

# Tourist Flows in the Po Delta

## Italy

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***Monitoring and Management of Visitors and Visitor Flows***  
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***Rovaniemi, Finland***



# Ecotourism and "Nature" demand in Italy

## some general data

### Trends (surveys at national level)

#### Reasons for holiday:

Environment 28%, discovery 42%

### Acts of consumption:

Arrive in farmhouses "Agriturismi" (2.5 million);

Visitors in parks: 10 million;

Participating in events such as Open Cellars (1 million), or open oasis (300,000)

### Habits and attitudes:

Join associations: WWF 300,000, CAI 307,000, FAI 45,000, LIPU 30,000, FIAB 10,000

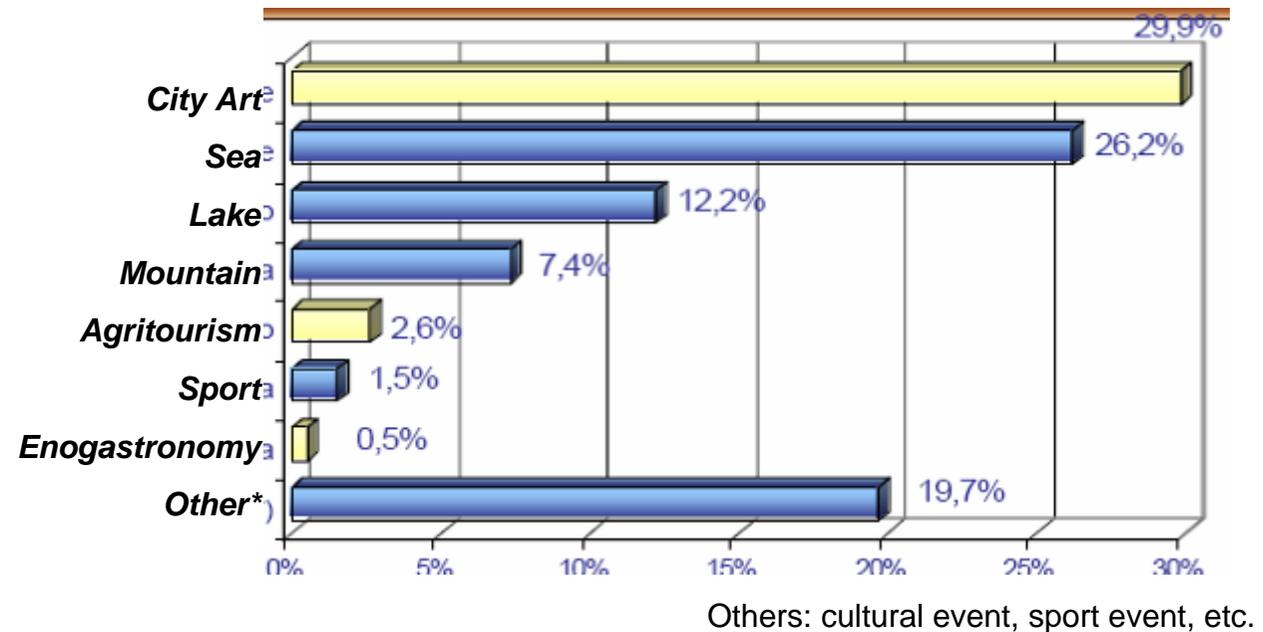
Join "eco-oriented sports": horseback riding 45,000, canoeing 20,000; Hunting 800,000

regular use of bicycle and propensity for a slow mobility:

high in some regions (Veneto and Emilia Romagna), similarly high in Central Europe (D, NL, DK and A); the rarest in South.

# International Visitors and their holiday in Italy

Reasons for holiday:



City art and sea are the “*most wanted*” (more than 55% of total);

It's increasing the interest for the tourism that wants to discover the territory and the local and typical products (enogastronomy, agritourism, etc.)

