The natural heritage is:
"all the possessions among which the existence, the production and the reproduction are the result of the activity of the nature, even if the objects which compose him it undergo modifications because of the Man"
(Insee, on 1986)

Partie 4: PROTEGER LE PATRIMOINE NATUREL
Chapitre 1 :
Qu'est-ce que le patrimoine naturel ?

I. Définition.
II. Le patrimoine biologique en France métropolitaine.
III. Le patrimoine géologique, minéralogique et paléontologique de la France.
IV. Le patrimoine naturel en outre-mer
V. Le patrimoine naturel de l'Ardèche

1. L'Ardèche présente une flore exceptionnelle aux multiples vertus.
2. L'Ardèche présente une faune remarquable, souvent protégée

Chapitre 2 :
Le patrimoine naturel est précieux et fragile il faut le protéger.

I. Des institutions chargées de protéger le patrimoine naturel.

1. Le conseil spécifique régional du patrimoine naturel.
2. L'inventaire départemental du patrimoine naturel.
3. Les Zones naturelles d'intérêt écologique, faunistique et floristique.
4. Les zones d'importances de conservation des oiseaux.

**Le Parc Naturel Régional des Monts d'Ardèche**

Caractéristiques du parc.
La charte.
Les actions concrètes.
Le projet du Parc.

7. L'office national des forêts. (ONF)
II. Les associations et la protection du patrimoine naturel.

Le RENE 07 est le Réseau Education Nature Environnement Ardèche.

1. Le FRAPNA
2. Pensees sauvages
3. Polenergie (Maitrise de l'énergie / énergies renouvelables)
4. Les amis du Viviers
5. CORA 07
6. CLAPAS : Roches Nature et Paysages
7. Clair d'étoiles et Brin d'jardin

III. La protection du patrimoine naturel dans le monde agricole.

1. Les AOC
2. Le châtaigne d'Ardèche et son AOC.
3. Le picodon et son AOC.
4. Le boeuf Fin Gras du Mézenc et son AOC.
5. Les mytilles d'Ardèche, un label de qualité mais pas une AOC.
Chapter 1:

What is that the natural heritage?

I. Definition:

The natural heritage includes the ecological wealth, faunistic, floristic, geologic, mineralogical and paleontological of France (ground, river natural territory).

This heritage is of an exceptional wealth:
- for its alive party (ecosystems, fauna and flora) named biodiversity.
- for its) inanimate party (elements geologic, mineralogical and paleontological).

II. The biologic heritage ou the biodiversity in France.

We notice a beautiful wealth of these heritage bound in:

- the big geologic and climatological variability, which get ecological very diversified conditions. France includes four of six biogeographical zones of the Western Europe: the Atlantic, continental, alpine and Mediterranean domains.

- the geographical situation on the West of Europe, which establishes a real biological crossroads, on one hand for the north migrations (between the Northern Europe and western Africa) and on the other hand for the exchanges between the western Mediterranean Sea (Iberic peninsula) and the oriental Mediterranean Sea (Italy, Greece).

The flora of metropolitan France.

Metropolitan France has approximately 4900 sorts of superior plants (Ptéridophytes and Angiosperms) natives, what places it just behind three Mediterranean countries:

- Spain (7500 sorts)
- Italy (5600 sorts)
- Greece (5000 sorts).

On the other hand, it outstrips countries of the North;

- Germany (3000 sorts)
- the United Kingdom (1400 sorts).

So, 40 % of the European sorts exist in France.

If we add to these native sorts the naturalized (native of another country, introduced voluntarily or not and behaving as a native sort), the escaped from culture, but not propagating and the accidental (appearing spontaneously but sporadically), it is widely more than 6000 sorts than we can find in our country.

Except the small departments very urbanized like Ile-de-France, every French department
has at least 1200 native or naturalized sorts. The maximum is found in Alpes-Maritimes, with 2700 sorts.

**The fauna of metropolitan France.**

The fauna of metropolitan France is rich and diversified, in road between the countries of north, relatively poor in biodiversity because covered by ice there is 10 000 years old, and the Mediterranean countries with a lot of biodiversity.

It is difficult to say how much there is of animal species in France. The number of sorts of invertebrates is in tens of thousands; only for insects, there are about 35 200. Vertebrates are represented by thousand sorts among which approximately 400 live in marine environment.

France contains a good part of the European biodiversity. It accommodates besides important populations of certain sorts, so conferring her a big responsibility face to face of the European natural heritage.

For example, France is:
- the second European country in number of sorts of amphibians (55 % of the European sorts)
- 58 % of the sorts of birds in Europe come in France for the reproduction.

Vertebrates, only 8 sorts (that is less than 1 %) are only in France. Invertebrates, this rate is also weak. Certain groups make however exception.

It is in Corsica where we find most endemic sorts, followed of Pyrénées and Alpes.

**III. The geologic, mineralogical and paleontological heritage of France.**

This heritage is very rich too, fruit of a geologic history was very diversified. It includes stratotypes, fossile sites and mineralogical sites, geologic landscapes, collections ...

Unlike the biological heritage, it deserves certainly to be better known, better estimated and better kept. Indeed its consideration in the "natural heritage" is only very recent.

**IV. The natural heritage of the “over-seas “ French communities.**

The levels of biodiversity it overseas are exceptional, both for its wealth and for its originality. The overseas communities accommodate globally more sorts for all the groups
There are globally 26 times more plants, 3.5 times more "mollusques", more 100 times more fish and 60 times more endemic birds "over-seas" communities than in metropolis.

So, more than 98% of the vertebrate fauna and specific vascular 96% of plants in France (which the preservation of the populations is under French responsibility) is concentrated on the 22% of its territory which represent the overseas communities.

These French communities are situated in three different oceans (the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific, the Indian), by the equatorial zone in the polar zone. This biogeographical disparity, mainly included in the "intertropical" zone, is at the origin of the very big biological variety of these communities, at the same moment on the international plan and with regard to metropolitan France.

Their island character (only Guyana is not an island) is at the origin of the very high level of diversity of the fauna and the flora. The importance of these exceptional biological heritage is all over the world recognized. These French communities are listed priority zones for the conservation of the biodiversity:

Examples:

A. New Caledonia is:
   - "Zone of Endémisme for birds " (BirdLife International)
   - "Center of Variety for Plants " (IUCN and WWF)
   - "Hot spot" (Preservation International),
   - includes four ecoregions (WWF).

B. Guyana identified is:
The territory presenting the best possibilities to the world as for the conservation of the big natural ecologically intact and relatively not disrupted forests ("forests-borders", WRI). It indeed represents one of the last 15 big massifs of rain forests which have not split up by the human activities yet.

V. The natural heritage of Ardèche

The nature is one of the essential wealth of Ardèche. Protected largely, it offers a quality of unmistakable life to the inhabitants and attracts here millions of tourists in search of natural spaces.

With its ecosystems and its very varied climates, Ardèche has a remarkable biological wealth, so in cash vegetable as animal.

