

IUCN South-Eastern European e-Bulletin



Photo: IUCN / A.Nesic, *Testudo hermanni*

Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to share with you the 29th issue of IUCN South-Eastern European e-Bulletin!

We thank you for contributing to this issue and for your continuous interest in this publication. Please note that the bulletin is available online at www.iucn.org/southeasterneurope, while guidelines for submitting articles can be found at the last page of this issue.

We wish you a pleasant reading!

IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe

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Funding nature in Serbia and Montenegro

Financing nature conservation and environmental protection in the region of South Eastern Europe is becoming an issue of growing importance. Public awareness on adverse effects of human activities on biodiversity and their negative impacts on ecosystems and the services they provide to society is increasing. Furthermore, the process of accession of the countries of the Western Balkans to the European Union is obliging continuous investments in environmental protection and nature conservation. As a result of these processes, funding for nature conservation and environmental protection today strongly depends on the public sector – national and local governments, multilateral and bilateral donors, European funds and international financing institutions and foundations. However, financing environmental sector and especially nature and biodiversity protection is in strong competition for funding with other national priorities and the lack of financial resources is often presented as a major obstacle for the good functioning of civil society organisations (CSOs) and institutions working in this area.



Lake Skadar by V. Buiszkovic

Capacity building for conservation action is a 18-month project funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade, implemented by the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe in partnership with Young Researchers of Serbia and Centre for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro. Its aim is to improve the capacity of target groups of the project, CSOs and government agencies in Serbia and Montenegro, to efficiently implement conservation policies and actions.

A one-day seminar organized in December 2011 introduced key conservation policies and funding sources, and it was followed by a three-day workshop on nature conservation fundraising and project proposals development. As part of this workshop, IUCN presented participants the potential sources of funding in nature conservation, available in Serbia and Montenegro. The main objective was to present the philosophy of fundraising in terms of creating a good and integral approach of institutions and CSOs to donors, as well as choosing the right donor to apply for providing support to their actions.

The most significant sources of financial support currently identified in Serbia and Montenegro include: national authorities (national and local governments), assistance from the EU, bilateral donors and companies.

For the time being, national authorities represent small but continuous source of funding and support to actions of CSOs in nature conservation and environmental protection. Through regular calls for project proposals on a yearly basis, CSOs have the chance to apply for this source of funding at the national institutions in charge of environmental issues (such as the Ministry for environmental protection and spatial planning of Serbia), or at regional institutions (such as the Provincial secretariat for spatial planning, construction and environmental protection of Serbia) and local governments (municipalities and local self-governments).

The European Union represents the biggest donor in the civil society sector. The EU plays an important role in channelling aid for developing environmental policies, institutions (including capacity building) and legislation. Since 2007, both candidate countries and potential candidates have received focused EU funding and support through a single channel – the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, or IPA. The IPA instrument plays significant role in co-financing projects in candidate countries, especially after the countries prioritised environment high enough in comparison to other sectors.

There are many bilateral donors active in Serbia and Montenegro who provide grant assistance to environmental projects. This type of support could be of special importance for development of fundraising strategies of



Photo: Boris Erg

CSOs. Bilateral donors have very well defined priorities and policy targets into which project proposals must fit, they provide from small to substantial sources of funding and have well structured and professional administrations. Furthermore, the new EU member states have changed from being recipients of assistance to donors, creating new opportunities for Serbia and Montenegro to extend the group of donor countries from whom they can ask for support in the EU accession process and environmental protection.

Private companies represent a recently established source of funding for nature and environmental protection in Serbia and Montenegro. As such, it does not represent a major source of funding for CSOs and public sector, but nevertheless it can represent continuous support to their efforts and actions not only by providing financial means through sponsorships and donation programmes, but also through support in communication with the public, providing in-kind support, their expertise and volunteers, establishing the culture of corporate philanthropy in the region.

To access the table overview of Potential funding sources for nature and environmental protection in Serbia and Montenegro visit <http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/about/places/belgrade/projects/?8948/Building-capacities-for-conservation-action>.

Recommended:

- Nature protection policies and funding opportunities - seminar results <http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/?8949/Nature-protection-policies-and-funding-opportunities>
- Presentation on Accessing EU funding (2010) by A.Plasmeijer, IUCN http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/anexo_4_eu_funding.pdf
- Accessing European funding brochure (2008) by IUCN http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iuc_001_08_lr.pdf

In general, assistance to the environmental sector represents only a small percentage of overall assistance channelled to the Western Balkans region. It is a great challenge to provide sufficient financing in this area as national sources of funding are not developed enough and there is a lack of coordination in the international donor community. At present, EU accession is a key driving force in environmental protection, and European Union represents the most influential donor in the region. Therefore, in order to improve their financial sustainability, CSOs and institutions in Serbia and Montenegro must develop their capacities to absorb financial resources provided through the EU accession process by currently available donors in the area of environmental protection and nature conservation.



