

SHORT-BEAKED COMMON DOLPHIN

Delphinus delphis

Marine mammal

WHO IT IS

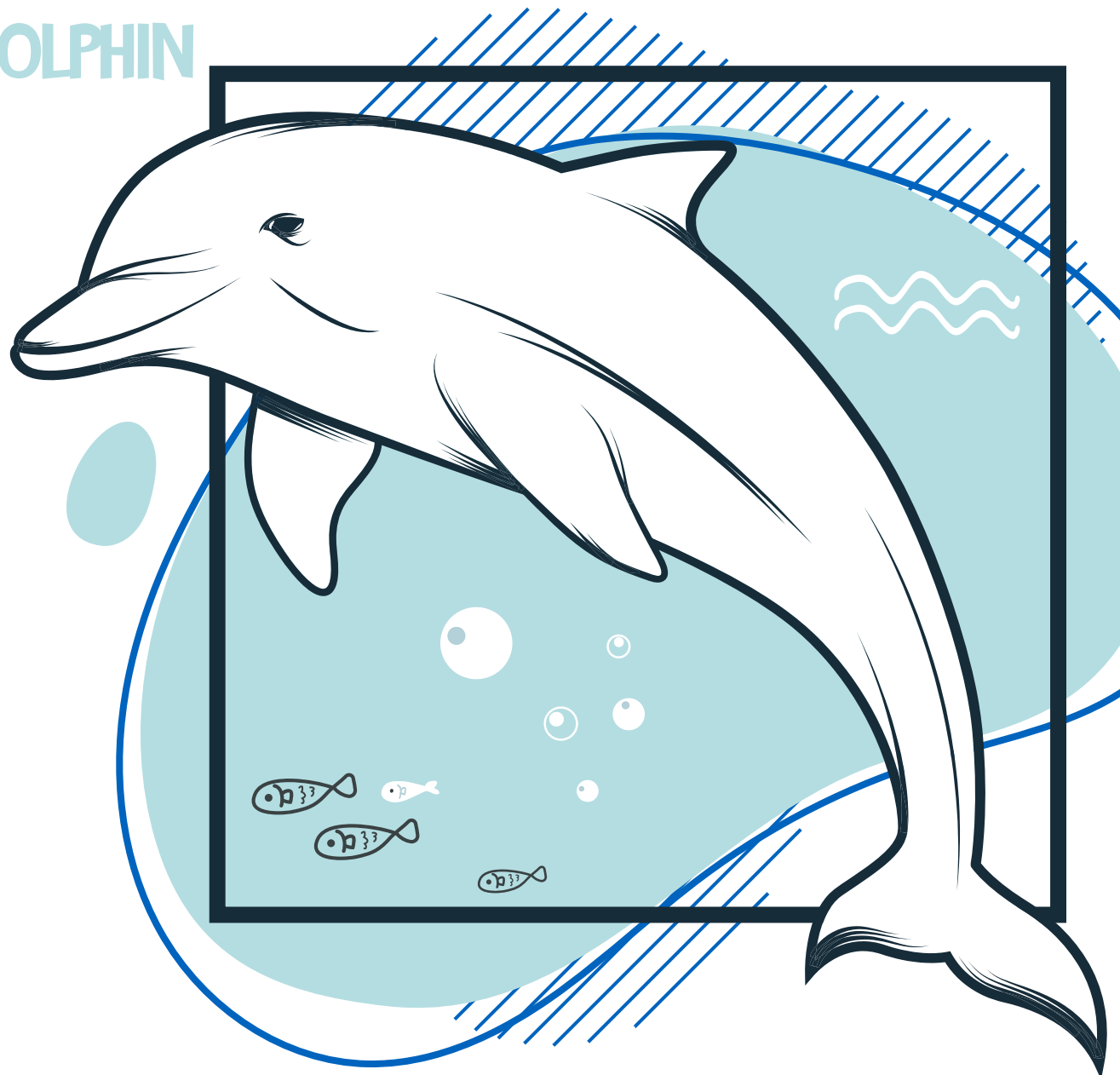
The short-beaked common dolphin, despite its name, is one of the rarest species in the Mediterranean Sea. It lives mostly offshore, several miles from the coasts and is often seen during sea crossings. It lives in large groups and feeds mainly on cephalopods, which it hunts using both sight and echolocation. It can reach a length of 2 meters and weighs over 100 kilograms. It can easily be distinguished from other species thanks to the yellow and grey hour-glass shaped patches along the sides of its body.

