

(Green) Team Work

Venice is a historical city famous for its uniqueness. For this reason, it is subject to an influx of 272.4 million of foreign tourists every year.

In the last decades, the amount of tourism has increased so much that it has significantly affected Venice's sustainability and has posed serious concerns about its ecosystem. The issue is not merely a matter of tourist flow, but rather a broader problem that also concerns the unsustainability of outdated infrastructure and the non-efficient management of waste. Several projects are available to help the city, for example, *Venice Lagoon Plastic free* which promotes different initiatives with the task of preventing and reducing plastic pollution through regulatory and social innovation in order to defend the Venetian scenic richness.

Last December, this project brought more than 80 students to Pellestrina to clean up and do monitoring activities. In this way, not only students take part in citizen science activities, but also become aware of the dangers of waste and plastic.

Pellestrina is an island located in the Lagoon of Venice, between the Adriatic Sea in the lagoon itself. Cleaning took place in various parts of the island, including beaches, green areas and canals, which are essential for local biodiversity and the quality of life of residents.

As far as monitoring is concerned, it is a periodic activity with the aim of calculating the quantity of polluting materials on the beach.

The monitoring activities were divided into three parts: sampling, collecting and counting. The area was 100 meters long and everybody was provided with proper protective devices, like gloves, and three containers to collect waste. After having scouted 100 meters of land, the waste was counted.

The most significant quantities concerned plastic materials, in particular viticulture nets. The result after only one hour of scouting and in only 100 meters of the beach were very impressive: there were 120 viticulture nets, 14 glasses and 21 bags, many bottle caps and more than a few ten cotton swabs. In total 185.24 kg of beach waste were collected.

In conclusion, we think that we did our best to clean up the beach from waste and plastics, but it is still not enough for our fragile Venice. As a matter of fact, the city is still very polluted with trash and we should improve it by taking some future actions, like doing more cleanups of the lagoon or taking part in local initiatives like this more often.

