

Format for the Periodic Review of the SPAMIs

SPAMI Name : Acantilados Maro Cerro Gordo

SECTION I: CRITERIA WHICH ARE MANDATORY FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN AREA IN THE SPAMI LIST

(Art. 8.2. of the Protocol and General Principles and C and D of Annex I)

In each question, crossed references to the Annotated Format (AF) are given.

1. CONSERVATION STATUS

1.1. Does the SPAMI fulfill one of the criteria related to Mediterranean interest as presented in Protocol's (Annex I section B para. 2), strictly maintain the status of populations of its protected species (those in Annex II to the Protocol), the status of its habitats and no adverse significant changes in the functioning of its ecosystems? (Article 8.2.) (See 3.4. and 4 in the AF)

YES

In case of "no", indicate the reasons that have motivated the deficiencies, their relative seriousness and, if possible, the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

1.2 If "yes", are the objectives, set out in the original SPAMI application for designation, actively pursued?

YES

2. LEGAL STATUS

2.1. Does the area maintains or has improved its legal protection status from the date of the previous report? (A-e and C-2, Annex I). See 7.1.2 in the AF

YES

2.2. Does the legal declaration of this area consider the conservation of natural values as the primary objective? (A-a and D1 in Annex I). See 7.1.3 in the AF

YES

2.3. Are competencies and responsibilities clearly defined in the texts governing the area? (D4 Annex I). See 7.4.3 in the AF

YES

2.4. Are external influences/threats been taken into account in the legal framework of the SPAMI? Does the legal text clearly establish coordination means between land and sea authorities? (D4 Annex I, Art.7.4. in the Protocol).

YES

In case there is no sea within the SPAMI, this question would be non-applicant.
See 7.4.3. in the AF

Indicate measures that have been adopted to address these influences/threats. In case of any "no" answer, indicate the reasons that have motivated the deficiencies and, if possible, the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

Activities are regulated within the SPAMI, according to the existing nature conservation laws. The Consejería de Medio Ambiente has articulated a program entitled "LIFE" of the European Union, which allows improvements in active management, including surveillance using patrol boats and cameras, installation of buoys, the maintenance of artificial reefs in the región of El Molino (to prevent incursions by bottom trawlers), and conservation of *Posidonia* beds.

3. MANAGEMENT METHODS (General principles D Annex 1)

3.1. Does the area have the same or an improved management body/authority as when the SPAMI was established and/or last evaluated?

Existence of a management body with sufficient powers (Art. 7.2.d, 7.2.f).
D6 - Annex I: "To be included in the SPAMI List, a protected area must have a management body, endowed with sufficient powers as well as means and human resources to prevent and/or control activities likely to be contrary to the aims of the protected area". See 8.1. in the AF

YES

3.2. Is the management plan in force?

Has the management plan been officially adopted? (D7 Annex I). See 8.2.1, 8.2.2. in the AF

No- it is in progress and will be finalized by 2012, as required by protected areas within the "Natura 2000" Network of the European Union

3.3. Does the management plan address the requirements set out in article 7 of the Protocol and Section 8.2.3 of the Annotated Format?

More details useful for the evaluation of the management plan are addressed in question 7.1 of this questionnaire.

YES

In case of any "no" answer, indicate the reasons that have motivated the deficiencies and, if possible, the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

4. AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

4.1. Is there basic equipment, human and financial resources ensured to the management body?

(Art. 7.2.d, 7.2.f. D6 in Annex I: "To be included in the SPAMI List, a protected area must have a management body, endowed with sufficient powers as well as means and human resources to prevent and/or control activities likely to be contrary to the aims of the protected area"). See 9.1, 9.2. in the AF

YES

4.2. Does the area have a monitoring program?

(D8 - Annex I: "The program should include the identification and monitoring of a certain number of significant parameters for the area in question, in order to allow the assessment of the state and evolution of the area, as well as the effectiveness of protection and management measures implemented, so that they may be adapted if need be"). See 9.3.3. in the AF

YES

If yes, what are the monitoring parameters and the management objectives being addressed by these parameters?

