Portfolio

of Actions for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Black Sea Coastal Wetlands

Wetlands International Black Sea Programme

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The publication is done in frame of Wetlands International project "Establishing the foundations for the launch of a Black Sea Regional Initiative for the wise use of coastal wetlands (BlackSeaWet)". The Portfolio of Actions was prepared by national teams involved in the project. Present actions needed for coastal wetlands conservation and sustainable use are represented in a format understood by donors. It is supposed that the Portfolio will be used to achieve objectives of the new Ramsar regional initiative (BlackSeaWet).

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 40 years there have been a number of initiatives to protect and restore the ecosystems of the Black Sea. None the less, Black Sea coastal wetlands continue to be degraded and adversely impacted. Such is the scale of this transformation that it is believed that only an initiative designed specifically to address coastal wetland issues will lead to the impetus required to engage all relevant players — intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental — by taking a partnership approach, blending local activities involving local people, together with a strategic approach leading to a sustainable long-term initiative.

This is why Wetlands International has begun by initiating the project, 'Establishing the foundations for the launch of a Black Sea Regional Initiative for the wise use of coastal wetlands (BlackSeaWet)', supported by BBI MATRA. An objective of the project is to establish the foundation for the future launch of a strategic regional wetland initiative (BlackSeaWet), which will catalyse the conservation and sustainable development of Black Sea coastal wetlands. A Portfolio of Actions focused on wetland conservation and sustainable development is one of the main outputs of the project. The Portfolio has been prepared by National Working Groups that have been created within the framework of the project in the Black Sea countries; it presents their vision of the most urgent Actions to be undertaken in order to conserve coastal wetlands. It is anticipated that the Portfolio will form the basis for future applications to donors for funding to support Black Sea coastal wetlands.

LIST OF PROPOSED ACTIONS

No.	Name of Action	Duration (years)	Location	Amount (Euros)
	BULGARIA			
1.	Establishment of a monitoring system to detect the movements of wetland-associated birds	5	All BS countries	4,500,000
2.	Utilisation of wetlands by tracked, globally threatened bird species	5–7	All BS countries	1,250,000
3.	Establishment of a joint database on projected and existing wind-power turbines in the Black Sea coastal region	5	All BS countries	170,000
4.	Review of EIA procedures and practices in the Black Sea countries	2	All BS countries	120,000
	Subtotal			6,040,000
	GEORGIA			
1.	Ex-situ activities to conserve <i>Quercus imeretina</i> , <i>Quercus hartwissiana</i> , <i>Pterocarya pterocarpa</i> and <i>Buxus colchicus</i>	3	Georgia	50,000
2.	Rehabilitation of Kolkheti relict forest	3	Georgia	50,000
3.	Prospects for sphagnum farming in the Kolkheti lowlands	3	Georgia	20,000
4.	Mires and forest of Kolkheti	1	Georgia	40,000
5.	Development of alternatives to cattle grazing in Kolkheti	2	Georgia	80,000
6.	ECODYPER: ECOsystem DYnamics of PERcolating Peatland Wetlands of International Importance	3	Georgia	200,000
7.	Reptiles of the Kolkheti wetlands	1	Georgia	40,000
8.	A public awareness campaign on the conservation and wise use of Kolkheti wetlands	3	Georgia	70,000
9.	International Conference: 'Kolkheti wetlands and the Ramsar Convention: conservation and wise use'	1	Georgia	40,000
10.	Spiders of the Kolkheti wetlands	3	Georgia	40,000
11.	Publication of a field guide, Medicinal Plants of the Kolkheti Wetlands	1	Georgia	7,000
12.	Re-creation of traditional activities for the local population living near the Kolkheti protected areas in order to improve their socio-economic conditions	1	Georgia	70,000
13.	Development of sustainable methods to control Hyphantria cunea along the Kolkheti coast of the Black Sea	1	Georgia	50,000

14.	Production of a field guide, <i>The Flora of the Kolkheti Wetlands</i>	3	Georgia	30,000
15.	Pilot training courses at Kolkheti Ramsar sites	1	Georgia	20,000
16.	Invasive flora of the Kolkheti wetlands	2	Georgia	25,000
17.	Atlas of the Habitats and Biodiversity of the Kolkheti Lowlands	2	Georgia	50,000
18.	Dragonflies and damselflies of the Kolkheti wetlands	1	Georgia	15,000
	Subtotal			897,000
	TURKEY			
1.	Hydrological modelling for a planned drainage system at Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site	2	Turkey	75,000
2.	Implementation of the Management Plan in Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site	5	Turkey	1,750,000
3.	Biodiversity conservation and monitoring in İğneada Longos forest	5	Turkey	200,000
4.	Social and economic development in İğneada Longos forest	5	Turkey	530,000
5.	Eco-tourism and recreation in İğneada Longos forest	5	Turkey	780,000
6.	Communication strategies for İğneada Longos forest	5	Turkey	170,000
7.	Eco-tourism at Acarlar Lake	5	Turkey	135,000
8.	Applied natural history education for students in Sakarya District	2	Turkey	60,000
9.	Production of a management plan for the Sakarya Delta	2	Turkey	120,000
10.	Production of a management plan for the Yesilirmak Delta	2	Turkey	200,000
11.	Eco-tourism at Sarikum Lake	2	Turkey	100,000
	Subtotal			4,120,000
	ROMANIA			
1.	The development of management objectives for wise use of the Romanian Black Sea coastal wetlands with a view to achieving wetland management that can respond to the impacts of global climate change and sea-level rise	2	Romania	250,000
2.	Integrated monitoring, including a programme to survey bird populations of Black Sea coastal wetlands	1.5	Romania	300,000
3.	Wetland restoration in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in order to improve the habitats of birds and other species of flora and fauna	2	Romania	2,000,000
4.	Amelioration of the hydrological conditions in the existing nature wetlands in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in order to improve bird habitats	1.5	Romania	10,000,000

	RUSSIA			
1.	Promotion of the EU Water Framework Directive in the Russian Federation through integrated water resource management in the Kuban River Basin	1.5	Russia	80,000
2.	The Kuban River Delta	2	Russia	18,000
3.	Rice bays: important habitats for waterbirds and waders in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov region (a case study from Krasnodar Krai, Russia)	2	Russia	30,000
4.	Conservation of island ecosystems of the Northwest Caucasus	2	Russia	45,000
5.	Man-made wetlands and their importance for the conservation of biodiversity	2	Russia	45,000
	Subtotal			218,000
	UKRAINE			
1.	Promotion of the 'wise use of wetlands' approach in the Black Sea region	3	All BS countries	400,000
2.	Promotion and encouragement of the use of standard wetland monitoring methodologies	2.5	All BS countries	450,000
3.	Improvement of national systems for estimating waterbird harvests	2.5	All BS countries	350,000
4.	Fish-eating waterbirds and local economies: towards resolution/mitigation of conflict	2.5	All BS countries	350,000
5.	Facilitation of civil society involvement in coastal wetland conservation and wise use	3	All BS countries	500,000
6.	Restoration of the Dniester delta meadows	2	Ukraine	100,000
	Subtotal			2,150,000
	Total			25,975,000

BULGARIA

Action 1

Establishment of a monitoring system to detect the movements of wetland-associated birds

Location

All Black Sea countries

Target groups

- 1. Governments and local decision-makers in the Black Sea region
- 2. Investors in the region and other stakeholders
- 3. Governments in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and East Africa

Duration

Five (5) years minimum; the synchronised effort will be very useful for comparing the proportions of individual migrants in different parts of the Black Sea.

A long-term, standardised effort is needed to increase knowledge of migration and population trends.

Total budget required

4,500,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The importance of the Black Sea coastal wetlands for migrant birds is well known. Huge populations of birds are regularly funnelled along the east and west coasts of the sea on their seasonal migrations. Wetlands in the region are regularly utilised by large concentrations of wintering, migrating and breeding species. While some migrant populations such as White and Dalmatian Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus* and *P. crispus breed* in the region, others (Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*) join the Black Sea flyway from distant breeding grounds in Europe, and continue as far south as southern Africa, while a third group (Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*, White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*) winters here. There is a long history of efforts to census bird migration in the region, but the surveys have always been conducted separately in each Black Sea country. Because of the lack of funding and/or cooperation, surveys have also been performed in different years and at different times of year, and with a varying level of effort, which reduces their value and potential as indicators of environmental change. The need for this Action is urgent in view of proposals for rapid development of economic infrastructure along the flyways, and continued desertification in the south.

Description of Action

- 1. Identify and count birds in flight in order to build on existing experience, from the Black Sea region and other parts of the world, of surveying birds in flight in order to create a common monitoring system using standard methodology and an integrated radar network. Coordination will ensure the use of the same technology and methods, production of identical databases and harmonised timing of the census. The use of a standard methodology will increase the value of the monitoring in the ways described below.
- 2. Conduct education and awareness programmes.

Expected results

- 1. Five (5) years will be enough to provide a snapshot of the present situation in the Black Sea region and in the context of the Eastern European Eastern African flyway region.
- 2. Long-term monitoring will present a unique opportunity to detect any changes in migratory populations, thus enhancing conservation in the whole eastern European eastern African region.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

Operational Objective 19.1: Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others.

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Action 2

Utilisation of wetlands by tracked, globally threatened bird species

Tracking globally threatened bird species in order to evaluate and improve the role of Black Sea wetlands in their survival

Location

All Black Sea countries

Target groups

- 1. Governments and local decision-makers in the region
- 2. The general public in the region

Duration

5-7 years

Total budget required

1,250,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Globally threatened species (Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*, Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* and others) regularly use Black Sea wetlands. The presence of these species is often one of the main reasons why the wetlands are protected. However, there is:

- little knowledge of wetland use, individual time budgets, habitat use and individual movements of globally threatened species; and
- insufficient awareness among the general public and hunters of globally threatened birds;
- little international coordination in day-to-day research and conservation activities; and
- underused potential for education, public awareness and advocacy purposes.

