

Project Title

Conservation of Black Sea Marine Ecosystems: Impact of Recreational Fishing in Crisis Conditions

Project Data

Duration	Funding	Project location/ Region
12 month (1 February 2026 – 31 January 2027)	9 041 €	Odessa coastal zone, north-western Black Sea, Ukraine

Project Partners

Who are the project partners?

- Bohdan Hulak, PhD, Researcher, Institute of Marine Biology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Odessa
- Institute of Marine Biology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (host institution)

What does each partner specifically contribute to the project?

- Bohdan Hulak: project design and implementation, field surveys, test fishing, laboratory analysis, monitoring of angling communities, data processing and reporting
- Institute of Marine Biology NAS of Ukraine: laboratory facilities, scientific collection of tissue samples, institutional support for fieldwork and analysis

About the Project

What is the problem – and what do you want to change about it? What are you doing specifically to achieve this goal?	Recreational fishing in the Ukrainian part of the Black Sea is poorly documented. Unlike commercial catches, it is almost absent from official statistics. Under wartime conditions, traditional marine monitoring is also restricted. As a result, there is little reliable information on the species composition of recreational catches, the biology of key coastal species and the possible role of amateur fishing as a source of monitoring data. The project assesses recreational fishing in the coastal zone of Odessa and tests whether test fishing, interviews with anglers and monitoring of online angling communities can be used for ichthyological monitoring when access to the sea is limited. The work includes control (test) fishing, laboratory analysis of size, sex and age, collection of tissue samples, and documentation of rare, Red-listed and invasive species.
What is special or new about your approach?	The project uses recreational fishing itself as a research and monitoring tool under crisis conditions. Instead of relying only on classical research surveys, it combines test fishing with standard amateur gear, interviews with local anglers and analysis of social-media communities. This makes it possible to collect data on common commercial species as well as on rare and invasive species that are seldom recorded in official landings.
The figure: What does the project actually do?	During the first field season (March–July 2026), 41 field trips were carried out, 304 fish and 879 molluscs were analysed, and 49 fish species plus 2 mollusc species were identified. The estimated catch of gobies and horse mackerel along the Odessa coastline in April–July 2026 was about 4.4 tonnes.
What remains? What concrete results are achieved, and who can use them in the future?	The project provides the first systematic dataset on recreational catches and the biological characteristics of key coastal species off Odessa under wartime conditions. The results can be used by research institutions, fisheries authorities and conservation bodies for stock monitoring, protection of rare species and the development of citizen-science approaches. The approach can



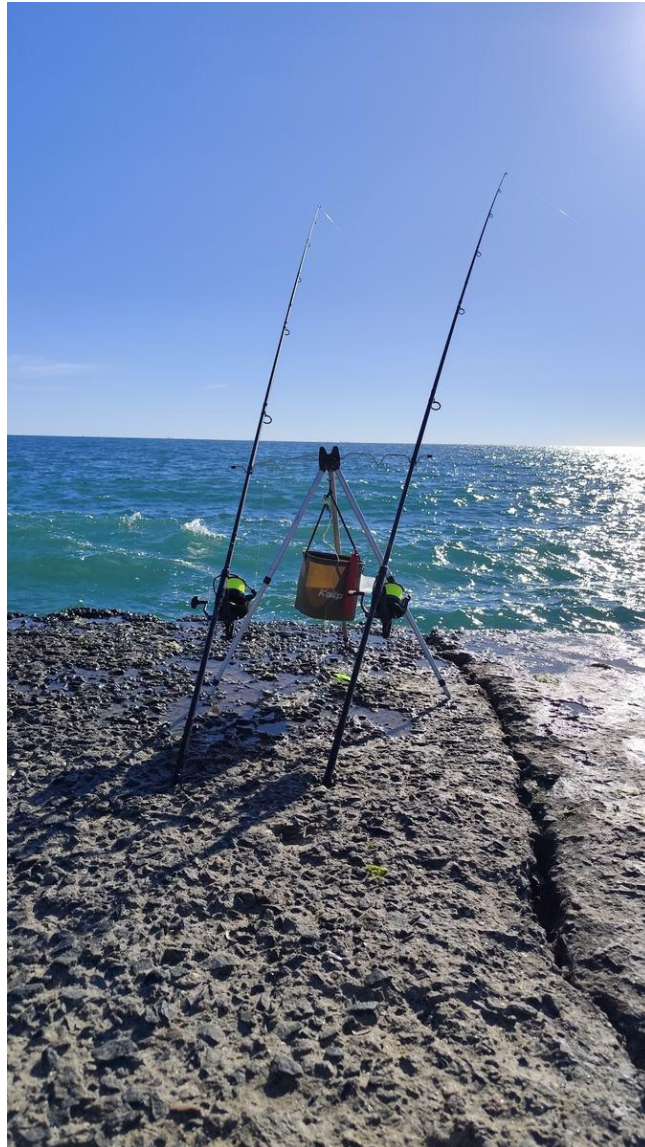
also serve as a model for adaptive fish monitoring when access to marine waters is limited.

