

Lands of Priolo: Integrated management to save a bird, recover natural habitats and promote sustainability

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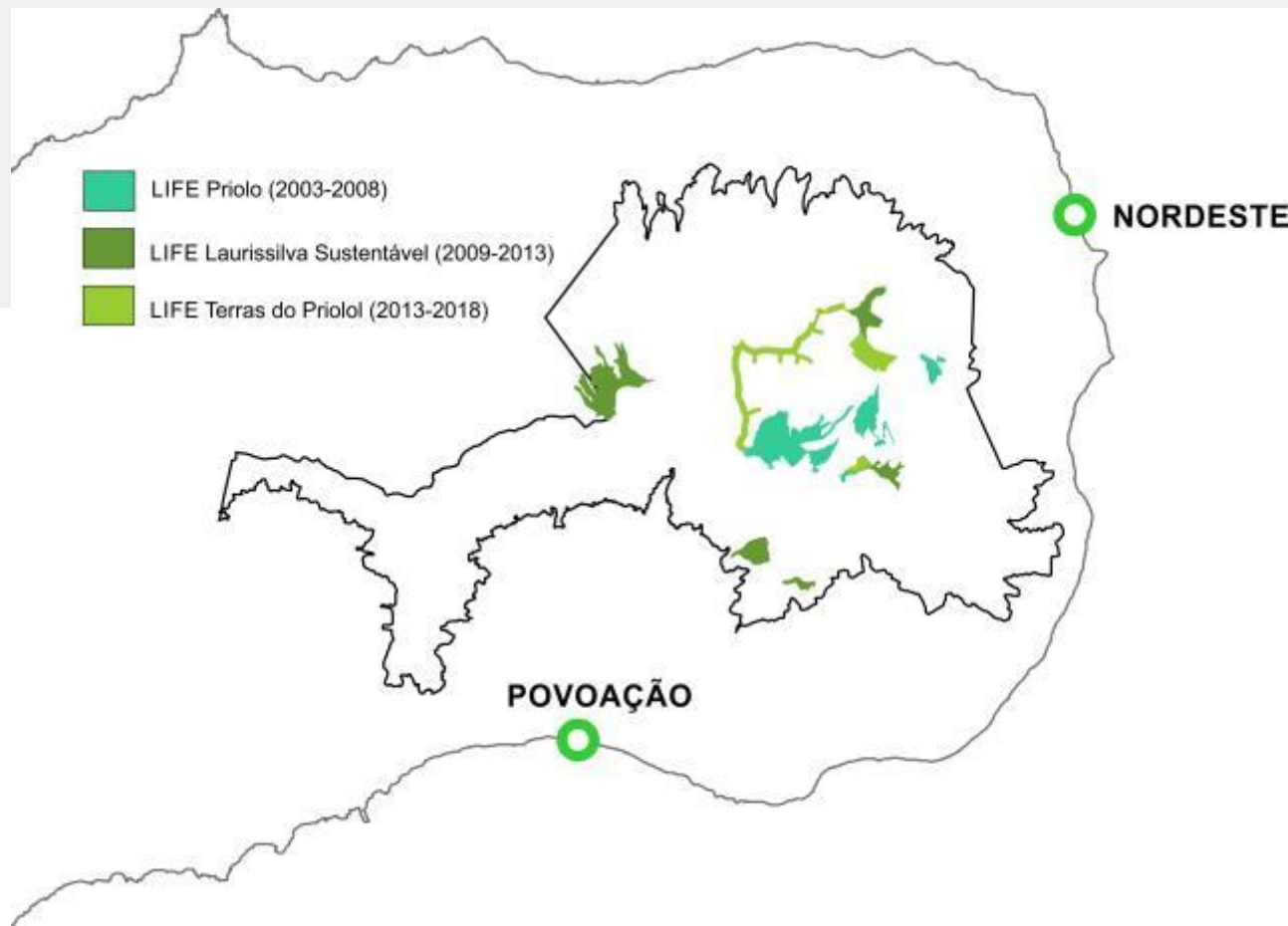
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Summary

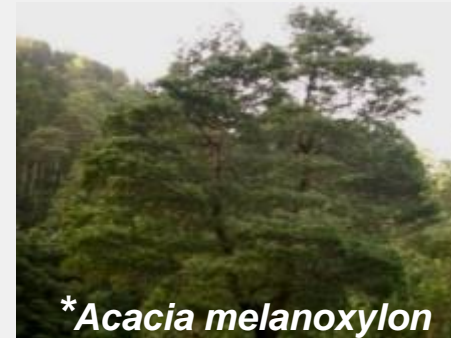
- The Azores bullfinch (*Pyrrhula murina*), is one of the rarest and most endangered birds in Europe and can only be found in the east of the island of São Miguel, Azores.
- For the last 15 years, habitat restoration for the recovery of this bird on the Special Protected Area (SPA) has had excellent results, improving its status and recovering unique habitats: laurel forest and peat bogs.
- Management strategy included maximizing positive local socio-economic impacts (job creation, expenses, educational opportunities, infrastructure) and ecosystem services provision. This positive local impact as well as awareness rising efforts, have turned this bird into a symbol. The “Lands of Priolo” are now working to develop sustainable tourism that contributes to conservation of natural resources and local development.



The Context



The Context



***Global Invasive Species Database (IUCN)**

Building Blocks

- **Ecological restoration of natural habitats**
- Azorean laurel forest
 - Chemical removal of IAS
 - Soil stabilization with natural engineering
 - Planting of native and endemic species
- Peatlands
 - Banishment of grazing cattle
 - Manual removal of IAS
 - Closure of drainage ditches
 - Inoculation of peatland mosses



Building Blocks

- **Production of native and endemic plants**
 - We produce 40.000 plants and around 160 kg. of seeds per year to add to the ones produced by the Forestry Services
- **Monitoring of Azores bullfinch population and restoration success**
 - Azores bullfinch, vegetation and water are monitored in order to verify positive impact and correct actions if necessary



Building Blocks

- **Environmental Education Programme**
 - Environmental education program for all levels of basic education and informal education, based on teachers needs
 - Teacher's training, teaching tools & child-friendly materials
- **Awareness raising and information for local and foreign visitors**
 - Communication strategy;
 - General public activities;
 - Priolo's Interpretation Centre since 2013.



Building Blocks

- **Participatory Sustainable Tourism Planning**
 - Participatory process to develop a Strategy and Action Plan to promote the Lands of Priolo as a Sustainable Tourism destination initiated in 2011;
 - Presently 11 entities and 49 touristic companies are effective partners in the process, other participate in open meetings;
 - Of 55 actions proposed for the first period (2012-2016), 66% were fully implemented and up to 88% at least started. New plan has 77 actions



Impact

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- **Recovery of the Azores bullfinch:** Conservation status (IUCN Red List) changed from “critically endangered” (2003) to “vulnerable” (2016)
- **Recovery of 350 hectares of laurel forest and 83 hectares of peatbogs;**
- **Positive socioeconomic impact** (21 full-time jobs, local investment of 85% of budget, improvement of tourism infrastructure such as the visitors' center and trails, increase of international promotion, educational and scientific opportunities, improvement of water quality and supply and reduction in erosion processes among other E.S)

Reflections

- **No need to reinvent the wheel:** Using and adapting already developed techniques, methodologies and tools can save a lot of time;
- **Learn from mistakes**
- **It takes time** to build this kind of project and it is a continuous learning and trust building process;
- **Partnerships and knowledge-share** are essential to ensure long term results;
- **However, long term maintenance is still a challenge...**



Thank you

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