The tourism sector largely ignores the value of Black Sea wetlands and does not generate enough revenue to contribute to their management.

Description of Action

- 1. Fit radio or satellite transmitters to a range of globally threatened species that regularly breed, migrate and/or winter in the Black Sea area. The birds will then be followed in the field, and information on movements and location will be collected, made available on the internet, at schools and in the media in the region.
- 2. Use data on threats and the birds' relative use and choice of wetlands to enhance the conservation of species and the wetland sites they use.
- 3. A film will be made in order to gain public support.

Expected results

- 1. Improved data will be obtained on individual wetland use, habitat use within wetlands, the importance of adjacent habitat for integrated conservation and wise use, and threats.
- 2. The data will provide Black Sea countries with international advocacy material; the educational, awareness raising and conservation research value of the Action is very high.
- 3. The Action will function as a driver for improved management, wise use and advocacy.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Fully in line with national priorities, action plans and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objective 6.1: Encourage active and informed participation of local communities and indigenous people, in particular women and youth, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- Operational Objective 18.1: Develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- Operational Objective 19.1: Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others.

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Action 3

Establishment of a joint database on projected and existing wind-power turbines in the Black Sea coastal region

Location

All Black Sea coastal countries

Target group

Governments in the region

Duration

5 years

Total budget required

170.000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

There is a lack of integrated planning and transboundary information on the development of wind turbines, which is a barrier to adequate monitoring and conservation in terms of their potential cumulative impacts on wetland biodiversity.

Description of Action

- 1. Gather data on wind turbines.
- 2. Hold consultations and negotiations with municipalities to identify opportunities for SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) on development/spatial plans (and their modification).

Expected results

- 1. A common database will be produced on windpower generators in the coastal region.
- 2. Capacity for calculating cumulative effects and for advocacy will be improved.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objective 19.1: Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others.
- Operational Objective 2.2: Develop, review, amend when necessary, and implement national or supra-national policies, legislation, institutions and practices, including impact assessment and valuation, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Convention, and especially the wise use principle, is being fully applied.
- 2.2.2: Apply Strategic Environmental Assessment practices when reviewing national and provincial policies, programmes, and plans that may impact upon wetlands.
- GO1 {CPs} 2.2.3: Ensure that these impact assessments include full and appropriate consideration of the environmental, social, economic, and cultural impacts. (Refer also to Action 1.2.6) GO1, 2 {CPs, OCs}

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Action 4

Review of EIA procedures and practices in Black Sea countries

Location

All countries

Target group

Governments in the region

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

120,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Both the procedure for and practice of EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) are weak in Bulgaria. The EIA is designed in such a way that it is difficult to produce a negative assessment, regardless of a project's real impact on wetland biodiversity.

Description of Action

- 1. Produce a report on the existing legal procedures and a review of practical implementation in order to identify loopholes.
- 2. Prepare improvements to the EIA system.

Expected results

There will be an improvement in knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the legal system in the region. This will strengthen advocacy for improved wetland conservation.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objective 19.1: Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others.
- Operational Objective 2.2: Develop, review, amend when necessary, and implement national or supra-national policies, legislation, institutions and practices, including impact assessment and valuation, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Convention, and especially the wise use principle, is being fully applied.
- 2.2.2: Apply Strategic Environmental Assessment practices when reviewing national and provincial policies, programmes, and plans that may impact upon wetlands.
- GO1 {CPs} 2.2.3:...Ensure that these impact assessments include full and appropriate consideration of the environmental, social, economic, and cultural impacts. (Refer also to Action 1.2.6) GO1, 2 {CPs, OCs}

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GEORGIA

Action 1

Ex-situ activities to conserve Quercus imeretina, Quercus hartwissiana, Pterocarya pterocarpa and Buxus colchicus

Location

Kolkheti lowlands

Target groups

Scientists, local people, environmentalists

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

50,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The ambitious socialist agricultural development of the Soviet era was accompanied by massive deforestation in the Kolkheti lowlands. Virgin forests were replaced by plantations of tea, citrus and tung tree. Canals were dug to drain the wetlands. Large-scale destructive human impact on the Kolkheti mires started at the end of the 19th century. In particular, since the collapse of the Soviet Union pressure on the Kolkheti lowlands has increased rapidly.

Current socio-economic conditions, high population pressure and the increasing demand for timber have caused even greater damage to the forest. The dense and valuable Colchic forests are still being devastated. The oaks *Quercus imeretina* and *Q. hartwissiana*, Caucasian Wingnut *Pterocarya pterocarpa* and Colchic Boxwood *Buxus colchicus* have become rare forest elements and survive only in places that are difficult to access. Deforested areas are used for agriculture. The fast-growing Black Alder *Alnus barbata* has become dominant where man has had an impact.

Description of Action

- 1. Undertake field expeditions.
- 2. Collect seed.
- 3. Rehabilitate the existing understorey.
- 4. Prepare ground for seedlings.

Expected results

- 1. A site is prepared to conserve *Quercus imeretina*, *Q. hartwissiana*, *Pterocarya pterocarpa* and *Buxus colchicus* ex-situ.
- 2. A database is established to support the rehabilitation of Kolkheti's relict forest.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objective 4: Restoration and Rehabilitation
- Operational Objective: 4.1
- Resolution VII.17: Restoration as an element of national planning for wetlands conservation and wise use
- Resolution VIII.16: Principles and guidelines for wetlands restoration.

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Action 2

Rehabilitation of Kolkheti relict forest

Location

Kolkheti lowlands

Target groups

Scientists, local people, environmentalists

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

50,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The Caucasus region was recently designated as one of 25 global 'biodiversity hotspots' (Myers *et al.* 2000). The Kolkheti lowlands, as a part of western Asia, form one of the last global Ice Age refuges. The lowlands harbour relict woody plants, i.e. plants that were widespread in Europe many millions of years ago and became extinct there during successive Ice Ages.

The forests of the Kolkheti lowlands have been degraded as a result of drainage, tree felling, planting of non-native woody plants, and invasion of alien species.

The forests are fragmented as a result of the development of infrastructure, industrialisation and conversion of land for agriculture. The oaks *Quercus hartwissiana* and *Q. imeretina*, Caucasian Wingnut *Pterocarya pterocarpa* and Colchic Boxwood Buxus colchicus have become rare forest elements and survive only in places that are difficult to access. Deforested areas are used for agriculture. The fast-growing Black Alder *Alnus barbata* has become dominant where man has had an impact.

Neither Tikeri nor Khobi Forest enjoys conservation status. There is a lack of forest management and qualified scientific personnel.

Description of Action

- 1. Hold workshops in Tbilisi and Poti.
- 2. Undertake fieldwork in Kolkheti.
- 3. Collect specimens in Kolkheti.
- 4. Collect data on the environmental parameters of Kolkheti.
- 5. Assess the ecological situation.
- 6. Increase the awareness of local people.
- 7. Analyse the data collected.
- 8. Establish plans for forest management and reforestation.
- 9. Create a conservation plan for biodiversity conservation in Kolkheti.
- 10. Assist the country in the formulation, review and endorsement of a biodiversity/strategic action plan for Kolkheti.

Expected results

- 1. The ecological status of Colchic forests has been evaluated.
- 2. Habitat (wetland) rehabilitation programmes have been established in line with Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008 Recommendation 4.1.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objective: 4 Restoration and Rehabilitation
- Operational Objective: 4.1
- Resolution VII.17: Restoration as an element of national planning for wetlands conservation and wise use:
- Resolution VIII.16: Principles and guidelines for wetlands restoration.

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Action 3

Prospects for sphagnum farming in the Kolkheti lowlands

Location

Kolkheti lowlands – Grigoleti, Maltakva and Kobuleti

Target groups

Local people, local authorities, environmentalists

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

20,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Worldwide, more than 30 million m3 of white peat (slightly humidified sphagnum peat) are used each year for substrates in professional horticulture. To replace this fossil material by a renewable and high quality resource, new sphagnum biomass appears to be very suitable.

Description of Action

- 1. Conduct a research project to focus on developing sphagnum farming opportunities on degraded peatlands and fallow or poor quality arable land in the Kolkheti lowlands.
- 2. Develop an ecologically and economically profitable project in the Kolkheti wetlands.

Expected results

- 1. Habitat will be rehabilitated.
- 2. The wetlands will be conserved and the 'wise use' approach will be taken to managing them.
- 3. There will be socio-economic improvement for local people.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objective 4: Restoration and Rehabilitation;
- Operational Objective 3.1: Integration of wetlands wise use into sustainable development

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Action 4

Mires and forest of Kolkheti

Location

Kolkheti

Target groups

Scientists, environmentalists, governmental and non-governmental organisations

Duration

One year

Total budget required

40,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The Caucasus region was recently designated as one of 25 global 'biodiversity hotspots' (Myers *et al.* 2000). The Kolkheti lowlands, as a part of western Asia, form one of the last global Ice Age refuges. The lowlands harbour relict woody plants, i.e. plants which were widespread in Europe many millions of years ago and became extinct there during successive Ice Ages.

In addition to the relict forest, Kolkheti is home to the globally unique Ispani II and Imnati marshes, which are sphagnum percolation bogs.

Since 1997 the Kolkheti wetlands have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

There are several protected areas in Kolkheti: Kolkheti National Park and Kobuleti Protected Areas, Kintrishi Protected Areas, Mtirala National Park, and the proposed Transboundary Machakhela Protected Area.

