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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

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**Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for
Protected Areas**

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**ANNUAL REPORTS 2017:
COMPILATION OF
ANNUAL REPORTS SUBMITTED BY
THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AREAS**

*Document prepared by the Directorate
of Democratic Citizenship and Participation*

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1. BELGIUM – HAUTES FAGNES NATURE RESERVE

No report / pas de rapport.

2. FRANCE – CAMARGUE NATIONAL RESERVE

1. Conditions : Lister ici toutes les conditions dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les conditions ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Garantir la mise en œuvre du plan de gestion 2011-2015 :

En tant que réserve naturelle nationale, la mise en œuvre annuelle du plan de gestion nous est demandée par l'Etat français, via la DREAL Provence Alpes Côte-d'Azur, afin d'obtenir la subvention de fonctionnement. Elle continue donc d'être assurée, mais n'a pas subi d'évolution ces dernières années (malgré l'augmentation du coût de la vie).

Le bilan annuel d'activités 2016 a été validé par les instances de gouvernance de la Réserve (Conseil de Direction et Conseil Scientifique) en juin 2017.

L'année 2016 a été consacrée à la rédaction du Plan de gestion 2016-2020. Le plan de gestion se compose de trois parties :

- Partie C : Evaluation du Plan de gestion 2011-2015

- Partie A : état des lieux et diagnostic général de la Réserve. Cette partie n'avait plus été entièrement actualisée depuis 1991. Les plans de gestion précédents reprenaient seulement la partie enjeux faune-flore-habitats.

- Partie B : Gestion de la Réserve. En se basant sur les enjeux définies à la partie A, cette partie permet de définir la vision à long terme de la Réserve, les Stratégies et Objectifs stratégiques à mettre en œuvre pendant les cinq ans du plan de gestion et au-delà, ainsi que la planification des actions conduisant à la réalisation des objectifs.

Ce plan de gestion a été validé par les instances de Gouvernance (Conseil de Direction et Conseil Scientifique) le 10 novembre 2016 et a reçu un avis favorable du Conseil Scientifique Régional du Patrimoine Naturel quelques jours plus tard.

2. Recommandations : Lister ici toutes les recommandations dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les recommandations ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

1. Etudier la possibilité de réactiver la coopération avec d'autres sites deltaïques du Diplôme Européen (comme le parc de Doñana en Espagne ou la réserve de biosphère du delta du Danube en Roumanie)

La coopération avec d'autres sites deltaïques du Diplôme européen n'a pas été réalisée jusqu'alors. Le manque de moyens humains (7.5 postes et aucun dédié à la coopération inter-site) et de moyens financiers (permettant une base pour des échanges) n'ont pas permis d'avancer sur ce sujet.

De plus, le Parc Naturel Régional de Camargue, acteur principal du delta camarguais, et porteur de la réserve de biosphère de Camargue est déjà en relation avec le Parc de Doñana et les Réserves de Biosphère du Danube notamment.

2. Octroyer des moyens supplémentaires suffisants, tant financiers qu'humains, notamment au vu de la mise en place prochaine d'un périmètre de protection tel que prévu par la Loi du 10 juillet 1976 sur la conservation de la nature, pour garantir la gestion, la surveillance et le suivi scientifique de la réserve

Le projet de périmètre de protection n'a finalement pas été validé par le conseil de direction de la réserve. En effet, le Conservatoire du littoral a proposé d'inclure les terrains limitrophes à la réserve dans sa stratégie d'acquisition 2014-2021, et de choisir préférentiellement la SNPN comme gestionnaire de tous ces secteurs. Dans ce cadre-là, un avenant à la convention de gestion a été signé en 2015 entre le Conservatoire et la SNPN pour la gestion actuelle (cogestion des « Etangs et Marais des Salins de Camargue », 6000 ha, et du site des « Grandes Cabanes du Vaccarès », 300 ha) et la gestion future des prochains secteurs du Vaccarès acquis par le Conservatoire. En 2016, un autre terrain limitrophe à la Réserve a été acquis par le Conservatoire, « Romieu ». Il s'agit de 60 ha essentiellement constitués d'une partie de l'étang du Vaccarès et de secteurs de roselières en bordure. Sans passer par le processus de création du périmètre de protection, la maîtrise foncière du Conservatoire et la gestion par la SNPN nous permettent de contrôler les activités réalisées sur ces sites, et donc de limiter les menaces s'exerçant sur la Réserve.

Une convention tripartite entre le Conservatoire du Littoral, la région PACA et le département des Bouches-du-Rhône permet d'allouer des financements à la gestion de ces terrains (en 2017, 15000€ ont été octroyés à la SNPN). Cette somme ne permet pas de pallier aux problèmes de moyens humains de la structure. Des efforts supplémentaires sont à prévoir dans la recherche de financements.

La subvention accordée par l'Etat n'a quant à elle pas évolué depuis plus de 5 ans. Cette subvention avait été, à l'époque calculée sur la base de 7.5 Equivalent Temps Plein correspondant à des gardes en début de carrière. Aujourd'hui, ce calcul ne correspond plus à la réalité puisque l'équipe se compose de postes plus qualifiés (chargés de missions scientifiques) avec parfois plus de 20 ans d'ancienneté. A titre d'information, la Subvention de 480 786€ ne couvre pas les coûts réels de fonctionnement liés à 7.5 postes estimés aujourd'hui à 617 000€.

3. Faire appliquer strictement la limitation des rejets d'eau d'origine agricole dans la réserve, notamment dans l'étang de Vaccarès, et poursuivre la collaboration avec les riziculteurs dans le respect des principes du développement durable en veillant à la mise en œuvre du programme d'actions à cinq ans comme convenu entre les différents acteurs

Un suivi réalisé par la SNPN depuis 2011 a pour objectif de faire un état des lieux actuel de la contamination de la réserve et de son impact éventuel, puis de mesurer l'effet de l'amélioration des pratiques agricoles dans les années à venir.

Les analyses sont réalisées par le laboratoire accrédité CARSO– Laboratoire Santé Environnement Hygiène de Lyon.

Elles concernent 666 substances chimiques, potentiellement polluantes, comprenant des pesticides, des métaux et métalloïdes, des HAP, des pesticides organochlorés, quelques autres substances organiques et des PCB, auxquelles s'ajoutent des molécules résultant des traitements fertilisants et des minéraux ainsi que les facteurs physico-chimiques. Les résultats sont confrontés aux données publiques de l'Agence de l'Eau RMC concernant le point d'échantillonnage « Rhône à Arles ».

Les résultats des analyses sont expertisés annuellement par des scientifiques spécialisés :

Hélène Roche, Université d'Orsay, Laboratoire Ecologie systématique et évolution (Paris Sud), Arnaud Elger, Université Toulouse III, Laboratoire Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Environnement.

Ces six années de suivi mettent clairement en évidence la réalité et l'importance de la contamination des canaux de drainage par les pesticides et le transfert de ces polluants vers les étangs et lagunes de la réserve. Douze molécules interdites ont été détectées régulièrement (atrazine, lindane, propanil...) et d'autres, autorisées ou non pour la riziculture, à des concentrations très supérieures aux normes de qualité environnementales, en particulier dans les canaux de drainage (glyphosate/AMPA, dimethamide, azoxystrobine, oxadiazon, flufenacet...).

En tout, ce sont plus de 60 contaminants (pesticides, HAP, micropolluants) qui ont été retrouvés dans les étangs et canaux de Camargue.

L'indicateur du SEQ Eau « somme des pesticides » met en évidence cette forte contamination des canaux de drainage (classés mauvais à très mauvais) et la contamination moyenne des étangs, en général plus contaminés que le Rhône.

A la demande de Monsieur le Préfet de Région PACA, un rapport a été réalisé, et plusieurs réunions ont été menées entre les services de l'Etat concernés (DREAL, Conservatoire du Littoral, DDTM, ONCFS, ONEMA, DRIR,...), notamment lors de MISEN. En 2016 une réunion sur les modalités d'actions à instaurer s'est tenue et nous a permis de soulever les problèmes d'actions de Police de l'eau en Camargue (sous effectifs ONEMA, ONCFS et manque de contrôles). Une rencontre entre la SNPN et les représentants de la Chambre d'agriculture et du Centre Français du Riz s'est tenue en novembre 2016, permettant de présenter les enjeux de chacun et d'envisager les pistes d'actions communes ou concertées à réaliser à l'avenir. En 2017, la chambre d'agriculture a intégré le Conseil de direction de la Réserve afin de maintenir le dialogue et favoriser les collaborations. De nouvelles réunions et prises de contacts avec le procureur de Tarascon, les organes de police de l'environnement et les services de l'Etat ont permis en 2017 de mettre en lumière la problématique auprès des services concernés qui semblent commencer à se saisir du sujet.

4. Engager des études pour la lutte biologique contre les espèces invasives, entre autres végétales, telles la Jussie (ou *Ludwigia peploides*) ou le Baccharis (*Baccharis Hamilifolia*) et octroyer les moyens nécessaires aux mesures de lutte mécanique ou manuelle

En 2017 deux sujets de stages ont approché la question de la lutte contre les espèces invasives, notamment la Jussie (*Ludwigia peploides*) et le Baccharis (*Baccharis hamilifolia*) mais aussi les oliviers de Bohème. Ces stagiaires ont travaillé sur la cartographie de répartition de ces espèces envahissantes et sur leur arrachage, sur deux grands secteurs de la réserve, Amphise et la Capelière. Ces travaux ont permis d'éliminer de très nombreux individus et ainsi de limiter l'expansion de ces espèces, mais la dynamique de ces espèces étant très rapide, il est impératif de fournir un effort constant et régulier.

Un projet de restauration des milieux de la Capelière (site d'accueil du public de la Réserve) est mené depuis 2014. Ce projet permet de rouvrir les milieux de marais, et a pour objectif de retrouver les potentialités d'accueil des oiseaux d'eau sur ce secteur, afin d'améliorer l'attractivité pour le grand public. Cela passe essentiellement par de la lutte contre les espèces envahissantes (*Baccharis halimifolia*, *Fraxinus americana*...). Deux phases, financées par la Fondation du Patrimoine, la Région PACA, le Conseil Départemental des Bouches-du-Rhône et la SNPN ont été menées. La dernière phase de travaux a eu lieu en 2017, notamment avec le montage d'un contrat Natura 2000 pour la restauration hydraulique du site qui va enfin permettre une meilleure gestion hydraulique des marais. Les secteurs de marais ont été recréés et les secteurs de roselière libérés des Baccharis envahissants.

5. Mettre davantage en évidence le Diplôme européen et l'action du Conseil de l'Europe, particulièrement aux points d'accueil et sur les dépliants de la réserve

Le diplôme européen est affiché depuis son octroi dans la salle d'accueil du public à la Capelière. Il est accompagné depuis 2015 de l'affiche anniversaire du diplôme correspondant à la réserve de Camargue, et le dépliant informant sur le diplôme est accessible sur place, en attendant la rénovation de l'ensemble de l'exposition dans les années à venir. Plusieurs autocollants ont été installés dans les lieux d'accueil du public. Le logo apparaîtra sur les dépliants et les panneaux lors des prochaines rééditions.

6. Contrôler la fréquentation à la périphérie de la réserve

Près de 48 000 personnes sont comptabilisées dans les trois sites d'accueil du public de la réserve (La Capelière, Salin de Badon, Phare de la Gacholle). On estime à environ 100 000 le nombre de personnes « pratiquant » la réserve. Il s'agit essentiellement de personnes profitant de la longue plage de sable d'une quinzaine de kilomètres qu'offre la réserve, bordée à l'est par les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, et à l'ouest par les plages de Beauduc, spot reconnu de camping sauvage et de kite-surf. Ces dernières années, plusieurs opérations ont permis de diminuer les problèmes liés à la fréquentation périphérique :

- une bonne communication avec la gendarmerie des Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer et de Salin de Giraud, et les agents de la DDTM et du Conseil départemental des Bouches-du-Rhône
- la cogestion des plages de Beauduc (appartenant au site des « Etangs et Marais des Salins de Camargue » du Conservatoire du Littoral) ; En 2015, la fermeture de l'accès aux véhicules terrestres à

moteur sur la plage « de la Comtesse », limitrophe de la réserve, a nettement diminué les impacts liés à ces véhicules. Ces effets s'observent toujours en 2017.

7. Préparer un plan d'adaptation aux changements climatiques incluant l'élévation du niveau de la mer

Le sujet de l'adaptation ou de l'atténuation lié aux changements climatiques est abordé dans le plan de gestion 2016-2020. La notion de gestion adaptative aux changements est intégrée. Dans ce cadre là, nous réalisons déjà depuis quelques années un suivi du trait de côte, un suivi de profils de plage et de dunes, permettant d'observer la dynamique littorale et l'évolution du niveau de la mer. Une autre série de relevés systématiques par quadrillage (passereaux, flore, pédologie...) nous permet d'observer l'arrivée potentielle de nouvelles espèces, et les modifications des habitats.

