



# Nature & Biodiversity

# LIFE PROJECTS 2015

**LIFE** Environment

Environment



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE-GENERAL**

**LIFE** (*"The Financial Instrument for the Environment and Climate Action"*) is a programme launched by the European Commission and coordinated by the Environment and Climate Action Directorates-General. The Commission has delegated the implementation of many components of the LIFE programme to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

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# LIFE Nature & Biodiversity 2015: Commission funds 39 new projects in 19 countries with €95.6 million

The European Commission has approved funding for 39 LIFE Nature & Biodiversity projects under the LIFE programme, the European Union's fund for the environment and climate action. The action grants have been awarded to 'beneficiaries', or project promoters in 19 Member States. The projects are led by beneficiaries based in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

## LIFE Nature & Biodiversity in 2015

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity projects support the implementation of the Birds and Habitats directives and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The 39 projects selected for funding will be carried out by partnerships of conservation bodies, government authorities and other parties located across 19 Member States.

The projects involve a total investment of €158.1 million, of which the Commission is providing action grants worth €95.6 million.

Projects will help conserve a wide range of threatened habitats, including rivers, wetlands, forests, meadows and bogs. Protected insects, molluscs, amphibians, birds and mammals will all benefit from LIFE's investment, which also helps safeguard the ecosystem services provided by Europe's natural capital.

## Background

The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value.

The budget for the LIFE Programme for 2014–2020 is set at €3.4 billion in current prices, administered through the Environment and Climate Action sub-programmes.

The Climate Action sub-programme will provide €864 million in co-financing for climate projects between 2014 and 2020.

Its main objectives are to:

- Contribute to the shift towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy;
- Improve the development, implementation and enforcement of EU climate change policy and legislation;
- Support better environmental and climate change governance at all levels; and
- Support the implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme.

More information on each LIFE Nature & Biodiversity project is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm>

Contact details for the relevant national authorities can be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/life\\_nat.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/life_nat.htm)

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# Dynamic River System Lech

## Project background

The Tyrolean Lech River, with its huge banks of gravel and broad zones of lowland riparian forest, is among the few rivers in the northern Alps that retains much of its natural state. For over 60 km, the highly braided (multi-channelled) river occupies a gravel bed that is up to 100 m wide in parts. The river's course is constantly changing due to erosion and deposition. In Austria, its dynamically braided course forms large-scale gravel and sand bars, and it still contains unimpaired wild stretches. But floods and increasing pressure from human activities in the valley are a threat. In certain sections hydrological works have severely narrowed the riverbed. The construction of debris traps across the streams and growing exploitation of gravel have also contributed to a deepening of the riverbed and a lowering of the water table. The consequent disappearance of flooding and forests that are regularly submerged has adversely affected numerous species associated with gravel banks, including the German tamarisk (*Myricaria germanica*), the pink-winged grasshopper (*Bryodema tuberculata*) and the little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*). The Tyrolean Lech Natura 2000 site was the focus of an earlier LIFE project (LIFE00 NAT/A/007053) that reintroduced natural dynamics to the river habitat.

## Project objectives

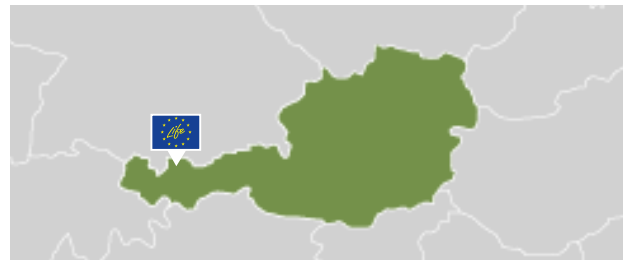
The LIFE Lech project aims to conserve the natural dynamics of the Lech river system and surrounding riparian landscapes, along with its characteristic habitats and species. Specifically, it aims to protect and develop the dynamically shaped gravel bars, remove bank stabilisation structures, widen the river, create side streams and shorten groynes. The project also aims to stop the deepening of the river bed and thus stabilise groundwater levels. This measure will preserve the surrounding riparian landscape along with Alpine river habitats and alluvial forest priority habitat and species. Another goal is to improve the way the visitors are managed in the area. Better and better-targeted information and awareness raising should help protect the breeding areas of disturbance-sensitive bird species (e.g. common sandpiper and little ringed plover) and at the same time increase the acceptance of the Natura 2000 network of sites among local people.

## Expected results

- The purchase and development of dynamically shaped river habitats on 4.3 ha of alluvial land;

LIFE15 NAT/AT/000167

LIFE Lech



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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### Duration of project:

64 months (01/09/2016 – 31/12/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

6,093,220.00

### EU contribution in euro:

3,655,932.00

- Creation of 11 river restoration sections, with a total of 10 km of 'soft' banks (without stabilisation structures);
- Development of 25 ha of dynamically shaped river areas – Alpine river habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive as additional habitats for species dependent on gravel bars (e.g. the common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), the little ringed plover and grasshoppers such as the speckled grasshopper (*Bryodema tuberculata*);
- Stable populations of common sandpiper, little ringed plover, and the highly specialised speckled grasshopper;
- Two water bodies created offering improved living conditions for amphibians (the northern crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), the European tree frog (*Hyla arborea*) and the natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*) along with the Frey's Damselfly (*Coenagrion hylas freyi*);
- Two water bodies created offering improved living conditions for crayfish, such as the stone crayfish (*Austropotamobius torrentium*), and the white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*); and
- Two water bodies created offering improved living conditions for small fish (the European bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) and the common minnow (*Phoxinus phoxinus*).

# Cross-border protection of the Great Bustard in Central Europe

## Project background

Austria and Hungary have undertaken efforts to protect and enlarge the habitat of the great bustard (*Otis tarda*), a bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. They have focused on active habitat management and on the maintenance of large areas dedicated to non-intensive farming. But the problem of overhead power lines remains great, causing fatal collisions – the main cause of bustard mortality in Austria – and jeopardising conservation measures. The Austrian LIFE great bustard project (LIFE05 NAT/A/000077) was set up to tackle this threat, but despite its success, several kilometres of power lines, which should be placed underground, still pose a danger to the species.

## Project objectives

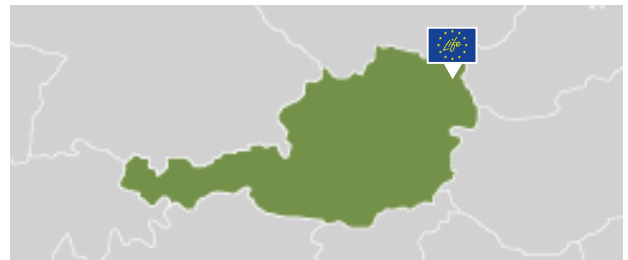
The objectives of the LIFE Great Bustard project are to reduce the threat of collision with power lines, to continue intensive habitat management efforts and to reduce predation. Specific project aims are to:

- Support and maximise the effectiveness of the cross-border protection in Austria and Hungary through the coordination of conservation measures and optimal communication;
- Increase publicity about the bustards, through short films and media coverage to spread knowledge of the special value of traditional, cultivated landscape; and
- Highlight the necessity of an integrated approach to nature conservation in the targeted Natura 2000 sites.

## Expected results

- Transfer below ground of 16 km in Austria and 25.5 km in Hungary of medium voltage power lines, with the support of the energy companies concerned and monitoring of the action's effectiveness;
- *In Austria:* the sub-population of great bustards in the 'Westliches Weinviertel' area increased from 54-56 individuals in the breeding period 2014 to at least 75 individuals in autumn 2023; the sub-population in the 'Sandboden-Praterterasse' area increased from 5-7 in the breeding period 2014 to at least 15 individuals in autumn 2023; the sub-population in 'Parndorfer Platte-Heideboden' increased from 202-285 individuals in the breeding period 2014 to at least 350-400 individuals in autumn 2023; and the sub-population in the Hansag area increased from 14-16 individuals in the breeding period 2014 to at least 30 individuals in autumn 2023;

LIFE15 NAT/AT/000834  
LIFE Great Bustard



### Beneficiary:

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#### Name of contact person

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### Duration of project:

90 months (11/07/2016 – 31/12/2023)

### Total budget in euro:

8,399,265.00

### EU contribution in euro:

5,962,905.00

- *In Hungary:* the sub-population of great bustards in the 'Kiskunsági' project site increased from 410 individuals in spring 2014 to at least 500 individuals in autumn 2023; the sub-population in 'Borsodi-sík' increased from 13 individuals in spring 2014 to at least 15 individuals in autumn 2023; the sub-population in 'Hevesi-sík' increased from 11 individuals in spring 2014 to at least 15 individuals in autumn 2023; the sub-population in 'Dévaványai-sík' increased from 425 individuals in spring 2012 to at least 475 individuals in autumn 2023; and the sub-population in the 'Vásárhelyi- és Csanádi-puszták' area increased from 32 individuals in the spring 2014 to at least 36 individuals in autumn 2023;
- Establishment of a great bustard visitor centre in Kunszentmiklós (Hungary); and
- 24 adult female great bustards fixed with GPS transmitters to monitor their movements and gather new information on habitat preference, population dynamics and the use of peripheral habitats.

# Action Plan for the Improvement of Habitats of Threatened European Species in the Demer Valley through Broad Cooperation

## Project background

The Demer is an 85 km-long river that runs through the Belgian provinces of Limburg and Vlaams Brabant. The project area is a broad and flat inland 'river polder' hosting vegetation that is unique within the Atlantic biogeographic region. The Demer Valley is particularly important for several plant and bird species of Community importance that require open areas with floodplain dynamics and marshland. A combination of factors – hydrological imbalance, fragmented habitats, disturbance caused by recreational visitors and inbreeding – has contributed to these species currently having an 'unfavourable' conservation status.

## Project objectives

The overall objective of the LIFE Delta project is to establish sustainable populations of the threatened target species within the project area, and thus to create genuine added-value to the Natura 2000 network of sites. There is considerable ecological potential for nature restoration within the sites. The specific project actions will include:

- Land acquisition and large-scale improvements to and/or extension of habitats;
- An innovative eco-hydrological study;
- Genetic research of target species;
- Creating recreational zones to avoid habitat and species disturbance; and
- Encouraging cooperation and networking.

## Expected results

- Development of flood-meadow habitats of good structure to support the endangered plant species, creeping marshwort (*Apium repens*), and to extend the existing population by adding two more populations of >500 and 150-500 specimens respectively;
- Improved conservation status of the target habitats favoured by the Marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), with three breeding pairs expected;
- Creation of 11 ha of transition mires and bogs habitat and 8 ha of reed land in transition to meadows, together with improvements to 60 ha of existing habitat. The project expects to have five breeding pairs of spotted crake (*Porzana porzana*) in these habitats;
- Restoration of 12 ha of shallow lakes, with a view to creating a sustainable population of floating waterplantain (*Luronium natans*) on an area of more than 50 m<sup>2</sup> and two smaller areas of 5-50 m<sup>2</sup>;

LIFE15 NAT/BE/000760

LIFE Delta



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#### Name of contact person

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### Duration of project:

72 months (01/09/2016 – 31/08/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

6,371,486.00

### EU contribution in euro:

3,822,891.00

- Good quality grassland restoration - resulting in 40 ha of suitable habitat for the red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) with an expansion from one to four breeding pairs;
- Creation of three ponds offering good potential to increase the great-crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) population by 30-50 individuals;
- Development of 28 ha of reed beds, together with 8.2 km of reed beds in re-channelled ditches – together offering good prospects for three pairs of Eurasian bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), and an extension from one to seven breeding pairs of little bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*). The bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*) is also expected to flourish with at least 10 breeding pairs;
- Restoration of 62 ha of wet meadow habitat in open grassland areas, subject to improved hydrological quality. This newly restored area will encourage 7-23 breeding pairs of corncrake (*Crex crex*);
- Restoration of 9 km of ditches and the creation of 4 ha of lagoons, leading to 7 ha of suitable habitat for the weather loach (*Misgurnus fossilis*); and
- Benefits to other threatened species and a considerable contribution to improving the conservation status of the Natura 2000 network of sites within the polder.



# Restoration and conservation of semi-natural and natural habitats in eastern Ardennes (Belgium)

## Project background

Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, the High Ardennes region of Belgium consisted of vast areas of heathland and grasslands, shaped by agro-pastoral management with herds of sheep and cattle. In between the high pastures lay valleys where farmers used specific irrigation techniques ('abissage') for hay management. As these traditional methods became unprofitable, mechanisation and intensification increased. Areas where this was not feasible were abandoned or planted with conifers. This has resulted in fragmentation and even disappearance of semi-natural habitats and associated species.

## Project objectives

The general objective of the LIFE NARD-US project is to recreate and restore semi-natural heathland and grassland habitats, improve their connectivity and conservation status and assure adequate management. The project targets four grasslands, meadow and bog woodland habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive including two that are priority for conservation (Nardus grasslands and bog woodland - 6230 and 91D0). It also targets two butterfly species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive, the marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) and violet copper (*Lycaena helle*).

Specifically, the project aims to:

- Improve knowledge of the habitats and target species through a detailed analysis of 25 Natura 2000 network sites within which the project area is located and in a 5 km buffer zone;
- Restore habitat to reconnect core areas. Restoration will consist of removal of trees, rotovation and harrowing of soils and sowing of grass seeds or hay transfer. Once the grassland habitats have been restored, the habitat will be maintained by mowing;
- Improve the conservation status of the targeted butterfly species through the restoration of the target habitats; and
- Develop exchange of expertise among scientific partners, NGOs and public sector agencies in Wallonia.

The work to be carried out in support of the recreation and restoration of the violet copper will be complementary to actions implemented by two earlier LIFE projects: PAPPILLONS (LIFE07 NAT/B/000039) and LIFE Eislek (LIFE11 NAT/LU/000858). In addition, measures will be taken to try to keep and develop the small marsh fritillary population that has been recently discovered in the project area.

LIFE15 NAT/BE/000774  
LIFE NARD-US



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Natagora

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#### Name of contact person

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### Duration of project:

84 months (07/07/2016 – 30/06/2023)

### Total budget in euro:

4,491,262.00

### EU contribution in euro:

3,368,446.00

### Expected results

- Restoration of species-rich Nardus grasslands (110 ha) and bog woodland habitats (25 ha);
- 60 ha of lowland and mountain hay meadows restored;
- 55 ha of habitat for the two target butterfly species restored;
- Local farmers engaged in the management of meadows with low productivity through an increased understanding of the value of the mowing products;
- Increased interest of local people in the conservation of nature and greater knowledge of the Natura 2000 network and other nature reserves; and
- Contribution to water retention and hydrologic control on several local rivers.

