... protected Nature

in prestigious sites!
The National Parks of France

A worldwide nature network

With approximately 5,000 National Parks around the world (over 300 in Europe and 10 in France) these parks form a worldwide network of exceptional nature areas. They cover a surface area of over 5.5 million km².

Bearing not only the origins of the planet but also its future, National Parks offer a combination of remarkable land and marine areas where biological, cultural and landscape diversity is expressed in outstanding splendour.

The world’s oldest National Park is the Yellowstone National Park in the USA which was created in 1872.

The first French National Park saw the light of day in 1963 pursuant to the 1960 Act.

Fifty years later the situation is very positive, especially in terms of knowledge, protection of species and emblematic landscapes and the understanding of natural environments.

The Calanques National Park, that came into existence in 2012, is the third National Park that was created since the 2006 Act. A project for creating the floodplain hardwood Forest National Park between Champagne and Burgundy is currently under way.

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National Parks are places of beauty and freedom and their wealth lies in the diversity and complexity of life. In these exceptional territories, conservation needs to be dynamic and encourage the discovery of the animal and plant world as well as the landscapes that have been shaped by the activities of man. National Parks exist for humankind of yesterday, today and tomorrow.
National Parks “à la française”

The French government designates a territory as a National Park when the latter possesses exceptional heritage value. Then it sets up an organisation seeking excellence in conservation and management.

The decree to create a National Park is taken by the council of state after considering a report open to public enquiry. It sets the boundaries of the National Park: the heartland and the peripheral partnership area and approves the National Park’s charter.

The development and management are entrusted to a public organisation whose board of administration is composed of representatives from territorial councils, state departments, associations and inhabitants.

Project territories

The Act of 21st April 2006 makes provision for a charter to be drawn up between the state and multiple stakeholders that is based on a diagnostic and shared vision of the territory and its issues. The charter is drawn up through a partnership process and the communes are free to choose whether or not to participate.

Those participating in the partnership area share in the responsibility of sustainable development founded in the conservation and enhancement of natural, cultural and environmental heritage. The partnership area is ecologically coherent and supportive of the National Park core.
Missions of protection, management and support

The National Parks all have outstandingly rich landscapes and remarkable fauna and flora. The protection of its biodiversity is a crucial part of their mission: the reintroduction of species, research and scientific monitoring have given a new biological boost to these territories; support given to agricultural, pastoral, forestry and maritime activities participate in maintaining biodiversity. National Parks are also responsible for safeguarding cultural heritage and participating in promoting activities that are compatible with the respect of nature.

A course of conduct for each National Park

The regulations that apply to the heartland seek to preserve the natural and cultural heritage as well as the character of the National Parks. Some provisions are common to all and these are complemented by regulations that are specific to each park. These limitations are quite simply akin to a form of civic-mindedness adapted to the environment: a condition and guarantee of liberty for all.

Sharing nature

Although the French National Parks are tools through which nature is protected, they are also areas where Man lives and finds the opportunity to recharge his/her batteries.

In accordance with the regulations, these territories are freely accessible to all, including the less able-bodied. Making this precious heritage available to the public today and transmitting it to future generations is part of a National Park’s mission. To accomplish this mission, the National Parks’ teams welcome members of the public, raising awareness of the issues and also organises educational events in order to encourage respectful behaviour.

Parcs nationaux de France (PNF)

In addition to creating a new impetus for French national parks, the 2006 law established the public-sector enterprise PNF, which has its head office in Montpellier.

PNF brings together national parks, strengthening their shared culture while preserving their unique qualities. It also oversees the quality of their management, and provides technical and administrative support. It represents the parks in networks of protected areas. Thanks to its communications policy, it helps increase their visibility in France and abroad.

PNF also assists future national parks.

PNF runs working groups on different themes, which supports this collective development process.
The Vanoise National Park, the oldest of the French National Parks, is situated between the high valleys of Maurienne and Tarentaise and includes a hundred or so peaks reaching over 3,000 metres in altitude, one of which is the Grande Casse.

The wildlife adapts to the rhythm of the seasons: Ibex (the largest colony in France), Chamois, Mountain Hares, Marmots, Foxes, Martens, Bats, Golden Eagles, Bearded Vultures, and Black Grouse. Around 1,200 plant species have been listed in this area, among which 200 are particularly remarkable (Alpine Sea Holly, Linnaea borealis, Alpine Bells, Saxifraga, etc.). The greatly diversified natural environments can be explained by the large variety of different rocks (limestone, gypsum, sandstone, quartzite schist, gneiss, etc.) and their complex geology, a wide altitudinal range (from 685m to 3,855m in altitude) and the major presence of glaciers. Prairies, lakes and forests follow one after the other, dominated by taluses, meadows and glaciers.

