



ENGLISH EDITION

Parque Natural de las
**LAGUNAS
DE RUIDERA**

VISITOR'S GUIDE

Comenzar



Naturalea

CASTILLA-LA MANCHA



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Laguna de Ruidera / David Blazquez

Parque Natural de las **LAGUNAS DE RUIDERA**

The Natural Park constitutes one of the most unique natural enclaves on the Iberian Peninsula. Its fifteen stepped lagoons that flow successively into one another, in a longitudinal direction, like a staircase descending the Pinilla river valley, are separated from each other by travertine or tufa barriers and have no equal in Spain, being very scarce worldwide. Alongside the lagoons with their characteristic submerged and terrestrial flora, we find in their basin and nearby slopes a vegetation and fauna associated with the Mediterranean environment.

The water in the lagoons comes from lateral springs located on the slopes; surface contributions from the Pinilla River and more than 70% of underground contributions.



THE KEY NATURAL ELEMENTS OF THE PROTECTED AREA ARE:

- Geomorphology with tufa formations generated by moss communities in carbonate waters
- Juniper Woodlands and Mixed Masses of Oak-Juniper
- Aquatic vegetation of the Lagoons.
- Fauna linked to aquatic and mediterranean environments.



NATURAL VALUES



LANDSCAPE

The main feature that we find to arrived the natural park is the abundance of water in an environment that is generally scarce in this element, as is the case in Campo de Montiel.

This watercourse constitutes what is called the Upper Guadiana, which flows between different lagoons, communicating with each other through underground currents and waterfalls of great beauty. 



Sunset/vicenfoto / Shutterstock



Landscape from viewpoint
Laguna del Rey / Tasón



Land E Scape waterfall/ Shutterstock



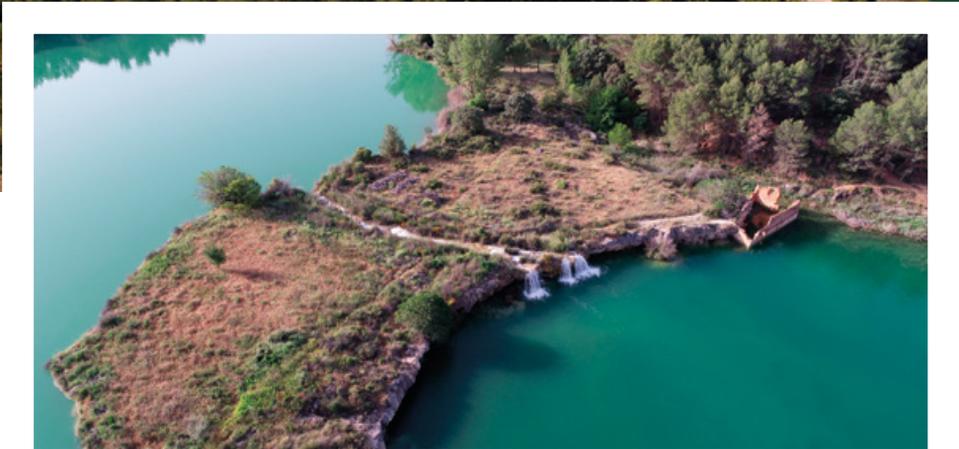
Laguna del Rey / David Blazquez



La Batana a La Colgada waterfall/ Tasón

► Around the lagoons, we can find gentle hills with hillside dominated by holm oaks that coexist with juniper thickets in the higher moorlands, and with valleys that, when precipitation

is abundant, pour their waters into the lagoons. In the natural park and its immediate surroundings, there are also extensive cultivated plots interspersed with patches of natural vegetation. ■



Salto de la Redondilla a la Lengua / Diana Lopez Perales_Shutterstock



Flora and vegetation

The holm oak is the dominant tree on the hillside and high areas, and it coexists with the Spanish juniper in the highest and coldest places (moorlands). In areas with stony soils, a dense shrub layer of kermes oak, thorns, rosemary and gorse is abundant. In some shaded areas and valleys, small stands of Pyrenean oak can be found, and on the margins of

the lakes, there are groves of elm, white poplar and planted poplar stands. On the shores, we find reed beds, rush beds, bulrush stands and sedge meadows, and on the travertine barriers and tufa formations, there are mosses and vegetation of carbonated waters. The bottom of the lagoon is covered by submerged meadows of charophytes. ■



Armeria quichotis/ Clara Manzano



Utricularia australis/ krolya25_Shutterstock



Vegetacion acuática / Clara Manzano



Cladium mariscus/ Nahhana_Shutterstock

ENDANGERED FLORA SPECIES: The



difference in depths of the lagoons enables the presence of various species of aquatic and shoreline flora. Among the most prominent species is the *Utricularia australis*, a carnivorous plant with aerial flowering although most of its plant remains submerged, or the subaquatic meadows of different species of charophyte algae. Also of importance are the formations of saw-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), constituting a habitat protected by the European Union and present on the edge of some lagoons. Among the terrestrial vegetation and flora, a unique endemic species of the Park stands out, the *Armeria quichotis*, as well as numerous species of orchids.



Marsh Harrier Mutan_Shutterstock

Wildlife

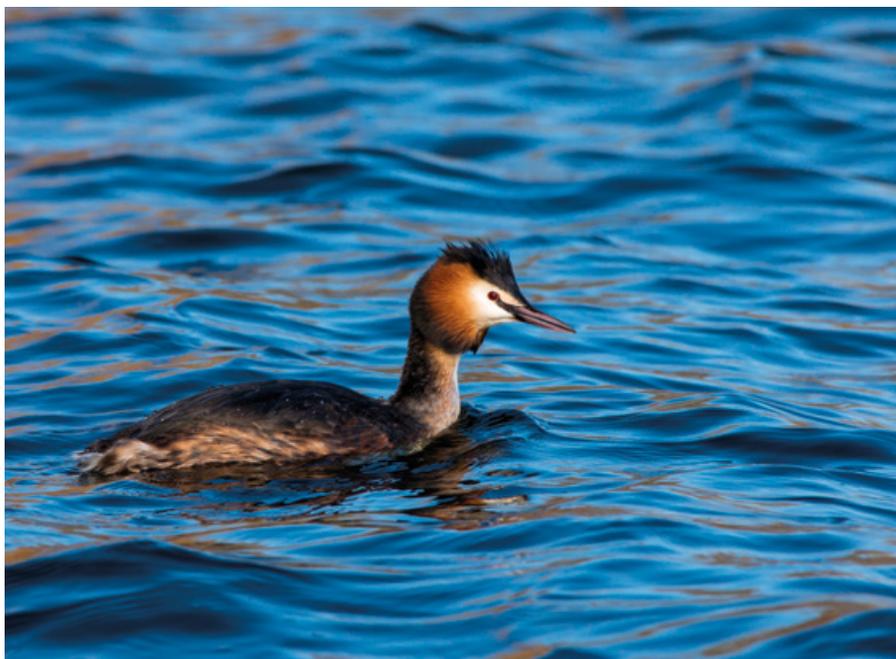
Linked to the aquatic environment, we can find species such as the Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), as well as fish like the peacock blenny (*Salaria fluviatilis*) or several species of barbels. Among the birdlife, the populations of western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) are very important, with one of the largest breeding colonies in Castilla-La Mancha, the great crested grebe (*Podiceps* ▶)



