



Marilles
Foundation



Impact report

2018-2023

“The man who becomes homo Delphinus will have understood that he is not separated from nature or the ocean. He will know that from the microbe to the whale there are no inferior or superior beings, that everything is connected. I do not see the sea as a frontier to conquer or a new territory to explore. I see the sea as the primordial element. I am the sea.”

DOLPHIN MAN, A DOCUMENTARY OF THE LIFE OF FREE-DIVER JACQUES MAYOL, NARRATED BY JEAN-MARC BARR

Marilles Foundation



In 2017, awed by the enormous beauty and exceptional biodiversity that the Balearic Sea harbours and aware of the need to protect it from the strong pressures to which it is subjected, we created Marilles Foundation.

Our mission is to turn the Balearic Islands into a global example of marine conservation. A small territory ecologically threatened and at the same time prolific in environmental initiatives is the best scenario to change the dynamics and export our experience to other seas.



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Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund



“We are a fund for the long-term conservation of the marine environment whose objective is to achieve the maximum return on each euro in terms of positive impacts on the sea.”

Positive attitude and dialogue for a common goal

We work with local marine conservation organisations – researchers, fishers, the public and private sectors – to identify solutions, promote dialogue, and attract funding. The health of the sea is everyone's responsibility, and to preserve it we must understand its threats, work together, and invest the resources necessary for the sea to recover the natural wealth it has lost.

An underwater photograph showing a dense field of green seagrass in the foreground, with sunlight filtering through the blue water above. The text is overlaid on the image.

We want to turn
the Balearic Islands
into a world reference
in marine
conservation.

We focus on four priority objectives

1



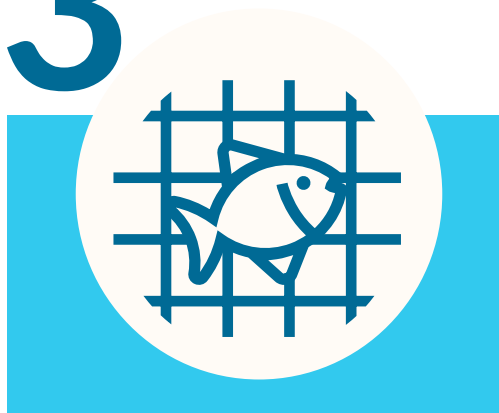
Improving and expanding the network of marine protected areas

2



Preserving vulnerable species and habitats

3



Transforming the fishing fleet into a sustainable one

4



Improving water quality along our coastline

The sea surrounding the Balearic Islands shelters a great wealth of species and habitats.

Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, and Formentera are beautiful islands where many people live and others choose to holiday. The sea surrounding the islands is a source of wellbeing: from the experience of a sunset, a swim in a cove of turquoise and transparent waters, or the sighting of a group of dolphins to the prosperity of families and businesses that live directly or indirectly from tourism, fishing, diving, or sailing.

The Balearic Sea is one of the best-preserved seas in the Mediterranean. It is home to more than 400 species of fish and 50% of the Posidonia meadows in the Spanish territory; 20% of its marine surface is protected. However, this treasure is threatened and we must act to protect it.

The Balearic Sea is home to more than 400 species of fish.



*Today, up to
78 marine species in the Balearic Sea
are threatened.*



©PEDRO RIERA LLOMPART - MARE 2022

A unique treasure under threat

In recent decades, we have seriously damaged the health of the sea and driven many species to extinction due to pollution, poor fishing practices, warming waters, and population pressure. Scarce scientific data, the lack of public knowledge, the lack of political will, and the few economic resources invested have aggravated this situation.

Only two generations ago, the monk seal inhabited the coasts of the Balearic Islands. This mythical and beautiful moustached mammal, almost two meters long, became extinct in the Islands, a victim of firearms or trapped in fishing nets. The same has happened more recently with other species, such as the guitarfish and the angel shark. Today, 78 marine species in the Balearic Sea are threatened.

One hectare
of seagrass retains
the carbon equivalent
to that emitted
by a thousand cars
in a year. Preserving it is
essential for our survival.

Posidonia is a marine plant endemic to the Mediterranean that regulates the climate, protects the coast, improves water quality and, above all, stores large amounts of carbon.

