

Photo: Sebastia Torrens

VISITING HOURS

The Park is open from 9 am to 6 pm between 1 April and 30 September, and from 9 am to 5 pm between 1 October and 31 March.

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 year-round, except for Christmas and New Year's Day). A special permit is required for groups, and must be requested from the Park in advance.

ACCESS

THE PARK MAY BE ACCESSED ON FOOT OR BY BICYCLE, by way of the Pont dels Anglesos [the Englishmen's Bridge]. Parking for vehicles is available along the roads skirting the residential areas adjacent to the Park, or in the designated parking area next to the Pont dels Anglesos (on the Can Picafort side). Special visiting arrangements for physically disabled visitors can be obtained on request to the Park.

RULES

- Please respect the wildlife and other values that have made this protected area possible. The removal of plants, flowers, animals or their remains is not permitted.
- Please remain on the marked paths at all times, proceed slowly if on a bicycle, and respect the signposting.
- Bicycles with more than two wheels are not permitted in the Park.
- Please respect the Park's visiting hours.
- Noise disturbs the animals and the other visitors. Please move about quietly.
- Food is not allowed in the hides, nor are picnics allowed in the Park.
- Sports activities are not allowed within the Park (jogging, horseback riding, mountain biking, etc.).
- Please do not bring pets (particularly dogs) into the Park.
- In the case of a violation of the rules, the Park staff may revoke the visitor's permit.

Parc natural de s'Albufera de Mallorca
Ctra. Port d'Alcúdia - Artà, Km 5,2 (Ma - 12)
Llista de Correus. E-07458 Can Picafort - MALLORCA
Tel.: 971 89 22 50 - Fax: 971 89 21 58 (Open to the public from 9 am to 4 pm)
parc.albufera@gmail.com
espaisnaturalsprotegits.caib.es

Orchis pilustris
Photo: P.N. S'Albufera



S'ALBUFERA DE MALLORCA

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 1646,48 hectares, mainly of wet grassland and marsh, the Park lies within the municipalities of Muro and Sa Pobla. The origins of the wetland date back to ancient times, and its surface area and features have fluctuated with changing sea levels.

While part of the grassland area developed during the Tertiary Era, the current wetlands were formed less than 100,000 years ago. The coastal dunes are considerably more recent, forming over the last 10,000 years or so.



Porphyrio porphyrio
Photo: Sebastia Torrens

WATER, FLORA & FAUNA

Water is the basis for S'Albufera's ecological wealth. Water and the moisture of the soil enable the constant growth of vegetation, which varies depending on water depth, proximity to the sea and type of terrain. Much of the Park's water is rained by way of seasonal streams and springs from subterranean aquifers. Though the amounts of sea-water penetrating during the summer months are relatively small, this input has a definite impact on flora and fauna alike.

The Park vegetation is dominated by common reed (*Phragmites australis*), fen sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and, to a lesser extent, reedmace (*Typha spp.*). Other plants, such as fennel pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*) and rigid hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), live submerged in the waters of the canals. The more brackish waters are home to rushes (*Juncus spp.*) and glassworts (*Sarcocornia spp.*). Foremost amongst the trees of the Park are the white poplar (*Populus alba*), the elm (*Ulmus minor*) and the tamarisk (*Tamarix spp.*). Dune plants, such as the sea daffodil (*Pancratium maritimum*), the local endemic Thymelaea (*Thymelaea velutina*) and the prickly juniper (*Juniperus oxycedrus macrocarpa*), are adapted to the harsh conditions of their sandy substrate.

Fungi are well represented. A good diversity currently numbers 205

species including one, *Psathyrella halofila* 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 mullets (*Chelon and Liza spp.*). The Iberian marsh frog (*Pelophylax perezi*) is abundant, and the most frequently seen reptiles are the viperine snake (*Natrix maura*) and European pond terrapin (*Emys orbicularis*). The 22 mammal species include mice, rats and a range of bats.

Among a huge abundance of invertebrates are numerous varieties of dragonflies, flies and beetles, while moth species exceed 450.

The bird list has reached 303 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 MANAGEMENT OF THE PARK

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 and 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 Majorcan 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 previous 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.

The Park also includes in its programme a series of research and monitoring activities which play an essential role in guiding the management of S'Albufera, ranging from ornithological and plant-related to monitoring the weather. Equally, S'Albufera Natural Park is open to tourists, families, naturalists, photographers, schoolchildren and anyone else who wishes to come and enjoy nature. The Park has a reception centre, a permanent exhibition, a network of trails and itineraries, bird-watching hides, observation points and publications in several different languages.



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