



Protists exhibition in zoological garden.

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The characteristics and roles of zoological gardens are described by the law n. 73/2005 in implementation the Directive CE 1999/22, "to promote and implement education and awareness programs on biodiversity". The role of zoos is extremely important for communicating ecological goals and their objectives. In fact, zoos represent a channel for communicating biodiversity in general. The species kept in zoos always have two major constants: high educational and conservation value. For these reasons we have decided to create an exhibit dedicated to the protists. Indeed, the protists are one of the best models of single-celled organisms for use in teaching biology. We focused on heterotrophic protists, usually known as "protozoa", in order to show the unicellular life. To better show unicellular organisms, it was thought to use colorful and large taxon, and to this purpose *Blepharisma japonicum* is certainly a valid species. The breeding of this species is not difficult, and cells can be kept alive by means of bacterial feeding (rice seed). In this case, it will be sufficient to attach a modest magnifying glass (-10x) to see the cells swimming. We are currently also thinking of setting up a tank that hosts flagellate algae of the genus *Chlorogonium*, in this case it will be impossible to see the individual algae, but you will be just the green color. Each breeding tank will have its own explanation panel with text and images. The exhibition is designed without the use of electricity. On the website of the structure, it will be possible to deepen the topic with multimedia material. For the writing of the popular texts we have decided to assign a degree thesis to a student of "Primary Education".

Protists at the Natural History Museum of the University of Pisa.

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The Natural History Museum of the University of Pisa, in the 2010-2011 school year, was the first Italian museum to include an educational activity dedicated to protists in its educational offer, becoming a reference point for educational activities aimed at knowledge of protistology and the microcosm that surrounds us. In addition to the educational activities, other events concerning protists were also organized, such as sampling during a congress dedicated to the "Scientific Research in the Museum", in 2012, or, more recently, the activities carried out during the International Day for Biological Diversity in May 2022. However, the two events that permanently linked the museum and protists were the 2015 inauguration of the exhibition "Earth: myth and science", a part of which is dedicated to the appearance of life on Earth and the publication of the exhibition guide in 2017, with insights that make it a text useful for our educational activities.