Photo: Szilard Kovacs

Prepared by Jelena Burazerovic
Edited by IUCN SEE

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

1. A new IUCN member from Croatia



During the IUCN Council meeting held in February 2012, the membership application of the State Institute for Nature Protection was approved. On a country level, Croatia counts with the highest number of IUCN members in South Eastern Europe: 2 GOs and 4 NGOs.

The State Institute for Nature Protection is the central institution carrying out expert tasks of nature protection in Croatia. It is operational as of September 2003, and has been focusing on monitoring and assessing the state of nature; preparing expert proposals for the protection of natural values; establishing the conditions for nature protection; management of protected areas and the use of natural resources; reporting on the state of nature; participation in the implementation of international agreements on nature protection and organising educational and promotional activities related to nature protection. For more information, please visit www.dzpz.hr.

By joining IUCN, the member benefits from IUCN's scientific credibility, its unsurpassed knowledge base and convening power, extensive networking opportunities and access to high-level political, economic and social decision making. IUCN extends a very warm welcome to the State Institute for Nature Protection!

Members form the highest decision-making body of IUCN. Every four years, IUCN Members gather for a unique global environmental parliament of governments and NGOs, whose result is the adoption of IUCN Global Programme. The 2012 World Conservation Congress will be held from 6 to 15 September 2012 in Jeju, Republic of Korea.

2. 11th Croatian Biological Congress announcement

After three years, the Croatian Biological Congress is to be held 16- 21 September in Sibenik, Croatia. As previously, the Congress will respond to the growing need of biologists and scientists in the country to gather and exchange their experiences and knowledge.

This year the congress will host three satellite symposia, enriching the scientific discussion base. A special attention will be given to biology in schools - the main topic of one of the symposia. It will ensure the engagement and presence of the Croatian educational system representatives. The Congress will have 10 thematic sections (genetics, molecular genetics and evolution; cellular and molecular biology; genomics, pharmacogenetics, proteomics, bioinformatics and molecular diagnostics; virology and microbiology; algology and mycology; plant biology; animal biology; marine biology; toxicology, ecotoxicology and biomonitoring; conservational biology, nature and environment protection and legislation).

For more information, please visit: <http://www.hbd1885.hr/Kongres2012/index.htm>.

1. Women for Shebenik-Jabllanicë NP



Photo: PPNEA Archive

The Woman Society Librazhd has been granted a small project by the Lynx Recovery Program Phase II last December, with an aim to increase the role of women in the conservation and development of this National Park. Training was offered to 45 women from 6 Communes (Stebleva, Letmi, Librazhd Qender, Hotolishta, Qukes and Rajca) and a small fair was organized, promoting local food and traditional costumes. The main idea of this initiative is the establishment of stronger and more sustainable economy, based on local market with significant increase of women's role.

Local food and traditions are seen as tools for tourism development, and the environmentally friendly farming is promoted as preferred income generation activity for the local population of Shebenik-Jabllanicë National Park.

For more information please contact [Spase Shumka](#), PPNEA.

2. Stakeholder Forum on IPBES launched



The [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\)](#) represents a global scientific authority providing information and knowledge relevant to policy and strategic decisions on the conservation of biodiversity and the use of ecosystem services. The Stakeholder Forum on IPBES is a new email discussion group for everyone interested in advancing the involvement of scientists, conservation organizations, businesses and other civil society actors in

IPBES. Join the Forum and discover the role that civil society can play in IPBES. You are welcome to ask questions, share your experience and exchange opinions. The Forum is established and moderated by the IUCN Programme on IPBES. There are already several mechanisms and processes at national, regional and global level that are designed to ensure that scientific information is considered when designing policies or making decisions. IPBES is a global ongoing mechanism recognized by the scientific and policy communities that pulls this information together, synthesizes and analyzes it for decision making in a range of policy fora.

For more information please contact the [Programme team](#) or visit [IUCN Programme on IPBES](#).

3. Second lynx radio-tagged in Macedonia



Photo: MESCOPEs, SNF

Young male lynx, weighting 17 kg was captured in Western Macedonia in March 2012. He was named "Riste" and released with a GPS collar. This was the second lynx capture in the frame of the project "Status, ecology and land tenure system of the critically endangered Balkan lynx in Macedonia and Albania", supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in the frame of SCOPES (Scientific co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland). The lynx in the South-West Balkans, considered a distinct subspecies, is the most threatened autochthonous population of the Eurasian lynx. A

fragmented population of probably less than 50 individuals remains in Western Macedonia and Eastern Albania. "Riste" will help increasing the knowledge about the ecology of the Balkan lynx which is urgently needed for elaboration of targeted conservation measures. The SCOPES research project aims to produce the scientific bases for the [Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme](#) founded in 2006.

For more information please contact [Manuela von Arx](#) and [Dime Melovski](#).

4. Korabi – Korritnik designated as Nature Park



Photo: PPNEA Archive

Albanian Government officially declared an area of 55.000 ha as Korab-Korritnik Nature Park in December 2011. The newly protected area is located in the Korabi mountain range in North-Eastern Albania, bordering with FYR Macedonia and Kosovo (UN 1244). The

relevant documents were prepared by the Albanian organization PPNEA, based on field work conducted in the previous years. In close cooperation with the Directorate of Nature Conservation of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, all activities towards the establishment of a protected area, following the national legislation were implemented. Large parts of the area are strongly degraded through intensive wood cutting and regeneration is hampered by grazing pressure. Nevertheless, the protection of the area is an important step forward, and now systematic approaches to secure and develop the Korab-Korritnik mountain range can be implemented. This is even more important as parts of the nature park border with the Mavrovo National Park in FYR Macedonia, which is considered to be a stronghold of Balkan lynx. All measures related to this activity were implemented within the frame of the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme, by PPNEA, Macedonian Ecological Society, EuroNatur and Swiss KORA.

For more information please contact [Spase Shumka](#), PPNEA.

5. Project on limestone gorges in Serbia

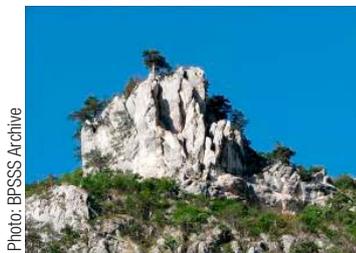


Photo: BPSS Archive

Survey and conservation of ecologically valuable limestone gorges in Serbia is project funded by Rufford Small Grants Foundation that will be implemented by Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia between April and October 2012. Main project objective is field data gathering that will attest the significance of these ecologically sensitive habitats. Through data publishing, media campaigns, educational meetings and workshops, the public will be informed on the importance of limestone gorges that will eventually create the basis for their legal conservation. A small number of limestone gorges in Serbia is protected under national legislation as nature reserves or recognized as sites of international importance (IPAs, PBAs, and IBAs). The majority of gorges are not explored and stay hidden from scientific community and general public. However, numerous planned hydropower plants would severely impact these intact habitats with very high conservation value. Therefore, it is of greatest importance to gather quantitative and qualitative data on habitats and species distribution, numbers and trends, as well as possible conservation threats.

For more information please contact [Uros Pantovic](#), Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia.

6. Joint planning for protected areas

The first quarter of 2012 saw the first phase of the preparation of the management plans for the Buna River and Surrounding Wetlands Protected Landscape, and the Shebenik-Jabllanicë National Park in the framework of a project led by IUCN in Albania. An open discussion between stakeholders and experts resulted in the assessment and modeling of the key ecosystem conservation and community development dynamics of the two sites. Concretely, the Buna River community stressed out, among others, the economic importance of fishing activities in the river and the coastal lagoons of Velipoje, the urgency of addressing the water pollution issue in the Shkoder Lake that consequently appears in the Buna River and the uncontrolled hunting of water and migratory birds in the area. Stakeholders and experts in Shebenik-Jabllanicë, on the other hand, highlighted



Photo: IUCN Archive

the importance of developing tourism as an alternative and desirable income generating activity, the importance of preserving the ecosystem services provided by the Park, the problem of unregulated mining and hunting and the several new hydropower schemes planned for the main rivers of the Park that cause serious concerns to the biodiversity of the area. The innovative methodological approach for spatial planning developed by the Italian Cooperation, and promoted by IUCN, foresees this first participative phase during which experts meet stakeholders to put together scientific know-how and local knowledge in describing the protected area in a structured way. The products are the so called “system matrixes”, which will serve as a reference to steer the action toward the definition of the Management Framework of the Integrated

Spatial Planning of the areas: the system diagram and the relevant indexes/indicators.

For more information please contact [Tomasz Pezold](#), IUCN SEE.

7. Ulcinj Salina protected



Photo: CZIP Archive

Government of Montenegro has forbidden the owner of 15km² of Ulcinj Salina to convert that area from salt factory into touristic development area with hotels and golf courses. This is an enormous victory of nature protection globally, given that Ulcinj Salina, with 250 registered bird species, represents the most significant site for nesting, wintering, and roosting for birds on their migration along the Eastern Adriatic coast. The decision was the result of a public campaign led by CZIP, with the significant support of the Secretariats of Bern and Ramsar Conventions, the European Commission and BirdLife International, as well as other centres for nature protection.

For more information please contact [Marija Stanisic](#), Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro.

