
Reserva Natural do Sapal de Castro Marim e Vila Real de Santo António

ABOUT



After journeying around 850 km from its source in Spain, and just before flowing into the sea in Vila Real de Santo António, the River Guadiana winds its way through the plains, branching out into creeks and canals that flow into lakes, marshland and salt pans, that provide a habitat to a wide variety of species.

This humid zone, known as the Marshland Nature Reserve of Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António, was the third zone to be declared a Nature Reserve in Portugal and is a privileged site for the reproduction of fishes, crustaceans and shellfish, who find shelter here in order to grow before they venture forth into the sea. It is possible to see birds throughout the year, such as the white stork, flamingo and the black-winged stilt that is the most common species in the zone and was therefore chosen as the symbol of the Nature Reserve.

If visitors follow the itinerary proposed by the Interpretation Centre they will discover a different Algarve, far from the hustle and bustle of the beaches, where the silence is only disturbed by bird cries. On foot or by bicycle, the trails lead us to the salt pans that occupy around one third of the protected area, and which for many centuries constituted the main source of riches in the region. Salt continues to be produced in many of the salt pans, in accordance with artisanal processes, delivering a product whose quality is certified by the Nature Reserve.

In drier zones, agriculture is the main activity, including typical trees from the Algarve such as the carob-shrub, fig tree and almond tree that provide the ingredients for delicious regional desserts such as D. Rodrigo and Morgado.

In order to round off the trip, visit the castle in Castro Marim, that offers a fresh perspective on the Nature Reserve, and the town of Vila Real de Santo António, that was built in the 18th century on the basis of a meticulous and innovative urban plan.

Contacts

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<http://www.natural.pt/portal/pt/AreaProtegida/Item/23>

<http://www.natural.pt/portal/en/AreaProtegida/Item/23>

Characteristics and Services

Signposted routes

Park area: 2.089 ha.

Altitude: Máx - 50m; min - 0m

Accommodation facilities available
