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UNDP Project on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas

Lessons from MPA Karaburun-Sazan



Since the beginning, the MPA K-S newsletter is meant to be different to the ‘normal’ publications in several ways. People interested in the sea are rarely able to monopolize an edition of any publication that is read by many people with diverse interests, not only those with primarily marine backgrounds. Such a rare opportunity occurs in this publication. Our aim is to take maximum advantage of it.

Below we describe several lessons learned related to MPA K-S management with particular reference to two principal focal areas:

1. The application in practice of the IUCN protected area categories to MPA; the ease and difficulty of establishing and managing the MPA and the benefits that can be derived from; and
2. Contributions which the MPA can make to sustainable fishing, as well as to biological diversity.

The lessons learned appear to be universal as well as location specific.

- ✓ The MPA contribute to the maintenance or restitution of both biological diversity and abundance, both of which are relevant to sustainable fisheries.
- ✓ Key to success is the deep involvement of local communities from the earliest stages of MPA.

- ✓ Design and management of MPAs must be both top-down and bottom-up.
- ✓ It is not feasible in today’s marine environment to divorce the questions of resource use and conservation, because marine natural resources and their living space are all sought now by many different users for many different purposes.
- ✓ The MPA designation serves both sustainable use and environmental protection objectives, and relevant agencies should work together in planning and management.
- ✓ Socioeconomic considerations usually determine the success or failure of MPA. Again, these should be addressed from the earliest possible stage.
- ✓ It is better to have an MPA which is not ideal in an ecological sense but which meets the primary objective than to strive vainly to create the ‘perfect MPA’.
- ✓ Another key to success is setting clearly defined objectives against which its performance is regularly checked, and establishing a monitoring program to assess management effectiveness.
- ✓ Because of the highly connected nature of the sea, which efficiently transmits substances and forcing factors, the MPA will succeed if it is embedded in an integrated ecosystem management regime.

We believe this is a good time to be working on MPA K-S – global attention on, and support for, is continuously higher and is growing rapidly. While the task ahead remains substantial, the prospects are in many ways becoming brighter. Thus we hope that readers will find this newsletter not only informative, but encouraging, as we did.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



In January 2018, under the direction of Prefect Ms. Suzana Jahollari, was held the meeting of Tirana County, in which was constituted the Protected Area Management Committee for Tirana County.

The meeting was attended by directors and representatives of various institutions, such as Mr. Zamir Dedej, NAPA General Director, representatives Tirana, Durrësi, Dibra RAPA-s, Tirana and Kavaja Municipalities, ISHMPUT, OSHE, Director of Educational Directorate, Deputy Mayor of Rrogozhina, representatives from the Ministry of Culture, because many cultural monuments are located within the Protected Areas.

In addition, NAPA has started work on the constitution of the respective Committees in each County, by sending the relevant

information and guidelines.

This initiative is implemented pursuant to the DCM no. 593, dated 9.10.2018 *"On the Composition, Functions, Duties and Responsibilities of the Environmental Protected Areas Management Committees"*.

Based on the relevant legislation the committee has a supervisory function for the implementation of management plans in the environmental protected areas and operates according to the regulation adopted by it itself, while the role of the technical secretariat is undertaken by the protected area administration, which administers all the documentation that reflects the committee activities.



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TOURISM CERTIFICATION IN VLORA

The UNDP MCPA2 Project has undertaken a study related to Tourism Certification in Vlora. This study consisted on appraising the tourism certification process and recommendations for the most appropriate certification schema to be applied to Vlora. The overall approach was to create an informal and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders, in order to listen and see how they perform in terms of all aspects of sustainability.



Some findings are summarized below:

- Vlora is a typical tourism destination. Investment in the accommodation infrastructure is evident.
- Hotels staff is a vital resource, however it is rather difficult to recruit employees and – importantly – retain them.
- Although the destination does offer a variety of activities, hotels do not seem to promote these.
- Regarding environmental protection, there many good examples of actions already being undertaken.
- There is no capacity building of the tour operator’s operating in the MPA K-S, nor an estimation of the MPA’s carrying capacity.
- The Visitors Information Centre is a very fine – state of the art – information point for tourists. The information there is first class and of great interest.



The following recommendations are provided as a follow up of this service:

- ✓ Development of a Sustainable Destination Strategy with tangible actions.
- ✓ It is a great opportunity for the destination to develop its mass tourism based on sustainable principles.
- ✓ The tourism sector should get involved, as it is their guests who are meant to enjoy the destination and hopefully come back.
- ✓ Hotels willingness to pay for certification.
- ✓ Providing information to the tourists (do’s and don’ts) and limiting tourist access to more sensitive areas.
- ✓ Working together with other stakeholders is very beneficial.
- ✓ Capacity building of the tour operators is important both in how to provide informative and interesting information to the tourists, and to ensure that the operators know why there are restrictions on the capacity and areas that are ‘no go’ for them.
- ✓ The PA administration should issue licences for tourism businesses operating in the PAs.
- ✓ Preparation of a code of conduct for operators in the MPA.
- ✓ Prepare Sustainable Management Plans for the tourism businesses.



