



Mediterranean
Action Plan
Barcelona
Convention



REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MONK SEAL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



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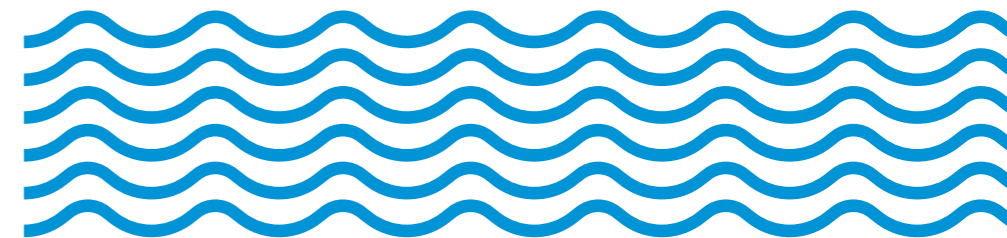
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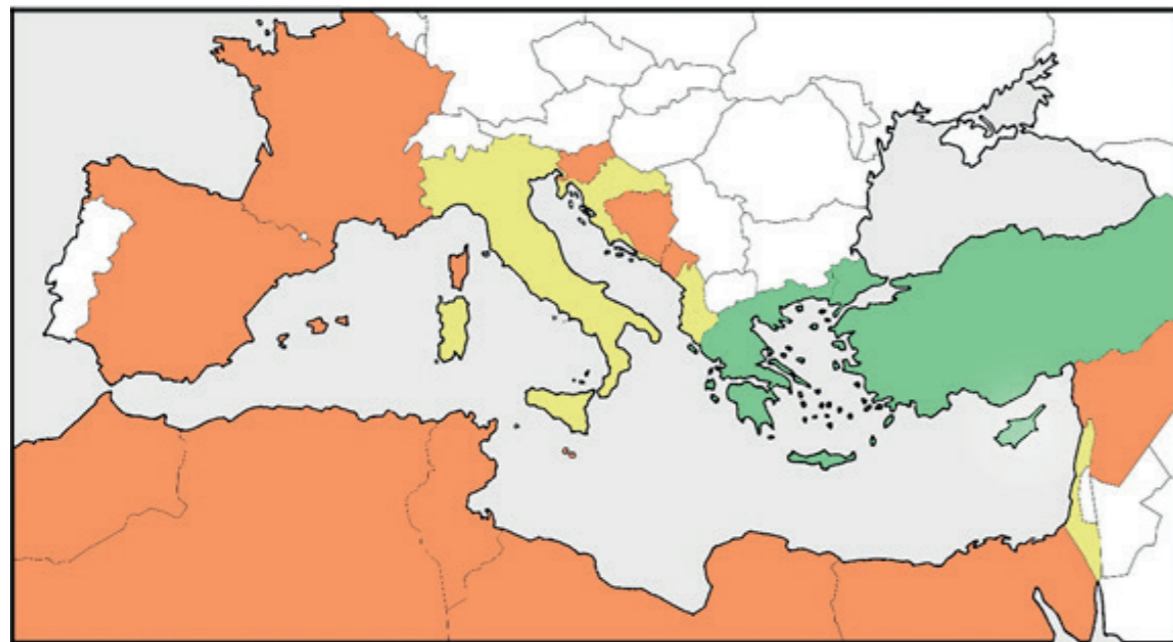




1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This Strategy follows guidelines which are detailed in “the manual for the construction of Species Conservation Strategies” (IUCN/SSC 2008). Accordingly, this Strategy is structured with the following elements:

- ~~~~ Vision, with associated Goals and Goal Targets that are SMART¹;
- ~~~~ the Objectives needed to achieve the Goal Targets within the stated time span, with associated SMART Objective Targets.



~~~~ **Figure 1**  
 Monk seal conservation status by country (updated at 31.04.2019). **Green:** “Group A” countries (where monk seal breeding has been reported after year 2010). **Yellow:** “Group B” countries (where no monk seal breeding is reported, but where repeated sightings of monk seals (>3) were reported since 2010). **Orange:** “Group C” countries (where no monk seal breeding is reported, and where very rare or no sightings of monk seals (≤3) were reported since 2010).

