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

MARINE AND COASTAL PROTECTED AREAS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SPA/BD PROTOCOL*

"Entered into force in 1999"

CONTEXT

A Protected Area is "An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means" (IUCN, 1994).

Conscious of the profound impact of human activities on the state of the marine environment and the littoral in the Mediterranean

Stressing the importance of protecting and, as appropriate, improving the state of the Mediterranean natural and cultural heritage, in particular through the establishment of specially protected areas and also by the protection and conservation of threatened species

* The Mediterranean countries, Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, adopted in 1995 the new Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD)

MEDITERRANEAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS: TO SAFEGUARD A COMMON HERITAGE

156 protected areas are currently declared in the Mediterranean coastal area by the riparian countries.

Most of Mediterranean countries have national legislations specifying the national categories of protected areas and the modalities of their establishment.

Among the 57 marine protected areas in the Mediterranean, 23 are exclusively marine, the others cover at the same time marine and terrestrial environments.

SPECIAL PROTECTED AREAS OF MEDITERRANEAN IMPORTANCE (SPAMIs): A REGIONAL NOVELTY

Criteria for the choice of SPAMIs:
To be included in the SPAMI list, sites should:
- be of importance for conserving the components of biological diversity in the Mediterranean;
- contain ecosystems specific to the Mediterranean area or the habitats of endangered species;
- be of special interest of the scientific, aesthetic cultural or educational levels.

SPAMI List (November 2005)

1. Banc des Kabyles Marine Reserve Algeria
2. Habibas Islands France
3. Port-Cros National Park France
4. Marine Protected Area of Portofino Italy
5. Alboran Island Spain
6. Natural Park of Cabo De Gata-Nijar Spain
7. Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria Spain
8. Maro-Cerro Gordo Cliffs Spain
9. Natural Park of Cap de Creus Spain
10. Medes Islands Spain
11. Mar Menor and Oriental Mediterranean zone of the Region of Murcia coast Spain
12. Columbretes Islands Spain
13. Archipelago of Cabrera National Park Spain
14. La Gaita Archipelago Spain
15. Knossis Islands Tunisia
16. Zembra and Zembretta National Park France, Italy and Monaco
17. Sanctuary for the Conservation of Marine Mammals

REFERENCES