

Information on Ecological and Biological Significant Marine Areas in Albania

The report is assembled from the draft strategic plan for marine and coastal protected areas in Albania, supported by the GEF-UNDP project on MCPAs and prepared by INCA (Institute for Nature Conservation) in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment of Albania.

The following sites can be potential EBSA-s for Albania as according to the study comply with the scientific criteria.

1. The Bay of Porto-Palermo

Porto Palermo bay, known as Panorma bay in ancient times, is situated in southeast of Himara town, between peninsula of Panorma and peninsula of Kavadon, at the Ionian Sea. Inside of the bay there is an attractive rocky peninsula, which enters about 300 meters to the sea.

Ecological criteria

High natural biological diversity: It includes interesting marine and coastal habitats with a rich variety of habitats and species.

Representativeness: It is representative of rocky coastal and infralittoral stage of the Ionian Sea

Productivity: High productivity in relation to the natural and semi natural production (fish aquaculture)

Important for a species: Monk seal

Prioritization

Species or habitats endangered, declining, or threatened with extinction: Posidonia, reefs

Important for a habitat/biotope: Posidonia, reefs, euphorbia

Important for other species: Despite limited data; many marine and terrestrial species are of international concern.

Sensitivity: The Posidonia meadows are affected by the aquaculture activities in the area and human ones (bath, fishing boats, etc); they show sign of pressure. The negative effect can be observed also in the land habitats (particularly euphorbia) for the construction and fire during summer season.

Naturalness: The area has gone some important human interventions around 60's when the submarine tunnels were built. However, being a military area since then, it has well restored its naturalness and has been preserved.