- Conservation of seagrasses within the SPAMI site
- Maintenance of artificial reefs
- Conservation of special, at-risk species: *Astroides calicularis*, *Patella ferruginea* *Pinna nobilis*
- Keeping inventories of regulated species and monitoring extraction of *Caronia lampa*

4.3 Is there a feedback mechanism that establishes an explicit link between the monitoring results and the management objectives, and which allows adaptation of protection and management measures?

YES

In case of any "no" answer, indicate the reasons that have motivated the deficiencies, their relative seriousness, and the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

SECTION II: FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA
(Section B4 of the Annex I, and other obligatory for a SPA (Art. 6 and 7 of the Protocol))

5. THREATS AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

5.1 Assess the level of threats within the site to the ecological, biological, aesthetic and cultural values of the area (B4.a Annex I).
See 5.1. consider also 3.5.2.b, 6.3 & 6.4. in the AF

In particular:

Unregulated exploitation of natural resources
(e.g. sand mining, water, timber, living resources) See 5.1.1. in the AF
(SCORE: 0 means "very serious threats"; 3 means "no threats")

2
Serious threats to habitats and species (e.g. disturbance, desiccation, pollution, poaching, introduced alien species) See 5.1.2. in the AF
(SCORE: 0 means "very serious threats"; 3 means "no threats")

1
Increase of human presence (e.g. tourism, boats, building, immigration...) See 5.1.3. in AF
(SCORE: 0 means "very serious threats"; 3 means "no threats")

1
Historic and current conflicts between users or user groups See 5.1.4., 6.2. in the AF
(SCORE: 0 means "very serious threats"; 3 means "no threats"):

2

Please include a prescriptive list of threats that are of concern and are evaluated individually

- Occasional torrential rainfall causes sedimentation and deposits of debris on the shoreline, this requires special mitigation/ management.
- Scuba diving is difficult to monitor and even though diving in caves is prohibited, surveillance and enforcement is difficult.
- Bottom and demersal trawling is prohibited but these fisheries have proven very difficult to regulate outside the SPAMI, and pressures continue to be exerted outside the protected area

5.2 Assess the level of external threats to the ecological, biological, aesthetic and cultural values of the area (B4.a of the Annex I). See 5.2. in the AF

In particular:

Pollution problems from external sources including solid waste and those affecting waters up-current. See 5.2.1. in the AF
(SCORE: 0 means “very serious threats”; 3 means “no threats”)

1

Significant impacts on landscapes and on cultural values. See 5.2.2
(SCORE: 0 means “very serious threats”; 3 means “no threats”)

2

Expected development of threats upon the surrounding area See 6.1. in the AF
(SCORE: 0 means “very serious threats”; 3 means “no threats”)

2

Please include a prescriptive list of external threats that are of concern and are evaluated individually.

The surrounding area of the SPAMI is very important for coastal tourism (Nerja and Almunecar); despite regulations, occasionally the wastewater treatment capacity is exceeded, resulting in sporadic contamination.

5.3. Is there an integrated coastal management plan or land-use laws in the area limiting or surrounding the SPAMI? (B4.e Annex I). See 5.2.3.

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

5.4. Does the management plan for the SPAMI have influence over the governance of the surrounding area? (D5-d Annex I). See 7.4.4. in the AF

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

0

6. REGULATIONS

6.1. Assess the degree of legal regulations See 7.4.2. in the AF

In particular, within the national framework:

Regulations concerning the strengthening of the application of the other Protocols to the Barcelona Convention, particularly dumping, passage of ships and modification of the soil (*Art. 6b, 6c, 6e in the Protocol, D5-a Annex I*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Regulations on the introduction of any species not indigenous to the specially protected area in question, or of any genetically modified species, (*Art. 6 d in the Protocol, D5-b Annex I*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Regulations concerning the Environmental Impact Assessment for the activities and projects that could significantly affect the protected areas (*Art. 17 in the Protocol*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

In particular, within the SPAMI framework:

Regulations for fishing, hunting, taking of animals and harvesting of plants or their destruction, as well as trade with animals, parts of animals, plants, parts of plants, which originate in the area (*Art. 6 g in the Protocol, D5-c Annex I*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

7. MANAGEMENT

7.1. Assess the degree of detail of the management plan

(e.g. zoning, regulations for each zone, competencies and responsibilities, governing bodies, management programs as protection, natural resource management, tourism, public use, education, research, monitoring, maintenance, services and concessions....) See 8.2.3. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= No Management Plan / 1= Weak / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

