Marine Protected Areas: 4 years to reach the Aichi Target, but where are we at?

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Abstract

In 2016, the Mediterranean registers 1 458 designated or described sites of interest for marine/coastal conservation, including Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) (MAPAMED, March2016). How do these contribute to attaining the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Target 11 of 10% protection by 2020? How much of the sea do these sites cover? What kind of protection do the different types of designations afford biodiversity? Are they effectively and equitably managed? Is the system of MPAs representative and well-connected? What is left to be done to reach the 2020 Target?

Every 4 years, a regional analysis on MPAs in the Mediterranean assesses progress with reaching the CBD objectives, at the interface between science, policy and management (jointly by MedPAN* & RAC/SPA**). The present contribution intends to present early results, ahead of the report publication to discuss the following: The strength of the different designations, making the link to newly published research on no-take zones within MPAs (PISCO, the science of marine protected areas, Mediterranean edition in prep.); How to better integrate the typology of MPAs to future research; what is missing scientifically to better inform policy and management; recommendations on how the scientific community can further contribute to current regional institutional efforts and better support management actions. Finally, amid the backdrop of Maritime Spatial Planning and threats to biodiversity, how to assess management effectiveness will considered.

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