

THE LAKE OF FRASSINO

A NATURAL, ECOLOGICAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF INESTIMABLE VALUE.

Lake Frassino, located in the municipality of Peschiera del Garda in the province of Verona, is an area of extraordinary environmental, ecological, and archaeological importance. This moraine lake, formed during the glacial periods, is not only a biodiversity hotspot but also a site of significant historical value, due to the presence of a Bronze Age pile-dwelling settlement now recognized as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps.

In recent decades, lake Frassino has been the focus of research and conservation efforts aimed at safeguarding both its natural ecosystem and its historical and archaeological heritage. This article explores the three fundamental aspects of this remarkable site: its biodiversity and environmental value, the conservation and protection measures, and its archaeological significance within the context of the Bronze Age.

A RICH AND DIVERSE ECOSYSTEM

Morphology and Environmental Characteristics

Lake Frassino is a glacial-origin lake basin covering approximately 80 hectares, of which 33 hectares are occupied by water. It measures around 800 meters in length, 400 meters in width, and reaches a maximum depth of 15 meters. Its formation dates back to the last glaciations, when the retreat of glaciers left behind moraine deposits, shaping a landscape characteristic of pre-Alpine regions.

This lake is characterized by stagnant waters with a relatively low water exchange rate, a factor that contributes to the accumulation of organic matter and promotes the growth of a wide variety of plant and animal species. Additionally, the presence of dense riparian vegetation helps maintain water quality and creates an ideal habitat for diverse wildlife species.



FLORA AND FAUNA

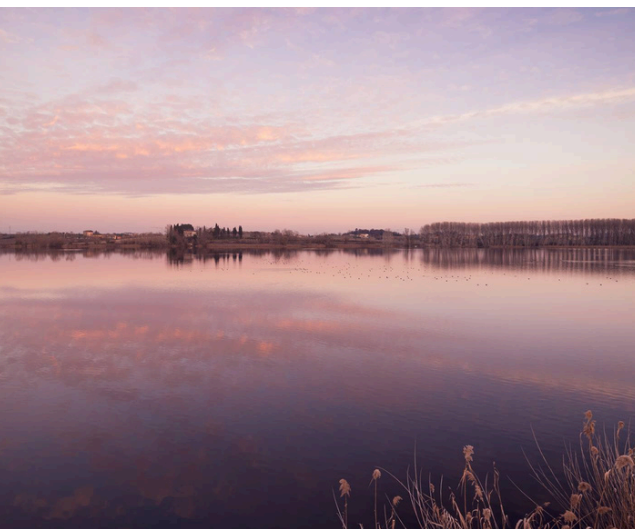
The lake's shores are surrounded by typical wetland vegetation, predominantly featuring reed beds of *Phragmites australis* and broadleaf cattail (*Typha latifolia*). This area provides a refuge for numerous species of aquatic birds, which use the lake as a nesting site and a resting place during migrations.

Among the most common migratory birds, swifts can be seen soaring over the lake between April and August, along with the kingfisher, bee-eater, and hoopoe, as well as various species of woodpeckers and passerines.

The reed beds also create an ideal habitat for numerous amphibian species, such as the green frog, and reptiles like the grass snake (*Natrix natrix*).

The lake's waters are home to several fish species, including rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*), tench (*Tinca tinca*), carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), and pike (*Esox lucius*), serving as an important resource for amphibians and reptiles.

The riparian vegetation and surrounding wetlands provide a valuable habitat for numerous insects and small mammals, such as otters and hedgehogs, which find shelter among bushes and submerged tree trunks.



PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION MEASURES

Thanks to its exceptional biodiversity, Laghetto del Frassino has been the focus of various conservation measures. Since the 1970s, it has been recognized as a protected area, and over time, its conservation status has been expanded. In 2007, it was officially included in the Natura 2000 network and designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) to ensure the preservation of its natural habitat and the species that inhabit it. This protection guarantees that the lake and its ecosystems remain intact, shielding them from threats such as urbanization and pollution. Additionally, the site is classified as a Site of Community Importance (SCI), recognized at the European level for its role in biodiversity conservation.

