

**How Many Marine Protected Areas Exist In The  
West Mediterranean?**

*DRAFT*

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## **Background**

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, Johannesburg 2002) saw countries commit to the development of a representative marine and coastal protected areas network by 2012. This commitment will be implemented in the Mediterranean region through the political and legal framework of the Barcelona Convention of 1976. To help achieve Johannesburg's objectives, IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) will support local, regional and national initiatives aimed at application of the Barcelona Convention.

The development of a database of Mediterranean MPAs serves as a starting point, at the same time providing a practical tool subscribing fully to the above initiative. A web-based database on Mediterranean MPAs could be used to promote progress of the MPA effort in the Mediterranean and help reach the Johannesburg targets.

## **1) Current Network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the West Mediterranean**

### **a. Summary of Results for the West Basin**

	Protected by Environmental Authorities	Protected by the Fishery authorities	Protected by Cultural authorities	Protected by: Public Maritime Domain granted in concession	SPAMI (Specially Protected Area with Interest for the Mediterranean)
Spain	19	11			9
United Kingdom (Gibraltar)	1				
France	10	7		4	1
Monaco	2				
Italy	26	16	2	4	
Malta					
Tunisia	3				3
Algeria	3				
Morocco	2				
International	1	1			1

### **b. Database of Marine Protected Areas in the West Mediterranean**

This paper has been put together within the framework of a study conducted at the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation. It currently only refers to the West basin of the Mediterranean, though should it prove valuable, the aim would be to expand the MPA inventory to the East Mediterranean.

This study should include ongoing consultation and verification with experts and governments, in order to ensure that the information it contains is both current and correct.

## **2) Tackling Marine Protected Areas' Management: The Evolution of the Concept**

Beyond the initial information contained in the database, the main interest of this work is that it is at the same time appealing and contentious to consider integrating

into MPAs, which are generally accepted as being created by Environmental authorities and dedicated to the conservation of biodiversity, protected areas created by other bodies and with differing goals, for example:

- Fishery reserves, which are traditionally designated by Fishery authorities to enhance the stock of commercial fishes; and
- Protected areas aiming at the conservation of submarine cultural heritage, usually designated by both Cultural and Maritime authorities.

**a. An Extensive Definition of a Marine Protected Area**

The textual element which permits consideration of extending the concept of the MPA is the MPA definition as proposed by IUCN, as well as that of the Protected Areas to which it corresponds. The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) describes a protected area as:

*“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”.*

A Marine Protected Area is defined as:

*“Any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora and fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment”*

No authority has been designated for the creation of marine protected areas; the only requirement being an effective protection, whatever the means. The generic nature of these wide definitions allows consideration of the diversity of goals and sources of MPAs according to a multifunctional approach.

**b. The Aim of Marine Protected Areas: A Question of Terminology**

Conservation is usually considered to be the only goal of an MPA, which is logical as Environmental authorities themselves have similar remits. This goal appears clearly in IUCN’s definition but it is neither exclusive nor imperative.

It is finally in the light of a more pragmatic study that it is possible to assert that the attribution of a goal to an MPA is a purely terminological issue. As a matter of fact, the object of a protected area is not a very convincing criterion, insofar as a discrepancy can often be noted between the initial official aim and the practical application. In practice, the objective is rarely unique and difficult to distinguish from the consequences of protection. For example, the Portofino MPA is in its legal statute a “Natural Marine Protected Area”, designated with an aim of conservation of biodiversity. However, this MPA contributes widely to the development of tourism and to local economical development, through management and regulation of activities such as fishing and tourism, sport fishing and diving.

It seems evident that the different aims of MPAs, as defined by IUCN, have to conform to, or at least be compatible with, the conservation of biodiversity, but that they cannot be reduced to the latter nor listed exhaustively. Some French examples even show that the aim declared by the legal statute of a protected area sometimes does not even feature protection as an objective: the Protected Marine Zones (Zones Marines Protégées) of the Maritimes Alps and the Marine Park (Parc Marin) of the Cote Bleu, which are situated on the Public Maritime Domain, were born in the 1980's with a legal statute of "marine cultures granted in concession" (concessions de cultures marines), which evolved in 2000 to: "concession d'endiguage et d'utilisation des dépendances du domaine public maritime maintenues dans ce domaine en dehors des ports" (public maritime domain granted in concession). In 2004 a modification gave to the Marine Park of the Cote Bleu the new statute of "protected marine zone with artificial reefs".

Whilst the creation of these protected areas mainly aims to rehabilitate a biodiversity already damaged by a strong entropic pressure, this objective does not appear in the legal statute. The Public Maritime Domain Granted in Concession is actually a fast and efficient way of implementing protection at the local level.

