

Please Remember

It is not possible to access some paths and areas of the Park with your four-footed friend.

You may bring your dog only within the Park's Zone A (please see: www.sibillini.net → Maps and GPS → The zoning map), on all the Hiking Trails except the following:

- **E**8 (entire trail) - Monte Bove
- **E**15 (entire trail) - Monte Vettore
- **E**17 from Capanna Ghezzi to Foce di Montemonaco
- **E**5-**E**6 from the Rifugio del Fargno to the Casale Ara del Re.

You may of course take your dog on:

- all the other **E** Hiking Trails
- all the **N** Nature Paths
- all the stops of the Grande Anello dei Sibillini **G**.

Dogs and Wolves

After years of rare sightings the wolf has returned and repopulated the territories it had left. This is of notable value considering that wolves are predators that regulate the equilibrium of the natural ecosystem and they are therefore protected by national and international law.

In the Sibillini mountains wolves never disappeared and have always existed alongside the tradition of shepherding. For this reason shepherds in these mountains have always relied on the help of their sheep dogs.



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Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini on



The Sheep Dog

Don't be scared
How to behave



Sheep dogs

Sheep dogs have been assisting shepherds defend their flock for millennia. Growing up with the flock, they develop a strong attachment to the sheep and instinctively try to protect them, and their territory, from potential threats. "White as the sheep, brave as the wolves," they watch over the livestock and keep predators at a distance. In Central Italy the most common breed of sheep dog is the Maremmano-Abruzzese Shepherd.



Hiking and sheep dogs

In order to allow sheep dogs to do their job, they are the only type of dog allowed within the Park without leash or muzzle; they are trained to stay close to the flock and not to constitute a threat for the general public. Moreover, a good sheep dog is chosen and trained so as not to be aggressive towards humans.

Occasionally, however, a sheep dog may consider humans as a possible threat to the flock of sheep. During a hike it is therefore possible that a sheep dog may run towards you barking in an attempt to keep people away. Have no fear! This is the dog's job, which we respect just as much as the work of human shepherds. By following some simple behavioural guidelines, the dog will understand you are not a danger to his flock.

How to behave

On foot



Do not cross through the flock. Simply go around it, leaving some distance and avoid touching or petting either the dogs or the sheep. If one or more sheep dogs approach you, they are simply checking to see if you represent a threat to the flock. They may approach you holding their tail straight upwards. Remain calm, avoid staring at them, shouting or making brusque movements, and simply continue to walk with ease. If the dog's behaviour becomes aggressive, back away slowly without running, shaking your hiking poles or throwing stones – in other words, without showing yourself to be aggressive in any way. Simply search for another path around the flock. If it is necessary to go through the sheep, try not to disturb or frighten the animals, and remain calm if dogs approach you.

With your own dog



If you have brought your dog on a hike keep it on a leash at all times (as according to national law) so that it does not approach or disturb the flock or other animals. Do not lift your dog and carry it in your arms. If – and only if – a conflict arises between your dog and the sheep dogs, release your dog from its leash so that it may handle the situation autonomously with its own body language and/or by running away.



By horseback



If you are riding horseback, please keep a suitable distance from the sheep. A sheep dog may interpret your arrival as an intrusion.

By car or motorbike



If you are traveling by car, simply slow down and maintain a steady direction and speed until you have passed the flock of sheep.

By bicycle



If you are biking nearby a guarded flock, simply get off your bike slowly and continue on foot, walking your bike by your side. At this point, follow the indications of the above section "ON FOOT".

Need to report something?

In possible situations of inadequate management, for example finding sheepdogs unsupervised and far from their flock of sheep, please report to: **The Police Department of the National Park Monti Sibillini**
T 0737 972500
E 043293.001@carabinieri.it
Environmental Emergencies T 1515