

## **CIESM Congress Session : Vertebrates under threat**

**Moderator : Juan Antonio Camiñas, IEO, Malaga, Spain**

### *Moderator's Synthesis*

The moderator introduced different approaches and definitions of the concept of “*threatened species*” that exist in the framework of regional or international organisations such as the Barcelona Convention, IUCN or GFCM, and presented some facts related to the number of species of reptiles, mammals, birds and fishes under threat in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as existing mitigation measures implemented by different RFMOs. Following the presentation of five communications focused on different species groups (tuna, groupers, marine turtles and mammals), a general discussion followed where participants presented their views and recommendations, notably:

- The need to focus the attention of the public and the managers not only on the charismatic species (mammals, birds, turtles or sharks) but also on those species of vertebrates currently discarded by different fisheries and those included as data-deficient and not evaluated.
- A general concern related to the effect of plastics in the life cycle of marine vertebrates, from fish larvae to big mammals, and the need for better research collaboration and coordination.
- The biodiversity of coastal vertebrates populations, except in MPA, is decreasing in most Mediterranean areas such as the Tunisian coast. A better protection of ecological corridors and straits.

The main conclusions after the discussion were:

Threats affecting vertebrates in the Mediterranean Sea are everywhere, but human activities, including coastal pollution, transport, coastal degradation, etc., do not have not the same intensity and effects on the populations at local, sub-regional or Mediterranean level. Thus the cross-basin spatial distribution of threatened species must be better studied. Actions to mitigate the degradation and loss of biodiversity in coastal areas are required at the local level, for example increasing the number of MPAs in south and eastern Mediterranean waters, but also at higher level, for instance via a better protection of ecological corridors and straits that would improve the status of some isolated populations by facilitating gene exchange. Migratory species (marine mammals, turtles, pelagic sharks, tuna or swordfish) are distributed along different Mediterranean basins during their life cycle. The characterisation of their movements across straits and corridors, their mapping between areas of concentration (for reproduction, feeding, mating, etc.) during annual migrations, are scientific issues of paramount importance for their conservation.

