

# ONE LAST BREATH.

*"A story of survival and threat"*

This work is dedicated to the marine species suffering the consequences of human actions. Species fighting to survive in a sea filled with waste that doesn't belong to them but has become part of their reality.

This photobook is a tribute to their existence and a call for hope: a reminder that we still have time to change, to protect, and to restore our oceans.

I sincerely thank the Oceanogràfic Foundation, Azul Marino Foundation and the CRAM Foundation for their kindness, support and their tireless work in marine conservation. I also extend my gratitude to all those who, with their dedication and passion, have made this project possible, dedicated to the protection of our oceans and the species that depend on them.

FUNDACIÓN OCEANOGRÀFIC VALENCIA

CRAM FUNDACIÓ PER A LA CONSERVACIÓ I RECUPERACIÓ D'ANIMALS MARINS

AZUL MARINO FUNDACIÓN

“When nature return our gaze, we see the scars of our actions”



## *Introduction*

**One Last Breath** is a visual journey through the silent crisis hidden beneath the surface of our oceans. Plastics, ghost nets, and other human waste have invaded the marine world, threatening ecosystems once thought untouchable. With a blend of documentary and artistic imagery, this project not only reveals the damage we've caused but also the change we still have the power to create.

The sea, one of the planet's great sources of life, is being slowly suffocated by our actions. But even in the midst of destruction, there is still hope. Every choice we make, every moment of awareness, can help rebuild what we're close to losing. This photobook invites us to stop, to look closer, and to understand that the ocean is not something far away it's part of who we are.

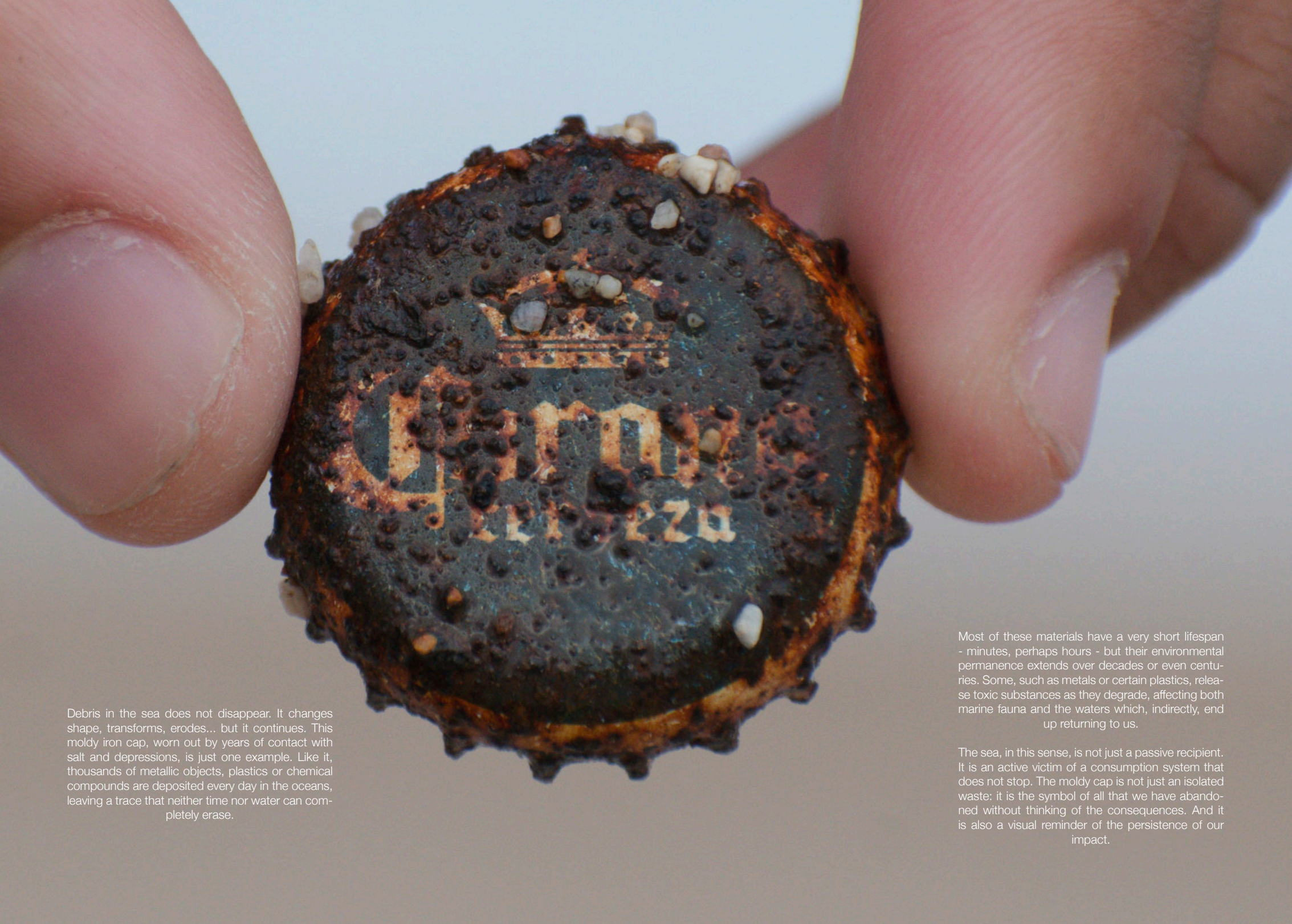
These pages trace a cycle: from the waste left behind, to the fragments found inside marine animals; from the silent recovery of wounded creatures, to their return to the sea. It's not just a story it's a loop, fragile but alive.