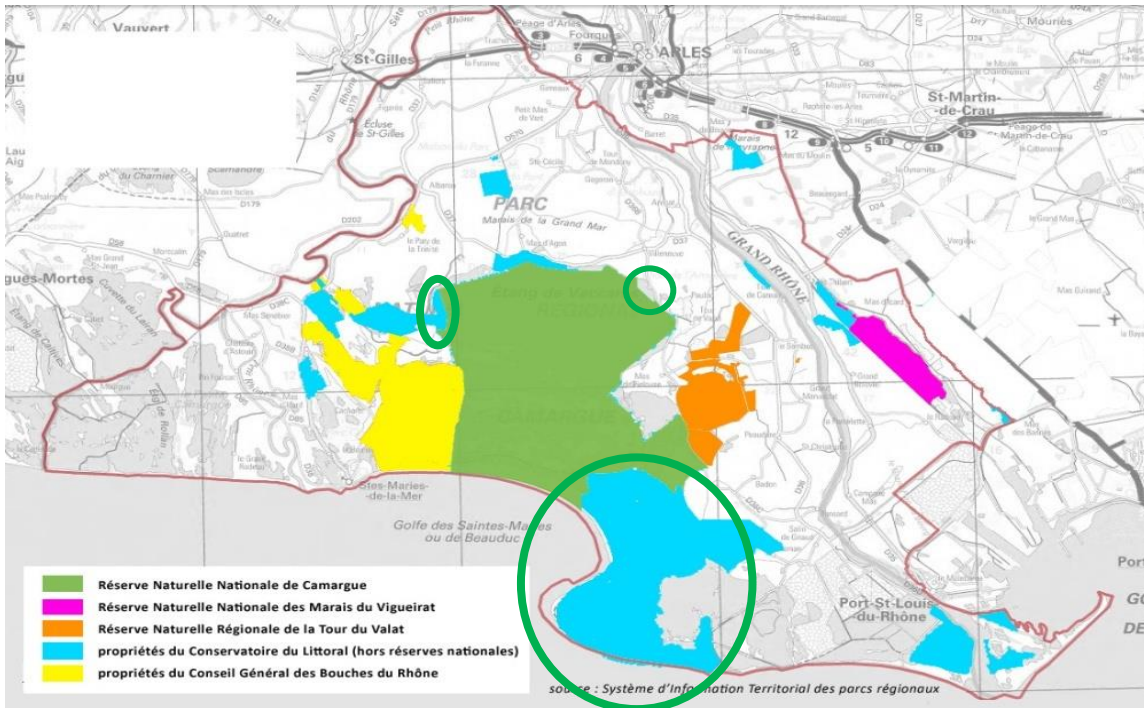
Dans le cadre de la cogestion des « Etangs et marais des Salins de Camargue », situé en limite sud-est de la réserve, nous avons récemment reçu le prix du Pôle relais lagunes méditerranéennes, récompensant la gestion adaptative réalisée sur le site. La SNPN, la Tour du Valat et le Parc Naturel Régional de Camargue, sur un site du Conservatoire du littoral, ont choisi d'accompagner l'évolution liée aux conséquences du changement climatique de ces milieux deltaïques particulièrement dynamiques. Ainsi, la gestion adaptative appliquée sur cet espace littoral vise un retrait maîtrisé et progressif du trait de côte et la reconnexion hydraulique et biologique des lagunes entre elles ainsi qu'avec la mer et l'étang du Vaccarès. Des rencontres entre gestionnaires et chercheurs de divers horizons (social, scientifique...) ont lieu et doivent aboutir à des sujets de recherche permettant une meilleure compréhension et une meilleure gestion face à ces changements climatiques. Par ailleurs le réseau RNF ambitionne de mettre en place un réseau « sentinelles des changements globaux ». Le projet n'est pas encore en place mais nous avons exprimé notre intérêt pour faire parti de ce projet.

3. Gestion du site : Lister ici toute modification dans la gestion du site détenant le Diplôme européen, en ce qui concerne les environnements terrestre et aquatique (si applicable), et en ce qui concerne les agents et les ressources financières, depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Il n'y a pas de changement notable depuis le dernier rapport annuel.

4. Frontières : Détailler tout changement apporté aux frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. S'il y a des changements, veuillez joindre une carte appropriée à ce rapport. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Les frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen n'a pas évolué. Cependant, la SNPN, gestionnaire de la réserve, est maintenant responsable de la gestion (ou de la cogestion) de sites en périphérie de la réserve (voir carte ci-après).



Carte 1 : La Réserve Naturelle Nationale de Camargue (en vert) et les autres espaces protégés dans le périmètre du Parc naturel régional de Camargue. Les trois cercles verts correspondent aux sites de Romieu, des Grandes Cabanes du Vaccarès et aux Etangs et Marais des Salins de Camargue, sites du Conservatoire du Littoral dont la gestion (ou la cogestion) est confiée à la SNPN

5. Autres informations : Lister ici toute autre information, concernant le site détenant le Diplôme européen, que vous estimez nécessaire de fournir au Conseil de l'Europe.

3. UNITED KINGDOM - PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Complete the review of the National Park Management Plan and continue implementation of the plans and strategies it contains.

A workshop was held to assess the effectiveness of the 2012-17 National Park Management Plan; of the 175 Actions in the Plan, approximately 145 (83%) have been completed or are on track. The 2018-23 Plan has been through a public consultation process and is scheduled to be adopted in May 2018, including an update of the National Park's Special Qualities.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Secure and enhance the management of existing important key conservation habitats in farmland, especially hay meadows, wetlands, limestone dales and remaining areas of lead mine rakes, particularly through advice and brokerage of agri-environment schemes in conjunction with appropriate partner organisations.

The Authority continues to work to safeguard key habitats through negotiation of new agri-environment schemes and ensuring renewal of expiring agreements for priority sites- approximately 70% of the National Park is within agri-environment scheme agreements. However following the Brexit decision work has been ongoing to influence future policy and support systems which will secure and enhance the management of existing key habitats. The Authority has also inputted, on behalf of English National Park Authorities, to the review of the current Countryside Stewardship scheme, and in particular to address concerns about the scheme being able to deliver for the uplands.

The South West Peak Landscape Partnership, covering approximately ¼ of the National Park, has started delivery. Projects relevant to farmland habitats will include Future Farmscapes (building relationships with the farming community to further conservation objectives, e.g. signposting to agri-environment scheme agreements); Glorious Grasslands (surveying, producing management plans and securing conservation measures for flower-rich haymeadows and waxcap grasslands); and Slowing the Flow (working with natural processes to reduce downstream flooding, e.g. riparian tree planting, “leaky dams”, in-field attenuation features and catchment management). A Magnificent Meadows project continues to be developed by a partnership of organisations locally, contributing to a national Plantlife-led project.

2. Halt and reverse the past degradation of heather moorland and blanket bog through moorland management plans, agri-environment schemes and with help from the Moors for the Future Partnership.

The Authority, working through the Moors for the Future Partnership (MFF) continues to co-ordinate major landscape scale delivery across upland habitats, in particular with the launch of the €16m EU LIFE-funded MoorLIFE 2020 programme. This includes a continuation of large-scale blanket bog restoration including revegetation of bare peat, restoration of water levels through extensive gully-blocking and the reintroduction of sphagnum mosses, to former bare peat areas and those dominated by purple-moor grass, heather and cotton-grass. Work to develop a consensus on good practice land management for the whole of England was focussed on this area, which is being successfully used to improve the ecological condition of blanket bog habitats.

3. Step up measures to address the decline in breeding populations of priority bird species, particularly lapwing, curlew and snipe on farmland.

As part of the HLF funded landscape scale partnership in the South West Peak, wader hotspots have been identified and surveys begun on key landholdings. From these surveys wader plans have been produced for landowners, to give clear practical guidance on conservation measures. A PhD has begun in partnership with the University of Sheffield and RSPB focusing on Curlew and Snipe habitat requirements. In the Dark Peak surveys have shown a very positive response to moorland restoration by birds such as Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), with a reversal of past declines.

4. Negotiate agreements to secure appropriate management of ancient and semi-natural woodland sites.

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) dominates the woodlands of the limestone dales and Ash Dieback poses a significant threat to the future of these internationally important woodlands. There is now a greater understanding that the dominance of Ash in these woodlands is the result of past management, and that they are likely to have had a more varied tree and shrub composition in the past (e.g. with more Lime (*Tilia spp.*)). Work has therefore started with partners to diversify these woodlands. A joint project between the Woodland Trust and the National Park Authority made good progress towards the target of creating 48ha new small-scale woodland over a 3-year period, and towards surveying and assessing the restoration potential of 300 hectares of plantation on ancient woodland sites to native woodland.

5. Implement with partners programmes to achieve the targets and objectives set out in the Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan, 2011-2020;

Following identification of suitable sites, 220 White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)- a globally endangered species- were re-introduced to the area in partnership with various organisations, using IUCN guidelines. Other Biodiversity Action Plan targets are being addressed through the various measures described elsewhere, notably under recommendations 1-4, 6 and 7.

6. Maintain at least 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) land in favourable or recovering condition on land owned by the National Park Authority; in addition, implement measures on authority-owned land to maximise its contribution to nature conservation and cultural heritage objectives.

The area of Authority owned SSSI land in favourable/recovering position remained at about 96%. On the Authority's North Lees estate a Heritage Open Day was held, with community heritage activities, and enhancement works (bracken clearing and scrub management) were undertaken on an area of nationally important Bronze Age prehistoric field systems and settlements. National Park warden Bill Gordon, who manages the Estate, was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to wildlife, particularly the protection of the ring ouzel.

7. Carry out conservation and community work at a landscape scale through an integrated area-based management approach.

In the South West Peak a community grants scheme has been launched, with £34,500 grants awarded to 7 community groups to date for heritage projects, including art projects, historic building repairs, local history initiatives and local walking trails. Other SW Peak projects are providing opportunities for community volunteering. The Authority continues to contribute to the Sheffield Moors Partnership. In the Dark Peak and South Pennines an integrated approach is co-ordinated through Moors for the Future, including through the MoorLIFE 2020 Bogtastic Initiative to raise awareness in the communities around the SAC and an extensive Citizen Science project. The €3.3m Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership project, led by Sheffield Wildlife Trust has been developing a series of projects to engage local communities in enhancing the National Park's moorland fringe landscapes to the north-west of Sheffield. The Authority has done a landscape characterisation and assessment of the area to help support the project.

8. Implement the Cultural Heritage Strategy for the National Park and continue to work with partner organisations, local communities and English Heritage to achieve targets.

The Authority continues to implement its Cultural Heritage Strategy through its external partnerships and community focussed work, statutory planning work and encouraging landowners to take up options for Cultural Heritage within agri-environment schemes. Several strands of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership will focus on cultural heritage. "Peak Land Lives" has now completed 25 interviews with farming families in the area, capturing and recording local people's memories of the area. These will be brought together into an illustrated book. Of the 2907 Listed Buildings (plus two further buildings designated this year) the number at risk remains low and relatively constant at c.6%, and of the 470 Scheduled Ancient Monuments only 7 (1.5%) are at risk. A Historic Farmstead Characterisation study was completed to provide guidance on the appropriate features to conserve and enhance the character of traditional farmsteads when considering development proposals.

9. Continue to provide encouragement to small-scale economic schemes linking conservation of the environment of the Peak District to economic benefit.

12 businesses including accommodation providers, food producers, land management businesses and tourism/recreation businesses were awarded the Environmental Quality Mark which the Authority continues to champion. This award recognises businesses which support their local economy, work to reduce their environmental impact, play an active role in their local community and help celebrate, conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.

Support has also been provided for the development of the “Inspired by the Peak District” brand, developed for businesses across the Peak District to use, and linking to the special qualities of the Peak District landscape.

10. Only authorise extensions of existing mineral quarries to meet essential national needs, for example, if the minerals are not available elsewhere or are needed to provide traditional building materials in the park; seek restoration of mineral quarries to enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the national park.

Following confirmation from the Secretary of State of a Prohibition Order made by the Authority in relation to Longstone Edge East, including Backdale Quarry, restoration works in line with the requirements of the Order have commenced and are now nearing completion. After many years of uncertainty about the possibility of extraction continuing at this site, the Order makes it clear that mineral working cannot resume. The site is visible from many vantage points and has a considerable landscape impact. The restoration works already undertaken make a significant positive contribution to the landscape of the National Park and this will continue over the next few months and years as the earth movement concludes and the site re-vegetates.

Stanton Moor Quarry is in the central part of Stanton Moor and is an area of heather moorland with birch scrub. The moor is a designated Scheduled Monument due to its Bronze Age heritage. Stanton Moor Quarry is partially within this Scheduled Monument designation. In the 1950’s the government granted permission for a number of sites for mineral extraction within this central part of the moor. These permissions had very few operational controls. Under current policies, Stanton Moor Quarry would not be granted planning permission. After several refused applications and many years of negotiation, a proposal was made to relinquish Stanton Moor Quarry and alternatively work a 50,000 tonnes extension at New Pilhough Quarry, which is located close by but in a less sensitive area. The legal agreement ensures that no further extraction can take place at Stanton Moor Quarry and a revocation order will follow to confirm this position. This positive outcome protects the central area of the moor from the threat of quarrying in perpetuity, and it is the last of the old mineral permissions in the Stanton Moor Area.

