

NATURE STUDIO (101173961)

DELIVERABLE D4.2

"USER'S GUIDE FOR RECORDING LOCATIONS IN MONCHIQUE, PORTUGAL"

by Carlos Norton, Fungo Azul, August 2026



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

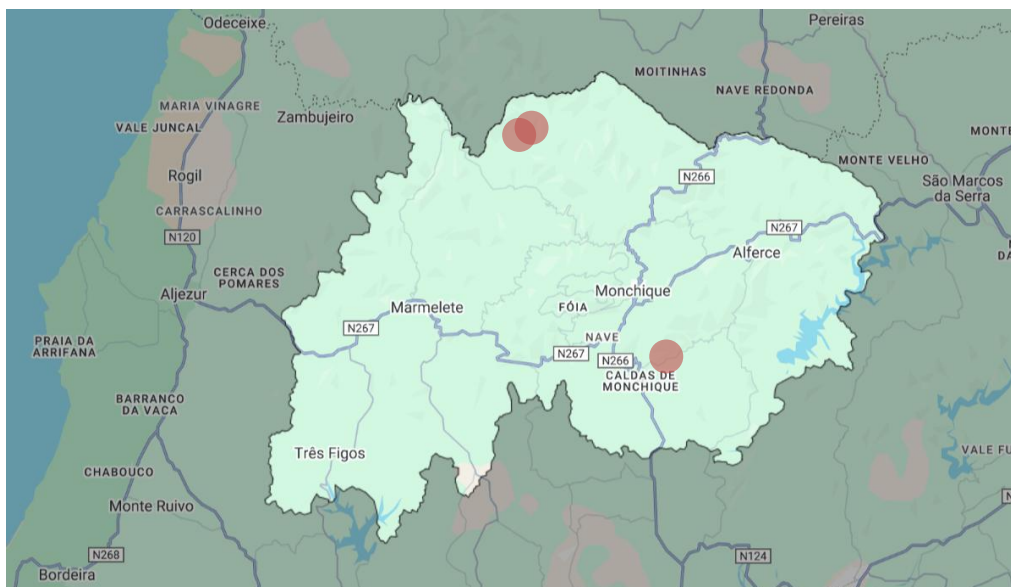
MONCHIQUE

Monchique is a municipality located at the Southwest of Portugal, being one of the few (3 out of 16) from Algarve without any coastline. It is a mountain region, with Fóia as the highest peak in the region, reaching 902m altitude.

Besides the main village, the municipality has only 3 other small villages - Marmeleite, Alferce and Casais. Most of the landscape is forest and rural properties with sparse houses, mainly in the south slope of the mountain. It is therefore a quite place, except for the main village and the main roads (South to Portimão, North to Santa Clara, West to Aljezur and East to S. Marcos).

