

An exceptional place to visit

Although it is situated amongst private lands, this site is accessible to the public.

• Follow the trail !

This trail is marked and maintained, allowing year round access. This leaflet will guide you during your visit.

Trail length: approximately 0.3 miles (550 meters)

Optimal wild flower viewing season: May and June

• Follow the guide !

Guided tours may be reserved for groups upon request to 'Guides en Morvan': www.guidesenmorvan.com



A French natural heritage jewel to be preserved

The 'Carnaval Rocks' natural site has been designated a 'classified site' on July 28, 1940. This is a **strong regulatory protection**, which guarantees the **conservation of individual sites of exceptional interest**. State conservancy services are the attentive stewards of Natural Heritage sites that are representative of rich and diverse French landscapes.

The remarkable biodiversity within this unique natural environment is sensitive. We thank you for being respectful and leave only footprints, so as to preserve this site for the benefit of future generations.



Do not leave the trails



Do not approach livestock

A few guidelines to respect

• So as not to disrupt the livestock, do not go past the pasture fencing. Dogs are welcome in the park providing they are on a leash at all times.

• For your safety, do not climb on the rock formations.

• On warm sunny days, be mindful of vipers sunning themselves near rocks.

• Part of this site is shared with soaring sports enthusiasts (paragliding and hang gliding). Thank you for respecting the practice space dedicated to these pastimes.

Otherwise similar the rest of the Morvan region, the Uchon granite massif hides at its heart curious geological formations that are an unusual sight in Burgundy and a rarity in France : granite 'chaos'.

Follow the marked trail and discover strange blocks of rounded rock piles, with their peculiar shapes defying balance. The end of this trail, passing through exceptional natural viewpoints, leads you to an awe inspiring view point over the Arroux bocage valley and the Morvan range.

Let the beautiful and magical appeal of this site move you !

Acidic moorland : a realm for Scotch broom and Heather

On both sides of the trail, Scotch broom and Heather moors dominate.

This natural milieu, typical of Morvan, is rare elsewhere in Burgundy. Plants found here are characteristic of acidic granite soils, which are especially dry and nutrient poor.

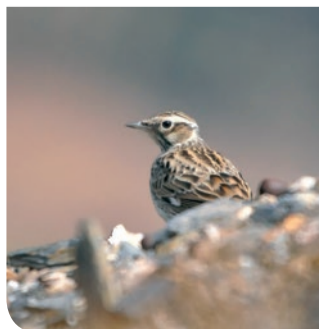
If you stop for a while, you may be in luck and catch a sight of the 'Lulu' lark.



Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) flowers from April to June. As its name suggests, its branches were once used to fashion brooms.
G. Doucet - CEN Bourgogne



Calluna (*Calluna vulgaris*) or False heather displays pink flowers that blossom in autumn.
G. Doucet - CEN Bourgogne



The 'Lulu' lark (*Lullula arborea*) is at home in this mixed environment of low vegetation and shrubs.
F. Croset

Information



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Directions

'Carnaval' Rocks are located within the 'Parc naturel régional du Morvan', on the Uchon hill, around 9 miles (15 kms) West of Le Creusot and 12 miles (20 kms) South of Autun. From the village of Uchon, follow road D275 and signs for 'Rochers du Carnaval'.



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To learn more about nature in Burgundy : www.bourgogne-franche-comte-nature.fr

