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Protected Natural Areas: the Estrecho Natural Park



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1. Introduction

This research paper refers to the issue of Natural Protected Spaces. Spaces that can be defined as geographic zones, both terrestrial and marine, dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and cultural resources that are legally managed with the aim of preserving them.

More accurately, it is a study of the Estrecho Natural Park in Cadiz. A Natural Park is used to refer to one large natural area, practically untransformed by human occupation and exploitation whose natural beauty, wildlife, flora and additional resources, as a whole, shape singular samples into a natural heritage.

The Estrecho Natural Park is the youngest in Andalusia with an extension of 18.931 hectares divided into two areas: the terrestrial environment and the marine environment. Unlike other Natural Parks in Andalusia, in the Estrecho Natural Park it is extremely difficult to name a singular particular uniqueness that stands out since there are so many of them, each with its own appeal.

This paper focuses on a general analysis of the aforementioned space, beginning with the general aspects related to its demography with an interpretation of population pyramids and their evolution, the physical environment with its climate and geological characteristics and finally its partner economy, highlighting the main sectors and the predominating activities. On the other hand, there is also an analysis of the tourism system including the resources, the offer, the demand, and the infrastructures. All of this is done with the objective of clearly demonstrating the different aspects of the Estrecho Natural Park to subsequently prepare a SWOT diagnosis that illustrates the current situation of the Natural Space, emphasising its strengths and weaknesses.

The aim of this research, through its contents, is to provide the reader with all the key information needed to become fully acquainted with the importance of the Natural Parks, and their protection particularly with respect to tourism. Additionally, the resources and activities that the park offers, as presented herein hope to allow the reader to delve into the park atmosphere which ultimately and indispensably invites people to visit the Park.

a. The importance of the Parks for tourism

Today, one can see the increase in the importance of Natural Protected Spaces for touristic activities particularly due to new changes being incorporated in the current lifestyle. Amongst the principal changes, one that stands out is the local cities residents' desire to increase their interaction with nature. They want to be able to connect and enjoy the different riches and activities that nature provides, thus disconnecting from their routines and the chaos brought from city life.

One of the highest priorities is the longing search to find new bigger and better, as well as more personalized, sensations and experiences, along with improvements in service quality. But at the same time, there is also a larger conscientiousness regarding the environment that surrounds them, creating a growing feeling of concern about the conservation of these spaces. It is in this way that the natural environment has become another factor in the touristic experience.

As expressed in the Doctoral Thesis, "in this context, the environment has gone from being simply a physical basis for physical activity to become a fundamental part of the touristic experience. Even more so when it comes to natural resources identified as having a high ecological and landscape value, and on many occasions, with spaces subject to some type of protection" (Pulido Fernandez, 2005).

Therefore, as stated by the professor at the University of Jaen, due to a continuous transformation in the eager society to improve life quality, a larger conscientiousness towards the ecological ecosystems and the negative effects of mass tourism, joined with the powerful promotion campaigns and the growing number of touristic intermediaries, makes known the immense possibilities and the potential of enjoying natural protected spaces. This way, they create "new necessities and new consumptions that suppose de facto the commercialization of nature" (Vera, 1997). Consequently, causing the expansion and the development of touristic activity in these type of spaces.

b. Literature

Wilderness tourism was defined as one whose specific goal is the study, contemplation and enjoyment of landscapes, plants, and animals, as well as cultural manifestations of relatively quiet and unpolluted areas (BOO 1990). The steady and strong growth in the demand for these spaces is due to a social need to obtain and to enjoy a certain type

of social and physical stimulation that can somehow compensate and combat the daily overload people are exposed to in artificial environments, defined as the big city, ([*Psychosocial Intervention*] Intervención Psicosocial, 2002), implying that "nature seems to be important for people" (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). This increased demand has resulted in the recent heightened interest in and attention to tourist literature regarding the analysis and participation of all members in the planning, management, and marketing of a tourist destination ([*Journal of Regional Studies*] Revista de estudios regionales, 2010).

Protected Natural Areas are therefore considered to be destinations with a high level of tourist attraction, becoming a "resource of great social value and appealing to the general population", while "natural parks serve as highly preferred destinations to escape, learn or recall the experience and direct contact with nature" (Corraliza, Garcia y Valero, 2002). From the perspective of environmental psychology (Pitt and Zube, 1987) a natural park is defined as a social scene of great importance in which different actors are involved, various activities are performed and different uses and interests arise.

It is believed that planning and management of a natural park must be a joint project, shared between all persons and organizations wishing to participate and showing interest (Corraliza, 2002).

However, different types of touristic activities that can be performed in a protected natural environment, must take into account certain bases that make the coexistence between the use and the conservation of such spaces, in a rational and responsible use of natural resources and existing cultures possible (Millan, 2001).

c. Legislation

The beginning of protected natural areas was in 1872, in the United States with the creation of the first national park, Yellowstone. "The protected natural areas, globally, in its different forms of protection, have experienced a large increase represented in 2008, 19,5 million square kilometers, i.e. 11,3% of the global area (*World Commission on Protected Areas*), in the case of Europe, has protected 13% of the territory", (López Olivares, 2014). In the case of Spanish protected natural spaces, until 2015, totally, they are 7.839.139,86 km², representing 14,47% of the total area.

Andalusia is said to be one of the European areas with the best-preserved natural spaces having a large quantity of Natural Protected Spaces. Specifically, in 2015, Andalusia has 334 protected areas, distributed in 2.575.147,90 km², corresponding to 29,39% of the territory and is in a first place in the number of such spaces nationwide (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment). Its history begins in Andalusia around 1929, when the Picacho de la Virgen de la Sierra (the Mountain Virgin) in Cordoba and the Torcal de Antequera in Malaga were declared as Places of National Interest (Marchenal, 1992). In 1975 the Open Inventory of Natural Spaces of Special Protection created by the ICONA appears, and is later joined by the MOPU. In 1987, the created Environmental Agency, basing on already declared spaces at that moment, made its first proposal regarding the Network of Natural Protected Spaces.

In 1997 the Network of Natural Protected Spaces in Andalusia (RENPA) was finally consolidated. It is based on a sustainable development as well as the conservation and regeneration of high value Natural Resources in the Protected Spaces in Andalusia.

From this date forward, additional planning for socioeconomic development intensified. Through the Environmental Department Council, the need to create and approve Integrated Development Plans arose. While these plans were being developed, the Environmental Department Council signed a Collaborative Protocol with the Instituto de Fomento de Andalucia (Institute of Development in Andalusia) that would enhance the socio-economic revitalization of the neighbourhoods that form part of these protected areas.

Currently, all natural parks in Andalusia have the Natural Resources Regulation Plan, the PRUG and the PDS; the three basic planning tools that made it possible to create a management model for the development of these spaces, going beyond simple progress strategies leading to more of an integrated management of protected areas.

d. Estrecho Natural Park declaration

As Jesus Cabello Medina, Custodial/Curator Manager commented, “with the declaration of the Estrecho Natural Park, in March 2003, a long and complex process was culminated in which different public administrations, social collective groups, scientists and citizens in general intervened. In the planning and standards that emerged, this new natural park recognizes the extent of the participation with which it was conceived, and the willingness with which it was done to make this a living space

of interest, and one with extraordinary cultural and natural attractions” (Macías Bedoya, 2005).

Once the Natural Resources Regulation Plan was approved, the initiation of the Natural Park declaration process proceeded, and on the 4th of March 2003, the governing council approved the decree 57/2003 thereby declaring the Estrecho Natural Park. This decree also dictates the limits and borders of the new protected space, as well as establishes the composition of the Governing Board as a participating collective body. This Board is formed by 46 members that represent the different sectors involved such as the environmentalists, entrepreneurs, universities, etc.

The Declaration of the Estrecho Natural Park is considered to be a local action, attuned to and based on the guidelines of the Rio Summit, the Constitution and European Directives. Once the Park was declared different projects and activities directly related to its existence were kick-started. In short, it is definitely a Park that should continue moving towards sustainable development, taking into account both the conservation of natural resources and socioeconomic development.

e. Geographical situation

The Estrecho Natural Park is located in the southern part of the Cadiz province. With an exact location of 35°58'N5°29'W, it therefore belongs to the autonomous community of Andalusia, Spain.



Figure 1: Estrecho Natural Park lokation

It was declared as such in 2003 and covers an area of 18,931 hectares, 9,326 of which are coastal areas and 9,684 are land. The elevated coastal area makes it one of the longest protected coastal areas in the Natural Protected Spaces of Andalusia along with Doñana Natural Park and Cabo de Gata Natural Park. On the other hand, the land surface area includes two municipal districts: Algeciras (2,324 hectares) from the Coves of Getares until Tarifa (7,360 hectares) Cabo de Gracia.

As for its borders, on the one side we have the terrestrial environment including the Silver Mountain, Betis Mountain, San Bartolome Mountain, the area of the Cerros del Estrecho, the N-340 motorway and the corresponding territories in Tarifa. On the other side, the coastal area is home to the area located between Cabo de Gracia and Punta de San Gracia, reaching one marine mile into the sea from the coast line to the Punta Camorro.

2. Methodology

For the preparation of this study, different methods and research materials were used. First, the emphasis being on material that was already written and published by other authors: academic articles, dissertations, guides, maps, magazines and local newspaper articles, books dedicated to the topic of Natural Protected Spaces, especially the Estrecho Natural Park like *Guía Oficial del Parque Natural del Estrecho (Estrecho Natural Park Official Guide)* and lastly, publications from different related webpages such as The Visitor's Window into Natural Spaces (Junta of Andalusia, Ministry of Environmental and Spatial Planning), Official Tourism Website of Cadiz, Magazine online waste, not to mention other websites that provide numerical data: Institute of Statistics and Cartography in Andalusia (Ministry of Economy and Knowledge) and the National Institute of Statistics (INE).

These materials were used mainly for the theoretical part of the study, providing necessary information about the basic aspects of the Park, its location, size, increasing importance for tourism and its declaration as a Natural Protected Space. Moreover, they also provided information and data for the analyses of the general aspects where we discuss the demographics and corresponding population evolution data, the physical environment that describes the basic characteristics of the climate and geology present in the zone and its socioeconomic aspects, highlighting the main activities of the municipalities that make up the Park. These sources were also necessary and helpful when it came to completing the analysis of the elements of the tourism system, providing valuable information on the resources that can be found in the area of the Estrecho Natural Park, its origin, types, hierarchies and preservation. In the magazines, Park guides and different studies we find data in reference to accommodations, restaurant and catering, transport, and the different activities that can be practised in the area and their demand, especially active tourism activities like

kitesurfing, windsurfing or different hiking routes, without forgetting the existing infrastructures and their status.

Another one of the sources used is the SWOT analysis, used to study the current situation of the Estrecho Natural Park, collecting relevant information to make future decisions. This analysis is extremely helpful when it comes time to make decisions regarding which actions are necessary in order to take advantage of the present opportunities, one of them being its excellent location, to protect the Park from any possible threats like landscape deterioration, while always acting conscientiously, unfailingly taking into account the present weaknesses, one of the most common and important being the seasonality, and the strengths such as having a large amount of exceptional resources to take advantage of.

