

Seashell farming in Marano and Grado lagoon according to L.R. n.31/2005

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Seashell production has found a favourable environment in the Northern Adriatic lagoons, moving from Po Delta to the gulf of Trieste. The annual production is around 50.000 tons, and Italy is the first European producer. Seashell farming has started in Marano lagoon in the second half of the Eighties, and after a first experimental period it has gained an increasing economic importance. Indeed, in the last years the production is comparable to that deriving from wild seashell collection.

*The collection of wild *Tapes decussatus*, that has spread in recent years from Po river delta to Grado and Marano lagoon, has been progressively substituted by seashell farming. Indeed, in the last fifteen years, the productions in restricted farming areas are comparable to those of the whole lagoon for wild specimen. Hence, considering the importance of seashell farming, the FVG Region has produced the Regional Law 16.12.2005*

“Dispositions on seashell farming in Marano-Grado lagoon”, stating that the concessions for seashell farming must be given by Municipality administrations and must indicate the fruitors of such concessions.

The concessions will be released taking into account the requirements of a use of marine resources that is compatible with the conservation needs of the lagoonal ecosystem, especially considering the EU Habitat Dir. 92/43/EC and the Regional Law on protected areas

n. 42/1996, and with the other fishing methods. The Regulation has been approved with the decree n. 3447 of 29.12.2005. The Regulation includes principles of conservation of lagoon ecosystems, of respect of civic uses, of equity of right among all potential fruitors, of non-conflictual development of all lagoonal activities. It states that the concessions can only be given for specifically classified areas. Such areas are classified according to reg. n. 3858/2004 that follows Leg. Decree 530/1992 “classification of zone of production of living seashell”. Concessions must also take into account the results of monitoring and of lagoon characterization plans, and of interventions of environmental restoration carried out according to Leg. Decree of 24.02.2003 “Definition of the Site of National Interest of Grado and Marano Lagoon.”

The areas to be given in concession are defined every three years, and an informative form with an assessment of impact must also be provided by the potential fruitors of the concession, before the farming concession is actually given.

At the beginning of 2005, FVG Region gave to the dep. of biology of the university of Trieste the task to indicate the most suitable areas for seashell farming in the Marano-Grado lagoon. The study was completed in november 2005 and indicated 860 ha that could be used for seashell farming.

The study also highlights that seashell should always be farmed in order to avoid impacts on the wild resource. The concession can last between 3 and 9 years, according to the activity that will be carried out, the location and the environmental requirements.

The fruitors of the concessions have the following obligations:

- farm only native or naturalized specimen;*
- introduce only individuals that have received a sanitary control;*
- apply the dispositions of DPR n. 395/1998 on measure to avoid specific diseases;*
- avoid putting barriers that could interfere with the tidal flow;*
- avoid modifying the bottoms;*
- avoid using covers, except for protection nets in the first stages;*
- use only the food sources coming from the lagoon, avoiding artificial feeding;*
- communicate the suspension of the activity to the reference authority;*
- allow access for environmental and sanitary monitoring. Different concessions must be separated by at least 15 m of open water.*

The concession is only aimed at seashell farming, and other activities cannot be carried out on the same grounds.

Collection of wild specimen is allowed only outside the concessions, and only by hand.

The concession borders can be modified if there are specific environmental requirements.

The concession is suspended if the assessment of impact gives negative responses,

- if sanitary and environmental violations are carried out,*
- if the obligations are not fulfilled,*
- if the activity has not started within a year from the delivery of concession.*