The main problem encountered in envisaging a region-wide Strategy derives from the quite diverse conservation status of monk seals in the different portion of the Mediterranean and by consequence the quite different priorities and responsibilities saddled onto the various monk seal Range States.

To handle this challenge, it is here proposed to assign Mediterranean countries to three groups (Figure 1):

A. Countries where monk seal breeding has been reported after year 2010<sup>2</sup>

- B. Countries where no monk seal breeding is reported, but where repeated sightings of monk seals (>3) were reported since 2010;
- C. Countries where no monk seal breeding is reported, and where very rare or no sightings of monk seals (≤3) were reported since 2010.

We realise that the above are rough indicators (e.g., monk seals can be present in a location even if they are not seen, as sightings depend on the presence of observers and the animals can have very inconspicuous behaviours; breeding may not occur in some countries because of lack of breeding habitat, but there may be a healthy presence of animals in that country; etc.). However, the above indicators are conceived to separate countries into major categories according to their current importance for monk seals, thereby involving different types of actions.

**Group A** countries is where action is most urgent, because at the moment these countries are our best hope for the survival of the species. These countries host monk seal resident breeding populations and the majority of the species population.

**Group B** countries are important, because current monk seal sighting records suggest the potential for the species’ survival and expansion in areas beyond Group A country borders. Group B countries may contain different extensions of monk seal critical coastal habitat, which is likely to be recolonised, and may lead to resident breeding nuclei, if conditions are favourable (as demonstrated by the frequent appearances of monk seals in many locations).

**Group C** countries are also important because, although they are characterized by rare monk seal occurrence, they contain historical monk seal critical habitat. The reestablishment of monk seal presence will become more likely if actions in nearby Group B countries are successful and if environmental conditions in historical critical habitat become favourable. In the absence of sighting data collection mechanisms, some countries, known to host seals and suitable environmental conditions in the recent past, may currently qualify as Group C.

To fulfil the Vision, this Strategy identifies four Goals. The first Goal relates to the creation of a conservation support structure at the international level, whereas the other three Goals relate to each of the three Groups the various countries have been assigned to.

## 2. THE STRATEGY

### 2.1. Vision

Over the next two decades, the ecological recovery of monk seals in the Mediterranean will deem to have occurred, when multiple colonies have become established within all major habitats in their historic range, interacting in ecologically significant ways with the fullest possible set of other species, and inspiring and connecting human cultures.

### 2.2. Goals

**Goal 1.** Mediterranean Range States implement this Strategy in pursuance of the Vision, through the expeditious development and adoption of appropriate national policies and administrative frameworks, and with the effective, coordinated support from relevant

<sup>1</sup>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

<sup>2</sup>Year 2010 was selected as a criterion to separate the present from the country assessment described in the past regional strategy (UNEP/Map RAC/SPA, 2013)





international organizations and civil society.

**Goal 2.** Monk seal breeding nuclei in sites located in “Group A” countries are effectively protected from deliberate killings and habitat degradation, so that seal numbers in such sites increase and seals are able to disperse to and re-colonize the surrounding areas.

**Goal 3.** Monk seal presence in sites where they are repeatedly seen today in “Group B” countries is permanently established, and breeding resumes. “Group B” countries are upgraded to “Group A”.

**Goal 4.** Monk seal presence is reported repeatedly in the species’ historical habitat in “Group C” countries, and these “Group C” countries are upgraded to “Group B”. Once all “Group C” countries are upgraded, Group C is deleted.

## 2.3. Goal Targets, Objectives and Objective Targets

### 2.3.1. GOAL 1. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Mediterranean Range States implement this Strategy in pursuance of the Vision, through the development and adoption of appropriate national policies and administrative frameworks, and with the effective, coordinated support from relevant international organizations and civil society.

**Goal Target 1.1.** A framework for the implementation of the Mediterranean Monk Seal Conservation Strategy is established by the Mediterranean Range States. The framework will include the establishment of a Monk Seal Advisory Committee (MSAC).

