

The Marine Natural Park, a management tool for the sea!

Created in 2015, the Park ensures the healthy functioning of marine ecosystems and pays particular attention to the links between land and sea.

Like the seven other Marine Natural Parks, its aims to preserve the marine environment, enhance knowledge about it and to assist the sustainable development of maritime activities, in dialogue with local stakeholders.

It also raises awareness about the richness and fragility of oceans, and encourages their conservation.

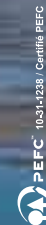
The Park is governed by a management board made up of 70 members: representatives of the State, local elected officials, marine professionals, leisure users, environmental protection associations and scientists.

It works with all stakeholders to improve how biodiversity is taken into account in each of their activities and practices.

A forum for dialogue, the management board decides on the policy of the Park and the actions to be implemented. It issues notices about projects prone to alter the marine environment and can propose changes to regulations.

The Marine Natural Parks are part of the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB), a public institution under the authority of the Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Gironde Estuary and Pertuis Sea
Marine Natural Park
3 rue Robert Etchebarne BP 80031
17320 Marennes
France
Tel: +33 (0)5 46 36 70 51
www.parc-marin-gironde-pertuis.fr



Credits: © Thierry Lèques - La navicule bleue, Pierre Lopin - Roc plongée, Olivier Roux - OFB, Yves Ronzier - Patrimoine maritime Marennes Oléron, Aurélie Dessier - OFB, Cécile Barreaud - OFB. Graphic design: Et d'eau fraîche - Printing: Clôtre - 2022



Gironde Estuary and Pertuis Sea Marine Natural Park



Gironde Estuary and Pertuis Sea Marine Natural Park

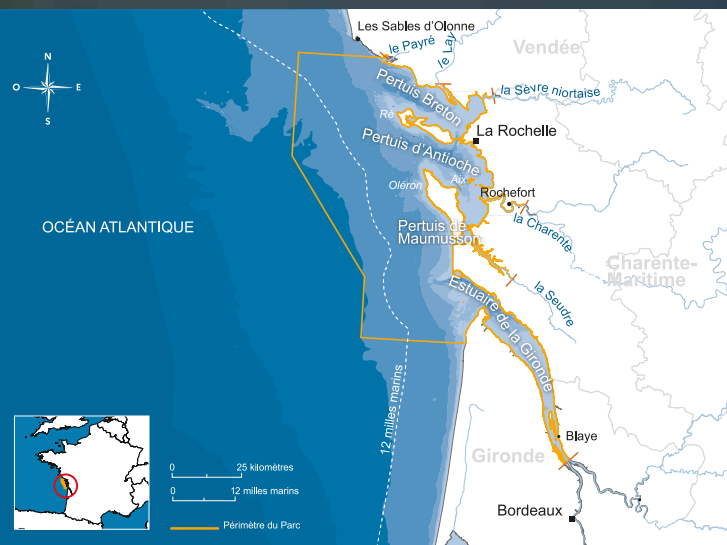
The Gironde Estuary and Pertuis Sea Marine Natural Park is a protected area covering 6 500 km²

Situated in the heart of the Bay of Biscay, the Park borders more than 1000 km of coastline and 113 communes in Vendée, Charente-Maritime and Gironde. It extends into six estuaries and some thirty kilometres out to sea, with depths of up to around fifty metres.

Exceptional and fragile ecosystems

Open to the ocean, the Park covers three “pertuis”, internal seas protected by islands, and spreads up six estuaries. It is where the freshwater of rivers loaded with nutrients meets the saltwater of the sea, a source of abundant food. The Park's various habitats (sandy and rocky shores, vast mudflats ...) are essential breeding grounds and nurseries. They create the conditions for **exceptional biodiversity**: rich communities of plankton, shellfish, migratory fish, marine mammals and fishing resources.

The Park is an ornithological crossroads of international importance. In winter, thousands of seabirds and coastal birds stop over to feed and rest.



The Park, from estuaries to the ocean

This vast marine area has remarkable natural treasures in three main interdependent zones:

- six estuaries including that of the Gironde, the largest in Western Europe
- the Pertuis Sea, a coastal zone sheltered by islands, with shallow waters and considerable surface areas of foreshore
- the open sea, with oceanic influences

Resources and people

The wide range of professional and leisure maritime activities are major socio-economic issues for the area. They are dependent on the healthy ecological status of estuarine and marine habitats.

Dynamic shellfish-farming activity

Leading as the first shellfish-farming sea basin in Europe, this activity greatly affects coastal towns due to its importance in the landscape, cultural, economic and social importance, and through the identity-defining image of its products.

A variety of professional fisheries

Fishing, mainly with small boats, is an important economic activity. The professional fishers use a large number and diversity of fishing gear to harvest a wide variety of species.

A wide range of popular leisure activities

The park is an exceptional area to practice a wide range of leisure activities. This diversity is linked to the particular configuration of its shores and water surface, which provide very diverse and favourable conditions.

Many ports of different types

There are more than 60 ports dotted along the coastline of the Park. Whether for commerce, leisure or fishing, the ports play a major role in the economy of the area.

