

is possible to find the panel explaining the provincial nature reserve Le Morette. Inside the environmental management and repair interventions performed by the Pistoia Province have recreated favorable conditions for the stay and nesting of numerous kinds of birds. Carrying along the bank in the shade of the poplars and willows, for some 100 meters more, you come to the "Green House (Casotto Verde)" (called Biagiotti), which has been equipped as a wildlife observatory; across shielded slits one can view open spaces of water surrounded by the canes. In springtime opposite the observatory you can observe seven different species of herons. In autumn and winter the stretches of water host, on the other hand, thousands of ducks and water birds.

Recommended period

The best period for visiting is in spring from March to the first half of June; during the summer months you should take advantage of the sunrise or sunset avoiding in this way the hottest hours. From September to January, Tuesday and Friday are preferable, benefiting from the hunter's silence given that the Reserve is surrounded by areas in which hunting is allowed.

Castelmartini

The name is derived from an ancient fortress of the XII century. In 1297 Martinus Jacobi Admannati built a "domus" and a "castrum". Not far from here was an ancient port which linked with the canals the marshes to the Arno river, connecting in this way the Pistoia townhall to the sea. In the same area there was the ancient "hospitium" of San Donnino, of which we remember the title of the present parish church of Castelmartini. Inside the church the seventeenth century wooden Christ on the main altar and a canvas of the first half of the XVII century, depicting Saint Joseph between Saints Anthony and Donnino.

Poggi Banchieri Mansion

Inside a large park we discover a mansion dating back

to the late seventeenth century, belonged to various aristocratic families (Ammannati, Panciatichi, Medici and Lorena), who used it as a hunting reserve. In 1777 it was finally purchased by the Poggi Banchieri, a family from Pistoia, whose heirs are still the owners. Today's appearance is renaissance; the garden is eighteenth century with big green meadows, flush lawns and a lake with marsh herbs.

"Casa Dei" museum of rural culture

Set up inside a rural structure, Casa Dei is located in Bagnolo. Made in collaboration with Regione Toscana as part of the project "along the migratory routes", under the patronage of the Province of Pistoia and the Municipality of Larciano. The museum was founded with the desire to recover and preserve the testimonies and values of the peasant culture, realized through years of research and careful conservation of agricultural equipment and everyday objects in country life. Dedicated to Giovanni Dei, a great lover of the memory of his land. With its rich collection, the Museum of Rural Civilization has become part of the Tuscany Region museum network since 2012. The museum can be visited by appointment.

Info and guided tours:

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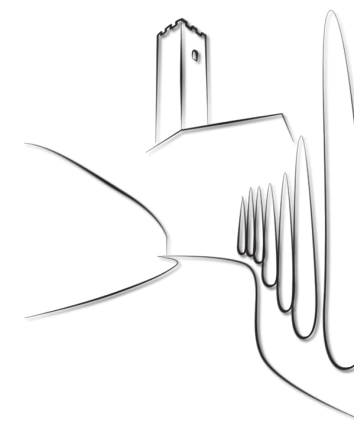
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Fucecchio and Castelmartini Marshlands

LARCIANO

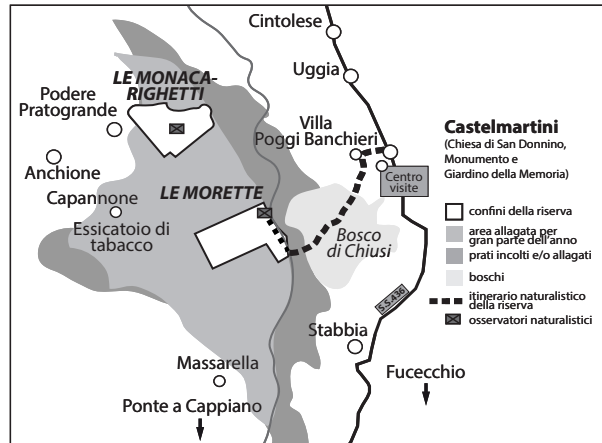


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Guided historical itinerary
of the marshlands of Fucecchio
and Castelmartini.

