

**ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION
OF MEDITERRANEAN SEABIRDS
AND OTHER BIRD SPECIES UNDER THE BARCELONA CONVENTION**

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Part 5 : Surveys and Conservation at national and regional level

State of knowledge of the populations of vulnerable raptor and seabird species in the Mediterranean: threats identified and action proposals

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Summary: In the framework of the « Albatros project » part of the “Mediterranean Small Islands Initiative” coordinated by the French Coastal Agency, in collaboration with more than 30 people from 10 different countries, a state of knowledge was elaborated in 2011 and 2012 concerning 7 target species of Mediterranean raptors and seabirds. In order to get a general picture of the conservation status of these species, a monograph has been prepared for each species, including information about biology, ecology, threats in the small islands and proposals of conservation actions specific for Mediterranean small islands. As a first step, censuses and monitoring data were collected from managers, researchers and institutions. The monographs were written by a number of experts in management and ornithology. A review of the monographs was carried out in spring 2012. All these activities are aimed at pooling and sharing of data among all the actors of bird conservation in the Mediterranean.

Key Words: Mediterranean Shag, *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*, Mediterranean Storm-petrel, *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis*, Yelkouan Shearwater, *Puffinus yelkouan*, distribution, status, threats, Mediterranean

In the framework of the project *Albatross* coordinated by the French Coastal Agency (*Conservatoire du littoral*) and with the technical support of the CEN PACA (regional nature conservancy for south-eastern France), a state of knowledge was completed concerning seven vulnerable bird species inhabiting small islands. A monograph has been elaborated for each of them, gathering information from research programs, publications and the managers of protected areas.

The species concerned are the Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (by Flavio Monti, University of Ferrara);

the Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* (by Hamid Rguibi - University of Chouaib Doukkali of Al Jedida, and Abdeljebbar Qninba - University Mohamed V of Rabat); the Lesser-crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis emigrata* (by Abdulmaula Hamza - Hull University, and Hichem Azafaf - Association des Amis des Oiseaux); the Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan* (by Karen Bourgeois - A dos d'île); and the Mediterranean Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*, the Mediterranean Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis* and the Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea diomedea* (*) (by the members of the CEN PACA - managers of the Islands of Marseille, Nature Reserve)

The elaboration of these documents was a one year process running from 2011 to 2012, following a decision taken in 2009. In October, the "PIM initiative" (initiative for the small Mediterranean islands, acronym PIM for *Petites Îles de Méditerranée*) organized the first "Albatross" workshop in Marseille. During this meeting it has been decided to focus the efforts on 10 target species identified by one or more of the following criteria: nesting on small islands, vulnerable, gaps in knowledge, necessity of setting up long-term monitoring, and availability of technical and logistic means for such monitoring.

Monitoring data concerning these species are spread between different Mediterranean actors, including managers (from administrations or from NGOs) and scientists involved in research programs. Access to these data is not always an easy task, at least not immediately available, particularly for entities which are not part of research programs. Therefore, this work responded to the needs for the centralization and update of the information on the geographical distribution of breeding populations for each species, as well as the identification of specific threats having an impact of these populations at Mediterranean islands. Concerning this last concern, the

Contents of each Monograph	Aims
Species' Description	Get a general presentation of the species
Ecology & Behaviour	Compile the most recent knowledge concerning the biology and behaviour (points useful for good monitoring)
Geographical distribution of breeding populations	Get a general view of the situation in the Mediterranean
	Identifying main colonies
	Identify gaps in knowledge
Threats identified on small islands	Identify the main challenges
Action proposals	Get a working base for the implementation of conservation actions on small islands

Table 1. Project Albatross for Mediterranean small islands: contents of species monographs.

(*) **Editorial Note:** It should be noted that recently the Taxonomic Sub-Committee of the British Ornithologists Union has recommended that the Cory's Shearwater complex is best treated as three full species, which should be listed in the following sequence: Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis* (monotypic); Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* (monotypic); and Cape Verde Shearwater *Calonectris edwardsii* (monotypic) (Taxonomic recommendations for British Birds: eight report. *Ibis* (2012) 154: 874-883).

monographs include suggestions for action that should be implemented at local, national and regional (Mediterranean) level to improve the state of conservation of these species. Table 1 presents the different components of the monographs with the corresponding aims responding to the needs mentioned above. Authors of monographs were selected on their level of knowledge and experience in study or management of these species. The first phase of elaboration of the documents was carried out by the author themselves. The monographs were written simultaneously after gathering the data necessary during summer 2011, and a draft version was presented to the Medmaravis symposium in October 2011.

