

# NATURAL MONUMENT OF THE ÓRGANOS DE MONTORO. ROCK FORMATIONS.

The Maestrazgo region straddles the Iberian mountain range and the Depresión del Ebro (Ebro river Valley). Due to its wild relief and picturesque scenery, it was worthy of the declaration of four Natural Monuments which are located within the Parque Cultural del Maestrazgo (Cultural Park of Maestrazgo) and Geoparque del Maestrazgo (Geopark of Maestrazgo).

The purpose of the declaration of these four natural monuments in the Maestrazgo region is to conserve some of the most singular and precious places of its territory and contribute to a sustainable development subject to its natural resources.

The Órganos de Montoro were declared a Natural Monument in 2010. With an area of 188 hectares, they partially occupy the townships of Villaluengo and Ejulve.

The Órganos de Montoro are a geological reference within the Maestrazgo region, and due to their incomparable beauty and accessibility, they are hugely popular in the region of Aragón.

The Órganos de Montoro are a limestone rock formation whose strata are almost vertical, and as a result of erosion, pipes similar to those of a musical organ have been formed.

The evolution of the Iberian mountain range is engraved on them: since the Secondary era when this area was totally covered by a deep sea, until the most recent touches of erosion, which still continues today.

The Guadalupe river has played a relevant role in this geomorphological formation. This river runs along the axis of a U-shaped, synclinal fold, which was formed during the Tertiary period. The central part of this fold contains soft materials which the river has washed away over the years, thus shaping a narrow valley.

However, both sides of the fold are composed of limestone rock. Rainwater has left trails along the weak parts of these rocks, like cracks for example, forming 'the organ pipes' as time has gone by.



## VEGETATION

The dominant vegetation in this area is typical of the mountains that range in height from 1,500m to 2,500m in Mediterranean regions; the kermes oak, the juniper, European black and Aleppo pines predominate in these regions. In addition, it is possible to find vegetation within fissures and cracks on the rock walls called rupicolous vegetation, with a high ecological value due to its endemic character.

## WILDLIFE

The fauna of the Órganos de Montoro is diverse and interesting. Undoubtedly, the presence of rupicolous birds (related to rock walls) stands out; there is a significant griffon vulture colony. Also, the Spanish wild goat finds the cliffs of Órganos de Montoro an optimum habitat to live in.



## CUEVA MUÑOZ

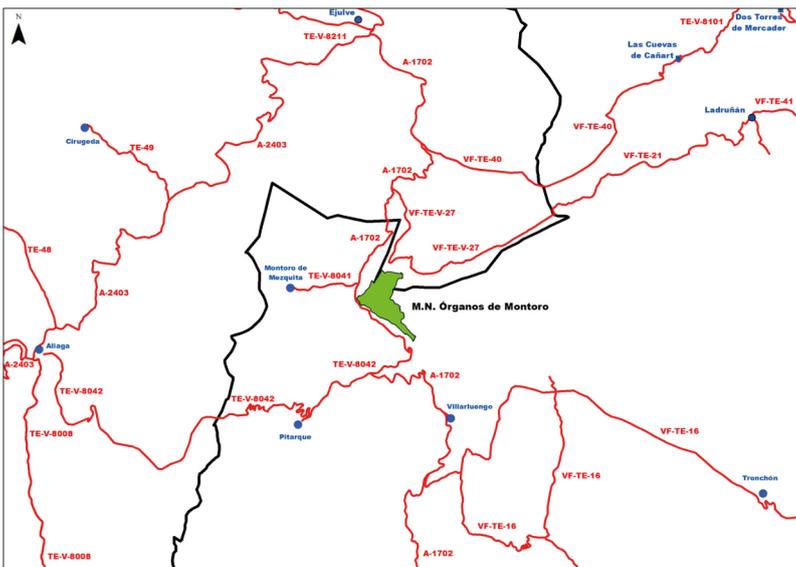
The Barranco de la Cueva Muñoz (Cueva Muñoz Ravine) lies on the eastern border of the Natural Monument of the Órganos de Montoro and it is mainly occupied by dense European black pine forests on the slopes and riverbank vegetation on its lower part. Along the ravine, there is an old path and some routes which were once used by the masoveros (term for people who live in masías, typical rural constructions common to this province and others).

From the top, the visitor may enjoy spectacular views of the ravine, the straits of the Guadalupe river, and the Garrucha and Carrascosa mountain chains.

The Ermitaño Cave is to be found at the halfway point of the ravine. It is a spectacular hole in the rock, used from time immemorial to build a home, farmyards, a bread oven, etc. It was inhabited until not so long ago.



Photos: Gobierno de Aragón y Comarca del Maestrazgo.



### INFORMATION OF INTEREST:

**The Barranco Cueva Muñoz trail (SL-TE 29)** starts at the *Masía de los Barrancos* (located at Ejulve village) and finishes at the end of the river Guadalupe ravine. The round trip is 6.4 kilometers.

### ADDRESSES OF INTEREST:

**Natural Monuments of Maestrazgo. Agriculture, Livestock and Environment Provincial Service of Teruel:** C/ San Francisco, 27 – Teruel, Spain. Telephone: +34 978 64 11 45.

**General Directorate of Natural Environment and Forest Management:** Plaza San Pedro Nolasco, 7 - 50071 Zaragoza, Spain. Telephone: +34 976 71 40 00