1. Ardèche presents an exceptional flora to the multiple virtues.

On the summits of the Mountains of Ardèche, the territory of the massif of Mézenc and springs of the Loire offers an exceptionally rich and varied flora which will delight botanists.
and walkers.
The Nature strewed of this there any sorts of plants for the pleasure of eyes there but also used for our well-being and our health.

However, certain sorts are protected and it is advisable to admire them only the glance.

The meadows or the rocky moors.

They offer a multitude of smells and colors with “la pensée sauvage, la violette du Mézenc, le serpolet (thym sauvage au goût citronné), la jonquille, le narcisse, la grande gentiane, l’arnica “ renowned for its soothing and healing virtues, “l’épilobe” which we meet along roads during summer, “la digitale pourpre”, “le lys martagon “, “ le séneçon leucophyle”, “lairelle des marais, “ le Lycopode sabine” , « l’iris nain », etc....

Photo 1 : le lys martagon.

Photo 2: l’épilobe en épi (epilobium agustifolium)

The height could achieve 1,20 m, the beautiful tight purple handles make a luxury cover from June for hectares of moors.
The “épilobe” reproduces by its roots and creates an inextricable network which stabilizes the ground, but does not leave many possibilities of development with the other plants.
The "anemone pulsatille" decorates with flowers the summits of the Mountain Mézenc and its neighborhood (Alambre, Cholet), from the beginning of April sometimes under the snow.

It is about a protected subalpine sort liking moors with heather the driest, very sensitive to the precocity of the spring period of sunshine.

It is also a toxic sort only used in homoeopathy.

Peat zones
They reserve several sorts protected as "le Rossolis à feuilles rondes, la Ligulaire of Siberia", the magnificent "oeillet" or Drosera, carnivorous plant.

Photo 3: “l’anémone pulsatille” (pulsatilla verna)

Photo 4: “lycopode sabine” (lyciopodium sabinus)

Photo 5: La ligulaire de Sibérie
We also find very rare orchids in Ardèche.

Photos 7, 8 and 9: Orchis odorant (Anacamptis coriophora subsp. Fragrans)

The “Orchis odorant” presents a hurt port, narrow sheets, sometimes green, varied, generally clear flowers of color, lengthened inflorescence, narrow sheets and a pleasant smell. It prospers in June. It lives in full light, on one dry, calcareous ground, and we find it until 600 m of height.

It is protected on all the national territory, under the name of Orchis coriophora subsp. fragrans.

Photos 7, 8 and 9: L’orchis odorant
Epipogon sans feuilles  (*Epipogium aphyllum*)

It is a rare plant, saprophyte, with eclipses. We find it in fresh forests of beeches and pines until 1800 m of height. It prospers from the middle of July to the middle of August. Attractive plant from 10 to 30 cms, it is very fragile. Without chlorophyll, its sheets are replaced by small scales. One account 2 - 8 big flowers, directed downward. The “périanthe” is yellowish, translucent. The “labelle” is directed upward, and it is white stained of pink, translucent. The spur is big and short. It is protected on all the national territory.

Photos 10, 11 et 12 : *Epipogon sans feuilles*.

2. Ardèche presents a remarkable fauna, often protected The variety is strong in Ardèche.

The biodiversity is very important in Ardeche. For vertebrates, it goes of the Shrew to the Golden eagle, by way of the Salamander or still the bats and the Beaver... For mammals, it is about 70 sorts. For birds, more than 150 sorts nest regularly in the department. For the reptiles and the amphibians, it represents approximately 35 sorts.

**Ecosystem aquacole**

Water of surface, stream, river, river whatever is its name, the water which flows modelled the ground where it digs its bed.

*High valley, hard rocks and strong slopes.*

In the realm of the waterproof metamorphic rocks, the river is a torrent fed by the cast iron of snows or rains. In these high lands of granites and lava, it digs valleys taken in the marked slopes.

photo 13 : a torrent
**Average valley, alluvial plains and abrupt parades.**
The Ardèche digs the plain in sedimentary materials which deteriorate easily. Harder rocks sometimes form contractions, sorts of bottlenecks or bolts, which come to give rhythm to the river

![River in plain](image)

photo 14 : *River in plain*

**“Gorges” picturesque and subterranean labyrinths of limestone.**
In its “gorges”, Ardèche flows into a narrow road profoundly dug in the limestone. With the rain, the streaming and the current, big faults rack themselves to form a valley in the almost vertical walls, in picturesque “gorges”. The water also modelled a multitude of subterranean tunnels and caves quite more spectacular the some than the others, as the famous “Grotte Chauvet” or “ the Aven of Orgnac”

![The river Ardeche](image)

photo 15 : *The river Ardeche*

**Alluvial plain: confluence with the Rhone.**
The last descent of the river towards the Rhone is made in a vast alluvial plain: the valley of the Rhone. Here, the river is calm and finishes its running slowly through orchards and cultures.

![The Rhone](image)

photo 16 : *The Rhone*
Rivers subjected to the summer low-water mark present a very rich ecology. They shelter botanical and animal species adapted to the important variations of the water level: des characteristic sorts of the dry circles alternate with those wet circles. The ecosystem “aquacole” is facilitated by the regime still not enough free of rivers. We find rare sorts as the crayfish on foot white there, fishes migratory as aloes or still the trout.

*The trout of river or fario* *Salmo trutta fario*

photo 17: *la truite*

Of the family of Salmonids, she likes the superior level of rivers and torrents. We can observe it frequently in the Loire and all the tributaries, in fresh, lively and well oxygenated waters. The trout goes hunting generally in the carriage near its shelter where she takes refuge with the slightest alert. Her color fluctuates according to the food which it ingests but especially of the aspect of the bottom of the river. Her food is constituted by insects during the first five years of its life then by the other fishes as the “Chabot” and sometimes even of batrachians.

*The crayfish on foot white (bearded Bearded men)*

We find it in fresh water; she prefers of many waters limestones. She lives in the stagnant or current and well oxygenated fresh water, upstream to rivers, on rocky and rocky capital, with many roots. Her body is lengthened and flattened, its shell covers the head and the thorax, its tail is flattened in the form of range. Her length is between 5 cms and 13 cms. She moves by walking on the bottom, or by swimming back. The crayfishes have a very reduced activity the winter, they hibernate almost.

Photo 18 : *l’écrevisse à pied blanc*
The birds faune

We count on the other hand numerous sorts of birds, variety largely bound to that of the biotopes of the river Ardèche and its tributaries. Certain sorts are very rare at the national or European level, as, comme l'Aigle de Bonelli, le Hibou Grand Duc, le Vautour percnptère, l'Aigle royal, le Faucon pêlerin, la Huppe fasciée, le Pic épeichette, le Pic noir, la Rosalie des Alpes, le merle de roche, le busard cendré etc.

Two sites are particularly controlled:
The mountain escrinet, is one of the most exceptional collars in Europe for the study of the spring migration. It is exactly situated in the migratory axis and constitutes a real "corridor". So, in 1985, not less than 150 sorts different from birds were able to be observed.

