

*novepassos*   
NAS TERRAS DE TRÁS-OS-MONTES

**TTM**  TERRAS DE  
**TRÁS-OS-MONTES**



Bragança

EN



**Red deer**  
(*Cervus elaphus*)

**Protected area**  
Montesinho Natural Park

**Location**  
Rio de Onor, Bragança

# Carvalho Trail

Red deer watching is one of the greatest shows that Nature has to offer in Portugal. Nowadays, red deer is the largest land mammal regularly occurring in Portugal.

This unmistakable species is distinguished by its large-sized body, slender limbs, short tail and branching antlers, only in males, that renew themselves annually.

The Carvalho trail is located in the extreme northeast of the Montesinho Natural Park. This trail was specifically selected for its location, in one of the areas with the highest abundance of red deer in Portugal, increasing the probability of watching these majestic and elusive animals. For this purpose, an excellent viewpoint over the valley, where dozens of red deer often gather, was carefully chosen. This point allows visitors to watch these animals with minimal disturbance on red deer and other wild species.

This trail can be visited throughout the year, with good possibilities of red deer watching. Even so, the period between September and October, coinciding with the breeding season, or the rut, is the

most suitable period to observe them in the wild. The rut corresponds to the mating period, in which many animals gather in groups, and stags signal their presence through strong roars. At that time, especially at sunrise and sunset, the probability of seeing and hearing animals of this species is higher.

The presence of a remarkable tree, a hundred-year-old Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*), is also noteworthy in this trail, which is named after it (*port.*: carvalho-negral).

The trail has a circular layout. To observe red deer, it is suggested that the trail starts on the right bank, following an anti-clockwise direction.



# Fauna

Besides red deer, this trail is also characterized by crossing a multiplicity of biotopes, used by several animal species.

Altogether, the Onor river and its riparian gallery, hay meadows, shrublands and thickets, small patches of native forests and farming areas, are places of refuge, feeding and reproduction for more than 150 species of vertebrate animals. These species include amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds, many of them endangered and rare in the *Trás-os-Montes* region and/or in the rest of the country.



Among the wildlife species that can be observed along the trail are some uncommon and protected species in Portugal. The Iberian painted frog (*Discoglossus galganoi*) and the Iberian emerald lizard (*Lacerta schreiberi*) are often seen in hay meadows and in areas around the river. Several birds, equally rare, frequently appear on higher areas, taking advantage of the local biotope mosaic, such as the European nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), the great spotted cuckoo (*Clamator glandarius*) and the European honey-buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*).

Very difficult to see, the presence of the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*) and the wild cat (*Felis silvestris*), two highly endangered species, can be confirmed along the trail by their characteristic tracks and signs.

More common, and therefore often easier to observe along the trail, are some species of birds, such as the European stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*), the western Bonelli's warbler (*Phylloscopus bonelli*) and the robin (*Erithacus rubecula*). The Iberian frog (*Rana iberica*), a common species in the area, can be easily spotted by the river.

- *Discoglossus galganoi*, *Rana iberica* and *Lacerta schreiberi* are all Iberian endemic species

- The Portuguese Iberian wolf population is estimated to have around 300 animals

**IBERIAN WOLF**  
(*Canis lupus signatus*)

**IBERIAN EMERALD LIZARD**  
(*Lacerta schreiberi*)





# Flora and vegetation



The Carvalho trail has an extraordinarily diverse flora and vegetation. Along the Onor river, the woodlands are dominated by native trees, specially the alder.

The places between the woodlands and the hay meadows are filled with tall grasses, some particularly beautiful, such as the columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris* subsp. *dichroa*) and the alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*). The wettest hay meadows are dominated by plants like the common rush (*Juncus effusus*). The driest ones are usually occupied by bulbous oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius* subsp. *bulbosum*) and several other species, like lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*). The flowers of this plant have been, and still are, used to curdle milk on 'artisan' production of cheese.

Along the trail, on the slopes, it is possible to see grass sward covered by a twisted leaf grass that only grows in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, *Festuca elegans*

subsp. *merino*. Those meadows are also the place where you can see *Phalacrocarpum oppositifolium* subsp. *hoffmannseggii*, an oxeye daisy endemic from northeast *Trás-os-Montes*. Further from the river, the wide areas are dominated by rockrose shrubs like gum rockrose or prickled broom, and by small holm oak woodlands, that grow mainly in dry areas with a steep slope.

Near the middle, the trail makes a small detour where you can see an interesting patch of oak woodland, with a remarkable specimen of Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*).

Among the numerous species of plants on this trail, one stands out: *Linaria intricata*. Is very rare and, in Portugal, is restricted to the north-east of *Trás-os-Montes*.