**Objective 1.1.1.** SPA/RAC establishes a Monk Seal Advisory Committee (MSAC). Tasks of the MSAC will include:

- provide support to SPA/RAC in the implementation of the Strategy and its review and updating (e.g., by defining the Actions needed to attain the different Objective Targets);
- provide recommendations and advice on issues related to monk seal conservation;
- support SPA/RAC in the creation and maintenance of a forum for monk seal conservation practitioners, where relevant information and experience is shared, exchanges are facilitated, challenges are discussed, cooperative initiatives are enhanced, transparency and openness of procedures are safeguarded.

The MSAC should be composed of geographically representative members of the region and membership to the committee should rotate within a specific timeframe to allow for adequate share of advisory roles by different experts.

The MSAC functioning is supported by SPA/RAC, and may benefit from relevant bodies within IUCN, the GFCM and other international organizations.

**Objective Target 1.1.1.1.** MSAC established by 2020. The Advisory Committee meets at least once a year to evaluate up-to-date achievement of Goals and Objectives within the Strategy’s timeframe and to support the implementation of the Actions foreseen in the Strategy.

**Objective Target 1.1.1.2.** First meeting of MSAC in June 2020. Recommendations are submitted to SPA/RAC for coordination with Contracting Parties as appropriate.

**Objective Target 1.1.1.3.** MSAC activities are harmonized, wherever appropriate, with prescriptions of the EU Habitats Directive, and with efforts by UNEP-MAP within the Ecosystem Approach process for the attainment of Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean, i.e., to attain Ecological Objective EO1 “Biodiversity” and Operational Objectives 1.1 (“Species distribution is maintained”), 1.2 (“Population size of selected species is maintained”), 1.3 (“Population condition of selected species is maintained”), 1.4 (“Key coastal and marine habitats are not being lost”), as far as monk seals are concerned.

**Objective Target 1.1.1.4.** Member States establish a national multiannual program that draws from the Action Plan and the Strategy objectives, that incorporates monitoring, capacity building and conservation measures into relevant existing national programs involving monitoring of marine biodiversity and spatial protection measures that have been formulated for national and international policy implementation (i.e. monitoring as per ECAP region-wide programs and Habitats Directive and MSFD for EC Member States, MPA network development and marine Natura 2000 establishment for Mediterranean EC countries ). The MSAC reviews the multiannual programs and reports to SPA/RAC, recommending content improvement so as to harmonize conservation efforts at a regional level with common objectives and comparable efforts. MSAC will provide support to SPA/RAC so national multiannual programs are defined by end of 2020.

**Objective 1.1.2.** The Parties to the Barcelona Convention ensure that the activities that the MSAC recommends are addressed.

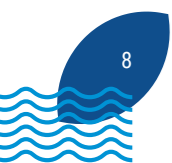
**Objective Target 1.1.2.1.** The Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopt resolutions in support of specific MSAC recommendations concerning the implementation of this Strategy.

**Goal Target 1.2.** Based on this Strategy, the MSAC provides support to SPA/RAC in the development and implementation of specific conservation actions having a regional scope.

