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CRUZIANA

GEOPARK NATURTEJO DA MESETA MERIDIONAL - UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK - E-MAGAZINE









GEO-stories of our places and people: Meimão

Meimão is the northernmost village in Naturtejo Geopark – UNESCO Global Geopark. Located between mountains rising at 900 meters high, in the high and straight valley of Meimoa Stream. Here two faults with kilometric extension intersect each other crossing the Malcata Mountain from North to South. From the viewpoint of the Chapel dedicated to Virgin of Pilar, the landscape spreads along the dam. The shale slopes mark the beginning of the Nature Reserve of Malcata Mountain, historic habitat for the very threatened Iberian Lynx and hopefully to be again the home of the rarest feline in the world and symbol of this land. These mountains, apparently deserted, were also habitat for Man since ancient times. Casinhas is a set of tumuli, unfortunately quite ruined today. Near the bridge over Arrebentão Stream there was once a Roman villa and not far is the fortified settlement of Meimão Velho, possibly from the Iron Age. Here, Romans exploited gold mines in veins of basic rocks of Meimão-Cabeça Calva. In a territory with 33,22 km2, where only 280 people live, protected nature brings huge possibilities for tourism development. The tourism activity is focused on the river beach on the dam and its tourist bungalows. But nature in these mountains enables a wide range of activities from trekking to cycling, from mountain sports to guided tours, fauna observation and ethnobotany. The Natural Reserve of Malcata Mountain offers the walking trail of Sobreiral and the area is crossed by the Long Trail of the Historical Villages. The desert mountains soon will be the home for the Iberian Lynx and Meimão may be a privileged door to discover its daily routine.

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Cover: (Projecto Objectiva: Geopark)

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES



1 April - Factor Ocio visits Naturtejo Geopark. Jorge Costa guided a group of 25 Spanish Tourists brought by the Tour Operator Factor Ocio through Monsanto and Idanha-a-Velha.

6 to 7 April – 6th Asparagus, Truffles and Mushrooms Festival. Alcafozes hosted the 6th Asparagus, Truffles and Mushrooms Festival, organized by the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova and the Union of Parishes of Idanha-a-Nova and Alcafozes. Once again this festival offered local products and handicrafts, live cooking, workshops, contests and traditional music.

The president of the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova and Naturtejo Geopark, Armindo Jacinto, said these two days aimed to "promote our gastronomy, our natural and historical-cultural heritage, and boost the economy with our products and exhibitors with the collaboration of local community".

According to the president of the Union of Parishes of Idanha-a-Nova and Alcafozes, Vítor Mascarenhas "the Municipality found in thematic Festivals like this positive formula to cheer our lands".

10 April – Spanish Tourists visit Naturtejo Geopark. A group of 55 Spanish Tourists came from Cáceres to visit Naturtejo Geopark, UNESCO Global Geopark. They discovered the Historical Village of Idanha-a-Velha and the Traditional Arts Centre of the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova. The visit ended with a traditional and delicious lunch in Helana Restaurant! The group was guided by Jorge Costa.



11 to 13 April -House of Sciences Meeting under the theme of Water. The House of Sciences – Belmiro de Azevedo Foundation started a new Round of Meetings on topics of great scope in which multidisciplinary activities strategies are proposed to deepen the learning. The first meeting was held at Technology and Management Superior School - Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo and was dedicated to water, addressing issues such as climate change, groundwater and the challenges of consumption, among others.

Naturtejo Geopark promoted the workshop "Groundwaters: Invisible Geological Heritage?" boosted by the Geologist Joana Rodrigues, with two sessions, one dedicated to Biology and Geology teachers and the other to Physics and Chemistry teachers, both attended by 50 participants who explore the Hydrogeological Heritage of Naturtejo Geopark, for an Acqua Challenge, with waters from all over the country, in an approach transferable to each classroom.

The event also included a field trip to a Waste Water Treatment Station, Viana do Castelo Geopark, DS Smith Paper Viana in Deocriste, the School of Agriculture in Ponte de Lima, Peso Spas and the Alvarinho Wine House in Melaaco.

Joana Rodrigues also moderated a session dedicated to the presentation of scholar and institutional projects, with good practices in multidisciplinary in-depth treatment of the Water theme and supported the visit to Peso Spas, in Melgaço.



14 April - Thematic Walking trail Rosa-Albardeira in Toulões. Toulões hosted the 5th edition of the Thematic Walking trail Rosa-Albardeira, promoted by the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova and the village of Toulões, with the collaboration of Naturtejo Geopark, UNESCO Global Geopark.

This walk started in the centre of the village, in the Parish and through 16km by the streets of Toulões, country lanes and trails in Murracha Mountain, where wild populations of Rosa-Albardeira (Paeonia broteri) grow in their natural habitat, under specific conditions of sun exposure, humidity, temperature and substrate. This time of year, in which the landscape shows its spring colours, but for a short period of time, the Rosa-Albardeira lies in its splendour, with magnificent intense pink flowers.

The trail was attended by 160 participants, among them a big group of Spanish hikers, and was supported by Carlos Pinto Gomes, specialist in Landscape and Environment from Évora University, and Mariana Machado, landscape architect, for the interpretation of the biophysical context the region.