Description of Action

- 1. Prepare a format to nominate the 'Mires and forest of Kolkheti' as a Property (site) for inscription on the World Heritage List:
- 2. Identify the Property (country, name, geographical coordinates, maps and plans, description of property).
- 3. Ensure the integrity of the nomination format.
- 4. Determine the state of conservation and factors affecting the Property.
- 5. Identify environmental pressures on the Property.
- 6. Give details of the protection status and management plans for the Property.

Expected results

- 1. A project proposal, 'Mires and forest of Kolkheti', will be prepared for the nomination of the site as a Property for inscription on the UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage List.
- 2. In accordance with the Black Sea policy, synergy among programmes run by intergovernmental institutions, such as UNEP (UN Environment Programme), MAB (Man and the Biosphere), UNESCO and IOC (International Ornithological Committee), and the regional efforts of decentralised scientific and professional networks will be improved.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Black Sea policy: international programmes should benefit to the maximum from the capacity and efforts that exist at the regional level. Such collaborative efforts and task sharing will produce not only higher quality products, but will also be significantly more cost effective (MEDCOAST's Alexandria Declaration).

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- General Objective 2: Wetlands of International Importance
- Operational Objective 3: Integration of wetlands wise use into sustainable development

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Action 5

Development of alternatives to cattle grazing in Kolkheti

Location

Kolkheti Grigoleti – Maltakva, Grigoleti and Kobuleti

Target groups

Local people, environmentalists

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

80,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

There is a need to halt the damaging effects of grazing in the globally unique Ispani mire complex and Imnati mire ecosystem by stimulating the development of sustainable alternatives by and for local cattle owners.

Description of Action

1. Inform local people of the international values of Ispani and Imnati mires and of how grazing damages the mires.

- 2. Stimulate local graziers to develop practical solutions to avoid the negative impact of cattle grazing by improving the carrying capacity of other grazing lands in the surrounding area.
- 3. Close the entrances to the mires.

Expected results

- 1. Local awareness of the value of the Ispani mire complex and Imnati mire ecosystem is raised.
- 2. Forest plantation and management is improved.
- 3. A concrete plan is developed by local cattle owners for reducing damage by developing sustainable alternatives to cattle grazing in the immediate surrounds of Kobuleti, Grigoleti and Maltakva.
- 4. Real, concrete actions are planned (together with essential ongoing research into, e.g., carrying capacity).

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

General Objective 1.

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Action 6

ECODYPER: ECOsystem DYnamics of PERcolating Peatland Wetlands of International Importance

Location

Kolkheti

Target groups

Scientists, governmental and non-governmental organisations, local people, PhD students

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

200,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Whereas in most ecosystems matter cycling is relatively fast, waterlogging in mires leads to an inhibited decomposition of dead organic material and consequently to the accumulation of peat. Water-level fluctuations have a large influence on the vegetation and hydraulic properties of mires. Low water levels lead to increased decomposition and consequently to a decrease in pore size, storage coefficient, elasticity and hydraulic conductivity of the upper peat. This effect is particularly important in mires with substantial lateral water flow. When water levels drop, the increased decomposition leads irreversibly to a smaller hydraulic conductivity of the uppermost peat, and thus to a decreased subsurface run-off, and a retarded lowering or even a rise of the water table. This negative feedback mechanism makes mires with water flow fundamentally different from mires with predominantly standing water.

Description of Action

- 1. Characterise the plant species and vegetation types that form percolation mires.
- 2. Measure above and below-ground plant productivity in percolation mires.
- 3. Measure decomposition rates in percolation mires.
- 4. Assess the hydrological characteristics of the percolation mire acrotelm.
- 5. Take steps to ensure ongoing peatland expertise in Georgia.

Expected results

Mire ecosystems of global importance will be conserved.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Recommendation 7.1: Biodiversity and wetland conservation: The importance of increased efforts for the inventory, study, and evaluation of peatlands.
- General Objectives 2: Wetlands of International Importance. The list of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar list) constitutes the flagship of the Convention.
 As such, it deserves special attention by all those responsible for, or interested in, the implementation of the treaty.

Name of organisation

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Action 7

Reptiles of the Kolkheti wetlands

Location

Kolkheti

Target groups

Scientists, governmental and non-governmental organisations, local people

Duration

One year

Total budget required

40,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

There is little information on the reptiles of the Kolkheti wetlands: no data have been collected, and there are no publications on the subject.

Description of Action

Undertake field trips to survey reptiles in the Kolkheti wetlands.

Expected results

There will be an exchange of scientific experience and knowledge.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Relevant to national and international Black Sea policy (including The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008).

Name of organisation

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Action 8

A public awareness campaign on the conservation and wise use of the Kolkheti wetlands

Location

Kolkheti

Target groups

Local communities, students, teachers, scientists, schoolchildren, local government, business sector, decision-makers, mass media and the general public in Georgia

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

70,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The wetland area of Kolkheti suffers from considerable anthropogenic impact. Medicinal and decorative plants are gathered from the wild; rare and endangered species of wild animals and birds are hunted. Illegal fishing and wood cutting, peat extraction, cattle grazing, invasive (alien) species, and dumping of domestic wastes and sludge are also very serious problems.

Description of Action

According the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objective 9: Action 9.1.2: Ensure that, based on a review of relevant activities, target groups, and threats, a national action plan for wetlands CEPA has been formulated, has been made widely available, and is being implemented.
- Action 9.1.6: Undertake campaigns, ideally linked to World Wetlands Day (2 February), to raise awareness of wetland conservation and wise use issues, and seek further national and international recognition of World Wetlands Day.
- 1. Establish an LA-21 (Local Agenda 21) group:
- 2. Organise meetings with the relevant stakeholders, business sector and local authorities to make joint efforts for the conservation and wise use of the Kolkheti Ramsar sites.
- 3. Assist the local community to make a social analysis of the use of protected areas and future prospects. The project team will develop information campaigns to contribute to public awareness of global warming, conservation of rare and endangered species, pristine ecosystems, protection of natural monuments, a waste minimisation and management strategy, protection of water from pollution and dissemination of the principles of sustainable use of natural resources for present and future generations.

Expected results

1. The establishment of a strong and organised LA-21 team.

- 2. Booklets, flyers and postcards etc. will be published to raise public awareness.
- 3. Insofar as waste is a very serious problem in Kolkheti and on the whole Black Sea coastline of Georgia, the Action will lead to:
 - a. An increase in the role of the mass media in relation to nature conservation and wise use;
 - b. The creation of environmental study courses.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objective 20.1: Training
- Recommendation 4.5: Education and training
- Recommendation 6.5: Establishment of further wetland manager training programmes

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Action 9

International Conference: 'Kolkheti wetlands and the Ramsar Convention: conservation and wise use'

Location

Kolkheti

Target groups

Scientists, governmental and non-governmental organisations

Duration

One year

Total budget required

40,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Kolkheti is *a hotspot* of biodiversity, with the world's first identified sphagnum percolation mires (Wetlands of International Importance [Ramsar Convention] since 1997), and is the refuge many relict and endemic species. The unique biodiversity of Kolkheti is threatened by high anthropogenic impact, i.e. deforestation, and low public awareness.

Description of Action

- 1. Invite experts from the Ramsar Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Kyoto Protocol, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Wetlands International, International Mire Conservation Group and countries of the Black Sea and Mediterranean regions to visit Kolkheti.
- 2. Organise an excursion to the Kolkheti wetlands for the experts.
- 3. Organise a workshop.

Expected results

- 1. International and national cooperation will be fostered.
- 2. A national resolution will be established for Georgia.

- 3. Wetlands will be conserved and used wisely.
- 4. Eco-tourism will be developed.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- General Objective 3: International cooperation

Name of organisation

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Action 10

Spiders of the Kolkheti wetlands

Location

Kolkheti lowlands

Target group

Scientists

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

40,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

No information exists about the insects and spiders in the Kolkheti wetlands.

Description of Action

- 1. Undertake field trips in the Kolkheti wetlands to include zoological surveys, insect collection, photography of species, drawing (black and white) of species, mapping.
- 2. Provide trainings (study tour).
- 3. Prepare a field guide for publication.

Expected results

- 1. A field guide, *Spiders of the Kolkheti wetlands*, will be published.
- 2. A range of specialists (university staff, zoologists, environmentalists, scientists, etc) will be enlisted to promote the enhanced awareness and understanding of the importance of wetland biodiversity.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

Operational Objective 9: Communication, education and public awareness.

Name of organisation

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Action 11

Publication of a field guide, Medicinal Plants of the Kolkheti Wetlands

Location

Kolkheti lowlands

Target groups

Scientists, local people

Duration

One year

Total budget required

7,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The use of medicinal plants, such as Sweet Flag Acorus calamus, Branched Bur-reed Sparganium neglectum, Yellow Flag Iris pseudocorus, Caucasian Wingnut Pterocarya pterocarpa, Water Mint Mentha aquatica, Purple Loosestrife Lythrum salicaria and Bogbean/Buckbean Menyanthes trifoliata, in Kolkheti has a long history. It is even mentioned in the story of the Argonauts, when the wise Medea prepared a medicine from the flowers grown where "Prometheus' (Amiran's) blood soaked the soil".

Description of Action

- 1. Collect historical data and information from local people.
- 2. Take photographs of specimens.
- 3. Publish a field guide, Medicinal Plants of the Kolkheti Wetlands.

Expected results

There is raised awareness of the medicinal plants of the Kolkheti wetlands.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea Policy

In accordance with Black Sea policy: raise awareness of the uniqueness of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea coastal environment.

