

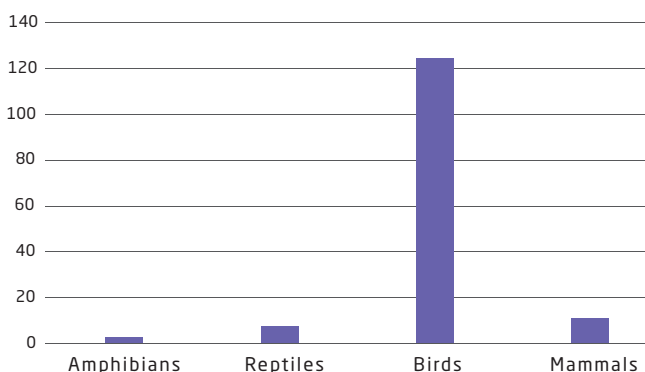
TERRESTRIAL FAUNA

INTRODUCTION

Although the seabed around the islands is home to most of the National Park's animal species, this does not mean that the terrestrial fauna of the islands is any less important. The fact that the islands have been separated from the continent for so long, the specific microclimate of each archipelago and the extraordinarily rich marine resources in their waters, all make the Park's terrestrial fauna a unique natural heritage.

Apart from invertebrates, there are 150 species of terrestrial fauna. Of these, over 80% are birds, as there are far fewer amphibians, reptiles, or mammals in the Atlantic Islands.

Of the birds, the most eye-catching are without doubt the spectacular colonies of seabirds that carpet the islands' cliffs in the spring and summer. They are one of the principal reasons for the National Park's importance at the global level.



No. of species in the different groups of animals in the National Park

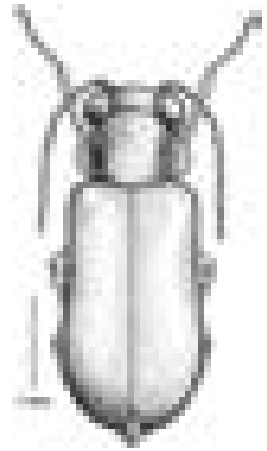
INVERTEBRATES

Despite their relatively small size, terrestrial invertebrates account for over 80% of all species in the animal kingdom. In the Atlantic Islands, most studies so far have focused on the lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) and the coleoptera (beetles).

Other groups are also important, such as the terrestrial **gastropods**, which include the *Portugala inchoata* snail and the *Geomalacus maculosus* slug, species that are otherwise only found in Portugal.

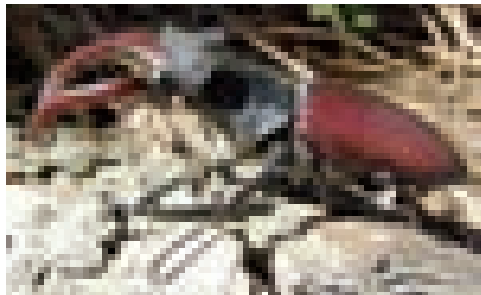
There are some endemic species of **coleoptera** that are only found on the Cíes Islands and nearby areas, such as *Stenosis oteroi* and *Tetramelus parvus*, which live among the gorse on the cliffs. A species new to science has also been discovered on the Cíes Islands the *Ernobius vinolasi* beetle (Novoa and Baselga, 2000), which is found in the coastal forests of maritime pine.

Of the coleoptera, the **xylophages** or wood eaters/wood borers play a very important role in the National Park's forest ecosystems, and the following are particularly noteworthy: the long-horned beetles (*Ergates faber*) and (*Criboleptura stragulata*), and the spectacular stag beetle (*Lucanus Cervus*), which can be as much as 9 cm long. The majority of these species are classified as protected throughout Europe. The stag beetle has only been found on the island of Cortegada, probably due to its predilection for native species such as the oak, and the need for dead wood to feed their larvae (xylophages). Interestingly, the larvae can live for between one and five years, whereas the adult only lives for between 15 days and a month. To ensure the availability of dead wood for the larval development of these species, Microhabitats for Threatened Xylophages have been installed at different points around the National Park.

