



LIFE PRIMED - Restoration, management and valorisation of PRIority habitats of MEDiterranean coastal areas

LIFE17 NAT/GR/000511



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Project description:

Background

Transitional small wetlands and coastal forests are among the most degraded and threatened ecosystems in the EU. This has resulted in many habitats and species in Mediterranean coastal areas having ‘unfavourable’, ‘vulnerable’ or ‘near threatened’ conservation status according to the Habitats Directive. Actions to improve the conservation status of habitats are particularly needed in two such areas along the Greek and Italian coasts, identified in preparatory project work. The Palo Laziale forest forms the core of the ‘Bosco di Palo Laziale’ Natura 2000 site in Italy. It covers 50 ha and is largely composed of the habitat ‘Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak-sessile oak forests’. In Greece, the largest remaining riparian forest in the Mediterranean area is protected within the ‘Delta Nestou’ Natura 2000 site. This is of great ornithological value, but in past decades has been severely reduced in size. Previous conservation efforts included the reforestation of 60 ha by the ‘Nestos’ (LIFE02 NAT/GR/008489) project. Habitats and species in both Natura 2000 sites face several serious threats, including shrub expansion, eutrophication and inappropriate water management, and invasive alien species.

Objectives

The main aim of the LIFE PRIMED project is to improve the conservation status of

habitats and species in the Nestos Delta and Palo Laziale woods Natura 2000 sites in Greece and Italy, respectively. The targeted habitats are ‘Mediterranean temporary ponds’, Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*, ‘Arborescent matorral with *Laurus nobilis*’ and ‘Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak-sessile oak forests’, all protected under Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Moreover, the project aims to improve the conservation status of characteristic species, particularly Hermann's tortoise (*Eurotestudo hermanni*), European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), Jersey tiger moth (*Euplagia quadripunctaria*), all protected under Annex I of the Habitats Directive, as well as species listed in the Birds Directive. Direct conservation interventions are planned in both Natura 2000 sites, such as increasing the area of ‘Mediterranean temporary ponds’. The project also aims to quantify the causes leading to ‘unfavourable’ conservation status of these habitats and species, and develop mechanisms to sustain management actions after the project. Moreover, it aims at engaging local residents in conservation actions, especially related to tourism to support the local economy.

Expected results:

- Increase in the surface area of ‘Mediterranean temporary ponds’ in Palo Laziale (Italy) by 0.8 ha and in Nestos Delta (Greece) by 0.02 ha;
- Recovery of 40 ha of the habitat ‘Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak-sessile oak forests’ in Palo Laziale;
- Reversal of forest decline via improving the chemical-physical conditions of the soil in the ‘Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak-sessile oak forests’ (Italy) and ‘Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*’ habitats by providing water during the dry season;
- Increase in the population sizes of *Eurotestudo hermanni*, *Emys orbicularis*, *Euplagia quadripunctaria*, and also common pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*);
- Production and dissemination of good practices for the restoration and management of lowland ecosystems and mainstreaming these into the methodological approach of the international Sustainable Forest Management Strategic Plan (SFMSP);
- Inform at least 400 forestry professionals during the project’s International Workshops across Europe, and train at least 200 people on conservation engineering, restoration ecology, and EU funding programmes to create new jobs; and
- Engage at least 2 500 tourists and residents in tourism and recreation initiatives facilitated by the project, and at least 2 500 local residents via environmental awareness activities.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Habitats - Forests

Habitats - Freshwater

Species - Reptiles

Species - Invertebrates

Keywords

environmental awareness, 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

Emys orbicularis *Euplagia quadripunctaria* *Testudo hermanni*

Target Habitat types

- 91E0 - "Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)"
- 91M0 - Pannonian-Balkanic turkey oak-sessile oak forests
- 3170 - Mediterranean temporary ponds
- 5230 - Arborescent matorral with *Laurus nobilis*

Natura 2000 sites

SCIGR1150010DELTA NESTOU KAI LIMNOTHALASSES KERAMOTIS - EVRYTERI PERIOCHI KAI PARAKTIA ZONI

SCIIT6030022 Bosco di Palo Laziale

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator

Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature

Type of organisation	NGO-Foundation
Description	The Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN) is the oldest environmental NGO in Greece. It advocates for the protection of biodiversity and conducts nature conservation actions through national and EU projects. HSPN raises public awareness, implements environmental education programmes in schools, and is the national operator for the eco-labels “Blue Flag” (for beaches and marinas) and “Green Key” (for tourist facilities).
Partners	Department of Environmental Biology - Sapienza University of Rome, Italy AGENZIA REGIONALE per lo SVILUPPO e l'INNOVAZIONE in AGRICOLTURA, Italy Management Body of Nestos Delta - Vistonida - Ismarida, Greece Institute of Mediterranean Forest Ecosystems, Hellenic Agricultural Organization “DEMETER”, Greece

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE17 NAT/GR/000511
Duration	02-JUL-2018 to 30-JUN -2023
Total budget	2,136,775.00 €
EU contribution	1,602,581.00 €
Project location	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki(Ellas) Lazio(Italia)

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Project web site	Project's website
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