From UIC

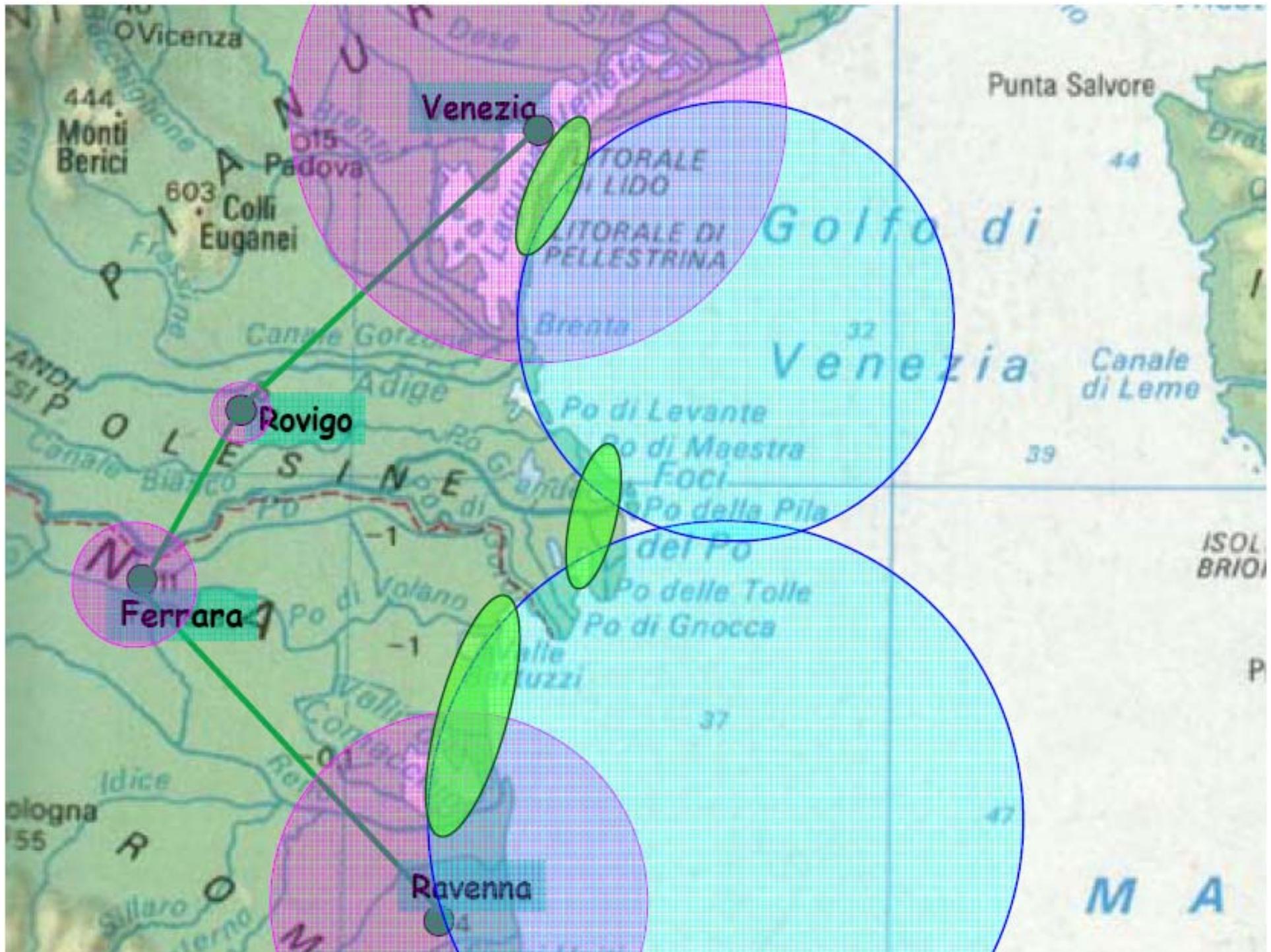
# The Po Delta

- ✓ rural area, low density.
- ✓ it entered in the tourism market only recently, in a heavily tourist area
- ✓ high specialized area:
  - not tourist but productive (extensive agriculture, fisheries, industry)
  - with influence on landscape
- ✓ connection with the Venetian lagoon that presents different characteristics
- ✓ low level of investment in the sector
- ✓ Ravenna, Ferrara, Rovigo, Venice



Number of Residents/Provinces

BO	RA	FE	FC	VE	RO	PD
927.800	356.900	346.800	358.500	815.000	245.000	845.000



# current tourism demand in the Po Delta

**difficulty in quantifying overall because of:**

**several points of access;**

**variety of institutions;**

**variety of services (visitor centers, but also boat rental, etc.) managed by different stakeholders;**

**arrivals and presences are recorded in the accommodation facilities only approximately (different forms of data collection);**

**since the 90s there has been an innovation in demand and supply;**

**tourism in the Po Delta is characterized by the educational activities, local initiatives and tourism events, (integrated services);**

