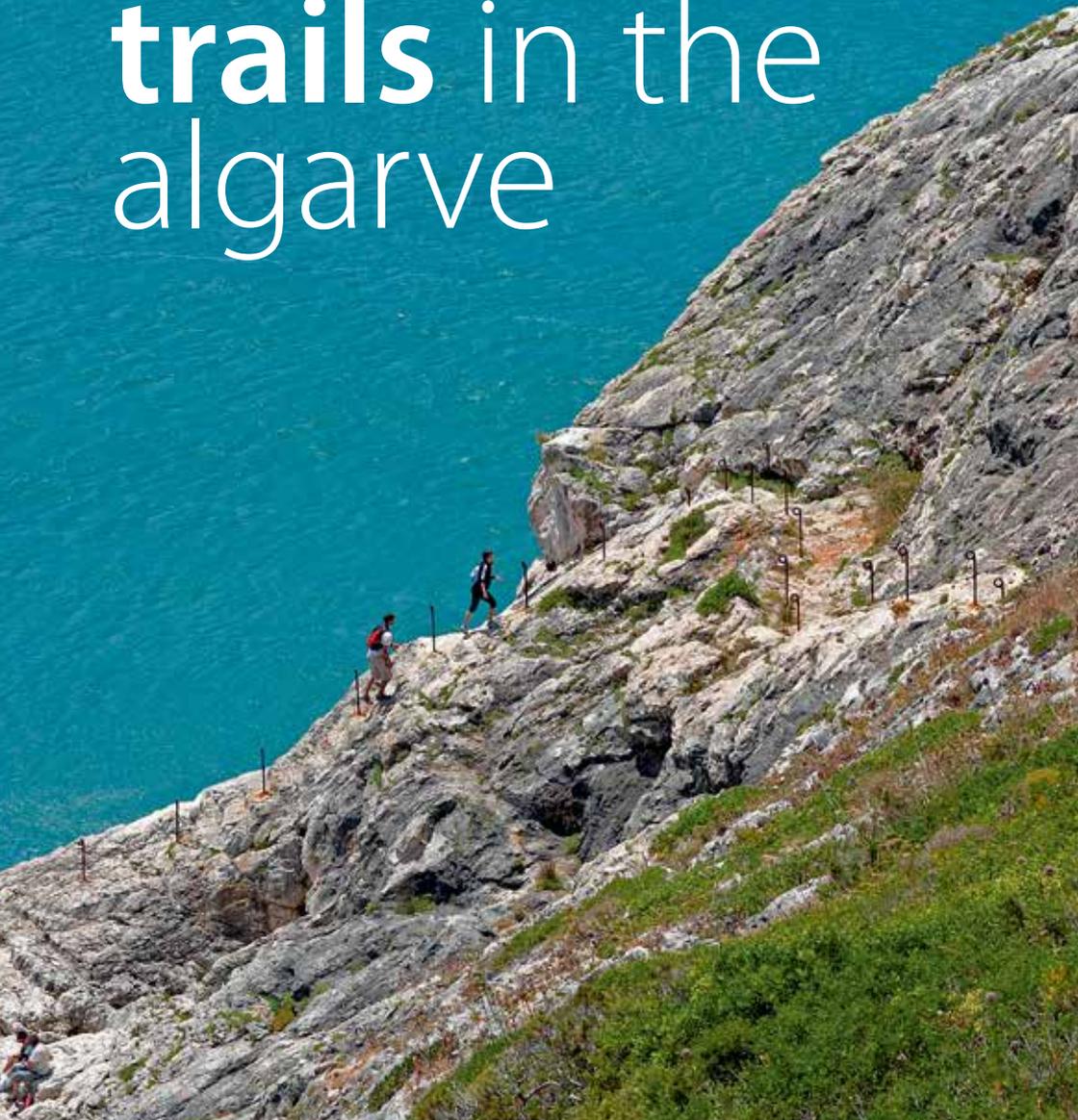


guide to

# walking trails in the algarve



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# preface

It is with much pleasure that the Algarve Tourism Board is republishing this Guide to Walking Trails in the Algarve, now in a new format and with new trails to follow to discover a still unspoilt Algarve.

There are over 30 trails on different themes, giving thousands of tourists and visitors the opportunity to discover the length and breadth of the Algarve, in search of much more than the sun and sand for which we are famous – our enviable climate, unique cuisine, genuine hospitality, age-old culture and traditions, the immaculate green of our golf courses, the endless sea, the peace and calm of a spa that soothes body and soul, passing time with work colleagues or at your second home, because you always feel at home in the Algarve.

The Guide contains various suggestions, from the Trail of Aromas on the Vicentine Coast to the Trail of Chameleons in the eastern extremity of the Algarve, enabling those who visit us or have chosen to live here to enjoy different experiences in contact with nature.

This Guide to Walking Trails in the Algarve aims not only to enable the reader to discover the biodiversity of the Algarve, whether on foot, mountain bike or horseback, but also to make the resident population and visitors aware of the importance of preserving it, starting with the only environment-friendly “means of transport” available.

Put your best foot forward and discover one of the many still-hidden secrets of this region, whether on the coast, in the Barrocal or in the Serra.

I hope that you will enjoy our suggestions as much as we have.

Keep coming back!

**António Ventura Pina**

Chairman Algarve Tourism Board

# explanation of trail information

**Name:** name of the trail.

**Geographic coordinates:** latitude and longitude coordinates in the WGS84 geodetic system of the start point of the trail, and of the end point where it is not circular.

**Parish(es) / municipality / location:** place where the trail is located.

**How to get there:** directions on how to get to the trail.

**Type:** type of trail (walking/mountain bike/horseback).

**Circular trail:** trail that starts and ends in the same place and which generally passes each point only once.

**Distance:** total distance covered including all the trail paths (the journey to the starting point and return from the end point of non-circular trails must be added).

**Average duration:** calculated taking into account the nature of the trail and an average walking speed of 3-3.5 km/hr.

**Ascent/descent:** based on the topography.

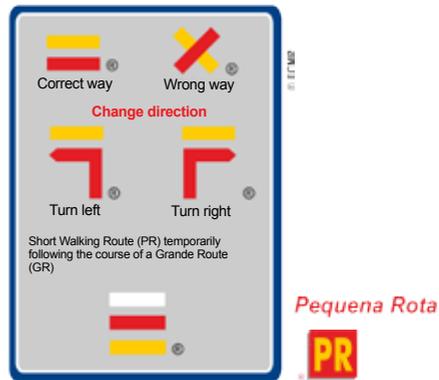
**Type of path:** roads, tracks and footpaths.

**When to go:** best time to go, bearing in mind the weather conditions and nature of the trail.

**Approved:** indicates whether the trail has been awarded the approval mark of the Portuguese Camping and Mountaineering Federation.

On "short routes" (PRs), there are the following signs: "right way", "wrong way" and "change of direction" (to the left or the right).

**Signposted:** whether there are signs on the trail, such as information panels and signposts (in some



cases, particularly on beaches, only information panels are provided).

**Special features:** here reference is made to any peculiarities of the trail, any points of cultural interest or any additional information which could be useful to walkers.

**Natural interest:** this gives information about whether the trail passes through a Protected Area or Natura 2000 Site. It also mentions different types of habitat that are of special natural interest.

**Description:** information about the starting point. Brief description of what can be seen on the route in terms of landscape, fauna, flora, or things of cultural interest. The description of the route follows the direction suggested on the map and makes reference to points of interest on the route.

**Ownership:** whether the paths are public or private.

**Organisations responsible:** organisation(s) responsible for the trail.

**Remarks:** additional information, such as whether the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

# introduction

The Algarve is the southernmost region of mainland Portugal. It is bounded to the west and south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by the river Odeceixe, the hills of the Serra de Monchique and Serra do Caldeirão and the river Vascão, and to the east by the river Guadiana, which separates it from Spain. Its geographical location and the strong influence of the Mediterranean lend the region a unique environmental richness which is reflected in its great diversity of landscapes, to which natural values and human impacts over time have contributed other special characteristics.

It is therefore crucial to ensure that the region's most authentic values are protected and that its varied and attractive landscapes are preserved as areas of biocultural balance. These landscapes are fundamental to the region's sustainable development since they are places that attract visitors and diversify the Algarve's tourism offer, a fact proved by the thousands of tourists who flock to the region every year to observe nature and to discover authentic traditions and different customs. Walking – the recreational activity of travelling distances on foot – brings people into close contact with nature and can raise their awareness of the importance of protecting natural and cultural heritage while promoting the wellbeing and quality of life

of its practitioners. This activity is particularly attractive from an educational, scientific, leisure and tourism point of view. Promoting walking as a form of tourism is therefore the key challenge of this publication, which by publicising other trails in the Algarve also aims to introduce new thematic routes that have been somewhat lacking in the nature tourism segment. This segment reinforces the affirmation of the region's heritage which is of unparalleled value to visitors and the resident population alike. 36 trails are featured in this "Guide to Walking Trails in the Algarve". The selection was made following a survey of existing routes in the region and after conducting numerous field visits to validate them. The choice of routes was based on a number of criteria: the state of conservation, safety, the selection of at least one trail per municipality, the existence of publicity material, information boards and signposting, proximity to important watercourses, the presence of significant natural, scenic and cultural values and the existence of unusual features. The Guide is divided into five areas: the Vicentine Coast, the South Coast, the Barrocal, the Serra and the Guadiana. The Guide also includes a brief description of the Via Algarviana, a long distance footpath (GR) between Alcoutim and Cape St. Vicente.

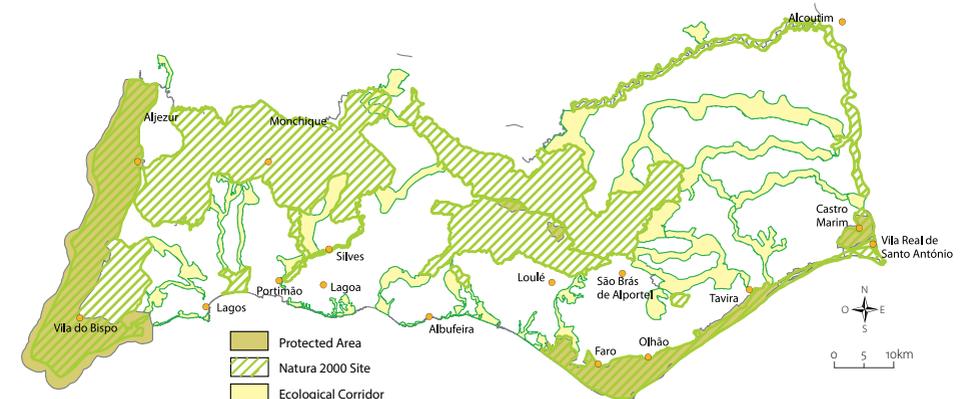
# description of the region

There is a wide variety of different landscapes in the Algarve. Scrub and Mediterranean scrub forest, oak woods and riverine woodlands in upland areas, karst landscapes and rainfed orchards in the Barrocal, and cliffs, dune systems and lagoons along the coast are some of the typical landscapes of the region. Much of the region is occupied by agricultural areas and forests. The present vegetation cover is the result of changes to the region's natural cover of cork oak and holm oak forest brought about by human activities in the region over thousands of years, but mainly during the last century. In terms of natural vegetation, the Algarve has the typical features of Mediterranean vegetation, including some of the species associated with it such as the cork oak, Kermes oak, rosemary, mastic tree, spurge flax, oleander and strawberry tree.

Particularly important sites for endemic plants include the Southwest Coast, especially the Sagres peninsula, and the higher part of the Serra de Monchique. In terms of cultivated vegetation, there are large expanses of orchards, especially rainfed orchards of olives, carobs, figs and almonds. The upland areas are clothed in oak forests and Mediterranean scrub forest, and there are extensive plantations of pine and eucalyptus. The region is especially rich in animal life, particularly vertebrates, due to the great diversity of biotopes. The Iberian minnow and the Arade chub among fishes; Schreiber's green lizard, the chameleon and the Spanish terrapin among reptiles; mammals such as the Cabrera vole and the wildcat; and birds such as the purple swamphen and Bonelli's eagle are among species recorded in the Algarve, some of

them occurring only in Portugal or the Iberian Peninsula. Wetlands, especially the estuarine areas and rias (Ria Formosa, Ria de Alvor, estuary of the river Arade, Guadiana estuary), play a crucial role for fauna as they sustain important fish communities. Together with other wetland areas such as lakes, reedbeds, rivers and streams they attract concentrations of bird species of national and even international importance either as breeding and wintering grounds or during migrations. The majority of rivers and streams are also important ecological corridors crucial to the survival of fishes, reptiles and amphibians interconnecting the region's natural areas. Designated protected areas in the Algarve include the Ria Formosa Natural Park, the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park (part of which is in the region), the Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo

António Wetlands Nature Reserve, and the Rocha da Pena and Fonte da Benémola Protected Local Landscapes. Including the 14 Natura 2000 sites, approximately 38 per cent of the total area of the Algarve enjoys conservation status, testifying to its conservation and landscape importance at European level. These protected areas and ecological corridors form the Regional Structure for Environmental Protection and Enhancement proposed in the Algarve Regional Land Management Plan, which sets out the planning and land management guidelines for reconciling nature conservation with human activities, and which are therefore conducive to the development of nature tourism. Depending on their location and characteristics, the trails selected for this Guide enable most of the above natural values to be observed.



# advice to walkers



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## Before setting off

### Equipment and clothing to consider taking

- Hat, sunglasses and sunblock.
- Suitable footwear for the terrain.
- Light clothing appropriate for the season, including a waterproof.
- Small, light rucksack for carrying water, light energy-providing snacks, basic first aid kit, compass, torch (in case you find yourself still on the trail after nightfall), mobile phone (although the mobile network does not cover some remote areas) and the guide to walking trails.

- In order to get full benefit from the natural surroundings, it may be useful to take a camera, binoculars or even a magnifying glass.

### Other advice

- Check the weather forecast before setting out.
- Check your departure time and confirm that you can complete the trail before it gets dark.
- On trails that cross hunting reserves, take care during autumn and winter, particularly on Thursdays, weekends and public holidays. (*For further information, contact the "Núcleo Florestal do Algarve" – Algarve Forestry Centre*)
- Do not take unnecessary valuables with you.
- Never set off on a trail unaccompanied.

### In the countryside

- Keep to the signposted trails.
- When passing through inhabited or agricultural areas, respect the local customs, traditions and property.

- Respect the rules in force in protected areas.
- Avoid making a noise: do not shout or talk loudly.
- Never drive over dunes. And for your own safety, do not drive or park on cliff tops.
- Do not gather plants or stones or disturb animals.
- If faced with an aggressive animal, do not

- run. Keep walking.
- Never light fires.
- It is advisable to stop from time to time for a light snack. Drink a little water each time, sufficient to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- Do not leave litter. Take it away with you and leave it where there is a refuse collection service.
- Be alert to what is around you.



7





# 1. Vicentine Coast

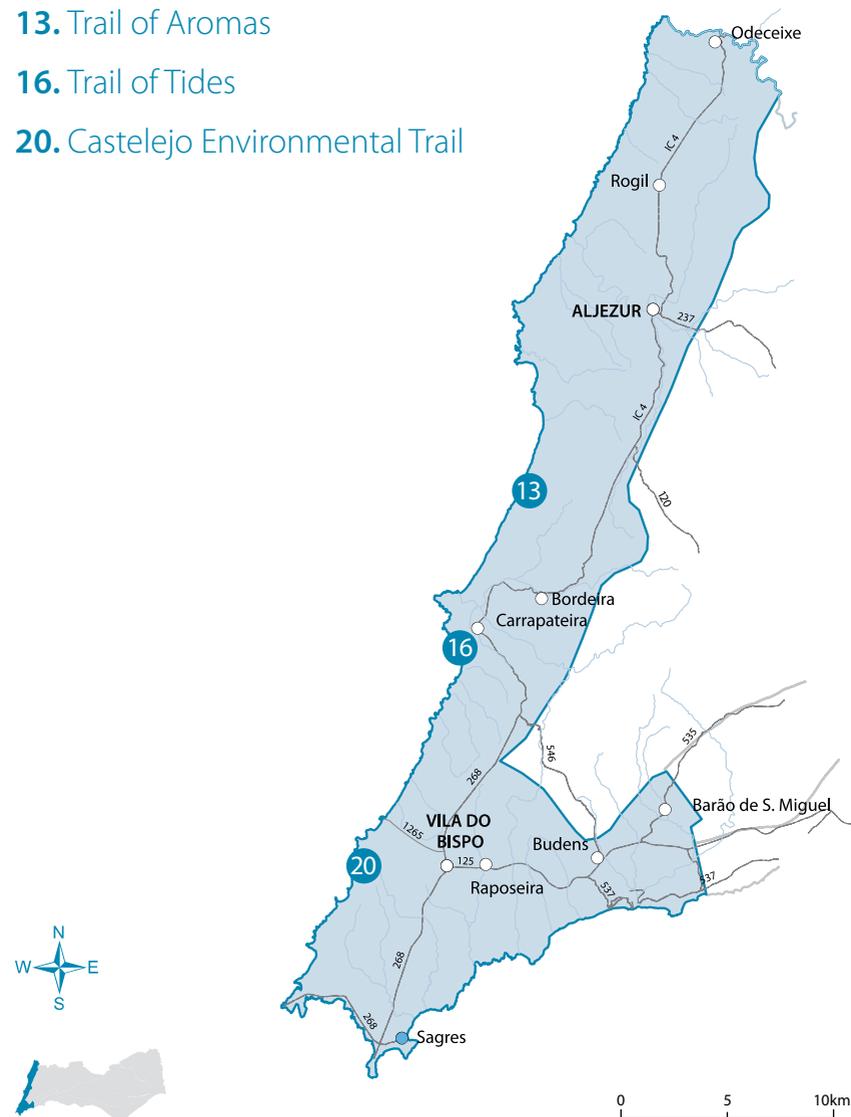
## 1. Routes

# Vicentine Coast

13. Trail of Aromas

16. Trail of Tides

20. Castelejo Environmental Trail



## Route

# Trail of Aromas

**Name:** Trail of Aromas

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 11' 54,712"N, 8° 51' 48,045"W (start)

**Parish:** Bordeira

**Municipality:** Aljezur

**Location:** Bordeira

**How to get there:** take the A22 to Bensafrim, then the EN 120 in the direction of Aljezur. After 14 km, turn off to Bordeira.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 14 km

**Average duration:** 4 hrs 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt tracks

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no

**Natural interest:** the trail is located in the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park and the Natura 2000 Southwest Coast Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Bordeira Parish Council

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

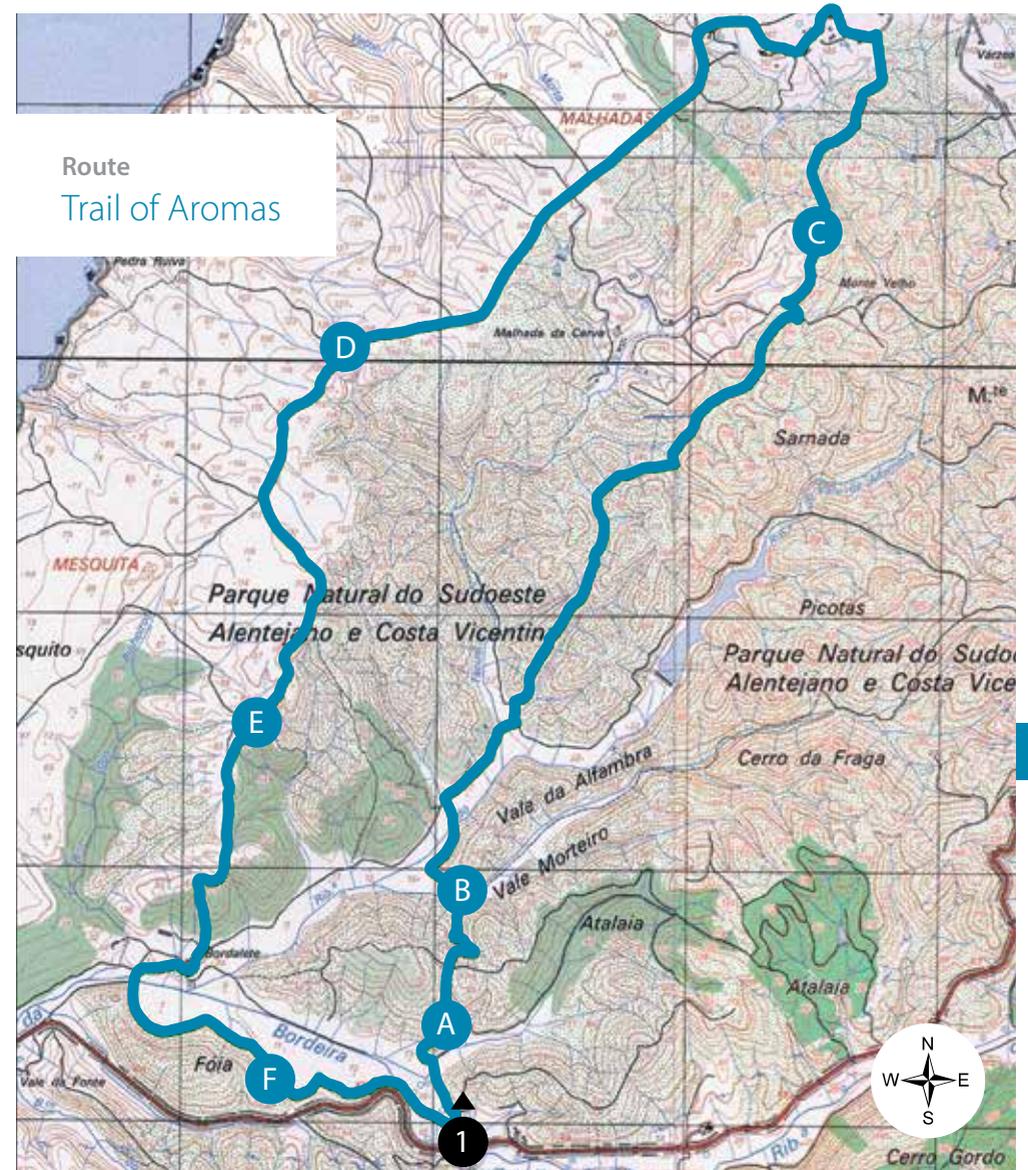
The trail starts at the information panel by the bridge over the Ribeira da Bordeira. The landscapes through which it passes are particularly rich in shrubby vegetation. To begin with, the vegetation includes species such as cistus, Montpellier cistus, mastic trees, purple phlomis and spurge flax. The trail continues in a northward direction, with views over the Bordeira valley (A). Continuing on to Vale Morteiro, the trail enters a typical riverine environment (B). The fauna on this trail is varied, with typical Mediterranean scrub forest species such as wild boar, hares, rabbits, great tits, quails, partridges, buzzards, mongooses, etc.



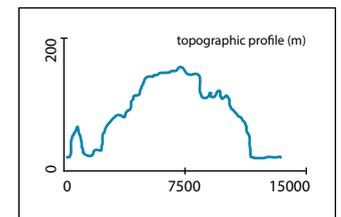
*Kermes oak*

Between the Ribeira do Tacual and Monte Velho, the trail continues in a valley. The landscape changes to one of juniper woodland and olive groves (C). The path to Monte Novo crosses an area of Mediterranean scrub forest punctuated by isolated pine trees. Pedra Ruiva is a good place to see a wide diversity of plant species: dwarf Spanish heath, wrinkle-leaved cistus, narrow-leaved

phillyrea, Spanish heath, thyme, large yellow restharrow and halimium (D). From here back to the starting point passing through Bordalete, we can observe a great variety of plants, some of them aromatic which, like those on the rest of the walk, do ample justice to the name of this trail (E). Towards the end, there are unobstructed views over the floodplain of the Ribeira da Bordeira (F).



- 1 Start of the trail**
- A** View over the valley
- B** Riverine vegetation
- C** Panoramic view
- D** Scrub forest
- E** View over the sea and Bordalete Pine Forest
- F** View over the floodplain
- Trail



## Route

# Trail of Tides

**Name:** Trail of Tides

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 11' 31,846"N, 8° 54' 01,015"W (start)

**Parish:** Bordeira

**Municipality:** Aljezur

**Location:** Carrapateira

**How to get there:** take the A22 to Bensafrim, then the EN 120 in the direction of Aljezur. After 14 km, turn off to Carrapateira.

**Type:** walking/mountain bike/horseback

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 19 km

**Average duration:** 7 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track and asphalt road

**When to go:** all year round except during the summer months and on very hot days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no

**Special features:** there is some traffic on some of the dirt roads. The coastal part of the trail can be very windy.

**Natural interest:** the trail is located in the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park and the Natura 2000 Southwest Coast Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Bordeira Parish Council

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.



Amado Beach

The trail starts in an area of dunes, next to the "O Sítio do Rio" restaurant and follows the asphalt road towards the coast across the coastal plateau. Here, the initial view is over the mouth of the Ribeira da Carrapateira (A). In between the junipers, mastic trees, marram grass and other plants that have established themselves here, there are dunes which are important for their biological diversity and landscape value. Along the coast, we can observe some of the bird species that nest here or pass

through here during their migrations (B). White storks also nest on the rocky cliffs, something they do nowhere else in the world.

Along the coast towards Amado beach, there are views of the line of cliffs indented with small bays (C).

After Amado beach (D), the trail turns inland and the landscape begins to change: species such as mastic trees, white-leaved rockroses, sage-leaved cistus, cork oaks and cistus become increasingly common.

At the next crossroads, the trail turns right and continues until it rejoins the asphalt road. It continues on this road until the turn for Vilarinha. Descending into the valley, the trail then turns left along the river towards Beijudo (E). The vegetation is denser here, reflecting the wetter environment along the banks of the Ribeira da Carrapateira, with alder groves and rush beds.

The area is rich in fauna and as well as seeing traces of mammals such as wild boar and foxes, we may be surprised by rabbits or hares on the pastures or in the scrub or pine forests. This is also an interesting part of the trail for observing birds, especially passerines (e.g. blackbirds, azure-winged magpies, white wagtails, stonechats, greenfinches or great tits) and raptors (e.g. short-toed eagles and buzzards).

Route  
Trail of Tides

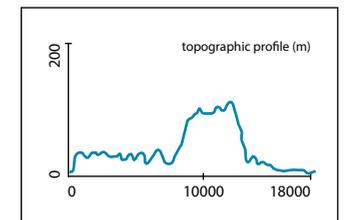
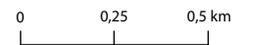


1 Start of the trail

- A View over the mouth of the Ribeira da Carrapateira
- B Panoramic view
- C Panoramic view
- D View over Amado beach
- E Riverine vegetation
- F Mature plant communities



Trail



## Route

# Castelejo Environmental Trail

**Name:** Castelejo Environmental Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 05' 28,698" N, 8° 55' 55,863" W (start)

**Parish:** Vila do Bispo

**Municipality:** Vila do Bispo

**Location:** Castelejo Leisure Area

**How to get there:** from Vila do Bispo take highway 1265 towards Castelejo beach. About 2 km from Vila do Bispo is Castelejo picnic park.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 3.5 Km

**Average duration:** 1 h 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** the trail is located in the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park and the Natura 2000 Network. Ownership: public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Vila do Bispo Parish Council

**Remarks:** there is a field guide on CD.



*Lichens*



*Pine cone*

The trail begins at the picnic area and continues south to the Forest Rangers Post, crossing an area of pine forest (maritime pine and stone pine) (A). The shrubby vegetation consists of broom, mastic trees, cistus, white-leaved rockroses, Montpellier cistus, Spanish lavender and strawberry trees, among other species. The middle stretch of the trail descends along a gully clothed in stone pines and some eucalyptus trees. Here the trail runs alongside a small stream (B) with typical riverbank vegetation such as bulrushes and tamarisks. It then enters an area covered mainly with shrubs, especially cistus.

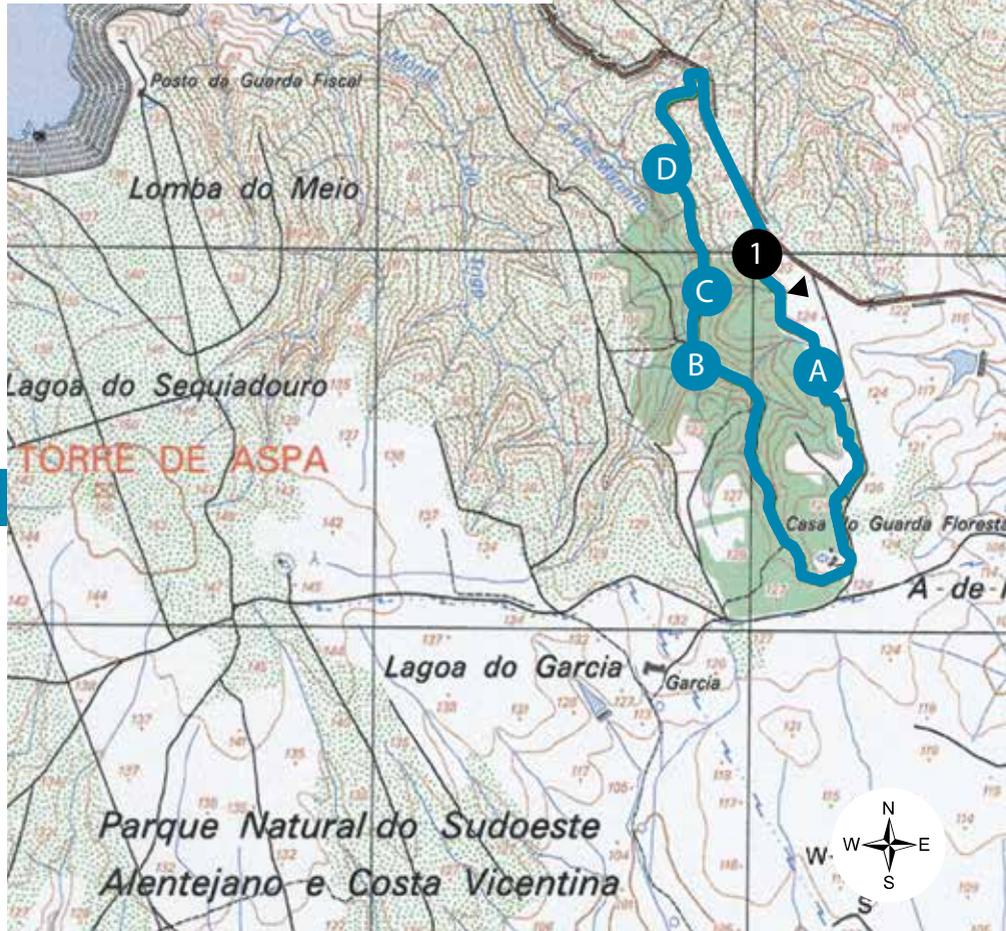
On the return to the starting point of the trail, at certain points there are views over the valley (C) and, in the distance, of Castelejo beach. The fauna here consists of bird species associated with pine forest and Mediterranean scrub forest such as the great spotted woodpecker, Eurasian jay and great tit, and mammals such as wild boar, foxes and rabbits, whose presence is betrayed by tracks and droppings which can be seen in places, especially near the water's edge. Towards the end of the trail, there are various places with good views of the landscape (D).

