

Youth Exchange Dossier

Protected Areas: a playground for the inclusion of young people



Protected Areas: a playground for the inclusion of young people

Outcomes of the Youth Exchange realised in Roseto degli Abruzzi (Abruzzo, Italy) from 16 till 25 September 2025

Project realised by ARCI Chieti and Istituto Abruzzese per le Aree Protette



In cooperation with Guide del Borsacchio



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Project Granted by:



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Intro

One of the results of the strong economic and social crisis that are affecting all Europe is that more and more young citizens are living in a condition of mistrust in the future increasing marginalisation and disregard for the society. In this framework, Nature can serve as a fruitful “playground” in which to stimulate young people’s practical activities in order to increase their opportunities for citizenship, community inclusion and active involvement. For this reason, in the last few years we focused big part of our work in supporting the development of all kinds of protected areas in the Abruzzo Region starting and/or consolidating interaction paths between the Natural Capital and young people by developing with them a set of good practices, modules and learning/working tools linking various aspects of Sustainable Development. The general aim of these 6 years activities is to realize an educational, cognitive, training and experiential path able to promote sustainable, inclusive and participatory development of young people and local communities. Main idea is to interact with several Nature Reserves and National Parks in order to ensure the active involvement of young people in the management of protected areas under an infrastructural (signposting for routes, information panels, gardening), educational (manuals, dossiers, modules, dynamics) and communicative (audio-visual and graphic products, social media) point of views involving in this process the whole local communities and its different stakeholders (youth and youth organisations, municipalities, social enterprises, schools, environmental NGOs and Institutes, etc.). During the whole process, different activities (from Seminars to Youth Exchanges) are taking place both in Abruzzo and abroad involving directly hundreds of participants and 10 countries (Italy, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Romania, Slovak Republic, Spain, Serbia, Portugal) in order to achieve the several goals planned (e.g. to learn technical skills, increase eco life styles and responsible behaviours, develop critical thinking and new educational modules, support local community and Protected Areas).

The project is realised within the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission and the Agenzia Italiana per la Gioventù with the support of the Abruzzo Institute for Protected Areas.



The Youth Exchange

The Youth Exchange took place on the Adriatic coast of the Abruzzo Region, in the community of Roseto degli Abruzzi nearby the Regional Nature Reserve “Borsacchio” (www.guidedellariservaborsacchio.it/), where dune system and green cliffs have been our main landscape. To the Youth Exchange participated 37 young people coming from Italy, Serbia, Portugal, Bulgaria, Slovak Republic, and Spain. The Youth exchange represented the 7th activity of a long-term educational process, and its overall aim was to give directly to young people the opportunity to be actively involved in the management of a protected area under an infrastructural, educational and communicative point of views. For this reason, participants acquired new competences, skills and methodologies through an educational path in direct contact with the Nature and the Roseto surrounding areas thanks to the development of Non Formal Education methods. To achieve these goals, core part of the educational path during the Youth Exchange has been represented by both practical activities and workshops: during first couple of days, participants realised, guided by the team of “Borsacchio”, some practical activities of maintenance able to let the group discover and observe the Nature Reserve; during the rest of the days, 3 environmental practical workshops (Environmental Education, Promotional/Documentary Video, Infrastructure Maintenance) have been settled in order to improve a sustainable community development and enhance young people’s full citizenship. In order to make explicit the skills acquired within the practical workshops, a specific moment of sharing with the local community of the educational path and its results has been realised in Roseto with the participation of the Mayor of Roseto degli Abruzzi, the volunteers and educators of the Association “Guide del Borsacchio”, the representatives of the Abruzzo Institute for Protected Areas, other local associations and a good representation of citizens and in particular of young people of Roseto. Moreover, in couple of specific working sessions, it was established a set of possibilities on how to exploit knowledge and competences acquired in local and international contexts.

International partners of the youth exchange were:

ARCI Chieti (Italy)

Estestvoizpitateli (Bulgaria)

Xeracion Valencia (Spain)

Environmental Education Center Dropie (Slovak Republic)

Aventura Marao Clube (Portugal)

ForestEducon (Serbia)

Enjoy your reading!

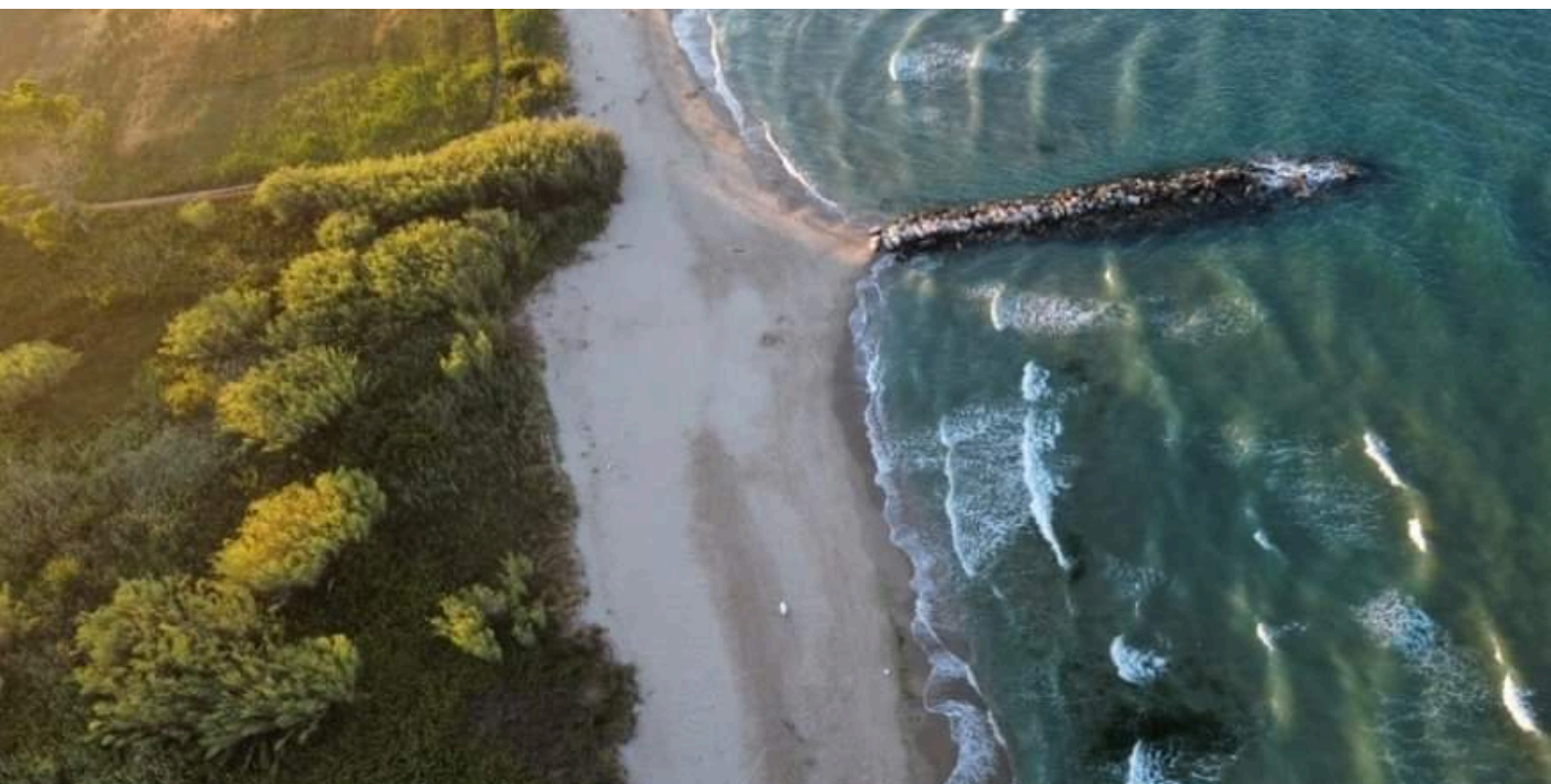


The Regional Natural Reserve “Borsacchio”

The Borsacchio Regional Nature Reserve is located in Roseto degli Abruzzi, in the province of Teramo, and currently extends over an area of 25 hectares, following a re-organisation that significantly reduced the protected area compared to its original establishment. The Reserve, established in 2005, initially had an extension of 1,100 hectares between the Adriatic coast and the surrounding hills. Its main objective was to protect an environment of great ecological value, characterised by sand dunes, wetlands, agricultural fields and Mediterranean scrub. Over the years, several discussions and boundary revisions followed, leading to the reduction of the protected area. The history of the reserve is marked by environmentalist battles and the constant commitment of local associations to the conservation of biodiversity and the enhancement of the area.

The Borsacchio Reserve is home to a rich variety of plant species, many of which are typical of coastal ecosystems. Among the most representative species are the Sea Lily (*Pancratium maritimum*), a plant characteristic of sandy dunes, *Helichrysum* (*Helichrysum italicum*), with its characteristic intense scent, Broom (*Spartium junceum*), which colours the hillsides yellow in spring, Tamerice (*Tamarix gallica*), important for stabilising coastal soil, and *Salicornia* (*Salicornia europaea*), which grows in wet and brackish areas. Thanks to the variety of its environments, the Reserve is home to numerous animal species, including the Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), a small wader symbol of the Reserve and at risk of extinction, the *Caretta caretta* sea turtle, which has chosen the Reserve's beach for nesting, the Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) which finds refuge among the hills and vegetation, the Porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*), a nocturnal rodent that roams the wooded areas, the Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), which can be observed in the wetlands during migration, and the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), which nests along the coast.

Guide del Borsacchio association is a group of volunteers committed to the protection and enhancement of the Reserve. They organise excursions, environmental education activities and awareness-raising campaigns for the protection of the local flora and fauna. In addition, they manually clean the beaches to preserve the ecosystem and collaborate with organisations and associations to promote biodiversity conservation. Thanks to their efforts, the Borsacchio Reserve is now a place of great natural and cultural interest, open to all those who want to discover and respect nature.

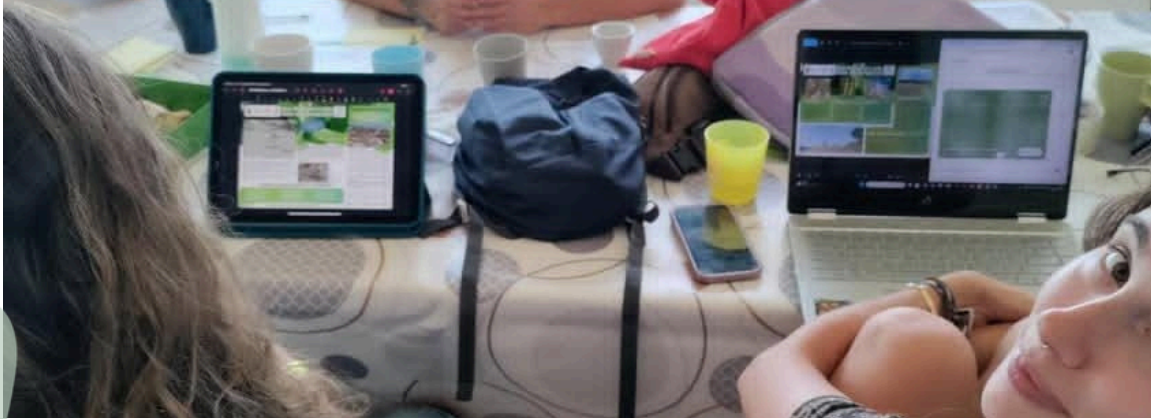


Outcomes from the workshops



During six working sessions, 3 environmental practical workshops (Environmental Education, Promotional/Documentary Video, Infrastructure Maintenance) have been developed in order to acquire new competences, skills and methodologies through an educational path in direct contact with the Nature and the Roseto surrounding areas. Having the Natural Capital as perfect playground and using Non Formal Education methodologies and approaches, the workshops developed their educational path realising several outcomes and results in terms of educational modules, communication products and infrastructural artefacts able to support the Nature Reserve and improve, at the same time, the quality and efficiency of the activities carry out by each partner in the different communities involved.

Environmental Education



The Environmental Education workshop was engaged and focused on creation of different modules and activities able to sensitize kids and young people to a more sustainable and healthier lifestyle, to develop new approaches about natural resources and to create an opportunity to improve the inclusion and participation of the local community. The workshop exploited to the optimum the present natural and cultural resources at the venue, developing activities associated with different aspects of the area and the natural ecosystem services there, and their connection to mankind.



PERCHE I MOZZICONI DI SIGARETTA SONO DANNOSI PER LA NATURA



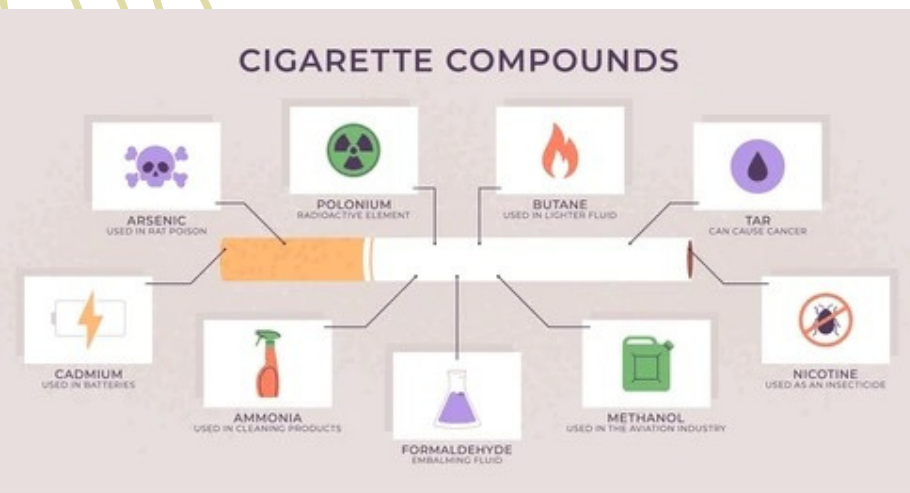
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DI COSA SONO FATTI

La maggior parte dei filtri delle sigarette è fatta di acetato di cellulosa, un tipo di plastica. Non si biodegradano rapidamente, ma si frammentano in microplastiche che rimangono nell'ambiente per anni.



SOSTANZE CHIMICHE RILASCIATE:

- Nicotina – tossica per i piccoli organismi acquatici
- Metalli pesanti – piombo, cadmio, zinco, rame
- Idrocarburi policiclici aromatici (IPA)
- Altre tossine come pesticidi



IMPATTO SULLA VITA MARINA:

- Le sostanze chimiche tossiche riducono la sopravvivenza e la riproduzione di pesci, molluschi e invertebrati.

Nel tempo, i filtri si degradano in microplastiche, entrando nella catena alimentare marina.

Gli animali possono scambiare i filtri per cibo, causando soffocamento, ostruzioni digestive o denutrizione.





IMPATTO SULLE SPIAGGE E SULLE PERSONE

- Sono l'articolo più comune raccolto durante le operazioni di pulizia costiera

Rovинano l'aspetto naturale delle spiagge, riducono la

- soddisfazione dei turisti e aumentano i costi di pulizia.



SOLUZIONI

- **Individuale:** non gettare mai i mozziconi di sigaretta nella natura; usa posacenere portatili

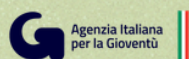
- **Misure locali:** divieti di fumo sulle spiagge, contenitori per i mozziconi, campagne di sensibilizzazione

- **Livello politico:** responsabilità estesa del produttore, divieti sui filtri di plastica, promozione di vere alternative biodegradabili

CONCLUSIONE

I mozziconi di sigaretta non sono rifiuti innocui di piccole dimensioni — rappresentano una delle principali fonti di sostanze chimiche tossiche e microplastiche nel mare, danneggiando la vita marina, inquinando le spiagge e hanno un impatto negativo sulle persone. Ridurre il loro impatto richiede una combinazione di responsabilità individuale, regolamenti locali e cambiamenti nelle politiche a livello globale.





