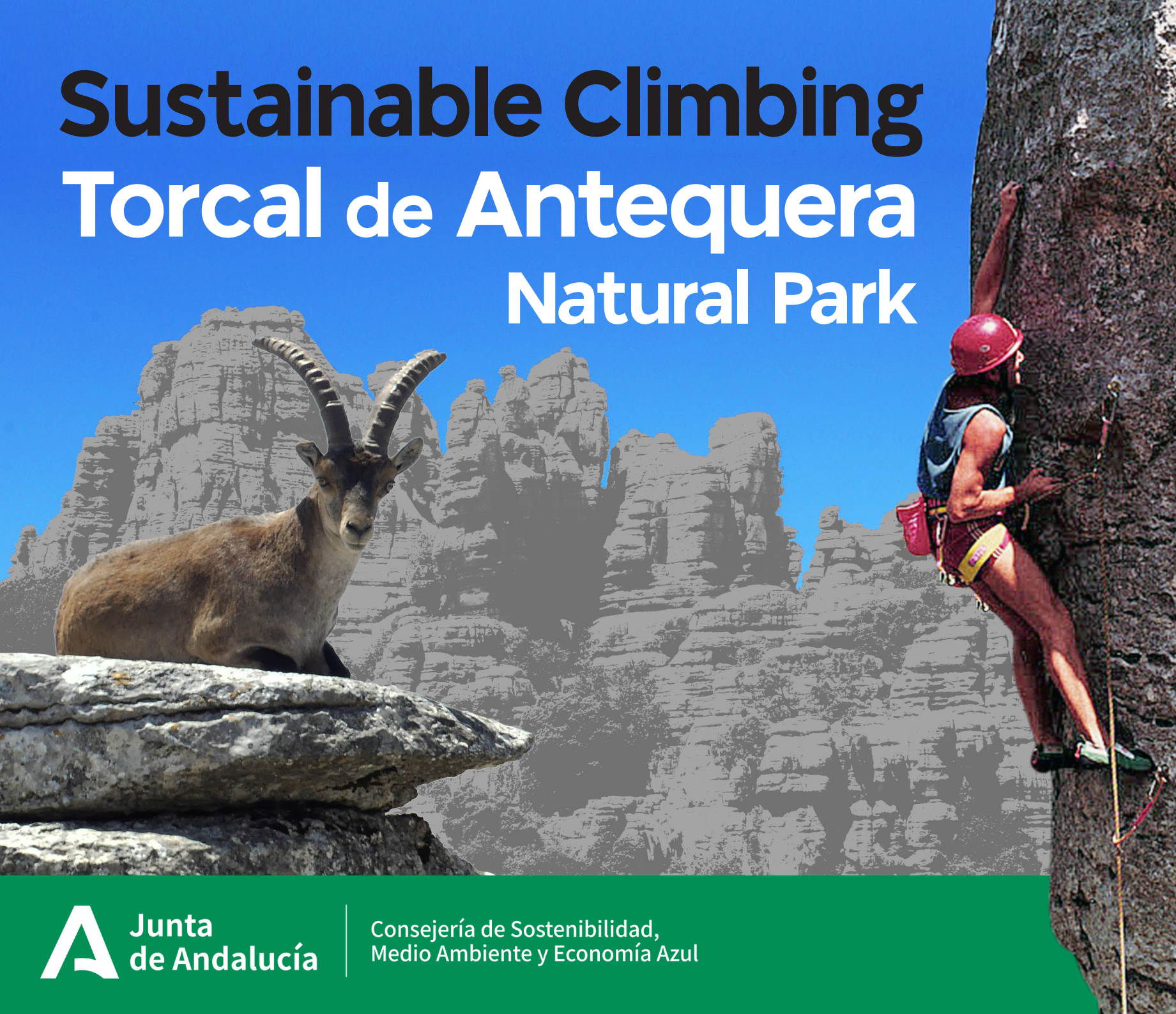


# Sustainable Climbing

## Torcal de Antequera

### Natural Park





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A male mountain goat resting on the rocks.

Antonio Cabanillas in El dominguero feroz (grade 7) in 1988

**Back cover photo:**

Snails taking refuge in a crack, with lichens and *Sedum mucizonia* in flower

**First edition:** November 2022



Tornillo y pila de bollos. Torcal de Antequera



# Torcal de Antequera. A Natural Space.

For the landscapes it contains and, above all, its size, El Torcal de Antequera is unique in the whole of Andalucía. The maze of alleyways alone is a very attractive prospect for the climbing community, however El Torcal is also an elevated plateau with significant cliffs on almost all sides. This has made it a popular destination for mountaineers and climbers.

In some of its caves and deep cracks, **archaeological remains from the Neolithic period** have been found. For millennia, it has been used for hunting, gathering, livestock breeding and even agriculture, leaving us with the *Callejón del Tabaco* (Tobacco Alley). But perhaps the most relevant and significant traditional activity was that of stonemasonry, thanks especially to the existence of two types of limestone, white or pink in colour, particularly in the **Torcal Bajo**.

Such unique scenery, (within the region of Antequera, and partly Villanueva de la Concepción) has always had strong support, both local and foreign, those who have defended it and its need for protection. In **1929** it was declared a **Natural Site of National Interest**, and in **1978** it was declared a Nature Reserve. Its current status as a **Natural Park dates back to 1989**, however it also has a **Natural Monument, El Tornillo**, and has been distinguished with international status as a **Special Area for the Protection of Birds and a Special Area of Conservation**.