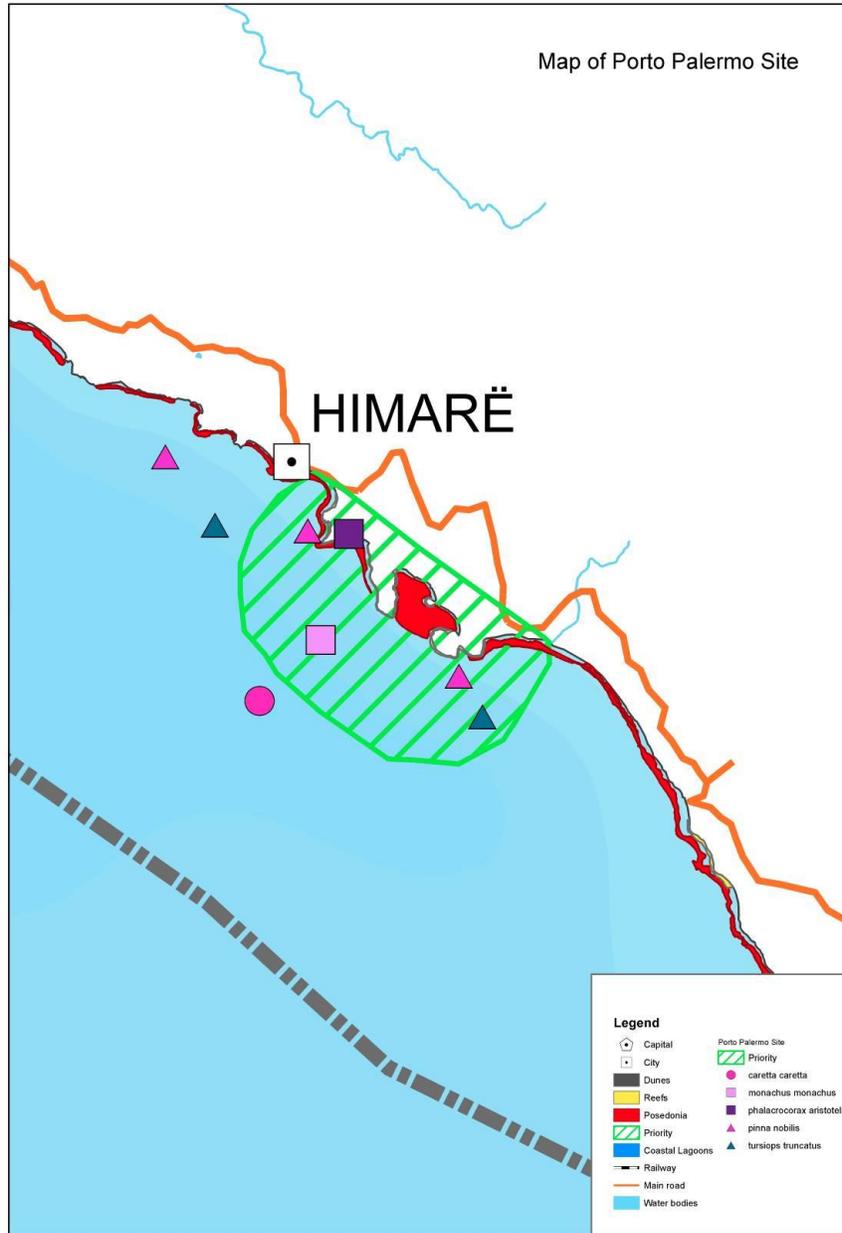
Practical considerations

Size: the proposed area is relatively small. However, it encompasses a well defined natural landscape with clear boundaries, what makes it perfect for preservation. The fortress and the church constructed by Ali Pasha of Tepelena at the end of 18th century add more value to the site
Potential for restoration: Being for a long time a closed area and under human threats only in the last 15 years, it has high potential for restoration. The presence of the military base, even not very active, can be a positive element along the restoration process.

Degree of acceptance: The area has been secluded for years and local communities are generally used with the idea of a protected (off limit) area. Some reaction against the establishment of the PA could be expected by aquaculture development investors.

Potential for success of management measures: The area had been recognized for the natural beauty, cultural values (the Ali Pasha castle) and economic potential (tourism, aquaculture). The management measures will be integrated in different field aiming in bringing the natural aspects. The role of the local authorities is very important.

Map of Porto Palermo Site



2. The area from Vjosa river mouth to Sazan and Karaburun (the entire Vlora Bay)

The area includes the Vlora Bay area from the western part of the Vjosa river mouth. The eastern coast of Karaburuni peninsula starts from Pasha Limani upto Cape Karloveci bypassing capes Kallogjeri, Raguza, Sevasini, Shën Vasili, Gjatë, Dim Kushta and Shëngjani, including also the Orikumi lagoon.

Ecological criteria

High natural biological diversity: It includes interesting marine and coastal habitats with a rich variety of habitats and species. The presences of wetland (the lagoon of Orikum and wetland area of Narta) increase the diversity.

Representativeness: It is representative of rocky and gravel coastal, as the last part of the Adriatic Sea. There are present also sandy dunes in the northern part

Productivity: High productivity as a result of river flow nutrients

Important for a species: Sea mammals, monk seal, fish species

Prioritization of sites for designation

Species or habitats endangered, declining, or threatened with extinction: Posidonia, fish species

Important for a habitat/biotope: Posidonia, sandy dunes.

Important for other species: Despite limited data, many marine and terrestrial species are present in the area.

Sensitivity: The Posidonia meadows are affected by human activities (bath, fishing, river sediments, etc) as well as from the aquaculture activities in the area; they show sign of pressure. The negative effect can be observed also from the pollution of the harbor and the chaotic development of the tourism infrastructure.

Naturalness: In the last 10 years the coastal area had been strongly developed and with illegal fishing activities, as well as the aquaculture development on the west coast of Karaburuni. In spite of this the area still preserves in most of the part its natural aspect and need very urgent intervention along the coastal development.

