

notebook #1

a special
nature



LA VAL
DEL LAGO

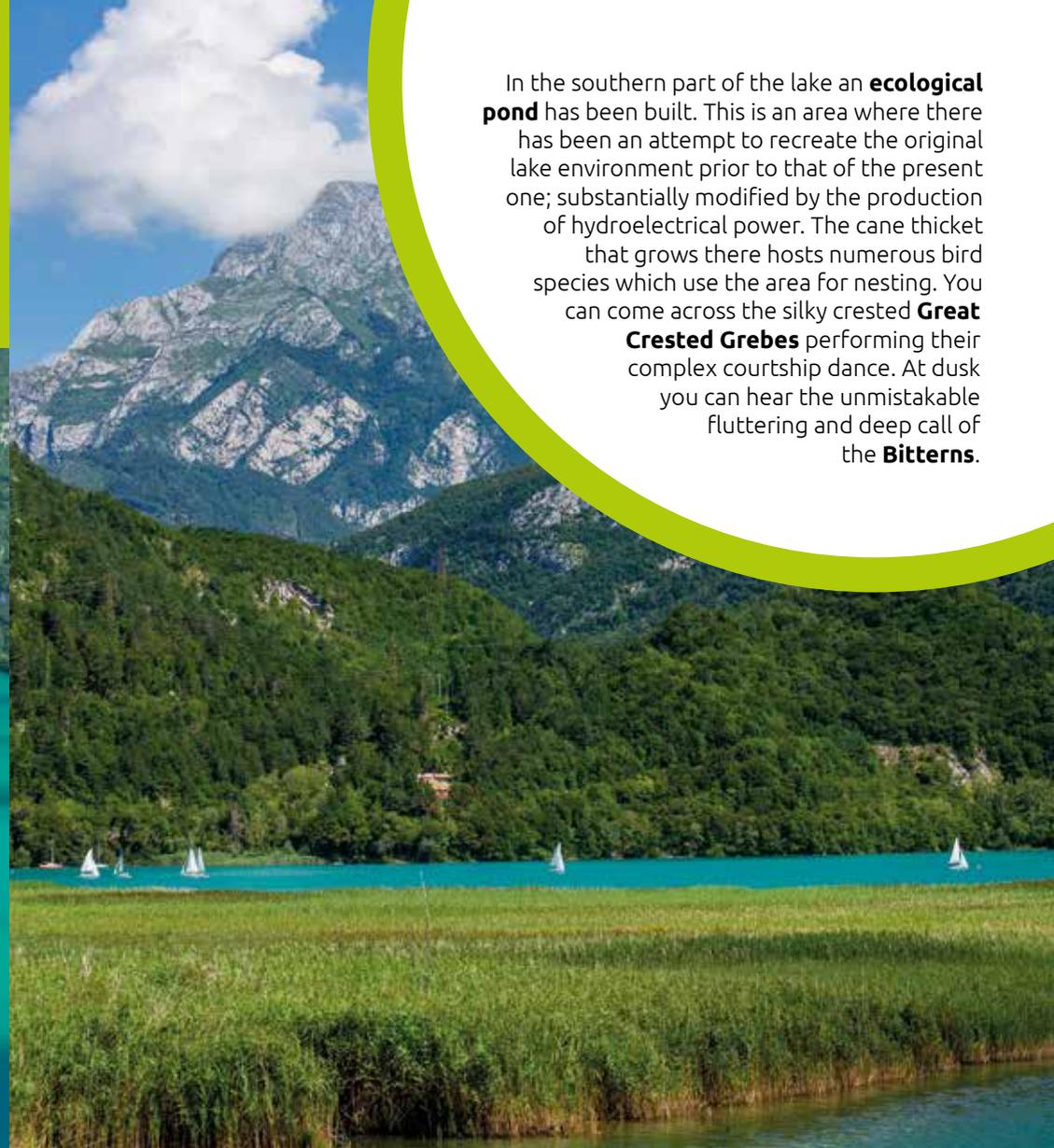




From Interneppo, a small village which forms part of the district of Bordano, you arrive at the **Botanical Park** (born by the passion of Sabino Leskovic in the first half of the 1900s) and along a downhill path, you can reach the shore of the lake. On the right is the **Visitor Center**, a point of reference for the educational activities of the ecomuseo. There are permanent exhibitions considering bird nesting, stones and pebbles of the territory and the traditional fishing methods of the lake. For didactic activities this is a remarkable environment within which there are a large number of herb and plant species that can be found throughout Val del Lago.



