



**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**



Oceanário de Lisboa
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OCEANO AZUL
foundation

MPA X-ray

Assessment of Portuguese Marine Protected Areas

February 2017

The importance of Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are an important part of marine conservation and management strategies, tools that aim to stop or reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services related to these areas.

MPAs can be of different types but are generally recognized as “areas effectively managed to protect marine ecosystems, processes, habitats, and species, contributing to the restoration and replacement of resources for social, economic, and cultural enrichment”.

A healthy ocean also generates benefits to people by providing oxygen, carbon dioxide sequestration, food, coastal protection, among others. These benefits, or ecosystem services, support means of subsistence, food and financial security.

Acceptance and compliance with protection measures by local users, as well efficient management and supervision, are essential for the success of an MPA.

The performance of an MPA also depends on clear and functional governance and the inclusion of stakeholders at various stages of its design and implementation.

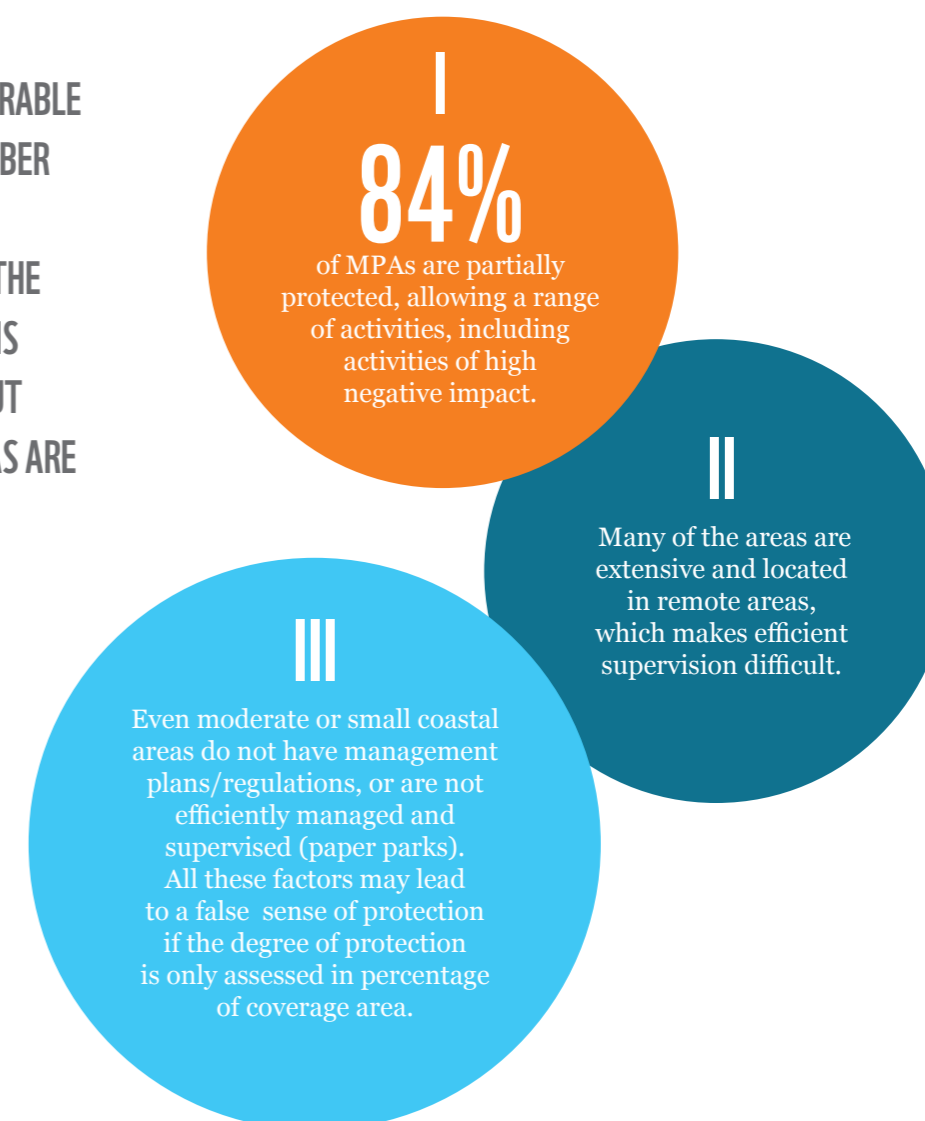


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Ocean protection in the world and in Europe

In recognition of the potential benefits of MPAs, several international agreements determined that 10% of global oceans should be conserved through MPAs with efficient and fair management (e.g. CBD 2010, Aichi Target 11).