The majority of sites operating in the Peak District National Park undertake progressive restoration as part of their working scheme. Other sites are currently undergoing progressive restoration or are in a period of prescriptive aftercare to bring the site to a beneficial after-use. Most restoration is designed to help the National Park achieve biodiversity targets in the biodiversity action plan. An example of this is the restoration work that has been progressing at Shining Bank Quarry where the Authority has been working with the minerals company and the landowner to create a site which will provide suitable habitat for White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*).

11. Continue to develop tourism activities in a way that protects and enhances both the interests of the community and the environment and supports the local economy; ensure that the National Park Authority meets the requirements of an application for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism; increase the proportion of visitors using sustainable methods of travel.

We continue to work with a range of partners to pursue approaches that put into practice the aims of the Charter for Sustainable Tourism, including responsible event management, responsible visitor management campaigns and various sustainable transport projects. The Authority hosts the Pedal Peak business initiative, developing rural cycle tourism, and in particular supporting businesses to become more cycling-friendly and to use the special qualities of the National Park in their business offer.

2. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The Authority has continued its Asset Management work, seeking opportunities to dispose of smaller properties of lower conservation value or properties where the interest can be managed by others, to ensure resources are focused on priority sites. 3 small properties have been sold or are in the process of sale during the year.

3. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There are no boundary changes.

4. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The Authority secured a grant of £200,000 from National Grid’s Landscape Enhancement Initiative Fund to carry out landscape enhancement works in the Longdendale Valley to ameliorate the visual impacts of the high voltage electricity line. Enhancement works have started and a further bid of £180,000 has been prepared. Preparatory work to underground a section of high voltage line at Dunford Bridge is also underway, having bid successfully against other sites nationally.

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The conditions and recommendations of the Diploma renewal are integrated into the National Park Management Plan and other corporate planning documents which guide the Authority’s work. The Authority continues to highlight the importance of the Diploma by including the logo



Holder of Council of Europe Diploma on all letters.

4. AUSTRIA – KRIMML WATERFALLS NATURAL SITE

1. Conditions:

No conditions

2. Recommendations:

1. Review and where necessary improve the regulations of the protected area in order to strengthen the protection status; and devote a part of the management plan of the HTNP to the Krimml Waterfalls:

The management plan for the Hohe Tauern National Park was decided by the national park committees. The Krimml Waterfalls will be integrated in the action field running waters and wet habitats and in the chapter legal basis a separate sub-item was dedicated to the European Diploma – see appendix

2. Continue to take appropriate measures in order to preserve the natural beauty of this impressive natural monument for future generations:

Is implemented on an ongoing.

3. Avoid impacts on the high aesthetic quality of the landscape surrounding the Krimml Falls, especially in the areas around “Wasserfallboden” and “Schönangerl”:

Is implemented on an ongoing. In all of nature conservation law administrative procedures, which take

place in the surroundings to the Krimml Waterfalls, always takes a rigorous examination of the potential impact on the natural monument.

4. Maintain great vigilance regarding the development close to the falls, e.g. installations or extension of shops, as well as medical care and new touristic activities (e.g. ice-climbing);

Is implemented on an ongoing. In all of nature conservation law administrative procedures, which take place in the surrounding area to the Krimml Waterfalls, always takes a rigorous examination of the potential impact on the natural monument.

5. Avoid as far as possible increasing light pollution:

Currently there are no efforts.

6. Continue to pay close attention of the problem of path erosion; and ensure that visitors only use the existing paths;

The general maintenance work on the footpath implemented and the balustrades was renovated by the Austrian Alpine Association. This work will be implemented with great care on the landscape for the safety of visitors and for the visitor management. Individual parts of the footpaths and their abbreviations have been dismantled, fenced and revegetated.

7. Pursue scientific research and secure funding for studies on regional birdlife, fungi (including lichens) and bryophytes, as a contribution to protect the area's typical biodiversity:

The area of Krimml Waterfalls and the Krimml Valley are included in some scientific research projects of the Hohe Tauern National Park. The scientific study "Ferns in the spray: the pteridophyte flora of the Krimml Waterfalls" was completed on December 2016 and demonstrate again that the Krimml waterfalls are a hotspot of biodiversity. The study author presented the results at the 6th international Symposium for Research in Protected areas in Salzburg on 3th November. The scientific studies on the human health and well-being effects of the Krimml Waterfalls were also presented at this research-symposium – see appendix.



8. Strengthen the cooperation with local stakeholders, especially land owners, the municipality, the Austrian Alpine Association (ÖAV), tourism operators and associations.

The cooperation is very well maintained with the Austrian Alpine Association, the land owners, the community and the tourist office and there is a good agreement. The chairman of the Alpine Association (ÖAV) section Krimml was honored with the Salzburg environmental merit sign for his great engagement to the European Diploma site Krimml Waterfalls.



Progress with measures taken in order to meet the recommendations defined during the award or renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas.

3. Site Management:

No changes

4. Boundaries:

No changes

5. Other information:

Visitor Management

The amount of visitors has diminished from 700.000 in 1992 to 348.623 in 2008. This year the visitor number increased fortunately slightly with 392.783. Most of the visitors come between June and September and spend only one day in this site. The means of transport used for visiting the region are mainly private cars, followed by busses and train. For years the arrival is forced by public transport. The Nationalpark Sommercard Mobil was very well received. To be able to enjoy and sample the region and its variety-packed offer, there were two new all-inclusive tickets available from 1th May to 31th October 2017. All people holidaying in the region, who are spending the night in a hotel, private lodging or holiday apartment or on a farm, had the chance with this card to choose from 60 attractions and avail of additional discounts. One of the benefits of the Nationalpark Sommercard was the visit of the Krimml Waterfalls and the Krimml Worlds of Water and the free use of the local “Pinzgau railway” and all “Salzburg Verkehr Postbuses”.



KRIMMLER WASSERFÄLLE
THE KRIMML WATERFALLS

DIE MOBILITÄTSANGEBOTE MIT DER NATIONALPARK SOMMERCARD MOBIL
THE MOBILITY BENEFITS OF THE NATIONALPARK SOMMERCARD MOBIL

Zusatzleistungen nur mit der Nationalpark Sommercard MOBIL

- Tägliche kostenlose Nutzung der Pinzgauer Lokalbahn und aller Salzburg Verkehr Postbusse zwischen Königsleiten und Rauris
- Kostenlose Nutzung der teilnehmenden Wandertaxis im Dürnbachtal, Mühlbachtal und Habachtal
- E-Bike-Verleih für einen Tag
- Ein Tagesticket für die Großglockner Hochalpenstraße
- Ein Tagesticket für die Gerlos Alpenstraße

The additional services only with the Nationalpark Sommercard MOBIL

- Free use of the local Pinzgau railway daily and all Salzburg Verkehr Postbuses between Königsleiten and Rauris
- Free use of participating 'hiking taxis' in Dürnbach Valley, Mühlbach Valley and Habach Valley
- E-Bike hire for a day
- A day ticket for the Großglockner High Alpine Road
- A day ticket for the Gerlos Alpine Road

mit Unterstützung von



The Krimml Waterfalls are an important excursion destination of the Austrian schools and a starting point of their field trips into the Hohe Tauern National Park. Many visitors had taken part in the excursions guided by the well-trained Rangers of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

In the course of several PR activities for the National Park Hohe Tauern and the Krimml Valley film and photo shoots or insertions of the Krimml Waterfalls were made.

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma Krimml Waterfalls, the exhibition "Panta Rhei - everything is flowing" was created by the Nationalpark Hohe Tauern and the Austrian Alpine Association at Krimml Municipal Office. In this exhibition the history of the European Diploma Krimml Waterfalls, the natural phenomena of the Krimml waterfalls are presented in a compact and exciting way. The exhibition was opened by Federal President Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen and the Minister of Nature Conservation of Salzburg and the chairman of Hohe Tauern Nationalpark Dr. Astrid Rössler. The exhibition can be visited until the spring of 2018 by free entry.

See link: <http://hohetauern.at/de/presseartikel/alle-news-artikel/3066-50-jahre-europadiplom-krimmler-wasserfaelle.html>



Another module of the celebration 50th anniversary of the European Diploma Krimml Waterfalls was the Special insert with eight pages supplement in the Nationalpark Magazin. This magazine goes to all households in Salzburg and thus the European Diploma can be brought closer to all Salzburger citizens. Further pages see in the attachment.



The promotion measures 2017 of the Ferienregion Nationalpark Hohe Tauern were under the motto "Year of the Water". In their press releases and advertising was repeatedly pointed to the Krimml Waterfalls, their healing effects and their award as an European Diploma Area.

STILL ODER PRICKELND
 In der Ferienregion Nationalpark Hohe Tauern im SalzburgerLand Juni 2017

Reisende Urlaubsfreizeiter
 Die Krimmler Wasserfälle liegen im Herzen der Ferienregion Nationalpark Hohe Tauern im SalzburgerLand. Sie sind ein Naturjuwel und ein internationales Zeichen für Naturschutz.

SALEWIKER LAND

HOHE TAUERN
 IM SALZBURGERLAND

Wo Körper und Geist aufleben
 Die Ferienregion Nationalpark Hohe Tauern im SalzburgerLand lädt zum Innehalten und Ausruhen, geizt aber auch nicht mit großen Abenteuern.

Die Welt von Gletschern und großer Artenvielfalt
 Das SalzburgerLand ist ein Naturjuwel. Die Hohe Tauern im SalzburgerLand sind ein Naturjuwel und ein internationales Zeichen für Naturschutz. Die Krimmler Wasserfälle sind ein Naturjuwel und ein internationales Zeichen für Naturschutz.

INHALT
 01 Das SalzburgerLand
 02 Die Hohe Tauern
 03 Die Krimmler Wasserfälle
 04 Die Krimmler Wasserfälle
 05 Die Krimmler Wasserfälle
 06 Die Krimmler Wasserfälle
 07 Die Krimmler Wasserfälle
 08 Die Krimmler Wasserfälle

NATIONALPARK Blicke

DIE WASSERREICHEN HOHE TAUERN
 // WATER, THE TREASURE OF THE HOHE TAUERN

Das SalzburgerLand ist ein Naturjuwel. Die Hohe Tauern im SalzburgerLand sind ein Naturjuwel und ein internationales Zeichen für Naturschutz. Die Krimmler Wasserfälle sind ein Naturjuwel und ein internationales Zeichen für Naturschutz.

HEALTH

Bis zu 4 Monate beschwerdefrei!

HEALTH

6. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The award of the European Diploma is not only honourable, but it is also a challenge for the conservationists to meet the demands of protection in a responsible way. This year we could preserve the nature and the landscape of the Krimml Waterfalls. The policies of the Hohe Tauern National Park and of the government of Land Salzburg adhere strongly to the idea of the protection of the Krimml Waterfalls. These interventions were warded off only based on the regulations of the European Diploma! Extremely keen standards are being applied to all matters connected with the Krimml Waterfalls and their protected surroundings. The award of the European Diploma to the Krimml Waterfalls has made the falls and the National Park well known throughout the world. This fact has been appreciated by the National Park Administration in many publications and conferences.

5. GERMANY - LÜNEBURG HEATH NATURE RESERVE

Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no conditions attached to the renewal of the European Diploma (see Resoulition CM/ResDip(2015)5).

Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Pursue a reduction, or at least a limitation to no more than the current amount, of the concession of ground-water extraction and co-ordinate the ground-water extraction for irrigation on farmland technically and quantitatively with the activities and infrastructure of Wasserwerke Hamburg; carry out additional studies and monitoring in order to collect more information about the influences of all kinds of water extraction on species and ecosystems; and simulation modelling should be undertaken for all factors possibly influencing the groundwater level, the soil, the streams, the different types of vegetation including forests, the biotopes of red-list-species, and the natural dynamic of the whole ecosystem;

The approval procedure concerning a new concession for ground water extraction asked for by Hamburg Waterworks is still going on. The amount of groundwater lifting will hopefully be limited to 12,1 million m³ instead of 16,1 million m³ (plus a maximum of 10% for so called "Process water"). VNP will tolerate this amount, but no higher extraction rates, as these would damage the ground water table severely.

2. Pursue political recognition of the VNP's Lüneburger Heide Nature Reserve (NLH) and increase the public funding to the same level as that provided to Federal Nature Parks

VNP criticises that there is still no public commitment to finance all necessary actions to keep Natura 2000 areas, FFH-Habitats and Species in good ecological condition.

