



UNITED
NATIONS

EP

UNEP/MED WG.608/14



UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

17 May 2025
Original: English

Seventeenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points

Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025

Agenda item 6: Conservation of sites of particular ecological interest

6.3. Analysis of the reports on Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) for the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs

Analysis of the reports on Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) by countries for the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs

Note:

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) and United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any State, Territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of their frontiers or boundaries.

© 2025 United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)
Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC)
Boulevard du Leader Yasser Arafat
B.P. 337 - 1080 Tunis Cedex - Tunisia
E-mail: car-asp@spa-rac.org

Table of contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Reported SPAs	11
	II.1. Reported SPAs total number by Contracting Party.....	11
	II.2. Reported SPA	11
	II.3. Management plans	11
	II.5. Main ecosystem and species and their habitats targeted	13
	II.6. No-take zones	14
III.	Compliance with the adopted criteria	15
	III.1. Management Plans	15
	III.2. Reported protection measures	16
IV.	Recommendations	17

Note by the Secretariat

1. The document UNEP/MED WG.608/14 presents an analysis of the notifications submitted by the Contracting Parties for inclusion in the Directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), for the biennial periods 2020-2021 and 2022-2023: 116 (SPAs) reported by fifteen Contracting Parties.
2. Please note that the data presented in this report regarding SPAs, in terms of area, representativeness and management effectiveness, reflects only the status of those SPAs officially reported by countries during the 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 biennial periods. consequently, the report does not consider all existing Mediterranean SPAs, as several of them are not currently included in the Directory because they have not been reported by countries.

Analysis of the reports on Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) for the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs

I. Introduction

1. Decision IG.25/12¹ of the 22nd meeting of the Barcelona Convention Conference of Parties (COP 22) (7-10 December 2021 in Antalya, Türkiye), providing guidance under the framework *“Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well-connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance”*, has:

- adopted the “Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas in the Directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas” (see Annex III to Decision IG.25/12), including the associated updates in the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), see **Appendix 1** to this report;
- Called upon the Contracting Parties to report on the Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) to the Directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas based on the adopted Criteria, at the time of submitting their national implementation reports under Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention, starting with the national implementation reports for the biennium 2020-2021 to be submitted by December 2022; to this aim also encouraged the Contracting Parties to report on other effective area-based conservation measures; and
- Request the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to provide an analysis of the reports on Specially Protected Areas and as appropriate on other effective area-based conservation measures, at every meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points.

2. This report provides an overview of the status of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) reported by Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol), based on the official submissions for the biennia 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. The report follows the “Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs” as adopted by the Contracting Parties.

3. The adopted criteria for SPAs could be summarized as follows:

- The SPA should be declared through a legal enactment;
- The SPA legal enactment should include at least one of the conservation objectives listed in Article 4 of the SPA/BD Protocol;
- To achieve the conservation objectives, the SPA should define relevant protection measures as per Article 6 of the SPA/BD Protocol;
- The SPA should have a management plan.

4. For the biennium 2022-2023; and up to the date of the BCRS reports submission deadline (7 March 2025), 9 Contracting Parties completed their national reports about SPAs, by using the BCRS reporting system. Hence, in addition to the 13 notifications made for 2020-2021, only three new notifications were received for the 2022-2023 biennium.

¹ https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop22/decision_25.12_en.pdf

Table 1. State of SPA data filling in the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS).

#	Contracting Party	Submission Format
1	Albania	Excel 2020-2021
2	Algeria	BCRS 2022-2023
3	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Excel and BCRS 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023
4	Croatia	Excel and BCRS 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023
5	Cyprus	BCRS 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023
6	Egypt	Excel and BCRS 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023
7	France	
8	Greece	
9	Israel	
10	Italy	Excel and BCRS 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023
11	Lebanon	BCRS 2020-2021
12	Libya	
13	Malta	
14	Monaco	BCRS 2020-2021
15	Montenegro	Excel and BCRS 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023
16	Morocco	Excel 2020-2021
17	Slovenia	Excel 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023
18	Spain	BCRS 2022-2023
19	Syria	
20	Tunisia	Excel 2020-2021
21	Türkiye	BCRS 2020-2021, BCRS 2022-2023

5. This report first examines the list of SPAs reported by 15 Contracting Parties. It then evaluates the level of compliance of the reported SPAs with the adopted criteria for inclusion in the Directory (Section III - Compliance with Criteria). Where criteria-specific information was missing, it was marked as “No Data reported” (ND).