**this is essentially composed of families, mostly from abroad (D, F, UK, northern Europe, USA);**

**It shows a strong growth (+20%);**

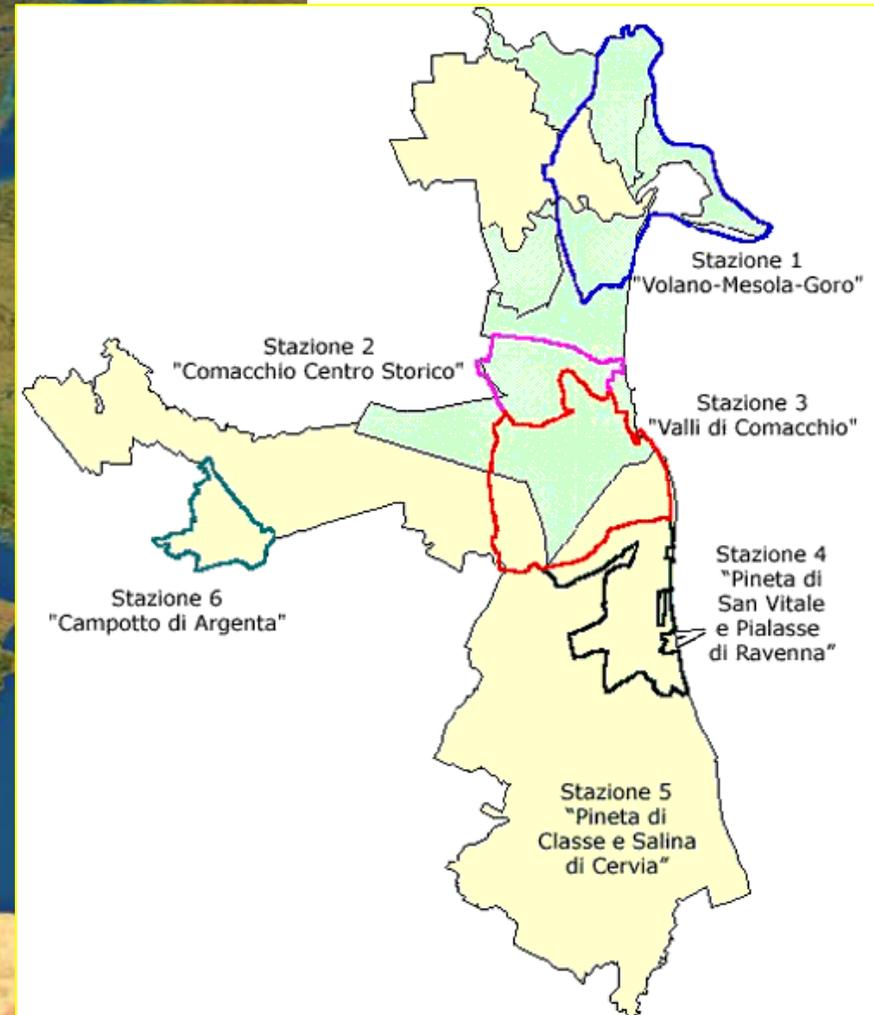
**peak demand during the period from March to June;**

**city of art and sea dominate the choices of foreign tourists (more 55% of total travelers);**

**growing interest in tourism to the discovery of the territory and of what it's typical and local (farm, gastronomy, etc..).**

# Geographical Setting

## PO DELTA PARK AREA

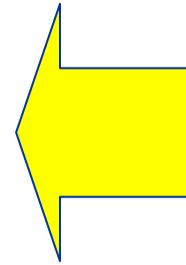


The park has been established in 1988 by Emilia Romagna Region and the Consortium for management in 1996 (9 Municipality and 2 Province Authority, Ferrara and Ravenna).



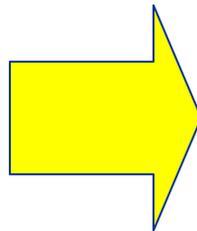
The Park stands on roughly 54000ha, and includes the south part of the modern padan delta: the “historic delta”, and a wide portion of humid sites of great natural interest.

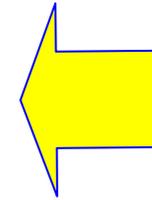
The Po Delta Park offers a significant variety of natural environments and cultural attractions. For example it's possible to see:



Remains of the  
primitive  
mediterranean  
wood

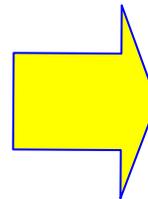
hygrophilus  
woods





lagoons

Brackish and  
fresh water  
marshes

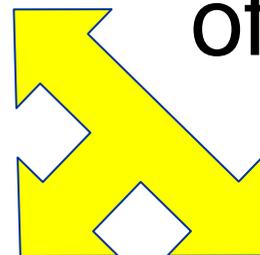




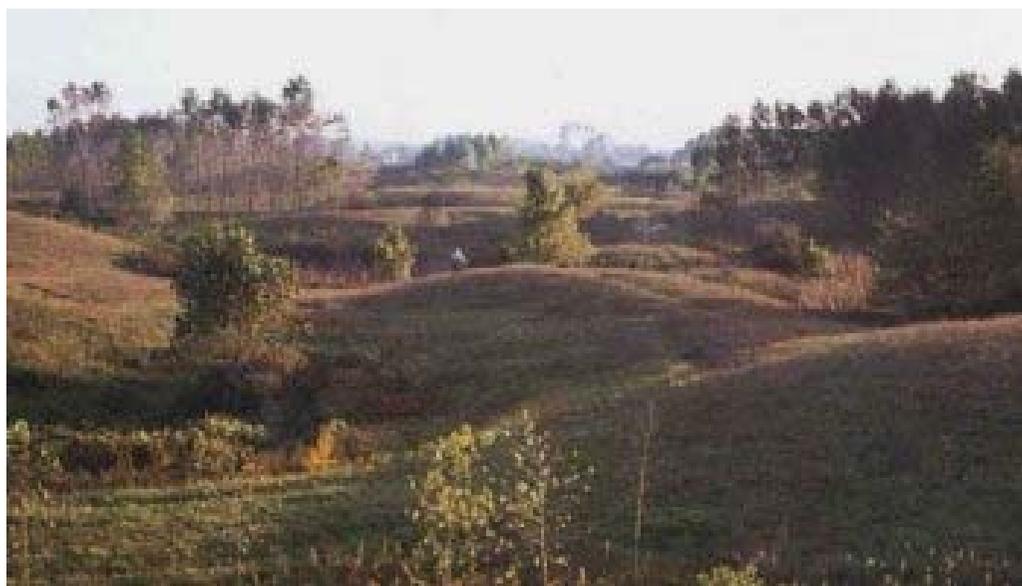
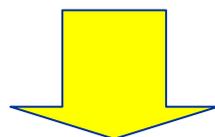
PARCO DELTA DEL PO  
EMILIA-ROMAGNA