Finally, for the field work, besides images taken personally at the destination and some interviews, a futuristic prospective method similar to the Delphi analysis that is based on the intuitive opinion of a group of experts was applied. The study consisted of an anonymous survey of closed answer questions given to a group of 15 experts, from university professors and park workers to members of some of the related institutions. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions about the various aspects of the Estrecho Natural Park, the legislation, physical environment, resources, etc. These questions have been evaluated using a Likert scale from strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, to agree and strongly agree. Thanks to the information obtained with this analysis, we can see the strengths and Park points with the highest ratings and the aspects that need improvement, since in the long run they will have negative adverse effects on the space.

3. Analysis

a. General features - Physical environment

Flora and Fauna

In the context of the communities, both terrestrial and marine, the Estrecho Natural Park, due to the large variety of species that appear in this territory, is considered of special biological interest in terms of its fauna and flora.

Terrestrial environment

According to the book about the Estrecho Natural Park, written by the Environmental Department, the land vegetation, flora, in the Estrecho Natural Park is very diversified. In the Silver Mountain (Sierra de la Plata) area, its original cork oak forests and olive trees have been replaced and reforested by shrubs, pine trees and eucalyptus trees. In this area we can also appreciate palmettos, gorse, lavender, and gum rockroses. As for those places located at a higher altitude, they are almost completely covered in a creeping brush thicket where species such as the *Erica australis* predominate. In the higher mountain zones, we find *Chamaespartium tridentatum* while in the rocky mountain areas there is *Drosophyllum lusitanicum*. On the contrary, the lower mountain areas have barely any vegetation.



Figure 2: *Chamaespartium tridentatum*

There are a few palmetto bushes (*Chamaerops humilis*) and mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*) as well as a few feet of olive trees. Further up the mountain, at a height of approximately 250 metres, olive tree forests and some other shrub species predominate. On the highest slopes the oak trees start to replace the olive trees and the brush becomes denser.



Figure 3: *Chamaerops humilis*

In the Cove of Bologna, there are several leguminous plant species, but also an abundant amount of herbaceous plants because of the conversion of the area in large pastures for livestock breeding. Finally, in Punta Caraminal we find stone pine trees (*Pinus pinea*) and coniferous species like juniper trees (*Juniperus phoenicea*).

As for the terrestrial wildlife, fauna, the Park area is quite rich, principally due to the large number of birds detected (3.605.084 samples from 380 species and subspecies, belonging to around 70 families). Highlighted among the most frequently detected birds are: the white stork, black kite and honey buzzard. In addition to those, there are many species of special interest that are under different forms of protection. There are also a few reptiles like the Ocellated lizard, the Montpellier snake, or terrapin sometimes referred to as a Mediterranean pond turtle.

Marine Environment

The Estrecho Natural Park is also an area of high biological interest because of its numerous underwater vegetation species. The most important ones are the seagrass *Cymodocea Nodosa* (*Cymodoceion nodosae*) mainly located off Los Lances beach, the *Laminaria Ochroleuca* and the *Laminaria Polyschides*, without forgetting the calcareous red algae. In the intertidal zone, depending on where a person is located along the coast, it is possible to distinguish between 3 and 7 algae belts at any given time.



Figure 4: *Cymodoceion nodosae*

Lastly, there is also a rich marine life, fauna, where we can find a large number of invertebrates, for example: sponges, coral, anemones, and molluscs. Orange coral (*Astroides calycularis*) and red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) populations particularly stand out because of their condition as endangered species.



Figure 5: *Astroides calycularis*

On the other hand, within the molluscs we can see limpets, Mediterranean date mussels or *Pinna Nobilis*, all of which are protected species. Fish such as the grouper (*Epinephelus alexandrinus*), rainbow wrasse (*Coris julis*), flounder, monkfish and bream are also of special interest. In addition, we can see other different protected species such as turtles, dolphins and whales.

Climatology

The Estrecho Natural Park has a Mediterranean and Oceanic climate due to one of its main characteristics and peculiarities, which is its location and proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Therefore, it is a relatively temperate climate, generally with mild and regulated temperatures all year long with an average temperature of 17,15°C. The highest annual average is 22°C in August and the lowest annual average is 13,4°C in January and

February. As we can see, winters are not very rigorous and Summers are not extremely hot either. This is due to the influence of the sea and the ocean which are able to dissimulate temperature fluctuations, thus providing a homogenous temperature all year long.

As far as the precipitation, it is irregular and many times torrential. Annually reaching 599mm, principally during the Autumn - Winter seasons, particularly in December with 118mm and during the Spring. The months with the highest amount of rain are: December (118mm), January (83mm), November (77mm) and February (73mm). On the contrary, during the months with the lowest recorded precipitation, July (2mm), August (4mm), and June (9mm) stand out. We can also observe that, according to the Gausson index of aridity we find 5 dry months: May, June, July, August and September.

On the other hand, we have the influence of the Eastern winds with an average wind velocity of approximately 50 km/hr, sometimes reaching speeds greater than 125 km/hr. This plays a large part in the formation of dunes and the land configuration, the vegetation adaptation, and bird migratory routes. But above all, men reap benefits and take advantage of the wind power firstly to practise certain sports such as kitesurfing or windsurfing and secondly to produce wind energy.

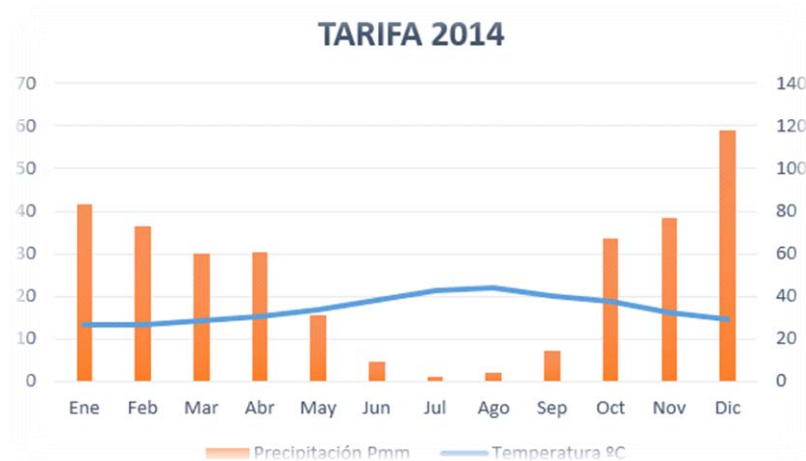


Figure 6: Temperatures and precipitations in Tarifa

Geological characteristics

In the Miocene age, the African plate shifted producing an escalation in the Alpine orogeny causing the softer materials to collapse, forming the mountain ranges. On the contrary, the harder materials fractured creating faults (Antúnez Neira, 2008).

In the Estrecho, the Alpine collapse happened on top of the sedimentary marine platform and as a result, the principal geological units of the Campo de Gibraltar are composed of detritus marine rocks of turbid origin, also known as *flysch*. Thanks to this, when we roam around the coast of the Estrecho Natural Park, we are actually walking on the old seabed.

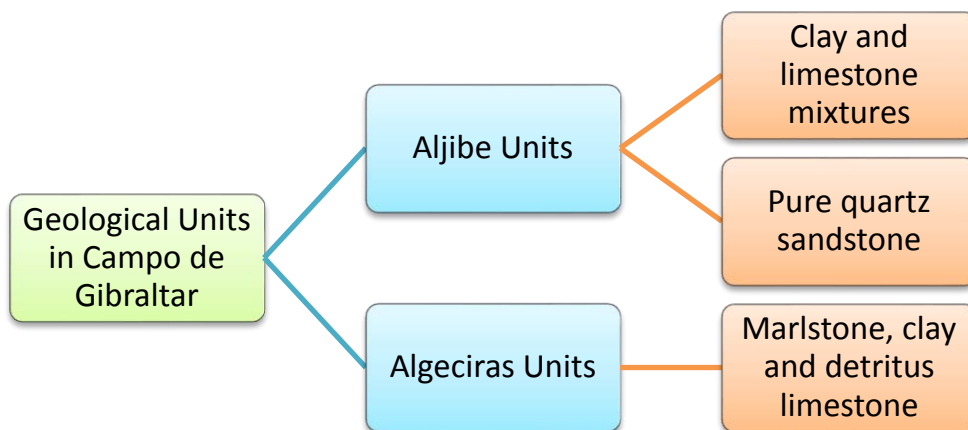


Figure 7: Geological Units in Campo de Gibraltar

In the Estrecho these two units are perfectly differentiated and separated by Tarifa. From Algeciras (Punta Carnero) until reaching Tarifa, specifically, Paloma Island, we have the Algeciras unit. From here until the western park border (Cabo de Gracia) is the Aljibe unit, making the highest mountains in the entire park: San Bartolome and Silver Mountain. The rest are other units of *Flysch*.

This brings us to observe how the entire eastern coast is made up of impressive cliffs with small coves filled with large pebbles. On the other hand, on the western coast we can appreciate white sand beaches and pine grove dunes.

GEOLOGICAL TIME SCALE						
EON	ERA	PERIOD	AGE	INTERVAL MILL. YRS	PRINCIPAL EVENTS	
Phanerozoic	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Holocene	-0.01	Development of current civilization	
			Pleistocene	0.01-2	Evolution of modern humans Extinction of large mammals large glaciations	
		Tertiary	Pliocene	2-5	Hominids appear Homo sapiens appear The Gibraltar Strait is opened definitively	
				Miocene	5-23	The Gibraltar Strait closes
			Oligocene	23-37	Elevation of large mountain ranges	
			Eocene	37-55	Mammal dominance	
			Paleocene	55-65	Evolution of continents	
		Mesozoic	Cretaceous	65-140	Dinosaur extinction Placental mammals (?) Europe separates from Africa	
				Jurassic	140-210	Marsupial mammals/ first bird life First plants with flowers and nuts
				Triassic	210-250	First Dinosaur Oviparous mammals Massive extinction
	Paleozoic	Permian	250-290	Separation of Pangea in Laurasia and Gondwana Massive extinction 95% of life forms disappear		
			Carboniferous	290-360	Abundant insects/first reptiles Tree fern forests Pangea is born (supercontinent)	
		Devonian	360-410	First insects/first forests		
		Silurian	410-440	First air breathing animal (scorpion)/terrestrial plants		
		Ordovician	440-500	First vertebrates/Corals land: islands		
Cambrian	Cambrian	500-590	Cephalopod molluscs/Plants predominantly algae (oceans)			
		Precambrian	Proterozoic	Late	590-900	First metazoans
				Middle	900-1600	First eukaryotic
Early	1600-1800	Formation of the Earth				

Figure 8: Geological Time Scale

Zoning

According to the Estrecho Natural Park Public Use Program (PUP), this is divided into various zones according to their protection grade and permitted uses. It was approved by the General Direction of Sustainability in the Network of Natural Spaces in 2008. There are three main zones and a few subzones currently in existence.



