

## IUCN South-Eastern European e-Bulletin

Issue 9 □ June 2006



### Editorial

Dear readers,

Welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> issue of the IUCN South-Eastern European e-Bulletin. We are presenting many new activities and projects happening in the region, as well as providing updates on some topics we introduced in some of the recent issues. Hopefully you will find the reading interesting and informative! As always, you sent us a lot of news articles and updates on passed and future events, and we tried to include all of them in this issue. Thank you for your continuous interest in the IUCN bulletin and we are looking forward to read your updates in the future. The guidelines for submitting articles for the IUCN SEE e-bulletin can be found at the last page of this issue.

With best wishes,

*IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe*

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## News

### 1 IUCN enlarges membership in Montenegro

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has more than 1,000 members worldwide, 800 of which are NGO members. After the IUCN Council's approval, the Greens of Montenegro have joined the Union, becoming the first IUCN member in the young state of Montenegro. The Greens of Montenegro are an NGO working on promotion of ideas of sustainable development and conservation of natural and cultural values of the country. The NGO is carrying out various activities jointly with local communities, governmental and non-governmental sectors. In 2002, the Greens have contributed significantly to the establishment of the Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Montenegro, a body which gathers representatives from different sectors. The future priority of the Greens is the improvement of dialogue between governmental, civil and private sectors, in the interest of better environmental protection. Environmental education is also an important field in this NGO's programme, contributing towards raised awareness about environmental issues among local communities and other key players in the country. Welcome to the Union! For more information please contact **Sasa Drljevic**, Greens of Montenegro, [mgreens@cg.yu](mailto:mgreens@cg.yu).

### 2 Turkey launches fund to halt biodiversity loss

**Turkey:** Doga Dernegi (BirdLife in Turkey) has formed a partnership with UNDP and the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Forestry to establish a national fund to halt biodiversity decline. The "Turkish Zero Extinction Fund" will carry out priority conservation actions in the 305 Key Biodiversity Areas identified by Doga Dernegi.

The official launch of the fund will take place on 4 June on CNN Turk, one of the main media sponsors of the campaign. CNN Turk will promote the fund and its ten highest priority projects through a series of television broadcasts. The projects that will benefit include: threatened orchid species conservation in Southern Turkey; the rediscovery of the Anatolian Leopard; the conservation of the Sultansazlığı wetlands; and the preservation of the country's last remaining Demoiselle Cranes and globally threatened Great Bustards.

A number of fundraising initiatives will also be carried out, including an internet-based auction of 18 Turkish artists' paintings, profits from which will feed the fund. For more information see the Doga Dernegi website: [www.dogadernegi.org](http://www.dogadernegi.org).

### 3 “Organic is In” Montenegro



**Montenegro:** NGO MOST from Zabljak initiated a new campaign “Green is In” to stop excessive logging and expand the size of protected areas in Montenegro. One of the first activities within this campaign was the organisation of a voluntary activity “Organic is In”, held in the village Podgora. Podgora is located at the edges of Durmitor National Park and near Tara River, which makes it an attractive place for visitors. Unfortunately, it is experiencing negative trends in migrations of people, as well as inadequate use of land and excessive logging. Combined organic production of food and medicinal plants and development of sustainable tourism would be good solutions for regeneration of the village and its surrounding area. The “Organic is In” event worked towards fulfilment of

this aim. The event gathered Zabljak’s high school students and a farmer, who planted seeds of different vegetables and medicinal herbs. NGO MOST intends to promote this activity on a yearly basis, hoping it will become a traditional event of the region and result with increased awareness about organic production. For more information visit [www.durmitorcg.com](http://www.durmitorcg.com).

### 4 Stewardship for conservation in the future karst park of Slovenia

**Slovenia:** The area of Kraski rob spans over the South-Western part of Slovenia and is considered as one of the most important biodiversity areas in the country, comprising dry calcareous grasslands, screes and rocky slopes and Mediterranean temporary ponds. Rich fauna (butterflies, amphibia, birds etc) and flora (i.e. one of the only three locations of *Moehringia tommasiniana* at global level) has contributed to the designation of the Natura 2000 area. The maintenance of the habitats and species, together with extensive awareness raising campaign was the subject of a LIFE Nature funded project, which was based on the idea of creation of the network of so-called “micro-reserves”. This model was developed in Valencia by a well-known botanist and conservationist Dr. Emilio Laguna. It is founded on the establishment of a network of smaller areas of significant importance for conservation, which are managed by land-owners, according to special, site-specific management plans. The project presents an innovative model of stewardship for conservation in Slovenia. Success of the project encouraged preparations for designation of the wider project area as the Regional Park. More on the project: <http://www.zrs-kp.si/projekti/life> or from **Andrej Sovinc**, *Project Manager*, [andrej.sovinc@guest.arnes.si](mailto:andrej.sovinc@guest.arnes.si).

### 5 Making Connections in the Lower Danube Green Corridor



“Making Connections” is a WWF-DCP project, funded by the Dutch BBI Matra scheme, which aims to gather ‘grass-roots’ support for the implementation of the Lower Danube Green Corridor (LDGC). In 2000, the LDGC was formalised in a joint agreement signed by the governments of Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Moldova; since then its application has been somewhat hampered by the huge social and political changes taking place in those countries, but now is the perfect time for revitalising Europe’s largest and most ambitious wetland restoration scheme. It is also an excellent opportunity to face the threats posed by short-term unsustainable development initiatives in agriculture and navigation in the

region, and to recognise and maximise the benefits, including economic gains, that environmental services deliver to local people. One way of raising awareness of these issues and opportunities is through the cross-cutting activity of sustainable tourism, the success of which depends upon a healthy environment.

The project will offer training to local and regional stakeholders across the region. A stakeholder network will be established, and trade and other links across national frontiers will be fostered. Organisations already working with ecotourism and rural tourism will be strengthened and new tourist destinations will be identified and promoted. A number of small ‘seed-grants’ will be awarded for innovations, economic sustainability being the key criterion.