8. “Climate Forum” lobbying and advocacy



Photo: WWF DCP Archive

Training on lobbying and advocacy for the members of the “Climate Forum” was held in March, with the participation of Irene Lucius from WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme. Climate change activities were analyzed and a connection of the actors in this field was initiated, with particular focus on dialogue between civil society, government institutions and private sector, which is essential for the process of adaptation to climate change. The examples of successful practice of civil society organizations from Serbia which have transferred their experience in the field of public advocacy were also presented. The aim of the project “South-Eastern Europe Forum on adaptation to climate change” is to strengthen cooperation

among all stakeholders and to develop the capacity of civil societies in Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia dealing with environment protection, to get actively involved in implementation of EU legislation relevant for climate change. The project was jointly developed by the Austrian, Croatian, Macedonian and Montenegrin Red Cross with the initial main purpose to raise awareness about the humanitarian consequences of climate change in the SEE region. The project is financed from the EU IPA funds.

For more information please contact [Sonja Badjura](#), WWF DCP.

9. Along the Mura River



Photo: Gregor Domanjko

More than 600 hikers and friends of Mura River from Slovenia, Croatia, Austria and Hungary gathered on in January in Radenci, Slovenia on 13th Nature walk along the Mura River to celebrate the World Wetlands Day 2012. Besides meeting people on both sides of Mura River, the walk objective was to draw the public attention to wetlands and the importance of their protection. The Mura River, with its remaining wetlands and floodplain forests, should be included on the list of Ramsar sites and stay free of dams for power stations as a part of a future UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mura – Drava – Danube. Participants met in front

of the Health Resort Radenci which is using healing mineral water from Mura thermal springs for the last 130 years. Before starting the 10 km long walk the hikers were warmly welcomed by organizers: Tabrih Association, International Committee for the Conservation of Mura River, Naša Mura-Unsere Mur, Međimurska Priroda, Health Resort Radenci and others.

For more information please contact [Gregor Domanjko](mailto:Gregor.Domanjko@park-goricko.org), Nature Park Goričko or visit www.park-goricko.org.

10. Construction in North Velebit National Park



Photo: Animalia Archive

NGO Animalia has started a campaign against project for illegal construction of huts for commercial use within North Velebit National Park, on the Veliki Alan and Veliki Lubenovac region, where cca 560.000 EUR, loaned from the World Bank, are planned to be spent. Thousands of people sent a letter to the minister for environment and nature protection, requesting an end of devastation of Velebit natural values. The management of North Velebit National Park intend to construct the buildings for commercial purpose on two locations in the heart of the NP, one of the last preserved European wildernesses with

enormous biodiversity. The construction on Veliki Lubenovac would affect the last Croatian habitat of the Carpecaillie, one of the last habitats of Golden eagle, and an important part of bear habitat.

For more information please contact [Gordana Pavoković](mailto:Gordana.Pavokovic@animalia.org), NGO Animalia.

11. Study on protected areas in Pella

The PAs in prefecture Pella (Greece) within the “European Green Belt Initiative” play a passive role in socio-economic terms and fail in achieving the protection goals, as concluded in a study of the Forest Research Institute in Thessaloniki, done in the course of 2011. The European large-scale project aims at conserving biodiversity along the former Iron curtain aiming at the sustainable development of the region. The prefecture Pella in Greece is one of the border areas part of the initiative: bordering the non-EU country FYR Macedonia the region has high



Photo: FRI Thessaloniki

biodiversity and dominantly rural character. At the same time the area shows major lacks in the implementation of nature conservation measures and suffers economically and socially from the border area status. Results of various surveys held with local stakeholders, experts and decision makers show that nature conservation is indeed integrated in regional development approaches. In practice, however, the protected areas play a rather passive role: Illegal activities like logging and hunting by the inhabitants obstruct the achievement of the conservation goals and alternative tourism potential as additional income is not fully used. Furthermore the cooperation with FYROM is inefficient if not lacking.

For more information please contact [Nikolaos Grigoriadis](#), Researcher at the FRI Thessaloniki.

12. The Mediterranean we share



Photo: Antonis Leronakis

In the period January – April 2012 MEDASSET is welcoming Athens airport visitors to the Amateur photo exhibition “The Mediterranean we Share”. This is MEDASSET’s second photo exhibition to be held at the airport, offering a range of individual views of the Mediterranean world. The exhibition’s 25 photographs stood out in [MEDASSET’s online competition](#), closed in December 2011. The aim of the overall project is to raise public awareness about the Mediterranean Sea. One hundred and thirty-eight amateur photographers submitted 350 photographs, and the final selection was a result of online public voting and judging committee decision.

For more information please contact [Jenny Ioannou](#), MEDASSET-Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles.

