

Conservation of Macaronesian Sparrowhawk and Laurissilva habitat in Madeira Island

LIFE+ Fura-bardos

The Macaronesian Sparrowhawk is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive and is classified as a priority subspecies. Despite having a conservation status of Least Concern in the Red Book of Vertebrates of Portugal (2005) and the IUCN (2001), the lack of current information about its distribution and population trend in the archipelagos of Madeira and Canary does not allow measuring the conservation status of both populations. The fires occurring in some areas of the SPA Laurel in recent years, coupled with habitat loss caused by the expanding distribution of invasive plants, increase problems related to the conservation of this species, therefore urgent measures to assist the conservation of the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk are crucial through the recovery of the Laurel forest of Madeira. The recovery of the Laurel habitat will benefit the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk population but also numerous other species of birds, invertebrates and plants, listed in Annex I of the EC Birds Directive 74/409/EEC and Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive 92/43 / EEC.

Recover the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk habitat is also a priority as well to increase the awareness among the local population.

OUTCOMES/RESULTS

- 1 Reduction of the invasive alien plants populations in the laurel forest
Recovery of a significant area of burnt Laurel forest, including production of native vegetation in nurseries and providing the correct conditions for its own dynamic natural reestablishment;
- 2 Training and establishment of a qualified team specialized in controlling invasive alien species;
- 3 Implementation of conservation measures for Laurel forest that will contribute for the conservation of the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk and other biodiversity, through the execution of long-term habitat management actions that will ensure the good functioning of this ecosystem;
- 4 Improve knowledge about Madeira and Canary population trends of the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk, providing essential information about its ecology;
- 5 Promotion of strong public awareness campaign for the conservation of Laurissilva habitat and species outlined in the Habitats and Birds Directive Annexes, through the development of activities in the intervention area and

SPECIAL PROTECTED AREAS LAURISSILVA OF MADEIRA, MADEIRA ISLAND, PORTUGAL

The main conservation and monitoring actions of the project LIFE Fura-bardos take place on some areas of Madeira Island, in the Special Protected Areas (SPA) Laurissilva of Madeira. The Macaronesian Sparrowhawk population will be studied throughout the island of Madeira and in five islands of Canary, Gran Canaria, Tenerife, La Gomera, La Palma and El Hierro, because it's important to know more about this bird.

LOCATION

The conservation of a priority subspecies, the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk, through the recovery and protection of their natural habitat - the Madeira Laurel Forest.

MADEIRA ISLAND
LAUREL FOREST
SPARROWHAWK
HABITAT CONSERVATION
LIFE+

KEYWORDS

workshops or thematic lectures, and also through the creation of the project logo and mascot, the disclosure of the internet site, among others, always aiming a strong commitment between the public and the project;

6 Ensure the continuity and sustainability of the measures through the engagement with the local/regional administration and the local population, increasing the awareness leading to change the behavior amongst the stakeholders and the public economically and/or traditionally linked to the use of this environment;

7 Creation of the Executive and Scientific Commissions to follow up the management of Laurissilva habitat and Macaronesian Sparrowhawk, in a long-term strategy.

MORE INFORMATION

Our project intends to create better environmental conditions by setting techniques and procedures for the conservation of species through habitat recovery. This conservation work will benefit not only the target species but also a significant number of flora and fauna native from Madeira, ensuring the preservation of the biodiversity of the archipelago and the European Union (EU) itself.

Besides contributing to the reduction of biodiversity loss, seeks to create conditions for effective sustainable future management and protection of the Laurel Forest, by fully implementing the existing Community legislation on nature protection, maintenance and restoration of ecosystems and their services.

The recovery of these plant communities and habitats will contribute directly to the restoration of indigenous diversity of Laurel, enhancing the survival of unique species in the world, adding value to the landscape of the laurel forest, creating a unique space and fostering a distinctive tourism product. **The improvement and preservation of natural resources in Laurel directly influence tourism activities, especially those related to nature tourism, boosting the promotional poster of Madeira and reaching new tourism niche markets.** It is expected that this project constitutes an added value providing new business opportunities by capturing captivated customers by nature and protected areas and creating new tourist offers based on the discovery of nature, optimizing the existing offer, creating a more complete offer and appealing and increasing the length of stay of visitors in the region.

Promotional and communication actions of the project intend to increase the promotion of some more remote villages and rural island of Madeira, which will contribute to regional development by creating closer links between rural populations and its natural heritage. In these locations, it is also suggested new uses of natural space, always in a sustainable way, resulting that more and different users can take advantage of it, encouraging the preservation of nature as a means to

Relevance of the Project

The project's actions are in accordance to the latest operational strategies, particularly with the strategy outlined for the next decade - "Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020", demonstrating alignment with the strategies followed by the EU in the field of protection and conservation of biodiversity, particularly by safeguarding the most important habitats and species in the EU by reducing the impact of introduced species with invasive character.

