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RECORDS OF LEPIDOPTERA IN HABITATS DIRECTIVE FROM MATESE NATIONAL PARK (SOUTHERN APENNINE, ITALY)

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INTRODUCTION

The recent establishment of the Matese National Park has increased the interest in the species included in the EU "Habitat Directive" (92/43/EEC). However, the protected area does not yet have an official perimeter and, therefore, there is no critical zoning of natural environments.

STUDY AREA

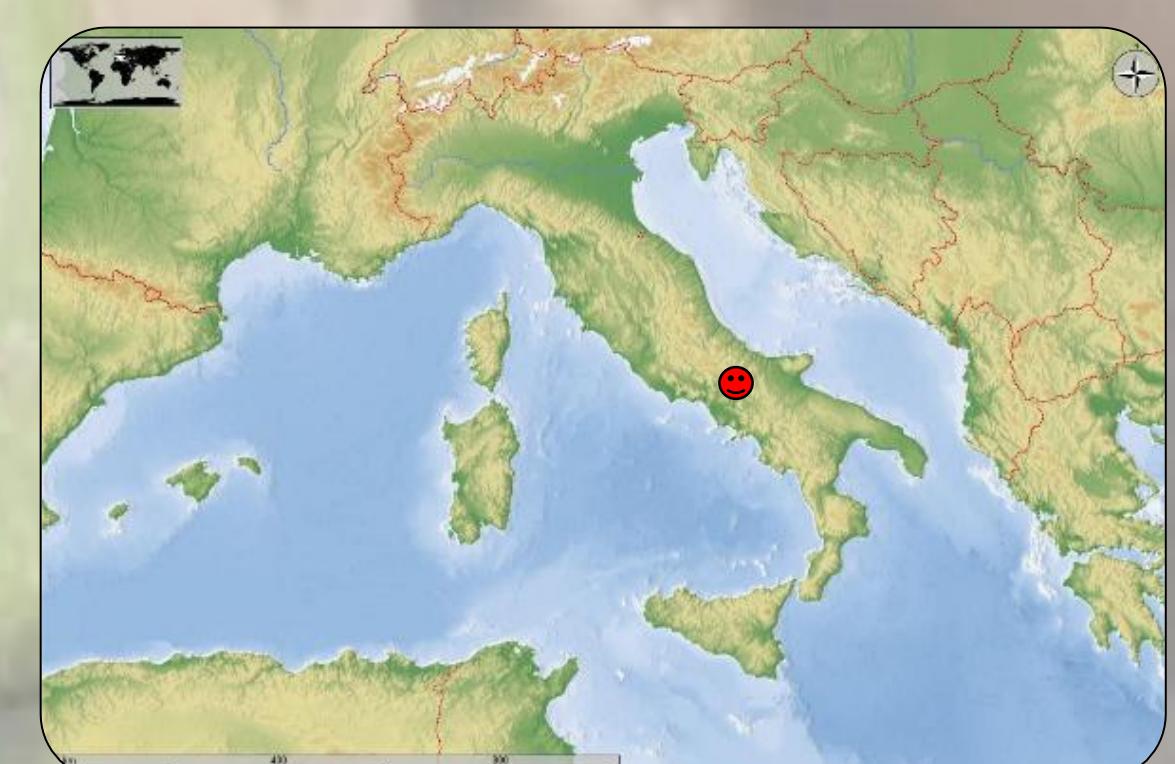
The Matese Massif is located between Campania and Molise Regions. It covers an area of about 1,440 km² and with a maximum altitude of 2,050 m represented by Mt. Miletto.

It is one of the most extensive mountain chains within the southern Apennines (Italy).

The area is almost entirely encompassed within three Sites of Community Importance (SCI, European Commission Habitats Directive), which are: "Matese Casertano", "Pendici meridionali del Monte Mutria" and "La Gallinola-Monte Miletto-Monti del Matese"; and, additionally, within two Special Protection Areas (SPA) ("Matese" and "Le Mortine").

The vegetation of Matese is similar in its general characteristics to that of other mountain ranges of the Central and Southern Apennines, with several belts which succeed to each other uphill.

Unfortunately, the knowledge of the entomological fauna and in particular of the threatened species of the area is still very poor.

