



NEWSLETTER

December 2012 / Issue 2

www.rac-spa.org

RAC/SPA

The Marine Protected Areas and Biodiversity Centre in the Mediterranean



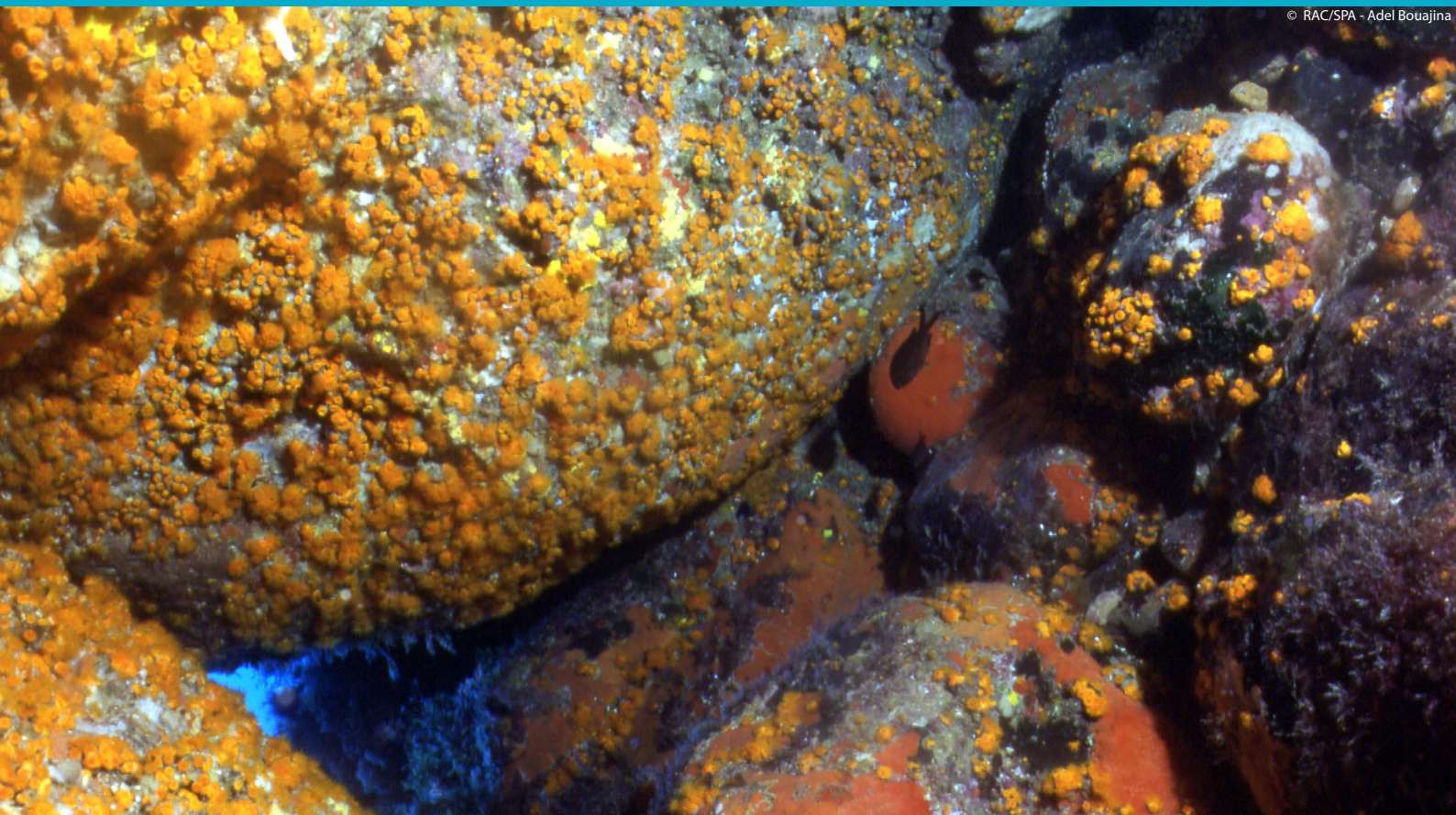
In this issue:

