



**United Nations Environment Programme
Mediterranean Action Plan
Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas**

Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Assessment and Perspectives



*Specially Protected Areas
in the Mediterranean &*

Assessment and Perspectives

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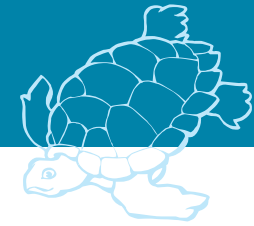
This Document describes the present situation in the Mediterranean of the Marine & coastal protected areas. This tool for the conservation of the habitats and species has undergone notable changes in the last few years. These changes are evident with reference to the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance which are for the protection of the common natural heritage.

In view of the ever increasing challenges due to amplified global changes there is a clear need to increase the number, surface area, geographical distribution of the protected areas as well as to ensure their networking. An eco-systemic approach of these challenges is necessary as well so that these protected areas are not run in isolation and truly contribute towards slowing down the erosion of biodiversity.

This document is based on the information available hitherto at RAC/SPA and in particular through the country national reports.

The Mediterranean

potentialities and challenges



The Mediterranean sea has a surface area of 2,51 million km² and a 46.000 km long coastline, approx. 19.000 km of which constitute insular littorals. To the north of this sea lies Europe, to the south is Africa and Asia to the east. The sea comprises two deep basins separated by the Siculo-Tunisian Strait.

From a hydrological viewpoint the Mediterranean sea is nearly a closed one and its only links with other masses of ocean and marine waters are through narrow isthmuses such as the Straits of Gibraltar which links it with the Atlantic Ocean, the Dardanelles Straits which make it possible to communicate with the Black Sea and the Suez Canal which for over one- and a- half centuries allows communication with the Red Sea.

Mediterranean waters, because of the intense evaporation, have a high degree of salinity and density mitigated basically by the inflow of Atlantic surface waters which are less saline and the outflow towards the Atlantic of saline deep waters.

Salinity and the physical characteristics of the Mediterranean waters are not homogeneous, apart from the increasing salinity gradient from west to east, the influence of considerable inflows of fresh water from the great rivers is clearly perceptible.

The present coastal and marine configuration of the Mediterranean has been shaped by its geological and tectonic evolution and the following regressions and transgressions. Its ecosystems, habitats and biological and ecological characteristics stem from its present state but have nevertheless been influenced by this slow evolution.

There are sub-systems represented by the smaller seas: the Ligurian, Tyrrhenian, Ionian, Adriatic, Aegean, the Levant Sea and the great marine regions of the South.

The particularities of the coastal areas and their hinterland play an important role and considerably influence the Mediterranean singularity and its sub-systems in particular: the enclosed Adriatic with its Apennines and the Dinarides, the Alpine influence on the north-western Mediterranean and that of the Sahara on the southern coasts, the archipelagic physiography of the Aegean sea etc.

The Mediterranean is an important biodiversity cradle

The Mediterranean a hotspot of biodiversity with its great diversity of marine and coastal habitats which are sometimes of world importance, with its wetlands, lagoons, dunes, thousands of islands and isles, reefs, sandy beaches and rocky coasts. The marine areas have vital habitats which are favourable for the development of a flourishing biodiversity with posidonia meadows, submarine caves and belts of calcareous algae.

The regional ecosystem is characterized by its exceptional biological richness on land and the sea and has been internationally recognized as a biodiversity hotspot. Its resources, however, are limited because of its oligotrophy and thus should not be over-exploited. It should be recalled that already in 2001 an ecological deficit was noted in all the bordering countries – and the environmental capital is spent faster than it is being renewed.

The biological richness of the Mediterranean basin and its shores is of undoubted importance as it is regularly enriched by regular inputs of new Atlantic species and Erythrean species and new accidental introductions (ballast waters, fouling...). The inventories for marine species and those species living in coastal environments are as yet incomplete.

Challenges facing the Mediterranean biodiversity.

This huge inner sea has 21 bordering States all facing great development challenges. The populations and economic activities are concentrated in these coastal areas. Over 150 million tourists annually visit the coastal and insular regions of these States.

The demographic and economic pressure has a perceptible impact on the coastal areas and receiving environments and this pressure is growing steadily from year to year.

Pollution of the marine areas is certainly felt in the 101 hotspots, especially near urban and industrial areas of concentration and the ports. Pollution is mainly due to industrial effluents and urban waste waters. A more diffuse pollution is caused by maritime, mainly commercial traffic.



The Posidonia meadows constitute the most important ecosystem in the Mediterranean sea: (i) the mats stabilize the sediments (ii) the meadows moderate the movement of the water and help to protect the beaches (iii) they constitute a spawning ground and a nursery for numerous species and they are the main areas for Mediterranean species diversity. Nearly 20 % of all the known Mediterranean species, that is, over 2000 species have been observed in the Posidonia meadows.



Fishing is a non negligible activity which is a source of food and income for a relatively large portion of the populations of the Mediterranean countries. If the stocks are in a better state on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean rather than on the northern shores, the situation may deteriorate with the development of fishing techniques being used and the infrastructures. In all the MPAs in these countries fishing is forbidden and that is why fishing and conservation are generally perceived as being incompatible. Furthermore the low level of involvement of the stakeholders in the planning and management of the MPAs constitutes one of the main impediments to their development.





Fishing is a particularly important economic and social activity in the Mediterranean. Production varies from one country to another and total landings for the Mediterranean sea are estimated annually at between 1.5 and 1.7 million tons. It generates approx. 300 thousand direct jobs and numerous indirect jobs associated with this activity and whose sustainability depend on the fishing activity.

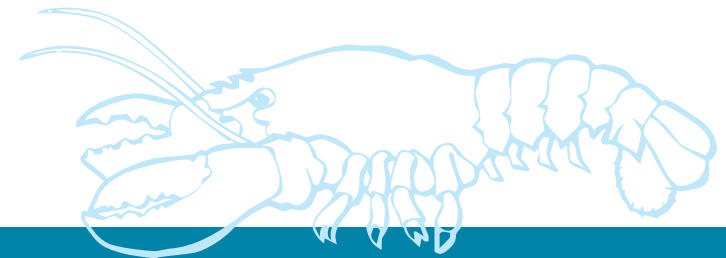
There is intense fishing pressure on sea resources threatening the stocks of species which are fished traditionally as well as those species in deep waters which have been spared so far.

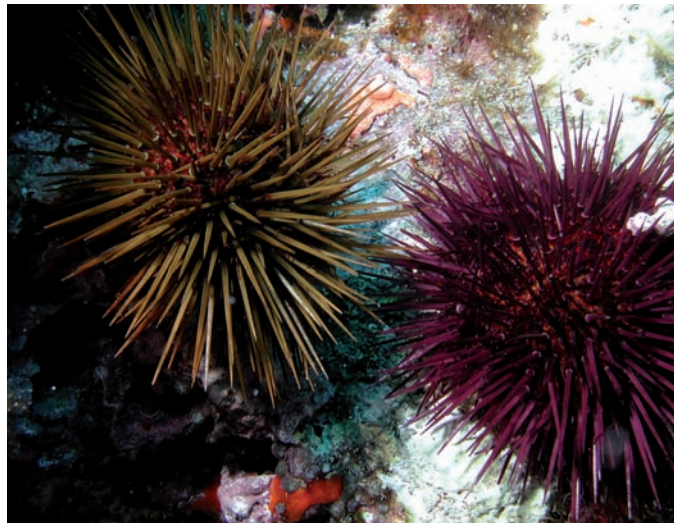
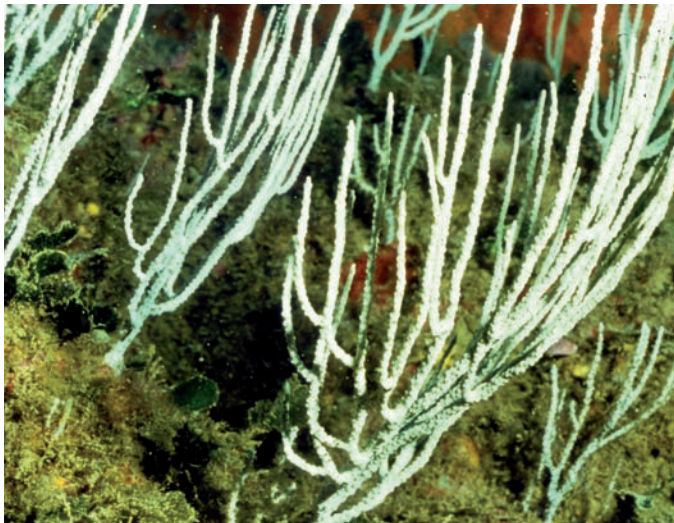
Finally climate change is today less of a hypothetical threat. The Mediterranean is recognized as one of the regions most sensitive to climate change and the main ensuing threats will be aggravated even more due to pollution, growing pressure of human activities and non-sustainable development which could reduce even more the resistance and adaptability of the ecosystems, habitats and species on the coastal fringe and the sea. A further threat is the accelerated meridionalisation of the biosphere and the increase in exotic invasive species.

