

Riofrío Forest



Visit

Nota importante

Eco-trails will soon be opened in the Riofrío Forest.

History

The Riofrío Forest is a large natural space of extraordinary ecological value. It is nine kilometres from Segovia and fifteen from San Ildefonso, the municipality to which it belongs although it extends between the villages of Madrona, Hontoria, Revenga, Navas de Riofrío and La Losa. It covers an area of 640 hectares.

It is an important ecological and biological reserve for all four of its forest ecosystems: Holm oak, juniper, Pyrenean oak and ash, with the last of these found on the banks of the Riofrío River. A high-lying area, its highest point is at 1,086 m and lowest at 950 m, with the Riofrío River running through it from east to north west.

Aside from the main types of trees, it is also home to Portuguese oak and Montpellier maple, and to willow and poplar trees along the river. The most common shrubs are broom, thyme, rosemary and Spanish lavender.

The Forest is also home to a remarkably diverse range of wildlife; in addition to iconic species such as the griffon vulture and the black vulture, over 50 other types of bird have been identified. In addition, there are also numerous mammals (deer, fallow deer, rabbits, badgers, foxes, genets and weasels) and reptiles. In total, 102 species have been catalogued: 42 protected, 8 endangered and 52 unthreatened.

The Environmental Protection Plan for the Riofrío Forest opens this unique place to the general public alongside a strict conservation plan. Accessible areas include approximately 5 hectares next to the Palace and various carefully marked-out recreational areas, with viewpoints, information plaques, benches and tables. There are two designated car parks.

This forest offers visitors a unique opportunity to observe and enjoy the wonder of Nature at just a short distance from the city of Segovia.

The Riofrío Palace and Forest was declared a historical-artistic monument in 1931. In terms of protection figures, the Riofrío Forest is part of the Organisational Plan for Natural Resources in the Riofrío River Basin and is classified by the NATURA 2000 network as a Site of Community Importance (SCI). It is also located within the Voltoya and El Zorita Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) for birds and Special Conservation Area (SCA).

At the beginning of the 18th century, the Riofrío Forest belonged to the Marquis of Paredes and was rented by Phillip V as hunting grounds. In 1751, the widowed Elisabeth Farnese purchased the land in order to build the palace that stands here today.

The Queen later extended the estate by acquiring the surrounding lands by purchase or exchange. Other land was added to the estate during the reigns of Charles IV and Isabella II and the extended Forest was not affected

by the sale of Royal property in the 19th century. It is entirely surrounded by a perimeter stonewall.