

FALK HUT

The Falk hut is located a couple of km beyond the village of Eita, in eastern Valgrosina, along the dirt road that leads to Viola Valley through the Verva pass. The hut is located on a flat area at an altitude of 2005 m on the orographic left of the valley, surrounded by larches and mountain pines. The hut is not manned by staff or managers but it is accessible as an unequipped emergency bivouac or, for groups by making arrangements with the Italian Alpine Club of Tirano which manages it and makes it available by reservation from June to August.

The hut and the valley are dominated to the north-east by the Sasso Maurigno (3062 m), to the east by Pizzo Coppetto (3066 m), to the south-east by the Cime di Redasco and to the west by the Sasso Calosso (2532 m).

The flat area where the hut is located is a terrace of glacial origin, barred downstream by a high rock step and bordered on the sides by two deep torrential furrows.

The entire area is a Site of Community Importance (SCI) called "Falk Hut" due to the presence of the hut and, for the fauna and flora present, this area is also identified as a SAC or Special Area of Conservation.

The main feature of the area is a large peat bog.

But what is a peat bog?

Peat bogs derive from lakes or ponds that have filled up over the course of centuries or millennia due to the gradual accumulation of peat. Peat is a material that originates from the progressive deposit of the dead parts of plants that grow in an area where water prevails and stagnates, such as marshes, ponds and lakes. Stagnant water and the consequent lack of oxygen prevent the complete decomposition of the plant tissues that accumulate on the bottom, progressively decreasing the depth of the basin. In this way the plants of the banks can be pushed further in, reducing the surface of the pond until it disappears completely. Therefore, in a peat bog the remains of plants that have accumulated over time are present and still clearly recognizable, such as mosses, leaves, wooden fragments, and by sampling and classifying them it is possible for naturalists and geologists to know the vegetation present in the past and, if different from the current one, to reconstruct the environment or environments where it grew and developed.

The "Falk Hut" SCI area is particularly interesting due to the presence of very rare species closely linked to uncommon ecosystems on the southern side of the Alps. The vegetation is of a hygrophilous nature, that is, it prefers humid environments. Among the many species present very beautiful to observe and photograph - but do not collect! Let us remember that we are in a protected and fragile area! - we point out the rare *Vaccinium microcarpum*, a species of blueberry with small fruits which here forms the most important population of all Lombardy due to its consistency, the false blueberry and the curious *Drosera rotundifolia*, a carnivorous plant that obtains the necessary nitrogen from insects to survive.

This area is also a particularly favorable environment for the reproduction of some animal species. Among the invertebrates, for example, we could observe different species of dragonflies, butterflies and beetles. Among the vertebrates that frequent the area we could spot mammals such as the white hare, birds such as the golden eagle, the ptarmigan and the black grouse, amphibians, such as the red frog, and finally reptiles, such as the viviparous lizard.

The Site of Community Importance "Falk Hut" is therefore very interesting to visit, but very delicate and fragile and therefore needs respect from everyone!