



LIFE+



Nature & Biodiversity

Projects 2009

nature



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION



environment

LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity 2009: Commission funds 84 innovation projects in 24 countries with €124 million

The European Commission has approved funding for 84 new environmental innovation projects in 24 countries under the LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity programme 2009. These projects will demonstrate new methods and techniques for dealing with a wide diversity of Europe's environmental problems. The projects are led by 'beneficiaries', or project promoters, based in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They represent a total investment of €224 million, of which the EU will provide some €124 million.

LIFE Nature in 2009

LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity projects improve the conservation status of endangered species and habitats. Of the 194 proposals received, the Commission selected for funding 84 projects from partnerships of conservation bodies, government authorities and other parties. Situated in 24 Member States, they represent a total investment of €224 million, of which the EU will provide some €124 million. The majority (74) are Nature projects, contributing to the implementation of the Birds and/or Habitats directives and the Natura 2000 network. The other 10 are Biodiversity projects, a LIFE+ project category for pilot schemes that tackle wider biodiversity issues. The Commission is pleased to note the steady increase in the number of Biodiversity projects funded since 2007 (four (4) projects) when the category was introduced.

Background

LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU and in certain non-EU countries. Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed a total of 3 314 projects, contributing approximately €2.45 billion to the protection of the environment. LIFE+ is the new European financial instrument for the environment with a total budget of €2 143 billion for the period 2007-2013. During this period, the Commission will launch one call for LIFE+ project proposals per year.

LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity is one of three thematic components under the LIFE programme. The other two components, LIFE+ Environment Policy & Biodiversity and LIFE+ Information & Communication, focus respectively on supporting pilot projects that contribute to the development of innovative policy ideas, technologies, methods and instruments; and on disseminating information and raising the profile of environmental issues or providing training and awareness-raising for the prevention of forest fires.

More information on each LIFE+ project is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.home&cfid=656029&ftoken=cab1cf8091752717-4430206A-E1CB-E45B-8C0A15178EBFFE27>

It is also possible to contact the relevant national authorities: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/index.htm>

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AUSTRIA	LIFE09 NAT/AT/000224 Flusslandschaft Enns	LIFE+ River landscape development Enns
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BELGIUM	LIFE09 NAT/BE/000411 LIFE Kleine Nete	Large scale habitat restoration in the valley of the Kleine Nete
	LIFE09 NAT/BE/000413 ZTAR	Zwin Tidal Area Restoration
	LIFE09 NAT/BE/000416 Life Itter en Oeter	Habitat restoration in the Valleys of the eastern region of Limburg: Bosbeek and Itterbeek
BULGARIA	LIFE09 NAT/BG/000229 Black Sea Oak Habitats	Conservation and restoration of Black Sea oak habitats
	LIFE09 NAT/BG/000230 Safe Ground Redbreasts	Conservation of the wintering population of the globally threatened red-breasted goose (<i>branta ruficollis</i>) in Bulgaria
CYPRUS	LIFE09 NAT/CY/000247 ICOSTACY	Improving the Conservation Status of Fauna Species in Cyprus: from microhabitat restoration to landscape connectivity
CZECH REPUBLIC	LIFE09 NAT/CZ/000363 Lounské Středohoří Steppe	Active protection of the SCIs with thermophilous habitat types and species in Lounské Středohoří hills
	LIFE09 NAT/CZ/000364 Butterflies CZ-SK	Integrated protection of rare butterfly species of non-forest habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia
DENMARK	LIFE09 NAT/DK/000370 RAHID	Restoration of Atlantic Heaths and Inland Dunes in Denmark
	LIFE09 NAT/DK/000371 CONNECT HABITATS	Restoring dry grasslands at Bøjden Nor with a positive influence on vulnerable coastal lagoon habitat status
FINLAND	LIFE09 NAT/FI/000563 Return of rural wetlands	Return of rural wetlands: local participation methods for cost-effective large-scale wetland restoration
FRANCE	LIFE09 NAT/FR/000582 CAPE DOM	Conserving French overseas threatened bird species and their habitats using demonstrative conservation tools
	LIFE09 NAT/FR/000583 MULETTE	Conservation of the freshwater pearl mussel in the Massif armoricain
	LIFE09 NAT/FR/000584 BioDiVine	Demonstrating functional biodiversity in viticulture landscapes
GERMANY	LIFE09 NAT/DE/000004 Rheinauen bei Rastatt	Rhine wetlands near Rastatt
	LIFE09 NAT/DE/000005 Steigerwaldrand Iphofen	Woodlands and river valleys on the Steigerwald slopes near Iphofen
	LIFE09 NAT/DE/000006 Wald - Wasser - Wildnis	Optimisation of NATURA-2000-habitats in the National Park Eifel
	LIFE09 NAT/DE/000007 Bergmähwiesen Winterberg	Sustained, favourable management and improvement of mountain hay meadows near Winterberg
	LIFE09 NAT/DE/000008 Alosa alosa	Conservation and restoration of the Allis shad in the Gironde and Rhine watersheds

Location	Project number	Title of project
GERMANY	LIFE09 NAT/DE/000009 Hang- und Hoochmoore	Rebuilding and preserving hanging bogs, raised bogs and transitional mires including the neighbouring habitats in the Hunsrueck and Eifel regions (Rhineland-Palatinate)
	LIFE09 NAT/DE/000010 LIFE-Aurinia	Reestablishment of the Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>)
GREECE	LIFE09 NAT/GR/000323 SKYROSBIODIVERSITY	Demonstration of the Biodiversity Action Planning approach, to benefit local biodiversity on an Aegean island, Skyros
	LIFE09 NAT/GR/000326 VERENIKE	Use of innovative practices and new technology in the production of wide variety and high quality forestry seedlings in order to enhance regeneration success and increase biodiversity
	LIFE09 NAT/GR/000333 ARCTOS/KASTORIA	Improving conditions of bear-human coexistence in Kastoria Prefecture, Greece - Transfer of best practices
	LIFE09 NAT/GR/000343 ACCOLAGOONS	Actions for the conservation of coastal habitats and significant avifauna species in NATURA 2000 network sites of Epanomi and Aggelochori Lagoons, Greece
HUNGARY	LIFE09 NAT/HU/000384 Falco cherrug B-H-R-S	Conservation of Falco cherrug in Northeast Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia
IRELAND	LIFE09 NAT/IE/000220 BLACKWATER SAMOK	Restoration of the Upper River Blackwater SAC for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Atlantic Salmon, European Otter and Kingfisher
	LIFE09 NAT/IE/000222 DBPRBRI	Demonstrating Best Practice in Raised Bog Restoration in Ireland
ITALY	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000093 ECO-RICE	Vercelli rice fields: integrated plan for environmental requalification and sustainable management of rice agroecosystem
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000095 EC-SQUARE	Eradication and control of grey squirrel: actions for preservation of biodiversity in forest ecosystems
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000099 SICALECONS	Urgent actions for the conservation of the <i>*Alectoris graeca whitakeri</i>
	LIFE09 ENV/IT/000110 Natura 2000 sites in the Po Delta	Conservation of habitats and species in the Natura 2000 sites in the Po Delta
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000118 RICOPRI	Restoration and conservation of dry grasslands in southern and central Italy
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000149 LIFE+ BOSCO INCORONATA	Conservation and restoration of habitats and species in the Incoronata Regional Natural Park
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000150 ZONE UMIDE SIPONTINE	Conservation actions of habitats in the coastal wetlands of SCI Wetlands of Capitanata
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000160 ARCTOS	Brown Bear Conservation: coordinated actions for the Alpine and the Apennines range
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000176 POSEIDONE	Urgent conservation actions of <i>*Posidonia</i> beds of Northern Latium
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000183 COORNATA	Development of coordinated protection measures for Apennine Chamois (<i>Rupicapra pyrenaica ornata</i>)
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000190 ARION	Systems for Coastal Dolphin Conservation in the Ligurian Sea
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000198 LIFE+ FAGGETE DEL TABURNO	Conservation of Taxus and Ilex beechwood in the pSIC "Taburno Massif"

Location	Project number	Title of project
ITALY	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000212 PP-ICON	Plant-Pollinator Integrated CONservation approach: a demonstrative proposal
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000213 SORBA	Restoration of Bacchiglione Springs and Habitat of SPA IT3220013 and SCI IT3220040
	LIFE09 NAT/IT/000608 Re.S.C.We.	Restoration of Sentina coastal wetlands
LATVIA	LIFE09 NAT/LV/000237 DVIETE	Restoration of Corncrake habitats in Dviete floodplain Natura 2000 site
	LIFE09 NAT/LV/000238 MARMONI	Innovative approaches for marine biodiversity monitoring and assessment of conservation status of nature values in the Baltic Sea
	LIFE09 NAT/LV/000239 Life-HerpetoLatvia	Conservation of rare reptiles and amphibians in Latvia
	LIFE09 NAT/LV/000240 EREMITA MEADOWS	Management of Fennoscandian wooded meadows (6530*) and two priority beetle species: planning, public participation, innovation
LITHUANIA	LIFE09 NAT/LT/000233 Baltic Aquatic Warbler	Securing Sustainable Farming to Ensure Conservation of Globally Threatened Bird Species in an Agrarian Landscape
	LIFE09 NAT/LT/000234 DENOFLIT	Inventory of marine species and habitats for development of NATURA 2000 network in the offshore waters of Lithuania
	LIFE09 NAT/LT/000235 Eagles in the forest	Conservation of the Lesser Spotted Eagle* (<i>Aquila pomarina</i>) in Lithuanian Forests
	LIFE09 NAT/LT/000581 ECONAF	Development of a Pilot Ecological Network through Nature Frame Areas in Southern Lithuania
THE NETHERLANDS	LIFE09 NAT/NL/000417 Revitalising Noordoinderen	Revitalising the Noordoinderen: from concrete surfaces to grey dune habitats
	LIFE09 NAT/NL/000418 Dutch dune revival	Realisation of Natura 2000 targets for calcareous white, grey dunes and dune slacks in three Dutch dune sites
POLAND	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000253 ochrona bociana białego	Protection of the white stork population in the OSO Natura 2000 Ostroja Warmińska
	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000254 Ograniczenie sukcesji	Restitute and maintain the habitats of breeding waterfowl birds
	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000257 Bagna są Dobre!	Active conservation of waterfowl and waders in the area of the Northern Polder in the Warta Mouth National Park. Wetlands Work Wonders! Stage 2
	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000258 Renaturyzacja	Restoration of hydrological system in the Middle basin of Biebrza Valley Phase I
	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000259 Pustynia Błędowska	Active conservation of priority sand habitats complex (6120, 2330) in the Natura 2000 site „Błędowska Desert”
	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000260 Biomass use for Aquatic Warbler	Facilitating Aquatic Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>) habitat management through sustainable systems of biomass use
	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000263 Polskie Ostroje Ptaków	Protection of water and marsh birds in five national parks - reconstructing habitats and curbing the influence of invasive species
	LIFE09 NAT/PL/000264 wisławarszawska.pl	Protecting the Habitats of Priority Bird Species of the Vistula Valley under the Circumstances of Intensive Pressure of Warsaw Agglomeration

Location	Project number	Title of project
PORTUGAL	LIFE09 NAT/PT/000038 MarPro	Conservation of Marine Protected Species in Mainland Portugal
	LIFE09 NAT/PT/000040 Habitats Conservation	Conservation of Natural and Semi-natural Habitats in the "Serras de Aire e Candeeiros"
	LIFE09 NAT/PT/000041 Life Ilhéus do Porto Santo	Halt the loss of European biodiversity through the recovery of habitats and species of the Islets of Porto Santo and surrounding marine area
	LIFE09 NAT/PT/000043 HIGRO	HIGRO – Demonstrative Actions for the Conservation of Priority Habitats in Northern Mountain Areas in Portugal
ROMANIA	LIFE09 NAT/RO/000618 STIPA	Tarnava Mare SCI: Saving Transylvania's Important Pastoral Ecosystems
SLOVAKIA	LIFE09 NAT/SK/000395 AYBOTCON	Conservation of <i>Botarus stellaris</i> and <i>Aythya nyroca</i> in SPA Medzibodrozie in Slovakia
	LIFE09 NAT/SK/000396 APOMARINA_SK	Conservation of <i>Aquila pomarina</i> in Slovakia
SLOVENIA	LIFE09 NAT/SI/000374 WETMAN	Conservation and management of freshwater wetlands in Slovenia
	LIFE09 NAT/SI/000376 MANSALT	Man and Nature in Secovlje salt-pans
	LIFE09 NAT/SI/000378 Life at Night	Improving the conservation status of nocturnal animals (moths and bats) by reducing the effect of artificial lighting at cultural heritage sites
SPAIN	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000513 UROGALLO CANTABRICO	Conservation of the Cantabrian Capercaillie (<i>Tetrao urogallus cantabricus</i>) in its habitat in the Cantabrian Mountain range
	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000514 MARGAL ULLA	Recovery of populations of <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> and <i>Galemys pyrenaicus</i> in the Ulla river basin (Galicia)
	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000516 OXYURA LEUCOCEPHALA-MURCIA	Conservation of <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i> in the Murcia Region. Spain
	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000520 Δ-LAGOON	Habitat restoration and management in two coastal lagoons of the Ebro Delta: Alfacada y Tancada
	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000529 LIFE TRACHEMYS	Demonstration strategy and techniques for the eradication of invasive freshwater turtles
	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000531 TERRITORIO VISÓN	Environmental recovery of the Fluvial Territory; living space of the European mink (<i>Mustela lutreola</i>)
	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000533 Innovation against poison	Innovative actions against illegal poisoning in EU Mediterranean pilot areas
	LIFE09 NAT/ES/000534 Life Posidonia Andalucia	Conservation of <i>Posidonia oceanica</i> meadows in Andalusian Mediterranean Sea
SWEDEN	LIFE09 NAT/SE/000344 MIRDINEC	Management of the invasive Raccoon Dog (<i>Nyctereutes procyonoides</i>) in the north-European countries
	LIFE09 NAT/SE/000345 GRACE	Grazing and restoration of archipelago and coastal environments
UNITED KINGDOM	LIFE09 NAT/UK/000020 Reintroducing <i>Otis tarda</i>	Reintroducing the great bustard <i>Otis tarda</i> to southern England

LIFE+ River landscape development Enns

Project background

The project area around the river Enns (Austria) covers a total area of 4 177 ha and consists of three Natura 2000 sites. As a result of works carried out between 1863 and 1879, when most of the oxbows were cut off, numerous back waters slowly deteriorated. Today, the residual back waters with alluvial forests and *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*, as well as numerous straw meadows with *Phragmites*, *Magnocarpion* or *Molinion* communities that have developed in the former riverbed sections, are among the most valuable habitats for rare and endangered animal and plant species.

However, flood control measures and the subsequent deepening of the riverbed resulted in the disconnection of the river from the adjacent landscape and its tributary brooks, the decrease of alluvial forests and the loss of the river's dynamic development processes. As a result, many of the area's habitats are endangered.

Project objectives

The main objective of the project is to reduce the threats to the area around the river Enns by:

- Securing remaining "Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* und *Fraxinus excelsior*" through re-connection to the river dynamics;
- Developing new alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* through the transformation and integration of allochthonous forests and agricultural land into the river dynamics; and
- Improving the condition of remaining peat land habitats and orchid meadows in the river valley.

Other endangered habitats and species to benefit include: natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation, included in Annex I of the Habitats Directive; The Annex II-listed otter (*Lutra lutra*), lamprey (*Eudontomyzon spp.*) and European bullhead (*Cottus gobio*); and the Annex I Birds Directive listed kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), grey-faced woodpecker (*Picus canus*), black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and little crane (*Porzana parva*).

Expected results

- New alluvial forests and ecological enhancement of 18.7 ha of existing vegetation typical of floodplains;

LIFE09 NAT/AT/000224
Flusslandschaft Enns



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung - FA 19B

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Name of contact person

Rudolf HORNICH

Duration of project:

60 months (10/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,863,102.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,431,551.00 (50.00 %)

- The establishment of side-channels along 2 120 m;
- Riverbed widening on 600 m;
- Partial removal of bank protections on 590 m;
- Restoration of tributary brooks and the establishment of river continuum on 860 m;
- Establishment/enhancement of floodplain pools to improve the environment for amphibians on 11 km² of land; and
- Enlargement of the Natura 2000 area by 3.4 ha;

Cross-border Protection of the Great Bustard in Austria - continuation

Project background

The great bustard is one of Europe's largest breeding bird species. Its population in central Europe, however, is under threat from intensive farming and collision with power lines. A 2005 LIFE project aimed to address these problems and successfully created undivided open spaces in the Westliches Weinviertel SPA. These habitat improvements have stabilised the Austrian great bustard population and could play a key role in establishing a breeding population in the Czech Republic, where the bustard is found but is not breeding.

Project objectives

The objectives of this LIFE+ project are to reduce the threat of collision with power lines, and at the same time to continue Austria's intensive habitat management efforts. The Austrian breeding population is part of the West Pannonian population of great bustards of which a significant part spends the winter in Austria. The project therefore aims to support and maximise the effectiveness of cross-border protection in Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic by co-ordinating conservation measures and optimising communication.

Other main project objectives are to establish close co-operation with stakeholders and to introduce a public information campaign to reduce the risk of human disturbance of bustards.

Expected results

- 33.1 km of medium voltage power lines will be transferred beneath the soil;
- Bird protection markings will be added to 3.9 km of high-voltage power lines and the effectiveness of these markings monitored;
- Two existing windbreaks will be broken up in the Sandboden and Praterterrasse project area to enlarge the habitat of the great bustard;
- Great bustard numbers and habitat use will be monitored in all four Austrian SPAs and (to a lesser extent) in adjacent Hungarian and Slovakian Natura 2000 sites;
- GIS evaluation of monitoring results and habitat management in co-operation with local farmers;
- Close contact and co-operation with great bustard conservation experts in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic;

LIFE09 NAT/AT/000225
LIFE+ Großtrappe



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Österreichische Gesellschaft Großtrappenschutz

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Reinhold REIF

Duration of project:

63 months (01/10/2010 – 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

4,508,481.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

3,381,360.00 (75.00 %)

- A public information campaign to reduce human disturbance of great bustards and an international film to promote the LIFE project and the objectives of Natura 2000; and
- Tasks will be carried out in close co-operation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. farmers and hunters).

Large scale habitat restoration in the valley of the Kleine Nete

Project background

The 'Kleine Nete' is a lowland river situated in the Flemish Campine region. The river valley is characterised by high geomorphological and well-preserved natural diversity. The area is unique in Western Europe, featuring heathland and moors in higher areas and valley ecosystems along the upper, middle and lower stream. The lower stream is freshwater and tidal, a rare and vulnerable habitat in the EU.

The valley of the Kleine Nete contains several types of endangered habitats listed in Annex I, and several rare and threatened species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Several species listed in Annex IV are also present in the valley, including a healthy population of moor frogs (*Rana arvalis*). Land use changes (afforestation and intensive agriculture) have placed several habitats under severe pressure, however, and some species are now on the verge of extinction. Improving habitats and creating stepping stones in the strategically-located valley of the Kleine Nete are vital to maintaining a favourable conservation status of these habitats and species.

Project objectives

The project aims to restore:

- 52 ha of a complex of Annex I habitats that depend on seepage, flood and/or (in the lower stream) freshwater tides. (The project is of particular importance for freshwater tide-dependent hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities, including the endangered plants *Veronica longifolia* and *Leucojum aestivum*);
- 17 ha of Annex I habitats on a dry, poor, sandy soil as a stepping stone between the Campine plateau and the heathlands in Flanders;
- Some 3 ha of the valuable Annex I habitat, oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters, and associated species such as the dragonfly and moor frog.

The project also aims to build new partnerships for nature management and to draw up three integrated conservation plans and an after-LIFE conservation plan.

Expected Results

- Establishment of the Kleine Nete as one of the core areas in lowland Europe for several Annex I habitats, especially *Corynephorus* and *Agrostis* dune

LIFE09 NAT/BE/000411

LIFE Kleine Nete



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

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Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

4,369,475.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,184,737.00 (50.00 %)

grasslands, oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters, watercourses on plain levels, wet heathlands, hydrophilous tall herb communities, quacking bogs and transition mires, and alluvial forests (*Macrophorbio-Alnetum* and *Carici elongatae-Alnetum*); and

- Restoration and increased populations of Annex II-species such as *Luronium natans*, *Leucorhinia pectoralis*, *Lampetra planeri*, *Cottus gobio* and *Cobitis taenia*.

Zwin Tidal Area Restoration

LIFE09 NAT/BE/000413
ZTAR



Project background

The Zwin is the largest and most important tidal salt marsh in Belgium. It was defined as a “wetland of international importance for waterfowl” by the Ramsar convention. In the western part of the site, small islands have for decades offered a safe breeding ground for numerous common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), redshank (*Tringa totanus*) and shellduck (*Tadorna tadorna*). Numerous species, included many listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, also overwinter on the site.

However, since the 1980s, sand deposits have led to the gradual filling up of the lagoon, re-connecting the islands to the mainland. This situation has also led to the loss of the habitat type ‘1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide’. The overgrowth of willows and reeds, the development of fresh and brackish ponds and the accumulation of litter have also led to the disappearance of the natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*).

Project objectives

The project aims to restore the rich biodiversity of the site by carrying out large-scale restoration of the ecological dynamics of the Zwin. Specific objectives include:

- Restoration of the habitat types ‘2190 Humid duneslacks’ and aquatic biotope for the Natterjack toad by excavating six depressions in the contact-zones between fresh groundwater and brackish water;
- Restoration of salt-marsh with colonising *Salicornia* and other annuals over 8 ha;
- Restoration of nesting, foraging and resting sites for coastal bird species by restoring the tidal lagoon (9 ha) with its ‘bird-isles’ (3 ha);
- Reversing the encroachment of the salt marshes and dunes with high grasses, in order to restore intertidal habitat types 1330, 2120, 2130 and 2190. Livestock grazing will be introduced on 80 ha of salt meadows and 9 ha of dune habitats; and
- Improving the supply of salt seawater in the tidal floodplain by enlarging the tidal inlet through the fore-dunes, so improving dynamics in the tidal gullies and slowing down the deposit of sand.

Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos

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Name of contact person

Jean-Louis HERRIER

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

4,135,521.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,067,760.00 (50.00 %)

Expected Results

- The restoration of tidal lagoon over 12 ha;
- The restoration to an optimal condition of 59 ha of the habitat types 1140 (also resulting in foraging opportunities for wading birds), 1310 and 1330;
- The restoration of more than 30 ha of the habitat types 2120 (‘white dunes’), 2130 and 2190 by introducing grazing and cutting off sods;
- The restoration of the habitat type 2190 and simultaneously the habitat for the natterjack toad on 0.5 ha, scattered over six locations in the dunes and the transition zones between dunes and salt marshes; and
- It is also expected that enlarging the main tidal gully and its mouth to the sea will increase the tidal currents and slow down the sedimentation process.

Habitat restoration in the Valleys of the eastern region of Limburg: Bosbeek and Itterbeek

Project background

The “Bosbeek” and “Itterbeek” lowland brook systems in the Flemish Campine region are characterised by high geomorphological and natural diversity.

The exceptional abiotic conditions in the two valleys mean that they are home to a wide variety of Annex I habitats, as well as several rare and threatened species, including the great-crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), European tree frog (*Hyla arborea*) and moor frog (*Rana arvalis*). More than 40 species of dragonflies have also been recorded in the project areas. The two valleys also once contained one of the last breeding populations in Flanders of the red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) and also held populations of natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*). Unfortunately several habitats are under severe pressure from changes in land use, which have led to habitat fragmentation and the consequent isolation of target species' populations and pressure from invasive alien species.

Project objectives

The project aims to combat threats to endangered species, while promoting nature-oriented recreation in the project areas. Specific objectives include:

- To restore 42 ha of Annex I habitats in the project area;
- To promote the tourist and socio-economic potential of the area;
- To exchange knowledge and experience with local people, other LIFE projects and relevant authorities; and
- To inform local people about the threat of alien species invading the pSCI via garden litter.

Expected results

- The acquisition of 42 ha of land in the project area;
- Restoration of 7 ha of quacking bogs and transition mires (7140);
- Restoration of 18 ha of alluvial forests - *Saliceto-Franguletum* and *Carici elongatae-Alnetum* (91E0+) - and hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities (6430). Locally, wet types of Nardetalia (6230+), wet heathland vegetations (4010) and lowland hay meadows (6510) will also develop;

LIFE09 NAT/BE/000416
Life Itter en Oeter



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Joost DEWYSPELAERE

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

3,795,818.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,897,909.00 (50.00 %)

- Restoration of 7 ha of Annex I habitats typical of the semi-dry, poor sandy soil of the region, as a stepping stone between the 'Hoge Kempen' (Flanders) and the 'Peel' area (Netherlands): 'Corynephorus and Agrostis dune grasslands' (2330), 'old oak forests' (9190) and 'dry heathlands' (4030);
- Restoration of 3 ha of the valuable Annex I habitat 'Nanocypertalia fen vegetations' (3130);
- Restoration and an increase in the population of European brook lamprey (*Luscinia svecica*) and common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and perhaps the return of red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*), European nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) and white admiral (*Lullula arborea*);
- Development of two integrated management plans;
- An eco-hydrological study and nutrient analysis of removed soil; and
- Better visitor facilities, more visitors, more information about the area and better socio-economic support for Natura 2000 and the LIFE project.

