



JELLYFISH SPOTTING CITIZEN SCIENCE CAMPAIGN IN MALTA: Spot the jellyfish

The Spot the Jellyfish initiative (www.ioikids.net/jellyfish) was initially developed within the ambit of the “Women, Youth and the Sea” programme funded by the International Ocean Institute (IOI). It is coordinated by Prof. Aldo Drago with the technical and scientific implementation of Dr. Alan Deidun and other staff at IOI-Malta Operational Centre, and enjoys the support of the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) and of Nature Trust, Friends of the Earth, EkoSkola, BlueFlag Malta programme and Sharklab. The initiative follows a citizen science approach and relies on the collaboration of the general public, mariners, divers, and especially the younger generations through their teachers and parents, by recruiting their assistance in recording the presence and location of different jellyfish through the use of a dedicated colourful reporting leaflet. The reporting is done by simply matching the sighted jellyfish with a simple visual identification guide, giving the date and time of the sighting, and indicating the number of jellies seen. Sightings can be also reported online or submitted through an SMS on 79 222 278, or by sending an email message to ioi-moc@um.edu.mt.

Jellyfish reports within the the Spot the Jellyfish are shared with the MED-JELLYRISK community in support of a pan-Mediterranean data collection effort and also makes the jellyfish occurrence forecast available within the MED-JELLY smart phone application possible. The campaign has received international recognition for its citizen science value – for instance, global citizen science fora, such as the “Science for Citizens” blog (<http://www.scienceforcitizens.net/blog/2010/08/spot-the-jellyfish-here-or-in-malta/>) and the Science 2.0 network (http://www.science20.com/citizen_science_journal/jellyfish_reporting_citizen_scientists_malta) carried an extensive feature on the Maltese initiative.

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