

## IUCN South-Eastern European e-Bulletin

Dear colleagues and friends,

Welcome to the fourth issue of the IUCN South-Eastern European (SEE) e-bulletin. This issue brings information on many new activities and project developments that happened in the last four months and that are related to the work of IUCN, its members and partners in SEE region.

We are happy to introduce our new staff member, Ms Aleksandra Nestic, who is working on administrative and financial issues. Also, we are continuing with presentation of IUCN members in SEE region, and this time we have the pleasure to introduce you to Ecolibri-Bionet NGO from Serbia and Montenegro. As usual, you will find announcements for some future events related to conservation of nature and biodiversity as well as brief reviews of those events that already occurred. Finally, we are presenting two new publications, as well as some funding opportunities for your projects.

IUCN Programme Office for SEE thanks all of you who had sent contributions for this issue of the bulletin. We are going to prepare and distribute our future numbers on a quarterly basis, thus you will receive the next issue at the end of June. We would like to welcome our new readers and invite all of you to provide news articles, announcements of events, information on new publications by 1 June 2005.

We hope you will find this issue interesting and useful and we are looking forward to receiving your contributions for the next issue of the bulletin by 1 June. The bulletin is also available on IUCN's website [www.iucneurope.org](http://www.iucneurope.org).

Best regards,

***IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe***

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## **IUCN SEE – New Staff**



At the beginning of this year, Aleksandra Nestic joined IUCN SEE team by replacing Sandra Djuric. Aleksandra is our new Administrative and Finance Assistant and we would like to welcome her into the team. She holds a BA in Spanish language and Hispanic literature and has previously been teaching Spanish and English as foreign languages. Aleksandra likes music, books, dancing, and is hardly waiting to earn her scuba diving license. We hope she will enjoy working in our Belgrade office!

## News

### 1 **Ecolibri Bionet – IUCN NGO member in Serbia**

Ecolibri-Bionet, Agency for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development, is an independent NGO, founded in 1996 by the multidisciplinary expert team working on a scientific study *“Biodiversity of Yugoslavia with the survey of internationally significant species”* (1995). The Agency is well known in Serbia for its distinguished editions on nature and biodiversity conservation such as: *“Biological Diversity of FR Yugoslavia - Assessments, Threats and Policies”*, *“National Park Iron Gate”*, CD-ROM *“Catalogue of the Yugoslav Fauna – Carbines”*, *“Encyclopedia of the Environment and Sustainable Development”*.

Ecolibri runs numerous projects and amongst others, specialises in environmental education. The most recent project that Ecolibri started, in cooperation with the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, is also the first project that is implementing the Carpathian Convention in Serbia. The “Database of Biological and Landscape Diversity and Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Carpathian Region of Serbia” intends to complete the database of the Carpathian ecoregion countries.

The Agency has become an IUCN member organisation in the year 2000 and since then has been supporting and undertaking active participation in IUCN activities in the region.

Further information is available from **Jovan Angelus**, *Executive Director*, Ecolibri-Bionet, [jangelus@eunet.yu](mailto:jangelus@eunet.yu).

## 2 French GEF visits the Sava River floodplains

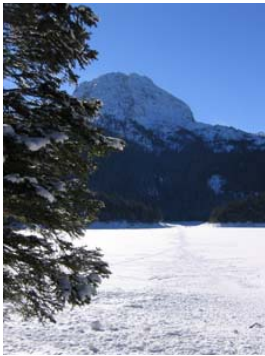


In January, IUCN SEE facilitated a feasibility study launched by the French Government in order to analyse the options for an engagement of the French GEF within the “Sava River Floodplain Biodiversity Conservation” project (submitted by IUCN to LIFE 3<sup>rd</sup> countries Programme last November). The mission was led by Bernard Bousquet, accompanied by local experts and IUCN staff and it focussed on the analysis of the potential for floodplain retention and traditional land use as instruments for ecological networking and biodiversity conservation along this important river.

The mission members discussed project details with the involved partner institutions in Belgrade (Environmental Agency, Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia), Zagreb (State Institute for Nature Protection) and Banja Luka (Agricultural Institute and Ecological Centre from Sarajevo). Besides the involved local actors, the mission members presented the project idea to international organisations such as the EAR, UNDP, REC, in order to harmonise project activities. The mission visited Obedska Bara and Lonjsko polje wetlands, and discussed the potential needs and concerns with local stakeholders from the Forestry Service, local communities, tourism providers and park management. Based on these impressions and the (hopefully) positive mission report (expected in March), the Sava River project might be extended significantly.

For further information contact **Joerg Lohmann**, *Director*, IUCN SEE, [Joerg.Lohmann@iucn.org](mailto:Joerg.Lohmann@iucn.org)

## 3 Tara River in spotlight of UNESCO and IUCN



**Montenegro, 16-21 January:** UNESCO and IUCN carried out an expert mission requested by UNESCO Director General and invited by the governments of Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH) with the goal to evaluate the proposed Buk Bijela hydro-electric dam project and its impacts on the Durmitor National Park World Heritage site (WHS) and Tara River Canyon Biosphere Reserve. With support of the Government of Montenegro and in particular its Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning, the mission held meetings with all relevant stakeholders including governmental authorities, NGOs, local communities and scientific experts. In addition to visiting Durmitor National Park and the municipality of Pluzine, the mission went to Foca in the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The mission also assessed the state of conservation of the Durmitor WHS, evaluating current and potential threats to its values and integrity, as well as potential transboundary aspect in coordination of a number of activities.

The final report was submitted to the Governments concerned, and it will be presented to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 29<sup>th</sup> session in July 2005 (Durban, South Africa).

