

TABLE 1

Mooring systems		
L'Illa Grossa	GPS Coordinate	
1	39° 53, 872' N	00° 41, 237' E
2	39° 53, 780' N	00° 41, 281' E
3	39° 53, 758' N	00° 41, 195' E
4	39° 53, 736' N	00° 41, 138' E
5	39° 53, 739' N	00° 41, 068' E
6	39° 53, 791' N	00° 41, 044' E
7	39° 53, 828' N	00° 41, 086' E
8	39° 53, 834' N	00° 41, 151' E
9	39° 53, 801' N	00° 41, 178' E
10	39° 53, 785' N	00° 41, 108' E
11	39° 53, 796' N	00° 40, 872' E
12	39° 53, 769' N	00° 41, 017' E
13	39° 53, 675' N	00° 40, 920' E
La Ferrera	GPS Coordinate	
14	39° 53, 515' N	00° 39, 974' E
La Foradada	GPS Coordinate	
15	39° 52, 519' N	00° 40, 133' E
16	39° 52, 467' N	00° 40, 162' E

**CONVENTIONAL SIGNS**

- Marine reserve**
  - Scientific studies with prior authorization of MARM
  - Boat anchoring, underwater fishing, and any kind of fishing without the specific permission scuba diving, and removal of animals, plants, objects and rocks are prohibited
  - Any kind of fishing is prohibited with the exception of the vessels with prior authorization of MARM
- No-take reserve**
  - Any kind of activities are prohibited with the exception of scientific studies with prior authorization
- Special use areas**
  - Scuba diving with prior authorization of MARM
  - Scientific studies with prior authorization of MARM
  - Anchoring, underwater fishing, any kind of fishing and removal of animals, plants, objects and rocks are prohibited

**LEYENDA**

- Reserva marina**
  - Muestreos científicos autorizados por el MARM
  - Prohibido el fondeo, la pesca submarina, el buceo con escafandra autónoma y la recolección o extracción de organismos, o partes de organismos, animales o vegetales, objetos o rocas
  - Queda prohibida cualquier tipo de pesca a excepción de las embarcaciones que dispongan de autorización del MARM
- Reserva marina integral**
  - Prohibida cualquier actividad salvo con fines científicos, previa autorización del MARM
- Zona de usos restringidos**
  - Buceo con escafandra autónoma previa autorización del MARM
  - Muestreos científicos autorizados por el MARM
  - Prohibido el fondeo, la pesca submarina, cualquier tipo de pesca y la recolección o extracción de organismos, animales o vegetales, objetos o rocas



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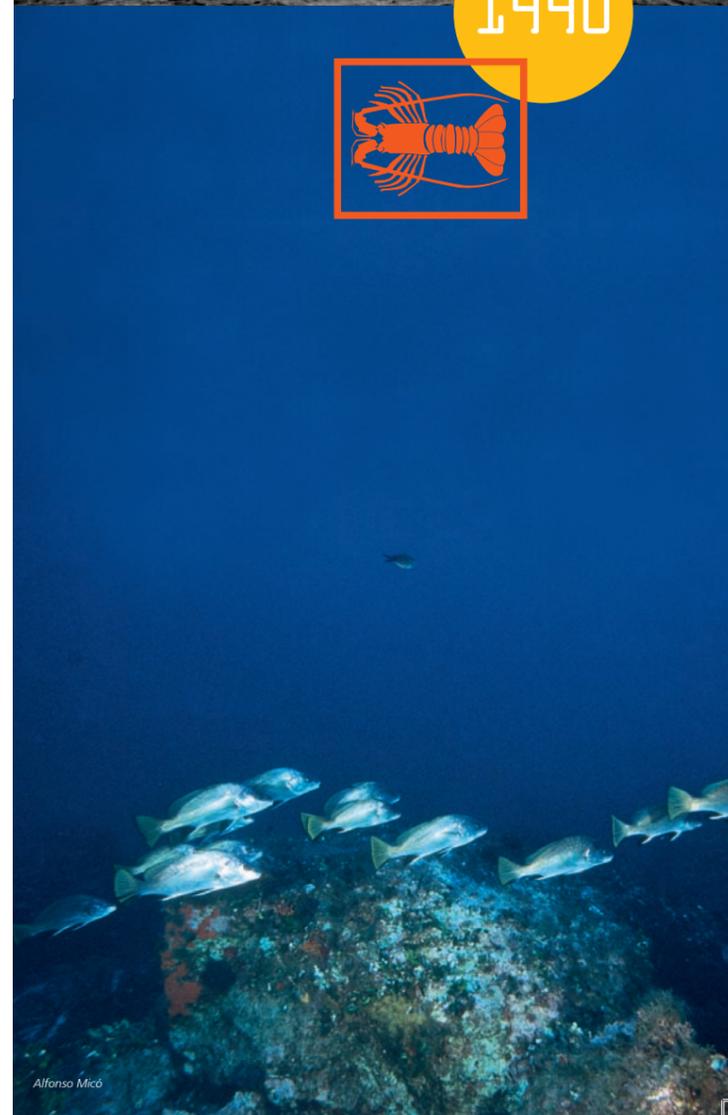
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**Marine reserves website:** [www.reservasmarinas.net](http://www.reservasmarinas.net)  
**Contact:** [reservasmarinas@marm.es](mailto:reservasmarinas@marm.es)

