Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to share with you the 28th issue of IUCN South-Eastern European e-Bulletin!

We thank you for contributing to this issue and for your continuous interest in this publication. Please note that the bulletin is available online at www.iucn.org/southeasterneurope, while guidelines for submitting articles can be found at the last page of this issue.

We wish you a pleasant reading and send Season's Greetings!

IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe
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1. IPA CBC
Building capacities for conservation action is a recently commenced project implemented by IUCN and financed by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade. The long term objective of the project is to improve capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and government agencies in Serbia and Montenegro responsible for the implementation of conservation policies and actions. The importance of institutions and CSOs working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable development is increasingly recognized. To ensure effective participation in this process, their resources including knowledge, skills and experience in implementing actions for achieving policy objectives should be correspondingly improved.

Implementation of actions is naturally connected to securing resources – human and financial – for realization of projects. Therefore, apart from working for better understanding how policy mechanisms for achieving conservation priorities work, IUCN is improving the skills of stakeholders for effective project management and increased funds absorption. The latter is logically an objective both for recipients and donors. This issue will be addressed also through an improvement of communication flows and exchange between relevant organizations and individuals.

Lack of financial resources is often presented as a major obstacle for the good functioning of organizations and institutions. However, in order to improve the financial abilities, organizations must first develop their capacity to absorb resources effectively. Thus the two processes are closely interlinked and equally important for the successful achievement of conservation objectives. It is expected that the availability of funding opportunities will increase in the future alongside EU accession process. Therefore it is important that both CSOs as well as institutions are prepared for this upcoming opportunity.

Objectives of the project are:
• To increase capacity of CSOs and nature conservation institutions as regards project management cycle and fundraising;
• To increase fundraising skills of recipient organizations and effectiveness of implemented actions;
• To improve information flow and exchange of experiences between government institutions, expert organizations and CSOs by improved use of existing communication platforms.
This 18-months project is funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade and implemented by IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe in partnership with Young Researchers of Serbia (www.mis.org.rs) and Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro (www.birdwatchingmn.org).

The project was opened by one-day seminar that shed light on key conservation policies and funding sources in Serbia and Montenegro, facilitating the dialogue between the donor community and potential recipients. It was organized by IUCN on 21 December in Belgrade, and gathered a multitude of state agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the field of nature conservation in Serbia and Montenegro.

H.E. Mr. Nils Ragnar Kamsvåg, Norwegian Ambassador to Serbia, opened the event talking about the importance environmental CSOs have in the process of social development, an issue with ever growing recognition in the region.

The seminar brought a series of interesting presentations. The general conclusion is that the networking of CSOs and state agencies could improve the quality and effectiveness of conservation action. However, capacities, skills and experience of CSOs and GOs have to be improved in order to be able to absorb the available funds and successfully implement conservation projects. Simultaneously, there was a strong voice for increased and diversified funding for conservation action that includes existing international support but also calls upon consolidated national environmental funds as well as the emergence of new donors such as the corporate sector. Finally, there is an overall impression that the prospect of increased support to conservation action is closely linked with the awareness on the importance of nature conservation both in Serbia and Montenegro.

“Once we make sure that the community is aware of benefits biodiversity is providing to our societies on a daily basis as well as the scale of our dependence on natural resources we may expect a tangible increase in financial resources allocated to conservation efforts” says Mr Boris Erg, Director of IUCN Programme Office for South Eastern Europe.

For more information please contact Veronika Ferdinandova, IUCN SEE at veronika.ferdinandova@iucn.org

More information on grant schemes for the project support of the Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade can be found on the embassy’s website www.norveska.org.rs.
IUCN welcomes two new NGO members from South Eastern Europe: Preservation and Protection of Natural Environment in Albania-PPNEA and Association for Biological Research - BIOM. Their membership applications were approved during the recent 77th Meeting of the IUCN Council.

**PPNEA (Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment of Albania)*** is the oldest non-profit organization in the country acting in the field of nature conservation and environment protection. It strives for the conservation of the natural heritage of Albania and the region, by strengthening the system of protected areas, enhancing rehabilitation and conservation measures, working directly on site and species protection by implementing actions on the ground. Most of the PPNEA projects are long-term and often cross-border, aiming not only at nature conservation, but also at ecological development of specific sites. PPNEA is active in Albania, Greece, and FYR of Macedonia.

