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**STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT  
OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HABITATS (CDPE)**

**Group of Specialists on Protected Areas  
(PE-S-ZP)**

**Parco Naturale Argentera  
(Italie)**

**Application for the European Diploma  
presented by the Italian Government**

## **PREAMBLE**

### **PARC NATIONAL DU MERCANTOUR (F)**

### **PARCO NATURALE ARGENTERA (I)**

#### **"Nature without frontiers"**

At the outset, it must be said that the Argentera Nature Park (I) and the Mercantour National Park (F) will present a joint candidature to the European Diploma, even though they will produce two distinct dossiers. Actually, these two parks differ both in their Rules and Regulations and in their management systems. Nevertheless they pursue the same policy of territory protection. On July 10th 1987, a twinning strengthened the ties between the Mercantour and Argentera Parks, which were already united by 33 km. of common frontier. Since then, they have already completed many important operations, also thanks to their common historical heritage. Indeed, they both derive from the old hunting reserve of Vittorio Emanuele II King of Italy, which was created in 1857 and covered vast portions of the two sides of Maritime Alps until 1860, when the treaty of Turin gave Nice county to France. Nevertheless, King Vittorio Emanuele II could keep his hunting reserve through the creation of an artificial frontier that maintained the Mercantour massif (30,000 hectares) under the Italian sovereignty.

After WWII, on both sides of the international border, the French and the Italians gave the old transfrontier royal reserve a new organization that became the starting point on the way to the creation of our two parks. In 1947 the Boréon hunting reserve was established on Mercantour (3,500 ha); it was then enlarged in 1950 and in 1964. Part of it was eventually included in the newborn Mercantour National Park, inaugurated on August 18th 1979, which has, nowadays, a central zone covering 68,500 hectares. On October 22nd 1947 the Italians, in their turn, created on the territory once reserved to the Crown the Reserve of Valdieri - Entracque with more than 22,000 hectares of extension. On May 30th 1980 the Reserve became the Argentera Nature Park, the surface of which is now of 25,883 hectares. Thus, the spirit of cooperation that links our two parks is very old, even though the principles that underpin the conservation of these territories have changed. They are no longer protected in the name of a private right, even though it was the king right, rather in the name of the national sovereignty of France and Italy, in order to make this patrimony available to all European citizens. It must also be stressed the fact that, long before the creation of the hunting reserves, the inhabitants of the Argentera - Mercantour massif already had close relations and common mores, language and traditions. Actually, the

Alps were not at all a barrier; on the contrary, trade and commerce flourished through their mountain passes since the establishment on these territories of the earlier human colonies, in the ancient ages of prehistory. The shepherd of the bronze age, who left extraordinary traces of their presence in the rock graffiti of Mont Bégo and the Vallée des Merveilles, lived also on the Italian side, as recent discoveries in the Vallone del Vej del Bouc witness. Later afterwards, trade and commerce followed the salt way. Cultural and religious affinities are still evident in the architectural style of the buildings and in their frescos, often painted by the same artists on both sides of the Alps. Nevertheless, history is not the only tie that links Argentera and Mercantour Parks. From a geographic and naturalistic point of view, they are the two complementary halves of a unique structural entity, the northern and southern sides of the same alpine massif. Climatic conditions of Argentera - Mercantour are extremely various because of the difference in exposure of their sides, of the high altitude reached by their peaks (3.300 m.) and of the small distance from the Mediterranean (less than 50 km. as the crow flies). These climatic conditions favour the development of a great variety of flora species, from mediterranean bush to alpine tundra. For the same reasons, Maritime Alps are considered by botanists the more significant endemism area of all the Alps' chain, because of the presence of a great number of exclusive endemic species (26), such as *Saxifraga florulenta* and *Primula allionii*, together with other species having bigger spreading areas but equally rare. As far as the animals are concerned, they too must be considered as living on a single massif: many ibex have their summer range on Mercantour and their winter range on Argentera, while for some moufflons is exactly the opposite. Moreover, there are great herds of chamois living on both sides.

Although the twinning between the two parks is recent, some common initiatives have already been successfully completed, such as the operations for the reintroduction of ibex in 1987 and 1989, the importance of which was officially recognized with the awarding, by the EEC, of the "logo" of the European Year of the Environment. Other initiatives will soon be realized, such as the reintroduction of the bearded vulture, under the aegis of the WWF.

It must not be forgotten that the spectacular moment of the release of these animals is always followed by a long and precise common work of control and exchange of information, in order to guarantee the best possible results for these operations. This kind of cooperation also exists when working with the other animal species to secure the coordination of fauna's management of both parks.

Finally, Argentera and Mercantour Parks have confirmed their affinity through a common information policy. In particular, they have realized a bilingual brochure of presentation of the two parks on the occasion of their twinning, bilingual brochures on ibex and bearded vulture, an exhibition on this rare bird, a common poster on Argentera and Mercantour, a guide-book for hiking and, recently, a brochure on transfrontier trails for horse-trekking.

Their historical ties and their present active cooperation convinced the Argentera and Mercantour managers to coordinate their respective efforts, with the ambition of obtaining the European Diploma for each of them.

# **NATURE PARK OF ARGENTERA**

## **CANDIDATURE DOSSIER**

### **EUROPEAN DIPLOMA**

Name of the subject: Nature Park of Argentera.

Name and address of the management Board: Nature Park of Argentera public Board, Region of Piedmont.

Country: Italy.

This candidature is presented concertedly with the Parc National du Mercantour – France.

#### **1 - KIND OF TERRITORY, SITE OR NATURAL MONUMENT**

"Nature without frontiers"

Nature Park of Argentera and National Park of Mercantour together protect a total surface of about 100,000 hectares corresponding to the Argentera – Mercantour Massif and its adjacent territories, in the heart of Maritime Alps.

From the historical and cultural point of view, as from the scientific and naturalistic one, these two parks represent the two complementary parts of what can be considered the first international park of the Alps. They are linked by a twinning since 1987 and united by 33 km. of common border. Moreover, they actively collaborate in fauna's management and in some important scientific projects. Their respective management agencies are completely independent from one another: one was created by the French Government, the other by the Italian Region of Piedmont. Nevertheless, their cooperation is very close and successful, also in the field of enjoyment of parks. From the conservation and protection point of view, it must be said that both protected areas have quite strict rules.

Actually, Argentera Park, even though it is a Regional Park, has a set of rules that in most respects is similar to that of the "central zone" of French National Parks. In the Argentera Park, one strict nature reserve and three special nature reserves (see map) were defined. One more reserve was created to protect an important mediterranean biotope: it is the *Juniperus phoenicea* Reserve, outside the park territory but managed by the same Board.

Nature Park of Argentera covers nearly 26,000 hectares in the Piedmont province of Cuneo, including the upper Valle Gesso and a small part of the glen of the Valletta di Aisone, in Valle Stura.

It is the biggest regional park of Piedmont and one of the largest in Italy. The park lies on three communes which own most of its territory, as shown below:

commune of Entracque	11,868 ha	45,9%
commune of Valdieri	8,910 ha	34,4%
commune of Aisone	1,580 ha	6,1%
one private citizen (in the Valdieri commune)	2,437 ha	9,4%
other private citizens	483 ha	1,9%
State property	605 ha	2,3%

There are no villages with permanent inhabitants within the park borders, except the hamlet of S. Anna di Valdieri, with less than one hundred people.

Protected territory goes from 800 m. of altitude to 3,297 m. corresponding to the southern peak (Cima Sud) of Argentera, the mountain that gives its name to the park. The Park seat is in Valdieri, less than 20 km. from Cuneo and not far from the Turin - Savona motorway and the international road to the Tenda tunnel.

Park borders include the upper basin of Gesso torrent, with its characteristic fan shape formed by several glens profoundly carved on the northern side of Maritime Alps.

The main massifs (from West to East) are those of Monte Matto, Argentera and Gelas, all with several peaks of more than 3,000 m. of altitude. On the Gelas Massif there are many glaciers of Pyrenean type, the most southern ones of the Alps.

## **2 - SCIENTIFIC, AESTHETIC, CULTURAL AND/OR RECREATIVE CHARACTERISTICS: THE REASONS FOR PROTECTION**

### **SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**

#### **a) Geological and lithological features**

From the geological point of view, the territory of Argentera Park is extremely interesting for the great variety of its lithotypes and their complex relations.

