

The Mediterranean Sea Mollusks – a school shell collection

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The aim of the present project is to develop the students awareness of human activities impact on mollusks population in the Mediterranean Sea.

Students have studied about the Geography of the Mediterranean Sea and they have the theoretical knowledge related to the its specific flora and fauna. One of the main fears related to the Mediterranean Sea is the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity due to biological disturbance, climate change and human activities. Out of all reasons, the human impact is considered to be the major cause of habitat loss, degradation and extinction. Regarding the Phylum Mollusca a major threat is represented by unregulated fisheries and shell traffic.

In order to enable the students possibility to observe the great diversity of the Phylum Mollusca in the Mediterranean Sea, a school shell collection was made. The shells were brought by the students and they had to mention if the shells were bought, received as a souvenir or picked from their environment. Further, the students learned how to prepare the shells for the collection. The next step involved the shell classification and by this activity the students learned how to use the IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature database to identify the threatened species, as well as the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) for a correct identification of the species. As Romania bordering the Black Sea, the students had the opportunity to identify the mollusks species common for both the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea.

The objectives of this study were to highlight the human-environment relation and the interconnection between environment conditions and life quality, to develop the students research, exploration and investigation skills, to be able to identify the causes of species extinction and methods that can be taken, understand what is an endangered species and how can the students contribute to this phenomenon and how to reduce their traffic, as well as acquiring scientific knowledge regarding taxonomy and using scientific databases.

This project has a practical, as well as a theoretical purpose and represents a valuable adjacent material as a modern educational system. It is an important tool for the scientific preparation of the students and an opportunity to educate them in the spirit of environmental protection.