

Annex 2
Comments, Conclusions and Recommendations
by the Technical Advisory Commissions entrusted with
the Ordinary Periodic Review of the 22 SPAMIs

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1. BOUCHES DE BONIFACIO NATURAL RESERVE (FRANCE)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

A full provisional version of the form was sent back to the consultants by RAC/SPA on 9 February 2015 so that they would be able to study the document with sufficient time in hand. A set of documents presented in the Annex mostly bear out the contents of this form. The meeting held in Bonifacio on 31 March 2015 brought together along with the two consultants, Ms. Madeleine Cancemi, the director of BBNR, and Mr. Jean Michel Culioli, in charge of scientific monitoring, Ms. Marianne Laudato, in charge of regulations, with the active participation of Mr. Gerard Pergent, President of the BBNR Scientific Council and National Expert for this ordinary revision. Prior commitments prevented Ms. Maud Casier, the RAC/SPA Focal Point, from attending. The meeting allowed a review and a point-by-point discussion of the whole form. The appraisal had as reference the tests of the SPA/BD Protocol devoted to SPAMIs, the form and the reference documents bearing out the data set out in the form.

Conclusion

The SPAMI is being managed in a remarkable way thanks to the staff's technical and scientific capacities, and to regularly developing participatory governance. Regionalization of the governance, with at its centre the Corsican Environmental Agency falling under the island's territorial authorities, constitutes a positive point (appropriation of stakes by decision-makers and management operators). The SPAMI staff makes a regular contribution to discussions on the stakes of heritage management of neighbouring land, and more generally the entire Corsican shoreline.

The management and regulating of the SPAMI is based on legislative and regulatory texts that are clearly defined and regularly updated, being adapted to constantly-changing management requirements.

The old management plan is being assessed prior to being updated.

Scientific monitoring of the SPAMI suits the management requirements. These now integrate certain users as contributors to these monitoring programmes. Involvement of the Scientific Council is proven.

The new ambition to set up a cross-boundary Franco-Italian Protected Area officially saw the light of day on 7 December 2012 in Bonifacio: the creation of a GECT-PMIBB linking the Corsican Environment Agency (as manager of the Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve, the Suartone Tre Padule Nature Reserve and the land belonging to the Conservatory of the Littoral) and the La Maddalena Archipelago National Park, in a single area of cooperation and governance in order to meet the environmental stakes of the Bonifacio international strait; the challenge in the coming years will be making this large Protected Area functional. Guidelines for this cooperation have already been drawn up.

Appraisal of this SPAMI as discussed at the GTC meeting is shown to be positive at every level. The progress margins mainly apply to adaptation to new contexts, and thus to the establishing, and making operational, of the GECT-PMIBB.

However, some improvements and developments could be aimed at, mainly:

- greater consideration of the conservation stakes and upgrading of the material and virtual cultural heritage
- shared management of natural resources

- developing and enhancing exchanges with other Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, especially SPAMIs, with a view to spreading and greater diffusion of the BBNR's know-how as regards management
- successful cross-boundary partnership and making this operational as part of the setting up of the GECT-PMIBB
- and, in the medium term, requesting and listing the GECT-PMIBB as a cross-boundary SPAMI.

Recommendations

The evaluation team's recommendations are as follows:

- When crafting the BBNR's management plan, take into consideration the programmes appearing in the GECT-PMIBB's Action Plan drawn up by the OEC and PNALM, in order to implement them
- Implement integral management of the GECT-PMIBB
- Extend the SPAMI to cover the entire territory of the GECT-PMIBB
- Implement the management plan according to the same participatory approach that has so far been adopted, and manage the Protected Area giving equal importance to the conservation stakes and the socio-economic requirements and cultural stakes
- Continue the partnership policy with key actors and users groups; integrating the social value of conservation; promoting collaborative management and persevering in the animating and coordinating of this land project over the BBNR and more generally the GECT-PMIBB perimeter
- Enhance the approach by which management of natural resources is shared, thus helping towards social peace
- Enhance exchange and involving users in the active management of the territories administered and managed by BBNR
- Enhance involvement in the Mediterranean regional nature conservation networks, of Protected Areas through making best use of the BBNR's exemplary management at regional, national and international level (involvement in setting up new Protected Areas, spreading of best practice – twinnings and technical cooperation, accompaniment) with other SPAMIs and more generally other MPAs.

2. PORT-CROS NATIONAL PARK (FRANCE)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

A first, very elementary, provisional, version of the form was sent back to the consultants by RAC/SPA on 9 February 2015 so that they would be able to make a general study of the document before the assignment and ask the PCNP to prepare and provide more details to the answers in the form for the revising meeting. A second version of the form (the present version) was sent to the consultants on 13 April by the Board of the PCNP, plus the information that had been added at the revising meeting. It should be noted that this constraint was the result of a computer pdf format problem in the first document, which did not allow the text to be included. A set of documents appearing in the Annex mostly bears out the contents of this form. The meeting, held on 2 April 2015 in the offices of the Port-Cros National Park at Hyères, brought together along with the two consultants, Mr. Guillaume Sellier, the director of PCNP, and Mr. Charles-François Boudouresque, President of the PCNPs Scientific Council and National Expert for this ordinary revision. Prior commitments prevented Mr. Maud Casier, the RAC/SPA Focal Point, from attending. The meeting allowed a review and a point-by-point discussion of the whole form. The appraisal had as reference

the tests of the SPA/BD Protocol devoted to SPAMIs, the form and the reference documents bearing out the data appearing on the form.

