



UNITED
NATIONS

EP

UNEP/MED WG.641/inf.3



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

8 June 2026
Original: English

Back-to-back Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMON) Biodiversity and Fisheries and Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA)

Videoconference, 10-11 June 2026

Agenda Item 3: Updated Guidance Factsheets for biodiversity (EO1)

3.1. Benthic Habitats (OE 1: Common Indicator 1 – habitat distributional range and Common Indicator 2 – condition of the habitat’s typical species and communities)

Guidelines for inventorying and monitoring of dark habitats in the mediterranean sea

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Action Plan for the conservation of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark Habitats Action Plan)¹ provide for improving inventories, location and characterization and enhancing national capacities and improve skills in taxonomy and monitoring methods.
2. In this context, SPA/RAC updated the Guidelines for inventorying and monitoring of dark habitats in the mediterranean sea to help countries in their efforts to conserve dark habitats

¹ CoP22 Decision IG.25/13, Annex II

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES



The biodiversity field guide was produced for the identification of common and characteristic taxa of Mediterranean marine caves, including key pressures and threats.

Scientific supervision by Vasilis Gerovasileiou

Photographic material by Thanos Dailianis, Vasilis Gerovasileiou, Markos Digenis, Michail Ragkousis, and Donat Petricioli

Graphic design by Markos Digenis, Vasilis Gerovasileiou

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

FORAMINIFERA



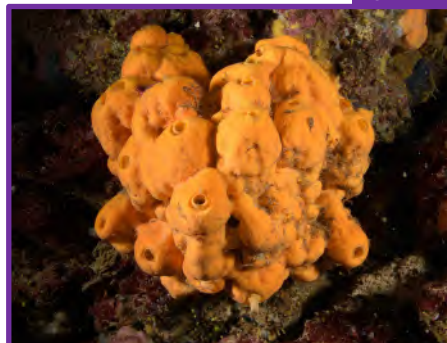
Miniacina miniacea

PORIFERA



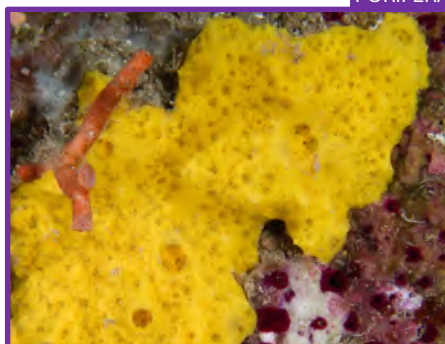
Acanthella acuta

PORIFERA



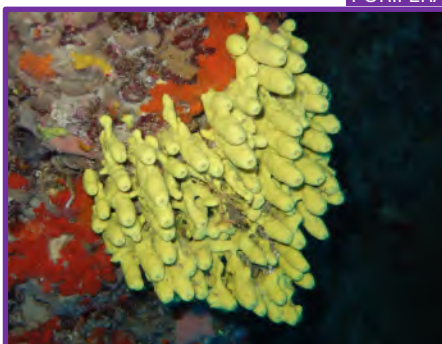
Agelas oroides

PORIFERA



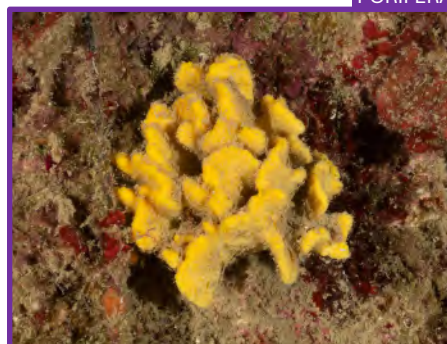
Aplysilla sulfurea

PORIFERA



*Aplysina sp. **

PORIFERA



Axinella damicornis

PORIFERA



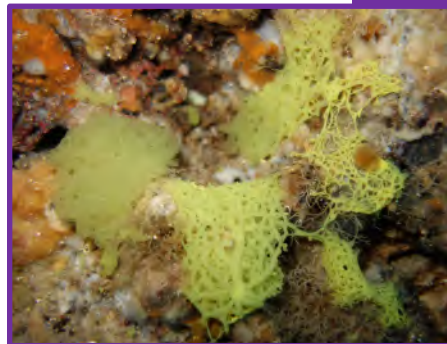
Axinella verrucosa

PORIFERA



Chondrosia reniformis

PORIFERA



Clathrina sp.

