



the
PROMONTORY



CIRCEO
PARCO NAZIONALE

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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.



THE FACE OF THE PARK

The unmistakable outline of the Circeo promontory makes the landscape unique and easily recognizable from anywhere. Its southern slope faces the sea whereas the northern slope looks towards the Pontine plain. The ridge is well defined and allows to appreciate the diversity of the two sides.

TWO SLOPES, TWO WORLDS

A thick olm-oaks wood with species such as cork-oaks, strawberry trees, black hornbeams and terebinth, covers the so called "Quarto freddo" (Cold Quarter) whereas the southern slope, called "Quarto Caldo" (Warm Quarter), is characterized by a very coloured and fragrant Mediterranean maquis. Limestone rocks and cliffs overlooking the sea characterize the slopes on which Mediterranean dwarf palms, *Euphorbia* and *Helichrysum* bushes grow. The *Centaurea cineraria circeii* is a subspecies that lives only on the Promontory.



STRAWBERRY TREE

A RICH ANIMAL DIVERSITY

The Circeo cape, which extends towards the Pontine islands, is a resting place for migratory passerine birds and birds of prey like the European honey buzzard. The peregrine falcon finds a safe shelter to nest on the "Precipizio" cliffs. Beech martens, weasels, badgers and foxes inhabit the two slopes of the Promontory

and, together with the abundant wild boar, find shelter among the ravines. The many karst caves and the Roman cisterns host numerous species of bats. Insects, mainly beetles and butterflies, but also some species living in the caves, are of great interest for researchers and nature enthusiasts.



STRAWBERRY TREE

THE FLAKY BARKS OF STRAWBERRY TREES OFFER NEST-BUILDING MATERIAL TO THE DORMOUSE (A SMALL RODENT THAT LIVES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN MAQUIS).

