

Flora



The flora of the Protected Landscape is very rich, with over 500 species some of which are endemic and many other are medicinal and aromatic.

Amongst the endemic species it is worth mentioning the Portuguese endemism *Narcissus calcicola* and the Dwarf Fan Palm (*Chamaerops humilis*) which is the only spontaneous Palm Tree in Europe and that is also used in handicraft products.

Of the medicinal species there is the St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and the Southern Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-verenise*). The aromatic species include the French Lavander (*Rosmarinus officinalis*).

It is also possible to see species like the Olive Tree (*Olea europea var. europea*), the Carob Tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*) and the Lusitanian Oak (*Quercus faginea*).



Narcissus calcicola



Dwarf Fan Palm
(*Chamaerops humilis*)



French Lavander
(*Lavandula stoechas*)

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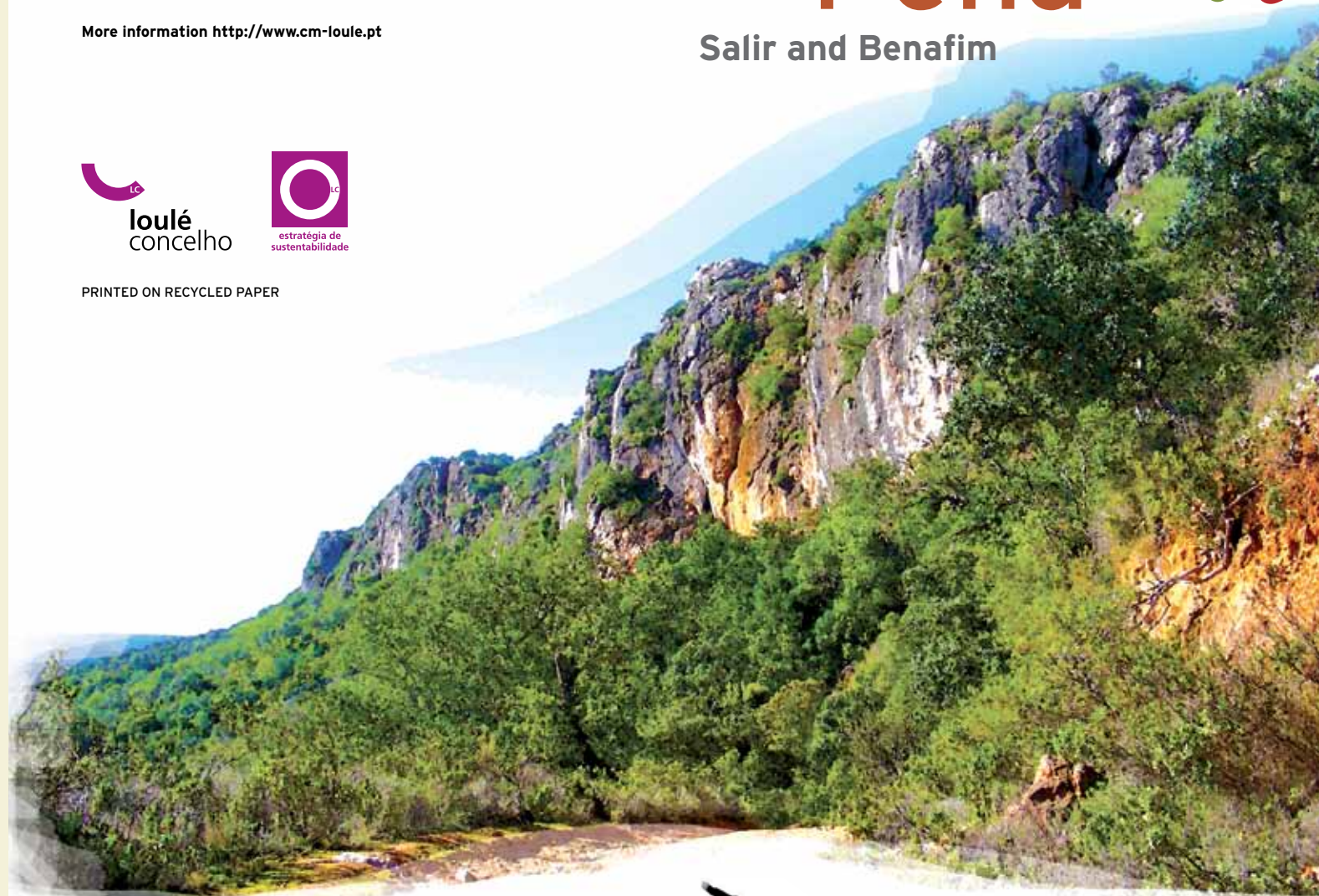


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PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

Rocha da Pena

Salir and Benafim



The Protected Landscape of Rocha da Pena

was created by the Law-Decree no. 142/2008 dated 24th July and is located within the parishes of Salir and Benafim.

This natural area was created, amongst other reasons to protect and preserve the physical, aesthetic, landscaping and biological patrimony of the Barrocal area, allowing a balanced and sustained form of economic, social and cultural development of the region.