Following this first step, the documents were reviewed during the rest of the year. A total of 15 reviewers were mobilized (researchers, members of NGOs and various institutions) in order to cross-check the information and data contained in the seven monographs. These monographs are the product of a joint effort by 32 persons (authors, data providers and reviewers) from 10 different Mediterranean countries. The documents have now been published on the PIM Initiative website: <http://www.initiative-pim.org/>. All the information found in these seven monographs cannot be fully outlined in the present proceedings, but it has been decided to present maps with an updated geographical distribution of the breeding population for the seven species (Figures 1-7). The monographs will be used as a working base for the implementation of future conservation actions validated and prioritized by the working group currently in elaboration. This process of data centralization should be considered also as a platform for updating regularly the knowledge on these species as well as to assist in pooling and sharing information on their status and conservation among stakeholders involved in bird research and conservation. By supporting actions of monitoring (e.g Zembra Island in Tunisia, Essaouira archipelago in Morocco), the PIM initiative is involved in producing data for the improvement of knowledge concerning these species.

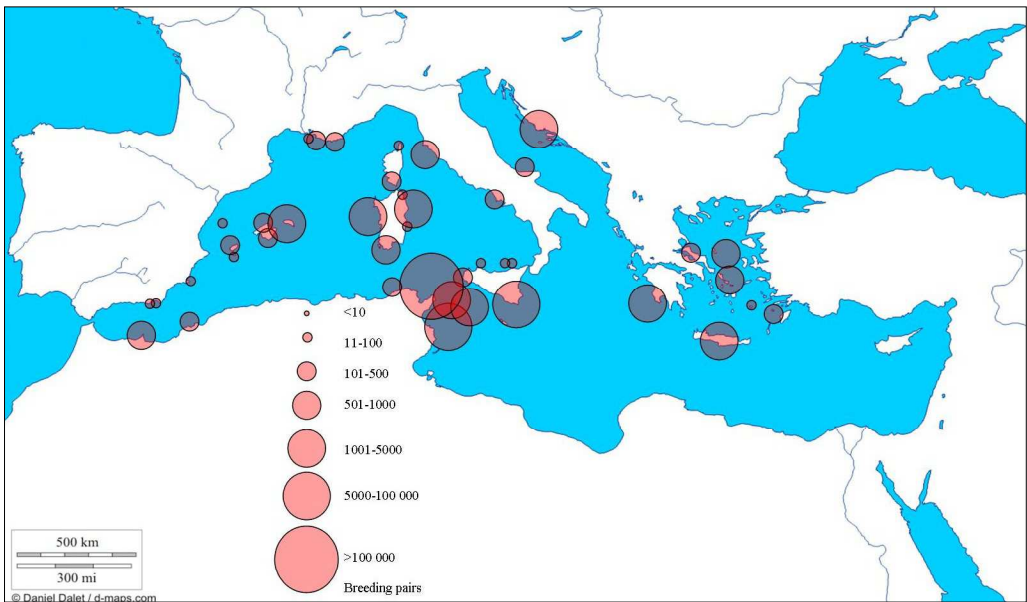


Figure 1. Breeding population of Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*.

