



A National Park created to protect, welcome and educate

Les Calanques is an outstanding natural monument situated between Marseille, Cassis and La Ciotat which is protected and managed by the public establishment of the Calanques National Park. In conjunction with local stakeholders, the organisation coordinates and implements the National Park Charter, a joint development project set up primarily for the purposes of:

- Protecting the landscape and the natural and cultural heritage
- Preserving the character of the different sites, especially their tranquillity, for the sake of the wildlife but also for local residents and the park's users and visitors
- Contributing to the knowledge base, in order to help address the major challenges facing the Mediterranean coast (both land and sea, in a periurban context)
- Welcoming the public and passing on knowledge about the treasures and the fragility of both the marine and land-based heritage
- Controlling activities and ensuring the rules are adhered to
- Helping develop the area sustainably and enhance its standing

Achieving these objectives requires active management, in terms of development, maintaining the areas, special regulations on use of the park and visitor education. For the sake of present and future generations, The Calanques National Park aims to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to relax, work and live sustainably on this outstanding stretch of coast, in harmony with nature and with the park's cultural identity.

For information and news: www.calanques-parcnational.fr

Access to the forests is controlled during the summer because of the fire risk. Please check before setting off at: www.bouches-du-rhone.gouv.fr or phone: +33 (0)811 20 13 13. (€0.06 per min)

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What is a national park?

A national park is a natural site whose landscapes, biodiversity, cultural treasures and character make it important to protect and manage, so that its outstanding heritage can be preserved for present and future generations. National Park status is a mark of both national and international recognition for a site.

Since a major legislative reform in 2006, French national parks have been divided into two types of area. The 'core' falls under special regulations and is more strictly protected. On land, the 'affiliated area' comprises the area that forms an ecological unit with the core, and the surrounding local authorities commit to promoting its sustainable development on a voluntary basis, with support from the national park authority. The 'adjacent marine area' is also covered by sustainable development guidelines, but local authorities do not need to be affiliated.

More importantly, by providing a special protection framework, a National Park is also a tool for ensuring excellence in natural site management. The administrative and financial management are in the hands of a public authority under the remit of the Environment Ministry, which develops and implements tools to build knowledge and protect the natural sites. The authority's principal governance body, the Board, is made up primarily of local stakeholders.

France has 10 national parks: La Vanoise, Port-Cros, the Pyrenees, Les Cévennes, Les Ecrins, Mercantour, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Reunion Island and Les Calanques. Their activities are coordinated by the Agence française pour la biodiversité (AFB). To find out more, visit: www.afbiodiversite.fr

Birth of a new generation national park

The Calanques National Park was created on 18 April 2012 by Prime Ministerial Decree, becoming France's 10th national park. Its location in the heart of the Aix-Marseille Provence metropolitan area makes it the first national park in Europe to encompass land, sea and periurban sections.

The park is also unique because of its history. From the early 20th Century onwards, a number of protection movements were begun spontaneously by local residents and users, to combat the various threats to the stunning landscape of Les Calanques. These campaigns achieved a significant victory in 1975, when the mountains between Marseille and Cassis were listed under the 1930 countryside protection act.

But in the light of the many pressures caused by its proximity to France's second largest city (urban development, pollution, over-use, excessive sample-taking, forest fires and more), local stakeholders were overwhelmingly of the view that the existing protection was inadequate and in 1999 decided to form Les Calanques Public Interest Consortium, a consultation, awareness-raising and research body that brought together representatives of central government, government agencies, local authorities and civil society (environmental protection associations and groups representing users, owners, residents and business people).

After more than 12 years of intense and often difficult negotiations, Les Calanques public interest consortium achieved the goal its members had worked towards, which had been long awaited by thousands of residents and users. Les Calanques was given a protection and management tool in keeping with the site's value and the challenges it faced.



The Calanques National Park: Identity Card

Creation of the national park	18 April 2012 (signing of the decree)
Location	Bouches-du-Rhône (département 13)
Land core	8,500 hectares, 3 municipalities (Marseille, Cassis and La Ciotat)
Sea core	43,500 hectares
Affiliated area	2,630 hectares, 3 municipalities (Marseille, Cassis and La Penne-sur-Huveaune)
Adjacent marine area	97,700 hectares
Biodiversity	140 protected land animal and plant species; 60 endangered, rare or protected marine species
Total visitor numbers	2 million visitors per year (land and sea)

- ### The Calanques National Park is:
- Europe's only urban national park
 - The only national park in the Mediterranean to have continental, insular and marine sections
 - France's 10th national park



The National Park team

The Calanques National Park team is made up of policy officers and field workers. Some of the field workers are ranger-advisers, whose task is to:

- monitor developments in the different environments,
- inform and educate visitors,
- oversee activities,
- ensure the rules are being adhered to.