The fight against alien invasive character will involve the application of methods and techniques that are likely to be replicated elsewhere in the European Union, including insular spaces and other small areas, where alien species control and the recovery of degraded natural habitats or burnt habitats is a priority. The recovery of natural areas burned also aims to contribute to the fight against climate change, by restoring the vegetation cover and the consequent increase in the percentage of carbon fixed by native species (compared with the majority of exotic species) as well as the rebalancing of water resources.

Our project still has a correct alignment and compliance with established priority goals and their respective guidelines, through a multisector approach designed to prevent the disappearance of habitats and priority species (included in the annexes of Directive Birds and Habitats Directive).

ensure their subsistence and economic growth, creating future major allies for conservation of natural resources.

At the beginning of the project was outlined a communication strategy with the priorities. The main target of the communication had been the local communities, the schools, the local authorities and off course the general public. Until now it was produced communication materials such as the institutional website, roll ups for an itinerary exhibition that was already in one of the biggest shopping mall of the Madeira's Island and merchandising such as pens, bags, t-shirts and field notebooks. It was also produced materials to give to the children during our school's visits, such as environmental education notebooks. During the project activities all the staff and volunteers use clothes with the project's logo.

The Macaronesian Sparrowhawk was also the Bird of the Year of 2015, chosen by the Portuguese Society for the Study of the Birds. As a result it was produced a special bookmark with a stamp and there are feature news about the bird and the project in the SPEA's institutional Facebook and website. When there is news about the project they are included in the national and regional newsletters and are spread in all the social media networks from SPEA, such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. It was also included articles in the SPEA's magazine and send press releases when there is important news to spread through the media. SPEA is also regularly invited to go to the local television to be interviewed about the projects.

To explain the project we produced two spots and one of them was included in the 2015 edition of Madeira Film Festival - The magic of Laurissilva.

Recently, the artist Elisabet Henriques painted the door of SPEA' Madeira office with a Macaronesian Sparrowhawk. Now more people stop to look to our door and make questions about the bird and SPEA. This initiative is part of "arte de pORTas abErtas (Art with doors open)"; a project that aims to rehabilitate the old town of Funchal.

All these efforts into the field and communication work are only possible because of the funds of the European Union, through the LIFE funding.



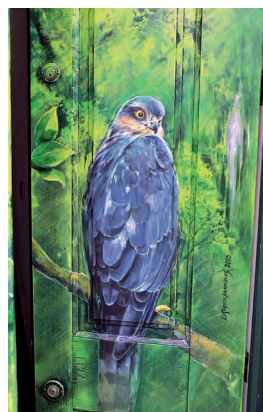
Environmental Education



Leaflet



Project headquarters - door art



Informative panels

According to the guidelines the LIFE program and the own environmental policy of SPEA, the project LIFE Fura-bardos is governed by a set of good environmental practices, which we hope that may serve as an example not only to project level developed in the EU but also at international level.

We would like to highlight the following actions:

- 1 The recovery of a priority habitat that will not only protect the target species of the project, but also a number of species of flora and fauna with unfavorable conservation status.
- 2 Through the action plan review for Macaronesian Sparrowhawk, we intend to contribute to setting priorities for the conservation of this subspecies throughout their range - Madeira and the Canary Islands.
- 3 The reforestation of a priority habitat, Laurel Forest, severely damaged by the fires of 2010 and 2012 and the introduction of invasive plant species, allowing the recovery of native vegetation with special interest in EU conservation.
- 4 Native populations will be strengthened, reducing the fragmented effective populations, decreasing the likelihood of being occupied by exotic species of invasive character.
- 5 We also believe that the creation of promotion materials and awareness campaigns are a great significance for the dissemination of the project and to increase the knowledge of the general population about this habitat and its main threats, allowing the continued involvement of the population, crucial to ensure the preservation of natural resources.
- 6 All of these monitoring actions, evaluation and active dissemination of results and lessons learned are effectively an important role in the tourism fostering and sustainable economic activities, through which we intend to encourage other stakeholders (farmers, hunters, ranchers and tour agents) to align their activities with the conservation of nature, resulting in a sustainable use of the natural resources.
- 7 In order to reduce our ecological footprint, in the course of the project have been avoided production of reports and other documentation on physical media, which are replaced regularly by digital and online dissemination. In addition, the trips aimed at committee meetings are always kept to a minimum, and the regular meetings via videoconferencing or via sound and video calls online.
- 8 We also realize the promotion of the project outdoors, like in the Birdfair edition of 2015, can be an asset to the Madeira's tourism. Madeira's island is already known for its natural beauty, so we believe that the Birdwatching can be a plus to the tourism and the local economy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Projects Website

Project spots - [Video 1](#) and [Video 2](#)

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