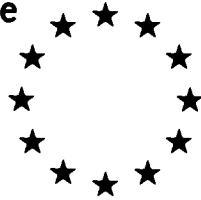


Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



Strasbourg, 5 February 1996

PE-S-ZP(96) 55

Group of Specialists "Protected Areas"
(PE-S-ZP)

Strasbourg, 6-8 March 1996



PORT-CROS NATIONAL PARK
(FRANCE)

Application for a European Diploma

submitted by the French Government

Parc National de Port-Cros
Castel Sainte Claire
Rue Sainte Claire
83418 HYERES

Country: FRANCE

Name of applicant area:

PARC NATIONAL DE PORT-CROS (PORT-CROS NATIONAL PARK)

Body responsible for management:

Name and address

PARC NATIONAL DE PORT-CROS
Castel Sainte Claire
Rue Sainte Claire
83418 HYERES cedex

Public administrative institution

Act No 60-708 of 31.10.61 on the creation of national parks (Code Rural, Sections L.241-1 to L.241-20)

Decree No 61-1195 of 31.10.61 containing public administration regulations for the application of the aforementioned Act (Code Rural R.241-1 to R. 241-71)

Decree No 63-1235 of 14.12.63 on the creation of the Port-Cros National Park (cf Appendix 1)

PORT-CROS NATIONAL PARK

Created 14.12.63

Location Municipality of Hyères (Var)

Area covered Island of Port-Cros - islets of le Rascas and la Gabinière, island of Bagaud - islets (J 391 and J 392)

Surface area

Land area	675 (ha)
Sea area	1 800 ha

Ownership of the land

National Park	216 ha
Defence Ministry/Navy	154 ha

Private owners:
Ms De Cabarrus and Mr Buffet 302.5 ha

Other owners/Municipality 2.5 ha

Listing

Island of Port-Cros	Designated site: Orders of 17.3.30 - Mr Henry's land 25.4.30 village 24.2.54 land around Forts Eminence and Vigie, Pointe de Port-Man
Island of Bagaud	Listed site (order of 13.6.49)

1. Type of area: A Terrestrial and marine national park (675 ha and 1 800 ha respectively)

2. Description of geographical position and/or sketch or outline on a map (scale 1:50 000): (Appendix 2)

Port-Cros is one of the three major Mediterranean islands (the other two being Porquerolles and the île du Levant comprising the Hyères archipelago off the coast of the Department of Var.

Lying some fifteen kilometres off the mainland, Port-Cros is the smallest (675 ha) and most mountainous (196 m) of the three. The land area of the park encompasses the island of Bagaud and two islets (La Gabinière and le Rascas) as well as the main island.

3. Characteristics and scientific, aesthetic, cultural or recreational value justifying conservation:

- The **landscape value** of an island typical of siliceous coastal Provence and the siliceous islands of the Mediterranean, protected from any building in a highly developed and very residential tourist area.

- **Undeniable scientific value:**

The national parks contain a large number of species and habitats considered to be of European interest and included in the appendices to the Bern Convention and the EC's "Birds" and "Habitats" Directives.

Where the "Birds" Directive is concerned, the island of Port-Cros has been designated a special protected area, particularly for the Cory's and Mediterranean shearwater, species of which the main populations in France are found on Port-Cros and Porquerolles (largely owned by the Port-Cros National Park, but not included in this application).

The island of Port-Cros is part of the Hyères archipelago, which is one of the sites to be put forward as Special Areas of Conservation in the future "Natura 2000" network.

The main wildlife and habitats found on Port-Cros and referred to in the EC texts and the Bern Convention are:

**Natural habitats to which Annex I
of the "Habitats" Directive refers**

No 11.34	Posidonia beds
No 18	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Mediterranean coasts
No 22	Mediterranean temporary ponds

- No 32 *Juniperus phoenicea* arborescent matorral
Tree-spurge formations (*Euphorbia dendroides*)
- No 33 Astragalo-Plantaginetum subulatae phrygana
(with *Anthyllis barba-jovis* and *Thymelaea hirsuta*)
- No 42 Mediterranean pine forests with endemic (Franco-Italian)
Mesogean pines
(Provenço-Ligurian Aleppo pine forests)
- No 45 *Olea* and *Ceratonia* forests (myrto-lentiscetum)
(Meso- and supra-Mediterranean holm-oak forests)
(Catalo-Provençal lowland holm-oak woodland)
- No 45.3 *Quercus ilex* forests
- No. 62 Silicolous sub-types (*Androsacetalia vandellii*)
(Provenço-Iberian siliceous cliffs)
- No 65 Caves