Practical considerations

Size: It is a vast area and can be divided in four parts: - the northern part which is the area after the Vjosa river mouth; the eastern side of the bay, with 14 km of coastline with increasing altitude from north (736 m at 2,5 km of the coast) to south (1136 m at 5 km); the southern section, 6 km long has a coastal road separating the sea and Orikumi lagoon; and the western side of the bay,

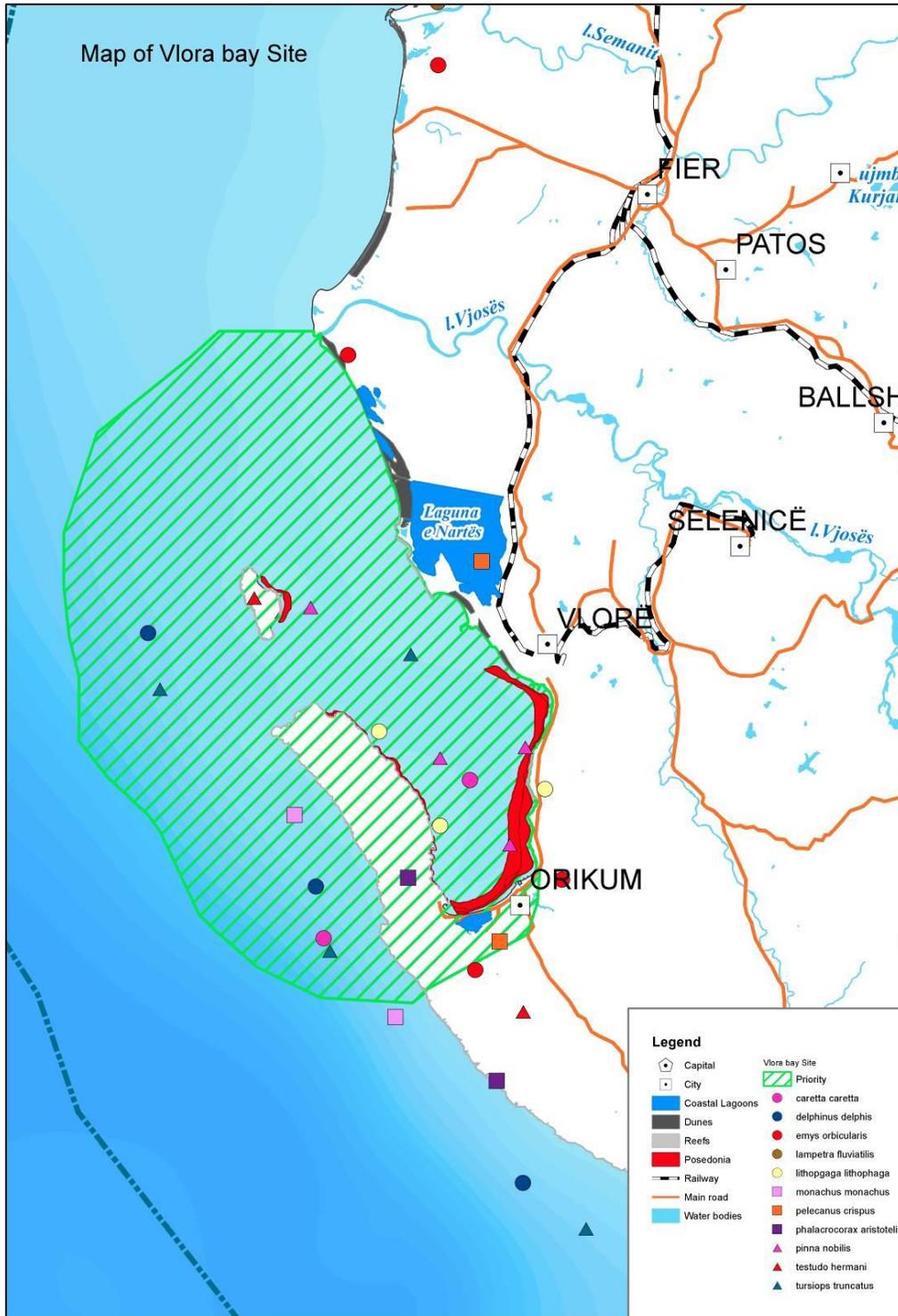
includes the eastern side of Karaburuni peninsula which is relatively lower than western Karaburuni.

Potential for restoration: The area has an urgent need for restoration on the coastal part from the Vjosa river mouth to the Orikumi wetland. On the other hand a solution should be find out for the sediments flow from the river Vjosa into the bay.

Degree of acceptance: There is a strong debate for the protection measures and the wild development of the coastal part, where the community needs more regulation and integrated approach in the development. For the marine area the acceptance of protection is related to the traffic.

