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The future of fisheries – Marine Protected Areas – a new way forward



Nowadays there are recognized several issues which bear upon the marine fisheries: (1) declining yields worldwide, (2) too many fishers pursuing too few fish, (3) an ever growing market for seafoods, and (4) a seeming inability for scientists, managers, and politicians to do much to stop several downward trends. Concerns are expressed in national and local press and other publications, as well as in almost all meetings, conferences and scientific discussions in this regard.

They all suggest something in common: *“Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) will enhance biodiversity and fish stocks”*.

MPAs provide opportunities for reproduction and recruitment of Living Marine Resources (LMRs). The habitat of an MPA is not subjected to physical damages by fishing gear, or the noise, movements, and shadows resulting from docks, piers, vessel traffic, or transects. The MPAs in estuaries and coastal zones can preclude dredging, filling, dock construction, pollution, and other physical damages so common in many coastal areas. Such areas may then develop more robust stocks, capable of dissemination to other, unprotected areas. In many cases, the MPAs are designed to protect diversity and endangered species.

Evidence is increasing beyond mere intuition that coastal aquatic habitats subject to ecosystem planning and protection are more robust, and characterized by greater species diversity, sometimes including endangered species. Use of the protected marine area

is, without doubt, the only way to preserve certain reefs, coral heads, and associated fauna.

It is not a lack of science and scientific data that prevents undertaking the first step; rather it is a lack of political will and, perhaps, timid souls at the management helm. We live in times when one’s neck must be extended if ever we are to manage effectively, the largesse of the marine world. The MPAs have been demonstrated in many ways to work and their use must be initiated if we are to conserve fish stocks, endangered species, diversity and habitat stability.

The MPAs may ultimately be linked to other schemes such as “corridors” and artificial reefs or islands, new tools and pathways to provide “bridges” so that stock progeny and genes may disseminate or flow from one MPA to another, or from an MPA to an unmanaged area. These methods have been tested and found functional in breaking down the natural and man-made barriers, to the dispersal of stocks and their progeny.

As for future research, the MPAs protected for long periods will allow us to assess change as it occurs with long-term cycles (millennia) and shorter-term, man-induced change. MPAs will be another “island tool” to aid in the verification of evolutionary change. They may also be the one best way to deal with marine pollution and physical degradation.



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UNDP Project on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas

2nd MEETING OF PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



The Prefect of Vlora held the 2nd meeting of the Protected Areas Management Committee for Vlora Region. In the meeting were presented the

activities implemented during the 6-month working period of Regional Administration of Protected Areas Vlorë and how were addressed the problems encountered during the touristic season.

UNDP MCPA II Project Manager, Ms. Violeta Zuna, as well as the two experts, Mr. Simone Modugno and Mr. Andrian Vaso, involved by the project, presented the findings and proposals for future efforts related to biodiversity monitoring indicators and process, as well as socio-economic aspects of PAs in general, and NMP K-S, in particular.

INCA presented the projects that it is implementing in NP Llogara and PL Vjosa-Narta. Interventions for fire protection, identification of endemic species habitats and plan for drafting the “Code of Conduct” in the PAs were identified.

The meeting discussions were focused at:

1. Drafting a plan of joint measures for controlling the National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan (NMP K-S)
2. Drafting the Code of Conduct for Tourist Boats in NMP K-S.
3. Acquaintance with the proposals for revision of the management plan of Vjosa-Narta Protected Landscape, within the framework of the ACAP project expertise.



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SOCIAL GOOD SUMMIT ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE



framework of the Social Good Summit held in Vlora.

The activities aimed at putting climate change at the center of attention and calling for the involvement of the entire society and the need to take action on climate change in order for Albania to fulfill the obligations of the Paris Agreement.

During the activities was highlighted the cooperation between UNDP, local authorities, national and international development partners for environmental protection through the preservation of healthy, productive and sustainable ecosystems.



Human-induced global warming has already reached about 1°C more (2018) compared to pre-industrial periods (1850-1900). The last four years were the hottest years. Sea levels are rising, coral reefs are crumbling, and the impact of climate change on health through air pollution, heat waves and lower food security is becoming increasingly evident.

