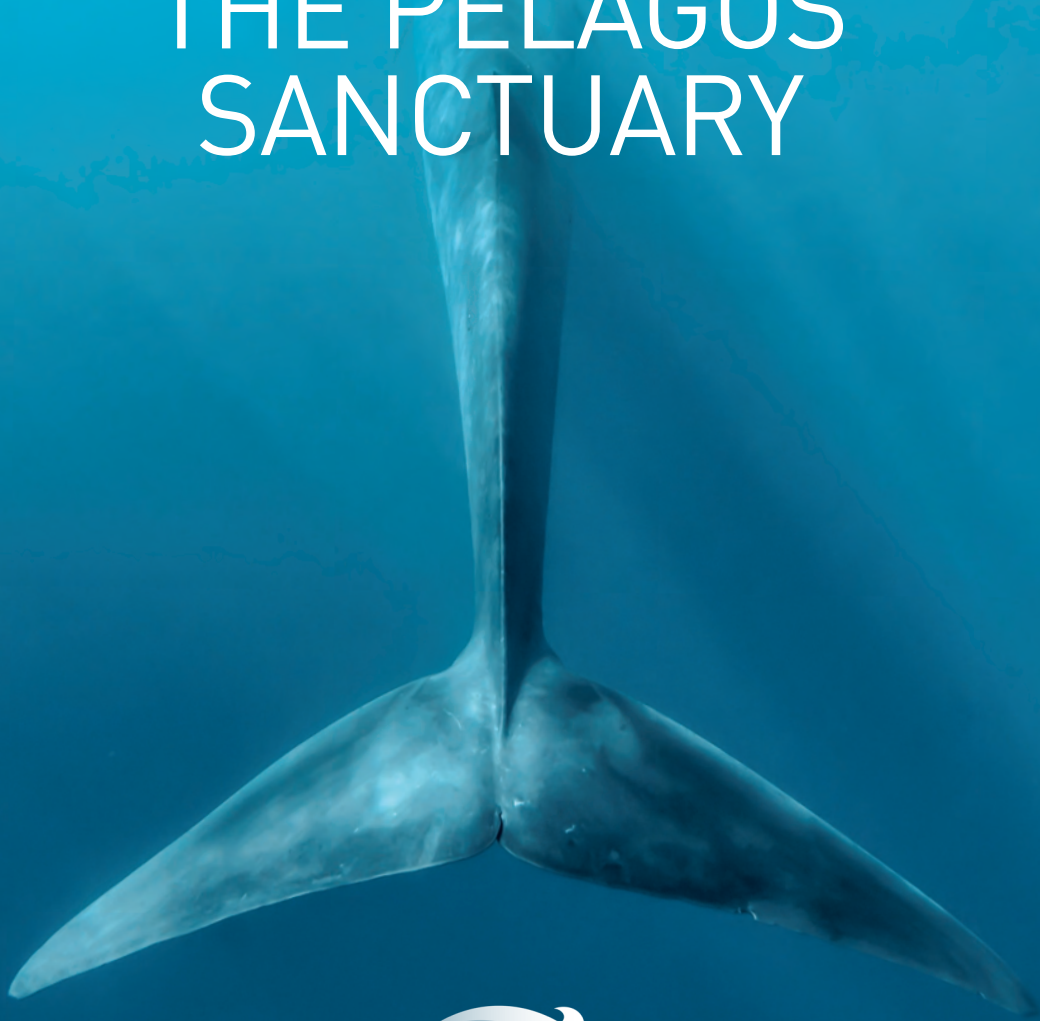


# CONSERVE AND PROMOTE THE PELAGOS SANCTUARY



initiative

**PELAGOS**

# THE PELAGOS SANCTUARY

## ONE OF THE GREATEST CONSERVATION CHALLENGES EVER LAUNCHED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Pelagos Initiative was created by major conservation players in the Mediterranean who have been working for years to support the protection of marine mammals and the development of marine protected areas.