The Vanoise National Park has a very rich cultural heritage marked by agricultural and pastoral activities, tourism and its situation on the national border: rock engravings, high altitude architecture, stone forts, Baroque buildings, folk art from the high valleys.

The Vanoise National Park received its European Diploma for protected species in 1976.

Created in 1963, the Vanoise National Park is located in the Savoie (73) Department.

The National Park in a few figures:
• Core: 53,500 hectares
• Potential adhesion area: 146,500 hectares, 29 communes, 37,700 permanent inhabitants, 720,000 visitors/year.
• Head office address:
  135 rue du Docteur Julliand - BP 705 - 73007 Chambéry Cedex
• Phone: + 33 (0) 479 623 054
• Website: www.parcnational-vanoise.fr
• Mail: contact@vanoise-parcnational.fr
The first marine park created in Europe, the territory of the Port-Cros National Park has been marked by its long history of maritime exchanges and war-like jealousies that resulted in numerous wrecks and a collection of 18 forts and batteries spread out over the two islands of Port-Cros and Porquerolles.

The forest cover of Port-Cros, dominated by the evergreen oak, is impressive in its density. The strawberry trees and tree heath, which form the maquis shrubland, can reach an impressive size. Other endemic species can be found, such as catnip.

Although the small surface area has not enabled large animals to develop, Port-Cros and the Hyères islands form an important stopover for migratory birds. Although rare in the Mediterranean marine birds such as puffins nest here.

The marine environment shelters remarkable habitats: Posidonia and calcareous algae populated by numerous and diversified animals that find refuge there. The Dusky Grouper may rule the roost but other large carnivorous fish can also be found here, such as the Red Scorpion fish and Barracuda...

The Port-Cros National Park administers the National Mediterranean Botanical Gardens of Porquerolles, responsible for the protection of its Mediterranean flora. It coordinates the French section of the PELAGOS Sanctuary that works for the protection of marine mammals.

Created in 1963, the Port-Cros National Park is located in the Var (83) Department.

The National Park in a few figures:
- Marine core: 2.950 hectares
- Terrestrial core: 1.671 hectares
- Adjacent marine area: 118.300 hectares
- Wilderness reserve: îlots de Bagaud, du Rascas et de la Gabinière, 350 inhabitants, 1.6 millions visitors/year.
- Managed by the National Park: State-owned land on Porquerolles island (1,000 ha) in the coastal conservation zone at Cap Lardier (300 ha) and on the Giens peninsula (110 ha) managed on behalf of the conservation zone and communes of Croix-Valmer and Hyères.
- Head office address:
  Allée du Castel Sainte-Claire - BP 70220 - 83406 Hyères Cedex
  Phone: + 33 (0) 494 128 230
  Fax: + 33 (0) 494 128 231
  website: www.portcrosparcnational.fr
  Mail: accueil.pnpc@portcros-parcnational.fr
A mosaic of crystalline and sedimentary rocks roughly treated by erosion and glaciations gave rise to the fabulous landscapes of the Pyrenees National Park: myriads of lakes, endless gorges, cirques with their immense cliffs and vertiginous waterfalls. The National Park’s territory stretches over 6 valleys, from the Aspe Valley in the west to the Aure Valley in the east, at altitudes of between 1,060 metres to 3,298 metres at the summit of the Vignemale. The natural and cultural landscapes of the Monte Perdido massif and Gavarnie are listed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

Some 1,800 plant species, 80 of which are endemic, can be found and are a consequence of the contrasting exposures: the Ramonda, Androsace ciliata, Dioscorea, Viola diversifolia…

Its fauna is as diverse and original as it is fragile: Bears, Izzards, Griffon Vultures, Wood Grouse, Desmans, the Common Midwife Toad and the Bearded Vulture.

The National Park is also the site of intense pastoral activity. During the summer, the herds graze on the summer pastures. In Bearn, the shepherds stay in their huts to make cheese.

The National Park is strongly committed to welcoming all members of the public.

Created in 1967, the Pyrenees National Park is located in the Hautes Pyrénées (65) and the Pyrénées Atlantique (64) Departments.

