



Photo: Ondrej Vizi

THE BALKANS WETLANDS GAZETTE

The newsletter of the Program 'Wetland Management and Dalmatian Pelican Conservation in the Mediterranean Basin'

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Mediterranean wetlands under pelican wings

The Mediterranean basin is one of the 34 biodiversity hotspots in the world. It has both cultural and economic interests. Mediterranean wetlands are fragile ecosystems but also among the most productive in the world. With a rich and varied biodiversity, they provide ecosystem services (water purification, flood control, soil fertility, etc.) indispensable to both human activities and many species, including migratory birds and the emblematic Dalmatian Pelican.

In this region, the development of human activities is very widespread and ancient. Many economic and recreational activities depend on wetlands, thus their degradation can negatively affect local development. However, strong anthropogenic pressures are threatening local ecosystems (deforestation, intensive agriculture, fire, development of infrastructures, solid waste, overfishing, etc.). With more than half of Mediterranean wetlands being critically endangered or having already disappeared, the Mediterranean Basin is among the four most altered hotspots on Earth.

[More information here](#)

http://noeconservation.org/files/wetlands/wetlands_gazette_art1.pdf

A regional initiative dedicated to pelican conservation and wetland management in 3 sites of the Balkans

The program named 'Wetland Management and Dalmatian Pelican Conservation in the Mediterranean Basin' seeks to contribute to the management of 3 unique Mediterranean wetlands thanks to targeted conservation efforts on Dalmatian pelican and improved local ownership for these natural heritages. The program aims at strengthening local capacities to improve wetland management effectiveness on these areas, selected for their shared management issues and pelican conservation interests.

[More information here](#)

http://noeconservation.org/files/wetlands/wetlands_gazette_art2.pdf



Photo: Ninoslav Djurovic

Project partners working together at installation of rafts on Skadar Lake.

Being wingmen to pelicans

In October 2013, all partners involved on Skadar Lake site gathered in Podgorica, Montenegro, for the first training workshop on best Dalmatian pelican monitoring, research and surveillance practices. The training laid the basis for reducing the disturbance caused to the pelicans, along with a revamped system of artificial nesting rafts, meant at improving reproduction and nesting conditions on the lake. This workshop has proven successful, with a Dalmatian pelican baby-boom during the following spring.

2014: a historical success for pelicans' breeding!

In March 2014, an estimated 70 adult pelicans gave birth to 48 chicks, which was a historical success that surpassed the previous record registered in 1977, when 46 chicks were counted.

In June, during monitoring sessions, swimming chicks could be observed, gathered close to the rafts. From estimate of 70 adult Dalmatian pelicans, 48 survived chicks was an excellent result. Since then, the 4 new nesting rafts continued being an attractive roosting spot with pelicans crowding there, from edge to edge.

Four steps towards a better cohabitation between pelicans and humans

When the program was initiated in 2013, one of the priority issues to be tackled by partners, in the framework of capacity building and enforcement of the regulation on Skadar Lake, lied in the human disturbances caused to pelicans colonies, especially in their zone of predilection. Due to its Special Reserve status, Panceva oka is a restricted access area. However, being a popular fishing site, local fishermen didn't respect it. During the workshop organized in October 2013, it was therefore decided by all partners to reinforce pelicans' protection by creating a safe zone around their breeding and feeding grounds. 35 buoys were set, every other bearing a warning sign that the entrance in the area is prohibited. Rangers were equipped and additional fuel provided to enable an intensified rangers' presence in the area. Besides, in order to achieve sustainable results, a new ranger station will be opened on the shore of the lake, 15 minutes away from the pelicans' safe zone.

More information here

http://noeconservation.org/files/wetlands/wetlands_gazette_art3.pdf



Photo: Andrej Vizi

Pelican chicks from the rafts.

News from Lake Kerkini, where pelicans and people live in harmony with nature:

In the framework of the Pelican Program, an exchange visit was organized in Lake Kerkini National Park – Greece, from 22 to 26 September 2014, aiming at fostering a strong and effective regional conservation community through the development of a regional network of effectively managed protected areas. The event gathered 15 participants, including the management authorities of Divjaka-Karavasta, Lake Skadar and Lake Kerkini National Parks, experts from EuroNatur, Tour du Valat, the Society for Protection of Prespa, as well as Noé's field and headquarters representatives.

This visit came as the 1st in a series of three regional workshops, meant at offering a platform of exchange between partners, geographically distant but sharing the same interest for pelican conservation and wetland management issues.

[More information here](#)

http://noeconservation.org/files/wetlands/wetlands_gazette_art4.pdf



Photo: Theodoros Naziridis

Platform installed for nesting and roosting of pelicans from Kerkini Lake.

The partners

The program is being implemented with the support of the MAVA Foundation, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Tour du Valat, EuroNatur, the Botiaux Dulac Foundation, Lake Kerkini Management Authority, Lush (a cosmetics company) and Noé Conservation. Its pilot phase started in July 2013 with its Montenegrin component, and in March 2014 for its regional one.

[All information about Partners:](#)

http://noeconservation.org/files/wetlands/wetlands_gazette_arts.pdf

Noé Conservation is an internationally active NGO whose mission is to protect biodiversity through conservation of endangered species and their natural habitats, and encourage change in our behavior towards the environment. As part of the program, Noé is responsible for its overall coordination and supervision.

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