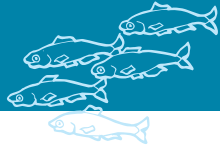
The configuration of the Mediterranean basin, the quality of the natural heritage thriving in the coastal and marine ecosystems and the considerable pressure on its natural resources mean that the Mediterranean sea is vulnerable necessitating the mobilization of all the bordering countries and beyond as the inputs and influence of the watersheds are also to be taken into account.

The Mediterranean States today have a coordinated dynamic approach to preserve their vital areas to preserve the fragile resources and to prevent a further deterioration of the biological diversity.

As can be seen from the number and the growing surface areas of the protected zones, the protection of the most vulnerable areas has been jointly adopted as a protection tool. But a lot is still to be done to crystallize the objectives for the protected surface areas and their distribution, the establishment of marine protected areas on the high seas and deep waters, reflection about the ecological corridors between the protected areas and especially the crystallization of management recommendations which are still often at the stage of intentions for numerous protected areas.







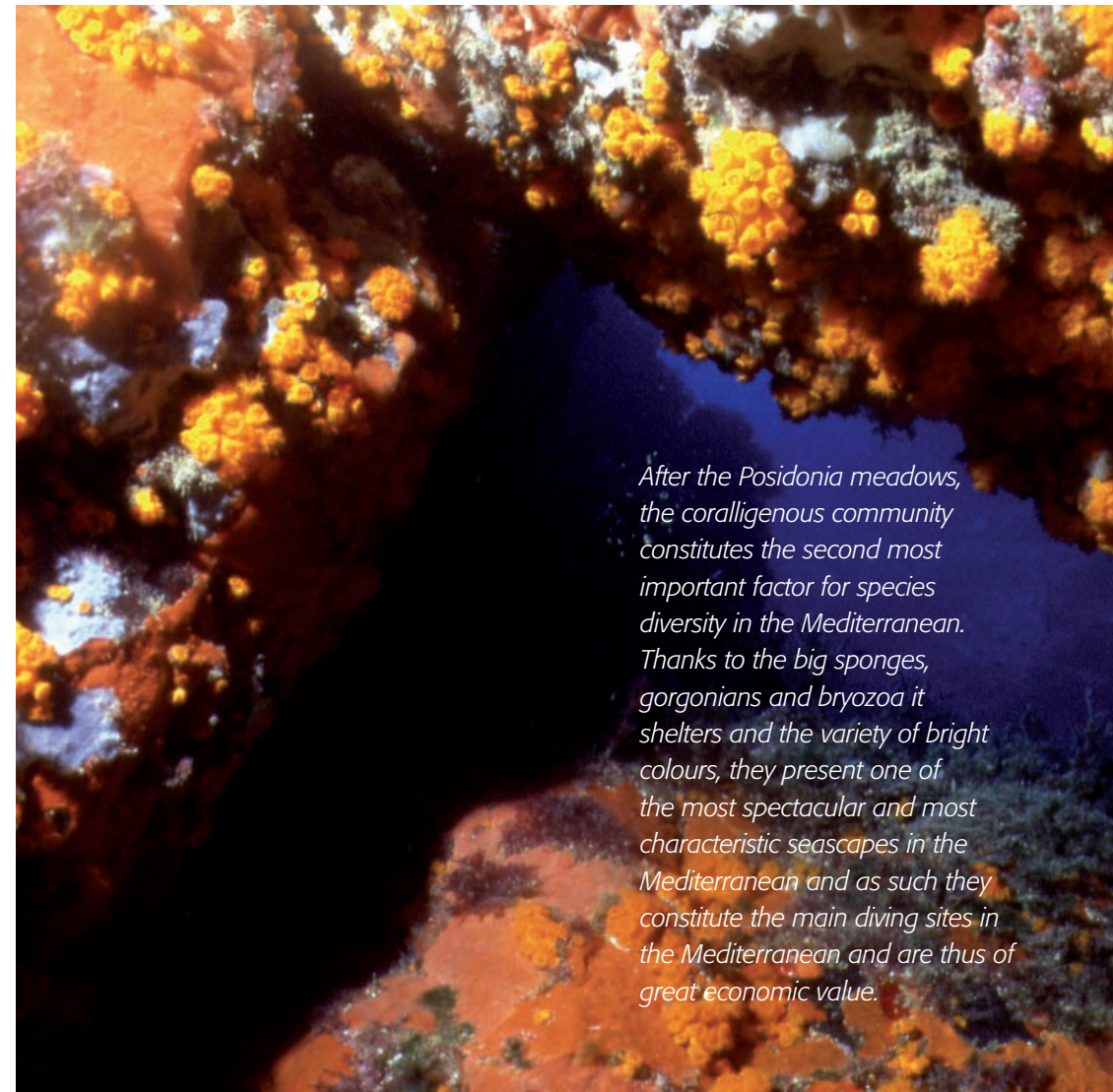
Biodiversity in the Mediterranean comprises some of the most diversified and rich animal and plant species in the world but they are also amongst the most threatened species.

Human activities have a considerable impact on the ecosystems in the Mediterranean. Pollution, overfishing, deterioration of the habitats, introduction of invasive species and global warming are a threat to the rich marine biodiversity.

Some emblematic species have nearly disappeared such as the monk seal. Dolphins and sperm whales are also less numerous in the Mediterranean.

The study noted a massive presence of invasive species imported from the Red Sea by boats going through the Suez canal, implanted either for commercial reasons such as oysters or the Japanese clam or present because of the warming of the seas which is favourable for the development of tropical species.

The exogenous species furthermore are thought to represent 4 % of all the species present in the Mediterranean, i.e. a total of 600 species which will develop with the increase in water temperatures and migrate towards new areas where they will threaten endogenous species.



After the Posidonia meadows, the coralligenous community constitutes the second most important factor for species diversity in the Mediterranean. Thanks to the big sponges, gorgonians and bryozoa it shelters and the variety of bright colours, they present one of the most spectacular and most characteristic seascapes in the Mediterranean and as such they constitute the main diving sites in the Mediterranean and are thus of great economic value.

