

Annex III (posidonia study)

Summary

The state of the posidonia meadows around the island is generally good but needs some interventions both to avoid future downgrades and to improve the quality and quantity of fish in the areas which are important for the populations of the seabirds. The existence of scattered posidonia meadows in many of the selected places studied is a good sign for the future of the meadows on the Andros coastline, as their proper management and specific actions to preserve their status could be expanded by the creation of dense meadows that are an excellent habitat for many species of invertebrates and fish that find shelter (permanent or periodic) among the dense foliage. Dense and extensive meadows stabilize the sediments in the coastal zone and over time create a barrier that protects the coasts from erosion. The same role is played by the dead leaves washed out at the beaches, which, as they mix with the sand, stabilize it.

The existence of active sewage pipelines which pollute protected areas, poses future risks to the health of the meadows and the overall deterioration of the marine environment. Sewage plants must be constructed as soon as possible, because delays can lead to total destruction of the meadows in the specific areas.

Illegal fishing by dynamic tools in the areas where meadows exist, creates serious problems mainly in pelagic fish species, with a potential direct impact on the future populations of seabirds breeding there. In addition, such kind of fishing can partially or even completely destroy the meadows, which would lead to local loss of habitats and species, with serious consequences. Reduction of fish abundance for local professional fishermen and erosion of coastline are two direct impacts relating to the loss of meadows, because the meadows function as a "nursery" for small fish of all kinds, and on the other hand act as a breakwater protecting the sandy beaches and coastline from erosion.

Possible problems on the existence and quality of the sandy beaches of the island would have an impact on tourism, as the island does not have that many.

The presence of foreign fish species, and more specifically of species that have been classified as very dangerous by the European Commission (<http://www.europe-aliens.org>), is something that must alert us and strengthen the actions for maintaining the health of meadows in excellent condition.