13. Earth Hour unites

With the official support of close to 300 cities across Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia and Ukraine, Earth Hour is becoming one of the biggest environmental events observed by thousands of people in Central and Eastern Europe. In Romania, Earth Hour began earlier in March when the town of Bistrita won the distinction of Earth Hour capital due to a huge pile of plastics collected by its enthusiastic citizens. In Bulgaria, Earth Hour supporters gathered in Sofia for a march holding candles and lanterns. A record number of 74 cities in Bulgaria officially supported Earth Hour this year compared to 47 in 2011. In Serbia, big events were organized in Belgrade, Nis and Novi Sad, with thousands of people celebrating Earth Hour by joining street concerts and live shows. Creativity in organizing events was stunning: students of one elementary school have prepared a theatre play showing games that their parents used to play when kids without electricity but having lot of fun! In Croatia, 36 cities switched off their lights. In Zagreb Earth Hour supporters enjoyed chorus singing, fire-juggling, stand-up comedy, drums performance and Celtic Fantasy dancing. In Dubrovnik, a UNESCO heritage site, 200 children from the historic city carried lights just like Olympic torches around the city. Split, known for the historic Palace of Diokletian, another UNESCO heritage site, also saw its city lights go off for one hour.



Photo: WWF DCP Archive

For more information please contact [Sonja Badjura](#), WWF DCP.

14. Marine IBA's in Southern Black Sea



Photo: Aris Christidis

Doga Dernegi, Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds, Hellenic Ornithological Society, and Romanian Ornithological Society are launching the EC funded project "Preparing the basis for an Inventory of Marine Important Bird Areas along the Southern Black Sea Coast" this spring. The Southern Black Sea coast holds internationally important populations of Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*, and the Mediterranean sub-species of the European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*. *Puffinus yelkouan* has recently been

upgraded on the IUCN Red List to 'Near Threatened'. The current project aims to train staff and volunteers from Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey on seabird research and conservation methods. Intensive fieldwork will also be undertaken to ascertain key feeding and rafting areas for Yelkouan Shearwaters and Shag, and all the Shag colonies in Turkey and Bulgaria will be surveyed. Consequently, Marine IBAs around the most important colonies would be mapped and characterized, according to the established Marine IBA methods and criteria. Training on methods to identify Marine IBAs and on designating Marine SPAs will also be organized.

For more information please contact [Süreyya Isfendiyaroglu](#), Doga Dernegi.

15. Conserve sturgeon spawning areas in Bulgaria

The WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme has received EU Structural Funds to support conservation of sturgeon spawning areas in Bulgaria. Among planned activities are review and improvement of the national legislation related to sturgeon conservation, field research of sturgeon habitats, identification of sturgeon spawning grounds along the Bulgarian Danube and strengthening populations through restocking with sturgeons of Danube origin (the release of at least 50,000 individuals is planned). Bulgaria, along with Romania, holds the only viable populations of wild sturgeons in the EU, but five of the six native sturgeon species in the Danube are critically endangered and sturgeon fishing there has been banned. The project "Conservation of sturgeons and improving their status in Bulgaria through implementation of activities from the National Action plan on Sturgeons in the Bulgarian Aquatories of Danube River and Black Sea" will be implemented 2012 - 2015, and the amount secured for its implementation is 700,000 EUR.



Photo: Frei Arco

For more information please contact [Olga Apostolova](#), WWF Danube - Carpathian Programme.

16. Golden Jackal survey



Photo: Milna Krofel

Golden Jackal informal European study Group GOJAGE, was formed in 2011 gathering enthusiasts from 6 European countries interested in the study of golden jackal (*Canis aureus*). The results of their work can be accessed [here](#). This year, members of GOJAGE are participating in international project organized by Jaroslav Cervinka and Martin Salek from Czech Republic that intends to assess the distribution and habitat use of golden jackal in several study areas across Europe. Specialized monitoring, including bioacoustic stimulation and

analysis with infrared cameras for night recording, will be performed in different habitat types and agriculture or abandoned landscapes. Field work will be done in April and October in natural areas in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy. Results will bring first detailed information about golden jackal distribution and habitat preferences, applicable for local landscape planning and for its conservation management. Members of Association

For more information please contact [Ivana Selanec](#), BIOM.

17. Natura2000 in Montenegro



Photo: WWF MedPO Archive

After successfully conducted workshops on habitat mapping methodology, local Natura 2000 team revised Montenegrin habitat list, and added 16 habitat types from European habitat list. Species and habitat database was prepared according to the EU standards, forming a database. It enables easier tracking of the state in the field and it provides easier access to data for all who are working in environmental sector (ministries, parks, Environmental Protection Agency and Institute for Nature Protection). Such database allows quick access to the current state easing the work of relevant institutions while planning their

activities related to environment and nature protection. The project is ending in June and its results will be presented during the final workshop which will be held in Podgorica, Montenegro.

For more information please contact [Andrea Stefan](#), WWF MedPO.

18. World Wetlands Day in Prespa

This year's World Wetlands Day in Prespa focused on local fisheries and rare fish species. Poetry, exhibitions and fishing games were only some of the interactive tools used to inform the children about the fish and the threats they face, as well as the measures needed for their protection. Children from primary schools of Prespa in Albania, FYROM and Greece were asked to take part in a competition for the best poem about the fish of Prespa. The participation was great and many young talented poets were discovered. This year's celebration was dedicated to fish & fisheries within the framework of a LIFE Information project that the Society of the Protection of Prespa is implementing in the Greek part of the Prespa Lake. One of activities is a mobile fish exhibition, produced in three languages that will travel the basin, rising awareness on the fish fauna and the threats it faces. The World Wetlands Day celebration was organised by the Society for the Protection of Prespa from Greece, in cooperation with the NGOs 'Environment & Health' and 'Transborder Wildlife' in Albania, and the Galicica National Park in FYROM.



