

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Mediterranean symposia on marine key habitats and non-indigenous species: A scientific gathering to share knowledge and foster marine biodiversity conservation**

*Scientists and researchers from all over the Mediterranean will meet in Antalya from 14 to 18 January 2019 to exchange knowledge on marine biodiversity conservation and enhance cooperation to achieve the good environmental status of the Mediterranean Sea.*

**Antalya, Turkey, 14 January 2019** - Improving the quality of the marine and coastal environment in the Mediterranean remains the priority objective of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), a UN Environment regional seas programme. Improving and sharing knowledge on biodiversity, is a key activity to achieve this objective.

In this context, the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), the Mediterranean biodiversity centre of MAP, is organizing the Mediterranean symposia on marine key habitats and non-indigenous species, in collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation and the Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV), as follows:

- 6<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean symposium on marine vegetation (from 14 to 15 January 2019)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mediterranean symposium on the conservation of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions (from 15 to 16 January 2019)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mediterranean symposium on the conservation of the dark habitats (16 January 2019)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Mediterranean symposium on the non-indigenous species (from 17 to 18 January 2019)

The symposia will be opened officially by Dr. Mehmet Emin BİRPINAR, Deputy Minister of Environment and Urbanization, after the welcome speech of Mr Khalil ATTIA, SPA/RAC Director, on behalf of Mr Gaetano LEONE, MAP Coordinator.

During the opening session, a presentation on the Mediterranean Key Habitats and NIS in Turkey will be provided by Professor Bayram ÖZTÜRK, president of TUDAV, followed by the screening of the documentary film “Mediterranean Sea and Biological Invasion”, produced by Turkish Radio and TV.

#### **Exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices**

The symposia aim essentially at providing an opportunity to exchange the most recent scientific data on marine biodiversity conservation while promoting the cooperation between specialists working on the Mediterranean.

Key note conferences, oral communications, poster sessions and round tables will be organized to present the most recent studies dealing with marine key habitats and species introduction in the Mediterranean, and to discuss the best strategies of biodiversity conservation and restoration in the Mediterranean Sea.

*“The symposia will also be a good opportunity to discuss new topics such as the monitoring, the definition of Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean and to strengthen links between scientists and scientific institutions”,* says Khalil ATTIA, SPA/RAC Director.

The Mediterranean symposia on marine key habitats and non-indigenous species is financed by the MAVA Foundation and the Mediterranean Trust Fund.

#### **Photographic exhibition**

During the symposia, a photographic exhibition on marine habitats and non-indigenous species will be held at the conference venue and will offer the visitors the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful Mediterranean underwater world.

**Go further:**

- *Symposia website:* <https://symposia.medchm.net>
- *Symposia programme and abstracts of the key note conferences, oral communications and poster:* <https://symposia.medchm.net/programme/>
- *SPA/RAC website:* [www.spa-rac.org](http://www.spa-rac.org) - SPA/RAC Facebook page & Twitter: [@SPARACinfos](https://twitter.com/SPARACinfos)

**About SPA/RAC:** *The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) is one of the seven components of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), which is a Regional Seas Programme of the UN Environment. The Centre was established in Tunis in 1985 by decision of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which entrusted it with responsibility for assessing the situation of natural heritage and assisting the Mediterranean countries to implement the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol).*

**About TUDAV:** *The Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV) was established in 1997 to conduct researches on marine science, to protect marine life, and to introduce marine culture and love for seas especially to future generations in Turkey. The foundation has been carrying out researches and conservation projects with the support of international organizations, such as UNEP, UNDP and EU, and that of private sectors. TUDAV has been accredited as an observer to Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project (BSERP), Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and United Nations (UN).*