

Isla de Cabrera

General description

This rugged and hilly island with numerous off-lying islets was declared a National Maritime–Terrestrial Park in April 1991. As such access is restricted and a permit must be obtained before visiting (see below). The main island measures some 3 miles in each direction, indented by several deep bays and rising to 172m at Alto de Picamoscas. There is an excellent sheltered bay on the northwest side, known as Puerto de Cabrera despite having no port facilities beyond a couple of short jetties. Anchoring is forbidden but fifty visitors' moorings have been laid. Access to the many other small, secluded anchorages is also restricted.

The only other island in the group of any size is Isla Conejera, measuring about 1 mile by 0.6 mile and separated from Isla de Cabrera by a channel 0.7 mile wide and more than 20m deep. Seven smaller islands lie north of Isla de Cabrera with others close inshore to the south. In general Isla de Cabrera and its islets are all steep-to, and in most places deep water runs close inshore.

History

It is probable that Isla de Cabrera (Goat Island) and Isla Conejera (Rabbit Island) were inhabited in prehistoric times – traces of an ancient building have been identified at Clot des Guix, and Roman and Byzantine ceramics and coins have also been found. The castle overlooking Puerto de Cabrera is thought to date back to the end of the 14th century and was probably built as a defence against pirates. During the Peninsular Wars some 9,000 French prisoners were interned on the island, where nearly two-thirds died of disease and starvation. They are buried near the castle and a memorial was erected in 1847 in the centre of the island.

Prior to the First World War the island was privately owned, but was requisitioned by the Spanish government in 1915 to prevent it falling into enemy hands. A small army garrison was established which still exists and at various times the area has been used as a gunnery range. Landing on any of the smaller islands could be DANGEROUS, due to the presence of unexploded shells or other ammunition (as well as being contrary to the rules of the Park).

Wildlife

There are several species of fauna, flora and lizards unique to the archipelago, which is also a haven for seabirds including the rare Audouins gull (see page 12) and birds of prey such as osprey and both

peregrine and Eleonora's falcon. The surrounding waters are home to fish, turtles, dolphins, whales and a variety of corals. Booklets describing the history and wildlife of the Cabrera group are available in several languages from the Cabrera National Park Office (see below).