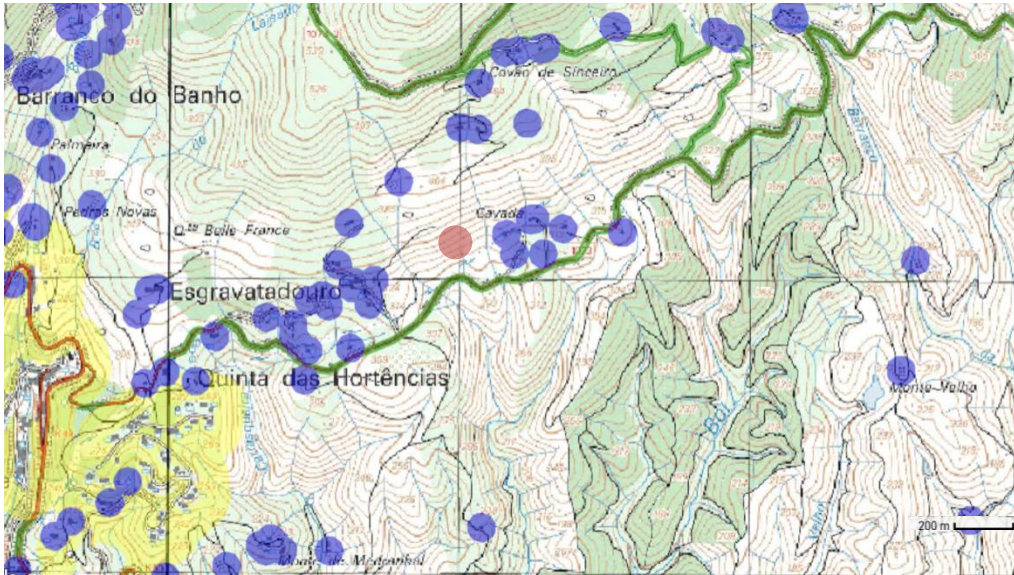


Three recording studios were chosen, one with easy access from the main road, "Esgravatadouro", and the other two "Perna da Negra" at the far north side in an isolated area, with some mountain road driving, not all covered with asphalt.



ESGRAVATADOURO

(37.288514, -8.538080)



(Red dot - Studio; Blue dot - houses; Green line - road)

Location: Esgavatadouro studio lies by a small road that has about 4 to 5 cars per day. There are some houses around, but because of specific topography, being protected by side elevations, the sound produced there does not reach the studio, unless it is uncommonly powerful. There may be some people doing some walking paths, but just occasionally, not even on a daily basis.

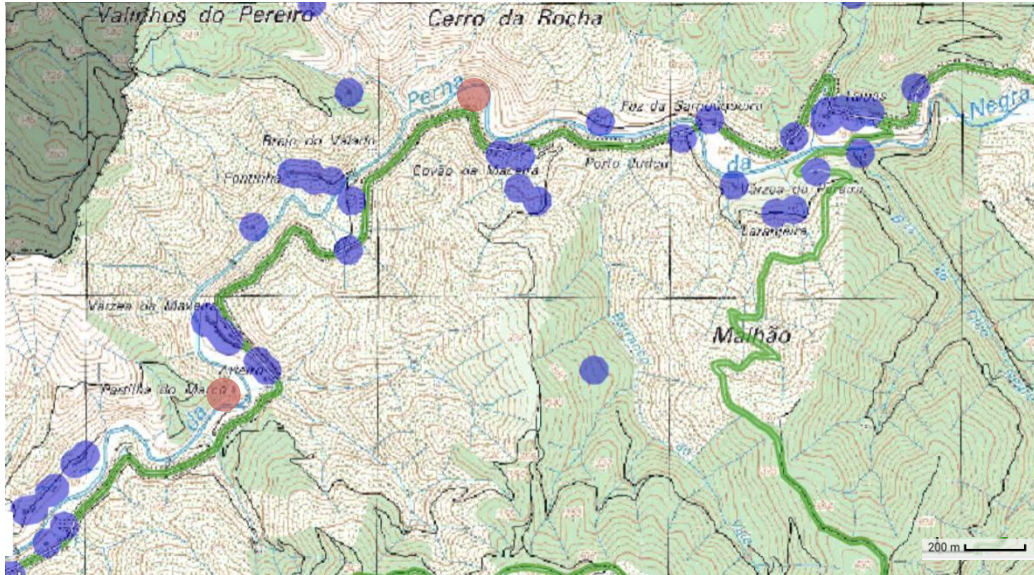
Sound specifications: As a wide open air place, the acoustics is sharp and clean, not reflecting from the near surroundings, with two echoes, one from SE (strong) and another from SW (medium).

Access and facilities: The place is steep and covered by grass and small bushes. Proper boots should help, but not mandatory. "Caldas de Monchique" is at a 5-minute drive from the studio, and has hotels, cafe and bar, public toilets and restaurants.



PERNA DA NEGRA (AREIRO + COVÃO DA MACHEIRA)

(Areiro: 37.384702, -8.621873; and Covão da Macheira: 37.393885, -8.612324)



(Red dot - Studios; Blue dot - houses; Green line - road)

Perna da Negra studios include two locations separated by 1300m, and both places are nearby a small road without asphalt, that serves only a small number of houses. The road has less than 3 cars per day. There are just some few houses around, with people living permanently, but just one house is close enough to each studio to potentially interfere with recordings.