Figure 9: Estrecho Natural Park Zoning Map

Protection A zones: These are known as the Reservation Zones and are of great environmental and cultural value and therefore require the most protection. They correlate to 1,9% of the land surface area and 22% of the marine area.

A1: Spaces with high natural value highlighting the Cabrita and Paloma islets, the island of Tarifa and the abrasion platforms between Tarifa and Los Parentones and between the Tolmo Coves and Punta Carnero.

A2: Spaces with a high cultural value among which we have the Archaeological Ruins of Baelo Claudia, the Algarbes and the Roman quarries.

In the marine atmosphere we have the south-eastern forefront of Tarifa island, the area of the Paloma island, Cabrita Island, and Bajo de la Perla, the Bologna Coves and Valdevaqueros and Punta de San Garcia

Regulations prohibit any and all uses and activities than can alter the environmental conditions, for example, construction or installation of buildings, any type of commercial or sport fishing, etc.

Protection B Zones: These spaces are referred to as Special Regulation Zones, and as in the previous cases, they are limited by their natural and/or cultural value. The difference is in that these are less fragile. In this zone there are three types of areas:

B1: Here we have grouped together the beaches, cliffs, dune formations, intertidal rocky substrates, banks, and finally the coastal lagoons (15% of the land surface). It is also important to point out the Natural Beach Expanses of the Lances.

B2: These are the steeper hilly mountain spaces in the Silver Mountain and San Bartolome and the Cerros del Estrecho. They make up 43% of the park land environment.

B3: all the other zones that have installations subject to National Defence regulations.

Concerning the marine environment, we have here all of those not included in Category A. In this case regulations aim to maintain current uses.

Protection C Zones: These are the Common Regulation Zones and are made up of the more humanized spaces and occupy 37% of the park land surface. These include

the inter-mountain areas of Silver Mountain, La Higuera Mountain and San Bartolome pastures along the N-340 motorway in the part of Algeciras and family gardens.

Land Uses

The land or soil is considered to be one of the most important natural resources as it is essential for life, as well as for the air and water. When it is used cautiously and correctly, it can be perceived as a renewable resource. Acting as a link between biotic and abiotic factors is another key land function. Besides, it is also regarded as a habitat for plant development.

The production of natural resources is possible thanks to this great and extensive land support. Consequently, we must recognize and understand the soil's distinct physical and chemical characteristics to further promote productivity with environmental equilibrium, thus achieving sustainability.

The Estrecho Natural Park has in its totality 18.931 hectares of which 9.326 are marine seashore and 9.684 are land. In the map we can appreciate the distinct land uses where the scrublands and Mediterranean forest predominate

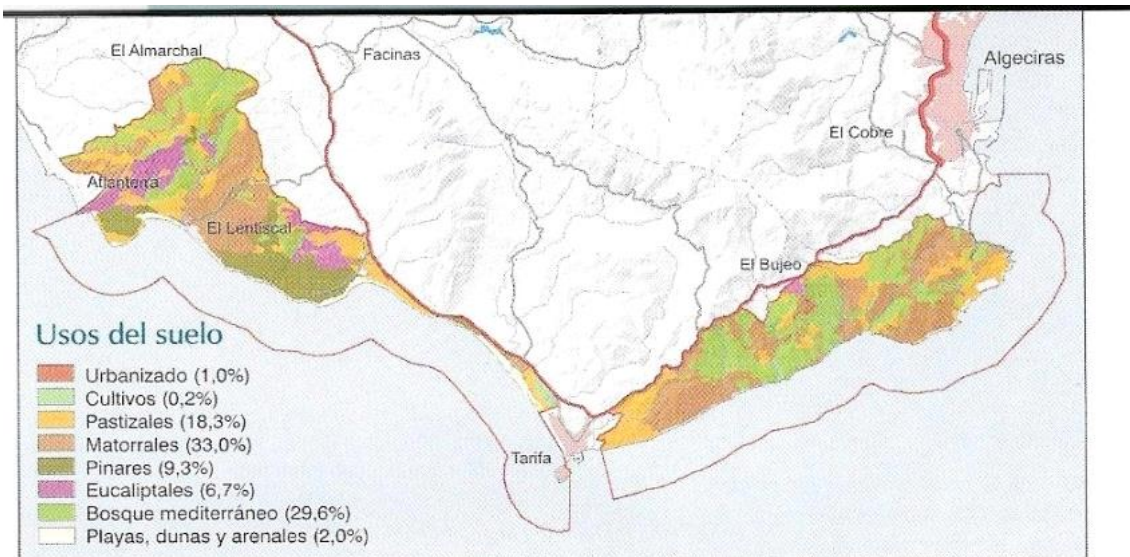

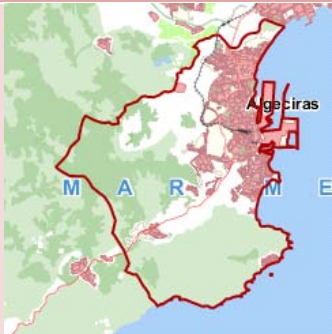


Figure 10: Different Land Uses Map, Estrecho Natural Park

a. General features – Demography

	TARIFA	ALGECIRAS
Surface Area (2015)	419,7	85,8
Population Total (2015)	18.011	118.920
Men (2015)	9.127	58.776
Women (2015)	8.884	60.144
Relative Increase (10 years)	4,72	6,86

Tarifa

Tarifa is a municipality pertaining to the Cadiz province, situated at 7 metres of altitude and at a distance of 101 kilometres from Cadiz. It is deemed as the southernmost city in all of the Iberian Peninsula with its main population in Punta de Tarifa, the Strait of Gibraltar.

Regarding its township limits, we can observe the borders as follows: (North) Medina Sidonia, (South) the Strait of Gibraltar, (West) Barbate, (East) Algeciras, (Northwest) Vejer de la Frontera and (Northeast) Los barrios.

The Punta de Tarifa, as it is located directly in front of where the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean cross, has an important role to play. Furthermore, it occupies 14 kilometres on the Moroccan coast making it the closest city to the African continent.

It is a locality that in 2015 had 18,011 habitants, of which 9,127 were men and 8,884 were women in an area of 418,7 km². Based on this, the population density can be calculated by dividing the total population by the surface area, in this case giving us a population density of 42,91 hab./km².

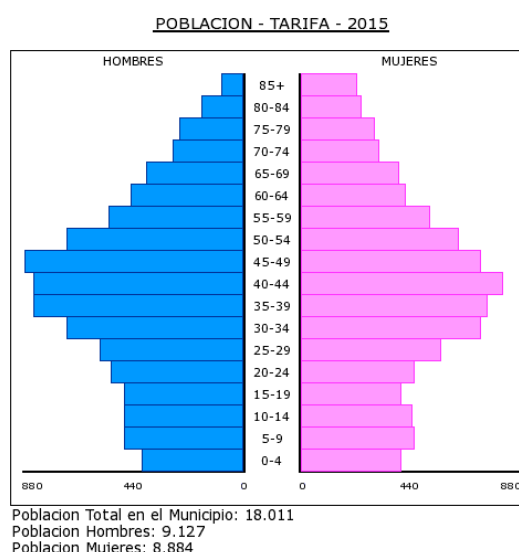
Population Pyramid

As a result of the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, as we have seen, in 2015 Tarifa had a total of 18,011 habitants, of which there were 9,127 men and 8,884 women. With respect to the population pyramid, we can analyse the population from different viewpoints. Firstly, **by age**, where the main interval concentrations are as follows: First and foremost is the age span of 40-44 years old, followed by 45-49 years old, then 35-39 years old and lastly 30-34 years old. The majority of them are descendants of the known Baby-Boom era, thus being the collective majority. Underneath these intervals we find the adolescent population, children, and in the lowest point of the pyramid, births. On the contrary, in the upper part of the pyramid we have those over 60.

Secondly, we find a ranking classification **by sex**, where at the left we have the men and at the right the women. Generally, and independent from any population pyramid, this category almost always fulfils a series of characteristics. The first one being the fact that men and women are born, as a biological rule, trying to correct and balance the higher mortality rate of men as compared to women. As we can appreciate in the upper part of the pyramid, more women than men reach this category. This finding demonstrates another biological rule showing that women have a higher life expectancy, besides a higher organic resistance due to having to suffer through childbirth. Their superior life expectancy is also due to the fact that previously women didn't have any bad habits, they did not smoke or drink. Neither did they dedicate themselves to dangerous, hard, exhausting jobs that men had to face, such as for example working in construction.

In this pyramid we can also see in the lower part a narrowing that implies a lower birth-rate that later increases in recent years with the increase in births. This is due to the arrival of immigrants and because of those born in the baby-boom era reaching their fertile ages.

Amongst other causes that provoked the decrease in the population, the most substantial are illnesses, epidemics, the civil war and the post-war where many people either died or emigrated.



Fuente: INE , Grafico elaborado por FORO-CIUDAD.COM para todos los municipios de España

Algeciras

Likewise, Tarifa also pertains to the province of Cadiz and is located 120km from the city of Cadiz. It is the largest city in the Campo de Gibraltar and is the seat of the grouping of municipalities in this region. It is located in the Bahía of Algeciras and its township lines are demarcated by the Palmones river. This works as a separation barrier between the other municipalities: Los Barrios to the North, and to the South, Tarifa. It is also the contact area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Thanks to this, Algeciras retains a Maritime port with a large transit of Spanish merchandise. It is considered to be a naval maritime city, but at the same time it is modern and cosmopolitan.

Owing to the data provided by the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia, we see that in 2015 this city had a population of 118,920 habitants, 58,776 of which were men and 60,144 were women. Its municipal district covers 85,9 km² at an average altitude of 20 metres above sea level and has a population density of 1.384,40 hab./km².

Regarding the population evolution, we can say that Algeciras is a city that was destroyed in 1379 and abandoned until 1704 when it was repopulated. The repopulating produced by the exiles from Gibraltar attracted a considerable number of people who were looking for new opportunities in a new city. Since the middle of the twentieth century we can see the growth has been practically constant, currently surpassing 100.000 habitants.