Conservation and restoration of Black Sea oak habitats

Project background

In Bulgarian Black Sea coastal areas, four types of priority oak habitats are experiencing similar trends and face the same conservation problems: Pannonic woods with *Quercus petraea* and *Carpinus betulus*; Pannonian woods with *Quercus pubescens*; Euro-Siberian steppic woods with *Quercus spp*; and Eastern white oak forests.

The movement of people and grazing impacts negatively on these priority habitats and fragmentation is also increasing pressures from the surrounding woodlands. The risk of fires is also high.

The Batova Reka Valley protected zone and the Emine-Irakli protected zone, both situated in the Black Sea coastal area, are designated Natura 2000 sites and are in need of conservation and restoration actions. They contain vast areas of degraded native oak woodlands and areas of sub-continental peri-Pannonic scrub habitat suffering from fragmentation and pressure from the surrounding woodlands.

Coherent conservation measures need to integrate these habitat types into the same project, as separately targeting one habitat type could adversely affect the other.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the Black Sea Oak Habitats project is to ensure long-term conservation of priority oak habitats by reforestation measures and management planning. The project will implement restoration measures over a total of 230 ha of target habitat. A key action will be the planting of acorns and oak seedlings as well as regeneration cuttings in devastated forestry areas. Seedlings from other tree species of local origin will also be planted. Seedlings will be grown in a nursery and the target soils prepared before the acorns and two-year seedlings are planted.

The beneficiary will develop an Action Plan for the restoration and management of the target habitats, which will include measures to decrease the unfavourable impact of people and grazing, and reduce the risk of forest fires. It is expected that the project will also lead to an amendment to the existing Forestry Management Plan, which will improve its compliance with the Bulgarian Forestry Act and Natura 2000.

LIFE09 NAT/BG/000229
Black Sea Oak Habitats



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Balchik State Hunting Area

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Name of contact person

Kalinka TODOROVA

Duration of project:

36 months (01/02/2011 - 31/01/2014)

Total budget in euro:

681,831.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

511,373.00 (75.00 %)

Expected results

- Habitat restoration on over 230 ha of oak woodlands;
- An Action Plan for the restoration and management of the target habitats; and
- Strengthening of the current Forestry Management Plan for the area.

Conservation of the wintering population of the globally threatened red-breasted goose (*branta ruficollis*) in Bulgaria

Project background

An important part of the BSPB's work is dedicated to conserving globally threatened species such as the red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*). The BSPB has monitored the red-breasted goose for 17 consecutive years, which is the longest continuous monitoring of any key species in Bulgaria. The BSPB was also one of the organisations that initiated the first international red-breasted goose monitoring scheme, providing valuable knowledge and experience.

As well as monitoring activities, the BSPB also strives to preserve the habitats and favourable ecological conditions for the survival of the goose, through direct conservation measures and by encouraging sustainable development.

North eastern Bulgaria is one the most important wintering areas for the red-breasted goose. In some winters, up to 80% of the global population winters there.

Project objectives

The Safe Ground Redbreasts project aims to introduce land-management measures in the Dobrudzha region of northern Bulgaria to provide secure foraging grounds for the red-breasted goose. The project seeks to stabilise the population of this, the most threatened goose species in the world, in its wintering grounds.

The main activity of the project will be the creation of a land-management scheme to ensure the protection of foraging areas for the red-breasted goose. The strategic planning framework will be strengthened to minimise the detrimental effect of economic development and human activity in the project area.

The project will develop a long-term public-private partnership between conservation NGOs and one of the largest land management companies in coastal Dobrudzha. It will work to engage stakeholders in reducing disturbance to the sites, developing sustainable land management models and in developing pride in the conservation of the red-breasted goose and the Natura 2000 sites that the species depends on.

Through these actions, the project hopes to stabilise the population during the life of the project and to contribute to increasing numbers in the longer term.



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds

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Name of contact person

Nada TOSHEVA

Duration of project:

57 months (01/09/2010 - 31/05/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,656,608.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,990,635.00 (74.93 %)

This should help to improve the global conservation status of the goose, given the importance of these wintering sites to the whole population.

Expected results

- The establishment of a land management scheme to favour the red-breasted goose;
- The creation of a public-private land management partnership;
- Stabilisation of the population of the species during the project's lifetime; and
- Improved global conservation status of the goose in the long term.

Improving the Conservation Status of Fauna Species in Cyprus: from microhabitat restoration to landscape connectivity

Project background

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean and boasts a rich biodiversity as a result of its biogeographical isolation and 10 000-year civilisation. The LIFE project targets 20 fauna species that are threatened by factors that include land-use changes, destruction of habitat, wildfires, overexploitation of freshwater resources, drought, biological invasions and the expected consequences of climate change.

Project objectives

The project's overall objective is to improve the conservation status of selected fauna species and their habitats within 14 Natura 2000 sites (including two new sites). Specific objectives are:

- Collection of scientific data for the assessment and further development of the surveillance of the conservation status of 20 Annex II & IV fauna species that are presently characterised as "unknown" or "unfavourable";
- Restoration of connectivity and mitigation of the impacts of land-use change and climate change by improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in Cyprus for the target species;
- Improvement of the conservation status of the 20 selected species in terms of increased range, population size, preferred habitats and future prospects;
- Control of impacts of invasive species on two native targeted reptiles – the grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and the Balkan terrapin (*Mauremys rivulata*). Decrease in the alien/invasive species populations by at least 20% on the selected sites by the end of the project; and
- Awareness raising among the site users and the general public; training of conservation staff.

Expected results

- Assessment of the conservation status of targeted species, including: assessment of range, population, available habitat and future prospects; and future prospect assessment with climate change scenario analysis for targeted species.
- Production of habitat suitability maps for species and landscape analysis;
- Construction of four ponds, one weir and one water tank;

LIFE09 NAT/CY/000247
ICOSTACY



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

National authority

Name of beneficiary

Environment Service - Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment of Cyprus

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Name of contact person

Christina PANTAZI

Duration of project:

42 months (01/10/2010 - 31/03/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,241,007.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

620,503.00 (50.00 %)

- Protection and/or maintenance of 10 old buildings and six mine galleries and installation of bat boxes to enable roosting;
- Restoration and enhancement of species microhabitats (four dry stone walls, 35 rock piles);
- Creation of three safe road passages (underpasses) with barriers along the roadside;
- Planting and/or grafting of 250 local fruit-bearing trees in two sites;
- Creation and protection of micro-reserves for invertebrate species with fencing, signposting, vegetation management and planting (2 000 plants), and the creation of four small ponds;
- Control or removal of 80-100% of two invasive alien competitor species (*Micropterus salmoides* and *Trachemys scripta elegans*) in the project area;
- Assessment of the genetic diversity and population structure of the targeted species; and
- Introduction of a captive breeding programme for *Mauremys rivulata*, *Natrix natrix cyprica* and *Coluber cypriensis*.

Active protection of the SCIs with thermophilous habitat types and species in Lounské Středohoří hills

Project background

Volcanic rock, combined with climatic factors and relief has created thermophilous habitats in the Lounské Středohoří hills, especially thermophilous steppic grasslands, dominated by *Stipa* grasses and rock outcrops with dry pioneer and grassland communities. These habitats host species-rich plant and animal communities with many rare and threatened species, including species of European importance. Many invertebrate species in the Czech Republic are only found in this area, and some of these are endemic. Efforts to protect the remnants of these rare habitats and species led to the establishment of two protected sites in 1936.

The area was traditionally used for animal (especially sheep) grazing – evidence of grazing dates back to the 13th century and continued until the 1980s, when there were some 2 500 sheep in the area. However, in 1991, all sheep were removed from the site. An immediate consequence of this was the spread of shrubs and the accumulation of dead biomass, leading to significant changes in habitat structure and, subsequently, a rapid decline of endangered species.

Project objectives

The project aims to contribute to the maintenance and the restoration to favourable conservation status of the unique thermophilous habitats and species in the Lounské Středohoří hills. The project will seek to increase the populations of target species, improve overall species diversity and raise public awareness of thermophilous habitat types and species, their protection, maintenance and sustainable use. The project will target nine habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive (6210, 6110, 6190, 6510, 40A0, 8150, 8160, 8220, 9180) and four species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive: *Stipa zalesskii*, *Spermophilus citellus*, *Stenobothrus eurasius* and *Callimorpha quadripunctaria*. In addition, 14 nationally important butterfly species will be targeted.

Expected results

The expected results include the purchase of 11.7 ha of land, as well as the acquisition of another 30 ha by free transfer and about 50 ha through short- and long-term land leases. The following management measures are foreseen:

LIFE09 NAT/CZ/000363
Lounské Středohoří Steppe



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

National authority

Name of beneficiary

Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic

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Name of contact person

Anna LIMROVÁ

Duration of project:

66 months (01/01/2011 - 30/06/2016)

Total budget in euro:

1,395,196.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

697,598.00 (50.00 %)

- Cutting shrubs in steppe habitats (110 ha);
- Restoration of pastures (100 ha);
- Elimination of invasive alien wood species (7.5 ha) and their replacement by 7 000 native deciduous trees in 5 ha of forest land;
- Renewal of old orchards (23 ha); and
- The restoration, cutting and mulching of grasslands (c. 17 ha).

Integrated protection of rare butterfly species of non-forest habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

Project background

Areas of flower-rich meadows and other non-forest habitats, crucial for the survival of butterfly species of European importance, still exist in three mountain ranges: the White Carpathian mountains (Bílé/Biele Karpaty) in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Lower Carpathians (Malé Karpaty) in Slovakia, and the Považský Inovec mountains in Slovakia. The project area, which is the largest area of species-rich meadows in Central Europe, hosts very rich fauna and provides an important refuge for rare and endangered invertebrate species (especially insects and arachnids).

Most of the land being targeted in the Czech Republic is privately owned and used by large agricultural holdings. However, some of it is managed by conservation associations and land trusts and some consists of small family farms. Parts are also unmanaged and subject to successional processes. On the Slovak side, most of the target area has unsettled ownership and is currently unmanaged. The target butterfly species often occur in areas encroached by shrubs and tall grasses, but the survival of viable populations depends on appropriate grassland and landscape management.

Project objectives

The project aims to introduce, test and promote patchwork management, which is essential for the conservation of the target butterfly species. The project will contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity and strengthening the Natura 2000 network in the target area by actively protecting non-forest habitats and species of Community and national importance, by applying suitable management practices, and by maintaining and restoring these species and habitats to a favourable conservation status. The project will also propose and test new agri-environmental measures.

The project will target 10 butterfly species (*Colias myrmidone*, *Parnassius mnemosyne*, *Parnassius apollo*, *Maculinea arion*, *M. nausithous*, *M. teleius*, *M. alcon*, *Lycaena dispar*, *Eriogaster catax* and *Euplagia quadripunctaria*) and 15 habitat types (3140, 6210, 6510, 7220, 5130, 7230, 6410, 6230, 91E0, 91G0, 9180, 9130, 9110, 91I0) of European importance. Special conservation measures will be implemented for threatened butterfly species and their meta-populations. Actions will also be undertaken to raise aware-

LIFE09 NAT/CZ/000364
Butterflies CZ-SK



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

National authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Anna LIMROVÁ

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

7,122,816.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

3,561,408.00 (50.00 %)

ness of the conservation value of non-forest habitats and their biodiversity.

Expected results

The main outcome of the project will be the restoration of grassland habitats. This will be achieved by re-introducing traditional management of non-forest habitats, namely:

- Patchwork mowing with heavy machinery (910 ha), light machinery (195 ha), and by hand (77 ha);
- Grazing (465 ha);
- Scrub elimination and mulching (170 ha); and
- The restoration of hedgerows (some 31 km).

The project will also:

- Lease some 100 ha of unmanaged land;
- Purchase 2 ha for grazing; and
- Establish a management centre for habitats and species in the Biele Karpaty Protected Landscape Area.

Restoration of Atlantic Heaths and Inland Dunes in Denmark

Project background

The heathland habitat types of Europe, and Denmark in particular, are considered to be vulnerable and to some extent threatened. In the latest evaluation (2007) of the conservation status of Annex I habitat types in Denmark, five of the targeted habitat types in the project proposal are evaluated as having unfavourable conservation status and one as having unknown conservation status.

Several factors adversely affect the conservation status of the heathland habitats: airborne fertilisation, atmospheric nitrogen deposition and the heather beetle (*Lochmaea suturalis*) are responsible for the overgrowth of grasses at the expense of the characteristic heathland scrubs resulting in a major loss of biodiversity in all of the targeted habitat types. The wet and dry heathland habitat types furthermore suffer from the accumulation of organic materials/nutrients, since the damaging heather beetle winters in the peat layer. Overgrowth with woody species is part of the natural succession of all of the habitats, but abandonment of pastoral systems has accelerated this process. The wet heathland habitat type, in particular, suffers from fragmentation and poor hydrological regimes.

Project objectives

The main objective of the project is to improve the conservation status and, if possible, increase the surface area of dry sand heaths with *Calluna* and *Genista*, dry sand heaths with *Calluna* and *Empetrum nigrum*, inland dunes with open *Corynephorus* and *Agrostis* grassland, Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*, European dry heaths and *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths. These habitat types often occur in a mosaic with each other in the relevant Natura 2000 sites. The proposed actions will target some 280 ha of existing 4010 habitat-type present in the project area and also enlarge the area of wet heath by up to 125 ha.

The second objective is to improve the existing and potential breeding habitats of the wood sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) and nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), both listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

LIFE09 NAT/DK/000370
RAHID



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

National authority

Name of beneficiary

Danish Forest and Nature Agency

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Name of contact person

Søren RASMUSSEN

Duration of project:

63 months (01/10/2010 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

4,075,688.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,037,844.00 (50.00 %)

Expected results

- Clearing of woody species on 142 ha of existing and potential heathland;
- Removal of the upper peat soil layer on 134 ha of existing and potential heathland;
- Milling of 160 ha of existing and potential heathland habitats dominated by purple moor grass;
- Harvesting of heathland vegetation on 386 ha of existing and potential heathland;
- Controlled burning on 578 ha of existing and potential heathland;
- Acquisition of 60 cattle and establishment of grazing on 659 ha of existing and potential heathland;
- Restoration of the natural hydrology across 17 ha of heathland; and
- Restoration and improvement of potential and existing wood sandpiper and nightjar breeding habitats.

Restoring dry grasslands at Bøjden Nor with a positive influence on vulnerable coastal lagoon habitat status

Project background

Bøjden Nor is a nature reserve in the Syddanmark region of Denmark, which is owned by the Bird Protection Fund. It has been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) of national interest by the Danish branch of Birdlife International (DOF).

Bøjden Nor consists of a shallow lagoon with several islands and surrounded by coastal meadows. It therefore provides a breeding ground that is safe from foxes and other predators and is an important staging post for a wide variety of migrating birds.

The Nor is most famous for the many ducks that come here from Northern Europe and Russia, including tufted pochard, teal, wigeons and scaup. Buzzards, rough-legged buzzards and kestrels are frequent visitors in the winter months, when flocks of twite and snow bunting also make an appearance.

However, the key habitat types of the reserve are threatened by fragmentation, overgrowth with trees and shrubs, and desiccation. The conservation status of both terrestrial and aquatic habitat types is also threatened to a high degree by nutrient enrichment from the catchment.

Project objectives

The CONNECT HABITATS project aims to restore semi-natural dry grassland habitats in the Bøjden Nor nature reserve to a favourable conservation status. It also aims to improve the conservation status of coastal lagoons, Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietaliamaritima*) and petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*), and enable their development inland in order to combat the impacts of climate change and coastal erosion. Specific project objectives include:

- To purchase land and convert 20 ha of former arable land into dry grassland;
- To improve the hydrology and restore a mosaic of wetlands and petrifying springs on 5 ha of former arable land;
- To clear existing dry grassland and salt meadows of invasive species and introduce grazing regimes on 15.5 ha;
- To create buffer zones between the catchment and vulnerable coastal lagoons, salt meadows and dry grasslands; and

LIFE09 NAT/DK/000371
CONNECT HABITATS



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

Faaborg-Midtfyn Kommune

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Name of contact person

Claus PALUDAN

Duration of project:

40 months (01/09/2010 - 31/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,151,329.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

575,664.00 (50.00 %)

- To reduce the nutrient impact on these habitats by the equivalent of 50% of the diffuse nitrogen load.

Over time the project expects to see better coverage of submerged coastal lagoon vegetation. Several migrating and breeding bird species will benefit from these actions. Amphibians will also benefit and a specific target of the project is to increase the population of natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*, formerly *Bufo calamita*) by 5-10 times.

Expected results

- Improved conservation status of dry grassland, coastal lagoon, Atlantic salt meadow and petrifying springs;
- Restoration of arable land to vulnerable habitat types;
- Nutrient reduction equivalent to 50% of the diffuse nitrogen load; and
- At least a 500% increase in the population of *Epidalea calamita*.

Return of rural wetlands: local participation methods for cost-effective large-scale wetland restoration

Project background

Diverse and rich open water wetland and mire complexes are characteristic of Finland's natural environment. Such complexes contain ecosystems of international importance which, support a variety of species. Finnish wetlands and mires provide core breeding areas for many migratory bird species, especially waterfowl, and therefore they are of key importance for the European avifauna and waterfowl populations.

During the last century an estimated 4 000 lakes and an estimated 5.7 million ha of wetlands have been lost due to drainage for agriculture and forestry in Finland. Countless small wetlands and moist forest habitat patches in forests have also been lost. As a result, ecological connections between wetlands have broken down and species can no longer move from one area to another, accelerating the loss of biodiversity.

Project objectives

The main objective of this LIFE Biodiversity project is to create a framework for a future nationwide programme for wildlife habitat conservation, restoration and recreation that will operate at the local level, drawing on the strong Finnish tradition for volunteering.

The project aims to create a network of demonstrative open water wetland sites at regional level, using the new type of participatory conservation involving public bodies, NGOs and local landowners and associations. The project is linked to Finland's National Biodiversity Strategy for 2006-2016 and to the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland 2008-2016.

Expected results

- At least one demonstration wetland restoration or re-creation site in each of 15 game management districts, with a total surface area of greater than 200 ha;
- A significant increase in the number of waterfowl breeding pairs and broods in the demonstration sites; and
- Increased motivation, skills and co-operation of local people and regional authorities for wetland conservation, restoration and re-creation.

LIFE09 NAT/FI/000563
Return of rural wetlands



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Small and medium-sized enterprise

Name of beneficiary

Metsästäjän Keskusjärjestö

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Name of contact person

Sauli HÄRKÖNEN

Duration of project:

64 months (01/09/2010 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,061,310.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,028,905.00 (49.92 %)

Conserving French overseas threatened bird species and their habitats using demonstrative conservation tools

Project background

There has been a significant decline in biodiversity in French overseas departments (DOMs), partly due to the lack of conservation tools. The Birds and Habitats directives do not apply in these DOMs and biodiversity protection is not integrated into policies such as agriculture, fishing or trade policies. Because of their distant geographical location, these regions have been missed out in research developments and technical innovations in nature conservation. Furthermore, conservation management tools that are developed for the European continent are not necessarily suitable because of the specificities of the local socio-economic contexts.

Project objectives

This LIFE Biodiversity project's objective is to contribute to stopping biodiversity loss in three DOMs (Reunion, Martinique and French Guiana), by testing demonstrative and innovative conservation management tools for the protection of threatened bird species and their habitats, and by disseminating the results to the other EU outermost regions.

Expected results

1. Development, implementation and transfer of management conservation techniques for:
 - Controlling rat predation on Reunion to allow an increase in the population of the Reunion cuckoo-shrike;
 - Reducing the human-induced mortality of the Reunion harrier;
 - Managing dry savannah habitats and their associated species efficiently in six targeted sites in French Guiana (200 ha).
2. Protection and management of sites in favour of threatened bird species and habitats:
 - Conservation of the threatened Guianan cock-of-the-rock colonies in three targeted areas;
 - Protection of the last remaining habitats of the white-breasted thrasher in Martinique;
 - Development and implementation of the first conservation plan for the Agami heron.
3. Development of new tools adapted to the tropical outermost regions' particular conditions, in order to extend protected areas and best monitor the state of biodiversity in the DOMs:

LIFE09 NAT/FR/000582
CAPE DOM



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux

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Name of contact person

Julie RIEGEL

Duration of project:

60 months (15/09/2010 - 20/09/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,251,500.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,111,650.00 (49.37 %)

- Submission to the relevant authorities of a demonstrative map showing a potential network of new (Natura 2000-type) sites for bird conservation in the three DOMs; and
- Implementation of a national monitoring programme of species and sites for common birds (STOC-EPS, French BBS) adapted to the DOMs.

Conservation of the freshwater pearl mussel in the Massif armoricain

Project background

The freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) is a mollusc listed in Annexes II and V of the Habitats Directive. It is protected by French law and listed as an “endangered” species in the IUCN’s Red List. The worldwide population has decreased by at least 50% over the last decade. It is estimated that during the 20th Century, 90% of the pearl mussel population in central European and 60% of the population in French rivers has vanished.

During its lifecycle, the pearl mussel has planktonic stages as well as a parasitic one – it lives in the gills of host fish such as salmon. Populations, and particularly the young mussels living in river beds, are vulnerable to increases in temperature and pollutants, as well as to eutrophication and sediment extraction. The pearl mussel represents a key indicator species of the river ecosystem quality and is also an umbrella species – i.e. protecting the pearl mussel has a positive impact on the entire river ecosystem.

Project objectives

The MULETTE LIFE project aims to restore the freshwater pearl mussel populations of the “Massif armoricain” (French Brittany). The project will target six Natura 2000 sites (SACs) that are known to be important refuges for freshwater pearl mussel populations in western France.

Expected results

- The development and implementation of a methodology for the captive breeding of pearl mussels;
- The production of 4 000 individuals for each river area targeted;
- The re-introduction of pearl mussels of different ages into suitable natural sites by putting them into contact with the gills of local host fish or into the substrate;
- The protection of wildlife sites by creating three Biotope Protection Orders and revising a further three;
- The involvement of river managers and stakeholders in the implementation of actions for improving the quality of rivers;
- The production of maps of the distribution and the ecological status of mussel populations; and
- The monitoring of the selected sites.

LIFE09 NAT/FR/000583
MULETTE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Bretagne Vivante - SEPNE

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Name of contact person

Bertrand RIVOAL

Duration of project:

72 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2016)

Total budget in euro:

2,517,546.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,258,772.00 (50.00 %)

Demonstrating functional biodiversity in viticulture landscapes

Project background

Grape vines provide habitats with unlimited food supply and few natural enemies. This makes them an ideal breeding ground for pests. As restrictions on phytosanitary products increase, environmentally-sensitive biological pest control methods are growing in importance.

Control of pests, diseases and weeds, as well as soil preservation, may be considered at the field scale or at the landscape scale. The latter has gained consideration only recently. Research on functional biodiversity and landscape connectivity demonstrates that new options arise when a landscape approach is used. Over recent decades, many attempts have been made to enhance the quantity and quality of the semi-natural features that are left in the countryside – such as hedges, groves or ground covers – so as to contribute to nature conservation and a better environmental quality and to promote the aesthetic and heritage values of the countryside.

Project objectives

The aim of this LIFE Biodiversity project focuses on demonstrating the benefits from strengthening landscape structures as a means to restore and conserve biodiversity in cultivated vineyards. This will be achieved by assessing biodiversity-friendly actions in different European biotopes. Complementary semi-natural spaces will be created in vineyards from seven test sites in three countries (Portugal, Spain and France) covering Atlantic, Mediterranean and Continental regions. The agronomic benefits of using arthropods and fungi biodiversity for viticulture will be tested. Results will inform the design of a landscape and ecological action plan intended to effectively combine wine production and biodiversity conservation actions.

Expected results

- Seven management plans will be developed based on conservation biological control;
- 175 ha of ground cover and 35 km of hedges will be put in place;
- 700 m of low walls will be restored;
- Some 40 000 pheromone traps will be placed;
- 70 ha of headlands will be planted;
- At least 5% of the surface of each demonstration site will contain non-productive semi-natural areas; and

LIFE09 NAT/FR/000584

BioDiVine



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Professional organisation

Name of beneficiary

Institut Français de la Vigne et du Vin

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Name of contact person

Joël ROCHARD

Duration of project:

52 months (15/09/2010 - 31/12/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,951,043.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

959,523.00 (49.18 %)

- Biodiversity will be closely monitored and should increase on each site by 15-20% for arthropods, by 20% for microbial diversity and by 50% for birds and small mammals.

