

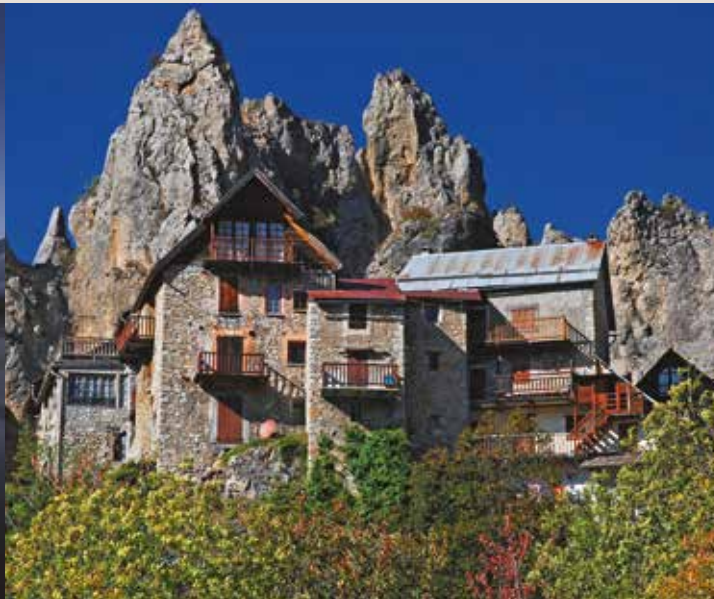


**RÉPUBLIQUE
FRANÇAISE**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



French National Parks





Protect
Share
Discover
Welcome
Inspire
Observe





A French take on National Parks

French National Parks are public institutions under the authority of the Ministry of the Ecological and Inclusive Transition. Since 2017, they have worked under the French Biodiversity Agency, which manages the network in order to promote exchange and joint projects. The network makes an active contribution to national plans and programmes in order to build a common future for biodiversity and sustainable development. National Parks are locally-run and governed by a board of Directors, primarily composed of local elected officials. They each have a local charter, drawn up in partnership with local stakeholders, which municipalities may choose to sign.

A National Park is formed of two zones with different regulatory statuses:

- **the core (regulated area)**
The National Park guarantees the protection of this area, as per its decrees, and manages any human activities carried out there, in line with its management objectives.
- **the surrounding area (projects)**
The surrounding area, or adjacent marine area for National Parks covering sea areas, is a space designed to achieve ecological consistency and solidarity with the National Park core. All local stakeholders hold a shared responsibility for sustainable development. The National Park plays an advisory role and can act as a partner in projects to preserve and promote the natural, historic, cultural and landscape heritage.

1 - © F. Salles - Guadeloupe National Park
2 - © L. Nédélec - Pyrénées National Park

National Parks, exceptional places

Preserving nature

French National Parks offer a network of places considered remarkable for their natural and cultural diversity. They celebrate the harmonious balance between humans who have shaped landscapes through activities such as grazing, farming and forestry, and nature, including untouched environments in places ranging from Alpine summits to ocean depths and tropical forests. The National Parks are located across France **to protect and promote numerous species, and a large number of natural and rural spaces.** The network is a model of environmental protection and has received national and international recognition **for the parks' excellent management methods as well as their biological and geological quality standards.**

National Parks are constantly changing, with the aim of passing on the heritage preserved to future generations and providing spaces for people to reconnect with nature.



National Parks, a warm welcome

Sharing nature

National Parks are designed to help people **discover nature** and aim to strike a balance between welcoming the public and preserving sites. The various parks' welcome centres offer guided tours and information for visitors wanting to discover the place for themselves. Information centres, events and resources available on their websites are all possibilities to find out more about local heritage. People can directly explore these exceptional natural areas thanks to the **networks of hiking trails provided and maintained by the National Parks**, including family-friendly discovery trails, professional hiking trails, underwater dives and more. **The focus is on creating wonder and the irreplaceable experience of being immersed in nature.**

GMF - benefactor of the French National Parks

Drawing on common values of solidarity and sharing, this partnership dates back to 2008 and aims to open up National Parks to all people, especially those with disabilities, in order to help them better discover and experience nature. Initiatives include renovated park welcome centres with "Tourisme & Handicap" accreditation, accessible trails and the provision of suitable teaching tools and equipment. This long-term commitment has included over 100 specific projects across the eleven National Parks.

Mobilising the citizens of the future

Educating and raising awareness about nature among the younger generations is a major issue for dealing with future environmental challenges. National Parks encourage schoolchildren to discover the riches in nature all around them. People protect what they love. Educational projects are therefore developed in partnership with teachers to build **a real connection with nature and help children better understand how it works and benefits our daily lives.**

Actions to raise awareness of biodiversity and discover local heritage are carried out with residents and businesses in order to change behaviour, focusing on more respectful and responsible practices.

Given the challenges associated with climate change and the urgency for collective action, modes of action are changing to include the principles of citizens' movements. **It is no longer enough to simply share our knowledge. We have to act, together.**



1 - © L. Jouve - Pyrénées National Park
2 - © J-Ph. Telmon - Ecrins National Park
3 - © F. Breton - Mercantour National Park
4 - © N. Barraqué - Déclit Bleu Méditerranée



National Parks and global change

Making biodiversity a priority!

National Parks are preserved due to their geographical locations and the high status of protection they receive.

National Parks cores are biodiversity reserves where the erosion of biological diversity is less pronounced than elsewhere in France.

The National Parks network supports their preservation through various actions:

- **knowledge of species and the dynamics in operation**

Numerous scientific programmes are in place to better understand changes to species and the consequences of global change.

Understanding how ecosystems work is a priority.

- **prevention of habitat fragmentation and ensuring the continuity of ecological corridors**

Outside of the protected cores, National Parks work closely with the environmental authorities, local authorities, farmers and forest rangers to ensure that ecological continuity is established and strengthened.

- **preservation of threatened or heritage species**

National Parks implement actions to maintain favourable environments for these species in order to promote reproduction, reduce causes of destruction and tackle invasive exotic species, etc.

They lead or support programmes to reintroduce heritage species, such as the ibex in the Vanoise and more recently in the Pyrénées, or the bearded vulture in the Vanoise, Mercantour and Cévennes.



The challenge of climate change

With fast-melting glaciers in the Ecrins, Vanoise and Pyrénées, the weakening of Gorgonian corals in the waters of the Calanques and Port-Cros and the proliferation of sargassum along the Guadeloupe coastline, National Parks are the first witnesses and victims of climate change and its consequences.

Faced with this irreversible situation and the increasing mobilisation of citizens, National Parks have adopted a multi-pronged approach:

- **understand current phenomena and their consequences on living beings** through observatories considering humans, nature and climate in order to demonstrate the links between climate change, biodiversity and economic activities.
- **raise awareness and mobilise the public** (schoolchildren and general public), using scientific data and field experiments to inform and make lasting changes to behaviour.
- **implement or support numerous energy transition projects:** building insulation, new energy generation solutions, improved public lighting, buying local, new modes of transport, etc. All these fields are explored with local partners.

National Parks, places of innovation

National Parks in the digital age

French National Parks are working to develop innovative digital tools to record, manage, share and disseminate the significant quantities of data that they collect and process. They are choosing to develop free software solutions **to promote cooperation between institutions and save users time and money.**



Geotrek

Geotrek was created by the Ecrins and Mercantour National Parks in 2012 to **manage a network of trails and promote hiking in these areas via a public web portal and mobile application.** It is currently used by over 70 organisations in France (National Parks, regional nature parks, *départements*, municipality groupings, etc.) that contribute to its development and support the pooling of public resources.



GeoNature

GeoNature is an open-source software suite developed by National Parks for their "biodiversity" information system.

The various tools created are used to enter data on the ground, which is pooled and shared with regional and national partners, such as the French National Museum of Natural History (MNHN), before being published online as an atlas for the general public. Data is customised for each municipality. Similar tools are available for built heritage, geology, landscapes, and environmental and glacier monitoring, while others are still under development.

- > rando.ecrins-parcnational.fr
- > randotectec.reunion-parcnational.fr
- > destination.cevennes-parcnational.fr
- > rando.maritimemercantour.eu
- > randoguadeloupe.gp
- > rando.guyane-parcnational.fr
- > rando.vanoise.com
- > destination.portcros-parcnational.fr

1 - © P. Folliet - Vanoise National Park
2 and 3 - © D-L Aubert - DAAF Guadeloupe
4 - © F. Ferreira - Calanques National Park

Esprit parc national, a brand inspired by nature.

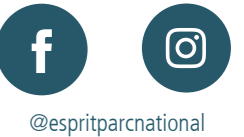
Since 2015, National Parks have been rolling out their collective brand, *Esprit parc national*, which offers a **range of products and services designed and created by men and women committed to preserving and promoting their regions and local know-how.**



Products and services include holidays, guest houses, shelters, hotels, restaurants, guided hiking trips, tours of cultural and natural sites, boat trips, diving, jams, vegetables, meat, wine, cheese, honey, coffee, vanilla, hand-crafted objects and more. The National Parks have defined criteria to guarantee that the professionals offering these products and services are committed to tangible environmental processes that help create resource - and heritage - friendly business models.

Choosing the *Esprit parc national* brand is a guarantee of responsible purchasing that promotes National Park sites and contributes to the local economy. It also promotes authentic experiences shared with local stakeholders living and working in these areas all year round.

> espritparcnational.com





Vanoise National Park

Vanoise National Park is the oldest National Park, created in 1963 to protect the ibex, which was threatened with extinction at the time. The National Park is bordered by the Tarentaise and Maurienne Valleys, encompassing around one hundred summits of over 3,000 metres and numerous glaciers. This mosaic of highly diverse natural environments with ragged geological formations is home to exceptional biodiversity including the bearded vulture, golden eagle and ptarmigan.

