

IUCN South-Eastern European e-Bulletin

Dear colleagues and friends,

We are glad to introduce the third issue of the IUCN South-Eastern European (SEE) e-bulletin and we thank all of you who submitted papers for this issue. With your support the e-bulletin is developing into a powerful communication tool fostering IUCN as the information hub for biodiversity issues and transboundary management of protected areas, while stimulating national and international commitment for nature conservation in SEE.

We thought you might be curious about the “who is who” in our Belgrade office, thus we briefly present ourselves and our colleagues from the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, who have been supporting the establishment of IUCN SEE office and are actively involved in our daily work. We are also briefly presenting the Institute as an IUCN member organisation and also the host institution of IUCN SEE. In future issues, we shall present other IUCN members from the region.

We hope you will enjoy the reading and we are looking forward to receive new information from you for the next issue by the 15 December. Note that you can access this bulletin on the website www.iucneurope.org.

With best regards,

IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe

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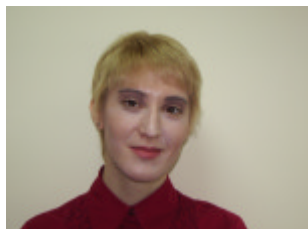
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IUCN SEE – Who is who



Name: **Jörg Lohmann**
 Position: Director
 Profession: Forest engineer (PhD) and environmental manager (MSc)
 At IUCN SEE: Since September 2004
 Experience: Last 10 years in SEE working for the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ)
 Hobbies: Farm working, Music, Dogs



Name: **Sandra Djuric**
 Position: Administrative Assistant
 Profession: Teacher of English language and literature (BA)
 At IUCN SEE: Since October 2004
 Experience: Last 5 years working as Interpreter/Translator and Office Manager for international projects
 Hobbies: Music, Literature, Psychology



Name: **Maja Zitkovic**
 Position: Project Officer
 Profession: Geographer (MA)
 At IUCN SEE: Since March 2004
 Experience: Last 4 years engaged in world heritage and protected areas issues; 2,5 years working for IUCN
 Hobbies: Photography, Music, Traveling



Name: **Duska Dimovic**
 Position: Associate, Institute's Coordinator for International Cooperation
 Profession: Biologist-Lichenologist
 Employed at: Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia
 Experience: 8 years working in nature conservation; last 2 years international cooperation; member of National UNESCO MAB

Hobbies: Committee; secretary of EUROPARC Section for SCG
Gardening, Sailing, Biking



Name: **Srdjan Marincic**
Position: Associate, Institute's Coordinator for IUCN
Profession: Geologist-Palaeontologist, Curator
Employed at: Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia
Experience: 7 years working in the field of nature conservation and museology; last 2 years international cooperation with IUCN
Hobbies: Sailing, Diving, Classical Music, Photography

News

1 Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia – IUCN partner institution

The Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia has been leading and carrying out activities in protection, preservation and improvement of Serbia's natural heritage for more than half a century. It was established by the Government's decree in 1948 with Headquarters being in Belgrade and departments in Novi Sad, Nis, and Pristina.

Protection of nature is based on multidisciplinary research and evaluation of areas. Some of the main activities of the Institute are: protection, monitoring and improvement of condition of the natural resources; designation of new protected areas, monuments, and natural rarities; scientific evaluation of areas as a basis for future legislative measures; participatory role in regional planning; museum operation services. The Institute is in charge of distributing licenses for collection of certain species and it sets out conditions on certain activities in protected areas. It has strong role in educational programmes, some of which are implemented through publishing activities and provision of support for ecological film production.

In recent years, the Institute became more engaged on an international level of cooperation with other institutions. The Institute is a member of international organisations such as Europarc Federation, ProGEO and ECNC. In 1997, it became an active member of IUCN, while on the 3rd November 2003, the two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Thus, the Institute became IUCN's important strategic partner in the Union's growing involvement in nature conservation activities in the South-Eastern European region. Based on this cooperation, the Institute aims to further strengthen its position and role in implementation of IUCN's programme for the region.

Further information is available from **Srdjan Marincic**, *Institute's Coordinator for IUCN*, email: srdjan-marincic@natureprotection.org.yu.

2 LIFE contribution to Mura River protection

Croatia, September: The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning of Croatia received more than 200 000 Euro from the LIFE III - Third Countries Programme fund in order to implement a two-year project "Establishing Institutional Capacities for the Protection of the Mura River Landscape". The project will deal with a variety of activities such as education and awareness raising, monitoring and building up of local capacities for effective protected landscape management.

Mura River Protected Landscape - designated as such in 2000 - in the Medjimurje county of northern Croatia faces various challenges as the current administrative and legal protection measures are proved not to be sufficient for protection of natural and cultural values of this area. With reasonable balance between human activities and natural resources, local communities will manage to establish sustainable practices resulting with economic benefits for people and ensuring necessary preservation of natural values. The process of establishment of institutional capacities will improve public awareness about the fragility of Mura River ecosystem, as well as encourage active participation of local communities in management planning.