SAP/BIO Evaluation of implementation & preparation of an updated SAP BIO	P1
SPAMIs in Open Seas Implementation and new follow-up phase III	P2
Information day on marine turtles in Tunisia	P3
2012 Forum on MPAS in the Mediterranean A common initiative for strengthening the Mediterranean MPAs network	P3
Development of indicators for climate change impacts on biodiversity within MPAs	P4

Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity

Evaluation of implementation & preparation of an updated SAP BIO

© RAC/SPA - Adel Bouajina



The Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO) has been prepared by RAC/SPA and adopted by the Contracting Parties to Barcelona Convention in Catania, Italy, in November 2003, to respond to the desire of Mediterranean countries to have a joint integrated strategy to address the complexity and extent of pressures on coastal and marine biodiversity.

The methodology followed by RAC/SPA within its mandate included the following elements:

- National and regional evaluation of marine and coastal biodiversity based on existing inventories and databases,
- Identification of the priority needs and actions of the riparian countries,
- Involvement and participation of a large number of national and regional players.

Since 2003, 30 regional priority actions had been set together with 63 National Action Plans (NAPs) with investment needs totalling US\$155 million (2003 estimate).

SAP BIO's main axes had been successfully integrated since 2004-2005 in RAC/SPA activities:

- inventorying, mapping and monitoring of the Mediterranean Sea as well as coastal biodiversity,
- habitat conservation,
- preservation of species and sensitive sites,
- evaluation and mitigation of the impact of threats to biodiversity,
- research to fill knowledge gaps in particular with regard to biodiversity,
- capacity-building to provide technical support and improved coordination...

RAC/SPA was helping the countries to implement certain NAPs, evaluate their biodiversity, ensure optimal management of MAP projects under way in coastal areas and the open sea, elaborate regional institutional arrangements to improve synergies, and promote transversal and external initiatives through regional action plans.

News prospects had arisen to implement the ecosystem approach and the creation of MPAs in open sea and deep sea areas (2008-2015). RAC/SPA had also assisted with the compilation of national surveys of vulnerability and the impacts of climate change (CC) on coastal and marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean region (2008-2009) and the state of Biodiversity (2010-2011). A project for the rehabilitation of Mediterranean lagoons and wetlands is being created in the framework of a regional activity aimed at alleviating the impact of CC and promote an ecosystem approach to aquaculture, while recovering degraded wetland habitats.

Now, a SAP BIO roadmap for updating the SAP BIO inline with the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Ecosystem Approach process within MAP was prepared, discussed during the SAP BIO Advisory committee and adopted by a SAP BIO national correspondents; organized and implemented on 2-4 July 2012.

An evaluation of progress so far made in SAP BIO implementation is expected to be ready for the next SPA focal points meeting, while an updated SAP BIO will be attempted for the end of 2013.

© RAC/SPA - Adel Bouajina



SHORT NEWS

Sea Turtles in Albania

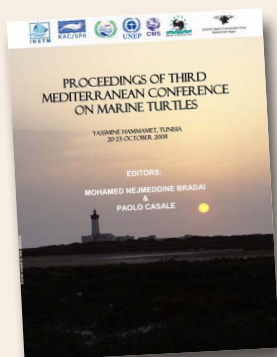
The Action Plan for the Conservation of Sea Turtles & their Habitats was adopted through a Ministerial Order of the Minister of Environment, Forests & Water Administration, Mr. Fatmir Mediu.

This adoption was officially announced at the 32nd Meeting of the The Standing Committee of the convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) at the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, France (27-30 November 2012).

The Action Plan for the Conservation of Sea Turtles and their Habitats in Albania is a result of extensive consultation with Albanian experts and scientists, which was carried under the auspices of the Barcelona Convention - Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA).

PUBLICATIONS

3rd MedTurtle Conference Proceedings



RAC/SPA has published the proceedings of the 3rd Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles. The electronic version can be downloaded through the RAC/SPA website.