**The Association for Biological Research - BIOM** is a non-profit, voluntary and independent civil society organization involved in nature protection, species and habitats conservation and promotion. The Association BIOM was founded in Croatia in 2006, and ever since, it focuses on scientific and professional research and protection of flora, fauna and habitats. Its activities contribute to awareness raising on topics related to biodiversity, habitats in danger and sustainable development, promoting Biology as a scientific discipline at the same time. For more information please visit [www.biom.hr](http://www.biom.hr).

By joining IUCN, the member benefits from IUCN’s scientific credibility, its unsurpassed knowledge base and convening power, extensive networking opportunities and access to high-level political, economic and social decision making. IUCN extends a very warm welcome to PPNEA and BIOM!

Members form the highest decision-making body of IUCN. Every four years, IUCN Members gather for a unique global environmental parliament of governments and NGOs, whose result is the adoption of IUCN Global Programme. The 2012 World Conservation Congress will be held from 6 to 15 September 2012 in Jeju, Republic of Korea.
1. European environment: alarming update

Europe’s natural heritage is showing an alarming decline. The European Red List, a part of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, assessed a considerable portion of Europe’s native fauna and flora, finding that a large proportion of molluscs, freshwater fish and vascular plants now fall into a threatened category. The assessment of some 6,000 species reveals that 44% of all freshwater molluscs, 37% of freshwater fish, 23% of amphibians, 20% of a selection of terrestrial molluscs, 19% of reptiles, 15% of mammals and of dragonflies, 13% of birds, 11% of a selection of saproxylic beetles, 9% of butterflies and 467 species of vascular plant species are now under threat.

For more information please visit European Red List.

2. Partnership for Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Drina

Partnership between the National Park Tara from Serbia and the Republic Institute for Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage Banja Luka from Bosnia and Herzegovina was formally announced on 16 November 2011. The directors of these two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which they pledge to develop and implement cross-border activities on common strategic fields. Judging from the activities under this Agreement, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina may soon have the first Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, which would extend on the territory of 6 municipalities: Visegrad, Srebrenica, Rogatica in BiH and Užice, Cajetina, Bajina Bašta in Serbia. Cross-border cooperation is a prerequisite for the systematic and long-term biodiversity conservation and community development based on sustainable use of natural resources.

Memorandum of Understanding was signed within the project “Environment for people in the Dinaric Arc” that is being implemented by the IUCN, WWF MedPO and SNV, and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

For more information please contact Veronika Ferdinandova, IUCN SEE at veronika.ferdinandova@iucn.org.

3. 2011 EuroNatur Prize awarded to Mr Gugic

Goran Gugic, NP Lonjsko Polje manager, was awarded with this year’s EuroNatur prize in October 2011. “Goran Gugic has created a model of how cultural landscapes in Europe can be efficiently protected”, said Gabriel Schwaderer, director of EuroNatur. NP Lonjsko Polje is one of the best administered in South Eastern Europe, and the pasturing tradition has been preserved since medieval times. The pasture land serves as retention area for the floods of the Sava River and alluvial wetlands host an exceptional richness in species. Mr Gugic is also member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, chairman of the Croatian UNESCO-Committee „Man and Biosphere“ and member of the standing committee of the Ramsar Convention.

For more information please contact Martin Schneider-Jacoby, EuroNatur at martin.schneider-jacoby@euronatur.org
4. Endangered Serbian Butterflies

During this project many young volunteers from Serbia got involved in butterfly conservation. The main goal was to explore Bog Fritillary (Boloria eunomia) colonies on Stara Planina Mt., highly endangered by ski tourism development. For the first time Violet Copper (Lycaena helle) and Gruner's Orange Tip (Antocharis gruneri) butterflies were discovered in Serbia. The data gathered during the project should help to preserve vulnerable fauna, through cooperation with relevant government institutions. In addition to research activities, crucial steps are made for promotion of butterfly diversity and the need for valuable habitats conservation. This was done through TV and newspapers, workshops for young children, info-boards and promotional material dissemination. The project is financed by The Rufford Small Grants foundation, and planned to end in May 2012.

