



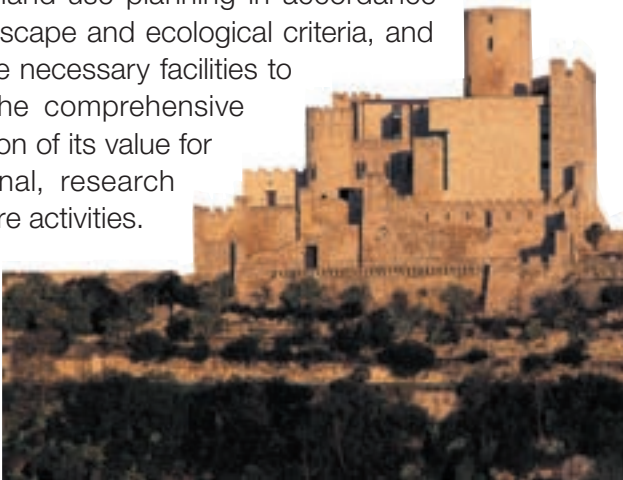
Kim Castells

## El Foix Park

El Foix Park is the southernmost of the twelve areas that make up Barcelona Provincial Council's Natural Park Network. Located in the region of L'Alt Penedès, it covers an area of 2,900 hectares.

Among its most emblematic features are the Foix Reservoir, which offers a great variety of ecological environments with high levels of biodiversity, and singular historical and architectural heritage.

El Foix Park is managed by the El Foix Park Consortium, which comprises Barcelona Provincial Council and the town councils of Castellet i la Gornal and Santa Margarida i els Monjos. The Special Plan for the Foix Reservoir, approved on 28 July 1993, guarantees the preservation of the Park's natural and cultural values and serves to regulate its use, implement land-use planning in accordance with landscape and ecological criteria, and define the necessary facilities to ensure the comprehensive exploitation of its value for educational, research and leisure activities.



Kim Castells

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## Natural Park Network

**B**arcelona Provincial Council's Natural Park Network consists of 12 natural areas of significant landscape, environmental and cultural value.

**T**he Network guarantees the territorial and environmental balance of the 100 towns within its geographical area.

**I**t covers an area of 101,576 hectares, which represents 22% of the territory in which 70% of the population of Catalonia lives.

**I**t plans and manages natural and agricultural areas through special plans drawn up with the participation of all of the stakeholders.

**I**t protects the natural, agricultural, forestry, cultural and landscape values of each park.

**I**t works towards a balance between the preservation of the parks and the economic development of the area.

**I**t encourages the public use of natural heritage.



### Natural Park Network

101,576 hectares of protected nature areas



Diputació  
Barcelona

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Diputació  
Barcelona



Parc del Foix

English



The Parc del Foix Consortium consists of:  
Barcelona Provincial Council, Santa Margarida i els Monjos Town Council  
and Castellet i la Gornal Town Council.

### Natural Park Network

Castell de Montesquiu Park, Les Guilleries-Savassona Natural Area, El Montseny Natural Park, Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac Natural Park, El Montnegre i el Corredor Park, Serralada Litoral Park, Serralada de Marina Park, Serra de Collserola Natural Park, El Baix Llobregat Agrarian Park, El Garraf Park, Olèrdola Park, El Foix Park.





## The Terrain

The Foix Reservoir, which holds water from the river of the same name, is in the southernmost part of the El Penedès depression, a flat area running northeast–southwest between the Catalan Serralada Prelitoral and Serralada Litoral mountain ranges and into the sea at its southernmost point. Geologically speaking, this valley is filled with Miocenic sedimentary materials in layers up to 500 metres thick.

The reservoir’s mountainous shores are made up of rocky formations that resemble their close neighbour, the Garraf Massif. Consisting mostly of calcarious rock, it generates a peculiar landscape, karst, characterised by the presence of caves.



Siqui Sánchez

## Oak and Pine Forests

El Foix Park contains very different ecological environments. Holm oak grows in very specific areas and is often mixed with pine in the shadier and damper areas of the park, while Aleppo pine dominate the drier, sunnier areas. It is here that we find European fan palm and other shrubs, such as the mastic tree, kermes oak, strawberry tree, Italian buckthorn, box, Mediterranean heath, rock rose and butcher’s broom, and aromatic plants such as rosemary and thyme.

## Riverside Environments

The environments found along the river, the affluent streams and, especially, around the reservoir, are of particular interest in the context of a dry region with scarce rainfall.

Along the Foix River and some streams, such as the Marmellar and the Llitrà, and also in certain parts of the reservoir, we find examples of riparian vegetation consisting of black alder, ash, white poplar, elm, poplar and willow, and of undergrowth made up of hawthorn, *Coriaria myrtifolia*, blackberry, ivy and euphorbia.



Arxiu ASMM

Myrtle groves are a plant formation of great value, associated with the arroyos around the Foix Reservoir. Besides myrtle, there we find species such as European fan palm, mastic tree, rough bindweed and Mauritania grass.