The park includes the crystalline massif of Argentera with its sediment covering, either adherent or not. This area was and still is the object of several scientists' studies. Its geolithological history is well documented by many thorough publications, among which stands out the systematic and exhaustive essay of R. Malaroda (R. Malaroda et Al., 1970). The name "Argentera Massif", in the comprehensive sense of the geological term, includes part of an Ercinian geological complex, formed by a metamorphic and granitic nucleus and its

sedimentary superficial layers. It has an elliptic shape, with the main axe in NWSE direction. It covers vast portions of the Italian valleys of Vermentina, Stura di Demonte and Valle Gesso, and the French valleys on the other side, thus giving Maritime Alps their characteristic geographical aspect.

Besides several lithotypes, some of which are exclusive (migmatite; and other lithotypes such as anatectic granite, aplitic granite, biotite gneiss, striped gneiss, marbles, migmatite), there are interesting vestiges of the action of the glaciations, which left the small glaciers already mentioned, moraines, glacial cirques, polished rocks and several lakes, either big or small. From the scientific and touristic point of view, there is also the important phenomenon of thermal springs. Rain water penetrates into the cracks of the striped gneiss of Monte Matto, down to probably more than 3 km. of depth where it heats up and absorbs mineral substances such as sulphur, iron and manganese. Then, it goes back to the surface and gushes out from 36 springs, with a temperature varying from 50 to 69 C.

On the rocks that thermal waters wet, grow bacteria and hot moulds of Beggiatoe kind (Bacteriaceae thermophilae) which concentrate curative principles in themselves and are thus used for thermal treatments.

#### b) Flora and vegetation

Geomorphological features already mentioned explain the asperity of this territory where crags prevail, with very small pasture land, a vast majority of broad-leaf woods and a few Coniferae mostly clung to very steep slopes. Soil occupation:

- rocks, glaciers and lakes	71,7%
- wood of broad-leaves mostly beech woods	15,0%
- wood of Coniferae and mixed woods of broad-leaves and Coniferae	3,8%
- shrubs	4,3%
- pasture land and small strips of stable meadows	5,2%

Maritime Alps offer an extremely rich and important variety of flora species, with very heterogeneous features and a great number of endemic species. It is evident that, in this context, the establishment of a protected area is fully justified.

In 1950, Ozenda assessed in his studies that vascular flora in Maritime Alps counts as much as 2,600 species, that is 2/3 of French flora, almost half the Italian one and the equivalent of vascular flora of Portugal that has a twenty time bigger surface. This extraordinary richness of species is explained by several factors:

- the geographical position of Maritime Alps (covering parts of Liguria, Piedmont and Provence) that in ancient ages were linked to geological districts that are

now very distant, such as Pyrénées, Corsica and Balcans; with all of them, Maritime Alps still have incredible flora resemblances;

- the relatively short distance from the sea and the presence of many peaks of more than 3,000 m. of altitude that justify the existence of several microclimates;
- the complexity of geomorphological aspects and the great variety of substrata;
- the alternation of glaciations and warm periods during the Quaternary.

All these factors, variously combined, explain the peculiar botanical features of Maritime Alps that can be summarized as follows (Martini, 1984):

- extreme richness of species, from typical mediterranean specimens to arctic and alpine ones;
- large numbers of endemic species; for this reason Maritime Alps are the most important centre of "endemisms" of the whole Alps' chain (Pawlowsky, 1970);
- significant changes in species distribution: some mediterranean species have reached unusually high altitudes, while other species normally living at higher levels have descended to lower altitudes; thus, it happens that botanical species with different ranges and ecological needs live together;
- exceptional features of the phytocenoses and presence of some exclusive specimens. It must be remembered that endemic species are even more important if they have only a restricted spreading area; in this case, they are called "exclusive" species.

These extraordinary features are mainly explained by the geographical position of these mountains, which were only marginally involved in the glaciations of the Quaternary that however left many vestiges in this area. Nevertheless, several rocky faces were spared and served as a refuge to ancient botanical species, even of the Tertiary Era, that survived here on Argentera massif and disappeared elsewhere. Among these "paleoendemisms" there is *Saxifraga florulenta*, a sort of living botanical fossil. Other species, which remained separated from their main stock, had an autonomous evolution and became distinct sub-species.

The prevailing crystalline nature of the Argentera massif explains the presence in the park of endemic species typical of silica rocks, seven of which are exclusive species.

As far as endemic species typical of calcium rocks are concerned, part of them grows in the Juniperus phoenicea Reserve: among them there is *Primula allionii* with only three known spreading areas in Valle Gesso and one in Valle Roya (see list of endemic species herewith).

From the point of view of the vegetation, it is possible to mention the following groups:

- vegetation of crags and detritus of high altitudes, which is peculiar of siliceous crags; there are other typical associations growing on detritus, such as *Viola nummularifolia*, *Thlaspi rotundifolium* (which colonizes the areas of thinner detritus), *Adenostyles leucophylla*, *Achillea herba-rotta* (on dry screes); this kind of vegetation includes most endemic species;
- vegetation of small valleys where snow lasts, mostly *Salix herbacea* and *Alchemilla pentaphylla*;

- vegetation of streams and springs (*Cardamine asarifolia*, *Saxifraga stellaris*, *Stellaria alpina*, *Allium schoenoprasum*, *Saxifraga aizodes*, *Epilobium alpinum*, *Salix foetida*, *Senecio balbisianus*);
- peat-bogs of high altitudes and stagnant waters (*Carex fusca*, *Eriophorum scheuzeri*, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Pinguicula vulgaris*, *Drosera rotundifolia*);
- shrubs (*Alnus viridis* and, on sunnier sides and drier ground, *Juniperus nana*, *Pinus uncinata*, *Pinus mugo*, *Rhododendron ferrugineum*);
- megaphorbiae (*Cicerbita alpina*, *Adenostyles alliariae*, *Peucedanum ostruthium*, *Achillea macrophylla*);
- pasture lands and grasslands of high altitudes, with rich meadows (cultivated and mown), arid meadows, *Nardus stricta* meadows, *Carex curvula* associations, *Festuca halleri* and discontinuous grasslands;
- Coniferae woods: Special Nature Reserve of the wood of Valletta, with four species of Coniferae: silver fir, spruce fir, larch, cembra pine (*Abies alba*, *Picea excelsa*, *Larix decidua*, *Pinus cembra*); spruce fir and cembra pine are on their southern edge of distribution; cembra pine, together with larch, tends to colonize new areas, mostly crags and ridges. Larch reaches here (Punta Stella) the highest altitude in Europe: 2,500 m.;
- beech-woods and woods of broad-leaves: beech-woods cover 80% of the wooded surface, for a limited area with long-trunked trees (Special Nature Reserve of the beech-wood of S. Giacomo) and for the remaining part with coppice managed according to a forest management plan controlled by the Park;
- *Juniperus phoenicea* Reserve: it protects a calcareous crag with mediterranean features and a vegetation including *Juniperus phoenicea*, *Juniperus thurifera* and various endemic species.

### c) Fauna

The main feature is the high density of big vertebrates deriving from the fact that hunting has been forbidden since the establishment of the Park. Even before, hunting had been limited because of the Royal Reserve created in 1857.

The populations of big ungulates enjoy a natural equilibrium thanks to natural mechanisms of regulation. The number of chamois is around 5,000 head, with a density of 24 animals per 100 hectares in central areas, while ibex are about 500. Moufflons are not autochthonous: they were reintroduced on the French territory and only some 100 head migrate to Argentera in summer. There are no winter presences. Wildboars are numerous in the wooded and bushy lands of the peripheric areas of the park. In all, there are 29 species of mammals, including Insectivora, Lagomorpha, Rodentia, Carnivora, Artiodactyla, Chiroptera.

In the Argentera Park there are 80 species of birds, 75 of which nest on its territory. Among birds of prey there are the peregrin (*Falco peregrinus*), with two nesting couples, the sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter nisus*) and the royal eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), with six nesting couples: this density is twice as in the rest of the alpine chain.

There are also other important bird species: black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*), which is in the edge of its spreading area, wall creeper (*Tichodroma*



*muraria*), chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*), raven (*Corvus corax*), nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*), dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*). Among the species that do not nest in the park there are the waterbirds that visit the artificial lake of the Piastra (see paragraph "Effectiveness of protection") and, moreover, *Pernis apivorus*, *Falco vespertinus*, *Gypaetus barbatus* (1977–1980 observations), eider (*Somateria mollissima*), and *Fulmarus glacialis* (first Italian observation in 1988).