Table 2. SPAs included in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs as notified by Contracting Parties during the biennial periods 2020-2021 and 2022-2023

Country	The name of the SPA	Date or Year of establishment of the SPA	Category	SPA/SPAMI	Reported Surface (km ²)	Management Plan Status	Management plan: Date of adoption	Legal Enactment
Albania	Karaburun Sazan National Marine Park	2010	SPAMI	SPAMI	ND	Yes	2014	ND
Algeria	Réghaïa	16/08/2016	Natural reserve	SPA	24,84	No	ND	Arrêté n°4959 du 15 août 2016
Algeria	Îles Habibas	29/03/2003	Marine reserve	SPAMI	26,84	Yes	14/12/2012	Décret exécutif n°03-147
Algeria	Banc des Kabyles	ND	Marine reserve	SPA	ND	ND	ND	ND
Algeria	Taza (Jijel)	ND	Marine reserve	SPA	ND	ND	ND	ND
Algeria	El Kala - Cap Rosa	ND	Marine reserve	SPA	ND	ND	ND	ND
Algeria	Srigina (Skikda)	ND	Marine reserve	SPA	ND	ND	ND	ND
Algeria	Aïn Témouchent	ND	Marine area	SPA	ND	ND	ND	ND
Algeria	Zemmouri El Bahri (Boumerdès)	27/09/2016	Marine reserve	SPA	16	No	ND	Arrêté de classement n°16-2124
Algeria	Tipaza coastal area	ND	Marine area	SPA	ND	ND	ND	ND
Algeria	Mont de l'Edough (Annaba)	04/09/2023	Marine area (Parc naturel)	SPA	403,12	Under Development	ND	Arrêté du Wali n°2261 du 04 septembre 2023

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Nature park Hutovo Blato (FBiH)	30/03/1995	Nature park	SPA	74,11	Yes	ND	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Nature park Blidinje (FBiH)	04/03/1995	Nature park	SPA	358	Yes	2011	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Protected landscape Vjetrenica - Popovo polje (FBiH)	26/02/2021	Protected landscape	SPA	ND	Yes	2021	ND
Croatia	Kornati	01/01/1980	National Park	SPA	215,71	Under development	01/01/2014	Yes
Croatia	Telaščica	01/01/1988	Nature Park	SPA	70,5	Yes	01/01/2017	Yes
Croatia	Lastovsko otočje	01/01/2006	Nature Park	SPA	195,83	Yes	01/01/2018	Yes
Croatia	Brijuni	01/01/1983	National Park	SPA	34,00	Yes	01/01/2017	Yes
Croatia	Mljet	01/01/1960	National Park	SPA	53,90	Yes	01/01/2017	Yes
Croatia	Velebit Channel	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Cres-Lošinj archipelago	19/10/2006	Nature Park	SPA	ND	Yes	2017	Yes
Croatia	Palagruža	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Vis-Biševo	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Medvidina cave	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Blue Cave - Biševo	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Zelena špilja - Ravnik	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes

Croatia	Pantan	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Kanal - Luka (Šibenik)	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Žut-Sit archipelago	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Zavratnica bay	25/09/1964	Significant landscape	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	Yes
Croatia	Jabuka Pit	ND	Other	SPA	ND	No plan	ND	Yes
Croatia	Telascica	13/04/1988	Nature park	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Cyprus	Lara - Toxeftra Turtle Reserve	Not found	Nature reserve	SPA	ND	ND	ND	ND
Egypt	Salloum	27/02/2010	managed resources		ND	Yes	2019	ND
Egypt	El- Burlluse	14/05/1998	RAMSAR		ND	Yes	ND	ND
Egypt	Zaranik	15/10/1985	RAMSAR		ND	Yes	ND	ND
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Regno di Nettuno	10/04/2008	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	86,26	Yes	2009	Ministerial Decree 2007
Italy	Capo Gallo - Isola delle Femmine	05/05/2002	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	23,98	Yes	2002	Ministerial Decree 2002
Italy	Cinque Terre	12/12/1997	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	0,80	Yes	2015	Decree 12.12.1997
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Capo Carbonara	15/09/1998	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	86,84	Yes	2017	Ministerial Decree 07.02.2012
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Isola dell'Asinara	20/12/2002	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	108,17	Yes	2009	Decree 30.07.2009
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Isola di Bergeggi	05/09/2007	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	2,29	Yes	2008	Decree 07.08.2007
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Isola di Ustica	26/03/1987	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	15,92	Yes	1990	Decree 1986

Italy	Area Marina Protetta Isole Egadi	19/05/1992	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	535,00	Yes	2010	Decree 21.10.2011
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Isole Pelagie	18/01/2003	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	42,98	Yes	2008	Decree 1997
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Penisola del Sinis-Isola Mal di Ventre	24/02/1998	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	56,00	Yes	2017	Decree 20.07.2011
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Torre Guaceto	19/05/1992	MPA - SPAMI - SPA Ramsar-Natura2000-Special Protection Area	SPAMI	21,82	Yes	2009	Decree 04.12.1991
Italy	Area Marina Protetta di Punta della Campanella	26/02/1998	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA MPA-Site of Community Importance (SCI)	SPAMI	15,27	Yes	2010	Decree 20.06.1997
Italy	Costa degli Infreschi e della Masseta	08/04/2010	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	2,80	Yes	2015	Decree 21.10.2009
Italy	PELAGOS Sanctuary for Marine Mammals	06/12/1991	International MPA - SPAMI	SPAMI	87500 (including areas under the jurisdiction of Italy, Monaco and France and a high sea zone)	Yes	Agreement 1999	Agreement France-Italy-Monaco
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Capo Rizzuto	27/12/1991	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	14,57	Yes	2009	Decree 1991
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Isola dei Cicli	2004	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	1,45	Yes	2017	Decree 2004
Italy	Isole di Ventotene e Santo Stefano	24/02/1998	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	7,20	Yes	2014	Decree 1997