DESPITE THE CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER AND AREA OF MPAS, PARTICULARLY OVER THE LAST DECADE, THERE IS GREAT CONCERN ABOUT WHETHER THESE MPAS ARE EFFECTIVE.

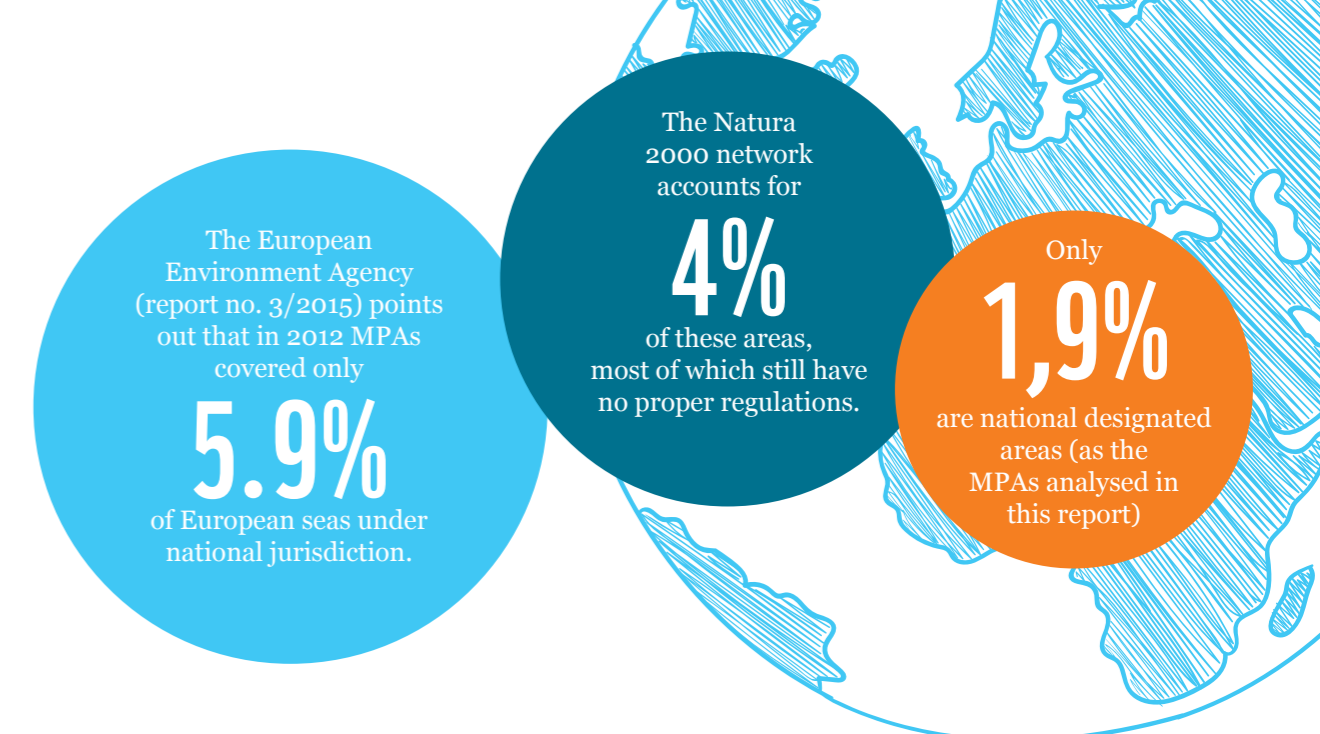


Ocean protection in Portugal

Portugal is a signatory to international agreements. As a traditionally maritime nation, the sea is a priority.

Over the last decade, thanks to global recognition of the importance of ocean conservation, several MPAs were established in Portugal. Along with the other States that signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Portugal has committed to establish new MPAs in priority places by 2020 towards the 10% AICHI target. Portugal has predominantly coastal MPAs, and only more recently (like other countries) has defined MPAs in ocean areas.

