



# Protected Areas In-Sight

The Journal of the **EUROPARC** Federation

## CLIMATE CHANGE; RESILIENT PARKS

### **EU POLICY INSIGHTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY**

An Interview with Nicola Notaro

### **A TRILLION EURO OPPORTUNITY**

a chasm to be crossed and the  
Superpowers we have that will help.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING IN PARKS**

Elements of the Natur'Adapt Methodology





# Imprint

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*Field Trip at Neusiedler  
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Conference 2022*





Participatory session at the EUROPARC Conference in France - Lee Kershaw

**The EUROPARC Federation represents Protected Areas and governmental organisations in around 40 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

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### – IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD?



By **CAROL RITCHIE**, EUOPARC Federation Executive Director

**EUOPARC has had a busy year. We were finally able to come back together and accelerate, sharing learning and working together through TWO excellent conferences.**

*Field Trip at Neusiedler See Seewinkel National Park, EUOPARC Conference 2022 - Sebastian Freiler*



In May, we considered Communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- Questioning our Mindset. In October, through the Natur'Adapt project Climate Change; Resilient Parks was our focus. Together, the results of these gatherings, have enabled us to consider WHY Protected Areas are so vital, HOW we should plan and manage for change and WHAT we need to be doing about it. Some of these considerations and recommendations are described in this special Protected Areas In-Sight edition.

Climate change-It's all in your head. That may suggest, that climate change and the resulting effects on our planet are imaginary, quite the contrary! It means, that any response by individuals or Protected Areas, starts with our mindset. A change in thinking will result in a change in action. There is an imperative for the Protected Area community to reflect on what is needed for better management of our places. Additionally, we need to build new partnerships and inquire appreciatively about all aspects of our work, building resilience not just into our management systems, but in our people too.

Patrick Geddes was a Scottish polymath, who pioneered much of the current cultural-ecological thinking. He proposed that we need both to be a 'synthesising generalist', i.e., an integrated and adaptive, holistic approach, alongside that of the more reductive positivist science. Despite the world's attempts to put issues into silos, like climate change and biodiversity loss, the reality is, that these are of course intrinsically linked. We

cannot solve climate change without tackling the biodiversity crisis. Understanding that, is relatively simple. Acting on it, is more complex. Finding the money and resources to do it, requires new thinking. For Protected Area managers, the LIFE Natur'Adapt project has provided both a "thinking and doing" tool to change how we manage nature in light of climate change, and to influence the values and choices of people who live and work in our landscapes.

**The articles in this Protected Areas In-Sight, detail that tool and the change undertaken in and around our Protected Areas on a community-level, that can inspire the change we need on a global level.**

Now, more than ever, in these economic and ecological crises, a creative reconciliation of things that have become disconnected and positioned in opposition to each other is needed: between people and nature; between lived experience and empirical science, between politics and reality. We need Sympathy, empathy with nature and the circumstances of people affected by climate change and biodiversity loss. We need Synthesis of ideas, of practice, of resources to populate new collective solutions. And we need Synergy, a forward momentum to decide to make something happen.

Patrick Geddes said by Living We Learn; By Creating We Think. Climate Change - It's all in our head? Time to use our head (and hearts), more creatively and effectively for people and nature.



# WORKING TOGETHER

## TOWARDS CLIMATE RESILIENCE

A message from the **EUROPARC  
Task Force on Climate Change**



**Dear EUROPARC Members, Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,**

*Dunes in The Netherlands -  
PWN, Myrthe Fonck*

For over 3 years now, the EUROPARC Task Force on Climate Change has been working within the LIFE Natur'Adapt project to reflect, exchange and provide guidance to help the community of European Protected Area managers in their effort to integrate Climate Change into their practice.

We rapidly identified that, on the one hand, Nature and Protected Areas are directly threatened by Climate Change and potential climate actions around them. Assessing vulnerability and planning for adaptation is therefore a must in the short term. On the other hand, working with nature offers promising approaches to address Climate Change.

There are a number of tools and methodologies to integrate Climate Change in our management practice. Some notable mentions are, the LIFE Natur'Adapt guide, the EUROPARC-Spain Manual 13 and the European Commission's Guidelines on climate change and Natura 2000. There are also many inspiring experiences and stories from all over Europe, available on the Natur'Adapt website.

We would like to draw your attention to a number of ideas that may help accelerate your journey towards Climate Change adaptation in Parks across Europe.



### Climate Change adaptation is a prospective, qualitative and iterative process

**1.** To adapt to Climate Change, managers need to project themselves into the future. Using existing scientific data and models, we need to imagine probable scenarios of what lies ahead and how vulnerable protected features are. Management decisions must be made despite the many uncertainties that remain. The nature of Climate Change makes adaptation very iterative. It is a journey, a continuous process of planning, learning, refining and adapting the plan to new conditions.

*"Just go for it, it is simpler than it appears. If you work with enthusiasm, everything else will follow."*

*Lorenzo Merotto, Scientific Officer,  
Area Marina Protetta di Portofino, Italy*

### Climate Change adaptation calls for flexibility and open mindedness

**2.** Temperature and precipitation patterns are changing. It alters the very foundations of socio-ecosystems such as water cycle, seasonal patterns and species and habitats distribution. Hence, it requires „zooming out“ and challenging our own ways. It calls for assessing vulnerability and planning on a longer term, like 50 years, or even a century. It calls for planning on a larger scale, like a river basin or a biogeographical region. Finally, it demands to challenge our own beliefs and basic conservation assumptions to evolve towards a more systemic and functional approach.

*"This process invited us to revise our concepts towards more integrated land management. We now seek to take into account the mosaic of habitats and the variety of land uses beyond the formal mandate and boundaries of the reserve."*

*Thierry Leroy, Conservator  
Chastreix-Sancy NNR, France*

### Climate Change creates new dynamics for better cooperation

**3.** Climate Change is all-encompassing. Everyone in every sector will be affected. Everyone will work to adapt and to mitigate the negative effects. Working together on Climate Change and assessing our vulnerabilities is creating a new space for shared governance.

*"Climate change is a great opportunity for nature management, as nature can be a very beautiful part of the solution and can provide answers to other important social issues."*

*Myrthe Fonck, Sr. Advisor Nature and Recreation,  
Puur Water and Natuur, The Netherlands*

Protected Areas and their managers ought to seize this opportunity to get involved at various governance levels. They have the ability to provide knowledge, expertise and experience on how natural systems work and what they need to be resilient and robust in the face of Climate Change. Hence, they can support the development and implementation of balanced climate action plans that benefit nature and communities alike.

Sincerely yours,  
The EUROPARC Task Force on Climate Change

Ainhize Butrón, Anne-Cerise Tissot, Emma Mitchell, Myrthe Fonck, Etienne Aulotte, José Aauri Mezquida, Lorenzo Merotto, Santtu Kareksela and Olivier de Sadeleer

## READ MORE!

LIFE Natur'Adapt guide.

EUROPARC-Spain. Manual 13, 2020, Protected Areas in the Face of Global Change. Climate Change Adaptation in Planning and Management.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment, Guidelines on climate change and Natura 2000, 2014.



# EU POLICY INSIGHTS

## ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY



An Interview with **NICOLA NOTARO**

Former Head of Nature Unit, Directorate-General for  
Environment, European Commission

In November 2023, Nicola Notaro left his position as Head of Nature Unit at DG-ENV to continue his career leading the Environmental Compliance-Implementation Unit. EUROPARC looks back on many years of positive and effective collaboration. Right before Nicola changed his position, we had the chance to do a final interview with him on the impacts of climate change on EU nature policies.



