

physical environment

The Segura River, when passing by the foothills of the Sierra del Molino (826 m) and La Palera (655 m) uses the numerous cracks,

faults and the rock dissolving processes to create a magnificent canyon of several kilometres



in length with vertical walls which are, in some points, as high as 150 metres. At half way of the canyon, the Quipar River joins the formation, which also forms a narrow gorge that separates the mountain range.

The best represented rocks are the limestones and dolostones which form the stratified slope deposits, cracks and joints that are possible to appreciate in the canyon or in the karts formations such as the lapiaz in the place known as Los Losares.

Special attention deserves "La Fuente del Gorgontón" to the end of the canyon, in the municipality of Cieza, which is considered one of the only places where it is possible to see the source of a spring in the very course of the Segura River.

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suggestions for visitors

You are in a protected area of beautiful landscape and great natural value, which we attempt to preserve for the future generations. So during your visit try not to forget...

Use authorised roads and footpaths.

Domestic animals must be hold.

Camping and/or caravanning are not permitted in the area.

Respect private propriety.

Do not disturb neither harm animals and plants.

Do not light fire unless authorised to do so.

Please, use the garbage bins.

For emergency, call number 112.

more information

• Consejería de Desarrollo Sostenible y Ordenación del Territorio
(Council of Sustainable Development)

Tel.: 968 22 89 37/38 • Fax: 968 22 89 38

• Sistema de Información Geográfica y Ambiental (SIGA)
(Environmental and Geographic Information System)

www.carm.es/medioambiente/

• Queries and Suggestions:

medioambiente@listas.carm.es



Región de Murcia
Consejería de Desarrollo Sostenible y Ordenación del Territorio
Dirección General del Medio Natural



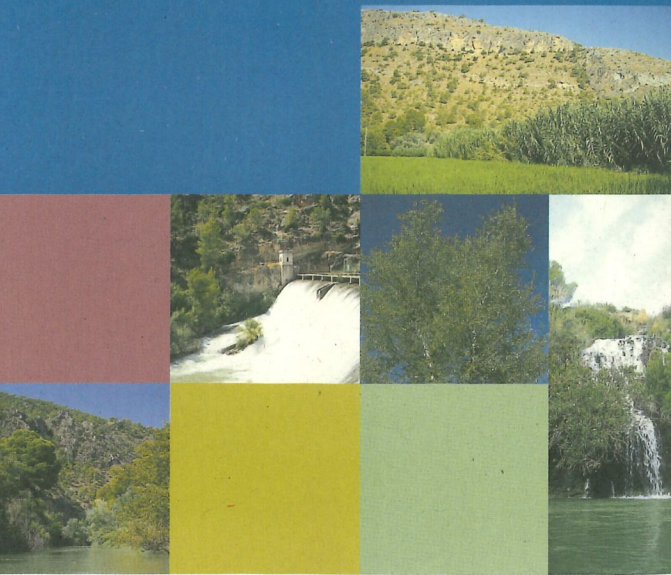
Protected Area
Cañon de los Almadenes



information on the protected natural areas

introduction

This Nature Reserve is on the top part of the Segura River when flowing through the Region of Murcia. It has got a length of 9 kilometres on the Segura River and 2 kilometres on the Quipar River, and the protected area to the sides of the rivers is of 116 hectares shared by the municipalities of Cieza and Calasparra. This area has been proposed as a Site of Community Importance and is part of a Special Protection Bird Area, being included in the European Natura 2000 network, a big network of European Nature Reserves. Within the area we can find the dam of La Mulata with the purpose of shunting the river for its use in the hydroelectric station of Los Almadanes in Cieza.



Fauna

In this Region, the most original and singular component

in terms of fauna is that related to the Segura River and the presence of the riverbank forest which acts as an ecologic corridor both for aquatic and land species.

Amongst all the species, the most important might be the otter, which finds here the largest population of the entire region. This carnivore is a good ecological indicator about the state of conservation of the river.