Conclusion

The SPAMI is being managed in a remarkable way thanks to the staff's technical and scientific capacities, and to regularly developing participatory governance. Despite difficult periods in the past, today it is clear that there has been a good development in the minds of the local people and also the public establishment. This has come about with the idea of sustainable development, gradually helping to eradicate prejudices about the necessarily negative character of the relationship between men and nature.

The management and regulating of the SPAMI is based on legislative and regulatory texts that are clearly defined and regularly updated, being adapted to constantly-changing management requirements. National Park status gives the PCNP a major capacity to implement efficacious management measures. It is particularly interesting to see how the use of 'soft' language does not provoke hostile reactions but encourages understanding of aims and acceptance by stakeholders (e.g. talking about 'resource area' rather than no-sampling area or integral reserve).

Scientific monitoring of the SPAMI suits the management requirements. The experience of 50 years and the involving of the PCNP's Scientific Council have been exemplary and have inspired the Law of 14 April 2006 on national parks and marine nature parks and regional nature parks as regards the prerogatives of the Scientific Councils, granting them a greatly strengthened role.

The new defining and enlarging of the PCNP is finished; all that remains to do is to confirm the integration of the communes' territorial part, but this does not affect the SPAMI. In the context of the new PCNP, there are an Administrative Council that integrates the state, local territorial authorities, experts (including the President of the Scientific Council) etc., plus a Scientific Council and also (since 2013) an Economic, Social and Cultural Council that represents users. The whole thing becomes a single area of cooperation and governance in order to satisfy the PCNP's environmental and sustainable development stakes, and lastly to help towards understanding the value of biodiversity, even outside the borders of the Park. This approach is enhanced by an anticipatory mode of management, clearly adopted by the National Park's Board.

Evaluation of this SPAMI as discussed at the CTC meeting is shown to be positive at every level. The progress margins mainly apply to adaptation to new contexts, and thus to the new defining of the National Park, that has undergone a very significant spatial extension and has a new charter.

However, some improvements and developments could be aimed at, mainly:

- updating the boundaries of the SPAMI to reflect changes in the definition of the Park, adding the areas that were added after those changes
- enhancing exchanges with other Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, especially SPAMIs, with a view to spreading and greater diffusion of the PCNP's know-how as regards management and scientific monitoring
- to this effect, an idea for development is implementing a training centre on the management of MPAs specifically targeting SPAMIs in order to improve their efficacy and their sustainability.

Recommendations

The evaluation team's recommendations are as follows:

- Extend the SPAMI to cover the entire territory of the Park's new boundaries

- Continue scientific research on protocols for monitoring ecosystems rather than species, linked to the Barcelona Convention's Ecosystem Approach and the Framework Directive Strategy for the European Union's marine environment
- Continue to strengthen the enforcement of the Fishing and Diving Charters throughout the PCNP, especially in resource areas
- Enhance the PCNP's governance policy through the balanced activity of its three Councils (Administrative, Scientific, and Economic, Social and Cultural)
- Continue to send good messages of targeted communication to public opinion generally and users in particular, and make an especial contribution to understanding the value of the PCNP's biodiversity and of 'ordinary biodiversity' in a pro-active way
- Enhance involvement in the Mediterranean Marine Protected Area networks to encourage exchanges with other Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, particularly SPAMIs, and share the PCNP's know-how as regards management and scientific monitoring
- Develop the idea of implementing a training centre on the management of MPAs specifically targeting SPAMIs.

3. PELAGOS SANCTUARY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MARINE MAMMALS (FRANCE, ITALY, MONACO)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The total scores of the table are not really reflecting the current situation for the Pelagos Sanctuary, because some of questions in the format are not adapted for the case of the Pelagos Sanctuary.

Conclusion

According to the evaluation of the committee, Pelagos Sanctuary still fulfils the criteria, which are mandatory for the inclusion of an area in the SPAMI list, and with the relevant criteria defined in the SPA/BD Protocol.

Recommendations

For Pelagos Sanctuary:

Within and with the limits of the institutional and legal structure of the Pelagos Sanctuary, the objectives, set out in the original SPAMI application for designation, are actively pursued, although cooperation and harmonisation, which are some of the Agreement goals, might be enhanced.

For RAC/SPA:

- Although Parties have filled the ordinary form, they ask RAC/SPA to adapt the ordinary form to the specificities of the Pelagos Sanctuary and other similar SPAMIs for the next revisions.
- Regarding the evaluation format, there is a need to provide guidelines for scoring and it would be necessary for defining the concept of "cultural values".

4. MARINE PROTECTED AREA AND NATURAL RESERVE OF TORRE GUACETO (ITALY)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Management Body presented to the TAC the activities carried out in the MPA.

The TAC gave advice on specific statements of single sections of the Format for the Periodic Review, especially concerning the evaluation of the management and the available staff, as well as on cooperation and networking. A positive judgement was given on the overall infrastructures of the area and on the long-term monitoring programs. The TAC stressed the particular importance, as an example of good practices, of the involvement of professional fishermen in the management of the resources. Another important specificity of the area, that improves its management, is the direct link between the marine area and its terrestrial counterpart. The TAC noted however the potential difficulties that could arise from the fact that the staff of the area doesn't have a permanent position from the administrative point of view.

