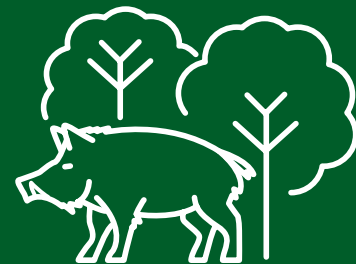




the
FOREST



CIRCEO
PARCO NAZIONALE

CIRCEO

PARCO NAZIONALE

The Circeo National Park was established in 1934 and is about 8900 hectares wide. Its territory, situated along the coast of the Latium Region, includes various environments: the Circeo Promontory, the "Selva di Circe" forest, the Island of Zannone, a diverse coastline with caves, cliffs, wide beaches and sand dunes, and the wetlands with four coastal lakes: Sabaudia (Paola), Caprolace, Monaci and Fogliano.



A UNIQUE FOREST

"Selva di Circe", seen from above, appears as a compact, glossy, flat green rectangle with other small sections close to the town of Sabaudia and to Paola Lake. Despite being the largest natural plain forest in Italy, as well as the richest in plant diversity, today the Forest of the Park is only a third of the ancient "Selva di Terracina" which covered part of the Pontine plain before the land reclamation of the 1930s. Thanks to its characteristics, in 1977 the forest "Selva di Circe" was declared "Biosphere Reserve" within the UNESCO "Man and Biosphere" programme.

"MAN AND BIOSPHERE"

Launched in 1971, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to promote a balanced relationship between people and their environments through biodiversity

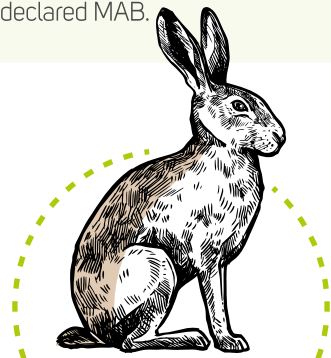
"LESTRE" AND "PISCINE"

The Forest is an ecosystem very rich in biodiversity. It grows on the ancient quaternary sand dunes and it is characterized by the alternation between raised and dry areas called "lestre", where shepherds used to build straw huts in winter, and marshy areas, called "piscine" (vernal pools) where rainwater and ground water gather.

conservation and best practices in sustainable development. The forest of the Park is part of it since 1977. More recently, all the protected area and the neighbouring territory of the Terracina municipality have been declared MAB.

ENJOYING THE FOREST ALL YEAR LONG

The plain and luxuriant forest offers amazing scenes and surprises in all seasons. Blooming and bird singing characterize the spring and the "Piscine". In summer, the forest offers a pleasant coolness painted by butterflies flying around. Autumn cyclamens surprises with a soft pink blooming which contrasts with the darker berries. In winter the temperature is never too low to enjoy a walk accompanied only by the rustling of your feet on the fallen leaves.



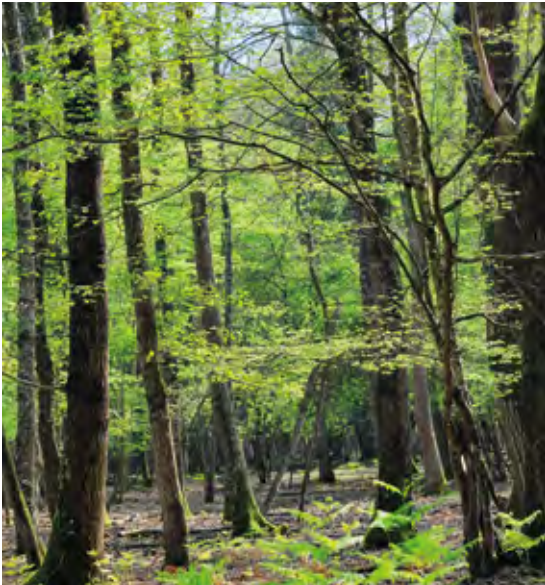
THE ITALIAN HARE IS ONE OF THE MOST STUDIED ANIMALS IN THE PARK. IT LIVES EXCLUSIVELY IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN ITALY AND ONLY RECENTLY IT HAS BEEN REDISCOVERED AS A DIFFERENT SPECIES FROM THE EUROPEAN HARE.