For more information contact **Maja Zitkovic**, *Project officer*, IUCN SEE, [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org).

## 4 Serbian Spoonbill needs new protected habitats

**Vojvodina, Serbia:** After two years of research of population numbers and conservation status of Spoonbill, *Platalea leucorodia*, carried out with the assistance of the European Nature Heritage Fund, The Bird Protection and Study Society of Vojvodina (BSPSV) has officially proposed the establishment of new protected areas. The three newly proposed sites, Becej (675ha), Jazovo (440ha) and Kapetanski rit (613ha), are of highest importance for Spoonbill breeding as 98% of all pairs in Serbia breed on these fishponds that are already designated as Important Bird Areas (IBA) or parts of IBA sites.

The fishponds Becej and Jazovo satisfy the Ramsar Convention criteria according to the number of regularly occurring Spoonbills, thus in addition to BSPSV's proposal protect these areas, BSPSV advised the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia to develop nominations for inclusion of these sites to the List of wetlands of international importance. Currently unfavourable conservation status for these sensitive habitats, should urgently be recognized. Otherwise, we are facing further physical destruction of breeding sites such was the brutal destruction of Becej colony in 2000 caused by reconstruction activities.

More information from **Marko Tucakov**, *Project Coordinator*, BSPSV, [mtucakov@eunet.yu](mailto:mtucakov@eunet.yu).

## 5 Saving the Montenegrin endemic subspecies from extinction



**Zminjicko Lake, Montenegro:** According to the latest scientific research, *Triturus alpestris serdarus*, an endemic subspecies of Alpine Newt, *Triturus alpestris*, might become extinct even in the course of this year. This subspecies is found only on the locality of Zminjicko Lake between the Sinjajevina and Durmitor mountains. In comparison with spring 2004, when about 40 adult specimens were found on the shores of the lake, in September, no newt larvae or adult newt were found in the lake or on its banks. The reason for this is evidently the introduction of allochthonous fish species to the lake that originally had no fish fauna. Scientists hope that some specimens might still be found at the locality this spring.

Introduction of fish to glacier lakes is a common problem in Durmitor area, although this directly violates National Park regulations. In several lakes the results were drastic and newts are completely extinct, while in some lakes they are very close to extinction.

Biologists from the Universities of Moscow, Belgrade and Podgorica, in cooperation with environmental NGOs from Durmitor, have decided to start a project that will develop urgent conservation measures for *Triturus alpestris serdarus*. The project will include creation of captive breeding population and awareness raising in the Durmitor area. More information is available from **Milica Dajovic**, Society for Protection of Durmitor, [Mil@net.yu](mailto:Mil@net.yu).

## 6 The first environmental education e-bulletin in Turkey

**Turkey:** Doğa Derneği (DD, BirdLife Turkey) has recently started to publish the quarterly Günebakan, the first environmental education e-bulletin produced in Turkey. It aims to be a communication tool between educators. The first issue covered topics such as "What is biodiversity", "Biodiversity and education", interviews with teachers, suggestions of activities on biodiversity, and lists of interesting biodiversity-related web pages. For subscriptions contact **Burcu Arik**, DD, [burcu.arik@dogadernegi.org](mailto:burcu.arik@dogadernegi.org).

## 7 IUCN builds NGO capacities in SEE



NGOs in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) nowadays have an important role as partners for transboundary conservation of natural resources as well as for the stabilisation of civil society in the region. However, the NGO scene is far from being homogenous and varies from large highly professional organisations to semi-professional and smaller ones without much experience. Considering the Balkans as the treasure chest for biodiversity in Europe, all necessary resources have to be mobilised to ensure sustainable management of the environment. Therefore, building capacities of environmental NGOs is an important issue in the region.

In the next months, IUCN will launch its project "NGO capacity building for cross-border conservation on the Balkans", funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS). The project will aim to strengthen NGOs in the SEE region regarding their capacities for transborder conservation, with special focus on protected areas (PA). It will also aim to establish an information/experience exchange platform for all stakeholders on local, national and international levels regarding transboundary management of PAs and biodiversity conservation.

More information from **Maja Zitkovic**, *Project Officer*, IUCN SEE, [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org).

## 8 New discoveries in Croatian cave coleopteran fauna

**Croatia:** The journal of the Croatian Natural History Museum, *Natura Croatica*, recently published descriptions of one new genus and three new species of cave coleopteran species from Croatia. The authors of the article are entomologists Achile Casale and Pier Mauro Giachino from Italy and Branko Jalzic from Croatia. Two species (*Velebitodromus smidai* and *Croatodirus casalei*), holotypes of which were collected in 1998 by Branko Jalzic, and one new genus (*Velebitodromus*), were all found in the Slovacka pit (-1320 m) in the Northern Velebit National Park. The species *Velebitodromus smidai* was named after the Slovakian speleologist Branislav Smida, one of the discoverers and explorers of Slovacka and Lukina Pits, while the *Croatodirus casalei* was named after the Italian coleopterologist Achile Casale. *Croatodirus ozimeci*, named after the Croatian biospeleologist Roman Ozimec, was found in the Lokvarka Cave (-275 m) in Gorski kotar. The three new species belong to the family of Cholevidae, subfamily Leptodirinae, and they inhabit only deep karstic pits surviving on water filtration. All the holotypes are located in the Cave Coleopteran Collection of the Croatian Natural History Museum, Zagreb. More information from **Daniela Hamidovic**, Croatian Biological Society, [hdaniela@zg.biol.pmf.hr](mailto:hdaniela@zg.biol.pmf.hr).

