An exceptional and fragile area

Situated at the crossroads of multiple climates, geological and altitudinal influences, the Mercantour National Park is home to an exceptional diversity of natural resources. This variety of landscapes, environments and species have created a jewel of preserved nature, a kind of reservoir for the men and women who live and work there. The Mercantour has struck a right balance between wilderness and human activity with the creation of the National Park in 1979. The Park is organized around a central area called the Heart of the Park, protected and regulated, and by an area of partnership with the municipalities, in a constant concern for harmony between protection, knowledge and sustainable development.

Teeming with nature

Large and small mammals, birds, reptiles and invertebrates, the Mercantour fauna is very varied. It is made up of several hundreds of species, some of which go back to the last ice ages. This diversity can be observed by the more unobtrusive walkers. The Mercantour also possesses an extraordinary wealth of plants; more than 2000 species, that is half of the number known in France. Numerous species are specific to the south of the Alps and of them there present only in the massif of Argentera-Mercantour.

A transalpine heritage

Pennine buildings, military remains, location names, local dialects, farming and culinary traditions, everything here speaks of a long shared history with Italy. Terraced agriculture, pastoral traditions and perched villages remind us that we are in the mountains and that man has had to adapt. Today, the visitor can discover these tokens of the past which are now the object of great care and attention so that this heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.

A common heritage to be preserved

A national park is a common heritage to be shared by all, indeed, through the knowledge and protection of biodiversity, it plays its part both in creating public awareness for the need to respect our environment and in sharing its own particular natural and cultural heritage. There are some important archaeological sites in the Mercantour like La Vialle des Merveilles or La Turbie. For these reasons, we are invited to discover it with respect.

The visitor centers

Welcome to the national parks!
The park welcomes you in its five visitor centers, the “Maisons du Parc”. The “Vallées” of Vallée, Saint-Martin-Vésubie and Tende are open all year long through the summer season and school holidays for the rest of the year. They offer exhibitions and educational attractions linked to the discovery of the natural and cultural heritage, and also sales of souvenirs.

The “Maisons du Parc” also offer for sale various items for young and old to enhance your visit or as souvenirs. Park staff are at your disposal to answer all your questions.

Regulations

A national park is an area which is free and open to all. To protect the natural wealth it contains, the heart of the Park is subject to regulations.

This green健康, protected on rocks or trees, indicates the limits of the Heart of the Park.

Excerpt of the Park’s heart regulation:

• Campfire is a tent, a canopy, a canvas, or any other shelter is forbidden.

• Building is authorized between 7AM and 9PM. If you are more than one hour a walking distance from the park limits of free the cut area special point.

• The use of sound equipment, noise and disturbances likely to interfere with the calm and peaceful aspect of the site are forbidden.

• The touching and damaging of rock carvings is forbidden.

The visitor centers

Discover our online shop: boutique.mercantour.eu

To find out more...

• Mercantour National Park’s official website: www.mercantour-parcnational.fr

• Official Website of the "Maritime Mercantour" European Natural Park: www.maritime-mercantour.eu

• Select your trek in a few clicks at: randonnées.mercantour.eu

• To download the "Mobile Mercantour" smartphone application for Android and iOS:

• The national park on social networks:

To avoid degradation and prevenative preservation of the Mercantour and Fontanabùa valley, listed Historic Monument, the regulation is complemented by some specific decrees:

• The driving and parking of motorised vehicles is forbidden.

• The washing, cleaning, cutting, sawing, or any event reduction of trees is forbidden.

• The touching and damaging of rock carvings is forbidden.

• The scraping of stone, sawing, drilling, or any event reduction of rocks is forbidden.

• The removal of minerals, fossils, etc. or the picking of plants, fruits, etc. is forbidden in all parts of the park's heart. Please take your rubbish back with you.

• Bivouacking is not allowed in any part of the rock carvings area, with the exception of the special areas for bivouacking the people and the same is allowed for the refuge.

• The touching and damaging of rock carvings is forbidden.

• The use of metal landing poles is in accordance with specific decrees.

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• The removal of minerals, fossils, etc. or the picking of plants, fruits, etc. is strictly controlled by the regulations.

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