



# PROTECTED AREAS IN-SIGHT

THE JOURNAL OF THE EUROPARC FEDERATION  
VOL. 11

Nature on your mind:  
Understanding our Values

# Imprint

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Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition.



*Jūrmala, Latvia - Fieldtrip at the EUROPARC Conference 2019*

*Cover photo:  
Ķemeri National Park, Latvia - Fieldtrip at  
the EUROPARC Conference 2019*

The EUROPARC Conference 2019 was hosted by the Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia in Jūrmala, a coastal city in the outskirts of Ķemeri National Park.

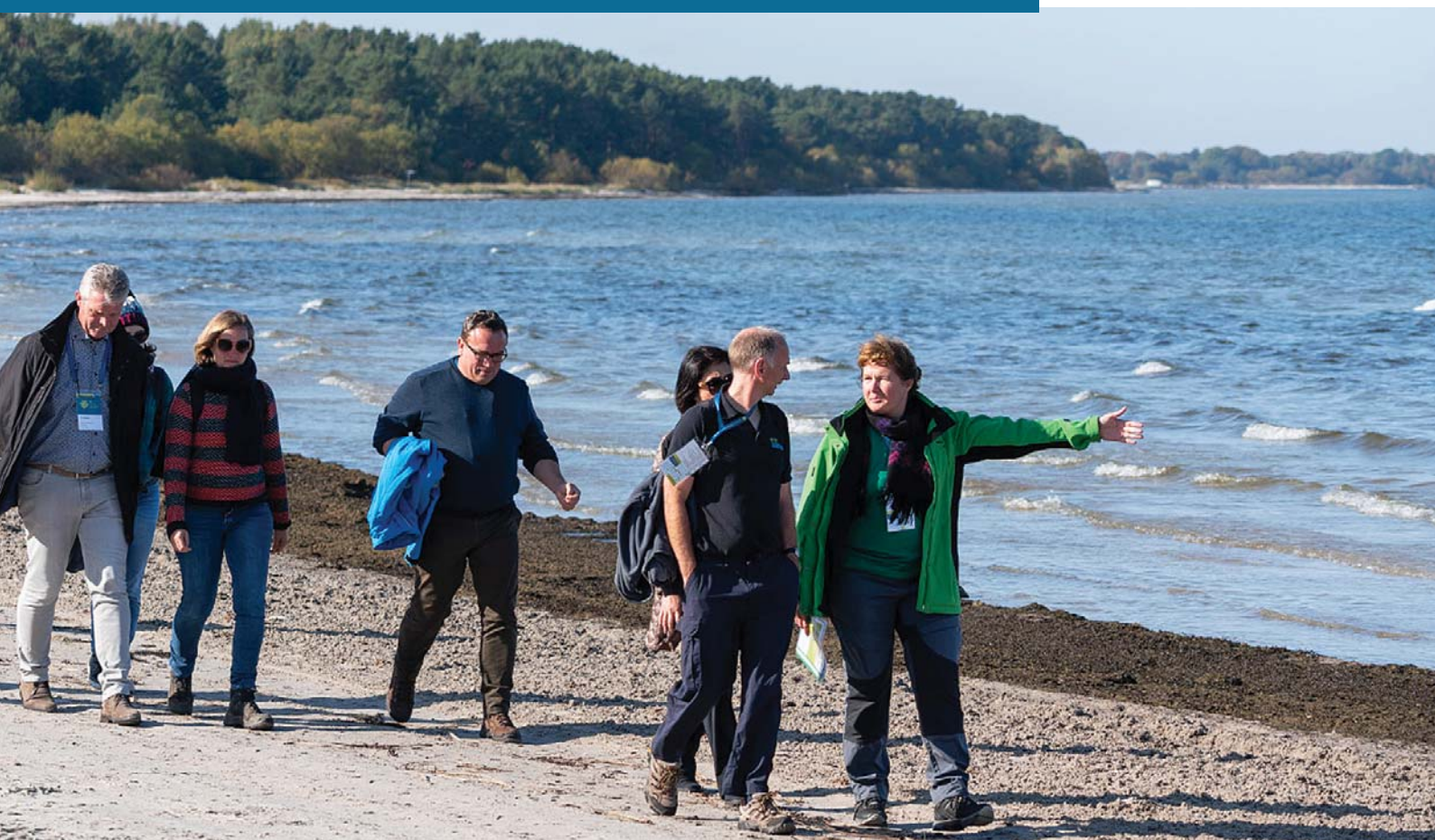
Check the photo album, film and the Conference outcomes at:

[www.europarc.org/europarc-conference-2019](http://www.europarc.org/europarc-conference-2019)



# PROTECTED AREAS IN-SIGHT

THE JOURNAL OF THE EUROPARC FEDERATION



The **EUROPARC Federation** represents Protected Areas and governmental organisations in 41 countries, who themselves manage the green jewels of Europe's land, sea, mountains, forests, rivers and cultural heritage.

**Nature knows no boundaries** and EUROPARC therefore facilitates international co-operation in all aspects of Protected Area management. Through networking, advancing policy and practice, sharing best practices and developing new solutions to the challenges of Protected Area management, we want to deliver a *Sustainable Nature: Valued by People* and ensure the value of Protected Areas is recognised at the heart of Europe.

For more information: [www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)





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# Editorial

This edition of EUROPARC's annual Journal "Protected Areas In-Sight" explores the link between nature and human health.

Nature plays a crucial role in today's society. The challenges of increasingly sedentary and urbanised lifestyles, growing number of physical and mental health problems, and especially the occurrence of the term 'nature deficit disorder', call for new remedies. Nature has been providing cures for diverse ailments for centuries and we must rediscover its healing potential.

New research and initiatives are being developed around the world to support the **promotion and recognition of Protected Areas as active actors in public health**. In return, not only will our health benefit from nature, but also parks and Protected Areas will be able to increase resources, if the connection between nature's vital functions to our bodies and minds is properly acknowledged. **Europe needs healthy parks, to provide opportunities for healthy people.**

During this year's EUROPARC Conference in Latvia, we looked at how to put "*Nature on your mind*" and found the interconnection with many sectors of life. From politics to arts, we heard a number of inspiring speeches and analysed case studies confirming this - often overlooked, yet obvious - link between nature and human health. That is why we launched the *Jūrmala Communiqué* and committed ourselves to set of a Europe-wide initiative 'Healthy Parks, Healthy People Europe'.

EUROPARC Federation with all its members and partners are in a particularly strong position to show how easy and accessible it is to benefit from what nature has to offer. It is part of our mission to help Parks to manage their natural assets, but also to offer quality experiences for their visitors, enabling communities to re-connect with nature.

At the same time, the increasing number of nature's guests, especially in periurban parks, made us join forces with ENOS, the European Network of Outdoor Sports, and create the "**10 Good principles for outdoor sports in Protected Areas**". The campaign aims to inspire a responsible conduct among visitors and sports practitioners, and ensure our European heritage is taken good care of. Join the campaign and share the 10 Good Principles with your visitors. After all, Protected Areas are in the frontline to boost behavior change! The principles are available in 9 languages and you can find all information at [www.europarc.org/outdoor-sports](http://www.europarc.org/outdoor-sports).

Lastly, 2019 saw the commemoration of the 30th anniversary after the **Fall of the Berlin Wall** and our network of Transboundary Parks created a special declaration to celebrate it (<http://bit.ly/TBber>). Peace, dialogue and cooperation – they are as needed now, as they were thirty years ago. Nature knows no Borders, and in 2020 EUROPARC will continue to provide opportunities to network and learn from your peers from across Europe. So do join us in Austria in October to "Question Your Mindset" in an inspiring conference on how parks should communicate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I hope that all the articles, case studies and interviews in this edition will inspire ideas and lead to action... Let's work together on a **healthier future – for Parks and People**.

