



MARBENA

**Electronic conference on
'The Southern and Eastern
Mediterranean Sea and the Black
Sea: New challenges for marine
biodiversity research and monitoring'**

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Summary of discussions

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*** Summary of discussions on Topic 2.1: Endangered biodiversity and management of marine protected areas, wetlands, lagoons, estuaries and seagrass meadows**

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Several contributions were given to this rather broad topic. Following the Introduction by Grimes et al., Ferdinando Boero of Lecce University (Italy) started the discussion with an interesting title, "people, biodiversity and culture", and the assertion that the more we institute MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) the more we see that their presence is useless unless the people (both local and tourists) are aware of the importance of protecting biodiversity and landscapes in general. In Boero's view, locals are irritated by limits to their freedom and do not want to wait for the promised medium-long term advantages. Even when a policy of intensive use of television to promote biodiversity protection has started, like in Italy, apparently this tool reaches only those who are already sensitive to the problem. Boero indicated that we should press our governments to introduce the respect of nature as an important part of school curricula, including the proper training of teachers, so that all individuals are exposed to some sort of environmental education. Boero concluded that no policy will ever succeed if there is no culture backing it. Izdihar Ammar of the Tishreen University (Syria) replied that the scientific, economic and social characters of the MPAs are the main issues, but in any case, it is necessary to put special laws and quality terms for every MPA. This should lead to the desired success. Ammar cited the case of Syria with the successful case study in the Ibn-Hani protected area. Conviction of the beneficiaries and strictness in respecting protection terms allowed reform to that area which has now started to show a return of a lot of species from different taxa, after it had begun to deteriorate. This reality was also acknowledged by those working in scientific research and fisheries. Ammar hopes that, in this region of the Mediterranean sea, national administrations will coordinate their actions with each other to join a net of MPAs on the bases of international laws and status. Ammar concluded with the wish that humans should stay away from these matters for some time in order to allow the marine environment to recover its health.

Morad Awad of the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (Egypt) affirmed that the attitudes of the non-living resources are opposite to the trends of the living resources. As an example, Awad indicated that the hydrocarbon marine exploitation, accompanied by organic and oil pollution as well as the establishment of numerous platforms and associated utility buildings, is nowadays increasing enormously in the southeastern Mediterranean waters. This is affecting directly or indirectly the living resources existing in the that region, and hence its biodiversity. Awad also mentioned the continuous development of touristic activities and the human impacts on the marine environment, with a substantial increase of domestic pollution. Awad gave further

* Please refer to this section as:

Ammar, I.; Gomoiu, M.-T.; Magni, P. (2004). Summary of discussions on Topic 2.1: Endangered biodiversity and management of marine protected areas, wetlands, lagoons, estuaries and seagrass meadows. Pp 76-78 in Magni, P. *et al.* (eds): Electronic conference on 'The Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea: New challenges for marine biodiversity research and monitoring' - Summary of discussions, 6 to 24 September, 2004. Flanders Marine Institute: Oostende, Belgium.

examples, such as navigation, maritime transport and the harboring facilities, that negatively affect the existing life stocks, acting against the protection and reservation of our natural resources. On the other hand, Awad acknowledged that it is impossible to defeat the promotion and development of civilization; and enhancement of human modern culture, keeping in mind the necessity of fishing as an industry and fish a popular source of human protein. A fundamental question which Awad raised was how to make the balance between these two major and contrasting attitudes. He indicated that we need extra comprehensive tools, e.g. simulation models, modern technology in marine satellite imageries, state of the art aquatic fish hybridization, excessive marine remote sensing monitoring, as well as the enhancement and promotion of human resources in a good, qualitative manner (e.g. through higher education, training, high building capacity, public awareness, etc.).