Laje do Castelejo  
Praia do Castelejo

Charnequinha do Castelejo

Route

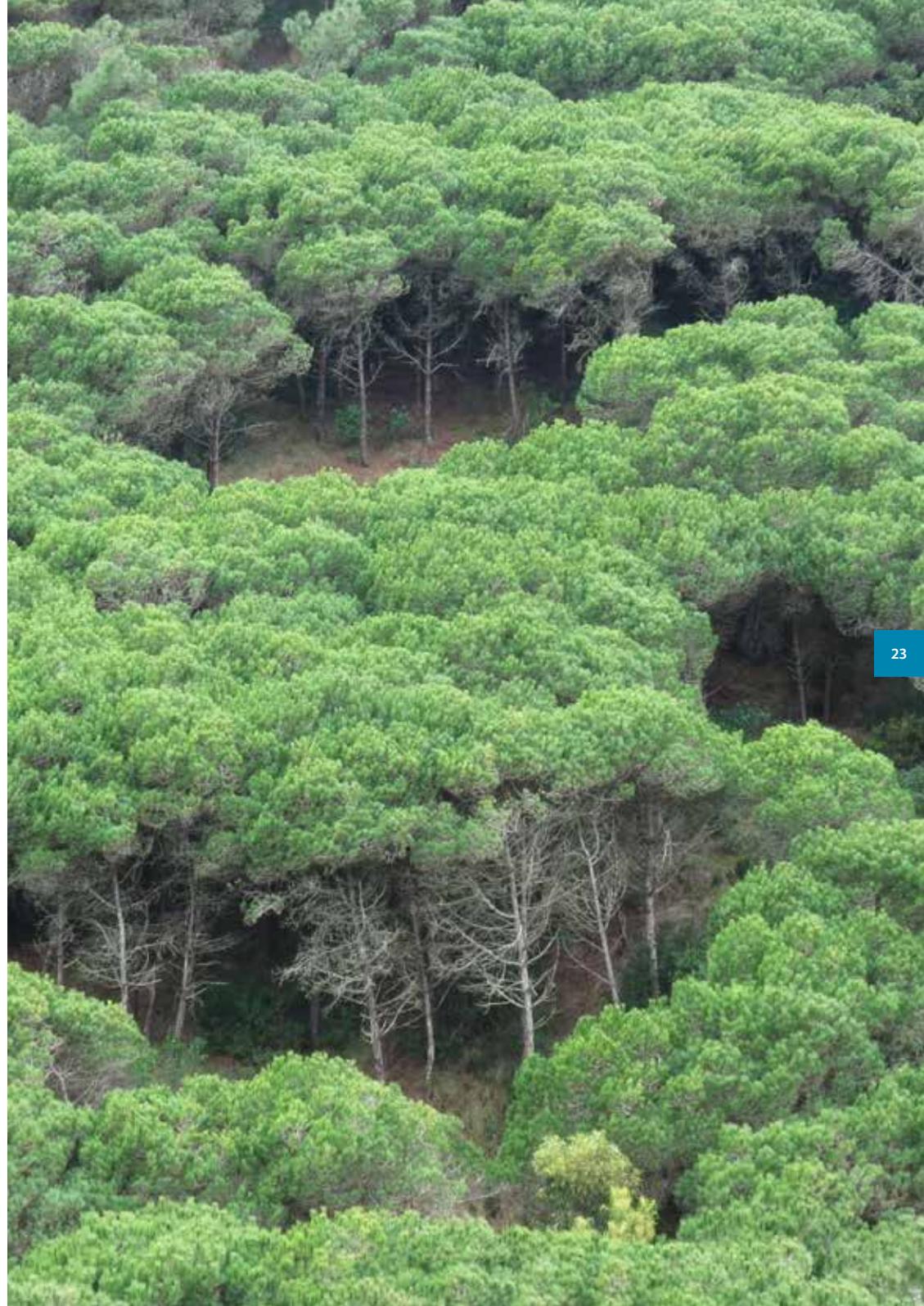
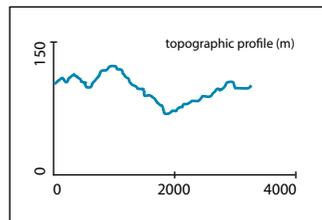
Castelejo Environmental Trail



1 Start of the trail

- A Pine forest
- B Small lagoon
- C View over the valley
- D Panoramic view

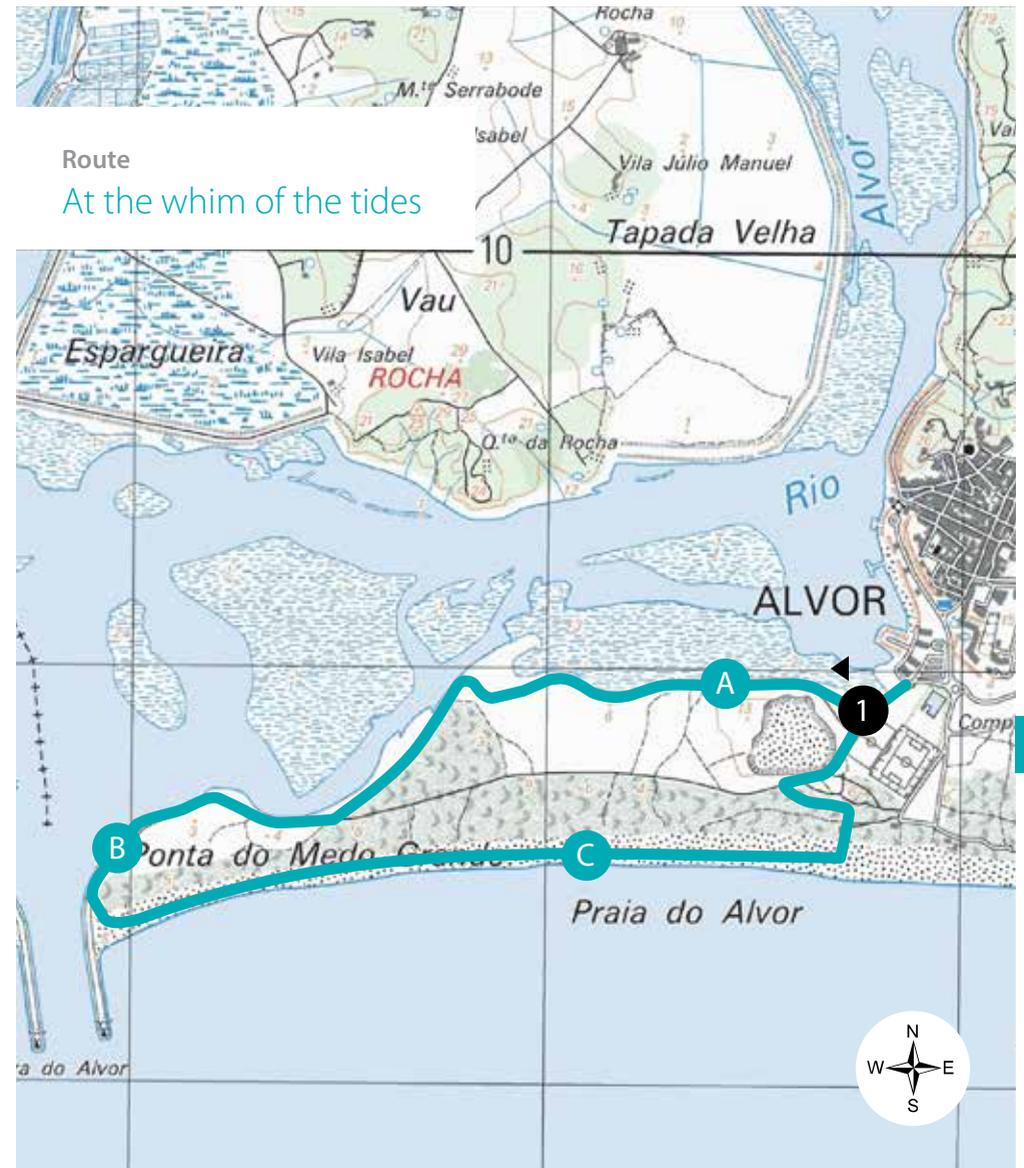
Trail





## 2. South Coast





Route  
At the whim of the tides

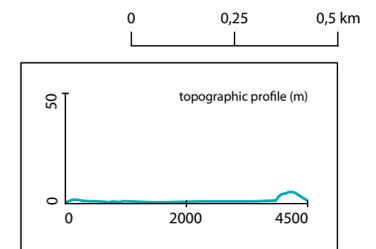
The trail starts at the walkway to the beach near the fishing port. This is an interesting place to observe aquatic birds, both along the beach and on the dunes and in the ria. Birds such as terns, dunlins, herons, plovers and Northern gannets, as well as many other species, can be observed in the various habitats here. Outside the summer holiday season, especially during migrations and in winter, this area is particularly rich in bird life. On the saltmarsh, various plant species typical of this habitat can be seen, such as grand statice, *Sarcocornia fruticosa* or shrubby sea-blite (A). Continuing to Ponta do Medo Grande (B), the trail passes through

an area of dunes before starting the return leg along the beach (C), from where we can return to the fishing port by various routes.



Common ringed plover

- 1** Start of the trail
- A** Saltmarsh
- B** Dunes
- C** Beach
-  Trail



## Route

# Rocha Delicada Trail



**Name:** Rocha Delicada Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 09' 13,899"N, 8° 36' 37,317"W (start)

**Parish:** Alvor

**Municipality:** Portimão

**Location:** Quinta da Rocha

**How to get there:** take the EN 125 in the direction of Lagos to Mexilhoeira Grande (railway station).

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 8 km

**Average duration:** 3 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no. Just some information panels

**Special features:** the "A Rocha" Association has a Studies and Nature Observation Centre at Quinta da Rocha which organises regular bird-ringing and environmental education activities.

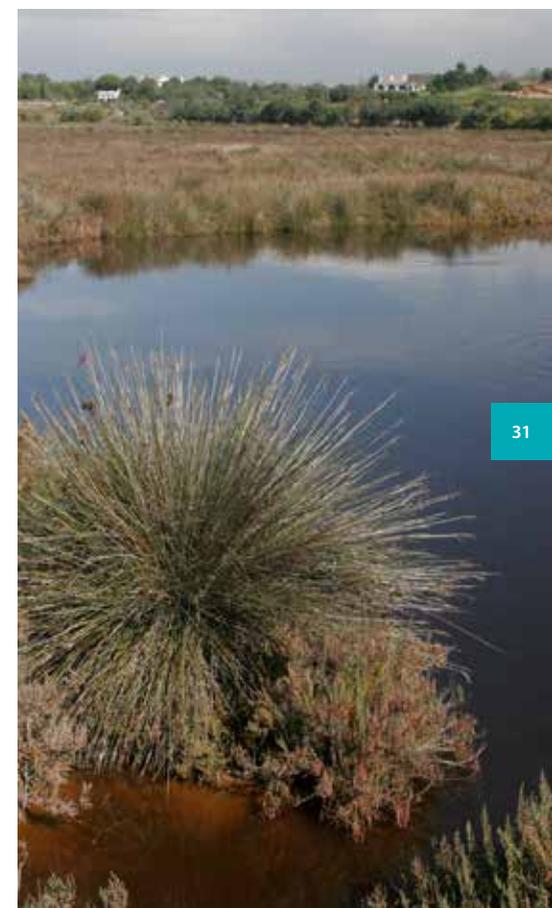
**Natural interest:** saltmarsh wetland. Dunes. Bird life. Ria de Alvor Natura 2000 Site.

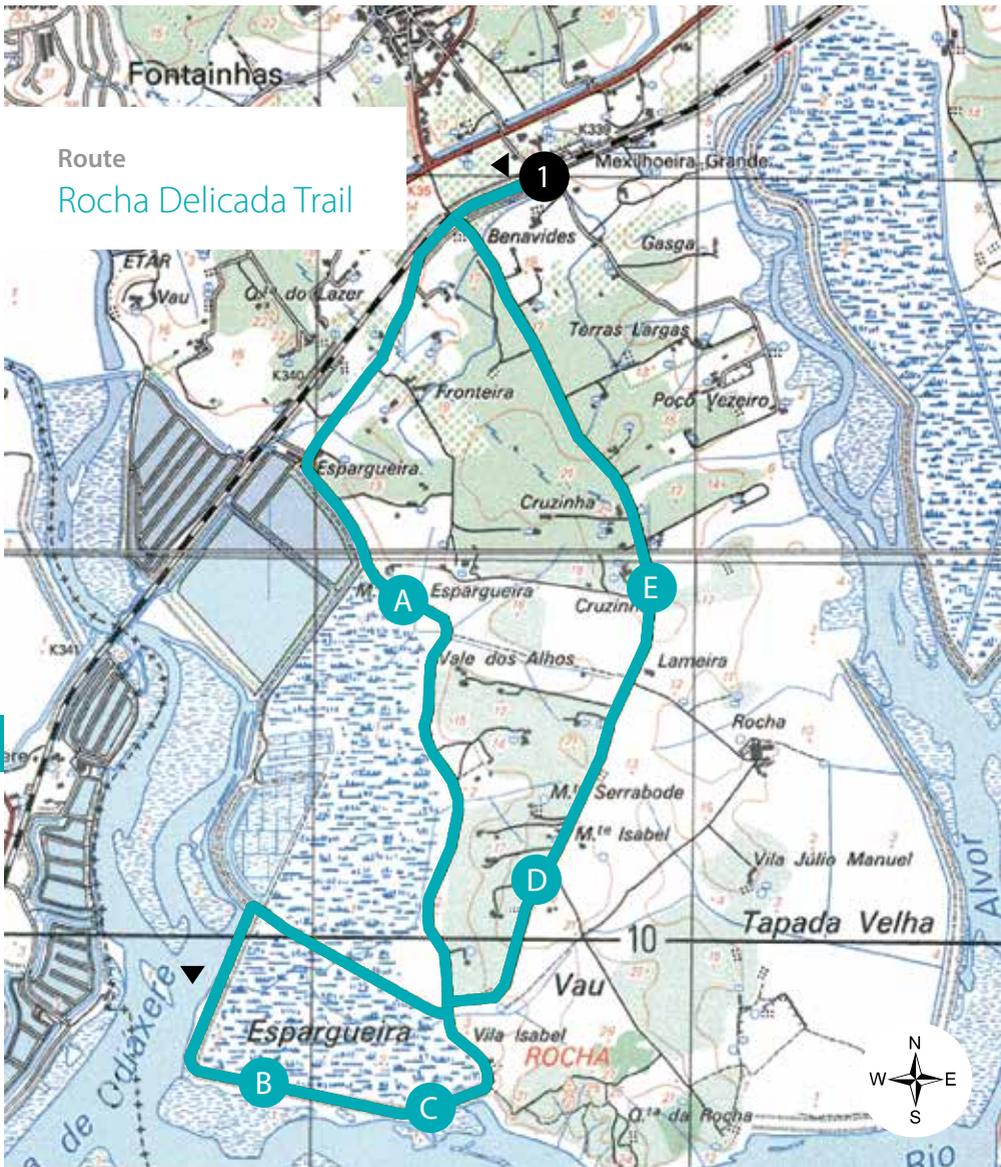
**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Portimão Municipal Council

The trail starts at the railway station, where there is an information panel. Crossing the railway line, the trail continues to the left to Espargueira, passing through saltmarsh landscapes (A). In this habitat there are various interesting plant communities and a diversity of species associated with high, mid and low saltmarsh zones. Many of the aquatic birds of the Ria de Alvor can also be seen here (B). After climbing to Quinta da Rocha (C), the trail begins the return leg to the starting point. It passes through farmland, including vineyards, cereal fields and cattle pastures, along with some rainfed orchards (almond, fig and citrus trees) (D). After passing the headquarters of the "A Rocha" Association (E) it enters an area of pine forest and Mediterranean scrub forest.

The diversity of landscapes that this trail passes through in a relatively short distance gives rise to a high degree of biodiversity, particularly birdlife, which varies considerably throughout the year. In winter and autumn during migrations, there are large numbers of waders and passerines to be seen. Raptors can also be observed, most of them in passage through the Ria de Alvor, with species such as the peregrine falcon, common kestrel or little owl relatively common.





Route  
Rocha Delicada Trail

1 Start of the trail - railway station

A Saltmarsh

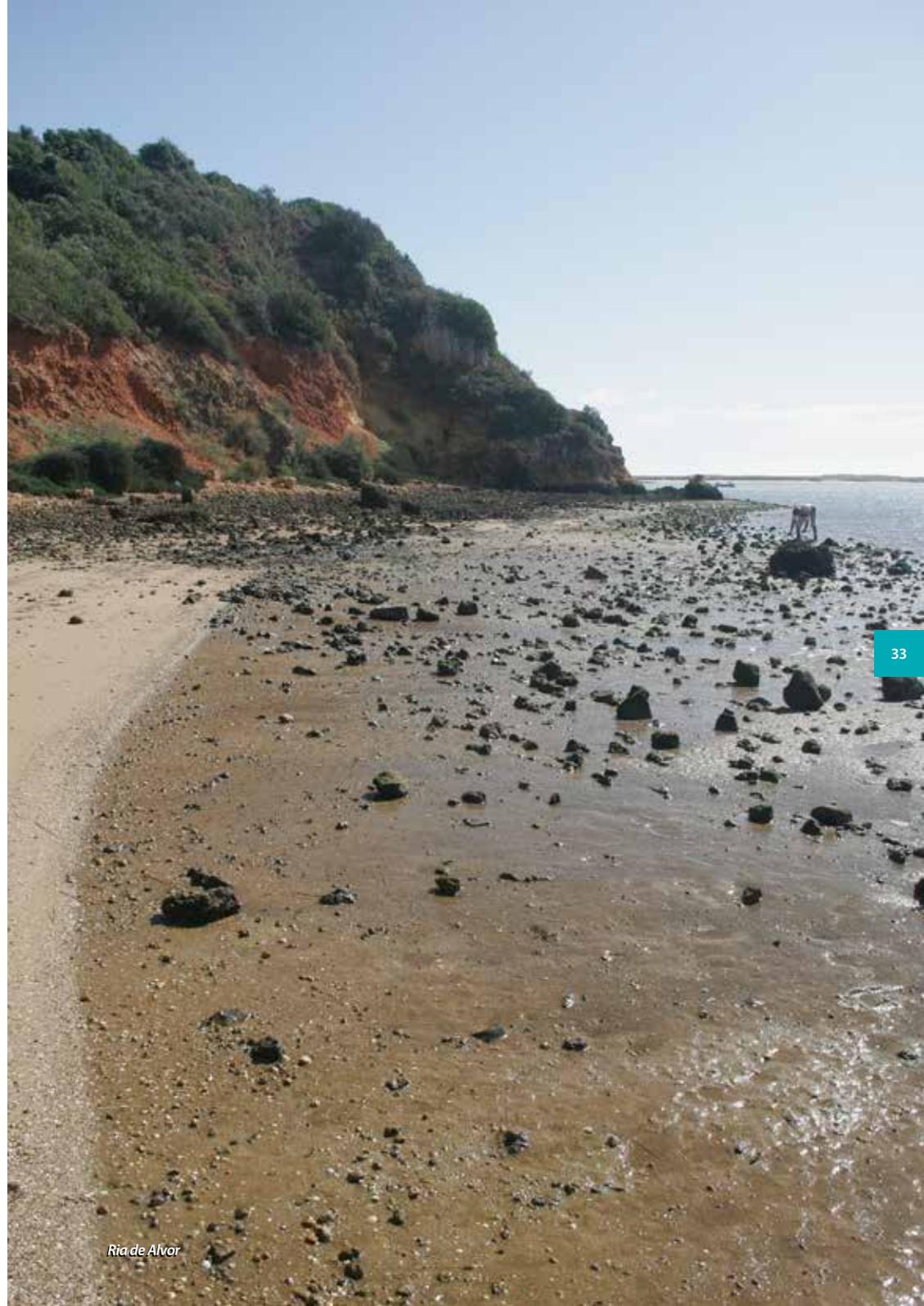
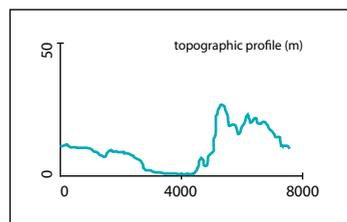
B Aquatic birds

C Cliff (Quinta da Rocha)

D Farmland

E "A Rocha" Association

Trail



Ria de Alvor

## Route

# Seven Hanging Valleys Trail

**Name:** Seven Hanging Valleys Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 05' 24,635"N, 8° 24' 46,181"W (start)

37° 05' 28,799"N, 8° 27' 14,762"W (finish)

**Municipality:** Lagoa

**Location:** coastline between Vale Centeanes beach and Marinha beach.

**How to get there:** starting either at Vale Centeanes beach or Marinha beach, follow the EN 125 and turn south by the International School. Then follow signs for the beach.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** no

**Distance:** 12 km (there and back)

**Average duration:** 5 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** yes

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** geomorphological interest (calcareous cliffs) and landscape interest. Seabirds. Juniper vegetation.

**Ownership:** public paths

This is a trail along coastal cliffs intersected by seven watercourses which over time have created small valleys from which the trail takes its name.

The trail starting at Marinha beach begins at an information panel in a picnic area. The stunning view over this beach reveals an indented coastline of cliffs with a great variety of geological forms such as arches, caves (at the extreme west end of the beach), gorges (at the west end of the beach) and stacks (at the west and east ends) (A).

There is interesting shrubby vegetation to be seen all along the trail including species such as mastic trees, junipers and Kermes oaks which in some places grow to full tree height (B).

The third valley houses Benagil beach where fishing boats nowadays offer trips to grottoes and isolated beaches. Throughout the trail it is possible to observe birds sheltering on the rocky cliff walls, including gulls, cormorants and doves (C).

After Carvalho beach and before reaching the Ladrão stack, there is a resting place with a wooden shelter affording views over the landscape (D).

Before reaching Alfanzina lighthouse, the trail passes through a pine wood in a valley protected from the sea winds, which

enables loftier pines to grow, creating a cool area of shade on this trail (E).

In the last valley, before Centeanes beach, there is there opportunity to stop for a while at another viewpoint with a wooden belvedere giving sweeping views over the coastline (F).



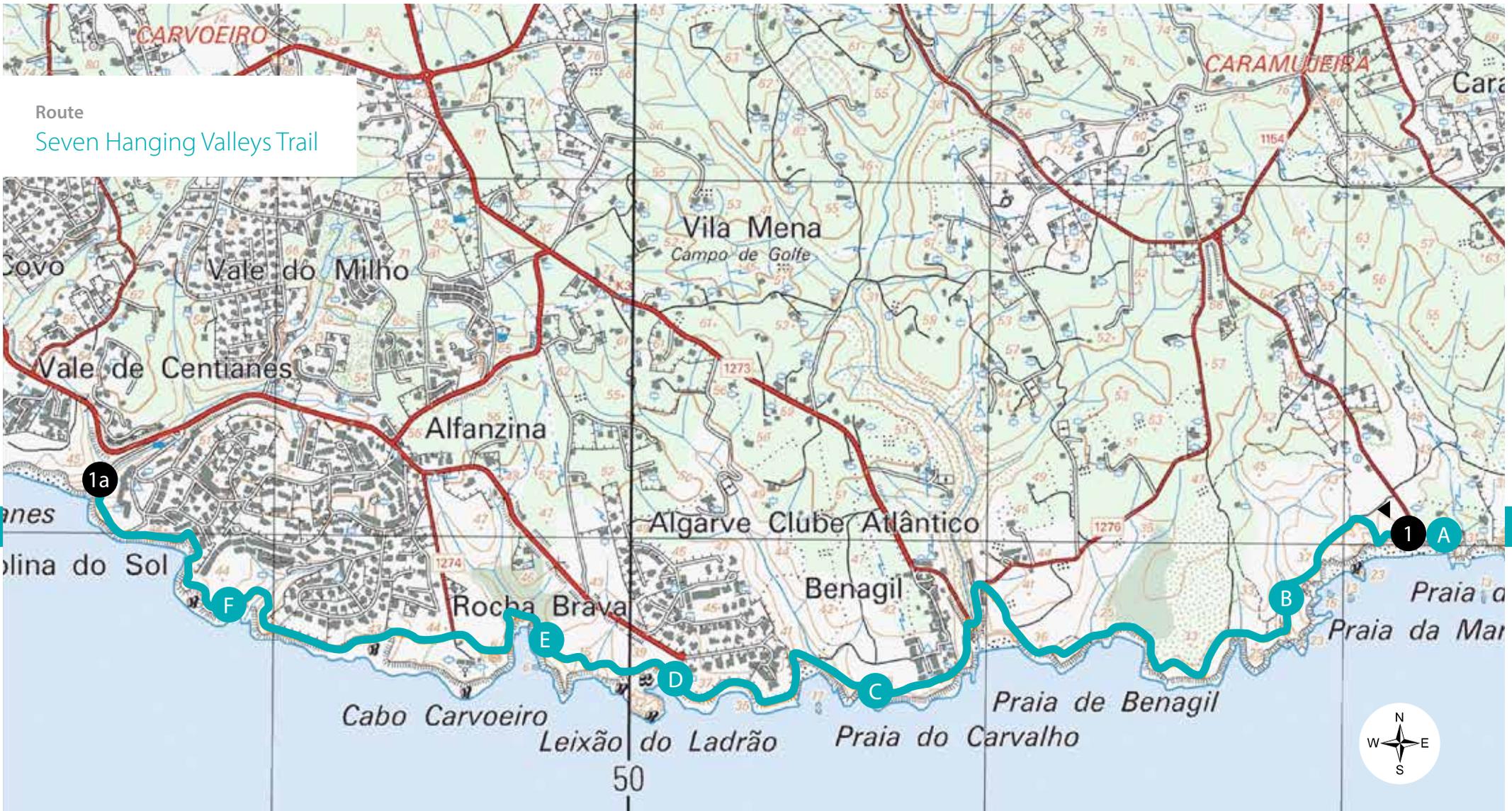
Yellow-legged gull



Juniper



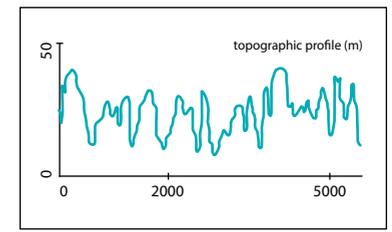
Marinha Beach



Route  
Seven Hanging Valleys Trail

- 1 Start of the trail (Marinha beach)
- 1a Start of the trail (Vale Centeanes beach)
- A View over Marinha beach
- B Mediterranean vegetation
- C Bird observation point
- D Panoramic view
- E Pine forest
- F Panoramic view

 Trail



## Route

# Praia Grande Interpretation Trail



Ruined mills and granaries



Cattle egret

**Name:** Praia Grande Interpretation Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 05' 44,304" N, 8° 20' 11,296" W (start)

37° 06' 19,743" N, 8° 20' 20,544" W (finish)

**Parish:** Pera

**Municipality:** Silves

**Location:** Praia Grande

**How to get there:** from the A22 motorway, turn off at the Algoz exit and head towards Pera, crossing the EN 125. After about 300 metres, turn left at the crossroads and then take the second right at the next roundabout.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** no

**Distance:** 5.5 Km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track, beach and wooden walkway

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no. Just some information panels

**Special features:** the return to the starting point can be done on the main road to the beach.

**Natural interest:** saltmarsh wetland and coastal lagoon. Bird life. Dune cordon. Pine forest.

**Ownership:** private paths, except along the front of the dune system.

**Organisation responsible:** CCDR-Algarve

**Remarks:** there is another trail in the same area.

The trail starts at the car park near the beach (1). Arriving at Lagoa dos Salgados (A) we find rush beds and stretches of reeds and bulrushes, especially alongside the Ribeira de Espiche which discharges into the lagoon (B). This site is well-known for its abundant bird life, with such interesting species as the ferruginous pochard, purple swamphen, Eurasian spoonbill, black-winged stilt, purple heron and little tern. Large bands of

flamingos can be seen regularly here, using this wetland as a resting and feeding ground. The trail continues along the beach (C) as far as the wooden walkway that crosses over the dune cordon. This is the most interesting place to observe the dune vegetation, including species such as sea holly, European sea rocket, cottonweed, sea medick, curry plant, spiny thrift, sea crucianella and large yellow restharrow (D).





Returning to the starting point and continuing westwards, we pass through areas of pasture intermixed with some rainfed orchards (carobs, almonds and figs) and shrubby mastic tree vegetation (E). The trail continues along the dune cordon (D) to the beach, in the direction of the Ribeira de Alcantarilha. Here in the saltmarsh (F-G), we can observe the different plant communities that have established themselves in the wetland: rush beds, halophytic scrub and Mediterranean

salt meadows which, together with the mudbanks, are of great conservation importance. After crossing this saltmarsh area, we come to an area of stone pines covering a fossil cliff (H). The undergrowth consists mainly of mastic trees, European fan palms, spurge flax, wild asparagus and conehead thyme. The final leg of this trail crosses an area of rainfed farmland with almond groves. Here we can also see some mills and granaries (I) used in the past.



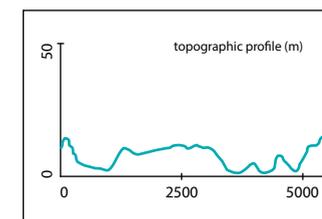
#### Route

### Praia Grande Interpretation Trail



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1</b> Start of the trail              | <b>E</b> Farmland   |
| <b>A</b> Lagoa dos Salgados              | <b>F-G</b> Ribeira de Alcantarilha saltmarsh  |
| <b>B</b> Mouth of the Ribeira de Espiche | <b>H</b> Fossil cliff   |
| <b>C</b> Beach                           | <b>I</b> Mills and granaries  |
| <b>D</b> Dune cordon                     |  Trail |

0 0,25 0,5 km



## Route

# São Lourenço Trail



Yellow broomrape

**Name:** São Lourenço Trail  
**Geographic coordinates:**  
37° 01' 41,887"N, 8° 01' 15,694"W (start)  
37° 01' 33,495"N, 8° 00' 20,563"W (finish)  
**Parish:** Almancil  
**Municipality:** Loulé  
**Location:** Quinta do Lago  
**How to get there:** from Almancil, turn off to Quinta do Lago and follow the signs for the car park at Quinta do Lago beach.  
**Type:** walk  
**Circular trail:** no  
**Distance:** 3.4 Km (there and back)  
**Average duration:** 1 h 30 mins  
**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)  
**Type of path:** dirt track  
**When to go:** all year round  
**Approved:** no  
**Signposted:** yes. Marked with painted stakes with a blue bar on the left side  
**Special features:** the trail can sometimes be partly under water as the saltmarsh is tidal. Be careful of stray balls when passing the golf course.  
**Natural interest:** saltmarsh wetland and freshwater lakes. Bird life. The trail is located in the Ria Formosa Natural Park and the Ria Formosa/Castro Marim Natura 2000 Site.  
**Ownership:** public paths  
**Organisations responsible:** Quinta do Lago, Loulé Municipal Council, PNRF and Infraquinta.



At the start of the trail, on the bank of the ria, there are views over the dune cordon, lagoon and saltmarsh. In the saltmarsh habitat (A), *Limoniastrum monopetalum*, a vigorous bushy shrub with pinkish flowers that blooms from April to November, is very common. The trail continues along the edge of the golf course, passing houses built in the pine forest. In the pine forest areas (stone pine and maritime pine) at Quinta do Lago there are some interesting birds and animals such as the azure-winged magpie, the hedgehog and the chameleon, which in Portugal occurs only on the south coast of the Algarve.



Purple swamphen



Quinta do Lago

Arriving at a small stand of pines (B) we find another type of shrubby vegetation with species such as sage-leaved cistus, broom and mastic trees. A few metres further on, we reach the lake of São Lourenço golf course (C), in which reeds, bulrushes and rushes predominate. There is a birdwatching hide at this artificial lake that makes a good vantage point for observing a wide variety of waterfowl, especially the purple swamphen, little bittern, little grebe,

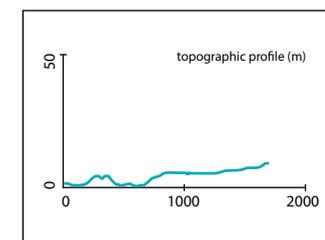
several species of duck, coots, and in winter a great variety of wader species. The lake can also be a good place to observe the two species of terrapins that are native to Portugal. On the way to the Roman ruins the trail continues through pine forest until we come again to an area overlooking the saltmarsh, with good views over the ria (D). This is a good place to see birds such as waders and colourful flamingos.



