

# FINDKELP, A GIS-BASED COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROJECT TO ASSESS PORTUGUESE KELP CONSERVATION STATUS

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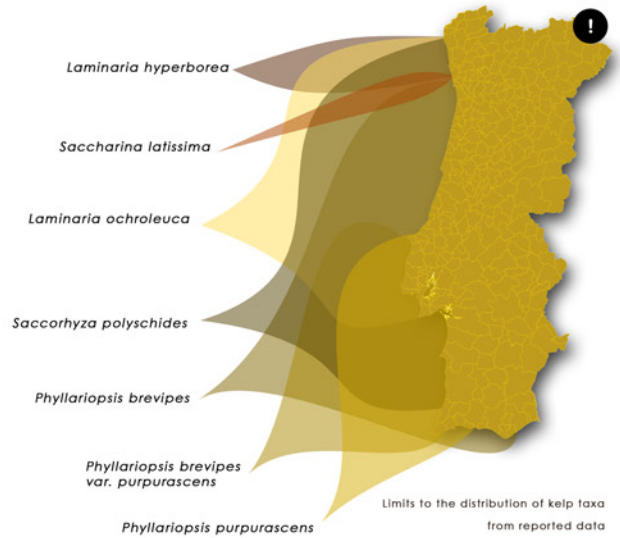


## INTRODUCTION

In almost any Atlantic coastal area of Europe where there is a suitable substratum and adequate water quality, one or more species of kelp may be found. Their high productivity and complex biological structure make kelps especially important members of their communities, particularly when present in dense stands known as KELP FORESTS.

Currently, these species are subject to important novel constraints of physical and anthropogenic origins that can strongly modify their sustainability, their distribution and the biodiversity of associated species.

Along the Portuguese coastline there is a perception by the local and scientific communities that some kelp species abundance is declining, particularly at the southern coast. Nevertheless, no large-scale spatial study of kelp abundance and diversity has been done.



## METHODOLOGY

- 1 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY :** USE OF MASS MEDIA TOGETHER WITH FACE-TO-FACE APPROACHES towards scuba divers and other coastal zone users  
FINDKELP : May to August 2008
- 2 FIELD BASED OBSERVATIONS:** team of informed volunteers acting as independent observers, reporting georeferenced data to an electronic data-base available within the project's web site
- 3 VALIDATION:** randomly chosen underwater locations (n=56) within reported sites (n=387), volunteer data was GROUNDTRUTHED by means of non-destructive sampling techniques (3x50m belt-transects), allowing map validation through ERROR MATRICES AND KAPPA STATISTICS WITH CONCORDANCE AGREEMENT SCALES.
- 4 FINAL OUTPUT:** MAP OF DISTRIBUTION / DIVERSITY / CONSERVATION STATUS OF 6 kelp species (K=0.827 i.e. perfect agreement).