Photo: SPP Archive

For more information please contact [Marianna Vlasi](#), Society for the Protection of Prespa.

19. Forest certification in BiH



WWF MedPO started the implementation of 2,5 years long project "Promote responsible forest management to support sustainable development in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" in January 2012, funded by IKEA. It is initiated in Tuzla canton in BiH that will serve as a country model after the project. Main project objective is to extend the area of responsibly managed and certified forests through HCVF mapping and their integration into Forests Management Plans. It will also intend to increase capacities

of public forest enterprises and public forest administration for responsible forest management, and to increase capacity of the Faculty of Forestry in Sarajevo to include forest policy, forest governance, forest certification, international wood trade regulations, and HCVF as topics in its ongoing teaching activities.

For more information please contact [Petra Boic Petrac](#), WWF MedPO.

20. Petition for Danube Wetlands



Photo: WWF MedPO Archive

On March 22nd, World Water Day, representatives of WWF and “Riverwatchers” met with Mirela Holy, Croatia’s Minister for Environment and Nature Protection in Zagreb. They submitted an international petition with 20,160 signatures asking the minister to immediately stop a highly controversial river channeling project which will lead to the destruction of the Danube’s most valuable wetlands in the Kopački Rit area in Croatia. The petition aimed to halt the channeling of the best preserved natural stretch of the Danube, which is home to Europe’s largest wetlands and floodplain forests. The channeling would ignore both EU law and international

environmental standards. If this project goes ahead, the free-flowing Danube in Kopački Rit Nature Park will be transformed into a monotonous waterway. The unique floodplain forests and one of the Danube’s key fish habitats would dry out. In total, approximately 500 square kilometers of wetlands, home to about 300 bird species, would be severely affected. Many highly endangered species - like the White-tailed eagle, the Black stork and the Ship sturgeon would be in danger of extinction.

For more information please contact [Petra Boic Petrac](#), WWF MedPO.

21. Dinaric Arc Parks

WWF MedPO is initiating a new project in the Western Balkans – Dinaric Arc Parks. Its aim is the establishment of positive regional identity built on shared natural and cultural values, personal contacts and joint actions between protected areas staff. The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and MAVA Foundation and will run from 2012 till end of 2014. The project kick-off meeting was held in Belgrade this March, with the participation of project coordinators from all countries, project leader WWF MedPO and EUROPARC



Photo: WWF MedPO Archive

Consulting. Main project outputs will be the establishment of an active regional collaboration network composed of agencies and staff responsible for PAs management; development and implementation of a capacity building plan for the network (addressing key issues identified through completed PAs management assessments), and the wide promotion of “Western Balkans/Dinaric Arc Parks” network brand based on shared natural and cultural values. A key part of the project will be the development of sustainable tourism in all the partner countries. No less than ten protected areas will be chosen to work towards and achieve the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Charter is a carefully assessed process by which protected areas analyze and improve their sustainable tourism “offer”, ending with the award of prestigious Charter status.

For more information please contact [Petra Boic Petrac](#), WWF MedPO or [Wilf Fenten](#), EUROPARC Consulting.

22. Towards connected landscapes



End of 2011 brought an end to three years long ECONNECT project. It confirmed that many animals live actually out of protected areas, that the importance of ecological networks is not widely recognized and that a functioning economy needs biodiversity. Measures for animals and plants protection must not be

limited to singular “ecological islands” or corridors. Ecosystems can only protect us from natural hazards or adapt to climate change if there is enough natural diversity. One of the project policy recommendations states that: “Ecological networks need to be considered as a value by society”. At the same time it is requested that information on forests or water courses which has been collected with public funding need to be publically accessible. This type of information is key for determining which habitats need to be inter-connected. Habitats were successfully connected in some of the project pilot sites. The project of the Austrian National Park Hohe Tauern has already been a model for the “Capercaillie action plan” of the Austrian province of Carinthia. The results of the ECONNECT project have been documented in various final publications and are accessible [here](#).

For more information please contact [Aurelia Ullrich-Schneider](#), CIPRA International

1. Natural solutions



Protected areas are an essential part of the global response to climate change. They are protecting natural ecosystems and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through carbon storage and sequestration. They can also help society cope with climate change impacts by maintaining the essential ecosystem services, upon which people depend. Protected areas are proven, “green” and cost-effective natural solutions to help address the climate crisis. IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme published the 4-page flyer “Natural Solutions – protected areas helping people cope with climate change” in 8 languages (English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic and Japanese). They can be downloaded from the WCPA website: [Natural solutions](#).

