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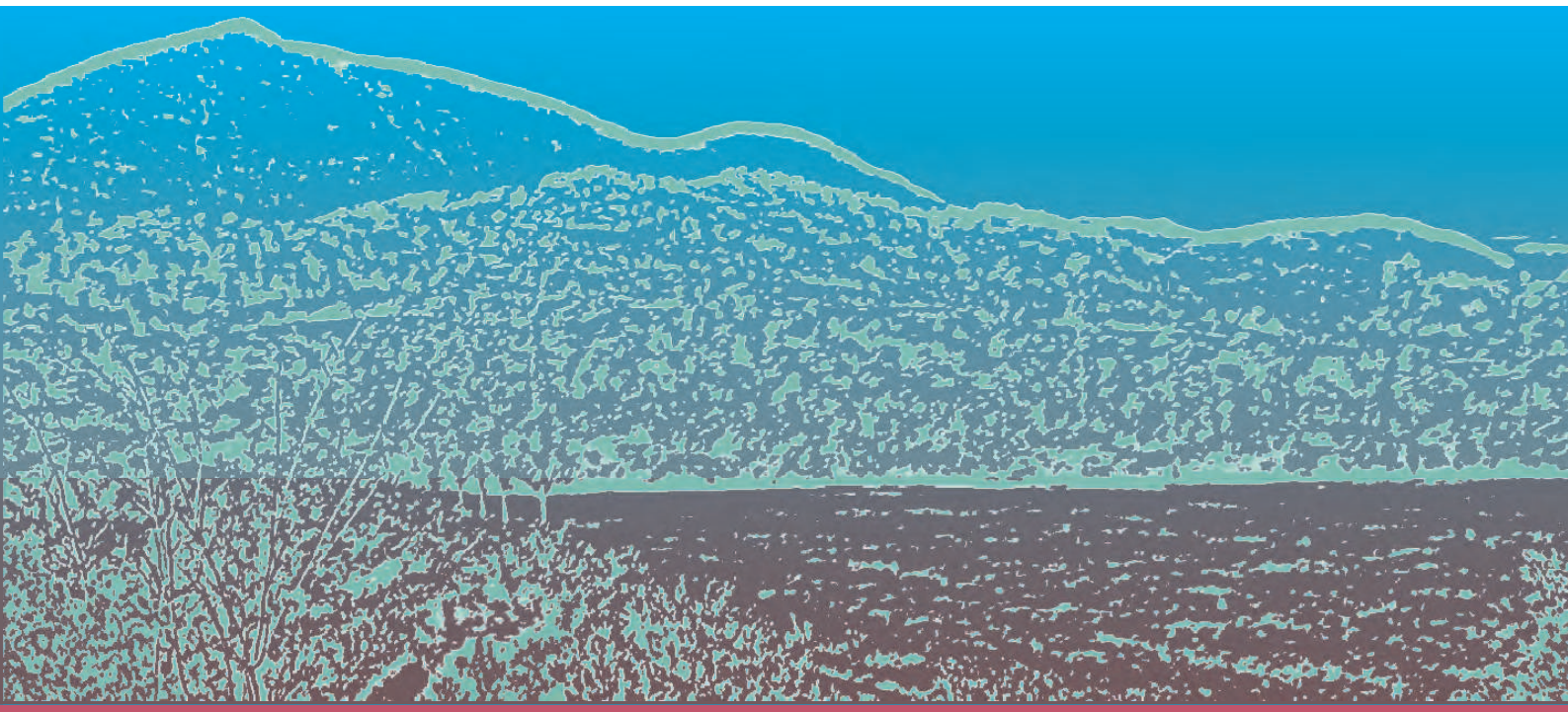

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Relazioni e comunicazioni

Floristic and phytosociological approach at the alliance level for the evaluation of conservation priorities in a Mediterranean wetland: a proposal of a synthetic index

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Wetlands are known how important ecosystems for the conservation of the biodiversity, nevertheless have always been exposed to threats and negative pressures (Dudgeon *et al*., 2006). Wetlands have suffered from a generalized impoverishment of flora and vegetation that underlined the need for protection measures, in particular in the Mediterranean area. Moreover, several wetland plant communities, rare in Mediterranean basin, are not included in the Habitat Directive (Benavént-Gonzales *et al*., 2014), neither in other protection lists, probably due to their relative diffusion in other biogeographical areas (mostly in central and northern Europe).

This study has the main aim to assay the conservational importance of wetland plant communities in a Mediterranean area, using alliances as the basic unit. According to Biondi *et al*. (2012), alliance is a powerful indicator for the identification of habitats of conservation interest under the Habitat Directive. The system of lakes Chiusi and Montepulciano, which is one of the most important complex of inland waters of central Italy, is the study case to this purpose. We analyzed the data set of recent phytosociological study of Lastrucci *et al*. (submitted), using multivariate statistical methods and the new Habitat/Alliance Conservation Quality (HACQ) index based on HCP of Bragazza (2009) and modified for our evaluations.

Our investigations highlighted higher values of HACQ of some hydrophytic and helophytic alliances indicating that these are the most important vegetation target for conservation in Mediterranean wetlands. Among these are: i) alliances belonging to habitat of the 92/43 EEC, very rarefied in the italian territory as 3150 and 3130, characterized by a high presence of both species on the red list of italian and regional interest; ii) alliances not belonging to any protection list, like *Magnocaricion elatae*, *Carici-Rumicion hydrolapathi* and *Eleocharito palustris-Sagittarion sagittifoliae*, significantly differentiated by a high percentage of species present in the lists of attention to the regional context. Our results reflect the importance of regional singularities when setting conservation quality in Mediterranean wetlands besides the necessity to consider regional singularities for accurate lists of habitats attention at least at the national level. The proposed index, allowing to identify habitat very important from a floristic point of view also at regional/local level, furthermore can be an help to bridge some gaps of the Habitats Directive.

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