Italy	Area Marina Protetta Isole Tremiti	1989	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	14,58	Yes	2018	Decree 1989
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Porto Cesareo	24/02/1998	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	16,65	Yes	2009	Decree 1997
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Secche di Tor Paterno	29/11/2000	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	12,00	Yes	2014	Decree 29.11.2000
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Parco Sommerso di Baia	09/12/2002	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	1,79	Yes	2002	Decree 07.08.2002
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Tavolara Punta Coda di Cavallo	26/02/1998	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	153,24	Yes	2014	Decree 28.11.2001
Italy	Area Marina Protetta del Plemmirio	09/02/2005	MPA - SPAMI - SPA Nature 2000	SPAMI	24,00	Yes	2009	Decree 2004
Italy	Secche della Meloria	21/10/2009	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	9,62	Yes	2016	Decree 2009
Italy	Santa Maria di Castellabate	09/04/2010	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	3,29	Yes	2015	Decree 21.10.2009
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Capo Caccia Isola Piana	05/12/2002	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	26,50	Yes	2021	Decree 2002
Italy	Torre del Cerrano	07/04/2010	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	3,46	Yes	2017	Decree 2009
Italy	Area Marina Protetta di Portofino	13/08/1988	Italian National MPA - SPAMI - SPA	SPAMI	3,52	Yes	2008	Decree 1999
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Parco Sommerso di Gaiola	05/12/2002	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	0,41	Yes	2002	Decree 07.08.2002
Italy	Area Marina Protetta "Miramare"	02/04/1987	MPA - SPAMI - SPA - UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserve	SPAMI	0,29	Yes	2009	Decree 1986

Italy	Area Marina Protetta "Capo Testa - Punta Falcone"	05/09/2018	MPA	SPA	ND	Yes	2018	Yes
Italy	Area Marina Protetta Capo Milazzo	10/07/1905	Italian National MPA - SPA	SPA	5,47	Yes	2020	Decree 2018
Lebanon	Palm Island Nature Reserve	03/09/1992	Nature reserve		ND	Yes	2000	ND
Monaco	Aire Marine Protégée du Larvotto	11/08/1976	MPA	SPA	ND	Yes	2021	ND
Monaco	Aire Marine Protégée du Tombant des Spélugues	29/08/1986	MPA	SPA	ND	Yes	2022	ND
Montenegro	Tivat Salina	12/11/2008	Special Nature Reserve	SPA	0,15	Under Development	ND	Yes
Montenegro	Nature Park Platamuni	14/06/2021	Nature Park	SPA	10,8713	Yes	01/06/2024	Yes
Montenegro	Nature Park Katic	16/09/2021	Nature Park	SPA	27,4493	Yes	01/01/2023	Yes
Montenegro	Nature Park Stari Ulcinj	29/12/2021	Nature Park	SPA	9,2916	Yes	01/01/2023	Yes
Montenegro	Monument of Nature Sopot	20/06/2024	Monument of Nature	SPA	0,034	Under Development	ND	Yes
Montenegro	Monument of Nature Drazin Vrt	08/07/2024	Monument of Nature	SPA	0,013445	Under Development	ND	Yes
Morocco	Koudiet Taifour	1995	Site d'Intérêt Biologique et Écologique (SIBE)	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Morocco	Cirque d'El-Jebha	1995	SIBE	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Morocco	Parc National d'Alhoceima	2004	Parc National-ASPIM	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Morocco	Sebkha Bou Areg	2005	RAMSAR	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Morocco	Embouchure de la Moulouya	2005	RAMSAR	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND

Morocco	Cap des Trois Fourches	2005	RAMSAR	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Morocco	Jbel Moussa	2019	RAMSAR	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Slovenia	Krajinski park Strunjan	2004	MPA of National Statute and SPAMI (since 2019)	SPAMI	42,89	Yes	ND	Yes
Slovenia	Strunjan	2013	Special Protection Area (Birds Directive)	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Slovenia	Strunjan	2004	Nature Reserve (Slovenia)	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Slovenia	Strunjan - Stjuža	2004	Nature Reserve (Slovenia)	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Slovenia	Škocjanski Zatok (PA)	1998	Nature Reserve	SPA	ND	Yes	2015	ND
Slovenia	Strunjanske soline s Stjužo	2007	Special Area of Conservation	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Spain ²	Cabo de Gata-Níjar	ND	Natural park	SPA/SPAMI	498	Yes	ND	Yes
Tunisia	La Galite	1995	FRA		ND	Yes	ND	ND
Tunisia	Zembra	1973	National Park		ND	Yes	ND	ND
Tunisia	Kneiss	1988	Natural reserve		ND	Yes	2019	ND
Tunisia	Kuriat	ND	Marine protected area		ND	Yes	2015	ND
Tunisia	Kerkennah	ND	Marine protected area		ND	Yes	2020	ND
Türkiye	Köyceğiz Dalyan	12/06/1988	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	2007	ND
Türkiye	Foça	22/10/1990	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND

² Spain reported only 1 SPA for inclusion in the Directory (Cabo de Gata Níjar). However, Spain has 9 other SPAMIs: Alboran Island, Cap de Creus Natural Park, Columbretes Islands, Mar Menor and the Oriental Mediterranean zone of the Region of Murcia coast, Medes Islands, Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria, Maro-Cerro Gordo Cliffs, Archipelago of Cabrera National Park, Cetaceans Migration Corridor in the Mediterranean

Türkiye	Saros Körfezi	22/10/2010	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	2017	ND
Türkiye	Fethiye-Göcek	12/06/1988	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Datça-Bozburun	20/10/1990	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Göksu Deltası	18/01/1990	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Belek	22/10/1990	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Patara	18/01/1990	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Kaş-Kekova	18/01/1990	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Ayvalık Adaları	ND	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Gelibolu Yarımadası	ND	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Olimpos Beydağları	ND	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Dilek Yarımadası	ND	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Troya	ND	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Yumurtalık Lagünü	ND	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Marmaris	ND	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Gökova	12/06/1988	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Finike Seamount	16/03/2013	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND
Türkiye	Karaburun Ildır	15/03/2019	SEPA	SPA	ND	Yes	ND	ND

II. Reported SPAs

II.1. Reported SPAs total number by Contracting Party

6. For the analysed period, a total of 116 Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) were reported by fifteen Contracting Parties for inclusion in the Directory (Table 2, Figure 1), through the official BCRS reporting mechanism.

7. The declared SPAs cover a wide array of protection categories, reflecting the diversity of national legislative and ecological frameworks. These include national marine parks, marine protected areas (MPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs), coastal and marine reserves, as well as Natura 2000 sites and other nationally designated conservation zones.

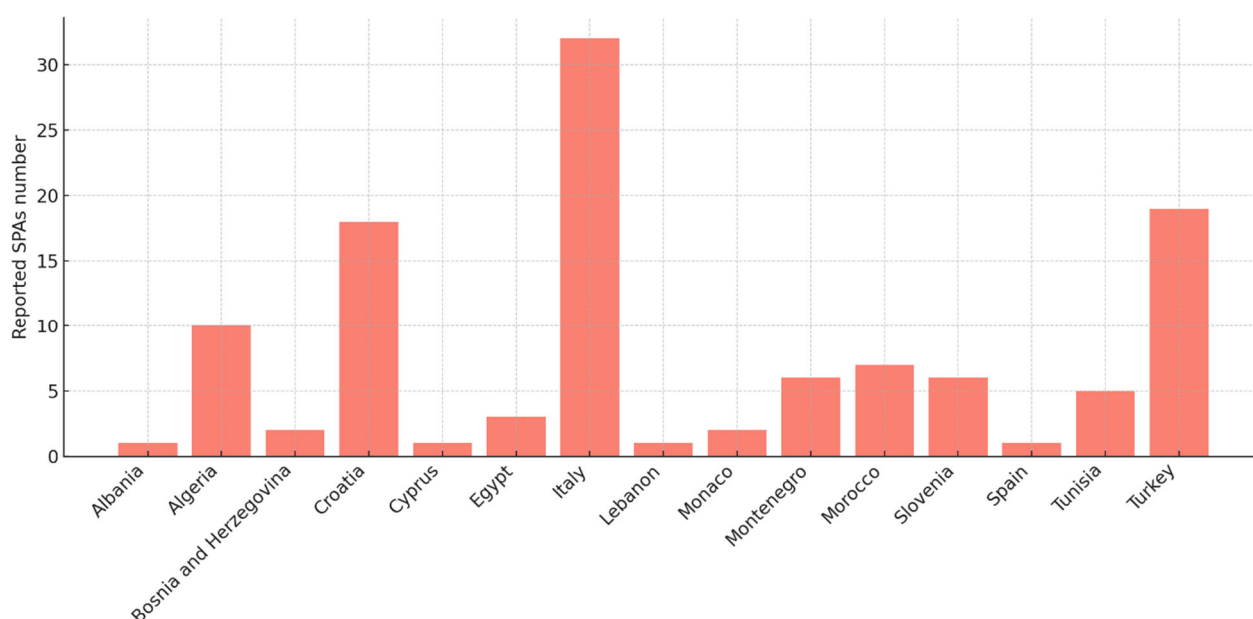


Figure 1. Reported SPAs by Contracting Party

II.2. Reported SPA

8. Since the information about the surface area was provided only for 51 out of 116 notified SPAs, the total surface of the Mediterranean SPAs included in the Directory cannot be provided in this report.