SPAMIs in Open Seas

Implementation and new follow-up phase III

In the framework of the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan, the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas implements a process since 2008 to assist the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to promote the setting up of a representative network of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean open seas, including the deep seas.



In the 1st phase, (Identification of priority conservation areas in the Mediterranean open seas, including the deep seas (2008 – 2009)) specific data had been collected, sub-regions within the Mediterranean basin had been assessed and ecologically or biologically significant areas had been identified. Inter alia, studies on marine birds, fisheries conservation management and vulnerable ecosystems had been conducted.

During the 2nd phase (Support to the Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the establishment of MPAs in open seas areas, including the deep seas (2010 – 2011)), which aims had been to facilitate the process of designating areas within the identified sites as potential SPAMIs and to instigate coordination between neighbouring countries through ad hoc working groups, has focused to the Alboran Sea and Gulf of Lions. A legal analysis had revealed the complexity of the context.

A procedure was elaborated to allow including preliminary declarations of proposed open seas SPAMIs in the focal points meeting report on Specially Protected Areas.

The 3rd phase of the project has been designed around two strategic orientations:

- Improving the state of knowledge, in particular in the eastern Mediterranean, and
- Building a framework with countries and organizations to facilitate the joint establishment of open sea/deep sea SPAMIs.

In addition, if further funds are granted, scientific workshops would be organized; oceanographic campaigns would be catalyzed; more work would be done on EBSAs; a joint socio-economic evaluation of fisheries in pelagic ecosystems and deep benthic habitats would be carried out.



Information day on marine turtles in Tunisia

Awareness



The Tunisian Ministry of Environment organized, in collaboration with RAC/SPA, a national information day about marine turtles conservation in Tunisia, on 11th October 2012.

Other national partners contributed to this information day: the Agency for Coastal Protection and Management (APAL), the National Institute for the sea's Sciences and Technologies (INSTM), the Fisheries and Aquaculture Directorate (DGPA) and the Tunisian Agricultural and Fishing Union (UTAP)

About Sixty people representing different research institutions and administrative structures on the fields of fishing industry and environmental protection, as well as many representatives of civil society, took part in this information day.

This event showcased the status of marine turtles in the Mediterranean and Tunisia and the conservation measures undertaken at regional and national levels.

Among the recommendations adopted at the end this day:

- Preparation of a National Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles.
- Training of fishermen using the tools developed by the RAC/SPA for the protection of marine turtles.
- Updating and revision of the Tunisian national regulations on the protection of this vulnerable species in accordance with the annexes to international conventions and protocols ratified.
- Implementation of additional and synergistically efforts to preserve vulnerable, endangered or threatened species in Tunisia and more specifically marine turtles.
- Activating the process of MPAs creation, particularly the Kuriat islands which are the main nesting site for marine turtles.

The 2012 Forum of MPAs in the Mediterranean

A common initiative for strengthening the Mediterranean MPAs network

The 2012 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean was held in Antalya, Turkey, From the 25 to the 28 November 2012.

France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America.

This forum was a "First time" opportunity for different key players involved in the marine environment to share their experiences and develop a joint program of work to advance the network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean.

314 person of various profiles: MPA managers, scientists, decision makers, private sector and civil society representatives, came from 33 nations bordering the Mediterranean and even beyond have exchanged from their respective interests trying all to help protecting the marine biodiversity of the Mediterranean.

The Countries that were represented are: Albania, Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt,

The four strategic objectives of the roadmap

- Establishment of an ecological network of MPAs which is representative and connected
- Achievement of an effective, efficient and sustainable management and a good Mediterranean MPAs governance
- Development of a territorially and sector integrated governance of Mediterranean MPAs while promoting the sharing of environmental and socio-economic benefits, and
- Increase of the allocation of financial resources to establish and maintain an ecological network of effectively managed MPAs

During these four days of the Forum, Mediterranean MPA community reviewed the status of MPAs in the region and identified actions needed to establish an ecological network of MPAs which is effectively and sustainably managed and elaborated a roadmap to achieve in 2020 the international goals of the Convention for Biological Diversity (within the framework of the Aichi targets). The forum led also to the establishment of the Antalya Declaration to give a certain force to the established roadmap.