The “gorges” of Ardèche are situated in the perimeter of a NATURE RESERVE managed by the Labor Union of Management of Gorges of Ardèche (SGGA). This measure aims at protecting a space of a big natural and patrimonial wealth.

The completeness of the reserve is situated in a Zone of Special Protection (ZPS) = “Natura 2000” to protect and to facilitate the return of sorts threatened as the peregrine falcon (Faucon pelerin - 14 couples), the eagle of Bonelli (Aigles de Bonelli - 2 couples), the vulture percnptère (Vautour percnptère - 1 couple) or the golden eagle (Aigle royal - 3 couples).

For example, the climbing is forbidden until June 30th, 2007 on the site of escalation the LIARD (municipality of St Martin of VALAMAS)

Eagle of Bonelli
His head is small and ended by a powerful hooked beak. At the adult, the bottom is white, slightly streaked with black. Wings are lined with black and crossed by a dark transverse band which makes him at once recognizable. The top is brown dark with a small clear spot in the middle of the back. The young person is uniformly red.

Photo 19: L’aigle de Bonelli (Taille: 65à74cm-Envergure:150 à 170cm-Poids:1500g à 2100g.)
**Aigle royal ou Golden eagle**

It is doubtless the biggest and most prestigious eagles. He is brown dark in clearer tendency on the head and the nape of the neck which aim in yellow gold-coloured. The tail is dark. The young people have white tasks, the tail darkens with the age. Both sexes are of identical colors. The female is bigger than the male.

In France, we find him in mountain massifs (ardèche the South). Only hundred of couples nest on the rocky projections of the cliff where from he can take advantage of ascending drafts to take his flight and realize smoothed characteristics.

Photo 20 : *L’aigle royal*

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**La huppe fasciée ou The fasciée hoopoe.**

The fasciée hoopoe is a bird in the long slightly curved slight beak, with an erectile hoopoe of reddish feathers in the rear a black, a back Harlequin tinged with yellowish, an orangy breast, finally a jerky and jumping up flight.

The environment typifies of the hoopoe, it is the “bocage” with quickset hedges, copses and orchards where she lives hollow trees, even old walls or buildings abandoned to nest there. She is in ardeche from April till September. It is the sort which we find in France to the wild state. She is much more plentiful in the South of the Loire than in the North and she goes in winter if need up to the South of Sahara.

Photo 21 : *La huppe fasciée.* (Taille 26 à 28 cm -Envergure:42 à 46 cm-Poids : 55 à 80g)
**Mammals.**
The variety of the biotopes of the Pond Overturning of Ardèche facilitates the presence of the other remarkable animals, with, in particular, the important presence of sorts protected from mammals, as the beaver (le castor), the otter (la loutre) and the genette (la genette).

**The massif of Mézenc and springs of the Loire** is the first rampart importing on the West the Alps. This situation confers it the role of no wintering for the sorts mountain dwellers coming from alpine regions.

**The marmot of the Alps (mumbled mumbled) ou la marmotte.**

Known by all, the diurnal and little wild marmot, is the symbolic animal of mountains. The walkers identify easily its silhouette drawn up on a rock or its whistling of alert. To escape in the rigours of the winter, the marmot hibernates from October till April in a den. Her diet mainly consists of plants. At the end of summer the adult weighs from 4,5 to 7 kg.

From 1980 till 1991, hundred of marmots were introduced into the massif of Mézenc by the agents of the ONCFS (ministry of the ecology). Since the stop of releases, the countings create a doubling of the population in ten years. She settled down well in the rocks of the mountain Mézenc and the “narce of Chaudeyrolles.” These animals are protected in the departments of Ardèche and the High Loire.

This rodent constitutes a potential prey for the golden eagle which colonizes the department of Ardèche since the beginning of 1990s. She shares her territory with the ermine, the weasel, the hare, the stone marten, the badger, the red fox, the wild boar and the roe deer.

Photo 22 : *la marmotte des Alpes*
*The Otter (Lutra lutra) (ou la loutre)*

The otter is one of the rarest mammals of France, protégée since 1972. The “piégeage”, but also the pollution and the destruction of its environment, led the sort at the edge of the extinction. A little of population remained nevertheless always on a party of the pond overturning of the Loire. A movement of “recolonisation” shows itself even since around ten years.

Of an average size from 1 to 1,20 m for approximately 6 in 12 kilos, the otter is an excellent swimmer. The otter has a reach of 1 in “loutrons” 3 a year. Her territory includes several kilometres of streams. Without damaging the balance of the fish populations, she feeds mainly on fishes, but also on batrachians and on mammals.

Photo 23 : *la loutre*

![Photo 23](image)

*The genette (genetta genetta)*

The genette is distributed by the South in the Loire and west of the Rhone.

This animal about 90 centimeters (the tail is almost also long as the body) is strictly night-.
He lives in the rocky places covered with forests, with copse, with bushes near brooks and near rivers. He however seems to avoid places inhabited.
Although she goes hunting essentially on the ground, the genette is an excellent climber. Her biology is little known and the rare observations. The female puts low two or three young people in spring and can have two reaches a year. The genette eats many birds and their eggs, small rodents, lizards and frogs, and insects.

Photo 24 : *la genette*

![Photo 24](image)
Chapitre 2
Le patrimoine naturel est précieux et fragile, il faut le protéger.

I. Des institutions chargées de protéger le patrimoine naturel

Les scientifiques, les administrations, les collectivités territoriales, les naturalistes et les associations de protection de la nature se sont associées en vue d'établir une synthèse sur le patrimoine naturel en France.

1. Le conseil scientifique régional du patrimoine naturel.

Depuis 2002, dans chaque région de France, un conseil scientifique régional du patrimoine naturel (CSRPN) a légalement été créé comme instance consultative à compétence scientifique en matière de patrimoine naturel.

Il travaille en concertation avec le conseil scientifique national et sa vocation est d’être un conseil de proximité pour les collectivités territoriales.

Les membres du conseil scientifique régional du patrimoine naturel, nommés par arrêté du préfet de région après avis du président du conseil régional, sont des spécialistes aux compétences scientifiques issus des:
- universités
- sociétés savantes
- associations
- muséums régionaux.

Il couvre toutes les disciplines des sciences de la vie et de la terre pour les milieux terrestres, fluviaux et marins.

2. L’inventaire départemental du patrimoine naturel.

Depuis 2002, dans chaque département français, un inventaire départemental du patrimoine naturel a été institué pour le recensement:
1. des sites, paysages et milieux naturels;
2. des mesures de protection de l’environnement;
3. des moyens de gestion et de mise en valeur.

Il s’agit de dresser l’inventaire des richesses écologiques, faunistiques, floristiques, géologiques, minéralogiques et paléontologiques.

Ces inventaires sont conduits sous la responsabilité scientifique du Muséum national d’histoire naturelle.

3. Les zones naturelles d’intérêt écologique, faunistique et floristique ou
ZNIEFF.

L'inventaire des zones naturelles d'intérêt écologique, faunistique et floristique (ZNIEFF) est un programme initié par le ministère en charge de l'environnement et lancé en 1982 par le Muséum national d'histoire naturelle (MNHN).