**1 Start of the trail**

- A** Saltmarsh and view over the dune cordon
- B** Start of pine forest
- C** Freshwater lakes and birdwatching hide
- D** View over the ria and saltmarsh
- E** Roman ruins

 Trail



## Route

# Ilha da Culatra Trail

**Name:** Ilha da Culatra Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

36° 59' 42,204" N, 7° 50' 31,681" W (start)

36° 59' 35,514" N, 7° 49' 36,708" W (finish)

**Parish:** Sé

**Municipality:** Faro

**Location:** Ilha da Culatra

**How to get there:** take the ferry from the quay at Olhão. There are crossings to this island all year round.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** no

**Distance:** 5.6 Km (there and back)

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** wooden walkway and beach

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no

**Natural interest:** saltmarsh wetland. Bird life. The trail is located in the Ria Formosa Natural Park and the Ria Formosa/Castro Marim Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Ria Formosa Natural Park, Faro Municipal Council and Ambifaro.

*Ferry to the island*

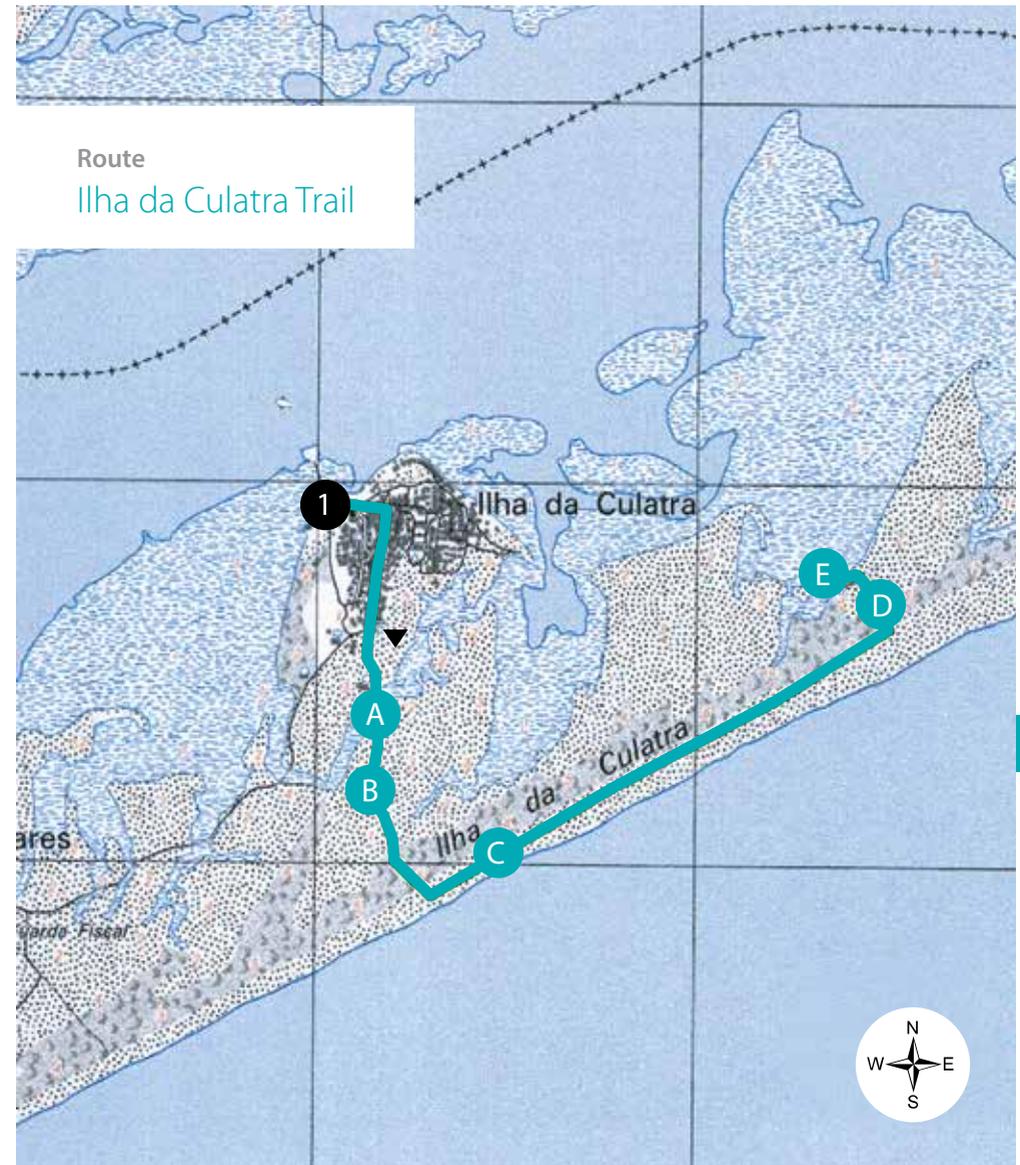


After crossing the ria and arriving at Culatra island, we enter a village where there is an information panel about this trail. Following the main street towards the beach, we come to a wooden walkway which takes walkers along the dune system. There are channels here that are inundated by the sea, encouraging the growth of saltmarsh vegetation (A).

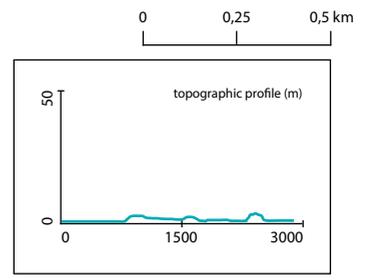
The dune vegetation (B) is of particular interest for the way it has adapted to the demanding conditions of temperature, salinity and anchorage in the ground. Plants such as seaside chamomile, Portuguese thyme, curry plant, marram

grass, sand couch and sea holly are among the dune species that can be seen here. Arriving at the beach, the trail continues to the left. Various species of seabirds can be seen here, and various types of mollusc shells washed up by the sea (C).

1.5 km from the entrance to the beach, look out for a walkway (D) over the dunes which ends at an inlet of the ria (E). This is a good place to rest and watch the birds of the ria such as the common redshank, Eurasian curlew, dunlin, little tern, great cormorant and grey heron, among many others. To return, walk back along the same trail.



- 1 Start of the trail**
- A** Saltmarsh vegetation
- B** Dune vegetation
- C** Beach
- D** Dune vegetation
- E** View over the Ria Formosa
-  Trail



## Route

# Nature Discovery Trail of the Marim Environmental Education Centre

**Name:** Nature Discovery Trail of the Marim Environmental Education Centre

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 02' 02,454" N, 7° 49' 09,578" W (start)

**Parish:** Quelfes

**Municipality:** Olhão

**Location:** Quinta de Marim

**How to get there:** follow the EN 125 in the direction Faro – Vila Real de Santo António and 1 km after Olhão, turn right by a filling station. There is a sign here for the access road to the headquarters of Ria Formosa Natural Park (Marim Environmental Education Centre).

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 3 km

**Average duration:** 1 h 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt tracks and wooden walkway.

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no

**Special features:** environmental interpretation centre with equipment and facilities for environmental education.

**Natural interest:** bird life. Saltmarsh and freshwater and brackish lagoons. Bird life. The trail is located in the Ria Formosa Natural Park (PNRF) and the Ria Formosa/ Castro Marim Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Institute (ICNB)

**Organisation responsible:** ICNB (Ria Formosa Natural Park)



The trail starts in a pine forest near a picnic area (A) and continues to the Marim Environmental Education Centre (CEAM). At this Interpretation Centre (B) visitors can purchase publications, view exhibitions and obtain other information about environmental issues generally and the Ria Formosa in particular. The trail skirts CEAM and continues through an adjacent area of pine forest consisting of maritime and stone pines with varied shrubby undergrowth (C).

The trail passes a large number of points of natural interest such as an area of dunes (D), saltmarshes (E) and a freshwater lagoon (G) where a great variety of fauna typical of these habitats can be observed. The trail also includes other points of interest such as a tide mill and shellfish hatchery (F), birdwatching hides (G), Roman ruins (salting tanks) (H), a bird rescue centre (I), a scoopwheel (J) and the home of the poet João Lúcio.

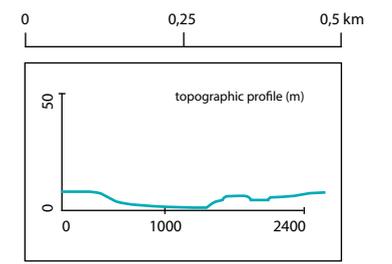
The bird life at Quinta do Marim is of particular interest. Here it is possible to see waterfowl that occur regularly throughout the Ria Formosa such as waders, flamingos, spoonbills, cormorants, ducks, herons, grebes, coots and terns among others.



Route  
Nature Discovery Trail of the Marim  
Environmental Education Centre



- 1 Start of the trail**
- A** Picnic area
- B** Interpretation Centre
- C** Pine forest
- D** Dunes
- E** Saltmarsh
- F** Tide mill and shellfish hatchery
- G** Freshwater lagoon and birdwatching hide
- H** Salting tanks (Roman ruin)
- I** Bird rescue centre
- J** Scoopwheel
- Trail



## Route

# Praia do Barril Trail



Crab



**Name:** Praia do Barril Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 05' 35,091"N, 7° 40' 30,637"W (start)

37° 05' 10,191"N, 7° 39' 43,941"W (finish)

**Parish:** Santa Luzia

**Municipality:** Tavira

**Location:** Pedras d'El Rei

**How to get there:** on the EN 125 between Luz de Tavira and Tavira, follow signs for Pedras d'El Rei. After passing through the village, the trail starts at a walkway crossing the Ria.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** no

**Distance:** 3 km (there and back, excluding the walk on the beach).

**Average duration:** 1 hr 15 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** walkway and beach

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes. With information panels

**Natural interest:** saltmarsh wetland. Bird life. The trail is located in the Ria Formosa Natural Park and the Ria Formosa/Castro Marim Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Tavira Municipal Council and ICNB (Ria Formosa Natural Park)



The trail starts at the entrance to the beach, before crossing a bridge (1) and then passes through an extensive saltmarsh area (A) to the dunes and former fishermen's huts (D), now converted into beach facilities.

This is an interesting trail for observing the birds of the ria and species such as the fiddler crab, particularly at low tide. The bird species here include waders (dunlins, stonechats, plovers, the red knot, black-winged stilt, avocet, etc), gulls and terns, and herons.

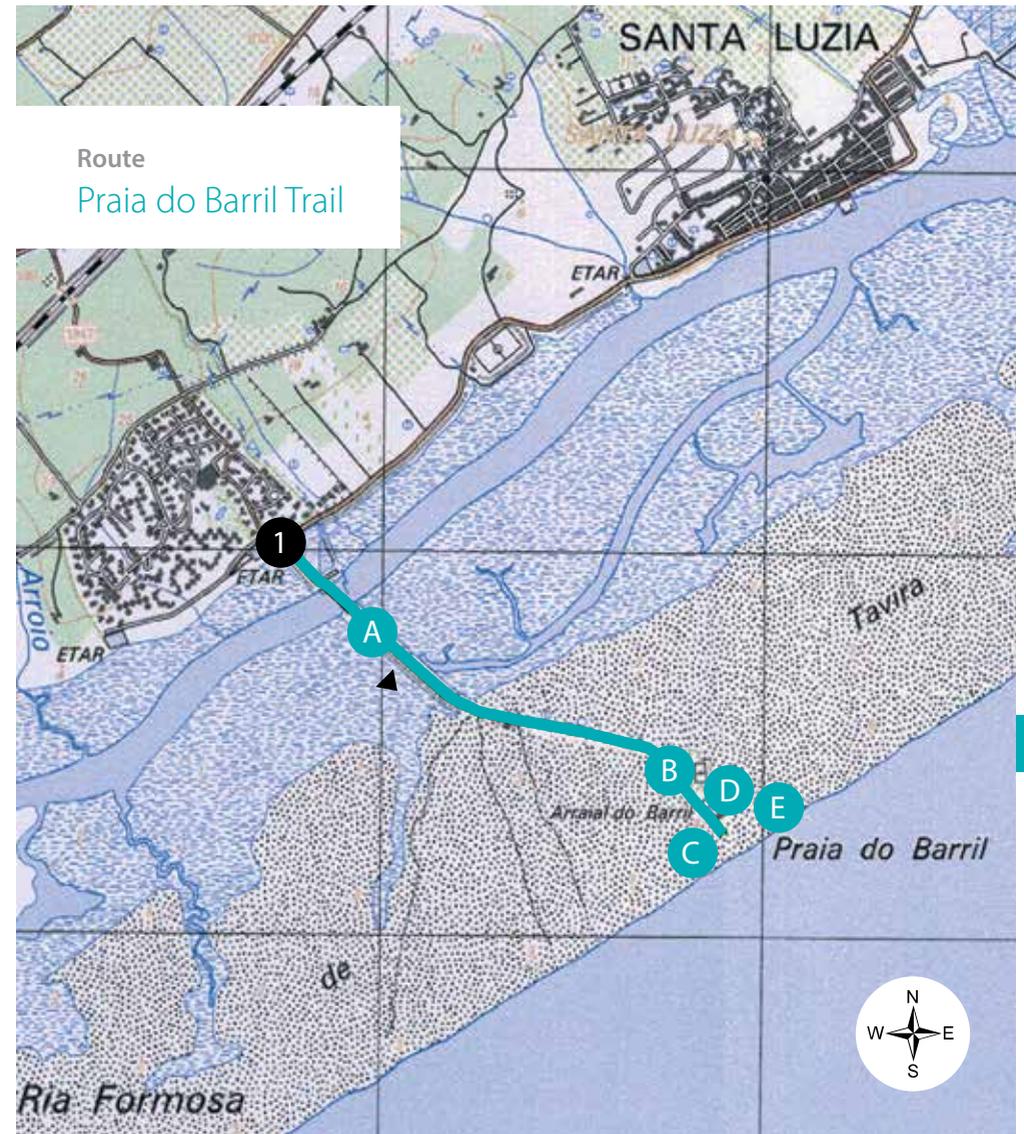
As we leave this extensive area of mudflats

we may come across stretches of sea rushes and before reaching the beach, on the right, in an area of primary dune (B), there is a diversity of native vegetation including the curry plant.

On arriving at the beach, the trail divides into two: to the right, in the area where the dune cordon is being restored (C) and is protected by palisades, plant species such as marram grass and sea holly can be seen. To the left, it is suggested that you read the information panel to find out more about the history surrounding the "anchor cemetery" (E).



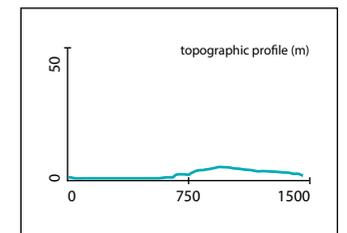
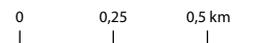
Access way to the train and beach



Route  
Praia do Barril Trail

- 1 Start of the trail**
- A** Saltmarsh
- B** View over the north side of the dune system
- C** Dunes
- D** Fishermen's huts converted to beach facilities
- E** Anchor cemetery

 Trail



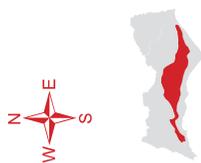
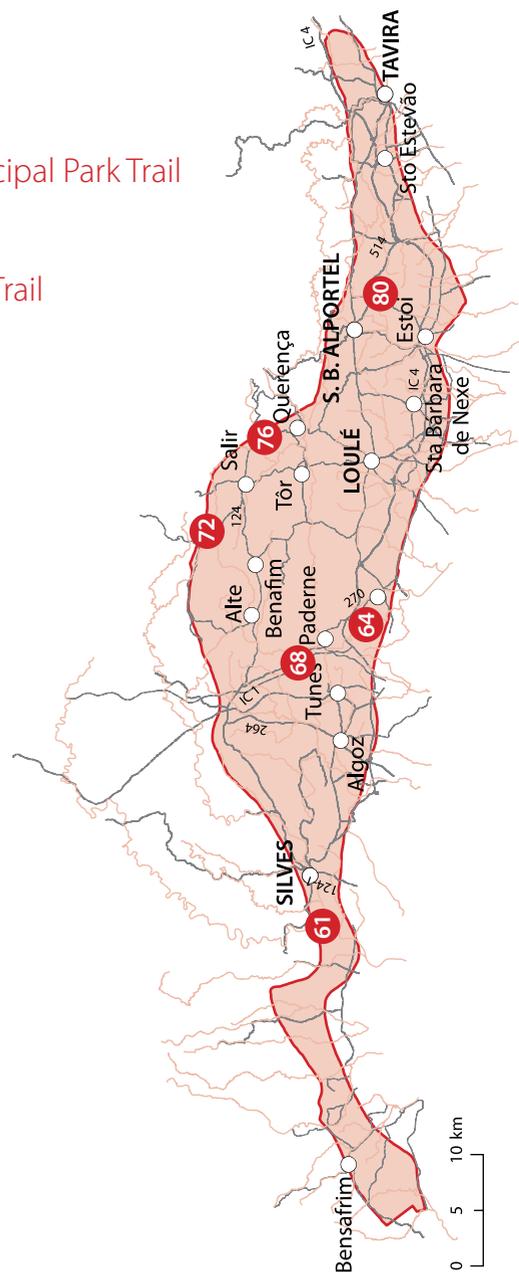


3. Barrocal

### 3. Routes

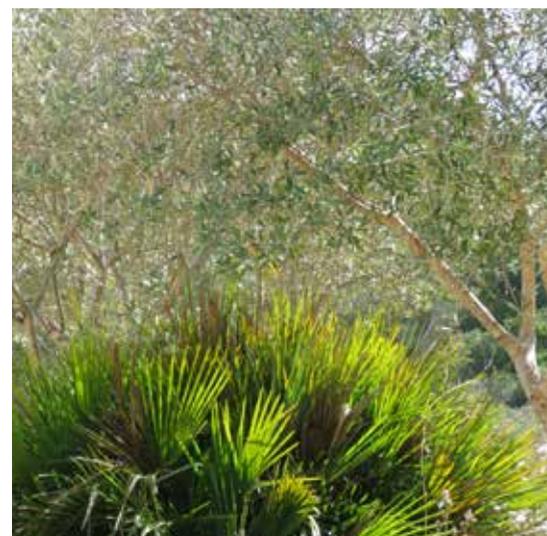
# Barrocal

- 61. Sítio das Fontes Municipal Park Trail
- 64. Paderne Castle Trail
- 68. Cerro de São Vicente Trail
- 72. Rocha da Pena Trail
- 76. Fonte Benémola Trail
- 80. A Walk to the Spring



### Route

## Sítio das Fontes Municipal Park Trail



Olive trees and European fan palms



Mastic tree

**Name:** Sítio das Fontes Municipal Park Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 09' 41,106" N, 8° 29' 06,842" W (start)

**Parish:** Estômbar

**Municipality:** Lagoa

**Location:** Sítio das Fontes

**How to get there:** take the A22 motorway, turn off at the Silves exit and continue in the direction of the railway station. At the next roundabout, turn right and continue until you see a sign for the Municipal Park.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 1.3 Km

**Average duration:** 1 hr

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt road

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes. With information panels  
**Special features:** the park has facilities for visitors including a Nature Interpretation Centre, picnic area, fitness training circuit, amphitheatre and weather station.

**Natural interest:** springs. Diversity of habitats. Arade/Odelouca Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Lagoa Municipal Council



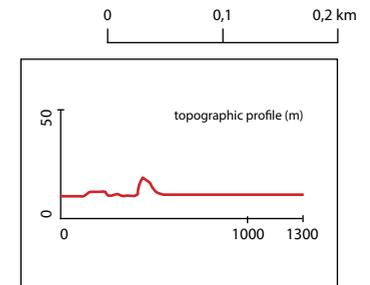
The trail starts at the south car park. Sítio das Fontes Municipal Park is situated on the banks of the River Arade. It occupies a small area containing a high diversity of environments such as areas of marsh, saltmarsh, Mediterranean scrub forest, riverine vegetation and stretches of freshwater, brackish and salt water. Near the start of the trail there is a scoopwheel which was formerly used to irrigate fields and orchards (A). The Nature Interpretation Centre (CIN) housed in a former rural building organises environmental education and interpretation activities (B). Continuing in the direction of the Forest Rangers Post, the trail passes through areas of mature Mediterranean scrub forest (C). Along the riverbank in the saltmarsh area, various species typical of this habitat can be seen, such as shrubby swampfire (*Sarcocornia fruticosa*) and sea rush (D). On the return leg

to the starting point we can see a weir and associated tide mill (E). Near the mill are the springs (fontes) from which the park takes its name (F). Crossing the bridge over the weir, the trail brings us to riverine woodland (G). The entire trail provides good places for observing the local fauna, in particular waterfowl and birds associated with Mediterranean scrub forest.



Butterfly

- 1 Start of the trail**
- A** Scoopwheel
- B** Nature Interpretation Centre (CIN)
- C** Mediterranean scrub forest
- D** Saltmarsh
- E** Weir and tide mill
- F** Springs
- G** Riverine vegetation
- Trail



## Route

# Paderne Castle Trail

**Name:** Paderne Castle Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

Road:

37° 09' 26,645" N, 8° 12' 04,713" W (start)

Watermill:

37° 09' 26,645" N, 8° 12' 04,713" W (start)

**Parish:** Paderne

**Municipality:** Albufeira

**Location:** Around Paderne Castle

**How to get there:** this trail can begin either on the road from Paderne or at the watermill near the castle. Leave the A22 motorway at the Albufeira exit, turn off to Ferreiras and follow the signs to Paderne. At Paderne, take the road to the castle.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 4.5 Km

**Average duration:** 1 hr 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt road

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** Paderne Castle, built from taipa (a mixture of mud, chalk, lime and aggregate that sets like concrete). During the rainy season the weir may become impassable, so the walk should be done in the opposite direction to that described here.

**Natural interest:** riverine and juniper woodland. Located in the Ribeira de Quarteira Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public and private paths

**Organisation responsible:** CCDR-Algarve

**Remarks:** there is another trail in the same area.

The trail runs along both banks of the Ribeira de Quarteira. Setting out from the watermill by the castle (A), the trail crosses the weir and continues along the right bank of the river.

In this steep-sided valley we can see a wide variety of plants (B) such as purple phlomis, several species of cistus, European fan palms,



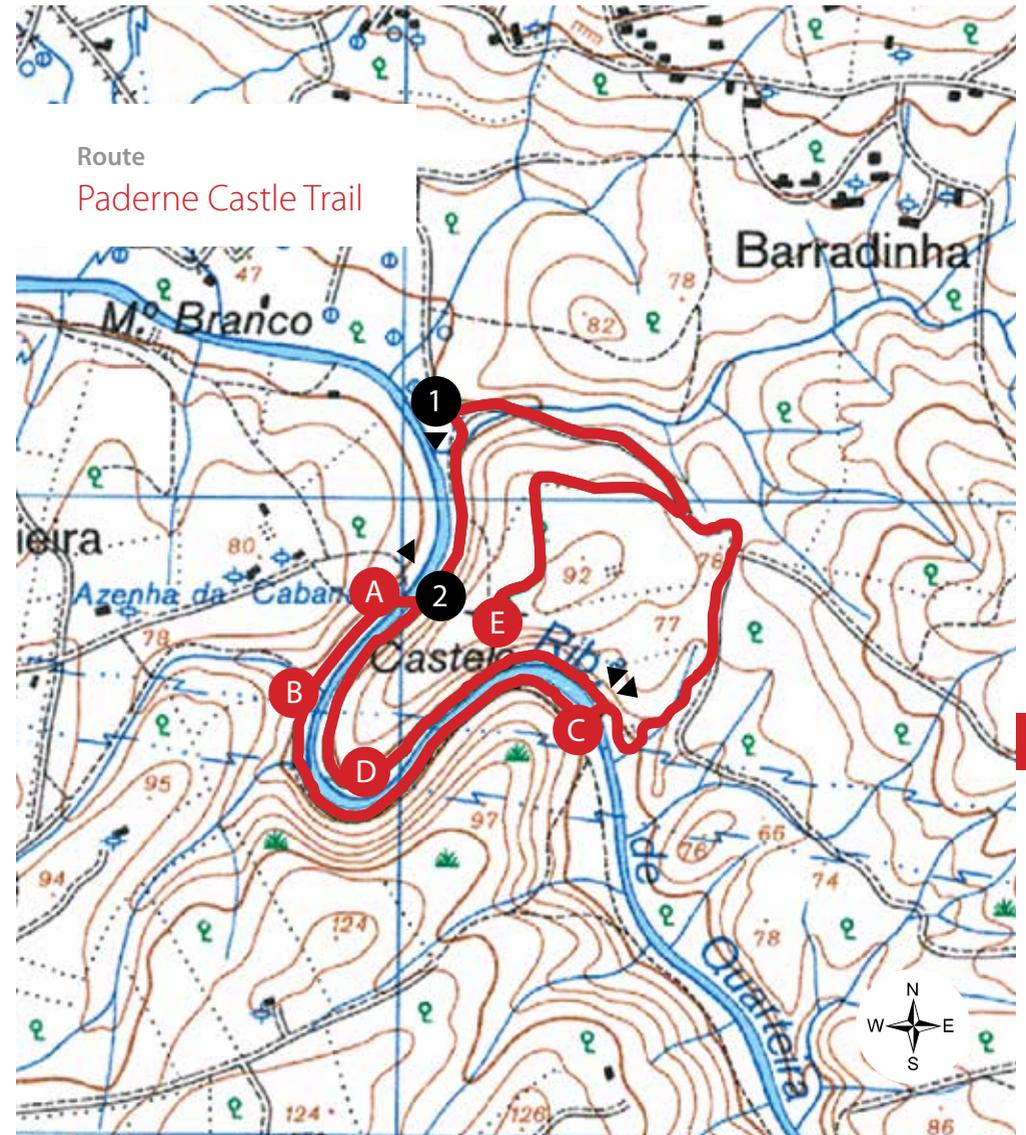
*Mastic tree*

mastic trees, strawberry trees, Kermes oaks, spurge flax, wild olive, juniper and narcissus. On the banks of the river, reeds, tamarisks, oleanders and ash trees predominate. To reach the left bank of the river we cross a bridge (C) which tradition has it is of Roman origin. From here we can walk along the left bank through a valley with a



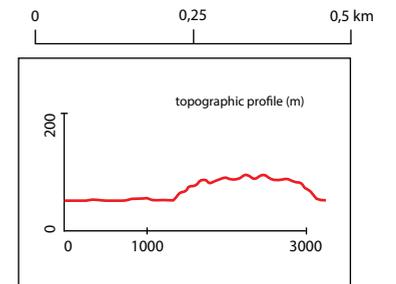
narrow floodplain planted with carob and olive trees (D). It is well worth climbing up to the castle (E), from where there are very attractive views of the valley and surrounding area. In terms of fauna, there are records of the

occurrence of mammals such as the otter, the least weasel, the lesser mouse-eared bat and the hedgehog. It is also easy to sight a number of Mediterranean woodland birds and waterfowl, and a few amphibians and reptiles.



Route  
Paderne Castle Trail

- 1 **Start of trail** on road from Paderne
- 2 **Start of trail** from the watermill
- A Watermill and weir
- B Riverside vegetation
- C Roman bridge
- D Floodplain
- E Paderne Castle
- ~ Trail



## Route

# Cerro de São Vicente Trail

**Name:** Cerro de São Vicente Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 10' 32,614"N, 8° 12' 19,691"W (start)

**Parish:** Paderne

**Municipality:** Albufeira

**Location:** Paderne

**How to get there:** leave the A22 motorway at the Albufeira exit, turn off to Ferreiras and then follow the signs to Paderne until you reach the Estádio João Campos.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 11 km

**Average duration:** 3 hrs 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the

topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** rural roads and asphalt road.

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** it may not be possible to cross the Ribeira de Algibre in the rainy season.

**Natural interest:** the trail is located in the Barrocal Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Albufeira Municipal Council

**Remarks:** the trail is located in a hunting reserve.

The trail starts at the Chapel of Nossa Senhora ao Pé da Cruz. From here it crosses the Ribeira de Quarteira by the D. Carlos I Bridge, also known as Paderne Bridge. As the Cerro de S. Vicente comes into sight, we leave behind the landscape with more human traces.

Before starting to climb up to the Cerro, the road is flanked by rainfed fig, carob and almond orchards. As the trail climbs, the landscape is dominated by agricultural smallholdings. The shrubby vegetation begins to show signs of typical Mediterranean vegetation with species such as junipers, mastic trees, Kermes oaks and Spanish lavender. At the summit, the trail enters an area of Kermes oak and carob woodland. There are sweeping views from here over the surrounding area, taking in Paderne, some typical Algarve Barrocal scrub forest, and as far as the motorway, which has a major visual impact on the landscape (A). Here we can also see the ruins of S. Vicente windmill (B). Descending again to the valley, the trail passes through areas covered in typical Mediterranean vegetation, with species such as white-leaved rockroses, purple phlomis, strawberry trees, Montpellier cistus, Kermes oaks, spurge flax, gorse and broom (C).

Back in the valley, the landscape consists



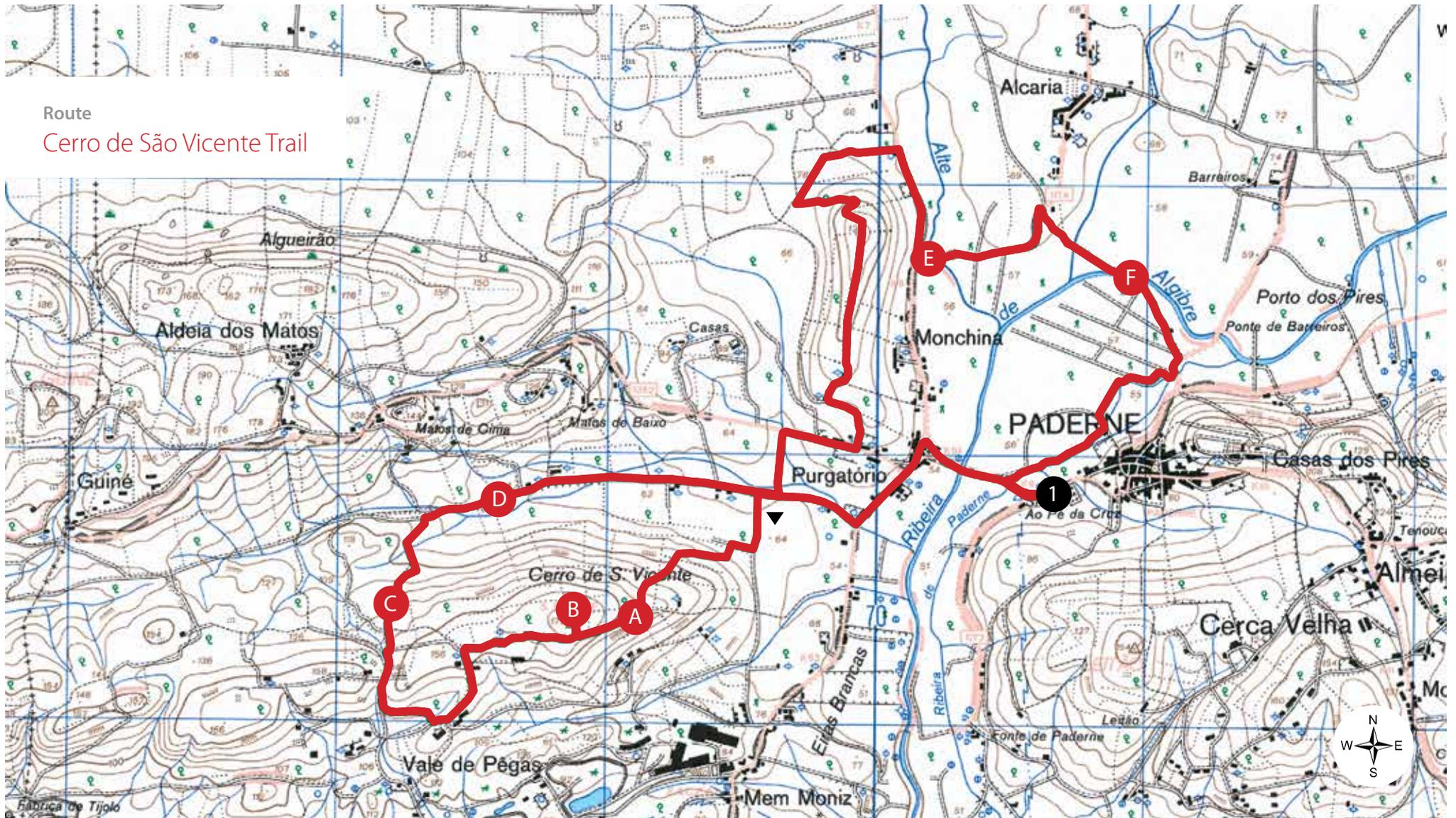
Olive tree

of carob and citrus orchards (D). The final part of the trail passes firstly across the floodplain of the Ribeira de Alte (E), followed by the floodplain of the Ribeira de Algibre (F). We cross the Ribeira de Algibre either at the ford or on stepping stones. Fig trees, olive trees, vineyards and typical riverine vegetation line the trail back to the starting point. The principal fauna are those that inhabit rivers and streams such as the otter, the Spanish terrapin and fishes recorded in this watercourse such as the hybrid minnow and the Iberian arched-mouth nase.