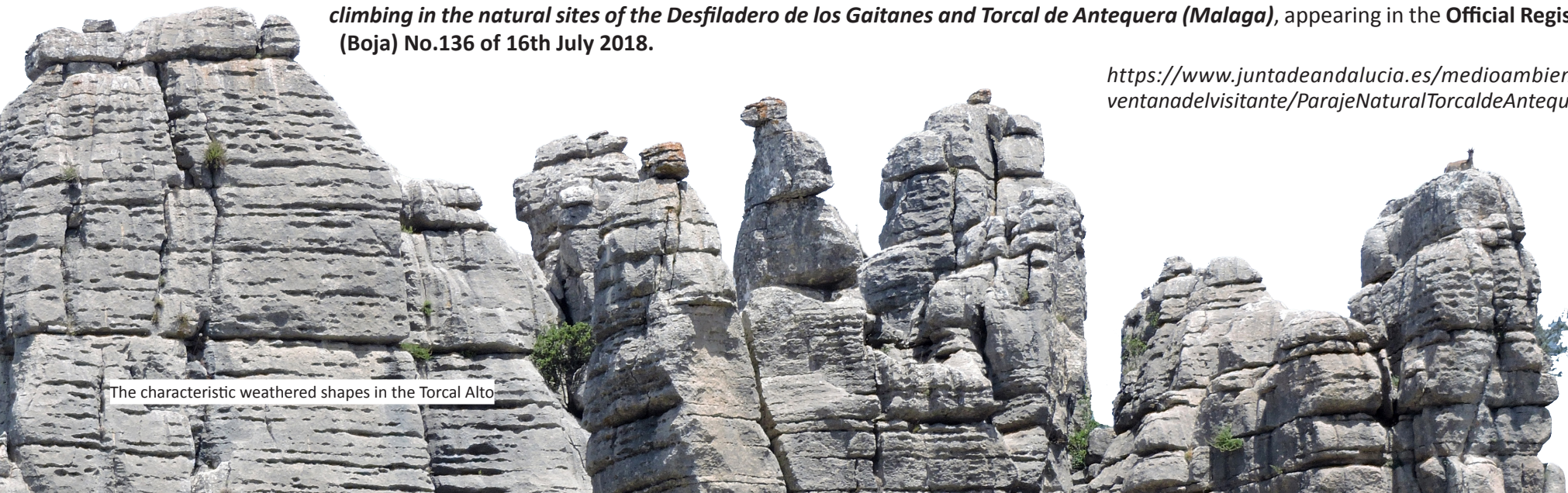
Many of these exceptional natural spaces, for which the Natural Park has been recognised, are precisely those shared with climbers. Dozens of plant species have settled on its ledges and in its cracks and hollows, as well as birds that rest, feed or nest on the rock walls.

It is these, our neighbours, which make the regulation of climbing in El Torcal de Antequera a necessity, and a responsibility for our collective to leave it as a legacy for future generations of mountaineers. For this very reason, after the administration's consultation with the climbing community, ***the Territorial Delegation of the Environment and Territorial Planning in Malaga finalised the Resolution regulating the practice of climbing in the natural sites of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes and Torcal de Antequera (Malaga), appearing in the Official Registry (Boja) No.136 of 16th July 2018.***



The Juan Ramos mountain refuge, near the gully of the same name, in El Torcal Alto

<https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/ventanadelvisitante/ParajeNaturalTorcaldeAntequera>



The characteristic weathered shapes in the Torcal Alto



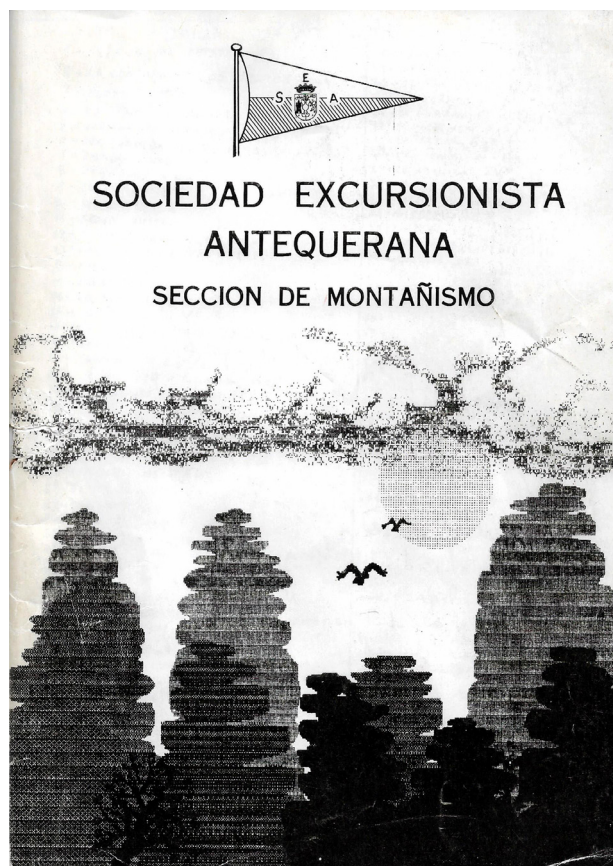


# El Torcal de Antequera.

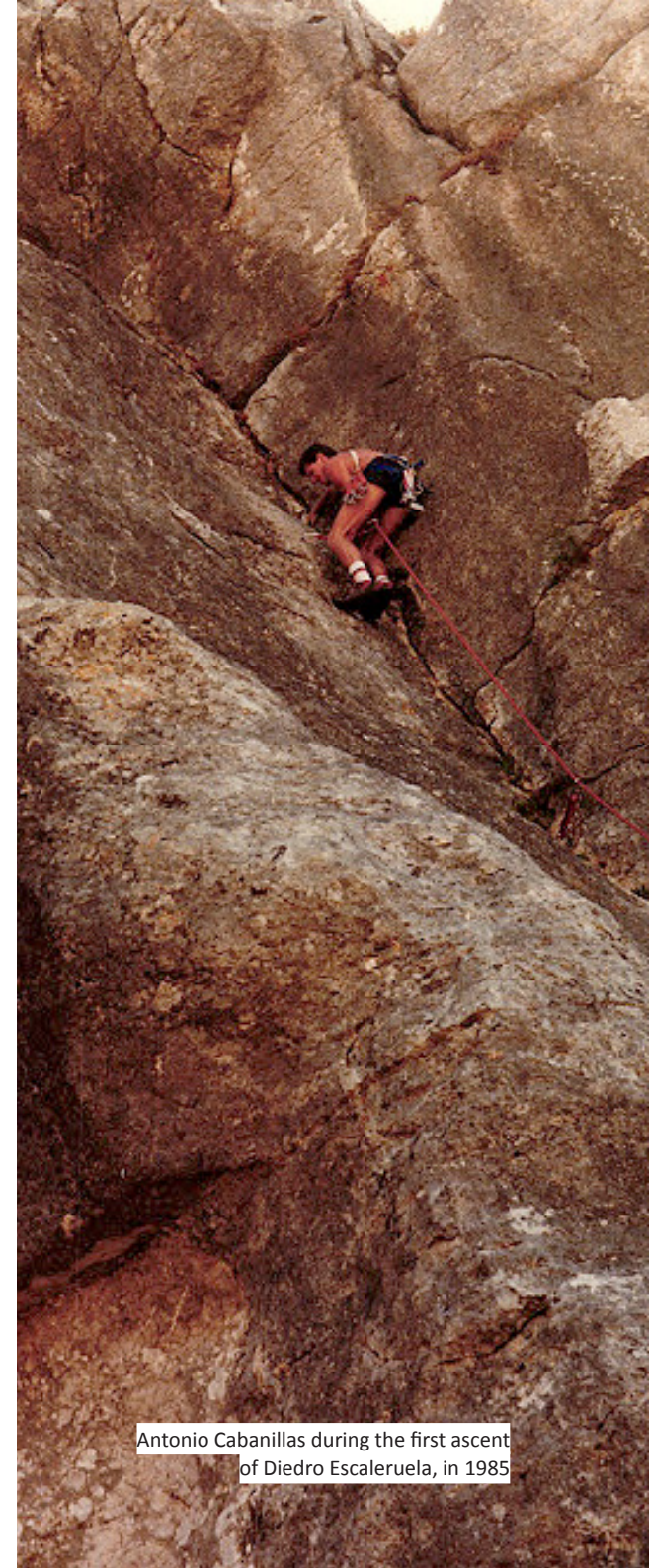
## Historical uses by mountaineers.