For more information please visit: [www.habiprot.org.rs/rsg2011](http://www.habiprot.org.rs/rsg2011)

5. Ecological Networks Seminar in Moldova

Two days long Seminar dedicated to the development and creation of regional sectors of Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) was held in October in Chisinau. Organized by IUCN and BIOTICA Ecological Society in cooperation with the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and the Ministry of Environment, the Seminar contributed to the international conference marking 50 years anniversary of the Institute. Participants learned about the recent projects that focus on ecological networks in Moldova, such as IUCN/BIOTICA project “Development of the National Ecological Network of Moldova”, UNDP/GEF project “Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of the PA System in Moldova” and Emerald project coordinated by Moldovan Ministry of Environment. Additionally, approaches from neighboring countries and the EU were presented and discussed with the special attention given to cooperation across borders.

For further information please contact Tomasz Pezold, IUCN SEE at tomasz.pezold@iucn.org.

6. Institutional Support to the management of Protected Areas in Albania

The recently commenced project in Albania aims to strengthen capacities of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration’s of Albania for development and management of protected areas. By promoting innovative approaches to PAs, that also imply the translation of principles of ecosystems and biodiversity economics into practice, this project will demonstrate a broad range of benefits that local and wider communities could enjoy from preserved and well-functioning ecosystems. The project will specifically promote alternative sustainable economic activities for local populations residing near or within two selected sites: Shebenik-Jablanica National Park and Velipoje Protected Landscape. These selected sites provide vast ecosystem services for the population, for example they guarantee the quality and permanence of water and prevent coastal erosion. The 2 years long project is supported by Italian Cooperation – DGCS.

“This project in Albania gives me the opportunity of doing something tangible for the nature conservation in the country and I am happy I have the opportunity to work with IUCN”, says Mr Ghiurghi, Project manager located in Tirana. The integral interview is available under [www.iucn.org/europe/Interview-with-Andrea-Ghiurghi](http://www.iucn.org/europe/Interview-with-Andrea-Ghiurghi).

For more information please contact Tomasz Pezold, IUCN SEE at tomasz.pezold@iucn.org.
7. Action for the Danube River

More than 40 rowers and paddlers from Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia joined in October, to participate in Danube regatta and raise voice against the destruction of Nature Park Kopacki rit in Croatia and Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve in Serbia. The two sites are under immense pressure due to ongoing efforts to turn this natural river stretch into a canal. Since April 2010 the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure and the Croatian Agency for Inland Waterways have been pushing for the regulation of 53 km of the river which acts as a border between Croatia and Serbia. 75 groins and heavy embankments would be built, thus heavily harming the natural river banks and transforming the meandering river into a lifeless canal. The proposed river regulation does not only threaten the unique species and wetland habitats of the region, but is also likely to have negative impact on the drinking water, forests and ecotourism in the area. Participants in the regatta appealed to the European Commission to act and prevent the irreversible destruction of Croatia's and Europe's natural treasures months before Croatia's accession to the EU. Regatta participants, WWF, NGO Zeleni Osijek and the Croatian Society for the Protection of Birds and Nature urge the Croatian government to immediately stop these destructive plans.

For more information please contact Arno Mohl, WWF at arno.mohl@wwf.at.

8. Turkey - update from RSPB

At least 15,000 young flamingos huddled in the crèche of one of the biggest flamingo colonies in the Mediterranean, in the middle of Tuz lake in central Anatolia, Turkey. This very large salt lake holds one of the two breeding colonies in Turkey, but this year, due to the abundant spring rains, conditions were better than usual. Quite the contrary for the other colony, in the salt pans in the Gediz delta, on the West coast, where several feral dogs have raided the colony in the beginning of the breeding season causing widespread destruction and the desertion of thousands of nests. Greece and Turkey are historical rivals and have been at odds several times during their long, and complex, shared history. Birds, of course, are oblivious to all this. The Hellenic Ornithological Society (BirdLife in Greece) has been studying and protecting seabirds across the Aegean Sea. Among the many research and conservation actions taken is the tracking of the rare gulls breeding on some remote islands. One of them (tagged at the island of Fournoi, near Ikaria) decided that the best feeding grounds were just off the Turkish coast, and spent most of the time there – only returning to breed in Greece, in a round trip of several hundred kilometres.

For more information please contact Jose Tavares, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at jose.tavares@rspb.org.uk.

