

ISLA DE TABARCA

MARINE RESERVE

ALICANTE - SPAIN



SECRETARÍA GENERAL DEL MAR ~ SGM

CREATION

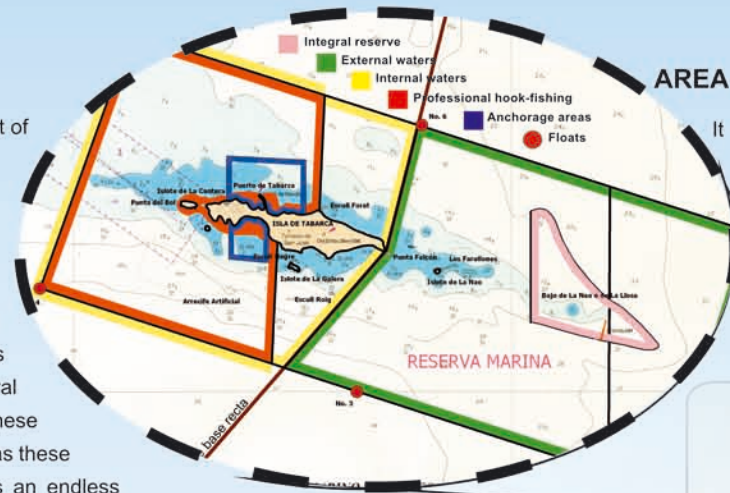
In 1986 the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA - Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of the Generalitat of Valencia (Conselleria de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación de la Generalitat Valenciana) created the Marine Reserve under Ministerial Order of 4th April 1986 and Order of 4th April 1986 of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, based on a study that Alicante City Council had commissioned to the city's university. Tabarca is the oldest Marine Reserve.

AIMS OF THE MARINE RESERVE

Artisanal fisheries: Protection, enhancement and development of resources of fisheries interest to maintain sustainable fisheries enabling artisanal fishermen in the area to preserve their traditional way of life.

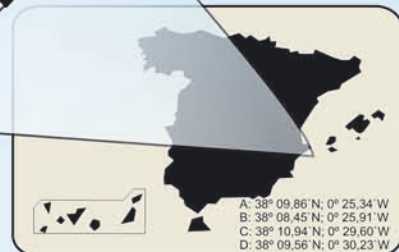
Protecting the flora and fauna of its waters and bottoms.

Marine research and nature watching. The well-preserved bottoms of Tabarca are ideal for regulated low-impact activities such as scuba diving and snorkelling, so not only can the general public enjoy its wealth of natural assets, but awareness of these assets is raised too. It goes without saying that assets such as these are of enormous interest to the scientific community as an endless source of information and research on marine life is revealed by its waters.



AREA

It comprises internal waters, within the Regional Government, and external waters, whose management falls within the MARM, holding a total surface area of 1,400 hectares.



GENERAL FEATURES

Aside from the established fishing objective, the basic principles of a Marine Reserve are the conservation and preservation of exceptional natural values and biological diversity. In each protected marine area there are species that, due to their peculiarity, rarity or abundance, have a significant value and have become emblematic of each Reserve.

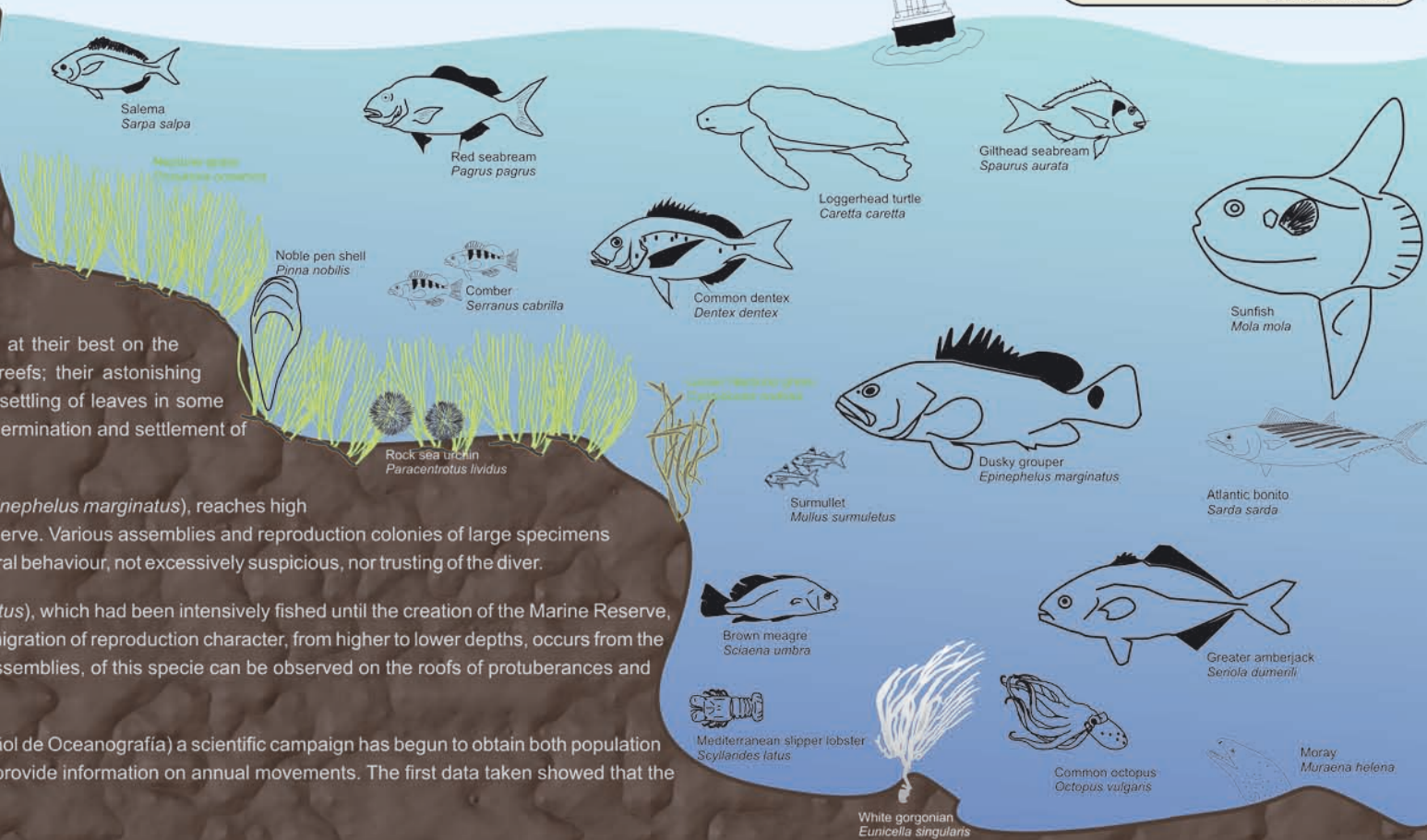
The most significant plant specie, the marine phanerogam *Posidonia oceanica* (neptune-grass), endemic to the Mediterranean Sea, occupies practically 80% of the Reserve's sedimentary or mixed sea beds. This plant gives the marine landscape a particular aspect as colour-covered rocky corners are surrounded by *Posidonia oceanica*'s large green leaves.

