

Visitor Information

Coordinates
27°12'50.0", 11°19'50.0"
Central point

Topographic map
CNS 1:25'000
Sheet no. 1313, Bellinzona

Access point / Infopoint
Vogorno, Town Hall

Most suitable period
June - October

1	Infopoint	📍
2	Mountain pasture	🏠
3	Borgna Hut (27°14'670 / 11°20'870)	🏠
4	Crápia Hut (27°13'450 / 11°20'960)	🏠
5	Colletta Oratory	🏠
6	Oratory of S. Antonio	🏠
7	Historic staircase	🏠
8	Spring	🏠
9	Tripod for overhanging wire	🏠
10	Spring	🏠
11	Preliminary works	🏠
12	Wall of Sassello	🏠
13	Ancient settlement	🏠
14	Charcoal burners	🏠
15	Beechwood	●
16	Abieti - Beech forest	●
17	Larch forest	●
18	High altitude pioneer forest	●
19	Birch forest	●
20	Alder Grove	●
21	Mixed deciduous forest	●
22	Colletta chestnut forest	●
23	Pomvégia chestnut forest	●
24	Wet biotope	●
25	Wet biotope	●

Equipment
Mountain equipment necessary.

Signposting

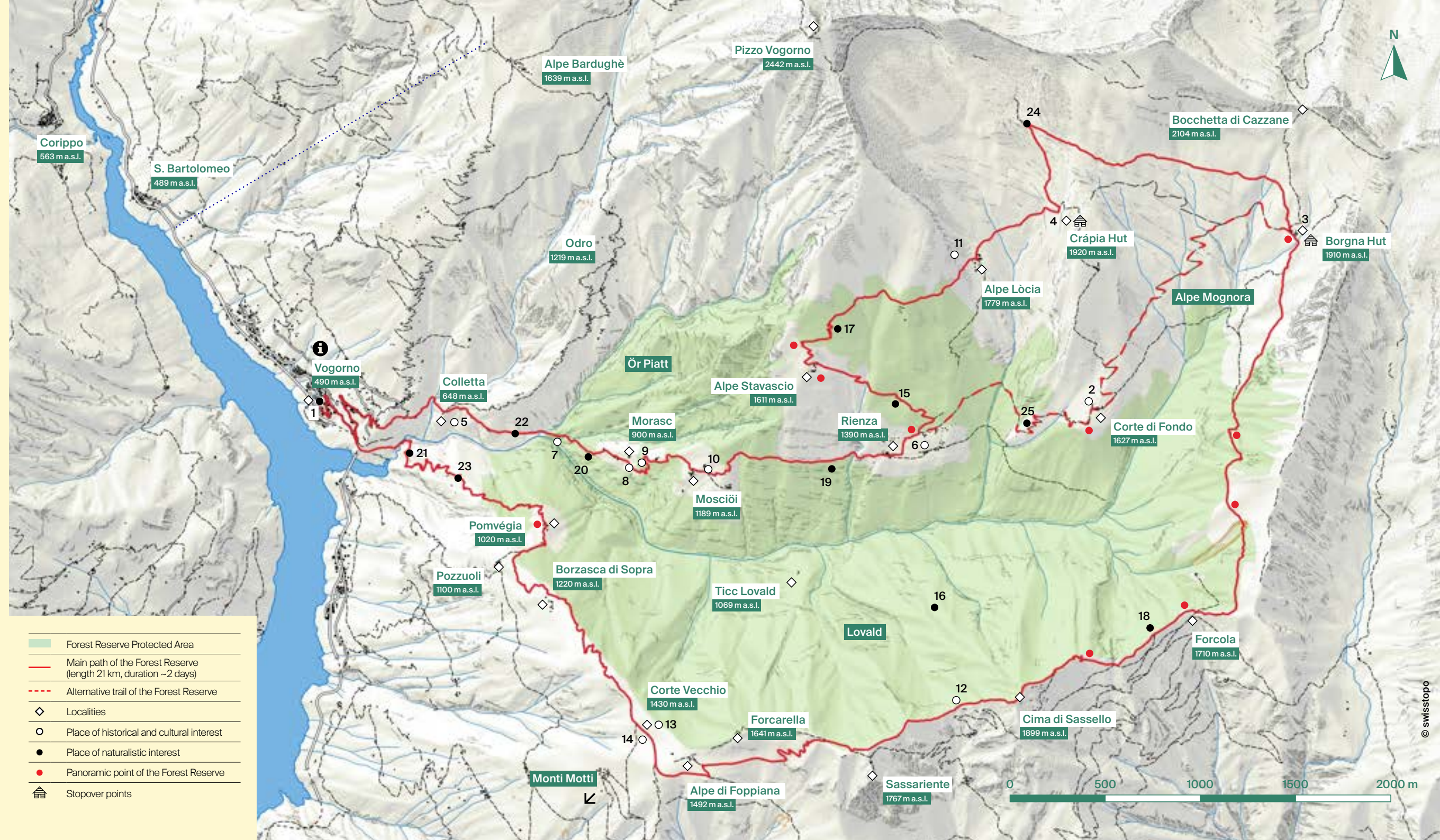
The trail network is marked with its own green signs and is indicated on the ground by yellow signs for hiking trails, white-red-white signs for mountain trails and white-blue-white for alpine trails (along the Sassello wall).

