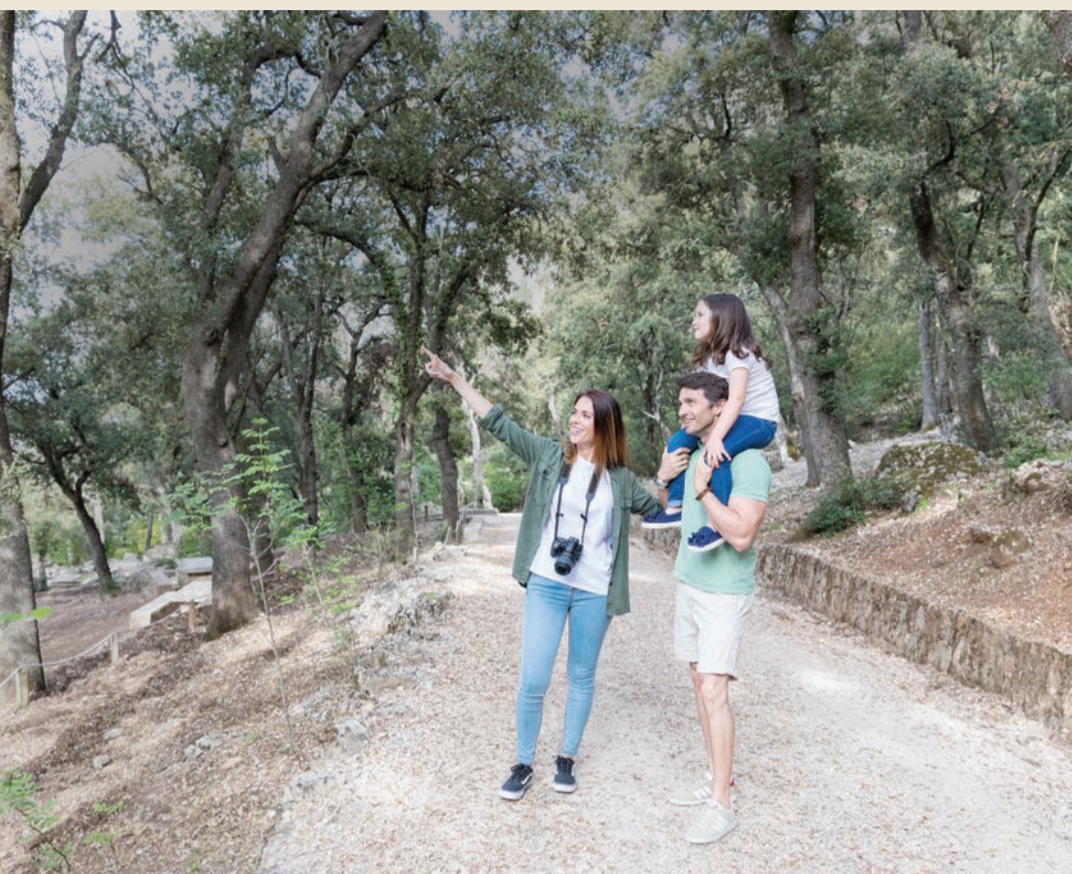


Ecotourism in the Region of Valencia



The Region of Valencia is home to a multitude of natural spaces to enjoy ecotourism, an activity aimed at connecting with nature and contributing to its conservation. It includes activities such as observing and learning about wildlife and the stars, guided hiking, staying in sustainable accommodation... And all this while exploring natural spaces and enjoying local cuisine.



Inclusive tourism

The Region of Valencia has a strategic plan in place so that everyone can enjoy its cultural and natural wealth on equal terms through the elimination of architectural barriers and the implementation of accessibility improvements. 'La Comunitat Valenciana, també per a tu' project has designed tourist routes accessible to people with physical and organic functional diversity, particularly those with reduced mobility. In addition, the natural parks make adaptive wheelchairs available to travellers for exploring nature. The 'Cadira de Rodes Adaptada per a la Natura' (CRAN/JOËLETTE) is a wheelchair with a single wheel that lets people with reduced mobility or any type of functional diversity to carry out hiking activities in the natural environment. This wheelchair makes comfortable hikes possible, with a minimum of two companions, on a series of specific trails. You simply need to check the availability of the Joëlette at each of the natural parks in the Region of Valencia.



- ecotourist -

- Commitment to sustainable development. Follow the instructions on signs and guides.
- Respect the habitats and those who live in them.
- Do not leave or bury rubbish. Take it to the rubbish bins in the nearest town.
- Never light a fire. Fire is the biggest enemy.
- Respect the trails and footpaths. Shortcuts only serve to accelerate soil erosion, making the original trail disappear.
- Water is our most precious asset. Take care of springs, rivers and other watercourses, and do not release pollutants.
- Never pluck plants, flowers or branches, so they can be enjoyed by all. Better take a camera.
- Wild camping is not permitted.
- Try not to leave a trace where the passage of centuries has not done so.
- Contribute to protecting the natural environment with your example.

Ecotourism map



Legend

- GR® Long Distance Footpaths
- Vias Verdes (greenways)
- Natural monuments
- Observing butterflies
- Unique trees
- Natural Parks
- PANAMU (Municipal Natural Landscape)
- Visitor centres
- Observing orchids
- Rock art
- Sighting cetaceans
- Astronomical observatories and Starlight destinations
- Marine reserves
- Paleontological sites
- Biosphere reserves
- Places of interest

Ancient trees

- Ficus de Benalúa, Alicante
- Palm tree in Plaza del León, Daya Nueva
- Garrofer (carob tree) of the Foa Brell, L'Alfàs del Pi
- Higuera verdal (fig tree), Orihuela
- Roure de les Berrugues, Ares del Maestrat
- El Abuelo (the Grandfather), Cortes de Arenoso
- Holm oak of Culla
- Elm of Navajas
- La Morruđa, Segorbe
- Travina La Juana, Alpuente
- Plátano de sombra (banana), Riba-roja de Túria
- Ficus del Parterre, Valencia
- Thousand-year-old olive trees, Baix Maestrat

It all starts at regionofvalencia.com

Make your stay in the Region of Valencia a truly special experience.

Thank you for visiting!

Eco Tourism/map

Spaces to connect with nature

REGION OF VALENCIA MEDITERRANEAN ATTITUDE

Destinations that stand out for their flora and fauna

Network of Municipal Natural Landscapes (PANAMU)

This network aims to bring citizens closer to the Region of Valencia's biodiversity, so close but so unknown. It groups together the municipal natural landscapes spread across the three provinces.