Albania will be one of the most affected countries in Europe by climate change. Extreme atmospheric events and



consequences, impacting water resources, energy, agriculture, tourism, health.

phenomena such as dense rainfall, prolonged drought periods, but also the rise of the Adriatic Sea level, are expected to be among the core

The latest analysis shows that if we act now, we can reduce carbon emissions within 12 years and hold the increase in the global

temperature to well below 2°C and even, as asked by the latest science, to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.



Albanian government committed and is preparing to reduce carbon-dioxide emission by 2030 aiming at reviewing the development of various sectors of economy and determine the de-carbonizing as a new way of growth in line with 2030 global agenda and Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs.



UNDP Albania has made available the expertise and convening power to bring partners and stakeholders on board for long term solutions

to sustainable development and nature protection, applied technologies for renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, waste and hazardous waste rehabilitation and recycling promotion.

Social Good Summit is held annually during the Sustainable Development Goals Week and in parallel with the opening of the UN General Assembly session in September.

The event was organized in cooperation with the Regional Administration of Protected Areas in Vlora.



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MINIGRANTS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT THE FUNCTIONING OF RADHIMA VISITORS CENTER

Increasing youth engagement to promote the cultural sustainability of Sazan Island



The project was implemented by Thinking, Planning, Acting Center (TPA). The main scope was raising effective management of MPA K-S, especially Sazani Island. The expected results were:

- Improving of information service on cultural, historical, sportive and natural attractions offered by Vlora municipality.
- Raising and promoting coordination with structures and main actors of policy making, in synergy with local general plan and tourism strategy of 2017-2020.
- Promoting local formalizations of professional touristic guider in the future.



The project's implemented activities were:

- Training of the students by TPA center on MPA, Legislation and Management Plan of NMP K-S, and historical and touristic value of Sazani Island.
- Visit at the NMP K-S and stop in Sazani Island. Exploring the island and get familiar with its historical and cultural values.
- Preparation of promotional video of Sazani Island. The video was launched at the Social Good Summit event.



Bio fest, promoting typical local products of the National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan



The project was implemented by "Greening 2000" organization. The main scope was the promotion of local agriculture and farming products of NMP K-S. The expected results were:

- Preparing of a promoting and informative electronic brochure for local products
- Preparation of an electronic database for local products
- Organization of a fair for the presentation and promotion of local products.



- Meetings with local farmers and agencies of Vlora. The data gathered will be part of the brochure and electronic database.
- The electronic database for local products with general data on Orikum Administrative Unit, number of local farms and farmers, number and type of cultivated/farmed species, etc.
- Participation at the fair organized during the "Social Good Summit 2019" event in Vlora. Local producer presented seasonal local products like: cultivated pine seedling, olive oil, tea and spices, fruits, wine, agriculture products etc.



The project's implemented activities were:

Radhima, a tourist destination to be explored



The project was implemented by "Hasan Mëhilli" School, Dukat i Ri and "Rakip Kryeziu" School, Fier. The main goal was the promotion of Radhima for its touristic and natural values. The expected results were:

- Educative information for 50 students on NMP K-S and Radhima Visitor Center (VC).
- Exploring Radhima and NMP K-S and share experiences via social media.
- Awareness raising and information of students about fishery sector and sea turtle conservation.
- Prepare informative and PR materials (picture, banners and leaflet) on the natural and touristic values of the park.

The project's implemented activities were:

- Visit to Radhima Visitor Center (VC), and get information about the area's beauties. Organize a one-day boat tour at the NMP K-S. Make drawings and photos.
- Promoting the VC. Everyone is trying to do something well, but doing something with passion, was the message the students of "Rakip Kryeziu" gave to citizens of Fieri after they visited Radhima VC.
- Fish menu to promote sustainable consumption. After the visit at Responsible Fishermen Association, the children organized an inner context on fish recipes and choose 3 of them to further distribute and promote through their media tools.
- A group of 20 students participated in the fair organized for the "Social Good Summit 2019". They actively took part in painting, bicycle, chess and basketball context.



