

IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS

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ANTEQUERA®
Directa a tu corazón



Ayuntamiento
de Antequera

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PLEASE DO NOT THROW LITTER ON THE GROUND, there are bins and containers provided.

PLEASE PHOTOGRAPH THE PLANTS, if you wish. DO NOT pick them.

PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB THE WILDLIFE. Do not go near nests during the Spring and Summer periods.

HUNTING IS NOT ALLOWED.

PLEASE RESPECT THE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY OF THE RESERVE, listen to the sound of nature.

CAMPING IS NOT ALLOWED in the Reserve.

A SPECIALLY SIGNED AREA can be accessed with an authorized A.M.A permit. Otherwise entry is prohibited.

REMEMBER THAT CONSERVATION OF THIS RESERVE DEPENDS UPON YOU.

USE RUBBER SOLED FOOTWEAR as walking on wet rocks can be dangerous.

If it is **FOGGY**, **KEEP TO THE ESTABLISHED ROUTES.**

DO NOT GO NEAR CREVICES, CAVITIES or POTHOLE.

CONSULT THE WARDEN, or call the ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE if you would like to know what activities can be carried out with or without authorization.



You can reach the TORCAL NATURE RESERVE from Antequera by taking the road to VILLANUEVA DE LA CONCEPCION. It lies about 7 km from the BOCA DE ASNO.

From Málaga, take the A45, passing through the historical city of ANTEQUERA. In ANTEQUERA you can visit the Dolmens, the Moorish Castle, and the many Renaissance and Baroque churches as well as the City Museum and the Museum at the Convent of the Descalzas.

The Torcal Nature Reserve is in the heart of Málaga province, and forms part of the limestone crest of the South Andalusian Mountains. It is in the municipality of Antequera. The massif joins the Sierra de la Chimeneas to the west and the Sierra de las Cabras to the east.

It became a protected area in 1929 when it was declared an area of national interest, and in 1978 it became a Nature Reserve, and its flora, fauna, geomorphology and landscape are under the protection of Law 2/ July 18th 1989.



rise to right angled (NW-SE and SE-SW) fractures (diaclasses). Erosion of these crevices produced passages or corridors, and caves and swallow holes were formed. (Swallow holes, or dolines, is a synonym for "Torcas" from which the name Torcal derives).

From then on the area was subject to a range of erosion processes: Karstic moulding, ice expansion, chemical change in the limestone due to CO² which is present in rainwater, and erosion due to general climate change, all of which have resulted in different rock formations and produced a "museum of natural sculptures". Some of these forms now have names e.g. the Screw - El Tornillo, which has, in fact, become the park's logo.

The erosion of the vertical rocks has created furrows and channels that are difficult to access. These are known, by the locals, as "agrios" - acid places.

UNDERGROUND FEATURES.

Like any limestone massif the Torcal has a richness of caves, potholes, and other underground features. Some are of great historical importance, such as, the Cueva del Toro (Bull's Cave) which has been formed by the action of rainwater on the rock.

The TORCAL consists of three different types of limestone: oolitic, breccia-like and karstic, all originally formed on the ocean bed during the Jurassic period, about 150 million years ago.

The sediment lying at the bottom of the sea emerged as a consequence of an Alpine fold, which maintained its horizontal shape in spite of rising over 1000 metres above sea level.

Later on, a series of faults gave

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The El Torcal Nature Reserve



The El Torcal Nature Reserve can be reached via the C3310.

At the visitors centre you can see the interactive exhibition which explains the natural and cultural features of the area, and a multi-use area where you can watch a 15 minute video. There is also a shop selling local fayre, and a restaurant which has wonderful views, and where home-made food is served in a nice, family atmosphere.

There is a tourist information desk and toilets for your convenience. The building also has facilities for the disabled.

“Las Ventanillas”. The Small Windows Viewpoint. Take the signposted track opposite the visitors centre for about 100 m and you will come to the “Las Ventanillas” Viewpoint. From there you can enjoy stunning views of Villanueva de la Concepcion, Campanillas river area, and on clear day you can even see as far as Africa.