Assessment

THE SPAs, TOOL OF CONSERVATION

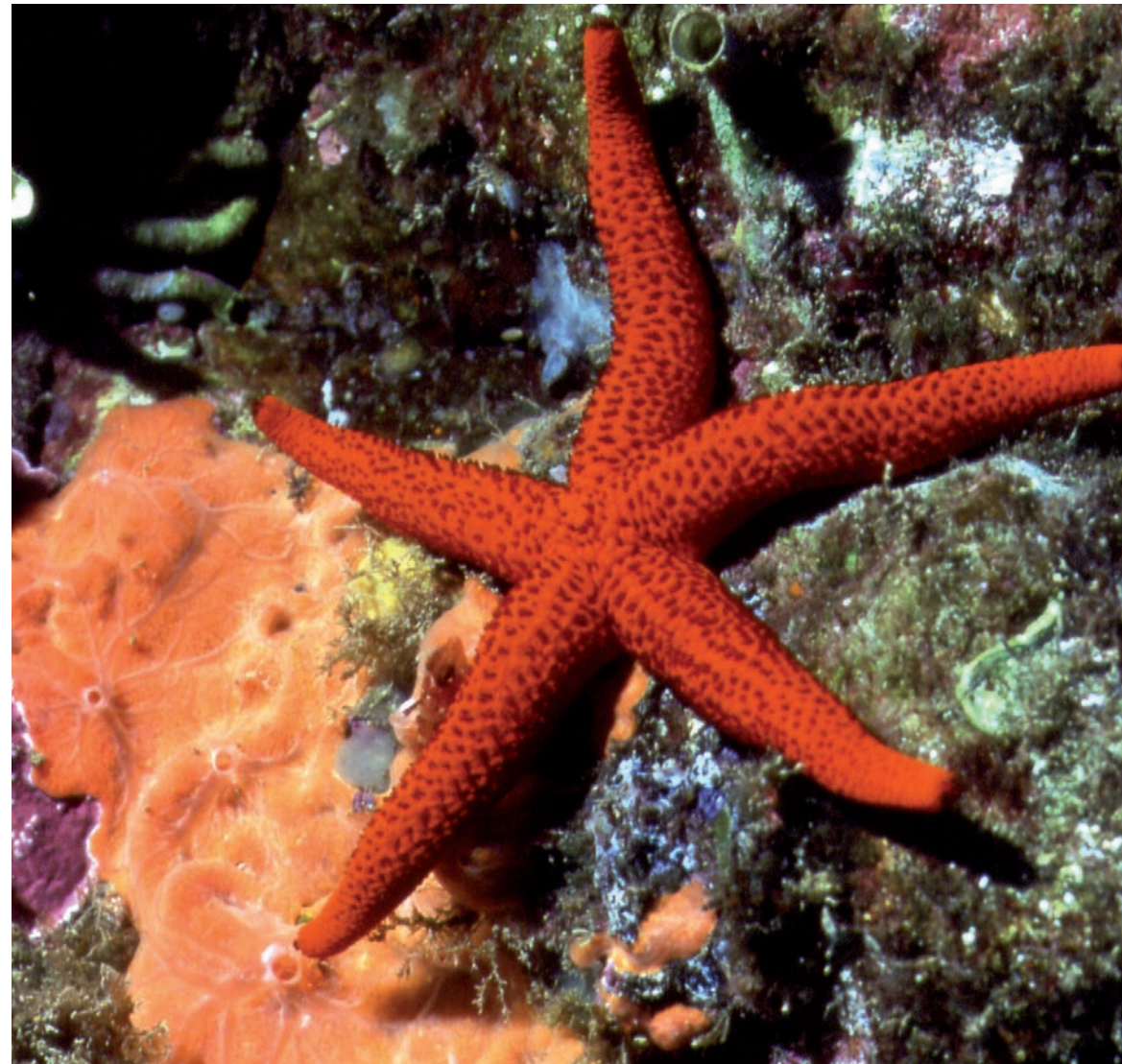
Protected areas have been created to face the perils and pressure caused by human activities affecting the fauna, flora and Mediterranean habitats and to slow down the erosion of biodiversity.

Protected areas were conceived and set up as a tool of conservation and sustainable management of the littoral and marine environment so as to preserve the sites of great ecological value and the Mediterranean ecosystems in particular, the habitats and protected or threatened species as well as natural resources.

The Mediterranean protected areas have entities of great value such as the *Posidonia Oceanica* meadows, rare formations such as the vermetid formations and threatened species such as red coral (*Corallium rubrum*), the Mediterranean fan mussel (*Pinna nobilis*) and the limpets (*Patella ferruginea*). These privileged areas also help to reduce the pressure on emblematic species or those in critical danger like the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), cetaceans and a large variety of birds using the protected areas as reproduction zones.

Marine protected areas, the MPAs, are also used nowadays as a management tool for fisheries so as to protect the spawning grounds and nurseries and thus constituting sanctuaries of repose for over-exploited species.

Within the MPA it was proved that the abundance and size of commercial and non commercial species of fish is increasing in contrast to what is happening everywhere else. Furthermore, the MPAs have a beneficial effect on fisheries outside the protected perimeters as they contribute towards the dissemination of juveniles and adults and the exportation of eggs and larvae of pelagic origin. However, for this beneficial effect to be felt on the fisheries, the MPAs must have big enough surface areas and diversified and good quality habitats.



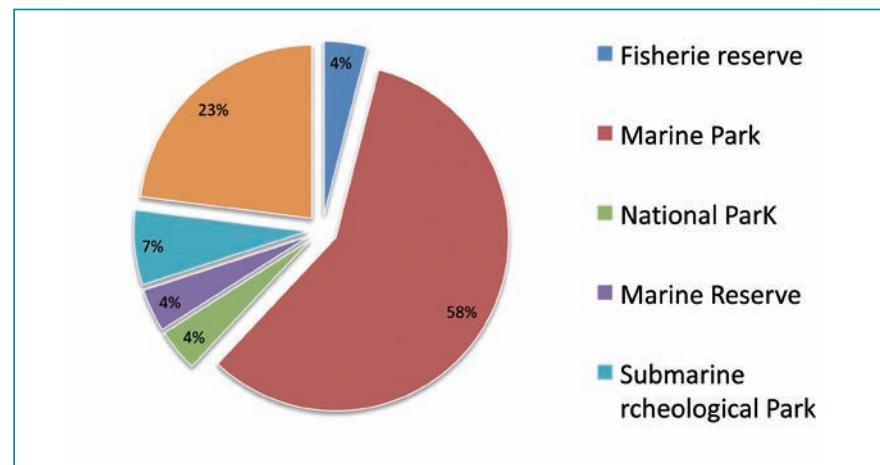


Properly managed MPAs increase the productivity of the fishing areas and generate jobs in this sector and also constitute a tool for the sustainable exploitation of the sea and littoral areas.

The names and typologies of protected areas are most diverse and closely linked to the legislative contexts and national regulations. Through their legislations the countries can create numerous categories of protected areas and amongst the most frequent are the National Parks and natural marine Reserves, classified aesthetic forests, maritime parks, marine parks, natural monuments etc.

These numerous denominations make it possible for the countries to aim at different protection objectives. To facilitate the comprehension of the conservation categories and objectives, the denominations have been classified according to a category system by IUCN. Most of the Mediterranean protected areas are in categories IV and II dedicated to the conservation of habitats and the protection of ecosystems for recreational purposes.

A major part of these protected areas is not classified in line with these categories thus stressing a lack of standardization on a regional level; numerous other classes of conservation areas can also be taken into consideration. From the continent to the sea, an example could be given of the State forest areas which help to protect the littorals and their biodiversity, the hunting reserves, fishing reserves for the preservation of sea resources, natural zones of ecological, faunistic and floristic interest, known as the ZNIEFF. There is also the land preservation of littoral areas through National Conservatories such as the Conservatoire du Littoral (France) or regional ones like the Coastal Conservatory (Italy) and there are also restrictive regulatory measures, decrees for the biotope and national laws for the Maritime Public Domain.



Other classifications make it possible for some countries to look after some fragile conservation areas such as the Sensitive Littoral Zones in Tunisia or the Sites of Biological and Ecological interest in Morocco and the ZNIEFF in France.

The latter classifications are not generally considered as protected areas but help, or should help, in time, to conserve the ecosystems and biodiversity in the littorals and at sea.

What do the Mediterranean Protected Areas protect ?

In the Mediterranean most were created to protect sites with remarkable habitats or important habitats for endangered or threatened species (marine turtles, monk seals, red coral, birds). But in several cases the reason for creating the protected area is not quite clear. The official name of the protected area or the type of text for its creation makes it possible to guess the reason for its creation.