Rhine wetlands near Rastatt

LIFE09 NAT/DE/000004
Rheinauen bei Rastatt



Project background

Covering some 4 000 ha, the project is located in the Rhine wetlands of Baden-Württemberg and covers the Natura 2000 SCI between Wintersdorf and Karlsruhe, as well as two Rhineland SPAs located in Elchesheim-Karlsruhe. The majority of the project area (97%) is also part of the trans-national Ramsar Upper Rhine site, the "Oberrhein / Rhin supérieur".

Despite the significant numbers of habitats and species found there, the project area is being successively degraded by the cessation of the flood dynamics and changes to the processes of the river system caused by hydro-engineering measures and intensive farming. This is having a detrimental effect on the area's alluvial habitats and plant communities, with a loss of endemic flora and fauna.

Project objectives

The project aims to improve wetland ecosystems along a section of the river Rhine, leading to the restoration of typical wetland habitats and improving the conservation status of plant and animal species listed in the Habitats Directive. Specific objectives are to:

- Restore areas of wetlands and floodplains along the Rhine and re-naturalise a heavily modified section of the river Murg;
- Restore river banks and improve the river dynamics of sections of the Rhine, benefitting important birds species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive (e.g. common tern), migratory bird species (e.g. common sandpiper or little ringed plover) and fish species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive (e.g. the sea lamprey);
- Improve the conservation status of standing waters along the Rhine, an important habitat for fish species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive (e.g. spined loach, bitterling);
- Restore the Annex I habitat, "water courses of plain to montane levels with aquatic vegetation", along the Ried canal and in Hofwaldschlut;
- Restore and re-establish the species-rich meadow habitat that supports a number of rare species, e.g., the dusky large blue butterfly (*Maculinea nausithous*); and
- Improve existing ditches as habitats for the species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive (e.g. weather loach or southern damselfly).

Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Daniel RADDATZ

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

9,397,433.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

4,698,716.00 (50.00 %)

Expected results

- The restoration of over 50 ha of wetland habitat along the river Murg with priority alluvial forest habitats (91E0* and 91F0), stitchwort/oak/hornbeam forest (9160), muddy river banks (3270) and hygrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels (6430);
- The development and restoration of gravel and sand banks and river islands over a 1 km section of the Rhine;
- The long-term conservation of the natural eutrophic lake habitat (3150) over approximately 6 ha;
- The restoration of habitat (3260) through the restoration of a 2.8 km stretch of river; and
- The restoration of some 8.9 ha of lowland hay meadows (6510) and some 3.9 ha of Molinia meadows (6410).

Woodlands and river valleys on the Steigerwald slopes near Iphofen

Project background

The project area encompasses a Natura 2000 site of more than 3 000 ha, located in the hills of Steigerwald in Bavaria. The area has been used as coppiced woodland and pasture-land for centuries, resulting in oak-hornbeam woods with specific and diverse structures. Traditional land-uses have helped to conserve the area's valuable natural habitats, including species rich hay meadows, hydrophilous grassland and petrifying springs with tufa formation, hedgerows, and dry grasslands in the river valleys and outside the large forests.

Boasting a wide variety of habitat types, part of the area around the municipality of Iphofen is one of the most species-rich in Bavaria. The project area is also a European "Prime Butterfly Area" (PBA), where conservation measures for butterflies are considered a high priority. However, this traditional landscape is increasingly under threat from modern farming and forestry practices, tourism and a lack of public awareness of the area's high nature value.

Project objectives

The project's main aim is to conserve the Steigerwald hills Natura 2000 site near Iphofen. Specific project objectives include:

- The conservation of 11 habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive;
- The conservation of habitats supporting 13 species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive, including: the scarce fritillary (*Euphydryas maturna*), the moth (*Eriogaster catax*), thick shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*), great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) and the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*);
- The conservation of 11 species of breeding birds listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, including: the collared flycatcher (*Ficedula albicollis*), middle spotted woodpecker (*Picoides medius*), and Ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*); and
- The creation of the necessary conditions to ensure a long-term and sustainable future for the target habitats and species.

Expected results

- The conservation of 63 ha of (partly coppiced) woodland consisting of *Galio-Carpinetum* oak-hornbeam and other semi-natural woodlands;

LIFE09 NAT/DE/000005
Steigerwaldrand Iphofen



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Gesundheit

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Name of contact person

Harald LIPPERT

Duration of project:

51 months (01/10/2010 - 30/12/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,631,786.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

815,893.00 (50.00 %)

- The development of 14 ha of transitional areas between woodland and open countryside;
- The securing and creation of pasture woodland with oaks (habitat type 9170) on 13.5 ha and the development of a guide for the restoration of pasture woodland;
- The improvement of the conservation status of petrifying springs with tufa formation in the Moorseebach river valley, by wood removal on some 0.5 ha;
- The purchase of 25 ha of agricultural and forested land for the conservation of eight targeted habitat types; and
- The improvement and connection of habitats to help to stabilise and increase the populations of thick shelled river mussel, crested newt and yellow-bellied toad.

Optimisation of NATURA-2000-habitats in the National Park Eifel

Project background

The Eifel National Park encompasses the counties of Aachen, Düren and Euskirchen in North Rhine-Westphalia and covers some 110 km². The park includes parts of six Natura 2000 SCIs, which are characterised by deciduous forests, meadows rich in species, rocks with pioneer-vegetation and stream water-systems. The characteristic water, forest and wilderness habitats support a number of rare or endangered animal and plant species.

The conservation status of four important forest habitat types – “Luzulo-Fagetum beech forests”, “Asperulo-Fagetum beech-forests”, “Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines” and “Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*” – has declined rapidly over the past decades. These rare or endangered habitats (listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive) are threatened by spruce plantations, which suppress the natural vegetation, and by spruce recolonisation or regrowth. The quality of the natural river courses has also declined due to the construction of weirs, which interrupt the free-flowing sections of the rivers, preventing the migration of fish. Bank areas and the riverbed have been altered and made more uniform; and important structures, which vary the flow speed and sediment distribution, are missing.

Project objectives

The project's overall goal is to develop and target the conservation of the four above-mentioned important forest habitat types in the SCIs. A second goal is to improve the ecological conditions and dynamics of water courses and riparian sites within the project area. Migration barriers will be removed over large river sections and hard bank protections will be taken down. The project also aims to reduce human disturbance in certain areas.

Expected results

- The ecological condition of 60 km of creeks and rivers of the habitat-type “water courses of plain to montane levels” will be improved;
- The conservation status of the targeted four forest habitats will be improved on 550 ha;
- Management plans will be produced for three sub-areas within the overall project area;

LIFE09 NAT/DE/000006
Wald - Wasser - Wildnis



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Henning WALTER

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

4,174,582.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,087,291.00 (50.00 %)

- Some 18 ha of forest and meadows will be purchased;
- 82 migration barriers in rivers will be removed;
- Nine ponds that interrupt the river courses will be removed or modified and structural improvements carried out in 22 sections of the river;
- Spruce trees will be removed on 63 ha;
- Regrowth spruce and Douglas fir will be removed on 500 ha;
- Beech trees will be planted to develop the desired forest habitat types – systems will be put in place to protect the beech saplings;
- A 5 ha area of open grasslands will be created;
- 6.3 km of roads and paths will be removed to encourage renaturalisation; and
- Stone crayfish (*Austropotamobius torrentium*) will be introduced in three sections of the river.

Sustained, favourable management and improvement of mountain hay meadows near Winterberg

Project background

Europe's mountain hay meadows are particularly endangered. Similar to other types of low-intensity hay meadows they are under threat from intensive farming practices or abandonment as unprofitable "marginal sites". The mountain hay meadows near Winterberg are the largest clusters of this habitat in North Rhine-Westphalia; some 390 ha of *Geranio sylvatici- Trisetetum*, of which about 290 ha are found in designated Natura 2000 network sites, are recorded within the municipality of Winterberg at heights of 600-800 m. Another 120 ha of 'montane Arrhenatherum elatius grasslands', of which about 90 ha are found in designated SCIs, have mostly been developed from *Trisetum* grasslands as a result of fertilisation. The planned project area comprises the "Bergwiesen bei Winterberg" and "Oberes Orketal" SCIs, with the most important remnants of montane grasslands on a total of 538 ha

Project objectives

The main objective of the project is to restore or improve stands of *Trisetetum flavescens* grasslands and closely related montane grassland communities. The project also aims to improve the conservation status of similarly degenerated isolated sites of European dry heaths and species-rich *Nardus* grasslands on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and sub-mountain areas in Continental Europe). These species-rich plant communities – in particular, mountain hay meadows – will be restored from degraded grassland stands, spruce afforestation, areas of intensive Douglas fir cultivation and by a re-introduction of low-intensity management systems on currently fallow land.

The re-establishment of the typical species composition of mountain hay meadows will be undertaken mainly by the application of autochthonous seed-rich hay through hay sowing. Subsequently, a management system of annual or biannual hay cutting will be secured. For other areas a special form of grazing may be agreed upon. In the context of the process of hay drying, methods for extracting autochthonous, storable seed for regional sites of mountain hay meadow will be developed and implemented.

LIFE09 NAT/DE/000007
Bergmähwiesen Winterberg



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Werner SCHUBERT

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

1,889,555.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

944,777.00 (50.00 %)

Expected results

- Grassland mapping and evaluation of 140 ha;
- Detailed management plans for the entire grassland area with foreseen project measures on 530 ha;
- Purchase of 54 ha, of which 52.7 ha should be restored as mountain hay meadows and 1.3 ha as alluvial forests or heathlands;
- Restoration of 31 ha of mountain hay meadows on intensive agricultural land through hay and seed sowing as well as through planting of pre-cultivated target plant species;
- Re-establishment of 21 ha of mountain hay meadows and 1.3 ha of alluvial forests with alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) by converting spruce forest and Douglas fir plantations; and
- Restoring and/or improving measures within the relicts of montane heaths and *Nardus* grassland (habitats 4030 and 6230*) within an area of about 4 ha; and
- Construction of a hay-drying unit with a seed extraction machine.

Conservation and restoration of the Allis shad in the Gironde and Rhine watersheds

Project background

The Allis shad population in the Gironde watershed was the most important in Europe until the beginning of the 21st Century, with catches of several hundred tonnes/yr. Since 2006, there has been a marked decline in the return of mature shads to the rivers for reproduction, the reasons for which are still not well understood. In 2008, a moratorium on Allis shad fishing was established in the Gironde watershed.

One hundred years ago, the Allis shad population in the Rhine watershed was also the most important shad population in its northern distribution range, with annual catches of several hundred tonnes/yr of fish. Within 30 years this population collapsed. Re-introduction efforts were started in 2007 as part of a LIFE project (LIFE06 NAT/D/00005).

Project objectives

The key objective of the project is the re-introduction of Allis shad to the Rhine watershed. In a unique European approach, the project is combining the conservation of the largest remaining Allis shad population in Europe in the Gironde watershed in France with the re-introduction of Allis shad to the Rhine watershed in Germany.

Another key objective of the project will be the transfer of Allis shad aquaculture techniques from France to Germany and the development of techniques for an ex-situ stock. These are important conservation tools for diadromous fish restoration and have been implemented in recovery plans of the European sturgeon and Atlantic salmon.

A pilot ex-situ facility will be established in Germany and mature or nearly mature fish can be expected at the end of the LIFE+ project. The development of these techniques will enable the project to remove fewer fish from French rivers and to include returning fish to the Rhine watershed in the ex-situ stock in the future.

Expected results

- Stocking of 1.5-2 million Allis shad larvae per year in the years 2011-15 (reintroduction programmes of the closely related American shad stock show that around 250 Allis shad larvae are required to obtain one returning adult. Therefore 30 000-40 000 Allis

LIFE09 NAT/DE/000008

Alosa alosa



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Landesanstalt für Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz in Nordrhein-Westfalen

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Name of contact person

Heiner KLINGER

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

1,605,827.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

789,414.00 (49.16 %)

shad can be expected from a stocking of 7.5-10 million shad larvae);

- An increase in the return rates of mature shad to the Rhine watershed from 2013 onwards;
- Improvement of the migration possibilities in the Gironde watershed;
- Installation of an ex-situ pilot facility in Germany with an output of 50 mature or near mature Allis shad in 2015; and
- Technical publications on Allis shad aquaculture with special emphasis on the development of an ex-situ stock, state-of-the-art fish pass design and monitoring techniques.

Rebuilding and preserving hanging bogs, raised bogs and transitional mires including the neighbouring habitats in the Hunsrueck and Eifel regions (Rhineland-Palatinate)

Project background

Bogs host a variety of specific plant communities and typical species. The conservation status of bogs in the Hunsrück and Eifel area has severely declined in recent years as a result of anthropogenic interference and suspended use. At the same time animal and plant species associated with bogs have become rare. Therefore there is an urgent need to restore and preserve the bogs of the Hunsrück and Eifel area.

Preservation and restoration of bogs is not only important for the long-term conservation of plant and animal species associated with these habitats: Bogs can function as permanent stores of CO₂ and, as a result, are of great importance for climate change mitigation. Degraded bogs, however, add to the emission of greenhouse gases and thus have a large-scale adverse effect on the environment.

Project objectives

The project aims to restore and protect important bog habitats in the Hunsrück and Eifel area. Among these are several habitats listed as priority habitats in Annex I of the Habitats Directive: active raised bogs, bog woodland and alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*. Other habitat types, such as the Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*, European dry heaths, Species-rich Nardus grasslands, Molinia meadows and hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities, will benefit from this project as well. The main objective of the project is to stop the decline of plant communities and species associated with bogs. In addition, the project will help stop emissions and reactivate the bonding of CO₂ from bog habitats. Further aims include raising awareness of the importance of protecting nature, and especially bogs, which can play a key role in climate change mitigation.

Expected results

- Restoration and protection of some 100 ha of bogs in the Hunsrück and Eifel area;
- Long-term waterlogging and maintenance of blocked ditches;
- Restoration of valuable open habitats on some 30 ha;

LIFE09 NAT/DE/000009
Hang- und Hoochmoore



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Jochen KREBÜHL

Duration of project:

72 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2016)

Total budget in euro:

2,743,834.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,371,917.00 (50.00 %)

- Purchase of 13.5 ha of forested land;
- Drawing up of six management plans;
- Stabilisation and activation of CO₂ storage in the bog areas of the project, and achieving long-term effects via voluntary emissions trading of bog certificates;
- Removal of tracks and forest roads; and
- Arresting the population decline of various target species.

Reestablishment of the Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*)

Project background

The Marsh fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*) was last observed in Schleswig-Holstein in 1991. The decline and eventual extinction of the species in the region was caused by a range of factors including intensification of land use, draining of bogs, and overgrowth of tall grass, scrub and brambles on military sites following the replacement of tanks by wheeled vehicles.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the LIFE+ Aurinia project is to reactivate habitats of the marsh fritillary in the last two known sites of the species (Nordoe and Jardelunder Moor). At similar good sites (e.g. the military training field Lütjenholm and Geltinger Birk) the project will try to improve the necessary habitats of the target species: mat grasslands, wet grasslands, heathlands and dry grasslands. At the remaining proposed project sites it may be possible to reintroduce the species in approximately 20 years when conservation actions have enabled the reactivation of the necessary vegetation. The condition of the sites varies according to the demands of the species, and therefore different actions are planned. The IUCN criteria for reestablishment of species were checked and influenced the planning process of the proposal.

Expected results

- Reintroduction of the marsh fritillary at the four most-improved of the eight project sites;
- Establishment of eight sub-populations of 100 individuals each at these four sites;
- Improvement or reintroduction of relevant habitat types through the following actions: conversion of 16 ha of spruce plantations; improvement of 40 ha of former agricultural areas into species-rich grasslands by hay/seed transfer and planting target plants (80 000 individuals); introduction of grazing on an area of 110 ha;
- Introduction of new conservation measures to Schleswig-Holstein: fire management; improvement of grassland by hay transfer; and large-scale rearing and planting of rare plants; and
- Involvement of the military and military-site managers and the establishment of co-operation for a more conservation-oriented site management.

LIFE09 NAT/DE/000010

LIFE-Aurinia



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Stiftung Naturschutz Schleswig-Holstein

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Name of contact person

Hauke DREWS

Duration of project:

100 months (01/09/2010 - 31/12/2018)

Total budget in euro:

3,298,259.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,649,129.00 (50.00 %)

Demonstration of the Biodiversity Action Planning approach, to benefit local biodiversity on an Aegean island, Skyros

Project background

The natural environment and biodiversity on Skyros are some of the best preserved in the region. The landscape is characterised by steep slopes, wet meadows, and seasonal wetlands, scrublands and pasturelands of high quality. The island includes many endemic plants, passerines, birds of prey, migratory waterfowl, bats, terrapins, and endemic species of lizard and pony. Traditional extensive farming methods had previously helped maintained the island's habitats but changes in farming practices have started to have a negative impact on the environment. Tourism pressures have also exerted stress on the island's green infrastructure, particularly in terms of coastal habitats threatening sea-bird colonies and rare, endemic chasmophytic plants.

Sustainability of the island's biodiversity will benefit from reorienting land use models to more sensitive approaches that respect environmental and landscape resources. Win-win benefits can be gained in this way from positive nature conservation actions that help support the island's economy as an eco-tourism location.

Project objectives

The objective of this LIFE Biodiversity project is to establish integrated planning methods and management capable of enhancing biodiversity whilst remaining compatible with sustainable economic and social development. The actions will be based on the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan focusing on important habitats and species. Public awareness will be raised to secure support for the conservation actions that aim to: revitalise the island's traditional land use model; restore wetlands and create an appropriate wetland network; develop action plans for important local and/or endemic plant species; and restore adjacent islet biodiversity. The project also aims to demonstrate the compatibility of tourism and biodiversity conservation.

Expected results

- Formulation and acceptance of an effective and comprehensive Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Demonstration of environmentally-friendly pastureland management on 320 ha of leased range-lands;

LIFE09 NAT/GR/000323
SKYROSBIODIVERSITY



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

Municipality of Skyros

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Name of contact person

Nikolaos KRITIKOS

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,437,655.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

704,527.00 (49.01 %)

- Cultivation of 20 ha of abandoned land with fodder crops and fava beans;
- Construction of livestock watering places and wild-life ponds;
- Re-creation of at least 1 ha of wetland habitat;
- Management of 10 ha of wet meadow habitat through controlled grazing of the endemic Skyrian pony and local livestock;
- Rat eradication on up to three islets;
- Gull control actions on at least one islet;
- Introduction of conservation plots and propagation for rare and endemic plants;
- Formation of a stable local group of 10 conservation volunteers who will implement conservation actions and carry out monitoring and management measures; and
- Wide dissemination of the project approach is expected to improve public awareness about the value of Skyrian biodiversity and the adaptation of environmentally-friendly attitudes and practices.

Use of innovative practices and new technology in the production of wide variety and high quality forestry seedlings in order to enhance regeneration success and increase biodiversity

Project background

Forests are of utmost importance to the Earth's climate and biodiversity. They make an important contribution to rural development, providing important social, economic and environmental functions. Every year, thousands of hectares of forests are damaged in the Mediterranean region by wildfires. The conditions that prevail after these fires are favourable to regeneration through the transplantation of seeds rather than natural processes. Planting carried out in this way is limited to a few species that can be easily produced on a large scale. The result is a 'restored' ecosystem characterised by low biodiversity.

A major problem for the large-scale production of some ecologically important forest species is the lack of efficient germination treatments that will break down seed dormancy. A second problem is the lack of suitable cultivation protocols that will lead to their successful large-scale production.

Project objectives

The aim of this LIFE Biodiversity project is to enhance biodiversity during the restoration of fire-disturbed ecosystems by introducing a new technology, based on the pre-cultivation in mini-plugs using a wide range of species. The project activities will include: the collection of high-quality seed material and evaluation of the seeds' germination potential; the development of seed germination and cultivation protocols; and the establishment of a prototype unit for the large-scale production of ecologically important forest species.

The seedlings produced using the new technology will be transplanted to three study areas in Central Macedonia, where their growth will be monitored and evaluated. This system for the large-scale production of reforestation material using a wide range of species will be introduced to public forest service nurseries in Greece through training programmes and seminars for forestry staff.

LIFE09 NAT/GR/000326
VERENIKE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Research institution

Name of beneficiary

National Agricultural Research Foundation/
Forest Research Institute

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Name of contact person

Kalliope RADOGLOU

Duration of project:

40 months (01/09/2010 - 31/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,324,725.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

653,362.00 (49.32 %)

Expected results

- The project is expected to introduce the state-of-the-art in forest nursery production for reforestation purposes to Greece;
- The new technology will allow large-scale production of seedlings that was not possible using conventional techniques;
- As well as being more cost efficient, the proposed system will contribute to the sustainable management of forest crop production through a decrease in energy, water and fertiliser needs, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions;
- The production of high quality plants will result in improved forest restoration after fires; and
- It will also contribute to increasing the biodiversity of these ecosystems.

Improving conditions of bear-human coexistence in Kastoria Prefecture, Greece - Transfer of best practices

LIFE09 NAT/GR/000333
ARCTOS/KASTORIA



Project background

The project is targeting a sub-population of the Dinara-Pindos population of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), the third largest in the EU. The sub-population was estimated in 2002 to include at least 19-54 individuals, making the project area of major importance for the conservation of large carnivore biodiversity over the whole of the European continent.

The brown bear sub-population and habitat are suffering from severe pressure, degradation and disruption related to the construction of a 72 km stretch of motorway: five bears have died within six months of the opening of the first 40 km of this new road. Immediate mitigation measures are needed to minimise this negative impact. Moreover, bears are threatened by other human activities, such as poaching, which affects around 5% of the bear population (above the sustainable threshold of 4% for a viable bear population). As food opportunists, bears show seasonal feeding patterns connected to human food resources, such as small-scale cultivations of wheat, corn and trifolium as well as small livestock and beehives. Increased contact with humans increases their risk of mortality. Bear habitats in the project area have also suffered degradation from criminal and accidental forest fires, particularly those that occurred in 2007.

Project objectives

The project aims to improve the conservation status of the brown bear in terms of habitat condition and population by addressing major threats related to road infrastructure, traffic and human-caused mortality. The project's communication activities aim to: improve drivers' awareness of the risk of traffic accidents and hence minimise traffic-related mortalities; improve the awareness level of specific target groups on existing preventive measures; and produce tools to minimise bear-human conflicts.

Expected results

- Human-caused brown bear mortality to be maintained at a sustainable level not exceeding 4% of the minimum estimated population in the project area;

Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

Prefecture of Kastoria

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Name of contact person

Nikos PANAGIOTOU

Duration of project:

45 months (01/10/2010 -30/06/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,128,326.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

846,244.00 (75.00 %)

- Yearly reproductive females to be maintained at no lower than 10-12% of the minimum estimated bear population; and
- Public servants in competent authorities (e.g. forestry services) to adopt best practice conservation strategies for the brown bear.

These objectives will be achieved through:

- The establishment and monitoring of specific mitigation measures related to traffic mortality risks;
- Systematic monitoring and analysis of the genetic status of the bear population;
- Establishment and operation of a bear emergency team and a wildlife veterinary facility;
- Enrichment of small-scale cultivated lands with a variety of crops attractive to brown bear diet;
- Operation of a long-term support mechanism facilitating awareness raising of local communities and implementation of preventive measures (e.g. guard dogs);
- Improvement of conditions for preventing forest fires during critical periods; and
- Restoration/cultivation of old orchards present in the brown bear habitat.

Actions for the conservation of coastal habitats and significant avifauna species in NATURA 2000 network sites of Epanomi and Aggelochoi Lagoons, Greece

Project background

Increasing urbanisation and industrialisation have altered or destroyed many coastal habitats. The main threats to coastal lagoons, dunes and seagrass beds are eutrophication, disruption of the sedimentation/erosion balance along the coast, direct destruction through human modification of the coastline, boat trawling and anchoring. The degradation and disappearance of habitats affects associated flora and fauna, such as birds, fish, amphibians, mammals, reptiles and invertebrates.

Posidonia oceanica meadows have been particularly affected by physical damage, deteriorating water quality and sedimentation. It is estimated that as much as 46% of underwater meadows in the Mediterranean have experienced some reduction in range, density and/or coverage, while 20% have severely regressed since the 1970s. The Epanomi lagoon has also lost hydrological functions through drainage and canalisation. This has limited the spatial and temporal confinement of the hydroperiod and has modified wetland habitat structure and composition. The absence of management bodies and the lack of a management plan threaten important bird species and relevant breeding and resting habitats. Uncontrolled tourism and leisure activities, as well as public ignorance, further threaten the ecological integrity of the coastal zone.

Project objectives

The objectives of the project include:

- To enhance the conservation status of priority habitats of coastal lagoons and *Posidonia* beds as well as the priority species they host, such as *Numenius tenuirostris* and *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*;
- To restore the hydrological and ecological status of the Epanomi lagoon; and
- To increase habitat heterogeneity by transforming the macro/micro topography of the area and creating new habitats that could support flora and fauna species, thus enhancing system biodiversity and stability.

Further objectives include the effective management of visitor activities and raising the environmental awareness of users.