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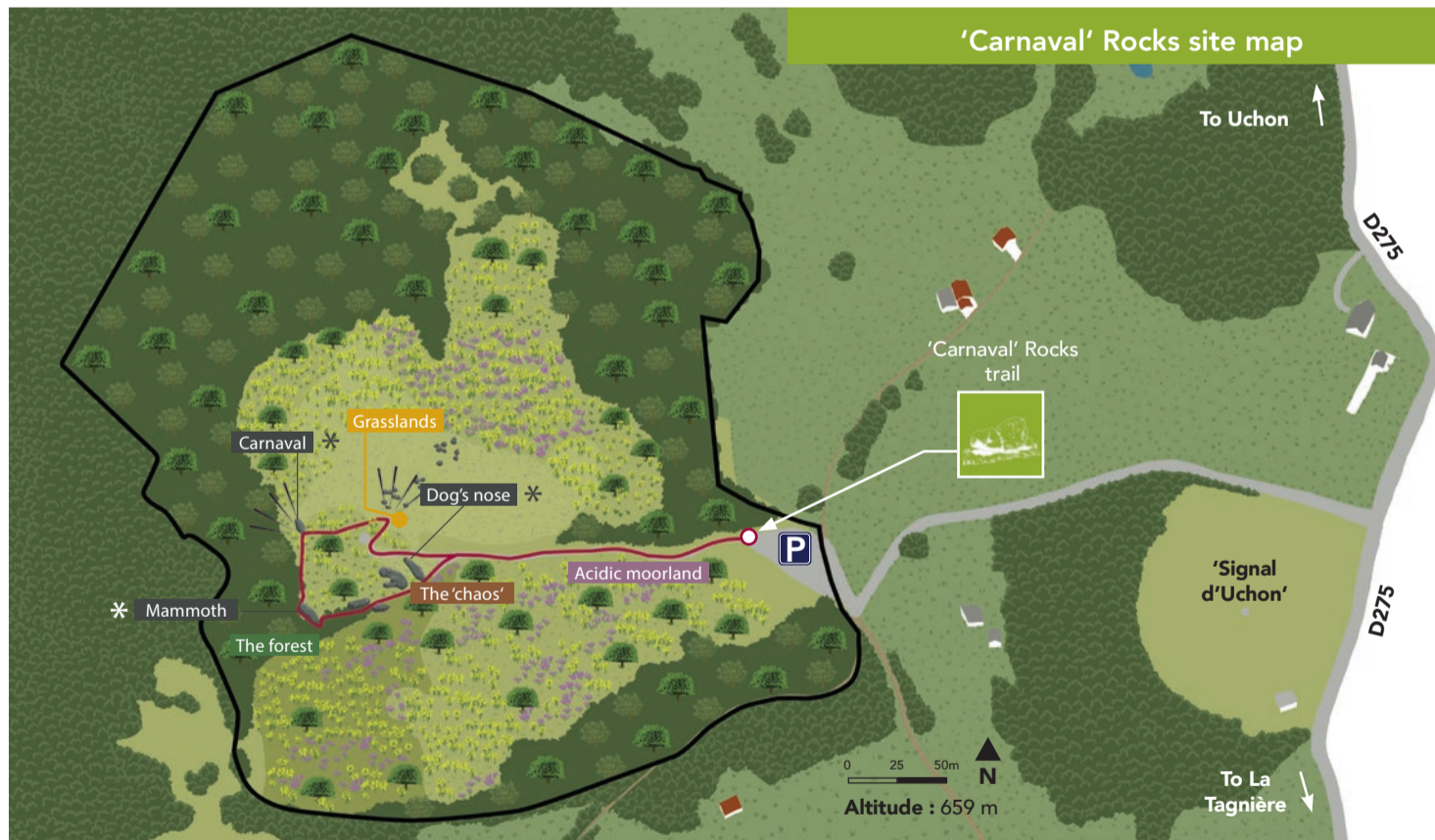
Les Rochers du Carnaval 'Carnaval' Rocks

Discovery trail



Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Bourgogne
www.cen-bourgogne.fr

