

SPAMI periodic review report

SPAMI name : Lara-Toxeftra turtle reserve

Review type : Ordinary Review

Review year : 2024

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

1. MEDITERRANEAN VALUE OF THE SPAMI

	<u>Score</u>
<p>1.1. The SPAMI still fulfils at least one of the criteria related to the regional Mediterranean value as presented in the SPA/BD Protocol's Annex I.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No : 0 Yes : 1</p>	1
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>The area includes the most important nesting beaches for <i>Chelonia mydas</i>, where <i>Caretta caretta</i> also nests in Cyprus.</p> <p><i>Posidonia oceanica</i> meadows (Habitat 1120*) are present in the marine part of the protected area and they cover 156.4 hectares according to the latest more detailed habitat mapping that was implemented in 2022 (available habitat mapping https://eservices.dls.moi.gov.cy/#/national/geoportalmapviewer). Shallow meadows can be found in the protected area in big blocks, at depths as shallow as 1m depth.</p> <p>The Mediterranean monk seal (<i>Monachus monachus</i>) has been spotted in the marine area as well as in a resting cave within the protected area. The sighting of the monk seal is not very frequent in the SPAMI site with around 20 sightings per year. It is noted that the breeding sea caves in Peyia of the species is near the SPAMI site and a Marine Protected Area and both sites are included in the same Natura 2000 site (Chersonisos Akama).</p>	

	<u>Score</u>
<p>1.2. Level of adverse changes occurred during the evaluation period for the habitats and species considered as natural features in the SPAMI presentation report submitted for the inclusion of the area in the SPAMI List.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>Significant changes : 0 Moderate changes : 1 Slight changes : 2 No adverse change : 3</p>	3

Rationale for the note

There are no adverse changes in the Lara-Toxeftra Turtle Reserve.

The number of nests has been increasing (with no increase in research efforts). There were just 300 sea turtle nests of both species on the beaches of Cyprus when the monitoring program began in 1978. These numbers grew to 2395 nests for both species in 2023, from which 377 were *Chelonia mydas* nests and 2018 *Caretta caretta* nests. It is important to note that the Green Turtle, the most endangered marine turtle in the Mediterranean only nests within the SPAMI site in the whole E.U. area. The nesting of *Chelonia mydas* has increased from 300 nests in 2020 (last periodic review period) to 340 in 2023 within the SPAMI site.

It is noted that the sea turtles need to be around 25-30 years old for them to start laying eggs and therefore it is important to have a long-term monitoring program in order to see these changes in the nesting numbers.

It is worth mentioning that the E.U. has rated the Conservation Status of marine turtles for the Mediterranean as “Unfavorable” with the exception of Cyprus being “Favorable” (Nature and Biodiversity Newsletter – February 2019).

Posidonia meadows were estimated in the past to have a 6.4 ha coverage but in 2022 with the new and detailed mapping, Posidonia meadows within the SPAMI site is estimated to be 156.4 ha.

Posidonia oceanica is protected in Cyprus and its meadows form a priority habitat. No trawling is permitted in waters less than 50 m depth in order to protect the meadows.

Score

3

1.3. Are the objectives, set out in the original SPAMI application for designation, actively pursued?

Rating scale

No : 0

Only some of them : 1

Yes for most of them : 2

Yes for all of them : 3

Rationale for the note

As stated in the original SPAMI application “The main objectives of the area are to protect Green and Loggerhead turtles near or on the nesting beaches, including their nesting activity at night, as well as their nests and hatchlings from human impacts such as from fishing, driving on beaches, use of lights etc”.

The monitoring of the sea turtle nesting is on going on an annual basis and the results show an increasing trend for both marine turtles.

Two (2) park rangers have been hired since 2022 specifically for monitoring the law enforcement within the SPAMI site during the nesting season. They are responsible for the control enforcement of the area and they also provide awareness to the visitors. At the moment one has resigned and DFMR is in the process of hiring a new park ranger before the upcoming nesting season 2025.

One Infrared live camera has been purchased and installed since 2020 in order to survey the Lara beach at night-time during the turtle nesting season.

The marine area of the SPAMI has seasonal prohibitions on vessel passage and fishing activities.

It is noted that in 2011, the Akamas Peninsula has been included in the Natura 2000 network as a Site of Community Interest (SCI) (CY4000010: Chersonisos Akama). Lara – Toxeftra SPAMI area is located within the Chersonisos Akamas. Therefore all the legal requirement of Natura 2000 sites are also applied to Lara-Toxeftra. This safeguards the area from any future pressures such as coastal development.

In addition, the offshore area of the SPAMI was also declared as a Natura 2000 site, “Oceanid” CY4000024, early in 2020 for the presence of the cetaceans and sea turtles. Oceanid covers an area of 8.317 km2. The area is a major migratory route of sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas* & *Caretta caretta*) to their feeding grounds along the African shores (Egypt and Libya). The aim for the establishment of Oceanid, is to ensure the protection of the migratory corridors of marine turtles. This would add to the protection efforts already done within the SPAMI area, with additional protection measures in the adjacent offshore Natura 2000 site. Additional research for the offshore site will determine these future measures. Currently DFMR is participating in a LIFE Project (<https://pandoteira.cy/>) and one of the activities is to add satellite tags on female sea turtles after laying their eggs in order to verify / check their migratory corridors.

2. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

	Score
<p>2.1. The legal status of the SPAMI (with reference to its legal status at the date of the previous evaluation report).</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>Significant negative change in the legal status of the SPAMI : 0</p> <p>Slight negative change in the legal status of the SPAMI : 1</p> <p>The SPAMI has maintained or improved its legal status : 2</p>	2
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>Legal milestones and benchmarks:</p> <p>1971 - Sea turtles and their eggs in Cyprus have been protected since 1971 by the Fisheries Law (CAP. 135) and Regulations 1990 (Reg. No. 273/90).</p> <p>1978 - Launching the Turtle Monitoring Project</p> <p>1989 - Habitat protection with Lara-Toxeftra Turtle Reserve set up under the Fisheries Legislation, with Management Regulations included in the law. The protected area includes the foreshore and the adjacent sea down to the 20m isobaths.</p> <p>It is noted that the area is protected by the National Fisheries Law and Regulations. According to Article 13 of the Fisheries Regulations (273/90), it is prohibited to capture, kill, buy, possess or sell a marine turtle, as well as their eggs, or any attempt to do any of these. The fisheries regulations prohibit from the 1st of June up to the 30th of September, camping, the use of umbrellas and sunbeds, the presence of people in the area at night, the use of vehicles on the beaches, entering and anchoring of boats and fishing (with any means except with rod and line from the shore) in the sea area down to the 20m isobath. The transit and anchoring of a boat in the area is prohibited from May 1st until October 31st. Holders of small-scale coastal fishing professional licenses, are exempt from the transit ban the months of May and October of each year.</p> <p>1989 - Administrative Act dated 11.8.1989 (K.Δ.Π. 188/89) - The land zones in Lara area have been converted into Protection Zones (Δα1), where no development is allowed. (Greek https://www.cylaw.org/KDP/data/1989_1_188.pdf).</p> <p>1989 -Training courses for other Mediterranean countries started, with trainees from RAC/SPA (UNEP/MAP) mainly.</p> <p>In 1990 (K.Δ.Π. 8/90) - issue of the Notification under article 5 (I) of the Foreshore Law: No permits / development of the coastal area of the Lara - Toxeftra SPAMI site is allowed (i.e no touristic beaches with facilities etc).https://www.cylaw.org/KDP/data/1990_1_8.pdf</p> <p>2004 - With the inclusion of Cyprus in the European Union, the sea turtles are protected through the European Habitats Directive (92/43 / EEC). In fact, sea turtles are considered priority species and for their conservation, the designation of Natura 2000 sites, is required.</p> <p>2011 -Akamas Peninsula has been included in the Natura 2000 network. Lara – Toxeftra area is located within the Natura CY4000010: Chersonisos Akama.</p> <p>2013 -Lara-Toxeftra was included in the SPAMI List of the Barcelona Convention</p> <p>2018 - Ministerial Decree on the Prohibition of the Transit of Vessels in Marine Protected Area of Lara (K.Δ.Π. 234/2018). Through the decree the seasonal prohibition of the transit of vessels in the MPA up to the 20m isobath has been expanded to 1st May – 31st October. Holders of small-scale coastal fishing professional licenses, are exempt from the transit ban the months of May and October of each year.</p> <p>2020 -The offshore area “Oceanid” was declared as a Natura 2000 site (CY4000024) for the protection of the cetaceans and the migratory routes of the marine turtles.</p>	