PORIFERA



Cliona sp.

PORIFERA



Crambe crambe

PORIFERA



Dendroxea lenis

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

PORIFERA



Diplastrella bistellata

PORIFERA



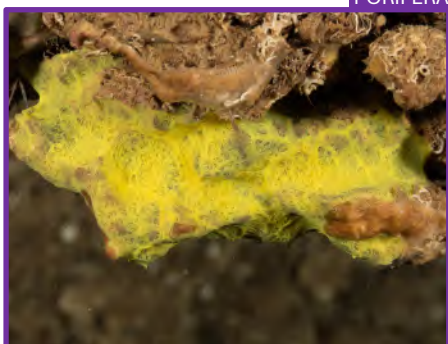
Haliclona (Halichoclona) fulva

PORIFERA



Haliclona (Soestella) mucosa

PORIFERA



Hexadella pruvoti

PORIFERA



Ircinia oros

PORIFERA



Ircinia variabilis

PORIFERA



Lycopodina hypogea *

PORIFERA



Merlia normani

PORIFERA



Myrmekioderma spelaeum

PORIFERA



Neoprissospongia sp. *

PORIFERA



Oscarella sp.

PORIFERA



Penares sp.

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

PORIFERA



Petrobiona massiliana *

PORIFERA



Petrosia (Petrosia) ficiformis

PORIFERA



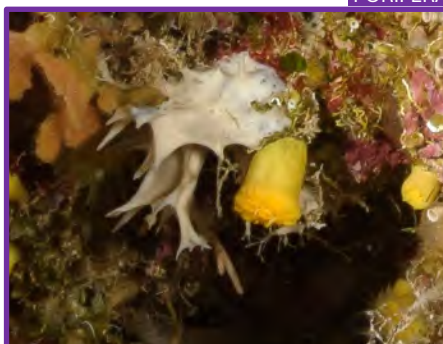
Phorbas tenacior

PORIFERA



Plakina sp.

PORIFERA



Pleraplysilla spinifera

PORIFERA



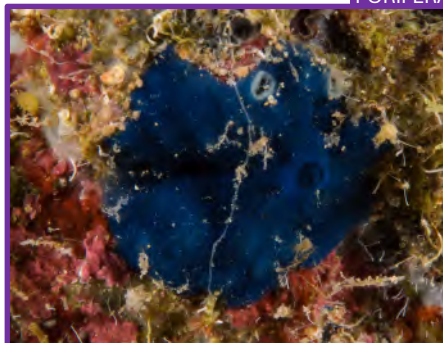
Spirastrella cunctatrix

PORIFERA



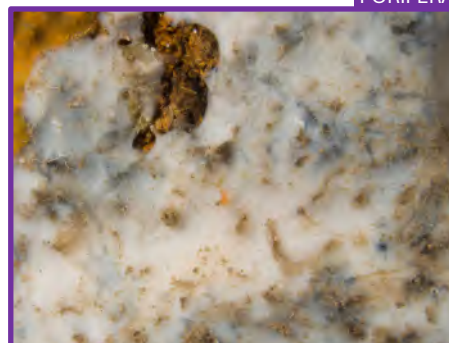
Spongia (Spongia) officinalis **

PORIFERA



Terpios gelatinosa

PORIFERA



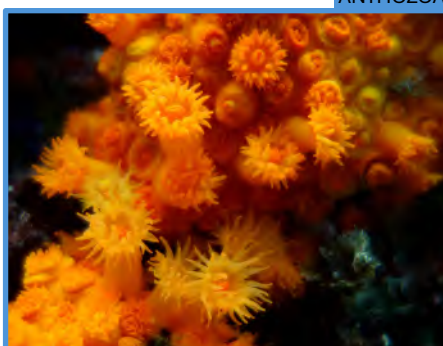
Thymosiopsis sp.