'Carnaval' Rocks site map



— Site boundary

Viewpoints

○ Trail entrance

Dry grassland

Moorland with Calluna

Oak forest

Forest

Scotch broom moor

Chestnut trees

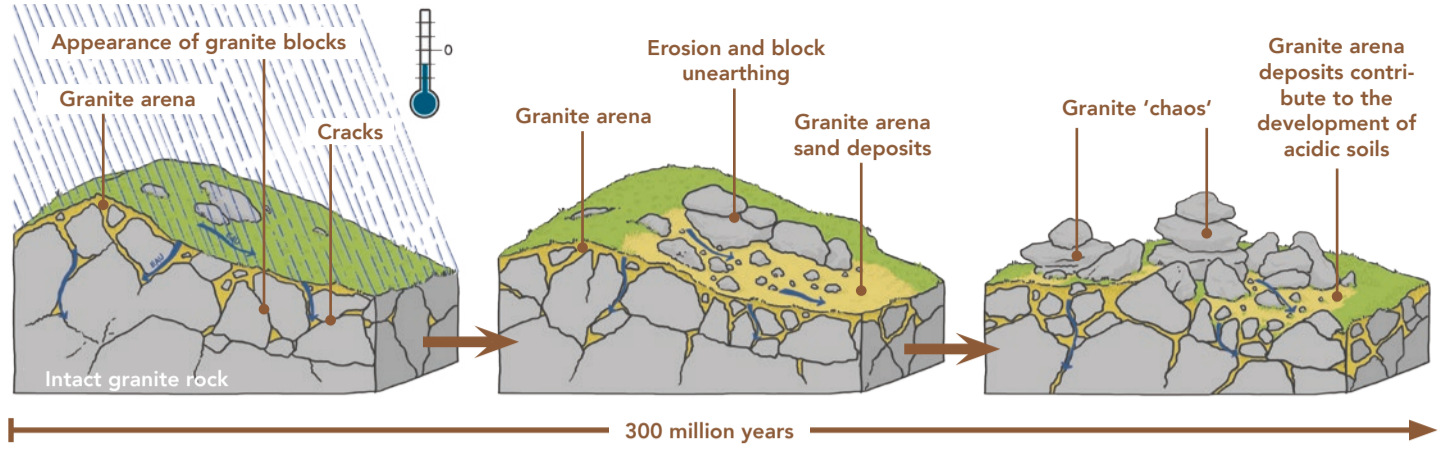
Granite 'chaos' rock formation

* given names for the major granite 'chaos' formations, inspired by their shape

Granite 'chaos' : natural phenomenon or devil's work ?

Granite 'chaos' or granite piles stand before you as if dropped in place by magic. But they are in fact the result of a history going back 300 million years, that of erosion of solid rock originating in the primary geological era.

Over millennia, frost and temperature fluctuations deepen natural cracks in the granite rocks to lead to eventual breaks and block release. Rainwater is then able to infiltrate and slowly dissolve granite into a type of sand named 'granite arena'. As these sands drain to the surrounding lower areas, granite blocks gain prominence as sculptures shaped by erosion. Some rocks slide away or may stack to form granite 'chaos'.



How do granite 'chaos' form?

Acidic grasslands : who goes there ?

Encircling the 'chaos' and along the discovery loop, low grasslands lay under your feet : these are acidic moors. They play a big role in the rich ecology of this site and foster plant species that are specifically adapted to these conditions.



The leaves of *Festuca filiformis* (a type of ryegrass) are ultra fine and serve to limit water loss. A great asset on dry terrain!

A. Poirel - CEN Bourgogne



Jacobea adonidifolia is usually found along the atlantic regions and is a rare sight in Burgundy.

O. Bardet - CBNBP



Sheep's-bit scabious or *Jasione laevis* is a mountain species, very rare and protected in Burgundy. It flowers from June to September.

M. Jouve - CEN Bourgogne



Lamb-succory (*Arnoseris minima*) grows in areas devoid of other vegetation, directly from rock bed.

O. Bardet - CBNBP

Landscape etched by history



View over the Arroux valley landscape
F. Jeandenand - CEN Bourgogne

The top of 'Carnaval' Rocks opens over a landscape sculpted by spring and rain water erosion of granite rocks, by tectonic shifts, as well as by human activity over millennia.

In the Morvan near Autun, prairies were once more spread out. Land parcels are still delineated by **low hedges with interspersed oak trees** forming what is termed a **bocage**. The evolution of agricultural practices and a move away from agriculture have led to a **gradual reforestation of slopes as well as some prairies and moors**. More recently, **forestry plantations** have accelerated this phenomenon. Darker green patches show up **softwood** plantations dotted over the landscape.

These **open, dry and rocky environments** support a **specific fauna**, notably **reptiles**, who seek the warmth from the sun heated rocks. 'Carnaval' Rocks are also the habitat of residence, mating and hunting for **many birds and insects**.

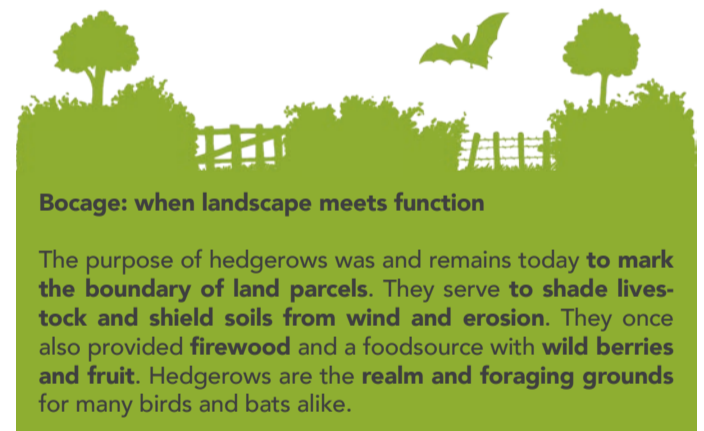
The Western green lizard (*Lacerta bilineata*), reaching up to 18 inch. (45 cm) with its tail, mesmerizes with its vibrant green colour.
G. Doucet
CEN Bourgogne