SENSORIAL CARDS GAME

ACTIVITY - SENSORIAL GAME
TARGET AUDIENCE - GROUPS, FAMILIES, ADULTS
PLACE- NATURAL RESERVE OF BORSACCHIO
EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE-CONNECTING WITH NATURE
TYPE OF ACTIVITY-INFORMATIVE

Explorers of the Borsacchio Nature Reserve

Embark on a unique sensory adventure along the coast of Roseto degli Abruzzi!

Your mission

complete the coastal landscape by gathering fauna, flora, and natural elements while learning, creating, and having fun.

How to Play

1 ☐ Explore 2 ☐ Activate your senses 3 ☐ Build the ecosystem

Card Types

Mission, Challenge, Fact, Creative

Objective

Become the Supreme Explorer by completing the most diverse and sensory ecosystem!

Game duration: 20 minutes to 1 hour

Use your senses, get creative, and discover the magic of nature!



MISSION CARDS

HEARING

**CLOSE YOUR EYES AND
COUNT THREE DIFFERENT
SOUNDS**

SMELL

**SMELL 2 DIFFERENT
PLANTS AND DESCRIBE
THE DIFFERENCE**

TOUCH

**TOUCH SOMETHING
ROUGH AND SOMETHING
SMOOTH**

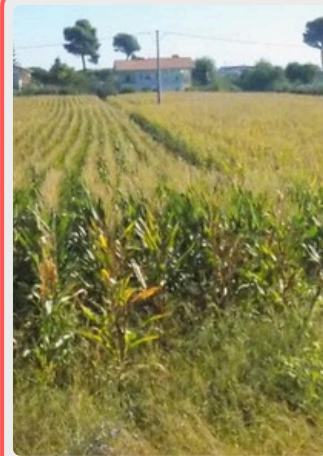
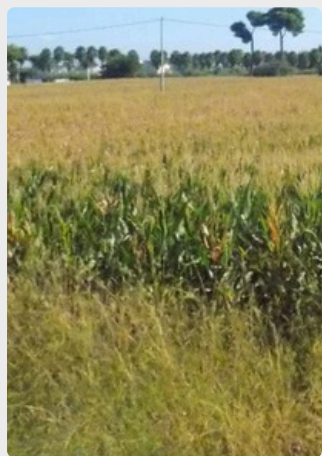
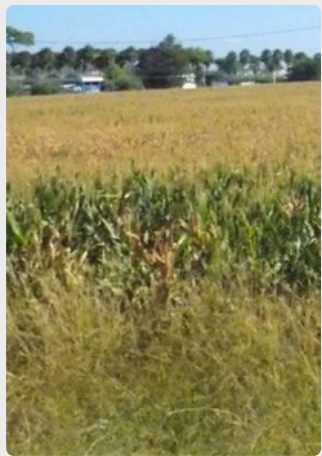
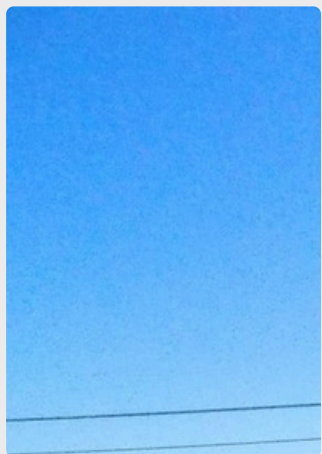
IMAGINATION

**CHOOSE AN OBJECT IN
NATURE AND INVENT A
NAME FOR IT**

SIGHT

**LOOK FOR SOMETHING
SHAPED LIKE A HEART**

MISSION CARDS



CHALLENGE CARDS

SIGHT

**FIND THREE DIFFERENT
TYPES OF PLANT AND
IDENTIFY THEM**

TOUCH

**FIND A PIECE OF TRASH
(PLASTIC, PAPER,
METAL...) THAT DOESN'T
BELONG TO NATURE AND
TURN IT INTO A SMALL
SCULPTURE**

SMELL

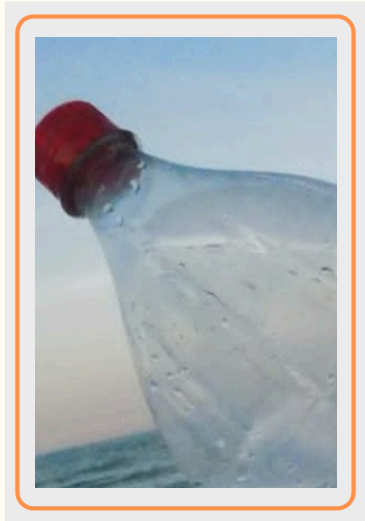
**COMPARE THE SMELL
NEAR THE WATER WITH
THE SMELL FUTHER UP
ON DRYMUD**

SMELL

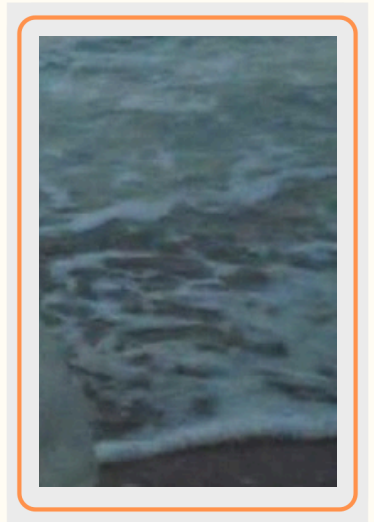
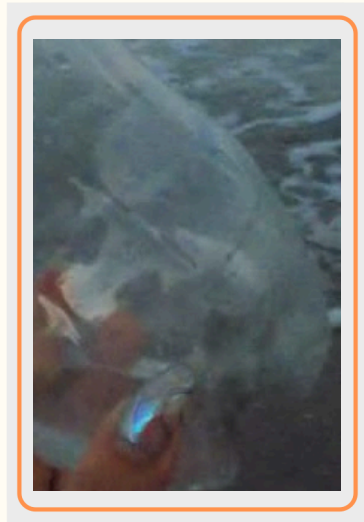
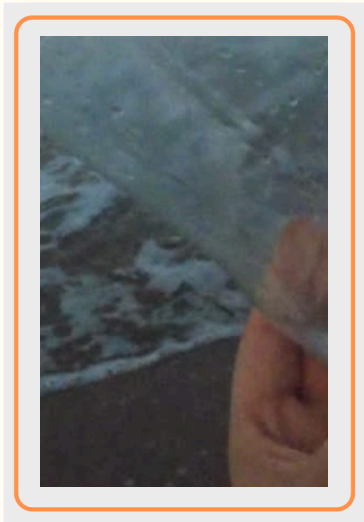
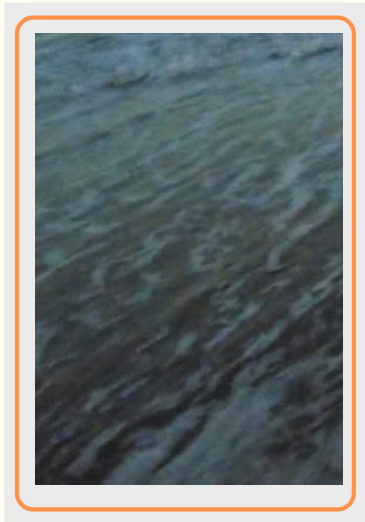
**PICK UP A NATURAL
OBJECT AND SNIFF-
DESCRIBE THE SMELL**

HEARING

**STAY SILENT FOR
ONE MINUTE AND
LIST THE SOUNDS
YOU HEAR**



CHALLENGE CARDS



CREATIVE CARDS

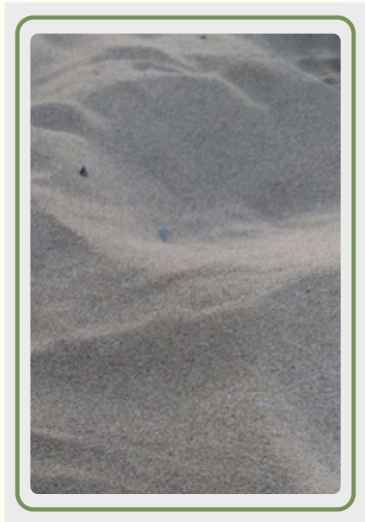
**IMAGINE YOU ARE
NATURE'S GUARDIAN.
RESIGN YOUR COSTUME
USING NATURAL
ELEMENTS YOU ARE
AROUND**

**CLOSE YOUR EYES AND
LISTEN 1 MINUTE, CAN
YOU TURN WHAT YOU
HEAR INTO A SONG**

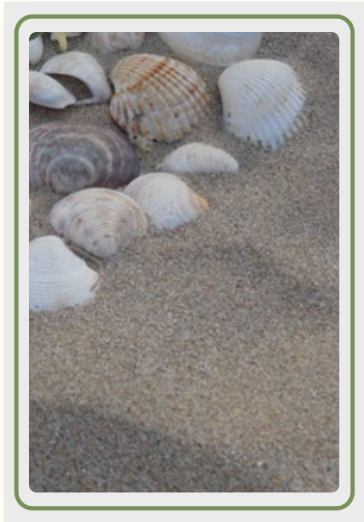
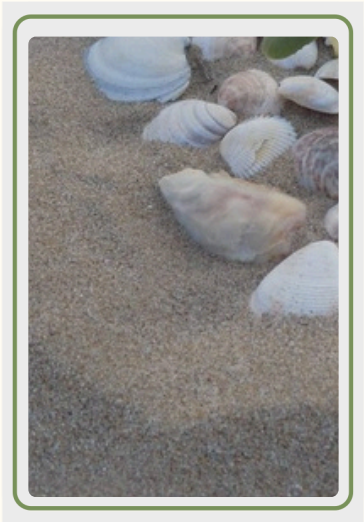
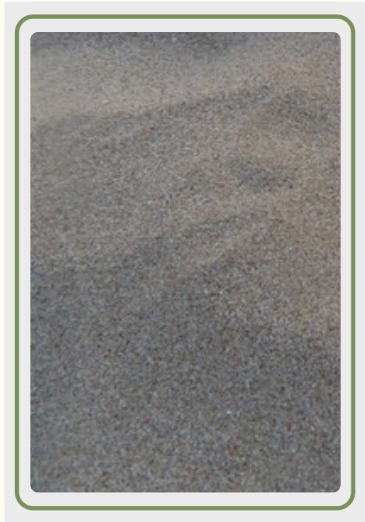
**FIND A FOLLEN LEAF AND
DRAW AN ANIMAL THAT
YOU SEE IN IT'S SHAPE**

**FIND 3 THINGS THAT
DON'T BELONG TO
NATURE. DRAW THEM
AND PICK THEM UP,
WHAT COULD THEY
BECOME IF RECYCLED**

**DRAW A SMALL MAP OF
THE TRAIL. MARK ANY
SPOTS WHERE YOU SEE
TRASH, HOW COULD WE
PREVENT IT NEXT TIME**



CREATIVE CARDS



FACT CARDS

Charadrius alexandrinus

Endangered, it is key species of the reserve due to its conservation status. It nests on the sand.



Caretta caretta

They are born at night and orient themselves by the light of the moon, so light pollution can disorient them.



Thinopyrum junceum

It can withstand short periods of time submerged in water. It helps to stabilize dunes.



Euphorbia paralias

Used to treat scabies with the latex it contain. It is currently a threatened species.

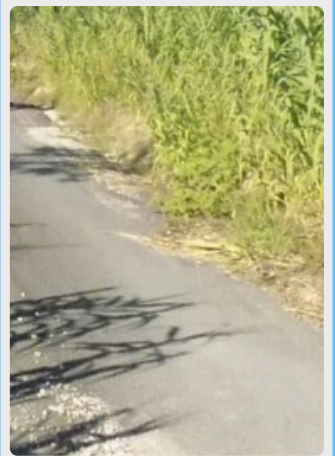


Pancratium maritimum

In winter, it loses its aerial parts, stem and leaves in order to withstand low temperatures.

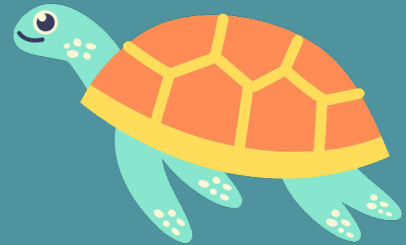
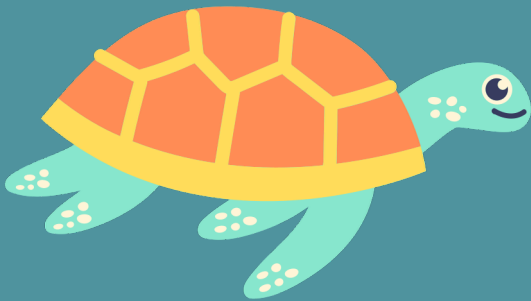


FACT CARDS

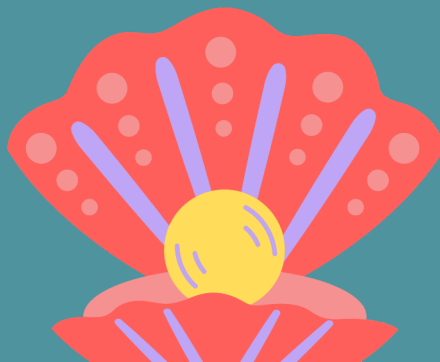
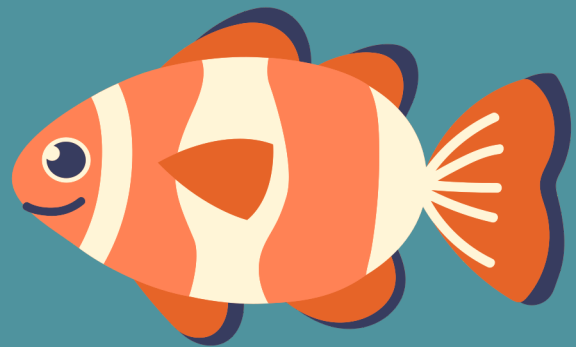




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LITTLE GUARDIAN TURTLES





STORY

A long time ago, on the beach of a protected sea area, there lived a family of guardian turtles. Their home was clean and full of life, but over time, more and more people came to the beach and left their trash behind. Plastic, paper, and nets started to harm the sea, the sand, and the small animals. The turtles knew they had to do something – because if nature was not protected, their home would disappear.

Now the children become little guardian turtles, starting a mission to save the beach. Their job is not only to collect trash, but also to show people how precious nature is. As they move slowly, leaving turtle tracks in the sand, they remind everyone that turtles live here and need a clean and safe shore.

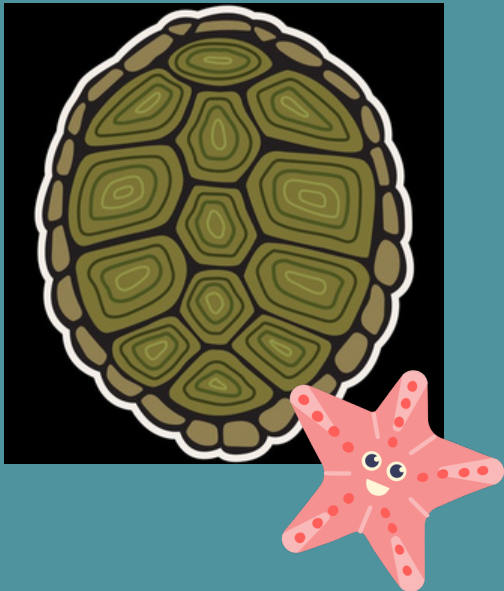
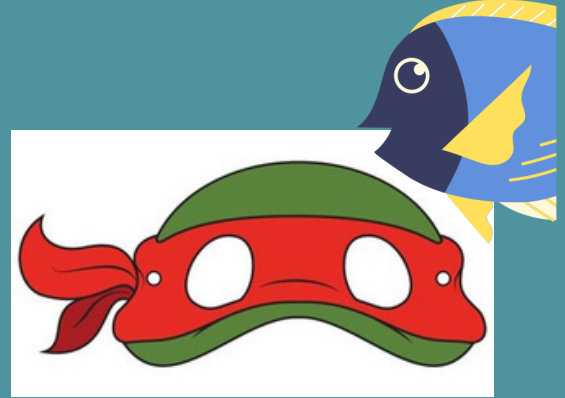
At the end of their mission, the turtles use the collected trash to create a big mural-message. This message is not just a sign – it is the voice of nature, reminding people that the sea and the beach belong to animals, plants, and humans together. If we all take care of our environment, both turtles and children will have a healthy and clean world to live in.