The focus of the project will be the People Summit, an international stakeholder forum and cultural festival to be held in Roussenski lom Nature Park in Bulgaria, on 15-16 September. More information is available from **David Reeder**, WWF DCP, [daimawr1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:daimawr1@yahoo.co.uk).

## 6 DEF initiates strengthening of Sava River NGOs in WFD

At the beginning of 2006, a new regional project “Strengthening NGO Participation in EU WFD Implementation in the Sava River Basin” started with support from the REC within the UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project. The project is implemented by four member NGOs of the Danube Environmental Forum: Green Action from Croatia, the Center for Environmentally Sustainable Development (CESD) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Society of Bird Research and Nature Protection (DPPVN) from Slovenia, and DEF Serbia and Montenegro. The purpose is to involve the public in the ongoing process of implementing the Water Framework Directive and management planning for the River Sava. This will be done through various activities such as the capacity building of representatives of environmental NGOs, relevant institutions and interested individuals active in the field of the WFD.

This one-year project will establish an ‘International River Sava NGO Committee’ able to actively participate in the development of the Sava River Basin Management Plans. The NGO Committee will remain active after the project’s end, and will monitor the process of management planning for the River Sava at national and international level. WFD is the first Directive to take public participation into account as a key element for successful implementation. It is hoped that public participation will be an obligation for every decision making process in the protection of water resources.

For more information about the project, please contact **Mirjana Bartula**, *Secretary General*, DEF, [mbartula@eunet.yu](mailto:mbartula@eunet.yu).

## 7 Green Forest conserves IPA in Montenegro



**Montenegro:** In February 2006 FLORON and Plantlife International from UK started a three-year project on the conservation of Important Plant Areas (IPA) in Bulgaria, Croatia and Montenegro. This project feeds into the Plantlife International’s overall programme aimed at identification and conservation of a network of the best sites for wild plants, fungi and their habitats around the world to ensure their long-term survival. The selection of sites follows international and regional guidelines to ensure consistency and is based on three criteria: threatened species, botanical richness and threatened habitats.

In Montenegro, the IPA project, which is starting in June 2006, is being coordinated by the Green Forest (Zelena Gora) NGO from Podgorica. The Green Forest cooperates with several public institutions in the implementation of the project - Natural History Museum, Faculty of Biology, National Parks of Montenegro, Ministry for Environmental Protection and Urban Planning, the Institute for Nature Protection of Montenegro, the Institute for Marine Biology. More information about IPA project is available from **Marko G. Karaman**, *President*, NGO Green Forest, [markoka@cg.yu](mailto:markoka@cg.yu).

## 8 Reducing Nutrient Pollution in SEE Danube Waters

A key focus of the UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project (DRP) is to reduce trans-boundary nutrient pollution to Danube waters in South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea. Excessive nutrient pollution can cause massive algae blooms. Left unchecked, sub-surface life becomes deprived of oxygen and suffocates, reducing biodiversity and altering plant communities, food webs and water body chemistry.

To this end, the DRP is implementing a broad range of projects, one of which encourages farmers to use best agricultural practices (BAP) to reduce nutrient pollution. A pilot project testing BAP is currently underway in Vojvodina, Serbia. Pilot projects in Croatia and Romania are helping the managers of municipal water and wastewater utilities to reduce operational costs and better plan for investments to improve the services.

The DRP encourages national water managers in using wetland vegetation to reduce pollution, and to include such actions in their national plans for meeting the EU Water Framework Directive. Project outputs will include guidelines and case studies where wetland plants have improved water quality. For more information, please contact **Paul Csagoly**, *Communications Expert*, UNDP, [Paul.csagoly@unvienna.org](mailto:Paul.csagoly@unvienna.org), [www.undp-drp.org](http://www.undp-drp.org).

## 9 NatuRegio in Bulgaria and Romania

Since the beginning of 2006 the Alfred Toepfer Academy for Nature Conservation, the University of Lüneburg, Euronatur and the EUROPARC Federation are running a project “NatuRegio” which aims to support the preparation and implementation of up to ten future-oriented nature conservation projects in

Romania and Bulgaria. With financial support from the Alfred Toepfer Foundation F.V.S. and the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU), young professionals in the field of nature conservation from Romania and Bulgaria are invited to join a four-month trainee programme in Germany. The programme is taking place in German protected areas and nature conservation institutions and includes several training courses and workshops on the themes of protected area management, European nature conservation programmes, forest and nature conservation as well as environmental education. Encouraged by the project team and the trainee institutions, the trainees are expected to develop a project idea in line with the needs of their home institutions. After having completed the programme, the trainees will implement the projects in their home countries. The project implementation will be subsidised, and two of the projects will be especially awarded and funded by the DBU.

Applications for the programme were accepted until the end of May. At the beginning of June the programme participants will be selected and shortly afterwards an introductory workshop will be held. Further information on the project is available at [www.naturegio-bg-ro.de](http://www.naturegio-bg-ro.de) and from **Eva Pongratz**, Director, EUROPARC, [e.pongratz@europarc.org](mailto:e.pongratz@europarc.org).

## 10 Countdown 2010 assessment tool



IUCN's Countdown Secretariat, together with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, is developing a monitoring tool to evaluate the progress of European countries in taking the necessary steps to halt the loss of biodiversity. This tool will investigate the development of national and regional 2010 strategies, but also look at specific policy actions taken within each biodiversity related sectors. Using the indicators developed at the European and global level to monitor changes in the state of biodiversity, the tool will look at the performance of countries in halting biodiversity loss.

