

# **SPAMI Day and Marine Education Trail in Landscape Park Strunjan**

*- MINI PROJECT ACTIVITY REPORT*



**SPAMI** day  
 15 April

## 1. Introduction

The SPAMI Day is an annual celebration dedicated to promoting Mediterranean marine conservation and protected areas. It was established during the COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention and is officially observed on 15 April each year. The primary objective of SPAMI Day is to raise awareness about ocean conservation and highlight the significance of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) - exceptional marine areas managed in an exemplary manner.

SPAMI Day 2023 focused on the theme of co-management and involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the management of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs). The aim was to recognize and encourage the various dynamics involving different stakeholders within SPAMIs, contributing to transformative change in preserving and restoring ecosystems and promoting harmonious coexistence with nature.

As part of the third edition of the SPAMI Twinning Programme, funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, SPA/RAC provided support to Mediterranean Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in implementing activities to celebrate SPAMI Day and promote the conservation of marine biodiversity across six SPAMIs. In this context, the mini-project titled "SPAMI Day and Marine Education Trail in Landscape Park Strunjan" was proposed and successfully implemented by Morigenos - Slovenian Marine Mammal Society in collaboration with the Landscape Park Strunjan (LPS). The specific aim of the mini-project was to raise awareness of the LPS as a SPAMI and emphasize the critical need for its conservation. LPS is the only site in Slovenia that holds the esteemed SPAMI status, highlighting its ecological, scientific, aesthetic, cultural, and educational significance as an integral part of the Mediterranean's natural heritage.

On Saturday, 15 April, the LPS celebrated SPAMI Day through an event titled "Landscape Park Strunjan celebrates SPAMI Day," jointly organized by Morigenos and the LPS, in collaboration with representatives from the Institute of the Nature Conservation's Piran Regional Unit. The event attracted a diverse range of visitors, spanning various age groups, who independently explored the park's circular learning trail. They engaged with four interactive stations strategically placed along the trail, delving deeper into the importance of protecting the marine environment and discovering ways to actively contribute to the preservation of our invaluable marine ecosystem.

This report outlines the key activities, achievements, and outcomes of the SPAMI Day celebration in the LPS, shedding light on the event's impact in fostering environmental awareness and promoting sustainable practices among the local community and visitors. It also highlights the subsequent implementation of the Marine Education Trail, which serves as an educational resource for schools, providing guided tours focused on marine themes and distributing informative worksheets to consolidate knowledge and summarize the content learned.

## 2. Presentation of Morigenos - the Slovenian Marine Mammal Society

Morigenos - Slovenian Marine Mammal Society is an independent and non-profit professional non-governmental organisation that combines scientific research, monitoring, education, public awareness and staff development for the effective protection of the marine environment and biodiversity. "Morigenos" means "born in the sea". Founded in 2001, the association has several projects in the fields of scientific research, education, public awareness and marine environmental protection. The main activity of the Society is the Slovenian Dolphin Project, a long-term research, monitoring and conservation programme for bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in the Gulf of Trieste and the surrounding waters of the northern Adriatic. The research carried out by Morigenos in this area over the last 20 years has shown that around 150 dolphins use the area as their habitat and has contributed important detailed information on their biology, ecology and conservation status.

## 3. The Mini Project

The marine protected area (MPA) within the Landscape Park Strunjan (LPS) is the only Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI) in Slovenia and the largest SPAMI in the Gulf of Trieste and the northern Adriatic Sea. The area is well known by the general public, but is largely under-appreciated, and few people are aware of its SPAMI status, or what this represents.

The project aimed to promote and highlight the relevance of this SPAMI for the conservation of local and regional marine biodiversity, its benefits to local sustainable tourism, and simultaneously raise awareness about the overall importance of marine conservation, and how citizens can become active players in this themselves. The project built upon existing, fruitful and long-term collaboration between Morigenos and LPS (SPAMI management body).

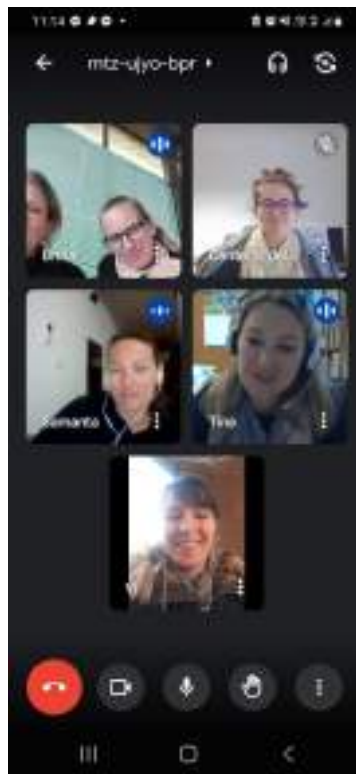
The project addressed two themes of the call, namely promoting the importance of environmental education, which was achieved through the creation of a marine education trail in the SPAMI area, and raising awareness on the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity, which was the focus of the SPAMI Day event itself.