	Score
<p>2.2. Are competencies and responsibilities clearly defined in the texts governing the area?</p>	2

<p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>Competencies and responsibilities are not clearly defined : 0</p> <p>The definition of competencies and responsibilities needs slight improvements : 1</p> <p>The SPAMI has clearly defined competencies and responsibilities : 2</p>	
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>The competencies and responsibilities are clearly defined in the relevant national legislation (Fisheries Law (CAP35 and Regulations)) and fall under the competence of the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research (DFMR), which is also responsible for the implementation of the sea turtle conservation project. DFMR is also responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the legislation. DFMR is the national competent authority for the protection of the marine environment and marine biodiversity in Cyprus.</p>	

	<u>Score</u>
<p>2.3. Does the area have a management body, endowed with sufficient powers?</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No management body, or the management body is not endowed with sufficient powers : 0</p> <p>The management body is not fully dedicated to the SPAMI : 1</p> <p>The SPAMI has a fully dedicated management body and sufficient powers to implement the conservation measures : 2</p>	<p>2</p>
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>The Department of Fisheries and Marine Research (DFMR) of the Ministry of Agriculture Rural Development and Environment, is the manager of the area and has a team of 4 people that is fully dedicated to implementing the conservations measures required. Furthermore, DFRM has sufficient power to implement the relevant legislation with the full-time personnel including its Fisheries Control Inspectors, at the nesting beaches particularly during the nesting period, as well as fisheries management in adjacent waters.</p> <p>It is noted that the area is protected by the National Fisheries Law and Regulations. According to Article 13 of the Fisheries Regulations (273/90), it is prohibited to capture, kill, buy, possess or sell a marine turtle, as well as their eggs, or any attempt to do any of these. The fisheries regulations prohibit from the 1st of June up to the 30th of September, camping, the use of umbrellas and sunbeds, the presence of people in the area at night, the use of vehicles on the beaches, entering and anchoring of boats and fishing (with any means except with rod and line from the shore) in the sea area down to the 20m isobath. The transit and anchoring of a boat in the area is prohibited from May 1st until October 31st. Holders of small-scale coastal fishing professional licenses, are exempt from the transit ban the months of May and October of each year.</p>	

3. MANAGEMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

	Score
<p>3.1. Does the SPAMI have a management plan?</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No management plan : 0</p> <p>The level of implementation of the management plan is assessed as “insufficient” : 1</p> <p>The management plan is not officially adopted but its implementation is assessed as “adequate” : 2</p> <p>The management plan is officially adopted and adequately implemented : 3</p> <p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>There is a rather unique case for this SPAMI site where there isn't a document compiled as a specific management plan for the protected area (with all traditional components of a management plan included in one document), but where all essential elements of a management plan are contained in various separate provisions.</p> <p>The management regulations for this area are spelled out in the Fisheries Legislation (CAP 35) and Regulations (273/90) as well as in the Ministerial Decree 2018 (K.Δ.Π. 234/2018), and are considered, defacto, the core of a management plan.</p> <p>In addition, a sea turtle monitoring protocol that is officially approved by the DFMR and the national scientific committee through the Department of Environment is being used in the area. The scientific/monitoring/conservation components used are those prescribed in the “Manual for the Marine Turtle Conservation in the Mediterranean”. (A.Demetropoulos and M.Hadichristophorou 1995 and “Addendum 1 to the Manual – Conservation Practices” by the same authors). These are institutionalised by being mandatory in the Tender Agreements for the implementation of the plan and its conservation practices.</p> <p>In addition, the SPAMI area is included in the Natura 2000 site “Chersonisos Akama” (CY4000010) and its management plan covers the SPAMI site as well. The management plan is publicly available and can be found in Greek in the following link: http://natura.environment.moa.gov.cy/sxedia/CY4000010P.zip</p> <p>Within this Natura 2000 management plan there is a clear description of the SPAMI site and its value in regards especially to the nesting of the marine turtles. All the management regulations and legislation for the SPAMI site are included in the management plan, along with the responsibilities of each competent authority (DFRM, Department of Environment, Department of Forests etc). There is a clear description of the monitoring program with the available data, the description of the nesting beaches, the threats and proposed solutions and optimal management measures. It is noted that the management plan followed the public consultation procedure and was approved in 2017.</p> <p>Following the recommendations derived from the previous ordinary evaluation that was completed in 2021 (that means only 3 years ago), DFMR along with the Marine & Environmental Research (MER) Lab in order to create a SPAMI-specific management plan, in accordance with Article 7 of the SPA/BD protocol, have started the project “Lara-Toxeftra Climate-Adaptive and Responsive (CARE) management plan (Lara-Toxeftra CARE plan)”. The duration of the project is 2 years (July 2024 – July 2026) and the expected result will be the the creation of the first National MPA management plan on the island. This project is supported by funding from MedPAN Small Projects and Cyprus Environmental Foundation.</p>	2

	Score
<p>3.2. Assess the adequacy of the management plan taking into account the SPAMI</p>	2

objectives and the requirements set out in article 7 of the Protocole ASP/DB and Section 8.2.3 of the Annotated Format (AF).

Rating scale

Low : 0
 Medium : 1
 Good : 2
 Excellent : 3

Rationale for the note

The management measures as well as the management plan of the “Chersonisos Akama” N2000 site, provide for the protection of the sea turtles through at least parts of their life cycle (nesting females, pre-nesting and nesting stage, eggs, incubation, hatchlings and resident young and adult turtles) while they are present in the SPAMI site.