Barbel



Otter / Ian W Douglas_Shutterstock



Crested Grebe/ Ian W Douglas_Shutterstock

► *cristatus*), numerous birds associated with riverside groves like golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*), common nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) or warblers. Between the population of birds of prey, it is easy to observe the Iberian imperial eagle (*Aquila adalberti*), nesting in the vicinity of the Natural Park. Among those breeding within it are the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) and nocturnal species such as the Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*) and the Eurasian scops owl (*Otus scops*), the latter being very abundant and linked to groves next to wetland areas.

In the more remote areas of the lagoons, we can find the increasingly scarce wildcat (*Felis silvestris*) and Cabrera vole (*Microtus cabrerae*). The predator community is completed by the beech marten (*Martes foina*), common genet (*Genetta genetta*), fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), and badger (*Meles meles*). Among the ungulates, the colonization of the Iberian ibex (*Capra pyrenaica*) has recently occurred, easily detectable on cliffs and high areas. The presence of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) is abundant, while the roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) is also present to a lesser extent.

Among the reptiles, the spotted lizard, the staircase snake, and the bastard snake stand out. ■



Warbler/Pedro Gamo



Golden eagle/ Colin Seddon-Shutterstock



Goshawk/ Jesus Giraldo Gutierrez_Shutterstock



Cabrera vole/ Jose Luis González



Genet/ Agami Photo Agency_Shutterstock



Badger/ WildMedia_Shutterstock



Wild boar/ WildMedia_Shutterstock



ENDANGERED WILDLIFE SPECIES

The presence of significant populations of bats in caves and tunnels is highly notable. Among them, stand out the short. Other species such as the greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and the cave bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*) are also present.



The greater horseshoe bat/ Carl Allen_Shutterstock



La Lengua waterfall / Tasón

Geology and geomorphology

One of the most important elements of the Natural Park is the tuff barriers or travertines that separate the lagoons. They are formed through a physical-biological dynamic process over thousands of years, resulting in terraces, barriers, and folds. Rainwater passes through the porous ground and before reaching the aquifer, it acquires carbonate characteristics. As these waters emerge on the surface, they carry these carbonates with them, and by the action of the water flow, jumps, and the action of bacteria and moss, the

carbonates precipitate, thus forming the so-called “corbel” and “stone contains”, and the travertine barriers. These last ones are the ones that generate the cascades or waterfalls, which are so representative of the lagoons. Some waterfalls have heights of up to 15 meters, such as those we can observe in El Hundimiento or in the lagoons of Santos Morcillo, Redondilla, or Lengua. They are very fragile and rare elements in the world.

The travertines we see today have an approximate age of 10,000 years. ■



Travertine/ Clara Manzano

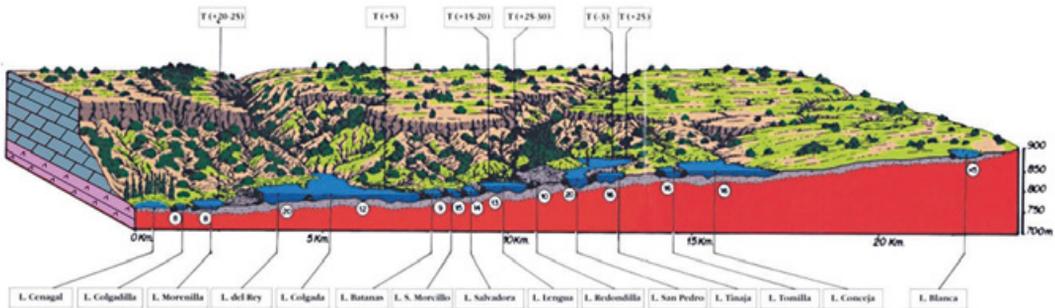


Hydrology

The hydrology of The Natural Park is a complex water system conditioned by the geology of the Campo de Montiel region. The water we can see in the lakes has two origins - the surface water from the streams that flow into the valley, and the groundwater from the Campo de Montiel

aquifer, previously known as aquifer 24, which traverses the permeable limestone materials of the valley..

The water flows under the lagoons and when other geological impermeable materials interrupt these currents, the lagoon is flooded.



- Terreno Tóxico.
- Terreno Tóxico Pléistoceno.
- Profundidad de la Laguna.
- Materiales Derivados Tóxicos.
- Granitoides (Quartzo intrusivo).
- Arcillas Margas y Yesos (Clásticos superiores).

Longitudinal Profile and Stepped Arrangement of Lagunas de Ruidera. / M.Á. García del Cura; J.A. González Martín; J. Cuevas-González; S. Ordóñez.



The lagoons

The lagoons that form this complex are: Blanca, Conceja, Tomilla, Tinaja, San Pedro, Redondilla, Lengua, Salvadora, Santos Morcillo, Batana, Colgada, Del Rey, Cueva Morenilla, Coladilla, and Cenagosa or Cenagal, and the Peñarroya reservoir (named in descending order from the valley).

Some of these lagoons reach depths of over 20 meters. The difference in elevation between the first lagoon (Blanca) and the last (Cenagosa) is 120 meters.