Cet inventaire est validé scientifiquement dans chaque région par le conseil scientifique régional du patrimoine naturel et il constitue le cœur de l'inventaire national du patrimoine naturel.

On distingue deux catégories de zones :

- Les ZNIEFF de type I, de superficie réduite, sont des espaces homogènes d'un point de vue écologique et qui abritent au moins une espèce et/ou un habitat rares ou menacés, d'intérêt aussi bien local que régional, national ou communautaire (en vert foncé sur la carte)

- Les ZNIEFF de type II sont de grands ensembles naturels riches, ou peu modifiés, qui offrent des potentialités biologiques importantes. Elles peuvent inclure des zones de type I et possèdent un rôle fonctionnel ainsi qu’une cohérence écologique et paysagère. (en vert clair sur carte)

Photo 25 : Carte de répartition des ZNIEFF en France métropolitaine.

ZNIEFF type I : en vert foncé.
ZNIEFF type II : en vert clair.

4. Les zones d'importances de Conservation des oiseaux (ZICO)
Dès les années 1980, la France a initié un inventaire scientifique des Zones Importantes pour la Conservation des Oiseaux (ZICO) sur son territoire afin de mettre en œuvre la directive « Oiseaux » du 2 avril 1979. Cet inventaire, basé sur la présence d'espèces d'intérêt communautaire répondant à des critères numériques précis, a été réalisé par la Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO) et le MNHN pour le compte du ministère chargé de l'Environnement, avec l'aide des groupes ornithologiques régionaux.

Publié en 1994, cet inventaire a identifié 285 zones couvrant une superficie totale d'environ 4,7 millions d'hectares, dont 4,4 millions d'hectares de superficie terrestre, soit 8,1% de la superficie du territoire national. Dans les ZICO la surveillance et le suivi des espèces constituent un objectif primordial.

Le col de l’Escrinet est sous la surveillance du ZICO.


Avec pour double objectif de préserver la diversité biologique et de valoriser les territoires, l’Europe s’est lancée, depuis 1992, dans la réalisation d’un ambitieux réseau de sites écologiques appelé Natura 2000. Le maillage de sites s’étend sur toute l’Europe de façon à rendre cohérente cette initiative de préservation des espèces et des habitats naturels. Le vol des oiseaux migrateurs nous rappelle avec poésie que la nature et sa préservation n’ont pas de frontières.

6. The National parks, the regional Natural reserves and the natural zones.

The specificity of a regional natural reserve lives in the fact that it is the conservation of the heritage (natural or cultural) that is on the base of its project of development.

Only can benefit from the label "natural reserve", a territory of a strong cultural or environmental interest (natural, landscaped, cultural). The partners make a commitment to protect this territory through a mode of above all environment-friendly development.

Furthermore, to bring to a successful conclusion its missions, a natural reserve is equipped with a multidisciplinary team which allows her to approach the problems of development on the global nature of its territory.

These territories are:

- The national Parks: they are mainly created on uninhabited territories and have for vocation the protection and the preservation of fragile natural spaces. They are among 9:
  
  - Les Cévennes
  - Les Ecrins
The Nature reserves: they guarantee on spaces restricted a strong protection to natural resources and very particular sorts.

Ardèche possesses two nature reserves:
- Grads de nave (Regional Nature reserve)
- Gorges de l’Ardèche (National Nature reserve)

- The regional Natural reserves: they are left by places of life where we become attached to the preservation, even to the intensification of the population. It is this complementarity between the objectives of conservation of the heritages and the development from inhabited territories which distinguish them the other French natural spaces. In a PNR, the development and the creation of economic activities are also important as the landscaped aspect.

They are among 45: in here is some examples

Les Alpilles ; Armorique, Ballons des Vosges, Boucle de la Seine, Corse, Camargue, Haut Jura, Lubéron , Monts d'Ardèche , Queyras , Vercors, etc...

The Regional Natural reserve of the Mountains of Ardèche

Characteristics of the park:
Placed extremely Southwest of the Region Rhone-Alps, on a single department, Ardèche, the Regional Natural reserve of the Mountains of Ardèche covers 180 000 hectares. Concerning mainly all the oriental border of the Massif central, the Park of the Mountains of Ardèche is above all a territory of slopes the height of which varies from 170 metres to 1753 metres in the Mount Mézenc. Collecting 132 municipalities and 6 cities-doors, the Park account 56 000 inhabitants. Her creation was make official by decree of the Prime Minister April 9th, 2001.
The identity of the Mountains of Ardèche leans on strong common characteristics:
The landscapes, the rural know-how, the volcanism, the rivers, the productions of bilberries and sweet chestnuts, the religious history, the mills and moulinages, the terraces, etc.

It is a question of protecting and of developing the wealth common to the Mountains of Ardèche, while emphasizing the local peculiarities. Because the Park shows very different faces: enter les Boutières (Zone of the pond overturning of the valley of Eyrieux), les Sucs volcaniques du massif du Mézenc, le plateau de Vernoux, la Haute Cévenne Which corresponds to the central part of the Park, le Piémont cévenol which lines le Parc d’Aubenas aux Vans, et la Cévenne méridionale au Sud.

The charter:
The signatories of the charter of the regional Natural reserve of the Mountains of Ardèche,
conscious of the wealth and fragilities of their territory, make a commitment for coming ten years to promote a harmonious economic development, based on the conservation and the valuation of their heritages:

**Humain** : Le maintien et le renforcement des populations boutiéroises et cévenoles font partie des objectifs prioritaires du Parc naturel régional : la diversité des paysages, et dans certains cas même des écosystèmes, tient en grande partie à l’activité humaine qui a dû et qui a su composer avec un environnement remarquable mais difficile.

**Imaginatif** : Les signataires de la charte ont conscience que seul un développement durable, valorisant les richesses et spécificités des pentes ardéchoises, est à même d’assurer l’avenir et l’équilibre des activités comme du territoire. Ils préconisent des approches qualitatives plutôt que quantitatives. Ils cherchent à favoriser l’émergence des projets et à promouvoir les expérimentations nouvelles.


**Equilibré et convivial** : L’équilibre entre les différentes activités et les utilisateurs de l’espace, et l’harmonie entre le développement et la préservation de l’environnement ne se décrètent pas : ils se construisent au jour le jour par les rencontres, les échanges d’idées et d’expériences. Les signataires de la charte s’engagent à favoriser le dialogue entre tous les acteurs du territoire, dans un esprit partenarial et contractuel.

**Cohérent** : Le Parc naturel régional des Monts d’Ardèche n’a pas vocation à se substituer aux organismes gestionnaires, structures professionnelles, institutionnelles ou associatives en place : il s’appuie sur les acteurs locaux pour développer la politique élaborée ensemble et transcrite dans la charte. Le territoire du Parc est un espace ouvert qui entretient de nombreuses relations avec les villes et territoires limitrophes.

