



Actions for the recovery of the Atlantic Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*) population (LIFE96 NAT/E/003144)

Actuaciones para la recuperación de la Foca Monje (*Monachus monachus*)

Beneficiary : Consejería de Política Territorial : Gobierno de Canarias
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Duration : 01-JAN-1997 -> 01-JAN-1999

Total Budget in € : 1.363.174,47

LIFE Contribution in € : 1.022.380,85 (75,00 %)

Description :

The Mediterranean monk seal is amongst the most endangered mammals on the planet. Its Atlantic population used to be found all along the coasts of North Africa, the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores, but is now restricted to a tiny colony on Madeira and another on Cap Blanc on the west coast of the Sahara, too far apart to allow for an exchange of individuals.

In order to link up these two colonies, a LIFE project was approved in 1994 to improve knowledge on the Atlantic population of the monk seal and assess the viability of the Cap Blanc colony, especially its capacity to act as reservoir and donor for re-introduction of the monk seal to the Canary Islands. A study on habitat and food supply off Lanzarote and Fuerteventura Islands in the Canaries was undertaken to see if any spots could be identified suitable for re-introduction.

Knowledge of monk seal biology and the conservation status of the Cap Blanc colony were noticeably improved by this 1994 LIFE project, which laid the foundation for this new project.

The 1996 LIFE project aims at establishing new seal colonies by measures to preserve available potential habitats and to re-introduce individuals, with the ultimate objective of restoring the original distribution range in the Atlantic and ensuring genetic exchange between the different sub-populations.

A supplementary objective is to promote the conservation and expansion of existing colonies so that they can become reservoirs from which the seals re-colonize old habitats.

Benefiting Regions for Project:

SPAIN

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[Go to Top](#)