The National Park in a few figures:
- **Core**: 45,700 hectares
- **Adhesion area**: 130,000 hectares
- **Potential adhesion area**: 78,500 hectares, 86 communes, 40,000 inhabitants, 1.5 millions visitors/year.
- **Head office address**: 2 rue du IV septembre - BP 736 - 65007 Tarbes Cedex
- **Phone**: +33 (0) 562 541 640
- **Website**: www.parc-pyrenees.com
- **Mail**: contact@pyrenees-parcnational.fr
Man’s influence is very evident in the Cevennes National Park with its territory at medium altitude: about 76,000 people live within the Park and bring to it an incredibly rich culture and memory that is expressed both in oral and written traditions as well as through traditional know-how, be it linked to dry stone walling, growing chestnut trees and sweet onions, or to making goat’s milk, Pélardon, cheese…

The diversity of the climate, soil and altitudes has given rise to an exceptionally rich flora: 11,000 species, including 2,250 different flowering plants on the Causses, Mont Lozère, Aigoual and the Cevennes with plant species endemic to the south of the Massif Central.

The fauna is also greatly diversified: 2,410 species, 70 of which are mammals, 195 birds (27 species of birds of prey), 18 amphibian species, 17 reptile species, 23 fish species and over 2,000 invertebrates species, 1,824 of which are insects.

The National Park was designated a biosphere reserve by UNESCO in 1985. The Causses and Cevennes were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2011 as Mediterranean agro-pastoral cultural landscapes.

Created in 1970, the Cevennes National Park is located in the Lozère (48), Gard (30) and Ardèche (07) Departments.

The National Park in a few figures:
- **Core**: 93,500 hectares
- **Adhesion area**: 175,000 hectares
- **Potential adhesion area**: 105,000, 152 communes (55 in core), 600 inhabitants in the Park heartland, 2 millions de visitors/year.

The National Park Co-manage or develope the Biosphere Reserve, the 3 eco-museums of Mont-Lozère, Causse and Cevennes, the Arboretum in St-Sauveur des Pourcils, the karst site of Nîmes-le-Vieux.

- **Head office address**: 6 bis place du Palais - 48400 Florac
- **Phone**: + 33 (0) 466 495 301
- **Site internet**: www.cevennes-parcnational.fr
- **Mail**: info@cevennes-parcnational.fr
Situated between Gap, Grenoble and Briançon, the territory of the Ecrins National Park plays host to prestigious mountain peaks (Barre des Écrins: 4,102 metres - Meije: 3,983 metres), glacier landscapes, renowned mountaineering routes, and deep valleys.

The different exposures of the slopes determine the dispersion of species and the movement of the fauna; over 350 species of vertebrates: Chamois, Ibex, Marmots, Small Grouse and the emblematic Golden Eagle can be found in the National Park territory. However, the approximately 1,800 plant species should not be forgotten: larches, dwarf junipers and rhododendrons flourish side by side with rare and spectacular flowers such as the Queen of the Alps (Eryngium alpinum), the Potentilla delphinensis and the Berardia subacaulis. This diversity also characterises the cultural identity of each valley, and is perceptible in the architecture and typology of the mountain dwellings built with both originality and humility.

Created in 1973, the Ecrins National Park is located in the Hautes-Alpes (05) and Isère (38) Departments.

The National Park in a few figures:
- Core: 92,000 hectares
- Adhesion area: 141,000 hectares
- Potential adhesion area: 37,500 hectares, 61 communes, 35,000 permanent inhabitants (3 in cores); 700,000 visitors/year, Le Lauvitel (created in 1995): 700 hectares.
- Head office address: Domaine de Charance - 05000 Gap
- Phone: +33 (0) 492 402 010
- Website: www.ecrins-parcnational.fr
The Mercantour National Park, twinned with the Alpi Marittime Nature Park in Italy, owes the unique diversity of its landscapes and natural heritage to its geographic location at the crossroads of the Ligurian, Alpine, Mediterranean and Provencal climatic influences, and is separated by only a few kilometres as the crow flies from the Côte d’Azur. Also, the National Park shelters the unique archaeological heritage of 40,000 rock engravings (Vallée des Merveilles).

Its extraordinary biodiversity is the reason behind one of the most ambitious biological inventories in the world being launched here in 2007. This exhaustive survey will require ten or so years of prospecting from scientists from around the world.

The exuberant and wild nature, associated with the splendour and diversity of the landscapes as well as the wealth of the cultures and traditions to be found here underlines the legitimacy of the territory’s ambition, supported by all its stakeholders, to be listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The joint inscription on the Tentative List of the two regions, prior to this ranking, is further evidence of the legitimacy of their process.

Created in 1979, the Mercantour National Park is located in the Alpes-de-Hautes-Provence (04) and Alpes Maritimes (06) Departments.

