

Health

# Fishermen helping to overhaul trashy plastic habits off Italy

**SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO:** On a moonlit night off Italy's coast, fishermen are hauling in the usual catch: cuttlefish, red mullet and plastic waste. But this time, they won't throw the rubbish back. The trash instead is being collected, analyzed and, where possible, recycled in an initially month-long experiment to try to provide a blueprint for cleaning up the sea. "A lot of the fishermen used to throw the rubbish back into the sea, because the law says they can't bring it to land," said Eleonora de Sabata, coordinator for Clean Sea Life, which runs the project. "They're not authorized to carry waste, in ports there's nowhere to put this kind of waste and it's not clear who should dispose of it." That dilemma will hopefully not be an issue for the around 40 fishing boats sailing off the Adriatic resort of San Benedetto del Tronto who are taking part in the initiative.

Since it started, the fishermen have collected around a ton of waste a week for a month, of which 60 percent is plastic. Each day, volunteers catalogue and sort the smelly catch on the quayside. Some is recycled, some is disposed of along with household or industrial waste, but none goes back in the sea. The project had been due to wrap up on June 7, the day before World Oceans Day, but has now been extended through the summer months. Organizers hope it will offer waste management solutions that can be scaled up for the rest of Italy and beyond.

**Plastic jumble**

Much of the rubbish is single-use, such as bottles,

plates and cutlery, but also includes old nets from fishing or mussel farming and assorted random plastic objects, from medical products to fax machine parts. Fisherman Claudio Uriani, 62, sorts the catch into different buckets, ready to be sold at market. The most voluminous species is the plastic, though. "Let's say we didn't always collect it. There didn't used to be anyone on land to take the plastic," said Uriani, who's been fishing since 1972. "If the fish eat plastic, they get sick, and so we also can get sick." The Mediterranean Sea faces the additional problem of being a virtually closed body of water surrounded by dense human populations. A study by the peer-reviewed Public Library of Science (PLOS) published in 2015 estimated that the Mediterranean contains 1,000-3,000 tons of floating plastic, with an unknown quantity on the seabed.

The Nile river delivers at least 1,500 tons of plastic into the Med annually, according to the PLOS study. Sperm whales wash up regularly on Italian beaches, their stomachs full of plastic. "The rubbish that ends up in the sea all comes from people, from lakes and rivers, it's essential to educate people that what they put in the water ends up in the sea," said harbor master Mauro Colarossi.

**'Political decision'**

In March European lawmakers approved a new law banning single-use plastic products in the EU from 2021. A draft bill is also before the Italian parliament on the handling of existing waste. Under current laws, if fisher-

men opt to retrieve and dispose of the rubbish they pull in with their catch they could face prosecution for illegally transporting it.

"If fishermen provide a service to the community by bringing this waste to land, it shouldn't be them who have to pay," said Colarossi. It's estimated that 80 percent of waste in the sea comes from land and 20 percent from boats and the fishing industry. "The value of this experiment is to find out what's on the seabed, understand how much is recyclable and how to manage this waste," said De Sabata. "All this information will help decision-makers to take a political decision and so continue." So far up to a quarter of all the waste retrieved was recyclable, depending on whether the polymers in the plastic were still in good enough condition after being in salt water, De Sabata said.

The pollution problem is not just about preventing plastics entering the food chain. If a tin of paint is brought up in the nets from 100 meters below, the whole catch is tainted and must be thrown away. Likewise, fishermen tell of getting so much plastic in their nets that it stops them being able to catch fish. "The problem is in the sea but the solution is and should be on land. There needs to be a political solution, we need to go from alarm to action," said De Sabata. As the ship returns to port after a night of trawling, the fish and the waste are unloaded onto the quayside. "If we did this for a year instead of a month, the sea would be clean," said captain Stefano Voltattorni, heaving yet another crate onto the dock. — AFP



In this photograph taken on May 23, 2019, a bucket of plastic waste recovered from fishing nets sits beside a tray of fish onboard a fishing boat off the coast of San Benedetto del Tronto. — AFP

CLINIC

PAGE





248 33 199





**Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally**  
Senior Registrar



**Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid**  
Consultant



**Dr. Abeer Khattab**  
Specialist



Cataract Surgery



Glaucoma



Retina



General Ophthalmology



Follow-Up All Treatments

Follow us on social media @haddclinic

Tel: 1801082  
Whatsapp Us: +965-6000 2184

## Dr Sahar Ghannam

Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser

**Timing: Saturdays to Wednesdays from 9 am to 1 pm**  
and from 8 pm to 12 pm  
Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm

**Friday is a holiday.**

Address: Fourth Ring Road - Abdallah Fadalah Street, Meidan Hawally, opposite fire station - block 35, building 31.

Clinic Phones: 25610407/ 409/ 314 Fax: 25610465  
Mobaile: 90974754/ 99166746



WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abou Ali

Consultant ENT, Head Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon

Following of the vocal college of surgeons in UK and Ireland.  
18 years work experience in Qatar Hospital WJH Doha.  
Ex Head of ENT department in Forensic Hospital WJH Doha.  
18 years work experience in UK and Ireland.

- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
- Snoring and OSAP Surgery
- Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
- Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
- Salivary gland and parotid surgery
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Micro laryngeal surgery



1 888 883

www.qmc-kuwait.com





Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or

Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617

or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Dr. Husain Alenzi

-Board Certified Urologist.  
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship In Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.



Expert in diagnosing and treating:

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
- 5- Male Factor Infertility And Varicoceles (Microscopic Surgery)
- 6- Erectile Dysfunction

Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088

94449452

 Twitter: @DrHusain\_Urol

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!





Dr. Kiran Turak  
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Zareena Zahir  
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Hasan Khan  
Senior Cardiologist



Dr. P. Seshendra Nath  
Orthopedic Consultant (AIESTRA)  
Specialized in Neck, Shoulder Hip and Knee

50721507  
24551555

www.exircenterkw.com

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER

Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES

Tel : 24568857 / 24568859 info@exircenterkw.com www.exircenterkw.com