THE PARK'S GREEN TREASURE

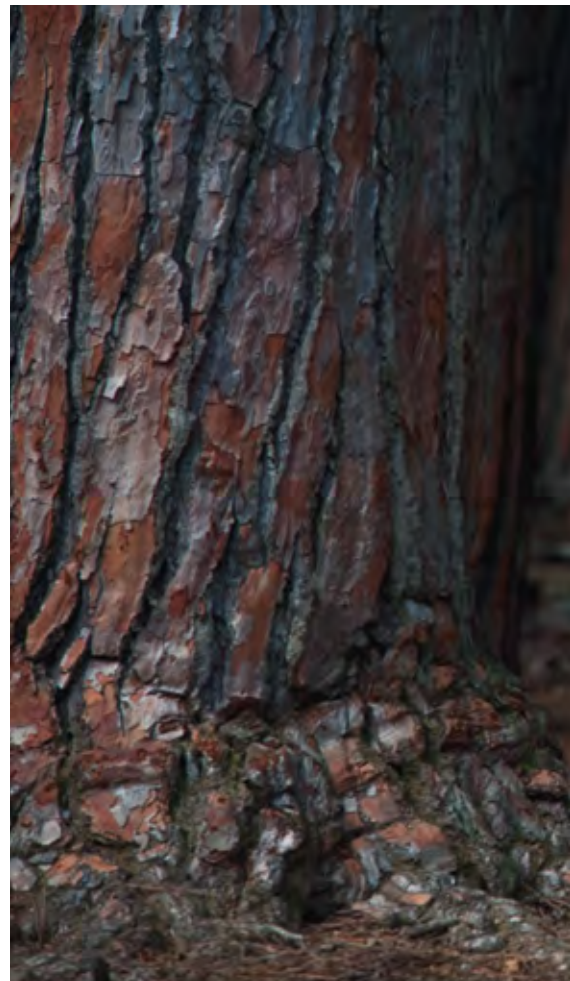
Walking in the forest, you can appreciate the plant richness which distinguishes it from any mountain forests such as beech forests.

Here your eyes will meet the herbaceous species, bushes and shrubs, and the highest trees, which overhang all of them. These trees are mainly oaks: Austrian oaks (*Quercus cerrus*), English oaks (*Quercus robur*) and Hungarian oaks (*Quercus frainetto*), all of which lose their leaves in winter, and holly oaks (*Quercus ilex*) and cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) which are both evergreen.

The contemporary presence of continental and Mediterranean species allows a richness, especially of oaks, unique to Europe.







THE FOREST INHABITANTS

There are many animals living in the forest. Almost all species, except for some birds, have nocturnal habits. During the day, a careful eye can see signs of their presence. An area where the ground has been turned over as if it had been ploughed is a clear track of a wild boar.

In late autumn, the fellow deer roar (a recently introduced deer) tells us that the mating season has started. While walking along the channels and the "Piscine", it is easy to hear the singing of frogs. You can easily encounter butterflies and shiny beetles and, if you are lucky enough, even a hare crossing your path.



BLOODY-NOSED BEETLE

A BEETLE WITH BEAUTIFUL
BLUE VIOLET REFLECTIONS



THE TAWNY OWL IS A BIG-SIZED NOCTURNAL BIRD OF PREY, A SKILLED PREDATOR. UNLIKE ITS SILENT FLIGHT, THE CALL OF THE MALE FILLS THE NIGHT WITH A MODULATED "UH UH", WHICH IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE SHRILL CRY OF THE FEMALE.

TAWNY OWL



VISITOR CENTRE: WELCOME TO THE PARK!

The small strip of forest where the Visitor Centre is, offers many interesting trails.

One of these leads to Paola Lake. In the Centre you can find: a historical reconstruction of a "Carbonaia" (a charcoal pile), a small wetland, a Naturalistic Museum, a picnic area, toilets, an Information Point, a library, an Audiovisual Hall and a Meeting Hall "Auditorium", as well as the Park Authority's headquarters.

