



CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

- **No-take reserve**
- **Waters beyond baselines**
 - Local professional fisheries
 - Scuba diving with prior authorization of MARM
- **Waters inside baselines**
 - Professional fisheries with traditional gear used in the zone
 - Land based recreational fishing
 - Scuba diving with prior authorization of "Consejería"
- **Floats** (external delimitation of marine reserve)

LEYENDA

- **Reserva integral**
- **Zona de aguas exteriores**
 - Pescas profesionales tradicionales
 - Buceo autónomo con autorización del MARM
- **Zona de aguas interiores**
 - Pesca profesional con artes tradicionales de la zona
 - Pesca de recreo desde tierra
 - Buceo autónomo con autorización de la Consejería
- **Boyas** (Delimitación exterior de la reserva marina)



USEFUL ADDRESSES

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CABO DE PALOS ISLAS HORMIGAS

marine reserve



1995





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DESIGNATION

The marine environment around Cabo de Palos and Islas Hormigas is characterised by a high degree of biodiversity: well-conserved ecosystems, namely its *Posidonia oceanica* beds, rocky coral beds and marked marine dynamics.

In 1995, the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA - Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación) and the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (Consejería de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca) of the Region of Murcia created a marine reserve under the Ministerial Order of 22nd June 1995 (BOE no. 161 of 7th July 1995) and Decree 15/1995 of 31st March (BORM no. 92 of 21st April 1995), based on studies conducted by the Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia and the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO - Instituto Español de Oceanografía).

The marine reserve has a surface of 1.931 ha and contains a no-take reserve around Isla Hormiga, El Bajo del Mosquito and the isles of El Hormigón and La Losa.

In terms of measures for protecting, regenerating and developing resources of fisheries interest, the reserve comprises waters inside baselines, under the remit of the Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia, and waters beyond baselines, under the remit of Central Government (Administración General del Estado), separated by a straight baseline.

The marine reserve of Cabo de Palos – Islas Hormigas also belongs to the Natura 2000 Network and has been declared as SPAMI (Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance).

AIMS OF THE MARINE RESERVE: ARTISANAL FISHERIES

The mission of the marine reserve is to protect, regenerate and develop resources of fisheries interest to maintain sustainable fisheries, enabling artisanal fishermen in the area to preserve their traditional way of life.

Similarly, the marine reserve offers the chance to practice other low-impact activities (scuba diving and snorkelling, environmental education, etc.), which contribute to the economic development of its area of influence.

BOUNDARIES AND AREAS

A marine reserve is marked out around Cabo de Palos and Islas Hormigas, comprising a portion of waters beyond baselines within the area between the following geographical points:

1. 37° 38,80' N - 0° 41,75' W
2. 37° 40,90' N - 0° 37,60' W
3. 37° 39,70' N - 0° 36,65' W
4. 37° 37,55' N - 0° 40,80' W

ACTIVITIES IN THE MARINE RESERVE

Prohibited activities

- Any activity in the no-take reserve, unless for previously authorized scientific purposes
- Underwater fishing and recreational marine fishing aboard a vessel, throughout the marine reserve
- Professional fishing by fishermen who do not usually fish in the area and who are not in the relevant census for vessels authorized to fish in the marine reserve
- Any unauthorized removal of marine flora and fauna

Activities subject to authorization in waters beyond baselines

- Professional marine fishing with gear traditionally used in the area, practised by vessels authorized to fish in the marine reserve
- Scuba diving, outside the no-take reserve, with prior authorization of the Functional Area of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Office of the Government Delegate (Área Funcional de Agricultura y Pesca de la Delegación del Gobierno) in Murcia

- Scientific sampling expeditions, with prior authorization of the General Secretariat of the Sea (SGM - Secretaría General del Mar)

In waters inside baselines

With prior authorization of the Directorate-General of Agriculture and Fisheries (Dirección General de Ganadería y Pesca) of the Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia:

- Professional fishing, with gear used traditionally in the zone
- Scuba diving, outside the no-take reserve
- Scientific sampling expeditions

THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The temperature and salinity characteristics of the waters of the reserve and its surroundings are not unlike those of the continental shelf between Cabo de La Nao and Cabo de Gata, being heavily affected by the seasons and Atlantic waters flowing from El Estrecho.

In summer, the average temperature (25°C) and salinity (36.9%) of the first 20 m are, in open water, the highest in the Peninsula coast.

Posidonia oceanica beds (sea plant), rocky sea beds and sedimentary areas, distinguish the reserve's underwater landscape.

BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

The area of Cabo de Palos is considered a biogeographical frontier of the Mediterranean which, along with Cabo de Gata, segregates the sea of Alborán, of greater Atlantic influence, from the rest of the Mediterranean.

The *Posidonia oceanica* beds constitute a characteristic landscape on the sea beds of the east Iberian coast. Some of the Spanish coast's most extensive and best-conserved formations of this plant can be found to the north and south of the reserve.

They are home to a great wealth of species (biodiversity), particularly molluscs, several new listings of which have been made for the area.

This enormous biodiversity is due to the great variety of environments which exist, as a result of the relief of the bottoms and incoming bodies of water from distant places.

Several species of commercial interest are common in the marine reserve, particularly grouper (*Epinephelus guaza*), the European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), common dentex (*Dentex dentex*) and gilthead seabream (*Sparus aurata*). Pelagic species abound too, such as the greater amberjack (*Seriola dumerilii*) and scombroidea fish such as the Atlantic bonito (*Sarda sarda*) and the bullet tuna (*Auxis rochei*).

PRACTICAL ADVICE

A marine reserve is a protected area. Its conservation depends on everyone:

- Find out about its restrictions
- Cooperate in its protection and maintenance and remember that it is **prohibited** to:
 - Practice recreational marine fishing onboard or underwater fishing
 - Practice any kind of professional or recreational fishing or any removal of marine flora and fauna, unless authorized in the corresponding rules
 - Posses any devices used by divers or fishermen which could be used for fishing or harvesting marine species
- Scuba diving authorization is granted by the Functional Area of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Office of the Government Delegate (Área Funcional de Agricultura y Pesca de la Delegación del Gobierno) in Murcia or the Territorial Services of the Directorate of Livestock and Fisheries (Servicios Territoriales de la Dirección de Ganadería y Pesca) of Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia