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REPORT
SUMMARY

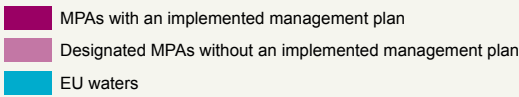
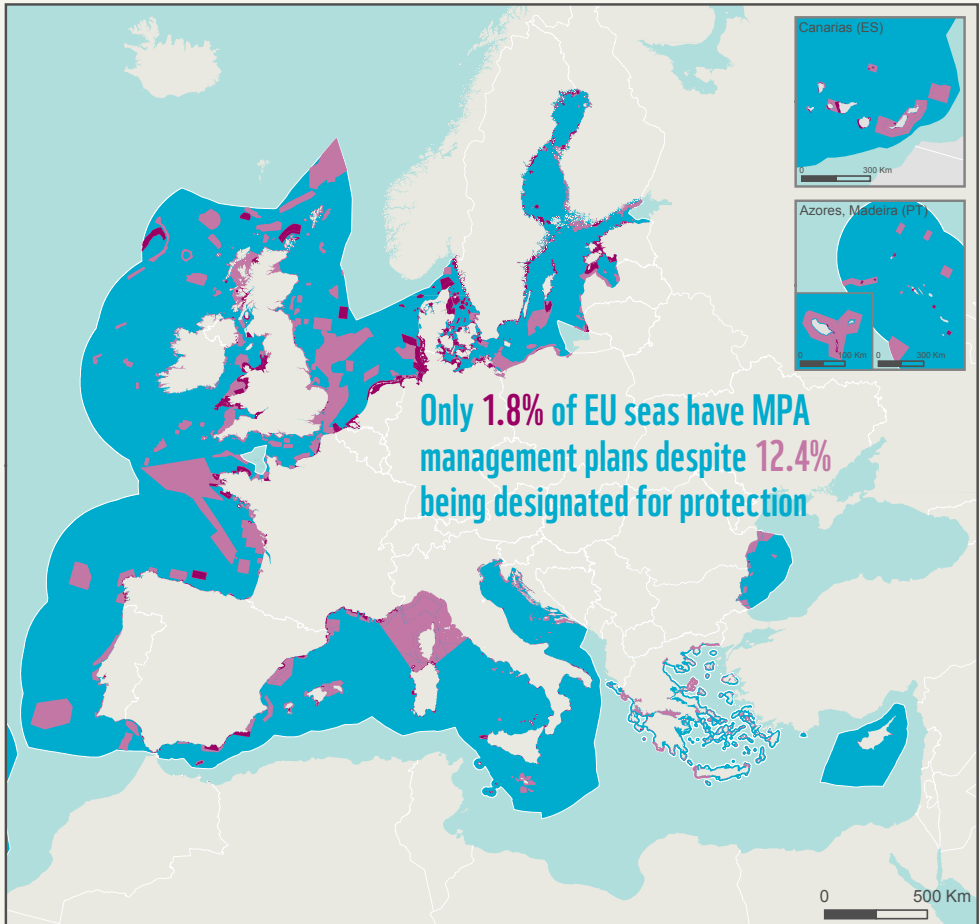
EU

2019

PROTECTING OUR OCEAN

EUROPE'S CHALLENGES TO MEET THE 2020 DEADLINES





Only 1.8% of EU seas have MPA management plans despite 12.4% being designated for protection

Due to different data sources, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea results also include management plans which have been finalised but not yet implemented

Source: ETC-UMA, 2019
 Origin of data:
 HELCOM, 2018; OSPAR, 2018; MAPAMED, 2017; EEA, 2017;
 Land and country boundaries, Eurostat, 2018
 Maritime Boundaries and Exclusive Economic Zones (200NM), Flanders Marine Institute, 2018

In the final year before the 2020 deadline for 10% of the ocean to be protected (The Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi target 11 and United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14), WWF presents EU and Member State decision makers with a comprehensive assessment showing the lack of appropriate biodiversity protection in European seas.

Today, only 1.8% of EU seas are covered by Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with management plans, despite 12.4% being designated for protection.

In reality, far less than 1.8% of European seas are under effective protection. For effective protection of our ocean, MPAs must have **comprehensive management plans** that address all cumulative human stressors which impact biodiversity. 85% of all designated MPAs in the EU currently lack a management plan.

