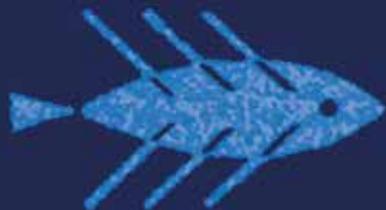


M U S E O



N U E V A

TABARCA



EXHIBITING TEXT



ENGLISH EDITION



PRESENTATION

Knowledge is the best form of conservation...

Since the declaration of Nueva Tabarca as a National Heritage Site in 1964, the increase year after year in the number of visitors is a reality that has undoubtedly affected the life of the Island and its inhabitants.

The knowledge and conservation of its monumental sites and the surrounding natural environment, the lifestyle and customs of the people of Tabarca (Tabarquinos), as well as the demand of the astounded visitors approaching this enigmatic place in the middle of the sea, makes the opening of this museum space a real necessity.

In this way, Nueva Tabarca Museum pays homage to the self-sacrificing people who inhabited the island at the end of the XVIII century, while simultaneously becoming an information centre where it is possible to obtain valuable information as starting point for a trip around the Island, which is the real object of the Museum.

GEOGRAPHY

"...Alicante is a small city with good buildings. It has a zoco (Moorish market), a Mosque-Aljama and another Mosque with preaching. It exports esparto grass towards every country across the sea. There are many fruits and vegetables, figs and grapes. It has an inaccessible citadel high on the top of a hill, where people arrive tired and breathless. Despite being quite small, ships for long voyages and barges are built here. Close to the city, towards the West, there is an Island call PLANESIA. It is a mile away from the coast. It is a good anchorage point that could be useful to enemy ships. It is found opposite the Observatory Promontory, ten miles from the city of Alicante "

Al-Idrisi, Arab geographer

Text written in the XII century.

The small archipelago of Nueva Tabarca, opposite the Cape of Santa Pola, belongs to the municipality of Alicante.

The main island, Isla Plana (Flat Island), has an elongated shape with a maximum length of about 1800m and a width

of 400 m, with an average height of 7m above sea level. The small harbour existing at present is situated to the North of the existing narrow isthmus; the inhabited centre is found towards the West and towards the East there a large open space known as El Campo (The Field), a silent witness to the time when this land was worked despite natural adversities.

A series of small islands La Cantera (The Quarry), La Galera (The Galley) and La Nao (The Ship), together with numerous reefs (Negre, Roig, Cap del Moro, Sabata and Naveta) complete the archipelago.

GEOLOGY

The archipelago of Nueva Tabarca belongs to the most Eastern outcrop of the Betic mountain range, with a tectonic-sedimentary evolution similar to that of the surrounding lands.

The poor quality of the sandstone used in the construction of the walls and doors, extracted from the island itself, and its very high level of porosity caused the rapid degradation of the elements constructed.

A sequence in the outcrops can be observed, from the most ancient, such as the ophites, which constitute the majority of the eastern part of the Island, up to the most recent outcrops. A group of calcarenites, approximately 5 million years old, rest on these first layer materials. Marl levels are also present with marine microfossils, nowadays levelled, which were used as a quarry for obtaining building materials on the island.

Finally, 2 million years ago the last two sections were formed which have a total thickness of between 1 and 2m. The lower sections, made up of a conglomerate of boulders and calcareous cement, where mollusc fossils can be found; and the upper level has a thickness of less than a metre and is made up of red loam containing a large quantity of continental snails.



A STRATEGIC ENCLAVE

Planesia or Isla Plana, the name by which it was known in ancient times, is an enclave of great geographic importance from a strategic point of view. Its location as well as its rich fishing waters mean that since at least the Roman period, as proved by archaeological investigation, people have visited the Island in temporary settlements.

"...the gulf called "Ilicitano" (meaning of Elche) by Mela and Plinio, there are three islands, and among them Plana, that Estrabón calls Planesia..."

Throughout the Middle Age there is little news relating to the Island, highlighting in particular the lack of documentary references regarding fishing matters and the first attempts to construct defensive elements in order to take advantage of the unquestionable value offered by the enclave.

In 1541 Emperor Carlos V visited the island anchoring his ships for a night during his return from the successful campaign in Algeria, since this position offered greater security than the port of Alicante.