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RESPONSE MEASURES AND MANAGEMENT OF OIL CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS AT SEA AND ON SHORE TABLE TOP EXERCISE

On January 22, 2019, a Table-Top exercise was organized in Durrës, with focus on testing response measures to maritime oil spill, within the framework of “*Management of marine and coastline pollution for increased Safety at Sea and Ports in line with EU Maritime Law and Policy*” project. The event was organized and managed by UNDP Albania, ATRAC (Adriatic Training and Research Centre) and IMOC (Inter-



institutional Maritime Operational Centre). The target groups were representatives and specialists whose role and functions relate to OSRP system and to maritime safety.

The purpose of this exercise was *to control the mechanisms for rapid alert, information verification, decision-making regarding response measures and management of oil and seawater purification operations.*

The statement of the exercise was: **“A tanker with 4000 tons had exploded on the morning of January 22, near Vlora Port, 8 Nm SSW from Sazan Island, polluting the surrounding area of the island”.**



This was followed by explaining in details the initial situation, the following hourly situations, the initial position of the ship, the oil spill region, the type, the weather condition, so all the necessary elements, allowing participants to analyze the situation, develop appropriate approached and take the right measures.

Participants reacted by providing the right solutions, just as if it was a real incident. Specific impacting elements were also studied, such as stimulated currents, winds and tides, weather, time-stamped vessel location coordinates, and tracking procedures from the operating center. Description, documenting, reporting, picking up and messaging, keeping a diary from a person skilled in the job, etc. were other specific issues during this exercise.



The structure of the exercise was well organized and enabled participants to efficiently test their capabilities in response operations to a maritime oil spill situation, and most important, to build discussions and exchanges of thoughts among each-other.

This experience and testing exercise contributes to strengthen cooperation between maritime OSR authorities and local authorities as well as the qualification of designated marine environment personnel from line ministries and relevant institutions/agencies on the ground. In addition, it helped to deliver practical know-how to maritime personnel on the procedures to assess the situations, provide prognoses of its progress, decision making tools to right response and command of operations during the OSR; these provide strong grounds to review and upgrade process of the National Contingency Plan in our country, mainly for the part of the maritime pollution and OSR measures.



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METT EVALUATION OF MPA KARABURUN-SAZAN

The monitoring and evaluation of the management effectiveness is an important aspect of Protected Areas management. Obviously, this aspect is also closely linked to the implementation of the respective management plans. Monitoring enables collection of information through observing impacts of management and therefore decides which activities will be adopted for the annual planning.

For some years now, this evaluation is carried out annually by the Regional Administration of Protected Areas (RAPA) Vlorë using an evaluation tool such as **Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)**.

With the support of UNDP MCPA2 project, this tool is digitalized, therefore providing the opportunity to facilitate the access, evaluation and data storage.

The Marine Protected Area Karaburun-Sazan was assigned as pilot area for testing this tool and has recorded data for several years which helps the area's managers to have a general overview of the progress related to the Protected Area effective management during last years.

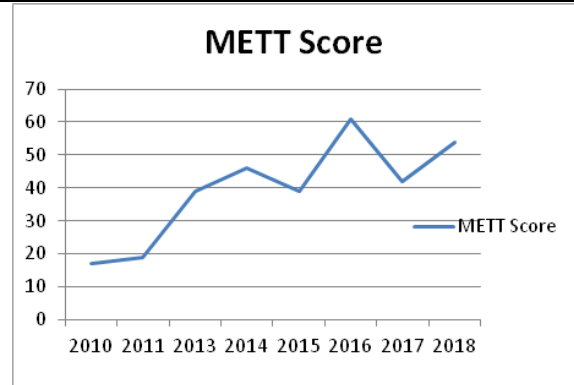


Chart of METT evaluation for MPA K-S

An important advantage of using METT is being easy to use, thus easy to replicate for other protected areas. Actually RAPA Vlorë is using this tool for the six protected areas under jurisdiction as well as for the Natural Monument of Blue Eye.

@ Regional Administration of Protected Areas Vlorë

INAUGURATION OF VISITOR CENTER AT LLOGARA NATIONAL PARK

In South-West Albania lies one of the most characteristic and unique national parks of its kind, Llogara National Park. Nowadays this park is identified with a new, fully contemporary and



interactive visitor center.