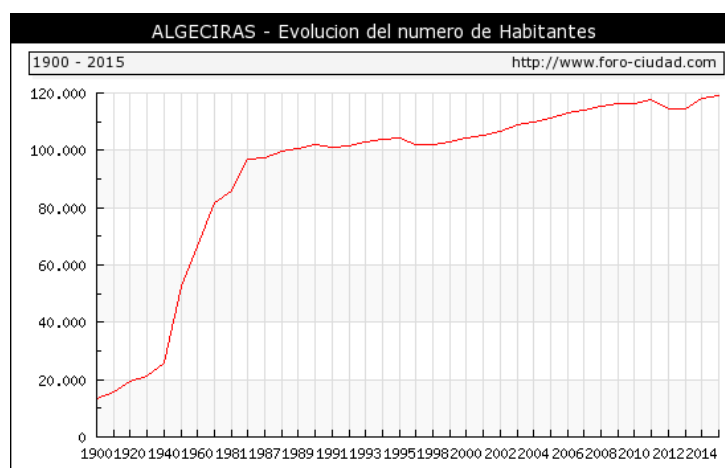


Figure 11: Population evolution, Algeciras

a. General features – Socioeconomics

As for the socioeconomic environment in the towns surrounding the Estrecho Natural Park, Luis Alberto Del Castillo Navarro, the First Chairman of the Institute of Gibraltar Related Studies, and Emeritus Professor at the University School of Legal Studies and Entrepreneurs from the Campo de Gibraltar Francisco Tomas and Valiente, Regional Council for the Environment of Andalusian Ministry says:“ Society and the economy in the Estrecho Natural Park and its environment are noticeable because of its geographical and political location. Algeciras and Tarifa occupy a border space with an exceptional strategic value. Throughout history its settlers have enjoyed as much as they have suffered from such circumstances. Even though the pattern of the modernization during the XX century arrived late to this extreme south of the Iberian Peninsula, the current socioeconomic structure on the northern edge of the Strait of Gibraltar is a key piece to the inner workings of the world economy. While the port in Algeciras consolidates as an international maritime traffic reference, other sectors such as tourism, have opened the way to the complex business world in the globalization age” (Macías Bedoya, 2005).

In these two municipalities, there are several sectors that developed emergent economic activities in the past, but also new activities that have appeared over time. Many of them have lasted and grown until today, and yet many others have been losing importance and falling into oblivion.

Undoubtedly, the most important economic activity in the municipality of Algeciras is that of its **port**, considered to be the main nationwide port in the total freight traffic, reaching in 2008, 74,8 million tons mainly from Asia and South America. Moreover, besides being one of the main shipping routes in the freight world, it also stands out because of the constant passenger and vehicle movement into the peninsula, which increases every year. Among the main routes, the most used is Algeciras with Tangier-Med, increasing 20% annually.



Figure 12: View, Port in Algeciras

This average annual increase is due to several different factors, among which include the strategic location of the port at the conjunction of the intercontinental lines linking

Northern Europe, Asia and America. Also included is their excellent seagoing conditions which allow any and all types of ships to dock at the port, favourable port conditions throughout the peninsula and nearby countries, and also the continuous improvement of their infrastructures.

As for the port infrastructures, it has everything you need to cater to cruise traffic and a fully automated Passenger Maritime Station. There are also lounges for some destinations such as Ceuta and Tangier, shops, cafes, luggage lockers, car rentals, etc. In addition, the port also has a commercial gallery where you can find bank offices, travel agencies, and many other passenger services.

One of the other more important activities is **tourism**, which is considered to be the basis of the local economy in Tarifa which according to the Andalusian Ministry of Tourism and Sport has more than 110 establishments for tourist accommodations: 23 hotels (7 one star, 7 two star, 5 three star and 4 four star), 15 hostels (11 one star and 4 two star), 29 touristic apartments, 29 rooming houses, 6 cottages and lastly, 7 campsites, all belonging to second type accommodations. Because of the wind in the area, sport related tourism such as kitesurfing and windsurfing are of increasing importance and thanks to the natural environmental characteristics, other leisure time activities such as hiking trails, bike routes, bird watching, and even cetacean watching from the boats are also available.

Moreover, Algeciras has a large number of hotel rooms, the majority being two-star hotels and rooming houses. As for the tourists, mainly coming from other cities in Spain, the number continues to rise. However, Algeciras is considered to be a "passing city" since a large number of the tourists are simply passing through on their way to the Strait of Gibraltar or other Andalusian cities.

As for the **industry**, the city of Algeciras has four industrial parks that concentrate the majority of the manufacturing sector and metal processing activities. Meanwhile, in Tarifa, the main feature is the Wind Park. It began producing energy in 1992, through wind turbines, but after expanding several times, the park reached the terawatt per hour and became the most important wind plant in terms of energy billed in Spain.

Traditionally, in the city of Algeciras, one of the most important economic activities has undoubtedly been **fishing**. In its port all products from the Mediterranean and the Atlantic disembark. But now, due to conflicts with Morocco, which in the 90s banned

fishing along its coasts and also due to the depletion of the Spanish hunters, a large part of the fleet was lost causing a significant drop in activity.



Figure 13: Fishing Port Algeciras (1973)

Finally, it is worthwhile to mention the certain importance of **agriculture** in Tarifa, especially in the rural areas with rain-fed monoculture. A large portion of the hectares are used for growing herbaceous crops, largely wheat. Other crops, including woody and fruit crops, cover a minimal area. On the contrary, in Algeciras, farming is minimal due to its township lines and forest conditions. Among the existing crops, the ones worth noting are cereals used as fodder, and some fruits such as orange, kaki and guava trees.

b. Components of the Tourism System

Tourist System

Bouillon (2004) defines the tourism system as “a combination of interrelated elements (infrastructures, superstructures, demands, local community, attractions, tourism plans, touristic products) that together satisfy the needs related to the use of free time”. According to the WTO, (1994), “the nature of tourist activities is a result of complex interrelationships between different factors that need to be considered jointly from a systematic point of view, meaning, a set of interrelated elements that together evolve dynamically”.



Figure 14: Components of the Tourism System

Resources

Tourism resources as part of the Tourism System are defined by (López Olivares, 2014) as the raw material of tourism development and together with the supply of accommodation; complementary tourism; general services and infrastructure; staff training and others, constitute the tourism product in the area. He also defines the resources as any material or non-material element which has a capacity, itself or in combination with other resources, to attract visitors to particular place, with strictly tourist and leisure or recreation motive.

The Estrecho Natural Park has an immense amount of all kinds of resources grouped into their respective categories: **A** (Appealing scenic and natural resources); **B** (historic, technical, ethnological and artistic resources); **C** (Gastronomic and artisanal resources); and **D** (Folklore, festivals and scheduled events). In this section the most important resources will be highlighted, from hierarchies 3, 4, and 5, and the description of some of them will be given.

One of the most important resources in this category is the current phenomenon of **migration** in the Strait of Gibraltar that acts as a passing and rest area for the birds as well as for the fish and the cetaceans.

First, the bird's migratory movements between Europe and Africa by way of the Strait of Gibraltar, generally occur in Spring and Autumn where all bird forms from large gliders and prey birds to smaller passerine bird species can be seen. Among the most frequently spotted species observed in the Strait we find the white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), the booted eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*), the short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), the black kite (*Milvus migrans*), the honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), and the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*). The most strategic place for bird watching is the Trafalgar Coast where of the 524 species recorded in Birds in Europe, approximately 226 birds (43%) can be found on a regular basis.



Figure 15: *Hieraetus pennatus*



Figure 16: *Milvus migrans*



Figure 17 : *Ciconia nigra*

On the other hand, just as the Strait of Gibraltar acts as a passing area for birds, it also establishes communication between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea for some migratory species, particularly cetaceans and tuna fish. Among the marine migrations in the Estrecho Natural Park, the ones with a special importance on an economic level, are the long distance species which are caught in the fishing traps in Tarifa, as highlighted for their culinary interest, frigate tuna (*Auxis thazard*), little tunny (*Euthynnus alletteratus*) and lastly, the larger tunas, Atlantic Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*). Other less migratory species like sardines (*Sardina pilchardus*) or anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) can also be found. Among the elasmobranch fish, it is worth noting the basking shark (*Cethorinus maximus*) which can grow to be over 10 metres in length and weigh over 4.000 kilograms.



Figure 18: *Cethorinus maximus*

Alternatively, we also find different cetacean species such as pilot or long-finned whales (*Globicephala melas*) and different types of dolphins (striped, common or bottlenose) that live and habitat the area throughout the year. However, the sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) the orca, or killer whale (*Orcinus orca*), which belong to this same family, use the Strait as a passing zone.

Archaeological Ruins Baelo Claudia, an ancient Roman city, located in the Cove of Bologna approximately 22 kilometres northwest of Tarifa inside the Estrecho Natural Park, conserves one of the best samples of Roman urbanism. Most of the construction was completed under the rule of Claudius but some of the buildings belong to the Augustan age.



Figure 19: Archaeological Ruins Baelo Claudia

Algarbe Necropolis is one of the most important archaeological sites from the Copper and Bronze Age in the province of Cadiz. It has a set of fifty funerary structures and artificial caves for collective burials. Ceramic vessels, stone tools and various ornaments were also found.

Caraminal Lighthouse has been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest with the name "Torre de Cabo de Gracia", (Cape Grace Tower), upon which it is situated. Previously, it was a beacon tower and was one of the coastal watchtowers built in the XVI century to protect themselves against Berber pirates. It was later restored and adapted to be used as a lighthouse.

Los Alcornocales Natural Park (almost 170.000 hectares) there is a mountain range where we can find the largest cork oak forest on the Iberian Peninsula, and one of the most important in the world, which is an excellent state of conservation.

Isla de las Palomas, this island is the southernmost point of Europe and separates the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Walking from here along the seafront promenade you can see a great view of the African coast.

The **Puerta de Jerez** is one of the most emblematic and important monuments of Tarifa. This gateway was constructed when the town walls were extended after the Christian conquest. In 2000 it was restored and now incorporates the painting "El Cristo de los Vientos" by Guillermo Pérez Villata, one of the tarifeño artist.

The **Castillo de Guzmán el Bueno** is a castle that dates from 960 and was built on the ruins of a Roman military camp by order of Caliph Abderraham III. Recent archeological excavations have discovered traces from the Bronze Age, Punic, Iberian and Roman Republican settlements.

Fuerte de San García was a fort in Algeciras. It was built in the 1730s and destroyed in 1811 to deny it to the French. Today all that remains are the foundation and base ruins, in the Parque del Centenario, but it is a registered Bien de Interés Cultural landmark.

Bologna Beach has a 3.800 m. of fine sand and moderate waves. It's a natural beach and a windsurfer's paradise. To the left of the beach you can find natural pools where the east "Levante" wind is blocked. On the shores of the beach are the Roman ruins of Baelo Claudia.

