

Observatoire PELAGIS



Pelagis carries out three missions that define its role as a Support and Research Unit (UAR 3462), (1) Research in ecology and conservation of marine mammals, (2) Support for research into marine megafauna through the collection and long-term banking of data and tissues, (3) Support for public conservation policies, through its role as an expert for the Ministry of Ecology, and the production of population status indicators.

It also manages the databases associated with research programmes and is linked to the Centre d'Études Biologiques de Chizé (CEBC).

Discipline—Ecology

Directors—**Florence Caurant / Jérôme Spitz**

Permanent research staff—**3**

Permanent technical assistant staff—**5**

Staff on research project—**22**



— Societal challenges

Preservation

Carrying out dedicated aerial surveys for the identification of oceanic areas with a high biodiversity of marine predators. Participation in ecosystem-based at-sea surveys to study temporal trends in species distribution. Use of strandings to study the health status of populations. Contribution to the implementation of French obligations in terms of marine mammal and bird conservation within the framework of the European network "Natura 2000 at sea" and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 June 2008). Support for managers of natural areas of importance for these species.

Human activities

Study of human activities and their impact on marine mammal and bird populations. The impact of interactions with fishing gear is particularly studied with regard to the common dolphin in the Bay of Biscay and the porpoise in the English Channel. In addition, the contamination of populations by Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and toxic metals is monitored within the framework of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008).

Database

Pelagis develops and manages various databases forming an information system on marine megafauna that is unique in France: data from sea surveys (aircraft and boats) and stranding data. Some of the data is made public through national (INP, Sextant) and international (Obis Seamap) portals or can be viewed directly on the observatory's website.



– Research Network

Pelagis benefits from the support of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, the French Office of Biodiversity and local authorities including the La Rochelle agglomeration community. Pelagis participates in numerous working groups of international agreements such as the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the OSPAR Commission, the Agreement for the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) or the International Whaling Commission. Pelagis coordinates the National Stranding Network (RNE).



– Expertise Achievements

Pelagis carries out dedicated aerial campaigns in France and overseas. It participates in international campaigns in the north-east Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea. The objectives are to assess the biodiversity of the marine megafauna, to determine the distribution and preferential habitats and to detect possible temporal changes. Reports of the surveys are produced and the data are used in scientific publications.

As part of the coordination of the National Stranding Network (RNE), correspondents are regularly trained and guides and carcasse examination sheets are produced. The RNE meets every year at a seminar to report on the work carried out during the year. A stranding report is published annually.



Training

MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

- ▶ programme Coastal Geosciences and Geophysics
- ▶ programme Environmental Management and Coastal Ecology
- ▶ programme Geography applied to coastal management
- ▶ programme Environmental Management

– Partnerships Collaborations



Data and samples are the source of numerous collaborations with research laboratories at both national and international levels. Pelagis provides its expertise to the managers of protected natural areas such as the marine natural parks of Mayotte, Iroise and the marine natural park of the Gironde estuary and the Pertuis sea. Pelagis participates in a national working group with representatives from the Ministry of Ecological Transition, the French Office for Biodiversity, fishermen and NGOs, which aims to reduce the incidental capture of common dolphins in the Bay of Biscay. Pelagis also participates in European working groups on this same topic.



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