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**Progress Report on the implementation of the Action Plan
for conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles**

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I. INTRODUCTION

In order to evaluate the progress made in implementing the Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles, with reference to each target set in the timetable, regular revisions are vital. The Action Plan is usually reviewed and updated every five years and submitted to the meetings of the National Focal Points for SPAs, on the basis of National Reports provided by the Mediterranean Countries which are Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and RAC/SPA reports focusing on regional aspects of the Plan.

Since its adoption, the Action Plan has been revised twice. The first time was in 1999, when the updated version of the Action Plan was adopted at the 11th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in Malta. The second revision was in 2007, where a new update of the Action Plan was submitted to the 8th Meeting of the RAC/SPA National Focal Points in Palermo (June 2007). On that occasion, the updated timetable for the period 2008-2013 was adopted.

In 2013, the 11th Meeting of the Focal Points for SPAs will take place in Morocco (2-5 July). On that occasion, RAC/SPA will present the Progress Report of Activities for the implementation of the 2008-2013 Action Plan for Marine Turtles. The updated timetable for the period 2014-2019 will be discussed and adopted.

This report intends to give a general overview of the progress made by the Mediterranean countries involved, and outline the difficulties and challenges still existent, since the last evaluation in 2007. A draft of the 2014-2018 timetable is also provided.

II. PROGRESS IN INCREASING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TURTLES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SINCE THE UPDATE OF THE ACTION PLAN IN 2007 AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

As indicated in the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles, RAC/SPA has to assist and support the regular organization of Marine Turtles Mediterranean Conferences as well as experts meetings on specific topics in order to encourage and strengthen regional and international cooperation and coordination in the field. Marine Turtle Mediterranean Conferences, to be held every three years in a different Mediterranean country, represent a time of shared knowledge and expertise among researchers and organizations involved in marine turtle conservation and looking for a common strategy on protecting these species.

After the finalization of the Action Plan in Arta 1998, RAC/SPA, in cooperation with the Secretariats of the Bonn and Bern Conventions, organized several Mediterranean Conferences on Marine Turtles, and assisted a number of researchers to participate. It was also instrumental in publishing the Proceedings, which are available for downloading from its website¹.

Since 2007, two very successful conferences on marine turtles in the Mediterranean have taken place in Hammamet (Tunisia) in 2008 and in Naples (Italy) in 2011. Compared to the first two editions (Rome, 2001 and Kemer, 2005) the number of participants at the third and fourth Marine Turtle Mediterranean Conferences increased considerably and new countries belonging to the Mediterranean area. In particular, the 4th Mediterranean Conference had 180 participants, mainly young students from universities and research institutes, 30 of whom with grants from RAC/SPA. The Mediterranean was represented by 15 countries as well as by well-known experts and observers from the United States and Asia.

The work showcased at the Conference greatly facilitated increased international understanding on Mediterranean marine turtle conservation and protection. More than 30% of the work presented was the result of international collaboration and demonstrates the widespread awareness among Mediterranean people of the need for common strategies and action plans for the survival of this seriously threatened species.

Further, the Mediterranean Specialists Group continued to meet during the annual Symposia on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation, hosted every year by the International Sea Turtle Society (ISTS), with workshops specifically addressed to the Mediterranean area. The 34th Symposium on marine turtles will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 10-17 April 2014.

The progress in molecular techniques has further improved our knowledge of the genetic composition of Mediterranean source populations as well as mixed foraging aggregations. By using extended mitochondrial sequences, it was shown that the colonization of the Mediterranean by marine turtles occurred in the Pliocene, much earlier than previously thought. The first genetic study of the Libyan loggerhead nesting population revealed that Libya hosts one of the original populations with a high diversity. These studies provide fundamental background knowledge for the conservation of genetic diversity in the

¹http://www.rac-spa.org/marine_turtles

Mediterranean, especially by identifying important management units, including small nesting populations such as in Calabria (southern Italy). Further work with long sequences needs to be applied to key foraging aggregations and other nesting populations. New molecular markers were also used in a study on green turtle structure revealing a much higher genetic variability than previously known using standard molecular tools.

While monitoring of the already known and well-established nesting beaches is ongoing, some new nesting sites used by very few individuals were also identified, including small and occasional nesting sites in the western Mediterranean, such as in Tunisia, on Italian mainland and islands and in Spain. An extraordinarily rare event was a nesting in France, which still represents the northernmost nesting site for loggerhead turtles worldwide. Nesting activities in Syria, Lebanon and Libya are still being monitored, although these efforts are sometimes hindered by delicate political developments in these areas as well as in other countries.

Yet a comprehensive picture of nesting in these countries is expected soon. It is of the utmost importance that all nesting sites be regularly controlled and data collections continued so that future population trends and climate change effects can be assessed.

First attempts to investigate impacts of climate change have been made but these studies are still in their infancy and not very conclusive. It is possible that hatchling production, egg maturation, nesting site and microhabitat selection as well as sex ratios are all affected. Yet these investigations need to be stepped up to better understand the overall effect on the Mediterranean turtle populations.

While new foraging areas are getting better known through at-sea monitoring and satellite tracking programmes, the importance of the Tunisian plateau as a foraging ground for many nesting populations, including Italy, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, Libya and Tunisia itself has been highlighted in many studies. Urgent protection measures of this area should follow these research results. Satellite tracking has also revealed migration corridors along the whole North African coast for those turtles travelling from the east to their foraging and wintering sites, as well as seasonal corridors connecting Greece with both the Adriatic Sea and the Tunisian Shelf. The at-sea behavior of juvenile turtles is also progressing and it is expected that soon more information of pelagic key areas and the factors that influence turtle dispersal and distribution will be available. The use of telemetric devices especially tags that are integrated with high-resolution GPS sensors as well as other sensors that collect information on turtle behavior represent promising tools to investigate aspects of turtle biology still unexplored.

Evaluation of fishery by catch data indicate over 132,000 captures per year, with probably over 44,000 incidental deaths per year, while the number of intentional kills remains unknown although it seems to be substantial in some areas. Small vessels using set net, demersal longline or pelagic longline represent most of the Mediterranean fleet and probably cause more deaths than large vessels using bottom trawl or pelagic longline. Assessments based on interactions, mortality, intentional killing, size and turtle populations indicate that Mediterranean green and loggerhead turtles are more affected by fishing gear such as bottom trawler, demersal longlines and set nets, by small-scale fisheries, and by fishing in the eastern basin.

III.REGIONAL ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE 2008-2013 ACTION PLAN

In 2009 RAC/SPA published the *Guidelines for setting up and management of specially protected areas for marine turtles in the Mediterranean*, in the framework of the Regional Project for the Development of a Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MPAs) Network through boosting the creation and management of Mediterranean MPAs (MedMPAnet Project).

This is one of the targets of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles (A2 – Protection and management of habitats; a. Elaborate Guidelines for the management of Protected Areas including key habitats) that has been achieved.

The document was prepared by Andreas Demetropoulos, President of the Cyprus Wildlife Society (CWS), on the basis of long experience gained in implementing, setting up and management measures for Protected Areas. Guidelines for the management of Protected Areas were elaborated many years ago, in Cyprus, to cover both the terrestrial and the marine parts of Protected Areas for turtles, including mating, pre-nesting, nesting and foraging areas for juvenile, sub-adult and adult green turtles. Further, Cyprus guidelines for setting up and managing Natura 2000 sites, under the provisions of the Habitats Directive, which include not only the site itself but the surrounding areas as well in which projects and programmes need to be evaluated prior to their permission, were considered for the elaboration of the RAC/SPA guidelines.

The 2008 publication: *Addendum 1 to the 1995 Manual of Marine Turtle Conservation in the Mediterranean*² should also be mentioned.

In 2009 RAC/SPA published the *Guidelines for developing marine turtle stranding networks and for data collection Protocols*³. The document was prepared by Mohamed Nejmeddine Bradai, Maître de Recherche/Biodiversité des Vertébrés marins, Directeur du Laboratoire Biodiversité et Biotechnologie Marines - Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM), within the framework of implementing the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles. It aims at helping countries develop marine turtle stranding networks and drafting protocols for data collection via stranded turtles (Actions B2 Monitoring; c. Elaboration of Protocols for Data Collection on Stranding; d. Setting up stranding networks).

RAC/SPA continued to assist to Mediterranean countries in capacity building by organizing and promoting training courses for scientists, biologists, researchers and vets. The 10-day, hands-on course on Turtle Conservation Techniques and Beach Management, at Lara Reserve, in Cyprus, is still held every year, with one or two sessions each year, upon request.

²Demetropoulos A. and M. Hadjichristophorou, UNEP RAC/SPA, IUCN, CWS, MANRE/Fisheries Department Cyprus.22 pp.

³UNEP (DEPI)/MED WG.331/9

These courses were originally organised for RAC/SPA Mediterranean scientists, but in the last few years trainees sponsored by the Bern Convention and other supranational organisations have been included and people from Eritrea, Nigeria and Senegal have attended in addition to Mediterranean scientists.

Since 2007, two Training Courses on Marine Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation, organised by RAC/SPA in cooperation with the Stazione Zoologica of Naples (SZN), were held in Bagnoli, at the Rescue Center, in 2007 and 2009. Many people from Libya, Tunisia, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, Croatia, France, Greece, Israel, Morocco etc. participated.

IV. EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MARINE TURTLES BY THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

To assess implementation of the 2008-2013 timetable of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles, RAC/SPA sent the Focal Points for SPAs of all the Mediterranean countries a questionnaire (**Annex 1**) with eight questions specifically concerning the major targets included within the 2008-2013 Action Plan.

Further, a different type of questionnaire (**Annex 2**), based on the timetable of the Action Plan, was sent to several regional organizations, Action Plan partners, and Multilateral Environmental Agreements. The purpose was to collect relevant contributions from other subjects and institutions deeply involved in marine turtle conservation, and identify the actions carried out in order to comply with the targets established by the Action Plan (2008-2013).

Both the questionnaires were examined, focusing in particular on the progress made by the Mediterranean countries since the last update of the Action Plan (2007) and on the difficulties and challenges still existing. The results of this analysis are reported below.

A. Evaluation of The Questionnaire Sent to the Focal Points For SPAs (Annex 1**)**

Among the Mediterranean countries consulted, sixteen Focal Points answered the RAC/SPA request for information, in particular: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the EU.

The European Union also submitted the questionnaire and clearly stated that most of the targets set in the Action Plan, namely the creation of marine turtle rescue centres, the compiling of an inventory of nesting beaches, tagging and awareness-raising programmes, elaboration of a National Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles, are the exclusive competence of its member states. Yet, with reference to the said programmes, the European Union provides state members with financial support through European Projects (LIFE).

1. Legal Protection for marine turtle

Except for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Monaco, all the fourteen countries consulted said they had enforced national legislation, to comply with international and Community regulations aimed at sea turtle conservation and protection (Habitat Directive – Annex IV). In some cases, already existing legislation for environment protection was amended, as in Egypt with Law 4/1994 for environmental protection amended by Law 9/2009. Some measures are addressed to specific areas of the country, as in Spain, where the Directorate of the Autonomous Community of Valencia adopted a programme of action for the conservation of cetaceans and marine turtles (Resolution of 12/2/2011).

Remark: Although generally there seems to be adequate legislation, appropriate implementation and enforcement are generally insufficient

2. Measures to reduce incidental catch

National measures implemented to reduce incidental catch are often directed to specific protected areas of the country, as in Greece, where fishing regulations are enforced especially in the marine area of the Zakynthos National Park (these regulations are included in the Presidential Decree establishing the NP), and Cyprus, where fishing regulations are limited to SPAs and mainly during the nesting seasons. In Lebanon, mitigation measures and regulations were developed by the Ministry of Environment (MoE), in 2012, to regulate fishing activities and speedboat within the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR). These regulations include measures to preserve the surrounding areas of the TCNR marine turtle nesting sites.

Outreach education and awareness raising programmes mainly directed to fishermen and measure to reduce incidental catch are ongoing in Israel and Tunisia, as well as in Greece and Cyprus, where non-governmental organizations, like the ARCHELON society and the Cyprus Wildlife Society (CWS), are very active through communication programmes.

The countries of the north Mediterranean are still working implementing of fishing regulations and the measures for reducing incidental catch are under development (Italy and France). Spain recalled the recommendations of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean XXXV/2011/10 which reproduce the main conclusions and management advice emanating from the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) as included in the report of its thirteenth session (Document GFCM:XXXV/2011/Inf.6). Among other things, the SAC establishes a code of good conduct for fishermen, and fishing-line cutters to free entangled turtles. Yet the said recommendation is not binding.

Remark: In general, the measures taken are too Sector-based and, where existent, often not binding due mainly to fishermens reluctance to accept constraints and modifications both to the type of fishing gear, techniques and strategies to be used and to the fishing areas to be restricted. Further, the lack of financial resources, administrative management and technical capabilities, do not help countries to develop valuable alternatives to dangerous fishing methods. Much has to be done to meet the target of the Action Plan, especially in terms of communication and stakeholder's involvement.

3. Creation of marine turtle rescue centres

Except for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, all the countries questioned have set up, or are going to create, marine turtle rescue centres. Most of these facilities are set up and managed by non-governmental organizations and research institutes; (ARCHELON in Greece, CWS in Cyprus, the Stazione Zoologica of Naples, in Italy, the *Musée Océanographique* of Monaco, and the *Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer- INSTM*, in Tunisia,), in collaboration with the local municipalities. National and regional administrations are even more involved in the process: in Spain the Infrastructure, Planning and Environment Department of the Autonomous Community of Valencia runs three rescue centres; in Greece, a nationwide marine turtle stranding network is run by ARCHELON in cooperation with the Ministry of the Merchant Marine in Italy, since 2007, rescue centres require the authorization of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) to operate. Financial difficulties are signaled in Egypt, where the creation of rescue centres is ongoing, and in Montenegro, which also reported a lack of adequate legislation framework and technical capacities necessary to create rescue centres.

Staff, managers and leaders of most of these rescue centres, as well as vets and biologists from other African Countries, were trained at the Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn of Naples, in Italy – *Training Course on sea turtle conservation and rehabilitation* organized by RAC/SPA in 2007 and 2009.

Remark: Need for providing adequate expertise and necessary assistance to set up rescue centres as well as regular training courses on marine turtle conservation and rehabilitation, in order to train and update Mediterranean Rescue Centre staff and managers.

4. Creation of SPAs in the Party's territory to conserve marine turtle populations and/or their potential habitats

Most sites that are important for the presence of marine turtles species have been included in the Natura 2000 ecological network of the European Community. The Infrastructure, Planning and Environment Department of the Autonomous Community of Valencia, in Spain, has declared within the Natura 2000 network four sites which host populations of *Caretta caretta*, and which were identified as Sites of Community Importance (SCI). In this regard, it is important to recall the Spanish LIFE+INDEMARES project, whose aim is to contribute to the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Spanish seas by identifying valuable areas for the Natura 2000 Network.

In 2010, the Akamas area in Cyprus was proposed by the Government to the European Commission as a Natura 2000 site (CY4000010 – Chersonisos Akama) both as a SCI and SPA. This includes the already protected Lara/Toxeftra area and, in addition, a small part of the Asprokremmos beach on the north coast of the site. The management regulations under the Natura status are under preparation. The site includes nesting and mating areas for *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* species and foraging and wintering areas mainly for *Chelonia mydas* in Chrysochou Bay.

Further, it has to be signaled that In Turkey, 21 Marine Turtle nesting sites are protected by legal framework, while in Lebanon management plans for two SPAs were recently ratified, namely for the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR), in 2012 and for Palm Islands Nature Reserve (PINR) in 2009, which include measures and guidelines to protect marine turtles

critical habitats. The TCNR will enforce this season, in 2013, the use of green lights instead of white lights inside its touristic zone in order to prevent light pollution for marine turtles.

In Tunisia, the project concerning the creation of a SPA for marine turtle conservation in the nesting sites of Kuriat is under development, even with difficulties linked to the legal framework.

As for Montenegro, administrative, financial and technical problems currently do not favor the identification of SPAs for the conservation of sea turtles. Yet, their involvement in the NETCET project, a cross border cooperation programme aimed at strengthening sustainable development capabilities of the Adriatic Region, will improve knowledge on sea turtles conservation, hotspots and threats.

Since France and Monaco have no nesting sites, there is a lack of information and knowledge on how and whether marine turtles use the marine habitats included within the French and Monegasque Mediterranean coasts, apart from nesting purposes.

Remark: Generally, Marine Protected Areas are recognized and included within the Natura 2000 network but it is still unclear whether those areas are intended for marine turtle conservation (whether the nesting and foraging areas, as well as the site with the major aggregation of sea turtles, are considered). To this end, monitoring and research programmes for identifying nesting and breeding sites, as well as foraging and wintering areas in marine habitats, are strongly recommended.

5. Inventory of turtle nesting beaches

Inventories of the most known turtle nesting beaches were compiled in Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Italy. Such inventories are absent in Spain and France, where there are no representative nesting beaches but just a few exceptional cases reported (in Spain: Vera Beach in 2010; France: south of Porto Vecchio, Corsica, in 2002 and Saint Tropez in 2006).

In Libya, since 2005, the Environmental General Authority (EGA) has established a long-term monitoring programme of marine turtle nesting activity (the Libyan Sea turtle Program), in particular on the beaches of Gulf of Sirte, Misratah, Benghazi, Aljabal Alakhdar and Tubroq sites. This long-term programme is supported by RAC/SPA.

