



## Xarxa de Parcs Naturals

Diputació de Barcelona

*Surface area* : 100.625 hectares

*Population* : 4 millions residents

*Region*: Catalunya

*Managing entity*: Diputació de Barcelona - Àrea d'Espais Naturals

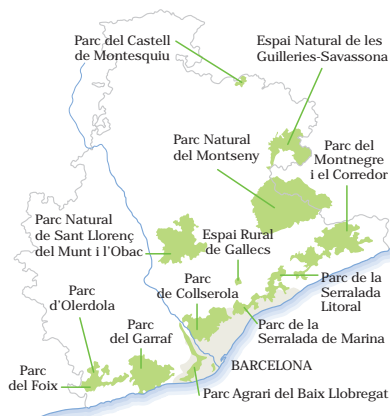
*Address* : Edifici del Rellotge / C/ Urgell, 187 / 08036 Barcelona

*Tel.* : +34 934 022 481

*Fax* : +34 934 022 439

*e-mail* : [a.espain@diba.es](mailto:a.espain@diba.es)

*web* : [www.diba.es/parcs](http://www.diba.es/parcs)



In Catalonia, the first instrument of protection of a natural area dated back to 1928, when the Association of Catalonia promoted a legal decree that constituted the Board of Trustees of La Muntanya del Montseny. However, it was not until the second half of the 20th century when, from Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Provincial Council), a public policy of protecting natural areas was promoted, mainly based on shared management between the municipal areas and with the participation of the inhabitants and users of the areas.

### *The way to protection*

The General Plan of the Province of Barcelona, in 1963, drawn up by Diputació de Barcelona, approved the Catalogue of Natural Parks, which proposed the possibility of declaring fourteen natural areas in the territory of the Barcelona regions. However, it was not until 24th July 1972 - the year in which the special plan to protect the Natural Park of Sant Llorenç de Munt i L'Obac was approved, based on the legislation on urban development in existence at the time - that the policy to protect natural areas was set up effectively.



The creation, in 1974, of the Natural Park Service of Diputació de Barcelona, guaranteed the technical application of this policy of planning and managing natural areas in the province of Barcelona. The arrival of the Llei del Sòl (Law governing Land Use) in 1975, allowed Diputació de Barcelona and the Town Councils involved to look more deeply into the instrument of the special urban plan as an instrument for protecting natural areas. In a short time, this process was translated into the creation, and in this case, the extension of six parks.



In the mid-1990s, Diputació de Barcelona took another step ahead with the territorial project for the metropolitan region of Barcelona. This project, called the Green Ring, proposed a system of natural areas based on the connection of forest masses, agricultural areas and natural areas, and led to the creation of both new parks and the interconnection between the new ones and those that already existed, with the aim of increasing the level of the environmental and landscape quality of the entire territory. As a result of this pioneering project, Diputació de Barcelona and several Town Councils constituted six consortia, that are today the managers of the six parks.



The Natural Park Network of Diputació de Barcelona is made up of twelve natural areas that are managed directly or in collaboration with the town councils, through consortia. Both Diputació de Barcelona and the Town Councils have decidedly opted for a management in agreement with civil society. This is why all the areas have their corresponding consultant councils, made up of representatives of the diverse areas that have some kind of relationship with the parks. These twelve parks are of first-class strategic importance to guarantee a suitable territorial and environmental balance within the geographical area of Barcelona. Together, they cover a total protected surface area of 100,625 Ha divided between 99 municipalities. Two thirds of the population of Catalonia live in their territory or area of influence.

The main objective of the Natural Park Network is to guarantee, in each of the areas, the preservation of natural and landscape values, sustainable socio-economic development and an organised public use. Coinciding with the first of these three objectives, the Natural Park Network promotes the territorial connection of the parks it manages with the surrounding areas. To guarantee the biodiversity of the territory. In addition, it develops other related functions, such as the preservation of the natural and architectural heritage, carrying out research, designing geographical information systems, preventing fires, maintaining paths, creating pedagogical programmes and many others.

As far as the socio-economic development of the areas is concerned, the Natural Park Network supports and offers technical guidance to activities in agriculture, stockbreeding, forestry or sustainable tourism, that guarantee the preservation and maintenance of the reality of the existing landscape, architecture and culture, which in addition influences the improvement of the quality of life of the population linked to the parks for residential or professional reasons.