

FOREWORD

This book comes with a purpose - to spread the word (I would like to say "tell the world", but modesty forbids) that the Italy of wildlife has little to envy that much better known Italy of art and history. That in short, not so far from the Colosseum, the Leaning Tower, the Grand Canal in Venice, are mountains and lakes and forests, offering the busy "Bel Paese" exciting encounters with the wilderness.

Even Italians know little about the wonderful natural environment of their country and are often unaware that the wolves and the bears are back in the Alps, the eagles and peregrine falcons are encouragingly on the increase, and chamois and deer inhabit forests and pastures in the Apennines.

The main cause of this welcome news is the creation of a network of parks established in Italy, especially in the last thirty years. Protected natural areas, large and small - number around 871, including 24 national parks and 134 regional parks - which with great difficulty not only protect the territory, but also achieve

environmental restoration, educational initiatives and promotion. This guide, however, does not just list the most important Italian natural resources. Rather it acts as a practical guide, providing concrete and detailed help to lead nature lovers, birdwatchers, photographers, to the right place at the right time.

It is divided into three chapters: the first is devoted to wildlife, the second to the landscapes, the third to the flora. Each is presented in geographical order from north to south, and each card is described by the of route to reach the different areas from the closest and most important cities (Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, Turin etc.), almost all of which have their own airports.

Finally, in the following pages you will not find colour but B/W pictures: the reason lies in the need to keep down printing costs and to maximize the dissemination of the book. Interested parties are welcome, to fill the gap, the visit the website www.giulioielardi.com

Have a good trip through the Italy's wildlife.

Giulio Ielardi