Moreover, it ensures the assessment and monitoring of their population and their reproductive activity, along with the protection of their nesting sites and gives recommendations for mitigation of threats and pressures.

The monitoring program has been in effect since 1978 and it shows positive results with very significant increases in both sea turtles' nesting activity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the management plan is being successfully and effectively implemented.

The DFMR is the authority that is in charge both of the management of the SPAMI site and the monitoring of the marine turtle nesting. The annual report provides not only the data requested from the monitoring program but also recommendations for additional measures or changes that might be needed for dealing with threats and pressures. Changes that are observed in the monitoring also trigger additional management measures. An example is that the past few years there has been a shift in the nesting season which now starts in the middle – late of May rather than in June. This observation triggered a change in the regulations by extending the protection of the marine site by the passage of vessels from May – October instead of June-September as it used to be.

In addition to the monitoring of the nesting beaches, the DFMR has completed in 2013 the mapping of Posidonia meadows within the Natura 2000 sites (including the Lara-Toxeftra SPAMI). In 2022 a new and more detailed mapping of Posidonia and other protected habitats was implemented in the framework of the implementation of the E.U. Habitats Directive (93/43/ECC) as well as for the requirements of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.

The national funds are sufficient for not only the monitoring program but also for the management of the site (including equipment, cars, surveillance vessels, patrolling etc). Currently there is a national fund of approximate 100,000 euro per year for the monitoring and management of the site and additional expenses for patrolling and staff salaries are also covered by the national budget of the DFMR. In addition, through the LIFE IP Physis EU project (<https://pandoteira.cy/>), an extra funding of 100,000 euro was obtained for the satellite tagging of the female marine turtles in Cyprus. Through the same project the new National Action Plan for Marine Turtles in Cyprus is being prepared. Another 50,000 euro is being used in the site through the E.U. Structural Funds by DFMR. Currently the information centre as well as the facilities of the DFMR in Lara beach are planned to be upgraded through this funding. It is noted the salaries of the DFMR permanent personnel including the Inspectors and Officers that deal with Lara-Toxeftra SPAMI site amongst other things, are not included in the above mentioned budgets.

It is noted that the management plan of the Natura 2000 site including the SPAMI site followed the public consultation procedure where the local communities were actively involved. Moreover, since 2021 the Youth of Polis Chrysochous District representing the local communities are actively involved in the marine turtle monitoring program. In addition, DFMR has provided all possible assistance and knowledge for the creation of the new Turtle Museum in the village of Innia (<https://inniaturtle museum.com.cy/en/home-en/>). It is noted that the information kiosk that DFMR used to have in the area of Lara has been removed from the beach and the one on the top will be reconstructed and therefore at the moment there is no info kiosk available on the site but visitors are prompt to visit the Turtle Museum in Innia, visiting at the same time the local communities and the village of Innia.

The elements from Article 7 of the SPA/BD Protocol are addressed and the management of the SPAMI site is effective, but as previously mentioned currently there is not one document that can be called the “management plan”. This is expected to be implemented during 2026 through the Lara - Toxeftra Adaptive and Responsive (CARE) Plan funded by MedPAN.

Score

2

3.3. Assess the adequacy of the human resources available to the SPAMI.

Rating scale

<p>Very low/Insufficient : 0</p> <p>Low : 1</p>	
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>As the DFMR is also involved in many activities, during the nesting season, three (3) people are fully dedicated to the SPAMI. In addition, and in order to ensure adequate human resources are involved, DFMR assigns through a tender procedure the implementation of the monitoring/conservation program of marine turtles to external experts (NGO).</p> <p>In addition, officers from the DFMR participate to the implementation of the program and also park rangers were hired for the surveillance of the SPAMI area during the nesting season.</p> <p>The DFMR also carries out educational and awareness raising activities throughout the year.</p> <p>DFMR by participating in EU - funded projects including the LIFE EUROTURTLES, LIFE IP PHYSIS and also through the MedPAN small projects, the SPAMI benefits from closer collaboration with national and international NGOs, academic institutions etc.</p>	

	Score
<p>3.4. Assess the adequacy of the financial and material means available to the SPAMI</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>Very low : 0</p> <p>Low : 1</p> <p>Adequate : 2</p> <p>Excellent : 3</p>	2
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>The cost of the management of the area is provided by the national funds through the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research. The funding is adequate to carry out the necessary management measures. Currently there is a national fund of approximate 100,000 euro per year for the monitoring and management of the site and additional expenses for patrolling and staff salaries are also covered by the national budget of the DFMR.</p> <p>In addition, funding through the European Structural Funds and through LIFE Projects has been used for several activities and material purchasing (eg aluminum protective cages, infrared cameras, night-vision binoculars, genetic analysis etc). It is noted that satellite tagging will also take place in the next years and the expenses are covered by LIFE IP Physis project with a budget of around 105,000 euro.</p> <p>DFMR has 2 local cars for management of the area, 2 vessels for the marine area, offices and computers for the personnel are located in DFMR district offices such as in Paphos.</p>	

	Score
<p>3.5. Does the area have a monitoring programme?</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p>	3

<p>No monitoring programme : 0</p> <p>The level of implementation of the monitoring programme is assessed as “insufficient” : 1</p> <p>The monitoring programme needs improvement to cover other parameters that are significant for the SPAMI : 2</p> <p>The monitoring programme is adequately implemented and allows the assessment of the state and</p>	
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>A marine turtle conservation project, set up by the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research, has been ongoing since 1978, covering both Green and Loggerhead turtles. The project aims at: a) protecting and managing the important nesting beaches, b) protecting eggs and hatchlings from predation and from human activities, c) protecting adult turtles, d) monitoring the turtle population and nesting activity in Cyprus, and e) raising public awareness in turtle conservation. The monitoring program has been in effect since 1978 and it has been ongoing every nesting season without any interruption. Through the monitoring program there have been positive results with significant increase in nesting of both <i>Chelonia mydas</i> and <i>Caretta caretta</i>.</p> <p>The monitoring also covers impacts of climate change through surveying sex ratio and temperature.</p> <p>DFMR also collects information on marine turtle strandings and proceeds with marine litter investigation inside the marine turtles by selecting non-decomposed dead turtles.</p> <p>Moreover, the marine habitats have been mapped in 2022 within the SPAMI site in detail.</p> <p>There is also monitoring of the erosion of the beaches, of the threats such as illegal driving on the beaches, the fox predation on the turtle nests and human disturbance.</p> <p>The monk seal is also monitored and sightings are recorded. Posidonia meadows (Habitat 1120*) and macrophytes - reefs (habitat 1170) also have monitoring programs in the area.</p> <p>Marine litter on the beaches is also being monitored including beaches in the SPAMI area.</p> <p>Physiochemical parameters are also being monitored within the SPAMI site within the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.</p>	

