

THE NATURE OF BRAŞOV

discover the county's protected areas

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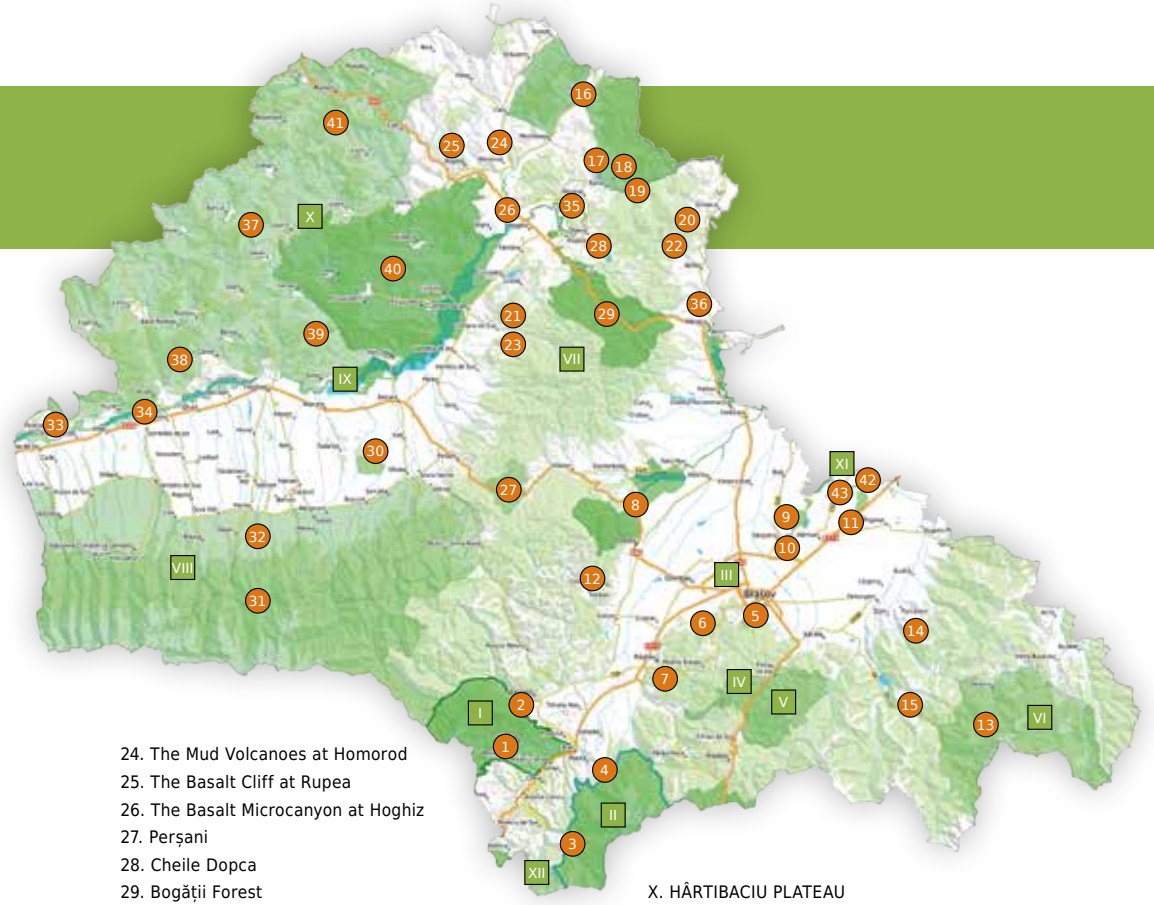

INTRODUCTION

The adjacent map and the list below include all protected areas in Brașov County, grouped by region, as shown in the album. You can use the links to navigate through the album pages.

Brașov County, located in the heart of Romania, is enthralling with its diversity of places, landscapes and natural values. You can visit here ancient oak forests at Racoș or in Hârtibaciului Plateau, you can admire the Carpathian Delta at Dumbrăvița, where more than 20,000 birds stop, and you can hike through the beautiful gorges at Dopca or Prăpăstiile Zărneștiului.

Mountains are also present all over, and you have a choice of no less than seven spectacular massifs for hiking: Bucegi, Piatra Craiului, Ciucaș, Perșani, Făgăraș, Piatra Mare or Postăvarul.

Let's discover together Brașov's nature!



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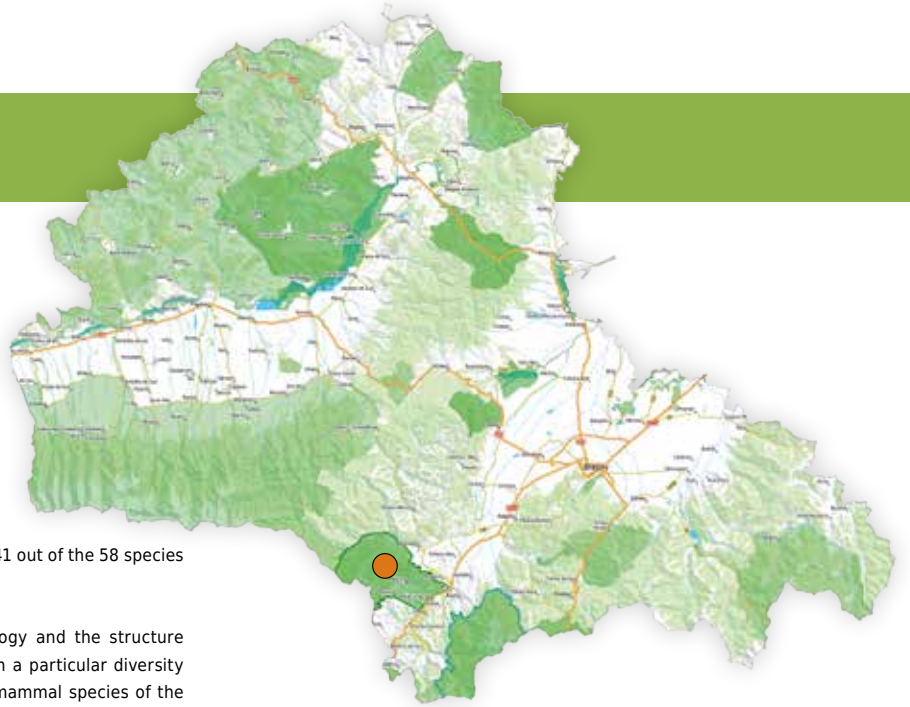


PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK

This massif belongs to the Bucegi - Leaota - Piatra Craiului mountain group. Its calcareous ridge is about 25 km long and has a NE-SW direction, perpendicular to the general direction of Southern Carpathians.

PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK

The garden pink of Piatra Craiului (Dianthus callizonus) is a living symbol of this mountain, the only place on earth where it can be found. We can admire it on the grassy, sunny cliffs in the lower alpine area or at the upper limit of alpine meadows; with its pink colour one cannot help noticing it in summer months.



The natural rocky fortress of Piatra Craiului Mountain is unique among Romania's mountains. Its peculiar landscape consists of a solitary ridge, about 25 km long and more than 2000 m high. La Om Peak (also called Piscul Baciului) is the highest - 2238 m.

A thorough look at the massif reveals a rich variety of landforms and sizes: cliffs, needles, pyramids, edges, towers, belts and horns. The large number of valleys, screes, natural arches and alpine plains complete this visual show, together with very spectacular scarps.

1170 plant species live here, almost 30% of the plants found in the country, of which 181 are protected species. Here are just some of the most well-known: garden pink of Piatra Craiului, yew, angelica, rosy vanilla orchid, alpine poppy, toad flax, edelweiss, wild gladiole, globe-flower and rhododendron. Piatra Craiului hosts an impressive number of mountain orchid species: 41 out of the 58 species present in Romania.

The climate and geological conditions, the geomorphology and the structure of flora and vegetation in Piatra Craiului helped maintain a particular diversity of mammals. More than 40% of the approximately 100 mammal species of the country's overall fauna live in Piatra Craiului.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	National Park and Natura 2000 site
NAME	ROSCI0194 Piatra Craiului
AREA	14 766 ha
E-MAIL	office@pcrai.ro
WEBWEBSITE	www.pcrai.ro













BATS CAVE (PEȘTERA LILIECILOR)

Bats Cave is located on Bran plateau at 950 m elevation. Also known as Peștera Mare or Peștera Bădichii, its first documentary evidence dates back to centuries ago, with the first archaeological works undertaken in 1957-1958. The cave is populated with bat colonies, including rare species, carefully monitored by specialists.

The cave entrance is a narrow pathway followed by a vault with an upward floor and a gallery. Inside the cave you can admire Jurassic limestone formations generated along centuries, including the so called “tears of the earth”. A muddy brook flows through the galleries and goes deep into the cave.





PRĂPĂSTIILE ZĂRNEŞTIULUI GORGES

The gorges are located in the N-E area of the massif and can be reached from Zărneşti on the forest road near Gura Râului chalet. They are about 3.5 km long with 100-200 m high escarpments that cradle the valley, which are highly attractive for mountain climbers.

Our recommendations:

- The trail along Piatra Craiului ridge, recommended only to experienced tourists;
- Watching wallcreepers in Zărnești Gorges and chamois in high crest areas;
- A sunrise in the villages at the mountain base: Măgura, Peștera, Șirnea, to admire the ridge in full splendour;
- Admiring mountain flowers, such as Piatra Craiului garden pink, edelweiss or the large number of orchid species, such as rosy vanilla orchid and lady's slipper;
- Hiking to Cerdacul Stanciului arch and Marele Grohotiș scree.



“I must admit that one of the reasons why I moved to Brașov was the nature surrounding the city and the seven mountain massifs around. Whether you go hiking to Postăvaru or Piatra Mare or you venture on Piatra Craiului ridge, you get lost on Bucegi plateau or among the cliffs in Ciucaș or you admire the forests and geology of Perșani or the spectacular landscape in Făgăraș, as a mountaineer you cannot wish for anything more. Not to mention photography - Brașov county is the ideal place for anyone keen about nature.”

Dan Dinu, photographer







Chamois are easy to notice in Piatra Craiului, as they have become friendlier and less fearful here lately, following the conservation efforts made for this species. One often has the chance to admire these very special animals when hiking on Piatra Craiului ridge.



The landscapes developing before your eyes when you're on the ridge are spectacular, particularly if you spend the night at the alpine shelters and enjoy a sunset or sunrise. Although it may often be quite difficult to reach the crest, it will certainly be worth all the effort.

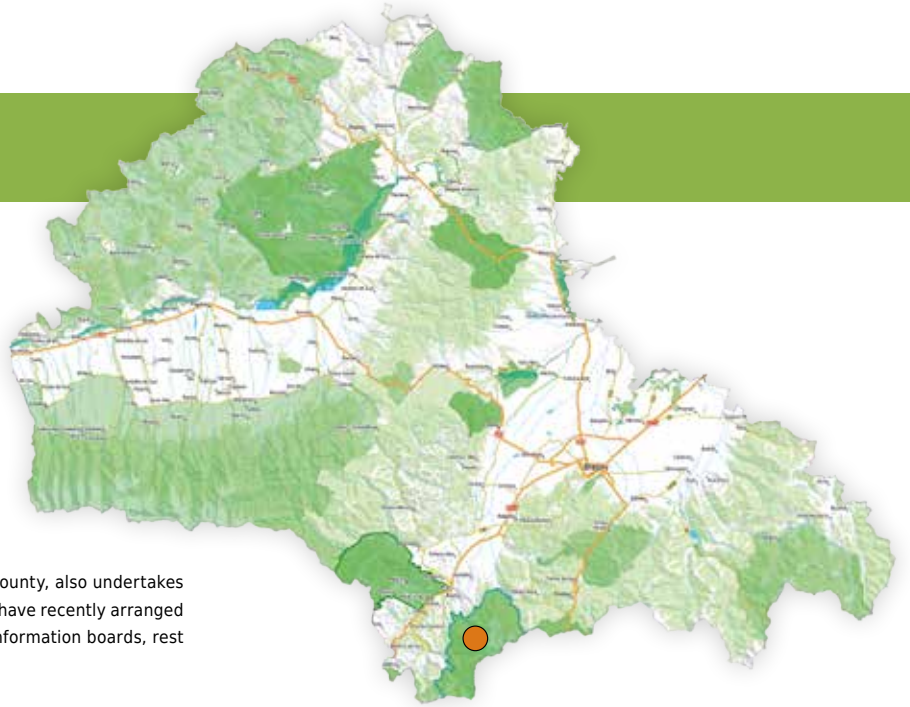


BUCEGI NATURAL PARK

Bucegi massif, perhaps one of the best known mountains in the country, dominates the landscape around it, whether you contemplate it from Prahova Valley or from Rucăr - Bran corridor.

BUCEGI NATURAL PARK

Probably the most spectacular mountain view in Romania is the view of Bucegi seen from Prahova Valley. Massive and solid, with giddy escarpments supporting a huge alpine plateau, these mountains are considered the cradle of Romanian mountain tourism.



Although nature protection intentions in Bucegi Mountains date back before the second world war, Bucegi Natural Park was legally designated only in 2000, with its own administration being established three years later. The park covers 32,497 ha and it also includes, in addition to Bucegi, other small areas of neighbouring massifs, such as Leaota. About 25% of the park's surface is covered by the 14 nature reserves that enjoy high level protection; the largest one is the escarpment towards Prahova Valley (Abruptul Prahovean), with about 3,500 ha.

The strict protection areas include 46 natural monuments (waterfalls, springs, caves, pit caves, gorges, towers, cliffs, arches, rocks, horns, corries and fossiliferous sites), most of them with geomorphological significance.

The park administration located in Moroieni, Dâmboviţa county, also undertakes promotional and environmental education activities; they have recently arranged 7 thematic trails in the most attractive park areas, with information boards, rest places and small wooden bridges.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Natural Park and Natura 2000 site
NAME	ROSCI0013 Bucegi
AREA	32 497 ha
E-MAIL	bucegipark@gmail.com
WEBSITE	www.bucegipark.ro







THE FOSSILIFEROUS SITE AT VAMA STRUNGA

Strunga Pass is on the main tourist trail connecting Ialomița Valley (Padina Chalet) and Bran (Șimon). The landscape here is extremely beautiful, you can admire Piatra Craiului mountain ridge from above, the peaks connecting Bucegi to Leaota, Bran and Brașov regions.

Vama Strunga Fossiliferous Site lies near Strunga Pass, below Strungile Mici mountain; it is a scientific reserve at 1950 m elevation, which protects a sequence of 40-50 m thick rocks. These limestones host one of the most important associations of marine fauna from the Middle Jurassic in Romania, comprising over 150 species.





BUCȘOIU - MĂLĂEȘTI - GAURA ESCARPMENT

This protected area located in the north of Bucegi Mountains includes part of the west side of Bucșoiu Mare mountain, part of Mălăești Valley and the beginning of Gaura Valley.

The area stands out by its alpine landscape with rocky scarps and rock cliffs, specific to the well kept glacial relief.