**Carol Ritchie**  
Executive Director



# Healthy Parks, Healthy People Europe

*All you need to know about the Jūrmala Communiqué and how to help take it forward...*

Our parks and Protected Areas are health-promoting assets. They have a crucial role in nurturing healthy ecosystems which are good for nature and sustain our societies. In providing opportunities for people to experience and enjoy nature, they also **support the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social health and well-being of people and communities across Europe.**

At the 2019 annual conference in Latvia, the EUROPARC Federation committed to developing a “Healthy Parks, Healthy People” (HPHP) initiative for Europe. **The Jūrmala Communiqué sets out a range of actions required to do this and to realise the potential of Parks and Protected Areas as natural health centres.**

**With the initiative Healthy Parks, Healthy People Europe,, parks and Protected Areas will become leading actors in delivering health and well-being for Europe’s citizens. At the same time, the initiative will also empower Protected Areas and parks to seek greater resources to fulfil this vital role.**

A new platform for the exchange of ideas and good practice between the health, environment and other sectors will be at the heart of the HPHP Europe initiative. **Through a range of advocacy, communications and networking activities,** it will seek a shift in policy towards the recognition of the value of nature and Protected Areas as resources - not just for a healthy biodiversity, but also as the source of future medicines and treatments, and as a locus for human well-being.

Read more about the Jūrmala Communiqué at:

[www.europarc.org/europarc-conference-2019](http://www.europarc.org/europarc-conference-2019)



## Why does Europe need an HPHP approach?

**Increasingly sedentary and urbanised lifestyles, social isolation and an aging population, all contribute to a growing number of common health challenges, such as coronary heart disease and strokes, type 2 diabetes, obesity and dementia. Despite sustained investment in health care, health inequalities between different socio-economic groups in many European countries are significant and growing. Many people suffer from what has been termed “nature deficit disorder”.**

Europe has a well-developed and diverse system of parks and Protected Areas and a range of progressive policies for biodiversity and green infrastructure. With millions of people living and working in and around these places, it’s time for European parks and Protected Areas to support improved health outcomes for Europe’s population.

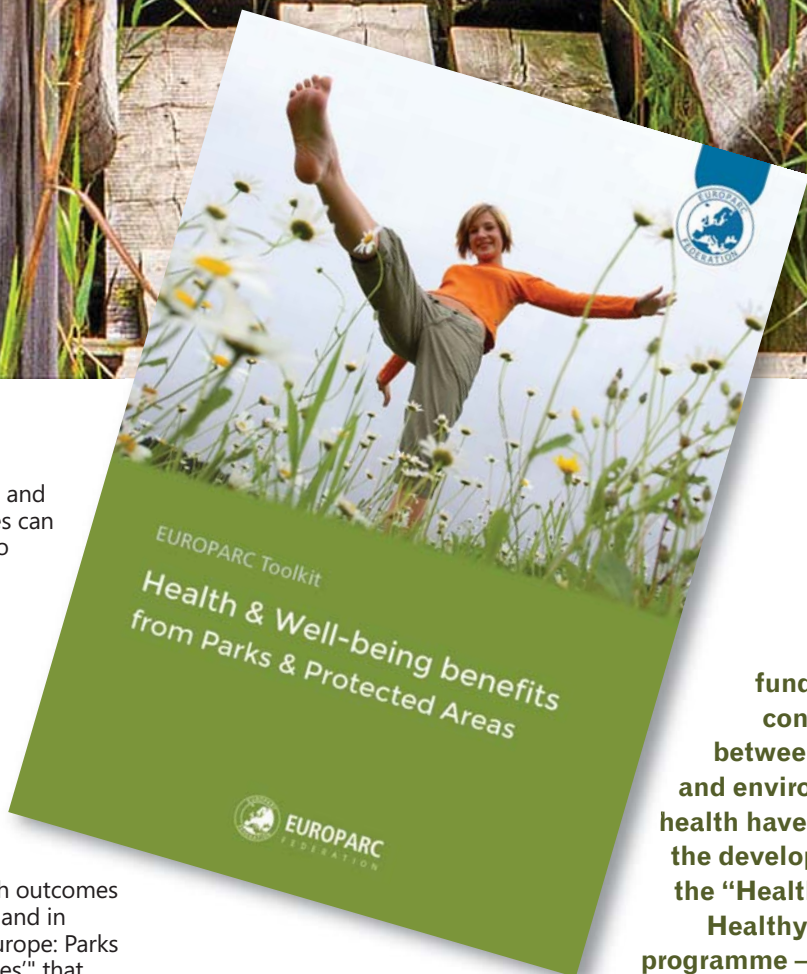




Kemeri National Park, Latvia.

In addition, the benefits of Protected Areas and green infrastructure in tackling health issues can be an essential and convincing argument to improve resources for their appropriate management - to halt the worrying loss of biodiversity in Europe and to raise social awareness about the importance of conserving nature.

**Some Protected Areas and Governments are already moving in this direction.** In the EUROPARC toolkit "Health & Well-being benefits from Parks & Protected Areas" we have collected some examples of parks and Protected Areas that actively support health outcomes for people by their programmes or events, and in a webinar "Healthy Parks, Healthy People Europe: Parks & Protected Areas as 'Natural Health Centres'" that was held in October, we discussed the great potential of parks and Protected Areas as natural health centres.



**These fundamental connections between human and environmental health have inspired the development of the "Healthy Parks Healthy People" programme – a global movement that aims "to**

**unlock the power of nature for its preventative and restorative health and well-being benefits while conserving and restoring biodiversity".**

[www.europarc.org/toolkit-health-benefits-from-parks/](http://www.europarc.org/toolkit-health-benefits-from-parks/)

[www.europarc.org/webinar-healthy-parks-healthy-people-europe/](http://www.europarc.org/webinar-healthy-parks-healthy-people-europe/)

# HPHP around the world

Following the first Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPHP) Congress in 2010 and the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, 2014, many countries have started crafting policies based on the global movement and incorporating its voice in their parks and public health outreach programs. Here are 12 inspiring initiatives from around the globe.

## CANADA

Building on the HPHP initiative, the Canadian Parks Council has established a 'made-in-Canada' *Healthy by Nature* as an opportunity to promote the strong connections between environment, parks, and population health. Find out more on <http://www.parks-parcs.ca/english/cpc/healthy.php>.



## SCOTLAND

Scotland is a front-runner within Europe in the green health agenda. In 2007, the Green Exercise Partnership brought a couple of Scottish environmental organisations together with the national health promotion organisation. Building on its success, the *Our Natural Health Service* initiative aims to mainstream the use of nature-based solutions into health policy and practice and contribute to prevention, treatment and care. To mention one early example of such actions, a 12-week outdoor programme called *Branching Out* has been developed in 2007 for people suffering from a mental illness. For more information visit <http://www.naturalhealthservice.scot>

## USA

The HPHP initiative created in 2011 in the Bay Area of San Francisco has been promoting free access to the natural and cultural locations known as the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Organising a variety of health-oriented events, the initiative has been taken up by all nine Bay Area counties with a total population of 7.4 million. In the US overall, the HPHP initiative is led by the National Park Service and involves about 400 parks. Read more on <http://www.nps.gov/orgs/1078/>.



## SOUTH AFRICA

In 2012, South Africa was among the countries that endorsed HPHP at the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Today, it is for example a community project SiZa Health Park, promoting the idea that 'health is not just the absence of disease, but a state of physical, mental and social well-being.' With its exercise equipment, skate park and youth programmes, the park aims to animate the community, organise sport events and improve the people's health, social interactions and well-being. More information on <http://www.copessa.co.za/projects/siza-health-park>.

## CATALONIA

The Barcelona Institute for Global Health, ISGlobal, is the fruit of an alliance between La Caixa Foundation, academic institutions and government bodies to conduct innovative research addressing the challenges in global health. The health benefits of natural spaces are widely promoted throughout their campaign #CitiesWeWant. Read more on <https://www.isglobal.org/>.

## SEYCHELLES

Developed in 2012 by Nature Seychelles, a leading environmental organisation in the Western Indian Ocean, the restored wetland called *Sanctuary at Roche Caiman* became the first park in Africa to join the HPHP network. Source: <http://www.natureseychelles.org/visiting/the-sanctuary>.





## FINLAND

In cooperation with its partners, Parks & Wildlife Finland, a unit of Metsähallitus, are responding to future health-related challenges through the *HPHP Finland 2025 programme*. For example, one of its early projects called *Open Air* (2012-2014) focused on embedding nature in rehabilitation and integration services, as well as improving access to urban and rural green spaces. You will find more information about the programme on <http://www.julkaisut.metsa.fi>.