HYDROZOA



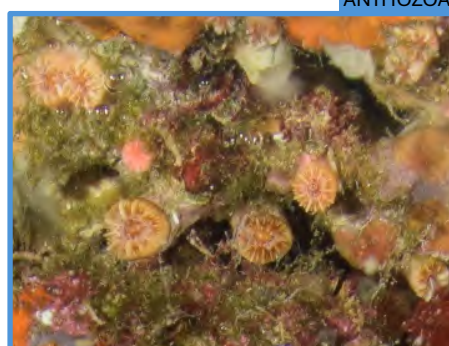
Eudendrium sp.

ANTHOZOA



Astroides calycularis *

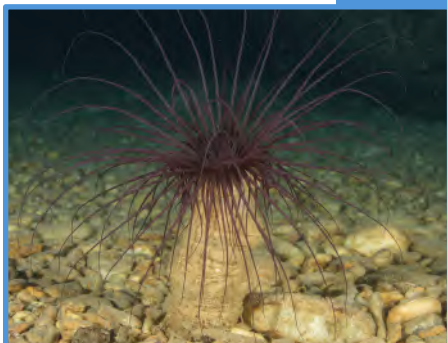
ANTHOZOA



Caryophyllia inornata

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

ANTHOZOA



Cerianthus membranaceus

ANTHOZOA



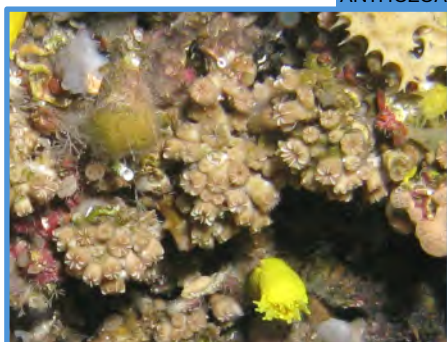
Corallium rubrum **

ANTHOZOA



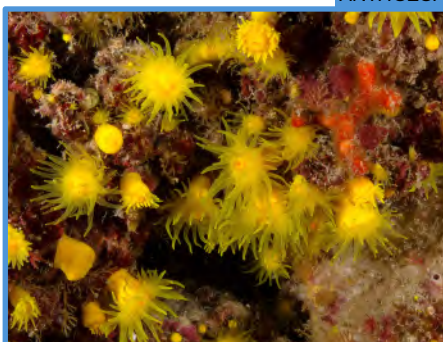
Eunicella cavolini

ANTHOZOA



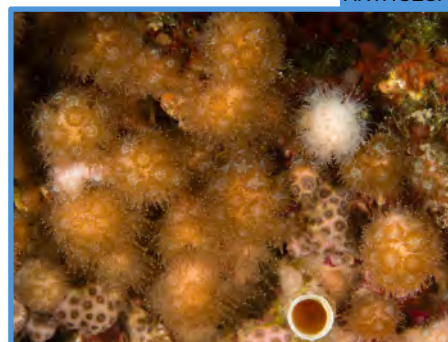
Hoplania durotrix

ANTHOZOA



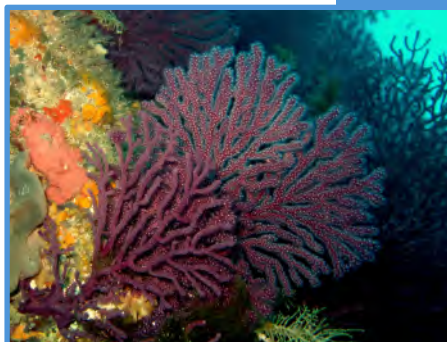
Leptosammia pruvoti

ANTHOZOA



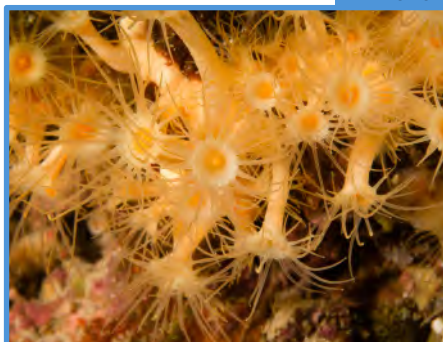
Madracis pharensis

ANTHOZOA



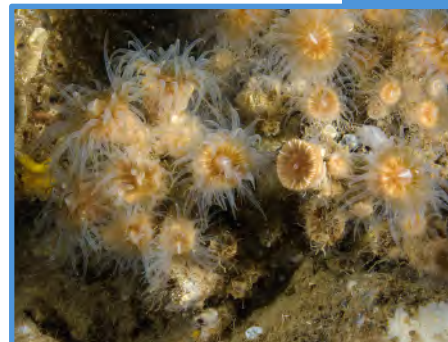
Paramuricea clavata

ANTHOZOA



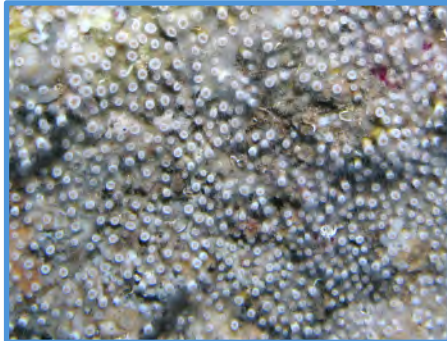
Parazoanthus axinellae

ANTHOZOA



Phyllangia americana mouchezii

ANTHOZOA



Polycyathus muelleriae

ANNELIDA



