

ECO-01: Insights on the foraging ecology of the Mediterranean monk seal

Luigi Bundone (1), Gema Hernandez-Milian (2), Jasna Antolovic (3), Emanuele Coppola (4), Sanja Zalac (3), Martina Hervat (3), Emanuela Molinaroli (1)

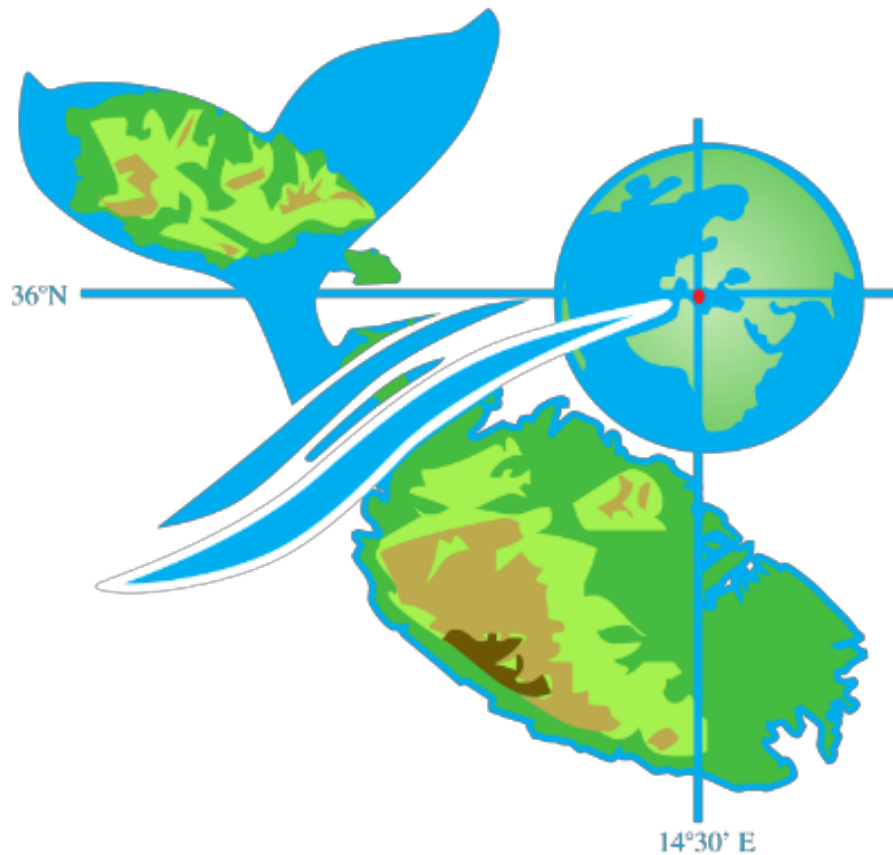
(1) *Università Cà Foscari di Venezia- Dip. DAIS, Dorsoduro 2137, Venezia, Venezia, 30123, Italy;*

(2) *University College Cork, Ireland;* (3) *Grupa Sredozemna Medvjedica, Croatia;* (4) *Gruppo Foca Monaca, Italy*

The Mediterranean monk seal is a critically endangered marine mammal species whose habitat and behaviour are in great part still unknown in the Mediterranean. In this study we present some insights about the foraging of this predator.

Scat samples from north Adriatic (Istria-Croatia, n=4) and south Tyrrhenian (Sicily-Italy, n=4) seas were collected and analyzed for dietary investigations. In all samples, only fish bones and scales were recovered. Most of the prey items (36%) consist on Sparidae fish, where saddled seabream and surmullet were the most common identified prey. Other remains were only possible to classify as Perciformes due to the digestion degree of the bones. Although the study was carried out with limited sample size, we underline the importance of this information for an endangered mammal such as the Mediterranean monk seal, and the use of scats for the first time for this species.

MARINE MAMMAL CONSERVATION FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL



29TH CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN CETACEAN SOCIETY

23rd to 25th March, 2015

Intercontinental Hotel, St Julian's Bay, MALTA



European Cetacean Society



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
L-Università ta' Malta