Thanks to their extraordinary richness in animal species, to their geomorphological asperity and to the modest human colonization, Maritime Alps, at the beginning of the century, were the last refuge for some species that had already disappeared in other areas: wolf, lynx and bearded vulture disappeared only during the first fifteen years of the century, the otter during the sixties and seventies.

#### d) Improvements and scientific research

Scientific research is particularly important for the activity of the Park, on one hand for protection and qualification of environmental patrimony and, on the other hand, for enjoyment, information and didactic activities.

Scientific research is directly conducted by the Park staff with the coordination and supervision of qualified experts (professional researchers and University professors).

Collaboration with Universities goes further, through the realization of stages and "on field" activities (University of Milan – Faculty of Natural Sciences) and through the assignment of graduation theses on specific subjects (University of Turin – Institute of Geology, University of Bologna – Institute of Entomology, University of Genoa; University of Pisa).

The Park has a "Foresteria" in S. Anna di Valdieri, with guest-rooms especially prepared to give hospitality to researchers and students who make their studies in the park.

Scientific research includes a series of essential operations and routine activities, usually managed by Park personnel. The Park has a computer data bank to catalogue all the observations recorded on special forms during the vigilance service. The data bank includes the following section:

- amphibians and reptiles;
- birds (with a special section on eagles);
- mammals (with a special section on ungulates);
- flora and vegetation. With regard to flora, the park has prepared a herbarium including, for the moment, more than 600 species, with some 1,200 samples. There still are other routine observations, among which stand out: checking of eagle nesting (all aeries are listed and couples are kept under constant control since 1984) and annual census of ungulates.

Present studies for graduation theses and specific projects managed by a single park ranger are: census of micromammals and chiropters; ecoethological study on marmots; study on *Rana temporaria*; ichtycal map of the park; study on the possibility of restocking of autochthonous *Salmo trutta fario*; flora of the glen Vallone del Sabbione (where crystalline rock and sedimentary rock meet);

geomorphological aspects; slave ants (*Polyergus rufescens*) of the Juniperus phoenicea Reserve; etc.

Among the most significant scientific initiatives of the park stand out: the creation of a botanical garden in Terme di Valdieri and the reintroduction operations of ibex and bearded vulture in close collaboration with the Mercantour National Park.

### The alpine botanical garden "Valderia"

The extraordinary features of the park flora have already been mentioned. These features explain why botanists have been visiting this area since long ago. In the 18th century, Allioni described for the first time the *Viola valderia* that he picked on the gravel bank of the torrent in Terme di Valdieri. It is exactly here, in the "*locus classicus*", that the botanical garden with the name of this endemic viola has been created. Works started in 1987; on July 14th 1990, in the presence of illustrious botanists from Italy and France, the Garden was inaugurated and opened to the public. Valderia was designed on the basis of totally innovative criteria: it is neither a "classic" alpine garden with a collection of mountain flora specimens coming from all over the world; nor one of these botanical gardens with rigorous geometric structure formed by squared flowerbeds and parallel paths.

It is rather the best possible reconstruction of all the different habitats of the park, each one with its main botanical species, all rigorously autochthonous. Thus, it is divided in "habitats", some of which were already present while others have been artificially recreated: the megaphorbiae association, the meadow, the crag and the detritus, the grassland, the peat-bog, the stream, the shrubs, the underwood. Each one is characterized by a wood board describing its main features. In each habitat there are labelled specimens of only the most remarkable and typical species (more than 400).

As a botanical garden is never complete, new habitats could be created and those already existing modified. The "habitat" criteria represents the real original feature of the garden and stresses its didactic aim. Moreover it is possible to have a walk along a naturalistic path in the mixed wood of coniferae that forms the natural background of the botanical garden: the boards with explanations on geology, zoology and ecology will help having a more thorough knowledge of the nature of the park.

### Operation of reintroduction: animals do not respect frontiers.

Argentera and Mercantour parks inherited from the Royal Hunting Reserve a long tradition of fauna's management, even though the interventions were justified by hunting interests rather than protectionist concerns. The introduction on the French territory, in the fifties, of a non autochthonous species, the moufflon, must be considered in this context. A great naturalistic importance is given to the reintroduction of ibex on the Italian territory in the twenties with animals captured on the Gran Paradiso: thus the first new colony of ibex was

created in the Alps. Starting in the seventies some studies on migration (Pfeffer and Settimo) proved the existence of important migrations across national borders, with ibex and moufflons moving from opposite sides: in summer, ibex migrate towards French territories and, at the beginning of autumn, they come back to Italy where their winter range is. On the contrary, moufflons cross the frontier to Italian territories in late summer but go back to France to winter at lower altitude.

The importance of controlling these migrations and reaching common and coordinate fauna's management urged Argentera and Mercantour parks' managers to strengthen collaboration ties through exchange of data and common censuses and controls. Still the most significant initiatives in this sense is Operation Ibex, an important scientific operation that included the creation of two new groups, one on the Italian territory, the other on the French territory, in areas that had not yet been colonized. The animals were captured by teleanaesthesia and, after checking general health conditions and collecting biometric data, they were fitted with coloured ear badges and then transferred by helicopter to their new territory where they were released. The methods used to track their progress more easily are:

- direct observation through the ear badges
- radiotelemetric system through V.H.F. collars
- ARGOS system (radiotelemetric system by satellite).

This operation was conducted in Italy in 1986-1987 with 46 ibex releases. In France the operation took place for the first time in 1987, with 13 ibex captured on the French territory; then in 1989 the operation was repeated with 15 animals from Argentera Park, where the capture is easier.

Interesting studies were conducted on the reproductive strategy of the new colonies and the use of the territory, both immediately after the release (some animals covered 15 km. in 24 hours) and afterwards. Today, more than two years have passed since the latest release, and the operation can be considered totally successful.

The second operation concerns the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), the largest European bird, which disappeared from the Alps at the beginning of this century. In 1975 IUCN promoted an international program of reintroduction in the Alps, which obtained the support of the international WWF. In 1987, on the basis of historical and ecological data, the Argentera Regional Nature Park and the Mercantour National Park proposed their common candidature as reintroduction site. The special International Commission gave its full approval and the Argentera-Mercantour became one of the four release sites of the Alps. Among the reasons of the support of the experts there are the presence of two large protected areas, with 33 km. of national boundary in common, the strong will of the managers and the good organisation of the Parks, based on the work of 60 rangers and the extension of the protected territory (100,000 hectares). In particular, this factor is extremely important if you consider that bearded vulture can cover hundreds of km. in a short period of time.

This is a really European project and to stress its importance, the releases will begin in 1992 with the operation "Gypaetus without frontiers".

e) Effectiveness of protection

During WWII, ungulate population fell by 80% but, when hunting was forbidden again, it rapidly grew. Thus, the Hunting Reserve did protect the animals in quite an effective way; still, natural environment suffered many attacks before the establishment of the Park. For example, the project of an international road tunnel, the Ciriegia–Mercantour, with the construction, in the sixties, of a short demonstration tunnel (1 km.) now closed. Nevertheless, the most significant intervention was the construction of two hydroelectric basins and one hydroelectric underground power station in the seventies. By the way, Argentera Park, after its establishment in 1980, succeeded in preventing a heavier environmental damage, the construction of new canals to collect water from near glens.

This project would provoke on all the park territory the same damages that are now evident only in the Vallone delle Rovine. However, since the early stages of its activities, the Park set close relations of collaboration with ENEL, the Italian hydroelectric agency, which started an exemplary program of environmental restoration.

This program includes: removal of unnecessary material, consolidation and grass covering of scarps, equipment of picnic areas near the Lago delle Rovine. Moreover, at the power station, ENEL is preparing an information centre on its plants which will include a section dedicated to the Park and the delicate relations between development and nature conservation.

There is another positive aspect of the question that must be stressed, that is the satisfactory degree of naturalization of the artificial basins. This is proved by the fact that the inferior lake (la Piastra, about 1,000 m. above sea level) has become an important halting-place for migratory birds. During these last years, interesting observations have been recorded of bird species coming from Northern regions and rare birds: mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), teals (*Anas crecca*), tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*), goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), wigeon (*Anas penelope*), eider (*Somateria mollissima*), Fulmarus (*Fulmarus glacialis* (first Italian observation), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), *Laridae*.

