

Living creatures in the brooks

The petrifying springs , rich in oxygen with fairly constant water temperature and with a lot of hiding places, are the ideal environment for the sweet water Crayfish



Sweet Water Crayfish
(*Austropotamobius pallipes*)

This specie was very diffuse and often fished for food but has been reduced due to an epidemic and water pollution.

Another small animal found in this areas is the salamander an amphibian more easily found in wet weather conditions.



Salamander
(*Salamandra salamandra*)

Actions to preserve the habitat of the Petrifying springs: The LIFE Nature Projects

In the Park with the support of the European Union and Lombardy region , within the LIFE Nature projects work is ongoing to preserve this habitat Following a preliminary research activity forest management and stabilization of the inclines are practised to stabilize the spring environment To limit the disturbances caused by the transit on the footpaths various small bridges wooden gangways and fences are maintained. Notice boards with explanations have been placed nearby the most significant phenomena.

Where can we observe the Petrifying Springs?

The best locations suitable for an easy observation minimizing the environmental risks are:

- In the Santa Croce valley at the Molgoretta Springs;
- at the "Riunione" , in the Curone valley, near Cà Soldato;
- along the road from Valfredda to Montev ecchia;
- along the path from Valfredda to Cà Soldato.

Various additional spots can be found in the hills.

It is absolutely necessary to be respectful of the environment and to avoid any kind of contact or disturbance !

It is specifically requested not to abandon the paths and not to walk inside the riverbeds.

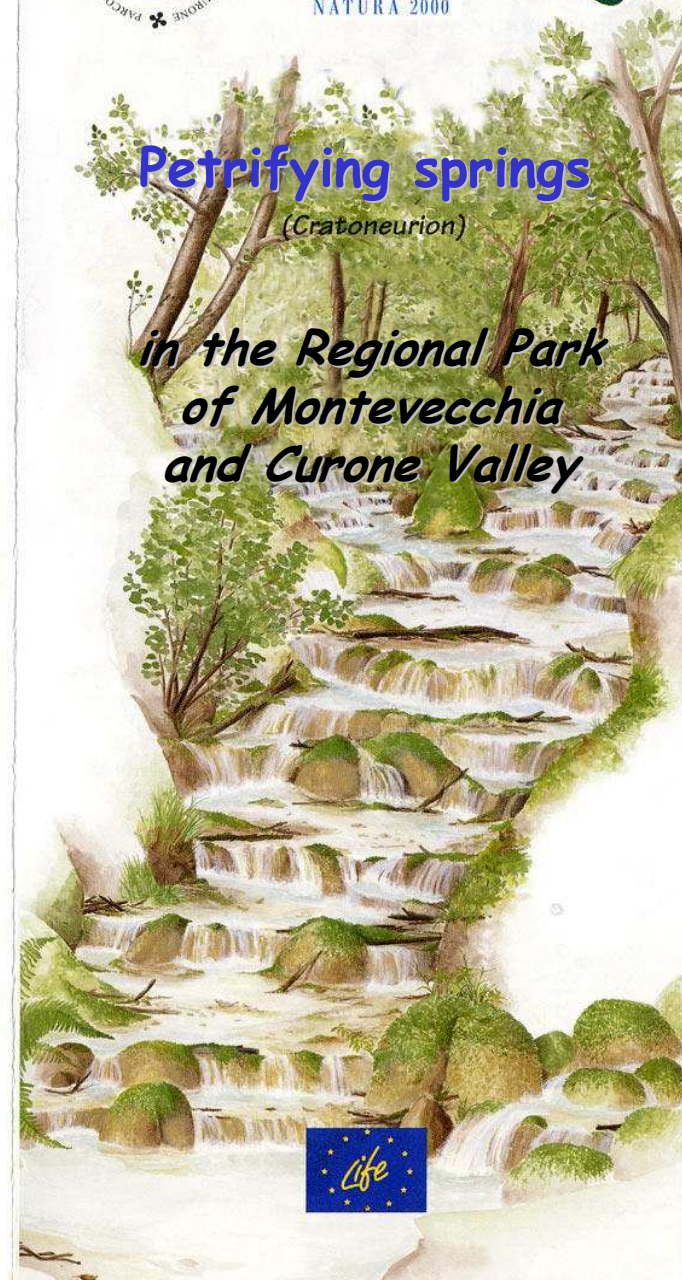
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Petrifying springs

(Cratoneurion)

*in the Regional Park
of Montev ecchia
and Curone Valley*



Petrifying springs Habitat (Cratoneurion)

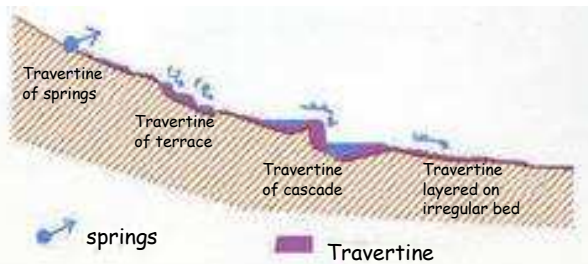
The petrifying springs habitat is one of the three natural conservation priorities acknowledged by the European Community in the Park. This Habitat is made by small brooks fed by perennial springs where phenomena of travertine formation occurs.

Travertine, a porous rock, forms as calcium carbonate is deposited from the water of mineral springs that are saturated with dissolved calcium bicarbonate.

Water leaves continuously growing mineral deposits on the plants, small rocks, leaves and mosses coating them to create bizarre shapes via a physical biological mechanism of small waterfalls and specific mosses and algae.

To this Habitat has been assigned the name of the mosses community **Cratoneurion** which is particularly important in the travertine formation phenomena.

In the most favourable conditions larger and more articulated formations are noted with systems containing small pools and waterfalls followed downstream by potholes and final deposition.



Hydrologic scheme of the petrifying springs

Petrifying springs in the Park and the care to conserve them

The phenomena of travertine formation declines moving away from the springs due to the precipitation as Calcium Carbonate and, after a few hundred meters, totally disappears.

These habitats are located in the initial part of the brooks where perennial springs are inside the woods in the hills in the northern part of the Park mostly in Valle Santa Croce and High Curone valley.

The most important factors in preserving the Petrifying Springs are the regular presence of water its temperature and quality, the main risks are changes in the catchment basin caused by natural events (landslides) or by human activity like excavations buildings etc. pollution, sudden increase of light in the woods (excessive logging) into which run the brooks.

Another risk are the excess of visitors and all behaviours that can cause a direct alteration of the habitat like the transit of equipment horses bicycles directly in the riverbeds.