**Names of species to which Annexes II and IV
of the "Habitats" Directive refer**

Mammals

CHIROPTERA

- *Miniopterus schreibersi* (B)
- *Myotis emarginatus* (B)

CARNIVORA

- Phocidae: *Monachus monachus*

Reptiles

TESTUDINATA

- *Testudo hermanni* (B)

SAURIA

- Gekkonidae: *Phyllodactylus europaeus* (B)

AMPHIBIANS

- Anura: *Discoglossus sardus* (B)

MOLLUSCS

- Bivalvia: *Pinna nobilis*
- Echinodermata: *Centrostephanus longispinus*
- Gastropoda: *Patella feruginea*

Names of bird species to which Annex I of the "Birds" Directive (79/409) refers and internationally important migratory birds

- *Phalacrocorax aristalelis*
- *Nycticorax nycticorax*
- *Philomachus pugnax*
- *Tinga glareola*
- *Hydrobates pelagicus*
- *Ardeola zalloïdes*
- *Pernis apivorus*
- *Milvus milvus*
- *Circus aueruginosus*
- *Circus pygargus*
- *Lullula arborea*
- *Sylvia undata*
- *Caprimulgus europaeus*
- *Coracias garrulus*
- *Sterna sandvicensis*
- *Sterna hirundo*
- *Falco peregrinus* (B)
- *Calonectris diomedea* (B)
- *Puffinus puffinus* (B)

Developments concerning fauna

Most of the large groups of terrestrial fauna on the island of Port-Cros have been recorded, but no very accurate population statistics are currently available. The only group about which little was known was the bats, which have been carefully studied since 1989. By 1992 seven species had been recorded, including the European free-tailed bat on Porquerolles and the grey long-eared bat on Port-Cros. The latter is currently the subject of a monitoring and ringing programme.

The 25 species of nesting birds recorded on Port-Cros are regularly observed on the island, as are another 47 which either come to us for the winter or stop over on the island when they migrate.

Noteworthy is the presence of a pair of peregrine falcons, one of the five pairs in the French Mediterranean area. One of the reasons why the pair has remained is certainly the fact that the park has not encouraged public access to the southern cliffs, near the nesting site, and that angling from the edge of these cliffs has been prohibited.

The Mediterranean shearwater (a species which appears in the Annex to EC Directive 79/409), a colony of which was discovered on Port-Cros in 1982, is strictly a Mediterranean species. The Port-Cros colony is the only one in the world being monitored. The studies carried out enable changes in this breeding population to be detected, with the number of pairs on Port-Cros remaining relatively stable from one year to another at around 100. All their burrows have been mapped and numbered, and any of the colony's birds captured have been ringed.

As early as 1985, transects were created in the sea to make ongoing recording possible. Using a fish counting method devised at Port-Cros and subsequently extended to the whole Mediterranean, fish are identified and counted year by year in each transect. The list of Port-Cros fish published in 1988 recorded 179 species (18 endemic to the Mediterranean), to which a new species of Gobiidae had to be added in 1992, *Gobius vittatus*, first observed at a depth of 18 metres off Bagaud.

Fish numbers off Port-Cros seem stable. The number of brown meagre, which had been the first victims of underwater fishing along the entire coastline, has now been found to be increasing. The findings of the regular fish monitoring conducted around the islet of la Gabinière show the positive results of the protective measures taken by the park: what the writers refer to as the "reserve effect". This effect has led to the presence of a fairly significant population of large specimens and to regular visits by species not very common elsewhere (eg brown meagre), as well as to high density and biomass.

A 1990 inventory revealed the presence of single specimens or very small groups scattered throughout the Port-Cros and Bagaud areas, as well as five families, each of several specimens of various sizes. Some forty brown meagre in all were seen in 1990. In November 1994, J G Harmelin's team found that just the five groups recorded already totalled 105 specimens. A very large increase had occurred. The brown meagre is one of the species which shows the effectiveness of conservation action, and changes in numbers in protected areas should be regularly monitored.

The same applies to another noble fish, the dusky sea perch. Since 1991 very large numbers of young have been observed in very shallow water near Port-Cros. Research is under way to try to find the reason for this, for it was previously believed that dusky sea perch reproduced only south of a line from Rome to Barcelona.

The inventory of the flora of the Iles d'Hyères drawn up in 1989 recorded 504 plant species on the island of Port-Cros.