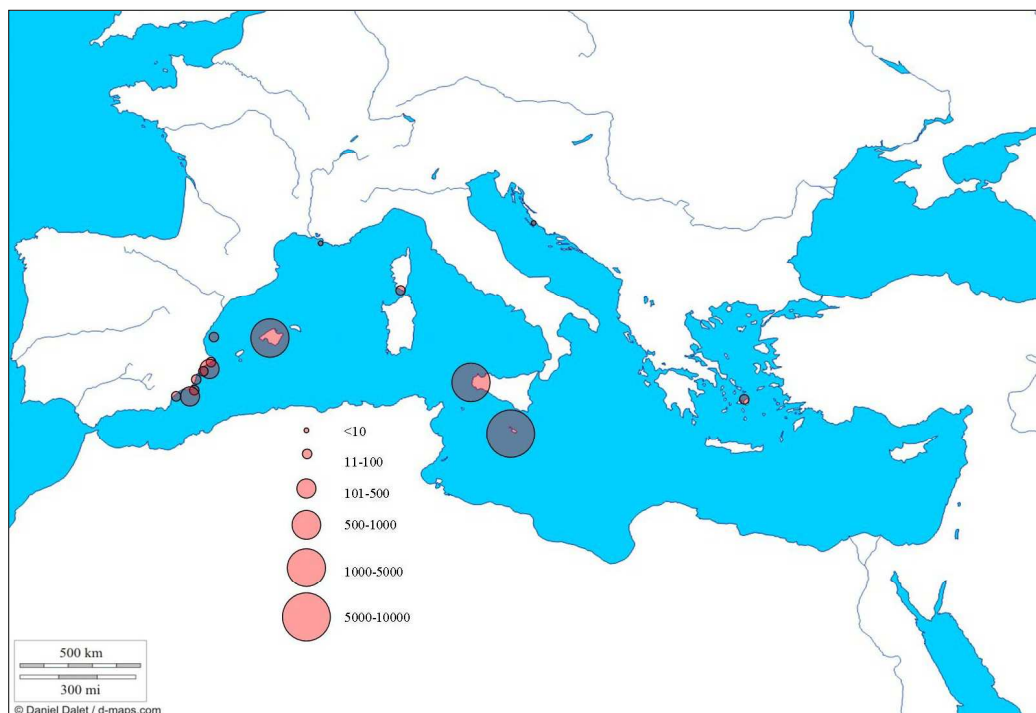


Figure 2. Breeding population of Mediterranean Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis*.

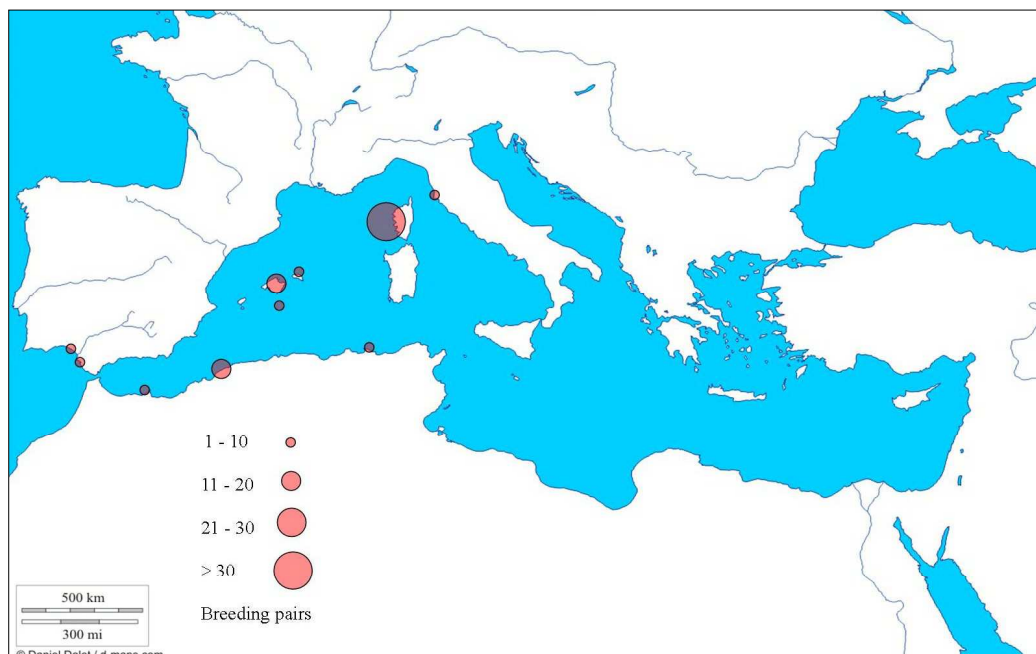


Figure 3. Breeding population of Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* in the Mediterranean.