For more information contact **Pedja Nedeljkov** at email: info@tzm.hr.

3 The fifth Ramsar site for Serbia and Montenegro



Special Nature Reserve Slano Kopovo received global recognition in July this year by being designated as Serbia and Montenegro's fifth Ramsar site. This wetland of international importance already held a status of an Important Bird Area (IBA) for several years. It is one of the most important bird habitats in Europe regularly supporting more than 20 000 waterbirds, breeding and migrating. It regularly hosts a significant number of vulnerable, threatened and critically endangered species such as *Numenius tenuirostris*, *Anser erythropus*, *Branta ruficollis*, *Oxyura leucocephala*, *Aquila heliaca*, *Falco naumanni*, and *Otis tarda*.

Located in the northernmost province of Serbia, Vojvodina, Slano Kopovo represents a saline habitat, preserved from draining of a fossil meander of the Tisa River. On its eastern side, it contains a smaller freshwater depression. Considering its saline conditions, the area contains plant communities such as the rare *Thero-Salicornietea*, which is specific for this kind of soil and habitats.

This international recognition is an important step forward for Serbia and its Institute for Nature Protection in further enhancement of conservation and protection of Slano Kopovo Reserve.

4 Tara Canyon - Dam or Not?



Durmitor National Park, Serbia and Montenegro: Planned construction of the Buk Bijela HE power plant might be a breaking point in the Montenegrin nature conservation policy, and just after adoption of the charter which labels Montenegro as an "ecological state". There are indications that the Governments of the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the construction of the dam. However, this was never presented publicly and the status of the Environmental Impact Assessment Study is unclear as well.

Tara canyon, as part of the Durmitor National Park World Heritage site and Biosphere Reserve, is under global attention of UNESCO and IUCN. The director of UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Mr Francesco Bandarin, in his letter to Mr Boro Vucinic, the Minister for Environmental Protection and Urban Planning, states: "Let me reiterate that the construction of this dam could endanger the NP Durmitor as one of the regions listed in the World Natural Heritage... Furthermore, it would be of great importance if you could send us a copy of the environmental impact study for our needs, and so that it could be reviewed by IUCN."

On the national level, discourses on the impacts of the potential dam are strong. NGO partners collected some 12 000 signatures as part of the campaign "I want Tara, not a pond" (in Serbian language "Hocu Taru, necu baru"). An NGO Greens of Montenegro organised an international round table "3 E's for Tara" (energy, economy and ecology) with support from UNDP. Another round table discussion was held during the First Symposium of Ecologists of Montenegro in October. The participants of the Symposium agreed that the Tara canyon should remain intact as a unique natural asset. They also adopted a conclusion that construction of the dam would violate obligations towards World Heritage Convention, as well as towards national regulations of Montenegro.

The impacts of the dam could be devastating. It is being predicted that half of the Tara River canyon would be sunk, changing the whole balance of the ecosystem. It is feared the dam would disrupt the river's ecological balance by depleting it of oxygen and nutrients, and affecting the migration and reproduction of fish and other freshwater species.

"In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments - there are consequences" (Robert G. Ingersoll).

Further information is available on or <http://www.undp.org.yu/montenegro> or from **Duska Dimovic**, Coordinator for International Cooperation, Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, duska@natureprotection.org.yu.

5 Skadar Lake Ramsar site becoming "hunters' paradise"?

Skadar Lake National Park, Serbia and Montenegro: The so called "Bird paradise" located in Montenegro deserved designation as a wetland of international importance (Ramsar site) in 1995. More than 260 bird species, including the Dalmatian Pelican, find refuge on Skadar Lake National Park (NP). The newest recommendation of the Management Board and Scientific Council of the public enterprise "National Parks of Montenegro" to call off the hunting ban that was adopted in 2001, might lead to significant loss of bird population. This recommendation that would collide with the current Spatial Plan for the Skadar Lake NP, adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro in 2001, is now awaiting approval from the Ministry of Physical Planning and Protection of Environment.

The number of birds spending winter on the Lake diminished significantly in the recent years, from around 250 000 in 1999 to around 80 000 in 2004. The number of breeding birds such as Dalmatian Pelican dropped as well from 25 to some 6 pairs only, while breeding ducks are nearly absent. What is the future of this wetland area if the authorities prioritise economic values gained by hunting over natural values? The well-known slogan related to the recent initiative to revitalise Montenegrin tourism - "Wild beauty" – might soon become absurd if there are no birds to be seen.

Further information is available from **Darko Saveljic**, Institute for Nature Protection of Montenegro, dasav@cg.yu.

