



Photo: Sebastia Torrens

S'ALBUFERA DES GRAU NATURAL PARK



Pandion haliaetus
Photo: Sebastia Torrens

Rodriguez Femenias Reception Centre
07700 Maó, Illes Balears
Ctra. de Maó a es Grau, km 3.5, desviació Llímpa,
Tel: 971 35 63 03 / 971 35 63 02

- Please remain on the marked trails and specially adapted paths, and move about quietly, so as not to disturb the other visitors and the animals.
- Please bear in mind that most of the Park is private property and that there are several farms and cattle ranches that must not be disturbed.
- Authorisation is required for organized tours or groups of more than 25 people.
- Please do not walk on the dunes. The use of motor vehicles, bicycles or horses on the beaches and dunes is not permitted.
- Please do not anchor boats in the Posidonia beds.
- Unauthorized fires and camping are not permitted.
- Please do not remove rocks or stones from the area around the Favàritx lighthouse.
- Please do not remove plants and do not disturb the animals.
- Do not bring dogs through the main areas of strict protection and conservation, such as Favàritx and the area of S'Albufera.

RULES

April – October:
Fridays, Saturdays & Mondays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm
November – March:
Fridays, Saturdays & Mondays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Visitors are invited to view the Parks permanent exhibit, "S'Albufera des Grau, the Nucleus of the Biosphere Reserve", on display at the reception centre.

VISITING HOURS

S'ALBUFERA DES GRAU



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AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS

The Park houses a number of well-conserved agroforestry communities, where human activity has fostered vast plant and animal biodiversity. These communities consist of extensive pastures for cattle and sheep, fields of forage and winter grains for the cattle, fallow fields, and wild olive groves. Together, these different areas form a mosaic landscape where the diversity of the habitats promotes the coexistence of many species of flora along with their associated fauna. Thus, the biodiversity found here today is the result of a balance attained largely thanks to the constant local cattle-raising activity.



Diplodus vulgaris
Photo: Manuel Mora

S'Albufera des Grau was declared a Natural Park by virtue of Decree 50/1995, of 4 May, after years of local social efforts to protect the area. In 2003 the Park's limits were expanded to cover a total surface area of 5,006.7 hectares, between its waters and its land, and the five islets were declared Nature Reserves (Addaia islands, s'Estany, Bassa de Morella, es Prat and the Illa d'en Colom) in an effort to conserve particularly sensitive places of vast natural and ecological interest.

Moreover, virtually the entire area sits within a Natural Area of Special Interest, forms part of the Natura 2000 Network and comprises the nucleus of the Biosphere Reserve. This protected natural environment includes vastly diverse habitats with varying degrees of human intervention: wetlands, agricultural and livestock areas, forests, a coastline of cliffs and beaches, islets and a marine area.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Minorca's cultural heritage is also well represented in the Park. The wealth of ancient archaeological sites, consisting of massive stone structures such as ancient watchtowers known as *talaiots*, *navetes* or collective tombs, and the T-shaped *taules*, as well as ethnological features including unmortared stone walls, stone farming and livestock shelters and other sites, bear witness to the human being's long coexistence with nature in this area, which dates back to pre-historic times. Also found here are the *cases de lloc*, or farmers' quarters of the country estates that represent Minorca's traditional architecture.



Photo: Sebastia Torrens



Testudo hermanni
Photo: Sebastia Torrens

NATURAL VALUES

Wild olive groves inhabit all of the Park's inland areas, except for the wetlands and the coastal strip. Predominant in this thick and dense formation is the wild olive tree (*Olea europaea* var. *sylvestris*), which lives alongside species such as the mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*) and the privet (*Phillyrea media*), and on the driest, stony hills, the tree spurge (*Euphorbia dendroides*).

Small stands of holm oak are usually found where the soil depth or the location allows for greater moisture, and the wetland areas accommodate hygrophilous plants.

The beaches often boast well-developed dune vegetation, and the rocky coastline features the locally known *socarrells*, thorny pincushion-like shrubs that are shaped by the splashing sea and the wind. These shrubs form part of the plant communities with the greatest number of endemic species in Minorca.

The Park also stands out for its diverse bird population. Found here are aquatic birds such as ducks, coots, and shags, and birds of prey such as the osprey, the red kite and the booted eagle.

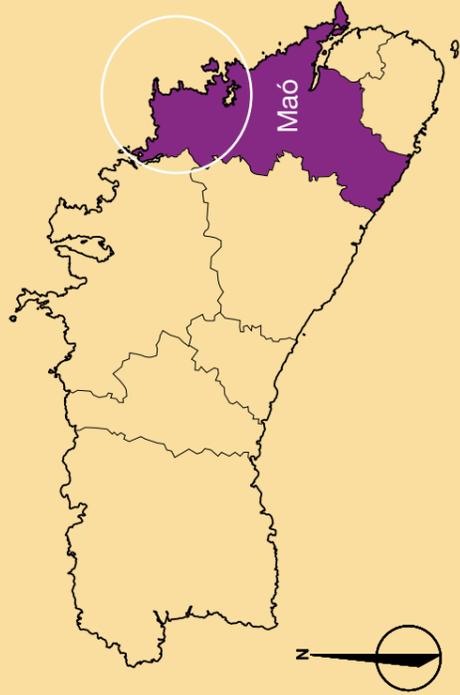
Among the reptiles and amphibians that live in the

Park, mention must be made of the Balearic wall lizard (*Podarcis lilfordi*), which is endemic to both Majorca and Minorca and found exclusively on the islets, where it has diversified, gradually evolving into different subspecies. There are also other interesting species such as the Balearic green toad, the European tree frog, the land and sea tortoises, the Italian wall lizard, the false smooth snake and the ladder snake.

The Park's mammals include carnivorous species such as the weasel and the pine marten, insect-eating mammals like the hedgehog and the shrew, as well as rodents like the garden dormouse.

Within the limits of the Park is a strip of sea with different types of sea floors. Predominant in the soft-bottom areas are the Posidonia prairies. Other aquatic plant communities live in narrow and shallow coves. These include the *Cymodocea* and *Zoostera*, which are scarce in the Mediterranean. Yet there are also rocky sea floors with interesting seaweed communities. Both of these seafloors accommodate different fish and invertebrate species.

NATURAL PARK S'ALBUFERA DES GRAU



- Cala Limpia Trail
- Santa Madrona Trail
- Sa Gola Trail
- Border of the Natural Park

- Information point
- Car park
- Area of landscape interest
- Bird watching area
- Hide
- Viewpoint
- Beach

