

Andrej A. GAJIĆ

B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., Ph.D. (Res.)



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🌐 <https://andrejgajic.com>

📍 Vlorë, Albania

ACHIEVEMENTS

75 PUBLICATIONS

Including 37 journal articles

25 RESEARCH PROJECTS

Principal Investigator of 21

7 HONORS & AWARDS

for scientific achievements

3 THESIS SUPERVISOR

at European leading universities

+300 MEDIA FEATURES

articles and docudrama

My current focus revolves around leading macro-regional research endeavors aimed at generating novel, reliable insights into elusive and lesser-known species.

PERSONAL PROFILE

Dedicated Ph.D. researcher specializing in post-capture survival, diseases and effective in-situ conservation of sharks, skates and rays. Recognized with multiple international awards for exceptional scientific achievements. Senior Principal Investigator with a successful track record of leading 21 regional project in past seven years. Published author with over 70 publications and distinguished speaker at numerous conferences across United States, Europe and Africa. Andrej's work has been featured in more than 200 media outlets, including National Geographic, Discovery Channel, Warner Bros., FOX, BBC, CNN affiliates, Arte and many more, as well as translated in over 15 languages. Andrej excels in leading complex field research, including underwater explorations, ROV surveys, and fishery surveys. Additionally, he adeptly coordinates and interprets pathological, histological, radiological (CT/MRI), embryological, and toxicological examinations.

Born: 1st of July 1991. in former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Fluent in: Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, English (communicate in Albanian)

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Doctor of Science (Veterinary Medicine)

Res./Can. **Thesis:** *Differential histopathology of hepatic lesions in elasmobranchs: a comparative analysis of parasitic and non-parasitic affliction* (dr.title)

Department for Pathology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
University of Sarajevo

M.Sc. Master of Science (Biology and Ecology)

(Hons.) **Thesis:** *Current degree of adaptation and diseases of the genus Mustelus Linck, 1790 in the Neum and Mali Ston Bays*

Department for Biology, Faculty of Science and Mathematics
Department for Pathology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
University of Sarajevo

B.Eng. Bachelor of Biology and Engineering Ecology

(Hons.) **Thesis:** *Neum bay as an adaptive zone of the adaptive type Mustelus Linck, 1790 (Carcharhiniformes: Triakidae)*

Department for Biology, Faculty of Science and Mathematics
University of Sarajevo

FEATURED EXPERIENCE

Sharklab ADRIA Research Center Vlorë, Albania

<http://www.sharklab-adria.org/>

2008 – today Executive Director Led the development and oversight of over 45 scientific research projects in the region, covering diverse fields such as ecological studies, reproductive biology, pathology, toxicology, and conservation sciences. Additionally, played a key role in enhancing scientific capacities in the Adriatic-Ionian region and provided direct scientific support to the EU and UNEP MAP.

National Geographic Washington, D.C.

<https://explorer-directory.nationalgeographic.org/andrej-a-gajic>

2018 – 2019 Head Scientist Head of the Shark Tales with the aim of understanding the impacts of pollution and habitat loss on the development of diseases and immune responses

2019 – 2021 Lecturer, Talent Based on my studies, several short documentary segments have been produced (Sharkfest in 2018, 2020). Invited speaker across the US and EU.

2021 – today Expert Reviewer Evaluating grants and conducting candidate assessments, delivering crucial information towards the decisions on project funding and new explorers

Discovery Channel New York, US

<https://www.discovery.com/profiles/andrej-gajic>

2020 – 2022 Head Scientist Lead of the Plastic Sharks study, aimed at understanding the adverse effects of micro- and nanoplastics and persistent organic pollutants on sharks.

2022 – today Head Scientist Leader of the scientific expedition 'What Lurks in the Depths?' representing the first systematic investigation of sharks and rays in the deep parts of the Adriatic. The expedition explores ecology, diseases, and survival rates.

ENGAGEMENTS

Year	Institution	Position	Location
2022 - today	FAO (SDG-BA)	Principal focal point	Rome, Italy
2021 - 2023	SPA/RAC (UNEP MAP)	Lead consultant	Tunis, Tunisia
2021 - today	European Environmental Agency	Head of the national NRC	Copenhagen, Denmark
2020 - today	EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian region	Development, Contingency	Izola, Slovenia
2015 - 2016	Hydro-Engineering Institute	Lead Expert, DeFishGear	Sarajevo, Bosnia
2010 - 2012	European Elasmobranch Association	Board of Directors	Plymouth, England
2009 - 2013	Shark Alliance (PEW Trust)	Coalition member	Brussels, Belgium

PUBLICATIONS

TOTAL PUBLICATIONS	75	Original Scientific Papers	37	Conference Proceedings	29
Books / Monographs	2	Book Chapters	4	Other publications	3

- Books**
- Gajić, A.** (2023). *Sharks, skates and rays of the eastern Adriatic Sea*. UNEP MAP - Barcelona convention. Sharklab ADRIA Center for marine and freshwater biology, 1-370.
- Gajić, A.** (2015). *Teeth and jaws of the Adriatic sharks*. Illustrated by Marc Dando. Federal Ministry for education and science, COOR, 1-150.
- Featured Papers**
- Gajić, A.** (2024). Exploring the elusive deep-sea sharpnose sevengill shark (*Heptranchias perlo*) in the Adriatic Sea: novel records, health assessments and conservation implications. *Aquatic Conservation Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 34(3), e4122.
- Gajić, A., Karalić, E., Beširović, H., & Sulikowski, J.** (2023). The first record of gravid Spiny butterfly ray (*Gymnura altavela*) in the northern Mediterranean Sea, with description of near-term fetuses. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 102(6): 1506 - 1509.
- Gajić, A., Sulikowski, J., & Beširović, H.** (2023). An interesting case of a single ocellus in a Brown ray from the Adriatic Sea. *Marine Biodiversity*, 53(29): 1-2.
- Gajić, A., Ribaj, S., & Karalić, E.** (2022). First record of neonatal sandbar shark *Carcharhinus plumbeus* (Nardo, 1827) (Carcharhiniformes: Carcharhinidae) from the Southern Adriatic Sea. *Acta Adriatica*, 63(2), 241-250.
- Gajić, A., Lelo, S., Joksimović, A., Pešić, A., Tomanić, J., Beširović, H., & Dragičević, B.** (2022). Contemporary records of the rare and critically endangered rough shark (*Oxynotus centrina*) from the eastern Adriatic Sea. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 100(1), 329-334.
- Gajić, A.** (2022). New hope for critically endangered angel shark, *Squatina squatina*, in the eastern Adriatic Sea. *Croatian Journal of Fisheries*, 80(1), 1-8.
- Gajić, A., Alić, A., Kahrić, A., Bilalović, N., Šupić, J., & Beširović, H.** (2020). Melanomacrophage centers and diseases occurring in lesser-spotted catshark (*Scyliorhinus canicula*) from the Adriatic sea – importance for monitoring. *Acta Adriatica*, 61(2), 175-184.
- Featured Proceedings**
- Gajić, A., & Beširović, H.** (2022). Histopathological alternations and individual immunological response to pollution observed in sharks, skates and rays from the eastern Adriatic Sea. Conference Adriatic Biodiversity Protection, Institute for marine biology, Book of Abstracts, p. 18.
- Gajić, A., Beširović, H., Clementoni, F., & Gioacchini, G.** (2022). Quantitative and macromolecular assessment of hepatic and splenic melanomacrophages and lipids in seven shark species from the Adriatic Sea. Conference Adriatic Biodiversity Protection, Institute for marine biology, BoA, p. 30.
- Gajić, A., & Lelo, S.** (2011). Assessment of degree of exploration of cartilaginous fish in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Structure and dynamics of ecosystems Dinarides - status, possibilities and prospects. Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Book of Abstract, 18-19.

HONORS & AWARDS

YEAR	FULL TITLE	AWARDED BY
2023	Person of the Year nomination For extraordinary scientific results in Adriatic Sea	Večernjakov pečat Highest regional award in Balkans
2022	Honorary Ambassador of the Mediterranean significant contribution to the Barcelona Convention	Barcelona Convention PAP/RAC (UNEP MAP)
2021	Special Governmental Recognition highly notable scientific and promotion of science	Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Education and Science
2020	Early Career Leadership award global leaders carrying novel and exploratory research	National Geographic Washington, D.C.
2020	Person of the Year nomination In the category <i>Venture</i> , for scientific research	Večernjakov pečat Highest regional award in Balkans
2019	Man of the Year award extraordinary scientific achievements and education	Ladies In, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Keynotes & Lectures (featured)

Year	Summit, Conference, Event	Organised by	Location
2024	Smart Conservation Forumq	UNEP MAP	Al-Hoceima, Morocco
2022	Sarajevo Innovation Summit	University of Sarajevo	Sarajevo, Bosnia
2019	Regional STEM summit	Save the Children	Mostar, Bosnia
2019	Education Summit	National Geographic	Washington, D.C.
2019	Explorations: Planet vs. Plastic	National Geographic	Ljubljana, Slovenia
2018	Sciencetelling Seminar	National Geographic	Madrid, Spain