WHY IS IT ENDANGERED

Anthropic impact has considerably reduced dolphin populations, so much so that this cetacean is listed on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list of endangered species. In recent decades, a significant decrease was caused by accidental trapping in driftnets, which was only recently banned. This species is protected by several international conventions.

WHAT CAN I DO

This is a highly endangered species and there are several projects and monitoring campaigns. Many research centers ask for the public's help in reporting sightings of these animals and providing their location. They are at the top of the food chain, therefore subject to the accumulation of toxic substances, a fact strongly supporting the need to reduce pollution in general, especially from hydrocarbons. Dolphins also suffer the effects of noise pollution, which is why it is important to limit/prohibit the use of acoustic instrumentation that could affect their sense of direction and ability to communicate.



LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE

Caretta caretta Marine reptile

WHO IT IS

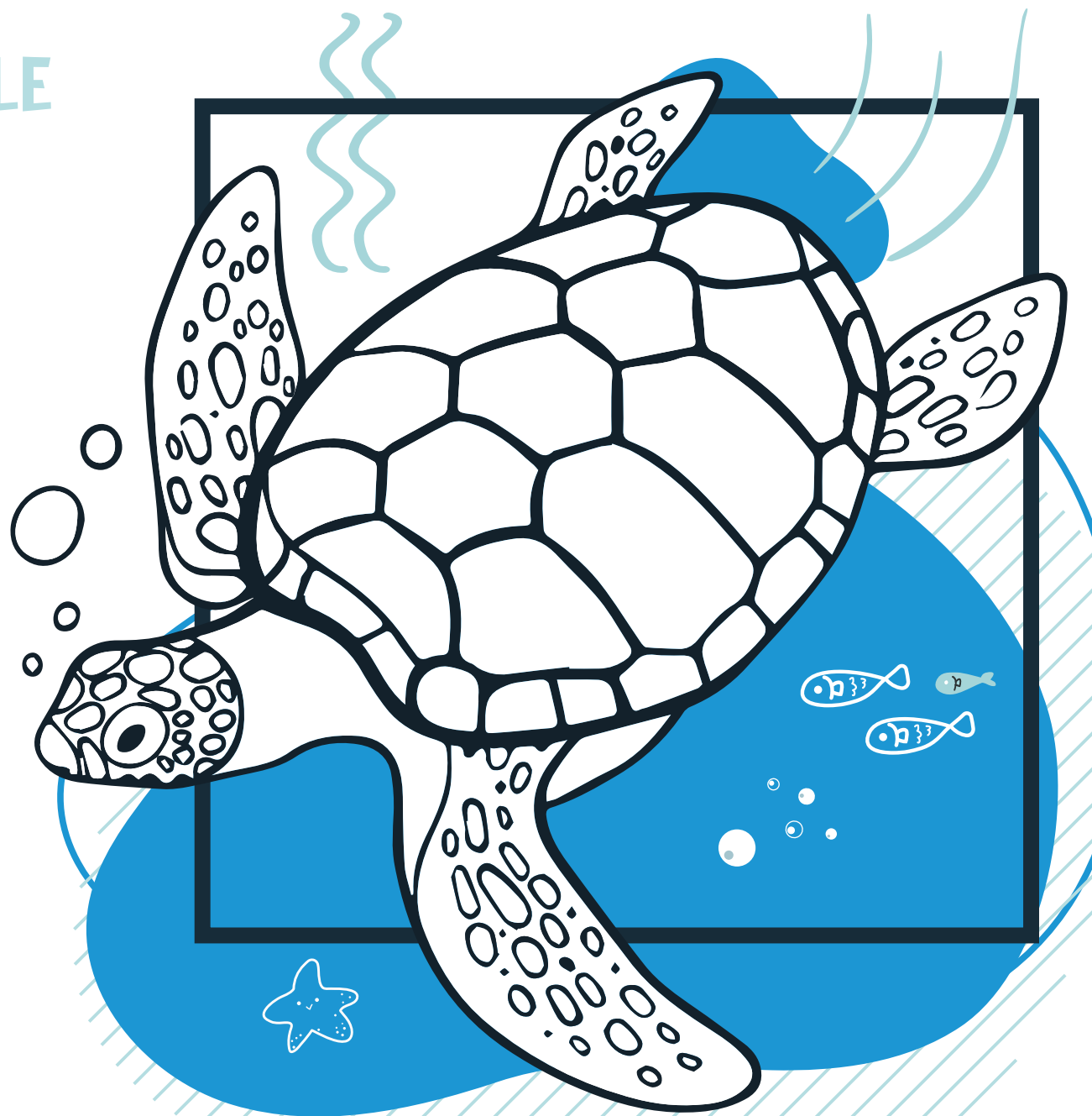
The loggerhead sea turtle (*C. caretta*) has inhabited the earth for millions of years. It lives mainly in the sea where it undertakes long migrations and feeds on jellyfish and numerous other marine organisms. Only the female, after reproduction, returns to the beaches to nest and can spawn up to 100 eggs. These turtles can grow to more than 1 meter in length and can weigh up to 100 kg, living for over 100 years. To catch their prey they can dive up to 200 meters below the surface and stay underwater for over 30 minutes, they always have to return to the surface, however, to breathe with their lungs.