In Israel, a comprehensive survey of all turtle nests in beaches is carried out annually by the Israel Nature and Park Authority (INPA) rangers daily.

The management plans of the Lebanese SPAs, namely TCNR and PINR, include a protocol and monitoring method for data collection on nesting activity and it is being executed by the reserve's team.

Remark: In some countries, namely Italy, France and Spain, where, recently, nesting has occurred occasionally, it would be desirable to develop and strengthen monitoring programmes to better understand the state and evolution of its occurrence. Those programmes would require administrative management and financial support to be carried out.

6. Participation in tagging programmes

Except for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt and Montenegro, tagging programmes are being developed, or under development, in all the countries examined. In Lebanon, the TCNR, in cooperation with RAC/SPA, prepared in 2012 a survey for the conservation of marine turtle population using methods such as, tagging, data logging, satellite telemetry, Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Remark: It is recommended that RAC/SPA adopt of a common uniform tagging system, to be followed and used by all the Mediterranean countries concerned. In particular, it is suggested that these should be only one standard ID tag type and model for all turtles released into the Mediterranean. The country and rescue center codes, progressive ID number assigned to each animal, address and phone number of the central organization (e.g. RAC/SPA) should be indicated on the tag. Will help clear and fast identification and classification of Mediterranean marine turtles. Use of a common language.

As mentioned in the *Progress Report on RAC/SPA activities*, presented during the Tenth meeting of Focal Points for SPAs (Marseilles-France, 17-20 May 2011), and in order to achieve *Objective 3 – Reduced Loss of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity*, RAC/SPA has assisted Turkey and Tunisia with tagging equipment⁴. It is desirable that the same type of equipment be used by all the Mediterranean countries with tagging programmes.

7. Awareness, information and training on marine turtle conservation

Awareness and information activity concerning marine turtle conservation is very strong in all the countries examined and is mainly directed at school-children, fishermen and stakeholders, SPAs rangers, and tourists visiting the Marine Protected Areas, nesting beaches and Aquarium.

Many of the awareness programmes and activities are developed and run by the marine turtle NGOs and conservation societies and environmental institutions working in the field, like ARCHELON and MEDASSET in Greece, CEST Med in France, and CWS in Cyprus.

Remark: The EU provides countries with financial support for this kind of activity. But, locally, there is a general lack of resources, as well as of a regulatory framework, due to the economic crisis.

8. National Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles

The elaboration of National Action Plans for the conservation of marine turtles is generally in process in several Mediterranean countries, except for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Monaco, Montenegro and Slovenia. Unlike Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Libya, Spain, Turkey, that have already developed National Action Plans, other Countries such as France, Greece, Italy and Lebanon are still working on this, in collaboration with the Ministries concerned.

⁴“Rapport sur l’Etat d’Avancement des Activités du CAR/ASP”, IV Objectif 3 – Perte de Biodiversité Marine et côtière réduite – IV.6. Principales réalisations – 9. Assistance aux pays pour la mise en œuvre du plan d’action relatif aux tortues marines avec les organisations qualifiées.

In particular, it has to be said that:

- In Greece: ARCHELON, in cooperation with the three responsible Ministries, has undertaken the drafting of a National Plan of Action for the protection of the species, including nesting beaches and open sea areas
- France has not yet structured a National Action Plan but different studies and technical observations have been done to this end. The French Ministry has provided financial support mainly for monitoring and fishing programmes
- Since 2007, the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) has adopted a series of measures, at national level, for the protection and conservation of marine turtles, engaging all those concerned (regions, research institutes, SPAs, environmental associations, scientific societies, port authority, and forestry units).

The final target is developing of a National Plan for the conservation of the three marine turtle species present in Italian waters. To this purpose, a Memorandum of Understanding between the bodies involved has been signed. A National Action Plan was commissioned by the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, (IMELS) for the National Herpetological Society and this Action Plan was also presented to the regional administrations, many of which have expressed their voluntary commitment to abide by the Action Plans content.

Further, national guidelines for the handling and holding of marine turtles for rehabilitation and scientific purposes were elaborated by a group of national experts, coordinated by ISPRA under the strict supervision of the Italian Ministry for the Environment. These guidelines were presented to the regional administrations, many of which have expressed their voluntary commitment to abide by the national guideline recommendations⁵.

⁵http://94.86.40.85/home_it/menu.html?lang=&menu=/menu/menu_attivita/Tutela_della_flora_e_della_fauna_marina.html&menuItem=/menu/menu_attivita/Tutela_della_flora_e_della_fauna_marina.html#piano

In **Table 1** below is summarized all the information provided by the Focal Points of 16 Contracting Parties.

Table 1

Country	Legislation	Reducing Incidental Catch	Rescue Centres	SPAs	Inventory of nesting beaches	Tagging programmes	Public awareness	National Action Plan
Bosnia Herzegovina	NA	NA	NA ⁶	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cyprus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Egypt	Yes	Yes	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
France	Yes	Ongoing	Yes	No	NA	Yes	Yes	Ongoing
Greece	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ongoing
Israel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ongoing
Lebanon	Yes	Yes	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ongoing
Libya	Yes	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monaco	No	No	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	No
Montenegro	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Ongoing	No
Slovenia	Yes	No	Other	No	NA	Yes	Yes	No
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tunisia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other
Turkey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EU	Yes	Yes	MS ⁷	yes	MS	MS	MS	MS

⁶ NA = Not applicable

⁷ MS = Competence of Member States.

B. Evaluation of the questionnaire sent to International and Regional Organizations, and Action Plan Partners (Annex 2)

In order to encourage and reward contributions to the work aimed at the implementing of the Action Plan, the Contracting Parties can at their ordinary meetings grant the title of Action Plan Partner to any organization (governmental, non-governmental, economic) that has carried out actions likely to help the conservation of marine turtles. The following Partners have answered to the questionnaire:

- For Greece, the ***Mediterranean Association to Save Sea Turtles (MEDASSET)***, an international non-governmental organization working since 1988 for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats within the Mediterranean
- For Cyprus, the ***Cyprus Wildlife Society (CWS)***, a no-profit non-governmental organization working since 1984 for the conservation of wildlife in Cyprus and the islands, the environment and the surrounding sea and focusing mainly on marine turtles and monk seals
- For Italy, the ***Zoological Station Anthon Dohrn of Naples (SZN)***, public research Institute working since 1872 in the field of marine biology and ecology, focusing mainly on marine organisms and their biodiversity
- for Tunisia, the ***Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM)***, a public research institute whose mission is to conduct research programs related directly or indirectly to the sea and its resources: fishing, agriculture, the assessed marine environment, sea technologies, oceanography, etc...

The contribution offered by the Partners above has been evaluated together with other non-official information obtained through informal communication with Turkey, Israel and Egypt. Further, the Proceedings of the last two Mediterranean Conferences on Marine Turtles⁸ and the IUCN report *Sea Turtles in the Mediterranean. Distribution, threats and conservation priority*⁹, have been considered for final and wider analysis.

Below are outlined the most relevant elements observed, with reference to the different macro-areas of the Action Plan:

1. Protection and management

MEDASSET has reported the production, submission and introduction of new legislation in Albania, the *Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles and their Habitats in Albania*, officially adopted through Ministerial Order (No. 596, 22.11.2012) of the Minister of the Environment, Forests & Water Administration, Mr. Fatmir Mediu. Further, steps for setting up a Rescue Centre in Albania, included in the said Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles and their Habitats, are ongoing.

⁸ Available at RAC/SPA website: http://www.rac-spa.org/marine_turtles

⁹Casale, P. and Margaritoulis, D. (Eds.) (2010) *Sea Turtles in the Mediterranean. Distribution, threats and conservation priority*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 294 pp.

Fishing regulations for marine turtle conservation are enforced only in a few countries and are often limited to specific Protected Areas and marine reserves and in particular seasons (Cyprus, Turkey, Greece and Israel). Those measures are expected to be applied to the management plans of Natura 2000 key areas, with some refinement for foraging areas for marine turtles. Much has to be still done with reference to those countries still absent in this field.

As for legislation to eliminate the deliberate killing of illegal trade in turtles, this is still a serious problem and a huge challenge especially for the countries in the southern part of the Mediterranean, where the illegal consumption of turtles and an illegal black market still exist.

During this biennium, RAC/SPA was contacted several times by international and national about the critical situation of marine turtles in the countries, where political situation is not stable (Egypt and Tunisia):

The death of about 100 turtles in Bradawl lake (northern Egypt) was reported and interviews with fishermen revealed that deliberate killing was the main cause. A report commissioned by MEDASSET and Nature Conservation Egypt (an Egyptian NGO) that will provide in-depth information about this tragic incident will be released very soon

The trade in turtles on the market was also reported in Tunisia: An awareness campaign was launched after this incident in all the fishing ports by the Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulic Resources and Fishing.

RAC/SPA has also organized a national awareness day (11 October 2013) in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, to which concerned stakeholders were invited.

Even if deliberate killing is forbidden, as in Turkey, there is a lack of systematic controls and an absence of coordination between the related implementing agencies.

Operations aimed at setting up new rehabilitation and rescue centres for marine turtles are ongoing in all the Mediterranean countries. Many centres have been established since 2007, like the Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Centre (DEKAMER), founded in 2008 on Dalyan beach in Turkey, and working all year long. Particular attention has been given to critical Mediterranean areas like Albania and Lebanon. In the first case, MEDASSET reported the ongoing plan to set up a rescue center in Albania. In Lebanon, with the collaboration of RAC/SPA, a project aiming at setting up a rescue centre at Sour, within the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve, is under development.

Financial support is needed to guarantee the setting up of new rescue centres, especially in the areas of the eastern Mediterranean coast (mainly in Israel, Lebanon and Albania).

2. Scientific research and monitoring

The level of scientific research and monitoring is really high and has been strengthened over the past few years, even under serious national financial constrictions. The Proceedings of

the two Marine Turtle Mediterranean Conferences, held in 2008 in Tunisia and 2011 in Naples, reveal progress in marine turtle scientific knowledge, and a striving towards international collaboration, which is extremely important in this field.¹⁰

Research and monitoring especially aimed at identifying key habitats used by marine turtles as new nesting and breeding sites, feeding and wintering areas and migratory routes, is urgent and must be implemented. Tagging and genetic analysis is generally being carried out even if more comprehensive studies are required. Further, as reported by Turkey, research groups usually work in a particular nesting area and need to get permission every year from the related Ministries. Legislation should guarantee long-term studies.

3. Public awareness and education

Public awareness is definitely one of the actions most implemented by the Mediterranean partners, thanks mainly to the several and numerous non-governmental associations and organizations working for marine turtle conservation. A vast typology of actions is reported, namely talks and visits to key areas for marine turtles, nesting beach clean-up and small garbage campaigns, the production and circulation of leaflets, posters, short films and animated training DVDs, public service announcements and spots, awareness exhibitions and public events aiming at bringing biodiversity conservation and the plight of the marine turtles to public attention.

Most of the programmes and activities focus mainly on crucial issues like marine turtles and habitat conservation, sustainable tourism, fisheries and marine litter and aim at educating, raising public awareness, and bringing together authorities and civil society for common goals. They are addressed to schools, students and teachers, tourists, marine area visitors, tour operators and hoteliers, and fishermen. Further, MAP and RAC/SPA, EU/EC, the Bern Convention, CITES, CBD, CMS, and national and local authorities are continuously being alerted and informed.

Remark: Campaigns and education programmes for fishermen, not limited to the production and circulation of leaflets and posters, are extremely necessary, especially in the eastern Mediterranean countries. These campaigns should attract the direct involvement and participation of fishermen by favoring an open interactive dialogue between the people involved. Financial support by national and local administrations is needed.

The marine Turtle Handling Guidebook for Fishermen, edited by RAC/SPA in 2001, should be updated and integrated with new and modern fishing methods and strategies.

4. Capacity building

Training courses on marine turtle conservation are well structured in some countries, especially in Cyprus and Naples¹¹.

¹⁰ See above (II. Progress in increasing knowledge on turtles in the Mediterranean since the update of the Action Plan in 2007 and future perspectives)

¹¹ See above (III. Regional Activities carried out in compliance with the 2008-2013 Action Plan).

The ***Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*** (also known as **CMS or the Bonn Convention**), the only global convention specializing in the conservation of migratory species, their habitats and migratory routes, responded to the questionnaire and gave information about a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning the Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa and aiming at safeguarding six marine turtle species, namely the Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), the Atlantic Ridley Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), the Ridley Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), the Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and the Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

The MoU, which is not legally binding, covers coastal areas from Morocco to South Africa including Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Portugal (Azores, Madeira), Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain (Canary Islands), Togo and the United Kingdom (Ascension Island, St. Helena).

Among the said states, Morocco is the only one which is also a member of the Mediterranean Action Plan. Yet, only Morocco's Atlantic coast is covered by the MoU. There is no MoU direct overlap between the two instruments (MoU and RAC/SPAs Mediterranean Action Plan).

CMS has not provided information about the implementation of the Action Plan.

In **Table 2** below the questionnaire sent to the partners has been reproduced, reporting the answers provided for each section and action. It is meant to give a global view of what had been done and achieved by the people involved. As shown in the Table, only the answers of CWS (Cyprus) , INSTM (Tunisia) , Medasset (Greece) and SZN (Italy) were given.

Table 2

Contribution to the work to apply the action plan by regional organizations /partners/Multilateral Environmental Agreements					
		CWS	MEDASSET	SZN	INSTM
A.PROTECTION ANDMANAGEMENT					
A.1Legislation	a.Protection of turtles–general species protection	yes	Yes	Yes	
	b.Enforce legislation to eliminate deliberate killing	Yes/ongoing	Yes	NA	
	c.Habitat protection and management (nesting, mating, feeding, wintering and key migration passages)	yes		NA	ongoing
A.2ProtectionandManagement ofhabitats		RAC/SPA	RAC/SPA	RAC/SPA	RAC/SPA
	a.Setting up and implementing management plans	yes	Ongoing	ongoing	
	b.Restoration of damaged nesting habitats		Yes	yes	yes
A.3MinimisationofincidentalCatches	a.Fishing regulations (depth,season,gear) in key areas	yes	Ongoing	NA	
	b.Modification of gear,methods and strategies Partners&Parties	yes	Ongoing	NA	
A.4OtherMeasuretoMinimisein dividualMortality	a.Setting up and/or improving operation of Rescue Centres	yes	Ongoing	Yes	
B.SCIENTIFICRESEARCHANDMONITORING					
B.1ScientificResearch	a.Identification of new mating,feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages;	Yes/ongoing	Yes	yes	
	b.Elaboration and execution of cooperative research projects of regional importance aimed at assessing the interaction between turtles and fisheries	Ongoing	Yes	No	
	c.Tagging and genetic analysis (as appropriate)	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
	d.Facilitatethenetworkingbetweenmanagedandmonitorednestingsites,aimingattheexchangeofinformationandexp erience	Yes	Ongoing	No	
B.2.Monitoring	a.Guidelines for long-term monitoring programmes for nesting beaches and standardisation of monitoring methods for nesting beaches, feeding and wintering areas	Yes	Yes	yes	
	b.Setting up and/or improving long-term monitoring programmes	Yes	Yes	yes	yes
	c.Elaboration of protocol for data collection on stranding	Yes	Ongoing	yes	yes
	d.Setting up stranding networks	yes	Ongoing	yes	
	e.Standardization of methodologies to estimate demographic parameters for population dynamics analysis,such as population modelling.		Yes	yes	
C.PUBLICAWARENESSANDEDUCATION					
	Public awareness and Information campaigns in particular for fishermen and local populations	Yes	Yes	yes	yes
D. CAPACITY BUILDINGyes					
	Training courses	Yes	Yes	yes	
E. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS					
	Elaboration of National Action Plans	yes	yes	ongoing	In progress

V. THE UPDATED DRAFT OF THE ACTION PLAN TIMETABLE

In the **Table 3** below the 2008-13 Action Plan timetable has been reproduced. For each action it has been suggested what should be confirmed and implemented by the Countries and partners and what still has to be done. Apparently, two actions were totally achieved A.2a and B.2 c. One Action has been added to the timetable, namely the proposal for a common tagging system to be used by all the Mediterranean Countries (tagging standardization). The finalized version of the implementation Timetable is given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/8.