El Torcal has always fascinated and provoked enormous interest. Most probably alongside shepherds, hunters, charcoal producers and quarry workers, locals from Antequera and visitors alike have long explored its passageways. The Excursion Society of Málaga was founded in 1906 and from the outset, its members went on long excursions on foot, some particularly adventurous and adventurous ones at that, with El Torcal as the principal destination. The Antequera Hiking Society was an off-shoot of this, created on 12th December 1958 under the name of Grupo Antequerano los Amigos del Torcal (G.AN.L.A.T.), and was probably the first official group in Andalusia. After the National Speleology Camp Operation Spain 71, the caves and deep cracks in El Torcal and other mountain ranges experienced a significant upturn. Thanks to the introduction of hand-operated belay devices and pitons, many climbing routes were set up during this decade.

The Society was re-founded in 1987 after a few years of inactivity and some of its members (Miguel Ángel Rubio, El Checa, Francisco Ontiveros, Julio Maqueda and Clemente González) continued to set up climbing routes in the 1980s. Given the maze of rocks it is, a climbing guide was published (one of the first in Andalusia). A second edition was published at the turn of the decade with the inclusion of other mountaineering activities, the front cover of which is seen here. The pitons were also progressively replaced by expansion bolts, as battery powered drills became available and the crag was established, almost as we know it today



Cover of the El Torcal Mountaineering Guide by Antonio Cabanillas, Francisco José Pérez López (Jimmy) and Elías Arroyo Gallardo.



Antonio Cabanillas during the first ascent of Diedro Escalruela, in 1985





# Guide to Environmentally-friendly Practices when Climbing.

In order to climb in El Torcal, it is advisable to investigate the different crags and the rules governing them, since the chosen site may be:

- ✓ An area where climbing is permitted
- ✓ An area subject to authorisation from the property
- ✓ An area where climbing is prohibited

## THE FOLLOWING IS PROHIBITED:

- Bouldering.
- Overnight parking of caravans, motorhomes and similar vehicles from sunset to sunrise.
- Letting pets off a lead.
- Drone flying.
- Bivouacking and camping.
- Lighting fires.

## REQUIRING SPECIAL AUTHORISATION FROM THE NATURAL PARK AUTHORITIES:

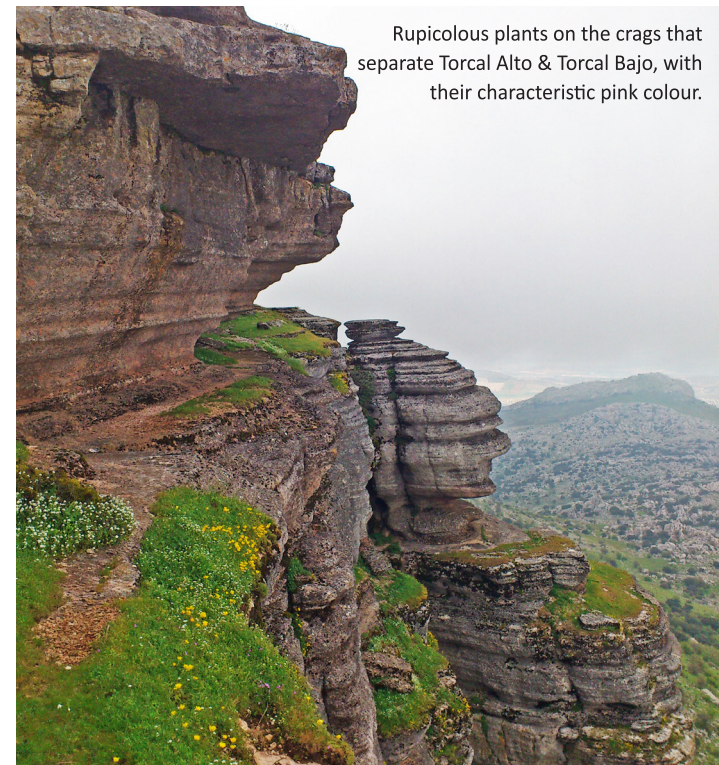
- Creating and bolting new climbing routes.
- Filming and/or photography for professional purposes.
- Filming, sound recording and photography involving the use of auxiliary equipment: spotlights, reflecting screens, hides, electric generators or others.
- Caving activities.
- Holding sporting events and recreational activities as defined in Decree 195/2007, of 26th June, which establishes the general conditions for the holding of public shows and recreational activities of an occasional and extraordinary nature.

## OTHER ADVISABLE PRACTICES WHEN CLIMBING:

- Be respectful of the fences protecting endangered flora.
- Respect private property. Ask permission to access, and leave gates closed.
- Park only in the designated parking spaces.
- When approaching climbing sectors, always stick to existing paths and tracks.
- Do not generate unnecessary noise.