Route

## Cerro de São Vicente Trail

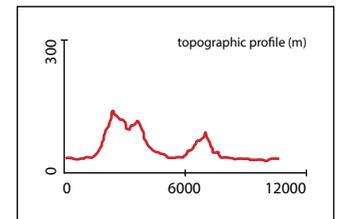


### 1 Start of the trail

(Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Pé da Cruz)

- A Panoramic view
- B Ruins of São Vicente windmill
- C Mediterranean vegetation
- D Valley with orchards
- E Ribeira de Alte
- F Ribeira de Alagibre

 Trail



## Route

# Rocha da Pena Trail

**Name:** Rocha da Pena Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 15' 01,100" N, 8° 05' 52,642" W (start)

**Parishes:** Salir and Benafim

**Municipality:** Loulé

**Location:** Rocha da Pena

**How to get there:** from Loulé, follow the road to Salir and then take the EN 124 towards Alte. Before you reach Alte village, take the turn to Rocha da Pena.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 6.4 Km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the

topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** stony path and footpaths

**When to go:** all year round except during the summer months and on very hot days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** monumental rocky outcrop. Karst landscape.

**Natural interest:** landscape. Vegetation.

Bird life. The trail is located in the Rocha da Pena Local Protected Landscape and Barrocal Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Loulé Municipal Council



*Iron Age stone walls*



*White-leaved rock rose*

The trail starts at Rocha da Pena (by the "Gruta" Bar). It begins with a steep climb up to the plateau, rising to 479 metres at Talefe. Rocha da Pena lies at the transition between the Barrocal and the Serra, with a resulting special biological diversity (A). Mixed woodland of holm oaks and junipers, Kermes oaks and species such as rosemary, the Western peony, the white-leaved rockrose and the European fan palm contribute to the huge plant diversity of this Local Protected Landscape. The fauna include Bonelli's eagle which once nested here regularly, and several species of cave-dwelling bats, of which there is an important hibernation and breeding colony here. During the walk it is possible to see a significant range of the typical flora and fauna of the Algarve Barrocal and Serra. The sweeping views over the surrounding landscape are also one of the main attractions of this trail (B) and (C). Another interesting thing to see on the plateau are the stone walls, which are thought to date from the Iron Age (D).

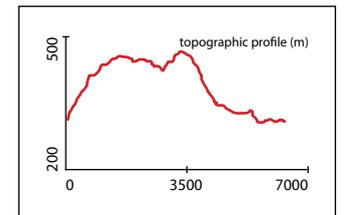
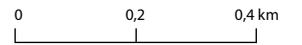
The trail then descends to the village of Penina (F), and from there continue to Rocha via a path from which there are good views of much of the south-facing escarpment (G). It is also possible to visit the ruins of the windmills at Rocha (H).

Route  
Rocha da Pena Trail



- 1 Start of the trail**
- A** Mediterranean vegetation
- B** Panoramic view (North)
- C** Panoramic view (South)
- D** Stone walls
- E** Talefe and panoramic view
- F** Penina village
- G** Views over the escarpment
- H** Rocha windmills (additional walk)

Trail



## Route

# Fonte Benémola Trail

**Name:** Fonte Benémola Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 11' 55,360"N, 8° 00' 15,759"W (start)

**Parish:** Querença

**Municipality:** Loulé

**Location:** Fonte Benémola

**How to get there:** from Loulé heading towards Salir, at the crossroads in Tôr take the turn for Querença on the EM 524. After crossing the bridge over the Ribeira da Menalva, continue on the road along the river before turning left on to a dirt track.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 4.4 Km

**Average duration:** 1 hr 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** springs

**Natural interest:** riverine woodland. Springs.

The trail is located in the Fonte Benémola Local Protected Landscape and the Barrocal Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Loulé Municipal Council



The trail starts at the hamlet of Fica Bem, where we can see a former lime kiln (A). It continues on a dirt track along the valley, flanked by farmland and orchards (B). The vegetation on the valley slopes is typical of the Barrocal, although the latter part of the trail crosses an area of schist soils covered in cistus and cork oaks. All along the valley (C) of the Ribeira da Fonte Benémola there

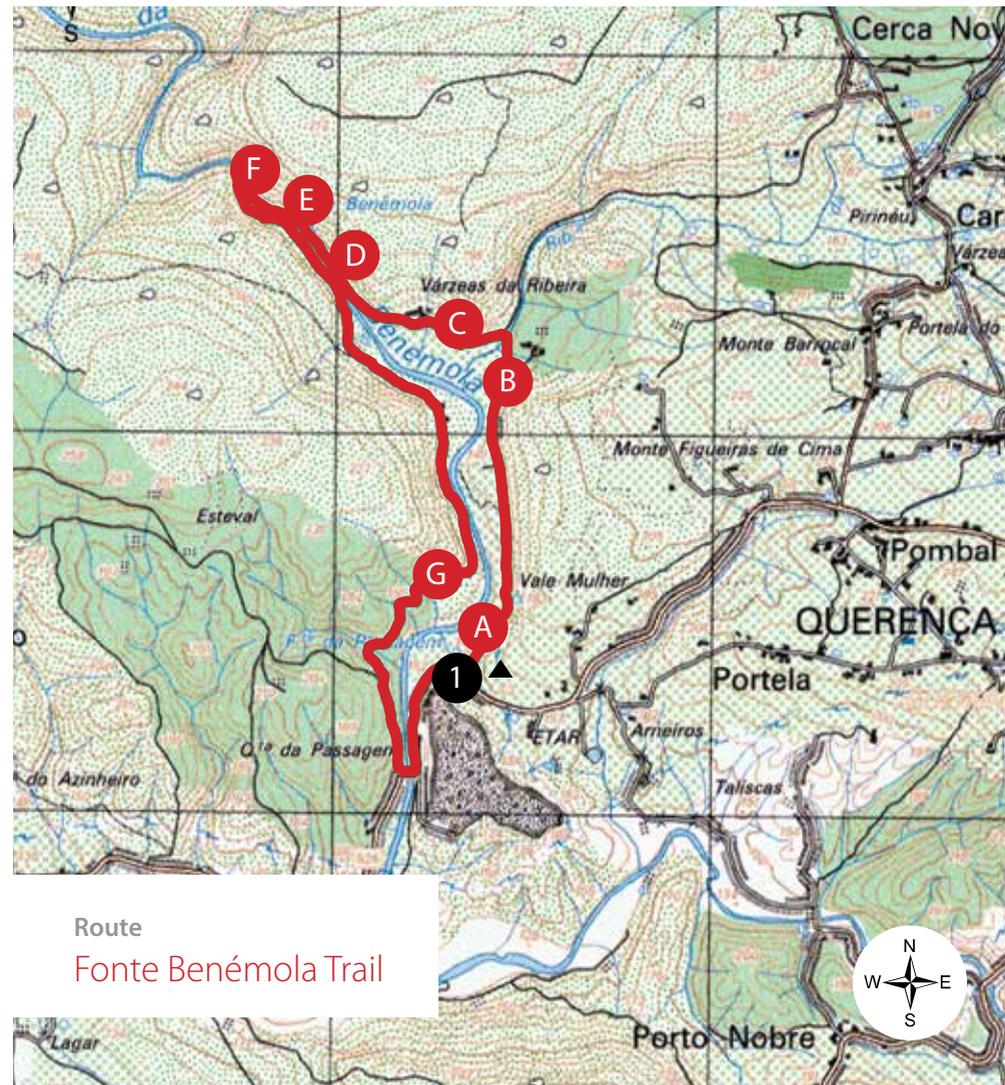
are dense and diverse riverine woodlands consisting of species such as ash trees, tamarisks, white willows, oleanders, laurustinus viburnum and white poplars (D). The river is the habitat of several important species from a conservation point of view, including terrapins, otters, kingfishers and many other vertebrate species. The areas bordering the river are also of interest



*Tamarisks*

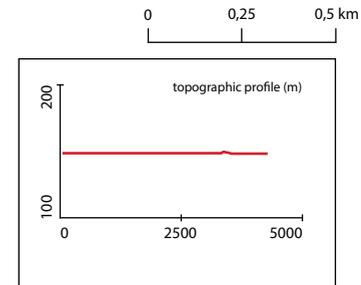
because of the occurrence of an unusually high number of Algarve fauna and flora species. Due to the presence of several springs (E), the Ribeira da Fonte Benémola

continues to flow throughout the year, even in summer, particularly downstream of Fonte Benémola. There is a picnic area on the trail (F).



Route  
Fonte Benémola Trail

- 1** Start of the trail
- A** Lime kiln
- B** Farmland and orchards
- C** View over the floodplain
- D** Riverine vegetation
- E** Springs
- F** Picnic areas
- G** Basket-maker
-  Trail



## Route

# A Walk to the Spring



**Name:** A Walk to the Spring  
**Geographic coordinates:** 37° 08' 49,378" N, 7° 51' 14,982" W (start)  
**Parish:** S. Brás de Alportel  
**Municipality:** S. Brás de Alportel  
**Location:** starts and finishes at Fonte da Mesquita  
**How to get there:** on arrival at S. Brás de Alportel, take the EN 270 in the direction of Tavira and turn right at the crossroads to Fonte da Mesquita.  
**Type:** walk  
**Circular trail:** yes  
**Distance:** 9 km  
**Average duration:** 3 hrs  
**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)  
**Type of path:** rural roads and asphalt road.  
**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.  
**Approved:** no  
**Signposted:** yes  
**Special features:** there is a POGI (point of geological interest), wells and a watermill.  
**Natural interest:** diversity of habitats. Landscape.  
**Ownership:** public paths  
**Organisation responsible:** S. Brás de Alportel Municipal Council



*Cork oaks*

The trail starts at the crossroads at Fonte Mesquita, and continues along walled paths flanked by farmland. The path from Bugia (A) offers very interesting panoramic views. Interspersed with the typical rainfed orchards of carob and olive trees which dominate the landscape, there are patches of natural Barrocal vegetation consisting mainly of species such as sage, Kermes oaks, white-leaved rockrose, mastic trees and conehead thyme. At the end of this descent, we come to the Ribeira do Bengado where we can find some irrigation infrastructures and admire the varied riverine vegetation. The trail continues on an asphalt road that runs through a cork oak forest. On the dirt track that follows, all along the valley of the Ribeira do Bengado (B-C), much of

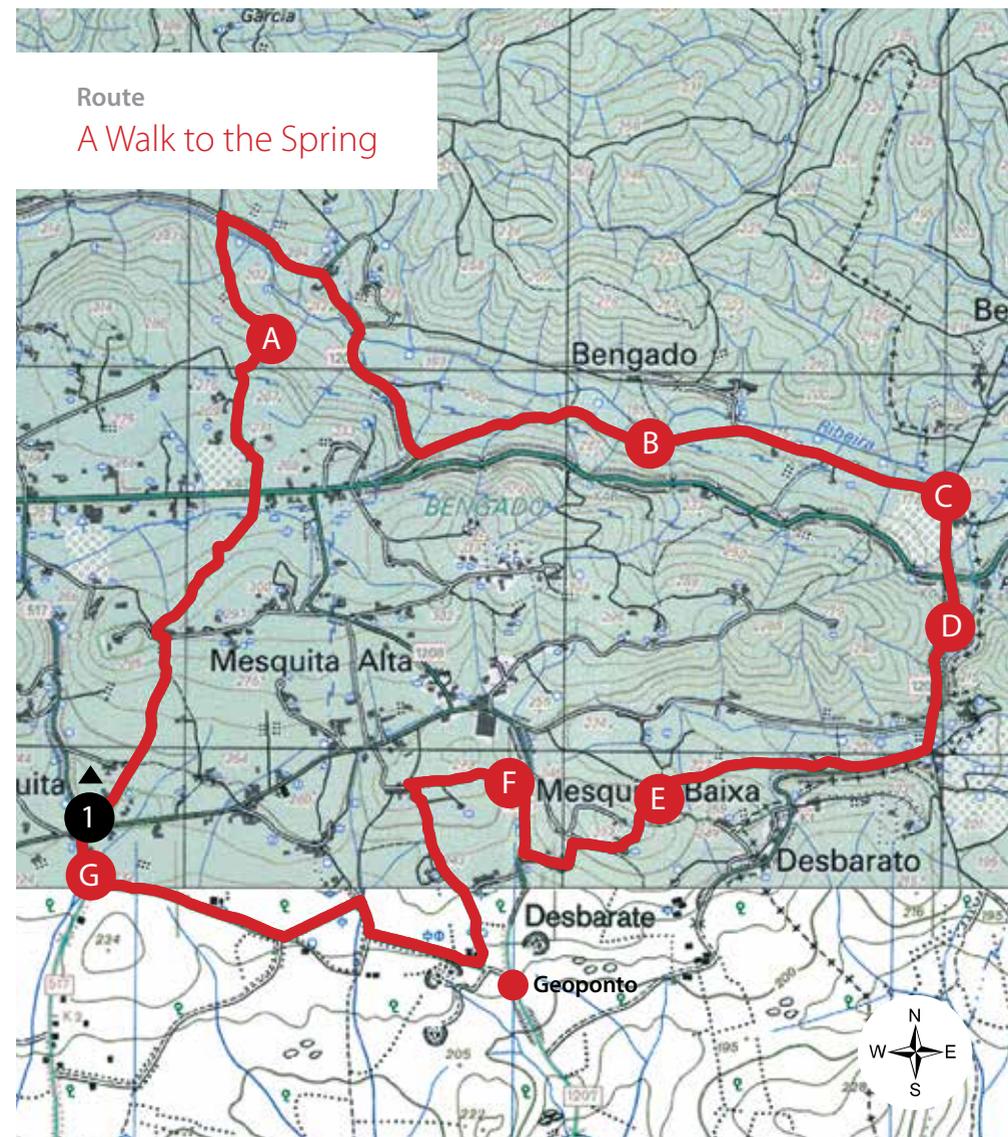


*Poço Velho (Old Well)*

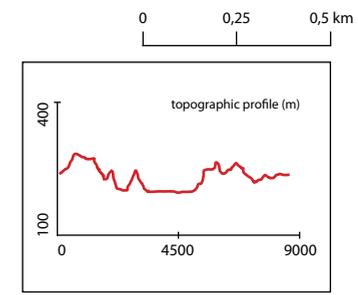
the landscape is dominated by holm oaks and shrubby species such as white-leaved rockrose, sage-leaved cistus, broom and purple phlomis. Turning south, the landscape is once again characterised by cork oak forest (D).

On the way to Monte das Favas (E) there are panoramic views over the adjacent valley and a wide variety of passerine birds typical of the

agricultural areas of the Barrocal can be seen. This part of the trail takes us to Poço Velho (F). The final part of the trail, after the sign to the POGI (where there is a very beautiful ornamental limestone breccia rock), again follows walled paths between traditional rainfed orchards, with carob trees predominating. This landscape continues until we arrive at the mill (G).



- 1** Start of the trail
- A** Panoramic view
- B-C** Valley of the Ribeira do Bengado
- D** Cork oak forest
- E** Panoramic view
- F** Poço Velho
- G** Watermill
-  Trail





## 4. Serra

## 4. Routes

# Serra

87. Discovering the Forest - Red Trail

92. Discovering the Forest - Lilac Trail

96. Fóia Trail

100. Lagoão Trail

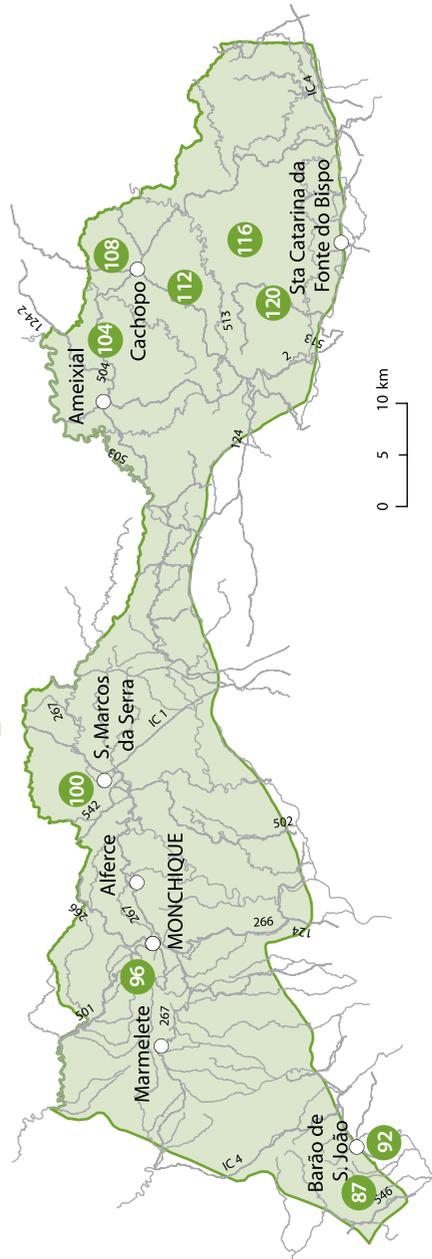
104. Masmorra Trail

108. Don Quixote Trail

112. Reserva Trail

116. Barranco das Lajes Trail

120. Between Valleys, Springs and Memories of the Serra do Caldeirão



### Route

## Discovering the Forest - Red Trail

**Name:** Discovering the Forest – Red Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 08' 22,865" N, 8° 46' 46,987" W (start)

**Parish:** Barão de S. João

**Municipality:** Lagos

**Location:** Mata de Barão de São João

**How to get there:** take the A22 motorway as far as Bensafrim. After driving through Bensafrim, turn right to Barão de São João.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 12 km

**Average duration:** 4 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** no



*Cistus*

**Signposted:** no

**Natural interest:** panoramic views. Southwest coast natura 2000 site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Lagos Municipal Council

**Remarks:** part of the trail crosses a hunting reserve.





The trail begins near the Cultural Centre in the town. From the start of the trail to the Forest Rangers Post, the landscape is dominated by acacia trees. Here and there on the edges of this area are stands of pine and cistus. Further ahead the trail enters an area where the landscape changes to a sparse vegetation cover consisting of

thyme, gorse, Portuguese heath, cistus and scattered cork oaks.

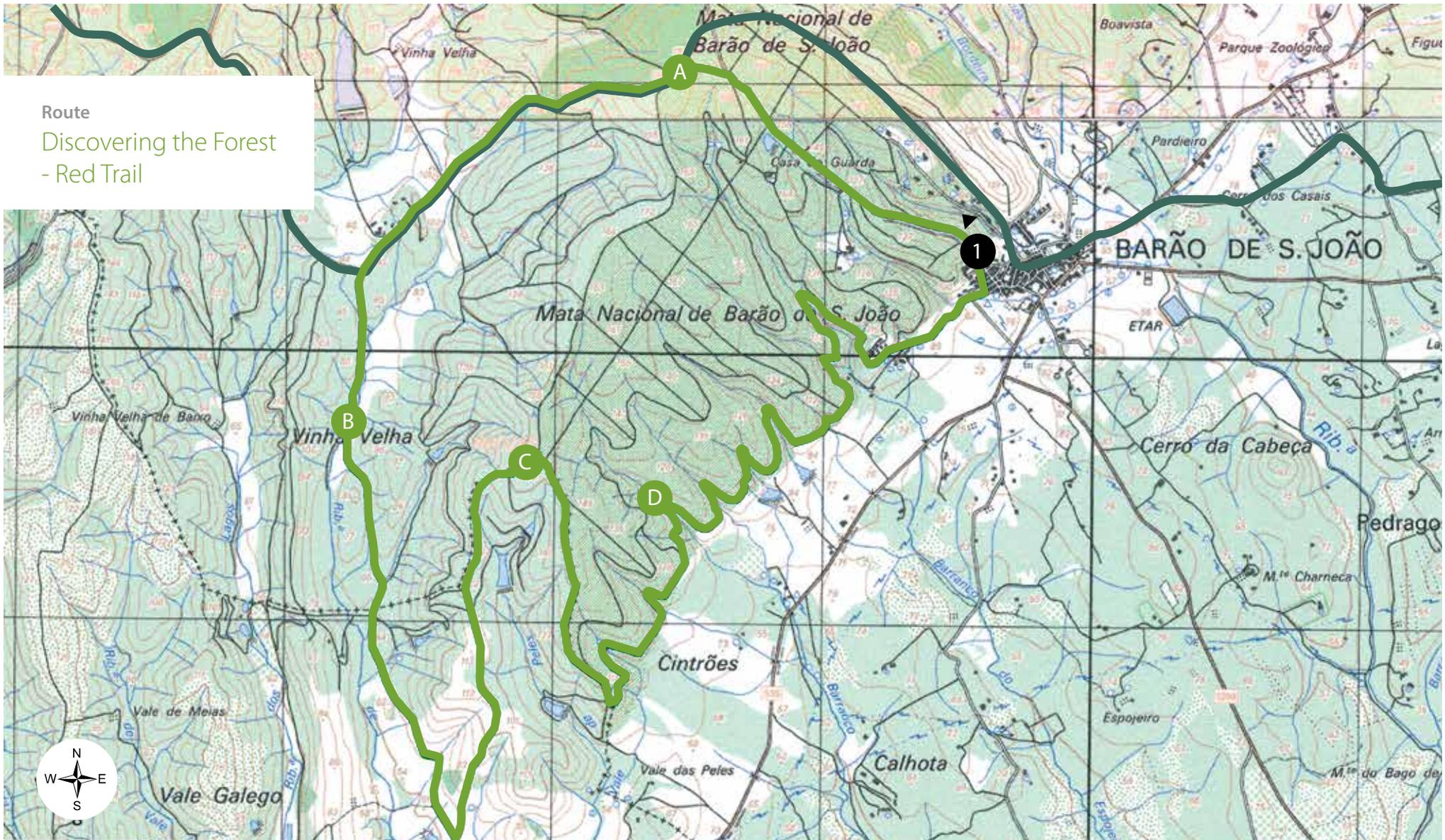
In the middle part of the trail, between Vinha Velha (B) and Relvas (C), there are places with good views of the mountain landscape.

From the southeast edge of the forest back to the starting point, the trail crosses an

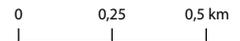
area of narrow ravines, following the banks of small streams. The vegetation cover here consists of species such as mastic trees, strawberry trees, purple phlomis, wild olive, Kermes oaks and various species of *Cistus*, although gorse and Spanish lavender are the most abundant species (D).

Among the mammals recorded in this

forest are hares and rabbits, and traces of wild boar and carnivores such as foxes, genets or mongooses may also be seen. In terms of birds, there is a wide range of passerines and raptors to be seen, such as the little owl, the buzzard and even Bonelli's eagle which has been sighted here.



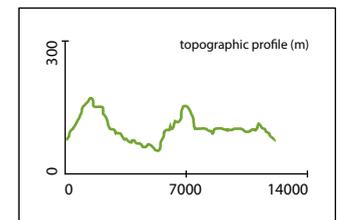
Route  
 Discovering the Forest  
 - Red Trail



**1 Start of the trail**

- A Mediterranean vegetation
- B Panoramic view
- C Panoramic view (trig point)
- D Riverine vegetation

Trail



## Route

# Discovering the Forest - Lilac Trail

**Name:** Discovering the Forest - Lilac Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 08' 22,865" N, 8° 46' 46,987" W (start)

**Parish:** Barão de S. João

**Municipality:** Lagos

**Location:** Mata de Barão de São João

**How to get there:** take the A22 motorway as far as Bensafrim. After driving through Bensafrim, turn right to Barão de São João.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 6 km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no

**Natural interest:** landscape. Southwest Coast Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Lagos Municipal Council

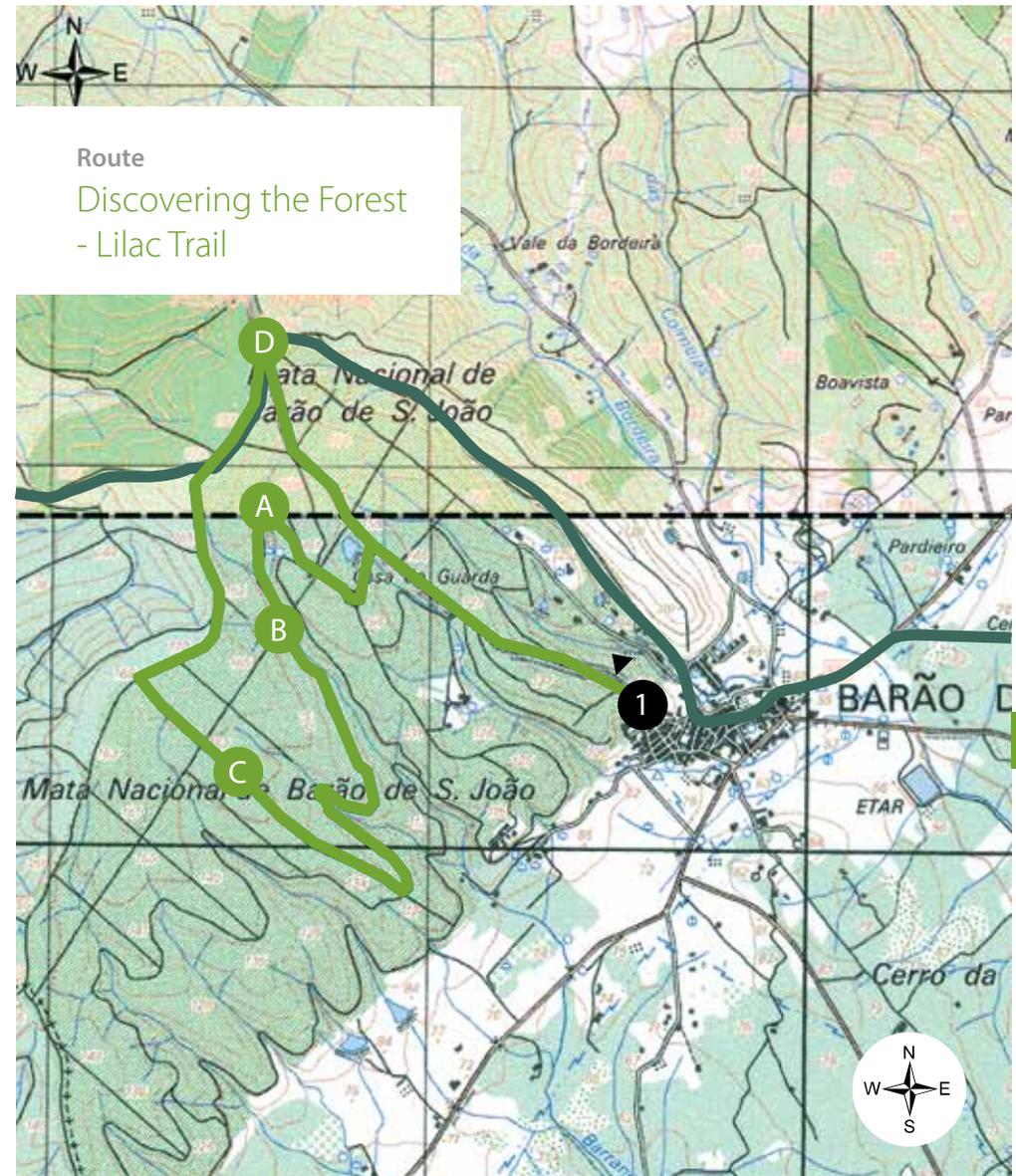




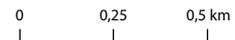
Spanish heath

The trail begins near the Cultural Centre in the town. From the start of the trail to the Forest Rangers Post, the landscape is dominated by acacia trees. After the Forest Rangers Post the trail skirts a picnic area set in a stand of stone pines (A). The trail then continues along the

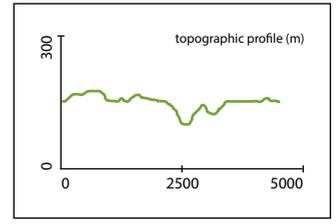
banks of a stream. The vegetation in the surrounding areas consists of cistus, strawberry trees, gorse, purple phlomis, narrow-leaved phillyrea and false yellowhead, along with scattered cork oaks (B). Once in the middle of the forest other interesting species are to be found, such as thyme, dwarf Spanish heath and Spanish lavender (C). From the northwest edge of the forest to Pedra Branca the landscape is again pine forest, this time maritime pine. On the top of Pedra Branca there is a Palaeolithic menhir known as Pedra de Galo which makes a good viewpoint over the surrounding mountains (D). From here back to the starting point of the trail acacias and pines predominate. The fauna is essentially the same as that described in the "Red Trail".



Route  
Discovering the Forest  
- Lilac Trail



- 1 Start of the trail**
- A** Pine forest and picnic area
- B** Mediterranean vegetation
- C** Mediterranean vegetation
- D** Palaeolithic monument (Pedra do Galo)
-  Trail



## Route

# Fóia Trail

**Nome:** Fóia Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 18' 56,850" N, 8° 35' 34,220" W (start)

**Parish:** Monchique

**Municipality:** Monchique

**Location:** Fóia

**How to get there:** leaving Monchique, follow the EM 266-3 to the Fóia viewpoint, where the trail begins.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 7 km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the

topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt tracks, footpaths and asphalt road

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot or very cold days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** Monchique Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Monchique Municipal Council

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

Starting the tour at Fóia, and continuing toward Pegões, the view stretches over the northern slope (A). There is a remarkable range of Portuguese plant species to be seen, with brooms, tree heath, rhododendrons and bracken among the most common.

The trail continues through areas of eucalyptus that occupy a significant part of the Serra de Monchique, which was once dominated by oaks (cork oaks, Portuguese oaks and Algerian oaks).

