

The **protection** of the Maërl beds is more effective when paired with an aware informed community willing to practice sustainable activities.

To protect this habitat and to continue to benefit from it, whenever you dive, fish or use a boat, just follow this simple rules



Do not trawl  
or use pots



Do not collect Maërl  
out of scientific use



Want to know  
more?



MINISTRY FOR THE ECONOMY,  
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AMBIENTE MARINO



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INTERREG V-A Italy-Malta Programme  
Project part financed by the European Union  
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)  
Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds



**M-INFO**  
RETE MARE INFORMA



*Maërl beds*

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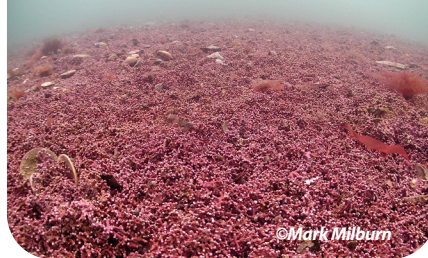


The Maërl beds are **hotspot of biodiversity**, representing a stronghold for several rare, protected or neglected species. Moreover, it attracts **divers** and supports **tourism**.



They provide **shelter and food for a variety of sea life** and are considered a **nursery** for many species of commercial interest.

They **produce oxygen** in the sea water, being made of photosynthetic algae, and **absorbs CO<sub>2</sub>**, through the deposition of calcium carbonate for their growth.



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The **Maërl beds** are a marine habitat made of **red coralline algae** which forms unattached rounded and branched particles named "rhodoliths".

It develops on sandy bottoms under specific conditions of light and may cover vast areas of the seabed. The growing rate of a maërl bed does not exceed 1 mm per year and some beds are aged up to 5500 years old. In the Mediterranean Sea the Maërl beds can be found between 20 and 120 m of depth.



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The main **threats** for the Maërl beds are:



Maritime traffic



Pollution



Trawling and aquaculture



Climate change (ocean acidification and seawater warming)