

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The territory of Fiastra Abbey Nature Reserve has been divided into three areas sharing common features, but managed according to different criteria: a Directed Nature Reserve (including "La Selva") is aimed to safeguard the natural processes of the forest vegetation; an Anthropologic Reserve (including the Cistercian Abbey, part of the cultivated lands, the river Fiastra and its vegetation) is aimed to make the most of the historical-architectonic heritage created by man during the centuries, and at the same time to promote an effective action to safeguard nature and its resources; a Protection Area (including the remaining part of the Giustiniani-Bandini estate) is aimed to guarantee a balanced relationship between the Reserve and the surrounding territory.

"La Selva" woodland, i.e. the heart of the Nature Reserve, is an interesting plain woodland covering over 100 ha. It is particularly important from a scientific point of view, since it is the last example of the kind of forest which used to cover the hills of Region Marche. It is characterized by the presence of the Turkey oak and by other trees such as the English oak, the flowering ash, and the field maple. Other interesting plants are also the oriental hornbeam, the *Helleborus bocconeii*, and the so-called mouse plant.

As far as wildlife is concerned, although reduced in comparison to the past, it is still very interesting since it includes some characteristic species such as the roe deer, which has been reintroduced in 1957 and which is controlled today by a preservation project. Among the mammals there are martens, badgers, and weasels; among the birds, tawny owls, lesser spotted woodpeckers, golden orioles, warblers, short-toed treecreepers, jays, and many other birds characteristic of the woodland environment.

The watercourses (the stream Entogge and the river Fiastra), with their typical fauna and riparian vegetation, the artificial lake "le Vene", and the agricultural area, represent an invaluable heritage in comparison to the current quality of urban life.