Programs and funds for nature conservation provided by EU and the Federal State of Lower Saxony are very difficult to handle for non-profit organisations such as VNP. Application procedures are highly complicated and lengthy. VNP handed in a program for conservation projects in several FFH-habitats but still has not received an answer. Non-profit organisations have to fulfil the same requirements as public organisations such as Districts or Communities. Particular smaller non-profit organisations do not have the means and the professional experts to apply for highly complex open competitive bidding programs that are offered in the new EC /

ELER / VO-EU Nr. 1305/2013 – (financing guideline “Special Species and Habitat Protection”, State of Lower Saxony, Rd.Erl. v. 28.8.2015 28-22620/2/010).

The new financing programs discriminate small, private non-profit organisations compared to large public institutions that have legal experts and enough professionals to fill in lengthy and complicate application forms.

VNP demands a better support for non-profit organisation to apply for public grants. An information centre and expert help in case of legal questions (particular public procurement law) are absolutely necessary to encourage small private nature conservation organisation to apply for sufficient funds.

Public grants for nature conservation in Lower Saxony are now distributed in the context of a ranking scheme. Nature reserves have to compete against each other. VNP wishes that nature reserves holding a European Diploma should get a higher ranking score in comparison to nature reserves without a European Diploma. This would underline the significance of European Diploma Areas in the context of a European nature reserve network.

3. Reconsider the ongoing practice of agricultural funding and pursue recognition of all types of heathland cultivation and all heathland restoration activities as a kind of “green land cultivation” with the same amount of funding, especially during the EC-funding period 2013-2020 and also for long term safe guarding

In 2015 heathland (i.e. *Calluna* dominated heath land habitats on sandy soil) was included in the list of agricultural land defined by EC. For the first time farmers and shepherds, who manage heathland, are authorised to payment entitlements and are allowed to apply for the European single payment scheme.

There are still two negative aspects concerning heathland as part of the agricultural subsidy system.

Heathland farmers who apply for the single payment scheme lose their grants for agri-environment measures (e.g. sheep grazing nature conservation schemes). This is a severe discrimination of heathland in comparison to grassland and arable land.

The second problem concerning single payments for heath land is the so called “100 tree rule”. In Lower Saxony heathland is only considered as agricultural land, if there are less than 100 trees (even *Juniper communis* is considered a tree) growing per hectare. This regulation is very difficult to handle in shepherding practice and causes an enormous bureaucratic effort, as each tree has to be counted on aerial photographs.

In 2017 VNPs’ own farm “Landschaftspflegehof Tütsberg” was examined by a board of experts from EC Auditing Board Luxemburg. These experts explained, that the so called “100 tree rule” is meant for arable land only (e.g. for olive trees on arable land in Mediterranean countries). The “100 tree rule” is not meant for grasslands and pastures. Unfortunately the State of Lower Saxony (in particular the authority in charge “Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen) has a different legal perception.

VNP asks for a more practical regulation that takes the actual land use, i.e. the grazing of the whole area, into account. FFH habitats especially dry European heathland with *Calluna vulgaris* (4030) and formations of *Juniperus communis* (5130) have to be considered agricultural land, even if there are more than 100 trees growing.

The case of the “100 tree rule” indicates that small private non-profit organisation need legal counsel and an information centre or committee to apply to in cases of discrimination or unpractical requirements set by public institutions.

4. Pursue the continuation of funding for the rearing of the „Heidschnucke“ (Heathland sheep) by Lower Saxony and the Federal Republic and recognise the „Dülmener Pferd“ (Heathland horses) as worthy of subsidy by the rear-premium of Lower Saxony

EC and the country of Lower Saxony support breeders of rare breeds of farm animals. Since 2015 the breeding of “grey horned heathland sheep” (Graue gehörnte Heidschnucken), the traditional sheep breed of the Lüneburg Heath, is funded with 200 Euro per livestock unit.

“Dülmener Horse”, the only surviving German pony breed, is included in the 2016 list of rare and endangered breeds. Unfortunately the breeders of the rare breed of Dülmener horses are not supported by the State of Lower Saxony. The neighbouring state of Northern Westphalia offers breeders of Dülmener horses a grant of 200 Euro per horse.

VNP calls for an equal treatment of active breeders of rare breeds in all German federal states.

5. Develop a concept for connecting the large heathlands areas east and west of Wilsede by an ecological corridor.

An ecological corridor linking the heathlands north and west of Wilsede (forest fringe north of “Heinköpen” Woodland) was not carried out until now. VNP demands that corridors are included in the new FFH-Managementplan, which will be drawn up in 2018. Corridors should consist of broad transitions from woodland to open land. Woodland should be cleared to a level of 25% tree crown cover to allow enough sun shine to reach the ground covering vegetation.

6. Pursue restoration of streams, their associated wetland biotopes and their buffer strips;

An ecological restoration scheme was carried out on various streams in the nature reserve throughout the past years. Financing was derived from a budget for the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive.

To initialize a dynamic river development, sections of “Haverbeeke” (a brook in the central part of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve) were improved with gravel banks and stream guidance. Artificial ponds that block the permeability along “Haverbeeke” were removed.

Last working stages were carried out in 2017 and the program concerning the restoration of “Haverbeeke” brook was completed successfully.

In 2016 VNP worked out a detailed concept for the restoration of large wetlands along small heathland brooks. The restoration of wetlands is important to improve the habitat quality of highly endangered ground breeding birds such as curlew (*Numenius arquata*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) or common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*).

VNP filed an application for a grant financed by European agricultural Fund / ELER / VO-EU Nr. 1305/2013 – (financing guideline “Special Species and Habitat Protection”, State of Lower Saxony, Rd.Erl. v. 28.8.2015 28-22620/2/010).

The restoration concept was approved in September 2016 by Niedersächsischer Landesbetrieb für Wasserwirtschaft, Küsten- und Naturschutz / NLWKN, the nature conservation authority of State of Lower Saxony.

NLWKN granted a 100% funding in accordance of the ELER guidelines of 381.274,87 Euro (2016-2022) to carry out the following schemes:

- Bird monitoring
- Clearance of surplus shrubs, felling of trees in breeding habitats
- Restoration of channelized ditches and brooks

- Construction of new ponds, ecological enhancement of existing ponds
- Protection of clutches and nests

The wetland restoration project takes place in two different areas:

- Twißelmoor – Tütsberger Grünland, 269 ha, 1 breeding couple of curlews, 1-4 breeding couples of lapwings, no common snipes
- Hörpeler Heide, 327 ha, curlew extinct in 1998, some sightings in 2014, lapwing extinct in 1999, no common snipes

Bird monitoring started in winter 2016/2017. In spring and autumn 2017 unwanted shrubs were felled in Twißelmoor – Tütsberger Grünland. Drainages and artificial ditches were removed. New ponds were built. Further working stages will be carried out in “Hörpeler Heide” in winter 2017/18.

7. Reduce areas with cultivation of energy-crops to a level that does not affect the nature reserve’s flora, fauna, groundwater and the scenic attractions

Energy crops like maize are still dominating and influencing the agricultural landscape in the neighbourhood of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve.

To increase the biodiversity on arable land used for energy crops VNP is planning many projects for agricultural ecological measures such as blossoming strips of wild flowers or nurse crops. The projects will be financed by European Union, Federal State of Lower Saxony and other ecological foundations. The impacts will be studied by the University of Lüneburg (Leuphana).

8. Continue ecological forest management and convert mono-croppings of spruce into mixed forests including oak (*Quercus* spp.)

Pasture woodland project

Pasture woodlands are an important habitat in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve for birds like nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*) or hoopoe (*Upupa epops*). They also accommodate large populations of reptiles, butterflies and ground beetles.

These picturesque woodlands consist of a canopy of large oak or beech trees with enormous crowns and a ground covering vegetation of grasses, lichens, calluna, blueberry and other species.

Pasture woodlands (“Stühbusch” they are called in Lüneburger Heide) are part of the cultural heritage of former generations of heathland farmers. Most pasture woodlands in and outside the nature reserve were converted into mono-use pine forests or arable land during the last 150 years. But in the centre of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve some pasture woodlands survived. They are still used in the traditional way with grazing (sheep and goat flocks, cattle and horses) and a traditional method of forestry called “Niederwaldwirtschaft”, where single specimen trees are cut circa 1 m above soil level and left for natural regeneration. Some trunks are left in the pasture woodlands to create habitats for the highly endangered stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), one of the so called European “priority species”.

During the last years VNP carried out restoration work at Wilsede pasture woodland (35 ha). In 2017 special fences were acquired with the financial assistance of BINGO (Nature conservation lottery) to protect the treated specimen trees against early grazing in the first decade after cutting (which would destroy the tree).

In autumn 2017 VNP worked out a conservation scheme for pasture woodlands and arranged for further promotion and public funding.

9. Ensure that existing data are included and respected in regional planning processes and also ensure that negative impacts on the nature reserve from outside the area's boundary are prevented; before licensing a wind farm, or any other project in the neighbourhood of the reserve, carry out sufficient and detailed studies taking into account the formulated VNP recommendations;

There is still no instrument (data base) that bundles all up to date ecological information of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve in one place. VNP hopes that a reserve management, which will be introduced in 2018 (s. Number 13) will enhance the current situation.

10. Complete the database of Lower Saxony concerning FFH-Species so that all species existing in the reserve are listed and considered in regional, national and federal planning procedures;

The standard information sheet (part of the FFH-directive planning process) was supplemented by known disturbances (but without questioning landowners). Further species or habitats listed in the appendices of FFH-or EU-Bird-Directive were still not included in the standard information sheet.

The federal state of Lower Saxony does not carry out any further surveys of FFH- or EU- Bird directive species. There are still severe lacks of information concerning bats.

There are still no coherent ecological data bases in Lower Saxony. Data on species can be found in separate forest data bases, FFH-data bases, surface watercourse data bases and data bases concerning certain speciation like birds, reptiles, mammals, locusts, dragonflies, moths. It is very laborious to extract relevant data from all this dispersed data bases to create a species list for a certain area.

11. Create suitable ecological corridors between the nature reserve and the black grouse biotopes outside the reserve without endangering infrastructures such as like wind turbines;

The "Regionales Raumordnungsprogramm" (regional planning document) is currently adjusted. Unfortunately the district of "Heidekreis" (the regional planning authority) still supports a zone for wind energy in "Borstel" right in the centre of an important ecological corridor. This corridor is highly important to connect the breeding habitats of Black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) in "Lüneburger Heide" nature reserve to the military training grounds ("Munster"), where another population of Black grouse is situated.

VNP regrets that still no measures to improve or safeguard existing ecological corridors for Black grouse were carried out by the district of Heidekreis during this period of report.

12. Realise the concept of buffer zone areas with a high protection status in the neighbouring areas of the nature reserve

Planning procedures by the regional nature conservation authority are going on to declare "Camp Reinsehen" (an area west of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve) as FFH-Habitat. Camp Reinsehen is a former British military exercise ground that contains large dry grasslands.

13. Establish a corps of rangers (Naturwacht).

VNP employs and finances six part time rangers from April to October. There was still no public funding for this ranger service in 2017.

In 2017 new guidelines concerning financing of reserve management were established by the State of Lower Saxony.

VNP worked out a concept for a new reserve management including ranger services ("Naturschutzfachliche Vor-Ort-Betreuung des NATURA 2000-Gebietes „Lüneburger Heide“

durch die VNP-Stiftung Naturschutzpark Lüneburger Heide (VNP)“) and submitted the necessary application forms in autumn 2017.

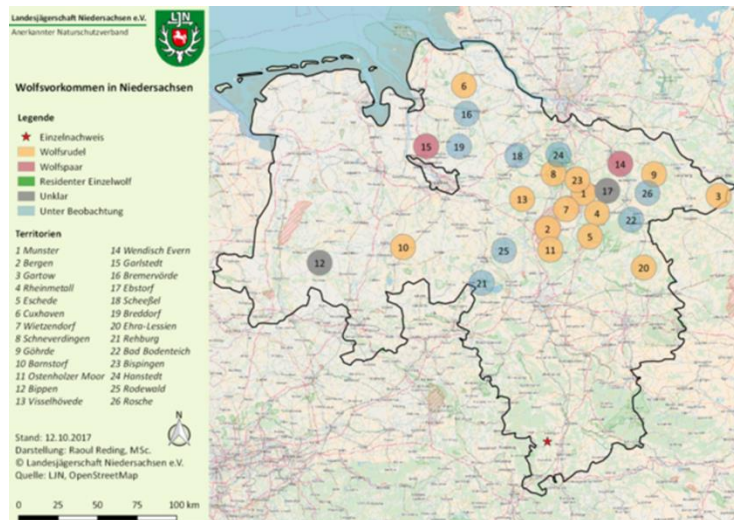
VNP applied for 368.000 Euro p.a. (2018-2021) to finance the position of a nature reserve manger, as well as ranger services. VNP has already created new office space for the prospective reserve manager and hopes to start work in 2018.

14. Site Management:

List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The European wolf (*Canis lupus*) showed an enormous increase of packs and individuals during the last years (48 pups in Lowe Saxony in 2017). 1-3 couple of wolves with 10-11 individuals are seen regularly in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve (number 8, 23, 24 in the following map). The wolves in the nature reserve were reproducing in 2016 and 2017 (7 pups).