2. Balkans scorecard: Assessing the region’s key pointers



“If we compare the current state of affairs in the Western Balkans with the conflicted reality of twenty years past, the region’s progress has been frankly miraculous” stated Mr Füle, EU Commissioner for Enlargement at Friends of Europe’s annual Balkan Policy Summit. However the region is not without its problems. Judiciary reform processes and political institutions remain to be strengthened, while organised crime and corruption need to be further combated. Freedom of expression and freedom of the media are still lacking and, though the regions’ economies are weathering the crisis quite well, much remains to be done to foster long-term economic growth. The full report is available in English under [Balkans scorecard](#).

3. Business @ Biodiversity newsletter out



Business @
Biodiversity

The EU B@B Platform has just started its third year of activities, now researching economic mechanisms related to biodiversity – one of the main concerns for the business sector. Companies struggle through the financial crises and biodiversity might seem another burden. Hence investigating this topic together with the Platform’s participants will help stress the benefits for companies willing to play a role in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Read more on how business work to help conserve biodiversity under [B@B Newsletter #6](#).

4. World Heritage Capacity building Newsletter out

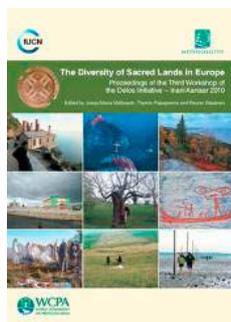
As part of our role as Advisory Body on natural heritage to the World Heritage Committee, IUCN undertakes training and capacity building for natural World Heritage Site managers, State Parties to the Convention, and other stakeholders involved in the management and conservation of the exceptional sites. IUCN is currently implementing a [capacity building programme](#) in partnership with the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and ICCROM, and in collaboration with ICOMOS. This three year programme (2010-2012) aims to enhance international and regional capacity on natural heritage.

5. What is IUCN?



Discover IUCN, the world’s largest global environmental network. It is working in more than 160 countries, gathering the latest knowledge on biodiversity, running hundreds of conservation projects around the world and being nature’s voice on the international stage. Watch this video and find out how IUCN works for a just world that values and conserves nature. IUCN video is available [here](#).

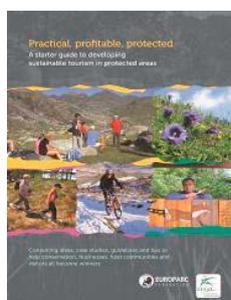
6. The Diversity of Sacred Lands in Europe



This publication gathers articles by specialists on sacred natural sites, offering an insight into the spiritual, intangible values of protected areas. Published by IUCN and Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services of Finland, the book is part of a series issued by The Delos Initiative of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas. The Diversity of Sacred Lands in Europe is a good reading for those planning to travel to sacred natural sites in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, North-West Russia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden or Turkey.

You can read more about the book or download it on [IUCN](#) or [Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services of Finland](#) websites.

7. Practical guide to save Europe's special natural places



From the mountainous wild regions of the Dinaric Arc to the wide wetlands of the Norfolk Broads, protected areas are under pressure as never before. Now a new guide has drawn together expert thinking on how to prevent growing tourism from destroying natural heritage and communities. *Practical, profitable, protected* is the first manual on how to develop and manage tourism in protected areas. Aimed at businesses, communities and area managers, it focuses particularly on places that are at an early stage of their tourism development – many of which are in the former Eastern block. The handbook was developed and published with financial support of LIFE+, a European Union programme supporting environmental and nature conservation throughout the EU.

For more information or printed copies please contact [Wilf Fenten](#), EUROPARC Consulting

8. Lower Danube photo album launched



An unique WWF album of photographs of the Lower Danube and the Danube Delta has been officially launched. The album contains 200 spectacular images of the last remaining free-flowing river in Europe. 14 photographers from Bulgaria, Romania, Austria and France contributed images to the album. The end result is an excellent portrait of the river with its incredible diversity of life. Besides the pictures, the album contains texts that sketch the history and natural heritage of this part of the Danube. "The Lower Danube" is a trilingual album featuring English, Romanian and Bulgarian language. The publication will be distributed free of charge throughout Europe. In Bulgaria, copies of the album will be presented to universities, libraries, cultural centres and others.

For more information please contact [Olga Apostolova](#), WWF Danube - Carpathian Programme.

1. COP11 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands



The 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP11) will be held in Bucharest, Romania 6 – 13 July 2012. Ramsar Contracting Parties will gather to assess the progress of the Convention and the sustainable use of wetlands to date, share knowledge and experience on technical issues, and plan their own and the Secretariat's work for the next triennium. The slogan for this conference is "Wetlands: home and destination", focusing on wetlands, tourism and recreation. Ramsar COP11 will also provide the opportunity for participants to hold a number of side events on global and regional themes relevant to the Convention and the COP11 issues. All materials related to the Conference can be accessed online on the [website](#) of the Convention.