The above-mentioned activities are supported by a UNDP grant under the "Implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Visitors Center Rradhimë" program, which is managed and implemented by Milieukontakt Albania

VISITORS AT NATIONAL MARINE PARK KARABURUN-SAZAN

The National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan (NMP K-S) continues to be a highly preferred touristic destination for Albanian and foreign visitors. This is also demonstrated by the high number of tourists that visited the park during 2019, especially the summer season, as well as the number of tour boat that provide this service.

It is worth noting that the data collection was made possible through the active participation of UNDP Junior Experts, who were very helpful in registering the number of tourists and providing useful information to them.

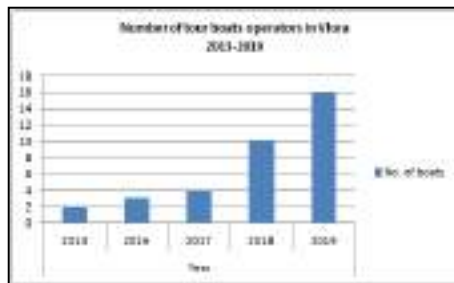
This article provides a comparative analysis on several statistical aspects, mainly related to number of tour boats and visitors. The comparison is made with 2018 (January-September), which corresponds to the starting period of visitors' data registering.

Based on the analysis, some conclusions are presented.

Number of Tour Boats Operators per Year

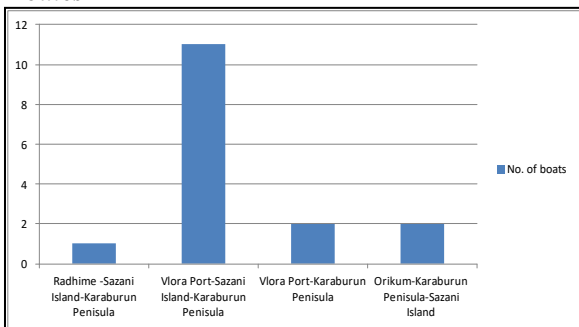
No.	Boat Name	Starting Year of Operation
1	Rapso Eran	2017
2	Turku Boat	2017
3	Black Pearl	2018
4	Avranas II	2017
5	Turku II	2018
6	Arqanimes	2018
7	Julla Ujqepe	2018
8	Superson	2018
9	Mogji	2018
10	Rapso Group Eran	2018
11	Ujqemes	2019
12	Turku Turku	2019
13	Ishtari	2019
14	Sedriati	2019
15	Ensi	2019
16	Hapso Rapso	2019

The table provides updated information on the **number and names** of tour boats



that operate in Vlorë, who organize touristic tours at the NMP K-S, as well as their **starting year of operation**. The associated graphic shows the **number of operating boats for the period 2013-2019**.

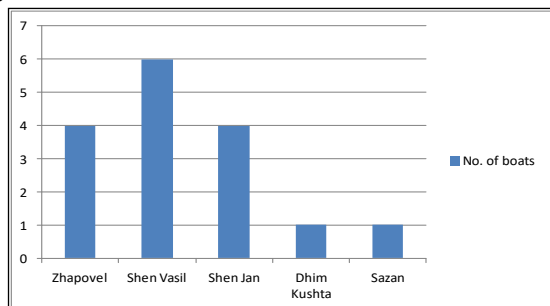
Routes



The statistical data show that the tour boats follow four main routes, as depicted in the figure.

Anchoring area

Currently, the tour boats anchor in five areas compared to two in 2018. The data shows that the most used anchoring area is Shen Vasili, where anchor 6 out of 16 boats. The figure presents these data visually.



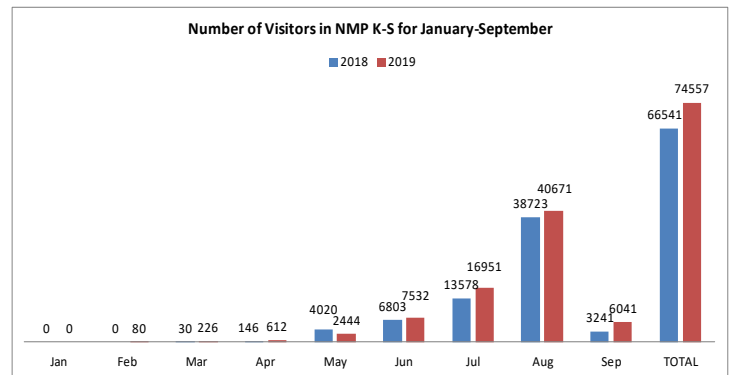
Number of Visitors per Month

The collection of statistical data on the number of tourists/visitors that have visited the MPA K-S began in January 2019, while the first visitors arrived in February.