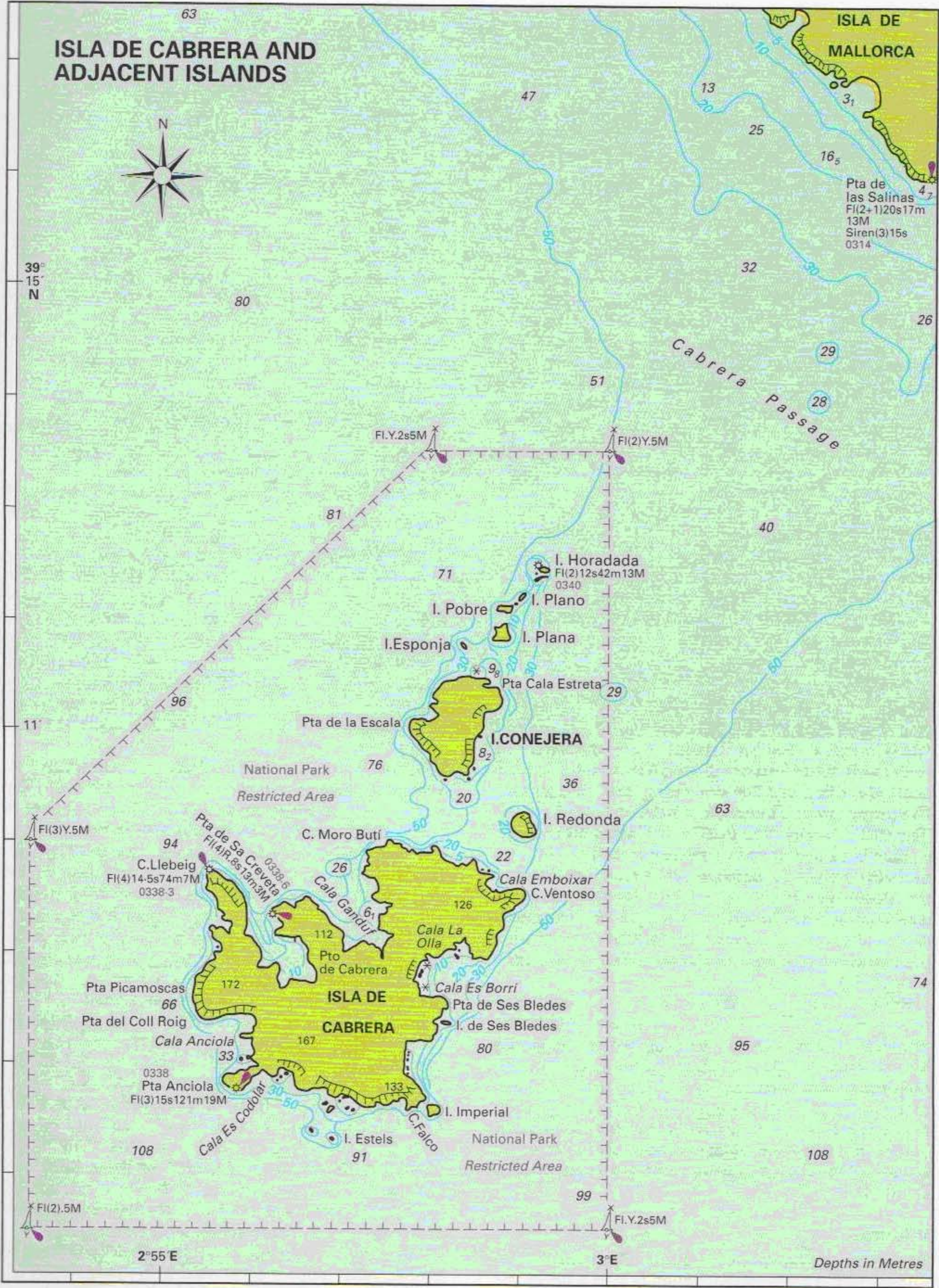
Permits

The National Park is administered by ICONA, the *Instituto Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza*, whose head office is at Calle Ciudad de Queretaro s/n, 07007 Palma de Mallorca. Permits, which are dated and can be applied for between three and ninety days in advance, are issued by the Cabrera National Park Office at Plaza España 8, 07002 Palma ☎ 971 725010, Fax 971 725585, closed at weekends and bank holidays. Most nearby yacht clubs, marina offices and harbour masters can provide a blank *Solicitud de Autorización* and, when completed, will fax it through (a small fee is sometimes charged for this service, though the permit itself is free). Details of the yacht (registration document), skipper (passport and certificate of competence), owner and number aboard are required. A scuba diving permit is available from the same office, though fishing is strictly prohibited. Animals may not be landed from boats and all rubbish must be taken back aboard.

No more than fifty yachts can use the harbour at any one time and visits are limited to one night in July and August, two nights in June and September and seven nights at other times. The permit is dated, and only valid for the date(s) shown, but if not all the buoys are occupied it may be possible to remain an extra night. (Equally, if all fifty buoys are already allocated a last minute application may be refused). Weekends are inevitably in greatest demand.

Each permit is accompanied by a map with details of permitted daytime (1000–1900) anchorages – currently two areas in the entrance to Puerto de Cabrera and Cala Es Borri on the east coast – and prohibited areas, which at present include Cala Ganduf, Cala Anciola, Cala Es Codolar and others on the south coast, Cala La Olla and Cala Emboixar. Even so brief details of these *calas* are included below in case the restrictions are lifted. There is a 5-knot speed limit in the entire Maritime Park area and a 2-knot speed limit in the harbour.

The boundary of the National Park is indicated by five pillar buoys, all lit and with × topmarks, in positions 39°13'5N 2°58'E (Fl.Y.2s5M); 39°13'5N 3°00'E (Fl(2)Y.5M); 39°06'5N 3°00'E (Fl.Y.2s5M); 39°06'5N 2°53'5E (Fl(2)Y.5M); and 39°10'N 2°53'5E (Fl(3)Y.5M).



Factual information

Magnetic variation

Cabrera – 1°21'W (decreasing 6'E annually)

Approach and coastal passage charts

Admiralty 2831, 2832
 Spanish 423, 422A, 4221
 French 7115, 7116

Approach lights

0338 **Punta Anciola** 39°07'·8N 2°55'·4E
 Fl(3)15s121m19M Red and white
 chequered tower on white building 21m
 277·5°-vis-169°
 0338·3 **Cabo Llebeig** 39°09'·7N 2°55'·1E
 Fl(4)14·5s74m7M Black and white
 chequered angular tower 7m
 0340 **Isla Horadada** 39°12'·5N 2°58'·8E
 Fl(2)12s42m13M White round tower, five
 black bands, on white round house 13m
 047°-vis-001°



The Cabrera group from the northeast. Isla Horadada with its distinctive banded lighthouse is nearest to the camera.