THESIS (CO)SUPERVISOR

Candidate	University	Country	Program	Discipline(s)	Candidates
Francesco	Marche Polytechnic University	Italy	Marine Biology	Histology	1
Emili de Loose	Ghent University	Ghent	IMBRSea Erasmus+	Pathology, Ecology	2
Andrea Martin					

PROJECTS (as Principal Investigator)

Duration	Location	Project title	Funded by
2023- today	Adriatic-Ionian Region	COSFI-MAR: Towards the long-term in-situ conservation, sustainable fisheries in Adriatic-Ionian	EUSAIR Interreg ADRION JZP Izola
2023- today	Albania	What lurks in the depths?! Diversity and threats of deep-sea sharks, skates and rays in the Adriatic Sea	Explorers Club Discovery Channel (New York, US)
2022- today	Albania	Research and conserazvation of sharks, skates and rays through rescue, rehabilitation andre-introduction	Rufford Foundation London U.K.
2021- 2023	Albana, Bosnia and Croatia	Qualitative-quantitative composition of nanoplastics in sharks embryos and prenatal diagnostics	Federal Ministry of Education and Science
2021 - 2022	Albania	Sharks, skates and rays of Albania: final step towards the regional conservation and management	Rufford Foundation London U.K.
2020 – 2021	Eastern Adriatic countries	Plastic Sharks: quantitative-qualitative assessment of micro- and nanoplastics in sharks	Explorers Club Discovery Channel (New York, US)
2020- 2023	Eastern Adriatic countries	Sharks, skates and rays of the eastern Adriatic Sea: biodiversity, threats and conservation (three seprated projects)	Federal Ministry of Education and Science
2020 – 2022	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Marine fauna of Bosnia and Herzegovina: biosystematic review and habitat mapping (Part II)	Fund for Environmental Protection
2020- 2021	Eastern Adriatic countries	Éviter l’extinction des anges de mer en Adriatique (Avoiding extinction of angel sharks in Adriatic sea)	Foundation Ensemble (Paris, France)
2020 – 2021	Bosnia and Herzegovina	iNaturalist BioBlitz communal citizen-science education and research effort with support of California Academy of Science	National Geographic (Washington, D.C.)
2019– 2021	Eastern Adriatic countries	Let's create better future for sharks, skates and rays in the Adriatic: towards the unique regional protection	Rufford Foundation (London U.K.)

2018 – 2020	Eastern Adriatic and United States	Shark Tales: the effects of habitat loss and pollution on elasmobranch health and disease development	National Geographic (Washington, D.C.)
2018 – 2019	Bosnia and Herzegovina	The next step for the establishment of the long-term in-situ conservation of sharks, skates and rays in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Rufford Foundation (London U.K.)
2018 – 2020	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Quantification of the microplastic in by-catch samples from small-scale fisheries in Bosnia and Herzegovina	PADI Foundation (Beverly Hills, CA)
2017 – 2020	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Marine fauna of Bosnia and Herzegovina: biosystematic review and habitat mapping (Part I)	Fund for Environmental Protection
2017 – 2018	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Spatial ecology of smooth-hound sharks, genus <i>Mustelus</i> Linck, 1790, in Neum bay	IDEA WILD (Fort Collins, CO)
2017 – 2018	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Assessment of degree of exploration and conservation strategy for elasmobranchs in the Neum bay	Rufford Foundation (London U.K.)
2012 – 2015	Eastern Adriatic countries	Comparative odontology of sharks: functional morphology and identification	Federal Ministry of Education and Science

PROJECTS (supervisor, expert)

Duration	Location	Project title	Position	Founded by
2023 - danas	Albania	Reviving the Lost Legacy: First data for <i>Gymnura altavela</i> in the 21 st century -s a new Hope for Conservation	Supervisor	The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund
2022 - 2023	Albania	Last chance to save the critically endangered elasmobranchs in northern Adriatic sea of Albania	Supervisor	The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund
2018 – 2023	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Supporting decision making and building capacity to support IPBES through national ecosystem assessments	Expert Author	German Ministry of Environment
2018 - 2029	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Establishing the first MPAs in Bosnia: Protecting the highly endangered habitats and spawning sites of skates and rays	Supervisor	Waite Foundation

2017 – 2021	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Achieving biodiversity conservation through the establishment and effective management of protected areas...	Expert	UNEP GEF
2013 -2016	Adriatic-Ionian Region	DeFishGear: Derelict Fishing Gear Management System in the Adriatic Region	Country Lead Expert	European Union IPA Adriatic

THESIS SUPERVISOR

FEATURED KEY-NOTE & LECTURES