II.3. Management plans

9. Among the 116 Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) reported by the fifteen Contracting Parties, **70 SPAs** were explicitly declared as having a valid management plan ("Yes"), while **16 SPAs** were reported as having **no plan in place** ("No"), and **4 SPAs** were marked as having a plan **under development**. For the remaining **26 SPAs**, the status of the management plan was **not reported**.

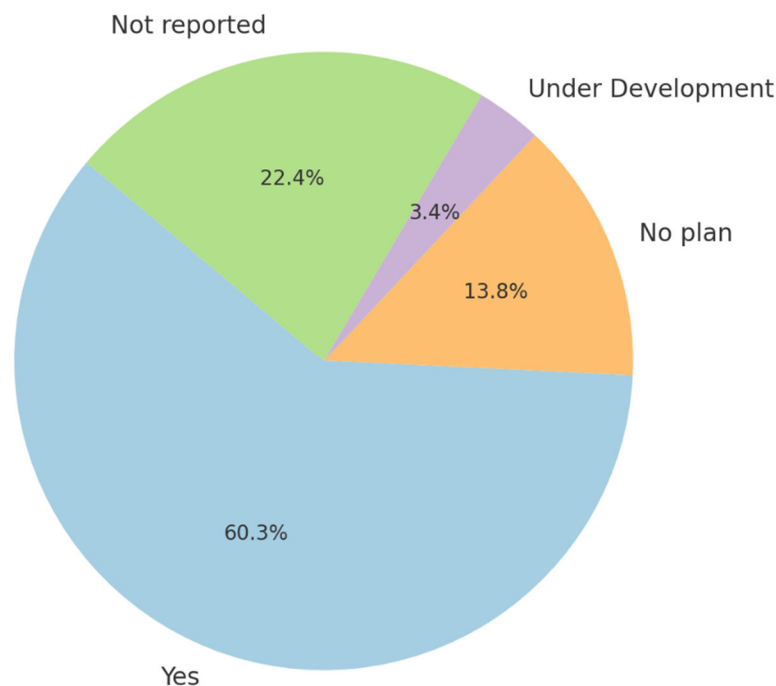


Figure 2. Breakdown of Management Plan Status in Reported SPAs

10. It is important to distinguish between **"No plan"**, which indicates that the reporting Party explicitly stated that no management plan exists for the site, and **"Not reported"**, which means that no information at all was provided on this field in the national submission. This distinction is relevant for assessing compliance with the SPA criteria, which require that each SPA have an adopted and implemented management plan (Figure 2 and figure 3).

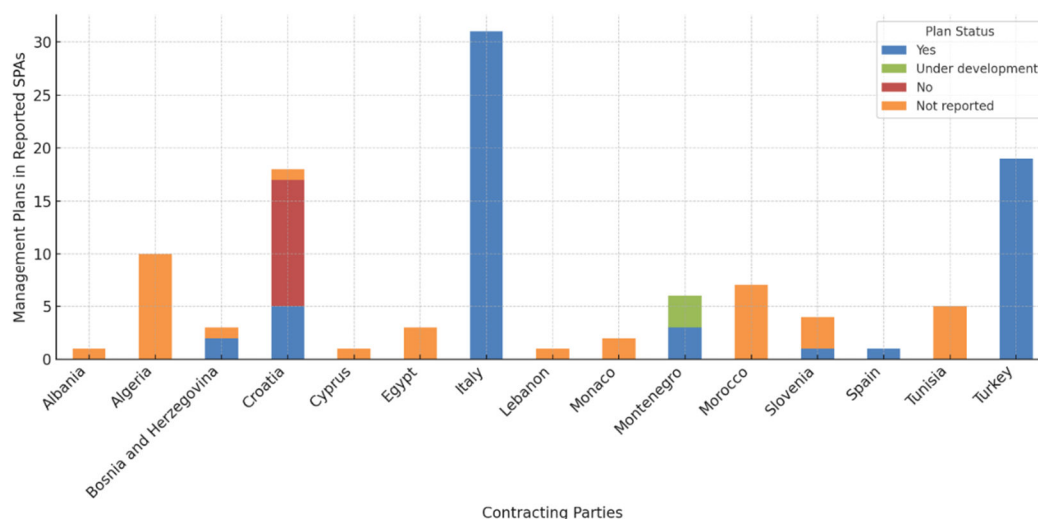


Figure 3. Status of SPA management plans as reported by countries

II.5. Main ecosystem and species and their habitats targeted

11. The 116 Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) reported by the fifteen Contracting Parties encompass a wide and diverse range of Mediterranean habitats. The emphasis remains clearly marine-oriented, with a notable predominance of benthic communities and priority species of Annex II and III of the SPA/BD Protocol.

