The Mondragó Natural Park is located in the south of Mallorca, in the municipal area of Santanyí, and has a surface area of 766 hectares. While the park sits on privately owned land and estates, which, often divided into plots, are generally occupied by extensive dry crop cultivation.

Mondragó was declared a Natural Park in 1992. It is also a Natural Area of Special Interest (ANEI) and forms part of the Balearic contribution to the Natura 2000 Network as an Area of Special Protection for Birds and a Site of Community Interest (SCI).

A MOSAIC OF VERY DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS. THE PARK’S LANDSCAPE

For the most part, the surface of the Park is made up of parched, poor, stony fields known as retes. Here, dry-farming crops mingle with trees and herbaceous plants on small plots that are generally delineated by dry stone walls. Particularly abundant are the almond tree (Prunus dulcis), the carob bean tree (Ceratonia siliqua) and the fig tree (Ficus carica), as well as cereal grains such as barley, oats and wheat.

The dry climate and the poor soils make for the predominance of scrubland, primarily consisting of the wild olive grove (Olea europea var. sylvestris), the Aleppo pine (Pinus halepensis), the mastic (Pistacia lentiscus), the spiny rush (Limonium sp.), rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis) and lavender (Satureja hortensis). Pine groves line the silhouettes of the streams, coming together with savin (Juniperus phoenicea), the carob bean tree (Ceratonia siliqua), heather (Calluna vulgaris), and lavender (Satureja hortensis).

Two brackish ponds are formed at the end of the dune system at S’Amarador, which is inhabited by the sea daffodil (Nymphaea alba) and the sea squill (Phascolospermum maritimum).

The dry climate and low rainfalls of the Park are also responsible for the presence of dry stone walls, which, often divided into plots, are generally occupied by extensive dry crop cultivation in boas and as beams for houses.

THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION

Centuries of agricultural and livestock activity have undeniably shaped and defined the landscape of this area. The many architectural features found here include dry stone walls and the rustic sheds that served as temporary shelters for those who cultivated the poor fields, the retes. These structures are often made of beams or bear a conical roof, locally known as curullu. Less common are the stone hillside terraces, which sit alongside streambeds and in gulles. Other traditional structures, such as waterwheels, irrigation ditches, water collection ponds and osterms, are associated with the use of water.

Here there are also constructions that bear witness to the use of the forest. These include charcoal mounds, the charcoal makers’ sheds and the rustic sheds, which, often divided into plots, are generally occupied by extensive dry crop cultivation in boas and as beams for houses.