LIFE09 NAT/GR/000343
ACCOLAGOONS



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

Prefectural Authority of Thessaloniki

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Name of contact person

Apostolos GIANTSIS

Duration of project:

36 months (01/10/2010 - 30/09/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,639,770.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,229,828.00 (75.00 %)

Expected results

The expected results include:

- The installation of eight environmentally friendly moorings to prevent further deterioration of seagrass abundance and distribution;
- The restoration of lagoon and peri-lagoon habitats;
- An improvement in water quality in the Aggelochoi and Epanomi lagoons; and
- The installation of three water quality monitoring stations and the collection of physico-chemical parameters. A telemetry data centre will receive, process and send station measurements.

Conservation of *Falco cherrug* in Northeast Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia

Project background

The saker falcon is a globally threatened species that is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. Hungary and Slovakia are home to some 47% of the European population (c. 450 pairs). Thanks to EU financial support, this population has stabilised and is increasing, while the European and global populations are still decreasing. An earlier LIFE Nature project has provided important new information about the risks, survival rate, migration and roaming patterns of juveniles. Roaming behaviour of juvenile falcons has been mapped to reveal a very wide catchment, ranging from Spain to Kazakhstan. Monitoring indicates that the young birds spend more time in Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia where there are more, less densely populated, suitable habitats. These habitats can be potential expansion areas for the core population if enough suitable nesting places are available and if threats are addressed.

Project objectives

This LIFE Nature project aims to stabilise and further strengthen the core European core populations of the saker falcon by implementing best practices for conserving the species in Bulgaria and Romania. Knowledge and experience will be transferred from the Hungarian and Slovak partners involved in LIFE06 NAT/H/000096 to Bulgarian and Romanian partners. In addition, threats in the falcon's core area will be eliminated to help further strengthen its conservation status.

Expected results

- By 2014 there will be at least 10 saker falcon pairs in Romania, 5 pairs in Dobrudzha in Bulgaria, 200 pairs in Hungary, and at least 35 pairs in Slovakia. A trend should be set to facilitate further increases in population numbers;
- Nesting sites will be improved and nest boxes will be installed. Know-how regarding feeding and habitat preferences will be enhanced. Prey populations will be increased by improving habitat conditions for European ground squirrels (*Spermophilus citellus*). This will include reintroducing squirrels in some areas and supporting their habitat via agri-environment schemes. Risks from electric pylons will also be addressed;
- A comprehensive monitoring programme will result in improved knowledge about the changes in

LIFE09 NAT/HU/000384
Falco cherrug B-H-R-S



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

József FIDLÓCZKY

Duration of project:

48 months (01/10/2010 – 30/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

4,032,828.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

3,006,470.00 (74.55 %)

population parameters of both the European ground squirrel and the saker falcon. Information about migratory losses of saker falcons will be increased using satellite telemetry and by gathering data from wintering grounds; and

- An intensive communication programme, targeting farmers, game managers and political decision-makers at local and national level will increase awareness in the target groups and create support for saker falcon conservation measures.

Restoration of the Upper River Blackwater SAC for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Atlantic Salmon, European Otter and Kingfisher

Project background

The River Allow catchment forms part of the Upper Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The site is important for a number of species including the kingfisher, freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon and European otter. The conservation status of the site has come increasingly under pressure and agricultural practices over recent times have led to increased nutrient enrichment and pollution, whilst channel degradation and siltation have been caused by major river modification works which date back to the 1850s. Significant threats to the site and its species also come from years of decline of the riparian areas of the river. Examples of this include the spread of invasive plants (in particular Himalayan balsam), and overgrown bank vegetation causing excessive shade for the river. These issues, if left unchecked, will have serious repercussions on native vegetation, river bank stability, sedimentation of spawning beds and ultimately on the habitat and food sources of the pearl mussel, salmon, otter and kingfisher.

Project objectives

The main purpose of the LIFE Nature project is to bring about a sustained enhancement of the Upper Blackwater SAC by targeting the freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon, European otter and kingfisher. More specifically this will be achieved by carrying out actions aimed at restoring the quality of the river bed and riparian zone.

Expected results

- Halt excessive siltation of 40km of pearl mussel and salmon (freshwater) habitat by restoring riparian areas vulnerable to erosion from unsustainable agricultural practices. This will include 0.44 km of bank protection works; 6.46 km of pruning and coppicing; 6.84 km of planting of exposed river-bank areas; 6.0 km of Himalayan balsam removal; and provision of silt traps and constructed wetland in afforested areas where needed;
- Improve otter habitat over 27 km through installation of 10 otter holts and holding areas;
- Provide 12 kingfisher nesting areas; (and 10 dipper nesting areas);
- Develop guidelines for the management of riparian zones for otter and kingfisher (and dippers) in riverine SACs including water quality management for adjacent farms;

LIFE09 NAT/IE/000220
BLACKWATER SAMOK



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Development agency

Name of beneficiary

Integrated Resource Development

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Name of contact person

Maura WALSH

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,995,826.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

935,650.00 (46.88 %)

- Produce a habitat restoration plan for the tributaries of the Upper Blackwater, and one habitat restoration plan for the main Blackwater River. Also produce one overall plan for the future management of the Upper Blackwater SAC; and
- Raise community awareness to improve public support and understanding for the project and its objective. This will comprise initiatives including a media campaign and a range of publications and signage. In addition, 10 public and community training workshops and eight educational lectures will be held. Visits will be made to all 36 schools in the catchment area and an online 'schools species recording project' will be established through the project website.

Demonstrating Best Practice in Raised Bog Restoration in Ireland

Project background

Irish raised bogs represent some of the finest examples of their habitat type in the world. Surveys indicate that some 50 000 ha of reasonably intact or uncut raised bog habitat remain in the country, which represents about 16% of the original natural extent of the habitat. Of this, about 21 500 ha is regarded as being of nature conservation value and is included in a network of protected areas (Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas).

Previous afforestation schemes on bogs have affected the ecological integrity of this green infrastructure and current national forest policy includes goals to protect semi-natural habitats of nature conservation value, including raised bogs.

Project objectives

The primary objective of this LIFE Nature project is to help restore wetland, peat-forming conditions on Ireland's raised bogs by continuing the process of removing plantation forests. This project builds upon the work carried out under Coillte's previous LIFE-funded project (LIFE04 NAT/IE/000121 "Restoring Raised Bog in Ireland"), which was completed in December 2008. That project demonstrated that tree removal and drain-blocking can have encouraging positive effects, even in the short-term, on bog hydrology and vegetation. All associated objectives of the current project are wholly aimed at supporting this main goal.

Bog restoration actions will target active raised bog habitat on 17 sites that have been partially or wholly afforested.

Expected results

- A total of 636.31 ha of raised bog habitat on 17 project sites (all candidate SACs and/or NHAs, spread over seven counties) will be enhanced by restoration works carried out;
- A total of 627.76 ha of plantation forests on raised bog habitat will be removed;
- Forestry drains will be blocked where necessary on a total of 636.31ha;
- Naturally regenerating trees will be removed where necessary over the entire project area of 636.31 ha;
- 15 665 m of fire-lines will be constructed where necessary; and
- 19 190 m of fencing will be erected where necessary.

LIFE09 NAT/IE/000222
DBPRBRI



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Public enterprise

Name of beneficiary

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Philip MURPHY

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,151,328.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,290,797.00 (60.00 %)

Vercelli rice fields: integrated plan for environmental requalification and sustainable management of rice agroecosystem

Project background

Intensive rice cultivation dominates land use in the western Po river plain regions of Piedmont and Lombardy. Mechanised agriculture in these regions has threatened lowland habitats leaving only artificial springs, small wetlands, scrubland and irrigation channels as semi-natural habitats features. Forest areas are also fragmented and connectivity between riparian woodlands is limited. The hydromorphology of riparian zones has been further altered by introduction of intensive poplar plantations, removal of willows and restrictions on natural fluvial dynamics. The combination of these habitat influences has led to changes in the distribution of some species and severely inhibited the presence of others.

Despite such issues, the Po river plain's fluvial habitats continue to provide important breeding and feeding grounds for European birds. The Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*), terns (*Sterna hirundo* and *Sterna albifrons*), sand martins (*Riparia riparia*), herons, gulls and duck species all rely on the area's mixed habitat features. Habitat management in the area is made more challenging by a mosaic of landownership that makes it difficult to apply territorial approaches.

Project objectives

The main objectives of this LIFE Nature project involve: safeguarding and improving key forest sites and riverine ecological corridors in the target area; identifying new fields for the development of an ecological network; implementing forest management models aimed at improving nesting conditions for herons; piloting an integrated territorial land management approach (at provincial scale) bringing together all relevant public and private sector stakeholders; raising stakeholder awareness about the aims, actions and benefits associated with the ecological network; and monitoring the socio-economic and environment impacts of the ecological network's establishment.

Expected results

- Qualitative and quantitative strengthening of core forest areas, through the purchase of 23.4 ha of land and a combination of habitat restoration and planting on 25.35 ha;
- Establishment of habitat stepping stones in the rice-field environment via restoration actions on one

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000093
ECO-RICE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Patrizia PIANTAVIGNA

Duration of project:

36 months (01/09/2010 - 01/09/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,441,900.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

720,950.00 (50.00 %)

artificial spring ('fontanile'), 2 552 m of irrigation ditches, one wetland (1.60 ha) and 1 ha of shrub area;

- Restoration of heronries located in forest areas (in two SPAs). Experimental forest management techniques will be applied and findings will be published as guidelines for similar work elsewhere; and
- Opening of a public office to inform, support and update the project implementation on site; and
- Collection of data during an exhaustive three-year monitoring programme to evaluate the different impacts of project interventions.

Eradication and control of grey squirrel: actions for preservation of biodiversity in forest ecosystems

Project background

Grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) are acknowledged as an invasive alien species and have threatened the native Eurasian Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) in the British Isles and parts of northern Italy. The grey squirrel can also cause extensive damage to trees through bark-stripping, which affects re-growth and natural tree reproduction in commercial plantations and other forest ecosystems. The spread of grey squirrel in northern Italy represents a problem for the entire European continent, since from Italy the alien species is predicted to colonise surrounding countries, particularly France and Switzerland.

Project objectives

The main objective of this project is to control and eradicate threats caused by grey squirrels at sites in the regions of Lombardy, Piedmont and Liguria in northern Italy. Species eradication will be carried out by live-trapping followed by euthanasia, while control methods will include surgical sterilisation and captive detection. Conservation actions (tree and shrub planting, supplementary feeding) will be carried out in each region to improve habitat quality and/or connectivity of forests patches for red squirrels. Red squirrels will also be reintroduced to a site in Lombardy to establish a Minimum Viable Population (MVP), following the removal of grey squirrels. The project will also evaluate the feasibility of reintroducing red squirrels in Genoa's Nervi Park after the removal of grey squirrels.

A pest risk assessment of the grey squirrel, and of other alien squirrels, will be carried out and the development of a legal trade ban for all alien squirrels will be discussed with the Italian Environment Ministry.

Expected results

- Rapid removal of grey squirrels at each site, concluding with complete eradication of the population in the target areas;
- The creation of a GIS-based database tracking the remaining population size and distribution at each site;
- Limitation of the grey squirrel's spread and densities in red squirrel areas in Piedmont;
- Creation of an area kept permanently 'grey-free' by using ongoing controls;
- Development of a long-term grey squirrel control plan;

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000095
EC-SQUARE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Pietro LENNA

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,930,000.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

890,000.00 (46.11 %)

- Evaluation of surgical sterilisation in comparison with traditional eradication techniques;
- Specific guidelines for supporting the dynamics of the red squirrel meta-population in and around a pilot study area in Lombardy;
- A pilot study to create an experimental forest area (EFA) where tree and shrub planting is carried out to improve habitat quality for red squirrels and to improve connectivity;
- Guidelines to improve habitats and reduce fragmentation of Po plain forests for arboreal rodents and conservation of other seed-eaters;
- The creation of a red squirrel MVP at a site in Lombardy where grey squirrels have been removed, as well as in the Genoa Nervi Park and its surroundings; and
- Guidelines for the use of feeding hoppers for red squirrel supplementary feeding.

Urgent actions for the conservation of the **Alectoris graeca whitakeri*

Project background

Coturnice di Sicilia (*Alectoris graeca whitakeri*) is a subspecies of rock partridge endemic to Sicily that is included in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

The Sicilian metapopulation of rock partridges is fragmented into small isolated populations and remains heavily threatened by: reduction and transformation of the bird's habitat following reforestation, insensitive grazing and fire; illegal release for hunting purposes of partridges belonging to other subspecies and species, with consequent hybridisation risks; illegal shooting; and lack of interest shown by local communities in protecting the endemic subspecies.

Project objectives

The main objective of the LIFE Nature project is to improve the conservation status of the Sicilian endemic subspecies of rock partridges. Actions will target Natura 2000 areas identified as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and involve risk reduction works to tackle each of the aforementioned threats.

Expected results

The project expects to achieve the following results:

- To safeguard and increase the Coturnice di Sicilia population within the target areas (SPAs);
- To maintain biodiversity within the target areas;
- To create a captive breeding stock of Coturnice di Sicilia for release in other Sicilian areas; and
- To raise awareness among local communities about the importance of biodiversity concepts, with particular reference to the project results.

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000099
SICALECONS



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Regione Siciliana - Assessorato Agricoltura e Foreste -
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Name of contact person

Camillo ALBANESE

Duration of project:

36 months (10/09/2010 - 10/09/2013)

Total budget in euro:

953,600.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

715,200.00 (75.00 %)

Conservation of habitats and species in the Natura 2000 sites in the Po Delta

Project background

The Parco del Delta del Po (Po Delta Park) is a protected wetlands region of 53 653 ha at the mouth of the River Po. It is the most complex system of wetlands in Italy, containing wetlands, forest, dunes and salt pans. It has a rich biodiversity, with around 1 000 plant and over 350 vertebrate species. It provides locations suitable for bird nesting and the reproduction of amphibians and reptiles.

However, vast portions of the wetlands have been drained and reclaimed. The remaining wetlands - known locally as "valli" - are used for extensive fish-farming activities. The main threat to the wetlands in the delta is water eutrophication, mainly caused by poor water circulation and salinity.

Within the park, the SCI and SPA "Valli di Comacchio" is 90% public property, with about 80% devoted to extensive fish-farming. It contains two main basins: "Sacca di Scardovari" and "Valle Bagliona and Valle Ca' Pisani". In the Veneto Region, the "valli" are privately owned and occupy approximately one-third of the entire area of the Natura 2000 site (SCI) "Delta del Po: tratto terminale e delta Veneto" and of the SPA, "Delta del Po".

Project objectives

The overall project objective is the conservation of habitat and species in the Natura 2000 sites of the River Po Delta. It aims to develop joint conservation actions between multiple public and private owners.

The project specifically intends to improve water circulation and reduce eutrophication in the two main basins of the "Valli di Comacchio". This should allow the restoration of several important habitats: coastal lagoons, Salicornia and other annual colonising mud and sand banks, Mediterranean salt meadows, Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic holophilous scrubs, and Mediterranean salt steppes.

Species conservation actions will include establishing some 8.7 ha of land and 20 artificial floating sites suitable for nesting of tern species (*Sternidae*) and the creation of eight freshwater ponds to promote the reproduction of amphibians. Specific actions will favour the reproduction of the European pond terrapin

LIFE09 ENV/IT/000110
Natura 2000 sites in the Po Delta



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

Name of beneficiary

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Lucilla PREVIATI

Duration of project:

47 months (01/09/2010 - 30/07/2014)

Total budget in euro:

4,344,770.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,172,385.00 (50.00 %)

(*Emys orbicularis*) and the common spadefoot toad (*Pelobates fuscus insubricus*). Two new embankments will be installed for the common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*).

Expected results

- Improved water circulation and reduced eutrophication in the Po delta area;
- Restoration of important delta habitats; and
- Improvements in the conservation of target species, including terns, pond terrapins and toads.

Restoration and conservation of dry grasslands in southern and central Italy

Project background

Grassland habitats are considered among the most threatened ecosystems in Europe. In particular, the *Festuco-Brometalia* grasslands and the Pseudo-steppe of *Thero-Brachypodietea* are being constantly and significantly reduced, along with a large number of rare endangered species that depend on these habitats. At EU level, the population of some of these species has decreased by as much as 20-50%. According to the "European Grassland Butterfly Indicator", the grassland butterfly population has decreased by almost 60% since 1990 and is continuing to fall. Out of a total of 436 species in Europe, 274 are dependent on dry grasslands.

Project objectives

The main project objective is the long-term conservation of two priority habitats that depend on good agropastoral management practices: the *Festuco-Brometalia* grasslands and the Pseudo-steppe of *Thero-Brachypodietea*. An additional objective is the conservation of the butterfly species associated with these habitats, in particular, *Eriogaster catax* and *Melanargia arge*.

The project will focus on three Natura 2000 sites in the Apennines (two located in the Province of Rome and one in the Province of Potenza). Best practices and demonstration actions to protect and restore these habitats and the butterfly species associated with them will be applied in the three sites.

The project also aims to increase awareness among the local population and stakeholders of the importance of these habitats and their related butterfly species; to test the restoration measures specified in the two management models, "Management of Natura 2000 habitats", published by the European Commission for these habitats; and to estimate the economic value of the two habitats.

Expected results

- Grazing plans, developed in collaboration with local breeders, will be implemented on approximately 420 ha of grasslands, in order to avoid over- and under-grazing and to achieve multiple benefits for both habitats/butterflies and livestock. To facilitate this, 100 sheep will be purchased, 12 water troughs will be restored, and wooden and electrical fences

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000118
RICOPRI



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

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Maria VINCI

Duration of project:

41 months (15/01/2011 - 30/06/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,509,913.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,132,434.00 (75.00 %)

will be used to regulate timing, location and load of grazing;

- The selective removal of shrubs (*Rubus* sp., *Rosa* sp., etc) on 19 ha, the eradication of nitrophilous ruderal species (*Silibum marianum* and *Onopordum acanthum*) on 2.5 ha, and of invasive alien plant species (*Robinia pseudoacacia* and *Ailanthus altissima*) on 2 700 m²;
- Naturalistic engineering work will be carried out on 6 000 m², to restore eroded areas belonging to the two priority habitats; and
- A germ-plasm bank will be set up to guarantee the long term ex-situ conservation of the species characterising the two dry grasslands.

Conservation and restoration of habitats and species in the Incoronata Regional Natural Park

Project background

The Capitanata area (northern Apulia) is located within the larger geographical region of "Tavoliere delle Puglie", one of Italy's intensive agriculture areas. The monocultural landscape, characterised mainly by the cultivation of wheat, has resulted in the gradual disappearance and reduction of natural areas such as wetlands and forests. Another problem is that the remaining uncultivated pastures have become overgrazed, which in turn causes an alteration of species composition. Due to these strong pressures, remaining natural areas play an important strategic role in preserving biodiversity in the region and providing an important refuge for rare or endangered animal species, especially raptors, amphibians and reptiles.

Project objectives

The general project objectives are to conserve the rare or endangered habitats of the "Bosco dell'Incoronata regional natural park" and to increase the biodiversity of the "Valle del Cervaro - Bosco Incoronata" SCI (site of Community importance within the Natura 2000 network).

The short- to mid-term objectives are to restore and improve the SCI habitats (92A0, 6220*, 91AA*) (asterix denotes a priority habitat for conservation) and to increase the individual numbers of the species typical of these habitats (raptors, amphibians, reptiles, bats). Among longer-term objectives, raising public awareness and local community participation are of fundamental importance for habitat and species protection and play an important role in ensuring sustainable environmental management.

Expected results

- The recovery of 100 ha of the 6220* priority habitat;
- The recovery and improvement of 40 ha of habitat 92A0;
- An improvement of 5 ha of 92A0 habitat and 20 ha of 91AA* habitat;
- The design and implementation of a grazing management plan;
- An increase in the number of the species typical of SCI habitats *Milvus milvus*, *Milvus migrans* and *Elaphe quatuorlineata*;
- The introduction of more than 6 000 larvae and young *Emys orbicularis*, *Triturus carnifex*, *Bombina variegata* and *Testudo hermanni*; and

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000149
LIFE+ BOSCO INCORONATA



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Michele LAURIOLA

Duration of project:

51 months (01/01/2011 - 31/03/2015)

Total budget in euro:

1,170,771.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

585,385.00 (50.00 %)

- An increase in the presence and settlement of new species of chiroptera.

Conservation actions of habitats in the coastal wetlands of SCI Wetlands of Capitanata

Project background

Wetlands are still often considered as unproductive and, therefore, reclaimed for agricultural use. Variation in water levels and a lack of buffer zones also threaten these areas. However, the loss of wetlands implies a loss of suitable resting sites for migratory birds, as well as valuable wintering, nesting and feeding areas for a variety of other bird species.

This project focuses on a Site of Community Importance (SCI), the "Wetlands of Capitanata". This site contains the Frattarolo Nature Reserve, the mouth of the Candelaro river and the Siponto coastal dunes. It is part of the most important area in southern Italy for water birds, and one of the most important in the wider Mediterranean basin.

As well as wetlands, the area also includes coastal lagoons and Mediterranean salt steppes, which are also important for bird species during migration and wintering. They also provide breeding grounds for the ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*).

This project will be undertaken in close collaboration with the LIFE+ project, "Avifauna Del Lago Salso" (LIFE07 NAT/IT/000507).

Project objectives

The ZONE UMIDE SIPONTINE project aims to achieve a global environmental restoration of the SCI, "Wetlands of Capitanata". Specifically, it aims to improve the conservation status of priority wetland, coastal-dune, coastal-lagoon and Mediterranean salt-steppe habitats contained within the site, and provide associated benefits for bird species. The project will:

- Restore 40 ha of coastal lagoons;
- Recover 110 ha of Mediterranean salt steppes (Limonietalia);
- Restore 1 500 m of coastal dunes with *Juniperus* spp.; and
- Improve 30 ha of wooded dunes with *Pinus pinea* and/or *Pinus pinaster*.

To reduce human impact on the priority habitats, the beneficiary will erect fences and build paths to control and direct tourists within the target area.

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000150
ZONE UMIDE SIPONTINE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Francesca PACE

Duration of project:

70 months (01/09/2010 - 30/06/2016)

Total budget in euro:

3,181,825.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,365,368.00 (74.34 %)

Indirectly, the project actions will help to boost the populations of many bird species, such as waterfowl, waders and raptors, including the pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), the great bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), Lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus*), red-footed falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) and lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*). Some of the other birds to benefit include priority species, such as the globally threatened slender-billed curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*) and the near-threatened ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*).

Expected results

- Restoration and/or recovery of 180 ha of priority habitats and 1 500m of coastal dunes;
- Reduced human impact on priority wetland areas; and
- An increased number of priority birds species in the area, including slender-billed curlew and ferruginous duck.

Brown Bear Conservation: coordinated actions for the Alpine and the Apennines range

Project background

The beneficiary has already taken part in LIFE Nature projects aiming at protecting the population of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) in Italy.

These bears, which almost disappeared from the country in the last decades of the 20th Century, still appear to be under threat as a result of a lack of robust scientific knowledge, habitat degradation, and conflict with human activities (in particular livestock rearing).

Therefore the implementation of a series of integrated actions is advisable, in line with those prescribed by the "Action Plan for the Conservation of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) in Europe" (Council of Europe Publishing, 2000).

Project objectives

The project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Make livestock husbandry practices and regulations more compatible with the needs of bears;
- Develop, promote and implement best practices for monitoring and controlling livestock diseases that are potentially transmittable to the bear population;
- Increase the number of farms in the bear's range adopting effective prevention measures and increase by at least 30% the use of compatible husbandry techniques;
- Facilitate the involvement and participation of the social sector;
- Encourage administrations to adopt the tools, best practices and guidelines developed;
- Significantly increase information and awareness in local communities in areas where bears are present; and
- Implement emergency teams in the bear areas in the Alps and Apennines.

Expected results

- Sustainable and innovative livestock husbandry practices in at least the protected areas encompassing the core bear range;
- Innovative management of conflict in at least the protected areas encompassing the core bear range;
- Reduction by 50% of predation on livestock in the core bear range;

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000160
ARCTOS



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

Name of beneficiary

Ente Autonomo Parco Nazionale Abruzzo, Lazio e Molise

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Name of contact person

Cinzia SULLI

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014)

Total budget in euro:

3,984,820.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,694,934.00 (67.63 %)

- Increase of stakeholder involvement in the decision-making phases related to conflict (livestock) and management of natural resources (forest, hunting, tourism); and
- Establishment of emergency teams in the core bear areas of both the Alps and Apennines.

Urgent conservation actions of *Posidonia beds of Northern Latium

Project background

The Neptune grass (*Posidonia oceanica*) habitat is declining in the Mediterranean basin as a consequence of human pressure along the coasts. Such regression of grasslands is caused by different factors, such as erosion caused by trawling (which is illegal inshore) and scraping by the anchors of pleasure boats. Both SCIs in the project area have deteriorated as a result of these pressures.

