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## Urkiola nature park

### Location

Over these Bizkaia towns: Abadiano, Amorebieta, Atxondo, Dima, Durango, Izurza and Mañaria; and one in Álava: Aramaio.

### Extension

5,955 Ha

### Altitude

Varies from 1.330 m at the Amboto summit to 240 m at the Uzkulueta stream.



Urkiola nature park

### Description

This is one of the most popular parks, and is located at the centre of the Basque Country. It is defined by the Anboto and Aramotz mountain ranges, which mark the division between the Cantabrian and Mediterranean rivers. At the top, there are rock formations and grazing grounds; further down, beech, holm oak, and pine forests. In the valleys, we find the first mountain streams. It holds more than 300 types of plants and trees, and 200 animal species, among others, birds such as goshawks, sparrow hawks, vultures and falcons. There are also interesting mammals like wildcats and European minks. And on either of its

two slopes, the Durango-Otxando, or the Arratia-Oxandio valleys, we find a wide variety of trees: beech, oak, holm oak, and holly. The landscape as a whole is characterised by the white limestone rocks, eroded by karstic phenomena.

There are many activities available to the visitor: walking, cycling, and mountain climbing with many well marked routes and paths.

There are also several companies which organize rappel, rock climbing, and speleology excursions.

### Naturlan

Tel. 94 431 58 42

### Kirik

Tel. 94 491 17 46

### Troka Abentura

Tel. 94 677 42 65

### Caseroi Toki-Alai

(Information Centre)  
Tel. 94 681 41 55

### Opening hours

Weekends 10:00–14:00h and  
16:00–18:00h

### + info

www.nekanet.net  
www.durangaldea.com

### How to get there

from Bilbao, take either the A-68 or the N-634 to Durango; then, take the BI-623 to the park's entrance.

### Bus

3915 bus to Durango. There, take the Durango-Vitoria bus, stopping at Urkiola.

## Gorbeia nature park

### Location

Accross Bizkaia and Araba, it includes the villages of: Zuya, Cigoitia, Urkabustaiz, Orozko, Zeberio, Areatza, Artea and Zeanuri.

### Extension

20,016 Ha

### Altitude

Highest point: Gorbeia peak (1,481 m); lowest: Orozko, at 320 m.

### Description

Mount Gorbeia and the surrounding peaks conform a typical mountain landscape, with beech and oak forests, and other species such as pine, birch, and heather. Several streams and rivers flow through its valleys: the Baias, Zubialde, or the Arratia river with its otter colony, and other mammals, like wild boar and roe deer. In addition, the park holds ruins of several medieval water mills and iron foundries. Within the park, the Altube wetlands have great ecological value for the large number of amphibia living in them. Also of note is the primitive beech Altube forest.

Also inside the park, we find the Itxina biotope, a karstic landscape modelled by the effect of rain water on its rocks. Other areas of interest

are the Gujulu waterfall, the Mairuelegorreta cave, and the noticeable 18-metre tall Gorbeia cross, at the top of this peak.



Common activities in this park are rappel, rock climbing, and mountain climbing.

### Baias Centre

Tel. 945 43 07 09

### Parquetxea (Areatza-Bizkaia)

Tel. 94 673 92 79

### + info

www.nekanet.net

### How to get there

Take the A-68 motorway towards Vitoria-Gasteiz, after the Altube port, follow the signs to Gorbeia.

### Bus

3917 bus (Bilbao–Hospital de Galdakao–Lemoa–Iurre–Zeanuri), alight at Villaro and start the climb via Pagomakurre.

## Protected biotope of Itxina

### Location

Within the Gorbeia range, in the Orozco valley.

### Town

Orozco (Álava)

### Extension

571 Ha

### Altitude

Highest point is mount Lekanda, with 1,303 m.

### Description

One of the most important karstic enclaves in Euskadi, the biotope of Itxina has been created by the erosion process provoked by natural forces such as rain. This erosion has created deep cuts in the limestone rocks, as well as caves – they in turn ideal elements for the development of Basque mythology, like the Supelegor cave. From its highest point, mount Lekanda, there are excellent views of the Zeanuri and Areatza valley, as well as of the Gorbeia range. In addition to mountain walking, Itxina is an ideal place for speleology, which can be practised in several of the caves.



### + info

www.acampamos.com

### How to get there

Take the A-68 to Orozco; after crossing this town, take the BI-3513 to Ibarra. From there, to Urgoiti via BI-4514, where the foot climb starts.

### Bus

3918 bus (Bilbao–Llodio–Orozco–Ibarra)

## Urdaibai reserve of the biosphere

### Location

Part of the following villages: Ajangiz, Arraztu, Bermeo, Busturia, Elantxobe, Forua, Gautegiz-Arteaga, Gernika-Lumo, Ibarrangelu, Kortezubi, Mundaka, Muruaga and Sukarrieta-Pedernales.

### Extension

23,000 Ha

### Altitude

In Astogana, 809 metres.

