

Tagliamento, the king of Alpine rivers

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ABSTRACT

The Tagliamento river is usually described as the king of the Alpine rivers because it is an extraordinary example of braided gravel-bed river in Europe. It flows in Friuli Venezia Giulia, a region in north-eastern Italy. It has preserved its original ecosystem which has never been changed significantly by irresponsible human interference. Therefore, vegetated islands and braid bars, due to the typical network of channels the river creates, have always been an uncontaminated natural habitat for a wide variety of species of flora and fauna.

The Pinzano Bridge, near San Daniele del Friuli, collapsed on 4th November 1966 because of an overflow of water from Tagliamento. From that time, lowlands territorial authorities would like to build retention basins to prevent the river from floodings.

A study about the bio-geological survey carried out from a Manzini High School project, chiefly aims to study this ecosystem, which combines the dynamic nature of the Tagliamento with the biodiversity of the whole area where it flows. In the previous years, some classes were involved in this school project. After visiting the river area and taking several photographs of it, the students had the opportunity to reflect upon the devastating environmental impact which the construction of retention basins would cause. They illustrated and analyzed both the solutions offered by some local governors and the objections raised by the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF). In the near future, other students will continue studying the Tagliamento river so as to be able to appreciate one of the local rarities nature offers, in the hope that the unique geomorphological features of this site of undoubted scientific interest could be kept intact for a very long time.