

France

Cévennes



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Declaration date: 1984

Surface area: 323,000 ha

Administrative division: Parc National des Cévennes

Human activities:

This vast territory has one of the lowest population densities in France (40,600 inhabitants in 1998). However, about 800,000 tourists annually visit this rural region (1998). A rich network of ecomuseums and visitor centers provides environmental education to tourists. Apart from tourism, agriculture and mining are the main economic activities.



Ecological characteristics:

Located in the south of the Massif Central, the Cévennes Biosphere Reserve and National Park encompasses some very different landscapes such as the limestone 'causses', the granite massifs of Aigoual and of Mont Lozère and the schist mountains



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of the Cévennes. The geology of the area and the presence of man since the Neolithic have led to the current biological richness. Habitats include beech, oak, pine and fir forests, Mediterranean scrublands, high altitude grasslands, rivers and peat lands. The great diversity of the Cévennes is dependent on human activity. The decline in agricultural activities has reduced the grazing pressure, with the result that many previously open areas and grasslands are being invaded by ligneous plants. This is the reason why the biosphere reserve aims in particular to support rural activities such as setting up maintenance contracts for farmers, providing grants for the restoration of farm buildings, maintaining old breeds (Aubrac cattle, Raïole sheep), labeling meet products, restoring long-abandoned chestnut groves and managing hunting and forestry. This biosphere reserve is twinned with the Montseny Biosphere Reserve in the Catalonian region of northeastern Spain and cooperates closely in research, training and education activities.



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* Details found on this information sheet are derived directly from the UNESCO website and are not a communication from the biosphere reserve.