6 Linking people and nature through the Pelister Mountain Conservation Project



Pelister Mountain, FYR of Macedonia: The powerful Pelister Mountain with diversity of natural resources and fascinating landscapes represents the main entry attraction for the launch of the pilot ecotourism project in Macedonia. One of the activities within the Pelister Mountain Conservation Project (PMCP), funded by the Swiss

Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC), is to promote ecotourism through sustainable use of the landscapes surrounding the mountain. The ecotourism activities started in 2002 in the village of Brajcino, situated on the southern slopes of Pelister Mountain at an altitude of 1000 metres above sea level. With its intact village structure and historical buildings combined with the natural beauties of the Pelister National Park and the Prespa Lake, Brajcino is a perfect base point for the development of ecological and cultural tourism.

Since 2003, the project offered intensive training in customer care, catering, accommodation, tour-guiding, and English lessons to the local people. Besides strengthening the local community of Brajcino, the project supported an upgrading of accommodation capacities, marking the trails and marketing. The activities within Brajcino were finalised this year with the establishment of the Society of Brajcino and resulting with a self-sustained ecotourism product. A 10% share of the generated income from ecotourism is allocated for nature conservation and village development.

For more details visit the web site www.brajcino.com or contact **Ana Jankulovska**, *Project Coordinator*, email: pmcp@mt.net.mk.

7 London-Ljubljana landscape learning links

Slovenia: It is widely recognised (at least in official rhetoric, if not always in practice) that well qualified and motivated staff are vital to realise the potential benefits of protected areas. Good in-service postgraduate training helps to raise the level of professional competence and to break down barriers between disciplines. A practical example of this was the joint London University/University of Ljubljana training module on sustainable tourism in Logarska dolina, a 'remote' alpine valley on the Slovene/Austrian border (and a potential Green Belt link), which took place in September. This recent venture represents a milestone in the twinning of the London Master's programme in Protected Area Management and the Ljubljana MSc in Natural Heritage Protection. Both MScs are part-time awards, aimed at nature conservation and protected area staffs working in protected areas, government agencies and NGOs.

So far the London-Ljubljana initiative remains unique although modules have been held elsewhere in the region. In May, Ljubljana students spent a week in Sarande/Butrint in southern Albania, and the possibility of a module in 2005 on the Croatian/Slovene border is currently under consideration. The establishment of the IUCN SEE office in Belgrade may provide the stimulus to develop this collaboration further, with

universities and training providers from other countries also wishing to become involved so that a programme of such courses can be developed throughout the region. This would be a practical manifestation of trans-frontier collaboration, helping to share best practice and raise standards whilst at the same time delivering real immediate benefits for local people.

Contact **Richard Clarke**, *Professor*, University of London at r.clarke@cepar.bbk.ac.uk or **Bostjan Anko**, *Professor*, University of Ljubljana at bostjan.anko@uni-lj.si.

8 Satu Mare County saves Barn Owls



Satu Mare, Romania: Through centuries of climate and habitat changes, the Barn Owl succeeded to adapt very well. Today, the majority of Barn Owls live in rural and urban areas while their population is declining across Europe. In Eastern Europe, they breed almost exclusively in church towers. In Romania, the number of breeding pairs is around 500 and these are found mostly in Dobrogea (south-east) and the western part of the country. The real state of the species is mostly unknown because of insufficient observations and monitoring data.

One of the most important Barn Owl populations breeds in Somes Plain and has been monitored for several years. Presently, this population is declining because of the lack of breeding places, increasing number of martens and the use of chemicals in agriculture.

The Romanian Ornithological Society (SOR), in cooperation with Satu Mare County Museum launched a programme aimed at rehabilitating the species in the Satu Mare County. Thirty artificial nests were installed in different towns and villages in the area with the support of local authorities and inhabitants. Satu Mare inhabitants showed an impressive initiative in saving the Barn Owl, with many of them asking for nests to be installed in their attics. SOR will continue its efforts to develop the project at a national level and your contributions will be greatly appreciated.

For more information contact **Anastasia Moga**, *Communications Officer*, SOR, email: anastasia.moga@sor.ro.

9 Doga Dernegi advocates zero extinction

Turkey: The prevention of the extinction of species and sites is one of the driving forces that most conservation organisations use to mobilise their individual or collective efforts. Doga Dernegi (DD/BirdLife Turkey) has launched a campaign against further extinction of the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) in Turkey, in collaboration with Atlas Geography and Exploration magazine.

The KBAs in Turkey have been identified according to scientific criteria developed by a coalition of biodiversity conservation organisations including BirdLife International, Conservation International and PlantLife International. 266 KBAs have been identified in Turkey, some of which are also recognised as "Alliance for Zero Extinction Sites" (AZE). These are sites that host one or more terrestrial species that do not occur elsewhere on Earth and which are classified as Critically Endangered (CR) or Endangered (EN) by IUCN. AZE is a global conservation initiative that has been launched to identify and protect the last remaining habitats for the world's most threatened species, acting as a front line defence against species extinctions.

Together, the AZE sites and the KBAs in Turkey form the basis of Doga Dernegi's "Sifir Yok Olus" campaign - the Turkish equivalent of "Zero Extinction". Within the framework of the campaign, an action plan informing the public of the many ways they can actively support site and species conservation is being developed.

