



WWF

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Boat on Lake Skadar, Karuc village, Montenegro.
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WWF Mediterranean Initiative Newsletter

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A turning point for the fate of biological diversity



As we approach the end of 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, last month marked a globally important event with the CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan. Governments gathered to evaluate

the implementation of previous targets set for 2010 and seek ways to reach an agreement to halt the decline of the world's valuable natural resources in the years ahead. A new 10-year biodiversity rescue plan has been adopted and an agreement made to protect 10% of all oceans, put an end to overfishing and ensure that 17% of terrestrial habitats are protected. The plan also requires countries to ensure that biodiversity is incorporated into national accounts. It is now vital that we move fast to translate these promises into action. The role of WWF's Mediterranean Initiative and similar movements is crucial in ensuring that this is the case. We will be stronger in meeting the challenge of safeguarding the immense heritage of the Mediterranean, where the effects of global climate change are expected to be severe.

Sedat Kalem, Coordinator of the WWF Mediterranean Initiative Task Force

Montenegro relaunches assault on wild beauty

To international tourism markets Montenegro promotes itself as a bastion of wild beauty. The government, however, appears to be trying to push forward plans to erect multiple dams along the outstanding Morača canyon. The Morača river, the second most important in Montenegro, provides two thirds of the flows into Lake Skadar, the biggest lake in the Balkans. As one of the most important bird and fish habitats in the Mediterranean region, Lake Skadar provides more than 90% of fish consumed in Montenegro. Just a few months ago the government promised to consider alternatives to the 40-year-old dams plan after a storm of domestic and international criticism. They are now working to introduce a “concession act,” which would in effect reinvigorate the multiple dams plan by giving directions to potential

investors. This, points out Francesca Antonelli at WWF Mediterranean, “sidesteps the government’s obligation to complete its earlier and largely discredited strategic environmental assessment of the plan and allows them to give investors the opportunity to propose alternative plans with no environmental or social performance guidance, or restrictions”. WWF and partner NGO in Montenegro Green Home had expressed very strong concerns regarding the plan proposed in February this year by the Montenegrin government to build four dams on the Morača river. The dams would significantly threaten important biodiversity areas – so-called Emerald sites that should become the country’s future Natura 2000 sites once Montenegro joins the European Union.

Water to Bafa, crops to the Aegean

Lake Bafa, a saline coastal lake in southwestern Turkey, has been the site of a WWF Turkey wetland conservation project since 2008. In a region which is characterized by heavy cotton and corn production using inefficient flooding irrigation methods, the project aims to reduce water use in agriculture and promote the adoption of modern irrigation systems. The first example of drip irrigation through surface water has been installed in a 4ha corn plantation. With the traditional irrigation system, 6-8 tons of corn per hectare is obtained whereas, with the drip irrigation systems, the yield has increased to 12 tons of corn per hectare. With a 50% increase in productivity up to 50% of water is saved with the new irrigation system. The pilot project has overcome the preconceived opinions on drip irrigation held by farmers, and WWF Turkey is ready to expand their activities throughout the basin.

This project is carried out in cooperation with The Coca-Cola Company and in collaboration with the District Directorate of Agriculture.

NGOs work on Water Framework Directive

July 2010 saw the start of a project which will involve the Serbian public in water protection. The project team will work on monitoring EU laws and addressing the Water Framework Directive, and its connection with the Habitat Directive and the Birds Directive. The NGO network Natura 2000 Resource Center of Serbia will form a working group to address water issues.

Led by Young Researchers of Serbia, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and the Environmental Engineering Group.

New protected areas in Tunisia

The Tunisian government has declared 8 new protected areas – 2 national parks and 6 nature reserves – bringing the number of Tunisian national parks to 12 and nature reserves to 22. The two new national parks – Jbel Chitana-Cap Negro and Oued Zeen – are located in the Kroumerie-Mogods in northwest Tunisia. Since 2002 WWF has worked in close collaboration with the Tunisian Ministries of Agriculture and the Environment to promote the declaration of the two protected areas which host a great wealth of forest habitat. They are the last refuge for the unique Barbary deer (*Cervus elaphus barbarous*) and include vast tracts of Cork oak forest (*Quercus suber*) and Zeen oak forest (*Quercus canariensis*).

NGOs building Natura 2000

NGO representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Turkey, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo and Iceland met recently to investigate means of building Natura 2000 in candidate countries and potential candidate countries, focusing on the role of civil society. As part of the EC's People 2 People (P2P) programme, it was a prime opportunity to learn about EU institutions, enlargement policy, RENA and Natura 2000 and EU policy in the field of biodiversity protection and the accession process. Participants had the opportunity to network internationally and regionally.

See <http://ngonatura2000.blogspot.com/>

Studying the Barbary deer.
El Feidja National Park, Tunisia.
© Michel Gunther / WWF-Canon

Regional cooperation in the Dinaric Arc

The Environment for People in the Dinaric Arc project covers 6 pilot areas in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania. The project promotes the natural and cultural values of the area, bringing together experts, Ministry representatives, NGOs, local councils, tourist organizations and local people, while enhancing economic development through improved regional cooperation and strengthened environmental governance. The first major event of the Environment for People in the Dinaric Arc project took place recently in Caplina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where over 100 participants shared results of the project's first studies.

Environment for People is a joint project of IUCN, SNV and WWF. See <http://dinaricarc.net/>

Partnership for Mediterranean Forests

The WWF Mediterranean Initiative has become part of a collaborative partnership between Mediterranean North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) and the Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, Turkey). Partners have agreed to accelerate the implementation of sustainable forest management and the protection of forest-based ecosystem services under climate change conditions in the southern Mediterranean. Partner organizations will coordinate their respective support activities in the framework of a common approach based on agreed objectives and expected results, defined by a steering committee.

