

# **The blue eyes of the Delta**

## **The Po Delta Park**

The Po Delta Park is situated in Emilia Romagna. It develops from the course of the Po of Goro to the historical delta, and includes the mouths of some Apennine rivers (including the Rhine).

In the park there are woods and pine forests, such as the Gran Bosco della Mesola and numerous important monumental complexes, including the Castello della Mesola, the Abbey of Pomposa, the medieval church of San Giorgio in Argenta and Sant'Apollinare in Classe.

There are works of engineering and other artefacts used for reclamation by natural drainage, which tangibly document the human activities dedicated to the works of water.

It is worth mentioning the structures of Torre dell'Abate, and in the territory of Argenta, the waterworks still in operation in Saiarino and Vallesanta, as well as the historical centres and areas of Mesola, Comacchio, Ravenna and Cervia, where the signs of the complex and diversified water culture are evident: hydraulic, and lagoon, marinatura, salt, and harbour.

The park is divided into homogeneous territorial areas,

covering a total area of 53,778 hectares: everywhere we find extraordinary naturalistic evidence, (such as Goro, the Comacchio Valleys, the Piallasse Ravennati and the Saline di Cervia) and Campotto Valleys. The park of the Po Delta, based in Comacchio, guarantees the correct management of the territory.

### **Campotto of Argenta**

The Valleys of Argenta and Campotto are the last remains of the ancient Padusa and the only area of the park characterized by detention basins of fresh water.

The Argenta valleys are composed of the Classe Campotto, Bassarone and Vallesanta.

They are enriched by an eco-museum, by numerous bicycle paths and by an eco-bus that allows visitors to visit other places of historical and architectural interest, such as the Pieve di San Giorgio and the Temple of Celletta.

## **The Valleys of Comacchio**

The Valleys of Comacchio are situated through the path of the Casoni di Valle, which can be accessed by boat.

The network of workers fishing eels provides a spectacular panorama typical of the lagoon civilization.

A visit to the Saltworks of Comacchio, from the Napoleonic age, exhibits the local salt tradition and a unique natural and ethnographic heritage in our country.

## **Volano, Mesola and Goro**

These three centres constitute one of the "homogeneous territorial areas" in which the park is articulated and represent its northern gateway, overlooking the Veneto delta of the Po.

Here are the Gran Bosco della Mesola and the Sacca di Goro.

The architectural heritage is also of great charm and offers religious complexes such as the Benedictine Abbey of Pomposa and works of hydraulic engineering such as the Tower of the Abbot.

## **The historical centre of Comacchio**

Comacchio has always been a "fishermen's village" and has preserved its characteristic lagoon, whose entrance is the Trepponti.

Among the historical and extremely charming buildings there are: Palazzo Bellini, seat of the cultural center; the Museum of the cargo of the Roman ship "Fortuna Maris", discovered in Valle Ponti in 1980; the ex hospital San Camillo; the loggia of the Cappuccini and the Manifattura dei Marinati, where the processing of a local dish, the marinated eel of the Valleys of Comacchio, still takes place.

## **Pineta di San Vitale and Piassasse di Ravenna**

Formed on the dune ridges corresponding to the fossil position of the Adriatic coast, they stand out for the prevalence of umbrella pine.

There are countless places of historical and natural interest in the vicinity of this station of the Park.

It is advisable to visit the Brandolini collection not far from the Rhine River, the Comacchio Valleys and the cycling routes to Argenta.

Of great interest are the city of Ravenna with the early

Christian basilica of San Vitale and its famous mosaics, Sant'Apollinare in Classe and the nearby Archaeological Park with the remains of the ancient Roman port and settlements from the 1st to the 7th century: a complex of monuments among the most evocative of the whole Mediterranean.

### **Classe Pineta and Saline di Cervia**

The Saline di Cervia are the southern gateway to the Park. Here the environment is characterized by flamingos and the whiteness of the salt piles, "white gold", which has given shape to the landscape.

We find evidence of this in the production basins and in the Sale Warehouse, located along the canal harbour, which once connected the town of Cervia Vecchia with the sea.

The Magazzino del Sale is now home to the Museum dedicated to this tradition.

