

ALTO MOLISE



Guide to the MaB UNESCO Reserve

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INFORMAZIONI TURISTICHE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comune Comune Stazione Comune Comune Parco Osteria/ristorante Restaurante Ristorante - Agriturismo De Servizio di trasporto pubblico Banca Nazionale Abbazia - Chiesa Chiesa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borgo - feudo Piazza Municipale Quadrato emblema Museo Sportivismo Abbezzo - stile Castello Stazione ferroviaria Archaeological Oratorio |
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TOPOGRAFIA

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EROSIONE

- Acqua - corso
- Lago - (naturale)

LINEE AMMINISTRATIVE

- Regione
- Provincia
- Comune

RETTORIATO MAB

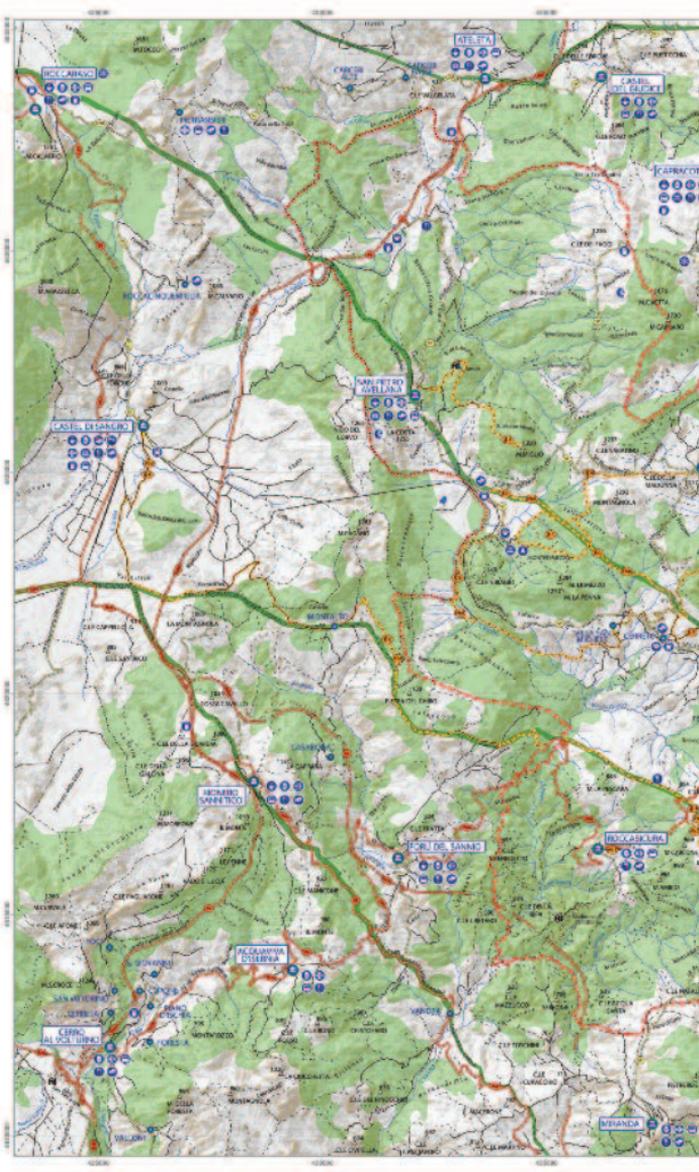
- Tratto
- Area naturale

Scala

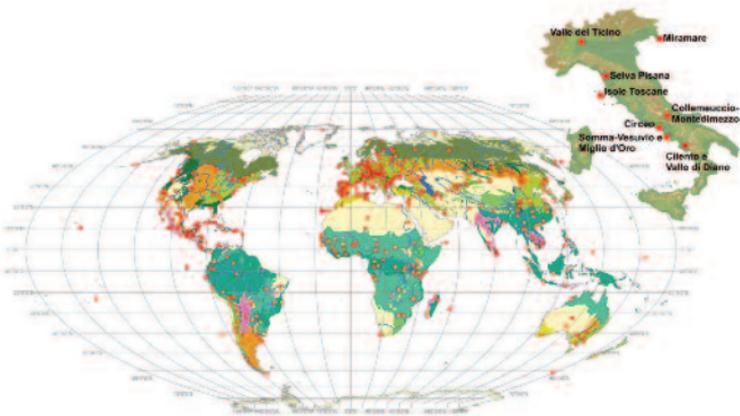
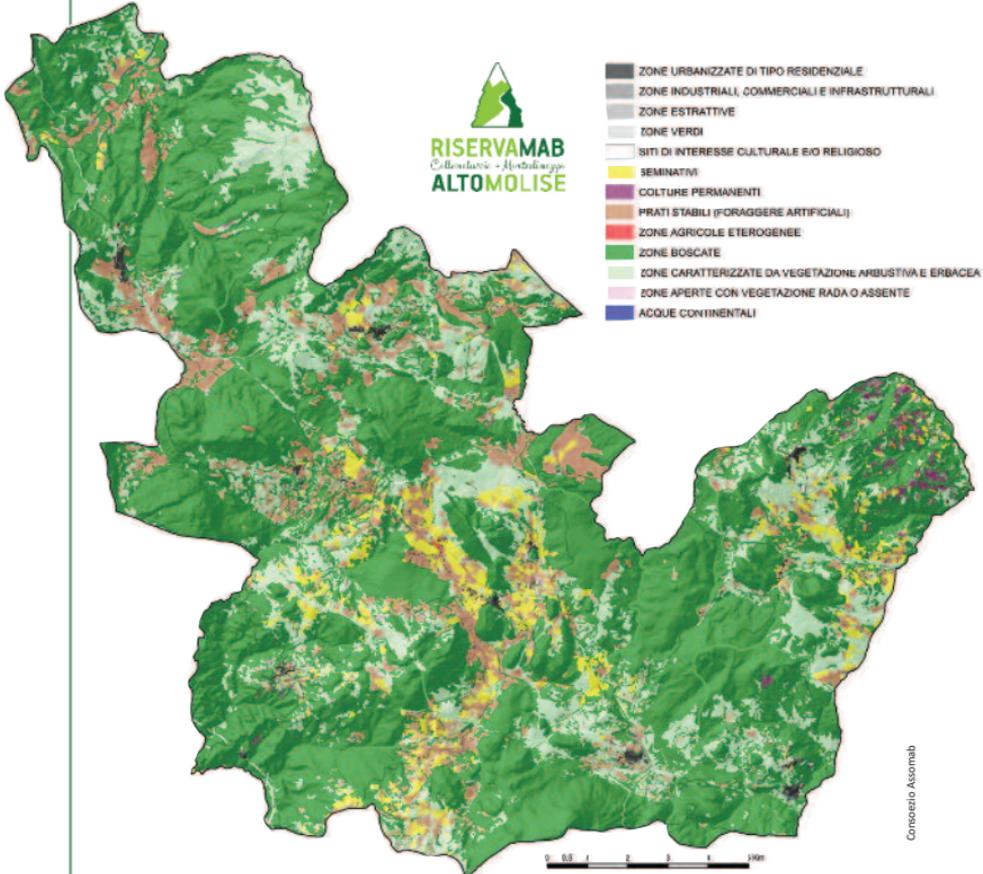
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TOPOGRAFIA