## 4. Activities and Results

### 4.1 Kick-off Meeting

Before the commencement of the "Landscape Park Strunjan celebrates SPAMI Day" event, an online meeting (Fig. 1) was organized with the participation of representatives from the Landscape Park Strunjan (LPS) and the Institute for Nature

Conservation. The purpose of this meeting was to establish a collaborative framework, define key tasks, outline the event program, and determine the optimal locations for the interactive points (Fig. 2).



*Figure 1. Screenshot of an online meeting with Morigenos, Lps and Institute of the Nature Conservation representatives.*

During the meeting, productive discussions took place, enabling effective coordination between all involved parties. The representatives shared their expertise, insights, and recommendations to ensure a successful event that aligns with the objectives of SPAMI Day. We collectively determined the specific tasks and responsibilities, emphasizing the need for meticulous planning and execution to maximize the impact of the event.

To enhance the visitor experience and engagement, the locations of the interactive points were carefully selected and mapped out. These points were strategically positioned along the circular learning path within the Landscape Park Strunjan, allowing participants to explore and discover essential aspects of marine conservation. Each interactive point was designed to provide valuable insights, educational resources, and hands-on activities to actively involve visitors in the protection of the marine environment.



Figure 2. LPS SPAMI map with stations marked where activities took place on the day of the event.

## 4.2 Landscape Park Strunjan Celebrates SPAMI Day

The "Landscape Park Strunjan celebrates SPAMI Day" event took place in LPS on 15 April 2023 from 10 AM till 3 PM. The event attracted a diverse range of visitors, spanning different age groups and backgrounds. We estimate that approximately 200 individuals attended the event, demonstrating the widespread interest and support for marine conservation efforts.

Attendees had the opportunity to embark on a captivating journey along a circular learning trail that traversed the picturesque landscape of the park. Along this trail, they encountered four interactive stations strategically placed to engage and educate visitors about the significance of marine environment conservation.

These interactive stations served as valuable hubs of information, offering insights into the importance of preserving our marine ecosystems. Through engaging displays, informative materials, and interactive activities, visitors gained a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the marine environment and the actions they can take to make a positive impact.

### Interactive Stations:

1. Presentation on SPAMI Sites (Fig. 3): Representatives from the Slovenian Institute of the Nature Conservation and LPS explained the concept of SPAMIs



and highlighted the features that distinguished the Landscape Park Strunjan as a SPAMI. The significance of protected areas in safeguarding marine and coastal biodiversity was also discussed. Visitors were provided with digiscopes and binoculars to observe the seabirds that frequent the park during this time of year.



*Figure 3. Representative from LPS explaining about SPAMI to visitors.*

2. Exhibition on Seashore Waste: An exhibition showcasing the most commonly found waste on the seashore was set up in the Strunjan parking lot (Fig. 4). Park representatives advised visitors on how they could contribute to a cleaner environment and encouraged them to participate in the clean-up campaign held during the event. Visitors were also provided with portable ashtrays to reduce cigarette butts on the beaches.



*Figure 4. Park representatives advising visitors on how they could contribute to a cleaner environment*

3. Meadow Exploration: At a designated point in the park's meadow, visitors learned fascinating facts about the plant species found in the park and the birds

that rely on it as a sanctuary. The participants had the opportunity to make their own musical instruments using the giant cane (*Arundo donax*), an invasive species. (Fig. 5)



Figure 5. LPS representative explaining about plants that grow in the area

4. Dolphin Research and Adoption: At the station on the Strunjan cliff, visitors enjoyed a breathtaking view of the sea while representatives from the Morigenos presented research on bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) — the only marine mammals in Slovenia. Attendees listened to sound recordings of dolphin calls and learned how to spot dolphins from land. (Fig. 6) Information about ten commonly seen dolphins in the Slovenian sea was provided, and visitors had the chance to symbolically adopt one of them.



Figure 6. Searching for dolphins from land.

### 4.3 Marine Education Trail

Following the successful "Strunjan Landscape Park celebrates SPAMI Day" event, the momentum for promoting marine education and conservation continued. An online meeting was conducted to finalize the details of a newly developed marine-themed learning trail at the Landscape Park Strunjan (LPS). This learning trail aimed to enrich the educational offerings of the park by providing guided tours focused on various marine-related themes.

Prior to the implementation of the learning trail, it was identified that a marine-themed tour was missing from the existing guided tour options offered by LPS to schools. To address this gap, Morigenos - the Slovenian Marine Mammal Society - took the initiative to prepare engaging content for worksheets that would accompany the guided tours. These worksheets were designed to reinforce the material covered during the tours and provide a comprehensive summary of the learned content.