Our recommendations:

- The rhododendron blossoming on Bucșa mountain at the end of June and the landscapes in Strunga Pass;
- The seven gorges along Ialomița River: Urșilor, Peșterii, Coteanu, Tătarului, Zănoaga Mică, Zănoaga Mare and Orzei Gorges;
- Bucegi Plateau with its specific stone forms, particularly Babele ("Old Women") and the Sphinx;
- Bucșoiu - Mălăești – Gaura escarpment, one of the wildest areas in the entire natural park;
- The trail from Caraiman Chalet to the Caraiman Cross and the ridge trail from Strunga Pass to Bătrâna Pass.







Ialomița forms no less than seven sections of gorges along its way through Bucegi Mountains. The wildest are the most upstream ones, Cheile Urșilor and Cheile Peșterii Gorges, where the river breaks its trail through dense vegetation and large stone blocks.



The rhododendron is a major attraction of this natural park around the middle of June. The most beautiful landscape is on Bucşa peak, which connects Bucegi to Leaota. You can also get there from Strunga Pass, located at the crossroads of several tourist trails crossing the area.



PROTECTED AREAS IN BRAȘOV REGION

Brașov, located in the centre of the country, is a privileged city surrounded by very easily accessible protected areas. It is the only city in the country with an exceptional natural reserve in the middle of the town, Tâmpa Mountain.

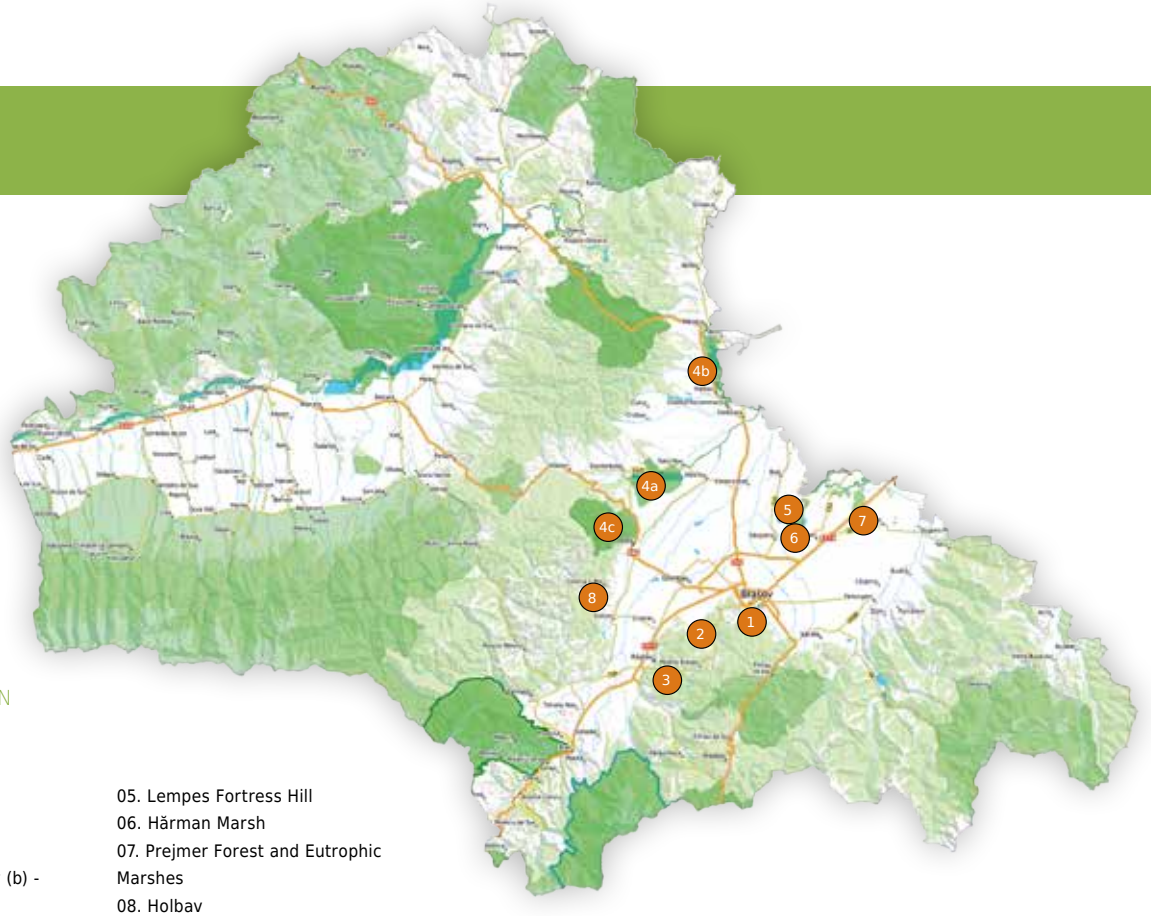
PROTECTED AREAS IN BRAȘOV REGION

Walking along the historical streets of Brașov you will enter a world of countless opportunities to know the local history, culture and traditions. At the same time you will walk through a city surrounded by nature, where people really honour this natural wealth they have.

Out of the 48 protected areas in Brașov county, 17 are in the close vicinity of the city, just a few steps away if we think of Tâmpa Mountain or a little more than one hour's walk if we want to climb on Postăvaru or Piatra Mare Mountains.

Bucegi Natural Park and Piatra Craiului are also close to the city, and so are other outstanding mountain or hilly areas such as Ciucaş, Măgura Codlei Hill or Lempeş Hill. You can even see rare bird species close to the city, such as the black storks at Dumbrăvița, you can visit Valea Cetăţii cave, or rediscover a well preserved village with fairy tale landscapes at Holbav.

Waters are populated with many fish species, while forests, comprising mainly beech, hornbeam and oak, are rich in mammal species. Rare flowers are also present around Brașov, and you can admire more than 975 butterfly species and 110 bird species just on Tâmpa Mountain.



PROTECTED AREAS IN BRAȘOV REGION

01. Tâmpa Mountain
02. Stejerișul Mare
03. Valea Cetăţii Cave
04. Dumbrăvița (a) - Rotbav (b) - Măgura Codlei (c)
05. Lempes Fortress Hill
06. Hărman Marsh
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08. Holbav










TÂMPA MOUNTAIN

Tâmpa Massif lies on the north-west side of the mountains forming the Curvature Carpathians, at their contact with Brașov Depression, as a linking step between the depression and the mountains. Despite its hilly-like elevations, Tâmpa is a mountain sub-division because it was formed and it evolved together with the mountains around, and its habitats are specific for mountains. Tâmpa is part of Postăvaru Massif and the reserve has an average elevation of 700 m and a maximum elevation of 955 m.

On Tâmpa you can find no less than 975 butterfly species, both daytime and nighttime, about one third of the total number of species in Romania, as well as more than 110 bird species, almost one third of the country's species.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Natural reserve and Natura 2000 site
NAME	ROSCI0120 Muntele Tâmpa
AREA	214 ha
E-MAIL	office@metropolabrasov.ro
WEBSITE	www.metropolabrasov.ro



It was designated as a site of European significance to protect five habitats of community interest, three fauna species and three flora species protected in Europe. The historical site Brașovia Fortress Ruins overlaps on 2.3 ha of the natural site. This fortress was used by local inhabitants in the 13th-14th c. as a refuge, similarly to Râșnov fortress.

More than 110 bird species were identified on a relatively small area - about one third of the total number of bird species in Romania - while mammals, including bear, lynx, wildcat, fox, marten or boar are also present in large numbers.

The main access point is Brașov city and you can go up on Tâmpa either by gondola lift or on four marked tourist trails. Another trail links Tâmpa Mountain to Postăvaru Massif, to which it belongs.





STEJERIȘUL MARE

This reserve, also known as Colții Corbului Mare, is a natural area located in the north-west part of Postăvarul Massif, south-west of Braşov, on Ştejerişul Mare Peak.

The reserve is of outstanding botanical significance and covers 16.30 ha. This is a mountain area with specific flora and fauna for the Curvature Carpathians mountain group. A calcareous geological formation, called Colții Corbului Mare, is located in the north part of the reserve, at 920 – 950 m elevation. This white-grey formation is of Jurassic age and is based on significant scree deposits.

The protected area hosts a wide vegetal variety with plenty of tree and grass species. Forests consist of beech and common oak species. Brush comprises mainly hazelnut trees, briar, hawthorn, cornel tree and elder. Grass species include rare species, such as woodland draba and European wild ginger





VALEA CETĂȚII CAVE

Valea Cetăţii Cave was designated natural protected area in order to protect and preserve some natural elements with ecological, scientific and landscape value and significance: geological phenomena and formations, fossiliferous deposits as well as other natural elements with a natural heritage value given by their uniqueness or rarity.

The cave is 958 m long. The limestone bank in which it was formed looks like a typical cone at the surface, clad in beech woods and rare larch specimens.

This natural protected area is 3.5 km away from Râşnov, 18 km from Braşov and 7 km from Poiana Braşov. It can be accessed from road DN1E Râşnov- Poiana Braşov. The path from the parking area to the cave is arranged as a trail and the visitable route inside the cave is arranged with duckboards, stairs and handrails. The cave may only be visited in the presence of a guide





Since 2010 the Great Hall of Valea Cetății Cave hosts concerts held by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Brașov. The cave's interesting acoustics and the unconventional natural setting turn these concerts into a memorable experience.





DUMBRĂVIȚA - ROTBAV - MĂGURA CODLEI

The reserve is located partly in Brașov and partly in Covasna counties, on the territories of the following localities: Dumbrăvița, Codlea, Holbav, Hălchiu, Feldioara, Măieruș, Belin, Hăghig. It is divided in three distinct areas and has a total surface of more than 4500 ha.

The protected area was designated to protect wild bird species, mainly those of community (European) interest, as it is one of key nesting and rest areas in this part of the country.



In migration periods, in spring and autumn, the total population of water birds at Dumbrăvița exceeds 20,000 specimens, being one of the most significant wetlands within the Carpathian range.

The main species are the nesting ones, such as: pygmy cormorant , Eurasian bittern, little bittern, purple heron, black-crowned night heron, squacco heron, little egret, great egret, ferruginous duck, western marsh harrier, little crake, corn crake, Ural owl, white-backed woodpecker, middle spotted woodpecker, black woodpecker, grey-headed woodpecker, collared flycatcher and red-breasted flycatcher. The most important species among the birds of passage, present in large numbers every year in the reserve, include: black stork, ruff, wood sandpiper and black tern. In addition to birds the protected area also hosts other animal species of community interest, such as beaver and otter.

The reserve also stands out by its diverse landscape, going from wetlands (fishponds, lakes, flowing water, marshes and reed plots) to hayfields, meadows and forests. The main access points are Dumbrăvița, Rotbav and Codlea localities.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Natural reserve, Ramsar Site and Natura 2000 site
NAME	ROSPA0037 Dumbrăvița - Rotbav - Măgura Codlei
AREA	4 500 ha
E-MAIL	dionescu@unitbv.ro
WEBSITE	www.dumbravita-natura2000.ro











The best time to visit the wetlands at Dumbrăvița and Rotbav is between April and July, when the nesting season starts and migration brings the widest variety of species. In August - September the area becomes an crucial resting point in the black storks' migration.



DEALUL CETĂȚII LEMPEȘ

This reserve at the east end of Braşov county covers 274.5 ha and lies on Lempeş Hill, also known as Fortress Hill (Dealul Cetății).

Lempeş Hill is 704 m high and is a specific element of the original natural environment in Braşov Depression, given its tectono-erosive genesis and its peaks elongated along SW-NE direction.

Lempeș Hill, perhaps one of the most beautiful and special places around Brașov, stands out by the forests that cover it but mainly by the multitude of flowers living here. In spring you can admire two rare species here, mountain pasque flower and pheasant's eye.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000 și rezervație naturală
NAME	ROSCI0055 Dealul Cetății Lempeș - Mlaștina Hărman
AREA	374 ha
E-MAIL	vasileboronia@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.fundatiacarpati.ro









Several types of habitats were identified here, from beech and hornbeam woods to Euro-Siberian forest steppe with oak species. Dealul Cetăţii - Lempeş was established as botanical reserve in 2000, to protect the rare plant species it hosts: pheasant's eye, festuca and dwarf sedge. Other protected species found here are: red-flowered viper's grass, iris, spring snowflake, common bluebell etc.

Fauna consists of stag, deer, boar, fox, wildcat, squirrel, and the bird fauna includes common buzzard, raven, lesser spotted eagle, common blackbird, hoopoe etc.

Various other tourist attractions can be found near the reserve, such as places of worship, historical monuments or other natural protected areas. Access is from Sânpetru or Hărman villages.





The proper time to visit Lempeș Hill is the end of March - beginning of April, when two rare flowers blossom here: the pheasant's eye and the mountain pasque flower. In this period the forests in the area dress up in a mauve carpet of corydalis, and snowdrop anemones are also abundant.



HĂRMAN MARSH

The marsh is a botanic natural reserve in Braşov county, on the administrative territory of Hărman commune.

The protected area is a wetland near Olt Valley with marshes and floodplain terraces consisting of sands, gravel and clay and crossed by several brooks (Hușbor, Părăul de Sub Coastă, Valea Morilor); their waters created optimum conditions for several rare species.

The area hosts a wide variety of flora, including more than 150 glacial relics, some of them endemic for Țara Bârsei region. Flower species include: armeria, black sedge, snake's head, lousewort, mauve gentian, orchid, bladderwort and round-leaved sundew.





PREJMER FOREST AND EUTROPHIC MARSHES

This natural area lies in Braşov Depression, near the county road connecting Hărman to Sfântu Gheorghe. The reserve was designated to protect biodiversity and preserve flora and fauna in Olt floodplain. It covers 345 ha and hosts terrestrial ecosystems (forest, brush, meadows) and aquatic fresh water ecosystems (water surfaces, marshes) on the left side floodplain of Olt River.

The reserve is home to a wide variety of flora: trees, shrubs, grasses and rare flowers, some of which are protected in Europe. Fauna consists of large and small mammals, such as boar, buck or wildcat.

The reserve may be visited in any season but there are no trails arranged.

The marshes at Hărman and Prejmer host a wide variety of flora, including more than 150 glacial relics, of which many species are endemic for Țara Bârsei region.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000 și rezervație naturală
NAME	ROSCI0170 Pădurea și mlaștinile eutrofe de la Prejmer
AREA	345 ha
E-MAIL	vasileboronia@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.fundatiacarpati.ro





The snake’s head is an extremely rare flower, found in very few places around Brașov. It loves wetlands and its specific shape and colour make it a very photogenic flower, which should be protected as much as possible.



HOLBAV

This protected area is located near Holbav commune, on Ghirtalău Hill, between Crucii Brook and Lupului Brook; it was designated in 2004 and covers the former clay quarry at Holbav.

The reserve has a lithological sequence about 230-250 m long and it is a geological site for scientific research used by geology, geography, environmental protection, ecology or mining universities.

Holbav village lies in the vicinity of the reserve and it still hosts traditions carefully preserved by local villagers, and fairy tale landscapes. From a point called La Cruce (At the Cross), close to a hill peak you can admire the village neighbourhoods as well as the peaks of Piatra Craiului National Park.







"I discovered Holbav village a few years ago. The first time I got there was for work. That day I saw very little of it, but I loved what I saw. In the week-end I came back for a walk on its hills. Since then I returned tens of times and I still have not had enough of the charm of this place."