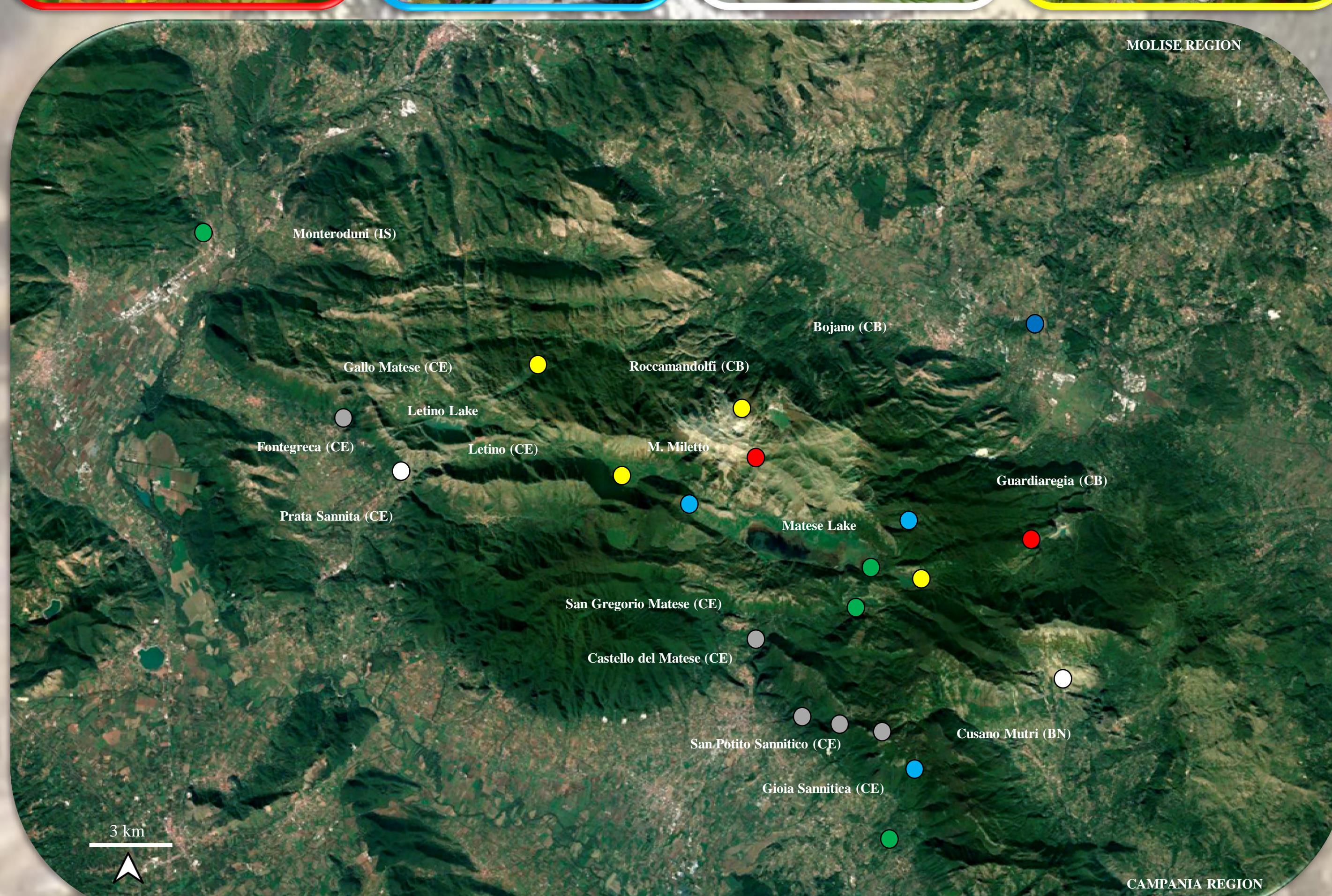


Location of the Matese National Park, Italy.

