

The Sentina Regional Natural Reserve has been instituted on December 14th, 2004, and it is the smallest and one of the youngest protected areas in the Marche Region.

A landscape of water and sand that stretches for about 180 hectares within the City of San Benedetto del Tronto (Managing body of the Reserve), between the district of Porto d'Ascoli on the north and the Tronto river on the south.

For a stretch of about 1.7 km, the area on the immediate north of the mouth of the Tronto river is formed by a sand dune behind which there are small patches of brackish wetlands and salty meadows, that by now have become rare ecosystems along the Adriatic coast.

Old documents show clearly the presence in the Sentina Reserve of a lake that due to urbanization and subsequent drainages has gradually disappeared.

The flora of this biotope still has characteristics of extraordinary biogeographical relevance in the Marche Region, and more generally in the central-southern Adriatic Italian sector. In addition to the vegetation (the site was declared by the Marche Region "Floristic Protected Area"), the area is particularly significant for the migratory birds, since it represents one of the few stopping points for migratory birds between Gargano and the Po river wetlands, for this reason it has been recognized as a Special Protection Area - SPA (Birds Directive 79/409/EEC) and Site of Community Importance - SCI (Habitats Directive 92/43/EC).

The logo of the Reserve represents its most significant species, which are a bird (the Black-winged Stilt - *Himantopus himantopus*) and a plant related to the environment of moist and salty dunes (*Salicornia* - *Salicornia patula*).

The site is also important from the point of view of historical and architectural heritage, since there are numerous evidences of an ancient civilization, even by pre-Roman populations that settled at the mouth of the River Tronto.

In the reserve there are also many buildings and artifacts the agricultural use of the area since a distant past. Of particular importance is the building called "Torre sul Porto" (Harbour tower), its main structure has been built in 1543 to protect the coast from pirates.