9. MAVA partners’ platform in South Eastern Europe

The MAVA Foundation gathered its implementing partners from South Eastern Europe in September in Podgorica, aiming at strengthening programme delivery and the conservation impacts in the Mediterranean Balkans. The workshop facilitated the exchange of ideas, contacts and experiences among the implementing organizations in MAVA's partner network. Each organization presented their past and current work in the region, as well as their planned projects. Participants also shared ideas on possible new projects to fill identified gaps between MAVA's current portfolio and its strategic orientation for the region.
Results of these discussions included proposals for future collaborations, exchange of experiences related to working with local partners in the region, as well as commitments on data sharing. Participants identified further strengthening of the MAVA partners’ network as the priority, and have expressed hope that this year’s was the first of what are to become annual meetings. Regular exchange between the partners would be maintained via regional electronic partners’ platforms.

For more information please contact Marko Pecarevic, MAVA foundation at Marko.Pecarevic@fondationmava.org.

10. International Long-eared Owl Conference

Serbian Owl Conservation Centre, Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia and Municipality of Kikinda hosted the First International Long-eared Owl (Asio otus) Conference in Kikinda, in November 2011. The conference was dedicated to the research and conservation of the mentioned species around the globe, but also eco-tourism development of communities with winter roosting sites. Serbia, and Vojvodina Province in particular, are well known for its largest Long-eared Owl roost sites in the world, while Kikinda is considered to be the World Owl Capital with up to 740 birds sitting on trees in the very town center. Over 60 leading owl and eco-tourism experts from 21 countries from North America, Europe and Asia attended the conference. On the last day the Long-eared Owl roosting sites in villages around Kikinda were visited and participants learned about owl netting and ringing in park of the Rusanda Spa in Melenci.

For more information please contact Milan Ruzic, Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia at milruzic@yahoo.com.

11. South Eastern European Green Belt meets again

More than 50 representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations met in November in Ulcinj, Montenegro, to discuss the future of the Green Belt in South-Eastern Europe. The meeting was organized by EuroNatur with the support of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, and the German Federal Environment Agency.

Large parts of the South Eastern European Green Belt are under official protection. Nevertheless, there are important natural treasures along the former border between East and West that urgently need to be conserved. These areas are important retreats for many endangered animal and plant species. Preceded by meetings in Novi Sad, Serbia and Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, this was the third regional meeting of the South Eastern European Green Belt community. One of the main problems pointed out by participants was the lack of functioning administrations in national parks and strict nature reserves which are crucial for the monitoring of compliance with the protection targets and the development of nature areas. In addition, the pressure on the valuable natural treasures along the Green Belt caused by large scale infrastructure projects such as dams, ski areas, wind parks and long distance roads, constantly increases.

For more information please contact Euronatur at greenbelt@euronatur.org.
12. Setting national biodiversity targets in Central and Eastern Europe

A regional workshop on updating national Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) for Central and Eastern European countries has been held in December, in Minsk, Belarus. The workshop, organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) with financial support from the Government of Japan in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus, brought together representatives of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Serbia, Turkmenistan and Ukraine, with participation of international organizations and NGOs such as CMS, UNDP, IUCN, and WWF.

The purpose of the workshop was to assist Parties in updating, revising and implementing their national biodiversity strategy and action plans, as well as to facilitate national implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and the development of national biodiversity targets in the framework of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, agreed at COP10 in Nagoya, Japan. This complex task requires involvement of many stakeholders, not only conservationists but other sectors alike, providing Parties with a good opportunity to look into various biodiversity-related conventions in trying to find synergies between them.

For more information please contact Boris Erg, IUCN SEE at boris.erg@iucn.org.

13. EU Nature-related Policies training

Thirty representatives of non-governmental organizations from Montenegro, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia took part in a training workshop held in Valjevo, end October, and organized within the EU funded project on building capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on major EU policies influencing nature conservation. The topics covered by the training were the concept of Green Infrastructure, ecological networks among which NATURA2000, Environmental Impact Assessment and Rural Development policy.

CSOs are seen as the driving force for transformation of the society in the Western Balkan countries. Establishing close cooperation and a functional network of skilled and knowledgeable CSOs is essential for achieving the above aim. Proper understanding and development of the EU policies having an impact on nature conservation during the pre-accession stage will have an immense effect on their implementation once the countries join the EU.

For more information please contact Veronika Ferdinandova, IUCN SEE at veronika.ferdinandova@iucn.org.