Nº	NAME OF RESOURCE	CATEGORY	TYPE	SUBTYPE 1	SUBTYPE 2
1.	Trafalgar Coast	A	1.8	1.8.3	
2.	Alcornocales Natural Park	A	1.8	1.8.5	1.8.5.2
3.	Isla de Las Palomas	A	1.3	1.3.3	1.3.3.4
4.	Los Lances Beach	A	1.3	1.3.1	1.3.1.1
5.	Bologna Beach	A	1.3	1.3.1	1.3.1.1
6.	Valdevaqueros Beach	A	1.3	1.3.1	1.3.1.1
7.	Cerro del Tambor Overlook	A	1.8	1.8.2	
8.	Estrecho Overlook	A	1.8	1.8.2	
9.	Bologna Dunes	A	1.3	1.3.1	1.3.1.1
10.	San Bartolomé Mountain	A	1.1	1.1.2	
11.	Tarifa Port	B	2.2		
12.	Algeciras Port	B	2.2		
13.	Archaeological Remains Baelo Claudia	B	2.3	2.3.1	
14.	Puerta de Jerez (Jerez Gate)	B	2.1	2.1.4	
15.	Guzmán el Bueno Castle	B	2.1	2.1.3	2.1.3.1
16.	Punta Carnero Lighthouse	B	2.1	2.1.3	2.1.3.3
17.	Algarbes Necropolis	B	2.3	2.3.1	
18.	Camarinal Lighthouse	B	2.1	2.1.3	
19.	Guadalmesí Tower	B	2.1	2.1.3	2.1.3.3
20.	Plaza Alta de Algeciras	B	2.2	2.2.2	2.2.2.1
21.	Monumento a Paco de Lucía	B	2.1	2.2.4	
22.	La Cueva del Moro (Cave of the Moor)	B	2.3	2.3.2	
23.	San García Fort	B	2.1	2.1.3	2.1.3.2
24.	Preserved fish	C	3.1	3.1.12	3.1.12.6
25.	Fresh tuna	C	3.1	3.1.12	3.1.12.6
26.	El voraz	C	3.2	3.2.1	
27.	Local festivals	D	4.2	4.2.1	4.2.1.1
28.	San Juan pilgrimage	D	4.2	4.2.1.	4.2.1.2
29.	Folk and reggae music festival	D	4.4	4.4.1	4.4.1.3
30.	Fun-board competition	D	4.4	4.4.2	

As demonstrated in the above table, the majority of the resources in the Estrecho Natural Park belong in the A and B categories, the natural, scenic, historic or monumental resources, highlighting the magnificent beaches. On the other hand, with fewer but not less important resources are the gastronomic resources, festivals and scheduled events (C and D). Thanks to these resources tourists can enjoy traditional dishes from the area and see the atmosphere of, and even participate in, the different festivals held in the Park. All of these resources as a whole are the main reason for the current streams of regional, national, and international tourists.

Offer

The touristic offer can be seen as a set of goods and services, but it is also a set of resources and infrastructures that are organized and structured in a certain place where they can be used or consumed by tourists in order to be more prominent in their market. Any basic tourist offer consists of the following items:

Accommodations

Accommodations are one of the few tourism services that are considered essential. This is mainly because a traveller can choose whether to eat in a restaurant or prepare his or her own meals, if they will use entertainment companies or not, etc. But without any doubt, all travellers will have to make use of the services a lodging company can provide, thus requiring accommodations.

Currently, the park has approximately more than 150 companies dedicated to providing tourists with accommodation, dividing the vacancies in two municipalities (Algeciras and Tarifa) and in various types of lodging: hotels, hostels, rooming houses, apartments, cottages, campsites, and second homes, each assigned to its corresponding category. Normally the two-star hotels, hostels, and rooming houses stand out. This is mainly attributable to the type of tourism present in both municipalities; sun and beach tourism and its target audience, the majority being young people who come to enjoy the various activities and resources offered by the park. However, we can also find several hotels for visitors who want or need more amenities and more “luxury” compared with others. These hotels have a maximum four-star rating.

Examples of accommodations:

HOTELS	HOSTELS	APARTMENTS	PENSIONS	CAMPINGS
Sol Atlanterra (4*)	Banti (2*)	Ortega	Facundo II (1*)	Tarifa
Pozo del Duque (4*)	Cuatro Molinos (2*)	Luz García	Medina (1*)	Río Jara
Punta Sur (3*)	Alameda (2*)	Wind Tarifa	África (1*)	Jardín Las Dunas
La Codorniz (3*)	Alborada (2*)	Miramar	Correosb (1*)	Paloma
Tres Mares (3*)	Villanueva (1*)	Oasis	Facundo I (1*)	Torre de la Peña I
Hurricane (2*)	El Asturiano (1*)	Cortijo Las Piñas		Torre de la Peña II
Madre Selva (2*)	Tarik (1*)	El Aguilón		
Mesón de Sancho (2*)	El Levante (1*)	El Beatario		
La Peña (1*)	Bellavista (1*)	Don Pedro		
Arte Vida (1*)	Lola (1*)	Residencial Luna		

According to the data provided by the Provincial Federation of Hospitality in the province of Cadiz (Horeca), hotel occupancy is rising. During the first fortnight of August in Algeciras occupancy ratings reached 95,54% assuming 1.5% more than the previous year and providing excellent forecasts for September which is expected to have an 81,48% hotel occupancy. Undoubtedly, tourism is growing and therefore generating such good statistics. This is due to the effort and hard work invested by the hotel sector and their quest to improve quality by constantly trying to encourage every type of upgrade and enhancement. Therefore, with the cooperation of the City Hall, who is fully committed to the organization of activities and events that attract more and more visitors, and the cooperation of other companies in the tourism sector, together they have a common goal: to attract a greater number of visitors so they can enjoy unforgettable experiences.

As for the hotel occupancy rate, as in most cases with Spanish coastal areas, the seasonal nature present in these areas comes with its own problem. During the summer months, tourist accommodations are virtually full, reaching almost 100% occupancy, meanwhile in the off season, this percentage falls below 10%.

The tourist rate analysis conducted by Paola Moreno Pérez shows some possible solutions to this problem:

- Distribute certain activities and events, such as windsurfing championships, throughout the whole year.
- Invest more energy in attracting international tourists since in several European countries, holidays are not taken during the two summer months, but in many cases scattered throughout the year.
- Encourage alternative tourism.
- Promote long holiday weekends as an additional way of creating a strong defense against seasonality, drawing the attention of hospitality professionals.

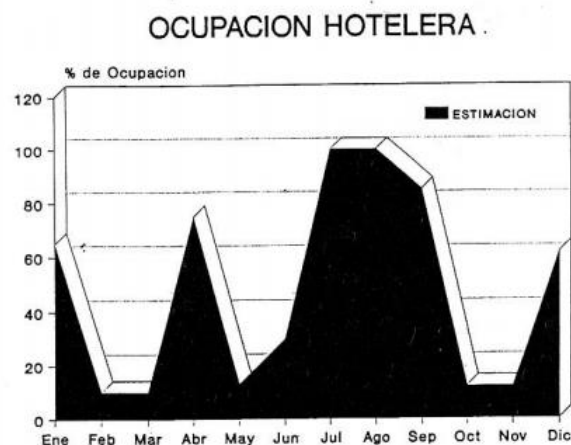


Figure 20: Hotel Occupancy, Tarifa

Catering and Restaurant Services

Despite the fact that on many occasions, customers who frequent restaurants are not tourists, but rather the locals themselves, these establishments are considered companies belonging to the tourism sector because they offer visitors a basic necessity service. According to (Bayón Mariné, Martín Rojo and Costa Pérez, 2004) this happens especially in the case of tourism nowadays since tourists are more active in recent years. Current tourism trends show that many tourists do not usually spend much time in their lodgings or accommodations, but rather they use their time participate in and enjoy other available activities, thus becoming potential restaurant clients.

Moreover, as in the case of the Estrecho Natural Park, there are several places with an outstanding gastronomy and rich cuisine. Many of the dishes and the restaurants have been gaining such prestige that they have become places that cannot be missed when visiting the area.

The Estrecho Natural Park, Tarifa has over 200 establishments dedicated to restaurant and catering related activity. According to the Tarifa Tourism Guide this sector is composed of the following: 40 restaurants with traditional food, 55 places with excellent tapas, 17 Italian food establishments, and 5 Mexican food places. There are also an additional 19 Cafes, 16 beach bar or stands, and 14 international establishments.

As you can imagine with such a large variety of restaurants and similar eating places, many of them are worth mentioning.

- First, for meat lovers, especially hunting game, Iberian and Retinto meats, the Pozuelo, El Nene or El Tesoro are a must visit.
- For those who spend the day on the beach, the beach bar stands like those in Bologna or Valdevaqueros are perfect to enjoy the local seafood and fried fish.
- For those who want to enjoy the typical tapas, it is paramount to visit Los Melli, El Perulero, Pasillo, or Cuatro Esquinas (Four Corners).



Figure 21: Bart Los Melli

In the case of Algeciras, the number of these establishments is overflowing. But, along the Ruta de los Balleneros (Whaling Trail) there are different bars and beach stands where one can try all the typical Bay of Algeciras foods. The same happens on the Ruta de la Migración (Migration Route), where a large number of places to enjoy perfectly fried fish cuisine can be found. Algeciras is mainly known for its fried foods, particularly fish and seafood, but also for one of the most typical tapas, snails with pennyroyal and cabrillas (large snails) with a special tomato sauce prepared during the beginning of the Summer season. Among the most classic and traditional bars, the ones which really stand out are Los Cristales, the Te Diré and the establishments in the Barriada de la Granja.

Lastly, Algeciras and especially Tarifa, also offer a variety of places to enjoy a night of dancing and a few drinks. There are approximately 15 pubs and 5 nightclubs, with an active nightlife, particularly in the Summer months. Because of this, Park visitors besides enjoying the outdoors and wilderness activities during the day, can also spend a few unforgettable nights in a great place, with a great atmosphere and even better company. Some of the places where you can eat or drink are:

RESTAURANTS	CAFETERIA	BEACH BARS	PUBS & DISCO
Dos Mares	Alameda	Agua	Almedina
Mesón de Sancho	Bossa	Arte Vida	Al Laito
El Pozuelo	Café Azul	Café del Mar Beach	Misiana
El Caserón	Las Delicias	El Chiringuito	La Santa
La Codorniz	Manduka Café	El Chozo	Bearhouse
Mesón la Rueda	Sirocco	Hurricane	Er Callejón
El Juncal	Surla	Los Pinos	Eco Center
La Jara	Punta Europa	Malibú	Moskito
La Ternera Mimosa	El Trato	Tumbao	Tacoway
La Galería Vasca	Akme	Waves	Vibram

Features and Facilities

According to the Estrecho Natural Park Public Use Program (PUP), “the Estrecho Natural Park is equipped with a network of facilities consisting of overlooks, bird watching observatories, marked hiking trails and recreational areas. It also has a recently built information centre in the area next to the Torre de la Peña (Peña Tower) and a Visitor Centre shared with Los Alcornocales Natural Park containing facilities that help promote awareness among the visiting population so that they can appreciate the immense value associated to these spaces”.



Figure 22: Map of all Public Use Facilities

PUBLIC USE FACILITIES		
Reception Facilities	La Peña Information Point	
	Huerta Grande Visitor Centre	
Recreation Facilities	La Peña Recreation Area	
Interpretation Facilities	Overlooks	Camarinal Lighthouse Camarinal The Moro Cave Cerro del Tambor Cabo de Gracia (Cape of Grace)
	Hiking Trails	Camarinal Lighthouse Bologna Dunes Bologna-Pulido Port Los Algarbes-Betijuelo Los Lances Natural Park Colada de la Costa (Coast Casting) Cerro del Tambor
	Observatories	Bolonga La Peña Cazalla Guadalmesi Los Lances Laja de Sargas

Figure 23: List of Public Facilities according the Environmental Facilities Manual

There are two **reception facilities**: La Peña Information Point located near the Western park entrance, and the Huerta Grande Visitor Centre on the Eastern side. Both have one goal in common; attend and provide information to visitors. The main problem, besides their location, is that since it is a newly created Natural Park, there is a lack of available tourist information regarding the importance and the possible uses of these spaces. Not very many publications exist yet and therefore the visitors are unable to really understand the characteristics of this special natural space.