WHY IS IT ENDANGERED

The *C. caretta* population is in sharp decline, including in the Mediterranean Sea, as turtles get entangled in fishing devices as non-target species (by-catch). The deterioration of habitats (loss of available beaches for spawning) and pollution, especially from plastic (ingestion and entanglement), also contribute to the deterioration in numbers of this species, which is protected by several international conventions.

WHAT CAN I DO

A network of recovery centers has been activated to protect specimens found in difficulty or trapped in fishing nets; all citizens can contact law enforcement agencies if they spot wounded or dead animals or a nesting female.



DUSKY GROUPE

Epinephelus marginatus Bony fish

WHO IT IS

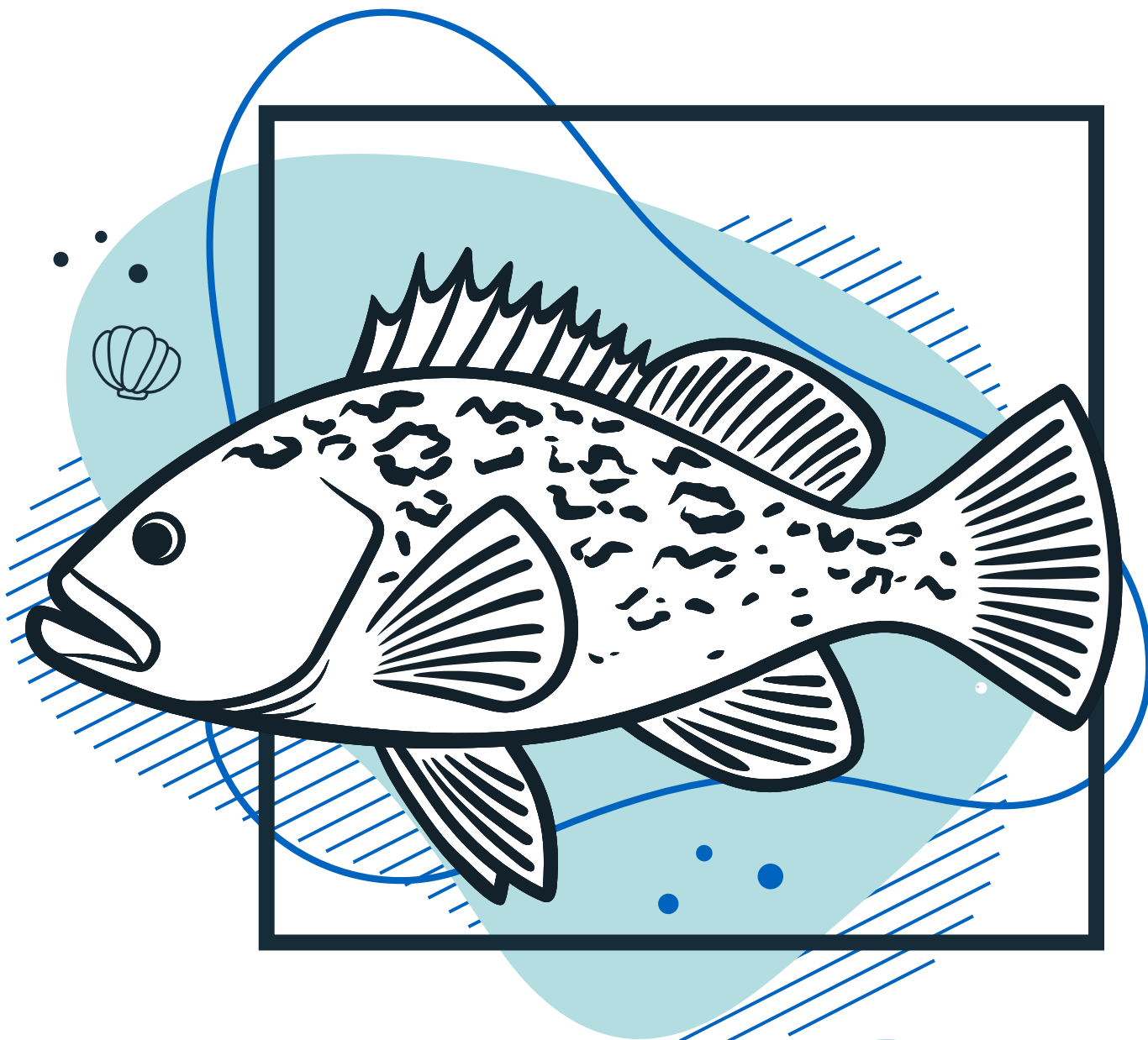
The dusky grouper, yellowbelly rock cod or yellowbelly grouper is one of the most symbolic fishes of the Mediterranean Sea. It is commonly found at about 40 meters, but can live as deep as 300 m below the surface. Its habitat is characterized by rocky seabeds with caves and crevices, where it can hide quickly. It is a solitary fish with a long lifespan (up to 60 years). It has a hefty body which can reach over 1 meter in length, a large mouth and a wide tail. It is usually brown and dotted with lighter spots. One of its most peculiar aspects is its ability to change sex (protogynous species) during its lifetime: it matures as a female around the age of 5 and, at around 12, can transform into a male. It is a carnivore, and therefore a skilled predator of other fish, crustaceans and mollusks.

