



LIFE-Patches & Corridors - Development of a habitat network for the Violet Copper to promote a sustainable metapopulation

LIFE15 NAT/DE/000745



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Project description:

Background

The rare butterfly species, violet copper (*Lycaena helle*), lives in flower-rich meadows with bistort (*Polygonum bistorta*). The occurrence of this valuable species, listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive, indicates pristine and functioning alluvial ecosystems in intact upland landscapes. It can be found in areas where clean streams flow through flower-rich damp meadows. The species thrives in cool, moist conditions on slightly acidic nutrient-poor soils.

The northern Eifel is one of only six German regions with the necessary qualities and site conditions for the species. However, dispersal of individual butterflies between sites is not possible. Improved migratory movement is needed to ensure that the species survives in the region. Restoration measures could create a habitat network in the "Oberlauf der Rur" Natura 2000 network site. The development and management of wet meadows, hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities and alluvial forests, as patches and corridors, will enable migration and movement of the target species.

Objectives

The LIFE-Patches & Corridors project aims to improve the conservation status of the violet copper butterfly and its supporting habitat types, three priority habitats of the Habitats Directive – alluvial- bog- and Tilio-Acerion forests of the Northern Eifel mountains. The overall objective is to establish a habitat

network within and between Natura 2000 sites in order to sustain violet copper (sub)-populations. Corridors and stepping stones will be established by removing obstacles and developing new habitats.

Specific objectives are to:

- Increase connectivity of existing and potential biotopes of the violet copper by developing, expanding and improving natural alluvial wood and open land habitats e.g. alluvial forests, bog forests, mountain hay meadows and hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities;
- Protect existing populations of the violet copper through land purchase;
- Establish a habitat management scheme in existing and potential habitats, taking into account the special ecological needs of the species; and
- Control invasive alien plant species to protect the natural species structure of both hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities and alluvial forests, by eliminating Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) in parts of the project area.

Expected results:

- Purchase of up to 27 ha of land;
- Lease of up to 10 ha of land;
- Removal of up to 19.5 ha of fir forests in the alluvial plain;
- Restoration of up to 4.5 ha mountain hay meadows;
- Management of up to 35 ha of wet meadows including fallows, hydrophilous fringes and headwaters;
- Restoration of up to 15 ha of bog woods, forests of slopes, screes and ravines and alluvial woods;
- Improvement of up to 10 ha of bog woods, forests of slopes, screes and ravines and alluvial woods by selective forestry and initial planting of bistort rootstocks;
- Planting of up to 1 000 Wych elms (*Ulmus glabra*) on sites typical for forests of slopes, screes and ravines;
- Elimination of the invasive alien plant Himalayan balsam in the Belgenbach, Tiefenbach, Kluckbach and Holderbach valleys; and
- Production of habitat management guidelines.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Species - Invertebrates

Keywords

biotope network, forest ecosystem, restoration measure

Target EU Legislation

- Nature protection and Biodiversity
- Directive 92/43 - Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora- Habitats Directiv ...

Target species

Lycaena helle

Target Habitat types

- 6430 - Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels
- 6520 - Mountain hay meadows
- 9180 - "Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines"
- 91D0 - Bog woodland
- 91E0 - "Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)"

Natura 2000 sites

SCIDE5403301Perlenbach-Fuhrtsbachtal

SCIDE5403304Oberlauf der Rur

SCIDE5404303Dedenborn, Talaue des Püngel-, Wüstebaches und Erkensruhoberlauf

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Biologische Station StädteRegion Aachen e.V.
Type of organisation	NGO-Foundation
Description	Founded in 1998, Biologische Station StädteRegion Aachen is an association managing nature conservation in the Aachen region in southwest North Rhine-Westphalia. Management includes the implementation of nature conservation measures, management, research and monitoring, as well as the development of management plans, issuing advice to land users (e.g. foresters and farmers)

and public relations.

Partners

Ministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt,
Landwirtschaft - Natur- und
Verbraucherschutz des Landes
Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE15 NAT/DE/000745
Duration	01-JAN-2017 to 31-DEC -2022
Total budget	2,455,479.00 €
EU contribution	1,473,288.00 €
Project location	Nordrhein-Westfalen(Deutschland)

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