Since publication, three species of *Romulea* have been discovered, one, *Romulea florentii*, on Port-Cros, and another two on Porquerolles. These are rare plants on the French mainland, to which some of them are endemic. In the short term, their habitat faces a threat from the spread of the coastal scrubland species and from being trampled by the public.

The major plant formations had been mapped in 1967, so it is now possible, 27 years later, to appraise changes in the island's vegetation. The environment has very definitely become more enclosed, with the holm-oak forest which fills all the valley bottoms moving up the slopes, eliminating the Aleppo pine as it goes (dead pines are increasingly common). The heather and strawberry tree scrubland remains stable on the upper slopes and the ridges and periclinal lines (Eminence, Marma, Port-Man, le Tuf). Areas of cistus have virtually disappeared, overrun by scrubland, and there is less grassland with annuals (heliport, fallow land at Manoir).

The outstanding species mapped in 1967 are also less dense now, examples being tree euphorbia, stifled by *oleolentiscus* or scrubland, cat thyme and flax-leaved broom, of which only a few scattered specimens remain.

The plant species conservation policy requires that they remain in the name habitats. Species are present in particular places because of their biological features and

ecological needs and the quality of their environment. The park and the botanical "conservatoire" have therefore started a chorological, biological and autecological study of four French Mediterranean plant species singled out from those present on the Hyères islands:

- . *Delphinium requieni* (endemic),
- . *Leucosium aestivum* (one of the few locations in France),
- . *Teline linifolia* (the largest French population),
- . *Teucrium marum*.

Detailed studies of the genetic variability of these particular species have been carried out with the help of Montpellier's university and INRA. Some of the findings have been used to "fine tune" the management arrangements being tried out.

- **Cultural value** stemming from a highly significant **architectural and archaeological heritage**. Port-Cros actually has no fewer than five forts, all restored, the oldest dating from the reign of François I and the most recent from the time of Napoleon III, as well as a number of artillery batteries and several underwater wrecks which have been or are being explored by scientific teams from the underwater archaeological research directorate (Direction des Recherches Archéologiques Sous-Marines).

4. European interest justifying the application

Port-Cros is Europe's first Mediterranean underwater and island national park. It is a living record of the past of the Mediterranean coastline.

The sea surrounding the island contains extensive Posidonia beds, which represent the main community, ie the largest and most diverse biologically, of the sublittoral stage in the Mediterranean. It is home to 25 % of the Mediterranean's fauna and flora. It also contains all the traditional biocenoses of the Mediterranean benthos, including the "coralligenous", the second most important source of biodiversity in the Mediterranean Sea.

On land, the Hyères islands, with all the other islands of the Mediterranean, form one of the two centres of endemism (the other being the mountain environment) of this part of the planet. Their separation from the mainland has enabled them to retain a large number of species, plant and animal (small vertebrates and invertebrate) protected there from climatic fluctuation and from the plant invasions associated with the Pleistocene epoch.

5. Land ownership (Cf Appendix 3)

Although the park owns only one third of the island, the decree on the creation of the park in practice implies ownership control of the land and control over the owners' activities.

6. Arrangements for protection (Cf Appendix 4)

Measures taken to date or under consideration (attach the relevant legislation and regulations)

- * Decree No 63-1235, of 14.12.63, on the creation of the Port-Cros National Park,
- * Prefect's Order of 23.6.81 granting the national park the right to operate Port-Cros harbour,
- * Orders of the park manager regulating the movements of motor vehicles and bicycles,
- * Orders of the Préfet Maritime (port admiral) imposing regulations on the sea within the park,
- * Prefect's Order prohibiting entry to the forests in the event that the ALARME plan (ALARME = Warning of Exceptional Meteorological Danger) is implemented,
- * Mayoral orders regulating access to Port-Cros harbour,
- * Diving Partnership Charter concluded with diving clubs (pro memoria).

7. Facilities and management plan

In the process of revision, this is to be submitted for discussion at the next meeting of the management board, in June 1996. The revision process is described in Appendix 5.

8. Reference to publications (Cf Appendix 7)

9. Photographs (Cf Appendix 8)

APPENDICES

List of documents available from the Secretariat

Appendix 1 - Administrative organisation

Appendix 2 - Maps

Appendix 3 - Land ownership

Appendix 4 - Regulations

Appendix 5 - Management plan (projected)

Appendix 6 - Educational and other activities

Appendix 7 - Publications

Appendix 8 - Photographs