

## IUCN Regional Office for West/Central Asia and North Africa (WESCANA)

### REACHING OUT:



**WELCOME** to the first issue of the IUCN-WESCANA monthly E-Newsletter.

The purpose of the newsletter is threefold:

- To ensure that our members, commissions, partners and other interested parties are regularly informed about the ongoing work of IUCN-WESCANA Regional Office. The newsletter will highlight the work and priorities of IUCN-WESCANA and provide opportunities for people to interact and participate in our programme at various levels. We will use this newsletter to launch new initiatives so that readers have direct access to our new work.
- The newsletter is an opportunity for our members, commissions and partners to share information on initiatives in which they are currently involved.
- Finally, the newsletter will provide information about what is being accomplished by the IUCN Secretariat Offices in other parts of the world and highlight global IUCN activities.

I hope that you will enjoy this first issue and look forward to your contributions and comments on improvements and additions. (Please send via email to [dok@iucn.org](mailto:dok@iucn.org))

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### FOCUSING:

**WITH** the recent establishment of the Regional Office in Amman in Jordan, IUCN stands at a new and exciting juncture in its activities in the region West and Central Asia and North Africa.

This is a vast region and one within which there is a great diversity of cultures, languages and environments. The challenge for the new Regional Office is how to tackle this great diversity and geographical

coverage and effectively implement the WESCANA Intersessional Plan (2005-8).

After a process of reviewing past approaches, the concerns of members and wider IUCN regional experience, WESCANA is adopting a pragmatic approach. This accepts the inherent complexity of a "region" that includes parts of Africa, Asia and Eurasia and operates in 5 major languages, while appreciating the synergies within it. The approach is focused around two linked strategies.

**The first** recognizes the shared priorities, challenges and opportunities that cross-cut throughout the region and on which synergies can be built. These include water resource management (an issue that this region more urgently than any other part of the world is challenged by), the effective management of Protected Areas and the importance of local community management of natural resources, the management of marine (& large inland "sea") resources, the assessment and conservation of biodiversity, the legal frameworks from national to global, and last but not least the need for communication and sharing of knowledge. The Regional Office is thus taking a cross cutting **Thematic** approach and has initiated so far:

- A Water Programme
- A Protected Areas Programme
- A Communications Programme

and is starting to evolve programmes for Business and Biodiversity, Environmental Law, and Marine themes

**The second** strategy recognizes that there is a clear need and many benefits for IUCN Secretariat to be functioning within, and representative of, each of the 3 sub-regions; and not solely operating out of a single Regional Office. Each of these sub-regions is very large and each has distinctive features - ecosystems, languages, history, culture, priorities, internal coherence and governance systems. The **Sub-regional** approach aims to strengthen the Union and the Secretariat through promoting the devolution of roles and responsibilities and

to do so progressively as financial and staff resources permit. The aim over the next few years is to establish and invest in viable IUCN representative structures able to pursue semi-autonomous programmes in each of the 3 sub-regions:

- Central Asia
- North Africa
- West Asia (through resources of the existing WESCANA Regional Office).

To make this model a reality is going to require close collaboration with all elements of the Union – the IUCN Secretariat, Commissions and Membership – and partnerships with others.

We look forward to any comments and suggestions you may have on this approach.

### PLANNING:

**IN** late January, a joint planning meeting was held between WESCANA Regional Office and the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN Med) to define scenarios for cooperation and coordination in 2005. During this productive review it was agreed that WESCANA would continue the delegation to IUCN Med of responsibility for project implementation in North Africa and build on the synergies and complementarities between both institutions. Agreement was reached that efforts of both should focus on building up the sub-regional status and programme in North Africa so that it can emerge strengthened from its current situation, irrespective of future decisions on regionalization of IUCN's Secretariat. It was also felt that it would also be helpful to link the membership and programme functions in North Africa with IUCN Med, rather than leaving them separate as had been the case in the past.

