

## General Information



## Park regulations

The Park's new regulations were defined by Decree 2009-1677 of 29 December 2009, which was passed to adapt the boundaries and regulations of the Cévennes National Park to the provisions of the environmental code under Law 2006-436 of 14 April 2006;



- No fire... except where required for pastureland or forestry management.
- Take your litter home – it always pollutes and sometimes injures.
- Respect all plants, whether wild or cultivated.
- Keep dogs on a lead: they disturb wildlife and livestock.
- No camping, no RVs, no caravans.
- No off-roading by bike, motorbike or car. No wheeled access is allowed except on authorised roads and tracks.

Respect fences. Close gates.

Agriculture, grazing and forestry are still practised, but are subject to regulations.

Hunting and fishing are also regulated.

Any work likely to change the Park's appearance is subject to the Director's approval. No new construction is allowed (except

where required for agriculture or the craft industry).

The regulations that are specific to the Park's central zone do not apply in the membership zone. However, all national regulations concerning the environment, traffic in recreation areas, and natural heritage do apply. ●

## International dimension of the Cévennes National Park

In 1971 UNESCO launched a worldwide programme of scientific cooperation called MAB (Man and the Biosphere). This ensures a balanced management of natural resources, associating conservation needs with sustainable development. This programme has been implemented in an international network of biosphere reserves, to which the Cévennes National Park has belonged since 1985.

Twinning: Since 1984, the Cévennes National Park has been twinned with the Saguenay National Park in Quebec (Canada). Since 1987, the Cévennes Biosphere Reserve has been twinned with the Montseny Biosphere Reserve in Catalonia (Spain). These links have given rise to many educational exchanges. ●

## Discovering the Park

**Eco-museums:** There are three eco-museums which allow you to discover the natural and cultural heritage of the Mont Lozère, the Cévennes, and the Causse and Gorges. The Mont Lozère Eco-Museum offers a permanent exhibition at the Maison du Mont Lozère (Le-Pont-de-Montvert, tel. 04 66 45 80 73) where the mountain's natural and human history is recounted. The Cévenne Eco-Museum, centred on the vallée Française, brings together in a coherent visit a set of museums and sites that promote a better understanding of Cévenol civilisation. The Causse and Gorges Eco-Museum groups together the area's major sites and lets you encounter the people who have shaped this land.

**Hiking and the great outdoors:** The Cévennes National Park is exceptional hiking country. It is crisscrossed by

many GR (long-distance hiking trails). Twenty-eight heritage trails (with explanatory leaflet) explain the landscape (for more details, look in the Park information centres or at <http://eng.cevennes-parcnational.fr/>).

Many bridleways crisscross the Park, and several centres organise horse treks and holidays. You can also trek on cross-country skis, mountain bike or touring bike.

In the summer, the “Festival Nature” brings together activities to discover the region. Upland guides, outdoor organisers, specialist associations and local residents also offer their services to those wishing to discover nature (hiking, canoeing/kayaking, caving, etc.).

**Activities, accommodation, information:** On arrival in the Park, you may wish to visit the Château in Florac first. It houses our main information centre (open all year, except Saturday and Sunday in the winter season). In the summer, some 30 information centres are at your disposal.

Our *Revue Cévennes*, our guidebooks, maps and specialised leaflets are available by mail, on our website, through a network of local retailers, and at our information centres (free leaflets available in English, books & maps in French only).

Rural gîtes in the heart of the countryside, set up with the help of the Park, offer an exceptional holiday environment, and put you in contact with locals. There are many rural inns, camping sites and hotels in the small towns of the membership zone. ●

## For further details

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The Cévennes National Park is the only mid-altitude National Park in mainland France. Because of its location, it is home to a year-round population and a significant cultural heritage.

This particularity gives the Park a specific vocation: to establish the conditions for a sustainable eco-development that consciously protects local heritage, respects the wider equilibrium, and ensures the survival of the agro-pastoral activities that are necessary to maintain biodiversity and the landscape.

The Cévennes are one of the European regions whose bio-diversity has increased most over the past 20 years. ●

## Basic characteristics

### Total surface area 372,000 hectares, of which

**the Park's central zone (protected by law):** 93,700 hectares (82% in Lozère, 18% in the Gard). This zone affects 55 rural districts including 317 inhabited hamlets, with a total of c.700 year-round residents. The National Park's central zone consists of 3% of land owned by the Park; 7% by the rural districts; 30% by the State; and 60% privately. It enjoys strict legal protection. Over 400 farms use land in the Park's central zone. Farmers are the foremost managers of open spaces, which make up 37% of the central zone's surface, the rest being forest (45% of which is privately owned).

**the membership zone (outer zone taken at its greatest possible extent, yet to be decided)** 278,500 hectares (49% in Lozère, 42% in the Gard, 9% in Ardèche) spread over 152 rural districts and grouping together about 74,000 inhabitants.