Project objectives

The main objective of the project is to safeguard and to restore some SCIs of particular importance to the conservation of the priority habitat 1120 *Posidonia beds in the Tyrrhenian Sea of Mediterranean Biogeographical Region. The conservation actions will take place in two SCIs in the Lazio region: "Sand banks between Chiarone and Fiora rivers" - IT6000001 (1 761.9 ha) and "Sand banks of Punta Murelle" - IT6000002 (1 111.99 ha).

Expected results

- Approval of management plans for two large marine Natura 2000 SCIs;
- Production of ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of the conservation efforts in the project areas to update the Natura 2000 schedules;
- Allocation of 600 submarine structures subdivided into two SCIs to combat illegal bottom-trawler nets;
- Allocation of 10 buoys (two buoy parks) in order to protect Neptune grass beds;
- The staging of two press conferences (in the initial and final phases of the project) and establishment of a website;
- Implementation of an environmental education programme in schools (120 hours of teaching time for 2 500 students);
- Production of a 20-minute long video, 1 000 DVD copies of which will be distributed;
- Publication and distribution of 12 000 leaflets;
- The signing of an agreement with fishery associations to preserve the marine SCI areas; and
- The holding of two European meetings on coastal and marine habitat conservation to define a common strategy at European level.

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000176
POSEIDONE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Paolo LUPINO

Duration of project:

46 months (01/12/2010 - 30/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,339,500.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

542,787.00 (40.52 %)

Development of coordinated protection measures for Apennine Chamois (*Rupicapra pyrenaica ornata*)

Project background

The Apennine chamois (*Rupicapra pyrenaica ornata*), one of the rarest species in Italy, is listed in Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive and as a subspecies at risk of extinction in the IUCN Red List. It is defined as "vulnerable" by the IUCN/SSC Caprinae Specialist Group and as a "specially protected" species under Italian legislation.

The main threat to the Apennine chamois comes from the low number and size of its populations and their scarce genetic variability. The source population of the Apennine chamois is the Abruzzo, Lazio e Molise National Park (ALMNP), but this population has decreased in recent years (518 individuals were counted in 2009).

In the Monti Sibillini National Park the number of Apennine chamois is less than the minimum viable population size (30 individuals), creating the threat of inbreeding.

Project objectives

The overall aim of the project is the long-term conservation of the Apennine chamois along the Central Apennines. The project aims to establish five geographically isolated colonies of Apennine chamois in five parks, namely the ALMNP, the Majella National Park (MNP), the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park (GSLNP), the Monti Sibillini National Park (MSNP) and the Sirente Velino Regional Park (SVRP). At least 12 Apennine chamois will be relocated from the MNP and the GSLNP into the MSNP, to bring the population there up to the minimum viable size.

Expected results

- A new colony will be established in the Sirente Velino Regional Park by the relocation of at least eight Apennine chamois from the MNP and the GSLNP;
- Threats that are affecting the population of the ALMNP will be analysed in four sample areas by intensive surveillance, monitoring of 20 marked Apennine chamois, sanitary analyses and monitoring interactions with red deer (an operative protocol will be drawn up for the Apennine chamois conservation in this area);

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000183
COORNATA



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Nicola CIMINI

Duration of project:

49 months (01/09/2010 - 30/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

3,141,756.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,262,064.00 (72.00 %)

- The captive breeding programme established by the previous LIFE project for the management of the captive Apennine chamois will be adopted by all fenced fauna areas that are in the project area; consequently, works to improve these fenced fauna areas will be carried out. At least four Apennine chamois will be relocated to the new fenced areas for captive breeding;
- All livestock breeding in the Apennine chamois home ranges of the PNALM, and domestic animals in expanding areas of the MNP, GSLNP, MSNP and SVRP, will be treated with proper vaccine and anti-parasitic drugs at least once a year; and
- All the relevant administrations involved in the management of the chamois territories will be brought together to share best conservation strategies for the species.

Systems for Coastal Dolphin Conservation in the Ligurian Sea

Project background

The bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) is a Mediterranean cetacean. This species is listed as “vulnerable” in Annex II of the Habitats Directive and in the IUCN Red List.

As a coastal species, bottlenose dolphins are most threatened by habitat degradation and loss. The main threats come from coastal urbanisation, port construction, boat traffic, shipping, pollution by industrial and agriculture activities, overfishing and overexploitation.

The Ligurian Sea and the Portofino coastal area are subjected to intensive boat traffic, especially during the summer season, which significantly increases underwater noise pollution. This kind of impact represents a serious threat for cetaceans as they communicate and orient by underwater sonar-waves. Moreover, human interaction with bottlenose dolphins has to be regulated during the summer season when newborns and calves are present with adult individuals.

Project objectives

The main objective of the project is the improvement of the conservation status of the bottlenose dolphin in the Marine Protected Area (MPA) of Portofino. An acoustic monitoring system will be set-up to detect and track the species. A network of hydrophones, communicating with an on-shore computer centre, will be installed on the buoys of the Portofino MPA to identify and follow dolphins in real time. Human activities and underwater noise will also be recorded.

Expected results

- Maximum reduction of the amount of disturbance of dolphins by ships and boats – collected data will be directly communicated to the vessel traffic services of Genoa and to the coastguard;
- The first long-term database on habitat use by the bottlenose dolphin and underwater noise pollution in the Portofino MPA. The database will include information on dolphin vocalisations; different underwater noises (engines, trawling and purse seine); presence/absence of the species; and temporal and spatial correlation with human activities. The database will be easily consulted for both management and conservation policies, scientific projects and public dissemination;

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000190
ARION



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary
University

Name of beneficiary
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Name of contact person
Mauro TAIUTI

Duration of project:
36 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2013)

Total budget in euro:
1,481,181.00

EC contribution in euro with %:
1,110,885.00 (75.00 %)

- An action plan will be prepared for the Portofino MPA and the surrounding marine area that will address all the threats to the species (such as boating, sailing and tourism);
- Public awareness of the threats affecting the species and of its need for protection will be raised and tourists will be made aware of the presence of the dolphin. The appropriate code of conduct will be disseminated among tourists on the Ligurian coast; and
- A demonstration of the effectiveness of the proposed tool will be immediately applicable to different areas within the International Sanctuary for Mediterranean Marine Mammals, PELAGOS.

Conservation of *Taxus* and *Ilex* beechwood in the pSIC “Taburno Massif”

Project background

Many beech stands were extensively exploited in the post-war period causing the drastic decline of yew (*Taxus baccata* L.) and common holly (*Ilex aquifolium* L.). With the setting up of the forestry commission area of Taburno, forest cover was re-established with artificial plantations of *Abies alba*, *Larix decidua*, *Picea abies* (L.) Karsten, *Pseudotsuga menziesii* and a few other non-native (allochthonous) species. Forests of the Taburno Massif are the ideal habitat of many species of bats, amphibians and scavenger raptors (e.g. royal and brown kites), all decreasing in number.

Project objectives

The general objectives of the LIFE project are to:

- Improve the conservation status of ecosystems, habitats and species;
- Collect data and information about the project area and targeted species, before, during and after the project, in order to measure and quantify the effects of project actions; and
- Improve public awareness and knowledge of the species and habitats targeted by the project and about Natura 2000 sites in the Taburno Massif.

Expected results

- Improvement of knowledge of the fauna and flora of the area;
- Drawing up of a grazing plan;
- Excavation of 10 ponds suitable for amphibians;
- Silvicultural interventions on 40 ha to improve the growth and natural regenerative capacity of *Fagus sylvatica*, *Ilex aquifolium* and *Taxus baccata*;
- Plantation of 40 *Taxus baccata* ‘micro collectives’;
- Silvicultural interventions on 50 ha of artificial conifer plantations;
- Construction of a reproduction centre for amphibians;
- Construction and installation of 1 000 ‘bat boxes’;
- Construction of two charnels for kites; and
- Increased public awareness through the organisation of information campaigns and events (including conference and observation days), various publications and on-site information panels.

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000198
LIFE+ FAGGETE DEL TABURNO



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Gianluca ACETO

Duration of project:

51 months (01/10/2010 - 31/12/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,311,098.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

655,549.00 (50.00 %)

Plant-Pollinator Integrated CONservation approach: a demonstrative proposal

Project background

Some 90% of flowering plant species profit from animal pollination for their reproduction. Pollination systems are under increasing threat from human activities, including fragmentation of habitats, changes in land use and modernisation of agricultural practices, such as increased use of pesticides and herbicides.

Europe's natural populations of the rare plant burning-bush (*Dictamnus albus*) are declining because a scarcity of pollination services. Moreover, suitable habitats (woodland fringes and clearings) for the plant are also becoming rare because of land-use changes as result of the abandonment of traditional agro-forestry activities. Wild pollinators are facing a widespread decline, brought about by climatic changes, soil use changes, habitat fragmentation and pollution, which together lead to a scarcity of floral resources and nesting sites.

Project objectives

The main objectives of this LIFE Biodiversity project are to ensure the survival of an isolated population of burning-bush plants and to restore the community of *Dictamnus albus* natural pollinators in a Bologna province regional park.

Wood management will be carried out, halting forest closure through selective shrub clearings in two sites of 16 ha each. The population of insect pollinators will be increased by providing nesting and egg-laying sites, reintroducing new colonies of the main pollinators and reinforcing populations of other nectariferous plant species in the area.

Expected results

- The actual population of *Dictamnus albus* is expected to be reinforced, as result of increased natural maternal fertility and reproductive effort (more flowering individuals, higher seed production, more seedlings);
- The overall diversity and abundance of pollinators in the project area will be increased, with benefits not only for the target species, but also for the entire ecosystem;
- The general public will be informed about the project primarily by means of information panels, activities for children and workshops that will take place at the Botanical Garden of Bologna and at seminars

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000212
PP-ICON



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

University

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Marta GALLONI

Duration of project:

54 months (01/01/2011 - 30/06/2015)

Total budget in euro:

603,007.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

300,966.00 (49.91 %)

across Europe. These dissemination activities should increase awareness about the importance of plant-pollinator interactions for plant conservation and ecosystem health; and

- Compensation agreements with landowners are foreseen, and particular attention will be given to public and stakeholder awareness to promote pollinator-friendly practices.

Restoration of Bacchiglione Springs and Habitat of SPA IT3220013 and SCI IT3220040

Project background

The Bosco Dueville SPA and Bosco Dueville SCI include 19 ha that was formerly used as a fish farm. Previous fish farming activities have adversely affected freshwater habitats, particularly levels of *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation. Land use changes in the SPA and SCI area have also affected other habitats, such as: Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils and Lowland hay meadows; and alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* as well as related species, such as the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*). The latter is further threatened by invasive alien species, whilst poaching in the SPA and SCI continues to pose problems for fish species such as the European bullhead (*Cottus gobio*).

Project objectives

The area where the project will be implemented is located within the SPA IT322013 "Bosco Dueville" and the SCI IT322040 "Bosco Dueville and nearby springs". Therein lies an area (19 ha) currently used as a fish farm, but now not in use, that was purchased by the Public Body Provincia di Vicenza (PVI) and will be subsequently recovered through the restoration and the increasing of habitats 91E0* and 3260, lying within the site. The PVI will also purchase 4 ha of land, located outside the area dedicated to fish farming, but inside the SCI; this area will serve as an ecological corridor to connect the other biotope "Bosco del Centro Idrico di Novoledo", which has a surface of nearly 20 ha and is located north of the fish farm. This area will be restored through the creation of habitats 91E0*, 3260 and 6410, which are present in the surroundings.

Expected results

- Some 4 ha, located outside the former fish farm but still inside the SCI, will be purchased to establish an ecological corridor connecting the restored area of the farm with the nearby "Bosco del Centro idrico di Novoledo" biotope; and
- A total of 6 ha of alluvial forest habitats, 2.4 ha of fresh water habitats, 1.2 ha of meadows and 1.2 ha of lowland hay meadows will be restored in the ecological corridor.

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000213

SORBA



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Riccardo d'AMATO

Duration of project:

36 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,224,000.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

612,000.00 (50.00 %)

Restoration of Sentina coastal wetlands

Project background

The project area is the only residual wetland in the wide Adriatic coastal tract of more than 400 km, between the Comacchio valleys (in the Emilia-Romagna region) and the lagoons of Lesina and Varano (in the Apulia region).

The coastal lagoons (a priority habitat according to the EU Habitats Directive) in this area are exposed to the threats of coastal erosion and sea level rises that influence the salinity and the volume of water. Other threats are from organic water pollution deriving from the use of fertilisers in farming; chemical water pollution caused by pesticides; alien species; and tourism.

The excessive salinity of the water is not directly connected with the sea, but rather soil and groundwater salinity: its fluctuation depending mainly on seasonal rainfall variation (approximately 600-700 mm/yr) and on evaporation. However, during extreme climatic events, sea storms can cause the occasional overflow of seawater into the wetland areas. Such once infrequent occurrences have become a permanent feature in some parts of the project area as a result of land reclamation.

Project objectives

The general project objective is to restore the coastal lagoons to their original condition and to widen the waste dune formations along the coastal area of the Sentina natural reserve. A series of other benefits are expected, including:

- The restoration of plant and animal biodiversity;
- An increase in the reserve's naturalness;
- The mitigation of seawater intrusion by reducing the impact on the wetland area of sea level rises and coastal erosion; and
- An improvement in water quality and, in the overall environmental quality of the area.

Expected results

- In the medium- to long-term – the reintroduction and maintenance of the population of *Emys orbicularis*;
- An increase in the population of *Bufo viridis*; and
- The nesting of the following bird species: *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Ardeola ralloides*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Himantopus himantopus* and *Alcedo atthis*.

LIFE09 NAT/IT/000608

Re.S.C.We.



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

Municipality of San Benedetto del Tronto ("Sentina"
Regional Natural Reserve)

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Name of contact person

Sergio TREVISANI

Duration of project:

30 months (15/09/2010 - 14/03/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,119,018.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

559,009.00 (49.96 %)

Restoration of Corncrake habitats in Dviete floodplain Natura 2000 site

Project background

Considered 'near threatened' worldwide and included in Annex I of the Birds Directive, the corncrake (*Crex crex*) breeds in alluvial meadows, lowland marshes, and drier parts of fens and bogs as well as in grasslands where vegetation is removed annually by mowing.

The Dviete floodplain, a special protection area (SPA) within the Natura 2000 network, is regarded as one of the most important 'core' breeding areas in Latvia for the corncrake, with an estimated 40-100 breeding pairs. Despite still being relatively common in Latvia, the breeding population risks a potential decline because of widespread changes in land-use (urban development, intensive farming) and habitat quality. Abandonment of farmland - and to a lesser degree intensification, with the subsequent effect of habitat change and loss - is a threat to current corncrake populations at many of the most important breeding areas for this bird in Latvia, including the project area of the Dviete floodplain. Actions are already underway, funded by the EU's Rural Development programme, favouring the management of biologically valuable grasslands. However, more action is required to stabilise population trends for corncrake in Latvia.

Project objectives

The main aim of the project is to improve the conservation status of the corncrake in Latvia and to restore breeding habitats for the species in a degraded and abandoned section of the Dviete river floodplain. Other aims are to demonstrate and promote the use of complex restoration methods for corncrake habitats in degraded floodplain grasslands; and to increase the participation and awareness among landowners and the local municipality of the management of the Dviete floodplain SPA for species of EU importance, including the corncrake.

Expected results

- The river Dviete will be restored to its natural meanders over a 2.1 km-long stretch – increasing the average groundwater level and improving the habitat quality for the corncrake;
- Bushes and trees will be cleared from at least 105 ha of abandoned and overgrown grasslands in and around the river restoration area. In addition, the open grassland habitats around the restoration

LIFE09 NAT/LV/000237
DVIETE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Latvian Fund for Nature

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Name of contact person

Jānis REIHMANIS

Duration of project:

48 months (01/10/2010 - 30/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,170,298.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

845,072.00 (72.21 %)

area will be reconnected to form more than 300 ha of continuous open grasslands for breeding corncrakes – improving local habitat connectivity and overall Natura 2000 site integrity. The restored wet grasslands are expected to be maintained by natural grazing of cattle and horses in optimal densities;

- An increase in the number of breeding corncrakes in and around the habitat restoration area, thanks to improved patch size and connectivity; and
- The development of an innovative model for classification of corncrake habitats using remote sensory techniques, using the Dviete floodplain as a pilot site.

Innovative approaches for marine biodiversity monitoring and assessment of conservation status of nature values in the Baltic Sea

Project background

The Gulf of Riga is one of the most naturally diverse areas of the Baltic Sea. The coastal part of the gulf supports reef habitats that host various rare plant, fish and invertebrate communities. These habitats also play a major role in maintaining the functioning of the gulf's ecosystem through, for example, nutrient assimilation. Both the Gulf of Riga and the Irbé Strait, which forms the main exit out of the gulf to the Baltic Sea, are used as bird stop-over and feeding sites during spring and autumn migration; and as wintering areas for significant numbers of European migratory birds i.e. more than two million individuals annually. The project area also includes several important bird areas, regularly holding more than 20 000 waterbirds.

There is a lack of knowledge about the biodiversity value of the offshore parts of the project area, resulting from a lack of monitoring. This lack also means it is not currently possible to quantify the negative impacts on the biodiversity of the Gulf of Riga. Nevertheless, it is known that main threats to the habitat and associated species are from non-native species and from eutrophication – both a result of diffuse pollution from land-use changing the nutrient balance of the ecosystem and its species composition. A further threat arises from oil spills from shipping that can cause clumping of bird feathers and damaging seabirds' habitats.

Project objectives

The project aims to develop concepts for assessing the conservation status of marine biodiversity (including species and habitats) – examining the impacts of various human activities, as well as the impacts of nature conservation policy from a socio-economic perspective. Focusing on the Baltic Sea territorial waters and the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) of Estonia, Latvia, Finland and Sweden, the aim is to apply a regional approach for future marine biodiversity monitoring and international co-operation when assessing marine biodiversity in the Baltic Sea.

Expected results

Among the project results expected by the beneficiary are:

- A proposal on a set of marine biodiversity indicators and monitoring methods;
- Survey reports from four countries on indicators and monitoring methods;

LIFE09 NAT/LV/000238

MARMONI



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Baltic Environmental Forum - Latvia

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Name of contact person

Heidrun FAMMLER

Duration of project:

54 months (01/10/2010 - 31/03/2015)

Total budget in euro:

5,888,801.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,944,400.00 (50.00 %)

- A proposal for an integrated indicator-based, biodiversity assessment scheme;
- A marine spatial plan for two Swedish counties;
- A proposal for marine monitoring concept for national monitoring programmes;
- An assessment of effectiveness of monitoring measures and methods; and
- Methodological guidelines for impact assessment on habitats and species of development plans in marine environment.

Conservation of rare reptiles and amphibians in Latvia

Project background

The European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) and the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*) are listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, and the smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) in Annex IV. All three species are endangered in their northern distribution limits, Latvia, and are rare across the whole region. Their overall conservation status in the Boreal biogeographic region is assessed as "bad", with the future prospects also assessed as "bad" for *Emys orbicularis* and *Bombina bombina*, and "inadequate" for *Coronella austriaca*.

All three species have legal protection status in the project area and are included in the list of specially protected species for whom micro-reserves should be established. While there is a lack of Nature 2000 sites for *Emys orbicularis* in Latvia, *Emys orbicularis* and *Coronella austriaca* are found in several larger Nature 2000 sites, such as the Slitere national park. *Coronella austriaca* is found in the Kemeris national park and *Emys orbicularis* in the Silene nature park. The former two sites have protection plans, but conservation activities for both species were not included.

Project objectives

The project's main aim is to facilitate the enlargement of populations of *Emys orbicularis*, *Coronella austriaca* and *Bombina bombina*, and to ensure their long-time survival in Latvia, by implementing a combination of 'in-situ' and 'ex-situ' actions and by improving their legal protection. Specific project objectives include:

- The creation of a suitable habitat - corridor network to sustain key populations of the target species;
- The establishment of a new Nature 2000 site in south-eastern Latvia (the Daugavpils district) for the main *Bombina bombina* population in Latvia; and
- The preparation and approval of a species protection plan for *Coronella austriaca*.

Expected results

- A proposal for a new Natura 2000 site for *Bombina bombina* in the Daugavpils district of Latvia, submitted to the Government of Latvia and, possibly, approved by the end of the project;
- A species protection plan for *Coronella austriaca* in Latvia;

LIFE09 NAT/LV/000239

Life-HerpetoLatvia



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

Municipality of the Daugavpils City

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Name of contact person

Mihails PUPINŠ

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014)

Total budget in euro:

772,400.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

386,200.00 (50.00 %)

- Habitat improvement for one key population of each target species in their respective target areas: the Silene nature park; the Kemeris national park; and the new Natura 2000 site;
- Three thousand *Bombina bombina* juveniles and 20 young *Emys orbicularis* raised in captivity and released by the end of the project; and
- The establishment of the "Rare Reptile and Amphibian Breeding Centre" for the breeding ex-situ populations of *Emys orbicularis* and *Bombina bombina*.

Management of Fennoscandian wooded meadows (6530*) and two priority beetle species: planning, public participation, innovation

Project background

Old-growth trees and decaying wood (wooded meadows, virgin forests) are important for supporting numerous rare, endangered and protected species of EU importance across all groups, notably insects, fungi, lichens, mosses and birds. Due to intensive agriculture and forestry these habitat types are rapidly disappearing throughout the EU.

This project will target at least 30 Natura 2000 sites which are important sites for the European priority beetle species, *Osmoderma eremita* and *Phryganophilus ruficollis*, as well as the priority habitat, Fennoscandian wooded meadows (6530*). Most of the project work will be carried out in Natura 2000 sites. However, the planning and inventories will be implemented across Latvia.

Project objectives

The main project objectives are to:

- Develop a comprehensive ecological management system for Fennoscandian wooded meadows and rare species dependent on old-grown trees and undisturbed forest habitats;
- Ensure the conservation of two EU priority beetle species *Osmoderma eremita* and *Phryganophilus ruficollis*; and
- Support the further development and implementation of the Natura 2000 network by involving land-owners and other stakeholders in the management of Natura 2000 sites and in particular, in the continuation of traditional extensive management of wooded meadows and other habitats suitable for the targeted beetle species.

Expected results

- A habitat conservation plan for Fennoscandian wooded meadows;
- A species conservation plan for EU priority beetle species *Phryganophilus ruficollis*;
- Two nature management plans for Natura 2000 sites - the "Eglone" and "Istras ezers" nature reserves;
- The planning of an ecological network for the conservation of rare saproxilophagous beetles and their habitats;
- The restoration of 40 ha of Fennoscandian wooded meadows;

LIFE09 NAT/LV/000240
EREMITA MEADOWS



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

University

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Jolanta BĀRA

Duration of project:

54 months (01/01/2011 - 01/07/2015)

Total budget in euro:

485,849.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

347,950.00 (71.62 %)

- Scrub removal on 20 ha (approximately 200 trees) around biologically valuable large trees – habitats of *Osmoderma eremita* and *Phryganophilus ruficollis*;
- Improved tourism infrastructure, including: a 5.2 km nature trail, an information centre; and mobile and permanent exhibitions; and
- An interactive GIS database of the two beetle species.

Securing Sustainable Farming to Ensure Conservation of Globally Threatened Bird Species in an Agrarian Landscape

Project background

The Aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) is the rarest migratory songbird in Europe, and the only globally threatened passerine bird found in mainland Europe. It is listed as “vulnerable” in the IUCN Red List of globally threatened species.

In Lithuania and Latvia, aquatic warblers are found in habitats that depend on human management (i.e. mowing and burning of vegetation). If suitable habitats are abandoned by land users, they become overgrown with vegetation and unsuitable for breeding and the birds disappear within a short time. In eutrophic habitats even the timing of land use can be crucial: if mowing is too late, breeding habitats may deteriorate; if mowing is too early it will destroy the broods of aquatic warblers along with other endangered breeding birds. Conservation of these birds requires adjusting mowing to the occurrence of aquatic warblers which may not always meet the interests of land users. Moreover, adjustment of land use is currently difficult to achieve because of the lack of incentive for farmers.

Project objectives

The main project objective is to ensure the favourable conservation status of the aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*), which breeds in wet meadows and open fens dominated by sedge grasses. The project will also bring added value to the conservation of other rare species that breed in similar habitats, namely the great snipe (*Galinago media*) and corncrake (*Crex crex*).

Conservation of the species will be achieved by: restoring important habitats; applying measures to ensure economic and social motivation to maintain management of important habitats in the long-term; applying demonstration measures to increase the area of suitable habitat; and raising awareness about conservation needs and initiatives as well as species ecology to increase public acceptance of the project.

Expected results

- *Ex ante* monitoring of the breeding aquatic warbler and its habitats on all six project sites;
- An agri-environmental scheme for the Nemunas delta targeting specific conservation measures needed to achieve the favourable conservation

LIFE09 NAT/LT/000233
Baltic Aquatic Warbler



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Intergovernmental body

Name of beneficiary

Viešoji įstaiga Baltijos aplinkos forumas
(Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania)

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Name of contact person

Žymantas MORKVENAS

Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,191,685.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,636,666.00 (74.68 %)

status of the aquatic warbler. The scheme will be integrated into the national rural development programme;

- The creation of some 300-350 ha of ecological priority land-use plot in the project site LT02, where further agri-environmental management measures can be implemented;
- The publication of guidelines for economically sustainable aquatic warbler habitat management;
- A communication strategy for landowners and ArcGIS training courses;
- Raised capacities of the administration of the protected areas through a communication strategy for landowners and ArcGIS training; and
- Three study visits (possibly to Poland, Belarus and Germany) to enable some 40 experts, environmental officials and landowners to gather relevant experience and know-how.