# Collective actions for improving the conservation status of the EU sea turtle populations

## Project background

The loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) are listed as priority species in Annex II of the Habitats Directive. In the EU, the loggerhead turtle has major nesting sites in Greece and Cyprus, and limited nesting in Italy. Most turtles from these sites remain in the eastern Mediterranean, with key foraging grounds located in EU waters, such as the Adriatic Sea (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia), Ionian Sea (Italy, Greece), and the Levantine basin (Cyprus). In the EU, the green turtle only breeds in Cyprus, and its foraging grounds in EU waters are in Cyprus and Greece (Casale & Margaritoulis, 2010). Those foraging grounds are also frequented by turtles from other Mediterranean nesting sites. Anthropogenic threats, such as high coastal development and fishing, however, are having a negative impact on sea turtles at all stages of life.

## Project objectives

The aim of the LIFE EUROTURTLES project is to improve the conservation status of the EU populations of two priority sea turtle species, the loggerhead turtle and the green turtle. The specific project objectives are to:

- Reduce the impact of anthropogenic threats at nesting sites and foraging areas;
- Improve the effectiveness of marine Natura 2000 sites for sea turtle conservation by extending current sites over turtle hot spot areas and improving management;
- Set up a consistent approach to the conservation of the EU sea turtle populations;
- Contribute to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive with consistent methods and with baseline data for improving monitoring;
- Promote the concept of shared responsibility for EU sea turtle populations and the value of natural marine resources; and
- Set up an EU network for sea turtle conservation.

## Expected results

- New regulations for the protection of 45 sea turtle nesting sites in three countries (Greece, Italy and Cyprus);
- Nest protection activities established in 19 sites in the three countries (Greece, Italy and Cyprus), resulting in 700 extra nests successfully protected per year;
- At least two marine Natura 2000 sites created/expanded in two countries (Croatia and Italy) to cover turtle hot spot areas;
- 130 fishing boats involved in voluntary dynamic fishery management to avoid disturbance in eight turtle

LIFE15 NAT/HR/000997  
LIFE EUROTURTLES



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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### Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2016 – 31/08/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

5,116,167.00

### EU contribution in euro:

3,793,167.00

- hotspot areas in six countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Malta), resulting in around 700 fewer turtles captured per year (2 100 during the project and more afterwards);
- 290 fishing boats in 10 areas in five countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Slovenia) informed about on-board best practices to reduce sea turtle mortality, resulting in more than 600 turtles correctly treated per year (2 000 during the project and more afterwards);
- Modified fishing gear (set net) to reduce turtle catch introduced in three countries (Croatia, Cyprus and Slovenia) through a minimum of 20 fishing boats;
- Two coastal foraging areas in two countries (Cyprus and Greece) cleaned of ghost fishing gear;
- Three rescue centres and rescue networks in three countries (Croatia, Cyprus and Greece) improved, resulting in their capacity to treat more than 40 additional turtles per year (160 during the project and more afterwards);
- An app for smartphones to report sea turtle encounters/catches, used by fishermen for avoiding sea turtle hotspots and also as an awareness tool (a public competition); and
- A report and guidelines on best practices for EU sea turtle conservation.

## Integrated conservation management of priority habitat type 9590\* in the Natura 2000 site Koilada Kedron-Kampos

### Project background

The Cyprus cedar (*Cedrus brevifolia*) is an evergreen long-lived coniferous tree that is endemic to Cyprus. Its natural distribution is very limited: it occurs only in a small area at the peak of Tripylos mountain, in the Paphos forest, in fragmented, scattered stands, over six separate geographical areas, mostly within the Koilada Kedron-Kampos Natura 2000 network site. These scattered areas cover a total of 290 ha, of which 106 ha are pure stands. Cyprus cedar forests are listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive. They face a number of threats linked to climate change, including dieback caused by periodic droughts, insect blights and the fact that because the species grows at the top of the tree line, there is no possibility to migrate to higher altitudes as a means of adaptation. Other threats include competition from the lone pine (*Pinus brutia*) and forest fires.

### Project objectives

The main conservation objective of the LIFE-KEDROS project is to maintain the priority habitat in the Koilada Kedron-Kampos Natura 2000 network site, in good conservation status in the long term. Specific project objectives are to:

- Reduce the possibility of habitat loss as a result of a single large forest fire incident;
- Enhance the habitat's resilience and its capacity to adapt to climate change;
- Implement ex-situ conservation measures, including the storage of seeds in a local seed bank and the creation of a new population (trial) of cedar trees within the Troodos National Forest Park at higher altitudes;
- Enhance natural regeneration of the cedar stands;
- Restore and expand the habitat within the project site and incorporate a patch of Cyprus cedar forest at Exo Milos into the Koilada Kedron-Kampos Natura 2000 network site;
- Mitigate the effects of intense competition;
- Improve other biotic and abiotic factors that are important for the health and vigour of Cyprus cedar stands and the stability of local ecosystems;
- Raise public awareness and disseminate the project results to local and overseas managers and scientists; and
- Demonstrate that carefully designed management interventions in natural/valuable ecosystems can achieve conservation objectives and may be preferable to letting nature take its course.

LIFE15 NAT/CY/000850  
LIFE- KEDROS



#### Beneficiary:

##### Name of beneficiary

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##### Name of contact person

Takis TSINTIDES

#### Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2016 – 31/08/2020)

#### Total budget in euro:

1,413,304.00

#### EC contribution in euro:

968,330.00

#### Expected results

- The implementation of silvicultural treatments within the natural and artificial stands of the targeted habitat, leading to the sound management of an area of 200 ha;
- An increase of the habitat connectivity and stability by restoration of 12 ha of degraded areas of habitat and permanent closure of 10 km of selected forest roads;
- A 4 ha expansion of Cyprus cedar forests;
- Management of the populations of seed feeders and bark beetles and the installation of 10 artificial barn owl nests, 20 bat boxes and 10 insect traps;
- Ex-situ conservation of the habitat's genetic diversity through the storage of Cyprus cedar seed lots from three successive years in a seed bank and through the establishment of a new, 8 ha plot in the Amiantos mine;
- A fire protection plan for Cyprus cedar forests, together with the implementation of fire prevention measures;
- Implementation of anti-erosion measures (e.g. dry stone walling) and improvement of water infiltration capacity;
- Technical guidelines for the management of Cyprus cedar forests, including an analysis of the cost effectiveness of specific techniques; and
- Dissemination of replicable project actions through four workshops, a project video, online and printed media and a stakeholders' committee.

## The rescue of endemic priority plant species *Minuartia smejkalii*

### Project background

*Minuartia smejkalii* is a postglacial flowering plant that is endemic to the Czech Republic. A type of sandwort, *M. smejkalii* is nowadays only found in two Natura 2000 network sites in the country. However, its population has undergone a 65% decline in the last five years and in some parts of the project sites it is already extinct. The main causes of this drop are forestry and associated natural processes, notably the increased formation of dense pine forests that create habitats that are not suitable for this plant, and human disturbance (unlicensed angling, fly tipping, vandalism and intensive collection of flowers).

### Project objectives

The Life for *Minuartia* project aims to rescue the priority endemic species, *M. smejkalii*, from the threat of extinction by enhancing its population at two Natura 2000 network sites. This will be achieved by addressing the main threats to the species and by establishing sustainable and practical management at the sites where it is found.

To achieve its main goal, the project will work towards the following objectives:

- Restoration of 17 ha of natural sites through various management best practices;
- Establishment of self-sustainable ex-situ conservation to be used for plant reintroduction;
- Direct enhancement of population size by sowing of *M. smejkalii* seeds and reintroduction of plants on a site of recent extinction;
- Involvement of the local community in reducing vandalism and plant collection by applying a participatory approach that will be tested for the first time in the country; and
- Increased awareness of Natura 2000 and dissemination of results at local and EU level.

The project will contribute to the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, by acting to improve the conservation status of a priority species of Community interest and by incorporating best practices in conservation. Preserving the endangered *M. smejkalii* will have a positive impact on the halting of biodiversity loss at both national and European level and thus will contribute to the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.

LIFE15 NAT/CZ/000818  
Life for *Minuartia*



#### Beneficiary:

##### Name of beneficiary

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##### Name of contact person

Hana PÁNKOVÁ

#### Duration of project:

54 months (07/07/2016 – 31/12/2020)

#### Total budget in euro:

735,940.00

#### EC contribution in euro:

551,954.00

#### Expected results

- 40% increase in *M. smejkalii* population;
- 50% of the sites within the species' distribution revived through suppression of plant competition on 15.7 ha, removal of the humus layer on 1.37 ha to allow spontaneous colonisation by 20 specimens, tree clearing on 5.75 ha to enhance plant flowering by at least 10%, and reduction of excessive grazing by some 20% to decrease plant damage by 30%;
- Self-sustainable ex-situ protection with 600 individuals (3/4 of total population size in nature), by sowing of seeds from 300 individuals and transplanting of 1 500 pre-cultivated plants;
- 30% increase in *M. smejkalii* population;
- 90% reduction in vandalism and plant collection by blocking road access to an illegal waste dump and through the involvement of at least 10 local people in active species protection; and
- 10% increase awareness and dissemination of results to at least 60 000 people through a range of activities, including a project website, social media and print publications, activities targeting schools and tourists, as well as expert seminars.

# Improvement of conservation status of habitat types and species of European importance at abandoned military areas

## Project background

Following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, many army firing ranges and training sites in former Warsaw Pact members, such as the Czech Republic, fell into disuse. The cessation of military training, abandonment of sites and succession processes has resulted in biodiversity loss. The impact of this trend has become more and more apparent in recent years.

Such abandoned military areas are important for scientific purposes and nature conservation for a number of reasons. The majority were established in the late 1940s and 1950s, when landscape was much more diverse and hosted varieties of fauna and flora with higher abundance. The military importance of these areas helped preserve a diverse range of landscape required for training. As a result, a wide variety of species can be found on a single tract of military land. Such areas also avoided the intensive use of chemicals in farming and forestry.

## Project objectives

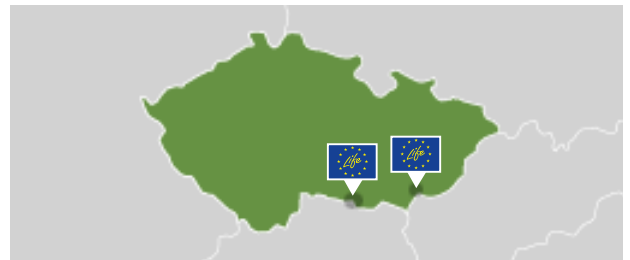
The overall objective of the Military LIFE for Nature project is to ensure the suitable management of exceptionally valuable natural sites formed by military training. A range of management approaches will create the optimum conditions for ensuring a favourable conservation status for the rare and endangered habitat types and species found in the project sites: Blšanský chlum, Mašovická střelnice, Havranické vřesoviště, Načeratický kopec and Pánov.

The target habitat types include semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies and priority Pannonic sand steppes, and others such as inland dunes, dry heaths, juniper formations, and siliceous rock – all listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive as priority for conservation. Also targeted is the Annex II listed priority butterfly species Jersey tiger (*Euplagia (Callimorpha) quadripunctaria*).

Specific objectives are to:

- Restore open sand with occurrence of two habitat types at the Pánov site and introduce long-term sustainable management;
- Extend substantially an area of two habitat types at the areas currently influenced by vegetation succession processes at the Načeratický kopec site and to prepare them for long-term sustainable management;
- Introduce breeding of large native herbivores (horses) at the Mašovická střelnice and Havranické vřesoviště sites and thus to prepare suitable conditions for four

LIFE15 NAT/CZ/001028  
Military LIFE for Nature



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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#### Name of contact person

Lenka VOKASOVÁ

### Duration of project:

67 months (01/09/2016 - 31/03/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

2,339,875.00

### EC contribution in euro:

1,691,906.00

habitat types and the herbaceous perennial (*Pulsatilla grandis*);

- Provide suitable conditions for the occurrence of the Jersey tiger at the Blšanský chlum site; and
- Promote various management methods for maintaining favourable status of the habitat types and species of the abandoned military training areas.

### Expected results

- Restoration of 55 ha of inland dunes and priority Pannonic sand steppe habitats at the Pánov site;
- Elimination of continuous shrub vegetation and the rapidly-growing invasive alien plant species, black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), from a 48 ha area prior to restoration of semi-dry grasslands and siliceous rock habitat types;
- Introduction of permanent grazing by native breeds of horses on 25 ha at the Mašovická střelnice site;
- Construction of a 25 ha enclosure for native breeds of horses at the Havranické vřesoviště site; and
- Provision of 18 ha of habitat suitable for the Jersey tiger at the Blšanský chlum site.

# Actions for improved conservation status of the thick shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*) in Denmark

## Project background

According to the most recent Article 17 report of the Habitats Directive, the conservation status of the thick shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*) is 'unfavourable – bad' in both Denmark and the wider Continental biogeographical area. Until recently the species was considered to be extinct in Denmark. However, in 2004, it was discovered at one major water course (Odense Å) and more recently (2007) in the Torpe Kanal, a tributary to the Suså river system.

Currently the Suså river system is unfavourable to the river mussel due to a number of threats such as poor physical conditions and a lack of continuity. In addition the host fish, common minnow (*Phoxinus phoxinus*) and bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), for larvae (glochidia) are not present in the water course.

## Project objectives

The main objective of the UC LIFE Denmark project is to contribute to obtaining a 'favourable' conservation status for the thick shelled river mussel in Denmark and in the Continental biogeographic region. This aim will be achieved by increasing the number of available habitat areas for the species and by reintroducing it into the Suså river system. The project will also benefit endangered habitat types listed in the Habitats Directive, such as water courses of plain to montane levels and hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities, and the Annex II listed fish, brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), and spined loach (*Cobitis taenia*) – hence the designation of the Suså site within the Natura 2000 network.