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Action 12

Re-creation of traditional activities for the local population living near the Kolkheti protected areas in order to improve their socio-economic conditions

Location

Kolkheti

Target groups

Local communities, tourists

Duration

One year

Total budget required

70,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The peatlands/wetlands of Kolkheti fulfil many ancient traditional functions: they provide material for construction and potting, spices, and resources for hunting, fishing and beekeeping. Along with honey the bees provide wax, which is used to manufacture moulds for metal casting. Horse riding is a traditional sport.

The community cultivated mulberry trees (Morus) for silkworm breeding.

Since the late Stone Age fibre processed in Kolkheti has been used to manufacture fishing nets, clothes, and sacks in which to store and transport grain crops and loadstone. The community made wide use of Hibiscus *Hibiscus ponticus* and *Kostaletskia pentacarpa*. Today the *Hibiscus ponticus* population is in decline: only small stands can be observed in the Churia, Nabada and Imnati mires.

Since the early Bronze Age animal husbandry (cattle, pigs, sheep, goat, buffaloes) has been widely practised. In Megrelia the community traditionally ranches buffaloes to make 'sulu-guni' (traditional Georgian cheese) and smoked meat. The degraded peatlands provide excellent pasture. The meadows around Nabada and Ispani are used to make hay for cattle.

Description of Action

1. Undertake social analyses among the local population in different parts of the area to establish what kinds of traditional activities they prefer. Encourage the local people to take part in decision-making processes in relation to the Kolkheti wetlands and their conservation and wise use.

Expected results

- 1. There will be a decline in anthropogenic impact.
- 2. There will be an increase in public awareness of the conservation and wise use of internationally important wetlands.
- 3. Socio-economic conditions for local people will improve.
- 4. Eco-tourism will be developed.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objective 6: Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values.
- Recommendation 5.8: Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves.
- Recommendation 6.3: Involving local and indigenous people in the management of Ramsar wetlands.
- Operational Objective 7: Private sector involvement.

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Action 13

Development of sustainable methods to control Hyphantria cunea along the Kolkheti coast of the Black Sea

Location

Kolkheti

Target groups

Local communities, tourists, environmentalists, scientists

Duration

One year

Total budget required

50,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Hyphantria cunea, the American White Moth or False Webworm, is a lepidopteran of North America origin that invaded most of Europe and Asia during the 20th century. Since 2007, damage has been observed in Kolkheti Relict Forest and in protected areas such as the Kolkheti National Park and Kobuleti Protected Areas as well as in the Kintrishi State Reserve and Mtirala National Park. The Kolkheti lowlands are particularly at risk because they represent a unique ecosystem heavily populated by relict and endemic species. Defoliation has already been observed on various species such as Black Alder Alnus barbata, buckthorn Rhamnus frangula, oak Quercus imeretina, Causcasian Wingnut Pterocarya pterocarpa etc. The present practice of using chemical pesticides is not sustainable because it also kills all natural enemies that could eventually control the pest.

Description of Action

- 1. Organise a workshop on the control of *H. cunea* to share experiences with scientists and pest-control managers from all regions of Georgia and experts from Europe, Russia and China.
- 2. Assess which control methods are best adapted to the Georgian situation and formulate collaborative projects to develop and implement these methods.
- 3. Move immediately from a strategy involving only chemicals to the use of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), thereby limiting the detrimental effects of the control of *H. cunea* in urban and agricultural areas.

Expected results

- 1. A short-term control strategy will be developed.
- 2. A long term control and research strategy will be planned and a proposal written.
- 3. A more sustainable approach will be taken to control, resulting in an improvement in public health and protection of biodiversity.

- 4. There will be extensive collaboration with countries experiencing a similar problem, and collaborative programmes will be developed.
- 5. In collaboration with the Global Invasive Species Programme, Cabi-Bioscience, practical guidance for the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species will continue to be developed.
- 6. There will be less anthropogenic impact:
 - a. wetlands of international importance will be conserved and managed with a 'wise-use' approach;
 - b. the socio-economic level of the local people will be raised;
 - c. tourism and eco-tourism will be developed.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

In accordance with Black Sea policy: Development of tools and techniques for coastal and marine management. Collaboration of basin-wide scientific institutions through existing or future networks should be encouraged.

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objective 5: Invasive alien species, and
- Operational Objective 6: Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values.

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Action 14

Production of a field guide, The Flora of the Kolkheti wetlands

Location

Kolkheti lowlands

Target group

Scientists, local people, environmentalists

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

30,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The Caucasus region was recently designated as one of 25 global 'biodiversity hotspots' (Myers *et al.* 2000) and the Kolkheti lowlands, as a part of western Asia, form one of the last global Ice Age refuges. The wetlands harbour relict woody plants, e.g. plants which were widespread in Europe many millions of years ago and became extinct there during successive Ice Ages. However, in Georgia there is no comprehensive coloured key to or atlas of the flora of Kolkheti illustrating relict and endemic species and giving their habitats and distribution maps.

Description of Action

- 1. Undertake field trips to the Kolkheti wetlands. Photograph plants, take herbarium specimens and collect seeds in order to create a database.
- 2. Make black and white drawings of species.
- 3. Prepare a field guide for publication.

Expected results

The publication of *The Flora of the Kolkheti wetlands*.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- General Objective 2: Wetlands of International Importance
- Resolution VII.14: Invasive species and wetlands
- Resolution VI.9: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Myers, N., Mittermeier, R.A., Mittermeier, C.G., da Fonseca, G.A.B. and Kent, J. J. 2000. Biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities. *Nature* 403: 853–858.

Action 15

Pilot training courses at Kolkheti Ramsar sites

Location

Kolkheti National Park, Kobuleti Protected Areas

Target groups

Staff of protected areas, local authorities, university students, schoolchildren

Duration

One year

Total budget required

20,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

No efforts have been made to make use of the Ramsar Convention in terms of training. No training seminars have ever been given on the globally unique Kolkheti wetlands ecosystem. The terms and conditions of Ramsar designation have been violated on many occasions.

Description of Action

- 1. Develop general training modules for the use of Ramsar Handbooks in the following topics:
 - a. making an inventory (of Kolkheti);
 - b. impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment;
 - c. the impact of climate change;
 - d. education and public awareness techniques.

- 2. Train scientists in mire research in order to develop a group of specialists able to conduct the investigations necessary to draw up management plans, and undertake monitoring in the protected areas.
- 3. Identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition, and implement appropriate responses.

Expected results

Public awareness will be increased.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objective 20.1: Identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands of Kolkheti and implement appropriate response.
- Recommendation 4.5: Education and training.
- Recommendation 6.5: Establishment of further wetland manager training programmes.

Name of organisation

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Action 16

Invasive flora of the Kolkheti wetlands

Location

Kolkheti wetlands

Target group

Scientists

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

25,000 Euro

Background/problem to be addressed

The ambitious socialist agricultural development of the Soviet era was accompanied by massive deforestation in the Kolkheti lowlands. Large-scale destructive human impact on the Kolkheti mires started at the end of the 19th century. In particular, since the collapse of the Soviet Union pressure on the Kolkheti lowlands has increased rapidly. Further, as a result of peat extraction and melioration activities Maltakva and Grigoleti mires have lost their original structure and functions: they are now covered by secondary cenosis. Meadows are covered by alien plant species: the alien flora of the Kolkheti wetlands comprises 442 species. At present, the degraded Kolkheti lowland forests harbour only a few native plants, whereas the number of alien species is rapidly increasing

Description of Action

In accordance with the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008: Operational Objective 5: Invasive alien species, Action: 5.1.1. Develop guidance and promote protocols and actions to prevent, control or eradicate invasive alien species in wetland systems; Implement available guidance relating to the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species. Address the problem posed by invasive species in wetland ecosystems in a decisive and holistic manner, making use, as appropriate, of tools and guidance developed by various institutions and processes:

1. Undertake field work in the Kolkheti Ramsar site — conduct investigations and botanical surveys, photograph species, take herbarium specimens.

Expected results

- 1. The creation of a database on the invasive plants of the Kolkheti wetlands (check list, photos, herbarium specimens).
- 2. It will be ensured that a national action plan for the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species fully incorporates wetland issues.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy (including The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008)

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objective 5: Invasive alien species

Develop guidance and promote protocols and actions to prevent, control or eradicate invasive alien species in wetland systems.

- Resolution VII.14: Invasive species and wetlands.
- Resolution VIII.18: Invasive species and wetlands.

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Action 17

Atlas of the Habitats and Biodiversity of the Kolkheti Lowlands

Location

Kolkheti, Georgia

Target groups

Local people, scientists, decision-makers

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

50,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Kolkheti, with its unique biodiversity, should be recognised by scientists worldwide.

There is a lack of publications about Kolkheti, and low public awareness.

Description of Action

- 1. Conduct an expedition to Kolkheti.
- 2. Produce photographs illustrating the unique biodiversity of Kolkheti wetland habitats, beautiful landscapes, panoramas and important flora and fauna.

Expected results

- 1. The production of an Atlas of the Habitats and Biodiversity of the Kolkheti Lowlands.
- 2. A range of experts (university staff, environmentalists, biologists, artists, scientists, etc) will be enlisted to promote an enhanced awareness and understanding of the importance of Kolkheti Ramsar sites.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

Operational Objective 9.1: Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA).
 Resolution VII.9.

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Action 18

Dragonflies and damselflies of the Kolkheti wetlands

Location

Kolkheti

Target group

Local people

Duration

One year

Total budget required

15,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Kolkheti is a refuge for many relict species of flora and fauna from the Ice Ages. There are still pristine habitats with specific flora and fauna, however existing data on the dragonflies and damselflies (Odonata) of Kolkheti wetlands are very poor. A study of the dragonflies and damselflies would be very important for the conservation of Kolkheti's unique biodiversity and for the proposal to UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) to designate the 'Mires and forest of Kolkheti' as a World Heritage site.