On the descent, after Relva Branca da Fóia, the trail crosses the terraces that are characteristic of this area and the landscape changes to cork oaks with occasional chestnut trees and scattered maritime pines (B). The panoramic view is now to the south, over the Algarve coast, hills and valleys. The occurrence of Monchique syenite, a type of granite, along the trail makes it unique. The trail then follows an asphalt road for about 650 metres. In this area the landscape is dominated by eucalyptus and pine forests. The trail then begins to rise towards Fóia, among shrubby vegetation dominated by cistus, dwarf gorse, Spanish lavender, green lavender, sage-leaved cistus and wrinkle-leaved cistus. Halfway up the rise there are good views to the south. Returning to Fóia, one can easily see the coast and the sea from the viewpoint (C) on a clear day.

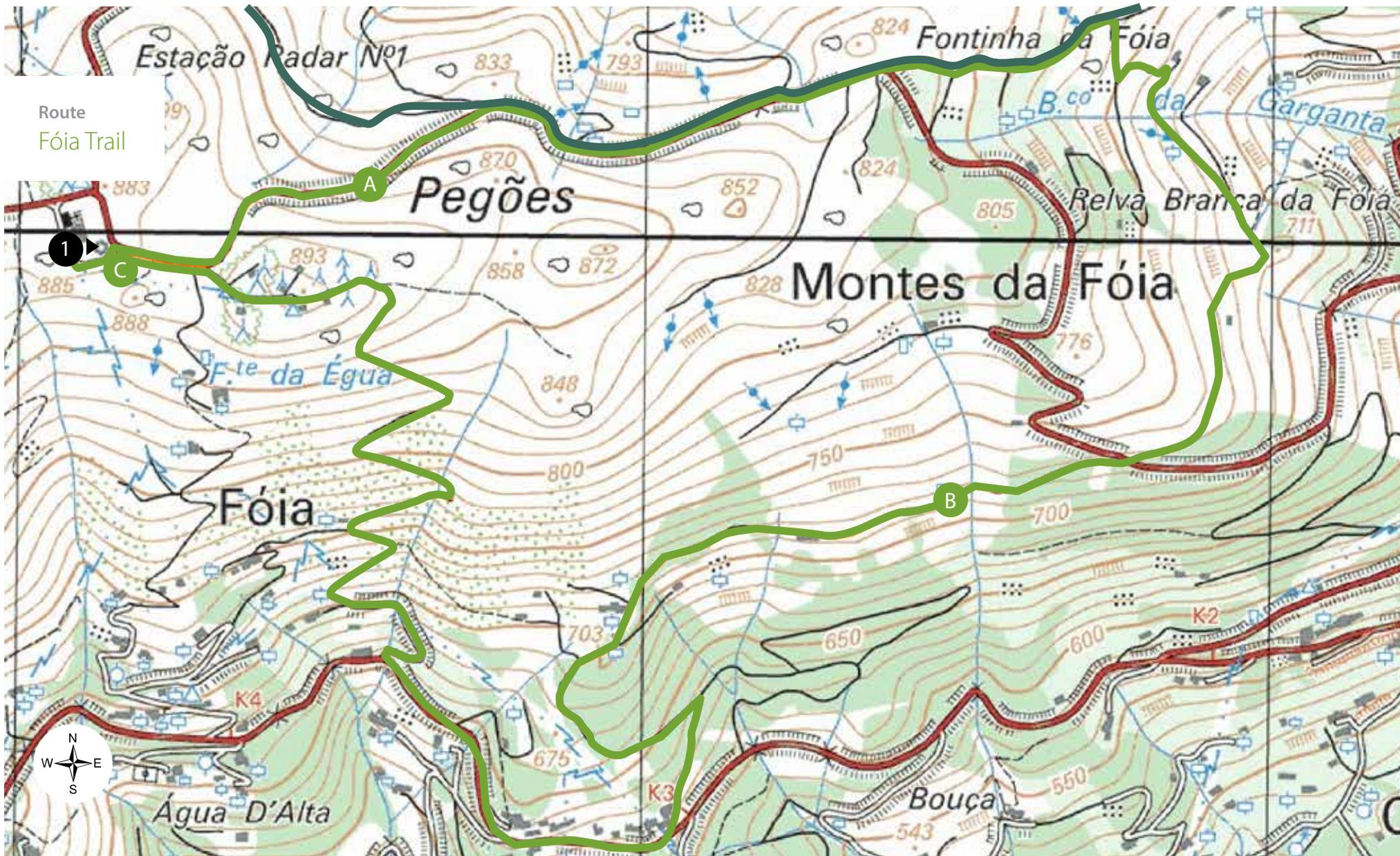


*Cork oak*



*Common rhododendron*

The Serra de Monchique is one of the places in Portugal where threatened species such as Bonelli's eagle and Schreiber's green lizard have found refuge. In addition to these, a large number of birds, reptiles and amphibians have been sighted, which is another of this trail's plus points.



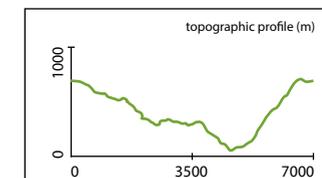
Route  
Fóia Trail

- 1** Start of the trail
- A** Panoramic view
- B** Area of oak and chestnut trees
- C** Viewpoint

Trail



0 0,1 0,2 km



## Route

# Lagoão Trail

**Name:** Lagoão Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 21' 43,574"N, 8° 22' 13,609"W (start)

**Parish:** São Marcos da Serra

**Municipality:** Silves

**Location:** São Marcos da Serra

**How to get there:** take the IC1 heading north. Turn off to São Marcos da Serra and head in the direction of the football pitch.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 10 km

**Average duration:** 3 hrs 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** no



Cortiça

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** it may not be possible to cross the river in the rainy season.

**Natural interest:** part of the trail is located in the Monchique Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** Silves Municipal Council

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.



*Ribeira de Odelouca*

The trail starts near the fire station and football pitch, where there is an information panel. Following the road northwards, the trail runs along the floodplain of the Ribeira de Odelouca (A).

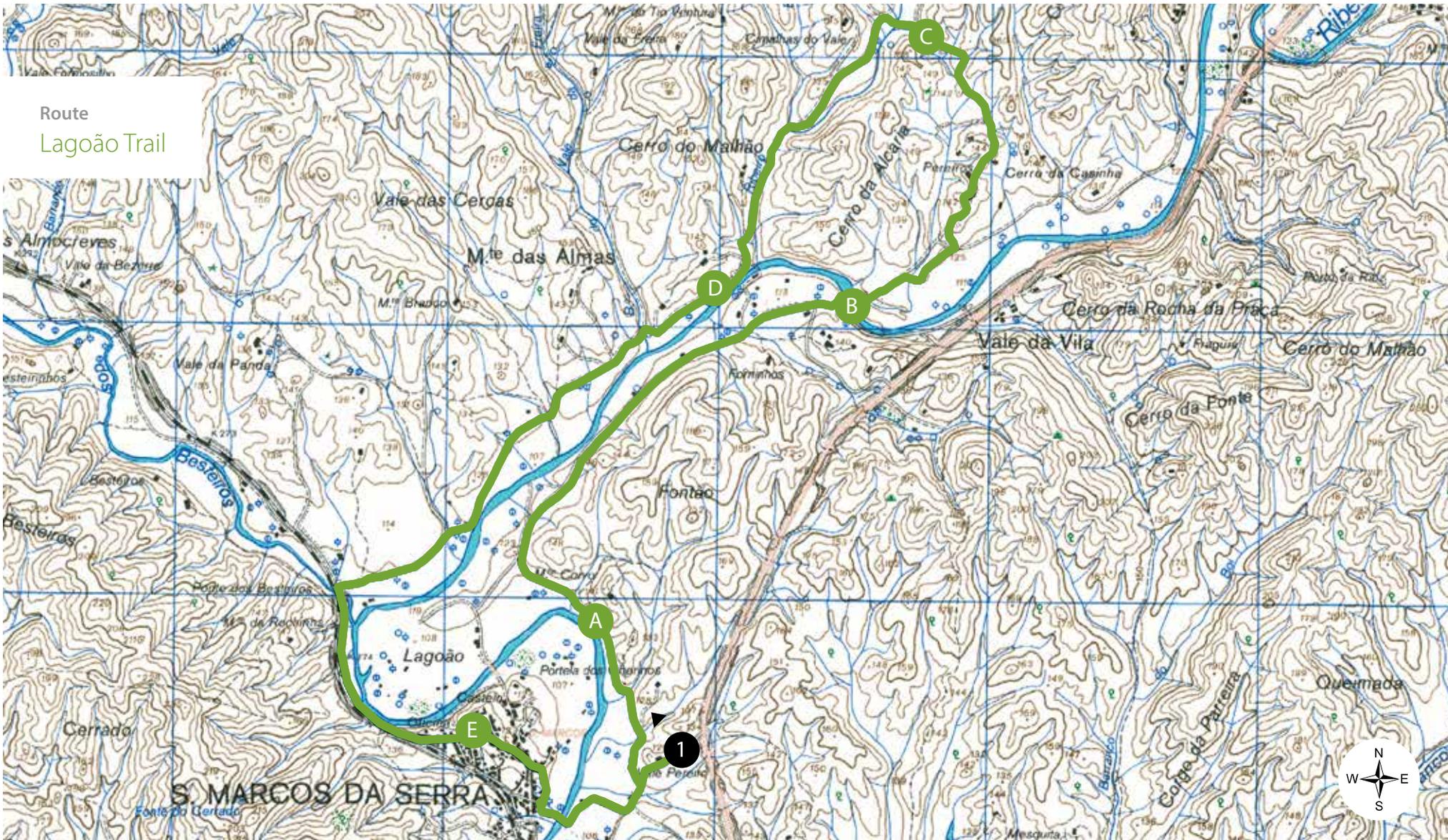
Walking close to the river we can identify some of the species typical of Algarve riverine vegetation such as ash trees, tamarisks and willows among others (B). These areas of natural vegetation are interspersed with dense reedbeds which have well-known negative effects on the rivers of the Algarve.

After crossing the river in the direction of Pereiros, we come to a small reservoir flanked by plantations of pine and olive trees. The landscape for much of the trail consists of olive and cork oak groves

composed both of mature trees and more recent plantings (C).

Returning to the river, the trail runs along the valley through wooded areas and farmland (D) and passes through a wide stretch of valley known as Lagoão, from which the trail takes its name. Arriving at the village of São Marcos da Serra, we can visit the mother church (E). Passing through the village and crossing the Ribeira de Odelouca we arrive back at the start of the trail.

Turtle doves, golden orioles, rabbits, kingfishers, azure-winged magpies, Iberian green frogs and Mediterranean tree frogs are just some of the many species that can be seen on this trail which passes through an interesting mosaic of land uses.

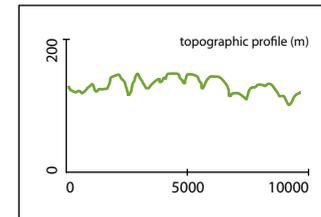
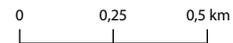


Route  
Lagoão Trail

1 Start of the trail

- A View over the Ribeira de Odelouca
- B Crossing point over the Ribeira de Odelouca
- C Area of forest
- D Scoopwheel
- E Mother church

~ Trail



## Route

# Masmorra Trail



*Dolmen*

**Name:** Masmorra Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 21' 48,210" N, 7° 52' 18,236" W (start)

**Parish:** Cachopo

**Municipality:** Tavira

**Location:** Mealha

**How to get there:** at the roundabout in Cachopo, take the road to Martinlongo and turn left when you see the sign for Mealha.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 5.5 Km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** rural roads and asphalt road

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** yes. PR8

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** Antas da Masmorra (dolmens), remains of former civilisations.

Typical haylofts. The Discovery Centre in Mealha is equipped to enable visitors to stay and also serves as a support facility for walks.

**Natural interest:** landscape. Bird life. Habitats associated with watercourses.

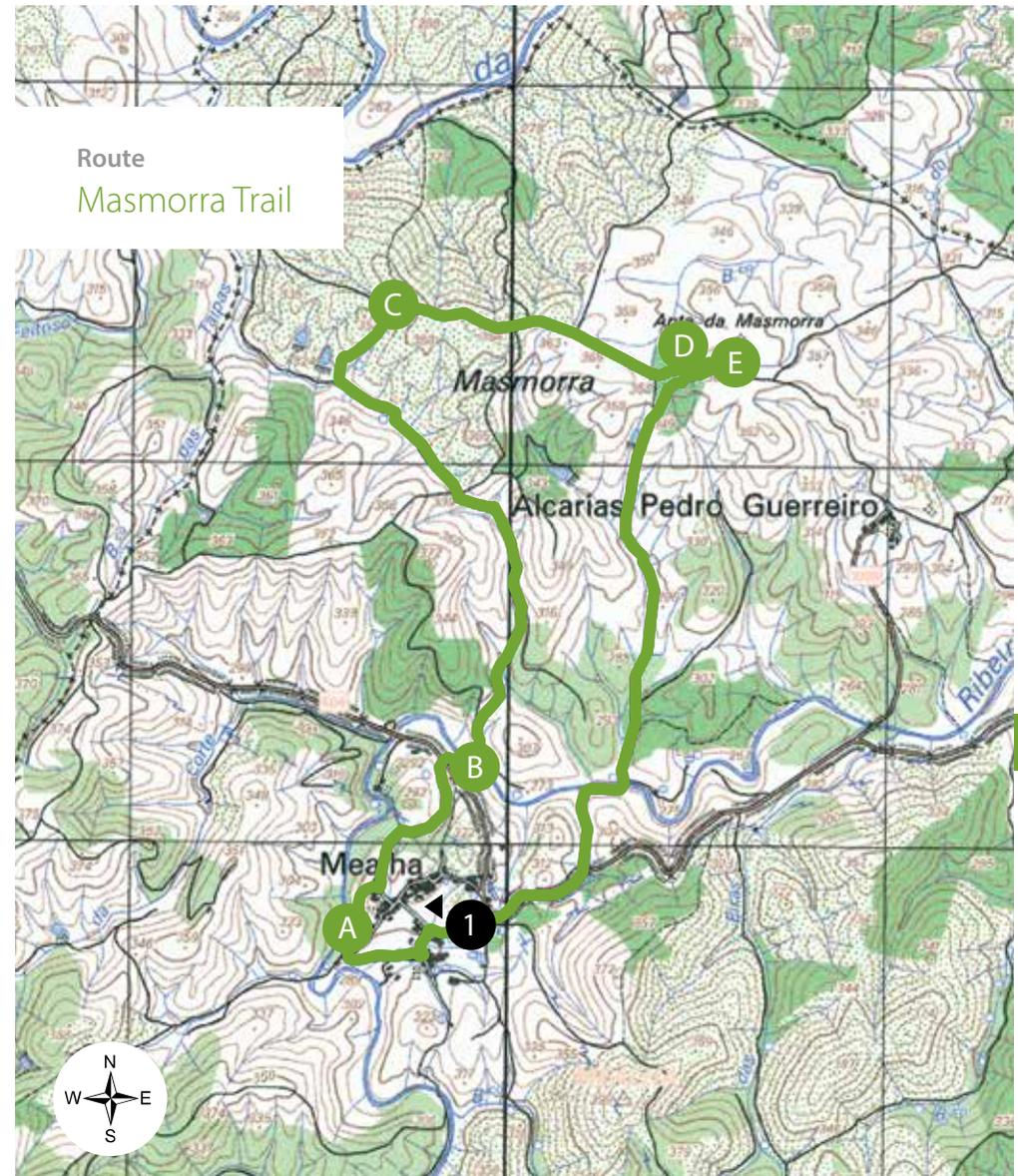
**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** "In Loco" Association and Tavira Municipal Council.

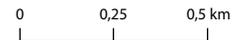
**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

The trail starts by the information panel at the Discovery Centre (the former village primary school) and passes between houses, smallholdings, haylofts and cattle pens (A), following the Ribeirinha before crossing over it. The landscape here is one of holm oak forest, as well as cork oaks, almond trees and Kermes oaks. Further on, the plant cover includes other species such as mastic trees, purple phlomis, rushes, myrtle, oleanders and carob trees. As we start to climb up towards Masmorra mount, pine trees and cistus become

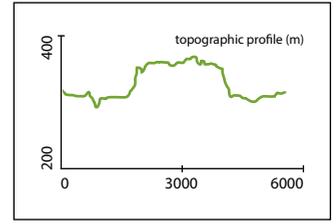
more common. From the top of the mount there are fine views of the surrounding countryside (C). Just past the windmills (D) are the Masmorra dolmens, used in funerary cults in times past. From here back to the starting point, the trail descends to run once again alongside the Ribeirinha and then through agricultural smallholdings before reaching Mealha. The various types of habitat through which the trail passes enable us to observe a wide variety of typical fauna and flora of the Algarve Serra.



Route  
Masmorra Trail



- 1 Start of the trail** - former primary school
- A** Haylofts and cattle pens
- B** Crossing point over the Ribeirinha
- C** Panoramic view
- D** Windmill
- E** Masmorra dolmens
- Trail



## Route

# Don Quixote Trail

**Name:** Don Quixote Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 20' 36,857" N, 7° 46' 54,359" W (start)

**Municipality:** Cachopo

**Location:** Casas Baixas

**How to get there:** when you reach Cachopo take the turn to Tavira. After about 1 km, look for a sign on the left to Casas Baixas.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 17 km

**Average duration:** 6 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track and asphalt road

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** yes

**Signposted:** yes. PR1

**Special features:** the Discovery Centre in Casas Baixas is equipped to enable visitors to stay and also serves as a support centre for walks.

**Natural interest:** upland landscape and biodiversity.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** "In Loco" Association and Tavira Municipal Council.

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.



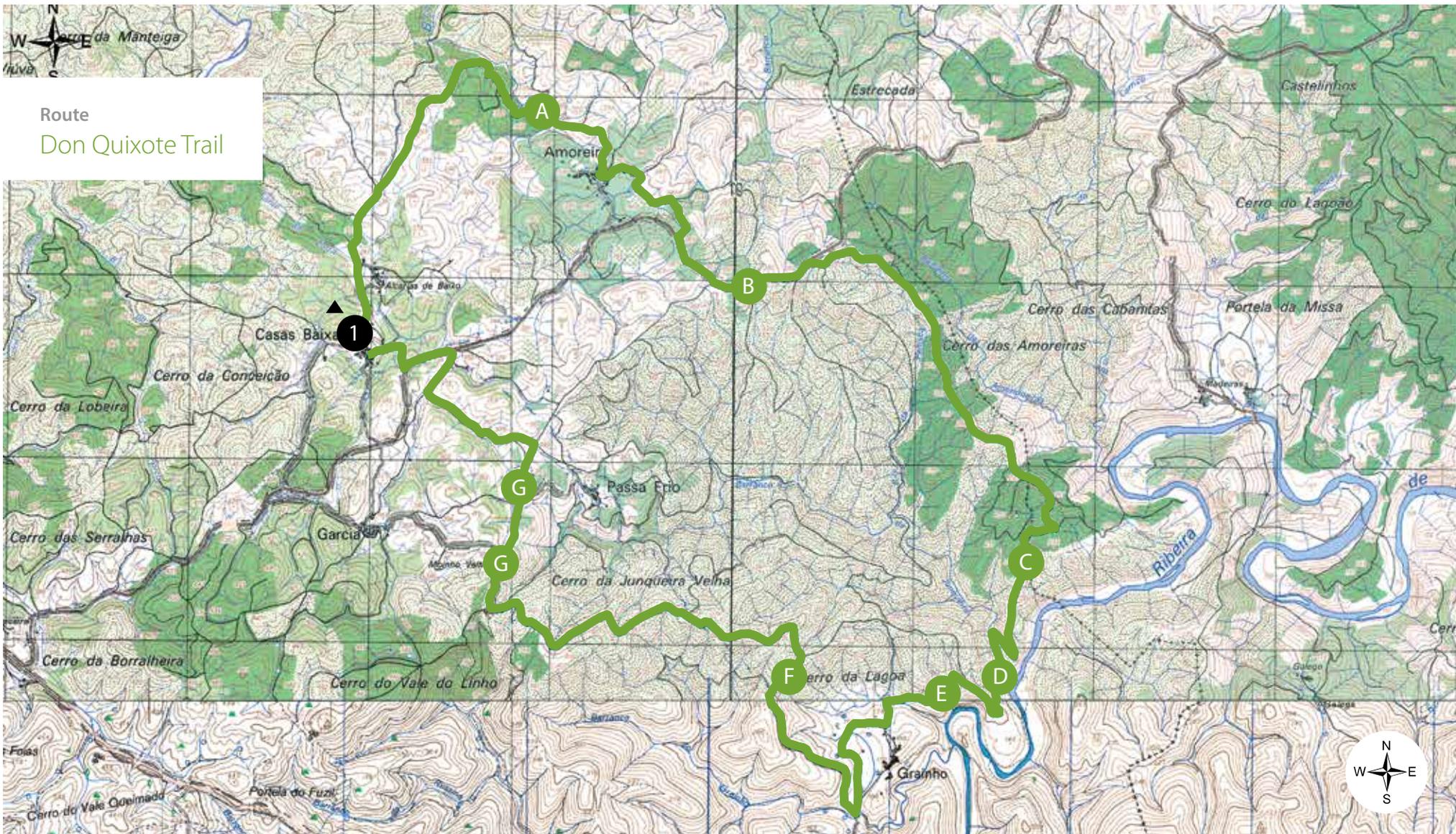
The trail starts at the Discovery Centre (the former primary school) in this village. The trail starts off in a northerly direction, passing through the village of Alcarias Baixas. The landscape is mainly cistus, changing gradually to cork oak groves and pine plantations.

In some places there are great swathes of Spanish lavender and spotted rockroses (*Tuberaria guttata*), which lend distinctive colour to the landscape during the flowering season. As far as Amoreira the trail runs alongside a stream (A), through orchards and vineyards. The trail continues through cork oak forests (B), cistus scrub and pine forests to the mount of Cerro do Bicudo. From here there are views over the Ribeira de Odeleite, the valley and hillsides covered in cistus, strawberry trees, pines and holm oaks (C). By the river there is an inviting picnic area (D) in which to rest for a while and admire the landscape (E). It is sometimes possible to see here some of the many species of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles of this area. Species such as rabbits, the Iberian green

frog, the thekla lark, the Eurasian jay, the partridge and the golden oriole are relatively common.

After leaving Graíno the trail crosses an area of floodplain occupied by fields, orchards, vineyards and pasture. The vegetation changes to cistus, holm oaks and cork oaks (F), and near Passa Frio the trail passes two windmills that testify to an earlier way of life in the Algarve Serra (G). The trail continues to the Casas Baixa Discovery Centre.



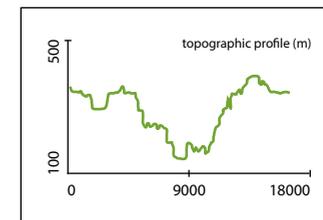
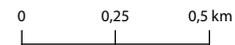


Route  
Don Quixote Trail

1 Start of the trail

- A Riverside habitat
- B Cork oak forest
- C Panoramic view
- D Picnic area
- E View over the Ribeira de Odeleite
- F Panoramic view
- G Windmills

~ Trail



## Route

# Reserva Trail



*Halimium*

**Name:** Reserva Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 16' 50,070" N, 7° 51' 43,582" W (start)

**Parish:** Cachopo

**Municipality:** Tavira

**Location:** Feiteira

**How to get there:** take the EN 124 towards Cachopo. 11 km after Barranco do Velho, you come to Feiteira.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 5.2 Km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the

topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** rural roads

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** yes. PR5

**Signposted:** yes

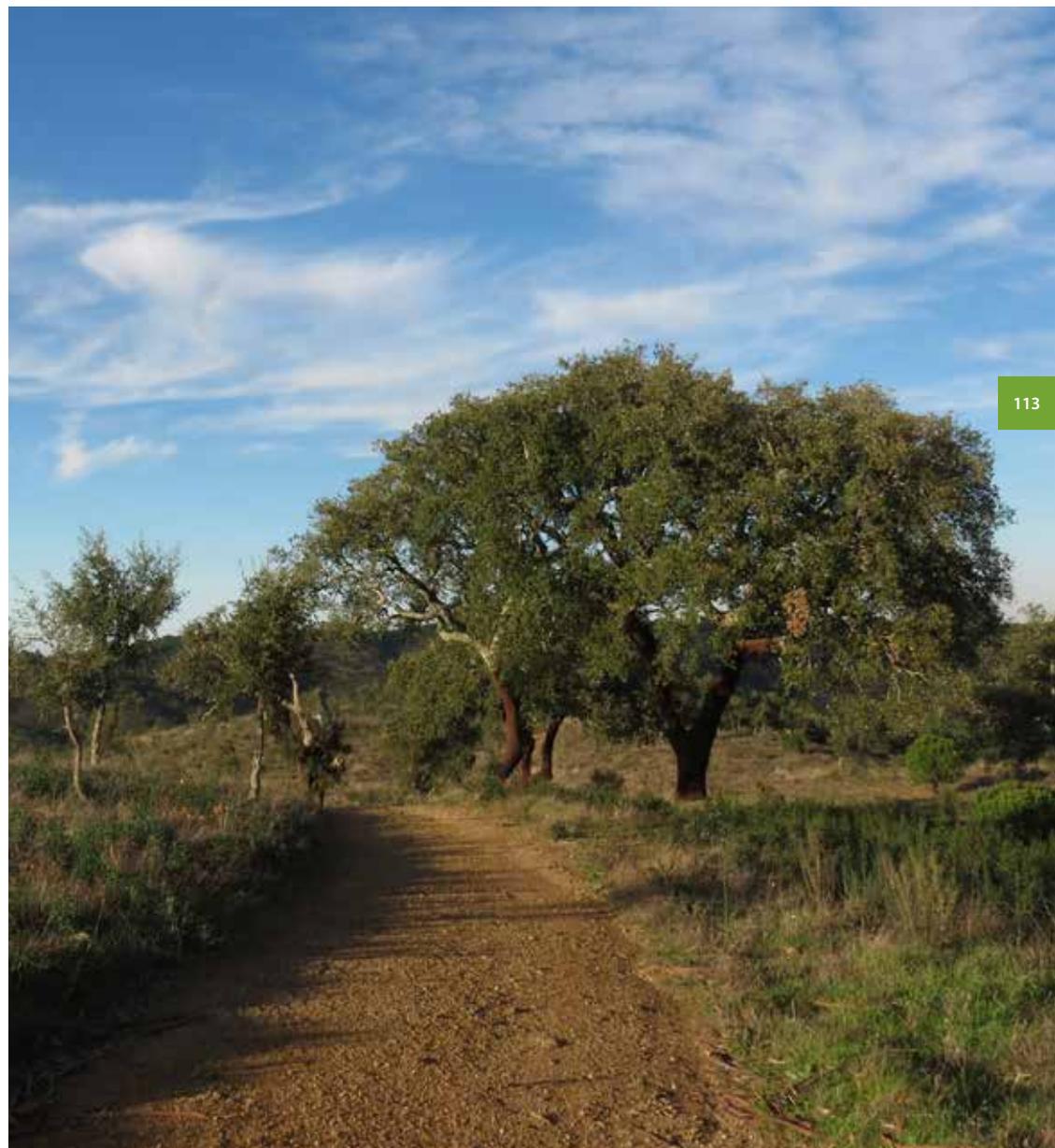
**Special features:** the Discovery Centre in Feiteira is equipped to enable visitors to stay and also serves as a support facility for walks.

**Natural interest:** landscape. Bird life.

**Ownership:** public paths

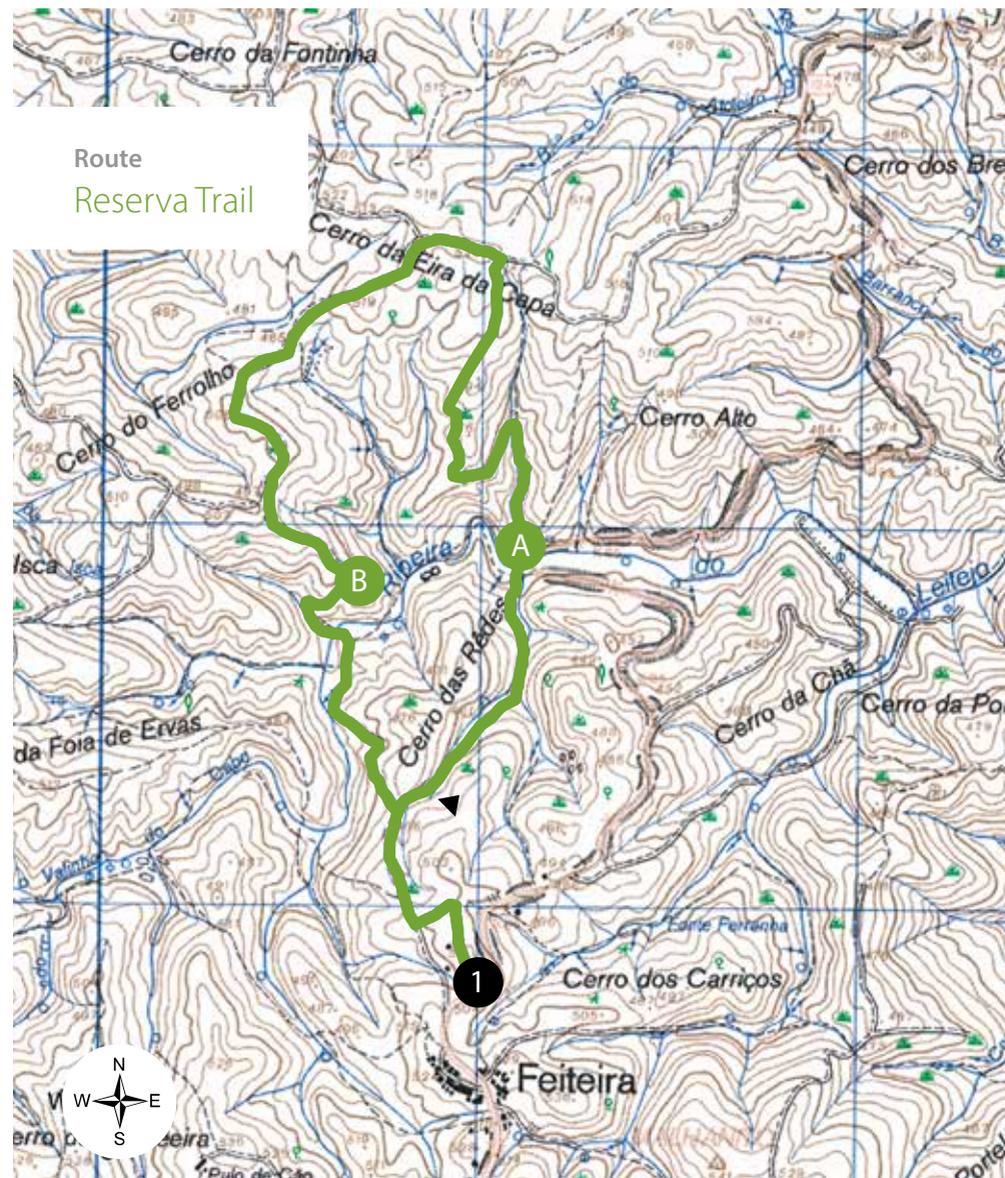
**Organisations responsible:** "In Loco" Association and Tavira Municipal Council.

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.