Bonellia viridis

ANNELIDA



Filograna/Salmacina sp.

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES



ANNELIDA



Hermodice carunculata

ANNELIDA



Protula tubularia

ANNELIDA



Serpula vermicularis

ANNELIDA



Serpulidae

MOLLUSCA



Homalopoma sanguineum

MOLLUSCA



Muricopsis cristata

MOLLUSCA



Naria spurca *

MOLLUSCA



Peltodoris atromaculata

MOLLUSCA



Barbatia barbata

MOLLUSCA



Lima lima

MOLLUSCA



Lithophaga lithophaga *

MOLLUSCA



Luria lurida *

* Species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

MOLLUSCA



Neopycnodonte cochlear

CRUSTACEA



Brachycarpus biunguiculatus

CRUSTACEA



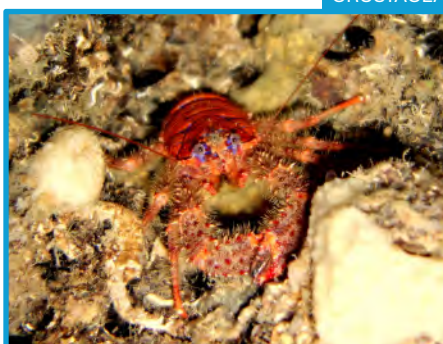
Dardanus sp.

CRUSTACEA



Dromia personata

CRUSTACEA



Galathea strigosa

CRUSTACEA



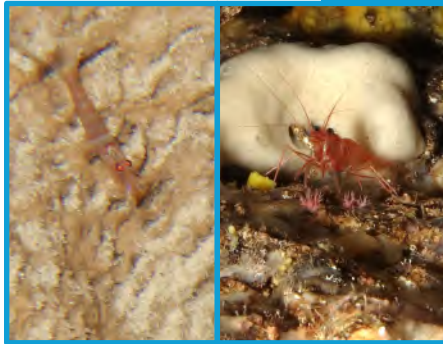
Herbstia condyliata

CRUSTACEA



Homarus gammarus *

CRUSTACEA



Lysmata sp.

