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Newsletter

LIFE FOR LASCA

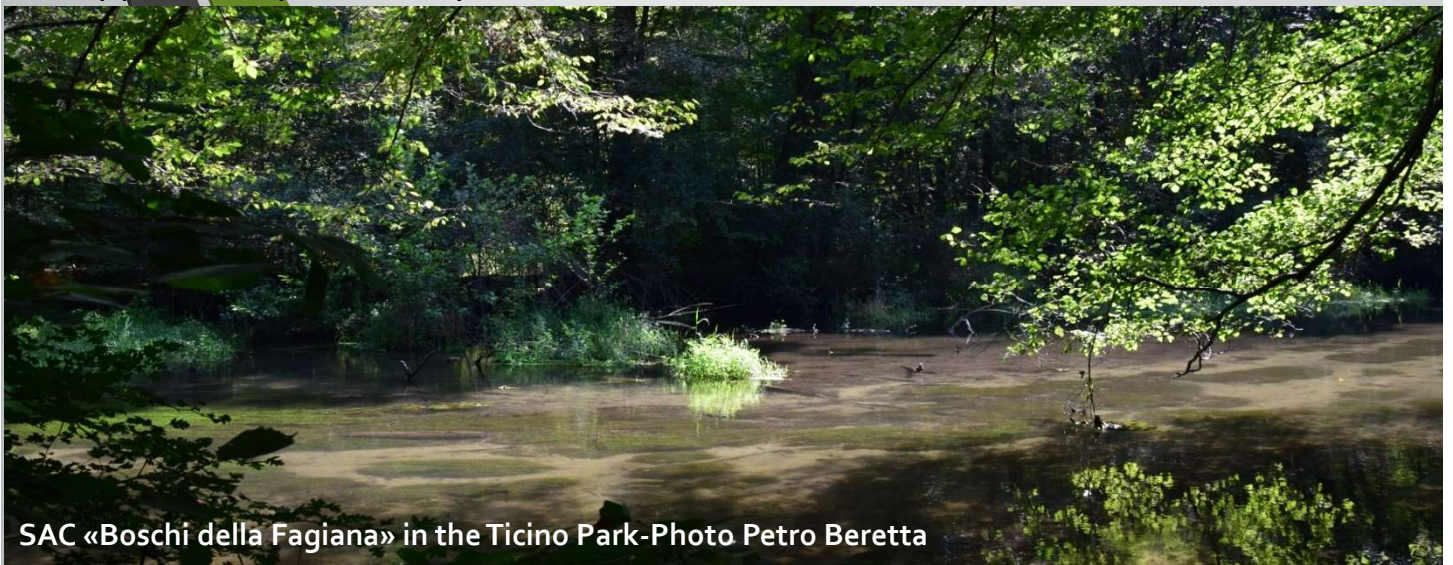
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The Natura 2000 Sites Network

Conservation projects, in which several countries participate, create an important link not only between authorities, research institutes, universities, but also between the Natura 2000 sites present in their respective territories. The foundation of the establishment of these sites is, firstly, the need to preserve habitats and species of community interest and then the usefulness of creating a sort of "network" between the sites, necessary for the survival of the protected species and source of ecosystem services that are also essential for us.

The Natura2000 Network presents two types of sites:

- Special Protection Area (SPA), established for the conservation of birds, designated under the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC following the scientific references of the Important Bird Areas of BirdLife International;
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC), established for the conservation of habitats and species of community interest, designated under the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC, following the creation of regulations and management and protection plans for Sites of Community Importance (SCI) previously approved by the European Union.



SAC «Boschi della Fagiana» in the Ticino Park-Photo Petro Beretta

Natura 2000 in Italy

In Italy there are 2636 Natura 2000 sites. In particular, 2357 SCIs have been identified, of which 2291 have become SACs, while the SPAs are 636, of which 357 are Type C, sites coinciding with SACs or SCIs .

