

Raven (*Corvus corax*)

Size: 54-67 cm in length – wingspan 115-130 cm.

It is found in the Pietra environment in autumn and winter.

A large-sized corvid, it is omnivorous (fruit, refuse, carcasses, amphibians, etc.).

It is completely black and has a powerful, prominent beak which is easy to recognize even in flight. It nests on perpendicular rock faces in the National Park and often lives in the same territory as the golden eagle.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Size: 29-41 cm in length – wingspan 58-80 cm

A small, very swift bird of prey, that mainly feeds on small perching birds. It catches its prey by means of swift surprise attacks in the woods around the Pietra, where it often nests.

Its upper plumage is dark grey, whereas its underside is lighter with thin stripes; it has a long thin tail.

It is seen all year round gliding in the thermal updraughts which are formed in proximity of the rocks at the hottest times of day.

Common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Size: 46-58 cm in length – wingspan 110-132 cm

A very common, medium-sized bird of prey that is easily seen in high places, searching for its prey. It mainly feeds on rodents, small mammals, coleopters, and occasionally, small birds.

It has dark brown upper plumage, light lower plumage and dark spots on its legs. It is a year-round Park resident and nests with other birds in the woods around the Pietra di Bismantova.

It is frequently seen circling in the sky for hours, looking for prey.

Common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Size: 31-37 cm in length – wingspan 68-78 cm

A very common, small bird of prey that nests on the vertical rock faces of the Pietra and prefers narrow gorges.

Its upper plumage is reddish-brown and speckled, whereas its underside is lighter with occasional black spots.

Males differ from females in that their heads, backs and tails are grey.

It is seen all year round, and feeds mainly on small rodents, insects and birds which it captures by means of its signature nose dive (known as “the flight of the Holy Spirit”) after hovering for a few seconds in the air over its prey (as in the photograph).

Peregrine falcon (*Falco Peregrinus*)

Size: 38-51 cm in length – wingspan 89-113 cm.

A fairly rare small/medium-sized bird of prey. It is very swift, and can reach a speed of over 300 km/h during a swoop.

Its upper plumage is dark grey which contrasts with its light, black-striped underside.

Its black moustache on light-coloured cheeks is a clearly visible distinguishing feature of this species.

It is very easily disturbed while nesting. In the last few decades these birds have bred several times on the rock faces of the Pietra.

It is found all year round and only feeds on birds caught by means of spectacularly swift swoops.

Wallcreeper (*Tichodroma muraria*)

Size: 15-17 cm in length.

A small-sized bird that spends its days flying from one narrow gorge to another. Sometimes it hangs head down from the rock, searching for small insects to eat.

It flaps its wings like a butterfly.

Its upper plumage is dark grey and its wings are bright crimson with white spots on the tips.

Its beak is long, and thin, and curves downwards.

It is seen during wintertime.

In the last few decades it has probably bred on the Pietra rock faces. This small bird is very easily disturbed while nesting, too.

Alpine accentor (*Prunella collaris*)

Size: 15-17,5 cm in length

A small perching bird commonly found in this environment.

It is greyish brown, with reddish claws.

A Park resident in wintertime, it is commonly seen flying around the Pietra in small flocks.

It feeds mainly on small insects and seeds found in the soil.

It normally nests in the higher areas of the National Park, along the Apennine crest.

Crag martin (*Ptynoprogne rupestris*)

Size: 14-15 cm in length.

A small swallow that builds its nests along the rock faces of the Pietra, taking advantage of its narrow gorges and crevices.

It feeds on insects that it catches in flight.

It has ash-brown upper plumage and a silk-white underside.

Unlike other swallows, its tail is not forked.

This species is present on almost every rock face in the National Park.

Great-spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Size: 23-26 cm in length – wingspan 38-44 cm

A very common woodpecker that nests in the woods around the Pietra by laying eggs inside tree hollows.

Its food mainly consists of insects and larvae found in various kinds of bark.

Its upper plumage is dark, with white spots on its upper wings, while its underside is light.

Males have a crimson spot on the top of their head which is absent in females.

It is a year-round resident and nests throughout the National Park area.