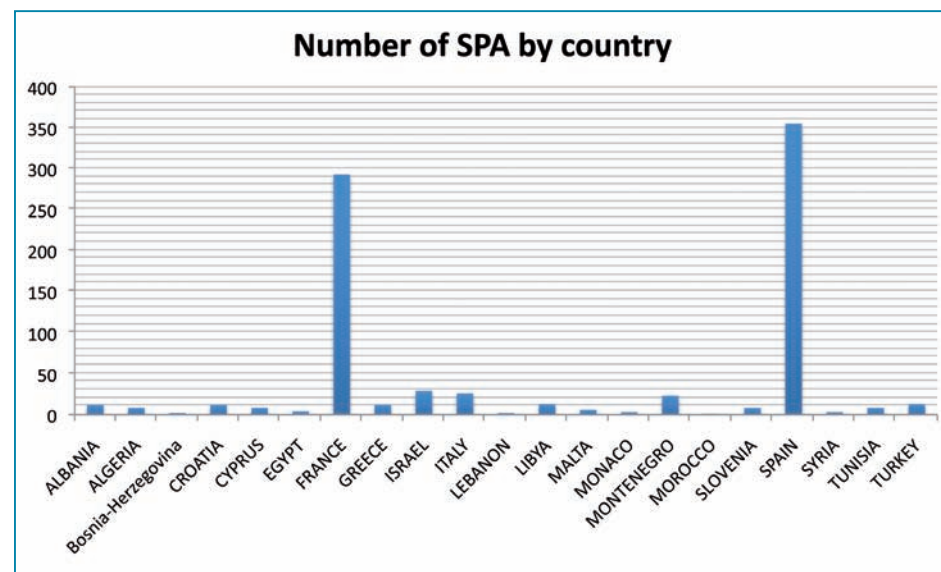
These special areas are recognized internationally and thus have the international label of an MPA thus highlighting the commitments of these countries in view of the ratification of the relevant conventions.

There is also the Natura 2000 network, Ramsar, World Heritage, biosphere reserves, Important Bird Areas – IBA, Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance - SPAMIs, the European Diploma and the Emerald network.

THE SPAs ARE UNEQUALLY DISTRIBUTED OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

An analysis of the country reports for the 2000 – 2007 period shows a strengthening of the legal instruments aimed directly or indirectly at the creation of SPAs and/or the protection of priority habitats.

In the 1995 assessment, 122 SPAs were identified representing a surface area of over 17 670 km². Today there are over 750 SPAs which have been placed under the auspices of the Barcelona Convention by the Mediterranean States, i.e. a total surface area of over 144 000 km², nearly 2/3 of which are marine areas.



The SPAs are unequally distributed over the Mediterranean basin. The western basin (Algeria, Spain, France, Italy, Morocco, Monaco and Tunisia) have 603 SPAs (82 %) whereas the eastern basin (the others) have only 149 (18 %).

There is also an imbalance between the 8 European countries (Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco and Slovenia) with 646 SPAs (84 %) and the 13 non European countries which have only 107 SPAs (16 %).

The assessment for the creation of new SPAs varies from country to country, with one SPA for Morocco and 291 for Spain. Two countries stand out: France and Spain as they have the greatest number of SPAs.

In France there were 187 SPAs before 2000 and 60 after 2000. Most undated sites are those acquired by the Conservatoire du littoral and for them there is a partial lack of information so far. In Spain 291 SPAs were created, 235 of which after the year 2000. These new SPAs are basically sites classified as Natura 2000 so that Spain has created the greatest number of SPAs in the Mediterranean since 2000.

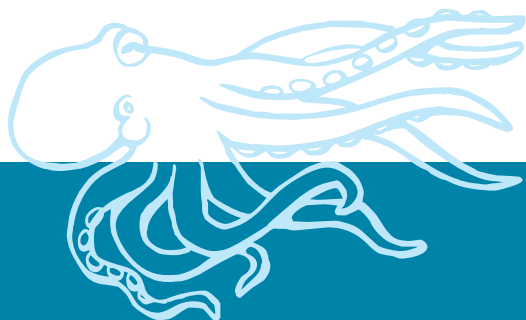
In contrast some countries have not set up any SPA since 2000 (e.g. Egypt, Lebanon, Monaco, Montenegro and Tunisia).



The Dalyan nesting beach in the Koycegiz-Dalyan SPA. (Turkey)



The Ghara island has the only population of the lesser crested tern in the Mediterranean. A project to create a marine protected area is underway.



THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CBD ARE FAR FROM HAVING BEEN ACHIEVED

The surface area of the SPAs is approx. 144 800 km² including the Pelagos Sanctuary.

If those areas with a marine section are taken into account, then the protected surface area amounts to 128 700 km², i.e. 5.1 % of the total surface area of the Mediterranean. This confirms that the objectives of the CBD to protect 10 % of the coastal and marine area by 2010 are still far from having been achieved.

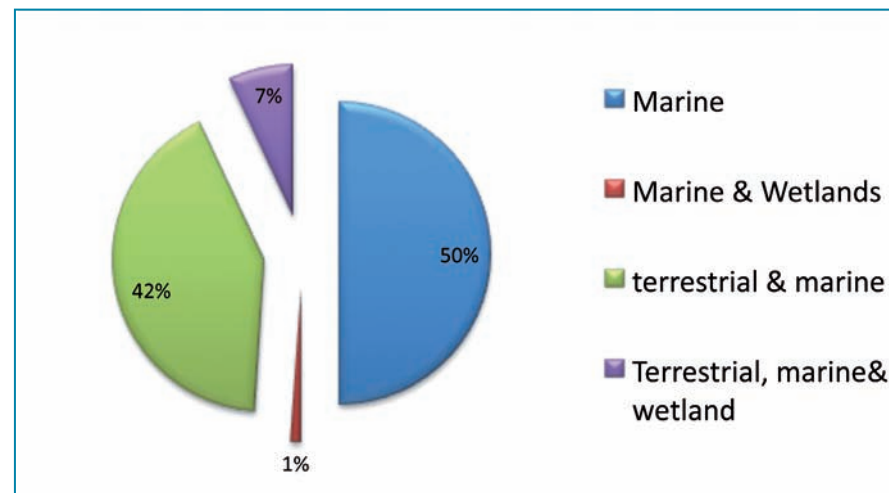
An analysis of the land and marine surface areas and wetlands shows a distribution of 2/3 over strictly marine surface areas and 1/3 of the land surface areas (wetlands + land areas). This distribution, however, is strongly skewed because of the large marine surface area of one SPA, that of the Pelagos Sanctuary. The strictly marine surface areas represent only 31 % if this SPA is excluded.

The trend has been the same since 2000 and mainly coastal SPAs have been created and their number has doubled since 2000.

In contrast to coastal SPAs, the number of MPAs has tripled since 2000 (32 before 2000 and 66 since 2000) but with a smaller surface area.