## Crops

Crops, on the flat or on terraces, are one of most characteristic ecological environments in El Foix Park. These environments, between the strictly natural and man-made areas, play a fundamental role as shelter and food source for many animal species. Traditionally, these crops consist of vine and, to a lesser extent, fruit trees such as almond and olive and vegetables.

## Fauna

The diverse environments offered by El Foix Park are home to a great variety of fauna. The reservoir contains fish, such as the eel, the carp and the goldfish, and reptiles such as the Mediterranean turtle, the viperine snake and the grass snake. Birds are the largest group, however, with species such as the cormorant, the mallard, the shoveller, the teal, the coot, the moorhen, the grey heron, the little egret and the cattle egret, among many others. Other wet areas, such as ponds and puddles, are home to amphibians such as the fire salamander, the tree frog, the marsh frog and the common toad.



Inaki Relanzón

In the woodland live mammals such as the badger, the stone marten, the fox and the wild boar, along with birds such as the kestrel, the jay, tits and woodpigeons. In rocky areas we can find reptiles such as the ocellated lizard, the ladder snake and the Montpellier snake, along with birds of prey such as the Bonelli’s eagle. The caverns house cave-dwelling species such as bats, and in the areas most affected by human activity we can find the Moorish gecko and the barn owl.

## Cultural Heritage

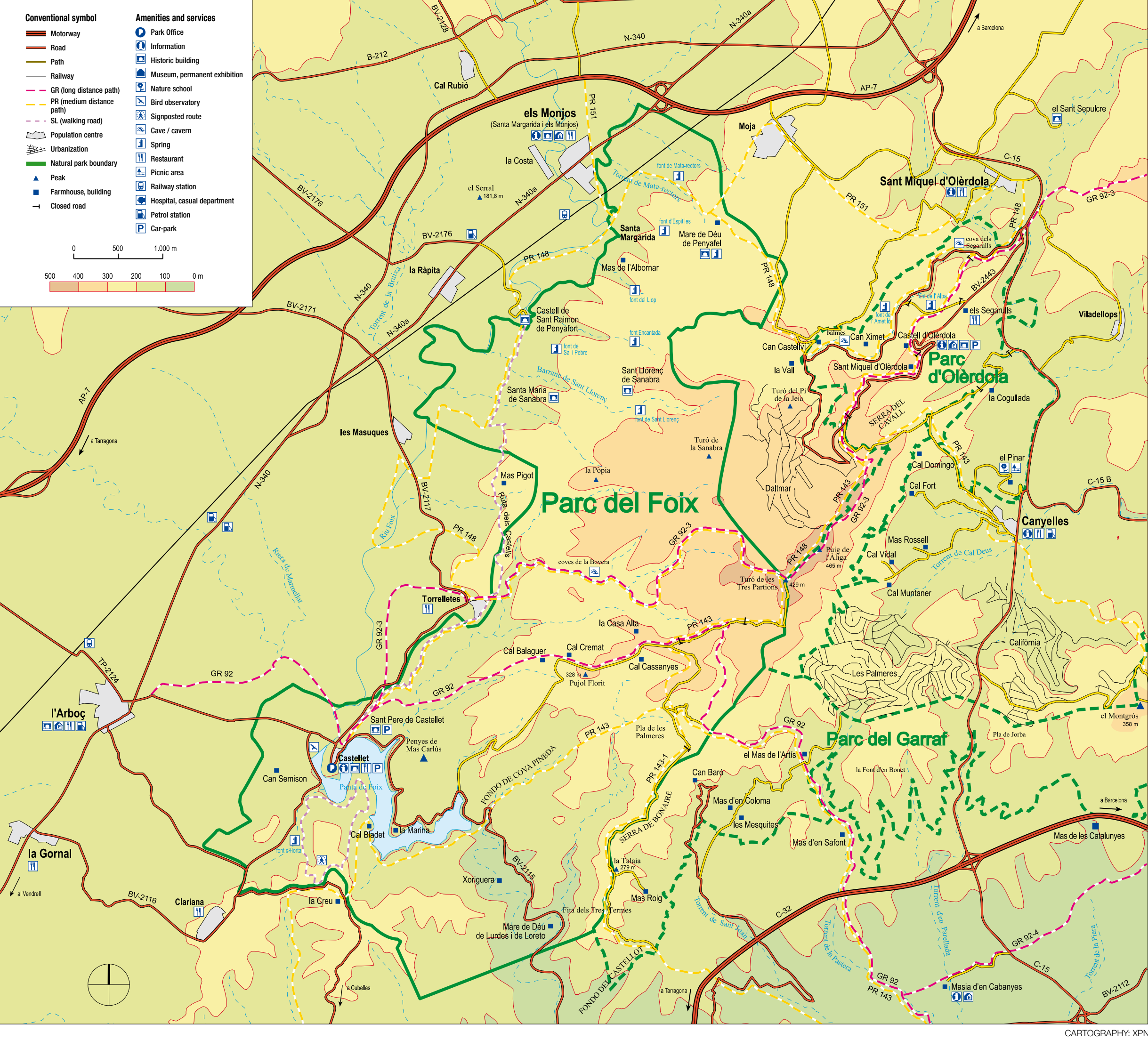
The Foix has played a significant role as a crossroads of civilisations. In the time of the Iberian-Romans it crossed the road from Tarraco to Barcino, and in the middle ages it marked the frontier between the Christians and the Moors. The castles of Penyafort and Castellet date from that time, when they were of great strategic value.

