ULTURE & TRADITION



Salinas de San Pedro in 1931



Las Encañizadas

Mediterranean Sea, locally called "golas", a fishing gear known as Las



irgen del Carmen pilgrimage and the gastronomy, with dishes like Caldero (a

HE PARK RECOMMENDS



At Las Salinas Visitor Centre vou can find information to discover and enjoy this Protected Area. We recommend you a visit to the Exhibition and Projection Rooms where you can get a first contact with the natural and cultural values of the Park. In addition, you have a binoculars loan service to be able to see birds up close from the different bird hides located in the Regional Park, Likewise, there is a network of signposted itineraries, both walking and cycling, that cross the Salinas in San Pedro.

Visitor's Center "Las Salinas"

On your visit we recommend you to:

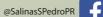
- Leave your vehicle in the authorized parking spaces.
- Always walk on authorized paths. Creating shortcuts deteriorates the soil. Always walk on the walkways and, never on the dunes.
- Keep pets on a lead and please clean up if necessary. Municipal laws do not allow the presence of pets on beaches. Find out beforehand about the existence of dog beaches.
- Respect the native fauna and flora.
- Avoid making noise as it could bother the wildlife and other visitors.

For more information:

Región de Murcia www.murcianatural.carm.es Centro de Visitantes "Las Salinas" Tel. 968 178 139 infosanpedro@carm.es

- Remember that it is forbidden to make fire camp and overnight parking.
- Take responsibility for the waste you generate, take it home or use the containers. Please remember that butts and any food waste are also considered rubbish.
- In the Mud Baths please remove the mud in the same pond in which you applied it, not in the Mar Menor.
- In summer avoid the central hours of the day, protect yourself from the sun and carry plenty of water in your bag.
- In case of emergency, call 112.

@SalinasSPedroPR





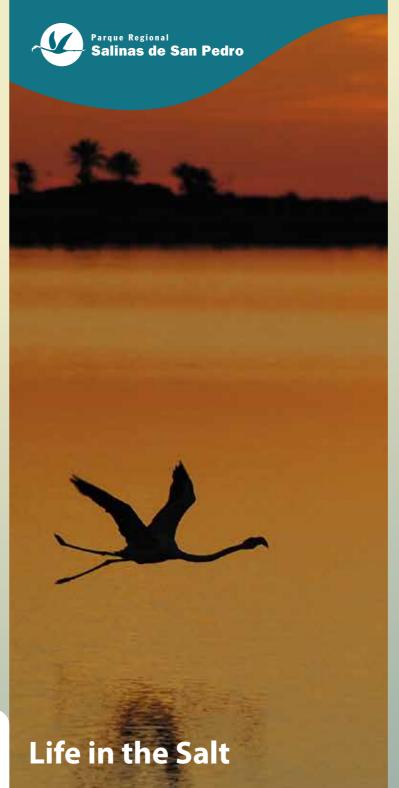












NTRODUCTION

The Salinas y Arenales in San Pedro del Pinatar Regional Park is a wetland located between the Mar Menor and the Mediterranean Sea, which has 856 hectares of land, distributed between the towns of San Javier and San Pedro del Pinatar.

This environment has been shaped by humans because of the conditions for salt production: scarce rainfall, high insolation and prevailing east winds. These characteristics, along with centuries of salt extraction, have given rise to different environments, with a flora and fauna adapted to these unique circumstances.

Despite its little surface, its natural and cultural values make it protected both nationally and internationally. In 1992 it was declared Regional Park and at the same time, became part of the Natura 2000 network. Later was designated a Wetland of International Importance according to the Ramsar Convention (1994) and in 1998 it was declared a Special Protection Area for birds (SPA). Together with the Mar Menor and other coastal areas in 2001 it became a part of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI). In 2019 the Master Plan for the Use and Management of the Regional Park was approved, becoming a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This plan is essential for the management and conservation of this environment.





Crystallizing Ponds

The way we see today the Regional Park is the result of the close relationship that humans have had for centuries with nature in search of the precious treasure of salt.