*Oulu Region, Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland.*

## JAPAN

In 1982, the Japanese government introduced the concept of '*shinrin yoku*', or 'forest bathing', urging citizens to make use of the country's natural wonders. Since then, Japan has been at the forefront of scientific investigation into the links between forests and human health. Since 2004, the Japanese government has been developing *shinrin yoku* as a national health programme. The 'forest-therapy' has become standard practice in Japan as a way to manage stress and treat depression and anxiety. Visit <http://www.japan.travel/en/guide/forest-bathing/> to learn more.



## SOUTH KOREA

To promote the connection of nature to people's health, the Korean Forest Service has created therapy forests. These are equipped with convenience facilities, simple sports equipment, etc. Visitors can also use meditation spaces, rest areas and healing forest trails. For more info, visit <http://english.forest.go.kr/>.

## AUSTRALIA

Acknowledging the integral link between natural environments and human health, Parks Victoria is an institution respected around the world for its pioneering approach to HPH management and its enthusiasm for building global partnerships for the betterment of the environment and communities. Visit <http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/> for more information.



## SINGAPORE

Understanding that city dwellers are more likely to be stressed or depressed, Singapore embraces greenery in every aspect of its planning - integrating gardens in shopping centres, hospitals and office blocks. In early 2000, Singapore's National Parks Board and Parks Victoria signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* for a staff exchange programme, aiming to promote the value of parks for human health and well-being. Since 2016, the National Parks Board has also started building therapeutic gardens in public parks to further boost visitors' mental and emotional well-being. More info on <http://www.nparks.gov.sg>.



## NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Government was the first to use the term 'green prescription', introducing the concept in the 1990s as a response to increasing obesity rates. It is basically a professional's written advice to a patient to become more physically active outdoors. More information: <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/physical-activity/green-prescriptions>.

## The 5 key areas awaiting your action

Implementation of the Healthy Parks, Healthy People Europe, requires action by EUROPARC Federation, its members, sections, the Directorate and a range of partners in the five following areas:

1

### ■ Policy:

the development of policy frameworks at national, regional and/or local level that establishes the connection between the natural environment and health benefits and encourages management practices and resources to deliver them.

2

### ■ Partnerships:

the establishment of new cross-sector partnerships and community engagement in implementation to reflect joined-up working and provide wider benefits for people and nature.

3

### ■ Practice:

the application of the key messages, principles and advice on delivery methods set out in the EUROPARC Federation toolkit in ways which are relevant to local needs and circumstances.

4

### ■ Support:

the creation of a strong evidence-base and many examples of good practice, with innovative projects being shared throughout the parks & Protected Areas network.

5

### ■ Leadership:

to make the case for global and EU strategies on biodiversity, climate change green infrastructure and youth to make more direct reference to health benefits and encourage the investment required to deliver them.

Across Europe's Parks and Protected Areas, there is a range of activity underway in each of these areas that provides a solid foundation on which to build. Based on the Green Prescription developed at the EUROPARC conference 2019 in Latvia, EUROPARC and the Health in Protected Areas Commission are now creating an action plan and communications to take forward a new and exciting HPHP Europe programme.

**Would you like to join us in the development of this programme? Share your thoughts with us by sending them to [barbara.pais@europarc.org](mailto:barbara.pais@europarc.org). We would be delighted to have your contribution!**

*Jūrmala, Latvia - Fieldtrip at the EUROPARC Conference 2019*





# Periurban Parks

## - their place in European Policies

By Teresa Pastor, EUROPARC Federation



Figuring out climate change “adaptation” (adaptation and mitigation), facing the so-called ‘6<sup>th</sup> massive extinction’ and unlimited urban expansion, fighting air pollution and dealing with an escalating epidemic of poor health, obesity and nature-deficit disorder: these are just some of the challenges that populations around the world are currently facing.

Protected Areas can help temper all of these challenges and nature professionals are well aware of that. Located in or close to cities, **Periurban Parks have a particularly strong potential to deliver positive outcomes for many people and mitigate issues linked to urbanisation directly at their source.** If only this important role of Protected Areas was better known by the society, and by policy-makers in particular...

That is why the EUROPARC Periurban Commission prepared a ‘Position Paper’ entitled “*Periurban Parks, their place in European Policies*”, which was presented at the last EUROPARC Conference in Latvia and will be disseminated to relevant European Institutions in the coming months.

The position paper aims to relate the various “services” Periurban Parks can offer in relation to the above mentioned challenges and how EU policies or Agendas can respond.



## We have identified 10 main policy areas:

# 1

### BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY:

Most Periurban Parks host high levels of biodiversity and many of them are classified as Natura 2000 sites, contributing to many targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Periurban Parks act as **biodiversity reservoirs** and their main role is to restore and maintain healthy ecosystems, in order to provide ecosystem services to nearby cities.

# 2

### CLIMATE CHANGE:

Periurban parks are instrumental to urban adaptation to climate change by protecting cities from floods and reducing urban heat island effects. At the same time, they also contribute to climate change mitigation through the absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gases through their vegetation and soils.

# 3

### NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS:

Periurban Parks provide Nature-Based Solutions to **mitigate urban heat island effects and reduce the intensity of floods**. Periurban Parks use Nature-Based Solutions in order to resolve other challenges, such as connectivity, by creating ecological links between other areas and to the city.

# 4

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

In urbanised territories, the deployment of Green Infrastructure is challenging due to heavy infrastructure and continuous urban sprawl which makes permeability and connectivity difficult between the few open spaces left. This is why consolidated Periurban Parks act as important core nature areas from which to establish Green Infrastructure towards both the city and the wider landscape.

# 5

### AGRICULTURE:

Periurban agricultural parks not only have a significant economic function, but also relevant social and environmental functions. Periurban agriculture can help to provide access to food close to source and create food autonomy within cities.

# 6

### HEALTH AGENDA:

Periurban Parks offer the necessary space for **active living and outdoor physical activity, reducing stress through the restorative effect of nature**. Periurban Parks offer a large amount of biodiversity in their soils – bacteria, plants, fungi – which is needed to build healthy immune systems. Periurban parks offer the opportunity to bring citizens and children closer to nature and reduce what has been named ‘nature-deficit disorder’.

# 7

### URBAN AGENDA:

Periurban Parks are **natural and legal barriers to urban development**. They have a vital role in territorial planning, putting a check on the unlimited growth of cities. They are important non-built spaces that act as “territorial separators” to avoid the fusion of neighbouring cities into one single mega-city, thus preserving their identities. Periurban Parks provide high quality, large green spaces which are very much needed in compact cities.



# 8

## CULTURAL AGENDA:

Periurban Parks are repositories of cultural heritage and host old cultural traditions alongside modern **events that connect people to their heritage and landscape.**



Collserola Nature Park, by Teresa Pastor.

# 9

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

Periurban Parks play a substantial **role in environmental education, not only for schoolchildren, but also in long-life learning.** In addition, they are great places to host outdoor learning experiences of all types.

# 10

## OUTDOOR SPORTS:

Periurban Parks are ideal healthy green spaces to practice outdoor physical activity on a frequent, even daily, basis. They are important to promote healthy ageing and a **healthy way of life for an urban society.**



Mt. Hymettus  
Aesthetic  
Forest.

In the face of the climate emergency and irreversible biodiversity loss, EUROPARC calls upon cities to put a check on boundless urban sprawl, to be actively involved in the protection of the remaining valuable nature in their vicinity, and to derive the many benefits Periurban Parks can bring.

**I**t is precisely due to their location near cities that Periurban Parks suffer from so many pressures, which make management complicated. Periurban Parks are threatened by urban sprawl, encroachment and intensification of urban development. They are affected by heavy infrastructures. They are subject to urban edge effects including more frequent and more severe fires, air, noise, water and light pollution, and introduction of invasive alien species. They are often affected by vandalism, littering, dumping, illegal occupation, and by intense visitor pressures.

We believe that Parks should be protected by a **strong binding policy** to ensure their long-lasting viability and that **appropriate resources should be allocated to them** to enable their good management. Only then will Periurban Parks be able to fully deliver their precious services.

Download the policy paper "Periurban Parks: Their role in the EU policies" at

<https://www.europarc.org/periurban-parks/>

# 10 Good Principles

## for Outdoor Sports in Protected Areas

**There is no doubt about the benefits that outdoor sports bring to participants' physical and mental well-being. With the booming popularity of sport activities in nature, especially in and around Protected Areas, we need to ensure that visitors respect the environment when doing sport activities, to minimise their impact.**

Responding to this growing need, EUROPARC Federation and the European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS) launched the *10 Good Principles for Outdoor Sports in Protected Areas*. The campaign aims to make sportsmen behave responsibly towards the surrounding fauna and flora, but also targets other Protected Areas visitors, so that everyone can enjoy their outdoor time without putting our natural heritage at risk.