Table 3

<i>Implementation Timetable (2014-2019)</i>			
<i>Actions</i>		<i>Deadline/periodicity</i>	<i>By whom</i>
A. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT			
A.1 Legislation	a. Protection of turtles—general species protection	To be confirmed	Parties
	b. Enforce legislation to eliminate deliberate killing	To be confirmed	Parties
	c. Habitat protection and management (nesting, mating, feeding, wintering and key migration passages)	To be confirmed	Parties
A.2 Protection and Management of habitats	a. Elaborate guidelines for the management of protected areas including key habitats	Achieved in 2009	RAC/SPA
	b. Setting up and implementing management plans	To be confirmed	Parties
	d. Restoration of damaged nesting habitats	To be confirmed	Parties
A.3 Minimisation of incidental Catches	a. Fishing regulations (depth, season, gear) in key areas	To be confirmed	Parties
	b. Modification of gear, methods and strategies	To be confirmed	Partners & Parties
A.4 Other Measure to Minimise individual Mortality	a. Setting up and/or improving operation of Rescue Centres	To be continued and implemented	Parties
B. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND MONITORING			
B.1 Scientific Research	a. Identification of new mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages	To be continued and implemented	Parties and partners
	b. Elaboration and execution of cooperative research projects of regional importance aimed at assessing the interaction between turtles and fisheries	To be continued and implemented	RAC/SPA, partners and Parties
	c. Tagging and genetic analysis (as appropriate)	To be continued	RAC/SPA, partners and Parties
	d. Facilitate the networking between managed and monitored nesting sites, aiming at the exchange of information and experience	Desirable	RAC/SPA
B.2 Monitoring	a. Guidelines for long-term monitoring programmes for nesting beaches and standardisation of monitoring methods for nesting beaches, feeding and wintering areas	To be done	RAC/SPA
	b. Setting up and/or improving long-term monitoring programmes	To be implemented	RAC/SPA and Parties
	c. Elaboration of protocol for data collection on stranding	Achieved	RAC/SPA
	d. Setting up stranding networks	To be implemented	Parties
	e. Standardization of methodologies to estimate demographic parameters for population dynamics analysis, such as population modelling.	To be done	RAC/SPA
	f. Tagging standardization	Desirable	RAC/SPA
C. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION			

	Public awareness and Information campaigns in particular for fishermen and local populations	to be strengthened	RAC/SPA, partners and Parties
D. CAPACITY BUILDING			
	Training courses	To be continued and updated	RAC/SPA, Parties and partners
E. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS			
	Elaboration of National Action Plans	To be continued and implemented	Parties
F. COORDINATION			
	a. Assessment of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan	Every two years	RAC/SPA and parties
	b. Cooperation in organizing the Mediterranean Conference on marine turtles	Every three years	RAC/SPA
	c. Updating the action plan on Marine Turtles	Five years	RAC/SPA

ANNEX 1

SPA AND BIODIVERSITY PROTOCOL: ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

Ref.	Description	Status	Remarks/comments	Difficulties/challenges	Remarks/comments
	Does the Party protect sea turtles by law?				
	Has the Party implemented measures to reduce incidental catch in marine turtles?				
	Has the Party created centres to rescue marine turtles?				
	In the Party's territory, are there SPA created to conserve marine turtle populations or their potential habitats?				
	Has the Party compiled an inventory of turtle nesting beaches?				
	Is the Party participating in tagging programmes?				
	Has the Party developed programmes for awareness raising, information and training concerning marine turtle conservation?				
	Does the Party have an action plan for the conservation of marine turtles?				

ANNEX 2

Action Plan for the conservation of Mediterranean Marines Turtles	
Contribution to the work to apply the action plan by regional organizations /partners/Multilateral Environmental Agreements	
Actions identified within the Timetable of the Action plan (2008-2013)	Please describe briefly any achieved/ongoing actions
A.PROTECTION ANDMANAGEMENT	
A.1Legislation	
a. Protection of turtles—general species protection	
b. Enforcelegislationtoeliminatedeliberatekilling	
c. Habitatprotectionandmanagement(nesting,mating,feeding,winteringandkeymigrationpassages)	
A.2ProtectionandManagementofhabitats	
a. Elaborateguidelinesforthemanagementofprotectedareasincludingkeyhabitats	
b. Settingupandimplementingmanagementplans	
c. Restorationofdamagednestinghabitats	
A.3MinimisationofincidentalCatches	
a. Fishingregulations(depth,season,gear)inkeyareas	
b. Modificationofgear,methodsandstrategiesPartners&Parties	
A.4OtherMeasuretoMinimiseindividualMortality	
a. Settingupand/orimprovingoperationofRescueCentres	
B.SCIENTIFICRESEARCHANDMONITORING	
B.1ScientificResearch	

a. Identification of new mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages	
b. Elaboration and execution of cooperative research projects of regional importance aimed at assessing the interaction between turtles and fisheries	
c. Tagging and genetic analysis (as appropriate)	
d. Facilitate the networking between managed and monitored nesting sites, aiming at the exchange of information and experience	
B.2. Monitoring	
a. Guidelines for long-term monitoring programmes for nesting beaches and standardisation of monitoring methods for nesting beaches, feeding and wintering areas	
b. Setting up and/or improving long-term monitoring programmes	
c. Elaboration of protocol for data collection on stranding	
d. Setting up stranding networks	
e. Standardization of methodologies to estimate demographic parameters for population dynamics analysis, such as population	
C. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION	
Public awareness and Information campaigns in particular for fishermen and local populations	
D. CAPACITY BUILDING	
Training courses	
E. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS	
Elaboration of National Action Plans	

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN
FOR CONSERVATION OF BIRD SPECIES LISTED IN ANNEX II OF THE
SPA/BD PROTOCOL**

Acronyms

AAO	Association “Les Amis des Oiseaux”, BirdLife Partner in Tunisia
AEWA	African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement
AP	Action Plan
APAL	Agence de Protection et d’Aménagement du Littoral, Tunisia (Agency for the Protection and Development of the Littoral, Tunisia)
BD	Biodiversity
BLI	BirdLife International
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CNRS	Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, France (National Scientific Research Center, France)
CoP	Conference of Parties
EAEA	Egyptian Agency for Environmental Affairs
EGA	Environment General Authority, Libya
HCEFLCD	Haut Commissariat des Eaux et des Forêts et de la Lutte contre la Désertification, Morocco (High Commissariat for Water, Forest and Combating Desertification)
IBA	Important Bird Areas
ISPRA Italy	Higher Institute for Scientific Research and Protection for the Environment,
IWC	International Waterbird Census
MedPO	Mediterranean Program Office
MoP	Meeting of Parties
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAP	National Action Plan
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ONCFS	Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage, France (National Office for Hunting and Wild Fauna, France)
PA	Protected Area
PIM	Initiatives pour les Petites Îles Méditerranéennes, France (Small Mediterranean Islands Initiative, France)
RAC	Regional Activity Center
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, UK
SAP-BIO	Strategic Action Program for the Conservation of Biological Diversity
SPA	Specially Protected Areas
TC	Technical Committee
TDV	Centre de recherche pour la conservation des zones humides méditerranéennes Tour du Valat, France (Research Center for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands Tour du Valat, France)
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
WG	Working Group
WI	Wetlands International
WMBD	World Migratory Bird Day
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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- **Action 2:** Protect legally all bird species in Annex II.
- **Action 3:** Adding new species to Annex II.
- **Action 4:** Public awareness and information campaigns:
- **Action 5:** Organise specific training courses and workshops in coordination with international and/or national NGOs.
- **Action 6:** Setting Up of a regional network for monitoring populations and distribution of Mediterranean threatened bird species, in co-ordination with other organizations.
- **Action 7:** Establishment of research programs to fill gaps in Knowledge of the threatened species.
- **Action 8:** Establishment of National Action Plans for the conservation of endangered and threatened bird species in the Mediterranean.
- **Action 9:** Identification of important bird areas on land and at sea.
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III) Participation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements in the implementation of the Action Plan since 2007

IV) Participation of Contracting Parties and Partners in the implementation of the Action Plan since 2007

V) Conclusions

VI) New Implementation Timetable

I) Introduction and background information

In 1995 the Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted a new Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas (SPA) and Biological Diversity (BD) in the Mediterranean. Annex II of this protocol lists endangered or threatened species found in the Mediterranean, including in its original version 15 bird species¹.

One of the principal objectives of this protocol is the adoption of measures to protect and manage species in order to maintaining or restoring populations to a favorable state of conservation.

During their meeting in Monaco in November 2001, the Contracting Parties asked the RAC/SPA to draw up a draft Action Plan (AP) for bird species listed in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol.

After a large consultation among international institutions, NGOs and experts throughout the Mediterranean, the draft AP N°1 was presented and discussed during the 6th meeting of the National Focal Points (NFPs) for SPAs in June 2003 in Marseilles and then approved and adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Catania, 2003)

Initial list of endangered and threatened birds species under Annex II 1995 - 2009		IUCN threats category
1	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i> (Scopoli, 1769)	Least Concern
2	<i>Falco eleonora</i> (Géné, 1834)	Least Concern
3	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Least Concern
4	<i>Larus audouinii</i> (Payraudeau, 1826)	Near Threatened
5	<i>Numenius tenuirostris</i> (Viellot, 1817)	Critically Endangered
6	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Least Concern
7	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i> (Bruch, 1832)	Vulnerable
8	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Least Concern
9	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> (Linnaeus, 1761)	Least Concern
10	<i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i> (Pallas, 1773)	Least Concern
11	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Least Concern
12	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i> (Brünnich, 1764)	Near Threatened
13	<i>Sterna albifrons</i> (Pallas, 1764)	Least Concern
14	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i> (Lesson, 1831)	Least Concern
15	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> (Latham, 1878)	Least Concern

¹http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/action_plans/bird.pdf

In 2005, at the first Mediterranean Symposium on ecology and conservation of the bird species listed under Annex II, which took place in Villanova I Geltrú (Spain) with the participation of 31 ornithologists and experts from 16 Mediterranean countries. Participants made several recommendations to the RAC/SPA, in particular the adding of 10 new threatened marine and coastal bird species.

List of endangered and threatened bird species added to Annex II on the 2009's amendment		IUCN
1	<i>Ceryl erudis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Least concern
2	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Least concern
3	<i>Charadrius leschenaultia columbinus</i> (Lesson, 1826)	Least concern
4	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Least concern
5	<i>Larus armenicus</i> (Buturlin, 1934)	Least concern
6	<i>Larus genei</i> (Breme, 1839)	Least concern
7	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i> (Temminck, 1820)	Least concern
8	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i> (Lowe, PR, 1921)	Critically endangered
9	<i>Sterna caspia</i> (Pallas, 1770)	Least concern
10	<i>Sterna nilotica</i> (Gmelin, JF, 1789)	Least concern

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention recommended to the RAC/SPA to regularly prepare progress reports, on the implementation of the AP, to be submitted to National Focal Points prior to their meetings.

In 2007 a first progress report on the implementation of the AP for the conservation of bird species listed in Annex II and a new Implementation Timetable considering the results of the first Mediterranean Symposium was presented to the Contracting Parties and adopted during their 8th Ordinary Meeting, held from 6 to 9 June 2007 in Palermo (Italy).

The present progress report is part of this monitoring, evaluation and review process. It mainly contains the results of the assessment conducted among the Regional and National networks of the AP. It is based on the activities carried out by the RAC/SPA, by Contracting Parties and by Partners in the Mediterranean countries since 2007.

The information here presented was compiled from the Progress Reports on RAC/SPA Activities as well as a questionnaire sent to all NFPs and to some partner organisations with the aim to collect further information on the implementation of the AP.

Add the time of the compilation of the present report, the Convention for Migratory Species (CMS) and the NFPs of the European Commission, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Libya, Monaco, Spain, Slovenia, Tunisia, and Turkey responded to the questionnaire as well as the following partner organizations: the Tour du Valat (TDV) a research centre for the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands, the French National Office for Hunting and Wild Fauna (ONCFS), the French "Conservatoire du littoral" and Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" (AAO), the BirdLife International Partner in Tunisia

This 2nd report on the implementation of the AP is comparing the progress made by the RAC/SPA and the Contracting Parties against the following workplan and timetable:

Action	Deadline	Implementation by
1. Development of guidelines to assist countries in their efforts to adequate legislative protection of endangered species	By year 2008	RAC/SPA
2. Protect legally all bird species in Annex II	By year 2008	Contracting Parties
3. Adding new species to Annex II	By year 2009	Contracting Parties and RAC/SPA
4. Public awareness and information campaigns	By year 2008	Contracting Parties, Partners and RAC/SPA
5. Organise specific training courses and workshops in coordination with international and/or national NGOs	By year 2008	RAC/SPA and Contracting Parties
6. Setting up of a regional network for monitoring populations and distribution of Mediterranean threatened bird species, in co-ordination with other organizations	By year 2011	RAC/SPA and Partners
7. Establishment of research programs to fill gaps in the knowledge of threatened species	By year 2011	Contracting Parties
8. Establishment of National Action Plans for the conservation of endangered and threatened bird species in the Mediterranean	By year 2012	Contracting Parties
9. Identification of areas important for birds on land and at sea (mapping of breeding, feeding, molting and wintering areas)	By year 2012	Contracting Parties
10. Legal establishment of protected areas with adequate management plans at breeding sites	By year 2012	Contracting Parties
11. Second Report on progress in the implementation of the Action Plan	In 2013	RAC/SPA

II) Implementation of the Action Plan by the RAC/SPA:

Action 1: Development of guidelines to assist countries in their efforts to adequate legislative protection of endangered bird species:

1.1 The RAC/SPA and the French "Conservatoire du littoral" under the Small Mediterranean Islands Program (PIM), elaborated technical guidance to help and assist the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to implement the AP on the conservation of bird species listed in Annex II to the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean. This document helps the Contracting Parties to advance,

if need be their legislation and regulations on the protection and management of the concerned bird species in compliance with the objectives and measures that appear in the AP.

- 1.2 The Guidelines for managing and monitoring populations of threatened seabirds and coastal birds and areas of Mediterranean importance were revised and republished by the RAC/SPA in 2012. This technical tool defines the goals and objectives of a management plan for coastal and marine areas that support colonies of breeding birds (all the species in Annex II are colonial nesters except *Pandion haliaeetus* and *Numenius tenuirostris*, the latter being a very rare winter visitor).
- 1.3 Scientific evidence points to by catch as the main cause for population decline in many seabird species around the world. To reduce its impact in the Mediterranean, the Guidelines for reducing by-catch of seabirds in the Mediterranean region was prepared and adopted by the Sixteen Meeting of the contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, Marrakesh 2009.
- 1.4 The draft of the Protocol for the monitoring of the breeding population of *Sterna bengalensis emmigrata*, which is currently confined to Libya, was prepared by the RAC/SPA and the Libyan Environment General Authority (EGA). Action and methods are described to provide a tool which will allow a coherent and safe approach to a population of extremely high conservation value, which is potentially vulnerable to many sources of threat, not least monitoring itself. The draft document of this protocol is presenting during the eleventh meeting of the SPA FPs meeting (Rabat, 2-5 July 2013)

Action 2: Protect legally all bird species in Annex II:

- 2.1 The majority of the Mediterranean countries give a legal protection status to the Annex II bird species. But to date, some of the species are still exposed to various risks from hunting, pollution, habitat degradation and loss or inappropriate management in breeding areas. Also, in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia the law enforcement is actually low due to political and social unrest following the Arab spring. Offences against existing laws regarding natural habitats and birds are increasing and are also affecting species listed in Annex II of the AP.

Action 3: Adding new species to Annex II:

- 3.1 According to the 15th Conference of Parties (CoP) asking the RAC/SPA to evaluate the status of the species listed in Annexes II and III to the Protocol (Decision IG17/14) and according to the requests made during the 1st Mediterranean Symposium for the Conservation of Marine and Coastal Bird Species, the RAC/SPA asked the MedMarAvis to complete the approved format in order to add a complementary list of marine and coastal threatened bird species to Annex II. In 2009 a list of additional ten species of marine and coastal birds (Decision IG.19/12) was adopted by the 16th CoP to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, held from the 3rd to the 5th of November 2009 in Marrakech (Morocco).

Action 4: Public awareness and information campaigns:

- 4.1 The RAC/SPA contributed to and participated in the annual celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) coordinated by the secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and organised in Tunisia by AAO and in Libya by EGA.
- 4.2 The RAC/SPA participated in the Slender-billed Curlew Quest, an initiative coordinated by BirdLife International, AEWA and the British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). In this framework in 2008 the RAC/SPA supported the translation of the leaflet in Arabic and French and disseminated this important tool to appropriate countries and networks.

4.3 On the 8th December 2009 the RAC/SPA participated with AAO in the organisation of the Slender-billed Curlew and Waterbird Census Awareness Raising Day in Ariana (Tunisia).

Action 5: Organize specific training courses and workshops in coordination with international and/or national NGOs:

5.1 A training session for the identification and census of water bird species was held in Benghazi (Libya) from 27th November to 2nd December 2008. This training course was prepared in collaboration with EGA and the Conservatoire du Littoral. Participants from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria have been attending this training.

5.2 National training on methods of identifying and inventorying bird species was organized from 31st January to 3rd February 2010 in Zaraniq (Egypt) in collaboration between the Egyptian Agency for Environmental Affairs (EAEA), the RAC/SPA and the ONCFS.

5.3 The RAC/SPA participated in the Albatros workshop in April 2012 in Bizerte (Tunisia). Organised by the French 'Conservatoire du littoral', in the framework of the PIM Initiative, this workshop aimed to improve the knowledge and the conservation of sea bird species, including many species of Annex II.

Action 6: Setting up of a regional network for monitoring populations and distribution of Mediterranean threatened bird species, in co-ordination with other organizations:

6.1 A regional network composed of experts from different institutions and organizations (ONCFS, ISPRA, BirdLife Malta, AAO) was set up in 2005. The mission of this network was to monitor populations and to map the distribution of Mediterranean threatened bird species. This network carried out activities especially in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia.

6.2 The RAC/SPA participated in and supported the PIM Research and Management Committee (COREGE). This interdisciplinary committee was created to ensure operational, organizational, technical and scientific relevance of the PIM Initiative and is composed by recognized experts.

6.3 The RAC/SPA participated in and supported the first regional brainstorming workshop on International Waterbird Census (IWC) in North Africa held on 8th and 9th October 2012 in Tunis (Tunisia). The workshop was organised by AAO, TDV and ONCFS in the framework of the Regional Support Program to IWC and wetland conservation in the Mediterranean.