The saline waters, great protagonists of the landscape, travel from pond to pond helped by the experience of

the salt factory workers. They are in charge of opening the wooden gates located in the "motas", a term which refers to the long sand and stone dams built by humans to delimit the different ponds.

Without a doubt the most striking thing is the pink color of the ponds where the salt crystallizes, caused by microorganisms that survive in these extreme environments.

Between the salt flats and the sea, we find the salt marshes, in whose soils the water appears and disappears and the vegetation acquires reddish tonalities.

The horizontality of the landscape barely breaks Coterillo Pine Forest, whose trees appear lying on the sands due to incessant wind, loaded with salts coming from the sea.



Pine Forest

Before reaching the Mediterranean Sea, dunes and beaches show us a landscape in continuous evolution. This landscape was formed in the past by the sand that travelled from the mouth of the Segura River with the help of the Ocean currents.

Two more landscapes complete the mosaic of colors and curious shapes: Las Encañizadas, the natural and shallow connection between the Mar Menor and the Mediterranean Sea, and the water channel that surrounds the Park, which is in charge of collecting runoff waters and bring them to the sea.

The animals that inhabit the salt ponds are very different from those of the Mar Menor and Mediterranean Sea, despite its closeness. The extreme salinity of water is only resisted by the tiniest beings, like the brine shrimp (Artemia salina).



Brine Shrimp (Artemia salina)

The only fish that lives in the Salinas is the Spanish toothcarp (Aphanius iberus), unique to the Iberian Peninsula and in danger of extinction. The greater flamingo (Phoenicopterus roseus) is another great example of adaptation of life in salt flats. Since, among others things, they use their beak to filter shrimps in order to feed themselves. The salt ponds shores and the beaches are a buffet for waders, whose beaks and legs are adapted to extract small insects and mollusks from the mud.



Greater Flamingo (Phoenicopterus roseus)

Throughout black winged stilts (Himantopus himantopus) and avocets (Recurvirostra avosetta) can also be seen. However, it is only in autumn and winter when we can see godwits (Limosa sp.), sandpipers and dunlins (Calidris sp.) joining the group.



Baby Avocet
(Recurvirostra avosetta)

Other featured water birds are the shelduck (Tadorna tadorna), a duck of colorful plumage, several seagull species, diver bids such as black necked grebes (Podiceps nigricollis) or terns like the little tern (Sternula albifrons) that, arrived from Africa each spring, find in the Regional Park an ideal place to expand its family.

Other animals such as lizards, snakes and the chameleon (Chamaeleo chamaeleon) watch over us from their hiding places.



Chameleon (Chamaeleo chamaeleon)

In addition to the demanding climatological conditions of this Region (strong insolation and scarce rains, usually torrential), the Salinas de San Pedro add new challenges for the survival of plants. Next to the salty water ponds and between the dunes. an impermeable and loaded down with salt soil, sometimes waterlogged, is inhabited only by salt-loving plants (hallophytic), like the sea lettuce (Limonium sp.), rushes (Juncus sp.) and glassworts (Sarcocornia fruticosa and Arthrocnemum macrostachyum).



Glasswort (Sarcocornia fruticosa)

In the outer dunes from the sea, a small pine forest (Pinus halepensis) get our attention, due to its knocked down logs by the wind. In these sand dunes two botanical gems are also preserved: the coastal phoenician juniper (Juniperus turbinata), in danger of extinction in the Region of Murcia, and the Mar Menor rockrose (Helianthemum marminorense), unique to this environment.



Coastal Phoenician Juniper (Juniperus turbinata)

On the beachfront, the dunes are in continuous movement and lacking in nutrients. They provide space to the flexible marram grass (Ammophila arenaria). To protect themselves from splashes and the sea wind, some species like the cretan trefoil (Lotus creticus) grow lying down upholstering the landscape of a showy yellow color. Other species such as the sea holly (Eryngium maritimum) coat its "skin" with a waterproof wax that protects it. Already on the shore of the beach, the accumulations of leaves and balls of marine plants remains announce the presence of neptune grass (Posidonia oceanica). Their underwater meadows provide shelter and food for thousands of species and at the same time they clean and oxygenate the waters.



Cretan Trefoil (Lotus creticus)