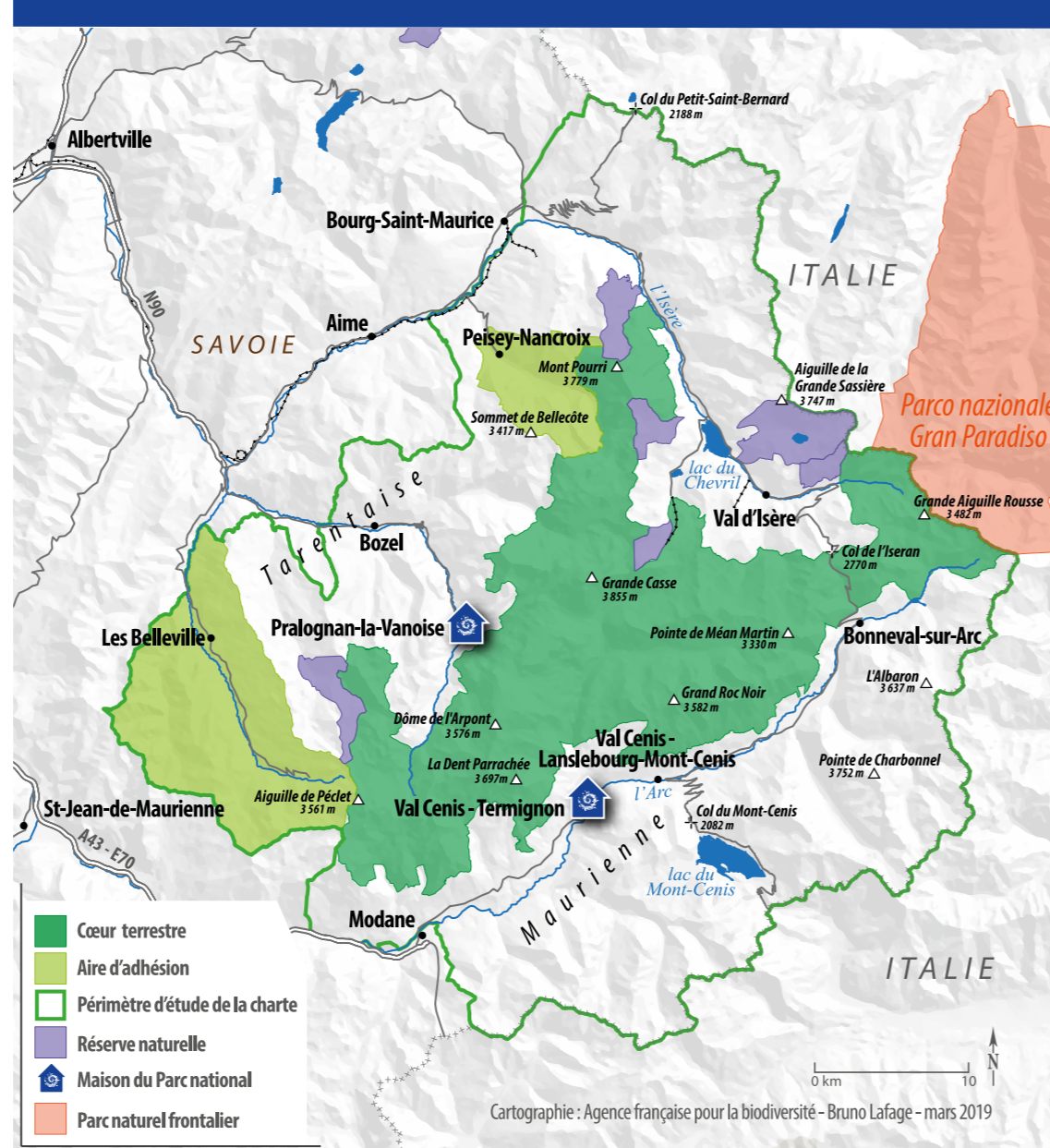
There are also 1 200 identified species of flora, including the arctic and alpine species *linnaea borealis* (twinflower) and the emblematic *eryngium alpinum* (alpine sea holly). With around 400 km of trails and a large network of renovated shelters, the National Park is perfect for hiking and offers a large variety of routes for all types of visitors. Thriving traditional agriculture is responsible for a range of products including the famous Beaufort cheese, while numerous rock carvings testify to an ancient human presence.

The National Park's core spans 53 300 hectares, and together with the adjacent Italian Gran Paradiso National Park, forms one of the largest protected areas in the Western Alps. ●

40 mountain shelters in the National Park's core

65 protected areas

5 nature reserves adjacent to the National Park



National Parks in action

Col du Palet mountain hut: 100% renewable energy

Shelters in isolated high-altitude sites managed by the National Park often face challenges with energy supply, especially electricity. At Col du Palet (Peisey-Nancroix municipality), energy is generated by solar panels, which allow for up to three-day energy storage. If the energy generated was insufficient or if additional consumption was required, a diesel-powered generator took over. The Col du Palet mountain hut is now fitted with a hydrogen battery, in an innovative system developed by the National Park and a business consortium. The battery is controlled by a smart module that stores any excess energy produced by the solar panels and releases it when required. The system has been continually optimised since its installation in 2015 and has demonstrated its worth. The shelter is now supplied by 100% renewable energy, 365 days a year, and this same system has already been installed elsewhere, including in Cirque de Mafate in La Réunion National Park.



TATOU, the next-generation shepherd's hut

The lack of shepherd huts in alpine pasture is one of the main obstacles preventing shepherds from effectively caring for their flocks. Under the French wolf plan to protect pastoral farming, Vanoise National Park contacted the *École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Lyon* (Ensal/Insavalor) to work on a research project. The aim was to create a more spacious and comfortable shepherd's hut that can be moved by helicopter and mounted in less than half a day, ensuring that it can withstand the varied seasons and challenging conditions of the mountain peaks.

Tatou was the result, named after the French word for the animal Cingulata. The hut comprises 5 interlocked modules in a brown-grey colour that blends into the landscape. Feedback has been very positive, both for summer use by shepherds (at over 2 500 m), and in terms of its ability to withstand winter conditions. The prototype will be improved and the architectural plans will then be made available to herdsmen, natural area managers and local authorities.



1 - © N. Tissot - Vanoise National Park
2 - © G-N Grosset - Vanoise National Park
3 - © P. Folliet - Vanoise National Park



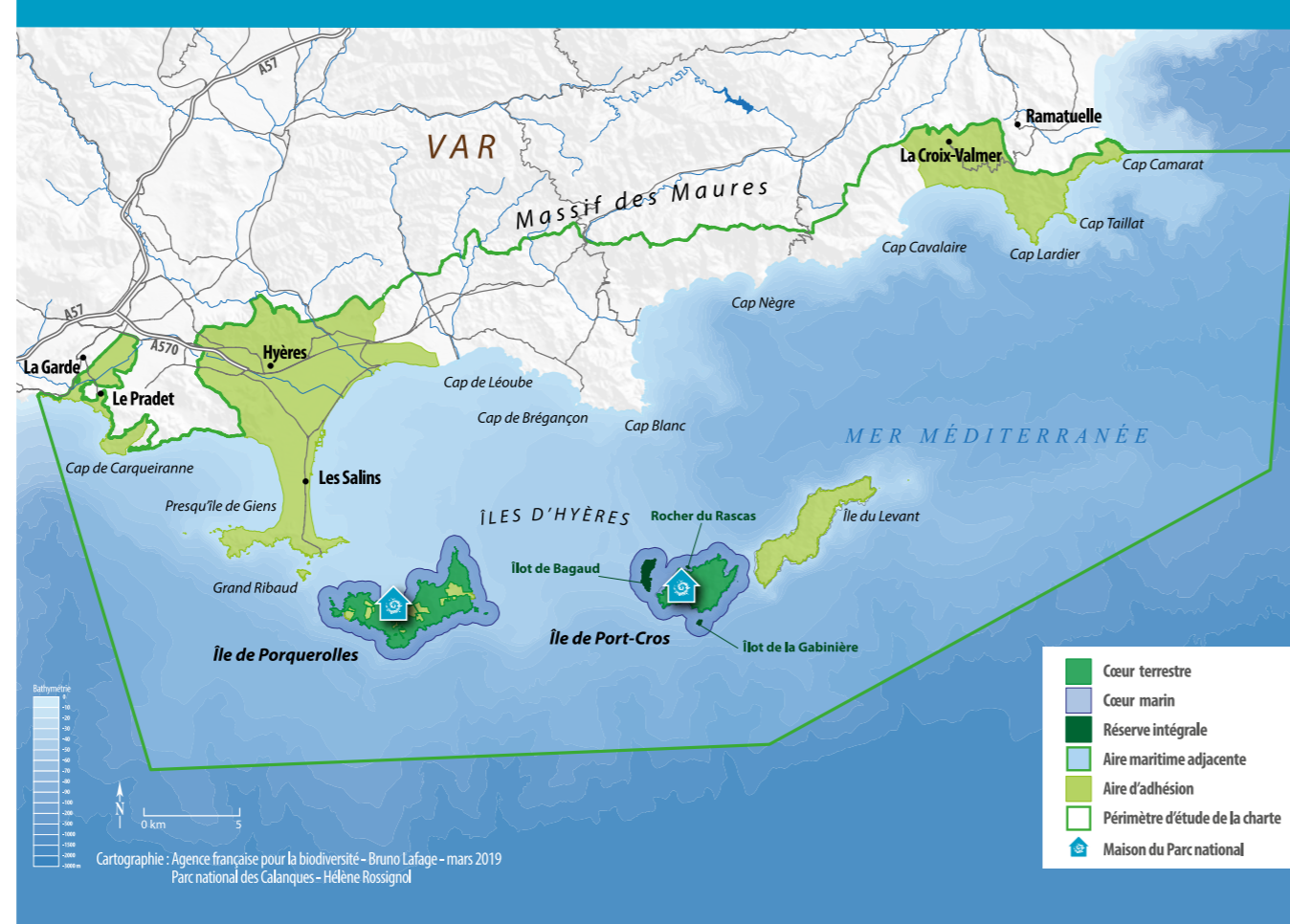
Port-Cros National Park

Port-Cros National Park was created in 1963 and is considered a real laboratory for island environment management in the Mediterranean and internationally. The coastline is subject to very high pressures from users and needs constant innovation to save or restore the exceptional quality of ecosystems and landscapes, in order to pass them on to future generations.