**Mesurable** : Les signataires de la présente charte souhaitent mettre en place des indicateurs leur permettant d’évaluer l’impact de la politique du Parc. Des études initiales ont été conduites et d’autres le seront durant la période d’agrément et avant l’évaluation décennale.

**The concrete actions:**

The evoked actions give an outline of the first realizations of the young Park of the Mountains of Ardèche. A large number of actions of the park the others are transverse and practice on the whole territory, are more localized.

Here are some examples:

- The creation of buckles of hike and a table of interpretation of the landscapes du Champ de Mars (Mézilhac).
- The support for the creation of an A.O.C. Châtaigne d’Ardèche.
- The creation of orchards academies of former(ancient) fruits to Joannas et St-Christol
- The formations on the taste for teachers and farmers, the gastronomic competition, the realization of an educational suitcase on the taste...
  - The support and the networking of the feasts of the territory: les Castagnades, la Fête de la Reboule, la Fête des myrtilles, La Fête des Plantes.
  - The assistant to the school outings and the creation of tools for the teachers (educational forest space to Montpezat, notebooks on the chestnut grove and the genette).
- The inventory of the present sorts on the Park.
- The advice(council) in the municipalities(Communes) for the implementation of Local Plans(Shots) of Town planning (P.L.U).

**The project of the Park is divided into 4 axes:**

**A territory of exception (valuation of the resources)**
- To identify and to value the landscapes;
- identify, manage and protect the natural heritage;
- protect and value the geologic heritage;
- know, manage and protect cultural heritages and built.

**A living territory (sustainable development of the activities):**
- Promote a quality agriculture to the multiple functions;
- facilitate a quality forest in the multiple functions;
- support and value the crafts, the business and the industry;
- participate in the development of an integrated tourism of quality;
- accompany the development of certain sports and leisure activities of open air;
- coordinate and encourage the cultural activities and the artistic expression;
- encourage savings and diversification of the energies;
- participate in the preservation and in the development of the services to the population;

**A protected environment (control of the activities)**
- Encourage a coherent town planning;
- master the billboard
- facilitate the integration of networks;
- master the motorized sports;
- participate in the management of the water
- participate in a management optimum of the waste;
- master the creations or the extensions of careers and the mining search.

**An included and shared project (participative democracy):**
- Develop the educational action;
- inform and communicate;
- lean on the links between local authorities, the cities-doors and the municipalities of suburb

**7. L'office national des forêts. (ONF)**
L’ONF a été créé en 1964 en remplacement de l’ancienne administration des Eaux-et-Forêts qui existait depuis... des siècles.

Bien que figurant souvent avec les associations proposant des prestations "nature", l’Office National des Forêts est un organisme qui remplit de nombreuses missions comme la gestion des forêts publiques (Etat, Région, département, communes et parfois des forêts de particuliers) pour la sauvegarde de ces massifs, la production de bois, l’accueil du public en forêt, la protection des milieux naturels, la prévention des incendies, la recherche forestière...

Leurs réalisations et leurs projets sont nombreux parce que la sauvegarde du patrimoine (naturel) ardéchois est une de leurs principales missions.

- Les Réerves Biologiques Dirigées sur lesquelles il est interdit de couper les arbres ou de changer quoique ce soit, de chasser, d’accéder avec un véhicule... et nous y faisons des études sur les plantes et les animaux rares d’Ardèche.
- Inventaires d’espèces rares ou menacées, d’habitats naturels exceptionnels.
- Mise en œuvre des opérations de protection de milieux fragiles (contrôle de la fréquentation, aménagement de passerelles pour ne pas piétiner certaines plantes, restauration de milieux naturels dégradés...).

On distingue :

La réserve biologique intégrale dont l’objectif est la libre expression des processus d’évolution naturelle des écosystèmes forestiers, à des fins d’accroissement et de préservation de la diversité biologique et d’amélioration des connaissances scientifiques.

La réserve biologique dirigée dont l’objectif est la conservation de milieux ouverts (pelouses, landes, garrigues...) ainsi que d’une flore et d’une faune (oiseaux, chiroptères, insectes, reptiles...) remarquables.

Par exemple :


Elle possède une surface de 514,02 hectares, en forêt domaniale de Bois Sauvage (Ardèche), 409,50 hectares étant classés en réserve biologique intégrale, 104,52 hectares en réserve biologique dirigée.

Toute exploitation forestière et toute intervention humaine susceptibles de modifier la composition ou la structure des habitats naturels sont proscrites, à l’exception des mesures de protection contre les risques naturels et de travaux pouvant être nécessaires à la sécurisation des itinéraires dont l’accès au public est autorisé par l’ONF.

Afin d’atteindre les objectifs de la réserve biologique, les activités humaines pourront être réglementées par un arrêté complémentaire spécifique, après avis du comité consultatif de gestion de la réserve.

En l’absence de prédateurs naturels, les populations d’ongulés pourront être régulées par la chasse afin d’éviter le déséquilibre des écosystèmes. Les modalités de cette régulation seront fixées par l’ONF après avis du comité consultatif de la réserve.
II. Associations and protection of the natural heritage.

Le RENE 07

*est le Réseau Education Nature Environnement Ardèche.*

The vital lead of the RENE 07 is the development of the responsible attitudes in front of our daily acts and of their consequences while trying to promote the notions of citizenship and sustainable development, respectful of the ecological systems.

Plusieurs associations ardéchoises ont décidé de mettre en commun leurs compétences, leurs complémentarités et leur professionnalisme.

1. Le FRAPNA

The Union Rhone-Alpes of Nature conservation section Ardèche (FRAPNA Ardèche) has for object the defence and the preservation of beauty spots, the protection(saving) of the environment, the natural environment and the improvement of the living environment in Ardèche.

To reach(affect) these purposes, she(it) privileges the actions(shares) allowing to inform, to form and to educate the public:

**Know:**

Observers' regional Network is created to follow the evolution of the fauna (birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians) and by natural circles. A technical follow-up of the populations is made (enumerations of migratory birds and winter holiday-makers within the framework of national and international collective countings) to realize an atlas of nicheurs birds of the region Rhone-Alps at present.

**Protect:**

Technical commissions elaborate actions of rescues of threatened sorts. Actions of protection and in justice for the respect for the legislation of the nature conservation and for the fauna in particular are in progress. Specialists participate in the creation and in the management of parks and nature reserves.

**Discover:**

Through animations Nature at the request of every public (school, pensioners, regions with a measure of autonomy), of exits, trainings of initiation, conferences and the creation of educational documents: exposures, slide shows with sound, educational files, informative plaques, posters, posters, slide library, the association has for vocation to make discover the wealth of the natural heritage ardéchois.
2. **Pensées sauvages**

This association proposes releases on the ground in season in Ardèche and on the other sites. Its domain concern the knowledge:
- Of the wild flora
- Of uses of plants under various forms: culinary, medicinal...
- Of products such as essential oil.

