

**Adriana Vella**  
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Prof. Adriana Vella, PhD (Cambridge), has been active in conservation and biodiversity research for 25 years as a full-time academic at the University of Malta. Her field and laboratory research work has allowed new discoveries and expanded knowledge in the area of conservation and molecular genetics linked to diverse species from the Maltese Islands. She has also supervised research projects focusing on both marine species, such as bony and cartilaginous fish, cetaceans, turtles and terrestrial species, such as bats, hedgehogs and invertebrates, since 1998, thus contributing to upgrading the scientific information required to improve conservation measures for local to regional biodiversity. The various projects involved field distribution surveys and molecular genetics to identify and study these species genetically. Adriana has also founded the Biological Conservation Research Foundation, BICRREF NGO, so as to facilitate voluntary work on vulnerable species and habitats at local and regional levels. She is deputy leader of WG3 on Genomics and Ecosystem services for COST Action G-BiKE

Image below shows one of the various creatures, indigenous or alien species, Adriana and her team have been working on. First molecular barcoding and record of the Indo-Pacific punctuated flatworm *Maritigrella fuscopunctata* (Newman & Cannon 2000), (Polycladida: Euryleptidae) from the Mediterranean Sea.