On the mainland, the National Park is committed to an ambitious programme of actions for sustainable development, working alongside the five coastal municipalities in the Var that have signed up to its charter and other local stakeholders.

The National Park has also been assigned additional tasks:

- operational management of real estate belonging to the French State and the *Conservatoire du Littoral*, representing approximately 2 700 hectares;
- management of the harbour of Port-Cros;
- coordination of the French part of the Pelagos Sanctuary;
- administration of the national conservatory and botanical garden, *Conservatoire botanique national méditerranéen de Porquerolles*. ●



132 scientific monitoring operations every year

1.5 million visitors to the islands forming the National Park core

18 forts and artillery batteries

National Parks in action

Promoting cultural heritage

The National Park site is home to 2 000 years of military heritage. Saving and promoting these historical monuments is one of the National Park's main tasks. Fort Saint-Agathe is one of the treasures of Porquerolles, and now features a permanent exhibition where visitors can discover the island's history.

Other remarkable sites are under restoration, such as Fort du Moulin on Port-Cros, which will soon create a meeting and training venue on the island. This new use illustrates the major challenge of reconverting the National Park's heritage to help maintain a human presence on the island.

On the mainland, restoration work is ongoing on the Fort du Pradeau at the Tour Fondue, which marks the entrance into the area. The project intends to open a visitor interpretive centre for the public, offering information about the region for the 500 000 visitors heading to Porquerolles.



Island capacity: mass tourism under the spotlight

The Islands of Port-Cros and Porquerolles fall within the core of the National Park, attracting 2 million visitors every year, 1.2 million of whom are concentrated over a three-month period.

The Island of Porquerolles welcomes 15 000 visitors every day in July and August and experiences a fifty-fold increase in its population over the summer.

The island is reaching saturation and issues associated with overtourism (crowded sites, busy beaches, water shortages, damage to the environment and biotopes) led the National Park to bring together the public authorities and local tourism stakeholders in 2016 to begin a transition to guarantee the destination's sustainable performance, thereby better reconciling the objectives of preservation and economic sustainability.

The carrying capacity initiative will be used to calculate the cost/benefit ratio of tourism from all perspectives (environment, noise, satisfaction of island residents and visitors, the economy) and find solutions to prevent life on the island from becoming unbearable.



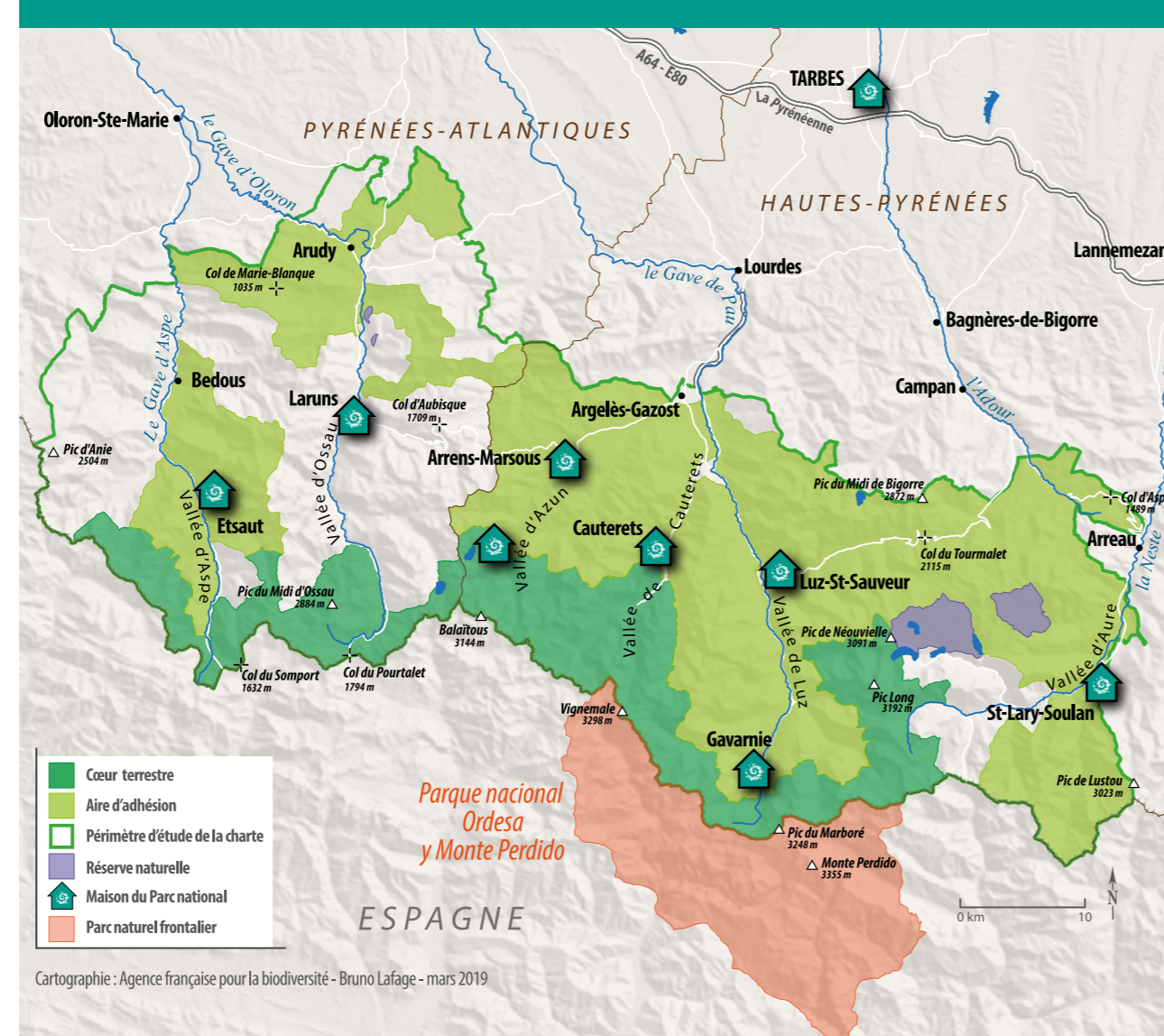
1 - © Ch. Gérardin - Port-Cros National Park
 2 - © A. Aboucaya - Port-Cros National Park
 3 - © Ch. Gérardin - Port-Cros National Park

Pyrénées National Park

The Pyrénées National Park was created on 23 March 1967. It runs along the Spanish border, stretching across six valleys, from the Aspe Valley in the west to the Aure Valley in the east, at an altitude varying from 1 000 metres to 3 298 metres at the Vignemale summit.

The Spanish side of the border is home to the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park. The natural and cultural landscapes of the Perdido and Garvanie mountains in the Hautes-Pyrénées and Pyrénées-Atlantiques départements (Occitanie and Nouvelle-Aquitaine regions in South-West France) feature on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The site comprises 64 municipalities (40 000 residents) across 245 000 hectares.

The National Park sits at the crossroads of climatic influences from the Atlantic and Mediterranean and is home to a diversity of natural and cultural sites and landscapes, with varied flora and fauna and a large number of endemic and emblematic species: *ramonda myconi* (Pyrenean violet), a remnant of hot climates dating back to the Tertiary Period; *lilium pyrenaicum* (Pyrenean lily) or *androsace ciliata*; the Pyrenean chamois, symbol of the Pyrénées; the bearded vulture, the largest bird of prey in the Pyrénées; the Pyrenean desman, an endemic aquatic mammal; and the brown bear. The National Park welcomes a large number of visitors (1.5 million) and has implemented an inclusive visitor policy.



350 km of marked trails

300 lakes

8 National Park welcome centres and 3 summer information centres

National Parks in action

Pyrénées National Park educational passport

The National Park is the ideal place for students to learn more about biodiversity and discover natural, cultural and landscape heritage.

It offers an opportunity for them to find out more about the place they live and to learn environmentally-friendly behaviour.

An educational passport for primary and secondary school children has been developed, with one booklet for teachers and another for students. Teachers can cover the Pyrénées National Park using multiple themes, including fauna, flora, water, forests, built heritage and landscapes, culture, agriculture and livestock rearing, and finally, climate change. The National Park has worked on this with various partners, environmental education associations and individuals. The aim is to encourage teachers to present multiple perspectives on issues such as sustainable development, energy and global warming.

The National Park regularly organises free events in schools across the area.



Return of the Iberian ibex

The ibex disappeared from the French Pyrénées in 1910, and from Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park in Spain in 2000.

Since 1987, the Pyrénées National Park has been working to reintroduce it. In 2014, the first individuals from Sierra de Guadarrama, north of Madrid, were reintroduced to Cauterets in Hautes-Pyrénées. Others were then released in the Luz/Gavarnie Valley and the Aspe Valley in Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

Numerous health checks are required before reintroducing a species in order to prevent the introduction of new diseases.