3. **Polénergie (Maîtrise de l’énergie / énergies renouvelables)**

This association has for educational objectives:
- Become aware of the importance of the energy in the everyday life.
- To know the bound environmental impacts has the energy.
- Make sensitive in the control of the energy.
- Develop a step of eco-citizenship.

Tackled issues:
- The energy in everyday life.
- The modes of production, transformation and use of the energy.
- Energy savings: why, how?
  - Visits of production sites of electricity of renewable origin.

4. **Les amis du Viviers**

This association aims at studying and at protecting the nature under all its forms, geology, botany, ornithology, herpétologie, mammalogie.

For that purpose, he suggests to the children from 6 to 10 years old discovering:
- The ecosystem river and the aquatic circles.
- The fauna of the Rhone (beavers, birds, migrations).
- The flora (the alluvial forests, the orchids).
- The hydraulic arrangements(developments).
5. CORA 07

CORA 07 (Ornithological Center Rhone-Alps section Ardèche) aims at the study and at the protection of vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians) of Ardèche, as well as information and the sensitization about this wild fauna.

The association exists since 1986 (originally, called "Naturalists of the Ardèche")

It intervenes with the school for the sensitization on the sorts threatened as well as the discovery of the migration and realizes every year several consumer days of discovery of birds.

The subjects proposed by the CORA 07 are:

The migration:
- the cycle of the swallow
- the life of migrants

Birds of prey:
- role and future of birds of prey in Ardèche
- the night:- customs and adaption

Mediterranean wild Fauna of the Ardèche:
- presentation of the sorts.

The actions are multiple and difficulty quantifiable:

It participates in local commissions (commission "go hunting", commission of " sites and landscapes ", commission " Grand Cormoran "), in the meetings Natura on 2000, to the consultative committee of the Nature reserve of the Gorges of Ardèche.

It works for several years with the Regional Natural reserve of the Mountains of Ardèche on amphibians notably, but also on marmots and micro-mammals.

It realizes the follow-up of the big birds of prey of the department and more particularly the threatened sorts (Aigle de Bonelli, Vautour percnoptère, Milan royal...).
It follows within the framework of a regional network several roselières of the department, as well as the Chouette chevêche...

6. CLAPAS : Roches Nature et Paysages

The CLAPAS is an association of professional presenters geologists and/or naturalists who animate conferences slides, excursions on the ground and days of formation.

Tackled issues are:

- Lavas and volcanoes: recent volcanoes or the former volcanoes, variety of the volcanism ardéchois.
  - The big families of rocks, origin and formation of rocks and landscapes - From some stoneware to the limestone: rocks tell, origin of rocks and landscapes, karst.
  - Reading of landscape: rocks, dynamics of the vegetation and the human setting-up.
  - The ground, the alive environment.
  - Natural circles: forest, scrubland, river, birds The nature in the course of the seasons ...
  - The water and of the river.
  - Sensitization at the natural risks and in particular at the risk flood in Mediterranean country.

7. Clair d’étoiles et Brin d’jardin

This association gives specialized driving forces. She(it) addresses all the types of public, the nursery school at the 3rd age, for animations of leisure activities or formation(training) on the education in the nature and in the environment.

The astronomy and the gardening are tools of sensitization in the nature and in the environment by the action, the observation, the experiment, the modelling, the sensory awakening, the imagination, the game ...

Tackled issues: the astronomy:

- Find a way in a starry sky.
- Turn day and night.
- Place the earth in the universe.
- Understand in the daytime and at night, the seasons, eclipses, moon phases.
- Recognize planets in the sky.
- Discover the solar system and the life cycle of stars - Review the instruments of observation (binoculars, telescope).
- Redraw the story of the astronomy and the spatial exploration.
The gardening:
- Discover the ecosystem garden (flora, fauna, ground, cycle of the water).
- Observe the animal life and the vegetable life (characteristics, functions needs).

III. La protection of the natural heritage in the agricultural world.

Labels guaranteeing the origin or AOC was create to protect a collective heritage through the preservation of the naming and the perpetuity of farms, as well as protect a duly established fame. The first French AOC was attributed in July, 1935 for the wine products. And it was necessary to wait for 1990 to see the AOC extending in dairy products and food-processing industries.

1. The AOC: label guaranteeing the origin.

![AOC logo]

**Definition:**
The AOC (Labels guaranteeing the origin) identify a product, the authenticity and the typicité of its geographical origin. They are guarantors for its qualities and for its characteristics, for its soil of origin, for the know-how of the producer (wines, ciders, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, etc.), of the anteriority and the fame of the name. The quantity and the control of labeling of products under AOC answer a specifications validated, in France, by the INAO (National Institute of the Origin and the Quality).

We set up quality signs to make them easily recognizable for the consumer. They are:
- Or marked in heel (red food ink)
- Or recognizable in their label.
- Let be one fix a plate of casein (food material). The color of the plate of casein indicates the classification: green for farm produce and red for dairy products.
Some figures:
- wine-producing Sector : 480 AOC, 80 000 exploitations
- dairy Sector : 50 AOC, 28 000 producers
- food-processing Sectors (fruits-vegetables, meat): 25 AOC

An European harmonization is in progress.

The commission of the European Union having wished to harmonize the "official quality signs", we cannot create any more of regional label. They are at present among six. So the IGP (protected geographical Indication) correspond to the European scale in the regional labels. At the same time, the AOC has for European equivalent the AOP (protected Label of origin). Since 2002, a label or an AOC cannot exist without being registered automatically respectively in IGP or in AOP.

In Germany, the AOC corresponds to "QbA" for Qualitätswein and in Spain in the "D.O". For Denominación of origen.

2. Sweet chestnut of Ardèche and its AOC.

The « chataigneraie » :
It recovers ardéchoises slopes since time age-old and shaped a civilization around its production.
She assured, of generation in generation, the preservation of the small farms and the social fabric in difficult zone.

Today, it represents a heritage and a strong identity for Ardèche, but also an economic reality for its agriculture and its zones of slope.
The «Châtaigne d’Ardèche».

It is the healthy and natural fruit par excellence that arranges naturally all the characteristics to aspire to a certification under Label guaranteeing the origin. It is a culture stemming from chestnut groves more than centenarians fruits of which develop superior and more recognized gustative qualities and which enjoy an established fame.

So, since the deposit of the file in September, 1998, the INAO examine the demands, the motivations of castanéiculteurs ardéchois. The institute already recognized officially the legitimacy of the demand of the SPCA.

- Implementation of the AOC "chataigne d’Ardèche"

Through this example, here are the necessary stages for the implementation of an AOC:
- In March 30th, 2000, the INAO grants the principle of gratitude in AOC for the "chataigne d’Ardèche" fresh.

- In March 21st, 2002, it by way of even for the traditional forms of preservation of the "chataigne d’Ardèche": dry Sweet chestnuts, Breezes of dry sweet chestnuts, Flour of sweet chestnuts, peeled whole Sweet chestnuts and Purée of sweet chestnuts.

