

Ifrane National Park is a national park located in the Middle Atlas mountain range, in Morocco.[2] Its territory extends over the Western part of the Middle Atlas mountains and areas within the provinces of Ifrane and Boulmane.[3] It was established in 2004 and covers an area of 125,000 hectares (310,000 acres).[4] Much of the park is forested with Atlas cedar.[5] Ifrane National Park is one of the few remaining habitats for the Barbary macaque, *Macaca sylvanus*; this primate prehistorically had a much broader range in North Africa, but currently survives as an endangered species in narrowly restricted and fragmented habitats.[6]

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Creation[edit]

Ifrane National Park was conceived in 1994 and established in October 2004 due to many reasons such as the existence of remarkable species in the territory, the presence of internationally important ecosystems, and the increase of human activity and resource exploitation.[7]

Since the 1990s, Morocco got involved in the conception of strategies that can help in protecting the environment and biodiversity through projects and conventions such as Ramsar.[7] Ifrane National Park is one of the strategies that the Moroccan state came up with in order to demonstrate the importance of its forests and ecosystems.

Territory[edit]

The park initially covered an area of 53,800 ha (133,000 acres), and was enlarged in April 2008 to 125,000 ha (310,000 acres).[4] The zone encompasses some of the most ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands and high-altitude forests.[3] It is believed that the park's altitude varies between 1,300 and 2,400 metres (4,300 and 7,900 ft) including the cedar forest located in the province of Ifrane.[4]

It was stated that the park contains one tenth of the Atlas Cedar in the world, on forth of the world's population of the Barbary Macaque, and two Ramsar sites: the two lakes Afennourir and Tifounassine.[4]

Additionally, included in Ifrane National Park's territory are the following 'daiyat', as in lakes, and forests:

Dait Aoua

Dait Hachlaf

Dait Ifrah

Tallount

Kharzouza

Ain Kahla[7]

Natural reserve[edit]

The park constitutes a very important natural reserve to Morocco since it is biologically and geologically diverse. The park was created with these three intentions:

protecting biodiversity and ecosystems

raising awareness of the environment and eco-tourism

sustainable development of natural resources[7]

Flora[edit]

The area has 1015 different plant species including the Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus Atlantica*), the Evergreen Oak (*Quercus Ilex*), the Algerian Oak (*Quercus Canariensis*), the Maritime Pine (*Pinus Pinaster*), and the Spanish Juniper (*Juniperus Thunifera*).[4] Other tree species that exist in the park include the Montpellier maple, the yew, and the holly.[4]

Cedrus atlantica in the Park

Quercus canariensis

Fauna[edit]

The park contains a rich fauna. It constitutes a natural living environment for the endangered monkey species the Barbary Macaque. Moreover, in the park one can find wild Barbary boars (*Sus scrofa barbarus*), the golden Jackal, the striped hyenas (*Hyaena hyaena*), the Barbary stag (*Cervus elaphus barbarus*), the arruis (*Ammotragus lervia*), red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), the serval (*Leptailurus serval constantinus*), the caracal (*caracal caracal algira*), the European otter (*Lutra lutra*), the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), the crested porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*), the cape hare (*Lepus capensis*) the Common Genet and probably the barbary leopard (*Panthera pardus panthera*).[7]

In addition, the park is a place where various bird species keep showing up. In fact, Afennourir Lake is a Ramsar Site where you can find a shelter for bird-watching. The bird species that can be found in the lake include coots, also called Fulica, snipes, and egrets.[7]

Mauremys leprosa

Macaca sylvanus

Reintroduction projects[edit]

In 2021, to celebrate World Biodiversity Day, in the Ifrane National Park, 31 arruis and 6 crested porcupine were reintroduced. In 2021 to Friday June 4, 28 arruis were reintroduced.

Notes[edit]