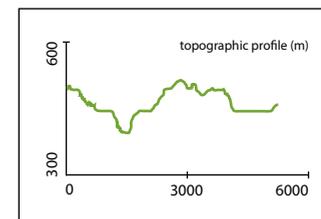
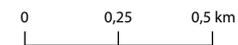


The trail starts at the Discovery Centre in Feiteira (the former primary school) and sets off in a northerly direction. Initially the trail passes between cork oaks, eucalyptus trees, maritime pines and full height strawberry trees. The landscape begins to change after crossing the Ribeira do Leitejo (A) and as far as Cerro da Eira da Capa the vegetation is typical Mediterranean scrub forest. At the top of Cerro da Eira da Capa the plant cover consists of pine forest and cistus scrub, with occasional green lavender. The vegetation on this trail provides cover for some animal species that live in these types of habitat, such as rabbits, partridges and various reptiles (sand racers, lizards, snakes). We may also see traces of the presence of mammals such as wild boar or foxes, although they are rarely seen. There is a rich and varied bird life and occasionally some of the species of eagle that inhabit these parts may be seen. From Cerro da Eira da Capa to Feiteira the landscape is dominated by shrubby vegetation, with occasional eucalyptus trees and cork oaks. The descent back to the Ribeira do Leitejo offers panoramic views (B). Species such as green lavender and heathers are common in the valley by the crossing over the Ribeira do Leitejo.



Route  
Reserva Trail

- 1 Start of the trail
- A Crossing point over the river
- B View over the valley of the Ribeira do Leitejo
- Trail



## Route

# Barranco das Lajes Trail

**Name:** Barranco das Lajes Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 14' 57,932" N, 7° 49' 04,556" W (start)

**Parish:** S. Brás de Alportel

**Municipality:** S. Brás de Alportel

**Location:** the start and end point is in Cabanas

**How to get there:** from S. Brás de Alportel head north to Alportel. Here, continue towards Cova da Muda, passing through Javali, Parises, Cabeça do Velho and, finally, Cabanas.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 5.5 Km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** rural roads and asphalt road.

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** it is recommended to follow the trail in the direction Lajes–Cerro da Urza.

**Natural interest:** landscapes. Vegetation. Bird life. The trail is in an area adjacent to the Caldeirão Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** S. Brás de Alportel Municipal Council

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.



The trail starts at the entrance to the village of Cabanas, continuing to the right on the asphalt road to Lajes.

This whole stretch is dominated by cork oaks and cistus. In some places species such as the strawberry tree, holm oak or olive are also present in significant stands.

The trail beyond Lajes is lined with olive and fig groves (A).

At the end of the descent into the valley of the Barranco Lajes we come to a watercourse where the vegetation consists of reeds, ferns and other riverine vegetation (B), mingling with the vegetation of the adjacent hillsides such as the foxglove which is in flower here between May and August. Also in this valley there are dense stands of cork oaks along the length of the valley sides (C).

Continuing west, we come to Poço do Ribeirinho (D), an irrigation infrastructure of great importance to local agriculture.

In some parts of the trail it is possible to see and hear the varied fauna associated with cork oak forests, particularly birds and mammals.

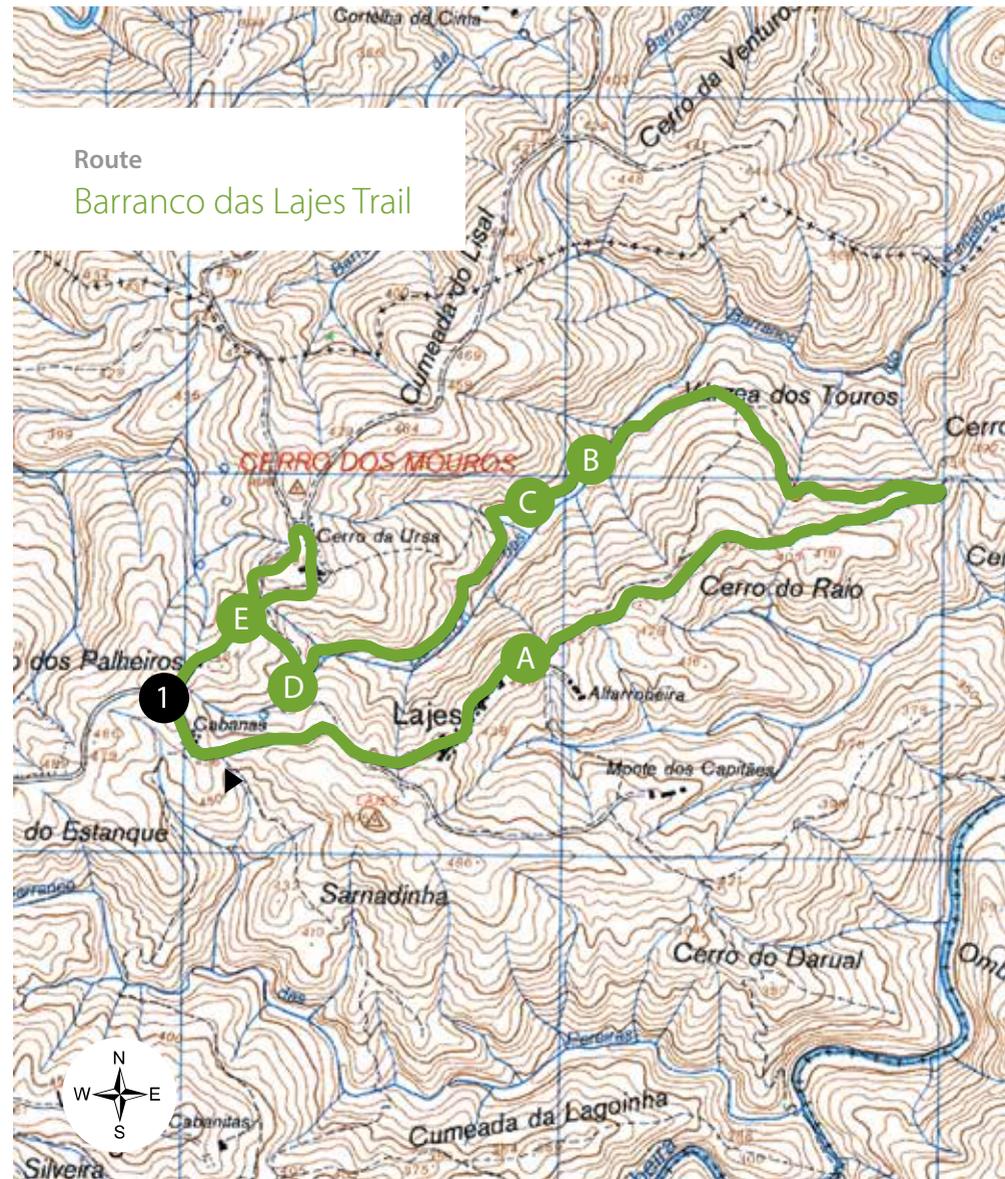
From the hilltop of Cerro da Ursa, there are sweeping views over the surrounding hills and the sea (E).



Foxglove

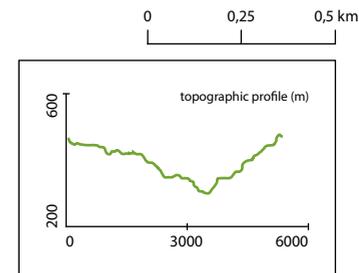


Raw cork



Route  
Barranco das Lajes Trail

- 1 Start of the trail
- A Orchards
- B Riverine vegetation
- C Cork oak forest
- D Poço do Ribeirinho
- E Panoramic view
- ~ Trail



## Route

# Between Valleys, Springs and Memories of the Serra do Caldeirão

**Name:** Between Valleys, Springs and Memories of the Serra do Caldeirão

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 14' 47,806"N, 7° 51' 11,761"W (start)

**Parish:** S. Brás de Alportel

**Municipality:** S. Brás de Alportel

**Location:** start and finish in Parises

**How to get there:** from S. Brás de Alportel head north to Alportel. From there, take the Cova da Muda road to Parises.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 20 km

**Average duration:** 7 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** rural roads, asphalt road and paved footpaths.

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Special features:** the trail can be divided into three shorter routes. Where the trail crosses the river it can present problems in winter.

**Natural interest:** habitats typical of watercourses. Partly located in the Caldeirão Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisation responsible:** S. Brás de Alportel Municipal Council

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

The trail initially follows a rural road before coming to the information panel at Parises. Along these roads the landscape is dominated by cork oaks and the shrub and subshrub layer is composed of species such as green lavender, Spanish lavender, cistus, rock roses and dwarf Spanish heath. The trail passes a spring (A) and on the descent into the valley the flora is more varied and plants such as the strawberry tree, spurge flax and laurustinus viburnum are seen (B).

In the valley, the trail runs alongside a stream (C). After we cross this stream the landscape is dominated by cistus with isolated stands of maritime pines and cork oaks (D). The trail then enters an area where three streams meet (E) and there are two alternative routes:

- The route in the direction of Várzea do Velho runs along the edge of smallholdings along the Ribeira das Ruivas in the direction of some ruined houses. It then returns to the starting point through areas of cork oak forest.

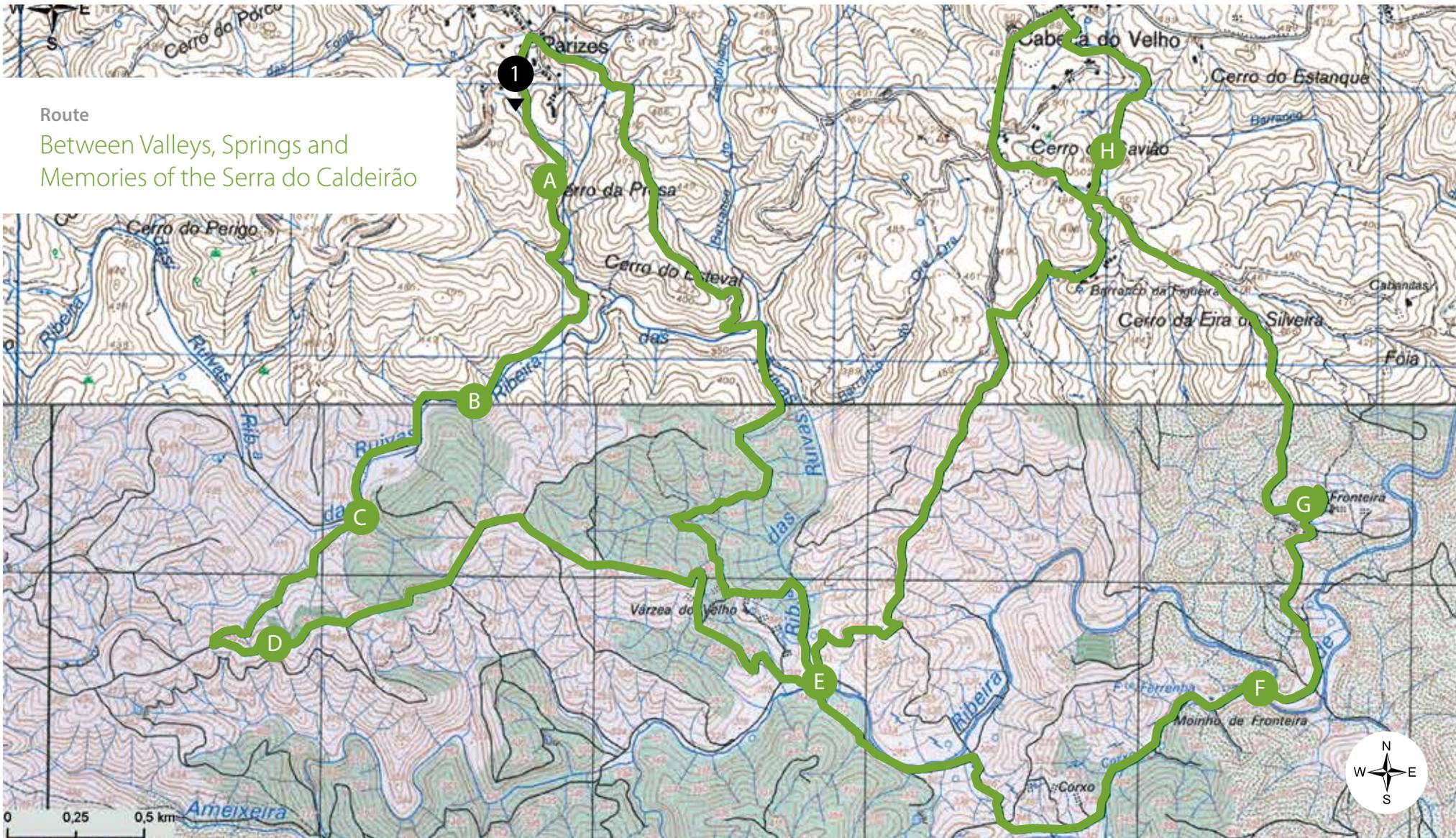
- On the route along the Ribeira da Ameixeira and the Ribeira de Fronteira (F) to Fronteira, the landscape is clothed in maritime pines, carob trees and holm oaks (G). From Cerro da Eira da Silveira to Cerro do Gavião, the landscape is covered in pine and cork oak forest. From here to Cabeça do Velho, the trail passes through a wetter area,



Spring

as indicated by the presence of ferns (H). Having completed this short, 5 km circular route, the trail returns to the crossroads before setting off in the direction of the Ribeira da Ameixeira.

This stretch can provide a good opportunity to observe the varied fauna and some of the typical Mediterranean habitats. Species recorded here include the mongoose, genet, wild boar, fox, partridge, hawfinch, Eurasian jay, lesser spotted woodpecker, azure-winged magpie, European green woodpecker, golden oriole, wood nuthatch and kingfisher, among many other species which together are a good indicator of the environmental quality of this part of the Serra do Caldeirão.



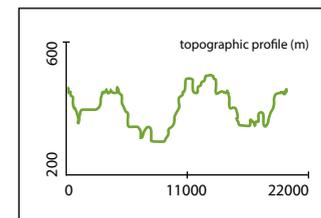
Route

Between Valleys, Springs and Memories of the Serra do Caldeirão

1 Start of the trail

- A Spring
- B Mediterranean vegetation
- C Riverine vegetation
- D Panoramic view
- E Confluence of three rivers
- F Watermill
- G Panoramic view
- H Area of botanical interest

Trail





5. Guadiana

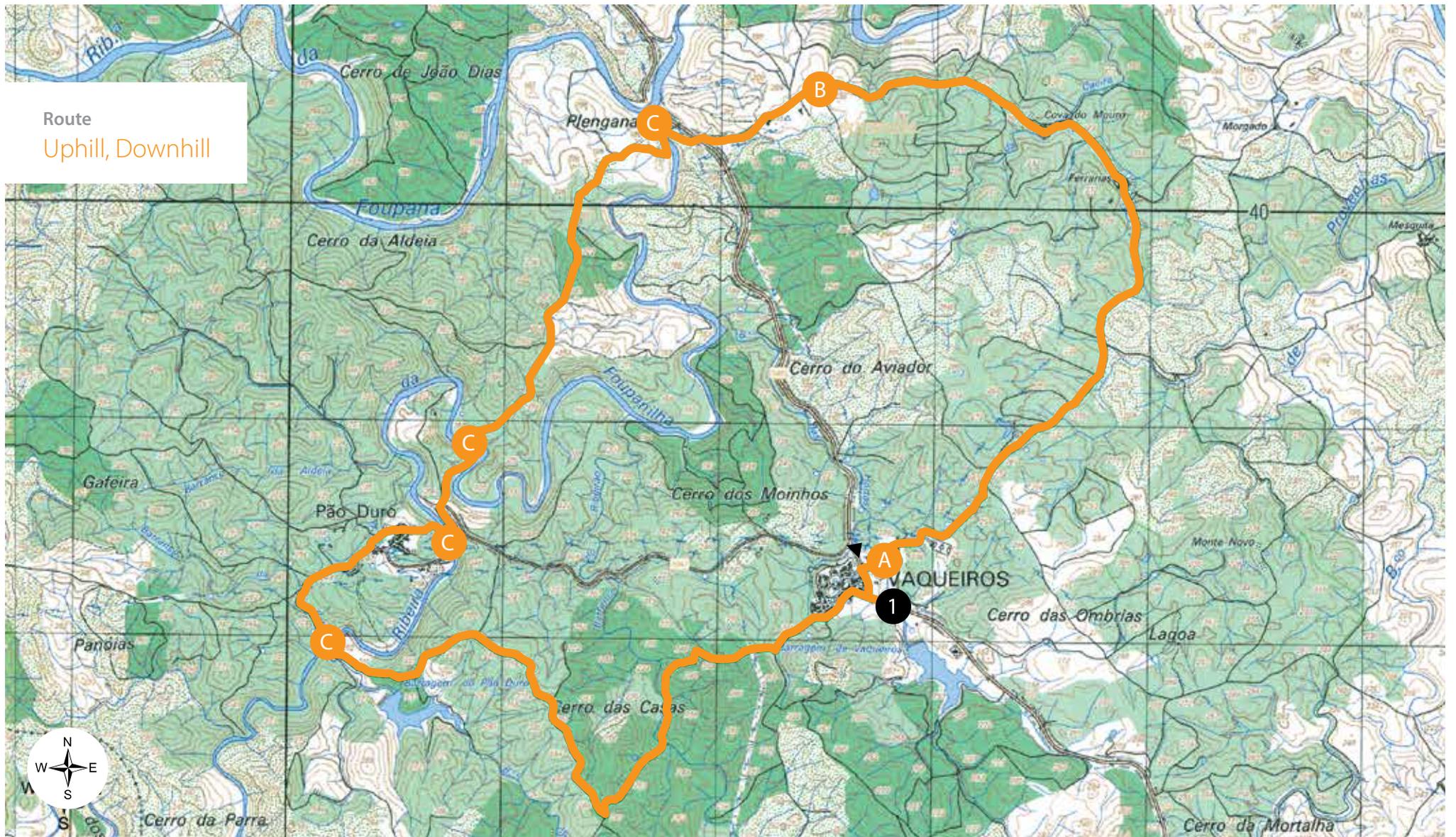




The trail starts near the primary school in Vaqueiros and continues in the direction of Ferrarias where it crosses the Barranco das Hortas in an area of oleanders and beds of bulrushes (A). The tree cover on the trail consists of holm oaks, cork oaks and stone pines, while the shrubby vegetation is mainly composed of cistus, which covers a wide expanse of the surrounding countryside. After Cova dos Mouros we enter a magnificent landscape overlooking the Ribeira da Foupana (B).

The trail continues southwards, crossing the Ribeira da Foupasilha in four places and the watercourse of the Barranco do Ribeirão. In both valleys, there is a rich riverine vegetation and fauna associated with these habitats such as the European water snake, terrapins, frogs, fishes and a wide diversity of insects (C).

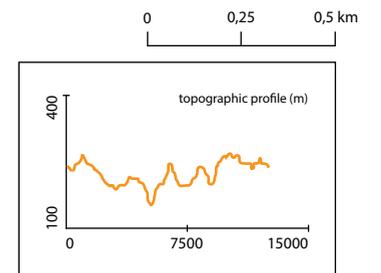
Route  
Uphill, Downhill



1 Start of the trail

- A Riverine vegetation
- B Panoramic view (Ribeira da Foupânia)
- C Crossing point over the Ribeira da Foupânica

Trail



## Route

# Ladeiras do Pontal Trail

**Name:** Ladeiras do Pontal Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 25' 20,309" N, 7° 27' 20,309" W (start)

**Parish:** Alcoutim

**Municipality:** Alcoutim

**Location:** Miradouro do Pontal

**How to get there:** the Miradouro do Pontal can be reached on the EM 1063, which connects with the EN 122 and the IC 27.

**Type:** walking/mountain bike

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 13.5 Km

**Average duration:** 4 hrs 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt tracks

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** yes. PR2

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** partly located in the Guadiana Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Odiana Association and Alcoutim Municipal Council.

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

The trail starts at the Miradouro do Pontal and it is recommended that you begin walking in the direction of Torneiro.

This stretch of the trail is dominated by herbaceous and shrubby vegetation such as cistus, mastic trees, Spanish lavender, Montpellier cistus and broom. Nearer the Barranco das Fontainhas, oleanders, elm-leaf blackberries, spurge flax, rosemary and purple phlomis begin to appear (A).

On the ascent to the village of Torneiro, the landscape is dominated by cistus, interspersed with rainfed orchards and vineyards (B).

Between Torneiro and Balurcos de Baixo there are more orchards (C), holm oak forests and some pinewoods (stone pines). Following the trail towards the Guadiana the landscape continues to be dominated by scattered stands of trees, mainly holm oaks and cork oaks, until we come to a high point with sweeping views over the

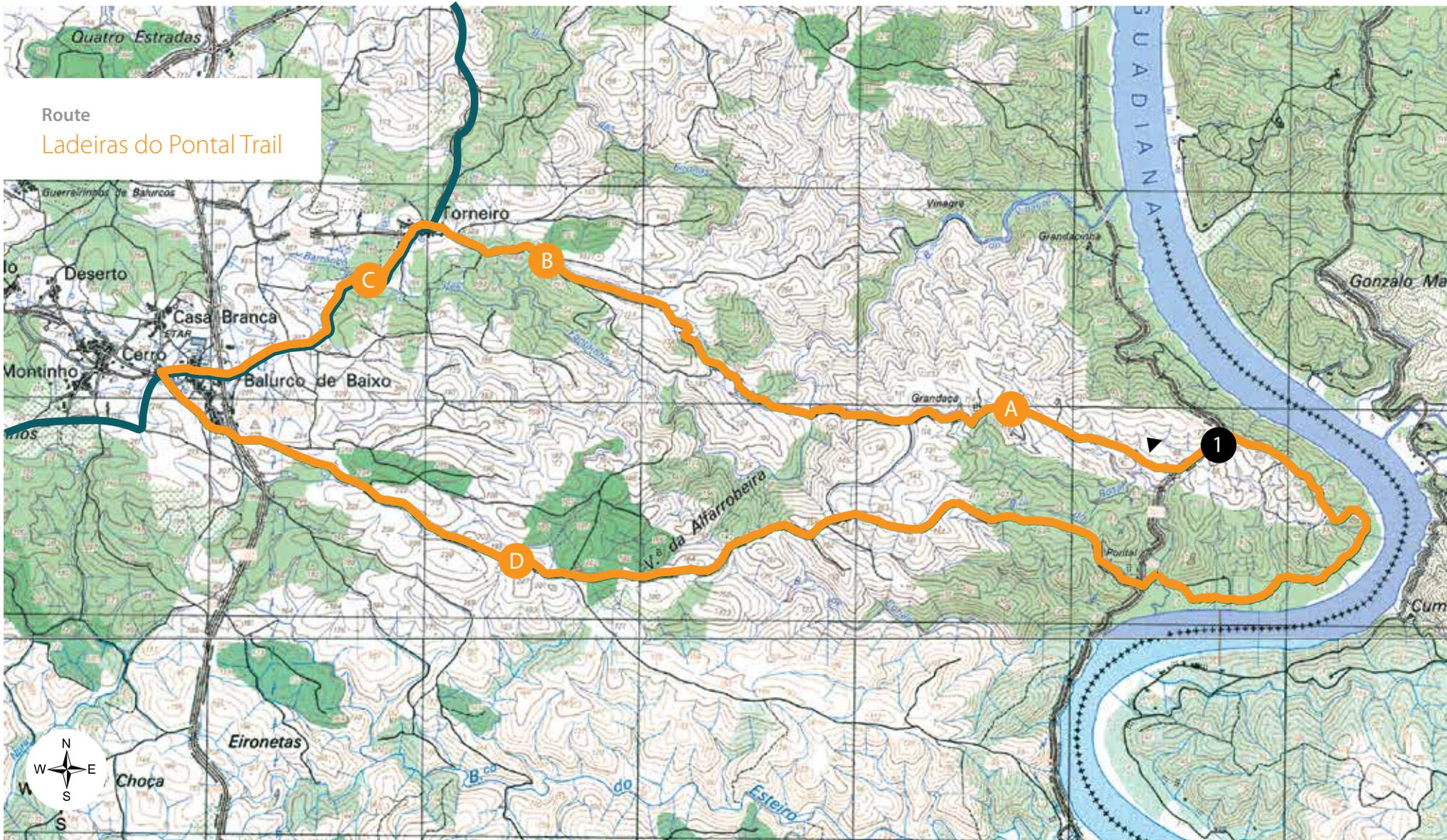


*Iberian green frog*

river and adjacent valleys (D). From Vale da Alfarrobeira, after passing between pine plantations the trail continues among cistus and holm oaks until it crosses the asphalt road again. From here back to the starting point, the trail follows a path alongside the River Guadiana through interesting landscape.

Of the varied fauna in this area, the bird life associated with the different types of land use on this trail is of particular interest. The River Guadiana and its principal tributaries are of considerable importance for their high number of fish species, some of them endemic to this river basin.

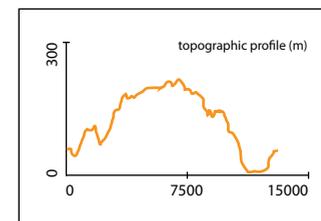
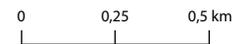




Route  
Ladeiras do Pontal Trail

- 1 Start of the trail
- A Panoramic view
- B Panoramic view
- C Orchard
- D Panoramic view

Trail



## Route

# Flow, flow... Guadiana

**Name:** Flow, flow... Guadiana

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 24' 10,010"N, 7° 27' 28,735"W (start)

**Parish:** Alcoutim

**Municipality:** Alcoutim

**Location:** Laranjeiras

**How to get there:** the village of Laranjeiras is reached by the EM 507-2, which connects with the EN 122 and the IC 27.

**Type:** walk

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 8.5 Km

**Average duration:** 3 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt tracks and asphalt road

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** yes. PR1

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** the trail is almost entirely located in the Guadiana Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Odiana Association and Alcoutim Municipal Council.

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

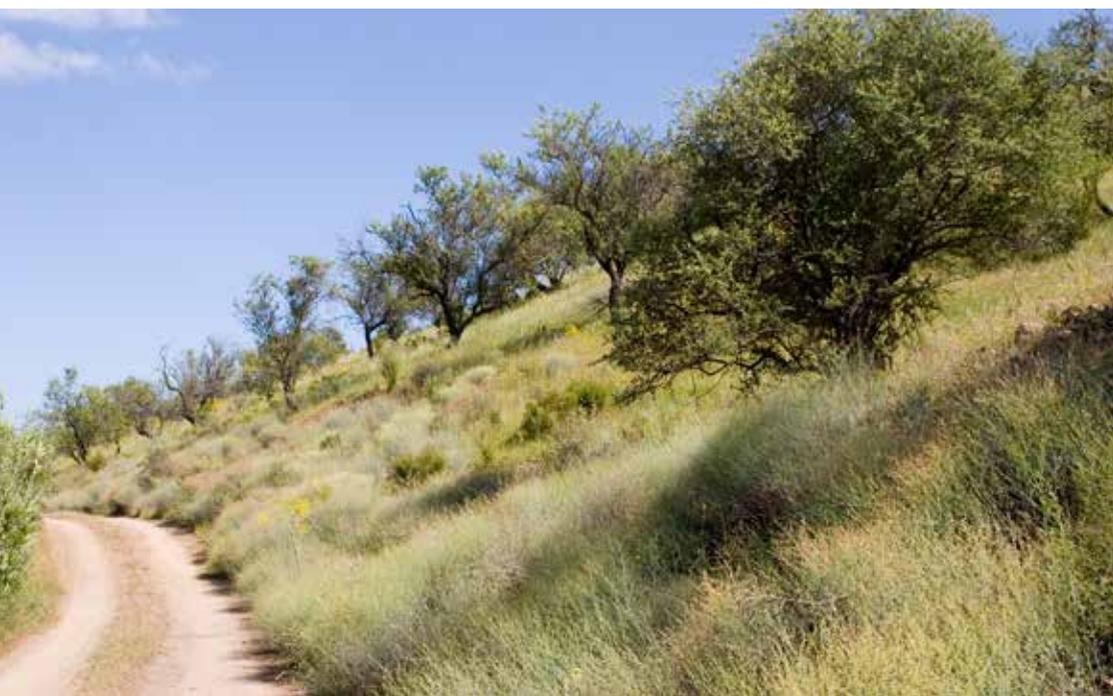
The trail starts at the car park and water fountain in the village of Laranjeiras. In the initial stretch of the trail, in the direction of Guerreiros do Rio and Álamo, and also in Laranjeiras, it is possible to see some traditional schist buildings (barns, ovens, etc). Leaving Laranjeiras, the trail rises to a high point overlooking the River Guadiana (A). On the descent to Guerreiros do Rio and the village of Álamo the trail follows the asphalt road. Between Álamo and Corte das Donas, the landscape is characterised by rainfed orchards, mainly of almond trees at first, followed later by olive trees (B). In this stretch, there are also isolated trees of other species such as holm oak and stone pine.

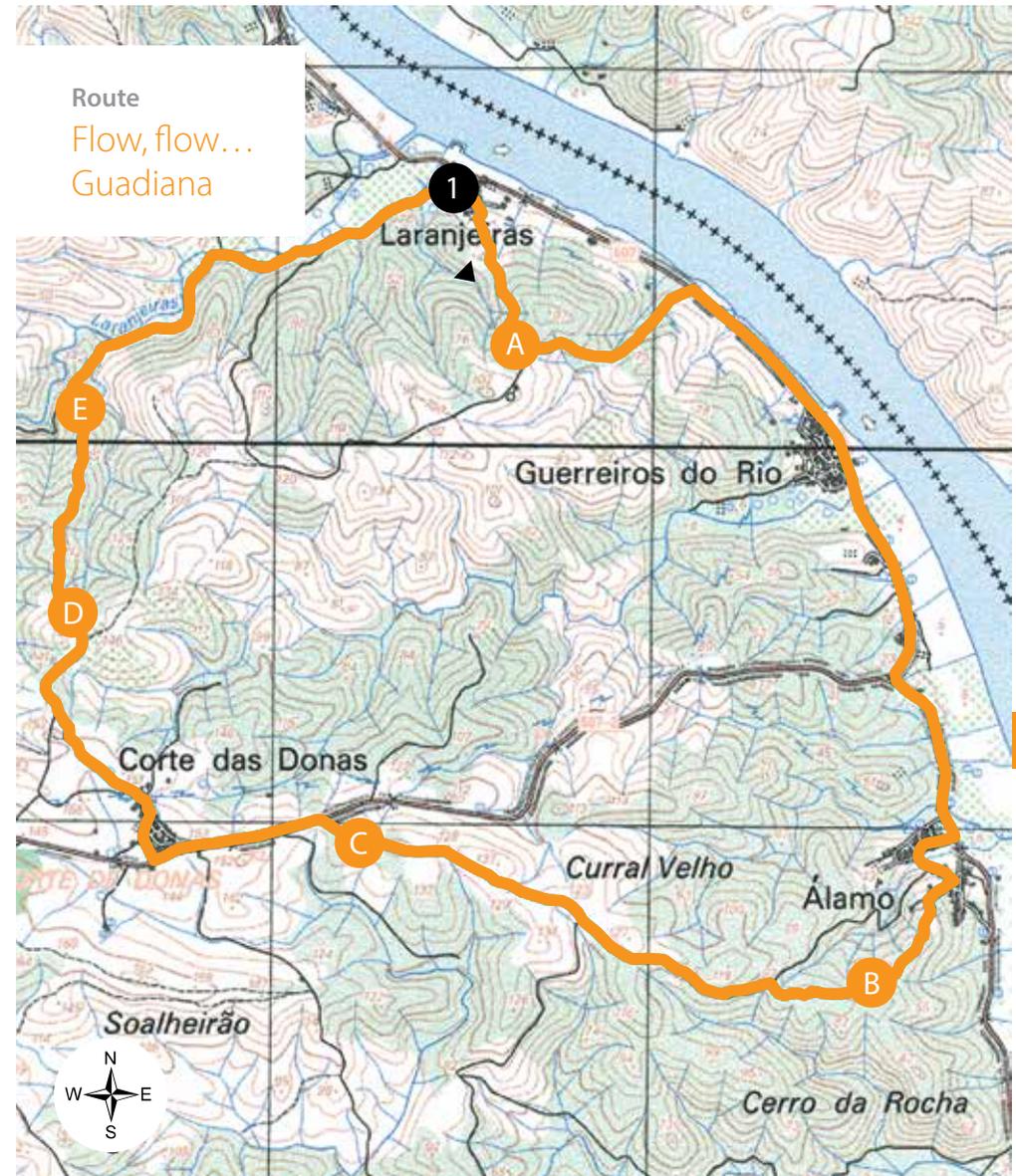
Before coming to the village of Corte das Donas we pass an old windmill (C). From here to Barranco das Laranjeiras the landscape is very varied, with a large number of Mediterranean fauna and flora species (D). Mastic thyme, rosemary, broom, green lavender, Spanish lavender, tamarisks, purple phlomis, mastic trees, carob trees, Montpellier cistus and spurge flax are just some of the many



*Green lavender*

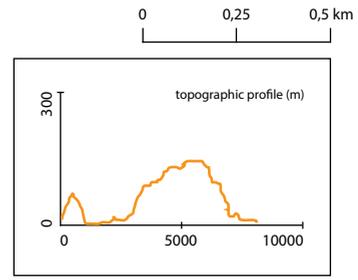
plant species that occur here. During the course of the trail a large number of local species of fauna can be seen, depending on the conditions. These include azure-winged magpies, rabbits, hares, partridges, European rollers and golden orioles among others.