*Neusiedler See Seewinkel National Park,  
EUROPARC Conference 2022 - Sebastian Freiler*





## **Could you give us a rapid overview of the EU Commission's vision on Nature Conservation and Climate Change?**

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>[1]</sup> recognises that 'the biodiversity crisis and the climate crisis are intrinsically linked'. Therefore, in its long-term vision on climate action, the European Commission acknowledges both the threat of climate change to biodiversity, but also opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation while tackling the biodiversity crisis. The Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 specifically sets out the goal 'to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters.' This goal has been turned into specific targets recently enshrined in the Commission's proposal for an EU Nature Restoration Law<sup>[2]</sup>.

In addition to this new legal proposal, I see a clear opportunity and need to integrate the actions undertaken under the Birds and Habitats directives – the 'Nature directives', with those that pursue wider EU climate, environmental and socio-economic goals. For instance, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy specifically recognises that "Public authorities and area managers responsible for Natura 2000 sites require guidance on suitable conservation approaches and adaptation strategies". This is what we will try to address in our ongoing update of the Natura 2000 and Climate Change guidance.

### **How can nature policies be integrated with other policies such as the CAP, policies on fisheries, forestry, energy or climate change... ?**

There are opportunities to mainstream climate and biodiversity goals together into other EU policies such as the CAP to achieve win-wins for nature, climate and people. An example of integration for the marine environment is

the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and its holistic strategies. They provide a good framework to monitor climate change impacts and to apply the ecosystem-based approach to climate change adaptation via the establishment of an effective network of marine Protected Areas that increases the resilience of the marine environment.

### **How can Member States support to achieve greater coherence and effectiveness?**

For example, Member States can decide to take an ambitious approach in the implementation of Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) standards under the CAP, e.g. for the protection of carbon rich ecosystems such as wetlands and peatlands (GAEC 2). Similarly, through eco-schemes Member States can support nature protection with broader climate and environmental objectives (e.g. through better nutrient management, agroecology, and agroforestry).



### ***What are the expectations of the EC of Protected Areas in regard to Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity Loss?***

Together with overexploitation of resources and the change of land and sea use, climate change poses a major threat. Protected Areas need to focus on adaptation planning and adaptive management to increase resilience, restoration, and connectivity of ecosystems as they hold the potential to mitigate and counter the effects of those threats. In addition to their biodiversity conservation objectives, Protected Areas should be managed to deliver crucial ecosystem services. These range from carbon storage and sequestration and water quality regulation to reducing risks and impacts from extreme weather events and sea level rise, as well as wider socioeconomic benefits.

*Nicola Notaro and EUROPARC Executive Director Carol Ritchie at the Seminar Dialogue 2019*

### ***How will the European Commission support Protected Areas in living up to those expectations, both at national and European level?***

Protected Areas are the heart of EU policy and legislation through the Nature Directives and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, with its goal to protect and effectively manage 30% of EU land and sea by 2030, amongst which one third must be strictly protected. Across the EU, Protected Areas are supported through a variety of funding opportunities such as under rural development, cohesion, horizon, fisheries, aquaculture, or the LIFE fund.

In addition, the Commission is working on an updated guidance on Natura 2000 and climate change that will propose a framework for action, setting out the key steps to assess expected climate change impacts on Natura 2000 sites; identify vulnerable ecosystems,

habitats, and species; and recommend measures to address these at the site, network, and landscape level.

### ***The Discussion Paper "Protected Areas and the European Strategies for Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity" published by the EUROPARC Task Force on Climate Change, underlines the importance of having an integrated approach to the Climate and Biodiversity crises. How do you think this should be tackled from a policy perspective?***

A comprehensive understanding of the expected consequences of climate change at all levels (from local to national and European level) is fundamental to identify sectors, regions and sites that are likely to be most affected by climate change and to develop appropriate





adaptation strategies. In this context, it is necessary to identify and mainstream nature protection needs and the role of Protected Areas in national adaptation strategies and plans, as well as in the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs).

Regarding the National energy and climate plans, it is clear<sup>[3]</sup> that further work is needed to assess the synergies and trade-offs of climate and energy policies with biodiversity. For example, the role of ecosystem services for mitigation and adaptation, but also risks in terms of biodiversity loss. In this respect, we all have work to do at EU and Member States level to improve consistency between energy and climate strategies and biodiversity protection. I believe the proposed Nature Restoration Law can be a game changer as it will require Member States to plan restoration comprehensively, factoring in other policies including climate and energy. We will certainly do our utmost to ensure a smooth and ambitious implementation of this law across the EU.

***At the EUROPARC Conference in France, it became clear that nature conservation will need to change in the face of climate change. Currently, the focus is on protecting landscapes and species that we find today. Often, the identities of these natural spaces are closely linked to these species. However, climate change will in many cases lead to drastic changes in the natural world. Do you think policymakers and managing authorities are ready for this change?***

As I mentioned, climate change is already showing its impacts on nature and biodiversity, and therefore adaptation planning by national authorities at a strategic level and by Protected Area managers at site level should be implemented without delay. The assessment of Climate Change threats and identification of adaptation measures should be integrated with the measures taken to achieve the conservation objectives of the sites. In most circumstances, under current conditions, priority should be given to increasing the resilience of habitats and species within Protected Areas by reducing existing pressures. However, further adaptation measures to increase connectivity and allow for the redistribution of species and habitats in response to Climate Change are likely to be increasingly required in future.

**Identities are by definition evolutionary: I believe Protected Areas identities will need to evolve, just like our own identities evolve all the time.**

***One last word to conclude?***

I think that in the EU, we have realised that Protected Area are part of the solution, but they cannot deliver on their own, the goals of halting biodiversity loss and mitigating/adapting to climate change. This is why we have presented a comprehensive Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, a new Adaptation Strategy, the “Fit for 55 package” of climate mitigation action and, more recently, a proposal for a Restoration law that goes well beyond Protected Areas. To be able to continue developing nature legislation that is fit for purpose and to tackle the complex issues arising from climate change, we need to listen to the experiences and the needs from the field. In that sense, the collaboration between the EUROPARC Federation and DG ENV, especially the Nature Conservation Unit, has been fruitful for many years, and we certainly hope and believe that we will continue in this partnership. Let's keep working together.

## READ MORE!

<sup>[1]</sup> EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Bringing nature back into our lives

<sup>[2]</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on nature restoration

<sup>[3]</sup> EU-wide assessment of National Energy and Climate Plans 2021, Discussion paper - “Protected Areas and the European Strategies for Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity”, EUROPARC Task Force on Climate Change

**We want to thank Nicola for taking the time to answer our questions and wish him all the best in his new position.**





# NATURE RESTORATION IN EUROPE

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PROTECTED AREAS?

*All participants at the Siggen Seminar 2022*

Restoring nature will help to increase resilience and connectivity of ecosystems, mitigate and adapt to climate change and prevent and reduce the impacts of natural disasters. So, what is the role of Protected Areas in this process? That is the question that 11 Protected Area professionals wanted to answer during the 2022 edition of the EUROPARC Siggen Seminar. The seminar followed the “co-petition” approach: whilst working together, but in separate teams, participants aimed to clearly identify the role of Protected Areas in nature restoration.



This article, written by EUROPARC’s Communications Officer **ESTHER BOSSINK**, details the outcomes.

### GET READY NOW

The EU Nature Restoration Law will be the framework for many of the restoration activities in Europe. However, implementation and enforcement of the law will take at least a couple of years.

Nature managers should utilise this time well. Use this time to underline to national and regional policymakers how essential nature restoration is for climate change adaptation, biodiversity and human health. This will lay the groundwork for practical nature restoration activities.

Furthermore, it is important to realise that society is on nature manager’s side. The EU Barometer shows that nature restoration is a priority for citizens. Protected Areas have the chance to capitalize and build upon this public interest, spread the message and bring together different stakeholders, involved in planning and implementation of restoration measures.

**PROTECTED AREAS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR RESTORING WHAT WAS LOST, AND PROTECTING WHAT WAS RESTORED**



## INVOLVE YOUR COMMUNITY

Whilst interest in nature restoration amongst the general public is at an all-time high, this does not mean that all restoration actions will always be met with open arms. Politicians, farmers, businesses, these are just some of the interest groups that will need to be onboard with your restoration plans.