14. Revitalisation of Hutovo Blato

Recent research of biodiversity status and ecosystem condition in Hutovo blato wetlands, BiH, catalogued over 700 species. Twenty-two of these are classified as vulnerable, and five as rare. Water purslane (Ludwigia palustris) is threatened with extinction, due to its habitat loss. Recent studies of the fish fauna identified 39 taxa. Fifteen of these are endemic, many of them with very restricted distribution. Overall, the current status of fish fauna is characterised by an increasing predominance of introduced species in relation to the native and migratory ones. The comparison of the recent results those from 1979 (just before the construction of the upstream hydropower infrastructure) confirms that the number of total recorded bird species decreased by 31% and the number of families by 19%.
WWF Mediterranean Programme Office has launched an initiative to stop further degradation of the wetlands ecosystem of Hutovo Blato through the Dinarc Arc Sustainable Hydropower Initiative. Research and open discussions drove to the conclusion that the restoration of flood meadows in the five biodiversity hotspots of Nature Park Hutovo Blato would stop the biodiversity loss. Hutovo blato has lost 5m$^3$/s of its water due to water diversions for electricity production. Most of this water should be returned in order to recover flood meadows of Hutovo blato.

For more information please contact Zoran Mateljak, WWF at zmateljak@wwf.panda.org.

15. Setting-up of the Emerald Network in SEE

In 2011, significant progress has been achieved on the constitution of the Emerald Network in South-Eastern Europe. The Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs) is to be set up under the Bern Convention. After intensive preparatory work a first biogeographical Emerald seminar targeting six Balkan countries was held at Bar, Montenegro (2-4 Nov. 2011). The Seminar had a major impact, because it initiated Phase II of the Emerald constitution process consisting in the scientific evaluation of proposed ASCIs. During three days, the sufficiency of the proposed Emerald sites to ensure the long term survival of threatened species and habitats of European importance was carried out and over 3200 assessments performed.

The coordination team of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) was at the heart of the success of the meeting, being responsible for the technical and scientific evaluation of the proposed sites. Similar to the Natura 2000 methodology, the Emerald biogeographical process involves national authorities and nature conservation NGOs. Cooperation between Government and NGOs representatives was very positive. NGOs from the region were particularly well prepared for the exercise, receiving support from CEEWeb for biodiversity. Efforts made by national authorities were very encouraging, but in the light of the conclusions from the Seminar the targeted countries received concrete indications and guidelines on which areas, species and habitats they need to focus their future work. More potential Emerald sites should be identified during 2012 and further evaluated at a biogeographical level in 2013.

For more information please contact Iva Obretonova, Council of Europe at Iva.Obretonova@coe.int.

16. Natura 2000 workshops in Serbia and Montenegro

Two recent Natura 2000 workshops gathered 80 representatives from nature conservation sectors of Serbia and Montenegro. The Natura 2000 concept was introduced, as well as the stakeholders’ role in the process of Natura 2000 sites designation. Protected area managers, representatives of environmental authorities and civil society organizations from the two countries were among the participants. Speakers from Romania and Bulgaria presented examples of good practice from the region, and how the NATURA 2000 network took shape in the newest EU member states. Experts from WWF, IUCN, the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, the Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province and Young Researchers of Serbia also shared their knowledge. Representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning and the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management introduced the latest legislation on nature conservation and water protection.

The importance of establishing NATURA 2000 network as a good opportunity to conserve nature and natural resources was highlighted. The necessity of collaboration between various stakeholders was stressed out,
17. Public consultation for the Sava management

The draft Sava River Basin Management Plan has been made available for public consultation in the period 21 December 2011 - 21 April 2012. The Plan itself, as well as the background documents produced during the preparation of the Plan, can be reached at www.savacommission.org/srbmp. This part of the Sava Commission's web-site, created primarily for the purpose of the public consultation process, offers a possibility to the public to respond to the consultation online, by submitting comments or suggestions in the form provided at the site. The response document will be published on the same website after the consultation period expires to show how the comments were taken into account.

For more information please contact Dragan Zeljko, International Sava River Basin Commission at dzeljko@savacommission.org.

