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Developing Mediterranean Monk Seal Education Games for *Shaping* a Sustainable Future in the framework of the management of the Natura 2000 Network in Cyprus

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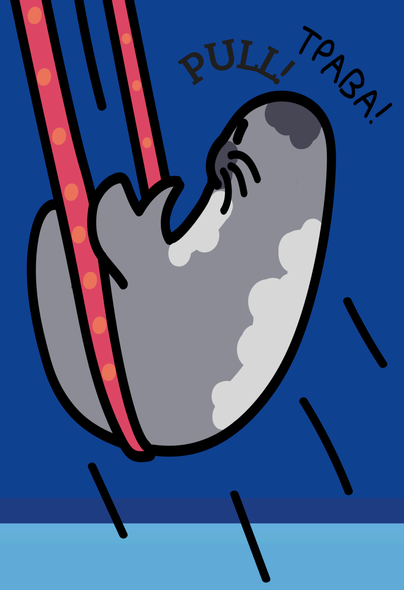
ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Pandoteira project (LIFE IP Physis, LIFE18 IPE/CY/000006 https://pandoteira.cy/), consists of a group of actions all interlinked in a framework with the purpose of making the Natura 2000 network in Cyprus more effective and functional, as well as sustainable.

The overarching goal of the project is
-to achieve a favourable conservation status for habitats and species of community importance.
-to positively influence land users, owners, local communities, the society in general and other stakeholders in understanding the importance of the Natura 2000 network and embracing it



ABOUT *Monachus monachus*

-the only pinniped species found in the Mediterranean Sea
-one of the most endangered marine mammals in the world
-included in Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
-uses sea caves that are protected under the E.U. Habitats Directive and national legislation
-a dedicated monitoring program for the species was formally established in 2010 by the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research (DFMR) through the Cyprus National Monitoring Team
-through LIFE ADAPTS further protection actions from threats posed by climate change are being taken

METHODOLOGY

-As part of the Pandoteira project, educational material dedicated to the Mediterranean monk seal (***Monachus monachus***) has been prepared by DFMR and Frederick University.
-The two organizations joined forces to create five different educational board games to be presented to schools all over Cyprus.
-The board games were developed and designed by students of Frederick University and were funded by the Pandoteira project.

RESULTS

These interactive educational games
-are fun,
-raise awareness about a protected species and its habitat,
-promote collaboration,
-boost motivation,
-encourage critical thinking,
-engage all students,
-increase attentiveness, and
-help develop social skills.

Children are playing together and learn in an interactive way about this protected species, and can better understand the threats and problems that affect species' survival.

Encouraging results are evident from the degree of friendly attitudes and behaviors towards marine protected species and the marine environment.

CONCLUSION

By educating children, the next generation of potential ambassadors for marine issues is being created.

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