

Introduction

The importance of insularity and biodiversity

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The importance of biodiversity is now widely recognized in the scientific field, but too often ignored or underestimated by those who, by law, should defend the territory and its environmental components, for which we can only applaud any initiative that wants to emphasize the value of biological diversity and the need for its careful protection.

The Congress held in Palermo in May 2012 not only wanted to examine several examples of biodiversity, but also put them in connection with the study of insularity (Figs. 1, 2), an argument which has always been beloved to systematists, ecolo-

gists and biogeographers, since each island, big or small, has the fundamental advantage of being perfectly delimited within its boundaries, which makes it an excellent model for both field analysis and theoretical interpretations.

The contributions have emphasized some aspects of island populations (especially those more closely Mediterranean) from a zoological as much as botanical point of view, proving once again, despite the limitation of means that characterizes the current historical moment, the level and the ability of researchers, either "professional" or "amateurs", as well as the crucial importance of a



Figure 1. Western Camere islet, North-Eastern Sardinia, opposite "Costa Smeralda", 11.IV.1986, photo R. Poggi.



Figure 2. Figarolo islet, Aranci Gulf, North-Eastern Sardinia, 11.IX.1987, photo R. Poggi.

careful and proper conservation of naturalistic collections, essential reference point for any kind of investigation that requires dynamic comparisons between the present and the past.

Finally, relations have also highlighted the need for the protection of our environmental heritage, too often subjected to aggression dictated by

a momentary individual profit and ignored, or at least underestimated, by some political, administrative and management structures that, instead, should be the Paladins of its protection, hoping to pass on to the future generations the Earth in a state at least similar to that in which our generation received it in temporary usufruct.