- 1. Bòvolar de Sant Jordi / Sant Jordi
- 2. Castell de Arenós / Puebla de Arenoso
- 3. Clot de la Mare de Déu / Burriana
- 4. El Castell / Atzeneta del Maestrat
- 5. El Mollet/Sant Joan de Moró
- 6. El Pozo Junco / Toro
- 7. El Rivet / Benassal
- 8. Ermitorio de la Magdalena / Castelló de la Plana
- 9. L'Estany / Nules
- 10. La Dehesa / Soneja
- 11. La Esperanza / Segorbe
- 12. La Mola d'Ares / Ares del Maestrat
- 13. Palomita / Vilafranca del Cid
- 14. La Torrellilla Puntal de Navarrete / Altura
- 15. Mola de la Vila / Forcall
- 16. Peñascabia / Beljís
- 17. Pereroles / Morella
- 18. Racó del Frare / Sant Mateu
- 19. Rambla Culembres / Castellfort/Cinctorres/Portell
- 20. Sant Miquel / Vilafamés
- 21. Barranc de la Fosch / Quatretonda
- 22. Barranco de la Hoz / Enguera
- 23. Cova Negra / Xàtiva
- 24. El Molón / Camporrobles
- 25. El Surar / Llutxent / Pinet
- 26. El Tello / Llombai
- 27. Els Cerros / Llombai
- 28. Fuente Bellido / Casas Altas
- 29. Hort de Soriano Font de la Parra / Carcaixent
- 30. L'Ermita / Castelló de Rugat
- 31. La Cabrença / Estubeny
- 32. La Colaita / Llombai
- 33. La Costerla / Puçol
- 34. La Mangüera / La Pobla de Vallbona
- 35. La Murta y la Casella / Alzira
- 36. La Solana y Barranco de Lucía / Alcublas
- 37. Les Fontanelles / Corbera
- 38. Les Rodanes / Vilmarxant
- 39. Les Salines / Manuel
- 40. Los Calderones / Chullilla
- 41. Muntanya de Llaúri / Llaúri
- 42. Parpallo Borrell / Gandia
- 43. Penyes Albes / Montixelvo/Terrateig
- 44. Riu de Barxeta / Barxeta
- 45. Serra de l'Ombría Pou Clar / Orinyent
- 46. Serra Perenxisa / Torrente
- 47. Serra de Quatretonda / Quatretonda
- 48. Sierra de Chiva / Chiva
- 49. Tabarla / Yátova
- 50. Ullals del Riu Verd / Benimodo
- 51. Umbria la Plana / Enguera
- 52. Vilingordo / Siete Aguas
- 53. Nacimiento del Río Tuéjar / Tuéjar
- 54. Barracos Carrasca / Gatillo Enguera
- 55. Los Chorroderos / Navarres
- 56. Muela de los Tres Reinos / Castellafabib
- 57. Arnel de l'Armorxó / Petrer
- 58. Clot de Galvany / Elx
- 59. Els Arcs / Castell de Castells
- 60. Els Plantadets / Xixona
- 61. Font del Baladre Fontanars Riu d'Agres / Muro de Alcoy
- 62. La Pilanica Sierra de Callosa / Callosa de Segura
- 63. La Sierra / Redován
- 64. Ladera del Castillo de Sax / Sax
- 65. Monte Coto / Monóvar
- 66. Parque Molino del Agua / Torreveja
- 67. Racó de Sant Bonaventura Canals / Alcoy
- 68. Sant Pasqual Torretes / Ibi
- 69. Sierra de las Águilas y San Pascual / Montforte del Cid
- 70. Lagunas de La Monte / Pilar de la Horadada
- 71. Los Algezares / Aspe

Protected Natural Spaces

The Region of Valencia is home to extraordinary natural diversity, with important species of flora and fauna, habitats and geological formations. Its Network of Protected Natural Spaces incorporates more than 180 spaces integrated into the Natura 2000 Network (SCI, SPA and SAC). Many of these areas have also received regional protection, such as the 22 natural parks in the Region of Valencia, the 71 municipal natural landscapes (PANAMU Network), nine protected landscapes, three natural monuments and flora micro-reserves.

These spaces harbour a diversity of ecosystems with a common denominator: the influence of the Mediterranean, which determines the climate, rainfall and wind systems, and the temperature ranges in the region. In the Region of Valencia, you can get to know everything from wetlands as impressive as l'Albufera in Valencia and Les Salines in Santa Pola, to the arid areas of inland Alicante. From the coastal mountain ranges of the Cordilleras Béticas as they reach the sea, between Valencia and Alicante, up to the heights of the Sistema Ibérico mountains in the northeast. And, of course, the refreshing banks of rivers such as the Júcar, the Túria and the Mijares. Here, endemic plant life, ancient forests, tiny invertebrates associated with microhabitats and large birds of prey and cetaceans that need these natural spaces all coexist together.

The Region of Valencia is about culture, traditions, diversity of natural spaces and cuisine. The rice paddies are part of the identity of this region, the smell of orange blossom gets under your skin, the salt-tinged breeze makes you disconnect. You can combine all the elements of the Mediterranean's essence that make this land such a special place.

Special mention should be made of the Biosphere Reserve declaration by UNESCO for Alto Túria and Valle del Cabriel in 2019 due to their natural wealth and the development of human activities that are respectful of the environment.

22 natural parks

These contain a representation of the most important ecosystems in the Region of Valencia, from varied seabeds to the specially adapted plant life of the highest mountain peaks, cliffs and coastal marshes, rivers, forests, scrubland and steppes.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Chera Sot de Chera | 12. Penyal d'Iñac |
| 2. Desert de les Palmes | 13. Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca |
| 3. El Fondo | 14. Puebla de San Miguel |
| 4. El Montgó | 15. Serra de Mariola |
| 5. Font Roja | 16. Serra d'Espadà |
| 6. Hoces del Cabriel | 17. Serra Calderona |
| 7. Columbretes Islands | 18. Les Salines in Santa Pola |
| 8. L'Albufera | 19. Serra d'Irta |
| 9. Lagunas de la Mata-Torrevieja | 20. Serra Gelada |
| 10. Marjal de Pego-Oliva | 21. Tinença de Benifassà |
| 11. Penyaolosa | 22. Túria |



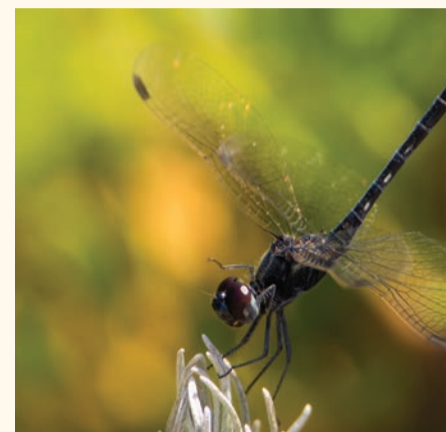
Fauna sighting



Butterflies and dragonflies

This is one of the places in Europe with the greatest diversity of butterflies, 159 registered species, 72% of all species on the Iberian peninsula. The key to this diversity lies in the variety of habitats.

The first butterfly micro-reserve is located in the municipality of Gandia in Parpalló-Borrell, with specimens that change according to the season of the year. Another activity that is increasingly in demand by ecotourists is the observation of odonates, one of the most popular groups of insects, which includes dragonflies and damselflies. You can discover up to 60 species in the Region of Valencia.



Birds

It is easy to enjoy bird watching in the region. The diversity of habitats, the infrastructure with marked trails and viewpoints, and specialist guides make this activity accessible to all. Added to the variety of resident birds is its strategic location, ideal for the passage of birds on migratory routes between northern Europe and Africa. Birdwatchers can easily observe more than 300 different species throughout the year.



Land mammals

The extensive variety of ecosystems, from inland mountain ranges to riverbanks, makes it possible to observe a great diversity of mammals. There are ungulates such as goats, deer, roe deer and wild boar, lagomorphs such as hares and rabbits, and carnivores such as the red fox, the otter and the genet, as well as an extraordinary variety of bats. Parque de Benicalap is home to 75% of the species of this Chiroptera, some of which are endangered. The land fauna found in the region constitutes a magnificent representation of European wildlife.



Cetaceans

The Region of Valencia offers the chance to watch dolphins and whales in their wildest state from various strategic points. It is a true spectacle for visitors who travel to municipalities such as Xàbia and Dénia. Although Cabo de San Antonio is where most bottlenose dolphin sightings occur, the most common, other important locations are: Torrevieja, Serra Gelada Natural Park in Benidorm and the Marine Reserves of Tabarca islet and the Columbretes islands.

The fin whale, the second largest whale species in the world, visible even from solid ground, can also be seen in the Region of Valencia. The best time to enjoy this experience is during migration (spring and summer), when they swim from the coast in Liguria to the Atlantic. The Dénia Cetacean Observatory lets you observe them swimming near the Alicante coast.



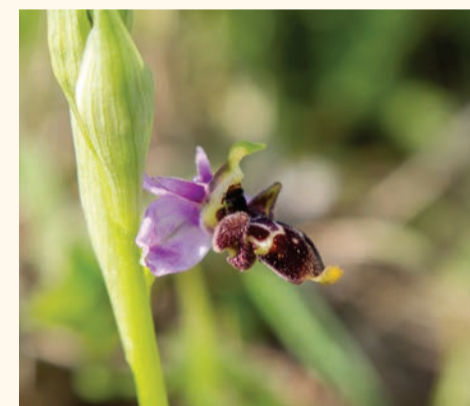
Observing flora



Orchids

69 wild orchid species and 21 hybrids have been identified in the region, most classified as very rare. The diversity of habitats provides the perfect conditions for their growth at low altitudes, some endemic in northern Alicante province and southern Valencia province, and inland in the higher altitude areas.

