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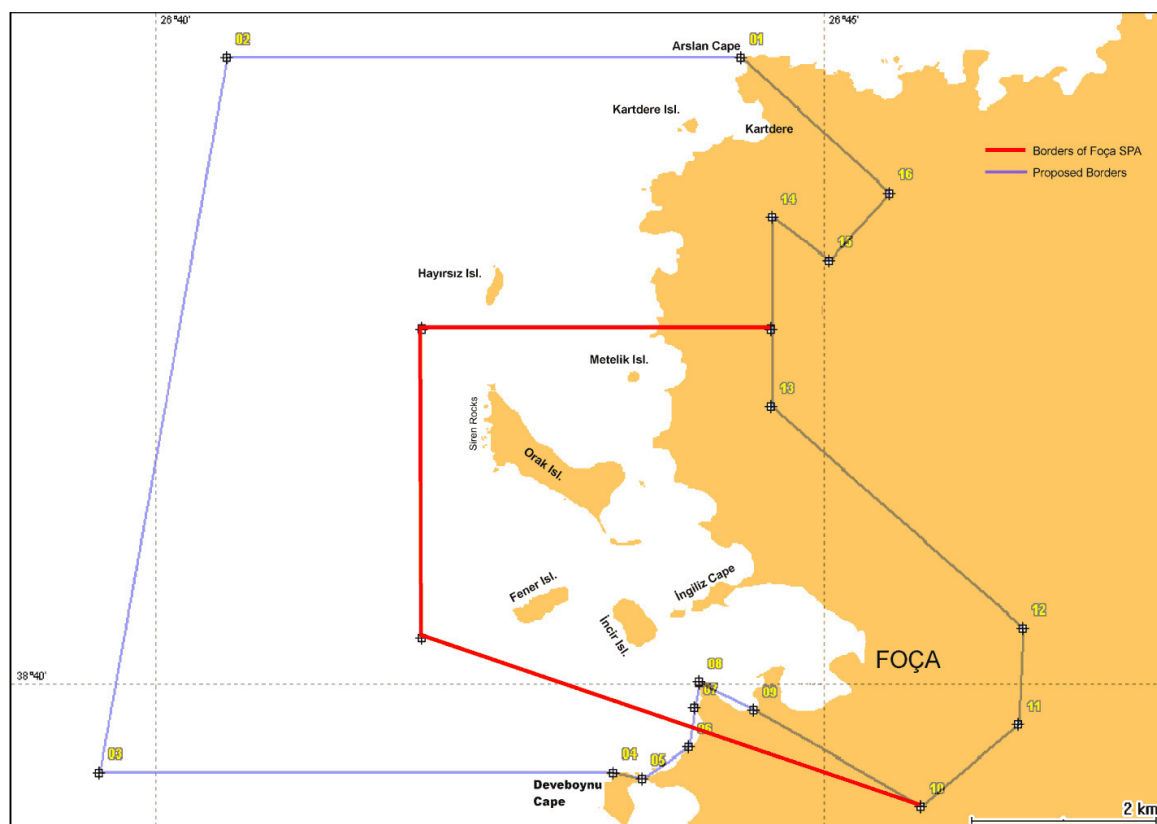
Turkey

Enlargement procedure underway for the Foça SPA

Foça and the small archipelago adjacent to its mainland coast were selected as the first "Pilot Region" in implementing the Turkish National Seal Conservation Strategy in 1991. Just one year earlier, some parts had been declared by the council of ministers as a 'Specially Protected Area' or SPA.

Foça was also the first area in Turkey where long term monk seal conservation projects were launched in 1993. Since then, SAD-AFAG, with support of the Local Monk Seal Committee, has identified many precautionary measures to safeguard the marine environment and monk seal habitat, submitting these recommendations to responsible official bodies.

Some of these precautions were subsequently endorsed by the authorities and translated into official regulations at various levels.



Map of the Foça SPA.

On the other hand, the Foça Pilot Region has never enjoyed a legal conservation status or a management plan that integrates the entire pilot region and the various regulations in force within it.

Under a recent EU-funded project with WWF MedPO, SAD-AFAG prepared draft zonation plans for Foça, the Karaburun Peninsula and West Icel coasts, and submitted these to the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2003 [see [Coastal Zone project draws to a close](#), TMG 7 (1): 2004].

As a result of this initiative, the new Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. Osman Pepe, agreed to recognize the declaration of five monk seal conservation areas – defined by the Technical Committee of the Turkish National Monk Seal Committee – as having priority for action [see [Turkish government pledges 5 new protected areas for the Monk Seal](#), TMG 7 (1): June 2004].

In accordance with the Minister's decision, the first step in this process is the expansion of the Foça SPA's borders to incorporate the larger Foça Pilot Region. The procedure has since commenced, with SAD-AFAG's specific enlargement proposals now being opened for discussion between the ministries by the Authority for Specially Protected Areas, in accordance with relevant Turkish legislation. If accepted, the borders of the SPA would be enlarged about four fold. – Yalçın Savas, SAD-AFAG.

New patrolling system in Aydıncık

The patrol boat purchased by SAD-AFAG through the EU-funded SMAP project [see [Coastal Zone project draws to a close](#), TMG 7 (1): 2004] is now ready for duty. Based in the Cilician Basin town of Aydıncık, the boat will be used to safeguard the Kizilliman MPA, no-fishing-zones and the fishery regulation area around Aydıncık.



The launch of the new patrol boat at Aydıncık.

