

## TIPS FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONSERVATION OF THIS NATURAL SPACE

-  Respect nature and all living things; do not disturb the animals or uproot plants. If you are mushroom collecting, behave responsibly.
-  Take away any litter you make and place it in the corresponding bins. If possible, sort your rubbish for recycling.
-  When walking, do not stray off the paths to avoid damaging the flora and fauna.
-  Keep noise to a minimum to avoid scaring the wildlife or disturbing other visitors.
-  Do not drive your car, motorbike or quad off-road. Always keep to a sensible speed.
-  Fire destroys life. Do not light bonfires or throw cigarette butts on the ground.
-  Do not abandon exotic pets: they cause permanent damage to nature's ecological balance.
-  Enjoy this space and the opportunity to be in contact with nature to the full. Make return visits at other times of year.
-  Find out about the Biosphere Reserve's Volunteer Programme.

Become a volunteer!



### Río Mandeo Visitor Centre

This visitor centre is located in Chelo and features a fascinating permanent exhibition providing an insight into the environmental heritage of this natural space, as well as all the information you need about the route and the surrounding area.

### How to get there



### More info about the Biosphere Reserve



[www.marinasetanzos.gal](http://www.marinasetanzos.gal)

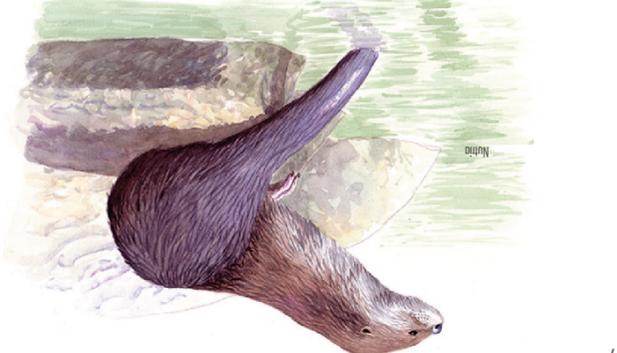
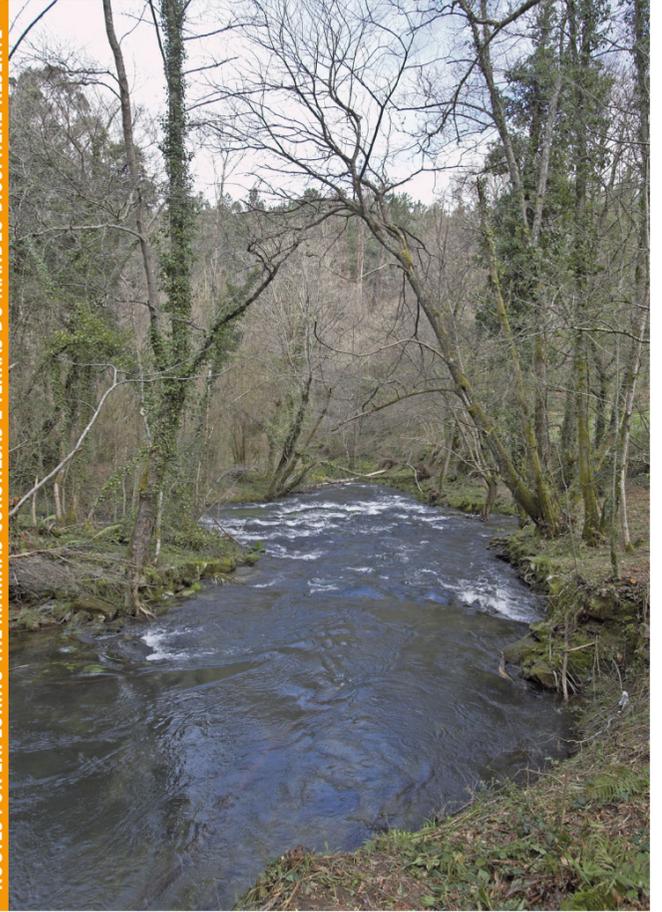
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# Chelo

## Río Mandeo Visitor Centre



ROUTES FOR EXPLORING THE MARINAS CORUÑESAS E TERRAS DO MANDEO BIOSPHERE RESERVE



Other protected mammals that live in the Mandeo include the **Iberian Desman** or the **Otter**, which is easy to locate thanks to its excrements which contain prickles and fish scales. In short, these routes will take you through well-conserved riparian woodland that provides a home for rare or restricted-range species. It is therefore essential to respect the environment and make every possible effort to cause the least possible impact during your visit.



