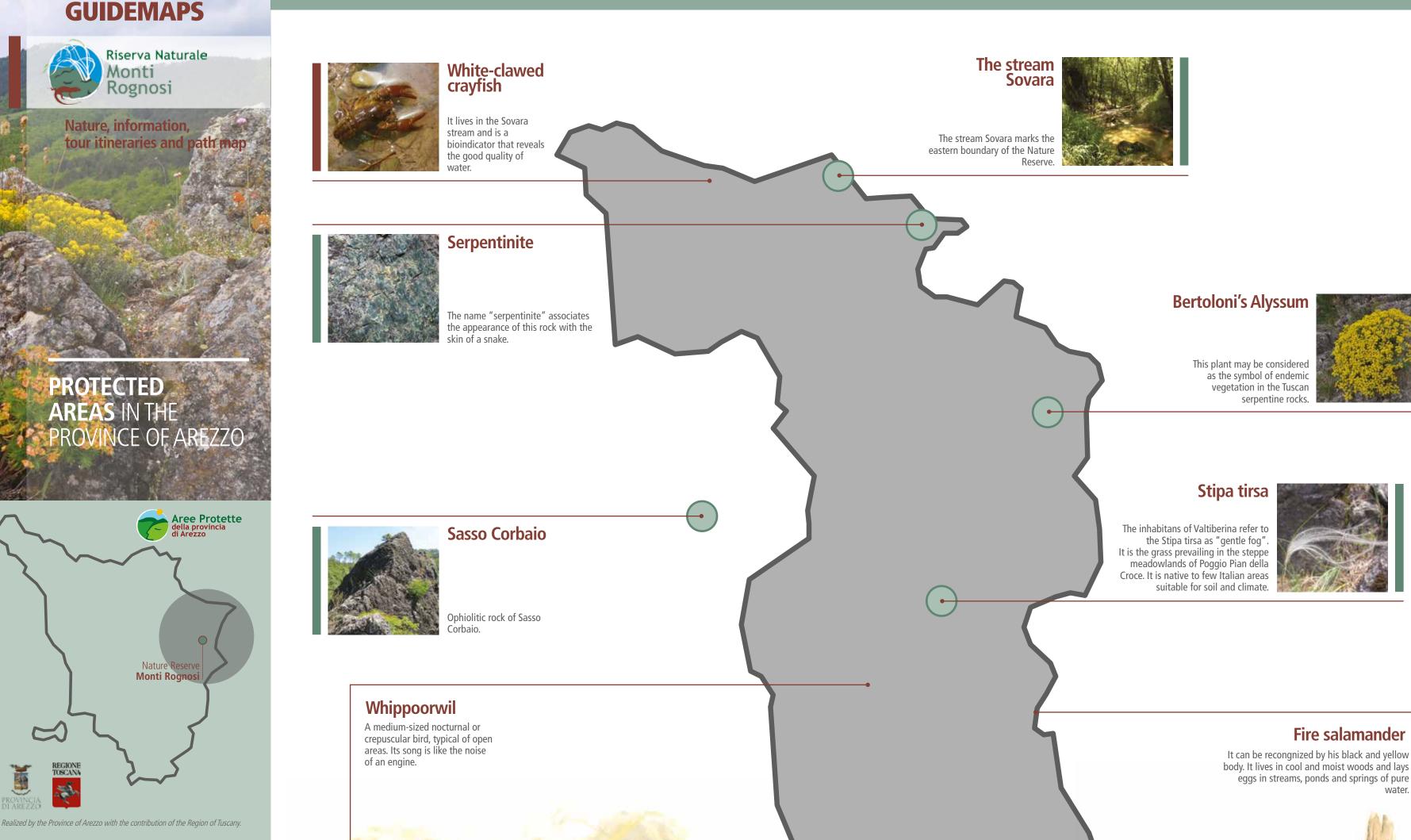
The Nature Reserve of "green stones"



PUBLICATIONS

Riserve naturali della provincia di Arezzo - Guida Provincia di Arezzo, Ed. Compagnia delle Foreste, 2016

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Riserve naturali della provincia di Arezzo - Cartoguide Provincia di Arezzo, Ed. Compagnia delle Foreste, 2016

Le Riserve Naturali della Valtiberina toscana e del Sasso di Simone (DVD), Provincia di Arezzo, 2008

Aree protette della Valtibera toscana - Sentieri natura Provincia di Arezzo e Comunità Montana Valtiberina Toscana, 2007

Valtiberina Toscana - Ed. Compagnia delle Foreste, 2004 Carta dei sentieri - Ed. S.E.L.C.A., 2004