Inventory of marine species and habitats for development of NATURA 2000 network in the offshore waters of Lithuania

Project background

Areas outside territorial waters have not been studied in the context of the Birds and Habitats directives. Broad-scale sediment and bathymetric charts indicate potential reef areas in all three proposed project territories: Klaipeda-Ventspils Plateau, Sambian Plateau and Klaipeda Bank. Reefs are included in the Annex I of the Habitats Directive. The complex topography of the seabed means that all three areas are important for fish species, such as pelagic-neritic anadromous twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*) or demersal anadromous common whitefish (*Coregonus lavaretus*), which are protected by the Habitats Directive. Both species spawn in the freshwater Curonian Lagoon, but it is largely unknown how they use their habitats during the juvenile feeding and maturation stages; therefore fish inventory surveys are necessary to provide background data on these offshore habitats. Such information will enable the development and implementation of conservation measures.

A bird inventory will focus on the identification of the staging areas for the wintering and/or migratory birds, which meet national SPA designation criteria (e.g. the red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*)).

Project objectives

The LIFE project aims to conduct inventories of marine species and habitats in the offshore waters of the Lithuanian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and designate Natura 2000 areas selected during site evaluation.

Expected results

- The project will map 137 850 ha of marine territory of the Lithuanian EEZ (approx. 30% of the total EEZ). Habitat maps featuring Habitats Directive Annex I habitat types for each target area will be produced: higher resolution full cover maps will be produced for Natura 2000 areas, and lower resolution maps will be provided for the entire target areas. Inventories of underwater habitats, fish and bird populations will result in separate maps reflecting distributions/movements of recorded important species. An integrated map of major marine values will be provided;
- Evaluation of the project areas will result in a GIS database, which will integrate information from individual inventories and existing data on human

LIFE09 NAT/LT/000234

DENOFLIT



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

University

Name of beneficiary

Klaipeda University

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Name of contact person

Darius DAUNYS

Duration of project:

54 months (01/10/2010 - 31/03/2015)

Total budget in euro:

1,569,699.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

784,849.00 (50.00 %)

impacts in the EEZ of Lithuania. A technical report with detailed description of the site evaluation procedure and GIS database layers will be produced. Recommendations for further EEZ planning processes, EIA procedures and valuation of marine environment will be drawn up;

- The Natura 2000 sites will be officially designated and their individual statutes approved by the order of the competent authority by 2015; and
- Awareness raising and dissemination activities will produce the following: an interactive 3D exhibition of the Baltic Sea ecosystem in the Lithuanian Sea Museum (attended by some 500 000 visitors per year); a handbook on marine natural values (2 000 copies); a layman's report (1 000 copies); an international conference for around 50 participants; and a project website.

Conservation of the Lesser Spotted Eagle* (*Aquila pomarina*) in Lithuanian Forests

Project background

The lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) is a medium-size migrating eagle found in central, eastern and south-east Europe, as well as eastwards to Iran. More than 95% of its global breeding range is in Europe, where some 19 000 pairs breed. The species has an unfavourable conservation status in Europe and is listed in the Annex I of the Birds Directive. The lesser spotted eagle breeds across the whole of Lithuania. Its breeding density varies significantly through the country, with the greatest density recorded in central and north-western regions. More than 10% of the European population breeds in Lithuania, while The Baltic States, Belarus and Poland hold more than half of European population.

The Lithuanian lesser spotted eagle population suffered a decline of more than 20% between 1980 and 2006. This was the result of habitat alterations and the loss of nesting sites (caused by forestry operations and drainage), as well as hunting activities during migration.

Project objectives

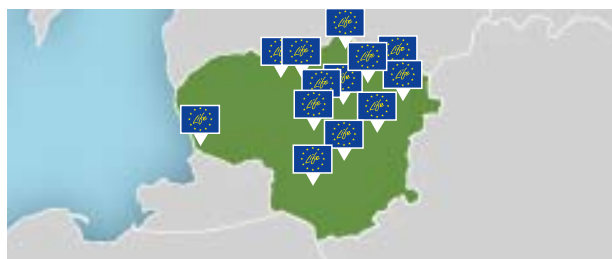
The main goal of the Eagles in the Forest project is to protect the nesting sites of at least 10% of Lithuania's lesser spotted eagle's population (more than 200 pairs) from direct destruction and the indirect effects of timber harvesting. The project also aims to ensure the long-term favourable status of nesting habitats for the entire population through carrying out protection measures in line with the ecological needs of the species, drawing up an action plan and new planning schemes for all SPAs designated for the lesser spotted eagle in the country. Information on the nests and their protection requirements will be distributed to all relevant stakeholders to avoid the deliberate and unintentional destruction of nests during forestry operations. The project will also focus on raising awareness among the general public and target stakeholders of conservation issues.

Expected results

- During preparatory actions nest-trees will be located and evaluated in order to assess the conservation status of more than 200 pairs of lesser spotted eagles;
- A comprehensive report will provide information about the exact location of each nesting site and

LIFE09 NAT/LT/000235

Eagles in the forest



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Viešoji istaiga Gamtosaugos projekto vystymo fondas

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Sigita BARONAITĖ

Duration of project:

54 months (01/11/2010 - 30/04/2015)

Total budget in euro:

1,049,998.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

766,933.00 (73.04 %)

the restrictions that apply. Relevant stakeholders will be informed to ensure nesting sites have the correct legal protection status;

- The quality of 80 nesting sites of lesser spotted eagle pairs will be improved;
- An action plan will be drawn up for six lesser spotted eagle SPAs. This will be approved by the environment ministry; and
- A wide range of awareness-raising activities is planned, including stakeholder workshops, seminars for state forest enterprises, a mobile photo exhibition on the target species and the involvement of the local, regional and national media.

Development of a Pilot Ecological Network through Nature Framework Areas in Southern Lithuania

Project background

The history of the southern Lithuanian landscape over the past 60 years can be split into two distinct periods: a period of intensive melioration, afforestation and intensified agriculture during Soviet times (1945-1990); and the gradual decrease of agricultural activity, afforestation and decrease of agricultural activity after the country regained its independence (1990-2009). Today, southern Lithuania is characterised by low water body density and rapidly increasing areas of abandoned agricultural land. Such loss of open, extensively used habitats threatens amphibian and reptile species listed in Annex II and Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, as well as rare invertebrates and birds such as the corncrake (*Crex crex*).

Another threat is the fragmentation of the meta-populations of the target species as landscapes become impermeable because of afforestation, natural growth of dense shrubbery and general loss of suitable stepping stone habitats. The existing network of three Natura 2000 sites inside the 2 300 ha of the project area is not sufficient either for safeguarding the threatened target species or for enabling biological communication among the core areas.

Project objectives

The overall aim of the project is to create an ecological network in southern Lithuania by ensuring the favourable conservation status of threatened populations of selected Annex II and Annex IV-listed species and simultaneously enhancing the ecological value of the target area. Specifically, the project aims to secure the long-term viability of the target species within the ecological network by implementing direct conservation measures and habitat management actions. Finally, the project aims to save the small and isolated populations of the threatened European pond terrapin (*E. orbicularis*) and European tree frog (*H. arborea*) in southern Lithuania from extinction, rebuild extinct populations within the ecological network and develop a pilot ecological network in southern Lithuania.

Expected results

The project expects to:

- Produce action plans based on an inventory of the target Annex II and Annex IV species, including an evaluation of habitats and an assessment of threats

LIFE09 NAT/LT/000581
ECONAF



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Nerijus ZABLECKIS

Duration of project:

49 months (01/09/2010 - 30/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

766,260.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

381,510.00 (49.79 %)

and the possibility of implementing conservation actions;

- Develop strategies for sand dune restoration to support the target species;
- Create a scenario for an ecological network in southern Lithuania;
- Sign 40 agreements with landowners for management actions;
- Establish five new Natura 2000 sites of 5-10 ha in the ecological corridor;
- Provide two farms with livestock to maintain grazing and help develop business plans for the farms;
- Purchase 50 ha of land in key areas;
- Develop a method for rearing the European pond terrapin in Lithuania;
- Set up a captive breeding station for the European pond terrapin at Kaunas Zoo; and
- Carry out a wide range of information and dissemination activities.

Revitalising the Noordduinen: from concrete surfaces to grey dune habitats

Project background

The Noordduinen area has been intensively used for agriculture, military purposes and water extraction. The northern part was temporarily drained for agricultural use and small bomb craters, the Kijkduin fort, and other buildings and concrete surfaces at Falga and Botgat testify to the military use of the land from 1881 to 2000. Infiltration canals in the Grafelijkheidsduinen are also visible.

Current threats to the area include the coverage of a large surface area by hardened concrete surfaces and buildings that were formerly used by the military; desiccation of the dune slacks; and eutrophication, as a result of agricultural use and atmospheric deposition. Around 5.5 ha is also dominated by the introduced species Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*).

Project objectives

The project will take place in the Natura 2000 site, Duinen Den Helder Callant-soog. This is one of the few Natura 2000 sites where the target habitat – fixed coastal dune with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) – is still present in a well-developed form and covers a large area (more than 50%). The aim of the project is to revitalise this part of the Noordduinen by:

- Demolishing and removing the hardened surfaces and buildings left behind by the military, in order to recreate priority habitat type, grey dunes;
- Introducing anti-desiccation measures to contribute to the development of humid dune slacks;
- Counteracting the negative effects of eutrophication and reconverting an agricultural area into a humid dune slack;
- Combating the invasive alien species Japanese rose; and
- Improving access to the area for managers and visitors, while protecting the vulnerable areas that are important for species and habitat conservation.

Expected results

- The transformation of 8 ha from farmland into valuable natural habitat;
- The creation of 5 ha of natural dunes by removing buildings and concrete from the former military site;
- The creation of 5 ha of dune slacks, which will in time be suitable for the development of grey dunes;

LIFE09 NAT/NL/000417
Revitalising Noordduinen



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Elly KUIPER

Duration of project:

40 months (01/09/2010 - 31/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,517,721.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

758,860.00 (50.00 %)

- The restoration of 5.5 ha of grey dunes by removing Japanese rose;
- An improved infrastructure for management and visitors and a new system of fences and gates for people and cattle; and
- A range of communication products to inform stakeholders and the general public about the project and the importance of Natura 2000.

Realisation of Natura 2000 targets for calcareous white, grey dunes and dune slacks in three Dutch dune sites

Project background

The project area consists of three well-known Dutch dune complexes, all part of the Natura 2000 network: Voornes Duin, Duinen Goeree & Kwade Hoek and Kennemerland-Zuid.

The Dutch dunes are very important for Europe's environment: they form an almost continuous broad area along the coast in which many habitats are well developed. These include grey dunes (a priority habitat), white dunes, humid dune slacks and dune forest, and salt marches. Humid dune slacks are of great importance due to the presence of many rare plant species, such as fen orchid (*Liparis loeselii*).

Most of these habitats are threatened. The main cause is the reduced dynamics of the dunes and, as a consequence, the increased speed of succession. Blowing dunes, the plantation of forests and a decline in rabbit numbers and the rapid expansion of exotic shrubs and trees - e.g. black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) and white poplar (*Populus alba*) - are factors in the succession of the dunes.

Project objectives

The main aim of this project is to enlarge and restore habitats and increase the presence of rare and characteristic species.

Depending on the speed of the succession after removal of the vegetation, the areas will be mown and/or grazed to secure permanent recovery of the relevant habitats. In Kennemerland-Zuid the sand will be removed at five locations near to the sea in order to obtain active blowing dunes, which create good conditions for the development of new humid dune slacks.

Expected results

At Voornes Duin:

- The improvement of more than 60 ha of grey dunes and an increase in the area of grey dunes;
- An increase in the area of humid dune slacks by more than 15 ha and the creation of a small area of white dunes; and
- An improvement in quality of both habitats.

LIFE09 NAT/NL/000418

Dutch dune revival



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Andries STOKER

Duration of project:

64 months (01/09/2010 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

6,700,899.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

3,350,449.00 (50.00 %)

At Duinen Goeree & Kwade Hoek:

- The restoration of more than 30 ha of grey dunes as well as a small area of white dunes.

At Kennemerland-Zuid:

- The development of around 25 ha of grey dunes as well as an improvement in the quality of the existing grey dunes;
- The restoration of 7 ha of new humid dune slacks and 15 ha of white dunes;
- The removal of exotic shrubs in order to enlarge the quality of 640 ha of dune forest, grey dunes and dunes with *Hippophaë rhamnoides*; and
- The preparation of inventories before the start of these activities in order to ensure that species are not endangered.

Protection of the white stork population in the OSO Natura 2000 Ostoja Warmińska

Project background

The white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. The species is also protected by the Ramsar, Bonn and Bern Conventions, as well as by Polish nature protection law. The overall white stork population is estimated at around 168 000 pairs and some 41 000 pairs migrate annually to Poland. Approximately 12 000 pairs nest in the north-eastern parts of Poland. The Ostoja Warmińska Natura 2000 site contains Poland's highest average density of nesting white stork, which can be as high as 99 pairs/100km².

Each year several hundred white storks are killed in Poland, following collisions with power lines and other outdoor power devices.

Project objectives

The main objective of this LIFE Nature project is to reduce stork mortality risks associated with power line collisions. Other species support actions will include renovating nest sites and improving habitat conditions for the stork's main amphibian food sources. The latter will be achieved by increasing the water retention capacity of habitat areas and by raising groundwater levels.

Local stakeholders will play an important part in the project's implementation, which will promote extensive farming approaches and environmentally-friendly attitudes among local communities, young people and visitors to the project area.

Expected results

- Stork mortality in the project area will be reduced by 50% as a result of the insulation of 22.5 km of medium-voltage power lines, the alteration of 90 insulators at transformer stations, and the marking of 75 stretches of medium and high-voltage power lines;
- Voluntary fire teams will construct or renovate up to 100 nest platforms for storks;
- Stork feeding grounds will be improved by creating six ponds, four dams, and establishing a water pool of over 6 ha; and
- Knowledge about storks will be enhancing by preparing a habitat inventory covering 142 016 ha, implementing a three year monitoring programme of the local stork population and transferring the associated findings onto GIS databases.

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000253
ochrona bociana białego



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Regionalna Dyrekcja Ochrony Środowiska w Olsztynie

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Name of contact person

Elwira BAŁDYGA

Duration of project:

36 months (01/01/2011 – 31/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,576,993.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

763,359.00 (48,41 %)

Restitute and maintain the habitats of breeding waterfowl birds

Project background

Warta Mouth National Park takes in part of the Warta River Mouth Natura 2000 site, which is designated for its high ornithological value. Its unique wetlands, spacious meadows and pastures count among the most crucial aquatic birds habitats in Poland and Europe. In this area, about 270 bird species have been recorded and some 170 species breed here. Lowland grass meadows located in the southern part of the park are favoured as breeding areas for many birds.

Previously the meadows were grazed and mowed but land use changes over recent decades have led to some 200 ha of the park's meadow habitats becoming overgrown with willow.

Monitoring indicates that conditions for birds nesting have significantly deteriorated in these overgrown areas, and some species have almost entirely disappeared from parts of the national park.

Project objectives

The general objective of this LIFE Nature project is to restore and maintain habitats for breeding waterfowl birds that nest in meadow areas. Target species include the corncrake, gulls, terns, plovers and some ducks.

Habitat work will safeguard appropriate plant succession processes and focus on permanently removing willow bushes. A two-year programme of intensive grazing will be introduced in order to inhibit willow regeneration. This will be followed by the reintroduction of pasture on the meadows.

Expected results

- The main expected result is a reduction in secondary succession of willow shrubs on 200 ha within the Warta Mouth National Park;
- Willow management measures will help to restore the meadows as valuable breeding areas for priority bird species; and
- The introduction of new grazing regimes will ensure long term sustainable development benefits.

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000254
Ograniczenie sukcesji



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Konrad WYPYCHOWSKI

Duration of project:

38 months (01/11/2010 - 31/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,078,570.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

539,285.00 (50.00 %)

Active conservation of waterfowl and waders in the area of the Northern Polder in the Warta Mouth National Park. Wetlands Work Wonders! Stage 2

Project background

The Warta Mouth National Park includes part of the "Warta River Mouth" (PLC080001) Natura 2000 site, which provides protection for unique wetlands, spacious meadows and pastures. It is considered to be a crucial aquatic bird habitat; some 270 bird species have been recorded here and about 170 of these use the area as a breeding ground. Species include the black-tailed godwit, corncrake, spotted crane, great snipe, montagu's harrier, shoveler, garganey and whiskered tern.

Drainage works have adversely affected the quality of wetland habitat in some parts of the Warta River basin and other land use changes have led to meadows becoming overgrown with willows. These changes create unsuitable conditions for nesting birds and as a consequence, some species have almost entirely disappeared from the area.

Project objectives

This LIFE Nature project's main objective is to restore degraded habitats located within the borders of the Warta Mouth National Park. Interventions will target breeding, feeding and resting grounds for birds in order to improve conditions for species that rely on open meadows and wetland habitats during migration and wintering.

The "Wetlands Work Wonders!" project vision is to work in partnership with local stakeholders to ensure extensive pasture management and maintenance of flood control functions in the project area.

Expected results

- The restoration and protection of nesting, feeding, resting and wintering sites for wetlands birds species in an area covering at least 2 800 ha;
- Halting land degradation and loss of wet meadow habitats by establishing an appropriate water regime in an area of at least 2 800 ha;
- The introduction of a water management system in an area of 5 000 ha;
- Improved water management as a result of the refurbishment and expansion of four weirs (including

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000257

Bagna są Dobre!



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Towarzystwo Ochrony Przyrody Ptaki Polskie

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Name of contact person

Pawel Olaf SIDLO

Duration of project:

42 months (01/01/2011 - 30/06/2014)

Total budget in euro:

4,196,941.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,095,908.00 (49.94 %)

three fish ladders), the repairing of 36 valves and culverts, and the refurbishment of drainage / irrigation ditches on a total length of over 187 km; and

- The removal of willow thicket from an area of 200 ha.

Restoration of hydrological system in the Middle basin of Biebrza Valley Phase I

Project background

North-east Poland's Biebrza Valley was drained over 100 years ago and this significantly changed habitat conditions in local peatlands as the ground water table lowered. Habitat changes were particularly acute in the valley's middle basin, where two Natura 2000 sites have been designated; the Ostoja Biebrzańska SPA and Dolina Biebrzy SAC.

These sites contain six habitats listed in the Habitats Directive and also provide breeding territories for a number of rare and endangered bird species, including more than 20 species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

Farming communities are expected to become key stakeholders in helping to manage the conservation status of habitats and species at the Ostoja Biebrzańska SPA and Dolina Biebrzy SAC.

Project objectives

The main objective of this LIFE Nature project is to improve the conservation status of habitats and species at the Ostoja Biebrzańska SPA and Dolina Biebrzy SAC. Works extending over 9 000 ha will target hydrogenic habitats and restore appropriate water flow conditions in the vicinity of key areas, such as around the Rudzki canal, the Elk river, the Jęgrznia river, and the Woźnawiejski canal. The project actions are expected to improve habitat conditions for birds in non-forested ecosystems.

A two phase approach is being implemented. Progress from the first phase will be evaluated in order to inform the direction and type of activities implemented during the second phase. This is considered important to facilitate suitable forms of agricultural land use in the target area.

Expected results

- Habitat conditions for wetland bird species will be significantly improved on an area of 110 ha;
- A Nature Protection Management Plan will be elaborated for an area of 9 000 ha;
- Technical documents covering 47.9 km of natural hydrographical network will be prepared;
- Up to 9 km of rivers and canals will be improved; and

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000258

Renaturyzacja



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Mariusz SIŁAKOWSKI

Duration of project:

76 months (01/09/2010 - 30/12/2016)

Total budget in euro:

3,658,824.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,829,046.00 (49.99 %)

- Water flow regimes in the Woźnawiejski Canal and Jęgrznia River will be increased by three times that of the previous low water level.

Active conservation of priority sand habitats complex (6120, 2330) in the Natura 2000 site „Błędowska Desert”

Project background

Southern Poland hosts two non-forest habitats that are listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, one of which has a priority status: the xeric sand calcareous grasslands (*6120); and the inland dunes with open *Corynephorus* and *Agrostis* grasslands (2330). The conservation status of both these habitats in southern Poland has been recorded as unfavourable.

Some 3.9% of Polish inland dunes and 6.3% of the country's priority sand grasslands are found within the Pustynia Błędowska Natura 2000 site. Previously used in part as a military training ground, this area is well known for its desert-like landscape and provides an important biodiversity enclave in the highly urbanised Silesian region.

Project objectives

The main objective of this LIFE Nature project is to secure favourable conservation status for the largest Polish complex of xeric sand calcareous grasslands (*6120) and inland dunes with open *Corynephorus* and *Agrostis* grasslands (2330). Habitat restoration work will focus on the Pustynia Błędowska site with the aim of restoring habitats here to the conditions they would have been in half a century ago. This will be achieved by testing, implementing and disseminating active conservation measures for inland sand natural habitats protected within the Natura 2000 network. Key conservation actions will include the removal of trees and scrub - mainly Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), common birch (*Betula verrucosa*), sharp-leaf willow (*Salix acutifolia*), and creeping willow (*Salix arenaria*) - that have overgrown much of the site.

Expected results

- The removal of trees and scrub on 300 ha and the removal of habitat threats from fire on 400 ha; and
- The establishment of basic tourist facilities in an area of 100 ha, including two nature trails/education routes and 10 wildlife interpretation stations to provide information about active conservation methods and explain ecological processes.

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000259

Pustynia Błędowska



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Agnieszka MÓL-KLICHOWSKA

Duration of project:

47 months (01/10/2010 - 30/11/2014)

Total budget in euro:

2,594,996.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,297,498.00 (50.00 %)

Facilitating Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) habitat management through sustainable systems of biomass use

Project background

The aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) is Europe's rarest migratory songbird, and a globally threatened species (IUCN status 'vulnerable'). Some 99% of its population is confined to Europe, with Poland accounting for approximately 25%. The aquatic warbler is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive and has been identified as a 'priority' species for LIFE+ Nature funding.

Once widespread and numerous on fen mires and wet meadows, the aquatic warbler has suffered from habitat loss and degradation. With its habitats now dependant on human land-use and being extremely susceptible to land-use changes, it is now effectively a conservation-dependent species.

An earlier LIFE Nature project (LIFE05 NAT/PL/000101) concentrated on the protection of a remnant Pomeranian population of the species, along the German-Polish border. It also tested and developed conservation methods at the Biebrza Marshes in north-east Poland, the principal site of the species in Poland.

This project will build on this experience, focusing on six sites in eastern Poland, which jointly hold 96% of the Polish and 24% of the world population of the aquatic warbler. At these sites, the key threat to the species is the slow deterioration of the open fen habitat through overgrowth with reeds, scrub and trees after the abandonment of traditional low-intensity manual mowing several decades ago.

Project objectives

The objective of the project is to link the production of biomass as a renewable energy source, with the large-scale mechanised management of aquatic warbler habitat. The aim is to demonstrate that conservation management of this habitat can also be economically viable. The project will be implemented in six project sites, all special protection areas (SPAs) according to the Birds Directive.

Specific objectives include:

- Testing and improving innovative systems for the use of biomass;
- Increasing the area of suitable habitat for the aquatic warbler in eastern Poland;

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000260
Biomass use for Aquatic Warbler



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Izabela Flor

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014)

Total budget in euro:

3,686,306.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,730,471.00 (74.07 %)

- Implementing regular, ongoing management of major parts of the project sites secured through income from the use of biomass; and
- Raising awareness among conservation and business managers, site administrators and the general public.

Expected results

- The area occupied by aquatic warblers is expected to increase by c. 550 ha with an increase in recorded numbers of least 100;
- Some 75 ha will be made available for restoration via land purchase;
- Management recommendations will be developed for four sites covering a total of over 73 000 ha;
- There will be five biomass facilities serving a project area of over 11 000 ha;
- Over 900 ha will be restored through bush and tree removal; and
- A further 500 ha will be restored through first-time mowing.

Protection of water and marsh birds in five national parks - reconstructing habitats and curbing the influence of invasive species

Project background

The project area encompasses the wetland areas of five Polish national parks: Biebrza, Drawa, Narew, Warta Mouth, and Slovinski. All of these parks include some Natura 2000 special protection areas (SPAs) and some areas are also protected by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands or are nominated as new UNESCO biosphere reserves.

