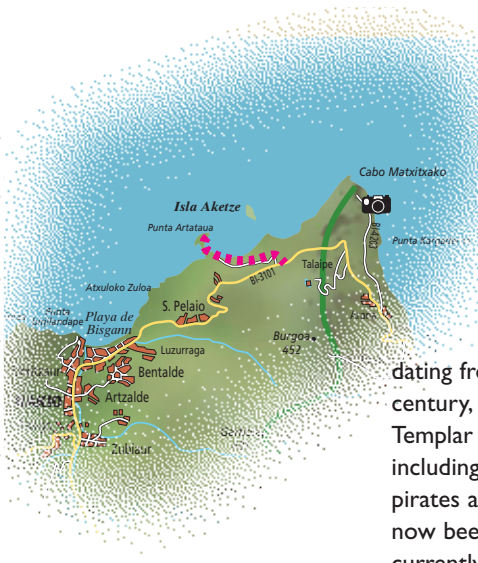


# GAZTELUGATXE

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Classification</b>   | Protected Biotope   |
| <b>Municipalities</b>   | Bermeo and Bakio  |
| <b>Area covered</b>     | 158 ha  |
| <b>Height</b>           | 50 m  |
| <b>How to get there</b> | By the BI-3101, between the towns of Bermeo and Bakio.  |
| <b>Information</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BAKIO TOURIST OFFICE:</b><br/>Tel.: 94 619 33 95</li> <li>• <b>BERMEO TOURIST OFFICE:</b><br/>Tel.: 94 617 91 54</li> </ul> |



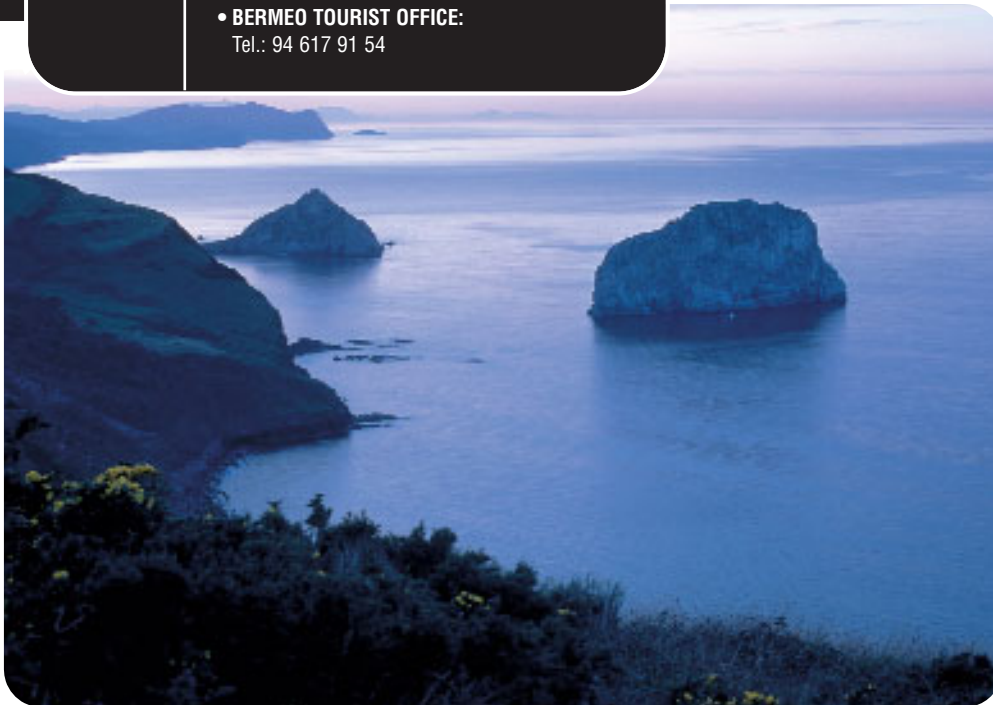
▲ Hermitage of San Juan de Gaztelugatxe

dating from somewhere around the 10th century, and which could have been a Templar monastery. After an agitated life, including fire and plundering by both pirates and Francis Drake in 1593, it has now been rebuilt. The entire area is currently an important tourist attraction.

Aketze rock rises prominently out of the sea, solitary and difficult to reach. That's why several species of sea birds have chosen it as their nesting place, including the yellow-legged gull and the shag; particularly outstanding however is its colony of storm petrel. This little-known sea bird, not much bigger than a sparrow, is the smallest in Europe. It normally lives far out to sea, only coming inland to nest and at the dead of night. Another bird sighted on these rocks is the rock dove, forebear of the domestic dove and of which natural populations are extremely rare.

One plant worth the mention is the wild olive tree, predecessor of the cultivated olive tree, and which was already spotted by a number of botanists in the 19th century. There are also others such as the *Cochlearia danica* and *Limonium binervosum*.

A car park and resting spot on the hard shoulder bordering the biotope is an excellent place from which to enjoy a view of this delightful marine landscape.



▲ San Juan de Gaztelugatxe and Aketze

The "Protected Biotope" covers the stretch of Bizkaian coast lying between the area around Bakio to the west, and Cape Matxitxako to the east. This is a particularly remarkable coastal area, and even more so if we take account of the very few islands and islets on our coastline. Moreover, one of its limits and its most prominent point, Cape Matxitxako, serves as a geographical reference.

Travelling along the road between Bermeo and Bakio, two rocky islets of typically pale limestone colour will come into view. Both are located in front of a coastal area formed by steep cliffs and hill slopes. These islets are called San Juan de Gaztelugatxe and Aketze. The former of the two is

accessed by means of a bridge over the rocks left by the sea between the islet and dry land; at one end the waves have beaten out perfect tunnels in the rock. At the top of a seemingly endless flight of stairs we will come to the hermitage of San Juan,

### Natural ecological route:

There is a viewpoint equipped with a panel giving information about the **typical species** and natural resources of the Biotope.

### Ecological, cultural and birdwatching itineraries:

**AIXERREKU:**  
Tel.: 94 687 02 44

### Hill-walking:

A specific route takes the visitor through the Biotope and its most important sights.

Information at

**BERMEO TOURIST OFFICE:**  
Tel.: 94 617 91 54

## TO KEEP YOURSELF BUSY

Different companies organise **active tourism** outings.

Find out about them, they'll offer you all sorts of ways to have fun.

**NATURLAN:** Tel.: 94 431 58 42

**UR 2000:** Tel.: 94 479 06 56

**KIRIK:** Tel.: 94 491 17 46

**TXOFI. BUCEO BILBAO:**  
Tel.: 94 688 14 00

**HEGALUZE:** Tel.: 677 256 092