The river is an important place for breeding and refuge for bats and birds. Amongst these last ones, it is possible to find

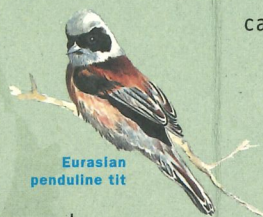
night herons, little bitterns, grey herons, mallards, kingfishers, white-throated dippers, blue-headed wagtails, golden orioles and penduline tits.

In the rock crags it is possible to see birds of prey such as the golden eagle and the eagle owl. Among the reptiles, the presence of the Spanish turtle is worth noticing and among the amphibious, the common toad, the natterjack toad, the Iberian green frog and the sharp ribbed newt.

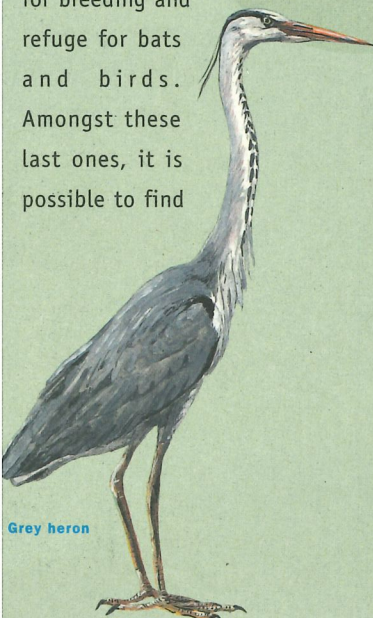
The most abundant fish is the barbell, although it is also possible to find other species like carps. The invertebrates are mainly represented by the crayfish and a very rare species of dragonfly, the Southern Damselfly.



King fisher



Eurasian penduline tit

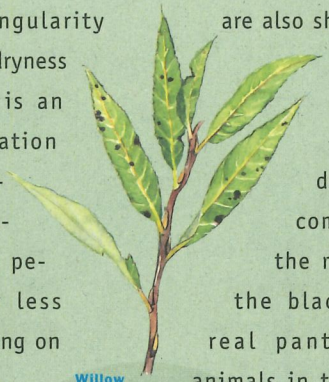


Grey heron

Vegetation

The riverbank forest, or gallery forest, is an environmental and landscape singularity within the general dryness of the region. It is an hydrophilic vegetation placed on the riverbanks and subjected to flooding periods of more or less importance depending on the river dynamics.

In the canyon, the river is quite crammed and the riverbank vegetation forms a very narrow strip to the sides of the river. It is possible to find trees such as the white and the black poplar, some elms and several species of willows. There are also shrubs like the African tamarisk or the oleander. The closer communities to the river bed are the blackberries, a real pantry for the animals in the area, the common reeds, the cattails, the giant reed and the purple loosestrife, a plant with a bright and colourful pink flowering.



Willow

Men and Landscape

The rough landscape of the Almadenes Canyon seems to be not very hospitable for the human being, but the truth is that there have been humans in the area since the Prehistoric times. It is possible to find two archaeological settlements. They are two rocky shelters carved by the river in the limestone. Los Monigotes Cave or also called Abrigo del Pozo (the Pool Shelter) is placed on the right bank of the Segura river. In the walls it is possible to find cave paintings dated from the Neolithic period. They are some very schematic paintings representing people, animals and some objects. In La Serreta cave there are also some pictures and some Bronze Age and Roman-Iberian remains.



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Both caves were declared UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. Another sample of human activity is the traditional crops. The rice crops of Calasparra get to the very first walls of the canyon, in the place known as Las Hoyicas. The traditional way of cropping and the quality of the rice makes it worthy of a Guarantee of Origin, making the rice fields an important economical and social resource.



Protected area limit
Roads
Panoramic view
Archeological site

The Area suggestions

It is possible to make rafting or kayaking down the river in the canyon until reaching the dam known as La Mulata together with a visit of the cave paintings of Los Monigotes. The visit can be booked through the Calasparra Tourist Office. The quietness will be the best ally when coming to enjoy the fauna to this place. Remember to visit the canyon in small groups and bring photographic camera and binoculars.

