LANDSCAPE PARK STRUNJAN Marine Protected Area





Krajinski park Strunjan Parco naturale Strugnano Strunjan Landscape Park



LANDSCAPE PARK STRUNJAN

spreads over 428.6 ha. encompassing the larger part of the Strunjan Peninsula, a 200 m long sea belt and the inner part of the Strunian Bay. It comprises the longest section of natural coastline in the Gulf of Trieste and a geologically active flysch cliff rising above it. The Park was established in 1990 to preserve valuable natural features as well as landscape and biological diversity. It is part of the Natura 2000 European environmental network, and in 2019 it made the SPAMI* list as well.

*SPAMI = Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance

www.parkstrunjan.si





WHAT IS A MARINE PROTECTED AREA (MPA)

This is a geographically distinct zone of marine environment that is legally recognised and managed and designated for long-term conservation of nature. To manage an MPA, it is necessary to designate a manager and adopt a management plan defining the preservation objectives and measures, as well as outlining an implementation programme. Preservation objectives do not preclude other goals, particularly not the sustainable development of socioeconomic activities, as long as these do not hinder the achievement of nature protection goals.

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MPA NETWORKS

Strong human networks for effective Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Managed effectively and provided with adequate expertise and human and financial resources, MPAs* can be extremely successful tools for preserving marine biodiversity.

The MPA NETWORKS project therefore aims to strengthen MPA managers' networks in the Mediterranean at all levels so that empowered MPAs can deliver results that will benefit nature and sustain people's livelihoods.

The MPA NETWORKS project seeks sustainable solutions to the challenges of MPA management, specifically the management of small-scale fisheries in MPAs, conservation of mobile species, and development of viable financing mechanisms.

*MPA = Marine Protected Area

This project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

mpa-networks.interreg-med.eu

ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT



- MPA TWINNINGS
- **2 PILOT MPA ACTIVITIES**
- **3 WORKING GROUPS**
- **4** OPERATIONAL TRAININGS
- **MPA MANAGERS' TOOLS**
- **6** SUPPORT AND CONNECT NETWORKS
- **②** EXPERIENCE-SHARING WORKSHOP
- **8 MEDITERRANEAN MPA FORUM**
- **9 POLICY SUPPORT**

TRANSFER OF BEST PRACTICES INTO NEW PROJECTS IN SEVERAL AREAS:

(⊙) Management effectiveness
(○) Mobile species conservation
(○) Sustainable financing
(○) Small Scale Fisheries management

THE NETWORK OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

1,087 MPAs 209,303 km² International goal 30% of the Mediterranean as MPAs by 2030 (in the EU, also 10% of MPAs strictly protected) MPAs 8.33% of the Mediterranean



THE NETWORK OF MARINE AND LITTORAL PROTECTED AREAS IN SLOVENIA

Efficiently managed MPAs represent one of the most powerful tools for preserving marine ecosystems. The current system of protecting the marine biosphere with MPAs and other protection measures is inadequate, as it does not address all the key elements of marine biodiversity.











LANDSCAPE PARK STRUNJAN



The flysch coastal landscape of the Strunjan Peninsula is a fusion of scenic natural features and age-old manmade marvels. The Park, adorned in the north by an 80 m high flysch cliff above a natural shore, sweeps across sunny cultivated slopes down to the south as far as the valley of the Roja Stream, a sea lagoon, and the saltpans.

CAPE MADONA NATURAL MONUMENT



The natural monument comprises the sea waters and the seabed around the promontory of Piran, along the old Piran town centre. The most prominent Slovenian cape, an interesting geomorphological feature in itself, is enhanced by a fully preserved natural seabed with rich underwater life. Close by, the sea floor drops the deepest on the Slovenian coast (38 m) at the point nicknamed the "Underwater Triglav."

SEČOVLJE SALINA NATURE PARK



While the northern part of the Park, Lera, is still in use for salt making, the southern part, Fontanigge, is dedicated to nature preservation and the cultural heritage of the old Piran saltpans, preserved and presented by the Museum of Salt Making. The sub-Mediterranean climate, the high salinity of the water in the shallow ponds, and the salt making methods employed co-create specific environmental conditions that promote floral, faunal and habitat diversity.



DEBELI RTIČ LANDSCAPE PARK



The Park is situated at the far end of the Ankaran Peninsula, washed by the waves and buffeted by the winds blowing in off the waters of the Gulf of Trieste. The central parts of the Park are the eponymous small promontory with a flysch cliff, the natural seashore at its foot, and underwater reef flysch deposits.



ŠKOCJANSKI ZATOK NATURE RESERVE

The last witness to the insular past of the town of Koper and the largest Slovenian brackish wetland extends at the site where the Rižana and Badaševica Rivers used to have their mouths on the Adriatic. Its location close to the sea, the Mediterranean climate, and sub-Mediterranean vegetation make it a singularity among Slovenian ecosystems, and the design and extent of the reserve are unique as well.