18. New steps for conservation of Gornje Podunavlje

The Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province finalized the project „Support of the conservation of Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve“. Combination of research and conservation action in this project is expected to bring new positive impulse to this transboundary site, particularly as it goes parallel to the preparation of establishment of Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, as well as two processes important on national level for the reserve: preparation of a new management plan (2011-2020) and preparation of Spatial Plan of the Area of Special Purpose of Gornje Podunavlje SNR.

Mapping of the key species and damaged habitats was always essential for this area. Three key bird species were mapped: Little Ringed Plover Charadrius dubiu, White-tailed Eagle Haliaeetus albicilla and Black Stork Ciconia nigra. Raptor feeding sites are constructed and equipped with observation hides on two localities and habitat restoration was supported by mowing 75 ha of Široki Rit. Finally, preparation of a Catalogue of Potential Restoration Sites in Gornje Podunavlje SNR was finished. Implementation of this project was supported by WWF – Danube-Carpathian Programme.

For more information please contact Marko Tucakov, Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province at marko.tucakov@pzzp.rs.

19. Three protected natural areas designated in Serbia

Serbia designated three natural protected areas, Special nature reserves “Paljevine” and “Gutavica” and Natural monument “Park Bukovicke Banje” in December 2011. SNR „Paljevine“ is a natural area of special importance, put under protection to conserve the only natural habitat of one variety of a pyramidal fir tree in Serbia. SNR „Gutavica“ situated on the hill Gutavica, includes fir forest (Abies alba Mill.) the last preserved
20. Exhibition “15 Ways How to Protect Nature”

With this exhibition, Young Researchers of Serbia, WWF and Green Home closed the 2 years long project “Partnership Actions for Biodiversity Protection in Western Balkans”, funded through IPA EU funds. “15 Ways how to Protect Nature” was opened during the final project workshop, held in Belgrade, Serbia, in October 2011. The opening speech in Student Cultural Centre was given by PhD Ivica Radovic, state secretary of Serbian Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning. The exhibition was the result of local actions that were implemented by members of NGOs, from the network “Natura 2000 Resource Center” in Serbia and “Natura 2000 Info Center” in Montenegro. During six months, the network members promoted the importance of biodiversity, Natura 2000, and energy efficiency. The exhibition remained opened for one week, displaying 30 photos with advices on how can we enjoy nature or how to find out more about the nature. The exhibition will travel from city to city through both Serbia and Montenegro. Within the project a blog about Natura 2000 was launched: http://ngonatura2000.blogspot.com. By now it has more than 19,000 visits from 57 countries. Although the project is finalized, project team agreed to continue with its administration.

For more information please contact Petra Boic Petrac, WWF at ppetrac@wwfmedpo.org.

21. Petition to protect Ulcinj Salina

Center for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP) was monitoring Ulcinj Salina: salt factory, an IBA, private nature park, Emerald and potential Ramsar and Natura 2000 site, but only couple of dozens of flamingos were visiting it. Since 2010 this number started to rise dramatically and in November 2011 ornithologists of the Center witnessed a flock of 450 flamingos, having some of the individuals ringed. Due to financial issues Salina was unable to guard this area precious for birds, so it became highly visited by poachers, who were gathering in groups and killing birds with no selection. Urging the importance to protect Salina and stressing out that if one flamingo is killed the whole flock will be lost forever, CZIP started with a wide public campaign to stop this illegal hunting. The effort gave some results but due to disturbance and hunting now only about 30 flamingos remain. As a final hit, Ulcinj Salina is by the new Spatial Plan designated to be a touristic development area, with hotels and golf courses built. As Ulcinj Salina’s importance for birds is great and overcomes the national level, CZIP started an online petition to protect Ulcinj Salina. CZIP reminds that, while celebrating 20 years of Montenegro’s proclamation of an ecological state, one of its most important wetlands is planned for destruction. CZIP calls the public to join now and help spread this story and gather as much signatures as possible. The petition is accessible under: http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/protection-of-ulcinj-salina-eng/

For more information please contact Bjanka Prkljacic, Center for Protection and Research of Birds at bjanka.czip@t-com.me.
22. Protection of Romania’s virgin forests

Virgin forests in Romania will receive the status of protected areas and the Ministry of Environment and Forests will work with WWF to identify, map and protect virgin forests. This is stipulated in a Memorandum of Understanding signed at the end of December by the two organizations. The Carpathian Mountains are home to a total of 322,000 hectares of virgin forests with the vast majority being in Romania. 250,000 hectares of virgin forests in Romania, which were so far left unprotected, will now receive a special status. These forests represent up to 65% of the virgin forests still remaining in Europe, outside of Russia. The memorandum was signed two months after WWF launched a popular campaign aimed at saving Romania’s most important and valuable forests. More than 100,000 people signed a petition supporting the cause.