7.2. Assess to what extent land ownership is well determined

(Undetermined land tenure regimes and registrations are a common source of conflicts in most protected areas world-wide)

See 7.3. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Undetermined / 1= Weak / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

7.3. Is there a body representing the public, professional and non-governmental sector and the scientific community linked to the management body? (B4b, B4c of the Annex I). See 8.1.2. & 8.1.3

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

0

7.4. Assess the quality of the involvement by the public, and particularly of local communities, in the planning and management of the area (B4.b of the Annex I)

(e.g. adequate planning involves local stakeholders and accommodates within appropriate management regimes a spectrum of possible multiple uses and regulated human activities, within the primary objective of conservation of marine and coastal environments) See 8.1.4. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= No involvement / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

1

7.5. Is the management plan binding for other national/local administrations with competencies in the area? See 8.2.2 in the AF

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

8. PROTECTION MEASURES

8.1. Assess the degree of enforcement of the protection measures

In particular:

Are the area boundaries adequately marked on land and, if applicable, adequately marked on the sea? See 8.3.1. in the AF
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Is there any collaboration from other authorities in the protection and surveillance of the area and, if applicable, is there a coastguard service contributing to the marine protection? See 8.3.2. 8.3.3. in AF
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Are third party agencies also empowered to enforce regulations relating to the SPAMI protective measures ?
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Are there adequate penalties and powers for effective enforcement of regulations and is the field staff empowered to impose sanctions? See 8.3.4. in the AF
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Has the area established a contingency plan to face accidental pollution or other serious emergencies? (*Art. 7.3. in the Protocol, Recom. 13th Parties Meeting*)
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

0

9. HUMAN RESOURCES

9.1. Adequacy of the human resources available to the management body (*Art.7.2-f in the Protocol, D6 in Annex I*) (e.g. enough number of employees to ensure adequate management and protection of the area)
See 9.1.1. in the AF

Is there a permanent field administrator of the area?
See 9.1.2. in the AF
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

0

Are there other permanent staffs in the field?
(e.g. technicians, wardens, guides, ...) See 9.1.2. in the AF
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

9.2. Assess the adequacy of the training level of available staff
(Art.7.2-f in the Protocol, D6 in Annex I) (e.g. enough training level to ensure protection of the area). See 9.1.2. in the AF
(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

10. FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL MEANS

10.1. Assess the degree of adequacy of the financial means
Sufficient resources for the development and implementation of the management plan, including e.g. interpretation, education, training, research, surveillance and enforcement of regulations. See 9.2.1. in the AF
(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

1

10.2. Assess the basic infrastructure (Art.7.2-f in the Protocol)
Administrative premises in the site, visitors' facilities (reception centre, trails, signs...), specific information, education and awareness materials
(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

10.3. Assess the equipment.
Guard posts and signs on the main accesses, means to respond to emergencies, marine and terrestrial vehicles, radio and communications equipment. See 9.2.3. in the AF
(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

11. INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

11.1. Assess the extent of knowledge about the area and its surrounding zones. (D3 - Annex I: Considering at least specific maps, habitat distribution, species inventories, and socio-economical factors)
See 9.3.1. in the AF
(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

11.2. Assess the adequacy of the program for data collection and the

monitoring program.

See 9.3.2. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Inexistent / 1= Insufficient / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

12. COOPÉRATION AND NETWORKING

12.1. Are other national or international organizations collaborating with human or financial resources? (e.g. researchers, experts, volunteers..).

See 9.1.3. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= No / 1= Weakly / 2= Satisfactory / 3= Excellent)

2

12.2. Assess the level of cooperation and exchange with other SPAMIs (especially in other nations) (Art. 8, Art. 21.1, Art. 22.1., Art. 22.3, A.d in Annex I)

(SCORE: 0= No / 1= Insufficient / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

COMMENTS by the Technical Advisory Commission

The SPAMI designation deserves to be extended.