Conclusion

The TAC changed slightly (sometime increasing) the values given by the Management Body and share the opinion that the Torre Guaceto MPA fully meet the SPAMI criteria set up in the SPA & BD Protocol.

Recommendations

The TAC appreciated the efforts and the actual results obtained and presented by the Management body. In order to further assure the long term efficiency of the management of the area, the TAC recommends that the management body finds ways to assure a permanent administrative position of the staff.

The TAC recommends to the RAC/SPA to improve the collaboration among SPAMIs to facilitate the exchange of experiences at basin level.

5. MARINE PROTECTED AREA OF CAPO CACCIA-ISOLA PIANA (ITALY)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Management Body presented to the TAC the activities carried out in the MPA in order to reach the conservation and management goals and fulfill the SPAMI criteria. The TAC gave advice on some statements of single sections of the Format for the Periodic Review, specially concerning the monitoring and survey of human activities.

Conclusion

The TAC changed slightly the values given by the Management Body. In spite of the above the TAC is of the opinion that the MPA Capo Caccia Isola Piana fulfills the SPAMI criteria set up in the SPA & BD Protocol.

Recommendations

The TAC appreciated the efforts and the actual results obtained and presented by the Management Body. In order to further improve the efficiency of the management of the area the TAC suggests:

- to further improve the monitoring activities finalized to support management, in particular considering adaptive management;
- to further improve the survey and control over human activities, including diving;
- to reinforce the cooperation between the MPA and the regional park, specially on beach, cliffs and dune management;
- to enhance the collaboration between the Marine Coastal Guard and MPA staff.

Regarding the improvement of the SPAMI management, the TAC recommends RAC/SPA to facilitate the collaboration between SPAMIs.

6. MARINE PROTECTED AREA OF TAVOLARA-PUNTA CODA CAVALLO (ITALY)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Management Body presented to the TAC the activities carried out within the protected area as well as in the area surrounding the SPAMI. The management technicalities and the interactions with the local communities were explained. Having heard and seen the results of the management of the area and taking into account the relatively short time since the setting up of the management body, the TAC can only congratulate the team of the MPA Tavolara Punta Coda Cavallo for the excellent performance.

Conclusion

The TAC reviewed the Format for the Periodic Review and agreed with the total score obtained. Taking into account the above, the TAC states that the MPA is in conformity with the criteria defined in the SPA/BD Protocol.

Recommendations

Having witnessed the job done by the management body of the MPA Tavolara Punta Coda Cavallo and taking into consideration the need to facilitate the collaboration among SPAMIs in order to improve their performance, the TAC is of the opinion that the role of this MPA would be relevant in particular to contribute in sharing specific management solutions.

Regarding the Italian MPA system in terms of surveillance and sanctions, the TAC suggests:

- to improve the status of the MPA staff allowing them to have sanctioning power and to improve direct relationship between the MPA management of the monitoring activities within the protected area.

7. MIRAMARE MARINE PROTECTED AREA (ITALY)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Management Body presented to the TAC the activities carried out in the MPA in order to reach the conservation and management goals and fulfill the SPAMI criteria. The TAC recognises the huge experience of the management body and staff of the MPA, that was the first marine protected area in Italy.

Taking in consideration the presentation, and in particular the foreseen relocation of the offices far from the protected site, the TAC is of the opinion that this might have a negative impact on the management efficiency. The same consequences could be expected from the fact that, the management body is obliged to spend a lot of its time raising additional funds.

Conclusion

The TAC changed slightly the values given by the Management Body and is of the opinion that the Miramare MPA fulfills the SPAMI criteria set up in the SPA & BD Protocol.

Recommendations

The TAC appreciated the efforts and the results obtained and presented by the Management Body. In order to further improve the efficiency of the management of the area the TAC suggests:

- to avoid the relocation of the offices or try to identify a new solution to accommodate the management body very close to the marine protected area and to avoid any additional costs due to the actual fragile financial situation of the MPA.

Regarding the improvement of the SPAMI management, the TAC suggests to the RAC/SPA to facilitate the collaboration among SPAMIs.

8. PLEMMIRIO MARINE PROTECTED AREA (ITALY)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Management Body presented to the TAC the activities carried out in the MPA in order to reach the conservation and management goals and fulfill the SPAMI criteria.

The TAC gave advice on specific statements of single sections of the Format for the Periodic Review, especially concerning the evaluation of the management and the available staff, as well as on cooperation and networking.

A positive judgement is given on the overall infrastructures of the area including the control system, based on the use of automatic cameras. The TAC notes however the potential difficulty to intervene in the field in case of detection of infringement of the rules.

Conclusion

The TAC changed slightly (sometime increasing) the values given by the Management Body and share the opinion that the Plemmirio MPA fully meet the SPAMI criteria set up in the SPA & BD Protocol.

Recommendations

The TAC appreciated the efforts and the actual results obtained and presented by the Management body.

In order to further improve the efficiency of the management of the area the TAC suggests:

- to enhance the monitoring of the catches of professional and leisure fishing;
- to further improve the possibility of intervention in case of infringement of the rules, especially concerning the poaching.

It would be important that the management plan of the SPAMI is considered for the governance of the surrounding area stressing the importance of an integrated coastal management.

The TAC recommends to the RAC/SPA to improve collaboration among SPAMIs to facilitate the exchange of experiences at basin level.