The initiative was born after the expert workshop held at the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen last year, when the Secretariat presented its proposal to the Countdown 2010 Steering Group. The Steering group agreed on the need for a high profile tool that could highlight developments as well as necessary actions. Over the summer, the Secretariat will finalise the prototype and test it. More information is available from **Sebastian Winkler**, Head of Countdown Secretariat, IUCN ROFE, [sebastian.winkler@iucn.org](mailto:sebastian.winkler@iucn.org).

## 11 Learn for sustainability in Plymouth

The University of Plymouth, UK, has designed a new MSc - Learning for Sustainability, which will be run by the Centre for Sustainable Futures (CSF). This interdisciplinary programme explores ethical, theoretical and practical frameworks enabling personal, professional, organisational, community and social change towards sustainability. At the heart of the programme is the idea that learning communities and organisations are vital for promoting sustainability. The students will gain sustainability-related knowledge, skills and capacities for leadership, management and change in chosen careers. For more information visit [www.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk) or email to [science@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:science@plymouth.ac.uk).

## 12 Expanded protected sites in Serbia

**Serbia:** The size of the Serbian protected areas has expanded in the last three months. According to the proposals of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, the Government has proclaimed the areas of the Ludasko Lake Strict Nature Reserve (from 390 ha to 850 ha), and Uvac Gorge Strict Nature Reserve (from 2,717 ha to 7,543 ha), while the country is richer for one newly established protected site - Vlasina Lake. Vlasina is designated as Landscape of Outstanding Features (IUCN Category VI).



Currently, the Institute finalised a new proposal for the protection of Zaovine in the Western Serbia, which is proposed to become a Landscape of Outstanding Features (IUCN Category V). Zaovine have special place in the history of botany being the area where Dr. Josif Pancic discovered a coniferous species, the Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*), in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Picea omorika* can nowadays be found only in this particular location of Zaovine on the Tara Mountain. Future protection of Zaovine will contribute to conservation of natural, as well as cultural values of the area. More information is available from **Maja Radosavljevic**, PR, Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, [maja@natureprotection.org.yu](mailto:maja@natureprotection.org.yu).

### 13 Transboundary Central Danube Floodplains host PA managers



WWF DCP has initiated exchange visits of the protected sites' managers within the Central Danube Floodplains connecting Hungary, Serbia and Croatia. The first one was organised on 25-26 April when Danube-Drava National Park conservation team from Hungary visited Gornje podunavlje Special Nature Reserve in Serbia. The visit of the Serbian team to Hungary was organised a month later. The first day of the May visit was focusing on the learning of techniques for restoration of forest communities with local tree species. Long-term goal of the Danube-Drava National Park is clear: no plantations of non-native poplar clones should grow in the National Park anymore. As unsustainable forestry still poses

the most important conservation problem in Gornje podunavlje, good model which is developed in ecologically similar alluvial ecosystem in Hungary was a motivating step in initiating forest restorations in Serbia.

Further on, a Restoration Forestry workshop, gathering foresters, conservationists and NGO activists, was held on 30 May in Mohacs. Georgi Tinchev, an expert from the National Forestry Board of Bulgaria, presented experiences of restoration of alluvial forests on Bulgarian Danube islands.

Reaching the vision of WWF and local conservation NGOs of the three countries, that the Central Danube Floodplain is one ecological unit that should be managed in a sustainable way for the benefit of nature and local people, seems closer now. More information from **Marko Tucakov**, The Bird Protection and Study Society of Vojvodina, [mtucakov@eunet.yu](mailto:mtucakov@eunet.yu).

### 14 First results of the Eleonora's falcon surveys

**Greece:** Greece holds about 70% of the world breeding population of Eleonora's falcon *Falco eleonora*, but the species suffers from multiple threats throughout the country, such as habitat degradation, poisoning by agrochemicals, human disturbance and egg/chick predation by introduced rats. The Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS, BirdLife in Greece) is implementing an EU LIFE Nature project for the conservation of this species, together with a number of partners including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). This project is assessing the population status of Eleonora's falcon in Greece and the other Mediterranean breeding range states, and it is implementing priority management measures at 9 Special Protection Areas (SPAs).



A population census started in 2004, and will be completed in 2007 bringing updated data for the distribution of the species. In Greece, a total of 11,000 pairs were counted, which is more than double the previous estimate for the Greek population. Surveys were also initiated in Croatia (50-100 pairs), Tunisia (150-170 pairs), Turkey (10-20 pairs), Cyprus (150-200 pairs) and Italy (638-704 pairs). Morocco, Spain and Algeria are expected to finalise the surveys this year and in 2007.

The RSPB is also carrying out a pilot project for the eradication of rat populations on two islets in the Sporades – the first such project in Greece. Egg and nestling losses through rat predation are estimated to reach up to 25%. Rat-specific poison, that was spread before the arrival of falcons, poses no danger to aerial feeding falcons, and are not a threat to other over-flying raptors/scavengers, as falcons chase them away from the colony. Repeated field visits have found no evidence of rats left on the islets, but monitoring will continue for a further year.

More information is available from **Jose Tavares**, Country Programmes Officer, RSPB, [jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk).

### 15 Joint project for transboundary protected areas

**Djerdap National Park:** Located in the Eastern part of Serbia at the border with Romania, Djerdap National Park is one of the pearls at the pan-European Green Belt route. As it is bordering the Romanian Nature Park Portil de Fier, the Djerdap park authorities have decided to strengthen already existing transborder cooperation and initiate a joint project to be implemented in both parks and possibly funded by the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR). Apart from engaging in regional cooperation, Djerdap park authorities are

very active on the local level, working with surrounding communities of the three municipalities, Golubac, Majdanpek and Kladovo. Several educational workshops were organised focusing particularly on school-children and raising awareness about the role of the National Park in conservation of natural and cultural values. More information on Djerdap is available from **Marija Milenkovic**, Djerdap NP, [npdjerdap@hotmail.com](mailto:npdjerdap@hotmail.com)