Another threat for the environmental integrity of Valle Gesso is represented by limestone quarries that supply local cement-factories with raw materials. In this case too, the Park obtained a positive result with the creation of the Special Nature Reserve of *Juniperus phoenicea*, for the protection of a remarkable mediterranean biotope of calcareous crags. The Reserve succeeded in limiting the expansion of the quarry, thus allowing the nesting of peregrin (*Falco peregrinus*).

Finally, the Park limited and controlled the expansion of tourism, which started in the late sixties, thanks to the "area plan", a means of territorial and urban management. Moreover, it succeeded in keeping the few, small ski-lifts outside the park borders.

A fundamental contribution comes from the action of the Park rangers, the purpose of which is essentially educational but, when needed, also repressive. Thanks to them, the behaviour of tourists and visitors definitely improved; actually, they are now more respectful and more conscious of how to behave in the natural environment.

### AESTHETIC INTEREST

The rugged and wild appearance of rocky and snowy peaks, the richness of lakes, torrents and falls, the splendid demeanour of ibex standing out on ridges: all this and countless other aspects explain the considerable aesthetic and scenic interest of this area. The first to appreciate Valle Gesso was exactly King Vittorio Emanuele II, who was struck by the solemnity of these mountains and their abundant game. In 1857, he obtained from the communes the concession for the Royal Hunting Reserve.

At the end of the 19th century, in the Romantic period, many writers and intellectuals went to the spa of Terme di Valdieri. The same romantic and aesthetic interest explains why Maritime Alps were so often visited and explored.

### CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INTEREST

The most ancient vestiges of the human colonization of these territories date back to the Bronze age (between 2000 and 1000 b.C.). In the valleys of Valle delle Meraviglie and Fontanalba (Commune of Tenda, Mercantour National Park) there are more than 100,000 incisions carved on the rocks polished by glaciers during the Quaternary. Recently, the Soprintendenza Archeologica (the archaeological board) of Piedmont and the Civic Museum of Cuneo promoted an archaeological campaign which also brought to interesting discoveries in Argentera Nature Park, in the glen of Vej del Bouc: graffiti, pottery and the remains of a village of the Bronze age.

In those ancient times, shepherds and their flocks were already moving along the sides of these mountains for which they had a sort of religious respect. Even today, peaks and ridges are not a frontier: pasture lands and shepherd huts ("gias") are spread all over the territory.

Human villages are characteristic: on the French side, there are houses with "colombages" roofs, while on the Italian territory, there still are old villages, now mostly abandoned, with thatched roofs. The Park is preparing an interesting project which includes the restoration of one of these villages to realize an "ecomuseum".

The period of the Royal Hunting Reserve left several traces: various royal hunting residences in S. Giacomo, S. Anna di Valdieri, Terme di Valdieri, and to Valasco, hunting lodges and huts at high altitudes, and, most of all, many tracks

that cover all the territory as a cobweb. During the period between the two world wars, many military tracks were realized that show a careful and respectful enjoyment of the territory, also through the use of natural materials: an example to be kept in mind. For this reason, the area plan fixed a series of rules for the respect of traditional building criteria, both for house restoration and construction of new infrastructures.

### RICREATIVE, EDUCATIONAL AND SPORT INTEREST

Alpinists started to explore Maritime Alps during the drawing up of the "Carta degli stati di S.M. di Sardegna", the map of the Savoia kingdom (approximately in 1830). However, at the time, these mountains were interesting for essentially geographical and military reasons. That is why the first to climb their summits were some officers of the Sardinian Army. Mountaineering had its golden age during the romantic period, at the end of the 19th century.

English and Germans were the most common protagonists of the main undertakings of this time, among which the climbs of the American reverend Coolidge deserve to be mentioned. He was the first to climb the Canalone di Lourousa, an impressive slide of ice with a 900 m. of difference in height and 45 degrees of gradient, and, after a traverse on a ridge, he conquered the southern peak of the Argentera, the highest summit of Maritime Alps. Then came the French helped by local guides. In 1930, Victor de Cessole succeeded in conquering the Corno Stella, "the noble cliff" and "last peak of the old Europe thought to be inaccessible", thanks to his guides Plent of S. Martin Vesubie and Ghigo of S. Anna di Valdieri.

Nowadays, mountaineering is very practised in this area; there are faces and routes for all kind of alpinists and new routes continue to be opened. Hiking too is very popular, thanks to the extraordinary network of mountain paths, to 9 mountain huts and 6 bivouacs of the Italian Alpin Club (CAI).

The territory lends itself also to other sport activities: canoe, mountain-bike, horse trekking and alpine ski. The Park can control sport activities and avoid excessive disturbances through the limitation of access to its territory and the regulation of periods and modalities. As far as enjoyment is concerned, the Park has carried out a significant didactic activity for many years now, in collaboration with all kind of schools, from primary to university level. Each year, the Park suggests detailed programs for didactic activities, from guided visits to various kind of activities on specific subjects and stages. For its guests, the Park has an agreement with local hotels and its own guesthouse, the Casa del Parco in Entracque, with 35 beds, several rooms and didactic equipment to be used during "green-week" stays and stages of students from primary to high school. For university students conducting specific studies or preparing their graduation theses, there is the already mentioned "Foresteria" in S. Anna di Valdieri. Moreover, in Entracque there is a visitor centre, with a permanent exhibition to introduce the Park to the public and an information office, where brochures and other publications are available both free and for sale. The visitor centre also



offers a didactic room for lessons, seminars and audiovisual activities. The Park has a complete video equipment for its own production of video cassettes and audiovisual material for didactic and educational purposes. Finally, in the Park building in Valdieri, there are all the administration offices, plus a small library, video and photo archives, the already mentioned herbarium, a laboratory for the preparation of naturalistic specimens to be used in visitor centres and in didactic activities, and a carpentry-workshop for preparing signs, information boards and wooden equipment for picnic areas. For the moment, two such areas have already been equipped (Ciriegia and La Piastra), and two new ones will be ready later on (Rovine and Terme). For Terme in particular, the project includes the settlement of all the area and the creation of an information centre of the Park. The aim of this kind of intervention is essentially the concentration of the presence of tourists in less vulnerable areas, where enjoyment can be more easily controlled.

### EUROPEAN INTEREST: THE REASONS FOR THE CANDIDATURE

Maritime Alps have the appearance and the features of high mountains (3,300 m. of altitude, wild and rugged rocky peaks, snow-fields and glaciers) only some tens of kilometres from the sea: in clear and windy days, from the top of Argentera it is possible to see the Mediterranean and Corsica. On these mountains there are the most southern glaciers of the Alps.

Microclimate variety, geological circumstances, glaciations and lithotype richness justify the existence on Maritime Alps of a kind of flora which is really unique in Europe. Actually, there is the simultaneous presence of botanical species having very different origins (Pyrénées, Provence, Corsica, Balcana, mediterranean and arctic regions) and, most of all, a high density of endemisms, with several remarkable "paleoendemisms". According to Pawlowski, Maritime Alps are the main endemism area of the whole alpine chain.

As far as fauna is concerned, its density is one of the highest in the Alps, with no overpopulation: more than 24 chamois per 100 hectares, 6 eagle couples in 26,000 ha. Argentera ibex colony was one of the first in the Alps to be recreated from the last colonies of the Gran Paradiso. Moreover, a European project will reintroduce the bearded vulture on these mountains in 1992.

In this area, man has lived in harmony with nature since the prehistorical age. Here, thanks to the active and concrete collaboration with Mercantour National Park, nature has really no boundaries. Argentera Park does not simply have a task of passive conservation. Actually, it has actively participated and still participates to the fight against speculations and to the sponsoring of environmental restoration initiative, even with public and private partners.

Since its establishment, Argentera Park has been a member of the Federation of National and Natural Parks of Europe, representing Italy in the executive committee of this organization. For this reason, the Park has frequent and interesting contacts with other European protected areas. It already had some temporary staff exchanges at various levels with English and Spanish

parks, plus experience and information exchange even with Eastern European parks (Triglavski Narodni Park, Yugoslavia; Kiskunsang National Park, Hungary; Krkonoski Narodni Park, Czechoslovakia). Close collaboration ties link Argentera Park to La Sierra de Las Nieves Regional Park (Andalusia, Spain). Together, they sponsor a scientific research program on ibex, with the coordination and supervision of the University of Turin, for a comparative study of the Alps' species and the Spanish one. In October 1992, there will be the twinning of these two parks on the occasion of an international scientific congress on Capra genus, in Ronda, where there is the seat of that Spanish park.