- Avoid painting or dirtying the walls or leaving unnecessary material on them such as maillones, carabiners or cords. The use of magnesium is allowed, but it is better to remove the remains.
- Do not leave waste in nature, especially cigarette butts and sanitary napkins.
- Consider the animals and plants that share the rocks as resident neighbors. Try not to remove plants from the dams unless necessary and avoid climbing on those routes where a nest is located.

On the **Andalusian Mountaineering Federation website** is a **Manual of Environmentally-friendly Practices** for mountain sports. In general terms, to produce this leaflet, we have adhered to the regulations in the BOJA 18-136-00241 Regulation of Rock Climbing in El Torcal de Antequera and the and the Rules for Public Use of the Natural Site.



Rupicolous plants on the crags that separate Torcal Alto & Torcal Bajo, with their characteristic pink colour.







*Stachys circinate*, a rupicolous plant growing in cracks



An ocellated lizard basking in the sun at the foot of a route

# The Climbing Crag.

The zoning of the climbing sectors in Torcal de Antequera, as stated in **Bulletin Number 136 of July 16, 2018**, is as follows in the attached table and map:

Climbing permitted	Los Navazos 1 & 2	Castillo, El Arco & Placas del Duro	Las Abejas
	Arregladeros & cara sur Gran Techo	La Carretera	Callejón, Siete vías & Bodega
	Ratas	Fraile	Tajo del Mejicano

Climbing allowed with landowner's permission	Puerto de La Escaleruela	Los Navazos 3
	La Cantera	Cruce de entrada al Torcal

Climbing prohibited	Las Gemelas	Tajo del Espejo
	Hollywood	Los Saltaderos

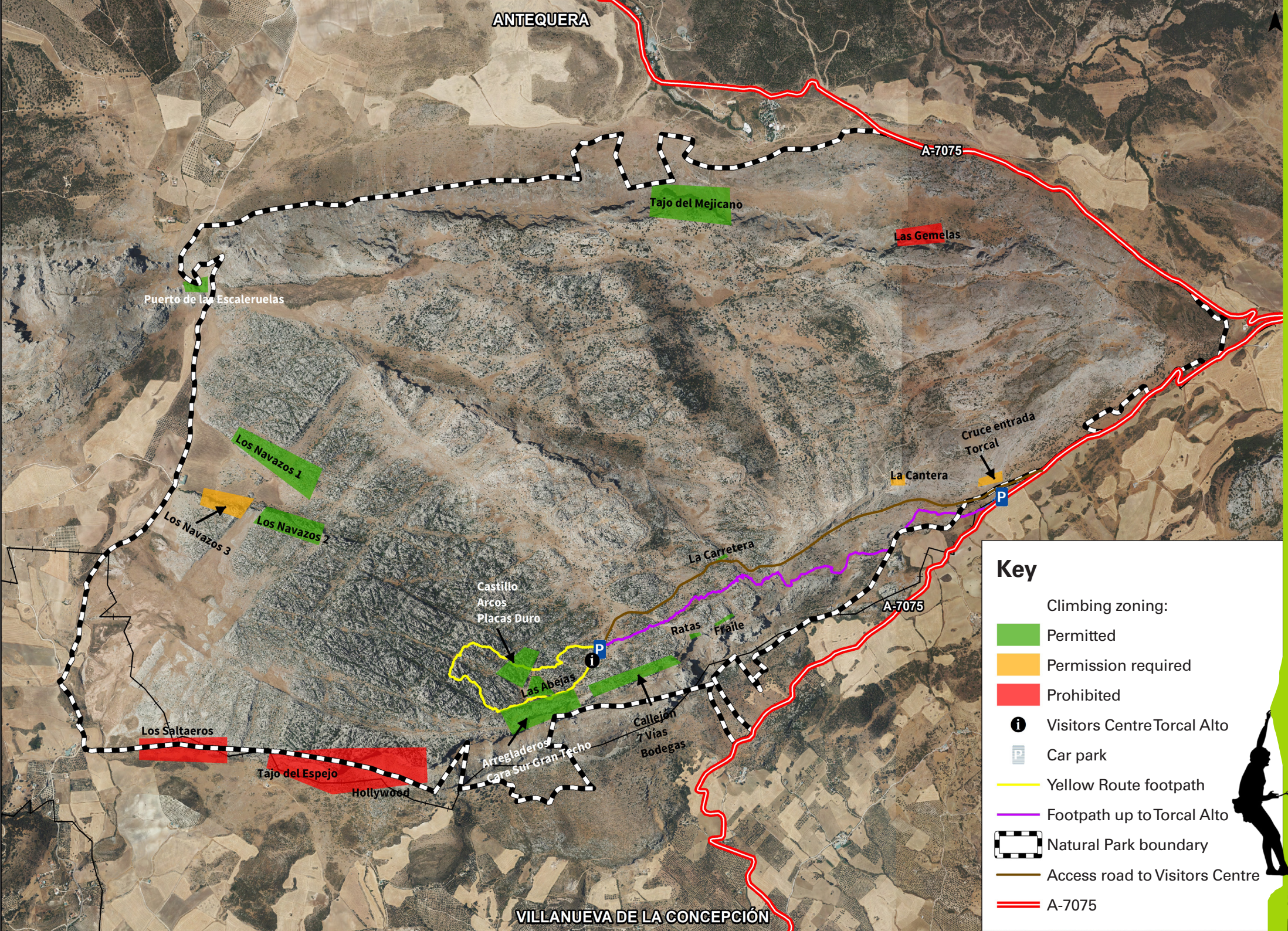
Due to El Torcal's geological characteristics, some of the climbing walls have a unique shape, making them immediately recognisable as sinkholes and alleyways. The alpine folding lifted the limestone strata, a couple of hundred metres thick, up to above 1,000 metres. Left almost horizontal and on two separate levels, there is the well-known *Torcal Alto* (the western area) and Bajo, with a dividing step to the northeast, the *Camorro de las Siete Mesas*.

Merely for ease of access, many of the climbing routes found in the alleyways are near, what was called Parador or Chalet (1967) and on the track (1964) to the quarries and the antennae. These are only short routes, usually just one pitch long and have an abundance of slopers, thanks to the shape of the needle-like pinnacles. Here we find the crags of *Castillo*, *Arcos*, *Placas del Duro*, *Abejas*, *Arregladeros*, *Siete Vías*, *Corral*, etc.

