



**Technical data**  
Atlantic Islands of Galicia  
Protection status National Park  
Autonomous community: Galicia  
Provinces: Pontevedra y A Coruña  
Surface area: 8,480 Ha  
(7,285.2 marine y 1,194.8 land)  
Latitude: 42° 23' 1" N (Lighthouse of Ons)  
Longitude: 9° 56' 6" W (Lighthouse of Ons)  
Date of creation 1 July 2002  
Legislation: Law 15/2002

**Addresses**  
MARITIME-TERRESTRIAL NATIONAL PARK OF THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS OF GALICIA  
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www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com  
www.facebook.com/ParqueNacionalIslasAtlanticasDeGalicia

**Recognition**  
Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB): Cíes Islands (1988) Ons Islands (2001)  
Site of Community importance (SCI)  
Natural Value Special Protection Area (Decreto 72/2004, on 2nd April)  
OSPAR Zone (2008)

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Fauna photos 8, 11 - Portada y Flora photos 9, 10, 11: JL González / CEMEAM-MAGRAMA / Flora foto 8: ZOEAM-CEMEAM-MAGRAMA

### Sálvora archipelago

**Routes**

- Route 1 (Lighthouse) 1,2 Km - 45min. round trip
- Route 2 ( Hamlet) 1,3 Km - (with authorized guidance only)

### Cortegada archipelago

**Routes**

- Option A, 3,2 Km - 1h 15 min (circular)
- Option B, 2,1 Km - 45 min (circular)

### Ons archipelago

**Routes**

- Route 1 (Sur) 6,2 Km - 2h 30min (circular)
- Route 2 (Norte) 8,1 Km - 3h (circular)
- Route 3 (Faro) 4 Km - 1h 30min (circular)
- Route 4 (Castelo) 1,1 Km - 40min (circular)
- Links between routes
- Short option route 1
- Short option route 2

Arquipélago de Sálvora, Arquipélago de Ons, Arquipélago de Cíes

### Cíes archipelago

**Routes**

- Route 1 (Monte Faro) 7,4 Km - 2h 30min round trip
- Route 2 (Faro da Porta) 5,2 Km - 1h 45min round trip
- Route 3 (Alto do Príncipe) 3 Km - 1h 15min round trip
- Route 4 (Monteagudo) 5,6 Km - 1h 45min round trip
- Links between routes

**Information**

- Information
- Red Cross
- Public baths
- Bird observatory
- View point
- Camping
- Buraco do Inferno
- Access restricted from 02/15 to 07/31
- National Park marine limit

**Rules**

**Not allowed:**

- Camping, except in the designated areas.
- Wandering outside allowed areas.
- Lighting any type of fire.
- Entering the park with pets, except for seeingeye dogs
- Throwing or depositing rubbish. Remind that you should take the rubbish back to the port of origin as there are no refuse containers in the islands.
- Unauthorised sailing and anchoring of vessels.
- Sports or underwater fishing.
- Taking seashells, sands or stones from the islands
- Uprooting plants or disturbing animals.
- Making noises that alter the quietness of the place.

## General Information

### Access:

The Park can only be accessed by sea, via passenger boat services or private vessels. Various shipping lines offer scheduled services, weather permitting, as well as services for prebooked groups of visitors.

For more information about transport companies with services to the islands, the period of service, times and bookings, please ask at any Xunta de Galicia Tourist Office, the Town Councils in the surrounding area or via the Internet.

### Information Points

Information offices are available on Cíes and Ons islands, close to the passenger embarkation areas, and they are open during the period of regular passenger transport. There are also another information centres with an interpretative exhibition on Cíes and Ons islands.

### National Park Visitor Centre

It's located in Vigo's old town, close to the Maritime Station. Entrance is free and it's open all year round. A previous visit to the Centre before going to the National Park is highly recommended. In that way you can have updated and accurate information on the protected area, the services available for visitors during the different periods of the year and the recommendations for your visit.

### Routes

The Park has specialized staff in guided walking tours. This service is offered on application outside of the summer season. The request form and conditions are available on our website (Applications-Permissions section). During the summer period (the week before Easter, the weekends in May and from 1st June to 30th of September) it is necessary to inquire about the daily guided itineraries at the information booths of the islands for participation.