- Monte
- Monte
- Monte



The Area of the MAB reserve



La mappa riporta la distribuzione delle 505 Riserve della Biosfera istituite al 2008.

On this page, from top to bottom: Map covering the ground of the MAB reserve Area and location of the biosphere Reserve in Italy and the world. On pag. 5: Logo of the MAB Unesco. At the bottom: anoramic view of the Montedimezzo forest from the meadow behind the road to San Pietro Avellana.

Man and the Biosphere

The Inter-governmental program "Man and the Biosphere" (Man and the Biosphere-MAB) was initiated in 1971 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The aim of the program is to maintain a lasting balance between man and his environment through the preservation of biodiversity, the promotion of economic development and the preservation of cultural values. To achieve this objective, the "World Network of Biosphere Reserves" was established.

The activities are organized by its main governing body, the international Coordinating Council (ICC), in liaison with the broader community of reserve managers, by the populations National Committees etc.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Man and
the Biosphere
Programme

The MAB program in Italy

The global Biosphere Reserve Network is currently composed of 686 biosphere reserves (including 20 transboundary) in 122 countries, of which 17 in Italy: Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo; Circeo; Miramare in Friuli Venezia Giulia; Cilento and Vallo di Diano; Somma-Vesuvius and Golden Mile in Campania; Ticino, Val Grande Verbano in Lombardia and Piemonte; Tuscan Archipelago; Coastal Selve of Toscana; Monvis; Sila; Appennino Tosco-Emiliano; Ledrensi and Judicaria Alps in Trentino-Alto Adige; Po Delta; Po Hill in Piemonte; Tepilora, Rio Posada and Montalbo in Sardegna; Valle Camonica-Alto Sebino; Monte Peglia.

The UNESCO recognition

In the 26th session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the MAB UNESCO program, held in Jönköping (Sweden) from 10 to 13 June 2014, the proposal for the extension and renaming of the MAB Reserve of Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo was approved. As to the extended reserve (Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo Alto Molise) it fulfilled the requirements of thep-



MAB program and entered the World Network of Biosphere Reserves-WNBR in full. A territory of 25 thousand hectares that embraces seven municipalities crossed by two Tratturi, rich in white truffles, in which is also included the archaeological site of Pietrabbondante. But above all, an area with a very high naturalistic value so high as to become part of the world Network of the biospheres. Unlike almost all other Italian UNESCO areas, thanks to the voluntary process of the local communities, it has been possible to build the first reserve of the Italian biosphere completely autonomous from both regional and national park bodies. The asomab area has been included in the list of valuable sites for the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity and cultural landscape. The presence of 7 Sites of Community importance (SIC-Habitats Directive) characterized by 12 habitats, of which 3 are prioritized, extraordinary archaeological sites and peculiarities in forestry, gives the whole territory a wide and



Above: Autumn forest in Collemeluccio. Under: General aerial view of the MAB reserve of Montedimezzo. On pag. 7: Ancient map of the feud and, at the bottom, Montedimezzo in the early years of the twentieth century





versatile valence in preservation and value of biological diversity and cultural landscape. A goal that was reached after years of work carried out by a consortium of public bodies called "Asso mab", formed by the region of Molise, the Territorial Office for Biodiversity of Isernia, Unimol and the seven municipalities involved: Carovilli, Chiauci, Pescocostanzo, Pietrabbondante, Roccasicura, San Pietro Avellana and Vastogirardi.

The two original nuclei

Originally the biosphere reserve mab Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo was 638 hectares; it is located in Alto Molise, the inner and mountainous part of the region characterized by unspoiled nature and landscapes of great charm, where also the local customs and traditions have not been erased. It was this peculiarity that made it one of the first eight MAB biosphere reserves in Italy and the first to be established (DD. MM. 23.12.1977), together with the National Park of Circeo.



The nucleus of Montedimezzo

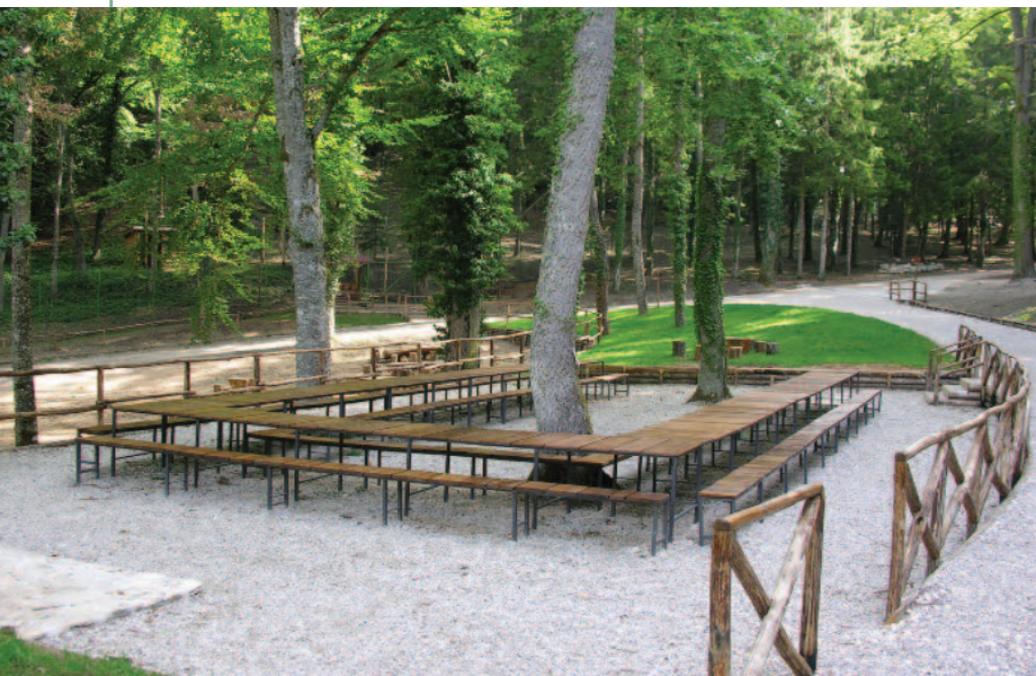
The forest complex of Montedimezzo-Feudozzo-Pennataro, extended about 1170 hectares, owned by the Angioini since 1200 and used as a summer residence, was bought in 1606 by Carthusian monks of Naples after "a huge fire destroyed the entire Forest and the five farmhouses." The Carthusian monks restored it and preserved it until 1799 when, following the subversive laws of feudality and ecclesiastical property, it returned to be part of the royal patrimony of the Bourbon House and, by Royal Decree No. 981 of June 12, 1825, it was declared Royal Hunting Reserve. With the unification of Italy it was forfeited by the state that in 1908 entrusted in management to the former Forestry administration and declared inalienable. It was transferred to