Stopover points

Borgna Hut: with kitchen, services and dormitory.
Crápia Hut: simple emergency bivouac.

Connections

Vogorno can be reached by the Val Verzasca cantonal road and is served by the postbus that departs from the Locarno SBB station, passing through the Tenero SBB station and Gordola Post Office.



- Forest Reserve Protected Area
- Main path of the Forest Reserve (length 21 km, duration ~2 days)
- - - Alternative trail of the Forest Reserve
- ◇ Localities
- Place of historical and cultural interest
- Place of naturalistic interest
- Panoramic point of the Forest Reserve
- 🏠 Stopover points

Geology, paedology and morphology

The Val Porta belongs to the zone of pennidic overlays. The crystalline rocks, metamorphosed during the alpine orogenesis, are mainly paragneiss, minute gneiss and mica schists. Groundwater debris is particularly frequent on the right slope of Val Porta. Rock emerges to a greater extent on the left slope. The soil typology includes acid brown soils in areas occupied by broadleaf trees and podzolic soils in those occupied by conifers. In general, therefore, there are acid soils with great permeability and a marked presence of rocky skeleton. These types of soil favour a good development of the forest.

The important altimetric gradient significantly influences the forest contents of The Val Porta: from Vogorno at 490 m a.s.l. it goes up until Pizzo Vogorno, at 2442 m a.s.l. Over a distance of about 5 km one passes from the mixed deciduous forest of the Piedmont strip to the larch forests and alpine grasslands of the upper areas, passing through the beech and fir woods of the intermediate areas. Val Porta has been shaped by the intense action of glaciers and rivers and therefore presents two distinct profiles, with the upper part tending to be characterized, particularly on the upper slopes by the U-shaped glacial form, and the lower part with a V-shaped fluvial connotation.

Climate

Val Porta is located in the transition zone between the lake and alpine regions. The main meteorological influences come from the south, which is mainly reflected in the precipitation and temperature regimes. The vegetation period in the hilly area lasts 6 - 7 months (April - October) and in the subalpine zone 4 - 5 months (May - September). Rainfall is abundant and particularly intense during the vegetative period.

Temperatures

Annual average in Vogorno 12 - 13 °C (temperatures must be corrected by 0,6°C for every 100 m of height difference)

Precipitation

Annual average 1800 - 2000 mm



Contacts

Patriziato di Vogorno
6632 Vogorno

For information and contacts
valporta.ch/info
or the QR code



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Riserva
Forestale
ValPorta

EN

Historical notes

Val Porta, oriented along the East-West axis, presents two morphologically distinct slopes. The left one, very steep and furrowed by deep valleys, is too inconvenient and difficult to access, as a document of 1930 states; it culminates on the Cima di Sassello (1899 m a.s.l.) and is entirely covered by forest. The right side instead extends well beyond the limit of the forest, up to the 2442 m a.s.l of Pizzo Vogorno: just as steep and precipitous in the lower part, it opens onto wide sunny pastures high up.

These remarkable differences have determined, since remote times, a diversified approach to the two slopes. The one to the south was exploited for its wood, while the one to the north has been used mainly for its grass. Along the paths of the forest reserve there are countless artifacts related to the exploitation of the Val Porta, some of which we would like to mention.

Access	
The springs of Morasc and Mosciöi	
Overhanging wires	
Avalanche protection works	

The Sassello wall



Please do not walk on the wall

The wall of Sassello

The Old Court of Foppiana

Another artefact created as part of the protective works is the wall of Sassello, which runs along the watershed between Forcarella and the Cima di Sassello, for over a kilometre and a half. Completed in 1948, this truly monumental work was intended to prevent the goats from grazing on the slope of Lovald and from crossing the ridge, coming down and damaging the young trees planted on the southern slope.