9. PUNTA CAMPANELLA MARINE PROTECTED AREA (ITALY)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Management Body presented to the TAC the activities carried out in the MPA in order to reach the conservation and management goals and fulfill the SPAMI criteria.

The TAC gave advice on some statements of single sections of the Format for the Periodic Review, specially concerning the need of enhancing the monitoring of the effects of the regulations of professional and leisure fisheries on fish assemblages and to find ways and means to improve the selectivity of fishing gears more in line with this kind of MPA.

A positive judgement is given on the foreseen control system, based on the use of infrared automatic cameras, useful to fight illegal activities i.e. for instance date mussels harvesting.

Conclusion

The TAC changed slightly the values given by the Management Body.

In spite of the above the TAC is of the opinion that the Punta Campanella MPA fulfills the SPAMI criteria set up in the SPA & BD Protocol.

Recommendations

The TAC appreciated the efforts and the actual results obtained and presented by the Management body.

In order to further improve the efficiency of the management of the area the TAC suggest:

- to set up a specific monitoring of the catches of professional and leisure fishing;
- to further reduce the impact of leisure boats anchoring by installing additional moorings.

The TAC recommends to the RAC/SPA to improve the collaboration among SPAMIs to facilitate the exchange of experiences.

10. AL-HOCEIMA NATIONAL PARK (MOROCCO)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

A full provisional version of the Form was sent to the consultants one week before the assignment by the Moroccan Authorities, giving them an opportunity to study the file with sufficient time in hand.

A set of documents presented in the Annex mostly bear out the contents of this form.

The appraisal was carried out with the participation of representatives from the central administration, the manager and the national expert, who reviewed, and discussed point by point, the whole form.

The appraisal had as reference the tests of the SPA/BD Protocol devoted to SPAMIs, and the data form provided by RAC/SPA.

Conclusion

Obvious evolution of the texts of law on Protected Areas; this will be still more effective with the promulgation of enforcement texts.

The new laws passed by Morocco as regards the management and protection of natural resources, present governance and the involving of several state bodies in monitoring and checking the activities carried out within the Park enable the various threats linked to the exploitation of natural resources, especially catching, gathering and selling threatened species, to be countered.

The management tools adopted and the actions implemented are found to be pertinent and efficacious. Following-up and monitoring indicators show improvement in habitats and populations of threatened species.

However, we note the following lines of improvement:

- imbalance between the means allotted to the terrestrial, and to the marine, parts
- insufficient human (number and skills), equipment and financial means to handle the stakes of managing the marine environment
- as regards the marine part, many programmes are obviously dependent on opportunities offered by fund providers or international cooperation.

Despite the strong commitment of the public administration at central level, and by the national and local partners towards the AHNP, there is still a need for a suitable business plan with management recommendations.

Recommendations

The evaluation team made the following recommendations:

- Update the development and management plan provided for in 2015 should enable integration of the AHNP's marine and terrestrial parts, today divided into two distinct documents; achieving this management plan means adopting a participatory approach throughout the process of diagnosis
- In the future development and management plan, take the proposals that appear in the AHNP's Development and Best Use Plan into consideration
- Implementing the management plan should continue the same participatory approach so far used, and management of the Protected Area should give equal importance to conservation stakes and development requirements
- A real partnership policy should be adopted between the key actors and the users group

- Project opportunities that could surface during the implementing of the management plan should suit the strategies and action plan that have been adopted and confirmed
- Strengthen management of the marine part of the AHNP in terms of equipment and human and financial means and both national (public institutions, research and university institutes, users) and international partnerships (continuing and enhancing existing partnerships, looking for other partners). Also it is recommended that the studies on marine biocenoses and biotopes be deepened, particularly as regards benthic communities, ichthyologic fauna, protected species generally and socio-economic aspects
- Make better use of the Park's tourist potential according to the 'European charter for sustainable tourism in Protected Areas' model
- Set up an integral information system for field data collection, for information sharing with stakeholders, and for gaining information on follow-up and monitoring indicators
- Enhance the involvement of the AHNP in networks devoted to nature conservation, Protected Areas (terrestrial and marine) and sustainable development
- Enhance basic research on managing the site; craft a business plan for the AHNP
- Activate conventions with the national universities for monitoring programmes that can, for example, benefit from specific study grants
- Make best use of the AHNP management through operations of good practice reproduced in existing or projected Protected Areas.

11. ALBORAN ISLAND (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Alboran Island SPAMI is a hotspot of biodiversity. The protection system in place allowed ensuring the conservation of the site of ecological features. From the date of the inclusion of the site in the SPAMI List, significant improvement occurred as for its legal framework. Furthermore, the site was declared in 2014 as a Marine Special Protection Area and a Site of Community Importance surrounding the SPAMI was proposed within the framework of the Natura 2000 network.

The local, regional and national administrations in charge of the protection and management of the site are acting following clearly defined roles and competencies and have adequate human and financial resources, however the budget constraints faced during the last year had among their consequences a reduced monitoring effort for the terrestrial area of the SPAMI.

An important amount of scientific information has been gathered in the last five years on habitats and species in the frame of the LIFE+ INDEMARES project referred to the SPAMI sea bottoms (more information at the website: www.indemares.es). The monitoring programme implemented in the site provided useful information for the management of the terrestrial and marine components of the SPAMI. It should be noted however that the monitoring in the subtidal and infralittoral zones of the SPAMI, the monitoring was limited to *Patella ferruginea*.