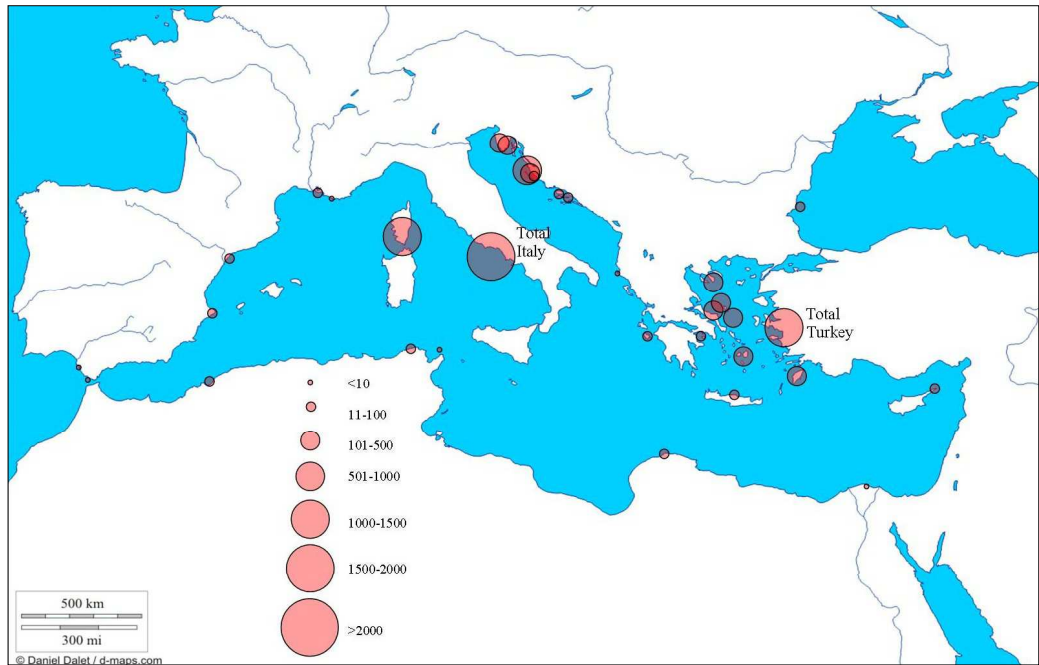


Figure 4. Breeding population of Mediterranean Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*.

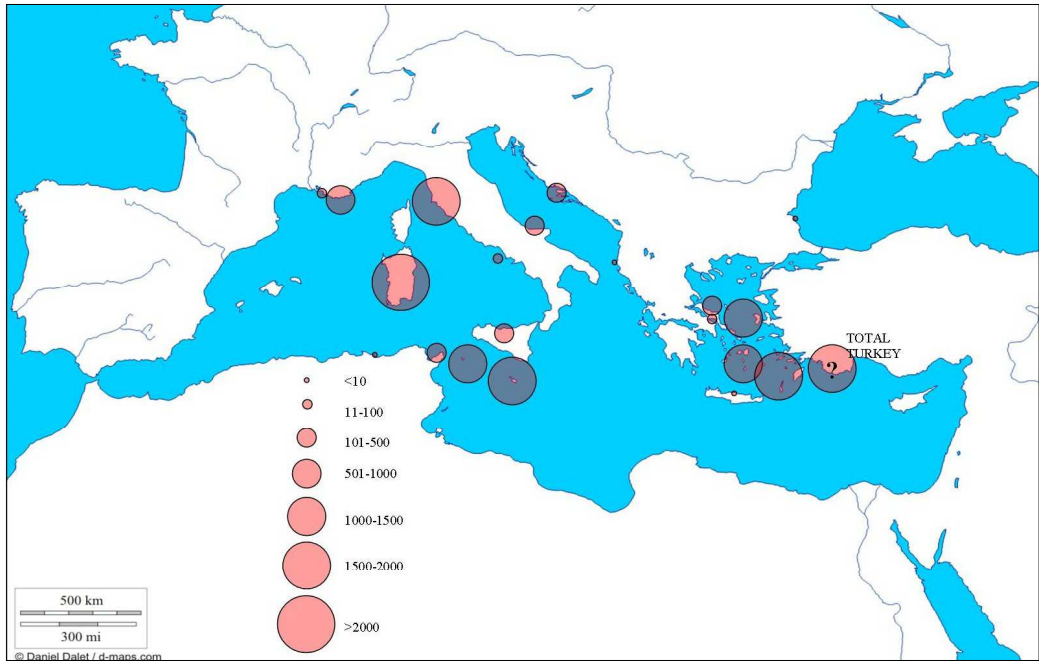


Figure 5. Breeding population of Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*.