The worksheets were meticulously crafted and printed in a quantity of 500 copies to accommodate the anticipated number of visitors. These educational resources were subsequently distributed to facilitate the learning experience of the participants. The learning trail encompassed a wide range of topics, including marine protected areas (SPAMI), salinization, commercial fish species, the Stjuža marine lagoon, marine litter, marine zones, and dolphins. Each theme aimed to deepen the understanding of marine ecosystems and foster a sense of responsibility towards their preservation.

In the first week of June, the Anton Ukmar Koper Primary School's 6th-grade students had the privilege of participating in the initial guided tours offered as part of the newly established learning trail. Despite adverse weather conditions leading to the cancellation of one tour, three tours successfully took place on 2nd, 7th, and 9th June. (Fig. 7) Approximately 70 pupils participated in these tours. The guided tours were jointly conducted by representatives of the LPS and Morigenos, with the latter taking charge of the section dedicated to dolphins.



*Figure 7. Students solving worksheets*

Moving forward, the guided tours will become a regular offering at the Landscape Park Strunjan, extending their availability to other schools and educational institutions. This



initiative will serve as an invaluable educational resource, fostering a deeper appreciation for marine ecosystems and empowering future generations to actively contribute to their conservation.

## 5. Promotion and Media Coverage

The event received media coverage through various channels, including the efforts made by Morigenos and the Landscape Park Strunjan to promote the event. The promotional activities included engaging social media posts (Fig. 8; 12-13) on the Morigenos and Landscape Park Strunjan Facebook pages, informative features on their websites (Fig. 9-11), and the airing of an advertisement on Capris Radio, the sole commercial radio station on the Slovenian coast. Prior to the event, a press conference was organized, inviting journalists from different newspapers and radio stations. As a result, a journalist from a prominent Slovenian newspaper attended and wrote an article that highlighted the event's importance and objectives.

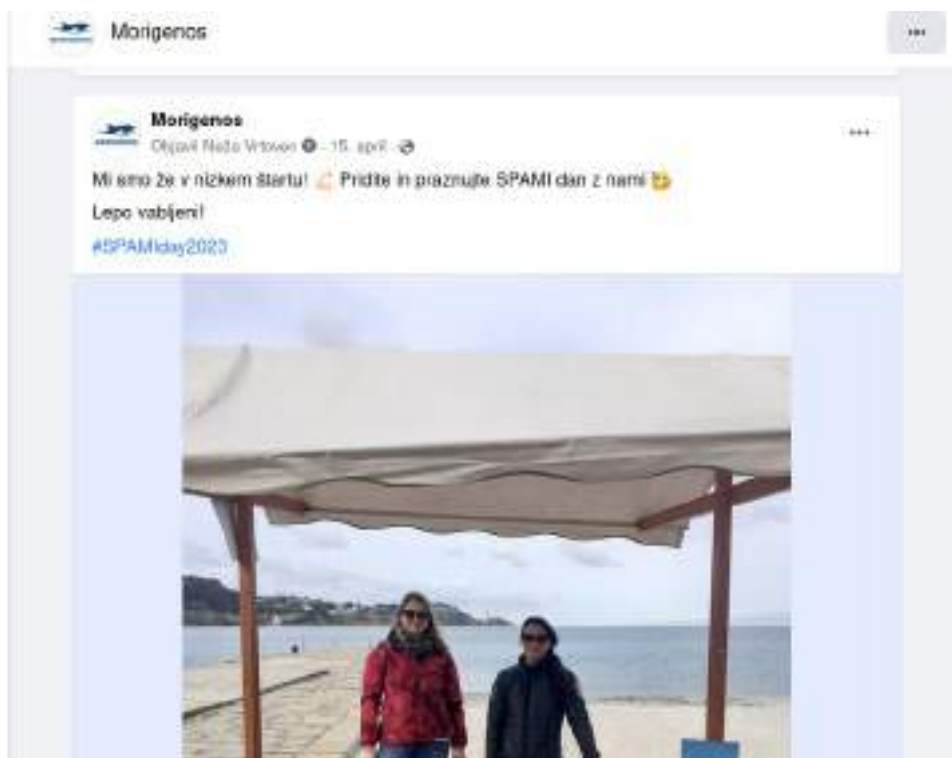


Figure 8. Facebook post about SPAMI Day event.

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## LANDSCAPE PARK STRUNJAN CELEBRATES SPAMI DAY

Join us at the SPAMI Day in Landscape Park Strunjan on Saturday, 15 April. Learn about the importance of marine conservation and how you can become active in preserving our precious marine ecosystem.