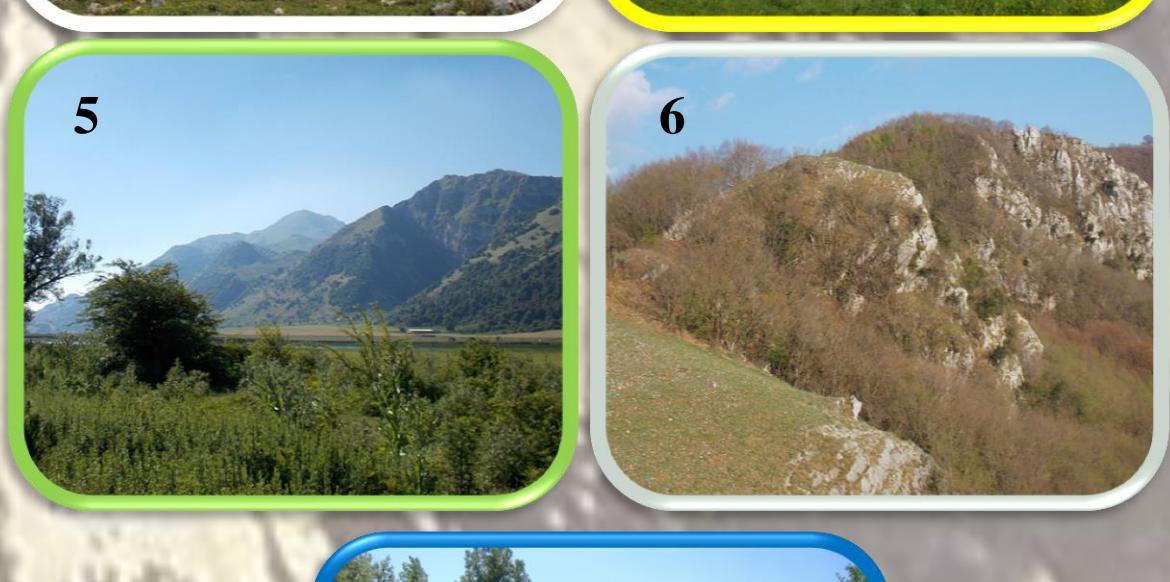
RESULTS

This contribution collects preliminary data on the macrolepidoptera fauna included in the Habitats Directive considering both literature records and unpublished results of research carried out by the authors in several localities within the mountain chain.