Because maybe the last breath isn't a farewell, but the moment we decide to breathe differently.

# *Waves of Waste*



The ocean, once a symbol of mystery and life, is now saturated with the remnants of our routines. Each wave returns more than water, it brings back a trace of our excess. The sea no longer just moves with salt and foam, but with debris that speaks of what we've discarded and forgotten. This segment opens a raw and visual reflection on the visible face of marine pollution. Through these images, the goal is not just to show, but to confront. To recognize that what floats in the water is not alien to us—it's ours. And it doesn't disappear with the tide. It stays, sinks, fragments, and returns. The ocean is no longer just a landscape. It's a testimony. One that demands we listen.



Debris in the sea does not disappear. It changes shape, transforms, erodes... but it continues. This moldy iron cap, worn out by years of contact with salt and depressions, is just one example. Like it, thousands of metallic objects, plastics or chemical compounds are deposited every day in the oceans, leaving a trace that neither time nor water can completely erase.

Most of these materials have a very short lifespan - minutes, perhaps hours - but their environmental permanence extends over decades or even centuries. Some, such as metals or certain plastics, release toxic substances as they degrade, affecting both marine fauna and the waters which, indirectly, end up returning to us.

The sea, in this sense, is not just a passive recipient. It is an active victim of a consumption system that does not stop. The moldy cap is not just an isolated waste: it is the symbol of all that we have abandoned without thinking of the consequences. And it is also a visual reminder of the persistence of our impact.



Single-use plastic cups. Lollipop sticks. Candy wrappers. Bottle caps and rings.
This is not a list of lost items , it's an X-ray of our daily routine. Each of these fragments, collected in just one hour of cleanup, reveals how deeply our everyday habits are leaking into the sea.

The plastic crisis begins with these small objects. Because of their size, they often go unnoticed, yet they carry enormous destructive potential: they get embedded in the sand, are ingested by marine species, and release toxic compounds. A simple lollipop stick can take hundreds of years to decompose, if it ever does.

These items don't end up in the ocean by accident. They are part of a production and consumption system designed for disposability, yet they cause lasting consequences. Plastic is not just a problem of quantity, it's a problem of mindset.





# *Fragments of a Dying Ocean*



There are waste materials that do not float to the surface or get dragged through the sand. They are the ones that accumulate inside the bodies of animals, the ones that get tangled among organs, the ones that end a life without making a sound. They are fragments of plastic, metal, rubber. Remnants that no one should have inside them, but that many species ingest, mistaking them for food or getting caught in invisible nets.

This chapter focuses on what is not visible at first glance: the internal and systemic impact of waste. From bottle caps and wrappers extracted from a turtle's stomach, to remnants that have accumulated in laboratories as a testament to our negligence. Each photographed object is evidence. Not of an isolated case, but of a pattern that repeats across the entire planet.