CRUSTACEA



Mysida

CRUSTACEA



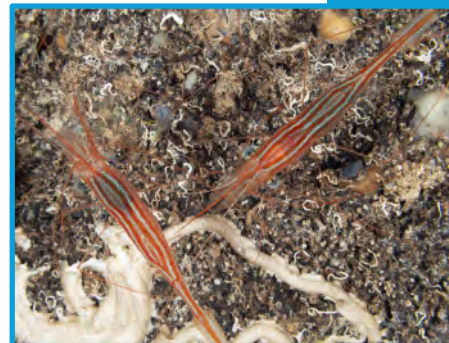
Palaemon serratus

CRUSTACEA



Palinurus elephas **

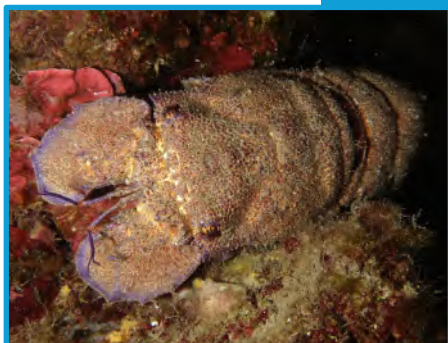
CRUSTACEA



Plesionika narval

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

CRUSTACEA



Scyllarides latus **

CRUSTACEA



Scyllarus arctus **

CRUSTACEA



Stenopus spinosus

BRYOZOA



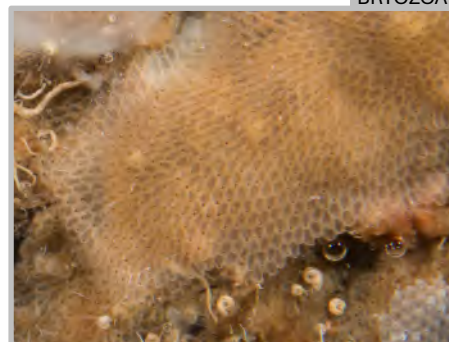
Adeonella sp.

BRYOZOA



Caberea boryi

BRYOZOA



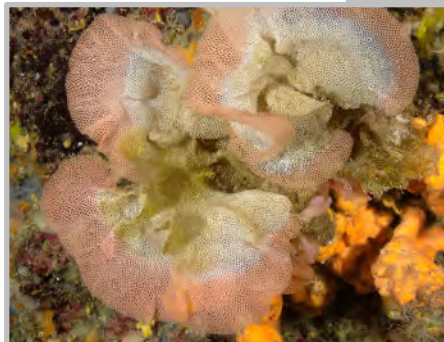
Hippaliosina depressa

BRYOZOA



Myriapora truncata

BRYOZOA



Reteporella sp.

BRYOZOA



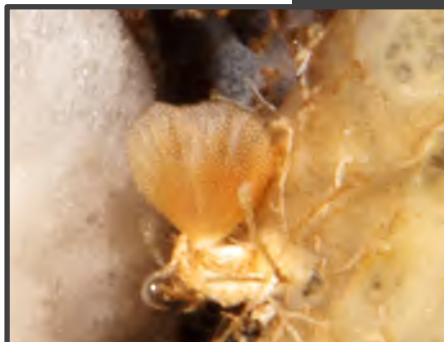
Schizomavella sp.

BRACHIOPODA



Argyrotheca cuneata

BRACHIOPODA



Joania cordata

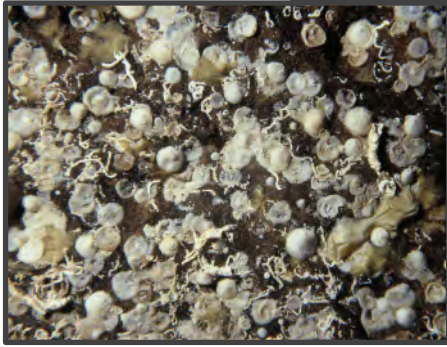
BRACHIOPODA



Megathiris detruncata

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

BRACHIOPODA



Novocrania sp.