In conclusion, Argentera Park interprets the concept of environmental conservations in an active and modern way, and it effectively plays its role not only at local and national level, but also in the European context.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTS

Argentera Nature Park was established by the Regional Law n. 65 of May 30th 1980, on the basis of a regional outline law and of the Regional Plan for Parks. It is managed by a public Board controlled and financed by the Assessorato alla Pianificazione Territoriale, the department for territory planning of Piedmont Region. The Park has a board of directors, its own budget and its own staff. The rules for the enjoyment of the park were adopted with the Regional Law n. 16 of March 30th 1987.

Picking of botanical specimens, camping, dog access, motor-vehicle access and fishing are strictly regulated. Fire lighting, leaving of litter, picking of minerals, fossils and insects, exploitation of quarries and peat-bogs, and hunting are forbidden. Lumbering within the park borders is allowed only on the basis of the Forest Management Plan, but it is forbidden in areas of particular protection (Strict Nature Reserves and Special Reserves). It is also forbidden to build new roads and infrastructures that are not included in the area plan. This plan allows only the interventions which are necessary to the carrying out of Park activities and to the fulfilment of its aims.

## REGIONAL LAW N. 65 OF MAY 30TH 1980: ESTABLISHMENT OF ARGENTERA NATURE PARK

The Regional Council adopted. The Government Commissioner signed. The President of the Regional Government promulgates the following law:

### R. 1 - Establishment of the Nature Park

Following the Regional Law n. 43 of June 4th 1975, the present law establishes the Argentera Nature Park public Board.

### R. 2 - Borders



The borders of Argentera Nature Park lying on the Communes of Aisone, Entracque and Valdieri, are determined by this law.

The drawing up of the area plan (R.12) to allow a sound touristic development, can define some areas within the Nature Park borders to be classified as "equipped areas" and "pre-park zones", according to R.4 of the Regional Law n. 43 of June 4th 1975.

Park borders must be delimited by boards easily visible from all access points. Each board must also be visible from its adjacent boards and bear the inscription "Regione Piemonte - Parco Naturale dell'Argentera". Boards must always be in good conditions and readable.

### R. 3 - Aims.

In the context and for the completion of the general principles listed in R. 1 of the regional law n. 43 of June 4th 1975, the aims of the Argentera Nature Park establishment are the following:

- 1) the protection and safeguard of natural environmental and scenic features of the Park, in order to allow the social enjoyment of these values;
- 2) the guarantee of the safeguard and protection of real estate within the Park territory;
- 3) the territory organisation for its recreative, didactic, scientific and cultural enjoyment;
- 4) the promotion of the improvement of living and working conditions for local population;
- 5) the promotion of agricultural, forest and pastoral activities.

### R. 4 - Allocation term.

The allocation of the territory defined in R. 2 to the establishment of a Nature Park will expire after 99 years. Extension will be possible at the end of this term.

### R. 5 - Park Council.

Management and administration of the activities carried out to fulfil the aims listed in R. 3 are entrusted to the Park Council formed by:

- a) six representatives (two of the opposition) of the Municipal Council of Entracque;
- b) three representatives (one of the opposition) each, for the Municipal Council of Aisone and Valdieri;
- c) three representatives of the hamlet S. Anna di Valdieri, appointed by the Municipal Council of Valdieri among the inhabitants of that same hamlet;
- d) three representatives (one of the opposition) of the Council of the Comunità Montana Valli Gesso-Vermenagna-Pesio;
- e) three representative appointed by the Regional Council after consulting the Cuneo Province.

Within 90 days from its establishment the Park Council must adopt its Rules and Regulations. They will be finally adopted through a decree of the President of the Regional Government.

Rules and Regulations must provide for: a) the Park Council; b) the Executive Committee; c) the President.

Rules and Regulations must also provide for the modalities of consultation and participation of possible concerned people and organisations.

Members of the Park Council and the President stay in office until the term of the Municipal Council they were appointed by will expire. They can be re-elected. A commissioner of the Region, appointed by a decree of the President of the Regional Government, will attend the assemblies of the Park Council with an advisory function.

The Park Council can avail itself of the contribution of a Scientific and Technical Committee, a panel of experts appointed with a resolution of the Regional Council.

Members of the Scientific and Technical Committee can attend the Park Council assemblies, to which they must be invited.

For its management and administration functions, the Park Council avails itself either of the staff mentioned in R. 6, or of regional, district, provincial offices, of Aisone, Entracque, Valdieri Communes and of the Comunità Montana of Valli Gesso-Vermenagna-Pesio and Valle Stura.

#### R. 6 – Personnel.

The organisation and the rules for the personnel of the Park are established by a regional law, after consulting the Park Council.

#### R. 7 – Director.

Argentera Nature Park Director is appointed by the President of the Park Council after competitive examination. The notice of competitive examination will be prepared after consulting the Scientific and Technical Committee.

The Director is a member of the Scientific and Technical Committee and participates to the assemblies of the Park Council with a consultive vote.

Director functions and relations with Park Council and Scientific and Technical Committee are regulated by the Rules and Regulations of the Park.

Argentera Nature Park Director is allowed to have management functions also in other parks or nature reserves, after proper agreement with their management Boards.

#### R. 8 – Control (omissis)

#### R. 9 – Restrictions and permissions.

State and Regional Laws either on the protection of environment, flora and fauna, or on hunting and fishing activities must be observed on all the territory of the Park. The following activities are also forbidden:

- a) opening and exploitation of quarries and peat-bogs;
- b) hunting; technical interventions mentioned in the regional law n. 50 of October 20th 1977 are allowed;

c) alteration and modification of natural living conditions of the animals; d) demaging and distruction of all kind of plant species, except for usual agricultural and pastoral activities;

e) lumbering or even damaging of trees having particular environmental, scientific or urban value;

f) picking of rocks and minerals, except for research activity and only with the authorization of the Park Council;

g) building of new roads and enlargement of existing ones if not for agricultural, pastoral, forest activities and for the enjoyment of the park;

f) picking of rocks and minerals, except for research activity and only with the authorisation of the Park Council;

h) recreative and sport activities with off-road motor vehicules;

i) demolition of existing buildings and construction either of new ones or of the other fixed or temporary structures that can deteriorate environmental features of the site.

Possible soil uses and building interventions on the Park territory must pursue the aims mentioned in R. 3 and respect the modalities established by urban planning means and by the area plan of R. 12.

Until the adoption of such a plan, the following rules must be applied:

1) existing buildings can be restored following the rules provided for by urban planning means; restored buildings must be used to pursue the aims stated in R. 3;

2) the construction of new buildings or any other kind of intervention that could provoke alterations of the present features of a site must be authorized either by the President of the Regional Government, after consulting the Park Council, or by all other authorities in accordance to the law;

3) grazing and agriculture are allowed on the basis of present modalities and territorial limits of practise.

Since the adoption of the naturalistic plan mentioned in R. 8, of the regional law n. 57 of September 4th 1979, and of its management plan, lumbering has been regulated according to R. 12 of that same law.

After consulting the Park Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee, the Regional Council will adopt Regulations for the enjoyment of the Park and for sanctions.

#### R. 10 – Sanctions.

Violations of the prohibition mentioned in letter a), R. 9 of this law involve a fine from 3,000,000 £ to 5,000,000 £ each 10 mc. of material that is removed.

Violations of letters c), d) e), f) and h) and of point 3), R. 9 involve a fine from 50,000 £ to 1,000,000 £.

Lumbering not obeying to R. 12 of the regional law n. 57 of September 4th 1979 involves a fine from 1,000,000 £ to 5,000,000 £ each hectare or fraction of hectare of territory on which lumbering was done.

Violations of point 2), R. 9 involve a fine from 1,000,000 £ to 10,000,000 £ according to the damage.

Violations mentioned in paragraphs 1, 3, 4 e 5 of this rule (R. 10) involve both their relative fine and the obligation to restore the former conditions of the environment, according to the prescriptions adopted by a special decree of the President of the Regional Government. (OMISSIS)

#### R. 11 – Vigilance.

Vigilance of Argentera Nature Park is entrusted to:

a) vigilance staff either of the park, as provided for in the rules and organisation mentioned in R. 6, or of the Boards mentioned in the last paragraph of R. 5;

b) personnel of the Boards mentioned in the last paragraph of R. 3 of the regional law n. 43 of June 4th 1975 and relative modification and integration, after reaching an agreement with respective boards;

c) voluntary guards, appointed according to R. 138 of the unified text of the Public Security laws approved by R.D. n, 773 of June 18th 1931, who took the oath before a magistrate (Pretore).