Fishing nets, ropes, and everyday items like cigarette lighters are among the most dangerous waste found in the ocean. Once in the water, these objects become traps: they entangle marine animals, damage coral reefs and seagrass beds, and often remain for decades without degrading.

Many of these items were never designed to enter the sea, but once they do, they become part of a deadly cycle. Lighters, for example, are often mistaken for food by seabirds and turtles. Nets can wrap around fins, necks, or reefs, causing slow injuries or death.

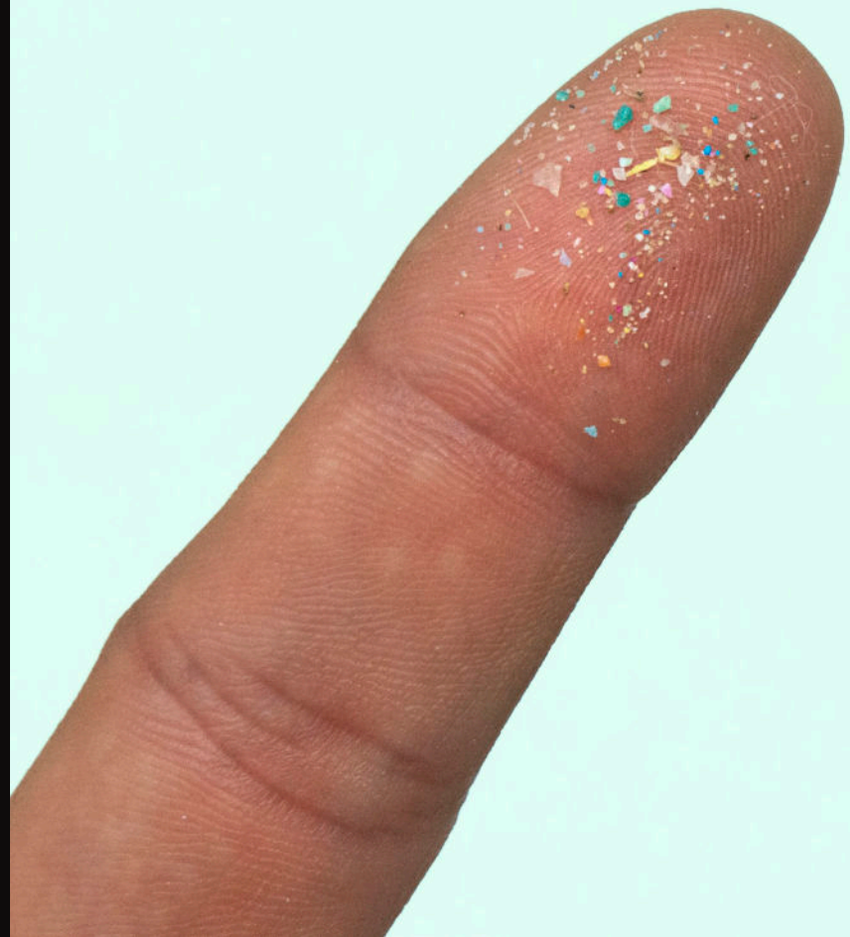
These images document the kind of waste that doesn't just pollute the water, it alters the balance of entire ecosystems.





*“Only 9% of all plastic ever produced has been recycled.”*

*“Plastics don’t disappear, they just get smaller.”*



Most plastics never fully disappear they just break into smaller pieces. What we see on the shore or floating on the surface is only the beginning. Over time, sunlight, saltwater, and friction turn these fragments into 1-5mm microplastics: tiny, almost invisible particles that infiltrate every layer of the marine ecosystem. They are ingested by fish, filtered by plankton, and ultimately, reach us. This image captures that slow transformation from visible waste to a hidden, lasting threat.



“Would you survive with this waste inside you? Most marine animals don’t.”