The *10 Good Principles* are the first outcome of the cooperation between EUROPARC and ENOS after they signed the Memorandum of Understanding during the EUROPARC Conference 2018 in Scotland. More actions are underway with the goal of implementing the ENOS Charter through a Task Force that coordinates the joint effort of both organisations.

### Endorse the 10 Good Principles

Although the Principles may seem obvious to you, it is always worth repeating to your visitors. EUROPARC published a range of promotional materials in different digital formats and languages, so that the campaign can be better adapted to the context of each Protected Area in Europe. You can find the tools on our website [www.europarc.org/outdoor-sports](http://www.europarc.org/outdoor-sports).

Now it's your turn! Help us spread the word and let people enjoy outdoor sports while treasuring our natural heritage. Currently, we are also working on principles for specific sports disciplines. If you have any suggestions, contact [barbara.pais@europarc.org](mailto:barbara.pais@europarc.org) and we will be happy to read and discuss them.





# 10 Good Principles for Outdoor Sports in Protected Areas

## Plan your visit sustainably

When we enter a Protected Area, we all make an impact on the natural environment no matter how small this might be. It is important not just to care for ourselves but the nature around us. Nature is inviting you into her home, be a good guest!



Come on foot, bike or public transport as a priority.



When using private vehicles, try to share the ride.



Circulate with caution and park in the spaces reserved.

## How to make the most out of your visit and to take care of the Protected Area?



**1 You are a privileged guest.**  
Stay in the trails, respect the natural environment and regulations to guarantee the beauty of the place.



**2 Plan your activity carefully.**  
Gather the information you need to enjoy your activity and the place; you will appreciate it better.

**3 If you come with a dog,**  
take extra care of it. Follow the regulations. Dogs can disturb other species.



**4 Take care of yourself and others,**  
and be prepared to help others, regardless their sport.



**5 Everyone wants to enjoy the place.**  
Give way to other users; anticipate that they often do not feel or see you coming, respect speed limits.



**6 Help us to keep this place clean.**  
Leave no trace and take with you the waste you make.

**7 Night is for species to be alone.**  
Avoid going in the night for your safety and let the animals live in peace.



**8 Keep "secret places" secret!**  
Use social media and GPS tracks with responsibility and according to official regulations.

**9 Avoid excessive noise.**  
Enjoy the quietness and calm, animals need quietness as we do.



**10 See it, Say it, Sort it!**  
If you see something wrong, tell the park. Open your eyes, appreciate nature and enjoy!



## Get Out & Get Into Nature

[www.outdoor-sports-network.eu](http://www.outdoor-sports-network.eu)  
[www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)



**EUROPARC**  
FEDERATION

# How are Protected Areas adapting to climate change?

Across Europe, nature conservation professionals report that they are already seeing the effects of climate change. The results of the NaturAdapt survey are presented here. They show that the adaptation process, which although constraining, also holds opportunities to innovate and develop a new cooperative space – it involves local people and private stakeholders, in ways that can positively benefit nature conservation in Europe.

## Key findings

1

### Climate change is being observed in Europe's Protected Areas

The observed effects of climate change include:

- prolonged heatwaves and droughts;
- floods and substantial erosion due to highly concentrated, heavy precipitation;
- rising sea levels and storm frequency;
- disruption of seasonal and phenological cycles.

Almost 80% of respondents said that climate change will be a priority within 10 years. Yet, the destruction and fragmentation of natural environments remain the major pressures.

2

### Taking climate change into account is an emerging practice

The results show that only a small minority of managers have conducted a detailed climate change vulnerability assessment (7%). However, a fifth of respondents say they are taking climate change into account. Managers are taking adaptation measures, such as:

- the active restoration of ecosystems, their functionalities and connectivity;
- the introduction of systems to monitor impacts;
- the development of increased cooperation or awareness-raising efforts among local stakeholders.

3

### Guidance and resources are needed to develop a long-term adaptation strategy

To incorporate climate change into conservation practices, human and financial resources are needed, as well as methodology and the sharing of knowledge and best practices.

Miguel Chamón Fernández, Murcia Region in Spain, says: *"It is important to budget for adaptation measures and the necessary resources, to identify the expected benefits, and to ensure the support of political decision-makers over the long term"*.





## A three-phase survey

**1** LIFE NaturAdapt conducted a short online survey, which generated 497 replies from nature conservation professionals (managers, associations, public authorities), with 43% of them coming from France and 57% from elsewhere in Europe

**2** An in-depth online survey, which generated 72 replies

**3** From these, 10 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted.

By Olivier de Sadeleer,  
EUROPARC Federation



**4**

### Protected areas have a role to play in mitigating climate change in their territories

90% of respondents believe that Protected Areas have a role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change. They may, for example:

- strengthen the structural resilience of socio-ecosystems within the territory;
- play a role in monitoring climate change;
  - act as a tool to raise public awareness about the effects of climate change.



# Opportunities

The survey revealed that the development of a climate change adaptation strategy is creating a number of opportunities to develop nature conservation practices in Europe.

1

## Adoption of a more creative and dynamic stance

Amongst others, the experience of the Broads in the UK, Montseny in Spain, Cascais in Portugal, Portofino in Italy and the Pyrenees National Park in France show that an climate change adaptation approach is an opportunity to adopt a creative and dynamic stance in our understanding of nature conservation and focus on developing the resilience and capacity of natural habitats to adapt.

2

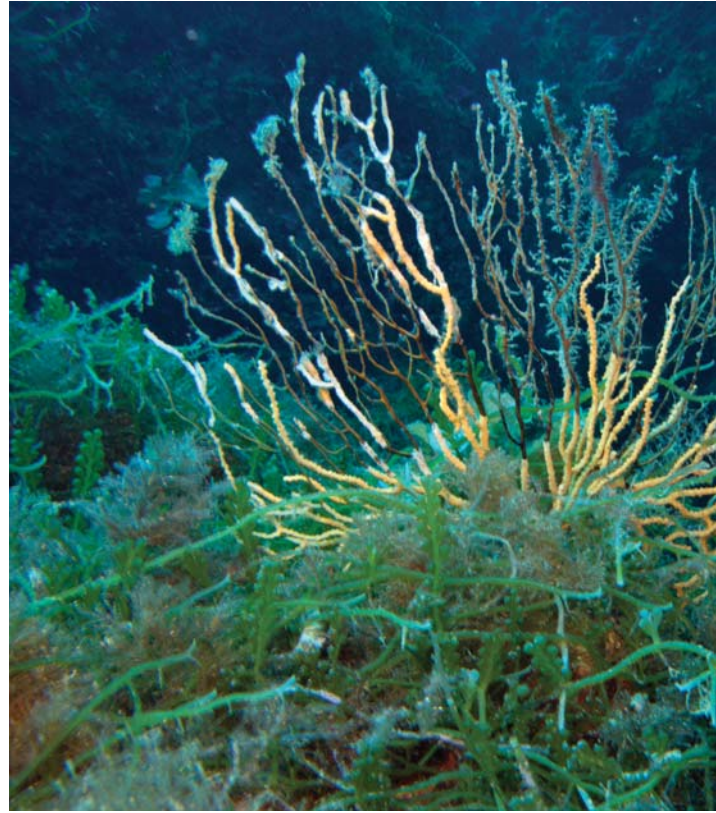
## Improved cooperation with local stakeholders

An inclusive approach to governance was mentioned in all interviews as being important to tackle climate change. Indeed, adaptation to climate change seems to offer rich grounds for discussion and cooperation with diverse local stakeholders that see and share a "common challenge".

3

## Valuing nature in local adaptation strategies

Planning conservation to include climate change impacts provides an opportunity to position natural areas within a broader societal context. By highlighting the benefits they generate for stakeholders, Protected Areas can position themselves as 'key players' at the heart of local strategies to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.



*"In Portofino, we have observed mass mortality events for benthic organisms since 1999, but it was only after the super storm of October 2018 that the region's inhabitants really became aware of the effects of climate change. Since then, cooperation with local fishermen and divers has become much more constructive. We are working together to develop adaptation solutions."*

Lorenzo Merotto,  
Marine Protected Area of Portofino, Italy.