Vicente Bendicho, in his account of the city of Alicante written in the XVII century described the Island in great detail, as shown by this extract:

"... it is at the East of the promontory Cape Algive (Cape Crypt), thus named because there is one in the Cape, an ancient one, at least from the time of the Moors since algibe is a Moorish word and it is near the castle or new place Santa Pola, considered to be well equipped with weapons, artillery and soldiers and belongs to the High Excellency Duke of Maqueda y Nájera y Marques of Elche. This island lies towards the North of the city and it seems to have a length of about half a league, a latitude of half a quarter or a little more, there is no water, neither has it ever been inhabited, although I am told that



there are remains perhaps of a Moorish watchtower or natural harbour for fishermen.

...It is also very useful due to the excellent fish of all types that can be caught along

the entire coastline of the island. The dangers facing us from this island are numerous because captives have been taken, even though now the danger has lessened because of the great care taking in visiting the island and because the Moors navigate in round baxels and not in frigates as they used to. It is said that the High Excellency Duke of Lerma, speaking in confidence with of His Majesty Felipe III, suggested the building of a fortress on the island, which was not built due to the amount it would cost to maintain it and because of its proximity to the New Place..."

THE NAME · NIIEVA TABARCA

After being forgotten for decades, the Island gains a new relevancy from the middle of the XVIII century, as once again its extraordinary geographic situation made it very useful. Military tensions with North Africa, pirate raids on the coasts of Alicante and the existence of smugglers, gave rise to the first ideas on repopulation and military use in around 1760.

Around this date, a series of fundamental events for the life of Planesia in Alicante took place in TABARCA, another small Island belonging to the Spanish Crown, located opposite the coast of Tunisia. The island was inhabited by Genoese who, under Spanish sovereignty, basically worked in collecting coral and enjoyed a productive economy and a location of high geo-strategic value in the Mediterranean context. Mid-century the island was invaded by the Tunisians who captured and imprisoned the island's inhabitants in Tunisia and Algeria for over a decade.

In 1768 King Carlos III, upon payment of the ransom, gained their freedom and they were brought to Alicante where they were provisionally accommodated in the Jesuit College.

King Carlos III was born in Madrid in 1716, son of Felipe V and Isabel de Farnesio. His reign was determined by domestic reforms implemented by an enlightened government team, in which the Count of Aranda was the leading light. Many unproductive lands were developed and repopulated, the project implemented in Nueva Tabarca being the fruit of those reformist policies. He died in Madrid in 1788.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A UTOPIA

It is at this time, while benefitting from the Count of Aranda's repopulation policy, that the Isla Plana is thought of as the ideal place for the permanent settlement of these peoples, while simultaneously becoming an advanced coastal military defence point.

In 1770, with many of the houses built, the movement of people took place. Consequently, since then and in remembrance of the origins of its first inhabitants it would be come to be called Nueva Isla de Tabarca (New Tabarca Island), the name that still remains today.

Pedro Pablo Abarca de Bolea y Ximénez de Urrea, the Count of Aranda, was born in Siétamo (Huesca) in 1719, and died in Epila (Zaragoza) in 1798. He was one of the instigators of the programme for the repopulation of uninhabited areas in the kingdom and given his position as president of the Castile Council, King Carlos III entrusted him in 1769 with the mission of finding a settlement area for the Tabarquinos on Isla Plana.

FIRST SETTLERS

Once settled in Nueva Tabarca, a series of privileges and exemptions were granted by the King to the new Tabarquinos, such as exemption from military service and from the payment of taxes which were imposed on other towns under the Monarchy.

Command was entrusted to a governor of low military ranking and troops were sent for the defence of the Island.

On 21st of February 1769, the Count of Aranda ordered the Governor of Alicante, Mr Guillermo de Baillencourt, to make a "Registration of the Tabarquinos rescued from Algeria", which, headed by the parish priest of Tabarca, Juan Bautista Riverola, was to list all the family units as well as those with no family.



Once the new Tabarquinos were settled, the definitive construction of a fortified citadel serving as an advanced military base for the coast of Alicante was conceived.

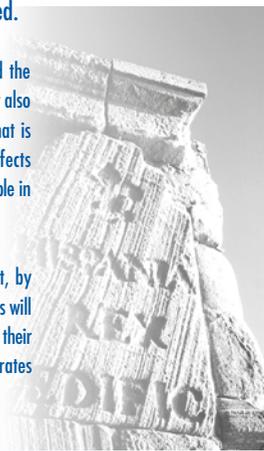
The works were entrusted to the military engineer Don Fernando Méndez de Ras, who gave the greatest importance to the project between 1772 and 1775, planning the construction of a genuine fortified town according to Baroque urban, military, ideological and aesthetic approaches.