*“Plastic waste from different countries found in the stomach of specimen Caretta Caretta 911.”*



*“Open bag containing 15 plastic fragments found in the stomach of the patient Caretta Caretta 911.”*


CC602
29.11.21
756
4/4/23
Cc 588
30/01/2025
Heces (madera)
CC495
22.10.19
Cc 500
28/12/19
Cc 950
31.03.25
Plastico en heces.
Cc 867
Heces con plastico (Poliespan)
28/11/24
Cc 503
26/12/19
Cc 713
28/12/22
Cc 919
Tapon botella + madera
CC 711
16/12/22
Cc 877
10/01/2025
Cc 741
11/3/23
CC 602
20/12/21
CC 493
7/10/19
CC598
27.12.21
742
13/3/23
598
14.12.21
Nº 741
29/03/23
30/04/24
Nº 595 ARCA
Cc 596
11/11/21
Cc 711 tapon botella
12/12/2022


Cc 713
28/12/22
Cc 711
16/12/22
Nº 595 ARCA
30/04/24
Cc 713
Cc 888
30/01/2025
Heces (madera)
Cc 495
22.10.19
Cc 500
26/12/19
Cc 950
31.03.25
Plástica en heces.
Cc 503
26/12/19




These containers preserve fishing hooks, screws, fragments of plastic and other debris extracted from the stomachs of sea turtles. Objects that should never have reached the ocean, let alone ended up inside a living being. Their presence reveals the scale of marine pollution and the wide range of residues that affect wildlife in unpredictable and harmful ways.








# *Healing the Silent Survivors*



Behind every injured animal lies a story of resistance. In recovery centers, far from the open sea, marine species begin the long and fragile process of healing, where silence replaces waves and the wounds caused by human waste become tangible. This chapter reveals a lesser-known face of marine conservation: the quiet dedication of those who care, clean, and protect. From turtles entangled in nets to species weakened by internal contamination, these survivors represent both the damage inflicted and the effort to repair it. Each image is a testimony of resilience. Not all make it back to the ocean, but every attempt is a reminder that protecting life starts with responsibility, empathy, and action.




*Tempus · Bellver Blue Tech Zone - Caretta Caretta 932*



In these recovery pools, sea turtles begin the delicate process of healing. Each individual is closely monitored, receiving food, antibiotics, and specific treatments adapted to its needs. The conditions are carefully regulated to reduce stress and promote recovery. These facilities represent a vital step between injury and the hope of returning to the wild.