The following map shows all known packs, couples and individuals of wolves in the State of Lowe Saxony.



In and outside the nature reserve several sheep flocks of private owners were attacked and several sheep killed or injured (notice: <https://www.wolfsmonitoring.com/monitoring/nutztierrisse/>)

In 2017 wolves attacked herded sheep flocks in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve twice. Both attacks took place at day time while shepherds and their dogs were present and herding the sheep flocks. The shepherds could chase the wolves away. But never the less, VNP is at a loss, how to handle wolves, that specialise in chasing and killing farm animals.

The nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) is a new invasive species that causes damage to wetland vegetation and mussels in brooks and ponds.

15. Boundaries:

Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

16. Other information:

List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

17. Please also remember to include one or two paragraphs on the use of the EDPA logo.

VNP informs about the EDPA on its homepage and uses the EDPA regularly, please notice:

<http://www.verein-naturschutzpark.de/hauptmenue/naturschutzgebiet-lueneburger-heide/europa-diplom.html>

6. SWEDEN – MUDDUS NATIONAL PARK

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions are listed neither in the Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)2 on the renewal of the European Diploma, nor in the Resolution Res(67)23 on the award of the European Diploma. Hence it follows that there are no conditions to be explained.

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Provide sufficient financial and human resources, including field staff, to the “Laponiatjuottjudus” (management board) in order to implement the new management plan and ensure a smooth transition from former the county management structure to the new board; and provide as soon as possible an English translation of the new Management Plan;

Today Laponiatjuottjudus has ten employees. Laponiatjuottjudus as an organization is now better equipped to implement the management plan since we now consist of a wide-ranging of competence within the field staff. The future challenge is to continue the work of creating a reliable and steady platform in order to develop and maintain management work required to preserve and develop the Lapponia World Heritage site. The work within the organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend. Laponiatjuottjudus is now operating under an extended trial period from the Swedish Government in order to manage the Lapponia World Heritage site. The trial period will end in December 2018 and before that a decision will be made by the Swedish Government if they will prolong the management of the World Heritage site in the care of Laponiatjuottjudus.

Management Plan was translated into English in 2014 and is available on http://lapponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Lapponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327_2.pdf.

2. Continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserving the exceptional predator populations while allowing the Sami population to continue their traditional reindeer herding activities;

Laponiatjuottjudus is not a Government authority. In the management task concerning the predators' inventories in Lapponia we are continuously working with the Sami communities and Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB). CAB is responsible for the predators' inventories in Sweden since they are a Government authority. The results from this year different inventories have not yet been presented.

Laponiatjuottjudus also have contact with the “Norrbotten County Ornithological association” (Norrbottens ornitologiska förening (NOF)) who performs inventories regarding different birds in the county.

3. Establish a centralized research database linked to a GIS for the whole Laponia area and make the results of the research widely available for scientist and visitors;

Laponiatjuottjudus have developed a basic GIS system that is available for the management to use. Hence, we now have a GIS system that can be used within the organization, the development of our GIS system is a long-term work in progress that will continue during the following years. The development of Laponia GIS is a very important and time-consuming work although it is a crucial management system to gather and store necessary information and execute spatial analyses. The management has not been granted access to existing systems used by the former county management (CAB). However, the work to develop and build up a Laponia GIS has increased during the last two years since Laponiatjuottjudus now have one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. The future task is to further implement the GIS system in the daily management.

4. Continue the monitoring of the fire areas including the natural regeneration processes and design a programme to monitor the effects of climatic change;

In 2013 the Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB) summarized the studies, which have been conducted in the forest fire area, into a report. Muddus/Muttos ecology and fire history is well documented and it is a common important task for the future to continue and encourage the research in the area. It is important to encourage people to visit the park and give the visitors a broad range of information about the whole Muddus/Muttos area, including the value of forest fires for the biodiversity.

Laponiatjuottjudus has during 2017 intensified the work of investigating the suspected establishment of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) in the National Park. We are developing a long term environmental field survey to detect any possible establishment of lodgepole pine. Here the fire areas will be important to monitor the natural regeneration in the area since lodgepole pine is a fast colonizer in disturbed forest areas.

During the year Laponiatjuottjudus have continued to stay in touch with the map producing company who produced the map over Muddus/Muttos area in 2015. In the future updates of the map we may be able to highlight strategic visitor places and canalize visitors in their hikes in the national park. This map also shows where the forest fire in 2006 took place.

In Sweden the County Administration Board (CAB) is coordinating the different surveys and follow-ups of the national environmental objectives and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives that the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for. These surveys and follow-ups of species- and habitats of interest indicate changes over time in both vegetation and animal species that possibly could be associated to climate change. Laponiatjuottjudus has an exchange with the Norrbotten CAB and we take part of the information and reports every year.

5. Assess the visitor flows and their impact both within and outside the park (ecological and economic impact);

During 2017 Laponiatjuottjudus has estimated the visitor flows in Muddus/Muttos by using data from visitor counters. With this information the management have developed a good estimation of where and how people hikes in the area. Laponiatjuottjudus have performed maintenance on the trails boardwalks and bridges. Keeping the trails accessible is important to allow people to visit the park in a safe way.

The visitor cabins in the National park are equipped with books containing suitable information about the area that among others mentions the European Diploma for Protected Areas. Laponiatjuottjudus have ordered new signs for directions in Muddus/Muttos National Park. The ambition is that these signs will be produced and mounted during the following year. We also hope to be able to produce European Diploma for Protected Area signs to mount in the cabins as a complement for the new signs that were mounted on the cabins in 2016. Further the management of Laponia also search additional funding to be able to maintain a good standard on the trails.

6. Consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks with the Muddus National Park and other conservation areas so that the Laponia World Heritage Site becomes a single European Diploma site;

This is a question for the board to consider on how to approach this question.

7. Reflect on the use of the different national and international designations for the area; organize a workshop with the relevant international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, and National Park Service) with a view to harmonizing the reporting and monitoring requirements and the respective perimeters.

Laponiatjuottjudus is positive to discuss and exchange information with people who possess relevant expertise in the different matters. We are also positive to organize an international workshop. Although to organize a workshop of that magnitude is a financial question and hence we have an important task to prioritize this.

3. **Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Today Laponiatjuottjudus management crew consist of seven full-time employees and three part-time employees.

Laponiatjuottjudus operate at a limited level due to the economic funding. During 2017 the economic funding was comparable to 2016's economic funding. But still the future funding is very uncertain and varies from one year to another. This insufficient funding of course affects the management since it is very difficult to plan in the long-term as the funding varies every year and hence it is a question of prioritizing.

4. **Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes of boundaries to report.

5. **Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

During the year Laponiatjuottjudus has continued to investigate the suspected establishment of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) in the National Park. The work has intensified with the work of developing a long term environmental field survey to detect any possible establishment of lodgepole pine within the National park. This work will continue during 2018.

During 2017 Laponiatjuottjudus has starting to build the new visitor entrance in Muddus/Muttos. With the new visitor entrance in the National Park we believe that we better can canalize and also monitor the effect visitors have on the area. The entrance will be wheelchair accessible and contain an entrance portal, fireplaces, information signs, toilet, recycling station and a parking space. The new entrance is financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). The plan is that the new visitor entrance in Muddus/Muttos also will contain the European Diploma logo with additional information about this acknowledgement. The work with the entrance will continue during the following years and will be completed with the development of suitable information signs regarding the area and the Laponia World Heritage.

In 2017 Laponiatjuottjudus has continued working with the task of developing our website. This is an ongoing process. In addition to the fact that the whole Laponia area of 9400 km² is a World Heritage, it

also consists four National parks and two Nature reserves. Therefore, we present information about all our different protected areas within the World Heritage. In the information about Muddus/Muttos National Park we announce that the area is awarded with European Diploma and also display the EDPA logo. Further we are also in the process of creating a new graphic profile for the World Heritage. Here the EDPA logo is included. In addition to Laponia's own homepage we also collaborate with SEPA and provide information to their website concerning Sweden's National Parks (www.sverigesnationalparker.se).

Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) two unsuccessful breedings was observed and no successful breeding was confirmed in 2017.

Rough-legged buzzard (*Bufo lagopus*) one observed successful breeding in 2017. This was one of few successful breedings in the Norrbotten county.

7. SWEDEN – SAREK AND PADJELANTA NATIONAL PARKS

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions are listed neither in the Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)3 on the renewal of the European Diploma, nor in the Resolution Res(67)23 on the award of the European Diploma. Hence it follows that there are no conditions to be explained.

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. *Provide sufficient financial and human resources, including field staff, to the "Laponiatjuottjudus" (management board) in order to implement the new Management Plan and ensure a smooth transition from former the County management structure to the new board; and provide as soon as possible an English translation of the new Management Plan;*

Today Laponiatjuottjudus has ten employees. Laponiatjuottjudus as an organization is now better equipped to implement the management plan since we now consist of a wide-ranging of competence within the field staff. The future challenge is to continue the work of creating a reliable and steady platform in order to develop and maintain management work required to preserve and develop the Laponia World Heritage site. The work within the organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend. Laponiatjuottjudus is now operating under an extended trial period from the Swedish Government in order to manage the Laponia World Heritage site. The trial period will end in December 2018 and before that a decision will be made by the Swedish Government if they will prolong the management of the World Heritage site in the care of Laponiatjuottjudus.

Management Plan was translated into English in 2014 and is available on http://laponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Laponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327_2.pdf.

2. *Continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserving the exceptional predator populations while allowing the Sami population to continue their traditional reindeer herding activities;*

Laponiatjuottjudus is not a Government authority. In the management task concerning the predators' inventories in Laponia we are continuously working with the Sami communities and Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB). CAB is responsible for the predators' inventories in Sweden since they are a Government authority. The results from this year different inventories have not yet been presented.

Laponiatjuottjudus also have contact with the “Norrbotten County Ornithological association” (Norrbottens ornitologiska förening (NOF)) who performs inventories regarding different birds in the county.

3. Establish a centralized research database linked to a GIS for the whole Laponia area and make the results of the research widely available for scientist and visitors;

Laponiatjuottjudus have developed a basic GIS system that is available for the management to use. Hence, we now have a GIS system that can be used within the organization, the development of our GIS system is a long-term work in progress that will continue during the following years. The development of Laponia GIS is a very important and time-consuming work although it is a crucial management system to gather and store necessary information and execute spatial analyses. The management have not been granted access to existing systems used by the former county management (CAB). However, the work to develop and build up a Laponia GIS has increased during the last two years since Laponiatjuottjudus now have one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. The future task is to further implement the GIS system in the daily management.

4. Closely monitor the use of snowmobile, motor boats and other off-road vehicles, particularly in view of controlling illegal hunting and fishing;

Controls and authority in Sarek/Badjelánnda is handled by the police and the Norrbotten County Administrative Board. Laponiatjuottjudus is cooperating with the authorities and we are working to maintain that visitors and inhabitants in the parks are following existing laws and regulations. We provide accessible information on our website about the regulations for the National Parks and we also have contact with the local inhabitants as well as local tourist organizations.

5. Set up a system for estimating the number of visitors, their profile and distribution over the year and initiate a research programme on the long term impact of the different human activities (e.g. reindeer herding, fishing and tourism) on the landscape, and design a programme to monitor the effects of the climatic change;

Laponiatjuottjudus is continuously working with the question concerning the number of visitors in the National Parks. In 2017 we have used three visitor counters in strategic places in Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks. This is an ongoing work and we plan to continue using visitor counters on strategic places in the parks in the following years. For Padjelanta/Badjelánnda we collect statistics of the number of visitors from the tourist cabins situated in the park.

The impact of the different human activities on the landscape is an important question. Laponiatjuottjudus work with the reindeer herding communities in matters of concern. We also work with the Norrbotten County Administrative Board and towards tourist companies in matters of permissions and tourist activities. During 2015 we have initiated a project and a field study in Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda concerning the knowledge of how, when and where the indigenous Sámi people in the National Parks have fished and still fishes for their household requirements. This study is looking at fishing from different aspects (e.g. biological, historical and cultural) and we also study the biology of fish in different waters in the Laponia WH area.

The Naturum Laponia visitor center is part of the Swedish phenology network and report about the seasonal changes in nature throughout the years. This is one way to follow up changes in nature due to climatic change.

In Sweden the County Administration Board (CAB) is coordinating the different surveys and follow-ups of the national environmental objectives and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives that the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for. These surveys and follow-ups of species- and habitats of interest indicate changes over time in both vegetation and animal species that possibly

could be associated to climate change. Laponiatjuottjudus has an exchange with the Norrbotten CAB and we take part of the information and reports every year.