# Saltpans and riparial areas of rivers and canals

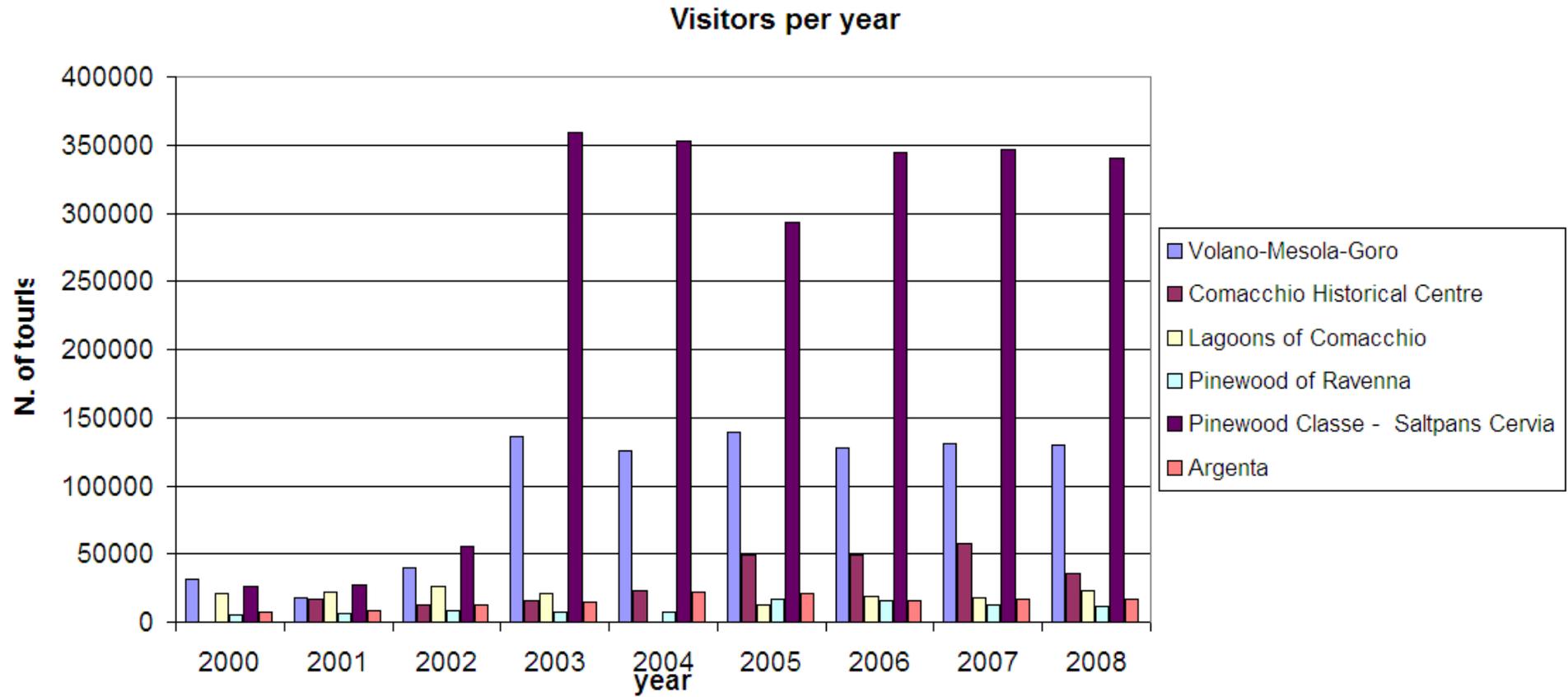


# Rests of present and ancient dunal system



# The Park is visited by rough 500.000 people every year

## Trend of visitors in the 6 "station" of the Po Delta Park





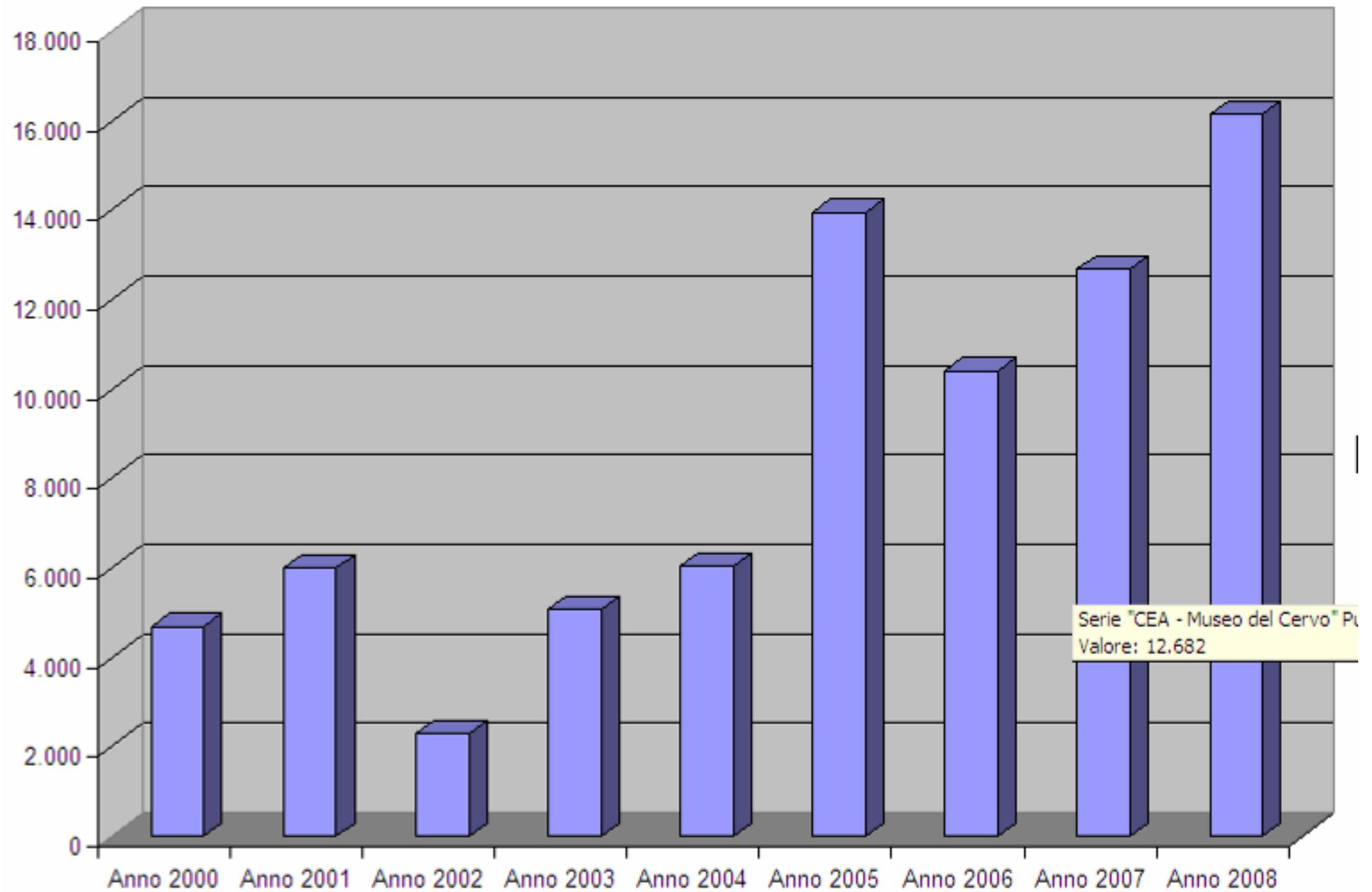
# Environmental Education Center in Mesola

*Este building of the Mesola Castle (Ferrara) houses an eco-museum which gives the opportunity to:*

- take a "closer look" to the traces left by time and by man in the territory;
- full immersion in the history, nature, and culture of the Po Delta;
- discover geomorphologic evolution and the story of the land reclamation;
- experience interactive, and didactic *paths*: botanic, ecological, zoological;
- feed the curiosity for the smallest details of insects;
- Introduce the visit at the Nature Reserve "Big Wood of Mesola" (Red deer, Fallow Deer, etc.);



## Environmental Education Center in Mesola



# “Manifattura dei Marinati”

The activities of *Azienda Valli Comunali di Comacchio* covered three main aspects:

- fish farming in the lagoons and fishing,
- surveillance against illegal fishing,
- internal catch management and marketing.

From 1933 the *Azienda* managed also a marinating factory, whose activity was previously carried out by several private firms.

The entire eel manufacturing cycle took place in the factory. This activity was carried out for more than sixty years in Manifattura dei Marinati. The facility includes the “*calata*”, arriving area for boats with live eels used for fish delivery, especially the so called “*marotte*“, the Fire Room with its twelve chimneys, used to cook eels, the vinegars room, with huge barrels, and the small frying room.