#### R. 12 – Area plan.

Waiting for the adoption of the territorial plans mentioned in R. 4 of the regional law n. 56 of December 5th 1977, the Regional Government prepares an area plan, object of this law, representing in all respects an excerpt of the territorial plan. It is prepared and adopted according to the procedure of the next paragraphs.

The Regional Government, within 12 months from the enforcement of this law, will prepared and adopt the area plan that will then be sent to concerned Communes, to the Comunità Montane of Valli Gesso–Vermenagna–Pesio and Valle Stura, to the District Committee of Cuneo and the Province of Cuneo. The Regional Government will publish the area plan on the Regional Official Bulletin and communicate where the plan will be available to anyone for consultation.

Within 90 days, the boards mentioned in the preceding paragraph will send their own comments to the Regional Government. In the same delay, District Committees with no territorial competence on the Park, public Boards, economic, cultural and social organizations and associations, as well as State authorities and firms in which the State has a holding can send their own comments to the Regional Government.

The Regional Government, within the following 90 days, will examine the advice mentioned in the preceding paragraph and will see to the preparation of the final text of the area plan. After consulting the Regional Urban Committee, the Regional Government will submit the final area plan to the Regional Council for its adoption.

The guidelines of the area plan and the rules for their enforcement are effective and binding since the coming into force of the Regional Council resolution, and replace all possible different prescriptions of the urban planning means presently in force.

INTEGRATION TO THE LAW N.65 MAY 30th 1980

Establishment of the Special Nature Reserve of *Juniperus phoenicea* of Rocca of San Giovanni – Saben (Regional Law n. 52 of September 3rd 1984 – Official Bulletin n. 37 of September 12th 1984).

**R. 1 – Establishment of the Special Nature Reserve.**

According to the regional law n. 43 of June 4th 1985 (1), this law establishes the Special Nature Reserve of *Juniperus phoenicea* of Rocca of San Giovanni–Saben, to integrate the Argentera Nature Park established by the regional law n. 65 of May 30th 1980 (2).

**R. 2 – Borders of the SN Reserve of *Juniperus phoenicea* of Rocca San Giovanni–Saben, in the territory of the Commune of Valdieri, are defined by the enclosed plan, on the scale of 1:25.000, which is an integral part of this law.**

Borders of the Special Nature Reserve must be delimited by boards put along the perimetre of the area and visible from all access points. Each board must also be visible from its adjacent boards and bear the inscription "Regione Piemonte – Parco Naturale dell'Argentera – Riserva Naturale Speciale del popolamento di *Juniperus phoenicea* di Rocca San Giovanni–Saben".

Boards must always be in good conditions and readable.

**R. 3 – Aims.**

To integrate the principles stated in R. 3 of the regional law n. 65 of May 30th 1980 (2), the aims of the establishment of SNR of *Juniperus phoenicea* of Rocca San Giovanni–Saben are the following:

1) to safeguard natural features of the area in order to preserve and perpetuate the *Juniperus phoenicea* species which grows in this site and characterizes its vegetation;

2) to safeguard and preserve the other botanical species within the perimetre of the Reserve;

3) to preserve geological and geomorphological features of the area; to favour the knowledge of *Juniperus phoenicea* species and scientific studies on it.

**R. 4 – To integrate the restrictions stated in R. 9 of the regional law n. 65 of May 30th 1980, in the SNR of *Juniperus phoenicea* of Rocca San Giovanni–Saben, access is forbidden, except for didactic, technical or scientific reasons and without authorization from the Park Council of Argentera Nature Park. All owners and other entitled people are exempted from asking any authorization and have free access to the area.**

Violations of the prohibition mentioned in the preceding paragraph involve the fine stated in paragraph 2 of R. 10 of the regional law n. 65 of May 30th 1980 (2) as modified by R. 3 of the regional law n. 15 of March 2nd 1984 (3), that is from a minimum of 25,000 £ to a maximum of 250,000 £.

**R. 5 – Final rules.**

In all the cases not expressly examined in this law, the rules to be applied are stated in R. 4 and following ones of the regional law n. 65 of May 30th 1980 (2).

They concern:

- a) allocation term;
- b) management, direction and administration functions;
- c) personnel;
- d) control;
- e) limitations and sanctions;
- f) vigilance;
- g) means of territorial planning;
- h) funds and income.

In particular, the management of the Special Nature Reserve is entrusted to the Park Council of Argentera Nature Park which provides for it through the regional allocation stated in the 8050 item of 1984 budget and in corresponding items of following budgets.

#### R. 6 – Temporary rules.

The Park Council of Argentera Nature Park, within 120 days from the coming into force of this law, will carry out the necessary modifications of the Park Rules and Regulations deriving from the enforcement of the prescriptions of this law.

(1) Regional Law n. 43 of June 4th 1975 (Official Bulletin of June 10th 1975 – supplement n. 23): Rules for the establishment of Parks and Nature Reserves.

(2) Regional Law n. 65 of May 30th 1980 (O.B. of June 11th 1980, n. 24): Establishment of Argentera Nature Park.

(3) Regional Law n. 15 of March 2nd 1984 (O.B. of March 14th 1984, n. 11): procedure for the application of administrative sanctions relative to violations concerning Nature Parks, Nature Reserve or equipped Areas.

### REGIONAL LAW N.16 OF MARCH 30th 1987. RULES FOR THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE ARGENTERA NATURE PARK

The Regional Council adopted.

The Government Commissioner signed.

The President of the Regional Government promulgates the following law:

#### R. 1 – Aims.

This law regulate the modalities of use and enjoyment of Argentera Nature Park, established by the regional law n. 65 of May 30th 1980.

#### R. 2 – Motor vehicle traffic.

On all the Park territory, all motor vehicles, including caterpillar vehicules, are forbidden to leave the road and to travel on roads where traffic is not allowed. This prescription does not apply to public administration vehicles and private vehicles used for agricultural and forestal activities, works of maintenance of hydraulic plants and forestal structures, rescue and fire-fighting interventions.

Violations of this rule involve a fine from 25,000 £ to 250,000 £.

**R. 3 – Leaving of litter.**

It is forbidden to leave, even if only temporarily, any litter produced by the consumption of meals, drinks and picnics. Violations of this rule involve a fine from 5,000 to 50,000 £. This sanction can be doubled if the breaker does not remove the litter after the request of the agent writing out the statement.

**R. 4 – Washing of tableware and vehicles.**

It is forbidden to wash tableware in springs and sheets of water. It is also forbidden to wash vehicles along water-courses, near springs, falls, lakes and sheets of water.

Violations of these prescriptions involve a fine from 5,000 to 50,000 £.

**R. 5 – Lighting of fires.**

Fire-lighting is forbidden all the year round.

In equipped areas specially delimited by the Park Board it is allowed to use barbecues and camping stoves.

Violations of the first paragraph of this rule involve a fine from 20,000 and 200,000 £.

**R. 6 – Burning of vegetable remains.**

Burning of stubble and other vegetable remains is allowed if obeying to forest regulations, and only more than 100 m. away from woods, in sites well limited and effectively isolated to avoid fire spreading. Moreover, burning of vegetable remains is allowed only in periods of high atmospheric humidity and with no wind.

People burning vegetable remains must be present until total extinction of the fire, with enough well equipped people to control and, if necessary, to put out flames.

Violations of these prescriptions involve a fine from 50,000 to 500,000 £.

**R. 7 – Picking of spontaneous flora.**

The regional law n. 32 of November 2nd 1982 regulates picking, taking away, damaging and possession of parts of herbaceous flora and shrubs.

Normal operations connected with agricultural and forestal activities are not included.

Violations of the first paragraph of this Rule involve the fine stated in R. 38 sub g) of that same law, as substituted by R. 3 of the regional law n. 29 of June 21st 1984, that is 20,000 £ plus 5,000 £ each picked specimen for strictly protected species and, for the other species, a fine from 5,000 to 50,000 £.

Only for vigilance reasons, the President of the Comunità Montana will inform the Park Direction of the authorizations for picking of spontaneous medicinal plants, granted according to R. 17 of the regional law n. 32 of November 2nd 1982.

