MEDAC - Registered Office Via XX Settembre, 20 - c/o MIPAFT - 00187 Rome (Italy) - Tax identification number 97534810581 - Association registered with the Prefecture of Rome as a legal entity n.1224/2017

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MEDAC opinion on the proposal to establish a Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) in the Adriatic Sea: Bari Canyon

The MEDAC was officially commissioned by the Italian Fisheries Administration (with a letter registered as Prot. 5229 of 25th March 2019) to prepare a contribution and an opinion on the proposal to establish a Fisheries Restricted Area in the Adriatic Sea, presented to the GFCM in April 2018 by ISMAR-CNR, IUCN, University of Bari, COISPA.

The points that were raised during the WG1 debate are that the promoters of the FRA did not organise a consultation with the stakeholders, (which is why the Italian administration directed it request for collaboration to the MEDAC before proposing this FRA). During the GFCM WG meeting on MPAs (Marine Protected Areas), held last February, it was highlighted that the promotors had carried out a socio-economic assessment and a consultation with stakeholders and this analysis will be presented during the meeting of the GFCM Sub-Regional Committee on the Adriatic Sea to be held at the end of May.

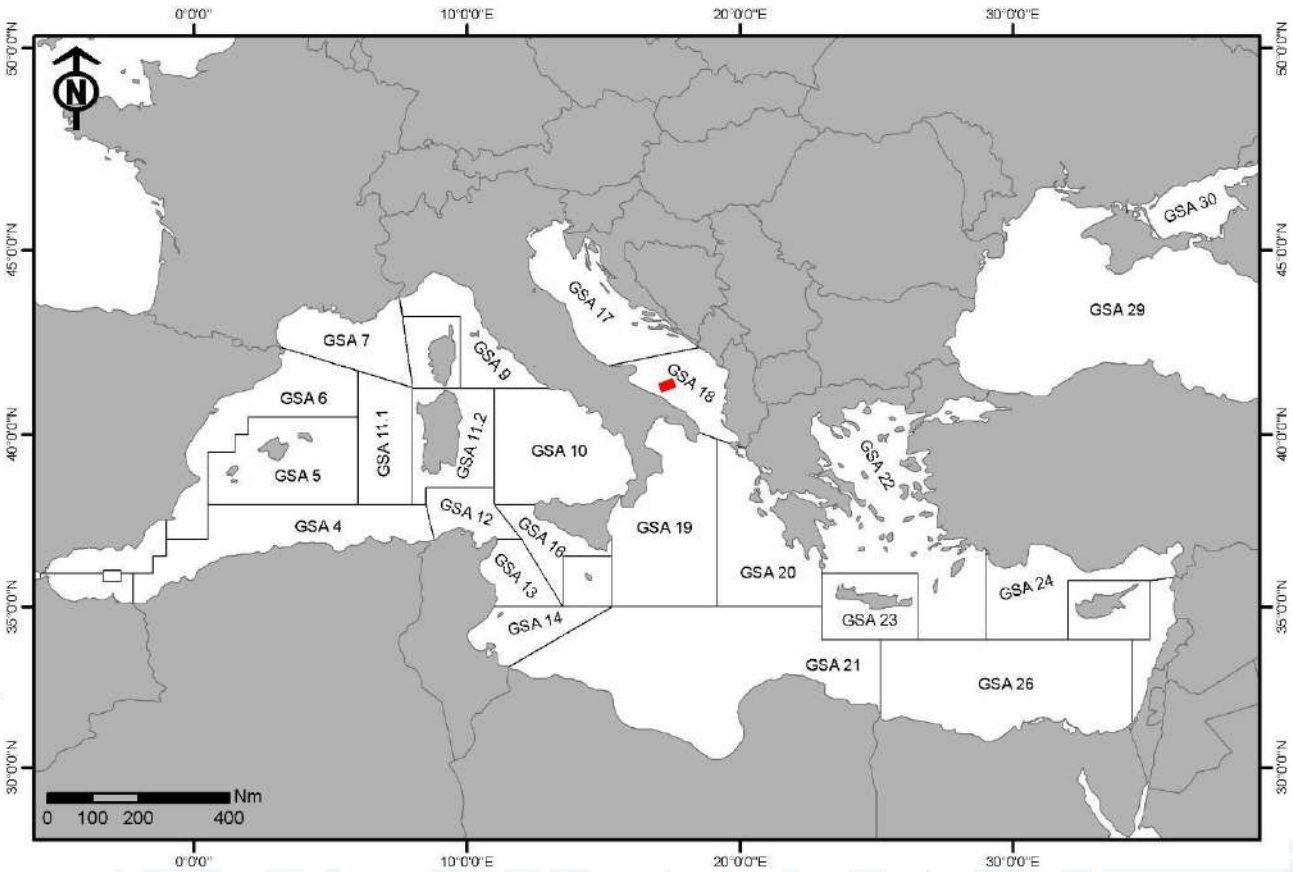
During the MEDAC discussion, the members noted that the promotors had carried out a socio-economic evaluation and a stakeholder consultation both in the initial (meeting of 25th May 2018) and final phases (5th April organised in Bari[1]).