**Objective 1.2.1.** The first task of the MSAC is to support SPA/RAC on supervising the attainment of Goals 2, 3 and 4.

**Objective 1.2.2.** The Capacity building and awareness activities are planned and promoted in monk seal Range States by SPA/RAC with the advice and support of MSAC so that monk seal protection and recovery is effectively embraced at the national level. This will include the preparation of a dedicated website and the regular issuing and widely distributed monk seal information newsletter in an adequate number of different languages

**Objective Target 1.2.2.1.** Capacity building: Categories of stakeholders are screened and suggested by MSAC and identified by SPA/RAC, taking stock of national frameworks pertaining to the relevant sectors, tailored to each different monk seal Range State (with first priority given to “Group A Countries” and second priority given to “Group B Countries”), and training courses are prepared and





planned (see Goal Targets 2.2. and 3.5). Preferably, training events will be developed in situ at selected locations having special relevance to monk seal conservation, in collaboration with the local groups, and will be followed by a constant “advice service” or accompanying process to ensure that full and long-lasting advantage derives from the effort.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.2.2.** In order to facilitate collaboration and communication amongst monk seal conservation experts throughout the region, the MSAC provides support to SPA/RAC for organizing periodical workshops on best practices of monk seal monitoring and conservation techniques, preferably taking advantage of other meetings being periodically organized (e.g., CIESM Congresses, ECS Annual meetings). Proceedings are edited and widely diffused (e.g., by pdf through the Internet) in formats that will serve as “best practice guidelines”.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.2.3.** In consultation with MSAC awareness actions are promoted by SPA/RAC, with first priority given to “Group A Countries” (with the exception of Greece) and second priority given to “Group B Countries”, in cooperation with local groups, targeting special interest stakeholders such as fishermen and local coastal communities.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.2.4.** An electronic monk seal newsletter will be issued yearly by SPA/RAC based on the recommendations from the MSAC (e.g., by resuming the Monachus Guardian), starting in 2020.

🌊 **Objective 1.2.3.** Monitoring of monk seal distribution and abundance, as well as advances in knowledge important for monk seal conservation, are promoted and supported by SPA/RAC through training, workshops and the facilitation of research and monitoring programmes. The monitoring process is made to coincide with the similar monitoring requirements within the framework of the Ecosystem Approach process by UNEP-MAP, and (where appropriate) with the Marine Framework Strategy Directive and Habitats Directive of the EC. MSAC supports SPA/RAC to investigate ways of storing and of making the available monitoring data publicly accessible.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.3.1.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the completion of monk seal breeding site inventories in “Group A Countries” by 2025.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.3.1.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the completion of monk seal breeding site inventories in “Group A Countries” by 2025.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.3.2.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the yearly monitoring of monk seal population parameters (e.g., population abundance, trends, pup production) in breeding sites in “Group A Countries”, starting in 2025.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.3.3.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the monitoring of monk seal parameters (e.g. species distribution, population abundance, mortality levels and causes) in areas of “Group B countries” with recurrent sightings, habitat availability, and spatial protection measures for the species.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.3.4.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the set-up of common

databases (e.g., photo-id catalogues).

🌊 **Objective 1.2.4.** The MSAC will provide support to SPA/RAC in facilitating the definition of a region-wide protocol for rescue and rehabilitation centres and programmes, and will provide support and advice, as required, to such centres and programmes supported by the different Range States.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.4.1.** Region-wide protocol for rescue and rehabilitation centres and programmes defined by the MSAC by 2022, taking stock of the successful initiatives developed during the last 30 years

🌊 **Objective 1.2.5.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the development of contingency plans for disastrous events (e.g., lethal epizootic outbreaks, massive oil spills within monk seal habitat), and for emergency conditions which may derive from catastrophic environmental change. Ideally, this should be done in cooperation with equivalent bodies dealing with the conservation of Mediterranean monk seals in the Atlantic, with the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean (i.e., within the ACCOBAMS framework), and with the appropriate bodies within the “Barcelona System” (e.g., REMPEC). The contingency plan will include the collection and safe storage of Mediterranean monk seal germplasm which may support in the future the recovery of the species, should it become necessary.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.5.1.** Contingency plan coordinated by SPA/RAC with support of MSAC in 2023 and adopted by the subsequent Barcelona Convention COP.

🌊 **Objective Target 1.2.6** MSAC supports SPA/RAC for the organization of a regular Mediterranean conference as an opportunity to assess the knowledge gained, to strengthen cooperation and the implementation of the Mediterranean strategy. This should be done in synergy with other regional bodies dealing with the conservation of the Monk seal.

### 2.3.2. GOAL 2. “GROUP A” COUNTRIES

Monk seal breeding nuclei in sites located in “Group A” countries are effectively protected from deliberate killings and habitat degradation, so that seal numbers in such sites increase and seals are able to disperse to and re-colonise the surrounding areas.