## Expected results

- Contribution towards a 'favourable' conservation status of the thick shelled river mussel;
- Physical water course improvements on around 18 km, enabling appropriate bottom substrate and continuity conditions for the river mussel and its host fish;
- A comprehensive stocking programme of the host fish. Minnows and bullheads infected by mussel larvae and released into the river system will create a starting point for rebuilding a viable, reproductive population of the river mussel on 18 km;
- The population of the thick shelled river mussel will be increased from zero to 0.1-0.2 individuals/m<sup>2</sup> of water course, equivalent to about 10 000 new individuals;

LIFE15 NAT/DK/000948  
UC LIFE Denmark



### Beneficiary:

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Malene CALLESEN DALL

### Duration of project:

64 months (01/09/2016 – 31/12/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

2,077,261.00

### EU contribution in euro:

1,246,356.00

- Presence of the river mussel in one additional water course system (it is currently found in two water course systems in Denmark). The population and the gene pool will be markedly more robust at the national level;
- Reproductive cycle of the thick shelled river mussel secured by reintroducing host fish into the Suså water course;
- The sites' continued protection under the Nature Protection Act., which together with their Natura 2000 network designations, will ensure the highest legal protection;
- Increase in the diversity of other habitat types;
- Raised public awareness of water course biodiversity in Denmark and the EU through a targeted communication strategy that includes public meetings, information boards and a website;
- Support for improved genetic diversity and ecotourism; and
- Adoption of best management and restoration practices encouraged through networking with similar projects in Europe.

# The wild forest reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*) of Finland: Conservation and recovery of historic range

## Project background

The Finnish forest reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*) is a subspecies of the large and widespread reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) population. The (sub) speciation took place during the last ice age, since which major changes have occurred in the Finnish forest reindeer's range. Once commonplace in Fennoscandia and north-western Russia, by the early 1900s, the sub-species had become extinct in Finland. Today, the population is around 4 500, as a result of migration from Karelia in Russia and the release of captive-bred stock.

The Finnish forest reindeer is listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive and its conservation status was assessed as 'unfavourable-inadequate' in the most recent Article 17 reporting. It is listed as 'near threatened' in the 2010 Red List of Finnish Species. The major threats to the sub-species are excessive mortality caused by large carnivores and traffic, and the potential genetic dangers of in-breeding. Habitat change is exacerbating large carnivore predation.

## Project objectives

The main objective of WildForestReindeerLIFE is to achieve a 'favourable' conservation status for the Finnish forest reindeer by 2023. This will be done by extending and defragmenting its range, reducing mortality rates and improving genetic diversity in wild and captive bred populations in Finland and Sweden. If the project is a success, it is hoped it will enable relevant authorities and stakeholders to start reintroducing the sub-species in other parts of Fennoscandia. Specific objectives are to:

- Increase the range of the species via reintroductions in two Natura 2000 areas;
- Prevent cross breeding with domestic reindeer;
- Improve the genetic diversity and viability of a small and isolated in-situ subpopulation in Finland;
- Improve the genetic diversity of the ex-situ population both in Finland and in Sweden;
- Reduce species mortality;
- Improve habitat in multi-use forest landscapes; and
- Improve the knowledge base of local communities and the general public in terms of Finnish forest reindeer conservation and management.

## Expected results

- A total of 121 Finnish forest reindeer will be tagged with GPS collars;
- A census of the sub-species carried out in 2017 and 2018 and a follow-up census to determine the results of the project taking place in 2022 and 2023;

LIFE15 NAT/FI/000881  
WildForestReindeerLIFE



### Beneficiary:

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### Duration of project:

84 months (01/10/2016 – 30/09/2023)

### Total budget in euro:

5,164,538.00

### EC contribution in euro:

3,054,098.00

- Assessment of levels of sub-species mortality due to traffic and illegal killing;
- Mapping of potential habitat on state and private land, preparation of education material for habitat recognition, and selection of a set of target areas;
- Reintroduction of more than 30 Finnish forest reindeer in the Seitsemien and Lauhanvuori Natura 2000 network sites, including six tagged animals;
- Local acceptance of the reintroduction of the sub-species in the Seitsemien region;
- An increase of the Ähtäri-Soini-Karstula subpopulation following the release 20-30 individuals;
- An increase in the captive bred (ex-situ) Finnish forest reindeer population from eight to 14;
- An end to hybridisation and mingling of domestic and Finnish forest reindeer in the project areas;
- A reduction in sub-species mortality from traffic and more accurate identification of the causes of mortality;
- An updated and legally-binding management plan for the sub-species in Finland;
- Completion of a strategy for replicating the reintroduction of the sub-species elsewhere in the EU; and
- A dissemination plan including training of guides and displays in zoos.

# Control strategies Of Alien invasive Amphibians in France

## Project background

The American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) and the African clawed frog (*Xenopus laevis*) are two invasive amphibian species. They are a major threat for wetlands because of their disruptive impact on autochthonous communities (competition, predation, transmission of pathogens) and their strong colonisation capacity (high productivity and high dispersal). In France, the American bullfrog can be found in Gironde, Bassin d'Arcachon and Dordogne (Aquitaine), and Sologne (Centre), while the African clawed frog is present in a single area straddling two departments, Deux-Sèvres and Maine-et-Loire. Some populations are monitored and controlled, but there is no coordination at national level and insufficient sharing of resources and know-how. Furthermore, there is no methodology for identifying the appropriate control strategy for each species.

## Project objectives

The LIFE CROAA project aims to completely eradicate the American bullfrog from 29 sites in Sologne and eight sites in Gironde and to significantly reduce the population of this invasive alien species (IAS) in Dordogne as a precursor to total eradication post-LIFE. At Bassin d'Arcachon, where the number of colonised sites is unknown, the project plans to prevent the American bullfrog population expanding. It also aims to limit the expansion of the African clawed frog along dispersal corridors. Other specific project objectives are to:

- Develop a methodology for selecting control strategies for invasive populations of amphibians when the size of the colonised area impedes eradication (e.g. African clawed frog in Deux-Sèvres/Maine-et-Loire and American bullfrog in Gironde);
- Prevent novel introductions by identifying major pathways for alien amphibians and by raising awareness among stakeholders involved in the trade and exchange of animals; and
- Create an early detection and assessment system for the introduction of alien amphibians thanks to a network of local stakeholders (local population, authorities, pet shops, laboratories using alien species and amateur enthusiasts), the development of a mapping tool and the expertise of IAS managers.

The project actions targeting IAS will contribute to the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and the implementation of the EU Regulation on IAS. The project team will attend pet trade shows and provide training to those

LIFE15 NAT/FR/000864  
LIFE CROAA



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### Duration of project:

72 months (01/09/2016 - 31/08/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

3,430,179.00

### EU contribution in euro:

2,058,107.00

responsible for ensuring compliance with agreements on alien species. The aim is to assist the French government in strengthening and implementing EU regulation.

### Expected results

- Development of a model for selecting the optimal control strategy for an invasive population of amphibians;
- Demonstration of new capture methods that are 20% more efficient;
- The eradication or significant reduction of small populations of American bullfrog;
- Raised awareness of alien amphibians among the main pet shop chains, laboratories, pet frog and toad owners and nature NGOs;
- The creation of a network of trappers across the range of the African clawed frog, extending from the Deux-Sèvres into areas where the impact of the population must be sharply reduced; and
- The creation of a network of observers (both professionals and volunteers) willing to operate an early detection and assessment system for alien amphibians. The expertise developed by the project team and networking with other groups of experts on freshwater ecosystems will strengthen the capacity to assess novel threats and to propose appropriate national responses to IAS.



## Hessische Rhön – Mountain grasslands, rough grazing and their birds

### Project background

The district of Fulda in Hesse is a rural area with a long agricultural tradition. The Hessian Rhön, the eastern part of the district, has a unique historic and cultural landscape. It has been a UNESCO biosphere reserve since 1991. In this grassland-dominated low mountain landscape, traditional agricultural land use and the protection of nature and the cultural landscape are at the forefront of nature conservation activities. In particular, dairy farming and the grazing of grasslands with goats and sheep have been common practices for centuries – despite the high elevation (rising to 950 m above sea level) of the area.

The management of the district's Natura 2000 sites – i.e. the grassland habitat types, bird species and a butterfly species – requires re-organisation to take into consideration both long- and short-term land-use impacts. Nature conservation and agriculture activities that take into account the operational situations of full-time and part-time farms must be developed.

### Project objectives

The LIFE Rhön grassland birds project's overall objective is to implement important strategic protection priorities in line with the Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for Natura 2000 in Germany. By sustainably improving the quality of the targeted habitats, the project will increase habitat types of the Habitats Directive, as well as species listed in the Birds Directive and the population of the butterfly marsh fritillary. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Increase the area of the priority habitat types of the Habitats Directive, semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (important orchid sites), and improve the habitat quality of further sites;
- Optimise the habitat of eight meadow-breeding birds or species breeding in shrubs and trees listed in the Birds Directive;
- Optimise the feeding habitat of the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), a Birds Directive listed species;
- Increase the habitat of the rare butterfly species, the marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*);
- Establish the sustainable maintenance of the targeted habitat types and species; and
- Optimise the effectiveness of maintenance regimes.

Furthermore, the project will enlist the support of farmers as long-term partners for nature conservation, especially for the conservation and strengthening of Natura 2000 network objectives.

LIFE15 NAT/DE/000290  
LIFE Rhön grassland birds



#### Beneficiary:

##### Name of beneficiary

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Torsten RAAB

#### Duration of project:

72 months (01/10/2016 – 30/09/2022)

#### Total budget in euro:

6,568,430.00

#### EU contribution in euro:

3,941,058.00

#### Expected results

- Restoration and the creation of habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, such as mountain hay meadows, priority species-rich Nardus grasslands, semi-natural dry grasslands and lowland hay meadows on 160 ha. For these sites adequate and viable land-use concepts will be developed and implemented in a participative way;
- Newly established habitats for the marsh fritillary on 65 ha;
- Optimisation of habitats for meadow-breeding birds such as meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*) and corncrake (*Crex crex*) on 200 ha;
- A 20% enlargement of extensively used sites in habitats of the bird species, the redbacked shrike (*Lanius collurio*) and northern shrike (*Lanius excubitor*), as well as the tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*) to a minimum of 80 ha;
- Optimisation of rough grazing for meadow-breeders and shrike species on 500 ha;
- Establishment of 20 feeding ponds for the black stork; and
- A strategy for farmer involvement tested and the results transferred on the total area (around 36 ha) of the Hessische Rhön SPA site.

# Improvement of habitats and population connectivity for endangered amphibians in the city region of Aachen

## Project background

The amphibian species, the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive, along with the Annex IV-listed midwife toad (*Alytes obstetricans*) and natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), are all endangered in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and in Germany as a whole. The former two species have a 'bad' conservation status in the Continental region, as well as in the Atlantic region, while the natterjack toad has an 'insufficient' conservation status in both regions. Their conservation status is also 'unfavourable' in Germany and at EU level. Furthermore, the yellow-bellied toad is threatened with extinction in NRW.

The loss of suitable habitats - which in the project region is due to the decline in the use of spoil tips (coal), military training areas and excavations with subsequent succession or re-cultivation without regard to the needs of species - causes a rapid decline of all three target species.

## Project objectives

The objective of the LIFE-Amphibienverbund project is to improve the conservation status of the three target amphibian species (the yellow-bellied, midwife and natterjack toad) in the district of Aachen. For the yellow-bellied toad the measures are concentrated in seven Natura 2000 sites around Stolberg, with cross-linking axes between them. The natterjack and midwife toads will be strengthened where they occur naturally in areas outside the Natura 2000 network.

Specific objectives are to:

- Improve the quality of the aquatic and terrestrial habitats, while reducing impairments and increasing the population size of the currently occurring target amphibian species;
- Stabilise cross-linkage of occurrences by the project activities and improve coherence of the Natura 2000 network in the Stolberg region and Wurm valley;
- Reduce long-term maintenance demands for the preservation of the amphibian habitats;
- Reintroduce two yellow-bellied toad populations with the ability to reproduce in two Natura 2000 areas;
- Disseminate the findings obtained and motivate other stakeholders to take action for the target species (replication and transfer of knowledge); and
- Carry out environmental education and public awareness raising.

LIFE15 NAT/DE/000743  
LIFE-Amphibienverbund



### Beneficiary:

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#### Name of contact person

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### Duration of project:

108 months (01/01/2017 – 31/12/2025)

### Total budget in euro:

4,220,892.00

### EU contribution in euro:

2,532,535.00

## Expected results

- Three regional amphibian action plans for the yellow-bellied midwife and natterjack toad species, as well as local action plans for all 31 project areas (nine areas, 13 conservation areas and nine stepping stone corridors);
- A genetic recommendation for resettlement of the target species;
- Amphibian habitats in Natura 2000 areas secured by compensation (8 ha) and purchase (2 ha);
- Amphibian ponds (683) created or optimised, 13.3 ha of terrestrial habitats improved, 28 hiding places created and 5.4 ha of agricultural areas cultivated in an amphibian-friendly way. Thus, about 20 distribution areas (nine of natterjack toads, five of midwife toads and five of yellow-bellied toads) optimised and at least 14 new amphibian habitats will be accessible to settlement of the target species;
- Two breeder groups for yellow-bellied toads established;
- Two yellow-bellied toad occurrences with the ability to reproduce re-established;
- Detailed plans for 80 areas of specific measures; and
- Eighty contracts of use to ensure long-term safeguarding of the measures.

# Development of a habitat network for the Violet Copper to promote a sustainable metapopulation

## Project background

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

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

## Project objectives

The LIFE-Patches & Corridors project aims to improve the conservation status of the violet copper butterfly and its supporting habitat types, three priority habitats of the Habitats Directive – alluvial- bog- and Tilio-Acerion forests of the Northern Eifel mountains. The overall objective is to establish a habitat network within and between Natura 2000 sites in order to sustain violet copper (sub)-populations. Corridors and stepping stones will be established by removing obstacles and developing new habitats.

Specific objectives are to:

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

LIFE15 NAT/DE/000745  
LIFE-Patches & Corridors



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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#### Name of contact person

Josef WEGGE

### Duration of project:

72 months (01/01/2017 – 31/12/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

2,455,479.00

### EU contribution in euro:

1,473,288.00

herb fringe communities and alluvial forests, including eliminating Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) in parts of the project area.