The IUCN Protected Planet Report 2016 reports that 10.2% of the waters under jurisdiction are already MPAs. In global oceans, however, including the high seas, the coverage is only 4.1%. Less than 1% of the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) are protected.



An efficient MPA depends on several factors

Recognition of the successes and failures of the MPA implementation process in Portugal is essential for an understanding of the steps required to establish efficient MPAs, rather than “paper parks” that create a false sense of protection and expectation.

The role of the various entities responsible for the governance of MPAs needs to be clarified, particularly regarding the designation, regulation, management, supervision and monitoring of these areas. Effective and appropriate governance is crucial for efficient MPAs.

An efficient MPA is designed according to the best possible knowledge and specific purposes that guide its location, management and planning. The MPA's regulations and management plans should specify protection measures that fulfil conservation purposes.

Protection measures should be defined by inclusive and participatory processes that consider the socioeconomic and ecological context at a local, regional and national level. These measures should be actively implemented, to be efficient, complied with and accepted.

These protective measures, as well as the whole implementation process, must be monitored to understand whether management is effective and sufficient so that the MPA meets the preservation purposes and its benefits are recognised.

To make all these steps clear and effective, governance should be clearly understood by all the interested parties, and the tasks of all the responsible entities should be clarified and appropriate to the MPA's operation. Without good governance and efficient management, it is unlikely that environmental management and conservation initiatives have social, economic or ecological success.



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The role of WWF, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa

WWF, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa are committed to contributing to the implementation of efficient MPAs with effective and equitable management, as well as with the achievement of the goal of 10% of the oceans protection. In this way, WWF in Portugal, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa intend to strengthen their contribution to **more and better MPAs in Portugal**.

The MPA X-ray report – a diagnosis of Portuguese MPAs

The WWF report “**MPA X-ray – a diagnosis of Portuguese MPAs**”, considers the type of protection, distribution and area of the MPAs in Portugal as well as their governance model. The report is supported by the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa.

The report focuses on national, regional and local MPAs (only nationally designated) and clarifies some of the more relevant and urgent questions about the MPAs.

The report also encourages the Portuguese Government and the institutions responsible for the implementation of more efficient MPAs to ensure the ocean's sustainability.

The “health” of Portuguese MPAs

The report

- Summarises information about all national, regional and local MPAs, particularly their area, purposes, and allowed activities.
- Estimates the number of MPAs, their percentage of coverage and types of protection (following two types of MPA classification) by region (Mainland, Azores and Madeira) and area (territorial sea: up to 12mn; EEZ: from 12 to 200mn; extended shelf area: beyond 200mn).
- Focuses on MPA governance, since this is an essential issue for an efficient and effective implementation of MPAs. The report analyses the entities responsible for MPAs and how the sharing of responsibilities between entities is processed. For this, information on the most relevant legislation was collected through informal contacts with the entities and a questionnaire.
- Presents a set of recommendations that contribute to improving the efficiency of existing and future MPAs.
- Focuses on MPAs from the MPA national network, but the recommendations are applicable to other classified areas, particularly to the Natura 2000 Network that is currently a European priority.



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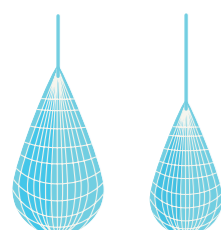
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Diagnosis of Portuguese MPAs - outcomes

MPAs in numbers



- Portugal has 71 national or local Marine Protected Areas, covering **3% of the areas under national jurisdiction** including the continental shelf, but **0.8% of territorial waters and EEZ**.
- Portugal has **4.7%** of its territorial waters covered by MPAs. The international commitment of 10% of land area is still far from being reached.
- Most of the area covered by MPAs is **moderately protected**, the least regulated MPA class (2.5% of the whole Portuguese territorial waters, 0.52% of the area under jurisdiction excluding the continental shelf, and 2.9% of the whole area including the continental shelf). **This type of MPA allows a variety of fishing gears and activities with potential impact on species and ecosystems.**
- Several MPAs in the Azores **have no regulations for fisheries** (57% of MPAs of the territorial waters and 77% of the MPAs beyond territorial waters).
- Only **0.1% of the territorial waters in the Azores and 3% in the territorial waters of the Continent** are total protection areas (no fisheries). The values decrease to **0.002% and 0.17%**, respectively if we include the adjacent EEZ. In the Madeira region there are no MPAs which exclude fisheries.
- Of the whole **Portuguese territorial waters**, only **1%** is a total fisheries exclusion zone. This value decreases to **0.03%** if we **include the whole EEZ**.
- Several Portuguese MPAs do not prevent other activities with a potential impact on the seabed, in particular seabed exploration or aquaculture.