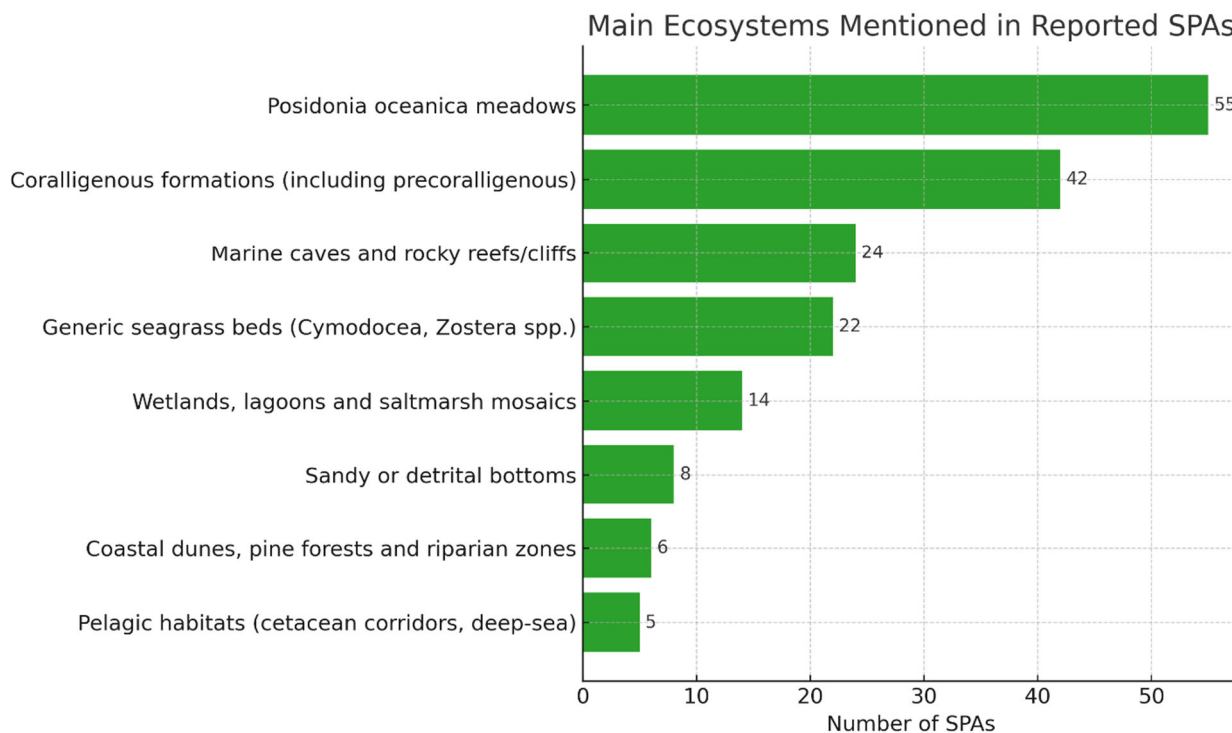


Figure 4: Main Ecosystems and Habitat Types Covered by the notified SPAs

Habitat / ecosystem (keywords extracted from national reports)	Share of SPAs (%)
<i>Posidonia oceanica</i> meadows	47.4 %
Coralligenous formations (including precoralligenous)	36.2 %
Marine caves and rocky reefs/cliffs	20.7 %
Generic seagrass beds (<i>Cymodocea nodosa</i> , <i>Zostera</i> spp.)	19.0 %
Wetlands, lagoons and saltmarsh mosaics	12.1 %
Sandy or detrital bottoms	6.9 %
Coastal dunes, pine forests and riparian zones	5.2 %
Pelagic habitats (cetacean feeding/migration corridors, deep-sea)	4.3 %

12. A total of **33 SPAs** explicitly mention species listed in **Annex II or III** to the SPA/BD Protocol. Among these, the **six most frequently cited species** are as follows:

Species (SPA/BD Protocol Annex)	No. of SPAs	Countries Reporting
Loggerhead turtle <i>Caretta caretta</i> (Annex II)	13	AL, DZ, HR, IT, SI, TN, TR, MA
Ribbed limpet <i>Patella ferruginea</i> (Annex II)	7	DZ, IT, MA, TN
Mediterranean monk seal <i>Monachus monachus</i> (II)	6	AL, HR, IT, MA, TR
Noble pen shell <i>Pinna nobilis</i> (Annex II)	5	DZ, IT, ME, SI
Orange coral <i>Astroides calycularis</i> (Annex III)	5	IT, MA, TN
Date mussel <i>Lithophaga lithophaga</i> (Annex II)	5	AL, IT, ME, SI
Bottlenose dolphin <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Annex II)	4	HR, IT, MA
Giant limpet <i>Patella rustica</i> (Annex II)	1	IT
Common dolphin <i>Delphinus delphis</i> (Annex II)	2	AL, MA
Coralligenous algae <i>Lithophyllum byssoides</i> (III)	4	AL, IT, MA, ME
Red coral <i>Corallium rubrum</i> (Annex III)	2	IT, ME

13. Annex II marine species, particularly *Caretta caretta*, *Monachus monachus*, *Patella ferruginea*, and *Tursiops truncatus*, feature prominently, with a notable increase in citations compared to the previous biennium. A diversity of sessile invertebrates and emblematic fish species were also reported in sites hosting coralligenous or Posidonia habitats. However, references to Annex III species remain limited and inconsistently detailed.