6. Build and equip as soon as possible the Visitor information centre in Stora Sjöfallet for the Laponia WH site and provide specific information on the different National Parks; establish a network of smaller information points at strategic entrances into the Parks and communicate about the different categories of international designations;

The Naturum Laponia visitor information center in Stora Sjöfallet was officially opened in the autumn of 2014 and it consist of a large building including an exhibition area, a café and an auditorium. Outside there are traditional sámí buildings. Laponiatjuottjudus obligation is to maintain the buildings and manage activities in the visitor center. Since Stora sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkke National Park is adjacent to Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks the visitor center possesses information for all three National Parks and also gives the visitor information about the entire Laponia world heritage site (WH) as well as information about the different designations within the area. Our experience is that the visitor center gives the visitors crucial information about how to behave in the protected areas and in the entire WH site. The visitor center plays an important role as a fixture before and after visiting the parks. The Naturum Laponia have given us a great opportunity to reach out and educate more people about the WH area and its different values. We are planning to develop some suitable information materials that among others mentions and explains the EDPA nomination.

Smaller information points at strategic entrances into the parks (nodes) have already been installed in 2014 in Porjus, Gällivare and Jokkmokk. In 2015 a node adjacent to Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks was installed in Kvikkjokk. All these nodes contain information about the WH site, including the National Parks. In 2017 Laponiatjuottjudus have arranged information events in the node in Gällivare. We are working to link the nodes together with Naturum visitor center to make the information about the WH site accessible for more people.

7. Consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks with the Muddus National Park and other conservation areas so that the Laponia World Heritage Site becomes a single European Diploma site;

This is a question for the board to consider on how to approach this question.

8. Reflect on the use of the different national and international designations for the area; organize a workshop with the relevant international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, and National Park Service) with a view to harmonizing the reporting and monitoring requirements and the respective perimeters.

Laponiatjuottjudus is positive to discuss and exchange information with people who possess relevant expertise in the different matters. We are also positive to organize an international workshop. Although to organize a workshop of that magnitude is a financial question and hence we have an important task to prioritize this.

- 3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Today Laponiatjuottjudus management crew consist of seven full-time employees and three part-time employees.

Laponiatjuottjudus operate at a limited level due to the economic funding. During 2017 the economic funding was comparable to 2016's economic funding. But still the future funding is very uncertain and varies from one year to another. This insufficient funding of course affects the management since it is very difficult to plan in the long-term as the funding varies every year and hence it is a question of prioritizing.

4. **Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes of boundaries to report.

5. **Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The visitor cabins in Padjelanta/ Badjelánnda are now equipped with instruction-/ and information books containing suitable information about the area that among others mentions the European Diploma for Protected Areas. We also hope to be able to produce European Diploma for Protected Area signs to mount in the cabins as a complement for the new signs that were mounted on the cabins in 2016. In Sarek there are no tourist facilities such as visitor cabins or trails. Laponiatjuottjudus has during 2017 continued the large work of register and update the status of every path and construction in the National Parks. We have to prioritize and maintain updated plans of maintenance for the paths and constructions in the parks. In 2017 different boardwalks and bridges in the mountain area have been renovated and improved in order to maintain accessibility and safety. We have also carried out smaller maintenance work on different visitor cabins in the area. This is an ongoing work that will require the field staff's attention every year.

Laponiatjuottjudus has in 2017 mounted new signs on the bridges in the mountain area, including Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks.

The national Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for mountain safety issues. To assist in the work of mountain safety EPA has a council consisting of representatives from government agencies and organizations with a vast knowledge and experience of the mountains and mountain safety. In the mountain regions there are local mountain safety committees that works as an extension of the council. Laponiatjuottjudus is a member of one local mountain safety committee and hence takes part of the work with preventive measures in mountain safety.

In 2015 the four research cabins built in the beginning of the 20's century, by Professor Axel Hamberg, in Sarek National Park was proclaimed as national historic buildings. These cabins are historically important from both a scientific and cultural point of view as well as a contribution to climate research. During 2017 Laponiatjuottjudus has continued the restoration of one of the cabins that was in worst condition. We have also carried out smaller maintenance work on the other cabins and also produced an information sign regarding Axel Hamberg and his research. In the autumn we have organized three "Hamberg days" in Sarek where people could come to learn more about the weather and geology research that Axel Hamberg carried out in the early 1900. We also shared information about the Lapponia World Heritage site as well as Sarek National park and all the designations for the area.

In 2017 Laponiatjuottjudus has continued working with the task of developing our website. This is an ongoing process. In addition to the fact that the whole Lapponia area of 9400 km² is a World Heritage, it also consists four National parks and two Nature reserves. Therefore, we present information about all our different protected areas within the World Heritage. In the information about Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks we announce that the area is awarded with European Diploma and also display the EDPA logo. Further we are also in the process of creating a new graphic profile for the World Heritage. Here the EDPA logo is included. In addition to Lapponia's own homepage we also collaborate with SEPA and provide information to their website concerning Sweden's National Parks (www.sverigesnationalparker.se).

Gyrffalcon (*Falco rusticolus*): three observed successful breedings in 2017.

8. SWITZERLAND – SWISS NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions

In the letter addressed to federal councillor Doris Leuthard on 11th July 2012, concerning the successful renewal of the European Diploma for the Swiss National Park (SNP), no conditions were mentioned.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Reservat da Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair (new name)

"Prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour remplir la condition posée par l'UNESCO, qui demande que le parc national qui constitue le coeur de la réserve de la biosphère "Biosfera Val Müstair/Parc Naziunal" soit entièrement entouré par une zone tampon"

In 2017 UNESCO officially recognized the Engiadina Val Müstair Biosphere Reserve (with the SNP as core zone) without the imposition of any further conditions. After years of work, political setbacks and the merely provisional recognition in 2010, we welcomed this decision with great pleasure.

2017 also saw the emergence of a crisis in the Val Müstair Regional Nature Park, which is (alongside the SNP and the municipality of Scuol) a Partner in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. An expression of this was the renewed dismissal of the manager, leaving this position vacant for the fourth time since the designation of the Nature Park in 2010. The population of the Val Müstair has at least made a clear commitment to the Nature Park and the aim is now to move forward with renewed strength. As of early 2017 the municipality of Scuol has set up the office for the Engiadina Val Müstair Biosphere Reserve. Scuol is the third and most recent partner in the Biosphere Reserve and is thus still in the process of establishing itself as such.

2.2. Human resources and "100-year SNP" jubilee

"Veiller à ce que le personnel soit assez nombreux pour satisfaire aux exigences actuelles et prévoir des moyens supplémentaires suffisants pour faire face aux célébrations du centenaire en 2014"

The National Park jubilee in 2014 was in every sense a resounding success, and now belongs to history.

2.3 Communication concerning large predators

"Continuer à sensibiliser la population locale, les municipalités et les visiteurs au retour des grands carnivores en travaillant en étroite coopération avec le service de la chasse et de la pêche du canton des Grisons"

Being a scientist who has previously spent many years on the subject of the lynx, the writer is concerned that the ground for large predators in the SNP (and the surrounding area) must be carefully prepared. As early as 1997 we took a step in this direction with the setting up of an ongoing permanent exhibition entitled "Uors in Engiadina/Auf den Spuren der Bären" in the Schmelzra Museum in S-charl (on the eastern boundary of the SNP). Since 2005 young brown bears have made transitory appearances nearly every year in the region of the SNP. After a lynx appeared in 2007/2008, an edition of our National Park magazine "Cratschla" was dedicated to the theme of the lynx. Furthermore, since 2016 at least one wolf has been permanently present in the SNP and its surrounding area. A female (F18) has been genetically verified, but thanks to photographic evidence we also know that a male is present at least some of the time. The presence of wolves in the SNP has long been expected and (especially with regard to research) preparations made. We have therefore started a wolf-monitoring project. With regard to this, but also in general, we maintain excellent relations with the cantonal Office for Hunting and Fishing.

2.4. Impact of the Pass dal Fuorn road

"Etudier, avec les différents ministères ou administrations concernés, la possibilité de limiter au minimum l'impact de la route qui franchit la Pass dal Fuorn"

In 2017, definitive measures were taken to improve the safety of National Park visitors in all parking areas and in those places where they have to cross the road. This included speed limits and warning signs in the vicinity of parking areas situated beside the road. The measures were introduced as planned and seem to have produced positive results. This refers mainly to the improved safety around the parking areas, but we assume that traffic calming has occurred to a certain extent, and certainly within the areas subject to the new 60km/h speed limit.

2.5. Collaboration with Stelvio National Park

"Poursuivre l'étroite coopération avec le Parc national voisin de Stelvio"

Over the years the collaboration established between our two parks has been intensified and works satisfactorily.

The Stelvio National Park now consists of three independent territorial units. The SNP team works mainly with the directly neighbouring Lombard area, where population counts and territory controls are conducted jointly. We also maintain close connections with the South Tyrol area and in 2017 we hosted their park team for a training day in the SNP.

2.6. SNP Extension

"Etudier la possibilité d'élargir la zone diplômée à l'ensemble de la réserve de la biosphère"

The enlargement of the SNP (e.g. biosphere reserve core zone) has for many years been a prime concern for the author of this report. In the year 2000 the Macun plateau and lakes (3.6 km²) were successfully integrated into the Park. At present any further increase in surface area is politically unlikely. Though the SNP is greatly appreciated by the local population – not merely for its ecological benefits, but rather more for the economic advantages it brings – the idea of any further enlargement is not generally accepted by the population concerned.

The potential recognition of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve with a European Diploma (extended to this perimeter) would be a welcome acknowledgement. I would however suggest waiting until the Val Müstair Regional Nature Park and the municipality of Scuol as partner of the Biosphere Reserve Engiadina Val Müstair have established their structures.

3. Site Management

There were no problems within the National Park administration during the current year. No great changes occurred in the natural environment of the National Park. As a wilderness area, where the protection of natural processes is guaranteed, we anyway take no action when natural changes occur (apart from a few exceptions).

The Federal National Park Commission (ENPK) continues its work under its president Franz-Sepp Stulz.

2017 saw the implementation of new strategic directives, which will remain in force until 2023. The implementation of the planned activities is however causing concern: general cuts to federal funding are leading to financial shortages. The ENPK has mandated a working group to look for solutions. A visit by the president and the director to the responsible head of department in Bern, Federal President Doris Leuthard, gave us grounds to be optimistic about the future. However, concrete funding commitments do not yet exist.

4. Boundaries

No changes

5. Other Information

For our protected area, to be awarded the European Diploma over decades is an honour as well as recognition of its importance. Of course we take the opportunity to communicate this wherever and whenever appropriate (e.g. www.nationalpark.ch).

The following sections (6.–11.) have not been filled in because the next renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas will be not until 2022.

9. ITALY – ABRUZZO, LAZIO AND MOLISE NATIONAL PARK

Conditions :

1. adopter définitivement le plan de gestion du Parc national (PNALM), dans un délai d'un an au plus, soit d'ici la réunion du Groupe de spécialistes en 2013 ;

Le processus pour l'approbation du Plan du Parc n'est pas encore terminé. Le Plan est à l'examen des Régions concernées (Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise). La Région des Abruzzes s'est chargée de contacter les autres Régions pour faire un accord à trois pour la gestion de la évaluation environnementale stratégique du Plan du Parc.

Le Plan de gestion des Sites du réseau Natura 2000 du Parc (IT7110205 et IT7120132) reste sous approbation de la Région Abruzzo.

Avec deux résolutions du Conseil régional en décembre 2016 et mai 2017 la Région Abruzzo a approuvé les Mesures générales de Conservation des sites Natura 2000 du territoire de la Région. Puis la Région nous a demandé de produire des Mesures spécifiques pour le site du Parc IT7110205 : nous avons décidé à ce point de produire de mesures qui soient un vrai règlement du Parc en substitution du Règlement prévu avec le Plan du Parc. De telle façon, dans l'attente de l'approbation du Plan, le Parc peut avoir un instrument pour la gestion et la réglementation de son territoire.

Les Mesures de Conservation du site IT7110205 ont été approuvée par le Conseil Directif du Parc le 9 décembre 2017 ([en pièce-jointe](#)). Les Mesure approuvées seront envoyé au Ministère de l'Environnement que pourra désigner la Zone Spéciale de Conservation IT7110205.

Dans le territoire du Parc il y a trois autres sites Natura 2000 : les sites IT6050018 et IT6050020 dans la Région du Lazio, le site IT7212121 dans la Région du Molise. Pour tous les trois le Parc est en train d'approuver les Mesures spécifiques qui seront les mêmes du site IT7110205. A la fin de ce processus les trois sites seront désignés à la fois Zones Spéciales de Conservations et le Parc aura un Règlement pour la gestion de son territoire.

2. prendre toutes dispositions utiles pour que :

- **conformément à la Loi-cadre sur les aires protégées en Italie, des zones périphériques soient créées sur les territoires des régions Abruzzes et Molise, d'ici fin 2013, et qu'une réglementation de la chasse tenant compte de la nécessité de minimiser les dérangements de l'ours au cours de l'automne, soit établie dans ces zones et appliquée à compter de la saison cynégétique 2013-2014 au plus tard ;**

La situation est restée la même que l'année passée pour la création des zones périphériques.