During the day, the **Grey Wagtail** with its bright yellow plumage adds splashes of colour to the riverbanks, whilst calls of the **Tawny Owl** accompany the bats, many of which belong to endangered species such as the **Greater and Lesser Horseshoe**, hunt the insects that make up their diet.



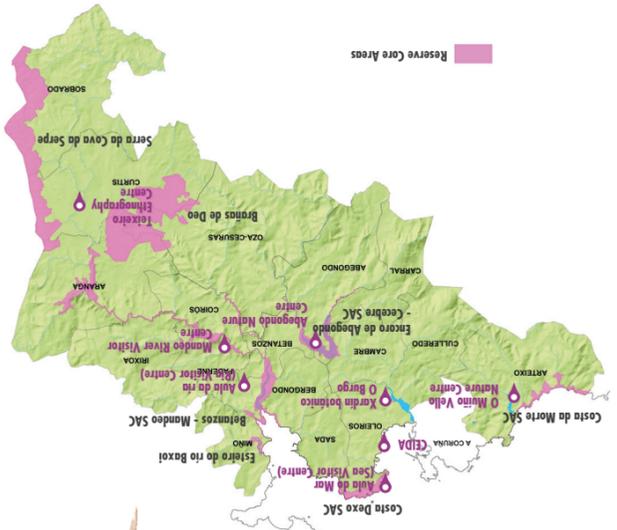
As for the amphibians, highlights include the **Gold-striped Salamander**, endemic to the north-west Iberian Peninsula and listed in the Galician Catalogue of Endangered Species. This tiny treasure lives hidden away in the humidity-saturated forests.

The fauna includes **Freshwater Mussels** and **Escargots de Guimper**, two endangered species of molluscs. Freshwater Mussels live for long periods, but their survival is threatened as they require clean water, sandy beds and the presence of Salmonidae. Large numbers of this mollusc can be found in the Mandeo thanks to the excellent water quality and the presence of **Salmon**, which are in danger of extinction in Spain.

A simple glance around you will reveal the wealth of biodiversity: from the tree tops to the finest of insects scurrying on the ground. They all have their part to play in nature and need a fine ecological balance, and this is where our contribution in nature and need a fine ecological listed in the Galician Catalogue of Endangered Species. Examples include the **Cyclamen-flowered Daffodil** (*Narcissus cyclamineus*) which flowers on the riverbanks in March, and ferns that are relicts from the Cenozoic Era such as the **Woodwardia radicans** which is under threat due to the felling of the **riparian woodland** it lives in.

The **Betanzos – Mandeo Special Area of Conservation** covers some 1,000 ha featuring a number of ecosystems that change as we move inland from the coast and upriver along the Mandeo and Mendo. Several of the natural habitats to be found in this space are of priority interest for conservation, including the **riparian woodland of Alder and Ash trees** that abound along the routes.

A number of routes follow the banks of the River Mandeo in the municipalities of Coirós, Paderne and Betanzos, revealing an ecological and environmental heritage of immense value. The source of the river is located in O Marco das Pras in A Cove da Serpe mountains from where it flows for some 56 km to its mouth in Betanzos ria. The ria, lower course and part of the middle course of the River Mandeo and the mouth of the River Lambre form a protected natural space included in the European Union's Natura 2000 network for the conservation of biodiversity.