Vlad Dumitrescu - photographer

Our recommendations:

- A hike on Lempeș Hill looking for the mountain pasque flower or the pheasant's eye, or in the Hărman or Prejmer marshes looking for the snake's head;
- Watching the large number of bird species at Dumbrăvița or Rotbav, particularly during migration seasons when even very rare species can be noticed;
- Watching black storks at Dumbrăvița in spring or autumn during their passage;
- A hike on Tâmpa to admire Brașov from above and to understand the complexity of this medieval fortress;
- Mountain climbing on the special routes on Tâmpa or a bike tour on the trails in the area, accessible only to experienced bikers.

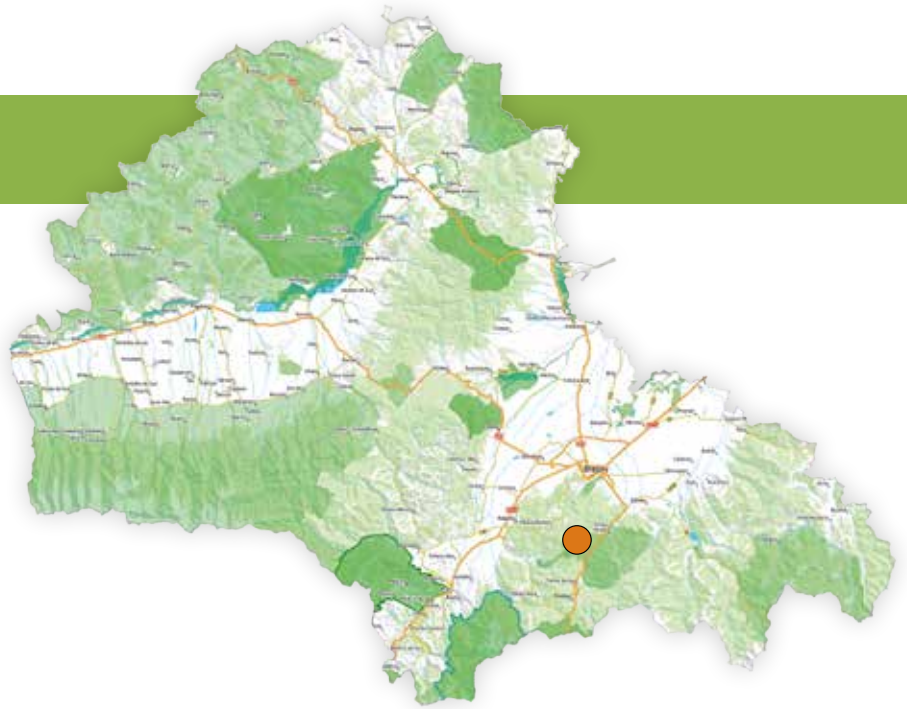


POSTĂVARUL

The massif is part of the Eastern Carpathians, more exactly of the Curvature Carpathians and is an important ski destination, both for people from Brașov and for tourists from all over the country who come to Poiana Brașov every season.



POSTĂVARUL



While in winter the mountain appears to be dedicated to skiers, in the summer it is open to all nature lovers. Its position ensures a splendid panorama from the peak, both towards Braşov and the neighbouring valleys and to Piatra Mare or Bucegi.

Postăvarul and Piatra Mare massifs form the Bârsei Mountains, which are part of the Curvature Carpathians within the Eastern Carpathians group. The maximum elevation is 1799 m on Postăvaru Peak, also known as Cristianul Mare Peak.

The massif is important both for the habitats of valuable birch and coniferous forests and the protected flora and fauna species, and for the winter tourism in Poiana Braşov.

Vegetation is mostly specific for mountain habitats, consisting of coniferous, deciduous and mixed forests, shrub brush and alpine grass, meadows or cliffs.

Fauna is very present, including most important mountain species: stag, buck, chamois, brown bear, wolf, boar, fox, lynx, wildcat, marten etc. Birds include: capercaillie, golden eagle, lesser spotted eagle, raven, crested tit, black woodpecker.

Postăvaru massif is an important skiing resort in winter, while in summer it is visited by mountaineers and bikers.

Access is from various mountain trails, both from Braşov and Poiana Braşov and from adjacent areas: Râşnov, Predeal, Timişul de Sus.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0207 Postăvarul
AREA	1 303 ha
E-MAIL	vasileboronia@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.fundatiacarpati.ro

Our recommendations:

- Tâmpa - Postăvarul route, which takes you from Braşov to Poiana Braşov on a wild and interesting way;
- Visiting Cheile Râşnoavei gorges and climbing on one of the many mountain climbing routes in the area.









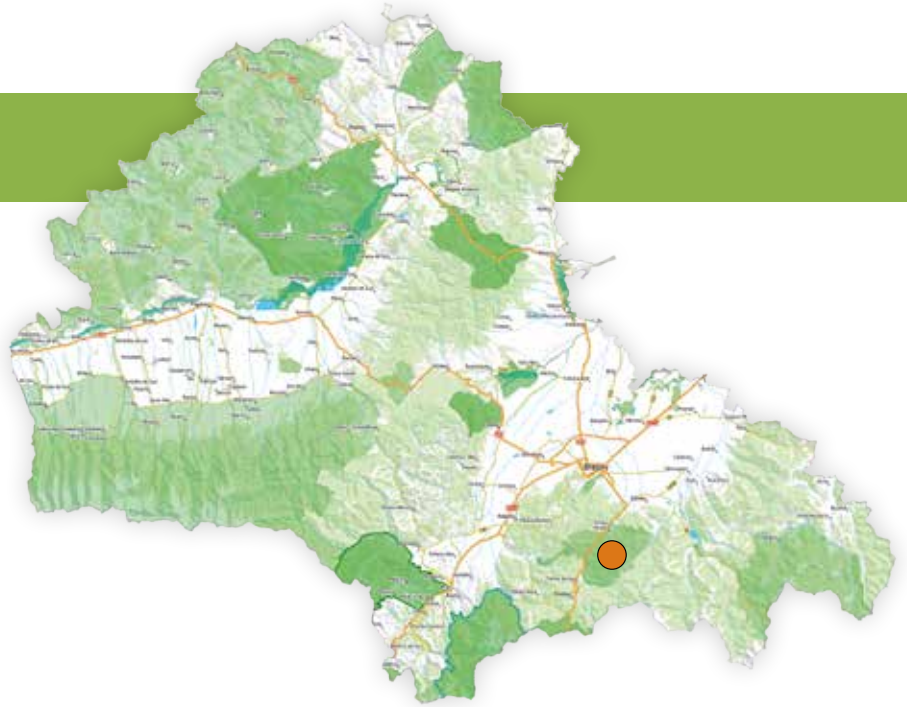
Râșnoavei Gorges offer some of the most beautiful mountain climbing routes in Brașov area. These vary in length and difficulty, for all tastes. One of the most spectacular routes, Creasta Generalului, offers a unique view from the top to the gorges and to Piatra Craiului.



PIATRA MARE

Piatra Mare and Postăvarul massifs form the Bârsei Mountains group. Although quite small, it offers spectacular views on all other massifs around, from Bucegi and Piatra Craiului to Ciucaș and Siriu.

PIATRA MARE



Piatra Mare is Brașov people's mountain; during any simple walk, regardless of day or season, you will certainly meet other hardcore mountaineers just like yourself. No matter from what side you approach the mountain, all trails go to the top.

Piatra Mare massif is part of Bârsei Mountains, located in the south of Braşov Depression within the Curvature Carpathians; its maximum height is 1844 m.

In addition to the coniferous and deciduous forests bordering the alpine plain, various shrubs are also present here, such as mountain pine, common juniper, lingonberry, hazelnut tree or briar. Rare flower and grass species such as edelweiss, pink or doronicum carpaticum can be found here, as well as a wide variety of mushrooms that hide under the treeline and in brush areas.

The rich diverse fauna consists of bear, stag, boar, marten, capercaillie, lesser spotted eagle, adder and salamander, as well as trout and chub.

One of the massif's attractions is the Şapte Scări (Seven Stairs) Canyon, dug in the Jurassic limestones in the west part of Piatra Mare. The canyon is 160 m long and has a level difference of 58 m. This karst complex is in the wood area, at 948 m elevation. The route may be done by the stairs installed, with no need for specialised equipment.

Piatra Mare massif is accessible either by road (DN1 and DN1A roads), or by the Bucharest - Braşov railway.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0195 Piatra Mare
AREA	4 283 ha
E-MAIL	vasileboronia@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.fundatiacarpati.ro

Our recommendations:

- Climbing Piatra Mare peak for a beautiful view of all mountains around, from Bucegi and Piatra Craiului to Postăvarul, Ciucaș and Siriu;
- Crossing Șapte Scări canyon on the footbridges and stairs installed, to leisurely discover the beauty of the place.









Given its moderate difficulty and easy access, Piatra Mare is a mountain that allows endless hiking possibilities, even in winter. With proper equipment and minimum effort, it is very easy to get to Piatra Mare chalet, a place with a great view.



CIUCAȘ

Certainly one of the most beautiful mountains in the Curvature Carpathians, Ciucaș stands out mainly by its specific cliffs. This mountain is much loved for its alpine meadows, spectacular routes and specific vegetation.

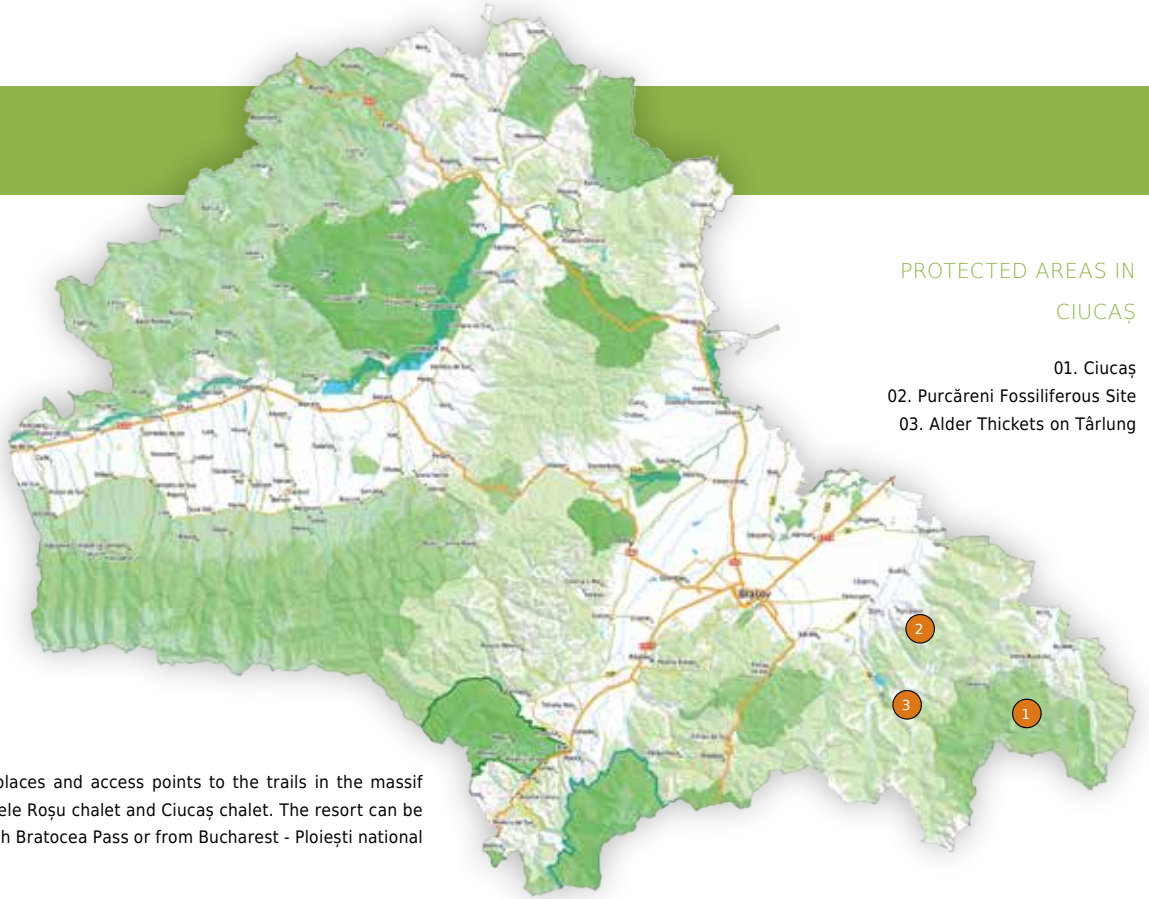
CIUCAȘ

A hike in Ciucaș takes you to an imaginary fairy-tale world, where cliffs turn into all sort of beings with weird names: Babele la Sfat (“Old Women Talking”), Goliat, Moșul (“Old Man”), Bratocea Sphinx or Gemenii (“Twins”).

Ciucaș massif belongs to the Curvature Carpathians, a mountain range in the Eastern Carpathians. The protected area is located in Brașov and Prahova counties. Ciucaș Mountain has two main ridges, Ciucaș - Bratocea along SW-NE and Gropșoarele - Zăganu along NW-SE, linked by Chirușca saddle.

The relief in Ciucaș is uniform, with a rich vegetation of meadows, shrubs and cliff plants. Many wild animals live here: bear, boar, stag, lynx, fox, marten, squirrel, wildcat and chamois. Birds include golden eagle, goshawk, nightingale, chaffinch, and reptiles are also present: common European adder and common lizard.

Ciucaș has a wide variety of irregular cliff forms, with diverse sizes and geomorphous shapes, with the most significant being: Babele la Sfat, Mâna Dracului, Turnul lui Goliat, Turnul Roșu, Colții Bratocei, Colții Zăganu, Ciuperca, Tigăile Mari and Tigăile Mici or Sfinxul Bratocei. There are also other peaks and ridges, limestone scarps and screes.



PROTECTED AREAS IN CIUCAȘ

01. Ciucaș
02. Purcăreni Fossiliferous Site
03. Alder Thickets on Târlung

The main accommodation places and access points to the trails in the massif are in Cheia resort, at Muntele Roșu chalet and Ciucaș chalet. The resort can be reached from Brașov through Bratocea Pass or from Bucharest - Ploiești national road.





