

Valle Averno national nature reserve

WWF Oasis Valle Averno is a fishing valley of the Veneto lagoon; it is the only lagoon where hunting is forbidden.

The Valle Averno Nature Reserve includes extensive salty ponds, reed beds, wet woodlands and canals within one of the most famous wetlands of the world.

About Valle Averno

A fishing valley (and ex hunting valley) of mixed fresh and salty waters on terrains originating from alluvial and lagoon environments. Here you will find wet woodlands, wet meadows, freshwater canals and ponds, salty lakes, sandbar, banks and hedges, reed beds, salty and freshwater marshes and pastureland.

Flora and Fauna

Such a remarkable diversity of habitat is linked to the saline gradient, to the different heights of the terrains and to the different types of substrates. This leads to a rich diversity of the vegetation with wet woodlands dominated by *Salicaceae*, holm oaks, English oaks and ash trees. Reeds and wild orchids grow on the wet meadows. In the hedges privet and common hawthorn, *Rosa canina* and salt cedar all coexist. Bulrush and common reed surrounds the freshwater bodies, while the salty-waters are surrounded by halophyte like *Halocnemum strobilaceum* and sea asters.

Waterbirds are present with many species and in big numbers (even up to 15.000). There are 241 confirmed bird species, 25 mammal species (fox, badgers, beech martens...) 9 reptile species including a stable population of the European pond terrapin, 8 amphibian species including Lataste's frog (or Italian agile frog), 25 fish species and a number of endemic insect species.

Visiting the Nature Reserve

The guided tour, along the flat nature trails, takes about 2 hours to complete. During the tour visitors are introduced to the natural, historical and ethnographic features of the area. The trail leads into the different habitats of the reserve: from the hygrophilous woodland, wet meadows, banks and canals, up to the observation huts over the salty lakes.

To visit the wet habitats comfortable shoes and neutral colours are necessary. The opportunity to observe the local fauna requires binoculars, silence and patience!

Facilities

WWF Italy owns 84 of the 200 hectares of the nature reserve and manages the whole area on behalf of the Ministry of the Environment.

An area of about 500 hectares (including the nature reserve) has been designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, and a natural area under Regional legislation.

The beautiful building of Cà Tiepolo hosts the visitor centre. There are nature paths (one of which suitable for people with disabilities), observation huts and turrets, educational panels, beehives, a car park and a non-equipped picnic area.

Directions

Valle Averno is located in the municipality of Campagna Lupia, on the S.S. 309 Romea between Venezia and Chioggia at km 112,800 (near the Nuovissimo canal junction). A OASI WWF sign indicates the main entrance to the nature reserve.

Contact Information and Opening Times

Guided tours on Saturdays and Sundays at 10.00 am and 3 pm (Sundays only). Groups and schools every day on booking.

Birwatchers and photographers: please contact the reserve for special conditions.

For further information and booking phone 041.5185068

e-mail oasivalleaverto@wwf.it

Places to visit

Lugo with its Museum and Ancient Church

The Brenta coast

WWF Oasis of **Dune degli Alberoni** on the Venice Lido

Venice and its lagoon

Chioggia

Overnights stays and restaurants

Valle Averno Agritourism by Boscaro & Franceschin (tel.+39 041.5185037)

La Chioccia Agritourism at Lughetto di Campagna Lupia (tel.+39 041.5185270)

Corte di Giove Agritourism at Lova di Campagna Lupia (tel.+39 041.467112)

Hosteria l'Oca Golosa in the Campagna Lupia city centre (tel.+39 041.461216)

Zabotto a Lugo (+39 041.5185003)

Hotel da Vito at Lughetto di Campagna Lupia (+39 041.5185205)

Ostello di Mira at Giare