The creation of the new Slow Food presidium and product “[Traditional marinated Eel from Comacchio Lagoons](#)” brought the most important manufacturing tradition of this city back to life in 2004.

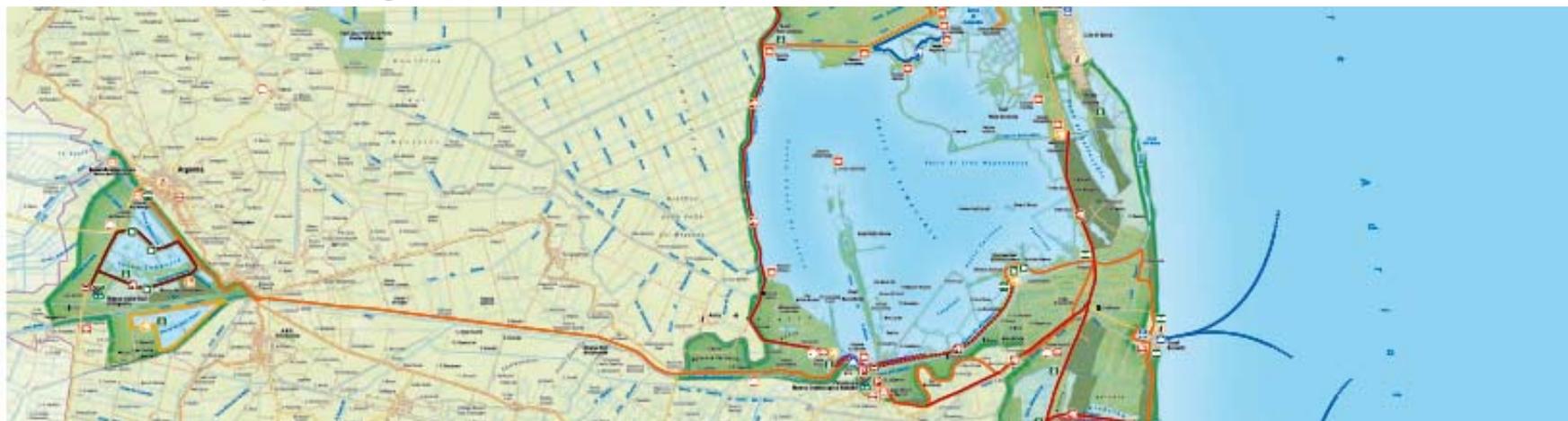


## Visitor Center "Palazzone Sant'Alberto"

- It's situated next to the Reno River and very close to the Valli di Comacchio lagoons.
- It is a real must for visitors that want to learn more about the Birds of the Po Delta.

Inside this historical building visitors find a range of services on the 1° floor, while the 2° floor house the "Ornithological *Museum of Natural Sciences of Ravenna*" with its "Alfredo Brandolini" ornithological collection: a natural exhibition which gives visitors the chance to admire the most common and the most rare bird species (most of them can be sighted within the Park, especially from the birdwatching path running along the Reno riverbank and Boscoforte peninsula).

- The Museum is also provided with a scientific library.
- The center offers the opportunity to discover nature trails, didactic labs, and to carry out guided visits.



