

BRING WITH YOU

- Water
- Supplies
- Garbage bag
- Weather appropriate footwear and clothing
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Area map
- Compass
- Local authorities contact details

IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS

NATIONAL REPUBLICAN GUARD 265 242 600/604
SOS 112
FIRE DEPARTMENT 269 498 450
TOURISM 269 750 429
SOS FOREST 117



PR3 GDL



PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
BIOMELIDES

BIOMELIDES ROUTE

The proximity to both the coastline and the lagoon were decisive elements in the establishment of population in this territory, which goes back to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, with several remains from the megalithic culture surviving in the parish.

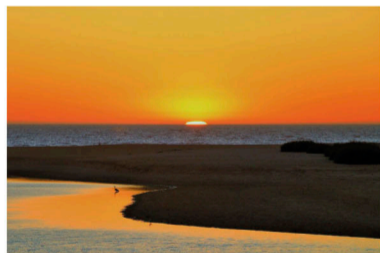
In the fifteenth century, this region was inhabited by a community dedicated to agriculture, fishing and herding, who lived around Barra de Melides, a watercourse navigable by small draft vessels and the location where the hermitage of Santa Marinha was built, a site that has been documented since the sixteenth century.

In 1523, Fernão Mendes Pinto ended up here. He is the author of the famous 'Pilgrimage' book and was dropped at the beach by French corsairs. This was a period when the ecosystem was changing and there was a lowering of the water levels. The seventeenth century witnessed the aggradation of the Barra and if, on the one hand, the lagoon was created, on the other hand, a wide swamp area filled with unhealthy waters also emerged. It was full of native flora and performed a habitat where mosquitoes were abundant and transmitting fever, also known as ague, being therefore responsible for the high mortality rates registered, especially in the summer season. This phenomenon is believed to have led to the construction of the hermitage of São Pedro located in a more sound and airy site, thus originating the establishment of the village.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the swamp was cleared, which, in turn, created fertile alluvium lands that were irrigated by water coming from the Olhos Fountain. The swamp area then became an agricultural meadow, where the rice culture predominated thereafter.

Whoever follows the BioMelides route will find several remains from the past, elements from both the material and immaterial heritage that are recognized at every step of the way and stand in full harmony with the nature around: the Vigia watchtower built at the location where vessels used to be monitored for fear of pirate ships, the Lagoon with its small fishing boats and associated arts, and what is left from the old water mills located in Baixo, Cima and Vau, among many others elements.

After going through the meadow and the paddy fields, cross the Melides stream by foot. Challenge yourself and be enchanted.



MELIDES LAGOON

A Mediterranean-type coastal lagoon system included in the Melides stream river basin, and part of a wider group of coastal lagoons distributed along the shoreline and stretching from the Sado estuary all the way down to the Sines cape.

In geological terms, the Melides lagoon is located within a morphological and structural unit known as the Meso Cenozoic region, which corresponds to a sedimentation basin that comprises three active faults with signs of tectonic activity for the past 2 million years: the Grândola fault, San Andreas fault and Santa Cruz fault. Integrated in the geomorphological unit of the Tróia-Sines coastal arch and corresponding to a lowland area, the lagoon's river basin is distinguished for its three morphological systems: the continental, drainage and lagoon. This body of water is isolated from the ocean by a dune bar, with the exception of the time when it is opened to the ocean, which occurs twice a year during the equinoxes' spring tides and performing an operation conducted with the support of machines. This procedure determines an important moment for the lagoon, since it allows the reduction of both the aggradation and eutrophication processes, thus allowing the renovation and cleaning of waters, the rinse of the lagoon's bed and consequently, enabling the entrance of several fish species.

It is necessary to bear in mind that during this process the lagoon crossing may be hampered due to the impact of the tides on the lagoon itself.



Armeria punjens

and some examples of common reed *Phragmites australis* can also be spotted, as well as a few endangered endemic groups, such as the spiny thrift *Armeria punjens*, the flowering plant *Jonopsidium acaule* or the breckland thyme *Thymus camphoratus*. The latter species have a priority conservation status.

FLORA

Stone pine *Pinus pinea* and some traces of maritime pine *Pinus pinaster* are the predominant elements throughout the BioMelides trail, in addition to the southern blue-gum *Eucalyptus globulus*. There is a meadow dominated by the rice culture



Plegadis falcinellus

FAUNA

The Melides lagoon functions as both a nesting and spawning location, and some of the animals often found at this site are the European eel *Anguilla anguilla*, the common roach *Rutilus rutilus* and the common snook *Centropomus undecimalis*.

Other traditional species characteristic of this region's coastal lagoons and observed during the trajectory refer to the grey heron *Ardea cinerea*, the western osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, the azure-winged magpie *Cyanopica cyanus* and the white stork *Ciconia ciconia* that has a strong presence in the region, similarly to the glossy ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*. All these can be found in wetlands, such as paddy fields, during the winter season. We can also identify the Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra* near water lines, performing one of the most vulnerable groups existing in the area and presumably one of the most iconic mammal breeds.