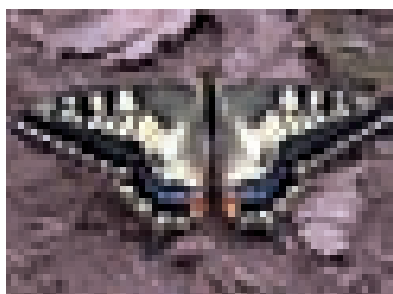


Ernobius vinolasi

Stag Beetle



Other interesting insects found in the Park include: of the **Orthoptera** (grasshoppers, crickets, etc), the scrub cricket *Callicrania seoanei*; and of the **Blattoptera**, the *Ectobius Brunei* wood cockroach. Both the latter species are unique to the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, while, of the **Dermoptera**, *Mesoche-*



Zerynthia rumina



Papilio machaon

lidura occidentalis is only found on the Cíes islands and in areas close to Lisbon.

The butterflies and moths found on the Park's larger archipelagos (Cíes, Ons and Sálvora) have been studied, and 164 different species of lepidoptera have been surveyed. Of these, the most important are: the Spanish Festoon or *Zerynthia rumination*, which is listed as Endangered, the large Old World Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*, and the *Brithys crini* moth, which is found on the islands of the Cíes and Sálvora archipelagos. Its caterpillars feed almost exclusively on the sea lily (*Pancratium maritimum*).

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

In general, **amphibians and reptiles are** poorly represented on the Atlantic Islands in comparison with their relatively high numbers on the nearby coast of Galicia. However, the isolation of these populations for the past 6,000-8,000 years, as a result of the formation of the islands, makes these species uniquely important in both

evolutionary and ecological terms. As a result, almost all the amphibian and reptile populations found on the Atlantic Islands enjoy some special protection status as endangered wildlife.

The differences between the islands in the Park in terms of microclimates, varieties of habitat and availability of water, mean that the number of species of amphibians and reptiles may even vary between the islands of the same archipelago (see Appendix on Amphibians and Reptiles).

Amphibians

As a result of the low number of permanent water courses and the low humidity of the soil, the presence of amphibians on the islands is very limited, in fact, only three species have been detected:

The common salamander (*Salamandra salamandra*) requires the continuous presence of moisture, so it remains underground and lethargic during long periods of drought. It usually lays its larvae in the water (ovoviviparous reproduction), but - surprisingly - the salamanders of the Atlantic Islands are born fully-formed (viviparous), having already metamorphosed. This vivipary is unique because it has originated in relatively recent times, as a result of the islands being formed. This makes the salamanders of the Atlantic Islands one of the National Park's most important natural assets.

Listed as "Vulnerable" in Galicia and throughout the Iberian Peninsula, the salamander is found in large numbers on Ons, where they display a higher degree of melanism than usual (the skin is predominantly black, with few yellow spots). On the other hand, there are very few on the Cíes archipelago, where they are virtually only found on San Martiño Island (also called Sur). Both are considered to be isolated and endan-



Salamander with offspring



Salamander on the Ons archipelago

gered populations threatened. This amphibian has not been found on the islands in the Cortegada and Salvora archipelagos.

Scientists and researchers propose that the salamander populations of the Atlantic Islands National Park as a “significant Evolutionary Unit”, with the aim of preventing this newly-evolved subspecies and obtaining a higher degree of protection for them in the Park, especially for the salamander population on the island of San Martino (Cíes) where only a few dozen individuals survive.

Bosca’s newt (*Lissotriton boscai*). Unlike the islands’ salamanders, all its reproductive phases take place in water, where it remains much of the summer and autumn until it moves to the land. For this move, its skin becomes tougher and thicker to prevent the body dehydrating. In the the Atlantic Islands, this species - which is unique to the west of the Iberian Peninsula - is found in the archipelagos of Ons and Sálvora.



Bosca’s newt

The Iberian painted frog (*Discoglossus galganoi*) is the only tailless amphibian species (Anura) found in the National Park. Until recently, it could be found on all four archipelagos, but has not been detected in the Cíes islands in recent years and it is considered almost extinct in that archipelago. By contrast, there are many on Sálvora. On Ons, however, its populations are scarce and fragmented, so there is a serious risk of extinction in the short term.



Iberian painted frog

There are old records of the common toad and the common frog being seen on Ons, but both are considered to be extinct on the Atlantic Islands. It should also be pointed out that these species may have been brought to the islands by man.

Reptiles

Reptiles are found in the Park in much higher numbers than amphibians, mainly due to the islands' dry and sunny microclimate, which provides the energy required to raise the body temperature of these cold-blooded animals.