The Pelagos Sanctuary is the first transboundary area in the Mediterranean dedicated to the protection of marine mammals. Covering 87,500 km<sup>2</sup> between France, Monaco and Italy, this area is home to remarkable biodiversity. Particularly rich in plankton, it boasts various species of whales and dolphins, some of which are on the IUCN red list of threatened species. Climate change, heavy maritime traffic and heavily populated tourist destinations along most of the Sanctuary's coastline are all threats that put pressure on organisms and ecosystems.

When working efficiently, marine protected areas could be nature-based solutions to counter climate change impacts increasing the resilience of marine organisms and ecosystems within the area by reducing other pressures.

The greater the level of protection, the more resilient organisms and ecosystems will be to climate change. Marine protected areas can also provide long term protection for habitats that act as "blue carbon" - ocean and coastal ecosystems that draw down and store significant amounts of carbon, such as Mediterranean seagrass beds.

Today, less than 9% of the Mediterranean is under protected status, and the Pelagos Sanctuary alone represents half of this area. However, less than 0.2% of the Mediterranean is under strict protection, and most of the Pelagos Sanctuary is not highly protected.

In 2021 the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation (PAF2), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Network (MedPAN) decided to coordinate their efforts by creating the Pelagos Initiative.

This partnership between several key civil society players in the Mediterranean finances activities that protect, conserve and promote the Sanctuary, in support of the implementation of the management plan of the Pelagos Agreement, established by the three countries responsible for the Sanctuary.

### Did you know?

Studies have shown that a whale could sequester up to 33 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in its lifetime, and the average value of a whale in terms of ecosystem services has been estimated at \$2 million.



## ZOOM ON FUNDED PROJECTS

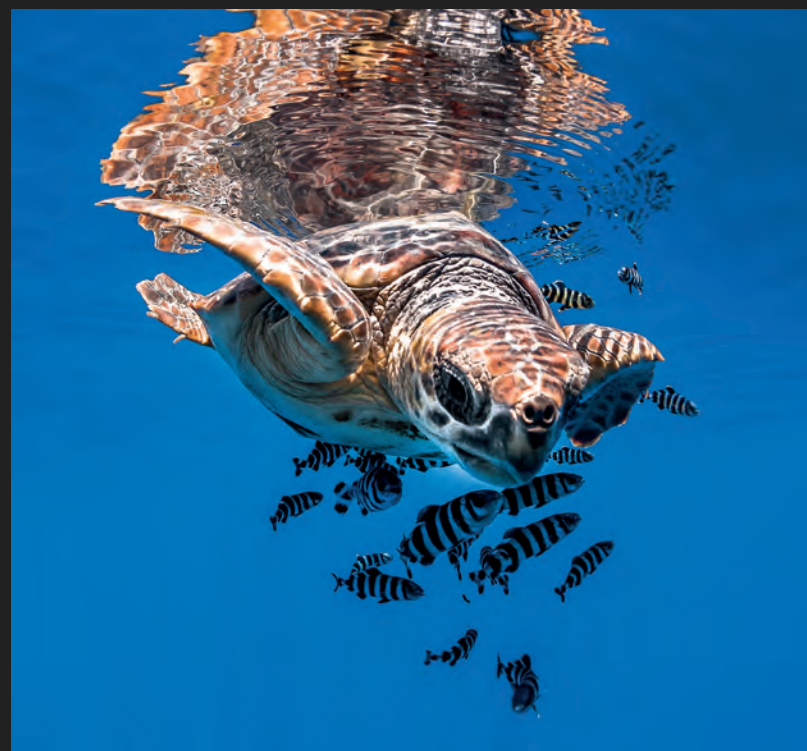
The French association **MIRACETI** is organising a three-week scientific expedition with four stopovers in the Sanctuary area: in France, Monaco and Italy. The mission collect data on the cetaceans and the impacts of disturbances linked to human activities (noise and chemical pollution, accidental captures and injuries, etc.). It also aims to train local actors on the priority conservation issues for cetaceans in the Pelagos Sanctuary, exploring the needs and possible actions and collaborations, and to raise awareness among the general public and young people, in particular through the production of a documentary highlighting conservation issues for cetaceans in the Sanctuary.

The Italian project leader **CREDIMA** is developing an automatic detection system to map and monitor interactions between bottlenose dolphins and fishing nets in the waters of the Pelagos Sanctuary in order to mitigate potential conflicts between dolphins and fishermen.

The French association **Regard du Vivant** will be showcasing the large pelagic fauna of the Mediterranean through the production of a television documentary film which aims to raise public awareness and widely promote the abundant biodiversity of the Pelagos Sanctuary.

The French NGO **EcoOcean** strives to increase our knowledge of the diet of blue and white dolphins and bottlenose dolphins in the Pelagos Sanctuary. Through the analysis of stomach contents of individuals stranded on the French Mediterranean coast since the early 2000s, this project aims to investigate the impact of waste exerted on these species.

The project of the Italian **istituto Istituito Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare (INFN)** has three main objectives: the study, protection and monitoring of marine mammals present in the Pelagos Sanctuary area. Among the tools deployed, the use of hydrophones and drones allows the collection of visual and acoustic data on cetaceans as well as the compilation of a complete catalogue of their sound emissions that will be made available for the scientific community.



KEY FIGURES

**5** PROJECTS SUPPORTED IN 2022

**900 000 €** COMMITTED

**3** COUNTRIES INVOLVED



## WHAT'S **NEXT?**

The objectives for the protection of marine areas set out in the Convention for Biological Diversity and the Barcelona Convention are still far from being achieved. Today, less than 0.2% of the Mediterranean is under strict protection. It is essential to strengthen the protection of the Mediterranean Sea, starting with the Pelagos Sanctuary and its exceptional biodiversity.

To enable a more effective and strategic capacity for action, the founding members of the Pelagos Initiative would like to welcome new partners and donors, private or public, to join forces to protect and promote the Sanctuary.

Why join the Pelagos Initiative?

- To obtain greater visibility and capacity to defend the interests of the Sanctuary,
- Help support more projects to increase knowledge and preservation of the Sanctuary's biodiversity,
- Encourage states to take stronger protection measures.

**JOIN US!**

# ABOUT THE PELAGOS INITIATIVE

The Pelagos Initiative was launched in 2021 through a collaboration between the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Network (MedPAN).

The Initiative is intended to act as a lever to strengthen the protection of the Pelagos Sanctuary, in line with the management plan of the Pelagos Agreement.

The Pelagos Initiative operates through annual calls for projects. It strives to reach a balance between French, Italian and Monegasque projects to ensure an impact on the whole territory. It promotes the collaboration of actors within the Sanctuary by encouraging joint projects between the three countries.

## THE AMBASSADORS OF THE PELAGOS INITIATIVE

The Pelagos Initiative benefits from the support of three free divers, from France, Italy and Monaco, who, much like the marine mammals of the Sanctuary, are taming the great depths of Pelagos.



### ALICE MODOLO

1<sup>st</sup> Frenchwoman to reach -100 m in 2021 in constant weight (single fin) and holder of the women's world record in constant weight double fin: 96 m in 2022.



### PIERRE FROLLA

Monegasque free diver, author of four free diver world records, three in free immersion (1999 at 72 m; 2000 at 73 m; 2001 at 80 m) and one in variable weight (2004 at 123 m).



### DAVIDE CARRERA

Italian free diver, author of the world record in 2014 at 94 m in constant weight (single fin) and holder of the world record in constant weight freediving in 2016 at 111 m.



FOR MORE INFORMATION | Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation | [✉ pelagos@fpa2.org](mailto:pelagos@fpa2.org)

Photo credits: Greg Lecœur ; Frédéric Larrey & Thomas Roger ; Frédéric Larrey / Conservatoire du littoral