More recently, many farmhouses bear witness to a time in which the Mediterranean triad—oil, wheat and vine—was the pillar of the country’s agriculture. In turn, the cattle tracks, used for transhumance, mark the importance of livestock in the region.



Arxiu ANMF





## Places of Interest

The diversity of landscape in the El Foix Park and its rich cultural and architectural heritage means there is no end of interesting places to visit.

- **Castellet Castle.** A medieval monument mentioned in documents from the 10th century and linked to several noble families that have left their mark on it. It has undergone alterations on various occasions and was recently restored.
- **Penyafort Castle.** Originally built in the 12th century as a defence tower, it was the birthplace of Raimon de Penyafort, and has been altered over the years.
- **Churches and chapels.** The rich heritage of the area is evident in the number of chapels and churches found in the park, such as the Romanesque church of Sant Pere, and the chapels of Penyafel, La Sanabra and Sant Llorenç.
- **The Bovera caves.** Situated between the Bovera Valley and the Barquera Plain, this is a group of over 20 rock shelters of varying sizes. In one of the caves we can see two large holes excavated in the rock.
- **Mas Carlús crags.** Noteworthy examples of the limestone rocks found in the park, with several karst caves.
- **Sant Llorenç valley caves.** This is a group of karst caves located in a *fondo*, a local word for the deep valleys found round about.

- **Springs.** The park contains a large number of springs, which offer a cool backdrop to our walks. They are the Horta, Mas Carlús, Sant Llorenç, Les Espitlles, Mata-rectors, Mare de Déu de Penyafel, and Encantada springs.
- **Peaks.** Some peaks, such as Tres Partions Hill (435 m) and Àliga Peak (464 m), are strategic observation points from which to watch migrating birds of prey in the autumn.
- **The bird hide.** On the bank of the reservoir is the perfect spot from which to watch water birds.
- **The lime kilns.** A few lime kilns have been recovered which teach us about one of the most important crafts undertaken in the past in El Penedès.

## Trails

A number of long hiking trails crisscross El Foix Park; among them the **GR 92**, the **PR 148** and the **PR 143**.

The pleasant climate and singular landscape provide the ideal conditions for rambling and walking, which has led to the creation of several local paths and trails:

- **The Horta Spring Trail**
- **The Castles Trail: from Penyafort to Castellet**

## Access

### Motorways

- AP-7 Junction 30
- C-32 Junction 26
- C-31 as far as the BV-2115 to L'Arboç

### Roads

- N-340
- BV-2115
- BV-2116
- BV-2117

### Public transport

- Mainline trains–Renfe Line 4 (Sant Vicenç de Calders - Manresa) L'Arboç and Els Monjos stations
- Coach–Autocars del Penedès (Tarragona - Vilafranca del Penedès) Stops in L'Arboç and Els Monjos



## Park Amenities

**El Foix Park Office**  
Information Point  
Castell, 31. 08729 Castellet i la Gornal  
Tel. and fax: 977 670 169 · E-mail: p.foix@diba.cat

**Penyafort Castle Information Centre**  
08730 Santa Margarida i els Monjos  
Tel. 938 186 128 · E-mail: p.foix.penyafort@diba.cat

**Molí del Foix. History and Nature Interpretation Centre**  
Municipal facility. Information Point  
Farigola, 2-8. 08730 Santa Margarida i els Monjos  
Tel. and fax: 938 186 928  
E-mail: molidelfoix@elfoix.net · Web address: www.elfoix.net


**El Foix Park Documentation Centre**  
Santa Margarida i els Monjos Public Library  
Cadí, 2. 08730 Santa Margarida i els Monjos  
Tel.: 938 186 705 · E-mail: p.foix.cd@diba.cat


**Castellet i la Gornal Town Council**  
Rosselló, 19-23. 08729 Castellet i la Gornal  
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**Barcelona Provincial Council**  
**Department of Natural Spaces**  
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## Recommendations


 Respect agricultural, stockbreeding and forestry activities, as they provide the livelihood of many of the park's inhabitants.


 Use the network of signposted tracks and paths. Vehicles are not permitted except on public roads and tracks. Remember that the maximum speed is 30 km/h. Do not park in front of the chains preventing access to certain tracks.


 Enjoy the park while respecting the diversity of the natural and architectural heritage.


 Respect nature and the peacefulness of the park, particularly in breeding areas. Avoid making unnecessary noise.

 Hunting, fishing and tree felling activities are regulated by law.

 Abandoning pets is cruelty and is classed as a crime by the law.

 Remember that lighting fires is prohibited throughout the park.

 Do not leave litter. Use the bins and containers in the park or take it home.

 Wilderness camping is not permitted.