



Subcommittee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)  
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**The Action Plan for the conservation of Habitats and Species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena, in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark Habitats Action Plan)**



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*Assemblages of underwater canyons*





**Deep Water Engineering benthic invertebrate assemblages**



**Deep-sea chemo-synthetic assemblages (mud volcanoes, cold seeps, 'pockmarks', brine anoxic lakes, hydrothermal springs)**



*Assemblages associated with seamounts*



The objectives of the Action Plan are to:

- conserve the habitats' integrity, functionality (favourable state of conservation) by maintaining the main ecosystem services (e.g. carbon sink, halieutic recruitment and production, biogeochemical cycles) and their interest in terms of biodiversity (e.g. specific diversity, genetics)
- encourage the natural restoration of degraded habitats (reduction of human origin impacts)
- improve knowledge about dark populations (e.g. location, specific richness, functioning, typology).





Actions	Time	Who
<b>Making a summary of knowledge of dark populations and their distribution around the Mediterranean in the form of a geo-referenced information system</b>	As soon as possible, and continuously	RAC/ SPA and CP
<b>Setting up a database of people/resources and means of investigation available</b>	As soon as possible, and continuously	RAC/SPA
<b>Identify and assess proven pressures on each of the various types of habitat</b>	Year 1	RAC/ SPA, Partners and CP
<b>Revise the reference list of types of marine habitat for the selection of sites for inclusion in the national inventories of natural sites of conservation interest, in order to take account of dark assemblages</b>	Years 1 and 2	RAC/ SPA and CP
<b>Revise the list of endangered or threatened species in order to take account of dark assemblages species</b>	Years 1 and 2	RAC/ SPA and CP
<b>Promote the identifying of areas of interest for the conservation of dark assemblages in the Mediterranean and Carry out concerted actions in national and/or cross-border sites</b>	Years 1 and 2	CP & RAC/ SPA
<b>Finalise the implementing of MPAs in already identified sites at national level and outside waters that lie within national jurisdiction</b>	Starting from Year 2	RAC/ SPA and CP
<b>Propose the creation of new MPAs</b>		
<b>Encourage the extension of existing MPAs to integrate nearby sites that host dark assemblages</b>	Starting from Year 2	CP
<b>Introduce national legislation to reduce negative impacts</b>	On adoption	CP
<b>Integrate taking dark assemblages into account within impact studies procedures</b>		
<b>Regularly hold theme-based workshops (in coordination with those of the 'Coralligenous' AP</b>	Every three years	RAC/SPA
<b>Propose guidelines suited to the inventorying and monitoring of dark assemblages</b>	Starting from Year 2	RAC/SPA and Partners
<b>Implement monitoring systems</b>	Starting from Year 3	RAC/SPA and CP
<b>Enhance cooperation actions with concerned organisations and in particular with GFCM</b>	On adoption	RAC/SPA
<b>Step up awareness and information about dark assemblages with the various actors</b>	Continuously	RAC/SPA, partners and CP
<b>Enhance national capacities and improve skills in taxonomy and monitoring methods</b>	As needed	RAC/SPA



**THANK YOU  
for your attention !!!**

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