For more information please contact Olga Apostolova, WWF at oapostolova@wwfdcp.bg.

23. Responsible tourism in Radenci

Tabrih Association and International Committee for the Conservation of Mura River “Naša Mura-Unser Mur” continue organizing Nature walks along the Mura River celebrating the World Wetlands Day. This year’s walk will start in Radenci, Slovenia on 29 January in front of the Health Resort Radenci, under the WWD 2012 slogan “Wetland Tourism: A Great Experience”. The main idea of the walk is to include the Mura River and its remaining wetlands and floodplain forests in the list of Wetlands of International Importance protected by Ramsar Convention, and to keep this area free of dams for power stations as part of future International UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mura – Drava – Danube. According to the news from Budapest organisers of the walk are on the right way. Namely, more than 50 nature conservationists from Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia are working jointly on the declaration for establishing the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

For more information please contact Gregor Domanjko, NP Goricko and Tabrih at gregor.domanjko@goricko.info.

24. Threat to Danube sturgeons

The highly endangered sturgeons of the Danube are at risk because of the persistent illegal trade in their caviar, according to a newly published TRAFFIC report compiled for WWF, focusing on Bulgaria and Romania. The two countries hold the only viable populations of wild sturgeons in the European Union (EU), but five of the six native sturgeon species in the Danube are Critically Endangered and sturgeon fishing there has been banned. According to the report, 14 seizures of illegal caviar originating from Bulgaria and Romania were reported by EU Member States between 2000 and 2009. It is of concern that Bulgaria and Romania reported no such seizures. The detected quantities are not very high, but the real volume of illegal trade is likely to be considerably higher.

The report also points out that in 2007, both Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU, meaning any illegal trade has got even harder to detect. In addition, due to their geographical position, the two countries are potential...
gateways for illicit caviar trade from the Caspian Sea, the most important sturgeon fishery in the world. Analysis of legal trade data indicates a large increase in aquaculture production in Bulgaria, raising the need for strict controls. The TRAFFIC report recommends both Romania and Bulgaria as well as EU consumer countries raise awareness among enforcement agencies of the illegal caviar trade and strengthen their capacity to control and monitor the trade.

The report is available at [http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_fish47.pdf](http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_fish47.pdf).

For more information please contact Katalin Kecse-Nagy, WWF at katalin@wwf.hu.

25. Sea turtle action plan

Research has shown that loggerhead (Caretta caretta) and green (Chelonia mydas) turtles migrate through Albanian seas and that Drini Bay is an important feeding and overwintering habitat for these endangered species in the Mediterranean. Following the 3 years long project “Monitoring and conservation of important sea turtle feeding grounds in the Patok Area of Albania”, Medasset prepared an Action Plan for the Conservation of Sea Turtles and their Habitats in Albania. This document will serve as a roadmap for the development of sea turtle monitoring and protection throughout Albania. A stakeholder consultation meeting was held in Tirana in October 2011 to discuss the proposed document. Representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas of UNEP/MAP, Albanian university professors and researchers, fishermen and local NGOs attended the meeting and provided their feedback on the document, highlighting the importance of the implementation of the Action Plan. The reviewed document is expected to be adopted by the Albanian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration in 2012. The meeting was organised by Medasset with the support of the MAVA Foundation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration and under the auspice of the Barcelona Convention and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas of UNEP/MAP.

For more information please contact Liza Boura, Medasset at LizaBoura@medasset.gr or visit [http://www.medasset.org](http://www.medasset.org)
1. New mobile app features the amazing world of frogs

The first ever IUCN mobile application developed together with Nokia is now available for consumer use, ready to download from the Nokia Store. The free-for-download app is the result of a partnership between Nokia and SOS (Save Our Species), a global species conservation fund to protect threatened species and their habitats. The app, “Fantastic World of Frogs,” is an image gallery of frogs for the Nokia N9 Smartphone and allows users to view spectacular photos of frogs, discover their habitat in the Colombian rainforest, and learn more about these incredible creatures. Users can also learn about conservation breakthroughs that the corresponding SOS-sponsored project “Protecting and restoring key sites for globally threatened amphibians,” in partnership with Conservation International (CI), delivered.