Potential for success of management measures: There are clear indications for good potential for success of management measures, particularly for the beach area of Vlore-Orikum.

Map of Vlora bay Site



3. The area from Cape Rodoni to Patoku lagoon

Rodoni Cape is a hill that separates Erzeni watershed from Ishmi river; the highest top hill is 223 m in Likmetaj. The coastline, represented by Tortonian sandstone-clay banks, is an erosive area and generally barren. Terrestrial vegetation is dominated by Mediterranean macquis. The site includes several important habitats as per HD as well as several species of conservation interests (See Annex for details).

Ecological criteria

High natural biological diversity: It includes interesting marine and coastal habitats with a rich variety of habitats and species. The presences of wetland near increased the natural biodiversity.

Representativeness: It is representative of sandy and rocky coastal in the Adriatic Sea.

Productivity: High productivity as a result of river affluent and wetlands presence

Important for a species: Sea turtle, dolphins, etc

Prioritization of sites for designation

Species or habitats endangered, declining, or threatened with extinction: Posidonia, fish species, littoral habitats, etc

Important for a habitat/biotope: Posidonia, sandy dunes.

Important for other species: Sea turtle

Sensitivity: The Posidonia meadows are affected by the human activities (fishing) and river pollution.

Naturalness: The area includes the northern Posidonia meadows for Albania and is found as a permanent feed area for the loggerhead turtles.

Practical considerations

Size: The area is vast and includes a marine and a coastal wetland area. The site also includes the rests of Rodoni Castle (XV century) and the reconstructed Saint Antonio's Church that enrich its historical values.

Potential for restoration: The restoration is mostly related to the coastal area and the solid waste flow along the river Erzen-Ishem, deposit in the sea shore. Also the wetland and the rocky part of the Rodoni Cape have a high potential for restoration.

Degree of acceptance: The community and institutions support the enlarging the protection of the area, as Patoku wetland already is.

Potential for success of management measures: The measures for the solid waste should be taken far from the area and do present a high risk for success. The other measures regarding the marine and coastal part, have a high potential of success.

4. The coastal area from Buna river mouth to Viluni lagoon

It is found in the northern part of the country and include the marine and coastal part of the landscape protection area of Buna river.

Ecological criteria

High natural biological diversity: It includes interesting marine and coastal habitats with a rich variety of habitats and species. The presences of wetland near increased the natural biodiversity

Representativeness: It is representative of sandy coastal habitats with natural dynamics.

Productivity: High productivity as a result of river affluent and wetlands presence

Important for a species: Adriatic Sturgeon

Prioritization of sites for designation

Species or habitats endangered, declining, or threatened with extinction: Adriatic sturgeon, littoral habitats, etc

Important for a habitat/biotope: Coastal wetland area lead to a approval of intervention not in line with the protected area principe.

Potential for success of management measures: The area has a great possibility of success implementing management measures, including also a transboundary context of their accomplishment.

Important for other species: Other commercial fish species that migrate in the river from the sea to the Lake Shkodra and *vice versa*.

Sensitivity: The sturgeon species is nearby extend and the wetland areas are suffering human activities