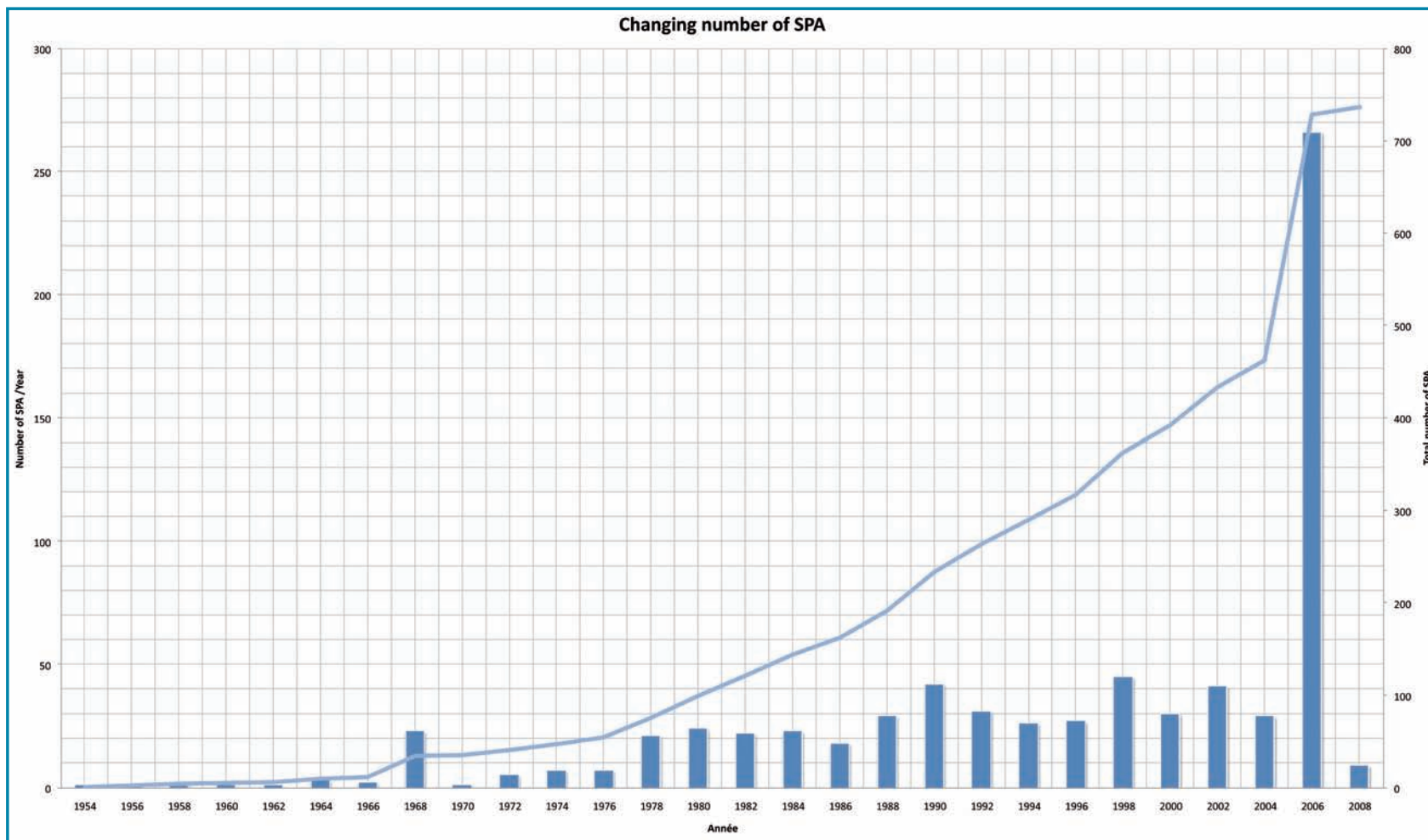
In general the coastal SPAs are most numerous and a lot of them have been set up since 2000.

The new SPAs have a smaller surface area than those created before 2000. This trend reflects the debate about the creation of a representative SPA network with the creation of smaller rather than larger areas.

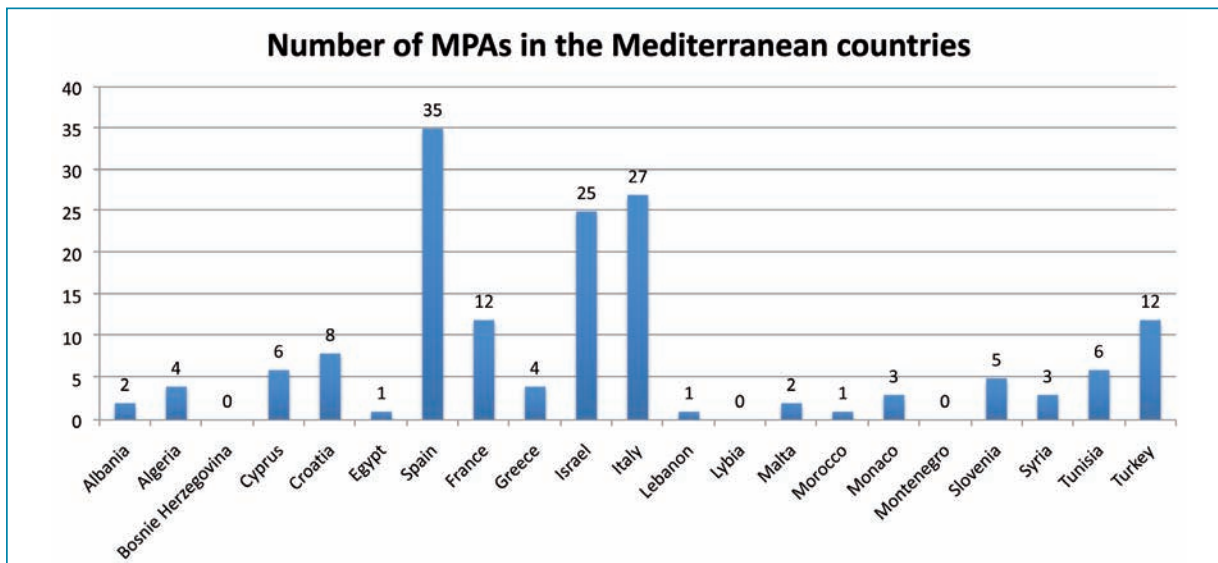


Mediterranean protected areas are numerous and most diversified and include mainly terrestrial and marine coastal areas.

With the exception of the pelagos Sanctuary on the high seas, there are as yet no areas for the protection of the high seas or deep waters. The Mediterranean protected areas do not as yet reflect a representative ecological network and are not linked by important ecological corridors.

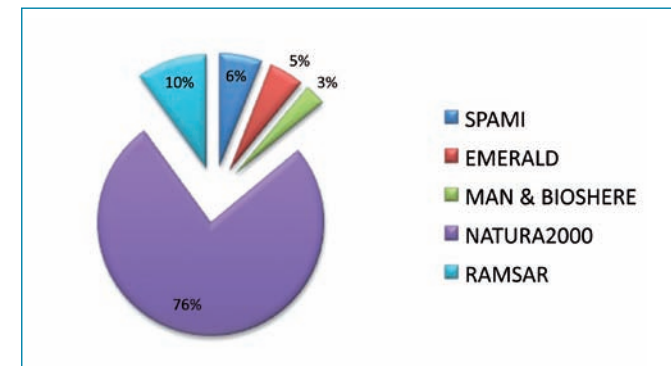


*Expansion of national protected areas between 1954 and 2008.
The graph has excluded the protected areas with an unknown date of creation.*



The preliminary results of a study carried out by (RAC/SPA) to assess the representativity of the Mediterranean MPAs of marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean region show that at present in the Mediterranean there are 158 MPAs spread between 18 countries, mostly in the north-western part of the Mediterranean. Some countries in the region do not have any available information about the surface area of the MPAs.

The available data shows that the average surface area of the MPAs varies from country to country. These average figures do not include the surface area of the Pelagos Sanctuary which covers 87.500 km².



International recognition is a label first and foremost. Out of the 753 SPAs counted, approx. 40 % enjoy one or several international approvals. The Natura 2000 network is the most represented in terms of numbers. The second most used international recognition is RAMSAR which covers 33 wetlands. Then there are the SPAMIS, 25 of which are SPAs, either exclusively marine or coastal/marine.

LAUDABLE PROGRESS BUT DISPARATE RESULTS

The CBD has fixed at 10 % the areas to be protected in the Mediterranean and the objectives are far from being achieved despite the effects of global changes affecting the marine and coastal areas in general and in the Mediterranean in particular.

The number of protected areas and their surface area are increasing considerably but progress is still hesitant. Their geographical distribution is unequal and most of these exceptional areas are mostly on the northern coast of the Mediterranean basin. Even today, with the exception of the Pelagos sanctuary, these are coastal and marine areas and littoral wetlands without any ecological corridors to connect them and without any particular attention to the land – sea continuity which is vital for the preservation of the landscapes, habitats and marine areas.

The provisions for creating protected areas on the high seas and in deep waters and reflection on the legal aspects and modes of management are underway to ensure a better representativity of the ecosystems.