The detailed information regarding the number of visitors per each month, boat and nationality can be found at RAPA Vlorë. We are presenting below comparative data on the number of visitors for each month during 2018-2019.

Number of Visitors in NMP K-S for Jan-Sep (2018-2019)

Year	Month									TOTAL
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
2018	0	0	30	146	4020	6803	13578	38723	3241	66541
2019	0	80	226	612	2444	7532	16951	40671	6041	74557



Conclusions and Recommendations

- The tendency for tourist boats operations in the NMP K-S has been increased significantly during 2019. This trend is primarily related to the diversification of tourist services and since there is a huge gap in this aspect, it may be seen as a lucrative way, but, at the same time, it can cause a collapse in the carrying capacity of the NMP K-S and its degradation.
- The mid-term goal is for Park Structures to play the role of auditor for the renewal of licenses for tourist boats that visit the Park, on the basis of performance criteria and cooperation with Park Authority (RAPA Vlorë) based on their behavior, navigation rules, biodiversity conservation, promotion of MPA during the trip, active participation in collaborative meetings and better integration with other institutions.
- While there is not currently reported any issue related to the limited number of anchoring areas, this may become an issue that needs to be addressed in the future. The anchoring buoys already installed in NMP K-S provide additional anchoring capacity to be used during peak season.
- The statistical analysis demonstrates that the number of visitors during 2019 is increased by 8016 visitors or 12% more than 2018. Furthermore, there is an exponentially higher visitors' demand during August, and indeed this has to be managed both through good planning, and diversification of the offer, i.e. providing other recreational activities in addition to the ones performed so far.
- It is important for Park Structures to perform a thorough study on the carrying capacity of the NMP and provide this as a guide document for other institutions/authorities, when it comes for taking decisions related to NMP usage for visit and other recreational activities. Good planning and management is imperative in order to keep the number of visitors within the carrying capacity, especially during the 'peak' months, such as August.

BIO-GIS MASTER PLAN



The UNDP MCPA II Project is developing and planning to apply a BIO-GIS Master Plan tool to increase nature protection and manage economic values of biodiversity, addressing the big gap on standardized quantitative data on marine species in Albania. The biotic component of the master plan will be very useful in underlining the ecological effects of ecosystem fragmentation, the sustainable management of resources in harmony with natural dynamisms and the evaluation of related problems.

The expected results from the BIO GIS MP of the K-S MPA could allow knowing and evaluating the buffer effect of both direct and indirect economic benefits coming from the activities planned or actually taking place in the MPA.

This way, BIO GIS Master plan becomes a very useful tool to better plan and manage the K-S MPA and future new MPAs along Albanian coasts.

It is very interesting to realize a digital cartographic instrument able to show at every level of stakeholders a sort

of actual and future projection on territory (both on environment and economic level), of every decision taken about the MPAs, representing an important multidisciplinary tool of integrated analysis, and even, a significant input to the socio-economic development of the MPA.

The GIS consultancy, in cooperation with the other biodiversity and affiliated expert team, are developing an GIS-overlay analysis & statistical analysis (generalized and then MPA benthic marine landscape dataset, the total number of habitats and their expansion, etc.)

The undertaken efforts will enable calculation of the Biodiversity Value / Synthetic Biodiversity Indexes through the calculation of the economic value of biodiversity and thereafter developing a technical-administrative tool, very necessary for introducing and management of blue business /economy.



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“ON-THE-WATER TOURISM”



The ecological, cultural, historical, traditional and artistic richness of MPA K-S could obviously serve as a product ready to be communicated in international markets for high

value added sustainable tourism, generating positive economic impacts and benefits to the local population, through green tourism and improvement of private sector initiatives. On the other side it provides a strong potential for various types of conservation activities integrating both tourism and education.