### Description

Unesco declared Urdaibai a Universal Biosphere Reserve in 1984. Its vast extension holds one of the most important wetlands for migrating birds in Europe. The heart of the reserve is the Gernika (or Mundaka) river, which ends in wide beaches at the river mouth. There are up to 120 bird species living in the reserve in Winter and Spring, including the fishing eagle. Among its flora, it is worth noticing the large holm oak forest, which hides a number of pre-historic limestone caves, such as Santimamine, 2 Km from Gernika, in Kortezubi. These can be visited by prior arrangement.

The river offers the opportunity to practise canoeing, bird watching, windsurf and surf, among others.

### Gernika Tourist Office

Tel. 94 625 58 92

### Bermeo Tourist Office

Tel. 94 617 91 54

### Urdaibai Foundation

Tel. 94 625 71 25

### + info

www.urdaibai.org

### How to get there

Take the A-8 and exit in Amorebieta-Etxano; take the BI-635, which crosses the Reserve south to north, across Gernika and ends in Bermeo. Or via Mungia; take the BI-3101 towards Bakio and then Bermeo, which crosses the Reserve north to south, via BI-635.



Urdaibai reserve of the biosphere

### Bus

3515 bus (Bilbao-Gernika-Bermeo), left bank. 3513 bus (Bilbao-Elantxobe-Ea-Lekeitio), right bank

### Train

Bilbao-Gernika-Bermeo (left bank)

## Protected Biotope of San Juan de Gaztelugatxe

### Location

Bakio and Bermeo.

### Extension

158 Ha

### Altitude

50 m above sea level

### Description

This is one of the most interesting enclaves of the Biscay coast. San Juan is a rocky islet, joined to land by a stone bridge. At the top, there is a fishermen's hermitage reachable via a 200-step



climb. Its origins date back to the X century, and it may have been a templar monastery. Tradition says that if you want to ask a favour from San Juan, you must start your climb with one foot and end it with the other; otherwise you have to start all over again.

Being a protected site, the main activity in the area is bird watching (in addition to enjoying the fantastic sea views!).

### Bakio Tourist Office

Tel. 94 619 33 95

### Bermeo Tourist Office

Tel. 94 617 91 54

### + info

www.bakio.org  
www.bermeo.org

### How to get there

Take the BI-631 towards Mungia. 2 Km after this town, take the BI-3101 to Bakio. From here, continue through the Eneperi hill; on descending, take the turn to the San Juan hermitage.

### Bus

3515 bus (Bilbao-Gernika-Bermeo): from Bermeo to San Juan de Gaztelugatxe every 2 hours. 3518 bus (Bilbao-Bakio): from Bakio to San Juan de Gaztelugatxe every 2 hours.

### Train

Euskotren Bilbao-Gernika-Bermeo.

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## Montes de Ranero- Los Jorrios nature space

### Location

Karrantza-Trucios area, northeastern part of Bizkaia.

### Extension

2,985 Ha

### Altitude

The highest peaks are Armañón, with 854 m, and Los Jorrios with 847 m.



### Description

This mountain enclave is located in the Encartaciones district, on the border with Cantabria. As in most of the Cantabrian Range, the limestone rocks have been heavily eroded, creating a varied and interesting landscape. The underground is equally important, as there are many caves of great historical value. The main one is Pozalagua, 30 m deep, and of paleontological interest due to its excentric stalactites. In terms of flora, there are several indigenous forests, the Cantabrian holm oak forest in Sopeña being the most important. There is also a large number of animal species, especially rock-nesting birds, and bats.

Mountain walking and climbing (mainly in Karrantza and Trucios), rock climbing, rappel, and speleology can all be practised in the area.

### Pozalagua caves visit

Tel. 649 81 16 73

**Encarnaciones Tourist Office**  
Tel. 94 680 13 56 / 94 680 02 26

**Karrantza Tourist Office**  
Tel. 902 19 73 61

**+ info**  
www.karrantza.com

### How to get there

Take the BI-636 to Balmaseda; there, the BI-630 to Villaverde de Trucios. From here, the park is reached via the BI-2617.

**+ info**  
www.nekanet.net

### How to get there

From Ambasaguas, there are several local roads ascending towards Pando and Lanzas Agudas, hamlets at the feet of the range, in the Los Tornos port area.

### Bus

2451 bus to Ambasaguas (Bilbao-Lanestosa); from there, walk towards Pando, Bernales, or Lanzas Agudas.

## Ordunte nature park

### Location

Western Bizkaia, in the border with Burgos. The park is part of Arcentales, Karrantza, and Villaverde de Trucios towns.

**Extension**  
3,922 Ha

### Description

The area has a spare vegetation, but in the more secluded areas there are some unusual bush species for the Basque Country, and some small beech and oak forests. In terms of animal life, there are important vulture colonies, as well as western moles and stoats, unusual in the region.



There are walking and climbing paths, as well as horse riding stables in the Los Tornos area.