As such, it is important to have a clear case on the pros of nature restoration for your community ready, adapted to the reality of the people in your area. The Siggen Seminar participants condensed the following benefits:

## IMPROVE HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

Restored and healthy ecosystems create opportunities to improve the mental and physical health benefits of your community by:

- Improving air, water and food quality;
- Offering open spaces for relaxation, sport and recreation;
- Helping to lower stress levels, providing tangible health benefits, reducing the risk of allergies and illnesses, hence increasing life quality and expectancy.

**An investment in nature, is an investment in the quality of life for your community.**

## ENHANCE LOCAL PROSPERITY

Natural resources are the basis of a sustainable and resilient local economy. As such, restoring nature contributes to “future-proofing” communities by ensuring a longer term, balanced management through which employment in a range of sectors is dependant:

- Healthy and restored ecosystems and balanced land management allow for self-regeneration of natural resources such as, soil, water, and wood;
- Healthy and restored ecosystems contribute to a large amount of job opportunities and local small scale business development in primary (local food, wild game, wood) and secondary (local processing) sectors;
- Protected and restored areas are huge drivers of tourism, boosting recreation and connected sectors in rural areas;
- Restoration work itself is a new area of local economic development and job creation.

**An investment in nature contributes to a better, more sustainable, local income.**

## HIGH BOLYST

Bolyst is a Norwegian word which evokes the feeling of a ‘sense of place’. Caring for and looking after a place together strengthens community bonds and ensures continuity:

- Restoring nature offers a way to do your part for the community and to work together on a common target;
- Restoring nature is a joint investment in the future of our children;
- Knowing the qualities of your land, local habitats and species contributes to developing a sense of pride and care for the place;
- Transferring that knowledge from one generation to another builds up bonds and local cultural identity.

**An investment in nature contributes to a strong community identity.**

## READ MORE!

This is just a small part of the wealth of resources that were created during the Siggen Seminar 2022. You can find all outcomes and different presentations from participants here.

[Learn more about the EU Barometer here.](#)



# A TRILLION-EURO OPPORTUNITY, A CHASM TO BE CROSSED AND THE SUPERPOWERS WE HAVE THAT WILL HELP.

Our family of protected and conserved areas are facing the **dual existential threats of biodiversity loss and climate change.**

**The sad reality is that as big as any one of us is, none of us are big enough to deal with these threats on our own.**



Written by **JAMES STUART**, former Convener (Chair) of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority.

James led the work in the run up to the UNFCCC COP26 to develop the Protected and Conserved Area Joint Statement on Climate Change and Biodiversity Crises: was also a member of the steering group for the £ Billion Challenge and continues to champion the role of protected and conserved areas internationally.

*Peatland restoring eroded peat hag above Loch Lomond - Loch Lomond and Trossachs NPA*

In the case of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, the park I have the privilege to lead, we are nearly 720sq miles in area, have thousands of hectares of forests and peatlands, and yet our provisional research suggests we only sequester around 120,000 tCO<sub>2</sub> each year. When visitor travel is included, our initial assessment of consumption-based emissions are just over 600,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>. We are an emitter, and I suspect that is true for most of our family of parks and protected areas across Europe.

This may at first glance appear to be rather depressing and the story feels even worse when we realise that many of the challenges we are dealing with are beyond the powers we have.

There is, however, cause for considerable hope.

## MOVING TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

The first is that we are part of a much bigger family. Right now, this family – our family of National Parks and Protected Areas – is undervalued and under-invested. But the latent potential is enormous: when put together, our family accounts for nearly a third of planet earth and, between us, we host billions of visitors each year. That knowledge gives us considerable leverage with governments and other decision makers at home and around the world.

The second is that the private sector is **actively looking for investments** in Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and they have literally trillions of Euros available. There is no shortage of money. Furthermore, we have a set of skills and relationships that they need to make these investments a reality. This is our **superpower**. Built over decades, we understand our land, seas and communities like no other. We know where the opportunities are, and we have the convening power to bring these groups together and to navigate the concerns many of them may have. **Investors need us.**

Put bluntly, if investment in nature and NbS doesn't work with us, it won't work anywhere.





## MAKING OUR VOICE HEARD

We must harness our global family voice. We are on the other side of a chasm between us and the investors. So, we must act. We need to harness the voice of our family and we need to bridge the chasm between us and investors.

Work to harness our global voice started at UNFCCC COP26, and continued at CBD COP15, and you can still help. **Raise your voice at national level** – draw attention to the constraints and opportunities in your areas and the combined potential across your country. Raise your voice at a European level – support EUROPARC to challenge and change the political landscape to make your work and investment in you easier. And raise your voice globally – add your signature to the International Protected and Conserved Area Joint Statement and join in the IUCN World Commission for Protected Areas (WCPA) Leadership Forum.

Work to build bridges over the chasm has already started – so there are models you can learn from, including our work in the UK.

Our first step was to team up at UK level, bringing the 15 UK National Parks together. This was hugely important, transforming our discussions from projects and topics in the hundreds of thousands of pounds to an emergent portfolio of over £200m. This step alone – aggregating a high-level view of the opportunity – transformed engagement with partners and led to our partnership with Palladium, an impact focused management consultancy, offering expert advice around the globe to help organisations achieve positive impacts and contribute to the UNSDGs. We have since refined this portfolio, launched [www.revere.eco](http://www.revere.eco) with our partner and started a series of pilots across the UK. We will continue to work with EUROPARC to share our learning over the coming months.

## DON'T HESITATE TO BE SELECTIVE

Before concluding, I think it's useful to note that **not all money is good money**. We have taken a robust and proactive approach to greenwashing and to ensuring that our values and principles are not compromised. Our partner was as keen to push for this as we were, which led to the adoption of a charter. We have already turned away offers of investment from those who fall short of our standards. I would hope you will all take a similar proactive approach to this too.

We are a remarkable family. We can determine the success or failure of humanity's fight to address the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. We have what potential investors in nature and NbS need – **our superpower** – and without it, bridges over the chasm will not be built. Furthermore, we also know what we need to do and there is support there. Now is the time to **think big, to look beyond your Protected Area, to team up and to make the difference**.

**I believe we have a duty to make this work and to ensure we are the difference between global success and failure in our fight against the dual crises of Climate Change and biodiversity loss.**

## READ MORE!

Protected and Conserved Areas Joint Statement.

The dedicated website for the Revere project.

Route Map from the Scottish Conservation Finance Project.



# GREEN CORRIDORS, TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

Written by **MARIANNA BASOULOU**, Forester-Environmentalist, at Philodassiki, one of the partners in the project. In this article, she introduces the Green Corridor of Athens. Keep on reading to find out how urban forestry can create cities that are good for nature and good for people!



**The LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans project will show how urban areas can become greener, healthier and more resilient.**

Increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, and more frequent extreme weather phenomena, these are some of the more apparent “symptoms” of Climate Change. For ecology and society, the related consequences are catastrophic.

Cities are not only large emitters of greenhouse gasses; they also are affected heavily by the above-mentioned effects of Climate Change. From infrastructure failure, to increasing health problems for city dwellers, the time for action is now if we want to make sure our urban areas remain liveable in the next decades. Luckily, we can find many solutions in nature.

## MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION THROUGH URBAN FORESTRY

Planting street trees is an effective mitigation and adaptation strategy for cities, that helps to moderate the negative impacts of climate change. In addition to the aesthetic value of trees, these urban “forests” are a living infrastructure that offer several environmental benefits to residents. Trees, for example, regulate the temperature in cities, filter the air, benefiting our human health and provide habitats for animals.

Green Corridors in cities strengthen the measures to adapt and deal with climate change and help reverse Biodiversity Loss. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of enhancing green urban areas and connecting green areas with ecological corridors. By doing so, improves biodiversity and the distribution of animal species within the urban landscape. When properly designed, green corridors can improve urban ventilation by allowing cooler air from outside the city, to penetrate the more densely built-up areas and thus reduce the urban heat island effect. Furthermore, these green spaces have a positive effect on human health and well-being.