Geology



Over the years the limestone rock of this geological formation has suffered a slow chemical erosion that in time has come to form fissures and caves. Rocha da Pena is a scarped cornice of very hard limestone rock with a 2 km long plateau and a rocky slope 50 m in height. The maximum altitude of this elevated area is 479 metres.





Fauna

Thanks to its magnificent geographical location, this natural area has a wealthy variety of birds, having already been observed approximately 124 species most of which are residents. However, it is also possible to find migratory, wintering, breeding and summer breeding species.

The resident species include the Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), recognised by its noisy call and the Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), bird of prey, fairly common throughout the whole of Europe and the important Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*), an endangered specie of which only exists one couple on Rocha da Pena.

The Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) and the Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*) are wintering birds. The summer breeding birds are the European Bee Eater (*Merops apiaster*) that digs a long tunnel in barriers to build its nest and the Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) that lays its eggs in other birds' nest so that these hatch them.

On Rocha da Pena it is also possible to find mammals such as the Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and the Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) and small predators like the Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), the Genet (*Genetta genetia*) and the Mongoose (*Herpestes ichneumon*). There are also two endangered bat species that can be seen in the area, Schreiber's Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*) and the Lesser Moused-Eared Bat (*Myotis blythi*).



European Bee Eater
(*Merops apiaster*)

Foto: Faisca



Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)



Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*)

Historical Heritage



Rocha da Pena has always had a great influence on the local history. On the Rocha da Pena's plateau there are two ancient stonewalls, that date back to the Iron Age and that were built for defence.

Later the Moors used these walls to defend the Rocha's plateau while they took shelter in a cave during the re-conquest of Portugal by the Christian King D. Afonso III, when D. Paio Peres Correia captured the castle of Salir. For this reason the cave where they hid is known as the 'Moor's Cavern'.

The villages surrounding Rocha da Pena are also rich in historical heritage. More specifically in the village of Penina there is an arched doorway and a chimney dated from 1827. In the Vale do Alamo it is possible to find various scoop-wheel wells in varied states of conservation.

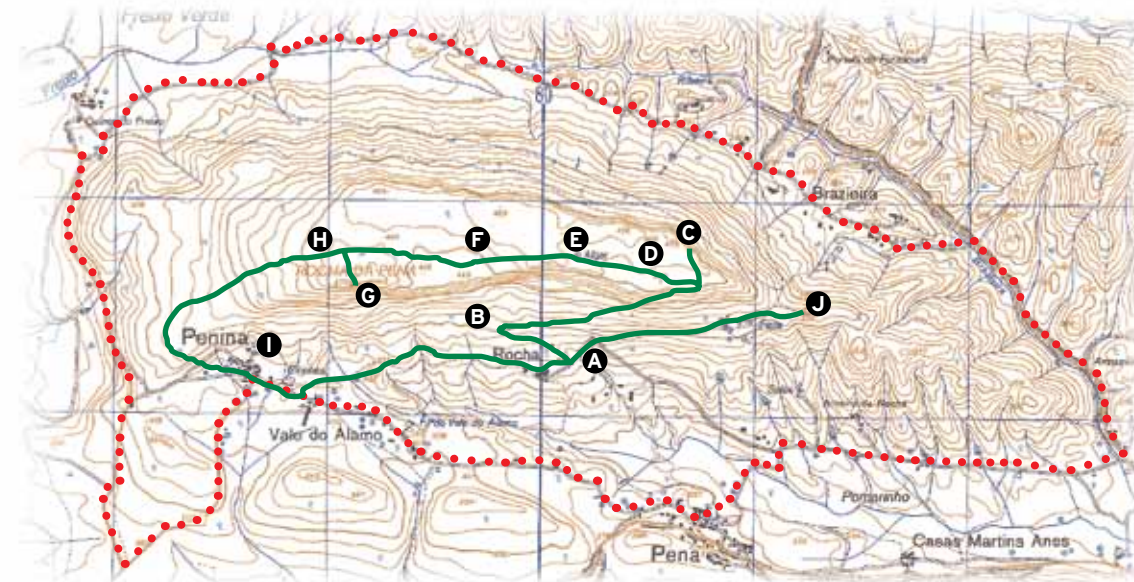
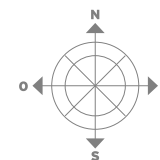
On the Eastern slope of Rocha da Pena you can see two windmills that are practically in ruins, known as the Windmills of Pena.



PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

Rocha da Pena

Salir and Benafim



Benafim

- A** Beginning of Trail
- B** Rocky Slope
- C** North Belvedere
- D** Flora
- E** Fauna
- F** Ancient Defensive Wall
- G** Geodesic Mark
- H** Ancient Defensive Wall

Salir

- I** Penina
- J** Wind Mills of Rocha
- Boundaries of the protected area

Pedestrian Trail
"Rocha da Pena" 4,7 Km



Regulamento das Paisagens Protegidas Locais da Rocha da Pena e da Fonte Benémola - Aviso nº 20717/2010, publicado no Diário da República, 2ª Série, nº 202, de 18 de Outubro de 2010.