Originally, the Alpe Foppiana was situated on the flat ridge to the north-west of the present one, in the locality called Corte Vecchio, where a ruined (but still clearly legible) settlement included at least four buildings and one or two enclosures. This articulated complex recalls similar very ancient situations.

The first sale of woods in Val Porta was recorded in 1510: since then there have been regular, often very extensive cuts. Large quantities of wood, especially beech, were used for the production of charcoal, as indicated by dozens of charcoal kilns scattered all over the mountain. Near the Corte Vecchio of Foppiana these flat squares with a circular perimeter are very evident, often supported by a wall downstream.

Access	
The springs of Morasc and Mosciöi	
Overhanging wires	
Avalanche protection works	

The mountains of Morasc and Mosciöi are made up of small groups of buildings that rise on a steep ridge far from the waterways. The presence of springs was providential for these settlements. The trail leads right past them, so that people and animals passing by could quench their thirst.

Around 1880, the first cable (rope) ways appeared. Without a motor, they allowed heavy loads to be sent downstream. Their installation constituted a real revolution in the transport of mountain products (wood, hay, cheese). Between Morasc and Mosciöi one can observe some *bordiöm* (large iron wires) on the ground or suspended among the branches, as well as a wooden tripod that served as a support.

In 1888, an avalanche destroyed about twenty buildings in the western part of Rienza and opened up a dangerous breach in the forest above. In 1936 a comprehensive wide-ranging project to build terraces to hold back the snow above Rienza and Lòcia began. Suspended during the war period, the work was completed in the 1950s.

The wall of Sassello

Arboreal vegetation and forest formations

Until the 1960s, the use of the forest of Val Porta was intense, anthropic pressure was important and consequently the forests were generally young and with a limited amount of woodland.

Afterwards, the strong decrease in agricultural activity and the abandonment of forest use allowed the arboreal vegetation to regain a good part of the territory and to evolve in a natural way, approaching in part the structural and compositional characteristics of the forest at the last stage of its natural succession (climax forest). Today, forests are generally characterized by natural hillside, mountainous and subalpine area forests, some of which are mature and vigorous.

Val Porta is located in the seasonal region defined as “southern boundary alps with sporadic spruce” and is characterized by the following forest formations: the mixed deciduous forests (hilly belt), the beech forests, beech-woods and birch forests (mountain belt), larch forests and high-altitude pioneer woods (subalpine belt). For each forest formation the following main forest types observed are indicated in italics on the ground.

The beeches	
The fir-beeches	
Larch forests	
High altitude pioneer woods	
The birch forests	
The mixed deciduous forest	

The beech forests are by far the most predominant forest formation up to 1500 -1600 m a.s.l. on soils that are generally stable and acidified, where the beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is at its ecological optimum. In the forest of Lovald, and sporadically on the right slope, there are mature stands with beech trees of considerable dimensions.

Luzulo niveae-Fagetum typicum Luzulo niveae-Fagetum dryopteridetosum

This kind of forest was likely much more common in the past. The only significant trace is present in front of Rienza in the Lovald forest between 1300- 1500 m a. s. l., with some small stands of silver fir (*Abies alba*).

Luzulo silvaticae-Abieti-Fagetum calamagrostietosum arundinaceae insubricum

Presence of natural and anthropogenic larch forests. The grazed larch forests of Alpe Stavascio, abandoned decades ago, are characterized by old larches (*Larix decidua*) of remarkable dimensions, while the larch plantation of Ör Piatt, created in 1898, is dominated by larch trees, accompanied by spruces and beeches.

Rbododendron ferruginei-Laricetum Adenostylo-Laricetum Juniperus-Laricetum

Dominated by green alder or drosa (*Alnus viridis*) and the rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), these constitute the arboreal cover of the upper belt, with outposts located around 1850 m a.s.l. a few tens of meters from the summit of Sassello.

Alno viridi-Sorbetum aucupariae Alnetum viridis

Natural birch forests (*Betula pendula*) on blocks or in the areas abandoned by agriculture.

Corylo-Betuletum on blocks Corylo-Betuletum on zonal locations

Adult and mature stands of mixed broadleaf trees, located at the entrance of Val Porta, with the sporadic presence of chestnut woods. Presence of black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) along the path from Colletta to Morasc.