Description of Action

Conduct a field survey of dragonflies and damselflies in the Kolkheti wetland ecosystem.

Expected results

The publication of a guide, *Dragonflies and damselflies of the Kolkheti wetlands*.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

According to Black Sea policy, tourism is the most important economic use of the coastal areas and has good potential for development in the Black Sea region.

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

 Operational Objective 9.1: Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA), Resolution VII.9

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TURKEY

Action 1

Hydrological modelling for a planned drainage system at Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site

Location

Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site, Samsun

Target group

Local stakeholders

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

75,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The main threat to the site is the construction of a new drainage system: there is no knowledge about the effects that the system might have on the site.

Description of Action

- 1. Prepare hydrological models of the new drainage system.
- 2. Communicate the results of the modelling of the new drainage system's probable impact on the conservation and management of the delta.

Expected results

- 1. The production of a report of the results of the hydrological modelling.
- 2. The production of a communications strategy and press releases.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective conservation and management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

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Action 2

Implementation of the Management Plan for Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site

Location

Kizilirmak Delta, Samsun

Target groups

Local people, stakeholders and decision-makers

Duration

5 years

Total budget required

1,750,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

A management plan has been prepared for Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site, and the time has now come for it to be implemented to conserve the site effectively.

Description of Action

Implement the management plan for Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site (as detailed in the management plan):

- 1. Improve the ecological balance and biodiversity of Kizilirmak Delta.
- 2. Improve agriculture and increase agricultural income.
- 3. Assess the Delta's eco-tourism potential.
- 4. Improve fisheries.
- 5. Create alternative income resources and economic income through wetland products.
- 6. Establish mechanisms to implement a participatory and effective management plan.

Expected results

- 1. The Kizilirmak Delta remains intact.
- 2. There is increased agricultural income in the region.
- 3. The infrastructure and human resources for nature tourism are established.
- 4. Alternative income resources are created.
- 5. There is an active mechanism for implementing a participatory and effective management plan.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

Name of organisation

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Action 3

Biodiversity conservation and monitoring in İğneada Longos forest

Location

Iğneada Kırklareli

Target groups

Local decision-makers, local people

Duration

5 years

Total budget required

280,000 USD (200,000 Euros)

Background/problem to be addressed

There is no current monitoring system for this site.

Description of Action

The individual actions are detailed in the management plan for Igneada Longos forest under the following headings:

- 1. Biodiversity Conservation and Monitoring Programme
- 2. Forest
- 3. Sand dunes
- 4. Freshwater (streams and lakes)
- 5. Marine
- 6. Species
- 7. Awareness of biodiversity

Expected results

The establishment of a monitoring system for the area and longer-term conservation.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

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Action 4

Social and economic development in İğneada Longos forest

Location

Iğneada Kırklareli

Target groups

Local people and the private sector

Duration

5 years

Total budget required

776,000 USD (530,000 Euros)

Background/problem to be addressed

There is no sustainable development strategy for the site, and sustainable development is not implemented in the buffer zone.

Description of Action

The individual actions are detailed in the management plan for Igneada Longos forest under the following headings:

- 1. Organic farming: 100,000 USD (4-5 years)
- 2. Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)

- 3. Beekeeping
- 4. Stock-breeding and grazing
- 5. Home-made products and handicrafts

Expected results

Sustainable development will be implemented in the buffer zone of the site.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

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Action 5

Eco-tourism and recreation in İğneada Longos forest

Location

İğneada Kırklareli

Target groups

Local people and the private sector

Duration

5 years

Total budget required

1,124,000 USD (780,000 Euros)

Background/problem to be addressed

There is a need for eco-tourism infrastructure and human resources to manage eco-tourism.

Description of Action

The individual actions are detailed in management plan of Igneada Longos forest under the following headings:

- 1. Capacity building for eco-tourism.
- 2. Infrastructure development for Igneada eco-tourism development area.
- 3. Developing and marketing eco-tourism services.

Expected results

The necessary eco-tourism infrastructure and relevant human resources are established at the site.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

Name of organisation

The Turkish Ministry of Environment, General Directorate of National Parks and Nature Conservation

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Action 6

Communication strategies for İğneada Longos forest

Location

Iğneada Kırklareli

Target group

Tourism operators, Turkish citizens

Duration

5 years

Total budget required

245,500 USD (170,000 Euros)

Background/problem to be addressed

The site is not well known either nationally or internationally.

Description of Action

Prepare communication strategies for various stakeholders as detailed in the management plan for Igneada Longos forest

Expected results

The site becomes well known in Turkey.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

Name of organisation

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Action 7

Eco-tourism at Acarlar Lake

Location

Sakarya Delta, Sakarya

Target group

Local people and the private sector

Duration

5 years

Total budget required

135,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

There are no eco-tourism facilities at the site.

Description of Action

- 1. Establish eco-tourism infrastructure (produce an eco-tourism management plan; create paths and a bird-watching tower).
- 2. Increase local capacity to manage eco-tourism.

Expected results

- 1. An eco-tourism management plan is produced.
- 2. The necessary infrastructure is in place.
- 3. Local people are trained in eco-tourism.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

Name of organisation

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Action 8

Applied natural history education for students in Sakarya District

Location

Sakarya Delta, Sakarya

Target group

Local schools, students

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

60.000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Applied natural history is not currently taught in the region.

Description of Action

Establish an applied natural history curriculum in Sakarya District:

- 1. Prepare training materials.
- 2. Train teachers.
- 3. Implement trainings in schools.
- 4. Conduct monitoring and evaluation.

Expected results

- 1. Training materials have been produced.
- 2. Sixty teachers have been trained.
- 3. Trainings have been given at 30 schools in the District.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective conservation of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

Name of organisation

Turkiye Cevre Koruma ve Yesillendirme Kurumu (TURCEK) (The Turkish Environmental and Woodlands Protection Society)

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Action 9

Production of a management plan for the Sakarya Delta

Location

Sakarya Delta, Sakarya

Target groups

Local stakeholders and decision-makers

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

120,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

There is no management plan for the Sakarya Delta, hence there has been no effective conservation on the ground.

Description of Action

Prepare a management plan for the Sakarya Delta:

- 1. Conduct biodiversity and socio-economic fieldwork and analyses.
- 2. Hold workshops and meetings.
- 3. Finalise the management plan.

- 4. Seek approval for the plan.
- 5. Publish and disseminate the management plan.

There is a management plan for the Sakarya Delta.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

Name of organisation

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Action 10

Production of a management plan for the Yesilirmak Delta

Location

Yesilirmak Delta, Samsun

Target groups

Local stakeholders and decision-makers

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

200,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

There is no management plan for the Yesilirmak Delta, hence there has been no effective conservation on the ground.

Description of Action

Prepare a management plan for the Yesilirmak Delta:

- 1. Conduct biodiversity and socio-economic fieldwork and analyses.
- 2. Hold workshops and meetings.
- 3. Finalise the management plan.
- 4. Seek approval for the plan.
- 5. Publish and disseminate the management plan.

Expected results

There is a management plan for the Yesilirmak Delta.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

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Action 11

Eco-tourism at Sarikum Lake

Location

Sarikum Lake, Sinop

Target groups

Local people and the private sector

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

100,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Eco-tourism facilities at Sarikum Lake are limited.

Description of Action

- 1. Establish eco-tourism infrastructure (produce an eco-tourism management plan and create footpaths).
- 2. Increase local capacity to manage eco-tourism.

Expected results

- 1. An eco-tourism management plan has been drawn up.
- 2. The appropriate infrastructure is in place.
- 3. Local people are trained in eco-tourism.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Priority action for effective management of Turkey's wetlands. In 2002 'The Regulation on The Conservation of Wetlands' was passed (Ministry of Environment and Forestry); the regulation was revised in 2005.

Name of organisation

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ROMANIA

Action 1.

The development of management objectives for wise use of the Romanian Black Sea coastal wetlands with a view to achieving wetland management that can respond to the impacts of global climate change and sea-level rise

Location

Danube Delta; Razim-Sinoie Lakes; Beibugeac, Corbu, Tasaul, Siutghiol, Tabacarie, Techirghiol, Tasaul and Mangalia Lakes

Target groups

Institutions dealing with lake management, local communities

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

250,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Despite the growth in understanding of their importance and functions, wetlands are still threatened as a result of the economic activities developed in or around them. The threats to Romania's Black Sea Wetlands are varied, and in most instances work together to degrade or destroy sites. By far the greatest threat, even today, remains ignorance of the importance of wetlands and the role that they play. The distinction between wetland loss and wetland degradation is not absolute. Continued degradation may result in the complete loss of wetland functions and values.

Historically, the development of urban areas has regularly involved the in-filling of wetlands for industrial, commercial, housing and waste disposal purposes and for the provision of playing fields and other recreational facilities. Many watercourses in urban areas have been converted to concrete-lined drains, resulting in loss of in-stream habitat, fringing wetlands and streamside vegetation. In agriculture, development has involved substantial loss of wetlands on the floodplains of coastal rivers. Drainage and conversion of wetlands for agricultural activities has been a major cause of wetland loss worldwide. However, agricultural management and maintenance of wetlands can be compatible, and conversion to agricultural use need not involve the complete loss of wetland functions and values. Sustainable natural resource management necessarily involves wetland management as part of a wholesystems approach. The development of aquaculture has had substantial impacts on wetlands in other parts of the world, both directly through destruction of habitat and indirectly through its impact on water quality and native biota.