**c. Extending the Concept of MPAs to Fishery Reserves: A Debatable Proposition**

Whereas neither the definition of MPAs, nor the question of the aim of protection, seem opposed to the assimilation of the concept of fishery reserves to that of MPAs, one can however admit that they diverge on several fundamental aspects inherent to what is generally recognized as an MPA. Fishery reserves are characterized by two aspects: they are meant to be neither managed nor permanent. Contrary to MPAs, they are merely practical and do not guarantee durability.

A fishery reserve is indeed effective when the regulation banning fishing in a determined area is implemented, and when surveillance of the site takes place. Nevertheless, can we stop here without asking whether MPAs are actually supposed to be permanent? And whether fishery reserves are always lacking a management body?

In the Mediterranean basin, 22 States have a marine presence, each one with its unique culture as well as political and legal system. In consequence, it seems essential, when relating to "MPAs in the Mediterranean", to maintain a certain level of flexibility in the concept, permitting the expression of Mediterranean diversity. Several sites in the west basin are perfect instances of the ambiguous distinction among MPAs, fishery reserves and even protected areas designed for the conservation of cultural heritage.

**1) MPA Durability**

Law is the best guarantee for durability and also the only instrument explicitly foreseen by the IUCN definition. However, it is only one of the effective ways of creating MPAs. One can highlight the public maritime domains granted in concession ("Marine Protected Zones")

of the Maritime Alps and “Oasi Blu”, managed by WWF/Italy), which are renewable but temporary. In France, for instance, the public maritime domains granted in concession are limited to 10 years.

These examples show that areas exclusively dedicated to conservation can be protected by tools such as public maritime domains granted in concession, which are characterized (due to the nature of Public Domains) by their temporary nature.

## **2) MPA Management**

Whilst fishery reserves are in principle not managed, the effectiveness of an MPA is intimately related to its management. However, an empiric study of MPAs could be the only way of demonstrating their management, and particularly their effectiveness. I will only mention the problem of MPA management, although it deserves to be developed further. I will, however, elaborate upon the theme of management with regard to fishery reserves. In the Balearic Islands (Spain), three fishery reserves (Isla del Toro, Isla Malgrats and Migjorn de Mallorca) were created at the regional level by the Fishery authorities. They have a management structure, which includes a fishery conciliation board, conservation and sport fishing associations along with nautical clubs. In addition, regulation refers not only to fishing, but also to diving and scientific research.

These examples are, perhaps, exceptions to the rule, but it is also possible to consider that the notion of fishery reserves is evolving, and can in certain cases be extremely hard to distinguish from that of an MPA.

## **3) Protected Areas Designed to Conserve Submerged Cultural Heritage**

This issue will be mentioned only briefly, as there are few cases (only 2 in the west basin), and particularly as the form of protection only differs in its source and aim. In addition, Baia and Gaiola (Italy) have been created with the participation of Environmental authorities, specifically by means of inter-ministerial decrees among the Culture, Environment, Transport and Sea, Agricultural and Fishing Ministries. These protected areas feature highly restrictive regulation in terms of human activities, which is particularly effective in relation to conservation of the natural environment.

The issue of their inclusion in the MPA concept only poses the previously mentioned “terminological” questions.

### **d. Fishery Reserves: A Practical and Evolving Means of Protection**

It is easier to understand the interest in integrating fishery reserves to MPAs if we consider it as a tool permitting the application of a number of restrictions to human activity in a determined marine area. Indeed, for most Mediterranean countries, the implementation of a fishery reserve is often easier and therefore

faster than exploring the available environmental legal avenues. The latter are often too centralized and may be too recent to have acquired sufficient legitimacy in the complex distribution of jurisdictions in relation to the sea. On the contrary, zones closed to fishery can be established at the local, regional and national level.

From the conservation point of view, it would be regrettable not to profit from the knowledge and “tradition of the sea” represented by fishery as a traditional and organized profession, when it is increasingly apparent that collaboration between both Fishery and Environmental authorities is necessary. In this sense, the integration of fishery reserves into MPAs illustrates perfectly the idea of a community of common interests.

## Annexes

### **1) Method for Creating a Database of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the West Mediterranean**

The main result of the work is a database of Marine Protected Areas, the latter defined by IUCN as:

*“Any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora and fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment.”*

This work is distinctive in that it contains different categories of marine protected zones. On the one hand are those traditionally designated as MPAs, mainly characterized as being created for conservation by environmental authorities; on the other hand are different protected areas selected according to two cumulative criteria:

- The existence of a marine area (not just the shoreline)
- Indifference to the nature of the authority that created the MPA, in accordance to a multifunctional approach, which implies the inclusion of protected areas aimed at managing fisheries or conserving submerged cultural heritage.

