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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

40<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2020

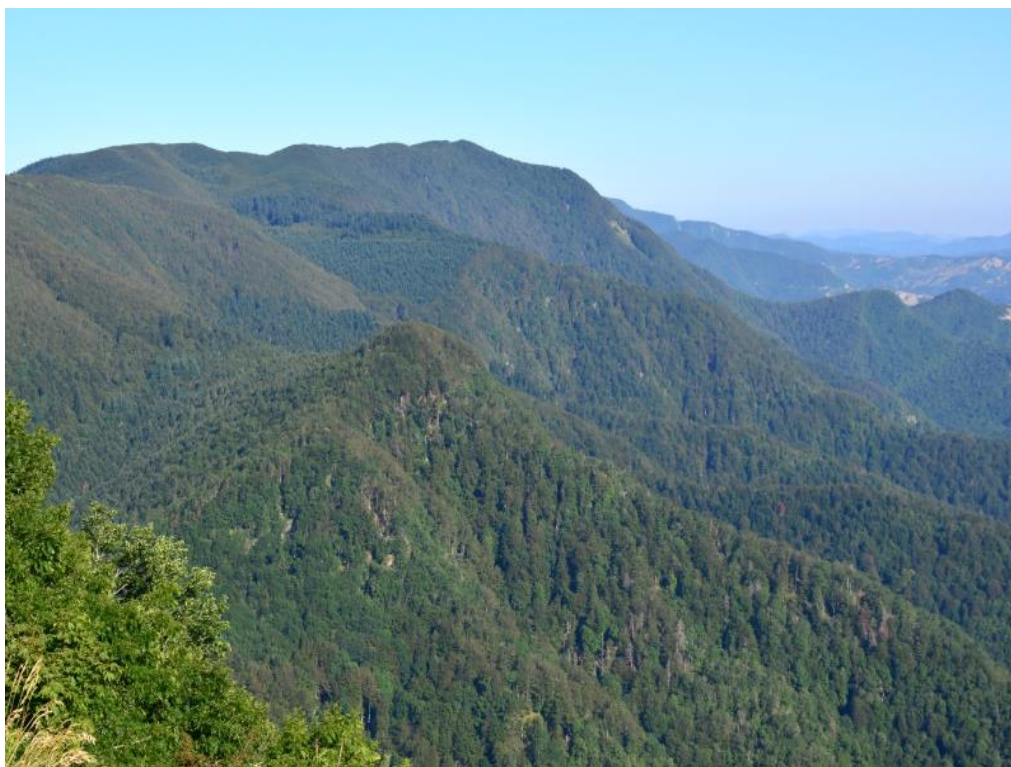
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**REPORT**  
**ON THE SPOT EXPERT APPRAISAL OF THE**  
**SASSO FRATINO INTEGRAL RESERVE**  
**(ITALY)**  
22-23 July 2019

*Document prepared  
by Mr Peter Skoberne (Slovenia)*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Diploma for Protected Areas was awarded to the Sasso Fratino Reserve in 1985 (Res(85)12) and renewed 5 times (1990 - Res(90)11; 1995 - Res(95)12; 2000 - ResDIP(2000)6; 2005 - ResDip(2005)2 and 2010 - CM/ResDip(2010)12). The last renewal expires on 21 September 2020. For the next renewal an on-the-spot appraisal was undertaken in 2019.

I visited the area from 22 to 23 July 2019. Despite the limited time, the visit was very well organised by the Reparto Biodiversità di Pratovecchio which is responsible for the site management.

I would like to thank the organisers of the visit, in particular Ten. Col. Magg. Paola Ciampelli, as well as all active participants for the helpful, competent, enthusiastic and very open assistance during the on-the-spot-appraisal mission:

### **Reparto Biodiversità Di Pratovecchio**

#### ***Military Personnel List***

Paola Ciampelli, Matteo Padula, Barbara Rossi, Stefano Tacconi, Antonio Zoccola, Maurizio Nanni, Sandro Marsella, Loris Gelli, Silvia Bertinelli.

#### ***Assistance Staff***

Angelo Lamberti, Gabriele Talenti, Albano Amadori, Massimo Betti, Roberto Branchetti, Marusca Tomeo, Valerio Mazzoli, Esterina Giovannini, Alessandro Brezzi, Marco Gonnelli.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019: Pratovecchio – meeting with representatives of stakeholders and researchers**

#### ***Representatives***

- Marco Baccini, Mayor of the municipality of Bagno di Romagna
- Carlo Toni, Mayor of the municipality of Poppi
- Serena Stefani, Representative of Mayor of the municipality of Pratovecchio - Stia
- Carlo Pedrazzoli, Pro tempore director of National Park
- Davide Alberti, Official of National Park
- Marco Mencucci, Commander of Reparto Carabinieri Parco

- Fabio Clauser, Head office from 1955 to 1973
- Beatrice Brezzi e Ivana Grofi, Unione dei Comuni Montani del Casentino
- Alberto Conti, WWF Forlì – Cesena President
- Stefano Gotti, WWF Forlì
- Daniele Zavalloni, GUF – Gruppo Unitario per le Foreste Italiane
- Maura Lucatello, park guide
- Matteo Ruocco, volunteers tutor
- Tito Manlio Pepe, Interpreter
- Vittoria Barolo, Artur Sannikov, Gabriele Beccacece - Volunteers