CONCLUSIONS

This SPAMI site is extremely important in that it has prevented the total conversion of coastal fringe to hotel, resort, and home development in Costa del Sol. For a stretch of approximately 12 kilometers, the littoral of the park is relatively pristine, with only those buildings that were grandfathered into the park (having been built prior to the park declaration). The protected area supports a robust population of Spanish wild goat (*Capra pyrenaica*), the only population near the sea, and also some populations of reptiles (e.g. chameleon), seabirds, raptors and songbirds.

From the marine perspective, the park is neither as large nor as significant as Cabrera National Park, and marine conservation and management is not as well-developed as in other Mediterranean sites. That said, the creation of artificial reefs has prevented illegal trawling in much of the park, and routine (but unpredictable) patrols have prevented incursions of commercial (and recreational) fishing boats within the park boundaries (extending to one nautical mile offshore). Scuba diving is regulated, and landing on the coast or beaches from offshore is prohibited. Scuba diving pressures appear to have decreased in recent years, as the nine scuba operators formerly accessing the park have been reduced to only one.

One issue concerning the occurrence and health of the seagrasses is the occasional sediment-loading that occurs following torrential rains. Although there is riparian buffer and a small wetland at the mouth of the Rio Miel, rainwater cascading down the valley overpowers the vegetation and results in a great amount of sediment loading, as well as dumping of debris (including cars, washing machines, etc.). Regional authorities are considering building a dike to mitigate these catastrophic effects, spurred in large part by the recent building of the autopista (four lane highway).

Park patrol agents have the authority of the law and can penalize those who do not abide by park regulations. Patrolling from the tops of the cliffs (using binoculars) is done every day, with a minimum of one patrol agent (maximum four, as needed).

Visitor management must be commended. That the park was able to restrict vehicle traffic to the beaches (roads already in), and to the two bar/restaurants operating summer, is a significant accomplishment, given the pressure that local people must have exerted to keep the roads open. The park provides small autobus service to two of the beaches in summer. Public education is limited – there is no visitor's center, and signage, though present at all beaches, does little to explain the natural value of the site. With the surrounding region supporting a population of almost half a million people, there is much potential for expanding environmental education using Maro Cerro Gordo as a focal site.

Nonetheless, in the height of the season, there is a staff of 40 volunteers from NGOs as well as retired people to help with education and outreach. There is also an excellent guidebook entitled, "Itinarios del Paraje Natural Acantilados de Maro-Cerro Gordo" prepared by the Consejería de Medio Ambiente, Junta de Andalucía. If a visitor's center is created in the future for the park, this professional guidebook should be made available to all visitors. Furthermore, the Aula del Mar de Málaga, located in the port area of Málaga, performs public education and increases visitor interest in the marine life of the region, including sea turtles (which are actively rehabilitated there). The facility works to make strong connections between what the visitors see in exhibits and in the rehabilitation center, and the existence of the Acantilados de Maro-Cerro Gordo park.

The park operating budget is sufficient for the monitoring, surveillance, research, and public outreach activities that are being undertaken. High quality scientific research and improvement of marine habitat is guaranteed through the EU LIFE project. However, when the LIFE program terminates in 2013, the park management will have to find alternative funding for maintenance of artificial reefs, as well as the scientific research being undertaken in the marine environments, at least at the scale done currently.

One challenge that will remain is the fact that all of the property within park boundaries is privately held. Purchasing these properties at fair market value would be impossible, so the park must make do with managing, but not owning, the land.

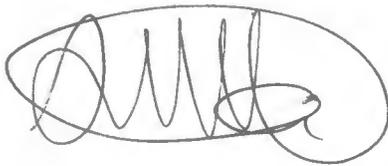
Finally, an integrated management plan is being developed, and though not within the SPAMI stipulated timeline of three years from time of nomination, the plan will undoubtedly be comprehensive, professional, and effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The park deserves renewal as a SPAMI designation.

SIGNATURES

National Focal Point



Independent Experts

Tunji Aganuy
Gerald R Han

SPAMI Manager(s)



SPAMI VALUE-ADDED

Questions		Score obtained	Maximum
5	Threats and surrounding context	12	23
6	Regulations	4	4
7	Management	6	11
8	Protection measures	4	5
9	Human resources	3	5
10	Financial and material means	5	9
11	Information and knowledge	4	6
12	Cooperation and networkings	4	6
TOTAL		42	69