Conservation Activities Include:

- Monitoring of existing species to ensure the preservation of the ecosystem, with regular studies on bird, fish, and aquatic plant populations.
- Limiting human activities that could disturb the natural habitat, with regulations banning motorized boats and restricting uncontrolled access to the most sensitive areas.
- Restoring vegetation to maintain water quality and biodiversity, through reforestation with native species and control of invasive plants.
- Regulating fishing and recreational activities to prevent negative impacts on the ecosystem, by enforcing strict limits on sport fishing and promoting eco-friendly activities such as birdwatching and sustainable tourism.

Public awareness and education play a crucial role in the conservation of Laghetto del Frassino. Educational programs and guided tours are organized to engage local schools and the community, promoting environmental awareness and encouraging active participation in protecting the area.

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- Monitoring species populations to ensure the ecosystem's protection through regular studies.
- Restricting human activities that could disturb the natural habitat.
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- Regulating fishing and recreational activities to prevent negative impacts on the ecosystem.



THE BRONZE AGE PILE-DWELLING SITE:

A WINDOW INTO PREHISTORY

A Strategic Settlement

Beyond its ecological value, Laghetto del Frassino is also an archaeological site of international significance. Along its southwestern shore, archaeologists have uncovered a pile-dwelling village dating back to the late Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (approximately 1700–1300 BCE).

Archaeological Discoveries

Excavations conducted between 1989 and 2000 have revealed significant findings, including:

- Wooden piles, which formed the structural foundation of the dwellings.
- Ceramics and bronze artifacts, such as daggers and fibulae.
- Bone and flint tools, used for hunting and material processing.
- Evidence of metallurgical activities, indicating on-site bronze production.

In 2011, the settlement was officially recognized by UNESCO as part of the transnational “Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps” site, emphasizing the importance of preserving these remnants of Prehistoric civilizations.

Conclusions:

Lake of Frassino is a unique site that seamlessly blends natural heritage, biodiversity, and archaeology. Its extraordinary variety of ecosystems makes it a crucial area for the conservation of local flora and fauna, while the Bronze Age pile-dwelling site serves as a valuable testament to the ancient civilizations that once inhabited northern Italy.

The inclusion in the Natura 2000 network and the UNESCO World Heritage List ensures the protection of this exceptional site, but it remains essential to continue preserving and enhancing the area for future generations.

LE ALI DEL FRASSINO AND LA TOSINA: A SHARED COMMITMENT TO PRESERVING HISTORY

Among the still waters and pristine nature of the Frassino Oasis lies a hidden treasure. Not only a haven of biodiversity, but also a place that holds deep traces of our past: Neolithic artifacts and the remains of a pile-dwelling village dating back to the Bronze Age, now part of the UNESCO World Heritage.

Le Ali del Frassino proudly supports the La Tosina Association and the new Archaeological Documentation Center in Monzambano, inaugurated in 2025, which tells the fascinating story of the first communities that inhabited the lands between the morainic hills and the lake. Their presence, uncovered through years of research and excavation, is now made visible and accessible.

A journey through time: from pile-dwellings to the present day

Important archaeological finds have been discovered within the Frassino Oasis: wooden poles made of ash and oak used to support lake houses, tools, decorated pottery, and even a bronze dagger with a bone handle.



A heritage dating back over 3,500 years, brought to light by underwater explorations and excavations conducted between 1989 and 2000.

These discoveries confirmed the presence of a stable and organized human settlement, perfectly adapted to the lakeside environment. A site so significant that it was included in the UNESCO serial project "Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps."

A center that preserves and shares

The new Documentation Center in Monzambano was created with the goal of enhancing and making these findings accessible to the public. Exhibits, explanatory panels, multimedia installations, and an engaging narrative offer an immersive experience that connects archaeology, nature, and the local history.

It's a space open to everyone – not only history lovers, but also families, schools, and visitors curious to explore the ancient roots of our landscape.

A natural choice: supporting the territory

Le Ali del Frassino's support for La Tosina and this cultural initiative reflects a broader vision: a conscious form of tourism that combines hospitality, environmental protection, and the promotion of local excellence. Because protecting an oasis also means preserving the memory of the civilizations that once flourished there.

Every stay at Le Ali del Frassino is an invitation to experience nature – and to rediscover history. As you walk through the trails of the oasis, with only birdsong to break the silence, you can imagine the lives of those who once built, cultivated, and dreamed right here.

Come discover a place that tells the past and builds the future.

