

A decorative border of green palm trees surrounds the page. The trees are arranged in a repeating pattern along the top, bottom, and sides of the text area.

The Mediterranean Sea

And our environment

Every year more than 8 million tons of plastic is dumped into our seas. One plastic bag takes five hundred years to degrade. Over 100,000 marine animals are killed each year from plastic and sea pollution. 70-130,000 of microplastics (fragments smaller than 5mm) and 150-500,000 million tonnes of microplastics (the equivalent of 66,000 garbage trucks of plastics) are dumped into the Mediterranean and other European seas every year.

How does all this affect humans, and what can we do to stop this behaviour? Plastic and other forms of pollution are ending up in our marine life, and the plastic is making its way into our food chain.

Plastic has been and still is a huge problem to the world. This problem about the increase of plastic in our environment is caused by us humans because we are choosing convenience above our environment and its creatures. People are throwing plastic away and with elements like the wind and rain, this plastic is ending up in our seas. But keep one thing in mind... the expression 'Throw away' doesn't exist because the trash must go somewhere.

Hundreds of thousands of sea creatures and their marine habitats are harmed by ocean plastic every year. Sea turtles, octopuses, dolphins, sea lions, fish and more are dying because they mistake the plastic for food and get poisoned or get seriously injured by the plastic. Sea animals also depend

on other sea creatures as food. For example, sea lions, penguins and dolphins all depend on fish as food, but the fish are decreasing drastically because they are eating the plastic and because of that the animals are not finding enough fish to eat so they are starving to death.

Light pollution is another problem. The baby sea turtles usually hatch on a full moon. When the beach is surrounded by a city, every building is lit up and they mistake the city lights for the moon light. They end up going in the city streets instead of the ocean and get run over.

Other forms of pollution that impact the health of the ocean come from known sources such as crude oil and fertilizers.

In Tunisia, Malta, Southern Italy and Spain plastic sheets which were made for fishing are found in the water tied up together. Out of these four country's Malta came in third for the most abandoned or lost materials in the sea.

Floating abandoned objects

Country/site	Total lost FADs (num)	Palm fronds (num)	Cork slabs (num)	Plastic bottles (num)	Inner tubes (num)	Polystyrene slab (num)
Majorca	53,555	53,555	0	0	7675	21,666
Malta	277,580	92,540	203,508	0	18,508	148,064
Tunisia	905,483	452,742	0	27,164,490	0	0
Sicily	359,900	359,900	0	5,398,500	0	179,950
Total	1,596,518	958,737	203,508	32,562,990	26,183	349,680