Established in 2018 by NAPA, this center was inaugurated and began its normal operation since 25 January 2019. The inauguration of this center was attended by the

EU Ambassador in Albania, Minister of Tourism and Environment, Prefect of Vlora Region, Mayor of Vlora, General Director of NAPA and other nature lovers and representatives of the local community.

The information exhibited in the center gives an overview of the nature and PAs network in Albania, proceeding further in detail with fauna and flora in Llogara NP. This park is visited all year round by foreign and domestic tourists as one of the most popular destinations for hiking, picnics, etc.



In the function of education, in the center is positioned a 3D model that conveys a clear panorama of the natural complex Llogara-Karaburun and highlights its natural and cultural attractions.

Llogara NP represents a perfect example of the coexistence of people with nature, where socio-economic benefits often go hand in hand with nature protection. Used for years by the local community for livestock and tourism, it is often threatened by human interven-

tion, mostly by deliberate fires or environmental pollution. In this regard the center provides very clear information on the effects of over-exploitation or misuse of natural resources with particular emphasis on erosion.



Thanks to its favorable geographic position, the natural complex of Llogara NP and Karaburun Peninsula has about 1400 vascular plants, approx. 42.4% of Albania's Flora. The center provides detailed information on flora, as

well as a herbarium which will be one of the elements that will be constantly enriched in collaboration with universities and students.

The center also exhibits the Bee House, a carefully constructed structure that introduces the life organization of a bee. The exhibitor is built in such a way that makes clearly visible through the honeycombs the working day of bees and their organization up to the honey production. The bee was not chosen by chance. The use of honey as a local product of economic benefit to the area and the complexity of this species ecology has resulted with interest in the education's function.



@ Regional Administration of Protected Areas Vlorë

INCREASING VISIBILITY AND INFORMATION FOR MPA KARABURUN-SAZAN



UNDP Albania project on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas in collaboration with Regional Administration of Protected Areas in Vlora, with the intent to increase visibility and information about marine park specific

The tables include a variety of information about the marine park accordingly to the management plan and its zoning areas.

In brief, the tables highlight the abundant natural, cultural,



areas with unique natural values and in accordance to Management Plan of the marine park, has financed the construction and installation of 9 information tables within different marine park areas and amenities.



historical and touristic attractions of the area, as well as the allowed activities within park boundaries.

A billboard with flashing lights located along national road at Orikum city entrance



has been completed with park information to promote MPA K-S.

During the last touristic season, the MPA K-S was one of the most impressive tourist destinations in Albania, with over 60,000 thousand visitors.



The aim of the investment is to help park administration to improve management on raising information, visibility and helping visitors to get acquaintance with marine park unique values and attractions.

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DID YOU KNOW?

The Sad Reproduction Secret of Octopuses



As with most creatures, the octopus's main purpose in life is to **reproduce**. However, if it knew just what was waiting for it soon after, it might think twice. Octopuses are considered the **most intelligent** of all invertebrates. However,

reproduction for them is a **death sentence**. Both the male and female octopuses **die soon after mating**. The male dies a few months afterwards, while female dies shortly after the eggs hatch.

Seahorse Give Birth



Seahorses are the only animals in which **the male**, not the female, gives birth to thousands of babies at once and care for their young, while **only five in thousand survive** in adulthood. The process of seahorse reproduction is very interesting. Males and females

court for several days. During that period of time they perform **dancing rituals, swimming side by side** at the same pace. They want to be able to **mirror the movement** of the other in sync.

Aristotle "The Father of Marine Biodiversity"



The great **Greek philosopher Aristotle** can also be regarded as "**the father of marine biodiversity**". He spent a considerable part of his life studying marine species. **More than 40% of the animals** that Aristotle studied in his zoological

works had a marine origin. If Aristotle were still alive today, he would have made an excellent **ambassador for modern marine biodiversity research**.

How long can the Precious Coral of the Mediterranean live?



The Precious coral of the Mediterranean – **Corallium rubrum** is known as one of the world's **most economically valued** marine species with long-lasting, historic exploitation. Scientists have described **C. rubrum** as a long long-living, slow-growing octocoral.

Depending on the geographic area, the average age of colonies at first branching is about 10 years and **C. rubrum** colonies have a **maximum lifespan of 106 years**.

LETTER FROM ANJA

Messages transmitted through words, eyes, and soul of a child always bring strong emotions, positive feelings, and hopefulness for a better future for the nature and our living environment.

These feelings were experienced by our staff when a letter from **Anja Brahimi**, a 4th grade student at "Mihal Grameno" school in Tirana, arrived in our editorial office.

Anja's letter is titled "**Endangered Birds**". With a simple, but rich and eloquent language for a child, Anja points out the high variety of birds in Albania and the dangers posed to them, especially by illegal hunting. "*There are thousands of birds in Albania that are fit to adapt to our climate ... Just think how rare these birds are and people turn them into food ...*" Anja writes.