RULES OF THE GAME

FORMING TEAMS

- Children are divided into teams of 3.
- Each team becomes a turtle family and receives fun Ninja Turtle-style masks.



ROLES

- The Carrier Turtle: Wears a "shell" (a basket or box strapped to their back). Moves slowly, like a real turtle.
- The Collector Turtles (2 per team): These turtles move around to collect trash. They hand the trash to the carrier (they don't carry it themselves). They also protect the carrier as it walks to the nest.

HOW TO MOVE

- Carrier Turtle: Must walk slowly, making turtle-like tracks in the sand.
- Facilitators will demonstrate turtle tracks and how to make and identify them.
- Collector Turtles: Can move freely and quickly, but must stay close to their carrier. They cannot wander too far away from their turtle family!



COLLECTING TRASH

-Trash is made from safe props (card board, plastic, or wood) placed around the play area.

-Each team is assigned a specific type or color of trash (e.g., only plastic, or only blue items).

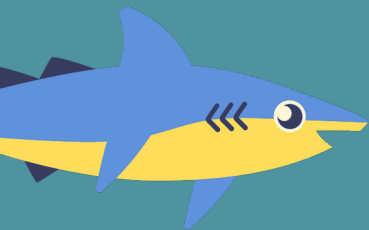
-This teaches sorting and environmental awareness.



DISPOSING THE TRASH

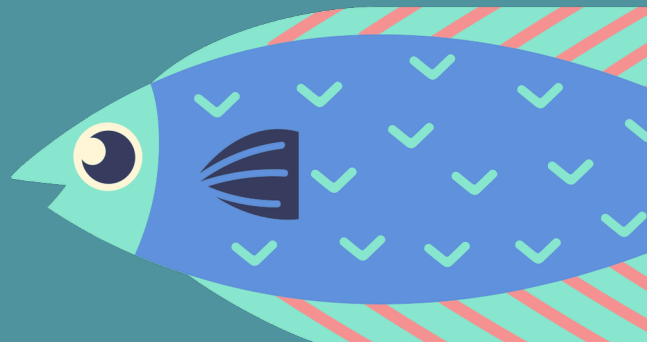
-Once the carrier's shell is full, the team must take it to the "nest" - a clearly marked drop-off zone.

-The team walks together, keeping the carrier safe until the trash is delivered.



CREATIVE MURAL

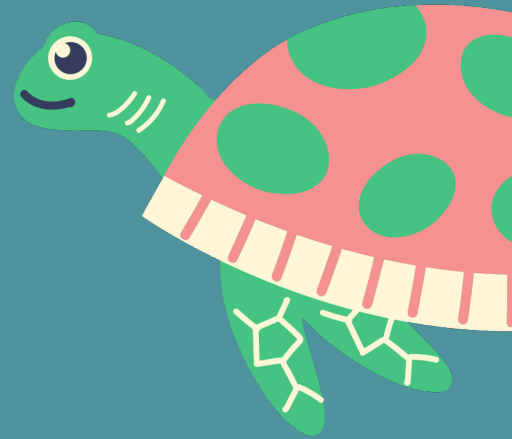
-At the end of the game, all the collected "trash" is used to create a large mural in the shape of, for example, a turtle, a heart or message such as "Nature is our home."



LEVELS OF THE GAME

Levels 1 - Hatchling Turtles: First Journey

- Challenge: Each family collects only one color of trash.
- Movement Twist: Carrier crawls slowly; collectors scuttle beside them.
- Teamwork: Collectors hand items gently onto the carrier's 'shell.'
- Extra Fun: Hidden 'shiny shells' give a 10-second speed boost.



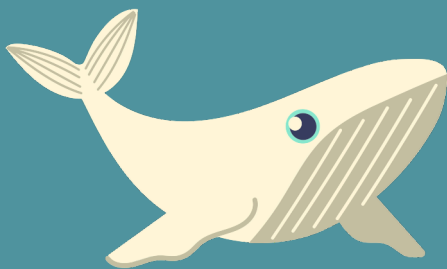
Levels 2 - Explorer Turtles: Treasure Sorters

Challenge: Sort trash by type (plastic, paper, wood) to the correct nest.

Movement Twist: After each delivery, turtles do a 3-spin 'turtle dance.'

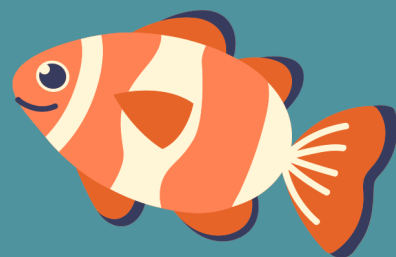
Teamwork: Collectors focus on different types; mistakes require a quick role swap.

Extra Fun: 'Mystery treasures' can be bonuses or need returning to the sea.



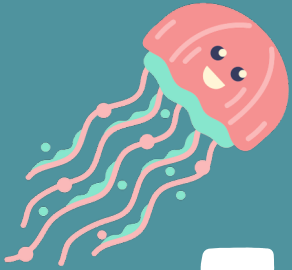
Hero Turtles: Ocean Rescue

- Challenge: Collect all trash while avoiding obstacles.
- Movement Twist: Touching obstacles means freezing until the team shouts, 'Help the turtle!'
- Teamwork: Collectors help the carrier navigate obstacles together.
- Extra Fun: Find the 'golden starfish' to win the game.



SAFETY & INCLUSION

- Trash is fake and safe (paper, plastic, wood no sharp objects).
- No running too far everyone stays in sight of the facilitators.
- Teams are mixed each child has a role, and everyone is equally important.
- Roles can switch after each round so all children try everything.



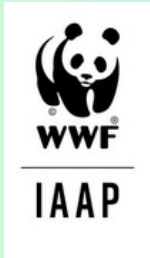
EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS

- Children learn the importance of recycling and protecting nature.
- They understand that teamwork is essential – turtles survive only if they help each other.
- They leave tracks in the sand, symbolizing the presence of turtles in the area.
- They create a visible result – a mural as a collective message.



LITTLE GUARDIAN TURTLES





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TV **BORSACCHIO** contest

WHO WILL BE THE
ULTIMATE NATURE
EXPLORER?

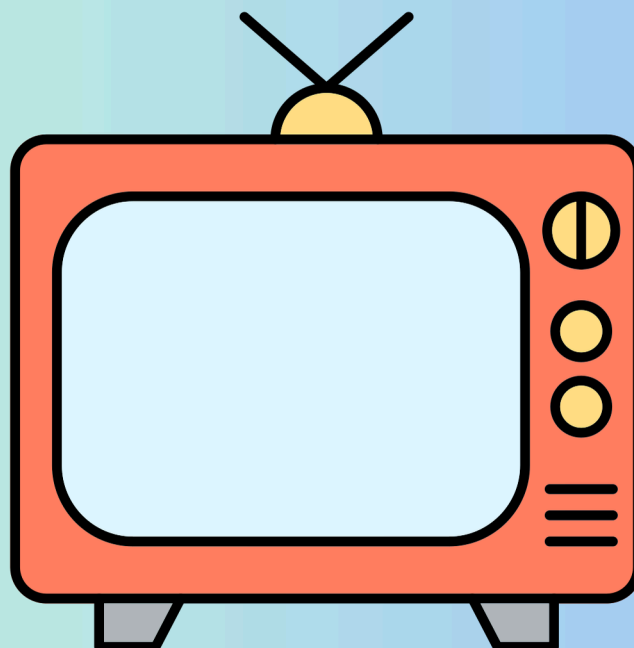


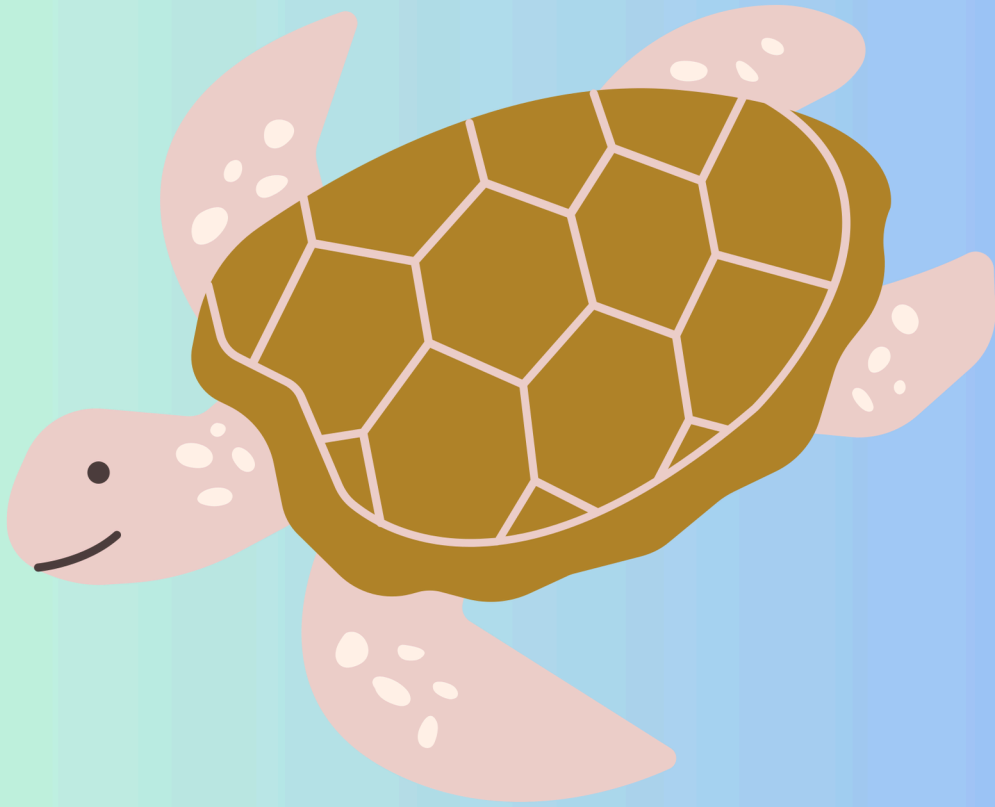
PRESENTER:
**“WELCOME EVERYONE TO OUR NATURE
CHALLENGE CONTEST!**

**TONIGHT, TWO FAMILIES WILL GO HEAD-TO-HEAD
IN A FUN AND EXCITING BATTLE OF KNOWLEDGE.**

**THE RULES ARE SIMPLE: WE HAVE 25 QUESTIONS
ABOUT THE WONDERS OF NATURAL BORSACCHIO
RESERVE.**

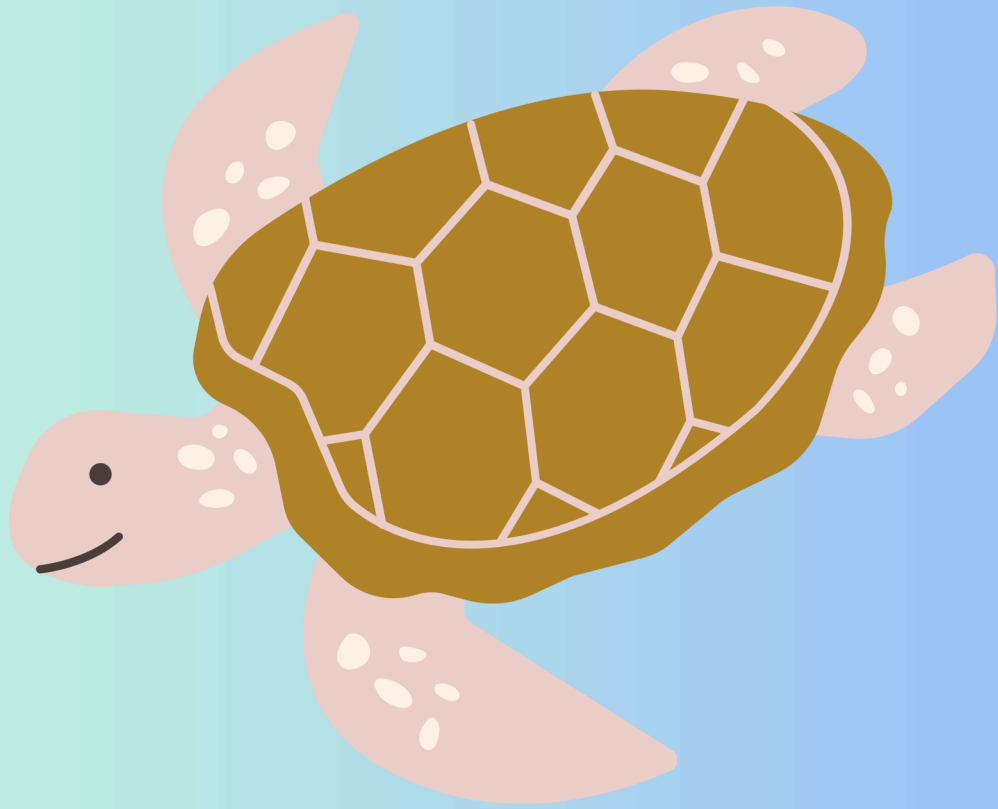
**TO ANSWER, EACH TEAM MUST HIT THE BUZZER —
THE FASTEST ONE GETS THE CHANCE! IF THEY’RE
WRONG, THE OTHER FAMILY CAN STEAL THE POINT.
LET’S SEE WHO WILL BECOME THE CHAMPIONS OF
THE WILD!”**