6.4 Within the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (SAP BIO) in the Mediterranean region, the RAC/SPA developed joint activities with its partners to promote the idea of a common approach to push for a regional network of representative and well-managed SPAs.

Action 7: Establishment of research programs to fill gaps in the knowledge of the threatened bird species:

7.1 The Atlas of Wintering Waterbirds in Libya was published in 2012 and launched on 10th of May 2012 on occasion of the 5th Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the AEWA. It is a part of the gap filling in the data on waterbirds in North Africa. The bilingual (Arabic-English) 312 pages publication describes 110 species of waterbirds that were observed in Libya during the winters from 2005 to 2010. It includes distribution maps and graphics that reflect the abundance and inter-annual variation of the species. There is also a detailed map of the Libyan wetlands and their classification according to their international and national importance levels.

This Atlas is the result of international cooperation between several organization such as the Libyan Environment General Authority (EGA), ONCFS, the Higher Institute for Scientific Research and Protection for the Environment (ISPRA), the French Ministry of the Environment (Ministère de

l'Ecologie, du Développement Durable, des Transports et du Logement), the French 'Conservatoire du Littoral' and AAO.

7.2 Organisation of 4 field missions in Ghara, Elba and Jeliana islands (Libya) from 1st to 7th August 2007, from 30th July to 9th August 2008, from 1st to 11th August 2009 and from 1st to 10th August 2010 as a second phase to the Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis* survey, census and ringing. This mission was organized in collaboration with Birdlife Malta, ISPR, TDV and the French 'Conservatoire du littoral'. A census and ringing of Ghara, Elba and Jeliana Island colonies was carried out.

7.3 The breeding population of Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis* in the Mediterranean is solely located within three unprotected marine/coastal sites in Libya. With the aim to compare the Lesser Crested Tern Red Sea population with Mediterranean populations, a genetic analysis of reproductive colonies of migratory terns in the Red Sea was organized with the support of the EAEA from 2nd to 4th August 2009.

7.4 With the aim to collect more data on the species included in the AP, the RAC/SPA supported and participated in 7 field studies: in Libya from 3rd to 15th February 2007, from 20th to 31st January 2008, from 26th January to 7th February 2009 and from 25th January to 3rd February 2011; in Tunisia from 1st to 31st January 2008 and from 2nd to 25th January 2009; in Egypt from 18th to 26th February 2010. The results of the 2011 survey in Libya were published in the African Bird Club bulletin 20.1 in March 2013 (p 20-26).

Action 8: Establishment of National Action Plans for the conservation of endangered and threatened bird species in the Mediterranean:

8.1 The RAC/SPA was requested by the Syrian Ministry of Environment for assistance to prepare the National Action Plan (NAP) for the conservation of marine and coastal bird in Syria. The presentation and consultation workshop on the (NAP) was held from 23rd to 24th April 2008 in Lattikia (Syria) in the premises of the High Institute of Marine Research where all national stakeholders concerned have participated. A number of important recommendations at national level resulted from this workshop. After adoption of the NAP, the participants of the workshop highlighted the need for more training in bird identification.

Action 9: Identification of areas important for birds on land and at sea:

9.1 Through two complementary projects, the RAC-SPA provides technical and financial support to the development of a Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas network in coastal and open sea waters:

- The MedMPAnet project which aims to develop Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas network through assisting single countries in establishing, better managing and networking marine protected areas. These protected areas should be representative of biodiversity hotspots and sites of interest at national level, and connected through corridors to allow better resilience, which favour adaptation to climate change. The final step of this process will be joining the SPAMI List that would represent in future coming years, a representative network of MAPs for the Mediterranean region.
- The project for supporting the creation of SPAMIs in open seas, including the deep seas which aim to facilitate the process of designating as SPAMIs sites included in areas identified as areas

for conservation interest in the open seas, including the deep seas. This project focuses on pelagic ecosystems and deep habitats. In order to facilitate the establishment of SPAMI(s) in the Gulf of Lions RAC/SPA has prepared marine ecology report for the region, with environmental data available for the Gulf of Lions Description. Among these a report on “ Seabirds in the Gulf of Lions shelf and slope area” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.8)

9.2 Farwa Island and Ayn Alghzal Lagoon in Libya were declared marine protected areas in 2009 and 2010. The management plans for these two sites is currently ongoing with support by the RAC/SPA and the WWF.

Action 10: Legal establishment of protected areas with adequate management plans at breeding sites:

(See Action 9)

III Participation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements in the implementation of the Action Plan since 2007:

CMS	The CMS has established a Working Group (WG) on minimizing poisoning of migratory birds relevant to several species listed under Annex II. The WG is undertaking an assessment of the whole range and has been meeting in May 2013 in Tunis (Tunisia).
	In 2012 the CMS developed the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds AP which provides a strategic framework for action at the international level to conserve, restore and sustainably manage populations of migratory landbird species and their habitats and is relevant to several species listed under Annex II.
	4 species under Annex II are also listed in Appendix I of the CMS, meaning the taking of these species is strictly prohibited. 18 species under Annex II are in CMS Appendix II, and range states shall endeavour to conclude agreements where these would benefit the species. 15 species are under AEWA Annex II and 2 species listed in the CMS MoU on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia.
	The CMS participates in the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) together with AEWA, a campaign in which dedicated organizations and people around the world plan events to celebrate migratory birds in their region and to raise awareness about the need for their conservation. Many events have been registered in the Mediterranean area.
	The CMS has organized two technical workshops concerning migratory birds, with the participation of international organizations as for example BLI, RSPB, etc.
	The CMS annual “Small Grants Programme” funds projects implemented by one or several cooperating organizations. One of the projects for 2012/2013 is the Conservation Program "Dalmatian Pelicans (<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>) and Wetlands in the Mediterranean Basin”.
	In July 2012, the Raptors MoU published Guidelines for Preparing National and Regional Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies.
	CMS/AEWA

	draft prepared by the IUCN Environmental Law Centre is currently being reviewed by the AEWA Technical Committee (TC). The Guidelines are expected to be finalized by the AEWA TC by mid 2014 and formally adopted by the 6 th AEWA MoP in 2015.
	Several species listed in Annex II of the Protocol have populations listed in column A of Table 1 of the AEWA AP. AEWA Parties have to provide protection to those populations listed in column A.
	A summary of public capacity building activities, awareness and information campaigns undertaken by the AEWA Secretariat in the period 2008-2012 can be found in the Report of the Secretariat to MoP5.
	AEWA supports the operation and further development of the IWC coordinated by WI.
	Within the framework of the GEF-funded Wings over Wetlands (WOW) project the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool was established with the main purpose of strengthening the implementation of the AEWA and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The tool makes it easy to obtain information on the sites critical for waterbird species by accessing several independent databases and analysing information at the bio-geographical population level, so providing a comprehensive basis for management and decision making.

IV Participation of Contracting Parties and Partners in the implementation of the AP since 2007:

Albania*	Ornithological diagnostic mission and identification of potential threats on Sazani Island took place from 2 nd to 8 th September 2012. In collaboration with the UNDP, local universities and BIOM (Croatia).
Algeria*	Habibas archipelago, Algeria. Ornithological diagnostic of the territory specifically focused on seabirds species. Several field missions between 2004 and 2007. Census and breeding monitoring of Cory's Shearwater, Mediterranean Shag, Audouin's and Yellow legged Gulls.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Entity Nature protection laws provides legal protection to all animal species in general. Natural park Hutovoblato protected area was established to conserve bird species listed in the Annex II to the Protocol.
EC	All the Annex II species that occur are legally protected through the Bird Directive. Several protected areas have been established in the countries of the European Community in order to conserve bird species listed in the Annex to the Protocol. APs have been developed for globally threatened bird species, including seabirds.
Cyprus	The Annex II species that occur are legally protected through the Law no. 152 (I)/ 2003. Management plans for several Special Protected Areas (SPAs) such as Larnaca saltlake and others are under preparation including conservation of the Annexe II species.
Egypt	All the Annex II species that occur are legally protected. A total of 217 bird species, including the threatened species, are monitored monthly over the last 8 years.

	A genetic analysis of reproductive colonies of migratory terns in the Red Sea was organized by the EAEA from 2 nd to 4 th August 2009.
France	All species of Annex II are protected under French law.
	Based on the scientific research program conservation action is underway on shearwaters and storm petrels through national APs.
	In 2010 France has launched a parallel program on marine zones and their use. This program, called PACOMM, aims to establish an inventory on birds, mammals, sharks, tortoise and the frequentation of the watershed on the whole of the national marine zone and limitroph zones.
	Program launched to collect information on marine birds and mammals by the Protected Areas Agency.
	The PIM Initiative is supporting several research programs institutionally, technically and financially in order to fill gaps in knowledge. This covers geographical distribution of colonies, ecology, behaviour, and threats to several species of Annex II; always with the final objective of improving their conservation status and the management of the colonies in the natural protected areas.
	French 'Conservatoire du Littoral' under its PIM program created and facilitated 10 species working groups in order to contribute to the conservation of the Mediterranean populations of 9 species of annex II: Cory's Shearwater, Mediterranean Shearwater, Balearic Shearwater, European Storm-petrel, Eleonora's Falcon, European Shag, Lesser crested Tern, Osprey and Audouin's Gull.
	A group of French site managers, scientists and stakeholders is raising awareness on several species of Annex II.
	ONCFS produced an updated training toolkit for trainers on waterbird identification and monitoring of waterbird population adapted to North Africa in the framework of the French support to the African Initiative of the AEWA.
	French 'Conservatoire du Littoral' under its PIM program has organised several workshops on Mediterranean seabirds including many species of Annex II.
	French National Research Centre (CNRS) leads a program on Cory's Shearwater and coordinates monitoring at French colonies of this species.
	CNRS developed a 2003 – 2009 research program on the sustainable conservation of Mediterranean seabirds and the impact of invasive predators.
	Les Amis des Marais du Vigueirat leads a NAPs on several species of Annex II and two further NAPs for target species of annex II were established: <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> and <i>Larus audouinii</i> .
	ONCFS and French Ministry for Environment supported the publication of the Atlas of wintering waterbirds of Libya technically and financially.
ONCFS managed a newly created PA where breeding of <i>Sterna albifrons</i> was encouraged through adequate breeding site management.	

	<p>The “Mediterranean Waterbirds” network was initiated by several countries in North Africa and is supported by TDV, ONCFS and WI, with financial support from the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy and the MAVA Foundation.</p>
	<p>Several workshops on the IWC in North Africa were supported by TDV, ONCFS and WI, with financial support from the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy and the MAVA Foundation.</p>
	<p>TDV is leading an active Greater Flamingo network with regular workshops and newsletters and West-African and Mediterranean breeding reports were produced annually.</p>
Greece	<p>All the bird species of Annex II are strictly protected at national level since 1985.</p>
	<p>The bird species of Annex II are trigger species for the designation of 85 SPAs of the Natura 2000 sites network in Greece. 21 Natura 2000 sites with trigger species of Annex II were designated in 2010 after a project proclaimed by the Ministry for the Environment, Energy & Climate Change, financed by the European Community and conducted with the support of Hellenic Ornithological Society. The project included field investigations in 69 Important Bird Areas (IBAs).</p>
	<p>The LIFE Project «Concrete conservation actions for the Mediterranean Shag and Audouin’s Gull in Greece, including the inventory of relevant marine IBAs» is implemented by the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS) in collaboration in 17 Greek SPA sites during 2009-2012.</p>
	<p>Midwinter counts of water birds are conducted by HOS. They concern wetland species but also raptors and sea birds. Counts cover every year more than 120 small or larger wetlands of the country including more than 150 volunteers and the Management Bodies of PA.</p>
Italy	<p>All species of Annex II are protected under Italian law and strict protection is provided to: <i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i>, <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>, <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>, <i>Larus audouinii</i> and <i>Larus genei</i>.</p>
	<p>NAPs for protection of <i>Larus audouinii</i> and <i>Falco eleonora</i> are developed.</p>
	<p>Many studies have been carried out and one of these programs lead to the drafting of the Guidelines on Impact of Power Lines on Migratory Birds. These Guidelines provide technical protocols for mitigation actions and suggest practical solutions to reduce power lines mortality risk. In particular the document illustrates useful tools for mitigating collisions and electrocution risk in operation lines (safe pylons, insulators and cables to be used especially in new lines) and indicates procedures to reduce casualties in operating / planned lines.</p>
Israel	<p>All the Annex II species that occur are legally protected.</p>
	<p>Research programs have been developed on several species of birds.</p>
	<p>National Action Plans have been established for <i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i>, <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>, <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> and <i>Falco eleonora</i>.</p>

Libya	Annex II Birds Species are partially protected.
	Regular annual water birds census was carried out from 2005 to 2013 in close collaboration between EGA, the RAC/SPA, AEWA, ONCFS, ISPRA, TDV and AAO.
	Management of the Jeliana island for better breeding success of the Lesser Crested Terns Colony in collaboration with the French 'Conservatoire du Littoral' under its PIM program.
	Awareness campaigns have been conducted during the WMBD from 2008 to 2013. Several TV and radio programs have been running and regular publications for awareness have also taken place.
	Two marine protected areas have been established in 2009 and 2010: Farwa island and Ayn Alghzal lagoon. The elaboration of the management plans for these sites is ongoing with support from RAC/SPA and WWF.
Monaco	No national legislation in place to protect bird species, but Monaco signed the Berne Convention.
	Establishing of a first inventory of birds started in 2010 and is ongoing.
Morocco*	In collaboration with the HCEFLCD and the French Research Institute in Ecology (CEFE-CNRS), the French 'Conservatoire du littoral' organized in the framework of the PIM Initiative, the census and monitoring of the Osprey population in Al Hoceima National Park (Morocco) in May 2012 and 2013.
	Regular breeding monitoring and ringing of the Eleonora's Falcon colony in 2010 and 2011 was organised by the French 'Conservatoire du Littoral' in collaboration with the HCEFLCD and Mohamed V University and Al Jedida University.
	A workshop for the elaboration of a NAP for the Conservation of the Eleonora's Falcon was co-organization between Moroccan HCEFLCD and the PIM Initiative in Essaouira on 6 th and 7 th of June 2012.
	A workshop for the elaboration of a NAP for the Conservation of the Osprey was organized between the HCEFLCD and the PIM Initiative in Al Hoceima National Park on the 22 th of May 2013.
	2 individuals of Eleonora's Falcon were fitted with GPS tracking devices in order to identify their wintering areas. This was carried out by the HCEFLCD and the PIM Initiative in Essaouira archipelago in August 2011.
	GREPOM contributed to the Arabic translation of the training toolkit for trainers prepared by ONCFS.
Slovenia	All species of Annex II present in Slovenia are protected, but only <i>Sterna albifrons</i> is breeding.
	Two protected areas have been established.
Spain	Indirect protection through Recommendation 07-07 by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) on Reducing Incidental By-catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries.
	Several Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the SPAMI's network are relevant site to several species listed under Annex II.
	The Infrastructure, Planning and Environment Department of the

	Autonomous Community of Valencia conducted annually monitoring in the main seabird breeding areas of the Region: Columbretes Islands, Albufera of Valencia, Cabo de San Antonio, Cabo de la Nao, Ifach, Mitjana Island, Isla de Benidorm, Tabarca Archipelago, Santa Pola and Salinas de Torrevejea.
	The General Secretariat of Fishing within the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment has research programs ongoing on <i>Larus audouinii</i> and <i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i> .
Tunisia	All species of Annex II present in Tunisia are protected under Tunisian law.
	AAO and ONCFS produced an identification guide to North-African waterbirds in Arabic for free distribution. This was done in the framework of the support by the French Ministry for Environment and the MAVA Foundation to the African initiative under the AEWA and resulted in the printing and distribution of 8 000 guides and the publication of the electronic version on the websites of several partner organisations as well as on the RAC/SPA website.
	<p>In collaboration with the Tunisian Coastal Agency (APAL) the French 'Conservatoire du littoral' organized, in the framework of the PIM Initiative, several expeditions, workshops and training courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albatros workshop, April 2012, Bizerte: Determination of the objectives, the scope, the target species and modalities of action of the Project "Albatros". • Galite archipelago, in 2010 and 2011: Training courses for seabird monitoring for an improvement of managing skills. • Zembra archipelago, 2010: Training course for distance-sampling method as an alternative method for seabird census. Wetlands of Cap Bon, 2012 Training course for scientific monitoring of waterbird species.
	APAL and the French 'Conservatoire du littoral', in the framework of the PIM Initiative, monitored between 2008 and 2013 three species from the Annex II: Cory's Shearwater, Yelkouan Shearwater and Mediterranean Storm-Petrel.
	In 2012 and 2013 APAL and the French 'Conservatoire du Littoral' carried out GPS-tracking of Zembra Cory's Shearwaters in order to better understand the foraging ecology and to identify the feeding areas of this population.
	The first regional workshop on the IWC in North Africa was held in October 2012 in Tunis. It was organized by AAO with the support of TDV, ONCFS, WI, the French Ministry of Ecology and the MAVA Foundation. This activity was carried out in the framework of the Support Programme to IWC in the Mediterranean and saw the participation of national IWC coordinators from 5 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. It came up with the decision to develop the regional IWC network, to establish national and a regional database which would feed into the WI database and to produce a common publication on the 2013 IWC data.
	Tunisia participated in the Slender-billed Curlew Quest in 2009 and

	<p>2010, which was meant to be a last major effort to find this critical endangered species. This was an initiative of the Slender-billed Curlew Working Group and was coordinated by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at the international level. In Tunisia the quest was coordinated by AAO. It was a collaborative effort of 18 AAO volunteers and 2 international experts which produced waterbird and habitat data on over 100 wetlands and other areas, but no record of the Slender-billed Curlew in Tunisia.</p>
	<p>During the reporting period AAO regularly monitored breeding populations of Annex II species at some sites, mainly IBAs and Ramsar sites.</p>
	<p>Tunisia is annually participating in the WMBD. The promotion of this event by AAO, during many years the only organisation to celebrate the WMBD in Tunisia, resulted in 2013 in at least 6 NGO and networks organising a multitude of events. Many Annex II species benefit of the special attention which is given by these events to migratory bird species.</p>
	<p>During several years AAO, in collaboration with national stakeholders and RAC/SPA, organised public information days on the results of the annual waterbird census.</p>
	<p>The annual IWC was carried out annually by AAO for an extensive network of Tunisian wetlands (80 to 110 each year). This fieldwork produced population data on at least 8 Annex II species and information on site conservation status and threats to the bird populations.</p>
	<p>In May 2013, Tunisia signed the Raptors MoU.</p>
Turkey	<p>All species of Annex II present in Turkey are protected. by Terrestrial Hunting Law, Regulation on protection of wetlands and Decisions of Central Hunting Commission.</p>
	<p>Research on <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i> is ongoing. And indirectly, during biodiversity assesment studies, many bird species living in the coastal wetland habitats were evaluated.</p>
	<p>Elaboration of Species Action Plan in process.</p>

*Data provided from partners

V Conclusions

The review of information on the implementation of the AP reflects a positive overall picture, because the progress made covers all scheduled actions and involves the RAC/SPA, several international partners and strong national government – non-government networks. Also, many of the actions and activities are carried out on a regular basis and are now core-activities of many institutions and organisations. All these aspect should considerably contribute to the effective implementation of the AP and the sustainability of the actions taken.

