Project Update: April 2018

The project begun with the good field expedition and a meeting with the stakeholders in the Neum municipality, as planned. Field expedition was held in mid-April 2018, through which I have analysed the small-scale fisheries in order to quantify the elasmobranch encounters. Besied, through a series of a night dives I have tried to locate new nursery grounds and map encounters with different elasmobranchs. Unfortunately, the conditions for diving below 20 m were extremely bad, with visibility just around 30 to 40 cm. Notwithstanding, I have managed to conduct several solo night dives, but with no luck to encounter target species this time. Unlike, data from the small-scale fisheries analysis have provided a very good insight into the marine ecosystems of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For the first time, I have tried to lure smoothhounds and other target species in the habitats located between two islands Mali Školj and Veliki Školj – where we have an unconfirmed nursery ground of smoothhounds. Lures were made from the bycatch from the driftnets in order to understand the preferred prey of sharks, skates and rays in the Bosnian water. We have lured sharks, skated and rays with over 10 different typed of potential pray, but with no luck this time. Anyway, I am planning to modify the luring technique and to try it again on another field expedition. The meeting went very well, and the local community now is not only willing to protect sharks, skates and rays – but is also interested to know more about their biology and ecology.

Analyses of the most common bycatch in the driftnets within the Neum bay as part of the small-scale fishery analysis. ©A. Kahrić / Sharklab ADRIA.

Andrej on the boat surveys and preparing for a nigh dives at different location in the inner parts of Neum bay. ©A. Kahrić / Sharklab ADRIA.

Andrej after a solo night dive in the coastal area in the continental part of the Neum bay, nearby one of the confirmed nursery grounds for marbled electric rays. ©A. Kahrić / Sharklab ADRIA.