The **ocellated lizard** (*Timon lepidus*) with an average size of about 20 cm - not counting the tail - is the largest lizard in Europe, and is present on all of the Parks' archipelagos. The population found on Sálvora Island has been described as a different subspecies: *Timon lepidus oteroi*. The **Iberian wall lizard** (*Podarcis hispanica*) is the reptile most commonly found throughout the National Park, and the only one that also colonizes the smaller islets. On the islands they are, on average, larger than their continental neighbours, especially on the more northern archipelagos of the Park (Sálvora). The Iberian wall lizard is not, however, present on the archipelago of Cortegada, where **Bocage's wall lizard** (*Podarcis bocagei*) predominates. This is possibly due to these islands being so close to the adjacent coast, where the latter is very abundant.



Ocellated lizard

Although it may look elongated and more reminiscent of a snake, the so-called "glass snakes" (*Ophisaurus*) are in fact lizards that have no legs (slow worms) or have very tiny and atrophied legs (skinks). The **common slow worm** (*Anguis fragilis*) and the **western three-toed skink** (*Chalcides striatus*) are found on all of the archipelagos in the Park.

Bedriaga's skink (*Chalcides bedriagai*), in contrast to the common or three-toed skink, has four well-developed legs, each of which, although small, has 5 toes. This species is endemic to the Iberian peninsula. In the Atlantic Islands, it has only been found on the Cíes archipelago. This population is listed as Endangered in the Galician Catalogue of Threatened Species and in the Red Book of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Spain.



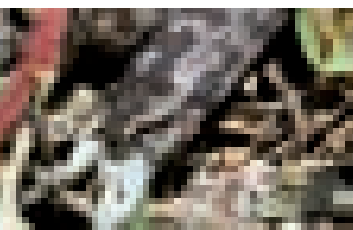
Bedriaga's skink



Ladder snake



Viperine water snake



Southern smooth snake

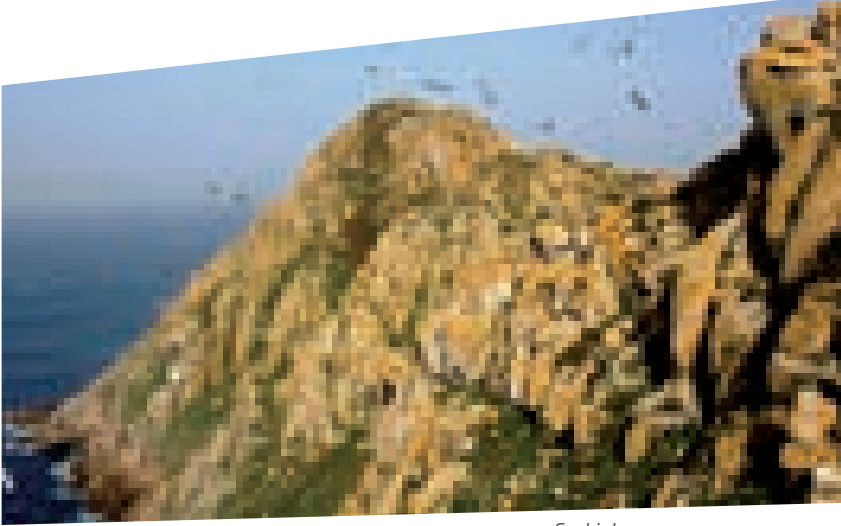
There are relatively few snakes in the Park, with the exception of the Ons archipelago, where the large **ladder snakes** (*Rhinechis scalaris*) are quite common. They which are usually over a metre long. The longest one measured to date on Ons was 1.40m long, although it is suspected that there maybe longer ones. The other two species of ophidians found in the Park are also harmless, but smaller: the **Southern smooth snake** (*Coronella girondica*) and the **viperine water snake** (*Natrix maura*) whose name alludes to the fact that it mimics the appearance and behaviour of the snakes as a defensive strategy to fool their predators. The latter regularly goes into the intertidal ponds to catch small fish to eat. This "marine" behaviour has surprised researchers and ecologists.

If, when visiting the Park you meet any of these species you must not disturb them, since they are in their natural environment and are completely harmless.