**ISLAS COLUMBRETES**  
 marine reserve



1990



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## DESIGNATION

Thirty miles off the coast of Castellón a singular archipelago formed by four groups of volcanic isles is visible: **the Islas Columbretes**. Surrounded by clear waters and sheer underwater cliffs, the isles provide the ideal conditions for abundant marine life.

In 1990 the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA -Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación) created the marine reserve of Islas Columbretes under **Ministerial Order of 19th April 1990 (BOE no. 97, of 23rd April 1990)**. The Management Plan approved by Ministerial Order ARM/384/2008 of the Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, reflects the new zoning and allowed uses. The marine reserve has a total area of 5543 ha comprising, in its totality, external waters under the General State Administration management.

The marine reserve encompasses two no-take marine reserves, located at El Carallot and El Murall del Cementeri, and three of special use: L'Illa Grossa, La Ferrera and La Foradada.

The archipelago, which has been also protected under the figure of the Comunidad Valenciana since 1988, is now a Nature Reserve.

The marine reserve of Islas Columbretes also belongs to the Natura 2000 Network and it has been declared as a SPAMI (Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Interest. Barcelona Convention).

## AIMS OF THE MARINE RESERVE

### Protecting the flora and fauna of its waters and sea beds

The uniqueness of the archipelago includes the organisms which inhabit its ocean bottoms, such as species which are now rare in other Mediterranean areas, highly fragile communities of organisms or unique populations on our coasts.

### Protecting and regenerating resources of fisheries interest

Objective achieved by lessening the impact of fishing in the area thereby ensuring artisanal fisheries are sustained.

### Marine research and nature observation

The singularity and high level of conservation of the ocean bottoms of the Islas Columbretes disclose a unique insight into marine life, which is of great interest to the scientific community. The reserve is a well-conserved environment

in which to engage in regulated low-impact activities such as recreational scuba diving.

## BOUNDARIES AND AREAS

### Marine reserve

The reserve falls between the following points:

- a: 39° 55,700' N; 000° 38,730' E
- b: 39° 55,700' N; 000° 42,910' E
- c: 39° 49,400' N; 000° 41,180' E
- d: 39° 49,400' N; 000° 38,730' E

### No-take reserve of El Murall del Cementeri

The reserve falls between the previous points (coordinates) of the marine reserve placed to the north of the parallel 39° 54,500' N

### No-take reserve of El Carallot

It comprises the marine reserve waters placed to the south of the parallel 39° 51,900' N

### Restricted use zone/area of L'Illa Grossa

It comprises the surrounding waters of this island inside a 0,5 nautical miles radio, with center in the coordinates point: 39° 53,800' N; 000° 41,200' E

### Restricted use zone/area of La Ferrera

It comprises the surrounding waters of this island inside a 0.5 nautical miles radio centred on the point: 39° 53,500' N; 000° 40,005' E

### Restricted use zone/area of La Foradada

It comprises the surrounding waters of this island inside a 0.6 nautical miles radio centred on the point: 39° 52,470' N; 000° 40,230' E

WGS-84 Datum coordinates.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE MARINE RESERVE

### Prohibited activities

- Anchoring anywhere in the marine reserve
- Underwater fishing throughout the marine reserve
- Any activity in the no-take reserves, unless for previously authorized scientific purposes
- Any kind of fishing in no-take reserves and areas of special use. Fishing in other

areas of the marine reserve is prohibited, except for vessels with the corresponding authorization

- Professional fishing by vessels without authorization subject to the specific marine reserve census
- Any unauthorized removal of marine flora or fauna
- Any unauthorized removal of articles or rocks
- Any kind of spill
- The overnight in La Ferrera or Foradada buoys

### Activities subject to authorization

- Recreational fishing out of the no-take reserves and areas of special use\*
- Professional fishing. Authorization shall be specified with the inclusion of the vessel concerned in the specific marine reserve census
- Recreational scuba diving. Dives must always be made from the existing buoys in the reserve (see table 1)\*
- Scientific sampling expeditions

\* Authorization is granted by the Sub-office of the Government in Castellón, Agency for the Funcional Area for Agriculture and Fisheries (Subdelegación del Gobierno en Castellón, Dependencia del Area Funcional de Agricultura y Pesca)

## BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

The bottoms of the marine reserve present a great variety of environments: steep walls and crevices, bottoms littered with sand and gravel, maerl beds and meadows of *Cymodocea nodosa*, a marine phanerogam.

The main Mediterranean marine communities, largely segregated by light, hydrodynamism and bottom type, are found in the archipelago.

Thanks to the clearness of its waters, the bottoms of the Islas Columbretes reveal a thick blanket of algae which reaches considerable depths and allows the development of interesting deep-water algal communities. Characteristic deep-water species, such as brown algae (*Laminaria rodriguezii*, *Cystoseira spp.*), are common place in Islas Columbretes.

The marine communities and habitats in the islands are exceptionally well-conserved. The fragility and abundance of deep-water benthonic communities (Coraligen) on the reserve's bottoms are particularly noteworthy, as are the *Cladocora caespitosa* reefs, the meadows of *Cymodocea nodosa*; maerl beds; fish stocks, scare in other places, such as Dusky grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*); and not forgetting its Noble pen shell (*Pinna nobilis*); the red Common Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*), of enormous fisheries importance; and the Mediterranean gorgonian (*Paramuricea clavata*).

## RESOURCES

The marine reserve of the Islas Columbretes has a fisheries patrol engaged in surveillance and protection tasks, amongst others. The marine reserve has three vessels for these purposes: "Nixe", "Guadalupe" and "Ophiusa".

The three existing areas of special use in the marine reserve have a series of mooring systems for vessels visiting the reserve. There are a total of 16 mooring systems: 10 in Puerto Tofiño, 3 west of L'Illa Grossa, 1 west of La Ferrera and 2 west of La Foradada (see table 1). The use of the mooring buoys is subject to restrictions of length; ask for information in the marine reserve. Anchoring to the mooring system must be done by passing the vessel's rope through the loop of the anchor buoy.

## RESULTS

Thanks to the protection granted the islands and their waters, species heavily affected by human fishing activity have had the chance to recover. Such recovery is essential for the conservation of the Mediterranean ecosystems and their biodiversity and, in turn, hugely benefits artisanal fisheries in the area as the reserve serves as a "store" of species of fisheries interest.

## PRACTICAL ADVICE

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

- Find out about its restrictions.
- Cooperate in its protection and maintenance and remember that it is **prohibited** to:
  - Underwater fishing
  - Practice any activity in the no-take reserves
  - Any kind of professional or recreational fishing and any removal of flora and fauna, unless authorized in the corresponding rules
  - Unauthorized recreational scuba diving
  - Possess any device used by divers or fishermen which could be used for fishing or harvesting marine species

**The patrol service can be received through channel 9 on VHF. For trips to L'Illa Grossa, please notify the patrol by radio. It is prohibited disembark at any other island.**