## 16 Conserving World Heritage in SEE

The Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development, with support from the German Environmental Foundation and Fondazione per l'Arte, has teamed up with UNESCO to design and implement management training seminars in selected sites in South-Eastern Europe. The project's Phase one will comprise an international symposium on 16-18 October in Germany. The symposium will bring together heritage site managers as well as leading regional and international experts to determine the actions necessary to ensure the perpetual conservation of current and potential sites. Phase two will consist of a series of capacity-building management courses during the first half of 2007. The third phase will include a thorough documentation and assessment of the results of the programme. The publication will outline the model(s) established for the training courses with a focus on their duplicability. Significant emphasis will be put on highlighting lessons-learned, innovative and sustainable methods for revenue generation, pitfalls, and methods for dealing with the different stakeholders (local community, government, business, and international organizations) encountered by the site managers. A website ([www.conservenaturalheritage.org](http://www.conservenaturalheritage.org)) providing access to the resources will be up and running shortly. For more information please contact **Samuel Shiroff**, Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development, [sshiroff@bfsd.org](mailto:sshiroff@bfsd.org).

## 17 Pelicans doing well at Prespa Lakes

**Prespa Lake:** Since 1991, The Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) has been implementing various activities to secure the long-term conservation of biodiversity of the Prespa lakes, spanning through Greece, Macedonia and Albania. Prespa is well known for its pelican colony - two species nest in Prespa, one of which – the Dalmatian pelican – is considered Vulnerable to Extinction in the IUCN Red Book of endangered birds – there are less than 10,000 pairs worldwide.

The SPP is carrying out a LIFE project to secure and improve the conservation status of the Dalmatian pelican and Pygmy cormorant in the lakes. To achieve this, SPP has been implementing a range of activities such as managing the wetland vegetation of the littoral zone by cutting reedbed and grazing with large herbivores, promoting an effective water management, monitoring the breeding colonies of the two bird species. As a result of this project, the wet meadows surface has been tripled and habitat diversity has increased. Pelican colonies have been faring well in recent years: last year, 1,100 pairs of Dalmatian pelican nested in Prespa, making it the biggest Dalmatian pelican colony in the world (more than 10% of the world population). Prespa is also very important for its breeding Pygmy cormorants (450-630 pairs, the biggest colony in the EU).

For more information please contact **Jose Tavares**, *Country Programmes Officer*, RSPB, [jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk).

## 18 KusBank to improve conservation of birds

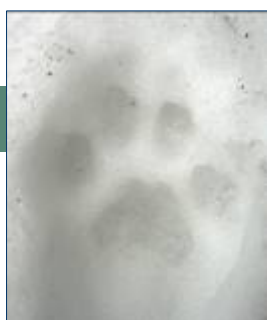
**Turkey:** KusBank is a new internet-based databank through which birdwatchers can store bird observation data collected in Turkey. The databank is run by Doga Dernegi (DD) NGO with the goal to contribute to conservation of birds and biodiversity in Turkey by facilitating the collection, analysis and presentation of data.

Kuşbank is the result of two initiatives. It is part of the DD's programme to increase the number and establish a conservation-minded birdwatching community in Turkey. Further on, the Kuşbank concept arrived at a time when the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) was developing an initiative to try to gather all the information on bird numbers and distribution that are only written in birdwatchers' personal notebooks. As a result, the RSPB developed the Worldbirds project, a global 'family' of data collection and provision systems to pull all these records together on a country basis, from both local and visiting birdwatchers, while at the same time mobilising amateurs, developing BirdLife partner capacity, and encouraging a more scientific approach to data collection. Kuşbank was at the forefront of Worldbirds, serving as a pilot test case for the development of a default system. If you go to Turkey and watch birds there, please send your observations to Kuşbank, [www.kusbank.org](http://www.kusbank.org).

## 19 Albaforest works on Bovilla watershed

**Albania:** In February 2006, Albaforest, in cooperation with the Zall-Bastari's Commune Forests and Pastures Users Association, completed a REC/GEF funded project targeted at reducing drinking-water pollution of the Bovilla reservoir. The activities focused on the implementation of technical models for soil erosion control and curbing downstream sedimentation by carrying out reforestation, check-dams installations, erection of fences, and seeding of indigenous grasses. By the end of the project, soil erosion was reduced by 30%, which was valuable indication that the techniques employed for this project are bringing results and could be utilised further in the region. Albaforest plans to extend its project activities in the Bovilla watershed and work on rehabilitation of 30 ha of eroded land, planting of 60,000 trees, and installing of 300 m<sup>3</sup> check-dams as well as fences on most of the eroded uplands of the Bovilla watershed. For more information please contact **Mehmet Meta**, *Executive Director*, Albaforest, [albaforest@yahoo.com](mailto:albaforest@yahoo.com).

## 1 Balkan lynx trail



**Mavrovo NP, 20-25 March:** Young researchers from the Macedonian Ecological Society and the Society for Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania, carried out a field survey in the Mavrovo National Park together with the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group, KORA and Euronatur. The aim of the survey was to carry out some transects in the supposed Balkan lynx habitats in order to identify correctly and record tracks of mammal species encountered, with hope to find indications of lynx presence.

Besides numerous hares and foxes, the surveyors encountered tracks of wild boar, chamois, badger, roe deer and marten. Among the large carnivores, the field survey found tracks of one bear, possibly two wolves and two lynx - probably a female with young. With regards to the long-term conservation of the critically endangered Balkan lynx, the surveyors concluded that finding lynx' tracks might be a small accomplishment, but still of great importance for young enthusiasts, dedicated for the protection of this charismatic species.

For more information consult the Balkan Lynx Conservation Compendium [www.catsg.org](http://www.catsg.org) or contact **Manuela von Arx** at [m.vonarx@kora.ch](mailto:m.vonarx@kora.ch).

