on https://www.sharkmans-world.org/) back in 1997, to raise awareness towards Shark Conservation issues. The first results came when in 1999, Malta became the first European country to pass laws to protect both the Great White and the Basking Sharks.

Why are Sharks important?

Sharks are vital for healthy oceans. As one of the top predators they keep fish and some mammals populations balanced ensuring no fish/mammals populations can grow out of proportion and causing other species to disappear. By eating the weak and sick, sharks help keep species strong. Sharks also protect habitats like seagrass and reefs by preventing overgrazing. Their presence gives ecosystems time to recover. Without sharks, the marine ecosystem can become unbalanced causing many species of fish we consume to become extinct

Photo: Shark Egg Purses

What is being done locally?

Over the years, the number of locally protected sharks has increased to 13 species. This was achieved with the great help of Sharklab Malta, an NGO set up in 2007 to create more awareness on the local scene. Sharklab Malta's work is leaving a huge impact on Shark conservation not only in Malta but also internationally.

During a visit to the Fish market in 2011 an encapsulated egg from a dead Smallerspotted Catshark female was recovered. After being placed in a small aquarium, the egg began to develop. And so did a new idea ... to actively remove eggs from landed dead pregnant sharks, cultivate them in small aquariums and after hatching release them back into the sea where they belong.

This new project had its first positive results when in 2013, Greg Nowell and his team, in collaboration with the National Aquarium, released the first Catshark. To date, 380 shark pups have been successfully breed and released.

How can we contribute?

You can also help make a difference!!
We need a lot of help from those that are willing to take this challenge with us. Sharks have been labelled as Monsters and Man-eaters for a long time, and to convince the right people to pass laws for Shark Protection, takes a lot of hard work.
Here are some of the things that you can do:

1) Help us spread the word that Sharks need to be protected.
2) Help dispel the Monster and Man-eater image that the media love to show.
3) Stop eating Shark food products.
4) Stop buying Shark items like real Jaws, Shark teeth or Shark leather items.
5) Support Shark Awareness and Conservation Issues World-Wide.
6) Support and Join Organizations like Sharklab – Malta.

It is up to people like us to protect these magnificent creatures before it is too late.

Alexander "The Sharkman" Buttigieg
Sharkman's World
More information can be found on https://www.sharkmans-world.org/

Whale Shark (Photo by Adrian Sultana)

The Right to be Free - Dolphins

Katya Borg – Organisation "Waves not Walls"

Humans have been intrigued by such beautiful, friendly dolphins since ancient Greece as they can be seen featured in Classical Greek Mythology.
We are ever so lucky to have 75 resident bottlenose in our own Maltese waters and we have dolphin watching tours where people can watch them and learn about them..

Photo: Jon Borg

Why are they so Special ?

The intelligence of dolphins is one of their most outstanding features. Among the thousands of members that the animal kingdom has, dolphins take one of the top places regarding intelligence.
They process pain and emotions like us humans, are self-aware and also have a highly developed language. They also use echolocation that allows their brains to translate sound into images and vice-versa.

Photo: Jon Borg

Dolphins live in tight knit families, known as pods, where the daughter never leaves her mother's side even after having her own calf. They go as far as grieving and mourning when a pod member dies. Recently both bottlenose dolphins and Orcas have been seen carrying their dead calf for weeks! They hunt together as a team and when a member is weak they collectively try their best to help out, even if it means putting their own lives at risk. Their empathy towards each other and other species makes them so remarkably special and so very similar to our human nature

They hunt together as a team and when a member is weak they collectively try their best to help out, even if it means putting their own lives at risk. Their empathy towards each other and other species makes them so remarkably special and so very similar to our human nature

In 2014, pro swimmer Adam Walker set out on a 8.5 hour swim across the Cook Strait (New Zealand). When a nearly-six foot long shark appeared underneath him, Walker feared for his life. However a pod of dolphins arrived on the scene and swam alongside the swimmer for an hour as he crossed the strait.

In 2006 a scuba diver in the Channel Islands was knocked unconscious by a boat and reports of his amazing rescue stunned the public. Although the diver had been reported missing and an extensive search was underway, it wasn't mankind who saved him: it was more than 100 dolphins. After being gone for more than two days, he was spotted in the water surrounded by dolphins.

Photos: Jon Borg

What are the threats they deal with ?