Lago di Cavazzo or Lago dei Tre Comuni is the largest natural lake in Friuli Venezia Giulia and lies between the districts of Bordano, Cavazzo Carnico and Trasaghis. Despite the many changes to its original appearance determined by anthropic action, the basin still retains many elements of naturalistic interest. It is easy to access the road which runs around the entire circumference, offering beautiful views of the valley. It is also possible to reach its shores by varied and naturalistic pathways, horizontally and vertically aligned trails which allow many observation points for birdwatchers.



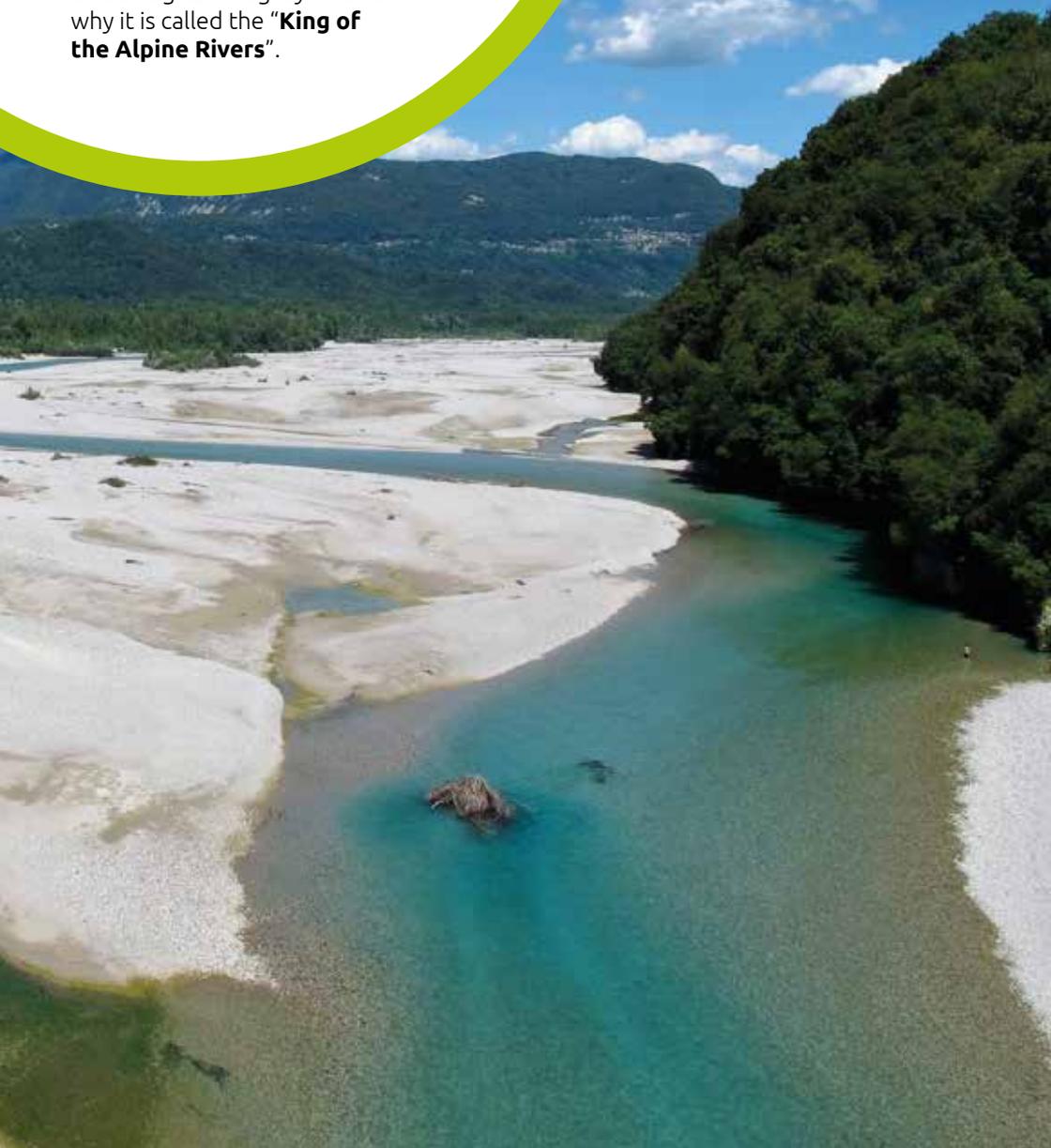
In the southern part of the lake an **ecological pond** has been built. This is an area where there has been an attempt to recreate the original lake environment prior to that of the present one; substantially modified by the production of hydroelectrical power. The cane thicket that grows there hosts numerous bird species which use the area for nesting. You can come across the silky crested **Great Crested Grebes** performing their complex courtship dance. At dusk you can hear the unmistakable fluttering and deep call of the **Bitterns**.