Puerto de Cabrera

39°09'·3N 02°55'·8E

Charts	Approach	Harbour
Admiralty	2831, 2832	
Spanish	423, 422A, 4221	4222
French	7115, 7116	7119

Lights

Approach

0338·3 **Cabo Llebeig** 39°09'·7N 2°55'·1E
 Fl(4)14·5s74m7M Black and white
 chequered angular tower 7m

Entrance

0338·6 **Punta de Sa Creveta** 39°09'·3N 2°55'·8E
 Fl.R.4s13m7M Red and white chequered
 angular tower 5m
 0339 **Jetty** 39°09'·1N 2°56'·1E
 Fl(2)R.10·5s5m5M
 Column on angular red tower 4m

Port Communications

Park Information Office VHF Ch 9.

General

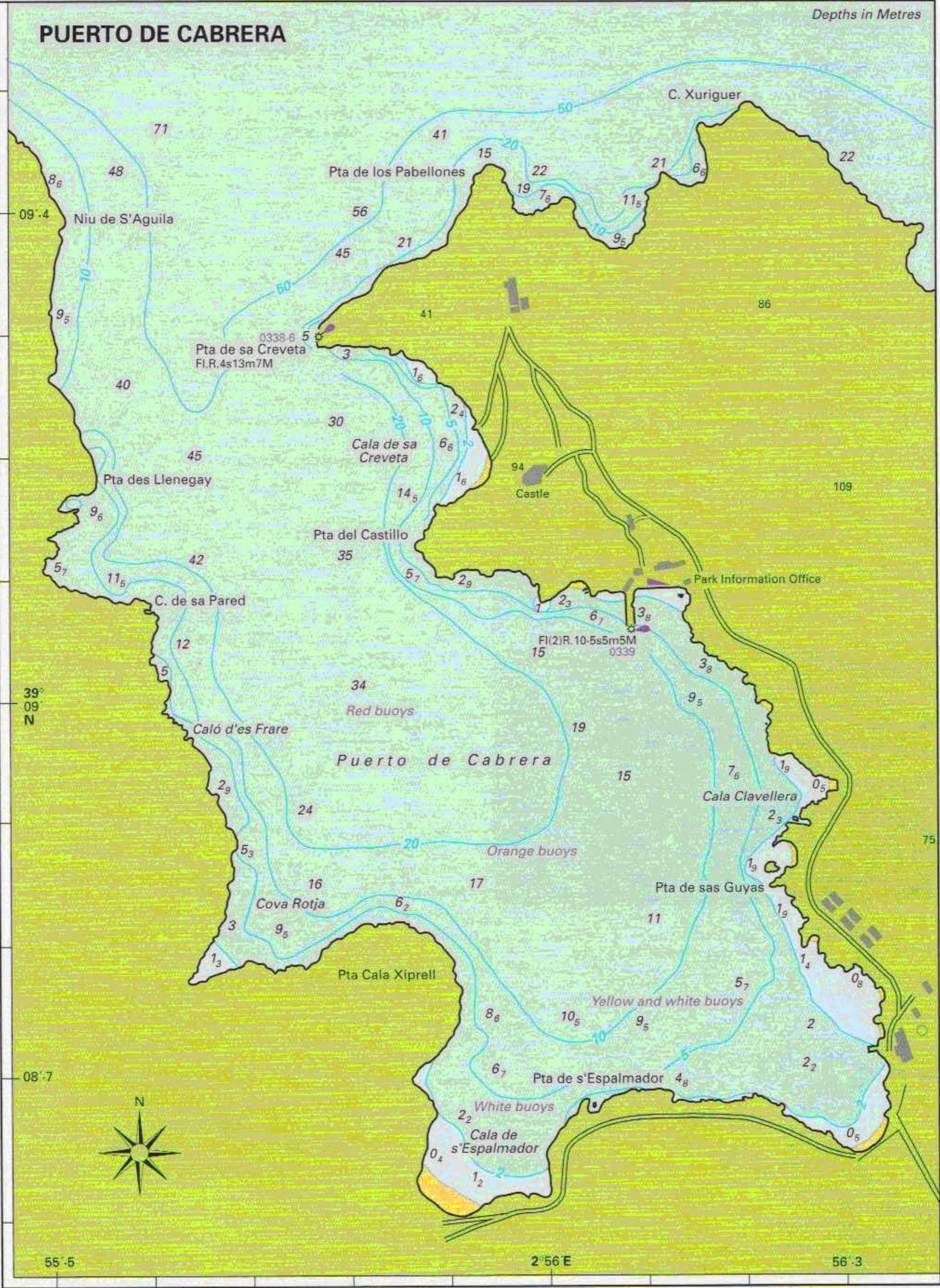
A large natural harbour which can be entered under virtually any conditions and shelter obtained, though it can become dangerous in strong north-westerlies when a swell also rolls in. Gusts blowing down into the harbour from the surrounding hills can also be fierce. However in normal conditions it is one of the few truly peaceful spots in the Balearics, without jet-skis, water-skiers and speedboats, though tourist ferries from Palma and Colonia de Sant Jordi arrive daily in the summer.