These reintroduction operations have been highly successful, with 148 released animals since 2014 and 151 birth since 2015. In spring 2021, the population is estimated at 270 individuals.

A number of publicity and awareness-raising actions have been implemented, including educational projects in schools, events for the general public and training courses for tourism providers, in order to promote local ownership of the project and area.





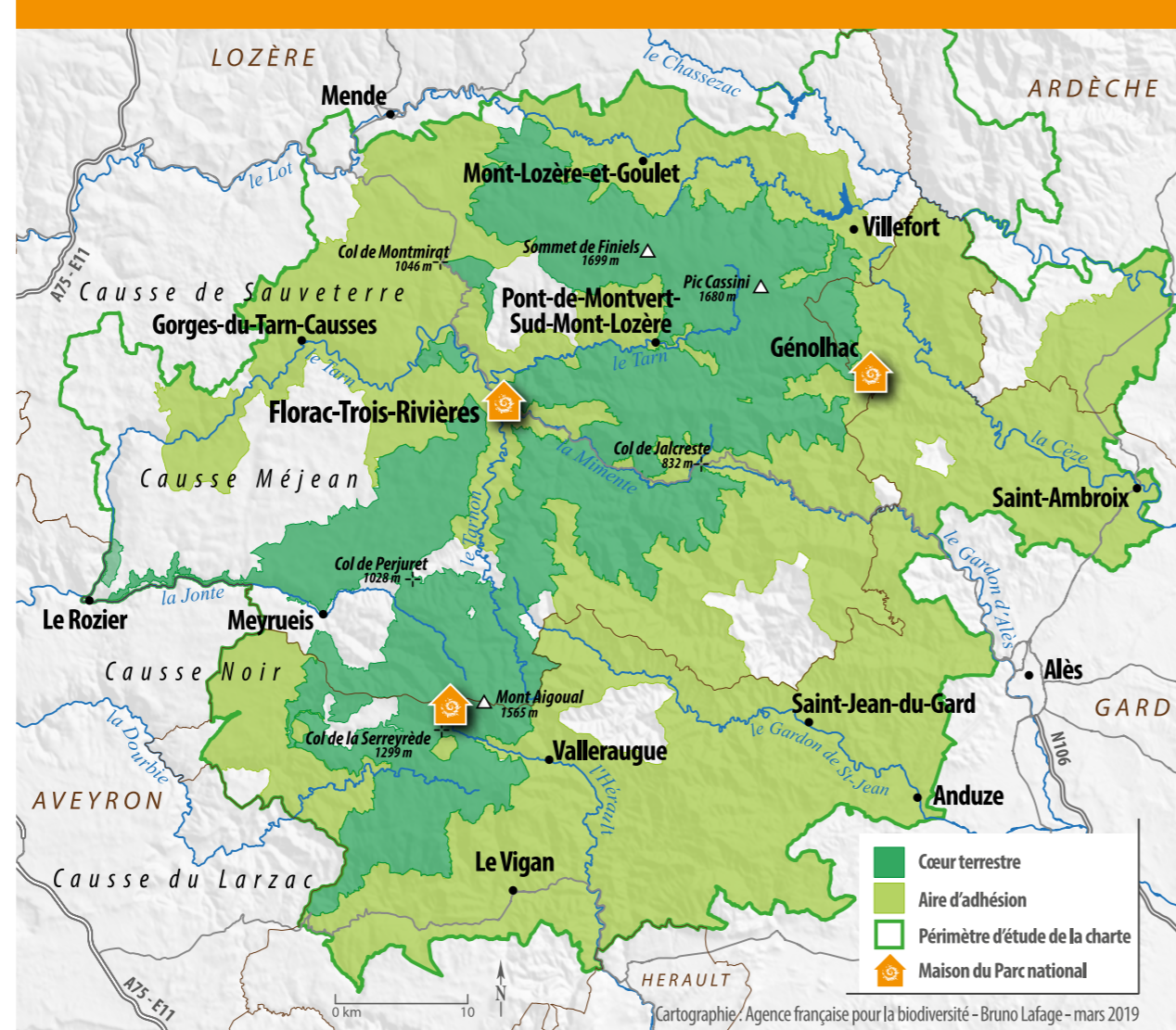
Cévennes National Park

The Cévennes National Park is a mid-altitude mountainous region of around 3 000 km², with a residential protected core representing approximately one third of the total area.

It comprises 121 municipalities in the départements of Lozère, Gard and the edge of Ardèche, all in Southern France. 113 of these municipalities have signed the National Park charter. The geological diversity, contrasting climate and steep topography have made this high-lying area south-east of the Massif Central and just above the Mediterranean a crossroads where nature and humans live together in total interdependence.

The strong cultural identity of the Cévennes, with its grandiose landscapes and diverse fauna and flora that developed over 5 000 years of agricultural and livestock farming, have underpinned the region's various protection statuses over the years. Firstly, it was named a National Park to protect its heritage, then a biosphere reserve combining preservation and development. This was followed by its inclusion on the world heritage list to sustain its changing and living agricultural landscapes, and more recently, it has become Europe's largest International Dark Sky Reserve.

The park charter was approved by decree on 8 November 2013 and sets out a 15-year plan to manage these four classifications while meeting the ambitions of local stakeholders.



72 % forest cover

168 natural habitats

7 Stevenson, Régordane, Saint-Guilhem, Urbain V, GR7, GR736 Gorges et vallée du Tarn and major mountain biking trail across the Massif Central.

National Parks in action

Municipal biodiversity atlas: sharing the joys of discovering nature

Since 2017, the National Park has supported municipalities committed to the municipal biodiversity atlas (ABC) programme, with financial support from the French Biodiversity Agency. Developing an ABC is a way of increasing and sharing knowledge of the municipality's natural heritage and can be used to collectively build action plans to preserve and promote these treasures. In 2020, the National Park provided the 16 municipalities involved with an initial state of biodiversity knowledge.

Associations, institutional partners and National Park agents have come together to run participatory inventory campaigns, awareness-raising actions for the general public and schoolchildren, and prospecting days for experienced naturalists.

All fauna and flora observations made within the National Park are available online via the Biodiv' Cévennes tool at: biodiv.cevennes-parcnational.fr.

Shining stars in Cévennes National Park!

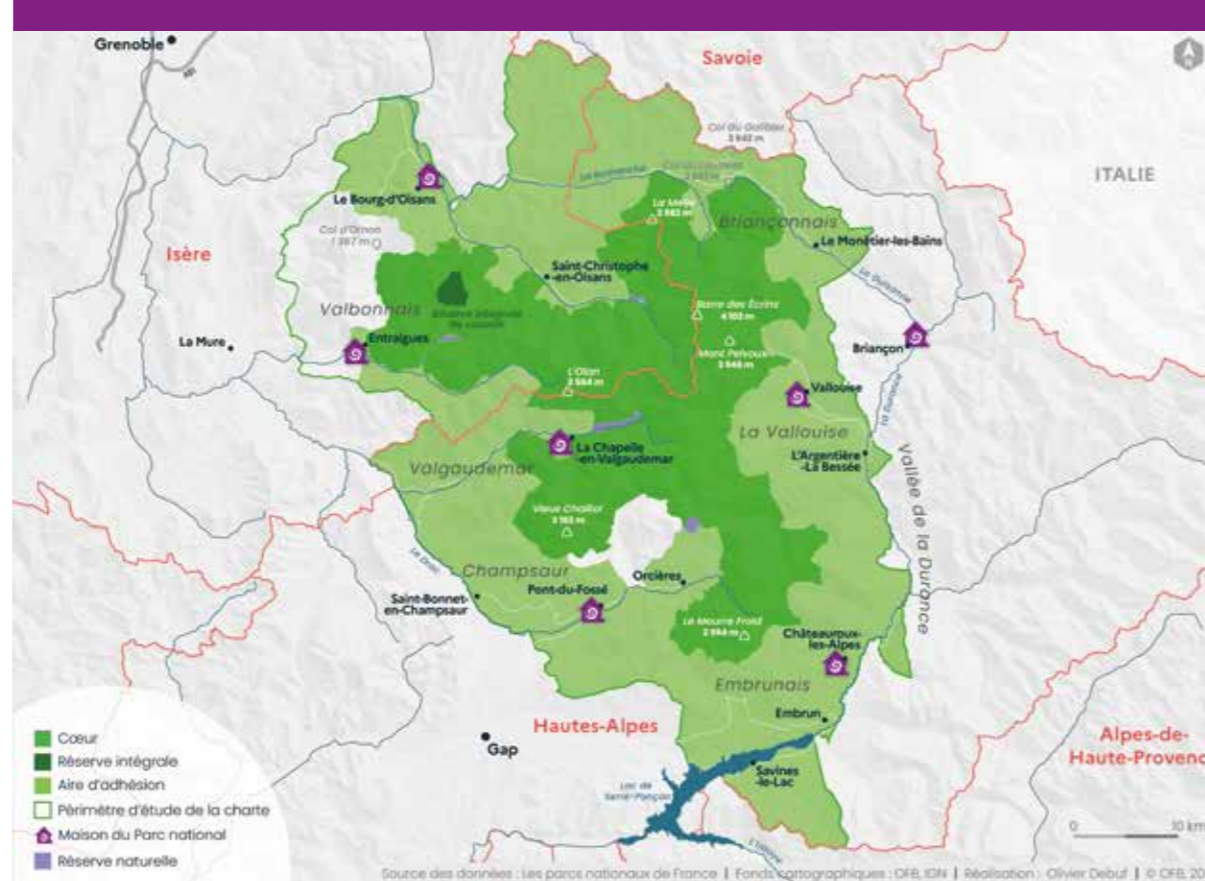
In line with its charter and status as an International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR), the National Park has launched an awareness-raising programme for local stakeholders on issues associated with light pollution.