Lago di Cavazzo is located where there was once the ancient Tagliamento riverbed. As a testimony to this, along the path that leads to the lake from Interneppo you can observe the outcrops of the paleo-Tagliamento alluvial deposits. After the last glaciation, the course of the Tagliamento diverted to the east, where it is today, leaving a depression that has been flooded by the lake waters. There are also numerous faults along the rocky walls, signs of the intense geological activity that characterizes this part of Friuli.



The **Tagliamento** is not just “a river of Friuli”, it is “Friuli”; its hydrographic basin embraces the entire mountain area and has therefore played a key role in defining the physiognomy and environment of the whole region. Compared with other rivers of alpine origin, it has suffered much less human intervention and has maintained an important bioecological integrity. That is why it is called the “**King of the Alpine Rivers**”.

Between the village of Bordano and the Tagliamento there are winding roads and trails for an easy walk. After a few hundred meters you reach the **large riverbank**; at certain points, more downstream, it reaches up to two kilometers wide. Its channels intertwine along the riverbed forming islets and gravel bars in continuous change. Moving through the pebbles to observe them closely is a journey for the curious.



What seems like a uniform expanse of grey stones is in fact an elegant mix of pebbles of different colours, as are the different places from where each stone has travelled. It could happen that among these pebbles you can find **Curlew** eggs. The Curlew is a migratory bird coming to Europe in the spring to reproduce. It moves in search of semi-desert areas with a rocky expanse where it can easily hide (in Italy there are very few places where it can nest). You just have to find a loop where the water current is less strong to notice a trace of footprints left behind by wild animals during their nocturnal wanders: roe deer, wild boars, deer, hares, foxes and why not even bears!



Monte San

Simeone rises, in an isolated position, directly from the plain to over 1,500 meters. The particular structure and location determine its high flora biodiversity (there are almost 1,200 species of vascular plants of which there are 3,000 in the Friuli Region). This fact, among other things, also makes it possible to see a wide variety of butterflies in this area. Since the nineteenth century San Simeone has been the destination of entomologists and naturalists from all over Europe.



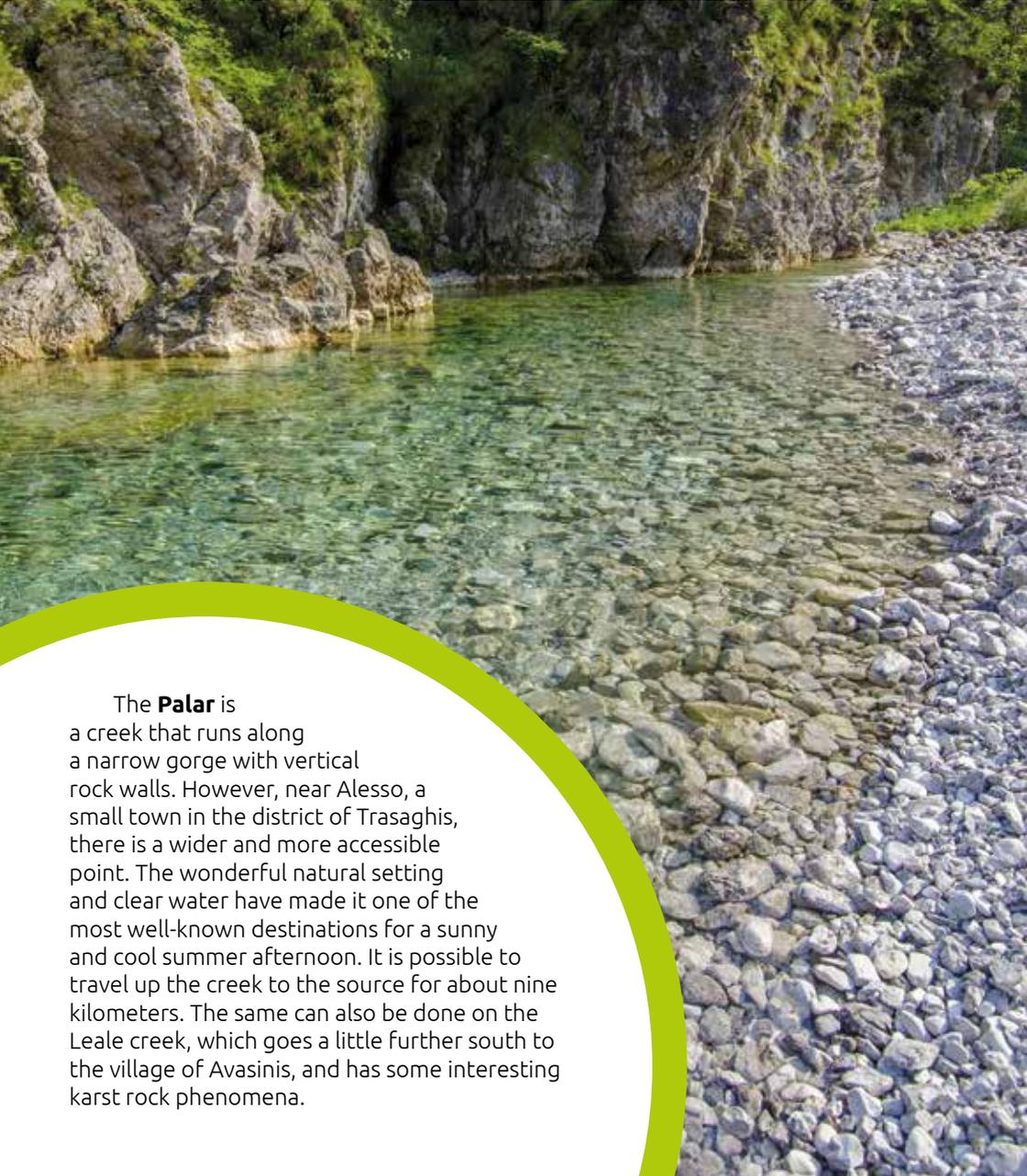
Bordano is home to the **Butterfly House**, the most important tropical ecosystem in Italy, with three large greenhouses that host hundreds of butterflies from America, Asia and the Amazon. The butterflies fly free in the middle of the visitors, and with them many other insects, small mammals, reptiles, rodents. The Butterfly House has also been a center of research, conservation and education for the last 15 years.