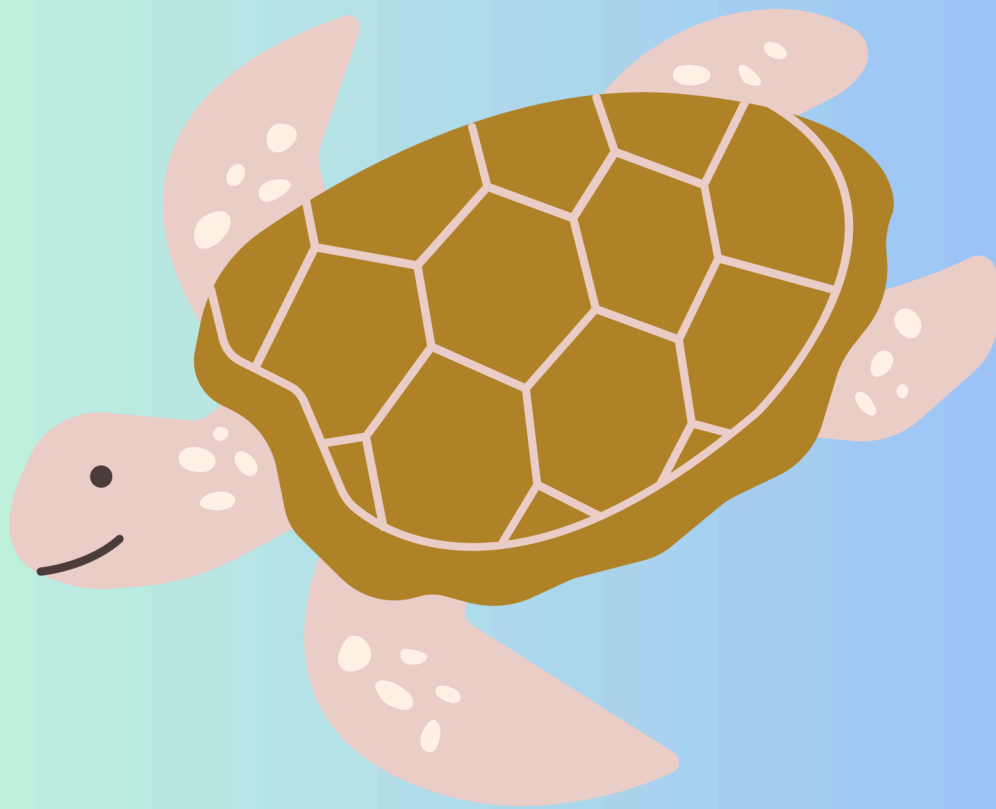
**WHICH ENDANGERED SPECIES LIVES IN
THE BORSACCHIO NATURE RESERVE?**

- A) IL FRATINO**
- B) SEA TURTLES**
- C) SARDINES**



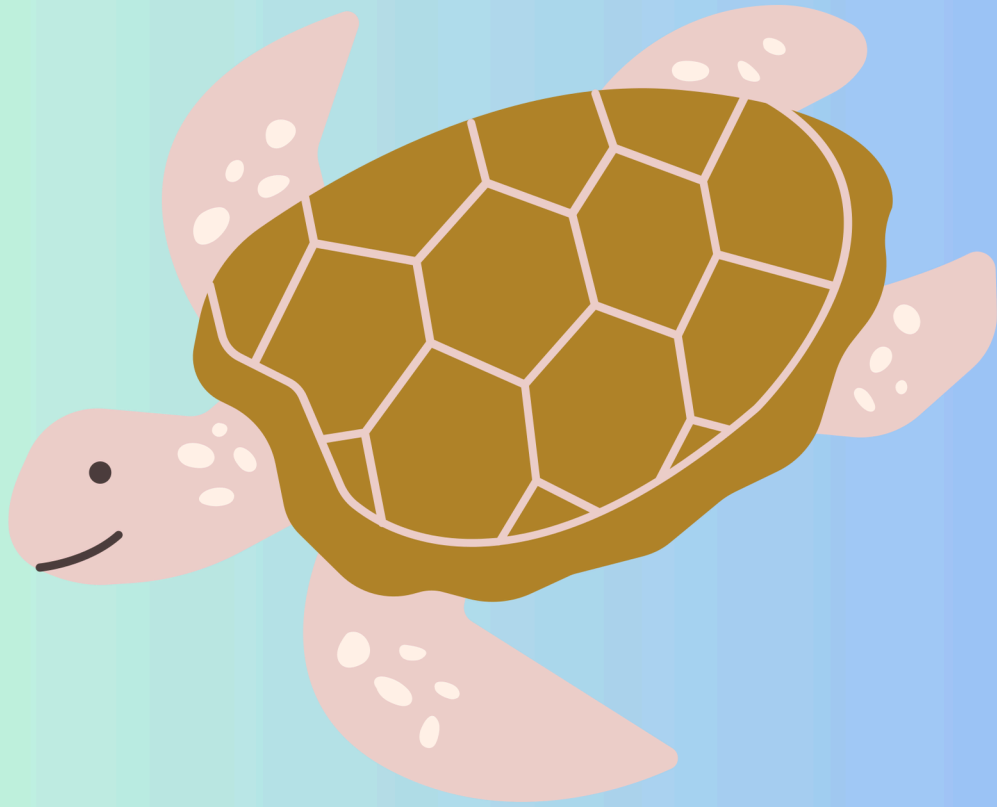
**WHICH TYPE OF PLANT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO
HOLD THE SAND IN PLACE?**

- A) OLIVE TREES**
- B) WATER LILIES**
- C) BEACH GRASS**



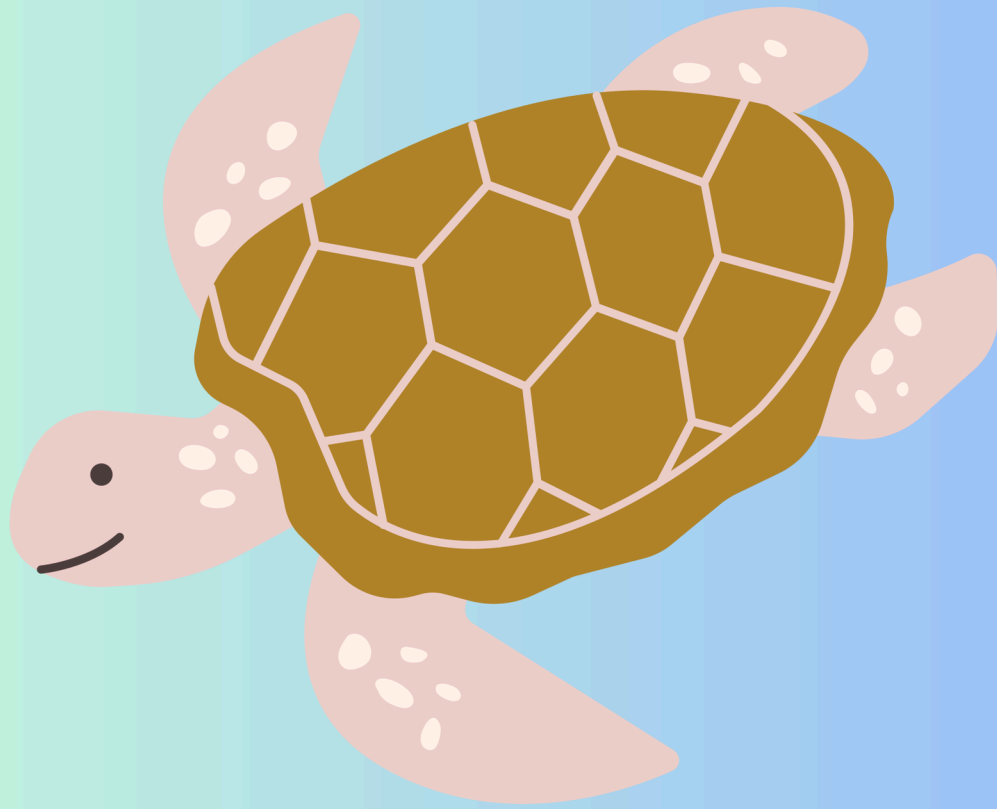
WHAT IS THE SCIENTIFIC NAME OF IL FRATINO?

- A) CARETTA CARETTA**
- B) EGRETTA GARZETTA**
- C) POLYOMMATUS ICARUS**
- D) CHARADRIUS ALEXANDRINUS**



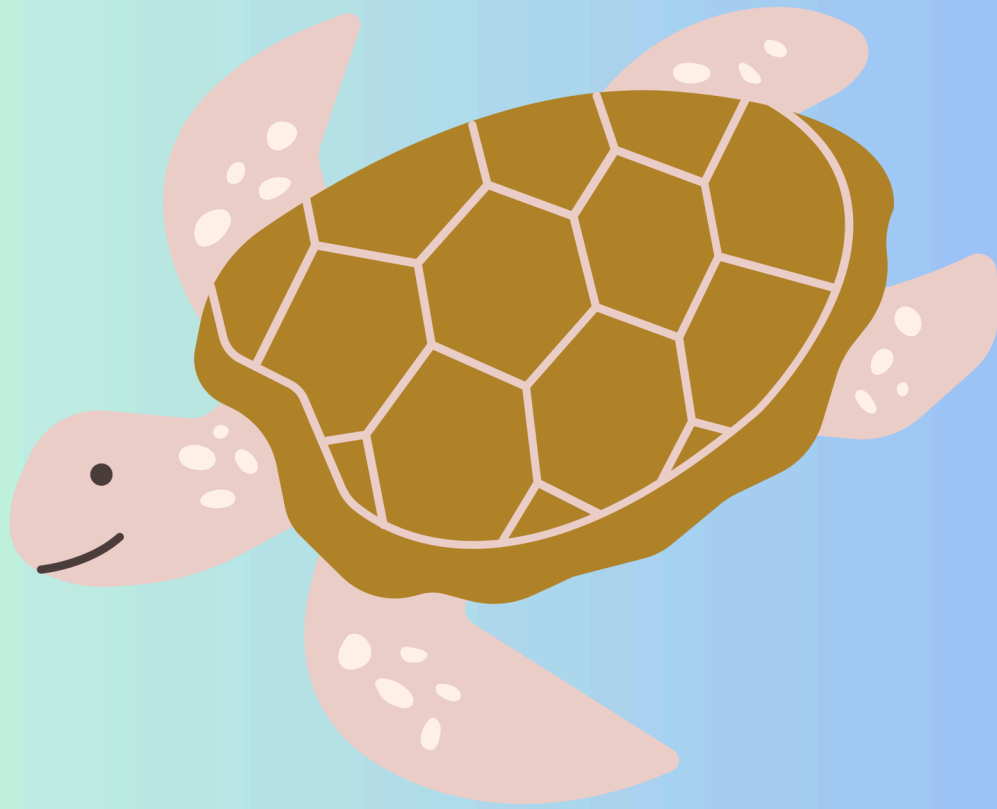
WHICH ANIMAL IS KNOWN FOR ITS REDDISH-BROWN CARAPACE?

- A) BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN**
- B) LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE**
- C) CRESTED PORCUPINE**
- D) COMMON BLUE BUTTERFLY**



HOW CAN WE PROTECT THE AREA?

**MULTIPLE ANSWER: AVOID LEAVING TRASH,
STAY ON MARKED PATHS, RESPECT WILDLIFE,
PARTICIPATE IN CLEAN-UP...**



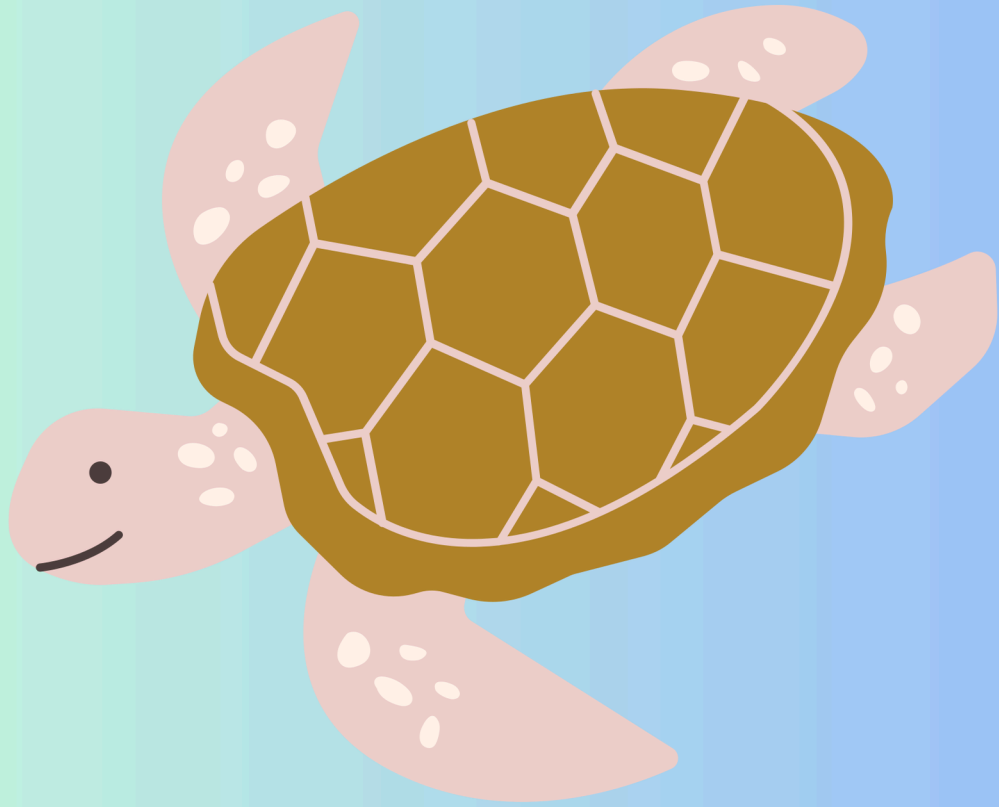
WHO HELPS PROTECT THE RESERVE?

A)VOLUNTEERS

B)LOCAL AUTHORITIES

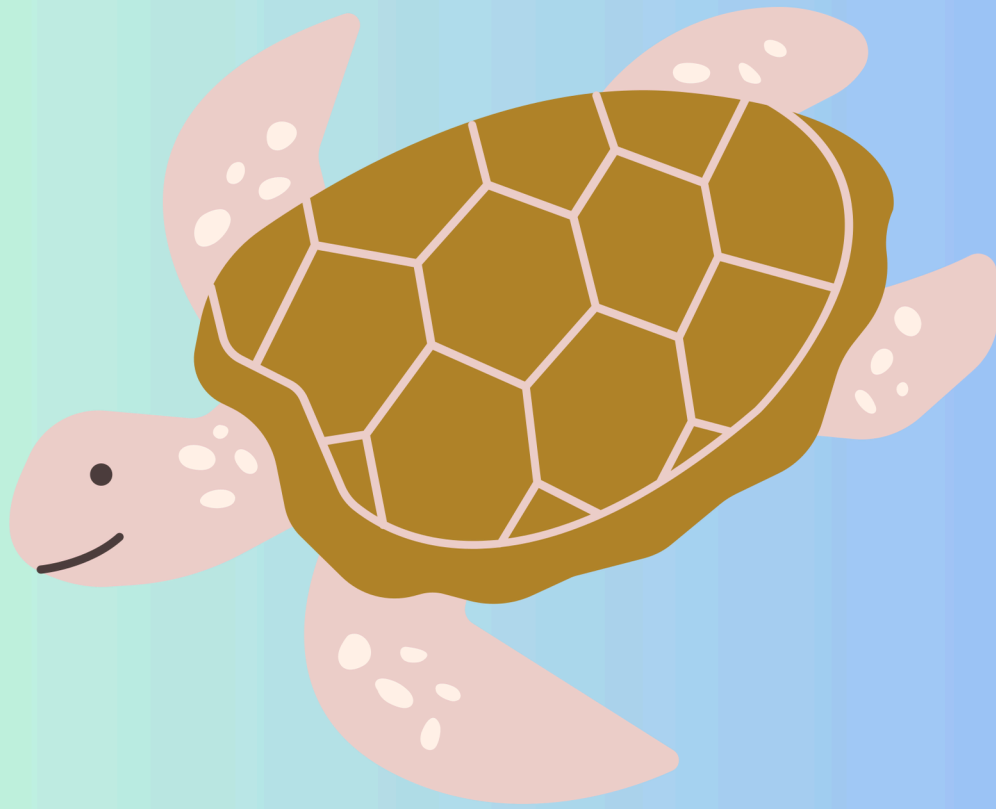
C) ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

D)ALL THEM ARE CORRECT



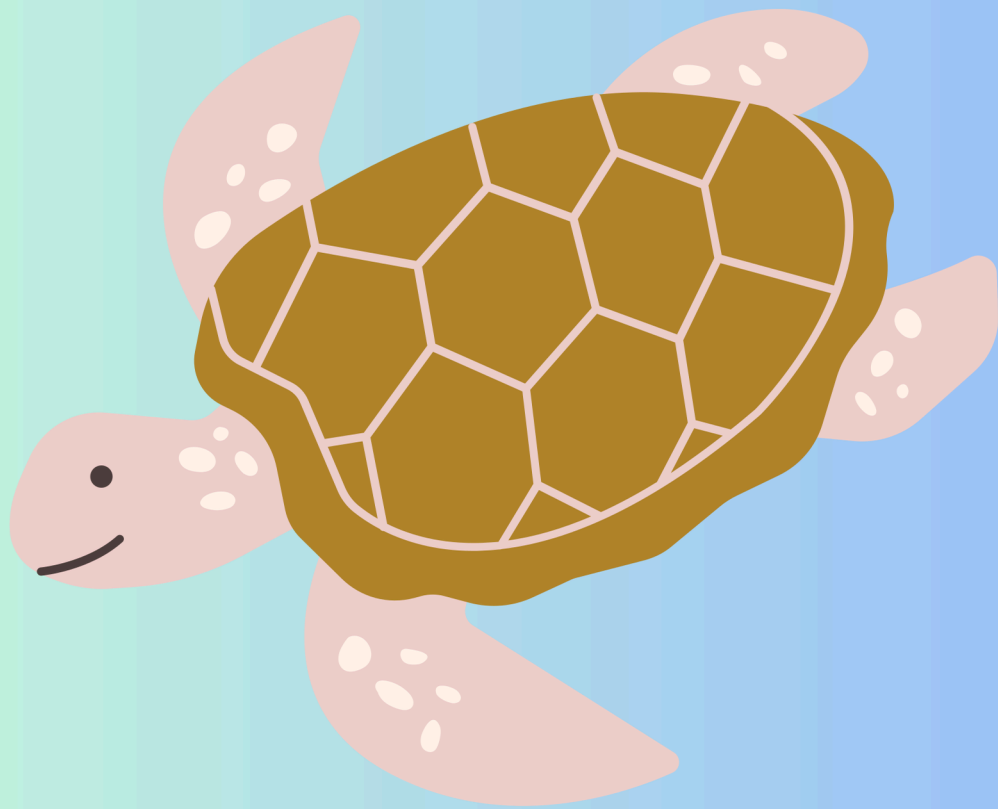
WHAT IS THE MOST DANGEROUS TRASH AT THE BEACH?