### Expected results

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

# Bird conservation in Lesser Prespa Lake: benefitting local communities and building a climate change resilient ecosystem

## Project background

Prespa National Park contains two Natura 2000 network sites, 49 different habitat types, 70 vegetation types and more than 2 000 plant species. Its lakes host 23 fish species, including eight endemics, and the park contains 11 amphibian, 21 reptile and 60 mammal species. Furthermore, 272 bird species can be found in the park, of which 164 breed and 88 are listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. The park hosts the largest breeding colonies in the world of the Dalmatian pelican (1 100 pairs) and the great white pelican, as well as over 1 000 pairs of the pygmy cormorant. Conversion of its wetland habitats into agricultural land and surface irrigation have degraded the lake's ecosystem, reducing wetland areas. But recent conservation efforts have shown that conservation management can benefit the waterbird populations.

## Project objectives

The overall aim of the LIFE Prespa Waterbirds project is to improve the conservation status of target bird species in the area by addressing the limited foraging areas for wading birds and obstructions to potential foraging sites and spawning of fish. It will also tackle the potentially devastating impact of avian flu on pelican meta-populations and the impact of climate change. Specific objectives are to:

- Increase suitable feeding habitats of the target species;
- Increase food availability by improving spawning grounds and access for fish species;
- Minimise the target species' mortality risk and breeding failure due to reed-bed fires;
- Increase knowledge and capacity-building along the flyway on how to respond to disease outbreaks in pelicans;
- Benefit the local community by providing reed biomass for agricultural fields;
- Increase ecosystem resilience by habitat management;
- Enhance collaboration on wetland management;
- Ensure transferability and replicability of project methods and techniques; and
- Increase environmental awareness of the local community.

## Expected results

- Management of up to 50 ha of wetland habitats/year;
- Dalmatian pelican: increase in breeding success, around 250 more fledglings/year;
- Great white pelican: 10% increase in breeding success;
- Pygmy cormorant: reduce inter-annual variation of breeding population by 10%;
- Ferruginous duck: increase breeding population by 50%;
- Great white egret: increase in breeding success by 10%;

LIFE15 NAT/GR/000936

LIFE Prespa Waterbirds



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP)

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#### Name of contact person

Athanasios KASTRITIS

### Duration of project:

60 months (01/10/2016 – 30/09/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

1,798,906.00

### EC contribution in euro:

1,060,431.00

- Little egret: average number of breeding pairs not falling below 27; inter-annual variation will decrease to 12 pairs;
- Average number of breeding pairs of night heron not falling below 107 and squacco heron not below 27;
- Glossy ibis: vegetation management will allow nesting every year regardless of amount of flooding;
- At least 20% increase in area of Mediterranean tall humid grasslands;
- Vegetation management of up to 3 km of drainage ditches per year;
- Elimination of waterbird nests destroyed by wildfires;
- Restoration of two upper stream areas;
- Two feeding sites of high quality for all target species;
- Up to 3 000 tonnes of reed biomass for soil conditioning;
- Dissemination of a national contingency plan for responding to outbreaks of disease;
- Establishment of a transboundary committee for wetland management and monitoring;
- Development of a climate change vulnerability assessment protocol;
- Training of up to 40 site managers and 20 students on wetland management and monitoring; and
- The local population, including stakeholders and school-children made aware of the project messages, objectives and achievements.

# Improving Human-Bear Coexistence Conditions in Municipality of Amyntaio

## Project background

The Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) is listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. There are estimated to be at least 500 brown bears in Greece, of which around a quarter are found in the project area, the municipality of Amyntaio in the Western Macedonia region of north-west Greece. This bear population is affected by bottleneck phenomena related to habitat disruption – in particular, the recently constructed section of the Egnatia highway connecting the town of Florina to the border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The construction of small-scale irrigation dams has further fragmented the forest and mountainous habitat of the target species.

One in every three brown bear deaths in the project area between 1996 and 2015 – or 20 bear deaths in total - has been attributed to human causes. Mortality rates of 7.8% in the project area are above the sustainable threshold of 4-6%. Bear-human conflicts relate to the damage caused by bears to agricultural production; bears becoming used to the presence of people and therefore losing their natural shyness; interference caused by legal or illegal hunting activities; and traffic fatalities due to the fragmentation of core bear habitat areas or population connectivity corridors. The gender ratio of bears is also imbalanced due to the increased vulnerability of certain age classes, females with yearling cubs, dispersing young adults and vagrant adults. These factors may cause the collapse of the population's demographic structure, low reproductive success, negative population trends and compromised population viability in the long term. Furthermore, the brown bear is also threatened by the degradation and loss of its habitat. The potential of the brown bear as a flagship species for sustainable economic development is often overlooked.

## Project objectives

The overall objective of LIFE AMYBEAR is to improve the conservation status of the brown bear by achieving sustainable human-bear coexistence through the minimisation of negative impacts. Specific objectives are to:

- Maintain bear mortality at a sustainable level not exceeding 6% of the minimum estimated population;
- Maintain the number of yearly reproductive females at a level of no less than 10-12% of the minimum estimated bear population in the project area;
- Improve the tolerance to the presence of bears of specific target groups (i.e. cattle, sheep and crop farmers, hunters and beekeepers);
- Improve awareness of the added value of the target species to the attractiveness of the project area;

LIFE15 NAT/GR/001108  
LIFE AMYBEAR



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Lever Development Consultants S.A.

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#### Name of contact person

Theodoros KARIPIDIS

### Duration of project:

46 months (01/10/2016 – 31/07/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

1,521,156.00

### EC contribution in euro:

1,140,116.00

- Improve the know-how of local authorities on specific management techniques; and
- Continue self-sustaining mechanisms supporting certain types of preventive measures on a long-term basis.

### Expected results

- Human-caused bear mortality maintained at less than 6% of the estimated minimum bear population;
- The number of yearly reproductive females not less than 10-12% of the minimum estimated bear population in the targeted area;
- At least 10 human-bear interference cases handled successfully and managed on an annual basis;
- Elimination of bear traffic fatalities, specifically related to the national road network;
- Increased tolerance of bears;
- Improved awareness of bear coexistence options among cattle, sheep and crop farmers, hunters and beekeepers in the project area;
- Improved capacity of competent local authorities to manage bear-human conflicts; and
- Installation and use of specific preventive measures (electric fences and livestock guarding dogs) on a long-term basis.

# Conservation of the eastern imperial eagle by decreasing human-caused mortality in the Pannonian Region

## Project background

Thanks to conservation efforts started in the 1980s, the Hungarian population of the eastern imperial eagle has come back from the brink of extinction, reaching 160 pairs by 2014. The Pannonian biogeographical region (which includes all of Hungary and parts of Slovakia, Romania, Czech Republic, Croatia, Serbia and Ukraine) now holds some 220 pairs of this priority raptor species (Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive). However, this small population is still vulnerable. Predator persecution, especially from illegal poisoning, is the main threat for the eastern imperial eagle in the Pannonian biogeographical region, representing more than 30% of known mortality causes. Persecution also affects other protected raptor species, including another Annex I listed bird, the saker falcon. Combating illegal bird poisoning is in line with the anti-poison policy of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.

## Project objectives

The main objective of the PannonEagle Life project is to increase the population of the eastern imperial eagle in the Pannonian biogeographical region through a significant decrease in deaths from non-natural causes, i.e. persecution incidents.

Specific objectives are to:

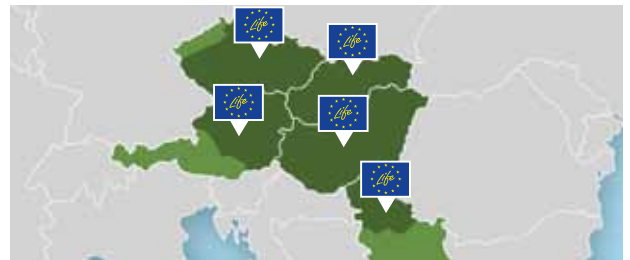
- Increase the chance of detecting illegal activities and of successful prosecutions;
- Increase understanding of the true, minimal impact of raptors on game species and encourage raptor-friendly game management methods; and
- Increase public awareness of the conservation importance of the eastern imperial eagle and of the possible consequences of persecution.

## Expected results

- An increase of more than 10% in the breeding population of the eastern imperial eagle in the Pannonian region (to more than 250 breeding pairs). This would result in a 9% increase in the EU population;
- A breeding rate of over 1.0 fledglings per breeding pair during the project;
- A reduction in the number of eastern imperial eagle and saker falcon deaths caused by persecution to fewer than five per year. The annual mortality rate of the eastern imperial eagle is expected to be less than 12% by the end of the project;

LIFE15 NAT/HU/000902

PannonEagle Life



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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#### Name of contact person

Marton HORVATH

### Duration of project:

66 months (01/10/2016 – 31/03/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

3,583,577.00

### EC contribution in euro:

2,682,771.00

- Rehabilitation of more than 30% of eastern imperial eagles and saker falcons injured in persecution incidents;
- More than 500 stakeholders from target groups to visit the eagle rehabilitation centre;
- At least three successful convictions of individuals prosecuted for illegal killing of the target raptor species; and
- More than 1 000 media reports about the project, reaching an audience of over 10 million, with more than a million visitors to the project's website and social media channels.

# Re-establishment of the Ribbed Limpet (*Patella ferruginea*) in Ligurian MPAs by Restocking and Controlled Reproduction

## Project background

The geomorphological features of the Portofino MPA promontory favour the development of a rich and highly diversified benthic fauna and flora. The area hosts the most important shallow-water coral population of the Ligurian Sea and contains significant gorgonian populations. The fish community includes such species as the brown grouper, brown meagre, dentex and barracuda. The coastal areas are also home to the ribbed Mediterranean limpet (*Patella ferruginea*), an endemic gastropod mollusc from the western Mediterranean and one of the most endangered invertebrates of the entire basin.

The species is included in Annex II of the SPAMI Convention, along with Appendix 2 of the Bern Convention and Annex IV of the Habitats Directive. Furthermore, the ribbed Mediterranean limpet is a target species for evaluating good marine environmental status (GES) in line with the Italian Marine Strategy and EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). This species, however, has all but disappeared due to pollution and being harvested for food and bait by recreational fishermen.

## Project objectives

The general objective of the RE.LIFE project is to reintroduce the ribbed Mediterranean limpet to the Portofino MPA and to other Ligurian MPAs (Bergeggi and Cinque Terre) included in four Natura 2000 network sites, as well as to raise awareness of the importance of conserving this species. To achieve this goal, the project will carry out the following actions:

- Define a protocol for the transfer of limpets from high- to low-density areas and transfer specimens from the Tavolara MPA in northern Sardinia to Portofino; and
- Set up limpet hatcheries and define a protocol for controlled reproduction and restocking. The hatcheries will help extend the repopulation process and its replication in other MPAs, as well as restoring the original population in Tavolara MPA through the transfer of reared individuals.

The project will contribute to the implementation of the MSFD as well as help carry out the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.

## Expected results

- Biodiversity recovery and restoration of ribbed Mediterranean limpet by re-establishing a local population, starting with 100 specimens;

LIFE15 NAT/IT/000771  
RE.LIFE



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Consorzio di Gestione dell'Area Marina Protetta di Portofino

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#### Name of contact person

Giorgio FANCIULLI

### Duration of project:

48 months (01/10/2016 – 30/09/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

1,247,061.00

### EU contribution in euro:

748,235.00

- Reproduction and production of juveniles (some 6 000 larvae per year) to be introduced to the target areas for restocking;
- Full recovery and new population development of ribbed Mediterranean limpet in the target area;
- Restoration of the population translocated from Tavolara by introducing juveniles from controlled reproduction; and
- Strengthened territorial promotion and reinforcement of the 'clean sea' message.

# GRowing AviaN in Apennine's Tuscany HeathLAnds

## Project background

Heathlands are mostly habitats of anthropic origin, which have flourished thanks to active human management and relevant socio-economic activities, such as the exploitation of heath and pastures for agriculture. In the last decades, as a consequence of the abandonment of traditional activities, the target area has been subjected to major environmental changes. In fact the original dry heath vegetation cover is being replaced by trees and shrubs. These changes are leading to the reduction of suitable breeding areas and feeding grounds for many birds listed in the EU Birds Directive.

## Project objectives

Situated in the Natura 2000 network site, "Pastures and mountain bushes of Pratomagno", the LIFE GRANATHA project's overall aim is to improve the conservation status of the populations of a number of Annex I listed species of the Birds Directive. The target species are the Dartford warbler (*Sylvia undata*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*), Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*), tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*), European nightjar (*Caprimulgus aeuropaeus*), short-toed snake eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), and the European honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*). In particular, the project aims to reverse the negative trend affecting the conservation status of the heathland habitats, and to ensure their sustainable management in the long term, i.e. by restoring their ecological functionality and by fostering the development of the production and marketing of brushes and related products/tools from the heath scrubs. Specific objectives are to:

- Improve the conservation status of Dartford warbler, woodlark, red-backed shrike, Montagu's harrier, tawny pipit and European nightjar and increase their numbers by restoring their nesting habitat;
- Improve the conservation status and increase the populations of the short-toed snake eagle and European honey buzzard through the restoration and improvement of their feeding habitats;
- Launch a local chain for the production and sale of household products/tools made from a perennial evergreen shrub, *Erica scoparia*, thus linking socio-economic activities and Natura 2000 network habitat management under the EU Business and Biodiversity Initiative; and
- Identify a management model of heathland habitats that could improve the conservation status of the target species.

LIFE15 NAT/IT/000837  
LIFE GRANATHA



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

D.R.E.A.M. ITALIA Soc. Cooperativa Agricolo Forestale

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#### Name of contact person

Marcello MIOZZO

### Duration of project:

70 months (01/09/2016 - 30/06/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

1,327,999.00

### EU contribution in euro:

796,499.00

### Expected results

- A 20% increase in the breeding population of the target bird species and a 20% increase in their distribution range;
- Restoration and management of 73 ha of heathland for the production of the marketable brush products;
- Restoration and management of 80 ha of heathland for nature purposes;
- Restoration and management of 10 ha of heathland for nature purposes, through the use of controlled fire;
- Involvement of private landowners to ensure the availability of an extra 20 ha of heathland for active management;
- Production and marketing of the brushes and related consumer products from sustainably managed heathlands;
- Development of protocols for the sustainable management of heathlands and the involvement of administrations in the dissemination of heathland management protocols; and
- Raised awareness among the local communities of the importance of the management of the target habitat and the species.



