

"50 YRS OF THE "TORRICCHIO MOUNTAIN" NATURE RESERVE: HALF A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH

50 years have passed since the days when the Marquis Mario Incisa della Rocchetta decided to donate a territory to the University of Camerino, thanks to the passionate commitment of Prof. Franco Pedrotti, with the purpose of establishing a Nature Reserve: 317 hectares of seminatural landscape in the Central Apennines. UNICAM accepted the donation on October 14, 1970, establishing a regime of integral protection in order to guarantee nature conservation and research.

The Torricchio Mountain became the first protected area of the Marche Region, a Biogenetic Reserve, included into the European ecological network Natura2000 and in the international long-term research network (LTER-Italy).

Today framed as a State Natural Reserve, the Torricchio Mountain is managed by UNICAM (School of Biosciences and Veterinary Medicine - Plant Diversity and Ecosystem Management Unit) with the primary purpose of maintaining and studying spontaneous ecological processes.

The half century of life of the Reserve constitutes a milestone and an opportunity to face new challenges of the present and future, as the infrastructural point of many long lasting observations and initiatives.

Thanks to the Reserve, already hundreds of internships and theses and research projects have been carried out in real outdoor lab. (incl. dozens of researchers from over 20 EU and non-EU countries) concerning with field studies on floristic, faunal, vegetational, pedological, geo-morphological, subject and following dynamical processes, the relationships between organisms and the environment also linked to issues of climate change.

The consequences of the dramatic seismic events of October 2016 led to a reduction in the activities of operators and collaborators, as well as having damaged the Shepard's Hut inside the Reserve (fundamental support for all activities).

Thanks to the funds obtained by the Ministry of the Environment, the restoration and technological improvement will return the

structure to full operation in 2021.

The current pandemic risk brought a further challenge just in the celebration year: the event scheduled for the 50th anniversary of the Reserve had to be postponed to 2021,

while an updated publication on Flora is already available (<https://italianbotanist.pensoft.net/article/50032/>) and

other publications are in preparation.

Happy birthday Torricchio!

Camerino, 14 October 2020

Canullo Roberto and the collaborators of
Natural Reserve of the State "Montagna di Torricchio"