Figure 24: Huerta Grande Visitor Centre

As for **recreational facilities**, the Park has a recreation area, La Peña, near the Valdevaqueros Beach. It is equipped with updated installations that include several picnic tables (some of them are adapted for handicapped accessibility), fountains with safe drinking water, barbeque areas, bathrooms, and an enclosed parking area.

On the other hand, under **interpretation facilities** we have 3 types of public use facilities. Firstly, we have the **overlooks**. These let visitors enjoy spectacular views. Near Punta Camarinal and Silver Mountain (Sierra de Plata) a few overlooks have a panoramic view of the sandy coast, the Bologna dunes, and Archaeological Remains in Baelo Claudia and also the San Bartolome Mountain. In one of the Cerros del Estrecho, specifically, the Cerro del Tambor, another overlook is located on top of another restored bunker. This overlook however paints another picture showing a rocky and cliffy coast, with views of the Bay of Algeciras and the African Mountains in the background.

Here we can also find some **hiking trails**. It is properly equipped trails that can be carried by visitors, not only by specialists. There are currently 7 trails and we will discuss 3 of them. First, Bologna Dunes (40 minutes), this trail begins in the cove and ends on Bolonia sand-dune. The route meanders over the beach and offers full view of the dune. The path goes through the Baelo Claudia archeological site towards the dune. To the left we can see the typical lagoons. These waters provide home to important wildlife including Sandpipers and gulls. The trail continues into the pines at the feet of the Bolonia dune. Secondly, Los Lances, we have two options to start the trail, one close to Tarifa football stadium or in the area of El Pozuelo. This walk is perfect for people with disabilities. Finally, Colada de la Costa (3 hours), this route begins close to Tarifa harbor, passing the castle of Guzman el Bueno and ending at the watchtower of Guadalmesí. The trail follows a coastal livestock path and passes along the cliffs towards Algeciras. The 8 kilometer route boasts impressive views of the African continent. Along this trail we can see bunkers, former civil guard barracks and other old buildings built for surveillance and defense.



Figure 25: Map of the hiking trails

Lastly, we can find five strategically located **observatories**. These are principally used to observe the migratory path of the bird life in the area and are frequented by ornithologists and bird-watching enthusiasts. The remaining observatory is located in the Los Lances Natural Park, set up as a place to spot and watch the birds that visit and inhabit the marshland at the mouth of the Vega and Jara rivers.

Complementary Offer

The complementary tourist offer for a particular place is composed of all those activities and attractions that can be found in the area and that make people want to visit them.

In this case, according to Juan Ignacio Fernandez, all the companies that offer:

- Active outdoor tourism activities:
 - Water activities (rowing, rafting, canoeing...)
 - Land activities (walking, cycling, hiking...)
 - Air activities (bungee jumping, gliding, paragliding...)
- Sociocultural entertainment (artistic and architectural routes on rural heritage, cultural shows, ethnological routes, craft courses, and visits with local artisans ...)
- Activities whose main concerns are the interpretation of biodiversity (photography routes, natural and marine classrooms, ecological tours, wildlife rehabilitation centres...)

As the author points out in *Criterios para una política sostenible en los parques naturales de Andalucía [Criteria for a Sustainable Tourism Policy in Andalusia's Natural Parks]* (Pulido Fernández, 2005), this classification is not primarily due to its exact definition, but rather because of the need to organize these activities in some way given that in Andalusia more than 50% of these services are provided by lodging companies.

In second place we have the companies that arrange active tourism activities at almost 46% of the complementary offer, followed by companies specialized in cultural activities with 31,39%. Finally, we have companies related to the interpretation and discovery of nature reaching 22,63%.

Focusing on the Estrecho Natural Park, within the **active outdoor tourism activities**, the majority of the businesses specializing in these type of activities is found in Tarifa. There are a large number of establishments offering outdoor activities, predominately kitesurfing and windsurfing (approximately 55). The beaches in Tarifa are the perfect

place for those who enjoy exhilarating water sports, especially since the climate provides eastern winds and waves that continue to attract surfers all year long. These activities generally have a lower impact on the environment, provided that they are practiced in the established areas.



Figures 26 and 27: Kitesurf and Windsurf in the Beaches of Tarifa

Then we have about 6 companies related to underwater activities. Beneath the water of the Estrecho, visitors can see one of its greatest attractions: a rich animal and plant life, with sunken ships from different eras and obstacles that attract divers who wish to engage in taking these routes, but always with the assistance of specialized guides. Finally, in the water, we find 5 companies dedicated to whale watching. This activity lets tourists enjoy the luxury of sailing between two continents appreciating the whale pods that can be found there among which are: different dolphins' species, sperm whale, blackfish (pilot whale), orcas (killer whales) and the common fin whale. This activity is carried out in the open water, taking a boat from Tarifa, Algeciras or La Linea, depending on weather conditions. The tours are led by cetacean specialists and the boats are manned by professionals.



Figure 28: Whale watching

On the other hand, by land, more accurately the San Bartolome Mountains and the Silver Mountain (Sierra de la Plata), are perfect for practising extreme adventure sports. More than 21 companies offer: climbing, hiking, biking trails, etc. These services typically include an accompanying tour guide. Hiking is considered one of the best options to visit the park and enjoy the great heritage it offers.

The **cultural offers** are a perfect complement to the natural space. In the case of the Park, one of the most important cultural entertainment attractions is the archaeological heritage of the Roman time period which is on display at the Archaeological Ruins Site at Baelo Claudia with more than 100,000 visitors per year. Another place of interest is the Necropolis of Algarbes from the Bronze Age. Some of the attractions, for instance the Necropolis, require prior permission from the Department of Culture which is responsible for managing those spaces, therefore visitors wishing to visit these places should inform themselves beforehand.

Lastly, there are several activities related to the **interpretation of nature** offered in the Park. According to the Estrecho Natural Park Public Use Program, there are a series of institutions along with the collaboration of volunteers from the Spanish Ornithology Society and the Migration Foundation that are dedicated to developing these exploratory activities and monitoring the land and marine birdlife. These sustain the “Migration Program” which aims to monitor land soaring and coastal marine birdlife. This monitoring is primarily done by volunteers and bird-watching enthusiasts. Thanks to this program, volunteers, visitors and locals alike can enjoy the migration spectacle, a truly unique experience, where during only a few days, thousands of storks begin their journey to the African continent.



Figure 29: Watching migration spectacle

Which companies work in the Park?

Besides the aforementioned companies, inside the Park we can find even more shops. The most noteworthy ones are the artisanal stores, where visitors can buy souvenirs and trinkets to remember their stay. There are also a large number of shops dedicated to food, clothing, accessories, decorations, flowers, jewellery, and haberdashery. Not to mention all the rental companies (car, bike, motorcycle, etc.)

Demand

Similarly, as with the touristic offer, due to their recent creation, the tourism demand analysis for the Natural Parks in Andalusia, especially the Estrecho Natural Park is very difficult to study. This is primarily because of the lack of adequate sources and statistics, large amounts of incomplete information and the temporary maladjustment to the existing information.

Usually, the main objective of any demand study is to identify how many tourists visit the Park, a number which allows us to calculate the number of people who visit these places annually. But, in this case, since there is not enough data available, it is very difficult to even come up with an approximation. One idea that has been mentioned to help resolve this problem is remodelling the Huerta Grande Visitor Centre and La Peña Information Point and implementing new registration procedures to evaluate the number of park visitors.

The second objective is to understand the basic characteristics of the tourists who frequent these natural spaces through an analysis of the principal variables that will then allow us to characterize the tourism demand.

To work on these sections of the demand, we are building off of the *Estrecho Natural Park Public Use Guide*, prepared by the Environmental Department. The study done by Juan Ignacio Pulido Fernandez about the general characterization of the tourism demand in the Natural Parks of Andalusia in his doctoral thesis will also be of great assistance.

As for the **influx of visitors**, despite the difficulty of knowing the volume of visitors with exact certainty, according to the perception of the custodial directors, during the year the park opened (2003), the approximate number of visitors was somewhere between 100.000 and 150.000 per year. As one can see, the influx of the park visitors is principally marked by the seasons since the Park is a top tourist attraction. The largest influxes, without a doubt, are during the Summer months. However, thanks to the climatic characteristics, certain activities can be practised during the rest of the year as well. For example, Tarifa. Its popularity as the "Wind Capital" has been able to attract tourists all year long. Highlighting, of course, sporting events like the windsurfing races and championships that take place on certain days and attract large crowds.

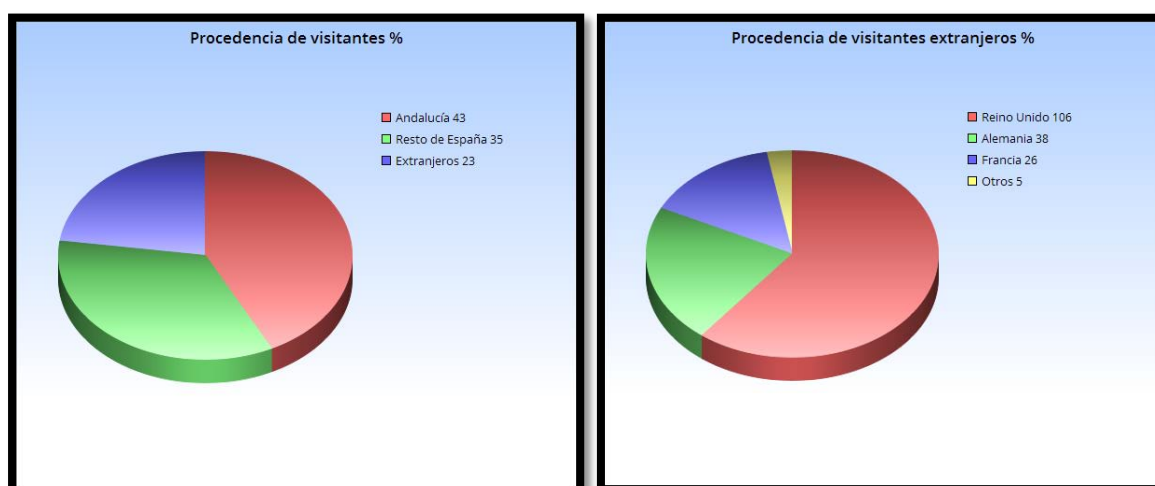
In the near future, they are forecasting an increase in the number of visitors in the Estrecho Natural Park because of the improvements in the exterior road networks that will increase tourist traffic.