## ATHENS’ GREEN CORRIDOR: GOOD FOR NATURE

The city of Athens already feels the effects of climate Change. In the summer, temperatures can surpass 40C, whilst flash floods pose a significant risk to the city’s infrastructure. To adapt to this future, the Greek capital is actively working on an integrated Climate Action Plan.

Particularly remarkable, is the green corridor of Athens, which connects the centre of Athens with the forest of Hymettus across a 7 km route through parks and streets. The city benefits from the wealth of forestry knowledge, this Periurban Park brings, to help create Athens’ urban green spaces.

The ecological and social functions of the green corridor are diverse. The path begins in the forest and as the green corridor descends, the natural environment merges with the city without losing its ecological function, bringing to the city;

- The increase of biodiversity by increasing green areas in the urban environment;
- The reduction of air pollution and noise pollution in the city;
- The prevention of heat islands, effectively lowering the temperature;
- Its contribution to better stormwater management.



The LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans project has received funding from the LIFE Programme of the European Union.



Furthermore, the green corridor allies the promotion of non-polluting mobility, like bicycles or scooters.

## **ATHENS' GREEN CORRIDOR: GOOD FOR PEOPLE**

However, the benefits of green corridors are much more than the ecological features. It is for many citizens essential contact with the natural environment through green paths and forest. Furthermore, it has a strong social function. Within the green corridor, there are social-cultural places like monasteries and the University Campus providing places to meet and practice outdoor sports and activities.

This underlines that green corridors, in addition to the environmental benefits already mentioned, generate social, cultural, and economic benefits. For example, they

- improve people's quality of life by promoting physical activity and mental relaxation;
- boost the cultural scene with open-air auditoriums or buildings dedicated to exhibitions;
- often are a tourist attraction that has a positive impact on the city's economy.

*Integration of the green corridor into the city - Mt Hymettus - Marianna Basoulou*

## **THE TIME FOR GREEN CITIES IS NOW!**

In short, if we want to support cities in adapting to climate change and create happier, healthier citizens, urban green spaces, like green corridors connecting cities to wider natural spaces around them, have a crucial role to play:

- Air purification: trees can remove particles and harmful gases from the air. By cooling the air, urban forests also reduce air pollutant formation.
- Flooding: trees intercept rain, helping to reduce the phenomenon of flash floods, which pose a serious problem for cities.
- Shading and cooling: trees are the major component of green spaces that provide urban cooling.

The EU Nature Restoration Law underlines the importance of green urban areas. In anticipation of its finalisation, it's time to get to work! LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans will help city planners, through a collection of practical examples and innovative actions, in the specially developed Urban Greening Knowledge Hub coming soon to the EUROPARC website. Here, you can get inspired by what large cities in Europe like Athens, Brussels, Milano, Lisbon and Barcelona are already doing to connect the outside green areas to the urban spaces and create the green cities of tomorrow.

## **READ MORE!**

Learn more about the project here.





# YOUNG PEOPLE, AS RIGHTS-HOLDERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

**Protected Areas play a crucial role in supporting the rights of children and young people. Not only because youth are key to protecting the newly declared human right to a healthy environment, but also because nature provides spaces where young people can practise their rights to live, play, experience culture and participate in management in meaningful and informed**



This article is co-written by **OLIVIER COURBON**, Project Manager for Consultation & Territorial Strategy at Agence Luth Médiations, and **JESSICA MICKLEM-KOLENIĆ**, Youth Officer at EUROPARC. It explores a positive example from the Gorges de Daluis Regional Nature Reserve.

Young people are just one group of the many stakeholders a Protected Area can and should engage with. Involving youth can be difficult as they are not always organised into a youth representative body. They may also have diverse interests and multiple roles, such as young farmers or young entrepreneurs, or perhaps they are just not informed about or aware of civic engagement opportunities. These are not insurmountable obstacles as they can, and have been, overcome, leading to increased engagement and diversity of perspectives which is beneficial for all. When it comes to decisions about the future of our planet, increasingly, many young people are saying “Nothing about us, without us!”.

Involving young people in decision-making, especially when it comes to climate change adaptation is important and when done well, can lead intergenerational efforts to build a future that we can all be part of and take pride in. Read the case of the Gorges de Daluis Regional Nature Reserve as one example.

## **CASE EXAMPLE:** Reserve Naturelle Regionale Gorges de Daluis

In January 2022, the youth forum on climate change: Mont'Climat, took place at the Valberg Station of the Regional Nature Reserve of the Gorges de Daluis in southern France (RNR Gorges de Daluis). It was set up within the framework of the European LIFE Natur'Adapt programme and facilitated by the Communauté de Communes des Alpes d'Azur, co-manager of the Nature Reserve.



Group work - Remi Bienvenu



The objectives of the forum were:

- To **raise awareness** of climate change and the Protected Area through the development of knowledge and critical thinking skills;
- To **collect the feelings of youth** about climate change as well as their 2050 vision of the Reserve and the resort of Valberg;
- To **involve young people** in the search for solutions for the climate change adaptation strategy.

To meet the objectives, multiple workshops were organised to collect perceptions of climate change and what it represents for young people and the Protected Area. The workshops also presented the climate history of the RNR Gorges de Daluis which shows the evolution of the Reserve over time. The youth forum also collaborated with a professional photographer who held photography training for the youth.

The participants defined **11 key values, 14 threats, and 14 opportunities** for the Nature Reserve and for the resort of Valberg. These were presented in the form of a mural to depict a desirable and undesirable future for the area.

#### **They suggested 44 concrete actions in the following main areas of work:**

- **More sustainable cities and villages:** reuse and renovate buildings, reduce energy use and switch to renewable energy, rainwater harvesting, waste reduction (composting, returnable glass);
- **A local, sustainable and responsible economy:** promote short supply distances and local production, be transparent about the origin of products, develop 4-season diversification to maintain jobs all year round, develop a social and inclusive economy;
- **More sustainable tourism and sports activities:** train tourism professionals on environmental issues, develop environmental education, develop immersive activities based on encounters with nature and adapt materials for a wide range of audiences;
- **A protected and enhanced natural heritage:** preserve the authenticity of landscapes and limit development to preserve biodiversity, develop activities to raise awareness of the environment and climate change in situ and ex situ.

One of the strengths of this youth forum was the diversity represented. Some participants were already active citizens in university or high school, but others were not. However, all were convinced of climate change and its impact on their future.



*Youth Forum on climate change - Remi Bienvenu*

**NEXT STEPS:** The young people who participated in this event expressed a need for future opportunities to engage with decision-makers. At the time of writing this article, things are happening on the ground to make this a reality! The Mont'Climat workshop will be developed into a regularly occurring event and the young people will themselves become organisers, enabling them to develop their own projects with the Reserve. This work brings means and legitimacy to active youth involvement and participation and has been included in the RNR Gorges de Daluis's climate change adaptation plans.

Young people are not only important rights-holders and stakeholders, but partners in climate change adaptation. It is great to involve and listen to the young people and also to assist them to become active changemakers, supported by Protected Areas in an intergenerational effort.

## **READ MORE!**

Outcomes of the youth forum – pdf (French)

Outcomes of the youth forum – video (French)





# CLIMATE CHANGE, THE NECESSARY ADAPTATION

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING IN PARKS - ELEMENTS OF THE NATUR'ADAPT METHODOLOGY

The natural assets of Protected Areas are threatened by accelerated global changes. The LIFE Natur'Adapt Methodology has been developed from practice in the field, to enable climate change adaptation considerations to be integrated into Protected Area management.

*Réserve naturelle nationale de Chastreix-Sancy - T. Leroy*



Written by **OLIVIER DE SADELEER**, EUROPARC Federation, and **ANNE-CERISE TISSOT**, Réserves Naturelles de France.

