

# COMENIUS PROJECT "NATIONAL PARKS"

*Nicolás Copérnico*  
I.E.S. Nicolás Copérnico



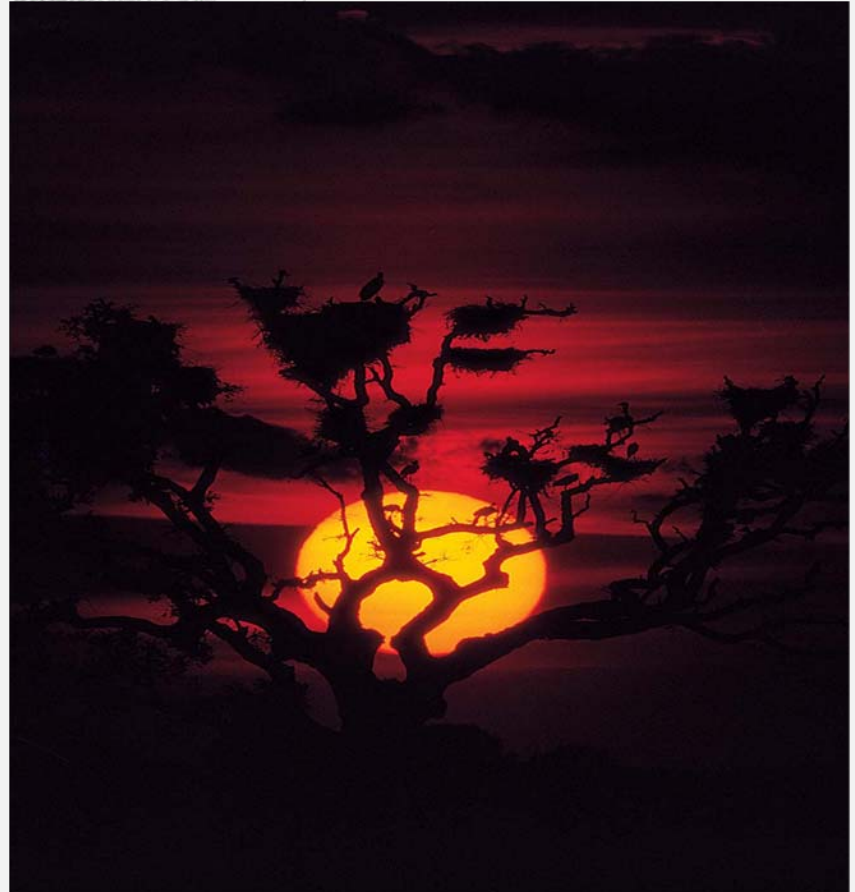
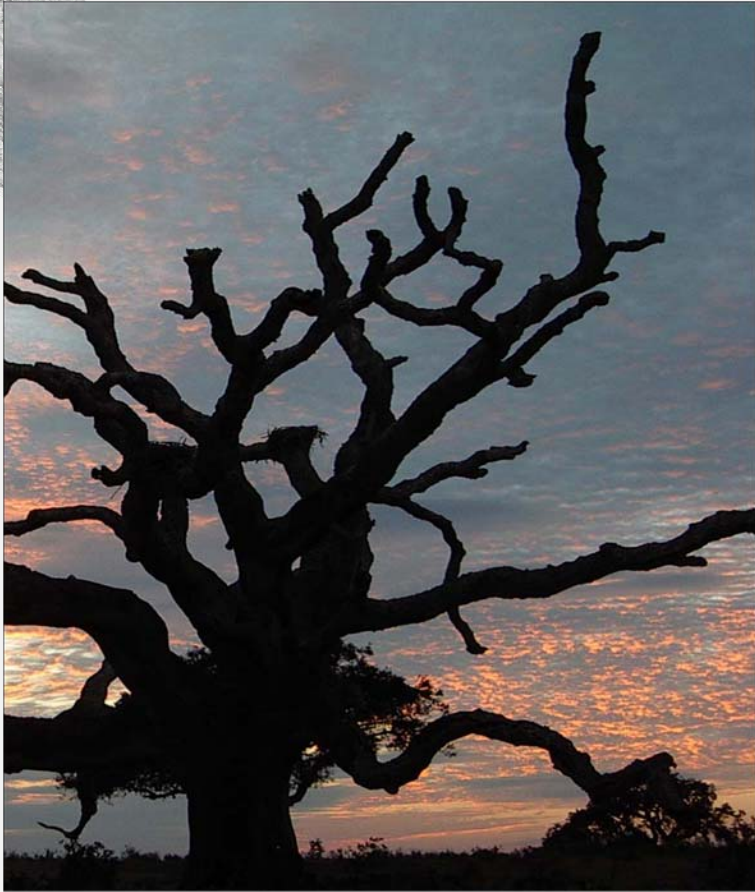
Socrates  
Comenius

## DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

I.E.S. NICOLÁS COPÉRNICO



# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK



# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

## OVERVIEW



- Doñana National Park is effectively the delta of the Guadalquivir, but unlike most rivers, this one has only one outlet to the sea, just below Sanlúcar de Barrameda. The rest of what used to be its delta has gradually been blocked off by a huge sandbar that stretches from the mouth of the Rio Tinto, near Palos, to the riverbank opposite Sanlúcar, and which the sea winds have gradually formed into high dunes. Behind this natural barrier stretch the marsh (*marismas*).