The marked routes in the maps allow independent walking tours in each of the Park's archipelagos.

### Other Services

There are campsites in the Cíes islands and Ons island open during the regular transport service in summer (see website). In both cases there is a daily capacity limit.

### Recommendations:

- You should take a bag for your waste which should be taken back to the port of origin as there are no refuse containers on the islands.
- Walk on allowed paths
- Don't get near the cliffs, it's dangerous
- Don't forget to get enough drink and sunprotection.
- Take a sports shoes and comfortable clothes, but don't forget some warm clothes for the sea trip
- Listen to the guides, vigilants and keepers indications

### Rules

**Diving:** you must request for authorization, provided that weights are used, by filling in the form from our website and send it to us.

**Sailing and anchoring:** written authorisation is required for sailing and anchoring in the waters of the National Park. The application form and the requirements for sailing permission can be obtained from the park's website or from the head offices. The anchoring permission can be obtained directly from the park's website; the sailing licence is previously required for an anchoring authorisation to be issued.

**Sport and submarine fishing:** it's forbidden inside the National Park.

### Not allowed:

- Camping, except in the designated areas.
- Wandering outside allowed areas.
- Lighting any type of fire.
- Entering the park with pets, except for seeingeye dogs
- Throwing or depositing rubbish. Remind that you should take the rubbish back to the port of origin as there are no refuse containers in the islands.
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# Maritime-Terrestrial National Park of The Atlantic Islands of Galicia

## A National Park dominated by rock and sea

Peaks once joined to the mountain ridges of the coast, and now isolated by coastal flooding, comprise a chain of islands that protects the estuaries.

The relief of the islands is characterised by two differentiated faces. The western face, which stares out at the open sea, is more abrupt, with sharp slopes that form cliffs. The eastern face, overlooking the estuaries, is less harsh in appearance, allowing beaches and dunes to form.

The strong winds full of sea salt, the scant land development and the relatively scarce rainfall have configured the natural features of the islands. Their close proximity to land, the uniqueness of their relief and the sea as a permanent scenic backdrop form stunning landscapes.

- **The archipelago of Cíes** begins to the south with San Martino island and continues with the islands of Monte Faro and Monte Agudo, both of which are joined by the Rodas sandbar.

- **The archipelago of Ons**, has the largest island in the park, the Ons island, with the small Onza on its side, both of them with flat-topped profile.

- **The archipelago of Sálvora**, whose largest island receives the same name is the island of low elevations, with a landscape of granite rocks rounded smooth by the wind. Located alongside of it are sandy islets such as Vionta and rocky ones such as Sagres.

- **The archipelago of Cortegada**, is formed by the largest Cortegada island, Malveiras islands and Briñas islets, which are practically flat. The estuary influence to which they are subjected creates a peculiar ecology.

## Main ecosystems represented

**Coastal ecosystems:** beaches and dune systems; cliffs.

**Sub-aquatic ecosystems:** Rocky sea beds, sandbars, Maërl bottoms, shingle bottoms and brown algae forests.

**Atlantic coastal and sub-Mediterranean scrublands**

## Marine bottoms hide the islands' treasures

The islands' extraordinary marine richness is explained by the sifting or rising up of nutrient-rich deep waters, nourishing the tiny microorganisms that are the basis of the food chain.

The circulation of marine and estuarial currents, the diversity of substrates and the relief of bottoms give the marine environment different ecological scenarios that account for the great variety of marine flora and fauna. This is the park's great hidden treasure.



Dorna (traditional fishing boat)

## Man and his influence on the Park and its surroundings

### Cultural aspects

From the Bronze Age until well into the 20th century, the intermittent presence of inhabitants was conditioned by the resources of the environment and the visits of invaders or enemies. Celtic and roman settlements, monasteries and graves from the Middle Ages, hermitages, fortifications, archaeological remains and more modern constructions attest to the human presence on these islands. Dependant on fishing, farming and raising livestock to survive, and prone to the forays of pirates and corsairs, settlers had to leave the islands on several occasions throughout history. In the mid-20th century, the hardships-crackle existence on the islands compared to life on the mainland led to their gradual depopulation. The isolation that they had to endure for long periods of time gave rise to a culture rich in superstitions and folklore; knowledge was also gained about the natural surroundings, medicinal plants and the sea, especially in Ons Island which owns the latest inhabitants of the Park. In recent decades, the increased popularity of Cíes and Ons among tourists has produced markedly seasonal flows of people, which is currently in the process of being regulated.



House in Ons

Siren Monument in Sálvora

## Fishing and sustainable management

For centuries, the towns and villages located near the islands have been fishing in their waters for such species as swimmer crabs, razor shells, sea bass and octopus. Since they are performed using artisanal techniques, this activity is compatible with the conservation of the Park's marine bottoms and therefore with their sustainable management.

## Territorial scope:

The Atlantic Islands are four archipelagos belonging to the Rías Baixas (Lower Estuaries), off the coast of Pontevedra and A Coruña

The National Park comprises the Cíes, Ons, Sálvora and Cortegada archipelagos and the surrounding waters (which makes the 86% of the total surface area). Cíes is located off the estuary of Vigo; Ons is at the entrance of the Pontevedra inlet; Sálvora, at the beginning of Arousa estuary, and Cortegada is sheltered in the interior of the same estuary. They are located in the municipalities of Vigo, Bueu, Ribeira and Vilagarcía, respectively.

The climate is less harsh than what would be expected for its location, with less rainfall and milder temperatures than on the nearby Atlantic coast.

## Flora

Sunlight and waves have a bearing on the distribution of marine flora, as do the depth and features of the substrate. On the western side of the islands, large brown algae (genera: *Laminaria* and *Saccorhiza*) have a notable presence, forming genuine sub-aquatic forests. It also stands out maërl bottoms which are formed by grouping of thousands of small sized coralline seaweeds of different species. **Terrestrial flora needs protection from aridity, salt and wind.** The Park's different ecosystems contain varied forms of plant life.

**Beaches and dunes**, highly arid environments, force plants to make special adaptations: light colours that reflect sunlight, very deep roots, water-storing bulbs, etc. These plants have a very limited distribution and are afforded mandatory protection. Sand reeds, sea daffodils and *Malcolmia littorea* are some of the representative species of these environs. Rarer, but of great importance, are *Corema album* and *Armeria pungens*.

**Cliffs**, areas with a scant substrate and exposed to strong winds full of sea salt, only allow the survival of highly adapted plants such as sea fennel, seathrift or seaside chamomile. Standing out as a plant exclusive to north-western Iberia is *Angelica pachycarpa*, which is commonly found on the cliffs frequented by colonies of seagulls.

**Brushwood**, dominated by gorse, forms a sub-Mediterranean scrubland with such species as daphne and the narrow-leaved rockrose. Noteworthy as an indigenous species of this scrubland is *Cytisus insularis*, a broom that has only been found in the Park. **Tree stands** are mainly the result of reforestation with such species as eucalyptuses, pines and acacias, with clusters of such autochthonous species as sessile oaks and blackthorns. In Cortegada we also found amazing forests of bay laurel with individuals that reach 12 m height.



- ① Bay laurel woodland · *Laurus nobilis*
- ② Thrift grassland · *Armeria pubigera*
- ③ Ons broom · *Cytisus insularis*
- ④ Rock samphire · *Crithmum maritimum*
- ⑤ Angelica · *Angelica pachycarpa*
- ⑥ Sand toadflax · *Linaria arenaria*
- ⑦ Marram grass · *Ammophila arenaria*
- ⑧ Green algae · *Codium sp.* y *Ulva sp.*



## Fauna

Best represented in the park is the marine environment; with its array of different settings, it provides a high degree of faunal diversity. Inhabiting sea-swept **rocky areas** are organisms that have developed mechanisms to attach themselves to the rocks: goose barnacles, limpets, mussels, sea acorns, etc. From the tidal line and as waters get deeper, hidden among the cracks are sea anemones, sea urchins, winkles, crabs, gudgeons and octopi. **Sandy bottoms**, which lack a firm substrate, are the home of some species that live buried in the sand: razor shells, cockles and clams, while others try to blend in with the surface such as turbot, cuttlefish and hermit crabs.

**Other shifting bottoms** are those formed by calcareous algae, called Maërl bottoms; and the gravel bottom, made up of bits of shells, where communities similar to those in sandy bottoms can be found.

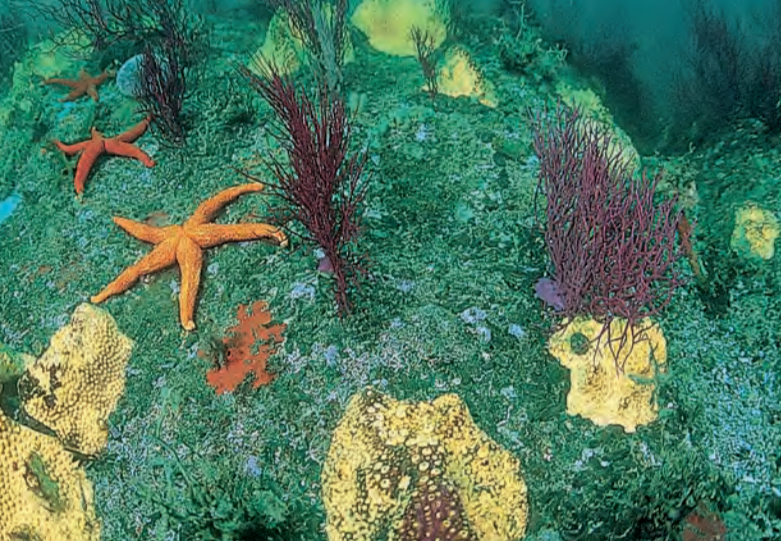
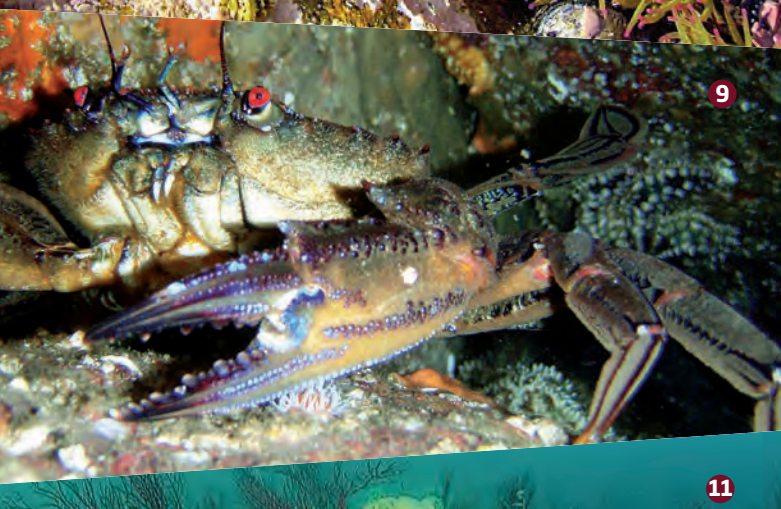
The abundance of marine organisms allows populations of nest-building **marine birds** to thrive, such as the yellowlegged seagull and the shag, which constitute some of the world's most important colonies, and to a lesser extent the sooty tern, the storm petrel and the Cory's shearwater. Also taking advantage of these resources are wintering or migrating birds such as great cormorants, gannets, Balearic shearwaters, razorbills and sandwich terns.

Inhabiting areas with less marine influence are such birds as peregrine falcons, salamanders in the amphibian family and such reptiles as five-toed skinks and ocellated lizards, as well as the rare Spanish Festoon butterfly among insects.

Mammals are scarce, although there is plenty of rabbits which practically have no predators. In recent years, otters have reappeared.



- ① Yellow-legged gull · *Larus michahellis*
- ② Ocellated lizard · *Timon lepidus*
- ③ Kentish plover · *Charadrius alexandrinus*
- ④ Spanish Festoon · *Zerynthia rumina*
- ⑤ Shags · *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
- ⑥ School of white seabreams · *Diplodus sargus*
- ⑦ Sea urchins, sea anemones, etc. (intertidal zone)
- ⑧ Goose barnacles · *Pollicipes pollicipes*



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