

A.F.M. Training Workshop – 17th April 2014

On the morning of 17th April 2014 at the A.F.M. Maritime Squadron headquarters in Floriana a lecture was given to officials of the Maritime Squadron by Ms Carmen Mifsud, the project Manager of the Life+ project Migrate, being coordinated by MEPA.

The meeting took four hours and started with a simple overview of the project, giving details of the aims; assessing the status of populations of bottlenose dolphins & loggerhead turtles in Maltese waters. Followed by reasons why these species the bottlenose dolphin and the loggerhead turtles are being studied locally. After this introduction the project actions were covered showing how the aims are going to be achieved.

The lecture went into great detail about the cetacean and turtle species found within Mediterranean Sea around Malta, with their main distinguishing features and behaviour covered, which provides a great deal of information when it comes to identifying the species. Information was given to aid in spotting cetaceans and turtle species at sea followed by how to identify the species and what characteristics are used by experts to even differentiate between individuals.



During the seminar there was a lot of interaction between the members of A.F.M. and the MEPA team, with a lot of interesting questions asked by the attendees; such as how to differentiate species whilst on the surface or when partially submerged and issues regarding turtles were raised, with an overview given to the officials on what they should do if an encounter with an injured turtle arose. The overview

explained the correct technique in handling an injured turtle and how to keep it during transport back to land for rehabilitation.

At the end of the lecture the attendees appeared to be very excited to have participated and to have learnt vital information regarding turtle and cetaceans. After thanking Ms Mifsud one member of the squadron showed a video he recorded during a mission at sea. The video showed a huge number of dolphins swimming and breaching, the dolphins in question appeared to be the striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), possibly the most common dolphin species within Maltese waters.