Carta dei sentieri 1:25.000 "Sentiero 50 - Dal Trasimeno alla Verna" Provincia di Arezzo e CAI - Ed. S.E.L.C.A. 2004



Visitor Centre with exhibition "La Fabbrica della Natura"

Open on weekends or by reservation Loc. La Fabbrica, Ponte alla Piera 67 - 52031 Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/787023 - mail: natura@toscanadappennino.it www.toscanadappennino.it

Tourist Office of Valtiberina Toscana V. Matteotti, 8 - 52037 Sansepolcro (AR) Ph. 0575/740536 - mail: info@valtiberinaintoscana.it

Museo della Battaglia e di Anghiari P.za Mameli, 1 - 52031 Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/787023 mail: <u>battaglia@anghiari.it</u> www.battaglia.anghiari.it

Unione Montana dei Comuni della Valtiberina Toscana Ufficio Demanio Forestale - Pieve Santo Stefano (AR) Ph. 0575/799097 - mail: demanio@valtiberina.toscana.it

Regione Toscana - Direzione Ambiente ed Energia Settore Tutela della Natura e del Mare Via A. Testa, 2 - 52100 Arezzo mail: areeprotette@regione.toscana.it



Inside or near the Reserve

Locanda del Viandante Il Casolare di Cerreto Open from March to January - Loc. Cerreto, Ponte alla Piera, 11 (AR) Locanda del Viandante · 23 Il Borgo di Valle di Sopra Open all year round - Loc. Valle di Mezzo, Ponte alla Piera, 70 (AR) Locanda del Viandante 17 Il Casolare di Valle di Mezzo Open all year round - Loc. Valle di Mezzo, Ponte alla Piera, 71 (AR)



VISITOR CENTRE

"La Fabbrica della Natura Loc. La Fabbrica, Ponte alla Piera 67 - 52031 Anghiari (AR)

CREDITS

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HOW TO GET THERE

From the Highway E45: exit Sansepolcro, then follow directions to nghiari - Ponte alla Piera. From Arezzo: go along the SR 71 toward Bibbiena, after Subbiano turn right toward Ponte alla Piera or go along the SS 73 to Sansepolcro, then turn into the SP 47 toward Anghiari.

Etruria mobilità - <u>www.etruriamobilita.it</u> - Toll-free number 800.115605



FAUNA



	Open all year round - Loc. Ca' di Fino - Capanno, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/799097 mail: <u>demanio@valtiberina.toscana.it</u>					
	Wilderness hut Casetta del Guardia		4			* fireplace
	Open all year round - Loc. C. del Guardia - Fonte del Ciliegio, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/799097 mail: <u>demanio@valtiberina.toscana.it</u>					
	Antico Posto di Ristoro	•	6	•	•	•
	Open all year round - Via Libbia - Passo della Scheggia, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/749174 mail: <u>info@anticopostodiristoro.it</u> web: <u>www.anticopostodiristoro.it</u>					
	Holiday farm Mafuccio	•	8	•	•	•
	Open all year round - Loc. Mafuccio - Ponte alla Piera (AR) Ph. 0575/1787197 - 335/5809944 mail: <u>info@montemercole.it</u> web: <u>www.montemercole.it</u>					
	Vecchia osteria La Pergola	•		•	•	
	Open all year round - Loc. Tavernelle, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/723330 web: <u>www.osterialapergola.it</u>					
	Camper area	5 places				
	Open all year round - Piazza 2 Agosto, Anghiari (AR) Ph. 0575/789522					









The harsh landscape of the Monti Rognosi is one of the most unusual in Valtiberina. This group of mountains, not exceeding 800m of altitude, is wedged between the "Alpe di Catenaia", in the north of Arezzo, and the Apennine range, distinguishing itself by its morphology and landscape. What makes the Monti Rognosi so unusual is their geological composition: in fact they are composed entirely of ophiolites, a group of rocks of magmatic origin mainly dark green and black in colour and where a unique type of vegetation grows, with endemic specialised species. Rich in minerals, mainly copper, the Monti Rognosi were affected by mining activities since the Aeneolithic era until the last century.

Near the Monti Rognosi there was an important communication route of Roman origin, the Via Ariminensis, which joined Arezzo to Rimini via Ponte alla Piera and the Viamaggio pass and which continued to play an important role until not long ago as a drover road for transhumance. Thanks to their strategic role the Monti Rognosi remained under feudal rule until the annexation to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany: the castle of Montauto, which still dominates the entire ridge, is one of the main relics, as is Castiglion Fatalbecco, of which only the ruins remain.