Three doors were opened in the walls: San Miguel to the North, San Rafael to the East, and finally, San Gabriel to the West, where an inscription is found mentioning King Carlos III, who authorised the works.

However, this complex idea was more ambitious than real and thus it was never completely finished. The huge expenses incurred by the natural environmental conditions as well as the recent changes in relations with North Africa meant that the Méndez' project could not be completed. Therefore, in 1779 the King ordered the usefulness of maintaining the citadel as a fortress to be evaluated, and in compliance with these orders the "Speech in San Pablo Square on the Island of Nueva Tabarca" was drafted by the military engineer Balthasar Ricaud, in which the arduous living conditions on the Island and also the achievements that had been reached were expounded.

"Not only has Nature denied the precious resource of wood but also the indispensable element that is fresh water, these great defects making the Island uninhabitable in the past"

"...but it is also certain that, by fortifying the island, smugglers will no longer find a place to store their illicit goods and Algerian pirates will





no longer find a harbour where their galleys can threaten our ships and abuse the neighbouring coasts and coves"

BALTHAZAR RICAUD

Speech in San Pablo Square on the Island of Nueva Tabarca
17 April 1779.

Nevertheless, until the death of Méndez in 1782 the works were not definitively suspended, signalling the end of that utopian dream.

NEW CUSTOMS. NEW IDEAS

Since 1789, during the reign of Carlos IV, the State Supreme Council considered the immediate future of Nueva Tabarca. Within this context new approaches were proposed by various military engineers, such as Antonio Ladrón de Guevara, who proposed the partial destruction of the village and the construction of two defensive towers.

At that point the main elements of the defensive system were already built, as well as the representative, civic and religious buildings, such as the House of the Governor and the Church.

King Carlos IV was born in Naples in 1745, son of Carlos III and Maria Amalia of Saxony. During his reign, Nueva Tabarca began to lose its position as an important strategic enclave and coastal defense point. In this context the Tower of San José was built, which was to become the only defensive bastion on the island. He died in Naples in 1819.

In another project, Balthasar Ricaud proposed the construction of a single tower in the centre of the island, according to the caption of the plan itself, "the most advantageous spot...".

"Therefore if the superiors, after examining the present project, see fit to give their approval it would be advisable to firstly allow the Church and Parrochial House to be demolished for being detrimental to the defence of the new Tower and useless in that establishment..."

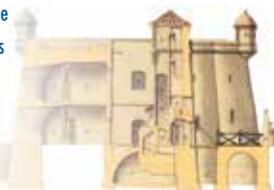
The construction of the Tower of San José was the fruit of the latter proposal, located in "El Campo" (The Field), by means of a Royal Mandate of 12 September 1790. Rafael Viravens, in his Chronical on the city of Alicante, describes the building:

"Among the most remarkable buildings constructed, the Tower of San José should be mentioned, built on the Eastern side of the small island. This fortress

is a stone castle comprising three floors, wherein there is a yard and rooms for jails and rooms for accommodating the troops. Ascending stone steps lead to a drawbridge; the Royal coat of arms appear on the entry door; there are windows with iron grills on the facades, and the fort is crowned with barbet batteries surrounded by its four fronts, with raised sentry boxes in the corners."

RAFAEL VIRAVENS Y PASTOR

Chronical on the illustrious and ever faithful city of Alicante, 1876



From this point onwards the gradual abandonment of the Island began in terms of its military role, culminating in 1828 with a Royal Mandate that established the cession of fortifications and buildings to the island inhabitants.

During the reign of Isabel II, with the introduction of the constitutional regime, the repeal of privileges granted by Carlos III and the loss of any military interest, Nueva Tabarca was forgotten. The utopian project for an eighteenth century city was a mere a memory and the decline of the population was unstoppable, the island being virtually uninhabited in the second half of the XIX century:

"...nowadays that beautiful town is almost lost from existence, its works undoubtedly having been left in inexperienced hands [those of Méndez de Ras] judging by the completely ruinous state in which they are to be found: some fishing families live today in the few houses that still stand".

