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The area is virtually pristine because there is very limited fresh water for human settlement. Fishers use the island and WWF is working closely with local government and fishers' groups to protect this national treasure. Over the past 3 years, a co-management process, whereby government and communities share management responsibilities, has been initiated. Baseline data have been collected, a zoning plan has been drafted and a broad-reaching management plan is being developed.

Sal Island is Cape Verde's number one tourism destination. Unfortunately, along with tourism, has come enormous pressure on limited coastal resources. WWF has established a strong relationship with both governmental and non-governmental partners to promote eco-tourism and MPA establishment. A broad-based consultative process on placement and operations of MPAs has been established, baseline data on biodiversity and the socio-economic status of local communities have been collected and the private sector is being mobilized to build the foundations for environmentally appropriate tourism.

Mauritania

Mauritania's Banc d'Arguin National Park (BANP) is one of Africa's largest and oldest MPAs. It covers a vast area (1.2 million km²) where the Sahara meets the sea. It is home to the largest reproductive colony of endangered monk seals, is a key nesting site for marine turtles, and fulfils a fundamental role in fisheries replenishment for the whole subregion.

WWF supports the park's conservation, surveillance, and community outreach teams in the field. We are also members of the BANP Scientific Council which is tasked with helping the park managers assess the merits of proposed scientific research.

The Gambia

The Gambia is in the process of establishing MPAs as part of a broader integrated coastal management program funded through the World Bank with WAMER providing technical support. Key activities include establishing ecological and social monitoring systems, community organization, training, and public awareness.

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prospects

Future activities of the programme include:

- Developing and implementing participatory management plans for targeted MPAs,
- Monitoring the impact of MPAs on biodiversity and local communities,
- Identifying and implementing sustainable funding mechanisms for MPAs,
- Strengthening the capacity of the relevant actors and contributing to setting up coherent institutional frameworks,
- Setting up mechanisms to monitor management effectiveness of MPAs,
- Supporting governments in the implementation of the CBD work programme,
- Starting a «Protected Areas for a Living Planet» programme in the WAMER ecoregion.



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partners

Brown University
Ecological Monitoring Centre
Local governments
Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
CRODT
National Parks Department
Marine Fisheries Department
FENAGIE
FIBA
GIRMaC
Ministry in charge of Environment and Fisheries
PNUD
PRCM
WWF network
(WWF-Netherlands, WWF-Germany, WWF-Italy)
Sustainability Challenge Foundation
IUCN
Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar
Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis
Wetlands International



WAMER
Western African Marine
Eco-region programme

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for a living planet®

MPAs [Marine Protected Areas]
Programme
Western African Marine Eco-region programme

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background

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are indispensable tools for the preservation of habitats critical for fisheries species and other marine life. They should not be viewed as isolated bits and pieces of nature but as tools for the sustainable management of oceans and coasts for the benefit of local people, national economies, and the wider international community. The importance of MPAs in coastal West Africa is all the more compelling since peoples' lives, food, jobs and traditions hang in the balance.

The need to protect the region's diverse and productive ecosystems has never been greater. According to scientists and fishermen, fisheries stocks have plummeted in recent years. Particularly high commercial value species in the Western Africa Marine Ecoregion (from Mauritania to Guinea including Cape Verde) are currently on one-fifth what they were in 1950. MPAs help:

Les aires marines protégées ne doivent pas être comprises comme des morceaux de nature sous cloche, mais plutôt comme des outils au service d'une gestion durable des océans et des espaces littoraux au bénéfice des populations locales. Elles permettent de

- › Preserve sensitive environments and threatened species;
- › Increase the productivity of fisheries by protecting breeding and nursery areas for fish;
- › Improve the living conditions of coastal communities;
- › Promote, environmentally-friendly income generating activities like ecotourism.

WWF's West Africa Marine Programme (WAMER) has been working with scientists, governments and coastal communities to establish and manage MPAs since it was established in 2000 and is now actively engaged in nearly a dozen key sites in Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde, and The Gambia. Our work is an integral part of a broader marine conservation initiative, the PRCM, which brings together WWF, IUCN, Wetland International, and FIBA (a French foundation), and over 50 research, governmental and non-governmental organizations from seven west African coastal states.

objective

To establish a resilient and sustainable network of marine protected areas to safeguard the biodiversity of the WAMER ecoregion The MPA programme seeks to:

1. Promote the establishment of scientifically-based, socially acceptable networks of marine protected areas at both national and regional levels,
2. Promote participatory management to ensure that MPAs benefit local communities,
3. Identify and implement sustainable funding mechanisms for MPAs,
4. Catalyse enabling policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for effective MPA management,
5. Promote the development of monitoring and evaluation standards and tools.



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activities/achievements

Active public participation is essential to successful MPAs. WWF works closely with local, national and regional authorities to ensure that MPAs are ecologically viable and supported by strong local management committees. WAMER, and our PRCM partners, organize training courses in MPA management, organize exchange visits for community representatives and MPA managers, and promote the integration of MPAs into the broader social fabric. Key highlights of the programme include:

Senegal MPAs

The Saint-Louis MPA

Located near the northern border with Mauritania and covering nearly 500 km², the Saint-Louis MPA plays a vital role in fisheries management and tourism. Following a series of community meetings, the borders of the MPA have been agreed and a local management committee established. A communications plan is being implemented to raise awareness and promote the involvement of local fishes and their families. The programme has also organized exchange visits to other MPAs so fishers can exchange experiences with other fishers and training courses in MPA management.

The Cayar MPA

Located about 60 kms north of Dakar, the Cayar MPA (170 km²) includes a remarkable submarine canyon which makes the area one of the most biologically diverse in Senegal. The MPA is part of a broader integrated coastal

management programme which includes improving fishing techniques, supporting women fish processors, rubbish collection, a micro-credit facility, and a community radio station. A local management body has been established and baseline biological and sociological data have been collected.

The Joal-Fadiouth MPA

The Joal-Fadiouth MPA (174 km²) includes the touristically important coasts of Fadiouth, a town built on an island of shells. The resident communities have delineated the MPA, established a zoning plan and are in the process of finishing the management plan. Marine turtle based tourism has enormous potential for the area so the WAMER MPA, Species, and Communications specialists have been working together with local authorities to successfully fight the illegal capture of these ancient but threatened species. Baseline socio-economic and biodiversity data have been collected to allow us to quantify the impacts of the MPA on fishers, their families, and nature.

The Abéné MPA

The Abéné MPA is a work in progress. It covers some 120km² of coastal waters of the northern Casamance region, south of The Gambia. An annual action plan is being implemented and a participative management body established.

Cape Verde MPAs

Cape Verdean waters harbor rare coral communities which recognized around the world for their high degree of species endemism. The islands are also the most important nesting site for threatened loggerhead sea turtles and one of the few places on earth where humpback whale come to nurse their young. Since WWF and PRCM began working in the archipelago, MPA establishment has become a national priority- both because of the islands unique flora and fauna but also because of the importance of tourism to national development plans. Two of the most important developing MPAs are Santa Lucia Island including the islets of Branco and Raso.>



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