SHARKLIFE is a EU Life+ project which began in October 2011 and will last for three years. It aims to contribute to the conservation of cartilaginous fishes, particularly basking sharks and pelagic sting-rays, in Italian seas by reducing the mortality rate caused by commercial and leisure fishing. In line with the European Plan of Action for Cartilaginous Fishes, the project will promote the use of low-impact fishing devices for pelagic stingrays (circle hooks); develop a system to reduce accidental captures of basking sharks; implement a ‘tag and release’ policy for fishing tournaments; and carry out tailored training for fishermen, veterinarians and coast guard who oversee fisheries controls.

**Some Conservation Actions**

**Action 1**: Promotion of circle hooks to reduce accidental captures of pelagic stingrays.

**Action 2**: Development of an innovative system for the reduction of accidental captures of basking sharks and other protected species.

**Action 3**: Modify the regulations of sport fishing tournaments forbidding landings of all elasmobranchs species and implementing a tag and release policy.

**Action 4**: Production of the Italian Action Plan for the management and conservation of cartilaginous fishes and Guidelines to design legislation and regulations in Italy.

**Some Awareness Actions**

- Travelling edu-exhibition dedicated to sharks and rays
- Two exhibit areas within La Maddalena National Park and Asinara National Park, with a special focus on basking sharks
- Small museum dedicated to sharks in Lampedusa
- Participation in main annual fishing fairs

**Expected results**

- A significant reduction in catches of several species of sharks andrays, due to:
  - 80% reduction in catches of pelagic stingray (*Pteroplatytrygon violacea*), through the use of circle hooks;
  - An end to the catching of sharks and rays in the national fishing competitions through the implementation of a tag and release policy;
  - The development of an innovative system for the reduction of accidental capture of basking sharks and other protected species which could be promoted on a large scale;
  - The adoption of a specific plan of action for the conservation of sharks and rays by the authorities concerned;
  - A greater consensus among fishermen and local communities about conservation policies and the sustainable use of marine resources; and
  - Greater public awareness of biodiversity