Since 2016, it has worked with the Gard and Lozère electricity boards to support municipalities in implementing a virtuous public lighting renovation programme for energy and the environment, thanks to European funding obtained through a call for projects by ERDF ITI (European Regional Development Fund - Integrated Territorial Investments).

In the long term, 19 000 light sources across 133 municipalities within the IDSR will be renovated in line with the recommendations of the Lighting Guide, a document created by the National Park and its partners for local elected officials and technicians. Modernising public lighting and turning off lights in the middle of the night will help municipalities improve the quality of the night sky, preserve the nocturnal environment and make significant energy savings.

1 - © J-P. Malafosse - Parc national des Cévennes
2 - © E. Jammes - Cévennes National Park
3 - © M. Benoît - Cévennes National Park





Ecrins National Park

Ecrins National Park was officially created on 27 March 1973, but the initial steps to its creation can be traced back to mountaineers as early as 1913.

It is considered Europe's highest altitude mountain park, located between Gap, Grenoble and Briançon, reaching 4 102 metres at the Barre des Écrins peak. In this high-altitude mountain range, deep valleys carved out by the glaciers open onto lands that humans have patiently conquered over time. Places such as Oisans, Valbonnais, Briançonnais, Vallouise, Embrunais, Champsaur and Valgaudemar all offer their own distinct landscapes and cultural identities.

The park's surprising plant diversity is due to the large differences in altitude and the convergence of climatic influences from the Alps and the Mediterranean. Valleys, mountain pastures and summits are home to a rich yet discreet fauna, which needs to be observed carefully. The core of the National Park can only be visited by foot. A network of trails for ascending to the summits or discovering lakes and pastures is regularly maintained. In the valleys, park centres welcome visitors all year round and events are organised to help them explore the area.



750 km of trails maintained by the National Park



140 scientific studies and protocols in the past 5 years

32 educational project every scholar year



National Parks in action

Ecrins Grand Tour

Since 2015, Ecrins National Park has been actively restoring the hiking trails in the area. What better way to discover a National Park than by hiking across it? The project is based on the idea of creating a grand tour of the highest mountain range in the Southern French Alps, with a series of options for different types of visitors. It is called the Ecrins Grand Tour, which is an global project incorporating various options:

- **Tour of Oisans and Ecrins (GR 54):** a major hiking trail at the heart of the mountain range.
- **Balcons des Ecrins:** easier trails suitable for all to visit villages and summits that can be explored by foot, mountain bike, on horse or donkey, trail running or electric bike. Thanks to financial support from Europe, the French State and the South Region, the National Park is working to identify and diversify hiking eco-tourism services in the mountain range and developing promotional tours. This work is now continuing with the development of mountaineering activities.
- **Ecrins Grand Tour by moutain bike :** the first "Grande Traversée VTT" touring a National Park, labeled by the French cycling federation > grand-tour-ecrins.fr



Sentinelles des Alpes

The "Sentinelles des Alpes" programme focuses on 5 elements :

- sentinel pastures,
- sentinel lakes,
- sentinel flora,
- ORCHAMP,
- sentinel shelters.

These systems create opportunities for dialogue between researchers, managers and local users through spaces that act as both observatories and management centres. The multi-disciplinary approach studies the interactions between humans, climate and nature. All the aspects monitored are used to **identify changes** affecting Alpine territories, including climate change, changes to the way in which land is used and changes to agricultural, livestock, sporting and recreational practices.



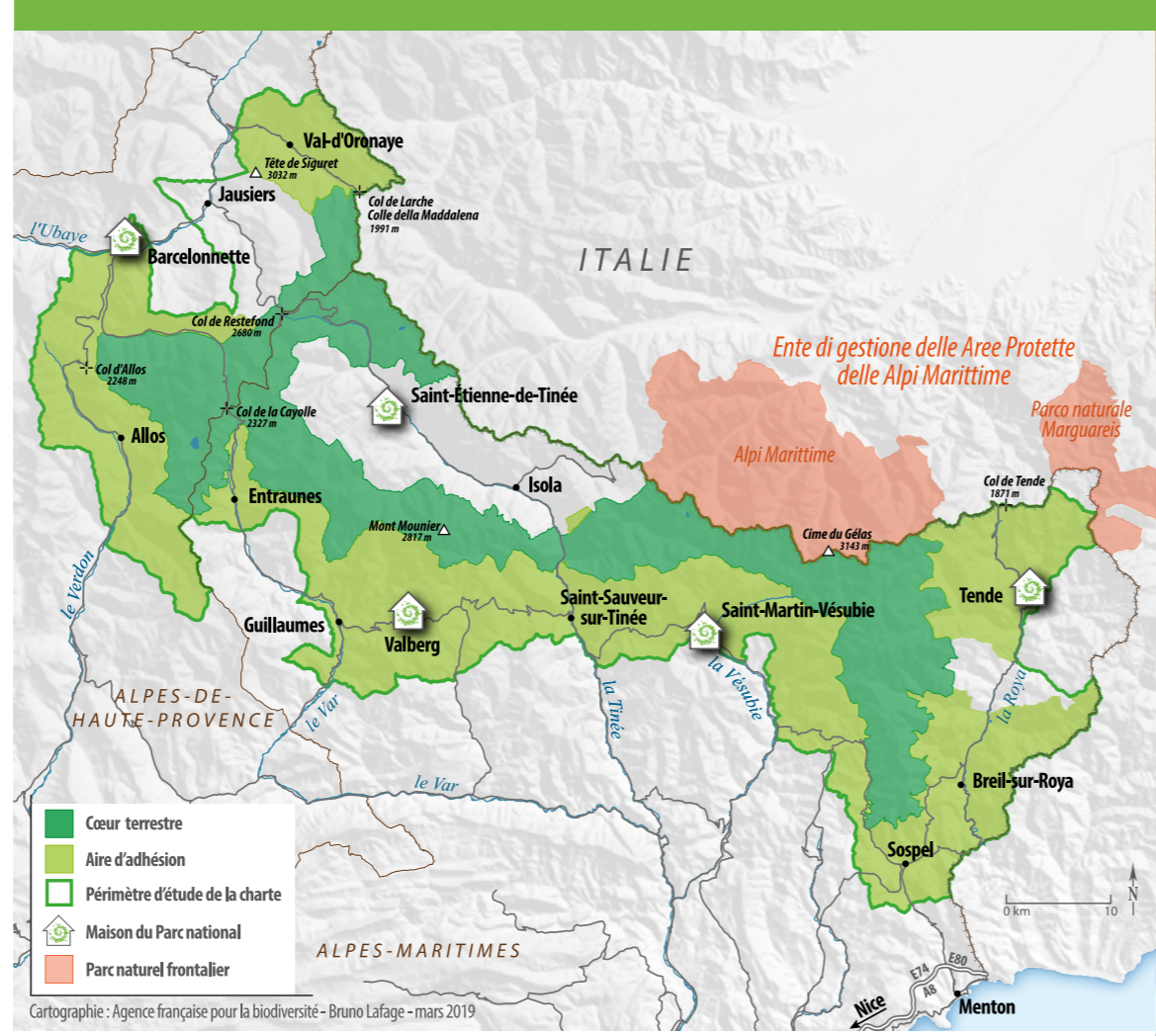
Mercantour National Park

The Mercantour mountain range lies along the Italian Piedmont border, with which it shares around 33 km of mountain ridges. It is the final promontory of the Southern French Alps before they suddenly drop off into the Mediterranean Sea.

Mercantour National Park was created in 1979 and offers unique and impressive landscapes. Located at the crossroads of multiple climatic influences, with varied geology and altitudes, the park is a mosaic of natural environments whose exceptional diversity explains the outstanding wealth of fauna and flora. The National Park is home to the greatest diversity of flora in France, with over 2 000 plant species, including 200 rare and 30 endemic species. There is also an impressive variety of fauna, with around 9 000 species identified.

Drawing on its charter and action plan, the National Park has launched ambitious scientific projects and schemes for better conserving and promoting these great sites, without forgetting its founding mission of educating people on the environment and sustainable development.

This includes a plan to increase cooperation with Italy and its neighbouring natural areas, which, together, form the first European park, "Alpi Marittime Mercantour".



Over **10 000** chamois in the area. Compared with a few hundred at the Park's creation

Over **13** bearded vultures have hatched naturally since their reintroduction

Over **25 000** visitors to the 5 parks welcome centres every year



National Parks in action

"Rock, paper, pens!"

"Rock, paper, pens!" ("Pierres, Feuilles, Stylos !") is an environmental and sustainable development education project that is part of a scheme to promote inclusivity in schools by taking into account the unique characteristics and special educational needs of students with disabilities. Since 2017, around 180 students from 12 classes in the Alpes-Maritimes *département* have taken part in the project every year. Six pairs of students work throughout the year on an educational project concerning an environmental issue, before coming together for a day of discussion and feedback at Mercantour National Park. It offers an opportunity for all of them to find out more about differences and to understand that people can be "differently abled". "Rock, paper, pens!" brings different people together and encourages students to work together alongside their teachers and to support one another despite their different backgrounds (able-bodied/disabled, from the coast/mountains, in pre-school/high school). The project raises awareness of issues surrounding the protection of nature and teaches students to learn from their differences in order to live together better.



Hiking trails for all

The 550 km of marked hiking trails within the core of the National Park tell the story of past activities. Some are even true works of art.

