

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2022)5
on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the nature Reserve of
Selvagens islands (Portugal)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 July 2022
at the 1440th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2025

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: Portugal

Name of the area: Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:
awarded since 1992; 3 years since the renewal in 2022

Central authority concerned:

Name: Governo Regional da Madeira / Secretaria Regional de Turismo, Ambiente e Cultura

Address: Avenida Arriaga, nº18, 9004-519 Funchal, Portugal

Tel: (+351) 291 145 300

Fax: —

e-mail: gabinete.srtac@madeira.gov.pt

www: <https://www.madeira.gov.pt/srtac>

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Instituto das Florestas e Conservação da Natureza, IP-RAM

Address: Quinta Vila Passos, Rua Alferes Veiga Pestana, nº15, 9054-505 Funchal, Portugal

Tel: (+351) 291 145 590

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The Portuguese Government should continue to take the necessary steps to preserve the current status of the Selvagens Islands and to unequivocally support the Madeira Regional Government in all matters concerning the nature reserve, in accordance with the provisions of Act No. 15/86 of 21 May 1986: The legal status of the Reserve has not been changed and there are no perspectives that such changes will occur, even considering a far future.

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. **revise and reinforce, if necessary, all precautions to ensure that non-native species of plants and animals are not introduced into the nature reserve;** No changes or deterioration of the environment occurred and the policies presented on the earlier annual reports still apply

2. **continue to improve the accommodation lodge and the communication systems of the nature reserve with new technologies that are available, in order to increase the capacity for wardens and military staff to contact their authorities in Madeira and their families; consider increasing the number of solar panels in order to reduce dependence on the generator;** A VSAT phone system with national indicative is installed, as well as a satellite internet system, fundamental for contacts, either with authorities as family. The communication system was reinforced with a Thuraya satellite phone. Small reconstruction and maintenance work was carried out at the biological stations of Selvagem Grande and Selvagem Pequena, to provide a better logistic support to the projects on going in the field and the comfort of the visitors. An acquisition process was already submitted to increase the number of solar panels at the biological station of Selvagem Grande and for a new house to replace the current biological station of Selvagem Pequena by a financial support project and the contract has already been awarded.

3. **include in the monitoring programme the follow-up of a selected number of parameters, not only to survey the effects of the eradication of alien species of flora and fauna, which must be continued, but also to establish scientifically validated monitoring protocols to generate long series of data allowing for comparison between different time frames in changing scenarios. This recommendation includes the definition of specific census methods, stable over time, providing reliable datasets that, when analysed, provide trustworthy information on the evolution of and fluctuations and trends in the seabird colonies, including paying specific attention to possible increases in the yellow-legged gull population and the evolution and effect of microplastics on biodiversity;** The flora and fauna conservation status is improving due to the success of the alien species eradication project (2001 – 2004) (details given on the 2002 annual report). Monitoring of the main actions of this project, is maintained up to present, involving an intensive monitoring on both flora and fauna: evaluate the effects of the programme on non-target species, namely gecko *Tarentola bischoffi* and pipit *Anthus berthelotii*; evaluate quantitatively the regeneration of the natural habitats of the island. Qualitative and quantitative data is being obtained every year and reports are being produced accordingly. Although the yellow-legged gull (Atlantic form) *Larus michahellis atlantis* should not be considered an alien species, there is a constant effort to prevent their breeding on the islands (Selvagem Grande, Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora). Due to the remoteness of Selvagens Islands and to their characteristics this is an easy and forward task. During 2025, local and foreign scientists develop various research projects in the fields of flora and fauna in Selvagem Grande, Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora. Between 23rd of march and 1st of May 2023, the Institute of Forests and Nature Conservation IP-RAM organized the expedition Selvagens 50, bringing together around 40 researchers, managers and technicians, from many regional, national and international institutions, whose main output was the creation of a long-term monitoring program https://ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/images/Doc_Artigos/Divulgacao/publicacoes/relatorio_selvagens_digital.pdf. A program that evaluates the effect of the Selvagem Grande terrestrial habitat recovery project (2001-2004), particularly on plants, insects, reptiles and birds (terrestrial and marine); evaluates the evolution of marine ecosystems and their conservation status, using previous studies as a basis for comparison, such as the 2015 National Geographic Expedition. A program based on science, and which allow us to meet the demanding challenge of managing one of the most pristine natural spaces in the Atlantic.