This zone is a geographical and cultural continuation of the central zone. Its vocation under the Park Charter is to show ecological solidarity with the central zone. The Charter, the shared long-term project for the Park's territory, involves the district councils, the public body running the Park and the French State. It strengthens their involvement and gives them the means of reconciling the different national policies on state land.

**Altitudes:** the highest 1,699m (Mont Lozère); the lowest 117m (Anduze); average altitude of the central zone 1,200m; average altitude of the membership zone 650m.

#### Geographical regions:

Causse Méjean, a limestone plateau that is part of the Great Causses (Sauveterre, Méjean, Noir and Larzac); average altitude 1,000m; sheep farming (milk and meat).

Mont Lozère, a granite massif: highest point 1,699m; cattle farming (milk and meat), transhumance of sheep (migration to summer pastures).

Mont Bougès, a granite and schist massif with a wooded north slope; highest point 1,421m; cattle and sheep farming, forestry.

The Gardons river valleys, carved into the schist bedrock: the vallée Longue with the gardon d'Alès, the vallée Française with the gardon de Sainte-Croix, and the vallée Borgne with the gardon de Saint-Jean; goat and sheep farming; bee-keeping; chestnut groves; formerly mining. Mont Aigoual and Lingas, schist and granite massifs; highest point 1,565m; heavily wooded, transhumance of sheep and cattle.

**Rivers:** Atlantic basin - Lot, Tarn, Mimente, Tarnon, Dourbie, Trévezel, Jonte; Mediterranean basin - Hérault, Gardons, Galeizon, Luech, Altier-Chassezac, Cèze, Auzonnet.

**Climate:** ranging from hot with pronounced summer drought (Gardons valleys) to very cold and damp (over 90 days of frost per year), for example on the upper slopes of Mont Lozère. Three influences confront each other: oceanic, Mediterranean and continental.

**Fauna:** Because intensive agriculture has been kept away from the Park's territory, the area is a refuge for a huge diversity of small wildlife (especially insects). In the past few years, many species have spontaneously resettled their habitats (Black Woodpecker, Tengmalm's Owl, Egyptian Vulture, otter, heron, etc.). The Cévennes National Park has also re-introduced stags, roe deer, mouflons, beavers, Griffon and Cinereous Vultures, and Western Capercaillies. Today there are 89 species of mammals, 208 of birds, 17 of reptiles, 18 of amphibians, and 24 of fish. Bats and birds of prey are particularly well represented. Inventories of invertebrates are still to be completed, but the presence of several species of high heritage interest has already been established, such as the White-Clawed Crayfish, Rosalia Longicorn, Hermit Beetle, Apollo Butterfly, and several species of dragonfly and grasshopper.

**Flora:** There is a great and contrasting range of flora, from the subalpine short-grass prairies of Mont Lozère, home to some species more typically found at the polar circle; to the very hot rocky shelters of the Mediterranean valleys, where plants grow that are found in dry subtropical climates. Also noteworthy are the plants associated with the Holm Oak (hot and dry climate) and the natural mixed Beech-fir forests of the high northern slopes (cold and damp climate).

Certain environments contain species with reduced ranges and even some species found only south of the Massif Central (48 endemic species in the central and membership zones), or rare and endangered ones (almost 300). The area's many peat bogs are home to a specific flora (sphagnum mosses, carnivorous plants, etc.). Of the 430 species of French flora that are protected nationally, 40 have been recorded in the Park (Spring Pheasant's Eye, Gagea, rockroses, orchids). In total 2,300 vascular species (flowering plants and ferns) have been inventoried. Of the central zone's 58,047 wooded hectares (half deciduous, half coniferous), two-thirds are covered with species native to the region and one-third with introduced resinous species. The large state-owned forest of the Aigoual is the work of late-19th century foresters. Chestnut groves, cultivated for over a millennium, are a typical landscape.

**Management:** The Cévennes National Park is a public body under the supervision of the Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development. Its head office is in Florac (Lozère). It is run by a board of directors made up of representatives of local authorities and the State, as well as other qualified people. The board is assisted in its task by a scientific committee and by specialised commissions: "agriculture-forest", "architecture and sites", "hunting", "water and aquatic environments", "tourism and information", "culture and education", "development and local relations", and "international relationships". The Park's staff of around 100 is made up of field teams (rangers and heads of sectors) and specialised services (study, protection and resource management; planning and architecture; communication, culture and tourism; general administration and accountancy). Twenty seasonal employees complete the workforce. The Park's financial resources come mainly from the State. The Park can grant subsidies to projects that contribute to the implementation of its Charter. Moreover, the State's financial programming has to take into account the distinctiveness of a National Park territory. ●