

# physical environment

It is a mountainous mass, with a rough relief and steep slopes, belonging to the betic mountain range and made up of limestones, dolomites, sandstones, marls and gypsums.

This park is considered to be split into two sectors, physically separated a precipice (Barranco del Mulo). Its highest peaks are in the eastern area (La Pila, 1,264m in height and Los Cenajos, 1,200m). The scenery is abrupt, scored by deep dry watercourses. The western area is wider. El Caramucel is about 1,023m high. From here it can be seen an astonishing panoramic view of the region.



Some natural erosive processes produce spectacular scenery. The most outstanding is, with no doubt, the erosion suffered by the southern slope, where the process is shown, since the small furrows made by water, to the bad-lands in the base. It is interesting to see the quick degradation in the abandoned crop terraces.

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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 held.
- 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/](http://www.carm.es/medioambiente/)**
- Queries and Suggestions:  
**[medioambiente@listas.carm.es](mailto:medioambiente@listas.carm.es)**



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



## Regional Park Sierra de la Pila



## introduction

The Sierra de la Pila mountain range is located in the north-western sector of the region and is shared by the municipalities of Abarán, Molina de Segura and Fortuna. The current limits and the management regulations are defined by the Environmental Management Plan approved in March 1998. This Protected Landscape has a surface area of 8,836 hectares. This mountain chain was included in the European Natura 2000 Network since it was declared a Special Protection Bird Area due to the importance of a great colony of red-billed chough inhabiting here. It was also proposed as a Site of Community Importance. This park comprises some inland population nuclei, such as La Garapacha and Fuente Blanca. In the periphery, there are some other interesting villages such as Hoya Hermosa, Peña de la Zafra and Las Casicas.



information on the protected natural areas



## fauna

This park shelters a number of vertebrates amongst amphibious, reptiles, birds and mammals. Birdlife is numerous and diversified, pointing out predatory birds such



Boreal eagle

as the golden eagle or the eagle owl. It was declared Special Protection Bird Area because of the great colony of red-billed choughs that nest inside the fissures and cavities in the rocks.

In these reforested spaces of shady slopes we can find certain predatory birds such as goshawks, sparrowhawks, buzzards and falcons flying, ready to catch their preys, above all small birds like chaffinches, firecrests, tits and blue tits.



Peregrine falcon



Greater tit

Thickets and abandoned crops are the places where many others species survive, such as the great grey shrike, red-legged partridges and warblers.

Amongst the small mammals we find the Algerian mouse, the Spanish shrew and the garden dormouse.

The Eurasian badger, the wild cat or the common genet are the carnivorous which give evidence of the great richness of the fauna in this area.



Red-billed chough



Blue tit

## vegetation

This mountain range is very rich in vegetation, pointing out the presence of holm oaks, savines and pines, and many other endemic species from the south of Spain. Many of them are protected species in the region of Murcia, such as the European fan palm, the strawberry tree, the juniper, the holm oak, the Mediterranean buckthorn and the small buckthorn. Holm oak woods appear in isolated groups in shady spots and summits of El Pico de la Pila and Los Cenajos. Although they are not in their mature state, they can give an idea of the vegetation that originally covered the area.

The Aleppo pine dominates the tree species, favoured by the reforestations.

This pinewood takes in some parts grass covers the suntraps; meanwhile the thickets of kermes oak, Irish juniper, small buckthorn and mastic tree are the typical species in the shady spots. Rosemary, thyme, broom like kidney vetch and shrubby globularia appear in other kinds of soil.



Strawberry tree



Mastic tree

## Men and Landscape

This mountain range has traditionally been characterized by a strong demographic dispersion. There are some typical country cottages, although most of them are not inhabited. The settlements are originally from the Arabic period. This community made the Christian conquest not so traumatic, since the economic activities continued. The agrarian activity was still important as well as the exploitation of pastures. From the 14th century

on cattle raising was the main economic activity since the municipality of Fortuna was incorporated to La Dehesa del Concejo de Murcia in 1379. In those days people used to make charcoal from firewood. This was forbidden from June to September because of the forest fires.

In the 17th century crop lands increase since wastelands and mountains were ploughed up. During the 18th century some activities such as harvesting and hunting acquire a great

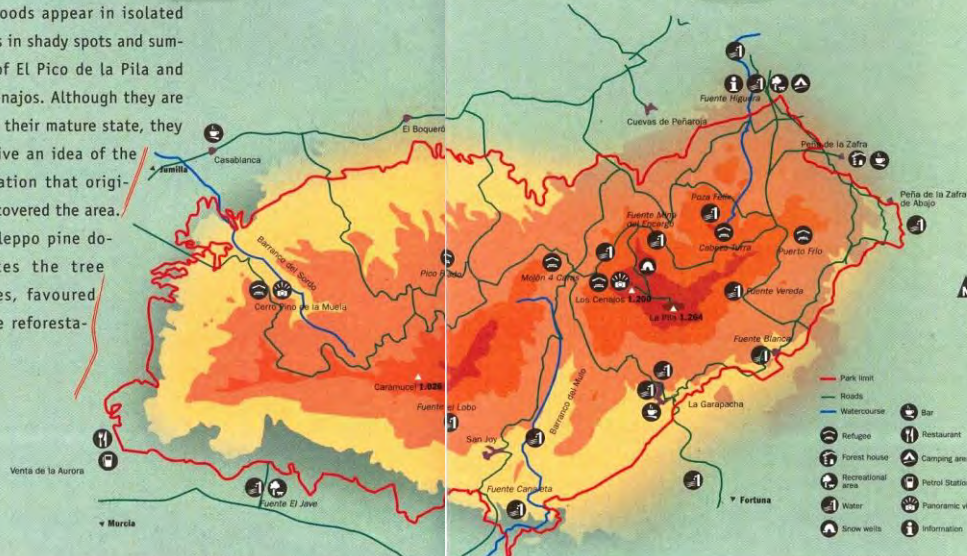
economic value. Thus, in Fortuna, a 10% of the working force, about 579 people, temporarily worked producing charcoal and the other 4% were woodcutters, according to the Libro del Vecindario (the Neighbourhood Book) in 1756. In



Puerto Frio refuge

this century population grows, just as the products to harvest, like the esparto grass, the tumbleweed, charcoal, wood and aromatic plants. There is a progress in agriculture, so cattle raising is moved to higher lands (Sierra de la Pila). An economic development took place between the 17th and 18th centuries and the snow wells where built (to store snow when there was a shortage of rains).

During the 20th century the esparto industry increased in importance, influencing the current scenery in some areas like the suntrap of El Caramucel.



### The Park suggests

Those keen on mountain-bike find a number of routes to go round. It is highly recommended to follow the route from La Garpacha to Fuente la Higuera, where we find an information point indicating some other interesting routes. Those who prefer walking, the ascent to the summit from the Cabezo de Turra refuge is a good alternative, full of natural charm. Remember to bring some water and a hat in summertime, because temperatures tend to be high. It is also recommended to visit the park in small groups. Do not forget a camera and binoculars in case you are interested in observing the fauna in the area.