These paths are now used by tourists, guiding hikers towards the most beautiful natural sites within the National Park. On-the-ground teams draw on their knowledge of specialised local businesses to restore and maintain this network of trails. Experience of working in mountains and using traditional techniques, especially dry stone, are key to conducting potentially complex operations in challenging weather conditions. Each year, men and women from the valleys, including volunteers, mountain professionals, *département* councils and user federations, work over the equivalent of 400 days. The network of trails in the National Park core is now a major tourist attraction for Mercantour.



1 - © G. Lombard - Mercantour National Park
2 - © M. Roland - Mercantour National Park
3 - © J.-M. Culotta - Mercantour National Park



Guadeloupe National Park

In 1989, Guadeloupe National Park was the first National Park to be created in overseas France, specifically in the Caribbean. It is a global biodiversity hotspot.

This protected area is home to a multitude of different ecosystems, all characteristic of the diversity of tropical environments. Coral reefs, mangrove forests, swamp forests, rainforests and volcanic slopes come together to create an especially diverse protected area.

Its island location has led to the development of endemic species over time, making the area truly exceptional.

The National Park and its partners aim to protect both the incredible biological diversity and the cultural wealth of the area, which has been formed by multiple migrations, each making its own contribution to the island's unique character.

The National Park works in partnership with other environmental stakeholders to enable local populations to get back to nature while continuing to preserve these unique sites which live under the threat of climate change. ●



National Parks in action

Operational intervention scheme (SIO): protecting nature while allowing leisure activities

The Grand Cul-de-Sac Marin bay is home to exceptional diversity and is highly sought after by both tourists and residents, who practice a variety of activities, from bird watching to jet skiing.

After several years of uncoordinated management and in the light of various climate- and visitor-related issues, on the initiative of the National Park, managers worked with users to create an operational intervention scheme to develop a shared plan for the bay.

The National Park, *Conservatoire du Littoral* and French National Forests Office (ONF) met with tourism professionals and user associations to draw up a map of uses for the different spaces in the bay.

Infrastructure requirements were also collected so that managers and local authorities could organise these areas and anticipate changes to visitor numbers.



Protecting the National Park so it can be shared with everyone

The Guadeloupe National Park programme of events, "*Nature et Culture en découverte*" has become an essential summer holiday occasion.

It offers opportunities for families to reconnect with or discover the natural environment through the various cultural aspects that make up our society. The Park works in partnership with the *département* council to offer free activities for people with learning or physical disabilities. It also helps promote and generate interest in this heritage through a number of activities, including fables and myths, traditional treatments and arts proposed by participants around a specific theme. Past themes have included "senses by nature", "nature between shadow and light" and "nature as a source of inspiration". The aim is to bring the public into contact with nature so that people can understand its everyday importance and help preserve it.

95% of municipalities have signed the Park charter

61% of threatened flora species are in the National Park core

88.8% of birds endemic to the Antilles can be found in the National Park core

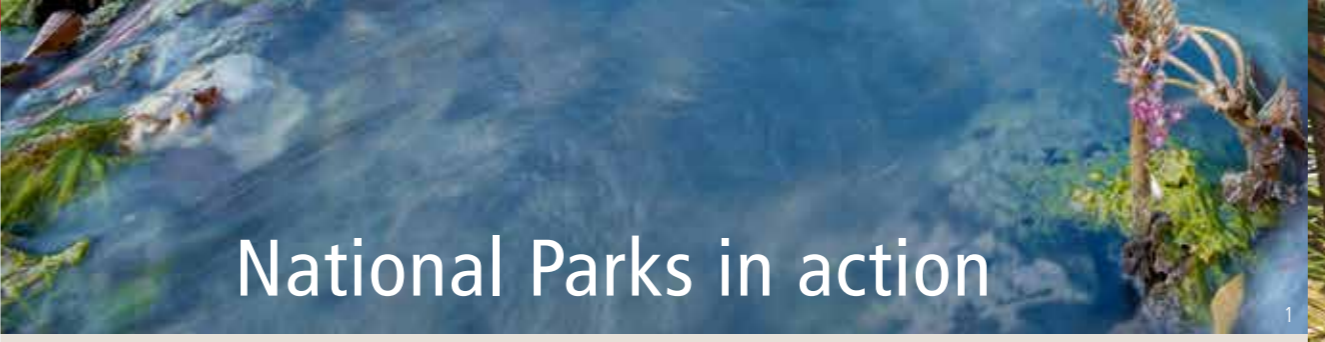
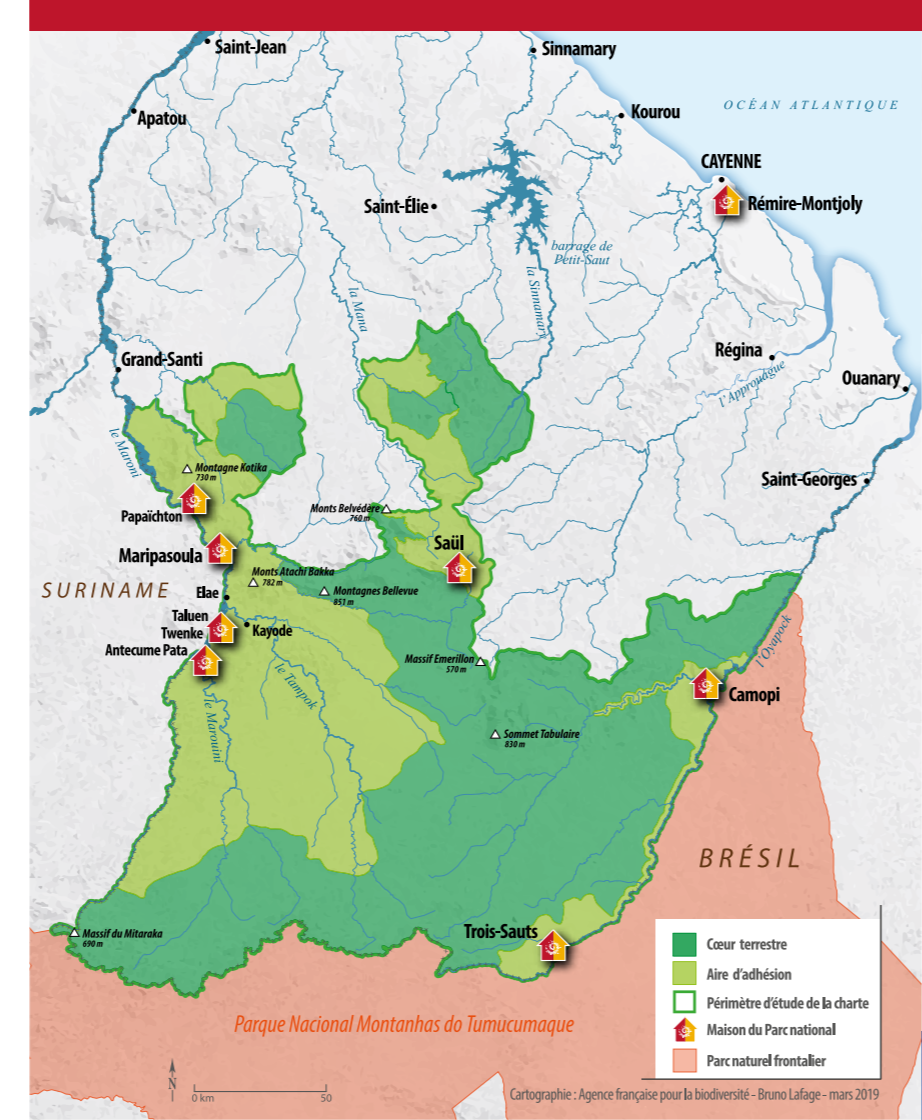


1 - © A. Priouzeau - Guadeloupe National Park
 2 - © E. Noël - Guadeloupe National Park
 3 - © M. Jean - Guadeloupe National Park

Guiana Amazonian Park

Guiana Amazonian Park covers 40% of French Guiana, representing 3.4 million hectares. It is located along the Brazilian border and Tumucumaque Mountains National Park (3.8 million hectares), and is one of the largest protected areas in the world. The National Park lies between two large rivers, the Oyapock in the east and Maroni in the west, and is home to one of the most biologically diverse areas on the planet. The southern Guiana forest is home to emblematic Amazonian fauna, such as jaguars, primates, giant otters, tapirs, caimans, anacondas, colourful poison dart frogs, giant beetles and shimmering morpho butterflies. The Amazonian Park's rich flora includes giant trees (over 50 m high), extraordinary lianas and plants with spectacular inflorescences.

The Amazonian Park has traditionally been a place of interactions between humans and the natural environment. Populations with strong cultural identities have been living in this area for generations, including the Wayana, Wayampi and Teko indigenous groups, the Aluku, Maroni Maroons and Creole peoples. This population of over 20 000 residents continues to swell with newcomers from South America, the Caribbean and Europe, like all of French Guiana. The Amazonian Park is the only public institution in French Guiana where tribal chiefs are on the Board of Directors. ●



National Parks in action

Amazonia for all

Guiana Amazonian Park is helping its municipalities to boost their tourism appeal, especially for people with disabilities. In Saül, training has been provided, including via a mobile application, with information on welcoming members of the public with special needs, the accessibility of the municipality's infrastructure and how to offer tourism products adapted to different types of disability. Test holidays have been carried out.

Training has also been offered in Papaïchton, the capital of the Boni region, with sign language and beginner-level tour guide courses. Thanks to the support of French National Parks benefactor, GMF, a "disability and adapted tourism" audit has been launched.

The aim is to identify obstacles to ensure the accessibility chain, including roads, the various establishments open to members of the public, and leisure and tourism sites.

It also aims to create a network of stakeholders who could use this assessment to make changes or purchase special equipment for hosting people with disabilities and offer adapted products and holidays.



Supporting the development of food processing

Guiana Amazonian Park works to support farmers from the production to selling their products by providing training, sharing sales techniques and more. Oli Taanga (which means "keep going") is an association of women from Maripasoula working in food processing, created in 2016. Creating this association has enabled these professionals to pool their resources and boost their visibility.

Since 2017, Oli Taanga has been supported by a specialist coordinator from the agri-food sector, recruited by the Amazonian Park. Their joint work has helped farmers developing partnerships and finding their place within a Guianese sales network.

Similarly, the *Pôle agroalimentaire de l'Ouest guyanais* (PAOG - West Guianese agri-food hub) gives those working in food processing in Maripasoula the opportunity to acquire new skills and create a real professional network.

Other actions promote agricultural production, such as the creation of a monthly farmers' market and opening a processing workshop up to the public, in order to promote local ingredients and encourage the population to use local products.

In Camopi, initiatives to support cassava food processing are being pursued in partnership with the municipality, which has begun construction of the first collective cassava processing site.



3.4 million hectares the largest National Park in France and the European Union

5 800 vascular plant species identified

100% of municipalities have signed the Amazonian Park Charter

1 - © G. Feuillet - Guiana Amazonian Park
 2 - © R. Deye - Guiana Amazonian Park
 3 - © L. Massue - Guiana Amazonian Park



La Réunion National Park

La Réunion National Park was created in 2007 in line with public policies to preserve and promote the island's inland mountainous areas.

Since 2010, the 105,447-hectare core has been on the UNESCO world heritage list, in recognition of the extraordinary value of its biodiversity and landscapes.

A wide variety of climates and microclimates, terrain and soils have made this isolated island home to a mosaic of ecosystems, unique to this part of the world.

The area boasts a wealth of original biodiversity, but it is highly vulnerable to disruptions, and especially invasive exotic species.

With these two labels (National Park & UNESCO) and the perfect environment for multiple outdoor activities for residents and visitors, La Réunion National Park is working with local stakeholders to build a sustainable economic project for this area of the island, based on discovering and promoting these remarkable heritage sites. ●



816 kilometres of hiking trails

110 different types of habitat from 0 to 3,070 m altitude

28 % of vascular flora is endemic

National Parks in action

Firefighting plan

The exceptional fragile landscapes and habitats of La Réunion Island are subject to special protection from the risk of wildfire. The National Park and world heritage site needs appropriate systems (access roads, water tanks, hillside reservoirs) for wildfire prevention and suppression, thereby ensuring the preservation of natural environments. This must not damage the exceptional universal value of the world heritage site, listed for its landscapes and biodiversity.

The National Park teams take part in discussions to identify exactly the right equipment, taking into account the size of forest firefighting equipment and its location. They work with local planners to monitor infrastructure construction with a view to assessing the impact on the environment and landscapes, and to avoid the introduction and spread of invasive exotic species. This partnership now applies to all of the island's forest firefighting planning (DFCI).



Strategy to tackle invasive exotic species

Biological invasions are the main reason for the erosion of biodiversity in the world. Island environments like La Réunion are especially affected.

In its 2017 Conservation Outlook Assessment for the natural world heritage sites on La Réunion Island, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recommended strengthening governance and better coordinating actions against invasive exotic species in environments that are most representative of local biodiversity.

An exemplary partnership was formed in late 2018, comprising the National Park, *département*, French National Forests Office (ONF), *Conservatoire botanique national de Mascarin* and CIRAD, to propose a coordinated strategy for prioritising actions to tackle this phenomenon. The aim is to assign actions across the geographical area and organise prevention mechanisms in order to improve consistency and efficiency.





Calanques National Park

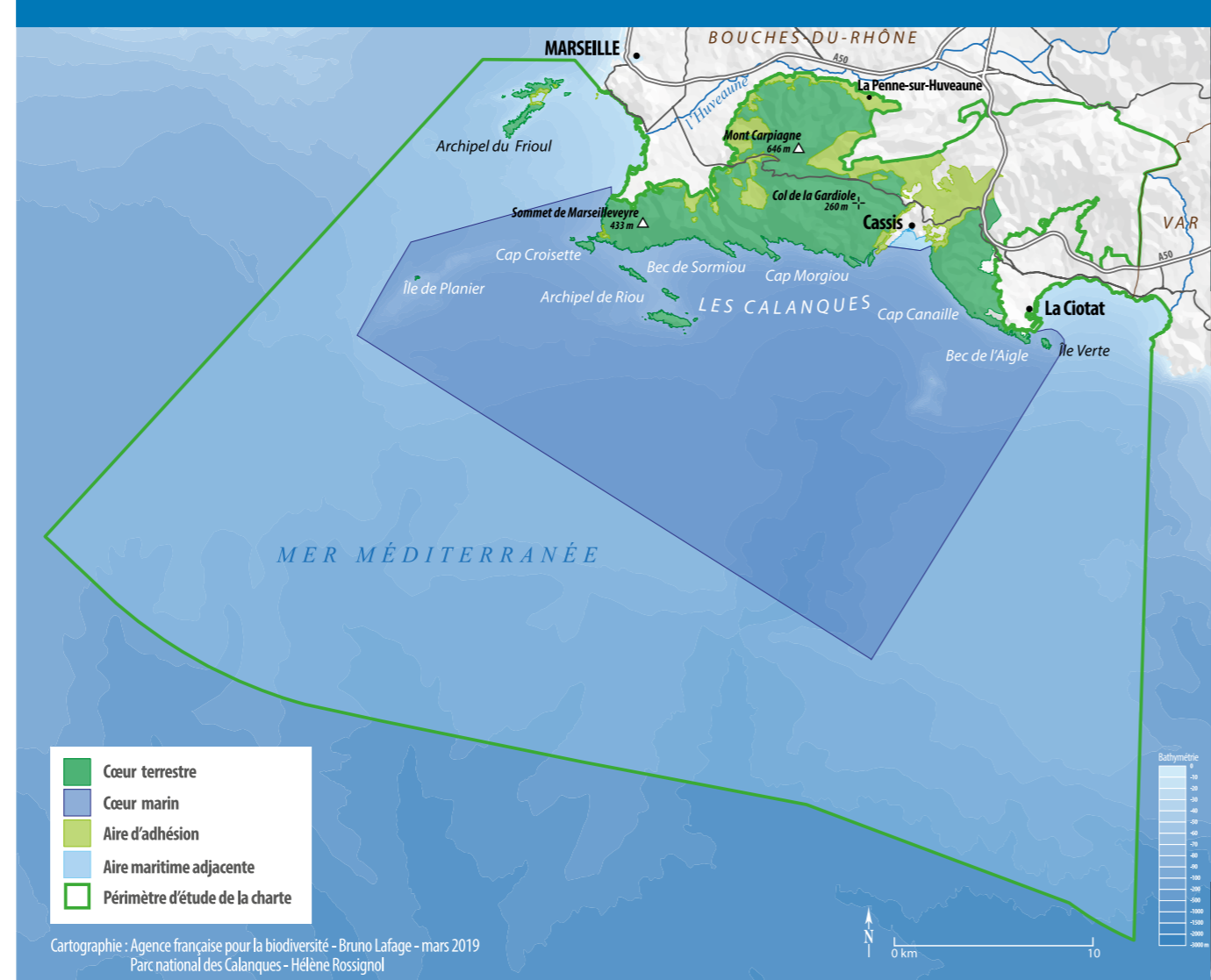
Calanques National Park was created in 2012 and is the only urban National Park in Europe. This unique status positions Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis alongside emblematic cities like Sydney, Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro. This encounter between a city and highly protected natural area gives rise to numerous challenges but is also an incredible opportunity to look for and develop future-oriented solutions to support biodiversity.

Calanques National Park is also unusual in having both a land and sea area. With 43 500 hectares in the sea core, compared to 8 500 hectares on land, it has an essential marine and coastal mission.

The Calanques are renowned for their outstanding landscapes and attract around 3 million visitors every year.

However, the true extent of their natural heritage remains unknown. With 140 protected land species and 60 heritage marine species, the Calanques are a global hotspot of biodiversity.

Calanques National Park has become an adventure destination with a number of outdoor sports and activities, and an exceptionally rich cultural heritage. It is an inhabited and historical area that excites passion and commitment.



93% of the park falls in the marine area

200 protected and heritage species

A National Park in a metropolitan area with a population of 1.8 million

National Parks in action

Monitoring no-take zones

Seven no-take zones where any form of fishing is prohibited were introduced in marine areas upon creation of Calanques National Park.

These zones aim to preserve marine biodiversity and fish stocks in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of local artisanal commercial fishing.

The National Park assesses the performance of these zones through the scientific monitoring of fish and red coral populations. Commercial fishermen are involved in the program via scientific fishing.

The first years of monitoring species dynamics have identified a "reserve effect". No-take zones are characterised by the return of a strong and healthy ecosystem with larger fish and more diverse species. Fish life is also exported outside of these protected areas, feeding into marine areas where fishing is permitted.