HERMITAGE OF SÃO PEDRO

MELIDES PARISH CHURCH

November 7th 1634 The Judge and the Disciples of the Apostle Saint Peter from Santiago do Cacém requested an authorization to build the hermitage.

1690 The Hermitage of São Pedro becomes the parish church of the Melides civil parish.

Location: 38°8'48.48"N; 8°43'44.74"W

Ramiro Correia Street. C.M.P. 1:25.000, sheet 494



OLHOS FOUNTAIN

This is a wide water stream site that, in turn, originates another brook irrigating the meadows of Melides, thus allowing the rice culture to thrive. As a natural spring, it dates back to ancient times. In the eighteenth century, its waters also enabled the milling process of some wheel mills, namely the ones located at Baixo, Cima and Vau that operated until the first half of the twentieth century.



VIGIA TRIANGULATION STATION

VIGIA WATCHTOWER

Located next to the Vigia triangulation station at the top of a cliff, this is a site from where one can enjoy a privileged panoramic overview of the ocean, all the way from Sines to Sesimbra. This was in fact the location where vessels used to be monitored, namely pirate ships whose presence startled the residents who, by being able to spot the threat from this station, managed to defend themselves against potential attacks.

Location: N 380 08 '05.8 "W 80 47' 28.8"

VISITORS CODE OF CONDUCT

- Respect private property; close the gates if you happen to find them on your way.
- Avoid making noise or adopt attitudes that disturb the local peace.
- Keep your distance from the animals; do not feed them; observe them with binoculars.
- Do not pick plants up or collect any geological sample; let other visitors be able to also contemplate the natural richness.
- Take pictures only; they perform good memories from past times and record the landscape beauty.

- Respect the signage.
- Each visitor is responsible for any garbage or debris produced; dispose of it at the appropriate places.
- Contact the local authorities whenever you detect any irregularity.
- Always follow the marked trails.
- Beware of the cattle; although it is meek it does not like its offspring to be approached by strangers.
- Do not forget that at times you may find other visitors on your trail; in this circumstance we appeal to the principles of mutual respect and common sense.

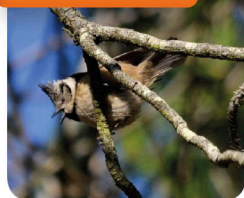
SPECIES BY AREAS

SAND DUNES



Kentish plover
Charadrius alexandrinus

PINEWOODS



European crested tit
Lophophanes cristatus

VAU WHEEL MILL



European goldfinch
Carduelis carduelis

VAU WHEEL MILL



Common nightingale
Luscinia megarhynchos

PADDY FIELDS



Eurasian spoonbill
Platalea leucorodia

TARRAJANA



Azure-winged magpie
Cyanopica cyanus

LAGOON



Western marsh harrier
Circus aeruginosus

VIEWPOINT



Common linnet
Carduelis canabina

CAMPING SITE



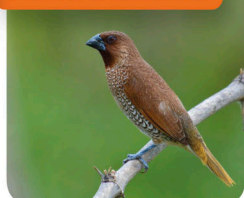
Striped hawk-moth
Hyles livornica

VIGIA



Crested lark
Galerida cristata

PADDY FIELDS



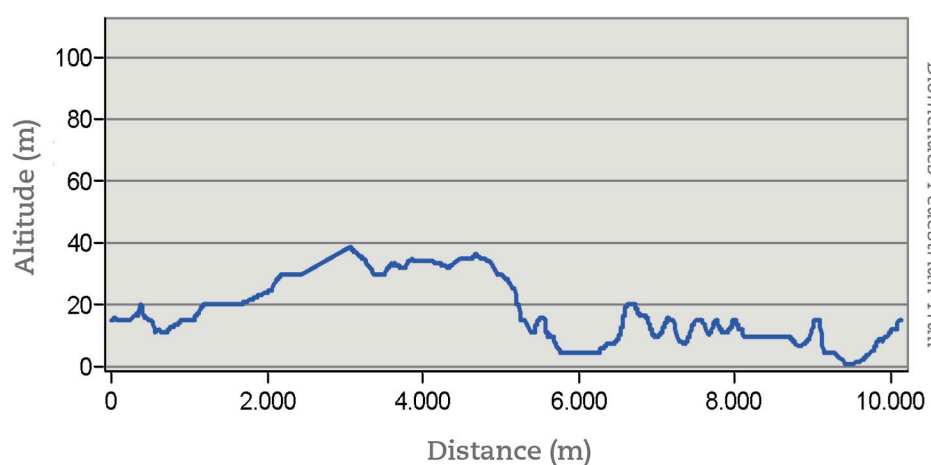
Scaly-breasted munia
Lonchura punctulata

PINEWOODS



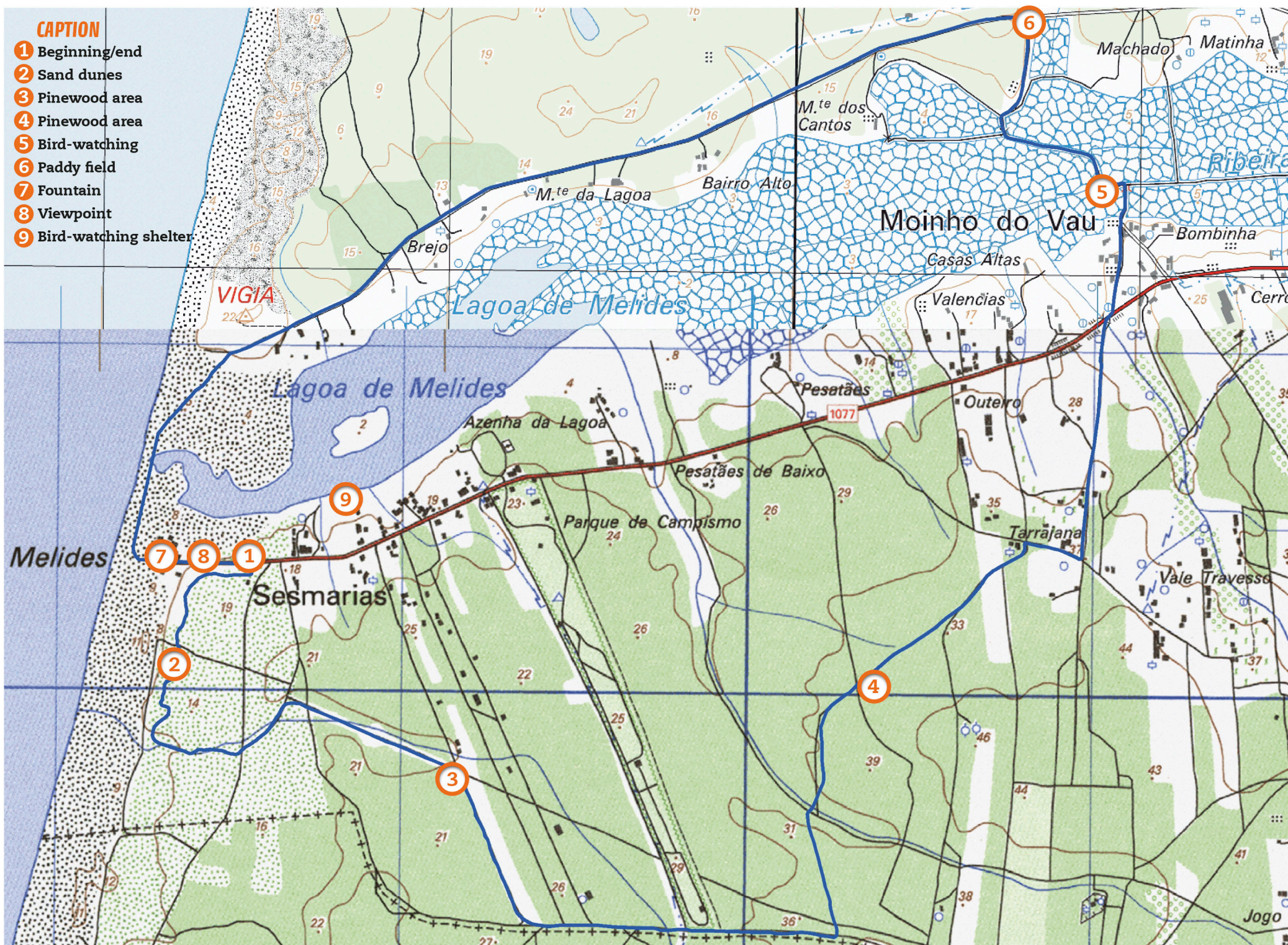
Painted lady
Vanessa Cardui

ELEVATION PROFILE



Biemelides Pedestrian Trail

Among nature, leave no more than footprints and take no more than photographs.



CAPTION

- 1 Beginning/end
- 2 Sand dunes
- 3 Pinewood area
- 4 Pinewood area
- 5 Bird-watching
- 6 Paddy field
- 7 Fountain
- 8 Viewpoint
- 9 Bird-watching shelter

PR3 GDL BIEMELIDES



- Starting/arrival point: 1 Melides beach viewpoint
- Advised Direction: Counter clockwise
- Travelled distance: 13 km
- Route duration: approx. 3 hours at a speed of 4 km/h
- Degree of difficulty: Easy
- Type of route: Small circular route
- Route scope: Ecological/ Landscaping/ Geocaching/ Mountain Biking

Not advisable between June 15th and July 15th due to the application of plant protection products.

SMALL ROUTE SIGNAGE

Signs found along the trail



Right track



Wrong track



To the right



To the left

In the process of being approved by the Portuguese
Camping and Mountaineering Federation

GeocacherZONE