Since 2018, multiple nature conservation and Protected Area professionals have been working together to co-design and test a methodology for climate change adaptation, across 21 Protected Areas. A broad array of natural features and human pressures were included. The result is a practical tool to carry out a climate change analysis that informs both management decisions and the design of adaptation measures.






## STEP 1 IMMERSION AND FRAMING

In this first phase, the goal is to get familiar with climate change, which is often a new and complex topic, and to review the conservation priorities in the Protected Area.

Managers will define, *a priori*, the objectives. These will include

- the time and spatial scale of the climate change vulnerability analysis
- select the natural features to be assessed in light of climate change.
- consideration of whom the Protected Area needs to involve and work with.
- review potential links with other local initiatives
- design the climate change adaptation planning process and its own specific governance.

 *This initial framework will evolve along the way according to the results and lessons learned from the analysis.*

## STEP 2 PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

This step is where managers will spend the most time and energy. It aims at understanding climate change and assessing the vulnerability of the Protected Area's socio-ecosystem. There are two elements to the prospective analysis.

### 2.1 Climate Projection: How will climate change locally?

Climate is an important factor in the functioning of ecosystems and human communities. In order to plan for adaptation, managers need to understand the past, present, and future of the local climate. The manager will need to identify the climate parameters and indicators that are significant for the Protected Area. Depending on the context, managers could, for example, analyse river flow, water temperature, the number of days of frost or soil humidity amongst other such measures

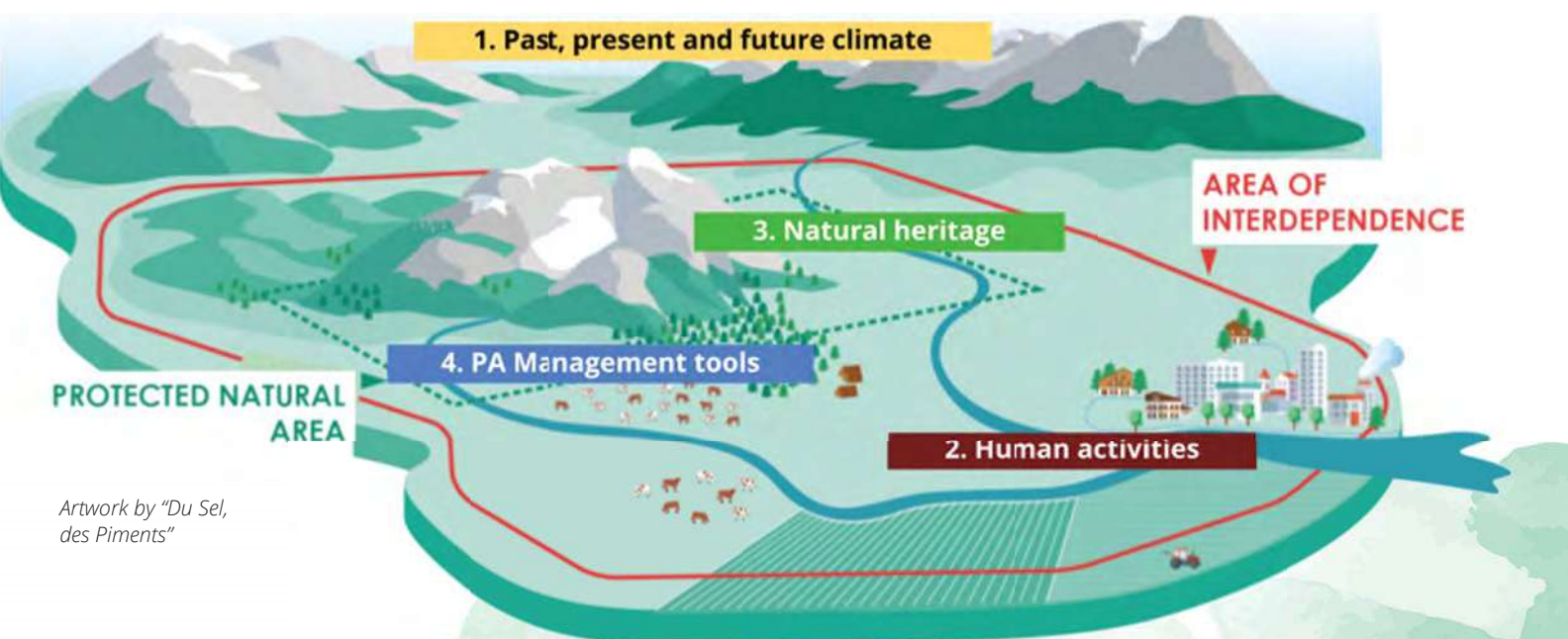
For the selected indicators, it is possible to reconstruct the evolution in the past by using, amongst others, local weather data sets, regional observatories, studies and expert opinions.

Managers will then have to analyse how these indicators are likely to evolve. To foresee the possible future climate, models, climate services are available regionally and nationally.

It is useful to sum up the results in a „climate story“. This will enable the manager to share and agree with internal and external stakeholders on what to expect under what conditions. This part of the analysis is critical as it will serve as a basis to assess the vulnerability of the Protected Area.

 *It is an extensive topic that may be time-consuming!*

Experience shows that use of climate data and services by managers enables them to test directly their ideas, to better understand scenarios and projections and grow confidence in the results. In turn, this helps them ultimately to better explain their climate change work to others.



Artwork by "Du Sel, des Piments"



## 2.2 Vulnerability and opportunity assessment: How vulnerable to climate change is the Protected Area?

Protected Areas generally are complex socio-ecosystems. Assessing their vulnerability can therefore be daunting. At this stage, the results of the framing (step 1), should guide managers to focus on priority features. In the vulnerability and opportunity assessment methodology, there are 3 broad components to consider:

### HUMAN ACTIVITIES


Local communities and land users will most likely adapt to climate change. After selecting the human activities to be assessed, managers need to evaluate if their vulnerability to climate change and their response will impact the Protected Area and its own vulnerability. This analysis may be simple or detailed. It can be done through desk research, surveys and by using a participative approach.

 *Stakeholder engagement is essential to understand their position and how they will adapt to the climate conditions. It is imperative to engage in a cooperative process.*

### NATURAL HERITAGE

This is what Protected Areas are all about! Conserving or restoring biodiversity, species and natural habitats is, for many, their core mission. Understanding the vulnerability of natural assets to climate change allows for adaptation planning.

Using existing science, research and expert opinion, managers must evaluate the possible effects of climate change on the priority features and their capacity to adapt. These priority features can be species or groups of species, habitats, ecological functions or processes that are representative or emblematic of the Protected Area. It is important to understand how the current natural heritage will evolve, but it is also worthwhile to think about new species and habitats that may develop in the Protected Area in the future.


 *Assessing vulnerability is often delicate. It is important to accept that the cross-referencing of experts' opinions is an essential source of information.*



### NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND ACTIONS

Nature Conservation Management Tools and Actions are the means and facilities used by the Protected Area to maintain the biodiversity assets. These may include, the use of fences, locations of footpaths, or grazing by cattle herds. These themselves, may be vulnerable and affected by climate change's negative effects.

As with the previous steps, the manager must use the climate projections to evaluate and assess the effects of climate change on a selection of management tools and practices. Experiences show that it is also useful to analyse the relevance of the current management plan in light of climate change.

 *Sometimes climate change can challenge the very basis on which the Protected Area was established or the underlying conservation paradigm.*





Monitoring at Réserve Naturelle Nationale de la Forêt de Massane

*„Through this experience, we have learned that it is important to accept that uncertainties are inherent to prospective work. This should not stop us. In our case, understanding the trends was enough to initiate a serious adaptation process.“*

Joseph Garrigue,  
Conservator at La Massane NNR

### STEP 3

## PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

By this step, managers should have a better idea of the possible climate pathways that lie ahead and how vulnerable the different features in and around the Protected Area are. Managers can use these results to inform decisions and to plan for adaptation. The exercise for managers is to reconcile the vulnerability, the ambitions, and the capacity to act.

