

Hoggar National Park

IUCN category II (national park)

Locator map

Location Tamanrasset Province, Algeria

Nearest city Tamanrasset

Coordinates 22°08′N 6°10′E﻿ / ﻿22.133°N 6.167°E﻿ /

Area 3,800 km² (1,500 sq mi)

Established 1987

The Hoggar Mountains (Arabic: **جبال هقار**, Berber: idurar n Ahaggar) are a highland region in the central Sahara, southern Algeria, along the Tropic of Cancer. The mountains cover an area of approximately 550,000 square km (212,000 square miles).[1]

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Geography[edit]

This mountainous region is located about 1,500 km (930 mi) south of the capital, Algiers. The area is largely rocky desert with an average elevation of more than 900 m (3,000 ft) above sea level. The highest peak, Mount Tahat, is at 2,908 m (9,541 ft).[1] The mountains are primarily composed of metamorphic rock approximately 2 billion years old, although there are areas where more recent volcanic activity has laid down much newer rock.[1] Several of the more dramatic peaks, such as Ilemen, are the result of erosion wearing away extinct volcano domes, leaving behind the more resistant material that plugged the volcanic cores.[1]

Assekrem is a famous and often visited point where Charles de Foucauld built a hermitage in 1911.[2] The main city near the Hoggar Mountains is Tamanrasset, built in a desert valley or wadi.

Environment[edit]

The Hoggar Mountain range typically experiences hot summers, with a cold winter climate. Temperatures fall below freezing in the winter. Rainfall is rare and sporadic year-round. However, since the climate is less extreme than in most other areas of the Sahara, the Hoggar Mountains are a major location for biodiversity, including number of relict species. The Hoggar Mountains are part of the West Saharan montane xeric woodlands ecoregion. The Hoggar mountains are home to the Ahaggar National Park, one of the national parks of the country.[3] The tallest peak in the Hoggar range, Mount Tahat is located in the park area, which covers approximately 450,000 square kilometres (170,000 sq mi).[3]

Fauna and flora[edit]

Slightly to the west of the Hoggar range, a population of the endangered African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) remained viable into the 20th century, but is now thought to be extirpated within this entire region.[4]

Analysis of collected scat in 2006 showed the presence of the Northwest African cheetah in the region.[5][6] Between August 2008 and November 2010, four individuals were recorded by camera traps.[7] A single cheetah was filmed and photographed by Algerian naturalists in 2020 in the national park in the Atakor volcanic field whose peaks approach a height of 3,000 metres (9,800 ft).[8]

Relict populations of the West African crocodile persisted in the Hoggar Mountains until the early 20th century.[9]

The park also contains a population of herbivores such as the saharan subspecies of the barbary sheep and the Dorcas gazelle.[3]

Vegetation in this area includes trees such as *Vachellia tortilis*, *Vachellia seyal*, myrtle and *Tamarix aphylla* which are scattered throughout the area. Other plants may include *Citrullus colocynthis* and *Calotropis procera*.

Cultural significance[edit]

Prehistoric settlement is evident from extant rock paintings dating to 6000 BC.[10] The Hoggar Massif is the land of the Kel Ahaggar Tuareg.[1] The tomb of Tin Hinan, the woman believed to be the matriarch of the Tuareg, is located at Abalessa, an oasis near Tamanrasset.

Panoramic view[edit]

See also[edit]

France and weapons of mass destruction; Saharan facilities

Saharan rock art

Teffedest Mountains