The Betanzos-Mandeo Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is one of the Core Areas included in the 'Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo' Biosphere Reserve, designated by UNESCO in 2013. Biosphere Reserves are spaces for sustainable development, where efforts are channelled into conserving their biological and cultural diversity, whilst at the same time guaranteeing social development and care for the environment. Experiments are conducted in order to secure the proper use of natural, cultural and social resources, encouraging citizens' participation and providing education and training. This Reserve covers 17 municipalities and more than 116,000 ha, accounting for almost 15% of the territory of the province of A Coruña. Core Areas are home to the most outstanding natural resources of a Reserve, and therefore include all those natural spaces of interest for conservation purposes.

## MARIÑAS CORUÑESAS E TERRAS DO MANDEO' BIOSPHERE RESERVE CORE AREA

# ROUTES FROM CHELO FOR EXPLORING THE RIVER MANDEO

The banks of the River Mandeo boast an immense biological wealth set against a succession of stunning landscapes that you will discover during your walk. The Río Mandeo Visitor Centre is the starting point for routes that run along the riverbank and provide a fascinating insight into the history, ethnography and nature of this wonderful river. Indeed, they are a perfect opportunity to discover an area of immense ecological and environmental value.



## Long itinerary 1 ●●●●●

The first itinerary heads upriver from Chelo to the Zarzo mini power station before returning to the starting point on the opposite bank. You make your way upriver flanked by riparian woodland in an excellent state of conservation and home to a wide range of plants and animals, several of which are listed in the Galician Catalogue of Endangered Species.

## Short itinerary 1 ●●●●●

Distance: 6.3 km (round trip)  
Degree of difficulty: Low, although not all sections of the route are accessible for people with reduced mobility  
Duration: 3 hours  
Starting and end point: Río Mandeo Visitor Centre

### 6. You've reached the Zarzo power station!

At the highest point of your route stands the Zarzo mini power station that is powered by the waters of the Mandeo and its tributary, the Zarzo. Here you will cross the river and start your way back along the opposite bank. At the start of the downhill section you will walk through a eucalyptus grove that breaks the harmony of this natural landscape, although you will soon enter the dense wooded areas dotted with Holly, Butcher's-broom and Blueberry bushes with their delicate berries.



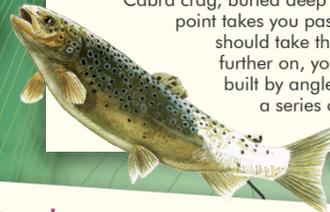
### 5. Traditional everyday life was inextricably linked to the river

On leaving the O Pedregal footbridge behind you, you will come to the ruins of several stone buildings, including at least one former water mill. You may well be lucky to come across the odd Roe Deer, Otter or other mammals, or at least be aware of their presence, indicated by the tracks and traces they leave behind.



### 4. The hand of man has transformed this landscape

From here, the route heads uphill towards the imposing Pena da Cabra crag, buried deep in the bed of the Mandeo. The highest point takes you past a small outcrop of quartz, where you should take the easy path, directly facing you. A little further on, you will come to the ancient Cabra dam, built by anglers to trap salmon and trout, as well as a series of spots that are ideal for taking a rest.



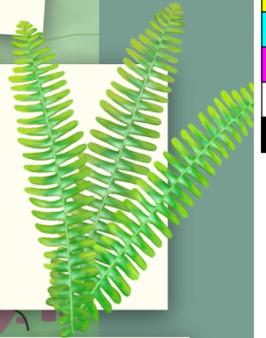
### 3. Salmon draw large numbers of anglers

The River Mandeo is rich in salmon and trout that each year swim upstream to complete their cycle and breed in these cold waters. Your route takes you through a fishing reserve dotted with deep pools, such as this one, known as A Moura, where the fish rest after their long journey. Grey Wagtails, White-throated Dippers and Common Kingfishers are just three of the birds that swoop tirelessly over these waters, accompanying the damselflies and dragonflies in search of small insects to feed on.



### 2. The giants that watch over the Mandeo

Over thousands of years the river gradually wore away the huge granite rocks, forming a narrow twisting passage. Leaving behind a wide calm river, you now enter a section of rapid white-water that leaps among the rocks that the Mandeo has not yet managed to erode. Under the canopy of trees, countless plants decorate the forest with their flowers and ferns, whilst moss carpets the ground, stones and tree trunks.