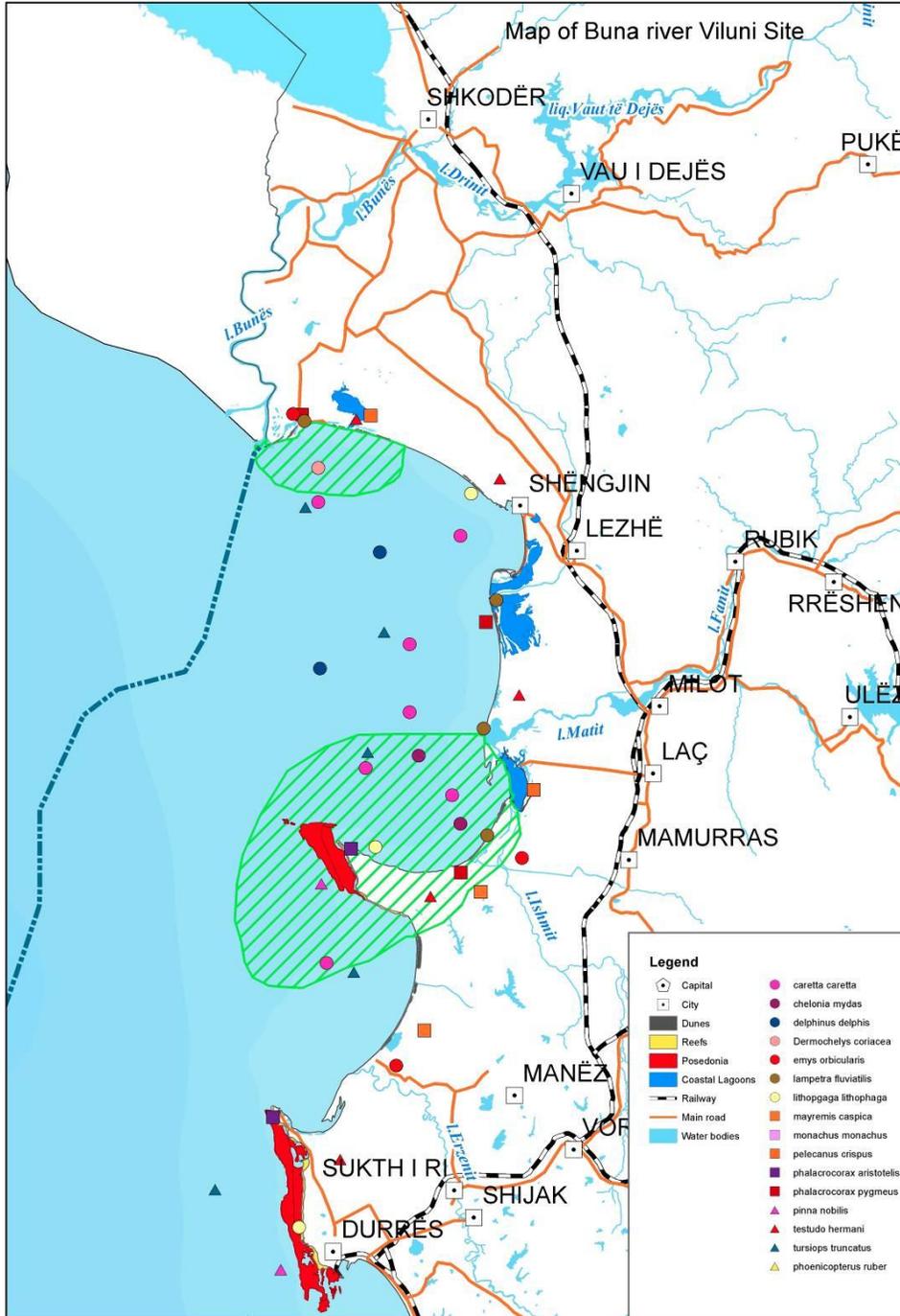
Naturalness: Is a natural dynamic coastal area from the river mouth sediments flow. The area in most of the territory is still natural in spite of the beach area.

Practical considerations

Size: The area is vast and includes a marine and a coastal wetland area. As mentioned before it is under continues changes and the erosion and accumulation of part of the coast are present.

Potential for restoration: Due to the intervention of human activities for the Velipoja beach area there is a need for urgent intervention of restoration mostly in the coastal area.

Degree of acceptance: The terrestrial part of the area is under protection by the Albanian law, as Category V “Landscape protection”, from this prospective there is already an agreement by the local authorities and communities. In the last period the aggressive request for investment in the



5. *The marine area of the National Marine Park Karaburun Sazan*

The National Marine Park (IUCN II) of Karaburun – Sazani, is established in 2010 (DCM No 289, date 28.04.2010), comprising an area of 12.570,82 ha. Karaburuni peninsula represents the western part of the Vlora bay and together with Sazani Island has been identified as a priority area by many recent environmental policy documents of the Government of Albania. The peninsula has a surface of 62 km² and separates the Albanian coast of the Adriatic Sea from the Ionian Sea. A narrow sea channel, named Mezokanali (*in English: middle channel*) separates Karaburuni from the Sazani Island.