Both to the north and to the south, the landscape is entirely different. The rock faces in the shaded areas (*Gemelas*, *Diamante*, *Tajo del Mejicano*) reach 150 metres in height, stretching more than 2 kms in length. On the sunny side, facing Villanueva de la Concepción, the cleaner and more vertical cliff faces reach closer to 200 metres for 3 kilometres. There are more routes here, also thanks to easier approaches, but do have restrictions: *Saltadero*, *Tajo del Espejo*, *Hollywood*, *Gran Techo*, *Ratas* and *Fraile*.

At the western end, are the three higher-than-expected Craggs of *Los Navazos* (requiring landowner's permission) and *El Puerto de la Escaleruelas*.





ANTEQUERA

A-7075

Tajo del Mejicano

Las Gemelas

Puerto de las Escaleruelas

Los Navazos 1

Los Navazos 3

Los Navazos 2

Cruce entrada Torcal

La Cantera

Key

Climbing zoning:

- Permitted
- Permission required
- Prohibited

- Visitors Centre Torcal Alto
- Car park

- Yellow Route footpath
- Footpath up to Torcal Alto
- Natural Park boundary
- Access road to Visitors Centre
- A-7075

Castillo Arcos Placas Duro

La Carretera

Ratas

Fraile

A-7075

Los Saltaeros

Tajo del Espejo

Hollywood

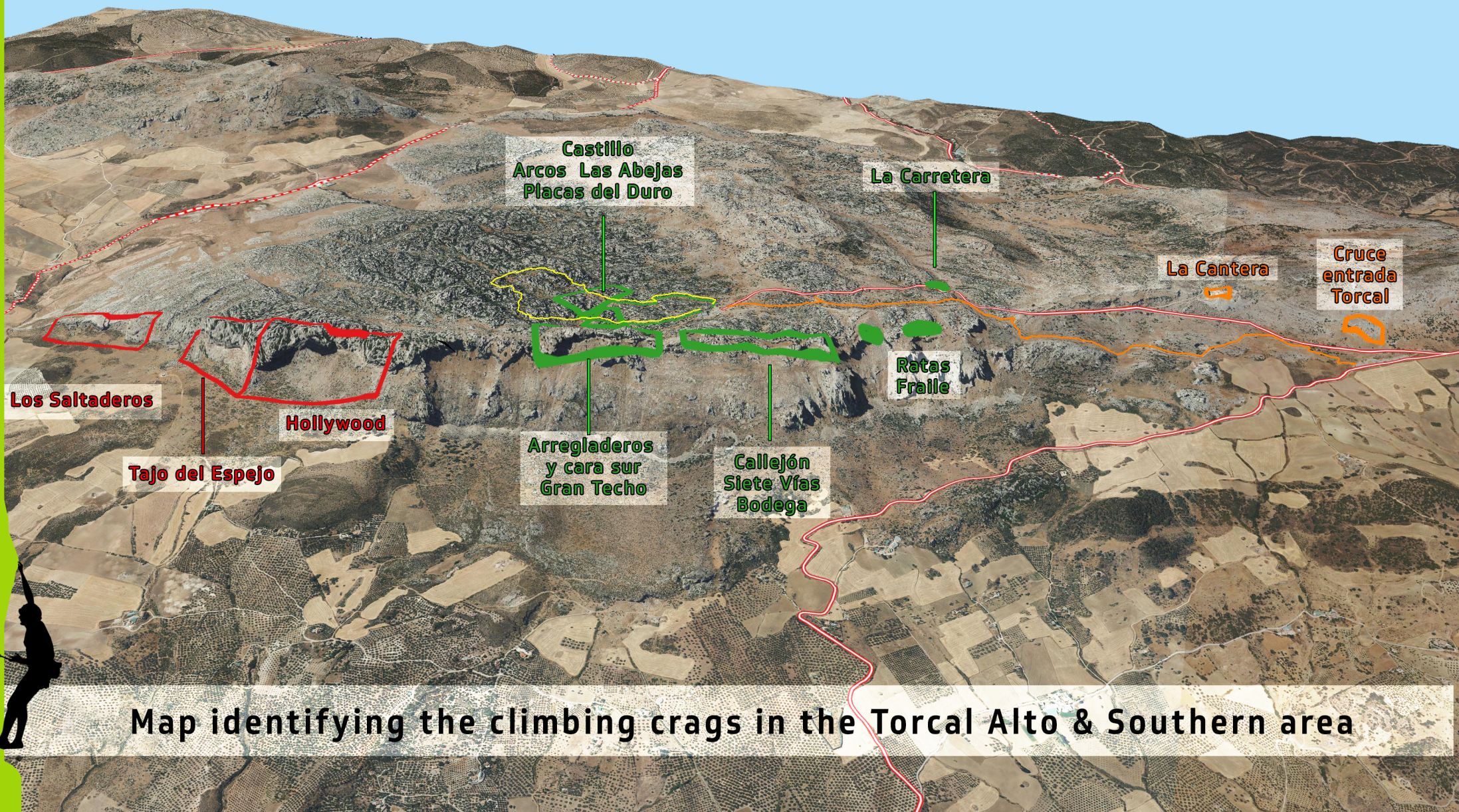
Arregladeros Cara Sur Gran Techo

Las Abejas

Callejón 7 Vías Bodegas




VILLANUEVA DE LA CONCEPCIÓN







## Keys

-  Access roads
-  Vehicle access to El Torcal
-  Yellow Route

Source: Ortofoto PNOA flight 2020



**Castillo  
Placas del Duro  
Arcos**

**Arregladeros  
(N)**

**Las Abejas**

**La  
Carretera**

**Corral**

**Ratas**

**Fraile**

**Cara sur  
Gran Techo**

**Callejón y  
Siete Vías**

**Bodega**

**Crags on the Southern face and the Torcal Alto**



# Arregladeros, Cara Sur & Gran Techo

These are the most visited crags by climbers. There are a wide variety of grades, both shaded and sunnier routes for winter or summer, that are easily accessed and has very high quality rock.