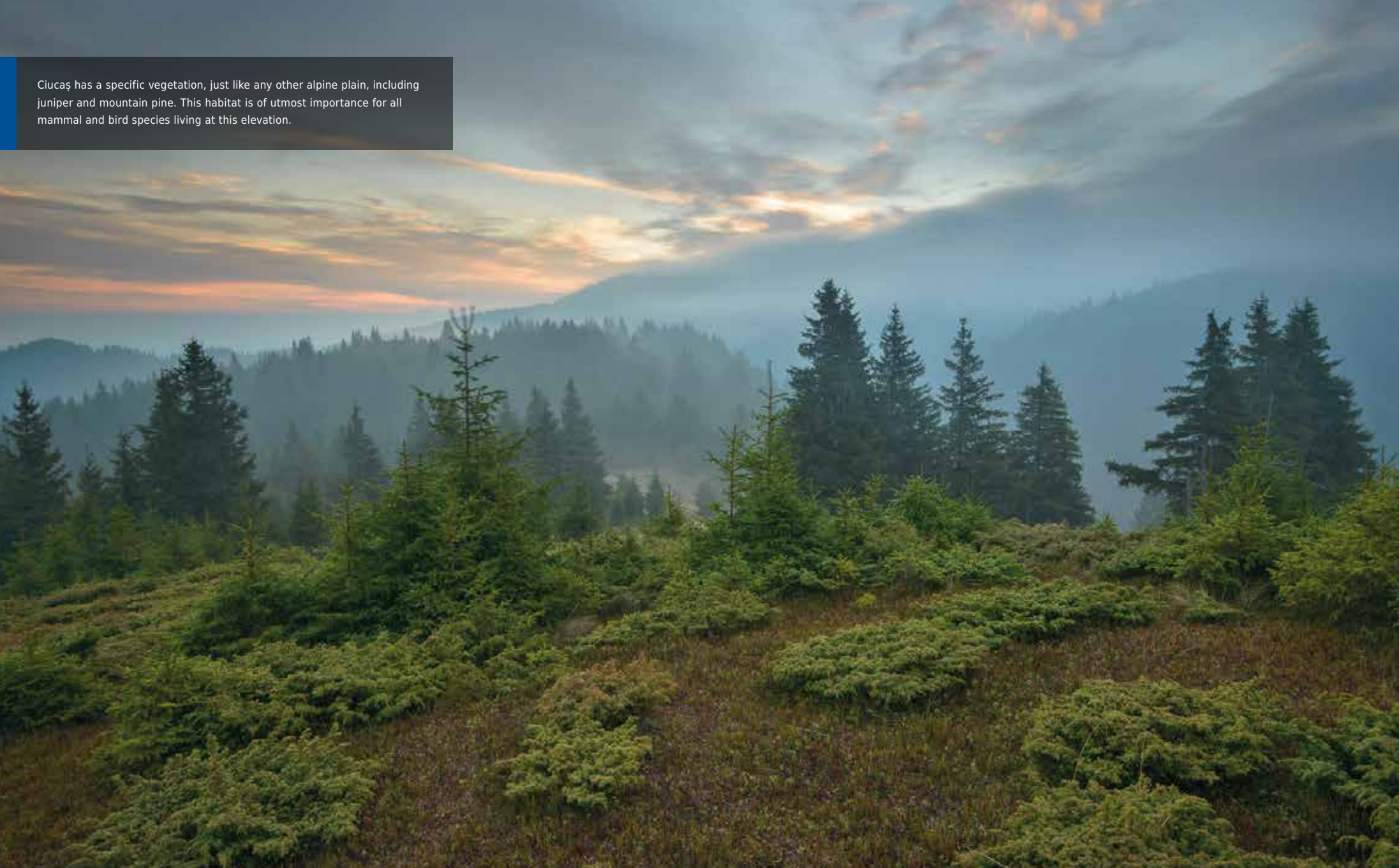
TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0038 Ciucaș
AREA	21 864 ha
E-MAIL	vasileboronia@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.fundatiacarpati.ro







The easy access to Ciucaș chalet located in the alpine area can help you discover this mountain leisurely. A sunrise in the chalet area should definitely not be missed, particularly if you have a hobby in mountain photography. The chalet also facilitates access during winter time, so all you have to do is explore.



Ciucaș has a specific vegetation, just like any other alpine plain, including juniper and mountain pine. This habitat is of utmost importance for all mammal and bird species living at this elevation.



PURCĂRENI FOSSILIFEROUS SITE

The site is a paleontological reserve located at Întorsura Buzăului near Purcăreni commune, a former limestone quarry that was closed and designated a natural monument. The protected area is a massive 200 cubic meters block of limestone, with a rich association of corals, branchiopodes and crustaceans. Geological and paleontological research indicated that these limestones form a small massif with great importance for the country's history.



ALDER THICKETS ON TÂRLUNG

This area in the SE part of Braşov county, at the base of Ciucaş Mountains, hosts an important community of alder trees, as its name suggests. In addition to the alder, which grows together with the ash tree, we will also be surprised to find here no less than 3,000 other plant species, including: globeflower, oxlip, lemon balm, autumn crocus, wood anemone.

The site was designed as protected area because of three amphibians: yellow-bellied toad, northern crested newt and salamander. Mammals include wildcat and marten.

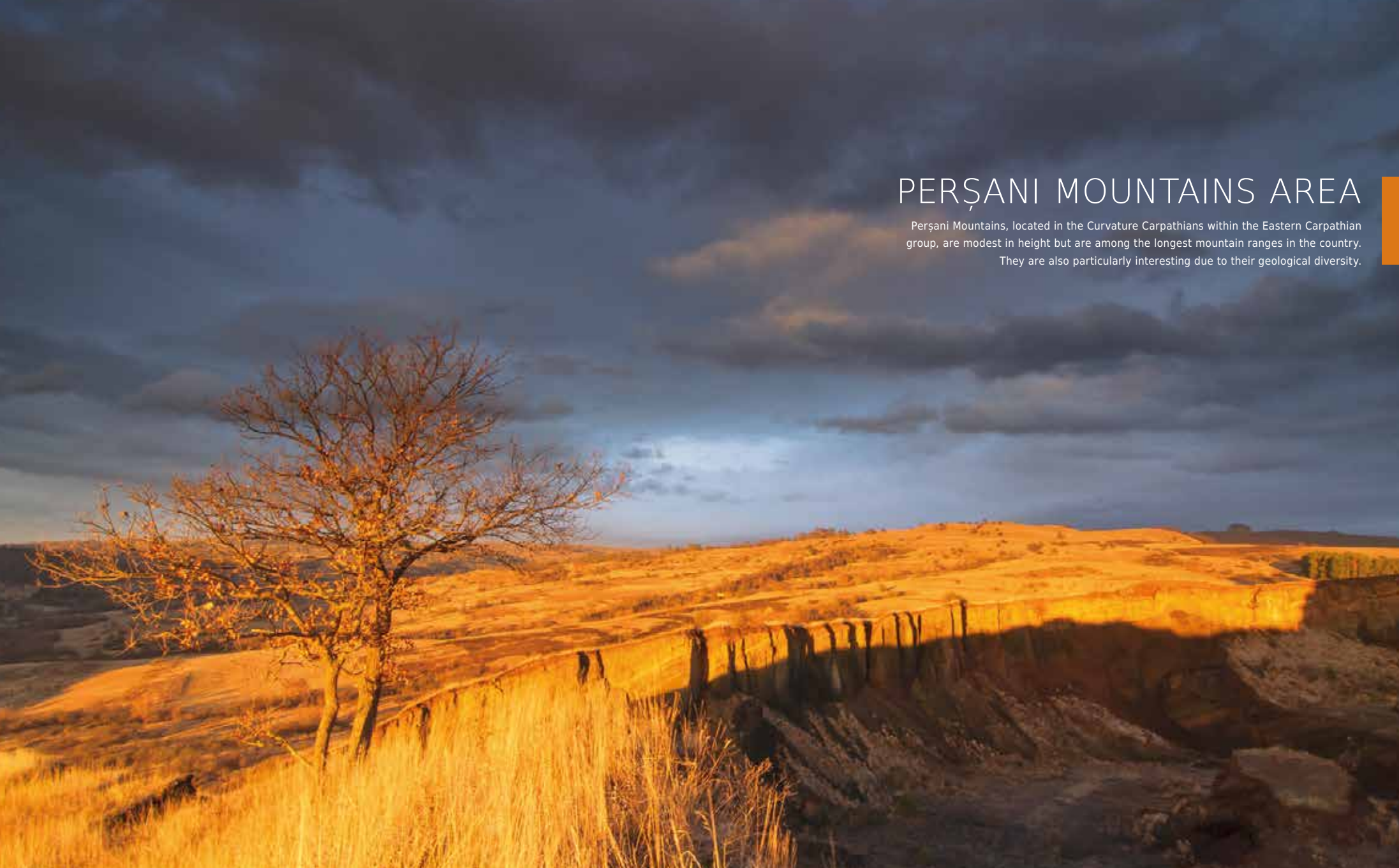
Both the fossiliferous site at Purcăreni and the alder thickets at Târlung are part of Ciucaș Natura 2000 site.





TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	RO SCI 0001 Aninișurile de pe Târlung
AREA	181 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro





PERȘANI MOUNTAINS AREA

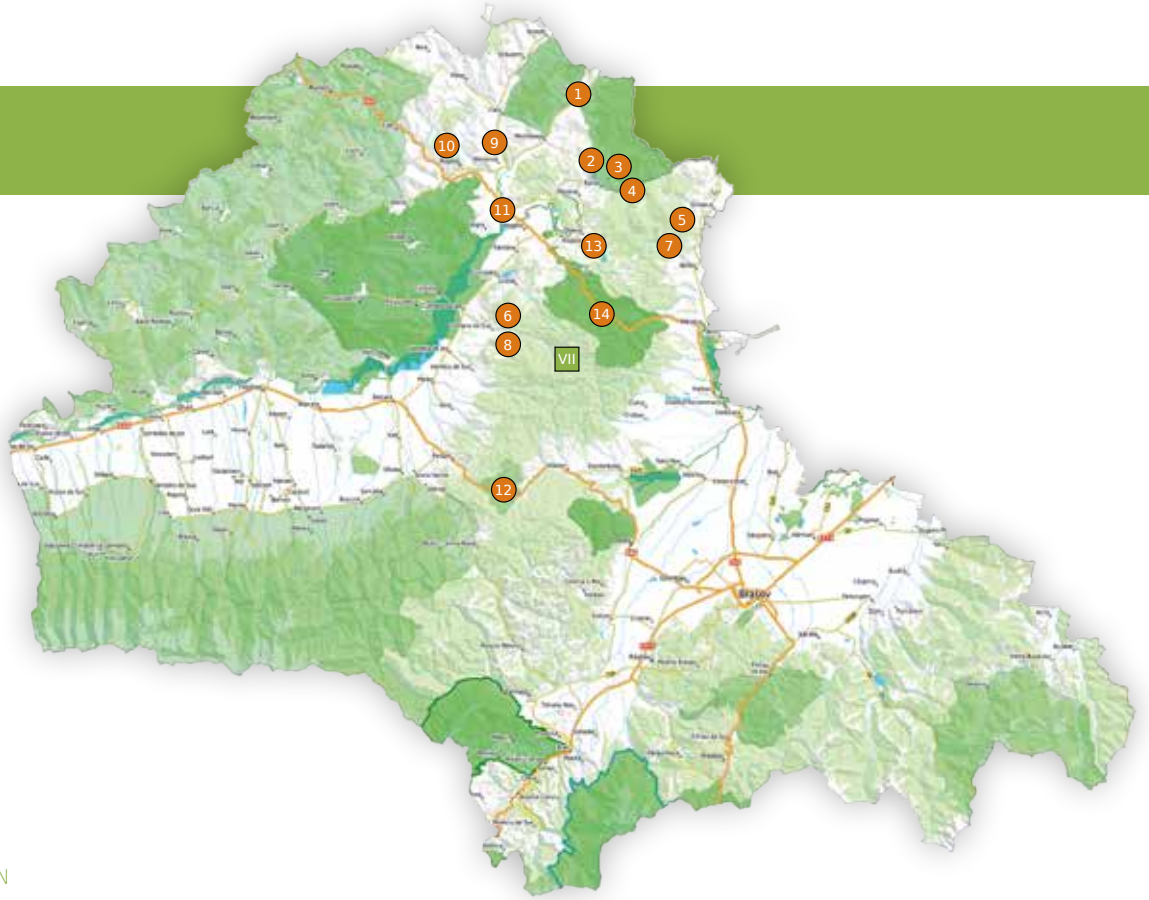
Perșani Mountains, located in the Curvature Carpathians within the Eastern Carpathian group, are modest in height but are among the longest mountain ranges in the country. They are also particularly interesting due to their geological diversity.

PERȘANI MOUNTAINS AREA

Perșani Mountains are completely different from the regions around by their great diversity: they consist of a real mosaic of rocks, some of which may be up to 800 million years old.

Although they could not stand a comparison with other, higher mountains in Romania, Perșani have their unique charm. Hiking lovers will find medium height peaks in these mountains: Măgura Codlei (1292 m) and Vârful Cetății (1104 m), many natural reserves: Cotul Turzunului, Bogății Forest, the Basalt Columns at Racoș and Piatra Cioplită cliff, volcanic rocks, mud volcanoes, fossiliferous sites, caves and gorges, such as Vârghișului or Dopca gorges. The wide variety of natural monuments makes this region an ideal recreational place, with opportunities to explore pristine areas untouched by civilisation.

Perșani Mountains area hosts the largest concentration of birds in the whole Brașov county, and if you venture for a hike with your backpack, near Mercheașa you will be welcomed by the oldest oak in Romania, more than 900 years old.



PROTECTED AREAS IN PERȘANI MOUNTAINS AREA

01. Homoroadelor Hills
02. The Geological Site at Racoșul de Jos
03. The Basalt Columns at Racoș
04. Carhaga Fossiliferous Site
05. Ormeniș Fossiliferous Site
06. The Basalt Columns at Piatra Cioplită
07. Bârlogul Ursului Cave
08. Comăna Cave
09. The Mud Volcanoes at Homorod
10. The Basalt Cliff at Rupea
11. The Basalt Microcanyon at Hoghiz
12. Perșani Mountain
13. Cheile Dopca
14. Bogății Forest











HOMOROADELOR HILLS

This hilly area looking like a mosaic of meadows and broadleaf forests is typical for south-eastern Transylvania. This is one of the most valuable areas in the country for the lesser spotted eagle as well as for the black stork, middle spotted woodpecker, red-backed shrike or corn crake.

Homoroadelor Hills also include the natural reserve Cheile Vârghișului, located in the south area of the Eastern Carpathians, at the junction between Perșani and Harghita Mountains. Cheile Vârghișului gorges are one of the most interesting natural phenomena in the south of the Eastern Carpathians, as they gather a number of natural elements of exceptional botanical, zoological, speleological and landscape value. The gorges have more than 120 caves, with several of them, such as Orban Balasz or Șura Calului caves, having spectacular entrances close to the tourist trail.