- A) PLASTIC BOTTLES**
- B) CIGARETTE BUTTS**
- C) FOOD WRAPPERS**



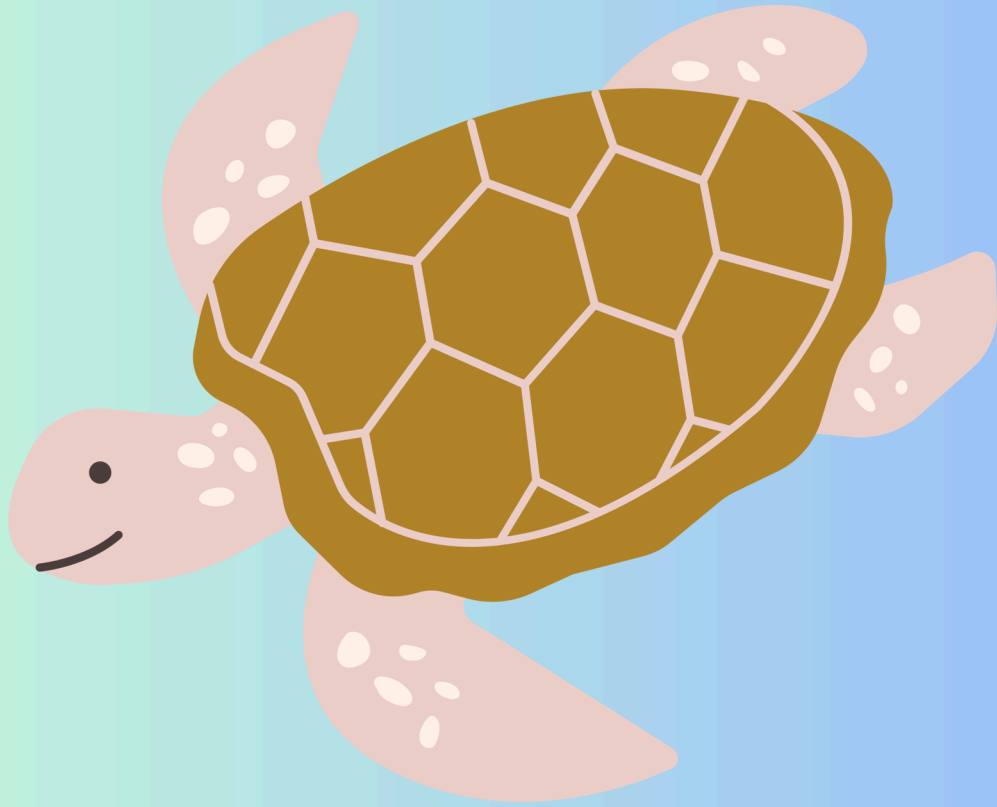
**WHICH MAMMAL IS HIGHLY SOCIAL AND
COMMUNICATES USING CLICKS AND WHISTLES?**

- A) I FRATINI**
- B) CRESTED PORCUPINE**
- C) LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE**
- D) BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN**



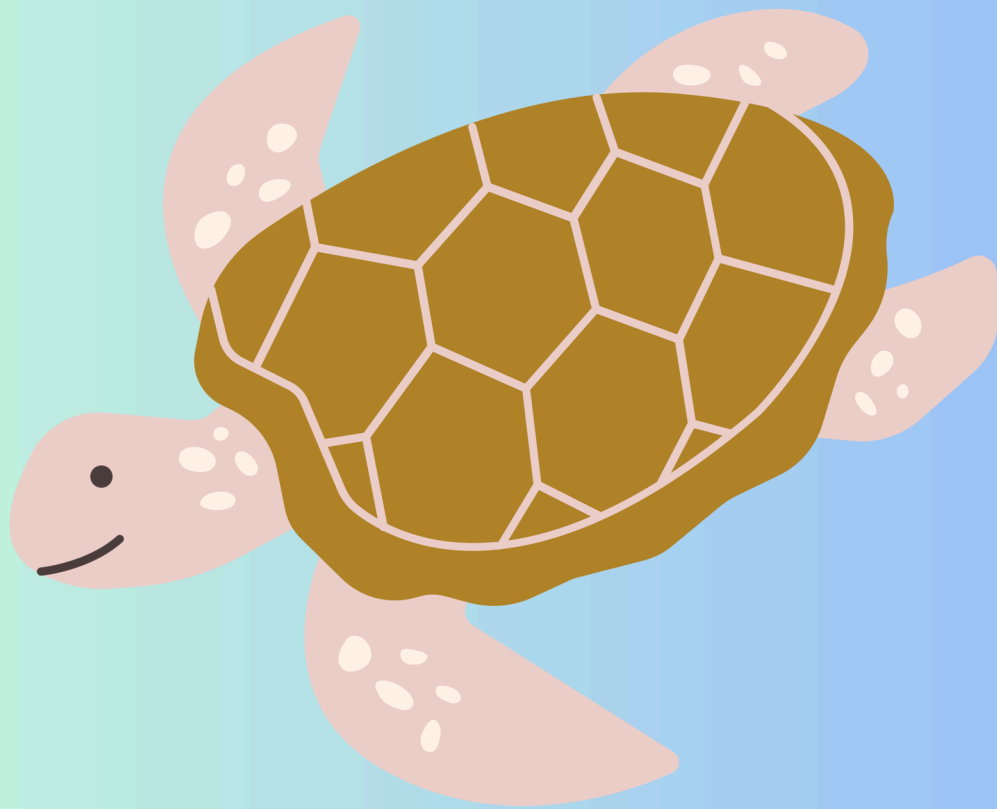
WHAT SEA IS NEXT TO BORSACCHIO RESERVE?

- A) TYRRHENIAN SEA**
- B) ADRIATIC SEA**
- C) IONIAN SEA**
- D) LIGURIAN SEA**



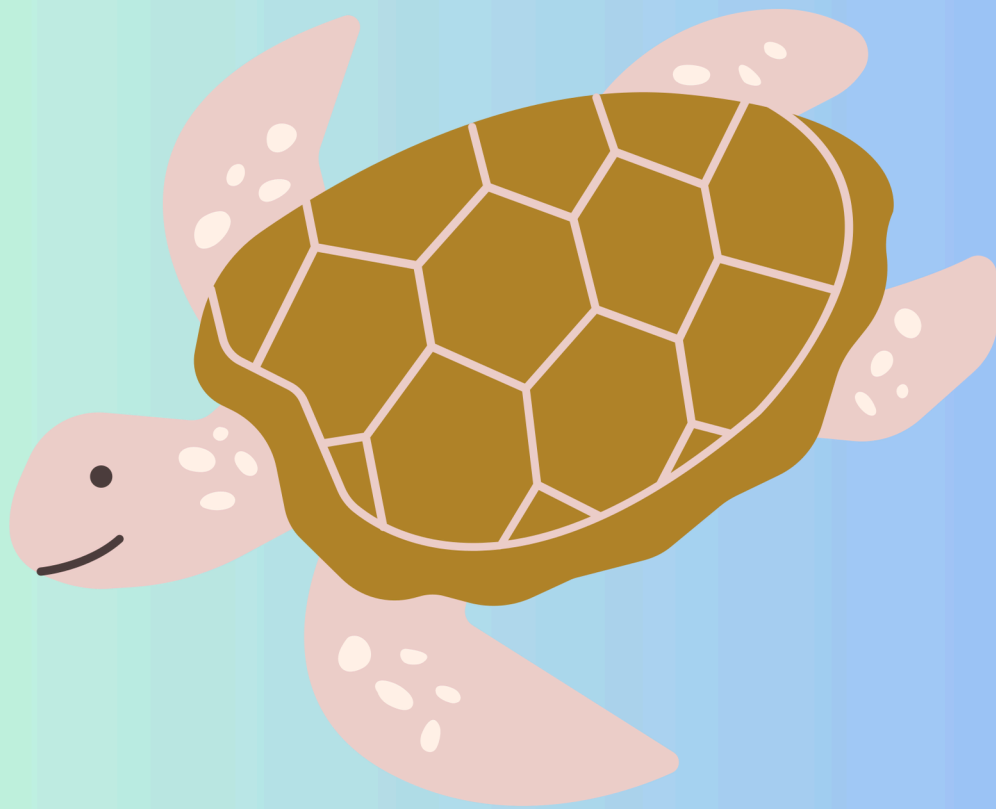
WHICH PLANT IS KNOWN AS SALSOLA KALI?

- A) SALTWORT**
- B) SEA HOLLY**
- C) COASTAL MEDICK**
- D) CRETAN TREFOIL**



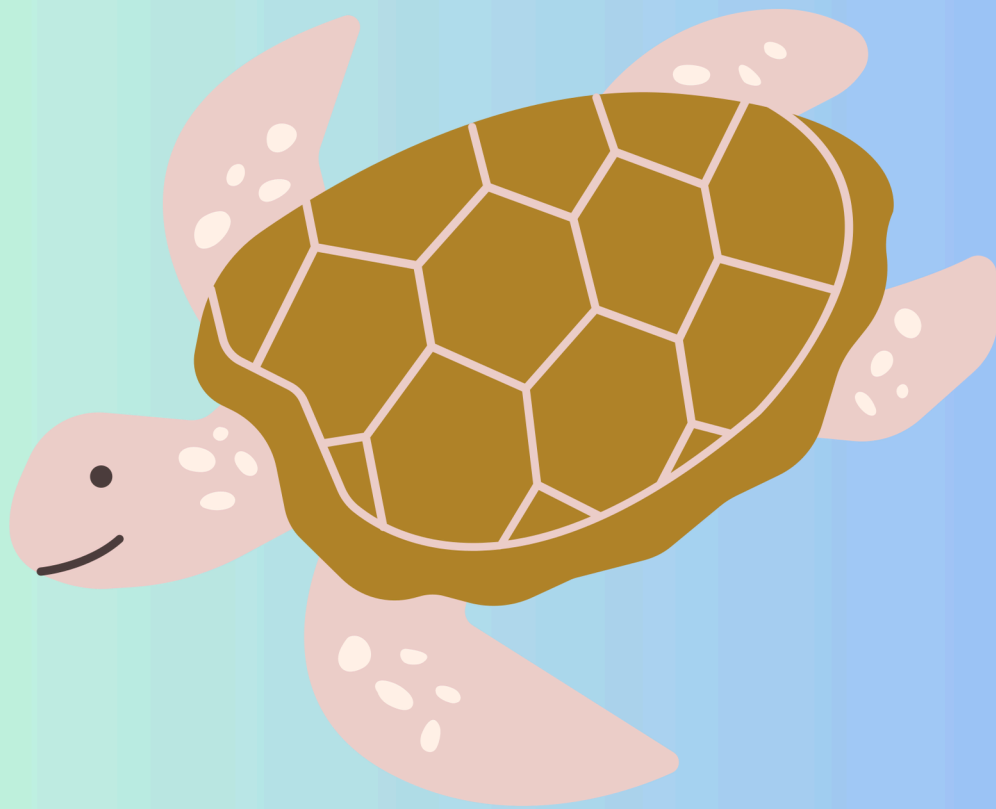
WHAT MAKES BORSACCHIO SPECIAL?

