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# Parco e Area contigua dell'Alta Val Borbera

**Category:** Regional Parks
**business description:**

The territory of the new Park and Contiguous Area of Alta Val Borbera is partially included in the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) called “Antola Massif, Mount Carmo, Mount Legnà: they are all SAC established under the Habitats Directive which contribute to the realisation of the Natura 2000 network, a European ecological network of sites identified for the purpose of preserving the biodiversity in Europe. The SAC of Alta Val Borbera is located at an altitude of between 600 and 1669 metres and occupies part of the sector of the headwater of the Borbera Torrent, corresponding to the river basins of the Agnellasca and Gordenella torrent, approximately bounded by the ridge line which starting from Mount Porreio (1533 m) arrives to the Peak of Erta (1020 m), passing by the peaks of Mount Legna (1669m), Mount Carmo (1640m) and Mount Antola (1597m). The landscape is that typical of Apennine valleys formed on a relatively soft calcareous matrix: this has permitted the formation of both rounded ridges but also steep slopes, locally interested by gullies. The Site is the only example in Piedmont of Mediterranean mountain silvo-pastoral environment that allows the presence of Mediterranean vegetation in mosaic with that of microthermal vegetation (which lives at low temperatures) and by the presence in several impluvia of mesophilous trees. An extended and continuous woodland occupies more than three quarters of the surface. The forest vegetation is composed primarily of beech woods at the higher altitudes of the slopes, then chestnuts, hop-hornbeam, turkey oak and downy oak (Quercus pubescens). Grasslands and meadow-pastures are fragmented in areas of a limited size where sheep farming is still active: if sheep farming and animal rearing has considerably reduced compared to the past, the abandonment of farming is to be considered almost complete. The high value of biodiversity of the area. Among the environments inserted into the Habitat Directive, the most important is represented by the xeric grasslands with Bromus erectus, priority habitat because it hosts a rich population of orchids. Among the Directive habitats, characterised by a good representation and good degree of conservation, are the heaths, tall grasses, chestnut and eutrophic beech forests which are the largest environment. The flora is interesting at the higher altitudes with the presence of relict Alpine species such as Vaccinium gaultherioides, Homogyne alpina, Vaccinium vitis-idaea, Gentiana kochiana. Among the rarest species, the presence of Anogramma leptophylla, Aremonia agrimonoides, Corallorhiza trifida, Omphalodes verna, Peucedanum schottii has been reported. These have been inserted into the regional Red List. Tulipa australis is also present and indicated as vulnerable in the Italian Red List. The fauna, on the other hand, distinguishes itself for the presence of rare and localised species. The Canis lupus wolf has been a stable presence for at least twenty years. It is monitored within the scope of the Progetto Lupo Piemonte from 2004 to 2012 and which today needs the definition of a local action plan which includes in detail threats, management interventions (including planning and indirect control of damage to livestock) and the programming of activities which are carried out under the Centro referenza Grandi Carnivori, of which the Management Board of the Protected Areas of the Piedmontese Apennine is an associated partner. More recent, but equally interesting, are the reports of porcupine (Hystrix cristata) while the bats, all protected by the Habitat Directive, are present with six species: barbastella (Barbastella barbastellus), Daubenton’s bat (Myotis daubentonii), Leisler’s bat (Nyctalus leisleri), common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus), greater horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum) lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) of which a small reproductive colony of 10-20 females is present in an abandoned building of Chiapparo in the municipality of Carrega, known since 2012. There are several species of amphibians present of community interest such as: spectacled salamander (Salamandrina terdigitata) and the Italian stream frog (Rana italica), whose presence in Piedmont is documented only in this narrow area of the Apennine of Alessandria; the North-west Italian cava salamander (Speleomantes strinatii) which is equally rare but present also in several zones of the Maritime Alps. Among the reptiles, there are other rare species: the dice snack (Natrix tessellata), the smooth snake (Coronella austriaca), the Aesulapian snake (Zamenis longissimus) The birds have four species inserted in the Bird Directive: the lesser grey shrike (Lanius collurio), the European nightjar (Caprimulgus europaeus), ortolan bunting (Emberiza hortulana) and the wood lark (Lullula arborea), all nesting birds.

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**Guided visits:** Yes
**other:**

Carrega Ligure and its history The boundaries of the new Park and contiguous area of Alta Val Borbera, which includes more than 5000 hectares of territory, coincide with the boundaries of the Municipality of Carrega Ligure, a charming mountain village, typical of the Piedmontese Apennine. Not too long ago, still in the early 20th century, the small village had more than 2000 residents, divided into twenty or so small hamlets that with difficulty you can still glimpse in the thick of the woods: the majority of these small hamlets are now almost completely depopulated or, as in the case of Reneuzzi and Casoni, abandoned. Emarginated and forgotten, Val Borbera still retains the historical memories and significant traces of the peasant world of the past. The articles on display in the small rural museums and the numerous mills recall a time in which cereal growing was widely practiced in those which today are nothing but uncultivated. It is said that no

other than Hannibal climbed Mount Lesima after the Battle of Trebia which saw the defeat of the Roman legions and Casa del Romano, just beyond the Genoese border, as certain archaeological findings would evoke. To witness the importance that Carrega Ligure had for trade and the control of the territory behind Genoa, remain the ruins of the castle of the imperial fief of the Malaspina Doria, built around an even older tower worth visiting, if only for the magnificent view that can be enjoyed, travelling a trail which starts from the road that climbs to Capanne di Carrega. During the years of the War of Liberation, Carrega on the Piedmontese side and Fasce on the Ligurian side provided shelter for the gangs that were at the forefront of the resistance between Alessandria and Genoa. The territory, between June and July 1944, was progressively occupied by the formations of the Pinan Cichero division and, towards mid-August, the German forces began a big round-up throughout the territory of the 6th zone, whose command was situated in Val Borbera, specifically in Carrega.

**educational facilities:** Yes

## Assessment

**Noted in guide book:** High

## Links

https://www.areeprotetteappenninopiemontese.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4147&Itemid=327

## Photos