Route  
Flow, flow...  
Guadiana

- 1 Start of the trail**
- A Panoramic view**
- B Panoramic view**
- C Windmill**
- D Varied landscape**
- E Panoramic view**
-  Trail



## Route

# Terras da Ordem Trail

**Name:** Terras da Ordem Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 21' 19,586"N, 7° 30' 24,982"W (start)

**Parish:** Odeleite

**Municipality:** Castro Marim

**Location:** Terras da Ordem National Forest

**How to get there:** Odeleite can be reached by the IC 17 or EN 122. About 3 km north of Odeleite on the EN 122, you will find the entrance to the National Forest.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 12.5 Km

**Average duration:** 4 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the

topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** yes. PR5

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** the southeast part of the trail lies in the Guadiana Natura 2000 Site. Landscape, fauna and flora associated with watercourses and stands of pine forest.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Odiana Association and Alcoutim Municipal Council.

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

The trail starts at the entrance to Odeleite, near the cemetery or at the entrance to the National Forest by the Forest Rangers Post. In the forest, until we come to a watercourse, the landscape is characterised by tree cover predominantly consisting of stone pines (A), with some holm oaks and shrubby vegetation composed mainly of green lavender, lemon-scented lavender and spurge flax.

The trail reaches the first watercourse, where the riverine vegetation is composed of reedbeds and some well-preserved areas of natural Algarve riverine vegetation such as poplars, tamarisks, willows, oleanders, bulrushes, rushes, etc (B).

As we approach the old Moinho do Carvão (C), the final stretch of the Ribeira da Foupana comes into sight. This river joins the Ribeira de Odeleite a little way ahead at Pernadas before flowing into the River Guadiana 4 km downstream. This whole riverside area is of great biological interest. The natural vegetation is relatively mature, with stands of holm oak interspersed with carob and olive orchards and farmland,

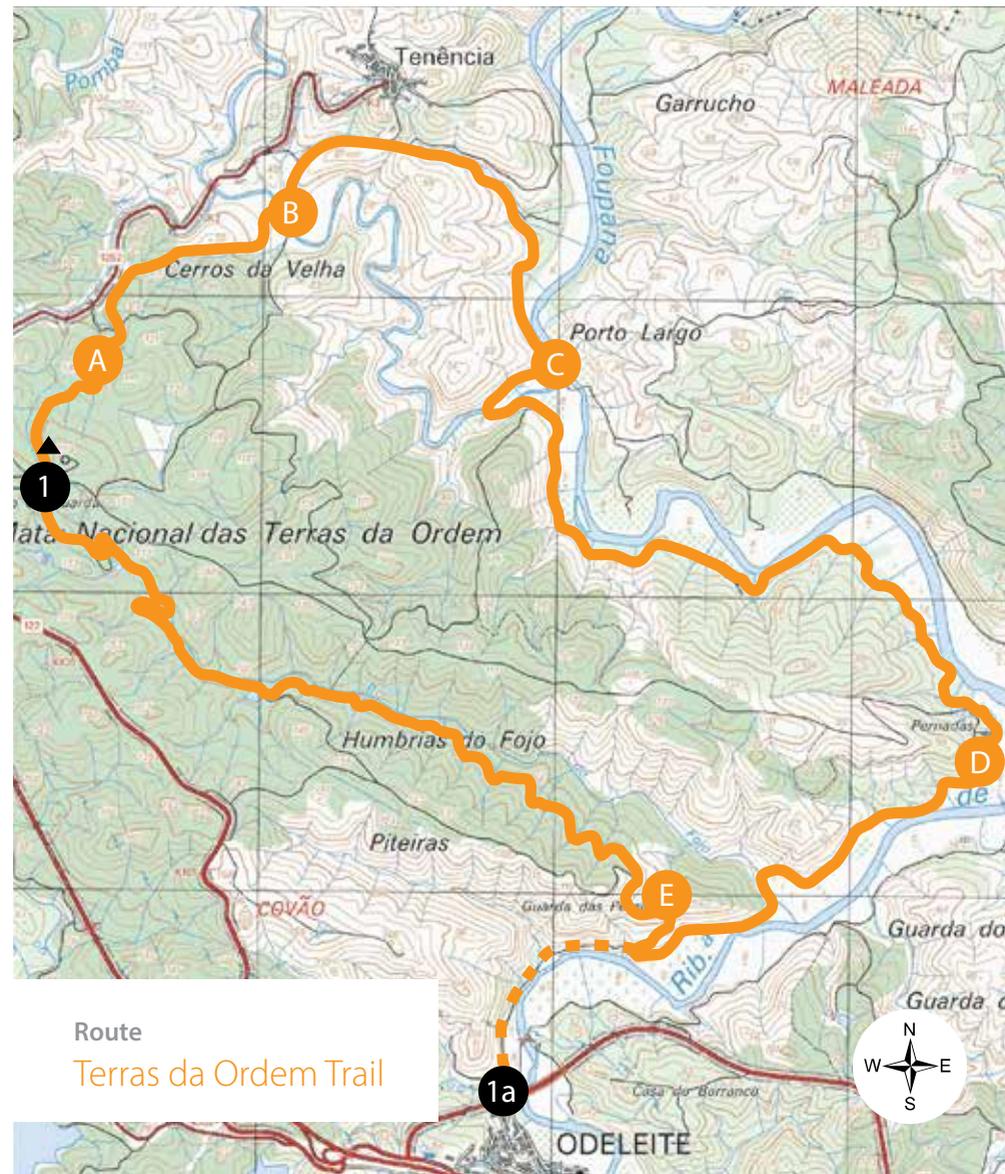


including orange groves, near the river. The forest fauna is extremely varied. Rabbits, partridges, azure-winged magpies and turtle doves are easily sighted, together with many passerine birds typical of these habitats. A significant number of reptile and amphibian species (herpetofauna) have also been recorded here. With luck, one can sight ladder snakes, Montpellier snakes, lizards, Spanish sand racers, Iberian midwife toads, natterjack toads, Spanish ribbed newts and fire salamanders.

At Pernadas on the right bank of the Ribeira de Odeleite, there is a watermill (Moinho das Pernadas) which has recently been restored as a place of cultural interest in the region (D). On the steep ascent that follows, there is varied shrubby vegetation composed of rosemary, Spanish lavender, mastic thyme, cistus, lemon-scented lavender, green lavender, spurge flax and Montpellier cistus (E).

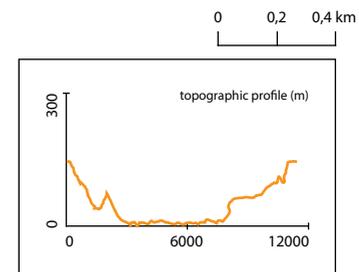
On the stretch of trail running along the Barranco do Cavalo the landscape is again dominated by pine forest before we come back to the Forest Rangers Post.





**Route**  
Terras da Ordem Trail

- 1** Start of the trail
- 1a** Start of the trail in Odeleite (near the cemetery)
- A** Crossing point over the Ribeira do Rio Seco
- B** Mediterranean vegetation
- C** Monte (typical Algarve hamlet)
- D** Panoramic view
- E** Varied vegetation
-  Percurso



## Route

# Amendoeira Trail

**Name:** Amendoeira Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 18' 21,922" N, 7° 35' 32,952" W (start)

**Parish:** Odeleite

**Municipality:** Castro Marim

**Location:** Alta Mora

**How to get there:** The village of Cruz de Alta Mora is reached by the EM 512 (Azinhal-Alta Mora), which connects with the EN 122 and the IC 27.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 11 km

**Average duration:** 4 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track and asphalt road

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** yes. PR8

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** landscape, fauna and flora associated with watercourses.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Odiana Association and Alcoutim Municipal Council.

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

The trail starts in the main square/crossroads of the village of Cruz de Alto Mora and heads in the direction of Soalheira through a landscape of almond trees and occasional holm oaks (A).

Alongside a small watercourse the vegetation consists of reeds and oleanders. Species such as the European water snake and the Mediterranean terrapin can be seen in these aquatic habitats. On the ascent that follows, the undergrowth consists of species such as purple phlomis, broom, Montpellier cistus, Spanish lavender, green lavender, cistus and false yellowhead, which turn the countryside colourful, especially during the flowering season in spring (B).



*Almond trees*



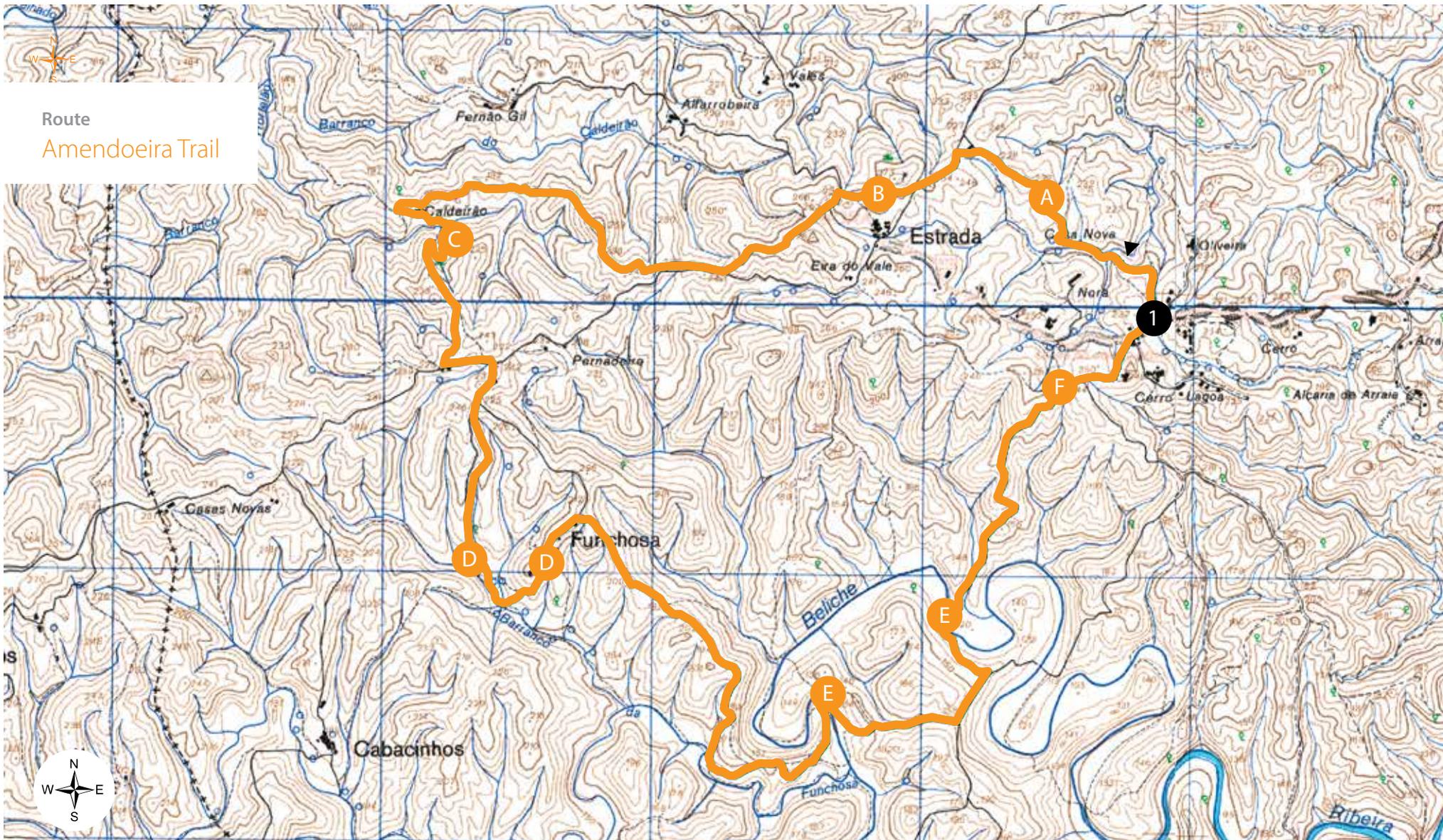
*Almond blossom*



*Oleander*

Back on the dirt track and passing the ruins of a windmill, there are views of the surrounding landscape. After leaving the second asphalt road, the trail continues through a narrow passage between hills. The trail continues to the village of Caldeirão through a landscape of cistus, followed by a large area of scattered almond trees (in January and February the landscape is

transformed by white almond blossom) (C). The walk then continues towards the Ribeira do Beliche, passing through two typical inland Algarve villages (D). At the two crossings of the Ribeira do Beliche that follow, it is recommended to pause for a while to look at this interesting watercourse (E) and rest for the difficult final climb up to the view over the valley (F).

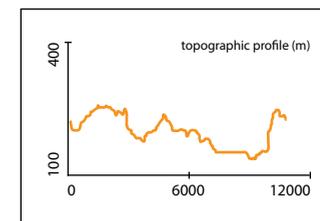
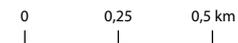


Route  
Amendoeira Trail

**1 Start of the trail**

- A Mediterranean vegetation
- B Panoramic view
- C Almond trees
- D Monte (typical Algarve hamlet)
- E Crossing point over the Ribeira do Beliche
- F Panoramic view

Trail



## Route

# A Window on the Guadiana



Goats

**Name:** A Window on the Guadiana

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 17' 04,151" N, 7° 27' 56,773" W (start)

**Parish:** Azinhal

**Municipality:** Castro Marim

**Location:** Azinhal

**How to get there:** take the EN 122 or IC 17 to the village of Azinhal.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 7.5 Km

**Average duration:** 2 hrs 30 mins

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the



River Guadiana

topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** stony paths and dirt tracks

**When to go:** all year round, except on very hot days.

**Approved:** yes. PR3

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** landscape. Fauna and flora associated with Mediterranean scrub forest.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Odiana Association and Alcoutim Municipal Council.

**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

The trail starts in the Largo do Mercado in Azinhal and sets off in an easterly direction towards a ruined windmill (A).

This is a very interesting trail for its uninterrupted views over the landscape (B), especially to the east over the River Guadiana and the adjacent hills and valleys (C).

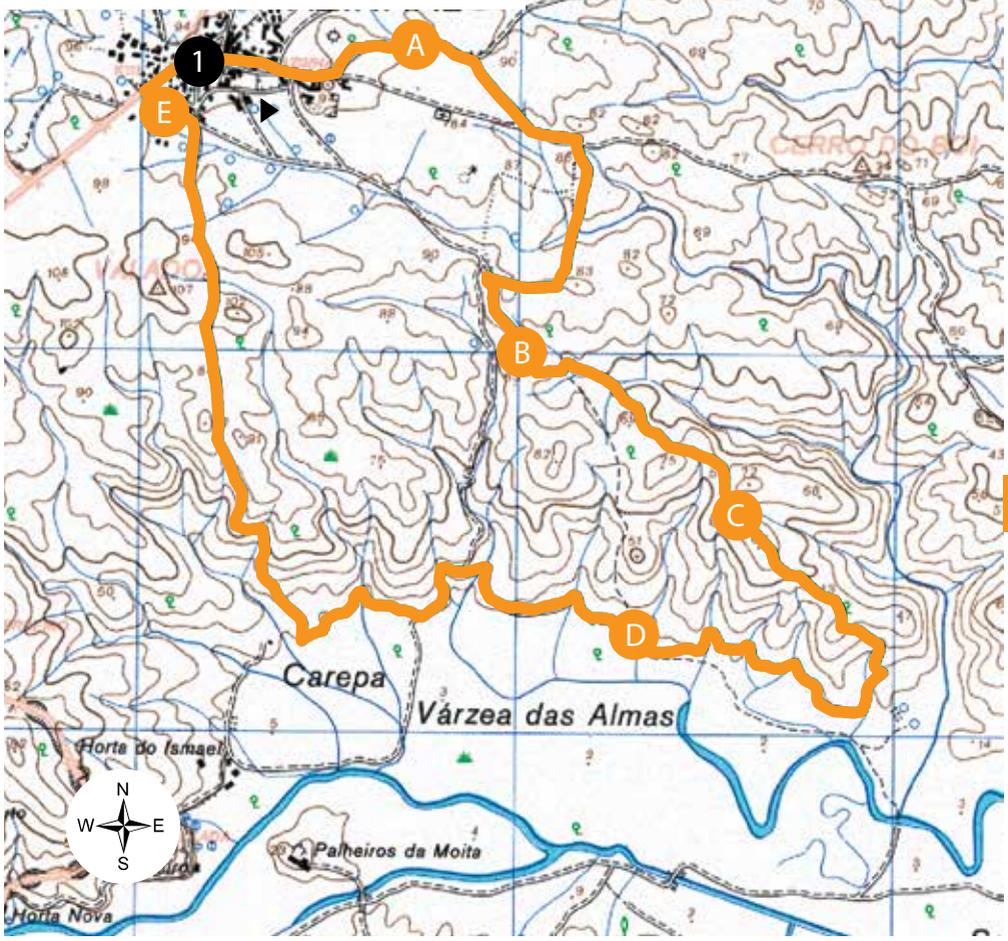
The landscape is one of cistus, rainfed orchards and occasional trees (wild olives, carobs and almond trees). There is a varied fauna and in the forests and orchards species such as rabbits, partridges, hares,

Dartford warblers, azure-winged magpies, blackbirds, thekla larks, turtle doves, golden orioles and red-backed shrikes can be seen.

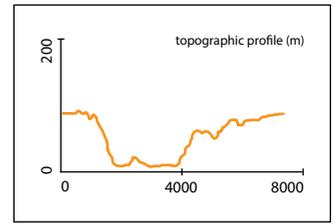
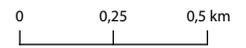
At the end of the descent to Várzea das Almas, the trail turns right. In this area, to the south of the steep hillside, the mature riverine vegetation includes some ash groves (D). At Carepa, the trail turns right and climbs back towards the starting point (E). On this stretch of the trail, the landscape is mainly vineyards and fig and carob orchards.



Route  
A Window on the Guadiana



- 1** Start of the trail
- A** Ruined windmill
- B** Panoramic view
- C** Panoramic view (Mouth of the Guadiana)
- D** Riverine vegetation
- E** Museum
-  Trail



## Route

# Venta Moinhos Wetlands Trail

**Name:** Venta Moinhos Wetlands Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 14' 04,884" N, 7° 26' 50,319" W (start)

37° 14' 28,771" N, 7° 25' 40,766" W (finish)

**Parish:** Castro Marim

**Municipality:** Castro Marim

**Location:** Interpretation Centre of the Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António Wetlands Nature Reserve (RNSCMVRSa).

**How to get there:** leave the A22 motorway in the direction of Alcoutim and at the next crossroads at Monte Francisco, turn right to the RNSCMVRSa Interpretation Centre. The trail starts at this crossroads.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** no

**Distance:** 7 km (there and back)

**Average duration:** 2 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt track

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** no. There are some information panels

**Special features:** detailed information can be obtained about the biodiversity of this Nature Reserve.

**Natural interest:** saltmarsh wetland. Bird life. The trail is located in the Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António Wetlands Nature Reserve and the Ria Formosa/Castro Marim Natura 2000 Site.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António Wetlands Nature Reserve and Castro Marim Municipal Council.



*Eurasian spoonbill*

The trail starts at the crossroads, where there is a sign for the RNSCMVRSa on the other side from the village of Monte Francisco, and heads towards the Nature Reserve Interpretation Centre. Along this trail there are information panels about the natural and cultural heritage of this area. The landscape is characterised by saltmarsh, salt pans, arable farmland and freshwater, brackish and saltwater lagoons which are home to the typical vegetation of these

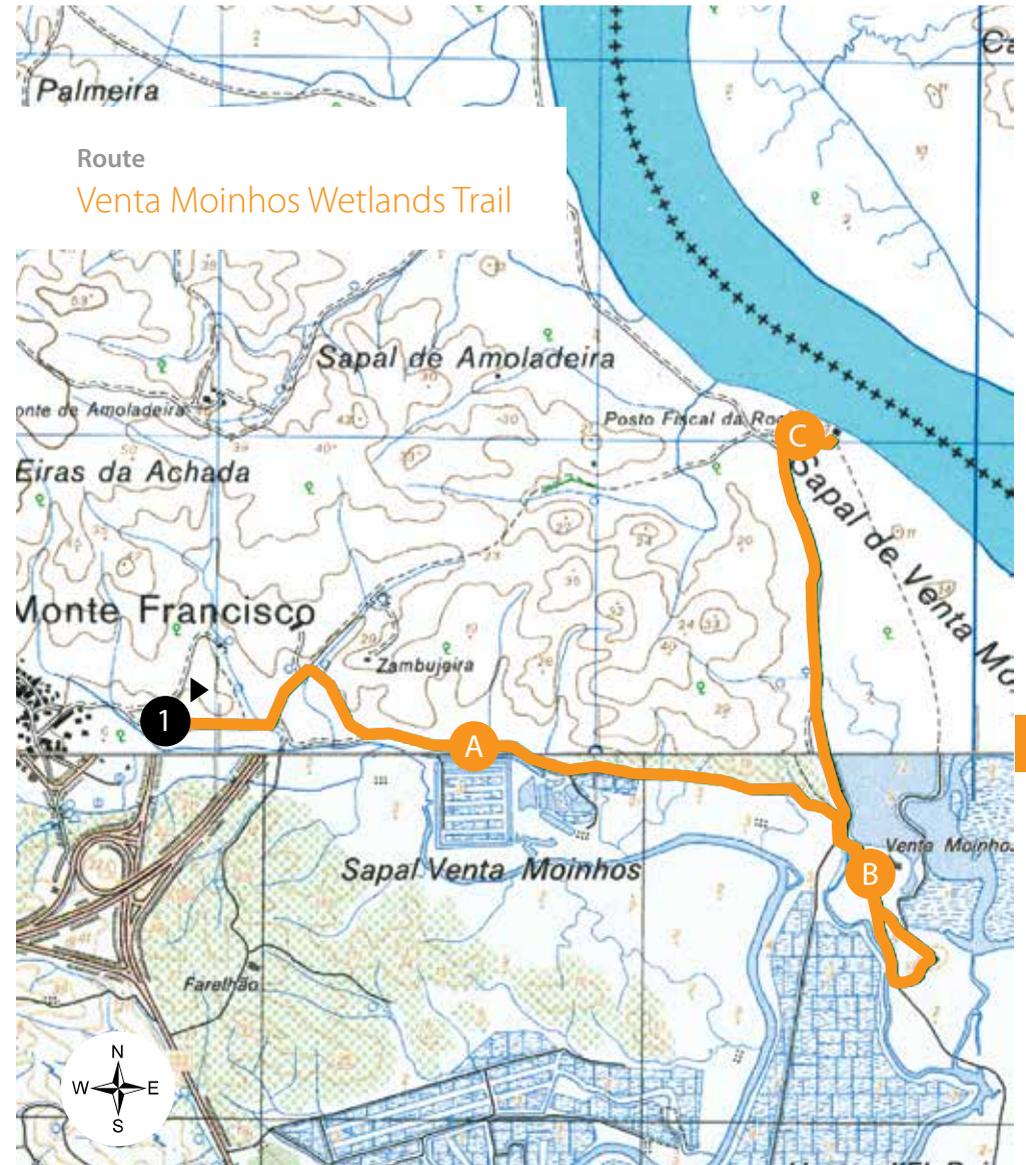
habitats and their associated fauna, in particular bird life (A), which is especially important nationally. Relatively rare birds can be found in these wetlands, often in large numbers, such as spoonbills, avocets, white storks and black-winged stilts. Aquatic fauna – fishes, crustaceans and molluscs – are also present in large numbers in the Nature Reserve, making this protected area one of the areas of the Algarve with the greatest diversity of fauna.

At the Interpretation Centre visitors can obtain information from the exhibitions and panels and from the publications available at the reception desk. From here there are views over the saltmarsh and adjacent lagoons from the Centre's large windows which make good observation points (B).

There is a small interpretation trail around the outside of the Centre and an attractive picnic area. The trail continues northwards to the shelter. This stretch runs between carob orchards with, at the end, an attractive view of the final stretch of the river (C).

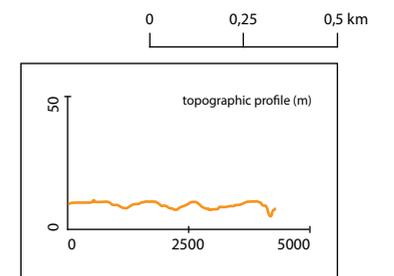


Shelter



Route  
Venta Moinhos Wetlands Trail

- 1 Start of the trail
- A Saltmarsh and salt pans
- B Nature Reserve Interpretation Centre
- C Shelter
- Trail



## Route

# Boa Vista Trail

**Name:** Boa Vista Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 13' 16,194" N, 7° 33' 46,752" W (start)

**Parish:** Vila Nova de Cacela

**Municipality:** Vila Real de Santo António

**Location:** Corte António Martins

**How to get there:** from the EN 125, take the EM 509, which connects Vila Nova de Cacela and Corte António Martins.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 9 km

**Average duration:** 3 hrs

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the

topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** rural roads and asphalt road.

**When to go:** outside the summer holiday period and avoiding very hot days.

**Approved:** yes

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** landscape. Fauna associated with farmland and Mediterranean scrub forest.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Odiana Association and Vila Real Santo António Municipal Council.

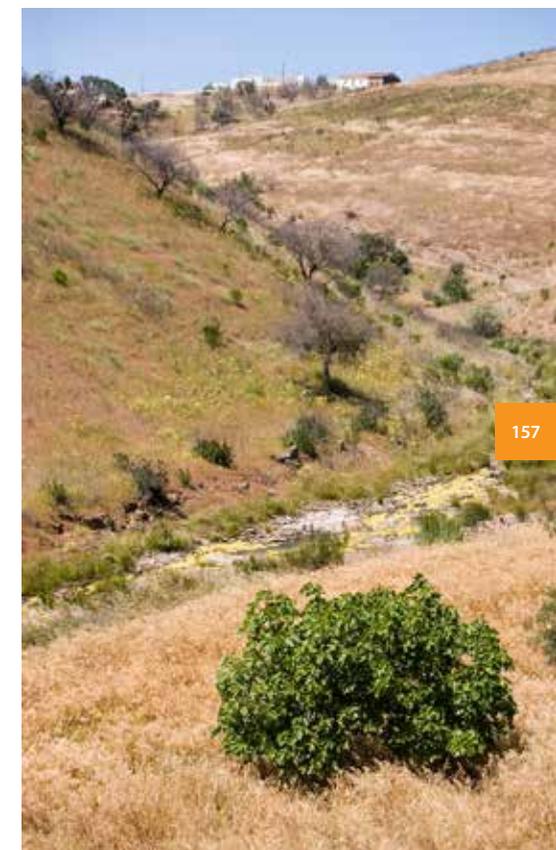
**Remarks:** the trail crosses a hunting reserve.

The trail starts just past the sign for Corte António Martins, at a crossroads where there is an information panel. Further on in the direction of Eira Pelada the trail passes the Corte António Martins Sports Centre.

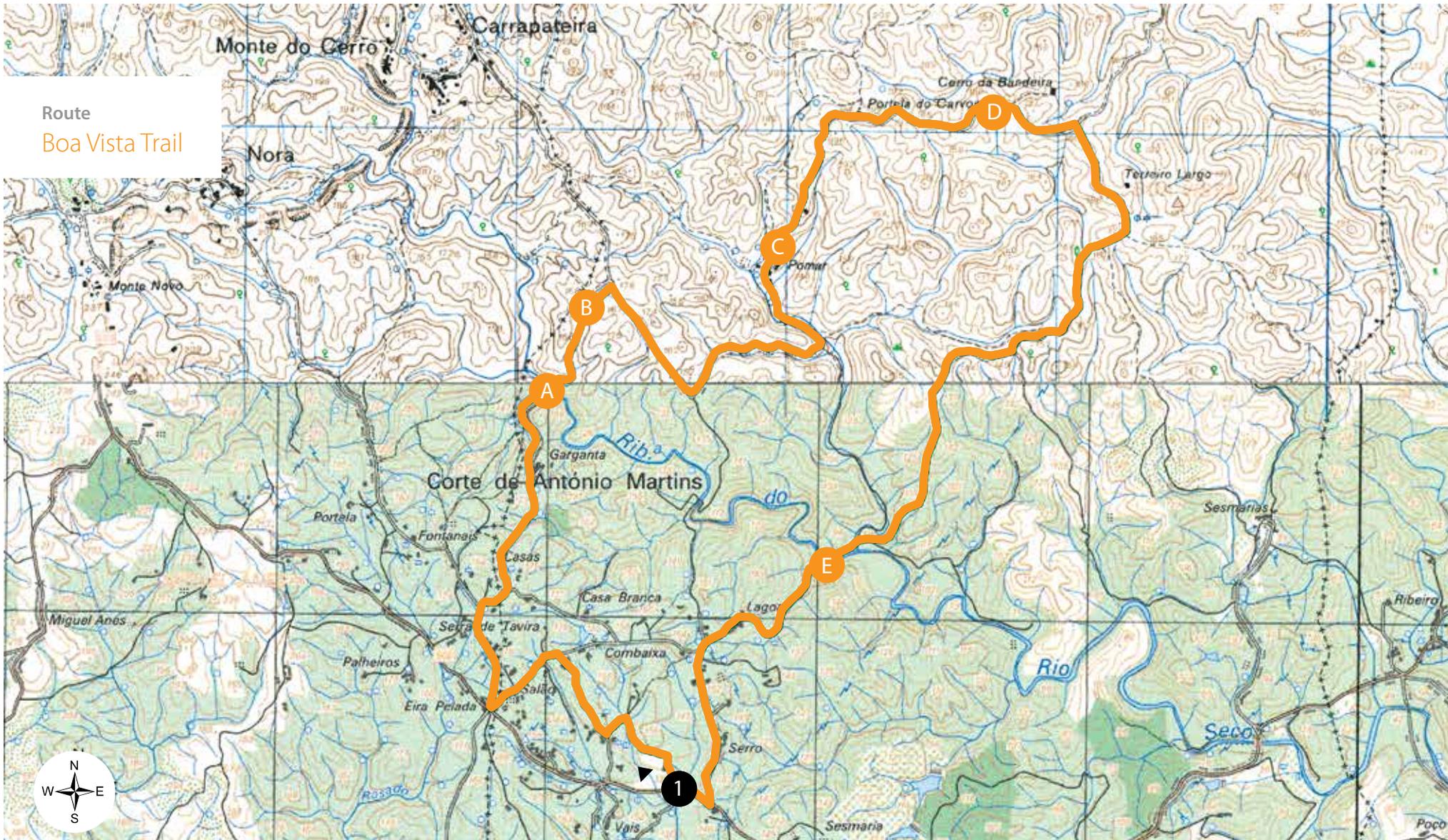
The first stretch of the trail crosses a landscape of carob and holm oak trees before coming to the first crossing over the Ribeira do Rio Seco, a small watercourse mostly colonised by oleanders (A).