## 9 Eco-tourism development on the Dilek peninsula



**Buyuk Menderes Delta, Turkey:** The Buyuk Menderes River meanders for 500 km through western Turkey before reaching the Aegean Sea with a large delta, consisting of several lagoons, extensive salt steppes and mudflats (the biggest in Turkey). This area holds up to 1000 avocets, 3000 cormorants, 15000 flamingos, and 32000 coots in the winter. To the north the delta is bordered by the steep hills of Dilek peninsula, a craggy, mountainous piece of land jutting out to the Aegean sea, with pristine coves and bays, and remote Mediterranean forests and scrub. This is the home of the Bonelli's eagle (1-2 pairs), olive-tree warbler, ruppel's warbler, krueper's nuthatch, cinereous and Cretzschmar's buntings. The ancient sites of Miletus and Priene are nearby, and lots of tourists visit the area, including lots of foreign birdwatchers.

In order to demonstrate that eco-tourism can play a role in the sustainable use and conservation of Turkey's biodiversity, Doğa Derneği (DD) is implementing a project with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to strengthen the existing eco-tourism infrastructure at the Dilek peninsula and Buyuk Menderes National Park, including development of local human capacity, and establishment of eco-tourism standards in order to regulate visitor use. This project received funding from IUCN.

Walking trails will be re-arranged, sign-boards will be renewed and new boards placed, a training manual on eco-tourism, interpretation and biodiversity education for the use of the local park staff and other local stakeholders will be produced. Further, a website (in Turkish and English) about the area will also be made. More information from **Jose Tavares**, RSPB, [jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk) and **Burcu Arik**, DD, [burcu.arik@dogadernegi.org](mailto:burcu.arik@dogadernegi.org).

## 10 Waterfowl mid-winter counts in Turkey

**Turkey:** Every winter Wetlands International coordinates a global mid-winter waterfowl count across wetlands in the northern hemisphere, to estimate global populations of ducks and other waterfowl. In Turkey, Doğa Derneği (DD) organised these counts from 15 January to 15 February. Before the field work, DD organised a training workshop for all interested volunteers in Diyarbakir (eastern Turkey). The workshop programme included some talks about the history of mid-winter waterbird census worldwide and in Turkey, bird census techniques in general, use of maps and GPS, waterbird identification, and a comprehensive planning of the next mid-winter counts in Turkey. More information from **Jose Tavares**, RSPB, [jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk) and **Eray Caglayan**, DD, [eray.caglayan@dogadernegi.org](mailto:eray.caglayan@dogadernegi.org).

## 11 Skadar looses birds over Ulcinj

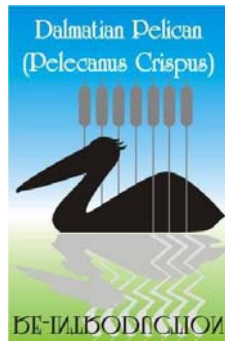
**Skadar Lake, Montenegro:** Skadar Lake, one of the biggest and most important bird winter habitats in Europe, is losing its status of "the European airport for birds", show the results of this year's winter counts. In 1999 there were more than 250 000 birds, the number which is now reduced to only 35 000.

While some bird species are showing its growth in Europe, on Skadar Lake the numbers are reducing. The bird numbers are even more than ten times lower than those recorded during the worst results in the

last 15 years. For example, in 1999 Skadar Lake wintered 150 000 Coots, while this year their number is less than 20 000. Pochard population has dropped from 40 000 to 2 400.

Contrary to Skadar and only 17 km away from the lake in a saline area of Ulcinj, by continuous efforts of The Centre for Protection and Exploration of Birds, Euronatur, and Solana Ulcinj, this year's winter counts resulted with growth of some birds, such as Great Snipe (2 600 compared with previous 300). Maybe this is the answer why the birds are leaving the Skadar Lake. More information from **Darko Saveljic**, Institute for Nature Protection of Montenegro, [dasav@cg.yu](mailto:dasav@cg.yu).

## 12 The return of the Dalmatian Pelican



**Croatia:** The Dalmatian pelican, *Pelecanus crispus*, is an extinct species of the Croatian Ornithofauna. This bird has been known to nest in the Neretva Delta in Southern Dalmatia some 150 years ago. Nowadays, the scientists and conservationists are engaged in returning this species to its former habitat by implementing the project "The Return of a Dalmatian Pelican". The project aims at reintroducing this species back to a Ramsar site of the Neretva Delta (Lake Kuti), and also some other potential locations such as the Ornithological Reserve Vrana Lake and Krka National Park. No bird reintroduction has ever been carried out in Croatia, so this project is bound to be useful for future similar conservationist actions. The project is supervised by the Institute of Ornithology at the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts in Zagreb. Currently, it is still in its initial phase of preparation of the Feasibility Study. Should the Study provide scientific grounds for viability of the proposed plans, the management team will start with the reintroduction phase. More information from **Jasmina Muzinic**, *Project leader*, Institute for Ornithology CASA, [jasmina@hazu.hr](mailto:jasmina@hazu.hr).

## 13 Mid-winter Waterfowl count in the proposed Drava-Mura-Danube Biosphere Reserve

**Drava-Mura-Danube:** The first large scale waterfowl counts on the Drava River from Austrian-Slovenian border to the Danube and on the Danube from the Croatian-Hungarian border to the confluence with the Drava river, occurred this January. The counts were implemented by people from Austria, Slovenia, Hungary and Croatia, with support of WWF, Euronatur, Green Action, Drava League, Zeus, Drava Federation and DOPPS. Altogether, 134 372 water birds belonging to 50 different species were counted, but considering the January weather conditions, the numbers of birds counted were probably below average. Still, the numbers in the Drava corridor in Croatia exceed the Ramsar Convention's criterion regarding wetlands of international concern by no less than 5.5 times.

