

ANCIENT CULTURES AND NEW PERSPECTIVES

South Tyrol's first nature park is located in the western Dolomites. Together with the Seiser Alm/Alpe di Siusi landscape conservation area, it forms a unique natural landscape unit. The Schlern/Sciliar massif with its two famous rocky peaks, Santner and Euringer, is considered one of South Tyrol's landmarks and has been visited by people since prehistoric times. The Rosengarten/Catinaccio massif is also known far beyond the South Tyrolean borders. The nature park also includes the mountain forests around Seis/Siusi, Völs/Fiè and Tiers/Tires as well as the Tschamin/Ciamin Valley.

Geology

There are only a very few places in the Dolomites where the history of their formation is as clearly visible as in the Schlern/Sciliar area. Former coral reefs and undersea volcanic eruptions in what was once the primeval Tethys Sea have created landscapes with a wide variety of rocks. The lowest level consists of the mostly dark red rocks of the Athesian Volcanic Group. These are overlain by Grödnertal/Val Gardena Sandstone, whose iron content often makes the soil appear bright red. This is followed by the Bellerophon and Werfen Formation deposited in the sea, bearing witness to the largest known mass extinction that occurred around 252 million years ago.

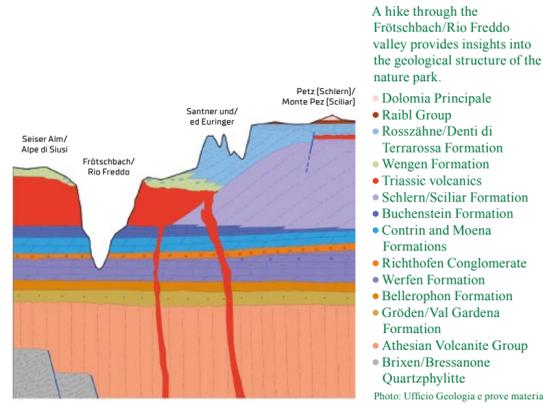


Photo: Michael Trocker

The Schlern/Sciliar massif and the peaks of Schlern/Sciliar Dolomite (in the picture the Vajolet Towers) are composed of Schlern/Sciliar Dolomite of coralline origin. These thick deposits consist of the outer skeletons of corals, sponges, algae and calcareous muds, which have undergone a chemical transformation process known as 'the Dolomia Principale'. Above the Schlern/Sciliar Dolomite and below the main dolomite, the red, clayey sediments of the Raibl Group can be found in individual outcrops. The Dolomia Principale is already completely eroded except for remnants on the Schlern/Sciliar.



The so-called Cipit limestone blocks (named after the Alpe di Cipit site) are limestone blocks that detached from the reefs; they were not dolomitised and contain numerous fossils.

Photo: Piero Gianolla



The crested tit with its characteristic feathered cap is a common bird species in the forests of the nature park.

Photo: Sepp Hackhofer

Habitats, animals and plants

If you look at the Schlern/Sciliar from the Bozen/Bolzano valley basin or from the Ritten/Renon plateau, it looks like a rugged, inaccessible mountain massif but in actual fact it is home to a rich variety of botanical species. The nature park is home to a wide variety of plant species in a very small area, more than in other parts of the Dolomites. This is due to the diversity of the soils and the fact that the distribution boundaries of eastern and western Alpine plants overlap here.

The forests

The forests along the south-western border of the nature park are mainly made up of Scots pine. These trees are content with barren, not very deep and dry soils and fulfil important tasks here: they stabilise the subsoil, protect it from erosion and promote humus formation. Typical species of undergrowth are heather, juniper, snowy mespilus and conspicuous flower species such as the black violet columbine, the yellow lady's slipper, the goldenrod and the *Daphne striata*.

A common inhabitant of spruce forests is the great spotted woodpecker, which is characterised by its black, white and red plumage and great climbing skills.

Photo: Maurizio Bedin



Instead, spruce predominates in wetter parts of the area with deeper soils. As the altitude increases, the stands become increasingly sparse and open. This makes the shrub undergrowth more varied, frequently comprising rusty-leaved and bramble alpine rose, cranberry and bilberry. With sufficient amounts of deadwood, various woodpecker species can also be found here.

Above the tree line

Above the tree line, mountain pine scrub and dwarf shrub heaths spread out. The extensive alpine meadows and the steep rock faces of the nature park are also remarkable. Rare and striking crevice-growing floral species thrive in the park, such as the *Campanula morettiana* and the *Aquilegia einseleana*.

The *Potentilla nitida* grows exclusively (endemically) in the Southern Alps, mainly on scree slopes and in rock crevices on limestone and dolomite.