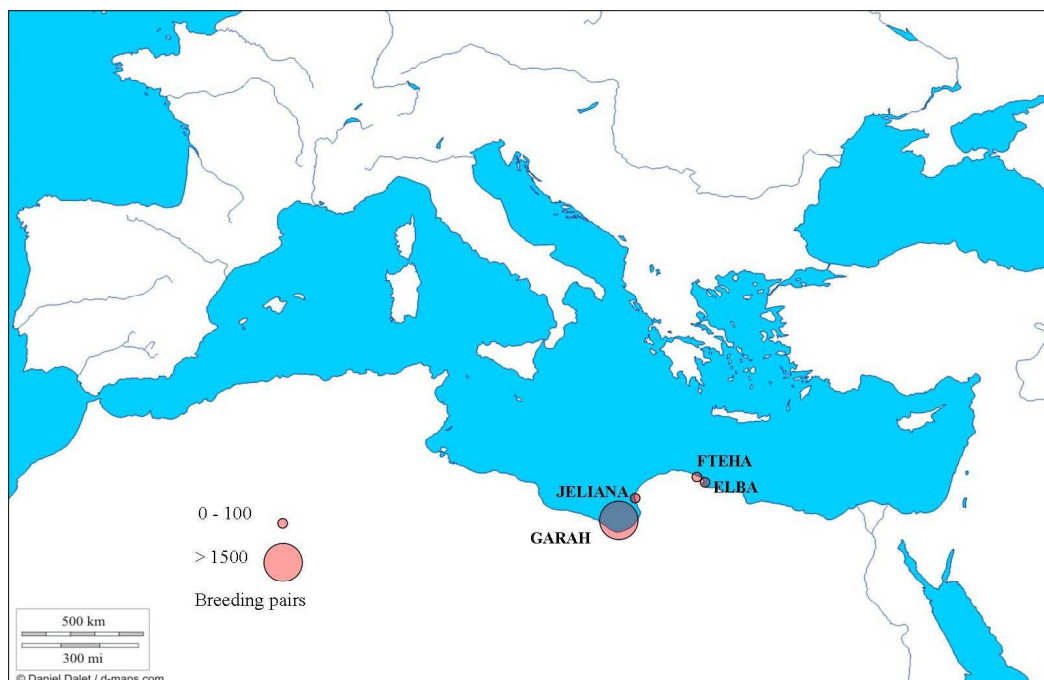


Figure 6. Breeding population of Mediterranean Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis emigrata*.

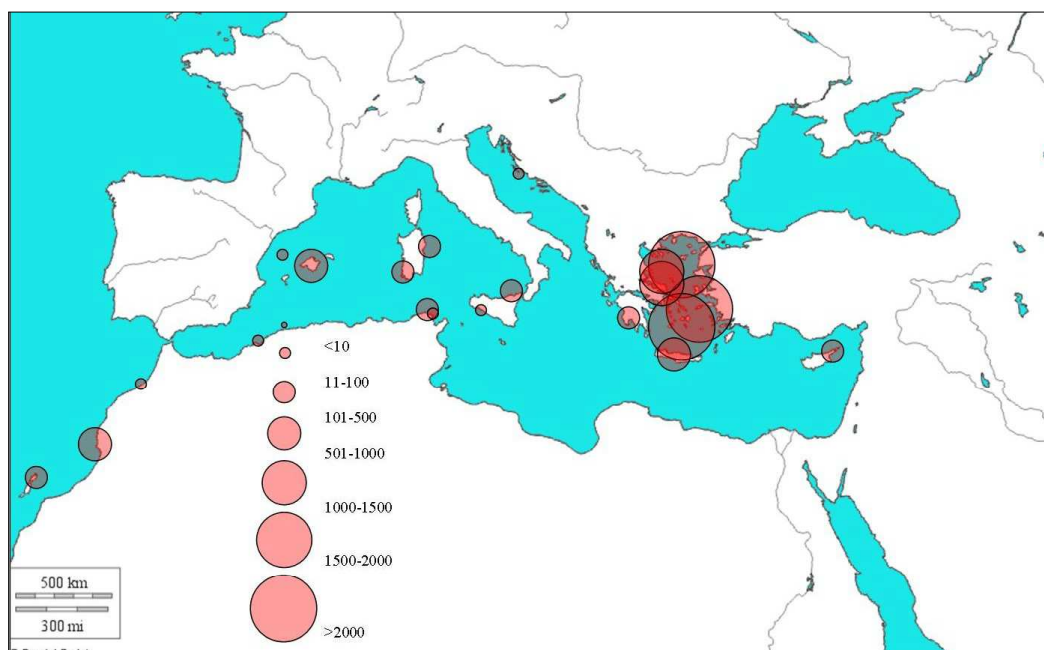


Figure 7. Breeding population of Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*.

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