Montgó Natural Park in Alicante province, l'Albufera in Valencia province and Penyaolosa in Castelló province are some of the locations where orchids are most often seen. There are specialist guides that will help you discover these small botanical wonders.



Unique trees and standout gardens

The Catalogue of Ancient and Unique Trees of the Region of Valencia lists all the protected trees and groves; their fame comes from their age, size, harmony or rarity within their species. But it also includes shrubs and other plant life of remarkable dimensions, which harbour an important historical or symbolic meaning, religious or social traditions, or have high ethnographic or ethnobotanical value.

If you are looking for harmony with nature, the Puebla de San Miguel Natural Park is home to the Las Blancas centenary forest of Spanish juniper, with trees over 1,000 years old to enjoy with all five senses. Other forests of interest are the Dehesa del Saler in Valencia province, the enchanted forest of Elda-Petter, the thousand-year-old olive trees of Baix Maestrat in Castelló province and El Palmeral in Elche.



Flora micro-reserves

Another proposal for enjoying the Region of Valencia's botanical wealth is the option of discovering, on a walk through the natural environment, one of the more than 300 flora micro-reserves spread throughout the territory.

These natural areas ensure the conservation and protection of almost 2000 plant species, which means that 56% of all regional flora has at least one population in one or more micro-reserves.



Natura 2000 Network

The special ecological value of the wildlife in the Region of Valencia has given it different national, international and local protections. This network's purpose is to ensure the long-term survival of the most threatened species and natural habitats in the European Union, thus helping to stop the loss of biodiversity caused by some human activities.

Natural monuments

There are three natural monuments protected for their unique landscape and ecological value: the Camí dels Pelegrins, a 36 km route that delves into the Penyaolosa massif (Castelló province), and the Volcanic Outcropping and Fossil Beach of Cap Negret in Altea, which forms one of the three volcanic landscapes in the region, and, lastly, La Capa Negra de Agost (Alicante province), a stratigraphic outcropping that evidences the impact of the large meteorite that wiped out the dinosaurs.

Rock art

The region shelters some of the best examples of Levantine rock art. It is mainly concentrated in the areas of Els Ports and Alt Maestrat in Castelló province, in Caroig massif in Valencia province and in the Valles de la Marina and the Alcoi area in Alicante province, although there are sites scattered throughout almost all of the Valencian comarcas. Examples include the cave paintings in Tirig, preserved thanks to the Museu de la Valltorta. The prehistoric caves in Morella, Caroig massif and La Sarga in Alcoi are also home to paleontological wealth to be discovered.

The Rock Art of the Iberian Mediterranean Basin, collectively declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1998, has a large number of sites in the region that include the different styles studied (Palaeolithic art, Levantine art, Schematic art and Macroschematic art).

Astrotourism

The skies of the Region of Valencia enjoy ideal conditions for observing stars, constellations and planets, hence the certification of municipalities in the Alto Túria area (Los Serranos and the municipalities of Tierra Bobal) as Starlight Destinations. Clear, dark skies to contemplate the universe through telescopes and astronomical observatories. This is an activity to be carried out in small and sparsely populated municipalities, far from noise and light pollution. Other examples are Aras de los Olmos, Titaguas, Alpuente and La Yesa, which are part of the Gúdar-Jalambre Starlight Reserve. La Punta Falcó on Tabarca islet (Alicante province) also has the Paraje Starlight certification; visitors can combine the contemplation of its stary heavens with the biodiversity of the seabed. You can't miss the beauty of the skies of Culla, Morella, the Els Ports area or Desert de les Palmes, all in Castelló province. There are specialist companies and infrastructure designed for your enjoyment.