**Goal Target 2.1.** Maintain and secure monk seal presence in Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) identified by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force<sup>6</sup>, with special attention to the following locations: a) Greek Ionian islands (Lefkada, Kefallinia, Ithaca, Zakynthos, and surrounding islets and seas); b) Northern Sporades; c) Gyaros; d) Kimolos and Polyaigos; e) Karpathos-Saria; f) Turkish Aegean and Mediterranean coasts; g) Cyprus. Breeding nuclei in the locations listed above are effectively protected from deliberate killings and habitat degradation, so that seal numbers in such sites increase and young seals are able to disperse and re-colonise the surrounding areas.

🌊 **Objective 2.1.1.** Current legislation prohibiting to carry firearms and explosives aboard fishing vessels in Greece, Türkiye and Cyprus is enforced, with a special attention in locations listed in Goal Target 2.1.



Objective Target 2.1.1.1. Compliance with existing laws concerning firearms and explosives aboard fishing vessels in Greece, Türkiye, and Cyprus is routinely enforced everywhere, to come into effect with immediate urgency. Appropriate statistics of infringements are kept and publicised. Infringements are prosecuted with penalties appropriate to address the destruction of an endangered, highly species. Current illegal fishing practices are eradicated.

Objective 2.1.2. Locations listed in Goal Target 2.1, and other equally important locations that may be eventually discovered in the future, are geographically delimited and legally protected/managed. The resulting MPA network should be ecologically coherent and effectively managed in order to guarantee favourable conservation status.

Objective Target 2.1.2.1. A monk seal MPA (or an MPA network) encompassing the most important monk seal habitat in the area is formally established in the Greek Ionian islands by 2024.

Objective Target 2.1.2.2. The current Natura 2000 site around the island of Gyaros is formally established as a monk seal MPA by 2020.

Objective Target 2.1.2.3. A monk seal MPA is formally established in Kimolos - Polyaigos by 2024.

Objective Target 2.1.2.4. A monk seal MPA is formally established in Karpathos - Saria by 2024<sup>7</sup>.

Objective Target 2.1.2.5. A Monk seal MPAs are formally established along the Aegean and Mediterranean coastline of Türkiye by 2024, to protect monk seal critical habitat as determined and mapped by the Turkish National Monk Seal Committee.

Objective Target 2.1.2.6. Monk seal MPAs are formally established in Cyprus-Davlos, Karpasia Peninsula, and to the west of Limnidis and Peyia Sea Caves by 2024.

Objective 2.1.3. Areas in locations listed under Goal Target 2.1 are effectively protected through a) appropriate management actions, and b) the involvement of the local communities, which will both ensure the good conservation status of monk seals found there. A management framework is in place and implemented, defining the spatial, temporal and specific measures needed in the species' critical habitats (e.g., regulating access to caves), thereby affording effective protection to haul out and pupping sites.

Objective Target 2.1.3.1. Until formal protection of the areas listed under Goal Target 2.1 is established and enforced, patrolling of the most important haul out and pupping locations and caves is organised at least during the summer and breeding season, starting in 2020. Patrolling can be done by volunteers, well-trained and possibly local, who could also be performing awareness actions in situ, as well as solicit the intervention of law enforcers in case of need.

Objective Target 2.1.3.2. All monk seal MPAs established under Objective 2.1.2, as well as the National Marine Park of Alonissos – Northern Sporades, are endowed with an operant Management Body and a management plan that is adaptive, ecosystem-based and fully implemented by 2024.

Objective Target 2.1.3.3. Management in monk seal MPAs established under Objective 2.1.2, as well as the National Marine Park of Alonissos – Northern Sporades, is conducted in a participatory fashion, with the full involvement of local artisanal fishermen and local communities at large, and in cooperation with the fisheries sectors (e.g., see GFCM 2011). All proposals and decisions aiming at establishing or modifying conservation and protection measures must be based on sound and scientific data and evidence. Elements of participatory approach will include awareness campaigns as well as the experimentation/adoption of innovative mechanisms to address opportunity costs, damage mitigation and the generation of alternative sources of income (e.g., ecotourism).

