

MedMPAnet newsLETTER

issue IV - March 2015

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1/ Project implementation progress by country

Since our last newsletter published in March 2014, many things came into the surface. Here is a summary of what has been done in the involved countries within the MedMPAnet project !



Algeria

>> In Algeria, the marine part of Réghaia Park has been selected and designated to become a future MPA.

A socio-economic study, including the identification of potential stakeholders and partnerships that could be involved in the marine protected area creation and management was carried out and its draft report elaborated in 2013.

>> In 2014, the socio-economic study has been reviewed and endorsed by the Algerian Ministry of Environment. On the other hand, an Algerian firm of consultants has been hired to carry out a complementary ecological survey in the Réghaia area, as well as to elaborate a management plan. Data collection and field work started since September 2014 and will be completed soon in order to serve for the management plan elaboration.



Albania

>> Porto Palermo Bay is situated in the southern part of Albania, a few kilometers from Himara town. The very limited access to the bay which has been a military area until 1991, contributed somehow to its protection. Therefore, following consultations with the Albanian environmental authorities, the site was selected to be a future MPA. The ecological studies conducted in 2013 and 2014, including mapping of most important marine habitats, species and associations, confirmed the presumed richness of the site. The ecological and Socio-economic study reports of the Porto Palermo Bay area were finalized (in English) and translated into Albanian.

>> The process of elaboration of a management plan, based on the ecological and socio-economic assessments and discussions with different stakeholders, started in June 2014. The first draft was ready in Albanian language by late

September 2014 and has been presented to local authorities during a workshop held on 12 November 2014.

The next activity in Albania within the MedMPAnet project, will consist on running demonstrating financial

sustainability mechanisms for the pilot MPA.

A training session on business plan for MPA managers and practitioners in Albania is also scheduled for the second quarter of 2015.



Croatia

- >> In Croatia, the project has been implemented along the coasts of the islands of Prvié, Sveti Grgur, Goli, Krk, Rab, Veliki and Mali Ćutin, Susak, Unije and Srakane, which belong to the County of Primorje & Gorski Kotar. An ecological study was conducted in these areas in order to map species and habitats and to assess their state. A socio-economic and fishery study was also elaborated with a view to developing sustainable fishing in the region. Finally, two national monitoring protocols for Posidonia and Coralligenous habitats were developed.
- >> Croatian environmental authorities have approved the two protocols. The final field survey reports on Posidonia, Coralligenous, and Fisheries, integrating the results of 2013 and 2014, have been finalized.



Lebanon

>> The activity implemented within MedMPAnet project in Lebanon focused on rapid natural habitat assessments along the coast.

Then, thorough studies were conducted during 2012 and 2013 in six sites, namely Enfeh Peninsula, Ras Chekaa cliffs, Raoucheh cliffs, Sidon, Tyre and Naqoura. Inventory of species, mainly of patrimonial and fishing interest, and mapping of benthic habitats were performed.

>> In 2014, the synthesis report of the ecological characterization of the six above-mentioned sites has been finalized, including outlines proposal on zoning and management. The final version of the synthesis report is under edition and will be presented during the consultation workshop to be held next April in Beirut



Libya

- >> In 2011, Libya declared the marine area of Ain El Ghazala and Elba Island as a new marine protected area. Yet, there are neither specific legislation for MPAs nor a national strategy to develop MPAs network and to reinforce stakeholders' participation.
- >> According to that and based on a close consultation and agreement with the Environmental General Authority (EGA) to overcome this legal and institutional gaps in Libya, several workshops were

conducted in order to elaborate a draft law on PAs. The last one was held in Tripoli, on 7th of May 2014. A draft law proposal is presently in the hands of the Libyan authorities who will undertake necessary procedure for its adoption. On the other hand, a draft national strategy for MPA establishment, developed between 2013 and 2014 in a participatory approach, has been submitted to the EGA to be shared with all relevant stakeholders in order to get their comments and recommendations in view to its endorsement.



Montenegro

>> In 2011 and 2012, rapid assessments were undertaken along the Montenegrin coast in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Montenegro. Further to this preliminary step, Boka Kotorska Bay was selected as a pilot site. A fishery study and an ecological survey were carried out in the area. The collected data contributed to the establishment of a GIS database that also served the purpose of CAMP Montenegro project.