BIRDS

The fact that these terrestrial vertebrates can fly, combined with the islands' proximity to the continent, could in principle make one think that there would be nothing especially important about the birds in the National Park. Nothing could be further from the truth, since the low levels of human presence, the availability of good breeding sites and especially the extraordinary abundance of marine resources in the surrounding waters, make the Atlantic Islands the ideal home for a wide variety of birds, especially seabirds, although there are also many others, including migratory birds. The Cíes and Ons archipelagos are therefore classified as SPA areas (Special Protected Areas for Birds) in accordance with the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC.

Seabirds



Seabirds

This group include birds ecologically linked to the marine environment, i.e. those that derive their food from the sea and therefore have evolved to thrive in the sea through specific adaptations such as desalination glands, waterproof plumage, webfeet, etc.

Thousands of seabirds use the Atlantic Islands' cliffs for protection and nesting. They are undoubtedly one of the National Park's most important and best known jewels. The most important nesting species include: the yellow-legged gull, the European shag, the lesser black-backed gull, the Cory's shearwater and the European storm petrel.

TABLE: Seabirds nesting in the Atlantic Islands National Park.

Seabirds	Cíes	Ons	Sálvora	Cortegada
Yellow-legged Gull (<i>Larus michahellis</i>)	0	0	0	*
Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)		*	*	0
European shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>)	0	0	0	
Cory's Shearwater (<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>)	0			
European Storm-petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>)	0			

(*) Very few

*Yellow-legged Gull*

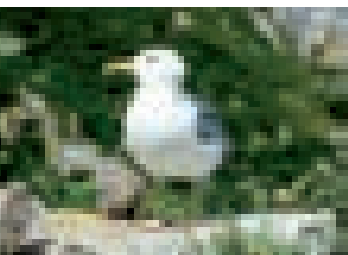
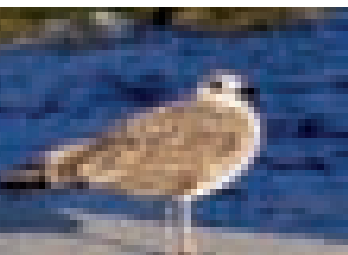
Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)

It is the commonest bird in the Park, and one of the most iconic. In the spring, thousands of pairs of these gulls come together to form a crowded and noisy colony that covers the western sides of the islands.

Although they are found on most of the coasts of southern Europe, around 15,000 pairs (2011 survey) of yellow-legged gulls nest on the Atlantic Islands, making this one of the largest colonies of this species in Europe.

*Gull nest*

Each pair lays 1 to 3 eggs, and they hatch in early June. The chicks are an inconspicuous greyish colour that helps camouflage them among the vegetation and they are nidifugous, in the sense that, when they detect danger they hide among the vegetation surrounding the nest. They remain under the care of their parents for approximately 2 months, being fed and protected by both members of the breeding pair. At the end of this period, the chicks are already almost as large as their parents, and make their first flights. They now have to leave the nest and start to survive alone, although many fail to survive this critical stage of their first summer. When they are between 3 and 4 years old, they become breeding adults. That is when their plumage turns white, with grey backs, and the bill and legs become completely yellow - the trait that gives this species its name. The yellow colour of the bill and legs of adult gulls intensifies during the breeding season to indicate good reproductive health. In the autumn and winter, however, the colour is much more less pronounced.

*Gull with chicks**Juvenile Gulls*

A bird that gets a bad press

Yellow-legged gulls are omnivores, and can take advantage of a wide range of food, including the waste on rubbish tips. This extra resource provided by humans is the reason why the populations of these gulls shot up in the last two decades, with over 25,000 nesting pairs on the just on the Cíes islands in the early 90's. The subsequent closing down of the nearby coastal towns' landfill sites and expansion towards new locations seem to be the causes of the progressive decrease in the National Park's gull populations over the last few years.

Man is therefore principally responsible for this imbalance, an imbalance that affects many gull populations on the Spanish and Portuguese shorelines and these birds, which most locals mostly know little about although they play a very important ecological role in coastal ecosystems, are not responsible.