**Goal Target 2.2. Implementation of Goal Target 2.1. is enabled through appropriate capacity building activities.**

Objective 2.2.1. Training sessions are organised in areas relevant to locations listed in Goal Target 2.1, with the support of the MSAC (see Objective Target 1.2.2.1). Training will concentrate, at least initially, on mitigating the main threats to monk seals (deliberate killing, habitat degradation, and accidental entanglements or bycatch), and will target stakeholders identified by the MSAC (e.g., fishermen, tourist operators, enforcement officers, judges). Training will be developed together with the local groups and will be followed by a constant "advice service" or accompanying process to ensure that full advantage is taken from the effort.

### 2.3.3. GOAL 3. "GROUP B" COUNTRIES

Monk seal **presence** in sites where they are occasionally seen today in "Group B" countries is permanently established, and breeding resumes in areas characterised by sufficient and suitable coastal habitat. "Group B" countries are upgraded to "Group A".

Monk seal presence in "Group B" countries must be verified with appropriate methods so as to define the actual species' use of the coastal seas and identify the areas in which priority monitoring, awareness and protection actions need to be carried out. This implies that priority areas of usage be identified thorough sighting collection campaigns, habitat surveys in areas of hotspot sightings, and where the coastal habitat is most pristine (which implies analysis of coastal habitat characteristics and their distribution in each nation), followed by in situ monitoring to assess the eventual degree of habitat use by monk seals. Coastal areas with confirmed repeated use must be evaluated in terms of pressures and risks. Awareness activities to be carried out in each site will depend on the type of use of the coasts by the species, the degree of the pressures insisting in each site, and the risks involved. Spatial protection measures are established, and site-specific management actions are implemented to reduce the pressures on the basis of the monitoring and risk analysis outcomes.





### Goal Target 3.1. Monk seal presence in Albania is confirmed and permanently established

- Objective 3.1.1. A **reporting** scheme to detect monk seal presence and alert authorities continues to be implemented along the Albanian coastal zone and awareness actions are conducted in areas with seal sightings.
- Objective 3.1.2. Long-term cave monitoring is established in the caves identified in previous studies in the Karaburun Peninsula and nearby locations.

### Goal Target 3.3. Monk seal presence in Italy, in areas with recurrent sightings, habitat availability and proximity to nearby breeding colonies, is permanently established, and monk seal breeding resumes.

- Objective 3.3.1. A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is enhanced along the coastal areas characterised by recurrent sightings and coastal habitat historically used by the species
- Objective 3.3.2. Monitoring of monk seal distribution, abundance and behaviour (including eventual pup production) is continued in the Egadi islands.
- Objective Target 3.3.2.1. Non-invasive and scientifically sound monitoring technologies, applied to caves in appropriate locations within the Egadi Islands MPA, is continued and enhanced.
- Objective Target 3.3.2.2. A programme targeting the local community and visitors, aimed at increasing awareness and fostering species' protection measures is continued and enhanced.
- Objective 3.3.3. Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in areas historically containing monk seal habitat and characterised by recurrent sightings in Sardinia.
- Objective 3.3.4. Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in areas historically containing monk seal habitat in the Tuscan Archipelago.
- Objective 3.3.5. Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in areas historically **containing** monk seal habitat and recurrent recent sightings in the lesser islands of the Sicily Strait (Pantelleria, Pelagie islands)
- Objective 3.3.5. **Regular** monitoring of monk seal presence is conducted in Salento (Apulia) in coastal areas containing historical monk seal habitat and characterised by recurrent sightings.

<sup>7</sup> Greece has already established the protected area Management Body in Karpathos in 2007, however the MPA has not been legally declared yet.

### Goal Target 3.4. Monk seal presence in Lebanon is permanently established.

- Objective 3.4.1. A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented along the Lebanese coastal zone; awareness actions are conducted in the concerned areas.
- Objective 3.4.2. A coastal habitat assessment study is conducted in the areas characterised by recent recurrent monk seal sightings and long-term cave monitoring program is initiated in northern Lebanon.