### 1. Ready to go?

Your route begins beside the ancient water mill at Chelo. The steps you can see on the opposite bank were built to help the fish overcome this minor obstacle and to monitor their state of conservation. Your way is lined with trees that form a riparian woodland, including Alder, Hazel and Ash trees that overhang the riverbank, providing shade, shelter and nourishment for numerous animals.



### 1. Let's go!

Your walk starts at the car park in Chelo, from where you cross the bridge to the opposite bank. The bridge affords striking views of the river and you may spot the odd trout leaping. Walk downriver until you come to a small river beach formed by the sediment swept down by the water from higher areas.

### 2. Walking in the shade of Hazel trees

Your route will soon take you through a leafy wood made up mainly of Hazel trees. Characteristically, these trees are low with trunks that are split from the base. As the name indicate, they produce nutritious hazelnuts, which provide sustenance for mice and squirrels – as well as humans.



### 7. Water has medicinal uses too

You will now come to the ruins of what was once a major spa (O Bocelo), popular with people who came here to take the sulphurous waters that sprang from the source to treat their liver or skin diseases. Built during the 1930s but destroyed by fire in the 1940s, the ruins of two buildings are still standing, including the sulphurous water fountain which is still popular with those who are familiar with its healing properties.

### 8. Stunning views over the River Mandeo

Several fine Elm trees stand next to Pedregal bridge. Their rough leaves and asymmetrical base make them easy to identify. The pools next to the river are a favourite spot for many amphibians that are endemic to the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, such as the Gold-striped Salamander which thrives in the damp atmosphere of these autochthonous forests.



### 9. A small natural viewpoint

The route takes you uphill among rocks that afford panoramic views of A Espenuca, with the Church of Santa Eulalia perched on the top and a natural viewpoint overlooking the Mandeo and the area of As Mariñas. This small clearing is home to plants such as Gorse and Heather that are uncommon along the rest of the route.



### 10. The end of the route

This is the end of your journey through the riparian woodland, discovering the culture and history of a site steeped in mystery and charm, and leaving behind you the rocks, plants and animals that have accompanied you along the way. We hope that your visit has given you the chance to experience nature at first hand and enjoy an unforgettable experience in a unique setting with all five senses.



### 3. A well-known water mill

The water mill at Chelo was one of the most important in the region. It was a toll mill, owned by a miller (unlike the inherited mills that belonged to groups of local residents), who received part of the ground grain as payment: the toll. It was used by residents of both banks of the river, and some users even rowed their boats up the River Mandeo from Betanzos.

### 4. The bridge and witness for the annual Os Caneiros river procession

Ponte Teixeira is the lowest point on your route. This bridge is just a short distance from the fields where the popular Os Caneiros festivity takes place on 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August each year. The residents of Betanzos decorate their boats before setting out in procession upriver to celebrate this festivity in a natural setting of outstanding beauty. From here you must make your way back along the same route as far as the Mandeo Visitor Centre.



## Itinerary 2 ●●●●●

This shorter route will take you from the car park at Chelo to Ponte de Teixeira bridge. Following the riverbank at all times, it takes you through a delightful wood made up mainly of Hazel trees. You will also be able to see the ancient Chelo water mill, a large toll mill that played a major role in local life until relatively recently.

Distance: 2.5 km (round trip)  
Degree of difficulty: Low. After crossing the bridge at Chelo the rest of the route is accessible for people with reduced mobility, albeit with difficulty in parts.  
Duration: 45 minutes  
Starting and end point: Río Mandeo Visitor Centre

## From Betanzos to Chelo via O Campo dos Caneiros

Chelo can be reached from Betanzos on foot along the riverside walkway that starts at Os Anxeles street and runs along the banks of the Mandeo as far as Os Caneiros. Continue upriver as far as Teixeira bridge, from where you should cross over the bridge to the Chelo nature area.

Section	Distance	Duration	Degree of difficulty
Betanzos-Os Caneiros	2,7 km	55 min	Low
Os Caneiros - Chelo	3,0 km	1hour	Low