Unfortunately, a decline in the number of birds inhabiting wet and marshy habitats has been recorded in all five areas. Therefore, there is a need to study, monitor and limit the known threats to the wetland bird populations. A decline of wetland habitats and threats from invasive predatory species are the key threats to the populations and individual species' numbers in the five project locations. The project will therefore try to limit these threats by implementing protection measures for birds' breeding habitats and by creating a network of sites where these negative pressures will be reduced.

Project objectives

The overall project aim is to implement and improve protection measures for a number of important European wetland bird species that breed in SPAs within the five Polish national parks. This will be achieved by improving habitat conditions in order to increase the breeding success of the targeted wetland bird species and, at the same time, curbing pressures from invasive alien predatory species, particularly the American mink (*Mustela vison*) and the common raccoon (*Procyon lotor*).

Expected results

- Over the course of the project, 180 ha of land will be purchased and prepared for re-naturalisation;
- The establishment of 200 safe nesting places, to enhance breeding success of wetland bird species;
- A reduction in the number of invasive predatory species as a result of using 310 live traps and other actions to minimise the negative impact of predators (e.g. American mink). The number of new mink farms will also be limited; and
- The project team also hopes to use the results of their work as a basis for discussions in other protected areas, both in Poland and elsewhere in Europe.

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000263
Polskie Ostoje Ptaków



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Research institution

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Andrzej ZALEWSKI

Duration of project:

39 months (01/10/2011 - 31/12/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,677,902.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

838,951.00 (50.00 %)

As a result, more effective cooperation between national parks and the administrators of adjacent lands to reduce the number of invasive species is expected.

Protecting the Habitats of Priority Bird Species of the Vistula Valley under the Circumstances of Intensive Pressure of Warsaw Agglomeration

Project background

The valuable natural environment of the Vistula river valley is partly protected by several Natura 2000 sites, including the "Middle Vistula Valley" SPA. This special protection area includes a 210 km-stretch of the Vistula River and covers an area of 308 km². Some 280 bird species have been recorded in this area. Of these, 160 species regularly breed here – at least 23 of these are listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

The Vistula and its tributaries (Bug, Narew, Wkra and Bzura) also provide important migration corridors for many European bird species, such as those breeding in Scandinavia, the northern part of Russia, the Baltic countries and northern and central Poland. Various rare and endangered European mammals and butterfly species also use migration corridors provided by the river and its tributaries.

The Vistula in its central course forms natural sand islands, which together with its specific plant and animal species, makes it a unique habitat. Moreover, many relict tundra plant species, as well as a complex of natural habitats dominated by poplars and willows are found in the Vistula Valley. The river has also acted as a historical corridor for the dispersion of plant species.

Project objectives

The general project objective is to restore the breeding colonies of waders, gulls and terns in the Middle Vistula Valley Natura 2000 network site (SPA), especially those within the Warsaw borders.

Other objectives include:

- Improving connectivity within the site by restoring areas of river habitats; and
- Improving the protection/conservation value of the SPA by increasing the ecological knowledge of Warsaw citizens of the importance of protecting threatened bird species, their type of land-use, and necessary actions for conserving species and their habitats.

Expected results

- Improvements in the conservation status and/or habitat conditions of at least 100 bird species;
- The establishment of at least four new stable colonies of *Charadriidae*;

LIFE09 NAT/PL/000264
wislawarszawska.pl



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Local authority

Name of beneficiary

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Jarosław MATUSIAK

Duration of project:

42 months (01/01/2011 – 30/06/2014)

Total budget in euro:

3,515,726.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,720,598.00 (48.94 %)

- Four sets of floating islands (over a total area of 150-1 200 m²) will be constructed to provide new environments for 200 breeding pairs of bird species. These artificial islands will provide stopover places during migration and will increase the amount of habitats for nomadic and over-wintering waterfowl, waders, gulls, wagtails, white-tailed eagles and other species;
- An increase of at least 100 ha in the flooded area of river habitats; and
- Over the course of the project, small 'refuges' in the form of stable islands of not less than 2 ha will provide new habitats for spawning fish.

Conservation of Marine Protected Species in Mainland Portugal

Project background

One of the main constraints to the enlargement of the Natura 2000 network to marine environments is the lack of research on marine habitats and species far from the coast. Few organisations or institutions have the necessary means to undertake such work. The designation of SCIs has thus been affected by the lack of relevant data on specific species such as cetaceans and seabirds.

An Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is an area stretching to 200 nautical miles from the coast, over which a state has special rights to marine resources. Portuguese EEZs include one of the highest abundances of common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) in Europe and are an important wintering ground for the Balearic shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*).

A total of 7 SCIs (55 400 ha) and 7 SACs (58 500 ha) have been created in the Portuguese coastal and marine environment. Nevertheless, political and logistical difficulties have led to a significant delay in drawing up further SCI proposals in coastal and marine areas. The availability of specific information needed for the implementation of appropriate management measures for cetacean and seabird species is also quite low.

Project objectives

The MarPro project aims to successfully implement the Natura 2000 network for the target cetacean and seabird species and their habitats throughout the EEZ of mainland Portugal. It will reduce conflicts between fisheries and the target species in order to ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives.

The project will propose new Natura 2000 marine areas for Portugal. It will also develop management plans for the harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), common bottlenose dolphin and Balearic shearwater.

MarPro will promote understanding between relevant authorities, scientists, fishermen, new marine industries (such as energy producers) and the general public in order to achieve consensus in the implementation of the marine Natura 2000 network. It will evaluate the complex interaction of open-sea fishing on the target species and implement good practice solutions concerning by-catch and fish depredation to improve sustainability.

LIFE09 NAT/PT/000038
MarPro



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

University

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Catarina EIRA

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,773,032.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,386,516.00 (50.00 %)

The project will create cost-effective, sustainable and long-term surveillance and monitoring instruments for analysing and interpreting the evolution of the conservation status of the target species and their habitats.

Expected results

- Sustainable development of Portuguese fisheries with a reduced impact on target cetaceans and seabirds;
- Implementation of SPAs and SCIs in Portuguese EEZs;
- Proposals for new Natura 2000 offshore sites for Portugal; and
- Conservation/management plans for *Phocoena phocoena*, *Tursiops truncatus* and *Puffinus mauretanicus*.

Conservation of Natural and Semi-natural Habitats in the “Serras de Aire e Candeeiros”

Project background

Calcareous habitats are characteristically alkaline. Calcareous literally means being mostly or partly composed of calcium carbonate, or in other words, containing lime or being chalky. Calcareous conditions are of vital importance for the conservation of several taxa and their habitats.

The SCI of Serra de Aires e Candeeiros includes one of Portugal's best examples of the biological diversity of calcareous habitats. However, these habitats are facing strong pressure from land-use changes, including increases in forestry and extractive industries, and the gradual abandonment of pastoral activities.

These emerging pressures encourage the progression of calcareous grasslands and rocky habitats into subshrub and bush habitats. This evolution undermines the conservation of the mosaic of habitats that provide important calcareous conditions for specific species.

Project objectives

This LIFE project's objective is to demonstrate a methodology for the conservation of priority calcareous habitats in the Natura 2000 site, “Serra de Aire e Candeeiros.” The project aims to restore 1 000 ha of calcareous habitats and, indirectly, ensure the protection of non-priority habitats for the conservation of threatened flora and fauna.

The targeted habitats include:

- Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alysso-Sedion albi;
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia), which are important orchid sites;
- Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals of the Thero-Brachypodietea and limestone pavements.

Specific actions of the project will include the promotion of extensive grazing through the establishment and contracted management of two goat herds of around 400 animals. The mosaic of habitats will be assured by limitations on grazing where there are species in need of protection or within natural thickets. Ten micro-reserves for endemic flora and rocky habitats will also be created.

LIFE09 NAT/PT/000040
Habitats Conservation



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

José Paulo MARTINS

Duration of project:

42 months (01/01/2011 - 30/06/2014)

Total budget in euro:

412,476.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

309,357.00 (75.00 %)

The project also intends to develop best practices related to the sustainable exploitation of certified products such as lamb, cheese and aromatic and medicinal herbs and condiments. Such a sustainable dynamic economy will ensure the conservation of these priority habitats in the long term.

Expected results

- Conservation and restoration of 1 000 hectares of priority habitats, including calcareous and dry grasslands and limestone pavements;
- Protection of the biological diversity of 400 contiguous hectares;
- Managed grazing using about 400 goats;
- The creation of ten micro-reserves;
- Best practices methodology for sustainable exploitation of natural resources.

Halt the loss of European biodiversity through the recovery of habitats and species of the Islets of Porto Santo and surrounding marine area

Project background

The Porto Santo Islets are a group of small Portuguese islands located within the Madeira archipelago, 43 km northeast of Madeira. Administratively, the islands are part of the Autonomous Region of Madeira. The largest of the islands is Porto Santo Island, which is about 11 km long and 6 km wide.

The project targets the Natura 2000 site of the Porto Santo Islets. The site is made up of a terrestrial area of vegetated sea cliffs and the marine area around the islets. The area is home to a large number of species endemic to the Macaronesian coasts - notably seabirds, land snails and plants - many of which are included in the Annexes to the Habitats and Birds Directives.

Since the discovery of Porto Santo Island, these species and habitats have come under increasing threat from the spread of invasive alien species and human activities. Appropriate habitat management is, therefore, essential for the long-term conservation of biodiversity on and around these islands.

Project objectives

The principal objective of the Life Ilhéus do Porto Santo project is to remove threats to the natural ecosystems of the Natura 2000 site of the Porto Santo islets and to improve the conservation status of species endemic to this region.

The project will research the distribution, density and conservation status of endangered species of seabirds, terrestrial molluscs, plants and arthropods in the project area. It will also explore ways of tackling the problem of artificial lights from Porto Santo Island, which can disorientate seabirds.

A programme of conservation measures specific to the endemic species will be implemented, including the control of rabbits, mice and invasive plants, and the establishment of quarantine measures to prevent the (re-)introduction of exotic species, particularly *Rattus* sp. Endangered indigenous plants will be reinforced and trails introduced to control human impact on biodiversity.

LIFE09 NAT/PT/000041
Life Ilhéus do Porto Santo



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Park-Reserve authority

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Name of contact person

Dilia MENEZES

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,150,016.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

571,163.00 (49.67 %)

Expected results

- The compilation of comprehensive information about endemic species in Porto Santo islets;
- An improvement in the conservation status of endangered species;
- Action Plans for the endangered species in Porto Santo islets;
- Solutions to the effects of lights from Porto Santo Island on seabirds.

HIGRO – Demonstrative Actions for the Conservation of Priority Habitats in Northern Mountain Areas in Portugal

Project background

Temperate Atlantic wet heaths with heather *Erica ciliaris* and species-rich nardus grasslands on silicious substrates are common on the supra-temperate and supra-Mediterranean levels in granitic mountains in North and Central Portugal. These habitat types are usually found in a mosaic landscape, frequently on the edge of peat ecosystems.

However, these habitats are in steep regression, threatened primarily by a natural progression into willow forests and beech woods, or into shrubland. Protection of the two habitats in the vegetation mosaic, and their relative abundance, depends on good management practices.

However, what is good for one habitat is not necessarily good for another. For example, burning, draining and grazing in mountain areas clearly benefits mat moorgrasses, but is harmful for higrophile heather-gorse shrublands.

Project objectives

The HIGRO project aims to define a methodology for the restoration and active conservation of the temperate Atlantic wet heaths and nardus grasslands on silicious substrates in mountainous areas. It aims to achieve an ecologically interesting balance of the two habitats in the mosaic, whilst maintaining or increasing their total occupation area.

The project will identify the most appropriate techniques to induce vegetation diversity and promote conservation of rare vascular plants and threatened invertebrates. It will also evaluate how the local biogeography and environmental conditions influence the interventions to be undertaken.

The HIGRO team will experiment with restoration techniques on 200 ha of mountain priority habitats in three SCIs. The project will assess whether these techniques have an effect on vegetation diversity and resilience to external disturbances.

Finally, the project will test a contracting approach with land owners and managers, based on the provision of services for biodiversity conservation. This aims to demonstrate an incentivising practice for en-



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Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

José Paulo MARTINS

Duration of project:

46 months (01/09/2010 - 30/06/2014)

Total budget in euro:

731,504.000

EC contribution in euro with %:

548,628.00 (75.00 %)

environmental cooperation, which could be replicated in other mountain regions.

Expected results

- Experimental restoration actions for Atlantic wet heaths and nardus grasslands over 200 ha. Planned interventions include: installation of 10 km of removable fences; selective control of grass and shrub formations on 50 ha; restoration of natural hydrology on 100 ha; promotion of extensive grazing on 100 ha; and the creation of four marked pedestrian trails;
- Definition of the most effective restoration actions for these habitat types;
- Demonstration of an effective contracting method to incentivise cooperation from land owners and managers; and
- Increase in the occupation areas of the target habitats in the project area with an effective balance between the two types.

Tarnava Mare SCI: Saving Transylvania's Important Pastoral Ecosystems

Project background

The Sighisoara-Tarnava Mare Natura 2000 site (SCI) covers 85 374 ha of one of the largest lowland areas of High-Nature-Value farmland in the European Union.

Following the collapses of the traditional rural economy, grazing was greatly reduced on an estimated 1 000 ha of these habitats, with the less accessible grassland abandoned altogether. This has resulted in the spread of scrubland into these former grassland areas.

Project objectives

The STIPA project aims to improve the conservation status of two priority dry grassland habitats in the Sighisoara -Tarnava Mare SCI: semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) with important orchid sites, and sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands. Both of these habitats are included in Annex I of the Habitats Directive.

The project aims to establish conservation action plans for the two habitats, by a priority zonation in the area and the creation of 5 micro-reserves in certain hotspots that include simple and practical management agreements with land owners. It is also foreseen to include payments for certain private owners where necessary.

The project will support local communities to continue or revert to traditional grassland management.

To encourage long-term habitat conservation, the project will contribute to the development of an integrated management plan for the broader combined SPA/SCI and to the design of national and regional agri-environment schemes for 2013-2019.

Expected results

- Field assessments of the conservation status of 10 000 ha of priority grassland habitats. With this information - and in consultation with farmers and other stakeholders - action plans for the targeted habitats will be developed;
- Conservation action plans for the priority dry grassland habitats;

LIFE09 NAT/RO/000618
STIPA



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary
NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary
Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania

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Name of contact person
Nathaniel PAGE

Duration of project:
36 months (01/10/2010 – 30/09/2013)

Total budget in euro:
356,330.00

EC contribution in euro with %:
259,515.00 (72.83 %)

- 7 500 ha of grassland habitats under conservation management by traditional farming practices;
- Up to 1 000 ha of grassland habitats restored by grazing and mowing;
- Restoration of 395 ha of dry grassland habitats by eliminating overgrowing trees and shrubs.

Conservation of *Botaurus stellaris* and *Aythya nyroca* in SPA Medzibodrožie in Slovakia

Project background

Slovakia's Medzibodrožie SPA contains the country's largest wetland biotype territory comprising channels, marshes, alluvial lowland landscapes and floodplains. The area is favoured by protected species such as bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) which use the SPA as a breeding ground. Up to 30 pairs are estimated to reside in Medzibodrožie but the population is not considered to be stable.

Other notable species include the ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), but the roosting population is limited to no more than five pairs and the population's status is recorded as unfavourable since numbers have declined significantly in recent years.

Both the above-mentioned species are waterfowl listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. In the Medzibodrožie SPA area they are threatened mainly by loss of habitat as wetlands dry up in response to changes in land use practice and climatic conditions. Eutrophication of existing wetland habitats poses an equally serious problem.

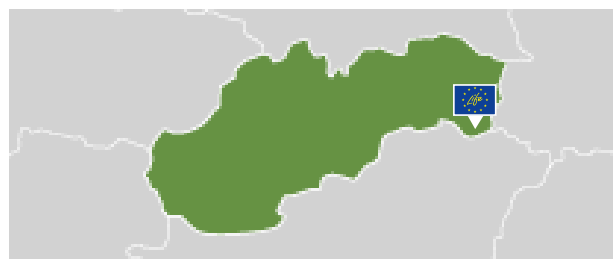
Project objectives

The core objective of the LIFE Nature project focuses on halting and reversing unfavourable population trends for the bittern and ferruginous duck in East Slovakia, especially within the Medzibodrožie SPA, which remains an important migration route and breeding area for these and other birds.

Expected results

- Elaboration of national action plans for protection of both target species;
- Purchase of 20 ha of land to ensure the protection of the two species;
- Restoration of appropriate water regimes on 50 ha, involving construction of one new sluice and reconstruction of three older sluices;
- Restoration of degraded wetland habitats for the target species over 90 ha;
- Implementation of management measures within 50 ha of breeding habitats of the target species;
- Securing of additional and suitable food supplies for the bittern at restored habitats;
- Prevention of disturbance of the target species at breeding sites;

LIFE09 NAT/SK/000395
AYBOTCON



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Slovak Ornithological Society / BirdLife Slovakia (Slovenská ornitologická spoločnosť / BirdLife Slovensko)

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Miroslav DEMKO

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2011 – 31/12/2015)

Total budget in euro:

1,870,720.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,043,040.00 (55.76 %)

- Building of visitor management infrastructure; and
- Raising of public awareness about the importance and benefits of species conservation activity.

Conservation of *Aquila pomarina* in Slovakia

Project background

The Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. This Raptor favours areas with altitudes of between 100 and 900 metres above sea-level that contain a rich mosaic of woodland, meadows, fields, pastures, marshes and a well-developed network of watercourses.

Its breeding range is restricted mostly to Europe (central, eastern and south-east Europe) and it has suffered a major decline in many countries, especially at the western and southern extent of its range. The European population size is estimated to be around 16 000 pairs, with up to 900 of these located in Slovakia. The Carpathian eco-region is one of the most important strongholds of the species.

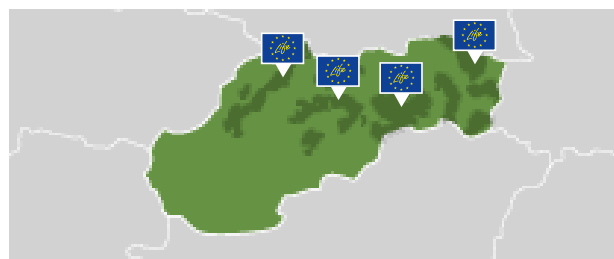
Project objectives

The main objective of this LIFE Nature project is to enhance the conservation status of *Aquila pomarina* in Slovakia. This will be achieved by establishing favourable conditions in the short term for stabilising the Slovak breeding population of the species in the Carpathian Ecoregion. Productivity of the population is anticipated to increase and mortality will be reduced.

Expected results:

- The establishment of direct conservation practices and management for 160 breeding pairs in SPAs;
- The elimination of insensitive forestry practices and the establishment of protective zones;
- The repair of 40 unsafe nests and the installation of another 30 artificial nests within established protective zones;
- The insulation of 80 km of 22 kV electric power lines, which pose a danger to the Raptor;
- The recovery and release of up to 20 injured, exhausted, starving birds or chicks that fall from their nests;
- The marking of 400 chicks and 20 adult birds with aluminium and plastic colour rings;
- An increase in human and technical capacity to support conservation in the project area; and
- The raising of public awareness via 240 educational presentations in schools and information sessions targeting 260 stakeholders and 75 hunters.

LIFE09 NAT/SK/000396
APOMARINA_SK



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Boris MADERIČ

Duration of project:

48 months (01/01/2011 – 31/12/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,045,265.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

783,948.00 (75.00 %)

Conservation and management of freshwater wetlands in Slovenia

Project background

European wetland habitats have declined significantly in the past two centuries and especially in the past few decades. In Slovenia, a lack of appropriate management over the last 50 years has led to wetland loss and degradation. During this period many wetland areas were modified and drainage systems were constructed, especially for agricultural land and forests. Between 1973 and 1991 more than 70 000 ha of lowlands were drained. In addition, flood control schemes have canalised natural meandering streams and restricted naturally fast-flowing waters. Agricultural intensification has been the main anthropogenic factor causing wetland loss and degradation throughout Slovenia. Official figures show a decrease of almost 40% (1 282 ha) between 1950 and 1992 in reed beds, marshes and ponds. Slovenian wetlands have also been adversely affected by indirect impacts – industrial development, urbanisation, the introduction of alien species and disturbance by the expansion of tourism and recreation.

Project objectives

The overall goal of the project is to re-establish a favourable conservation status for eight targeted freshwater habitats and six wetland habitat SCIs. The project sites – Pohorje, Zelenci, Vrhe, Planik, Gornji kal and Mura-Petišovci – contain different types of wetlands, all of which have suffered from a lack of appropriate management.

Expected results

- An increase in the size and quality of targeted habitats and the habitats of targeted species;
- Restoration of the structure of bogs, mires, oxbows and other wetland habitats, and a general increase in biodiversity;
- Revitalisation of the most south-easterly distribution range of active raised bogs in the EU;
- Improvement of the habitat of the southernmost populations of black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) and capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) in the Alpine region of the EU and a significant reduction in disturbance of these species;
- Revitalisation of the oxbow lakes and related species of Community importance in the Mura river, including fish such as the mudminnow (*Umbra krameri*), amphibians (*Bombina bombina* and *Tritu-*

LIFE09 NAT/SI/000374
WETMAN



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

National authority

Name of beneficiary

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Nika DEBELJAK ŠABEC

Duration of project:

48 months (01/02/2011 - 01/02/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,144,376.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,072,188.00 (50.00 %)

rus carnifex), dragonflies (*Leucorrhinia pectoralis*) and European pond turtles (*Emys orbicularis*);

- Incorporation of conservation guidelines into sector management plans to ensure active ongoing management of project areas after LIFE;
- Establishment of an integrated systematic approach for standing freshwater wetlands management in Slovenia that will have a demonstrative value for the conservation of other standing freshwater habitats and habitats of species of Community importance in Slovenia included in the Natura 2000 network; and
- Raising awareness about the importance of wetland species and habitats, the Natura 2000 network and biodiversity among landowners, local communities, visitors and local and national authorities.

Man and Nature in Secovlje salt-pans

Project background

Sečovlje salina is a 650 ha area along the estuary of the Dragonja River, on the southernmost stretch of the Slovenian coastline. The coastal alluvial plain has developed over centuries by the continuous deposition of sediments in the Dragonja river estuary. Basins for the evaporation of sea water were created at least 700 years ago; the landscape and ecosystem has remained relatively unchanged since. Several different habitat types have evolved, all of them dependent on the salty environment and the presence of humans to control the tide and flooding.

Until the late 1960s, human actions controlled the circulation of waters and prevented flooding from sea waters within the entire salt basin. However, the downturn in the European salt market led to the abandonment of around half of the salt basins. Regular maintenance of embankments and sea-defence walls stopped and flooding with sea and inland waters now threaten the whole system. In December 2008, an exceptionally high tide flooded the entire area.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to improve the conservation status of target bird, reptile and fish species and target habitat types in the Natura 2000 site Sečovlje salina. Target species include: *Charadrius alexandrinus*, *Himantopus himantopus*, *Sterna hirundo*, *Sterna albifrons*, *Larus melanocephalus* (all listed on the Annex I of the Birds Directive), *Emys orbicularis* and *Aphanius fasciatus*. Target habitat types include: mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*); Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic salt marshes and salt meadows (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*); estuaries; and *Spartina* swards (*Spartinion maritimae*).

Specific project actions will aim to achieve the following:

- To ensure control over the water regime and hydraulic management in saline ecosystems based on a system of sea-defence walls, embankments and internal channels;
- To prevent negative effects of human disturbance, predation and habitat fragmentation on target species and habitats; and

LIFE09 NAT/SI/000376
MANSALT



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Large enterprise

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Andrej SOVINČ

Duration of project:

60 months (01/10/2010 - 01/10/2015)

Total budget in euro:

7,056,366.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

3,439,983.00 (48.75 %)

- To raise awareness among the local population and wider public about the importance of saline habitat types for conservation and maintenance of sustainable land uses.

Expected results

- Maps of habitat types;
- An action plan for three target breeding bird species;
- Technical studies on the reconstruction of embankments;
- One wetland restoration project including preparatory geodetic maps of the channel area;
- 3 406 m of embankments and sea defence walls built or restored;
- 670 m of sea wall built or restored;
- The installation of 16 sluices for improving water exchange;
- 10 new artificial islands (1 km²); and
- 8 ha of the habitat for *Emys orbicularis* restored, with 2 100 m of railway to prevent human disturbance.

Improving the conservation status of nocturnal animals (moths and bats) by reducing the effect of artificial lighting at cultural heritage sites

Project background

Light pollution is becoming an increasingly important problem that affects a large number of species. Many nocturnal animals are attracted to artificial lights, which confuses their orientation and often induces endless repetitive circling around light sources. Such behavioural changes can increase susceptibility to predators, affect reproduction, disrupt migration, disturb animal circadian rhythms and result in mortality due to collision or exhaustion. The effects of light pollution on biodiversity are still not widely understood, but studies have demonstrated negative effects on insects, bats, birds, turtles, amphibians and a number of other animals. While a lot of actions have focused on streetlights, problems associated with illuminated sites of cultural importance remain largely unaddressed. This issue represents a special challenge as such illumination typically comes from below and emits towards the sky, resulting in large bright areas in the nightscape. As a result, illuminated buildings or monuments are visible to terrestrial and aerial animals.