1. Unsustainable overfishing – Cetaceans, especially whales that need to eat a large quantity of fish, are not finding enough food thus are being malnutritioned and are in danger of perishing.
2. Countries such as Japan, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway are still persisting on hunting whales and dolphins.
3. Plastic ingestion is causing an extrapolation of unnecessary deaths.
4. Naval drills, oil drilling and seismic blasting.
5. Dolphins, seals and Orcas are captured for captivity in dolphin parks.
6. Fishing net entanglements or caught as bycatch in nets.

In Taiji, Japan, dolphins are driven into a shallow cove where they are then chosen to be either killed for their meat or taken away from their family to serve a lifetime in captivity to perform tricks for us in a tank!

Dolphin parks claim that they conserve and protect these species. This is true in certain cases when a dolphin is sick or gets itself stranded. However once the dolphin is better it should be released and not used to perform in shows or in breeding programs. One has to ask if this balances the quality of life that a dolphin has to experience... how worth it is it? Would a person prefer being locked up in a prison cell for all his life to have the assurance of being fed and protected, or living a life in this world with all its dangers?

Waves not Walls campaign is calling for an end to the exploitation of marine mammals at Mediterraneo Marine Park. File photo.

Photos: Times of Malta

What can we do to help?

- Reduce plastic waste
- Ditch the dolphin park tickets and go for dolphin tours were you can actually see the true behaviour of dolphins enjoying the presence of their family and the enrichment that the ocean can provide.
- Help both local and international NGO's such as Sea Shepherd, and Ric O' Barry's Dolphin Project, that are working against dolphin captivity, fight against cruel drive hunts and help rehabilitate captive dolphins

Katya Borg – Organisation "Waves not Walls"

Photos: Jon Borg

Our Power, Our Planet

Word Earth Day 2026 - Clean up at Fomm ir-Riħ

The theme "Our Power, Our Planet" emphasizes how individual and collective actions can make a real difference in protecting the environment and our planet Earth. It reminds us that the power to create change lies in our daily choices and collective actions. By saving energy, reducing waste, and supporting clean and renewable resources, we can help build a healthier and more sustainable planet. This theme encourages everyone to take responsibility and work together to safeguard the environment for future generations.

Photo: Fomm ir-Riħ with all sorts of waste carried up by the sea

World Earth Day 2026 was marked by a meaningful clean-up at Fomm ir-Riħ, one of Malta's most striking natural coastal sites. In a collaborative effort, NGO Baħar Wieħed, Raniero's Adventure, and Ambjent Malta joined forces to tackle marine pollution.

This initiative raised awareness about the importance of protecting our seas and coastlines, drawing attention to the urgent issue of marine pollution while actively working to address it.

The clean up purpose was aimed to restore the natural beauty of this remote bay and to confront, firsthand, the scale of waste that continues to wash up along our shores. Fomm ir-Riħ, known for its dramatic cliffs and unspoiled landscapes, offered a stark contrast between natural beauty and the harsh reality of human impact.

What was Found

Large quantities of polystyrene were scattered across the coastline, broken into countless small pieces. With the wind carrying these fragments across the bay, it created an almost surreal scene, as if it was snowing plastic. This visual alone captured the severity of the issue, materials designed for convenience persisting in nature long after their use, breaking down into micro plastics that pose serious risks to marine life.

Beyond polystyrene, a wide array of debris was collected. Plastic containers of all shapes and sizes were found embedded in rocks, alongside rusting tins and discarded crates. A plastic container filled with fuel was found as well, highlighting not only pollution but potential environmental hazards that could have long-term consequences for the ecosystem.

Photo: Exapanded Polystyrene could be found everywhere

Fishing-related waste was also widespread. Plastic ropes, nets, and other equipment were tangled among the rocks, serving as a reminder of how industrial and recreational activities contribute to marine litter. These materials can entrap wildlife and disrupt delicate habitats, compounding the damage already caused by pollution.

One of the most poignant discoveries of the day was the sheer number of shoes washed ashore. As they sit under the sun and salt, they begin to break down chemically. Tiny particles shear off, becoming micro plastics that seep into the sand and water. Dyes and adhesives leach out, introducing toxins into fragile coastal ecosystems.