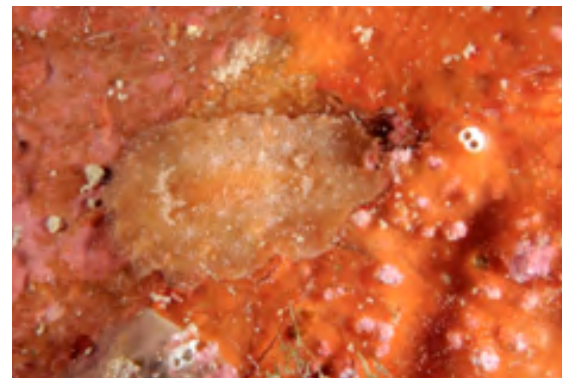
>> Furthermore, RAC/SPA has joined efforts to PAP/RAC and SCP/RAC in a pilot project on testing the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) in Boka Kotorska Bay. A feasibility study on ecotourism, aiming

at encouraging the development of green entrepreneurship, was elaborated and presented during a public consultation workshop held in February 2014.

The study was finalized and endorsed by Montenegrin environmental authorities in September 2014.



>> A legal and institutional framework assessment has been also developed and endorsed by the Montenegrin environmental authorities in November 2014.



Morocco

- >> The Cap des Trois Fourches future MPA is located on the eastern coasts of Morocco. The characterization of its habitats highlighted the existence of a healthy and well structured coralligenous assemblages, as well as the presence of 17 species of conservation interest
- >> Following the ecological and socio-economic characterization of the Cap des Trois Fourches area in 2012 and 2013, a management plan is being developed. This activity has been launched in June 2014. Two workshops were held in Nador. The *last one* that took place on 1st October served to present the diagnosis and assessment phase and to discuss the management vision and

strategic objectives with the various stakeholders. The next workshop in Morocco is scheduled for April and will aim at discussing the management plan draft and the proposed participation and involvement mechanism of local stakeholders in the process of creation and management of the future MPA.

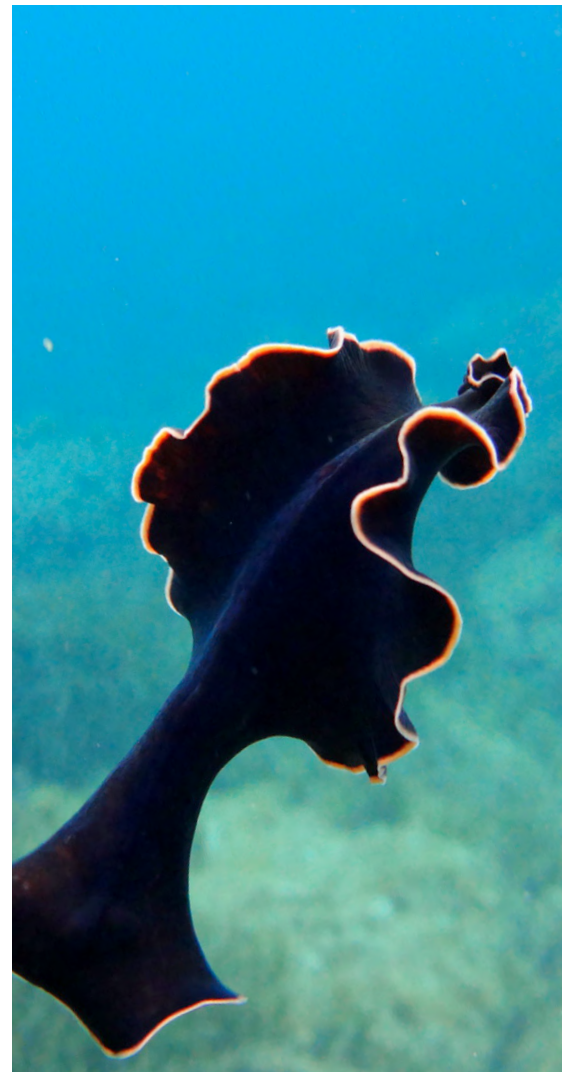


Tunisia

>> Two surveys to assess the marine biological features of the Kuriat Islands (north eastern Tunisia) have been undertaken respectively in 2010 and 2011. Barrier reefs of *Posidonia oceanica*, maerl banks and other marine biocenosis were characterized and mapped. This work served as a basis for the elaboration of a management plan.

>> A first workshop for consultation with local stakeholders was organized in Monastir, at early April 2014. A second workshop aiming to discuss the zoning and management programme proposal took place on 26 May 2014. Based on the results of these workshops, a management plan was drafted and presented during a stakeholders' public workshop, held on 26 March 2015 in Monastir. The management programme was thus endorsed by the stakeholders.

