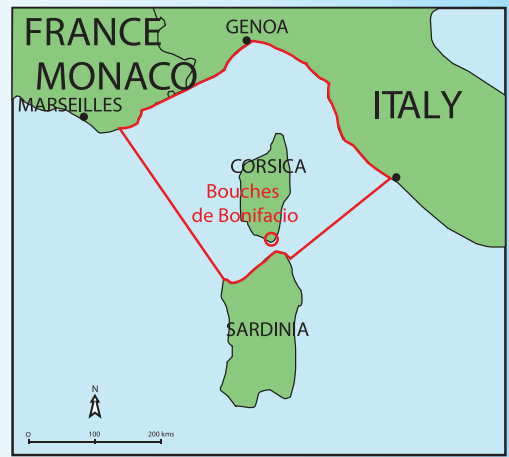


Bouches de Bonifacio

National status :	Nature reserve
Year of creation :	1999
Founding text:	Ministerial decree (legal status)
Management organization:	Corsican Environment Office
Surface area:	79 460 ha
Management category:	Ia (IUCN 1994)



the bouches de Bonifacio has been a SPAMIs since 2009 thanks to the presence of huge posidonia meadows, lagoons, clumps of coastal vegetation and reefs.

Territory

The Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve, the French part of the Bouches de Bonifacio International Marine Park stretches from the southern tip of Corsica over the whole French territorial waters between the Roccapina cove to the west and the "Punta a Chiapa" cape, the end part of the Porto Vecchio gulf to the east.



Physical characteristics

The territory has two main geological formations, a granitic base formed before the separation of the Corso-Sardinian micro-continent, forming massifs and blocks of land which gave rise to most of the isles and archipelagos and tabular calcareous deposits of marine origin intersected by valleys and rias forming the cliffs of Bonifacio.

Specificity and Importance

The main habitats characteristic of the Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve are the huge posidonia meadows, lagoons, clumps of coastal vegetation and reefs.

In the Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve there are 973 animal species (18 mammals, 163 birds, 7 reptiles, 2 amphibians, 187 fishes, 11 protochordata, 13 echinodermata, 261 insects, 11 arachnids, 6 bryozoa, 103 crustaceans, 143 molluscs, 7 annelids, 23 cnidarians and 19 porifera). 22 of these are of community interest necessitating strict protection measures and 11 of community interest necessitating the designation of Special Conservation Areas. Amongst these species are the bottlenose dolphin (*tursiops truncatus*), marine molluscs, brackish water fish, the Aphanius of Corsica (*Aphanius fasciatus*) and the loggerhead marine turtle *caretta caretta*.

The huge posidonia meadows constitute the sole habitat of the pen shell (*pinna nobilis*) and the hippocampus (*hippocampus ramulosus*). The rocky coastline of the nature reserve is one of the last refuges of the giant limpet (*patella ferruginea*). In the rocky depths are forests of *cystoseira* and corraligenous biocenoses rich in sponges, corals and echinoderms.

The reefs shelter a large number of species of interest for reasons of heritage and sea value such as the common spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*), spider crab (*Maja squinado*), yellowbelly rockcod (*Epinephelus marginatus*), brown meagre (*sciaena umbra*), gorgonian *Paramuricea clavata* and *Eunicella* sp..

Amongst the birds, the European shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*) and Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*) are considered as priority species and there is an international action plan for them. The nesting population of Cory's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) of the nature reserve represents half of the French population of this species.



Threats and Pressure

Apart from the pollution risk due to maritime traffic and the dangerous nature of the detroit, the main threats to the habitats and the species stem from frequent touristic trips to this area as well as the anchors of the pleasure boats, trampling on the grasslands and dunes, pleasure fishing, submarine fishing, some diving spots being used very often etc.



Management

A management plan was set up for the 2007 – 2011 period and it was validated by numerous bodies (the Advisory committee of the Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve, Prefect of Corsica, Executive Council of the Territorial Authority of Corsica (Conseil Executif de la Collectivité Territoriale de Corse) and the Corsican Assembly) and the activities already underway will be continued and reinforced.

The Corsican Environment Office has a staff of 31 who are permanently managing the protected area, 5 are responsible for scientific follow-up, 2 for operations in a hyperbaric environment, 2 for awareness-creation and information actions and 15 are engaged and sworn-in as “nature police”.

The nature reserve team has a continuous monitoring programme and is responsible for the scientific follow-up. In addition to this programme some of the actions can be entrusted to external service providers such as consultancies and research laboratories.

The results of the scientific monitoring programme are analyzed as they go along by the manager and reviewed at the meetings of the Scientific Council (one meeting per annum). This makes it possible to eventually re-orientate any actions undertaken in terms of monitoring human activities, looking after the environment, catering for the populations and providing information for the public.