Translating literally from Greek, the ophiolites could be called "serpent rocks": this surprising name refers to the scaly and dark green appearance of the serpentinite, the most common rock in the Reserve. These are extremely ancient rocks, which about 200 million years ago, during the Jurassic period, formed the bed of the Ligurian-Piedmont Ocean and which are all of volcanic origin: in fact they formed along an oceanic ridge due to the reaction of magma - rising from the earth's mantle - with seawater.

Today these rocks are scattered in small outcrops in various parts of Tuscany following the tectonic movements that triggered the closure of the Ligurian Ocean and the formation of the Apennines: strips of ophiolitic oceanic crust were caught up in these movements and transported to their current positions. As well as the serpentinites, the ophiolites of the Monti Rognosi include gabbro, basalts and serpentine breccia. Only these last ones are considerably widespread in the central part of the Nature Reserve. Other outcrops of ophiolitic rocks may be found slightly further north, near the village of Pieve S. Stefano.

ts appearance might lead to think of the Monti Rognosi as an area little suited and inhospitable to fauna but, on the contrary, the animal population includes many interesting species which have found their ideal habitat in the vegetation of the serpentinites. In the garigues and grasslands birds of prey can hunt easily, such as the short-toed eagle, the Eurasian hobby and the common kestrel that nest in the surrounding woods, while the bizarre European nightjar finds suitable corners for laying its eggs directly on the ground. The prickly juniper bushes act as refuges for common linnets, sub-alpine warblers, cirl buntings and Sardinian warblers, rare passeriformes which are diminishing in number all over Europe mainly as a result of the disappearance of bushes and shrubs due to the mechanisation of farming. The rock bunting, another uncommon passeriform, wanders around the rocky outcrops. Grasslands and garigues, with their heat, attract reptiles like the western green lizard and the Italian three-toed skink.

Natural woods are just as rich: in the oak woods nests the northern goshawk, an extremely rare bird of prey seen repeatedly in this area, as well as other typical forest species such as the Eurasian nuthatch, the song thrush, the short-toed treecreeper and the marsh tit, which find a favourable cool and damp microclimate in the Sovara valley floor, contrasting with the arid slopes of these mountains.

In the pure waters of the stream and its tributaries the rare fire salamander and two endemic Italian amphibians (the spectacled salamander and the Italian stream frog) reproduce; there you find also the white-clawed crayfish, a crustacean that now is extinct in most Italian streams. In pine reforestation, generally poor in fauna except for the coal tits and the firecrests, are worth recording the irregular visits of small groups of common crossbills, robust northern European birds specialised in feeding on pine nuts which "invade" Italy in more severe winters. Recent studies indicate that the wolf has reached the Monti Rognosi from the Apennine ridge.





behaviour is to hover at a height of around 10-20 metres over open country.

VEGETATION



The ophiolites and in particular the serpentinite are extremely compact rocks, rich in heavy metals such as chrome and nickel. These produce rocky soils which tend to heat up rapidly on account of their dark colour, offering little hospitality to plants. However the most precious species in the Reserve, the so-called "serpentinophytes", are indissolubly associated with these prohibitive conditions. On the serpentinites of the Monti Rognosi live eight of the eleven species endemic to the Tuscan-Emilian rock outcrops, among which the most widespread and characteristic is the Bertoloni's alyssum (Odontarrhena *bertolonii*). These plants are hardly identifiable since they reach little more than 10cm in height, so they are not particularly striking except when they begin to bloom in spring. To see them one must paradoxically search in the most barren, rockiest parts of the Reserve, in the so-called "serpentinophyte garigue", a special type of low, sparse scrub where most of the endemic species live. Another characteristic feature of vegetation is the steppe which appears in the small areas where the soil is more developed such as the flat summit of Poggio Pian della Croce, in the heart of the Reserve. Here dominate two grasses of the Stipa genus, extremely rare in Italy, the Stipa etrusca wich is an endemic species to the ophiolites and the Stipa tirsa wich tipically occurs in the ophiolitic areas. In these peculiar environments there are also interesting plant species, preferring rocky and arid soils, which have found a sort

of refuge in the ophiolites; here for example the garland flower (Daphne cneorum) has its only Tuscan station, and there are also the burning bush (*Dictamnus albus*), the hardy cloak fern (Notholaena marantae) and the meadow saxifrage (Saxifraga granulata). Garigue and grassland are dotted with bushes of prickly juniper (Juniperus oxycedrus subsp. oxycedrus), which become denser only where the slope decreases and allows a certain accumulation of detritus and soil, permitting the presence of trees like the downy oak and the flowering ash.