Even as they degrade, they continue to affect the environment around them. Scattered along the coastline, these items carried with them an unspoken story. While they may appear as simple debris, their origins often trace back to complex global issues, ranging from maritime accidents to migration journeys. Seeing them in such quantities was a powerful and emotional reminder of the human dimension behind marine pollution. You can't help but wonder, Who wore this? Where were they going? How did it end up here? There is something deeply human about them.

Photos: Some of the items collected - mainly plastic and Polystyrene washed up by the sea

Photo: All items collected were safely disposed of by Ambjent Malta

The collected waste was removed from the shore and transported by an Ambjent Malta boat. This initiative was not just about cleaning a beach, it was about sending a message. Collaboration between NGO Baħar Wieħed and Raniero's Adventures, supported by Ambjent Malta, demonstrates what can be achieved when organizations and individuals unite for a common cause. However, it also underscores the reality that clean-ups, while essential, are only a temporary solution to a much larger problem.

Marine pollution does not begin at the shoreline; it starts with everyday choices, waste management systems, and global consumption patterns. The debris collected at Fomm ir-Riħ did not originate there, it traveled across seas, carried by currents, reflecting a shared responsibility that extends far beyond local borders.

As we reflect on World Earth Day 2026, the message is clear: action must go beyond a single day or event. Preventing pollution requires sustained effort, stronger policies, and a shift in mindset at both individual and collective levels. Reducing single-use plastics, improving waste disposal practices, and supporting environmental initiatives are all part of the solution.

The clean-up at Fomm ir-Riħ stands as both an achievement and a call to action. It shows the power of community, but also the scale of the work still ahead. If we are to protect our seas and coastlines for future generations, we must act together consistently and decisively.

Photo: The Baħar Wieħed team together with Raniero Borg from Raniero's Adventures

Photo: Fomm ir- Riħ back to its natural beauty

Building a capacity for ocean advocacy and restoration

Professor Alan Deidun - University of Malta

The ocean has finally come of age, earning its place at the top table when it comes to policy priorities being discussed by global leaders. The nexus between climate change and ocean health is finally being embraced by all, with recognition for the pivotal role played by the ocean in regulating climate and in providing a suite of essential ecosystem goods and services finally materialising.
This recognition is culminating in a deluge of relevant international agreements seeing the light of day or kicking off the blocks, including the BBNJ or High Seas Treaty (adopted in June 2023) as well as discussions concerning the EU's proposed Ocean Pact and Ocean Act which might eventually yield a European Ocean Agency.

Whilst the elevation of ocean matters to the highest political sphere is welcome news to any marine conservation advocate, direct intervention in and results from the field, or, in this case, the waters are even more poignant.

The Oceanography Malta Research Group (OMRG) within the Department of Geosciences of the University of Malta has since 2024 been participating in active Posidonia oceanica seagrass meadow restoration exercises within the MT105 Marine Protected Area off Qawra, in collaboration with the MEDSEA Foundation of Sardegna and the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA).

The Posidonia Meadows in Qawra

Over 300m^2 of meadow has been restored to date on a seabed dominated by dead seagrass matte. Future marine restoration work is being planned by the OMRG through the ongoing Revive project, funded within the Interreg Italia-Malta framework, entailing the deployment of artificial reefs to fuel the restoration of vermetid reefs as well as to improve water quality within degraded areas.

The OMRG is a firm believer in the potential of citizen science campaigns.. So much so that the it manages a total of four different marine citizen science campaigns on a national level, namely the Spot the Jellyfish (started in June 2010,) the Spot the Alien and the Spot the Alien Fish, (Active since 2016) as well as the ANDROMEDA microplastics. All campaigns are accessible through a single website – campaigns.ocean.mt.

Tens of previously-unrecorded non-indigenous species, belong to a diverse array of taxa, ranging from fish to flatworms, crustaceans and jellyfish, have been added to the marine biodiversity lists for Maltese waters as a result of the first three campaigns, including the nomadic jellyfish, the upside-down jellyfish, the Australian spotted jellyfish, the Atlantic blue crab, the silver-cheeked toadfish, the diamondback pufferfish, the bigfin reef squid, the Massawan shrimp, the flat needlefish, the red squirrelfish, the wahoo, the deep-sea rockfish, the Sergeant major, the African moonfish, the Azure damselfish, the Guinea damselfish, the punctuated flatworm, the fangtooth moral eel and the diamond lizardfish.