However, in the aim to further improve the implementation of the AP and to develop a proper tool for the monitoring of the activities (also with view to the 3th report) we propose to establish clear milestones and indicators for each proposed action. These indicators combined with a scoring system may then allow evaluating the proportional progress by country and for the whole region. The finalized version of the implementation Timetable is given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/8.

VI A New Implementation Timetable (2014-2019)

Action	Deadline	Indicator	Implementation by
1. Produce and publish an updated version of the Action Plan including all 25 target species.	By 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated AP produced • Updated AP published on the RAC/SPA website 	RAC/SPA
2. Protect legally all bird species in Annex II	By 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bird species in Annex II are legally protected by all contracting parties 	Contracting Parties
3. Optimize synergies with international agreements and organizations dedicated to bird conservation	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Barcelona Convention National Focal Point (NFP) presented the AP to the NFPs of other relevant international agreements and APs in his/her country. • Synergies and possible coordination with other international agreements are identified and integrated in the workplans of the NFPs. 	Contracting Parties
4. Target and lobby decision-making organisations and government bodies to stimulate the implementation of the Action Plan	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in 10 information and awareness raising meetings with governments and international organizations • Produce and publish a summary document 	Contracting Parties, Partners and RAC/SPA

		(brochure) on the AP	
5. Organise specific training courses and workshops in coordination/synergy with international and/or national NGOs	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional assessment of training needs conducted and result shared with the NFPs Regional training program established and implemented At least one regional training course organized At least 4 national training courses organized Summary reports on 5 training courses available and published on the RAC/SPA website 	RAC/SPA and Contracting Parties
6. Organisation of the 3 rd Mediterranean Symposium on ecology and conservation of the bird species listed in Annex II	By 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Mediterranean Symposium organized Proceedings of the 2nd Mediterranean Symposium produced and published on the RAC/SPA website 	RAC/SPA and Contracting Parties
7. Participation in / promotion of a regional network for monitoring populations and distribution of Mediterranean threatened bird species, in co-ordination with other organisations	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual meetings with network facilitators organized 	RAC/SPA
8. Establishment / support of research and monitoring programs to fill gaps in the knowledge of threatened species in partnership with other organisations	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap analysis conducted and results reported to NFPs and partners Research / monitoring protocols developed for at least 10 research / monitoring programs At least 5 new research / monitoring programs launched At least 5 existing research / monitoring programs supported 	RAC/SPA, Contracting Parties
9. Establishment and implementation of National Action Plans for the conservation of endangered and threatened bird species in	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of existing National Action Plans (NAPs) and gaps conducted and results shared with NFPs and partners 	RAC/SPA, Contracting Parties

the Mediterranean		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities for the gap filling process identified and a support program developed • At least 5 new NAPs produced and published 	
10. Support contracting parties and partners to produce and publish relevant scientific documentation contributing to update knowledge and enhance conservation action taken on the Annex II species	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of knowledge gaps conducted and results reported to NFPs and partners • At least 5 relevant documents (atlas, inventories, monitoring protocols, etc.) produced with support from RAC/SPA 	RAC/SPA
11. Identification of areas important for birds on land and at sea (mapping of breeding, feeding, molting and wintering areas).	From 2014 to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventories and maps established/updated for all breeding populations of the Annex II bird species in at least 15 contracting countries • Inventories and maps of main wintering areas of all Annex II bird species regularly updated through IWC and other monitoring programs • At least 3 specific surveys for the identification of feeding areas conducted and results reported to NFPs and partners. 	Contracting Parties, Partners
12. Legal establishment of Protected Areas (PAs) with adequate management plans at breeding sites	By 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unprotected sites supporting breeding populations of Annex II species identified • At least 5 PAs legally established • Adequate management plans developed and implemented at 5 PAs 	Contracting Parties
13. Produce the 3 rd Report on progress in the implementation of the Action Plan	By 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the questionnaire used for the collection of information on the 	RAC/SPA

		<p>implementation carried out and draft questionnaire submitted to the NFPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information collected from at least 50% from the contracting countries• Progress report on the implementation of the AP produced and submitted to the NFPs	
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**ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CARTILAGINOUS FISHES
(CHONDRICHTHYANS) IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

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1. Introduction

The aim of RAC/SPA is to assist and support Mediterranean countries in the implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (the SPA Protocol) and its related Action Plans.

The *Action Plan for the Conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean* (UNEP MAP RAC/SPA 2003), hereinafter referred to as the *Shark Action Plan*, was approved at the XIII Conference of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. In addition to guiding activities within the context of the Barcelona Convention, the *Shark Action Plan* was also developed in line with the UN FAO's International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA–Sharks), the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and the World Summit for Sustainable Development.

The original five year Implementation Timetable annexed to the 2003 *Shark Action Plan* was reviewed at a meeting of independent chondrichthyan fish experts in May 2009. This expert meeting reviewed progress and elaborated an updated calendar of actions for the next four year period. Their recommendations, including a draft *Shark Action Plan* implementation timetable for 2010–2013 (Fowler and Valenti 2009; UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.331/Inf.13) were presented to and approved by the Ninth Meeting of Focal Points for SPAs (Floriana, Malta, 3-6 June 2009).

In 2013, four years after the earlier review, the RAC/SPA Secretariat circulated questionnaires to National Focal Points, requesting information on implementation of the *Shark Action Plan* and any difficulties or challenges encountered. Letters were also sent to the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, regional organisations, and Action Plan Partners. These requested assistance with identifying potential synergies between the Action Plans for the conservation of marine turtles, cartilaginous fishes and birds, and other instruments, in order to strengthen the management of sensitive species and vulnerable habitats in the Mediterranean.

This document presents the following outputs based on responses to the RAC/SPA Secretariat's requests for information.

- Evaluation of the implementation of the *Shark Action Plan* at national level, based on the responses to the questionnaire sent by RAC/SPA to the SPAs Focal Points.
- Evaluation of the implementation of the *Shark Action Plan* by RAC/SPA.
- Evaluation of the implementation of the *Shark Action Plan* at international level, based on the responses to the questionnaire sent to concerned International and regional organizations (Table 2).
- Evaluation of the comments, programmes, plans and recommendations of international and regional organizations working on shark conservation issues (Table 2).
- Summary of progress against the 2010–2013 Implementation Timetable (Table 3).
- Proposals for a new Implementation Timetable for 2014–2019, taking into account the results of the above evaluations (, Table 4).

Annexes to this report do not include copies of the responses received, or full verbatim copies of these responses, but these documents are available from the RAC/SPA Secretariat.

2. Review of National Implementation of the *Shark Action Plan, 2009–2012*

The questionnaire circulated to Focal Points by the RAC/SPA Secretariat in April 2013 (see Annex II) asked Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Barcelona Convention SPA Protocol to provide a brief update on steps taken at national level to implement the *Shark Action Plan* (UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA, 2003). Sixteen CPs (including the European Commission) responded to the questionnaire. Six did not, so this evaluation provides an incomplete picture of activities in the Mediterranean. One of the six is an EU Member State and had replied to the previous review in 2009; it is possible to extrapolate to some extent from their comments in 2009 (for example, protected species legislation in place then will still exist today) and to the 2013 response from the European Commission. Most importantly, five of the seven largest Mediterranean shark-catching CPs (see Table 1 and Figure 3) responded to the questionnaire circulated in 2013, while the other two had replied to the 2009 questionnaire survey. This is an encouraging overall response rate for these important CPs, which have the greatest impact upon chondrichthyan fishes in the Mediterranean.

A summary of the results of the questionnaire survey are presented in tabulated form in Annex I and in graphic form in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 illustrates the progress reported by the 16 CPs that responded to the 2013 questionnaire against six categories of implementation measures, and Figure 2 the challenges and/or difficulties reported by the CPs for each of these categories.

In 2009, fewer than 50% of the CPs for which information was available had implemented fully any of the actions identified in the Implementation Timetable. The response to the 2013 questionnaire indicates that implementation has improved slightly over the intervening period. 50% of the CPs who responded reported that they had taken action for shark fisheries management and scientific research, while an additional 13% and 6%, respectively, had measures under development in these areas. 50% also had some degree of species protection either in place or under development. Although progress towards implementation of the IPOA–Sharks was only reported by 44% of CPs, these included the majority of the major fishing entities in the Mediterranean (the European Commission, whose measures are binding on EU Member States, and three of the four non-EU States with the largest recent reported landings of sharks and rays). The development of information materials and training programmes lagged behind at 38% and 25% respectively. The following sections provide more information on progress against each of the six categories of action identified in the questionnaire.

Figure 1. Implementation of *Shark Action Plan* measures by Contracting Parties

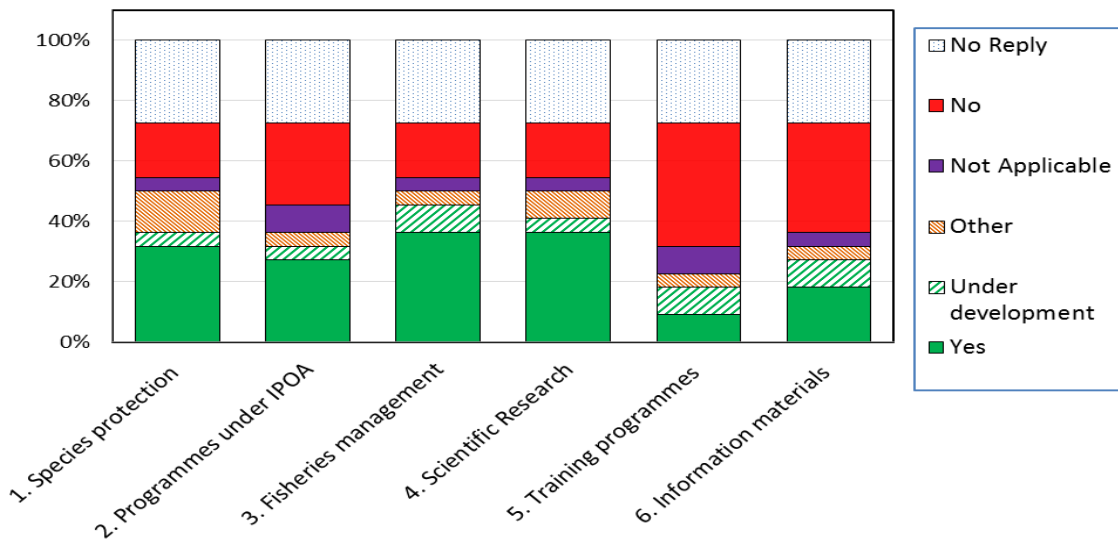
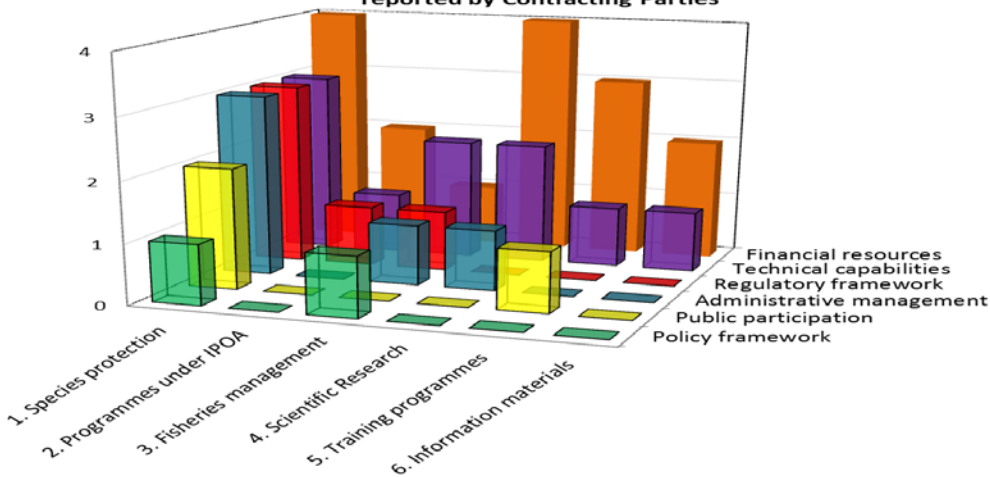


Figure 2. Challenges with implementation of *Shark Action Plan* measures reported by Contracting Parties



i) Species protection

The questionnaire circulated to CPs asked: “Has the Party granted chondrichthyans a legal status that complies with the conventions adopted to protect them from degradation and harm due to human activities?” A checklist was provided of relevant species (Annex III to this report): those listed in the Mediterranean region under Annex II and III to the Barcelona Convention Specially Protected Areas (SPA) Protocol, and those listed in appendices to major multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). This element of the Shark Action Plan received the most detailed responses from CPs, and this section of the evaluation contains more information than those that follow.

Species protection is a major objective of the *Shark Action Plan* (A.10.2). The ‘urgent provision of legal protection status’ for endangered species is listed as the first priority for action (B.11.1) and falls under implementation measure (C.1). CPs were asked, in Action 10, to implement legal protection for endangered species by one year after adoption. This Action was not only directed at the three species originally listed in Annex II to the Protocol (basking shark *Cetorhinus maximus*, white shark *Carcharodon carcharias* and giant devil ray *Mobula mobular*), but also recommended for other endangered chondrichthyans – namely the species (Annex III of this report) that were subsequently added to Annex II

to the Protocol by the 17th Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, in 2010, under Decision IG.20/5.

Two years later, the European Commission proposed to the 36th Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) additional fisheries management measures by CPs for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area, including conferring protection from fishing activities upon all Annex II elasmobranch species. The proposal was adopted by in May 2012, as Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 (see Annex IV), and came into force in October 2012.

Although 50% of CPs who responded to the questionnaire reported that they had protected species or had measures under development, implementation has been very incomplete, with 25% of CPs reporting no action. Nine years after CPs were asked to protect the three species listed in Annex II, only Croatia and Malta have used their national legislation to do so for all three species, apparently in direct response to the *Shark Action Plan*. Croatia is also the only CP that reported protecting the species added to Annex II in 2010, Although Israel legally protected every species of chondrichthyan fish within its waters in 2005.

Several other CPs protect a smaller number of Annex II species (usually basking shark and white shark). Reports to RAC/SPA In 2009 from Montenegro recorded protection for the white shark and porbeagle shark *Lamna nasus* (an Annex III species) under national threatened species legislation, and Turkey reported protecting basking shark and sandbar shark *Carcharhinus plumbeus* (an Annex III species with a pupping area in Turkish waters) under fisheries law. In 2009, Spain prohibited fisheries for porbeagle and for hammerhead sharks Sphyrnidae, then in 2011 added thresher sharks Alopidae to the protected species list; all species of hammerhead and thresher sharks are now listed in the National Catalogue of Endangered Species and protected under a Royal Decree. Tunisia has protected the guitarfish *Rhinobatos rhinobatos*.

The EU has applied fisheries rather than biodiversity regulations to prohibit the catch, retention on board and landing of a few species, including the basking shark and white shark, but has still not extended these provisions to the giant devil ray, nor to the majority of the species recently added to Annex II and now covered by Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3. These European Council Regulations have applied since 2007 throughout EU waters and to the whole EU fleet, wherever the latter is operating, and more recently have been extended (in the form of zero Total Allowable Catches (TAC)) to some of the more recently added Annex II species. Although some EU MS that are Party to the Barcelona Convention reported that they have not granted protected status to any species, their vessels must still comply with these fisheries regulations.

Cyprus (an EU Member State) noted that chondrichthyan fish species are protected through the implementation of GFCM and ICCAT Recommendations, but did not name the species covered nor the legislation used to implement these recommendations (the former should, in theory, deliver protection for all species listed in Annex II).