Depending on the context and the conservation priorities, managers will define one or multiple strategies for adaptation.

Adaptation actions can range from land or sea management operations, monitoring and evaluation, development of management tools or new governance structures, communication and awareness-raising actions, research, and more.

If a management plan exists, there is an obvious interest to integrate the climate change adaptation plan with it.



*Adaptation measures may not be revolutionary at their core, but they often are in their design and intention.*

### STEP 4

## REVIEW AND VALORISATION

This is a simple, yet positive step in the methodology.

Having better understood climate change and the vulnerability of the Protected Area, an adaptation plan has therefore been devised. Now is the time to start implementing climate change adaptation measures, to further develop engagement with the community, to monitor the results and adjust the plan as necessary.

Before getting into action, managers are invited to take a „reflective break“. Reflecting on the path travelled, what worked well, what was difficult, what changed, what was surprising. This is generally helpful to the team, who have been working on the climate adaptation plan, but also for other Protected Area managers who can directly learn from the feedback from their peers to be inspired and get started.

## PUT YOUR CLIMATE CHANGE GLASSES ON, IT'S WORTH IT.

Climate change adaptation is a prospective, iterative and continuous process that is challenging, but also brings opportunities.

Managers need to build up capacity, to engage internal and external stakeholders, and to integrate the climate change pressures into their practice at every level of the Protected Area management. On top of that, it involves both personal and organisational changes, which can be uncomfortable.

In parallel, experience shows that it brings opportunities to innovate, to develop knowledge and to foster new cooperative local dynamics.

By putting “climate change glasses on”, managers will start a new chapter in the life of the Protected Area. Taking a good 360° look at the Protected Area, through climate change lenses, will ensure that its management is relevant and effective in the long term.



# MANAGING THE LANDSCAPE, TO CONTROL WILDFIRES

**Wildfires are not new occurrences, however climate change will cause them to be more and more frequent, even in areas previously not at high risk. So, how can we manage the landscape to limit the negative impacts of these fires?**



*Promoting the landscape mosaic with natural grazing and prescribed fire*

This article, written by EUROPARC Council Member **JOÃO CARDOSO DE MELO**, supported by **MARLENE MARQUES** and **DÉBORA HENRIQUES**, details the experience of Sintra-Cascais Natural Park in Portugal.

## CLIMATE CHANGE & WILDFIRES IN EUROPE

Over the last decade there have been recurrent wildfires in Europe, with the 2021 wildfire season being the second-worst on record, according to the Advance EFFIS Report on Forest Fires in Europe, Middle East and North Africa (2021). The IPCC climate change projections (2022) predict an increase in temperature and more extended dry periods, with expected increases in the frequency of droughts, heatwaves and other extreme weather events. Wildfires have been particularly harmful in Southern Europe (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain). Portugal has one of the highest forest fire risk rankings in Europe.

On 6 October 2018, a wildfire burned 429.0 ha of the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park (SCNP) (about 3.0% of its total area); this had significant environmental, societal and landscape impacts, endangering people, and villages, affecting forestland and other natural areas. This event was a severe warning that wildfires, which occur annually in rural areas, can also happen in peri-urban areas, and threaten densely populated urban villages. Given this

scenario, the combination of unmanaged areas and climate change pressures can lead to even more severe, frequent, and large-scale wildfires in the future.

## ABOUT SINTRA-CASCAIS NATURAL PARK

The SCNP, with a total area of 14,446.31 ha, is located within the municipalities of Sintra (11,174.75 ha) and Cascais (3,271.56 ha), two of the most densely populated counties in Portugal. It is classified as a Protected Area by the Portuguese governmental Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests and a part of the Natura 2000 network for conservation of habitats and species under the Habitats Directive. It also includes the area classified by UNESCO as Sintra World Heritage Cultural Landscape, due to its cultural interest and natural beauty. The SCNP, characterised by diversified natural and semi-natural landscapes and a high environmental, historic, cultural and social heritage, is very popular for outdoor nature activities such as hiking, trekking, mountain biking and trail running.



Cascais Ambiente it's a municipal company which provides technical support and manages the southern SCNP Cascais municipality area (SCNP-C). The company was tasked to implement a landscape management and conservation plan to restore the burnt area, implement actions to mitigate the risk of wildfires and adapt the landscape to climate change.

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

We have studied the wildfires occurring in the last 30 years to analyse their **recurrence and patterns in the landscape**, the relationships with human presence and land use, the types of wildfire progression, and the vegetation, meteorology and topographic characteristics. The SCNP-C landscape has been shaped by **agroforestry abandonment** and a consequent increase of wildfire episodes. The annual burnt area averages around 80 ha and large wildfires more than 400 ha, which on average recur every six years. The wildfires with the greatest burnt extension correspond mostly to fires fuelled by wind, some of them coinciding with the main wind corridors.

As the drivers of wildfires are the meteorology, topography and vegetation, only the last one can be managed. As such, our goal is to introduce changes in the landscape and land use, not to avoid wildfires, but to contain their uncontrolled progression.

## HOW CAN WE USE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT FOR WILDFIRE PREVENTION?

In SCNP-C, vegetation management has been implemented around main villages and roads. However, these measures are useless where wildfires are topographic. Thus, a new approach is needed to allow **better suppression opportunities**, but also to promote sustainable management and the development of **new dynamics** in economic and social development based on nature tourism and local farming.

To pursue this vision, the management project is structured on three main pillars of action:

- Tackle and build landscape resilience to climate change impacts, particularly to wildfires, while preventing soil erosion, promoting the diversification of ecosystem services and ensuring biodiversity and ecological corridors by implementing sustainable agro-silvo-pastoral management models;
- Develop and demonstrate the sustainability and profitability of local economies based on agro-silvo-pastoral activities and ecotourism by fostering local production and promoting green jobs;
- Improve the knowledge base, develop awareness and promote the engagement of stakeholders and the local community in climate change adaptation actions.

## CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY

The expected increase in global temperature will raise the frequency of drier periods leading to even **more severe and large-scale wildfires**, placing people, villages and biodiversity at risk. If the problem is not addressed, a scenario of severe and extensive wildfires could become even more frequent and **endanger the sustainability and the communities** of the SCNP-C.

Considering the particular characteristics of the SCNP-C area, **a set of management models** were outlined according to local characteristics, mainly current vegetation and land use, biophysical attributes such as relief, climate variables (temperature, wind), soil type, hydrogeology and historical wildfires (recurrence impacts). The implementation of these models will create **a mosaic of different land-uses, generate vegetation discontinuities and undo the continuum** that promotes extensive and severe wildfires, as well as facilitating their suppression. The models will also **promote biodiversity and diversification of ecosystem services**, ensure natural and stable vegetation management, reducing human intervention and associated costs.

## READ MORE!

Advance EFFIS Report on Forest Fires in Europe, Middle East and North Africa (2021)

IPCC climate change projections (2022)

[Read the full article](#)



# RELIFE PROJECT:

A TOOL TO INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE ERA



ReLife



**RELIFE, a project co-funded by the European Union's LIFE Programme, represents an example of adaptation to the changing of marine environment through an active restoration action.**

This article, written by **VALENTINA CAPPANERA**, RELIFE Project Coordinator for Portofino Marine Protected Area, details how the project worked on creating a more resilient marine ecosystem through species management.

The aim of the project was to counter the risk of extinction of the small invertebrate mollusc *Patella ferruginea*. By restoring the mollusc in the Ligurian Marine Protected Areas, there will be an increase of the natural capital value of the habitat. Furthermore, it will increase the healthy status of the habitat and, as such, help to create an ecosystem that is more resilient to Climate Change.

The ferrugineous limpet (*Patella ferruginea*) is one of the largest limpets of the Mediterranean Sea, reaching a shell diameter of over 10 cm. Once widespread throughout the western basin, today its distribution has declined: presently, it is mostly found in limited, small populations, in confined areas.

