



Sea finger, *Acyonium acaule*. © Joaquim Garrabou

Key Facts:

- 136 species of Anthozoans native to the Mediterranean Sea have been assessed for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- Nearly 13 % are threatened and more than half of the species lack enough information to estimate their risk of extinction.
- 23 anthozoans are unique to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Bycatch and physical damage from fishing techniques and fishing gears are the main causes of decline.
- To date, only 9 threatened species of anthozoans are currently listed under different international instruments in the Mediterranean region.
- The bamboo coral, *Isidella elongata*, is almost exclusively restricted to the Mediterranean Sea and is listed as Critically Endangered. It needs urgent conservation action together with legal protection at local, regional and international levels.
- More efficient legal protection and improved species knowledge are urgently needed for all.

Main Threats

Mediterranean anthozoans are suffering the effects of accidental damage by various fishing techniques and gears. Bottom trawling and dragging nets across the sea floor have the greatest impact. Commercial collection of some anthozoans also exerts considerable pressure.

The increase in seawater temperature due to climate change is having a particularly strong impact on gorgonian and some coral populations and mass mortality events have occurred in recent years.

Other important threats such as pollution, increased sedimentation, seawater eutrophication and human disturbance are also affecting the populations, particularly

those in coastal areas. Deep sea species are threatened by drilling and mining activities, anchorage or positioning of offshore structures on the seabed. Invasive species are also an important threat.

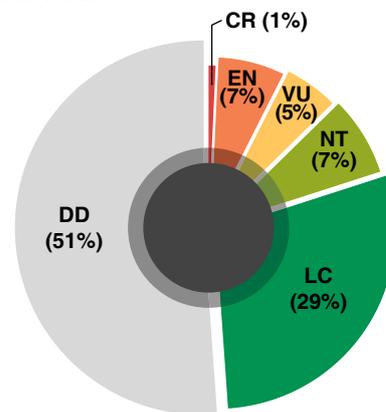
Conservation status assessment

Anthozoan species including deep sea and shallow corals, gorgonians, zoanths, sea anemones and sea pens were assessed for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species at the Mediterranean regional level. Of the 136 native species to the Mediterranean Sea, 17 are considered to be threatened within the region. Of this, 1 species is listed as Critically Endangered, 9 species are Endangered and 7 fall within the Vulnerable category.

Summary of the conservation status of the Mediterranean Anthozoans assessed at the regional level:

IUCN Red List Categories	No. native species	No. endemic species
Extinct (EX)	0	0
Extinct in the Wild (EW)	0	0
Regionally Extinct (RE)	0	0
Critically Endangered (CR)	1	0
Endangered (EN)	9	2
Vulnerable (VU)	7	0
Near Threatened (NT)	10	0
Least Concern (LC)	40	3
Data Deficient (DD)	69	18
Not Applicable (NA)	2	0
Total number of species assessed	136*	23

*Excluding Not Applicable species



Conservation Actions

Only 5 of the 17 species threatened in the Mediterranean Sea are granted protection under the Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention and the fishing of the endangered red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) is regulated in few countries. Increased legal protection and conservation measures are urgently needed and Mediterranean countries should update their endangered species annexes in order to adapt their legislation to the changing vulnerability of anthozoans.

The enforcement and expansion of fishing restrictions on bottom

trawling and towed dredges is urgently required to reduce the bycatch of anthozoans. Moreover, existing sites of large and well-developed populations of threatened anthozoans need to be identified and designated as Marine Protected Areas or Fisheries Restricted Areas and combined with the development of specific regulations to protect them.

Further research and monitoring programmes should be target Data Deficient and threatened species in order to assess their population trends, distribution and their conservation status.

Species	IUCN Category	International Legal Instrument	Regional Legal Instrument			European Legal Instrument	
		CITES (a)	Protocol SPA/BD (b)	Bern Convention (c)	GFCM Recommendations(d)	EU Habitats Directive (e)	EU Regulation Trade wild fauna and flora species (f)
<i>Isidella elongata</i>	CR						
<i>Desmophyllum dianthus</i>	EN	II					B
<i>Lophelia pertusa</i>	EN	II	II				B
<i>Corallium rubrum</i>	EN		III	III	REC.CM-GFCM/36/2012/1 On further measures for the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area	V	
<i>Dendrophyllia cornigera</i>	EN	II					B
<i>Cladocora caespitosa</i>	EN	II	II				B
<i>Leiopathes glaberrima</i>	EN	II	II	III			B
<i>Madrepora oculata</i>	EN	II	II				B
<i>Paranemonia vouliagmeniensis</i>	EN						
<i>Crassophyllum thessalonicae</i>	EN						
<i>Dendrophyllia ramea</i>	VU	II					B
<i>Ellisella paraplexauroides</i>	VU		II				
<i>Funiculina quadrangularis</i>	VU						
<i>Pennatula rubra</i>	VU						
<i>Pennatula phosphorea</i>	VU						
<i>Pteroeides spinosum</i>	VU						
<i>Paramuricea clavata</i>	VU						

(a) Ratified by all Mediterranean States. Appendix II lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled.

(b) Ratified by all Mediterranean States (except Greece, Israel, Bosnia and Libya). Annex II lists species that are endangered or threatened and Annex II lists species whose exploitation is regulated.

(c) Ratified by all Mediterranean States of the study, except Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon. Appendix II – Strictly protected fauna species. Appendix III – Protected fauna species.

(d) Must be implemented in all Contracting Parties of the GFCM in the Mediterranean.

(e) Council Directive 92/43/EEC. Must be implemented in all European States of the Mediterranean. Annex I lists different marine European habitats, including one Habitat type (1170 Reefs) which might concern several species of anthozoans.

Annex V species whose taking from the wild can be restricted by European law.

(f) Must be implemented in all European States of the Mediterranean according to Regulation (EC) No 338/97, Annex B.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

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