

Underwater nurseries help revive Mediterranean fish stocks

LA CIOTAT, France - A French company has developed an innovative system to replenish marine fish stocks in places like ports that have suffered environmental damage.



Image Source: [Ecocean](#)

Based in the Mediterranean city of Montpellier, Ecocean harvests baby fish, nurtures them onshore and then returns them to the sea after a short acclimatisation period in an underwater "bio-hut" or nursery.

Conservation no longer enough, ecosystem needs to be replenished

The company was created in 2003 to address an alarming increase in the number of endangered marine species since the 1950s, caused by pollution, habitat destruction and overfishing.

In an interview with AFP Ecocean director Gilles Lecaillon said conservation was no longer enough and that the ecosystem needed to be replenished with species such as cod, scorpion fish, conger eels, red mullet and grey sea bream.

The bio-huts are wire cages lined with oyster shells and shrouded in nets that serve as a habitat for the baby fish and the algae they feed on as they re-acclimate to the sea. After several days the nets are removed and the fish swim to freedom.

Ecocean, which has a staff of 12, has projects to rehabilitate marine life in over a dozen French ports, including Marseille and Toulon in the south and Calais in the north. It has also developed partnerships in the United States, the Netherlands, Denmark, South Korea and Jordan.

Source: AFP