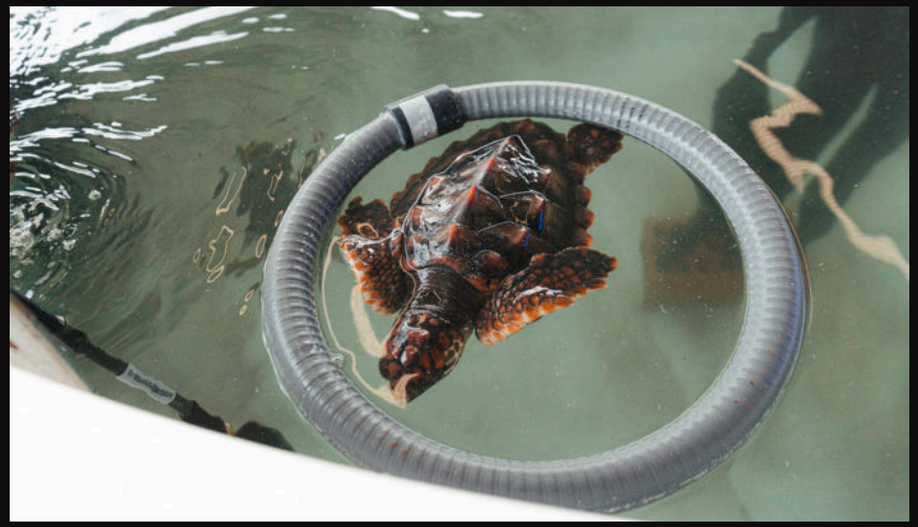


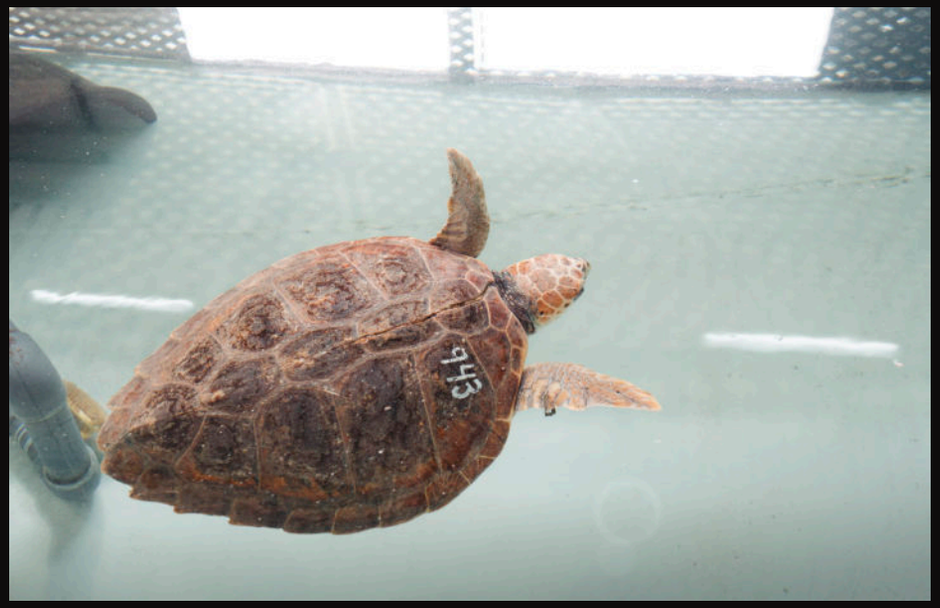




Head Starting is a conservation strategy designed to improve the survival rates of marine turtles during their most vulnerable stages. In the wild, only 1 in 1,000 hatchlings reaches adulthood, threatened by predators, marine debris, and human activity. Today, climate change adds another layer of complexity: rising sand temperatures are causing severe feminization among hatchlings, putting future reproduction at serious risk.

By raising young turtles in controlled environments, this approach offers both physical protection and a way to help restore a balanced sex ratio. What unfolds here is more than just rehabilitation it's an attempt to correct a human-induced imbalance with a solution.









These images reveal the harshest face of marine reality: the silent suffering inflicted by human activity. Some turtles arrive with critical injuries, necrotic fins on the verge of amputation, fractured shells, deep wounds, often caused by collisions with boats or entanglement in plastic debris. Their bodies carry the marks of an ocean in crisis.

What we see is not just pain, but the will to survive. Each wound is a trace of the violence we've imposed. And yet, within these recovery pools, hope persists, suspended between trauma and the possibility of a return to the sea.

# *A Second Chance*



Step by step, held by human hands for the last time, they cross the sand until the water touches their skin again. This moment mark the end of a long journey, one of pain, care, and survival, and the beginning of another: the reunion with their natural habitat.

Releases are never just releases. They are acts of reparation. Of letting go. Of acknowledging the damage and daring to believe in recovery. Each turtle that returns to the sea carries the trace of a shared responsibility, but also the promise that not everything is lost.




Once sea turtles have fully recovered from their injuries, a careful selection process determines which specimens are ready to return to the wild. Each individual is assessed to ensure it is strong, healthy, and capable of surviving independently.

This moment represents the transition from clinical care to freedom, a crucial step that marks the success of the rehabilitation efforts and the beginning of a new chance in their natural habitat.

This public event, organized by the Oceanogràfic Foundation, marked the final step in the recovery process of a specimen treated after suffering injuries caused by human activity.

Surrounded by families, volunteers, and marine biologists, the turtle returns to its habitat — a symbolic gesture of resilience and a reminder of our shared responsibility.