See the project images
on the following pages



Project images

Image 1 of 3



Test fishing on a pier in Odessa.

Photo: Bohdan Hulak, Institute of Marine Biology NAS of Ukraine

Project images

Image 2 of 3

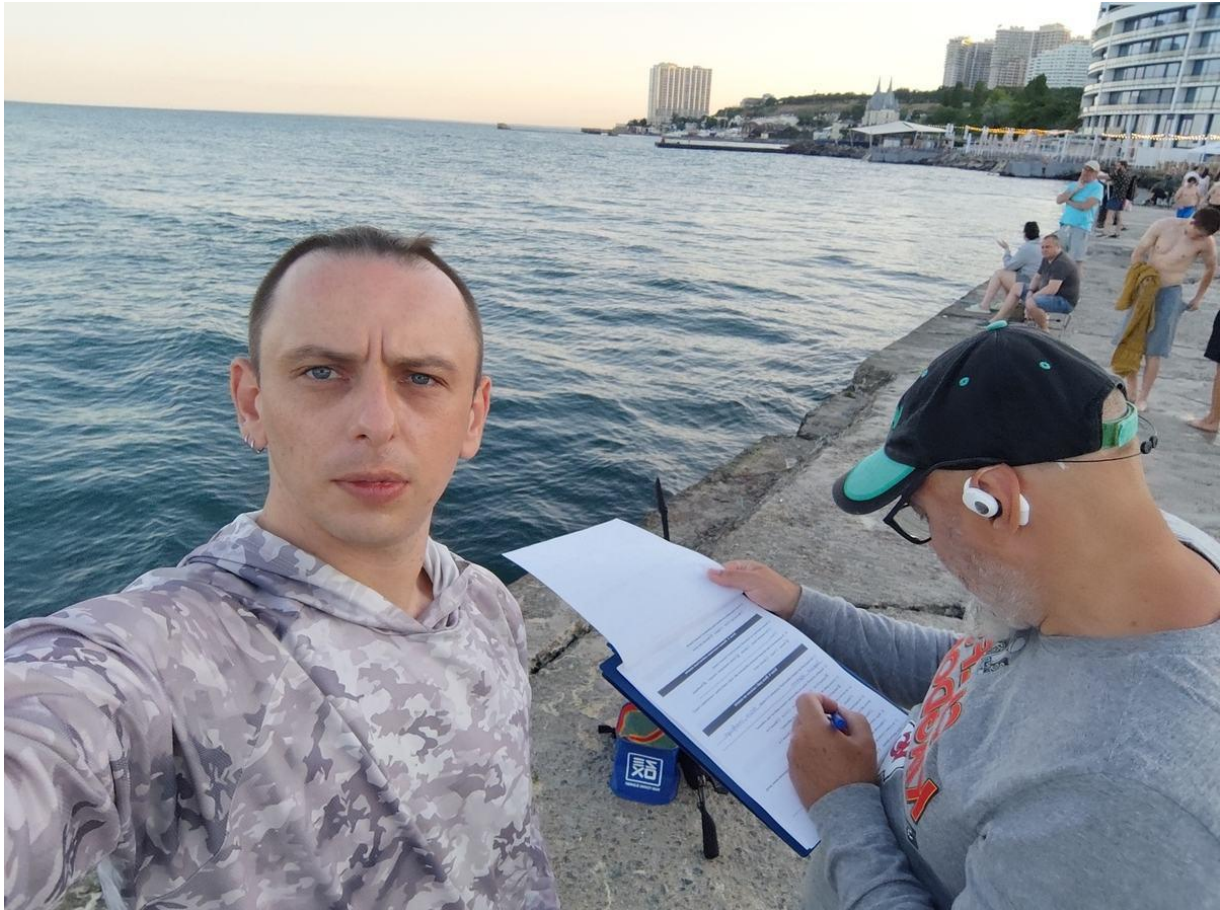


Laboratory analysis of fish samples (length measurements / otoliths).

Photo: Bohdan Hulak, Institute of Marine Biology NAS of Ukraine

Project images

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Interview with a recreational angler / view of the Odessa coastline.

Photo: Bohdan Hulak, Institute of Marine Biology NAS of Ukraine