Like many seabirds, the yellow-legged gull usually chooses the same mate every year. Both partners take turns hatching the eggs and searching for food for the chicks, which they will fiercely defend against any threat or predator that dares to approach the nest. During the breeding season their main food (up to 60% of the diet) are small crabs called "patexos" that are present in their thousands in the sea around the islands when the water is warmer. They also take advantage of low tide to feed on starfish, mussels, barnacles, etc. Interestingly, they have developed the skill of dropping mussels and other bivalves onto the rocks from a certain height, in order to break the hard shell, so that they can eat them. In addition, they eat fish and other seafood rejected by fishermen and can "grab" mackerels, sand eels and other fish from cormorants and other seabirds. The red dot on the bill seems to be the point of stimulation which chicks peck at to make the parents regurgitate food to feed them.

When visiting the islands, remember that these birds are in their natural environment and must not be fed or disturbed. When nests are close to foot traffic areas, these birds naturally feign threatening attacks to try to keep humans away from their chicks.



LARIDAE Family

Scientific name: *Larus michahellis*

Larus michahellis

Common Name:

Yellow-legged Gull (Eng),
 Gaviota patiamarilla (Sp),
 Gaivota patiamarela (Gal),
 Gavia argentat de potes groges (Cat),
 Kaio ankahori (Eusk).



LARIDAE Family

Scientific name:

Larus fuscus

Common Name:

Lesser Black-backed Gull
(Eng),

Gaviota sombría (Sp),

Gaivota escura (Gal),

Gaviá fosc (Cat) ,

Kaio iluna (Eusk).

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

This gull is very similar in size and appearance to the yellow-legged gull, and can only be differentiated because the wings (back) are darker. It is much less common in Europe than the yellow-legged gull, and there are few breeding colonies on the Iberian Peninsula, the Atlantic Islands colony being one of the largest. Within the Park, virtually the entire population of these gulls is found on the Sálvora archipelago, where there are about a hundred breeding pairs. The Cíes and Ons archipelagos occasionally host some breeding pairs.

European Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*)

The Spanish name of this species (Cormorán moñudo) comes from the crest or "moño" of feathers that this bird has on its head during the mating season (February-May).

They are black with a metallic green-tinged sheen and slim body, and congregate on rocky outcrops around the islands' coastlines to dry their feathers in the sun. They fly close to the water in search of shoals of sand eels and other fish to feed on, which they catch by diving under the water.

Both the breeding season and the number of chicks per pair vary much more than for the yellow-legged gull, but in general they have 1 to 3 chicks between February and August. They build their nests on the rocky ledges of the "furnas" (sea caves) or in crevices between the granite blocks of cliffs in areas close to the sea. In a few months, the chicks eat a very large amount of food and grow fast, reaching almost the same body size as their parents while they are still juveniles. Juveniles can be differentiated from adults by the pale areas on the neck and chest. They often congregate on easy-to-reach rocks close to the sea called "nurseries", from where they make their first dives to try and catch fish, although many of them are still fed by their parents.



Adult European shag



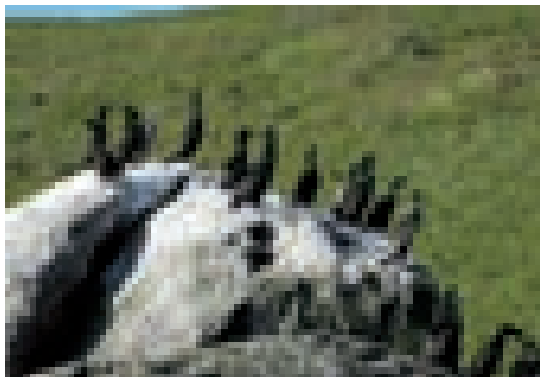
Juvenile European shag

The Atlantic Islands European shag colony, with close to 1,000 breeding pairs, is one of this species' largest colonies in the world, and accounts for almost 50% of the Spanish population as well as 80% of the entire population on the Cantabrian and Atlantic coasts (of the *aristotelis* subspecies). In spite of this, it is under threat, and its population on the islands has dropped drastically in recent years, especially on the Cíes archipelago. The main causes of this decline seem to be fishing nets, oil pollution and predation by species that have been introduced. With respect to fishing nets, there is a high level of mortality in birds that get caught in nets when diving, as they drown if they can't return to the surface. The *Prestige* catastrophe also had a very negative effect on the European shag since, in addition to directly causing the death of adults, and having sublethal effects due to the bioaccumulation of pollutants, it also had negative side effects in the long-term, such as the decline in numbers of sand eels, which are one of this species' main sources of food. The arrival of new predators such as the American mink has also seriously affected these birds, since mink prey on both chicks and adults. However, the intensive program of eradication carried out in recent years by the National Park has considerably reduced this latest threat. For all these reasons, the European shag is listed as "Vulnerable" (proposed to be classed as Endangered) in the Galician Catalogue of Threatened Species, and "Endangered" in the Red Book of Birds in Spain, and no effort should be spared to prevent the disappearance of this, the Atlantic Islands' most iconic bird.