They work in close collaboration with the policy officers, who form the office-based technical team and liaise with the other local partners. During the summer months, eco-rangers are stationed in both the land and sea zones, to provide information for visitors on the ground and help look out for risks, such as fire hazards.

Outstanding geological treasures

How were Les Calanques formed? The national park's rock formations are sedimentary: the limestone formed at the bottom of the warm sea during the Mesozoic era (Jurassic & Cretaceous periods), through the chemical transformation of the accumulated marine microorganism skeleton and shell fragments (up to several hundred metres deep). During the Cenozoic Era (lasting 60 million years), these rocks emerged from the sea when the African and Eurasian continental plates collided. The Pyrenees-Provence range made up of the Pyrenees, Corsica and Sardinia, was formed. Over time, this belt gradually eroded, fractured and changed shape. Hot periods assisted the creation of a 'karst topography' (a landscape formed by the dissolving action of run-off and percolating water), forming features such as caves, sinkholes and underground rivers. **Glaciation** during the Quaternary period (1.8 million years) caused the sea level to drop 130m and the erosion of the coastal limestone belts accelerated. Deep, narrow valleys formed and vertical faults carved up the mountain landscape. Later, the sea level rose, submerging the area below the ravines (the rocky inlets of the Calanques) and forming the landscape we see today.

The distinctive Soubeyrane cliffs The Pyrenees-Provence belt is made up of limestone and much older rocks. Where the sea now lies, a river flowed northwards down from a mountain. The Soubeyrane cliffs were formed from the sediment that accumulated in the river delta and they now stand imposingly with their several hundred metres of alternating white limestone, sandstone and yellow puddingstone.



Eucalyptus pentagonum fossil from the Upper Cenomanian age, found in Cassis © Provence Paleontology Museum



Land zone: remarkable biodiversity

The national park contains 29 habitats of community interest (those considered rare and fragile by the European Union) and is home to 138 protected land animal and plant species.

Fauna 80 breeding or potential breeding bird species have been observed, of which 67 are protected in France, such as Bonelli's eagle (one of France's 32 pairs nests in Les Calanques). Among the sea birds present, the yellow-legged gull (commonly known as Gabbian by locals) is reaching a stable population. In summer, it is easy to spot rafts of Cory's shearwaters bobbing on the waves, or families of shags perched on rocks along the shore. As for mammals, 13 bat species have been observed (of the 17 species found in the Bouches-du-Rhône département), including the European free-tailed bat which is one of Europe's largest bats, with a wingspan of 40cm. The national park also boasts a wide variety of reptiles, such as the eyed lizard, which at 80cm long holds the record as the largest lizard in Europe. The European leaf-toed gecko is a small nocturnal animal considered to be vulnerable at a world level.

Flora Of the more than 900 plant species that have been catalogued within the national park boundary, 38 are protected and 43 recognised as noteworthy. The native broom Genista lobelii can be found along the crag tops and among the scree. Its cushion shape allows this small, spiny shrub to withstand the wind. The protected endemic species Arenaria provincialis ('Provençal sandwort') grows among the scree and limestone pavement (a geological formation of the limestone rock formed by trickling rainwater, also known as lapies). This plant is not found anywhere else in the world apart from Provence. The silhouettes of Aleppo pines tower over the scrub in many places, their branches often twisted from exposure to the strong winds. Rosemary, thyme and Montpellier rock rose (Cistus monspeliensis) grow at the sides of the paths. The shoreline is home to many halotolerant plants, i.e. species that can withstand the saltiness of the seaspray. Among these are Marseille milk vetch (Astragalus tragacantha), which has adapted to extreme environmental conditions through its cushion shape and small, hairy leaves.