HOW DO WE PROTECT NATURE IN THE LANDSCAPE PARK STRUNJAN

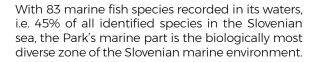




By preserving natural sections of the shore ...

The most characteristic feature of the Park is 80 m high Cliff of Strunjan. Together with its bosky rim and the 200 m sea belt underneath, it is the longest section of natural shore on the entire 130 km shoreline of the Gulf of Trieste.

The flysch cliff and an abrasion terrace





Damselfish (Chromis chromis)

The quality of the Park's seawater is confirmed by the presence of sea meadows, which are considered indicators of purity. The slender seagrass (*Cymodocea nodosa*) overgrows the shallow sandy seabed, forming one of the Park's most important marine environments.



A slender seagrass meadow dotted with noble pen shells (*Pinna nobilis*)



... as well as the sea lagoon and saltpans inhabited by endangered plant and animal species.

The Strunjan saltpans have been producing salt according to traditional methods for over 700 years. The town of Piran, which traded in it, is said to "have grown on salt." The saline wetlands are also home to rare and endangered plants and animals adapted to life in this difficult salty environment.

Levees, canals, and shallow ponds in the saltpans

Stjuža is the only Slovenian sea lagoon, created during the construction of a dam over 400 years ago and long serving as a fish farm. Today, its lush vegetation, the diverse lagoon fish fauna, and abundance of demersal invertebrates make it an important stopover for migrating birds.



Little egret (Egretta garzetta)

With their succulent leaves and stems, the shrubby swampfire, the common glasswort, and the annual seablite stand out among the halophytic vegetation. Halophytes are plants adapted to soils that contain high concentrations of minerals. Most of them are included in the Red List of Endangered Species, as they only grow in a narrow coastal strip.



Shrubby swampfire (Sarcocornia fruticosa)



We preserve the mosaic landscape through promotion of traditional activities.

The cultural landscape of the Landscape Park Strunjan





Small-scale fishery



Manual salt making



Plantations on cultivated terraces supported by drystone walls

We carefully plan and design the Park's infrastructure in order to educate visitors and provide them with intimate and extraordinary visits.

The view of the Bay of St. Cross from the nature trail





Visitor centre at the saltpan house



Nature trail "Strunjan: A Portrait by the Sea"



Guided tours, science days, and workshops

VALUES AND BENEFITS OF EFFICIENTLY MANAGED MPAS

775



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PROTECTION OF FISHERY RESOURCES

Small-scale fishing is conducted with vessels up to 12 m in length and using passive fishing gear. In the Landscape Park Strunjan, the season for fishing with set gill nets and trammel nets lasts four months per year. The largest shares of catch in terms of weight are accounted for by gilt-head bream (*Sparus aurata*), mullet (*Mugil spp.*), European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*), and sole (*Solea solea*).

The strictly protected marine portion of the Park, the so-called "no-take" zone, totally prohibits all extracting activity, while in the remaining marine part fishing is highly regulated by a protection regime. The manager of the Park and commercial fishermen work together in the management of the area towards common goals: restoring fish stocks and preserving a healthy environment for fish in all their life stages.

MOBILE SPECIES PROTECTION

MPAs are vital to the long-term protection of mobile species of marine birds, turtles, and mammals. One of the protected sea bird species that regularly visits the Park is the Mediterranean shag. Its members gather in the Slovenian part of the Gulf of Trieste in greatest numbers during summer and autumn, feeding on small fish in the shallows. These waters also provide abundant food for Sandwich terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*). During the quieter winter months, small flocks of little egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) stop on the shores as well.

While encounters at sea with the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) are rare, meeting bottlenose dolphins is quite common. With a population of around 150, these dolphins are the only marine mammal species with a permanent presence in the Gulf of Trieste. The area seems to be important for them particularly as a feeding habitat.



A Strunjan fisherman's catch for the day



Bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus)



Mediterranean shag (Gulosus aristotelis desmarestii)

CORAL REEF PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION

The Mediterranean stony coral (*Cladocora caespito-sa*) is the only reef-building coral in the Mediterranean Sea. As one of the ecosystem's central biological building blocks, it creates habitats for numerous other organisms. In the Mediterranean, coral reefs are very rare – in the Slovenian sea there are only two of them, one growing in the Park's immediate vicinity, in front of Cape Ronek.

While coral reefs are endangered primarily by anchoring, trawling, increased sedimentation, and pollution, stony corals are also sensitive to climate change. Extremely high sea temperatures that continue well into the autumn cause coral bleaching and even death. To protect the coral reef in the long term it would be necessary to expand the Park's marine boundaries and define a suitable protection regime for the pertinent area.



A healthy and a bleached Mediterranean stony coral

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Project partners:



















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