Butterflies hosted in butterfly houses are raised in tropical countries. **Butterfly farming** proved to be an effective alternative to cutting down the forests. It is an activity that allows thousands of families, often disadvantaged, to live with the natural environment without destroying it. Indeed, in order to breed butterflies it is necessary to take care of the wild plants that cater for caterpillars. Therefore, to breed the butterflies we need to convert the cultivated fields into the original forests.





An excursion to the woods above Avasinis, a village in the district of Trasaghis, leads to **Monte Corno** (Cuàn). From the top (1478 m) opens a panorama that spans in every direction and you have a privileged perspective where it is possible to observe griffins in flight. At the edge of the woods extend pastures inhabited by many endemic vegetation species. In the summer there is mountain pasture, and the mountain cottage can be a good stop off point for the hiker in need of refreshment or even an overnight stay.



The **Palar** is a creek that runs along a narrow gorge with vertical rock walls. However, near Alesso, a small town in the district of Trasaghis, there is a wider and more accessible point. The wonderful natural setting and clear water have made it one of the most well-known destinations for a sunny and cool summer afternoon. It is possible to travel up the creek to the source for about nine kilometers. The same can also be done on the Leale creek, which goes a little further south to the village of Avasinis, and has some interesting karst rock phenomena.

The purity of these waters is also evidenced by the presence of the **freshwater crayfish** (*Austropotamobius pallipes*). These crustaceans, protected for years, are strongly threatened by the degradation of their habitat. This is due to a species introduced by humans: the **Louisiana crewfish** (*Procambarus clarkii*) originating from the south of the United States. However, it is not yet present in the Palar. Among the various possible encounters along the waters of this creek, it is possible to encounter a **dice snake** (*Natrix tessellata*). Have no fear, this snake is not venomous and so is harmless towards humans. It feeds almost exclusively on fish and hunts for its unsuspecting prey underwater.



The **Vuarbis swamp** is a great naturalistic place for wild plants and animals. Its recessed position impedes the sun's rays and the mitigating action of temperate and humid currents from Lago di Cavazzo results in a microclimate and vegetation similar to those of the peaks of the Alps and northern Europe. In winter the sun's rays never reach the swamp; a thick ice crust forms on the surface of the water and a dense frost covers everything white.



Exploring the territory of Val del Lago can often introduce you to small and unexpected treasures of natural beauty. Sometimes they are remote and wild corners, more often they are characterized by a combination of natural landscapes and the intervention of man. For example, the two-arch **roman bridge** located in Somplago on the **Schiasazza river** (the main tributary of the lake) witnesses the passage of an ancient salt-road, still partly viable.



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*The **Butterfly House of Bordano** also organizes groups of nature tours around the territory of Val del Lago, with specific insights into the local fauna and flora.*



Learn more on the site
www.ecomuseovaldellago.it

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*The **Somplago hydroelectric power plant** is one of the A2A plants available for educational visits during the school period. Through the A2A School Project, students can learn about many plants in the various regions of Italy. In order to visit the plants it is necessary to book the visits through the portal on the A2A website at the following link: <https://www.a2a.eu/en/sostenibilita/a2a-scuola>*



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