- In May 19th, 2005: demarcation of the soil of the "Sweet chestnut of Ardèche", with definitive validation of the geographical area

- In March 27th, 2006: the INAO confirms definitively specifications compiling the conditions of production, marketing and transformation, as well as the procedure of enjoyment.

- In June 30th, 2006: the decrees of the naming paraissent in the Official Newspaper of the Republic.
The Castagnades d’Automne.

Every year, the sweet chestnut puts the autumn in feast! Castagnades d'Automne is a whole set of festivities around the sweet chestnut in Ardèche, organized by the Regional Natural reserve of the Mountains of Ardèche. Every year, the organizing municipalities change.

For 2007: 9 municipalities (Communes) were chosen: the municipalities (Communes) of Antraigues, Désaignes, Jaujac, Joyful, Saint André Lachamp, Saint Laurent les Bains, Chalencon, Deprived and naturally Gluiras.

Photo: card of the Communes of ardèche

Photo: poster des castagnades d’automne 2004
Some animations proposed previous years in castagnades:

“Castagnades” of autumn to “Jaujac” in 2005, it is the alliance of the feast of the sweet chestnut and the popular feast: walked to the sweet chestnut and produced on base of sweet chestnuts, restoration in the sweet chestnut, the demonstrations of know-how, hikes, pedestrian running and Celtic concert.

Photo: on the market...

Around the name-days

The period of Castagnades, it is also pony treks of the meetings soil, weekend with subject to marked hosts "reception of the Park".

The sweet chestnut, it is thus a whole universe of visits and discoveries at fascinated professionals. They welcome you at home, in their farm, to speak to you about the country and about the earth which feeds them. They built with the Park an offer of discovery for the visitors, valuing the sweet chestnut and the chestnut grove,
according to a walk, to a snack or to a weekend.

**Examples of proposed activities:**

*The sweet chestnut in the heart of the farm perched in St-Etienne-de-Serres*

It is a family farm. We discover in a magic frame a chestnut grove of more than 600 trees of former variety show, a small herd of ewes, a breeding of rabbits and an orchard of diverse fruits, transformed into jams. Roselyne and Marie, mother and fi lle suggest you discovering the hairdryer to sweet chestnuts, the mill with flour and all the material which allows them to elaborate a complete range of products led in organic farming.

In your baskets in the chestnut grove! a *St Jean-chambre*

In the castanéïcole farm of Annick and Ludovic, you can visit the hairdryer with sweet chestnuts (clède) and the workshop(studio) of transformation. An exposure photos commented presents you the various activities of the castanéiculteur in the course of the seasons. You can collect sweet chestnuts before taking a snack "house": softness, biscuits, syrup of elder...

**Photos: activities in " la chataigneraie"**
3. Le picodon et son AOC.

Symbol of a whole culture Picodon is the product of the Drôme and the Ardèche today par excellence.

The previous history go back up raise to 14th century.

The first written tracks of goat’s milk cheese are to Dieulefit, Valréas, St Félicien, Tournon. In 16th century, Ronsard sampled it in the castle of Tournon. In 18th century we find it in royalties in kind of most of the leases farmers. The 19th century gives him the fame; codifies the gustative qualities and the methods of fabrication; giving him an economic role importing (to see the train of Picodon in the 1890s between Dieulefit and Montélimar). The production was family and gave place to a marketing of the surpluses. Nowadays the tradition is immortalized by transformers, refiners and producers.

The word Picodon comes from the occitan pichot (young) the spelling of which varies according to periods and places: Picaudou, Picaïdon, Picaudon...

The breeding of goats.

Picodon draws its taste so delicately perfumed in the dry and warm climate of its country. Because it is under the Mediterranean sky and in the rigour of the steep landscapes which goats give the best of themselves and their milk for the best of Picodon.

The geographical area of Picodon A.O.C. consists of departments of Ardèche and the Drôme as well as canton of Barjac for the Gard and the enclave of Valréas for Vaucluse. The word Picodon is reserved for this zone and for the A.O.C. since the decree of August 25th, 2000.

Photo: goats in full freedom
The cheese.

"Picaoudou", as we say in language of oc, knows how to offer a heart to tighten(to stretch out, to aim), a taste at the same moment frank and subtle which hides a note of hazelnut.

Under the shape of an attractive puck from 5 to 7 cms in diameter and 1,8 in 2,5 high, Picocon reveal a white or yellow dough. During the period of refining, it covers itself with a crust decorated with flowers in the blue and white color. His its fine, regular and supple texture, can seem pleasantly breakable after a prolonged refining. With its 45 % of fat minimum, Picodon reveals all the generosity of its native earth.

The characteristic flavour of Picodon results exclusively from some whole goat's milk. Formerly, these goats tackles produced few milk in winter. Then the farmers had the idea to keep it under the shape of a cheese: Picodon. To bring him his unique taste, goats feed essentially on feed or on cereal spot products. As soon as the time(weather) allows it, they go out to graze completely in the sun.

Implementation of the AOC "picodon"

- At first in the 1970s and more exactly November 6th, 1975 takes place the creation of the Labor Syndicate of Defence and promotion of Picodon. The purpose of departure of this Labor Syndicate was to make recognize and to protect an ancestral know-how and a local tradition.

- A first stage was crossed on July 25th, 1983 by the appearance of the decree recognizing the Label guaranteeing the origin Picodon de l' Ardèche and Picodon de la Drôme. This gratitude allowed to transform a diffuse mainly family and craft production into a production listed this day about 340 tons a year that is 6 million drooms.

- This first stage was crossed, it seemed indispensable that the word "Picodon" is reserved for its zone of origin, because the fame acquired at this moment there by Picodon did not have to escape him.
- 2 years later, taken out of the decree officializing the relocation and the method "refined

Photo: collection of the milk at a breeder by the milkman

4. The Fat Fine ox of Mézenc and its AOC:
   le boeuf fin gras du Mézenc

The Fine Fat of Mézenc is a persillée beef, that is dotted with intramuscular points of fat, stemming from oxen (30 months minimum) or with heifers (24 months minimum) raised to the hay and to the herb on the soil of Mézenc and manured during the last winter with some natural hay of mountain produced locally. This last peculiarity looks at the same time as its seasonality (from February till June) all its typicité in the product.

The production of meat of ox is located on the Massif of Mézenc, the highlight of the Regional Natural reserve of the Mountains of Ardèche (on 1753 m), in the northwest part of this one. Races most usually manured on Mézenc are crossings - dominant Charolais Montbéliarde-and secondarily Aubrac, Charolais pure or pure Limousin.

The fattening:
The hay is the only harvest of Mézenc: that is why the breeders pay a particular attention on the hay which serves for manuring animals the come winter. The quality of this hay gives to the meat a particular taste. The ciste, " the herb with meat ", is an aromatic pastoral plant. It became the emblem of the hay of Mézenc and community of the breeders.

Photo: the herb with meat: the ciste
"To get fat we sort out the best; at first when we bring in the hay, when we have animals to be manured, we know that it is held in such place... We know it the winter by giving it... The good hay, we give it to those after whom we better want to look ". From day to day, the breeder leads the fattening to the sight and to the touch. The know-how of the breeders to manure the animal and obtain it "fine fat" contributes to the flavour of the product a lot.