*Restoration activities at work in Portofino*





The RELIFE project has defined a protocol for the controlled reproduction of the species in the laboratory to ensure the availability of juveniles for repopulation of new areas. It was the first project focused on a restoration topic that involved not only the Portofino Marine Protected Area, but also two other Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Ligurian Sea (Italy), Cinque Terre and Bergeggi Island.

The project, which started in 2016 and finished in March 2022, mainly focused on the reintroduction of *Patella ferruginea* in the three Ligurian MPAs where the causes of extinction have been eliminated and an appropriate level of protection ensured. The donor site was the Tavolara MPA (North Sardinia), where a rich population of almost 3.100 individuals is still present.

The RELIFE project was able to obtain more than 2.000.000 eggs from 10 female specimens.

Most of the eggs released were fertilized and produced over one million larvae. The larva develops through different stages until it is able to lay on the substrate. It then “becomes”, or better yet metamorphoses, in the form known as “juvenile”, which is a tiny individual with the features of an adult.



*Resettled Patella ferruginea*

In this context, two successful breeding events were achieved under controlled conditions and through non-invasive methods in autumn 2020 and 2021.

The achievements not only relate to the release of gametes, but also in enabling us to follow and document the various larval stages (several hundred thousand individuals): this includes up to the moment of settlement on special supports placed in tanks in the laboratory.

Starting from the settlement in the laboratory, the small limpets grew and were followed through the various stages of growth until they reached a suitable size to be moved to the sea. At the beginning of March 2022, some surviving juveniles were released in the natural environment.

The RELIFE project also focussed heavily on communication and networking, with success! The project was able to establish a network of MPAs interested in the project's replication, not only at the Italian level, but also across the Mediterranean.

The success of the project has established RELIFE as a “pioneer” for similar activities.

The restoration of *P. ferruginea* makes the habitat where it lives more resistant to the effects of global changes. Today, there is much talk of the need to restore species and habitats where the purpose is to improve the resilience of ecosystems: the RELIFE project is a starting point. Now, we have to continue investing more and more on restoration. If we want to ensure that the *P. ferruginea* is no longer at risk of extinction, MPAs urgently need to implement networks of cooperation at local, regional, micro regional levels. Furthermore, it is important to employ restoration on a large scale in order to be more effective.

In the future, the real challenge is to ensure the continuation of the activities undertaken within the project. It is essential to continue the implementation of reproduction protocols and maintenance activities in laboratories, as well as in a wider action of conservation that entails the involvement of other MPAs and research institutes. Only then, will we be able to create density hot spots for this species in the Northern Mediterranean.





BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF NATURE MANAGERS  
THROUGH EU-FUNDED PROJECTS.

# LIFE ENABLE, NATUR'ADAPT and NATURACONNECT

Article written by **OLIVIER DE SADELEER**, Natur'Adapt project manager, **MARIT SCHNEPF**, NaturaConnect project manager and **SANDRA GREGO**, LIFE ENABLE project officer.

The EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy has several ambitious targets which highlight the need for increasingly integrated management practices, tools, techniques in particular in relation to Climate Change and Nature Restoration Law. Competence-based capacity building approaches can help us to make progress towards achieving the targets and better protect nature. Three important EU-funded projects, in which EUROPARC is either the leader or an active partner, are currently working to improve the effectiveness of management practices in these areas: LIFE ENABLE, LIFE Natur'Adapt and Horizon Europe NaturaConnect.

Nature Academy to provide tailor-made capacity building courses that will contribute to ensuring progress towards the realisation of the objectives and ambitions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and underpinning policies. Our primary objective is to create a new and dynamic interactive learning environment which delivers a range of capacity building courses for Protected Area managers, but in particular those working in forest and marine ecosystems.

## WHY ARE COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACHES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING REQUIRED?

Protected Area managers work in a wide variety of roles in multidisciplinary settings. Where they work is likely to be dynamic, constantly evolving and complex. To be an effective Protected Area manager requires more than technical knowledge: it requires the application of a mix of knowledge, skills and attitudes or competencies. Core competencies include:

- Stakeholder engagement based on inclusive participatory approaches;
- Excellent communication skills;
- High-quality project management;
- Commitment to interdisciplinary working and networking;
- Comprehensive biodiversity knowledge and up-to-date technical practices.

***The projects focus on capacity building in management practices, new tools for adaptive management for climate change and models to establish new ecological corridors through stakeholder engagement.***

## LIFE ENABLE - CREATING THE EUROPEAN NATURE ACADEMY FOR APPLIED BLENDED LEARNING

LIFE ENABLE is designed to meet Natura 2000 and Protected Area managers' training needs. The project is creating the new European

*Filming for the European Nature Academy in Scotland*





These combine with intrinsic personal attributes such as leadership, empathetic working and commitment to include people and other sectors in order to achieve more for nature and people.

## LIFE NATUR'ADAPT - PUT YOUR CLIMATE CHANGE GLASSES ON

Over the last 4 years, the LIFE Natur'Adapt partners co-designed a methodology for Climate Change adaptation in Protected Areas (see pp.20). The methodology was piloted and tested in 21 Protected Areas. It is a prospective analysis on Climate Change vulnerability that can inform management decisions and guide the design of Climate Change adaptation measures. In addition, an **Open Online Course** was developed to provide training about *how to integrate climate change into your management practices*. The backbone of the training is a sequence of online videos presented by experienced Protected Area managers and nature conservation professionals. It is supplemented by additional resources such as checklists, case studies, online conferences, articles, etc. and supported by a small team with experience in the topic.



At the end of the training, participants should be better equipped to understand Climate Change, its main impacts on the management of natural spaces and to take decisions in a context of uncertainty. They will know the main concepts and steps to create an adaptation plan together with local stakeholders.

## NATURACONNECT - THINKING BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF PROTECTED AREAS

NaturaConnect aims to support EU Member States in designating new Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites to create a resilient nature network across Europe based on the conservation targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The project seeks to develop spatial planning and mapping support tools to identify conservation and restoration priorities for establishing multifunctional corridors across Europe. Co-design and engagement are at the heart of the project. NaturaConnect ensures that stakeholders' visions and preferences about conservation are incorporated in the development of the tools, by conducting stakeholder engagement activities at different levels.

Conservation, restoration and sustainable management must be grounded with accessible and relevant capacity building and communications for stakeholders who will implement and manage such a network. To this end, NaturaConnect is creating a diverse range of training courses, tools and modules on issues like finance mechanisms, communication and stakeholder engagement. These will be available in a NaturaConnect platform as part of the European Nature Academy.

## INVESTING IN A BETTER FUTURE

People working in Protected Areas are on the front line of nature conservation. As practitioners, they connect places and people: they are responsible for managing nature in evolving, living contexts, which need to take into account social norms and cultural traditions. The often multidisciplinary setting makes the working life of Protected Area managers dynamic and challenging, but also rich with opportunities to make significant gains for nature. This is especially true when dealing with Climate Change, increasing management adaptations and ways to establish greater ecological connectivity to protect biodiversity.

However, Protected Area managers need support and dedicated training in order to help them in their work. That is why EUROPARC will continue to invest in capacity building projects so that people working in Parks around Europe can be inspired, more confident and capable to lead nature protection in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.





# MEET THE EUROPARC STAR AWARDS WINNERS 2021-22



Star Awards

The Sustainable Tourism **Partners** Awards

The EUROPARC Star Awards recognises 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 ECST and Star Awards Ceremony 2022, hosted in the European Parliament, in December 2022.





