

# The “biodiversity” of communication and public engagement in ecology: activities and reflections from the LTER-Italy network

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## The LTER-Italy network

Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) aims at better understanding, analysing, and monitoring changes in ecosystem patterns and processes over decades. The **Italian LTER network (LTER-Italy)** is made of **79 research sites**, from terrestrial, freshwater and marine domains, representative of the main Italian ecosystem typologies. It belongs to the European (LTER-Europe) and International (ILTER) networks since 2006. The LTER networks represent a suitable context where new and different forms of communication and of public engagement could be experimented and where reflections about the way scientists communicate ecology can arise.

## The Cammini LTER initiative

LTER-Italy realized, since **2015**, the informal science communication initiative “**Cammini LTER**”, a series of trails connecting two or more LTER sites, where researchers walked and cycled together with citizens, aiming at providing the public with the opportunity to get familiar with LTER research. During Cammini **different forms of dialogue and of knowledge exchange** were experimented, using a diversity of tools and language. More traditional communication activities joined other initiatives, more or less structured, which offered both the researchers and citizens the opportunities to exchange, share and build knowledge, experience and perspectives.

## Citizen Science

Along some trails, the organizers involved citizens in the provision of VGI (Volunteered Geographic Information) by proposing the use of specific apps to collect either **biological or abiotic observations**.



The results of these activities are documented on the LTER-Italy website



**LTER  
CAMMINI**



The Comitato Nazionale Italia BioBlitz provided the patronage and the organizational support to the four BioBlitz organized during Cammini in the **Central Apennines (Abruzzo)** between 2015 and 2018. Overall, the presence of over 1000 species has been documented, with the participation of 20 experts and about 200 people.

## Social networks

LTER-Italy makes an extensive use of social networks with more than **1000 users (Twitter, FB and Flickr)**. FB posts are particularly strategic during Cammini, to describe the trips in real time. In 2017, during the bike-tour “Antropica”, we experimented the “**sup\_post**”, short video-selfie, to critically and ironically reflect on science communication “on the move”.

Visit the LTER-Italy Facebook page - video



## Sea Featuring Tours

**Sea Featuring Tours** are participatory labs based on an “experiential” mode of engaging, noticing and anticipating the future. They took place during the 2017 bike tour “Antropica”, in two Italian coastal areas (Bagnoli, in the **Gulf of Naples** and **Mar Piccolo of Taranto**). The aim was to activate and enhance the synergies between researchers and other actors in the territories.

For more information about this activity visit the LTER-Italy website