**MULTIPLE ANSWER: ITS DUNES AND BIODIVERSITY,
PROTECTED WILDLIFE, NATURAL COASTAL
ECOSYSTEM...**



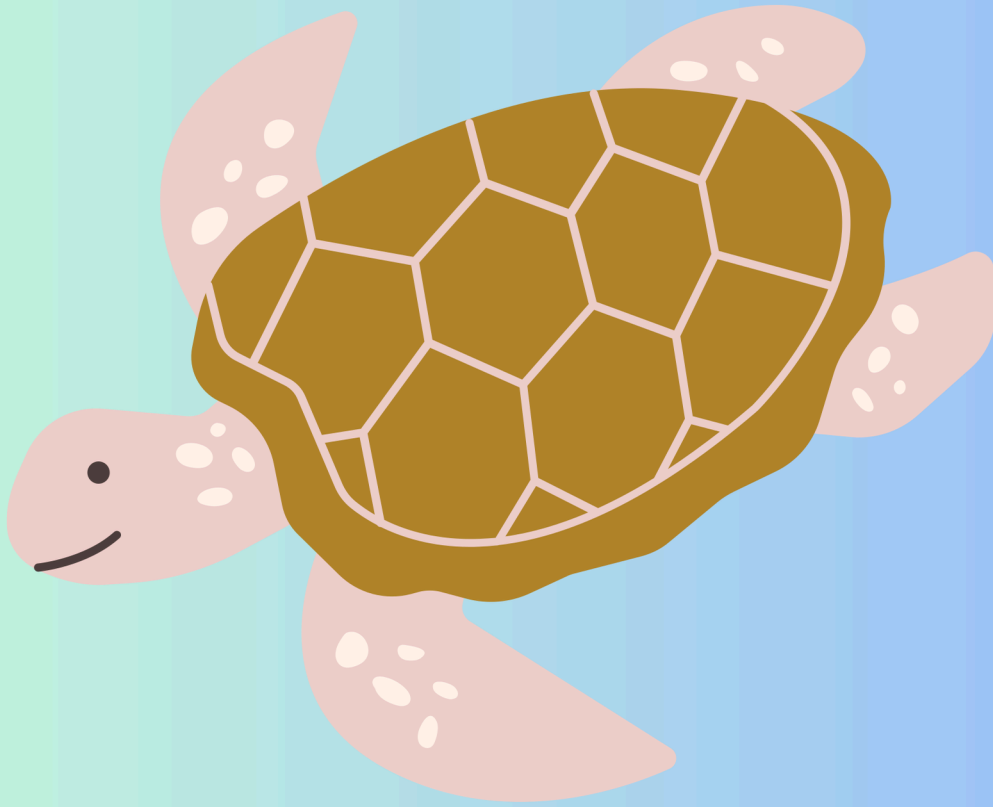
**WHICH PLANT IS USED IN CULINARY AND
STABILIZES DUNES?**

- A) COSTMARY**
- B) SPINY SEA FENNEL**
- C) EUROPEAN SEA ROCKET**
- D) SEA BINDWEED**



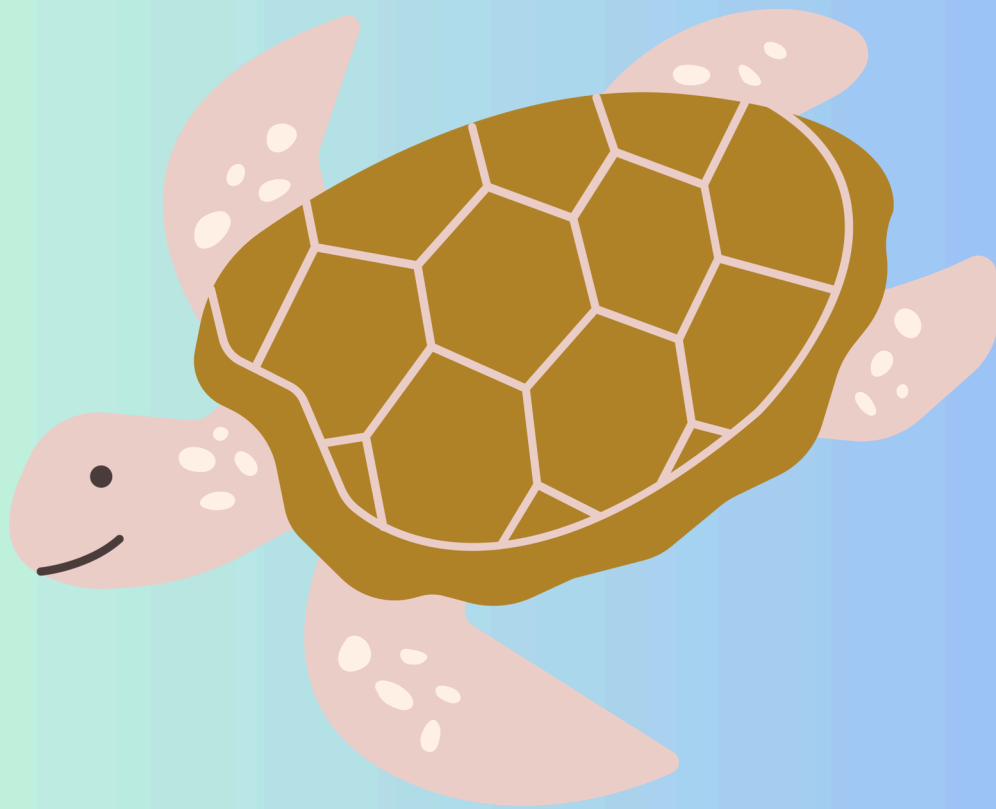
**WHICH COLORFUL BIRD IS KNOWN FOR IMPRESSIVE
HUNTING SKILLS AND DIVING?**

- A) KINGFISHER**
- B) LITTLE EGRET**
- C) SPOTTED SANDPIPER**
- D) KENTISH PLOVER**



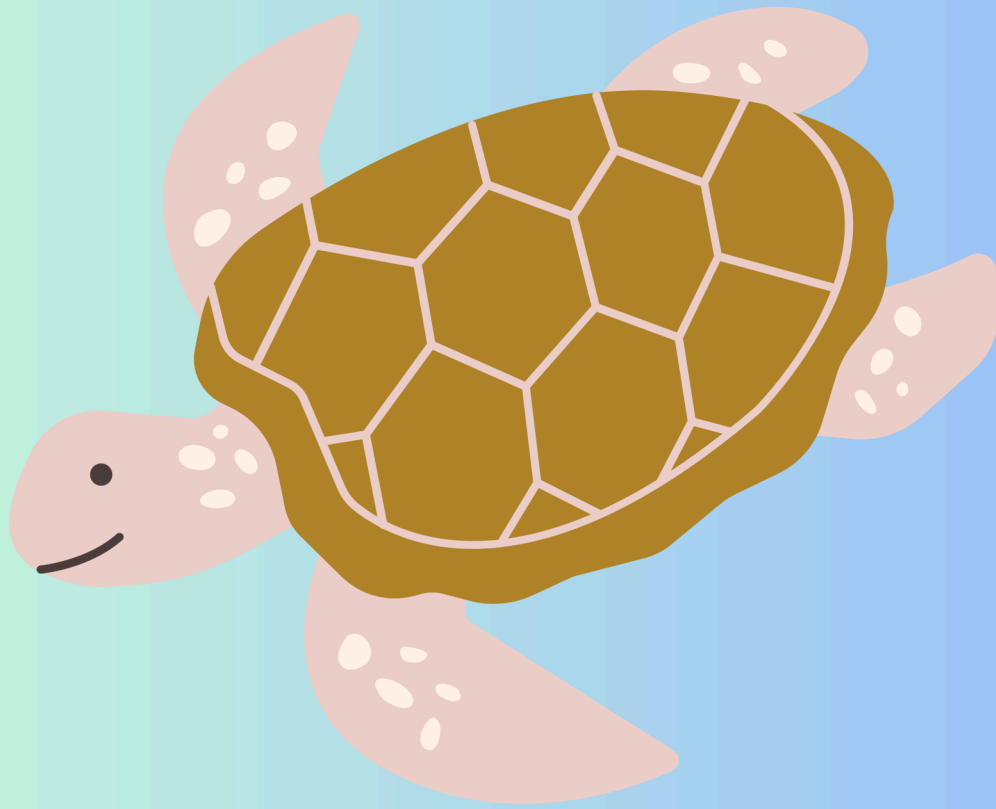
**WHICH PLANT HAS FLUFFY FLOWER HEADS
RESEMBLING A HARE'S TAIL?**

- A) PINK CATCHFLY**
- B) SEA BINDWEED**
- C) HARE'S TAIL GRASS**
- D) CRETAN TREFOIL**



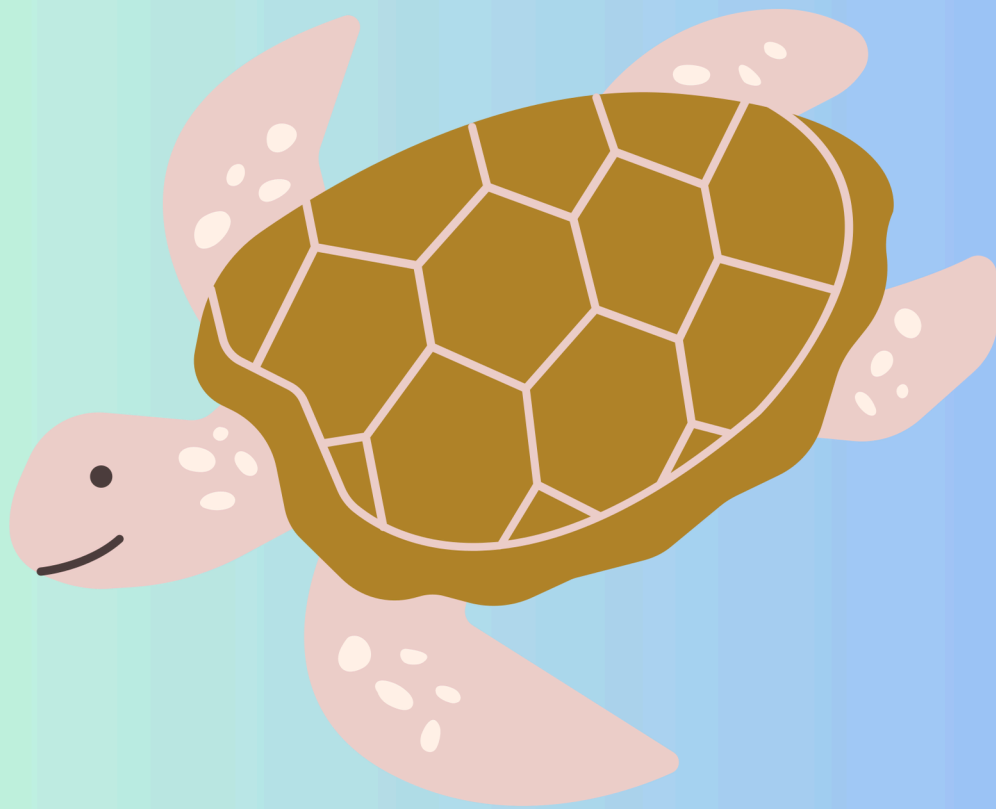
**WHICH BIRD IS A PROFESSIONAL DIVER WITH
DARK FEATHERS?**

- A) LITTLE EGRET**
- B) KENTISH PLOVER**
- C) KINGFISHER**
- D) CORMORANT**



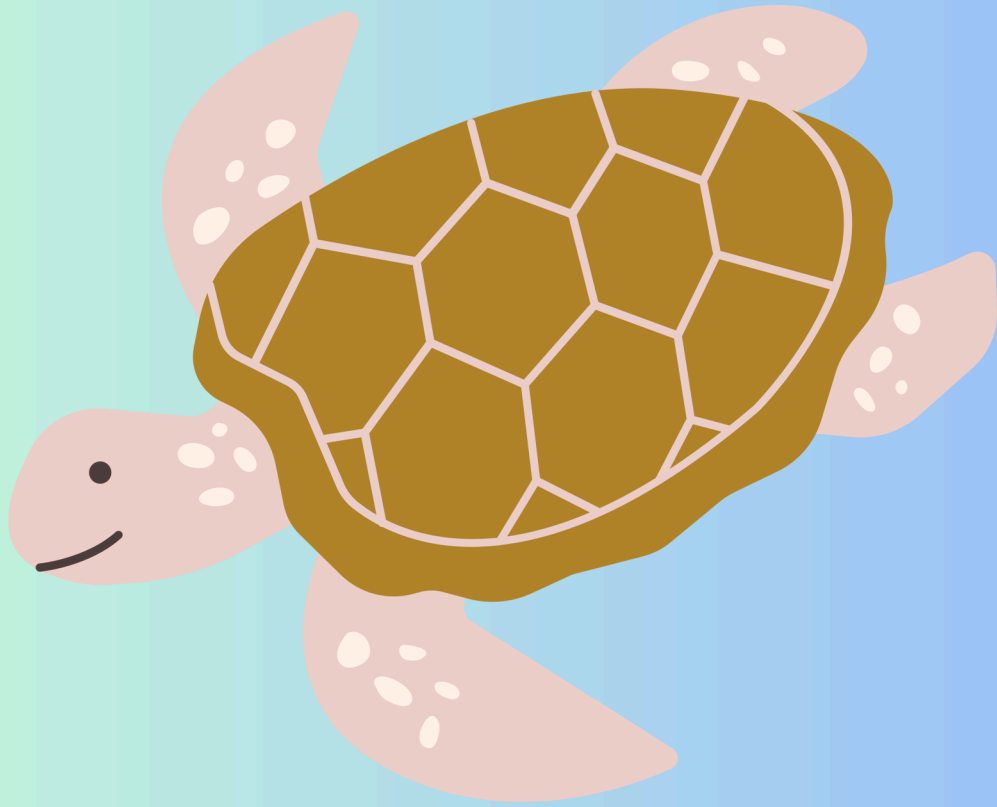
**WHICH MAMMAL RAISES ITS QUILLS WHEN
THREATENED?**

- A) BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN**
- B) CRESTED PORCUPINE**
- C) LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE**
- D) KENTISH PLOVER**