For further information on the campaign visit <http://www.sifiryokolus.org/english/index.php> or contact **Esra Basak**, *AZE campaign representative*: esra.basak@dogadernegi.org.

10 Important Bird Areas in the BTC pipeline region



Turkey: As part of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Company's (BTC Co.) Environmental Investment Programme, Doga Dernegi (DD/BirdLife Turkey), the RSPB (BirdLife UK) and BirdLife International are implementing a two year project to identify new Important Bird Areas (IBAs) along the pipeline route, increase the number and technical capacity of local Bird Groups, especially in Eastern Turkey, and promote the awareness of, and lobby for the legal protection of, IBAs nationally.

In Turkey, the BTC pipeline stretches for over 1 000 km, from the Georgian border to the Mediterranean coast. Much of this area is poorly known as highlighted by this spring's breeding bird survey which found 12 potential new IBAs. Many of the sites are important for their high mountain bird communities, especially raptors. More detailed work will be carried out next year but in the interim information on land use, threats etc is being collated so that three demonstration sites can be selected for producing Monitoring and Management Plans for implementation by local residents and conservation staff.

Following an extensive review of recent bird data from Turkey, the number of known IBAs is now 198 and there are almost certainly new sites still to be found. A booklet giving more detailed information on all of the IBAs was published in May and at the end of the project all of the results will be brought together in a new Turkey IBA book. DD staff are working closely with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and promoting the concept of IBAs as the basis for Turkey's NATURA 2000 network.

For more information contact **Geoff Welch**, *Project Manager*, email: Geoff.Welch@rspb.org.uk.

11 UNESCO-ROSTE in Montenegro: Responding to emergencies within a long-lasting perspective



"Double nomination means double responsibility" titled the intervention of the representative of UNESCO-Regional Bureau for Science in Venice (ROSTE) at the Round Table '3 E for Tara', organised by the 'Greens of Montenegro' with the support of the UNDP. In fact, the discussion held on 13 October in Podgorica reflected the complexity of the issues related to the construction of

the Buk Bijela hydro-plant. The dam is planned to be built on the territory of the Republic of Srpska, but the related water basin is expected to flood part of the Tara River canyon, inundating the transition area of the Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve (BR, one of the first to be nominated in the region, in 1976) and approaching the borders of the Durmitor National Park, which is a World Natural Heritage site since 1980. UNESCO-ROSTE responded to this urgency by actively participating in the Round Table and its following discussion, and by bringing further elements of clarification as far as the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme and the World Heritage (WH) Convention functioning bodies and decision-making mechanisms are concerned.

Nevertheless, reacting promptly to the environmental emergencies represents only one side of the UNESCO-ROSTE strategy for the Republic of Montenegro; a longer lasting and more comprehensive action frame being the ultimate mission of the Office in the country, as well as in the entire region. Starting from the local territorial dynamics of the existing and potential BRs and WH sites is the approach of the current and future interventions, combining natural and cultural assets in the same project philosophy. The case of the 'Natural and Cultural-Historical Region of Kotor' - inscribed on the WH List since 1979 - is another example of the above-mentioned approach. From 18 to 28 October, a group of Italian and Belgian experts and their scholars is actively cooperating with the local municipality to develop the Management Plan for the site, combining the cultural values and the environmental issues.

Additionally, the UNESCO mission to support scientific development in the region has been further interpreted by the ROSTE Office into a pilot project, dedicated to alleviate the brain drain in the region; a partnership with Hewlett Packard - started on 25 April 2003 - resulted in the launch of the "Piloting Solutions for Alleviating Brain Drain in South East Europe" project, in cooperation with the Faculties of Electrical Engineering of both the University of Belgrade and Podgorica.

Ultimately, all the various ROSTE's efforts are part of a large SEE regional strategy, within which the different components - the educational, scientific and cultural ones - are being more and more harmonised to support the local sustainable development.

For more information on UNESCO ROSTE activities in SEE contact **Giorgio Andrian**, *Environmental Consultant*, email: g.andrian@unesco.org.

12 GIS training to strengthen implementation of Ramsar and Carpathian Conventions

DAPHNE - the Institute of Applied Ecology from Bratislava, supported by the Bratislava-Belgrade Fund, will significantly contribute to the implementation of the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions in Serbia by helping capacity building of Serbian governmental organisations and NGOs which work on implementation of these Conventions. The project is aimed to enable them to manage and conserve biologically important habitats and species in the Carpathians as well as in the wetlands of international importance and, thereby, assist the country in achieving full participation in international and regional environmental initiatives and in meeting its commitments under international law instruments.

Within the project, ten persons from the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia and from Ecolibri Bionet, Agency for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development, will be trained to work with GIS and database systems in the near future. Besides, experts from these organisations will then prepare the assessment of Serbian biodiversity information in the Carpathian context. The project will thus bring Serbia to a favourable state in comparison to the other Parties to the Carpathian Convention through developing data management skills and databases and GIS complementary to existing Carpathian information system established for the purpose of the Convention.

For more information contact **Jovan Angelus**, *Executive Director*, Ecolibri Bionet, email: jangelus@eunet.yu.

13 Sustainable use of *Arnica montana*

Apuseni Mountains, Romania: South-Eastern Europe is one of the most important European source regions of medicinal plants collected from the wild. Following a long tradition, the local rural population in most of these countries has been collecting and using a variety of wild plant and mushroom species for medicinal, cosmetic and nutritional purposes, be it on subsistence level or for trade. As elsewhere in Europe, however, destruction or conversion of habitats and an increasing demand for raw material, have piled on the pressure on medicinal plant resources in the Balkans.

WWF, the University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine (USAMV) and Babes-Bolyai University (UBB) in Cluj have initiated the project 'Conservation of Eastern European Medicinal Plants: *Arnica montana* in Romania' to make this problem more widely known and develop a model for the sustainable use of medicinal plants from the wild. The project is scheduled for a three years period until spring 2007 and funded by the Darwin Initiative, UK. The project is being carried out at field level with the community of Garda-de-Sus in the Apuseni Mountains (Transylvania). The main goal is to develop a model for the sustainable production and trade of *Arnica montana* in Garda-de-Sus. This will be done through: research on *Arnica* ecology, trade chain, socio-economic context and drying methods; training and capacity building for the local community; development of a local Resource Management and Trade Association; and development and construction of *Arnica* drying facilities in the village.

More information is available from Luminita Tanasie, Communications Officer, WWF DCP: ltanasie@wwfdcp.ro.

14 Provincial Secretariat of Vojvodina supports NGOs

Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro: During the month of September 2004, the Provincial Secretariat for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of Vojvodina has supported a number of project activities of local NGOs. The most important are "Protection and Reconstruction of Relict Steppe Flora and Fauna near the Zobnatica Lake", "Solution of Conflicts of Distribution and Protection of White Stork by Building its Nests on the Platforms" and "Placing Artificial Cavities for Bats". Financing of these activities and cooperation with NGOs is a part of the usual activities of the Sector for the Protection of Natural Resources and Biological Diversity, which is a part of the Provincial Secretariat.

A considerable sum of money is awarded for the Protected natural assets and the proposed budget for 2005 is larger than previous. For more information please contact **Imre Jenovai**, ekolog@nspoint.net.

15 FAO contributes to forest policy and law development in Serbia

Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro: FAO is currently running a project intended to assist the Government of Serbia to formulate a new forest policy, revise the existing forest law and organise the private forest sector so that the private forest holdings can be managed on a sustainable basis. In this process, in which participatory approach is ensured, due emphasis is given to biodiversity conservation in all types of forests. For more information contact **Predrag Jovic**, *Adviser*, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, pedaj@yubc.net.

16 Improving the conservation status of the Caucasian Black Grouse

Turkey: A two year project to improve the conservation status of the Caucasian black grouse *Tetrao mlokosiewiczii* in Turkey started in February 2004 implemented by Doga Dernegi (BirdLife Turkey), the RSPB (BirdLife UK) and BirdLife International and supported by the Environmental Investment programme of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Company (BTC Co.). Activities to date include an international workshop in Ankara in March, field surveys of lekking birds in north-eastern Turkey in May and June; and surveys for autumn leks and post-breeding flocks in September.

Ayder, a mountain village in the Kackar Mountains National Park, has been chosen as the site for developing a demonstration Ecotourism Plan to raise the profile and awareness of the grouse and its mountain habitats and to bring tangible and sustained benefits to the local community and the environment. Potential activities include training of local guides to provide a better service for tourists, provision of leaflets, posters and information boards, and organisation of an annual Caucasian Black Grouse Festival. By demonstrating that the conservation of the grouse and its habitat is of financial importance, it is hoped that the Turkish government can be persuaded to provide better protection and resources for management in the region.

More information is available from **Geoff Welch**, *Project Manager*, email: Geoff.Welch@rspb.org.uk.

17 Progress in the Balkan Peace Park project in the Prokletije mountains

The UK-based international Balkan Peace Park project Committee managed to obtain Charitable Status, confirming further legitimacy on the cross-border proposals for a protected area. Cordial relations with government officials and NGOs in the 3 regions (Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo) of the mountain range have been substantially increased. Members of the Committee, alongside local communities, have participated in international research expeditions, meetings and recreational journeys in the region and abroad. At the AGM in the Strand, London on 18 September, decisions were taken to explore a regional workshop and summer seminars in Plav, Montenegro, next year, with representatives from all interested bodies. Further meetings will be held in December to build on the groundwork already achieved. Further information is available from **Antonia Young**, email: ayoung@mail.colgate.edu.

Events

1 Former Iron Curtain becoming a Green Belt



Ferto-Hanság National Park, Hungary, 8-12 September:

IUCN and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) organised the first conference on the European Green Belt with a goal to introduce the Green Belt concept as an ecological network running through the entire length of the former Iron Curtain in Europe to potential national stakeholders and international experts. The organisers sought to motivate stronger commitment, especially from the SEE countries, to this unique ecological networking model.



