



ConShagAudMIBAGR - Concrete Conservation Actions for the Mediterranean Shag and Audouin's gull in Greece including the inventory of relevant marine IBAs

LIFE07 NAT/GR/000285



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Contact details:

Project Manager: Jakob FRIC
Tel: +30 210 8228704
Fax: +30 210 8227937
Email: info@ornithologiki.gr



Project description:

Background

Seabirds in the Mediterranean are subject to a range of threats, depending on species and location. However, the most important threats, in terms of conservation, are insufficient knowledge to help protect seabirds in their marine environment; predation by introduced mammals (primarily rats and cats); predation or competition for food and habitat with Yellow-legged gull (*Larus michahellis*); incidental capture and mortality by fishing activities (by-catch); reduced quality of breeding habitats; risk of oil spills and chemical pollution; and over-fishing.

Objectives

The LIFE project focused on improving the conservation status of Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*) and Mediterranean shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*), which inhabit the Aegean Sea and Ionian Sea areas of Greece. The aim is to improve breeding performance of national populations of Audouin's gull and Mediterranean Shag by between 20-25% and 10-15%, respectively. The project actions addressed the most relevant threats for the conservation of these two species, namely, rat predation, gull competition and commercial fishing activities that cause accidental bird fatalities. The project sites were uninhabited islets and islands where seabirds breed, the surrounding sea where they feed, and larger

inhabited islands where major ports and towns are found. Specific actions at these sites included the complete removal of all rats from five Natura 2000 network sites (Special Protected Area - SPA) island complexes, the modification of fishing gear and/or fishing regulations to reduce accidental trapping problems, and research to improve knowledge concerning Yellow-legged gull control methods. Another objective was the identification of marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs), in order to promote their protection as a necessary step to avoid habitat loss and degradation. These LIFE actions aim to help implement the Birds Directive in the marine environment, as well as address priorities identified in both EU legislation and international action plans.

Results

The project was successfully implemented to the benefit of the 17 most important Natura 2000 network (SPAs) for Audouin's gull and Mediterranean shag in Greece. For these areas 41 marine IBAs were identified, for inclusion in the Natura 2000 network. Rat eradications were successfully implemented on nine complexes of islets, where up to 51.5% and 16.2% of the national breeding populations of Audouin's gull and Mediterranean shag reproduce, respectively. These measures improved the breeding success of the target seabird species and also helped restore degraded ecosystems on these uninhabited Greek islets.

Breeding success was also improved by the pilot implementation of control measures to reduce Yellow-legged gull populations, a competitor for food and nesting sites. Control operations were conducted at five colony sites, representing 7-10% and 5% of the national populations of Audouin's gull and Mediterranean shag, respectively. The project assessed the incidence of by-catch and developed mitigation measures in cooperation with local fishermen. A systematic assessment of seabird by-catch in all main types of fishing gear led to the publication of a report identifying the types of equipment mainly responsible for by-catches of all seabird species of conservation concern in Greece. A list of proposed measures to be implemented to reduce bird fatalities was produced.

An analysis of the diet of Audouin's gull and Mediterranean shag and a chemical assessment of pollution that affects each species were conducted. The toxicological analysis of target species tissue samples resulted in a report on the levels of chemical pollution and their estimated effects on the target species. Successful awareness-raising, dissemination and environmental education actions were implemented, directed at the general public, local populations near the main habitats, fishermen and local authorities. Key themes of these communications were the promotion of nature conservation and the sustainable co-existence of human populations with the natural environment. Social and economic benefits could derive, for example, from a growth in eco-tourism.

The establishment of a networking system among project beneficiaries led to the effective exchange of information, tools and cooperation among BirdLife partners and related projects on issues regarding marine IBA identification, alien species eradication and island management. Another legacy of the project is the numerous collaborations with academic institutions, NGOs, key stakeholders and authorities, which have promoted project outputs at local, national and international levels.

The main legislative benefits of the project derive from the publication of the inventory of marine IBAs. This included a description of the marine IBA concept, the methods used, the importance of specified threats at each site for both seabird species, and other information of value for habitat management and policy-making. The project achieved a major advance in the study of seabirds and their habitat conservation in Greece. The marine IBA inventory, assessment of seabird by-catch, environmental education material, and other project outcomes, contributed information for the extension of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment and ensured a better conservation status for the two seabird species.

Further information on the project can be found in the project's layman report and After-LIFE Conservation Plan (see "Read more" section).

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Species - Birds

Keywords

endangered species, marine ecosystem, nature conservation

Target EU Legislation

- Nature protection and Biodiversity
- Directive 79/409 - Conservation of wild birds (02.04.1979)

Target species

Larus audouinii Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii

Natura 2000 sites

SPAGR1150001DELTA NESTOU KAI LIMNOTHALASSES KERAMOTIS KAI NISOS
THASOPOULA
SPAGR1430005NISIA KYRA PANAGIA, PIPERI, PSATHOURA KAI GYRO NISIDES
AGIOS GEORGIOS, NISOI ADELFOI, LECHOUSA, GAIDOURONISIA
SCI GR3000010NISIDES KYTHIRON: PRASONISI, DRAGONERA, ANTIDRAGONERA
SCI GR1430004ETHNIKO THALASSIO PARKO ALONNISOU - VOREION
SPORADON, ANATOLIKI SKOPELOS
SCI GR4120004IKARIA - FOURNOI KAI PARAKTIA ZONI