The most numerous species were the Mallard, Black-headed Gull, Common Coot, Great Cormorant, White-fronted Goose, Tufted Duck, Common Pochard, Greylag Goose, Common teal, Common Goldeneye, Bean Goose, Mute Swan, Yellow-legged Gull and Little Grebe. On the basis of the 90 counted White-tailed Eagles it can be estimated that the population of these birds wintering in the proposed Drava-Mura-Danube Biosphere Reserve (BR) exceeds 100 individuals. One of the count's features were no less than 659 counted Pygmy Cormorants which amounts to 1.5% of the species' global population. It is obvious that during the wintering period the proposed BR is an internationally overlooked wetland of superlatives. More information is available from **Borut Stumberger**, DOPPS, [stumberger@siol.net](mailto:stumberger@siol.net).

## 14 UNEP launches a project for transboundary management in SEE

In January 2005, UNEP office in Vienna started a project "Enhancing Transboundary Biodiversity Management in South-Eastern Europe (SEE)" as a part of the Environment and Security (EnvSec) Initiative for Central Asia, Caucasus and SEE that was launched in 2002 by UNEP, OSCE and UNDP, and NATO as of recently. This project aims to encourage regional cooperation on transboundary mountain protected areas in SEE countries and IUCN is considered as the key partner in the project's implementation.

The first phase of the project will consider an assessment of the state of transboundary mountain ecosystems, main threats and current management practices and prioritization of major critical sites in the region. During the second phase, the project will support ongoing initiatives on transboundary cooperation of biodiversity and protected areas, and facilitate collaborative processes. Furthermore, the project will support the establishment of the network of protected areas, using similar experiences such as the Alpine and Carpathian Networks of Protected Areas. The outcomes of the project will be presented at the 6<sup>th</sup>

Ministerial conference "Environment for Europe" that will take place in Belgrade in 2007. For more information please contact **Jasmina Bogdanovic**, UNEP, [jasmina.bogdanovic@unvienna.org](mailto:jasmina.bogdanovic@unvienna.org).

#### **15 IUCN and IAC developing ecological network on Sava River**

The Dutch government (PIN/MATRA scheme) has recently approved a project "Ecological Network Development along the Sava River", to be implemented by IUCN and the International Agricultural Centre (IAC). This is the first success of IAC and IUCN in their plans to provide support to the transboundary cooperation on the protection and management of the landscape and biodiversity along the Sava River, which runs through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro. An inception meeting is planned in the first half of 2005.

For more information contact **Henk Zingstra**, Senior Advisor, IAC, [henk.zingstra@wur.nl](mailto:henk.zingstra@wur.nl) or **Maja Zitkovic**, Project Officer, IUCN SEE, [maja.zitkovic@iucn.org](mailto:maja.zitkovic@iucn.org).

#### **16 Development of the Macedonian National Emerald Network**

**FYR of Macedonia:** The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of Macedonia (MoEPP) finalised the second phase of the project that aims to develop a National Emerald Network in the Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI). During the 2004, 30% of the national Network was established, including the following protected areas: Pelister National Park, Strict Nature Reserve Tikves and Nature Monument Demir Kapija. All of these areas contain species and habitats that are valuable on both European and world level. For more information contact **Sasko Jordanov**, MoEPP, [S.Jordanov@moepp.gov.mk](mailto:S.Jordanov@moepp.gov.mk).

#### **17 Awareness raising at Burdur Lake**

**Burdur Lake, Turkey:** In January, Doğa Derneği (DD) in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Burdur Municipality and the Burdur Governor, started a new 3-year project, funded by Wetlands International, under the AEWa agreement, to raise awareness of the key local stakeholders about the ecological importance and natural assets of Burdur Lake, and to try to establish conditions for sustainable management of the site in the long-term. The Burdur Golu is a large (20 000 ha) tectonic lake situated in a closed basin and fed by several streams. It is one of the deepest (110 m) lakes in Turkey, and still the single most important wintering site in the world for the globally threatened white-headed duck. In 1994 around 50% of the lake was declared a Ramsar site, but the lake continues to have several problems: the water level decrease since the 1970s due to less rainfall, dam construction and water extraction on the feeding streams.

In addition to raising awareness on environmental issues focused on school-aged children and key local stakeholders, the DD's project will establish a process and timetable for development of a Ramsar Management Plan for Burdur.

More information from **Jose Tavares**, RSPB, [jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk) and **Burcu Arik**, DD, [burcu.arik@dogadernegi.org](mailto:burcu.arik@dogadernegi.org).

#### **18 New MSc on Protected Areas in Klagenfurt**

**Klagenfurt, Austria:** As of this September, the University of Klagenfurt is launching an international Masters programme on Management of Protected Areas (PA). The programme focuses on international PA categories, nature conservation strategies in Europe, integration of socio-cultural, economic and ecological aspects, and co-management processes in PAs. The courses will take place at the University of Klagenfurt and in protected areas of Austria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia. Application deadline is this July. More information is available from **Michael Getzner**, University of Klagenfurt, [michael.getzner@uni-klu.ac.at](mailto:michael.getzner@uni-klu.ac.at).