Conclusion

The Technical Advisory Commission concluded on the basis of the available information and of the evaluation meeting that the Alboran Island protected Area fulfills the criteria qualifying it as a SPAMI.

Recommendations

The Monitoring of marine and coastal (subtidal and infralittoral) zones of the SPAMI should be extended to cover the key benthic communities, using appropriate techniques such as scuba diving and taking into account the legal regime of the area.

12. ARCHIPELAGO OF CABRERA NATIONAL PARK (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

- The monitoring and knowledge for marine and terrestrial areas has been balanced for the first time, which is very positive.
- The budget on research monitoring and management has to be at least kept and increased to the level before economic recession to fulfill the gaps that have been detected in some cases.
- A sufficient representation of stakeholders should be included in the board.
- Cabrera is an example for the rest of the protected areas in the Mediterranean, especially in some aspects as small scale fisheries management. This gives an added value to the SPAMI and to the National Park, which can be an example to some other protected areas with similar conditions.

Conclusion

Cabrera National park is a well-designed marine and terrestrial park and remains outstanding in the Spanish protected area system. The archipelago is highly valued by residents and tourists alike, and its pristine nature makes it extremely important as a place for scientific study as well. The two main historic threats to the archipelago: fishing and unregulated recreational use (and with these the attendant pressure caused by invasive species introductions and pollution impacts), were adequately addressed in the design of the park, the zonation adopted, and the regulations pertaining to extractive use and limited entry.

Following the transfer and administration to the Regional Government, the budget was severely constrained and monitoring and research activities were limited. Since that time, park management has figured out how to continue practicing effective management with a much-reduced budget, but additional resources could help strengthen the monitoring and research and adequately assess and address threats, including the pressure brought about the increased visitation and dive tourism.

The park remains well-managed, with a well-articulated quota system for visitation (300 persons maximum at any time on the islands, and a limited number of mooring buoys for the boats reserved in advance), and an effective enforcement regime.

The new management structure allows for revenue generation through user fees, profits from which flow directly back to park management. Nonetheless, costs of surveillance, maintenance, interpretation, and public outreach are high due to the size of the park and its remote location. The visitor's center in Colonia San Jordi remains a flagship facility, but the management costs have strained the park management (operating costs have been reduced from 1.3 million euros per year to 450,000 euros per year).

Artisanal fisheries continue to exert pressure on the marine resources of the archipelago, through the limited entry scheme prevents overexploitation, for the most part, and the particular gears used are non-destructive, with very limited by-catch. The fishing community is an important proponent for the

park, and performs de facto enforcement functions as well. Studies could fill further knowledge gaps such as how an extension of the park would affect not only the biota but also the fishermen.

The governance of the park, with the constitution of the Board and active engagement of stakeholders, is a model for other protected areas in Spain and beyond. Improving the stakeholder representation on the Board, as is being explored, will only strengthen its management and demonstration value. Overall, this protected area certainly deserves continuing SPAMI status, and sharing lessons learned with other SPAMIs throughout the Mediterranean will help strengthen the overall network.

Recommendations

- The Technical Advisory Commission recommends to pay special attention to the increases in boats and divers visiting the marine area and take appropriate measures to keep this within levels compatible with the carrying capacity of the zone.
- The new management plan should be finalised and approved as soon as possible.
- The management body of the park and relevant national and international organization are encouraged to promote the use of Cabrera National Park as model for other Mediterranean MPAs.

13. CABO DE GATA-NIJAR NATURAL PARK (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The Cabo de Gata-Nijar Park has a great diversity for both ecological and geological point of view. It is well-managed, with an adequate funding and a highly skilled management team.

In 2013, an emergency plan was developed for the Park providing an additional management tool and allowed to significantly reduce the risk of degradation for the terrestrial and marine parts of the park.

Conclusion

From the date of its inclusion and previous evaluation (2009), the Cabo de Gata-Nijar SPAMI strengthened its legal framework and received further technical means for surveillance.

The marine habitats and species of the area are monitored through integrated monitoring programme focusing on key habitats and threatened species. Being developed for the whole coasts of Andalusia, the monitoring programme provides a comprehensive picture of the status of habitats and species in the protected area and beyond its boundaries.

The Technical Advisory Committee, based on the available information and the results of the evaluation meetings and visits concluded that the Cabo de Gata-Nijar Park deserves to be on the SPAMI List.

Recommendations

This SPAMI can be a model for other Mediterranean marine and coastal protected areas.

Networking among SPAMI at regional level (Mediterranean) needs to be further developed.

14. CAP DE CREUS NATURAL PARK (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

In general, the support to this park is nowhere near what is needed, given its national, Mediterranean, and global significance and potential to serve as demonstration model for multi-use, integrated protection.

Developing an acceptable management regime for marine waters difficult given the parks's size, complexity, and the propensity of the public here to reject the idea that change may be needed. (The populace feels the area in being conserved adequately without the park, and is not aware enough of the prospects for us becoming unsustainable, nor the benefits of conservation to them.) There is resistance to additional regulations or management on the marine portion – with the exception of regulations against red coral removal, which stakeholders feel is a poor use of the resource (realize that red coral left in place can bring more economic benefits than red coral removed and sold as jewellery).

Major issue is placement of mooring and prevention of anchoring. Stakeholders are opposed to this – as they want open access maintained. Suggest piloting moorings in only a few sites (see below) to show benefits, and create an incentive system to catalyse a change in attitudes.