[1] "Debate on the proposal to establish a FRA in the Bari Canyon- Conservation of marine ecosystems and sustainability of fisheries: discussion between researchers, fisheries operators and administrators", University of Bari, 5 April 2019

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EXTRACT FROM FRA PROPOSAL[2]

"In 2013 the number of fishers in the western side of GSA18 was around 2159 professional units, among which 1146 fishers were working onboard trawlers, 147 onboard longlines and the number of workers in the small-scale fishery was 866 (Spedicato et al., 2016). It is likely that the number of employees has not been varied significantly since then. Considering the fishing effort deployed in the Bari canyon the number of professional fishermen potentially involved in such fishing activities should be quite small. There is no however information on the number of recreational fishers involved in fishing activities in that area and the impact from them on the resources and the habitats."

"In order to manage at best the Bari Canyon ecosystem, it is advisable to ensure the involvement of local communities, including fishermen, as well any other potential stakeholders.

"The main threats are represented by the fishing activities, mostly longlining and occasional trawling carried out by Molfetta, Bari, Mola di Bari and Monopoli fisheries. The fishing operations are occasional in the canyon and the number of vessels operating is variable according to the season.

[2] Bari Canyon submitted by ISMAR-CNR, IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation, University of Bari, Coispa Bari, on April 2018

Fishermen sometime deploy longlines to catch large individuals of valuable species but often they lost or damage their fishing gears.
Other threats are due to dumping of waste and litter, in particular discarded/lost fishing gears and plastic debris. No projects for prospections have been planned or are active or seem to be plan in the near future"

"Considering that among the 44 (UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA, 2014) local long-liners often fish in the canyon with the aim of catching large specimens of valuable species, a certain socio-economic impact over the short-term will derive from the spatial closure establishment of the FRA. More comprehensive information for the evaluation of socio-economic impacts of the FRA and adequate programme to mitigate these impacts should be part of the FRA implementation of measures."

EXTRACT FROM GFCM WG REPORT (Marine Protected Areas) 18-22 February 2019

46. Ms Maria del Mar Otero, Project Officer at IUCN-Med, provided an update on the Bari Canyon FRA proposal submitted to the SAC and the Commission in 2018. She explained that the proposal was considered complete from a scientific point of view, but a deeper socio-economic assessment of the effects of the FRA on local fisheries, including small-scale fisheries, was requested by the Commission. The fisheries affected by the FRA and its proposed management measure (i.e. prohibition to fish with bottom contact gear) would be demersal longliners mainly as few trawlers operate in the area. The socio-economic assessment was currently being carried out, in consultation with local stakeholders, on around 50 percent of the entire fleet operating in the area (around 178 fishing vessels in total). She also said that data on smallscale fisheries were being collected also according to the GFCM methodology to survey small-scale fisheries. The results of such analysis would be submitted to the next session of the Subregional Committee for the Adriatic Sea (SRC-AS), in May 2019. She also mentioned the upcoming meeting organized by the University of Bari, COISPA, ISMAR CNR and IUCN with fisher stakeholders from the region of Bari to discuss the proposal.

47. The WWF expert informed that WWF was organizing a series of meetings with the Monopoli fleet (Apulia, Italy) on a WWF ongoing project about shark bycatch reduction. She added her organization would also like to be informed on upcoming meetings for the FRA.

48. The GFCM Secretariat welcomed the efforts that were being done in order to meet the request of the Commission and underlined the importance of presenting again the FRA proposal, including the new results of the socio-economic assessment with the stakeholders, in advance of the SRC-AS meeting in order to allow time for the subcommittee to review the FRA proposal.

OPINION

With reference to the above, the MEDAC expresses a favourable opinion on the proposal to establish an FRA in the Bari Canyon. The MEDAC will evaluate the results of the socio-economic assessment that will be presented at the next meeting of the SAC annual meeting that will be held at the end of June (24-27).