#### **19 Poisoning of Griffon vultures in Croatia**

**Rab, Croatia, December 2004:** The worst incident of poisoning of Griffon, *Gyps fulvus*, in Croatia, happened at the end of December last year. 17 Griffon died on the island of Rab from the effects of Carbofuran (carbamate) after which the environmentalists held a protest in the town of Rijeka to support Griffon protection. The Eurasian Griffon is a specially protected species according to the Nature Conservation Act and it is estimated that there are 160 to 190 of them left in Croatia. For more information on Griffon in Croatia please visit [www.caput-insulae.com](http://www.caput-insulae.com), a website of Eco-Centre Caput Insulae-Beli NGO, based on island Cres.

## 20 Mediterranean Conservationists and Fishermen Work Together to Protect Deep Seas

**Malaga, Spain, 2 March:** The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) - the main inter-governmental decision-making body on fishery management in the Mediterranean - last week decided to refrain from expanding deep water fishing operations beyond the limit of 1000 metres based on scientific considerations. This important measure was based on a comprehensive study on the status of deep sea fishing in the Mediterranean developed by the IUCN and WWF and the Mediterranean is the first regional sea to adopt measures to refrain from deep water fishing. The decision was adopted at the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the GFCM held in Rome from 21-25 February 2005. Unless objections from member countries arise, it will come into force in four months time. More information is available from **Lourdes Lazaro**, *Communication Officer*, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, [lourdes.lazaro@iucn.org](mailto:lourdes.lazaro@iucn.org).

## 21 Touristic valorisation of Plavsko Lake

**Montenegro:** A newly released short movie "When beauties have smell and taste" highlights rich potentials for tourism development of Plavsko Lake and Prokletije region of Montenegro. For realisation of this project, the Greens of Montenegro NGO received financial support from the Ministry of Tourism of Montenegro and UNDP. The movie emphasises the abundance of local food products and its importance for attracting tourists into these, once very significant tourism areas.

In addition to this movie, the Greens of Montenegro have just finalised a project that suggests guidelines for protection of the Plavsko Lake from erosion. With these two activities, the Greens provide their contribution to the protection and valorisation of natural and cultural potentials of Montenegro. For more information contact **Sasa Drljevic**, Greens of Montenegro, [mgreens@cg.yu](mailto:mgreens@cg.yu).

## Events

### 1 DEF General Assembly 2005

**Veliko Trnovo, Bulgaria, 5-8 April:** Danube Environmental Forum (DEF) General Assembly 2005 and the EU Enlargement Conference will be held in April in Bulgaria. The purpose of the General Assembly is to bring together the DEF members from 13 Danube River Basin countries to evaluate the current functioning and set future steps of the DEF Network. The EU Enlargement conference will focus on three policy issues related to DEF activities: EU Water Framework Directive, Natura 2000 and agro-environmental issues. More information from [defyu@Eunet.yu](mailto:defyu@Eunet.yu).

### 2 Preparations for ecological data survey of the Sava River Basin

**Zagreb, Croatia, April:** ALTERRA Research Institute from the Netherlands is organising a workshop in Zagreb in early April as part of their project "Integrated River Basin Management Plan" related to the Sava River Basin. The project is financed by Dutch government through the Water for Ecosystems Programme ([www.waterfoodecosystems.nl](http://www.waterfoodecosystems.nl)) and it aims to support intergrated river basin management, conservation planning and cross-border cooperation with special focus on flood protection and ecological networks. The project is carried out in close cooperation with relevant authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, as well as IUCN SEE.

The foreseen workshop will assess the existing data in the four countries and prepare outlines for setting up of a GIS database. As Croatia and Slovenia already have data overview in line with NATURA 2000 legislation, special focus will be given to Bosnia and Serbia who are supported to prepare their accurate overview of the ecological data for the basin. In May, the stakeholders will assess the ecological network along the Sava, based on the collected spatial data. For further information, please contact **Sabine van Rooij**, ALTERRA, [Sabine.vanRooij@wur.nl](mailto:Sabine.vanRooij@wur.nl).

### 3 Romania hosts Large Herbivore Foundation meeting

**Vanatori Neamt, Romania, 18-22 May:** The 2005 Large Herbivore Foundation Network (LHFN) Meeting will be held in Vanatori National Park in May. The meeting will be hosted by the National Park staff and the National State Forestry of Romania. For further information visit [www.largeherbivore.org](http://www.largeherbivore.org) or contact **Fred Baerselman**, *Executive Director*, LHF, [fred@largeherbivore.org](mailto:fred@largeherbivore.org)

#### 4 School of Conservation Biology at Croatian Adriatic

**Rovinj, Croatia, 29 May-5 June:** Conservation biology as a science is a prerequisite for effective biodiversity conservation and effective sustainable development as well as conservation planning and environmental management. In order to enhance education and capacity building in the field of scientifically sound biodiversity conservation, the Croatian Biological Society is organizing a School of Conservation Biology (SCB). The School will take place in the historic city of Rovinj, Croatia, on the northern Adriatic coast in May this year and will be hosted by the Centre for Marine Research, Institute "Rudjer Boskovic".

The School will introduce graduate students to the scientific discipline of Conservation Biology through an intensive practical 8-day course. The teaching language will be English and the course will be lead by a team of international lecturers and guest speakers, headed by Asst. Prof. Selina Heppell (Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University, and adjunct faculty at Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University, USA). It will include lectures, discussion groups, computer practices, group projects and a two-day field trip. The Croatian Biological Society offers two tuition grants to the best candidates. The registration deadline is 15 March 2005.

Detailed information may be found at [www.hbd1885.hr/scb](http://www.hbd1885.hr/scb), or contact **Bojan Lazar**, *President of SCB Organizing Committee*, Croatian Natural History Museum, [Bojan.Lazar@hpm.hr](mailto:Bojan.Lazar@hpm.hr).