NICASIO CAMILO JOVER

Historical outline of the City of Alicante, 1863.

RECENT TIMES

During the second half of the XIX century and the first decades of the XX, Nueva Tabarca acquired certain characteristic features that would determine its subsequent evolution. The negligence they had suffered prompted the Tabarquinos to withdraw into themselves and to fight to subsist in such a limited place and with scarce resources.

Already under the jurisdiction of Alicante, there were only two relevant actions taken in the XIX century, the construction of the lighthouse in 1854, which would serve as school for lighthouse-keepers, and the definitive location of the walled cemetery at the eastern end of the Island.



It is certain that around the beginning of the last century the Island did not have light, water, drains, or a harbour to anchor ships and provide shelter in case of a storm.

In this situation, economic maritime activities were the basic sustenance of the population, whilst the boat constituted their principal means of transportation and main work tool. Rope-making, the production of nets and fish pots, the construction of boats and daily fishing sustained the inhabitants of the Island.

During the first half of the century, fishing activities continued at a good rate, even stimulating a certain level of progress and population growth on the Island.

A trap-type fishing net, such as the *almadraba* (tuna trap net), formed the basis of this situation, a situation which would change towards the middle of the century due to several factors. The first signs of sea-bed exhaustion due to trawling, as well as the change in tuna migratory routes brought about the disappearance of the *Almadraba* of Tabarca in 1960, the last tuna trap net in the province of Alicante.

The clear decline in fishing activity coincided with the rise of a new economy: tourism, the development of which currently constitutes the basic income of the population of Tabarca.



PEOPLE OF THE SEA FISHING NETS OF NUEVA TABARCA

The people of Nueva Tabarca have always had an intense relationship with their natural environment, THE SEA, which has led them to adapt, create and utilize a series of fishing nets and tools which serve to extract the riches of the sea and to maintain the subsistence economy in which they lived. Since the Middle Ages, fishing activity had been declining on Spanish coasts until the XVIII century produced a real frenzy .

In the second half of the century some beach nets such as the *xávega*, or trawling nets such as the *bou* began to be introduced.

Xábega (Beach net) / *Bol* (Trawling net)

"A large hemp line net comprising several pieces that form the sides and bunt, those known among fishermen as cast nets, and the most common and profitable in our Ocean and Mediterranean coasts from the Gulf of Roses, to the mouth of the Guadiana River"

SAÑEZ REGUART

Historical Dictionary of National Fishing Gear,
1791-1795

Bou (Pair trawling)

Bou, or pair trawling experienced a slow but inevitable progression, and by the middle of the enlightened century, paired sailing was already definitively established in the East of the Peninsula and was bearing an extraordinary yield. This was due to the fact that these nets trawled the fishing grounds of the virtually untouched coastal platform clearing the seabed within a few years. This was the reason behind the great controversy.

"the fishing net that catches everything is not a real net"
Antonio Sañez in reference to Bou (mid-XVIII century)



Drift nets, that make no contact with the seabed, such as the bonitera, and surrounding nets, such as the known purse seine surrounding net, have also been used in Tabarca.

Fixed underwater nets such as the trammel net have a great tradition on the island, as well as currently the moruna (Moorish fishing net).

Moruna (Moorish net)

Fixed underwater net currently used in Nueva Tabarca between the months of April and June. It is made up of a transverse net with one single piece of net cast perpendicularly to the coast, with two coils and a bunt. With the moruna, grossa or xirretera type nets, seasonal species are caught, above all the Greater Amberjack that constitutes 85 % of the catch.

Trasmallo (Trammel net)

"A net much used for fishing in the sea and rivers, generally known by this term, comprising three nets with different meshes, i.e. three pieces of netting joined together along their length and width, as if they were three strips of linen cut separately and then sewn together on their top and bottom edges..."

ANTONIO SAÑEZ REGUART

Historical Dictionary of National Fishing Gear,
1791-1795

Hook fishing gear such as the palangre (long line), the fluixa and the curricán (devonspinner or trolling line) have also been commonly used by the fishermen of Tabarca, being employed offshore by means of a line with several hooks or with fishing rods.

Palangre (Long line)

"The most innocent net, or hook fishing method, as it does not destroy the sea. It is also known as the Real Net undoubtedly for this reason. In other places it is called Espinela..."