However, it is to highlight the risk linked to un-sustained tourism development, causing as a direct consequence a decline in environment quality, artificial modification of coastlines and threat to marine ecosystems.

In this regard, the UNDP MCPA II Project has undertaken and is developing an initiative on the analysis of the actual legal and institutional situation in the tourism sector, and on that bases, introducing necessary adjustments and changes that encourage *on-the-water tourism* and eco-tourism management schemas, with involvement of all concerned

actors responsible for implementing, monitoring, developing the respective bylaws, planning, coordination with regional administrations and tourism organizations at the national, regional and local level.

The rationale is to contribute on mainstreaming marine ecosystem protection & conservation into the tourism sector, to further improve management of NMP K-S and enable schemas that promote rational and eco-efficient use of resources, as steps towards an integrated environmental management system. The expectation is to enable engagement of tourism operators in Vlora into sustainable and feasible actions.

Thus the end products will be know-how & best management practices (BMP) for on-the-water tourism, with emphases on promotion and operation of tour boats and sustainable ecotourism initiatives, enabling their implementation and ensuring sustainability over time.



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DEFINING AND OPTIMIZATION OF MONITORING INDICATORS IN NMP KARABURUN-SAZAN



Identifying and using the right indicators for the monitoring of NMP Karaburun-Sazan is a very important element for an effective management.

Choosing the most suitable indicators was the aim of the workshop realized within the frame of the project “Supporting the Management of National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan”, supported by Association pour le financement durable des AMP de Méditerranée (MedFUND) financed by French Fund For Global Environment (FFEM).

The workshop was realized in collaboration with the Regional Administration of Protected Area Vlorë, national and local partners, such as: Vloera Region Prefect, representatives of UNDP/Albania, international and national experts, biology professors, etc.

The UNDP MCPA II Project was invited and became part of this event, sharing with the participants some of the key findings of the process for assessing deficiencies in the management and conservation of MPA habitats. Emphasis was given on the proposed monitoring indicators in the NMP K-S (reports, protocols, examples), based on the MPA's ecological status. As such, were underlined *Posidonia oceanica*, *Cystoseira* monitoring, artificial barriers to marine habitat protection and improvement such as biocolonization (safe growth of fish populations and protection of Posedonia) and obstacles to illegal fishing, physical-chemical monitoring, transects location, sampling along transects, bi-weekly (or even monthly) water analyzes, monk seals, sea turtles, etc.



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WORKSHOP WITH ARTISANAL FISHERY GROUPS



UNDP MCPA Phase II project organized an workshop with artisanal fishery groups in Vloera on 6th September 2019. The workshop followed the main findings of the consultant report on Impacts Assessment from Fishery Activities

of the MPA Karaburun-Sazan and addressed the most relevant issues such as artisanal fishing practices taking place in Vloera Bay, its development to protect marine ecosystems, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, co-management and increasing production value.

The invitees and the project experts shared discussion and presentation on general aspects of fisheries and legal situation in Albania pertinent to marine ecosystems conservation, fisheries sector and impact on the marine environment, artisanal fisheries and the situation in Vloera Bay, mutual reliance of fisheries sector with MPA as well as steps to the future improved co-management.



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SUMMER SCHOOL



During the first week of August, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment conducted a one-week summer school in Dhërmi with nationwide selected students. The main focus was on the topic of marine pollution, as

an increasing concern.

The selected students together with a group of professors from University of Tirana worked for one week to prepare and propose innovative ideas for the prevention of marine pollution. The training was accompanied with concrete outreach and awareness activities on the site. During the visit, the students were also familiarized with the Visitors Centers of National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan and National Park

Llogara, as well the natural resources of these parks.

The event, which was supported by the UNDP Project on Enhancing the Financial Sustainability of Protected Areas, funded by GEF, was concluded with the issuance of certificates and concrete opportunities for student involvement through internships near the most important institutions in dealing with environmental issues as well as studying scholarships.

The projects developed by students and selected by the professors will be implemented and monitored by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment.



