ID 32

“Delphy, the Guardian of Capo Granitola”: from stranded cetacean to a tool for Marine Biodiversity Communication

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SCAN ME

The Project

A scientific comic book that reclaims a stranded Stenella coeruleoalba — legally classified as "special waste" — into a scientific, educational and cultural resource through osteological reconstruction and 3D scanning.
The dolphin's digital model becomes Delphy, protagonist and narrative voice of the comic, blending marine biology, digital technology and visual storytelling.

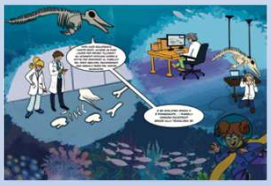
Key Message

"Knowledge is the highest form of respect we can have for nature“

A journey through science and storytelling that reveals the unique traits and challenges of the cetaceans inhabiting the Sicily Channel — once feared as "monsters," now recognized as guardians of Mediterranean biodiversity.

CNR-IAS · Capo Granitola - *Located at the crossroads of Africa and Europe in the Strait of Sicily. A multidisciplinary research centre in a former tonnara (tuna fishery) studying cetacean populations, marine biodiversity and anthropogenic impacts.*

Cetacean Bio-Reconstruction Laboratory - *A unique laboratory combining biology, anatomy, technology and museology. 3D scanning produces high-resolution digital models used for biometric analysis, trauma identification, and faithful anatomical replicas for museums and schools.*



From Stranding to Story — The Delphy Journey

Stranding
Stenella found on SW Sicilian coast

3D Reconstruction
Skeleton scanned and digitally modelled

Necropsy
Cause of death: Anisakis parasite

Delphy
Digital hero becomes comic and exhibit

Threats Illustrated

Fishing
Bycatch & gear entanglement

Traffic
Ship strikes & collisions

Pollution
Chemical & acoustic pollution

Food scarcity
Overfishing depletes resources

The Sperm Whale of Capo Granitola A Case Study

2 June 2007 — *Sperm whale strands in the port of Mazara del Vallo — fatal collision with a vessel*

3 Days — *Researchers extract bones from landfill site*

3 Years — *Bones treated and prepared for reconstruction*

2 Years — *Skeleton reconstructed with Argentine specialist Pablo Alberto Raposo*

Today — *Skeleton dominates the promontory of Capo Granitola as* ***"Guardian of the Sea"***

Comics as a Science Communication Tool

- **Scientific Literacy** — *Accessible language for students, citizens & stakeholders*
- **Third Mission** — *Bridges research institutions and society*
- **Citizen Science** — *Promotes environmental education & biodiversity conservation*
- **Cultural Heritage** — *Connects science with local traditions — cetaceans as "Guardians of the Lighthouse"*

Delphy demonstrates how creative media can effectively translate complex scientific knowledge into an inclusive and engaging language

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