

Volunteer Work Programme Information

Dear Volunteers,

We would like to welcome you to our **Volunteer Programme** for our project in the Central Apennines. Please note that this is not a paid position.

You will find below a general programme, which may vary according to weather conditions and locations, as we may need to arrange agreements with local institutions – especially nature reserves and national parks – regarding some specific activities. We are considering 3-4-month long traineeships in the period March-November for groups of students possibly arriving and leaving on the same time. Please, look at the programme below and choose the best time for your traineeship, possibly within the following dates:

1st week of April

1st week of June

1st week of August

Note: because of the current situation due to Covid19 we are flexible with dates. Please contact us to make arrangements regarding the date of your arrival.



Marsican brown bear



Sirente Velino Regional Park

The project includes the creation of **Bear Smart Communities** (BSCs) in the home range of the **Marsican brown bear** (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*, Altobello 1921) and a **Bear Fund** (BF) to finance them. This is an ambitious task and we do rely on your skills and abilities to achieve this important goal.

What is a Bear Smart Community?

The **Bear Smart Community** programme consists of a set of **proactive conservation measures to prevent conflicts between humans and bears** and educate local communities on how to coexist with bears. This project is in progress in the area of Pettorano sul Gizio and Rocca Pia and received a grant from IBA ([International Association for Bear Research & Management](#)) in the years 2015-2017. A similar initiative has been replicated in Alto Molise since 2018 and Valle Roveto – Ernici since 2019.

Conflicts with humans occur more often in areas that bears are gradually recolonising. Scientists agree that the conservation of this **critically endangered** brown bear population is strictly dependent on its ability to spread into suitable territories. BSCs are also facilitating this natural process.

General Programme

Scientific research and monitoring activities:

- Camera trap management (systematic and random wildlife monitoring)
- Study of man/bear relationship
- Monitor wildlife species in the study areas (Marsican bear, Apennine wolf, wild cat, griffon vultures etc.), use the Cluey app.
- Wildlife observations



Gioia Vecchio, municipality of Gioia dei Marsi



Marsican Brown Bear

Structure management

- Construction and maintenance of electric fences
- Set up road reflex reflectors, road signs and delineators for road ecology purposes
- Clean underpasses for road ecology purposes
- Remove waste from natural environments
- Remove barbed wire from the natural environment
- Check the efficiency of bear-proof waste bins
- Prune wild or abandoned fruit trees to increase food sources for bears and other species outside the urban centres

Communication

- Write or review articles for the organisation's newsletter
- Organisation of public events and fundraising events
- Help in writing pages on social networks regarding the traineeship activities

Enterprise

- Help in carrying out a Landscape Business Plan
- Help in any fundraising initiatives
- Help to find any potential sponsor or funding opportunity

Education / Learning By Doing

- GPS elementary course
- Course of cartography
- Advance wildlife monitoring techniques (trail camera setting and management; observation with binoculars or telescopes; identification of signs of presence of wildlife and collection for genetic analysis etc.)

Knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired by the end of the traineeship (expected learning outcomes)

- Knowledge of the best practices of wildlife management (especially in mitigating conflicts between man and large carnivores)
- Skills and competences in wildlife monitoring
- Knowledge, skills and competences in the installation of electric fences and maintenance
- Skills and competences in the use of GPS
- Road ecology techniques for the mitigation of wildlife-vehicle collisions
- Skills and competences in data collection and processing
- Skills and competences in dissemination of bear smart communities' best practices
- Skills in the organisation of events and activities to raise local people's environmental awareness
- Skills and competences in the identification of botanical and faunal species
- Knowledge of (basic) Italian language, culture and traditions

Evaluation plan

- Weekly report: at the end of every week, the volunteer will report the actions performed and their effectiveness to the volunteer supervisor
- Scientific research: the volunteer will produce a scientific-based final report about a specific issue related to the conservation of bears or other wildlife species or their environments.



Electric fence



Collection of bear hairs



Gran Sasso National Park



Sperone, hamlet of Gioia dei Marsi

Hikes (once a month)

- Hike in the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park
- Hike in Majella National Park
- Hike in the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park
- Hike in Sirente Velino Regional Park
- Hike in the Monte Genzana Alto Gizio Nature Reserve
- Hike in Montagne della Duchessa Nature Reserve
- Hike in Abetina di Rosello Nature Reserve
- Hike in Zompo Lo Schioppo Nature Reserve

In-kind contribution from Rewilding Apennines

- First aid equipment
- Rewilding Apennines stickers
- Binoculars
- Trail cameras
- Walkie-talkies
- Working tools
- Working gloves and other personal protective equipment
- Reflective vests for road ecology interventions

Rewilding Apennines volunteers and Erasmus Plus trainees will play a key role in this programme. Please, use the above equipment with care and return it (except for stickers) to us at the end of the traineeship in the original conditions.

Number of traineeship hours per week: 40 (we will be flexible do not worry).