The entrance is in Sabaudia, on 188 Carlo Alberto road.

LESTRA COCUZZA: THE SCHOOL IN THE FOREST

A short and pleasant walk leads to a nice building which was a school and a medical centre during the land reclamation period.

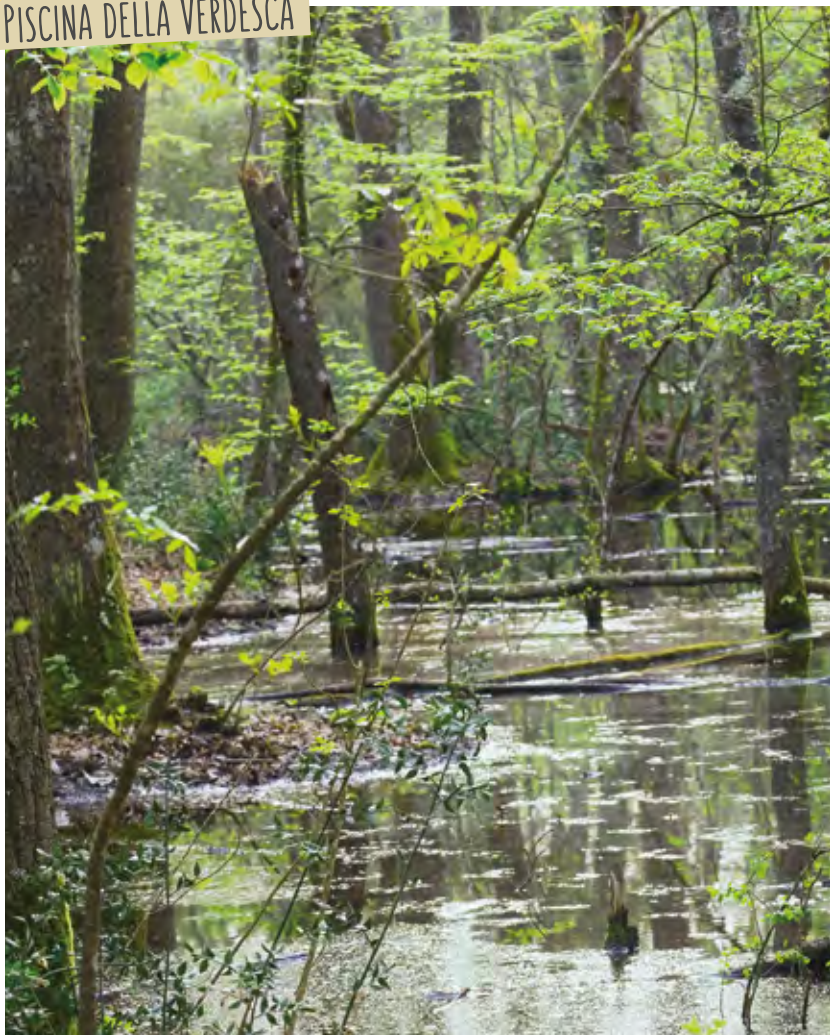
Today, it is a Documentation Centre on the education and healthcare of the Pontine marshes. You can visit the centre on weekdays from 9.00 am till 1.00 pm for free.

The Cocuzza entrance is on the Litoranea road.

USEFUL INFORMATION

The whole forest can be visited using a wide network of pedestrian and cycle paths, except for Piscina delle Bagnature, Piscina della Gattuccia and Lestra della Coscia, three strictly protected nature reserves. Prized fungi are very common during the favorable seasons but their picking is regulated and controlled.

PISCINA DELLA VERDESCA





PISCINA DELLE BAGNATURE

CERASELLA: IN THE HEART OF THE FOREST

Many trails start from the picnic area where you can also spot fallow deer and wild boars in an enclosure. The dirt road leads to the "Piscina della Verdesca" where you can travel in time and see what the forest looked like before the land reclamation.

From late autumn-winter to late spring –summer, if it rains enough, part of the forest floods creating the typical "piscine". Cerasella is accessible from SR 148 Pontina.





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