Fully-fledged, downy oak woods only appear along the canal Raggio and the stream Sovara where there is also a riverine belt of vegetation with poplars, willows and alders. The Monti Rognosi are today mostly covered by a reforestation of conifers, especially European black pine, planted from the 1920s onwards, when these mountains were entirely bare, both as a result of the difficult nature of the soil and of centuries of overexploitation of spontaneous vegetation. The reforestation aimed at limiting hydro-geological destruction, making this land productive, but also at providing employment in the difficult post-war years. But now the spreading of pinetrees is kept under control because they are invading the last areas of ophiolitic vegetation.



Municipality: Anghiari Area: 184 ha (contiguous area: 1.303 ha) Established: March 18, 1998 Management: Region of Tuscany in collaboration with the Unione Montana dei Comuni della Valtiberina Toscana

TOUR ITINERARIES

Several themed footpaths go through the nicest spots of the Nature Reserve, allowing to know its landscape and to appreciate the high naturalistic value of all the Sovara Valley, its history, culture and folk traditions. The focal point for walking tours, with circle routes of different lengths and levels of difficulty, is the Visitor Center of "La Fabbrica della Natura" (The Factory of Nature), opened in 2015. The Visitor Center meets specific requirements and allows to analyse thoroughly your experience in the Nature Reserve. There is also a room used for teaching activities and a conference room.

Download the itineraries map in the website: www.toscanadappennino.it/la-fabbrica-della-natura

Walking on the ocean floor Length: 4.1 km Travelling time: 2h

Level of difficulty: easy

The Monti Rognosi owe their barren and stony appearance, from which their name derives, to the presence of ophiolites, magmatic metamorphic rocks which formed the floor of the Ligurian-Piedmont Ocean until 200 million years ago. The ophiolites have produced an arid, rocky and apparently inhospitable soil. However, nature has adapted well to these harsh conditions, and today the area is characterized by the presence of peculiar vegetation consisting of shrubs, herbs and curious endemic species.

Flowers on green stones Length: 2.00 km Travelling time: 1h Level of difficulty: easy

The vegetation of the Monti Rognosi is mainly characterized by species preferring dry or rocky soils. This short route leads to an educational trial (Sentiero Natura) dedicated to the plants growing in this unique territory.

The mining trail Length (round trip): 11 km Travelling time: 4h 30' Level of difficulty: medium

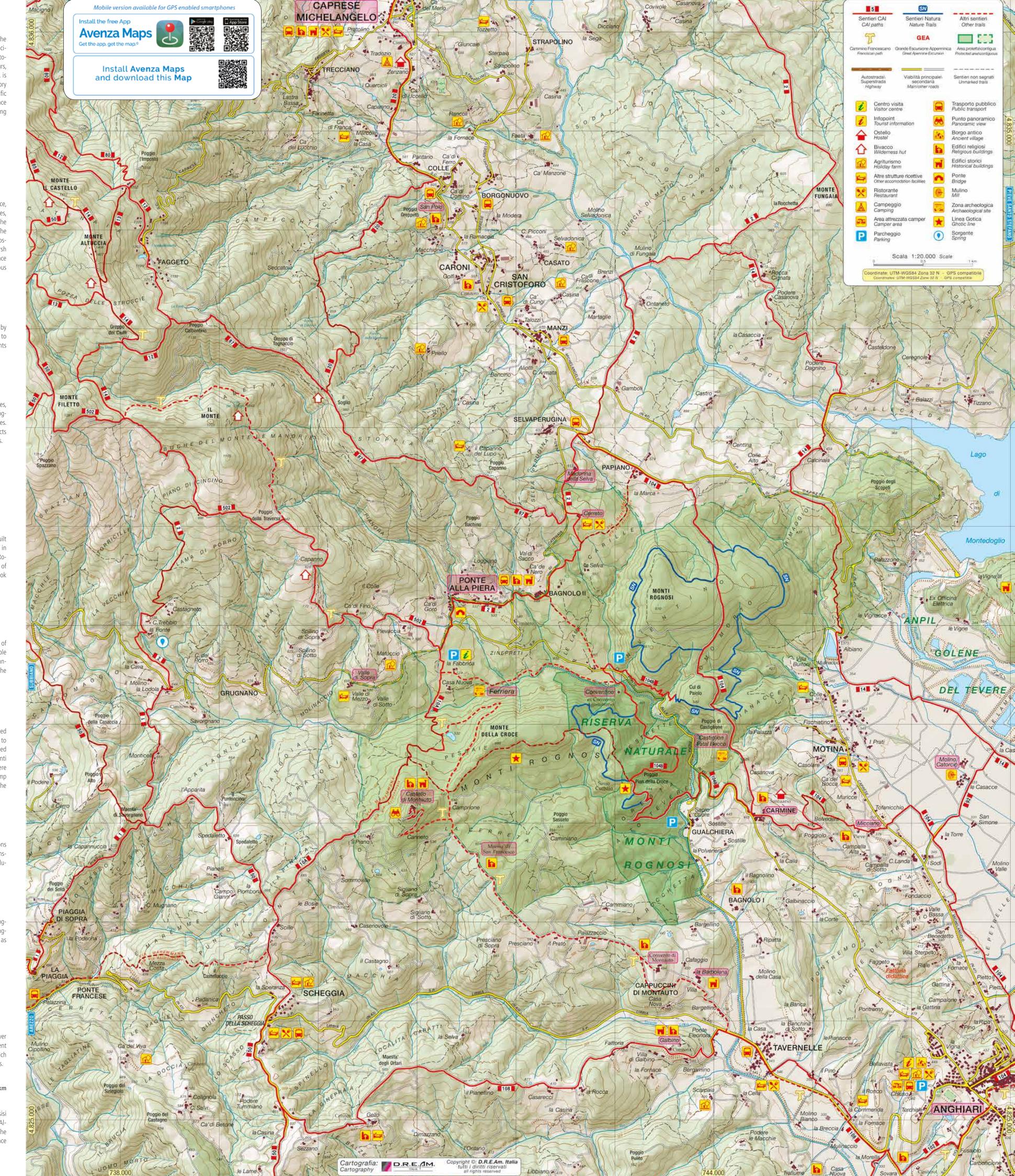
The most meaningful evidence of mineral extraction activities, due to the presence of metals in the rocks of the Monti Rognosi, mainly copper, dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. This route will allow you to rediscover the places and artefacts which have accompanied mining activities over the centuries.