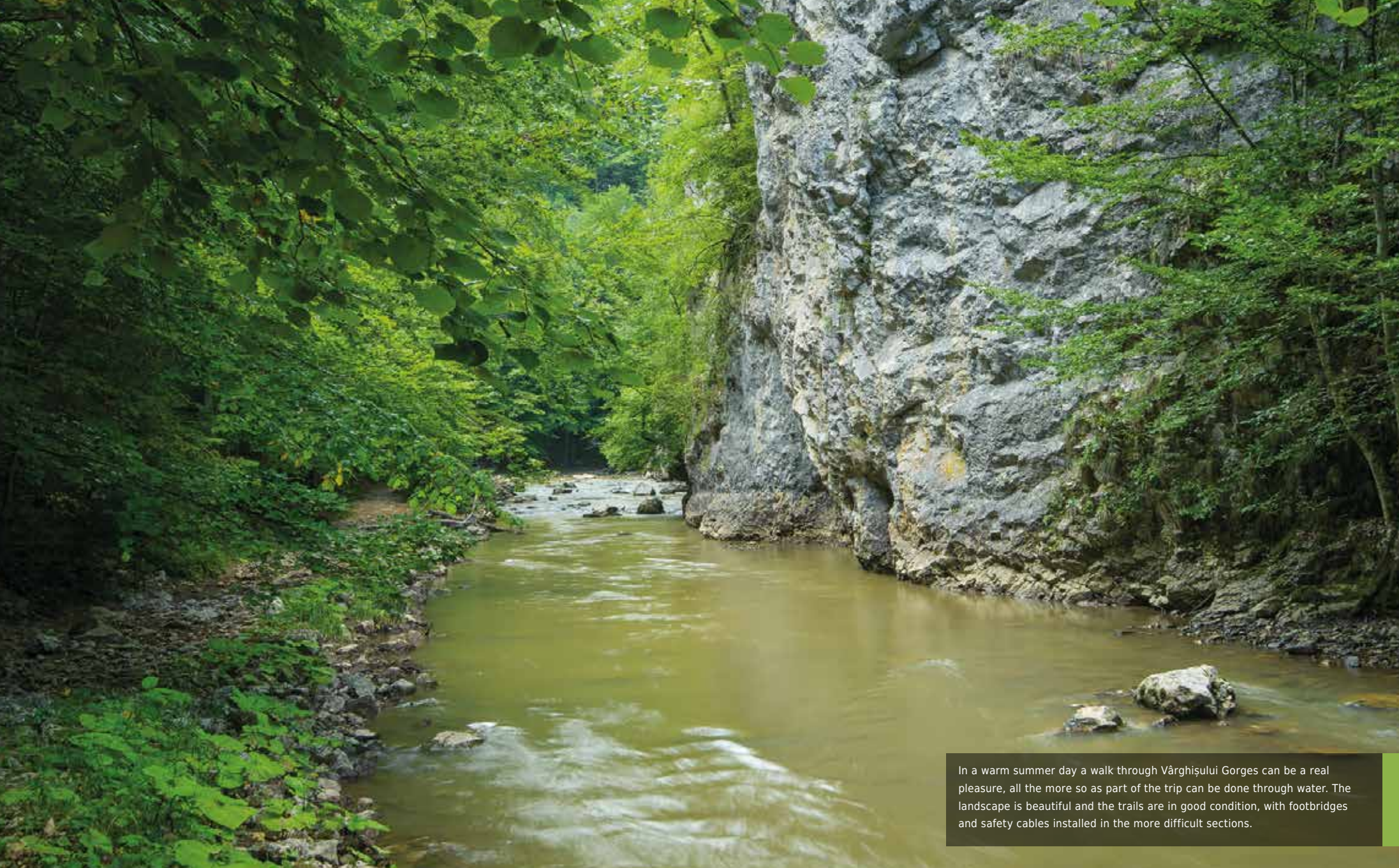
TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSPA0027 Dealurile Homoroadelor
AREA	37 093 ha
E-MAIL	carpaterra@gmail.com
WEBSITE	www.carpaterra.org

Our recommendations:

- Visit to the oldest oak tree in Romania, at Mercheașa;
- Make sure not to miss Cheile Vârghișului and the caves, particularly the area above Șura Calului Cave, a very interesting complex of arches and caverns;
- Climbing in Cheile Vârghișului on one of the many climbing routes arranged or bike riding on the road to the gorges;
- Visit to the Racoșul de Jos area, very rich in geological phenomena;
- Hiking through Bogății Forest or Dopca Gorges, where you can notice a very special fish in the brook, European bullhead, very similar to the goby.







In a warm summer day a walk through Vârghișului Gorges can be a real pleasure, all the more so as part of the trip can be done through water. The landscape is beautiful and the trails are in good condition, with footbridges and safety cables installed in the more difficult sections.



THE GEOLOGICAL SITE AT RACOȘUL DE JOS

This complex site of about 95 ha lies on the north-east peak of the Basalt Triangle in Perşani Mountains (Racoş - Rupea - Comăna de Sus) and comprises the basalt flows that occurred 1.3 million years ago and ended the volcanic processes in the Carpathians. Although basalt has been quarried at Racoş for more than 100 years, the area is currently protected to preserve the site geology in the best possible way.

There are three quarries currently in conservation or in the closure process. The basalt quarry at Brazi comprises a huge geological section of the basalt volcano, 50 m high and 200 m long. A lake formed on the quarry bottom from rainfall and snow melting.

The basalt scoria quarry at Hegheş Hill is perhaps the most remarkable place here, with its selenary landscape almost devoid of vegetation. Basalt scoria formations in various colours can be seen, from black to cinnabar, which also contain volcanic bomb interlayers.

The third quarry contains the Basalt Columns, a separate reserve within this complex.

Access to these protected areas is from Racoş. If you want to fully understand the complexity of this unique area in the Romanian landscape, we recommend a guided tour.

THE BASALT COLUMNS AT RACOȘ

This monument consists of basalt rocks that reached the earth surface as a result of the volcanic activity 1.2 million years ago. The eruption lasted for about 10-20 thousand years, being among the last ones in the Carpathians. The columns were generated by cooling, and in certain areas we can notice the specific fragmentation as a result of different cooling speeds.

The last volcano eruptions in the Carpathians, dating back 1.3 million years ago, generated a very peculiar geological complex where site geology can be studied in detail.







The basalt columns at Racoș remind us of the volcanic history of the Carpathians. Although they do not cover a large area and they are quite low, 10-15 m, the columns depict an interesting process of volcanic lava cooling and crystallization.



CARHAGA FOSSILIFEROUS SITE

The fossiliferous site at Carhaga in Perşani Mountains, on the valley with the same name, has a geological opening about 10 m long and 5 m high. We can notice here thick layers of Jurassic marls with interlayers of fine limestones rich in fossil fauna. This fauna consists mainly of ammonites, and the Carhaga layers are a precious paleogeographic witness, which determined its protection over 1.6 ha.

ORMENIȘ FOSSILIFEROUS SITE

This natural reserve lies in the east part of Perşani Mountains. This mountain side links the massif to Braşov Depression and is crossed by a number of valleys, including Ormeniş Valley.

The grey-blue rocks and the fossil shells in this reserve have international scientific importance.

Perşani Mountains are like a geological puzzle of rocks that are about 800 million years old.



THE BASALT COLUMNS AT PIATRA CIOPLITĂ

The basalt columns at Piatra Cioplită are on the left bank of Comăna Valley, 1 km away from the village entrance. It is a geological reserve designated in 2000 and consists of basalts with a column-like aspect.

It is the southmost point of volcanic activity in our country and includes the Perșani Sphinx, a human profile sculpted by erosion in basalt formations.





BÂRLOGUL URSULUI CAVE

Tipia Ormenişului, the mountain with an impressive cone shape in the central part of Perşani, hosts Bârlogul Ursului ("Bear's Den") Cave at 667 m elevation. The fossil cave was named after the specific bear head shaped formation and consists of limestone galleries, rimstone dams with pearl formations and wall drip formations. The cave total length is 300 m.



COMĂNA CAVE

Comăna Cave is in Perşani Mountains, in Comăna Valley basin. The cave is the underground route of the brook that collects its water from the plateau south of Peştera Mountain. It includes a system of galleries on three levels, with a total development of about 2500 m and a 70 m level difference.

Speleological exploration, mapping and topography activities are regularly performed in Comăna Cave, as well as clean-up actions and scientific research, under the supervision of "Emil Racoviţă" Speleology Institute in Cluj-Napoca.

The cave is not open for tourism and a maximum of five entries per year are allowed, to protect the underground habitat. Access is possible only with the agreement and in the presence of the custodian.





Given the difficult access and the outstanding beauty of Comăna Cave, there is a strict regulation in place which allows access for exploration only for maximum five times per year, to protect the underground landscape in the best possible way.





THE MUD VOLCANOES AT HOMOROD

The presence of mud volcanoes in the Transylvanian Basin is favoured by the presence of gas accumulations, formation water and sedimentary deposits, which have the role of material source layer for the mud volcanoes. The first mud emanations occurred at the middle of the 20th century and built these mud volcanoes, an extremely rare geological case. Six such volcanoes were noticed on the geological protected area site.

The mud volcanoes at Homorod differ in terms of their activity. Two of them have a sporadic activity, most likely influenced by the weight of the water mass pressing them. One of the most active ones is called Homorod 3, which erupts in the very road infrastructure. Homorod 4 is the muddy basin type and is the most active, it can even be seen bubbling.







"You wake up early in the morning; you drive slowly, a bear crosses the boulevard; breakfast at a small café, with a view to the mountain peaks; from the office window you can see the forest; you walk through the historical centre, go up on a path, take the bus, then you have lunch among cliffs; you go under a waterfall, go down by gondola, you feel the forest vibrating; you walk down from the beltway, have dinner on the margin of an extinct volcano, an eagle flies above; you buy blueberries from a nice lady, from the window you see the city glimmering in the night; you fall asleep in Brașov, surrounded by nature" - Tiberiu Chiricheș, Propark - Foundation for Protected Areas.

THE BASALT CLIFF AT RUPEA

This formation is impressive by the mass of sedimentary rocks and basalt lava underlying the last volcanic activities in Perșani Mountains. They look like hills watching over Rupea town, on which Rupea Fortress was also built, now an important medieval archaeological site. The landscape is enhanced by oak forests, rivers and meadows.

Access is from Rupea town, on the county road Brașov - Sighișoara.





THE BASALT MICROCANYON AT HOGHIZ

The micro-canyon is worn by Hoghiz brook which springs in the saddle between Măguricea Mare and Pleşiţa, on the west side of Perşani. The protected area consists of basalt rocks with a peculiar shape, mountainsides looking like sawed steep vertical walls, similar to canyon valleys, but at a much smaller scale. The landscape also includes two waterfalls as well as a small cave in the left side.



PERȘANI

Perșani Mountains close the west end of Țara Bârsei region, as a link between Eastern Carpathians and Southern Carpathians. They are divided into three sections according to the types of rocks and relief, the local elevation variations, the presence of deep valleys and crosswise depressions: Southern Perșani, Central Perșani and Northern Perșani. The latter have rounded peaks with slight slopes and rocky steep walls. Central Perșani feature limestone conglomerates, sharp ridges and peaks divided by deep valleys, whereas Southern Perșani have a small hill landscape, occasionally looking like a plain.

Măgura Codlei is the highest peak, 1292 m high, almost cone-shaped, standing out above its surroundings. Perșani Mountains forests consist of oak, beech, hazelnut, common hawthorn, juniper, as well as protected flora species such as snake's head, globe-flower, mountain pasque flower, lousewort and large blue hepatica (livewort). These mountains are crossed by important east-west communication ways, from Țara Bârsei region and Baraolt Depression to Făgăraș and Homoroadelor Depressions.

Although one of the longest mountain ranges in the country, Perșani are fragmented by roads and canyons. The highest peak, Măgura Codlei, is only 1292 m high.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0352 Perșani
AREA	2 261 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro











CHEILE DOPCA

Dopca Gorges are located between Perşani mountain peaks and Valea Mare basin. They are 5 km long and offer the opportunity to see the Earth's evolution in different geological eras, through the very clearly displayed geological strata. Dopca Gorges formations are about 94-112 million years old. The gorges height varies between 5-40 m, with an interesting landscape consisting of wooded areas, isolated cliffs, scree slopes, karst springs and valleys. Access to the gorges is from Bogata village.



BOGĂȚII FOREST

This natural area lies in the centre of Perşani mountains and is crossed by the national road Braşov - Sighişoara, near Rupea town. It is the most easily accessible and visited reserve in Perşani Mountains, and the limestone and basalt rocks can often be seen even from the road.

It is a complex geological, landscape, botanical and forest reserve, named after Bogata brook crossing it along about 10 km.

The reserve covers meadow areas but also some of the most important deciduous forests in the country, with prevailing beech associated with sessile oak and common hornbeam. The ancient forest covers the central part of the mountains on a 17 km2 area. The protected plant species present here include the large blue hepatica (livewort). Fauna is very rich and diverse, with large mammals such as stag, bear, wolf and lynx.

Bogății Forest is one of the most valuable deciduous forests in our country, at the same time a geological, landscape and of course botanical and forest reserve.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000 și rezervație naturală
NAME	ROSCI0137 și ROSPA0093 Pădurea Bogății
AREA	6 329 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro











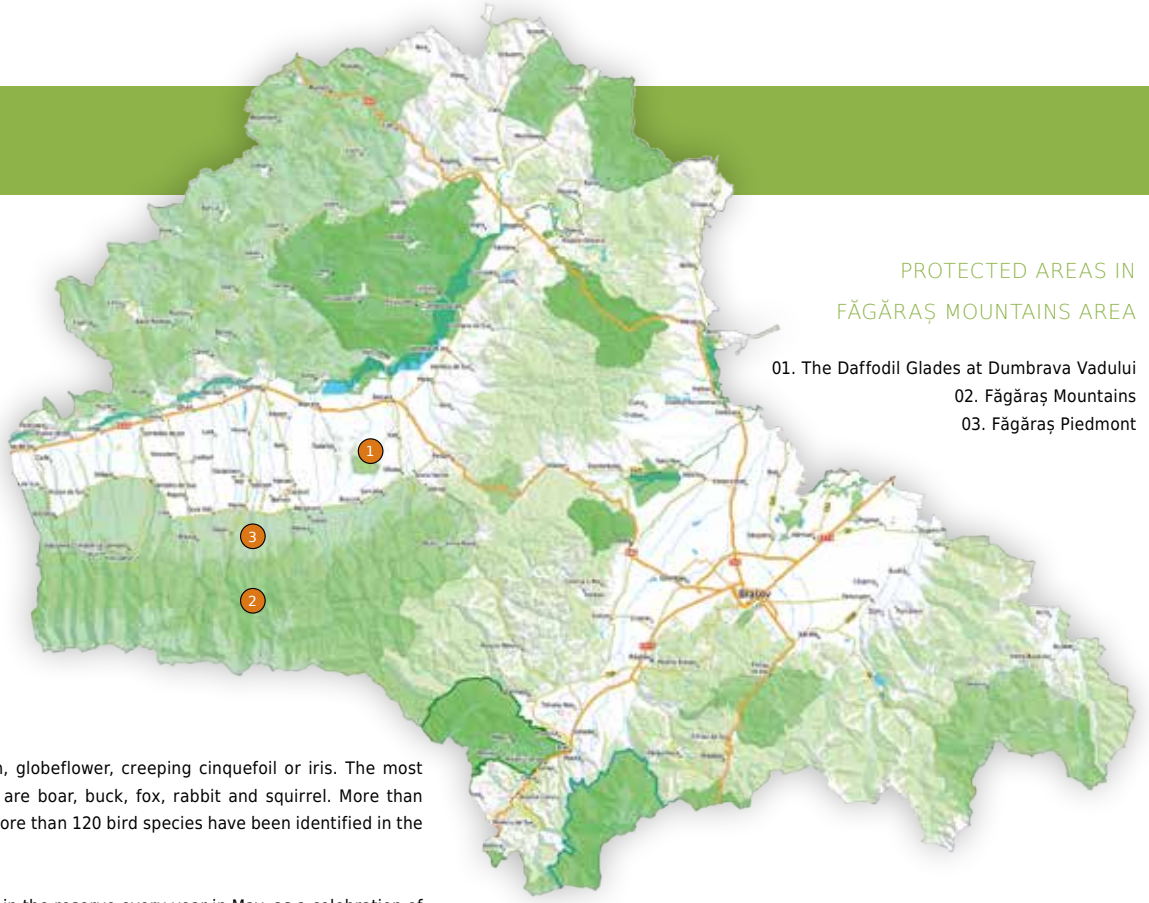
FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS AREA

Făgăraș Mountains, an essential part of the Southern Carpathians, are the highest mountains in the country, with an impressive mighty aspect, regardless of whether we look at them from the ridges or from the base depressions.

FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS AREA

Făgăraș Mountains, also called the Transylvanian Alps, are the largest and highest mountain range in Romania. They have eight peaks over 2500 m, with the highest being Moldoveanu at 2544 m, followed by Negoiu at 2535 m.

Făgăraș Mountains are about 70 km long on the east-west direction and 45 km long north-south, and are the country's largest mountain range. The ridge looks like a huge spine, with the north crests being much shorter and steeper, as compared to the south ones which are very long and mild. Other important natural areas developed at the base of the mountain, as links to the surrounding forests or hills and tables.



PROTECTED AREAS IN FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS AREA

01. The Daffodil Glades at Dumbrava Vadului
02. Făgăraș Mountains
03. Făgăraș Piedmont

THE DAFFODIL GLADES AT DUMBRAVA VADULUI

Dumbrava Vadului is known for the millions of daffodils that blossom here in May. This species is protected by law and known by the locals under the name "coprine". Their presence in such large numbers is due to the land with marsh traces and to the thin shade of the oak, hornbeam and ash trees. In addition to daffodils we can also find here a very wide range of flora species, more than 500, including: bridalwreath, globeflower, creeping cinquefoil or iris. The most frequently found mammals are boar, buck, fox, rabbit and squirrel. More than 360 butterfly species and more than 120 bird species have been identified in the area.

The Daffodil Festival is held in the reserve every year in May, as a celebration of the flowers here.





TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000 și rezervație naturală
NAME	ROSCI0205 Poienile cu narcise de la Dumbrava Vadului
AREA	399 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro







Făgăraș Mountains cover 3000 km² and have eight peaks above 2500 m (Moldoveanu, Negoiu, Vișțea Mare, Lespezi, Cornul Călțunului, Vânătoarea lui Buteanu, Hârtopu and Dara), other 42 peaks above 2400 m and about 150 peaks above 2300 m.

Făgăraș Mountains have a very rich and diverse vegetation. Compact forests cover mountain slopes up to almost 1700 m elevation, while hay meadows and glades full of flowers are present along valley banks and in forest clearings.

The species usually found in alpine areas include: orange hawk bit, pink, heartsease, forget-me-not, aconite and various species of bluebell and gentian. Protected flowers include: edelweiss, rosy vanilla orchid and Daphne blagayana. At the middle of June the rhododendron blossoms up in the alpine plain, as a scented bright red efflorescence which clads the mountain as a blanket visible from a long distance.

These mountains are very special by the large number of corries and alpine lakes at high elevations.







"Protected areas are perhaps even more important in countries like Romania, because they hold many species which have almost disappeared in Western Europe. We still enjoy a certain profusion of biodiversity and we should learn from other countries' mistakes and protect this in time. All protected areas, including those in Brașov county, should be supported and protected by all of us."

Horia Bogdan - biologist and photographer



TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0122 Munții Făgăraș
AREA	198 618 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro



FĂGĂRAȘ PIEDMONT

Făgăraș Piedmont is one of the main bird protection areas in the country, both in terms of surface and number of protected species (25) and natural conditions provided.

The piedmont lies in the Făgăraș Depression, in Brașov and Sibiu counties, on the north side of Făgăraș Mountains. As the site includes both alpine and continental areas, hill and mountain relief prevails. Specific habitats are varied, including grasslands and hay meadows, deciduous and coniferous forests, agricultural land, vineyards and orchards. Flora is very rich in the region, with more than 900 plant species registered, and the flora diversity is very obvious particularly in the wetland meadows (about 450 species).

The area at the base of the north side of Făgăraș Mountains provides an optimum habitat combination for many bird species of worldwide significance, such as the lesser spotted eagle, corn crake, a lot of woodpecker species, peregrine falcon, capercaillie, black stork etc. In order to ensure the long term protection of these birds it is of utmost importance to preserve the habitats where they build nests, grow their brood and feed.





Our recommendations:

- The trail along Făgăraș ridge, recommended only to experienced mountaineers;
- View on Făgăraș ridge from Vânătoarea lui Buteanu peak;
- Visit to the large number of glacial lakes, such as Călțun close to Negoiu peak.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSPA0098 Piemontul Făgăraș
AREA	71 256 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro









The landscape of Făgăraș Mountains with its mighty crests and deep valleys is unique in the country. Although they no longer hold glaciers, like the Alps, these mountains are definitely one of the most impressive sections of the Carpathians.



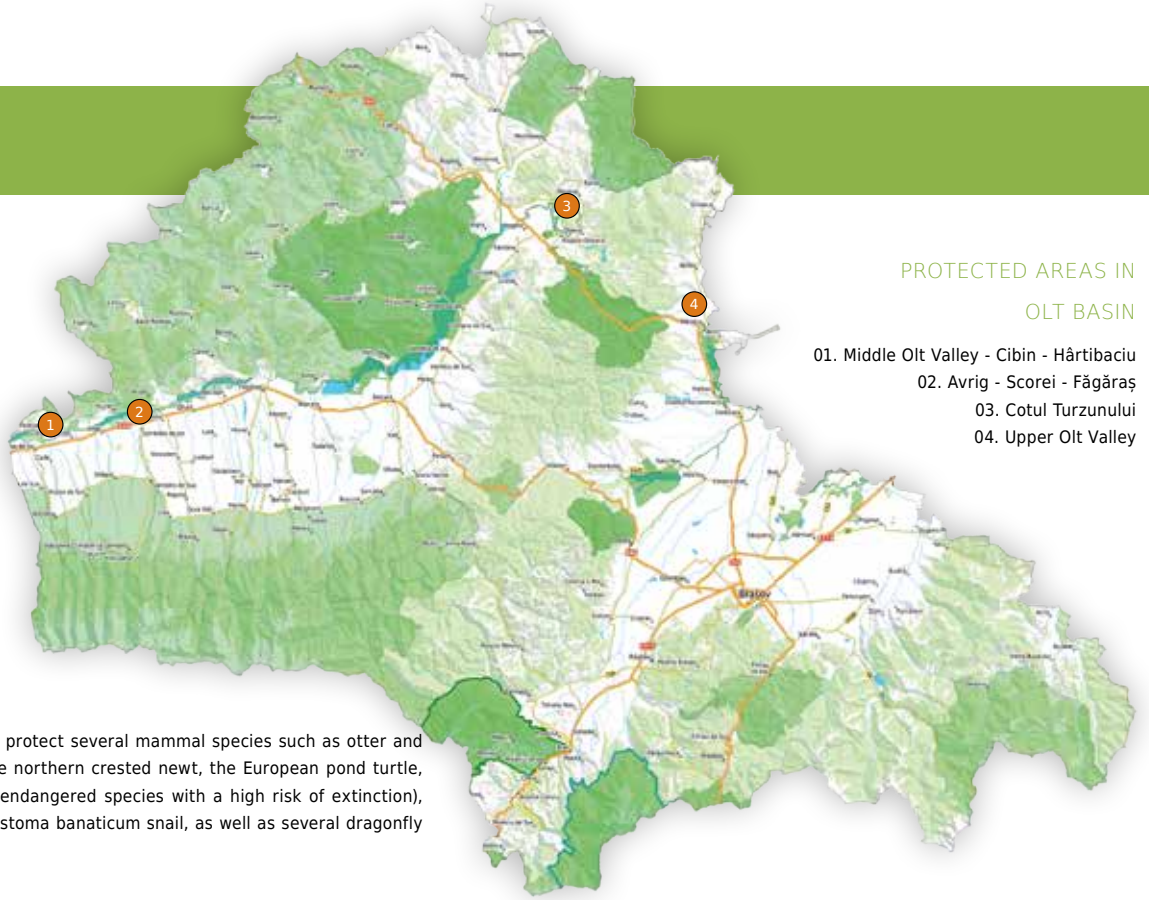
OLT BASIN

Olt River is among the longest rivers in the country, flowing along 615 km from its sources in Eastern Carpathians down to its outlet into the Danube River and crossing no less than seven counties on its way.

OLT BASIN

Olt River generally flows slowly, forming bends and curves where it finds harder rocks which it cannot erode. It also creates lively habitats where birds always find a refuge.

Olt River, known in the Dacian period as Alutus, springs from Hăşmaşul Mare massif in the Eastern Carpathians. After crossing several mountain areas and flowing along 615 km, Olt river flows into the Danube in Izlaz town in Teleorman county. Olt River crosses no less than seven counties (Harghita, Covasna, Braşov, Sibiu, Vâlcea, Olt and Teleorman), several depressions (Ciuc, Braşov, Făgăraş, Loviştea), canyons (Tuşnad, Racoş, Turnu Roşu, Cozia, Călimăneşti) and passes (Tuşnad, Turnu Roşu, Cozia).



PROTECTED AREAS IN OLT BASIN

01. Middle Olt Valley - Cibin - Hârtibaciu
02. Avrig - Scorei - Făgăraş
03. Cotul Turzunului
04. Upper Olt Valley

MIDDLE OLT VALLEY - CIBIN - HÂRTIBACIU

The site is a protected area located in three counties: Sibiu, Braşov and Vâlcea. It is an alpine and continental bioregion at the base of Făgăraş Mountains, along Olt valley, which contains beech forests, alpine and boreal shrubs.

The site was established to protect several mammal species such as otter and beaver, ten fish species, the northern crested newt, the European pond turtle, thick shelled river mussel (endangered species with a high risk of extinction), lesser ramshorn snail, Chilostoma banaticum snail, as well as several dragonfly species.





TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0132 Oltul Mijlociu - Cibin - Hărtibaciu
AREA	2 826 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro







AVRIG - SCOREI - FĂGĂRAȘ

This area along Olt River is considered an ecological corridor for bird migration. It is located in Brașov and Sibiu counties on a 3 ha area and is a natural reserve with high flora and fauna diversity. It is particularly important for the nesting populations of several sedentary or migratory bird species.

During migration periods and when birds spend the winter here, the total population exceeds 30,000 – 40,000 specimens annually.

The bird species living here include: grey heron, lesser spotted eagle, corn crake, white stork, gadwall, hen harrier, goldfinch, cirl bunting etc.

The main access roads are: DN1 national road on the route: Brașov – Făgăraș – Avrig and DN1 on the route Sibiu – Avrig – Făgăraș.





"Following a short research I noticed more than 80 bird species, that is, about 25% of Romania's avifauna, living along 5 km of embanked river with various other activities taking place in the same area: animals taken to pasture, hunting, fishing, wastewater discharge, ballast extraction from the river bed, waste dumping, logging, fire lighting and car washing. If they managed to survive so far in this section of Olt River, how difficult can it be to protect them?"

Cristian Goga - birdwatcher & photographer

Our recommendations:

- Watching the large number of species that live on Olt River banks and feed or nest here;
- A walk on the river bank in frosty winter mornings when rime ice covers everything in white, as in a fairy tale landscape.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSPA0003 Avrig - Scorei - Făgăraș
AREA	3 023 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro





COTUL TURZUNULUI

Olt River encountered in its way Turzunului Hill, made of hard basalt rocks which it failed to penetrate so it formed a spectacular circular floodplain around it. Cotul Turzunului bend, about 13 km long, hosts many birds that look for water ponds for food and rest during migration. The most significant resident or migratory birds include: white and black stork, little bittern, night heron, purple heron, little egret, great egret, ferruginous duck, smew, western marsh harrier, common kingfisher and ruff.



UPPER OLT VALLEY

Olt River springs from the contact area between the limestone in Hăşmaşul Mare massif and the crystalline in Şipotului massif, at 1280 m elevation. At the beginning in the Ciuc Depression it flows slowly and then it crosses the canyon area where several valuable spa resorts are located (Tuşnad, Bixad, Malnaş). It makes a detour around Baraolt massif on three sides, forming large meanders through the level plain of Braşov Depression, where it meets the smaller rivers Râul Negru, Ghimbăşel and Bârsa. Then it faces a new massif, Perşani, which it crosses through Racoş canyon. In Făgăraş Depression Olt River flows again slowly like a lowland river, between the low banks, permanently pushed to the right by its large number of tributaries. Cibin, Hârtibaciu and Sadu are its last tributaries in Transylvania, as after the confluence with these rivers Olt crosses the Southern Carpathians forming the picturesque canyon Turnu Roşu – Cozia.

The marshy habitat is very valuable for the beaver, otter and many fish species such as common carp, Sabanejewia bulgarica, European bitterling, asp, Romanian barbel and spined loach.

Aquatic habitats are very valuable and Olt River is no exception, although many areas were embanked. A great number of bird species find refuge, food and nesting places here.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0329 Oltul Superior
AREA	1 508 ha
E-MAIL	office@apmbv.anpm.ro
WEBSITE	www.apmbv.anpm.ro











On the Olt River bank you can see and take pictures of a lot of bird species, both nesting and birds of passage, particularly during the migration periods. The marsh warbler is a small bird but, like all its family members, it stands out by its extremely brisk and shrill song.



HÂRTIBACIULUI PLATEAU

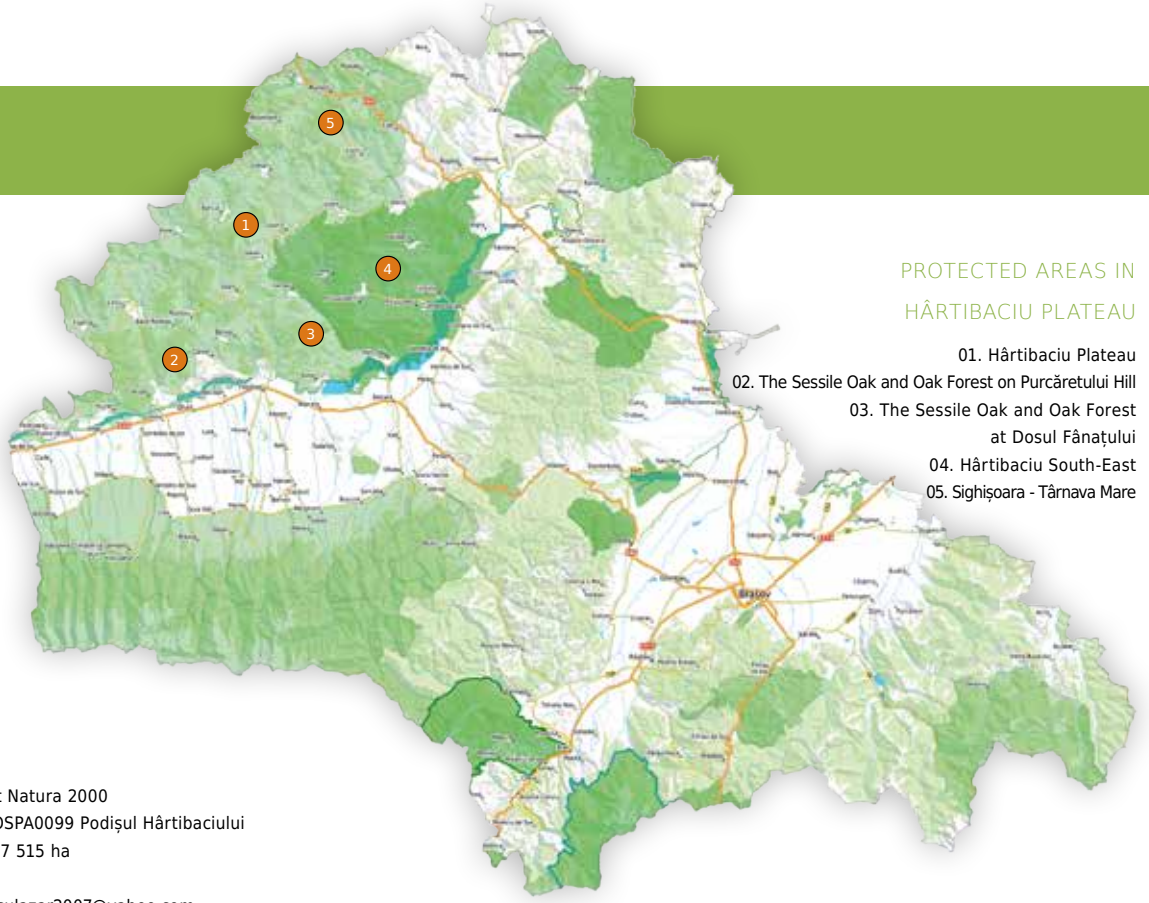
As the second largest reserve in Romania, this plateau hosts specific habitats for oak and other deciduous forests, but mainly grasslands and hay meadows with high European significance, as such habitats have almost disappeared from Europe.