The Green Belt comprises a long corridor containing important areas for Europe's natural and cultural heritage. It spans through many protected areas and represents a string of Europe's pearls of natural areas linking already existing natural assets with potential new ones. The Northern Fenno-Scandian and the Central European parts of the Belt are already functioning as an institutional tool to raise public awareness about nature conservation and to

place the environmental management issue on the political agenda. The SEE Belt, however, is of special interest, supporting the activities of IUCN in this region and is intended to serve the Natura 2000 Network and the Countdown 2010. Additional impact is expected regarding the Bern Convention and the Emerald Network while the cooperation for joint action is feasible between World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves.

The Green Belt operates at many levels from the local, national, sub-regional to the regional level. In order to implement the work on these levels, focal points from involved countries were nominated and will work with the Secretariat and the foreseen co-ordinator, who will work in the IUCN SEE Office in Belgrade. The main output of the conference was a Programme of Work, which details specific targets for the coming years. Initially work will focus on creating a database of protected areas and a corresponding remote sensing inventory of habitats (2005), media trips along the belt presenting pilot area projects (2006) and monitoring of flagship species for Green Belt habitats. According to the Programme, the Green Belt is supposed to be established throughout Europe by 2010.

For more information visit <http://www.countdown2010.net/greenbelt.htm> or contact **Jörg Lohmann**, Director, IUCN SEE, email: joerg.lohmann@iucn.org.

2 Consultations on Environment and Security

Skopje, FYR of Macedonia, 23-24 September: The Environmental Ministry of Macedonia hosted the Conference on Environment and Security organised by UNDP, UNEP and OSCE. The conference was attended by representatives of governmental bodies from SEE countries, who presented case studies concerning environmental risks due to abandoned landfills from exploitation of mines, spill over of tailing ponds and other hazardous waste problems. Especially the abandoned sites of former exploitation or industrial plants for production of fertilizer were considered as pending threats to the concerned areas while the contamination of river systems was reported to have even severe impact on whole region and requires transboundary solutions to prevent further environmental calamities. International organisations such as NATO, REC, and IUCN presented their approaches to develop a network of security practises based on scientific grounds (NATO) and co-operation of involved stakeholders on local and regional level (IUCN).

Considering this event IUCN proposed to the organisers to provide professional advise and expertise regarding biodiversity and transboundary management of protected areas. Further on, the Green Belt Initiative was presented to stimulate stronger co-operation amongst partner countries in the region and to encourage international support for this activity.

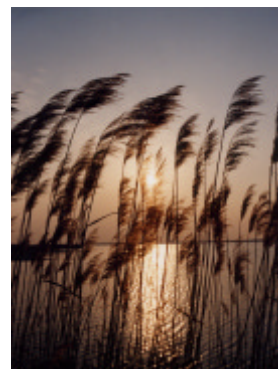
3 "Silver Pine" goes to Serbia and Montenegro at MEFEST



Zlatibor, Serbia and Montenegro, 23-26 September: Several years ago, the so called "Birds from the Balkans affair" brought great attention to illegal killing of protected birds in the Balkans. More than 120 000 frozen birds were found in one go on the Italian border, with intention to be sold at high prices in Italy. In Serbia, no serious consequences have been taken in connection with this. "My friend, the goldfinch", a documentary reminding us about this affair, won a "Silver Pine" award in the category of environmental movies at the latest International Festival of Tourist, Ecological and Sport Films (MEFEST). The authors of the movie, Oliver Fojkar and Dusan Cekic,

used some of the most important wetlands in Serbia as locations for making this film, Vojvodina's Ludas Lake, Slano Kopovo and Stari Begej-Carska bara.

After 12 years, MEFEST became a traditional festival in Serbia and Montenegro. It is the first festival focused on environment, tourism and sports and at the latest manifestation on Zlatibor, authors from 17 countries worldwide presented 77 movies. "Grand Prix" went to "Tanzania", a movie presented by Tanzanian Tourist Board. MEFEST was also an opportunity to organize a Round Table discussion on nature conservation and sustainable development in Western Serbia, moderated by the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia. For more information on "My friend, the goldfinch" contact **Oliver Fojkar**, oliver@natureprotection.org.yu. For more details on MEFEST, contact **Gavrilo Azinovic** and **Slavica Grubac**, slavicagrubac@hotmail.com.



4 IUCN and IAC joint action to protect the Sava River basin

Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, 29 September: One of the main challenges in management of the Sava River is to reconcile economic development with sustainable use and protection of natural resources in the river basin. Flowing through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro, the Sava River and its basin is the main focus of the planned project of IUCN and the International Agricultural Centre (IAC) of Netherlands, which seeks support from relevant authorities in these countries. IUCN and IAC have jointly developed a project that would help identify, designate and manage ecological and landscape diversity along the Sava River. The relevant Ministries and Institutes for Nature Protection, joined by Euronatur and UNESCO ROSTE, gathered in Belgrade to discuss the project and funding details.