Sea zone: outstanding natural heritage

The national park is home to 60 rare, endangered or protected species and 14 habitats of community interest (those considered rare and fragile by the European Union), such as posidonia meadows, a native Mediterranean flowering marine plant with slow-growing roots (1 century to grow 1m). Posidonia produces large volumes of oxygen and stabilises the seabed, whilst also acting as a nursery, refuge and feeding ground for a rich diversity of fauna. Many fish species can be observed in its beds, such as salemma, sea bream, Mediterranean rainbow wrasse and seahorses, not to mention the numerous invertebrates, including long-spined sea urchin, with spines up to 10cm long, or fan mussels, the largest shellfish in the Mediterranean (up to 1m long).



In deeper waters, the coral ecosystem is characterised by an abundance of marine organisms which together form colourful underwater landscapes. Colonies of tree-like red coral can be found on the darker rocky seabed, while the yellow gorgonian corals usually prefer the rock sides, at depths of 10 to 30m.

The shady grouper is protected by a moratorium and over the last few years has begun to regain ground in its seabed habitat. Corb is also very rare in Les Calanques because of its vulnerability and is too is under a moratorium. Corbs tend to live in the shelter of rocks or crevices, where they can hide more easily.

Further out to sea, various cetaceans can be spotted, including bottlenose dolphins, striped dolphins and fin whales, which at approximately 20m long are the second largest animal on earth after the blue whale.

Loggerhead turtles can also be seen in the offshore waters, where they come to feed.



Les Calanques, a cultural gem

As well as the splendid landscapes and huge biodiversity it encompasses, Les Calanques is also a place of culture, as witnessed by the many traces left by humans over the course of millennia. From its ruins to its traditions, from ancestral rituals to modern-day customs, from Cosquer cave to the fishermen's cabins and rowing boats, both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Les Calanques have shaped the site's identity over time, a unique culture that is both Mediterranean and Provençal at the same time. One of the national park authority's highest priorities is to protect and enhance this exceptional cultural heritage.



THE CALANQUES NATIONAL PARK: A NATURAL AND CULTURAL TREASURE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

« Les Calanques is at its most striking and most unusual close to the sea, not only for the splendour of its landscapes, but also the eternal draw of its seascapes » Gaston Rebuffat

www.calanques-parcnational.fr

MAP OF MARKED PATHS IN THE CALANQUES NATIONAL PARK



Wildlife, cultural and landscape heritage

The main purpose of The Calanques National Park is to protect the exceptional heritage of its land and sea zones, but also to enable the public to share in them, which it does by running welcoming, information and awareness-raising activities.

Good habits

Les Calanques is coastal high ground. Check the weather forecast before you set off and make sure you are well equipped: water (1.5 litres per person), map of the path network, first aid kit, walking shoes, hat, etc. Don't drop litter. Take your rubbish with you and put it in the waste bins. Stay on the marked paths.

For your safety

There are steep slopes in many parts of the national park, with a level of difficulty typical of medium-high mountains. For your safety, familiarise yourself with your route before you set off and check the fire risk and weather conditions.

Access to the forests in summer

For everyone's safety, access to the département's forests is controlled by Prefectural Order on the basis of the current fire risk.

Find out before you set off by visiting the Prefecture website: www.bouches-du-rhone.gouv.fr or phoning +33 (0)811 20 13 13 (0.06€ per min)

The main rules in the national park core

A national park is an exceptional site, where everyone is welcome but everyone is also responsible. In order to balance preservation of nature and the site's tranquillity with public activities, special rules are in force in the park's core zones.

The rules of behaviour are straightforward and based on common sense and respect for nature and other users. They are there to allow everyone to enjoy this magnificent site.

-  Dogs are welcome and must be on a leash
-  No lighting fires or smoking
-  No littering in the land or sea zones
-  No sound nuisance in the land or sea zones
-  No damaging the heritage (plants may be picked for domestic, culinary or medicinal use: see full list of species in the National Park Charter)
-  No camping, caravanning or bivouacs
-  No driving motor vehicles off the public tracks
-  No parking outside of official car parks
-  No jet-skiing or motor-drawn water sports (water skiing, parasailing, etc.)
-  No electrically or hydraulically aided fishing devices to be used for leisure fishing
-  No drone overflight

Introduced by The Calanques National Park, Decree (No 2012-507 of 19 April 2012, as amended).

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Mes Calanques, the official app of the Calanques National Park

For more information on the full National Park rules, please visit www.calanques-parcnational.fr

