



Accord Pelagos relatif à la création en Méditerranée
d'un Sanctuaire pour les mammifères marins

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di un Santuario per i mammiferi marini

2024 CALL FOR TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC CONSULTANCY OF THE PELAGOS AGREEMENT

Final Administrative Report

July 2025



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General info:

Project title	<p align="center">“Monthly distribution of recreational maritime traffic in small port and marinas” and “Development and dissemination of guidelines for the mitigation of disturbance caused to species by recreational boating” in the area of the French Department 06</p>	
Consultant(s)	<p>Dr Alexandre GANNIER & D.-Vet. Adrien GANNIER</p>	
Duration of the consultancy (beginning – end)	<p>06 November 2024 – (10) July 2025</p>	
List of the deliverables submitted (number of the deliverable, title and date of submission)	Nature	Transmission date
	'Enquête en ligne sur la navigation de plaisance dans le Sanctuaire Pelagos (Alpes-Maritimes)' – document in French, <i>modified and translated version from that provided to the study</i>	27 January 2025
	List and characteristics of recreational ports of Côte d'Azur – TOR4 v3.1.xls – excel sheet, <i>corrected version from that provided to the study</i>	30 January 2025
	Shape files of French protected areas worldwide – format ArcGIS (<i>We Transfer</i>)	31 March 2025
	Rapport intermédiaire de l'étude (en français)	08 April 2025
	Study Interim Report (in english)	11 April 2025
	Report TOR4 / task 'Mitigation measures' – preliminary document	28 April 2025
	Short report TOR4 /task 2 'Distribution of recreational boating in small ports and marinas' – document (12 pp)	19 May 2025
	ArcGIS map 'PelagosTOR4.mxd' and shape files 'Ports_Azureens'	19 May 2025
	Short report TOR4 /task 3 'Protected and regulated areas off the Alpes-Maritimes' – document (7 pp)	19 May 2025
	ArcGIS map 'PelagosTOR4.mxd' (updated), of shapefiles	19 May

	for all Alpes-Maritimes protected and regulated areas, and of coastline/isobaths shapes files – (<i>GrosFichiers</i>)	2025
	Report TOR4 /task 4 'Development and dissemination of mitigation measures' – document <i>draft version</i>	23 May 2025
	Powerpoint presentation for meeting STC7 of 3 et 4 June	30 May 2025
	Summary report TOR4 /task 4 'Mitigation measures' for the Scientific Committee – document (7 pp)	02 June 2025
	Report TOR4 /task 4 'Development and dissemination of mitigation measures' – document <i>final version</i> (28 pp)	07 June 2025
	'Elements for dissemination of mitigation guidelines' – document (4 pp)	08 July 2025
	Contract Final Report – document (14 pp)	10 July 2025
	End-of-Contract Summary Report – this document	10 July 2025

Abstract:

Recreational boating is identified as a potential threat to cetacean conservation in several regions worldwide, including mainly in Europe and in the Americas. However very few of them share two main characteristics encountered off the Alpes-Maritimes (and Monaco): the coexistence of a quite diverse cetacean community including three species of dolphin and two whales, and a very dense recreational boat traffic (with a flow in excess of one boat/minute during summer peak period), mainly comprising motorized units of every size from 3 to 150 meters length. The purpose of the study was to document the recreational boating traffic, and the marinas of the Alpes-Maritimes, to provide an updated overview of regulated and protected areas off the French Riviera, to review and evidence the potential effects of the intense recreational traffic on cetaceans and their habitat, and to propose and prioritize potential mitigation measures to consolidate the local conservation prospects of whale and dolphin species.

A survey questionnaire was translated and adapted from a model provided by other consultants, was tested, and then provided by email to 32 recreational ports and marinas. Two further messages were sent to promote the survey effort, and this was followed by telephone calls to each facility, and a proposal to have an in vivo or video interview to fill the survey questionnaire. This was done in link with another consultant.

Marinas and ports list, as provided, was corrected and updated, and then imported to ArcGIS software to create a documented map of these ports.

Extensive web searching enabled to locate and import GIS shape files for most protected and regulated areas, to document and to import them into ArcGIS software to augment the existing project map.

A database request to Groupe de Recherche sur les Cétacés enabled to provide the necessary knowledge on common cetacean species off the Alpes-Maritimes. A recently completed study (with Pelagos partie française) provided a precise picture of the recreational traffic in the central part of the area of study (Cap d'Antibes), including a description of boat types, hourly and seasonal trends.

An overview of the published literature, worldwide, and author's previous studies enabled to determine the principal potential and actual threats affecting the cetacean habitat and their life, as a consequence of intense recreational boating. The mitigation proposals derived from the same material study.

Survey results were collected by the consultant in charge of this task and transmitted to us: 8 ports responded to the survey questionnaire.

An ArcGIS map was created and documented with ports and marinas data, and with protected and regulated areas information. Necessary topography shape files were also provided.

Mitigation measures proposals were prioritized and include raising awareness of the recreational boating 'ecosystem' (all stakeholders), enforce the existing national regulations already providing many elements to protect cetaceans and their habitats, design and implement a nearshore domain where speed limitation would apply, either as an incentive measure, and preferably as an official regulation.

There is compelling evidence that intense recreational (motor) boating heavily influences the local cetacean habitat quality. Scientific data, collected during the past ten years, already exists to further document the present situation and could be specifically augmented.

A major outcome of this work is the great need for having more marinas and recreational ports really involved in the cetacean habitat preservation: the poor survey response ratio obtained after a sustained effort illustrates how big is the potential for future improvement.

This is not a minor aspect of an efficient cetacean protection policy: during the warm season, there are thousands of boaters wandering from one place to another within the Azurean seascape, and there are hardly a couple of Gendarmerie and Customs boats seaborne at a given time. Hence, any serious protection move must be commenced by a sustained effort of awareness raising, and marinas are major players to implement this aspect of a future proactive policy.

Inducing political and institutional entities to actually enforce existing marine mammal protection regulations might also be a challenge.