The project, that supports the implementation of the EU legislation, consists of two parts. One part is the "Ecological Network Development along the Sava River", while the other is the "Protection of Biodiversity of the Sava River Basin Floodplains through Development and Introduction of Good Agricultural Practises". It is foreseen that the two parts of the united action for Sava River and its floodplains have different funding sources. Thus, the application for the first one was made to the Dutch PIN/MATRA Programme, while the other application is currently being prepared for LIFE III – Third Countries and the French GEF Programmes.

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

5 IUCN presents its programme to the REReP Task Force

Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, 30 September-1 October: The Task Force for Implementation of the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South-Eastern Europe (REReP), coordinated by a Secretariat based at Regional Environment Centre (REC), met for the seventh time since its establishment in 1999, in Belgrade. This year, IUCN presented its programme and planned activities for the SEE region in an oral presentation and it also submitted a report "Conservation without Frontiers - Networking for Sustainability in SEE" to the participants. SEE countries presented reports on major achievements and reforms in environmental policy and reconstruction, development and cooperation in the region.

6 Fighting for Eagles' survival through filming



Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, 5 October: A renown Serbian ornithologist, Bratislav Grubac, was the main expert advisor and script writer for an ecological film providing an overview of the most important threats to the survival of Imperial Eagle, *Aquila heliaca*, in Serbia. The 45 minutes long movie "Imperial Eagle" was presented in Belgrade and Novi Sad, as the first movie dealing with this particular theme in the Balkans. It was filmed on Fruska gora, a habitat of only two remaining pairs of the Imperial Eagle in Serbia. Some of the problems facing the Eagle's survival in Serbia are degradation of habitat, abandonment of pastoral lands, use of chemicals, and in rare cases, road traffic.

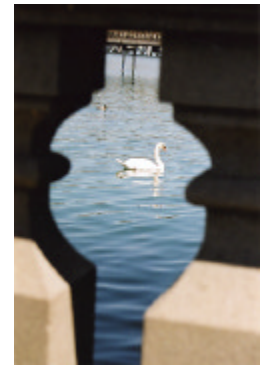
Imperial Eagle is globally endangered species, and while around 80 pairs are known to exist in the entire Balkan, only two remain in Serbia. This movie, supported by the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, Fruska gora National Park, and "Zastava film", is an important instrument for education of people about the life of Imperial Eagles in general, as it follows the daily life of nestlings from the third week of being born until their first flight. It is also a warning mechanism to the society in order to undertake necessary measures and ensure the survival of this legendary bird species.

For more information about the Imperial Eagle contact **Bratislav Grubac**, *Ornithologist*, Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, grubacs@ptt.yu.

7 "Wanderings" through nature and culture

Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro, 7 October: The Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia in Novi Sad hosted the opening of the first photo exhibition of Maja Zitkovic, Project Officer at the IUCN SEE office in Belgrade. The ongoing exhibition titled "Wanderings" represents a comprehensive overview of

photographs taken in seven different countries. Along her "Wanderings" Maja Zitkovic identified the mutual interaction of environment and culture as the framework of human life with its very different expressions all over the world - nevertheless always being a powerful tool to overcome political borders and separation of people. The tension of rural-urban and natural-cultural moments of life on earth is portrayed by a collection of 32 photographs including World Heritage Sites and almost unknown locations on one end as well as stylish handicraft and unspoiled nature on the other. By choosing such extreme contrasts the photographer invites the visitor to broaden ones horizon about limits and constraints to living conditions of humans within their natural and cultural habitats and environment. More information can be received at maja.zitkovic@iucn.org.



8 First Symposium of Ecologists of Montenegro brings attention to Tara canyon

Tivat, Serbia and Montenegro, 14-18 October: 250 participants from 10 countries discussed the most urging ecological issues facing Montenegro during the First Symposium of Ecologists of Montenegro. The Symposium advocated termination of all activities leading to degradation of habitats, thus influencing further destruction of biological diversity. Special attention was given to degradation of sand and wetland habitats at Ulcinj area, exploitation of pebbles from Moraca River, cement factory in Zelenika port, and protection of Skadar Lake.

The highlight of the Symposium was the Round Table discussion on "Conservation of Tara River", which brought considerable attention not only from the participants, but also from the media. All the participants clearly expressed their opinion about the importance of protection of Tara River canyon as part of the World Heritage site of Durmitor. The destiny of Tara canyon is currently being widely discussed and examined nationally and internationally, due to the possible construction of a HE power plant Buk Bijela. The Round Table finished with drafting of clear recommendations regarding the Tara canyon, which are available upon request. Read more on Tara canyon in the article number 4 above under the News section above.

More information about the Symposium is available from **Marko Karaman**, *Curator*, Natural History Museum at markoka@cg.yu or at website www.pmcg.cg.yu.

