

Zembra and Zembretta

Legal status	National park
Foundation year	1977
Foundation text	Decree no. 77-340
Management body	Agency for the Protection and Development of the Coast
Superficy	5090 ha
Management category (IUCN, 1994)	II



Territory

The archipelago lies north-east of the Gulf of Tunis, opposite the Cap Bon peninsula, and is made up of the island of Zembra (389 hectares) and the islet of Zembretta (2 hectares).

Zembra is surrounded by two rocks: the Entorche to the north and the Cathedral to the west.



The archipelago of Zembra and Zembretta has been a SPAMI since 2001 for it is a site that is rich in marine flora and fauna and where the monk seal live.

Physic features

The main island, Zembra, presents a complex, very steep relief with three big clefts and fallen structures. The stratigraphic series runs from the calcareous massifs of the Higher Cretaceous to the clays and fine sandstones of the Middle Miocene. The entire coast is rocky and made up of cliffs, caves and underwater slopes.

Several caves and rocky areas can host the monk seal.

Specificities and Importance

The land flora is made up of 230 species (four of these threatened in the world, including 2 endemics of Tunisia: *Silene barrattei*, *Anthyllis barba-jovis*, *Scabiosa farinosa* and *Iberis semperflorens*) and forms a maquis. Zembra presents a highly diversified fauna of invertebrates; the most important land vertebrates are the wild rabbit and the mouflon.

The site is of great avifauna interest, being a reproduction area for the Audouin's gull and the Mediterranean shag, with 11 pairs of peregrine falcons and 20,000 Cory's shearwaters. It used to have a monk seal colony.

The Zembra and Zembretta National Park presents many habitats including the Posidonia meadow, rocky seabed and caves where the monk seal can live. The marine fauna is characterised by a hard substratum benthos, where the ferreous limpet coexists with a fauna of diversified fishes, rich in sea-bream and groupers. The area has several monk seal-friendly caves and is also much frequented by dolphins, and is an important site for nesting of the Cory's shearwater.

The islands are a Punic and Roman archaeological site and many prehistoric and classical remains are found there.

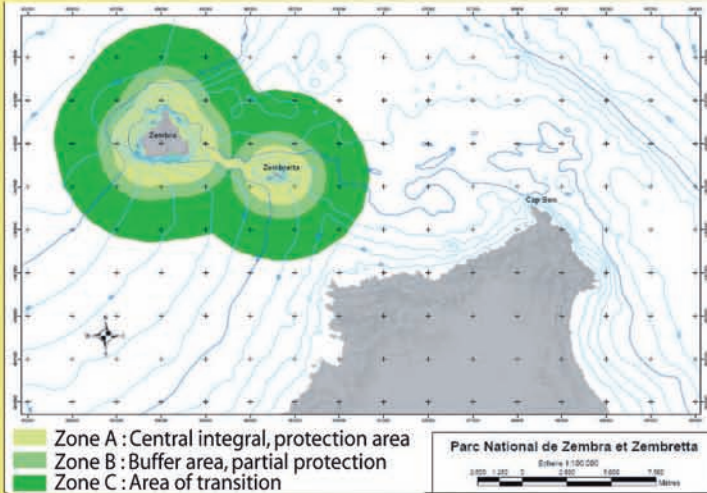


Threats and pressure

The islands are not inhabited; access to the public and the removal of natural resources is forbidden in the land environment and over a 1.5 sea mile strip around the island of Zembra.

There are some forms of illegal fishing and poaching. Many fragments of fishing tackle brought by the currents and the sinkers that ballast trammels are sources of erosion of the loose seabed.

Some exotic and invasive species have been observed in the water or environs of the Zembra archipelago.



Management

Crafting a management plan for the marine part of the Zembra and Zembretta National Park comes under the implementing of the MedMPA Project.

The National Park has a zoning plan, divided into three parts:

- the central integral protection area where all activity is forbidden, except for studies and the necessary movement for research and monitoring ;
- a buffer area of partial protection to guarantee logistical back-up for site management and site conservation activities, and
- an area of transition and eco-development.

The management plan advocates carrying out many actions to ensure logistical coordination of the work and of welcoming visitors and the public, to make best use of what the National Park can offer for environmental education and popularising nature, or to manage possible future tourist frequentation.

Many forms of scientific monitoring have been done in Zembra and Zembretta, such as:

- monitoring of the limpet population,
- monitoring of the ichtycs populations using fixed transects,
- monitoring of benthic sessile communities and,
- monitoring of the impact on ecosystems and biodiversity, sea pollution, piscicolous communities, or changes in the Posidonia meadow.

