



La Pélite

The red gorge shows up in your mailbox when you least expect it.

Discovering . . .

Palud Forest

The Gorges de Daluis Regional Nature Reserve woodland mainly consists of relatively young pine forest planted as a part of the French program for mountain soil conservation. Some of the plots have a forest management plan, such as **Palud Forest** which covers 160 hectares. The name means “marsh” in old French. North-facing Palud Forest is the largest woodland area in the reserve, growing on the highest summit towering over this protected area (1,731m). Mainly dominated by Scots pines and European larches, Palud Forest is home to **many keystone plant and animal species** such as: endangered mosses protected by the Natura 2000 network Habitat Directive, like the green bug-on-a-stick moss; or chiropters like the lesser horseshoe bat which hunts in wooded areas. It also includes many important birds: the boreal owl, the black woodpecker, the black grouse, the northern goshawk...

The forest's value does not merely lie in its economical worth; it is also seen through its **wide plant and wildlife biodiversity**. The forest also takes part in various natural processes like soil stability, water sanitation, and flood and climate change control.

To increase knowledge of this forested area, and in accordance with the reserve management plan, studies were carried out over several years to assess what is called a “**Potential Biodiversity Index**” (IBP). Applying the IBP protocol is a way to measure a **forest's fauna and flora hosting capacity** depending on different factors like the numbers of snags and very wide trees, and the availability of micro-habitats.

It aims to improve global knowledge of the forest and its structure, species, functions and processes. Following that, **specific management measures** will be taken depending on the areas; some will remain untouched to preserve forest biodiversity.



European larch forest "La Palud" © P. Grapeloup

Meeting . . .

Philippe Chavignon

Philippe Chavignon is a global citizen who learned languages and **beekeeping** while travelling around the world, especially in South America and the United States. He settled in Alpes-Maritimes in 1995. From there onwards, he started setting up his bee yard. Converted to **organic farming** in 2005, he has built a honey shop out of local larch wood and thatch, in Villetale Haute, 1,300 metres above sea-level.

The honey shop focuses on **high-quality products** and offers different types of organic honey and essential oils, resulting from the toil of the red lands' bees and flora (mountain savory, thyme, lavender...), and sold under the name “*Rucher des gorges de Daluis*” (Gorges de Daluis apiary). He turned out to be a beekeeper with little ecological impact, as he runs his business on a bee-friendly territory where **many flowers brimming over with nectar** grow.

Philippe studied forest management, and beside his bee yard and bee shop, he also works for the National Forest Office as a part of the French **program for mountain soil conservation**.

Upcoming . . .

The advisory board

On **16th December**, elected representatives, experts and the reserve's partners will meet in Guillaumes to take stock of the measures taken and discuss future ones. The afternoon will be dedicated to the **scientific monitoring** carried out on the reserve. Conclusions drawn from the studies on Palud Forest will also be discussed.

Inscriptions are required at slarbouret@alpesdazur.fr

Did you know . . . ?

Green Buxbaumia (Buxbaumia Viridis)

Also called green shield-moss, elf-cap moss or bug-on-a-stick moss, is a rare species protected by the Natura 2000 Habitat Directive. Protecting it is the key to preserving habitats where other species can thrive. Finding one shows the rich forest biodiversity and it is a good clue to determine which other species are present in the life-teeming decaying understory. It grows on decaying logs in conifer and, sometimes, shady broadleaf forests with ideally high atmospheric moisture conditions. The 5-to-10-millimetre tall green shield-moss can grow from 500 to 1,900 metres above sea-level, and bears fruit from June to October.

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