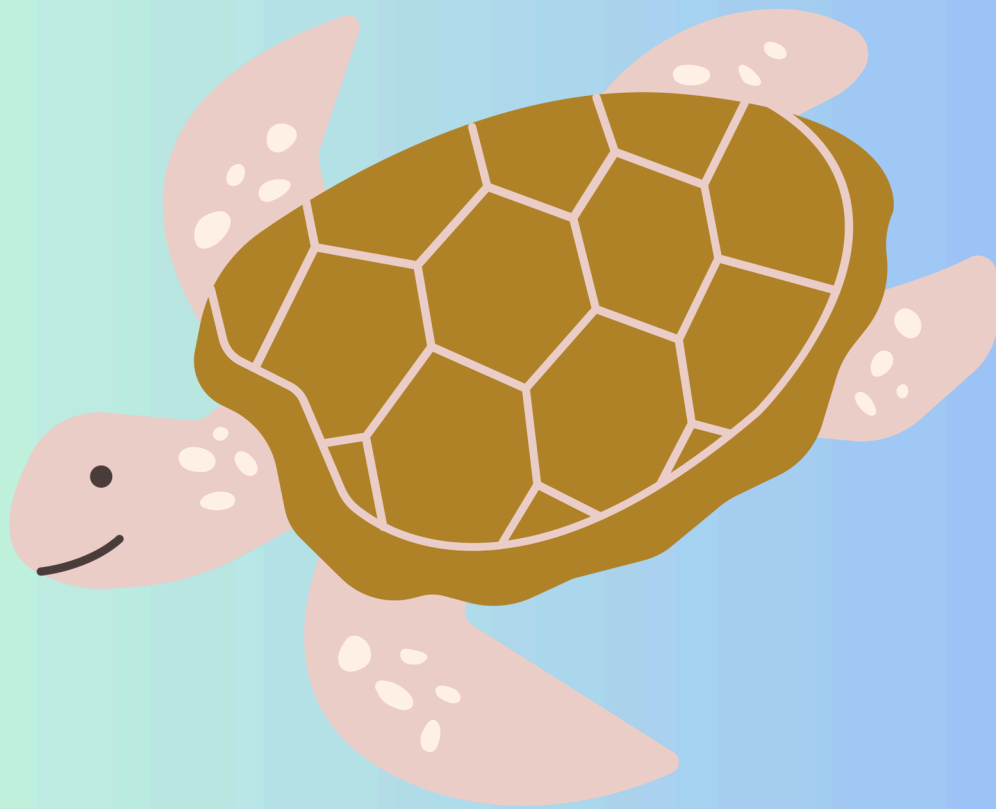
**WHICH PLANT HAS SILVERY LEAVES AND
YELLOW FLOWERS?**

- A) PINK CATCHFLY**
- B) SEA HOLLY**
- C) CRETAN TREFOIL**
- D) COASTAL MEDICK**



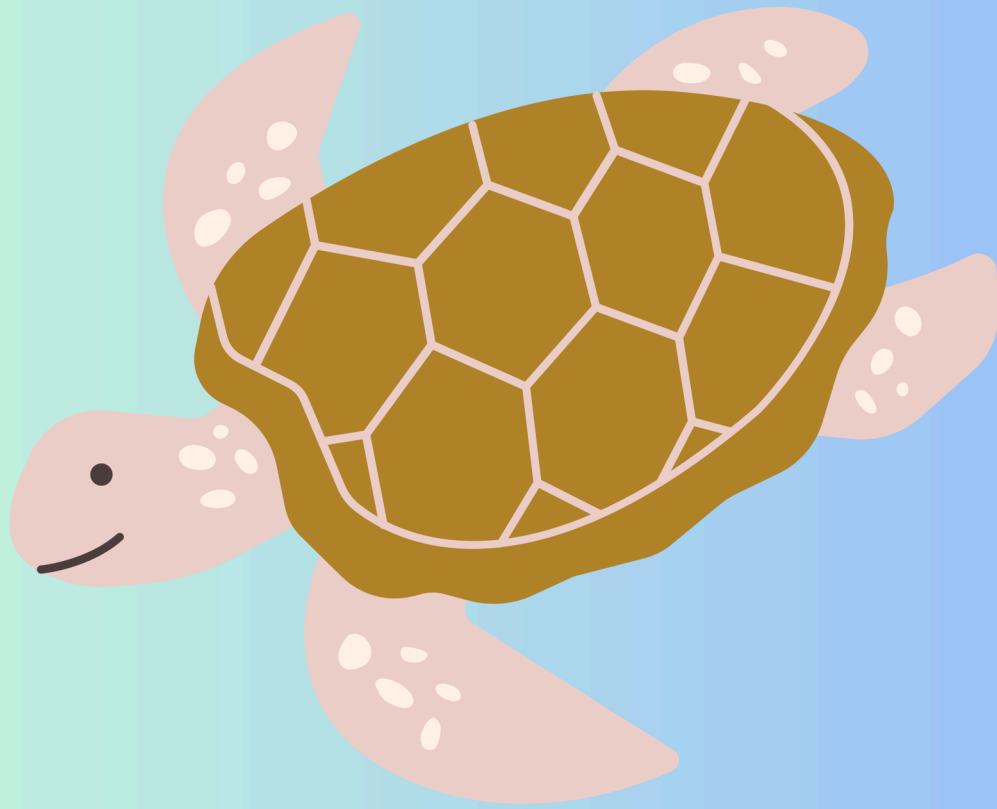
**WHICH PLANT HAS SPINY LEAVES AND PALE
BLUE FLOWERS?**

- A) SEA HOLLY**
- B) SPINY SEA FENNEL**
- C) COASTAL MEDICK**
- D) CRETAN TREFOIL**



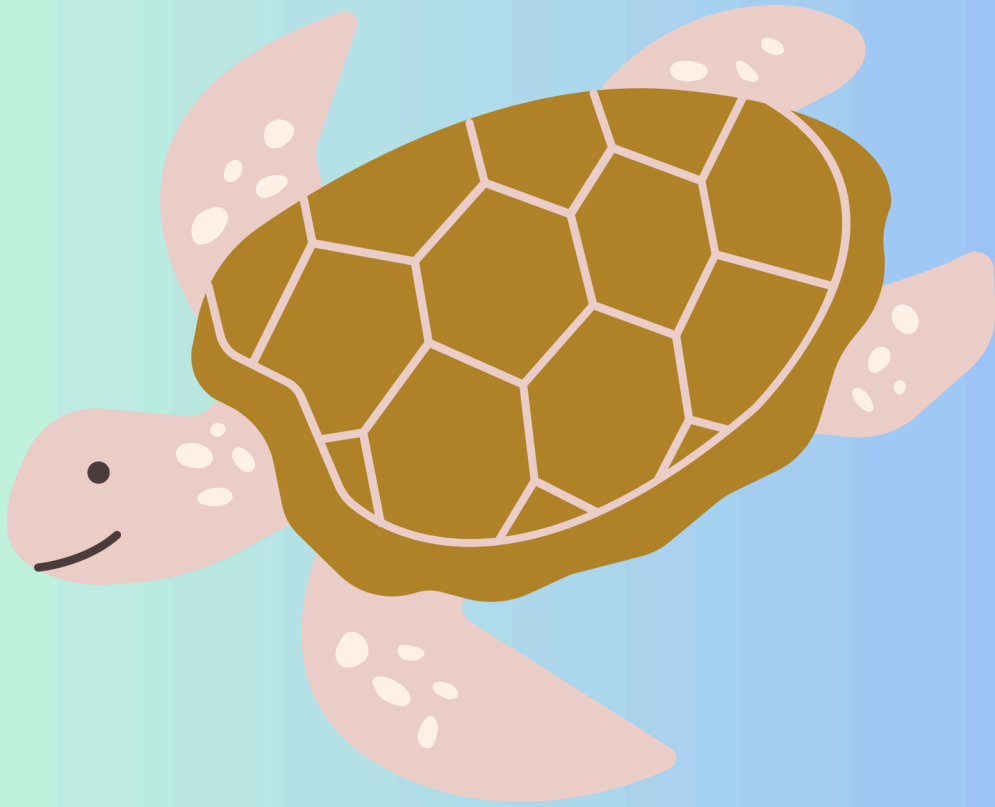
**WHICH PLANT HAS FLUFFY FLOWER HEADS
RESEMBLING A HARE'S TAIL?**

- A) HARE'S TAIL GRASS**
- B) SEA BINDWEED**
- C) PINK CATCHFLY**
- D) CRETAN TREFOIL**



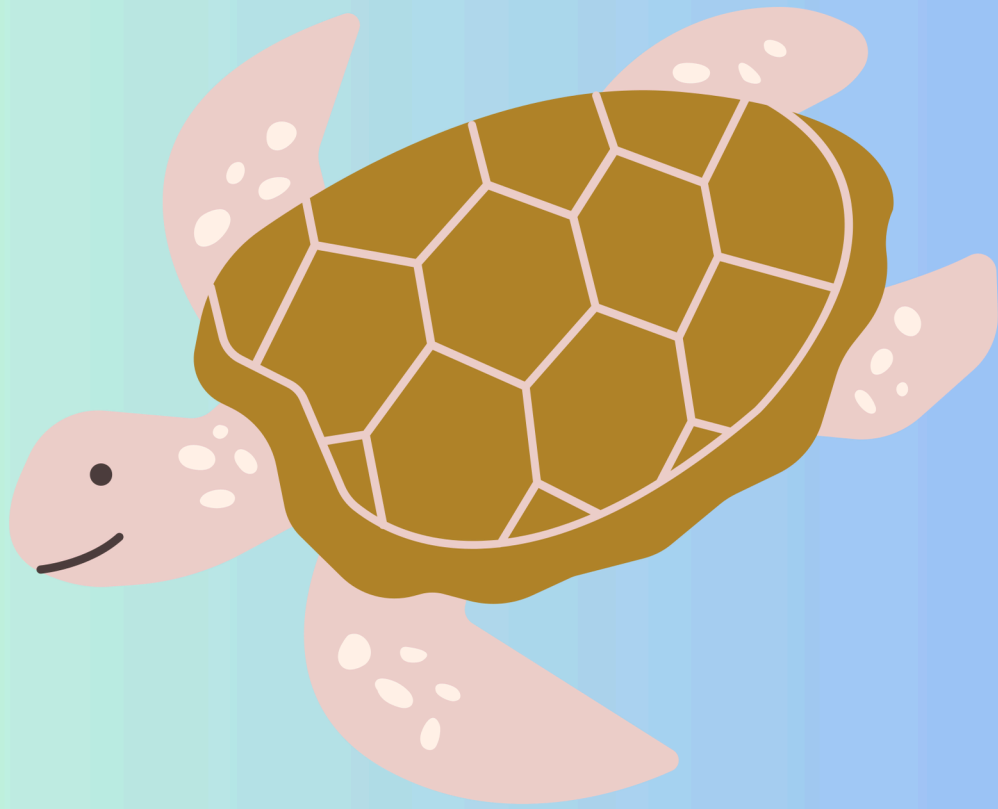
**WHAT IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN THE
PROTECTED AREA?**

- A) LITTERING**
- B) COASTAL EROSION**
- C) HUMAN DISTURBANCE**
- D) ALL OF THEM ARE CORRECT**



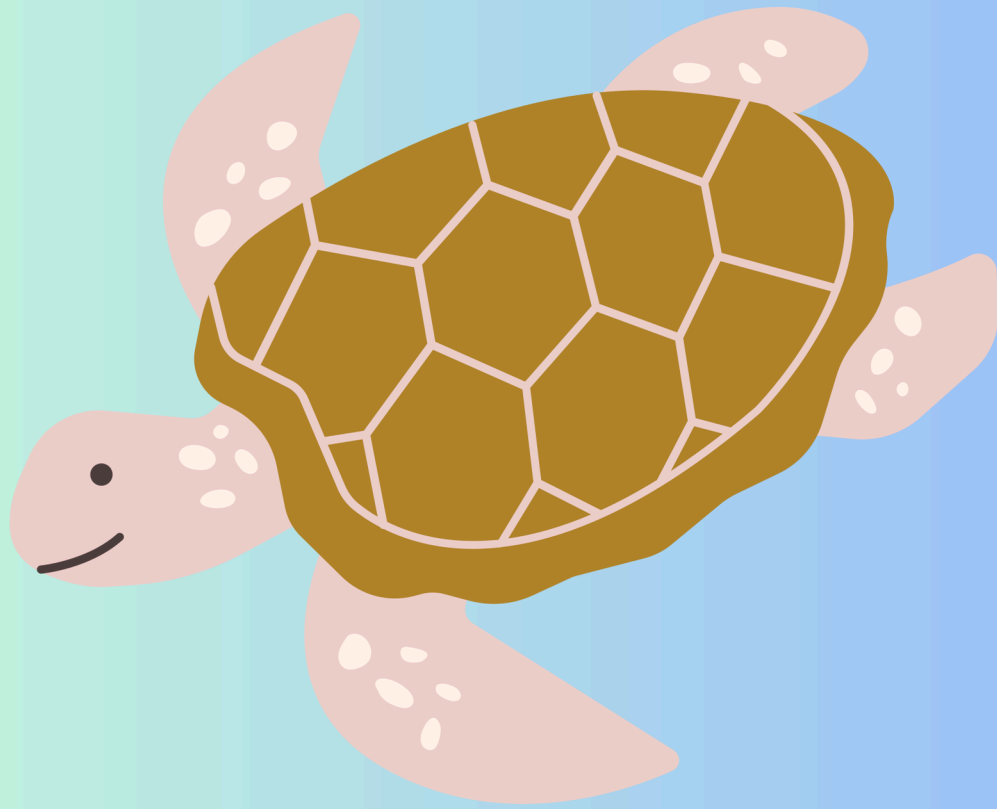
**HOW MANY FRATINI ARE THERE IN THE
RESERVE?**

- A) 132**
- B) 6**
- C) 54**
- D) 18**



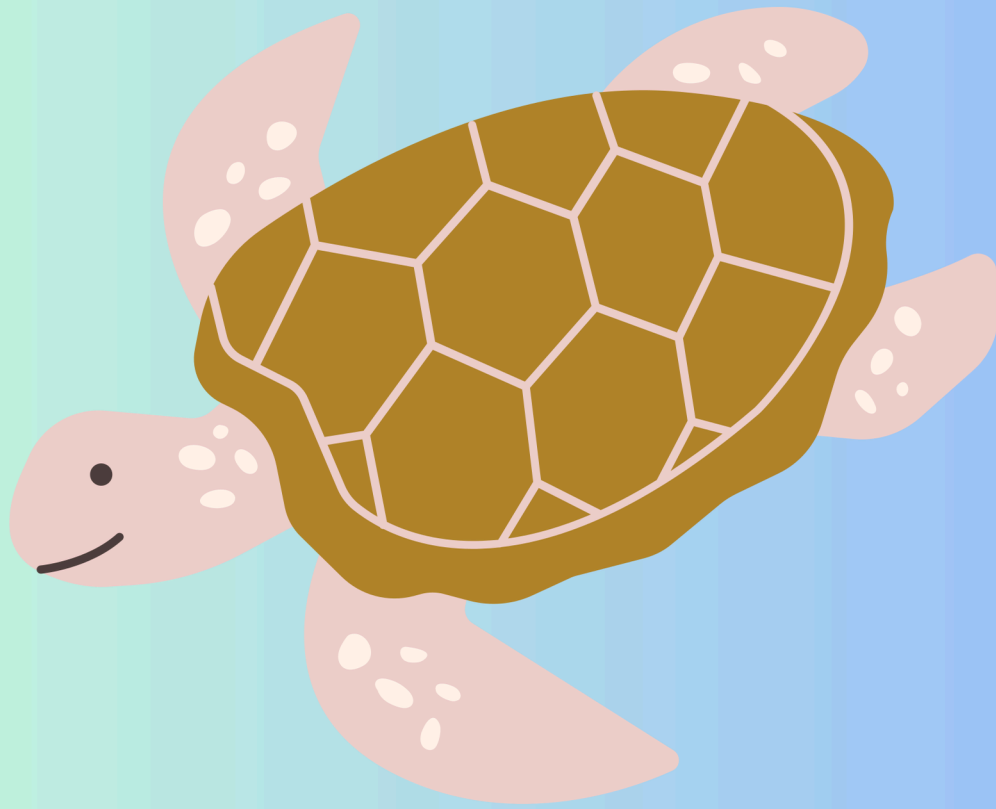
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU FIND TURTLE TRACKS OR A SEA TURTLE ON THE BEACH?

- A) PICK IT UP AND RETURN IT TO THE SEA**
- B) CALL LOCAL WILDLIFE RESCUE NUMBER**
- C) LEAVE IT ALONE AND WALK AWAY**



**WHAT IS ONE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF SAND
DUNES IN THE ECOSYSTEM?**

**MULTIPLE ANSWER: PROTECTION AGAINST
EROSION, HABITAT FOR SPECIES, NATURAL
BARRIER AGAINST STORMS, ETC.**



**WHICH SPINY PLANT CONSERVES WATER IN
COASTAL HABITATS?**

- A) SPINY SEA FENNEL**
- B) SEA HOLLY**
- C) SALTWORT**
- D) EUROPEAN SEA ROCKET**

AND THE WINNER IS...



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Borsacchio Beach: Towards Blue Flag Status

- A natural reserve with clear waters, dunes, and rich biodiversity, but still facing challenges to meet international standards.

Water quality

- Clear water, fine sand, unspoiled setting
- Problems: occasional pollution, litter, unpleasant smells
- Needs: monitoring, sewage treatment, better waste management, protection of dunes & wildlife

Environmental Management

- Protected reserve since 2005
- Volunteers support clean-ups, monitoring, dune restoration
- Challenges: urban pressure, climate change, limited funding
- Needs: management plan, legal safeguards, funding, sustainable tourism

Safety & Services

- Peaceful, natural atmosphere
- Lacks lifeguards, first-aid, signage, restrooms, accessibility
- Needs: lifeguards, first-aid, waste management, clean facilities, accessible paths

Environmental Education

- Local associations & schools involved
- Clean-ups, restoration, awareness campaigns
- Needs: year-round programs, digital tools (apps/QR), partnerships with businesses

Steps Towards Blue Flag

- Regular water testing & pollution control
- Stronger legal protection & dune restoration
- Safety services & accessibility
- Year-round education & community involvement
- Balance between natural beauty & international standards

AREA OF THE KENTISH PLOVER AND THE DUNES OF BORSACCHIO



The typical call is a short whistle "uit uit"; in case of alarm it becomes more decisive "kitap"

The Kentish Plover, *Charadrius alexandrinus*, is the smallest member of the Charadriidae family and a frequent visitor of beaches characterized by the presence of dunes. It can be easily recognized by its physical structure: long legs and dark beak; compact body with upper parts grayish and lower parts white. The female, without breast band, and the male are easily distinguished during the breeding season, when in this last one, in "nuptial attire," the head shows a rusty-colored cap without black edges, while the forehead and the supercilium join in a broad white band; on the sides of the neck a black stripe is interrupted just above the nape; a black stripe crosses the eyes. Juveniles, similar to females in winter plumage, have very light plumage and are poorly distinguishable from the sand.



The nest is a simple shallow cup, dug directly into the sand between March and August. The eggs, usually two to three, are sandy with black spots, and are incubated for 24-27 days. The chicks, 24-36 hours after hatching, leave the nest and are ready to follow their parents in search of food. They can be seen running quickly along the beach and dunes (hence the nickname *curri curri*), in search of small insects and marine invertebrates. In case of danger, the mother and father protect their chicks at all costs by defending the nest, even pretending to be injured to distract intruders and lead them away from the nest!

HOW CAN WE HELP THE KENTISH PLOVER?

Their eggs are small and camouflaged: when we walk on the beach, especially near vegetation, let's be very careful where we step!