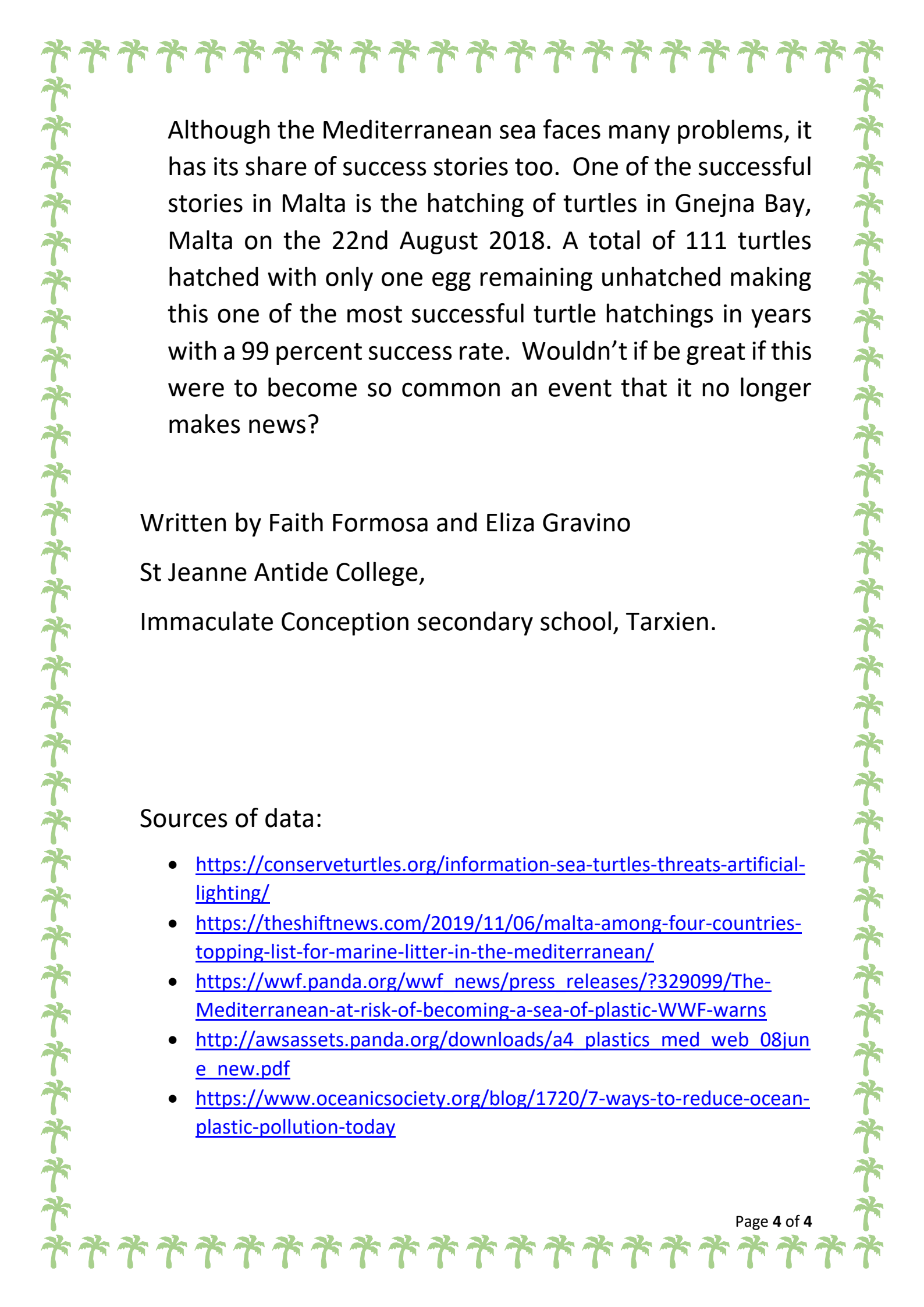
Some Interesting Facts:

- Today, plastic represents 95 per cent of the waste floating in the Mediterranean and lying on its beaches.
- 27 million tonnes of plastic waste produced each year;
- The Mediterranean holds only 1 per cent of the world's waters and 7 per cent of global microplastics.

One solution is that people should start to live a minimum waste life and when they go shopping they could take some containers and mesh bags with them to put either vegetables or other sort of foods. By that less plastic will be created because you will be living a plastic free life.

Some other ideas to help our environment are:

- **Reduce the use of single use plastic.** These plastics are: plastic bags, water bottles, straws, cups, utensils, dry cleaning bags, take-out containers, and any other plastic items that are used once and then thrown away and don't have any more uses.
- **Recycle Properly.** always be sure to recycle your plastic. Recycling helps keep plastics out of the ocean and reduces the amount of "new" plastic.
- **Organize or participate in beach\town clean-ups.** Help remove plastic from your area.
- **Spread the Word.** Stay informed about what's happening to our environment and tell your friends.



Although the Mediterranean sea faces many problems, it has its share of success stories too. One of the successful stories in Malta is the hatching of turtles in Gnejna Bay, Malta on the 22nd August 2018. A total of 111 turtles hatched with only one egg remaining unhatched making this one of the most successful turtle hatchings in years with a 99 percent success rate. Wouldn't it be great if this were to become so common an event that it no longer makes news?

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Sources of data:

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