### Goal Target 3.5. Monk seal presence in Israel is permanently established.

- Objective 3.5.1. A **reporting** scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented along the Israeli coastal zone and awareness actions are conducted in areas characterised by recent sightings or coastal habitat suitability
- Objective 3.5.2. A coastal habitat assessment study is conducted, and a long-term cave monitoring program is **implemented** in northern Israel

### Goal Target 3.6. Monk seal presence in Montenegro is permanently established.

- Objective 3.6.1. A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented along the coastal zone of Montenegro.
- Objective 3.6.2. Coastal habitat assessment studies are completed, and long-term cave monitoring programmes are implemented in Montenegro.

### Goal Target 3.7. Implementation of Goal Targets 3.1 - 3.6 is enabled through appropriate capacity building activities and sub-regional cooperation.

- Objective 3.7.1. Capacity building. Training sessions are organised in areas relevant to locations listed in Goal Targets 3.1 - 3.6, with the support of the MSAC (see Objective Target 1.2.2.1). Training will concentrate, at least initially, on national / local groups working on the development of monitoring and awareness programs directed at mitigating the main threats to monk seals (deliberate killing, habitat degradation, and accidental entanglements). Capacity building activities can also target stakeholders identified by national/local groups with the support of the MSAC (e.g., fishermen, tourist operators, enforcement officers, judges). Training will be developed together with the local groups and will be followed by a constant "advice service" or accompanying process to ensure that full advantage is taken from the effort.





**Objective 3.7.2.** Streamlining of sighting and cave monitoring results carried out in Goal Targets 3.1 - 3.4 above is discussed at sub regional level in order to better assess the population status in the “Group B” countries within a geographic context that goes beyond country borders, and in order to identify priority areas in which spatial protection measures are necessary.

**Objective 3.7.3.** Capacity building of MPA managers acting in monk seal distribution areas identified through the implementation of Goal Targets 3.1 - 3. 6, is carried out so as to discuss improved management and mitigation measures to be introduced in existing MPAs.

**Objective 3.7.4.** The implementation of Goals 3.1-3.6 is carried out, as much as possible, through the development of international collaboration frameworks, directed at guaranteeing sharing of expertise and monitoring results amongst neighbour countries for the purpose of sub regional status assessments and conservation goal attainment. The latter is particularly important for countries that have limited suitable coastal habitat and recurrent sightings and which border countries with breeding colonies or countries with sightings and extensive and suitable habitat. This may involve cross collaboration initiatives that involve an array mixture of Group A, B and C countries (i.e. Türkiye-Cyprus-Syria-Lebanon-Israel, Libya-Egypt, Greece-Albania-Italy-Montenegro-Croatia, Italy-Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco).

#### 2.3.4. GOAL 4. “GROUP C” COUNTRIES

Monk seal presence is again repeatedly reported in the species’ historical habitat in “Group C” countries, and these “Group C” countries are upgraded to “Group B”. Once all “Group C” countries are upgraded, Group C is deleted.

**Goal Target 4.1.** Monk seal presence in locations of the Maghreb’s Mediterranean coasts and annexed islands in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Chafarinas Islands (Spain) is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

**Objective 4.1.1.** A reporting scheme to detect monk seal presence through sightings and to alert authorities is implemented along Maghreb’s Mediterranean coasts and annexed islands characterised by monk seal historical presence and recent sightings. This includes areas such as: northern Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and the Chafarinas Islands (Spain); awareness actions are conducted in the concerned areas.

**Objective 4.1.2.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in the Al Hoceima National Park and Cap Trois Fourches in order to assess monk seal presence in the Moroccan coastal area.

**Objective 4.1.3.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in the Chafarinas islands in order to assess monk

seal presence in the area.

**Objective 4.1.4.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in previous studies carried out in selected Algerian locations in order to assess monk seal presence in the area.

**Objective 4.1.5.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in the La Galite Archipelago in order to assess monk seal presence in the area.

**Goal Target 4.2.** Monk seal presence in the Balearic Islands, Spain, is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

**Objective 4.2.1.** A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented; awareness actions are conducted around the Balearic Islands, Spain.

