

What We Know - and What We Don't Know -about Contaminants in the Kastela Bay (Adriatic Sea)

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Abstract

Since 1946, the IOF in Split, has been collecting oceanographic, nutrient and biological data from several stations in the Kaštela Bay. The Bay is particularly threatened by organic matter, nutrients and other harmful substances. Majority of us still believe that industry-big industry- is a great problem. But most contaminants do not come out of a pipe. They come into the ecosystem from diffuse or “non-point” sources such as runoff from stormwater and from atmosphere. Diffuse or “non-point” sources of contaminants are becoming more important all over the Bay, and these sources remain more difficult to track and more difficult to control.

For now, we know a fair amount about the inputs of nutrients and toxic materials into the Bay, but we are still just learning how to measure the effect of those contaminants on the Bay organisms, and on the Bay itself. We have made great strides in understanding where contaminants come from and how they move - physically and chemically - throughout the Bay. Until today we have only begun to make progress in understanding the biological effects those contaminants can have - not only on large organisms like fish, but also on the microscopic plant and animals that make up the foundation of the Bay’s food web.