“Ruta Verde”. The Green Route. The “Ruta Verde” is a walking route which starts in the car park and takes you around the Torcal Alto (High Torcal), (1.410 m). It is an easy/medium level walk which takes from 40-60 minutes, be careful when it is raining as the terrain can be slippery. This walk is highly recommended as you will be able to enjoy the flora, fauna, rock formations, and wildlife, don't forget to take your binoculars! The route is well signposted and there are litter bins for your convenience.

“Ruta Amarilla”. The Yellow Route. The “Ruta Amarilla” is a more difficult route which starts in the car park and lasts about 2 hours. It's a wonderful way to explore the vegetation, geology, and rock formations, and to see the wildlife. It is also an area suitable for educational activities.

Parking. There is a large parking area next to the visitors centre for cars and coaches. There you will find benches, litter bins and also noticeboards with information.

“Tajo de la Venta”. The Cliff Inn. This area of the Torcal is situated at the crossroads of the C3310 and is under an impressive rocky cleft called “Tajo de la Venta” due to its proximity to the old Venta del Rosario. It is a former quarry where you will find an information stand and a control point which monitors the entrance of vehicles to the reserve.

Information Boards. Check out the information boards, as they will tell you about the most interesting features of the reserve.

Reforestation. The reforestation area is a fenced-off part of the reserve recreated, under guidance, by young people: children planted the trees, and their growth is monitored by environmental students.

Parking: Parking is provided for cars and coaches and it is a good place to park for those who wish to enjoy a pleasant walk up to the Torcal Alto. Litter bins are provided for rubbish.

Diego Monea's Viewpoint. Diego Monea's Viewpoint is situated halfway between the C3310 crossroads and the Torcal Alto Tourist Centre. It's an ideal place to have a rest, take in the views, and locate specific geographical areas. Parking, information boards, bins and benches are available.

The Torcal extends over 11.7 km² and is one of the most outstanding examples of Karst limestone in Europe. There are four geomorphological areas:



SIERRA PELADA: The Sierra Pelada is situated to the East of the reserve and covers an extensive area. The highest point is 1.154 m at the the Camorro de los Monteses or Cerro de los Repetidores.

TORCAL ALTO (High Torcal): The Torcal Alto is situated to the southwest of the reserve and boasts the best karst limestone area of the massif. Las Vilaneras, a great rocky crest, separates it from the Torcal Bajo. The maximum height, of the entire Torcal, is found here at the Camorro de las Siete Mesas (1.336 m).

TORCAL BAJO (Low Torcal): The Torcal Bajo is situated between the above mentioned areas, and is similar to the Torcal Alto, although less spectacular. Here you can find the remains of historical settlements.

CLEFTS AND HILLSIDES: Clefts and hillsides bound the Reserve. The most spectacular ones are found on the south side. The formations are impressive, and are a perfect place for birds of prey to nest and shelter.

Man's presence in the Torcal of Antequera goes back to prehistoric times. Neolithic remains found in various places testify to this, the most important finds being at the Cueva del Toro. Roman remains have also been found and it seems that the Romans used the Torcal as a quarry to extract limestone

from which they built the nearby villages of Antikaria, Osqua, and Nescania.

The Arab presence was also important and, until recently, a watchtower could be seen in the nearby mountain of Las Chimeneas (The Chimneys). Several Moorish tombs and remains have also been found.

Humans settled in the area until the last century when the only known settlement of Las Sepulturas (The Tombs) was abandoned. The settlement consisted of several small, stone buildings, sheep pens, and fields, and evidence shows that the settlers were highly skilled stonemasons.

With the 19th century industrial revolution came intensive oak tree felling from which charcoal was



made; quarrying was intensified, and sheep keeping increased, all of which prevented the natural regeneration of plant life. This is why some areas of the Reserve look so desolate.

In the 20th century, when quarrying came to an end, the Torcal Nature Reserve was used exclusively for sheep grazing, and, in times of austerity, crops were grown in the area.

The acquisition of the area by the Andalusian Regional Government meant that the area could now be conserved and restored.

The Torcal massif is an area that is rich and varied in flora which emphasizes the importance of its natural features.