Furthermore the small size of these areas is inadequate to protect them from disturbances coming from or which could come from the vicinity and from any potential accident. The core of these areas could be quite close to potential sources of accidents over which neither the managers nor the regulation of the Protected Areas have any say whatsoever.

The protected areas are generally established on the basis of the presence of emblematic, rare or threatened species which obviously does seem inadequate in order to offset the erosion of biodiversity in the marine and coastal environments as the protection of zones of reproduction, feeding and nurseries are not taken into consideration.

This somewhat narrow approach restricts the conservation vocation of these areas and the species they are meant to shelter. The protection effects of these scattered or “confetti” areas on the Mediterranean coastal and marine biodiversity are very low indeed.

Finally and in close connection with the interests of the neighbouring populations and fishing sustainability, the protected areas as they are at present and their mode of management does not seem to make it possible for them to tackle the important problem of over-exploitation of sea resources.





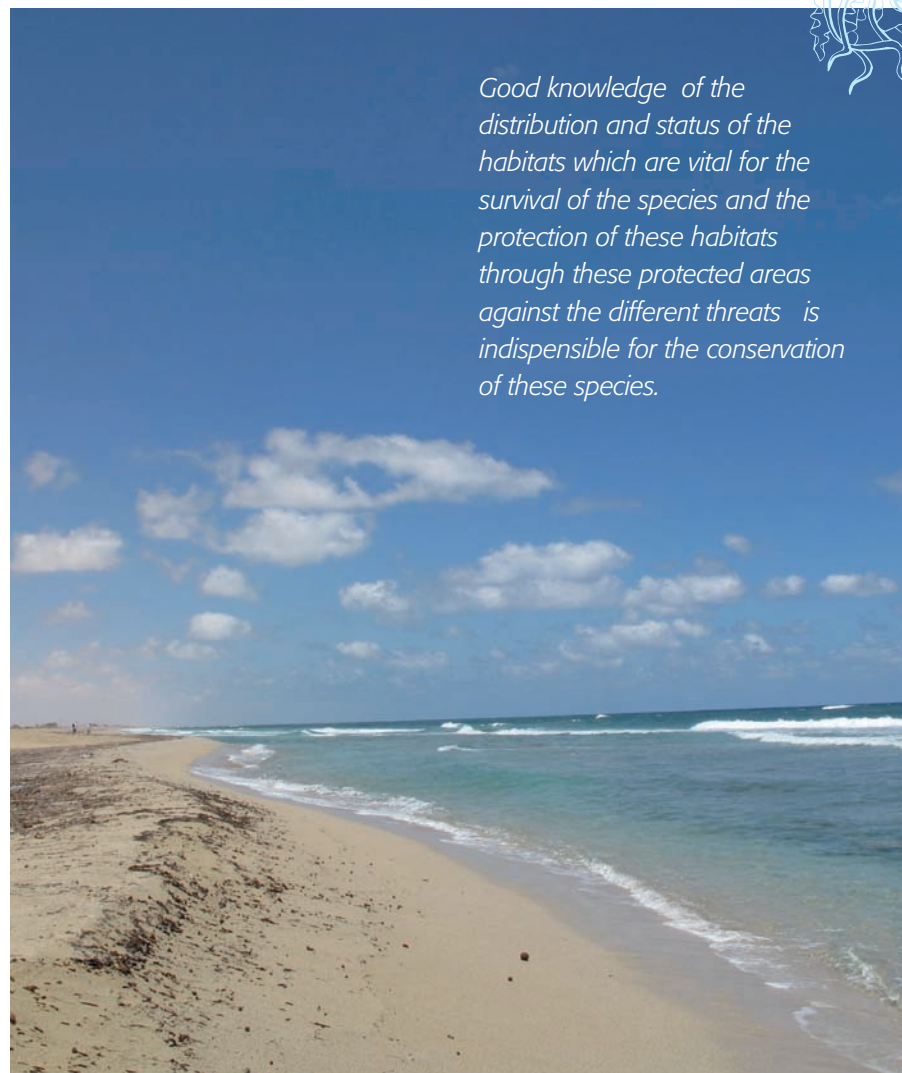
MOST UNEQUAL MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

An evaluation of the existing SPAMIs well illustrates the reality of the protected areas in general from the management viewpoint but there are still numerous shortcomings when dealing with the challenges of conservation and there are still many “paper parks”.

Many protected areas classified as such still do not have any management documents and others have not even started implementing them.

The Mediterranean marine and littoral areas often suffer from activities which impact them strongly and from considerable pressure on the land areas and the resources. Minimal conservation measures are often no longer adequate.

There are reasons for this shortcoming such as the absence of a legal basis or feeble financial means. The absence of active management provisions have a considerable effect on the conservation of the exceptional natural heritage to be found in these areas. Amongst the factors contributing toward maintaining the vulnerability of the protected areas and the dangers facing the landscapes, biodiversity and natural resources, is the presence of numerous classified areas with no management instruments and the absence of trained and well equipped management units which could do the policing of the protected areas and there are no efficient action plans to be implemented. Furthermore, the low level of involvement of the users and inadequate recognition of the management objectives and regulation constitute a heavy burden which impedes the implementation of a conservation approach.



Good knowledge of the distribution and status of the habitats which are vital for the survival of the species and the protection of these habitats through these protected areas against the different threats is indispensable for the conservation of these species.

SPAMIS, NETWORK FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE COMMON MEDITERRANEAN NATURAL HERITAGE

Within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and to promote cooperation in terms of management and conservation of natural areas and the protection of threatened species and their habitats, the new Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and biological diversity (SPA/BD), adopted in 1995 and which came into force in 1999, advocates the establishment of a list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance or SPAMIs. (RAC/SPA- MAP-UNEP, 1999; Art. 8).

The fundamental objectives of a SPAMI are conservation of the natural heritage, scientific research and environmental education provided that they are compatible with the conservation objectives.

The SPAMIs registered on the list and their geographical distribution should be representative of the Mediterranean region and its biodiversity. The list should represent the largest possible number of the types of habitats and ecosystems.

The SPAMIs should constitute a nucleus of a network for the effective conservation of the Mediterranean heritage and should serve as an example and a model for the protection of the region's heritage.

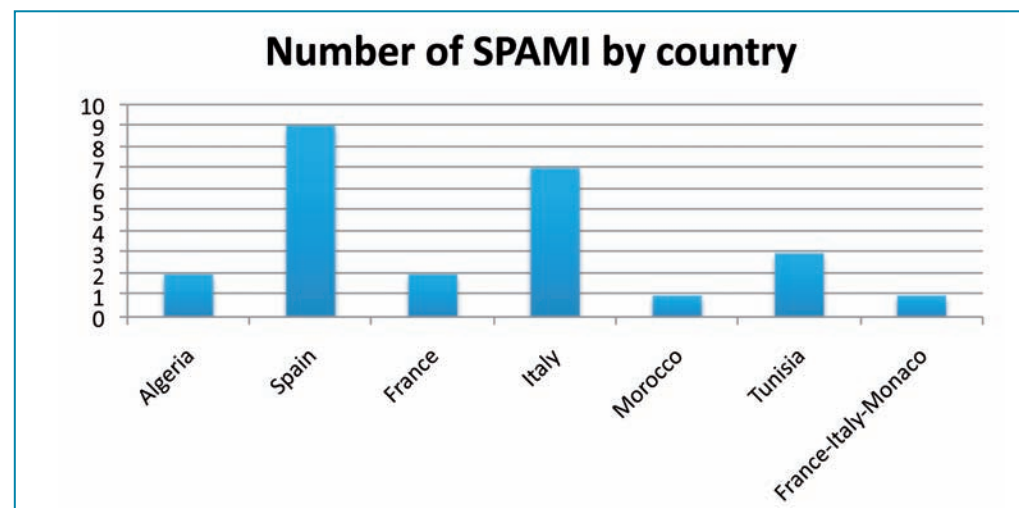
PROCEDURE FOR THE CREATION AND REGISTRATION OF SPAMIS

The selection of SPAMIs must be done on a scientific basis and only those sites which suitably comply with the criteria established by the Protocol will be accepted for registration on the SPAMI List .

The Parties proposing a registration on the SPAMI list submit a presentation report with information on its geographical location, physical and ecological

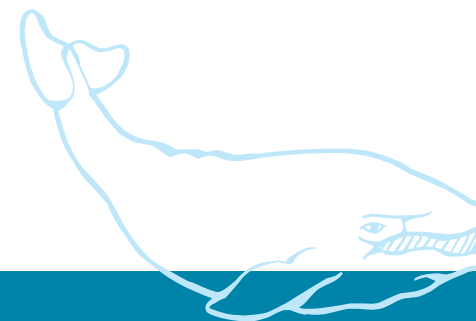
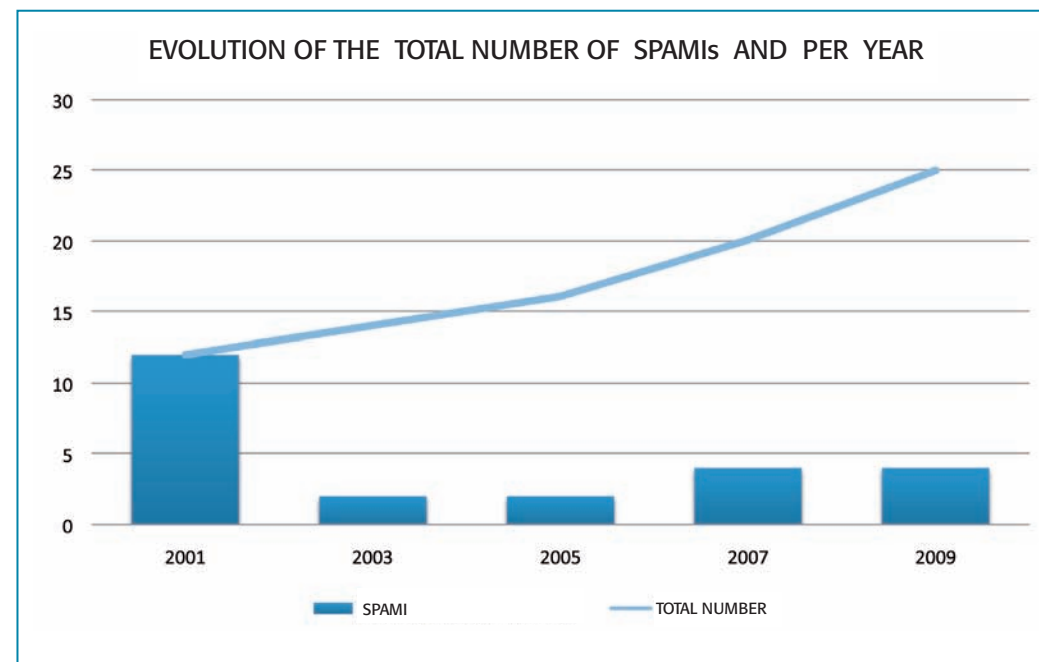
characteristics, legal status, management plan and its means of implementation as well as a report demonstrating the area's Mediterranean importance and it is then submitted, through RAC/SPA, to be reviewed by the 21 Mediterranean countries which are contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention. Reviewing the proposition includes evaluating the Mediterranean importance of the site and the measures of protection and management which have been set up.

When the decision for the registration of an area is made, the Parties ensure that the sites included have a legal status, protection measures and adequate means and methods of management and pledge to respect the established rules.

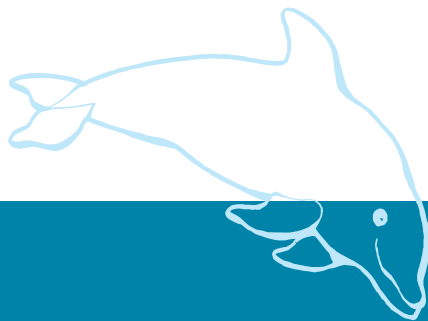


The SPAMI list is held by RAC/SPA. The sites which can appear on the SPAMI list must: (UNEP-MAP – RAC/SPA. 1999: Art. 8) :

- Be of importance for the conservation of the constitutive elements of biological diversity in the Mediterranean
- Comprise ecosystems which are specific to the Mediterranean region or habitats of threatened species
- Be of particular interest from the scientific, aesthetic, cultural or educational viewpoint



THE SPAMIS ARE UNEVENLY DISTRIBUTED OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN



SPAMI List (2010)

Code	Name of the SPAMI	Year of inscription
DZ1	Banc des Kabyles	2005
DZ2	Habibas Island	2005
FR1	Port cros	2001
FR2	Bouches de Bonifacio	2009
IT1	Plemmirio	2008
IT2	Portofino	2005
IT3	Miramare golfo di trieste	2005
IT4	Tavolara - punta coda cavallo	2008
IT5	Torre guaceto	2008
IT6	Punta campanella	2009
IT7	Capo caccia – isola piana	2009
MA1	Al-hoceima	2009
SP1	Acantilados de maro-cerro gordo	2003
SP2	Archipelago de cabrera	2003
SP3	Cabo de gata nijar	2001
SP4	Cabo de creus	2001
SP5	Fondos marinos del levante almeriense	2001
SP6	Isla de alboran	2001
SP7	Islas columbretes	2001
SP8	Islas medas	2001
SP9	Mar menor	2004
TN1	Galite	2001
TN2	Kneiss islands	2001
TN3	Zembra and zembretta	2001
TB1	Pelagos Sanctuary	2001

Relevant Legal Frameworks



It is up to the States of the region to watch over and to act for the preservation of biodiversity in their respective territories. It is however important that the States act in a coordinated and complementary manner, hence the adoption of several conventions and international or regional agreements through which the States of the region have pledged to act so as to maintain and restore the elements of biodiversity.

BARCELONA CONVENTION AND SPA PROTOCOL

Initially meant to combat pollution in the Mediterranean sea, the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) has evolved since it was launched in 1975 so as to extend the cooperation of the countries of the region to other aspects of the preservation of the Mediterranean environment. Thus the countries of the region adopted in 1982 the Protocol pertaining to the Specially Protected Areas. This Protocol, also known as the Geneva Protocol, was, at the time of its adoption, the first regional agreement for the conservation of natural coastal and marine sites. Three years after the adoption of the Geneva Protocol and at the 10th anniversary of MAP, the Mediterranean countries adopted the Genoa Declaration which defines the objectives to be attained for the second decade of MAP (1985 – 1995). The creation of 50 new protected marine and coastal areas in the Mediterranean was one of the main objectives in the Genoa Declaration.

In 1995, within the framework of the revision of the MAP legal instruments set up by the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the Mediterranean countries adopted a new Protocol pertaining to the specially protected areas and biological diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA & BD Protocol). This new Protocol replaces, from the date of its coming into force, the 1982 Geneva Protocol and the relationship between the Parties and the two instruments.

The SPA & BD Protocol introduced the concept of SPAMIS (Specially Protected Areas of

Mediterranean Importance). The SPAMIS are marine and/or coastal sites chosen on the basis of the criteria defined by the Protocol in its Annex I.

The Parties recognize the particular importance for the Mediterranean of the sites on the SPAMI LIST and pledge to observe the protection and management measures fixed for each of these sites. The Parties also pledge not to allow and not to undertake any activities which would be in contradiction with the objectives which motivated the creation of the SPAMIS.

According to the SPA & BD Protocol, the SPAMIS can be created in zones under national jurisdiction but also in marine areas which are partially or totally on the high seas, beyond the areas under the jurisdiction of the countries. The registration procedure of sites on the SPAMI list is defined in the Protocol and starts, for each site, with a presentation report prepared by the Party (or Parties) concerned and submitted to RAC/SPA. The report is reviewed by the national focal points so as to assess the conformity of the proposition with the criteria and other conditions established by the Protocol. The decision to register the sites on the SPAMI LIST is made at the meeting of the Parties.