**R. 8 – Picking of mushrooms.**

Picking, taking away, damaging and possession of mushrooms, even if not edible, are regulated by the regional law n. 32 of November 2nd 1982.

Violations of this rule involve a fine of 10,000 £ plus 3,000 £ for each specimen exceeding the allowed quantity, in accordance to R. 38 sub 1) of the regional law n. 32 of November 2nd 1982, as substituted by R. 3 of the regional law n. 29 of June 21st 1984.

Only for vigilance reasons, the President of the Comunità Montana will inform the Park Director of the passes for mushroom picking granted in accordance to R. 22 of the regional law n. 32 of November 2nd 1982.

**R. 9 – Picking of undergrowth products.**

Picking, taking away, damaging and possession of any undergrowth product is regulated by the regional law n. 32 of November 2nd 1982.

Violations of this rule involve a fine of 10,000 £ plus 3,000 £ for each specimen exceeding the allowed quantity, (OMISSIS).

Residents for whom picking of undergrowth products represent a source of income or seasonal work are granted special permissions, in accordance to R. 32 of the regional law n. 32 of November 2nd 1982.

The President of the Comunità Montana informs, only for vigilance reasons, the park Director of such authorization

**R. 10 – Picking of amphibians and molluscs.**

Picking, taking away and voluntary killing of any amphibians or mollusc species are always forbidden.

Violations of this rule involve a fine from 25,000 £ to 250,000 £ for each specimen.

**R. 11 – Picking of insects.**

Capture, taking away and killing, if not accidental or necessary, of any kind of insect are always forbidden.

Normal operations connected with agricultural and forest activities are not included, as well as the enforcement of other rules concerning sanitary, plant pathological, veterinary, hygienic and forest control.

Violations of this rule involve a fine from 25,000 to 250,000 £.

**R. 12 – Dog access.**

Access of dogs, of any race and even on the lead, is forbidden. This rule does not concern villages, municipal and provincial roads, and special areas expressly delimited and indicated by the Park Board.

Anyway, along municipal and provincial roads and in the areas expressly indicated by the Park Board, dogs must be on the lead.

The prohibition stated in paragraph 1 does not concern authorized shepherd dogs and dogs used for agricultural and forest activities, as well as dogs used for rescue operations.



Dogs used for keeping herds and flocks and for agricultural and forest activities must always be under the direct control of the shepherd of the agricultural and forest operator.

Violations of this rule involve a fine from 25,000 to 250,000 £.

#### R. 13 – Disturbance of nature habitats and quiet.

It is forbidden to use radios and television sets, as well as portable record-players, tape-recorders and the like outside the equipped areas delimited and indicated by the Park Board.

Anyway, their use in the equipped areas must never disturb the quiet of the natural environment and the life of animals.

All such devices used for vigilance and rescue service and those installed in private houses are allowed.

Violations of this rule involve a fine from 25,000 to 250,000 £.

#### R. 14 – Photographs.

During the reproductive period, it is forbidden to take pictures, both at professional and amateur level, of the animals if this activity disturbs and threatens nesting and reproduction.

The Park Board must inform the public through proper boards of the periods in which photographs are not allowed. Periods must be defined according to the different species they are referred to.

Exceptions to the first paragraph are allowed in accordance to R. 17 of this law, with the modalities and in the sites expressly defined by the Park Board.

Violations of this rule involve a fine from 25,000 to 250,000 £.

#### R. 15 – Temporary limitation of access.

The Park Board can temporarily forbid the access to specific areas, delimited by proper boards, for reasons connected with forest and fauna management.

Violations of this rule involve a fine from 25,000 to 250,000 £.

#### R. 16 – Exceptions.

The Park Board can always grant authorizations by way of exception to the rules stated in this law for scientific, didactic and study reasons, provided that such authorizations are neither in contrast with State or Regional laws, nor pertaining to other Boards or Authorities. Such authorizations are specific, personal and temporary.

If requested, they must be produced to vigilance personnel.

Park personnel is allowed to act differently from the prescriptions of this law, according to the indications and programs of the Park Council.

#### R. 17 – Vigilance.

Vigilance on the respect of this law and verification of relative violations are entrusted to the vigilance staff of the Park Board and to the persons mentioned in

R. 11 of the regional law n. 65 of May 30th 1980, after proper agreement with concerned Boards.

**R. 18 - Procedures.**

The verification of the violations and the application of the fines mentioned in this law are regulated by the regional law n. 15 of March 2nd 1984.

Fines paid in accordance to this law will be integrated into the budget of the Region (OMISSIS).

This regional law will be published on the Official Bulletin of the Region.

All concerned persons must observe this law and make it observed as a law of the Piedmont Region.

Turin, March 30th 1987.

Vittorio Beltrami.

**REGIONAL LAW N.36 OF JUNE 8th 1989.**

**INTERVENTIONS TO REACH AND PRESERVE THE EQUILIBRIUM OF FAUNA AND ENVIRONMENT IN NATURE PARKS, NATURE RESERVES AND EQUIPPED AREAS . SUMMARY.**

R. 1 - Hunting is always forbidden on the territory of Nature Parks, Nature Reserves and equipped Areas.

In such protected and equipped areas, fishing is allowed if not in contrast with regulations in force in those same areas.

R. 2,3 - In the already mentioned areas, it is allowed to carry out technical operations that cannot be considered "hunting activities" aiming at the re-establishment of the environmental equilibrium. These interventions are:

- a) selective kill operations;
- b) captures;
- c) reintroductions.

As far as fish fauna is concerned, the following operations are allowed:

- a) captures;
- b) restocking and/or reintroductions.

R. 4,5,6 - Technical interventions are carried out according to the following procedure: the Park Board submits to the Regional Government a plan (either of selection, capture or reintroduction) plus a scientific report, prepared by qualified experts, and the favourable advice of the National Institute for Game Biology (INBS) and the Regional Scientific Committee. The Regional Government can adopt or reject the proposal.

Selective kill operations can be carried out only by the vigilance staff of the Parks or of the Provinces with territorial competence.

R. 7, 8 - As far as fish management is concerned, the Park Board is allowed to withdraw fish specimens either for scientific reasons or for restocking in other areas. The procedure is similar to the preceding one and includes the

advice of the Advisory Committee for Fishing of the Region instead of the advice of the INBS. In Parks and Nature Reserves, all restockings for fishing activities (in the proper fishing reserves) must be authorized by the Park Board, after a special study and after consulting the Advisory Committee for Fishing and the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Region.

R. 10, 11 - The Region, through the Provinces, provides for the compensation of damages to agricultural activities caused by wild animals.

R. 12 - Sanctions have been arranged for those who will hinder the enforcement of this law

REGIONAL LAW N.12 of MARH 22nd 1990  
 NEW RULES FOR PROTECTED AREAS (NATURE PARKS, NATURE RESERVES, EQUIPPED AREAS, "PRE PARK" ZONES, SAFEGUARD ZONES)

SUMMARY

General rules

R. 1 - The Piedmont Region establishes protected areas and participates to the establishment or inter-regional protected areas.

R. 2 - The Region adopts a Regional Plan for Protected Areas, prepared following the indications of public Boards, Universities, Research Institutes, associations of agricultural workers, environmental organizations and hunting associations.

The Plan can be periodically revised and integrated. It includes the list and the maps of the areas to be protected.

R. 3, 4 - In the areas included in this Plan, temporary prohibitions are immediately enforced concerning quarry exploitation and similar activities, building of new roads and hunting. Sanctions are arranged for violations.

R. 5 - Classification.

According to their characteristics and purposes, Protected Areas are classed as follows:

- a) Nature Parks (conservation and outdoor recreation);
- b) Nature Reserves; 1 - Strict Nature Reserves (only scientific interventions are allowed), 2 - Special Nature Reserves (specific conservation), 3 - "Oriented" Nature Reserves (for interventions of environmental restoration);
- c) equipped areas (recreative use);
- d) pre-park zones and safeguard zones, to gradually link protected areas to the rest of the territory.

R. 6 - Establishment.

Protected areas are established by Regional Laws including: boundaries, class, management, planning means, restrictions, sanctions, vigilance modalities and funds.

#### Administrative structure

R. 7 - All Protected Areas are managed by specific public Boards, controlled by the Region. Each of them can be entrusted with the management of one or more Protected Areas.

R. 8 - The management organs of the Park Boards are the following:

- a) the Park Council;
- b) the Executive Committee;
- c) the President.