9 Discussions on Iron Curtain in Austria

Vienna, Austria, 3-5 November: The University of Leoben, Austria and partners announced the "Final Iron Curtain International Symposium" to be held in Vienna. More information is available at <http://www.ironcurtainproject.com/symposium.php>.

10 Morava-Dyje hosting SEE experts

Bratislava, Slovakia, 5-6 November: A two-day study trip to Morava-Dyje floodplain is going to be organized by the Slovakian Danube Environmental Forum (DEF) Secretariat on 5-6 November. DEF has invited 10 representatives from Hungary, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro to join the study-trip and learn on the experience of one of the most successful transboundary cooperation areas in Europe. Morava-Dyje, at the border of Slovakia, Czech Republic and Austria, is indeed an example of a good wetland management practice. Among many others, the visit aims to raise questions such as data collection and evaluation, management plan preparation, wetland (habitat) characterisation and management, sustainable use of resources, public participation, forest management and restoration.

11 Final preparations of IUCN for the 3rd World Conservation Congress

Bangkok, Thailand, 17-25 November: The world's largest democratic environmental forum, IUCN 3rd World Conservation Congress (WCC), will set the conservation agenda to the end of the decade. More than 3000 international experts from 150 countries and over 700 institutions will attend three principal parts of this event: the IUCN Member's Assembly, the World Conservation Forum and the Commissions at Work. IUCN European Programme will have strong presence in Bangkok through activities such as the organisation of official members gathering and Countdown 2010 event. The European Programme 2005-2008 will be informally discussed as well. For more information visit <http://www.iucn.org/congress/index.cfm>.

12 International gathering in Karadjordjevo

Karadjordjevo, Serbia and Montenegro, 28-29 November: Karadjordjevo in Vojvodina will host an international workshop "Special Nature Reserve Karadjordjevo – conditions, threats and perspectives", in organisation of the Ecolibri Bionet NGO, an IUCN member organisation. The workshop will discuss a project for revitalisation of this wetland area which will encompass development of the Management Plan. For more information contact **Tijana Spasic**, *Coordinator*, Ecolibri Bionet, at tkbionet@eunet.yu.

Funding opportunities

1 Call for proposals: LIFE 2004-2005

Regions: EU Member States, associated countries to LIFE

Amount awarded per project: maximum 50%, sometimes 100% of the eligible costs

Closing date: 31 October, 30 November, 13 December

Submission of proposals: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/funding/index.htm>

Contact: Bruno Julien, life-environment@cec.eu.int

2 Call for proposals: FP6 - 2 Science and Society

Regions: EU Member States, associated states, associated candidate countries

Amount awarded per project: Between 35% and 100% according the actions (3 million EUR global budget)

Closing date: 15 December

Submission of proposals: http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=168

Contact: rtd-sciencesociety@cec.eu.int

3 Call for proposals: Co-financing with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) - Actions to raise public awareness of development issues

Regions: EU member states

Amount awarded per project: Minimum amount: 50 000 EUR; Maximum amount: 1 080 000 EUR

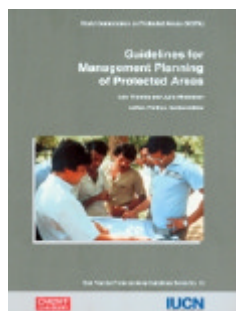
Domain: Development and cooperation between EU and developing countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro)

Closing date: 23 November

Submission of proposals: europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/tender/data/AOF51953.doc

Publications

1 Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas



Management Plans are crucial documents in setting out the management approaches and goals to be implemented in certain protected areas. They are important tools outlining frameworks for decision-making, whilst encompassing the widest possible consultation with all relevant stakeholders who have an interest in the use and ongoing survival of the area concerned. IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas – authored by Lee Thomas and Julie Duff - are based on global best practice and represent a working framework for protected area planners to consider and adapt to their needs and circumstances. Guidelines are available at <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/pdfs/mountainPAguide-screen.pdf>.

2 Bangkok awaits the 2004 IUCN Red List

The 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and Global Species Assessment (GSA) will be launched at the opening of the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in November. Based on the Red List, the GSA is the most comprehensive evaluation ever undertaken of the status of the world's biodiversity. It shows trends in biodiversity since the last major analysis in 2000 and highlights species that are at greatest risk of extinction, where they occur, and the threats facing them. This assessment is the first to include the Red List Index, a new tool for measuring trends in extinction risk. For the first time,

complete assessments of amphibians, cycads and conifers will be provided. A comprehensive information kit will be accessible via the IUCN SSC website.

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. ROfE is comprised of four IUCN offices located in [Brussels](#), [Warsaw](#), [Belgrade](#) and [Moscow](#). The head office, located in Brussels, is a meeting point where the IUCN Programme Office for Central Europe in Warsaw, The IUCN Programme Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow and the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe in Belgrade can disseminate information and strategies. Together as ROfE we strive to meet our goals for a sustainable Europe by utilizing local expertise and the strength of the global IUCN network.

ROfE in Belgrade**Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe**

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