ANTONIO SAÑEZ REGUART

Historical Dictionary of National Fishing Gear,

1791-1795

Finally, the most commonly used fishing traps of the cage type are fish pots, prawn pots or lobster pots depending on the species to be captured, which are made by the fishermen themselves.

Fish Pots

"The fishing method that, apart from being one of the most ingenious, is believed to be one of the oldest. In the history of fishing, which has produced a countless number of useful discoveries, perhaps this invention came about from the realisation of how easy it was to pick up a small number of small fish in a basket or something similar, by placing it into the water on the seashore or on the river bank, and when removing it later from the water, filtering or draining the water through the gaps in the wicker, reeds, canes or straw of which the pot is made, the catch remained imprisoned or immobile in the pot, taken from their own natural habitat and unable to escape..."

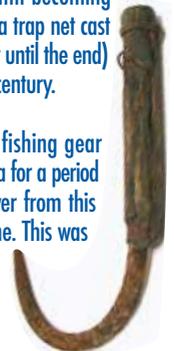
ANTONIO SAÑEZ REGUART

Historical Dictionary of National Fishing Gear,
1791-1795

TUNA FISHING A MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE

Another fixed gear such as the tuna trap nets had great repercussions along the entire coast of Alicante, given that it was the basis for an elementary economy such as that of the Island of Tabarca in the middle of the last century. Designed specifically for catching tuna, its evolution has been very complex until becoming known as "buche tuna trap net" (tuna trap net cast at the beginning of the season and left until the end) introduced here at the end of the XIX century.

Since 1830 this type of fishing gear experienced huge expansion in the area for a period that lasted for over a century, however from this point onwards it would fall into decline. This was fundamentally due to



the inexorable extraction of tuna throughout the centuries, as well as to the change in their migratory routes. In 1960 the tuna trap nets disappeared definitively from TABARCA.

Tuna Trap Nets

The buche or bunt tuna net, the product of the combination of two previous types (almadraba de vista and almadraba de monteleva), uses fixed nets and mobile nets that help to guide the tuna towards the bunt or chamber of death. Its complicated structure is made up of a series of fundamental elements, such as the frame or catcher, the main part of the structure, which is divided into chambers, bordonal (compartment following the buche), buche and bunt, where the raising takes place, whereby the tuna caught is raised to the surface.

The auxiliary parts are called "rabras", that form a system of long length vertical nets that obstruct the the route of the fish leading them to the main frame.

The Tabarca tuna trap nets, although not of large dimensions, rely on a kettle net (land rabera) that is cast from the little island La Galera with a length of 1000 m. until reaching the frame, the bunt being cast to 34 m depth. Up to 35 men worked on this tuna trap net, whose memory is conserved in the warehouse building that currently houses the Nueva Tabarca Museum, with a main manager, the "arráez" who directed the orientation and positioning of the gear.



INSEPARABLE COMPANION: THE BOAT

Since the definitive occupation of the island at the end of the XVIII century, the economy and the Tabarquinos' need for transportation depended on one fundamental element in their lives: the BOAT.

In Nueva Tabarca the passage of small rowing boats and boats with the traditional triangular sail, the lateen sail, for fishing and transportation of travellers was common. This generated the existence of an important trade of great tradition on the Island, shipwrights or waterside carpenters, who were craftsmen who built and also repaired fishing boats.

In essence the vessels are working tools and therefore have been adapted to the marine conditions of our coasts, to the waters in which they navigate and to the type of fishing gear used.



In Nueva Tabarca there has essentially been two types of vessels commonly to be found navigating the Island's waters. Reference is made to the boat (bot in the Valencian language) and the lateen sail felucca (llaüt, laud in the Valencian language). The first was a small vessel propelled by oars, often used to assist the large ships in the bou (pair trawling). If on occasion a sail was used, the so-called "mystic sail", i.e. a truncated lateen sail, was raised.

The llaüt is undoubtedly the most common ship on our coast, and both the llaüt and its "little brother" the bussa, are associated to virtually every activity performed on the Island.

Coastal llaüts and small fishing boats are the most popular vessels in Nueva Tabarca, which, with dimensions of about 8m length by 25m breadth, have mainly been used for fishing and taking people to the Peninsula.

In around 1920 the fleet of Tabarca was at its peak, in turn generating ship-building work, not only for use on the Island but also for nearby towns.