SCI GR4210010ARKOI, LEIPSOI, AGATHONISI KAI VRACHONISIDES
 SCI GR4220012VOREIA AMORGOS KAI KINAROS, LEVITHA, MAVRA, GLAROS KAI
 THALASSIA ZONI
 SCI GR4220017NISOI DESPOTIKO KAI STRONGYLO KAI THALASSIA ZONI
 SCI GR4340013NISOI GAVDOS KAI GAVDOPOULA
 SCI GR2210001DYTIKES KAI VOREIOANATOLIKES AKTES ZAKYNTHOU
 SPAGR2420009NISIDES SKYROU
 SPAGR4110008NISIDES KAI VRACHONISIDES LIMNOU: NISOS SERGITSI KAI
 NISIDES DIAVATES, KOMPIO, KASTRIA, TIGANI, KARKALAS,
 PRASONISI
 SPAGR4110009NISIDES LESVOU (SYMPLEGMA TOMARONISION, KYDONAS,
 AGIOS GEORGIOS, GLARONISI, KLP)
 SPAGR4120006NISOS FOURNOI KAI NISIDES THYMAINA, ALATSONISI,
 THYMAINAKI, STRONGYLO, PLAKA, MAKRONISI, MIKROS KAI
 MEGALOS ANTHROPOFAGOS, AGIOS MINAS
 SPAGR4130002NISIA ANTIPSARA KAI NISIDES DASKALIO, MASTROGIORGI,
 PRASONISI, KATO NISI, MESIAKO, KOUTSOULIA
 SPAGR4210015NISOS AGATHONISIOU KAI NISIDES: PITTA, KATSAGANI,
 NERONISI, STRONGYLI
 SPAGR4210016NISOS LEIPSOI (DYTIKO TMIMA) KAI NISIDES: FRAGKOS,
 MAKRONISI, PILAFI, KAPARI, KALAPODIA, MEGALO ASPRONISI,
 MAKRY ASPRONISI, KOULOURA, NOTIA ASPRA, SARAKINA,
 PIATO, PSOMOS, STAVRI, LIRA, ARETHOUSA, MANOLI
 SPAGR4210017VOREIODYTIKO TMIMA ARKION KAI NISIDES: AGRELOUSA,
 STRONGYLI, SPALATHI, SMINERO, TSOUKA, TSOUKAKI,
 PSATHONISI, KALOVOLOS, MAKRONISI, AVAPTISTOS, KOMAROS
 SPAGR4210024NISOS TILOS KAI NISIDES: ANTITILLOS, PELEKOUSA,
 GAIDOURONISI, GIAKOUMIS, AGIOS ANDREAS, PRASOUDA, NISI
 SPAGR4220024NISOS AMORGOS (VOREIOANATOLIKO TMIMA) KAI NISIDES:
 PSALIDA, GRAMVOUSSA, NIKOURIA, MIKRO KAI MEGALO
 VIOKASTRO, KRAMVONISI, PETALIDI
 SPAGR4220025NISIDES PAROU KAI NOTIA ANTIPAROS
 SPAGR4340023NOTIODYTIKI GAVDOS KAI GAVDOPOULA
 SCI GR3000013KYTHIRA KAI GYRO NISIDES: PRASONISI, DRAGONERA,
 ANTIDRAGONERA, AVGO, KAPELLO, KOUFO KAI FIDONISI

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	HELLENIC ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Type of organisation	NGO-Foundation
Description	The Hellenic Ornithological Society is an NGO (affiliated to BirdLife International) with a mandate that includes conservation of birds and their habitats.

Partners Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Sea (MOM), Greece Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Greece Technological Educational Institution of Ionian Islands, Greece Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA), Portugal

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Administrative data:

Project reference LIFE07 NAT/GR/000285
Duration 01-JAN-2009 to 31-DEC -2012
Total budget 2,357,922.00 €
EU contribution 1,768,442.00 €
Project location Ionia Nisia(Ellas) Voreio Aigaio(Ellas) Kriti(Ellas)

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Read more:

Brochure Title: Project's leaflet (1.71MB) Year: 2014 No of pages: 2

Brochure Title: "Seabirds of the Greek seas" (1.3MB) Author: Roula Trigou, Vassilis Hatzirvassanis Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 3

Brochure Title: "Sailing with seabirds in the Aegean Sea: Quick identification guide to seabirds" (4.77KB) Author: Roula Trigou, Vassilis Hatzirvassanis Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 2

Brochure Title: "Gli uccelli marini della Grecia" (1.36MB) Author: Roula Trigou, Vassilis Hatzirvassanis Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 3

Brochure Title: "Die Seevögel der Meere Griechenlands" (1.35MB) Author: Roula Trigou, Vassilis Hatzirvassanis Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 3

Brochure Title: "Seabirds of the Greek seas" (1.33MB) Author: Roula Trigou, Vassilis Hatzirvassanis Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 3

Poster	Title: "Mediterranean shag" (822KB) Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 1
Poster	Title: "Audouin's Gull" (809KB) Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 1
Poster	Title: "The valuable small, uninhabited islets" (1.21MB) Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 1
Poster	Title: Project's poster (1.6MB) Year: 2014 Editor: Ornithologiki No of pages: 1
Poster	Title: "Pelagic seabirds of the Aegean Sea" (1.44MB) Year: 2014 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society No of pages: 1
Project web site	Project's website
Publication: After-LIFE Conservation Plan	Title: After-LIFE Conservation Plan Year: 2013 No of pages: 23
Publication: Layman report	Title: Layman report Year: 2012 Editor: Hellenic Ornithological Society/BirdLIFE Greece No of pages: 12
Publication: Technical report	Title: Project's Final technical report Year: 2013 No of pages: 135

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