

INFORMATION POINT NO. 1: LIGHT, DEPTH AND LIFE STRATEGIES



THE DEPTH OF THE SEABED IN THE CANARIES

More than **98% of the Canary Islands' territory is submerged**, with an average depth of more than -3,500 metres, reaching almost -5,000 metres in some areas.

The great depths that characterise the archipelago are due to intense volcanic activity over millions of years, accumulating layers of lava until they surpassed the surface of the sea and emerged in the form of islands. It is, therefore, their volcanic nature that is responsible for the great submarine depths reached near the coast.

THE ROLE OF LIGHT

Light is a key element in the marine environment that determines the distribution of habitats and species. Depending on the depth at which light penetrates we find 3 layers:

- **Photic layer:** well-lit seabed, with significant vegetative cover, where the largest biomass in the oceans accumulates.
- **Oligophotic layer:** here organisms do not receive enough light to photosynthesise, however, the sense of vision remains the most common orientation system.
- **Aphotic layer:** completely devoid of light. Here, the organisms' ability to generate light plays an important role in attracting prey or to throw off predators.

LIFE STRATEGIES

According to their life strategies, marine organisms can be grouped into three main groups:

- **Pelagic:** drifting and/or migratory species.
- **Benthic:** species attached to the bottom.
- **Demersal:** species living close to the bottom, but not attached to it.