THE PROTECTION OF THE OASIS

THE COMMITMENT OF HOTEL LE ALI DEL FRASSINO

Located in the immediate vicinity of the lake, Hotel Le Ali del Frassino has embraced a philosophy of sustainability and environmental protection to ensure the preservation of the Oasis. The resort's initiatives focus on eco-friendly practices and projects aimed at enhancing local biodiversity, with targeted interventions across various areas.

Biodiversity and Sustainability Initiatives

Organic Vineyard

In 2019, the hotel established an organic vineyard, adopting the “married vine” method, where vines grow alongside trees such as mulberry and field maple. This innovative approach creates a favorable environment for numerous bird species native to the agricultural landscape, contributing to the diversification of agricultural habitats and the protection of local wildlife.

Planting 400 Native Trees

Also in 2019, 400 new native trees were planted, improving the oxygenation of the area and providing shelter and habitat for local fauna. Additionally, the lakeshore is home to at least five century-old trees, including a rare pear tree over 200 years old, a species increasingly difficult to find, representing an invaluable natural heritage.



Creation of an Emmer Wheat Field with Cornflowers and Poppies

This initiative aims to increase plant biodiversity and provide an ideal environment for pollinators and small animals. The emmer wheat field is not intended for production but was sown exclusively to enhance the area's natural value, offering shelter and nourishment for many species.



Installation of Green Roofs with Bee-Friendly Flowers

Several buildings within the resort feature green roofs with sedum and bee-friendly flowers, which contribute to thermal insulation and air quality improvement, while also reducing the environmental impact of the structures. These green roofs act as micro-habitats for insects, including essential pollinators such as bees and butterflies.



Bat Houses and Pollinator Shelters

The hotel has installed bat houses, which play a crucial role in controlling harmful insect populations, as well as pollinator shelters for bees and bumblebees. These artificial refuges support the presence of species vital to maintaining natural ecosystem balance.

Alternating Grass Cutting to Protect Pollinators

The hotel employs a rotational grass-cutting technique, which allows spontaneous wildflowers to bloom longer, providing a sustainable habitat for pollinating insects and small mammals. This method ensures that key areas remain rich in biodiversity while maintaining a balanced landscape.

Reed Bed Maintenance for Bird Conservation

The reed bed is a fundamental part of the Laghetto del Frassino ecosystem, providing shelter for numerous bird species, including many migratory ones. Hotel Le Ali del Frassino actively contributes to its controlled maintenance, avoiding invasive interventions that could disrupt this delicate natural habitat.

Certifications and Recognitions

In 2018, Hotel Le Ali del Frassino introduced the Suite Belvedere, designed to blend seamlessly with the surrounding natural environment. These structures are entirely clad in natural larch wood and feature green roofs with sedum, along with solar panels to enhance energy efficiency and reduce resource consumption. Their low-impact construction reflects the resort's commitment to sustainability and the preservation of the natural landscape.



Transition to a Plastic-Free Approach

Hotel Le Ali del Frassino is undertaking a significant transition towards a plastic-free policy, aiming to drastically reduce the use of single-use plastics and adopt more sustainable solutions. Among the initiatives already implemented:

- Elimination of plastic cups in rooms and the spa, replaced with eco-friendly paper alternatives.
- Sustainable courtesy sets available upon request, featuring paper packaging and solid cosmetics to reduce the environmental impact of single-use packaging.
- Paper straws, eliminating plastic from the restaurant and bar services.
- Reduction of plastic bottles, introducing reusable glass alternatives.
- Polymerized cups in the pool area, made from innovative, low-impact materials, ensuring both safety and sustainability.

A Recognized Commitment to Biodiversity

Thanks to these concrete sustainability efforts, Hotel Le Ali del Frassino has been awarded the prestigious Biodiversity Friends certification by the World Biodiversity Association. This recognition highlights the resort's commitment to biodiversity conservation and its responsible management of natural resources.

The company has also successfully **obtained ESG sustainability certification**, achieving a **BBB rating**. This result confirms its concrete and ongoing commitment to a more responsible, ethical, and environmentally conscious development model. **It is a milestone that reflects the company's dedication to integrating the principles of environmental, social, and governance sustainability into every aspect of its operations, contributing to the creation of a more balanced and aware future.**