the Special estate of State forestry, established by Law No. 277/1910, reordered as an autonomous entity and transformed into A.S.F.D. (state-owned farm forests) in 1933. This was abolished with Presidential Decree No. 616/77 from which the management of ex A.S.F.D., until the recent reorganization and renaming of office for Biodiversity that operates through 28 peripheral utb. Montedimezzo, already state Forest, was declared a natural reserve oriented with D.M. 11.09.1971 for 242 hectares. With D.M. 21.03.1972 the reserve was

On this page, to the side: Specimen of roe deer housed in the fences of the reserve MaB of Montedimezzo. At the bottom: Ancient former camping in Montedimezzo. On the side: Guided tour for school groups; frozen fountain and multimedia room inside the MaB reserve of Montedimezzo.



Ufficio territoriale Biodiversità - Isernia

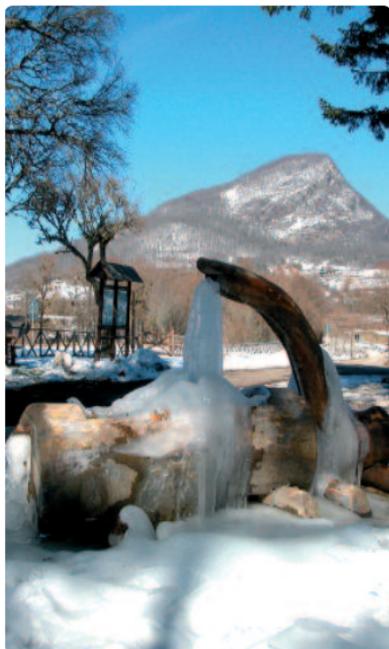


extended to 291 hectares in a single complex with the addition of 49 hectares owned by the Experimental Institute for Forestry, now CRA-FSA (Council for Research and experimentation in agriculture-research unit for the management of forest systems of the Apennines-San Pietro Avellana-IS). For over a century, Montedimezzo is managed by the State Forestry Corps, while the forests of Pennataro and Feudozzo have been transferred respectively to the Molise region and to the Abruzzo region (regional state forests). With D.M. 23.12.1977 the

Montedimezzo Nature Reserve, the entire area, was declared a biosphere reserve within the framework of the Unesco MAB program. The whole territory of the reserve is also included in the list of Sites of Community importance (SIC) and Special Protection Zones (spz).



Ufficio territoriale Biodiversità - Isernia



Ufficio territoriale Biodiversità - Isernia

The nucleus of Collemeluccio

Collemeluccio, the only resinous forest of the Vignali feud owned by the Duke of Alessandro of Pescosciano, was gifted to him as dowry for the noblewoman Desiderata Melucci, from whom it is believed the name derives, which would have acquired it in 1628 by the University of Pietrabbondante. The forest remained the property of the d'Alessandro until 1895, the year in which it was expropriated by the Bank of Naples. Purchased by three families and divided over time, for a series of hereditary successions, in many small quotas. Today is the example of a long and not yet completed work of reemerging and reparation of the ancient feud several times fragmented, but characterized by a common element: the presence of spontaneous white Fir in pure woodland formation and/or mixed with Cedar. Since 1968, the former state-owned forestry firm has undertaken a work of resettlement which, to date, has led to the formation of a sizeable nucleus of 363 hectares. Recently, the region of



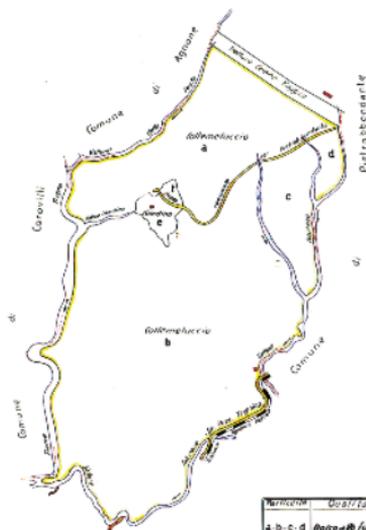
On this page, above: Specimen of white fir present in the wood of Collemeluccio. Below: The Casermetta resumed in its winter set. On pag. 11, at the top: Ancient cadastral map of the Collemeluccio area and wooden fountain near the Casermetta.



Molise, with the same goal, has bought about 16 hectares of private land and hopes that the action of the regrouping will continue to reach the extension of the approximately 500 hectares of the original Fir Forest of Collemeluccio. In 1971, with D.M. 11.09.1971, Collemeluccio was declared R.N.O. for 187 hectares. by D.M. 13.07.1977 further 160 hectares, already registered with the number 13 of the National Book of the seeded forests referred to in Law No. 269/73, were declared Biogenetic reserve and later, by ministerial decree of 23 December 1977, included in the nature reserve and enlarged to 347 hectares. With the same decree, the R.N.O. Collemeluccio was declared mab reserve for 347 hectares. In 1984, another 16 hectares were acquired by private individuals classified as State forest, taken over by the Administration of office ex A.S.F.D. of Isernia on November 4, of the same year.

Provincia di Campobasso
COMUNE DI PESCOLANCIANO

Bosco di Collemeluccio..



