

The Troodos range is the predominant geological and morphological feature on the island. It is covered mostly with natural forests of unique beauty and hosts invaluable plant and animal habitats. Graphic villages that maintain local culture, tradition and customs, are scattered all over the Range. To the west, it extends to the Pafos district and to the east it stretches over large parts of Lefkosia, Lemesos and Larnaka districts. The Troodos forest occupies the heart of the Range and includes its highest peaks (up to 1 952 m). The largest part of the forest, about 9 000 ha or 90 km², was designated a National Forest Park in 1992. The main aim was to safeguard its rational use and to perpetuate the values and functions of the area: ecological, scientific, recreational, hydrological and economic. The greater part of the Park has been included in the European network of protected areas, "Natura 2000".



A black pine (*Pinus nigra*) stand

Geographical position

The Troodos forest lies about 40 km north of Lemesos and 60km west of Lefkosia. It covers an altitudinal zone of 600 m (lowest point near Saittas) and 1 952 m (highest peak, Chionistra). To the north it extends to the main road Kakopetria - Prodromos; to the west up to the villages Lemythou, Agios Dimitrios and Pano Platres; to the south, it is bound by the villages Moniatis and Pelendri and its eastern boundaries roughly follow the road Fylagra - Kato Amiantos - Kakopetria.

Visitor Centre

It is located just about 200 m west of the Troodos Square, to which a paved trail is connected. The main function of the centre is to provide information about the Troodos National Forest Park. It is open daily at fixed hours and there is a low entrance fee. It includes an exhibition gallery, a film and lecture theatre and a small shop. Outside, there is a short circular trail with geological and botanical exhibits.



Cyprus alisson (*Alyssum cypricum*)



Peony (*Paeonia mascula*)

Management

The entire Park area is a state forest and is therefore public property. The management of the Park is the responsibility of the Forestry Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment. The headquarters of management are at Platania Forest Station near Kakopetria. Forest Offices operate also at Pano Platres, Saittas and Pano Amiantos. The main management activities include protection from fire, nature conservation, recreation management, reforestation, restoration of Amiantos asbestos mine, maintenance of forest roads etc.



Picnic site at Platania, under snow

Vegetation and Flora

The forests in the Troodos National Forest Park are mostly natural, regenerated without human intervention. At lower elevations calabrian pine (*Pinus brutia*) is the dominant tree species ascending up to 1 200 m and in warm, south-facing slopes, up to 1 600 m. A large number of smaller trees and shrubs occupy specific niches of the forest ecosystems that are created as a result of the combined effect of altitude, geology and moisture conditions. Along main riverbeds the dense vegetation is made up of oriental plane (*Platanus orientalis*), oriental alder (*Alnus orientalis*), laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), bramble (*Rubus sanctus*), myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), mint (*Mentha longifolia*), ivy (*Hedera helix*) etc., contributing considerably to landscape biodiversity and providing an ideal refuge to animal life. At lowest altitudes, wild olive (*Olea europaea*) reaches 1 000 m, the strawberry tree (*Arbutus andrachne*), with its attractive colour changes throughout the year is encountered in the zone from 600 - 1 500 m, the sumach (*Rhus coriaria*) and the endemic golden oak (*Quercus alnifolia*) from 600 - 1 650 m. At higher altitudes, from 1 200 - 1 500 m up to Chionistra, the dominant forest species is black pine (*Pinus nigra*). Other hardy, woody species common to the area are foetid juniper (*Juniperus foetidissima*), wild service tree (*Sorbus aria*), cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster racemiflorus*), barbary (*Berberis crerica*), the endemic dwarf gorse (*Genista sphacelata* subsp. *crudelis*) etc. A considerable number of black pine trees as well as junipers in this zone, are perennial-old, often exceeding 500 years - a few up to 1 000 years. These trees are strictly protected for their high ecological and scientific value.

