

PRESENTATION

Geographical area: All Spanish jurisdictional waters that extend from the north to the south from the boundary between the Spanish and French EEZs in the Bay of Biscay to the southern limit of the EEZ generated by the Canary Islands archipelago; from east to west from the agreed boundary between Spain and Italy for the delimitation of the continental shelf to the westernmost limit of the Canary Islands EEZ.

Spanish maritime jurisdictions defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea:

Normal baseline (NBL): this is the line from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Its course corresponds to the low-water line along the coast (UNCLOS, Art. 5).

Straight baseline (SBL): this is obtained by linking points furthest from the coast and must not depart to any appreciable extent from the general direction of the coast (UNCLOS, Art. 7).

Internal waters: “waters on the landward side of the baseline of the territorial sea form part of the internal waters of the state” (UNCLOS, Art. 8). States exercise full territorial sovereignty over such waters, the seabed and subsoil and superjacent airspace.

Territorial sea: strip of sea adjacent to the territory and internal waters of the coastal state over which the state exercises full sovereignty both over the groundwater and over the superjacent airspace, seabed and subsoil of that sea. The maximum breadth of territorial sea is 12 nautical miles (UNCLOS, arts. 2, 3 and 4).

Contiguous zone: waters located beyond the territorial sea and adjacent to it and in which the coastal state may take customs, fiscal, immigration or health measures. Its breadth may not exceed 24 nautical miles from the baseline from which the territorial sea is measured (UNCLOS, Art. 33).

Exclusive economic zone: maritime area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea in which the coastal state exercises sovereign rights for the purposes of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, the seabed and its subsoil and the superjacent waters. Its breadth is 200 nautical miles from the straight baselines from which the territorial sea is measured. (UNCLOS, arts. 55, 56 and 57).

Fishery zone/fishery protection zone: area of variable breadth (up to 200 nautical miles) declared by a coastal state around its coastline, and within which it exercises control over access to fishery resources. It has no jurisdictional effect over other resources.

Continental shelf: natural prolongation of a coastal state’s submarine territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles if the continental margin does not extend this far. The continental margin comprises the submerged prolongation of the land mass of the coastal state and consists of the seabed and subsoil of the shelf, the slope and the rise (UNCLOS, Art. 76).

In some cases the continental margin (geomorphological concept) or the continental shelf (jurisdictional concept) extends beyond the 200 nautical miles limit.

Coastal waters: surface water on the landward side of a line every point of which is at a distance of one nautical mile on the seaward side from the nearest point of the baseline from which the breadth of territorial waters is measured, extending where appropriate up to the outer limit of transitional waters. This is not a type of maritime jurisdiction, but a concept defined by the Water Framework Directive, establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water protection and management.

BASIC DATA

Spanish jurisdictional waters (sq km)

Internal waters	14 679
Territorial sea	101 700
Contiguous zone	117 216
Exclusive economic zone	758 253
Fisheries protection zone	190 582
Continental shelf (Alboran sea)	14 019
Extended continental shelf	38 182
SUM OF SPANISH MARITIME JURISDICTIONS	1 120 351

Additional information

Length of coastline (km)	7 503
WFD Coastal waters (sq km)	19 026

Governance

Legal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Decree No. 2510/1977 of 5th August 1977 • Act No. 10/1977 of 4th January 1977 • Act No. 15/1978 on the Economic Zone of 20th February 1978 • Royal Decree 1315/1997, of 1st August, establishing a Fisheries Protection Zone in the Mediterranean Sea • The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Defence • Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs • Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Observations

The sum of Spanish maritime jurisdictions will not coincide with the figure in the exclusive economic zone chart for the international scale as these are hypothetical and do not include the waters of Spain's territorial enclaves in the north of Africa and the Alboran Sea. The measurements are only indicative as they do not come from official sources.