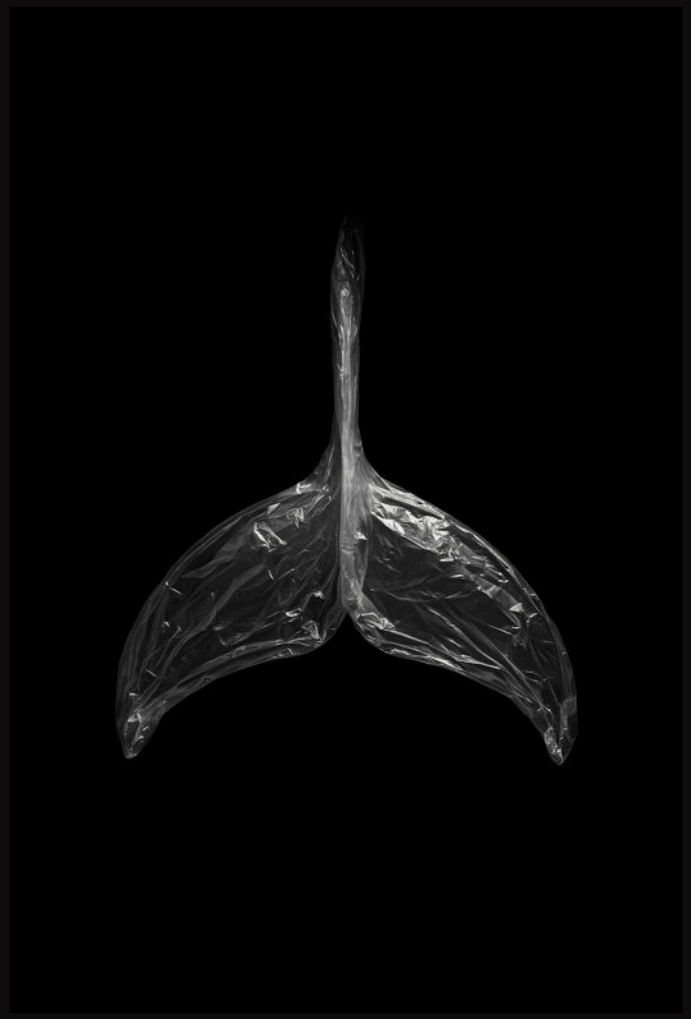


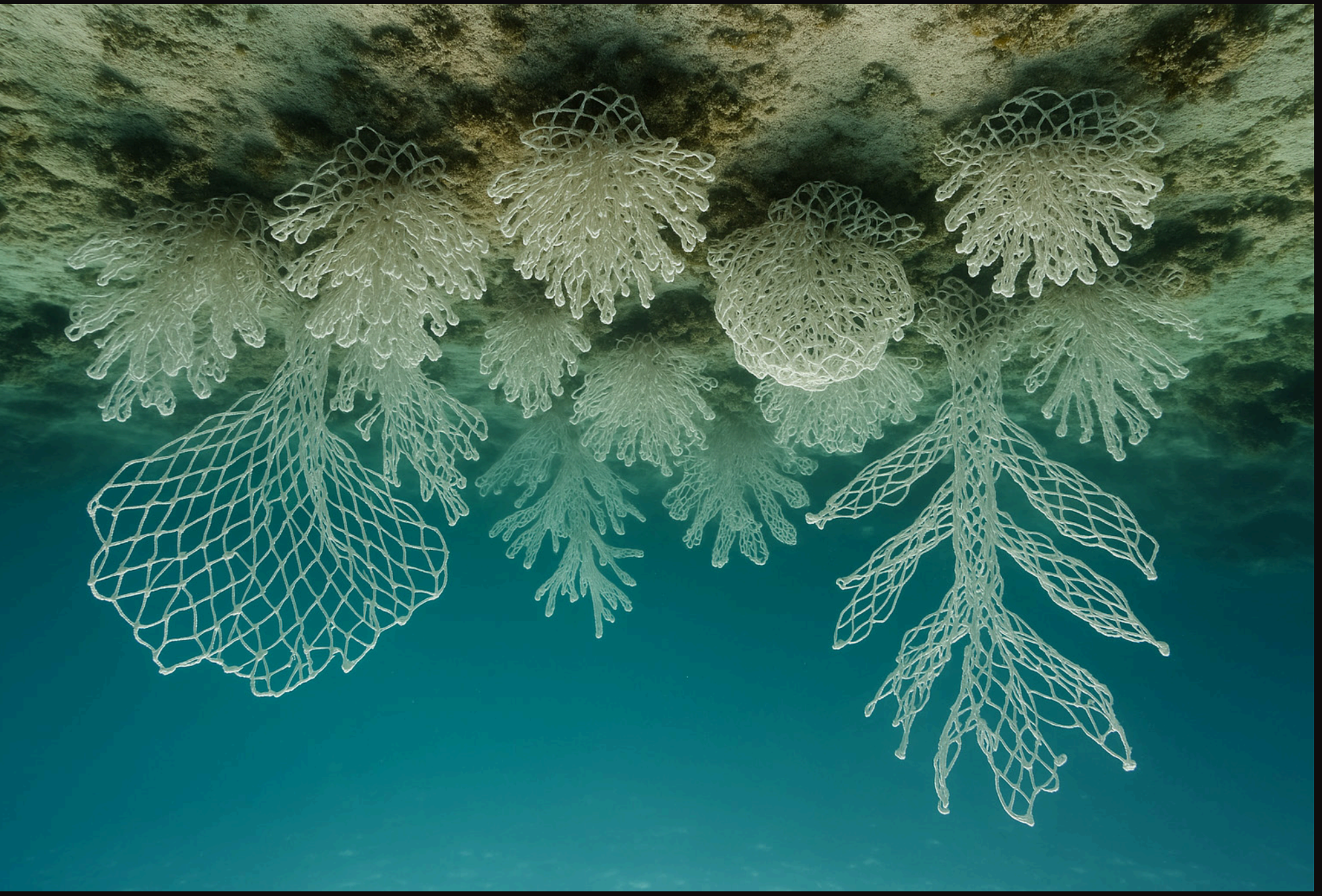
*Release of Espi, a loggerhead turtle, at Saler Beach, Valencia.*



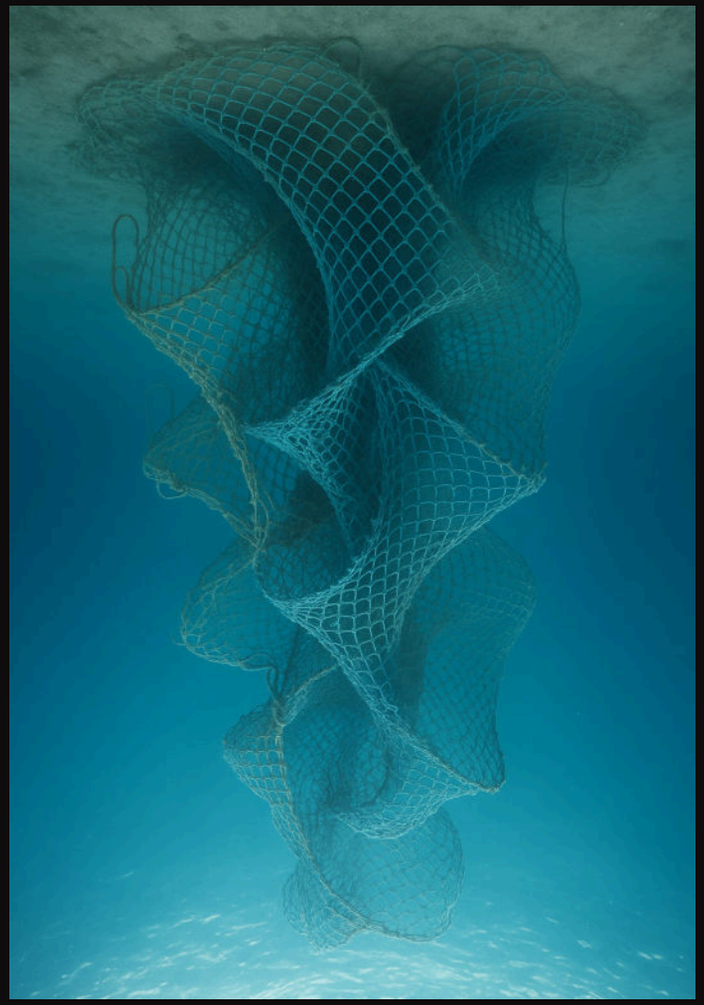
“Reversing the damage begins by reversing the gaze.”



















# *What remains*



This chapter opens a speculative visual narrative in which marine species are reimagined through the very materials that threaten their existence. Using artificial intelligence as a creative tool, each image presents a reconstructed creature—its form shaped by plastic, ghost nets, synthetic fibres, and industrial waste. These are not natural portraits, but conceptual representations born from the collision between biology and debris.

The goal is not to replicate what already exists, but to question what might remain. In these compositions, the boundary between life and residue is deliberately blurred, offering a critical reflection on how human impact reshapes the natural world, sometimes irreversibly.

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