The main problems to be addressed are:

- Monitoring and research are performed in a simple way;
- There are gaps in defining the real ecological status of the lakes;
- There are gaps in implementation of the Law of the Romanian Coastal Zone (limits of coastal zone not yet established, etc.);

- The protection status of the coastal wetlands differs: only the Danube Delta and Techirghiol Lake have been designated as Ramsar sites; only the Danube Delta is a designated protected area (Biosphere Reserve);
- Stakeholders are using the resources of the lakes as they do any other resources; they
 carry out their activities making no effort to avoid impact on the local wetland ecology.

Description of Action

- 1. Establish an interdisciplinary and inter-institutional working group.
- 2. Make an assessment of the existing situation, identifying the gaps that relate to ecological parameters.
- 3. Fill the gaps in knowledge about the status of the lakes by performing specialised studies/research.
- 4. Hold meetings between a working group and stakeholders to define interests, to raise awareness of risks, and to promote cooperation to develop and implement the harmonised use of the natural resources of the lakes and their surroundings (catchment area).
- 5. Elaborate an initial draft of an integrated management plan and an Action Plan for the coastal wetlands (lakes); develop the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) procedure.
- 6. Collate the observations and proposals in order to complete the plans.
- 7. Finalise the plans and distribute them to stakeholders for implementation.
- 8. Monitor the progress of plan implementation and actions undertaken to halt wetland degradation.

Expected results

- 1. Short-term results:
 - a. There is an integrated Management Plan for the coastal wetlands;
 - b. There is an Action Plan for the implementation the Management Plan.
- 2. Long-term results:
 - a. The impact of the economic activities related to natural resource use in the wetlands and their surroundings is reduced.
 - b. Habitats for specific flora and fauna are improved; the number of species and the size of populations increase.
 - c. There is harmonised and wise use of the natural resources.
 - d. The living standard of the local communities improves as a result of diversifying resource use, and recreational opportunities are improved in order to develop tourist facilities.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Action is relevant to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Strategy for Integrated Management of Romanian Coastal Zone, and the objectives of biodiversity protection in the Black Sea region.

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- General Objective 1: Wise use of wetlands
- General Objective 3: International cooperation

Name of organisation

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Action 2

Integrated monitoring, including a programme to survey bird populations of Black Sea coastal wetlands

Location

Danube Delta; Razim-Sinoie Lakes; Beibugeac, Corbu, Tasaul, Siutghiol, Tabacarie, Techirghiol, Tasaul and Mangalia Lakes

Target group

Institutions dealing with lake management, local communities

Duration

1.5 years

Total budget required

300,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Monitoring activity in the wetlands along the Romanian Black Sea coast is currently undertaken by different institutions, according to their responsibilities:

- The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority monitors a range of factors (water quality, wastes, biodiversity, natural resource use, economic activities, etc.) in the area of the Danube Delta and Razim-Sinoie Lakes, in accordance with the institution's management objectives;
- The 'Apele Romane' National Administration 'Dobrogea Litoral' Directorate, Constanta, monitors water quality in the lakes along the Black Sea coast;
- The 'Grigore Antipa' National Marine Research and Development Institute, Constanta, monitors water quality and biodiversity in coastal areas and some coastal lakes;
- The Danube Delta National Research and Development Institute, Tulcea, monitors water quality and biodiversity in several waterbodies in the Danube Delta and the Razim-Sinoie Lakes.

The main problems to be addressed are:

- The monitoring activities are not part of an integrated system, and they differ in terms of seasonality and complexity.
- The data gathered by monitoring are spread across different institutions.
- There are gaps in defining monitoring needs within an integrated system.

Description of Action

- 1. Establish a working group in which representatives of the institutions involved in monitoring activities participate.
- 2. Make an assessment of the existing situation with regard to monitoring, and identify the gaps that relate to the ecological parameters to be monitored.
- 3. Fill the gaps in knowledge about the situation of the lakes by undertaking specialised studies/research.
- 4. Hold meetings of the working group to define monitoring needs, raise awareness of the risks of having a non-integrated monitoring programme, and to promote cooperation to develop monitoring objectives and a monitoring programme.
- 5. Develop and begin to implement a programme of integrated monitoring for the all coastal lakes;
- 6. Collect the data monitored and establish a database for the lakes that relates to the monitoring programme.
- 7. Monitor the progress of implementation and devise actions to address any changes/deviations.

- 1. An integrated monitoring programme for the coastal wetlands (Danube Delta and coastal lakes) is established.
- 2. Joint/integrated monitoring activities are undertaken in the area.
- 3. A database for Black Sea coastal wetlands has been developed.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Action is relevant to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Strategy for Integrated Management of the Romanian Coastal Zone, and the objectives of protection of the Black Sea.

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- General Objective 1: Wise use of wetlands
- General Objective 3: International cooperation

Name of organisation

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Name of organisation

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Action 3

Wetland restoration in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve to improve the habitats of birds and other species of flora and fauna

Location

The Danube Delta and Razim-Sinoie Lake Complex (Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve)

Target groups

Local communities in the Danube Delta and surrounding villages.

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

2,000,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

During the last decades of the 20th century about 80,000 ha of natural wetlands in the Danube Delta were reclaimed for agriculture, fish farming and forestry. This land reclamation work destroyed important bird and fish habitat, mainly by affecting the soil quality of polders newly created for agriculture (the soil suffered from desiccation, increased salinity, chemical and nutrient pollution, and a fall in the groundwater level).

Soon after the establishment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority, and in view of the low economic efficiency of the activities in the polders, an important programme for wetland restoration was begun, supported financially by the Romanian Government. During the period 1994–2008 about 15,000 ha of former agriculture and aquaculture polders were restored to wetlands by reconnecting them to the natural hydrological regime of the Danube Delta, based on studies undertaken to find an optimum solution to the soil degradation problem. A further 65,000 ha of polders remained for economic activities.

The main problem to be addressed by the Action is the need to restore more wetlands in the Danube Delta with a view to recreating the wetland and terrestrial habitats destroyed by the land reclamation work.

The target is about 40,000 ha of restored wetlands.

Description of Action

- 1. Develop feasibility studies for the restoration of the polders in question, including field studies to evaluate the existing situation and the probability of successful restoration, and conduct an EIA (Environment Impact Assessment).
- 2. Carry out field work to undertake the proposed restoration activities.
- 3. Monitor activities to assess the success of the restoration and the need for further intervention.
- 4. Raise public awareness of the importance of the restoration work for local communities in terms of natural resources (fish, reeds, landscape) and the environment (reduce eutrophication by nutrient sequestration).

Expected results

Wetland and terrestrial habitats are restored for both flora and fauna, and for migratory species, in particular:

- a. The quality of the environment is improved through sequestration of nutrients.
- b. The productivity potential of natural resources (fish, reeds, etc.) for local communities is restored.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Action is relevant to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Strategy for Integrated Management of the Romanian Coastal Zone, and the objectives of protection of the Black Sea.

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- General Objective 1: Wise use of wetlands
- General Objective 3: International cooperation

Name of organisation

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Action 4

Amelioration of the hydrological conditions in the existing natural wetlands in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in order to improve bird habitats

Location

Danube Delta and Razim-Sinoie Lake Complex (Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve)

Target group

Duration

1.5 years

Total budget required

10,000,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

During the last decades of the 20th century about 80,000 ha of natural wetlands in the Danube Delta were reclaimed for agriculture, fish farming and forestry. This land reclamation work destroyed important bird and fish habitat, mainly by affecting the soil quality of polders newly created for agriculture (the soil suffered from desiccation, increased salinity, chemical and nutrient pollution, and a fall in the groundwater level). In order to build the polders many artificial channels were dug, and these affected the natural water discharge through the delta, impacting the quality of many natural habitats (i.e. both large and small lakes close to the new channels were affected by siltation, and this shortened the stretches of open water between the Danube and lakes), reducing both the length of time that water remained in the waterbodies in the delta and the length of time available to natural ecosystems in the delta to metabolise the nutrients and sediments brought down by the River Danube. As a comparison, at the beginning of the 20th century the River Danube could refresh the whole delta three times a year; today Danube water refreshes the delta 6–7 times a year.

Soon after the establishment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority, in 1995 an important programme to improve water discharge through the delta was begun, supported financially by the Romanian Government. The programme included work to close or narrow channels in order to adjust the water input with a view to bringing it closer to the former water discharge pattern of the natural delta and to improve the viability of the ecosystems in all seven lake complexes of the delta. The work proposed for this programme was based on a mathematic model developed by the Danube Delta National Research and Development Institute. Work has already been undertaken on more than 100 km of the main ('first class') channel network (the channels that permit the major distribution of water through the delta).

The programme of work should be continued on the secondary and tertiary channels (the 'second class' channel network) in order to improve the distribution of water through all the waterbodies that form the lake complexes in the delta.

The main problem to be addressed in the Action is the need to restore the former pattern of water discharge and distribution through the water bodies in the Danube Delta in order to improve the viability of these ecosystems. The target is c. 200 km of existing channels.

Description of Action

- 1. Develop feasibility studies for each of the lake complexes, and carry out field studies to evaluate the existing situation and the probability of successful restoration; undertake an EIA (Environment Impact Assessment).
- 2. Carry out field work to implement the proposed solutions.
- 3. Conduct monitoring activities to assess the success of the work and the need for further interventions.
- 4. Raise public awareness of the importance of the work for local communities in terms of natural resources (fish, reeds, landscape) and for the environment (reduce eutrophication by nutrient sequestration).

Expected results

- 1. Water discharge through the lake complexes will improve and will more closely resemble the natural water discharge pattern.
- 2. The improved water supply to smaller waterbodies will ensure optimum conditions for fish spawning and bird foraging.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Action is relevant to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Strategy for Integrated Management of Romanian Coastal Zone, and the objectives of protection of the Black Sea.

