

## Interaction between depth and protection in determining the structure of Mediterranean coastal fish assemblages

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Patterns of spatial and temporal variability of coastal fish assemblages were compared between areas subjected to different levels of protection at two different depths using a visual census technique. A no take reserve was compared with recreational fishing areas around a small Mediterranean island at 5 m and 20 m depth. Univariate and multivariate statistical techniques were used to test the hypothesis that protection could have different effects at different depths. A total of 56 species were identified during the survey. The most represented families were Sparidae and Labridae. Results showed an interaction between depth and levels of protection that was not persistent across the study period. This result was consistent for the whole fish assemblage and for the target species; most species showed higher abundance in protected areas at 20 m depth.

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