14. Large pelagic mammals such as the fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) and sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) were mentioned explicitly in one SPA only (the Pelagos Sanctuary, Italy), despite their known presence in offshore Mediterranean corridors.

II.6. No-take zones

Contracting Party	SPAs reported	SPAs with at least one NTZ	% of national total	Cumulative surface of declared NTZs (km ²) *
Croatia	18	7	38.9 %	28.4
Italy	31	13	41.9 %	46.1
Montenegro	6	2	33.3 %	2.3
Slovenia	1	1	100%	0.2
Spain	1	1	100%	0.5
Other 10 reporting Parties (AL, BA, CY, DZ, EG, LB, MA, MC, TN, TR)	59	ND	-	ND

* Values derive from national annexes and management plan tables. If an NTZ polygon was reported but no surface value specified, the cell is marked “no data »

15. Out of the 116 Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) reported by 15 Contracting Parties, only **24** included at least one officially designated **no-take zone (NTZ)**.

16. The cumulative surface of NTZs declared amounts to approximately **77.5 km²**, representing just **0.27%** of the total area covered by the 116 reported SPAs ($\approx 28,900$ km²).

III. Compliance with the adopted criteria

17. In this section of the report, SPAs that have a legal enactment, an adopted management plan, protection objectives and protection measures were considered, following the adopted criteria. SPAs are meant to be “officially established and fully managed”.

III.1. Management Plans

18. Among the **116 Specially Protected Areas (SPAs)** reported, **92 sites (78.6 %)** are already governed by a management plan, while **5 sites (4.3%)** report that a plan is **still under development**. In contrast, **20 SPAs (17.1 %)** explicitly state that **no plan is in place**.

Contracting Party	SPAs reported	SPAs with an adopted plan	Share of national total
Albania	1	1	100 %
Algeria	10	2	20 %
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3	3	100 %
Croatia	18	5	27.8 %
Cyprus	1	0	0 %
Egypt	5	5	100 %
Italy	32	32	100 %
Lebanon	1	1	100 %
Monaco	2	2	100 %
Montenegro	6	3	50 %
Morocco	7	7	100 %
Slovenia	6	6	100 %
Spain	1	1	100 %
Tunisia	5	4	80 %
Türkiye	19	19	100 %

19. Among the 92 SPAs with adopted plans, only **approximately 40 %** provided the year of adoption. The earliest plan recorded was for Isola di Bergeggi in Italy (1990). Most management plans were adopted after 2005, reflecting the post-amendment momentum in MPA governance across the region.

20. While the growing adoption of plans is encouraging, many earlier frameworks (dating from the early 2000s) are likely due for updates or reviews. Future reporting cycles would benefit from the inclusion of dates of adoption, to help monitor the lifecycle and effectiveness of these plans.

III.2. Reported protection measures

21. The protection measures recommended by the SPA/BD Protocol for SPAs are: (a) strengthening application of other Protocols, (b) prohibition of dumping, (c) regulation of shipping, (d) control of non-indigenous species, (e) prohibition of subsoil exploitation, (f) regulation of research, (g) regulation of hunting/fishing/harvesting, (h) prohibition of harmful activities, (i) safeguarding ecological processes.

22. The most commonly adopted protection measures among the 116 reported SPAs are (h) the regulation or prohibition of activities likely to harm species or ecosystems, and (i) other measures aimed at safeguarding ecological and biological processes. Each of these measures was reported in more than 70 SPAs. Regulation of (f) scientific research activities and (g) fishing, hunting, and harvesting were also widespread, applied respectively in 66 and 69 SPAs. Measures (b) prohibition of dumping and discharges, and (c) regulation of shipping activities were each reported in over 60 SPAs, while (a) strengthening the application of other Protocols and (e) prohibition of subsoil and seabed exploitation were cited in approximately half of the cases. Measure (d) on the control of non-indigenous or genetically modified species, although less prevalent, was still applied in around 40 SPAs.

III.3. Protection objectives

23. The objectives of SPAs as set in the SPA/BD protocol are:
- representative types of coastal and marine ecosystems of adequate size to ensure their long-term viability and to maintain their biological diversity;
 - habitats which are in danger of disappearing in their natural area of distribution in the Mediterranean or which have a reduced natural area of distribution as a consequence of their regression or on account of their intrinsically restricted area;
 - habitats critical to the survival, reproduction and recovery of endangered, threatened or endemic species of flora or fauna;
 - sites of particular importance because of their scientific, aesthetic, cultural or educational interest.