The nomadic jellyfish, an invasive and highly-stinging species native of the Indo-Pacific region, was first documented within Maltese waters by the Spot the Jellyfish

Through the Spot the Jellyfish campaign, an anomalously high number of sightings of Portuguese man o'war colonies were recorded

The bigfin reef squid is one of over 20 previously unrecorded species documented by the citizen science campaigns. This species happens to be an marine invasive alien species native of the Indo-Pacific region.

The ANDROMEDA microplastics campaign revolves around an image-analysis algorithm which quantifies the number of microplastic particles and deciphers their colour, dimensions and surface roughness simply through a photo of the same particles submitted through your mobile phone app

Training and capacity-building are cross-cutting issues which should underpin any attempt at meaningful change. The OMRG has been steering through, for over a decade, an immersive and hands-on postgraduate course – the Master of Science in Applied Oceanography – which upskills the next generation of maritime professionals through focused theoretical sessions covering the multiple facets of oceanography (from the physical, chemical and biological to the geological and meteorological) and engaging sessions entailing the direct deployment of instrumentation by students out at sea during bootcamps, placements/internships within relevant entities ,site visits to coastal monitoring facilities (e.g. meteorological stations, HF radar stations, water column moorings, sea level stations, BLUE multiparametric buoy) besides training in communication and outreach skills.
Over 50 young professionals hailing from 10 different countries and 3 different continents have been trained within the course since its inception in 2014. Applications for the next course opening in October 2026 are open: https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/overview/pmscapoftt5-2026-7-o/

Founded by Prof. Elisabeth Mann Borgese in 1972, the International Ocean Institute (IOI) is a world leading independent, non-governmental non-profit organisation conducting training and capacity building in Ocean Governance with the aim of creating knowledgeable future leaders. IOI provides training in contemporary approaches to coastal and ocean management, with an emphasis on the moral, ethical and legal values in Ocean Governance (equity and peaceful uses of the ocean).
The OMRG services the IOI through an annual, short accredited course on regional ocean governance which is offered over the November-December period and which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2025. Applications for this year's course are currently open: https://courses.ocean.mt/ioicourse/

Professor Alan Deidun is Malta's Ocean Ambassador as well as Rector's Delegate for the SEA-EU Alliance, Coordinator of the MSc in Applied Oceanography course and of the various citizen science campaigns listed in this article and serves as the Director of the IOI Malta Training Centre.

Health of the Sea Under the Lens East of Malta

Professor Aldo Drago - Malta College of Art Science and Technology

In the early hours of 22 April, as the first light of dawn spread across a calm central Mediterranean Sea, the Italian research vessel Gaia Blu maintained position at an offshore station east of Delimara Point, a key location for current dynamics. Far from being a routine stop, the station had been carefully selected following days of monitoring by satellite of a dynamic oceanographic feature: a long filament of water extending southwards from the south-eastern coast of Sicily and propagating into Maltese waters under the influence of regional circulation patterns.

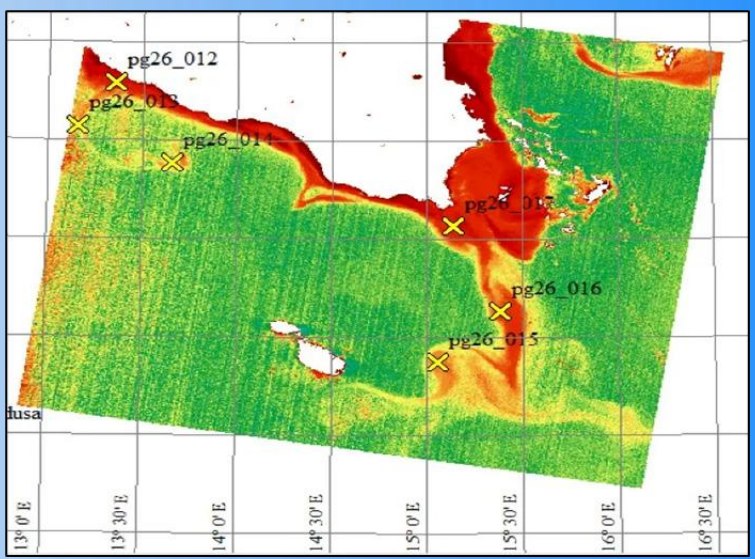


Figure 1 The stations sampled on the filament flowing and carrying with it more nutrient rich water evolving with the currents southward from Sicily to the Maltese Islands. The patterns obtained through satellite imagery are showing from high resolution Sentinel OLCI Chloriphyll concentration, green at the lower values to yellow and red at the higher end of the scale

The island's strategic position, at the crossroads of water masses with different characteristics, makes it particularly interesting for studying upwelling processes and the evolution of these filaments as they transport nutrient-rich waters across the Sicily Channel, stimulating plankton productivity and influencing the wider marine food web. Using near real-time satellite imagery from Sentinel-3 OLCI, scientists had tracked the filament as it stretched towards Malta, allowing the research team to position the vessel precisely within the southern extremity of the filament in order to capture its physical, chemical, and biological characteristics directly in the water column.