Finally it was also agreed that the search for synergies should include reinforcing technical competence in Amman and Malaga that can serve the whole region, sharing of communication and web-site

resources and sharing funding for project development.

## IUCN-WESCANANews:

### MANAGING WATER ACROSS BORDERS: Workshop on Water Governance builds capacity of Policy Makers in West Asia

THE shortage and conflict over water may become a significant threat to security in the Middle East. In order to improve the management of this scarce resource and promote collaboration, IUCN-WESCANAN Regional Office, under the patronage of HE the Minister of Environment in Jordan, held a workshop on water governance in Amman, Jordan on 18 April 2005.

The workshop trained public officials and policy makers in the field of water from Syria, Iraq, Kazakhstan and Jordan on how to develop regulatory frameworks for water, and offer a platform for debate to improve coordination and sharing of experiences between various countries. "Good regulation can empower people to establish participatory, equitable and responsible water use and create the political will and good governance to use water in a sustainable manner", said Dr Odeh Al Jayyousi, IUCN Regional Director. Dr Alejandro Iza, Head of the IUCN Environmental Law Programme, explained that this initiative is a starting point for promoting good water governance in the region and assisting countries to strengthen their national capacities to revise existing and/or adopt new legal framework for the management of water resources in a sustainable manner.



The workshop was organized by WESCANAN Regional Office located in Amman, Jordan, with the invaluable support of UNESCO, UNEP, the Dutch Embassy in Jordan and IUCN WANI.

### Egypt Protected Areas Programme



A UNDP contract to support a Protected Areas programme in Egypt, building on an earlier phase, was negotiated by WESCANAN and signed by the Regional Director, Odeh Al Jayyousi in March 2005. The project is implemented on a day to day basis by IUCN Med (as noted above in "Planning"), with technical inputs and backstopping where needed from the WESCANAN Protected Areas Programme. The 3 year project, funded by Italian Cooperation, aims to provide IUCN technical support to three Egyptian protected areas, Wadi El Rayan,

Siwa Oasis and Gebal Elba as well as to provide capacity building and institutional support to the further evolution of the Nature Conservation Sector of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency.

### World Conservation Union supports Jordanian National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan



WESCANAN Regional Office, is supporting the Jordanian Ministry of Environment to implement Jordan's national biodiversity strategy and action plan. A recent national stakeholder workshop brought together more than 80 officials and experts representing all national and international institutions and agencies from the various sectors related to the strategy. The workshop decided which strategic projects are a priority to the national environment agenda and then established the means and mechanisms needed to enhance the proposals and to finance them.

The workshop conducted two screening stages of the strategic projects based on the five main areas of intervention stated in the strategy and a set of nationally and globally sound criteria developed by the participants. The outcome, a tentative list of ten top priority projects, will go through another consultation process between the ministry, and its partners for each project, to finalize an action plan for their full development and funding. The World Conservation Union's WESCANAN office in Amman will provide further technical support to the Jordanian government to support this process.

The workshop was also attended by several donor agencies interested in the environment sector and funding priorities with regard to environmental projects in Jordan. Donor agencies there included the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU), and the Global Environment Fund Small Grant Programme (GEF/SGP).

### Sustainable freshwater management in West Asia, Central Asia and North Africa



Freshwater resources are considered to be one of the limiting factors for sustainable development of WESCANAN Countries. Recognizing the urgency of tackling this environmental risk in the Region, IUCN, through its WESCANAN Programme is establishing a Regional Water Programme with the support of the Italian Development

Co-operation (DGCS). DGCS had just approved the first year funding, to implement the Water Programme in WESCANAN.

This programme will focus on strengthening water knowledge and eco-system approach, environmental law, networking, advocacy and policy reforms in areas of fresh water resource use and conservation, especially with regards to fresh water biodiversity.

The IUCN WESCANAN Water Programme will form part of and directly contribute to the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), a world-wide effort to implement a systemic approach to water management. This will allow the WESCANAN network members to benefit directly from the experience and expertise available in this Initiative worldwide.