# Safeguard and valorisation of the plant species of EU interest in the Natural Parks of the Apennine Abruzzo

## Project background

Several plant species of EU importance, listed in the annexes of the Habitats Directive, are found in the Majella, Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise national parks and the Sirente Velino regional park. The species are under threat from the growing impact of tourism, resulting in the unsustainable exploitation of the environment and its resources. The species are also threatened by (illegal) collection by tourists and locals; poor management and exploitation of pastures and grasslands and forest fires. The natural dynamics of vegetation encroachment is leading to a general increase of the forested areas in the project sites.

## Project objectives

The main objective of FLORANET LIFE is to improve the conservation status of several plant species of EU concern that are listed in Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive, with particular emphasis on three priority species for conservation: *Astragalus aquilanus*, *Klasea lycopifolia*, and *Jacobaea vulgaris subsp. gotlandica*. The other target species are *Iris marsica*, *Adonis distorta*, *Androsace mathildae* and *Cypripedium calceolus*. The target areas cover Natura 2000 network sites in three of the main protected areas of the Apennines, i.e. the above-mentioned Majella, Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise national parks, and the Sirente Velino Regional Park.

In line with Italy's National Strategy of Biodiversity, in situ and ex situ conservation measures will be carried out for *Cypripedium calceolus*, *Adonis distorta*, *Androsace mathildae*, *Iris marsica* and *Astragalus aquilanus* in the Majella National Park; for *Klasea lycopifolia*, *Jacobaea vulgaris subsp. gotlandica*, *Astragalus aquilanus* and *Adonis distorta* in Sirente-Velino Regional Park; and for *Cypripedium calceolus* and *Iris marsica* in the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise national parks.

Measures to protect the sites from grazing, mowing and tourism will be considered, along with the adoption of environmentally friendly restoration techniques, including the production of plants grown ex situ, analysis of germination processes of the germplasm of the target species, propagation in nursery and cultivation in botanical gardens. Finally, the project aims to increase awareness about the conservation issues in the target areas, particularly among local people and visitors to the parks.

LIFE15 NAT/IT/000946  
FLORANET LIFE



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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#### Name of contact person

Oremo DI NINO

### Duration of project:

50 months (18/07/2016 - 30/09/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

1,731,233.00

### EU contribution in euro:

1,038,739.00

### Expected results

- Improved conservation status of the target species of EU interest;
- The collection of propagule (seeds, roots, fruits or other plant parts);
- Propagation in nurseries at least 3 220 plants obtained from seeds and through micropropagation (plant tissue cultures aimed at producing around 200 plants of *Adonis distorta*, *Androsace mathildae* and *Cypripedium calceolus*);
- Removal of invasive trees and shrubs on a total surface of 12.5 ha in the target protected areas;
- Placing of fences and shelters to ensure the protection of the sites under threat by extensive tourist activities, grazing and other human impacts;
- Restocking and reintroduction of new populations of rare plants;
- Promotion of best practices (for example regarding mowing); and
- Implementation of sound management measures, including the re-definition of the boundaries of the relevant Natura 2000 sites.

# Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park

## Project background

The project targets a range of fauna species found in Ticino Park – 15 species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive and Annex II, IV and V of the Habitats Directive. The park acts as a source of biodiversity for the whole Padana Plain, hosting most of the species of conservation interest related to this geographic area. Currently, it is the main ecological corridor connecting the Apennines and the Alps, but many species are threatened by the loss or degradation of their habitats. Intensification of agriculture has played a significant role in the decline of typical species found in open habitats. Of particular concern are the loss and degradation of wetlands and the degradation of streams, springs and secondary water courses. In the past few years, the ‘dry’ cultivation of rice has become a major threat along with the introduction of invasive alien species.

## Project objectives

The main aim of the LifeTicinoBiosource project is to preserve and increase the biodiversity of Ticino Park. The project will target more than 15 species for which the park hosts the most important known populations or is even the only site where they are found. These include the Adriatic sturgeon (*Acipenser naccarii*), whose only naturally breeding population occurs in the River Ticino, and ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), whose breeding population in the park is one of the most numerous in Italy. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Designate a new Natura 2000 network site to protect the only known spawning area for the Adriatic sturgeon;
- Protect the spawning area by establishing and training a task force of stakeholders;
- Reintroduce the European sturgeon (*Huso huso*) to the River Ticino;
- Restore springs and little streams for the conservation of fish species of Community interest;
- Restore and create wetland habitats at Motta Visconti and Bernate Ticino;
- Establish rafts with marsh vegetation for creating new sites for breeding, migrating and wintering birds;
- Manage lowland wet meadows habitats in favour of birds and butterflies;
- Conserve riparian forest habitats included in the Habitat Directive at Motta Visconti and Bernate Ticino; and
- Increase awareness among the local population, creating nature trails, school packages and informative leaflets.

## Expected results

- The designation of lower part of Ticino River as part of a 180 ha SCI “Spawning area of *Acipenser naccarii*” ahead

LIFE15 NAT/IT/000989

LifeTicinoBiosource



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino

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#### Name of contact person

Fulvio CARONNI

### Duration of project:

49 months (01/10/2016 – 31/10/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

3,877,000.00

### EU contribution in euro:

2,326,000.00

- of its designation of a Natura 2000 network site;
- Creation and training of a long-term task force focused on protecting Adriatic sturgeon spawning areas;
- Reduction of the presence during summer of the wels catfish in at least 50% of spawning areas;
- Restoration of 5.7 ha of natural water habitats;
- 9 000 m<sup>3</sup> of new ponds, 7 000 m<sup>2</sup> of new reedbeds and 8 000 m<sup>2</sup> of new wetland, with colonisation of target species of birds in Motta Visconti;
- New embankment suitable for establishing a nature trail in Motta Visconti;
- Creation of 2 ha of European dry heath habitat and 3 ha of wet woodlands and restoration of 11 ha of riparian mixed forests in Motta Visconti;
- Creation and restoration of 4 ha of woodland and 12 ha of riparian mixed forests in Bernate Ticino;
- Restoration of 6 500 m<sup>2</sup> of wetlands in Bernate Ticino;
- Installation of 4 000 m<sup>2</sup> of floating rafts with marsh vegetation and gravel, and colonisation of target species in the basins of Arno stream at Lonate Pozzolo;
- Flooding of 75 ha of lowland wet meadows to favour migratory and wintering birds;
- Reintroduction of the European sturgeon to Italy through the release of at least 4 000 juveniles in Ticino Park; and
- An educational programme engaging schoolchildren.

# Coastal Habitat Conservation in Nature Park 'Piejūra'

## Project background

Piejūra Nature Park harbours valuable habitats and species of the Boreal region and is an important nature area both nationally and in Europe. Valuable protected coastal habitats found there include embryonic dunes, white dunes, grey dunes and wooded dunes, which are spread over an area of more than 30 km and have a high biodiversity. In the EU, conservation of these sensitive habitats is becoming more and more important due to the increase of anthropogenic pressure on coastal territories, as well as the increasing strength of storms and subsequent destructive level of coastal erosion. Such climate change consequences are being observed in the park.

## Project objectives

The overall objectives of LIFE CoHaBit are to mitigate heavy anthropogenic pressures and to restore vulnerable coastal habitats of Piejūra Nature Park, a Natura 2000 network site. Conservation and restoration actions will be implemented and sustainable management introduced for 13 coastal habitat types (seven of which are priority) that are listed in the Annex I of the Habitats Directive.

Specific project objectives are to:

- Update the park's nature management plan;
- Implement concrete conservation and restoration actions;
- Control alien species invasion; and
- Involve the local community including landowners, local residents and other stakeholders in sustainable management of the park by implementing an effective awareness raising/educational campaign.

## Expected results

- An updated and approved site management plan;
- Restoration of 75 ha of coastal dune habitats (priority grey dunes, wooded dunes, embryonic shifting dunes and white dunes) in the Mangali area;
- Restoration of 5 ha of priority coastal lagoons in the Daugavgrīva and Mangali areas;
- Restoration of 4.5 ha of priority Boreal Baltic coastal meadows and the surrounding complex of alluvial semi-natural grasslands in the Vakarbulī area;
- Significantly diminished deterioration of habitats of Community importance, allowing regeneration of natural vegetation on at least 800 ha in the Mangali, Garciems, Carnikava and Saulkrasti areas;

LIFE15 NAT/LV/000900  
LIFE CoHaBit



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Carnikava Municipality

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#### Name of contact person

Edgars PUDZIS

### Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2016 – 31/08/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

970,067.00

### EC contribution in euro:

582,041.00

- Improved conservation status of bird species associated with the target habitats;
- Clearing of invasive species on an area of 175 ha; and
- Establishment of an information and education centre in the park.

# Stepping stones towards ensuring long-term favourable conservation status of Aquatic warbler in Lithuania

## Project background

The aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) is Europe's rarest migratory songbird and a globally threatened species (listed as 'vulnerable' by the IUCN and included in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive). It has very specific habitat requirements, being found only on fen mires or wet meadows on peaty soil covered by sedges. The water level must be above ground, but not by more than 10-15 cm, to avoid flooding the nest. The species requires a large quantity of insects. The aquatic warbler, however, has suffered from habitat loss and degradation. A small breeding population of around 100 pairs is found in the Neman river delta in Lithuania. This population at the periphery of its distribution relies on a strong, stable population in the centre of the range, namely the Zvanets fen mire in Belarus.

## Project objectives

The LIFEMagniDucatusAcrola project aims to restore degraded habitats of the aquatic warbler in Lithuania, as well as in parts of Belarus. Reducing fragmentation of aquatic warbler breeding habitats is a major precondition for achieving a long-term 'favourable' conservation status in its north-east European breeding range. Habitats in Lithuania are often key stepping stones connecting the remainder of the EU population (in Poland, Hungary and Germany) with that found in Belarus. The project will apply traditional restoration methods for the target habitats, such as the elimination of reeds and removal of bushes and redundant biomass. It will also carry out burning to increase the productivity of the degraded habitat. A second innovation will be the application of an accelerated method of seeding sedge grass vegetation.

The project will furthermore establish self-sustaining farming mechanisms to ensure long-term socio-economic preconditions for maintaining aquatic warbler breeding habitat in the Neman river delta. Drawing on European best practice, it will also set up a biomass processing facility in this area to create a marketable product and thereby ensure constant demand for late-cut biomass gathered from the surrounded breeding areas of the aquatic warbler. Most notably, the project also aims to carry out the first translocation of aquatic warblers.

## Expected results

- Habitat restoration and improvement actions over an area of 20 509 hectares in Lithuania (Tyrai marsh,

LIFE15 NAT/LT/001024  
LIFEMagniDucatusAcrola



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania

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#### Name of contact person

Zymantas MORKVENAS

### Duration of project:

79 months (07/07/2016 – 31/01/2023)

### Total budget in euro:

4,097,038.00

### EC contribution in euro:

3,072,778.00

Šyša and Sausgalviai polders and Žuvintas marsh) and Belarus (Zvanets mire, Servech mire and Dokudovskoe);

- Translocation of 100 aquatic warblers from Zvanets mire in Belarus to Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve in Lithuania, with an expected 40% return rate;
- Four site management plans and two species action plans for the aquatic warbler (one for Lithuania and one for Belarus), approved by the competent authorities;
- A biomass processing plant in the Neman river delta area;
- Assessment of the effectiveness of conservation measures; and
- A comprehensive communication campaign aimed and the effectiveness of the species translocation discussed at expert meetings. (If successful it is expected that further aquatic warbler translocations will take place in Poland and Hungary).

# Conservation of White Stork in the River Valleys of Eastern Poland

## Project background

The white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) is a species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive. The 18 Natura 2000 network sites covered by this project are important white stork sanctuaries (accounting for 4% of the total national population). The sites are characterised by extremely high density populations, high stability of numbers and good conservation conditions. However, public acceptance of large stork nests on chimneys and roofs is declining, which, together with other socio-economic changes, could have a negative impact on the white stork population in Poland.

## Project objectives

The LIFEciconiaPL project aims to maintain the good conservation status of the white stork in the river valleys of eastern Poland, where the population of the species is some 1 600 breeding pairs.

Specific project actions will focus on the following:

- Protecting some 400 nesting sites;
- Increasing public tolerance of stork nests on buildings;
- Reducing white stork deaths caused by power lines;
- Improving the effectiveness of two white stork rehabilitation centres; and
- Halting the loss of biodiversity by protecting this umbrella species.

## Expected results

- Secure 400 white stork nesting sites under threat from conflicts with people;
- Reduce white stork mortality by making safe 110 transformer stations, 80 disconnector stations, 80 electricity pylons and four sections of 110 kV voltage lines crossing river valleys;
- Renovate two rehabilitation centres so that they can provide basic care and treatment for ill and injured white storks;
- Create a geographic information system (GIS) database mapping white stork nests in the project area;
- Increase awareness of and tolerance towards white storks through training, education and communication activities, the latter including a 'nest cam' broadcasting on the project website; and
- Long-term monitoring of changes of breeding population of the white stork in the seven largest valleys of eastern Poland.

LIFE15 NAT/PL/000728

LIFEciconiaPL



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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#### Name of contact person

Adam ZBYRYT

### Duration of project:

48 months (01/08/2016 – 31/07/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

1,419,468.00

### EC contribution in euro:

851,680.00

# Osprey conservation in selected SPA Natura 2000 sites in Poland

## Project background

The osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is a protected raptor whose numbers are declining both in the EU and globally. It is listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and in Annex II of both the Bonn Convention and the Washington Convention. In 2014, an 'Action plan for Ospreys in Europe and the Mediterranean region' was drafted under the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. In Poland, the osprey population was 28-39 breeding pairs for 2008-2012, as reported under Article 12 of the EU Birds Directive. However, the short-term population trend is decreasing, with a decline of 20-40 breeding pairs reported for the period 2000-2012. Preserving a stable population in Poland would require implementation of emergency actions reaching far beyond simple reactive protection.

## Project objectives

The main aims of the LIFEPandionPL project are to stop the decline of the osprey population in Poland and to implement actions supporting an increase in its numbers. The project will focus on activities carried out in forests, where the osprey most commonly nests, as well as on lakes and ponds – its main feeding areas.

Specifically, the project aims to:

- Identify osprey breeding and feeding sites within the Natura 2000 network, threats to the species at those sites and factors limiting population growth;
- Ensure the species is protected at all known sites, by creating a network of nest and site wardens;
- Monitor 15 ospreys by satellite for three years; and
- Create favourable conditions for an expansion of the breeding population by installing artificial nests in suitable locations.

