



PULO OF ALTAMURA - THE GREAT KARST CRATER

With a diameter of about 700 meters and a depth of 90 meters, the Pulo of Altamura is among the largest and most scenic dolines in Italy. This geological site, one of the most important in the Alta Murgia, was generated by the collapse of a karst cave system and shaped by the force of rainwater. It represents an exceptional expression of surface karst, characterized by the presence of caves along the steep walls. On the northern side is a swallowhole consisting of several wells. Archaeological evidence found in the cavities demonstrates human habitation from the Late Paleolithic to the Middle Ages.

The site is located in the “A zone” of the protected area (integral reserve zone) and is home to important endemic species, thanks to a favorable microclimate even in the driest periods. Because of its great geological significance, the Pulo of Altamura has been used as an example of karstification by the distinguished Apulian geologist Carmelo Colamonico.

The area that can be visited by the public has several equipped walking trails, two parking areas and a picnic area. Some small shelters are freely accessible, but expert cavers are recommended to visit the caves. The bottom of the sinkhole allows the growth of endemic plants and provides shelter for wildlife during dry periods.

K2 Geosite – international significance

Location: Altamura

Age: Late Cretaceous - Neogene - Quaternary

Interests: Geology - Stratigraphy - Karst morphology - Archaeology - Flora - Fauna.

