

# PUNTA CAMPANELLA

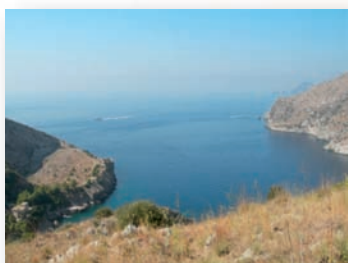
National status: Marine Protected Area  
Year of creation: 12 December 1997  
Founding text: Ministerial decree  
Management body: Italian Ministry of the Environment,  
Protection of the Territory and the Sea

Surface area: 1 549 ha  
Management category: IV  
(IUCN 1994)



## Territory

Extreme point of the Sorrento peninsula with its high coast, meets the sea between the Gulf of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno. A splendid view over Capri with its Faraglioni and the Bay of Leranto.



## Specificity and Importance

In the Punta Campanella MPA the typologies of the most curious marine biological communities can be summarized as follows:

- Biocenoses of hard sea beds, calcareous cliffs and caves
- Biocenoses of loose sea beds, coarse sand and organogenic gravel
- *Posidonia oceanica* meadows

Most common are the biocenoses of the calcareous cliffs. They are characterized, but only in the first few meters under the sea (within 5 to 10 m), by photophilic communities, mainly algae which are well adapted to an exposed environment which is strongly sunlit and washed by the sea waves. The dominant plant is mainly the brown algae such as *Cystoseira spp.*

The most characteristic phenomenon is the presence, at a few meters deep, of sciaphile communities (biocenoses of Coralligenous) which are usually present at greater depths, on rocky beds at a depth of over 30 to 40 m. The main reason is the steep slope of the substrate which promotes the formation of semi-dark habitats.

The sciaphile assemblages (puzzle of communities) enrich the underwater scene. The plant organisms, still mostly red algae such as *Peyssonnelia spp.*, *Mesophyllum spp.* and *Jania rubens*, do not constitute the main element of the community. The dominant element is now represented by sessile animals such as the upright and encrusted sponges, Hydrozoa, Bryozoa, Anthozoa (*actinia*, sea anemones, madrepores, gorgonians) and *Annelida Serpulida*. Amongst the other surprising and important species from the biological viewpoint are *Astroides calycularis*, *Cladocora caespitosa* and more rarely *Leptosammia pruvoti* and *Parazoanthus axinellae*. In some areas it is possible to find spectacular walls covered with white gorgonians (*Eunicella singularis*), yellow gorgonians (*Eunicella cavallinii*) and red gorgonians (*Paramuricea clavata*).

The Punta Campanella MPA is one of the richest areas of the Mediterranean in terms of submarine caves. The submarine caves may harbor a great, interesting and rare range of very strange animals (such as *Halcampoides purpurea*, *Telmatactis forskali*, *Maasella edwardsi*, *Lysmata seticaudata*, *Plesionika narval*, *Oligopus ater*). The species are well adapted to the semi-darkness or total darkness such as the shrimps *Stenopus spinosus* and *Plesionika narval*.

The coarse organogenic sands and gravel are mainly at the bottom of the cliffs and in the strait of Bocca Piccola separating Punta Campanella from the island of Capri. These sands are inhabited by highly specific animal communities such as the community of Amphioxus (*Branchiostoma lanceolatum*) or, more rarely, calcareous red algae at a greater depth (*Melobesioideae*).

*Posidonia oceanica* does not form great meadows in the MPA because of the few loose and crumbly sea beds in the bathymetric zone between the surface and -30 m.

The Punta Campanella MPA has several species of fish and the most abundant are *anthias Anthias*, *chromis Chromis*, *julis Coris*, *Thalassosoma pavo*. Many rocky bottom fish are present such as the yellowbelly rockcod (*Epinephelus marginatus*), brown meagre (*Sciaena Umbra*), sea bream (*Diplodus spp.*), moray eel (*Muraena Hélène*) and the conger (*Conger conger*).

The Punta Campanella MPA has been a SPAMIs since 2009. It is one of the richest areas of the Mediterranean in terms of submarine caves which may harbor a great, interesting and rare range of very strange animals

## Physical characteristics

The coastal geomorphology of the Sorrento-Amalfi peninsula is very different from the contiguous volcanic and alluvial parts of the Gulfs of Naples and Salerno. It is characterized by steep calcareous cliffs plunging into the sea at a depth of over 30 – 40 m where the organogenic detrital sea beds extend up to a large muddy plain.

There are also differences between the coast of Sorrento overhanging the Gulf of Naples and the Amalfi coast overhanging the Gulf of Salerno. The cliffs of the former are not so high (approx. ten meters) with a relatively regular landscape due to phenomena of erosion whereas the latter has very high and steep cliffs (hundreds of meters) increasing progressively from the distal part to the proximal part of the peninsula. There are some exceptions to the general appearance of these cliffs mainly near the mouths of the streams. These areas are usually to be found in sheltered shallow small coastal creeks whose slopes are not so steep and the littoral is made up of small rocky or pebbly beaches with marine beds composed of accumulated sediments. The very high coastal slope has a tremendous influence on the organization of the benthic communities.



## Threats and Pressure

Despite the anthropogenic pressure on the MPA mainly due to nautical tourism, the benthic habitats, because of the geomorphological and hydrological particularities of the whole area, are in general well conserved. Habitats of great interest such as the submarine caves, coralligenous and rhodolites are in an optimal state of preservation.

The greatest threat for the marine environment is the great number of boats in the marine protected area or areas in the vicinity.



## Management

The Italian Ministry of the Environment, Protection of the Territory and the Sea is involved in the management of the MPA through a consortium of 6 municipal districts (Massa Lubrense, Sorrento, Piano di Sorrento, Sant'Agnello, Positano and Vico Equense ).

The mayors of the municipalities designate their representative to the Bureau of the Consortium Directors. The members of the Bureau of Directors designate, amongst themselves, the president of the MPA who then presides over the Bureau.

Each year the MPA president submits a management plan to the Ministry of the Environment for approval. The MPA is divided into 3 distinct areas with different levels of protection:

- A: Whole reserve
- B: General reserve
- C: Partial reserve
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The scientific commission represents an informal advisory body composed of scientists who submit proposals about the scientific programme and environmental follow-up.

An appropriate system of buoys demarcate the limits of the Reserve at sea and the different areas of the MPA. On land the limits of the MPA are demarcated as well. The Coast Guard watches over the MPA.

The Management Plan is prepared on the basis of financial estimations and previsions, taking into account the results of the follow-up activities and meetings with the decision-makers, the environmentalists and the police force ("Observatory on the Environment and Legality").

Each year the Ministry of the Environment and Management of the Territory contributes to the financing of the basic team, protection measures and information purposes.