Mortality events on Gorgonian corals (Eunicella cavolinii), surrounded by Caulerpa cylindracea, an invasive alien species.  
By Lorenzo Merotto

*"The journey is worth it. Don't worry, you won't lose anything. You'll gain a lot. Thanks to this exercise in planning adaptation to climate change, the management practices of Cascais Ambiente have developed to become more inclusive and more financially sustainable."*

João Dinis,  
Cascais Ambiente, Portugal.

## Towards a methodology for adaptation.

Experience shows that adaptation is an iterative and circular process to be run over the long term. Nevertheless, it is possible to envisage a typical, linear pathway through which climate change is incorporated into the management of protected natural areas. For example, this can involve:

1. a **'trigger'** to put climate change on the PA team's agenda;
2. the **preparatory phase**, which includes research, discussions with experienced people, climate change specialists, stakeholders, etc., to build understanding about climate projections in the future;
3. the **establishment or development of systems for monitoring** the effects of climate change;
4. **conducting a vulnerability assessment of the site and the socio-ecosystem**;
5. **planning of adaptation measures** using a collaborative approach on various spatial scales;
6. **implementation of adaptation measures**;
7. **adaptation of the management plan to responses** on the ground.



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MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

To find out more about the LIFE NaturAdapt project, go to  
<https://www.europarc.org/naturadapt>

## Save the date - Siggen Seminar

### How can we help Protected Areas adapt to a changing climate?

During this two-day interactive seminar, EUROPARC and NaturAdapt teams will present the prototype methodology and the tools developed for planning adaptation to climate change. Together, participants will discuss their needs in terms of political support to tackle the challenges of adapting to climate change in Europe's Protected Areas.

When? **From 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Where? **Gut Siggen Seminar Centre  
23777 Heringsdorf, Germany**

Register online at:

[www.europarc.org/siggen-seminars](http://www.europarc.org/siggen-seminars)

*Probing ice and snow in Ecrins National Park  
© Ecrins National Park Archive.*



# Chalk Bed Marine Conservation: A case study from the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).



By Fiona Tibbitt - Marine Lead Adviser, Natural England

Natural England (NE) provides conservation advice to regulators of fishing activities in English waters, with a special focus on Marine Protected Areas.

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ in North Norfolk was designated in 2016 under UK legislation *The Marine and Coastal Access Act (MACAA) of 2009*. The aim of MACAA 2009 is to protect rare, threatened and representative habitats, species and geological features of national importance. This legislation is unique - it considers ecological and geological importance as well as socio-economic impacts. Local communities and sea bed users had a say in the designation process and those views were listened to. **A decade later, we are much closer to a well-managed, ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas, but there's still work to do.**

*Chalk beds are important because their cracks and crevices provide refuge for wildlife, especially juvenile invertebrates and fish. It is also a source of substrates for burrowing organisms. Any irreparable structural damage is therefore significant and may require some sort of management.*



Cromer crab and lobster fishery today. Copyright Romsey Advertiser.

The assessment of fisheries impact to create management measures in Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ is now underway. But when the site was designated, we had limited evidence. Fisheries activity levels were unclear and the position of Natural England (NE) was that the most intensive fishing activity - 'potting' - was small scale, selective and low impact. Based on the best available evidence at that time, implementation of management measures was unlikely and this was communicated widely.

Currently, new anecdotal evidence shows that there may be impacts on chalk habitats from some fishing activities after all. But given the rarity of this habitat, we still need more evidence to improve our understanding.



Historical Cromer Crab and Lobster fishery. Copyright National Maritime Museum.

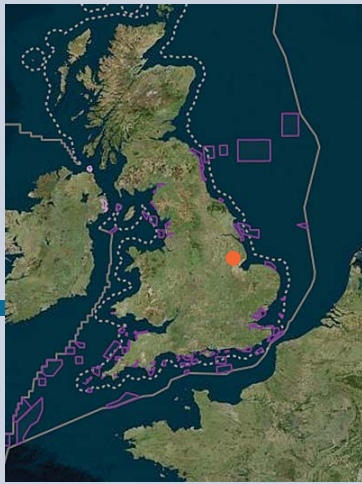
## Reconciling the regional heritage with sustainable management

The crab and lobster fishery started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is fundamental to the character, cultural heritage and economy of North Norfolk, so it is essential that any management is risk-based and proportionate. The application of the 'precautionary principle' is required where evidence is lacking and NE advise an 'adaptive management approach.' This means, with more evidence, management can be modified accordingly.

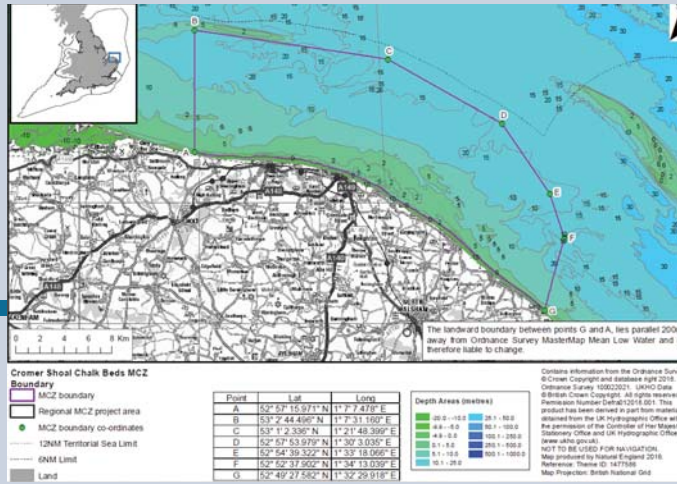
NE are working closely with the conservation authorities and the Agents of Change Project, Marine Conservation Society at the Essex University, fisheries representatives and Seasearch to gather more evidence. **We have conducted dive and drone surveys, workshops and discussions** to improve understanding of activities and impacts on chalk. Novel techniques are being used, e.g. **3D Photogrammetry to improve our scientific understanding** and provide tools for exciting marine visualisation opportunities for education and outreach purposes, such as **Virtual underwater tours**.

Community Voice Method workshops with fishers outlined plans for more to be done in terms of gathering evidence and communicating the findings. Plans for a fishers and regulators forum are evolving so fishers are included in the management and feel a sense of ownership. Local communities also need to be involved as they can act as local monitors, and resources for enforcement will always be finite.

*The Community Voice Method is an innovative, research-based approach to fostering effective public conversations about important local issues. It aims to foster more inclusive, informed, and ongoing civic dialog in communities facing changes to their landscapes and resource-based livelihoods.*



● Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ in UK.  
Copyright JNCC.



Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ designation.  
Copyright Natural England.

Further work to help build trust between us and the local community is needed with better and regular communications. Sustainability is at the heart of management of Marine Protected Areas but both the marine environment and coastal communities need to be addressed, so they can thrive together.

This approach is being watched closely by others as there are implications for other chalk sites elsewhere. It will be precedent setting and we need to get it right.

So can we consider it a success? We have achieved adaptive, proportionate and effective management. There is a thriving and sustainable local fishery with other sustainable marine activities and an engaged local community protecting their MCZ for future. With our partners, we help gather science and evidence to assess the condition of our MCZ in order to better inform the management and help to modify it accordingly. Finally, the public are engaged in innovative ways so they connect, value and respect the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. There's still much work to do, but we'll get there.



Diver on Cromer Shoal MCZ.  
Copyright Sam Bean.



Fiona Tibbitt

## Transboundary Cooperation

# Preserving the “cultural biodiversity” of the Alps: an interview with the new Transboundary Park- Binntal Veglia Devero Transboundary Nature Park

The Ossola Protected Areas in Italy and the Landschaftspark Binntal in Switzerland are located in the Lepontine Alps, a natural environment dominated by rocks and glaciers: mountains reach 3.500 meters high, and rich alpine lands contain pastures, peat bogs and mowing meadows. Since their official agreement on transboundary management in 2013, the wild animals of the Alps, such as chamois and ibex, can move freely from one side to the other: of course, they did this for thousands of years in the past, free animals and men know no borders.

