

Mionší Virgin Forest

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Mionší Virgin Forest that belongs to the Carpathian Mountain range is situated in the Beskydy Mountains, in the easternmost part of the Czech Republic. This forest is the largest one in the Czech Republic and consists of three peaks, Úplaz, Velká Polana, Mionší, and several forest meadows, pastures, wells, rock formations and a huge diversity of fauna and flora. The Virgin forest is an example of the preserved ecosystem with nearly no human activities apart from firs protection with wire fence, for example. The fir and beech forests of the Carpathian species covered the area before the first settlements came here. The oldest trees are about 400 years old, for example, beeches. The trees are about 180 years old on average. There are a lot of Carpathian fauna and flora species, some of them are endemics.

Nowadays it is difficult to renew the fir forest due to the high air pollution coming mostly from Poland as firs are very sensitive to the environmental impacts, such as air pollution.

In the past the Wallachians were pasturing their herds of sheep and goats on the mountain ridges and steep slopes of the Virgin forest. They had to gather a lot of beech leaves they cut during the late spring and summer to have food for the animals during winter times. There was little hay to make as the mountains were covered with the forests around. Later on more and more forests were cut down to have enough pastures and hay.

At present the volunteers and mountain rangers keep the pastures with the manual scything to preserve the flora diversity. They try to take care of the forest in a very respectful way to the nature.



Figure 1: View of the Mionší



Figure 2: Fir tree with fungi



Figure 3 : Salamander



Figure 4: Dentaria glandulosa