**Kralinski park**

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During the event, which will take place between 10 AM and 3 PM you will have the opportunity to explore a circular learning trail through the park and visit four interactive stations where representatives of the Morigenos, Landscape Park Strunjan and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation will present the importance of SPAMI, the most significant plant and animal species in the area and the research of the dolphins that regularly visit the area, as well as practical tips and advice on how to better protect and preserve the marine environment through good habits.

The event is free and open to visitors of all ages.

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to learn and have fun while celebrating SPAMI Day. See you in the Landscape Park Strunjan!

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### What is SPAMI?

No, it's not a spam, but the acronym SPAMI stands for Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance. SPAMI areas are given a special status because of their ecological, scientific, aesthetic, cultural or educational importance at a regional level. The areas have been identified by the Regional Centre for Protected Areas of the Barcelona Convention. There are 29 such sites in the Mediterranean, with the Landscape Park Strunjan in Slovenia. To showcase the Mediterranean Sea in all its diversity and richness, SPAMI Day is celebrated every year on 15 April.

The SPAMI Day event is organized by Morigenos – Slovenian Inland Marine Society and Landscape Park Strunjan as part of the SPAMI Day and Marine Education Trail project and the SPAMI LPS, on a grant by /NEMRP/STSR/ACC and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security.

Figures 9-11. Post about SPAMI Day event on Morigenos official website.

**15.**

SOBOTA, 15. APRIL 2023 OBE 10:00–10:00

## Krajinski park Strunjan praznuje SPAMI dan

Krajinski park Strunjan

About Razprava Povabi kot Neža Vrtovec Uredi ...

### Podrobnosti

- Število oseb, ki so se odzvale: 25
- Dogodek osebe **Morigenos**
- Krajinski park Strunjan
- Trajanje: 5 h
- Javno · Vsi z računom Facebook ali brez njega

Pridružite se nam na SPAMI\* dnevu v Krajinskem parku Strunjan v soboto, 15. aprila! Spoznajte pomen ohranjanja morskega okolja in izvedite, kako lahko postanete aktivni pri ohranjanju našega dragocenega morskega ekosistema.

V času dogodka, ki bo potekal med 10. in 15. uro, boste lahko raziskali krožno učno pot po parku in obiskali štiri interaktivne postaje, na katerih vam bodo predstavniki društva Morigenos,

Morigenos

Morigenos  
Objavi Neža Vrtovec · 4 d · 🌐

Prejšnji teden smo skupaj z Javnim zavodom [Krajinski park Strunjan](#) izvedli prvo vodenje za osnovnošolce na temo morja. 🌊

Vodenje, ki smo mu dodali morsk tematiko, poteka po obstoječi učni poti v strunjskem parku ter je namenjeno osnovnošolcem in srednješolcem. Mlade bomo tako bolje spoznali z bogatim morskim ekosistemom in jim približali pomen ohranjanja morskega okolja.

Tematsko vodenje je nastalo v tesnem sodelovanju z Javnim zavodom Krajinski park Strunjan v sklopu projekta SPAMI Day and Marine Education Trail in LPS SPAMI, ki ga sofinancirajo LINEP/MAP-SPA/RAC in italijansko Ministrstvo za okolje in energetska varnost.

Veselim se, da bomo skupaj lahko delili svoje znanje in strast do morskega sveta z mladimi generacijami. 😊

Figures 11 and 12. Facebook posts about SPAMI Day and implementation of marine education trail

## 6. The Way Forward: Recommendations for Future SPAMI Day Celebrations

Based on the successful implementation of the SPAMI Day celebration and associated activities, we propose a series of recommendations to further enhance future SPAMI Day celebrations and promote effective marine conservation efforts. These recommendations aim to amplify the impact of the event and foster continued engagement among stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the preservation of Mediterranean marine ecosystems.

Diversify Stakeholder Engagement: Encourage the active involvement of a broader range of stakeholders in SPAMI Day celebrations. This could include government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, local communities, and businesses. Emphasize the importance of collaboration and partnership among diverse stakeholders to maximize the effectiveness of conservation initiatives.

Expand Awareness and Outreach: Implement targeted awareness campaigns leading up to SPAMI Day to generate widespread attention and engagement. Utilize various communication channels, including social media, traditional media outlets, and community networks, to reach a wider audience. Highlight the ecological, scientific, aesthetic, cultural, and educational significance of SPAMIs to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among the public.

Strengthen Educational Initiatives: Continue to develop and expand educational initiatives such as learning trails, guided tours, and interactive stations. Foster partnerships with schools, educational institutions, and relevant organizations to integrate marine-themed curricula and educational programs into formal and informal learning environments. Emphasize hands-on activities, interactive displays, and engaging content to enhance knowledge retention and inspire future conservation actions.