### ***Researchers***

- Alfredo Di Filippo, Forest - Università degli Studi della Tuscia di Viterbo
- Chiara Lelli, Naturalist - Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna
- Sandro Piazzini, Biologist - Università di Siena
- Vincenzo Gonnelli, Botanist
- Guido Tellini Florenzano, Ornithologist
- Marco Lucchesi, Biologist
- Filippo Frizzi, Biologist - Università di Firenze
- Dino Scaravelli, Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna
- Gianni Pavan, Roberta Righini – Università di Pavia
- Matteo Ruocco, Naturalist

At his occasion representatives of main interest groups and in particular researchers gave a very intensive and informative overview of the protected area. A special privilege was to meet prof. Fabio Clauser who was the main player behind the idea of the first protection in 1959. When I asked him, what was the main reason for this action, he simply replied: “Belleza, belleza!”

### **22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019: Sasso Fratino “Cullacce – Pian Del Pero”**

- Matteo Padula, Antonio Zoccola, Loris Gelli
- Angelo Lamberti, Gabriele Talenti, Albano Amadori, Massimo Betti
- Alfredo Di Filippo, Chiara Lelli, Vincenzo Gonnelli, Marco Lucchesi, Roberta Righini, Gianni Pavan, Maura Lucatello
- Tito Manlio Pepe, Interpreter
- Vittoria Barolo, Artur Sannikov, Gabriele Beccacece - Volunteers

### **23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019: Sasso Fratino “Poggio Scali – Fonte Del Maresciallo-Ponte Alla Sega”**

- Matteo Padula, Antonio Zoccola, Loris Gelli, Barbara Rossi, Enrico Rinaldi (Mayor of Florence)
- Alfredo Di Filippo, Vincenzo Gonnelli, Marco Lucchesi, Roberta Righini, Gianni Pavan, Stefano Gotti, Daniele Zavalloni, Maura Lucatello, Paola Fazzi, Leonardo Rosini
- Tito Manlio Pepe, Sara Tironi, Elisabetta Pigni, Leonardo Crocenzi, (volunteers)
- Angelo Lamberti, Valerio Mazzoli, Ester Giovannini, Marco Gonnelli (Lama).

## **2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Sasso Fratino Integral Reserve is situated in the Northern part of Apennines in Emilia Romagna Province at the border with Toscana. It is on the eastern part of the ridge that is dividing Adriatic and Tyrrhenian watershed. The whole reserve is in Emilia Romagna and within the Adriatic watershed.

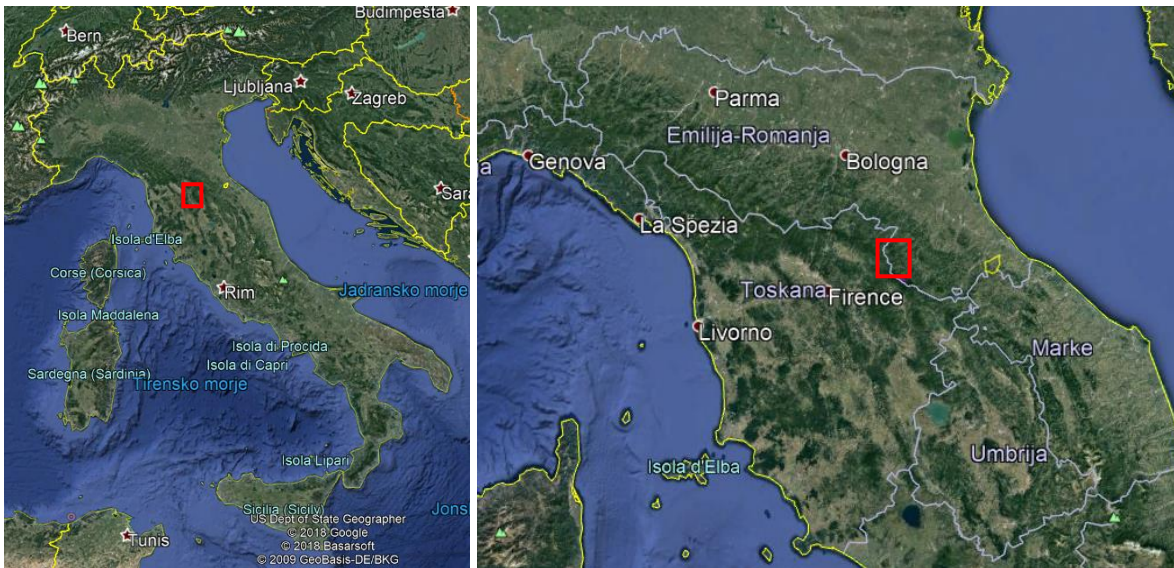


Figure 1: Topographic situation of the Sasso Fratino Integral Reserve

The reserve is at rather steep slope facing North and North-East between 650 m (Ponte di Campo alla Sega) and 1,520 m (Poggio Scali) with erosion side valleys of torrents. The subsoil are flysch rocks, where arenaceous marl is alternating with banks of sandstone. Layers are inclined towards the bottom of the valley, thus smaller or larger landslides can occur. There were two larger landslides: Frana Vecchia and Frana Nuova (1993) and several smaller ones. The ecological conditions are very diverse ranging from very extreme on steep slopes with thin layer of soil to rich substrate on more flat areas.