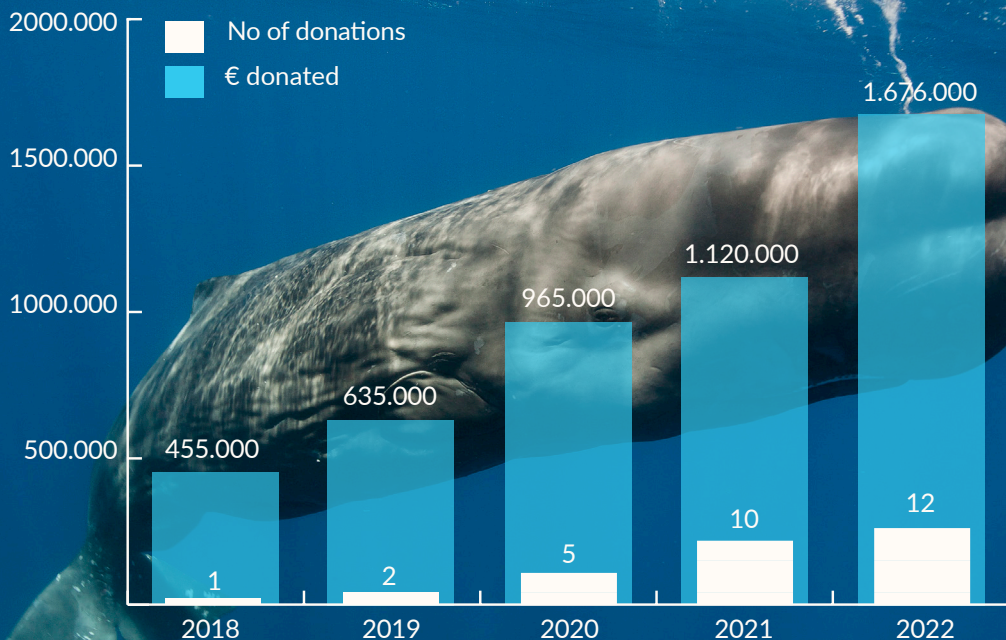
For the sea to continue providing us with health, food, happiness, and wealth, it is vital that we take responsibility for its preservation. Thanks to our collaboration with many other entities, we have achieved significant accomplishments.



Shared successes

Something that characterises us is the spirit of dialogue and inclusiveness that has led us to work with all sectors involved in marine conservation in the Balearic Islands: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), fishers, scientists, hoteliers, and managers. We collaborate with more than 30 organisations on

the four islands and are part of several Mediterranean alliances. This allows us to work closely with organisations with a solid track record such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF), BirdLife, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Oceana, MedPan, and ClientEarth.



5 + 100 12

**Millions
invested**

**Funded
projects**

Donors

What have we achieved?

Thanks to our strategic vision and the local expertise and good work of NGOs, we have managed to increase scientific knowledge on the state of marine conservation, improve marine management, influence conservation policies, and raise public awareness of the need for immediate action.

Marine protected areas

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are key to conserving marine biodiversity and improving fishing yields. Since 2017, three new reserves and two extensions

have been declared, totalling 664.4 km² of MPAs. The president of the Balearic Islands has made public her commitment to make the Islands the first European region with 30% of the sea protected and 10% highly protected by 2030. Our studies have revealed the economic benefits generated by MPAs and Posidonia meadows in the Balearic Islands.

Sustainable fishing

We have put the spotlight on illegal fishing and solutions to combat it: four new fisheries inspectors have been hired, more than 250 artisanal fishing

boats have installed a geolocation system that improves resource management and prevents illegal fishing, and the artisanal fishers of Ibiza and Formentera have agreed on a management plan to make their activity both sustainable and profitable.



Vulnerable species and habitats

The Tursiops Association has identified a sperm whale breeding area and studied the impact of noise on the Balearic dolphin population. SharkMed recordings have revealed that half of the blue sharks swimming in Balearic waters have embedded hooks or lines, essential information for defining new conservation measures. The Cayume Association has helped to change society's negative perception of sharks and rays by recovering and hatching eggs of these species.

Citizen connection with the sea

The MARE audiovisual contest has collected more than 3,000 unpublished photographs of the Balearic Sea. Many of them have been made available to NGOs so that they can make visible its beauty and the threats it suffers. Street exhibitions throughout the islands have inspired many people to get involved in marine conservation.

Professional marine NGOs

With our training programme, we have strengthened the strategic, communicative, and fundraising capacity of some 20 NGOs working in the conservation of the Balearic Sea.

Knowledge

With the creation and annual update of the Balearic Sea Report we have made available to the public the best information there is on the state of our sea. The Balearic Islands Citizen Science programme has added more than 20 entities and diving centres that contribute scientific data to 17 research projects, and together with the entire Spanish network of participants adds up to more than 19,000 observations of marine species.

If we want the efforts made so far not to be in vain, we must continue working to address the most urgent challenges facing the marine environment of the Islands.

We need an effective network of MPAs that covers at least 30% of the Balearic Sea area and has at least 10% of the total under strict protection, 50 times more than it has today!



The challenge continues

More than 70 countries around the world have committed to achieving this goal by 2030. We need to be even better at explaining the benefits of marine protection to the public and making sanctuary creation and marine conservation a priority for all political parties.

To achieve our goals we need to increase the resources dedicated to marine conservation, both public and private. To date, Marilles has invested more than 5 million, thanks to the contribution of ten private foundations. Although this is a significant amount, it is far below what is needed. For this reason, we continue to work to ensure that more of the public budget is invested in marine protection and that the private sector becomes involved and invests effectively in marine conservation.

**There's still time to
save the oceans!**

Thanks to your participation we will be able to conserve the unique beauty and richness of the Balearic Sea and enjoy abundant marine life and fishery resources that contribute to the economic prosperity of the region.

**Join us and be part
of the real
transformation
of the Balearic
Islands and
the Mediterranean!**

If you want to be part of our
donor network write to us at:
info@marilles.org

Follow us on:



We are a non-profit foundation that works to make the Balearic Islands a world reference marine conservation. Every euro that Marilles receives, we invest in local projects to preserve the biodiversity and beauty of the Balearic Sea.