## Arregladeros

Relatively tall rock faces, in the form of independent pinnacles joined at their base by a strong wall of rock. Access is via the Yellow Route, a few minutes west from the Visitors Centre. There are few routes and are very traditional in style, among which the *Celeste* 6a+ (shown in the photograph) stands out, first climbed from its base with chocks and then bolted.

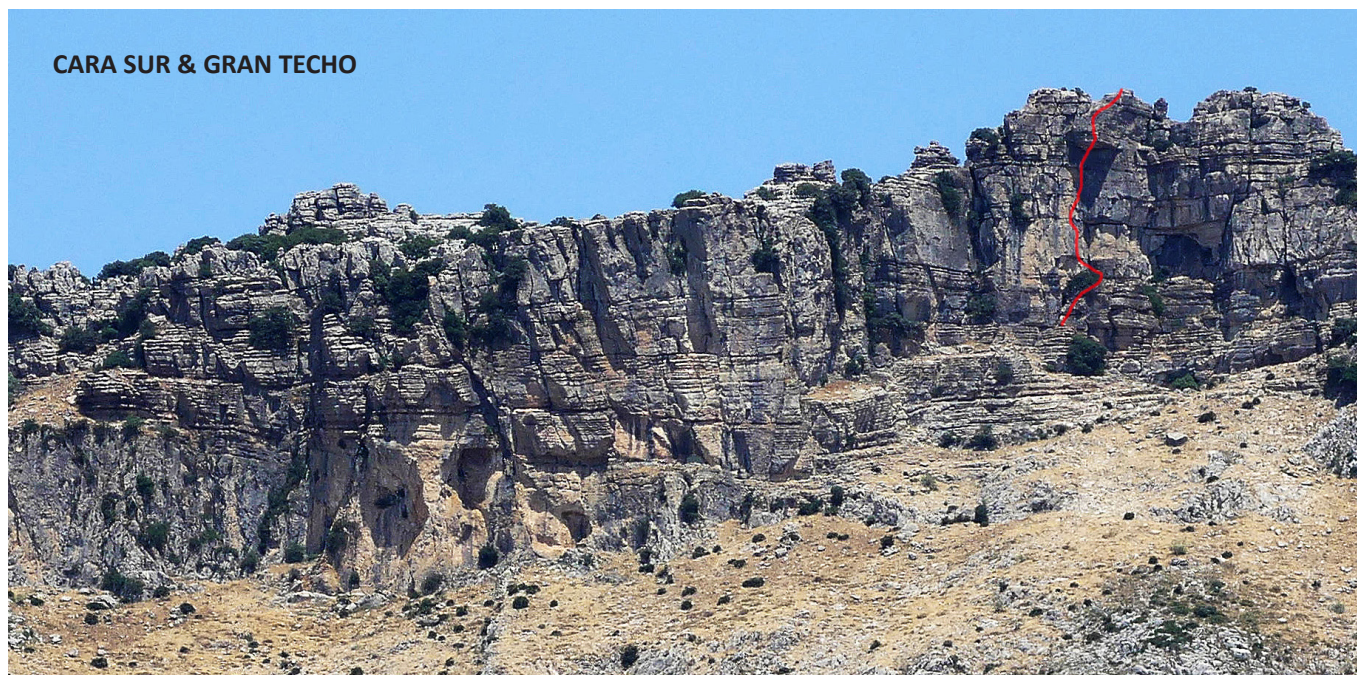
## Cara sur & Gran Techo

Routes of up to 100 metres that face Villanueva de la Concepción, with frequent cracks, some overhangs and roofs. Highlights include *Obertura del loco* 6c+ (the first in the sector), *Techo de la luna llena* 7a/Ae (shown in the photograph) and *Socorrilla*, an extreme three-pitch aid climbing route.

ARREGLADEROS



CARA SUR & GRAN TECHO



The roof at Luna Llena Photo: Antonio Cabanillas Collection



## Castillo, Arcos, Placas del Duro & Las Abejas

In the loop formed by the Green and Yellow routes are a series of alleyways between numerous pinnacles and rock pillars ("Bread-stacks"), truly El Torcal's most characteristic landscape. At 1,200 metres above sea level, it has orientations to suit all tastes, while its slopers and smooth slabs are undoubtable highlights. The sectors of *El Castillo*, *El Duro slabs*, *Arco* and *Las Abejas* can be found here. It has the first sport climbing route, bolted from above, *El Segoviano*, on the *El Duro* or *Hierros* slabs. As a side note, the small crag of *Las Iguales* was removed for conservation reasons.



*Pelo afro* 6c, from 1984 Photo: Antonio Cabanillas Collection



A climber in mid-flight on *Con joroba no se bloquea*, 6c (1990)

Photo: Antonio Cabanillas Collection





## CALLEJÓN & SIETE VÍAS



## Callejón, Siete Vías & Bodega

These crags are located just below the *Ventanillas* viewpoint but are best accessed from *Las Ventanillas* footpath, from the Yellow route. The 7 *Vías* and *Bordillos* sectors are considered beginner climbing sectors, with more straightforward routes. In the *Callejón* there is a bit of everything, with a shaded wall in summer. *Eternamente Fatima*, 6b+ is displayed in the photo.

*Linaria antillarum* in the Torcal ►

*Vanessa cardui* butterfly on ivy flowers ►►





Near this crag is *El Corral*, one of the most visited areas of the Torcal, both for its demanding routes, the quality of the rock and, above all, its shaded routes in summer. Here we find emblematic routes such as *Capital de Italia*, *Espectro* or *Espectro encadenado*. The photograph shows the line of Enka, 6c+.

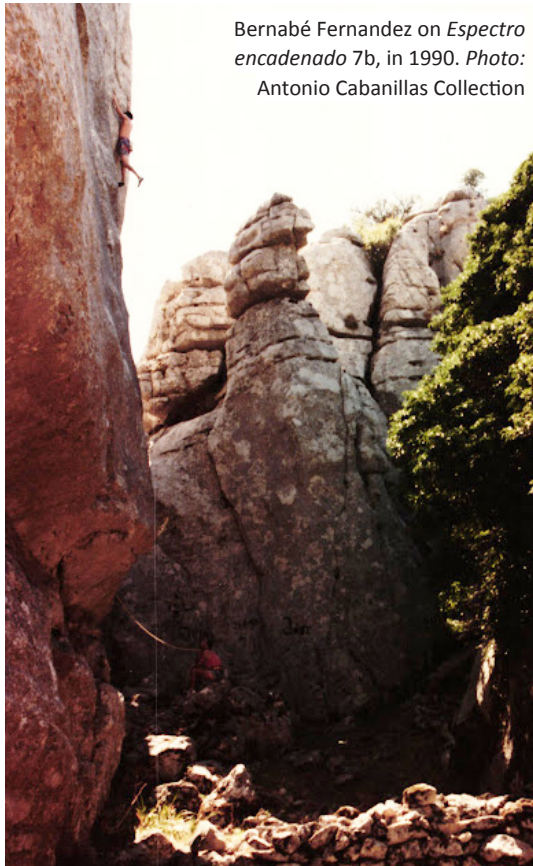
### Bodega

A large crag that faces south and has many possibilities, making it ideal for cold days or summer afternoons. Several rock faces separated by fractured alleyways and channels, occasionally with separate pinnacles in between. In this recommended crag, the routes are named after alcoholic beverages, such as *Tinto con limón* (7a, shown in the photo), *Pacharán con endrinas*, *Cruzcampo* or *Cóctel tropical*.

### EL CORRAL



Bernabé Fernandez on *Espectro encadenado* 7b, in 1990. Photo: Antonio Cabanillas Collection



### BODEGA





### Fraile & Ratas

Somewhat removed from the rest of the crags, these are the natural continuation of the Bodegas crag to the east. In tremendously rugged landscape, its excellent rock, being south-facing and the beautifully drawn lines make it highly recommended. The most notable routes are *Sacrifice* (7b) in the photo, *Asfalto* and *Turboninjas*. Below are the Ojitos crags, with very challenging and steep routes.

### La Carretera

This crag, once made up of several routes, has been engulfed by the ivy in the image which now covers almost half. The only remaining climbable area, by the roadside has some interesting routes, such as, *La fuerza del destino*, drawn in the image, grade 7.

The attractive rock-growing plant *Campanula mollis*



### FRAILES Y RATAS



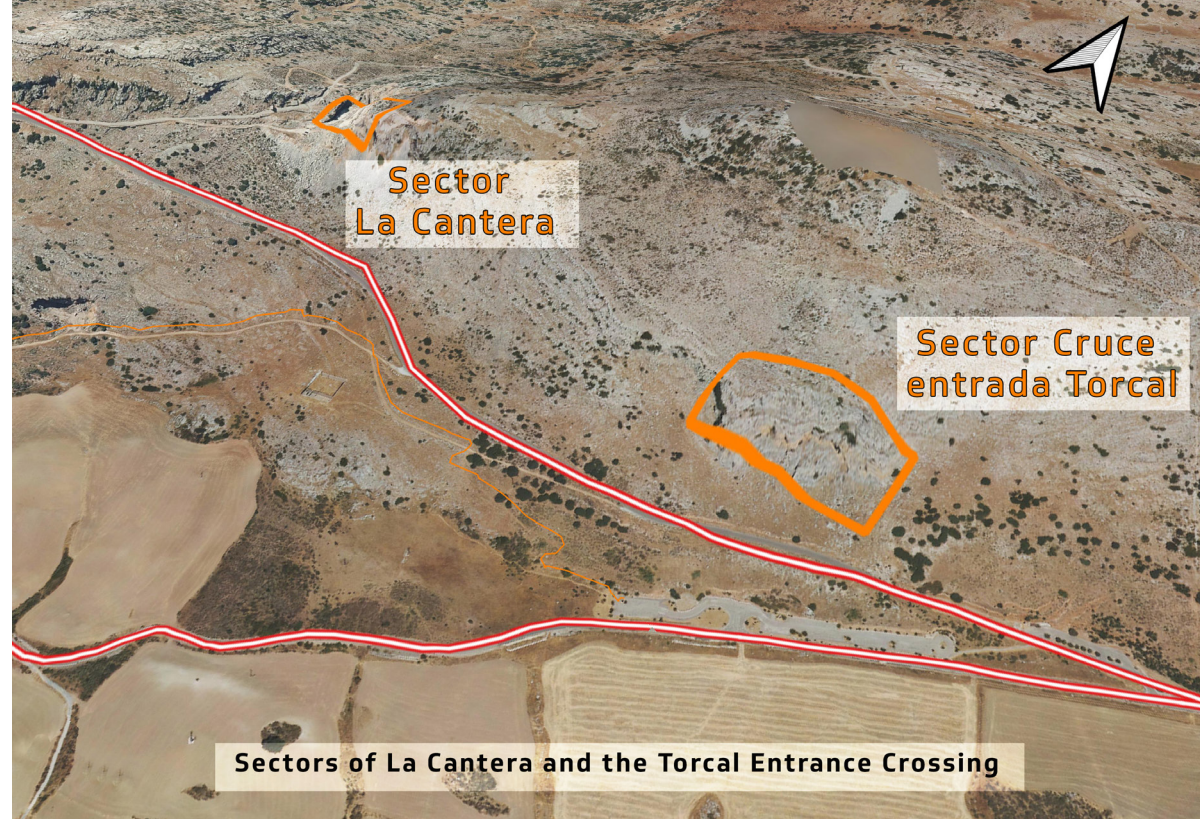
### LA CARRETERA





### La Cantera and Cruce at the entrance to El Torcal

Part of the history of climbing in Andalusia was written at this crag, accessed along the track to the old quarries. This is where Bernabé Fernández redpointed the very demanding route, the first of its category, Mojave (8c+, shown in the photograph). Also of note are *Mi nombre es ninguno* and *Manga ancha*. Both here and at the Cruce crag at the entrance to El Torcal, authorisation from the landowner is necessary.