- MPAs **without more restricted regulations** than the surrounding areas do not confer a higher level of protection within their limits than areas without protection. They create **expectations** and a **false** sense of conservation, and are no more than **“paper parks”**.
- The **Natura 2000 Network** locations for the marine environment do not have regulatory or management plans (only general recommendations), being currently integrated into the nationally defined MPAs or considered as **“paper parks”**.

Governance

Answers to the questionnaire sent to the entities involved in MPA management in Portugal:

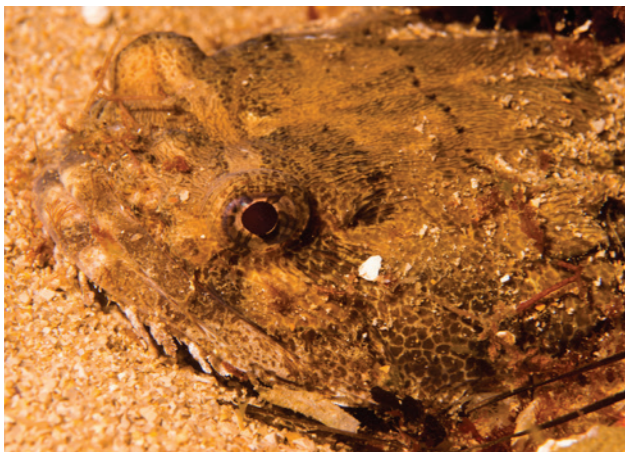
- Entities claimed the following responsibilities concerning MPAs: regarding territorial waters, from the total answers received, 12 entities for proposal/designation, 13 for regulation, 10 for management/implementation and 14 for supervision. The fact that the answers were different from each other, **suggests that the governance model is not clear even for the entities with competencies in MPAs.**
- In relation to the sharing of expertise between entities, most respondents stated: a) that there is no sharing of competencies; b) they did not know or did not answer. This result **suggests that communication between entities with competencies in MPAs is unclear, insufficient or inefficient.**
- The most revealing result was about what could be improved/changed in the sharing of competencies. The clear majority mentioned that there could be better coordination between entities, as well as clarification of how this should be done. In addition, most entities pointed out the need for a means of building capacity, especially in supervision, which was mentioned as being insufficient. **This result reinforces the need for the clarification of competencies between entities, including better distribution or concentration of resources for the efficient implementation and supervision of MPAs.**

Governance model

- A simplified governance model was developed and presented to the main entities responsible for the various regions, to **help clarify existing measures and to promote the required changes**.
- The analysis of the existing legislation, of the answers to the questionnaires and informal contacts with the entities **strengthened the idea that in some cases responsibilities are unclear, particularly when shared between these entities** (national, regional, and between Government regions).
- The lack of clarification in sharing processes can create irregularities, necessitating an urgent resolution of the situation.
- The analysis also suggests that it is urgent to clarify how the **MPAs management plans** are to be integrated in new **maritime spatial planning instruments**, as a result of the new territorial management paradigm that replaces Protected Areas spatial planning.
- In addition to the need for clarification in **designation, regulations and management, supervision** of Portuguese MPAs is poorly addressed and poorly clarified.
- **Monitoring of the expected effects** of MPAs is also disregarded in legal and operational terms.
- Clarification of the processes involved in the designation and implementation of MPAs is essential to guide the creation of new MPAs, so that they comply with the Portuguese Government's commitment on international agreements (including the goal of 10% of the marine area covered by MPAs by 2020).



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- In addition, to ensure that existing and future MPAs are not reduced to “paper parks”, **the various stages of their implementation** (design, regulation, management and supervision) must be guaranteed and therefore clarified. This would be the first step towards efficient and effective MPAs (a commitment that is also part of the 10% goal for 2020).