An additional reason for diversity is that in this area the Alpine and Apennine Province are meeting. Therefore, it is for many Alpine species the southernmost localities and some Apennine species are coming to their northern border of distribution.

The vertical distribution in Sasso Fratino presents mainly two large vegetation forest types: mixed beech and pine forests between 800 and 1300 m and oak woods interspersed with other deciduous varieties below 800 m.

The conditions along the upper part of the ridge are very extreme in climatic (cloud forest) and edaphic (steep slopes, thin soil level, landslides) aspect. Here we can see very old trees (about 500 years), not very big, but with typical habitus resulting in brunchy tee crowns.

The main Apennine ridge is oriented North-South, the western side being under influence of the Tyrrhenian Sea, while the Eastern is influenced by the Adriatic. This natural border is now used as political border between Emilia – Romagna and Toscana. However, despite of different political settings in the past, there is a difference in historical forest use on both sides. On the West side fir plantations of Benedictine monks were practised, while on the Eastern side char coal production and management of beech forests was more common.

Since 1959 there are no economic activities in this area.

Thus, the forest of the integral reserve is not a virgin forest, but a very nice example of secondary nature forest that is regenerating in a complete natural way. That orientation should remain.

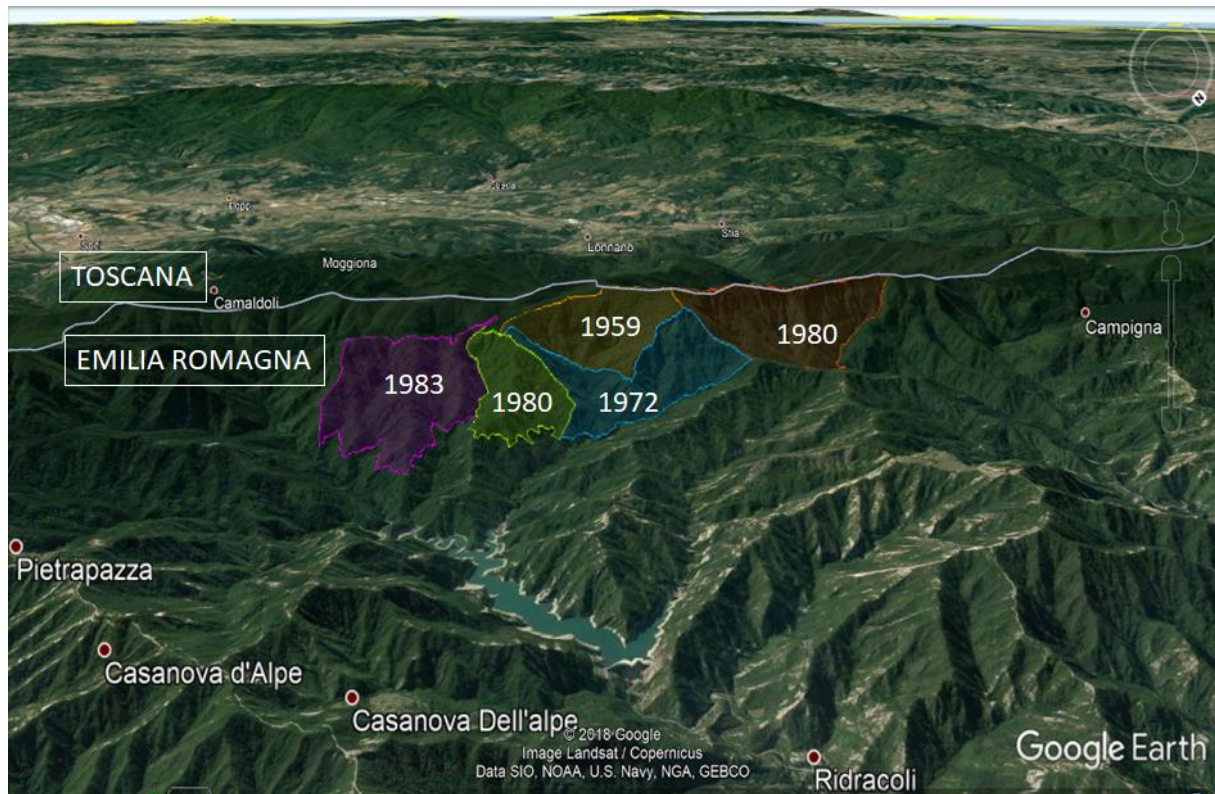


Figure 2: Gradual enlargement of the Sasso Fratino Integral Reserve.

### 3. EUROPEAN INTEREST

The justification of the European interest in the application (1983) was stressing the naturalness of the area: “Sasso Fratino has remained in the admirable condition in which we find it today because it is a long way from any main roads and is set in impassable terrain.

Forest ecosystems as close to nature as those found at Sasso Fratino are extremely rare, not only in Italy but throughout western Europe. Sasso Fratino is extraordinarily interesting not only from the scientific but also from the aesthetic point of view, owing to its wide variety of species, the complexity and composition of the vegetation and the majesty of its ancient trees.”

This character is still present as the management measures are keeping this area out of any exploitation and tourist visit. Visits are limited to research or educational purposes and controlled.