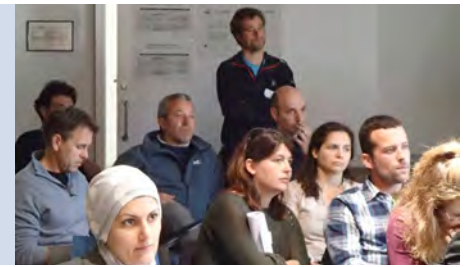
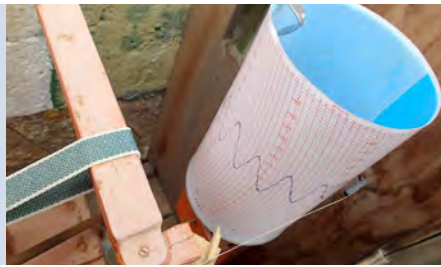
>> The MedMAPnet project has thus completed its activities in Tunisia. However, the Tunisian Coastal Protection and Planning Agency (APAL) took rapidly action and built on the project achievements. In this regard, a small meeting with key stakeholders took place in Monastir on 18 March 2015, in order to set up the future MAP steering committee.



2/ Exchange programmes and trainings

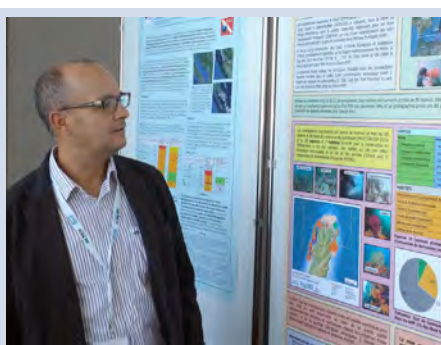
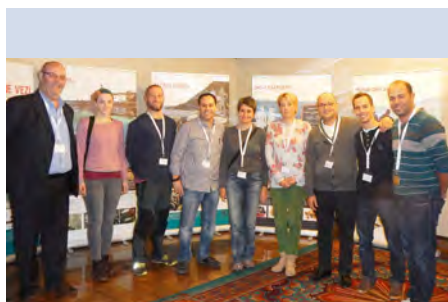
Well aware of the importance of experience-sharing and capacity building to enhance biodiversity conservation, [RAC/SPA](#)* developed the following activities within MedMPAnet project:

Co-organizing with [MedPAN](#)* a regional training workshop for Mediterranean MPA managers on “Climate change in Mediterranean marine protected areas”, held in Cadaqués (Spain). From the 1st to the 4th of April 2014.



Supporting [APAL](#)* and [INSTM](#)* in running the summer turtles monitoring campaign in Kuriat Islands and providing training to a number of Tunisian and non-Tunisian young scientists in turtle nesting sites monitoring techniques.

Organizing, from 22 to 27 September 2014 in Santa Pola and Nueva Tabarca Marine Reserve (Spain), the 4th [Regional training session on ecological monitoring in MPAs protected areas](#)*, in collaboration with CIMAR (University of Alicante).



Providing support to 9 marine scientists and MPA practitioners to attend the [RAC/SPA-convened symposia on the conservation of Mediterranean marine key habitats](#)* (Portorož, Slovenia), 27-31 October 2014) and to present the results of the MedMPAnet project habitat-related field assessments.

Co-organizing with MedPAN a regional experience-sharing workshop on “Monitoring for managing Mediterranean MPA”, held in Tirana (Albania), from 25th to 27th November 2014.



3/ Take action for a better conservation!

Removal campaign of the invasive plant *Carpobrotus* in Kuriat Islands

RAC/SPA is supporting civil society initiatives that contribute to the conservation of marine and coastal protected areas. In April 2014, the Centre collaborated with two Tunisian associations, namely «Notre Grand Bleu» and «Association des Fans de La Chebba», in the first removal campaign of an invasive plant in Kuriat Islands future MPA.

Marine experts, who participated to the campaign, gave a presentation on the sites importance for marine turtles nesting. They also explained to the volunteers (they were about 60) the need to establish networks of marine and coastal protected areas to ensure a greater conservation of the sea.

Ultimately, the invasive plant has been manually removed from a more than 200 m² wide area.



A new methodology to monitor fish assemblages in MPA

Involving young researchers in biodiversity protection projects and supporting them, is also the vocation of RAC/ SPA. Emna Ben Lamine, a 28 year-old PhD student, accomplished a study on fisheries monitoring in Kuriat Islands future MPA within the MedMPAnet project. More precisely, she designed a monitoring process for fish assemblages, based on two complementary approaches, applied for the first time in Tunisia.