#### 5 Life in Dubrovnik's subterranean karst

**Dubrovnik, Croatia:** "Tracing the Footsteps of the Gromaca Caveman" photo exhibition was opened in mid February in Dubrovnik's Rupe Gallery, presenting the works of Jana Bedek, Marijana Franičević, Branko Jalžić and Roman Ozimec. The photos are the result of a research conducted by the Croatian Biospeleological Society (CBS) during 2003 and 2004, while the exhibition was organised by CBS and the City of Dubrovnik – Directorate for Environmental Protection and Physical Planning. The visitors have the opportunity to see Močiljska Cave and the Cave beneath Gromačka Vlaka - the most important karstic phenomena from the Dubrovnik area. The caves' wildlife - troglobiotic, endemic and relict species - and its ecology are highlighted. For additional details and a catalogue please contact **Roman Ozimec**, *President*, Croatian Biospeleological Society, [roman.ozimec@zg.htnet.hr](mailto:roman.ozimec@zg.htnet.hr).

#### 6 All you need is a bicycle!

**SEE region, 5-21 June:** Just imagine: one hundred persons from all over Europe who will be exploring some of the nicest sites across the Western Balkans for two weeks, using the most sustainable means of transport: their bicycles! Biking the Balkans (BtheB) - as originally promoted by UNESCO-ROSTE - intends to be a cluster of sporting, cultural and nature conservation related events, organised to promote the idea of sustainable development as a result of interaction between the local initiatives and their global networking.

The tour will start in Venice and continue via Triglav, Lonjsko Polje, Belgrade, Djerdap, Golija-Studenica, Durmitor, Sutjeska, Skadar Lake, to Ohrid and Prespa Lakes. At every site the organisers will provide opportunities to debate issues of relevance for the territorial dynamics through round table discussions, workshops etc. The participation to BtheB is open to everybody, and positive reactions have arrived already from various key partners in the region; the European Cyclist Federation (ECF), IUCN SEE, WWF and UNDP. More information about pre-registration is available from **Giorgio Andrian**, *Consultant*, UNESCO ROSTE, [g.andrian@unesco.org](mailto:g.andrian@unesco.org).

#### 7 7<sup>th</sup> Turkish Birdwatching conference a great success

**Izmir, 30-31 October 2004:** The 7th Turkish Bird Conference, organized by DD and attended by more than 200 birdwatchers, was held in Izmir in October 2004. Turcophile Richard Porter gave a thrilling presentation to the mostly young audience about his experience of birdwatching in Turkey in the 1960s. Outside the conference centre, a Yellow-browed warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) was a surprise finding. After all the talks some excursions were done to nearby Gediz Delta and Spill Mountain. The 8th bird conference will be held in Bursa in 2005. More information from **Jose Tavares**, RSPB, [jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk) and **Eray Caglayan**, DD, [eray.caglayan@dogadernegi.org](mailto:eray.caglayan@dogadernegi.org).

## 8 Joint study trip to the Morava river floodplain in Slovakia

**Slovakia, 4-6 November 2004:** Under the auspices of Danube Environmental Forum (DEF) Secretariat and hosted by DAPHNE – The Institute of Applied Ecology, NGO representatives from Hungary, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro went on a study trip to Morava River floodplain in Slovakia. The participants presented and discussed their experiences of good practices and benefits from transboundary approaches in wetland management, while also conducting a field trip and visit to the Zahorie protected landscape authorities. NGOs, coming mostly from the Central Danube floodplain which includes three important protected wetlands – Danube-Drava National Park, Kopacki rit Nature Park and Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve, were encouraged to continue raising public awareness on the importance of transboundary approaches in floodplain management, biodiversity safeguarding and the necessity of local communities' participation within the process of sustainable use of resources. More information on [www.daphne.sk](http://www.daphne.sk), [http://www.ramsar.org/key\\_awards2002\\_report.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/key_awards2002_report.htm), or from **Boris Erg**, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, [berg@eunet.yu](mailto:berg@eunet.yu).

## 9 Resolutions from the World Conservation Congress available on-line

**Bangkok, Thailand, 17-25 November 2004:** Around 5000 participants attended the world's largest democratic forum, the 3<sup>rd</sup> IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), flagged by a theme "People and Nature – Only One World". Governments and NGOs had the opportunity to jointly establish conservation priorities and guide the Union's policy and approve its Programme. More than 1000 member organisations elected IUCN's new President, Valli Moosa, former Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism of the Republic of South Africa. The IUCN Members Business Assembly further elected IUCN's Treasurer, the six Chairs of its scientific Commissions, and 24 Regional Councillors, who together with the President, make up the Union's governing body.

Participants heard the world's latest scientific knowledge presented, saw landmark initiatives launched, took part in high-level debates, signed a number of agreements, and voted on more than 100 resolutions and recommendations on critical conservation issues, that are now available on-line at <http://www.iucn.org/congress/index.cfm>. Many of these support certain actions of the IUCN European Programme (Countdown 2010, Green Belt, transboundary cooperation etc).

WCC offered a clear goal of the Union's activities in the coming years, which integrates ecosystem management, biodiversity loss, poverty and livelihoods.

## 10 Obedska bara – new home for beavers

**Obedska bara, Serbia, 8 December 2004:** Beaver *Castor fiber L.* reintroduction programme in Serbia and Montenegro has continued last December by releasing 20 beavers in the Special Nature Reserve Obedska bara along the Sava River. The project is supported by the Government of Bavaria, and carried out by the Serbian Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection and the Faculty of Biology in Belgrade. This is the second endeavour of beaver reintroduction, after 30 specimens were successfully released in the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica in April 2004. All beavers released to Obedska bara are marked with small microchips, thus identified and hopefully, monitored. More information on [www.zelenamreza.org.yu](http://www.zelenamreza.org.yu) or from **Boris Erg**, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, [berg@eunet.yu](mailto:berg@eunet.yu).