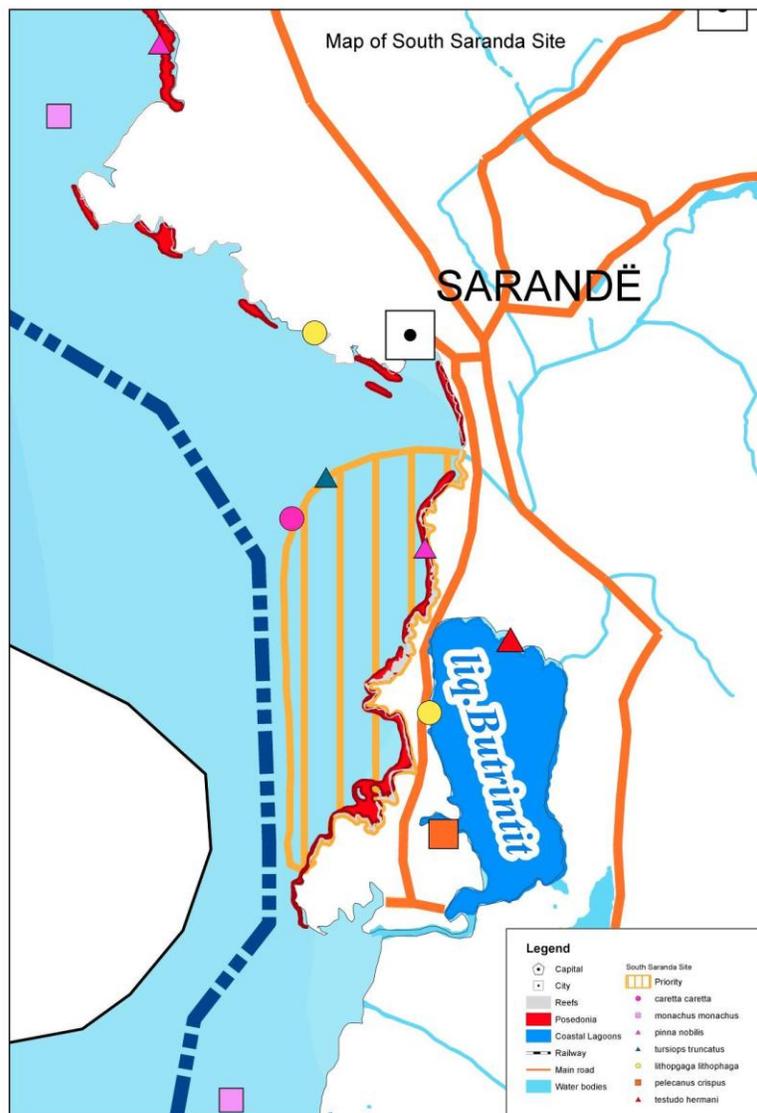
Karaburun – Sazan Marine Protected Area, is approved by decision of Council of Ministers No.289, date 28.4.2010 with a total area of 12 570.82 ha, compound by Karaburun marine area of 9848.95 ha and Sazani marine area of 2721.87 ha.

The Sazan Karaburun Marine National Park covers 25.53% of reefs and only 2.38% of the Posidonia beds.



6. Marine area of National Park Butrinti

This area covers 35 km of coastline and is situated in the very south of the country near to the border with Greece. The Butrinti lagoon is surrounded by other wetlands such as the Bufi lake, Pavllo river outlet and Bistricea river. Butrinti Lake was originally a lake of tectonic origin with no access to the sea, which received the waters of the Vurg catchments and the Bistricea river. A 3.6 km long and 100 m large channel was built, linking the lake to the sea thus changing drastically the ecological balance of the area, which became brackish. Butrinti Lake has now a double system of opposite currents, which divides the water mass in two distinct layers with seasonally variable salinities, temperatures and hydro chemical characteristics at 5-6 m of depth. The lake is a large area of around 1600 ha with brackish water.



Map of identified sites to be proposed as MCPA