Hiking

There are educational trails in the Natural Parks to enjoy a walk while learning about different plant species, animals, geology etc. You can also discover such interesting options as the Ruta de los Molinos (the Mills) in Alborache, the suspension bridges in Chullilla, the medicinal trail in La Murta or any of the Water Routes in the region.

The Long Distance Footpaths, identified with white and red colours and the initials GR®, make long journeys through the Region of Valencia possible. Other options are the Short Distance Footpaths (PR®), between 10 and 50 kilometres for one or two days, and Local Footpaths (SL®), less than 10 kilometres, which make up a total of more than 5,000 kilometres of approved footpaths, in addition to the various routes you can choose according to your interests.

The Vias Verdes (greenways), old disused railway tracks that have been transformed into cycle and hiking paths, have become another way to explore and enjoy some of the most attractive natural enclaves in the Region of Valencia.

7 Ecotourism experiences

/ Observing nature

The Valdeserrillas Reserve is a natural environment located north of Benagéber. There are 330 hectares of cliffs, canyons and ravines of impressive beauty, largely covered by dense Mediterranean pine forest, and inhabited by deer, mouflon, roe deer and wild horses in semi-freedom that coexist with other species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

The Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca wetland is a coastal plain separated by a strip of sand from the Mediterranean sea, where small free-water lagoons can be seen. This is a fantastic place for birdwatching. You can see species such as the Montagu's harrier, the common pratincole, marsh passerines and a wide variety of waterfowl. Moustached warblers, stilts, little bitterns, little terns, Kentish plovers, red-crested pochards and Eurasian coots are all resident birds. Depending on the time of year, you can observe common pratincoles and Montagu's harriers, great cormorants, ospreys, marsh harriers, common buzzards, kingfishers, grey plovers and European penduline tits.

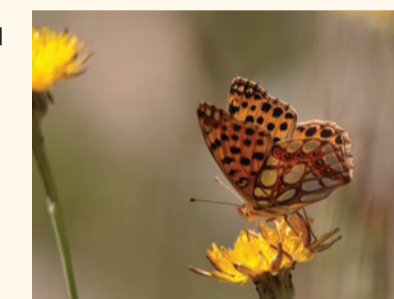


/ Cetaceans

Cabo de San Antonio in Alicante province is famous for bottlenose dolphin and fin whale sightings. The diversity of habitats makes the Region of Valencia the perfect destination to see dolphins and whales in their wildest state, thanks to the conditions of its coastline.

/ Butterflies

The first Butterfly Oasis in the Natural Parks Network has been open to the public in Sot de Chera since January 2020. This oasis is an open-air space created especially to favour the free breeding and development of butterflies and other pollinators such as bees, bumblebees, moths and beetles, and thus help the insect populations that are declining.



/ Starlight Reserve

Where the only source of light is natural. If you are looking for a unique astrotourism experience, visit the Aras de los Olmos Astronomical Observatory, where you can contemplate one of the clearest skies in Spain.

• www.arasdelosolmos.es

/ Flora

Discover the route through the Marina Alta, with natural spaces of great value, some just a few metres from the sea. An incredibly beautiful area with a multitude of ecosystems and biodiversity, typically Mediterranean landscapes, orchid meadows and biotopes with vestiges of flora from other eras. The trail also has spectacular views of Mare Nostrum from peaks such as Montgó, Segaria and Bernia.



/ Rock art

The Bicorp Ecomuseum Heritage Visitor Centre is an ambitious project that aims to revitalise the local economy through the archaeological, ethnological and paleontological heritage. A place where you can discover Levantine Rock Art, collectively declared a World Heritage Site in 1998, as well as the region's traditions and customs.

• www.ecomuseodebicorp.com



/ Oleotourism

Enjoy oleotourism, walk through olive tree groves, enjoy the landscapes and learn about the ancient art of growing and harvesting olives.

/ Fishing tourism

Come and discover the tradition of fishing hand in hand with its protagonists. Get to know the produce and the way it is worked; try it, fresh and seasonal. Doing this also contributes to highlighting the value of the coastal heritage and the fishermen's work.

