

17th Workshop of the International Association of Phytoplankton

Kastoria 14-21 September, 2014



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**17th Workshop of the International Association of
Phytoplankton Taxonomy and Ecology (IAP)
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SCHEDULE

AND

BOOK OF ABSTRACT

Lake Tovel, an ecological research station within the LTER and NETLAKE perspective

Giovanna Flaim¹, Ulrike Obertegger¹, Maria Cellamare², Maria Leitão², Michela Rogora³, Giampaolo Rossetti⁴, Bertha Thaler⁵, Stefano Corradini¹, Cristina Castellani¹, Luciana Zanini⁶, Lisette de Senerpont Domis⁷, Eleanor Jennings⁸

¹Fondazione Edmund Mach (FEM), Via E. Mach 1, 38010 San Michele all'Adige Italy. E-mail: giovanna.flaim@fmach.it

²Bi-Eau, 15 Rue Laine'-Laroche, 49000 Angers, France

³CNR Istituto per lo Studio degli Ecosistemi, Largo Tonolli 50, 28922 Verbania Pallanza, Italy

⁴Dipartimento di Scienze Ambientali, Università di Parma, Parco Area delle Scienze, 11/a Parma, Italy

⁵Laboratorio Biologico, AAPB, Via Sottomonte 2, 39055 Laives (BZ), Italy

⁶Istituto Comprensivo di Tuenno, Via Maistrelli, 11 Tuenno (TN), Italy

⁷NIOO-KNAW, Droevendaalsesteeg 10, 6708 PB Wageningen, The Netherlands

⁸Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dublin Rd., Dundalk, Co. Louth, Ireland

Lake Tovel is a LTER research site (IT09-005-A) within the larger *Mountain Lakes* parent site (IT-009-000-A). It is also part of NETLAKE (EU Cost Action ES 1201) that aims to build a network of sites and individuals to support the development and deployment of sensor-based systems in lakes, and promote their use to address water issues in Europe. Long-term ecological datasets collected in a consistent way over time offer the opportunity to study the response of an ecosystem to environmental stressors. Mountain lakes, because of their sensitivity to environmental changes, can be used as early warning systems for climate change and are ideal study sites to investigate ecological processes at the whole-ecosystem level. Furthermore, their phytoplankton communities are frequently made up of difficult to identify small flagellates, often limiting the taxonomic resolution achieved.

Despite the strategic importance of our environment, citizens often have a poor understanding of environmental issues, even though they make the management decisions that will affect ecosystems. Lake Tovel provided the ideal setting for addressing these different topics – phytoplankton taxonomy and citizens' education.

NETLAKE supported a Short-Term Scientific Mission for a trained phycologist who provided a more refined taxonomic definition of Tovel phytoplankton, thereby strengthening the basis for future studies on phytoplankton communities. A further objective of NETLAKE was to raise citizen awareness of local lakes and build a network of LakePals within Europe. These objectives were achieved by increasing lake visibility to the public by setting up a dedicated website and positioning a webcam, donated by the local bank *Cassa Rurale Tuenno*. In addition, the local middle school, along with other European classes, participated in the WaterPals initiative geared to inform children about their environmental heritage regarding Lake Tovel. This is particularly important because these children will be the decision makers of tomorrow.