



Posidonia oceanica

- dominant endemic reef-building seagrass seagrass in the Mediterranean Sea (2%)
- forms large meadows (on rocks/sandy sea bottom) filtering sediments creating uniquely clear waters
- crucial role in coastal ecosystem dynamics → oxygenation of the underwater ecosystem, sustain food nets, providing a food source and breeding ground for more than 400 species of marine plants and 1000 species of marine animals
- preserve coastal systems trapping sediments into the matte and reducing hydrodynamics
- regarded as a key species → listed in the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC.

Designated as SCIs (site of community importance)

It loses leaves in autumn → leaf litter can be found mainly along sandy coasts forming wedge structures of few to several meters in thick → in 80's, French authors denominated it banquettes.





'banquette' evolution









Banquette's ecological role

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- solid and elastic structures and provide a very remarkable level of compactness
- represent a deposited biomass from sea to land that protects the shoreline from wind and sea erosion
- contribute to the formation and maintenance of coastal dune system
- indicator of the excellent quality of coastal water
- constitutes a reserve of nutrients and organic matter
- carbon sequestration within the matte contributes to the mitigation of emissions of co2
- biodiversity hotpspot (invertebrates) → explained by the margin effect between the marine and the terrestrial environment.



Banquette removal

- common practice on Mediterranean shores because:
 - obstacle for pleasure boat activities
 - obstacle for the tourism of the coast
 - bad smell on urbanized coastline
- often carried out with heavy machines → harmful for beaches in terms of:
 - destruction or obliteration of geomorphic features
 - depletion of sand trapped inside the seagrass volumes removed (depending on grain size)
 - loss of nutrients for coastal trophic chain →a
 permanent loss of C, N and P
 - Elimination pioneering plants → desertification of sandy beaches
- high economic costs
- damage to marine ecosystem
- high volumes in landfill





WWF: sustainable management of banquette

1. On-site mainteinance:

- best solution for coastal protection, trophic reserve and Source of carbon and nutrients
- possible when the presence does not clash with turism/bathing activities → Education
- desiderable expecially for protected areas or National parks

2. Temporary removal:

- only in the months of May/June to allow the use of the beach
- minimize the impacts of removal → no mechanical handing of the deposits → work manually to avoid removal of sandy materials.
- displacement of deposits: transported in the backshore of the same beach that are not accessible or not frequented by bathers (inside the coastal dune or in retired belts close to dune); stored in dry areas
- no transport ex situ

3. Permanent removal and disposal in dumps

- only if the above solution are not feasible
- exclusively on beaches where such biomasses do not have a clear ecological function (e.g. no dunes), characterized by anthropic morphology or intensive tourist use
- No mechanical removal







Past uses in Mediterranean countries

- Although seagrasses might not be widely known by the public nowadays, they were known and used for different purposes by coastal communities in the past. For example:
 - packing material to transport fragile items (i.e., glassware, pottery)
 - animal food, especially for poultry, sometimes for camels during famines
 - cattle bedding in stables
 - dead leaves used in mattresses and pillows (pope julius iii popularized this practice throughout italy in the 16th century) respiratory infections seemed to
 - be prevented when sleeping in this type of bedding
 - toys
 - adobes
 - charcoal processing
 - fertilizer in agriculture/ soil amendment for tomatoes
 - roof insulation
 - medicinal uses included the alleviation of skin diseases (i.e. acne) and pain in legs caused by varicose veins





Reusing Posidonia

Construction industry use

- last as long as 150 years when used as insulation
- capable of keeping buildings well insulated (20% higher than wood insulating materials)
- free of extraneous or toxic matter, making it also particularly suitable for allergy sufferers
- non-flammable
- resistant to mold
- act as a buffer, absorbing water vapor and releasing it again without impairing its own ability to keep the building insulated
- Atoxic
- No more than a 5% increase in construction costs.

Agronomic use

- Compost production
- Soil amender for agricultural
- Cultivation substrate for horticulture/floriculture







WWF recommendation

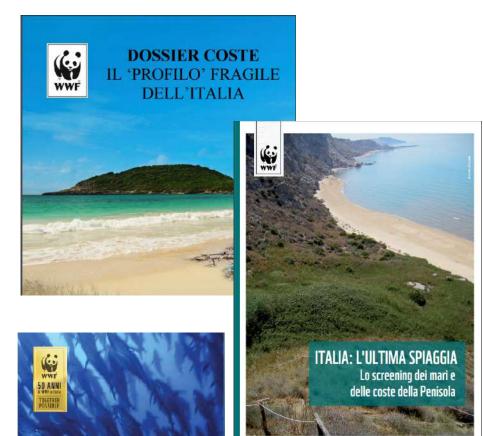
- On site mainteinance of stranded posidonia residues
- Dune restoration in the same beach of deposit / temporary storage in the backshore
- Environmental Education activities
 (ecological role of stranded posidonia) → in
 situ activities
- Comunication with the public (users, operators of bathing facilities) in the management of stranded biomassess
- Partnership with local authorities in order to produce/spread guidelines
- Promotion of reuse alternative to landfilling
- Action must be beach-specific





WWF Dossier

- "The fragile profile of Italy" (2012)
 → identifies precious coasts, intact from the naturalistic point of view but threatened by degradation and conceived use
- "The Last Beach Italian Seas and Coasts Screening of the of the Peninsula" (2016) → identifies sensitive areas to preserve and institutional tools to promote sustainable blue growth.
- "Mediterranean: Our Home, Our Life" (2016) → dedicated to the great issues of the Mare Nostrum, with a focus on coasts preservation



MEDITERRANEO: La nostra casa.



World Oceans Day

an annual opportunity for WWF to celebrate the 'value' of marine ecosystems









WWF conservation activities for shore-nesting species

16 febbraio

Marina di Bibbona

salva le nostre spiagge.







WWF Sea Turtle project















WWF summer and volunteer camps





Allora i campi estivi residenziali proposti dal WWF Area Marina Protetta di Miramare sono quello che fa per voi!













WWF Volunteer's Day Beach Clean Up











WWF projects

- 1. Merces (Orizon 2020): restoration of different degraded marine habitats, with the aim of:
 - 1. assessing the potential of different technologies and approaches;
 - 2. quantifying the returns in terms of ecosystems services and their socio-economic impacts;
 - 3. defining the legal-policy and governance frameworks needed to optimize the effectiveness of the different restoration approaches.
- 2. EuroTurtles (Life): collective actions to improve the conservation status of the EU populations of two sea turtle priority species, the Loggerhead turtle Caretta caretta and the Green turtle Chelonia mydas











Do not wait to know what will happen if posidonia disappears!