### Central Asia: Protected Areas Effectiveness Assessment Project



For some years IUCN members and partners in Central Asia have identified the complex situation of protected areas in the sub-region as a priority for action. This project will complement other on-going initiatives by **firstly** undertaking a field based assessment of the current management effectiveness and status of selected protected areas in Central Asia and **secondly** facilitating and developing a network of protected areas specialists through a sub-regional section of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

In late March 2005 a small regional meeting of WCPA members was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan hosted by the Tajik National Parks authority. This meeting identified priority protected areas in the 5 countries for the assessment of management effectiveness (Strict Nature Reserve or *Zapovednic* was selected), methodologies and workplan to undertake field assessments were decided and institutional arrangements to strengthen the WCPA network were discussed. IUCN has sourced funds from DGCS and the project is now under implementation. National results and a regional overview are expected to be available by the end of the year. Those interested in contributing to an effective WCPA network in Central Asia are invited to write to [rjashenko@nursat.kz](mailto:rjashenko@nursat.kz) or [simon.anstey@iucn.org](mailto:simon.anstey@iucn.org).

### New IUCN project to conserve biodiversity in Yemen

Collaborative management of protected areas and natural resources are the focus of a new IUCN project in Yemen, which the

IUCN-WESCANA Regional Office launched in May 2005, in cooperation with the Yemeni Environment Protection Authority.

The new project, funded by the Italian Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS), aims to support the implementation of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, developed with input from IUCN.



IUCN-WESCANA perceives Yemen as a country of high priority for support and cooperation, due to

its outstanding terrestrial and marine biodiversity, particularly in Protected Areas, and the great challenges facing Yemen in maintaining its natural integrity as it strives to provide a better quality of life for its people.

Under the new project, the World Conservation Union will work with its Yemeni partners to implement the national biodiversity strategy, focusing on the development of an effectively managed national protected area network, on improving community participation and gender equity and strengthening Yemen's collaboration with its regional and international partners in the field of biodiversity. The Italian government supports the initial one year phase of the program.

## IUCN NEWS:

### Major Boost in Environmental Protection in Lebanon



Lebanese legal specialists, government officials and practitioners involved in legislative drafting

attended a training course on drafting environmental legislation organized by the IUCN Environmental Law Programme and the Lebanese Ministry of Environment in Beirut. For two days, IUCN secretariat, IUCN members, and members of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law shared their experiences on drafting environmental legislation. The strong interest shown by the participants along with their high level of knowledge enabled a participatory and meaningful session, which included a theoretical part, and a practical exercise where they developed draft legislation of their choice on three different topics: air, water and biodiversity. This exercise brought them face-to-face with the major issues to be considered when drafting environmental law. The course is part of SELDAS, an ambitious project for

strengthening environmental legislation development and application in Lebanon.

<http://www.balamand.edu.lb/seldas/>  
<http://www.iucn.org/themes/law/elp06.html>

### Medicinal Plants in North Africa: Linking Conservation and Livelihoods

THE World Conservation Union (IUCN), with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and support from IUCN members in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, is promoting biodiversity conservation through the North Africa Biodiversity Programme. About 70% of the wild plants in North Africa are known to be of potential value in fields such as medicine, biotechnology and crop improvements according to a 2002 UNEP study. With increased demands on available resources, a



number of important plant species have become scarce in areas where they were previously abundant. If their collection and use is not regulated, some species may become threatened with extinction. Since 1994, IUCN has been engaged in a programme that promotes the conservation of biodiversity in North Africa, developing the sustainable use of natural resources and empowering local communities, in particular women, in biodiversity conservation, as well as creating a platform for experience sharing and exchange of knowledge and information.