UNESCO describes Doñana as:

*Notable for the great diversity of its biotopes, especially lagoons, marshlands, fixed and mobile dunes, scrub woodland and maquis. It is home to five threatened bird species. It is one of the largest heronries in the Mediterranean region and is the wintering site for more than 500,000 water fowl each year.*

Doñana National Park covers an extensive area (50,720 hectares) between the coastline of La Rábida (Matalascañas) and the Guadalquivir estuary. These wetlands, sands, dunes and coastal marshes are visited by over 300 species of birds and are home to many rare species, including the endangered Iberian lynx, wild boar, imperial eagle and several species of deer. Some of the most spectacular sights are the blankets of colourful flamingos, the flocks of thousands of geese that descend on the dunes to swallow the sand they need for their digestion, and the wide variety of different species that can be seen together in the coastal marshes, including spoonbills, garza imperial, and a whole host of wading birds.



# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

## OVERVIEW



These coastal marshes (*marisma*) are the biggest ecosystem in the park (27,000 hectares). It is an area that has lost contact with the sea and the river that formed it and that has become marshlands which only have seasonal flooding. In autumn you see the first puddles form; in winter they become a shallow lake; in spring the surface of the water is covered with flowers and in summer they are a dusty plain.

Spring and winter are the best times to visit the park when most species of birds are in residence. In summer when the park is at its driest, many species have finished breeding and migrated, although eagles, vultures and other local inhabitants still abound.

There are no towns or villages in the park and despite many threats over the centuries the beautiful landscape has remained largely unaltered. Curiously several palaces can be seen in the park, built mainly by aristocrats over the centuries, including the Palace of Doña Ana Gomez de Mendoza, who retired here when the area was a great hunting ground, and who gave her name to the park.





# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

## HISTORY

- These are some important hints in Doñana's ancient history:
- The origins of Doñana as a region go back to ancient times. About 10 centuries before Christ some very old texts placed the mythical Tartessos in this area.
- Civilizations like Etruscans, Phoenicians and Greeks left their prints in the National Park. Today it's still possible to find some important Roman remains hidden in the sands.
- In Roman times there still was a large inner lake called *Lacus Ligustinus* surrounded by the Guadalquivir River and its tributaries and the coastal sand bars to the south.
- **1495**  
The third Duke of Medina Sidonia decides to put in productivity the forests and introduces reed deer for hunting. He also organizes a beating to get rid of the wolves in the area in order to encourage cattle grassing in the marshes.
- **1585**  
**The seventh Duke of Medina Sidonia** buy the lands of his ancestors from the City of Almonte up to the Madre de las Marismas. He was married to Mrs. Ana de Mendoza y Silva, daughter of Eboli's Princess. Ashamed of her mother's libertine life at the royal court, she moves to the Duke's game reserve where he build an appropriate house for her. It was then when the area starts being called the Coto (Spanish for hunting ground) of Doña (Spanish for Mrs.) Ana, later Doñana.
- **1854**  
First mention on a printed document of the **Avifauna of Doñana:** "Catálogo de las aves observadas en algunas provincias andaluzas" (Catalogue of the birds watched in some Andalusian Provinces) by Antonio Machado y Nuñez. **1952**  
In one side, the newly established dictatorship was of the opinion to make empty lands profitable for the sake of people and finances. In the other side naturalist and nature lovers wanted to preserve the biological values for the future. They get to slow down the eucalyptus planting projects. The fight for the preservation of Doñana has started



Coto de Doña Ana picture, XVIII century



# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

## HISTORY



- **1963** WWF and Spanish government buy at last 6,300 has. of forests and marshes for more than 33 million pesetas and creates the Doñana Reserve
- A piece of 3,200 has. of marshland is bought by the WWF and the Guadiamar Reserve is created.

**Doñana National Park** is founded with an extension of 35,000 has. The Biological Reserve is still under the ownership and management of the Ministry of Education and Science but the lands around it, included in the National Park, are owned privately and controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture through ICONA (Institute for the Conservation of Nature )

- **1972**  
An agricultural plan of the government to put in productivity large parts of the marshes and plains surrounding the Reserve is a new threat to the conservation of the species. The Guadiamar River, one of the main sources of water for the marshes is canalised. **1978**  
The National Park is enlarged up to 50,720 has. and a buffer area of some 22,000 has. called Prepark is created around it.
- **1980**  
Doñana is classified by UNESCO as a **Biosphere Reserve**. First plans for the hydrologic regeneration of Doñana.
- Doñana receives the **European Management Award**. Later again on 1990 and 1995.