4. **in order to mitigate possible risks and hazards related to climate change and possible large-scale disturbances on the reserve (contamination, changes in the annual patterns of rainfall and/or temperature, invasive alien species, frequency of extreme events, etc.), reinforce the existing monitoring programme with new technologies such as remote sensing, satellites or drones, to follow**

up indicative parameters for: i. assessing the effects of climate change on the Selvagens Islands; ii. early detection of undesirable consequences on species, ecosystems and ecological functions; iii. estimating the rate of change (if any); and iv. defining predictive models that could be of help in anticipating possible management needs; The Institute of Forests and Nature Conservation IP-RAM, including the warden corps is nowadays fully equipped with drones for either surveillance and ongoing studies, and provides its staff with regular training.

5. considering the vital role of the staff responsible for monitoring the nature reserve, and the difficult conditions in which they often have to carry out their tasks, enlarge and reinforce the team of wardens, providing opportunities and incentives for young naturalists to join the warden corps and to learn from experienced wardens, thus allowing a smooth transition between the current generation of wardens and the next, without any loss of knowledge; In 2023, the warden corps was reinforced with 9 new nature wardens. In 2024, they successfully completed the mandatory training course that enables them to carry out their duties professionally, and in 2025 they joined the warden corps that nowadays has forty two members and already carry out missions at Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve.

6. maintain dialogue with the economic players in the region, namely with tourism professionals, to avoid increasing the impact of visitors on such a delicate and vulnerable ecosystem, using new resources and technology to maintain the necessary restrictions while giving citizens a better understanding of the natural assets of the nature reserve; envisage drafting a tourism strategy to ensure a sustainable balance between showcasing the natural beauty of the islands and controlling the number of visitors; there is regulation that approves the conditions for carrying out activities in Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve, as well as the respective Internal Regulations regarding human activities, including number of visitors by activity. Visitors are met by the Nature Wardens, accompany them along the informative circuit and then to the reception centre.

7. along with the enlargement of the nature reserve to the boundaries of the Natural Monument of the Selvagens Islands Volcanic Edifice, consider extending the area covered by the European Diploma and the protection of the whole water column between the water surface and the bottom water. The management plans of the different existing protection categories should subsequently be harmonised; the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve was enlarged and is now bounded by the marine area around these islands up to 12 nautical miles and the whole water column between the water surface and the bottom water is protected by regulation, Regional Legislative Decree No. 8/2022/M. Once this enlargement, we believe that the European Diploma will accept to cover all this area. The responsible regional authority is committed to update the management plan of the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve by 2026.

8. consider making the scientific data collected over the years available to the public; Qualitative and quantitative data is being obtained every year and reports are being produced and published accordingly.

9. work to raise awareness of the importance of geological heritage; No changes occurred and the policies presented on the earlier annual reports still apply.

10. maintain in good condition the restored rubble walls and reconstruct any unrestored walls. Most of the remaining unrestored rubble walls of the plateau are now well preserved and maintenance efforts are considered one of the priority duties of the nature wardens of the Island.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes occurred.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes occurred.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

All the events and lectures addressed to the public in general and target groups, as well as the website, facebook campaigns and new production of illustrated material, namely informative panels, used to raise awareness about the importance of the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve, were reinforced with the European Diploma logo.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

8. Education and scientific interest

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
 - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
 - 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- 8.2. Scientific research
 - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
 - 8.2.2. Scientific publications

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
 - 10.1.5. Waste management
 - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
 - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
 - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
 - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
 - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas