

Conserving marine biodiversity



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The Mediterranean Sea is:

A global biodiversity hotspot

- Covers only 0.8% of the total surface of world oceans, but includes 7% of all known marine species;
- 20-30% of Mediterranean species are endemic and many of them are emblematic species of global conservation concern.

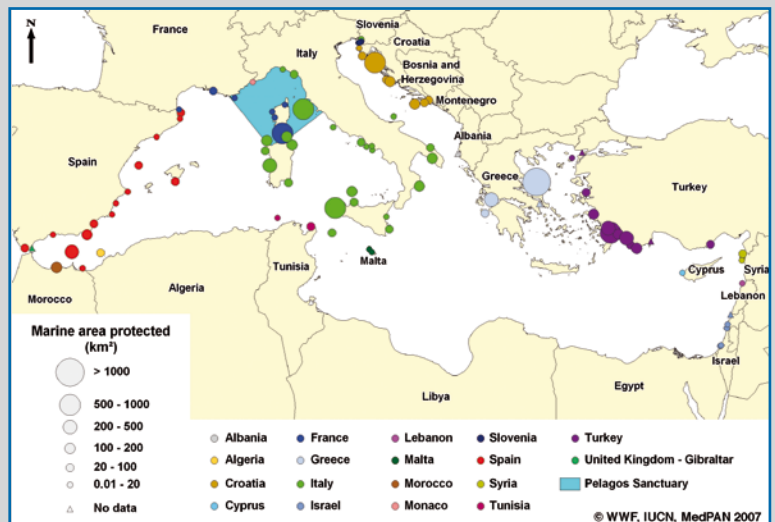
One of the most intensely and historically impacted regions on the planet

- 7% of the world's population lives along the coast of the Mediterranean that host 32% of international tourism;
- Overfishing, pollution and habitat destruction are the main drivers of Mediterranean biodiversity loss, with global climate change likely to exacerbate the impacts of these stressors.

Marine Protected Areas are an important tool to reduce biodiversity loss

In the Mediterranean, the area under protection or management is insufficient (only 3.8% of the Sea) and MPAs are not distributed in an ecologically coherent and representative network.

69 MPAs (73.4% of all Mediterranean MPAs) are located along the northern shore, highlighting a lack of MPAs in southern and eastern shores and in the high sea. Existing MPAs must also enhance their management to be more effective in conserving marine biodiversity.



Processes at different scales

The work of IUCN aims to support Mediterranean countries in achieving conservation targets set by the Convention of Biological Diversity. This work is undertaken on three scales:

Regional

- Establishing an ecological network of effective Marine Protected Areas;
- Improving the knowledge of under-studied and under-protected species, habitats and biomes;
- Supporting regional knowledge-exchange and networking.

National

- Developing national strategies for MPA networks;
- Building technical capacity for marine conservation;
- Improving institutional and legislative frameworks to establish and manage MPAs.

Site

- Assessing marine biodiversity and socio-economic conditions of potential MPA sites;
- Developing management plans based on these assessments;
- Raising awareness on marine conservation issues in relevant coastal communities.

IUCN focuses its activities in areas (e.g. southern and eastern Mediterranean) and biomes (e.g. the high seas and the deep sea) that are less represented in the current network of MPAs.

Expert networks

Multi-disciplinary expertise are utilised to address complex environmental and socioeconomic challenges facing MPAs. These networks include the:

- IUCN Global Marine Program;
- World Commission on Protected Areas-Marine and Mediterranean Groups;
- Species Survival Commission and the Mediterranean Species Program;
- Commission on Ecosystem Management;
- Business and Biodiversity Programme.

Critical partnerships

The activities are implemented through essential collaborations with IUCN members, national and local partners, and a number of regional organisations such as:

- UNEP Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)
- WWF
- The Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MedPAN)
- ACCOBAMS

Projects at a glance

- Strengthening institutional capacity of the *Egyptian* Ministry of Environment to establish and manage a national network of protected areas;
- Identifying priority areas for conservation in the *Mediterranean* using an ecoregional approach;
- Technically assisting in the development of a network of marine protected areas and an associated monitoring program in *Lebanon*;
- Utilising the IUCN categories for Protected Areas in the *Adriatic*;
- Supporting *Egypt* in designating its first MPA in the Mediterranean;
- Supporting growth and maintenance of the network of *Mediterranean* MPA managers;
- Enhancing the management of the only MPA in *Morocco*, the Al Hoceima National Park.



For More Information

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Relevant documents available at:

www.iucn.org/marine

www.iucn.org/mediterranean

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