Natural Heritage of Central Portugal: A Biodiversity Sanctuary

Description

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Natural Heritage of Central Portugal: A Biodiversity Sanctuary

Discover the Ecological Wealth of Portugalâ€™s Heartland

Central Portugal boasts one of Europeâ€™s most diverse natural landscapes, where ancient forests meet pristine waterways and unique Mediterranean ecosystems. This region serves as a vital refuge for endangered species and protected habitats under the EU Natura 2000 network.

Protected Habitats

1. Freshwater Ecosystems

- **3170 Mediterranean Temporary Ponds**: Seasonal wetlands hosting rare amphibians

- **3260 Running Watercourses**: Pristine rivers with:
  - Ranunculion fluitantis vegetation
  - Callitricho-Batrachion plant communities
- **3280 Mediterranean Permanent Streams**: Featuring white poplar (Populus alba) and willow corridors

2. Temperate Heathlands & Forests

- **4020 Atlantic Wet Heaths**: Blanketed in Erica ciliaris and Erica tetralix
- **4030 European Dry Heaths**: Drought-resistant shrublands
- **91E0 Alluvial Forests**: Ancient floodplain woods with:
  - Black alder (Alnus glutinosa)
  - European ash (Fraxinus excelsior)

3. Mediterranean Woodlands

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- **5230 Laurel Groves**: Rare stands of Laurus nobilis
- **9330 Cork Oak Forests**: Quercus suber ecosystems
- **9340 Holm Oak Woodlands**: Quercus ilex dominated landscapes

4. Mountain & Grassland Systems

- **6230 Siliceous Nardus Grasslands**: Flower-rich alpine meadows
- **7110 Active Raised Bogs**: Sphagnum moss peatlands
- **8220 Siliceous Rocky Slopes**: Cliff-dwelling plant communities

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Wildlife Sanctuary

Amphibians

- **Endemic Species**:
  - Lusitanian salamander (Chioglossa lusitanica)*
  - Iberian frog (Rana iberica)
- **Protected**:
  - Marbled newt (Triturus marmoratus)
  - Midwife toad (Alytes obstetricans)

Birds of Prey

- **Endangered**:
  - Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos)*
  - Bonelliâ€™s eagle (Hieraaetus fasciatus)
- **Raptors**:
  - Short-toed eagle (Circaetus gallicus)
  - Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis)

Mammals

- **Iconic Species**:
  - Iberian wolf (Canis lupus signatus)*
  - Otter (Lutra lutra)
- **Forest Dwellers**:
  - Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus)
  - Wild boar (Sus scrofa)

Reptiles & Fish

- **Rare Herpetofauna**:
  - Schreiberâ€™s green lizard (Lacerta schreiberi)*
  - Latasteâ€™s viper (Vipera latastei)
- **Native Fish**:
  - Iberian barbel (Barbus bocagei)
  - Mediterranean trout (Salmo trutta)

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Botanical Treasures

Forest Giants

- **Portuguese oak (Quercus faginea)**
- **Pyrenean oak (Quercus pyrenaica)**
- **Sweet chestnut (Castanea sativa)**

Mediterranean Flora

- **Rockrose (Cistus ladanifer)**
- **Strawberry tree (Arbutus unedo)**
- **Portuguese laurel (Prunus lusitanica)**

Rare & Protected

- **Narrow-leaved ash (Fraxinus angustifolia)**
- **Portuguese iris (Iris lusitanica)**
- **Scarce fritillary butterfly host plants**

Conservation Challenges

Central Portugal faces pressing ecological threats:

- Climate change impacts on temporary ponds
- Invasive species (eucalyptus monocultures)

- Habitat fragmentation from development

Explore Responsibly

We promote:

- Guided eco-tours with certified naturalists
- Citizen science programs
- Habitat restoration initiatives

Join us in protecting this irreplaceable natural heritage!

*Endemic species * IUCN Red List species

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