There are no people walking nor tourists in this area.



Areiro

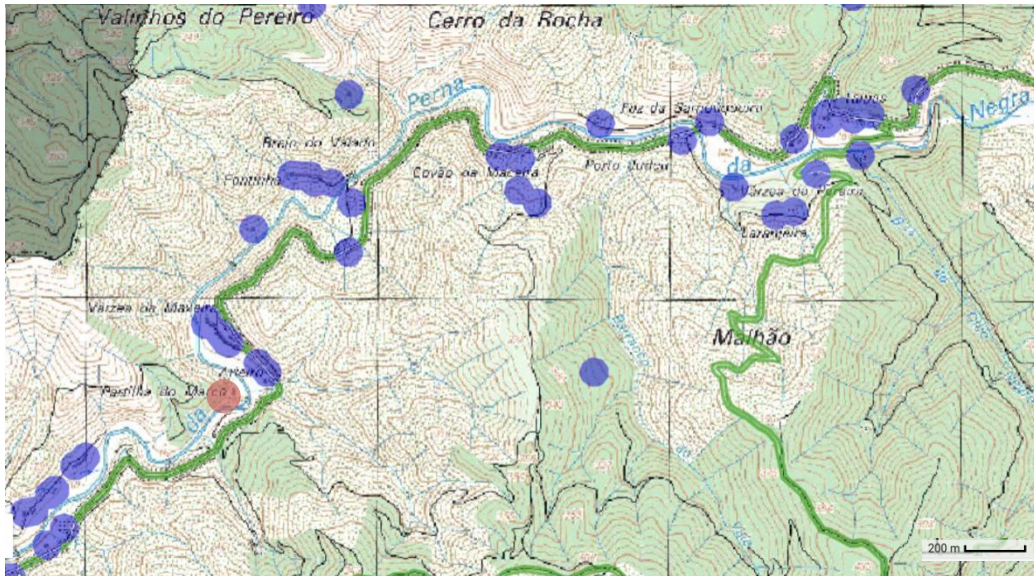


Covão da Macheira

PERNA DA NEGRA

(AREEIRO)

(37.384702, -8.621873)



(Red dot - Studio; Blue dot - houses; Green line - road)

Location:

The studio lies by a small river, just less than 100 meters from the gravel road, and it's surrounded by trees, mainly Eucalyptus. On each side of the river a steep hill protects the studio.

Sound specifications:

The combination of topography and vegetation, leads to a cozy and warm sound environment, with no particular echoes or bright sounds. The river is a constant, but frequently with smooth sounds. The location is big enough to place microphones in order to capture the most or the less of the river, but never to avoid it. Strong winds will make the leaves quite noisy.

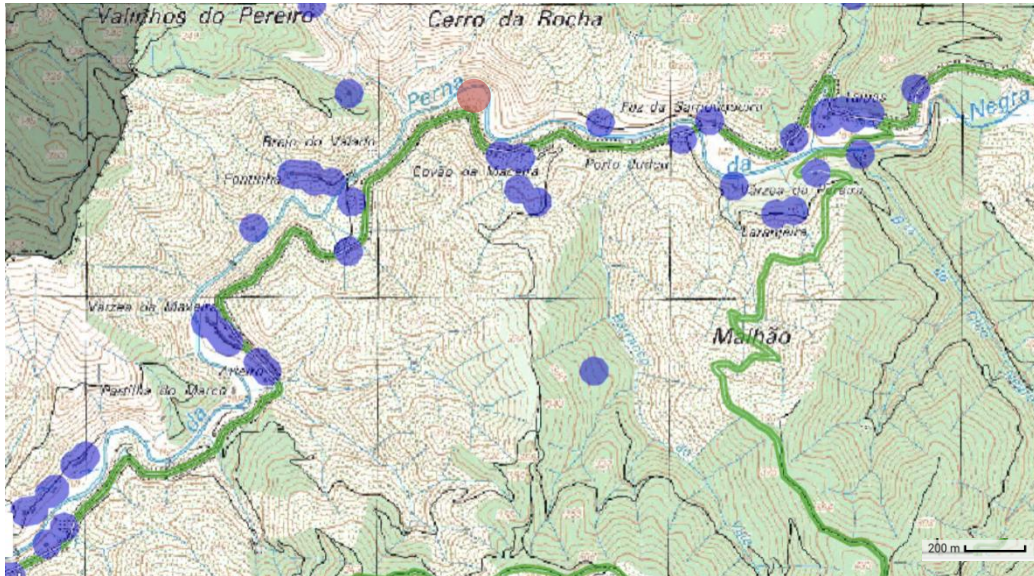
Access and facilities:

The place is steep, but the access from the road is easy. No specific boots are required, unless if you intend to go into the river, which is 30cm deep maximum.

The nearest place from the studio for public toilets, cafe and restaurants, Vila de Monchique, is at a 30-minute drive.

PERNA DA NEGRA (COVÃO DA MACHEIRA)

(Covão da Macheira: 37.393885, -8.612324)



(Red dot - Studio; Blue dot - houses; Green line - road)

Location:

The studio is located right on the gravel road and lies by a valley with a small river at the bottom and a naked flat stone hill just in front.

Sound specifications:

The stone hill in front provides a very strong echoes. Nevertheless, there is no other sound feature, no reflections there. The small river is hidden by the slope, so not reaching the studio.

If there is strong wind, the echoes will be lost. The ground at the studio is of gravel, so artists and technicians need to be steady.

Access and facilities:

No specific needs, as the studio is on the edge of the road.

The nearest place from the studio for public toilets, cafe and restaurants, Vila de Monchique, is at a 30-minute drive.

ENVIRONMENTAL SOUNDS

The studios are located at low density populated areas, outside tourism routes or even local population movements. There is little anthropogenic sonic features, hence most of the soundscape is natural. Nevertheless, there may be several events that may produce loud sounds, both produced by man or nature.

Nature sounds:

Birds - although present throughout the year, are more abundant in spring and summer;

Frogs - during spring and early summer;

Cicadas - mainly in summer;

Owls - for night recordings;

Water - as there are normal high levels of rain during winter, water streams can produce loud sounds from late winter until early summer.

Anthropogenic sounds:

Agriculture - there are no farms near the studios, but small gardening at the nearest house may produce some sound;

Clearing the lands - trimmers may be operating in the area, usually working from sunrise to sunset. The most frequent period is from march to end of may;

Wood extraction - chainsaws are loud even in some considerable distance. May happen at any moment of the year, but not frequently;

Vehicles - the road next to the studios is isolated, so little movement is expected. There is no sound from other distant roads.

Airplanes - there is an airport in Faro, but the pathway for the planes is not in the area. Only a few exceptions, like a recently opened route from Faro to New York, is audible in the area. It is recommended to check airplanes position in real time (flightradar24, for example).

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON METHODOLOGY

Recording outdoors, far from electricity supplies, requires self-powered systems. Our option was for portable digital sound recording devices, operating on batteries. For sustainability reasons, we selected re-chargeable batteries only.

As recording devices, we used several Zoom recorders, but always trying to use a single device for each recording, to avoid problems in synchronization. For that we used cables of distinct length, some of them 30 metre long.

As for microphones, we used several different ones, sometimes choosing some close to artists stereo mic, or even binaural mics standing by the artists, or some shotguns, pointed straight to the singer or to the instrument.

In most of the recordings we dedicated some microphones for capturing the soundscape of the place (the river, birds, wind on the leaves) so that in post-production we could balance the "amount" of nature sounds in the recordings.

We always used wind protection for the microphones, that also helps for flying insects. Both technicians and musicians were instructed to wear light and silent clothes.

Obviously, the choice of the microphones is not a reason, but a will, therefore each sound person will choose the equipment accordingly to his preferences, and to the musicians requirements. For that same reason we do not recommend any particular kind. Nevertheless, each recording information labels the microphones used, so that it can be used as a reference.

Carlos Norton

Fungo Azul