On the ascent towards Pomar the shrubby vegetation is very varied, with plants such as cistus, Montpellier cistus, broom, mastic thyme and false yellowhead, in an area where the tree cover is mainly olive trees and cork oaks (B). Mammal species such as rabbits and hares, and birds such as the Eurasian jay, the hoopoe and the azure-winged magpie, among many others, are relatively common.

In Pomar we can see a number of structures typical of traditional building techniques of the Serra, such as walls, houses, communal ovens and other structures (C). Around this small village there are orchards, mainly of citrus fruit. After Portela do Carvoeiro the trail enters an area with spectacular panoramic views, especially from the hill of Cerro da Boa Vista (D).



The trail then descends to Lagoa and Corte António Martins, crossing the Ribeira do Rio Seco again (E).

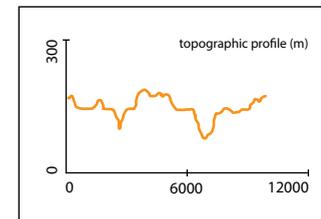
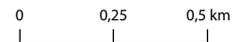


Route  
Boia Vista Trail

**1 Start of the trail**

- A Crossing point over the Ribeira do Rio Seco
- B Mediterranean vegetation
- C Monte (typical Algarve hamlet)
- D Panoramic view
- E Varied vegetation

Trail



## Route

# Aldeia Nova Interpretation Trail

**Name:** Aldeia Nova Interpretation Trail

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 10' 54,869" N, 7° 28' 04,520" W (start)

**Parish:** Monte Gordo

**Municipality:** Vila Real de Santo António

**Location:** Dunas de Vila Real de Santo António National Forest

**How to get there:** on entering the village of Aldeia Nova travelling in the Faro - Vila Real de Santo António direction, take the first turn on the right. After 200 metres you come to a car park.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** yes

**Distance:** 1.5 Km

**Average duration:** 1 hr

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt tracks

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes. Information panels

**Natural interest:** pine forest.

**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Vila Real de Santo António Municipal Council

**Remarks:** trail with 10 interpretation stations with information in Braille.

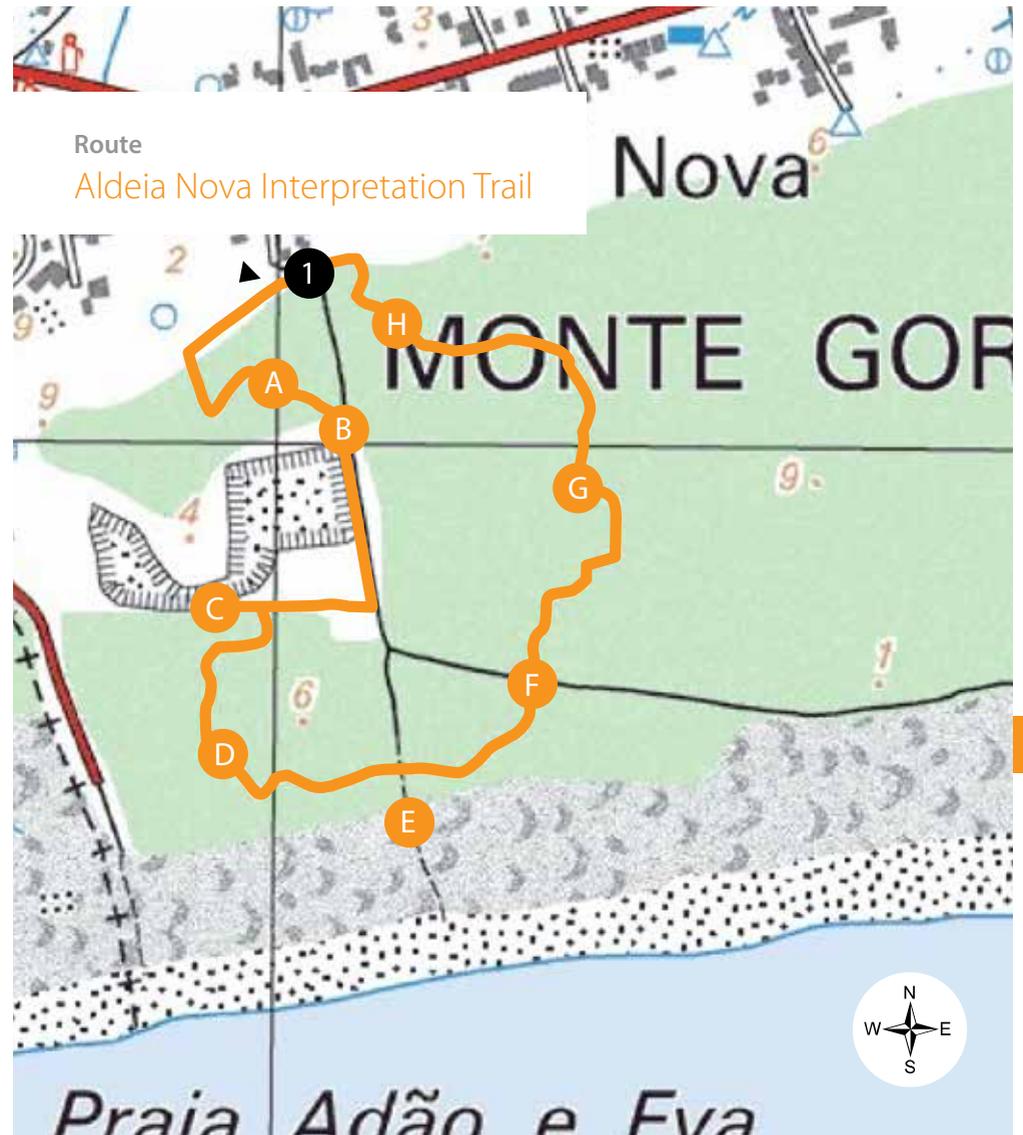


*Pine cone*



The trail starts at the information board in the car park. Following the directions on the panel, we enter a pine forest mainly consisting of maritime pine with small clumps of stone pines (A). Further on there we come across clearings – straight strips of land which are kept clear of vegetation – which act as fire breaks and ensure access for firefighting vehicles (B). Following the trail along this fire break we come to a birdwatching hide (C) on the banks of a lake built to act as a water reservoir. Some waterfowl can be seen here, including ducks, herons and grebes.

Continuing in the direction of the beach, the pine forest gradually changes to stone pines, which are more suited to the sandy soil (D). The trail arrives at a wooden walkway giving access to the beach. Continuing towards the beach we can observe a typical dune cordon and the characteristic plant species like marram grass (E). Further on, the trail crosses a track leading to the Trail of Chameleons (F). From this crossroads to the finish, the trail passes through another area of maritime pines (G). Before completing this trail, we can rest at a shady picnic area equipped with tables (H).



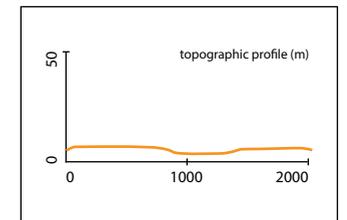
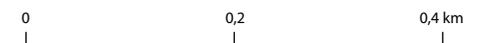
Route

Aldeia Nova Interpretation Trail

**1 Start of the trail**

- A Pine forest
- B Clearing
- C Lake and birdwatching hide
- D Pine forest
- E Dune vegetation
- F Crossroads with Trail of Chameleons
- G Pine forest
- H Picnic area

 Trail



## Route

# Trail of Chameleons

**Name:** Trail of Chameleons

**Geographic coordinates:**

37° 11' 17,840"N, 7° 25' 23,078"W (start)

37° 10' 54,869"N, 7° 28' 04,520"W (finish)

**Parishes:** Monte Gordo and Vila Real de Santo António

**Municipality:** Vila Real de Santo António

**Location:** Dunas de Vila Real de Santo António National Forest

**How to get there:** in Vila Real de Santo António turn right (south) at the first roundabout and follow the road to the Centro de Informação Ambiental do Camaleão (Chameleon Environmental Information Centre) which is on the right. The trail starts at this Centre or, alternatively, in the car park in Aldeia Nova at the

entrance to the National Forest.

**Type:** walking and mountain bike

**Circular trail:** no

**Distance:** 5 km

**Average duration:** 3 hrs, there and back

**Ascent/descent:** (see diagram of the topographic profile on the map of the trail)

**Type of path:** dirt tracks and beach.

**When to go:** all year round

**Approved:** no

**Signposted:** yes

**Natural interest:** National Forest. Pine forest. Chameleons.

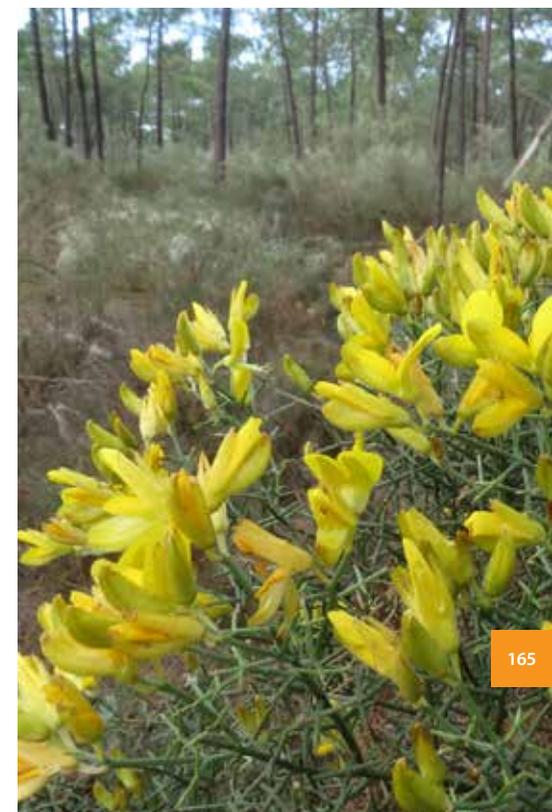
**Ownership:** public paths

**Organisations responsible:** Vila Real de Santo António Municipal Council

Starting from the Chameleon Environmental Information Centre, where there is an information panel:

As far as the first crossroads the landscape is predominantly stone pine forest. From this point, the trail continues in the direction of Monte Gordo and the landscape changes to maritime pines with plant species such as broom, mastic trees and retama broom which in places form expanses of dense shrubby vegetation. In this pine forest it is sometimes possible to sight an extremely vulnerable iconic species of Portuguese fauna: the chameleon. In Portugal the species' range is restricted to the Algarve coast, where it inhabits coastal pine forests and the vegetation of coastal dunes. One of the main populations is found in this National Forest. Some bird species are also common, such as tits, finches, azure-winged magpies and turtle doves.

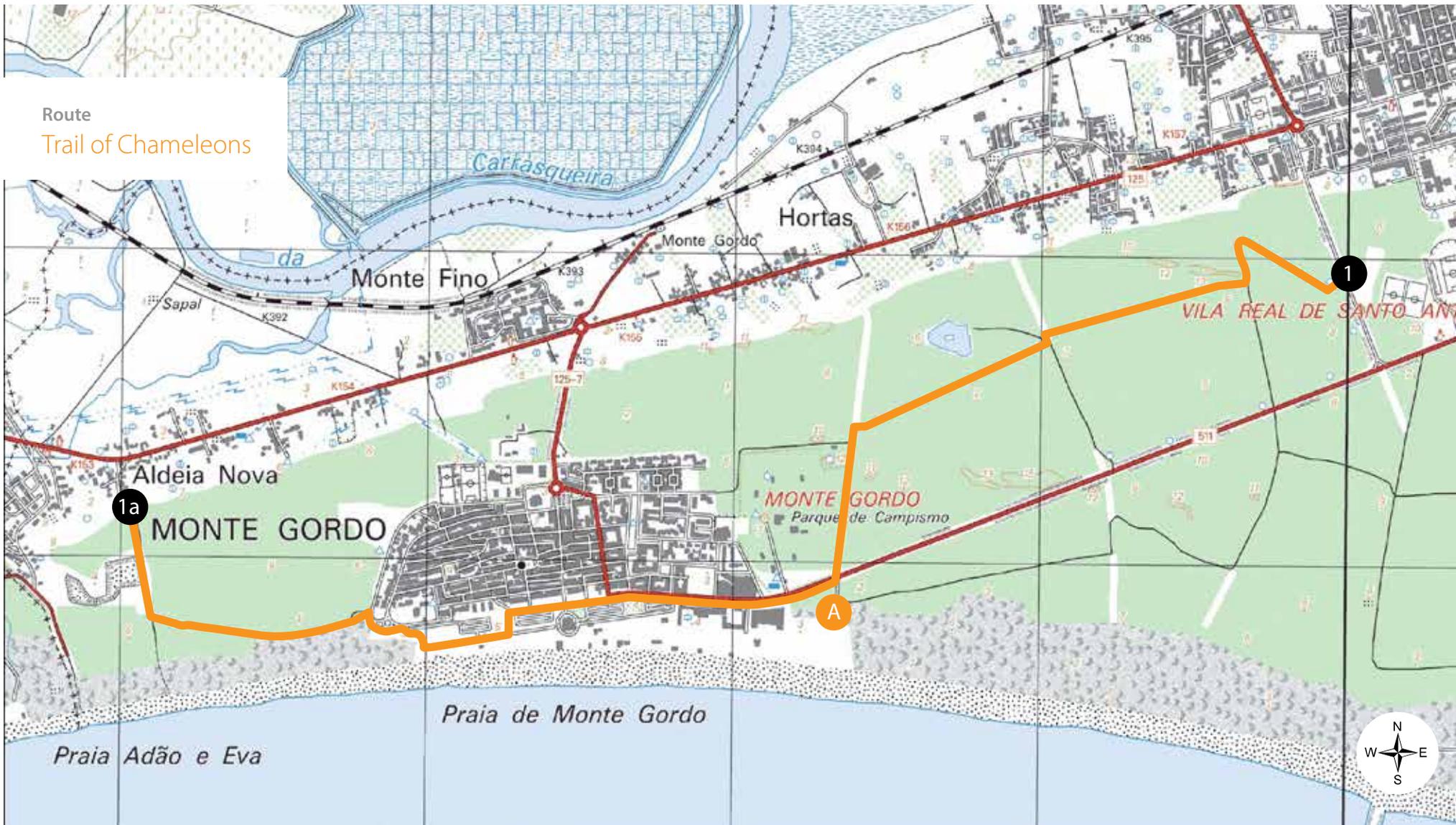
After passing the camp site, where there is a picnic area, the trail continues along the riverside area of Monte Gordo and re-enters the pine forest before ending at the car park in the village of Aldeia Nova.



*Broom*

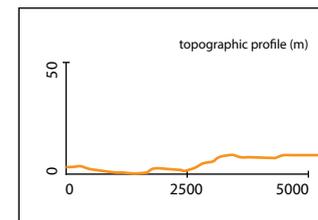
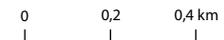


*Chameleon*



Route  
Trail of Chameleons

- 1** Start of the trail (Vila Real de Santo António)
- 1a** Start of the trail (Aldeia Nova)
- A** Picnic area
- Trail





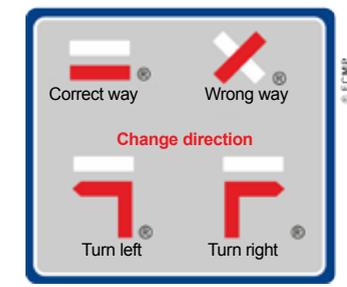
# Via Algarviana

## Route Via Algarviana



The Via Algarviana is a long distance route (300 km) for walkers and cyclists classified as a Grande Route (GR13). This route, which starts in Alcoutim and ends at Cape St. Vincent – it can also be done in the opposite direction – crosses the whole of the interior of the Algarve from the Barrocal to the Serra, passing through villages and hamlets where many of the region's customs and cultural traditions still survive. Taking account of the nature of the terrain and logistic requirements, natural obstacles, enclosed areas, lodging, meals, etc, the route is divided into 14 sections. The sections are not intended to be watertight and can be done separately, depending on each individual's physical ability. The Via Algarviana has a comprehensive signage system to help users – marker posts, direction arrows and signposts, interpretation panels and colours marking places of interest or cultural and natural heritage, support facilities, the direction

to follow or the general direction of the route. The painted colours always use the red and white Grande Route (GR) colour identification code.



Travelling the Via Algarviana the walker or cyclist will come across different landscapes, places of interest, heritage, cultural traditions and varied fauna and flora. As it crosses the 11 municipalities through which the route passes, the five Natura 2000 Sites, two Classified Sites and one Natural Park are clearly identified. Various threatened animal and plant species occur in these places – Bonelli's eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*), the Eurasian Eagle Owl (*Bufo bufo*), the otter (*Lutra lutra*), the wildcat (*Felis silvestris*), orchids and narcissi. There is also an important community of native

flora, including endemic species such as *Bellevalia hackelii*, *Linaria algarviana* and *Thymus camphoratus* among others. Several aromatic or medicinal plants are to be found along the route such as thyme, Spanish lavender, fennel, rosemary, etc. The natural vegetation is mainly Mediterranean, with dense cork oak forests with cistus undergrowth (*Cistus ladanifer*); there are also strawberry trees, rainfed orchards and pine woods. The route crosses a number of rivers lined with riverine vegetation, hilltops and viewpoints, and places of geological interest such as Silves with its *grês-de-silves* (Silves sandstone), Monchique with its subvolcanic

eruptive syenite massif and Bensafrim with its Jurassic limestones. The Via Algarviana is a route rich in historical, archaeological and religious heritage where many of the cultural values of the Algarve interior still survive, from time-honoured churches, wells, chapels, scoopwheels, windmills, menhirs and communal ovens to museums, traditional and craft fairs and markets, and popular and religious festivals that occur all year round. There are also crafts based around different local products such as wool, flax, cotton, cane, wicker, ceramics, medronho brandy, honey and many others, which make this a never-to-be-forgotten route.



Scoopwheel

**Name of Route:** Via Algarviana (GR13)  
**Municipalities covered:** Alcoutim, Aljezur, Castro Marim, Tavira, São Brás de Alportel, Loulé, Silves, Monchique, Lagos, Portimão and Vila do Bispo  
**Location:** Algarve Region  
**How to get there and start/finish points:** the route is divided into 14 sections, each starting and finishing at places where lodging and meals can be obtained. Get there via the EN highways to these places: Alcoutim, Balurcos, Furnazinhas, Vaqueiros, Cachopo, Barranco do Velho, Salir, Alte, São Bartolomeu de Messines, Silves, Monchique, Marmeleite, Bensafrim, Vila do Bispo and Sagres – Cape St. Vincent.

**Type of route:** linear Grande Route (GR)  
**Distance:** 300 Km  
**Average duration:** one section per day (14 sections with distances between 14.3 km and 30.19 km, corresponding to 4-8 hours walking per day)  
**Maximum altitude:** 850m, near Foia (section 11)  
**Minimum altitude:** 12m, near Vinha Velha (section 13)  
**Recommended season:** spring and autumn  
**Approved:** in process of approval  
**Signposted:** yes  
**Organisation responsible:** Almagem Association



# list of species

## Flora

Common Name - Scientific Name

**Acacia** - *Acacia* sp.  
**Common rhododendron** - *Rhododendron ponticum* ssp. *baeticum*  
**Broad-leaved phillyrea** - *Phillyrea latifolia*  
**Rosemary** - *Rosmarinus officinalis*  
**Carob tree** - *Ceratonia siliqua*  
**Almond tree** - *Prunus dulcis*  
**Mastic tree** - *Pistacia lentiscus*  
**Holm oak** - *Quercus rotundifolia*  
**Mastic thyme** - *Thymus mastichina*  
**Giant reed** - *Arundo donax*  
**Common reed** - *Phragmites australis*  
**Sea holly** - *Eryngium maritimum*  
**Kermes oak** - *Quercus coccifera*  
**Algerian oak** - *Quercus canariensis*  
**Portuguese oak** - *Quercus faginea*  
**Poplar** - *Populus* sp.  
**European white poplar** - *Populus alba*  
**Cottonweed** - *Otanthus maritimus*  
**Spiny thrift** - *Armeria pungens*  
**Foxglove** - *Digitalis purpurea*  
**European sea rocket** - *Cakile maritima*  
**Cistus** - *Cistus ladanifer*  
**Rock rose** - *Cistus populifolius*  
**Marram grass** - *Ammophila arenaria*  
**Wild asparagus** - *Asparagus albus*  
**Eucalyptus** - *Eucalyptus globulus*  
**Sand couch** - *Elymus farctus*  
**Bracken** - *Pteridium aquilinum*  
**Fig tree** - *Ficus carica*  
**Laurustinus viburnum** - *Viburnum tinus*

**Narrow-leaved ash** - *Fraxinus angustifolia*  
**Sea crucianella** - *Crucianella maritima*  
**Large yellow restharrow** - *Ononis natrix* ssp. *ramosissima*  
**Rush** - *Juncus* sp.  
**Spiny rush** - *Juncus acutus*  
**Sea rush** - *Juncus maritimus*  
**Narrow-leaved phillyrea** - *Phillyrea angustifolia*  
**Oleander** - *Nerium oleander*  
**Sea medick** - *Medicago marina*  
**Seaside chamomile** - *Anthemis maritima*  
**Purple phlomis** - *Phlomis purpurea*  
**Halimium** - *Halimium ocymoides*  
**Strawberry tree** (Arbutus) - *Arbutus unedo*  
**Myrtle** - *Myrtus communis*  
**Olive tree** - *Olea europaea* var. *europaea*  
**European fan palm** - *Chamaerops humilis*  
**Curry plant** - *Helichrysum italicum* ssp. *picardii*  
**Maritime pine** - *Pinus pinaster*  
**Stone pine** - *Pinus pinea*  
**Dwarf Spanish heath** - *Erica umbellata*  
**Portuguese heath** - *Erica lusitanica*  
**Western peony** - *Paeonia broteroi*  
**Wrinkle-leaved cistus** - *Cistus crispus*  
**White-leaved rockrose** - *Cistus albidus*  
**Spanish lavender** - *Lavandula luisieri*  
**Green lavender** - *Lavandula viridis*  
**Lemon-scented lavender** - *Lavandula pedunculata* ssp. *sampaiana*  
**Willow** - *Salix* sp.  
**White willow** - *Salix* ssp. *vitellina*

**Sage-leaved cistus** - *Cistus salvifolius*  
**Montpellier cistus** - *Cistus monspeliensis*  
**Elm-leaf blackberry** - *Rubus ulmifolius*  
**Cork oak** - *Quercus suber*  
**Bulrush or reedmace** - *Typha* sp.  
**Great reedmace** - *Typha latifolia*  
**Tamarisk** - *Tamarix africana*  
**False yellowhead** - *Dittrichia viscosa* ssp. *revoluta*  
**Broom** - *Genista hirsuta*  
**Gorse** - *Ulex argenteus* ssp. *argenteus*  
**Dwarf gorse** - *Ulex minor*  
**Camphor thyme** - *Thymus camphoratus*  
**Portuguese thyme** - *Thymus carnosus*  
**Conehead thyme** - *Thymbra capitata*  
**Thyme** - *Thymus villosus*  
**Spurge flax** - *Daphne gnidium*  
**Tree heath** - *Erica arborea*  
**Spanish heath** - *Erica australis*  
**Shrubby sea-blite** - *Suaeda vera*  
**Grand statice** - *Limoniastrum monopetalum*  
**Wild olive** - *Olea europaea* var. *europaea*  
**Juniper** - *Juniperus turbinata*

## Fauna

Common Name - Scientific Name

**Short-toed eagle** - *Circaetus gallicus*  
**Common buzzard** - *Buteo buteo*  
**Bonelli's eagle** - *Hieraetus fasciatus*  
**Pied avocet** - *Recurvirostra avosetta*  
**White wagtail** - *Motacilla alba*  
**Hawfinch** - *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*  
**Iberian arched-mouth nase** - *Chondrostoma lemmingii*  
**Hybrid minnow** - *Rutilus alburnoides*  
**Kentish plover** - *Charadrius alexandrinus*  
**Donkey** - *Equus asinus*  
**Spanish terrapin** - *Mauremys leprosa*  
**Chameleon** - *Chamaeleo chamaeleon*  
**Purple swamphen** - *Porphyrio porphyrio*  
**Fiddler crab** - *Uca tangeri*  
**Stonechat** - *Saxicola torquata*  
**White stork** - *Ciconia ciconia*  
**Great tit** - *Parus major*  
**Little tern** - *Sterna albifrons*  
**European water snake** - *Natrix* sp.  
**Ladder snake** - *Elaphe scalaris*  
**Montpellier snake** - *Malpolon monspessulanus*  
**Common quail** - *Coturnix coturnix*  
**European rabbit** - *Oryctolagus cuniculus*  
**Eurasian spoonbill** - *Platalea leucorodia*  
**Great cormorant** - *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
**Thekla lark** - *Galerida theklae*  
**Least weasel** - *Mustela nivalis*  
**Arade chub** - *Squalius aradensis*  
**Dartford warbler** - *Sylvia undata*  
**Peregrine falcon** - *Falco peregrinus*

**Flamingo** - *Phoenicopterus ruber*  
**Eurasian jay** - *Garrulus glandarius*  
**Yellow-legged gull** - *Larus cachinnans*  
**Eurasian coot** - *Fulica atra*  
**Common moorhen** - *Gallinula chloropus*  
**Northern gannet** - *Sula bassana*  
**Little egret** - *Egretta garzetta*  
**Little bittern** - *Ixobrychus minutus*  
**Grey heron** - *Ardea cinerea*  
**Purple heron** - *Ardea purpurea*  
**Wildcat** - *Felis silvestris*  
**Common genet** - *Genetta genetta*  
**Common kingfisher** - *Alcedo atthis*  
**Black-headed gull** - *Larus ridibundus*  
**Wild boar** - *Sus scrofa*  
**Spanish sand racer** - *Psammotromus hispanicus*  
**Schreiber's green lizard** - *Lacerta schreiberi*  
**Iberian hare** - *Lepus granatensis*  
**Otter** - *Lutra lutra*  
**Black-tailed godwit** - *Limosa limosa*  
**Eurasian curlew** - *Numenius arquata*  
**Common blackbird** - *Turdus merula*  
**Little grebe** - *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
**Little owl** - *Athene noctua*  
**Lesser mouse-eared bat** - *Myotis blythii*  
**European hedgehog** - *Erinaceus europaeus*  
**Golden oriole** - *Oriolus oriolus*  
**Mallard** - *Anas platyrhynchos*  
**Azure-winged magpie** - *Cyanopica cyanus*  
**Common kestrel** - *Falco tinnunculus*  
**Red-legged partridge** - *Alectoris rufa*  
**Common redshank** - *Tringa totanus*  
**Black-winged stilt** - *Himantopus himantopus*  
**European green woodpecker** - *Picus viridis*  
**Red-backed shrike** - *Lanius collurio*

**Great spotted woodpecker** - *Dendrocopos major*  
**Lesser spotted woodpecker** - *Dendrocopos minor*  
**Dunlin** - *Calidris alpina*  
**Hoopoe** - *Upupa epops*  
**Red fox** - *Vulpes vulpes*  
**Iberian green frog** - *Rana perezi*  
**Cabrera vole** - *Microtus cabrerai*  
**Mediterranean tree frog** - *Hyla meridionalis*  
**Turtle dove** - *Streptopelia turtur*  
**Ruddy turnstone** - *Arenaria interpres*  
**European roller** - *Coracias garrulus*  
**Egyptian mongoose** - *Herpestes ichneumon*  
**Spanish ribbed newt** - *Pleurodeles waltl*  
**Fire salamander** - *Salamandra salamandra*  
**Natterjack toad** - *Bufo calamita*  
**Iberian midwife toad** - *Alytes cisternasii*  
**Iberian minnow** - *Anaecypris hispanica*  
**Red knot** - *Calidris canutus*  
**Wood nuthatch** - *Sitta europaea*  
**Greenfinch** - *Carduelis chloris*  
**Ferruginous pochard** - *Aythya nyroca*

# glossary

**Arable** - Plant growing on seeded soil; grain or fodder producing plant crop.

**Barrocal** - Area of limestone soils stretching across the central part of the Algarve between the Serra and the coastal strip, with its own characteristic vegetation largely unique to this area.

**Biodiversity** - Includes diversity within a species, between species and comparative diversity between ecosystems.

**Carnivore** - Animal that feeds predominantly on flesh.

**Cave-dwelling** - Species that inhabits or shelters in caves.

**Creek** - Narrow arm of a river or the sea penetrating the land.

**Dolmen** - Megalithic monument consisting of a large horizontal stone slab resting on upright stones.

**Dune** - Mound or ridge of sand formed by the wind or the sea.

**Footpath** - Narrow track created by the passage of people and animals.

**Habitat** - A place with specific geophysical conditions where a particular species or group of species lives.

**Halophytic vegetation** - Vegetation found in environments of high salinity.

**Hibernation** - Dormant state adopted by some animals during the winter as a means of adapting to cold and lack of food, with the aim of saving energy.

**Karst landscape** - Limestone landscape characterised by absence of surface water, 'sinks' and a well-developed underwater drainage system with caves.

**Lagoon** - Coastal basin separated from the sea by a dune cordon.

**Limestone breccia** - Limestone fragments cemented together with calcium carbonate.

**Marsh** - Land subject to flooding.

**Mastic grove** - Area predominantly covered by mastic trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*).

**Mediterranean scrub forest** - Area of very dense scrub dominated by shrubby species typically found in Mediterranean climates (e.g. the genera *Cistus*, *Erica*, *Rosmarinus* and *Lavandula*).

**Mediterranean woodland** - Densely wooded area dominated in its most mature form by holm oaks, cork oaks and pines.

**Menhir** - Megalithic monument consisting of a single standing stone.

**Montado** - In Portuguese, semi-natural woodland consisting of open woodland underlain by natural and semi-natural pastures. The tree species are usually cork oaks and holm oaks.

**Monte** - In Portuguese, a small group of houses in an isolated location.

**Natura 2000 Network** - European ecological network established to protect biodiversity through the conservation of different types of habitat and wild fauna and flora in the European Union.

**Outcrop** - Visible exposure of rock on the surface of the land.

**Passerine** - Bird, usually small, belonging to the order Passeriformes (e.g. sparrows, finches, tits).

**Pequena Rota** - (literally 'short route') This is a walk identified by the abbreviation "PR", followed by its registration number in the corresponding municipality. It is indicated on the ground by red and yellow posts, takes less than a day to complete and is less than 30 km in length.

**POGI** - Point Of Geological Interest.

**Rainfed orchard** - Area of fruit-bearing trees. May consist of trees of various species (almonds, carobs, figs and olives).

**Riverine** - Refers to vegetation growing on the banks of watercourses.

**Saltmarsh** - Wetland with characteristic vegetation that tolerates salty soil.

**Scoopwheel** - Device for raising water from a well.

**Silt** - Muddy deposit at the bottom of a river, etc.

**Undergrowth** - Layer of vegetation beneath the tree cover.

**Wader** - Member of a group of birds comprising several families, usually found in wetland areas (e.g. dunlins, sandpipers, plovers).

**Watermill** - Mill powered by a waterwheel.

**Weir** - Small dam built from stone. Made to hold back and raise the level of waters of rivers and streams and divert them via a mill-race to a watermill.

**Wetland** - Any coastal or inland area which is dominated permanently or temporarily by water.

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