The Riserva Naturale Integrale di Sasso Fratino (RNIF) is included into the European ecological network Natura 2000 (IT4080001: Foresta di Campigna, Foresta la Lama, Monte Falco<sup>1</sup>). It covers 19% of the Natura 2000 site. On the Eastern side the Reserve is bordering the Natura 2000 site Monte Gemelli, Monte Guffone (IT4080003) and on the Western side the site Camaldoli, Scodella, Campigna, Badia Prataglia (IT5180004). It is situated in the central part of a complex of Natura 2000 sites.

<sup>1</sup> <http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/>

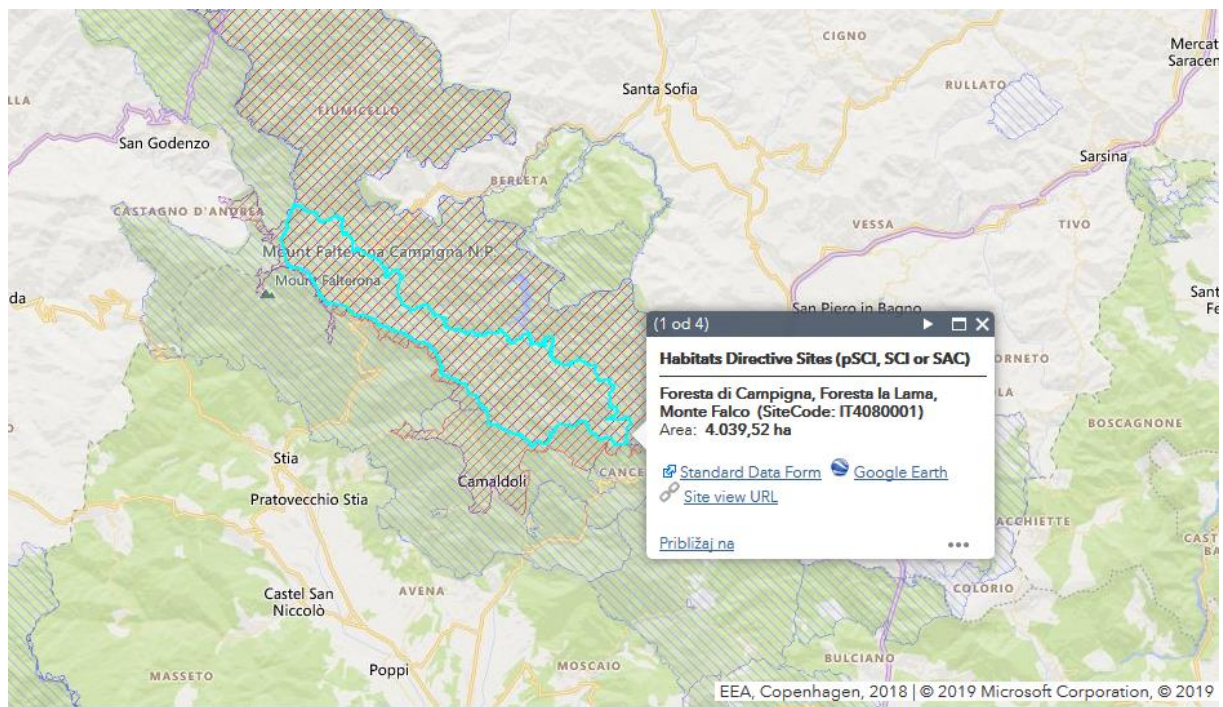


Figure 3: Natura 2000 site Foresta di Campigna, Foresta la Lama, Monte Falco is in the very hearth of complex of Natura 2000 sites in this part of Appenines.



Figure 4: Situation of Natura 2000 site IT4080001: Foresta di Campigna, Foresta la Lama, Monte Falco in relation to the integral reserve.

The Natura 2000 site Foresta di Campigna, Foresta la Lama, Monte Falco is designated according to the Habitats directive. The target habitat types and species are listed below (the bold habitat types and species are in particular relevant to the integral reserve<sup>2</sup>):

**Habitat types (Annex I of the Habitats Directive):**

- 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths
- 5130 *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands
- 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) (\* important orchid sites)
- 6220 Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals of the Thero-Brachypodietea
- 6230 Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe)
- 6410 *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)
- 6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels
- 6510 Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)
- 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*)
- 8230 Siliceous rock with pioneer vegetation of the *Sedo-Scleranthion* or of the *Sedo albi-Veronicion dillenii*
- 9130 Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests**
- 9180 Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines**
- 91E0 Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)
- 9210 Apeninne beech forests with *Taxus* and *Ilex***
- 9220 Apennine beech forests with *Abies alba* and beech forests with *Abies nebrodensis***
- 9260 *Castanea sativa* woods

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<sup>2</sup> <http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/SDF.aspx?site=IT4080001#3>

