



Natural Park of Cadí-Moixeró

The Natural Park of Cadí-Moixeró encompasses 41,060 hectares, spread over three regions: L'Alt Urgell, El Berguedà and La Cerdanya. It is classified as a mountain park, as its altitudes range between 800 and 2,648 metres. The two great Cadí and Moixeró mountain ranges make an impressive Pre-Pyrenean mountain barrier. The Pedraforca, Tosa and Puigllançada are highly differentiated units.

The vegetation and fauna in the Park is of great interest as the varied climate conditions and altitudes mean that alpine, euro-Siberian and Mediterranean species can be found.

Between 50% and 100% of the European or world populations of plant species such as the Pyrenean violet (*Ramonda myconi*), the *Xatardia scabra*, the zigzag larkspur (*Delphinium montanum*), the Austrian Dragonhead (*Dracocephalum austriacum*) and the yellow gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) are found in the Park.

As far as the fauna is concerned, there are a great number of invertebrates listed: 92 molluscs, 218 arachnids and 75% of the daytime butterflies of Catalonia. There are 249 listed species of vertebrates. Notable mammals include the chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), the roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and the European pine martin (*Martes martes*); birds such as the capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), the boreal owl (*Aegolius funereus*), the black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*), the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*); reptiles such as the green lizard (*Lacerta viridis*) and the western whip snake (*Coluber viridiflavus*); amphibians such as the Pyrenean brook newt (*Euproctus asper*) the common frog (*Rana temporaria*), and also fish such as the brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), the Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*) and the minnow (*Phoxinus phoxinus*).

Photographs: Jordi Ruiz Olmo and the Archive of the Natural Park of Cadí-Moixeró Plan: David Potrony Drawings: Daniel Olivera

The Partial Natural Reserve of Segre-Prullans

In 1987, the partial natural reserves of Segre-Prullans and of El Riu de la Llosa were created with the aim of guaranteeing the survival of the last otter (*Lutra lutra*) populations.

The Partial Natural Reserve of Segre-Prullans, through which the route runs, encompasses the river and its banks in the municipal areas of Martinet, Bellver de Cerdanya and Prullans and in 1992, was included in the Plan for Areas of Natural Interest (PEIN) under the name of Riberes de l'Alt Segre.

The water of the Alt Segre is inhabited by species of great interest, such as otters or polecats (*Mustela putorius*), among the mammals and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) or minnows (*Phoxinus phoxinus*) among the fish. There are also amphibians such as palmate newts (*Triturus helveticus*), which are found in very few parts of the country. Birds are the most diverse group of vertebrates in the fluvial ecosystems, in particular white-throated dippers (*Cinclus cinclus*), grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) or mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), among others.



Park centre:

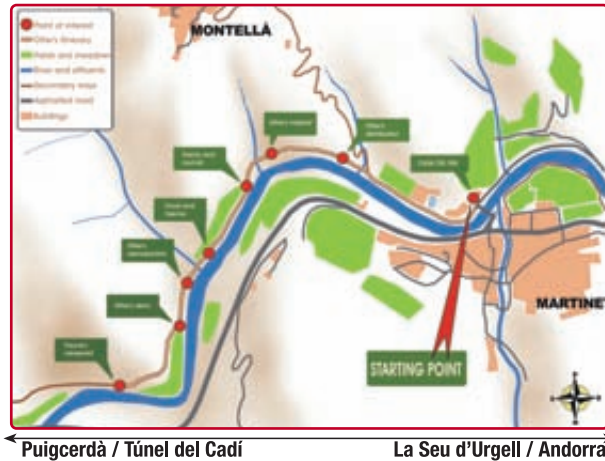
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 Further information: www.parcscdecatalunya.net/cadi.htm

The otter route



How to get there

To follow the route, you should go to Martinet de Cerdanya, along the N-260, and when you reach the bus shelter and the car park, you should cross over the River Segre, where you will find the Casa del Riu -the old abattoir, and the Riberes del Segre Woodland, where there is a parking area. The signpost showing the start of the route is found here.