ECHINODERMATA



Antedon mediterranea

ECHINODERMATA



Arbacia lixula

ECHINODERMATA



Centrostephanus longispinus *

ECHINODERMATA



Holothuria sp.

ECHINODERMATA



Ophidiaster ophidianus *

ECHINODERMATA



Ophioderma longicauda

ECHINODERMATA



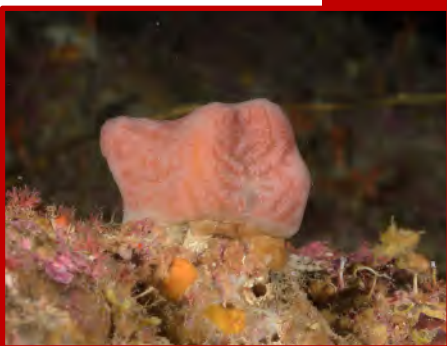
Ophiothrix fragilis

ECHINODERMATA



Paracentrotus lividus **

ASCIDIACEA



Aplidium sp.

ASCIDIACEA



Didemnum sp.

ASCIDIACEA



Halocynthia papillosa

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES

ASCIDIACEA



Microcosmus sp.

ASCIDIACEA



Pyura sp.

TELEOSTEI



Anthias anthias

TELEOSTEI



Apogon imberbis

TELEOSTEI



Atherina sp.

TELEOSTEI



Chromis chromis

TELEOSTEI



Conger conger

TELEOSTEI



Corcyrogobius liechtensteini

TELEOSTEI



Diplodus sargus

TELEOSTEI



Diplodus vulgaris

TELEOSTEI



Epinephelus costae

TELEOSTEI



Epinephelus marginatus **

BIODIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE of MEDITERRANEAN MARINE CAVES



TELEOSTEI



Gammogobius steinitzi

TELEOSTEI



Grammonus ater

TELEOSTEI



Marcelogobius splechnai

TELEOSTEI



Oblada melanura

TELEOSTEI



Phycis phycis

TELEOSTEI



Sciaena umbra *

TELEOSTEI



Scorpaena sp.

TELEOSTEI



Serranus cabrilla

TELEOSTEI



Serranus scriba

TELEOSTEI



Thorogobius ephippiatus

TELEOSTEI



Tripterygion sp.

MAMMALIA



Monachus monachus *

INTRODUCED TAXA

MOLLUSCA



Malleus/Isognomon sp.

CRUSTACEA



Percnon gibbesi

CRUSTACEA



Urocaridella pulchella

ASCIDIACEA



Herdmania momus

TELEOSTEI



Pempheris rhomboidea

TELEOSTEI



Pterois miles

TELEOSTEI



Sargocentron rubrum

TELEOSTEI



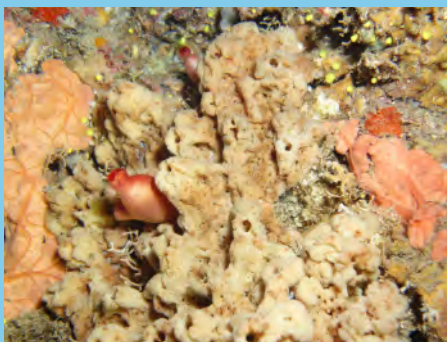
Siganus sp.

TELEOSTEI



Torquigener flavimaculosus

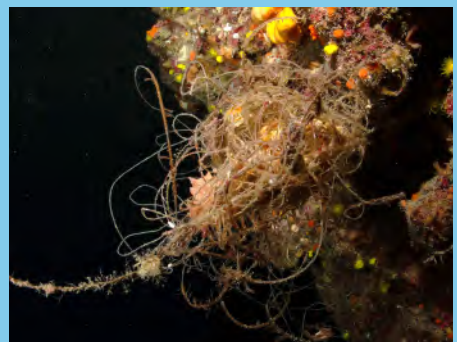
PREASURES AND THREATS



Sponge necrosis



Fallen bryozoan fragments



Marine litter (fishing line)