Location of the lagoons / Marina Serrano

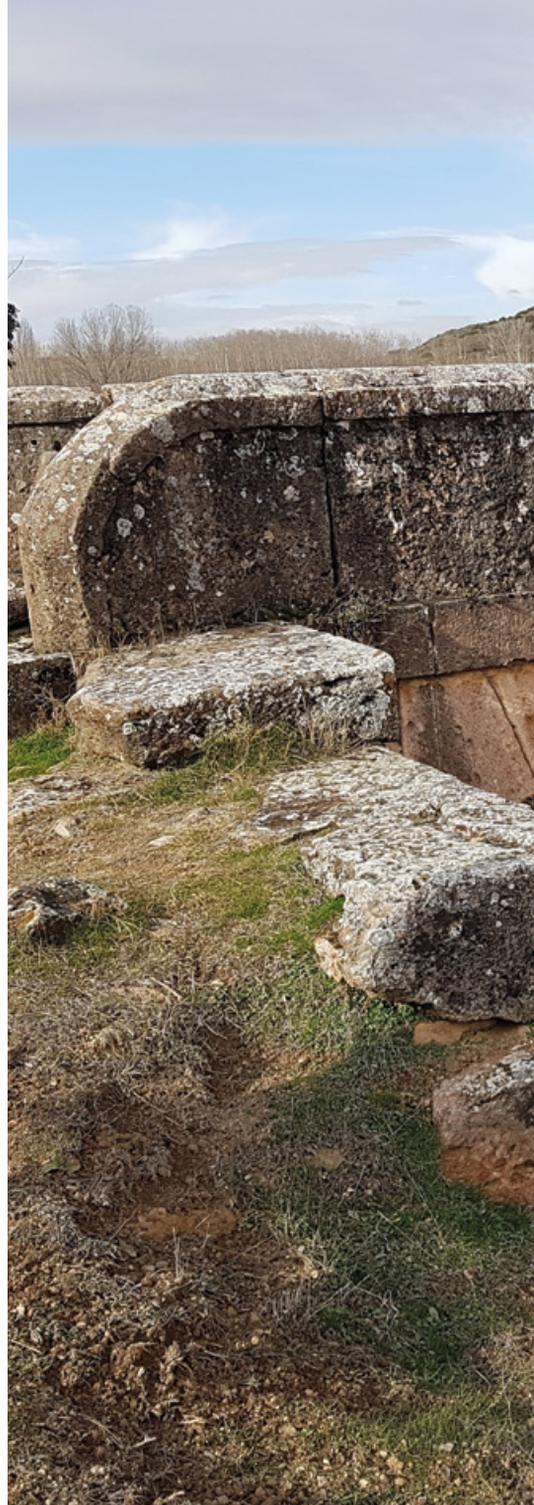


Topaceous barriers / Tasón

Human activity in Lagunas de Ruidera

The availability of water in abundance and throughout the year has been a very valuable resource for humans for millennia. Already in the Bronze Age, settlements were established in the current Natural Park spread throughout its surface, also controlling prominent passages through lookout posts and mortillas. The Roman civilization also leaves evidence of its presence, linked to the legendary city of Laminium (now Alhambra). After the Visigothic period in the Peninsula, it is the Arabs who occupy the territory until the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa leads it into Castilian hands, with the Military Orders of St. John of Jerusalem and Santiago being responsible for managing these lands.

In the 18th century, a significant event occurs with the construction of the Royal Gunpowder Factory in Ruidera. The architect Juan de Villanueva, responsible for the project of the current Prado Museum or the Royal Observatory in Retiro, Madrid, and a trusted figure of King Charles III and his son, the Infante Gabriel, is in charge of its design and execution. Subsequently, the same architect designs the Canal, known as the Great Prior's Canal, intended to provide irrigation water to the Manchegan fields from the Ruidera Lakes. This major engineering feat can be admired today at locations such as the lock bridge. Later, at the beginning of the 20th century,







Esparto/ Clara Manzano

various hydroelectric power plants and associated canals are installed, which largely determine the current landscape. On the other hand, the useage of natural resources such as grazing, beekeeping,

fishing, hunting, and esparto have also influenced the landscape to shape it as we know it today.

Currently, the area is home to villages with a considerable population (more than 10,000 inhabitants in the areas within the park). This, along with the influx of visitors, results in the area being significantly anthropized.

EL QUIJOTE (DON QUIXOTE)

Miguel de Cervantes located some passages of his brilliant work Don Quijote de La Mancha (Don Quixote) in the lagoons of Ruidera. References to the



Cueva de Montesinos/ Clara Manzano



cave of Montesinos, whose bats Cervantes called “birds of hell,” the Castle of Rochafriada, and the hermitage of San Pedro, are also reflected by Cervantes..

WETLANDS OF LA MANCHA

The park is also part of the Wetlands of La Mancha Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO recognition of places where the balance between people and their environment is sought. These are representative spaces of valuable ecosystems considered suitable for conservation, scientific research, and the application of sustain-

able development models in which the local population takes center stage.

The Wetlands of la Mancha Biosphere Reserve spans across the provinces of Toledo, Cuenca, Albacete and Ciudad Real, encompassing areas that have earned designation as Natural Parks and Reserves, and even inclusion in the National Parks Network through the Tablas de Daimiel.



Mancha Húmeda
RESERVA DE LA BIOSFERA

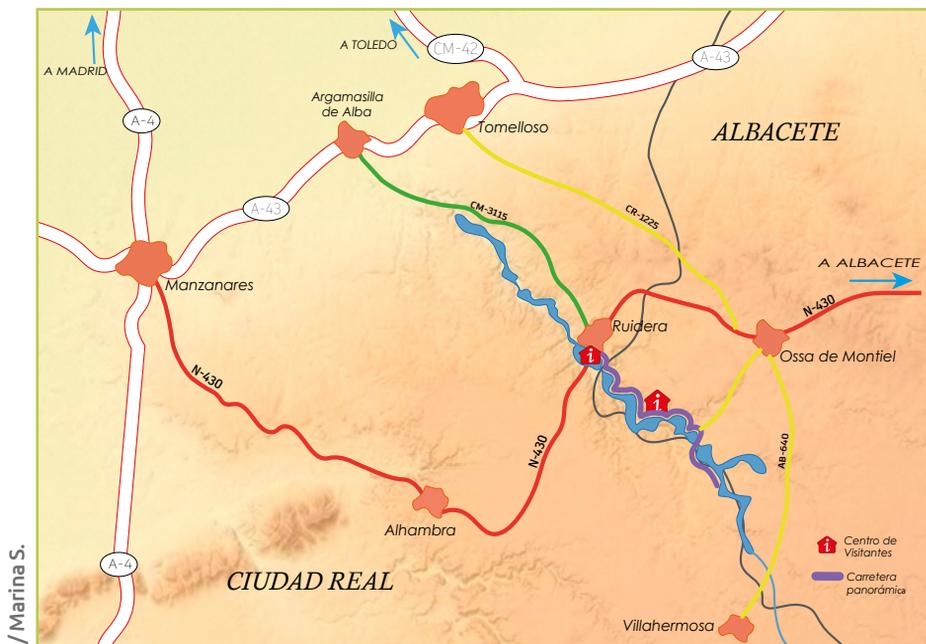
N A T U R A L E A L A S L A G U N A S D E R U I D E R A

“Naturalear” is to immerse oneself in the natural world, to venture into the territory, to explore its paths, to peacefully enjoy its villages and nature, leaving behind no trace except that of the respect with which we do so.