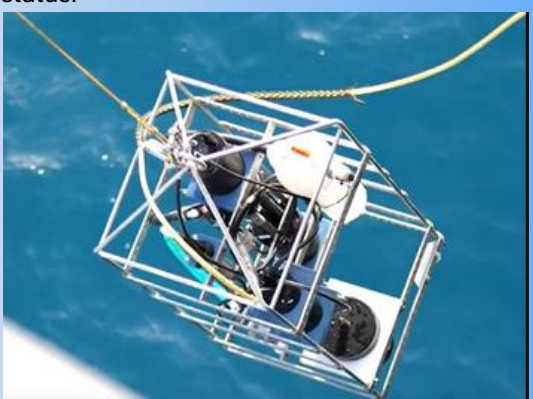
On board, operations were unfolding simultaneously across multiple areas of the ship. On the aft deck, technicians and scientists teamed to deploy sophisticated sensor packages and sampling equipment into the sea.

The CTD rosette, equipped with sensors measuring temperature, salinity, oxygen, fluorescence, turbidity, and other bio-optical properties, was lowered progressively through the water column while seawater samples were collected at selected depths. This strategy made it possible to directly compare the surface layer with deeper levels influenced by upwelling processes in the Malta area.

Figure 2 The CTD rosette coming out of the water as it is winched up on deck after a vertical dive to measure and sample the water column

Inside the control room, scientists closely monitored the incoming profiles in real time as streams of data appeared on their screens, revealing the internal structure of the filament beneath the surface. Variations in temperature, chlorophyll concentration, and water density provided the first indications of how this transported water mass differed from surrounding waters.

Meanwhile, activity continued in the wet laboratory, where water samples were being filtered, preserved, and processed for subsequent analyses. These samples are used to investigate nutrient dynamics, plankton communities, biodiversity patterns, and emerging genomic indicators that can provide deeper insight into ecosystem functioning and environmental status.



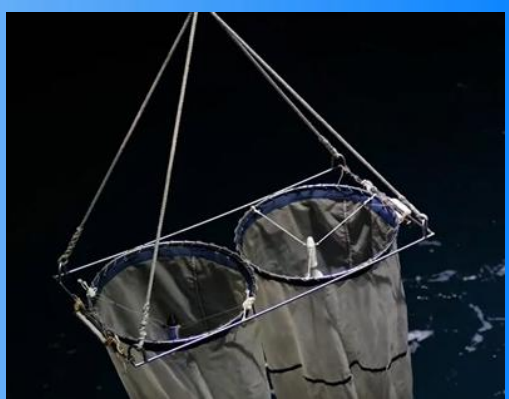


Figure 3 Contaminants are measured by dedicated sensor package (left picture) while biological components like zooplankton, phytoplankton and primary production (right picture) are assessed with Bongo nets and water samples together with assessments on biodiversity by environmental DNA techniques.

The operations formed part of the intensive 20-day oceanographic expedition conducted under the PAGES (Process-Based Assessment for Good Environmental Status) project. The expedition represents one of the most extensive multidisciplinary scientific surveys ever carried out in this part of the Mediterranean Sea. This embraces a holistic approach that links biological responses to the overarching fluid-dynamical processes that ultimately drive their functioning. This endeavour aims to contribute to the revision of the Marine framework Directive (MSFD) linking the dots among different marine ecosystem descriptors and contributing to GES understanding and achievement in a more integrative and scientific manner.