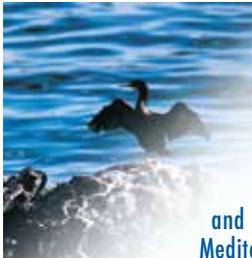
Nowadays, there are few vessels associated to the Fishermen's Guild of Tabarca, which belong to small-scale fishing fleets.

THE CONSERVATION OF THE SEA INSULAR ECOSYSTEMS AND MARINE RESERVES

In the last few years the creation of protected marine areas for the the conservation of the coastal ecosystems, the reestablishment of biological habitat in adjacent areas and the maintenance of the fishing industry has been considered necessary.

Within this field of action, the creation of marine reserves is to be highlighted, defined as areas whose main objective is the protection of marine species for their development and proliferation.

Apart from Nueva Tabarca Reserve, there are twelve other reserves in Spain, located in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, the Autonomous Region of Valencia, Murcia, Andalusia and the the Canary Islands.



These reserves contain and develop the main Mediterranean benthic communities, aiming to coincide with the areas where there is less human impact.

These marine areas can be differentiated according to the type of communities that they predominantly house:

Communities belonging to the soft seabeds in the open sea, including marine phanerogam prairies such as *Cymodoce nodosa* and *Posidonia oceanica*, present on the seabeds of the Island of Nueva Tabarca and the coasts of Murcia.

Photophilic and scyaphila communities on rocky substrates and detritic beds, including *Posidonia* prairies on rock, coral, etc. These communities are mainly found around the islands of the Mediterranean coast.

The closed and limited characteristics of islands produces different ecological cycles. Thus, the known fragility of insular ecosystems is proportional to their surface, clearly

being greater in those of small dimensions, such as Nueva Tabarca.

On the other hand, the value of these smaller islands as enclaves in the marine environment is very significant, with particular relevance to birds, as they are able to gather in large concentrations at a key moment in their vital cycle.

Therefore, insular ecosystems are essential for the protection of the marine environment, since a real increase in biodiversity and productivity occurs around them, which makes their conservation fundamental.

A WINNING FUTURE: THE MARINE RESERVE OF NUEVA TABARCA

This Reserve was created in 1986, the first in Spain. The application of the Alicante City Council was based on a study carried out by the University of Alicante that demonstrated the healthy state of the Island's marine environment and of the inhabitant biological communities, in particular the resources with interest to the fishing industry.

It has a rectangular shape and a total surface of 1400ha and the seabed oscillates between 0 and 40m in depth. There are stony and sandy-silty substrates predominated by the *Posidonia oceanica* prairie, which is in an optimal health condition. Its density and range allow it to serve as a feeding ground and a shelter for a large number of species directly or indirectly involved in the traditional local fishing industry.

In order to avoid the detrimental trawl fishing that could affect the laying and reproduction areas of many species of fishing interest, artificial reefs have



been installed, which together with the anchoring of old wooden fishing vessels have allowed the observation over the last few years of the recovery of the prairie and the fish and cephalopod population.

In this marine reserve a series of biological communities of special singularity may be distinguished:

Posidonia Prairies

The *Posidonia oceanica* prairies form the most complex and mature community that can develop on sandy or rocky beds from 0 to 30m depth. It houses a high biodiversity, has a high primary production, intervenes in the sedimentary stability and is the habitat and growing, laying and reproduction area for many species. In order to develop the prairie requires excellent light, transparency and quality conditions in water, therefore its presence indicates a good environmental quality, a quality evident in the waters of the Island of Tabarca.



Semi-dark Caverns

Semi-dark caverns are characterised by the lack of light, which conditions life in these enclaves. Vegetation is not able to develop and the hanging fauna that covers the walls of the caverns predominates, fauna such as gorgonia, sponge, madrepora, etc. These caverns also serve as shelter during the day for nocturnal fish. The cave known as Cueva del Llop Marí (The Cave of the Sea Wolf), on the Southern coast of the Island, is an example of these habitats. Its name refers to the fact that this was the last shelter of the monk seals in these waters before their disappearance.

Vermetid Cornice

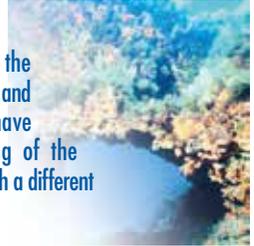
Vermetid Cornices are formed by a multitude of tube-shaped shells belonging to the sessile gastropod *Dendropoma petraeum*. The consolidation of the tubes is due to the action of red algae, which by means of a cementing action build vermetid platforms on a substrate.