The National Park in a few figures:
- **Core**: 68,000 hectares
- **Adhesion area**: 94,000 hectares
- **Potential adhesion area**: 53,000 hectares, 28 communes, 17,700 permanent inhabitants, 600,000 visitors/year.
- The Vallée des Merveilles, with its 40,000 rock engravings dating from the Bronze Age, listed as a Historical monument in 1989.
- **Head office address**: 23 rue d’Italie - 06000 Nice
- **Phone**: +33 (0) 493 167 888
- **Website**: www.mercantour.eu / www.e-coguide.com
Guadeloupe, baptised the “Island of beautiful waters” by the Pre-Columbian populations, is bathed by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Caribbean Sea to the west. The territory of the Guadeloupe National Park includes a tropical forest dominated by an active volcano, the Soufrière, the Grand Cul-de-Sac Marin lagoon, the islets of Kahouane and Tête à l’anglais, and the marine depths around the Pigeon Islets.

The abundant precipitation (up to 12 meters per year on the highest peaks) encourages the development of exuberant, original and varied plant species: over 300 tree species, 100 orchid species and 270 fern species have been identified. As for the fauna, there are 33 bird species, including the only Woodpecker in the Lesser Antilles, 17 mammal species, 11 of which are bat species, and the Manatee, which had not been seen in Guadeloupe since the 19th century, but that is being reintroduced. The world biosphere reserve of the Guadeloupe archipelago, designated by UNESCO in 1992, coincides with the boundaries of the National Park territory.

Created in 1989, the Guadeloupe National Park is located in the Guadeloupe (974) Department.

The National Park in a few figures:
- Terrestrial heartland: 18.800 hectares
- Marin core: 3.300 hectares
- Adjacent marine area: 131 000 hectares
- Potential adhesion area: 95 400 hectares, 21 communes, 210.000 permanents inhabitants, 650 000 visitors/year.

The National Park manage the World biosphere reserve of the Guadeloupe Archipelago (UNESCO). Wetland area of international importance (RAMSAR) in the Grand Cul-de-Sac Marin

- Head office address: Monéran - BP 93 - 97120 Saint-Claude
- Phone: + 33 (0) 590 415 555
- Website: www.guadeloupe-parcnational.fr
The largest of the French National Parks, as well as being the largest in the European Union, the territory of the French Guiana Amazonian Park covers 40% of French Guiana. With its neighbouring Tumucumaque Brazilian National Park (3.8 million hectares), it forms one of the largest protected zones in the world. Two major rivers mark the Park’s boundaries: the Oyapock, on the border with Brazil, and the Maroni, on the border with Surinam.

Access is difficult; the Park protects one of the areas with the highest biodiversity on the planet as well as original ways of life and the human activities of the inhabitants of the rivers and the forest. It is home to the Wayana, Wayâpi and Téko Amerindians as well as the Aluku, the Maroons from the Maroni, the Creoles and Metropolitan French.

A range of rare environments can be added to its widely diverse landscapes: savannah-rocks, inselbergs (imposing, isolated rocky massifs) and forested mountains situated at over 500 metres altitude.

The flora comprises over 5,800 species: orchids, ferns, lianas, over 1,500 tree species, some of which reach heights of over 50 metres.

The fauna is also exceptional: 400 freshwater fish species (40% endemic), 192 mammal species, nearly 261 different reptile and amphibian species, about 719 bird species and several hundreds of thousands of insect species (butterflies, beetles, stick insects).

Created in 2007, the French Guiana National Park is located in the French Guiana (973) Department.

The National Park in a few figures:
• Core: 2 millions hectares
• Potential adhesion area: 1 million 400,000 hectares, 5 communes, about 15,000 permanent inhabitants.
• Head office address: 1 rue Lederson - 97354 Rémiere-Montjoly
• Phone: + 33 (0) 594 291 252
• Website: www.parc-amazonien-guyane.fr
• Mail: infos@guyane-parcnational.fr
• Webtv: www.parc-amazonien.wmaker.tv
La Réunion appeared just a short three million years ago - the island has two volcanic massifs and has one of the most active volcanoes on the planet: the Piton de la Fournaise. Deep gorges, wide volcanic plateaus and impressive cirques give the island its exceptional character.

Over 110 different biotopes spread from sea level to altitudes of over 3,000 metres.

The flora, which arrived progressively, is particularly abundant: over 800 indigenous plant species have been identified (seed plants, ferns and associated plants, mosses) 230 of which are endemic.

In terms of fauna, birds predominate: there are a hundred or so species, 18 of which are endemic and 9 unique species, nesting on Réunion Island. Then there are several remarkable species of reptiles and 2,000 species of insect.

Along with the islands in the south-west of the Indian Ocean, Réunion Island is one of the 34 world biodiversity hotspots.