The database holds the following information:

- Country
- MPA name
- Legal statute
- Creation act
- Supervision structure
- Management structure
- Regulation
- Other measures of management
- Area
- Protection goals
- Geographic situation
- Site ecology
- Information sources

## 2) Case Study: Las Islas Chafarina

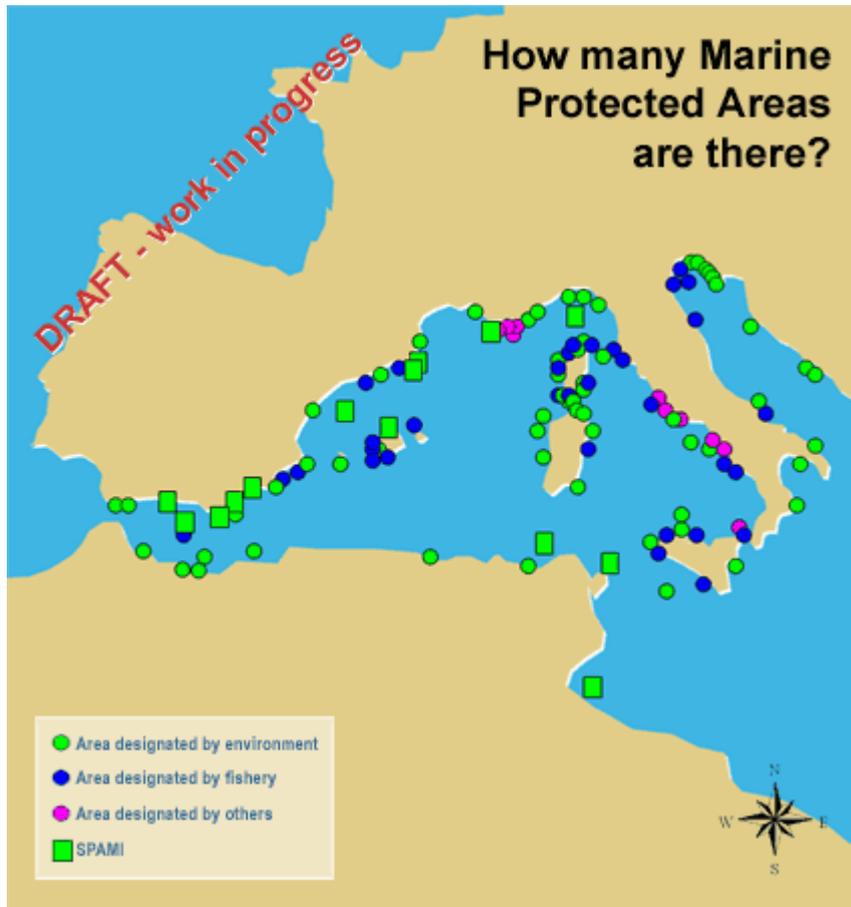
MARINE PROTECTED AREA	COUNTRY	LEGAL STATUTE	CREATION ACT	SUPERVISION STRUCTURE
Islas Chafarinas	SPAIN	National Hunting Reserve / Natura 2000 site / refused SPAMI statute in 2003 because of political problems with Morocco	Royal Decree num.1.115/82 of June 1, 1982, BOE num.130	Ministry of the Environment

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	REGULATION	OTHER MEASURES OF MANAGEMENT
Organismo Autonomo de Parques Nacionales (OAPN) : Autonomous Structure for National Parks, delegates management to the company : Management and Studies of the Natural Environments (GENA)	UNAUTHORIZED: submarine fishing in Spanish territorial waters around the islands	Plan to improve sustainable development of human activity on the islands and conserve marine and terrestrial resources.

PROTECTION GOALS	MARINE SURFACE	GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	ECOLOGY
Wilderness protection		Situated in Moroccan territorial waters in front of the Algerian border. (important base of the Spanish army in the territorial waters of Morocco)	Because of the isolation and the morphology of these islands, they are one of the last places for wilderness on land and under water. Fauna and flora are endangered by fishing

SOURCES
<a href="http://www.revistaiberica.com/iberica_natural/islas_chafarinas.htm">http://www.revistaiberica.com/iberica_natural/islas_chafarinas.htm</a> <a href="http://www.mma.es/parques/centasoc/Chaf_Plan_actividades_2004.pdf">http://www.mma.es/parques/centasoc/Chaf_Plan_actividades_2004.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.revistaiberica.com/iberica_natural/islas_chafarinas.htm">http://www.revistaiberica.com/iberica_natural/islas_chafarinas.htm</a> <a href="http://www.mma.es/parques/centas">http://www.mma.es/parques/centas</a>

### 3)How Many MPAs Exist in the West Mediterranean?



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