WHY IS IT ENDANGERED

Because of its large dimensions and the quality of its meat, it is also coveted by professional and recreational fishermen: due to overfishing it has been added to the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list as a species at risk and its catch is currently strictly regulated.

WHAT CAN I DO

Comply with the restrictions and reduce/avoid fishing and consumption. Preserve all the various sizes of fish, ensuring a balance between males and females.





LIFE BELOW LUNA ROSSA

BASKING SHARK

Cetorhinus maximus Cartilaginous fish

WHO IT IS

The basking shark is a migratory species that feeds on plankton. It can live for up to 50 years and has the habit of swimming slowly on the surface of the sea, with vertical displacements that can reach depths of over 1200 m. It is completely harmless to humans and is easily distinguished thanks to its dark color, large, half-moon shaped tail, and its wide mouth that opens completely when it feeds. It is the second-largest fish in the world, after the whale shark, and can reach lengths of well over 10 meters.

WHY IS IT ENDANGERED

Its slow growth, long gestational period and late sexual maturity make the basking shark very vulnerable to overfishing. It is therefore considered a species at risk of extinction and is marked as "endangered" in many lists and international conventions.

WHAT CAN I DO

This species is easy to sight from a boat and it would be very useful for people to provide any data to research centers (date, coordinates, number of specimens, etc.). These species are very sensitive to pollution since their longevity means that they accumulate high levels of toxins. In recent years several studies have shown that basking sharks are ingesting large quantities of micro plastics.