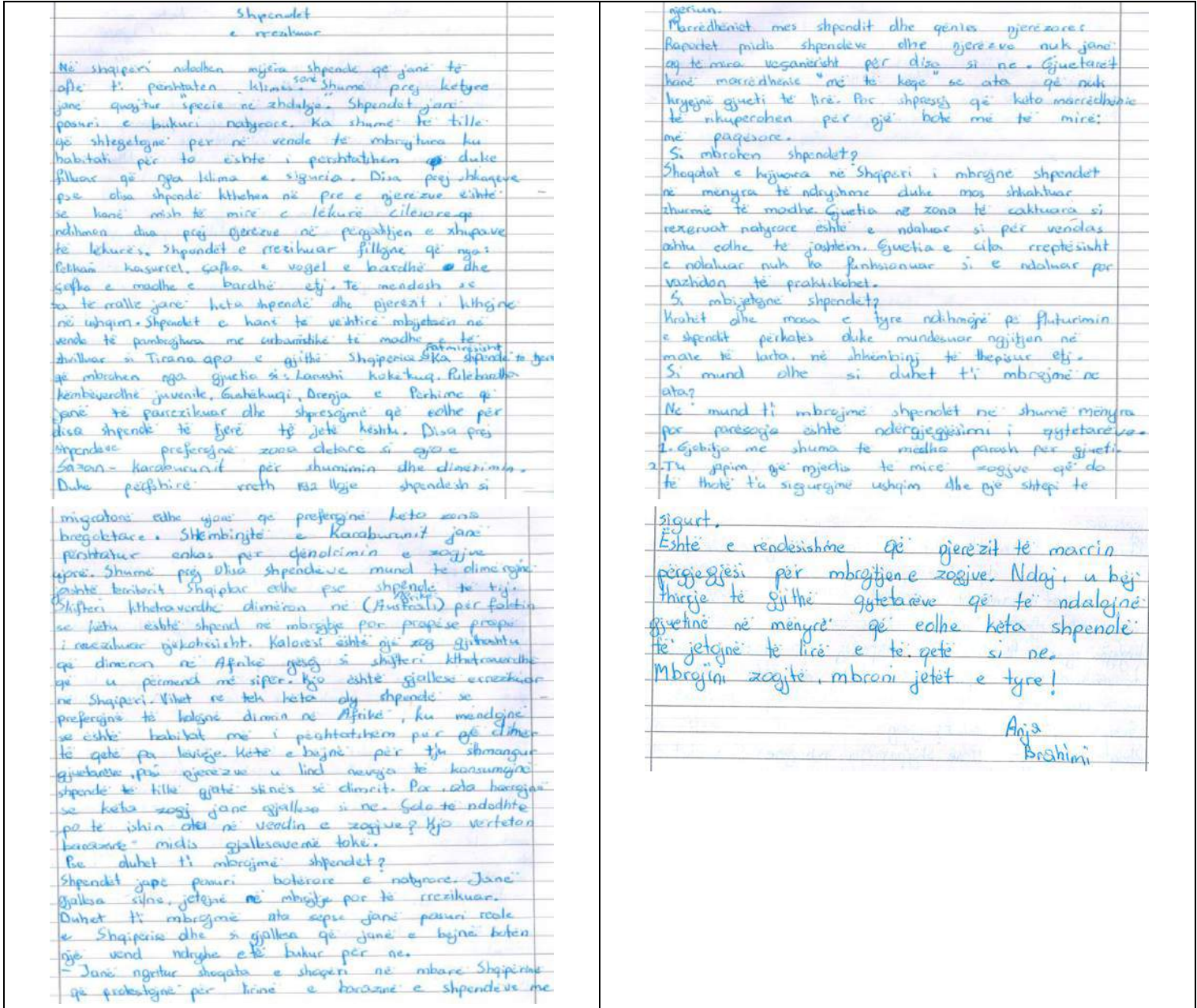
In a very natural way it is founded in this letter the link between endangered birds and MPA K-S: "*Several birds prefer marine area*

like that of Sazan-Karaburun for propagation and wintering ... The Karaburun cliffs are specially tailored for nesting of aquatic birds."

How beautifully, sincerely and straightforward Anja "protests" against illegal bird hunting: "*... people have the need to consume these birds during the winter season. But they forget that these birds are living things like us. What would happen if people were in the birds' place?*"

Anja explains why we should protect birds, how they are protected and survive, and what each of us should do in this regard. At the end Anja has a message for all of us: "*... I urge all citizens to stop hunting so that these birds can live as freely and quietly as we do!*"

We invite you to read Anja's letter, hoping you will enjoy it and experience the same feelings as we did.



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.