Greece and France reported that some Annex II species receive conservation protection because of their inclusion in the Appendices of CMS and CITES. The previous review of the *Shark Action Plan* implementation concluded that awareness of the CITES listings appeared to be higher than for the SPA Annex II listings. No CP, however, reports any protection measures having been introduced for the Annex II sawfishes *Pristis pectinata* and *Pristis pristis*, listed in the CITES Appendices in 2007.

Two of the original Annex II species have been in the news in the past few months, highlighting a lack of awareness and poor enforcement of their protected status in the Mediterranean. On 3rd December 2012, a video was released on the internet of a very large white shark (possibly trapped in a tuna net, although outside the tuna fishing season) being shot by fishermen, reportedly a short distance off the coast of Sousse, Tunisia. In February 2013, large numbers of devil rays (an anecdotal count of 220) were filmed having been landed on the Gaza beach. This was reported as the resumption of a seasonal eastern Mediterranean fishery that had not taken place for several years (although FAO has never received any reports of devil ray landings from the Mediterranean).

Overall, the level of protection granted to the chondrichthyan fish species listed in Annex II of the Protocol continues to be disappointingly incomplete. Only 50% of CPs that responded to the questionnaire survey reported some form of action, and there were more reports of difficulties or challenges in this area than for any of the others covered in the following pages. These included financial resources (25%), regulatory frameworks, administrative management and technical capacity (19% each), public participation (13%) and policy framework (6%). Despite these problems, national protected species lists are very common in national law. Adding threatened fauna, particularly those that are not commercially exploited in the Mediterranean, is presumably relatively simple under existing domestic wildlife or fisheries legislation; it is hard to understand why greater progress has not been achieved during the decade since the *Shark Action Plan* was adopted.

ii) Programmes under the IPOA–Sharks

CPs were asked: “*Has the Party developed specific programmes in the context of IPOA-Sharks?*” The *Shark Action Plan* identifies promoting sustainable fisheries as a primary objective of the Plan (A.10.1) and recognises the importance of fisheries management for achieving the conservation of chondrichthyan fishes in the Mediterranean (B.11.3), including the implementation of Shark Plans under the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA–Sharks) (C.2). The *Action Plan* acknowledges that such management should be implemented at national level, and at regional and international levels through the appropriate Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (the GFCM) (C.2.18). It envisages CPs and RFMOs describing fisheries and identifying management needs (Action 19), and developing National Shark Plans (Action 20) and plans for shark fisheries management (Action 21).

The GFCM and its CPs have recently taken up this challenge, with the adoption of Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3, which does far more than simply list prohibited species (see Annex IV to this report). However, it is realistically too early to review progress with its implementation and the GFCM did not respond to the RAC/SPA questionnaire. Of the CPs that responded, 38% reported taking action with programmes under the IPOA–Sharks, with an additional 6% reporting that this was under development. 38% reported no progress, and 13% considered that action under IPOA–Sharks was not applicable to them. Of the CPs that reported no progress had been made or was necessary, this was generally because they protect all species, or had no fisheries, or no target shark fisheries in their waters. Of those that did report progress, many were European Union MS and covered by the Community Plan of Action for Sharks (CPOA), which applies to all EU vessels wherever they fish. Italy was also developing its own National Shark Plan. Tunisia noted that it had adopted both the FAO and the Barcelona Convention Shark Plans. Slovenia had reported in 2009 that a Shark Plan would be drafted that year, but replied in 2013 that no specific programmes had been developed in the context of the IPOA–Sharks.

The difficulties and challenges reported for the development of programmes under the IPOA–Sharks were primarily financial resources (two CPs: 13%) while the regulatory framework and technical capacity were both also identified as relevant issues (6% each).

iii) Fisheries management

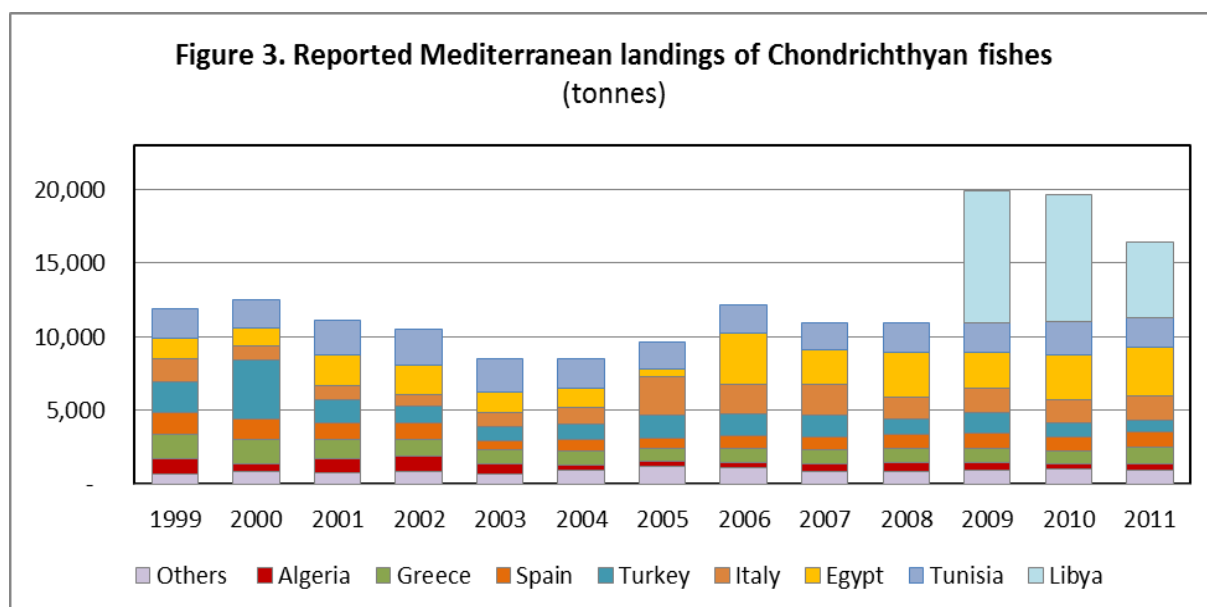
CPs were asked: “*Has the Party taken steps on fishing?*” As noted above, the *Shark Action Plan* recognised sustainable fisheries as a primary objective (e.g. A.10.1, B.11.3), not solely through the IPOA–Sharks. Annex IV to this report sets out the GFCM Recommendation for achieving this objective. 50% of CPs reported having shark fisheries management measures in place, and 13% had measures under development. 25% had not taken steps on fishing.

Table 1 presents total Mediterranean landings of chondrichthyan fishes reported to FAO by each CP during the past decade, with CPs listed in order of total catch volume for the past three years. (Figure 3 presents this information graphically.) This puts the significance of progress on fisheries management by various CPs into context.

Table 1. Landings of chondrichthyan fishes in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, 2001–2011.

Source: FAO Fishstat 2013. Fishing entities are listed in descending order of total recent volume of landings for 2009–2011. Catches reported for Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are assumed to be from the Black Sea and were excluded. Small catches reported by Japan and Korea are also excluded. (* figures estimated by FAO)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Libya									8,937	8,595*	5,190*
Egypt	2,143	2,020	1,395	1,251	577	3,450	2,388	3,039	2,468	3,056	3,333
Tunisia	2,332	2,375	2,231	2,053	1,760	1,961	1,804	1,945	1,964	2,242	1,990
Italy	912	823	964	1,175	2,612	1,974	2,042	1,515	1,696	1,537	1,629
Turkey	1,575	1,073	966	1,018	1,535	1,532	1,485	1,038	1,345	972	787
Spain	1,179	1,158	624	837	720	854	862	931	1,011	991	1,019
Greece	1,243	1,114	985	911	849	963	969	941	964	861	1,114*
Algeria	977	1,010	666	342	374	370	570	687	594	365	487
Israel	35	32	28	89	280	179	169	170*	178	181	181*
Morocco	35	64	66	66	91	82	63	100	141	173	108
Croatia	116	68	64	67	156	139	145	78	100	133	176
Albania	45	209	28	53	175	203	87	133	134	125	96
France	152	156	156	158	124	105	97	88	97	138	81
Syrian Arab Republic	150	182	184	190	135	196	103	90	119	105	85*
Lebanon	55	60	60	60	55	58	58*	58*	58*	58*	58*
Malta	27	36	28	30	32	34	41	48	40	47	56
Montenegro	18	18	17	13	15	21	19	30	19	27	26
Cyprus	28	22	13	13	21	25	17	7	10	13	23
Palestine, Occ. Tr.	32*	31	34	54	21	7	16	14	4	9	17
Portugal	72	18	3	164	74	27	1	-	-	2	-
Slovenia	1	2	5	5	2	2	1	2	1	-	1



Some CPs that have protected all species (e.g. Israel), or which have no target fisheries, or no fisheries at all do not consider that fisheries management measures are necessary (although bycatch fisheries do still require management and some of these countries report significant levels of bycatch to FAO – see Table 1). Croatia reported having begun the process of developing a management plan and action plan

for the protection of chondrichthyans. Montenegro summarised some of the provisions of its fisheries legislation and the law that regulates scientific research. Several CPs (including France, Greece and Italy) are bound by European Council Regulations; some MS also have national management measures. France noted the management recommendations adopted under ICCAT (including prohibitions on thresher shark *Alopias vulpinus* and hammerheads, as well as other species not recorded from the Mediterranean), but did not mention the GFCM Recommendation. Italy noted that the driftnet ban is an important step towards the protection of pelagic shark species. Outside the EU, Egypt bans fishing during May and June, Libya (which has very large elasmobranch fisheries – see Table 1 and Figure 3) reported that fishermen still use traditional gill nets in coastal areas. Tunisia reported minimum landing sizes for skates, rays and torpedo rays, and protection for one guitarfish species.

iv) Scientific research

CPs were asked: “*Has the Party started programmes of scientific research on chondrichthyans?*” One of the key objectives of the *Shark Action Plan* is the improvement of scientific knowledge (A.10.4). It recommended the development of new research programmes and extension of existing programmes to the whole of the Mediterranean (C.4, Actions 14–17). 50% of the CPs that responded to the questionnaire reported that they had done so, with an additional 6% (one CP) having a research programme under development. 25% reported that they had not started any research programme.

The collection of statistical and biological data under the EU Data Collection Framework was mentioned by Cyprus, while Greece noted its national fisheries data collection programme and other research projects. French and Italian scientific institutes participate in various national and regional research programmes, one of which, MedLEM, has collaborators in other CPs, including Tunisia. Various universities in Israel are undertaking relevant research projects. Some national research programmes are smaller, ranging from the development of a national checklist (Montenegro) to participation in a technical workshop (Libya). 25% of the CPs that responded noted that financial resources posed a challenge, 13% technical capability and 6% administrative management.

v) Training programmes

CPs were asked: “*Has the Party developed programmes to train specialists and fisheries technicians and managers in the study and conservation of chondrichthyans?*” This refers particularly to B.11.8 and C.5 in the *Shark Action Plan*. Progress in this area has been poor. Only 25% of CPs reported that they had any such programmes, either underway or under development. 56% did not, and 13% considered that this was not applicable to them. Egypt mentioned that some *ad hoc* training had been undertaken for rangers and Italy had conducted training for Coast Guard Personnel, to assist them with recording bycatch of threatened species. France noted that training should take place within the framework of the EU CPOA. Three CPs (19%) reported that financial resources posed difficulties for them, while technical capability and public participation were also mentioned as a problem by one CP.

vi) Information materials

CPs were asked: “*Has the Party developed information material directed at local authorities, residents, teachers, tourists, commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, divers and all other groups of people likely to be concerned?*” Increasing public awareness was recognised in the 2009 review as an extremely high priority for action to implement objective A.10.6 and to implement measures

recommended under C.6. Three major Actions (5–7) appear in the Action Plan implementation table. However, progress has remained poor. 50% of CPs reported no activity, and only 25% responded that they had done so. A further 13% (2 CPs) had some materials under development. Challenges included financial resources (13%) and technical capability (6%). It appears (as noted above) that there is low public awareness of the threatened and legal status of even the highest profile protected species, the white shark, and the importance of conserving these species.

3. Implementation of the *Shark Action Plan* by the RAC/SPA, 2009-2012

RAC/SPA finalized 2010-11 work on the amendment of Annexes II and III to the Protocol, through improving the updated scientific assessment of some of the elasmobranch species listed in Annex III, upon some Parties contributions with a view to their inclusion in Annex II. The decision (IG.20/5) of the 17 COP of the Barcelona Convention in February 2012 agreed on this amendment.

Collaboration with the GFCM and European Commission took place for the workshop on Stock Assessment of Selected Species of Elasmobranches in the GFCM area held in Brussels, Belgium on November 2011.

Guidelines for shark and ray recreational fishing in the Mediterranean were prepared and edited in English and French. A base of elasmobranch specialist and experts was elaborated by RAC/SPA.

4. Review of International Implementation of the *Shark Action Plan*, 2009–2012

The Director of the RAC/SPA wrote to his counterpart in the Secretariats of the Bonn Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Bern Convention for the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, and the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean (GFCM), with a view to identifying potential synergies with other instruments in order to strengthen the conservation of Mediterranean wildlife and habitats. The list of 28 Shark Action Plan 'Actions' (see Table 2) was appended to these letters, which requested information on relevant actions within each of these in order to identify potential areas for collaboration. This review only concerns responses obtained for the Shark Action Plan (similar information was requested for the Marine Turtle and Annex II Bird Action Plans).

A detailed response was only received from the CMS Secretariat; this was concerned primarily with the considerable scope for potential synergies between the Conservation Plan for Migratory Sharks, adopted at the First Meeting of the Signatories to the CMS Shark Memorandum of Understanding in September 2012 (CMS 2012). However, Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area is sufficiently detailed to provide information on important areas for synergy between RAC/SPA and GFCM and has been used to populate Table 2, which summarises the results.

5. Review of activities and implementation by Partners and other organisations

Similar requests for information were also sent to Action Plan Partners and other organisations working on shark conservation issues. Responses were received from the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Shark Specialist Group, developed by the Co-Vice Chairs for the Mediterranean Region, and from the National Institute of Marine Science and Technology (INSTM), Tunisia. Their responses are also incorporated in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of progress ongoing or actions achieved by other international instruments and organisations for 28 Shark Plan Actions

Actions within AP Timetable 2010-2013	Convention on Migratory Species MOU & Conservation Plan for Migratory Sharks	GFCM	IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group	INSTM, Tunisia
<i>TOOLS</i>				
1. Establish directory of national, regional and international experts on chondrichthyan fish taxonomy, biology, stock assessment, conservation and management, supported by an external panel of experts.	The CMS Conservation Plan for Migratory Sharks includes an activity to create a directory of experts and organizations concerned with shark conservation on a regional and global level.	GFCM was involved with the development through RAC/SPA of a Mediterranean Directory of experts in 2012 and has received a copy of this database.	IUCN SSC produced list of experts for RAC/SPA and GFCM	
2. Develop, print and distribute regional and national field identification guides and sheets, highlighting diagnostic characteristics, for improved monitoring of elasmobranch fisheries and landings by government bodies and fishermen. Priority areas are: i. Southern and eastern Mediterranean (in Arabic, French, Spanish); ii. Adriatic, Aegean, Ionian (Croatian, Albanian, Italian, Greek, Turkish); iii. Northwestern Mediterranean (French, Spanish).	The CMS Sharks MOU website provides links to existing global and regional identification guides for sharks and shark fins, one of which was specifically developed for the identification of species listed in Annex I to the Sharks MOU and CITES Appendix II. http://sharksmou.org/?q=no%2F72 http://sharksmou.org/?q=no%2F79		Noted that the FAO has produced field guides for the Mediterranean and Levantine Basins; identification cards for the main species of sharks in English, French and Arabic; and some other field guides (e.g. for demersal elasmobranchs) are in preparation under the coordination of MEDITS. Northern European and Mediterranean volume of a new Chondrichthyan Field Guide series is due in 2014/15.	
3. Promote use of existing standard monitoring protocols and forms (RAC/SPA, FAO) for landings, discards and observations of threatened species;	The Conservation Plan includes: - Recommend standard methods and set minimum levels of data collection and adopt or develop a recommended set of protocols for research, monitoring, and information exchange.		The EU Data Collection Framework is working towards this. Species-specific records of elasmobranchs are needed in official statistics, for stock assessment and conservation purposes.	