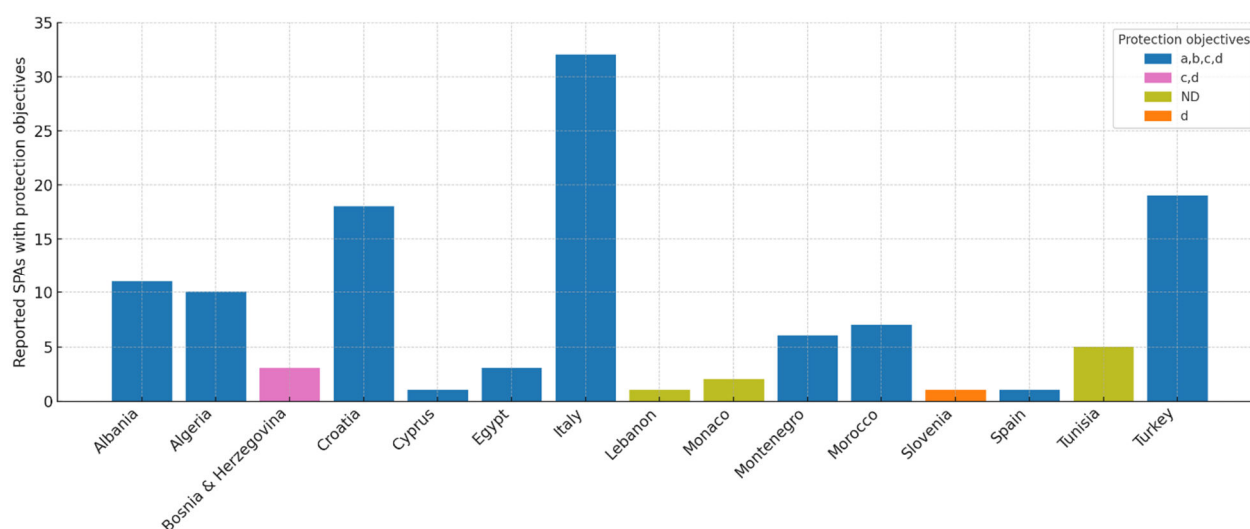


Figure 5. SPA objectives by Contracting Party (2022-2023).

IV. Recommendations

24. All 21 Contracting Parties are strongly encouraged to **submit complete and structured reports** on their SPAs through the BCRS, regardless of whether changes occurred during the biennium. The absence of reporting undermines regional analyses and weakens the collective credibility of Mediterranean conservation efforts.
25. Parties should **continue improving the accuracy and regularity** of their BCRS submissions, with a particular focus on:
- legal status and enforceability of protection measures,
 - surface area coverage (marine, coastal, and wetland components),
 - linkages between protection objectives and ecosystem features.
26. Where relevant, Parties are invited to **upload or update national annexes and supporting documents**, particularly for management plans and legal decrees, to ensure traceability and verification of key information.
27. Countries that did not submit SPA reports or submitted only partial information, whether due to technical constraints, data gaps or other reasons, are **urged to fully engage in the 2024-2025 reporting cycle** to ensure regional equity and shared responsibility in conservation progress tracking.
28. The BCRS platform should continue evolving to better **support implementation tracking**, including functionalities that help distinguish between planned, ongoing and completed management actions, and clarify protection levels and monitoring efforts.
29. The **Directory of Mediterranean SPAs** should be periodically updated based on **validated BCRS entries**, ensuring coherence between national reporting, regional knowledge products, and tools such as MAPAMED.

Appendix 1: Information on Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) included in the reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, for purposes of inclusion in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs

(The amendments to the SPA section of the BCRS as decided by the contracting (Decision IG.25/12) for purposes of inclusion in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs appear as follows: The information underlined and in bold are the required additional information, the stricken-through text refers to the information to be deleted from the format.)

No	Name of the SPA	Date of establishment	<u>Legal enactment (copy of the text should be attached)</u>	Category	Jurisdiction	Coordinates Polygons	Surface (marine, terrestrial, wetland) <u>(total and if it's the case distinguish into marine, coastal, wetland)</u>	Main ecosystems, species and their habitats <u>(incl. species listed under Annexes II and III)</u>	Management plan			<u>Protection objectives (drop down menu from objectives in Article 4)</u>	<u>Protection measures (drop down menu from list in Article 6)</u> <u>Other measures?</u>	<u>Are the measures legally binding (e.g. included in an applicable regulation)?</u> <u>If yes, provide reference to relevant regulation</u>	<u>Existence of No-Take Zone³⁷ (Yes/No)</u> <u>If yes, provide total extent of the No-Take Zone as officially declared (in km²)</u>
									Date of adoption <u>(link or attachment provided)</u>	NO	Under development				
N															
N+1															
...															

³⁷ No-Take Zones are geographically defined zones within marine protected areas that do not allow any fishing, mining, drilling, or other extractive activities.