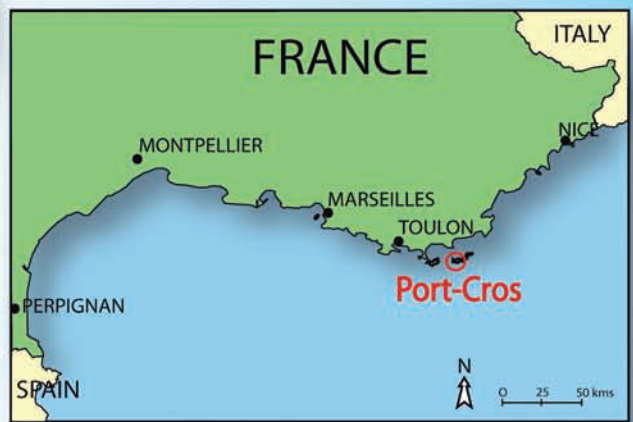


Port-Cros

Legal status	National park
Foundation year	1963
Foundation text	Decree no. 63-1235
Management body	Port-Cros National Park public institution
Superficy	2000 ha
Management category (IUCN, 1994)	II
Council of Europe certificate	



Port-Cros has been a SPAMI since 2001 for its management is exemplary and it is exceptionally rich in land and sea species

Territory

The Park consists of the island of Port-Cros, the Bagaud, La Gabinière and Le Rascas islets, listed as an integral reserve and a 600-metre-wide marine perimeter. The Park also manages 1,000 hectares made up of the natural perimeter of Porquerolles island, and, on the continent, the Conservatoire du Littoral lands of Cap Lardier (325 hectares) and the Giens peninsula (110 hectares).



Physical features

Port-Cros island, with a surface area of 650 hectares, is mountainous and has heavy vegetation. The old metamorphic rocks of gneiss and micaschist form the base of the archipelago. Port-Cros peaks at 196 m., with steep cliffs dominating the island's southern coast. Only a few coves and three little beaches offer easy access to the sea.

Specificities and Importance

The island is covered with very dense vegetation, dominated by maquis with oleo-lentisk plants and a mixed population of Aleppo pines and holm oaks.

There is also an interesting vegetation of coastal cliffs, dunes at the back of the beach, some wetland areas with a Mediterranean water system and a small dam at the centre of the island. Lichens and fungi are very well represented.

Several species of terrestrial fauna are remarkable, such as *Discoglossus Sardus*, a batrachian endemic to Corsica and Sardinia, and the specifically Mediterranean *Phyllodactylus* and the *Hemidactylus*, both of these geckos that are mainly active at night and find in the Hyères islands favourable environments. Port-Cros, the first land reached when coming from Africa, is an important place for migratory avifauna and also offers nesting for many heritage species (peregrine falcon, European nightjar, common Scops owl). Also, the coastal cliffs shelter colonies that are of national importance for two marine bird species, the Balearic shearwater and the Cory's shearwater.

The underwater domain extends over 1,300 hectares and also offers a great richness of landscapes and two main, particularly remarkable, ecosystems:

- the Posidonia meadow extends down to about 40 metres, and is a true source of biodiversity. It shelters a fine population of *Pinna nobilis* noble pen shells,
- the coralligenous, present on rocks from about twenty metres down, is made up of many fixed invertebrates, gorgonians, Bryozoa and sponges. It is a host to the dusky grouper, an emblem species – 550 individuals listed in 2008 – the grande cigale, *Centrostephanus longispinus*, and other species.

In all, over 180 species of fish, 265 species of crustacean, 92 species of sponge, 53 species of echinoderma and 173 species of mollusc have been found in the Park.

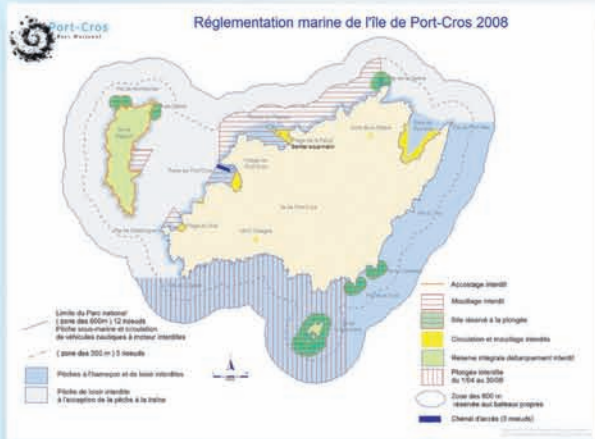


Threats and pressures



Human pressure on this territory is basically linked to summer tourism. During the months of July and August, nearly 3,000 visitors land every day to discover its exceptional landscapes dotted with a line of forts of great architectural and historical interest. In all it is estimated that there are 120,000 visitors a year, plus about 8,000 pleasure boats anchoring there, which gives a total of over 200,000 visitors. Over 60,000 dives were done in 2008 in the waters of the Park.

The introduction of exogenous animal (haret cat and black rat) and plant (carpobrotus sp., *Caulerpa taxifolia*) species can undermine certain biological balances, and thus it is necessary to regulate such 'undesirables'. Each year, a campaign to find and wipe out the alga *C. taxifolia* is organised in the marine part of the Park.



Management

The 5-year management plan has been updated to correspond to changes in the environment and human pressure. The (DOCOB) 'Natura 2000' Objective Document is a supplementary version of the management plan that applies to habitats and species of Community interest.

The long-term research programme, drawn up with the Scientific Council, is based on the permanent monitoring of species and environments. These observations enlighten the Park teams as to priority management measures to be introduced and how these will be put into effect.

Protecting the landscape capital of heritage species and habitats is done by the statutory or conventional supervision of usage (partnership charters) and by fittings and improvements that limit the impacts of frequentation: integrated parking for bicyclers, biological and landscape development of the area behind the beaches, ganivelles (fencing), barriers, and permanent ecological moorings for divers and pleasure boaters.

Charters negotiated in consultation with the users like commercial fishermen and underwater divers define the conditions in which such activities can be carried on and the places that are set aside for these.

Markers allow a visual grasp of the edges of the regulated areas: speed limits and mooring and sailing areas. The National Park is also responsible for managing the port of Port-Cros. It thus decides on the number of places on the dock, the sectors where there are mooring buoys, and the places where the passengers disembark.

'Park gate' notice-boards, an information office, an exhibition, an underwater trail and many theme-based publications are made available to visitors to teach them about the riches, the fragility of the natural environments and the rules of conduct that are essential for their protection.

Special attention is paid to pedagogical action for schoolchildren. Discovery trips are organised at the Fort de l'Eminence for them, in partnership with the Good Planet association and the Educational League.