For more information please contact [Kati Wenzel](#), Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

2. Pan-European Green Belt Conference



The next Pan-European Green Belt Conference will be held 28-30 June 2012, in Mavrovo National Park, FYR Macedonia. The meeting is organized within the frame of the current R+D Project "Advancing the European Green Belt" jointly implemented by BUND-Project Office Green Belt and EuroNatur, financially supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with means of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. More information about the programme and the conference venue will be distributed soon.

For more information please contact the [Green Belt team](#).

3. Thethi Summer Programme



Photo: B3P Archive

The Balkans Peace Park Project (B3P) is firming up plans for its fifth Summer Programme that will be held in the community of Thethi, supported by international volunteers and local Albanian teachers. This year sees a new outpost of the Summer Programme. For the first time, a team of teachers and volunteers will spend time in Vermosh, a village near Thethi and if anything more remote. The team have a range of skills and experience to bring to the young people, including English Language teaching, drama, and creative writing. Since the summer programme began, many young people in Thethi

have improved their English. This has enabled them to welcome an increasing number of tourists to their beautiful valley, and to communicate effectively with them.

For more information please contact [Peter Spafford](#), B3P.

4. Nature Scholarship for Young European Conservationists now open



The Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships 2012 are now open for applications! The award provides three young European conservationists with €3000 to undertake a study visit to one or more protected areas in European countries other than their own. They are awarded by the Alfred Toepfer Foundation and the EUROPARC Federation. The deadline for applications is Friday 11 May 2012. The €3000, donated by the Alfred Toepfer Foundation (DE), gives successful scholars the chance to gather experience and strengthen their networks. Applicants must be under 35, of European nationality and themes for applications must be connected to the management of natural areas. Applications can be filled in online at www.europarc.org. The Scholarships enhance international cooperation and advance the quality, innovation and European dimension of the management of natural areas, such as national parks. At the end of their study visit the scholars should produce a report on their findings. In 2011 the scholarships were awarded to three individuals from Hungary, Scotland and Belgium.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

1. IPA CBC



Photo: IUCN

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) offers assistance to countries engaged in the accession process to the European Union (EU) for the period 2007-2013. The aim of the IPA is therefore to enhance the efficiency and coherence of aid by means of a single framework in order to strengthen institutional capacity, cross-border cooperation, economic and social development and rural development. Pre-accession assistance supports the stabilisation and association process of candidate countries and potential candidate countries while respecting their specific features

and the processes in which they are engaged. We would particularly like to draw your attention to the several on-going calls for proposals under the Cross-Border Co-operation component. Please find more information on http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/ipa/crossborder_en.cfm and http://www.interact-eu.net/ipa_news/51.

2. Terra Viva Grants Directory



This global database provides information about international grant funding for agriculture, energy, environment, and natural resources in the developing world. They focus on grant makers (donors) serving the developing world. The website is mostly used by people searching for financial support of their work as individuals or as organizations. Grant makers included in the Terra Viva Grants Directory range from funders of community projects to funders of science and research. For more information please visit: www.terravivagrants.org.

3. IPA - EU Rural Grant Scheme – Kosovo (UN1244)

Programme(s): IPA -5 RURAL DEVELOPMENT. Sectors: Social Affairs Culture - Media Public management Agriculture - Fisheries Information Education - Training Energy Environment Co-op & Development.

Abstract: Proposals to support the development and modernization of the three sub-sectors of agriculture, namely dairy, meat and fruits and vegetables processing in Kosovo.

Deadlines for submitting applications: 30 May 2012.

Eligible organisations: Local and Regional authorities Schools Training centres Federations Unions Development NGOs International Organisation.

Regions concerned: EU Member States, Kosovo, EEA Member States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), IPA beneficiaries (Croatia, Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia).

To download all related documents click [here](#). For more information about IPA click [here](#).

For more information please contact EC, DG Enlargement, Rue de la Loi 200, B- 1049 Brussels (Belgium).

Guidelines for contributing to the IUCN SEE e-bulletin

IUCN welcomes articles in which you report on the activities related to transboundary cooperation in protected areas and biodiversity conservation. Please inform the public on the status of your projects and actions, as well as events that you attended. You are welcome to announce new meetings and workshops, briefly report on new publications and announce funding opportunities. Please send a photo to accompany your article if appropriate and indicate your email and/or weblink for further reference.

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. The editors reserve the right to shorten and modify the text if necessary. Thank you for taking these guidelines into consideration!

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IUCN's European region covers the European continent, Russia and Central Asia, and includes the European Union overseas entities. Representing one third of the global membership, this is IUCN's largest programmatic region. Four offices in Switzerland, Belgium, Georgia and Serbia coordinate action in the region. Together we strive to meet our goals for a sustainable future by using the expertise and the strength of the global IUCN network.

www.iucn.org/europe

Our Mission

"To influence, encourage and assist societies in Europe to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable."



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