## 2 Steps forward for integrated Shkodra basin management

**Shkodra, 29 March:** The civil society representatives from Shkodra, Albania, and Montenegrin Podgorica and Ulcinj, met to discuss the implementation of an integrated water resource management process for a transboundary Skadar/Shkodra Lake. The meeting was organised by the Civil Society Development Center (CSDC), as part of its project implemented in cooperation with WWF MedPO, and funded by the Government of Catalonia. The participants agreed to promote and strengthen the process for the integrated management of the Shkodra basin by reaching several conclusions: to use the existing Shkodra Lake Forum as a nucleus of the future body which should also comprise NGO representatives in order to exchange relevant information and have as its objective the conservation and sustainable management of the basin, to enable this new body to practice equal powers as the current Forum. More information is available from **Zamira Poda**, *Manager*, CSDC, [zamirapoda@hotmail.com](mailto:zamirapoda@hotmail.com).

## 3 IUCN holds training on habitat mapping

**Koprivnica, 6-7 April:** One of the major focuses of IUCN SEE's project "Integrating Local Communities and Nature Protection in the European Green Belt" is to develop new inventory and habitat mapping of the Gornje podunavlje Special Nature Reserve (SNR) in Serbia. This protected site is part of one of the last big floodplains in the whole Danube River basin, spanning through Croatia and Hungary. Transboundary cooperation and unified measures are the key solution to sustain the future of this important natural complex. One of the first activities undertaken within this project was a 2-day training course on habitat mapping in neighbouring Croatia, organised for the project partners: representatives of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, Gornje podunavlje SNR and members of The Drava League. The training was organised with support of the Ecological Society Koprivnica (The Drava League member), and conducted by Ulrich Schwarz, Floodplain Ecology expert, and Alois Lang, IUCN European Green Belt Coordinator. The programme of the course focused on GIS techniques in habitat mapping and communication.

This event was an important platform for exchanging experiences and knowledge between neighbouring countries. The mapping research team agreed on further steps for the habitat mapping, classification and techniques to be used, and how the project should communicate at the local, regional and international levels. For more information on the project, please contact **Boris Erg**, *Project Coordinator*, IUCN SEE, [boris.erg@iucn.org](mailto:boris.erg@iucn.org).



#### 4 Training on Natura 2000



**Belgrade, 11-13 April:** Several countries in the SEE region have prepared their proposals for Natura 2000 network, while some countries have not started this process. As part of the “Development of an Ecological Network along the Sava River” project, IUCN SEE and Wageningen International organised a training workshop on the Natura 2000 designation process from 11-13 April in Belgrade. The workshop was designed for the representatives of governmental, non-governmental and academic institutions coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro, while the experts from Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia and Denmark shared their experiences and provided guidance on the Natura

2000 process. The training provided full introduction to the Natura 2000 designation procedure, including species lists and habitat type classification system, identification of species and habitat types on national level, selection of sites, designation of sites, EU procedure. The participants elaborated Action Plans for their countries, elaborating the organisational, legal and technical aspects. More information is available from **Maja Zitkovic**, *Project Officer*, IUCN SEE, [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org).

#### 5 'No' to new golf courts in Istria



**Pula, 29 April:** According to the Spatial Plan of the County of Istria, 23 new golf courts are planned to be built in Istria, located in South-Western part of Croatia. Each of these golf courts would be 80 to 150 ha large, potentially bringing serious problems over water and pesticide usage, causing loss of biodiversity in and around the planned courts. The Green Istria NGO pointed on the negative aspects of building golf courts during the Anti-golf Day marked on 29 April in Pula. This event was organised jointly with the Carobnjakov sesir (Wizard's hat) NGO and Inat team. The Green Istria demands that the Istrian County modifies the Spatial Plan not to allow

building of new golf courts. More information is available from **Iva Sverko**, Green Istria, [ivasverko@yahoo.com](mailto:ivasverko@yahoo.com).

#### 6 SEE mountains in focus of the proposed convention

**Pelister, 12-13 May:** Under the UNEP's organisation, Pelister in Macedonia hosted intergovernmental meeting on the legal framework for the protection of mountainous areas in South-Eastern Europe (SEE). IUCN was present at the meeting, together with other environmental organisations and environmental Ministries from a number of SEE countries. The participants agreed to fasten the process of the preparation of Convention to be ready for the Environment for Europe Conference in Belgrade in 2007. Drawing from the example of the analogue Alpine and Carpathian Conventions, this Convention would be the first legal instrument specifically designed for mountainous regions of the SEE. Mountains in the SEE are suffering from a number of environmental and social problems such as unsustainable use of resources and economic exclusion. The Convention would put forward essential pillars of sustainable development such as the need to develop an integrated approach to biodiversity conservation in the region. Greece offered to host the next consultation, and UNEP will continue to assume the role of facilitator. More information is available from **Harald Egerer**, *Programme Officer*, UNEP, [harald.egerer@unvienna.org](mailto:harald.egerer@unvienna.org).

#### 7 WWF WetSchool 2006

**Aiguamolls de l'Empordà, 14-21 May:** WWF Mediterranean Programme (MedPO) and WWF Dams Initiative organized a training course (WetSchool) on “Freshwater ecosystems and dams” on 14-21 May in the Natural Park of Aiguamolls de l'Empordà (Catalunia, Spain). In the last decades, freshwater ecosystems, including the Mediterranean region, have suffered from increasing development pressures due to a fast

world's population growth. To meet the demand for water, many river basins are at risk from further dam development.

WWF is convinced that small and large dams are not always the best answer to meet social and economical needs. An accurate and transparent needs assessment should determine whether or not the building of dams is the best option. Effective demand side management and/or alternative energies may represent a far better option. WWF is also convinced that the criteria set out by the World Commission on Dams should be endorsed and applied by all parties involved in building dams. Such criteria should indicate when a dam is an option and, if it is, how to move forward in a way that is economically sensible, as well as socially and environmentally acceptable.