On the 1st of August 2010, the "Pitons, Cirques and Ramparts of Réunion Island" were listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The candidacy project was promoted by the National Park, which will ensure the management and conservation of this asset. It is the 3rd French nature site to be granted this international label that acknowledges the unique beauty of the island and its exceptional biodiversity.

The National Park in a few figures:
- Core: 105,447 hectares
- Potential adhesion area: 88,000 hectares, 23 communes (40% of the island), 800 permanent inhabitants in the Park heartland, 670,000 visitors/year.
- Head office address: 258 rue de la République - 97431 La Plaine-des-Palmistes
- Phone: +33 (0) 262 901 135
- Site internet: www.reunion-parcnational.fr
- Mail: contact@reunion-parcnational.fr
The Calanques National Park is the 10th French national park and the first European national park that is terrestrial, marine and semi-urban.

Located within the southern Provence, the Calanques National Park boasts steep limestone coastal cliffs and a vast marine area (93% of its territory), which includes one of the richest underwater canyons of the Mediterranean in terms of biodiversity. It also comprises several islands that both protect its biodiversity and acts as a window to famous landmarks such as the famous Chateau d’If.

Located in one of the most arid and windy areas in France, the spectacular landscapes are formed by the incredible cliffs towering over the Mediterranean and are home to many domestic species.

The close proximity of wild natural areas to the second largest city of France (Marseille) is the prominent feature of this area and the main challenge facing the National Park with the help of its partners.

Its goal is to allow everyone to be able to admire, work and live sustainably on this exceptional coastline in harmony with nature and its cultural identity.

Created in 2012, the Calanques National Park is located in the Bouches du Rhône (13) Department. It’s the first European national park semi-urban and the third on the world after the Cap and Sydney.

The National Park in a few figures:
- Terrestrial heartland: 8,470 hectares
- Marin core: 43,321 hectares
- Adhesion area: 2,621 hectares
- Potential adhesion area: 8,206 hectares
- Adjacent marine area: 97,503 ha, 7 communes; 1,7 millions de visitors/years.
- Head office address:
  Bât A4 - Parc Valad - impasse Paradou - 13099 Marseille
- Phone: + 33 (0) 491 726 673
- Website: www.calanques-parcnational.fr
- Mail: contact@calanques-parcnational.fr
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/ParcNationalDesCalanques
The primarily broad-leaved forests of the future 11th French national park are representative of the limestone plateaus of the north-eastern quarter of France. These forests which boast with up to 15 types of trees per hectare (the beech being the most common) are at the crossroads of continental and oceanic climatic influences and endure both Mediterranean and Alpine winds.

Due to two factors, their age and a near continuous afforestation, they house many natural environments (tufa marshes, calcareous grasslands, grasslands…) and are rich in sometimes rare species such as the Yellow Lady’s Slipper. Even though stags, roe deer and wild boar are very abundant one also finds remarkable species such as the European Wildcat or the Black Stork.

Water is equally very present with 694 kilometres of rivers, numerous springs and wetlands.

A privileged witness to the close ties between man and nature since the Neolithic Era, the forest protects and contains numerous archaeological remains and retains the imprint of the work of the monks in the Middle Ages, farming, logging, hydraulic or metallurgical at different times. The originality of the proposed Forest National Park of Champagne and Burgundy is its strong and sustainable human presence and activities throughout its territory, including a large forest-timber sector.

The future National Park aims to reconcile the conservation of these unique heritages and the economic, social and cultural development.

Launched in July 2009, the project is in the Cote-d’Or (21) and Haute-Marne (52) departments. The creation of the Forest National Park of Champagne and Burgundy is expected for 2017.

The project in a few figures:
- Core study area: 76.622 hectares
- Potential adhesion area: 241.781 hectares
- Proposed wilderness reserve area: 3 100 hectares
- Head office address: 4 ruelle du Monument - 21290 Leuglay
- Phone: +33 (0) 380 931 092
- Website: www.forets-champagne-bourgogne.fr
- Mail: parcnational@forets-champagne-bourgogne.fr
French National Parks are exceptional areas that must be protected and shared with everyone, especially people with disabilities. This is the idea behind GMF’s long-term patronage project, which promotes the shared enjoyment of nature by creating suitable tools and facilities in all national parks.

www.parcsnationaux.fr
The emblem of the National Parks of France is a hymn to life. It reveals its extreme diversity, from the infinitely small to the infinitely great. It embodies the wealth, complexity and evolution of life. It also symbolizes the solidarity between nature and Mankind, and between the heartland areas and the areas in partnership with the National Parks.

**National Parks of France**

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