2. Butterfly field guide for Serbia

NGO HabiProt published the first field guide for butterflies in Serbia. Each species is represented by excellent photo and illustration, and introduced through simple and short text. In this way everyone can easily recognize butterfly species. The guide intends to involve new, young members with the butterfly study and conservation. The publication was printed with the support of the Netherlands Embassy and Belgrade Secretariat for nature protection.

For more information, please visit: www.habiprot.org.rs

3. Species on the Edge app is launched

Acclaimed by the US Apple Store as ‘New and Noteworthy’, the new Species on the Edge app is a detailed guide to 365 species from the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Featuring stunning photos and thought-provoking information it allows users to learn about threatened species from around the world. Each profile has a description of the species along with its conservation status, geographical location and information on the conservation action required to protect it. Illustrated by stunning images this app is fascinating for nature lovers, environmental enthusiasts and anyone concerned about the state of the world’s flora and fauna.

For more information, please visit: http://www.iucn.org/?uNewsID=8603

4. SEE Ramsar sites featured in UNECE’s assessment of transboundary waters

The Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters was launched at the Seventh “Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference” in Astana, Kazakhstan on 21 September 2011. This assessment has been carried out under the auspices of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention), in close cooperation with water and/or environment administrations of some 50 countries and with involvement of more than 250 experts.

The Second Assessment covers more than 140 transboundary rivers, 25 transboundary lakes, about 200 transboundary groundwaters, and 25 Ramsar Sites and other wetlands of transboundary importance. It presents a broad analysis of transboundary water resources, pressure factors, quantity and quality status, and transboundary impacts, as well as management responses and future trends. The assessment of South-Eastern Europe was prepared in cooperation with
the Global Water Partnership Mediterranean. Among the wetlands assessed with the Ramsar Secretariat and experts were the following sites: Prespa Park Wetlands, Lake Skadar/Shkoder and River Buna/Bojana, and Drava-Danube Confluence, all of which are shared by two or more countries. The information compiled provides stimulus for Governments, river basin organizations, as well as international and non-governmental organizations to take action to improve the status of transboundary waters and related ecosystems. The full report and the executive summary are available in English and in Russian at http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub/second_assessment.html.

For more information please contact Annukka Lipponen, UNECE at annukka.lipponen@unece.org.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

1. IPA CBC

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) offers assistance to countries engaged in the accession process to the European Union (EU) for the period 2007-2013. The aim of the IPA is therefore to enhance the efficiency and coherence of aid by means of a single framework in order to strengthen institutional capacity, cross-border cooperation, economic and social development and rural development. Pre-accession assistance supports the stabilisation and association process of candidate countries and potential candidate countries while respecting their specific features and the processes in which they are engaged. We would particularly like to draw your attention to the several ongoing calls for proposals under the Cross-Border Co-operation component. Please find more information on http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/ipa/crossborder_en.cfm and http://www.interact-eu.net/ipa_news/51.
Guidelines for contributing to the IUCN SEE e-bulletin

IUCN welcomes articles in which you report on the activities related to transboundary cooperation in protected areas and biodiversity conservation. Please inform the public on the status of your projects and actions, as well as events that you attended. You are welcome to announce new meetings and workshops, briefly report on new publications and announce funding opportunities. Please send a photo to accompany your article if appropriate and indicate your email and/or weblink for further reference.

The articles should be 150-250 words in length. Please note this as the interest to distribute news articles through the bulletin is extremely high and we are trying to secure space for all of you to contribute. The editors reserve the right to shorten and modify the text if necessary. Thank you for taking these guidelines into consideration!

IUCN Regional Office for Europe

IUCN's European region covers the European continent, Russia and Central Asia, and includes the European Union overseas entities. Representing one third of the global membership, this is IUCN's largest programmatic region. Four offices in Switzerland, Belgium, Georgia and Serbia coordinate action in the region. Together we strive to meet our goals for a sustainable future by using the expertise and the strength of the global IUCN network.

www.iucn.org/europe

Our Mission

"To influence, encourage and assist societies in Europe to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable."