

## Pelagos Sanctuary for Marine Mammals in the Mediterranean

(Submitted by France in the name of the secretariat of Pelagos and the three parties of the agreement – Monaco, Italy, France)

On 25 November 1999, after ten years' discussion and information sharing, France, Italy and Monaco came together to sign an agreement to create a sanctuary in the Mediterranean for marine mammals, to be called Pelagos. The Agreement entered into force on 21 February 2002 after ratification by the three countries.

The Sanctuary covers an area of 87,500 square kilometres and is the first international High Seas Marine Protected Area. In 2001 it was added to the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI), a practical illustration of the innovative nature of the Protocol Concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean. This listing involves official recognition by the signatory states of the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean.

The main species concerned are the striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), long-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala melas*), Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*), fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*), and sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*).

The Sanctuary has been designed to protect marine mammals against all types of disturbance by human activity, and its objective is to reconcile the harmonious development of socio-economic activities with the necessary protection of habitats and species.

To that end each Party to the Agreement plans its policies and management projects in consultation with the other Parties, with reference to the jointly adopted management plan. This action is also coordinated with other organisations and intergovernmental agreements such as ACCOBAMS, ICSEM, GFCM and RAC/SPA.\*



### Area of Sanctuary

Based on French Navy Survey (SHOM) chart n° 7204

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One of the Sanctuary's strategies is to achieve synergy between the various technical, scientific, educational and legal resources applicable to reconcile economic and naturalist interests in this extensive maritime zone.

In terms of communication a brochure in French, Italian and English has been published, a logo and whale watching Code of Conduct have been adopted, and the Parties have held meetings, in order to circulate the Sanctuary's messages as widely as possible.

The international dimension has developed further since 2006 with the creation of a Permanent Secretariat to help the Parties implement the management plan and coordinate their action via joint meetings to define priority themes.

In 2007, the Secretariat will move into premises at the Ducal Palace in Genoa, in the heart of the Italian region of Liguria.

A priority action programme involves working groups on the following themes:

- coordination by the Parties of controls at sea to manage human activities
- establishment of a three-country database
- creation of a website
- whale watching, swimming with dolphins and dolphin therapy
- fisheries and fish-farming
- marine traffic and commercial maritime transport
- high-speed craft races
- scientific research and monitoring, cetacean censuses and population estimates

This forms the basis for concerted effective action to meet the Pelagos Sanctuary's management objectives.

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\*ACCOBAMS: Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area

ICSEM: International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea

GFCM: General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

RAC/SPA: Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas