

SCIENTIFIC & EDUCATIONAL INTEREST

The multiplicity of leisure activities and common practices in the massif and the gorges (canoeing, swimming, hiking, fishing, hunting, picking), combined with the presence of rare and sensitive animal and plant species, give a particular interest to the reserve to deal with questions concerning the conciliation between these activities and common practices and the conservation of species with a high heritage significance.

The numerous vestiges, showing a very ancient human presence on the site, make it possible to organize educational activities about the interpretation of landscapes in relation to human activities.



Guided tours are organized to show you the site and its heritage : enquire at the Conservatoire des Espaces Naturels du Languedoc-Roussillon for details.

CREATION & MANAGEMENT

The reserve was created in 2001, thus giving concrete expression to a project initiated as from 1970 by the Société de Protection de la Nature du Gard.

The management is undertaken by the town of Sanilhac-Sagriès and the Conservatoire des Espaces Naturels du Languedoc-Roussillon. It is exerted under the authority of the Regional Council of Languedoc-Roussillon, in accordance with the orientations set by the advisory committee of the reserve that gathers all the local players.

REGULATIONS

Decision of the Regional Council number 09/15.586 of December 18th 2009

By respecting the regulations of the reserve, you take part in the protection of the site and you make it possible for everybody to enjoy its beauty for a long time.



For the peacefulness of the wild fauna and the sheep flock that frequent the Reserve :

- don't make noise,
- don't wander from the paths,
- keep your dog on a leash, especially in spring which is the reproductive period.

Hunting, fishing and picking for family consumption are allowed, subject to the respect of the regulations in force and of the owner rights.



ACCES

Access to the site is free. You can get to the site from the village of Sanilhac, from the city hall square, by following the "Chemin de la Baume".

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Nature Reserve GORGES OF THE GARDON



MANAGERS OWNERS



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SITUATION



The Regional Nature Reserve of the Gorges of the Gardon is situated in the heart of the gorges, in the town of Sanilhac-Sagriès, about ten kilometers to the North of Nîmes.

Mainly located on the left bank of the river Gardon, between the Pont Saint-Nicolas and Collias, the reserve stretches on 491 ha of land, belonging to the town and to the Conservatoire des Espaces Naturels du Languedoc-Roussillon.

NATURAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE

The scarcity of water on the karstic plateau, the absence of roads running along the Gardon and the proximity of the Garrigues military camp, restricted the development facilities and made it possible to preserve an exceptional heritage, essentially concentrated in the very gorges.



The setting named „La Baume“

Landscapes

The Gardon runs across narrow and deep gorges, dug in the limestone massif. They offer a spectacular panorama where the dryness of the garrigue on the plateau contrasts with the coolness of the banks and of the resurgences that revive the Gardon.

Vegetation and flora

The reserve covers varied environments : river, banks where a vegetation regularly disrupted by the floods is growing, cliffs, caves, wood, garrigues and grasslands.

The flora is composed of about twelve remarkable species, among which the Granatelli's gagea and the Tanglehead, both protected in France.



Tanglehead grass



Granatelli's gagea



Fauna

The fauna (water fauna, land fauna and underground fauna) is composed of several remarkable species, some of which benefiting from a protection at national or European level.

• Almost a hundred bird species nest or frequent the site, about twenty of which of European interest. Among them, the Bonelli's eagle and the Egyptian vulture are unquestionably the most emblematic species of the massif.



Egyptian vulture



Bonelli's eagle



Bee-eater



European beaver

• Several families of European beaver are enumerated in the gorges.

• The Gardon provides a habitat for about twenty fish species, two of which are remarkable : the souffia and the Southwest European nase .

• Ten species of bats use the cave “la Baume Saint-Vérédème”, to reproduce or to winter. Among them we find the Schreiber's Bat, the long-fingered bat and the Mediterranean Horseshoe bat, which are rare and threatened.



Colony of Mediterranean Horseshoe bats



Long-fingered bat

Archaeology, history

The reserve preserves several vestiges that show the age and the continuity of human occupation in the massif : the cave “la Baume Saint-Vérédème” occupied as early as the Superior Palaeolithic (- 30 000 years), menhirs and oppidum, the chapel “Saint-Pierre” (Xth century), charcoal kilns and lime kilns (until the XIXth century).



The hermitage “Saint-Vérédème” and the entry of the cave