The Casa del Riu – Riberes del Segre Woodland

To get to know this area a little better, it is a good idea, before starting the route, to visit the **Casa del Riu**, which is in the old abattoir building. This centre has a significant exhibition about fluvial ecosystems: the main river course, riverbank woodlands and their associated fauna.



You may visit it, in the summer, from Monday to Saturday, from 10 am to 12 pm and from 4 to 8 pm, and on Sundays and holidays from 10 am to 2 pm. At other times of the year, groups can book visits by calling the Park Centre (tel.: +34 93 824 41 15) or Martinet de Cerdanya Town Hall (tel.: +34 973 51 50 12).

Outside, as a complement to the exhibition, there is the **Riberes del Segre Woodland**, where you can take a stroll around to observe the most representative riverbank plant species.



What you will see there

The itinerary starts at the path to Montellà, heading towards Sant Martí dels Castells, coinciding with the Sant Jaume path. Once you have gone past the sporting facilities, leave behind the steps that climb up to the centre of Montellà and continue along the track, which follows the river. Diverse panels along the path will inform you about specific aspects of otters: where to find them, their distribution in the Catalan Lands, their habitat, their tracks and sounds, their excrement and food, their reproduction, their dens and the other species that live there.

A careful look will let you observe the river, at its middle course, with its flood plains and meanders, very important during the thaw period and in the case of great rises in the water level. The riverbanks have typical vegetation adapted to their permanent or temporary contact with water. This vegetation is found in strips, starting with the plants whose roots are always submerged, such as bulrushes or reeds; these are then followed by willow bushes, with their roots out of the water and with very flexible branches adapted to tolerate rises in the water level. Poplars, alders and willow trees are found next, although still in earth with a high content of water; finally, there are the ashes and the elms, where the water level oscillates most during the year.

These riverbank forests play a very important role in maintaining and stabilising the river banks and at the same time, they are home to most of the animal species in the fluvial ecosystem.

Fluvial areas are the place chosen by our protagonist, the otter. Along the river, where they have their paths, you may find their prints. If you go towards dusk or early in the morning, you may be able to hear their whistling, like a person laughing, their panting and a kind of sneezing. On stones, tree trunks, sand banks or patches of weeds you may find the otters' excrement, which can provide information about their feeding.

Many species live in these fluvial environments; the typical inhabitant of the river, however, is the brown trout, (*Salmo trutta*). Other mammals that share the river with the otter are the polecat (*Mustela putorius*) and the Pyrenean desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*), although they are very difficult to see. The most diverse group of vertebrates in wetland ecosystems are birds, such as the white-throated dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*), the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), the mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) or the common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), among others.

If you carry on walking, you will come to a large meadow, next to the river, reserved for grazing animals. You should take the path which, surrounded by box trees and Scots pines, climbs up to a panoramic viewpoint there is above the River Segre. If you look carefully, you will be able to observe the fauna that lives in these environments.

You must go back the way you came, until reaching the beginning of the route, where you left your car.



Otters (*Lutra lutra*)

Otters, which are called "water dogs" in some places, are carnivorous mammals of the *Mustelidae* family. They are, without a doubt, the queen of aquatic environments, although they have amphibious habits; they hunt and feed in the water but they seek refuge and breed on the riverbanks, where the riverbank vegetation is in a good condition and provides them with hiding places.



Their most notable adaptations are the shape of their body, long (hydrodynamic) with short, thick fur, webbed feet, like those of a duck, that help them to move quickly through the water; a long, powerful tail that they use as an oar and a rudder, long, sensitive whiskers that help them find their prey. They prefer being active at twilight and at night and they are rather territorial, solitary animals.

Despite being able to breed all year round, they usually concentrate their reproduction to the end of spring and the beginning of summer. They usually have two cubs, which stay in the den until they are 2-3 months old. At 6-7 months, they are slightly smaller than their mothers and can accompany her everywhere. They become independent at 10 months.



The presence of this species is a good indicator of the quality of the water and the river banks.