Another important aspect to the demand is the **visitor description**. These, as a general rule, can be classified into groups motivated by different factors:

- First, we have the ones who visit the Park mainly to practise water sports such as windsurfing and kitesurfing.
- Second, we have those visitors who are interested in the beaches in the area such as Valdevaqueros, Bologna, and Los Lances North beach.
- Third, we have the foreign visitors who primarily visit the Park in order to enjoy the sun and the beaches.
- Next, we have those visitors who are interested in the cultural aspect of the Park (Archaeological Ruins Baelo Claudia).
- Then we have the Ornithologists (birdwatchers) and nature enthusiasts who come to the Park to watch the wildlife and scenery.
- Lastly we have the local population in Tarifa, who usually visit the nearby beaches, such as Los Lances South.

With regard to the **source of the visitors**, national tourists, the majority being from urban centres near the Park like Cadiz and Seville (43%) stand out, closely followed by those coming from bigger cities like Madrid and Barcelona (34%). Looking at foreign tourists (23%), visitors predominately come from the United Kingdom consistently throughout the entire year (10,6%), followed by the Germans (3,8%), the French (2,6%) and others (5%).

Figures 30 and 31: source of the visitors



Finally, proceeding on to the **characterization of the visitor's activities**. Among the many activities offered in the Park area, without a doubt, the most popular are the ones related to sunbathing and swimming at the beach, water sports, underwater diving, and whale watching.

With reference to **sunbathing and swimming**, the most frequented beaches are the Cove of Bologna, Valdevaqueros, and Los Lances. Unfortunately, when there are periods of strong Eastern winds, it is impossible to swim or sunbathe at these beaches.

But it is not all bad- these same Eastern winds favour other types of **sport activities** such as kitesurfing and windsurfing, practised on these same beaches in spaces defined for them. This type of activity is normally practised freely or with a school or company that provides the necessary equipment and training to practise these sports. These activities generally have an almost non-existent environmental impact, since they are practised on few infrastructures.

No fewer are the visitors who come to the Park to practise **underwater activities**. The main diving areas are concentrated around the Island of Tarifa where the rich and clear marine seabed attracts a large number of divers from all over the world. Based on the tourism development in recent years, the amount of divers visiting the area is predicted to rapidly increase along with the establishments needed to cover this demand.

For **whale watching** there are numerous possibilities to hire nautical itineraries during the sighting season. If someone wants to see the whales or the dolphins, the sighting season is from April to October, while in August there are also Orcas (killer whales). This is considered to be one of the most dynamic leisure time activities, registering between 15.000 and 20.000 annual users. Scuba diving is a perfect way to be able to see the seabed area up-close, but as with all the activities, requires an adequate preparation. This is mainly due to the fragile nature of the benthic systems and the fact that poorly regulated underwater activities can cause significant seabed deterioration.

On the other hand, one of the land-based activities that has a lot of potential is **hiking**. There are already a considerable number of trails equipped with necessary facilities to continue developing this activity. For the locals and the tourists that enjoy walking along the sea shore and the old pecuniary paths, hiking is also a high interest activity.

Regarding the **recreational activities**, they are mainly concentrated in La Peña Recreational Area that brings together a large number of people, especially during the Summer months. This activity however, causes a range of environmental impacts that

need to be controlled such as: waste generation, deterioration or destruction of infrastructures and the environment, etc.

Rock climbing is another activity in high demand. It is generally practised in the traditional areas of La Loma de San Bartolome where one can climb all the varying degrees of difficulty and in the Silver Mountain (Sierra de la Plata).

The newest activities that can be found in the Estrecho Natural Park are the **aeronautical activities** such as paragliding in the elevated areas near the coast, **water sports** such as canoeing and kayaking and finally the **cultural visits**, mainly to the Archaeological Ruins, Baelo Claudia, as it is one of the most sought after activities in combination with enjoying the environment.

Infrastructures

Infrastructures are a set of resources, both physical and economic, that constitute the basis of the development of any sector, in this case, the tourism sector. Blanco (2008: p.18) defines the tourism infrastructure as the provision of goods and services that a territory has to support their social and productive structures and as such, conditions tourism development. The Park infrastructure is generally composed of:

- Basic services: water, electricity, health network, telephone, etc.
- Transport: airports, taxis, buses, ports, etc.
- Roads: roads, highways, existing routes and their status, etc.

Principal and secondary road networks

There are many different ways to get to the Park, but the main access roads are:

- At kilometre 71 off of the N-340, direction Tarifa, it is the exit that comes out in Bologna via the CA-2216
- At kilometre 74 off of the N-340, heading towards Tarifa we have the CA-222, an asphalt path that brings us right to the Valdevaqueros beach.
- At kilometre 102 off of the N-340, heading towards Punta Carnero, we can find the thirist access road to the park, the CA-224.

- Other secondary access roads also exist. They are defined by the road that reaches all the way to Paloma Baja, the Petalmeros motorway and the Corijo Los Palos road.

Besides these road networks, there are other ways to access the park by using other means of transport:

- **Plane:** The park can be accessed from practically any European city thanks to its proximity to the airports located in Jerez de la Frontera, Seville, Malaga, and Gibraltar.
- **Boat:** Being maritime vocation locations, the ports in Tarifa and Algeciras receive ships and cruises that come from all types of countries. Additionally, there are the regular daily routes covered between the Tangier and Ceuta ports (*ferries*).
- **Train:** In existence there are two daily routes: 1) Algeciras – Madrid with stops in Ronda, Antequera, Córdoba, Puertollano and Ciudad Real and 2) Algeciras – Granada that stops in Los Barrios, San Roque, Almoraima, Jimena de la Frontera, San Pablo, Cortes de la Frontera, Benaolan, Ronda, Campillos, Bobadilla and Antequera.
- **Bus:** There are several different regular bus lines that operate in the municipalities included in the Campo de Gibraltar. 1) Portillo: connects Algeciras with Malaga, Almeria, Córdoba, Granada y Jaen. 2) Comes: Refers to regular routes that connects almost all of the localities in the Cadiz province. It joins Tarifa with Algeciras and Cadiz, and an interior line, through the natural park with stops in Tahivilla, Facinas and Atlanterra. 3) Linesur busses connecting Seville with Algeciras with stops in Dos Hermanas, Los Palacios, El Cuervo, Jerez de la Frontera, Medina Sidonia, Alcalá de Los Gazules y Los Barrios. 4) Daibus has a route from Madrid to Algeciras with stops in Estepona and La Linea de la Concepcion. Finally, Dainco: Connects Algeciras with El Ferrol passing through La Coruña, Lugo, Zamora, Salamanca, Caceres, Seville, Cádiz y San Fernando.
- **Car:** There are several possibilities: From Malaga and Marbella it is possible to arrive at Algeciras taking the national highway N-340 or the toll motorway AP-7.
- **Bike:** This method of transport lets you enjoy the landscapes in a calmer and more relaxed manner. However, to access the park on bike, you need to be properly equipped and be physically fit. The disadvantage is that in many

places it is essential to combine the bike with another form of transport such as the train or bus.

- Services: Education (several elementary school and high schools), Health (Red Cross, Health Centre in Tarifa and Algeciras, Marine/Maritime Rescue), shops (of all kinds but mostly artisanal), communications (points of free internet access) etc.

According to the Secretary of Tourism (2005), a tourism infrastructure must be made available to all members of a community, being residents or visitors, since its basic function is to satisfy the needs of the community.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis as established by Thompson and Strickland (1998) consists of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses that together diagnose the internal situation of an organization as well as an external evaluation of the opportunities and threats. Just as this is applied to other fields, it can likewise be used to evaluate Natural Protected Spaces. Resources identified as having a high value and the same competitive capacity in the organization as an accomplishment that provides a favourable situation in society are considered to be Strengths. On the other hand, a Weakness is seen as a factor or a deficiency-causing activity that makes the organization vulnerable (Henry, 1980). Both of these variables refer to internal factors which are easier to control, improve and obtain results since they are elements that can be acted on directly and the same organization can control them. On the contrary, Opportunities and Threats refer to external factors that affect the company and the company does not have complete control since they do not solely depend on the organization, but also on its environment and surroundings.

The SWOT analysis, being one of the simplest and most efficient methods to collect and study all the necessary decision making information, is of great importance to subsequently make decisions about the future.

The Natural Resources Ordinance Plan provides valuable information such as: specific space diversity (wildlife, wilderness), the rules and regulations, the stakeholders involved, and their interests. With this information, the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis can be performed on what the Park has in order to take advantage of the Opportunities, maintain and benefit from the Strengths, prevent

and avoid the Threats and finally use the available resources to overcome the Weaknesses.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possession of a large number of all kinds of resources 2. Great natural heritage richness 3. Excellent biodiversity 4. Existence of cork oak forests 5. Huge variety of landscape features (dunes, marshes, cliffs...) 6. Large cultural interest thanks to the existence of civilizations remains 7. Main area for air and marine migration 8. Existence of rules and regulations for activities 9. Existing weather and climate conditions 10. Large variety of both aquatic and terrestrial activities (underwater diving, hiking...) 11. Numerous overlooks 12. Good environmental policies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seasonality 2. Lack of information about these spaces 3. Lack of visitor registration procedures to quantify the number of visitors entering these spaces 4. Some very fragile ecosystems 5. Scarce presence of biking paths 6. Some inadequately or incompletely marked trails 7. Insufficient promotion of the Park attractions 8. Need for agreements with private businesses carrying out some of the activities within the Park 9. Need to coordinate management between different entities 10. During the Summer, saturated road traffic heading to the beach 11. Badly located tourist information points
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent location between two bodies of water and two continents 2. Possibility of appreciating the African continent 3. Project with the aim of improving visitor services and offered information 4. Large influx of tourists in major areas 5. Possibility of extending some activities, such as trails 6. Constant development of wind energy production 7. "Migration Project" program with a large projection and outside participation 8. Large presence of companies dedicated to low environmental impact active tourism activities (windsurfing, kitesurfing...) 9. Population growth in Tarifa and Algeciras 10. Vast array of festivals and traditions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Large specialization in wind sports but other activities are possibly not being taken advantage of 2. Landscape deterioration due to construction 3. Possibility of illegal activities 4. Negative impacts in certain areas due to the large concentrations of people 5. Crisis of the primary production activities 6. Insufficient fire safety laws and action procedures 7. Poor commercialization of Park products 8. Scarce variety of accommodations 9. Accessibility

COMMENTS:

Based off the SWOT analysis done on the Estrecho Natural Park as depicted in the above table we can evaluate the different aspects of the park as related to tourism.