Photo: Hugo Wassermann



One of the botanical rarities of the nature park is the *Campanula morettiana*, an endemic species. This Dolomite plant is found in Tschaminital/Val Ciamin and at the foot of the Santner and Euringer peaks.

Photo: Sepp Hackhofer



The Seiser Alm/Alpe di Siusi mountain pasture area is regularly mowed and grazed in late summer. The conspicuous pink meadow bistort prefers nutrient-rich wet meadows and is often an indicator that the soil is fertilized.

Photo: Michael Trocker

Alpine pastures

The Seiser Alm/Alpe di Siusi, the largest high Alpine pasture in Europe, offers a really outstanding landscape. Only its southernmost section is part of the nature park, while a much larger area is protected as a landscape conservation area. In its remote areas, snowbells, wood anemones, crocuses, gentians, orchids, rose daphne and primroses bloom in spring. The flora of the Schlern/Sciliar plateau is equally fascinating, featuring the pink cinquefoil, edelweiss, grey saxifrage and the *Paederota bonarota*.



White in winter, brown in summer - the stoat is always perfectly camouflaged. This secretive predator feeds mainly on small rodents, which it pursues into their underground burrows.

Photo: Maurizio Bedin



During the rutting season in late autumn, male chamois engage in exhausting chases fighting for the females.

Photo: Claudio Sfera

Man and nature

The low mountain range to the west of the Schlern/Sciliar massif that includes Völs/Fiè, Seis/Siusi and Kastelruth/Castelrotto is rich in prehistoric settlements. The Schlern/Sciliar plateau was also inhabited in prehistoric times. This is evidenced by pottery findings in the Burgstall/Monte Castello area and on the slope of the Roterdsitze/Cima di Terraossa. Experts claim that this was a cult site, which would make the Schlern/Sciliar the highest prehistoric cult and settlement site in South Tyrol.

In the late Middle Ages, the minstrel Oswald von Wolkenstein lived in the wild rock fortress of Hauenstein/Castelvecchio, the ruins of which rise up on a mighty block of rock near Seis/Siusi. It is believed that the rock on which the castle rises broke off of the north face of the Santner peak and fell into the Hauenstein/Castelvecchio forest.

Today, the Hauenstein/Castelvecchio Fortress is a popular tourist venue in the region and a favourite excursion destination for young and old. It offers insights into the medieval architecture and history of the region and is used for various cultural events.

Photo: Nature Park Office



The alpine grasslands in the nature park are protected Natura 2000 habitats.

Photo: Michael Trocker

Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is a European nature conservation project. It aims to create a network of protected areas for the long-term protection of natural and semi-natural habitats as well as for wild animals and plants in order to safeguard biodiversity. All South Tyrolean nature parks are part of the Natura 2000 network and their designation is based on two European directives: the Flora-Fauna-Habitats-Directive and the Birds Directive.

Dolomites UNESCO World Heritage Site

In 2009, the Dolomites, and with them the Schlern-Rosengarten/Sciliar-Catinaccio Nature Park, were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List due to their scenic beauty and their geomorphological and geological significance. After careful selection, this list includes globally outstanding and unique natural and cultural assets whose preservation is of particular importance to the international community. This honour also means a special obligation and responsibility with regard to the protection and sustainable development of this extraordinary mountain region!

The Dolomia Principale Formation contains megalodons, which are also referred to as "cow kick shells" due to their shape. They are the leading fossils of the formation and they are very rare, as most fossils were destroyed by the chemical process of dolomitisation, in which calcium carbonate is converted into calcium magnesium carbonate.

Photo: Nature Park Office



The Schlern/Sciliar massif largely embodies the original coral reef from which it emerged, while the Santner and Euringer peaks have been modelled by erosion over the course of time.

Photo: Helmut Rier



Rosengarten/Catinaccio Infopoint - Photo: Nature Park Office

Seiser See, Tiers, Tires Infopoint - Photo: Nature Park Office

Schlern-Rosengarten/Sciliar-Catinaccio Nature Park Visitor Centre - Photo: Nature Park Office



SCHLERN-ROSENGARTEN/SCILIAR-CATINACCIO NATURE PARK VISITOR CENTER
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Phone +39 0471 708 110
info.sr@provinz.bz.it



Opening hours: nature-parks.province.bz.it/en
Free admission!



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SCHLERN-ROSENGARTEN/ SCILIAR-CATINACCIO NATURE PARK
Ancient cultures and new perspectives



The rare and endangered yellow-bellied toad is tied to wetland habitats. In case of danger, it shows its enemies the bright yellow spots on its belly. It secretes a poisonous fluid through its skin that irritates the mucous membranes, puts predators to flight and also protects against bacteria.

