

FIRST AID PROTOCOLS FOR DOLPHINS AND SEA TURTLES IN ADRIATIC SEA DESIGNED WITHIN BLUE PROJECT

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The Adriatic Sea is an important habitat for dolphins and sea turtles. In this region, interaction with humans occurs frequently and it can be lethal for these animals. Most dolphin injuries and deaths are caused by entanglement in fishing nets and other fishing gear. Sea turtles are affected by the same previously mentioned dangers, to which we need to add hypothermia and motorboat collision. The help given by the finder can often save the injured and/or sick animal.

In order to educate and inform the general public, we have designed first aid protocols for dolphins and sea turtles. These protocols were developed within the project dedicated to the development of community-engaged learning at our faculty (short title the Blue Project). They show step-by-step procedures on how to help an injured or sick animal.

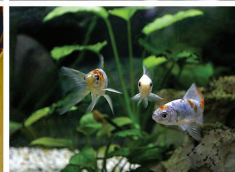
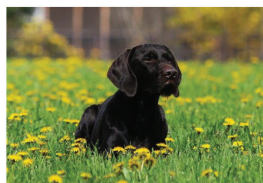
In case of an injured, sick or dead dolphin or sea turtle, the finder should call the emergency number 112 and a proper veterinary care will be organised. During very cold winters, the sea turtles found on the sea surface should be taken out of the water and warmed up. In summer, they need to be placed in the shade. Fishing gear or plastic objects should be carefully removed from entangled dolphins. Stranded dolphins should be covered with wet cloth, and in doing so, covering of the nostrils should be avoided. The finder should be aware of protective measures to minimise the risk of acquiring zoonotic diseases as well as of a possibility of being injured by the animal.

The protocols are available at the Blue Project web page (<https://www.argonauta.hr/plavi-projekt/>) and will be distributed to tourist agencies, police stations, coast guards and veterinary clinics along the Croatian coast and islands in order to raise public awareness.



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