Access the public use map of the Park in pdf format:

Map

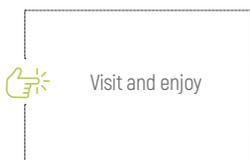
Information



The Natural Park Lagunas de Ruidera is located in the Upper Valley of the Guadiana River (or Pinilla River) and serves as the provincial boundary between Ciudad Real and Albacete. From Ciudad Real or Madrid, you can reach Manzanares via the N-IV, and from there take the N-430 road, passing through La Solana, Alambra, and Ruidera. From Albacete, take the N-430..

Learn more and start your visit

At the end of this guide, you will find more details about the Natural Park.



By organizing your visit appropriately, you will make the most out of it. Some pretasks before your visit are:

- Choose your accommodation depending on your activities.
- Choose companies and accommodations committed to sustainable tourism, identified by the Park.

- Book activities or visits in advance
- Anticipate the appropriate equipment and clothing beforehand
- Visit the park in a different season to summer, all the seasons are exceptional in the lagoons

Visitor's centres are the ideal spot to start your visit. They will provide you with more information, values of the Park and will help you to plan further details of your stay.

In addition, many trails and routes start from them.



OSSA DE MONTIEL RECEPTION CENTRE



The Visitor Reception Centre is located in the municipality of Ossa de Montiel, in the former Alonso Quijano youth hostel, which has been restored and adapted for this purpose. It is situated in the central area of the park, on the road that runs through it, next to the La Colgada lagoon.

VISITOR'S CENTRE IN THE PARK



They are open during weekends, bank holidays and long-weekends from Easter to November. Please, check opening days in the park website.

The centre features an interpretive exhibition covering both the natural and human environments, as well as various models and an audiovisual room. Outdoors, there is a bird feeding station with an adjacent observation area, allowing visitors to enjoy the different species that use it. The centre also has a car park and a rest area with tables and children's furniture.



RUIDERA INFORMATION POINT



The Information Point is located in the municipality of Ruidera, where there is also a small exhibition of the values of the Park.

Outside, you can enjoy a garden and the old canal that supplied water to the Royal Gunpowder Factory, which runs alongside it.

The opening calendars, as well as the activities that take place in these centres, can be consulted on the park's website.

VENTURE INTO THE PARK

The Natural Park of the Ruidera Lagoons has viewpoints and marked trails to explore the area and discover it. They are spread throughout the Park and cater to the different interests and abilities of visitors.



HIKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKE ROUTES

The enabled routes in the Park, although presented in the two categories below, can be said to be, in general, of low difficulty and all can be walked

or cycled by visitors of all types. It's an active and healthy way to get to know the Park that you should do responsibly to avoid the risks that may occur.

EASY TRAILS: For families with kids and inexperienced hikers.

Peñarroya Interpretative trail

- 4 ● Argamasilla de Alba
→ 1, 80 Km

Montesinos cave trail:

- 3 ● Ossa de Montiel → 0,80 km

Laguna Blanca route.

- 2 ● Villahermosa. → 8 kms

Ossero trail

- 8 ● Ossa de Montiel. → 5.30 kms

00 Trail number on the map

→ Linear trail

Cultural interest

Vehicle route

● Starting point

Environmental interest

Loop trail

MTB route

INTERMEDIATE TRAILS: For more experienced hikers. They require preparation for the journey and appropriate equipment. Of greater length or with some complicated point or certain risk

- 5 **Castillo de Peñarroya route**
 ● Ruidera. → 21 Km
 🏃 🚶 🚲

- 1 **Pie de en medio route**
 ● Ossa de Montiel ↻ 6 km
 🏃 🚶 🚲

- 6 **Left bank trails**
 6.1 Laguna del Rey-Central de Santa Elena ● Ruidera → 6,9 km
 🏃 🚶 🚲

- 6.2 Central de Santa Elena-Laguna de San Pedro → 5,30 km
 🏃 🚶 ➡ 🚲

- 6.3 Mesa del Almendral viewpoint (Ossa de Montiel)
 ↻ 2,5 km kms
 🏃 🚶 ➡ 🚲

- 6.4 Linking trail through Tinada de las Hazadillas
 Ossa de Montiel → 1,70 km
 🏃 🚶



Viewpoint



Peñarroya castle

- Rochafriada castle trail:**
 7 ● Ossa de Montiel
 → 4,30 km kms
 🏃 🚶 🚲



Footbridge to the island



Viewpoint

GUADIANA NATURAL PATH

The route follows the Guadiana River from the Lagunas de Ruidera lakes to its mouth in Ayamonte. The park's two initial trails coincide with trails 2, 10 and 5 of the park, which it then continues. Consult the public use map in this guide.

Stage 1:

📍 Laguna Blanca – Ruidera ➡ 12,40 km



Stage 2::

📍 Ruidera - Argamasilla de Alba ➡ 30,90 km (12 km en el parque)



Viewpoint



VIEWPOINTS

The Natural Park of the Ruidera Lagoons has a splendid network of viewpoints from which to enjoy the landscape of the lagoons. The park's Route 3 stands out, a circular trail through the Viewpoints of Mesa del Almendral.



Viewpoint



Panoramic road view/Ignacio Mosqueda

PANORAMIC ROAD VIEW

The road that surrounds the lakes in the central part of the Park has been adapted to improve accessibility and landscape perception. The use of private motor vehicles is maintained with a single central lane for two-way traffic, and two lanes for bicycles have been implemented on both sides, as well as a pedestrian path has been conditioned

along most of its route. This facilitates and prioritizes visiting and enjoying the Park through hiking or cycling.

10  Ruidera  10,85 km
Level: Easy



00 Trail number on the map

 Linear trail

 Cultural interest

 Vehicle route

 Starting point

 Environmental interest

 Loop trail

 MTB route

SITES AND RESOURCES OF INTEREST



• PEÑARROYA. CASTLE

It is one of the fortresses that still remain in the territory that the Knights Hospitaller possessed in La Mancha, the so-called

Campo de San Juan. Its location, 12 kilometres from Argamasilla de Alba, is the northern entrance to the Lagunas de Ruidera park.



• ARGAMASILLA DE ALBA CAVE MUSEUM.

The cave of Casa de Medrano, in the heart of Argamasilla de Alba, continues to convey the magic of the blend of

legends and realities that place it as the location where Miguel de Cervantes was imprisoned and began writing the most important work in the Castilian language: 'El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de La Mancha' (Don Quixote).



• MONTESINOS CAVE.

80 metros de profundidad, 80 metres deep, on the outskirts of the municipal term of Ossa de Montiel (Albacete), there is La Cueva de Montesinos which has been forming over centuries due to the dissolution processes of

rainwater in the local rocks, and inside it flows a small stream.