The total number of individual plant species recorded in the Troodos National Forest Park approaches 750. Among them, 72 are endemic to Cyprus, of which 12 are exclusive to the Park, that is, they can only be

found in the Troodos National Forest Park and nowhere else in Cyprus or on the planet. Some of these plants have been named after Troodos like *Alyssum troodi*, *Nepeta troodi*, *Scorzonea troodea*, *Rosa chionistrae* etc. The Troodos National Forest Park constitutes the only, or the main habitat in Cyprus for many hardy plant species, such as the wild service tree, foetid juniper, cotoneaster, barberry etc. As a result of these characteristics, Troodos is considered as a botanical heaven and has been classified among the most important mountainous habitats of flora in Europe.

Fauna

Animal life of the Park is also rich and with high conservational value. Of the mammals, mention merits the Cyprus mouflon (*Ovis gmelini ophion*), which however is very rare and is scarcely to be seen. It is only a casual visitor to the western and northern parts of the Park that are closer to the main mouflon's habitat, the Pafos Forest. The fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and the hedgehog (*Hemiechinus auritus dorotheae*), live in the Park; they have evolved to endemic subspecies, obviously because of their long isolation in the island habitats of Cyprus. Interesting in the special mammal group are the bats, which prefer mine galleries and old buildings for roosting.

More than 80 bird species have been recorded to nest or to visit the Park area during the year. Of particular interest are the rare and protected: griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), raven (*Corvus corax*), Bonelli's eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*). Typical of the Park, are the smaller birds, crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra dorotheae*), treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*), the nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), the Cyprus wheatear (*Oenanthe cyprica*) etc.

Various reptile species appear during the warmest seasons of the year. The blunt-nosed viper (*Macroripera lebetina*) which can be extremely dangerous only if somebody steps on it, the slim-tailed Agama (*Laudakia stellio cyprica*), the Mediterranean chameleon (*Chamaeleo chamaeleo*), different lizard species like (*Phinicolacerta troodica*) and other snake species.

In moist sites, the freshwater crab (*Potamion potamios*) is characteristic; the green toad (*Bufo viridis*), the brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) and various other smaller animals can be seen.

Of the insects, that are not so well studied, butterflies are of the greatest interest. More than 30 species have been recorded in the Park, including some very rare and endemic species. As regards other insect groups, hundreds of species have so far been recorded, some of them endemic to Cyprus and to the Park.



Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)



Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

Hydrology

Most of the largest streams of Cyprus spring from the Troodos forest: Kourris, Kryos, Chapotami, Dhiarizos, Karkotis and Marathasa river.

No other forest area hosts as many water springs as Troodos forest. At present, there are about 50 known springs with substantial flow, used for supplying drinking water to many villages of the Lemesos and Lefkosia districts. "Arkolachania" spring has the biggest flow, with a minimum daily flow of 1 500 m³ and a maximum of 7 000 m³. The hydrological role of the forest is mainly the infiltration and purification of precipitated water. The water is stored in natural underground reservoirs and constantly supplies springs with water.

The provision of pure, drinking water is a main function of the forest. Its importance is growing rapidly, as a consequence of the increased pollution of waters from excessive and unwise use of chemicals by man.

Geology

The distinctive geology of the Troodos Forest area has attracted international scientific interest. The various rock types of the forest belong to the ophiolitic complex, which is characteristic of the broader Troodos range and one of the best-developed worldwide. For this reason, it has become the object of scientific study. It is widely accepted that the ophiolitic system of Troodos, has influenced man's knowledge of the structure and birth of the ocean's crust like no other ophiolitic complex in the world. The Troodos ocean crust was created 90 million years ago and it began to rise 70 million years ago. The first trace of land emerged only 15 million years ago.

The main rocks found in the Park area are serpentinite, dunite, wehrlite, pyroxenite, plagiogranite, gabbro, diabase and volcanic rocks at the lower altitudes.

Threats to the Park

Forest fire is the main threat to the Park. Fires are favoured by the prolonged hot, dry summers, the high inclines and dense flammable vegetation. Human negligence is the sole cause of destructive fires in Cyprus. The management makes every effort and has at its disposal considerable resources for the prevention and timely extinction of fires. Forest fires cause among others, landscape and habitat deterioration, soil erosion, loss in ecosystem productivity and death of many animals.