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Fucecchio Marshlands

The Fucecchio marshlands are the biggest in Italy, extending for about 1800 hectares, 230 of which are natural reserves instituted by the Provincial Administrations of Pistoia and Florence. Even if they were considerably reduced compared to the ancient lake marsh once they occupied a big part of the northern Valdinievole.

Nature

The Marshlands host rare and typical plants of different climates. Here the "Morso di rana" (frog-bit) and the "Felce reale" (royal fern) survive; these are plants characteristic of warm areas and "sfagni" (special moss), more suited to cold climates of the North, and descended up to now starting from the last glacier. The wildlife is so rich as to enable more than 200 species of birds to be observed. The marshlands have actually a fundamental role in the migrations: the herons create during reproduction the nesting colony, called heronry ("garzaia"), the most important of Central and Southern Italy.

History and Traditions

The Fucecchio Marshlands maintain the fascination of the historical matters connected with the great families of the Medicis and Lorena. Important testimonies of the work of man remain here in addition to the wonder of the countryside and nature: the canals, the system of ports, the Medici bridge of Cappiano, the complex of the farm of the "Capannone" and buildings of the industrial archeology like the tobacco driers. By tradition the activities of collection and intertwing of the marsh herbs like "sarello" and "sara", used to line seats and bottles of special form called "fiasco" (flask), are still practiced by few valued artisans.

The Le Morette Nature Route

This is a route particularly suitable for the lovers of nature observation and bird-watching. The departure point is at the "Centro Visite" of Castelmartini inside which it is possible to discover a rich documentation on the historical nature features and on the traditional activities (the harvest and the production of the marsh reeds) typical of the marsh of Fucecchio.

Castelmartini-The Outrages

At Castelmartini near the visiting center you can find a monument erected in 2002, which commemorates the vicious massacre which took place on 23 August, 1944, when 175 unarmed people (mostly women, old people and children) were shot by the Nazis close to the marshland. Produced in marble from Carrara by the architect Gino Terreni the monument represents the horror and drama of the innocent victims mown down by the arms of the same soldiers who should have been put up in the houses. On the opposite side of the street it is possible to visit "il Giardino della Memoria", created in 1996 by the artists Andrea Dami and Simone Faggioli. The garden is space of art consisting of two pieces of work: "Landscape" with 175 plastic signs made of painted iron and "My brother is here" consist of 9 mosaic pictograms in marble and ceramic.

Chiusi Wood

From Castelmartini following the road indication for the natural reserve you pass (by car or on foot, when the weather is good) by a panoramic street which runs alongside a typical Tuscan scenery and which crosses for a long period the Chiusi Wood. The Wood represents the last significant testimony of the primordial forest which in distant times stretched along almost all of the low Valdinievole and accommodates mostly examples of oaks (turkey oak, oak and other types of trees). The Chiusi Wood and nearby small marsh of Ramone, little area, most, which conserves some of the most interesting vegetable association of the Fucecchio Marsh; you can visit only as a guided tour in the spring and summer times.

The Morette Port

The road carries on up to the Morette Port where it is a good idea to park the car before the bridge on the "Terzo" Canal. Ever since the Middle Ages there are testimonies on the use of the Marsh system as a way of internal navigation which, from the Valdinievole, enabled people to reach Pisa or Florence with several imbarcations, from the small boats to the big boats and the vessels which loaded goods. The "Le Morette Port", one of the few in which we can find a quadrangular structure built on three sides as a demonstration of the importance not only local of the navigation, takes its name from morette which are a diving ducks (tufted ducks) and in particular from the now rare "moretta tabaccata" (aythya nyroca) which was once very frequent in the Marsh. Beyond the bridge the itinerary on foot in the catchment area of the Marsh starts; in front of us plunged, in a poplar, is "Casotto (hut) del Criachi" on which a memorial stone remembers the victims of the ferocious violence of the Nazis.

The Nature Reserve

Running along the bank of the canal northwards, it