



The Nature Reserve of "green stones"

GUIDEMAPS



Nature, information, tour itineraries and path map

PROTECTED AREAS IN THE PROVINCE OF AREZZO

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Nature Reserve Monti Rognosi



Realized by the Province of Arezzo with the contribution of the Region of Tuscany.

VISITOR CENTRE
"La Fabbrica della Natura"
Loc. La Fabbrica, Ponte alla Pira 67 - 52031 Anghiari (AR)

CREDITS
Photos: MARCO CARUGHI, VINCENZO GONNELLI, DANIELA CINI, Records of the ex "Conservazione della Natura" Office of the Province of Arezzo
Pictures: Rita Peti
Texts: BARBARA ANSELMINI, ESTER ARMANINI
Cartography: DREAM Italia / Points of interest localization: LUCA VANTINI
Graphic work: Compagnia delle Foreste
Research of texts and iconographic material: VALENTINA GIOVANNINI
Coordination: MAURO FERRINI
Translations: VALENTINA GIOVANNINI

HOW TO GET THERE
From the Highway E45: exit Sansepolcro, then follow directions to Anghiari - Ponte alla Pira.
From Arezzo: go along the SR 71 toward Bibbiena, after Subbiano turn right toward Ponte alla Pira or go along the SS 73 to Sansepolcro, then turn into the SP 47 toward Anghiari.
Etruria mobilità - www.etruriamobilita.it - Toll-free number 800.115605

TERRITORY



The harsh landscape of the Monti Rognosi is one of the most unusual in Valtiberina. This group of mountains, not exceeding 800m of altitude, is wedged between the "Alpe di Catenaccia", in the north of Arezzo, and the Apennine range, distinguishing itself by its morphology and landscape. What makes the Monti Rognosi so unusual is their geological composition: in fact they are composed entirely of ophiolites, a group of rocks of magmatic origin mainly dark green and black in colour and where a unique type of vegetation grows, with endemic specialised species. Rich in minerals, mainly copper, the Monti Rognosi were affected by mining activities since the Aeneolithic era until the last century.
Near the Monti Rognosi there was an important communication route of Roman origin, the *Via Ariminensis*, which joined Arezzo to Rimini via Ponte alla Pira and the Viamaggio pass and which continued to play an important role until not long ago as a drover road for transhumance. Thanks to their strategic role the Monti Rognosi remained under feudal rule until the annexation to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany: the castle of Montauto, which still dominates the entire ridge, is one of the main relics, as is Castiglion Fatalbecco, of which only the ruins remain.

GEOLOGY



Translating literally from Greek, the ophiolites could be called "serpent rocks": this surprising name refers to the scaly and dark green appearance of the serpentinite, the most common rock in the Reserve. These are extremely ancient rocks, which about 200 million years ago, during the Jurassic period, formed the bed of the Ligurian-Piedmont Ocean and which are all of volcanic origin: in fact they formed along an oceanic ridge due to the reaction of magma - rising from the earth's mantle - with seawater.
Today these rocks are scattered in small outcrops in various parts of Tuscany following the tectonic movements that triggered the closure of the Ligurian Ocean and the formation of the Apennines: strips of ophiolitic oceanic crust were caught up in these movements and transported to their current positions. As well as the serpentinites, the ophiolites of the Monti Rognosi include gabbro, basalts and serpentinite breccia. Only these last ones are considerably widespread in the central part of the Nature Reserve. Other outcrops of ophiolitic rocks may be found slightly further north, near the village of Pieve S. Stefano.

FAUNA



Its appearance might lead to think of the Monti Rognosi as an area little suited and inhospitable to fauna but, on the contrary, the animal population includes many interesting species which have found their ideal habitat in the vegetation of the serpentinites. In the garigues and grasslands birds of prey can hunt easily, such as the short-toed eagle, the Eurasian hobby and the common kestrel that nest in the surrounding woods, while the bizarre European nightjar finds suitable corners for laying its eggs directly on the ground. The prickly juniper bushes act as refuges for common linnets, sub-alpine warblers, ciril buntings and Sardinian warblers, rare passeriformes which are diminishing in number all over Europe mainly as a result of the disappearance of bushes and shrubs due to the mechanisation of farming. The rock bunting, another uncommon passeriform, wanders around the rocky outcrops. Grasslands and garigues, with their heat, attract reptiles like the western green lizard and the Italian three-toed skink.
Natural woods are just as rich: in the oak woods nests the northern goshawk, an extremely rare bird of prey seen repeatedly in this area, as well as other typical forest species such as the Eurasian nuthatch, the song thrush, the short-toed treecreeper and the marsh tit, which find a favourable cool and damp microclimate in the Sovara valley floor, contrasting with the arid slopes of these mountains.

Kestrel



A small falcon whose typical hunting behaviour is to hover at a height of around 10-20 metres over open country.

VEGETATION



The ophiolites and in particular the serpentinite are extremely compact rocks, rich in heavy metals such as chrome and nickel. These produce rocky soils which tend to heat up rapidly on account of their dark colour, offering little hospitality to plants. However the most precious species in the Reserve, the so-called "serpentinophytes", are indissolubly associated with these prohibitive conditions. On the serpentinites of the Monti Rognosi live eight of the eleven species endemic to the Tuscan-Emilian rock outcrops, among which the most widespread and characteristic is the Bertoloni's alyssum (*Odontarrhena bertoloni*). These plants are hardly identifiable since they reach little more than 10cm in height, so they are not particularly striking except when they begin to bloom in spring.
To see them one must paradoxically search in the most barren, rockiest parts of the Reserve, in the so-called "serpentinophyte garigue", a special type of low, sparse scrub where most of the endemic species live. Another characteristic feature of vegetation is the steppe which appears in the small areas where the soil is more developed such as the flat summit of Poggio Pian della Croce, in the heart of the Reserve. Here dominate two grasses of the *Stipa* genus, extremely rare in Italy, the *Stipa etrusca* which is an endemic species to the ophiolites and the *Stipa tirsia* which typically occurs in the ophiolitic areas. In these peculiar environments there are also interesting plant species, preferring rocky and arid soils, which have found a sort

PUBLICATIONS



Riserve naturali della provincia di Arezzo - Guida
Provincia di Arezzo, Ed. Compagnia delle Foreste, 2016
Riserve naturali della provincia di Arezzo - Cartoguide
Provincia di Arezzo, Ed. Compagnia delle Foreste, 2016
Le Riserve Naturali della Valtiberina toscana e del Sasso di Simone (DVD), Provincia di Arezzo, 2008
Aree protette della Valtiberina toscana - Sentieri natura
Provincia di Arezzo e Comunità Montana Valtiberina Toscana, 2007
Valtiberina Toscana - Ed. Compagnia delle Foreste, 2004
Carta dei sentieri - Ed. S.E.L.C.A., 2004
Carta dei sentieri 1:25.000 "Sentiero 50 - Dal Trasimeno alla Verna"
Provincia di Arezzo e CAI - Ed. S.E.L.C.A. 2004

TOURIST INFORMATION



Visitor Centre with exhibition "La Fabbrica della Natura"
Open on weekends or by reservation
Loc. La Fabbrica, Ponte alla Pira 67 - 52031 Anghiari (AR)
Ph. 0575/787023 - mail: natura@toscanadappennino.it
www.toscanadappennino.it
Tourist Office of Valtiberina Toscana
V. Matteotti, 8 - 52037 Sansepolcro (AR)
Ph. 0575/740536 - mail: info@valtiberinaintoscana.it
Museo della Battaglia e di Anghiari
P.za Mameli, 1 - 52031 Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/787023
mail: battaglia@anghiari.it www.battaglia.anghiari.it
Unione Montana dei Comuni della Valtiberina Toscana
Ufficio Demanio Forestale - Pieve Santo Stefano (AR)
Ph. 0575/799097 - mail: demanio@valtiberina.toscana.it
Regione Toscana - Direzione Ambiente ed Energia
Settore Tutela della Natura e del Mare
Via A. Testa, 2 - 52100 Arezzo
mail: areeprotette@regione.toscana.it

ACCOMODATION



Inside or near the Reserve

	facilities	bed number	toilets	restaurant	kitchenette
Locanda del Viandante - Il Casolare di Cerreto	●	16	●	●	
Open from March to January - Loc. Cerreto, Ponte alla Pira, 11 (AR)					
Locanda del Viandante - Il Borgo di Valle di Sopra	●	23	●		●
Open all year round - Loc. Valle di Mezzo, Ponte alla Pira, 70 (AR)					
Locanda del Viandante - Il Casolare di Valle di Mezzo	●	17	●		●
Open all year round - Loc. Valle di Mezzo, Ponte alla Pira, 71 (AR)					
Ph. 0575/723016 - 334/7956056 mail: info@locandadelviandante.com web: www.locandadelviandante.com					
Wilderness hut Capanno di Ca' di Fino		4			* fireplace
Open all year round - Loc. Ca' di Fino - Capanno, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/799097 mail: demanio@valtiberina.toscana.it					
Wilderness hut Casetta del Guardia		4			* fireplace
Open all year round - Loc. C. del Guardia - Fonte del Ciliegio, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/799097 mail: demanio@valtiberina.toscana.it					
Antico Posto di Ristoro	●	6	●	●	●
Open all year round - Via Libbia - Passo della Scheggia, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/749174 mail: info@anticopostodiristoro.it web: www.anticopostodiristoro.it					
Holiday farm Mafuccio	●	8	●	●	●
Open all year round - Loc. Mafuccio - Ponte alla Pira (AR) Ph. 0575/1787197 - 335/5809944 mail: info@montemercole.it web: www.montemercole.it					
Vecchia osteria La Pergola	●		●	●	●
Open all year round - Loc. Tavernelle, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/723330 web: www.osterialapergola.it					
Camper area		5 places			
Open all year round - Piazza 2 Agosto, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/789522					

of refuge in the ophiolites; here for example the gariand flower (*Daphne cneorum*) has its only Tuscan station, and there are also the burning bush (*Dictamnus albus*), the hardy cloak fern (*Notholaena marantae*) and the meadow saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*). Garigue and grassland are dotted with bushes of prickly juniper (*Juniperus oxycedrus subsp. oxycedrus*), which become denser only where the slope decreases and allows a certain accumulation of detritus and soil, permitting the presence of trees like the downy oak and the flowering ash.
Fully-fledged, downy oak woods only appear along the canal Raggio and the stream Sovara where there is also a riverine belt of vegetation with poplars, willows and alders. The Monti Rognosi are today mostly covered by a reforestation of conifers, especially European black pine, planted from the 1920s onwards, when these mountains were entirely bare, both as a result of the difficult nature of the soil and of centuries of overexploitation of spontaneous vegetation. The reforestation aimed at limiting hydro-geological destruction, making this land productive, but also at providing employment in the difficult post-war years. But now the spreading of pinetrees is kept under control because they are invading the last areas of ophiolitic vegetation.

IDENTITY CARD OF THE PROTECTED AREA



Municipality: Anghiari
Area: 184 ha (contiguous area: 1.303 ha)
Established: March 18, 1998
Management: Region of Tuscany in collaboration with the Unione Montana dei Comuni della Valtiberina Toscana