*The king Alfonso XIII  
hunting a wild boar in Doñana*



# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

## HISTORY

- **1988**  
Doñana is classified as a Zone for a Special Protection of Birds (**ZEPA**).
- **1989**  
**Doñana Natural Park**, with some 54,000 has., is created by the Andalusia regional government.
- **1994**  
Doñana is classified as a **World Heritage Site** by Unesco.
- **1998**  
A **mine accident** at Aznalcollar causes the spillage of many thousands tons of toxic mud into the Guadimar River. Emergency measures are taken to protect Doñana and clean up the river bed.
- The "**Doñana 2005**" and "**Corredor Verde**" projects are approved in order to regenerate the hydrologic system in the area.
- **2002**  
The ZEPA is enlarged to include the Natural Park.
- Spanish Supreme Court decides to impose sanctions of about 45 million euro in fines and compensations on Boliden Swedish company for the Aznalcollar dam burst disaster. Boliden appeals the decision.
- **2005**  
The National Park is enlarged up to 54,120 has.  
The Natural Park is also enlarged up to 53,835 has. and included in the list of Ramsar sites.





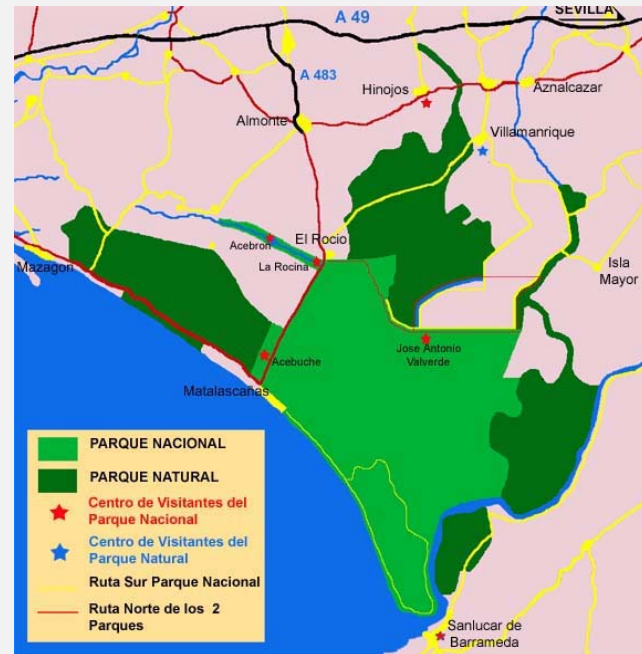
# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK ORGANIZATION

The famous Coto Doñana is nothing but the protected area created in 1963 and named for the Spanish Government as Doñana National Park. An area that has been enlarged several times up to the actual 54,120 has.

In 1989 the Andalusian Administration step ahead of all the Spanish Communities with its Protected Sites Regulation by which some 18 new protected sites were created in the region. One of them was called Doñana Natural Park and it was to include among others a former area around the National Park called Pre-park. Overall some extra 54,000 has were efficiently protected in Doñana area.

The plan was to create a sort of buffer area to strength the protection of the National Park. Recently the Natural Park has been enlarged up to the actual 53,835 has.

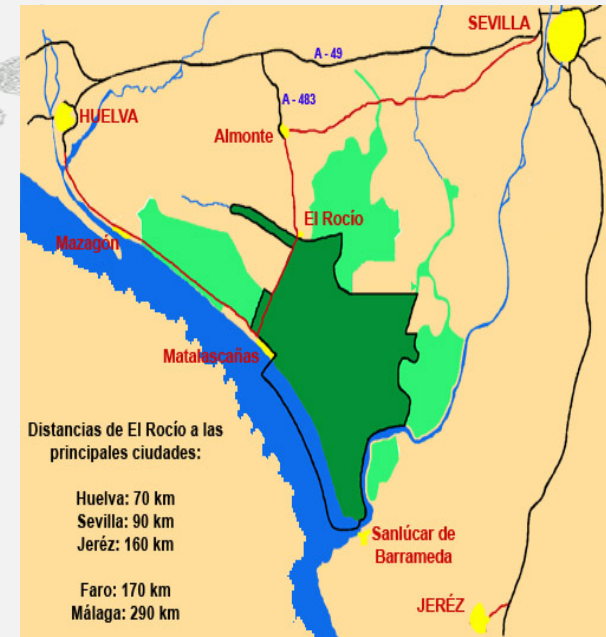
So, historically, one of the main differences between National and Natural Park was that the first was managed by the National Administration and the second by the Regional Administration. That has recently changed. At present National Parks competencies in Spain have been transferred to the regional Administrations so now both parks depend on the Junta de Andalucía, the regional parliament.





# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK ORGANIZATION

- In the National Park **Conservation** of habitats and species is on top of the priorities list, along with **Research** for a better protection. Use of the Natural Resources and Public Uses remain in a lower category. Only some residual traditional activities are allowed.
- In the other hand, the Natural Park gives the same kind of priority to Conservation - Research and Use of the Natural Resources; in such a way that activities like Intensive Farming, Grassing or even Hunting are allowed and regulated in certain areas.
- Thus the conservation of ecosystems and species in Doñana is guaranteed at the same time that we allow the population in the area to keep living on the natural resources of their homeland.
- Both parks try to have good examples of the 3 main ecosystems in the area:
  - Sand dunes - Beaches
  - Mediterranean forests - Scrubland
  - Marshes
- **Natural Park Facilities**
- At present there are
- **2 Visitor Centres** in the Natural Park: - Bajo de Guía in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. You can contact them on 959 380 922. - Dehesa Boyal in Villamanrique de la Condesa. To contact them call 670 947 837 Additionally,
- **7 different trails** of different length and profile have been designed:
  - 1 - Laguna del Jaral
  - 2 - Cuesta Maneli
  - 3 - Laguna de Ribetehilos
  - 4 - Poblados forestales
  - 5 - Arrayán
  - 6 - Marismas del Guadalquivir
  - 7 - Pinar de la Algaida





# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK ORGANIZATION

## National Park Facilities

- The National Park is a very restricted and controlled area. Visitors are only allowed in certain routes and trails specially design not to produce negative effects on ecosystems and species. These are as follows:
  - - **3 guided tours:** one in the south along the beaches, sand dunes and forests and one in the north across the pine and cork oak forests and through the marshes. Another one will take you in a boat along the Guadalquivir River from Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Booking required for all of them.
  - - **7 Information and Visitor Centres**, most of them offer information, exhibitions and self guided trails. Free entrance. - Acebuche, near Matalascañas
    - Acebrón and
    - La Rocina, near El Rocío
    - José Antonio Valverde, at the northern marshes
    - Los Centenales (959 459 241), in Hinojos
    - Casagrande Information Point (955 750 006,) in Aznalcazar
    - Fabrica de Hielo (956 381 635), in Sanlúcar de Barrameda-
- Several Short Trails.** Besides those next to the visitor centres already mention there is also the Mobile Dunes Trail (self guided), at the eastern end of Matalascañas and a nice walk around the mashes in El Rocío.
- - **3 Long Trails.** You are also allowed to walk along the Raya Real (east of El Rocío), Camino de Moguer (along the northern banks of La Rocina Stream) and along the beaches of the National Park up to Sanlúcar de Barrameda. No vehicles allowed without authorization.





# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK ORGANIZATION

## Visits to the park

- Visits to the park are strictly limited and no private vehicles are allowed in at all. Spanish legislation allows visitors on foot along the whole of the coastline between the sea and the impressive walls of sand dunes. On the west side of the Doñana, which is classified as a Natural Park, you are allowed visits - on foot, horseback or by four wheel drive with a pre established timetable depending on the time of the year. It is also possible to visit the outer limits of the park from the town of Matalascañas, where several companies organize visits by four wheel drive, on horseback and in horse and carriage.

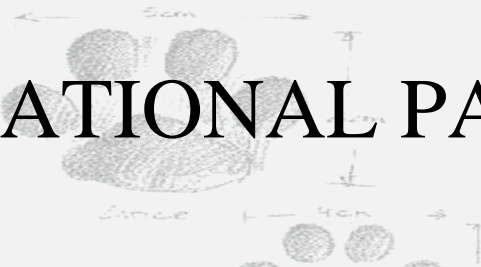
## Organized Tours

- This is one of the highlights of Doñana. There are several companies with a concession or authorized by the National Park administration to carry out their activities in the area. These companies organize tours in 4WD vehicles or other appropriate to the terrain using two possible routes, one in the south and one in the north of the National Park. Along them you will see good examples of the main ecosystems and natural values of the reserve. Access is restricted in both. The Park does not run any tours, they just offer the services through the authorized companies.
- These organized tours last normally around 4 hours and offer the visitors contents of general interest, in groups normally large and following standard itineraries. Discovering Doñana offers more personalized tours, of variable itineraries and durations, more adaptable to every client's needs, including more flexible timetables.
- Additionally it is also possible to book a boat trip from Sanlúcar de Barrameda to visit a section of the Guadalquivir River and a little part of the National Park.





# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK





# DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