Because staffing is so limited for a park of this size and complexity, suggest ways to use volunteer associations to be 'eyes on the water', and to public outreach.

Conclusion

This immensely valuable site certainly deserves continued SPAMI status. A management plan for the marine park is being developed with stakeholder engagement – although the public is difficult to work with and largely opposed to management of any kind. The park is able to build on the good management accomplished in the adjacent terrestrial area, with Natural Park zone, Natural Sites of National Interest, and Integral (terrestrial) Reserves.

Recommendations

- 1) Look for ways to catalyse more public education, awareness raising, and stewardship – especially through drawing on other examples of how marine parks provide benefits, but also by piloting marine management activities at key, priority sites.
- 2) Look for ways to provide financing for additional management activities, including volunteer-based surveillance (soft enforcement), and education.
- 3) The park has adequate infrastructure, and could capitalise on this by finding funding to hire more staff, or contract needed services under consultancies. The value of providing sites for research, especially applied research that has application to management, should be more broadly communicated (and this value should be included in the future SPAMI evaluations).
- 4) A basic habitat classification and mapping should be done to serve as a basis for future planning (such as the possible expansion of the Marine Integral Reserve to include the Ille de Massa) and for monitoring the efficiency of management.

15. COLUMBRETES ISLANDS (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

None

Conclusion

- The Technical Advisory Committee concluded that the SPAMI continues to fulfill the criteria that allowed its inclusion in the SPAMI list.
- From the last evaluation the following improvements were recorded:
 - improved legal framework,
 - improved knowledge about marine habitats and assemblages, and
 - improved facilities and equipment.

Recommendations

- Establish a body, which allows the involvement of public and all stakeholders, including scientists not only in the planning, but also in the management of the SPAMI.
- Collaboration with the SPAMIs of other Mediterranean countries should be established directly and/or through RAC/SPA.
- The SPAMI area should be extended to cover also the newly proposed Site of Community Importance.
- We recommend to the extent possible the harmonization of all relevant management plans.
- As is the case of almost everywhere in the world, the management body should charge a fee for use of the scientific facilities, for instance the lighthouse lodging, and lab.

16. MAR MENOR AND ORIENTAL MEDITERRANEAN ZONE OF THE REGION OF MURCIA COAST (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

In the marine portion of the SPAMI, the Special Protection Area was declared recently; it is therefore difficult to evaluate the efficiency of its protection and management in the way the format requires.

Conclusion

According to the evaluation made by the Technical Advisory Committee, this SPAMI continues to fulfill the criteria that are mandatory for the inclusion of an area in the SPAMI list.

Recommendations

The Technical Advisory Committee recommends:

- Having the Integrated Management Plan for the marine Special Protection Area approved as soon as possible.
- Establishing a structure allowing the participation of public and stakeholders in the governance of the SPAMI.
- Establishing a scientific committee to promote links between the results of data collection/monitoring and management.

- Enhancing collaboration and networking with SPAMIs in other countries, RAC/SPA could play a significant role in this context.

17. MARO-CERRO GORDO CLIFFS (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

This SPAMI provided a significant contribution in safeguarding the natural features of the area while the adjacent coastal zones were subject to an extensive development.

It is also contributing to the conservation of the only population of Spanish wild goat (*Capra pyrenaica*) near the sea, as well as populations of reptiles (e.g. chameleon), seabirds, raptors and songbirds. Its marine component hosts many key habitats and threatened species. Furthermore, this SPAMI is located in the limits of the natural extension of *Posidonia oceanica* in the West Mediterranean.

Conclusion

Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous evaluation report (2011) were addressed by the managing authorities, in particular regarding the management of scuba diving and the elaboration of the Self Protection Plan to face oil spill incidents.

The actions undertaken to complete the barrier of artificial reefs and to finalise the management plan and have it officially adopted are the most important achievements of the SPAMI during the last years.

The SPAMI endeavoured during the last years to improve the networking with other MPAs in the Mediterranean, in particular through the participation in MedPAN activities.

The Technical Advisory Commission concluded that the SPAMI fulfill the criteria that allowed its inclusion in the SPAMI List.

Recommendations

- Implement as soon as possible the management plan approved in January 2015.
- Install the ecological mooring for the diving boats.
- Establish a new committee within the framework of the Environment Council to deal specifically with the coastal zone management issues.
- Investigate ways to improve the financial resources of the SPAMI.

18. MEDES ISLANDS (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The evaluation form does not provide sufficient means to assess and communicate an important potential value of SPAMIs: that of serving as sites for furthering knowledge. In the case of Medes Islands, the various forms of protection over the last 35 years has allowed for a steady stream of applied and basic research in ecology, oceanography, and marine management. The Park has made every effort to encourage and support scientific research, and has a good system to ensure data will be available to support management: one condition of issuing permits for scientific research is a requirement that researchers share data with the park. Providing not only a managed and secure site

for research, but also logistical support, has increased scientific understanding of the area's ecology, and the impacts of human use / efficacy of management. The park also enhances knowledge and understanding through its public outreach, and in particular its link to local primary schools. Medes staff and researchers who use the park also interact fully with other SPAMIs, and across MedPAN's MPAs. However, with no funds for a visitor centre, and limited staff to interact with visitors and users, the important function of expanding knowledge if the scientific effort had a platform for broad public outreach through a visitor centre, creation of awareness-raising apps, and a well-managed, comprehensive website!