The Caledonia Falls



Rock formation in Troodos

Illegal capture and killing of birds is also a threat that leads to considerable reduction of bird populations, and undermines the management's effort to enhance biodiversity. Littering constitutes an additional problem, as it results in spoiling the Park's beauty. Recreational activities, especially snow activities, damage young plants and cause soil compaction and erosion. Unwise use of agriculture chemicals on the Park boundaries, causes pollution of stream water and has a negative impact on the small animals whose main habitat is water, like the freshwater crab.

What can you do in the Park

Picnicking: There are nine picnic sites within the Park area with a capacity for 250 to 2 000 visitors. This leaflet gives information about picnic sites while their location is shown on the map. Among the facilities provided are wooden tables, drinking water, car parks, toilets and children's play areas. Barbecues are permitted only in the pits provided in designated areas.

Camping: There are four campsites. Three of these, are for short stays with only rudimentary facilities. The fourth site, 500m east of the Troodos square, just next to the main road, is suitable for longer stays since it offers upgraded facilities. Information about the location and capacity of the campsites is given on the leaflet.

Hiking: The nature trails of the Park are well known and popular. There are 13 trails within the Park totalling about 65km. One of the trails offers access to wheelchair users. Trails provide an excellent chance to get to know the beauties of the Park and have a closer look at the various features like wild plants, fauna, geology and scenery. The best season for walking is usually from April to November. All trails are well-maintained and signposted. Additional and specific information for each trail is provided in other leaflets, which you can obtain from the visitor centre and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation.

Driving: A fast and convenient way of having a first look of the park is to drive along selected roads. Apart from the asphalted roads along which there are special viewpoints, row-surface forest roads offer another alternative leading to the heart of the forest. The lack of traffic provides the visitor with additional options and a quieter environment. Non-asphalted roads are maintained every year from May to November. It must be mentioned that some of them may be closed to the public for fire protection reasons and in such cases there will be appropriate signing.

Other activities and sights: Of the most interesting sight to visit, are the very old monasteries, most of which are found along the perimeter of the Park. Many of them have been restored and are protected, like the Agios Nikolaos at Kakopetria, Ayios Ioannis Lampadistis at Kalopanagiotis village, Timios Stavros at Peledri, Trooditissa near Platres and Trikoukka at Prodomos. The traditional way of life can be seen in many villages and local products can be bought. Furthermore, visitors can have a pleasant time visiting Kaledonia falls, the closed Asbestos mine where restoration works are in progress, the Moufflon enclosure at Platania Forest Station, and the centuries-old trees of black pine and foetid juniper on the higher elevations of the park.

Activities related to snow are only possible during January and February and rarely from December to March. The Park provides unique opportunities to photographers both amateur and professional, to bird-watchers and to those who like studying plants and geology.

Accommodation is offered both near Troodos square and mainly at nearby villages, like Kakopetria, Pano Platres, Pelendri etc.

Information

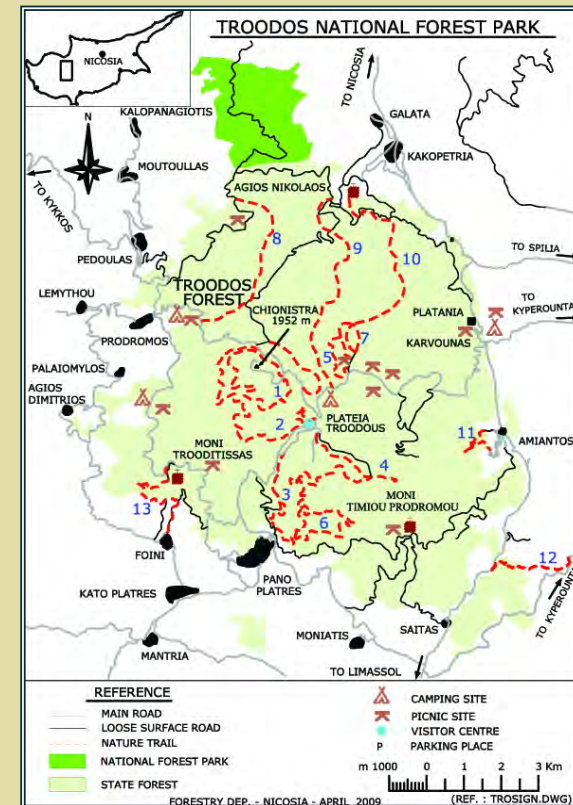
For further information, queries or any suggestions, please contact Platania Forest Station tel.: 22924219 or the headquarters of the Department of Forests in Nicosia tel.: 22805533