The decline of plant life due to tree felling, sheep grazing, and human activity has allowed the growth of other interesting vegetation. The richness of plant species is considerable. In the Torcal Nature Reserve there are, at least, 664 plant species which can be grouped into a hundred different families. There are, for example, 12 species of lichens, 77 species of moss, 10 species of ferns, and 565 seed-bearing plants.

The vegetation can be mainly divided into two bioclimatic types:



Thermo-Mediterranean: found in the low areas of the Reserve, or in areas that have a similar temperature, and Meso-Mediterranean which covers most of the Sierra - in the medium and high areas of the reserve.

In some places plant species are found on the high meso - Supra-Mediterranean - for example at the “Puerto de las Campanas”. Vegetation of great botanical importance is found amongst the rocks and has adapted to the fractures and crevices in the rocks. Many of these plants belong exclusively to this area. Thus, strict conservation rules apply, and with this in mind, an area inside Torcal Alto has been created with the aim of preserving and protecting several plant communities: Toadflax, Saxifrage, Stonecrop, Snapdragon, and Ferns, among others.

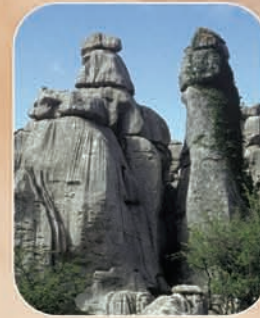
Trees found in the Torcal Nature Reserve include: the Holm Oak, the Gall-Oak, the Mountain Ash, and the Maple.

Honeysuckle, Hawthorn, Buckthorn, Olive Trees, Blackberry, Wild Rose, and Peonies cover most of the Torcal Alto. Meanwhile, other plants, are common to pasture land, including thistles, are usually found in the swallow holes or enclosures, as well as, Meadowgrass, Clover, Buttercup, Illyrian Thistle, Milk Thistle, or the rarer: Antequeran Carnation and Oblong-leaved Toadflax.

The abundant Ivy plant should be given special mention because of the beautiful and striking formations it makes on the rocks.

As you will appreciate, the great botanical richness of the Torcal Nature Reserve is due to the many rare and endangered plants which grow there. We therefore ask that you do not damage the plants or pick the flowers, so that they may flourish for others to enjoy in the future.

The fauna of the Torcal Nature Reserve has been affected by man's impact on the environment. There are 116 vertebrate species: 1 amphibious specie, 11 reptile species, 82 different bird species, and 22 different kinds of mammals. There are a multitude of invertebrate species most of which are insects



upon which the majority of vertebrate species feed.

Large predators and herbivores are the Fox and the Mountain Goat.

One of the most outstanding features of the Torcal Nature Reserve fauna is the enormous variety of birds which are either there permanently or use the Torcal as a stopover on their migratory routes, or as a nesting place.

Due to this, the Sierra was declared a Special Area for the Protection of Birds (ZEPA), under community law 79/409. However, some

birds have failed to return to the area due to human interference (putting down poison, stealing nests, and doing uncontrolled sports activities etc). These birds include the Imperial Eagle, the Peregrine Falcon and the Bonelli Eagle. Many birds nest in the large clefts and therefore it is important that sports such as hang-gliding or rock climbing are prohibited.

The Griffon Vulture can usually be seen in the Torcal Nature Reserve flying between the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes-Sierra Huma and the Sierra del Camarolos and the Jobo or you may see them descending low to feed on dead cattle.

Other birds present in the Torcal of Antequera are the Wheatear, the Eagle Owl, the Little Owl, the Common Kestrel, the Martin, the Chough and a host of other small birds (Common Coal Tit, Goldfinch, Woodlark, Redstart, Bunting); and many others which can be seen, depending upon the season of the year and the area in which you are in.

The presence of reptiles in the Sierra depends highly on the temperature. They are very active and can be frequently seen during the spring and summer seasons. You should keep your eyes open for the Ocellate Lizard, the Wall Lizard, the Ladder Snake, the Montpellier Snake and the Lataste Viper whose bite is poisonous.

Amongst mammals the mole is commonly found: detected by small mounds of earth. Other mammals: foxes, weasels, badgers and rabbits can be identified by their excrement.

