



Waste Effect on Biodiversity in the Adriatic Sea

The term "**BIODIVERSITY**" describes the diversity and interrelationships of the living world on our planet. It includes all living things - microorganisms, fungi, flora and fauna, and humans.

Every imbalance in the biodiversity of ecosystems caused by the climate crisis, pollution, rising sea temperatures, overfishing, and the impact of tourist activities, especially coastal tourism, has far-reaching consequences for both ecosystems and human lives.

Impact of Plastic on the Biodiversity

It is frightening, but **75% of waste comes from land, and a smaller amount comes from irresponsible nautical traffic and fisheries.**¹

The overall generation of municipal waste in the EU shows an increase of 1% compared to 2020, from 233.2 million tonnes to 235.4 million tonnes. While compared to 2019, the increase amounts to 4.5%².

Plastic is the most frequent and harmful type of waste. Although it is recycled, due to excessive use and inadequate disposal, a large amount of plastic ends up in seas and oceans.

Plastic is a hardly-degradable material that disintegrates into small particles of microplastics. Over time, microplastics mix with phytoplankton and enter the food chain.

Plastic material resembles a potential food source and thus threatens nature. Birds, fish, and mammals often mistake plastic for food, filling their stomachs with debris and other waste, which frequently has lethal consequences.

***„Biodiversity is the foundation of
life.”***

We learn so we can act!

Only with knowledge, we can

change the world, but let us not

forget that every change

starts with ourselves.

¹Gračanin, I. 2018. Završni rad. Sveučilište u Rijeci, Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci

²ISPRA. Rapporto rifiuti urbani edizione 393/2023.

Impact on the pilot areas

This project will develop, test, and implement a new, integrated, participatory, and holistic approach at the landscape level, adapting to the specific characteristics of protected and Natura 2000 areas to mitigate the harmful effects of waste, especially concerning the river and coastal areas, most affected by anthropogenic waste.

There are three pilot areas to tackle: the Sakarun Beach, the Istrian West Coast and the Middle Brenta River.

The Sakarun Beach, situated on the island of Dugi otok, is one of the most beautiful Croatian beaches. This beach is located in the northwestern region of the bay and comprises both sandy and pebbly stretches and meadows of Posidonia oceanica, also known as "Adriatic lungs "(Scubalife, 2022).

Parco Fiume Brenta is not a park but only a brand we use to develop various initiatives in the Natura 2000 site "Grave e zone umide del Brenta". This site is a SPA (Special Protection Areas - Directive birds 2009/147/EC) and SAC (Special Areas of Conservation - The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC). Due to its wide variety of river environments, the Brenta River performs the fundamental function of an ecological corridor, offering refuge to multiple animal species.

The pilot area in Istria is located along the western coast of the Istrian region. The Natura 2000 areas of Istria County consist of 66 locations, including two conservation areas important for birds and 64 conservation areas important for species and habitat types. The significant part of the western coast, along with its marine area, has the special name of Aquatorium of Western Istria.



Ecological days of learning and fun will be held soon!



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