## Expected results

- A 20% increase in the osprey population compared with 2014;
- Installation of artificial osprey nests: 232 nests in trees and 50 nests on electricity pylons fitted with safety measures to prevent bird electrocution;
- Creation of a network of nest and site wardens;
- Mapping of the migration routes of Poland's ospreys;
- Detailed monitoring of lakes and ponds to determine fish stocks necessary for the osprey population;
- Six awareness-raising workshops for Poland's fishing community, with outcomes incorporated into guidelines for a sustainable fishing economy in regions inhabited by ospreys;

LIFE15 NAT/PL/000819

LIFEPandionPL



### Beneficiary:

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#### Name of contact person

Łukasz POREBSKI

### Duration of project:

45 months (01/10/2016 – 30/06/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

1,373,484.00

### EC contribution in euro:

824,090.00

- 1 500 schoolchildren reached through educational activities, including three competitions during World Osprey Week;
- Two international conferences and three expert workshops held to increase knowledge of best practice in osprey conservation; and
- Guidelines for the protection of the osprey in Poland and in Central Europe, which should enhance cooperation between institutions in order to detect or prevent wildlife crimes, particularly poaching and theft of eggs.

# Conservation of black grouse as umbrella species for valuable habitats of the Orawsko Nowotarskie Peat Bogs

## Project background

The Orawsko-Nowotarskie peat bogs in Podhale, southern Poland, is a large complex of raised bogs, surrounded by swamp forests and extensively-farmed agricultural land, mostly hay meadows and pastures. This unique 8 500 hectare ecosystem provides important habitats for valuable plant, animal and fungi species, containing 12 habitat types listed in Annex I and 14 animals listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The project area also contains three particularly threatened species listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive: the black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*), western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) and corncrake (*Crex crex*).

## Project objectives

The main objective of the LIFE CIETRZEW KARPATY PL project is to stop the decline in the 'Torfowiska Orawsko-Nowotarskie' Natura 2000 network site (specifically, the Orawsko-Nowotarskie peat bogs) of one of the largest black grouse populations in the country; and thus to secure the conservation of the species in the long term. Active protection measures for the grouse habitats will contribute to the conservation of one of the largest raised bog complexes in Poland.

Specifically, the project aims to:

- Restore the proper structure and quality of black grouse habitats, i.e. the peat bogs, including the priority habitat type, active raised bogs;
- Ensure that black grouse lekking sites (i.e. sites where males gather to engage in competitive displays during the mating season) are of sufficient quality and size. Most such sites are located in mountain hay meadow habitats;
- Reduce disturbance and anthropogenic pressure on the grouse at their lekking sites;
- Reduce black grouse predation by the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*); and
- Increase awareness of black grouse conservation and the importance of peat bog habitats among the local community.

## Expected results

- An increase in the black grouse population from 30-40 to 45-60 males;
- Removal of invasive plant species (mainly Scots pine – *Pinus sylvestris*) from black grouse breeding and foraging habitats (peat bogs);
- Improved structure and water levels of 300 ha of raised peat bogs;

LIFE15 NAT/PL/000820  
LIFE CIETRZEW KARPATY PL



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

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#### Name of contact person

Tomasz WILK

### Duration of project:

51 months (01/12/2016 - 28/02/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

1,416,974.00

### EC contribution in euro:

850,184.00

- Restoration of 1 ha of raised peat bog degraded by peat extraction;
- Mowing of 200 ha of current and former black grouse meadow and grassland lekking sites;
- A reduction in the number of red foxes in the project areas, with training of up to 50 representatives of hunting organisations to continue management of the main black grouse predator after the project;
- Training of eight local volunteers to patrol project areas during the mating season and prevent disturbance at lekking sites;
- Channeling of tourism activities in the project areas to avoid disturbing black grouse; and
- Increased local awareness of black grouse conservation and the importance of peat bog habitats.

# Wetland habitat restoration and bird protection of Poiplie, Horna Orava and Senianske rybniky SPAs in Slovakia

## Project background

Poor water management, succession processes and changes in landscape and land use are having a long-term negative impact on bird habitats in many Natura 2000 network sites in Slovakia. The main threats are unsuitable water regimes, insufficient water management and infilling of wetlands, and the inappropriate management of grassland and reed stands leading to degradation of nesting places and nesting possibilities. Uncontrolled recreation activities also contribute to habitat disturbance.

## Project objectives

The main aim of the LIFE IPORSEN project is to reduce factors adversely affecting wetlands of international importance by restoring their ecological functions in favour of the targeted water bird species.

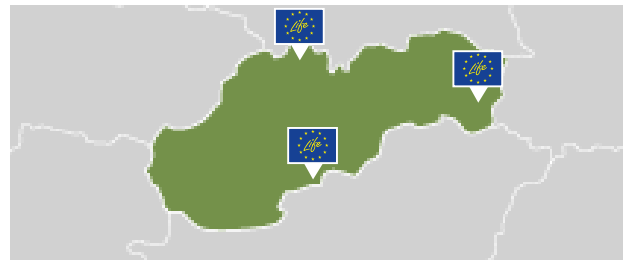
Specifically, the project aims to

- Restore the water regime in three Natura 2000 network sites;
- Remove accumulated biomass from wetlands and river meanders overgrown with shrubs;
- Introduce a grazing and mowing regime to restore wet meadows;
- Restore and create nesting sites for colonial and ground-nesting birds; and
- Raise public awareness about Natura 2000 sites and biodiversity, promote birdwatching and nature-based tourism, eliminate disturbances caused by unregulated movement of visitors in the protected areas and construct tourist infrastructure with educational purposes.

## Expected results

- A management plan for the Senianske rybniky Natura 2000 network site;
- Improved water regime in at least 850 ha of wetlands by repairing four sluice gates, 1 600 m of water channels and 1 000 m of dykes, reconnecting two oxbow river arms (2 km) and installing a well with a windmill pump;
- Removal of accumulated biomass from 32.8 ha of infilled wetland habitats and natural river meanders to enhance their hygienic function;
- Restoration of 175 ha of wet meadows and wetland vegetation by grazing, cutting and removing ruderal and invasive plant biomass;
- An animal eco-farm;

LIFE15 NAT/SK/000861  
LIFE IPORSEN



## Beneficiary:

### Name of beneficiary

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### Name of contact person

Matej REPEL

## Duration of project:

60 months (01/05/2017 – 30/04/2022)

## Total budget in euro:

2,961,859.00

## EU contribution in euro:

1,777,115.00

- Restoration a 200 m section of nesting walls used by target bird species;
- Restoration of two nesting islands and creation an artificial nesting island (combined area 25 000 m<sup>2</sup>) in the Horná Orava and Senianske rybniky Natura 2000 network sites;
- Installation of 50 artificial nesting platforms for the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and 20 platforms for the white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*);
- Purchase of 50 ha of land and introduction of compensation payments for conservation management on a further 20 ha; and
- Construction the following visitor infrastructure: information panels, observation towers, lookout shelters, tourist paths and surveillance measures to prevent disturbance in the breeding colonies.



# Sustainable farming in SPAs of Castilla La Mancha for steppe birds conservation

## Project background

Castilla-La Mancha is the third largest region in Spain (79 461 km<sup>2</sup>). It is home to a wide variety of habitats and biodiversity, including steppe habitats and associated species. All species of steppe birds in western Europe can be found in four Natura 2000 network sites in the region. Most of these species are listed as in decline, impoverished/depleted or threatened, according to the latest conservation status assessment (Article 12 of the EU Birds Directive) provided by Spain for 2008 to 2012 and are included in Annex I of the Birds Directive. The four Natura 2000 network sites also contain many other species of flora and fauna listed in Annexes II and IV of the EU Habitats Directive.

## Project objectives

The main objective of LIFE STEPPE FARMING is to halt the population decline of steppe birds included in Annex I of the Birds Directive, and classified as threatened, declining endangered or depleted in the latest Article 12 assessment of conservation status. The project aims to increase the population of some of these species in specific locations and to reduce threats to steppe birds derived from the changes in farming systems. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Implement more sustainable and competitive models for crops and livestock. To preserve the territory's mosaic structure and its value as habitat for steppe birds without losing productivity;
- Reduce the use of pesticides and modify the techniques of pest control and use of agrichemical products;
- Remove threats and obstacles facing birds and recover the territory's ecological infrastructure, such as small ponds or breeding facilities;
- Gain the trust of farmers, sheep breeders and hunters and increase the local community's awareness of the importance of conservation;
- Improve knowledge of the status of and threats to steppe bird populations;
- Implement the most important conservation measures of the EU Species Action Plans for the little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), great bustard (*Otis tarda*) and lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*); and
- Produce a regional plan for steppe bird conservation.

## Expected results

- Halt of the population decline of the most threatened steppe bird populations and 10-15% increase in the presence of species such as the little bustard, stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedicanus*), pin-tailed sandgrouse

LIFE15 NAT/ES/000734  
LIFE STEPPE FARMING



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### Duration of project:

40 months (01/09/2016 – 31/12/2019)

### Total budget in euro:

1,765,155.00

### EU contribution in euro:

1,059,153.00

- (*Pterocles alchata*), black-bellied sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) and Dupont's lark (*Chersophilus duponti*);
- Increased breeding population of the lesser kestrel to at least 100 pairs;
- Enlargement of 25 000 ha of the El Hito Natura 2000 network SPA site;
- Increased ecological connectivity, vegetation coverage and plant diversity in the project areas: 20 km of hedges in boundaries and 5 000 ha of wasteland pastures;
- 50 farmers (1 500 ha) included in a land stewardship network, achieving a decrease in nitrogen and pesticide active matter by 25%, and an increase of fallow and legume rotations by 20%;
- Application of a 'sustainable sourcing guide for cereal and legume production for the conservation of steppe birds';
- Implementation of a 'regional plan for the conservation of steppe birds' and a proposal for new agri-environmental schemes under the EU Rural Development Programme to be implemented in 2020;
- Collaboration with hunting societies in steppe bird protection, with the participation of 500 hunters directly or indirectly in the project; and
- 100 000 people reached by communication activities and 300 000 by broadcast media.

# Conservation of the Montseny brook newt (*Calotriton arnoldi*): management of the habitat, of its population and environmental education

## Project background

The Montseny brook newt (*Calotriton arnoldi*) is an endemic amphibian present only in the Montseny area and classified as 'critically endangered' in the IUCN Red List. The population of this amphibian is estimated to be fewer than 1 500 adults. Moreover, its distribution area is small and fragmented, covering less than 8 km<sup>2</sup>. The newt species is adapted to mountain streams and requires a pristine habitat. It is adversely affected by climate change and human activities.

Although some populations disappeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, probably due to the lack of a stable water flow, most are seemingly stable nowadays. Nevertheless, some populations have an 'unfavourable' conservation status, mainly caused by melanocytosis (pigmented skin tumours), which could indicate adverse micro-environmental changes.

## Project objectives

The main objective of the Life Tritó Montseny project is to improve the conservation status of the Montseny brook newt and its riparian habitat. Specific objectives are to:

- Ensure the conservation of the genetic pool of the species and to expand its geographic distribution area;
- Increase the hydrological quality and water flow of streams in its range of distribution;
- Eliminate or minimise current threats in the riparian habitat where the species is found;
- Establish suitable legal protection at national and European level and develop a management plan for the species;
- Monitor regularly its conservation status and increase scientific and technical knowledge on its conservation and management; and
- Involve and engage stakeholders in the conservation of riparian habitats, their biodiversity and, specifically, the Montseny brook newt.

## Expected results

- Doubling the number of streams with Montseny brook newt through reintroductions, creating six new populations;
- Captive breeding centres to quadruple larvae production and produce newts with 90% of the genetic variability of natural populations and no body anomalies;
- Consolidation of existing wild populations;
- Reduction in water extraction from streams with Montseny brook newt (90% of surface water catchment systems to be improved or eliminated);

LIFE15 NAT/ES/000757

LIFE Tritó Montseny



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#### Name of contact person

Daniel GUINART

### Duration of project:

51 months (01/10/2016 – 31/12/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

2,971,276.00

### EU contribution in euro:

1,782,764.00

- Improvement of wastewater treatment in 75% of houses in the range of the Montseny brook newt;
- Installation of collection and reuse of rainwater and grey water in 50% of the houses in the newt's range;
- A 90% increase in river connectivity at intersections between roads, tracks and streams holding the Montseny brook newt;
- A 50% increase in the area of native riparian forest and increased biological quality;
- Drafting and approval of a conservation plan and action programme for the Montseny brook newt;
- National and European legal recognition of the species;
- Annual monitoring of the conservation status of the Montseny brook newt, using improved stations;
- Greater knowledge of the biology and ecological requirements of the species;
- Transfer of all data gathered by the project to the PN-RB Montseny information system and to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF); and
- A comprehensive communication and dissemination strategy (website, scientific articles, events, good practice guidelines, school visits, etc.).

# Conservation and restoration of mediterranean *Taxus baccata* woods (9580\*) in the Cantabrian Mountains

## Project background

In the Mediterranean region, yew (*Taxus baccata*) usually grows with other tree species in mixed forests. Wooded formations made up solely of Mediterranean yew are listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive as priority for conservation, and are very rare. They are often reduced to small enclaves in remote mountain areas. Climatic and anthropogenic factors seem to have led to the isolation of this yew population for a long period of time, which may have significantly contributed to increasing the distinctiveness of the population. The Iberian Peninsula is the southernmost limit of yew distribution in Europe, and is currently subject to extreme environmental conditions. At European level, the conservation status of Mediterranean yew is 'unfavourable'.

## Project objectives

The aim of the project is to improve the conservation status of the priority habitat type, Mediterranean yew, in 15 Natura 2000 network sites in the Cantabrian Mountains, by focusing on three conservation status indicators: 'area of occupancy', 'structure and functions' and 'future prospects'. Specific project objectives are to:

- Develop targeted actions to increase the area covered by Mediterranean yew woods including silviculture activities, removal of exotic species, and cultivation and planting of characteristic species of plants;
- Implement measures designed to improve the structure and functions of the woods, and establish infrastructure to stop herbivores having a negative impact;
- Apply measures to achieve an improvement in the future survival prospects of the woods, including establishing Mediterranean yew 'genetic resources conservation units' (GRCUs) and two gene banks, drafting a management plan and storing a collection of DNA tissue samples in five arboreturns;
- Improve habitat knowledge and protection measures against human-induced pressures;
- Establish a specific strategy to disseminate and transfer knowledge on the measures developed during the project to ensure their replicability at EU level;
- Raise public awareness of the value of Mediterranean yew woods; and
- Involve regional and local administrations, landowners, stock-breeders and forestry associations in long-term conservation.

