

## Broken balances? Let's put nature back together!

*Equilibri in frantumi?  
Ricomponi la natura!*



The landscape of the islands of the Tuscan Archipelago consists of a mosaic of many different habitats, some of which are home of a rare and protected flora.

### THE VEGETATION OF THE ROCKY COASTS



### SALINITY-PROOF

The rocky cliffs are extreme environments where vegetation capable of withstanding high concentrations of salt due to marine aerosols is quite rare. It is one of the environments most subjected to the threat of being invaded by succulent plants coming from exotic locations, such as the Hottentot Fig featuring gaudy pink and yellow flowers, the Prickly Pear or Agaves. But even the native plants give life to spectacular blooms with the yellow of the *Helichrysum* and the Silver Ragwort, the soft pink of the *Limonium* that can be found on our islands available in the different endemic species.

### A RARITY IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

It represents an ecosystem consisting of different microhabitats which is found exclusively at Lacona (Capoliveri) in the Tuscan Archipelago. The wind and the sand have determined the special adaptations of the plants. The Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*), which grows very close to the sea, has long roots which are essential in order to anchor to the inconsistent ground. You will also be able to find other species where the dunes are consolidated such as: the Sea Daffodil (*Pancratium maritimum*) and the Prickly Juniper (*Juniperus oxycedrus ssp. macrocarpa*). These environments can be damaged by erosion or by the excessive trampling.



### THE SAND DUNES



### THE MEDITERRANEAN MEADOWS

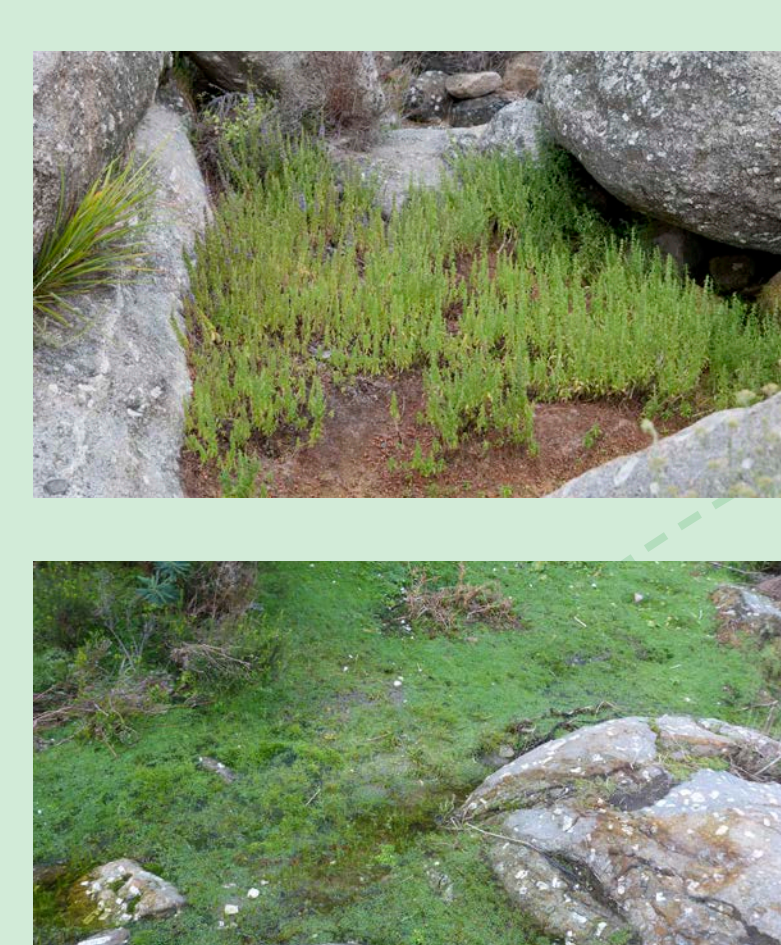


### WHERE ORCHIDS BLOOM

In the openings among the maquis, on soils poor in nutrients, there are growing plants which remain sleepy during the summer and begin flourishing again in the spring thanks to their underground seeds or bulbs. In this habitat, you can observe the splendid blooms of some orchids which have developed refined pollination systems: they imitate the appearance, movement or even the scents of some insects, attracting them in order to encourage the transfer of pollens from one flower to another.

### SO MUCH LIFE IN SUCH LITTLE WATER

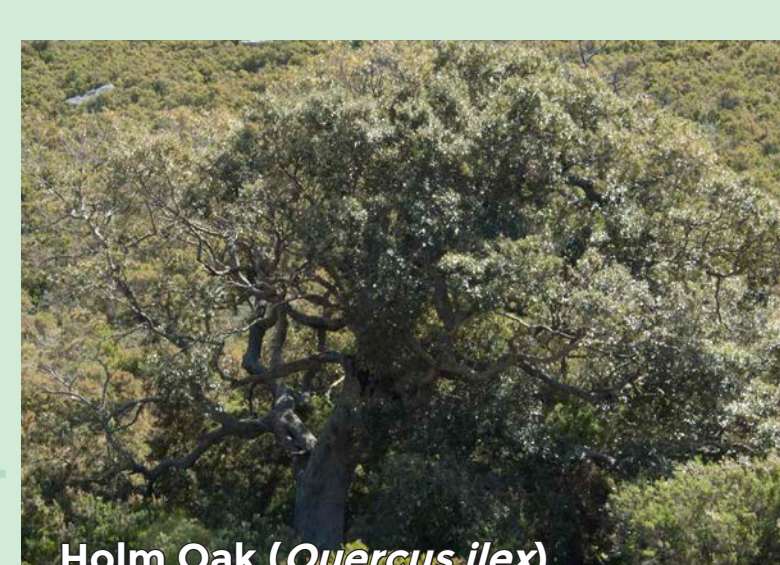
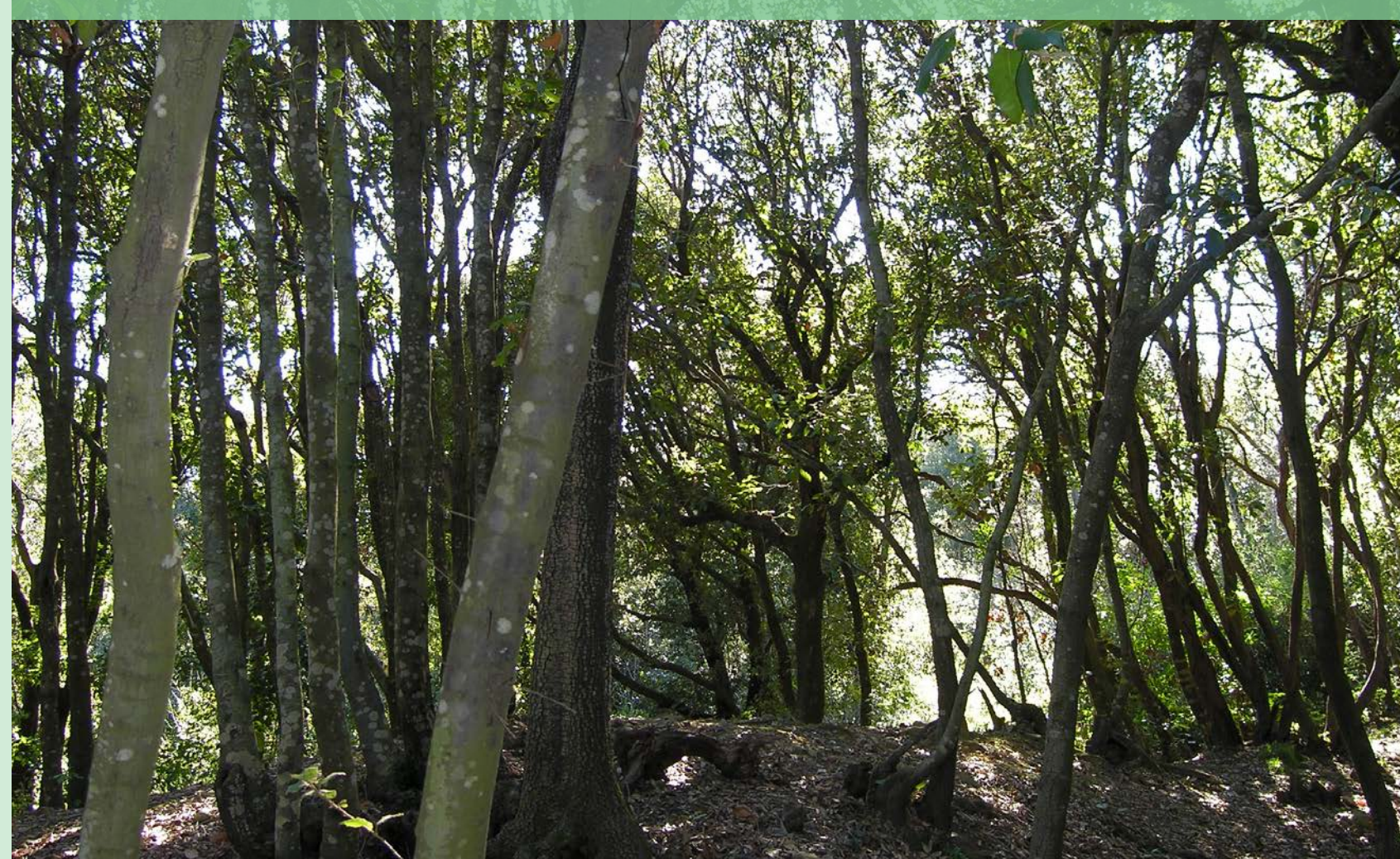
Small, highly specialised plants settle in limited depressions in the ground or in the cavities of the rocks which are flooded during the winter due to the rain. These are the Romulea or the Isoetes which restore life to these ephemeral environments in spring. They have their underground roots immersed in mud and nutrient-poor soil while their delicate flowers and vegetative parts are emerged. The trampling and shadowing over by the arboreal and shrubby flora may determine the loss of these habitats.



### THE TEMPORARY PONDS



### HOLM OAK FORESTS



### MIGHTY EVERGREEN TREES

The Holm Oak forests are typical forest formations of Mediterranean islands; they need water and soils with a certain amount of nutrients which give life to these mighty trees: trunks, branches and evergreen leaves. Since ancient times, man has exploited the timber to generate energy and earn livelihood. In some cases, the exploitation was so intense that today, in Montecristo, Pianosa and Capraia for example, only some "exemplary wrecks" remain struggling for survival. The acorns and the small seedlings are precious and saving them from the voraciousness of the black rat, wild goats and other ungulates represents a priority for the National Park of the Tuscan Archipelago.



### THE MEDITERRANEAN MAQUIS



### A TANGLE OF BRANCHES AND LEAVES

The woods and the maquis grow where the Holm Oak forests did not have the chance to recover or where the ecological conditions are too strict for its recovery. The typical plants are the Heather Tree, Strawberry Tree, Mediterranean Buckthorn, Broom, Myrtle, Lentisk. Along the rocky shores of almost all the islands, the Phoenician Juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea ssp. turbinata*) form homogenous bushings, giving rise to impenetrable thickets. On Pianosa it is negatively affected by the presence of Aleppo Pine, a conifer that grows very quickly and used by man for reforestation.

The balance between all the plant communities of the Archipelago is the key to ensuring the survival of many natural species and to preserve this extraordinary biodiversity.

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