

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SEAGRASS
POSIDONIA OCEANICA (L.) DEL. IN THE GULF OF KOPER.
PRELIMINARY REPORT

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An investigation was conducted in 1993 on the size and morphological features of the only known *Posidonia oceanica* (L.) Del. bed on the west coast of the Istrian peninsula, in the Gulf of Koper, in order to be able in some further work to state stability, progression or regression of the meadow and to take proper conservation measures. According to the Natural and Cultural Heritage Protection Law from 1981 the site is bound to be protected as a natural monument.

According to some early works (BENACCHIO, 1938), the Mediterranean seagrass *Posidonia oceanica* (L.) Del. was quite common on the silted bottom of the inner part of the Gulf of Trieste but it is not mentioned almost three decades later in a work carried out on the distribution of the Zosteraceae in the gulf (SIMONETTI, 1966).

However there is still a tiny *Posidonia* meadow on the Slovenian coast between the towns of Koper and Izola (VUKUVIC, 1982). It seems to be the only remnant of the principal marine phanerogam in the Mediterranean not only in the Gulf of Trieste but along the west coast of the Istrian peninsula as well (JAKLIN, pers. com.). The area is close to the coastline and it is approximately 1 km long and only 50 m wide with the maximal depth between 2 and 4 m. The site is also next to the outfall of the Badasevica river, which is polluted with domestic and industrial waste waters.

The *Posidonia* bed is not homogeneous and it consists in numerous islands of different shape and size distributed amidst a well-formed *Cymodocea nodosa* meadow. In 1993 we started to collect data about the position and shape of the single parts of the meadow so to have a proper basis for future monitoring of its progression or decline. We also started an investigation so to find adequate sites for reintroducing *Posidonia oceanica* in the shallow waters of the Slovenian coastal sea.

REFERENCES

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