

Regional nature parks in the Apulia region of Italy: the example of the "Terra delle Gravine" nature park

Summary

by Patrizia TARTARINO

The Apulia region in mainland Italy's far south is characterised by the presence of numerous natural areas with important ecological or landscape value. A large part of this region is involved in the establishment of protected zones with various levels of protection.

The region includes:

- 2 national parks, with a total area of 188,580 hectares;
- 65 regional nature parks, with a total area of 59,953 ha;
- 16 national nature reserves, with a total area of 11,183 ha;
- 37 regional nature reserves, with a total area of 5,890 ha;
- 94 Natura 2000 sites, with a total area of 688,770 ha.

Of the newly created regional nature parks, the Terra delle Gravine Park is the object of an international cooperation programme called "Qualigouv".

The park, set up in 2005 at the initiative of the Regional Government Council, covers some 28,000 ha in 13 municipalities in an area featuring gorges that are home to some very special ecosystems.



Before the park was formed, a process of concertation with the local population, organised by the Region, led to a very extensive territory with a very irregular perimeter being earmarked for inclusion. The legislation formally establishing the park gave the possibility to the population to request exclusion from the park zone; the result was that the area of the park was significantly reduced.

The management of the Terra delle Gravine Park has been given provisionally to the Province of Taranto, though this authority has not got adequate resources, either human or financial, to carry out the task.

In taking part in the Qualigouv project, the Province is seeking to acquire a tool for governance which will facilitate the acceptance by the local inhabitants of the classifying of the designated territory as a regional nature park.

A "Plan for ecological forestry management", which could well answer this need has been tested on a pilot site covering some 7,500 ha of which about 4,500 ha are forested.

The process of involving the stakeholders and other parties concerned is well under way and the approach, once tested and validated, will be extended to the remainder of the Park.

P.T.

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From top to bottom:

Picture 1:

Debriefing session in the Province of Taranto during the MED Qualigouv project

Picture 2:

View over Park territory from the observation platform of the Lazera Gravina

Picture 3:

Oasi Lipu Reception Centre within Park territory

Photos David Gasc