



Joint RAC/SPA, GFCM and ACCOBAMS Meeting on protection of marine areas in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Tunis, Tunisia, 9-12 June 2015)

The meeting includes three events and is co-organised by

- **RAC/SPA SPAMI Conference**
 - **2nd GFCM Working group on MPAs,**
 - **ACCOBAMS workshop on the effectiveness of MPAs containing critical habitats for cetaceans.**
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Information Note

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have proved their usefulness in the conservation of the marine environment and in restoring degraded habitats and depleted species populations. Their role in the economic and social development and in ensuring sustainable livelihood sources is being increasingly recognised. In the Mediterranean, the following regional organisations have among their mandates the development of MPAs and other spatial based management measures to achieve several objectives of their programmes and strategies:

- The Regional activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) of the Barcelona Convention. RAC/SPA provides assistance to the Mediterranean countries to develop protected areas in their Marine and Coastal Zones, as well as in open and high sea zones. The List of SPAMIs (Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance), is one of the collaboration tools promoted by RAC/SPA for the conservation of the outstanding biodiversity spots in the region. It was established in 1995 in accordance with the provisions of the SPA & Biodiversity Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.
- The Secretariat of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). GFCM is the regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO) dedicated to the sustainable management of fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The establishment of fisheries restricted areas is one of the spatial management measures promoted by GFCM to ensure the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources. In this context, GFCM has declared a series of Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) aimed at maintaining and recovering marine living resource stocks as well as ensuring the conservation of sensitive or critical habitats.
- The Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS). The main objective of ACCOBAMS is to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans. Establishing and managing MPAs are among the conservation measures requested to the Parties by the Conservation Plan of ACCOBAMS, in particular in

areas which serve as habitats of cetaceans and/or which provide important food resources for them. Accordingly, and on the basis of several recommendations from its Scientific Committee, 22 areas of special interest for cetaceans are identified in the ACCOBAMS area. Parties are encouraged to formally promote the national implementation of these areas and to ensure their effective management.

Considering their respective roles and prerogatives regarding MPAs these Regional Organisations engaged in a collaboration process aimed at promoting the exchange of information and experiences and ensuring a high level of harmonisation of their relevant programmes. In this context, they agreed to organise in 2015 a joint meeting to which they will convene experts and representatives of their focal points and contact organisations in the Mediterranean countries to (i) assess the progress made so far in developing MPAs in the Mediterranean (ii) take stock of the available knowledge about the Mediterranean marine areas of special conservation interest because of their importance for biodiversity conservation, especially regarding cetacean critical habitats, and the sustainability of fisheries and (iii) and investigate options for further harmonising the processes for the establishment of SPAMIs, FRAs.

Given the importance of this joint meeting, the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN) decided to hold its Annual Advisory Committee meeting in conjunction with the joint meeting. A wide range of MPA specialists (scientists, MPA managers, administration officers, etc.) is therefore expected to attend the event which offers a positive step forward inter-organisation collaboration regarding Mediterranean MPAs.

The provisional programme of the meeting, as agreed by the four organisations, is annexed hereinafter.

Provisional Agenda

- 1- Opening, arrangements and adoption of the agenda
- 2- Assessment of the status and information available
 - a. Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs), spatio-temporal closures and other national measures (*coordinated by GFCM*)
 - b. Status of SPAMIs network including aspects related to representativity, coherence, and management (*coordinated by RAC/SPA*)
 - c. Database of MPAs containing critical habitats for cetaceans (CCH). Definition of new areas of special importance for cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area. (*coordinated by ACCOBAMS*)
- 3- Assessment of the processes, benefits and performance
 - a. Marine areas for protection with CCH (*coordinated by ACCOBAMS and MedPAN*)
 - b. FRAs with special attention to options for monitoring, control and surveillance (*coordinated by GFCM*)
 - c. Follow up of developments related to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) (*coordinated by GFCM*);
 - d. SPAMIs (*coordinated by RAC/SPA*)
 - e. Fisheries protected areas under EU fishery Directive (*coordinated by GFCM and IUCN*)
- 4- Guidelines for the management of marine areas for protection with CCH in Mediterranean based on cases of good practices. (*coordinated by ACCOBAMS*)
- 5- Strategies and recommendations to propose new FRAs and SPAMIs, including in high seas.

(Presentation and discussion of the draft elements for a common strategy among RAC/SPA, GFCM, ACCOBAMS and IUCN-Med in collaboration with MedPAN)
- 6- Any other matters
- 7- Conclusions, general recommendations and work plan
- 8- Adoption of recommendations and closure of the meeting

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Provisional Programme of work and chairing of the sessions

	Monday 8 June	Tuesday 9 June	Wednesday 10 June	Thursday 11 June	Friday 12 June
Morning 9h00-13h00	MedPAN Advisory Committee meeting	Opening	Point 3 Chair: RAC/SPA	Point 4 Chair : ACCOBAMS	Point 6 Chair: GFCM
		Point 2 Chair : Hosting country/GFCM			
Afternoon 14h30-18h00		Point 2 Chair: ACCOBAMS	Point 3 Chair: RAC/SPA	Point 5 Chair: GFCM/IUCN	Point 7 and 8 Chair : Hosting country/GFCM