Conclusion

Medes Islands is well known throughout the Mediterranean, a site of immense value as a living lab, and one of the best examples of how protection can increase biomass in a no-take area. The fish populations are healthy, and although some damage to biota occurs through the intense diver usage (and despite some occasional poaching or red corals), the park is well managed. Improvements are underway to reconsider carrying capacity and lessen the pressure on corals exerted by dive tourism. A new system of allocating dive spots to dive operators is being put in place, which will allow annual quotas at each dive site to be respected. Additionally, the work of a multi-institutional council to discuss management, will not only improve management but may also lead to identification of new means to generate revenues for badly needed capital investments and additional staff. The Medes Islands continues SPAMI designation, in the view of the evaluators.

Recommendations

- 1) Medes should continue to investigate the issue of carrying capacity for dive tourism, and develop a set of options for limiting impacts on ecological communities, including rotating closures for some sites, mandatory training of divers through required eco-briefings, opening up new sites (even in adjacent areas) for diving while keeping a core area diver-free, in order to monitor and understand carrying capacity, and establishing an award program for responsible dive operations.
- 2) A vehicle for generating additional investment in infrastructure and more staff is badly needed. The Director has some good ideas in this regard, and the Council may be able to catalyse some other public-private partnerships.
- 3) There is a need to assess the terrestrial portion of the park, and to think of ways to lessen the pressure on marine areas, possibly by expanding the portfolio of nature-based activities that visitors could undertake on land as well. An integrated plan should be developed for the land/sea area.
- 4) Medes should be recognized for its contribution to scientific study and public understanding. At the same time, more could be made of this aspect by investing in a visitor center and additional park staff to work on outreach (including through the use of social media and smartphone / tablet apps).

19. SEA BOTTOM OF THE LEVANTE OF ALMERIA (SPAIN)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

Following changes in the governance of the area covered by this SPAMI, that are expected to be into force in a recent future, the competencies for the management of the SPAMI will be transferred to the Central Administration. Waiting the official transfer of competencies, the Regional Administration (Junta de Andalucía) is pursuing its activities of management, control and monitoring of the area.

Given the changes being done as for the competencies in its management, this area is not now covered by an officially approved management plan. However the Central Administration drafted a management plan for the northern part of the SPAMI (covered by a Special Protection Area) and a management plan for the whole SPAMI area (proposed as a Site of Community Importance).

Conclusion

The Technical Advisory Commission (TAC) stresses that the scores obtained for this SPAMI under Section 7 of the evaluation form (Management) are not reflecting the actual situation as for the management of the area. These are partly due to the transitional period concerning the competencies. Generally speaking the TAC assesses the management of this SPAMI as adequate.

Recommendations

The TAC recommends that the management plans drafted by the Central Administration for this SPAMI be adopted and implemented as soon as possible. Also the appropriate arrangements should be done to ensure full coordination in the future of the competencies and interventions of the Central and Regional Administrations.

20. KNEISS ISLANDS (TUNISIA)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The evaluation meeting was held on the APAL premises, with the RAC/SPA Focal Point, the SPAMI manager and the national expert attending. It was extended by a field visit and a meeting with the Generations Continuity Association (GCA).

The evaluation was based on a provisional version of the form, well filled in, that had been sent to the members of the Technical Commission one week before the meeting.

Each point in the form was discussed. Additional information requested by the independent experts was provided at the session. The appraisal had as reference the texts of the SPA/BD Protocol devoted to SPAMIs.

The evaluation elements provided in the form are borne out by the documents that appear in the Annex.

Conclusion

The Kneiss Islands SPAMI is an area of great ecological interest, particularly due to its ornithological importance both for Tunisia and the world (ZICO and RAMSAR site).

The site is relatively well known for its fauna and flora. Many scientific studies have contributed to an ecological diagnosis that bears out its listing and has enabled a management plan to be crafted.

Its 1993 listing as a nature reserve has encouraged awareness among local people, particularly as to protection of natural resources (clam deposits, etc.).

Lying in an area (the Gulf of Gabès) with one of the biggest tidal ranges in the Mediterranean, the site seems to be threatened by the rise in sea level in the context of climate change.

The positive evolution in the site's status within the context of Law no. 49-2009 and its (2014) enforcement decrees offers prospects of improving and clarifying the management and protection of the SPAMI.

A field visit proved the heavy involvement of civil society (sustainable development, both ecological, social and economic).

However, some improvements must be made, bearing in mind:

- the absence of a regular follow-up
- the absence of a governance body
- the restricted involvement of local people in management planning despite their increasing awareness expressed in particular in informal cooperation between the manager and the local NGOs
- flagrant insufficiency of the logistic and human means provided for managing the SPAMI
- the (mainly external) funding mechanisms do not seem to guarantee that the planned actions will continue into the future.

Recommendations

- Strengthen the technical, especially nautical, and human means of the SPAMI manager
- Formalise, in the context of the SPAMI's listing as a MCPA, the setting up of a steering committee and the participation of local people, these already particularly motivated, in this governance body
- Implement regular monitoring of the fauna and flora and also of the effects of the rise in sea level on natural habitats
- The Kneiss Islands SPAMI can be seen as a pilot site for monitoring the rise in sea level and its consequences for natural sites. In this context, some thought should be taken as to the means that will help the site to be restored or protected, linked to APAL's programme on the resilience of coastal environments to climate change
- Continue and develop partnership with national research bodies and universities and encourage them to take the Kneiss Islands SPAMI into account in their research programmes
- Envisage regular funding mechanisms and provide the SPAMI with a 'business plan'.