Scientific Name	Global Site Assessment
<u><i>Accipiter gentilis</i></u>	A
<u><i>Anthus trivialis</i></u>	C
<u><i>Apus apus</i></u>	
<u><i>Aquila chrysaetos</i></u>	B
<u><i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i></u>	A
<u><i>Barbastella barbastellus</i></u>	A
<u><i>Barbus plebejus</i></u>	B
<u><i>Bombina pachipus</i></u>	A
<u><i>Canis lupus</i></u>	A
<u><i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i></u>	C
<u><i>Certhia familiaris</i></u>	B
<u><i>Cuculus canorus</i></u>	C
<u><i>Delichon urbica</i></u>	
<u><i>Dryocopus martius</i></u>	A
<u><i>Eriogaster catax</i></u>	C
<u><i>Euplagia quadripunctaria</i></u>	C
<u><i>Hirundo rustica</i></u>	
<u><i>Jynx torquilla</i></u>	C
<u><i>Lanius collurio</i></u>	C
<u><i>Lucanus cervus</i></u>	C
<u><i>Lullula arborea</i></u>	B
<u><i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i></u>	B

Scientific Name	Global Site Assessment
<u><i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i></u>	B
<u><i>Monticola saxatilis</i></u>	C
<u><i>Muscicapa striata</i></u>	C
<u><i>Myotis emarginatus</i></u>	A
<u><i>Myotis myotis</i></u>	A
<u><i>Osmoderma eremita</i></u>	A
<u><i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i></u>	C
<u><i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i></u>	C
<u><i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i></u>	B
<u><i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i></u>	C
<u><i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i></u>	B
<u><i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i></u>	B
<u><i>Rhysodes sulcatus</i></u>	A
<u><i>Rosalia alpina</i></u>	A
<u><i>Salamandrina perspicillata</i></u>	A
<u><i>Sylvia communis</i></u>	B
<u><i>Telestes muticellus</i></u>	B
<u><i>Triturus carnifex</i></u>	B
<u><i>Turdus torquatus</i></u>	B
<u><i>Vertigo angustior</i></u>	B

The exceptional value was reconfirmed in the year 2017 when the Sasso Fratino Reserve was listed on UNESCO's World Heritage list (decision of the World Heritage Committee 41 COM 8B.7) to the serial site Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe<sup>3</sup>. The process is continuing towards implementation following UNESCO/IUCN guidelines.

<sup>3</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/document/159805>

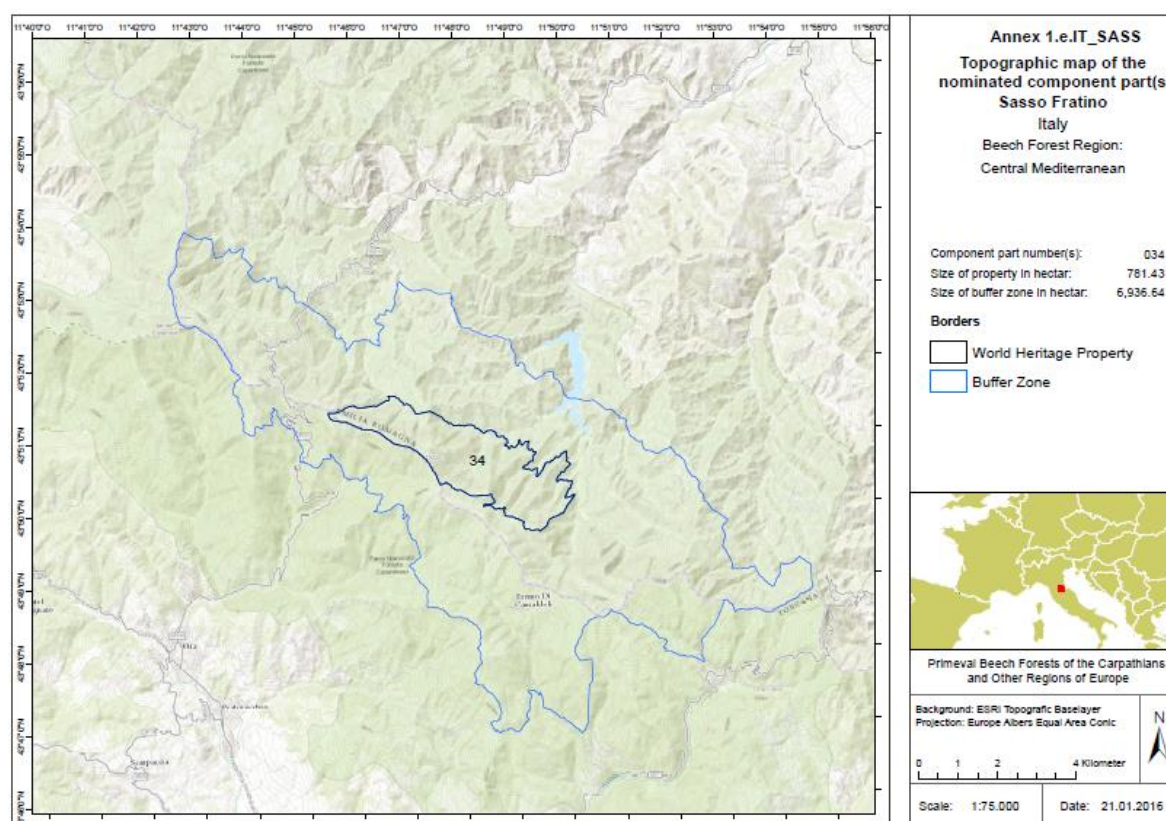


Figure 5: Topographic situation of World Heritage nomination (the Reserve and the buffer zone)

### Conclusion:

The Sasso Fratino Integral Nature Reserve is of exceptional European significance and importance for the conservation of biological diversity, cultural landscape and cultural heritage.