It is mandatory to enter the cave with tour guides and it is recommended to go equipped with torches and comfortable footwear, as there are some difficult and dangerous steps.



• ESCLUSA BRIDGE.

The Esclusa bridge, built in the second half of the 18th century according to the brilliant architect Juan de Villanueva's project, is one

of the historical-architectural treasures of the Upper Guadiana that best represents the former royalty of the Ruidera site



• ETNOGRÁFICO OSSA DE MONTIEL MUSEUM.

It is situated a mile and a half from the town, on the Villahermosa road in a rehabilitated labourer's hut, one of the few

that remain standing today. Visits only by appointment.



• ALHAMBRA CASTLE AND VILLA.

Magnificent example of a castle-hill, meaning, one whose shape exactly matches that of the hill on which it stands. Also

found were burials and constructions from the Bronze Age and Iron Age







Interpretive diving./ Julian Maldonado_Shutterstock

GUIDED TOURS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Park activity program offers guided tours and other free activities for all visitors. Please, book in advance. Local ecotourism and active tourism companies offer different guided activities:

- **Interpretive diving .**
- **Routes in kayak.**
- **Hiking.**
- **Astronomical observation.**
- **Birdwatching.**
- **Boat rental.**



Routes in kayak / Julian Maldonado_Shutterstock



LIVE YOUR SPACE



REGULATION OF ACTIVITIES

Hiking and cycling tours or horse riding routes along the designated trails are permitted. If the activity is organised by a group, entity or company, authorisation from the Park is required.

- Interpretive diving should always be carried out through a company or organization that oversees the activity from the perspective of user safety and the conservation of underwater natural values.
- Private navigation by kayaks is permitted on the Rey, Colgada, Santos Morcillo, Salvadora, Redondilla, San Pedro, Cueva Morcillo, and Tinaja lagoons for a maximum of 5 boats and needs permission from 6 onwards..
- Bathing can be carried out when the responsible Town Councils sees it appropriate in the previously mentioned lagoons and in the White Lagoon. It is not allowed in the channels between the lagoons.
- It is strictly forbidden to climb on the existing travertine barriers between the lagoons.
- Canyoning and white-water rafting are not permitted.
- Climbing may only be carried out in the designated areas.

Similarly, the use of quads and all-terrain vehicles is restricted to paved roads.

- Entry to the Park with companion dogs is permitted, but they must be kept on a leash when walking the routes through the Hazadillas and Era Vieja Wildlife Refuge.



Bicycle route



Astronomical observation.

Fishing may take place during its authorized season and under specific regulations in the lagoons Rey, Colgada, Santos Morcillo, Salvadora, Redondilla, San Pedro, Tinaja, and Peñarroya reservoir. In all of them, fishing is only allowed from the right bank, meaning fishing is not permitted on the Wildlife Refuge bank or in the channels between lagoons or upstream of the Tinaja lagoon



PRUG



Safety, rules and recommendations. Help us protect the park!

- *Using the trails and other equipment in the natural areas may entail some risks. Take necessary precautions to enjoy them responsibly.*
- *Do not make noises disturbing the wildlife or causing inconvenience to other visitors.*
- *Help us keeping the natural area clean. Do not litter; only dispose litter in the bins located the urban areas.*
- *No fires permitted. Please do not throw burning cigarettes.*
- *Free camping is not allowed.*
- *Please respect flora, wildlife and protected area.*
- *Using soaps and detergents is not allowed in natural water courses.*
- *Keep pets supervised at all times.*
- *Please obey all signs and indications from the park rangers and support staff of the protected area.*
- *Try to avoid motor vehicles when possible. When in use, maximum speed limit is 30 km/h on trails and paths.*
- *In order to prevent problems of soil erosion and for your safety, do not leave designated paths and trails.*
- *Extreme temperatures can be reached both in summer and winter, please dress accordingly. Appropriate footwear is required all year round.*

Learn more

Park website:: <https://areasprotegidas.castillalamancha.es/lagunas-de-ruidera>

Email: pnlagunasruidera@jccm.es

Touristic information in Ruidera, Ossa de Montiel and Argamasilla de Alba.



LAGUNAS
DE RUIDERA NATURAL
PARK WEBSITE



PROTECTED
AREAS



ZEC LAGUNAS
DE RUIDERA



CASTILLA-LA MANCHA
TOURISM







Naturalea

CASTILLA-LA MANCHA

DO YOU PRACTISE NATURALEAR?