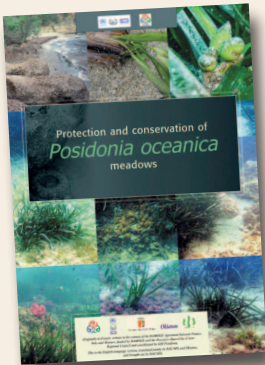
The roadmap, the list of participants, the Antalya Declaration and many other information can be found by visiting the 2012 Forum website:

www.medmpaforum2012.org



PUBLICATIONS

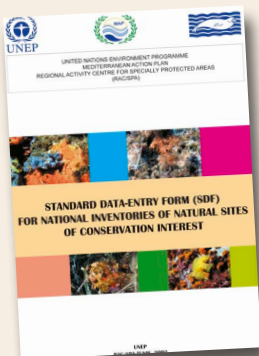
Guide on the Protection & Conservation of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows



This version (RAMOGE & RAC/SPA publi., Tunis, 2012) (originally available in French (2006) and Italian (2008)) is not a mere translation of the original French text of 2006. The translation/edition has been made with the agreement of the authors of the original guide (Boudouresque et al.), who introduced important changes and updates to this document.

Book downloadable at RAC/SPA and RAMOGE websites.

Updated Standard Data-Entry Form (SDF)



The RAC/SPA has prepared an updated SDF to take into account the new changes into the species list included on the Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol.

This document can be downloaded from the RAC/SPA website.

Development of indicators for climate change impacts

on biodiversity within MPAs

In continuation of a first meeting conducted on November 2011 (Malta) under the initiative of The Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) and IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med), both organisations undertook in October 2012 a two-day workshop in Malaga (Spain) to continue guiding the development of indicators for biodiversity impacts in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by the threats of climate change (CC).

This process is facing a series of challenges, such as: how to define and communicate indicators, the need to fully understand the impacts of CC and their synergistic effects, criteria to select target impacts of key biodiversity features, how to be ready for planning adaptations strategies, need to develop and adapt new ideas, and how to feed back result findings into managers.

In fact, these indicators will build towards the medium goals of SAP/BIO Programme at the Mediterranean level (UNEP - MAP - RAC/SPA, 2009) of improving coordinated actions across the Mediterranean MPAs, informing adaptive approaches to CC for effective MPA management and Initiating a climate warning system at different geographical scales for redacting vulnerability within MPAs.

The preliminary list of indicators to track CC impacts that has been pre-selected in the Experts Meeting on Climate Change impacts on marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean MPAs, held in November 2011 in Malta is the base of further defining these indicators

and, eventually, get additional ones to be suggested to MPA managers and the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention.

List of pre-selected CC indicators in MPAs

- SST and thermal stratification
- Basic parameters (O₂, salinity, nutrients, cl.a)
- Acidification (pH, alkalinity, DIC, pCO₂)
- Phytoplankton abundance
- Flowering of *Posidonia oceanica*
- Seasonality of benthic algae species (*Cystoseira*)
- Seasonality of hydrozoans and colonial ascidians species
- Reproduction and breeding date of selected species
- Phenology of fish early life history stages
- Migration date of seasonal species
- Mortality and bleaching events
- Episodic species outbreaks (blooms)
- Range shift of alien / temperature-sensitive species

The key focus of this meeting was to discuss the previous set of indicators to monitor CC impacts on marine biodiversity within MPAs, before further elaborating them for formal discussion with the Parties to the SPA/BD protocol of the Barcelona Convention.



UNEP



United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)

Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)

B.P. 337 - 1080 Tunis Cedex - TUNISIA

Tel.: (+216) 71 206 649 / 485 | Fax: (+216) 71 206 490

E-mail: car-asp@rac-spa.org

Web: <http://www.rac-spa.org/>