### LA CANTERA

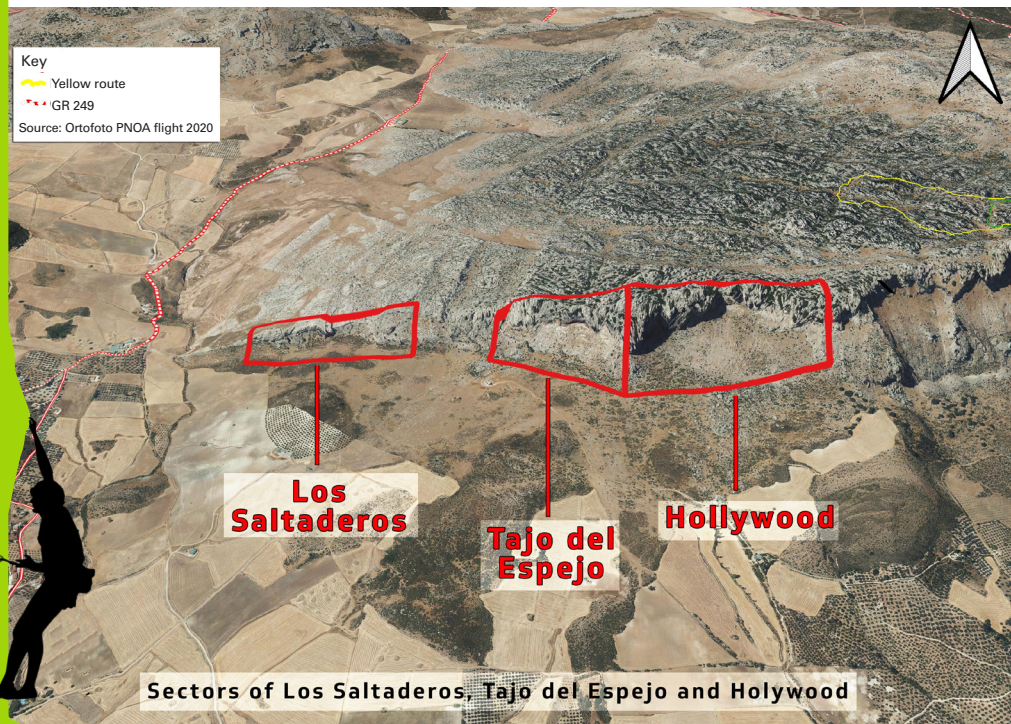




# Los Saltaderos, Tajo del Espejo & Hollywood.

This large crag, made up of three climbing sectors, has great potential both for the quality of the rock and the height reaches. Nevertheless, there is currently a total ban on climbing for reasons related to rock fauna and flora.

There used to be some 30 sport climbing routes in **Los Saltaderos** and another two traditional routes further east. A few trad routes were established in the **Tajo del Espejo**, among them the *Gran Dihedro Moya*, some 200 metres long. Apart from some outstanding trad routes, the most interesting feature in the *Circo sur* and *Hollywood* crags is the via ferrata, one of the first in Andalusia.



LOS SALTADEROS



TAJO DEL ESPEJO

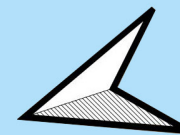


HOLLYWOOD





Las  
Gemelas



Los  
Navazos

Tajo del  
Mejicano

Los  
Navazos 3

Puerto de las  
Escaleruelas

Map of the sectors on the northern and western faces.



# Los Navazos.

## Los Navazos 1 & 2 & Los Navazos 3

At the western end of the Natural Park, is the *Los Navazos* crag. Permission is required from the owner of the farmland to enter, while extreme caution must be taken not to interfere with the farm activity and its livestock, mainly cows. It can be reached along the lane heading up from the fountain of *La Higuera* or the villages of *La Joya* or *La Higuera*, belonging to Antequera. Along this same path, runs one of the Long Distance Footpaths climbs from *Las Escaleruelas*.

It is an elongated outcrop facing west, with two other cliff faces facing one another, however the focal point is several needle-like pinnacles. There are a few sport routes up the former and a few traditional routes in the two shaded sectors.

LOS NAVAZOS 1



LOS NAVAZOS 2



LOS NAVAZOS 3





## LA FERRATA DEL PUERTO DE LA ESCALERUELA



### Puerto de La Escaleruela

To reach this, take the track that turns off the A343 at the 11km mark and passes through the country estate of *Las Ánimas*. It is not very good quality rock, however it has considerably long routes. There is a climbing sector towards the east of *Las Escaleruelas*, and which falls within the Natural Park. The other much larger area, is home to the route of the same name, shown in red in the photograph.

You must get permission from the owners of the property to carry out any mountaineering activities here.



*Diedro Escaleruela, 1981.*

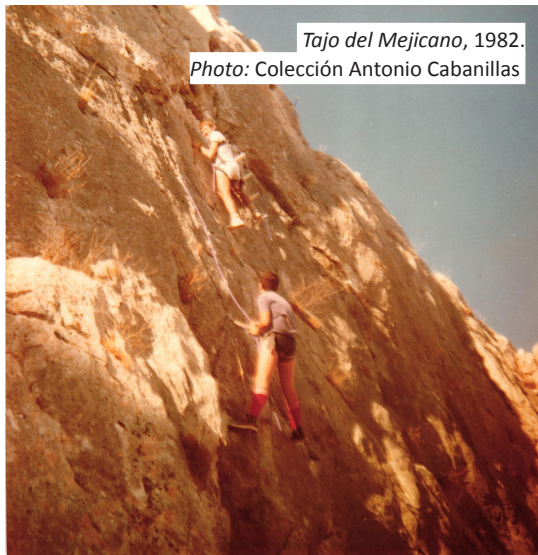
*Photo: Antonio Cabanillas Collection*

### PUERTO DE LA ESCALERUELA





## TAJO DEL MEJICANO



*Tajo del Mejicano, 1982.*

Photo: Colección Antonio Cabanillas

### Tajo del Mejicano

A crag with many possibilities, especially for traditional climbing. It has a very steep & mountainous approach, since it is a reasonable height above the road from Antequera to El Torcal. Here, are routes such as the ***Grieta Superior***, the ***Directa*** or the ***Kapas Joseíto***, all of which are over 100 metres long and fairly challenging.

### Las Gemelas

This area has a very similar approach as up to the *Tajo del Mejicano*, however climbing is not currently permitted here. Within *Las Gemelas*, only one classic route has been established, named after the crag. Nearby is another sector called *El Diamante*.

## LAS GEMELAS







Las Gemelas

Tajo del Mejicano

Senderos GR

Sectors of the north face of Torcal



# Sustainable Climbing

## Torcal de Antequera Natural Park