Project objectives

The overall objective of this Biodiversity project is to improve the conservation status and biodiversity of nocturnal animals at selected areas by reducing the negative effects of artificial lighting produced by the illumination of cultural heritage sites. The project also aims to draw up technical guidelines for energy-efficient and environmentally friendly illumination of cultural heritage sites and promote their use at national and EU level.

The project aims to design a light source which is specifically adjusted and blocks the light that would otherwise be emitted towards the sky. The light source will emit less light, have a blind adjusted to the shape of the building that will prevent light loss, and will be more energy efficient. The beneficiary plans to manufacture and test a prototype of this newly designed custom-made light source on selected churches. It will also monitor the impact of different light sources on the conservation status and biodiversity of two groups of nocturnal animals that are strongly affected by light pollution: bats and moths.

LIFE09 NAT/SI/000378

Life at Night



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Small and medium-sized enterprise

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Mojca STOJAN-DOLAR

Duration of project:

42 months (01/09/2010 - 28/02/2014)

Total budget in euro:

596,280.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

294,393.00 (49.37 %)

Expected results

- The replacement of the lighting source on 26 churches with a nature-friendly and energy-efficient source; and
- A 30% reduction in the electricity costs of lighting;
- An increased level of awareness of biodiversity and other problems associated with light pollution and a tangible demonstration of how to harmonise nature conservation and cultural heritage.

Conservation of the Cantabrian Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus cantabricus*) in its habitat in the Cantabrian Mountain range

Project background

North-west Spain's Cantabrian mountains are home to an isolated and endangered population of capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), which live in forests above 800 m. This population forms the south-western edge of the EU's capercaillie distribution and survives in an area smaller than 2 000 km².

Cantabrian capercaillies have suffered a serious decline in numbers during recent decades, particularly at the edges of the distribution range and at lower altitudes. The population is considered in danger of extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Project objectives

The LIFE Nature project's objective is to improve the conservation status of the Cantabrian capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus cantabricus*). Conservation works will target the Natura 2000 network sites that are being designated in the Cantabrian Mountains and so also benefit the birds' habitat, as well as other allied species. Project outcomes are anticipated to improve the connectivity and functionality of the capercaillie's habitat.

A pilot phase will test the partnership approach required for implementing conservation actions across different municipality areas. This will be followed by implementation of a full, homogenous, cross-cutting project for the entire area where the species is found, combining in-situ conservation actions (e.g. habitat improvement, control of predators and competitors, non-natural mortality reduction) with ex-situ activities (a captive breeding and restocking programme). Experts, civil society and private landowners will participate via different, and at times innovative, conservation methodologies.

Expected results

- The population decline of the Cantabrian capercaillie will be halted;
- Scientific knowledge about the species will be increased and best practices identified/published regarding habitat management for the Cantabrian capercaillie;
- Landowner participation will be secured in works to improve capercaillie habitats and traditional land use practices harmonised with the bird's conservation needs;

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000513
UROGALLO CANTABRICO



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Ignacio TORRES

Duration of project:

48 months (01/10/2010 - 30/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

7,028,505.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

3,509,252.00 (49.93 %)

- The Cantabrian capercaillie will be established as a key species in SPA management along the Cantabrian mountain range and improvements made to the bird's habitat in the SPA;
- Measures will be implemented to reduce threats from competitors (such as red deer) and also pressures from predators;
- A breeding pool centre will be established, making available a captive stock of birds for release and restocking purposes;
- Opportunities will be identified for generating win-win benefits for nature conservation and rural employment through design of sustainable economic development strategies for the project area; and
- Public awareness will be raised about the capercaillie and the importance/relevance of supporting its conservation.

Recovery of populations of *Margaritifera margaritifera* and *Galemys pyrenaicus* in the Ulla river basin (Galicia)

Project background

The Ulla river basin experiences pressures that impact on aquatic species such as the freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) and Pyrenean desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*). Threats affecting these species include degradation of the river bed substrate from dredging and siltation, degradation of riparian forest and difficulties for host species to move upriver (in the case of *M. margaritifera*). Both species act as biological indicators for the overall state of the Ulla's fluvial ecosystem and conservation actions that tackle threats to these species will have knock-on benefits for many other species living within the river basin.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to help improve the conservation status of the freshwater pearl mussel and Pyrenean desman in the Ulla river basin, and establish suitable conditions for recovery of the original populations. This will be achieved by: increasing knowledge about the factors threatening both species; improving habitat factors associated with the decline of both species; implementing measures to recover the hydromorphology of certain sections affected by dams and drawdown flow, in order to foster natural dynamics of the freshwater pearl mussel and facilitate connectivity of potential desman population centres; reinforcing and reintroducing *M. margaritifera* in suitable areas of the river basin; improving the conservation status of riparian forest in the project area; and implementing best practices in the management of river and riparian forest habitats, as well as matters affecting river quality, such as phytosanitary, bed loads and particles.

Expected results

- Improved knowledge about the conservation status of the freshwater pearl mussel and Pyrenean desman populations and factors affecting their habitats (sources of pollution, riparian forest status), as well as threats to both species;
- Maintenance of sufficient genetic variability of pearl mussel populations to allow re-stocking with local specimens from the basin itself;
- Improved knowledge of the response of the Pyrenean desman to actions involving the elimination of barriers to natural river dynamics;

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000514
MARGAL ULLA



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2015)

Total budget in euro:

3,666,981.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,821,604.00 (49.68 %)

- Fostering the natural dynamics of pearl mussel host fish populations (removal of a maximum of nine barriers and adaptation of nine channels in the river);
- Improved connectivity of desman populations;
- Improved conservation status of the freshwater pearl mussel and Pyrenean desman;
- Improved conservation status of the river ecosystem and of other endangered habitats and species (*Narcissus cyclamineus*, *Chioglossa lusitánica*, *Ch. arcasii*, *S. salar*);
- Reinforcement of the pearl mussel population in areas where stocks are low, and reintroduction in other parts of the basin;
- Elaboration of environmental guidelines for watercourse management;
- Introduction of best practices and methodologies on the Ulla river basin farms; and
- The establishment of monitoring systems for the freshwater pearl mussel and Pyrenean desman populations and habitats.

Conservation of *Oxyura leucocephala* in the Murcia Region. Spain

Project background

The white-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) is a small stiff-tailed duck, which breeds in Spain and North Africa. Its breeding habitat is open water with areas of dense vegetation, which provide safe nesting sites.

A large fall in the population in the last ten years has left the species endangered. Most of this decline is due to habitat loss and human impact, notably through hunting. Another concern is epidemiological events that can occur under certain conditions in wetlands.

However, a more recent threat is interbreeding of the Spanish population with the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*). This species is American in origin, but escaped into the wild in Europe from wildfowl collections. Its aggressive mating behaviour and willingness to interbreed is threatening the survival of the white-headed duck.

The project will focus on three lagoons in Murcia, which are important habitats of the target species: Campotejar, Moreras and Alhama de Murcia.

Project objectives

The project's overall objective is the conservation of the white-headed duck in the wetlands of Murcia. It aims to improve understanding of the breeding habitat of the species, extend and conserve its habitat and reduce the impact of humans and other species.

The project will monitor the target species and the environmental factors which determine its reproduction. It will check for epidemiological events in the wetlands so that action can be taken quickly where necessary to protect the target species. The project will ensure that the ruddy duck does not settle in the Murcia Region, and that the region is not a breeding ground for this species and its hybrids.

The project will also assess and mitigate human threats to the species and habitat. For example, it will examine ways of reconciling biodiversity conservation with the modern agricultural use of treated sewage water stored in lagoons in the wetlands. The team will also reduce species mortality from power lines.

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000516
OXYURA LEUCOCEPHALA-MURCIA



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Pablo FERNÁNDEZ ABELLÁN

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2010 – 01/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

1,342,103.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,006,577.00 (75.00 %)

The project expects to see the approval of a recovery plan for the white-headed duck in the Murcia region and the extension of the Natura 2000 network into the three lagoons of Campotejar, Moreras and Alhama de Murcia. Management plans should also be approved for these wetland habitats.

Expected Results

- An increase in the number of white-headed duck in the Murcia region;
- The long-term conservation of the target species guaranteed by a regional recovery plan; and
- An extension of the duck's wetland habitat and better conservation through the inclusion of three new lagoons in the Natura 2000 network with associated wetland management plans.

Habitat restoration and management in two coastal lagoons of the Ebro Delta: Alfacada y Tancada

Project background

The Alfacada and Tancada lagoons are located in the Delta del Ebro Natural Park. Though the Alfacada lagoon is a protected area, it was until recently a private estate used for hunting. It is also vulnerable to the effects of climate change on the water and sediment flux of the Ebro river. Therefore specific management and restoration measures are necessary to mitigate these negative effects.

The target salt marshes of San Antonio in the southern part of the Tancada lagoon have been damaged by intensive fish farming and much work is required to restore this now-protected area to its natural state.

Project objectives

The main goal of the project is to improve the ecological status of the Alfacada and Tancada lagoons through habitat restoration and management measures, such as improvement of hydrological function, elimination of infrastructure that interferes with connectivity, and the creation of new lagoon habitats in existing rice fields and abandoned aquaculture facilities.

Expected results

- Improvement of the conservation status of 350 ha of coastal lagoon habitats (Alfacada and Tancada);
- Creation of 62 ha of new wildlife habitat in the Alfacada lagoon area, 50 ha of which will be coastal lagoon habitat;
- Restoration of 16 ha of coastal ponds and salt marshes in an abandoned aquaculture facility located in the Tancada lagoon area;
- Increased resilience and better adaptability of the coastal lagoons to the effects of climate change;
- Improvement of the conservation status of several endangered species, including *Porphyrio porphyrio*, *Botaurus stellaris*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Larus genei*, *Sterna albifrons* and *Aphanius iberus*;
- Creation of a new population of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) through the reintroduction of at least 100 individuals;
- Construction of new infrastructure for public use and environmental education, specifically a visitor centre, eight ornithological observatories, 1.2 km of walkways and 22 information boards;
- Increase public awareness of the conservation sig-

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000520
Δ-LAGOON



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Research institution

Name of beneficiary

Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia Agroalimentàries

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Carles IBAÑEZ

Duration of project:

52 months (01/09/2010 - 31/12/2014)

Total budget in euro:

3,054,703.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,490,084.00 (48.78 %)

nificance and fragility of the coastal lagoons through an education programme for 1 000 students;

- Dissemination of the project results to stakeholders, managers and wider society; and
- An increase in knowledge about the conservation status and evolution of the most relevant habitats and species of the area, as well as the proposal of further conservation measures to managers. A total of nine monitoring programmes will allow project actions to be assessed.

Demonstration strategy and techniques for the eradication of invasive freshwater turtles

Project background

The pet turtle trade has led to a large number of specimens being maintained in captivity. Often these are released unthinkingly into the wild, where they can start breeding and competing with native species. Exotic turtles can also be vectors of several pathogen agents that can be transmitted to other turtles. These issues can exacerbate efforts to conserve endangered native turtle species, such as the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*).

Project objectives

The main aim of this LIFE Biodiversity project is to address the negative environmental impacts on wetland environments from alien exotic turtle species, particularly the red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta*). A strategy will be developed to preserve aquatic endangered species of endemic fish and autochthonous freshwater turtles in Valencia and Portugal by eradicating wild populations of exotic invasive freshwater turtles. Regulations will be introduced to tackle the trade and use of exotic invasive turtles as pets and prevent their release into the wild. A public awareness campaign will be established to support the regulations. This will highlight the problems and damage caused by exotic invasive species in order to deter people from buying or releasing exotic turtles.

The strategy methodology will then be implemented in pilot areas to test and demonstrate its effectiveness as a suitable and feasible solution for replication elsewhere.

Expected results

- Development of standardised protocol methods and techniques for the eradication of exotic invasive freshwater turtle populations in wetlands;
- Implementation of the protocol in pilot areas (natural wetlands in Spain and Portugal);
- Demonstration of the viability and feasibility of new techniques for detecting nesting areas of exotic invasive freshwater turtle populations in wetlands;
- Collection of individual exotic turtles (mainly *T. scripta*) from 17 wetlands of Valencia and Portugal;
- Eradication of eggs of exotic turtles (mainly *T. scripta*) from 11 wetlands of Valencia and Portugal;
- Eradication of wild populations of exotic invasive freshwater turtles from 17 natural wetlands in Spain and Portugal;

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000529
LIFE TRACHEMYS



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

M^a Ángeles CENTENO CENTENO

Duration of project:

36 months (01/01/2011 - 30/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

1,200,754.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

591,390.00 (49.25 %)

- Production of a handbook about the eradication of exotic invasive freshwater turtle populations in wetlands;
- Reinforcement of 10 populations of indigenous endangered freshwater turtles in Valencia and Portugal; and
- Holding of an international seminar about the control of invasive exotic fauna in wetlands.

Environmental recovery of the Fluvial Territory; living space of the European mink (*Mustela lutreola*)

Project background

The lower reaches of the Aragon and Agra rivers forms one of the Sites of Community Importance (SCI) included in the Natura 2000 network. The area's importance is mainly due to the presence of Mediterranean river forest habitats (Mediterranean poplar and willow forests) and species such as European mink (*Mustela lutreola*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), European turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) and night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). In the past, dikes and breakwater defences were built to defend agricultural and forestry plantations along the rivers' floodplains, and the Agra River was canalised to protect downstream towns from floods. These defence infrastructures have diminished the dynamics of these two rivers, resulting in a decrease in natural habitats and a reduction in biodiversity.

The degradation of the fluvial ecosystem is especially problematic for the European mink. The project area hosts a fifth of the species population in Navarra and two-thirds of the Iberian population; hence the importance of restoring the river ecosystems of the lower reaches of these two rivers for the global strategy of the species conservation.

Project objectives

This project aims to significantly enhance the biodiversity of the lower reaches of the Aragon and Agra Rivers. In particular, it aims to improve the conservation status of European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) by restoring the fluvial ecosystems on which the species depends. This will guarantee the preservation of the species in the area and promote it as a source of individuals for the recovery of neighbouring populations.

The project will implement the 'fluvial territory' concept as a way of preserving biodiversity and obtaining good ecological status, while also promoting public interest and awareness.

By restoring the floodplains and the natural habitats on which the mink depends, the project will contribute to EU water, conservation and flood management objectives and serve as a model for Mediterranean river management.

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000531
TERRITORIO VISIÓN



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Public enterprise

Name of beneficiary

Gestión Ambiental, Viveros y Repoblaciones de Navarra, S.A.

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Name of contact person

Fernando MENDOZA

Duration of project:

48 months (01/10/2010 - 30/09/2014)

Total budget in euro:

6,323,807.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

3,877,164.00 (61.31 %)

Expected results

- The project is expected to achieve an integral improvement of the fluvial ecosystem that will lead to the recovery and increase in population of the European mink, together with a decrease in its main threats;
- Oxbow lakes, wetlands, floodplains, river forests and river beds will be restored as part of the objective of improving the carrying capacity of the area for the target species; and
- The project will also seek to promote a more positive public attitude to nature, the fluvial territory and biodiversity conservation.

Innovative actions against illegal poisoning in EU Mediterranean pilot areas

Project background

The use of poisoned bait is forbidden under annex VI of the Habitats Directive. However, its use is deeply rooted in many rural areas of Europe. While the incidence of this practice varies greatly from country to country, it is considered to be more common in Mediterranean countries.

Illegal poisoning greatly affects raptors and carnivores, especially scavengers such as the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) and Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), both listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. The brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), wolf (*Canis lupus*) and Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*) are also strongly affected by this practice.

Illegal poisoning has developed in secret. Detecting its use requires extremely specialised, methodological, complex and long-term work.

The selection of the pilot areas has been made on the basis of four variables: i) the presence of highly endangered affected species; ii) comparable intensity in the use of illegal poisoned bait; iii) the presence of well-established local biodiversity conservation organisations with strong social acceptance at regional and local level and significant experience of fighting illegal poisoning and/or improving the conservation status of species most affected by illegal poisoning; iv) they are located in the Mediterranean region, have a medium-high density rural population and an economic reliance on rural activities, including hunting and stockbreeding.

Project objectives

The overall aim of the project is to implement, monitor, assess and spread innovative and demonstrative actions that significantly improve current strategies for combating illegal poisoning in the EU.

Expected results

- High quality information about illegal poisoning activities in eight pilot areas (1 029 742 ha);
- Production of specific indicators to assess: the direct use of poison and related aspects; social perceptions of and social participation in poison cases; and the results of the canine team samplings and radio-tagged bio-indicator species;

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000533
Innovation against poison



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

José Eugenio GUTIÉRREZ UREÑA

Duration of project:

60 months (01/10/2010 – 30/09/2015)

Total budget in euro:

5,660,886.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,730,790.00 (48.24 %)

- 30 selected stockbreeders in each pilot area to adhere to the guidelines of the European Network of Stockbreeders against Illegal Poisoning;
- All 89 municipalities within the pilot areas to adhere to guidelines of the European Network of Municipalities against Illegal Poisoning;
- 18 hunting zones in each pilot area to adhere to the guidelines of the European Network of Hunting Areas against Illegal Poisoning;
- Four technical guidelines on combating illegal poisoning to be published;
- Implementation of a common methodology to work on a bio-indicator species as an illegal poisoning indicator, and the trapping and tagging of this bio-indicator species;
- Development of a communication plan that includes a dissemination and awareness-rising tool;
- An 80% decrease in poisoning cases related to stockbreeders in the pilot areas;
- Development of awareness and dissemination activities; and
- Assessment of the anti-poisoning tool implemented during the project

Conservation of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in Andalusian Mediterranean Sea

Project background

Neptune grass (*Posidonia oceanica*) underwater meadows are a priority habitat listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive. Some 95% of these meadows are found in six Natura 2000 network marine sites (SCIs) in Andalusia. A management plan is required for the marine meadows that harmonises nature conservation with economic and social development needs in the area.

Project objectives

The project's main objective is to improve the conservation status of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in Andalusia. Research will identify the current state of the meadows to enable the design of baseline data and indicators to track conservation gains. Threats to the ecosystems (including pollution, boat anchoring, uncontrolled trawling or traditional local fishing and the expansion of exotic invasive species) will also be investigated. Mechanisms to limit negative impacts on the meadows and the species they support will be assessed.

All this information will inform the design of a new management plan for natural areas in Andalusia. Outcomes of the management plan will be monitored via networks of volunteer divers. These will assess the risks and report on the conservation status of Neptune grass meadows and associated species.

Stakeholder participation will feature strongly throughout the project work and involve close liaison with fishermen and professional ship owners, tourism providers and users, sports divers and students.

Expected results

- Production of a detailed cartography of the meadows for use as an essential management tool;
- Confirmation of baseline data about the current state of the meadows, against which recovery actions can be measured;
- An 80% reduction of threats from boat anchoring;
- 100% prevention of uncontrolled trawling in priority areas;
- Demonstration of passive control measures for improving detection of actions in breach of environmental regulations protecting these ecosystems;

LIFE09 NAT/ES/000534
Life *Posidonia* Andalucía



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Esperanza PEREA ACOSTA

Duration of project:

36 months (01/01/2011 - 31/12/2013)

Total budget in euro:

3,562,125.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,474,902.00 (69.48 %)

- Development of a management plan that will ensure effective future management of this ecosystem;
- Designing and performing extensive monitoring of the meadows, which will allow early detection of degradation of these ecosystems;
- Favouring social participation in managing these ecosystems, with an estimated participation of at least 100 volunteers per year; and
- Increasing social awareness about the environmental and economic value of these ecosystems in Andalusia, such as the meadows' role (i) in breeding of commercially important fish species; (ii) as an essential attraction for developing sustainable tourism services; and (iii) in maintaining the coastline.

Management of the invasive Raccoon Dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) in the north- European countries

Project background

The raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) is an invasive species, native to eastern Asia, introduced as a fur game species to the western parts of the Soviet Union in the 1930s-1950s. It was recently listed in the top 100 most damaging invasive species by the DAISE project (<http://www.europe-aliens.org/speciesTheWorst.do>).

The species has been found to cause substantial ecological damage to native fauna in Europe and urgent action is considered necessary to prevent a population explosion of raccoon dogs in Scandinavia.

Project objectives

The objectives of this LIFE Biodiversity project focus on halting the loss of EU biodiversity, particularly in wetland areas, from raccoon dogs. An early warning system will be established to track immigration of raccoon dogs and innovative culling/management methods will be applied to control the species. Project findings are also expected to be transferable to many other invasive species.

Expected results

In alignment with the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the Bern and RAMSAR conventions, this project aims to:

- Prevent damage to native biodiversity;
- Prevent the establishment of a viable wild population of raccoon dogs in Sweden, Norway and Denmark;
- Limit any increase and dispersal of the target species in Finland;
- Use innovative methods to reduce and eradicate invasive species such as raccoon dogs;
- Use tagging with GPS/VHF transmitters for effective culling;
- Use innovative methods to learn more about the social behaviour of invasive species;
- Disseminate project findings among hunters, local communities, ornithologists and international stakeholders of invasive species; and
- Improve awareness among the public to report sightings of raccoondogs.

LIFE09 NAT/SE/000344
MIRDINEC



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management

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Name of contact person

Jan SWARTSTRÖM

Duration of project:

36 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2013)

Total budget in euro:

5,318,278.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

2,659,139.00 (50.00 %)

Grazing and restoration of archipelago and coastal environments

Project background

Sweden's archipelago habitats have a high nature conservation value and this is mainly attributed to the islands' specific geological conditions, micro-climate and farming history. Together these factors create very different conditions for flora and fauna and few similar habitat types exist in significant quantities on the Swedish mainland.

Archipelago habitats have suffered during recent decades from abandonment of traditional land use practices, which leads to species-rich areas becoming overgrown by scrub vegetation and threatens the extinction, at national level, of different species. Some of the island species are also threatened in a European context. Habitat management measures are required to prevent further deterioration of the archipelago habitats.

Project objectives

The main aim of the LIFE Nature project is to restore specific habitat types to favourable conservation status within 23 Natura 2000 sites associated with the Swedish archipelago in the Counties of Västra Götaland, Halland, Blekinge and Stockholm. A partnership approach between the four counties is expected to provide operational efficiencies and create an increased understanding about nature conservation activity in coastal habitats. Participation of the local farming community in habitat conservation work will form an important goal and this is expected to help secure long term sustainable rural development benefits.

Expected results

- The project will improve the conservation status of 12 habitats and 13 species in 23 Natura 2000 sites;
- Restoration actions on 1 826 ha of open and tree covered habitats will target 12 habitat types that are listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive;
- Management interventions will also target three species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive and 10 birds listed in Annex I the Birds Directive; and
- Conditions for wading birds, such as ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) and dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) will be improved.

LIFE09 NAT/SE/000345
GRACE



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland
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Fanny SAHLÉN

Duration of project:

74 months (01/11/2010 - 31/12/2016)

Total budget in euro:

8,500,688.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

4,250,344.00 (50.00 %)

Reintroducing the great bustard

Otis tarda to southern England

Project background

The great bustard (*Otis tarda*) is a globally threatened species listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and a priority for LIFE+ funding. It was once found in large parts of lowland Europe, but started to decline in the 18th century and is now absent from much of its original range. It became extinct in the UK in 1832 and in numerous other European countries during the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a 'flagship' species for lowland and dry grassland Natura 2000 sites across Europe and yet, is still declining in most countries where it survives.

In 2004, permission was granted by the UK government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for a 10-year trial reintroduction programme on and around the Salisbury Plain SPA in central southern England. To date, this programme has succeeded in establishing a population of some 15 great bustards. In addition, the first great bustard chicks to hatch in the UK for more than 170 years appeared in June 2009.

A mid-term review of the reintroduction programme has informed the development of this LIFE+ project.

Project objectives

The LIFE+ project will increase the population of great bustards on Salisbury Plain by extending the reintroduction programme to support the establishment of a self-sustaining population over the longer term. The project will include:

- A five-year release programme bringing at least 20 juvenile birds from Russia each year;
- The establishment of 'management areas' to provide optimal conditions for release and the establishment of a second release site;
- Monitoring to improve understanding of the interaction between released bustards and their environment;
- Protection of birds from threats such as predation and disturbance through voluntary wardening;
- The development of a long term strategy to guide work in the project area and across the UK; and
- The development of agri-environment options to improve the suitability of the wider countryside for the species.

LIFE09 NAT/UK/000020
Reintroducing *Otis tarda*



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

NGO-Foundation

Name of beneficiary

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

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Name of contact person

Nick FOLKARD

Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2010 - 31/08/2015)

Total budget in euro:

2,182,175.00

EC contribution in euro with %:

1,636,631.00 (75.00 %)

Expected results

- An increase in the UK great bustard population from 15 birds to approximately 50 birds;
- The release programme will continue beyond the project to reach the numbers required for a self-sustaining population; and
- A national Species Action Plan will be prepared and greater protection will be sought for the species in the UK through national and European legislation.



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