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- General Objective 1: Wise use of wetlands
- General Objective 3: International cooperation

Name of organisation

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RUSSIA

Action 1

Promotion of the EU Water Framework Directive in the Russian Federation through integrated water resource management in the Kuban River Basin

Location

Kuban River catchment, North Caucasus, European Russia

Target group

Responsible government agencies, primarily the Federal Water Resources Agency and the Kuban Basin Water Department, its local unit.

Duration

1.5 years

Total budget required

80,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The Kuban basin covers a huge area in the Azov-Black Sea region of Russia. The area contains a high percentage of agricultural land and is highly populated. The results of this are water pollution, loss of natural wetlands, fish (sturgeon) poaching, shortage of water resources, catastrophic floods etc. It is possible to improve the situation only through the introduction of integrated water management, using international experience.

Description of Action

- 1. Conduct a comparative analysis of the methodology and approaches for water monitoring and protection, water quality standards etc. used in Russia and the EU.
- 2. Disseminate good examples of river basin management in EU countries.
- 3. Provide training for Russian professionals within Russia and in EU countries on river basin management and restoration.

Expected results

The responsible government agencies, primarily the Federal Water Resources Agency and the Kuban Basin Water Department, its local unit, are encouraged to explore possibilities for implementing the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive, with regard to monitoring of surface waters, development of management plans etc.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Demonstrate advances in implementation of the EU Water Directive and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives to protect water resources and biodiversity in Russia.

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Action 2

The Kuban River Delta

Location

East coast of the Sea of Azov, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Target group

Governmental authorities, environment-conservation organisations, land users, general public of Krasnodar Krai

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

18,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

The Kuban Delta underwent considerable changes in the second half of the 20th century, such as the establishment of an irrigation rice growing system, transformation of *liman* complexes to fish farms, and reclamation of some *plavni* areas. The economic recession in the 1990s contributed to the partial restoration of the Kuban Delta ecosystem.

The Kuban Delta has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance, with two Internationally Important sites identified within its borders. However, in the current situation of active development of the Kuban Delta as an oil and gas producing and recreation area, conservation of its unique ecosystem has become a priority.

Description of Action

- 1. Write the scenario for a film about the Kuban River Delta.
- 2. Make the film.
- 3. Present the film and distribute copies.

Expected results

The film made will reflect the present problems of the Kuban Delta. It will be aimed at raising the awareness of the population (including governmental authorities, environmental organisations and land users) of the status and importance of the Kuban River Delta ecoregion, threats to it, and possible ways of solving conflicts. The film should stimulate the local people to carry out nature conservation activities.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The implementation of the project corresponds with objectives of the Black Sea Regional Initiative, as it focuses on the conservation of internationally important wetlands.

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Action 3

Rice bays: important habitats for waterbirds and waders in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov region (a case study from Krasnodar Krai, Russia)

Location

East coast of the Sea of Azov, Taman Peninsula, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Target groups

Ornithologists, users of agricultural land, hunters, and fishermen

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

30,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Rice growing is one of the most important types of irrigated agriculture. In the former USSR, rice production was concentrated in three zones: Europe, Central Asia and Kazakhstan, and the Far East. The European zone (within the borders of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov region) comprises rice bays in Krasnodar Krai (Russia).

Rice bays are cultural counterparts of natural mires or littoral ecosystems (Odum 1975). It is not, therefore, unusual that these quasi-natural habitats support specific associations of birds. In recent years, as the administration of the region began to change from being government controlled ('command-administrative' system) to being a free-market system, rice production decreased both in volume and area. The impact of human pressure on these ecosystems inevitably affected their bird populations.

Although rice fields covered large areas up to the early 1990s, the avifauna of this biotope was little studied, and few attempts had been made to monitor species composition.

Today, as the rice growing sector is being restored, it is vital to estimate changes in the bird populations during the transition period. This is all the more important as rice fields attract many rare and protected bird species. However, the rice bays of Krasnodar Krai have not been designated as Important Bird Areas (IBAs) or important wetlands.

The problem of 'Birds and Agriculture' (e.g. birds feeding on rice fields in Southeast Asia) shows the need for a wetland management system, which means that management plans have to be made for these sites.

The impacts of rice growing on local birds have not yet been studied.

Description of Action

- 1. Within the framework of the project, carry out seasonal bird counts in each rice growing area in Krasnodar Krai.
- 2. Determine species composition and numbers in the field using binoculars and telescopes.
- 3. In the second year, make monthly counts at sites that have been identified as important.
- 4. Map the sites using a GPS receiver.

Expected results

An inventory will exist of the rice fields of Krasnodar Krai most important for birds, with data on current species composition and numbers obtained.

The rice fields identified as important will be assessed as potential IBAs and important wetlands, so that they can be designated as such or included in existing specially protected areas. The distribution of rare and commercially important bird species on rice fields will have been mapped, as will assemblages of birds.

For sites of greatest importance there will be GIS maps, and they will have been described in terms of IBA and Important Wetland criteria.

Bottlenecks that the birds of the Krasnodar Krai rice fields encounter will be studied within the framework of the project, and guidelines for agricultural and other land-users developed in order to protect rare rice-field bird species.

The project will be a starting point for monitoring man-made wetlands in the region. When it is completed, a description of the project will be published as a monograph.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Inventory of rice fields of the region as potential important wetlands and IBAs; monitoring and protection of birds inhabiting rice fields; wetland management.

Submitted by

M.A. Dinkevich

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Odum, E. 1975. Fundamentals of ecology. Saunders, Philadelphia, PA.

Action 4

Conservation of island ecosystems of the Northwest Caucasus

Location

Coasts of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov within the borders of Russia

Target groups

Governmental authorities of the Russian Federation and its administrative regions, local self-governing authorities, environmental organisations, land-users of various sectors: hunters, fishermen, tourist agencies, catering services

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

45,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Island ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to negative anthropogenic impacts. Today, the survival of these ecosystems depends entirely on human pressure. Birds are one of the most important components of the island ecosystems of southern Russia. Islands are mass breeding habitats of rare and protected species: White and Dalmatian Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus* and *P. crispus*, Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*, Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*, Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*, Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* etc. Numerous colonies of Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*, Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*, Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*, and Gull-billed *Gelochelidon nilotica*, Sandwich *Sterna sandvicensis* and Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* determine the

importance of island ecosystems in terms of conservation of rare species in the regional fauna. Birds use islands as stopovers and feeding sites during migration as well as in winter.

Island vegetation is often poor in comparison to similar mainland biotopes, however the plant and animal life of the islands is very specific and requires conservation and study.

The size of the concentrations of the numerous fish-eating bird species during the breeding season determines the severity of their impact on aquatic biological resources. Under these conditions, the birds compete with man. The negative attitude of humans to such neighbours often results in illegal destruction of colonies, nests, eggs and even the birds themselves.

Island ecosystems are becoming increasingly attractive for recreation. However, the use of beaches for recreation by local people and visitors from other areas does irrevocable damage to such ecosystems.

A study of each individual conflict and the search for an acceptable solution that would allow mitigation of the birds/humans co-existence problem is one of the objectives of the project.

Description of Action

- 1. Carry out a cross-disciplinary survey of island ecosystems and adjacent areas.
- 2. Conduct research into economic activities, identify and analyse negative factors and related conflicts.
- 3. Develop a GIS-based database.
- 4. Develop a conservation strategy for island ecosystems of the Northwest Caucasus.
- 5. Prepare proposals for updating the protection status of some island systems and minimising the impact of human activities in the study area.
- 6. Publish the results of the project as a monograph.

Expected results

- 1. The most comprehensive and reliable information on the current status of island ecosystems will be obtained. The information will be compiled as a database.
- 2. There will be a conservation strategy for island ecosystems of the Northwest Caucasus.
- 3. For some areas, guidelines to minimise the impact of human activities will be developed that should promote conservation of island ecosystems without compromising the wellbeing of the population.
- 4. Recommendations will have been developed with regard to the establishment of specially protected natural areas to protect the most valuable components of the ecosystems.
- 5. A monograph will have been published to provide all stakeholders with comprehensive information.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The conservation of island ecosystems of the Northwest Caucasus is a priority direction of the Black Sea Regional Initiative and the Ramsar Convention in general.

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Action 5

Man-made wetlands and their importance for the conservation of biodiversity

Location

West Caucasus, Russia

Target group

Governmental authorities of the Republic of Adygea and Krasnodar Krai, local self-governing authorities, environmental organisations, land users, local communities

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

45,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Man-made wetlands in the West Caucasus are represented by irrigation systems, artificial water bodies (reservoirs, ponds, settling basins etc.) and water courses (canals). The appearance of these wetlands has undergone considerable change since they were established, which reflects a growth in quantitative and qualitative indicators of biodiversity in the area. Some man-made wetlands are unique reserves and centres of expansion for animal and plant species. Today, however, with the growth in economic activity, there is a danger of biodiversity loss through human interference. No integrated analysis of the importance of wetlands for biodiversity conservation has yet been carried out. The present project will make it possible to assess the importance of these wetlands for biodiversity conservation; it will develop guidelines for effective use of the sites that will minimise biodiversity loss.

Description of Action

- 1. Carry out an integrated survey of man-made wetlands in the West Caucasus.
- 2. Classify wetlands according to their types and importance for the conservation of biodiversity.
- 3. Determine economically valuable ways of using wetlands, assess technological schemes related to economic activities, identify and analyse activities that are leading to a decrease of biological diversity.
- 4. Prepare proposals to optimise technological processes involved in wetland utilisation in order to minimise damage done to flora and fauna by human activities.
- 5. Publish a monograph to disseminate the proposals to optimise economic activities in order to promote conservation of the biological diversity of man-made wetlands.

