

## EU Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting

### Visit of Tenuta di Castelporziano (Estate of the President of the Italian Republic) Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> - 08.00 – 12.00

The Castelporziano presidential estate covers an area of approximately 60 square kilometers that lies about 25 km southwest of Rome (center).

Its boundaries are delineated by the Via Cristoforo Colombo and the Pineta Comunale di Castel Fusano to the northwest, by Via Pontina and Pratica di Mare to the east and by the Tyrrhenian sea to the south. The estate is entirely a SPA (Special Protected Area) and contains two Site of Community Importance (SCI).

Morphologically, the estate consists of four main areas:

- a volcanic area with tufa-based soil that is highly uneven as a result of a process of fluvial erosion that has created rocky peaks;
- an area whose muddy soil bears witnesses the previous existence of marshes and lagoons, drained in ancient times;
- an area of ancient dunes of reddish sand running parallel to the sea and furrowed by small streams;
- an area of recently formed dunes of fine-grained shifting sand.

The area is mainly covered by various types of woods (Ha. 4584 - 79% of the surface).

The most valuable, from an ecological point of view, is the deciduous woodland with a high percentage of oaks: it covers a surface of 2.300 hectares (40% of the whole area); the biodiversity of Castelporziano is increased not only by the presence of stone pine woods (Ha. 752), Mediterranean woods, evergreen oaks as *Quercus suber* L. and *Quercus ilex* L. but also by the fields and grazing lands, semi-arid grasslands, wet zones and marshes.



According to this variety of environments, we can find a great number of animal species: mammals, birds, reptiles etc. It is very common to see wild boars, fallow and roe deer, but also foxes, badgers and porcupines. In the estate it is also established a bird-ringing station, as a consequence of its favourable position along the migration routes from Africa to Northern Europe,



A really significant index of the ecological value of Castelporziano estate is the check-list of the living organism: the last published record (2006) has counted 5039 species (2.918 animals, 1.044 plants, 299 licheni, 722 fungi, 118 protista, 8 monera)..

Under the trees and the bushes there are many archaeological sites: noble villas, but also thermae and villages: from more than a century they had been studied and yet there is much to discover.

It is surprising that this natural and historical treasure is so close to the capital of Italy, only half an hour from the heart of Rome. Thanks to its first royal then presidential ownership, Castelporziano has remained unspoilt: a very rare situation along Italian coasts.

From 1999 more protection is assured by a presidential decree that states for Castelporziano estate a management like other natural areas protected by the law (Riserve Naturali dello Stato).