21. LA GALITE ARCHIPELAGO (TUNISIA)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The evaluation meeting was held on the APAL premises, with the RAC/SPA Focal Point, the SPAMI manager and the national expert attending. The weather conditions and the site's remoteness prevented there being a field visit. However, the site is known to one of the independent experts (Guy-François Frisoni).

The evaluation was based on a provisional version of the form, well filled in, that had been sent to the members of the Technical Commission one week before the meeting.

Each point in the form was discussed. Additional information requested by the independent experts was provided at the session. The appraisal had as reference the texts of the SPA/BD Protocol devoted to SPAMIs.

The evaluation elements provided in the form are borne out by the documents that appear in the Annex.

Conclusion

Despite the site's geographic, topographic and meteorological situation that make it hard of access, the basic elements for managing a Marine Protected Area have been implemented in the La Galite SPAMI (ecological monitoring, rehabilitation, environment restoration, etc.).

Particularly noticeable is the major improvement in knowledge of the ecosystem and human activities in the site.

The positive development of the site's status in the context of Law no. 49-2009 and its enforcement decrees (2014), as well as the revision in 2015 of its management plan, offer additional prospects of improvement and clarification of the management and protection of the SPAMI.

The La Galite SPAMI constitutes a laboratory and pilot site whose experience is beneficial to all the other MCPAs in Tunisia.

The first results of the monitoring done there imply positive results as to protection of Mediterranean ecosystems.

But some necessary improvements must be made:

- the regulatory perimeter of the marine part does not appear on marine maps
- although an annual activity report is drawn up for all the MCPAs in Tunisia, this does not give a specific vision of the activities carried on in La Galite
- although relations with fishermen have clearly developed, they are as yet too little involved in the projects authorized by the steering committee
- the North Tunisia MCPA management unit is responsible for many sites that are remote from each other, and its staff is deemed to be insufficient compared to the extent of its assignments
- the (mainly external) funding mechanisms do not seem to guarantee that the planned actions will continue into the future.

Recommendations

- Continue the progress made in recent years in the La Galite MCPA in terms of environmental knowledge, management, equipment, staff training and involvement of partners
- Make sure the regulatory perimeter of the marine part appears on official maps
- Envisage the drafting of synthesized annual activity reports for each of Tunisia's MCPAs, including the La Galite SPAMI
- Further develop relations with users, especially fishermen, and associate them with projects from the moment they are being designed
- Continue and develop partnership with national research bodies and universities and encourage them to take the La Galite SPAMI into account in their research programmes
- Strengthen the staff means of the North Tunisia MCPA management unit
- Envisage regular funding mechanisms and provide the SPAMI with a 'business plan'.

22. ZEMBRA AND ZEMBRETTE NATIONAL PARK (TUNISIA)

Comments by the Technical Advisory Commission

The evaluation meeting was held on the APAL premises, with the RAC/SPA Focal Point, the SPAMI managers (DGF and APAL) and the national expert attending. The weather conditions prevented there being a field visit. However, the site is known to one of the independent experts (Hocein Bazairi).

The evaluation was based on a provisional version of the form, well filled in, that had been sent to the members of the Technical Commission one week before the meeting.

Each point in the form was discussed. Additional information requested by the independent experts was provided at the session. The appraisal had as reference the texts of the SPA/BD Protocol devoted to SPAMIs.

The evaluation elements provided in the form are borne out by the documents that appear in the Annex.

Conclusion

Despite the site's difficult geographic, topographic and meteorological situation, the basic elements for managing a Marine Protected Area have been implemented in the Zembra Archipelago as a National Park management plan within the perspective of being listed as a MCPA. These management actions have given very positive results, particularly as regards eradication of the black rat in Zembretta, resulting in a clear improvement of the reproductive success of the Balearic shearwater.

Thus, this SPAMI remains a site of basic importance and a hotspot for populations of ferreous limpets and Cory's shearwater (the biggest populations in the Mediterranean). The return of a nesting population of Balearic shearwater is exceptional in North Africa.

Even though at present the status of National Park guarantees the protection of the terrestrial part, the positive development of the site's status within the context of Law no. 49-2009 and its enforcement decrees (2014), as well as the revision in 2015 of its management plan, offer additional prospects of improvement and clarification of the management and protection of the SPAMI. Additionally, while awaiting this listing, there is already effective cooperation between the DGF and APAL (co-management) on land and also out at sea when the APAL team is present on the site.

However, some weak points were raised during the appraisal:

- little attention has been paid to the problem of welcoming the public and controlling frequentation
- local people are not much involved in planning the site's management and protecting it
- there is a lack of nautical means and basic infrastructure
- the regulatory perimeter does not appear on marine maps
- meetings of the steering committee are infrequent
- the (mainly external) funding mechanisms do not seem to guarantee that the planned actions will continue into the future.

Recommendations

- In the future management plan, take into account the problem of welcoming the public and controlling frequentation
- Develop relations with local people to involve them effectively in the management and protection of the site

- Enhance nautical means and basic infrastructure for better monitoring of the marine part of the SPAMI
- Make sure the regulatory perimeter appears on marine maps
- Make sure the steering committee meets regularly
- Enhance the means of monitoring and data collection
- Grant management funding means through a 'business plan'.