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Conclusions

- MPAs must be effective, efficient and equitably managed
- Many Portuguese MPAs are “paper parks” without appropriate regulations for the effective conservation of species and habitats
- The lack of MPAs’ own funding is a significant limitation
- Existing and future MPAs should be effective tools for oceans conservation, resulting in benefits for ecosystems and people
- More efficient supervision and management should more highly integrate MPA local users, and ensure better cooperation and sharing of experiences between managers and between these and other relevant players
- The competencies of each entity, as well as communication between them is not clear
- A simple, clear and validated governance model is necessary
- There is some confusion and uncertainty regarding the new territorial management paradigm
- Own funding is needed, as well as the allocation of clear responsibilities so that MPA objectives are achieved.



WWF, Oceano Azul Foundation and Oceanário de Lisboa: recommendations for Portuguese MPAs



- Portugal should increase the quantity and quality of its MPAs to meet its international commitments. This process should be based on the best information and scientific knowledge available.
- The type of protection of existing and future MPAs must be appropriate. Most of the MPAs should be highly protected rather than moderately protected.
- A significant increase in the total protection area is recommended, i.e., the areas without any activity (for example, in the Mediterranean there is already a commitment of 2%). These areas promote important services and goods to the surrounding areas and are essential for the conservation of species and habitats.
- To comply with international commitments and good practice recommendations, MPAs must be properly implemented, with efficient management and supervision. This step is essential so that they can be effective and efficient MPAs and not just “paper parks”.
- The Natura 2000 network for the marine environment must be strengthened with efficient and effective regulations and management, and should be subject to the same concerns as the national MPAs.
- A public database of Portuguese MPAs should be created, allowing their regular assessment.
- There is an urgent need for clarification and simplification of the Portuguese MPAs governance model, which includes the definition and understanding of the responsibilities and competencies shared between entities.
- Means and resources should be reinforced and/or these should be efficiently concentrated or shared, particularly in implementation and supervision.
- Key local stakeholders should be integrated in management (e.g. co-management) and surveillance to promote the success of MPAs, particularly in a country with reduced supervision means.



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- There is an urgent need to clarify the regulatory and management plans of MPAs under the new maritime spatial planning instruments, following the legal transformation of the spatial plans for protected areas.
- To ensure that existing and future MPAs are not reduced to “paper parks”, the various stages of their implementation (designation, regulation, management and supervision) must be ensured and clarified. This would be the first step for efficient and effective MPAs.
- Appropriate funding for MPAs must be provided so that they can be efficiently implemented.
- A national authority that collects information, coordinates management and guides MPAs conservation policies must be recognised.
- Each MPA must define the responsible management entity, supported by other entities, with competencies and means to implement protection measures, define and manage their needs as well as the role of the other entities, particularly regarding supervision.
- The elaboration of an MPA implementation best practices guide is recommended. This may be based on the results and recommendations of this diagnosis.
- The creation of a Portuguese MPAs managers network (PtPAN) is suggested, with the collaboration of stakeholders like the MedPAN network. This would contribute to overcoming many of the weaknesses detected in this assessment.
- Together with the different national stakeholders, the recommendations of this report may be prioritized in phases and, therefore, a roadmap of the Portuguese MPAs for 2020 could be developed. A national commitment should be undertaken, just like the international commitments, which should be mandatory and independent from political directions.
- A listing and assessment of the ecosystem services provided by Portuguese MPAs is suggested, which can help to increase awareness about the MPAs.
- WWF in Portugal, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa offer to contribute to the success of the proposed recommendations and associated initiatives.



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This report is part of the Fisheries and Oceans programme of WWF Mediterranean in Portugal; it has been co-funded by the Oceano Azul Foundation and by the Oceanário de Lisboa. WWF's Fisheries and Oceans programme aims to protect marine ecosystems and resources so that people can live in harmony with nature.

For further information: www.wwf.pt

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This executive summary is part of the full report "MPAs XRayAssessment of Portuguese Marine Protected Areas" of Bárbara Horta e Costa (consultant), with review of Angela Morgado e Rita Sá, WWF. February 2017