Seahorses as flagship species

For Mar menor Coastal Lagoon Conservation

Our **mission** could be defined to raise awareness on coastal and marine habitats protection though research and monitor the long-snouted seahorses´ (Hippocampus guttulatus) population considered as a flagship species in the Mar Menor Coastal lagoon.

Our **vision** is to implement a wider coastal, marine and underwater conservation multi-sector strategy that would include legally binding conservation management plans, which would also prescribe for the nationally endorsed long-term monitoring of the marine habitats and species that are critically at risk in a Natura 2000 site. Our main activities have been Fishermen brotherhoods, media and visitor Awareness Campaigns, Long-term marine habitat and species monitoring, Data seahorse networking, and environmental marine education for locals and visitors.

LOCATION

MAR MENOR - MURCIA, SPAIN

Mar menor Coastal Lagoon (Sea Minor), Murcia Region. SE of Spain – Mediterranean



Eight years dealing with Seahorses, Volunteers and Institutional conservation practices in Natura 2000 places

OUTCOMES/RESULTS

1 After a local fishermen awareness campaign, they accepted to provide key historical data from Seahorses fishing.

2 At least two Fishermen brotherhoods for Murcia Region (Mar menor and Cartagena) are more aware about Seahorse conservation initiatives

3 At least 4 times this year, Hippocampus Association has been on the news by participating on National radio and Regional TV programs. Additionally another 4 press articles about seahorses has been published on regional newspapers and one is going to be published in a Youth magazine in Slovakia (8 months project).

KEYWORDS

SEAHORSES
FISHERMEN
UNDERWATER MONITORING

LIFE+ INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PROJECT:
EFFICIENT MANAGERS FOR EFFICIENT NATURA 2000 NETWORK

4 2015 Underwater monitoring census program is on going on a monthly basis since April with high volunteer's participation (Fully booked for each diving site).

5 More general public and other organizations and individuals are asking and interested to participate with Hippocampus Association during the year 2015.

6 We have been recently invited to join to FARNET EU initiative for community led local development with fisheries local action groups up to 2020

7 Three national and international organizations (Seahorse trust UK, Kenna Eco-Diving centre / Cataluña and CUASS Seville) are linked with us recently for sharing data and working together in new projects.

8 A new video about Hippocampus has been recently released mentioning our worK.

LESSONS LEARNED

1 Funding is important but friendship and working together is even more important.

2 Creativity, innovation and perseverance are key factors to face financial crisis.

3 Commitment of a core group could lead a positive change

4 Never lose hope; start from small and little by little you will get your target.

5 If one door is closed, a window will be opened.

6 Start building you contacts' network now and identify right stakeholders and key strategic allies.

7 By word of mouth is a very powerful way to promote your project amongst your contacts, even Institutions.

8 Show on Facebook any small action you did and share with others to spread news about what is going on at your organization .

9 Take some calculated risks while investing your scared financial resources for community actions with volunteers.

10 Look always for alternative financial sources Banks, private enterprises, local social groups.

11 Enhance your networking including other social and economical sectors looking for support and coherence.

12 Approach local media: alternative, digital or traditional and try to get the best of them to promote your project.

13 Make a plan or at least have a list of priorities before acting towards getting your outcomes.

14 Keep track of your little achievements to rapport later on.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please check the website or our facebook page.

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