## 11 Meeting of the Committee for Prokletije Peace Park

**Yorkshire, UK, 10-13 December:** Members of the Committee of the first Balkan Peace Park (BPP) and others interested, met to further the aims and proposals already underway. Participants came from Belgrade, Pristina and Tirana, as well as from Australia, US and UK. One of the topics for discussion was the Committee's part in the positive proposal set out by UNEP-UNDP-OSCE Environment and Security initiative Enhancing Transboundary Biodiversity Management in South-Eastern Europe Project Fiche. It is planned that desk assessment will take place from January to April 2005, with a final assessment from June to August, and regional workshops in October 2005. Other topics covered include the Kosovo national peace park, the first part of the project to be officially approved. A BPP project proposal, action plan and budget was drafted to support this park and complement the Vienna project fiche. Further information from **Antonia Young**, [ayoung@mail.colgate.edu](mailto:ayoung@mail.colgate.edu).

## 12 Serbian experts trained in GIS technology

**Bratislava, Slovakia, January:** A group of Serbian IT experts from the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and the Agency for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development "Ecolibri-Bionet", have successfully finished their first training in GIS at the Institute for Applied Ecology DAPHNE in Bratislava. The training was organised as part of the project "Support and Capacity Building for Implementation of the Carpathian Convention in Serbia", supported by Slovak Aid and CIDA. Ecolibri-Bionet, the implementing Agency of this project, aims to apply GIS technology to create natural and cultural heritage database of the Carpathian region of Serbia, in accordance with IUCN and CERI (Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative) standards. This will feed into the Bratislava based Central Database of the Carpathian Ecoregion countries. The GIS expertise will be beneficial for Serbia's successful preparation for designation of Emerald and Natura 2000 networks. More information from **Nenad Robajac**, Ecolibri-Bionet, at [nrbionet@EUnet.yu](mailto:nrbionet@EUnet.yu).

## 13 Protecting coastal lagoons and wetlands of Albania

**Tirana, Albania, 28-29 January:** IUCN SEE presented the European Green Belt and Countdown 2010 initiatives at the workshop "Coastal lagoons and Wetlands: Biodiversity Heritage of Albania" held in Tirana in January. The workshop was organised by the University of Lecce with reference to the TWReferenceNET project "Management and sustainable development of protected transitional waters" of the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIB CADSES. IUCN was requested by the workshop organizers to get involved in the further project implementation and the Albanian Environmental Ministry endorsed its cooperation on the project.

The participants at the workshop provided their perspectives on conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem health of coastal lagoons of Albania in the context of European Directives and corresponding international conventions. Additionally, the trans-national research group of TWReferenceNET on the Albanian lagoons represented its activities. More information from **Joerg Lohmann**, Director, IUCN SEE, [Joerg.Lohman@iucn.org](mailto:Joerg.Lohman@iucn.org).

## 14 World Wetlands Day celebrated in Novi Sad

**Novi Sad, 2 February:** The Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, Department in Novi Sad, celebrated the World Wetlands Day, as a reminiscence on 1971, when the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance - widely known as Ramsar Convention, has been signed. Gathering all the main regional stakeholders from the field of nature conservation including state institutions, experts, protected area authorities and NGOs, was a good occasion to present current achievements and plans related to conservation of wetland areas in Serbia. Slobodan Puzovic from the Provincial Secretariat for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of Vojvodina presented the Special Nature Reserve Slano Kopovo, which was recently designated as a Ramsar site. The participants were informed on the new nominations for Ramsar designation, among which Labudovo okno is almost completed, while Gornje podunavlje, Karajukica bunari and Vlasinsko jezero are in preparatory process. For more information about these nominations contact **Boris Erg**, Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, [berg@eunet.org](mailto:berg@eunet.org).

## 15 New IUCN Councillor for SEE

**Belgrade, 1 March:** IUCN SEE and its two members in Serbia (Ecolibri-Bionet and the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia) organised a media event to promote IUCN activities in the region, including the introduction of IUCN Councillor for East Europe, North and Central Asia. Marija Zupancic-Vicar from Slovenia was elected as the Councillor during the IUCN 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conservation Congress in Bangkok last November. She informed the press and the invited guests from governmental bodies, NGO scene, and international organisations, about major resolutions from the Congress affecting the SEE region.

Apart from IUCN members from Serbia, whose leaders, Lidija Amidzic, Director of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, and Jovan Angelus, Director of Ecolibri-Bionet, presented their activities and cooperation with IUCN SEE, Violeta Orlovic provided information on IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas - European Task Force on Training for Protected Areas, and Joerg Lohman, Director of IUCN SEE presented IUCN activities in the region.

## 16 IUCN WCPA Training Task Force at Mediterre

**Brindisi, Italy, 3-6 March:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Mediterranean Parks Fair, held in Brindisi and organized jointly by the Italian Federation of Parks and Natural Reserves, the Ministry for Environment and Puglia Region, was strongly supported by IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). IUCN WCPA European Task Force for Training (ETTF) and Network of European Environmental Training Centres of Excellence (NEETCE) promoted the establishment of five Centres of NEETCE that were inaugurated in November 2004. These are: the Alfred Toepfer Akademie für Naturschutz; Atelier Technique des Espaces Naturels (France); Istituto Pangea-ONLUS-European Institute for Environmental Education and Training (Italy); Losehill Hall, the Peak District National Park Environmental Learning Centre (United Kingdom); Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat (France). NEETCE has the role to facilitate the exchange of experiences and to define criteria and standards of quality of training for protected area staff. For more information on ETTF please contact **Maurilio Cipparone**, [mc@ecoidea.net](mailto:mc@ecoidea.net), and on NEETCE **Johanes Schreiner**, [Johann.Schreiner@NNA.Niedersachsen.de](mailto:Johann.Schreiner@NNA.Niedersachsen.de).