HÂRTIBACIULUI PLATEAU

In June the meadows in Hârtibaciului plateau are filled with flower scent, and a walk in these places will become an unforgettable experience. These meadows still exist peacefully here, although they disappeared from other parts of Europe.

Hârtibaciului Plateau is the second largest protected area in Romania, after the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. It is located in the centre of the country, in the south of Transylvania, bordered by Târnava Mare River to the north and Olt River to the south. The plateau has a mosaic landscape, where land and natural resource management have created favourable conditions for many bird species of community and national interest.

Some of the most important bird species living here are: corn crake, Ural owl, grey-headed woodpecker, woodlark, red-backed shrike. This is a nesting area for the largest population of lesser spotted eagle and European honey buzzard in Romania, with the highest density reached south of Hârtibaciului Valley.



PROTECTED AREAS IN HÂRTIBACIU PLATEAU

01. Hârtibaciu Plateau
02. The Sessile Oak and Oak Forest on Purcăretului Hill
03. The Sessile Oak and Oak Forest at Dosul Fânațului
04. Hârtibaciu South-East
05. Sighișoara - Târnava Mare



TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSPA0099 Podișul Hârtibaciului
AREA	237 515 ha
E-MAIL	niculazar2007@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.dssibiu.ro/progresul-silvic/progresul-silvic











The meadows in Hârtibaciului Plateau are exceptionally beautiful and diverse. In such places you can encounter more than 50 flower species on a single square meter of ground, living in perfect harmony. This flora profusion is long since gone from Western Europe.



THE SESSILE OAK AND OAK FOREST ON PURCĂRETULUI HILL

This natural area lies in the central-west part of Braşov county, in Beclean commune, close to the county road connecting Voila to Cincşor and covers 42 ha.

The site is important for the presence of a habitat of European interest, consisting of Euro-Siberian forest steppe vegetation with sessile oak. The forest has a well preserved natural structure, with oak and sessile oak as dominant species, originating from naturally regenerating seeds. Some trees are outstanding in size, up to 70 cm diameter and 25 m height.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0144 Pădurea de pe Dealul Purcăretului
AREA	42 ha



"In the hilly area of Hârtibaciu - Târnava Mare nature is very well preserved and the wonderful landscapes are a delight for the eyes. This area is of European significance for its riches, plants and animals, forests and outstanding meadows, a unique landscape and good housekeepers. Although local people do not appear to pay much attention to nature, their daily actions bring evidence of a life in harmony with nature. We should take care of this wealth for which Europe envies us!" - Judith Papp, Milvus Group Association.

THE SESSILE OAK AND OAK FOREST AT DOSUL FÂNAȚULUI

The site was designated as a protected area in 2008 for the presence of a habitat of European interest, Euro-Siberian forest steppe vegetation with sessile oak. Oak and sessile oak dominate the forest, which regenerates naturally. Some trees in this forest are up to 70 cm in diameter and up to 29 m high.

These ancient forests are a perfect combination of many tree and shrub species, such as: beech, common hornbeam, linden tree, field elm, hazelnut tree, common hawthorn, elder; they also host two protected species of coleopteras: great capricorn beetle and Morimus funereus.

This natural area is in the central-west part of Braşov county, in the vicinity of Şoarş commune.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0143 Pădurea de la Dosul Fânaţului
AREA	108 ha
E-MAIL	niculazar2007@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.dssibiu.ro/progresul-silvic/progresul-silvic





HÂRTIBACIU SOUTH-EAST

This natural site included in Podișul Hârtibaciului plateau is located in the inner Subcarpathian area of Transylvania, in Homoroadelor district. Elevation varies between 430 m near Olt River floodplain and 700 m on Capului Hill. The area is mainly attractive by its traditional rural landscape.

Dacian forests, consisting mainly of oak, common hornbeam and beech, cover almost 30% of the reserve surface, with the rest consisting of grasslands, hay meadows, agricultural land and water flows.

The protected species of the area are: brown bear, bat, otter, long-eared owl, European fire-bellied toad or northern crested newt. The wolf population in this area is the largest population of this mammal in the Continental bioregion. The site is one of the few sites designed for the protection of the European pond turtle.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0303 Hârtibaciu Sud-Est
AREA	25 903 ha

Hârtibaciu South-East site hosts the largest wolf population in the Continental bioregion, which is extremely important for the conservation of this species.

SIGHIȘOARA - TÂRNAVA MARE

Sighișoara - Târnava Mare site was designated in 2008 for the meadow, lake, scrubland, floodplain woodland and various forest habitats. It hosts many protected flora species (about 87) and fauna species that depend on these habitats. The site area hosts 23 mammal species, 55 bird species and 600 butterfly species protected nationally.

The area is of international significance due to the large meadows, probably the last ones in Europe, which are perfectly functional from an ecological perspective. Their traditional management has maintained a balance between human activities and nature, almost unchanged from the Middle Ages.

The site is located in Podișul Târnavelor plateau and partly in Podișul Hârtibaciului plateau.



"I would define this area as a part of Transylvania where you feel peace. It is an area that creates harmony and balance. Traditions have remained untouched, and the wide meadows are breath-taking."

Florentina Florescu, WWF

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0227 Sighișoara - Târnava Mare
AREA	85 815 ha
E-MAIL	niculazar2007@yahoo.com
WEBSITE	www.dssibiu.ro/progresul-silvic/progresul-silvic











The rich vegetation on the Transylvanian hills gives this place a very special appearance. In Viscri the village is completely hidden behind hills and all you see is the church. For centuries people always knew how to live in harmony with nature, which we sometimes forget.



BODOC - BARAOLT MOUNTAINS

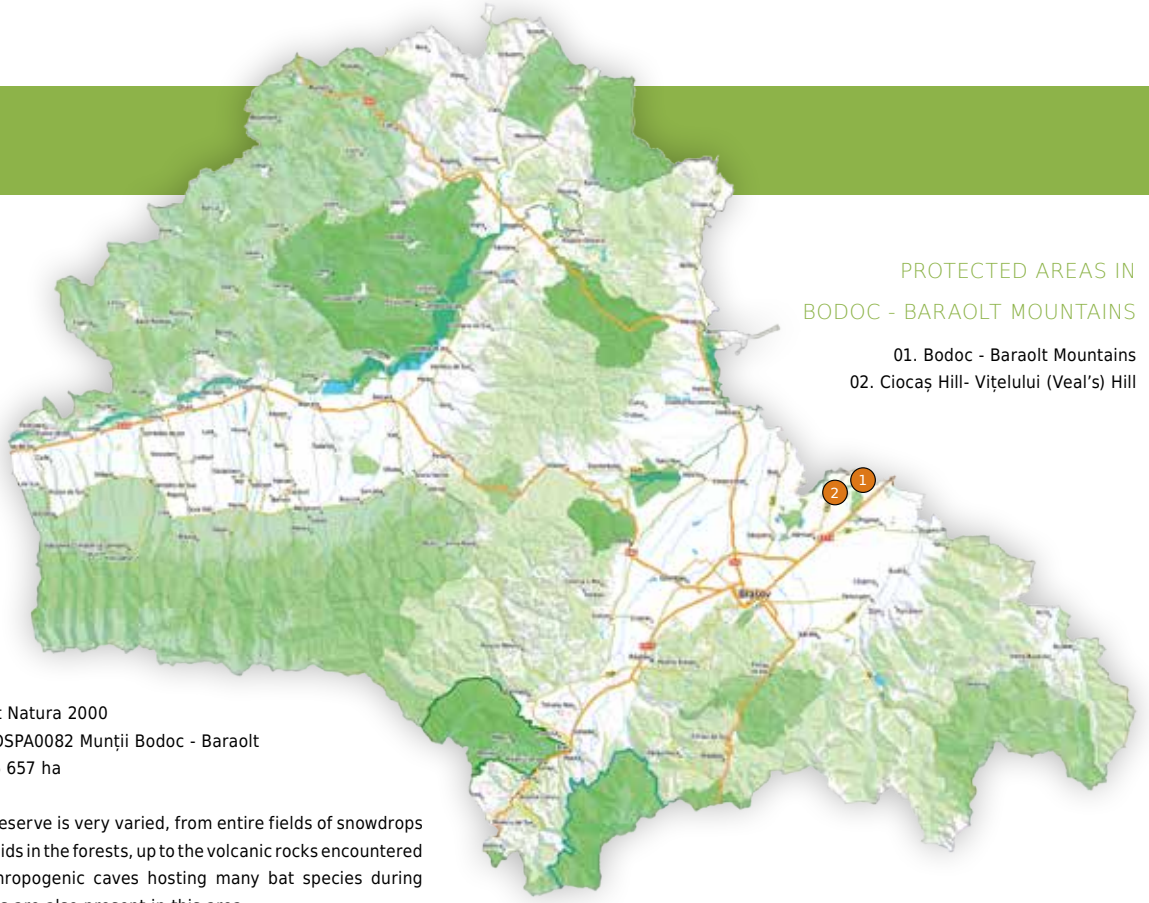
Although small sized, these mountains are beautiful by their wilderness. As part of the Eastern Carpathians, Bodoc - Baraolt Mountains are the beginning of a wilderness area that continues further with Harghita and Gurghiu Mountains.

BODOC - BARAOLT MOUNTAINS

These welcoming mountains delight our eyes with the hundreds of snowdrops that come forth in spring, while the coloured autumn forests and the sunny glades invite you to a few moments of relaxation.

The site covers Baraolt Mountains entirely and also part of Bodoc Mountains. Forests make up for about 70% of the site surface, and relief is typical for high hill areas. All the brooks flowing through the site are tributaries to Olt River. The protected area includes grasslands and hay meadows that alternate with ancient deciduous forests, mainly beech, providing an ideal habitat both for prey birds and for black stork. The European honey buzzard and black stork populations in Bodoc-Baraolt Mountains stand for 2% of the country-wide populations of these two species. Other important species present here are: corn crake, lesser spotted eagle, Ural owl, grey-headed woodpecker, collared flycatcher and red-breasted flycatcher.





PROTECTED AREAS IN BODOC - BARAOLT MOUNTAINS

01. Bodoc - Baraolt Mountains
02. Ciocaș Hill- Vițelului (Veal's) Hill

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSPA0082 Munții Bodoc - Baraolt
AREA	56 657 ha

The landscape offer of this reserve is very varied, from entire fields of snowdrops under Kőmöge Peak and orchids in the forests, up to the volcanic rocks encountered here and there or the anthropogenic caves hosting many bat species during winter. Mineral water springs are also present in this area.











CIOCAȘ HILL- VIȚELULUI (VEAL'S) HILL

The area is highly interesting for biologists, geologists and archaeologists, as it offers a wide range of scientific values. It hosts rare species from the flora of Covasna and Brașov counties or even from country-wide flora. It is the only area in Covasna county with a lot of steppe species living in very good conditions at this elevation: dwarf Russian almond, blackthorn, pygmy iris, mountain pasque flower, pheasant's eye, burning bush, redcurrant, sage and pink. The landscape is enhanced by birds flying over forests: corn crake, owl, common kestrel and European Bee-eater.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000 și rezervație naturală
NAME	ROSCI0056 Dealul Ciocaș - Dealul Vițelului
AREA	917 ha





"I do hope from all my heart that Romanians will start to value nature and protected areas more and more. When something bad happens to a protected area, it should hurt us just like some bad news about a close friend. I think nature is a good friend to us, for better or for worse. And it is good for us to make a step to this life-time friendship: walking, running, on a trotting horse or riding a bike, with a camera or holding children or grandparents by hand."

Andrei Blumer, Romanian Ecotourism Association





The European Bee-eater is one of the most colourful and spectacular birds in the country and is found in large numbers in this protected area. It builds its nest in the loess quarries, where it digs a several meter long gallery. It feeds mainly on bees, dragonflies and butterflies.

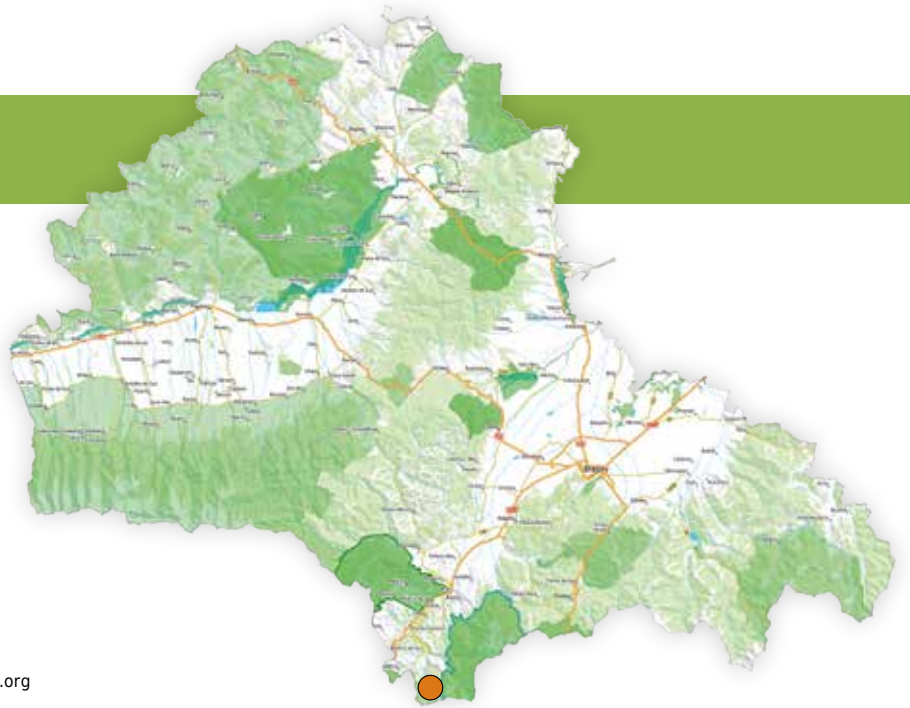


LEAOTA

Leaota Massif is located in the south-west part of Bucegi mountain complex, which also includes Bucegi Mountains, Piatra Craiului Mountains, Rucăr-Bran-Dragoslavele Corridor and Prahova Corridor; Leaota stands out mainly by its wilderness.