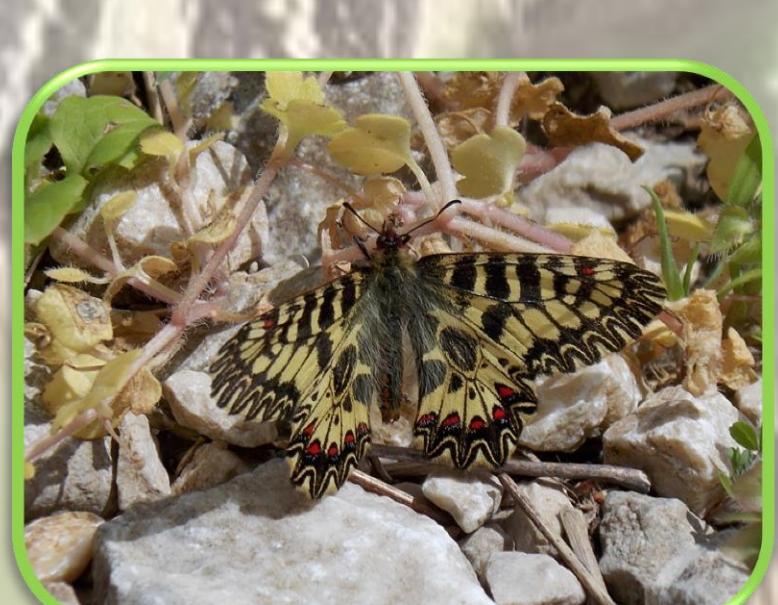
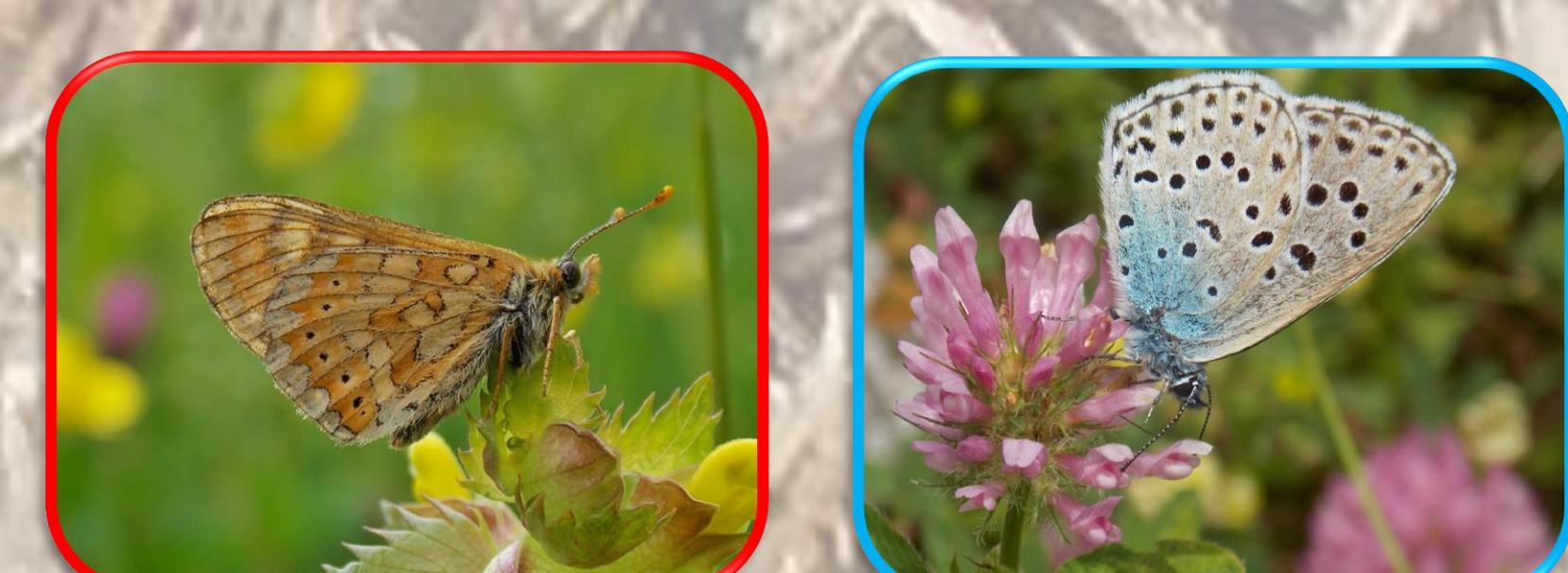
The results show the presence of 6 species (Rhopalocera): *Euphydryas provincialis* (Boisduval, [1828]), *Maculinea arion* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Melanargia arge* (Sulzer, 1776), *Parnassius mnemosyne* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Zerynthia cassandra* Geyer, 1828 and two species of Heterocera: *Euplagia quadripunctaria* (Poda, 1761), *Proserpinus proserpina* (Pallas, 1772) included in the Habitats Directive.



Map of Matese Massif with the indication of collecting sites.



- 1) Campo Figliolo ((Gallo Matese (CE)) – 1663m, 12.VI.2016
- 2) Monte Erbano ((Gioia Sannitica (CE)) – 1407m, 24.VI.2016
- 3) Rava di Prata ((Prata Sannita (CE)) – 701m, 20.VI.2016
- 4) Monte Janara (San Gregorio Matese (CE) – 1403m, 29.V.2016
- 5) Rena Rossa Castello del Matese (CE) – 1018m, 20.VI.2018
- 6) Monte Ariola ((San Potito Sannitico (CE)) – 460m, 4.IX.2016
- 7) Ponte del Comune ((Bojano (CB)) – 700m, 10.VI.2016



CONCLUSIONS

Insects, especially Lepidoptera, are excellent bioindicators and play an extremely important role in natural ecosystems. The presence of species included in the Habitats Directive confirms the importance of the Mountain massif, now a National Park, regarding the conservation of threatened species.

We also believe that the study of the distribution of individual species has an important predictive role and provides detailed data on habitat quality.

Finally, the census of the species took place through photographic research of individuals with the exception of *P. proserpinus* whose reporting comes from previous research conducted by the Authors.