The training course, organized with the financial support of the Diputació of Girona, hosted eighteen people coming from WWF National Offices worldwide and Mediterranean NGOs, with the objectives: to learn how inter-connectedness of freshwater systems affect physical and ecological processes and the dynamics of riparian habitats; to strengthen understanding of dam engineering principles and good environmental practice in dam engineering; to learn about risks and costs and how global and Mediterranean policies are dealing with these issues; and to learn how NGOs may play a role in decision-making.

More information is available from **Raffaele Mancini**, *Freshwater Capacity Building Officer*, WWF MedPO – Across the Waters, [rmancini@atw-wwf.org](mailto:rmancini@atw-wwf.org).

## 8 Karst polje in focus of the 4<sup>th</sup> DAI meeting



**Trilj and Livno, 15-17 May:** The 4<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of the Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI) partners (WWF, UNESCO, IUCN, UNDP, Council of Europe and FAO) took place in Trilj (Croatia) and Livno (Bosnia and Herzegovina), from 15-17 May. This three-day meeting comprised of two parts – field trip to the karst area of Sinjsko and Livanjsko polje (field), and the internal DAI partners meeting. The field trip had a purpose to scope the situation and develop a draft project proposal for potential involvement of DAI partners in this geographical area. Local NGOs, Euronatur and REC Croatia were present at this event.

Sinjsko polje and Livanjsko polje are a transboundary karst area with rich natural and cultural diversity. The discussed project would focus on sustainable development, wise use of natural resources and biodiversity protection in the karst area. Several DAI members opted for partnership in further development of this potential new project.

During the DAI Working Group meeting, the partners discussed the existing projects in the Dinaric Arc ecoregion, the coordination of a membership platform, funding of the DAI, as well as forthcoming activities. One of the major outcomes was the DAI enlargement, since FAO officially joined the DAI members family.

More information is available from **Boris Erg**, *Project Coordinator*, IUCN SEE, [boris.erg@iucn.org](mailto:boris.erg@iucn.org).

## 9 Conference for the National Biodiversity Day

**Ankara, 22-24 May:** More than 350 people attended a three-day National Meeting on Biodiversity and Protected Area Management in Ankara. The meeting was organised by the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Forestry, with support of the GEF and in the framework of the joint project with the World Bank - "Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management". This project is entering its final stages and was being implemented since August 2000. The National Meeting was used to present the project with its results to the audience coming from governmental, non-governmental, academic sectors, civil society and several international institutions (eg. Flora and Fauna International, IUCN, WWF).

Apart from the plenary session, the meeting comprised a set of workshops at which the participants discussed chosen topics in greater details and draw concrete recommendations. These workshops were: national and international strategies and legislation; financing and economics of conservation; communication, dissemination and collaboration within/among organisations; community participation; alternative income generating activities for nature conservation; monitoring of biodiversity and protected areas; sustainability.



The organisers prepared a 2-day post-conference field visit to Cappadocia where some pilot sites from the GEF project could be seen (eg. Sultansazligi wetland). For more information please contact **Maja Zitkovic**, *Project Officer*, IUCN SEE, [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org).

## 10 Countdown 2010 partners meet in Brussels

**Brussels, 29 May:** Regions and international organisations, governments, business and civil society, representing Countdown 2010 Steering Group, met in Brussels on 29 May and shared experiences in implementing the Countdown 2010 in regions from Finland to France. The Group presented activities related to various issues, including development of policy and action plans, and communication of biodiversity to young people via computer games and competitions. Joint future activities of the initiative will comprise the launch of the Countdown 2010 assessment tool, a website to boost partnership interactions, and a number of conferences. For more information please visit [www.countdown2010.net](http://www.countdown2010.net).

## 11 Partnership for the Black Sea

**Bucharest, 5 June:** The Black Sea Forum of Dialogue and Partnership was held on 5 June in Bucharest, Romania. Initiated by the Romanian government, the objective of the Forum is to create a platform for stringer cooperation between the Black Sea countries. The participants at this meeting were the Presidents of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Romania, high representatives of Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece; representatives of the EC, CoE, EU, IUCN, OSCE, EBRD, various UN entities, WTO, the World Bank, OECD, CIA etc. The Russian Federation was an observer at the Forum. The countries involved in the Black Sea Partnership signed a Joint Declaration in which they stated the principles of the Forum and the fields of joint activities (eg. security, education, environmental protection etc). The Forum invited all countries in the region to join this Partnership and agreed on active cooperation with the EU.

## 12 Development of the Sava ecological network

**Belgrade, 6-7 June:** Wageningen International and IUCN SEE held the final consultations with its project partners from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. The "Development of an Ecological Network along the Sava River" was a one-year project and is finishing in June 2006. The representatives of the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, State Institute for Nature Conservation of Croatia, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, and University of Sarajevo – CEPRES, met to share their results of the project. The Technical Eco-Group has shown the work carried out in the last year, focusing on the activities leading to the creation of a preliminary ecological network along the whole Sava River. The project partners prepared shape files and the Natura 2000 data sheets for chosen focal sites relevant for the eco-network. This data will be uploaded to the newly created website for Sava, which consists of a comprehensive Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) for the Sava River, and will be active by the end of June.

The findings and agreements made by the Technical Eco-Group on the first day, were presented to the project Steering Committee on the second day of the meeting. The present Steering Committee representatives were the Croatian Ministry of Culture, the Serbian Ministry for Environmental Protection, the Provincial Secretariat of Vojvodina, and the Sava Basin Commission, together with Wageningen International, IUCN and Bio/Consult. More information is available from **Maja Zitkovic**, *Project Officer*, IUCN SEE, [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org).