Coralline

Coralline developed from the remains of encrusting calcareous organisms form blocks on soft substrates in beds of between 30 and 40m. Algae settle on the blocks, finding numerous microhabitats where organisms diversify.

In short, the Marine Reserve of Tabarca provides for three basic functions in accordance with the basis of its creation: the conservation of species and habitats; scientific research; and the development of economic resource management that is sustainable and well-balanced with the natural environment.

In this sense, the different economic activities and the human presence have determined the planning of the reserve into three areas with a different level of protection.



BIODIVERSITY IN NUEVA TABARCA LAND AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment of the island is conditioned by the typical Mediterranean climate. The water is clean and warm during the winter season and markedly subtropical in the summer season, which also conditions the marine environment.

Similarly, the particular topography of the Island, as well as the lack of vegetation and intense sun exposure, notably affect the local climatic characteristics and thus the configuration of its biodiversity.

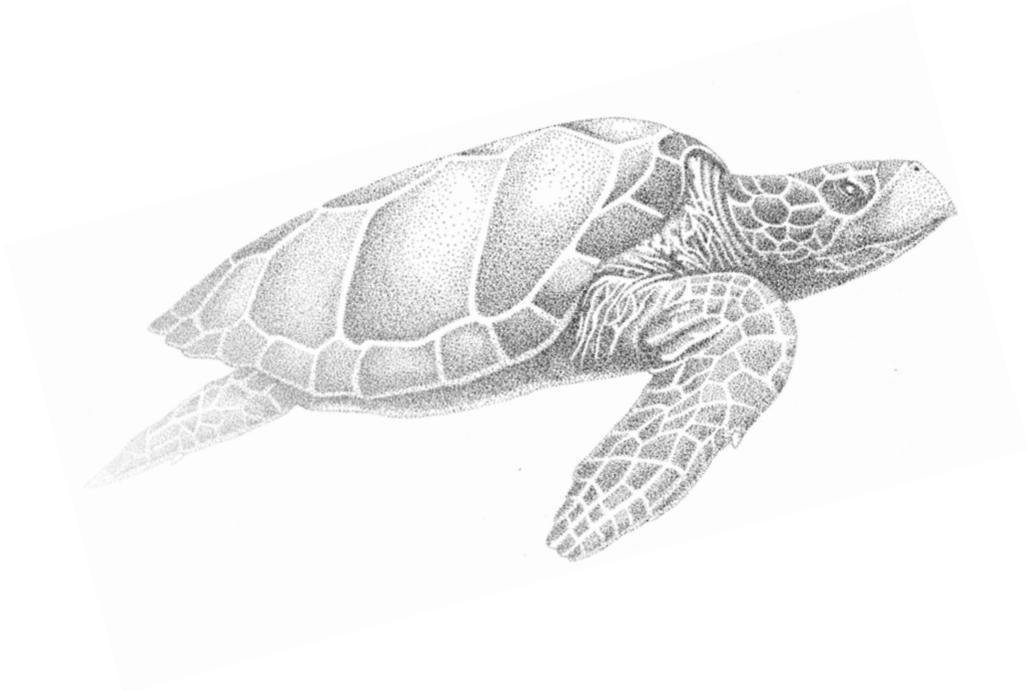
In view of its insular character, the action of the sea and the lack of water have exerted a decisive influence on the vegetation, thus plants in Tabarca are adapted to the salinity of the environment and the lack of regular rain.

The Island has continental vegetation made up of a reduced number of short duration species in terms of flowering and fruition, which differ little from the species in nearby continental areas.

The best represented are those found in the two eastern thirds of the Island, typical of weathered areas and coastal environments, adapted to difficult natural conditions

and to anthropic erosion. Contrary to the situation on the surface, the richness of the biodiversity of the marine environment of Nueva Tabarca is evident. The sandy bed and the rocky substrate are its principal biological communities, the *Posidonia oceanica* prairie, an endemic Mediterranean marine plant present for over

sixty million years, is vital not only from the biological and ecological point of view, but also important for the consolidation of the soft substrates and for slowing down wave erosion on the coast. Under the surface the water is rich with various invertebrates and fish of fishing interest.





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NUEVA  TABARCA
MUSEO