S’ALBUFERA DE MALLORCA

The S’Albufera de Mallorca was declared a Natural Park on 28 January 1988 (Decree 4/1988). It is also a Wetland Area of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, and is included in the EU Natura 2000 Network - both as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the Birds Directive and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive.

S’Albufera is the largest and most important wetland area in the Balearic Islands. With a surface area of 8.8 square kilometres, this input has a definite impact on water quality, and is included in the EU Natura 2000 Network. In addition, S’Albufera is a Ramsar Site, or Wetland of International Importance under the Convention on Wetlands. The Park is a rich source of biodiversity and is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna.

The Park vegetation is dominated by common reed (Phragmites australis), iris, sedge (Cladium mariscus) and, to a lesser extent, reedmace (Typha spp.). Other plants, such as fennel pondweeds (Potamogeton pectinatus) and rigid hornwort (Ceratophyllum demersum), are submerged in the waters of the canals. The more brackish waters are home to rushes (Juncus spp.) and glasswort (Sarcococca spp.). Foremost amongst the trees of the Park are the white poplar (Populus alba), the elm (Ulmus minor) and the tamarisk (Tamarix spp.).

Among a huge abundance of invertebrates are numerous varieties of dragonflies, flies and beetles, while moth species exceed 450. The bird list has reached 383 different species including 64, a mix of residents and summer visitors, which breed. Over 10,000 birds spend their winter months in S’Albufera. These comprise ducks, herons and others, as well as massive flocks of roosting starlings. The Park is also an important resting point for a host of migrants, such as garganeys and swallows, which drop in for a few days before resuming their journey, and it also attracts occasional wanderers like the crane, which stop off unexpectedly.

The Park also includes in its programme a series of research, education, environmental protection and publications in several different languages.

The management of S’Albufera is undertaken by the Government of the Balearic Islands through a Park steering committee whose remit is to oversee social participation and control. A multidisciplinary team performs such diverse tasks as management, environmental education, visitor information, administration, wildlife monitoring, supervision, maintenance and agricultural livestock work. One of the key management tasks is to maintain the quantity and quality of the water. To achieve this, the main waterways are dredged regularly, dykes kept clean and water flow controlled by means of floodgates. In addition, various physical and chemical properties of the waters are analysed on a monthly basis. Native Moorish cattle, Camargue horses and other livestock are used as a management tool to create areas of open water and to diversify habitats.

The establishment of the Park has permitted a reintroduction programme for species previously lost to the area, most notably the purple gallinule, red-crested pochard and red-knobbed coot. Action is also taken to control invasive species, such as Florida terrapins, feral cats, carp and alien plants.

Culturally, efforts are being made to maintain and restore traditional activities such as eel fishing, cane and reed-based handicrafts, etc.

RULES

Please respect the wildlife and other values that have made this place worth conserving. Noise disturbs the animals and the other visitors. Please move about quietly. Sports activities are not allowed within the Park (jogging, horseback riding, etc.).

ADMISSION TO THE PARK IS FREE, but A PERMIT IS REQUIRED and must be requested at the Reception Centre (open between 9 am and 4 pm, closed on weekends and holidays). It may be obtained from the Park or through Llista de Correus. A special permit is required for groups, and must be requested from the Park in advance.

THE P ARK MAY BE ACCESSED ON FOOT OR BY BICYCLE, by way of the Pont dels Anglesos [the Englishmen’s Bridge]. Parking for vehicles is available in a designated parking area next to the Pont dels Anglesos (on the Can Picafort side).

VISITING HOURS

The Park is open from 9 am to 6 pm between 1 April and 30 September, and from 9 am to 4 pm during the rest of the year, except for Christmas and New Year’s Day. A special permit is required for groups, and must be requested from the Park in advance.

W A TER, F LORA & F A U NA

Fungi are well represented. A good diversity currently numbers 205 species including one, Phaethon halophilus which was new to science when discovered in S’Albufera in 1992. As for the fauna, the most frequently encountered fish species are the eel (Anguilla anguilla) and the mullet (Chelon and Liza spp.). The Iberian marsh frog (Pelophylax perezi) is abundant, and the most frequently seen reptiles are the viviparous snake (Natrix maura) and European pond terrapin (Emys orbicularis). The 22 mammal species include mice, rats and a range of bats.

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