## 4. CONSERVATION MEASURES

### Legal protection status

Initially, an area of 110 hectares in the Sasso Fratino massif was declared as an integral nature reserve by the State Forestry Authority in 1959.

The Ministerial Decree of 26 July 1971 confirmed this status. Then enlargements of the reserve followed:

- the Decree of 9 February 1972 increasing the area to 261 hectares;
- the Decree of 25 September 1980 concerning a second extension to 550 hectares (104 ha at Badia Prataglia and 184 ha at Campagna);
- the Decree of 15 April 1983 increasing the area of the integral reserve to 764 hectares (see Figure 2).

On 2 April 1988, the region of Emilia Romagna designated the regional park (*Parco Regionale del Crinale Romagnolo*).

On 14 December 1990 a decree was published concerning the boundaries of the *Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona and Campagna National Park* to replace the regional park which was formally declared but never really materialised.

At the end of 1990 the Park Consortium was constituted, and its chairman appointed; then on 12 July 1993 the Park was officially established.

There are different legislative instruments at different levels (region, state). The main challenge is not the absence of the legal instruments, but an effective and co-ordinated implementation. This is reflected in management issues.

***Conclusion:***

Existing legal regulations are considered as a solid basis for the future conservation and sustainable development of the Diploma holding area.

## **5. MANAGEMENT**

### **5.1 Institutional arrangements**

The Reserve is managed by Reparto Carabinieri Biodiversità of Pratovechio. The change goes back to the end of 2016 when the decision was taken that Corpo Forestale dello Stato (former management authority) was incorporated to Comando unità per la tutela forestale, ambientale e agroalimentare Carabinieri. In 2017 they took over effective management of some protected areas in Italy, in particular nature reserves.

By law they are authorised for surveillance of the regime and inspection of the Reserve, they co-ordinate research and monitoring and are taking care of visitors, mainly in the buffer zone of the Reserve, as free access to the protected areas is not allowed.

They have good and rich co-operation with local communities, and both with regional authorities and National Park authority. This is necessary as the overlapping of legal instruments and different competences is difficult to follow, especially when partial economic interests appear.

Staff of the Reparto is very dedicated to their mission and work, skilled and effective in maintaining infrastructure of the Reserve and its surroundings.

### **5.2 Management Plan**

Following national law, each Nature Reserve has to adopt a management plan. A Plan for Sasso Fratino is in the process of adoption, while the management is at the moment streamlined by yearly programmes of work. As the regime is very restrictive, the management goals are relatively simple and for the core area very limited stakeholders are concerned. The main concern are activities in the buffer zone, which is beyond the scope of the Reserve management plan, but is considered in the National Park Management Plan, which was adopted, but as far as I could understand conceived at rather general level.

The requirements of the World Heritage Committee regarding the management of Word Heritage sites are quite demanding and we can expect that the regime and implementation in the buffer zone will improve in near future.

### **5.3 Financial matters**

Finances are secured by the state budget from the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Environment. Additionally, the managing authorities are applying for different projects (e. g. LIFE+). Finances are relatively modest and do not enable more intensive monitoring which could give better knowledge about and understanding of changes, mostly caused by the climate change. Studies about human influences in this part are very limited.

### **5.4 Research and monitoring**

There is an intensive research activity in the Reserve area. Prominent researchers mostly from Italian research institutions are contributing to the knowledge about the Reserve. It is an ideal research plot for

studying natural processes as the human activities are absent. Beside this the biogeographic and topographic condition is creating unique ecosystems (cloud forest on the ridge, biogeographic extremes, succession of landslides).

I would emphasise two studies that are specific to the area. The first is the research on sound background as there are not many places where there are no human activities and where there is still more or less natural sound background. Results in time series can give very interesting results over time.

The second field of research is studying of old growth forest in extreme conditions. These two studies are perfectly demonstrating the European interest of the Reserve for science.

There is a lot of basic research, while some applicative studies are following some actual needs for the management. A lot of data, provided in these studies can be used for monitoring, especially to establish the baseline. Some habitat types and species (particular species and habitat types of European importance - e. g. Annexes of the Habitats Directive and Bern Convention) are regularly monitored (e. g. *Rosalia alpina*, wild cat, wolf, bear, bats ...). Results are publicly available but scattered. I haven't noticed any central database system. But results are published periodically. There is no general monitoring scheme for systematic surveillance.

## 5.5 Natural resources management

There is no resource management possible in the Reserve according to the law. Some activities (limited forestry, water management) are taking place in the buffer zone but under the control of the management authority.

The protected area infrastructure is outside the Reserve, in the buffer zone. The borders are clearly marked with shields and information that access is not allowed. There are information points at several places, suitable for visitors and hikers. There you can get main information about the Reserve, including information that this is a European Diploma holding area.

There is no maintained infrastructure within the Reserve. There are some historic paths (marked on maps), but as they are not used and maintained, they partly disappeared at exposed places by natural processes. This practise of non-maintaining the paths should remain. This is the best mechanism to avoid undesired visit. But in cases, where it is needed to prevent possible accidents, urgent maintenance of the passage can be done. The decision is upon the discretion of skilled staff members.

### **Conclusion:**

Management is in place and it is operational.  
More focus should be given to systematic monitoring.

