

## PARCO REGIONALE DEL LAGO TRASIMENO

### PARCO REGIONALE DEL LAGO TRASIMENO

Region: **Umbria**

Area: **13,200 hectares**

Established in: **1995**

Headquarters: **viale Europa**

**06065 Passignano sul Trasimeno (PG)**

Tel. **075 828059**

Fax **075 8299273**

**www.parks.it**

### Bird Ringing Station

With its 124 square kilometers, Trasimeno Lake is the fourth largest lake in Italy, and the largest one of the peninsular Italy. Along the south-eastern bank between San Feliciano, San Savino, and Sant'Arcangelo, in the Municipality of Magione, the area of Oasi della Valle is probably the most interesting part from a naturalistic point of view: a wetland with large canebrakes and wildlife of great scientific value. A protected nature sanctuary since 1989, it was established by the Province of Perugia and its management has been entrusted to Legambiente, which deals with naturalistic and educational aspects and is engaged in a scientific activity: the Bird Ringing Station.

The perimeter of Trasimeno Lake – characterized by shallow waters, especially after the last dry years – is covered by a thick canebrake, mainly developing in the area of the Valle. As a matter of fact, here, between the fields and the open water of the lake, it is one-kilometer wide, offering shelter and food to several animal species, above all birds. The avifauna that has been observed includes about ninety species, among which the Bittern and the Glossy Ibis, the White Stork and the Crane, and the Collared Pratincole.

The bird ringing station within the nature sanctuary deals mainly with research on the populations of Passeriformes and works in only one capture site. At the moment, in Umbria, it represents the only example of bird ringing site where capture activity is carried out regularly and in a standardized manner. The station uses 9 *mist-nets* placed in the canebrake (each of them is 12-meter long and 2,4-meter high, has 4 pockets, and the grid size of the mesh netting is of 16 mm); 5 additional nets have been placed in an olive grove.

Created at the end of the 90s, the net system cost about 15 million Italian Liras. Because of the nets wear, they have to be replaced every year, with a cost of about 300 Euros per year. The money comes from the annual contribution of 30,000 Euros granted by the Province of Perugia for the management of Oasi La Valle, according to what established by the convention signed between the Province and the managing authority, that is Legambiente.

The relationship with the regional park where the Nature Sanctuary lies is still to be set out: as a matter of fact, the absence of a Park plan and the shortage of available resources still today limit the functionality of the important regional protected area.

The bird ringing station is active all the year round. Two people work in it in a permanent way, with about one exit per week to unfold the nets, collect the birds, ring them and collect the data, etc. About ten voluntary workers, more or less regularly, help them. According to the existing rules, the operators of the station have a regular permit issued by Infs, the Wildlife National Institute. This is an essential authorization to carry out the activity, and in Italy is issued after a 1-2 year long training period together with an expert in bird ringing, an intermediate evaluation and a final test to be held in Infs headquarters, in Ozzano Emilia (Bologna).

Between 1995 and 2000, 15,000 birds have been trapped by the almost invisible mesh of the 14 nets in the area of Valle. For the following years, we do not have data that can be ascribed to the Nature Sanctuary alone and

that can be compared with the data of the previous years. Among the most common species, we can mention the Reed Warbler, the Penduline Tit, the Blackcap, the Reed Bunting, the Chiffchaff, and – with great variations from season to season – the Swallow.

The collected data, duly coded, are sent to an international coordination organism, Euring, where they are elaborated and stored together with data coming from other European Countries. They are of great scientific interest and represent one of the main contributions that protected areas can directly provide to research and to a better knowledge of the biology and conservation status of the wild avifauna.