GLOBAL  
APPROACH TO  
SUSTAINABILITY -  
OVERALL WINNER



PARTNER OF  
PARCO NAZIONALE  
ABRUZZO, LAZIO E MOLISE

## HOTEL RISTORANTE LA PIEJA (IT)

The hotel and restaurant La Pieja wants to create an “Economy of well-being” centred around enjoyment and conservation of nature in the area of the Abruzzo National Park. To make that goal a reality, they have created an integrated offer for tourists, that includes nature, culture and outdoor activities. All of this is done in close cooperation with other local operators, guides, and museums. La Pieja regularly meets with the Abruzzo Park Authority and local producers to create common objectives and commitments that ensure adherence to ecological standards.

Furthermore, La Pieja actively promotes the Abruzzo National Park, its nature and the territory by providing brochures in the guest rooms and adding the Park’s offers to the bulletin board. Hotel staff also work on “education” visitors by distributing rules on how to behave in the natural area. Moreover, they organise special seasonal activities, for example walks during deer mating season, excursions to examine the traces left by different species of animals, or the fall photography contest, aimed at capturing the autumn landscape of the Park.

Inside the hotel and restaurant, this attention to the needs of nature continues. The menu of the restaurant is composed of local and seasonal ingredients, some of which are ‘0 km produce’. The gardens surrounding the building are planted with native species, and only eco-friendly fertilisers and insect detergents are

used. Moreover, light pollution is kept to a minimum through the use of motion activated sensors.





## HOTEL GRAN REY (ES)

PARTNER OF  
PARQUE NACIONAL DE GARAJONAY



Hotel Gran Rey was created with the philosophy of integrating into the environment. It is located in a landscape formed by steep cliffs, palm groves, springs, and farmhouses. The hotel has eliminated all exotic plants in their landscaped garden and replaced them by native species. The hotel works closely together with the Garajonay National Park. The staff actively promotes the National Park and pictures of the area decorate the rooms, all aimed at making their visitors aware of the rich natural area they are staying at.

Furthermore, their vegetable garden wants to rescue agricultural varieties that could disappear and recover the soil. Of course, the harvest of the vegetable garden then ends up on the plates of the restaurant that is part of the hotel effectively creating 0 km produce. They work with local suppliers for anything they cannot grow on their own.

The hotel also actively works on reducing its energy needs, for example through using energy efficient LED lights, and helps remind their visitors to support them in this goal. They have also installed solar panels and renewable energy now makes up 37% of the total energy consumption. Furthermore, Hotel Gran Rey is very conscious about its water-usage: they use drip-irrigation in the gardens and have installed flow restrictors on the taps in the rooms.

All these efforts have resulted in different prizes and certifications. Now, they can add EUROPARC STAR Award winner to the list!



BUILDING  
MY COMMUNITY

## EXPLORE IBERIA (ES)

Is it possible for a business to practice local biodiversity conservation and restoration?

It certainly is! Explore Iberia “adopted” a natural site, from Geoparque litoral de Viana, and plays an active role in the landscape restoration and conservation.

They are a small independent tour operator that is invested in providing visitors with an authentic experience in Northern Portugal and Galicia. The team of local experts have developed tours that incorporate their wealth of biodiversity and cultural heritage knowledge, and they provide full flexibility. Whether visitors want private tours, self-

PARTNER  
OF ALTO MINHO

guided tours, flex-guided tours or to go solo – Explore Iberia allows each visitor to experience the region as they wish. They also have special offers for travellers that are blind or have low vision. Explore Iberia’s style of slow travel promotes sustainable practices and a deeper immersion into local cultural experiences.

When creating their activities, the team always makes sure to add a “cultural discovery moment”, where interpretation and experiencing the local culture play a key role. From corn bread workshops, to seaweed harvest or traditional pottery painting, visitors can experience the authentic culture of the region, whilst enjoying local food and drinks.

Through all these activities, Explore Iberia contributes to the cultural and social fabric of their community.



## PENSIÓN CANDELARIA (ES)



The staff of Pensión Candelaria puts great care into promoting the natural values of the area to their visitors, particular to German tourists.

Through the Facebook group "La Gomera Insider - Inselnachrichten", the Director of Candelaria, Carol Gewetzki, sends out information of interest related to the island, Valle Gran Rey and the Garajonay National Park. Through the project "Travel Notes: Stories and Legends", Carol also compiled information of each of the municipalities of the area in a travel notebook format. In these little books, the joint history is told to allow tourists to get to know the area. Furthermore, she designed a guide on the National Park Garajonay with little known places and information about the Park.

However, the Pensión Candelaria does not just tell the story of the area, they also help maintain it! The staff are active collaborators in the Plántate project. This participatory project promotes the reforestation of thermophilic forests in La Gomera. They also offer customers the possibility to offset their carbon footprint locally, either through participating in the plantation efforts, or by giving a direct financial contribution to the project. Furthermore, the staff actively promotes other sustainability activities like beach cleaning to its guests and travellers, mainly those who speak German.

They frequently communicate with staff from the National Park and the accommodation actively promotes them by making all the brochures and maps available to its customers. To further their sustainability efforts, Candelaria actively promotes walking routes that can be reached from the accommodation, to reduce the usage of private vehicles.

PARTNER  
PARC  
NATURAL DEL  
MONTGRÍ, ILLES  
MEDES I BAIX TER

### INNOVATION

## PROJECTE SÈPIA (ES)

The PROJECTE SEPIA was born to improve the breeding conditions of cephalopods and repopulating the waters of the Empordà.

Together with local, artisanal fishermen the project wants to preserve traditional fishing and promote sustainable practices.

The Empordà bays struggle with a great decline of cuttlefish. This threatens the livelihoods of local fisherman and has gravitating social and environmental repercussions. The Sèpia project aims to ensure the reproduction of cephalopods and the incorporation of juveniles into the populations of the Empordà bays and raise awareness on the importance of the sea and sustainable tourism.



To support the dwindling cuttlefish numbers, scientists working in the project have installed underwater cuttlefish spawners (called Sepieres) made from branches in l'Escala and L'Estartit to create a protected place for cuttlefish and squid. This work is carried out together with local fishermen and technicians from the Montgrí-Medes Natural Park. These nurseries are then avoided by sailors and fishermen, favouring the reproduction of cuttlefish and squid.

Besides this action, artisanal fishermen have been coordinated to retrieve the cephalopod's eggs that have been attached to their fishing gear and placed in incubator cages. This way the eggs can hatch normally and the youngsters incorporate to the biomass of the bays. More than 1,5 million eggs have been saved in three years by these actions.

In 2022 a tourist activity started in which visitors sail on an ancient fishing boat to learn about traditional fishing, about the Projecte Sepia and about the Marine Protected Area of the Natural Park.





CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION

## TRESALIA (ES)

PARTNER OF GARROTXA  
VOLCANIC ZONE NATURAL  
PARK

Trescalia has sustainability at their core. They have been part of the permanent Forum for Sustainable Tourism "Tursime Garrotxa" in the la Garrotxa Volcanic Zone Natural Park since its beginnings in 2013. Within the forum, they help promote the "Garrotxa Experience Catalogue" for tourism agencies. This catalogue contains ecotourism proposals, with all ECST accredited companies in the area!

However, they are not just motivating other companies to create sustainable tourism offers - Trescalia is leading the way! Trescalia carries out the monitoring of different flora and fauna like butterflies. In fact, since 2010 they have carried out weekly monitoring of butterflies for 30 weeks per year!

Furthermore, Trescalia offers multiple-day packages for visitors that all include nature-friendly and volunteer activities. These include a visit to the visitor's centre of the Natural Park, where they are welcomed by a Park technician; planting local fruits or harvesting them; monitoring bats, birds or other animal; surveying flora or removing invasive species. All activities are always done with a Park technician. This allows visitors to get a deep understanding of the natural area, whilst also actively participating in its conservation.

Trescalia also puts in a lot of effort to offer year-round tourism, that is well-spread-out throughout the natural area. They avoid promoting highly-frequented places and focus more on less-well known spaces. The guides also explain to the visitors why it is important to have a better spread of tourism to help raise awareness.



## Star Awards

The Sustainable Tourism **Partners** Awards





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