

Catral and El Hondo

The village of Catral is a typical inland Vega Baja village, with a main square, an impressive church, long high street and a municipal outdoor summer only swimming pool. However, included within its municipal limits is San Felip Neri and also part of the El Hondo Natural Park. The cute hamlet of San Felip Neri is little more than a collection of houses, but it still has a central square with a church.



El Hondo (El Fondo in Valenciano) has been a Nature Park and Reserve since 1988 and is on the RAMSAR wetlands conservation list as well as being classified as a Special Protection Area for Birds, or ZEPA. This park is part of what used to be the Elche Lagoon, which was almost completely drained during the 18th century. Today there are two controlled reservoirs which are surrounded by a series of ponds and salt marshes, fields and palm plantations, making it a pretty place to visit at any time of the year. There is a visitors centre with information about the flora and fauna, picnic benches, twitching huts, and a walking and cycling routes with information boards.



Catral Village Centre

[38.159517, -0.804450](#)

Park on the main road and walk towards the blue domed church for the village square with the town hall.

Catral Long High Street

[38.163450, -0.802267](#)

Catral Municipal Swimming Pool

[38.166150, -0.801367](#)

San Felip Neri Hamlet

[38.177800, -0.797067](#)

El Hondo Visitors Centre

[38.187600, -0.790850](#)

Parking is in the car park and is free, it is best to park in the first car park (furthest away from the centre) as this never gets locked.

The Visitors Centre has a series of information boards which explain about the reserve. It was initially created to help boost the Marbled Duck and the White Head Duck population both of which had dropped to dangerously low levels with less than 30 pairs in 1994.

The picnic area is to the far side of the building looking out over the reserve and the toilets are on the opposite side of the building to the front door. Remember to take the binoculars!

El Hondo Walking & Cycling Route

[38.187600, -0.790850](#)

For the 1 km circular walking route, called the Amarilla or Yellow Route go past the Visitors Centre and follow the wooden walkway back to the start, this route is accessible to people with reduced mobility.

For the 4 km circular walking route, called the Verde or Green Route go past the Visitors Centre and start on the wooden walkway, once this has finished follow the path to the small white building which is beside an irrigation canal and lots of palm trees, turn left and continue to the lookout tower, then turn left in front of the large irrigation canal following the white and green posts back to the car park.

For the 16 km there and back linear cycling route, called the Azul or Blue Route, follow the walking route until the look out tower, at the irrigation canal turn right and continue along this service road until the end of the lagoon, turn left here keeping the lagoon on your left and fields on your right, go past the El Azarbe observation hut and the route ends at the second hut called El Saladar, turn around and follow the same route back to the Visitors Centre.



Bars, Restaurants and Shops

Catral Village Centre

[38.159517, -0.804450](#)

San Felip Neri Hamlet

[38.177800, -0.797067](#)

Annual Fiestas and Events

Romeria Catral Santa Agueda 5th February

Easter Catral parades on several days throughout Easter week

Patron Saint Fiesta Catral San Juan Bautista 24th June