The Region

The map below shows the current home range of the Marsican brown bear.

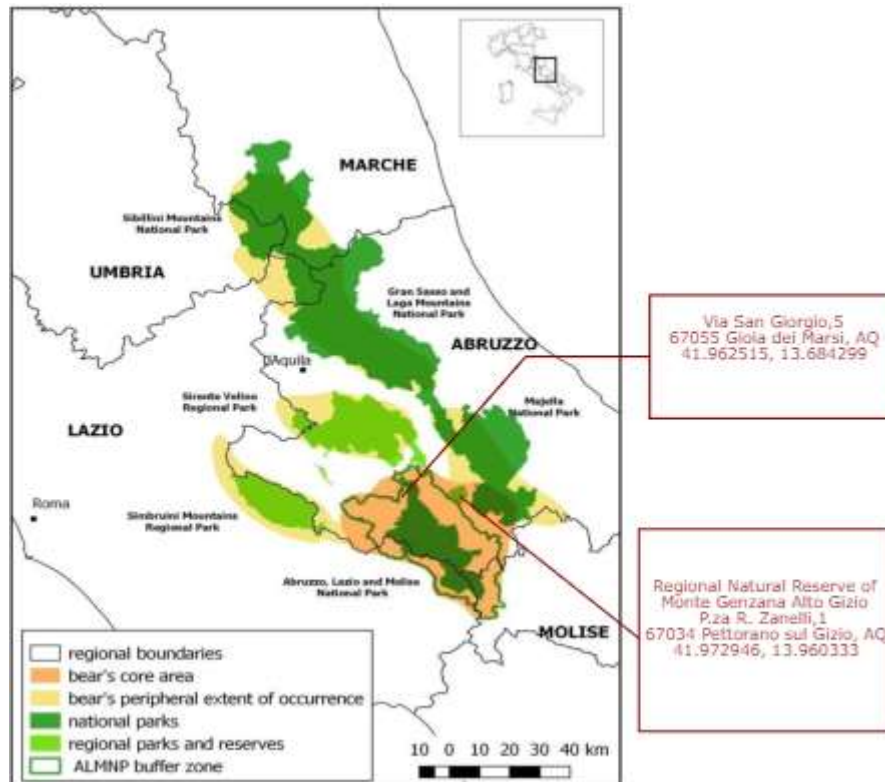
As a volunteer or intern you will be staying in one of the two towns highlighted in the map: Gioia dei Marsi or Pettorano sul Gizio. Generally volunteers and interns will take part in activities in both areas, with some variations.

Gioia dei Marsi: the activities will mainly take place inside the bear's core range, in particular at the border with the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park and its buffer zone (ZPE) in the municipalities that are part of the Marsica region and in the Sirente Velino Regional Park

The accommodation in Gioia dei Marsi is located at about 20 minutes by car from one of the best vantage points for bear watching in Europe.

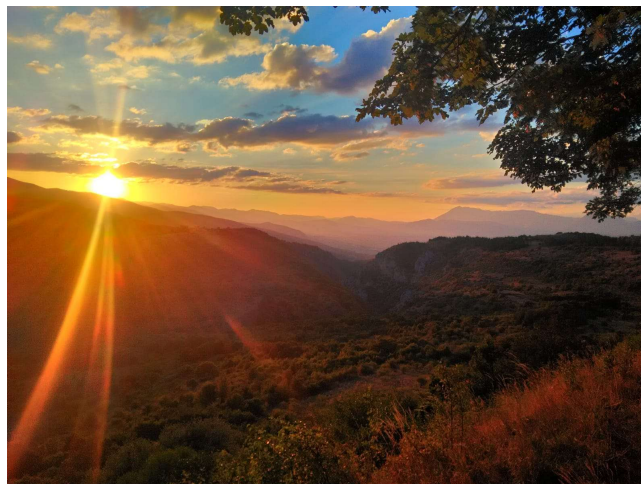
Pettorano sul Gizio: the project will also take place in part of the bear's core range, and especially in the Site of Community Importance SCI IT7110100 (5,805 ha). Several activities will be carried out as a collaboration with the Monte Genzana Alto Gizio Regional Nature Reserve.

The town of Pettorano is located inside the Regional Reserve itself.





Pettorano sul Gizio



Observation point at Gioia Vecchio,
Municipality of Gioia dei Marsi

Costs and accomodation availability

Cost: 250 € a month per volunteer including accommodation in guesthouses (heating, Wi-Fi, power and water consumption expenditures included), membership fee, tutoring and Italian incident and public liability insurance*.

Accommodation availability: 15 people in shared rooms (max 4 people in each room) in Pettorano sul Gizio, 5 people in shared rooms in Gioia dei Marsi;

*It would be desirable for you to have also an insurance from your country.

Contacts

Please write to info@rewilding-apennines.com to get in touch with Rewilding Apennines' contact person.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!