The end of the fattening is marked by the traditional "fair in the oxen of Easter" in Estables which puts the ox in the honor.
The period of tasting is reduced: it is a sold seasonal product of in the middle of March at the beginning of June.

Photo: walked in Estable

- Implementation of the AOC: "fat fine ox of Mézenc"

In the 1990s, the breeders of the Massif worried about the decrease of the number of farmers and about the decline of the sector bovine meat created an association, "Friends du Mézenc ". This association works at the patrimonial and cultural valuation of the massif: the breeding generally and the Fine Fat in particular.
**Mars 1996:** creation of the Association "Fin Gras du Mézenc ", on the initiative of a group of breeders. A first portrait of the Fine Fat is raised (drawn up).

**1997:** the association "Fin Gras du Mézenc " puts down the first file of demand with the INAO (National Institute of Labels of origin): anteriority, fame, link in the soil.

**2002:** Drafting of the conditions of production and demarcation of the territory.

**In May 19th, 2005:** this territory is validated: the area of production concerns 28 municipalities completely or partially while the geographical area (which corresponds to the zone of slaughte) extends over 333 municipalities.

**2006:** the projects of the Fat Fine AOC of Mézenc are voted by the National Committee of the INAO ...

5. **Bilberries, label quality but not of AOC.**

First producing department of wild bilberries, Ardèche, the country of bilberries, invites you to discover the small fruit of its mountains, picked in the hand, 100 % bio, natural and wild.

From Valgorge to Saint-Agrève, from Cévenne to Boutières, the bilberry grows from 600 metres in height on a third of the department of Ardèche. Hisits territory becomes confused with that of the regional Natural reserve des Monts d'Ardeche, and spreads out on the Mountain Ardéchoise.

**A little of botany.**

The bilberry is a variety of blueberry of the tribe of Vacciniées (vaccinium myrtillus), which includes 13 kinds and more than 200 sorts.

Small blue bay was made purple, it possesses a slightly acid and very fragrant flavour. Before, she was simply called "myrtil", which became "bilberry" (girl myrte) thanks to Mister Littré... According to regions or countries, it changes name: teint-vin, raisin-des-bois, coussinet, bleuet, airelle-epiphyte, airelle-myritille, ......

Photo : *la baie de myrtille*

The shrub which produces the bilberry is called the "myrtillier", it is up to the family of Éricacées. Its average size is from 20 to 30 cms, sometimes more when he has to clear
himself a passage towards the light through stifling brooms or under too powerful shades.

Photo: *le myrtillier*

The myrtilier carries small oval and light green sheets, which become purple now in autumn. Flowers have the shape of small white-green little spherical bells, tinged with pink. Bays (hardly more than about ten by foot) weigh less than a gram.

The myrtilier grows only on the acid grounds, on the source rocks not limestones: granites or schists. We find him(it) in Ardèche, in Auvergne, in Puy de Dôme, Cantal, the Haute-Loire, the montagnes de Lozère, in Vosges, the Alpes, and even in Bretagne.

*A production in decrease.*

The production of wild bilberries which was 1200 tons in Ardèche at the beginning of the eighties decreases very appreciably every year.

This decline is the logical consequence of the too weak price paid to the producer who, as a result, is not any more motivated to maintain his plots of land. It is also the repercussion of the ageing of the farmers Ardéchois from which raises it. However is not assured for this too badly paid work, you will find bilberries on markets and in the shops of cities and villages which you will cross.

*Savage or cultivated?*

The true bilberry is *wild* and 100 % natural. *Savage,* because it grows naturally on certain mountain massifs. *Natural,* because it undergoes no treatment, and merit everywhere the medal of "bio".

Small plant grow naturally but require a regular interview. To hope to obtain a harvest it is necessary to tear away brambles, heathers and brooms so as to allow the plant to develop. Without this painful work a moor of bilberries disappears within ten years invaded by bushes. In twenty years Ardèche so lost three quarters of its production of bilberries.

The picking is made in a craft way by means of a "comb" which picks up the fruit of the plant to bring down hit in a basket. It is necessary to bend for a long time the spinal column under the sun to fill its basket.

Photo: *un peigne à myrtilles.*
We can also cultivate bilberries.

The cultivated bilberry looks like the wild bilberry by its outside color, its shape and its naming. But it is bigger double, almost, in the point to look like a pupil. Its flesh translucent green-white (unlike the purple of the bilberry) does not stain. She is less perfumed and does not possess either the gustative and nutritional qualities, or the therapeutic virtues of her wild cousin.

Ardèche, and zone of production of bilberries.

Photo 31: carte de production de myrtilles en Ardèche.
The bilberry which makes blue the lips of the gourmands is a fruit of health.

For the night-vision...

In the 30s bilberries and jams of Establishments Sabaton (Aubenas) were exported in quantity towards Great Britain to be distributed to the underground workers.

During the second world war the pilots (drivers) of Royal Air Forces consumed daily whole salad bowls of bilberries to increase their visual acuteness for their night-interventions.

Since, the bilberry is used in laboratory for the manufacturing of a medicine which strengthens the wall of capillary vessels).

And for the digestion.

Very rich in vitamin C, the wild bilberry also brings iron, magnesium, potassium and phosphor. Its wealth in fibers gives him astringent properties, antiseptics and beneficial
action on the digestion.
Finally, the wild bilberry possesses one concentrated by flavonoides in said activity "vitamin P " which confers him a beneficial role for the cardiovascular health and against the cellular ageing.

**Traditional recipe:**
Bilberries sample in tarts, jams, syrup, sometimes even in a sauce accompanying the duck or the game.

**Clafoutis à la myrtille sauvage**

**Pour 6 personnes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myrtilles</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain de mie</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lait</td>
<td>25 cl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citron vert</td>
<td>1 zeste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pépites de cremeilles</td>
<td>125 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amandes</td>
<td>1 pincée</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sel</td>
<td>4 jaunes d'oeufs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oeufs</td>
<td>5 blanches d'oeufs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beurre ramolli</td>
<td>165 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enlever la croûte du pain de mie. Couper la mie en morceaux et la réserver dans un grand récipient. Faire tiédir le lait et le verser sur la mie. Quand celle-ci est bien imbibée, ajouter le zeste de citron, la poudre d'amandes, les jaunes d'œufs, 125g de sucre semoule, la fleur de sel et le beurre ramolli. Mixer le tout jusqu'à l'obtention d'une pâte homogène semi-liquide. Monter les blancs d'œufs en neige en ajoutant le sucre restant en 2 ou 3 fois. Mélanger les blancs à la pâte très délicatement. Préchauffer le four à 180°C. Laver et essuyer les myrtilles. Les incorporer à la pâte. Mettre le tout dans un moule anti-adhésif à bords hauts. Enfourner pendant 40 minutes à 160°C. Démouler. Déguster tiède.

Bon appétit !!!