

BIODIVERSITY AND VEGETATION ANALYSIS AIMED TO OUTLINING A MANAGEMENT PLAN IN TESTA D'ALPE STATE FOREST (LIGURIA, ITALY).

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Study site lies mainly on the eastern side of the mountain group of Testa d'Alpe (Italy, Province of Imperia), covers about 300 hectares (including about 140 in the homonymous State Forest) and is between the Italian-French border and the Provincial Road n. 69 Pigna- Monte Gouta-La Colla-Camporosso.

The property of the State Forest was received by the Azienda Statale Foreste Demaniali under the act of 1923, with purchases made between 1934 and 1938. Originally, in the districts of Pau and Cremo, the ownership was two-thirds in the municipality of Rocchetta Nervina and third in the French municipality of Breil. After the peace treaty of 1947 the State Forest lost 558 of the original 734 hectares, which went to France for the adjustment of state boundaries, reducing, therefore, only 176 ha, which over the years until reduced to the current 140 hectares.

The aim of the investigations carried out within the transboundary project "Alcotra 016 Testa d'Alpe" and linked to the ALCOTRA project Natura 2000 Alpi del Mare (Alloisio *et al.*, 2010) is to provide the knowledge needed to identify an effective strategy for improved management and enhancement of the "Testa d'Alpe" State Forest and of a part of the Natura 2000 network (SCI IT1315313 and SPA IT1315380) associated with it.

A vegetation map was created by orthophotos processing and ground surveys, in particular by phytosociological relevés. The vegetation is dominated by various types of shrublands and woodlands (Fir, Scots pine, Hop Hornbeam and Pubescent oak forests and thermophilous mixed forests), which were assigned to known *syntaxa*.

Moreover, since the area is renowned for the richness of edible mushrooms, mycological surveys were carried out to evaluate also the myco-diversity. The study allowed the identification of some species and habitats of conservation interest (Mariotti, 2008). The collected data was processed with specific software for the analysis of biodiversity.

Over 415 taxonomic units of vascular plants were observed, including about thirty "espèces patrimoniales". Were also found about 70 species of macromycetes, including 8 found for the first time in Liguria.

The landscape has a high prevalence of closed habitats (forest) or mixed transitional habitats (sparse forests and formations with a dynamic tendency addressed to the forest), just under a fifth of the area have an open structure.

By working with forestry experts and zoologists, objectives and guidelines for forest, pastoral and fauna management have been suggested at the level of 13 particles and 5 adjacent areas.

The ultimate goal of this project is to create a forest Oriented Natural Reserve with an administrative and operative management coordinated between Italy and France with the cooperation of ONF (Office National des Forêts), CFS (Corpo Forestale dello Stato) and Parco naturale Regionale delle Alpi Liguri.

Alloisio A., Casazza G., Dente F., Mariotti M., Minuto L., Pavarino M., Salvidio S., Zanella S., 2010. Biodiversità senza frontiere. Progetto ALCOTRA 016. Natura 2000 A.d.M. Rapporto finale. Il contributo italiano. 48 pp.
Mariotti M.G., s.d. (2008). Atlante degli Habitat. Natura 2000 in Liguria. Regione Liguria/ARPAL, 592 pp.

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