



LIFE Artina - LIFE Artina - seabird  
conservation network in the Adriatic

LIFE17 NAT/HR/000594



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#### Project description:

##### Background

Most EU countries with pelagic birds (i.e. that spend a significant portion of their lives on the open ocean) have designated Special Protection Areas (SPAs) offshore for them. However, Croatia has not yet completed an inventory of birds for its marine Natura 2000 network. This data is needed to identify SPAs for the Croatian breeding populations of pelagic birds. As Croatia joined the EU in 2013, before which it had no obligation to report on its progress with implementing the Birds Directive, it does not yet have all the data required. But according to the Red Data Book of birds in Croatia, published in 2013, two of the LIFE Artina project's three target species have unfavourable or declining conservation status - the Yelkouan shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*) and Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*).

The Lastovsko otocje SPA (Lastovo Islands Nature Park) is of vital importance for these two and for the project's third target species, Scopoli's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*). The SPA contains more than 50% of the national population of the Yelkouan shearwater, approximately 30-70% of the Scopoli's shearwater population and almost 100% of the Audouin's gull population. The nearby Palagruza archipelago and surrounding sea are also important for biodiversity and for conservation of these three bird species, in particular Scopoli's shearwater, due to their offshore and remote position in the Adriatic.

## Objectives

LIFE Artina will help designate some marine Special Protection Areas in Croatia, drawing up a list of proposed SPAs and suggested management measures for them. The project's specific goals are to:

- Identify marine SPAs in Southern Croatia for the yelkouan shearwater, Audouin's gull, and Scopoli's shearwater;
- Understand and assess the main threats affecting oceanic bird populations on land and at sea in the project area, and map out actions to mitigate these threats;
- Eradicate terrestrial invasive species (black rats) from shearwater breeding colonies and control yellow-legged gulls at Audouin's gull breeding colonies.

Expected results:

- Full assessment of Scopoli's shearwater, yelkouan shearwater and Audouin's gull populations at sea, identifying significant offshore feeding and roosting areas;
- Individual tracking of 40 Scopoli's shearwater, 40 yelkouan shearwater and 15 Audouin's gull specimens using remote sensing equipment (data logger, ultra high frequency radio logger and satellite-transmitter);
- Designation of offshore SPAs based on data acquired and submitted to the authorities;
- Collection of three years of census data for the yelkouan shearwater, Scopoli's shearwater, Audouin's gull and yellow-legged gull. Assessment of threats on land and at sea (e.g. through interactions with fishers, predation);
- Refinement of the Lastovsko otočje SPA's management plan with sound monitoring frameworks for seabirds;
- Monitoring (at least 15%) of the fishing fleet operating in the project area to assess bycatch levels;
- Mitigation methods implemented by at least 25% of the fishing fleet by the project's end;
- Publication of best practice guidelines on sustainable tourism and fishing;
- Yellow-legged gull populations controlled on two sites where they are sympatric (occurring within the same or overlapping geographical areas) with Audouin's gulls;
- Black rats eradicated on remote breeding islets of seabirds in Lastovo Islands Nature Park;
- Black rats controlled on islets situated near inhabited places;
- Conference about sustainable birdwatching on marine sites;
- Awareness-raising actions targeting two local schools and the islands of Lastovo and Vis.

## Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Species - Birds

Keywords

monitoring, remote sensing, management plan, vulnerability assessment

Target EU Legislation

- Nature protection and Biodiversity
- Regulation 1143/2014 - Prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien ...
- Directive 2009/147 - Conservation of wild birds - Birds Directive (codified version of Directive ...

Target species

Calonectris diomedea Larus audouinii Puffinus yelkouan

Natura 2000 sites

SPA	HR1000038	Lastovsko otočje
SPA	HR1000039	Pučinski otoci

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Udruga BIOM
Type of organisation	NGO-Foundation
Description	BIOM is a non-profit civil society organisation founded in 2006 active in nature protection and conservation of species and habitats. Its mission is to preserve Croatia's unique biodiversity and to encourage cooperation and commitment among stakeholders for nature protection.

Partners BirdLife Malta, Malta Udruga za prirodu, okoliš i održivi razvoj Sunce - Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce, Croatia Javna ustanova Park prirode Lastovsko otočje, Croatia

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE17 NAT/HR/000594
Duration	01-SEP-2018 to 31-AUG -2023
Total budget	1,921,387.00 €
EU contribution	1,152,832.00 €
Project location	Kontinentalna Hrvatska(Croatia Hrvatska) Mediterr. Croatia (CRO)(Croatia Hrvatska)

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