## Expected results

- Update of the priority habitat Mediterranean yew, mapping its management criteria in the Cantabrian Mountains;

LIFE15 NAT/ES/000790  
LIFE BACCATA



### Beneficiary:

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#### Name of contact person

Pablo RAMIL REGO

### Duration of project:

52 months (01/09/2016 – 31/12/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

1,925,104.00

### EU contribution in euro:

1,441,649.00

- An increase of its area of distribution by 145.9 ha;
- An improvement of structure and function of the woods over 541 ha;
- Cultivation of over 132 000 plants;
- Control and removal of exotic species resulting from reforestation on 45 ha;
- Increased connectivity;
- Some 481 ha preserved from herbivore damage;
- Erection of almost 33 km of fencing to protect the habitat type;
- Establishment of 35 km of forest tracks for improving and adapting the vegetation in adjacent areas and to prevent the spread of fires;
- Establishment of two gene banks of 33 different examples of Cantabrian yew;
- Creation of five arboretum of yew populations;
- Establishment of 15 forest GRCUs integrated into the EU EUFORGEN Programme;
- Definition of the variability and the genetic relationships between different Mediterranean yew populations, and their degree of genetic connectivity, and establishment of a structure and genotypic database;
- Management agreements with landowners;
- Transfer of the project results; and
- The sustainable development of municipalities in mountainous areas.

# Conservation of the Dupont's lark (*Chersophilus duponti*) and its habitat in Soria (Spain)

## Project background

Dupont's Lark (*Chersophilus duponti*) is one of the most endangered and rare birds in Spain and Europe as a whole. In Spain, where it has a small, declining population, overgrazing or undergrazing and agricultural development have reduced its preferred habitats and caused its numbers to decline considerably. It is therefore included in the 'endangered' category of the Spanish Red Data Book, and it is legally classified as 'vulnerable' (Spanish Catalogue of Endangered Species, R.D. 139/2011). At European level, it is an Annex I species of the Birds Directive, requiring special habitat conservation measures to ensure its survival and reproduction. In 2014, it was added to the Ornithological Committee list and became a priority species for funding through the LIFE programme.

## Project objectives

The overall objective of LIFE Ricoti is to carry out specific measures to protect Dupont's lark and its habitat in two Natura 2000 network sites in Soria (Castilla y León region) in Central Spain. The aim is to involve local stakeholders.

Specific objectives are to:

- Carry out conservation measures in favour of the Dupont's lark population in the two target Natura 2000 network SPAs, 'Altos de Barahona' and 'Páramo de Layna' in southern Soria, which combined account for around 15% of the species' total population in Europe;
- Increase habitat availability through direct habitat restoration measures and the maintenance and promotion of livestock management;
- Evaluate relationships between habitat quality and population viability in the framework of conservation strategies;
- Define criteria for habitat management of the species, which will be integrated into national and regional conservation strategies for the species; and
- Improve awareness and understanding of the ecological value of the species among local stakeholders.

## Expected results

- Restoration of around 325 ha of habitat (equivalent to 33-81 potential areas) currently considered unsuitable or of low quality for Dupont's lark. Given an occupancy rate of 50%, this could mean a population increase of 15-40 reproductive pairs;
- Maintenance of traditional activities (sheep grazing) in areas with potentially suitable habitat for the species;

LIFE15 NAT/ES/000802  
LIFE Ricoti



## Beneficiary:

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### Name of contact person

Rafael GARESSE ALARCÓN

## Duration of project:

53 months (15/09/2016 – 15/02/2021)

## Total budget in euro:

3,347,601.00

## EU contribution in euro:

2,505,795.00

- Identification and definition of agri-environmental measures aimed at improving the habitat quality for the species and other pseudo-steppe bird species on the basis of a scientific evaluation of the relationships between traditional extensive grazing and food availability;
- Enhancement and improvement of people's awareness of the presence of Dupont's lark in southern Soria;
- Integration of Dupont's lark into bird watching and tourism activities;
- Definition of management measures for the conservation of the species and its habitat in the region, in order to improve conservation prospects; and
- Management and conservation criteria to be incorporated into the National Conservation Strategy and Conservation Plan, under development with the participation of TEG-UAM.

# Conservation and management of Basque mountain grasslands

## Project background

The agricultural sector is a major source of pressure on Europe's environment. In the Spanish Atlantic biogeographical region, natural and semi-natural grasslands are mostly affected by the abandonment of pastoral systems and associated lack of grazing. In the Basque country, most of the natural grassland habitats used for the intensive livestock farming are identified as having an 'unfavourable-bad' conservation status.

## Project objectives

The main objective of the LIFE OREKA Mendian project is to develop a strategy for grasslands conservation tailored to the Basque context. By encouraging the traditional use of grasslands the project aims to restore a 'favourable' conservation status for 12 habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive and two Annex II species. Specific objectives are to:

- Establish criteria for the management of the target habitats and species to be shared among all stakeholders, promoting coordination and efficiency;
- Ensure compliance with the conservation objectives for each Natura 2000 network site, through a livestock management plan;
- Achieve a balance between the forage supplied by the grasslands and the demand for livestock use, by involving landowners and land users;
- Restore the surface, structure and functionality of the grassland habitats, in particular where they have suffered from shrub encroachment and overgrazing;
- Achieve a balance between livestock and forestry usage and limit grazing to areas where the risks of forest regeneration or soil erosion are minimal;
- Restore vulnerable habitats (bogs, mires, fens and heathland) as well as associated grassland flora;
- Eradicate invasive species of flora found in the targeted habitats;
- Test innovative tools for the management of grassland habitats and provide data for monitoring and assessing their conservation status;
- Establish best practices to help site managers with decision-making;
- Communicate to the general public the socio-economic and environmental benefits of the project; and
- Exchange experiences with other European regions.

## Expected results

- Plan for the conservation of grassland habitats in 15 Natura 2000 sites;
- Approval of plans by landowners and managers/users;

LIFE15 NAT/ES/000805  
LIFE OREKA Mendian



### Beneficiary:

#### Name of beneficiary

Fundación HAZI Fundazioa

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#### Name of contact person

Mikel DE FRANCISCO PASTOR

### Duration of project:

62 months (01/09/2016 – 01/11/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

3,743,704.00

### EU contribution in euro:

2,246,223.00

- Improvement of the conservation status of 13 400 ha of mountain grassland habitats in the targeted areas;
- Guidelines for private land and promotion of voluntary agreements;
- Restoration of 1 037 ha of four habitat types;
- Improvement of 903 ha of six habitat types;
- Eradication of invasive species on 105 ha of priority, species-rich *Nardus* grasslands;
- Improved conservation status of *Narcissus - asturiensis* and – *pseudonarcissus*;
- Assessment of grazing to limit shrub encroachment;
- Assessment of prescribed fire to restore 30 ha of *Molinia* meadows;
- Protection of 50 ha of 'unfavourable' conservation status habitats included in grasslands areas of four habitat types (of which two are priority habitats);
- Restoration of 2 400 m<sup>2</sup> of degraded grassland habitats in two sites;
- Increased use of under-grazed areas by creating features for cattle;
- Elimination of over-grazing in bogs, mires, fens and heathland and forests or habitats at risk of erosion;
- Guidelines for producing grassland plans to obtain agri-environmental funds; and
- A best practice manual for the management of mountain grasslands.

# Recovery of Endangered Mollusc *Patella Ferruginea* Population by Artificial Inert Mobile Substrates in Mediterranean Sea

## Project background

The Mediterranean ribbed limpet (*Patella ferruginea*) is endemic to the western Mediterranean Sea. Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the range of the species has undergone a marked decline. Consequently, the species is included in Annex II of the SPAMI Convention, Appendix 2 of the Bern Convention and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive. It is also classified as 'endangered' in the Spanish Catalogue of Endangered Species. As a result, it is the first invertebrate and, indeed, the first marine species, for which a national conservation strategy has been developed in Spain (MIMAM, 2008).

In the Spanish coastal waters of the Iberian Peninsula, a ribbed limpet population is found only in the southernmost part. This is made up of small groups of individuals which, given their number and size, may not even constitute a core group. The mollusc is also found in small numbers in very specific enclaves of the coast of Corsica and Sardinia and off the coasts of small islands nearby. There are also small populations in Tunisia and on other small islands near the Strait of Sicily. However, the only current populations with a high number of individuals are all located on the North African coast, in particular at four locations: Chafarinas, Melilla and Ceuta (Spain) and the Habibas Islands (Algeria). Diversification of its geographical distribution could decrease the real risk of its going extinct in the short- or medium-term, by establishing viable reproductive specimens in a significant number of locations.

## Project objectives

The main objective of LIFE REMoPaF is to design, test and implement new techniques and methods for the management of the Mediterranean ribbed limpet, based on knowledge of the biology and ecology of the species, and on previous scientific experience. These trials are designed to enable repopulation of suitable existing habitats and the expansion of the species into new areas, in line with the national species conservation strategy. Specific objectives are to:

- Move 500 individuals (of high reproductive success rate) from a donor area with a large population to a receiving area whose population is in decline;
- Use artificial inert mobile substrates (AIMS) to collect naturally fixed larvae, and to ensure the individual limpets can be moved without separation from their substrate;
- Develop the most suitable AIMS design to enable the effective translocation of individuals;

LIFE15 NAT/ES/000987  
LIFE REMoPaF



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### Duration of project:

60 months (07/07/2016 – 30/06/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

1,810,566.00

### EU contribution in euro:

965,391.00

- Develop protocols for the management of the species and its habitat, and disseminate these to managing authorities and the scientific community;
- Develop and demonstrate an integrated management scheme for the species, involving public authorities, research groups and private companies, and cover the future addition of other stakeholders, such as the fishing industry, environmental organisations and divers; and
- Encourage awareness of the species and behavioural changes to reduce the threat caused by human pressure.

### Expected results

- An increase in Mediterranean ribbed limpet populations in the final AIMS locations thanks to the translocated specimens;
- Estimates of survival rates of the translocated limpets to be used as a standard reference for further initiatives after the LIFE project;
- A protocol for the management of the species and its application at Spanish and European level; and
- Development of dissemination materials to increase awareness of the species and its vulnerability, and thus to have an impact in reducing human pressure.

# Management of Urban SPAs in Extremadura for the conservation of Lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*)

## Project background

In Extremadura, more than 70% of lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) breeding colonies are located in urban centres. In particular, a unique network of 19 urban Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within the EU Natura 2000 network is currently home to over 50% of the region's lesser kestrel population. A recent survey a declining trend of the breeding population. This is due to a loss of suitable breeding places (caused by the deterioration of buildings or by poor restoration works) and a loss of suitable foraging habitats (due to the extension of monocultures and the increasing use of pesticides). Breeding success is low due to competition for nesting places, and high predation rates on eggs and chicks. Other factors include a lack of agreed protocols to implement renovation works in a kestrel-friendly way and a lack of awareness in rural areas of the conservation needs of the species are also factors.

## Project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to develop a management model that guarantees the long-term conservation of the lesser kestrel. Specific project objectives are to:

- Improve the conservation and management of breeding of the lesser kestrel populations in urban SPAs. This will involve a survey of nesting sites and measures to increase the number and quality of nesting sites, reduce competition with other species and avoid nest destruction and disturbance caused by building works. The project will also design, manufacture and install a safer, more economical and longer-lasting type of nesting box;
- Ensure suitable foraging habitats for urban kestrel populations. The project will analyse diet and foraging habitat use and patterns in order to define the most favourable farming practices for the birds. It will develop a pilot project in Extremadura to encourage cooperation agreements with landowners, with a view to gaining their active involvement in the conservation of the species;
- Improve the quality of land for grazing, crops and field edges in order to increase the abundance and availability of prey, such as grasshoppers, crickets and other insects. These measures are also expected to help boost the breeding success of the lesser kestrels;
- Raise local awareness of the importance of lesser kestrel conservation, in particular among the owners of buildings, who play a crucial role in preserving nesting sites; and
- Develop tourism activities around the lesser kestrel, as a model of sustainable local economic activities.

LIFE15 NAT/ES/001016  
LIFE ZEPAURBAN



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#### Name of contact person

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### Duration of project:

52 months (01/09/2016 – 31/12/2020)

### Total budget in euro:

2,779,810.00

### EU contribution in euro:

2,054,120.00

## Expected results

- Increased knowledge among the local population of the issues surrounding the lesser kestrel and its roosting sites in 19 urban SPAs;
- A database of information on SPA colonies and field-work results;
- Definition and agreed methodology for lesser kestrel surveys in SPAs;
- A habitat conservation plan for the lesser kestrel in the region, updated regulations for municipalities, three revised boundaries of existing SPAs and the designation of new SPAs (if necessary);
- Some 900 (stone) walls in over 500 buildings fitted with suitable gaps for nesting and installation of 1 000 new nesting boxes;
- An increase of the breeding population of around 50 colonies, by improving the species' breeding success; and
- Signing of at least 20 cooperation agreements with farmers and stockbreeders to manage around 100 ha of cereal crops, 700 ha of grassland, 200 ha of legumes/alfalfa and to create 10 km of field boundaries with natural vegetation.

# Bridging the Spatial and Temporal Gaps in Threatened Oak Habitats

## Project background

Poor maintenance and a complete lack of management have led to a decline in the conservation status of Fennoscandian wooded pastures and meadow habitats (listed in Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive). The same problem is occurring in other rare deciduous forest habitats, such as oak and natural old broad-leaved forests.

Some sites have been completely abandoned and, as a result, the landscape has changed and habitats have become fragmented. This has led to declines and even extinctions of local deadwood vertebrates that depend upon these habitats to survive. The species most affected are the hermit beetle (*Osmoderma eremita*), great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*), stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) and the pseudoscorpion, *Anthrenochernes stellae*.

## Project objectives

The LIFE BTG project will focus on 30 Natura 2000 network sites in south-eastern Sweden. It aims to reconnect the fragmented landscape of Fennoscandian wooded pastures, thus reducing the extinction rates of the local beetles that depend upon the wood for a habitat.