PAGES is coordinated by the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche within the framework of JPI Oceans, with the participation of the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and funding support from Xjenza Malta on the Maltese side.
Prof. Aldo Drago leads the MCAST team participating in the project

Assessing the health of the marine environment is like placing and fitting together the pieces of a complicated jigsaw puzzle. To place each next piece you need to know and keep in perspective the whole picture. Likewise all the data that we collect must serve to build the picture enabling us to monitor the sea as a whole as it changes responding to natural cycles, to climate change and to impacts from our own activities. We need to respect the carrying capacity and sustainability of the oceans. The PAGES expedition is proving the new concepts, methodologies, technologies and tools enabling us to acquire the data we need, how to collect it, when and where. The idea is simple: we need to support policy and decision making by providing data that describes the whole picture about the sea by integrating and connecting its physical, biogeochemical and ecosystem functioning perspectives.

The science to policy link is imperative. Truly it is not the scientists who take the decisions, but it is the scientists who bring on the table the answers to questions made by the managers and policymakers for their sound judgements. PAGES is exactly targeting to take marine monitoring and assessments of the state of health of the sea to the next step by providing the data and the knowledge that supports the decision-making process with an open eye and clear understandings.

Prof. Aldo Drago is a senior Professor in Oceanography currently engaged with the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology and the Maltese principal investigator for PAGES. Main endeavours since the early 90s include the setting up of the Physical Oceanography Unit leading to operational real-time marine observations, numerical modelling and data services, linking science to policy by providing stakeholders with essential information for decision-making and planning in the marine environment.

Which one of the below is Malta's National Fish ?

Yacopo Luigi Baldacchino - Esplora Interactive Science Centre

Maltese Name : Il-Bużaqq
English Name : Mediterranean killifish
Scientific Name : Aphanius fasciatus
They are small fish with silver and dark vertical stripes. Males are generally more colorful than females, displaying striking blue-green tints during breeding season. Generally found in saline marshlands and nature reserves, most notably at l-Għadira (Mellieħa), is-Simar (Xemxija),

Photo: Yacopo Baldacchino

Maltese Name: Il-Lhudi
English Name : Ornate Wrasse
Scientific Name : Thalassoma pavo
The ornate wrasse is a colourful Mediterranean fish often spotted in shallow Maltese waters during summer. Males display striking green, blue, and orange patterns and are very active swimmers around reefs and seagrass beds

Photo: Yacopo Baldacchino

Maltese Name : Sultan iċ-Ċawl
English Name : Cardinalfish
Scientific Name : Apogon imberbis
The cardinalfish is a small red-orange fish commonly found hiding inside caves and shaded rocky areas around the Maltese coast. It is mostly active at night, when it leaves its shelter to feed on tiny marine animals

Photo: Yacopo Baldacchino

Maltese Name : Trilja
English Name : Striped Red Mullet
Scientific Name : Mullus surmuletus
The striped red mullet is recognised by its reddish body and the two long barbels under its chin, which it uses to search the seabed for food. It is commonly found on sandy and rocky bottoms around Malta and is also popular in Mediterranean cuisine.

Photo: Yacopo Baldacchino

Maltese Name : Ċawla
English Name : Damselfish
Scientific Name : Chromis chromis
The damselfish is one of the most common fish seen around Malta's rocky reefs and seagrass meadows. Young damselfish are bright electric blue, while adults become darker and usually swim in large groups near rocks and caves.

Photo: Yacopo Baldacchino

Maltese Name : Ċerna
English Name : Dusky Grouper
Scientific Name : Epinephelus marginatus
The dusky grouper is a large and powerful fish that lives in rocky caves and deep reefs around Malta. It is considered an important protected species in the Mediterranean because overfishing caused its numbers to decline.

Yacopo Luigi Baldacchino is Content Developer at Esplora Interactive Science Centre

esplora®

Activities and Events

The 08th of June is World Ocean Day.
To celebrate World Ocean Day, NGO Baħar Wieħed together with Raniero's Adventures will be organising a number of events. Watch out our social media for more information

Citizen Science

The Spot the Jelly Fish and Spot the Alien and Spot the Alien Fish . Citizen science campaigns from the Oceanography Malta Research Group, Department of Geosciences University of Malta. They aim to promote the submission of reports of Jelly fish and Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) spotted within Maltese waters by citizen scientists. The Spot the Alien Fish campaign focuses only on non-indigenous fish species, while the Spot the Alien campaign focuses on all other non-indigenous species.

https://campaigns.ocean.mt/index.php/about/

Answer to Test your Knowledge

The answer to the question on what is Malta's national fish: No, it is not Lampuki, it is il-Bużaqq.