<p>4. Develop protocols and programmes for improved compilation and analysis of data, for contribution to regional stock assessment initiatives.</p>	<p>The Conservation Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop capacity in research, data collection, monitoring and facilitate training in data quality. - ... adopt or develop a recommended set of protocols for research, monitoring, and information exchange. - Regularly exchange scientific and technical information and expertise in order to develop and implement best practice approaches to the conservation of sharks and their habitats. 		<p>The MEDITS programme needs to be extended to the African and Levantine countries. This requires the support of RAC/SPA and Action Plan partners to convince relevant national and international administrations (e.g. EU) and GFCM to do so.</p>	
<p>5. Formalise/reinforce synchronous submission of catch, bycatch and discard data to both scientific and management bodies, and annually to the GFCM.</p>	<p>The Conservation Plan requests to the development of programmes to establish baseline data and facilitate reporting at a species specific level on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shark catch rates; - fishing gear used in shark fisheries; - amount of incidental and directed take; - amount of waste and discards; - size and sex of individuals caught; 	<p>See Annex IV to this report: GFCM/36/2012/3 PART III. Monitoring, data collection and research 9. CPCs shall ensure that: a) information on fishing activities, catch data, incidental taking, release and/or discarding events for sharks species listed in either Annex of the SPA/BD Protocol, be recorded by the ship-owners; b) this information be reported to the national authorities for notification to GFCM Secretariat within the annual national reporting to SAC; c) any other additional measures taken to improve data gathering....</p>		
<p>6. Add further information on elasmobranch bycatch to national reports to GFCM, for incorporation in GFCM database, as recommended by GFCM workshop on bycatch (Rome, 2008)</p>	<p>See above</p>		<p>MEDLEM helps to update the knowledge on incidental catches of large elasmobranchs during annual meetings of the Sub Committee of the GFCM SAC.</p>	<p>Not yet added (Tunisia)</p>
<p>7. Undertake information campaigns, improve the provision of materials for publication, and disseminate more widely</p>			<p>See above</p>	

<p>existing RAC/SPA, FAO and other products (e.g. the RAC/SPA Guidelines for reducing the presence of sensitive species in by-catch). These activities should target managers, researchers and the general public.</p>				
<p>8. Develop guidelines and/or a code of conduct for the management of shark and ray fishing. These will promote catch and release, describe protocols for handling catches in order to minimise stress and improve survival, and encourage reporting of such catches.</p>	<p>The MOU website provides information on safe handling and release of sharks, developed by NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/USA) http://sharksmou.org/sites/default/files/Careful_release_brochure.pdf#overlay-context=node/79%3Fq%3Dnode/79 The Conservation Plan encourages Signatories to implement the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995).</p>		<p>See above. Also, IUCN SSG specialists contributed towards the development of Guidelines for RAC/SPA.</p>	
<p>9. Promote a shift in focus of shark and ray sport/recreational fishing towards catch and release, contributions to research activities (for example through engagement in tag and release programmes), and improved reporting of catches.</p>			<p>A LIFE project in Italy on this topic will be completed next year. Also, IUCN SSG specialists contributed towards the development of Guidelines for RAC/SPA.</p>	<p>INSTM is working on developing a tagging and release program on sharks with IRD-France</p>
<p>LEGAL PROCESSES</p>				
<p>10. Establish strict legal protection for threatened and endangered species listed in Annex II through appropriate national laws and regulations.</p>	<p><i>Carcharodon carcharias</i> and <i>Cetorhinus maximus</i> are listed in CMS Appendix I; taking these species is strictly prohibited. The Conservation Plan foresees various measures contributing to legal protection of MOU Annex 1 Sharks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review domestic policies and laws to address gaps or impediments to the conservation and management of sharks and their habitats - Implement and enforce existing fisheries conservation and management measures and trade regulations on 	<p>See Annex IV to this report: GFCM/36/2012/3 Regarding Annex II and Annex III species of the SPA/BD Protocol to the Barcelona Convention: 6. CPCs shall ensure a high protection from fishing activities to elasmobranch species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD protocol 7. Specimens of sharks' species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol cannot be retained on board, ... or offered for sale. 8. CPCs shall ensure that catches of tope</p>		<p>No national regulation but ratified international conventions on the issue could be taken in account on the national level</p>

	<p>shark fisheries through effective monitoring, control and surveillance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement specific measures where gaps are identified and develop capacity in compliance and law enforcement 	<p>shark (<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>) taken with bottom-set nets, longlines and in tuna traps shall be promptly released unharmed and alive...</p>		
<p>11. Establish and promote national, sub-regional and regional plans or strategies for the conservation, recovery and/or management, as appropriate, of species listed in Annexes II and III.</p>	<p><i>Carcharodon carcharias</i> and <i>Cetorhinus maximus</i> are listed in CMS Appendix I, implying that taking these species is strictly prohibited.</p> <p>Conservation Plan calls for cooperation between signatory governments for a range of measures, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify management issues where cooperation is required for successful conservation and management. - Enhance capacities and competencies in ... techniques to support MOU implementation at national, regional and international level. - Strengthen existing and develop new mechanisms, where required, for cooperation and effective consultations ... with relevant IGOs and RFMOs and regional seas conventions, at the sub-regional level. - Develop networks, including for information and data, for cooperative management of shared populations, within or across sub-regions; where appropriate, formalize cooperative management arrangements. - Cooperate, where possible, in the establishment of transboundary marine protected areas using ecological rather than political boundaries. <p>Conduct collaborative studies and monitoring in pursuing activities</p>			

	described above where appropriate.			
12. Support GFCM finning prohibition by enacting national regulations for the prohibition of finning at sea, transport, landing and transshipment of fin without corresponding carcass, by all vessels in national and international waters.	The Conservation Plan requests: Where not already in place, consider enacting legislation or regulations requiring sharks to be stored on board and landed with each fin naturally attached in line with applicable UN General Assembly Resolutions, including 62/177 and 66/68 and with applicable decisions from IUCN, including motion 4.114, and relevant RFMOs.	See: GFCM/36/2012/3 PART II, Fisheries management measures 4. CPCs shall ensure that: - 'finning' shall be prohibited; - beheading and skinning of specimens on board and before landing shall be prohibited. - It shall be prohibited to purchase, offer for sale or sell shark fins which have been removed, retained on board, transhipped or landed in contravention of the above.		
13. Protect critical habitats for chondrichthyan fishes, as soon as they are identified.	The Conservation Plan requests: - Designate and manage conservation areas, sanctuaries or temporary exclusion zones along migration corridors and in critical habitat, including on the high seas, in cooperation with RFMOs and RSCs, or take other measures to remove threats. - Integrate shark and shark habitat protection in environmental impact or risk assessments for marine and coastal development projects. - Develop, implement and assess spatial and/or seasonal closures of fishing areas to reduce incidental capture, particularly in nursery grounds and mating and pupping aggregation areas. - Promote the protection of the marine environment from land-based and maritime pollution. - Avoid mortality of juvenile sharks and fecund females to maintain population levels and ensure	See: GFCM/36/2012/3 PART II, Fisheries management measures 5. Reduction of trawl fishing in coastal areas to enhance protection of coastal sharks A) CPCs shall ensure that fishing activities carried out with trawl nets are prohibited within 3 nautical miles off the coast, provided that the 50 meters isobath is not reached, or within the 50 meters isobath where that depth is reached at a shorter distance from the coast. B) Specific and spatially limited derogation may be granted by the Members on condition that affects a limited number of vessels and provided that such derogation: a. is justified by particular geographical constraints...; and/or b. concerns small trawl vessels of less than or equal to 12 metres overall length and engine power of less than or equal to 85 kW traditionally carried out in coastal areas; or c.	For this action it is extremely important to maintain monitoring activities and, if possible, to implement them involving the maximum number of Mediterranean countries (including Levant basin and African countries)	Many elasmobranchs species have nurseries in the Gulf of Gabes area. INSTM is working on delimiting these nurseries for eventual protection.

	population viability.	concerns a limited number of vessels during a seasonal fishing campaign;; and d. has no significant impact on the marine environment.		
MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION				
14. Promote existing research proposals developed under the RAC/SPA Action Plan (Eastern Adriatic, Balearics, Gulfs of Gabes and Sirta) by adapting them to funding proposals for the consideration of potential funding bodies, partners and Contracting Parties.			This action is vital and should be applied also to the countries of the Levant basin.	
15. Initiate comprehensive programme / campaign to support data collection efforts in: i. Gulfs of Gabes and Sirta, Levantine basin (areas of highest biodiversity importance for chondrichthyan fishes in the Mediterranean and a high priority for development of precautionary management measures); and ii. Eastern Adriatic (an important region for demersal fisheries and for large rare Mediterranean elasmobranchs).			The SSG strongly supports this activity.	Annual campaign onboard on elasmobranchs in the Gulf of Gabes to have data on bycatch and nurseries
16. Promote input to the MEDLEM database under the appropriate protocol, to ensure shared access to information on chondrichthyan fishes across the Mediterranean.			Activity strongly supported. MEDLEM is available via password, issued through the website to researchers from research institutes, but not to those wanting data for personal use. MEDLEM is discussed in GFCM & adopted by RAC / SPA	INSTM participated on data collection but relationship with MEDLEM should be improved
17. Complete and disseminate critical habitat inventories (mating, spawning and nursery grounds)			See above about scientific campaigns for stock assessment	In progress but this task need more funds

<p>18. Increase efforts to comply with obligations to collect and submit species-specific data on commercial chondrichthyan fish catch and bycatch to FAO and GFCM, including through increased use of observers on fishing vessels.</p>	<p>The Conservation Plan includes::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and implement strategies to ensure that sharks and shark products entering international trade are harvested and traded in accordance with conservation and management measures and applicable regulations including those of CITES and RFMOs. - Implement and enforce fisheries conservation and management measures and trade regulations through effective monitoring, control and surveillance. 	<p>GFCM has not yet received data from any Parties (INSTM)</p>	<p>Progress with establishing a training programme to support such activities, requested by FAO, have been hindered by financial problems.</p>	<p>Commercial data are submitted regularly but data on bycatch need more effort. GFCM did not receive data from any parties on the issue</p>
<p>19. Comply with obligations under existing ICCAT/ GFCM Recommendations to collect and submit data on pelagic shark catches.</p>	<p>The Conservation Plan includes::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement and enforce existing fisheries conservation and management measures and trade regulations on shark fisheries through effective monitoring, control and surveillance. 			<p>Yes. Tunisia will also sign the CMS MOU on the conservation of migratory sharks</p>
<p>20. Improve programmes for the collection of data from coastal fisheries.</p>	<p>Conservation Plan requests programmes be developed to establish baseline data and facilitate species specific reporting on: catch rates; fishing gear; incidental and directed take; waste and discards; size and sex of individuals caught; and fisheries methods that are sustainable, responsible & protect habitat.</p>			
<p>21. Support the participation of relevant experts on the conservation of cartilaginous fishes in RFMO (e.g. ICCAT, GFCM) meetings and workshops, in order to share expertise and improve capacity to undertake data collection, stock assessment and bycatch mitigation.</p>		<p>GFCM/36/2012/3 PART III 10. As appropriate, the GFCM and its CPCs should, individually and collectively, engage in capacity building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on sharks and sharks fisheries and to support the effective implementation of this recommendation,</p>	<p>GFCM often organizes meetings, workshops for researchers. e.g., a) 2010 Sfax (Tunisia) First Transversal expert meeting on status of Elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean and Black Sea; b) 2011 Brussels (Belgium) Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Workshop on</p>	<p>- Participation of the laboratory in the workshop on stocks assessment of selected species of elasmobranchs in the GFCM area (Belgium, 12 – 16 December 2011). - Participation on the training</p>

		including entering into cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international bodies.	Stock Assessment of Selected Species of Elasmobranchs in GFCM area; c) 2012 Antalya (Turkey) Training workshop on Age Reading of elasmobranchs in GFCM area.	course on age and growth of elasmobranchs in the frame of the GFCM medium program on elasmobranchs (2010-2012) (Turkey, 2012)
MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES				
22. Review existing sources of data and undertake new studies if necessary to clarify the status of species that are/were not rare in the Mediterranean but are assessed as Data Deficient or Near Threatened, prioritizing inter alia: <i>Raja radula</i> and other endemics, <i>Mustelus punctulatus</i> , <i>Carcharhinus</i> spp. and other large sharks			This action is one of the most important activities of the IUCN SSG. The first global Red List assessment is now completed and updating is underway. The EU is currently developing a Marine Fish Red List. Cooperation with scientific stock assessment programmes (e.g. of MEDITS & GFCM), RAC/SPA and IUCN is very important.	-Bradai et al. 2012. Elasmobranchs of the Mediterranean and Black Sea: Ecology and Biology, bibliographic analysis. <i>Studies and Reviews of the GFCM</i> , N° 91. -Many papers on biology and ecology (reproductive cycle, age and growth, diet, systematic)
23. Monitor Critically Endangered, Endangered and endemic species	The Conservation Plan requests the following regarding monitoring sharks: - Identify priority ... monitoring ... needs; - develop capacity in ... monitoring .. - Compile relevant data, improve ecological knowledge and conduct baseline studies on: shark populations including dynamics, structure and abundance; essential shark habitats; distributional range, aggregations; behaviour; ecology; seasonal and spatial migration patterns and routes; taxonomy; and environmental factors with impacts on sharks. - Conduct long-term population monitoring to assess conservation status and trends. - Identify and prioritize		<i>Mobula mobular</i> is a particularly high priority for monitoring and data collection, particularly in view of recent information on the eastern Mediterranean seasonal fishery. Consideration should be undertaken for gathering the information necessary to determine whether to propose this species for listing in the Appendices of other MEAs.	Monitoring of the presence of the white shark in Tunisia

	<p>(with a view to developing conservation measures): critical shark habitats (incl. migration routes), seasons, life stages and populations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess and prioritize threats from human activities (especially fisheries) and identify the most vulnerable species. - Establish conservation targets and indicators to assess progress towards species population targets and develop species-specific reference points for enhanced conservation measures 			
24. Provide to the GFCM an annual description of all national target and/or bycatch chondrichthyan fisheries, in the form of annual Shark Assessment Report.			MEDLEM updates incidental catches of large elasmobranchs; these data may enable assessments of some elasmobranch species through the GFCM SC Stock Assessment	This kind of information is submitted annually, in a national report, to the SAC (Scientific Advisory Committee) of the GFCM
25. Develop and adopt as a matter of urgency where these do not exist national Shark Plans within the framework of the FAO IPOA-Sharks, incorporating specific regulations for fisheries exploiting chondrichthyans, whether target or bycatch.	Conservation Plan calls upon Signatories to develop and implement NPOA-Sharks to manage sharks within their jurisdictional waters and to regulate of the activities of States' fleets fishing on the High Seas in accordance with FAO's voluntary IPOA-Sharks, also taking into account UN GA Res 59/25 and 61/105.		This action is essential. The role of RAC / SPA is fundamental for constantly updating the MAP and for stimulating Mediterranean countries to produce their own National Plans (as done for Libya, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro in 2007-2008)	Not yet but the national plan is an objective of a project dealing with elasmobranchs (2011-2014)
26. Undertake discussions with GFCM with a view to promoting the eventual development of a Regional Shark Plan and associated fisheries management measures and regulations outside territorial waters, to complement and assist with the implementation of activities under the RAC/SPA Action Plan				
27. Review national and regional Shark Plans				

every four years				
28. Implement a programme for the development of stock assessments, by area (Adriatic, Gulf of Gabes, Levantine Sea), and by species.			As mentioned above is extremely important that the GFCM and RAC/SPA contact the EU in order to activate similar stock assessment programmes along the African and Levantine coasts	In progress: growth parameters were determined for five or six species.

6. Review of progress and proposals for a new Implementation Timetable

This section presents two tables. Table 3 is based upon the responses from CPs and other consultees, and other sources of information and evaluates progress against the 2010–2013 Implementation timetable. Table 4 proposes a new implementation timetable for the period 2014–2018. The finalized version of the implementation Timetable is given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/8