European shag nests

Group of adult and juvenile European shag





PHALACROCORACIDAE

Family

Scientific name:

*Phalacrocorax
aristotelis*

Common Name:

European shag (Eng),
Cormorán moñudo (Sp),
Corvo mariño cristado (Gal),
Corvo marí emplomallat (Cat),
Ubarroi mottoduna (Eusk).

Status:

VU (Vulnerable)

An arrow under the water

The European shag is undoubtedly one of the nature's most spectacular examples of adaptation to the marine environment. In spite of the fact that, as a bird, it flies through the air, all its body's structure is designed to cope incredibly well under the sea and catch the fish it feeds on.

It therefore has a sharp bill with a hook on the end to prevent its prey escaping. Its long webbed feet act as fins, and its slim body allows it to move surprisingly fast underwater. Its long, flexible neck allows it to trawl through the gaps between rocks in search of fish and small crustaceans, while providing the power for the head to be able to "harpoon" its prey. Its eyes have an outer membrane (third eyelid) that acts as a lens, giving these birds magnificent underwater vision. Additionally, unlike most seabirds, its plumage is not completely waterproof because, since it is quite large, it needs to be partially wetted to increase its weight and reduce its buoyancy. This is essential to its effectiveness underwater. This means they have to spend much of their time drying their feathers, and so stay on the sunniest rocks where they stretch out their wings - a typical pose that characterises this species. They often gather together to fish in large groups called "ralleiras", that hunt the shoals of sand eels and mackerel that are plentiful in the waters of the Park and the surrounding area.

European Storm-petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*)

Similar in size to a swallow, the storm petrel is Europe's smallest seabird. It is a pelagic bird, i.e. feeds far from the coast, in open water, where it uses its highly-developed sense of smell to find food. It only spends time on land during the mating and nesting seasons. The storm-petrel nests in crevices or cavities on the coast, in places normally inaccessible to humans, and only settles on its nest during the night. The Park is home to a small breeding colony of about a dozen breeding pairs, which nest on the Cíes archipelago.

Despite its small size, it is one of the longest-lived seabirds in Europe and can easily reach 30 years of age. It has a very low birth rate, as it only lays a single egg and, like other seabirds, reproduces intermittently, i.e. does not breed every year. Interestingly, the petrel feeds its chick so much that it grows to 150% larger than the adults. The chick then uses up this accumulated body fat until its body is fully developed and it can fly away from the nest on its own, out to the vast ocean that will be its new home.

It is listed as a Vulnerable species (V) in the Red Book of Birds in Spain and in the Galician Catalogue of Threatened Species. The presence of rats, which have been brought onto the islands by man, is one of the principal conservation problems, and may yet kill off whole colonies of this curious seabird.

Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*)

It has recently been confirmed that a small group of Cory's shearwaters are nesting on the cliffs of the Cíes archipelago, which is very good news for the National Park. As a result, a specific action program is being developed (lures, fencing to protect against predators, etc), to ensure that this Atlantic Islands colony can become permanent.

Like the storm petrel, the Cory's shearwater is a pelagic bird with nocturnal habits. It is, however much larger, al-



HYDROBATIDAE

Family

Scientific name:

Hydrobates pelagicus

Common Name::

European storm petrel(Eng),

Paiño europea.(Sp),

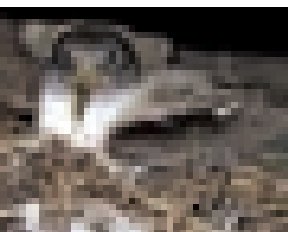
Paiño pequeno ou do mal tempo (Gal),

Ocell de tempesta (Cat),

Ekaitz-txori txikia (Eusk).