Expected results

The most comprehensive and reliable information on man-made wetlands of the West Caucasus will be obtained. Analysis of this information will lay the groundwork for the classification of wetlands according to their types and importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

Ways in which wetlands can be used for economic purposes will be listed, technological schemes for economic activities assessed, activities that lead to a decline in biological diversity identified and analysed.

The prepared proposals to optimise technological processes aimed at minimising the human impact on flora and fauna will be submitted to the governmental authorities and organisations that carry out economic activities on man-made wetlands.

The published monograph will disseminate the proposals to optimise economic activities in order to promote conservation of the biological diversity of man-made wetlands.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

Conservation of biological diversity as an important component of wetlands is a priority of the Black Sea Regional Initiative and the Ramsar Convention in general.

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UKRAINE

Action 1

Promotion of the 'wise use of wetlands' approach in the Black Sea region

Location

Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

Target groups

National and local authorities, local communities, NGOs

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

400,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

In the countries of the Black Sea region there is still no holistic approach to the management of wetlands and use of their resources. Many different organisations and state agencies are involved in the management and use of all the wetlands, but there is no real coordination between them. Moreover, very often long-term economic development national/regional plans, including spatial planning, do not take into account the conservation needs of wetlands and wise use of their resources. Local communities are poorly informed about planned economic developments, are not involved in wetland management, and often do not understand the importance of wetlands.

Description of Action

- 1. Undertake an overview and gap analysis of national systems of wetland management, control and resource usage in the context of spatial planning, river basin and coastal zone management, and economic development.
- 2. Translate Ramsar materials on wise use of wetlands into the relevant national languages.
- 3. Hold national and international conferences on the wise use of wetlands
- 4. Develop recommendations for improving national systems of wetland management, control and resource use.
- 5. Prepare and disseminate information materials on wetland importance and the 'wise use' approach to wetland use.

Expected results

- 1. There will be a clear understanding of the current status and gaps in national systems of wetland management, control and resource use in the context of the 'wise use' approach.
- 2. The 'wise use' approach to wetlands is promoted among national and local governments and local communities.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objectives 3.1, 3.4 and 9.1

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Action 2

Promotion and encouragement of the use of standard wetland monitoring methodologies

Location

Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

Target groups

National and regional authorities, scientific institutions, NGOs

Duration

2.5 years

Total budget required

450,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

There is no unified system of wetland monitoring in the Black Sea countries. National lists of characteristics/indices for monitoring differ from each other; different methods are used for collecting data; information is dispersed among different agencies or organisations and is often not easy accessible for decision-makers, scientists, conservationists and the general public. In many cases, there is no clear understanding of gaps in current national wetland monitoring systems and key directions for their improvement.

Description of Action

- 1. Undertake an overview of existing wetland monitoring systems in Black Sea countries (state system(s), scientific programmes, national non-governmental projects/programmes, international projects/programmes Important Bird Areas (IBAs), International Waterfowl Census (IWC), etc.)
- 2. Hold an international conference on the standardisation of inventory methodologies (in view of EU demands and development of indices) and national seminars (one per country).
- 3. Make recommendations for improving national monitoring systems.
- 4. Develop monitoring programmes for selected Ramsar sites on a unified basis (at least one site per country).
- 5. Develop a national list of organisations/agencies that undertake wetland monitoring.
- 6. Create a regional web-based database for storage of data on key characteristics of Wetlands of International Importance.
- 7. Create national coordination monitoring groups responsible for supporting their own national section of the regional database.

Expected results

- 1. Detailed information will be obtained on the current wetland monitoring system (WMS) for each country, and on their strengths and weaknesses.
- 2. There will be a clear understanding of how the WMS in each country should be improved.
- 3. National authorities and state agencies responsible for monitoring are informed about the need for improvement of their WMS.

- 4. The processes of WMS standardisation through the development of unified monitoring programmes for selected Ramsar sites will be launched.
- 5. There will be improved data storage and information sharing on wetlands.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objectives 1.1.1 and 11.2.1

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Action 3

Improvement of national systems for estimating waterbird harvests

Location

Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

Target groups

National and local authorities, hunting organisations, research organisations, NGOs

Duration

2.5 years

Total budget required

350,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

In the Black Sea area there are several hundreds of thousands of hunters, who harvest a large quantity of migratory waterbirds every year. Furthermore, this area is becoming increasingly popular with hunters from western Europe. However, in many cases hunting statistics do not reflect the reality of the harvest. Thus there is no clear understanding of impact of hunting on waterbird populations in the Black Sea region.

Description of Action

- 1. Undertake an overview of national systems for registering/estimating waterfowl harvests.
- 2. Conduct pilot studies at selected wetlands on registering waterfowl bag numbers.
- 3. Hold an international conference in the Black Sea region on waterbird harvesting.
- 4. Develop recommendations for improving national systems for estimating waterbird harvesting and making them more compatible.
- 5. Develop and disseminate awareness-raising materials on the need for the sustainable use of waterfowl in the region.

Expected results

- 1. There will be clear understanding of the current status (shortcomings) of national systems for evaluating waterfowl harvesting.
- 2. Recommendations will be made to national authorities for improving and standardising national systems and making them compatible.

3. Awareness of sustainable waterfowl use will be raised.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy (including the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008)

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objectives 1.1; 1.2; 12.2.2, 12.2.3 and 12.2.4
- AEWA (African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement) Implementation Plan 2006-2008: 10

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Action 4

Fish-eating waterbirds and local economies: towards resolution/mitigation of conflict

Location

Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

Target groups

Fishermen, fish farmers, hunters, local communities

Duration

2.5 years

Total budget required

350,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

Over the past few decades, numbers of some fish-eating (piscivorous) species, such as cormorant *Phalacrocorax spp.*, Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* and pelican *Pelecanus spp.*, have increased and continue to increase considerably, and this leads to conflict between local economies (fishery, fish farming, game-hunting) and birds. In trying to regulate bird numbers, people destroy colonies, scaring and killing waterbirds. As a result, rare and endangered bird species (such as pelicans) suffer.

Description of Action

- 1. Collect and analyse existing data on numbers and distribution of fish-eating bird species.
- 2. Conduct field surveys to obtain new information on fish-eating bird species
- 3. Disseminate information: publish the data on the internet and on CD.
- 4. Collect information on conflicts between local economies and birds as well as on best management practices to resolve conflicts.
- 5. Conduct four national workshops and one international conference on fish-eating bird species.
- 6. Prepare a manual for local fish farmers on managing fish-eating bird species.
- 7. Prepare and disseminate information materials (posters, booklets, leaflets) to raise awareness among fishermen, fish farmers, hunters and local communities on the conservation of rare fish-eating bird species.

- 1. A detailed overview exists on numbers and distribution of fish-eating bird species in the region.
- 2. There is an overview of conflicts between local economies and birds as well as of best management practices to resolve conflicts.
- 3. The awareness of local fishermen, fish farmers, hunters and local populations on the conservation of rare fish-eating bird species is raised.
- 4. There is a mitigation of conflicts between local economies and fish-eating bird species resulting from the dissemination of information on best practice in the management of these species, and conservation awareness is raised.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003–2008:

- Operational Objectives 3.1, 9.1, 12.2 and 14.1

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Action 5

Facilitation of civil society involvement in coastal wetland conservation and wise use

Location

Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey Ukraine

Target group

Local authorities, local communities, NGOs

Duration

3 years

Total budget required

500,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

It is not possible to achieve good results in nature conservation without the strong involvement of wide circles of different groups of people — decision-makers, scientists, educators, students, NGOs, local communities. To date, in most countries, there is insufficient understanding of the urgent need for conservation and wise use of coastal wetlands. Civil society is also very weakly involved in practical conservation activities and the management of coastal wetlands.

Description of Action

- 1. Develop a web-portal for accumulating and free-sharing information materials on wetlands: popular brochures, training courses, manuals, guidance on public monitoring, restoration etc.
- 2. In each country, conduct an awareness campaign on the conservation and wise use of wetlands:
 - a. disseminate information through TV, radio and other mass media;

- b. conduct a series of seminars for local communities who live around key wetlands of international importance;
- c. conduct a series of short-term actions for coastal wetland conservation.
- 3. Develop a training course on the conservation and sustainable use of coastal wetland.
- 4. Prepare and publish popular books on coastal Wetlands of International Importance in each country of the Black Sea region.
- 5. Organise study tours for representatives of local communities, local authorities and NGOs to developed countries, or other countries in the Black Sea region, to study best practice in the conservation and wise use of coastal wetlands.

- 1. There will be positive changes in the attitude of society, and people will take a more active position with regards to wetland conservation and wise use.
- 2. A wide range of people will have enhanced access to information on coastal wetland conservation, methods, materials etc.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008:

- Operational Objectives 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 6.1 and 9.1

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Action 6

Restoration of the Dniester delta meadows

Location

Belgorod-Dniestrovsky region, Odessa Oblast, Ukraine

Target groups

Local authorities, local communities, NGOs

Duration

2 years

Total budget required

100,000 Euros

Background/problem to be addressed

During the Soviet era a large area of wetland meadows was separated from the Dniester River by the construction of a raised highway/dike. The importance of the area for biodiversity and for local people was lost.

Description of Action

The principal concept of the project is:

restore the natural connection and exchange of water between the river and meadows by modifying the highway.

The water meadows, and hence wetland biodiversity, will be restored as a traditional place for hay-making, cattle grazing and recreation for local people.

Relevance to national and international Black Sea policy

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

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