### In what aspects was the transboundary cooperation most needed?

The cross-border cooperation between the Landschaftspark Binntal and the Veglia Devero Nature Park already started unofficially 15 years ago, with a common awareness that the two parks are united by a natural border (a watershed ridge) between Switzerland and Italy. Both the north and the south of the Alps share the same natural environments, identical tourist visits focused on summer and winter mountaineering, and the same nature conservation challenges. Together, we decided to exchange information related to wildlife monitoring and to carry out common initiatives, including free cross-border paths and the joint promotion of a single alpine territory.

Representatives of the Transboundary Park awarded at the Conference 2019.



Men from Lepontine Alps walk together, study together, protect and celebrate together. With no borders.

### What are the main benefits of your transboundary cooperation?

In these times, when the Alps are witnessing observable consequences of climate change, the transboundary cooperation allowed a better management of the alpine biodiversity throughout common monitoring actions, continuous exchange of scientific information and management experiences.

Now, the Transboundary Parks Award is the recognition of our successful policies for joint regional and sustainable development, which protects nature, promotes cooperation and international peace.

### How does your transboundary cooperation help to preserve the local cultural heritage?

This is very important, because the Alpine parks are located in remote areas with cultural and linguistic minorities. It is a "cultural biodiversity" that needs to be preserved as an asset for the Europe of tomorrow, a Europe of diverse "small countries". The cross-border park is united by the historical experience of *Walser culture*, developed since the 13<sup>th</sup> century on both sides of the Alps. The shared dialects, the local knowledge of building houses and barns with larch wood, and the common free-trade relations in the mountains have made it possible to achieve a common historical experience. The Transboundary agreement confirms and celebrates this long-standing path.





Alpe Devero,  
by Ivano De Negri.

Binntal Veglia Devero  
Transboundary Nature Park



### How does your cooperation enhance the common regional identity of local people?

The cross-border experience is manifested in joint initiatives. The two parks hold the event "Parks in the City" each year, alternately in Switzerland and Italy. The inhabitants and representatives of the two parks "descend" from the remote areas into cities to present their natural and cultural values. Excursions, such as the "Arbola Walk" and the "Pastures and Cheeses" event, bring hikers from all over Europe to get to know each other, discuss and celebrate together. Cultural exchanges with music bands allow women and men to play, sing and become friends. **The cross-border park unites peoples.**

The "cultural biodiversity" needs to be preserved as an asset for the Europe of tomorrow, a Europe of diverse "small countries".

### What are the challenges for your transboundary cooperation?

Although we are in different countries, language is not an obstacle. German is spoken in Valais, and Italian in Italy. Many Swiss speak Italian, and some Italians speak German. Language difficulties are overcome by the desire to meet each other. **Music, food and wine, paths and nature are our common language.**

There are administrative and legislative differences between the two states. For example, Italy is a founding member of the European Union and Switzerland is not, which makes it harder to apply for EU funds. Nevertheless, in the end, all these difficulties are overcome by the will and ability to cooperate.

In recent years, great speculative interests have been hanging over the Alps. Large companies with enormous financial possibilities wanted to turn the Alps into cities, nature parks into amusement parks with hotels at the mountaintops and a steel cobweb that suffocates nature. **Our transboundary park is the alternative to this: it ensures a peaceful future in harmony with nature for the next generations.**



# DECLARATION

of the EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme

## The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall

[9 NOVEMBER 1989-2019]

### Nature has no borders



On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall we, the **European Transboundary Parks** highlight the need to re-enforce cooperation and mutual understanding in Europe, across frontiers.

Since its birth, **EUROPARC's Transboundary Parks Programme**, has embodied the spirit of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, on the basis of our day to day experience collaborating in the **management of a shared biodiversity despite our political borders.**

Our network of protected areas is characterised by being one, close to the other- but separated by a border a virtual administrative, political and cultural wall - even in a now open Europe.

The experience of our history, our knowledge and values, led us to create a movement of active people, concretely co-operating and building projects to overcome barriers through the **EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme: a true European project.**

The inspiration derived from the Fall of the Wall is particularly evident given that **most of our protected areas are located on the former Iron Curtain (now European Green Belt)**. Just looking at a map of Europe makes this very clear.

As equally evident is the energy and the will that the people involved in the Transboundary Programme put into the cooperation activities every day, driven by the pleasure of working together in once, long-time divided territories.

For these reasons and on this occasion, **we strongly declare our commitment for peace, dialogue and nature protection**

and our availability to support, in the frame of our institutional goals and skills, any initiative aimed at fostering cooperation between European states within and beyond the European Union.





TransParcNet Meeting 2018 in the Transboundary Area composed by Podyjí National Park (CZ) and Thayatal National Park (AU)

“Borders are not natural, they were created by people. Therefore, people should also be able to break them down for our cultural and natural heritage.”

*Brunner, 2006*

The EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme “Following Nature’s Design” seeks to support a process of mutual understanding, often between countries where history may have created mutual distrust, or administrative barriers and develop management tools to enable greater cooperative management.

The Protected Areas awarded with the EUROPARC Transboundary Programme Certificate compose the TransParcNet, an innovative platform for safeguarding cross-border biodiversity, ecosystem services and cultural landscapes, as well as inspiring and encouraging people for better understanding of the importance of transboundary cooperation.

Transboundary Parks...following nature's design



Transboundary Parks Award Ceremony Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park (FI-RU-NO) Scotland, 2018

DISCOVER OUR  
TRANSBOUNDARY AREAS:  
[europarc.org/discover-our-transboundary-areas](http://europarc.org/discover-our-transboundary-areas)

- 1 Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park (FI/NO/RU)
- 2 Oulanka-Paanajärvi Transboundary Parks (FI/RU)
- 3 Hainaut-cross-border Nature Park (BE/FR)
- 4 Maas-Schwalm-Nette Nature Park (NL/DE)
- 5 Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland Transboundary Parks (DE/CZ)
- 6 Krkonoše and Karkonosze National Parks (CZ/PL)
- 7 Šumava and Bavarian Forest National Park (CZ/DE)
- 8 Podyjí-Thayatal Transboundary Parks (CZ/AU)
- 9 Neusiedler See-Seewinkel & Fertő-Hanság (AU/HU)
- 10 Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion (IT/SI)
- 11 Binntal Veglia Devero Transboundary Nature Park (IT/CH)





# From Sites to Systems - transforming Protected Areas for better outcomes

**January 2020: it is time to look at the current state of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy implementation and the outlook on the post-2020 Strategy. An opinion piece by Dr Stig Johansson, President of EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section, reflects on the main challenges, obstacles and prospects for both the concluding and future Biodiversity Strategies.**

In early October, Parks and Wildlife Finland organised the EU Nature Director's field trip to focus on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. We spent a great day in the Ekenäs Archipelago National Park on the Island of Jussarö, far out on the edge of the open Baltic Sea. During that day, we had time to discuss with colleagues and the EU Commission about biodiversity Post-2020, and especially how the EU will time its strategy in relation to the international process. I was quite surprised to hear that the EU strategy will be drafted already in early 2020, as part of the new Commission's 'Green Deal'. This is only some 100 days from now, and almost one year before the COP15 in Kunming, China.

During the inspiring EUROPARC 2019 Conference in Jūrmala, Latvia, I emphasized several times the need to align the next EUROPARC strategy process with the EU process and the post-2020 framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Since much is taking place this autumn under the Finland's Presidency at the Council of the EU, I also kept reminding ourselves that we need to be alert and use every opportunity to contribute and to make sure that Protected Areas are sufficiently addressed in setting these new global and SMART<sup>1</sup> targets. These will ultimately be reflected in the updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and we will find these strategies, goals and targets on our desks sooner rather than later. The more we can influence the global and the EU processes, the more realistic it will be - we will know more and be better prepared.

The EUROPARC strategy is of course about Protected Areas and their role and contribution to societies - so well captured in the five themes of the conference - but it is important to ensure that both the EU and global goals will also emphasize Protected Areas and their management as the backbone of our efforts to conserve biodiversity, in Europe and elsewhere. We all know that biodiversity loss is not entirely halted by Protected Areas: but, we also know that they are the sites protecting the most valuable biodiversity and ecosystem services and sites where we can experience nature in a relatively undisturbed state. And this is good for our body and soul, as we all heard in Jūrmala.

The Aichi Target 11, the quantitative area-based conservation targets - 17% terrestrial and 10% marine areas protected - are likely to be among the few targets to be reached.