Ahmet Kideys of the Institute of Marine Sciences, METU (Turkey) indicated that setting up MPA's around the Mediterranean was a goal planned by the surrounding countries at the PAM in 1985, which established the RACSPA for that purposes (entre autre) and which ended with the SPA-biodiversity protocol of the 90's. Kideys pointed out that the number of SPA had been raised, but questioned how efficient they are in terms of conservation of biodiversity, export of productivity, public awareness and marine sciences. He concluded by saying that we can't be satisfied and that we need a monitoring/control organism in order to see how much countries are really ready to go in that direction. He believed that the lack of financial support can not be seen yet as a valid argument. Kerim Ben Mustapha of the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (Tunisia) agreed on the main lines discussed, but indicated that we should also take the opportunity of the protocol on PSA-biodiversity to setup MPA's in the High Seas, which are urgently needed for several reasons.

A remark was made by Glamuzina Branko of the University of Dubrovnik (Croatia) who asked: who needs protection? Branko indicated that we have to make detailed cost-benefit analysis and to involve the influence on local people's lives before we initiate the process of protection. Otherwise, it doesn't work and we have numerous examples. Speaking of the long-term benefit of developing eco-tourism and other eco-friendly activities is not enough. Branko thinks that we have to develop middle-term compensation funds for locals in order to protect and enhance their living conditions, before a positive influence of protection becomes a reality. Therefore, we have to develop this method and include it in a strategy of protected areas development. Ali Gab-Alla of the Suez Canal University (Egypt) highlighted that the Suez Canal convoy many species to the eastern Mediterranean. In addition, the High Dam effects the water quality of this basin changing the geology, hydrology, hydrography, fish communities and benthic communities also. Gab-Alla indicated that we should consider the filling operations of lagoons and lakes. These wetlands are very important areas for marine organisms to breed and spawn. They are also stop sites for migrating birds. We should study carefully these areas, which represent a route for migrating European birds. We should protect these fragile and very sensitive coastal habitats.

Ahmet Kideys asked whether the Black Sea is today one of the most seriously damaged seas in the world and added some points to the Introduction by Gomoiu relevant to the Black Sea. Kideys cited a question he was asked by a prominent marine ecologist from the eastern Mediterranean: are any fish surviving in the Black Sea? This question was a clear example of the lack of knowledge, accompanied by a negative idea that very significant negative events occurred in the Black Sea in the last decades, of scientists who have never been to this sea nor have been exposed to the publications available. Kideys indicated that we should differentiate two phenomena here: (1) The events taking place in the shallow northwestern shelf are the extreme cases and do differ significantly from the entire basin. (2) The Black Sea still provides the highest fish catch among all Mediterranean countries due to the abundance of anchovy. Kideys also cited and mentioned that recently several publications appeared in peer-viewed journals stating that the open Black Sea

pelagic ecosystem has been recovering speedily. He gave the example of Turkish anchovy catches: after its fishery almost collapsed to about 50 thousand tons (from about 280 thousand tons), the average annual catch value of this fish during 1995-2001 was above 270 thousand tons! Kideys concluded his remarks by saying that if he would classify a sea being one of the most seriously damaged seas in the world, today we would put the Caspian Sea at the top.

Messages that were posted on this topic:

<u>Introduction in English</u>	13 Sep 04	Forum Admin
<u>people biodiversity and culture</u>	13 Sep 04	Ferdinando Boero
<u>Two Major Attitudes of Marine Activities in the South-easter</u>	13 Sep 04	MORAD AWAD
<u>It is necessary to put specials laws for every MPA</u>	14 Sep 04	Izdihar Ammar
<u>MPA</u>	14 Sep 04	Kerim Ben Mustapha
<u>Introduction en Français (original)</u>	13 Sep 04	Forum Admin
<u>MPA</u>	14 Sep 04	Kerim Ben Mustapha
<u>Introduction in Arabic</u>	13 Sep 04	Forum Admin
<u>Introduction in Russian</u>	13 Sep 04	Forum Admin
<u>Introduction to Black sea (English)</u>	13 Sep 04	Forum Admin
<u>Is The Black Sea today one of the most seriously damaged sea</u>	13 Sep 04	Ahmet Kideys
<u>Who needs protection?</u>	14 Sep 04	Glamuzina Branko
<u>RE: Introduction</u>	15 Sep 04	Ali Ali Abdel-Fattah Ali Gab-Alla
<u>Introduction to Black Sea (Russian)</u>	16 Sep 04	Forum Admin