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INFO & NEWS – Activities of RAPA Vlorë

Information Source: RAPA Vlorë



On September 20, Céline Damery, from the Conservatoire, and Joan Mayol,

Vice-President of PIM NGO, went in Tirana and Vlora to exchange with Albanian partners (Coastal Agency, NAPA/RAPA, Flag Pine NGO, UNDP Program for Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, French Embassy) on ongoing projects, and identify cooperation activities to be developed in 2020 in the framework of COGITO project (supported by the FFEM), notably on Sazani Island, NMP K-S and Cape Rodoni site.



Experience exchange activities within the twinning program between the MPA Karaburun-Sazan

and the Torre Guaceto Nature Reserve are on-going, with the presence of Prefect of Vlora, in the capacity of the Chairman of the Protected Areas Management Committee and the RAPA Vlorë staff.

The program is managed by RAC/SPA and financed by the Italian Ministry for Environment and Protection of Land&Sea.



In the frame of capacity building, RAPA Vlorë staff participated in a 5-day training, held in Zakynthos, Greece,

on "Design and implementation of monitoring activities for assessing the ecological effects and fisheries in marine protected areas".

The training purpose was related to monitoring and enhancing the efficiency of artisanal fisheries in marine protected areas and border areas and at the same time guaranteeing the socio-economic benefits to the fishermen community.



Reporting of cases of sea turtle presence in our waters has been increased more and more in recent

years. At the same time, has been also increased the number of turtles injured or stacked in fishermen's nets. An average number of 12 sea turtles are treated annually at the Turtle First Aid Center in Radhima.

With the support of the ACAP project and the assistance of WWF Italy several actions have been taken to increase the capacity of RAPA Vlorë for the treatment of this species.



Approximately 800 kg of waste collected is the output of one day voluntary clean-up action at

Karaburuni!!!

- 700 kg wastes at an area of 180 m² in the small beaches from Shën Jani Bay up Shën Vasili Cape.
- 100 kg underwater wastes inside Haxhi Ali Cave and next to the pier in Shën Vasili.

The action is a hopeful signal of the positive impact that cooperation brings to the protection of our national assets!!!



When visiting the NMP K-S you will definitely get beautiful memories! Please be careful for not leaving

your wastes behind!!!

It is unacceptable that in only 80 m² of one of Karaburuni's natural beaches the youngsters of *smilealbania* and RAPA Vlorë staff collected approximately 220 kg of waste!!!!

The activity is part of a coordinated action between institutions and local associations, for addressing this important issue arising from irresponsible behaviour of visitors in the park.



On September 5th, students of Geology from the University of Pisa, Italy, visited the Visitor Center of

NMP Karaburun-Sazan in Radhima. The objective of the visit was to get acquainted with the geological values of this area and the impact that the particular geomorphology of the area has on its biodiversity.



The Visitors Center of NMP K-S is the only center of its kind dedicated to environmental

education on the marine environment.

CERCI Association recently conducted an information activity on the importance of differential waste treatment and its impact on the marine ecosystem.



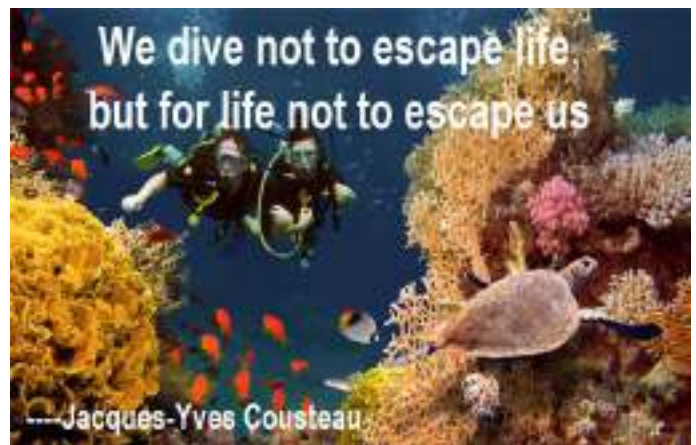
Karaburuni, a mysterious peninsula yet to be discovered!

The staff of the

prestigious Discovery Channel television during shootings for exploring the unique nature and history of the Inglizi Bay and Cave.



QUOTES



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