• Hay meadows are protected by European and Portuguese legislation and are very rich in biodiversity

• This trail was named as Carvalho trail (oak trail) after the remarkable Pyrenean oak tree. That tree was classified in 2012 as a Public Interest Tree

## HAY MEADOWS

*AQUILEGIA VULGARIS* SUBSP. *DICHROA*

# Geology

The Carvalho trail contains numerous geological curiosities that are manifest in the presence of various rocky massifs and on signs of remarkable events in natural history.

There is a 'photographic postcard' of mountains and countryside, where a long schist plain that turned the Onor river stands out, whose outline has a meandering pattern.

There are several points with a privileged view to the valley, from where you can see quartzite outcrops on slopes, usually lighter and more prominent than other rocks.

Local geological faults define the main alignments of valleys and steep areas, such as a quartzite escarpment (fault mirror) located just before the stream crossing.

In this crossing and surrounding areas, phyllites and meta-sediments of glacial origin can be observed. These rocks present lithic fragments, some of them large.

On roadsides, upstream, there are important geological contacts between haematitic schist and clay.

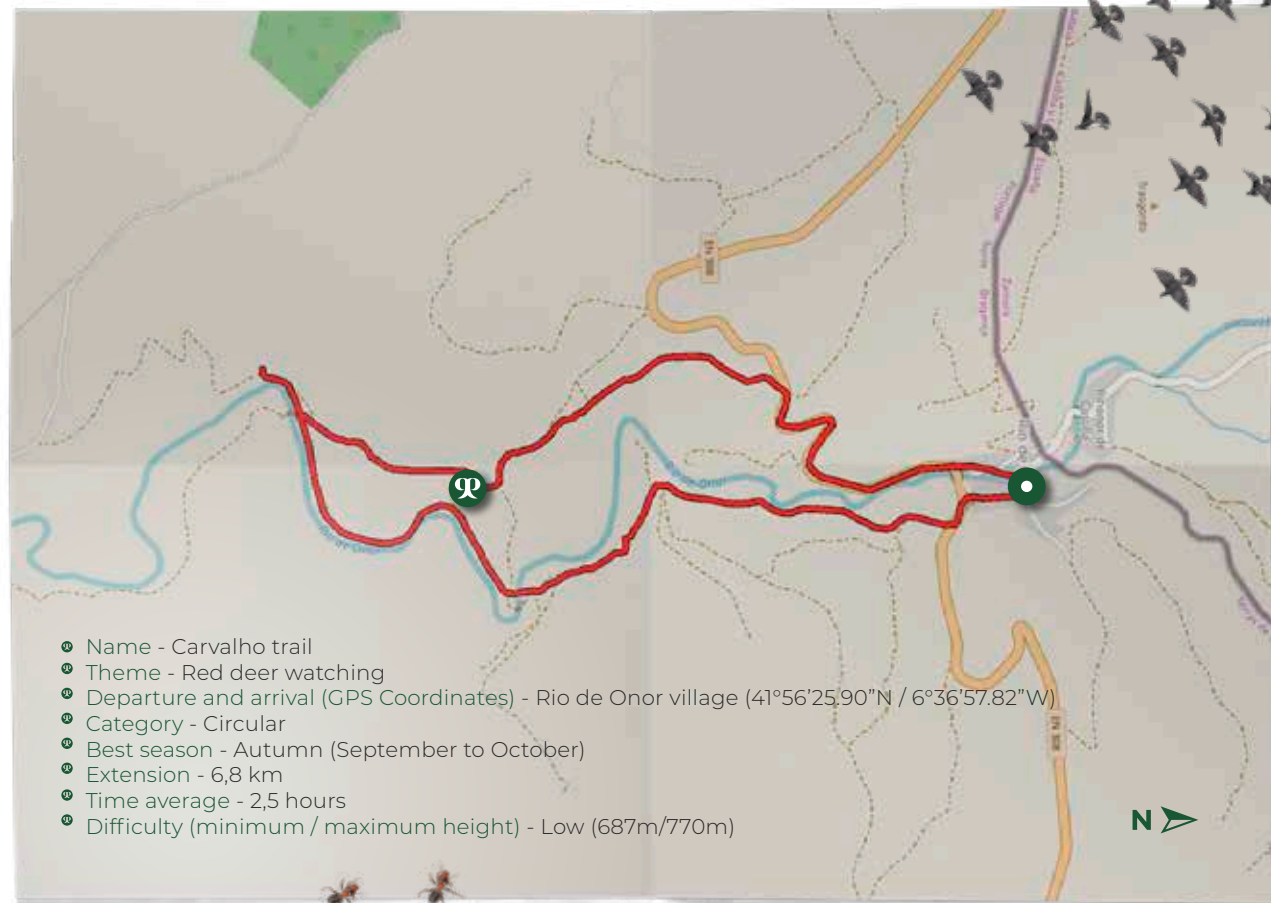


• Along the way, several types of rocks can be observed, with schist and quartzite both standing out