Photo: Martin Mair



The non-poisonous grass snake, which prefers wetland habitats, avoids humans. If it is disturbed, it lifts its head and hisses like a viper. When threatened, it spits vomit or projects a foul-smelling secretion at its enemy. It can also play dead by lying on its back with its mouth open.

Photo: Nature Park Office



Map: Tiziano Dolbazar



SCHLERN-ROSENGARTEN/ SCILIAR-CATINACCIO NATURE PARK

Ancient cultures and new perspectives

Hauensstein/Castelvecchio sword
Photo: Nature Park & Onice

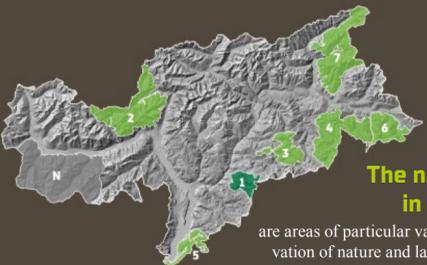
Alpine rescue signal

- 1 Within 1 minute, emit 6 acoustic or visual signals (at 10 second intervals)
- 2 Pause for 1 minute
- 3 Repeat the signal (until response arrives)
- 4 Response: 3 signals within 1 minute

Emergency call centre **112**

Key

- Nature park boundary
- Access road
- Closed road
- Car park
- Ascent system
- Nature Park Visitors' Centre
- Infopoint
- Marked hiking trail
- Difficult trail
- Via ferrata
- Mountain pass
- Water body
- Landscape conservation area boundary
- Inn/Rest area
- Mountain hut
- Camping
- Castle or castle ruins



The nature parks in South Tyrol

are areas of particular value for the conservation of nature and landscape, research, awareness-raising and environmental education. They offer numerous opportunities for direct and respectful interaction with nature.

| | | |
|----------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Schlern-Rosengarten Sciliar-Catinaccio | 7,288 ha 2,156 m ★ 1974 |
| 2 | Texelgruppe Gruppo di Tessa | 31,407 ha 2,857 m ★ 1976 |
| 3 | Puez-Geisler Puez-Dolè Pöz-Odles | 10,729 ha 1,499 m ★ 1978 |
| 4 | Fanes-Sennes-Prags Fanes-Senes-Braies | 25,445 ha 1,929 m ★ 1980 |
| 5 | Trudner Horn Monte Corno | 6,873 ha 1,571 m ★ 1980 |
| 6 | Drei Zinnen Tre Cime | 11,878 ha 1,961 m ★ 1981 |
| 7 | Rieserferner-Ahrn Vedrette di Ries-Aurina | 31,334 ha 2,610 m ★ 1988 |
| N | Nationalpark Stilfserjoch Parco nazionale dello Stelvio | 53,447 ha 3,255 m ★ 1935 |

The Schlern-Rosengarten/Sciliar-Catinaccio Nature Park in a nutshell

The Nature Park covers 7,288 hectares. The villages of Kastelruth/Castelrotto, Seis/Siusi, Völs/Fiè and Tiers/Tires lie at about one thousand metres above sea level. The 5,200-hectare Seiser Alm/Alpe di Siusi landscape conservation area extends about one thousand metres higher up, along the park's northern side. Another five hundred metres higher up is the Schlern/Sciliar plateau. West of the Tschamin/Ciamin Valley rises the Rosengarten/Catinaccio massif, famous for its spires and peaks. According to legend, the dwarf king Laurin, lord of the Catinaccio (in German Rosengarten = Rose Garden), fell in love with the beautiful Similde and abducted her. In the battle against her liberators, Laurin was betrayed and defeated by the movements of the roses, despite wearing a cloak of invisibility. Out of anger, he cursed the rose garden so that it would be invisible both day and night. Nevertheless, at dawn and dusk the Rosengarten/Catinaccio shines in its most beautiful colours.

The nature park's municipalities

- Kastelruth/Castelrotto**
Nature park's share 2,313 ha
Tourist office Kastelruth/Castelrotto Ph +39 0471 706 333
Tourist office Seis/Siusi Ph +39 0471 707 024
Tourist office Seiser Alm/Alpe di Siusi Ph +39 0471 727 904
www.seiseralm.it
- Tiers/Tires**
Nature park's share 3,023 ha
Tourist office Ph +39 0471 642 127
www.seiseralm.it
- Völs am Schlern/Fiè allo Sciliar**
Nature park's share 1,955 ha
Tourist office Ph +39 0471 725 047
www.seiseralm.it

Rules of behaviour

- No vehicles
- Don't camp
- Don't trash
- No noise
- Don't pick
- Dog on a leash
- No fire
- No drones
- Don't destroy