<http://iucn.org/places/medoffice/nabp/>

### Extractive Industries in Arid and Semi-Arid Zones

This IUCN publication is now available in Arabic thanks to the generosity and commitment of the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD), an IUCN member from Saudi Arabia. The translation was peer reviewed by CEM Regional Vice Chair for North Africa and West Asia. For a copy, please contact [cem@iucn.org](mailto:cem@iucn.org).

This publication provides an overview of the issues and problems associated with extractive industries in arid and semi-arid lands, and recommendations on how these industries can be better planned and managed to minimise land degradation and desertification. It is primarily intended to assist government departments responsible for licensing, planning and monitoring of extractive industries activities, to take account of environment and development issues in their decision-making.

### IUCN completes evaluations of nominated World Heritage sites

IUCN – The World Conservation Union has completed its year-long evaluation process

of 12 new sites nominated for World Heritage status. As the official Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee on natural heritage, IUCN carries out a long and rigorous process of evaluation each year, involving a field mission to each nominated site, input from a large number of independent experts, and a review by a Panel of World Heritage experts. The field missions also include consultation with local and national authorities, NGOs, local communities, and other stakeholders.



This year, eight natural sites are nominated for World Heritage status, including among others, the Whale Valley in Egypt, where fossils of whales with hind limbs still exist in the Egyptian desert. The World Heritage Committee, comprised of 21 States, will examine IUCN's evaluations at its annual session in July 2005 in Durban, South Africa, and make the final decision on whether the Egypt nominated site will be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

<http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/>

## MEMBERS NEWS:

### First National Botanic Garden founded in Jordan

On 21 March 2005, HRH Prince Faisal, the Regent, of Jordan inaugurated the first national botanic garden in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This pioneering community project is being

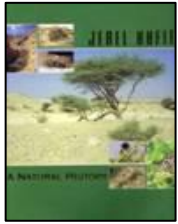


championed by HRH Princess Basma bint Ali, and at her request, BGCI is working in collaboration with a team of local experts to develop plans for the Royal Botanic Garden. Rick Richardson, Programme Director, Asia & Middle East, BGCI, said: "This is a positive story to come out of the Middle East. The Royal Botanic Garden will be the first botanical collection of living plants that is open to the public in Jordan. It will be a regional centre for native plant conservation, public education, and scientific research and will have links with other gardens, both in the region and worldwide." **You can access the full press release online at:** [http://www.bgci.org/home/1st\\_jordan.html](http://www.bgci.org/home/1st_jordan.html)

### IUCN WESCANA members in UAE collaborate with Private Sector to conserve Natural History

In 1997, the Emirates Natural History Group (ENHG), an active IUCN member in UAE, approached the Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations, ADCO, to seek support for detailed survey and the production of a report covering the natural history, geology and archaeology of Jebel

Hafit. To their great credit, ADCO willingly agreed, and ENHG set about planning and overseeing the work. Several specialists were approached to see if they would be willing to survey the mountain and provide a



report on their findings. The Group was very fortunate to secure the services of some very knowledgeable and enthusiastic experts, who all tackled the task with considerable dedication.

The results of their efforts were brought together in a well illustrated report (Emirates Natural History Group, 1998), but at that stage it was only possible to produce sufficient color photocopies for the immediate needs of ADCO, ENHG and the authors.

The Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency ERWDA, another pronounced member of IUCN in UAE, has drawn up definitive plans for the establishment of Jebel Hafit National Park, while the authorities in Al Ain are also actively studying conservation issues related to the mountain. The wealth of information brought together in this book certainly provides ample scientific justification for the conservation of the mountain, its fauna and flora and archaeology, should it ever have been doubt. It also underlines the urgency for protective measures, and it will provide a great deal of baseline information for a much-needed Management Plan.

