

The Mediterranean Sea: incomparable wealth in steep decline

September 27 2017



Credit: Jorge Sierra / WWF-Spain

Along its 46,000km coastline, the Mediterranean Sea supports around 150 million people living along its shores. The report *Reviving the Economy of the Mediterranean Sea: Actions for a sustainable future*,

launched today, shows that the Mediterranean Sea plays a fundamental role in the region's economy but that the sea's underlying natural asset base – which supports much of the economy and community wellbeing – is eroding.

The report, produced by WWF in association with The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), is the most focused review yet of the Mediterranean Sea's natural asset base. It reveals the enormous benefits that the Mediterranean Sea brings to the region's [economy](#) and proposes six strategic priorities to achieve a [sustainable future](#) for the Mediterranean.

The report maps the contribution of the sea to the region in new ways and finds that the overall value of the Mediterranean's natural assets is at least US\$5.6 trillion. This value draws on assets including productive coastlines, fisheries and seagrass. The sea's annual estimated economic output is at least US\$450 billion.

If the Mediterranean Sea was its own economy, it would be the fifth largest in the region – bigger than most of the region's national economies – generating about as much annual economic output as Algeria, Greece and Morocco combined.

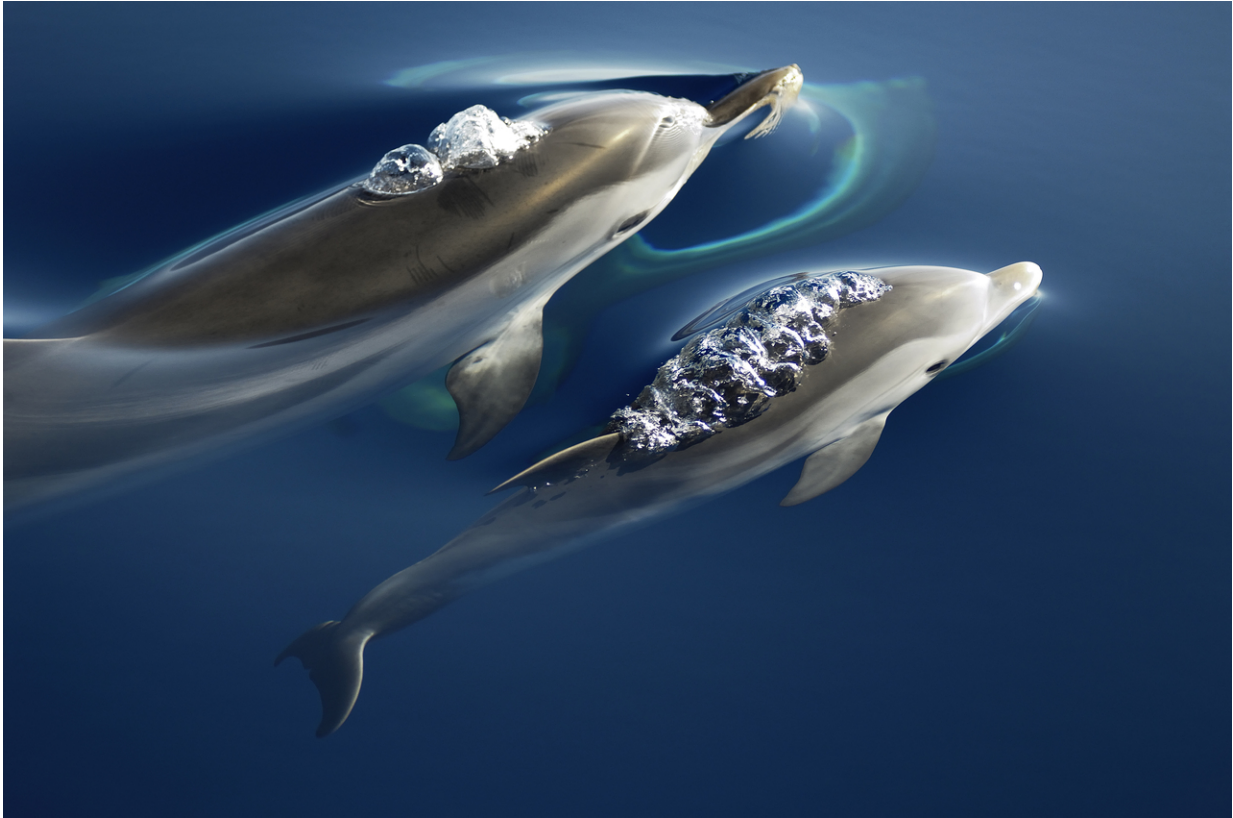
The report also reveals, however, that many principal assets in the Mediterranean Sea are declining because of unsustainable exploitation and that the use of these resources is accelerating. The report focusses on the fisheries sector and the rapidly growing tourism industry and shows that the health of the Mediterranean Sea is at a turning point.



Credit: Ivan Bura

"This new analysis adds considerable weight to the case for conservation to be an even higher priority for Mediterranean leaders. We have seen good commitments in the past but an objective analysis shows that we are running out of time and that we need action on a much greater scale and urgency if we are to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for the Mediterranean.", said Demetres Karavellas, CEO of WWF-Greece.

In his foreword, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, said, "developing a strong and sustainable Blue Economy for the Mediterranean region will greatly depend on keeping our sea, coastlines, and marine ecosystems healthy, and where possible to restore degraded ecosystems. We cannot continue to erode the very assets that Mediterranean cultures and economies depend on."



Credit: Frédéric Basmayousse

BCG Partner and Managing Director, Nicolas Kachaner, said, "With this analysis, no one can be in any doubt about the importance of carefully managing the sea assets that underpin so much of the Mediterranean economy. A prudent economic approach would see strong conservation actions rolled out across the region to secure its natural assets, otherwise the region's economic foundations could seriously be threatened."

"We are seeing many fish populations, coastal areas and ocean ecosystems coming under immense pressure around the world and in important regions like the Mediterranean. We also are witnessing an unprecedented focus on the ocean and leaders in the Mediterranean and

beyond can seize this moment to commit to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the global climate agreement of 2015. There is no time to lose." adds John Tanzer, Leader for Oceans at WWF.



Credit: WWF

Provided by WWF

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