

## **Ripa Bianca di Jesi regional nature reserve**

In the heart of the WWF Oasis Ripa Bianca di Jesi there is a lake originating from a gravel quarry which comprises the only heronry of the region.

### **About Ripa Bianca di Jesi**

The WWF Oasis is dominated by the Esino River and a lake, famous for the presence of the only heronry of the Marche region. The area was originally a quarry gravel. The rest consists in typical rural landscape with natural elements including hedges, woods and pre-gully formations.

### **Flora and Fauna**

Because of the multiple anthropogenic interferences that have involved the area over time (farming, mining, unauthorized dumping grounds) the original vegetation has undergone significant change.

The area counts three specimen of downy oak and a wide willow wood about 10 years old, formed by different willow species: white willow, purple willow, willow rosemary some specimen of black and white poplar. The remaining vegetation is made up of Acacia and herbaceous plants. By the lake stands a full grown woodland of black and white poplar where the heronry is settled.

The fauna living on the reserve premises have been at the centre of significant monitoring actions: birds, mammals reptiles, amphibians and insects. The resulting check-list highlights the presence of a remarkable biodiversity that gradually increased along with the area's conservation.

The area counts the only heronry registered for the Marche Region. Usually chaotic, the heronry looks like a large condominium, an incredible place where little bitterns, little egrets, black-crowned night herons and grey herons nest in spring among the trees or in the groove of reeds.

The Esino river basin with its different habitats represents a wintering and breeding grounds for many bird species, with areas suitable for resting and nutrition of both migrant and sedentary bird species. Their presence can be gathered from their singing while passing through the young patch of riparian wood or by observing their footprint on the clayey banks.

Among the winter species are the great cormorant, the Eurasian teal, the Western marsh-harrier, the great egret, the cattle egret; among the nesting species are Cetti's warbler, the great reed warbler, the European penduline tit, the common moorhen, the common kingfisher, the little ringed plover, and the great spotted woodpecker.

Recent management actions including the recovery of areas previously subtracted by human activity to the river have led to a gradual return of many amphibians, important as they represent a significant food source for herons.

### **Visiting the nature reserve**

The three thematic nature paths equipped with panels and notice boards are easily accessible; multi-sensory pathways are available.

### **Facilities**

The nature reserve is managed by WWF in collaboration with the Marche Regional administration. The visitor centre is an old farmhouse renovated following the bio-architecture principles; the whole renovating process is well-described with dedicated notice-boards and panels. It accommodates a centre for the Mediterranean ecoregion, a small guest room for researchers and the nature reserve offices.

The farmhouse also hosts the Environmental Education Centre (CEA) "Sergio Romagnoli", with teaching classrooms overlooking the river and farm environments, a dedicated library and a lecture room. There is also a green classroom, a butterfly garden, the *Testudo* and the *Anatidae* faun areas.

### **Directions**

Take the toll-way 14 and exit "Ancona Nord", then take the state highway 76 in the Jesi-Roma direction, exit Jesi Est, then follow the nature reserve directions.

### **Contact Information and Opening Times**

The nature reserve is open from January to June and from September to December. Closed in July and August.

October to February: on Sundays from 9.00 to 1.00 pm and from 3.00 to 6.00 pm.

March-June and September: Saturdays from 3.00 to 7.00 pm and Sundays from 9.00 to 1.00 pm and from 3.00 to 7.00 pm.

Guided tours for groups and school groups are available every day on booking.

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### **Places to visit**

- Regional Nature Park of Monte Conero,
- Regional Nature Park of Gola della Rossa e Frasassi, and the Frasassi Caves,
- the historic city centres of Ancona, Jesi, Osimo, Offida, of the Jesi Castles,
- the Verdicchio dei colli di Jesi e Matelica wine cellars

### **Overnight stays and restaurants**

The cities of Jesi and Chiaravalle and the surrounding towns offer a wide range of choices to sleep and eat. We suggest you to contact the Jesi Tourist Office, the Jesi Town Hall or look up the website: [www.comune.jesi.an.it](http://www.comune.jesi.an.it)