The wildlife of the deserts and mountains of the UAE is under severe pressure, as progressively more land is lost to development and the remaining wild areas become fragmented by new roads, walls, fences and pipelines. There is an urgent need to create a system of Protected Areas or National Parks, and what area could be deserving of greater priority than Jebel Hafit?. ENHG sincerely hopes that this book serves as a stimulus that will help to ensure that the necessary systems and management are put in place, rather than being merely a valuable historical record. [www.adias.uae.com](http://www.adias.uae.com)

### **Biodiversity of Mashreq region to be protected**



The Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN), an NGO member of IUCN in Jordan, has signed a \$2.7 million agreement with the Swiss Agency for

Development and Cooperation (SDC) to implement the second phase of the Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism in the Mashreq Region Project. The project seeks to contribute to conservation of high biodiversity areas in the Mashreq region by stimulating

ecotourism as an income source and a vehicle for community and institutional strengthening. The project aims to build capacity for key players in biodiversity conservation and ecotourism by facilitating training at both technical and administrative levels in both public and private sector institutions. For more information on the project, please visit: <http://www.rscn.org.jo/>

### **IUCN-NCWCD: Sixteen years of partnership**

IUCN-WESCANa has just signed a new Agreement for its continuous partnership with NCWCD in Saudi Arabia. For sixteen years in a row, IUCN has been supporting NCWCD in its conservation of biodiversity in the Kingdom.

The long term objective of this partnership is the conservation and development of the Kingdom's biodiversity and to support enhanced sustainable development.

### **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:**

#### ***A networking opportunity for IUCN members in 2005!***

Have you updated your organization's information in the Membership Database? IUCN members will have an exclusive benefit of consulting the IUCN Members' Portal to identify other member organizations with similar interests. An element of the online Members' Portal was demonstrated in the Membership Hub during the Bangkok Congress. Those members who visited the Hub already saw how this Portal will help IUCN members to expand their networks and develop new partnerships with other members – to promote your organization by adding attractive elements to your organization's information already in the IUCN Membership database. To ensure that the database which we are developing has updated information, we request you to spend no more than 5 minutes to download a Membership Data Update Form in English, French or Spanish; complete the form and e-mail or fax the completed and signed form to the WESCANa Regional Office email: [dok@iucn.org](mailto:dok@iucn.org), Fax: 00962(6)5680355. If you cannot email a signed copy of the form, then e-mail a completed copy without the signature, print the last page, sign it and fax it. *Download the form from:* [www.iucn.org/members](http://www.iucn.org/members)

**IMPORTANT:** The deadline for application for formal recognition of National and Regional Committees of IUCN is **31 July 2005**.

***New Membership applications to be considered by Council*** - IN accordance with Regulation 14 of the IUCN Statutes, we are pleased to inform you that applications

of four organizations from WESCANa that are seeking membership have been accepted for consideration by Council. The IUCN Council will consider these applications at its next meeting which will be held in Gland on 26-28 September 2005. These are: *Association of Retired Persons of the Department of Environment, Jordan, Jordan River Foundation (JRF), Jordan, Palestine Wildlife Society, Palestine, and The Nature Conservation of Sughd Region (NCAS), Tajikistan.*

This information has been emailed to members and is also displayed on our website where it can be downloaded from: [www.iucn.org/members/admission.htm](http://www.iucn.org/members/admission.htm)

We would like to recall that the admission process is governed by the IUCN Statutes and Regulations. It is, therefore, important for you to carefully consider the provisions of Article 7 of the Statutes when reviewing these applications as it stipulates the IUCN key admission criteria.

### **WHO's WHO at WESCANa**

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### **Contribution and Feedback:**

Please send your news, events or successful stories, or any feedback to share with all WESCANa members and partners. Via e-mail to Dona Khanfour at [dok@iucn.org](mailto:dok@iucn.org)

### **Tsunami Portal Goes Live**

The IUCN tsunami portal is now on-line at [www.iucn.org/tsunami](http://www.iucn.org/tsunami). This is a portal for all environment decision makers: a source of useful reference information from IUCN and our partners related to post-tsunami reconstruction. Plans for the near future include search capabilities on the reference materials and possibly a bulletin board.