***In Europe, the terrestrial Protected Area coverage is 25.1% (June 2019). Another 1.2% could be added if national commitments are implemented before the 2020 reporting. For marine areas 9.7% is protected. Again, if national commitments are implemented, we will stand at 10.3%, reaching the Aichi target.***

*EU Nature Director's field visit to Jussarö Island in the Ekenäs Archipelago National Park. Credit: Hans-Erik Nyman, Parks and Wildlife Finland*



<sup>1</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely



By Stig Johansson, Metsähallitus, Parks and Wildlife Finland

However, there are many qualitative elements which are also crucial – for example, representation, connectivity, protecting key areas important for biodiversity and ecosystems services, equity etc., and of course the effectiveness of management. Many of these are also increasingly measurable, directly or using proxies, though some lack the metrics or are difficult to assess globally. Many of those targets may not be achieved.

Almost half of our terrestrial and marine ecoregions are below the 17% Aichi target, and many are below 5% protected. On closer inspection, representation is not what it should be. In addition, 68.5% of Europe's Key Biodiversity Areas are covered by Protected Areas, which is quite good, but little can be said about important areas for ecosystem services. They lack metrics or agreed measurement approaches, which can be critical from a social and economic perspective - think pollination and crops, think clean water, and of course, think climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### Focus on systemic integration and think solutions

For us in Europe, the focus should be to make the Natura 2000 network and Protected Areas as effective as possible in achieving the objectives for which they were established. We have many areas, which could be called "paper parks", also in Europe - areas that give you aesthetic or recreational satisfaction: nothing against that, but they deliver little in biodiversity outcomes. In many areas, those who manage have far too little information or focus on the nature values and how these develop, especially with respect to management. Often there are different institutions that manage, measure or monitor, leading to a lack of comprehensive management. How can we then be expected to deliver on biodiversity conservation?

Three final points, as we are heading towards the CBD 2050 vision. First, our sight is often focused on sites and we forget that the sites form a network, which stands far greater chances to address and contribute to conservation and climate change challenges. **We need to move from sites to systems thinking, manage Protected Areas as networks, integrating other area-based conservation measures, spatial planning and green infrastructure.**

Secondly, we need much more focus on management processes and biodiversity outcomes - again, **focus on systemic integration rather than one-off management effectiveness assessments.** We also need better metrics to capture outcomes, results and adaptation in management.

Finally, **think solutions.** We need to start managing Protected Areas and networks aiming at solutions – this involves not only managing the loss of biodiversity, the prime aim, but also addressing social, health, economic and livelihood challenges, as well as delivering nature-based solutions to climate change.



# Seminar-Dialogue with the European Commission

When policy and practice come together

By Barbara Pais  
Communications and Marketing Manager,  
EUROPARC Federation



“It’s all about people... their building of trust and the shared resources”

Harald Grabenhofer

Here I am, in Brussels, October 29<sup>th</sup> 2019. Although the sun is timidly shining, I feel hot under the multiple layers of clothing as I hustle down Beaulieu Avenue towards the headquarters of the Directorate-General Environment (DG ENVI). Like me, there are many others heading that way, and I notice that each group I overtake speaks a different language - a clear sign of the multicultural scene that is waiting for me.



Diego Garcia-Ventura  
EUROPARC-Spain  
Fernando González Bernáldez Foundation  
diego.garcia@fungobe.org



28-29  
October

Seminar-Dialogue  
with DG Environment 2019

organised by:  EUROPARC  
FEDERATION 

Partnerships for Biodiversity  
European policies and the role of Protected Areas  
2019 Seminar-dialogue with European Commission  
Organized in cooperation with DG ENV,  
with the participation of DG AGRI, DG GROW, and DG EAC (TBC)

Protected Areas In-Sight

At the entrance, I line up behind those waiting to get their visitor’s badge. The inside of DG ENVI is bright and impressive, with a high glass ceiling and living trees decorating the inner patio. Every day, around 500 people work here, for the EU’s Nature and Regions. For some of them though, today is not a normal ‘day at the office’.

We took over the largest meeting space in the building, a u-shaped room where we were able to fit 30 participants. Our audience came from all corners of Europe to establish a first-person dialogue with many representatives of the European Commission. “We are here today to talk about 3 things”, EUROPARC Executive Director Carol Ritchie said, “**places, people and partnerships**”.

Micheal O'Briain at the Seminar-Dialogue 2019.



At EUROPARC, we believe that Europe's nature is better protected through dialogue and (international) cooperation, through exchange and collective learning. Protected **places** in Europe need committed **people** working in **partnership** towards shared goals, be that biodiversity protection, Natura 2000 management, social cohesion or sustainable tourism. That is why, for the third time, EUROPARC and DG ENVI co-organised the "**Seminar-Dialogue on EU Policies**", a special event where we bring policy makers and Protected Areas together around the same table.

**S**tarting with the practical implementation of the **Transboundary Parks Programme**, Harald Grabenhofer from Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park (AU) shared his experience on implementing the EU Nature Directives in straight cooperation with Fertő-Hanság National Park, their counterpart in Hungary. After all, **nature knows no boundaries**, and keeping high biodiversity levels in one of the largest lakes in Central Europe requires joint efforts, as well as funds. INTERREG, the EU Regional Development Fund, is one of the funding tools fundamental for their work.

INTERREG is under the umbrella of DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO). Maud Skäringer, representing DG REGIO, shared the outcomes of their 2014-2020 action plan and future ambitions post 2020: these focus on **a smarter, greener and low-carbon Europe, with climate change adaptation and circular economy at its core**, but also a more connected Europe, socially fair and closer to citizens.

From biodiversity to tourism, Sophie Poudou from the Mercantour National Park (FR) told us about their long-lasting cooperation with Alpi Marittime (IT). They became a **Transboundary Sustainable Destination** in 2017, with the first cross-border implementation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, a tool to support parks achieving sustainability in tourism.

Creating tools to support Protected Area professionals is at the core of EUROPARC's work. That is why we invited Diego García from EUROPARC Spain, who shared their **Carrying Capacity Assessment Model** which considers not only the ecological and physical capacity of a place, but also the social and psychological effects on visitors. The methodology is now being implemented by several Parks in Spain.

"If young people are not staying, the sustainability of our landscapes is threatened."

**Nicola Notaro**

**K**aty Foxford brought us the voice of Youth. One of the creators of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto and currently Tourism Support Officer at the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the 26 year-old showed us the park's commitment in creating opportunities for young people. "*We didn't want the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto to be a stand-alone piece of paper, but a working document!*" They established a Youth Forum and launched the Young People Initiative, making Katy proud that the "*topic is being placed at the forefront of people's minds*".

From DG ENVI, Nicola Notaro commented that in Europe we have achieved good ecological insights, but not as much on social elements. Highlighting the need for a higher environmental awareness, he asked Protected Areas to add an educational perspective in every touristic activity and **committed to look for a stronger inclusion of the youth perspective in the next EU Biodiversity Strategy, whose first draft should come out by February 2020.**

# “Alone you go faster, together you go farther”

Michela Formento

This could be the next tagline of **EUROPARC Network of Sustainable Destinations**.

Michela, who probably gave the most inspiring speech of the day and also stars in our film, “A Sustainable Journey”\*, is a business owner working in the Alpi Marittime – Mercantour Transboundary Sustainable Destination. “Respect for nature, for these people, for time and for myself” were the key lessons she learned from working in that foreign territory. Also, she left us with an important message: “meetings should take place at the mountain tops”.

At the mountain tops, or in a threatened rural landscape, as Victor Garcia said. The young entrepreneur from Asturias showed us how Ecotourism can be a tool for rural development and how **people who love their land is all we need**.

At 16:30, it had been a long but productive day. Even if my fingers ached from fast typed notes, my brain is still processing all the information shared. There is a feeling of accomplished mission in the air. The smiling faces around me reinforce that. If we started as strangers, we leave now this room as **partners**, sharing the same commitment: to keep working with our **people** to protect Europe’s most amazing **places**. Just as we have been doing, each one in our own way, but now much stronger: **together**.



Sophie Poudou from Mercantour

The presentations are available at

[www.europarc.org/seminar-dialogue-2019](http://www.europarc.org/seminar-dialogue-2019)

and as participation is limited, let us know if you would like to participate in the next seminar in 2020. Just drop us a line to [stefania.petrosillo@europarc.org](mailto:stefania.petrosillo@europarc.org).

\* watch the award-winning EUROPARC film “A Sustainable Journey” at

[www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism](http://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism)

Meeting room in DG Envi where the Seminar Dialogue took place.