In December 2020, these areas occupied a total of over 5 million hectares in land area and over 2 million hectares in sea area, corresponding respectively to 19.38% and 13.42% of the Italian national territory.

Natura 2000 Network in the Ticino Park

In the Ticino Park there are 14 SCIs of which 9, having a management plan already in place, have become SACs, and 1 SPA, called "Boschi del Ticino", which covers an area of 20,569.04 hectares along the entire river course from Sesto Calende to Pavia.



Adriatic sturgeon and Roe deer-Photo Ticino Park

Ticino Park: restocking and reintroduction

Throughout the history of the Park (born in 1974), various reintroduction, restocking and protection projects have been carried out for the species present on its territory and in its Natura 2000 sites. The successes achieved allow us today to admire numerous animal species, including rarest in Europe.

The Park, for example, has worked through restocking in favor of the Adriatic sturgeon (*Acipenser naccarii*), reintroduction of the Beluga sturgeon (*Huso huso*), protection of the so-called Spadefoot toad (*Pelobate fuscus insubricus*), of the Stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), of the ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), of the Eurasian bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) and of the common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*). One of the Park's first great successes was the reintroduction of the Roe deer, which took place in the 1990s. More than 30 years later, it can be said that the Roe deer, once extinct on our territory, survived and settled permanently in the Park, expanding the initial area of presence more and more. All this was made possible by monitoring, studying and managing the species and the habitats associated with it. In these days, the Park technicians with the collaboration of the University of Pavia carried out the census of Roe deer to verify the state of health of the population and the areas of presence of the species.

Natura 2000 in Slovenia: the SAC Dolina Vipave

Our Slovenian neighbors have established protected natural areas for more than half of the national territory and 37% is represented by Natura 2000 sites. In these areas, 205 animals and 27 plant species are protected.

The Lasca release sites, carried out by our project, are located in the "Dolina Vipave" SAC. This SAC, of over 5,000 hectares in extension, was recognized in 2012, after being designated in 2007 as a SCI and encloses the areas of natural significance within the catchment area of the Vipava River. In addition to the Lasca, in the Natura 2000 site there are other rare and endangered species such as the Lataste's frog (*Rana latastei*), the Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*), the Stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), the Large copper (*Lycaena dispar*) and even the Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*).



Large copper and Stag beetle-Photo Pietro Beretta

The cross-border projects of Slovenia

In the projects of reintroduction, restocking and protection of the species, some of these have a natural drive towards dispersion, in search of new areas where they can settle. It is easy for a suitable habitat to be on the borders of different countries or for an individual to cross a border to enter a new territory. Projects that see the collaboration of neighboring nations are therefore fundamental, as in the case of the European Beaver (*Castor fiber*) reintroduced in Croatia, from where it subsequently moved. In Slovenia today it is also protected thanks to the LIFE BEAVER project (<https://life-beaver.eu>) in which the two nations collaborate and transmit information in order to move towards common objectives, exchanging experiences and data to improve knowledge on this species, finally returned to a more satisfactory state of conservation, being classified as at minimal risk.

Another cross-border project, in which Slovenia is committed, is the LIFE Lynx (<https://www.lifelynx.eu/>), which aims to prevent the extinction of the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), from the Southeast and Dinaric Alps involving Italy, Croatia, Slovakia and Romania to improve genetic variability within the population which is currently decreasing.

www.lifeforlasca.eu

Cooperation and sharing

We have seen how it is necessary to create a continuous network of Natura 2000 areas to safeguard habitats and species, not only at the national level but also at the European level.

The principle of cooperation and exchange of good practices between member states is also the foundation of other European funding channels; among these the INTERREG program which supports the efforts of cross-border European regions to achieve common objectives on social, environmental, economic issues, in research and innovation and in the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises. The Ticino Park currently collaborates in two projects of this type: SHARESALMO (<https://www.sharesalmo.it/>) and PARCHIVERBANOTICINO (<https://www.parchiverbanoticino.it/>).

Slovenian habitats– Photo Alice Pellegrino