Table 3. Evaluation of progress against the 2010–2013 Implementation Timetable

Action	Deadline	By whom	Progress
<i>Tools</i>			
1. Establish directory of national, regional and international experts on chondrichthyan fish taxonomy, biology, stock assessment, conservation and management, supported by an external panel of experts.	1 year after adoption	RAC/SPA, advised by IUCN Shark Specialist Group, ICES & ICCAT Shark Working Groups	COMPLETE, but will require regular updating. CMS proposes similar regional and global directories
2. Develop, print and distribute regional and national field identification guides and sheets, highlighting diagnostic characteristics, for improved monitoring of elasmobranch fisheries and landings by government bodies and fishermen. Priority areas: i) Southern and eastern Mediterranean (in arabic, french, spanish); ii) Adriatic, Aegean, Ionian (in Croatian, Albanian, Italian, Greek, Turkish); iii) Northwestern Mediterranean (French, Spanish).	1 year after adoption (basic ID sheets) 2–3 years (more detailed guides)	GFCM/FAO National scientific and management bodies Regional cooperation agencies	PARTIAL FAO guides for Mediterranean and Levantine Basin; species cards in English, French & Arabic. UNDERWAY MEDITS demersal elasmobranch guide in prep.
3. Promote use of existing standard monitoring protocols and forms (RAC/SPA, FAO) for landings, discards and observations of threatened species;	Immediate & continuous	National scientific and management bodies,	UNDERWAY
4. Develop protocols and programmes for improved compilation and analysis of data, for contribution to regional stock assessment initiatives.	1 year after adoption	Regional cooperation agencies,	UNDERWAY
5. Formalise/reinforce synchronous submission of catch, bycatch and discard data to both scientific and management bodies, and annually to the GFCM.	Immediate & continuous	GFCM and FAO	POOR
6. Add further information on elasmobranch bycatch to national reports to GFCM, for incorporation in GFCM database, as recommended by GFCM workshop on bycatch (Rome, 2008)	1 year after adoption	Contracting Parties, GFCM	POOR
7. Undertake information campaigns, improve the provision of	2 years after	AP Partners,	POOR

materials for publication, and disseminate more widely existing RAC/SPA, FAO and other products (e.g. the RAC/SPA <i>Guidelines for reducing the presence of sensitive species in by-catch</i>). These activities should target managers, researchers and the general public.	adoption	Associates and donor agencies	
8. Develop guidelines and/or a code of conduct for the management of shark and ray sport/recreational fishing. These will promote catch and release, describe protocols for handling catches in order to minimise stress and improve survival, and encourage reporting of catches.	1 year after adoption	RAC/SPA, GFCM Scientific Committee	COMPLETED
9. Promote a shift in focus of shark and ray sport/recreational fishing towards catch and release, contributions to research activities (for example through engagement in tag and release programmes), and improved catch reporting.	2 years after adoption	Contracting Parties	UNDERWAY
Legal processes			
10. Establish strict legal protection for threatened and endangered species listed in Annex II through appropriate national laws and regulations.	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties	POOR / VERY INCOMPLETE
11. Establish and promote national, sub-regional and regional plans or strategies for the conservation, recovery and/or management, as appropriate, of species listed in Annexes	4 year after adoption	Contracting Parties, RAC/SPA, GFCM	POOR PROGRESS
12. Support GFCM finning prohibition by enacting national regulations for the prohibition of finning at sea, transport, landing and transshipment of fins without corresponding carcass, by all vessels in national and international waters.	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties	GOOD, BUT INCOMPLETE
13. Protect critical habitats for chondrichthyan fishes, as soon as they are identified.	Continuous	Contracting Parties, MEAs,	POOR PROGRESS
Monitoring and data collection			
14. Promote existing research proposals developed under the RAC/SPA Action Plan (Eastern Adriatic, Balearics, Gulfs of Gabes and Sirta) by adapting them to funding proposals for the consideration of potential funding bodies, partners and Contracting Parties.	1 year after adoption	RAC/SPA	POOR Minimal uptake by funding bodies
15. Initiate comprehensive programme/campaign to support data collection efforts in: i) Gulfs of Gabes and Sirta, Levantine basin (areas of highest biodiversity importance for chondrichthyan fishes in the Mediterranean and a high priority for development of precautionary management measures); and ii) Eastern Adriatic (important region for demersal fisheries and for large rare Mediterranean elasmobranchs).	2 years after adoption 3 years after adoption	National scientific bodies/institutes, Regional cooperation agencies, GFCM	POOR
16. Promote input to the MEDLEM database under the appropriate protocol, to ensure shared access to information on chondrichthyan fishes across the Mediterranean.	Immediate, continuous	Contracting Parties, GFCM	GOOD
17. Complete and disseminate inventories of critical habitats (mating, spawning and nursery grounds)	2 years after adoption	Contracting Parties	POOR
18. Increase efforts to comply with obligations to collect and submit species-specific data on commercial catch and bycatch to FAO and GFCM, including through increased use of observers on fishing vessels.	Immediate & continuous	Contracting Parties	POOR
19. Comply with obligations under existing ICCAT/GFCM Recommendations to collect and submit data on pelagic	Immediate	Contracting Parties	UNKNOWN

shark catches.			
20. Improve programmes for the collection of data from coastal fisheries.	Immediate	Contracting Parties	UNKNOWN
21. Support the participation of relevant experts on the conservation of cartilaginous fishes in RFMO (e.g. ICCAT, GFCM) meetings and workshops, in order to share expertise and improve capacity to undertake data collection, stock assessment and bycatch mitigation.	Immediate	Contracting Parties, RFMO, RAC/SPA	MODERATE – GOOD
Management and assessment procedures			
22. Review existing sources of data and undertake new studies if necessary to clarify the status of species that are/were not rare in the Mediterranean but are assessed as Data Deficient or Near Threatened, prioritising <i>inter alia</i> : <i>Raja radula</i> and other endemics, <i>Mustelus punctulatus</i> , <i>Carcharhinus</i> spp. and other large sharks	2 years after adoption	Contracting Parties, Partners	UNDERWAY
23. Monitor Critically Endangered, Endangered and endemic species	Continuous	Contracting Parties	POOR, BUT UNDERWAY
24. Provide to the GFCM an annual description of all national target and/or bycatch chondrichthyan fisheries, in the form of annual Shark Assessment Report.	Every year	Contracting Parties	POOR
25. Develop and adopt as a matter of urgency where these do not exist national Shark Plans within the framework of the FAO IPOA-Sharks, incorporating specific regulations for fisheries exploiting chondrichthyans, whether target or bycatch.	1 year after adoption	Contracting Parties individually and through GFCM	INCOMPLETE
26. Undertake discussions with GFCM with a view to promoting the eventual development of a Regional Shark Plan and associated fisheries management measures and regulations outside territorial waters, to complement and assist with the implementation of activities under the RAC/SPA Action Plan.	2 years after adoption	Contracting Parties, GFCM	UNDERWAY
27. Review national and regional Shark Plans every four years	4 years after adoption	Contracting Parties, GFCM	PARTIALLY UNDERWAY
29. Implement a programme for the development of stock assessments, by area (Adriatic, Gulf of Gabes, Levantine Sea), and by species.	2 years after adoption	Contracting Parties, GFCM	PARTIALLY UNDERWAY

Table 4. Proposals for an updated Implementation Timetable 2014–2019.

Action	Deadline	By whom
<i>Tools</i>		
1. Update directory of national, regional and international experts on chondrichthyan fishes.	2015	RAC/SPA, CMS Shark MOU Secretariat, IUCN SSG, RFMO Shark Working Groups
2. Develop, print and distribute multilingual regional and national field identification guides and sheets for remaining priority areas: Adriatic, Aegean, Ionian (in Croatian, Albanian, Italian, Greek, Turkish); and Northwestern Mediterranean (French, Spanish).	2014 – 2015	GFCM/FAO, MEDITS, National scientific and management bodies Regional cooperation agencies
3. Promote use of existing standard monitoring protocols and forms (RAC/SPA, FAO) for species-specific data on landings, discards and observations of threatened species;	Continuous	National scientific and management bodies, Regional cooperation agencies, MedLEM, CMS, GFCM and FAO
4. Update and promote protocols and programmes for improved compilation and analysis of data, for contribution to regional stock assessment initiatives.	Continuous	National and regional agencies and advisory bodies, CMS, GFCM and FAO
5. Formalise/reinforce synchronous submission of catch, bycatch and discard data to both scientific and management bodies, and annually to the GFCM.	Continuous and annual	Contracting Parties
6. Improve data on elasmobranch bycatch in national reports to GFCM, for incorporation in GFCM database	Continuous and annual	Contracting Parties, GFCM, MEDLEM
7. Undertake information campaigns, improve the provision of materials for publication, and disseminate more widely existing RAC/SPA, FAO, CMS and other relevant products to fisheries managers, researchers and the public.	2014, 2016, 2018	AP Partners, Associates and donor agencies
8. Widely disseminate RAC/SPA guidelines and code of conduct for shark and ray recreational fishing.	2014	RAC/SPA, Contracting Parties, AP Partners, CMS
9. Promote catch and release, research activity and improved reporting of catches to shark and ray recreational fishers.	Continuous	Contracting Parties and AP Partners
<i>Legal processes</i>		
10. Establish strict legal protection for species listed in Annex II and GFCM Recommendation through national laws and regulations.	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties
11. Establish and promote national, sub-regional and regional plans or strategies for species listed in Annexes II and III.	2014	Contracting Parties, RAC/SPA, GFCM, CMS
12. Support GFCM finning prohibition by enacting national regulations and monitoring their implementation & enforcement.	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties
13. Monitor and protect critical habitats for chondrichthyan fishes, as soon as they are identified.	Continuous	Contracting Parties, MEAs,

Table 4 continued (2/2)

Action	Deadline	By whom
<i>Monitoring and data collection</i>		
14. Promote existing research proposals developed under the RAC/SPA Action Plan to funding agencies; develop similar proposals for the Levantine basin.	2014	RAC/SPA, CPs, AP Partners
15. Develop and support improved data collection efforts, particularly in southern and eastern Mediterranean	2014 – 2015	National and regional scientific bodies and cooperation agencies, GFCM, FAO
16. Promote input and shared access to the MEDLEM database under the appropriate protocol.	Immediate, continuous	Contracting Parties, research institutes, GFCM
17. Complete and disseminate inventories of critical habitats (mating, spawning and nursery grounds)	2015	Contracting Parties
18. Increase compliance with obligations to collect and submit species-specific commercial catch and bycatch data to FAO and GFCM, including through increased use of observers.	Immediate & continuous	Contracting Parties
19. Comply with obligations under GFCM Recommendations to collect and submit data on pelagic shark catches.	Immediate	Contracting Parties
20. Improve programmes for the collection and reporting of data from coastal fisheries.	Immediate	Contracting Parties
21. Support expert participation in RFMO and other relevant meetings and workshops, to share expertise and build capacity for data collection, stock assessment and bycatch mitigation.	Immediate	Contracting Parties, RFMO, RAC/SPA
<i>Management and assessment procedures</i>		
22. Continuously review data and undertake new studies to clarify the status of Mediterranean endemics and large bodied species assessed as Data Deficient or Near Threatened	2014, 2017	Contracting Parties, Partners
23. Monitor Critically Endangered, Endangered and endemic species	Continuous	Contracting Parties
24. Submit to the GFCM annual Shark Assessment Reports describing all national target and/or bycatch fisheries	Every year	Contracting Parties
25. Develop and adopt (where these do not exist) national Shark Plans and specific regulations for fisheries exploiting chondrichthyans, whether target or bycatch.	Immediate	Contracting Parties individually and through GFCM
26. Develop a Regional Shark Plan and associated fisheries management regulations outside territorial waters.	2015	Contracting Parties, GFCM
27. Review national and regional Shark Plans every four years	2014, 2018	Contracting Parties, GFCM
29. Continue to implement programme for the development of stock assessments, by area and by species.	2014, 2016, 2018	Contracting Parties, GFCM
30. Assessment of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan and update its timetable	2019	RAC/SPA, Contracting Parties

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Annex II. Questionnaire to National Focal Points regarding implementation of the Action Plan on Cartilaginous fish

No.	Description of measures taken under the Action Plan	Status Please tick the most appropriate answer					Difficulties/Challenges Please tick the most appropriate answer					
		Yes	No	Under development	Other	Not applicable	Policy framework	Regulatory framework	Financial resources	Administrative management	Technical capabilities	Public participation
1	Has the Party granted chondrichthyans a legal status that complies with the conventions adopted to protect them from degradation and harm due to human activities?											
		Remarks/Comments					Remarks/Comments					
2	Has the Party developed specific programmes in the context of IPOA-Sharks?											
		Remarks/Comments					Remarks/Comments					
3	Has the Party taken steps on fishing?											
		Remarks/Comments					Remarks/Comments					
4	Has the Party started programmes of scientific research on chondrichthyans?											
		Remarks/Comments					Remarks/Comments					
5	Has the Party developed programmes to train specialists and fisheries technicians and managers in the study and conservation of chondrichthyans?											
		Remarks/Comments					Remarks/Comments					
6	Has the Party developed information material directed at local											

	authorities, residents, teachers, tourists, commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, divers and all other groups of people likely to be concerned?	Remarks/Comments	Remarks/Comments
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Annex III. Mediterranean Chondrichthyan species listed in Conventions

Species	Barcelona SPA Protocol		Bern Convention		CMS Appendices & Migratory Sharks MOU			CITES Appendices		
	Appendix II / GFCM	Appendix III	Appendix II	Appendix III	I	II	MoU	I	II	III
<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>		X								
<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>		X								
<i>Carcharias taurus</i>	X									
<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	X		X		X	X	X		X	
<i>Centrophorus granulosus</i>		X								
<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>	X		X		X	X	X		X	
<i>Dipturus batis</i>	X									
<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>	X									
<i>Gymnura altavela</i>	X									
<i>Hepranchias perlo</i>		X								
<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	X			X		X	X			
<i>Lamna nasus</i>	X			X		X	X		X*	X*
<i>Leucoraja circularis</i>	X									
<i>Leucoraja melitensis</i>	X									
<i>Mobula mobular</i>	X		X							
<i>Mustelus asterias</i>		X								
<i>Mustelus mustelus</i>		X								
<i>Mustelus punctulatus</i>		X								
<i>Odontaspis ferox</i>	X									
<i>Oxynotus centrina</i>	X									
<i>Prionace glauca</i>		X		X						
<i>Pristis pectinata</i>	X							X		
<i>Pristis pristis</i>	X							X		
<i>Rhinobatos cemiculus</i>	X									
<i>Rhinobatos rhinobatos</i>	X									
<i>Rostroraja alba</i>	X									
<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	X			X					X*	X*
<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>	X								X*	X*
<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>	X								X*	X*
<i>Squalus acanthias</i>		X				X	X			
<i>Squatina aculeata</i>	X									
<i>Squatina oculata</i>	X									
<i>Squatina squatina</i>	X			X						
									* from June 2013	* until June 2013

Annex IV. Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objectives of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean are to promote the development, conservation, rational management and proper utilization of living marine resources;

RECALLING the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development of 2002 and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development of the Fisheries in the Mediterranean held in Venice on 2003;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fishery management;

RECALLING the FAO International Plan of action for the Conservation and the management of Sharks (IPOA-sharks);

RECALLING the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of some sharks species in either Annex II or Annex III of its Protocol concerning the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (hereinafter SPA/BD Protocol);

NOTING the importance of harmonizing conservation and management measures with other international conventions responsible for the protection of these species;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the SAC advice and in particular the needs for species identification and to ensure better conservation status to sharks including protection of coastal areas from most active fishing gear;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article III paragraph 1 (b) and (h) and Article V of the GFCM Agreement that:

PART I

Scope

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties of the GFCM (hereafter referred to as CPCs) shall ensure that sharks are kept on board, transhipped, landed and marketed at first sale in a way that species are recognizable and identifiable and catches, incidental takings and, whenever appropriate, releases by species can be monitored and recorded.

2. CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures to ensure adequate conservation status to sharks.

Definitions

3. For the purposes of this Recommendation the following definitions shall apply:

‘Shark’ means any fish of the taxon Elasmobranchii

‘Shark fins’ means any fins of sharks including caudal fins, but excluding the pectoral fins of rays, which are a constituent part of ray wings;

‘finning’ means the removal of fins at sea and discarding of carcass;

‘trawl nets’ means nets which are actively towed by the main boat engine and consisting of a cone- or pyramid-shaped body (as trawl body) closed at the back by a cod-end and which can extend at the opening by the wings or can be mounted on a rigid frame. Horizontal opening is either obtained by otter boards or provided by a beam or frame of variable shape and size. Such nets can be towed either on the bottom (bottom trawl net) or in midwater (pelagic trawl net);

PART II

Fisheries management measures

4. CPCs shall ensure that:

- ‘finning’ shall be prohibited;
- beheading and skinning of specimens on board and before landing shall be prohibited. Beheaded and skinned sharks cannot be marketed at the first sale markets after landing;
- It shall be prohibited to purchase, offer for sale or sell shark fins which have been removed, retained on board, transhipped or landed in contravention of this Recommendation.

5. Reduction of trawl fishing in coastal areas to enhance protection of coastal sharks

A) CPCs shall ensure that fishing activities carried out with trawl nets are prohibited within 3 nautical miles off the coast, provided that the 50 meters isobath is not reached, or within the 50 meters isobath where that depth is reached at a shorter distance from the coast.

B) Specific and spatially limited derogation may be granted by the Members on condition that affects a limited number of vessels and provided that such derogation:

- a. is justified by particular geographical constraints, such as the limited size of continental shelf along the entire coastline of a Member State or the limited extent of trawlable fishing grounds due to different causes;and/or

- b. concerns small trawl vessels of less than or equal to 12 metres overall length and engine power of less than or equal to 85 kW traditionally carried out in coastal areas; or
 - c. concerns a limited number of vessels during a seasonal fishing campaign; and
 - d. has no significant impact on the marine environment.
- C) CPCs shall inform the GFCM on the modalities of applying the derogation under point B) no later than 31 March 2013. This notification shall include:
- a. a list of authorised trawl fishing vessels with their characteristics,
 - b. zones as identified by geographic coordinates both on land and at sea and by GFCM statistical rectangles as defined in Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1.
 - c. Measures taken to monitor and mitigate impact on marine environment
- D) CPCs shall establish a specific monitoring plan for the trawl fisheries operating under derogation as stipulated by point B).
- E) These provisions are without prejudice to more detailed or stricter rules implemented by Members.

Elasmobranchs species under Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) and Annex III (list of species whose exploitation is regulated) of the SPA/BD Protocol to the Barcelona Convention

6. CPCs shall ensure a high protection from fishing activities to elasmobranchs species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD protocol of the Barcelona Convention that must be released unharmed and alive to the extent possible.
7. Specimens of sharks' species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol cannot be retained on board, transhipped, landed, transferred, stored, sold or displayed or offered for sale.
8. CPCs shall ensure that catches of tope shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*) taken with bottom-set nets, longlines and in tuna traps shall be promptly released unharmed and alive to the extent possible.

PART III

Monitoring, data collection and research

9. CPCs shall ensure that:
- a. information on fishing activities, catch data, incidental taking, release and/or discarding events for sharks species listed either in Annex II or III of the SPA/BD Protocol, must be recorded by the ship-owners in the logbook or equivalent document, in line with requirements of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 establishing the GFCM logbook;
 - b. this information must be reported to the national authorities for notification to GFCM Secretariat within the annual national reporting to SAC and through the Task 1;
 - c. any other additional measures are taken to improve data gathering in view of scientific monitoring of the species.

10. As appropriate, the GFCM and its CPCs should, individually and collectively, engage in capacity building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on sharks and sharks fisheries and to support the effective implementation of this recommendation, including entering into cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international bodies.

11. The provisions referred to in Paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are without prejudice to stricter rules implemented by the CPCs.

¹ General Assembly Resolution A/RES+G12/62/177 on Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments.
