



UMBRIA'S JURASSIC PARK



Italy is world famous for its ancient classical monuments, but strangely enough its many unique and fascinating prehistoric sites are little known. The **Fossilized Forest of Dunarobba at Avigliano Umbro**, near Amelia (Umbria) is a rare natural monument dating back **three million years to the Pliocene Era**. It is so rare, in fact, that only two other examples exist in the world – one inside a glacier in Canada and another in Germany. Not to be confused with the American Petrified Forest, which was transformed by volcanic action into stone, the Dunarobba trees are still technically wood, frozen in their original composition and form, with their tops snapped off but their rugged trunks preserved.

The extraordinary site came to light at the end of the 1970s while workmen were digging out a clay quarry and came under the protection of the **Ministry of the Environment and Umbria Region in 1989**.

The sight of some fifty giant conifer stumps leaves visitors open-mouthed. Some tower up to a height of **8 m**. The diameter of the trunks measure between **1 to 4 m**. They stand on what was once the bank of a vast lake that stretched across the Terni Valley from Spoleto to Città di Castello. Climate change caused the waters to recede and the trees sank gradually down into deposits of sand and clay, lying buried deep in the layers of sediment that preserved them to the present day.

Since the Dunarobba trees are still technically wood, they are vulnerable to deterioration and attacks from birds and nesting insects and are therefore carefully monitored. The site is open most days with **guided visits obligatory**.

For info on opening hours: Tel. +39.0744.940348
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[Back to top](#)

›20 Sep 2017

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