R. 9 - As far as Argentera Nature Park is concerned, its Park Council is formed by:

- a) six representatives (two of the opposition) of the Municipal Council of Entracque;
- b) three representatives (one of the opposition) of the Municipal Council of Valdieri;
- c) three representatives of the hamlet of S. Anna di Valdieri, appointed by the Municipal Council of Valdieri and chosen among the inhabitants of that same hamlet;
- d) three representatives (one of the opposition) of the Municipal Council of Aisone;
- e) three representative (one of the opposition) of the Council of the Comunità Montana Valli Gesso-Vermenagna-Pesio;
- f) three members appointed by the Regional Council, having experience in zoology, botany and tourism;
- g) three members appointed by the Comunità Montana on indication of the associations of agricultural workers;
- h) three members appointed by the Comunità Montana on indication of the environmental associations.

R. 10 - The Park Council is responsabile for the preparation of the programs of activity, the budget and the final figures.

R. 11, 12, 13, 14 - The Executive Committee is formed by the President, the vice-president and five councillors elected by the programs and of the ordinary management.

R. 16 - Management Boards of the Protected Areas adopt their Rules and Regulations which regulate their activity.

R. 17 - Park Boards have their own staff.

R. 18, 19 – Park Boards have their own budget.

R. 20 – In case of default of a Park Board, the management of the Park will be entrusted to a Commissioner of the Region.

R. 21 – It is established a Scientific and Technical Committee formed by experts of the different fields, with an advisory power on Protected Areas policy.

#### Territorial management

R. 23 – Area Plans include guidelines for urban planning and Protected Areas future management.

R. 24 – Forest Management Plans regulate lumbering activities.

R. 25 – Naturalistic Plans regulate the management of the environment (OMISSIS).

R. 29 – Agriculture is one of the traditional economic activities to be improved and stimulated.

R. 30 – Pastoral and lumbering activities are regulated by the forest management plans.

R. 31 – The Piedmont Region promotes didactic and scientific activities in the Nature Parks.

R. 32 – The Region prepares detailed intervention programs for all the fields of activity mentioned above.

R. 33 – Subsidies are envisaged for private citizens in order to promote the use of traditional building techniques and to restore landscape.

R. 34 – The Region promotes the creation of cooperative societies with socio-economical aims.

R. 35 – Compensations are envisaged for damages to the agricultural activities caused by wild animals.

R. 37 – The Region promotes the creation of associations (Park Friends) to support, and even fund, Park activities.

R. 38 – A Documentation and Research Centre on Protected Areas is established.

## ANNEX 1

LIST OF BOTANICAL ENDEMIC SPECIES WHICH ARE EXCLUSIVE FOR  
LIGURIAN AND MARITIM ALPS

*Moehringia lebrunii* Merxm.  
*Moehringia sedifolia* Willd.  
*Silene cordifolia* All.  
*Silene campanula* Pers.  
*Hesperis inodora* L.  
*Saxifraga cochlearis* Rchb.  
*Saxifraga florulenta* Moretti  
*Potentilla valderia* L.  
*Potentilla saxifraga* Ardoino  
*Alchemilla cavillieri* (Burnat) Pign.  
*Cytisus ardoini* E. Fourn  
*Erodium rodiei* Poiron  
*Viola valderia* All.  
*Helianthemum lunulatum* (All.) DC.  
*Primula allionii* Loisel.  
*Galium tendae* Rchb.  
*Galeopsis reuteri* Rchb. fil.  
*Ballota frutescens* (L.) Woods  
*Micromeria marginata* (Sm.) Chater  
*Campanula isophylla* Moretti  
*Campanula sabatia* De Not.  
*Phyteuma cordatum* Balbis  
*Leucanthemum discoideum* (All.) Coste  
*Senecio persoonii* De Not.  
*Centaurea procumbens* Balbis  
*Leucojum nicaeense* Ardoino

## ANNEX 2

### LIST OF MAMMALIA

#### Insectivora

*Erinaceus europeus*  
*Sorex minutus*  
*Sorex araneus*  
*Neomys fodiens*  
*Crocidura leucodon*  
*Talpa europaea*

#### Lagomorpha

*Lepus capensis*  
*Lepus timidus*

#### Rodentia

*Sciurus vulgaris*  
*Marmota marmota*  
*Clethrionomys glareolus*  
*Pitymys multilex*  
*Microtus nivalis*  
*Apodemus flavicollis*  
*Apodemus sylvaticus*  
*Rattus norvegicus*  
*Glis glis*  
*Muscardinus avellanarius*  
*Eliomys quercinus*

#### Carnivora

*Vulpes vulpes*  
*Mustela erminea*  
*Mustela nivalis*  
*Martes martes*  
*Martes foina*  
*Meles meles*

#### Artiodactyla

*Sus scrofa*  
*Rupicapra rupicapra*  
*Capra ibex*  
*Ovis ammon*

*Chiroptera*

*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*  
*Rhinolophus hipposideros*  
*Pipistrellus kuhli*  
*Plecotus auritus*



## ANNEX 3

### LIST OF BIRDS

*Accipiter nisus*  
*Buteo buteo*  
*Aquila chrysaetos*  
*Falco tinnunculus*  
*Lagopus mutus*  
*Tetrao tetrix*  
*Alectoris graeca*  
*Actitis hypoleucos*  
*Columba palumbus*  
*Cuculus canorus*  
*Strix aluco*  
*Apus apus*  
*Apus melba*  
*Dryocopus martius*  
*Dendrocopos major*  
*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*  
*Hirundo rustica*  
*Delichon urbica*  
*Alauda arvensis*  
*Anthus trivialis*  
*Anthus spinoletta*  
*Motacilla cinerea*  
*Motacilla alba*  
*Lanius collurio*  
*Garrulus glandarius*  
*Phyrrhacorax phyrrhacorax*  
*Phyrrhacorax graculus*  
*Corvus corone*  
*Corvus corax*  
*Cinclus cinclus*  
*Troglodites troglodites*  
*Prunella collaris*  
*Prunella modularis*  
*Muscicapa striata*  
*Sylvia borin*  
*Sylvia atricapilla*  
*Sylvia curruca*

*Phylloscopus collybita*  
*Phylloscopus bonelli*  
*Regulus regulus*  
*Regulus ignicapillus*  
*Saxicola rubetra*  
*Oenanthe oenanthe*  
*Monticola saxatilis*  
*Phoenicurus ochruros*  
*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*  
*Erithacus rubecula*  
*Turdus merula*  
*Turdus philomelos*  
*Turdus viscivorus*  
*Aegithalos caudatus*  
*Parus palustris*  
*Parus montanus*  
*Parus ater*  
*Parus caeruleus*  
*Parus major*  
*Sitta europaea*  
*Tichodroma muraria*  
*Certhia familiaris*  
*Certhia brachydactyla*  
*Passer domesticus*  
*Montifringilla nivalis*  
*Fringilla coelebs*  
*Serinus serinus*  
*Carduelis carduelis*  
*Carduelis cannabina*  
*Carduelis flammea*  
*Loxia curvirostra*  
*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*  
*Emberiza citrinella*  
*Emberiza cia*  
*Emberiza hortulanus*  
*Emberiza cirlus*

## ANNEX 4

### LIST OF PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE, YEAR 1991

guide-book of the park	£ 25.000
guide-book of the paths of the Valle Gesso	£ 15.000
map of the park	£ 10.000
posters of the park (two views)	£ 3.000
sticker of the park	£ 500
postcards new series (groups of eight)	£ 4.000
postcards old series (each)	£ 300
B/W depliant	no charge
colours depliant	£ 1.000
report on park activities	£ 2.500
the ungulates of the park	£ 2.000
depliant "Naturalistic path"	£ 2.000
	£ 2.000
depliant "The rye cultur"	
depliant "Botanical garden"	£ 2.000
depliant "Bearded vulture" (french and italian text)	£ 2.000
brochure "Bearded vulture"	£ 3.000
poster bearded vultur	£ 2.000
brochure "Acta of the international conference on ibex"	£ 5.000

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT THE PARK SEAT

poster of "twinning" with Mercantour National Park  
 depliant of "twinning" in french and italian  
 depliant "Operation ibex" in french and italian  
 poster "Please do not leave litter in the Park"  
 book "On the King's paths" about the ancient Royal Hunting Reserve  
 depliant "Cultural path"

## ANNEX 5

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