Partners include WWF, FAO, AFD/FFEM, AIFM, EFIMED, GTZ, IUCN-Med, MAAP, Plan Bleu/ MAP, ONF-I and MMFN.

Rare palm forest damaged in summer fires

One of the most important forest ecosystems in the Mediterranean, the rare and endemic palm forest of Preveli in Crete, was severely damaged by fire in August. "The memory of the tragic summer of 2007, when over 270 thousand hectares of precious Mediterranean forest land were burnt and more than 80 people died, should teach us the importance of prevention and integrated forest management, but the national budgetary crisis has decimated the already scant funding for forest management and protection," said Demetres Karavellas, WWF Greece. In a joint

statement, WWF Greece and WWF Russia highlighted common elements of the catastrophic wildfires that hit Russia during the first two weeks of August and the tragic Greek "black summer" of 2007 and called on their governments to address numerous and deadly serious gaps in the national forest legislation. "Forests need to be managed and protected primarily as vulnerable ecosystems, which are vital for human survival and not as land offered for easy profit," they said.

Towards payment for ecosystem services in Portugal

WWF Mediterranean has been working in the last few months on identifying ecosystem services, such as carbon storage and water regulation, provided by Cork and Holm oak forests. Concentrating on the southern area of the Tagus River with a case study carried out on the estates of APF Certifica – a cork producer forest association – the WWF Portuguese team has gathered information on ecosystems and has created an innovative tool, an online geographical information system. Results are presented in the HABEaS report (Hotspot Areas for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Montado) towards a greater understanding of the montado ecosystem in Portugal and its importance for ecosystem services. The WebGIS-HABEaS tool is also being promoted more generally as an important way for people to learn about ecosystems in places that they live or visit and by that knowledge improve their conservation practices.

See www.habeas.com.pt



WWF tagging project brings new understanding of Mediterranean bluefin tuna migration

To coincide with the third season of *On the Med Tuna Trail* in Roses, Spain, WWF Mediterranean launched a new report on this ambitious project to tag and track Atlantic bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean – revealing some surprising first results. One tag from 2008, for example, was recovered after the tuna had roamed free for 391 days – providing unprecedented information on bluefin migratory behaviour for a full year's life cycle. None of the tagged tunas left the Mediterranean Sea during the whole tracking period, while results suggest a residence pattern for large adults north of the Balearic Islands in late summer. The new understanding of the migratory behaviour of this enigmatic species made possible by WWF's *On the Med tuna trail* project research will help make fisheries management more

sustainable. "The results of WWF's tuna tagging work in the Mediterranean have provided surprising and valuable insights into bluefin behaviour," said Dr Sergi Tudela at WWF Mediterranean. "WWF has distributed its new findings widely and is urging fisheries decision makers to apply the precautionary principle in Atlantic bluefin tuna management: until impacts on the species are fully understood, extreme caution must be applied." The current project expires at the end of 2010 but there are plans to continue the Mediterranean bluefin tuna tagging field work in the future.

Mediterranean bluefin tuna conservation will be discussed at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), 17-27 November, in Paris. Read more at www.panda.org/tuna.

Towards the first coastal and marine protected area in Tunisia

Through the MedPAN South project WWF is assisting in establishing and setting up the first coastal and marine protected area in Tunisia: the Cap Serrat-Cap Negro MPA. The project supports the establishment of a management unit and steering committee for the MPA, while providing the know-how and tools to build capacity and raise awareness among local communities and tourists visiting the area.

More information on MedPAN's activities at www.medpan.org. A searchable database with information about experts, best practices, management solutions and tools for marine conservation and MPA management in the Mediterranean is now available. See <http://experts.medpan.org>

MedPAN pilot project in Kaş-Kekova

Within the framework of MedPAN South an underwater survey was performed at Kaş-Kekova to monitor groupers and other indicator flagship species' populations. Sixty-five species were observed by "visual census". Research divers also collected information about sediment structure as well as seagrass and algae patterns. This monitoring survey will be performed every year until 2012.

Spreading the word on solar power

A catamaran powered exclusively by the sun cast off from Spain's southeastern coast in summer, starting a journey that is completely free of fossil fuels. The WWF Solar is part of WWF Spain's 'Embárcate' (Get on Board) campaign to promote the use of renewable energy and the conservation of marine ecosystems. "WWF Solar is a boat that causes no pollution – it does not emit any CO² whatsoever. The Solar shows that we can easily substitute fossil fuels with renewable energy," said José Luis García Varas at WWF Spain. WWF Solar, its crew and volunteers have spread the word along Spain's southeastern coast, distributing information on endangered Mediterranean habitats and species and tips on the sustainable use of resources in some of the last wildlife bastions along the Spanish

shoreline. They have accompanied local people and tourists on solar boat trips as well as guided hiking and diving expeditions. WWF Solar will visit some of the Mediterranean's most important coastal areas over the next 3 summers, including Marine Protected Areas such as the Cap de Creus Canyon, home to the greatest density of submarine canyons in the Mediterranean Sea.

WWF Solar is fitted with photovoltaic panels that cover its 65m² roof. When fully charged, the vessel's batteries can run its engines for 90 nautical miles. In 2007, a crew of 5 travelled from Basel, Switzerland, to New York City setting a Guinness World Record by marking the first motorized crossing of the Atlantic Ocean using only renewable energy. Upon completion of this historic voyage the original developers of the boat, the Swiss association Transatlantic 21, donated it to WWF.



Detail of WWF Solar.
© Miguel Murcia Navarro / WWF Spain



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/mediterranean

Prepared by WWF Mediterranean Programme.

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