Status:

VU (Vulnerable)



PROCELLARIIDAE

Family

Scientific name:

Calonectris diomedea

Common name:

Cory's shearwater (Eng),

Pardela cenicienta (Sp),

Pardela cincenta (Gal),

Baldriga cendrosa (Cat),

Gabai arrea (Eusk).

most as big as a seagull. They feed on fish, squid, and also the fish and seafood tossed overboard from fishing boats which they regularly follow. Their flight is very characteristic, with short, quick flaps of the wings followed by a long effortless glide close to the water. They seem to "play" with the waves, to take advantage of the wind that hits a wave and then blows upwards. They therefore commonly follow in the wake of vessels for hours, to take advantage of the waves generated. They often gather in large floating groups called "rafts".

A Cory's shearwater also lays a single egg and doesn't breed every year. It often digs a small burrow to build its nest in. The parents often have to be absent for several days in search of food for their chick. At 3 months, it is fully developed and finally leaves the nest. The young return to the same colony, or one close by, after five years, although many of them do not breed for the first time until they are six to nine years old.

This species is in decline worldwide. Deaths caused by being accidentally caught in fishing gear and by mammalian predators (cats, rats, mice and mink) that have been introduced by humans to the islands where they breed, are the main threats to the species' survival. Light pollution, with dazzled chicks becoming disorientated when they first fly, is a serious threat, as is poaching.

The Cory's shearwater has a complex system of calls that it only makes during the mating and breeding seasons in breeding colonies. The male's mating call is nasal, while in females it is guttural and deeper. These curious guttural sounds ('Guaña-Guaña') have resulted in some authors relating them to the "siren song" that sailors were said to hear in certain parts of the coast in the evenings.

The decline of the Guillemot

This small member of the Alcidae family was once commonly seen along the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula, with a population in Galicia estimated to be around 3,000 in the 60's. It formed dense breeding colonies on the Atlantic Islands, especially on the Cíes islands, where the last nesting pairs were seen around the end of the 80's.

At present, as much a couple of pairs of this bird may still - miraculously - nest on the rugged coast of Cape Vilan (A Coruña). The breeding success rate is not, however, known. The guillemot is listed as Critically Endangered, which means that, within a few short years, it may no longer be nesting on the Spanish coast.

The causes of this acute population decline are not entirely clear. Although, like other seabirds, the guillemot has suffered the damaging effects of drift nets, sport fishing, oil spills, etc, the reasons for its disappearance as a nesting species from the Galician coast have not yet been demonstrated.

Because of their similar appearance and clumsiness on land, some authors have called it "the Galician penguin". This bird, however, does not belong to the penguin family but to the Alcidae, which differ primarily in that they still retain the ability to fly.

In the present, guillemots can occasionally be seen in the waters of the Park during the winter months, but in the spring they return to their breeding colonies in the north Atlantic.



ALCIDAE Family

Scientific name:

Uria aalge

Common name:

Guillemont (Eng),

Arao común (Sp),

Arao (Gal),

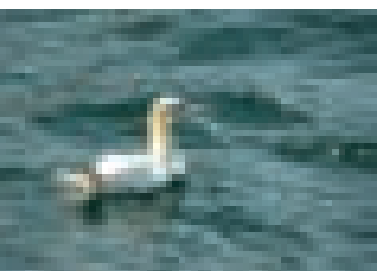
Somorgollaire t (Cat),

Martin(Eusk).

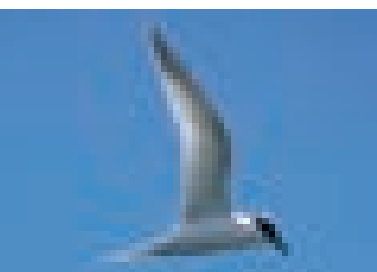
Status:

(E) Endangered

Birds of passage - seabirds, waders and water birds



Northern Gannet



Sandwich Tern



Kentish Plover



Bar-tailed godwit

In addition to the birds that breed in the Park, throughout the year many seabirds, waders and waterfowl visit the waters around the Atlantic Islands during their migrations, spending the summer or winter here. Hundreds of **great black cormorants** and **Mediterranean gulls** shelter on the islands during the winter. In spring and autumn there are usually groups of **northern gannets** feeding in the waters around the islands. At the same time, the noisy sandwich tern is commonly seen flying over the transparent water along the beaches in search of fish, which they catch by making spectacularly steep dives.