## 6. REVIEW OF THE RENEWAL ASSETS

Annual reports and following documents were considered:

- Bottacci, A., Ciampelli P. (a cura di), AGC Edizioni, 2018, *La Riserva Integrale di Sasso Fratino*, RCCB, Pratovecchio. 291 pp.  
([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337334473\\_La\\_Riserva\\_Naturale\\_Integrale\\_di\\_Sasso\\_Fratino\\_a\\_cura\\_di\\_Alessandro\\_Bottacci\\_e\\_Paola\\_Ciampelli/link/5dd2daa992851c382f49a342/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337334473_La_Riserva_Naturale_Integrale_di_Sasso_Fratino_a_cura_di_Alessandro_Bottacci_e_Paola_Ciampelli/link/5dd2daa992851c382f49a342/download))
- Lefeuvre, J.-C., *Appraisal Report on Sasso Fratino Integral Nature Reserve (Italy)*, Council of Europe, 2000, document PE-S-DE (2000) 65.
- *Resolution on the award of the European Diploma to the Sasso Fratino Nature Reserve (Italy)*, Council of Europe, 1985, document Res(85)12.
- *Resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Sasso Fratino Integral Nature Reserve (Italy)*, Council of Europe, 1990, document Res(90)11.

**Review of the recommendations of the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers in 2010 (CM/ResDip(2010)12):**

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***Implement the management plan for the Casentino Forests National Park and reinforce co-operation with the national park in order to co-ordinate all the activities, especially in terms of research;***

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Co-operation is in place, but the National Park authority is relatively weak to implement and co-ordinate expected activities on the territory of the whole park. Some of them (e. g. population of ungulates, visitors' management) impact the Reserve. The Reparto is able to manage the Reserve but has very limited possibility to react to influences that are coming from outside. This recommendation should remain with slight adaptations.

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***The nature reserve should continue to stand out as the reference for nature protection in the region;***

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This recommendation is fulfilled in the last period, but it is of utmost importance and should remain.

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***Care should be taken to ensure that the Sasso Fratino Integral Nature Reserve and the adjacent biogenetic reserves continue to be managed as a cohesive whole;***

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Meantime, all biogenetic reserves are included to the National Park area, there is no need for this recommendation anymore. But coherent management should be encouraged within the National Park policy.

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***Special attention should continue to be given to protecting Monte Falco in order to avoid, in particular, the construction of any new ski slopes;***

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Monte Falco - Poggio Piancancelli area is part of the Zone A (Integral Reserve) of the National Park. Measures are defined in "Temporary and urgent regulations for the conservation of flora in the localities of Monte Falco, Poggio Scali and Monte Penna di Badia Prataglia" approved by Resolutions of the National Park Board of Directors (Consiglio Direttivo) n. 82/2000 and n. 12/2001. The regime is part of the National Park plan and approved by both regions: Emilia Romagna Legislative Assembly on 8. 2. 2010 and Regional Council (Tuscany) on 23. 12. 2009 (n. 86). The legal status is realised. There are no indications about ideas to build ski centres in this area. The recommendation can be dropped.

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***The necessary funding should be provided in order to maintain the very high standard of scientific research;***

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Regular monitoring is in progress according to the annual work plan. There are 2 main streams for the research interest. First is the interest of research institutions to conduct studies within the Reserve because of the unique natural conditions. The second one are studies that have applicative effect to the Reserve management and are in direct interest of the Reserve manager. While the first type of research is mostly directly financed by the research budget, for second type 'conservation' money is needed. The Reparto applied for some projects in the frame of LIFE funding, as well. The recommendation should stay and be rephrased.

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***Any further damage in the buffer zone, such as the laying of new roads or significant improvement work on the ski slopes, should be avoided;***

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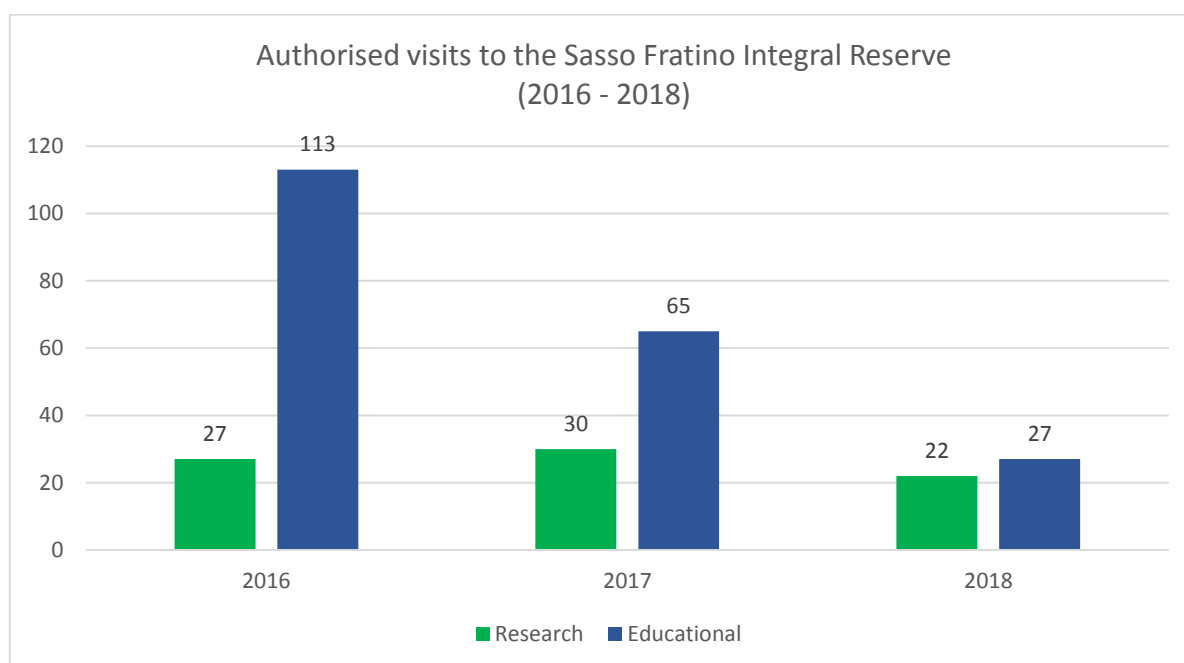
Specific threat, mentioned in the recommendation was not reconfirmed, but in general, the conservation status of the Reserve is very dependent on the quality of the buffer zone. This is the most vulnerable issue related to the ability to preserve the Reserve in good condition. As the buffer zone