	Score
<p>3.6. 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?</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>Low : 0</p> <p>Medium : 1</p> <p>Good : 2</p> <p>Excellent : 3</p>	<p>3</p>
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>There is an annual report at the end of each nesting season that is provided by turtle experts that run the program through a tender procedure, to the competent authority (DFMR) which includes an assessment of the management measures of the area and the results of the nesting monitoring program. This works as a feedback mechanism between the monitoring results and the management objectives that allows for the adaptation of protection and management measures. For example, the nesting season during the last few years was starting earlier in May and therefore a decision for adaptation of the measures was made by the Ministerial Decree that was issued in 2018, in order to ensure the protection of the SPAMI during the months of May and October.</p> <p>The yearly monitoring report includes a section with proposed additional measures that need to be taken to minimize threats and/or pressures that arise. Although the report is provided on a yearly basis, it includes analysis of all previous years that the program has been running and any trends are indicated along with possible measures if need to be taken.</p>	

Score	
<p>3.7. Is the management plan effectively implemented?</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>Low : 0</p> <p>Medium : 1</p> <p>Good : 2</p> <p>Excellent : 3</p>	<p>2</p>
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>The management measures included in the Fisheries Legislation, along with the Management Plan of the entire Natura 2000 site (Chersonisos Akama) that includes the management of the SPAMI site as well along with the monitoring programme of the Lara-Toxeftra turtle reserve are effectively implemented and provide for the protection of the sea turtles through at least parts of their life cycle (nesting females, pre-nesting and nesting stage, eggs, incubation, hatchlings and resident young and adult turtles).</p> <p>Moreover, it ensures the assessment and monitoring of their population and their reproductive activity, along with the protection of their nesting sites.</p> <p>The monitoring program has been in effect since 1978 and it shows positive results with very significant increases in both sea turtles nesting activity.</p> <p>The adequacy of human resources to implement the management plan is also ensured.</p> <p>Moreover, DFMR has provided a free training program for the local communities that includes practical and theoretical sessions in order to provide better knowledge of the marine turtles and the promote awareness and has also provided information to newly developed Turtle Museum in Innia village.</p> <p>The national funding is ensured by the DFMR's budget for the monitoring program and the management of the Site. In addition, further funding is obtained through EU Project and Structural funds since the site is included in a Natura 2000 area. Cyprus as a member of the EU has also compiled the Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for Natura 2000 sites that includes all priority actions that need to be taken for better management of these areas and ensures sufficient funding.</p> <p>The external scientists / experts working for the marine monitoring program need to have a special permit by the DFMR and the Department of Environment in order to be able to work with these priority marine species. This also ensures that all data obtained are passed on to the competent authorities along with recommendations for any additional future measures or changes in current ones through the annual report.</p> <p>It is also noted that the DFMR is the competent authority for the management of the SPAMI site both for the land and marine areas. In addition, the DFMR is closely collaborating with the Department of Environment and the Department of Forests since the site is included in the Natura 2000 area of "Chersonisos Akama" and in the National Forest Park. All these three governmental departments are within the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment.</p> <p>Therefore, it can be concluded that the management plan is being successfully and effectively implemented.</p>	

Score	
<p>3.8. Have any concrete conservation measures, activities and actions been implemented?</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>Low : 0</p> <p>Medium : 1</p> <p>Good : 2</p> <p>Excellent : 3</p>	<p>3</p>

Rationale for the note

During the nesting / hatching season (1st June to 30th September) beaches are under sufficient control for the enforcement of the relevant legislation/regulations, through constant surveillance with the use of park rangers and DFMR personnel. At least 2 rangers are constantly present on site.

Sea turtle nesting is monitored and randomly selected female sea turtles are tagged after laying their eggs. All eggs/nests are protected *in situ* by special aluminum cages, on the beach they were laid. The cages are mainly used to avoid predation by foxes. A small number of nests (10-20) from other touristic beaches around Cyprus are moved to in a fenced off part of the Lara beach, that is designated as a hatchery. To avoid destruction by wave activity some nests are moved up the same beach.

Other measures implemented are:

Between the 1st June and the 30th September, the following are prohibited in the marine/coastal protected area:

- Place any umbrellas, sun-beds, tents, caravans or any other similar items
- Stay in the area at night, starting an hour before sunset until sunrise
- Drive any vehicle on the beaches or tolerate such action
- Fishing, except with a rod and line from shore
- Use or anchor a boat or any similar object, or tolerate such action

In addition, it is prohibited the months of May and October to:

- Use or anchor a vessel or any similar device (professional small-scale fishermen are exempt)

According to Article 13 of the Fisheries Regulations (273/90), it is prohibited to capture, kill, buy, possess or sell marine turtles, as well as their eggs, or attempt to do any of these.

In addition, marine turtles are included in Annex II of the Protocol which deals with Specially Protected Areas and the Biodiversity of the Mediterranean of the Barcelona Convention, which Cyprus ratified with Law no. 20 (III) / 2001. They are also protected through the European Habitats Directive (92/43 / EEC). In fact, sea turtles are considered priority species and for their conservation, the designation of Special Areas of Conservation is required. This Directive has been transposed into national law in 2003 by the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Act No. 153 (I) / 2003. It is noted that within the framework of this legislation, the Natura 2000 Network has been established in Cyprus.

The DFMR runs a marine turtle rescue centre located in the Cyprus Marine Aquaculture Research Centre (CyMARC) in Larnaca. The public can easily communicate with the DFMR by calling even outside office hours using the on-call lines provided through the DFMR's website: http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/dfmr/dfmr.nsf/contact_gr/contact_gr?OpenDocument

Information that is given to the public for dead / injured marine turtles and how the public can assist:

<https://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/dfmr/dfmr.nsf/All/9AEAA6BEAF46CBEBEC22588630040D444>

It is noted that around 10 sea turtles are treated there every year. Occasionally, when a sea turtle is successfully released back to the sea after treatment, people are invited to attend and it is also promoted through the media for awareness.

(ex <https://in-cyprus.philenews.com/local/lucy-injured-sea-turtle-released-back-into-limassol-waters-photos/>).

It is also noted that DFMR has a good collaboration with the Department of Environment of the British Sovereign Bases in Cyprus and injured sea turtles that are found within the British Bases are immediately transferred to the Rescue Center of DFMR.

In addition, the DFMR records all stranded dead sea turtles reported by the public and randomly selected sea turtles that are not decomposed are examined for DNA analyses, diet analyses and marine litter. Moreover, data such the turtles dimensions, weight and sex is recorded for each turtle.

Section II: FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA

4. THREATS AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

4.1. Assess the level of threats within the site to the ecological, biological, aesthetic and cultural values of the area (B4.a Annex I).

Under section 4.1, questions are asked in two parts: part a) enquiring on the existence of threats within the site, and part b) asking about the response made to mitigate such threats. If the answer to part a) is “no threats”, part b) is not applicable. Whereas, when threats are reported under part a), part b) should be answered. The score achieved in response to part b) is considered as a bonus and has no impact on the score evaluation and consequently the result of the review.

	<u>Score</u>
<p>4.1.1.a. Unregulated exploitation of natural resources (e.g. sand mining, water, timber, living resources) See 5.1.1. in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No threats : 3</p> <p>Weak threats : 2</p> <p>Serious threats : 1</p> <p>Very serious threats : 0</p> <p>(If the answer is “no threats”, pass directly to question 4.1.2. a).</p>	<p>3</p>

Rationale for the note

Within the area all activities and exploitation of natural resources are regulated through the respective / equivalent legislative framework. For example fishing activities are regulated by the Fisheries Legislation, while hunting is regulated by the Game and Fauna Service etc.

It has to be noted that sand extraction from the area was terminated by law in the 1980s. Exploitation of timber is not allowed and fishing activities are prohibited from the 1st June – 30th September except with a rod and line from the shore. In addition, they are regulated through the Fisheries Legislation in areas adjacent to the SPAMI. For any fishing activity in Cyprus except with the use of rod and line from the shore, a permit must be issued by the DFMR.

The area is being monitored and patrolled on a regular basis for any illegal activity by the competent authorities:

Department of Fisheries and Marine Research

Department of Forests

Game and Fauna Service

Department of Environment

Police and port police etc

Score

4.1.1.b. Efforts (actions) undertaken during the evaluation period to address/mitigate the unregulated exploitation of natural resources (e.g. sand mining, water, timber, living resources) See 5.1.1. in AF.

Rating scale

No efforts : 0

Little efforts : 1

Some efforts : 2

Significant efforts : 3

(If applicable: Not applicable if the answer to question 4.1.1. a) is “no threats”.)

Not Applicable

Score

4.1.2.a. Threats to habitats and species (e.g. disturbance, desiccation, pollution, poaching, introduced alien species) See 5.1.2. in AF.

Rating scale

No threats : 3

Weak threats : 2

Serious threats : 1

Very serious threats : 0

(If the answer is “no threats”, pass directly to question 4.1.3. a).

2

Rationale for the note

Driving on beaches has been a serious threat over the past few years, but due to the implementation of access restriction measures this was minimized. Unfortunately last year due to the development of the Akamas National Forest Park by the Department of Forests, there have been bad practices and delays on the road improvements near the SPAMI site and the barriers that were installed in the past have been removed. The barriers will be reinstalled once the roadwork is finished.

Another threat derives from the pressure imposed by several developers for the construction of tourist infrastructure, including other urban development, adjacent to the currently protected coastal area.

Another potential threat is the disturbance of the nesting sea turtles and hatchlings by humans / visitors. Although there is no regular habitation in the Lara-Toxeftra Turtle Reserve, visitation is high, especially in the summer season, largely due to the Turtle Project and the opportunity for people to see live sea turtle hatchlings. Guided ecotourism trips are common during daylight hours in the breeding season. No night visits are allowed.

Another potential threat is the floating marine litter coming through currents and wave activity from other land-areas and accumulates on the beaches of the protected area.

A possible threat is the impact climate change might have on the sea turtles' sex ratios. Higher temperatures produce more females than males. This is being monitored by randomly placing temperature loggers in marine turtles nests in the SPAMI site, recording all necessary information. Climate change can also potentially impact the nesting beaches through sea level rise and erosion. So far no significant impacts have been noted in the area.

Score

3

4.1.2.b. Efforts (actions) undertaken during the evaluation period to address/mitigate the threats to habitats and species (e.g. disturbance, desiccation, pollution, poaching, introduced alien species) See 5.1.2. in AF.

Rating scale

No efforts : 0

Little efforts : 1

Some efforts : 2

Significant efforts : 3

(If applicable: Not applicable if the answer to question 4.1.2. a) is “no threats”.)

Rationale for the note

Rangers are hired for providing information to visitors and increasing awareness, as well as for control and law enforcement.

Monitoring of the infrared camera on Lara Beach allows for a constant night monitoring and in case there is illegal visitation the park rangers can immediately go on site and take appropriate actions/measures.

The SPAMI site has a strong protection legal framework. It is noted that no development is expected within the Lara-Toxeftra SPAMI site. Moreover, the SPAMI is also included in the wider Natura 2000 area of Akamas Peninsula (CY4000010: CHERSONISOS AKAMA), in which any future development is controlled and regulated. Any development plan or project is being assessed environmentally through the relevant procedure of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and also the Ecological Assessment since the area is included in the Natura 2000 network. Within the process of examination for any development plan the status of the area and its environmental parameters are taken into consideration. The SPAMI site is also included in the National Forest of Akamas and it is also included in the Nature protection zone with no coastal development allowed.

Manual clean ups are carried out on a daily basis by DFMR personnel, during the nesting season. No machinery is being used in order to avoid any disturbance of the nests. Since the SPAMI site is included in a National Forest, the Department of Forests is responsible to maintain the area clean. The DFMR since 2018 is also implementing the marine litter monitoring protocol within the framework of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive". In addition, local communities, NGOs, companies etc organized volunteering clean ups in the area. Through these clean-ups it has been observed that a large amount of the litter found on the beaches of the SPAMI site is coming from neighboring countries due to the current activities (unpublished DFMR raw data).

	<u>Score</u>
<p>4.1.3.a. Increase of human impact (e.g. tourism, boats, building, immigration...) See 5.1.3. in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No threats : 3</p> <p>Weak threats : 2</p> <p>Serious threats : 1</p> <p>Very serious threats : 0</p> <p>(If the answer is “no threats”, pass directly to question 4.1.4. a).</p>	2
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>A threat derives from the pressures imposed by several developers for the construction of tourist infrastructure, including other urban development, adjacent to the currently protected coastal area.</p> <p>Potential threat from disturbance of nesting sea turtles and hatchlings by humans / visitors. Although there is no regular habitation in the Lara-Toxeftra Turtle Reserve, visitation is high, especially in the summer season, largely due to the Turtle Project and the opportunity for people to see live turtle hatchlings. Guided ecotourism trips are common during daylight hours in the breeding season.</p> <p>Human presence on the beaches at night is strictly controlled during the nesting season, although some minor incidents were recorded of people illegally staying overnight to observe the nesting activity. These incidents are very limited due to the presence of rangers and awareness information provided to the visitors.</p> <p>During the nesting season and specifically from May – October each year there are no vessels passing inside the SPAMI site as this is prohibited by the Fisheries Legislation (CAP 35 and Ministerial Decree ΚΑΠΙ 234/2018). Only the small scale fishermen are allowed to enter the SPAMI site in May and in October.</p>	

	<u>Score</u>
<p>4.1.3.b. Efforts undertaken during the evaluation to address/mitigate the increase of human impact (e.g. tourism, boats, building, immigration...) See 5.1.3. in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No efforts : 0</p> <p>Little efforts : 1</p> <p>Some efforts : 2</p> <p>Significant efforts : 3</p> <p>(If applicable: Not applicable if the answer to question 4.1.3. a) is “no threats”.)</p>	3

Rationale for the note

In addition to what is referred in 4.2.1 (a) and (b) and 4.3.1 (a), a Ministerial Decree on the Prohibition of the Transit of Vessels in Marine Protected Area of Lara (Κ.Δ.Π. 234/2018) was issued. Through the decree the seasonal of the transit of vessels in the MPA up to the 20m isobath has been expanded from 1st May to 31st October.

Also, new signs were installed in 2020 along the protected area referring to the regulations that are implemented in the area and provide awareness (co-funding through the E.U. Structural Funds). On the signs the activities that are regulated in the area are clearly defined.

Park rangers have been hired for control enforcement and public awareness.

An infrared camera was installed in Lara Beach.

		Score
<p>4.1.4.a. Conflicts between users or user groups. See 5.1.4. and 6.2 in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No threats : 3 Weak threats : 2 Serious threats : 1 Very serious threats : 0</p> <p>(If the answer is “no threats”, pass directly to question 4.1.5. a).</p>	<p>2</p>	
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>A local community (Innia village) has been frequently submitting a request for the development and establishment of beach tourism infrastructure, with parasols, sunbeds and facilities, within the protected area. Their request has been getting denied.</p>		

		Score
<p>4.1.4.b. Efforts (actions) undertaken during the evaluation period to address/mitigate the conflicts between users or user groups. See 5.1.4. and 6.2 in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p>	<p>3</p>	

No efforts : 0 Little efforts : 1 Some efforts : 2 Significant efforts : 3	
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>Any request for the development of tourism beach infrastructure has been constantly declined by the Competent Authorities.</p> <p>Environmental Awareness and education campaigns are being carried out on a regular basis in regards to the sea turtle protection program both to tourists but also to locals.</p> <p>DFMR has collaborated with the village of Innia in order to create the Turtle Museum within the village and to promote awareness. It is noted that the Turtle Museum is being successfully operated for the last 2-3 years with a lot of visitors, minimizing the human pressure on the SPAMI site.</p>	

<p>Please include here a prescriptive list of threats (not evaluated or mentioned above) that are of concern and are evaluated individually:</p> <p>The potential development of the road under the Akamas National Forest is a general threat to the protected area, both in land and at sea, due to the increase of visitations.</p>

4.2. Assess the level of external threats to the ecological, biological, aesthetic and cultural values of the area (B4.a of the Annex I) and the efforts made to address/mitigate them. See 5.2 in the AF.

Under section 4.2, questions are asked in two parts: part a) enquiring on the existence of external threats, and part b) asking about the response made to mitigate such threats. If the answer to part a) is “no threats”, part b) is not applicable. Whereas, when threats are reported under part a), part b) should be answered. The score achieved in response to part b) is considered a bonus and has no impact on the score evaluation and consequently the result of the review.

	Score
<p>4.2.1.a. Pollution problems from external sources including solid waste and those affecting waters up-current. See 5.2.1 in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No threats : 3 Weak threats : 2 Serious threats : 1 Very serious threats : 0</p> <p>(If the answer is “no threats”, pass directly to question 4.1.2. a).</p>	<p>2</p>

Rationale for the note

The floating marine litter coming through currents and wave activity from land and marine sources are washed up by prevailing westerly winds and accumulate on the beaches of the protected area. Recently microplastics have been also found in the sand of the Lara beach, in the framework of the Tender N0. 01 / 023 for the "Implementation of Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes in the Republic of Cyprus".

Also a serious threat is any catastrophic event such as a large scale oil spill that might originate offshore.

	Score
<p>4.2.1.b. Efforts (actions) undertaken during the evaluation period to address/mitigate the pollution problems from external sources including solid waste and those affecting waters up-current. See 5.2.1 in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No efforts : 0 Little efforts : 1 Some efforts : 2 Significant efforts : 3</p> <p>(If applicable: Not applicable if the answer to question 4.2.1. a) is “no threats”.)</p>	3

Rationale for the note

Manual clean ups are carried out on a daily basis by DFMR personnel, during the nesting season. No machinery is being used in order to avoid any disturbance of the nests.

Since the SPAMI site is included in a National Forest, the Department of Forests is responsible to maintain the area clean.

The DFMR since 2018 is also implementing the marine litter monitoring protocol within the framework of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive".

In addition, local communities, NGOs, companies etc organized volunteering clean ups in the area.

Through these clean-ups it has been observed that a large amount of the litter found on the beaches of the SPAMI site is coming from neighboring countries due to the predominant ocean currents (unpublished DFMR raw data).

The Department of Environment is the competent authority in regards to the waste management in Cyprus. The Cypriot policy on waste management is based mainly on waste hierarchy (prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery, disposal) and the correct environmental handling. The ultimate aim is to protect the environment and human health. This is achieved through the reduction/elimination of the negative effects of the generation and management of waste, the promotion of reuse, recycling and recovery and generally the environmentally sound management in order to reduce the disposal in landfills and to reduce the overall impact of the use of resources by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their use. The application of environmentally rational management of waste generated in Cyprus is achieved through the implementation of the Waste Law of 2011 (L.185(I)/2011) and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Law of 2002 (L.32(I)/2002) and their amendments, as well as the Regulations and Decrees issued in accordance thereof. The above legislation is the result of European policy and legislation harmonized and adapted to national law. More information on waste management and the national waste programs can be found in the relevant website of the Department of Environment:

http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/environment/environmentnew.nsf/page20_en?page20_en?OpenDocument

	Score
<p>4.2.2.a. Significant impacts on landscapes and on cultural values. See 5.2.2 in AF.</p>	2

Rating scale

No threats : 3

Weak threats : 2

Serious threats : 1

Very serious threats : 0

(If the answer is “no threats”, pass directly to question 4.2.3. a).

Rationale for the note

The threat of possible development of infrastructure related to tourism may have an impact on the landscapes of the protected area.

The Akamas Peninsula has been divided into three development / management plans:

1. The Local Development Plan of the Akamas peninsula communities - has been completed.
2. The Local Development Plan of Peyia - under development
3. Akamas National Forest development and management plan - under discussions

Due to this fragmentation of a single unique ecosystem like the Akamas Peninsula, negative impacts are expected on the effective and long-term management and protection of the area.

Score

3

4.2.2.b. Efforts (actions) undertaken during the evaluation period to address/mitigate the significant impacts on landscapes and on cultural values. See 5.2.2 in AF.

Rating scale

No efforts : 0

Little efforts : 1

Some efforts : 2

Significant efforts : 3

(If applicable: Not applicable if the answer to question 4.2.2. a) is “no threats”.)

Rationale for the note

Any developmental plan or project is being assessed environmentally through the relevant procedure of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and also the Ecological Assessment since the area is included in the Natura 2000 network.

Within the process of examination for any development plan the status of the area and its environmental parameters are taken into consideration.

	<u>Score</u>
<p>4.2.3.a. Expected development of threats upon the surrounding area. See 6.1 in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No threats : 3 Weak threats : 2 Serious threats : 1 Very serious threats : 0</p> <p>(If the answer is “no threats”, pass directly to question 4.2.4. a).</p>	2
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>Please see 4.2.2 (a) and (b)</p>	

	<u>Score</u>
<p>4.2.3.b. Efforts (actions) undertaken during the evaluation period to address/mitigate the expected development of threats upon the surrounding area. See 6.1 in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No efforts : 0 Little efforts : 1 Some efforts : 2 Significant efforts : 3</p> <p>(If applicable: Not applicable if the answer to question 4.2.3. a) is “no threats”.)</p>	3

Rationale for the note

No development is expected within the Lara-Toxeftra Reserve. Moreover, the Reserve is also included in the wider Natura 2000 area of Akamas Peninsula (CY4000010: CHERSONISOS AKAMA), in which any future development is controlled and regulated.

Any possible/proposed development plan or project is being assessed environmentally through the relevant procedure of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and also the Ecological Assessment since the area is included in the Natura 2000 network.

Within the process of examination for any development plan the status of the area and its environmental parameters are taken into consideration.

Please include here a prescriptive list of threats (not evaluated or mentioned above) that are of concern and are evaluated individually:

.

Please include the list of threats (not evaluated or mentioned above) that were of concern and were eliminated or solved :

.

	Score
<p>4.3. Is there an integrated coastal management plan or land-use laws in the area bordering'.' or surrounding the SPAMI? (B4.e Annex I). See 5.2.3. in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No : 0</p> <p>Yes : 1</p>	1

Rationale for the note

The Lara-Toxeftra Turtle Reserve is included in the Akamas Natura 2000 site:
[www.moa.gov.cy/moa/environment/environmentnew.nsf/all/825E6DC5EFF93104C225848D003781B5/\\$file/CY4000010.pdf?openelement](http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/environment/environmentnew.nsf/all/825E6DC5EFF93104C225848D003781B5/$file/CY4000010.pdf?openelement)

This means that any development in this site will be subject to the provisions of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The management plan for the site can be found in the link below (Greek):
<http://natura.environment.moa.gov.cy/sxedia/CY4000010P.zip>

The updated Local Development Plan of Akamas Peninsula communities (also for the part outside the Natura 2000 site) has been approved. The DFMR was actively participating in this process along with other competent authorities such as the Department of Environment, the Department of Forests and the Game and Fauna Service.

<https://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/tpb/tpb.nsf/all/2A4521836ECA9040C2258960003A3A94?opendocument> (in Greek)

ICZM is also enforced in the whole Natura 2000 site that the SPAMI is included in.

Score

<p>4.4. 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.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No : 0 Yes : 1</p>	<p>1</p>		
<p>5. ENFORCEMENT OF PROTECTION MEASURES</p>			
<p>5.1. Assess the degree of enforcement of the protection measures In particular</p>			
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>Due to the strict protection of the area, the Competent Authority (DFMR) and consequently the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment have a major influence on the governance and the activities of the surrounding area, to ensure that there will be no negative impacts on the Lara-Toxefra turtle reserve.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1136 609 1402 636" style="text-align: center;"><u>Score</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1136 636 1402 739" style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">1</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Score</u>	1
<u>Score</u>			
1			
<p>5.1.1. Are the boundaries of the area adequately marked on land and, if applicable, adequately marked at sea? See 8.3.1. in the AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No : 0 Yes : 1</p>			
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>The protected area is clearly and adequately marked on land with relevant signs located at different locations within the protected area including its boundaries.</p> <p>No marks or buoys are employed in the sea, since the site is clearly defined by the 20m isobaths in the maps. These maps are publicly available through the governmental official site (geoportal) https://eservices.dls.moi.gov.cy/#/national/geoportalmapviewer</p> <p>Note that buoys are not planned to be installed for 2 main reasons: 1) aesthetic view of the area and 2) strong winds and currents since it is open sea thus the buoys will need regular maintenance.</p>			

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1136 1447 1402 1505" style="text-align: center;"><u>Score</u></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Score</u>
<u>Score</u>		
<p>5.1.2. 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. and 8.3.3. in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No : 0 Yes : 1</p>	<p>1</p>	

Rationale for the note

Besides the DFMR, other authorities that have competence regarding the protection and surveillance of the area are:

- The Port and Marine Police
- Department of Environment
- Department of Forestry
- Game and Fauna Service
- Police

		<u>Score</u>
<p>5.1.3. Are third party agencies also empowered to enforce regulations relating to the SPAMI protective measures?</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No : 0 Yes : 1</p>	<p>1</p>	

Rationale for the note

The authorities that can enforce regulations relating to the SPAMI protective measures are:

- The Port and Marine Police
- Department of Environment
- Department of Forestry
- Game and Fauna Service
- Police

		<u>Score</u>
<p>5.1.4. Are there adequate penalties and powers for effective enforcement? See 8.3.4. in AF.</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>No : 0 Yes : 1</p>	<p>1</p>	

Rationale for the note

The existing penalties and powers of the DFMR are sufficient. The existing legislative framework in relation to illegal activities within the area, allows for fines for up to 8,560 euro and/or up to six months imprisonment. The DFMR Director can compound offences (i.e., fine the offender without court proceedings, provided the offender agrees to pay the fine). If the offender does not agree then the case is taken to court.

Score

5.1.5. Is the field staff empowered to impose sanctions? See 8.3.4. in AF.

1

Rating scale

No : 0

Yes : 1

Rationale for the note

All officers representing the competent authorities as mentioned in point 5.1.2 have the power to impose sanctions.

Score

5.1.6. Has the area established a contingency plan to face accidental pollution or other serious emergencies? (Art. 7.3. in the Protocol, Recommendation of the 13th Meeting of Contracting Parties).

1

Rating scale

No : 0

Yes : 1

Rationale for the note

There is an emergency plan for pollution emergencies and for chemicals the responsible authority is the Firefighting Department.

There is a National Contingency Plan for the whole coastline of Cyprus regarding oil pollution:
<http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/dfmr/dfmr.nsf/All/EFC47876B89A5BB5422583E500414E9E>

6. COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

Score

6.1. Are other national or international organizations collaborating to provide human or financial resources? (e.g. researchers, experts, volunteers...). See

3

9.1.3. in the AF.

Rating scale

No : 0

Weakly : 1

Fairly : 2

Excellent : 3

Rationale for the note

The sea turtle conservation program has been assigned, through tender procedures, to sea turtle experts in an NGO over the last few years.

In 2020 other national NGOs and local communities have been participating in the field work as part of awareness and education activities/efforts.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between DFMR and Terra Cypria NGO for a volunteering project in regards to the marine turtles: <https://terracypria.org/project/the-cyprus-turtle-program/>

Researchers from Marine and Environmental (MER) Lab have also been involved through the LARA - TOXEFTRA CARE PLAN in order to develop the Management Plan of the SPAMI site as well as within the marine litter project by assessing the nesting beach of Lara as well as a implementing assessments of marine litter presence in dead sea turtles provided by DFMR.

Score

3

6.2. 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 of the Protocol, A.d in Annex I).

Rating scale

No : 0

Insufficient : 1

Fairly : 2

Excellent : 3

Rationale for the note

There have been visitations to other SPAMI areas through SPA/RAC and also MedPAN exchange visits.

Moreover, the DFMR participated in the marine turtle group of MedPAN where information is exchanged and managers of MPAs with marine turtle nesting, are cooperating. It is noted that DFMR is an active member of MedPAN.

Section III: FOLLOW-UP OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION(S)

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Score

<p>7.1. Assess to what extent the recommendations possibly made by the previous evaluations were implemented: Recommendations made by the TAC(s) and/or approved by the Focal points for SPAs regarding Section I</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>'No' for all of them : 0</p> <p>'Yes' for some of them : 1</p> <p>'Yes' for most of them : 2</p> <p>'Yes' for all of them : 3</p>	<p>2</p>
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>Recommendation 1: Dedicated management plan - In process under the MedPAN funded project: <i>Lara-Toxeftra Climate-Adaptive and REsponsive (CARE) management plan (Lara-Toxeftra CARE plan)</i></p> <p>Recommendation 3: <i>To allow for expanded research, given the great value of this SPAMI site not just for conservation but also for furthering knowledge of sea turtles and the prospects for their long term survival in the Mediterranean, we recommend better collaboration with universities and research institutions. As part of this collaboration, we recommend DFMR tie research permitting to agreement to ensure data-sharing. As this progresses, DFMR can work with academic partners to develop long term research plans and objectives. - DFMR always welcomes further research and collaboration with universities and research institutions. At the moment a new collaboration is established through the new LIFE ADAPTS project with NGOs, the University of Cyprus and the University of Pisa in Italy in regards to marine turtles and the monk seal.</i></p>	

		<u>Score</u>
<p>7.2. Assess to what extent the recommendations possibly made by the previous valuations were implemented: Recommendations made by the TAC(s) and/or approved by the Focal points for SPAs regarding Section II</p> <p><u>Rating scale</u></p> <p>'No' for all of them : 0</p> <p>'Yes' for some of them : 1</p> <p>'Yes' for most of them : 2</p> <p>'Yes' for all of them : 3</p>	<p>2</p>	
<p><u>Rationale for the note</u></p> <p>Recommendation 2: <i>Given the rapid pace of climate change impacts in the region, it is recommended that more research be undertaken on temperature effects on nests (including effects on sex ratios and on disease/mortality within nests. Population genetics studies could help elucidate whether the increases in the number of nests at Lara-Toxeftra indicates population increase or changes in distribution of sea turtles within the wider Mediterranean. Environmental DNA studies in the wider area (including the Oceanid area) could further knowledge about population distributions, abundances, and trends. Initiating monitoring of climate change impacts on beach erosion is also recommended. - Most of the above mentioned recommendations are already being implemented. The only thing not yet done is the eDNA studies in Oceanid area.</i></p> <p>Recommendation 4: <i>To strengthen processes already underway, it is recommended that management between the Lara-Toxeftra SPAMI site and adjacent Natura 2000 sites be optimized. For future protected areas, it is recommended that Natura 2000 sites and other MPAs be designed such that their management measures are complementary to the SPAMI and ensure conservation of turtles, marine mammals, and the wider ecosystems in which they reside. - DFMR as the SPAMI manager, is directly involved with the management of the wider Natura 2000 area.</i></p>		

CONCLUSION* (based on score*) :

Based on the results obtained, the SPAMI is maintained in the ordinary revision process.

*Evaluation of the score:

The TAC will propose to include the SPAMI in a period of provisional nature (in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Procedure for the revision of the areas included in the SPAMI List) if the SPAMI has:

- a score < 1 in one or more of the following questions: 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6;
- a score < 2 in one or more of the following questions: 1.2, 1.3, 7.1 and 7.2.

Furthermore, considering that the sites included in the SPAMI List are intended to have a value of example and model for the protection of the natural heritage of the region (Paragraph A.e of Annex 1 to the SPA/BD Protocol), the TAC shall also propose to include the SPAMI in a period of provisional nature if:

- the total score of the evaluation is less than 54 for a coastal national SPAMI (= 70% of the maximum total score without bonus: 78);
- the total score of the evaluation is less than 50 for a coastal national SPAMI subject to its first ordinary periodic review (= 70% of the maximum total score without bonus: 72);
- the total score of the evaluation is less than 58 for a multilateral (transboundary high sea) SPAMI (= 70% of the maximum total score without bonus: 83);
- the total score of the evaluation is less than 53 for a multilateral (transboundary high sea) SPAMI subject to its first ordinary periodic review (=70% of the maximum total score without bonus: 77).

The bonus will count only in the case where the SPAMI has not reached the minimum score without the bonus. Then, the bonus will be added to the total score achieved by the SPAMI.

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

1. MEDITERRANEAN VALUE OF THE SPAMI

Total score 7 (Max : 7)

2. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Total score 6 (Max : 6)

3. MANAGEMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

Total score 19 (Max : 24)

Section II: FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA

4. THREATS AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

Total score 17 (Max : 23)

5. ENFORCEMENT OF PROTECTION MEASURES

Total score 6 (Max : 6)

6. COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

Total score 6 (Max : 6)

Section III: FOLLOW-UP OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION(S)

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS

EVALUATIONS

Total score

4 (Max : 6)

Overall total score

65 (Max : 78)

Recommendations for future evaluation

1 - A specific management plan for the site is a must in my view, aligned with the directives of management of marine protected areas worldwide.

2 - A buffer zone of enough extension, -a 500 m band would be a reasonable compromise- both at land and at sea, would be necessary for the site to ensure protection in the future from the pressures of the surroundings noted in the report.

3 - Timing for the seasonal onset and termination of protection needs to be reassessed based on evolution of turtle behaviour following climate change impacts. This should cover seasonality of protection in both marine and terrestrial habitats.

4 - Although the protection of sea turtles is the priority, I would like to shed light on the fact that the bathymetric limit of the area -20m depth- do not cover the bathymetric limit in the distribution of Posidonia oceanica., which in the Western Mediterranean reaches well below 40 m. It would be advisable to extend the limits of the reserve at least to -50 m depth, which is close to the limit of presence of Posidonia beds, but also is the limit depth for trawlers. In doing so, both the protection of the priority habitat 1110 AND the surveillance of trawler activity in the vicinity of this critical area for the sea turtles would be positively improved.

5 - I would advocate for the declaration of the Akamas Peninsula a national park, a biosphere reserve or a (national) protected area with comparable international protected status... aiming to facilitate a coordinated management of sea-turtle nesting beaches in NW Cyprus.

6 - As a general comment for the evaluation file, I do not find the way to express a discrepancy on the evaluation of the manager at a certain point -for example this, the 2.2- as we (the experts) cannot click a different value on the multiple choice evaluation that the one already chosen by the manager

7 - There is not a participatory body of the area, open to the presence and participation of the local communities and stakeholders. This would be extremely advisable.

8 - The best way to manage visitors in summer for the conservation of the SPAMI would be to close the road except for managers and local residents. Create a parking lot at the White River and allow entry to the beaches only by foot or bicycle. And create an administrative/interpretation centre with a small cantina at the current restaurant location inside the protected area

9 - A local campaign related with the reduction of residues in the residential and touristic areas in the vicinity of the SPAMI would be the mostly appreciated.

Signatures

Melina Marcou
SPAMI Manager



Pep Amengual
Independent Expert



Myroula Hadjichristoforou
National Expert



Melina Marcou
Focal Point



ALan Rees
Independent Expert