This thematic visit also aimed to raise awareness to the fragility of this endemic species of the region, educating for the need of conservation and warning to not collect bulbs or seeds of the plant, which suppress new Rosas-Albardeiras to born.

It is worth to remind that Toulões is the peony village in Portugal, the result of a partnership with Lorsch "Peony City" World Heritage, in Germany, and with Mount Lushan, China also "Peony City" and a World Heritage Site, with the main purpose to appreciate the Rosa-Albardeira associated with its preservation.

18 to 21 April – Holy Week always in high demand in the Geopark for Spanish Tour Operators. The Spanish Tour Operator Arawak held another programme through Naturtejo Geopark for 52 people guided by Francisco Paula. The group walked through the Fossils Trail in Penha Garcia; visited Cargaleiro Museum and the Garden of the Episcopal Palace in Castelo Branco; held a Boat Trip in Vila Velha de Ródão; visit the Olive Oil Centre in Proença-a-Velha and the Historical Village of Monsanto.

18 to 21 April - Tierra de Fuego in Naturtejo Geopark. Jorge Costa accompanied a group of 22 Spanish Tourists who walked through the Vultures Trail, Balconies Trail; Fossils Trail and the Boulders Trail in Monsanto, walking down the Inselberg through the trails to Idanha-a-Velha.



18 to 21 April – Spanish Tour Operator Geographica visits Naturtejo Geopark. Naturtejo Geopark hosted 30 Spanish tourists to visit Monsanto and Idanha-a-Velha and also a Bout Trip in Vila Velha de Ródão. The group was accompanied by José Antunes.

18 to 21 April – Holly Week in the Geopark. A group of 10 people coming from Malpartida de Cáceres enjoyed the Easter weekend to discover Naturtejo Geopark and were accommodated in Geo-Refúgio Casa do Forno in Salvaterra do Extremo.

25 April – Spanish Tour Operator Bayern Travel visit Castelo Branco. A group of 33 Spanish tourists travelled from Madrid to Naturtejo Geopark to discover Castelo Branco. This visit was guided by the local Association "A Nossa Beira".



27 April – Travel With Life. The Music Academy of Coimbra held their Annual Students Trip, the 4th Travel With Life, for a two days trip with music, discovering nature, culture and heritage in Oleiros. The visit included the geosite Mosqueiro Viewpoint, where visitors understood the landscape in Oleiros Mountains, the International Appalachian Trail and traces of ancient life, preserved in the rocks of Muradal Mountain, guided by the Geologist Joana Rodrigues.



28 April – Closing talks of the 800 Years Celebration of Proença-a-Velha. Once again the Mercy Church of Proença-a-Velha hosted the last journeys of the celebration of 800 years of the Charter of Proença-a-Velha. These journeys were dedicated to local history and the researcher João Caninas presented the inventory of the archaeological heritage of the parish of Proença-a-Velha. This inventory results from a joint work with the staff of Naturtejo Geopark and included photogrammetric surveys and geo-radar to locate the old medieval castle. The event ended with the choir of the University of Salamanca, which also celebrates its 800 years, in lively relationship with a local women adufe-players group. This project, coordinated by Dr João Adolfo Geraldes, will result in the publication of an extensive literary work which will bring together all existing knowledge on this historic land. The parish of Proença-a-Velha and the Proençal Association, supported by the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, are the entities responsible for inviting various experts of the most diverse areas of knowledge who will see their contribution to the recognition of this parish in its multiple dimensions to be published later this summer.



IMPACT OF GEOPARK IN MEDIA

Newspapers & www

April (Raiano) - Cross-border heritage Interpretation Journeys

16 April (Diário Digital de Castelo Branco) – 5th Walking trail Rosa-Albardeira with 160 participants was a big success

17 April (Povo da Beira) – Toulões hosted the Walking Trail Rosa Albardeira 18 April(Reconquista) – Walking Trail in Toulões was a success – Rosa Albardeira with 160 participants

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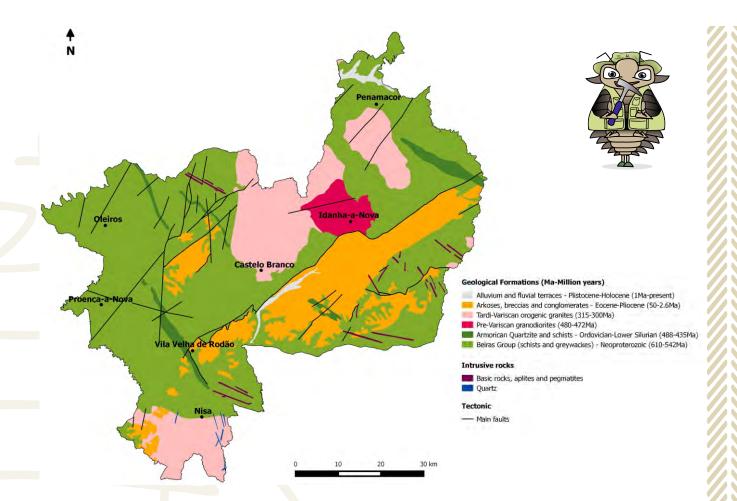
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Geoparks: Geology with human face