SAD-AFAG delivered the boat to Aydıncık last spring but then became locked in protracted debate with the Local Governor and Gendarmerie on responsibility for operating costs. The new Governor of Aydıncık, following an evaluation and discussion period, has since signed a contract with SAD. According to the terms of the contract, the local governorship will be responsible for the operating and maintenance costs of the boat while SAD-AFAG will provide know-how based on its experiences gained in Foça since 1993. Two personnel have already been trained in Foça during the SMAP project to perform guarding duties in Aydıncık. – Yalçın Savas, SAD-AFAG.

Foça patrol boat high and dry

Due to reasons as yet unknown, the Volvo Penta KAD32-P diesel engine of the Foça MPA patrol boat "Cevre" was heavily damaged recently. Upon inspection, two holes were found in the block, a crankshaft broken into four pieces, one broken and two bent piston rods, as well as other damaged parts. The cost of repair has been put at 17,000 euros, roughly 60% of the price of a brand new engine of the same type, even after special discounts for Volvo Penta parts and labour. The authorized service centre of Volvo-Penta in Izmir has inspected the damaged engine but could not provide a clear reason for the damage sustained. The fate of the engine and patrol boat will be discussed at the next meeting of the Foça Local Monk Seal Committee. The most likely decision will be to look for an alternative solution, since the cost of the repair is about the same as the price for a second hand boat with engine. In addition, the hull of the "Cevre" has not been in good condition for several years and replacement was already on the agenda. The President of the Foça Fisheries Cooperative, Mr. Yasar Balta, who is also the captain of the patrol boat, has already pledged to donate a secondhand 100HP marine diesel engine for a new patrol boat. – Yalçın Savas, SAD-AFAG.

New office space donated by Foça city council

The new mayor of Foça, Gokhan Demirag, and the town's city council, have agreed to donate free office place for SAD-AFAG's local team. Because of current financial constraints, SAD-AFAG's office in Foça would otherwise have faced imminent closure. SAD-AFAG's request for assistance

was approved unanimously both by the town council and the mayor. In addition, the mayor has also agreed to provide 50 liters of diesel fuel per month for the operation of SAD-AFAG's vehicle based in Foça. – Yalçın Savas, SAD-AFAG.

Cilician Basin ecotourism project enters second phase

The Cilician monk seal colony is growing steadily. Every year, new pups are joining the group in this pristine area where mass tourism has yet to intrude. Yet the tendency of the government's tourism policies suggests that the mass tourism threat will arrive in the area within several years. As tourism continues to grow and expand into new natural areas, more concrete action needs to be taken to safeguard the Earth's biodiversity, while promoting tangible economic benefits to local communities.

Since the establishment of the Kizilliman MPA, local people, particularly those in the peripheral towns of Aydıncık and Bozyazı, have become more aware of the monk seal colony. Recognizing ecotourism as a conservation tool that can involve local people in the sustainability of the MPA, whilst also providing a means of gaining economic support for the conservation project in the area, a second ecotourism was implemented in June 2004. With the co-operation of Gruppo Foca Monaca in Italy, a group of 9 persons visited the Cilician monk seal habitat over a 10 day period. During the trip, a bus was hired from a local company and accommodation was provided in a small locally owned hotel. The group dined in seven different restaurants in the area and visited traditional local markets in three different towns. Five artisanal fishermen's boats were used during daytrips and fish bought from the local fishing cooperative in Aydıncık where, in the past, monk seals had been considered an enemy and were slaughtered.

Revenues Generated by the Local Community			
Type	# involved	Days	Revenue (€)
Accommodation	2 hotels / 6 persons	8	1,350
Transport	1 minibus / 2 persons	10	750
Fishermen	5 fishermen / 9 persons	5	750
Catering	7 restaurants / 20 persons	9	750
Shopping	5 stores and 3 local markets	-	~500

Although the number of participants was very limited, the total revenue to the local community is remarkable. For instance, the daily average landing catch of local fishermen in the area is about 10 kg of fish (~15 Euros). The revenue generated by the tour is thus 10 times higher for them than going fishing. The local economy is mainly driven by the secondary (leisure/holiday) house owners visiting the region for only a month between 15 July and 15 August. The ecotour, on the other hand, which was organized outside the high season, provided extra financial benefits to the locals involved.



Participants of the latest 'ecotour' to the Cilician coast.



Local fishermen, whose boats were used for daytrips, have benefitted financially from the programme.

Conservation activities on the Cilician coast are carried out by the Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences, yet the project has faced significant financial constraints during the last year. Because of the ecotourism initiative, however, the guests have effectively underwritten the running cost of our office for a year.

We believe that these initial ecotourism pilot schemes will provide convincing evidence for the authorities to consider implementing alternative, low-impact tourism on a wider scale, mindful of the need for sustainable tourism in sensitive areas. The trials are also providing important data for planned future studies:

- A carrying capacity analysis will be conducted to calculate how many visitors the MPA can accommodate
- Identification and establishment of boating routes and nature trails within the MPA with lowest possible human impact
- Training local tourist guides and development of information guides for visitors.

It is increasingly clear that, where tourism development is not guided by principles that promote conservation of nature and contribute to the well-being of local people, both human welfare and biodiversity can seriously suffer as a consequence.

Locals from coastal communities who have benefited from the first and second phases of the project (including Bozyazi, Aydincik, Bogsak, Anamur, Melleç, Göksu, and Tasucu) provide ample encouragement that we are on the right path. – Serdar Sakinan, Project Assistant, METU-IMS.

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