MINISTERIO
PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA
Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO

Primer ejercicio del proceso selectivo para el ingreso por el sistema general de**PROMOCIÓN INTERNA** en el **CUERPO DE INGENIEROS DE MONTES DEL ESTADO**

PARTE A – IDIOMA INGLÉS

Resolución de 17 de junio de 2021 (BOE 1 de julio de 2021)

TEXTO:

European ecosystems are not only the result of natural processes, they have also been heavily influenced by humans over thousands of years. There is probably nowhere else in the world where the signs of human interaction with nature in the landscape are so varied, contrasting and localised and this is strongly reflected in Europe's biodiversity.

Without this intervention, Europe would have looked completely different today. According to existing soils, topography and climate, 80–90% of the continent should be covered in forest. Yet only a third of the EU is actually forested and almost all of this is now managed or used for commercial timber extraction. Very little of the truly natural virgin forest is left and what remains is often tucked away in remote inaccessible places far from human inhabitation.

Instead, trees were systematically cut down to make way for farmland and other habitats that could prove useful for humankind. Each valley or region developed its own traditions and methods of working the land depending on local conditions. Crops and vegetables were planted in rotation to get the most out of the soil without exhausting it. Livestock was put out to pasture while orchards and olive groves were planted in patches dotted around the countryside. Today, there are still over 2,800 traditional livestock breeds registered in Europe, more than anywhere else in the world, as well as several thousand ancient varieties of fruit trees.

Each breed is adapted to cope and thrive in particular environments and, as such, represents a valuable genetic resource as well as an important legacy of the past. These diverse farming practices continued on a localised level for centuries and were passed down from generation to generation. With time they became firmly embedded in the diverse cultures, traditions and languages that were beginning to develop across Europe at that time. They also created a wonderfully intricate patchwork of different habitat types, interspersed amongst vast areas of still

untouched natural habitats. Most of these semi-natural habitats developed their own distinct mix of wild plants and animals which considerably enhanced Europe's overall biodiversity. Even today, half of our wildlife is associated with, and sometimes also entirely dependent upon, the existence of semi-natural habitats.

Natural and semi-natural forests are amongst the most complex and biodiversity-rich ecosystems on earth but few of these ancient valuable habitats have survived into the 21st century.

Today, around a third of Europe is forested but less than a tenth of this resource is of any significant wildlife value, and only a tiny fraction of that is completely natural virgin forest, untouched by humankind.

A number of distinguishing features set these natural and semi-natural forests apart from the rest. On the whole, they tend to look 'less tidy' than intensively managed plantations. Trees are of varying ages, height and structure—some are massive, others are little more than young trees. The forest floor is often covered in a thick understorey of shrubs and other wild plants and every now and then, a dead or dying tree has fallen down to create a forest clearing.
These different features help to create a variety of micro-habitats which are in turn colonised by a rich array of wildlife species that vary from one type of forest to another. The presence of dead and decaying wood and leaves in particular encourages the growth of lichens and fungi which are not found in this quantity in any other kind of environment.

Within the European Union, 81 forest habitat types have been identified as being in urgent need of conservation under the Habitats Directive, either because of their unique assemblage of trees, plants and animals or because they are vital for the survival of rare and threatened species.

This large number does not imply an abundant resource. On the contrary, it goes to confirm their generally rare and residual nature. Over half are restricted to just one or two countries, like the beech forests of the Italian Apennines or the lush laurel forests of the Canary Islands, the Azores and Madeira.

Only a handful of the more 'common' and well-known forests—such as alluvial forests, oak woods and beech forests—are present in several countries.

As one approaches central and western Europe, the coniferous forests are increasingly intermixed with deciduous broadleaved trees.

Unlike boreal forests, these temperate forests have, in their natural state, an exceptionally rich undergrowth. Wild plants grow in profusion on the forest floor, benefiting from the added nourishment provided by decomposing leaves and the extra light that penetrates through before the trees are in leaf.