SCALA 1:20.000

Sezione	Superficie	HA
a-b-c-d	Bosco alla foresta di 21	453
e-f	Area ex foresta di 16	16
Totale		467



The MaB "Alto Molise" reserve

The zoning

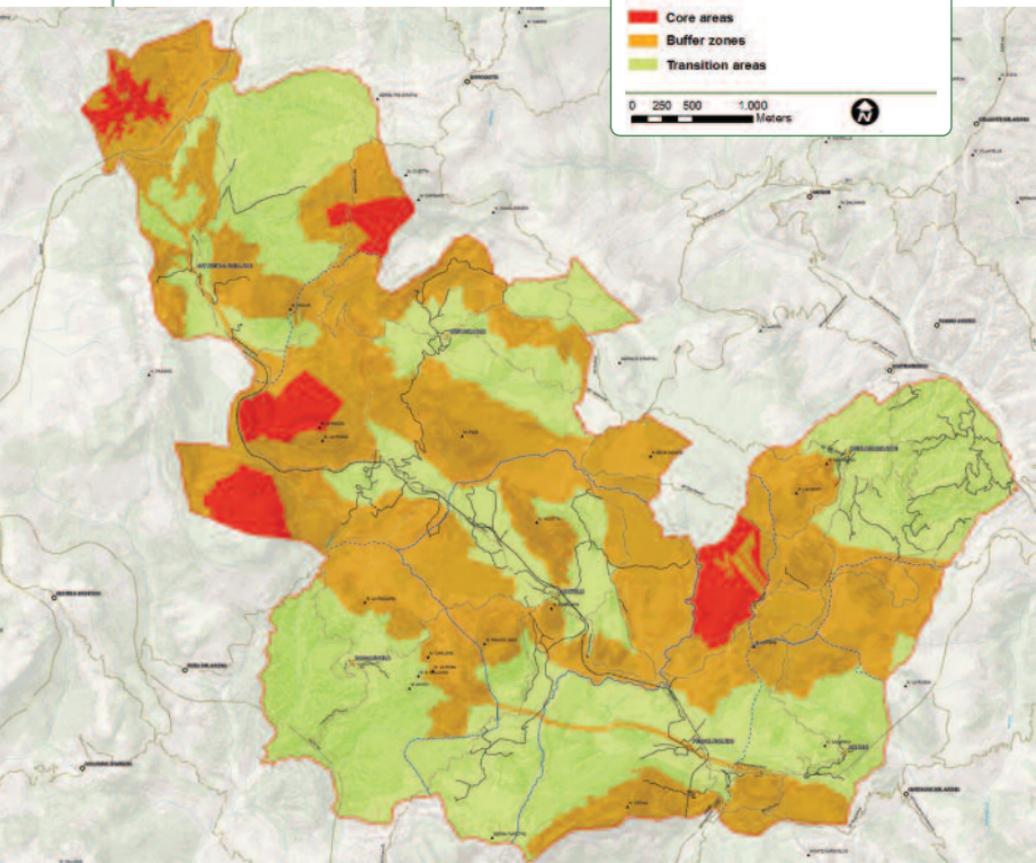
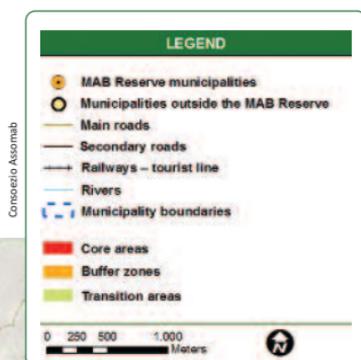
Zoning is a complex process, the collection, analysis and elaboration of spatial data (production chains and receptive services, municipal property cadaster, use of pre-existing and current soil, climate, fauna surveys, flora, vegetation etc.) are the indispensable tools to arrive at a detailed picture of the problems and potentials of the new reserve.

Core Area (5.4% of the total area, in red on the map) strictly dedicated to conservation mainly includes the woods of Collemeluccio and Montedimezzo, which are added to the forests of Pennataro, Monte Capraro, San Martino and Cantalupo.

Buffer Zone (48%, in yellow): According to the Madrid Action Plan (2008), in addition to the protection

of the Core areas, buffer zones can have, a particular intrinsic value linked to the maintenance of an anthropogenic, biological and cultural diversity and can have important large-scale connection functions. For this reason, in Buffer zones, a large part of the areas covered by SIC, the Tratturi, the areas affected by sustainable land use and, therefore, the cultural landscapes

Below: Map of the zoning of the Mab "Alto Molise" reserve. In red, the Core Area; in yellow, the Buffer zone and, in the green, the Transition Area. On pag. 13: Sheep grazing on the tratturo.



Transition/cooperation Area

(46, 6%, in green): It includes the other areas for traditional agricultural and forestry practices, the areas most closely linked to socio-economic development interventions and the populated centers and where they reside. Also, according to the Madrid Action Plan, the cooperation, however, can cross the limits of the Transition Area to share "best practices", particular solutions and approaches with neighboring areas, achieving one of the objectives of the Biosphere reserves: to be an example of sustainable development fully realized.

The naturalistic values

In the area there are 7, complete or partial sites of Community importance (SIC) of the Natura 2000 network [1] Bosco di Collemeluccio Selvapiana-Castiglione-La Coccozza. 2) Monte Bosco di Mezzo-Monte Miglio-Pennataro-Monte Capraro-Monte Cavallerizzo 3) Isola della Fonte della Luna (Island of the source of the Moon) 4) Pesche-Mount Totila 5) Brook Tirino (Forra)-Monte Ferrante 6) Chiauci Gola 7) Verrino Spring, characterized by the presence of habitat of Community interest in forestry, but also of shrubs and prairies.

Land use

There is a diversity of land use related to both the high heterogeneity of the environmental components and to the millenarian use by man. We currently observe a landscape for forestry (66% of the total area) with agriculture on the plains, mainly addressed to the production of fodder in mowing meadows (9%). Natural grasslands (11.5%) and bushy (8.4%). They are often examples of re-colonization on abandoned pastures, a phenomenon that may pose a danger to preservation of the traditional landscape. The multifunctional role of the woods (productive, protective-environmental, ecological, landscape, socio-cultural, tourist-recreational) in recent years is being reevaluated also in economic terms thanks to goods and services, materials and the intangible, which can provide the company (ecosystem services). The management of changes in landscape, the strategic importance in the storage of carbon, the resuming of uses in particular territorial areas are just some of the aspects that have recently been imposed on the attention of public opinion, the competent authorities and the technical services.