## 17 Joint actions for the environment in SEE

**Milocer, Montenegro, 10 March:** IUCN SEE attended a cross-border sub-regional conference on Environmental Protection as a Neutral Platform for Reconciliation, Cooperation and Stability, organised by the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) and the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Physical Planning of the Republic of Montenegro. Around 35 international experts discussed transboundary cooperation in environmental protection related to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro. The outcome of the conference was a draft "Joint statement on common actions for sustainable management of shared natural resources of the sub-region", the document which is supposed to facilitate cooperation between neighbouring countries as well as the international collaboration on environmental projects in the region. For more information please contact [Olvanova@rec.org](mailto:Olvanova@rec.org) or [Joerg.Lohmann@iucn.org](mailto:Joerg.Lohmann@iucn.org).

## Funding opportunities

### 1 Call for proposals: Leonardo da Vinci fund

Summary: Third call for proposals to award grants for organising valorisation actions to promote dissemination and exploitation of project results

Regions: EU Member States, EEA countries, Candidate countries

Global budget: 1,5 Million Euro

Amount awarded per project: Maximum 100 000 Euro and maximum of 75% of eligible costs

Closing date: 3 May 2005

Submission of proposals: TAO Socrates, Leonardo & Jeunesse; Rue Colonel Bourg 139 – 139; Kolonel Bourgstraat; B-1140 Evere; Belgique

### 2 Call for proposals: PHARE Programme – multi-beneficiary small projects

Summary: Small projects fund for information activities on European integration in Romania

Regions: Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, EU Member States

Global budget: 1 Million Euro

Amount awarded per project: 15 000 to 50 000 Euro

Closing date: 18 April 2005

Submission of proposals: [www.infoeuropa.ro/fonduleuropa](http://www.infoeuropa.ro/fonduleuropa)

Contact: Information Centre of the European Commission in Romania, [fonduleuropa@infoeuropa.ro](mailto:fonduleuropa@infoeuropa.ro)

### 3 Call for proposals: Specific measures in support of international cooperation

Summary: Three calls of specific measures in support of cooperation with Third countries

Regions: EU Member States, Acceding Countries, Candidate Countries, EFTA Countries, Developing countries Med countries, Western Balkans

Global budget: 60 + 10 + 3 Million Euro

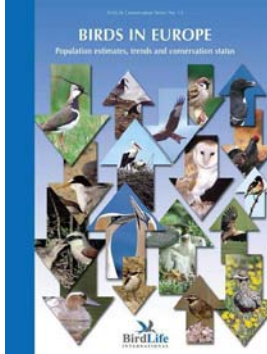
Amount awarded per project: Between 35% and 100%

Closing date: 13 September 2005

Contact: European Commission, The INCO Information desk, Directorate N, Directorate General RTD, B-1049 Brussels

## Publications

### 1 European birds in danger



In November 2004, Birdlife International released an updated version of its 1994 report "*Birds in Europe: Population Estimates, Trends and Conservation Status*". The new report covers the whole European continent, including Caucasian countries and Balkan countries (Serbia and Montenegro (SCG), Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR of Macedonia) in which data collection in 1994 failed.

"*Birds in Europe*" provides concise summaries of each bird species regularly occurring in Europe, its status across the continent, illustration, distribution map, population size and trends for each country. The study shows that the number of species in danger is rising: 226 species (43%) of all those occurring regularly in Europe, as well as 103 species (42%) of those occurring in SCG, are facing an uncertain future. Many population numbers are declining and

some bird species are so threatened that they may disappear from certain parts of Europe in the very near future.

In SCG, data collection started in 2002 and was led by the Bird Protection and Study Society of Vojvodina (BSPSV, Novi Sad), the League for Ornithological Action of Serbia and Montenegro (Belgrade) and the Centre for the Protection and Research of Birds (Podgorica). "It is my opinion that four questions in contemporary ornithology in SCG are the most important. By implementation of this project we have managed to answer two of them: which birds live in our country, and how strong their populations are. Answers to these questions are crucial in order to determine priorities and goals in the effective conservation of their habitats", said Slobodan Puzovic, BSPSV. More information from **Marko Tucakov**, BSPSV, [mtucakov@eunet.yu](mailto:mtucakov@eunet.yu), and **Dragan Simic**, [ddsimic@eunet.yu](mailto:ddsimic@eunet.yu), League for the Ornithological Action of Serbia and Montenegro.

### 2 New issues of Natura Montenegrina



*Natura Montenegrina*, a scientific e-journal, continues to attract scientific and wider public with its new issues. The third and fourth issues will be released in April, offering 86 scientific papers from the 1st Symposium of Ecologists of Montenegro, held in October 2004. The journal is known for providing a wide range of articles from the field of biology, geology, agriculture, environmental protection and other areas, scientific-popular contributions, information on events, surveys, and presentation of financial assistance programmes. The journal will remain bilingual (Serbian and English), while starting with the third issue, scientific articles will be exclusively in English. More information from **Marko Karaman**, *Technical editor*, Natural History Museum of Montenegro [markoka@cg.yu](mailto:markoka@cg.yu) and <http://www.pmcg.cg.yu>.

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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

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