



The woodlands of the Po Plain are the remains of the ancient forests which once covered the entire area but which have now almost entirely vanished, after thousands of years of human settlement.

These witnesses of ancient natural and human events contain populations of plants and animals which are sometimes unique, such as the Italian agile frog or the Selva di Arvonchi shrew, recently described as a species new to science.



The Po Plain woodlands also shelter many species of insects like the impressive stag beetle, recently listed as a species of EC interest in the Habitat Directive.



This now fragmented forest "labyrinth" is what is left of the great forests of oak, elm and lime which existed in pre-Roman times, woodland formations now described as the *Asparago tenuifolii-Quercetum roboris* association.



Proper knowledge of this precious environment is essential, if we are to be able to conserve these isolated remnants of woodland, to enjoy their intrinsic qualities, and to educate new generations to respect the world in which we live.



Woodlands of the Po Plain

ITALIAN HABITATS

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