# Visitor Center "Saline di Cervia"

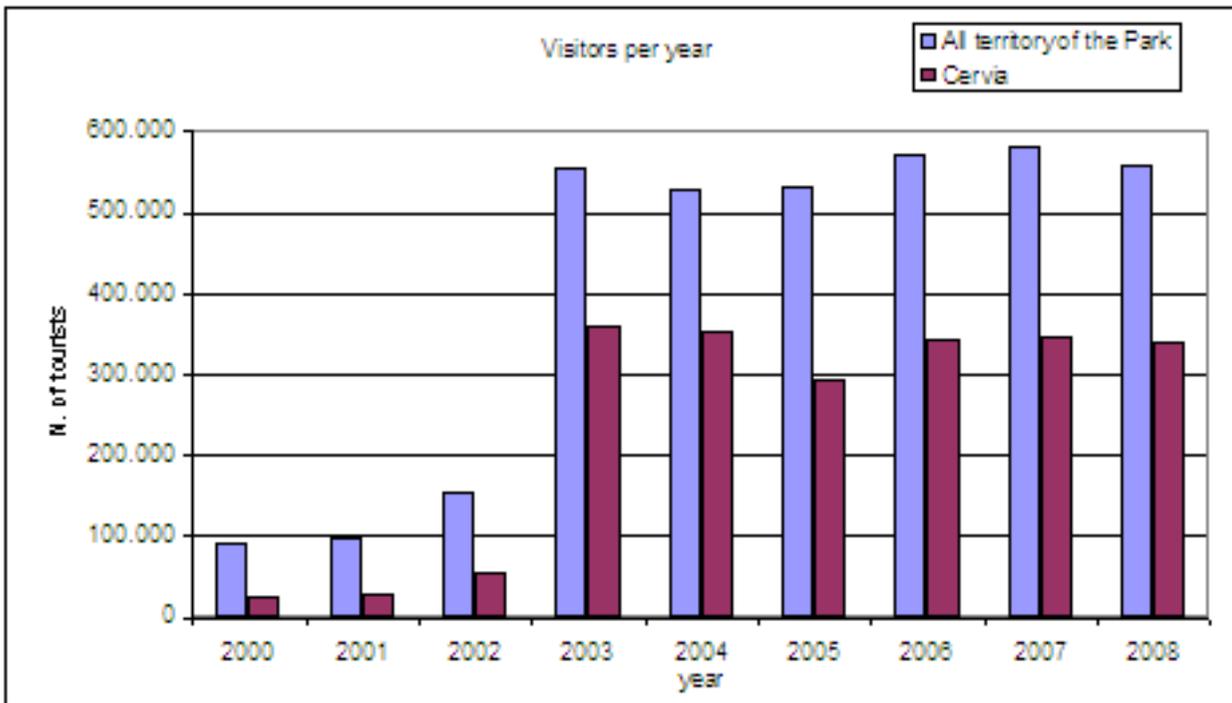
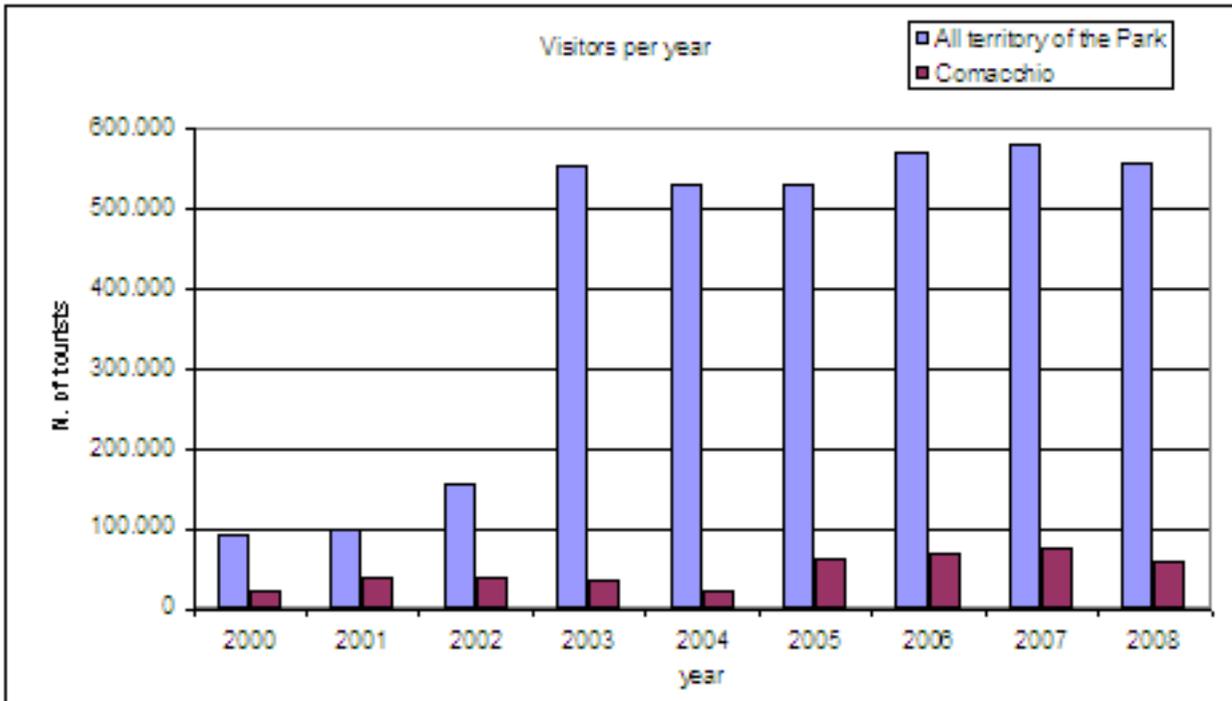
It's situated next to the old-centuries "Salina di Cervia".

Within this recently built structure, visitors will find a learning route with clear didactic aims, which allows visitors to admire and to understand the magic world of salt, from its birth to its production. The visiting route is characterized by some "themes":

- "*La natura*" (nature), since the Salt pan can be admired from life, by observing the extraordinary flora and fauna diversity of the site;
- "*La materia*" (the substance): what the salt is, what it is made of, which is the formula leading to its formation, which organisms – including the invisible ones – live in this very particular environment;
- "*Il tempo*" (the weather), about the importance of climatic conditions and their influence on the formation of salt;
- "*Il luogo*" (the place): the physical description of the area, the importance of its nearness to the sea and the precious work of the salt makers are the main elements which characterizes the discovery of this unique natural habitat;

The visitor center is provided with functional didactic equipment to create workshops, maps, instruments and exhibition panels to learn more about the magic world of salt.