La réglementation de la chasse pour la saison 2017-2018 des trois Régions a diversifié le système de chasse dans la Zone Périphérique du Parc par rapport au reste du territoire régional. En particulier:

a) Région des Abruzzes : le système de chasse au sanglier est celle de la soi-disant " girata" (un groupe de chasseurs avec un ou deux chiens spécialisés et certifié par ENCI pour la recherche du sanglier) ou de la chasse à l'affût pour minimiser l'impact de la chasse sur la période d'alimentation de l'ours en automne. La région a aussi divisé le territoire de la Zone Périphérique du Parc en deux partie : dans la Zone C1 est possible la chasse au sanglier à l'affût ou en " girata" avec un seul chien. Dans la zone C2 est possible la

chasse à l'affût et la chasse en petit groupe avec un seul chien qui n'est pas spécialisé et certifié pour la recherche du sanglier.

La Région a aussi créé une autre zone au dehors de la Zone Périphérique du Parc : une zone où la présence de l'ours est moins continue mais significatif, zone considérée comme aire d'expansion et de connexion. Dans cette zone la chasse au sanglier est prévue à l'affût et en groupe mais avec un seul chien.

b) Région Lazio : la Région a divisé la Zone Périphérique du Parc en deux sous-zones, A et B. Dans la sous-zone A située tout de suite au dehors des limites du Parc la chasse est interdite. Dans la zone B la chasse au sanglier ouvre le 1^{er} novembre. La Région a décidé aussi que dans la Zone Périphérique du Parc on chasse avec le système dit " girata "(un groupe de chasseurs avec un ou deux chiens spécialisés, certifié par ENCI pour la recherche du sanglier);

c) Région Molise : la Région a fixé des règles particulières pour la chasse au sanglier, au lièvre, au renard à l'intérieur de la Zone Périphérique du Parc. Pour la chasse au sanglier la Région a introduit le système en " girata "(un groupe de chasseurs avec un ou deux chiens spécialisés, certifié par ENCI pour la recherche du sanglier) avec 6-10 chasseurs et un seul chien.

Le Parc a aussi signé un accord avec une association de chasseurs la " Fondazione UNA" pour faire ensemble une recherche sur le dérangement causé aux ours par la chasse : l'association rendra disponible de l'argent pour payer un biologiste et pour mettre un collier émetteur sur un exemplaire d'ours qui vive au dehors du parc.

- **la réglementation interdisant les activités pastorales dans la zone A du Parc national soit appliquée de façon absolue et sans délai, et que les élus locaux soient sensibilisés sur cette question ;**

Le Parc, avec son corps de vigilance et avec l'aide des agents forestiers, a continué l'œuvre de vigilance sur les pâturages dans la zone A.

Dans les Mesures de Conservation des sites du réseau Natura 2000 il y a une partie dédiée aux activités pastorales avec tous les règles pour utiliser les pâturages du Parc : nombres d'animaux par hectares, période de pâturage, zones fermées, règles sanitaires, modalités pour avoir l'autorisation etc.

Dans le même temps nous sommes en train de produire un règlement pour les activités compatibles avec l'objectif de rendre visible aux visiteurs du parc les éleveurs qui travaillent en collaboration avec le Parc et respectueux de l'environnement du parc, de sa biodiversité, de ses habitats. Ce règlement sera le règlement des éleveurs " Bear friendly". Les éleveurs pourront adhérer librement au règlement et le respect des règles fixées donnera aux éleveurs la possibilité d'utiliser le logo du Parc, d'avoir une promotion par le Parc de leurs produits, de participer aux événements organisés par le Parc même.

- **une concertation soit engagée sans délai avec les autorités municipales des communes du Parc national, pour la fermeture matérielle des voies d'accès à la zone diplômée, les plus critiques du point de vue de la conservation de la grande faune ; cette concertation devra conduire à ce que des dispositifs de fermeture et une réglementation appropriés tenant compte des droits des tiers locaux, soient établis d'ici fin 2013 ;**

A la fin du Projet Life on a fermées avec des barrages 20 voies d'accès.

Recommandations :

- 1. démarrer la mise en œuvre du plan d'action PATOM pour la protection de la population d'ours dans les meilleurs délais, facilitée par l'administration du PNALM ;**

Nous référent aux objectifs fixés par l'Autorité de Gestion du Patom pour la période 2016-2018 nous pouvons signaler en particulier les choses suivantes :

-réseau de monitoring de l'ours : création du Focal point, individuation des référents pour tous le territoire de présence, d'expansion, de probable expansion, début du cours de formation pour les référents du réseau ;

-la Région Abruzzo a approuvé avec une résolution du Conseil régional le protocole d'intervention pour les ours problématique au dehors du territoire du Parc e de sa zone périphérique. Ce protocole est semblable au protocole sortie du Life ARCTOS et qu'intéresse le territoire du Parc. Les actions du protocole voient la collaboration du corps forestier, des parcs nationaux, de la Région, des réserves naturelles de la Région concerné par la présence de l'ours ;

-la Région Abruzzo a aussi approuvé avec une résolution du Conseil régional une loi pour interdire l'utilisation des appâts empoisonnés;

-la réglementation en zone critique pour l'ours des activités touristique: le Parc des Abruzzes a produit un règlement pour les promenades avec les chiens, excursion en mountain bike, excursion à cheval. Ce règlement a été présenté aux opérateurs touristiques du Parc pour avoir leurs observations. Terminé la phase des observations le Règlement sera soumis au Conseil Directif du Parc pour son approbation.

2. poursuivre la réflexion en vue de l'inclusion à la zone diplômée des secteurs limitrophes du PNALM, réputés d'intérêt biologique majeur pour les grands carnivores, l'ours et le loup en particulier ;

Le Parc a préparé une proposition avec tous les zones au dehors de ses limites qui sont écologiquement très important parce que ils sont d'élevé valeur naturel ou présent criticités particulières pour certain espèces faunistique ou floristique ou sont en continuation d'habitats prioritaires. Cette proposition a produit aussi une carte géographique à l'intérieur du Plan du Parc.

3. achever d'ici fin 2012 l'élaboration du plan de développement économique et social, comme prévu par l'administration du PNALM, en vue de le mettre en œuvre rapidement ;

Pour la recommandation 3 rien de nouveau à signaler.

4. accroître substantiellement les moyens humains et financiers attribués aux activités scientifiques du PNALM et les adapter aux problématiques complexes auxquelles le parc devra faire face au cours des prochaines années et veiller à ce que ses capacités en général lui permettent d'accomplir ses missions de conservation et de contrôle convenablement ;

Le Ministère de l'Environnement a mis à disposition des aires protégées italiennes de l'argent pour améliorer la gestion du patrimoine faunistique et floristiques des Parcs Nationaux Italiennes.

Pour l'année 2017 le Parc a reçu 101.000 euro en total. Le financement 2017 sera destiné surtout au programme de gestion de l'ours brun marsicano. Le Président du Parc en plus a destiné beaucoup des ressources du budget annuel du Parc aux objectifs de conservations. Dans le budget 2017 plus de 220.000 euro ont été destiné aux activités du Service Scientifique : monitorages des espèces prioritaires, gestion des ours, amélioration des instruments techniques pour les activités de recherche, création d'un GIS (système d'information géographique).

Avec les ressources du budget annuel pour le Service Scientifique nous avons pris trois personnes qui travaillent avec le personnel du Service sur le programme de gestion de l'ours, sur le monitoring de chamois et sur toutes les autres activités du service. Ces trois personnes travailleront pour le Parc deux ans.

5. étudier la possibilité d'assermenter l'ensemble des personnels techniques pour le constat des infractions à la réglementation du PNALM ;

Pour la recommandation 5 rien de nouveau à signaler

6. engager une réflexion sur l'utilité d'une gestion dirigée du cerf, en liaison avec l'amélioration de l'état de conservation du chamois ;

Pour la recommandation 6 rien de nouveau à signaler

7. mener un effort particulier en faveur du soutien des activités de tourisme rural en périphérie du PNALM ;

Dans l'année 2017 le Parc a participé aux événements promotionnels suivants:

-foire touristique "Fa la cosa giusta" dans la ville de Milan, mars 2017 ;

-foire "Vinitaly" dans la ville de Verona, avril 2017 ;

-foire "Festambiente" dans la ville de Grosseto, aout 2017 ;

-foire "Sapori dei Parchi 'n jazz", ville de L'Aquila, septembre 2017.

Tous les événements promotionnels ont été organisés avec la participation des producteurs locaux du territoire du Parc et avec l'aide des opérateurs touristique du parc.

Avec les autres parcs nationaux de la Région Abruzzo nous avons organisé le concours pour le meilleur miel des parcs 2017.

Dans la partie du Lazio du Parc nous avons organisé: avec le village de Picinisco la foire "Pastorizia in festival" dans le mois de aout ; toujours dans le mois de aout, itinérant dans tous les villages de la partie Lazio du Parc, le festival des histoires.

8. engager une réflexion avec les maires des communes sur la question du nourrissage des animaux d'élevage et de la faune sauvage.

Les points de nourrissage artificiels à l'intérieur du Parc sont fortement réduits. Pour réduire la présence au dehors du Parc de points de nourrissage artificiels nous avons introduit dans les Mesures de Conservations du site IT7110205 l'interdiction à l'utilisation de points de nourrissage artificiels dans le territoire du site. Le site du réseau Natura 2000 IT7110205 a la plus grande partie de son territoire en dehors du parc et l'introduction de cette interdiction peut contribuer à éliminer le problème en dehors du Parc.

Gestion du site

Comme chaque année nous avons fait le comptage de femelles d'ours avec ourson dans le territoire du Parc : pendant ce comptage nous avons vu six femelles avec en total 12 ourson.

Au d'avril le Parc a signé un accord avec la société ENEL pour la gestion du lac artificiel de Barrea : la société ENEL est le gestionnaire du lac car est le gestionnaire du barrage qui a créé le lac. A l'intérieur de cet accord on a fixé les limites entre lesquelles le niveau du lac peu changer selon les saisons. L'accord donc a mis fin aux situations des années passées qui voyaient le lac réduit, pendant l'hiver, à sa moitié avec tous les problèmes que cette situation créait à la faunes et au paysage. Nous ne pouvons pas oublier que le lac de Barrea est une aire du réseau Ramsar.

Au mois de juillet finalement la procédure de candidature UNESCO de Val Cervara et des autres sites des forêts vétustes du parc est terminé et tous les sites ont été inscrits dans la liste du Patrimoine Mondial de l'UNESCO. La forêt de Val Cervara donc rentre dans le réseau nommé *Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Germany, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine)*.

Les autres sites UNESCO du Parc sont : la forêt de Valle Cacciagrande – Val Iancino (village de Opi), les forêts de Coppo del Principe et Coppo del Morto (village de Pescasseroli), forêt de Moricento (village de Lecce nei Marsi).

Au mois d'août un jeune ours male est entré dans une maison du village de Villavallelonga. L'ours, nommé Mario, est un des animaux problématiques qui entrent dans quelques villages du Parc pour chercher fruits et autres choses à manger.

Heureusement l'ours n'a pas créé problèmes aux habitants de la maison mais le Parc, à partir de ce moment, a intensifié le control et mise en place une équipe dédié à la gestion de l'ours. Le Ministère de l'Environnement nous a donné un financement extraordinaire pour la gestion de cet ours : le financement doit être utilisé surtout pour sécuriser les sources potentielles de nourriture dans les villages fréquentés par l'ours Mario (Villavallelonga, Lecce nei Marsi, Collelongo), villages au dehors du territoire du Parc. Le projet du parc prévoit la sécurisation avec clôture électrifiées de potages, la sécurisation de poulailler avec clôture électrifiées ou portes en fer. En plus le Parc va mettre en œuvre des poulaillers anti-ours fabriqués exprès pour le projet et déjà expérimentés avec succès dans le mois de septembre.

Frontières

Rien à signaler. Les frontières du Parc sont restées les mêmes.

Autres informations

Pendant l'été 2017 le Parc a produit le second rapport ours : dans le rapport on a donné informations et données sur l'ours dans le Parc des Abruzzes mais aussi dans les autres aires protégées de la Région des Abruzzes ([en pièce-jointe](#)).

Dans l'année 2017 deux découvertes très intéressantes ont concerné le Parc:

-Au mois de juillet a été signalé une nouvelle espèce de papillon *Aricia eumedon*, de la famille de Lyceidae, très rare. Sa chenille mange feuille et graine de *Geranium sanguineum* et *Geranium sylvaticum*. Jusqu'à ce moment l'espèce était connue seulement pour les parcs du Gran Sasso et du Sirente ;

-Au mois de mai a été signalée pour la première fois dans le Parc une nouvelle plante : *Astragalus exscapus*. L'espèce était connue seulement pour les Alpes. L'*Astragalus exscapus*, de la famille de Leguminosae, est une plante très rare typique des pâturages secs, caractéristique de steppes de l'Est (Asie centrale) restée dans le Parc en témoignage de différents périodes climatiques.