There are a few houses near the south mole, some used by the owners of the sheep and pigs pastured on the island. These keep the vegetation down and until recently many fine walks could be enjoyed over deserted countryside. Unfortunately this is no longer the case and yachtsmen, having landed at the main jetty, are only allowed to walk unsupervised along the foreshore. All other walks (minimum of four people) are conducted by Park Rangers at designated times available from the Park Information Office. The walk up the steep track leading to the castle ruins will be rewarded with spectacular views and it is also possible to visit the memorial to the French prisoners of war.

The Cuevas Azul (Blue Caves) in Cala Ganduf some 600m south-southwest of Cabo Moro Butí are also most attractive but are only accessible by sea. Anchoring in the *cala* is not permitted, but at some 1·4 miles from the buoys in Puerto de Cabrera a visit by sailing or outboard-powered dinghy is feasible.

Approach

From north When approaching from this direction the chain of islands running north/south does not appear separated from Isla de Cabrera itself until quite close. Leave these islands to port, heading for



a position slightly east of Cabo Lleibeig (Fl(4)14·5s 74m7M, black and white chequered angular tower 7m). The entrance lies close under this headland, with Punta de Sa Creveta (Fl.R.4s13m7M, red and white chequered angular tower 5m) to the east.

From west The hills of Isla de Cabrera can be seen from some distance away, with the line of smaller islands running towards the north visible on closer approach. Set course to round Cabo Lleibeig, the northwest tip of the island, after which the entrance will open up beyond.

From east or northeast The hills of Isla de Cabrera can be seen from some distance away, with the line of smaller islands running towards the north visible on closer approach. Pass either side of Isla Redonda to round Cabo Moro Butí and cross the wide and deep Cala Ganduf towards Cabo Xuriguer and Punta de los Pabellones. The entrance will open up on rounding Punta de Sa Crevata beyond.

Currents

Strong wind-induced currents may be experienced around the islands, the direction and strength dependent on that of the wind.

Entrance

The entrance, which is deep but relatively narrow, lies between Cabo Lleibeig and Punta de Sa Crevata. Wind conditions in both the entrance and harbour can be very fluky due to the high surrounding hills. Mooring buoys lie south of a line between Cabo de sa Pared and Punta del Castillo. As well as the 5-knot speed limit in the entire Maritime Park area there is a 2-knot speed limit in the harbour itself.

Moorings

Secure to one of the fifty visitors' moorings, colour coded according to yacht size (up to 12m – white; 12–15m – yellow; 15–20m – orange; 20–30m – red) for which no charge is made. The smaller sizes tucked into Cala de s'Espalmador are the most sheltered but also furthest from the main (northeast) jetty, the only place where landing is permitted.

Berthing

Lying alongside the jetty is only possible with a military permit or in an emergency.

Anchoring

Anchoring in the harbour is forbidden.

Formalities

A guard visits each yacht every evening to check that a valid permit is held. Landing by dinghy is only allowed at the main jetty, and the permit must be shown at the Park Information Office on coming ashore. Scuba permits should also be presented before diving.

Facilities

The army *cantina* welcomes visitors and has a bar, though food is not available. Small quantities of non-drinking water can usually be collected from the *cantina*. (Take containers).



Puerto de Cabrera from a little west of north. The landing jetty is hidden behind the hill on which the castle sits, but some of the visitors' buoys can just be seen.

Anchorage in the Isla de Cabrera group

A number of the anchorages listed below are currently closed to yachts, indicated by the omission of a preceding ⚓ symbol. These brief details are included in case restrictions should be lifted.

Cala Ganduf 39°09'·2N 2°56'·8E

A protected but rather deep anchorage with several separate indentations, open to northeast and north.

Passage between Isla de Cabrera and Isla Redonda

An 800m wide passage with a minimum depth of 21m. Take in a northwest–southeast direction.

⚓ Cala Emboixar 39°09'·6N 2°58'·3E

An attractive anchorage in a small bay under cliffs, with a rocky ledge looking like a breakwater to the northwest. Anchor on the west side of the bay in 5m over stone, rock and weed, open to north through northeast to east. There are two small beaches, one rocky and one of sand.

Cabo Ventoso (Cap Ventós) 39°09'·5N 2°58'·7E

A high (88m), steep, rocky-cliffed promontory with good water at its base.

Cala La Olla 39°09'·1N 2°58'E

An interesting anchorage amidst wild scenery at the mouth of the eastern of two small *calas*, themselves at the northern end of a wide bay. Anchor in 5m over sand, rock and stone open to southeast round to southwest. Several islets lie close to the west.