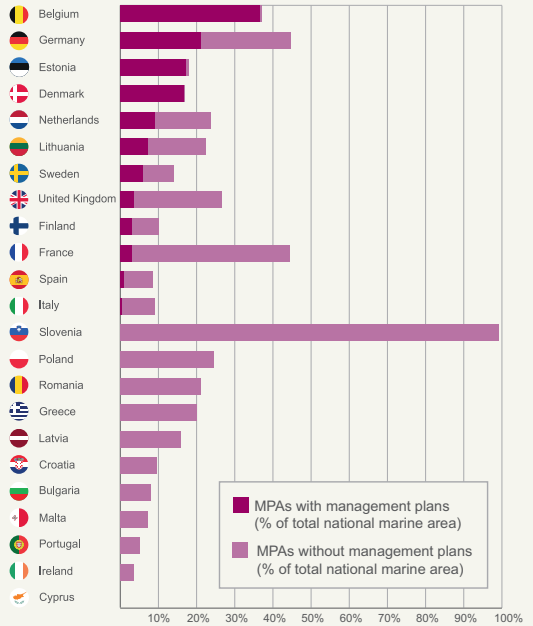
Management plans must, in turn, be effectively implemented and translated into actions for conservation or active nature restoration, with proper restrictions against extractive activities. Unfortunately, many European management plans still allow extractive activities within MPAs.

It is striking that almost half of the EU's marine Member States have no or hardly any management plans in place.

Eleven EU Member States have not reported any management plans for their MPAs, while only four have management plans for over 10% of their marine area (but not necessarily for all their designated MPAs).

EU Member States must step up efforts to produce and implement robust management plans for existing MPAs, as well as improve overall designation of MPAs to reach jointly agreed international targets by 2020.

EU Member States must also improve the transparency of marine protection by ensuring timely and accurate reporting to all relevant MPA authorities and databases.



WWF's assessment further indicates that the European MPAs fail to function together as a network.



Examining MPAs in the Baltic Sea, the North-East Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea found that MPAs in each regional sea were too far apart to successfully connect habitats and species. In addition, habitats and species were found to be insufficiently represented and replicated across most of Europe's regional MPA networks.

A well-connected network of MPAs is vital to safeguard Europe's unique biodiversity beyond individual protected areas, thereby increasing ocean resilience and supporting the balanced use of our ocean's marine resources.

In the face of climate change and continued unsustainable use of ocean resources, even protecting 10% of the EU marine area in well-managed and connected MPA networks is not enough to secure resilient marine ecosystems.

Scientific advice and IUCN recommendations call for **at least 30% effective protection of the ocean by 2030.**

Without immediate implementation of effective ocean protection, nearly all EU MPAs stand at risk of remaining protected on paper, but not in practice.

WWF calls for accountability, transparency and effective management of ocean protection measures. Political action is urgently required in both EU and Member State legislative agendas to achieve the comprehensive biodiversity protection required for the 2020 and 2030 international targets.

Investment in ocean conservation is a down payment on future human and economic health.


RECOMMENDATIONS

WWF's analysis of marine protection in Europe shows how far the EU stands from achieving the 2020 goal of having at least 10% well-managed and well-connected MPAs, as required by both UN SDG 14 and the CBD Aichi target 11. **Today, only 1.8% of EU seas are covered by MPAs with management plans**, despite 12.4% being designated for protection.

WWF calls on the European Commission and EU Member States to urgently improve biodiversity protection in all EU seas and ensure effective management of all Marine Protected Areas. EU Member States must:

- Ensure that the main priority of all MPAs is **conservation of biodiversity**, not economic opportunity.
- Establish, enforce and implement **effective management and monitoring** in existing MPAs.
- Secure appropriate **resources, investment and legislation for MPAs**, and use **participatory processes** to include all relevant stakeholders in the development of functional management plans.
- Commit to the goal of reaching **at least 30% effectively managed MPAs by 2030**.
- Increase transparency of the EU marine area's protection by ensuring **timely and accurate reporting** to all relevant MPA authorities and databases.
- Ensure that the national and regional MPA networks are **designed to provide protection across the whole network** by supporting habitat connectivity, representativity and replication between MPAs.
- Include the benefits of MPAs beyond nature protection as the basis of the **ecosystem-based approach in Marine Spatial Plans (MSP)** to support securing a Sustainable Blue Economy by 2021.
- Provide **greater scrutiny over fisheries management measures** within Natura 2000 sites submitted by EU Member States to ensure that conservation objectives are achieved in line with Article 11 of the Common Fisheries Policy.

For more details, see full report.

	<p>Why we are here To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.</p> <p>www.wwf.eu</p>
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