

# **CALANCHI ATRI NATURE RESERVE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Regional Nature Reserve was established in 1995, where the European Community had already identified a Site of Community Importance (SCI) a few years earlier, in an area that covers 380 hectares spreading from the valley floor of the Piomba stream (100 m above the sea level) to the Colle della Giustizia (500 m).

Here the main attraction are the badlands, impressive forms of rainfall-induced erosion, also known as Dante's pits.

The badlands are mainly distributed on the left side of the Piomba stream, in the southern area.

They are the result of a geomorphological phenomenon of erosion that typically occurs when the Mediterranean climate meets certain conditions: clayey ground with a certain percentage of sand, steep slopes preferably with a southern exposure and a marked alternation of rainy and dry seasons.

A clayey ground is a soil formed by microscopic particles of lamellar shape adhering to each other. When it is wet it is easily mouldable, on the contrary, when it is dry and dusty it presents cracks on its surface. It does not contain many minerals, it mostly consists of salts and sodium chloride that are not really useful to plants, but the impact of the rain on a dry clay soil leads to its break up into small particles, and if conditions are favourable (the erosion rate has to be higher than that of pedogenesis) the whole process produces what we call badlands.

## **ENVIRONMENTS**

Even if the badlands seem to be a difficult environment for plants to grow in, the reserve is home to many species that are specialised to live in extreme conditions. Many are the conditioning factors and the pioneer species - mostly xerophile (resistant to aridity) - living in this habitat have to endure many negative aspects of this spectacular but cramped territory. High sodium levels in the substrate, high slope, exposure to the sun, poor soils and frequent landslides are all environmental factors that affect biodiversity, which is itself closely linked to three different areas of a badland: the margin, the wall and the valley floor.

### **The margin**

On the top of the badlands we mainly find plant species which belong to Mediterranean vegetation: Alfalfa, Italian Sainfoin, Artichoke Thistle, Liquorice (used in food industry since 1811) and other more demanding species. Among these species there are also shrubs such as the Weaver's Broom, the Blackthorn, the Wild Blackthorn, the Dog Rose, the Field Elm and the Hawthorn.

### **The badlands walls**

Xerophilous species are abundant along the steep walls having evolved the ability to grow in warm and very dry climates: there are also many gramineae such as the Sea Couch Grass and the Reichardia Picroides. It is also worth mentioning the Caper bush (*Capparis Spinosa*) and the Tamarisk.

### **The valley floor**

Here we mainly find hydrophilous plants such as the Pliny's Reed, the Wild Carrot, and the Hairy Canary-clover. Within the nature reserve there are also various species of trees and shrubs,

including the Common Dogwood, the Downy Oak (*Quercus pubescens*), the Silver Poplar, the Black Poplar and the White Willow.

## **HOW TO REACH ATRI**

### **By car:**

A14 Motorway, Atri-Pineto exit; A24 Motorway, Villa Vomano-Roseto Degli Abruzzi exit and then take the Adriatic Highway 16

### **By train:**

Atri-Pineto station

## **HOSPITALITY WITHIN THE RESERVE**

“L'oasi dei calanchi” restaurant  
restaurant, bar, pizzeria, arrosticini  
“S.Lucia” District  
Telephone number/ fax:085 8780070  
Specialities: Abruzzo's typical dishes Closing day: Tuesday

“Il nido dei calanchi” holiday farm  
Dorothea Harmel & Alois Ruland, Brecciarra street 64032 Atri(TE)  
Mobile phone: +39 339 7441133

web site: [www.nidodeicalanchi.eu](http://www.nidodeicalanchi.eu)  
e-mail: [info@nidodeicalanchi.eu](mailto:info@nidodeicalanchi.eu)

Apartments:3

Further information:

This is an old renovated farm located in a WWF protected zone: Atri's Badlands Natural reserve( for this reason the street is not paved!). The house is located 2 kilometres towards west from Atri(350 metres above the sea level) in Teramo's province, one of the four Abruzzo's Provinces which borders the Adriatic sea.

“Isola dei calanchi” Holiday farm  
“Cagno” district  
Telephone number and Fax:  
Mobile phone: +39 339 7441133

Sito: [www.nidodeicalanchi.eu](http://www.nidodeicalanchi.eu)  
e-mail: [info@nidodeicalanchi.eu](mailto:info@nidodeicalanchi.eu)

Rooms: 4

Apartments: 4

Beds: 22

Further information: The structure is located on a small promontory encircled by badlands. The view is completed by the Mountains of Maiella, Gran sasso and Monti della Laga with the Vomano

Valley and the Adriatic Sea. With the Atri's old town far only 1 kilometre, you can live a magical stay among relax, art and traditions.