* Fish escapes due to sabotage pose significant ecological and socioeconomic risks.
* We examined the fate of seabass escapees after farm sabotage in the Alboran Sea.
* Escapee density declined by 17%/km and dropped to 1% after two months.
* The declining escapee density corresponded with a shift towards larger sizes.
* Results can inform contingency plans to mitigate risks associated with escapes.