



LIFE16 NAT/SI/000644

Newsletter

LIFE FOR LASCA

N. 17/2021

Water: a resource that creates life

The LIFE for Lasca project, like many other LIFE projects, is closely linked to water and the natural ecosystems that depend on this resource.

Looking around us, we realize that the territory in which we live is strictly connected to water from various points of view: from agricultural aspects, now thousands of years old, which exploit the waters of rivers for irrigation through immense canalizations, to the production of energy. hydroelectricity, commerce, tourism. Every aspect of our reality depends on water, which is therefore a fundamental good, but which today is at the center of a problem that until a few years ago did not involve the Po Valley: water scarcity. In these days, along the banks of the Ticino, we are witnessing a series of intense and in some cases even highly damaging precipitations, which led the river to an unexpected and sudden flood after months of drought and almost zero rainfall.



Rice field in the Ticino Park-Photo Pietro Beretta

Water scarcity and drought

Water scarcity and drought are two different phenomena:

- water scarcity occurs when the demand for water exceeds its availability. It is a long-term imbalance between demand and resources that often occurs in areas with very low average rainfall, high population density and intense industrial and irrigation activities. We can find these characteristics precisely in the Po Valley and in the territories along the Ticino river bank.
- drought, on the other hand, is a temporary problem caused by a decrease in the average amount of water available due to lack of rainfall. It can occur in every region of our country and in every season and the impact on the population and production activities is increased by a short-sighted management of water resources.

Water in Europe

Europe is considered a continent with water resources adequate to the demands of the population, but the phenomena of drought and water scarcity have been increasing for many years now and also involve our country. In fact, from the European Commission website, we learn that from 2007 onwards at least 11% of the population and over 17% of the territory have been affected by water scarcity.

Dry Ticino river-Photo Pietro Beretta



Safeguard policies and climate change

Since 2007, the European Commission has developed a policy of actions aimed at mitigating the effects deriving from water scarcity and drought, including changes in climatic conditions which have led to ever higher temperatures from year to year and sudden and violent rainfall alternating with long periods of absence of rainfall. The problems deriving from water scarcity are therefore no longer an isolated issue in particular territories, but affect all the inhabitants of the European Union and all of the world.

To limit the impact of phenomena related to water scarcity, the policy of the European Commission focused on some fundamental points, such as the more efficient allocation of funds, technologies and infrastructures for alternative supply of water, the promotion and dissemination of a culture aimed at the correct use of water resources, knowledge and study of climate change and phenomena related to precipitation, the establishment and application of adequate ecological flows for all water bodies in Europe in order to keep natural ecosystems intact and anthropogenic ones closely linked to this resource.



Canalization of the waters of the Ticino river-Photo Pietro Beretta

Water in the Life Ticino Biosource project

The final conference of the LIFE Ticino Biosource project, started in 2017, in which the Ticino Park was the leader, was held on Thursday 15 July. Water was one of the main topics of this work, even if not specifically mentioned. In fact, the target species included, for example, *Acipenser naccarii*, *Huso huso*, *Rana latastei*, *Aythya nyroca*, *Egretta garzetta* and *Lycena dispar*. By discovering the habitats in which these animals live, we realize how they depend on the presence of water and humid environments. For some of these species the river is important, others relate on oxbow lakes and ponds, for others still the water meadows called "marcite" are of fundamental importance (agricultural landscape typical of our areas that allows for green grass to be used as fodder even in the middle of winter).

On the occasion of the conference, all the projects that the Park has undertaken in the last 20 years for the protection of native fish species (life for lasca included) were also presented and the exhibition dedicated to the fish of our river "Ticino submerged life", created by Mattia Nocciola, was exposed.



Shots realized during the conference– Photos Alice Pellegrino

Concluded the photo contest

The «Parco Ticino Wild» photo contest, where photos related to aquatic environments and animals have triumphed, has finally concluded with the delivery of the prizes. Unfortunately, due to the health emergency, it was not possible to organize an awards ceremony, but the prizes were delivered. All the photographs participating in the contest can be viewed at the link

<https://ente.parcoticino.it/concorso-fotografico-parco-ticino-wild/>.



Prizes of the photo contest– Photo Alice Pellegrino

Material produced with the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Commission

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