

Life BaHAR for Natura 2000

LIFE 12 NAT/MT/000845

New Marine Protected Areas for Reefs and Caves

The LIFE BaHAR for N2K project resulted in identifying representative areas for reefs and caves, both within existing Marine Protected Areas and beyond.

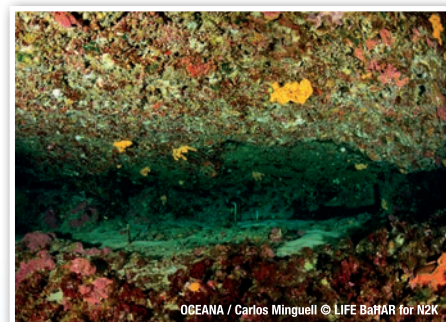
In this regard, **700 km²** of additional marine areas are being proposed for inclusion in the Natura 2000 network under the Habitats Directive. This means that **4138 km²** of Malta's marine waters will be afforded protection under the EU Nature Directives, covering more than **35%** of the Fisheries Management Zone.

Three new inshore sites are extensions of existing coastal MPAs, which now encompass a range of coastal caves and reefs. Various species of conservation interest inhabit these sites, such as the star coral *Astroides calycularis*, the long-spined sea urchin *Centrostephanus longispinus* and the Mediterranean slipper lobster *Scyllarides latus*.

Five offshore areas have been protected; two are completely new sites, while the other three are extensions of existing MPAs. All these sites were chosen based on the presence of reef structures and offshore caves in deep waters. The offshore reefs include extensive and diverse communities of cold water corals, such as the black coral *Leiopathes glaberrima*, the zig zag coral *Madrepora oculata* and the stony coral *Lophelia pertusa*, as well as communities formed by gorgonians, in particular *Callogorgia verticillata*. Other species of conservation interest, such as the bamboo coral *Isidella elongata* and the tall sea pen *Funiculina quadrangularis*, were often observed within certain sites, particularly on flat plains at the foot of escarpments.



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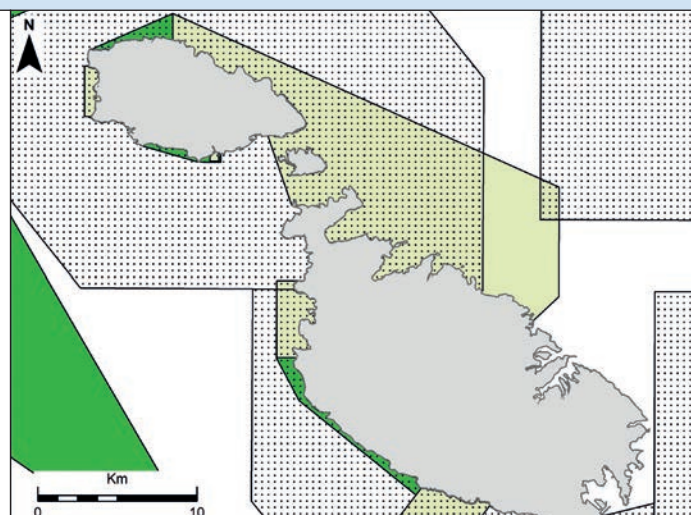
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Legend

-  New and extended sites resulting from the LIFE BaHAR for N2K project
-  Special Areas of Conservation (pre-2018) for the conservation of habitats and species
-  Special Protection Areas for the conservation of wild birds
-  25 nautical mile Fisheries Management Zone



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Żoni Protetti Ġodda Fil-Baħar għal Sikek u Għerien

I-proġett LIFE BaħAR for N2K identifika żoni rappreżentattivi għal sikek u għerien, sew fiż-żoni protetti eżistenti kif ukoll lil hinn minnhom.

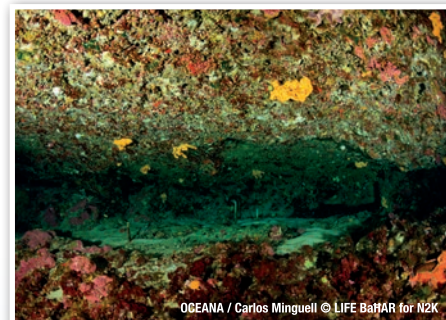
Dan wassal biex **700 km²** oħra ta' żoni fil-baħar qed ikunu proposti biex jiġu inklużi fin-Natura 2000 'network' permezz tal-'Habitats Directive'. Dan ifisser li **4138 km²** tal-ibhra ta' Malta se jkunu mħarsa permezz tad-Direttivi tal-UE dwar in-Natura, liema żoni jkopru aktar minn **35%** miż-Żona ta' Ġestjoni tas-Sajd.

Tliet siti ġodda qrib il-kosta huma estensjoni taż-żoni protetti vicin il-kosta, u li issa jinkludu numru ta' għerien u sikek. Diversi speċi ta' interess għall-konservazzjoni jgħixu f'dawn is-siti, bħall-qroll tad-dell *Astroides calycularis*, ir-rizza tax-xewk twal *Centrostephanus longispinus* u ċ-ċkala ħamra *Scyllarides latus*.

Hames żoni 'l barra mill-kosta ġew protetti; tnejn huma siti kompletament ġodda, filwaqt li t-tlieta l-oħra huma estensjoni ta' żoni protetti eżistenti. Dawn is-siti kollha ġew magħżula abbażi tal-preżenza ta' sikek u għerien f'baħar miftuħ u fond. Dawn is-sikek jinkludu komunitajiet estensivi u diversi ta' qroll tal-ilma kiesaħ bħall-qroll iswed *Leiopathes glaberrima*, iż-'zig zag coral' *Madrepora oculata* u l-qroll abjad *Lophelia pertusa*, kif ukoll komunitajiet magħmulin minn 'gorgonians', b'mod partikolari *Callogorgia verticillata*. Speċi oħra ta' interess għall-konservazzjoni, bħall-'bamboo coral' *Isidella elongata* u t-'tall sea pen' *Funiculina quadrangularis* kienu osservati ta' spiss f'ċerti siti, partikolarment fuq pjanuri maġenb sisien taħt il-baħar.



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Legend

- Siti ġodda u estensjonijiet li jirriżultaw mill-proġett LIFE BaħAR for N2K
- Żoni Speċjali ta' Konservazzjoni (qabel l-2018) għall-konservazzjoni ta' ambjenti naturali u speċi
- Żoni ta' Ħarsien Speċjali għall-konservazzjoni tal-għasafar selvaġġi
- 25 mil nawtiku Zona ta' Ġestjoni tas-Sajd