The first method is the “Fish Assemblage Sampling Technique” (FAST). MPAs managers could apply this simple but pertinent and low cost technique. The second one is the “method of transect with variable width”, which requires an advanced scientific background.

Also as part of this study, a reference state for fish assemblages was defined and some volunteer divers were initiated to the FAST.

Moreover, the pressures resulting from frequentation and spearfishing were ascertained.

The proposed indicators quantifying fish assemblages and fishing pressure in the study led to an accurate description of the state of fish populations in Kuriat Islands. The application of the proposed monitoring methodology should continue to be implemented, either by scientists or MPA managers.



4/ Spreading inspiring resolutions and activities through international meetings



RAC/SPA has actively participated to the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress, a landmark global forum on protected areas, from 12th to 19th November 2014 in Sidney.

During this event, RAC/SPA presented the Roadmap to achieve the Aichi targets which crystallize the Mediterranean countries commitment to protect 10 % of their coastal and marine areas, by 2020.

As a reminder, the goal of this Roadmap is “to achieve by 2020 a connected, ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored network of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, which ensures the long term conservation of key elements of the marine biodiversity and gives significant support to the sustainable development of this region”.

RAC/SPA also presented its national experiences with MPA network development, through the MedMPAnet project. Indeed, this project is contributing to:

- (i) creating and planning for management of eight new MPAs: Porto Palermo Bay (Albania), Réghaïa (Algeria), Sallum (Egypt), El-Kouf National Park marine extension and Ain Al-Ghazala & Bomba Gulf (Libya), Kotor Bay (Montenegro), Cap des Trois Fourches (Morocco) and Kuriat Islands (Tunisia);
- (ii) evaluating other potential sites for MPA creation along the coasts of four Mediterranean countries (Croatia, Lebanon, Montenegro and Morocco).

Another interesting initiative was presented, dealing with the development of financing approaches for marine conservation. In fact, RAC/SPA and MedPAN have launched three studies in September 2014, in collaboration with WWF-MedPO, in order to evaluate financial needs of Mediterranean MPAs, to develop a guide for the financing of MPAs, and to prepare training on MPA financing. The overall objective is to promote the development of MPA sustainable financing mechanisms, on local and national scales, by providing the necessary tools, expertise and tailored case studies.



5/ New publications

“Mediterranean Lesser Crested Terns, *Thalasseus bengalensis emigratus*”: this technical tool provides directives to assess changes in the seabird population size, distribution and breeding success, in a coherent and safe approach. [The book](#) is available online in English.



“Guidelines for setting up and management of specially protected areas for marine turtles in the Mediterranean”: edited in English and French, [the manual](#) explains how to select nesting areas to protect and how to manage them.

NB: this manual is a new edition of the guidelines published in 2009.



6/ Communication and information

An article entitled ‘Guidelines to improve the implementation of the Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas network and connectivity between Specially Protected Areas’, submitted by RAC/SPA, was published in the [Watch](#)



7/ Upcoming events

Twelfth Meeting of Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas // Athens (Greece) // 26-30 May 2015



The 5th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles will be held with the 35th International Sea Turtle Symposium (ISTS) on 19-24 April 2015 at Hilton Hotel, Dalaman (Turkey)

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1/ Project implementation progress by country

Algeria - p2

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Albania - p3

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Inlet of Panorma, Porto Palermo Bay © Alket ISLAMI

Croatia - p4

Unije Island (top) © RAC/SPA
Goli Island (left) © RAC/SPA
Prvić Island (right) © RAC/SPA
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Lebanon - p5

El Jamal area (Tyre) © Alfonso A. RAMOS-ESPLÁ (top)
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Tunisia

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2/Exchange programmes and trainings

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Training session in Kuriat Island © RAC/SPA
Regional training session in Santa Pola, © Dorra MAAOUI (left) - Ahmed BEN HMIDA (right)
Symposiums in Slovenia © Atef LIMAM
Experience-sharing workshop in Albania © MedPAN (facebook)

3/ Take action for a better conservation !

Removal campaign of *Carpobrotus* in Kuriat Islands © Yassine Ramzi SGHAIER

A new methodology to monitor fish assemblages © Emna BEN LAMINE

4/ Spreading inspiring resolutions and activities through international meetings

Participation to the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress
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7/ Upcomming events

Bird's nest in Kuriat Islands © Sami BEN HAJ
Turtle in Lebanon © Yassine Ramzi SGHAIER

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