DORMOUSE







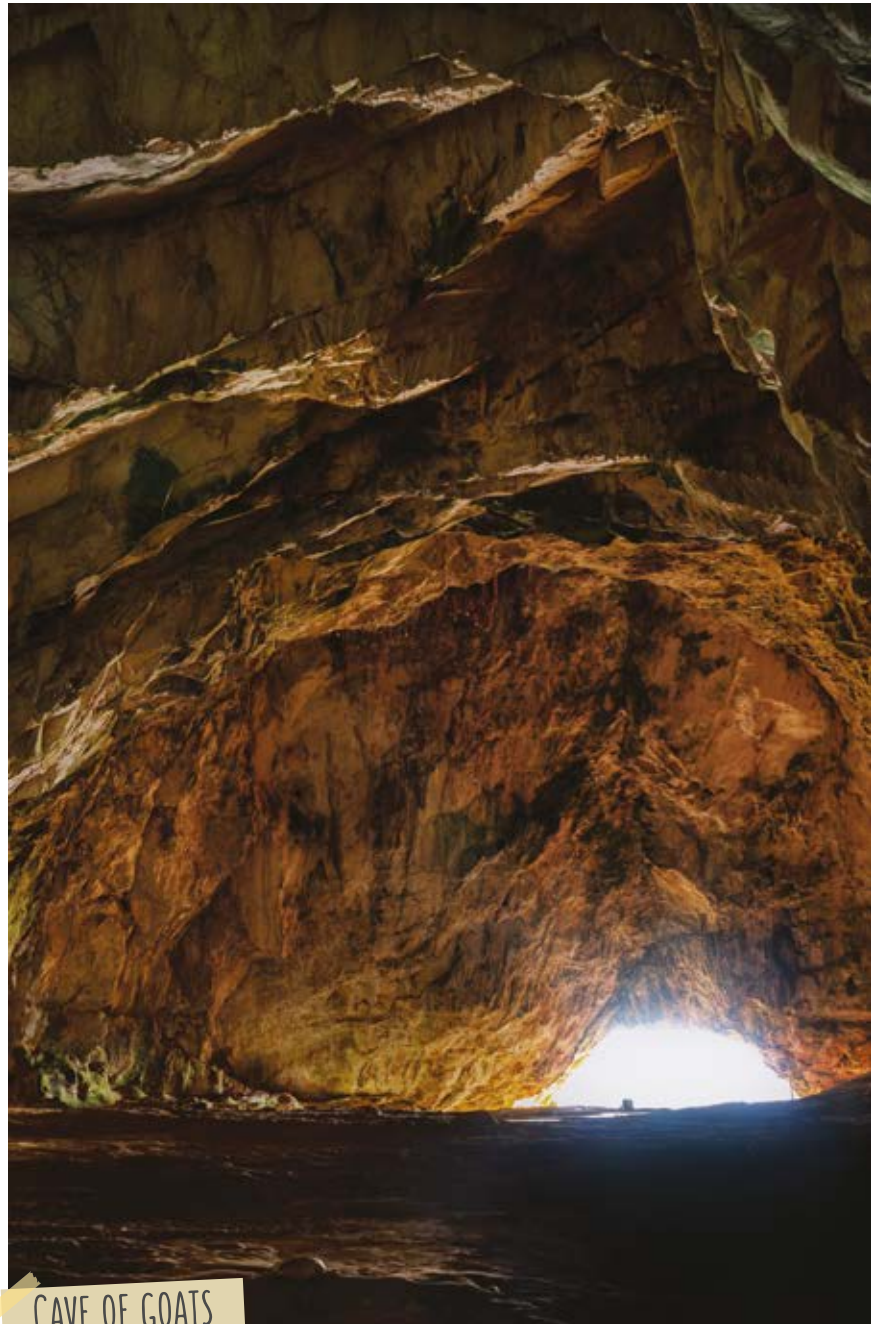
NEANDERTHAL SKULL FOUND
INSIDE THE GUATTARI CAVE

A PARK INHABITED SINCE PREHISTORIC TIMES

Almost all 33 caves of the Park can only be reached by sea. The caves are of great Prehistoric Archaeological importance because they preserve both prehistoric and paleontological evidences.

In 1939 a Neanderthal skull of about 50,000 years ago was found inside Guattari Cave. Other important Prehistoric human evidences have been found inside the Fossellone and Breuil Caves.

The main evidences are bones of animals from the glacial period and many lithic industries belonging both to *Homo neanderthalensis* and to *Homo sapiens*. "Riparo Blanc" is an interesting site because it was frequented by the "Sapiens", for short periods, about 8,500 years ago. Grotta delle capre (Cave of goats), one of the most evocative caves, is reachable by land. Due to the proximity to the sea, no human evidences were found here. Along the cave walls, it is still possible to see the fossil mark of about 120,000 years ago, when the sea level was eight/nine meters higher than today.



CAVE OF GOATS

MURA CICLOPICHE



IN THE MAIN SQUARE OF SAN FELICE CIRCEO, THE TEMPLARI TOWER, BUILT BETWEEN 1240 AND 1259, STANDS OUT PROMINENTLY.



IN THE SHADOW OF CIRCE

Whichever direction you arrive from, the Promontory (Symbol of the Park) will catch your eye and trigger your imagination.

Since ancient times, the Promontory has been related to myths. The outline of its peaks, in fact, resembles the profile of the Sorceress Circe.

Many Roman archaeological sites are safe-kept by the vegetation. The village of San Felice Circeo, which was built on the ancient Circeii, faces the sunrise on the sea. Its medieval castle follows

the plan of the Roman "Castrum". Even more ancient polygonal walls emerge among the Moorish houses.

For centuries, popes, knights and pirates have occupied and abandoned this small rocky cliff which extends towards the sea and the marshland. This is testified by the parade ground dominated by the Templar Tower, with its one hand clock, and the coastal towers.

TRAILS OF THE PROMONTORY MAPS



THE TRAILS

ON THE NATIONAL PARK'S WEBSITE YOU CAN FIND THE MAP "TRAILS OF THE PROMONTORY": A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE TRAILS AND THE FACILITIES OF THE PARK.

THE TRAILS OF THE PROMONTORY

The paths of the promontory are well shown on the map "Trails of the Promontory" edited by the Park Authority.

It is important to know that the trail which leads to the highest peak (although it is only 541

meters high) is recommended only to expert hikers.

If you are among them and you reach the top, please be careful to not step on the ruins of a very ancient sanctuary voted to Circe.



**750 - PICCO DI CIRCE TRAIL**

Difficulty: Expert Hikers
 Length: 6,6 Km
 Time needed for trip: 6h 30'

751 - ULIVETO TRAIL

Difficulty: Turistic
 Length: 4,7 Km
 Time needed for trip: 3h

754 - MURA CICLOPICHE TRAIL

Difficulty: Expert Hikers
 Length: 1 Km
 Time needed for trip: 2h 30'

755 - BRECCIARO TRAIL

Difficulty: Hiking
 Length: 2,3 Km
 Time needed for trip: 2h

756 - GUARDIA ORLANDO TRAIL

Difficulty: Hiking
 Length: 1,3 Km
 Time needed for trip: 1h

757 - TORRE FICO - LA BATTERIA TRAIL

Difficulty: Hiking
 Length: 4,1 Km
 Time needed for trip: 2h

**PEREGRINE FALCON**

FROM THE PORT OF SAN FELICE CIRCEO, WITH A BIT OF LUCK YOU COULD SPOT THE PEREGRINE FALCON: AFTER A QUICK DIVE THAT CAN EVEN EXCEED THE SPEED OF 300 KM/H, AN EXPERIENCED TURN WILL BRING IT UP AGAIN JUST BEFORE IT TOUCHES THE GROUND.





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