The Protocol stipulates that the selection of the sites of the SPAMI list is made on a scientific basis taking into account the quality of the sites and the protection and conservation measures which have been set up. The SPAMIS must constitute a representative network of the Mediterranean region and its biodiversity aiming at the

effective conservation of the Mediterranean heritage.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the main international treaties for the world environment. It was open for signing up on 5th June 1992 at the Rio summit on the environment and development and it came into force on 29 December 1993 and its first Conference of the Parties took place at the end of 1994 in the Bahamas.

For the CBD the protected areas constitute one of the effective means for the protection in situ of the constitutive element of biological diversity. A work programme on protected areas was thus elaborated and adopted by the contracting Parties to the CBD in February 2004. This work programme aims to set up, through a participative approach, national and regional representative systems of protected areas to be managed efficiently. The Mediterranean actively contributes towards the implementation of this work programme through the individual action of the countries of the region who are all Parties to the Convention and through the activities of MAP on the protection areas and coordinated by RAC/SPA. To consolidate this action, a work programme on protected areas was adopted by the contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in Marrakech (November 2009). The Mediterranean region furthermore, is one of the regions in the world which is striving most to achieve the objectives of the Jakarta Mandate on the conservation of marine and coastal biological diversity adopted by the second conference of the Parties to the CBD. The SPA and BD Protocol and the Protocol on the integrated management of the coastal zone of the Barcelona Convention constitute for the Mediterranean principles stemming from the Jakarta Mandate.

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS (CMS)

The CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention from the name of the city where it was adopted in 1979, came into force in November 1983. Its aim is the conservation of terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their whole range and thus applies on a global scale.

The species covered by the CMS are listed in the two appendices of the Convention. Appendix I deals with endangered migratory species. A migratory species may be in Appendix I of the CMS if on the basis of convincing data, that is, the best scientific data available, it is established that the species is endangered. Appendix II of the CMS covers the migratory species whose state of conservation is unsatisfactory and which necessitated the conclusion of international agreements for their conservation and management as well as those species whose state of conservation would significantly benefit from international cooperation which would stem from an international agreement. Several regional Agreements have been made under the aegis of the CMS for the conservation of species or groups of species.

The main agreements concluded with the framework of CMS which concern the Mediterranean region are:

- The Agreement on the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds (AEWA) concluded in 1995
- The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area concluded in 1996
- The Agreement for the conservation of the populations of European Bats concluded in 1991. At present this Agreement covers only the countries on the northern shores of the Mediterranean.

IMPORTANT EUROPEAN DIRECTIVES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL SITES

The European Directives known as the “Habitats Directive” and the “Birds Directives” are applicable in the Mediterranean in the European Union member countries. They were the basis for the identification of several natural sites of interest for Conservation and which constitute the Natura 2000 Network. At present several of these sites benefit from protection regimes to preserve the habitats and species. The identification of Natura 2000 sites is based on the reference list of habitats and species.

The strategy framework-directive for the marine environment adopted in June 2008 highlights the protected sites as tools for the preservation of the marine ecosystems. In this connection the Directive stipulates that “on the basis of information supplied by the member States for 2013, the Commission submits, for 2014, a report on the state of progress in setting up protected marine sites, bearing in mind the existing obligations by virtue of the applicable community law and the international commitments of the Community and member States.

RAMSAR CONVENTION

The Convention on wetland of international importance known as the Ramsar Convention, was adopted in Ramsar (Iran) in February 1971. This Convention is not administered by UNEP and aims to promote the conservation and rational utilisation of wetlands and their resources. To become a Party to the Ramsar Convention, each country must designate at least one wetland in its territory to be registered on the Ramsar list. Even though the Ramsar sites are not necessarily

protected sites, the Parties pledge to look after their conservation. Within the framework of the Ramsar Convention, marine zones whose depth does not exceed 6 m can be considered as wetlands.



Wetlands are the first natural environments to have had a protection convention.

THE PELAGOS SANCTUARY

The Pelagos Sanctuary was created by an Agreement signed in Rome by France, Monaco and Italy. It deals with the creation in the Mediterranean of a Sanctuary for marine mammals so as to maintain a satisfactory state of conservation for the marine mammal populations by monitoring the cetacean populations, strengthening the application of the existing legislation concerning some fishing activities, reducing pollution, regulating the touristic watch of cetaceans and improving the dissemination of information to the public.

The creation of the Pelagos sanctuary is the crowning point of several initiatives which started in 1986 after the denunciation by scientists and NGOs of the drift gill nets and by-catch of cetaceans in the Corso-Ligurian basin.

The Pelagos Sanctuary covers a total surface area of 87 500 km which extend over waters under the jurisdiction of 3 signatory countries of the Agreement and over a marine area which is beyond national jurisdictions. So the Pelagos Sanctuary was the first Mediterranean protected area which covers a portion of the high seas. It was registered on the SPAMI LIST in 2001 so that it is recognized by the Parties to the SPA & BD Protocol and who, because of this registration, recognize the particular importance of the Pelagos Sanctuary for the Mediterranean region and thus pledge to comply with the measures applicable there and not to authorize or undertake activities which would be in contradiction with the objectives which motivated the creation of this SPAMI.



Conclusion

Real progress achieved but a lot still remains to be done.

Despite the good progress made in terms of the management of habitats and marine and terrestrial landscapes in the Mediterranean, a lot still remains to be done to improve the representativity and efficiency of the Mediterranean network of protected areas. It is necessary to finalize the identification of natural sites of conservation interest in order to establish a most detailed inventory of the sites to be preserved. This inventory would then be the basis for planning in time and space to obtain a sustainably good state of conservation of the sites, landscapes and natural resources. This planning should be such as to ensure a good representativity of the Mediterranean network of protected areas which means a better distribution of the protected areas from the geographical viewpoint as well as the habitats, species and ecosystems.

As indicated in the assessment in the present document, future planning of Mediterranean protected areas should take into account the necessity of ensuring better connectivity between the protected areas not only on a national level but also within a trans-border context. The role which the fishing reserves could play in the conservation of biodiversity and the role of the protected areas in the preservation of habitats and natural resources beyond their borders are also to be taken into consideration when staking out the planning.

The inventories and planning should be finalized rapidly and this is one of the major challenges for the Mediterranean region; some countries of the region have already made a count of the natural sites of interest in the marine and coastal zones of their territory but this still needs to be done in several other countries and some of them do not have the necessary human and/or financial means to do so.

Cooperation and mutual assistance between States in the region already play an important role in this domain but as the degradation of the natural sites is still progressing more rapidly especially in the region's coastal zone, it has become even more necessary to strengthen cooperation and assistance programmes. Cooperation between the States of the region is also necessary to preserve the natural potentialities of the marine areas on the high seas beyond the jurisdiction of the States.

Cooperation between States can be strengthened only if on a national level there is a real will of the government to develop the protected areas and ensure better management. Several of the Mediterranean natural sites are protected only on paper at present (paper Parks) or they do not have a management plan or the necessary human and material means. Such situations are often due to a poor perception of the role of the protected areas by the decision makers and

stakeholders who consider the setting up of a protected area on a site as an impediment to economic and social development in their region or country. This perception is obviously wrong as several examples in the world and even in the Mediterranean show that a protected area can be a driving force for development and even the basis for economic activities and sources of income for the local population. This implies good integration of the protected area into its local and national context and better involvement of the stakeholder in planning its management. To take up all these challenges the Mediterranean region can rely on the long tradition of environmental cooperation started in 1975 between the States of the region through the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the Mediterranean Action Plan. The different MAP components are to orientate their programmes and intervention to help the countries of the region develop their networks of marine and coastal protected areas and to set up mechanisms to ensure sustainable financing for each protected area. The MAP components can rely on the potential and experience of other international organizations which are involved in the Mediterranean region. It is thus important to continue and to further strengthen the efforts deployed by these organizations in the last few years for the coordination, cooperation and harmonization of their respective programmes so that they be complementary and more useful for the region



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