will be in future the main emphasize of the World Heritage Site management plan, the Bern Convention Secretariat should co-operate with the World Heritage Committee to streamline EDPA and WH requirements. Implementation of such plan should avoid possibilities of undesired forms of development. The recommendation should be dropped, but the substance should be included in other recommendations.

***The number of visits should not be increased and they should be restricted to researchers and people with a genuine interest in the site;***

The Reserve is closed for visitors and surveyed. There were not many cases of violations of that rule. Visits are possible with the authorisation of the Reparto for scientific or educational purposes. Visits are very limited and are decreasing.

**Number of visits to the reserve of Sasso Fratino:**



***The possibility of extending the European Diploma to include the biogenetic reserves should be studied.***

Meantime, the National Park was established and the legal basis for a large conservation area is secured. There is no added value to extend the European Diploma site. The original character of wilderness should remain the main objective at the existing location.

**Issues not covered by previous recommendations**

I regularly pay attention to the visibility of the European Diploma on the spot. The Reserve is very well promoting the Diploma with ED logo on every information shield. At the main entrances of the Reserve border the copy of the Diploma is displayed together with the basic information. Nevertheless, I propose a recommendation in this direction to even improve the visibility.

Recommendation No. 206 (2019) of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, adopted on 6 December 2019, on nature-based solutions and management of protected areas in the face of climate change, is addressing EDPA, as well:

- Ensure adaptive management in the context of climate change is included, as appropriate, in Resolutions for the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas (EDPA);
- Support the involvement of Emerald Network and EDPA sites in testing ways of scaling up and transferring nature-based solutions, as a response to climate change and for the prevention of natural disasters.

In case of Sasso Fratino the character of strict protection gives not much possibility for active mitigation management, but it is a splendid occasion to monitor changes in biodiversity including changes that are linked to the climate change. Species on extreme habitats and on the limit of different biogeographical regions are very good indicators in this respect.

But the importance of the buffer zone is highlighted from this perspective, as well. A close protection of nature surrounding ecosystems can mitigate effects of climate change, if the buffer zone is large enough and properly managed. This should be taken into account in management documents, especially in the Casentino Forest National Park.

## 7. WORLD HERITAGE AND EUROPEAN DIPLOMA



At this site we have another example of multiple international designations.

Both designations are based on the same qualities, have similar requirements and pass the same message: this site is important and well managed! They are not competing, but they support each other.

At the level of the Council of Europe, it would be reasonable to work more actively with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, Ramsar Committee and IUCN regarding multiple designations, to take advantage of such cases.

Regarding Sasso Fratino common activities with the WHC regarding definition of the buffer zone and the management plan are meaningful.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### General conclusion:

The Sasso Fratino Integral Reserve is of European importance and is well managed with a view to maintain the exceptional natural character of the area.

*I therefore recommend to the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma and to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention to agree on renewing the European Diploma of the Sasso Fratino Integral Reserve for the next 10 years.*

In addition, the following **recommendations** should be attached to the renewal:

1. Strengthen the co-operation and the co-ordination with the Casentino Forest National Park, national, regional and local authorities towards coherent management, especially in visitors' management, management of wild ungulates and large carnivores;
2. The Nature Reserve should continue to stand out as a reference for nature protection in the region;

3. Prepare and secure funding for a long-term monitoring programme. National Park policy documents should encourage high standard scientific research within the Reserve and the whole National Park area;
4. Pay special attention to the management of the buffer zone, using all existing legal instruments, taking into account the requirements of the World Heritage site and of the European Diploma;
5. Include in the management plan currently in preparation and in Casentino Forest National Park management plan specific provisions dedicated to climate change (including research needs) and how to address this issue in relation to the long-term conservation of rare species;
6. Limit the visits to the core area to researchers and people with a genuine interest in the site and other visitors to the buffer zone;
7. Use more regularly the European Diploma logo on publications and appropriate infrastructures, promote the European Diploma more actively, encourage partners and stakeholders to use European Diploma logo.