Visitors' DO's and DON'T's

Lighting of a fire at any point, within or near the forest, is prohibited by law, even along roads, bare ground or forest clearings.

- ▶ Lighting a fire is only permitted for cooking purposes in the designated barbecue pits of picnic sites.
- ▶ Before leaving the picnic site make sure that you have put out completely the fire.
- ▶ Make sure children do not play with anything that can start a fire. Avoid throwing away lighted cigarette stubs or matches.
- ▶ Do not litter the forest. After your picnic, collect all the rubbish you may have and put it in the litter-bins provided. If no bins are available or if they are full, take your litter with you. Do not leave it in bags outside the bins.
- ▶ Protect animal and plant life. Avoid cutting branches or shoots of plants and uprooting plants. Carving tree barks is also prohibited.
- ▶ Avoid damaging the facilities and constructions in the forest.
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary or undue noise and respect other visitors' need to enjoy a quiet environment.
- ▶ Do not smoke or eat during your walk along nature trails.

Recreation Sites at Troodos National Forest Park - Picnic sites				
Picnic site	Capacity	Altitude above sea level (m)		
▶ Platania	2,300	1,000		
▶ Mesa Potamos	400	900		
▶ Almirilivado	2,200	1,600		
▶ Ppasia livadi	1,500	1,600		
▶ Kampos tou Livadi	500	1,650		
▶ Trooditissa	400	1,200		
▶ Kampi tou Kalogyrou	450	1,400		
▶ Prodomos Dam	260	1,600		
▶ Marathos	270	1,300		
Camping sites				
Camping sites	Capacity tents	Altitude above sea level (m)		
▶ Platania	200	1000		
▶ Kampi tou Kalogyrou	120	1,400		
▶ Troodos	100	1,650		
▶ Prodomos Dam	100	1,550		
Nature Trails				
Name	Number on map	Length (Km)	Mean walking time (hours)	Height (m)
▶ Artemis	1.	7,0	2,5	1.850 - 1.850
▶ Atalanti	2.	14,0	4,5	1.750 - 1.750
▶ Kaledonia	3.	3,0	1,5	1.600 - 1.200
▶ Persefoni	4.	3,0	1,0	1.800 - 1.650
▶ Kampos tou Livadiou	5.	3,0	1,0	1.650 - 1.650
▶ Pouziaris	6.	9,0	3,5	1.700 - 1.200
▶ Livadi	7.	1,6	1,0	1.650 - 1.200
▶ Prodomos Dam	8.	4,5	1,5	1.550 - 1.200
▶ Kannoures	9.	7,0	2,5	1.650 - 900
▶ Mnimata Piskopon	10.	10,0	4,0	1.650 - 850
▶ Loumata Aeton	11.	2,5	1,0	1.100 - 1.000
▶ Moni-Fylagra	12.	3,0	1,0	1.000 - 750
▶ Trooditissa-Foini	13.	4,2	1,5	1.300 - 900



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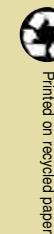


The Troodos National Forest Park



"On the island of Cyprus, on the highest of its mountains, called Troodos, numerous and various herbs can be found, which are useful for medical purposes and for which one would need very long time to talk about"

(Arist. Fr. VI. Phys.266).



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