From the Roman legion to transhumance

High route Length 5.7 km Travelling time 2h 30' Level of difficulty: easy Low route

Length: 4.9 km Travelling time: 2h Level of difficulty: easy

The *Via Ariminensis* is an ancient consular Roman road built to facilitate the connection between the legions stationed in Arezzo with those in Rimini. Centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, the same route was used for the transhumance of herds from the Apennines to the Maremma and the road took the name of "Via Maremmana".



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Cupiglia 2

Length: 17.8 km Travelling time: 6h Level of difficulty: difficult

An imperial feudo

The Montauto Castle overlooks the trails tracing the history of the Monti Rognosi, which extend to its feet. It is a tangible sign of the presence of the Galbino family, an important ancient family which had ruled over this area since before the year 1000.

Places of remembrance: the Gothic Line

Length: 6.7 km Travelling time: 2h 30'

Level of difficulty: medium

During the Second World War, the Germans in retreat prepared the Gothic Line, a defensive line that ran from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic sea, whose purpose was the slowdown of the allied forces. Its most important evidence is to be found on the Monti Rognosi, a place of outposts and trenches. Not far from here there are also the remainders of the Renicci Internment Camp (Loc. La Motina, Anghiari) and a commemorative stone of the massacre of La Scheggia (Loc. La Speranza).

The reforestation trail

Length: 7.7 km Travelling time: 2h 30'

Level of difficulty: medium

Starting from the '20s of the last century, conifer reforestations were made. This trail allows to understand the history of transformations operated by man and to "read" the natural evolution of the landscape.

Waters and ophiolitic landscapes Length: 9.5 km

Travelling time: 3h 30' Level of difficulty: medium

Fresh and clean waters flow down the sides of the Monti Rognosi. The route meets the torrent Sovara and the Fosso del Raggio and leads to the most appealing ophiolitic places, such as the Sasso Corbaio.

The chestnut culture

Short route Length: 3.7 km Travelling time: 1h 30' Level of difficulty: easy Long route Length: 11.4 km Travelling time: 4 h Level of difficulty: medium

To go through the "Chestnut trail" today means to rediscover an important cultural heritage made of traditions and ancient knowledge, of old farming tools and forgotten practices which have marked the hard work in the woods over the past years.

St. Francis and his sackcloth

Distance from the Montauto monastery to the castle: 4.4 km Travelling time: 2h

Level of difficulty: medium

During his wanderings towards La Verna, St. Francis of Assisi used to stop at Montauto Castle as a guest of his friend Alberto. During one of those stops he left him his sackcloth. The area around the Monti Rognosi is still a proof of the presence of St. Francis.