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## S'EMBARCADOR

**GEOGRAPHICAL AND PHYSICAL DATA:**

**Municipality:** Es Mercadal.

**Other place names:** the beach de S'alairó, Pregondó.

**Associated urban areas:** none.

**Access:** on foot by way of the Camí de Cavalls (bridle path) from the car park at Binimel·là beach which can be reached by car by way of the Tramontana road, Es Mercadal.

**Beach location:** North facing

**Surface area of the beach:** 2.160 square metres

**Length of the beach:** 70 metres

**Average width of the beach:** 40 metres

**Beach's level of occupation:** high, in peak season. Much frequented by boats.

**Geology of the surroundings:** the bay is composed of Permo Triassic rocks which have suffered erosion and a succession of Quaternary sand dunes and alluvium. One can observe outcrops of sub-volcanic rock.

**Sediment composition:** carbonated with thick grains and pinkish colours. Its origin is quite balanced, with a predominance of lithoclasts (61%) and the remainder of carbonates.

**Natural protected area:** included in the Natural Area of Special Interest Me-3, on the Natural Network of 2000 and in the sea, on the Marine Reserve of the North of Menorca.

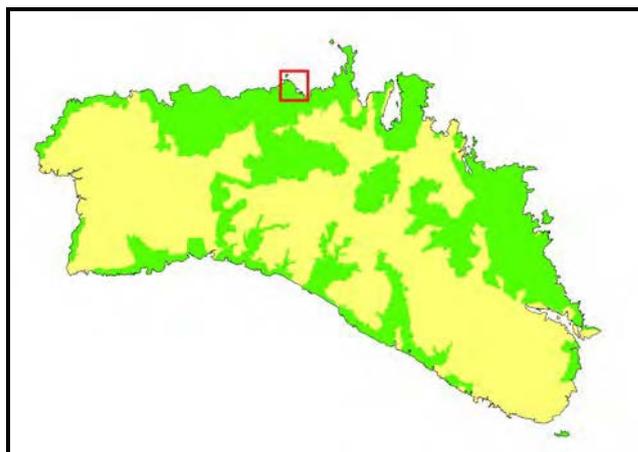
**SERVICES AVAILABLE ON THE BEACH:**

**Beach classification according to the CIME:** Type B beach (natural with road access).

**Distance from car park area:** 1.500 m from the Binimel·là parking area

**Lifeguard service:** none.

**Other services:** none.



## SURROUNDINGS AND LANDSCAPE

It is a small beach in the North of Menorca with a highly interesting landscape. Its location, within the spectacular surroundings of Cala Pregonda, gives it views of great beauty. However, its ecological interest is similar or more as this beach has sand dunes in one of the best states of conservation on the island (see photo). In spite of the small size of the part facing the coast, the sand dune system extends inland for kilometres, showing a group of sand dunes in a very good state towards the interior, where, as well, one can easily observe fringes of vegetation which is typical in these eco-systems. Unfortunately, one cannot say the same about the section of sand dunes on the east side which are quite disordered because of the passage of man, and where important processes of erosion can be seen which lead to the de-structuring of the system. The Son Ametller river breaks on to the beach during periods of heavy rain. At the back of the beach one can see a small group of tamarinds which testify to its presence.



From the front of the beach, one can observe the Pregondó reef, some orangey coloured rocks of a sub volcanic nature which take on some very odd shapes (see adjoining photo). Behind these reefs, on the right of the beach of s'Embarcador and well protected from the wind is another miniscule piece of sand which is known as the beach of s'Embarcadoret.



## PLANTS AND VEGETATION

On the beach one can generally find the usual more pioneer species, those which live amongst the most movable dunes : prickly saltwort (*Salsola kali*), sea knot grass (*Polygonum maritimum*), small purple surge (*Euphorbia peplis*) (see left hand photo) and *Suaeda spicata*. Even further away, when the sand dunes have already started to form,

the most persistent species appear with a clear purpose to stabilise the sand: marine thistle (*Eryngium maritimum*), sea lily (*Pancretium maritimum*), sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), which are accompanied by sand couch grass (*Elymus farctus*) and Marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*), the two gramineae which contribute most to the fixing of the sand and the formation of the sand dunes.



Amongst these other plants appear such as the sea lotus (*Lotus cytisoides*), marine camomile (*Anthemis maritima*), morning glory (*Calystegia soldanella*) and also sea fennel *Echinophora spinosa*, this last species is really very rare in Menorca and is only found on a few beaches and only one or two at a time.

The sand behind the beach extends in the shape of a tongue towards the interior and as it leaves the coast, the plant communities are change, and woodland plants become significant such as the junipers (*Juniperus phoenicea*) (see photo on the right), lentiscus (*Pistacia lentiscus*) or wild olives (*Phillyrea media*), and also tamarinds (*Tamarix sp. pl.*), because of the rivers and streams which envelop the tongue shaped sand dunes.

### ANIMALS

As the sand dune system is well established, it would be easy to find animals from this type of environment more inland. The easiest to see are Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), which are widespread on the sandy substrata; also rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), when they are not affected by either of the two diseases which greatly reduce their populations in Menorca.

### IN THE SEA

This bay has a totally heterogeneous sea bed. On the western part the bottom of the sand is predominately made up of blocks of various sizes which favour the presence of banks of bream (*Diplodus sargus*), and some sea bass (*Epinephelus marginatus*). On the eastern side, however, the sea bed is predominately rock with some groups of different types of seaweed alternating with fronds of posidonia which at some points practically reach the surface, where they co-habit with sea grass (*Cymodocea nodosa*). Brown seaweed *Cystoseira crinita* is very abundant in this bay (see adjoining photo), where it forms one of the most extensive and spectacular communities of the whole island.



Around the small island situated in the middle of the bay, one can normally observe a large number and variety of fish. Apart from bream and grouper fish which have been previously mentioned, one can see morays (*Muraena helena*) (see adjoining photo), rock wrasses (*Symphodus spp.*), salema (*Sarpa salpa*) and rainbow wrasse (*Coris julis*). Since the creation of the Marine Reserve for the North of Menorca, fishing in this area is restricted and under surveillance.



### HISTORY AND PECULIARITIES

The name of S'Embarcador refers to the fact, that, in the past this beach would have been a small port for merchandise. This is confirmed by the archaeological Roman remains on the western side of the beach, and the utensils which can be found amongst the ruins.

Some time ago, before the flat areas of Alairó y Binimel·là were cultivated, it is fairly certain that the sandy regions of Pregondó y Binimel·là were only ones and there were a series of areas prone to flooding in the middle.