LIFE BELOW LUNA ROSSA

CHARONIA LAMPAS

Charonia lampas Mollusk

WHO IT IS

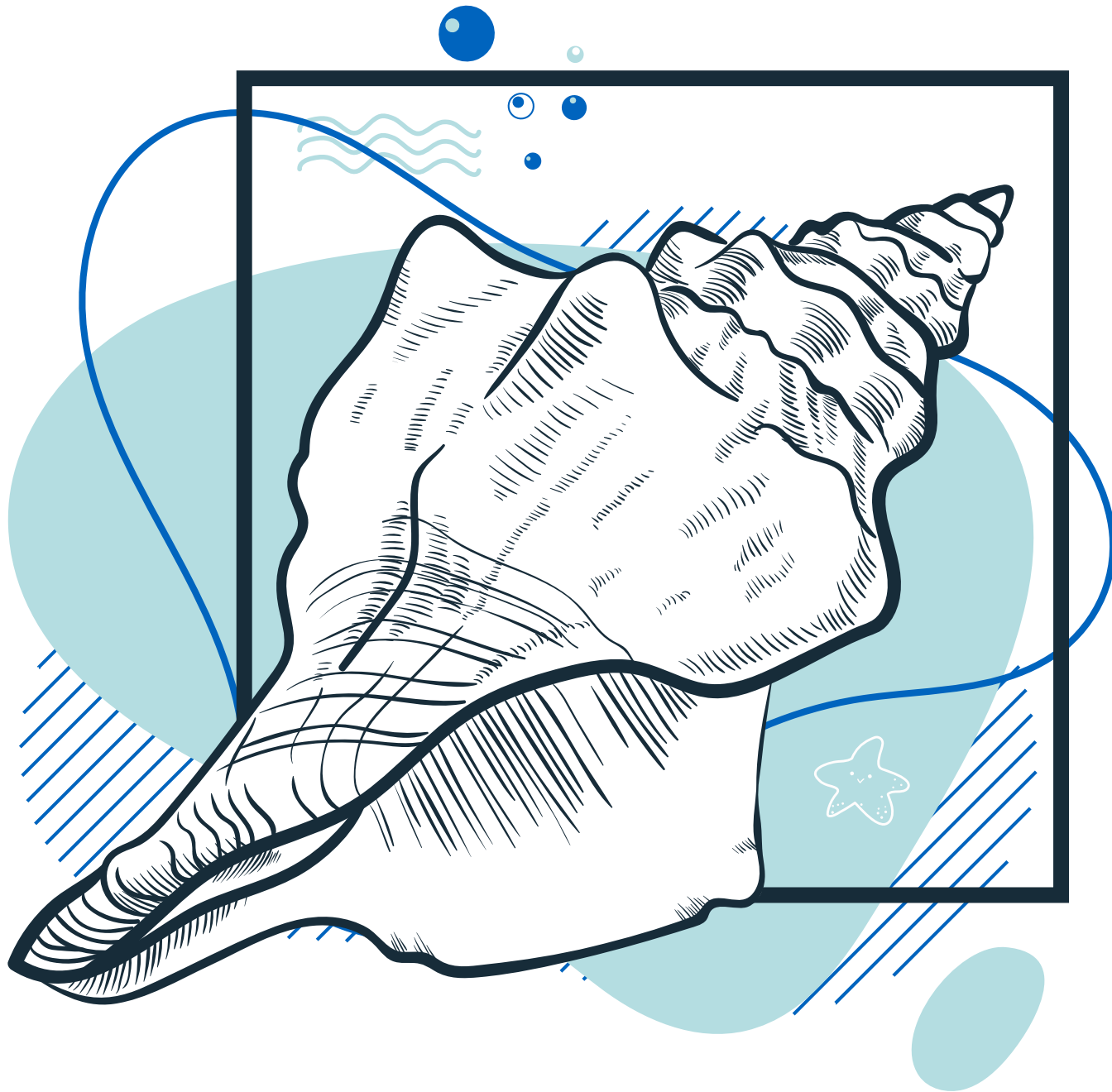
The Charonia lampas, commonly known as Triton's trumpet or Triton snail, is a mollusk with a large, light-colored shell (up to 40 cm in length) that ranges from brown-beige to white or green, with dark shades in its hollows. The fleshy part of the animal is orange, from which two antennae protrude, decorated with two little black bands. It prefers rocky seabeds, including in shallow waters, but it can also be found in detrital beds on the edges of the Continental Shelf. It is carnivorous and preys on ophiuroids and starfish.

WHY IS IT ENDANGERED

This species has become quite rare due to both industrial and small-scale fishing for food, and for collecting for the beauty of its shell. For this reason, the Charonia lampas is a mollusk protected and listed under several international conventions.

WHAT CAN I DO

Do not contribute to the collectors' market. If caught accidentally it is recommended that you release it immediately back into the sea.





LIFE BELOW LUNA ROSSA

SPINY LOBSTER

Palinurus elephas

Crustacean

WHO IT IS

The spiny lobster inhabits rocky seabeds at depths ranging from 5 to 260 meters. It is an unmistakable crustacean thanks to its brownish color and 10 legs (making it a decapod). It has very long yellow and red striped sensorial antennae and a wide fan tail. Its body is covered in an armor (exoskeleton) which, as it grows, is replaced several times with a new one (molting). It lives, on average, 9 years, reaching a maximum length of 50 centimeters and is usually found in the crevices between rocks, from where it only emerges to feed at night (omnivorous species).

WHY IS IT ENDANGERED

Overfishing is considered the main threat to spiny lobster conservation. It is classified as a vulnerable species in several international conventions.

WHAT CAN I DO

Comply with laws on fishing, with a particular focus on minimum size and breeding seasons. In Sardinia there are several repopulation areas where fishing is forbidden. Consumption should be limited.

