

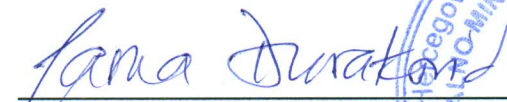
Recommendation for Leading and Participating in International Studies

The Federal Ministry of Education and Science confirms that Andrej Gajić, a Ph.D. can. in veterinary sciences and a Master of Biology, is an outstanding and award-winning scientist active in the fields of pathology, ecology, and conservation of elasmobranchs.

Through his extensive work over the years, he has covered the area of the Mediterranean Sea and beyond. Our Ministry is familiar with the results of his work, in which he has made a significant contribution within his areas of expertise, leading to the presentation of the Ministry's Special Recognition in 2021. Among other achievements, Andrej Gajić is:

- author of over 70 scientific papers and conference proceedings as well as two monographs supported by our Ministries and UNEP MAP;
- principal investigator of 21 regional scientific research projects (2014-2024), funded by the most eminent and competitive foundations;
- keynote speaker at numerous conferences and summits in the United States and Europe related to marine biology, fish pathology and climate change;
- the recipient of 7 international honors and awards, including being appointed as the Honorary Ambassador of the Mediterranean by the Barcelona Convention and EC Leadership by National Geographic.

We hereby recommend our scientist as the director of studies, primarily those related to the impact of pollution on disease development, fisheries, ecology, and conservation biology.


Jasna Duraković, PhD

FBiH Ministry of Education and Science
Minister

Mostar, December 2023



Endorsement and Support for International Research Program in the Mediterranean Region and Beyond

I am pleased to extend the endorsement and support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Science for the ongoing international program led by our internationally awarded scientist Andrej A. Gajić, Ph.D. (can. vet. med.), focused on enhancing our understanding and effective conservation of less-known and highly threatened elasmobranch species in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

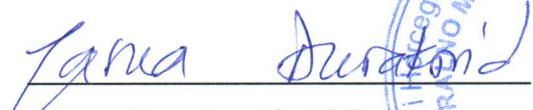
The Ministry recognizes the significance of research objectives for upcoming period, which include:

- conducting in-depth field and laboratory studies,
- facilitating the exchange of samples and collections between countries,
- supporting local capacity building through master and doctoral programs.

By endorsing your research program, the Ministry aims to demonstrate its support for collaborative efforts in scientific research, environmental conservation, and international cooperation.

Please consider this statement as an official endorsement from the Ministry of Science and Education for your international research initiative conducted with Sharklab ADRIA, National Geographic, and numerous other partners. We look forward to witnessing the positive impact of your work and trust that this collaboration will contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge and the conservation of biodiversity.

Thank you for your dedication to advancing scientific research, and we wish you success in your endeavors.


Jasna Duraković, PhD

FBiH Ministry of Education and Science
Minister

Mostar, December 2023



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Sarajevo, 10.12.2021. godine

SHARKLAB
Andrej A. Gajić

Subject: Recommendation

We hereby deliver the following recommendation:

Mr. sc. Andrej Gajić, prof. biol. is an extremely successful, internationally recognized scientist who has implemented, as principal investigator, a large number of scientific and developmental projects along the eastern Adriatic.

1. Internationally awarded scientist who works in the fields of pathology, toxicology and ecology. He is the holder of a special award from the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for extraordinary scientific achievements, National Geographic ECL award, and seven other honors and awards.
2. He is the author of more than 60 original research papers, mostly published in recognized peer-review journals. Furthermore, through the past five years, Andrej has coordinated 19 cutting-edge regional scientific projects.
3. Andrej is an experienced lead scientist in the terms of understanding the effects of pollution on disease development, application of biomarkers, IUCN assessments, strategy development for species revitalization, and long-term in-situ conservation.

Our Ministry would proudly recommend our scientist Andrej Gajić for every kind of regional and international engagement and cooperation, especially for leading the large-scale studies.


MINISTER
Edita Đapo

14th December 2023

Dear Andrej,

Re: Review of The Rufford Foundation support for shark conservation in The Adriatic Sea

Thank you for contacting me about your plans to expand your work beyond the Adriatic Sea. This is an interesting prospect and, with the support of local partners (the Borneo Marine Research Institute at Universiti Malaysia Sabah and the Sabah Shark Protection Association), there are very positive signs that your experience and knowledge shall be transferred into a different region to support shark conservation.

The Rufford Foundation is proud to have granted £30,000 to five projects that you have led since 2017. At each stage of project funding, you have impressed our staff and Trustees with your clear project design, high quality deliverables and timely reporting.

Over the past six years, we are delighted to have witnessed how you have broadened the scope and scale of your work, delivered increased conservation impact and developed from an early-career conservationist into a world-renowned marine biologist and shark expert. The fact that you have been able to raise the profile of sharks in the Adriatic, leverage impressive levels of funding from other sources and act as the driving force behind SharkLab ADRIA is testament to your dedication and continuous endeavours to achieve specific conservation and research goals.

Your efforts, together with that of your team, have resulted in a number of important outcomes that have improved the outlook for sharks and other marine species. These include:

- Creating a baseline assessment of the health status of elasmobranchs.
- Proposing an expansion of legal protection of species and habitats.
- Communicating your work through accessible channels, including scientific journals, books, popular media articles and videos.
- Working towards the establishment of Bosnia's first Marine Protected Area.
- Convening and facilitating important partnerships between institutions in Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland and the USA.
- Mapping potential nursery and breeding areas for threatened elasmobranchs in the eastern Adriatic Sea.
- Advocating for significant changes to the Albanian Red List and developing legal amendments for wildlife protection.

We are pleased to have reviewed the updates from your current project, which have further highlighted the conservation value of your endeavours, particularly in the rescue and rehabilitation of threatened sharks.



We look forward to being kept informed of you current Rufford-funded project and to hear more about your plans for work on threatened sharks in Asia.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Paterson'.

Stuart Paterson,
Chief Executive Officer
The Rufford Foundation