## 13 Balkans Peace Park Project

**Podgorica, 13-14 June:** The Balkans Peace Park Project (BPPP) was presented at the conference "Enhancing Transboundary Biodiversity Management in South-Eastern Europe", held in Podgorica. The BPPP has recently begun to develop a joint project with Fractal. This project aims to promote the development of strong local democratic procedures, foster better cross-border cooperation, and promote harmonious transborder environmental protection in the proposed Balkans Peace Park. The project is supported by UNEP. For more information please visit [www.balkanspeacepark.org](http://www.balkanspeacepark.org).



## 14 Training on medicinal and aromatic plants

**Stara Planina Nature Park, 4-6 July:** In July, Stara planina Nature Park, Serbia, will host a training course on "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Growing Wild – Collection, Use, Conservation". The course is organised by IUCN SEE and in cooperation with REC, within IUCN's project "Raising Awareness about Biodiversity and Sustainable Community Development in the Stara Planina area". This project is focusing on conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development in the

transboundary Stara planina area (Serbia/Bulgaria), which is located on the pan-European Green Belt route. Stara planina is internationally recognised as an Important Plant Area (IPA) and it is home to 48 species listed in the European Red List. The participants of the training course will attend lectures and practical workshops in anatomy, morphology and taxonomy of medicinal plants, as well as field work focusing on determination, sustainable collection and use of plants. More information is available from **Duska Dimovic**, Project Coordinator, IUCN SEE, [duska@natureprotection.org.yu](mailto:duska@natureprotection.org.yu).

#### 15 Promoting Green Belt on Biking the Balkans tour



**24 June-15 July:** Biking the Balkans, led by UNESCO BRESCE, is an event aiming to promote sustainable local development in the region. The tour is taking place from 24 June to 15 July across the SEE countries and will cross the pan-European Green Belt as well. On 4 July, the bikers will tour from Donji Milanovac to Kladovo, while IUCN SEE will organise a roundtable on transboundary conservation and the Green Belt initiative. For more information and full itinerary, visit [www.bikingthebalkans.org](http://www.bikingthebalkans.org).

#### 16 Junior Rangers meet in Spain

**Spain, 24 July-2 August:** The 5th International EUROPARC Junior Ranger Camp will be held in the Picos de Europa National Park from 24 July until 2 August. The park is located in the regions Asturias, Cantabria and Castilla y León in Northern Spain. The participants will have the opportunity to get to know the first Spanish National Park through an inspirational programme of activities and to learn more about the ranger profession, the role of protected areas and nature protection on the ground. Junior rangers from across Europe will unite forces to protect Europe's natural and cultural heritage. Please contact **Claudia Klampfl** at [office@europarc.org](mailto:office@europarc.org) should you wish to participate in the camp.

#### 17 Summer School 2006

**Sarajevo and Lonjsko polje, 28 August-10 September:** The Regional Information and Education Centre for Sustainable Development (REIC), based in Sarajevo, in partnership with UNESCO-BRESCE and the University of Bologna, is organising a Summer School 2006 on "Environmental Integration in Territorial Management and Planning". The Summer School 2006 will be held from 28 August to 10 September with the theoretical part being conducted in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and residential week in Lonjsko polje National Park, Croatia.

The programme is conceptualised as an 'interdisciplinary territorial laboratory' spreading across four study areas: territorial certification, natural resource management (with special emphasis on wetlands), tourism (focusing on eco-tourism approaches), cultural heritage (with specific attention to the involvement of the local population). The ultimate objective of the programme is to offer interdisciplinary approach to the young professionals from SEE region in the field of sustainable territorial management which will be applicable to other areas.

The application deadline is 3 July. For more details about the Summer School programme and application procedures please consult REIC Office in Sarajevo on [info@reic.org.ba](mailto:info@reic.org.ba) or [www.reic.org.ba](http://www.reic.org.ba).

#### 18 Countdown 2010 training seminar on protected area management

**Majella NP, 25 September-14 October:** "Countdown 2010: people, protected areas and biodiversity conservation" is the title of an international seminar on the management of protected areas and biodiversity that will take place in the Majella National Park (Abruzzo Region, Italy). The seminar is a result of a successful long term cooperation between The World Conservation Union (IUCN), the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), the Italian Federation of Parks and Nature Reserves (Federparchi), and the Majella NP. It is funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment and the Abruzzo Region Government. The seminar is designed for people working on management of protected areas in the Mediterranean and other European countries. This training will focus on the methods and techniques of monitoring, managing and conserving biodiversity in protected areas, providing theoretical background and case study analyses. More information, including the application procedure, is available from **Rita de Stefano**, Director, Istituto Pangea-Onlus, [rdestefano@libero.it](mailto:rdestefano@libero.it).

## 19 Mediterre – The Border which Unites

**Bari, 27 September-1 October:** The Mediterranean Parks Fair, Mediterre, organised by the Apulian Regional Government, the Italian Ministry of Environment and Federparchi, will take place in Bari, Italy, at the end of September. This event is dedicated to parks and protected areas of the Mediterranean region in order to promote the exchange of ideas and common projects between different bodies engaged in activities related to protected areas. The main theme of this year's Mediterre is The Border which Unites. Mediterre will engage in strengthening the role of co-operative management in protected areas, rediscovering diversity and common roots of the Mediterranean communities. More information can be obtained at [www.mediterre.it](http://www.mediterre.it).

## 20 IUCN pan-European Members meet in Barcelona

**Barcelona, 18-21 October:** The pan-European Members of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) will meet in Barcelona on 18-21 October. The meeting will comprise gathering of the IUCN Commissions (WCPA and Chairs of other Commissions), as well as the European Members meeting, which will be followed by an excursion. It is funded by the Spanish Federal and Catalan Regional Ministries of the Environment. A formal invitation and more details will follow shortly. More information is available from **Joerg Lohmann**, Director, IUCN SEE, [joerg.lohmann@iucn.org](mailto:joerg.lohmann@iucn.org).