# Meet the EUROPARC Star Awards Winners 2019

The EUROPARC Star Awards recognise the effort and investments made by tourism businesses in Europe, to be more sustainable and help care and protect their natural and cultural heritage. The Star Awards are also a means to celebrate the successful partnerships between EUROPARC Sustainable Destinations (Protected Areas that have implemented the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas) and their business partners.

EUROPARC awarded the prize in five categories – Contribution to Conservation, Reducing Impact on the Environment, Building my Community, Communicating the Values of my Park and Business, and Innovation. The winners were announced at the Charter Awards Ceremony 2019, hosted in the European Committee of the Regions, in December 2019.

Currently, an online public voting is active! Help us choose the finalist that you want to hear at the next EUROPARC Conference 2020. The business chosen by the public, together with a representative of the Protected Area authority where it operates, will be invited to join us in Austria and give a speech at the EUROPARC General Assembly. You can vote at: [www.europarc.org/star-awards-2019](http://www.europarc.org/star-awards-2019)



## Contribution to Conservation



# Deltapolet Natura i Sabers – Reviving the ancestors' knowledge

### Partner of Delta del Ebro Natural Park, Catalonia

Living in a period when the region's traditional practices started to disappear as machines were slowly taking over, Mr. Polet decided to maintain the knowledge of his ancestors. His philosophy is still alive today, followed by Deltapolet's owner and Polet's son, who has one strong goal: remain able to get and process resources without using machines or chemical products.

*Planting activity, by Delta Polet.*



Manual rice cultivation, traditional fishing and the work and handcraft of natural fibers are at the core of the knowledge he wants to spread and maintain – such means are essential to guarantee the sustainability of food and the preservation of the Park's fauna and flora.

Deltapolet's business is based on nature, local knowledge, sustainability and conservation. But how does that reach other people? Through guided tours in the Delta del Ebro Natural Park, including education activities and an ecocultural safari, visitors are invited to experience the essence and roots of the Ebro Delta. At Deltapolet, they aim to make everyone love their park - as much as they do.

By avoiding visits to fragile and threatened areas of the park, measuring and respecting its



*"Tirant to ralla a l'Arrossar", by Delta Polet.*

carrying capacity, the company makes sure that the values of sustainable tourism are well respected.

Making people understand the threats of mass tourism and the importance of a transition to sustainable tourism is crucial for them too. That is why at the end of Deltapolet's activities, each visitor receives an ecotourism certificate. Becoming new ambassadors of sustainable tourism, visitors are more likely to choose sustainable destinations in the future.

## Innovation



# For Play – The pioneer in sustainable mobility

### Partner of Coastal Dunes Regional Park, Italy

For Play's mission is to allow visitors to explore the region, while following the principle of sustainable mobility. Equipped with a fleet of colourful electric cars, the company creates a new way to move around the Coastal Dunes Park.

Producing zero emissions and zero noise, the little cars move slowly and safely through the maze of narrow streets bordered by the stone walls of Ostuni, and the ups and downs of Itria Valley. The cars are provided with itineraries, allowing visitors to spread and discover historical sites and private areas that are not accessible by other means.

Offering an alternative to mass beach tourism, For Play "de-seasonalises" the tourist flows and decongests the beaches during the summer peak. In other words, visitors can appreciate nature and local traditional practices in a more respectful way.

The itineraries range from tours through vineyards and olive orchards to natural or culinary journeys. They engage and promote local producers, farmers, and businesses, creating a strong network that stimulates growth and development of small communities. The activities are complemented with explanations and instructions about how to behave in natural habitats, respect their peculiarities, and observe threats.

Not only tourists, but also locals are attracted to use For Play's services. With their engagement, a network of charging points has been developed to facilitate mobility and reassure users as they travel sustainably.



*Photos by For Play.*



## Building my community

### Sud Randos – Following the steps of locals

#### Partner of Cévennes National Park

Sud Randos, an association of tour operators in Cévennes National Park, France, has been awarded in recognition of its special contribution to the cultural and social fabric of the community. When organising tourism experiences, farmers, artisans, craftsmen, artists, and local nature are the lead actors and objects of discovery for visitors.



*Pays Cathare, trip from Queribus to Montsegur.*

Sud Randos' infrastructure takes care of each detail, making sure that most of the equipment, material or food come from fair trade, local businesses, and organic production. Habitats, species and potential environmental threats are taken into account when setting itineraries, numbers of visitors and ways of transport.

The project has a strong connection with Cévennes National Park and natural heritage has been deeply rooted in their know-how for many years. They have actively participated in several projects focused on the



*Hiking and spa at Pays du Mont Blanc, by Chantal Breuillaud*

protection of sensitive areas and support the Forest Protection Office in the management of species at local level. Agropastoralism, management of karst habitats, wetlands, fresh water ecosystems, forestry and Natura 2000 sites are just some examples of issues they cover. Recently, they set up a reception space in a sensitive area to educate visitors.

With culture and local traditions at the core of their touristic activities, they strengthen the community and support preservation of traditional practices with modern incomes.

## Communicating the values of my park and my business

### Hotel Caminetto – The hotel that educates its guests in sustainability

#### Partner of Adamello Brenta Natural Park, Italy

Hotel Caminetto can be considered a role model of a sustainable hotel committed to respect the environment and protect natural resources without giving up comfort. The communication policy of Hotel Caminetto aims to make guests fully aware of the culture and nature of the place, so they can better value it.

The Hotel allows guests to experience a real sustainable holiday, by informing and encouraging them to perform certain actions and practices inside and outside of the facilities. This includes information about waste management, energy consumption, sustainable mobility and appropriate behaviour during walks to see the local flora and fauna. The Hotel's kitchen supports the local economy throughout the use of local products and promoting them to other stakeholders. Visitors get their towels changed only on request and can rent equipment, such as backpacks or reusable bottles to prevent littering.



An essential part of the Hotel's communication policy is the promotion of activities in Adamello Brenta Natural Park. During certified guided tours, visitors have the opportunity to discover less seasonal alternatives to traditional ski tourism. Thanks to the "Parco Card", which is free of charge and



*Photos by Hotel Caminetto.*

funded by the Hotel, visitors are encouraged to discover the natural heritage. The Card allows them to attend guided excursions, access the Park Houses, and gives them free use of shuttle buses and discounts in many local and traditional businesses.

For more than 14 years, Hotel Caminetto has been committed to applying the environmental culture that they believe in. It has received several labels that recognise its environmental quality. But most importantly, nowadays, they are ambassadors and guardians of natural heritage, encouraging the community throughout their communications to follow their steps towards more sustainability.

# Reducing impact on the environment



## La calma, cultura i lleure – The flavour of self-sufficiency

Partner of Montseny Natural Park, Catalonia

**L**a calma, cultura i lleure, (“The calm, culture and leisure” in Catalan) runs a 100% energy efficient restaurant *El Bellver* in El Montseny Natural Park and Biosphere Reserve. The restaurant is located in a big “Masia”, an old traditional country house, in the heart of the Park, and can only be accessed by foot. Besides the restaurant, they also manage an interpretative museum of traditional knowledge.

*Friendly staff,  
by La Calma.*



**The use of local products is the company's seal of identity.**

Around 80% come from the region or from Catalonia, including material used for business and management. Almost half of the goods - including eggs, flour, dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables – are ecologically produced.

Consumption is carefully managed to avoid waste. Products are transported to minimise unnecessary packaging. In the kitchen, organic waste is composted or, if possible, used to feed animals. For water, they use a biological depurative system - this process transposes grey waters to a lagoon with vegetation and filtering gravel that treats the water and sends it back to rivers.

Water is procured from springs nearby the Montseny massif. In order not to waste a single drop, water used in the kitchen is recycled for the orchard when possible, and the rainwater collected from rooftops is used for cleaning: in addition, water-saving measures are applied in the bathrooms. Using solar panels, energy accumulation batteries, movement sensors and an inverted gasification biomass boiler with thermal buffer tank, *El Bellver* became 100% self-sufficient in terms of energy and water.

With their communications efforts and information panels for clients, they aim to promote the need for respectful behaviour beyond the walls of the restaurant.



*Fresh products from local farmers, by La Calma.*



*Dessert buffet, La Calma*



*Recovered seeds called Carai, La Calma*



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