



**The ophiolitic crags at Pietra Corva and Pan Perduto** - Set high up in the Oltrepò at an altitude of about 1000m, these outcrops (ophiolites) are surrounded by small areas of dry grassland where the typical flora is a blend of broadleaf woods, small glades, shrubs, and mowed meadows. All of this is beneficial to the Lepidoptera in the area which number about seventy species. While you are there, it's well worth visiting the Alpino Botanical Gardens, where you can observe and photograph the butterflies attracted to the rich variety of flowers. A path connects the Botanical Gardens with Pietra Corva and Pan Perduto.

District: Romagnese

Typical species: *Hamearis lucina*, *Satyrrium spini*, *Polyommatus coridon*, *Minois dryas*, *Arethusana arethusa*, *Erebia aethiops*



**The Park at Verde Castle** - The park is a protected area at an altitude of about 750m surrounding the ruins of Verde Castle. It is made up mainly of broadleaf woods with some areas of dry grassland and shrubs. One of these is home to The Butterfly Garden, a space which has been replanted in such a way as to attract the maximum number of butterfly varieties to a limited area. The park is highly accessible, with paths and thematic information panels. It is also home to a significant number of *Maculinea* oregano butterflies. This rare species is attracted to the wild oregano that is essential to the growth of caterpillars.

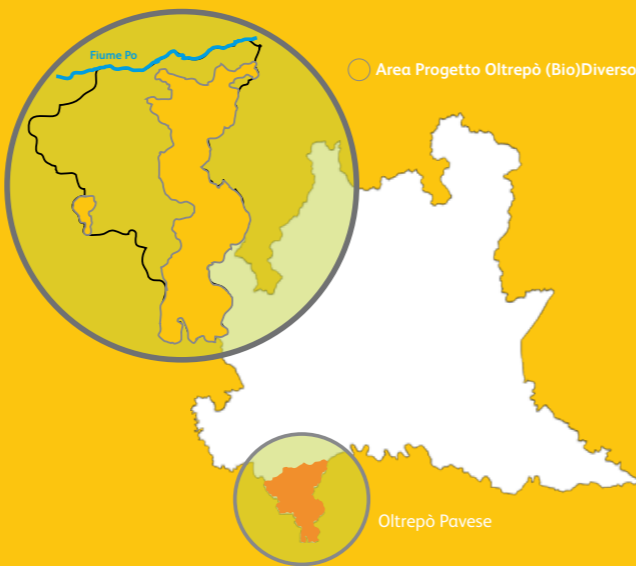
District: Valverde

Typical species: *Carcharodus lavatherae*, *Thymelicus acteon*, *Thecla quercus*, *Maculinea arion ligurica*, *Polyommatus daphnis*, *P. escheri*, *P. icarius*

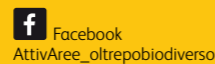
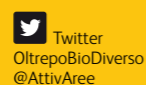


## Butterflywatching

observe, discover, respect



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Colourful, elegant and light on their wings, butterflies have always aroused curiosity and admiration. However, not everybody knows that these insects are excellent pollinators and bioindicators, able to provide valuable information about the quality of the ecosystem they inhabit.

Observing and photographing butterflies in their natural habit has been made possible by butterfly watching, an increasingly popular pastime that provides a closer look at this fascinating world. It offers the chance to appreciate the beauty and vast variety of diurnal butterflies respectfully and responsibly, while adding value to any nature trek or excursion. Butterfly watching is similar in approach to birdwatching, with enthusiasts and numerous associations throughout the world. Encountering butterflies in their natural habitat is exciting, and learning to identify them is a source of great satisfaction for naturalists, both professional and amateur alike.



This is what you need: a camera, binoculars with close focus, a butterfly net, and suitable clothing. Any butterflies that are caught are released immediately after having been identified.

It is also important to have a good guidebook so that you can identify different species, either during your trip or back home with the help of the photographs you have taken.

Today, butterflies are being threatened by pesticides, the destruction of their natural habitats, climate change, and collectors. In addition to increasing awareness and respect for these insects, butterfly watching can provide useful information about their whereabouts and distribution.

**REMEMBER: true butterfly watching means not harming either the butterflies or their environment!**

Where butterflies are concerned, the **Oltrepò Pavese** is an area particularly rich in biodiversity, bringing together species from both the Apennine-Mediterranean and Po Valley environments. Recent studies have shown that there are 122 species of diurnal butterfly (Lepidoptera rhopalocera) in the Oltrepò. This is 40% of the species in Italy and double the number of species in Great Britain, an area where butterfly watching is extremely popular. Alongside the common, widespread species, there are also rare butterflies protected at a national and European level. The wide variety of butterflies and the beauty of the environment they inhabit make the Oltrepò Pavese the ideal place for both expert and amateur butterfly watchers. Here are a few suggestions.



**The Monte Lesima Grasslands** - Mount Lesima (1724m) is the highest peak in the Oltrepò Pavese. It can be reached by a path that gradually rises to the summit, crossing spacious meadows that are a butterfly watcher's paradise. This strip of land, which includes the remarkable natural environment in the Corbesassi area, is one of the richest in terms of diurnal butterflies with 90 species having been identified so far. The Monte Lesima area is generally an extremely important site for both flora and fauna and home to species protected by Italian and European law.

District: Brallo di Pregola.

Typical species: *Lycaena alciphron*, *Thecla betulae*, *Maculinea rebeli*, *M. arion*, *Arethusana arethusa*, *Hipparchia semele*, *Erebia meolans*, *Zygaena spp.*

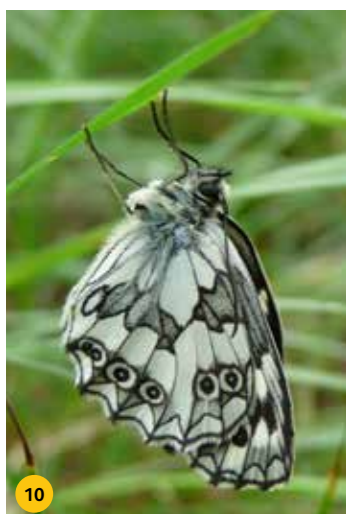
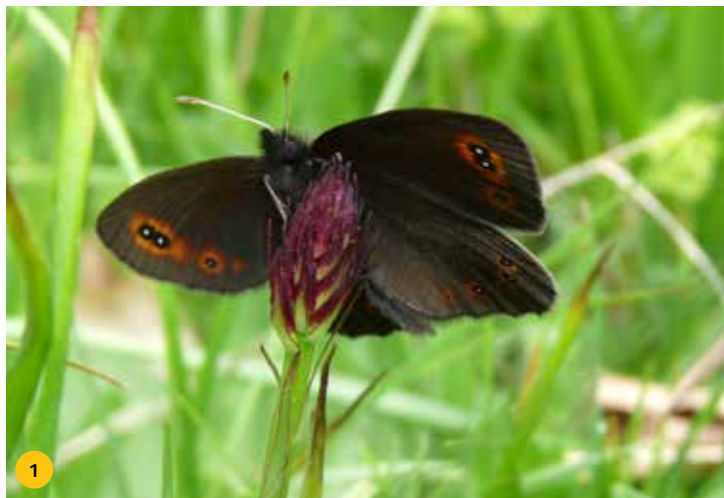
**The Monte Alpe Grasslands** - The Monte Alpe Nature Reserve (900m – 1254m) is in the upper Staffora Valley. It consists mostly of woods that are either naturally occurring or the result of reforestation. In addition to the woods, there are peaks and also meadows and sloping pastures that are of particular interest to butterfly watchers. In addition to the rich variety of flora in these well-conserved areas, there is also a surprisingly large number of butterflies. In June and July, it's possible to observe more than 60 species during just one excursion! The area is easily accessible thanks to a network of footpaths with information boards.

District: Menconico

Typical species: *Carterocephalus palaemon*, *Lycaena virgaureae*, *Brenthis hecate*, *Limenitis populi*, *Erebia medusa*



Texts and images by IOLAS – The Pavese association for the study and protection of butterflies.



Let us introduce you to some of the 122 butterflies to be found in the Oltrepò area. Why not experience butterfly watching first hand and try to find them in their natural habitat? Some of the species are common and easily encountered in numerous different areas, while others can only be found in very specific places (photos 1, 7, 8, 15). You can find a complete checklist of butterflies in the Oltrepò area on the Pavia Butterfly Association's site: Associazione Pavese per lo Studio e la Conservazione delle Farfalle, [www.iolas.it](http://www.iolas.it)

<b>01</b> <i>Erebia medusa</i>	<b>10</b> <i>Melanargia galathea</i>
<b>02</b> <i>Inachis io</i>	<b>11</b> <i>Ochloides sylvanus</i>
<b>03</b> <i>Issoria lathonia</i>	<b>12</b> <i>Papilio machaon</i>
<b>04</b> <i>Limenitis reducta</i>	<b>13</b> <i>Pieris brassicae</i>
<b>05</b> <i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	<b>14</b> <i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
<b>06</b> <i>Aporia crataegi</i>	<b>15</b> <i>Satyrrium w-album</i>
<b>07</b> <i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>	<b>16</b> <i>Thecla betulae</i>
<b>08</b> <i>Lycaena thersamon</i>	<b>17</b> <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
<b>09</b> <i>Maculinea arion</i>	