All the development aspects of grassland areas or 'algae forests' are seen at their best on the Reserve's sea beds: their growth on steps or on terraces, or by forming reefs; their astonishing accumulation of dead leaves, forming stratum along the coast line; and the settling of leaves in some corners. Even the rare flowering, formation of fruits, dissemination of seeds, germination and settlement of plantlets of this valuable plant have been observed and followed step by step.

The second of them – the reserve's 'King of the Seas' - the dusky Grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*), reaches high densities as both juvenile and adult individuals in all corners of the Marine Reserve. Various assemblies and reproduction colonies of large specimens exist in the maximum-protected area at a moderate depth. Animals display natural behaviour, not excessively suspicious, nor trusting of the diver.

Finally, within the crustacean, the Mediterranean slipper lobster (*Scyllarides latus*), which had been intensively fished until the creation of the Marine Reserve, remarkably recovered its population numbers. Little is known of this specie. A migration of reproduction character, from higher to lower depths, occurs from the beginning of spring to the beginning of summer. Then large densities, even assemblies, of this specie can be observed on the roofs of protuberances and rocky caves.

In collaboration with the Spanish Oceanographic Institute (IEO - Instituto Español de Oceanografía) a scientific campaign has begun to obtain both population and ethology data of the specie through marking and releasing. Re-captures provide information on annual movements. The first data taken showed that the densities of this specie in the Reserve are remarkably high.



REGULATED ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Integral reserve	External waters	Internal waters
Professional hook-fishing	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Artisanal hook-fishing	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Professional hook-fishing with floats	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Artisanal hook-fishing with floats	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Scuba diving	Prohibited	Allowed	Allowed
Snorkelling	Prohibited	Allowed	Allowed
Underwater photography	Prohibited	Allowed	Allowed
Underwater videography	Prohibited	Allowed	Allowed
Underwater research	Prohibited	Allowed	Allowed

Surveillance: Patrol boats ("Punta Falcon", "Llania" and "Lisa" vessels) Rangers, GPS video camera, night vision devices, diving equipment, ROV and camera.



RESOURCES



CHALLENGES

- Increasing fishermen awareness on the importance of Marine Reserves.
- Increasing stakeholders education.
- Keeping poachers out of the Marine Reserve.
- Balancing good scuba diving and artisanal fisheries.
- Reducing the threats and impacts of human-induced effects.
- Ensuring better flow of data and information to the managers.
- Tackling the threat of invasive non-native species.
- Reducing the underwater fishing in the Reserve boundaries.

RESULTS

- Recovery of exploited stocks and fishery enhancement.
- Protection of the marine biodiversity.
- Marine laboratories for scientific follow up and research.
- Public awareness of the need and benefit of Marine Reserves.
- Good diving practice compatible with resource protection.

Order of 4th April 1986 (BOE no. 112 of 10th May 1986 and DOGV no. 397 of 27th June 1986)
 Order of 15th June 1988 (BOE no. 163 of 8th July 1988)
 Order of 24th July 2000 (BOE no. 184 of 2nd August 2000)
 Order of 19th October 2000 (DOGV no. 3368 of 31st October 2000)
 Decree 40/2006 of 24th March 2006 (DOGV no. 11366 of 28th March 2006)