The Fauna

Investigations carried out in the years 2012-2013 allowed to update the checklist of the species of interest present in the area of the assomab where, between field and bibliographical data, there are: 48 species of mammals, 112 species of birds, 10 species of amphibians, 8 species of reptiles, 5 fish species and 9 species of invertebrates included in the annexes to the Habitats Directive (only surveys on a limited number of faunistic groups have been conducted for invertebrates: cerambicides, crustaceans, odonates). Most species of interest are related to the presence of open areas and wooded areas; this means that maintaining the environmental mosaic is an indispensable resource for their preservation. Within these macro-environments we have tried to identify the species that can function as umbrella species or indicators of the evolution of the preservation of the natural systems in which they are inserted:

Below: Specimen of Nibbio photographed in the skies of Alto Molise.

Umbrella species of the open areas:

Passerine *Lanius collurio* (1), Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (2), Biancone *Circus gallicus*, Lanario *Falcon biamircus*, Pilgrim Falcon *peregrinus* (3), Nibbio Bruno *Milvus migrans*, Royal Kite *Milvus milvus*, Pecchiaiolo *Pernis apivorus* (4), Tottavilla *lullula arborea*, Calander *anthus campestris*.

Umbrella species of rivers and wetlands:

Rovella *rutilus Rubilio*, Barbo *barbus plebejus*, Ululone Apennine (8), *Bombina pachypus*, Spectacled salamander (7), *Salamandrina perspicillata*.

Umbrella species in the forestry sector:

Osmoderma eremita, *Morimus aspe*, *Cerambix cerdo*, Red woodpeckers *Dendrocopos medius*, Lesser spotted woodpeckers (5), *Picoides minor*, Goshawk (6), *Accipiter gentilis*, Sparviere *Accipiter nisus*.





The Flora

For the registration and management of data on plant species in the area of the Consortium ASSO MaB Alto Molise, a floristic database has been set up according to the specifications of the Biological Inventories of the World's Protected Areas. To date, there are more than 900 species and subspecies present in the database (about 30% of the flora of the whole Molise), belonging to more than 90 families and about 400 genre. Among all the species present in database five are exotic or "alien": *Veronica persica* (Plantaginacea of Asian origin), *Robinia Pseudoacacia* (Fabacea of North American origin), *Xanthium spinosum* (Asteracea of South American origin), *Ailanthus* Very high (Simaroubacea of Asian origin) and *Conyza canadensis* (Asteracea of North American origin).

Rare species in Molise found in grasslands, prairies, forest clearings:

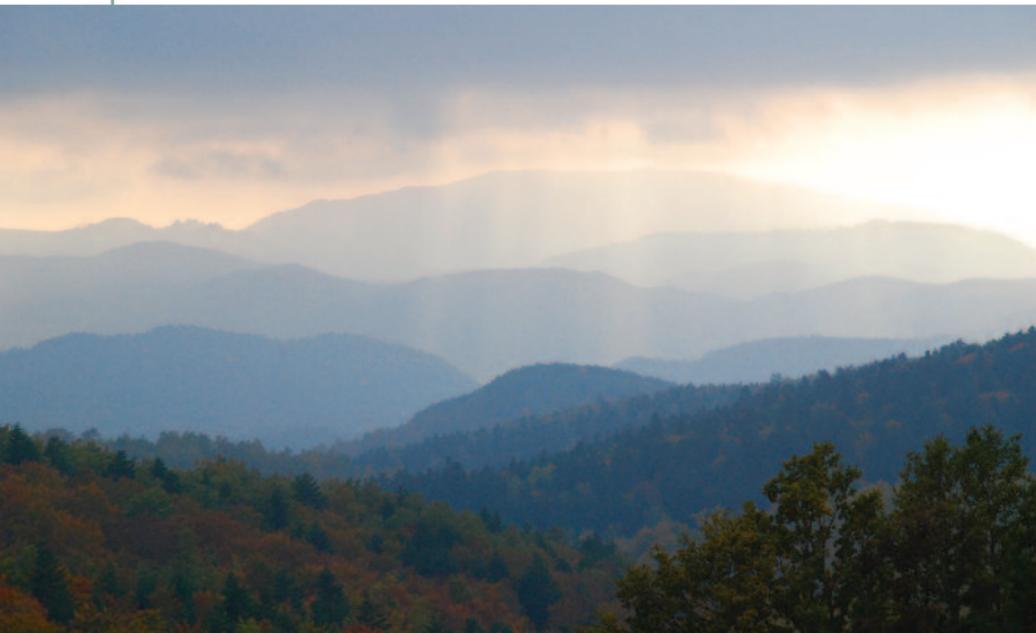
Eufrasia of Liburnia *Euphrasia liburnica*, Minimum Eufrasia *Minimum euphrasia*, Simple chickweed (6) *Lacthrus nissolia*, Red Lily *Lilium bulbiferum subsp. Croceum*, Lupinella

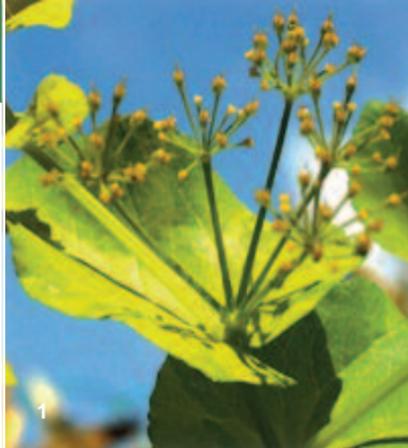
of the Hills *Onobrychis sandstone subsp. Tommasinii*, Ofride yellow *Ophrys lutea* (6) and *Apifera* (2), Vetch *Vicia loiseleurii*.

Rare species in Molise, present in the woods:

White fir *Abies alba*, Lobelius maple *Acer cappadocicum subsp. Lobelii* (8), Yellow anemone *Anemone ranunculoides* (3), Peverina with large leaves *Cerastium sylvaticum*, Cucco Herb *Cucubalus Baccife* (4), Euphorbia reef *Euphorbia corallioides*, Euphorbia lumpy, *Eustuca Dulcis*, fescue of the very high *Festuca woods*, Herb of S. Giovanni shrubby *hypericum androsaemum*, False netting BlackBerry *Lamium galeobdolon subsp. Montanum*, Martagon Lily *Lilium martagon*, Uva di Volpe *Paris Quadrifolia* (1), Ruscolo Maggiore *Ruscus hypoglossum*, silene with greenish flowers, *Silene viridiflora*, Corinthian dentate *Smyrnum Perfoliatum* (1).

Below: The white Firs Abies Alba of the Collemeluccio Forest photographed at sunset with the high mountains of Molise in the background.



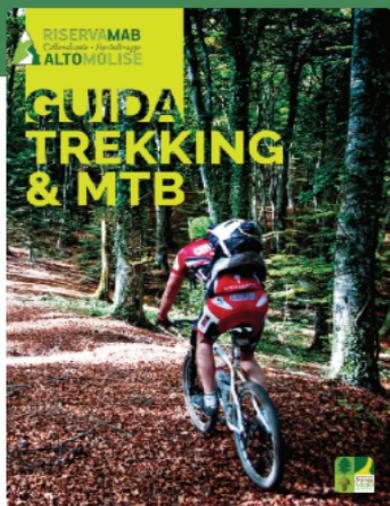


Tourism

The activities of the MaB reserves

The two historical nuclei of the MaB reserve count an average of 23,000 visitors per year. The majority are the schools (of every order and degree), in April and May with occasional visitors in summer. Besides being important areas for the preservation of biodiversity, they are also ideal places to educate the young generations to respect the nature and the careful use of the resources of the territory. Acting as open classrooms, as well as privileged sites for scientific research on Flora and Fauna, thanks to collaborations with Italian and foreign universities. The two areas are accessible thanks to a wide network (in particular, the path Colle San Biagio in Montedimezzo guaranteeing access to the handicapped), along with the periodical organization of orientation competitions, running and mountain biking; Picnic areas and areas used for camping upon request. Moreover, in Montedimezzo there is the visitor's center with departments dedicated to geology, woods and Fauna, a projection room, fauna enclosures and aviaries that host the wildlife in difficulty rescued on the territory.

On this page, from top to bottom: Trekking Guide & MTB Edita dall'Assomab; Conferences, exhibition halls and path Colle San Biagio with accessibility for handicapped people; Departure of a running race in the reserve of Montedimezzo. On pag. 19: Reconstruction of the Italic temple-theatre of Pietrabbondante and its circular vision.



Concezio Assomab



Ufficio territoriale Biodiversità - Isernia

The Italic Sanctuary

The Theatre-Temple of Pietrabbondante is the most grandiose testimony of the Sannitic civilization, which in Pietrabbondante is dated back to the fifth century A.C. from the necropolis of the Troccola on Mount Caraceno, whose summit is surrounded by a fortification with polygonal walls of the IV century B.C. Built between the end of the fifth century and the first half of the fourth century. B.C. to be retouched in the third century B.C. after being destroyed in 217 B.C. by Hannibal, as reported by some historians, the monumental complex is undoubtedly the first example of a covered temple that replaced the woods or the open-walled areas as a place of worship for the Samnites. To this first temple (A) they flanked about 55 meters south the construction of the so-called Temple (B), where the theatre was first built (end of II century B.C.) and then the great temple, so-called (B) (I century B.C.). The entire architectural complex retraced the Hellenistic typologies in use in the theatres of neighboring Campania. The first phase of excavations began from 1840, under the Bourbons, and lasted until 1913: at this stage, the temple A and the theatre B



were discovered. During these same years, the excavations were visited and studied by important classical scholars such as the Mommsen, the Friedlander and the Maiuri. Starting from 1959 the excavations resumed by the then inspector at the Antiquities of Abruzzo and Molise Adriano La Regina, under whose direction the temple B was discovered and brought to light and provided for the arrangement of the entire area. From 2001 to date, the same La Regina - among the most important contemporary sannitologists - with the supervision of the Superintendency of Molise has reopened the shipyards on the site of locality Calcatello to proceed to the reconstruction of the original structure of the sanctuary.



Astronomical Observatory

In the district of Montagna, in the municipality of San Pietro Avellana, at the roots of Monte Capraro, operates the astronomical observatory. Created by the provincial administration of Isernia and is named after the famous astronomer Leopoldo Del Re. The professional telescope is equipped with all the slow and fast photographic movements, both in the clockwise and declination motion, of a telescope (refracting guide F = 1180 mm/F 9.3 mm, 127 mm diameter in parallel) complete with eye-door and off-axis guide created by the company Ritchey Chretien. The astronomical observatory has an average annual presence of visitors equal to about 2,400 people.

Cheeses and Tartufi

Land of pastures, Alto Molise, aromatic herbs and renowned dairy products, which represent the excellent artisan production of the numerous dairy farms in the area. The excellence of the entire production is guaranteed by the uncontaminated riches of the pastures and by the workmanship according to traditional techniques. Fiordilatte, Scamorze, Caciocavalli, Trece and Stracciata are the dairy products that best characterize uniqueness of the municipalities of Vastogirardi (Trece, Caciocavalli and Stracciata) and Carovilli (Caciocavalli, Scamorze and Cheeses). The Alto Molise, land of beautiful and extensive forests, is also rich of valuable products of the undergrowth, in particular, Mushrooms and Tartufi. The Tartufo Nero (*Tuber aestivum vitt.*) is present in abundant quantity, while the Tartufo Bianco (*Tuber magnatum Pico*), considerably more prized, is present and is collected in the whole territory of San



Pietro Avellana, where it is found in the various Microclimates determined by the altitude and the abundance of water (750 m ASL Sangro River-1730 m. Monte Capraro). The municipality of San Pietro Avellana, in order to promote the territory and the Tartufo economy, organizes for the second Sunday of August each year the Sagra del Tartufo and on November 1 and 2 the *Fiera-Mercato del tartufo Bianco*.

On this page, from top to bottom: Astronomical Observatory "Leopoldo Del Re" and string cheeses spun of high-molisan production. In the lower: Tartufo bianco (Tuber magnatum Pico).

Villages

Carovilli

A name of ancient origins: the most valid interpretation brings back to the Roman consul Spurio Carvilius. Remote traces of history, from the eighth century B.C.; remains of an Italian building, dated III-I sec. B.C., on Monte Ferrante, where there is fortified Samnite center of significant importance, with traces of the settlement ranging from ceramics of the IV-III century A.C. to iron weapons. The fifteenth-century church of S. Maria Assunta, with its artistic and architectural merits, extends between the tratturi Celano-Foggia and Castel di Sangro-Lucera, connected by the Tratturello di S. Domenico, on which stands the homonymous church. In Castiglione, you can admire the Church of S. Nicola di Bari in the XVIII century and the Ammond Church dated XIV century. Historical suggestions are added by the landscapes of the valley of Fonte Curelli, the pastures of the plain of S. Mauro, the Cave of Vomero, the Capo d'Acqua spring and the Tirino, the Briccioso fountain, Selva di Castiglione and Ficora woods, woods that lend themselves to the conspicuous collection of mushrooms and truffles. There is no shortage of artisanal activities related to the proces-

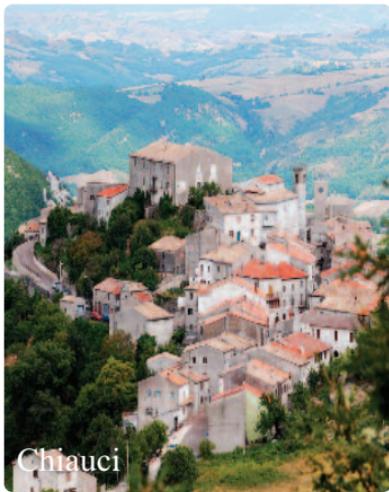
sing of truffles and milk, with the production of Scamorze, Stracciata and Caciocavalli. Among the many events that take place during the year, the most awaited and significant of the farmers/peasants culture, is "La Tresca" (the threshing, the harvest of grain without the use of modern day machinery), who's ancient gestures and the value, once sacred, linked to the harvest, are renewed every year under the August sun. Behind the country run the tracks, the "Trans-Siberiana d'Italia" with the station located down in the valley below the village.

Chiauci

Located on the left of the high run of the Trigno River, where the river sourced, in Foce district, a waterfall now incorporated in the artificial lake-with a jump of 60 meters, the village of Chiauci sits at 868 m above sea level. Oak woods, Cedar, Fir and Pine, rich in undergrowth, such as mushrooms and truffles, surround it. Sant'Onofrio woods are well known for its mountain preserves a Samnite fortification of the IV century A.C. and below, an eighteenth-century chapel, which opens to an area equipped to spend the days outdoors. The Normans in 1002 cal-



Carovilli



Chiauci

led the village Clavicia (from Clava - cudgel, symbol of strength), the Angioini, Castello Claviza and then Chiavico or Clance in the seventeenth century. The feudatories were the Bucca, the Del Bosco, the Montagano until 1512; Then several others, of which the last the Gambadoro. The parish church, dedicated to San Giorgio Martire, of simple renaissance forms, dominates the village together with the Palazzo of Gambadoro, a building dating back to the XVI century. Other architectural evolutions include the Chiesa di San Sebastiano or the SS. Rosario, built outside the historical center and inside there was placed a copy of the

Sacra Sindone, while the Road Cross, once placed along the road to the village, was placed its churchyard. The Chiaucesi (people from Chiauci) are very devoted to Sant'onofrio, which is celebrated on June 11. Many dishes of the gastronomic tradition, including the polenta with sausage and peppers and the Baccalà (cod fish), the main attraction of a popular festival that takes place every year in August. On San Martino (11 November) for the traditional feast, inserted among the intangible assets from the Italian network of popular culture, the women of the country prepare the "*Ch'coccia Patan' P' stiat*", or pounded/smashed pumpkin and potatoes. Worthy of experiencing is also the traditional feast of San'Antonio, with the preparation of bread that is gifted to each family as a wish for good luck.

Pescolanciano

In the Norman period, when the village was feud of Berardo de Calvellis, the name appears in the form *Pesclum Lanzanum* (the meaning of the second term is not known, while *Pesclum* is just settlements on cliffs). Under the Svevi, Pescolanciano belonged to a family that had taken the name from the feud, and later to the



Pescolanciano

d'Evoli. In 1517 Andrea Carafa possessed for his paternal succession, among other lands, his own *Piesco Lanciano* (he was still an heir in 1529). In 1552 Giovanni Tomaso Carafa, tutor of Antonio Carafa Conte di Ruvo, says "that past years Fabritio Carrafa count of Ruvo, father of Antonio sold to Vincenzo di Ebuli the castle of *Piesco Lanciano* for 8500 Ducati." The feud in 1576 was purchased for 10,850 ducats by Rita di Baldassarre, who in the year 1594 "refutò" (passed on) together with "Li Vignali", another feud, to his eldest son Donato d'Alessandro. To the descendants of these-who then obtained the ducal title-the castle remained until the eversion of feudality. This manor, located on a cliff, characterizes the whole village. A construction of medieval origin, already in existence in 1223 has inside; a chapel that still preserves a beautiful marble altar and a painting on canvas (sec. XVIII) of the School of Francesco Solimena. The factory of majolica (Italian tin glazed pottery) is well-known, white pottery (china) and porcelain that, in 1790 the Duke Pasquale M. d'Alessandro brought. On the hill in front of the village are the remains of a lookout tower, which dominates the Tratturo

from the summit of S. Maria dei Vignali, while the vegetation hides the remains of a medieval village created in the ancient Samnite fortification of the IV century B.C. The parade of the haystacks is very important, (July 25) in honor of Sant'Anna, patron saint of the village, which is venerated the next day in memory of the earthquake of July 26, 1805. Its statue is preserved in the church of San Salvatore, contemporary to the village.

Pietrabbondante

Pietrabbondante rises near the Tratturo Celano-Foggia and perches on rocks. Venue, for some historians, of the ancient *Bovianum Vetus* Sannitica, its name refers, unequivocally, to the remarkable presence of rocks, debris and stones scattered throughout the area. Further confirmation is the municipal coat of arms, of three designs: the Morgia on which the ruins of the castle stand, in the most inaccessible part of the village; the Ravens of the Crows and Monte Saraceno, on top of which are pre-Roman fortifications. Its birth is ascribed between the ninth and tenth centuries, in the Lombard period, when Pietrabbondante was the capital of one of the 34 counties of the



Duke of Benevento, the county of the Borrello, the most powerful feudal family of the vast land of the *Burrellensis*. Artistic pieces cover the Church of Santa Maria Assunta which was built in 1666, the back wall hide fragments of the body of the factory of tombstones and opens with a beautiful portal of Baroque workmanship. Along the road that leads to Castelverrino, you can find the church dedicated to San Vincenzo Ferreri, patron saint of the village, celebrated on 4 and 5 August. However, it is the ancient history, starting from the fourth century A.C., with the Teatro-Temple Italico located in Calcatello, to have left powerful traces. In the gracious Piazza Vittorio Emanuele there is also a bronze statue depicting a Samnite warrior, testimony to the glorious history of the nation of the Samnites of Pentri.

