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Mediterranean Action Plan
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DECLARATION ON THE MONK SEAL RISK OF EXTINCTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Contracting Parties

Recognise that there is a high risk of extinction of the monk seal in the Mediterranean and that the protection of this species is a major challenge for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity. Therefore, this issue must be addressed as a first priority for the region.

On the basis of a considerable amount of knowledge existing on the status of the monk seal populations in the Mediterranean (revised by RAC/SPA on 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2005); as well as of the Action Plan for the Management of the Mediterranean Monk Seal (implementation evaluated : Rabat, 1994 and Arta, 1998), the Contracting Parties recognise that :

- The species is threatened by many factors, however the major causes of its decline are deliberate killing combined with habitat loss;
- Unless the Contracting Parties endeavour to take concrete measures, the decline of the species will continue;
- While existing knowledge needs to be widely disseminated, what is urgently needed is legal protection of known sites with critical habitats of monk seals and the promotion of participatory activities to involve local communities in the conservation process;
- Identification of new potential critical habitats and capacity building for effective management are necessary additional steps;
- Furthermore, development and use of operational tools and allocation of appropriate human and financial resources are urgently needed for targeted conservation and management.

For the above reasons, the Contracting Parties committed themselves to take all necessary measures for the implementation of the Action Plan and of the Recommendations approved at their Fourteenth Ordinary Meeting (November, 2005).