

# The Habibas



Legal status	Marine nature reserve
Foundation year	2003
Foundation text	Decree n° 03-147
Management body	National Commission for the Coast
Superficy	2684 ha
Management category (IUCN, 1994)	III

## Territory

The Habibas Islands lie about 26 miles west of Oran, 5.8 miles from the nearest continental point at Madagh II, west of Cap Cigale, better known as Cap Blanc. The islands, located in water under Algerian jurisdiction, are on a NE-SW axis.



The Habibas Islands have been a SPAMI since 2005 because of their remarkable marine diversity and their untouched heritage character



## Physical features

The Habibas are almost entirely made up of volcanic rocks (brown dacite in the north, pale whitish-greenish rhyolite in the south), the two formations being separated by green gypseous marl. Limestone sediment (calcareous-clayey silts) carpets the islands' circumference.

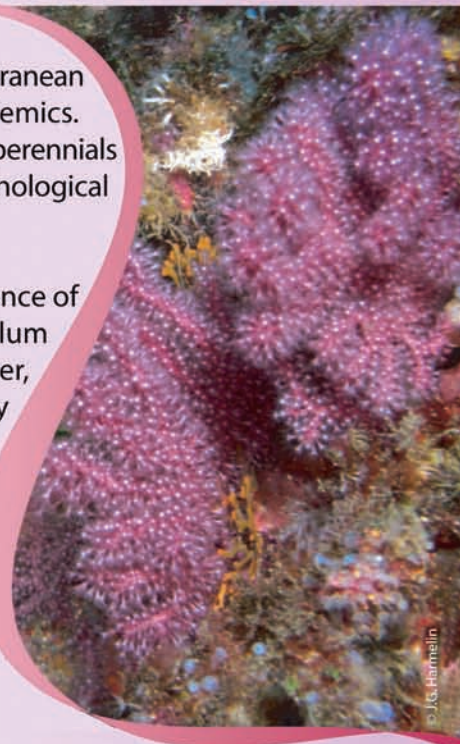
Shelly sand covers all the flat surfaces and clays extend to the depressed peri-littoral areas, there replaced by silts.

## Specificities and importance

The Habibas islands possess a floristic basis that is common to the western Mediterranean basin, among 97 recenssed species, 9 North African endemics or strict Oran endemics. The great diversity of the environments, including areas of bushy vegetation with perennials and areas of cliffs and rocks, offers ecological niches that are essential to the ornithological fauna.

The marine fauna and flora present a remarkable diversity marked by the presence of various species that are protected in the Mediterranean, particularly *Lithophyllum* banks, the ferreous limpet, the *Centrostephanus longispinus* urchin, the grouper, the noble pen shell and the dolphin. There are many dolphins, though not very diversified.

There is a great diversity of fish species: sea-bream, wrasse, sea-perch, and scorpion-fishes.



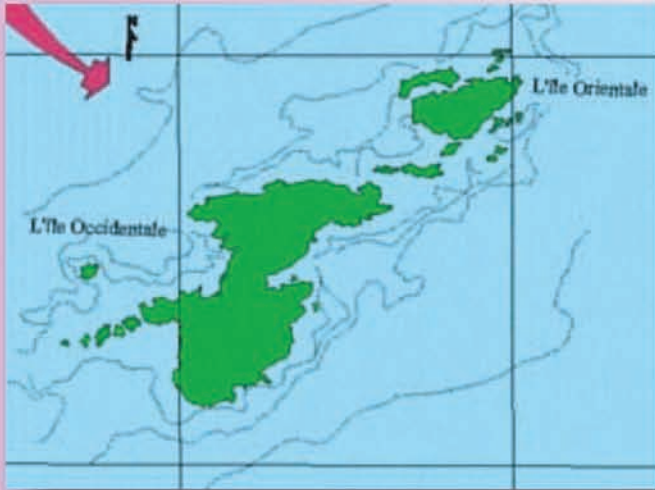


## Threats and pressures

Only the halieutic resources present an interest and make fishermen cast covetous eyes at the Habibas. The sophistication of the semi-commercial fishing gear pushes fishermen to approach the Islands to tap part of the stocks that have so far been preserved.

Also, there is a danger from demographic pressure and tourism.

Various tourist projects have been started in the coastal area precisely because of the presence of the Islands.



The geographical location of the Habibas Islands gives them a monitoring facility for the exploitation of the soil and subsoil, which is strictly regulated in Algeria, so much so that any exploitation is easily ruled out.

As for the sea, the basically halieutic activity can also be easily controlled from the Bou Zedjar port.

Part of the oceanographic scientific community has made the Habibas Islands a model for studying the marine environment.

## Management

A management plan is in the process of being crafted.

The edges of the reserve are marked by luminous markers and giant buoys adapted to the very unruly open sea and able to resist the drift current.