Visitors in the Po Delta Park (blue) and in the area of Comacchio (red-up) and Cervia (red-down)

**CHART SUMMARISING TOURIST FLOWS IN THE PO DELTA PARK**  
AND OTHER RELEVANT AREAS WITHIN EMILIA-ROMAGNA (relevant period January – December)

The tourists flow survey, that the Po Delta Park Emilia-Romagna is running every year, collecting data from a number of different operators, is performed to learn where the visitors go in the protected area and to receive their degree of preference. The collection of such information, although not based on statistical principles (simple numeric comparison), reveals very interesting data to get an understanding of the tourist flows.

<i>Stations of Po Delta Park Municipalities of the Park</i>	<i>Visitor Centers - Museums – Naturalistic Areas</i>	<b>Year 2000</b>	<b>Year 2001</b>	<b>Year 2002</b>	<b>Year 2003</b>	<b>Year 2004</b>	<b>Year 2005</b>	<b>Year 2006</b>	<b>Year 2007</b>	<b>Year 2008</b>
<b>Station n. 1</b> Volano - Mesola – Goro	CEA - Museo del Cervo	4.700	5.997	2.294	5.070	6.039	13.956	10.402	12.682	16.156
	N.R.Big Wood of Mesola	26.784	11.477	37.344	22.703	20.435	25.670	19.490	20.785	25.105
	Pomposa Abbey - Museum pomposiano				108.227	98.878	99.710	97.855	97.345	89.044
<b>Station n. 2</b> Historical Center of Comacchio	Museum del carico della Nave Romana		16.300	12.309	15.818	15.498	14.379	15.138	20.073	14.400
	Manifattura dei Marinati					7.194	35.169	34.551	37.119	21.448
<b>Station n. 3</b> Valli di Comacchio	Excursions in the Valli di Comacchio	20.456	22.184	26.510	20.441	chiuso	10.910	17.692	16.929	21.396
	Salina di Comacchio						1.599	420	207	508
	Nature trail (Prato Pozzo)							500	1.000	1.000
<b>Station n. 4</b> Pinewood S. Vitale e Piallasse di Ravenna	Punte Alberete - Valli Mandriole	5.195	5.350	6.300	5.100	5.080	5.550	3.150	3.750	2.348
	Birds Museum NatuRa "A.Brandolini"						1.373	3.480	1.678	6.560
	Ca' Vecchia						7.000	6.000	3.600	closed
	Visitor Center Palazzone S. Alberto		1.000	2.465	2.399	2.317	2552	2.661	3.364	2.529
<b>Station n. 5</b> Pinewood of Classe e Salina di Cervia	Visitor Center Salina di Cervia	7.993	8.273	8.358	Closed	10.003	16.594	19.482	19.712	22.043
	Butterfly House (Milano Marittima)			26.175	46.292	41.759	40.940	40.614	39.167	38.306
	Insects House							5.831	22.452	24.175
	MUSA Salt Museum	18.250	19.365	20.651	19.506	18.001	21.454	19.359	21.302	21.518
	Basilica S. Apollinare in Classe				293.563	282.885	214.005	258.835	243.648	233.877
<b>Station n. 6</b> Campotto di Argenta	Wetlands Eco-Museum Valli di Argenta	6.948	8.640	11.468	12.350	17.286	16.335	11.766	11.871	13.331
	Reclamation Museum of Saiarino			1.226	2.787	3.782	3901	2.938	3.506	3.030
	Museum Civico di Argenta					903	637	701	1057	815
<b>Municipality of Ostellato</b>	MDT Territory Museum	3.124	3.250	3.050	Closed	closed	closed	1065	3.167	1.500
<b>Municipality of Alfonsine</b>	Casa Museo Monti	1.374	1.758	3.866	2.336	2.043	999	396	506	1.088
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>94.824</b>	<b>103.594</b>	<b>162.016</b>	<b>556.592</b>	<b>532.103</b>	<b>532.733</b>	<b>572.326</b>	<b>584.920</b>	<b>560.177</b>

# Considerations

- Several public-private partnerships involved
- High potential for ecotourism
- Carrying capacity for the more sensible areas
- Po Delta identity
- Increase of awareness
- Efficiency
- Conflicts caused by different activities
- Definition of common goals and objectives
- Strategic planning

# Potential touristic products

- Discovery of landscapes and scenarios
- Environmental education - naturalistic didactic
- Birdwatching
- “River” Tourism
- Active holiday (horseback riding, canoe, etc)
- Fishing
- Eno-gastronomy
- Cultural
- Special interests (reclamation, rural archeology, agriculture)

# Tourist Flows in the Po Delta

## Italy

Thank you for your attention

Giacomo Benelli

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
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Nordic

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