### 1 New WCPA Guideline for sustainable protected area financing

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has released a 13<sup>th</sup> Best Practice Protected Area Guideline focusing on sustainable financing in protected areas. The IUCN/WCPA Best Practice Series commenced in 1998 drawing on knowledge and experience of top protected area (PA) thinkers worldwide and offering advice, guidelines, knowledge and experience for diverse issues important for protected area management. After 12 issues being edited by Adrian Phillips, this new Guideline, "Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas: A global review of challenges and options" has been reviewed by a newly appointed Series Editor, Peter Valentine from the Australian James Cook University. The Guideline was written by Lucy Emerton and Joshua Bishop of IUCN with Lee Thomas of the World Commission on Protected Areas.

With many, if not most, PAs facing funding crises, both in terms of the amount of funds available and how those are used, there is an urgent need to expand and diversify PA financial portfolios, and to ensure that funding reaches the groups and activities essential for biodiversity conservation. This report sets out the background of financing protected areas and identifies a series of approaches towards financial sustainability in protected areas. It provides information on status and trends in protected area finance, a typology of financing mechanisms, ways of attracting and administering external funds to encourage conservation, as well as recommendations for a range of actors including governments, NGOs and PA managers, to achieve sustainable PA financing.



The Guideline is available on-line at [www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/guidelines.htm](http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/guidelines.htm).

### 2 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species confirms ongoing decline of species



The total number of species declared officially Extinct is 784 and a further 65 are only found in captivity or cultivation. Of the 40,177 species assessed using the IUCN Red List criteria, 16,119 are now listed as threatened with extinction. This includes one in three amphibians and a quarter of the world's coniferous trees, on top of the one in eight birds and one in four mammals known to be in jeopardy. The ranks of those species facing extinction are joined by familiar species like the polar bear, hippopotamus and desert gazelles; together with ocean sharks, freshwater fish and Mediterranean flowers. Thanks to conservation work, the status of the white-tailed eagle and Indian vultures has improved.

The 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species brings into sharp focus the ongoing decline of the Earth's biodiversity and the impact mankind is having upon life on Earth. Widely recognized as the most authoritative assessment of the global status of plants and animals, it provides an accurate measure of progress, or lack of it, in achieving the globally agreed target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species acts as a wake up call to the world by focusing attention on the state of our natural environment.



More information on IUCN Red List is available from **Andrew McMullin**, *Communications Officer*, IUCN Species Programme, [andrew.mcmullin@iucn.org](mailto:andrew.mcmullin@iucn.org). For a 2-minute video roll of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, visit [www.arkive.org](http://www.arkive.org).

### 3 IUCN releases new data on freshwater fish status in the Mediterranean

Freshwater in the Mediterranean basin is of huge economic and environmental importance. However, with a growing human population and located in the world's main tourist destination with around 175 million visitors a year, the freshwater resources and endemic species in the Mediterranean basin are under great pressure. Current threats to Mediterranean wetlands include eutrophication, drainage, dam construction, over-fishing, and industrial pollution. As a result, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN, 2006) identifies an alarming number of inland water species threatened with extinction. "The Status and Distribution of Freshwater Fish Endemic to the Mediterranean Basin", compiled and edited by Will Darwall and Kevin G. Smith (IUCN Species Survival Commission Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment Programme) includes an assessment of freshwater fish and identifies centres of freshwater fish biodiversity and main threats to their survival. It is an important input to assist the regional planning in the Mediterranean basin through provision of a baseline data and the development of a network of regional experts. The report is available at <http://app.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2006-005.pdf>.

### 4 Guidance on forests and protected areas

Protected areas play a crucial role in conservation of biodiversity, protecting important ecosystem functions, as well as human communities and cultural landscapes. About 10% of the world's forests are to be found in protected areas, and Forest Protected Areas make a critical contribution to nature conservation. In 2005, IUCN published a WCPA Best Practice Guideline "Forests and Protected Areas: Guidance on the use of the IUCN protected area management categories", written by Nigel Dudley and Adrian Phillips. This Guideline addresses two major questions, both of which are strategic, complex and politically important – what is and what is not a Forest Protected Area; and what other forms of forest protection exist and how do they relate to forest protected areas. In answering these questions, the Guideline supplement IUCN general guidance on Protected Area Management Categories. The "Forests and Protected Areas" Guideline is available at [www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/guidelines.htm](http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/guidelines.htm).

IUCN welcomes articles in which you report on the activities related to transboundary cooperation in protected areas and biodiversity conservation. Please report on the status of your projects and actions, as well as events that you attended. You are welcome to announce new meetings and workshops and briefly report on new publications and announce funding opportunities.

The articles should be 150-250 words in length. Please note this as the interest to distribute news articles through the bulletin is extremely high and we are trying to secure space for all of you to contribute. Therefore, please be short. The editor keeps the right to shorten and modify the text if necessary.

Please send a photo to accompany your article if appropriate and indicate your email and/or web-link for further reference.

Thanks for taking these guidelines into consideration!  
All contributions should be sent to [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org).

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### ROfE's Structure

Regional Office for Europe (ROfE) is a branch of The World Conservation Union (IUCN) global network. We along with offices and commissions around the world link back to the President, Director General and [Council of IUCN](#). For a history of IUCN and an explanation of the global structure please visit [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org). ROfE is comprised of four IUCN offices located in [Brussels](#), [Warsaw](#), [Belgrade](#) and [Moscow](#). The head office, located in Brussels, is a meeting point where the IUCN Programme Office for Central Europe in Warsaw, The IUCN Programme Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow and the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe in Belgrade can disseminate information and strategies. Together as ROfE we strive to meet our goals for a sustainable Europe by utilizing local expertise and the strength of the global IUCN network.

### ROfE in Belgrade

#### Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe

Dr. Ivana Ribara 91  
11070 Belgrade  
Serbia and Montenegro  
Tel: +381 11 2272-411  
Fax: +381 11 2272-531  
Email: [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org)