If we find nests, eggs or chicks, let's remember not to touch them for any reason. Let's report immediately the discovery to the competent authority or WWF.

Let's respect dune vegetation, especially in areas where nests may be present, and keep our dogs on a leash.

THE "SAVE THE KENTISH PLOVER" PROJECT IN ABRUZZO

In Abruzzo, the species is present as a nesting, migratory, and wintering bird, especially in coastal dune areas. It is an excellent biological indicator of the ecological conditions of dune habitats.



A SPECIES AT RISK

The main causes of the risk of extinction of the Kentish Plover are:

- alteration of the habitat and disturbance during the nesting phase caused by human activities;
- cleaning of beaches with mechanical equipment that removes plants and natural materials deposited by the sea and destroys nests;
- anthropogenic disturbance with constant exploitation of natural areas turned into tourist facilities;
- the presence of dogs left free, foxes, crows, magpies, seagulls, which pose a danger both to eggs and chicks, often becoming prey.

Although it is widespread throughout the world, local populations have drastically declined and are at high numerical risk.

Since 2005, the species has been included in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive 79/409 as a "particularly protected species" and is safeguarded by the National Hunting Law. From here, the Marine Protected Area "Torre del Cerrano" and WWF, with other associations and many volunteers, have launched a protection project along the Abruzzo coast.

AREA OF THE KENTISH PLOVER AND
THE DUNES OF BORSACCHIO

Sea Bindweed
(*Calystegia soldanella*)

The Sea Bindweed (*Calystegia soldanella*) is a perennial plant, a pioneer of sandy dunes, very resistant and capable of colonizing the loose sand substrate.

Its ideal habitat is sandy ridges not too affected by human presence. It develops in the long rhizome that creeps underground. Its stem rests on the sand, while the leaves are kidney-shaped or shield-like with 5-7 clear longitudinal ribs. The leaves, of a dark green color, are thick and fleshy, with a rounded base reminiscent of a coin (hence the name "soldanella": the silver coin minted in May).

It blooms from April to May-August with pink funnel-shaped flowers streaked with white. The stems dry up in summer, but the underground rhizome survives.



Mullein
(*Verbascum niveum* subsp. *garganicum*)

The White Mullein (*Verbascum niveum* subsp. *garganicum*) is a herbaceous plant present in the back part of the consolidated embryonic dune.

It stands out for its particularly beautiful flowering: colonies and populations are covered with bright yellow petals. It is an exclusive endemic species of the central-southern Adriatic, particularly widespread in Abruzzo. From a morphological point of view, it is a tall, robust plant, with an erect stem covered by thick hairiness that gives it a silvery appearance.

Its state of flowering occurs between June and September, manifesting itself in tall flowering stems that rise above all surrounding vegetation.

The White Mullein thus becomes an indicator species of consolidated dune environments, able to enrich the coastal landscape with its presence.



Sea Daffodil
(*Pancratium maritimum*)

The Sea Daffodil is a splendid perennial bulbous plant, with a deeply buried bulb that allows it to continue to survive in the harsh conditions of sandy coasts.

Its ribbon-like, gray-green leaves with parallel veins emerge from the underground bulb and appear in spring. The showy flower is composed of large white corolla-like tepals with a long tube and a white central crown.

It blooms in late summer, from July to September. On sandy beaches, its seeds, contained in a capsule, are easily carried away by the wind (anemochory) and by floating in seawater (hydrochory). It is particularly visible on the sandy dunes of the Abruzzo coast, where it stands out during the strong summer heat.



DUNE - What are they?

A dune is an accumulation of sand generated by the action of wind transporting grains and depositing them along the coast, forming characteristic structures typical of sandy coastal areas.

Defined as real sandy ridges shaped by the dynamic morphology induced essentially by the force of the wind and the breaking of waves.

The dune is a living and dynamic environment where specialized plants and animals live, able to adapt to an extreme environment: surviving the movement of sand, the lack of fresh water, resisting high salinity, developing special adaptations, such as deep root systems to anchor themselves, fleshy leaves, reduction of transpiration, etc. Thanks to these adaptations, vegetation represents the fundamental biological filter for dune ecosystems, stabilizing them and making them more resilient to marine storms and winds.

The vegetation varies according to the degree of proximity to the sea and the stabilization of the sand: we thus distinguish embryonic dunes, mobile dunes, and consolidated dunes. Each hosts specialized plant species with adaptations in relation to their position.

Mobile dunes are characterized by the presence of grasses with underground rhizomes (*Ammophila arenaria*) that fix the sand and give the typical morphology. Consolidated dunes host bushes, small trees, and Mediterranean scrub vegetation.

DUNE - Why are they important?

The dune system is a unique habitat of enormous ecological and landscape value. It has multiple functions:

It constitutes a natural defense against erosion and flooding;

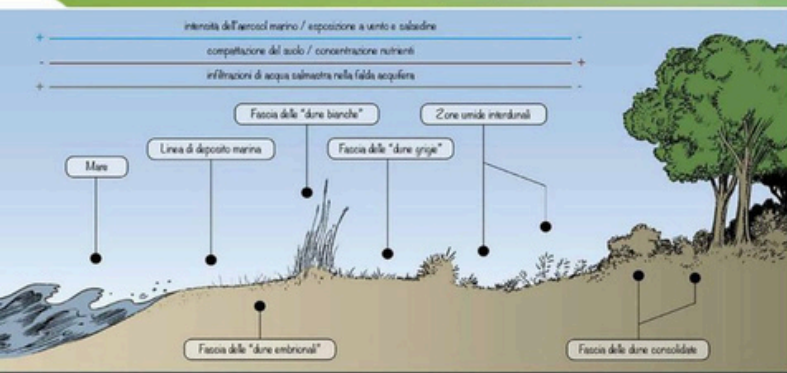
It represents an important barrier against the force of storms and rising sea levels caused by climate change;

It is a natural biological filter that improves water quality;

It is a source of biodiversity, hosting unique plant and animal species highly specialized and often rare.

Unfortunately, coastal dune systems are among the most threatened habitats in the Mediterranean. Their vulnerability is amplified by the strong anthropogenic impact due to the exploitation of sandy coasts, tourist activities, cleaning with mechanical means, and uncontrolled trampling.

For this reason, preserving coastal dunes and restoring degraded habitats is a priority objective to guarantee the survival of these natural systems that protect our coasts and preserve biodiversity.



Infrastructure Maintenance



The workshop was engaged and focused on the infrastructural needs of the Nature Reserve. The general aim was to support its management and maintenance with placement activities (e.g. structures to protect Kentish plover and turtle nests, planting trees) and preparation of specific panels and signs related to the Dune system, the source of the Accolle and other spots of the Nature Reserve.





Ready to experience the
beauty of the great outdoors
work?
Great news! You are in the
maitanance team!

Our Contact



What Our Volunteers Said About Their Experience In *Borsaccio Nature Reserve*



*This is not a solo
mission. It's a
community adventure.
Join in, share it, live it.*
-Germán Amián Mata



*Volunteering here isn't
about working alone, it's
about sharing laughs,
sweat, and stories.*
-Ivana Rabrenović

*"Being a volunteer in
such a beautiful place
connects us even more
with the nature."*
-Rastko Đukić



Borsacchio Maintenance Guide



Your unforgettable nature
adventure starts here



Meet your guides

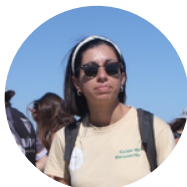
"The time stops and the heart get relax in Borsacchio "

Marco Quaranta



"A home for a lot of species of fauna and flora"

Micaela Di Gialluca



"A treasure of biodiversity, last authentic place where past, present and future meet"

Marco Borgatti



Activities to protect

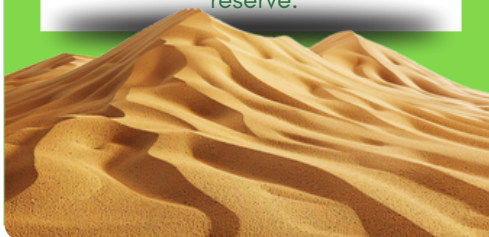


Protect the fratino

Their eggs are fragile. Build wire cages (30–40 cm high), overlap edges, and tie firmly.

Guard the dunes

Mark the protected area with poles (8–10 steps apart, 0.5 m deep). Use short ropes (only 2 poles each) with strong knots. Add signs so visitors respect the reserve.



How to plant trees Step By Step Guide

How do I prepare the tree base?

Clear a 50 cm radius around the trunk—no grass, no weeds.

How should I prune branches?

Cut small shoots or branches with a diagonal cut so the tree heals faster.

How do I keep the tree stable?

Place two wooden sticks firmly into the ground next to the tree. Use two ropes (top & bottom) and twist them around the sticks for extra support.



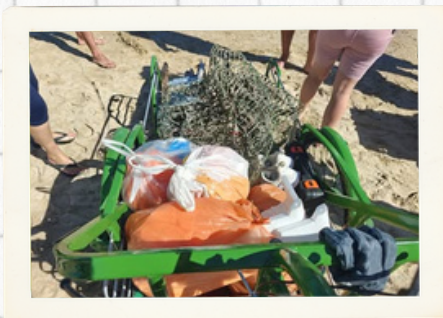
Infrastructure & Maintenance Group - Activity Report

The activities of the Infrastructure & Maintenance Group commenced on the afternoon of Saturday, September 20, following a morning excursion to the "Oasi dei Calanchi di Atri." At the headquarters of the Associazione Guide del Borsacchio, participants were divided into three specialized workgroups:

- Group 1: Fabricated supports for information signage to be installed within the Borsacchio Nature Reserve, utilizing reclaimed materials;
- Group 2: Managed the design and printing of the signage;
- Group 3: Constructed protective cages designed to safeguard the nesting sites of the Snowy Plover (Fratino).

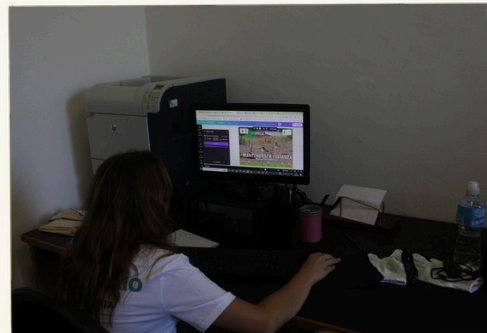


On the morning of September 21, the team conducted a manual cleaning of the Reserve's coastline. During this session, they installed the signage produced the previous day and erected posts and ropes to delineate the dune systems and the breeding habitats of the Snowy Plover. Following the midday break, operations resumed throughout the afternoon.



On Monday, September 22, the morning session was dedicated to the planting of Tamarisk trees. In the afternoon, participants initiated workshops to document and present their work. They were organized into two functional units:

- Unit A: Developed a vademecum (handbook) outlining best practices for conduct within the Reserve, alongside informational content regarding the volunteer operations of the Guide del Borsacchio;*
- Unit B: Prepared a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the activities completed during the previous days.*



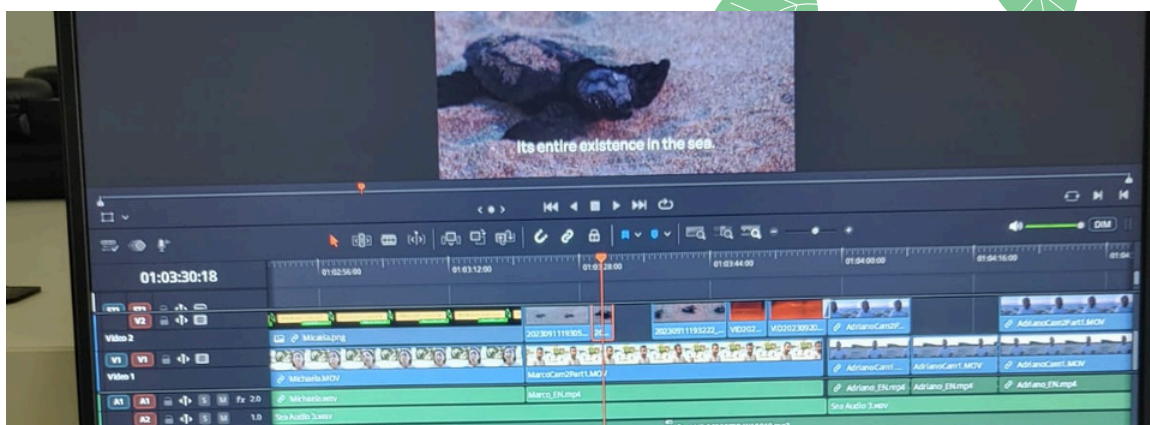
The morning of Tuesday, September 23, was utilized to finalize the ongoing projects. The program concluded in the afternoon with a public presentation of the results, held in the presence of the Mayor and the Councilor for Tourism of Roseto degli Abruzzi.



Promotional/documentary video



The workshop was engaged and focused on the creation of different kind of promotional/documentary videos connected with the Nature Reserve and its biodiversity. The main aim was to generate condensed, powerful, easy to understand positive messages and behaviours capable to help the relationship between Nature and citizens in order to facilitate and improve the common living together within the protected area. In particular, 3 videos have been prepared by participants together with the facilitator related to the subjects of Volunteering (how important volunteers are to the maintenance of the reserve, how this allows the reserve to engage with the local community, personal benefits of being a volunteer), Tourism (impact of tourism on Nature Reserve, how this puts the reserve into conflict with building developers, and how tourists in the area can behave in a way that is compatible with the goals of the Borsacchio Reserve) and Political landscape of Nature Reserves in Abruzzo (how the reserves interact with the social and political contexts, the challenges they face, why their work is important and their hopes for the future).



Natural Reserve of Borsacchio



SCAN ME



Esplorando il Borsacchio: volontariato per il futuro



SCAN ME



Esplorando il Borsacchio: turismo solidale



SCAN ME



Scambio Giovanile Internazionale
"PROTECTED AREAS: A PLAYGROUND
FOR THE INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE"

Condivisione dei risultati dei Workshop

**23
settembre
2025
ore 18.00**

Villaggio Lido d'Abruzzo
Roseto degli Abruzzi

- Environmental Education
- Infrastructure Maintenance
- Promotional Video



Erasmus+



Funded by
the European Union



Agenzia Italiana
per la Gioventù



Participants

Bulgaria

Polina Kazakova, Mina Popova, Andrea- Maria Dimitrova, Daniela Gospodinova, Ekaterina Dimitrova, Sashka Vitanova

Spain

German Amian Mata, Laura Rubio Ungueti, Daniel Ortega Cámara, Jonathan García Fernández, Andrea González, Elena Galán Ruiz

Italy

Alex Montanari, Giulia Salvemini, Alessia Micoli, Marco Borgatti, Agata De Ascentiis, Marco Quaranta, Micaela Di Gialluca

Portugal

Ana Cerqueira, Raquel Vieira, João Teixeira, Miguel Cardoso Cardoso, Rita Oliveira, Beatriz Ribeiro

Serbia

Ivana Rabrenović, Rastko Đukić, Ivan Konstantinovic, Srđan Vukašinić, David Pajić, Anja Nikić

Slovakia

Andrej Šijak, István Szőke, Gabriel Balog, Štefan Dávid Gášpar, Jakub Stodolica, Veronika Zeleňáková

Special thanks to those who supported and helped in the realisation of the Youth Exchange:

Andrea Natale from the Abruzzo Institute for Protected Areas

The volunteers from the Associazione Guide del Borsacchio

The citizens and the Municipality of Roseto degli Abruzzi

Associazione Vecchio Borgo of the Museo civico della cultura materiale from Roseto degli Abruzzi

We are all just human beings: for this reason, it is possible that this dossier contains mistakes and inaccuracies.

Feel free to write us to: circoloarcichieti@yahoo.it

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Thank you

2026