Wart-biter (*Decticus verrucivorus*), a grasshopper, dwells in the tall grass prairies and moors.
G. Doucet - CEN Bourgogne



The Baton blue butterfly (*Pseudophilotes baton*) is at home in grasslands and dry moors with low rising plants. (seen April to September)
M. Jouve
CEN Bourgogne



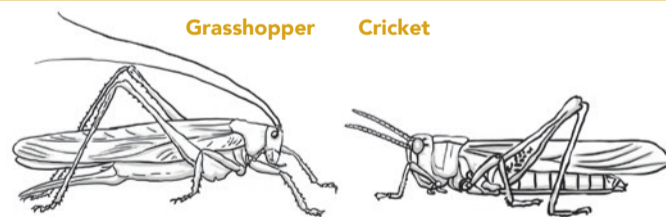
Bocage: when landscape meets function

The purpose of hedgerows was and remains today to **mark the boundary of land parcels**. They serve to **shade livestock and shield soils from wind and erosion**. They once also provided **firewood** and a foodsource with **wild berries and fruit**. Hedgerows are the **realm and foraging grounds** for many birds and bats alike.

Cricket or grasshopper : can you tell ?

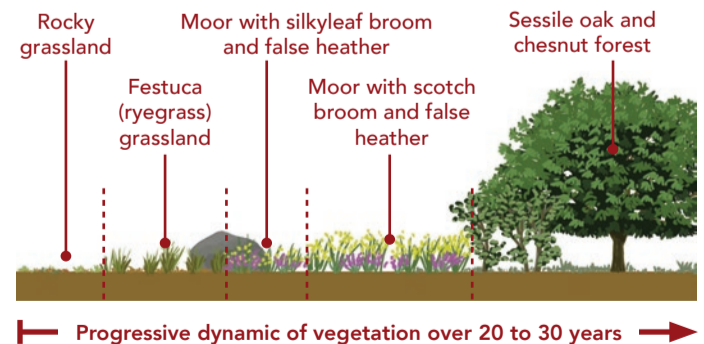
To get it right every time, do not trust their colour but check out their antennae!

Grasshopper : thin antennae - longer than its body
Cricket : shorter antennae than its body



A fine balance between nature and human activity

Although natural, the evolution of vegetation encroaching on open sites endangers the ecologically valuable species that predilect such environments. Without protective intervention, this very site would become fully forested within a couple of decades !



Progressive dynamic of vegetation over 20 to 30 years

Rich diversity of the Morvan forest

The 'Carnaval' Rocks site is surrounded by forest. Oak, beech, hornbeam and birch trees can all adapt to poor, dry and acidic soils to grow naturally on the Uchon massif.

Chestnut trees, thought to have been introduced by the Romans, appear to have thrived in this area!

Deciduous forests, a unique charm of Morvan landscapes, are slowly being **replaced by softwood plantations** due to economic interests. Unfortunately, softwood forests do not favour biodiversity.



Fruit and leaves of the Sessile oak tree
G. Doucet - CEN Bourgogne

Woodpeckers : adapted to a life in trees

Woodpecker feet consist of **two sets of two opposing claws**, which allow them to **grip and climb tree trunks**. They hammer with their strong beak to **defend their territory**, or to seek **delicious insects through the tree bark**.



To preserve the ecological value of 'Carnaval' Rocks, the '**Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Bourgogne**' (Burgundy natural spaces Conservancy) owns part of the lands and **actively manages the entire site** since 1996, in partnership with other private owners, local partners and State services. Ancient customs, once used to manage grasslands, are applied regularly at this site and include **selective tree felling**, **removal of shrubs** as well as **grazing by livestock**. These approaches allow for the maintenance of open grasslands and moors so that all of us can enjoy the 'chaos' and their surrounding landscape for many years to come.