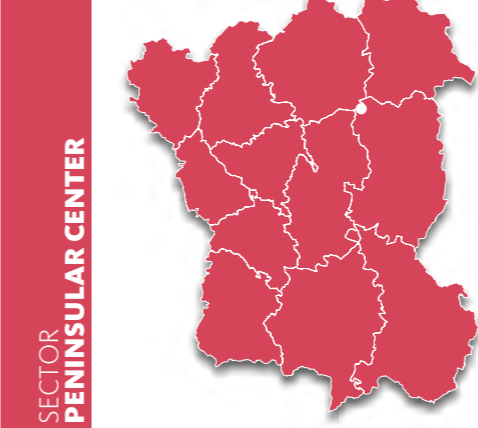


# NATURE TRAIL LA MANCHA WETLANDS



Guide to the  
**Nature Trails**  
of Spain



SECTOR  
**PENINSULAR CENTER**

## SECTOR PENINSULAR CENTER CAMINO NATURAL LA MANCHA WETLANDS

- 1. Stage 1: Villacañas - Quero (Main Route):** Approximately 27 km-long stage through Toledo lands. You can visit the lagoon complex of Villacañas, passing near its town centre and enjoying the Laguna Larga, the Laguna de Tirez and the Laguna de Peñahuca. This stage finishes after the Lagunas y Albarinales del Gigüela Nature Reserve in the town of Quero.
- 2. Laguna Larga branch:** Less than a kilometre long, it draws from the Main Route and continues until reaching the Laguna Larga de Villacañas.
- 3. Stage 2: Quero - Villafranca de los Caballeros (Main Route):** You will start this 14 km stage at the Laguna Grande in Quero, explore the River Gigüela and the Lagunas y Albarinales del Gigüela Nature Reserve, go along the Laguna Chica de Villafranca de los Caballeros and end at the Laguna Grande de Villafranca de los Caballeros.
- 4. Stage 3: Villafranca de los Caballeros - Alcázar de San Juan (Main Route):** Throughout this third stage, with a length of almost 19 km, you will leave Toledo behind to visit the Laguna de la Sal and reach the River Gigüela basin. In Ciudad Real you will come across several wetlands: Laguna de las Yeguas, Laguna del Camino de Villafranca and, finally, Laguna de la Veguilla. The east limit of Alcázar de San Juan marks the end of the stage.
- 5. Junta de los Ríos branch:** You will get going at Alcázar de San Juan and continue until you reach the exceptional



✦ Molino Sorditero mill in Campo de Criptana

Since 1993 the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and the Environment's Nature Trails Program aims to restore former transport infrastructures such as railway tracks, cattle trails and traditional routes, for public use and enjoyment. These routes take us to the countryside to discover the biodiversity and beauty of our precious natural heritage, and discover the villages, sights, traditions and people that are part of the unique cultural landscape of our country. We invite you to visit them and offer you the keys to enjoy the trip. In this brochure you will find a brief description of the La Mancha Wetlands Nature Trail and the map for the journey, along with recommendations to make the most of this experience. We only ask one thing of you: do not forget to leave everything as you found it. The conservation of these pathways is also your responsibility.

**TELEPHONES OF INTEREST:**

- Asociación para el Desarrollo y la Promoción de La Mancha Norte de Ciudad Real (PROMANCHA): 926 58 41 51



✦ Flamíngos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) in Laguna de la Veguilla lagoon

## COUNTLESS LAGOONS AND A WIDE VARIETY OF BIRDS POPULATE THESE MANCHEGO LANDS, THE CRADLE OF DON QUIJOTE



The La Mancha Wetlands Nature Trail runs across the main lagoons of the La Mancha Húmeda region, included within the Natura 2000 network and classified as a Biosphere Reserve, among other protection instruments. The trail consists of 5 stages and 6 detours with an approximate length of 150 km. This itinerary runs along broad, smooth relief paths between the provinces of Toledo, Ciudad Real and Cuenca. This feature makes it the perfect trail for bike rides, especially in seasons with a mild climate such as spring and autumn.

de Sánchez Gómez precedes the Laguna de la Dehesilla, which just a few kilometres later returns to the Main Route.

- 11. Laguna del Taray Chico branch:** Branch of over 5 km that runs between vineyards after leaving Las Mesas which will allow you to enjoy the constantly wide Laguna del Taray Chico.

### LAMANCHA WETLANDS

Protected Natural Space with a surface area over 14,000 ha included within the Natura 2000 network as a Specially Protected Area (SPA) and a Specially Protected Area for Birds (SPAB). This territory covers discontinuously the provinces of Toledo, Ciudad Real and Cuenca. It possesses the Biosphere Reserve status and many of its lagoons are classified as Natural Reserves. It is characterised by a clear continental character and a smooth relief, dotted by numerous shallow, saline lagoons with a great seasonality that leads to its complete dryness during the summer period. These unique features increase the botanical and zoological value of this environment. In terms of vegetation, numerous species adapted to the hyper-saline conditions grow in this wide lagoon areas, notably a broad sample of protected and endangered species included in the national and regional catalogues. The zoological value is mainly concentrated in the bird population that finds shelter in this environment, both as a stop in their migratory routes and throughout the year. For these reasons, the importance of preserving and conserving these spaces and its flora and fauna population must be a shared commitment.



✦ Close-up of the salt crust in coastal area of the lagoon