Roccasicura

The small village is developed on a rocky spur immersed in a landscape of particular beauty. The oldest archaeological finds are a votive statuette of Hercules dating back to the

fourth century B.C. and found along the Tratturo Castel di Sangro-Lucera, and a Roman funeral plaque of the second century A.D. The first known name of the village, *Rocca Siconis*, is undoubtedly linked to Sicone I, Prince of Benevento. The castle was built around the year thousand, during the Lombard domination. Towards the end of the tenth century and in the following Norman period, it was one of the strongholds of the powerful Borrello family, to then pass to the Carafa. Not much remains of the structure but one can still see, in addition to the clock tower, the ruins of the ancient manor. The parish church dedicated to S. Leonardo di Limoges, houses a crucifix of 1400, one of the most beautiful in Molise. Very characteristic is the Piazzetta Umberto I with its fortified palazzetto. The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Vallisbona is instead a clear example of how the pastoral civilisation of Molise was absorbed in time and expressed forms of folk belief that fall into the broader phenomenon of transhumance. Among the natural beauties is the Vandra spring, a small natural jewel.



Roccasicura

San Pietro Avellana

Built on the edge of the Tratturo Celano-Foggia, it features buildings with modern architecture. The old settlement was razed by the retreating German militia in November 1943. The original denomination derives from the presence on site of an ancient Benedictine monastery, born around the year thousand. The addition of Avellana is linked instead to the Samnite city of Volana, probably located on the summit of Monte Miglio, a city destroyed in 259 BC by the Roman consul Spurius Carvilius. The Samnite presence is testified by the fortification that, divided into three sets of walls, is still visible today on the summit of the mountain. Further historical and artistic traces are evident in the parish complex of the SS. Pietro and Paolo and in the annexed Chiesa of Sant'Amico, restored and brought back to the original colors, light peach and ivory, a church that preserves architectural structures and elements of the XIII century. Testimonies of ancient settlements are traced in the Tavern of the Valley near the river Sangro, located on the left side of

the border of the Tratturo Celano-Foggia in Taverna, and in the eighteenth-century Fontana Grande, integrated in the ancient complex Benedictine monastery. The landscape is superb, made even more pleasant by the harmonious configuration of mountains covered with lush forests and rich in variegated flora, of Tartufo (especially the Tuber magnatum Pico or Bianco, but also the most common Tartufo Nero). In the interest of nature is the SIC Isola di Fonte della Luna (Island of source of the moon), an islet of about 3 hectares formed in a remote period in the river Sangro. In addition, worthy of a visit is the hermitage of S. Amico, which can be reached by following a small road surrounded by Beech trees within the forest of the same name not far from the village. The municipal territory boasts of two railway stations: that of Sulmona-Isernia, the spectacular "Transiberiana d'Italia" and that of Sangritana. Near the parish complex, one can visit the Museo della Civiltà contadina that presents a rich collection of furnishings and tools of farmer/peasant civilization.



San Pietro Avellana

Vastogirardi

Important historical vestiges, considerable natural and landscape resources make of Vastogirardi one of the villages of the Alto Molise with the most attractions for the visitor. Its denomination has passed over the centuries by Castrum Girardi to Rocca Girardo, Guasti Belardi, Guardia Gilardo of the XVI century. The town's layout presents itself as "winding" with the summit crowned by the castle and as the village winds through stone corners, streets, portals, keys carved with dates and illustrations. The flowering of churches and sacred places is remarkable, from the fifteenth-century church of St. Nicholas, enclosed in the medieval village and several times restored, to the churches of San Rocco of 1702, Santa Maria delle Grazie, beginning XVIII century, and the Congrega della Morte. Among the many palaces one must be mentioned, the Palazzo Selvaggi, built in 1714 by Fernando Fuga, a pupil of Vanvitelli, and Palazzo Marracino. The nature is particularly lush, woods, moun-

tain peaks (Monte Pizzi), reserves (MaB Forest of Montedimezzo) and springs. In the woods of the Contrada San Nicola there was *Re Fajone*, an ancient beech specimen of more than 300 years. Also the underbrush products, the Tartufo Nero e Bianco, the diamonds in the rough. The Dairy industry is also very interesting, important dairy farms that produce exquisite Caciocavalli. A yearlong wait for the feast of the patron saint for the Volo dell'Angelo (July 1-2) is an event many attend. The protagonist is a child dressed as an angel who, suspended from a pulley, travels the space between the Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Grazie and the building in front. In the Contrada Sant'Angelo, the area is enriched by the presence of the remains of a small temple and a building from the Samnite period. The town is reachable by train, train stops in the fractions of Cerreto and Villa San Michele, of the railway line Sulmona-Isernia, the "Transiberiana d'Italia".



Vastogirardi

Useful Info and Numbers

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For visits and excursions in the Core Areas of the Reserve (Montedimezzo-Collemeluccio-Pennataro Woods-Monte Capraro-Bosco San Martino Cantalupo), especially for organized groups (schools), the passage or visit can only take place through formal communication (at least 30 days' notice). Period: all year from 08.00-17.00.

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Museo della ceramica

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Museum and Archaeological Area

C.da Macere - Tel. 0865 76129
Opening hours (weekly closing: Monday) winter (from 1 September to 30 April): 10.00-15.30 summer (from 2 May to 31 August): 8.30-19.30.
Entry into state archeological areas is free for all European citizens under the age of 18 or over 65. The entrance ticket to the Italian Sanctuary costs € 1 for citizens aged between 18 and 25 and € 2 for those aged between 25 and 65.

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Osservatorio Astronomico

Località Montagna - Tel. 335 7802583

Museo della Civiltà e del Costume

d'epoca - Tel. 0865 940266

Admission is free for all citizens of the European Union under the age of 12 or over 65, costs € 1 for citizens aged 12 to 18 and € 2 for those aged 18 and 65 years.

Foreste Demaniali - Tel. 0865 940147

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