LEAOTA

The solitude of these mountains, lands haunted only by the tireless wind, the wild forests and the alpine plains pastured by flocks of sheep, make this protected area an ideal destination for lovers of isolated places.



Leaota Massif is bordered by Piatra Craiului National Park at the north-west and Bucegi Natural Park at the east; the site's main role is to be an ecological corridor to ensure species' migration between the two large protected areas. Bear and wolf are among the species that benefit from this role of the natural protected area.

The habitats identified here are: mixed beech - coniferous forests, spruce forests, alluvial forests, subalpine shrubs, meadow habitats, with frequent cliffs and screes. The site has a very rich vegetal diversity, comprising 810 species including several protected species: pink, edelweiss, rhododendron, English yew, Swiss pine etc. Various mammals and birds were identified here, including protected species such as: brown bear, lynx, wolf, capercaillie, sparrowhawk etc.

The main tourist activities in Leaota mountains are hiking, mountain cycling, off-piste skiing, photography and fauna watching.

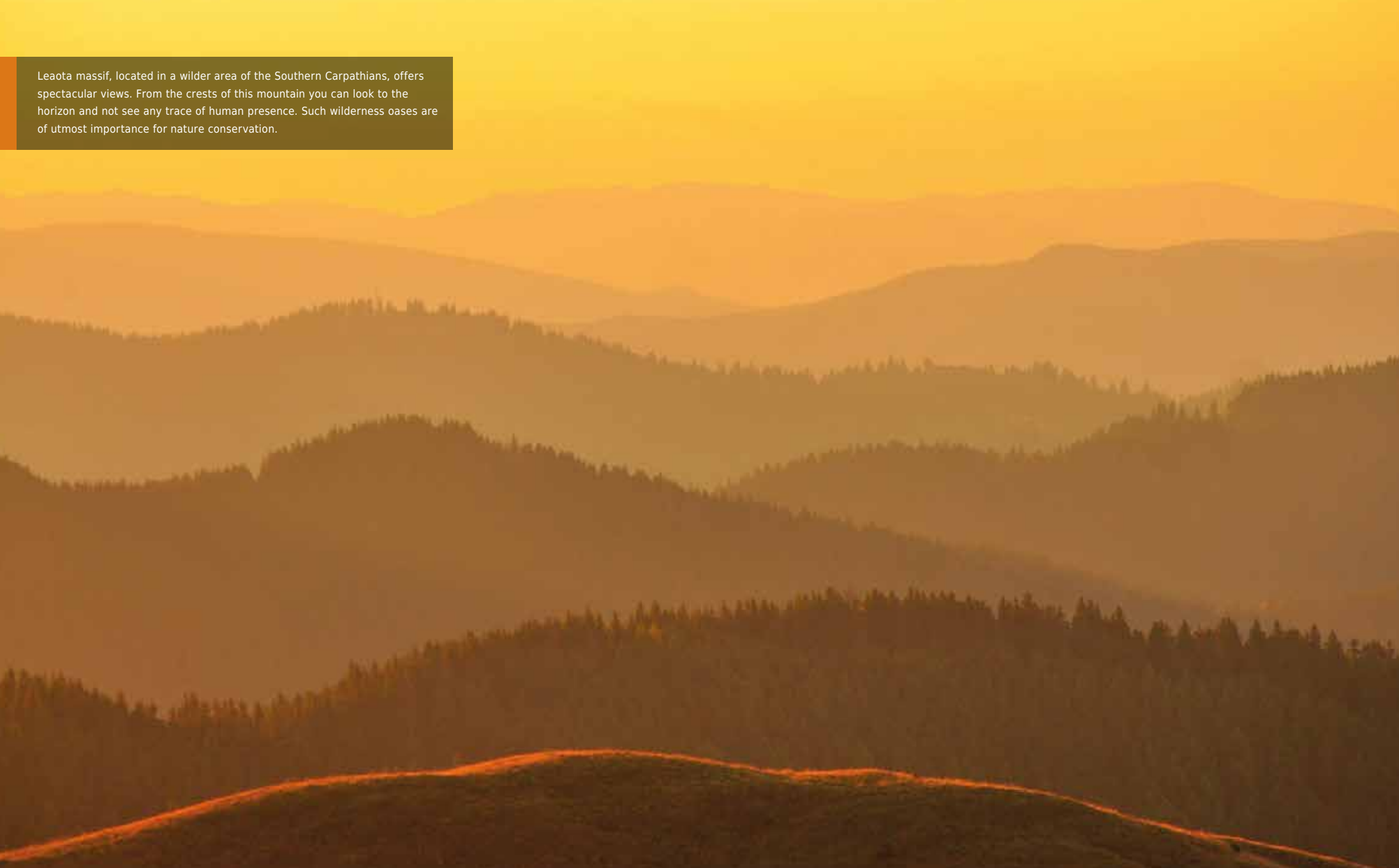
The optimum visiting period is early summer during the rhododendron blossoming season and autumn with the profusion of nature colours.

As the protected area is important for fauna, access is recommended only on the marked trails. There are several trails crossing Leaota Mountains, with access possible from Podu Dâmboviței, Rucăr, Stoenești, Padina, Fundata and Moeciu de Sus.

TYPE OF PROTECTION	Sit Natura 2000
NAME	ROSCI0102 Leaota
AREA	1 393 ha
E-MAIL	d.bucur@conservationcarpathia.org
WEBSITE	www.carpathia.org







Leaota massif, located in a wilder area of the Southern Carpathians, offers spectacular views. From the crests of this mountain you can look to the horizon and not see any trace of human presence. Such wilderness oases are of utmost importance for nature conservation.



One of the best times to visit Leaota Mountains is the beginning of summer, when the rhododendron blossoms and everything gets more colourful. Other alpine flowers also start to blossom at this time, such as pink or even edelweiss.

CONTACTS INFORMATION ABOUT PROTECTED AREAS

BUCEGI
NATURAL PARK ADMINISTRATION
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Bucegi Natural Park
The Fossiliferous Site at Vama Strungă
Bucșoiu - Mălăești - Gaura Escarpment

PIATRA CRAIULUI
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Piatra Craiului National Park
Bats Cave
Prăpăstiile Zărneștiului Gorges

METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – BRAȘOV
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Tâmpa Mountain
Stejerișul Mare

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BRAȘOV
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www.apmbv.anpm.ro
+40 268 419 013

Alder Thickets on Târlung
Avrig - Scorei - Făgăraș
Cotul Turzunului
Hârtibaciu South-East
Holbav
Făgăraș Mountains
Middle Olt Valley - Cibin - Hârtibaciu
Upper Olt Valley
Ormeniș Fossiliferous Site
Bogății Forest
Perșani
Bârlogul Ursului Cave
Piemontul Făgăraș
The Daffodil Glades at Dumbrava Vadului
The Basalt Cliff at Rupea

CARPATERRA
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Cheile Dopca
The Basalt Columns at Piatra Cioplită
The Basalt Columns at Racoș
The Geological Site at Racoșul de Jos
Homoroadelor Hills
Carhaga Fossiliferous Site
The Basalt Microcanyon at Hoghiz
The Mud Volcanoes at Homorod

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+40 721 833 183; +40 723 225 869

Comăna Cave

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Ciocaș Hill- Vițelului (Veal's) Hill
Bodoc - Baraolt Mountains

DRĂGOI IOAN LAURAȘ
laurasdragoi@yahoo.com
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Purcăreni Fossiliferous Site








CONTACTS INFORMATION ABOUT PROTECTED AREAS

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www.carpathia.org

Leaota

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+40744 359 862

Ciucaș
Dealul Cetății Lempeș
Hărman Marsh
Prejmer Forest and Eutrophic Marshes
Piatra Mare
Postăvaru

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www.pestera-valeacetatii.ro
+40 755 394 609

Valea Cetății Cave

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www.dumbravita-natura2000.ro
+40 268 481 581

Dumbrăvița - Rotbav - Măgura Codlei

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niculazar2007@yahoo.com
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+40 730 651 776

The Hârtibaciu Plateau
The Sessile Oak and Oak Forest at Dosul Fânațului
The Sessile Oak and Oak Forest on Purcăretului Hill
Sighișoara - Târnava Mare








PHOTO INDEX

THE COVER/ CONTENT


Ciucaş Mountains
© Dan Dinu


Leaota Mountains
© Ioan Stoienică


Common Kingfisher
© Dan Dinu


Crocuses
© Dan Dinu


Newt
© Dan Dinu


Ciucaş Mountains
© Dan Dinu


Vârghişului Gorge
© Dan Dinu

PIATRA CRAIULUI NAŢIONAL PARK


Cerdacul Stanciului Piatra Craiului
© Dan Dinu


Brown bear
© Mircea Vergheleț


Dianthus callizonus
© Dan Dinu


Lady's-Slipper Orchid
© Oliviu Pop


Alpine poppy
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Edelweiss
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Capercaillie
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Chamois
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Chamois
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Piatra Craiului
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NATURAL PARK BUCEGI


Strunga pass
© Dan Dinu


Ialomița river
© Dan Dinu


Sfinx
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Bucegi
© Dan Dinu


Strunga pass
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Clints, Strunga pass
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Bucegi Ridge
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Babele
© Dan Dinu


Lynx
© Ramon Jurj


Cave gorges
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Strunga pass
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PROTECTED AREAS IN BRAȘOV REGION


Dumbrăvița and Măgura Codlei
© Dan Dinu


(Eurasian) Nuthatch
© Dan Dinu


Penduline Tit
© Dan Dinu


Wood Anemone
© Dan Dinu


Chamois
© Dan Dinu


Butterfly
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Butterfly
© Dan Dinu


Tâmpa Mountain
© Dan Dinu


Spring pheasant's eye
© Dan Dinu


Tâmpa Mountain
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Blue Tit
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Livewort
© Dan Dinu


Wood Anemone
© Dan Dinu


Honey fungus
© Dan Dinu


Valea Cetății Cave
© E.M.S. Cave


Valea Cetății Cave
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Dumbrăvița
© Dan Dinu


(Common) Kingfisher
© Dan Dinu


Stejerișul Mare
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Dog rose
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Valea Cetății Cave
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Măgura Codlei
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Little Egret
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Water Rail
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Little Bittern
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Wood Anemone
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Mountain pasque flower
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Spring Fumewort
© Dan Dinu


Spring pheasant's eye
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Pink
© Fundația Carpați


Great Egret
© Dan Dinu


Lempes forest hill
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Spring pheasant's eye
© Dan Dinu


Lempes forest hill
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Moor frog
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Hoopoe
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PROTECTED AREAS IN BRAȘOV REGION


Prejmer Marshes
© Life for Marsh Project


Snake's head fritillary
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Holbav
© Vlad Dumitrescu


Fern
© Dan Dinu


Holbav
© Vlad Dumitrescu


Holbav
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POSTĂVARUL / PIATRA MARE


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Herb-Robert
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Postăvarul
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Cheile Râșnoavei
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Piatra Mare
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Wren
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Pinks
© Dan Dinu


Seven Stairs Canyon
© Dan Dinu


Piatra Mare
© Dan Dinu

CIUCAȘ


Chirușca Peack, Ciucaș
© Dan Dinu


Snowdrop
© Dan Dinu


Dogtooth violet
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Gropșoarele pass, Ciucaș
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Ciucaș
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Ciucaș
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Ciucaș
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Forest
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Purcăreni
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Globeflower
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Alder thickets on Târlung
© APM Brașov

ZONA MUNȚILOR PERȘANI


Racoșul de Jos
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Vârghișului Gorges
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ZONA MUNȚILOR PERȘANI


Vârghișului Gorges
© Dan Dinu


Racoș
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The Oak of Mercheașa
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Homoroadelor Hills
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Vârghișului Gorges
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Vârghișului Gorges
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Racoșul de Sus
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The Basalt Columns at Racoș
© Carpaterra


Racoșul de Jos
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The Basalt Columns at Racoș
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Forest
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Carhaga fossiliferous site
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The Basalt Columns at Piatra Cioplită
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Comăna Cave
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Bârlogul Ursului (“Bear’s Den”) Cave
© APM Braşov


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Rupea
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Rupea
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Mud volcano
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The Basalt Cliff at Rupea
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Vârghișului Gorges
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The Basalt Microcanyon at Hoghiz
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Tree frog
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House snake
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Green lizard
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Salamander
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Bogăţii forest
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Bullhead
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Dopca gorges
© Carpaterra


Bogăţii forest
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FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS AREA


Făgăraș mountain
© Horia Bogdan


Vadului Grove
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Topologului Valley
© Dan Dinu


Marmot
© Dan Dinu


Călțun Glacial Lake
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Common Buzzard
© Dan Dinu


Daffodil
© Dan Dinu


Făgăraș mountains
© Vlad Popescu


Viștea-Moldoveanu Peaks
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Făgăraș mountains
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Topologului Valley
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Middle Spotted Woodpecker
© Cristian Goga


Topologului Valley
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Coniferous Forest
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Fern
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Făgăraș mountains
© Horia Bogdan

OLT BASIN


Olt River
© Dan Dinu


European Stonechat
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Greater White-fronted Goose
© Cristian Goga


White Stork
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Grey Partridge
© Cristian Goga


Ducks
© Dan Dinu


Riparian Vegetation
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Marsh Warbler
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Whinchat
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Little Ringed Plover
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Marsh Warbler
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Common Kestrel
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Cotul Turzunului
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Common Buzzard
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HÂRTIBACIULUI PLATEAU


Meșendorf
© Dan Dinu


Hârtibaciului Valley
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Red-backed Shrike
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Lesser Spotted Eagle
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Milkwort
© Dan Dinu


Flax
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Cincu
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Oak Forest
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Oak Forest
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Cincu
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Meadow
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Meadow
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Meadow
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Blueweed
© Dan Dinu


Viscri
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BODOC-BARAOLT MOUNTAINS


Bodoc-Baraolt Mountains
© Ioan Stoienică


Bodoc-Baraolt Mountains
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Black Stork
© Dan Dinu


Bodoc-Baraolt Mountains
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Bodoc-Baraolt Mountains
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Fox
© Dan Dinu


European Bee-eater
© Dan Dinu


Bodoc-Baraolt Mountains
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Ciocaș Hill- Vițelului (Veal's) Hill
© Barti Levente


Pygmy Iris
© Barti Levente

LEAOTA


Leaota
© Ioan Stoienică


Leaota
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European roe deer
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Leaota
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Rhododendron
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Bucegi Natural Park
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Agile Frog
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Female deer
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Yellow Wagtail
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The basalt columns at Racoș
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Chamois
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Grey Heron
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Bucegi Natural Park
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Alpine Squill
© Dan Dinu



Marsh Tit
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Bucegi Natural Park
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Snowdrops © Dan Dinu

THE NATURE OF BRAŞOV
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