Learn more

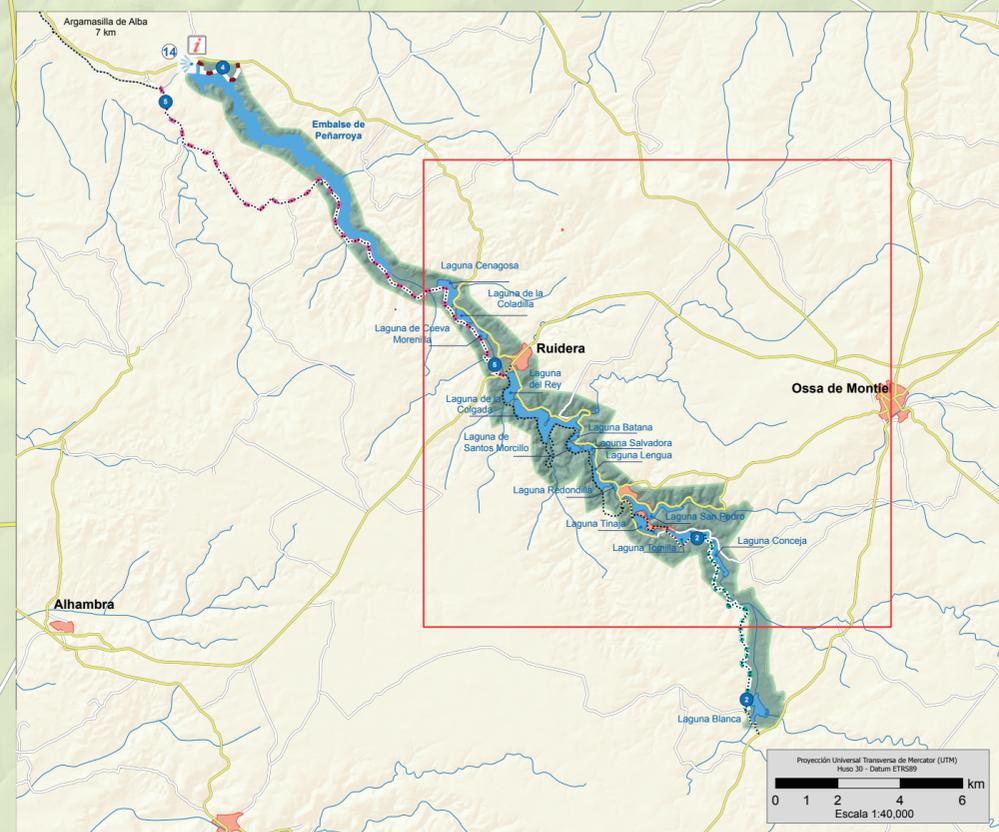
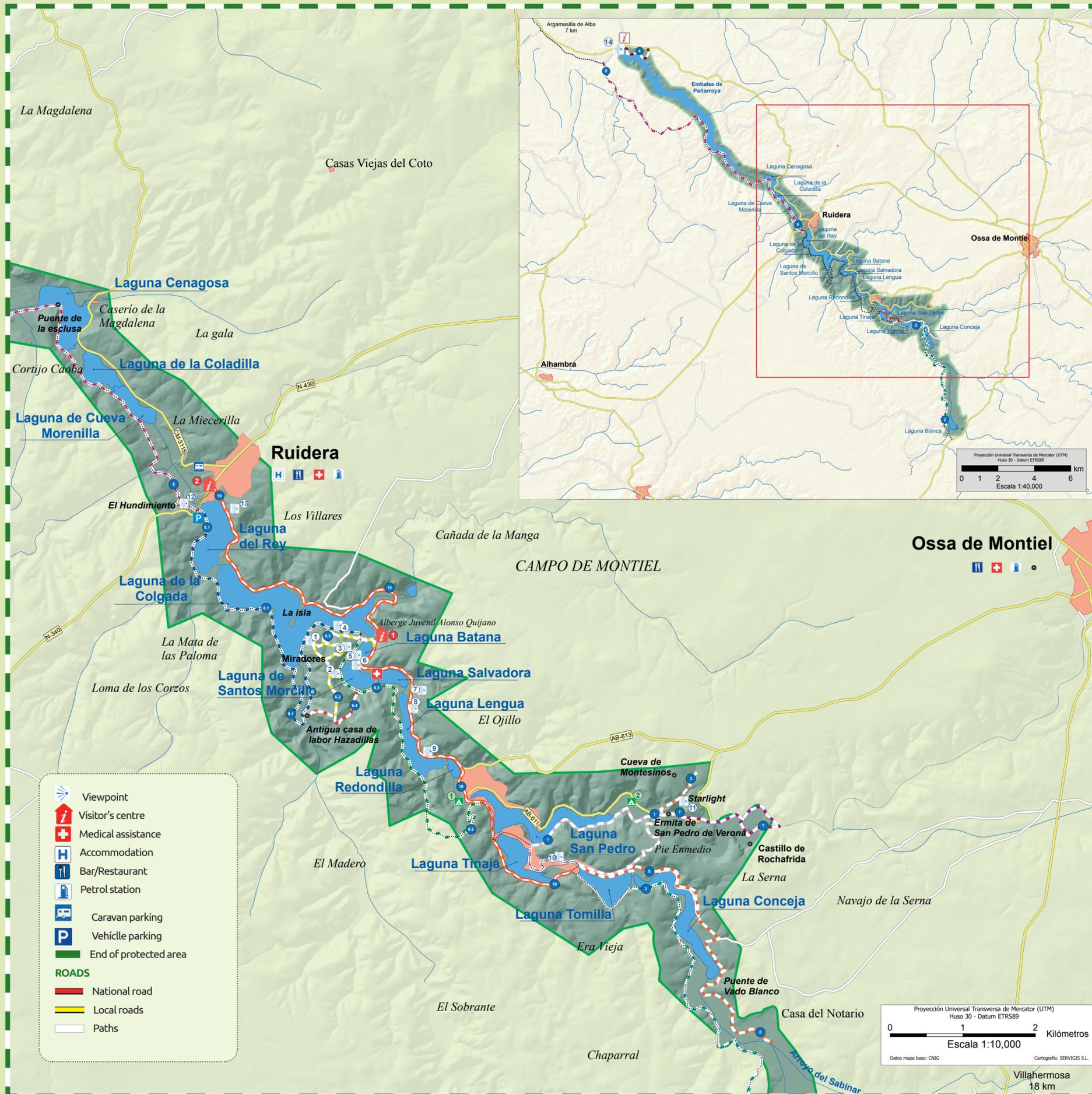


Castilla-La Mancha

LAGUNAS DE RUIDERA

[▶ go back to Naturalea el Alto Tajo](#)

PUBLIC USE MAP OF THE NATURAL PARK



VIEWPOINTS

- 1 MESA DEL ALMENDRAL 1
- 2 MESA DEL ALMENDRAL 2
- 3 MESA DEL ALMENDRAL 3
- 4 LA COLGADA
- 5 SANTOS MORCILLO-BATANA 1
- 6 SANTOS MORCILLO-BATANA 2
- 7 SALVADORA
- 8 LA LENGUA
- 9 LA LENGUA-REDONDILLA
- 10 LA TINAJA
- 11 STARLIGHT
- 12 HUNDIMIENTO
- 13 MIRADOR DEL REY
- 14 CASTILLO DE PEÑARROYA

VISITOR'S CENTRE

- 1 ALONSO QUIJANO (OSSA DE MONTIEL)
- 2 RUIDERA

CAMPING (Private management)

- 1 LOS BATANES (GESTIÓN PRIVADA)
- 2 SAN PEDRO

NATURAL PATH DEL GUADIANA

- STAGE 1** LAGUNA BLANCA – RUIDERA: 12,40 KM
- STAGE 2** RUIDERA – ARGAMASILLA DE ALBA: 30,90 KM (12 KM IN THE PARK)



DOWNLOAD THIS MAP

Scan the QR CODE to learn more about the Natural Park Lagunas de Ruidera



TRAILS IN THE NATURAL PARK

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 1 | PIE DE ENMEDIO TRAIL | 5,9 KM |
| 2 | LA LAGUNA BLANCA TRAIL | 7,9 KM |
| 3 | LA CUEVA DE MONTESINOS TRAIL | 0,80 KM |
| 4 | INTERPRETATIVA DEL CASTILLO DE PEÑARROYA TRAIL | 3,5 KM |
| 5 | DEL CASTILLO DE PEÑARROYA TRAIL | 19,9 KM |
| 6 | MARGEN IZQUIERDO. LAGUNA DEL REY – CENTRAL DE SANTA ELENA TRAIL | 3,1 KM |
| 7 | MARGEN IZQUIERDO. CENTRAL DE SANTA ELENA-LAGUNA DE SAN PEDRO TRAIL | 5,1 KM |
| 8 | MARGEN IZQUIERDO - CIRCULAR POR LOS MIRADORES DE LA MESA DEL ALMENDRAL TRAIL | 6,7 KM |
| 9 | MARGEN IZQUIERDO. ENLACE POR TINADA LAS HAZADILLAS TRAIL | 1,2 KM |
| 10 | CASTILLO DE ROCHAFRIDA TRAIL | 2,8 KM |
| 11 | OSSERO TRAIL | 5,3 KM |
| 12 | PEATONAL DE LA CARRETERA (CARRETERA PANORÁMICA) TRAIL | 10,9 KM |

