

## Update of the conservation status of the Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Spanish Atlantic, as a contribution to the Conservation Strategy of marine turtles of Spain



Year: 2020-21 Country: Spain	
Action Area: Spanish Atlantic	
Action Line: Marine Turtles	
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### PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) faces several threats, generally shared with the other marine turtle species such as the bycatch and interaction with boats, marine litter, pollution and degradation of their habitats. The Project is focused on this species, which at the global level has the category of **Vulnerable** species, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, and at the level of the subpopulation of the Northwest Atlantic with that of **Endangered**. The Gulf of Cadiz is a corridor for the entry and exit of the Mediterranean for various species, including the Leatherback turtle.

The project focuses on deepening knowledge about the use of habitat, relative abundance and impacts on this species in this important marine corridor and in the Spanish Atlantic. To do this, censuses are carried out from boats in the Gulf of Cadiz, in order to improve the methodology to obtain estimates of abundance and habitat use of the species. Another activity is to have an updated assessment of the impact of bycatch and interaction with boats and fishing gears in the Spanish Atlantic. Through surveys of skippers of the different fisheries, these aspects are evaluated, as well as the knowledge that fishermen have about the species.

On the other hand, there has been a significant increase in recreational fishing on the Spanish coast in recent years, but there is no information on the potential interaction of the different modalities of this activity with marine turtles. For this reason, a preliminary evaluation is carried out through surveys to have more information on the growth of the activity and possible direct or indirect impacts on the Leatherback Turtle and other threatened species in the area of the Gulf of Cadiz.

With the information obtained from the different actions and the literature review and updated information on human activities in the marine and coastal environments, a comprehensive and updated analysis of the main human impacts on the Leatherback in the Spanish Atlantic is produced.

Awareness actions are also carried out so that, both fishing sector and society have more information about the species, its conservation status and the need to improve the management of the marine environment to conserve its valuable resources and ecological services.