The specific project objectives are as follows:

- Initiate the process of recovery to a 'favourable' conservation status of 1 405 ha of Fennoscandian wooded pastures and meadow habitats;
- Initiate the process of recovery to a 'favourable' conservation status of the Annex II listed hermit beetle, great capricorn beetle, stag beetle and the pseudoscorpion *A. stellae* in 30 Natura 2000 network sites;
- Initiate the creation of decaying wood habitats within these sites; and
- Increase and update the knowledge about the management of the targeted habitats and species among stakeholders, site managers and scientists by the dissemination of project experiences and results, in order to ensure transferability and replicability.

## Expected results

The following achievements will be considered as indicators of a successful recovery process:

- Clearing of overgrowth has resulted in reduced canopy cover benefiting the targeted habitats;
- Clearing of overgrowth and monitoring of ancient trees indicate an increased number of hollow trees

LIFE15 NAT/SE/000772  
LIFE BTG



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72 months (03/10/2016 – 30/09/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

8,343,675.00

### EC contribution in euro:

4,999,784.00

that are sun exposed and thus indicate improved living conditions and potential for colonisation by tree-living insects, including by the target species;

- Planting of trees and bushes has been successful, i.e. by project end >80% survival of planted small trees and >90% survival of large oak trees, indicating that a process to bridge gaps between habitats has been initiated;
- The number of trees inhabited by the hermit beetle and *A. stellae* has increased, as indicated by monitoring using mould boxes;
- Wood-living beetles have begun colonising log piles;
- 'Veteranisation' (deliberate ageing) of trees has resulted in colonisation by the hermit beetle, *A. stellae* and other associated species, as indicated by monitoring using eclector traps; and
- The great capricorn beetle is re-established at two project sites, as indicated by monitoring exit holes of the species.

To encourage transferability and replicability, local stakeholders, conservation experts and policy-makers will be involved at different stages of the project implementation.



# Restoration of Boreal Nordic Rivers

## Project background

The economy of Västerbotten is linked to its forests, but its forestry practices can have negative impacts on protected species, habitats and biodiversity. Its rivers have been heavily influenced by measures taken to facilitate large-scale timber floating during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Extensive efforts were made to narrow and channel all water courses, blocking side channels, and removing boulders and tree trunks from the main channel. Drainage ditches were linked to the rivers, and while such ditches are no longer dug, most of the old ditches remain and have long-lasting effects on both forests and water courses. Current forestry practices could also be detrimental to these rivers. Moreover, the riparian forest, which is very efficient in preventing particles and nutrients from flushing out into streams, is often cut down or severely damaged. Clear-cutting along streams leads to an increase of solar exposure and rising water temperature. The ecological status of many of the stretches of river targeted by this project is no better than 'moderate'.

## Project objectives

The project aims to:

- Improve the conservation status of habitats and species of Community interest; and
- Enhance previously modified bodies of water with the aim of achieving good ecological status, in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

The habitats concerned are Fennoscandian natural rivers and water course of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation – two habitat types whose conservation status was assessed as 'inadequate' in the boreal region of Sweden in both 2007 and 2013. Project actions will take place in six river systems of the boreal region, all of which are Natura 2000 network sites. The target species are the freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), and European otter (*Lutra lutra*). Specific objectives are to:

- Restore previously cleared stretches of river by moving large boulders from the surrounding forest into the river, and opening previously blocked side channels by removing boulders and stone walls;
- Restore spawning grounds using gravel sediment (around one spawning site every 100 metres of river); and
- Inform foresters and other stakeholders of conservation best practice for riparian buffer zones, creek crossings and forest roads, as well as about relatively

LIFE15 NAT/SE/000892  
ReBorN LIFE



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### Duration of project:

60 months (07/07/2016 – 06/07/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

13,052,875.00

### EC contribution in euro:

7,829,810.00

easy methods to protect water courses from damage when performing cutting and soil treatment.

### Expected results

- Restoration of 202 km of the target rivers and creation of 2 300 spawning grounds for salmon and trout;
- More heterogeneous river channel geometry and increased hydraulic roughness;
- An increase in rewetted area of 0.126 ha/per km restored;
- A decreased risk of downstream flooding (lower peak discharge and increased floodplain connectivity);
- A 10% increase in juvenile salmon densities (five-year average) at the end of the project and at least a 30% increase by five years after the project;
- At least 50% of 30 monitored spawning grounds show signs of salmon or trout spawning by the end of the project;
- A 10% increase in glochidial infection rates among trout in the project area;
- A 20% increase in the range of the European otter in the project areas;
- Increase in salmon and trout fishing licences; and
- At least 450 foresters aware of forestry best practice methods for the protection of rivers and the plugging of old ditches.

# LIFE - Shad Severn: Conservation and Restoration of twaite shad in the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation

## Project background

Prior to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*) was an economically-important species in the River Severn basin. Within three years of the installation of navigation weirs fishing ceased.

Despite fish passage improvements in some sites, the conservation status of twaite shad is 'inadequate' owing to barriers to migration. The Severn Estuary and the Bristol Channel are an important habitat for juvenile and adult twaite shad. Open migration between the adult and juvenile habitat in the estuaries and spawning freshwater rivers is critical. At maturity, twaite shad stop feeding and gather in the estuaries of suitable rivers in late spring, moving upstream to spawn from mid-May to mid-July. Spawning takes place in flowing water over stones and gravel, among which the eggs sink. The young fish move downstream in the current to the quieter waters of the upper estuary where they start to feed and grow. Currently, the species is unable to migrate further upriver than Worcester on both rivers Severn and Teme reducing its spawning range to around 20 km. The suitability of habitat upriver means that removal of barriers at Worcester would significantly increase the range of the species.

## Project objectives

The LIFE-Shad Severn project will improve access up and down the two key rivers for this species associated with the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC), directly impacting 57% of the UK's potential breeding stock and increasing access to favourable spawning and juvenile habitat by 195%, through the removal of seven barriers to migration upstream of the Severn Estuary Natura 2000 network site. The project aims to improve the conservation status of twaite shad in the Severn Estuary by significantly improving access to spawning and nursery habitats and re-establishing access to 253 km of the former natural range of the species in the rivers Severn and Teme. The long-term population increase will benefit other catchments, including the Usk, Wye, Afon Tywi, Carmarthen Bay estuaries and the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.

## Expected results

- Access across five artificial structures on the River Severn, opening 190 km of historic spawning and nursery habitat associated with the Severn Estuary SAC by 2020;

LIFE15 NAT/UK/000219  
LIFE-Shad Severn



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### Duration of project:

63 months (11/07/2016 - 30/09/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

22,233,989.00

### EU contribution in euro:

7,778,396.00

- Access at two artificial structures on the River Teme, opening 63 km of historic spawning habitat associated with the Severn Estuary SAC by 2019;
- Target species present and suitably protected above Lincomb Weir on the Severn and Knightsford Weir on the Teme by 2021. The number of individuals in the mid reaches of the Severn and lower Teme increase from nil to 50 in 2021 and the number of spawning locations on the mid-Severn and lower Teme increase to five by 2021;
- Increased understanding of the environmental and economic value of twaite shad, the river and the Natura 2000 network;
- Long-term monitoring established by 2017 to assess populations and connectivity in the Severn and Teme; and
- Exchange of best practices across the species' range in Europe and the transfer of replicable actions.

# Recovering and securing the future of the globally Near Threatened black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*) in the UK

## Project background

The black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*) is categorised as 'near threatened' in the IUCN Red List, and is one of only five UK breeding birds that are of global conservation concern. It is classified as 'vulnerable' in Europe and 'endangered' in the EU specifically – making it one of only 27 bird species that are 'endangered' or 'critically endangered' within the EU. Two subspecies of black-tailed godwit occur in the UK: *L. l. limosa* and *L. l. islandica*. The former has a greater conservation need: its population is small and vulnerable (less than 60 pairs), but there is scope for it to increase. The species is affected by impacts on its breeding grounds. Around 0.4 fledglings/pair are required for a stable population. Since 2005, average annual productivity has been 0.32 fledglings/pair at the Nene Washes and 0.34 fledglings/pair at the Ouse Washes – both Natura 2000 network sites in eastern England and the two main breeding sites for the species in the UK. Under current estimates of productivity and recruitment, the populations at both sites will decline and may be at risk of extinction.

## Project objectives

The overall purpose of the LIFE blackwit UK project is to improve the conservation status of the black-tailed godwit in the United Kingdom, specifically by recovering the UK breeding population of *L. l. limosa*. This project is focused on the two main breeding sites for this species in the UK, the Nene and Ouse Washes. Specific project objectives are to:

- Increase the productivity of black-tailed godwit at key breeding sites in the UK to the level necessary for population stability by the end of the third year of the project, and to a level sufficient for population growth by the project end;
- Maintain and enhance 1 100 ha of the species' habitat at these key sites;
- Improve understanding of the local and migratory movements of black-tailed godwits breeding in the project area;
- Trial the use of 'head-starting' as a conservation tool for black-tailed godwits (i.e. moving eggs from nests into incubators and releasing the hatched chicks into the wild once they can fly); and
- Increase support among local communities for the long-term conservation of black-tailed godwits, and raise awareness of waders, SPAs and the importance of 'wader wetlands' among the general public and decision-makers.

LIFE15 NAT/UK/000753  
LIFE blackwit UK



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### Duration of project:

65 months (01/08/2016 – 31/12/2021)

### Total budget in euro:

2,797,653.00

### EU contribution in euro:

1,678,592.00

## Expected results

- Predation impacts significantly reduced;
- At least 1 100 ha of habitat enhanced either directly (e.g. through pool creation and ditch re-profiling) or through improvements to water control infrastructure;
- Increased productivity at the project sites increase so that the mean over the five years of the project exceeds 0.4 fledglings/pair and the mean over the following five years (2022–2026) exceeds 0.6 fledglings/pair;
- Increased population at these sites, with a target of 55 to 65 pairs in the Nene/Ouse metapopulation by 2021;
- Increased number of sites supporting successful breeding in the Cambridgeshire and Norfolk Fens by 2021;
- Increased support among local communities for the long-term conservation of black-tailed godwits and the protection of project sites, with at least 10 local groups and 25 schools directly engaged in the project;
- Increased public awareness of waders and wetland conservation;
- Increased knowledge of head-starting methods for waders conservationists; and
- A national action plan for the species.

# Marches Mosses Raised Bog Restoration Project

## Project background

'Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses', is Britain's third largest lowland raised bog. This 950 ha Natura 2000 network site straddles the border of England and Wales. Some 71% of the site is active raised bog, a priority habitat type listed in the Habitats Directive, and 25% is degraded raised bog. Much of the site is also classified as a national nature reserve.

Drained to enable peat cutting, agricultural improvement and afforestation, the centre of the site was rescued from near-destruction in 1990 owing to commercial peat cutting. Through continued 'first-fix' restoration, this part now is starting to see active peat formation. However, the site still faces problems including evapotranspiration, water/air pollution and unsympathetic land management by other land owners.

## Project objectives

The overall aim of Marches Mosses Bog LIFE is to restore active raised bog habitat and convert part of the degraded raised bog habitat, in order to progress the Natura 2000 site towards 'favourable' conservation status. This aim is consistent with the prioritised action frameworks (PAFs) for England and Wales, which identify bogs as a priority ecosystem. Although the UK does not have a formalised bog restoration strategy, this project feeds into Natural England's highest priority for lowland bog restoration, and also contributes to other national targets, such as its prioritised improvement plans and site improvement plans along with the delivery of England's biodiversity strategy.

The specific project objective is to restore 665 ha of habitat to achieve a more sustainable, resilient and better functioning active raised bog, including restoration of the lagg zone. This includes the restoration of 575 ha of raised bogs and 67 ha of degraded bogs in the site and an additional 23 ha of important, undesignated land adjacent to the site.

## Expected results

- Restoration of 665 ha;
- Acquisition of degraded raised bog in 'unfavourable' condition and peat cutting licences;
- Removal of 107 ha of conifer plantations and woodland;
- Improvement of the bog's water quantity and quality through new water control structures, contour bunding, dam adjustment, reduced evapo-transpiration and diverting polluted water;

LIFE15 NAT/UK/000786  
Marches Mosses BogLIFE



### Beneficiary:

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### Duration of project:

62 months (01/10/2016 – 02/01/2022)

### Total budget in euro:

7,141,352.00

### EU contribution in euro:

5,356,014.00

- Speeded up active bog processes, improved condition of contaminated land and reduced impact of air pollution by surface treatments (e.g. turving, reseeding, scraping, mowing and containment);
- Removal of invasive alien species including common rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*);
- Monitoring of recovery and dissemination of best practice guidance on restoration techniques to managers of similar habitats across Europe;
- Establishment of a volunteer and training centre of excellence; and
- Raised awareness of the Natura 2000 network site.

LIFE “L’Instrument Financier pour l’Environnement” / The financial instrument for the environment

The LIFE programme is the EU’s funding instrument for the environment and climate action

Period covered 2014-2020

EU funding available approximately €3.46 billion

**Allocation of funds** Of the €3.46 billion allocated to LIFE, €2.59 billion are for the Environment sub-programme, and €0.86 billion are for the Climate Action sub-programme. At least €2.8 billion (81% of the total budget) are earmarked for LIFE projects financed through action grants or innovative financial instruments. About €0.7 billion will go to integrated projects. At least 55% of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported through action grants under the sub-programme for Environment will be used for projects supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity. A maximum of €0.62 billion will be used directly by DG Environment and DG Climate Action for policy development and operating grants.

**Types of projects** Action Grants for the Environment and Climate Action sub-programmes are available for the following:

- > “Traditional” projects – these may be best-practice, demonstration, pilot or information, awareness and dissemination projects in any of the following priority areas: LIFE Nature & Biodiversity; LIFE Environment & Resource Efficiency; LIFE Environmental Governance & Information; LIFE Climate Change Mitigation; LIFE Climate Change Adaptation; LIFE Climate Governance and Information.
- > Preparatory projects – these address specific needs for the development and implementation of Union environmental or climate policy and legislation.
- > Integrated projects – these implement on a large territorial scale environmental or climate plans or strategies required by specific Union environmental or climate legislation.
- > Technical assistance projects – these provide financial support to help applicants prepare integrated projects.
- > Capacity building projects – these provide financial support to activities required to build the capacity of Member States, including LIFE national or regional contact points, with a view to enabling Member States to participate more effectively in the LIFE programme.

**Further information** More information on LIFE is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/life>.

**How to apply for LIFE funding** The European Commission organises annual calls for proposals. Full details are available at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/life.htm>

## Contact

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