Luzulo niveae-Tilietum Cruciato glabrae-Quercetum castanosum var. basifila Arunco-Fraxinetum castanosum

Flora

Androsace vandellii

The floristic surveys carried out in Val Porta in 2019 allowed us to count about 200 species, of which 4 are protected at the national level. Vandelli’s Androsace (*Androsace vandellii*) is present on the rocky wall south-east of the of the Bocchetta di Cazzane, while the Round-Leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) is an insectivorous plant that is potentially threatened with extinction that grows in the marshy land between the Borgna Hut and Alpe Lòcia. Finally, there are two protected orchids that are considered bio-indicators to measure the level of health of various ecosystems: the Common spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata subsp. fuchsii*) observed between Rienza, Mosciöi and Colletta, and the Small white orchid (*Pseudorcbis albida*) present in the grasslands above the Borgna Hut and in the open larch forest between the hut and Corte di Fondo.

Androsace vandellii

Round-leafed drosera

Candid orchid

Androsace vandellii

Round-leafed drosera

Candid orchid

Androsace vandellii

Round-leafed drosera

Candid orchid

Mushrooms

Mushrooms are exceptional organisms in many ways. There are almost 9000 species currently known in Switzerland and almost 4000 in Ticino. No less than 190 species of mushrooms were observed during surveys carried out in 2019, but it is estimated that there may be twice as many. The richest forest was the beech forest, with 111 species. Of note is the discovery near Ticc Lovald of *Tricholoma roseoacereum*, an endangered mushroom whose conservation is a priority South of the Alps.

Tricholoma roseoacereum

Tricholoma roseoacereum

Tricholoma roseoacereum

Tricholoma roseoacereum

Tricholoma roseoacereum

Tricholoma roseoacereum

Fauna

Red frog

Red frog

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Fire salamander

Muced bunting

Muced bunting

Muced bunting

Scarce copper

Scarce copper

Scarce copper

Scarce copper

Scarce copper

General Information	
Designation	Val Porta Forest Reserve (<i>Riserva forestale Val Porta</i>)
Promoter	Patriziato of Vogorno
Year of institution	2016
Protected area	641 ha
Property conditions	The protected area is located entirely on property of the Patriziato of Vogorno.
Typology	Forest reserve according to the "Concept for the creation of forest reserves in Canton Ticino".
Management	The wooded area is left entirely to natural evolution except for safety cuts along watercourses and hiking trails

Large **mammals** such as Chamois, Deer, Ibx and Marmots are relatively easy to observe in the Val Porta, because no hunting zones have been created in the area around Pizzo Vogorno. Smaller sized mammals are instead more difficult to sight, but they constitute the majority of species. By applying appropriate methodologies, it was possible to take a census of almost half of the 47 mammal species currently known in Ticino. It is interesting to note that Val Porta represents the southern limit of the distribution area of several species typical of the Alps, such as the Mountain hare, the Stoat or the Alpine shrew. There are at least 10 species of **bats** that frequent the Val Porta, almost half of the Ticino’s species. They range from the Soprano bats, the smallest indigenous species, to the European free-tailed bat, which is our largest bat. Several species find refuge in the cavities of trees, among them, Leisler’s bat.

Of the 13 species of **reptiles** present in Ticino, 6 have been observed in the Val Porta, of which only one is poisonous: the European asp. Among the harmless species we find the Smooth snake, the smallest indigenous snake seen as it does not usually exceed 70 cm in length. As for **amphibians**, the European common frog and the Fire salamander have been sighted.

The censuses of the **avifauna** have led to the identification of a total of 69 bird species. As many as 58 can be considered nesting and represent about 40% of those that regularly nest in Ticino. Most of the species can be found along the paths of Val Porta as far as Mosciöi and Rienza, in the deciduous woods alternating with more open areas rich in bushes. Among the common ones, such as the many tits, the Common chiffchaff and the Rock bunting are the ones that are most noticeable for their repeated songs and sharp verses. Along the path one might also happen to observe the typical signs of the Black woodpecker, that pierces the trunk of the trees with its beak in search of the larvae it feeds on. Together with the Great Spotted Woodpecker, it is considered the architect of the woods because every year it digs a new cavity for nesting, thus making the old one a refuge for other species. In the larch forests, the Boreal owl and the Eurasian Pygmy-owl (the smallest European nocturnal bird of prey) have also been detected.

During the censuses carried out in Val Porta it was possible to observe 25 species of **orthoptera** (crickets, grasshoppers and locusts), which correspond to almost one third of the species present in Switzerland, 60 species of **diurnal butterflies**, among which the male Scarce copper, which has particularly beautiful bright orange wings, and 30 species of **ants**, including the *Formica exsecta*, one of the most common found in extensive meadows.

General Information

Val Porta Forest Reserve

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Beech forest above Rienza