The LIFE programme on Calanques habitats

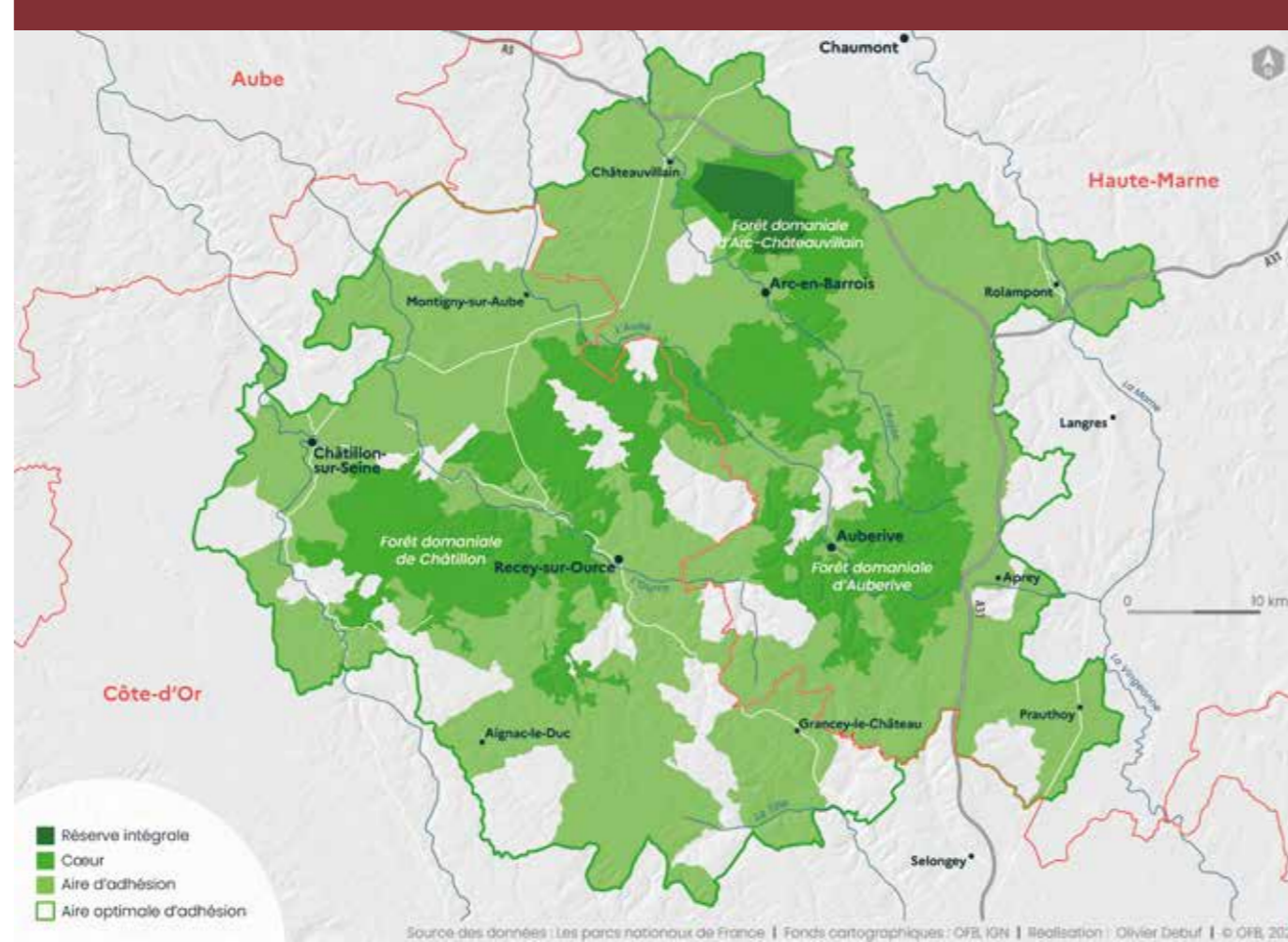
Mediterranean shores are home to 10% of global plant biodiversity despite representing just 1.6% of the land surface, making it a global biodiversity hotspot. The attractive coastline is also subject to strong pressures that are weakening natural habitats.

In the light of these challenges, the National Park and its partners have worked with the European Commission to implement a LIFE programme for coastal habitat restoration. The 5-year programme was launched in 2017 around 5 main themes:

- Restoration of ecological continuity by establishing trails to limit the trampling of natural habitats;
- Restoration of coastal habitats disrupted by the development of invasive plants through weeding campaigns;
- Planting of two protected and vulnerable species: the Marseille *astragalus* and the *Plantago subulate*;
- Information and awareness-raising for the general public;
- Sharing knowledge and experience at a European level.

1 - © Y. Queyrel
 2 - © Céline Bellanger - Calanques National Park
 3 - © Noémie Frachon - Calanques National Park





Forests National Park

Forests National Park was created in late 2019, and is dedicated to knowledge, preservation and the promotion of lowland deciduous forests. Located along the Seine and Rhône watershed, the park acts as an immense water tower, supporting the preservation of water resources, which is an extremely valuable shared resource. The presence of forest and meadows also helps reduce the risk of flooding in towns and cities downstream.

The National Park is located between the Champagne and Burgundy regions, and has witnessed a rich and, at times, turbulent history, with a succession of periods and lifestyles, including Celtic tribes, Knights Templar, monastic orders and metalworking. These activities have shaped the landscapes now visible to visitors. The 127 villages nestled along the rivers are beautifully made with their Burgundy stone façades. The forest is renowned for hunting and is home to the rare French populations of the black stork and wildcat.

80 % of forests in the National Park existed at the time of the French revolution

10 % of the French population of black storks is located in the National Park forests

Over **100** tufa marshes have been formed by water and rocks mixing together

National Parks in action

The largest forest in France returns to the wild

Since the creation of the National Park, over 3 000 hectares of forest (equivalent to 12 000 football pitches) have been returned to nature. This is a unique experiment in France and Europe. Creating the Forests National Park "integral forest reserve" is a one-of-a-kind scientific project that will attract many scientists, forest rangers and others interested in the scheme. It will provide answers for monitoring and understanding changes to forests in the light of climate change and offers an opportunity to observe the renaturing of a forest previously used for timber production. In the future, the area will also offer a source of inspiration for biomimetics as the discovery of new molecules and a better understanding of natural forest dynamics will help us to learn from nature.



The forest is a backdrop for archaeological remains

The forests within the National Park have existed for a long time and have successfully preserved a large number of archaeological remains. These traces of past occupation are updated via radar plotting by plane. Under the thick forest cover, mounds and hills less than 10 centimetres high have reappeared, reminding us of the area's rich history, and especially the ancient "Vix vase". This dates from ancient times and is the largest bronze vase ever discovered, with a 1 100 litre capacity. Land use and the relationships between humans and nature are issues at the heart of the scientific project underpinning Forests National Park.

It also offers a brilliant excuse for getting away deep into the forest.



1 - © Matthieu Delcamp - Forests National Park
2 - © Marie Quiquemelle - Forests National Park
3 - © Marie Quiquemelle - Forests National Park



A new State public institution to protect and reclaim biodiversity

The French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) was created on 1 January 2020* to meet the challenge for protecting and restoring the biodiversity of France and overseas territories. It is a public institution operating under the double auspices of the Ministry of the Ecological Transition and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Support for public policy and biodiversity stakeholders, in close contact with local territories

The French Biodiversity Agency is active throughout the territory of both Metropolitan and Overseas France, at all scales from local to international. Its highly territory-based presence places it at the core of the network of biodiversity stakeholders, including local authorities, decentralised State services, companies, research organisations, non-governmental organisations, nature users and citizens. The OFB provides support to France's 11 National Parks, which are attached to it, along with other protected natural area management bodies: facilitation of the network of marine protected area managers and the protected areas conference. It likewise coordinates the 11 national botanical conservatories. To meet the challenges of protection of biodiversity in the territories, the Agency participates in creating and training the network of regional biodiversity agencies together with the regions, water agencies and decentralised State services. The OFB also has partnerships with local authorities, particularly "Territories committed to nature", the "Atlases of communal biodiversity" and the training of elected officials about biodiversity protection.

* French Act 2019-773 of 24 July 2019

The OFB's 5 complementary missions

- Knowledge, research and expertise on species and habitats, and their uses,
- Environmental police and wildlife health police,
- Support for the implementation of public policies,
- Management and support of natural area management bodies,
- Support for stakeholders and mobilising society.

OFB resources

- 2 650 agents (including 1 900 in local units in mainland and overseas France),
- national and regional departments and local offices, with complementary and closely linked actions in mainland and overseas France,
- 8 marine nature parks and 1 marine mammal sanctuary,
- 26 nature reserves



Manage protected areas

The OFB manages protected areas, which are remarkable in terms of species, habitats, ecological functions and services provided. The 8 marine natural parks (2 of which are in Overseas France) carry out numerous actions to enhance knowledge about and protect outstanding ecosystems while enabling the sustainable development of economic and leisure activities. These actions are carried out under the governance of management committees, in partnership with local stakeholders. The Agoa sanctuary is a protected marine area of over 140 000 km² with the objective of increasing knowledge about marine mammals and protecting them from the direct or indirect negative impacts of human activities, whether actual or potential. The 26 reserves with various legal statuses (national hunting and wildlife reserves, national nature reserves...) have a surface area of 53 000 hectares.

The French National Parks, together with the other protected areas, play a major role in the conservation of biodiversity. This remarkable network is attached to the French Biodiversity Agency to promote synergies between the various bodies. The Agency and the National Parks pool together their services and resources, and coordinate their actions.

1 - © Philippe Massit - OFB
2 - © Blandine Guillemot - OFB
3 - © Ruppe-Rolland - OFB



Vanoise National Park • vanoise-parcnational.fr

Port-Cros National Park • portcros-parcnational.fr

Pyrénées National Park • pyrenees-parcnational.fr

Cévennes National Park • cevennes-parcnational.fr

Ecrins National Park • ecrins-parcnational.fr

Mercantour National Park • mercantour-parcnational.fr

Guadeloupe National Park • guadeloupe-parcnational.fr

Guiana Amazonian Park • parc-amazonien-guyane.fr

La Réunion National Park • reunion-parcnational.fr

Calanques National Park • calanques-parcnational.fr

Forests National Park • forets-champagne-bourgogne.fr

parcsnationaux.fr | ofb.gouv.fr