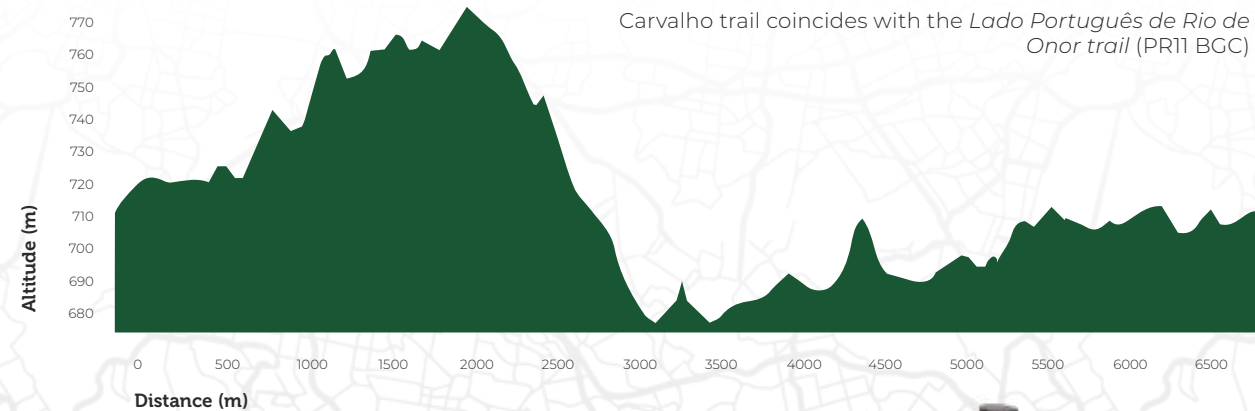
• This trail contains geological and geomorphological traces revealing ancient glaciations that occurred on Planet Earth

QUARTZITE ESCARPMENT MIRROR OF GEOLOGICAL FAULT

PROMINENT GEOLOGICAL CONTACT BETWEEN SLOPE DEPOSITS (CLAY) AND HAEMATITIC SCHIST



Start Observation point



#### Useful contact numbers

- Town council (+351) 273 304 200
- Tourist office (+351) 273 240 020 / 273 381 273
- Fire brigade (+351) 273 300 210
- GNR (National Republican Guard) (+351) 273 300 570
- Forest protection (+351) 117
- SOS (+351) 112

#### Attention

- Follow only the marked routes
- Avoid noise and attitudes that disturb local peace
- Do not disturb animals, observe them from a distance
- Do not collect plants, animals, rocks or artifacts
- Do not light a fire
- Do not litter; please use the containers provided





In the Portuguese and European contexts, *Terras de Trás-os-Montes* (Lands of Trás-os-Montes) present a unique natural value, with extraordinary ecological and ecotourist potential, still unknown. It is a region with countless protected areas, rare species and incredible natural events.

The *Nove Passos* (nine steps) project aims to unveil this incredible natural heritage; while promoting the conservation of the region's main natural values, through the dissemination of 9 trails.

We thus suggest a complete adventure, carried out in 9 steps, one per municipality, all within the most important protected areas for Nature Conservation in Portugal.

In each step, we suggest a carefully selected trail to explore specific natural themes, which, represent the natural areas where they are inserted.

The Carvalho trail is one of the suggested natural steps. Come and meet them all and stamp your natural passport.



Visit these 9 themes of biodiversity, geology and landscape and become an expert in the *Lands of Trás-os-Montes*.

## 📍 **Carvalho trail** Red deer - Bragança

Next steps

- 📍 **Sabor trail**  
Sabor lakes - Alfândega da fé
- 📍 **Quercus trail**  
Birds at the Azibo reservoir - Macedo de Cavaleiros
- 📍 **São João das Arribas trail**  
Vultures - Miranda do Douro
- 📍 **Vale de Lobo trail**  
Cork oak and prickly juniper woodlands - Mirandela
- 📍 **Cascata da Faia da Água Alta trail**  
Cascata da Faia da Água Alta - Mogadouro
- 📍 **Vilarinho das Azenhas to Ribeirinha trail**  
River Tua riparian gallery - Vila Flor
- 📍 **Castelo de Algosó trail**  
The Angueira river fauna - Vimioso
- 📍 **Biospots (Alto da Ciradilha) trail**  
Butterflies and other invertebrates - Vinhais





9passos.cim-ttm.pt

TERRAS DE **TTM**  
**TRÁS-OS-MONTES**

CIM-TTM  
Comunidade Intermunicipal  
das Terras de Trás-os-Montes

Rua Visconde da Bouça, AP 238  
5300-318 Bragança - PORTUGAL  
T. +351 273 327 680

[www.cim-ttm.pt](http://www.cim-ttm.pt)  
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