First, the **Strengths**, which are mainly related to the natural environment, give the Park an exceptional value. There are a large number of resources belonging to the different existing categories starting with the appeal, or natural and scenic resources providing an enormous diversity of unique landscape features such as cliffs, dunes, marshes and seabed. Add to that the presence of high biodiversity, especially in the marine environments where, due to its uniqueness, we find communities with a vast biological interest. Furthermore, especially captivating is the existence of another Natural Park inside the Estrecho Natural Park area. The Alcornocales Natural Park has its own variety of landscapes, wildlife and vegetation that contribute to the area. Among the landscapes, it is worth noting the many overlooks that offer visitors spectacular views. Another one of the strengths is that inside what is considered the Park area, there is also a key migration area for both bird and marine life, converting it in a place of interest for birdwatchers and whale-watchers alike being that these are some of the main activities offered and demanded in the Park. On the other hand, within the historic, technical, ethnological, and artistic resource category, highlighting a high cultural interest due to the existence of several civilization remains such as the archaeological ruins Baelo Claudia, make the cultural offer a perfect complement to the natural space. For the correct management and protection of the space and the existing resources, certain rules and regulations are required for responsible use and enjoyment. The Park has many plans and laws such as the PRUG, Natural Resources Regulation Plan, Fire Prevention and Safety Against Forest Fires Act, as well as other protection programs and good environmental policies that help preserve the environment and aim to avoid, or at least reduce the negative environmental impacts caused by the development of tourism activities to a minimum. One of the strongest points of this natural area is the large variety of activities that can be practised, from aquatic to terrestrial activities, highlighting underwater diving, hiking, rock climbing, sailing routes, bird-watching, whale-watching etc., which are currently the most highly requested activities in the Park. Finally, the climate plays a huge role. The smooth and regulated year-round temperatures, along with the presence of the strong easterly winds, make the Park and its beaches, one of the most attractive places to practise certain sports like windsurfing or kitesurfing.

As for the **Weaknesses**, first we have the seasonality resulting in a large influx of visitors in the Summer season, some days even saturating the traffic heading towards the beaches, and an extremely low influx in the Winter. In Summer, to resolve this problem, numerous possible solutions have been proposed, such as distributing organized events throughout the year. Being a recently created Park, the poorly located tourist information points and the scarce and incomplete information available regarding these spaces mean that visitors feel as though they do not really know what possibilities and attractions are available to them in this area. Moreover, the lack of visitor registration procedures impedes knowing with exact certainty how many tourists visit the Park, information that is of vital importance for demand studies. Within the Park we can also observe other deficiencies, for example some of the trails have erroneous or incomplete signs and can harm tourists. Also there are hardly any biking paths, and since biking is considered one of the best ways to travel around the Park, on many occasions being the only way to reach certain destinations, this is detrimental to the Park's tourism. Lastly, regarding management and decision making, the Park needs agreements and coordination with the private companies that carry out certain activities in the Park, thus creating a certain dependency between the public and private entities.

Third, among the great **Opportunities** we have the excellent strategic location of the Park between two bodies of water and two continents which gives the park a unique and individual character; spectacular views of the African continent. On the other hand, by opening information points like La Peña and the visitor centre Huerta Grande, there is a distinct opportunity to correct one of the previously mentioned weaknesses, the scarcity of tourist information. The large tourist influx in the influence area that usually increases each year is also considered an opportunity. However, this opportunity could also become a threat because of the negative impacts in the space that come from having too many people in a determined area. There are also programs like the "Migration Project", about ornithology, where volunteers can participate and that draw attention from those outside the Park. Important companies have made their mark as well offering certain tourism activities such as kitesurfing, windsurfing, and underwater diving that really have almost no environmental impact and are in high demand among tourists and visitors. Besides these, a great opportunity in regards to the development of the Park lies in the population growth of nearby towns and the recognition of the wind-park, one the most important in Spain in terms of wind energy production. Last but not least are the folklore, festivals, and scheduled events. Inside the Park we find a vast array of festivals and traditions, as well as events, concerts and sport

championships that attract visitors from other places in addition to the local population in attendance.

Lastly, among the **Threats** we find that the majority of the companies in Tarifa are specialized in and primarily offer wind activities and that by inadvertently concentrating so much effort on one specific sport, they may not be taking advantage of other activities. Along with this, there is the possibility of illegal activities that may endanger resources. On the other hand, the current crisis in primary production activities, can cause authentic economic and territorial disasters just like with the negative impact of the unmeasured construction in the landscape and countryside. Finally, with the aim of protecting the resources and the Park itself, the need arises for a greater amount of protection laws and programs, for example, fire safety, a common threat nowadays. It is also important to pay attention to accessibility difficulties since it is quite complicated to get to the park without having a vehicle.

In conclusion, the SWOT analysis allows and helps determine which actions should be executed to take advantage of the detected opportunities and to address the possible threats, while always keeping the strengths and weaknesses in mind.

Delphi analysis

Dalkey (1972) defines the Delphi method as a prospective technique to obtain qualitative or subjective information. Particularly necessary in imperfect information contexts, the analysis stems from the combination of knowledge and experience of several experts in different fields, in a way that tends towards the consensus of opinions, using measures such as: the mean, medians and quartiles, based on the traditional idea that several minds are better than one. On the other hand, Linstone and Turoff (1975, p.3) offer us another great definition where the Delphi model *“is a method of structuring a group communication process so that the processes are effective, letting a group of individuals be treated as a collective group to solve a complex problem”*. It is an anonymous perspective method that is based on the intuitive opinions of a group of experts in order to reach a consensus of informed opinions.

In this case, the Delphi survey was completed by 15 experts, among which we find: university professors, park professionals, its workers and some members of both private and public institutions. The questionnaire consists of 27 questions divided into different sections: physical surroundings, legislation, socio-economics, environment,

resources, formal offer, complementary services, infrastructures, general services and lastly tourist services. These questions were answered by marking the answer that most closely corresponded to the personal opinion of the expert, valued on a Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree.

Analysing these survey results we can not only clearly see the strengths the park has as well as its weaknesses, but also aspects that even though they do not have a bad evaluation, can be improved.

First, where more than 95% of experts gave a high punctuation on aspects of the Park we have:

- Its role as a transit and rest area for migratory birds (4,8)
- The existence of cork oak forests which give the Park great potential (4,7)
- Marine communities that have an elevated interest (4,7)
- The existence of rich cultural and patrimonial resources (4,7)
- Water and beach sporting activities (kitesurfing and windsurfing) that greatly enhance the complementary services offered in the Park (4,4)

All of these points are relevant since they characterize the Estrecho Natural Park through the large quantity and diversity of the resources available in addition to its important functions and complementary services. All of them separately, but moreover, together, present an attractive offer letting any visitor enjoy this natural space and its activities.

On the contrary, with dreadful evaluations, we can see the aspects of the Park that, according to the experts, leave little to be desired and must be corrected rather urgently, especially because they can adversely affect the space. The questions with the worst evaluations, undoubtedly, are related to the existence (or lack thereof) of regular bus lines in the areas near the Park, their frequencies and the Park accessibility with a punctuation of only 2,1. Indeed, if a tourist does not have a vehicle, accessing the Park is quite difficult due to its location. There are busses, mainly along the Tarifa-Algeciras route, that can bring visitors to some of the access points, but, not to very many of the other places of interest in the Park. Therefore, tourists who use the bus are confined to certain determined locations and certain timetables thus missing out on

many of the spectacular spots in the Park. Among the weaknesses we also find the information points, that while they fulfil their role of providing information to the visitor, are poorly located, especially the Huerta Grande visitor centre. Lastly, regarding the scarce variety of accommodations. The Estrecho Natural Park has a decent range of good quality accommodations, but the majority are only 2 star hotels, hostels, and camping sites.

Finally, as for those aspects with an average evaluation of 3,2 points, ones that work well but could function even better we have:

- The commercialization of Park products
- Natural Resources and their preservation
- Trail signposts: some of the signs have erroneous or deficient information
- The number of festivals and celebrated traditions: currently there is a wide range, but more events could be organized throughout the year

All of these variables, the good, the bad and the regular are extremely important because they constitute the basic characteristics of the Estrecho Natural Park and the opinion that visitors form about these spaces based on their experience, are based off of these characteristics. Hence, the importance of the Delphi analysis, which helps complete these types of studies and see which aspects need to be worked on and which points should be promoted.

Conclusion

This research paper shows the utter importance that the Natural Protected Spaces have, in this case, especially regarding tourism. Under the umbrella of protecting Natural Parks, areas with a higher environmental value are protected from the dangers present in society nowadays. It is also worth noting that currently, human beings have a greater environmental awareness, which in turn increases their desire to be in touch with nature and to find tourist destinations where they can live new and authentic experiences.

The Estrecho Natural Park is one of the places that by its own nature, draws special attention from visitors. First, this is due to its privileged location between two enormously different continents, Europe and Africa, and where two bodies of water meet, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Its large surface area is divided into two zones, one being the terrestrial environment and the other being the marine environment. Both offer an impressive range of different species that are considered of special biological interest. In this regard, the Estrecho Natural Park plays a fundamental role in the migration of birds, fish and cetaceans, acting as a passing zone for these species and bringing together surprising numbers of enthusiasts and researchers who are able to enjoy an incredible spectacle during migration periods.

On the other hand, the Park is well known because of its products, especially its active tourism activities like kitesurfing and windsurfing, that thanks to the climate, fill its excellent surfing beaches year round. It is also worth noting whale watching where different species can be observed and underwater diving which offers visitors the chance to see the Estrecho from a different point of view, under the water. In addition to all of this, one must not forget the diverse land activities, like hiking different marked routes, or ornithological tourism. In regards to the activities, this Natural Protected Space, like many others, must follow established laws and legislation that aims to ensure a proper and responsible use, thus guaranteeing the preservation and conservation of the existing heritage.

Besides natural resources and a large number of active tourism activities which can be practised in the area, there is also a vast assortment of different cultural activities. Being located at a converging point, it was a meeting place for many different

civilizations and a passing area different populations over time, from as far back as the Palaeolithic age. The most relevant and recognized is the Roman archaeological site, represented by the Archaeological Ruins of Baelo Claudia and the Algarbes Necropolis.

Therefore, in conclusion, the Estrecho Natural Park offers an extraordinary legacy of marine and terrestrial heritage with valuable resources. Resources that are not only environmental but also cultural and sentimental, in addition to the exceptional views, activities and great times that can be enjoyed and where unique and unforgettable experiences can be lived.

In short, it is a space that could become a popular natural tourist destination offering visitors virtually everything he or she could want or need and more, as long as its use and management are appropriate, ensuring total conservation. The main objective is to create a form of sustainable tourism, that keeps in mind, equally, the environmental values and the interests of the various participating institutions, with the aim of not reaching a point where those interests outweigh the natural value, negatively impacting and affecting the heritage and consequently the entire space.

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Figure 6: Personal elaboration

Figure 7: Personal elaboration

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Figure 9: Zoonificación del Parque Natural del Estrecho. (2011). [image] Available at: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parque_natural_del_Estrecho#/media/File:Estrecho_mapa_zonas.png

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Figure 15: Gómez Guinot, P. (2016). *Hieraetus pennatus*. [image] Available at: http://www.panoramio.com/photo_explorer#view=photo&position=169&with_photo_id=14782746&order=date_desc&user=837539

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Figure 20: Datos Empresas Hoteleras

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Figure 23: *List of Public Facilities according the Environmental Facilities Manual elaborated by myself*

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Figure 25: Mapa de senderos. (n.d.). [image] Available at: <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/servtc5/ventana/resultadoEquipamientos.do?tip oBusqueda=sendero&idEspacio=14076>

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