**Goal Target 4.3.** Monk seal presence in Bosnia Herzegovina and Slovenia repeatedly reported and permanently established.

**Objective 4.3.1.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species’ historical habitat in, Bosnia Herzegovina and Slovenia.

**Goal Target 4.4.** Monk seal presence in Corsica is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

**Objective 4.4.1.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species’ historical habitat in Corsica.

**Goal Target 4.5.** Monk seal presence is reported again from continental France.

**Objective 4.5.1.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species’ historical habitat in Corsica and continental France.

**Goal Target 4.6.** Monk seal presence in Libya and nearby western Egypt is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

**Objective 4.6.1.** Monk seal ecology and behaviour is monitored in Libya (Cyrenaica) and nearby Egyptian coast (from the border with Libya, including Sallum MPA, to Marsa Matrouh).

**Objective Target 4.6.1.1.** Full survey of monk seal habitat in the Libyan easternmost coast bordering with Egypt is conducted and long-term cave monitoring is established in this area as well as in the caves identified in previous projects.



Objective Target 4.6.1.2. Awareness actions are conducted in Libya, targeting local residents and most notably fishermen, with the aim of fostering respect and data collection on sightings.

Objective Target 4.6.1.3. Full survey of monk seal presence through data collection on sightings and awareness actions organised in Egypt (from the border, including Sallum MPA, to Marsa Matrouh) by 2025.

Objective Target 4.6.1.4. Full survey of monk seal habitat in the Egyptian areas characterised by recurrent sightings and a geomorphologically suitable coast is conducted, and long-term cave monitoring is established.

**Goal Target 4.7.** Monk seal presence is reported from Malta.

Objective 4.7.1. Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species' historical habitat in Malta.

**Goal Target 4.8.** Monk seal presence in Syria is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

Objective 4.8.1. A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented along the Syrian coastal zone; awareness actions are conducted in the concerned areas.

**Goal Target 4.9.** Implementation of Goal Targets 4.1 - 4.8. is enabled through appropriate capacity building activities and sub-regional cooperation.

Objective 4.9.1. Capacity building: training courses are organised in locations listed in Goal Targets 4.1-4.8, with the support of the -MSAC (see Objective Target 1.2.2.1).

Objective 4.9.2. The implementation of Goals 4.1-4.8 is carried out, as much as possible, through the development of international collaboration frameworks, directed at guaranteeing sharing of expertise and monitoring results amongst neighbour countries for the purpose of sub regional status assessments and conservation goal attainment (see Objective 3.7.4).

evaluate upto-date attainment of Goals and Objectives within the Strategy's timeframe and to identify, if needed, moderate adjustments.

### 3. REVISION OF THE STRATEGY

The suggested time horizon of this Strategy is six years, to be concluded in 2025, when a comprehensive review of the Strategy's accomplishments and failures, with a consideration for potential actions to be taken beyond 2025, should be conducted. Such timing also coincides with the process requiring EU Member States to report concerning the Habitats, thereby facilitating the implementation of the Strategy's actions by such States. It will also contribute to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) programme of measures in 2022.

A mid-term assessment of the implementation results in 2022 is also recommended, to



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## SPA/RAC WORKING AREAS

SPA/ RAC, the UNEP/ MAP **Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre**, was created in 1985 to assist the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (21 Mediterranean countries and the European Union) in implementing the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol).



**Marine turtles**



**Cetaceans**



**Mediterranean Monk Seal**



**Cartilaginous fishes**  
(Chondrichthyans)



**Marine and coastal bird species**

Listed in Annex II of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean



**Specially Protected Areas**



**Monitoring**



**Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions**



**Marine vegetation**



**Dark Habitats**

Habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena



**Species introduction and invasive species**



Mediterranean  
Action Plan  
Barcelona  
Convention



*The Mediterranean  
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