The shearwaters are also regular visitors to these Atlantic waters, and large numbers of **Balearic shearwaters** (listed as Critically Endangered) come in groups during the summer months to feed along the Galician coast. The many intertidal pools, beaches, and especially the Lagoon on Cíes, are used as places of rest and refuge by many shorebirds, including herons, egrets and curlews, during their migratory passages.

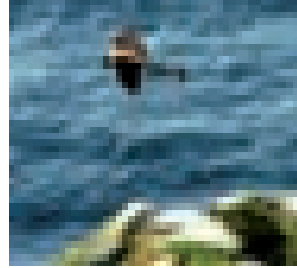
The Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) is an exception. This wader, which is listed as Vulnerable (V), has become a regular nesting species on the dunes of Cíes and Sálvora in recent years. The elusive European oyster catcher has successfully bred on the coasts of the Cíes archipelago, although at the moment there is just one breeding pair.

Terrestrial birds

In spite of the small land area of the Park (1,194 ha.) there are quite a few species of land birds that nest on its islands, many of them in clearly declining numbers, both on the adjacent Galician coast and on the islands themselves.

Of the birds of prey, the **common buzzard** and the **northern goshawk** are both present on the islands of all four archipelagos. On the cliff ledges of Cíes and Ons, the **peregrine falcon**, **common kestrel** and the **royal swift** all nest. The red-billed chough has disappeared from the islands where, not so many years ago it nested, while the **western jackdaw** is only seen on the island of Ons, where numbers have declined significantly in recent years. These declines in populations of Corvidae may possibly be related to the reduction in agricultural land-use, such as growing maize and other cereals, on the islands.

Species of medium-sized birds and small passerines (perching birds) also benefit from the islands' mild climate. In the trees, in addition to **common wood pigeons**, **doves** and **blackbirds** there are also many **greenfinches**, **blackcaps** and **warblers**, **finches** and **coal tits**. In the thickets and among the gorse, **nightjars** and **stonechats** are common and there's no lack of **robins** and **goldfinches**, while **wagtails** and **black redstarts** are often seen among the cliff crags (see *Appendix on Birds*).



Common Kestrel on Cíes

Nightjar



MAMMALS

Due to their small land area and isolation, the Atlantic Islands are, in general, home to fewer mammal species than the nearby continental coasts.

Some species, such as the rabbit have adapted exceptionally well to the specific island conditions (absence of predators, little human presence) and so are found all over the archipelagos in the Park. Small rodents are frequently seen, including the **house mouse**, the **wood mouse** (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), and especially the **black rat** (*Rattus rattus*), which is a threatened species in the United Kingdom and Central Europe. The **greater white-toothed shrew** (*Crocidura Russula*), the **European hedgehog** (*Erinaceus europeus*) and the **Spanish mole** (*Talpa occidentalis*) - the latter two only on Cortegada - complete the list of small mammals in the Park.

With respect to bats, the presence of at least five species has been detected in the Park: the **common pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus Pipistrellus*), **serotine bat** (*Eptesicus serotinus*), **gray long-eared bat** (*Plecotus austriacus*), **Savi's pipistrelle** (*Hypsugo savii*) and the **greater horseshoe bat** (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*). The latter is listed as Vulnerable (VU) in Spain and Endangered (EN) in the Balearic Islands.

Other mammals, such as **feral cats** (*Felix catus*), have been introduced by man and constitute a serious threat to the few indigenous small mammals of the islands. The recent presence of the **American mink** (*Mustela vison*), a foreign species from breeding farms that has become established all along the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula, is also especially worrying, mainly on the islands in the Cíes and Sálvora archipelagos, where is a problem for the colonies of nesting seabirds, since it preys on the eggs and chicks and even adults. In both cases, the National Park is carrying out an ongoing control and monitoring campaign.



Greater Horseshoe Bat

*American mink*

The presence of the **otter** (*Lutra lutra*), which was believed to have disappeared, has been increasing year by year on the islands in the Park, and stable family groups have currently been found on the Ons and Sálvora archipelagos. The fact that Galician otters are the only ones that also inhabit marine islands makes the ones on the Atlantic Islands even more valuable.

Other mammals introduced by man for hunting or farming are horses and deer on Sálvora and sheep and goats on Ons. In the last few years an increase has been detected in the number of wild boar on the island of Cortegada, where a small group of feral goats has also been found.

*Young Mink on Salvora*