RULES IN THE PARK:

- Do not make noises disturbing the fauna or causing inconvenience to other visitors.
- Do not litter. Dispose garbage in the bins located in the urban areas.
- No fires permitted. Please do not throw burning cigarettes.
- Free camping is not allowed.
- Non-authorized drones are not allowed.
- Keep pets supervised at all times.
- Please follow all signs and indications from park officers and support staff of the protected area.
- Maximum speed limit is 30 km/h on trails and open paths for motor vehicles.
- Parking out of designated areas is prohibited.

FOR YOUR SAFETY:

- Extreme temperatures can be reached both in summer and winter, please dress accordingly.
- Appropriate footwear is required all year round.
- Using trails and other equipment in the natural areas may entail some risks. Take necessary precautions and enjoy them responsibly.
- Please, stay on the paths designated by the nature park.
- Railings, handrails and similar infrastructures are elements to delimitate and to close the trails. They are not protective or security elements. Do not climb or lean on them to prevent falls.



NATURAL PATH OF ORIENTAL GUADIANA

The trail follows the Guadiana River from the Lagunas de Ruidera flowing into Ayamonte.

The first two stages run through the park:

STAGE 1: LAGUNA BLANCA – RUIDERA (LAGUNA SAN PEDRO) ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

12,4 km

Level: Easy

Distinctive features:The trail runs through the high lagoons of the natural park (from La Blanca to San Pedro). The vegetation landscape is composed of junipers (*Juniperus thurifera*), holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*) and low scrubland with thyme and rosemary, which alternate with some agricultural plots and, in the areas closest to the lagoons, we can sometimes find poplar plantations from former clearings.

At the beginning of the trail, motorized traffic is only permitted for authorized vehicles.

Important: The signposted path ends at Laguna San Pedro, with an unmarked discontinuity until the start of the 6.2 path, which we will follow along the left bank until we reach the 5.1 path, which we will take to the population of Ruidera.



STAGE 2 RUIDERA - ARGAMASILLA DE ALBA ●●●●

● Ruidera

→ ● ● ● ● ● (12 km in the park)

Level: Easy

Distinctive features: The stage begins in the town of Ruidera with a mandatory stop at the viewpoint of the Hundimiento waterfall. It then passes through the low lagoons of the Natural Park, characterized by the extensive development of reed beds, bulrushes, and tamarisks, constituting an excellent refuge and nesting place for waterfowl. It continues along the left bank of the Peñarroya reservoir in an area of Mediterranean forest, and after 12 kilometers through the park, it exits towards the end of the stage in Argamasilla de Alba.



HIKING TRAILS



3 CUEVA DE MONTESINOS TRAIL ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

0,8 km

Level: Easy

Distinctive features: Trail of the mythical and universal Montesinos Cave, known literary cave for appearing in two chapters of Don Quixote of La Mancha. The route starts at the hermitage of San Pedro and ascends through the slope of the almagra, passing by five stops and reaching Montesinos Cave where we can immerse ourselves in it and live the adventures that the Knight Hidalgo experienced there.

4 INTERPRETATIVE TRAIL CASTILLO DE PEÑARROYA ●●●●

● Argamasilla de Alba

→ ● ● ● ● ●

1,8 km

Level: Easy

Distinctive features: The Peñarroya Castle is a strategic location in the natural park to understand the relationship between man and his natural environment. This is a path around Peñarroya Castle. It consists of six thematic stops that develop six different themes we can appreciate on this route of just two kilometers, where we can enjoy a viewpoint halfway through the journey along with an interpretive panel.



LEFT BANK ROUTES

ROUTE 6.2 LAGUNA DE SAN PEDRO – CENTRAL DE SANTA ELENA – OSSA DE MONTIEL ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

5,3 km

Level: Intermediate

Distinctive features: This is a linear route that follows the shores of the lagoons Rey, Colgada and Batana providing spectacular views of the surrounding landscape and the lagoons themselves. The trail begins at the N-430 road and ends at the Santa Elena Power Station. It is an excellent route for spotting wildlife and observing the geomorphology of the lagoons along the way.



ROUTE 6.3 VIEWPOINTS MESA DEL ALMENDRAL ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

2,5 km

Level: Intermediate

Distinctive features: This is a loop trail that starts from the Santa Elena Central and climbs up to 3 viewpoints located on the Mesa del Almendral. Spectacular views from one of the highest points on the park's trails, passing by numerous viewpoints. Absolutely essential.



ROUTE 6.4 LINKING ROUTE THROUGH LA TINADA DE LAS HAZADILLAS ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

1,7 km

Level: Intermediate

Distinctive features: This is a link that allows you to pass from the Hanging Lake to Santos Morcillo via the Tinada de las Hazadillas, serving as an alternative connection to the linear routes 1 and 2. It also enables linking with loop route number 3



HIKING TRAILS

7 CASTILLO DE ROCHAFRIDA TRAIL ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

4,3 km

Level: Intermediate

Distinctive features: One of the most beautiful romances of medieval lyric poetry says: "In Castile there is a castle, called Rocafriada, they call the castle Roca, and the fountain they call Frida..." A four-kilometer trail, starting and ending at the hermitage of San Pedro, consists of seven stops along the route, including the castle of Rochafriada. The route is easy except for the climb to the castle, which is somewhat more demanding.



8 OSSERO TRAIL ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

5,30 km

Level: Easy

Distinctive features: This trail starts in baño de las Mulas, at the end of Tomilla lagoon and follows part of the Abuchao trail towards Ossa de Montiel then taking the road towards Ossero, reaching the white ford where it can connect with the route of the White Lagoon. It skirts the Tomilla and Conceja lagoons.



10 SCENIC ROAD ●●●●

● Ruidera

→ ● ● ● ● ●

10,85 km

Level: Intermediate

Distinctive features: This trail coincides and is part of the road that skirts the lakes in the central part of the Park. It has been adapted to improve accessibility and landscape perception. The use of private motor vehicles is maintained with a single central lane for two-way traffic, and two lanes for bicycles have been implemented on both sides, as well as a pedestrian path has been conditioned along most of its route. This facilitates and prioritizes visiting and enjoying the Park through hiking or cycling.



HIKING TRAILS

1 PIE DE EN MEDIO ROUTE ●●●●

● Start: Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

6.00kms

Level: Easy

Distinctive features: Interpretive loop trail that starts from the hermitage of San Pedro, in the village of the same name, passing by Pie de Enmedio and skirting three lagoons, Tomilla, Tinaja, and San Pedro. It is six kilometers with a maximum elevation gain of 75 meters and a duration of an hour and a half. The trail quickly gains height to reach an evocative balcony overlooking the lagoons. It descends to the valley on the southern slope, and finally follows a solitary path along the shores of the San Pedro lagoon.



2 LA LAGUNA BLANCA ROUTE ●●●●

● Villahermosa

→ ● ● ● ● ●

8 km

Level: Easy

Distinctive features: It is an 8km linear route (one way), following the road that borders the lakes, at the end of which you'll find a parking area for your car. It's there where you can start this route, which in its first 2km borders Lake Conceja, and will take you to the first of the Ruidera Lakes, White Lake, with a very different morphology to the others. The path is in a regular condition, and the route is quite flat.

HIKING TRAILS



5 CASTILLO DE PEÑARROYA ROUTE ●●●●

● Ruidera

→ ● ● ● ● ●

21 km

Level: Easy

Distinctive features: This is a linear route of 21 km (one way only), starting near the Ruidera cemetery, passing along the left bank of the low lagoons Cueva Morenilla, Coladilla, and Cenagosa, and following the shore of the Peñarroya Reservoir. You will reach its dam and the Peñarroya Castle located next to it. The route is fairly flat, and the path is in good condition. Initially, the route runs along the edges of the low lagoons and the reservoir. After a steep climb, it reaches a plateau dotted with farmland, vineyards, and some patches of Mediterranean forest. Finally, it crosses the Guadiana canal to ascend to the castle.

6 MARGEN IZQUIERDO ROUTES

ROUTE 6.1 LAGUNA DEL REY – CENTRAL DE SANTA ELENA ●●●●

● Ossa de Montiel

→ ● ● ● ● ●

6,9 km

Level: Intermediate

Distinctive features: This is a linear route that follows the shores of the lagoons Rey, Colgada and Batana providing spectacular views of the surrounding landscape and the lagoons themselves. The trail begins at the N-430 road and ends at the Santa Elena Power Station. It is an excellent route for spotting wildlife and observing the geomorphology of the lagoons along the way.



TECHNICAL SHEET

• **NAME:**Lagunas de Ruidera Natural Park

• **AREA:** 3.772ha

• **PROVINCES AND VILLAGES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TERRITORY TO THE PARK:** In the province of Albacete, 1 municipality: Ossa de Montiel. In the province of Ciudad Real, 4 municipalities: Ruidera, Alhambra, Argamasilla de Alba, Villahermosa.

• **SOCIOECONOMIC INFLUENCE AREA:** composed by villages integrated in the natural park.

• **LAW DECLARING THE PROTECTED AREA:** Royal Decree 2610/1979, of July 13, declaring the Lagunas de Ruidera Natural Park and its surroundings.

• **OTHER TOOLS TO PROTECT AND RECOGNISE THE PARK:** Red Natura 2000 network "ZEC Lagunas de Ruidera ES4210017".

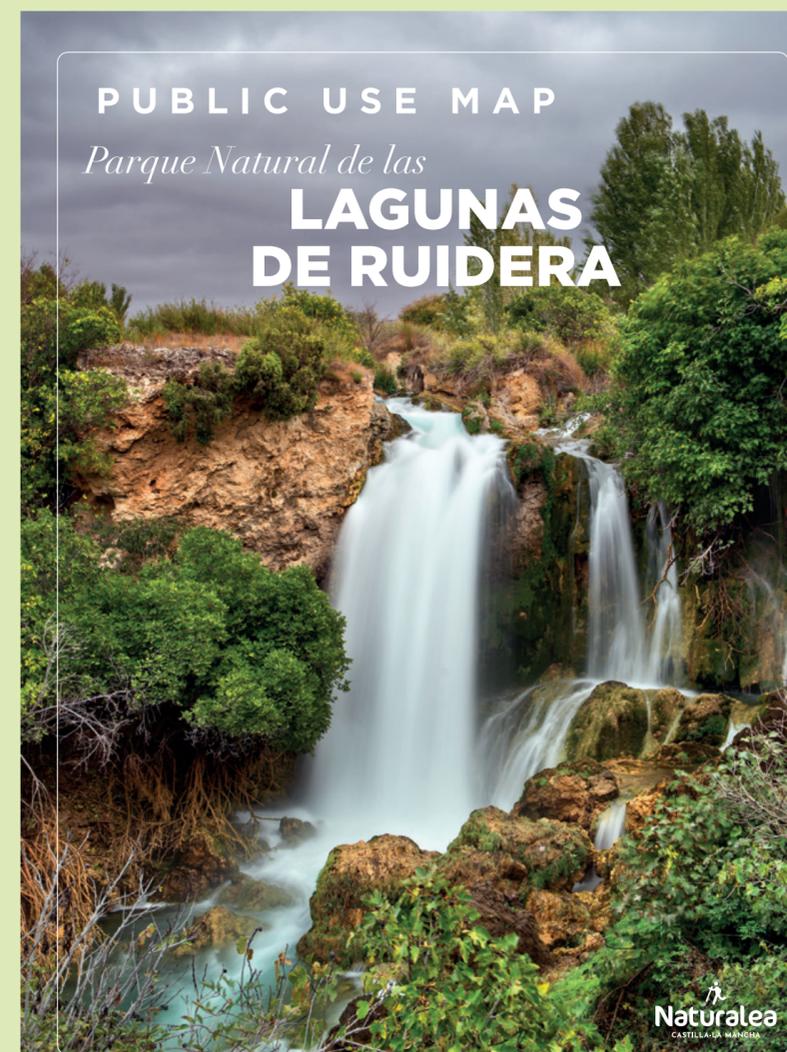
Mancha Húmeda Wetland Reserve.

Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar).

• **PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT:** Master Plan for the Use and Management of the Park, effective by Resolution of December 5 of 1995, of the Dirección General de Medio Ambiente Natural, ordering the publication in the D.O.C.M of Master Plan for the Use and Management of the Natural Park Lagunas de Ruidera (D.O.C.M. nº 61 of 15-12-1995)

SYMBOLS FOR ALL ROUTES

- Starting point
- Loop trail
- Linear trail
- Suitable route for MTB
- 📍 Point of interest
- 👁 Viewpoint
- 🏠 Visitor's centre



PUBLIC USE MAP

Parque Natural de las

LAGUNAS DE RUIDERA