Le Parc a continué à utiliser le logo du Diplôme sur son site internet, sur les panneaux qui sont situés sur les routes principales à l'entrée du Parc, dans le Centre de Visite de Pescasseroli.

10. GERMANY – WOLLMATINGER RIED UNTERSEE-GNADENSEE NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions

The last extension of the European Diploma for the Wollmatinger Ried was not linked to any conditions by the European Council.

2. Recommendations

Six (6) recommendations were formulated in the last extension of the European Diploma until 28 November 2019 in the implementation of which the following progress could be achieved.

Here are our comments on the individual recommendations of the European Council:

Recommendation 1 – Self-dynamic development of the shallow-water zone:

It is extremely important to allow the nature reserve to develop naturally, particularly in the shallow water zones. To this end, there should be no obstacles to the natural erosion and sedimentation processes.

➤ Re. Recommendation 1:

No changes occurred in the period under review.

The question whether or not the *Schläuche* (sand-banks) should be excavated which would cause an intervention into the self-dynamic development of the shallow-water zone was postponed for the time of discussions at the Round Table for Professional Fishery in the Nature Reserve Areas on the Lake of Constance – Untersee (see recommendation 2). The erosion and sedimentation processes go on at the present time in the natural way.

Recommendation 2: Tentative suspension of fishing in particularly sensitive core areas

All fishing activities should be halted in the *Schläuche* and the Hegnebucht “lagoons” for an experimental three-year period in order to further reduce the disturbances arising. An overall assessment of this measure should cover both the waterfowl and fish ecology.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 2:**

The last meeting of the “Round Table for Professional Fishery in the Nature Reserves Areas on the Lake of Constance – Untersee” took place on 27 July 2016. Proposals for a tentative limitation of professional fishing in the core area of the nature reserve were made in the Round Table meetings. The preferred solution, namely a study in one core zone of the reserve (Hegner Winkel) could not be finalised so far. The Regierungspräsidium Freiberg has submitted the decisions on the study design and available funds to the Ministry for Environment, Climate and Energy for voting.

Recommendation 3: Documentation of the moulting process and elimination of potential disturbances

The Wollmatinger Ried is a refuge area for avifauna sensitive to disturbances, particularly during the moulting season. Increasing numbers of ferruginous ducks (*Aythya nyroca*), a threatened species, are coming to the area north of the Reichenau “dyke road” for the moulting season. Only few studies of these movements have been conducted so far, therefore these should be documented and all potential disturbances should be eliminated (fishing, water sports, etc.).

➤ **Re. Recommendation 3:**

Thanks to the extended waterfowl monitoring, the significance of the nature reserve as an over-summering and moulting location for waterfowl is regularly documented. Although fishermen could smoothly enter the shallow water zone thanks to the high water level in springtime, the number of fish traps and disturbances linked to such traps remained relatively low in the year under review. On the other hand, there were more disturbances - above all in July and August - caused by the noise of a megaphone used for the training of rowers directly south of the nature reserve border in the Ermatingen Basin. In addition, there were again more flights of the Zeppelin NT above the Ermatingen Basin. These disturbances could be gradually reduced over the summer by interventions of volunteers at the conservation and observation station “Netta” and talks with the rowing club management and the operator of the Zeppelin NT.

Recommendation 4:

Throughout the nature reserve and especially in the Ermatingen Basin, protection measures must be harmonized by developing co-operation between Germany and Switzerland, for example in the framework of the International Lake Constance Conference.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 4:**

There were no direct contacts between the Nature Conservation Authority and official bodies in Switzerland to discuss how to improve the protection of the shallow water zone in the Ermatingen Basin and how to harmonise the cross-border cooperation. So far, no further steps were taken concerning the extension of the nature reserve on the water side that was recommended in the management plan of the Natura-2000 area.

Recommendation 5:

The scheduled road works to improve traffic flow at the entrance of the reserve – B33 and western bypass (Tangente West) – are part of a comprehensive landscape concept and must not disturb the reserve. The compensatory measures necessitated by the work must be implemented as a matter of priority.

➤ Re. Recommendation 5:

The building activities in the area of the Kindlebild junction and the bridge ramp over the railway line are largely completed. In winter 2016/17 a short-time intervention was needed because some reeds areas in the reserve had to be used for a temporary diversion to complete the road connection. This emergency road was however dismantled in February 2017 and the reeds could fully regenerate. In addition, a small area of 335 square metres of the nature reserve was used for road-building. As compensation for these temporary interferences and for a small permanent overbuilding, an additional extension of the nature reserve up to the enlarged route by 4,510 square metres is determined in a complementary planning approval process.

The 7-hectare-extension of the nature reserve west of the sewage treatment plant envisaged since the planning approval 2008 as compensation measure has meanwhile been implemented by amending the nature reserve regulation.

The structural measures in this extension area were completed in the year under review with the construction of a noise protection wall and flooding troughs.

There is a bikeway initiative underway seeking to bring the former path along the nature reserve border and in the area of the animal bridge inside the reserve back to life. However, this would impair the functional effect of the animal bridge determined in the planning approval. In addition, increased disturbances from such a public path are to be apprehended. Therefore the Nature Conservation Authorities exclude an exemption for the re-use of the path.

Recommendation 6:

The continued operation of the reception centre in the premises of the former Reichenau railway station is not guaranteed in the medium and long term. This question should be settled as soon as possible.

➤ Re. Recommendation 6:

The construction of the new building for the NABU nature Conservation Centre Wollmatinger Ried was started on 03 August 2017 in the presence of André Baumann, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Environment. The grand opening is planned for the third quarter 2018 on the occasion of the 50-year jubilee of the conferment of the European Diploma.

3. Site management

The State of Baden-Württemberg has delegated the care of the reserve to the local NABU and drawn up a care contract. The contract concluded for 5 years expired on 31 December 2016 and was first extended by only one year because the amount of the care remuneration had not been sufficiently determined. The Ministry of Environment intends to sign a new five-year-contract as of 01 January 2018 between the Regierungspräsidium and the NABU for the care of the Wollmatinger Ried.

4. Boundaries

The proceedings for the extension of the nature reserve by 7 hectares on the West of the sewage plant of Constance were finalized (see recommendation 5). In addition, an extension of the nature reserve boundary up to the road is aimed at in the building section between Kindlebild junction and the railway bridge. For the rest, see recommendation 4.

5. Other information

The rapidly growing urban pressure and the continuously expanding traffic routes cause constant changes in the reserve environment so that it becomes more and more isolated and disturbances and emissions can penetrate up into the core zones of the nature reserve. These developments can be compensated only to a certain degree by individual measures, for instance by roads built to improve biotope corridors. Therefore a comprehensive nature protection approach is needed which gives priority to the maintenance of the natural basis of life.

4. Boundaries

The proceedings for the extension of the nature reserve by 7 hectares on the West of the sewage plant of Constance were carried out in 2016 by the Higher Nature Conservation Authority. The amended regulation will come into effect in 2016.

There are no changes in comparison to the reporting year 2015 concerning the extension of the EU bird sanctuary on the water side provided in the management plan as development measure of the reserve.

5. Other information

In spite of its high publicity, the general esteem and the particular protection thanks to the European Diploma, the Wollmatinger Ried is still under pressure caused by a great number of small measures: roads and industrial buildings in the direct vicinity are getting denser and move directly to the border of the nature reserve. Competing uses (water sports, aviation) still continue to cause problems in the core areas of the nature reserve. All these individual cases together cause a continuous and time-consuming dispute by the nature protection authorities.

11. NETHERLANDS – BOSCHPLAAT NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions:

The renewal of the diploma is not subject to any conditions.
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2. Recommendations:

The following recommendations were made at the time the diploma was renewed in 2010:

1. sufficient financial resources need to be available on an ongoing basis in order to safeguard the interests of the Boschplaat's natural environment, especially monitoring, staff, public relations and communication;
2. measures should be taken to restore the original dynamics in the eastern part of the reserve. The present function of the "Stuifdijk" (artificial sand dike) should be taken into consideration. New insights based on recent scientific research on restoring natural dynamics should be included in the management plan, including the consequences of the current rise in sea levels;
3. communication with all those involved in the measures to be taken (which are still being contested locally) requires maximum attention and the deployment of the necessary resources;
4. annual shipping incidents in the North Sea to the north of the Boschplaat are a real concern for both people and the natural environment. Better guarantees of safety with regard to the transport of hazardous substances and oil should be instituted;
5. the number of motorised vehicles on the beach should be reduced.

Recommendation 1. Financial resources: There are sufficient financial resources for public relations and communication. There are still concerns relating to having a sufficient number of skilled personnel for monitoring.
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Recommendation 2. No changes during this reporting period.
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Recommendation 3. Communication. Refer to 5.
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Recommendation 4. Shipping accidents. Oil spill response exercise. A large-scaled three-day response exercise simulating a shipping accident involving an oil spill into the Wadden Sea was held in September. This exercise consisted of multiple parts. The first involved the managers of the nature reserves and was about the dilemmas requiring them to make quick decisions. The second consisted of the first phase of an incident that would require the clean-up of as much oil as possible on the high seas. The third part involved using innovative technologies to clean up oil spilled in shallow water and on exposed mud flats and also to rescue oiled birds. This exercise, in which all the relevant parties, including the managers of the nature reserves, participated, was held under real conditions including an exercise conducted at windforce 8 on the Beaufort scale and involved testing new technologies.

Recommendation 5. No changes.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

N 2000 Management Plan

The Natura 2000 Management Plan for Terschelling was officially established in December 2016 by the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs and the Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment. The Province of Friesland is responsible for realising the conservation objectives included in the plan.

Included as one of the activities in the plan for the Boschplaat is the ‘Drawing up and development of a vision for the future of the entire Boschplaat and the Koggegronden’.

Notice of appeal

The foundation Ons Schellingerland joined a local platform of private individuals in submitting an appeal to the Council of State stating their objections to parts of the management plan. The appellants see contradictions in the management plan between conservation objectives for certain habitat types and the dynamic management of the coastline, particularly to the east of Pole 26.

A new vision for the Boschplaat

In February 2017, the provincial Staatsbosbeheer was asked to collaborate with the island population and involved organisations in developing ‘The Vision for the Future of the Boschplaat’.

Key points to be addressed by this assignment are:

- Developments occurring in recent years concerning coastline development (coastal erosion), habitat quality (the maturing and overgrowth of vegetation due to progressive succession), birds, and natural dynamics (sand fixation of the Stuifdijk itself and the fixation it causes).
- What will occur if the policies and management remain unchanged?
- How does this relate to the objectives proposed in the N 2000?

- How will the future rise in sea level affect this?
- What is the desired situation, and which measures will be needed to achieve this?

Project plan

A project plan was developed for the purpose of creating this vision for the future. Its implementation was started in March 2017. By now, various activities have been completed.

The most important parts/activities completed to date are:

- An excursion including experts, islander interest groups, nature reserve managers and inhabitants to the neighbouring island of Ameland to join a group of site managers in visiting a number of practical examples such as washover systems and an island salt marsh developed completely naturally without the use of a sand drift dike. All 35 places reserved for participants were filled.
- Themed meetings and excursions to the Boschplaat including inhabitants. A total of 11 excursions including more than 250 participants. This activity included the making of a SWOT analysis.
- Boschplaat exhibit held in 'De Natuurschuur' (a nature information centre). This exhibit, which includes a programme for schools on the island, received a financial contribution from the fund Iepen Mienskipfûns Fryslân. The exhibit opened to the public in June 2017, has been visited by around 20,000 people to date, and is scheduled to remain open for a large part of 2018.
- Boschplaat symposium including researchers and islanders followed by a meeting of experts. This symposium (the programme for which is included as an appendix) was attended by around 100 participants. During the meeting of experts, the content of the scientific presentations was combined with input from the islanders to create an initial comprehensive starting point for the vision yet to be developed.

Work on this project is currently being completed. The vision will consist of two sub-products:

- A digital version that will contain both the core content and a description of the entire process that can be traced by means of a timeline, as well as links to the supporting documents. This part can already be followed at: tijdlijn.boschplaatvisie.nl.
- A written report/document in the form of a full-colour magazine intended to be distributed to all households on the island.
- Completion. The contracting party and the island population are expected to be provided with the new Boschplaat Vision early in 2018.

SEAWAD coastal research

A comprehensive measuring programme in the sea channel between the Boschplaat and Ameland began in August in order to get an idea of the interactions among wind, waves, sand movement and soil life.

The research findings will be used to substantiate 'Coastal Genesis 2', the policy decision to be arrived at in 2020 by Rijkswaterstaat which is intended to make the sustainable and ecologically responsible use of sand to maintain and protect the coast from future rises in sea level possible. The findings could also be important for the situation at the eastern point of the Boschplaat where the coastline has been receding for decades due to the impact of the tidal channels in the sea channel. SEAWAD is a collaborative project involving the efforts of the Delft, Utrecht and Twente universities together with the research institute Deltares.

12. GERMANY- SIEBENGEIRGE NATURE RESERVE

1.Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in

complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. to draw up a management plan within three years in order to guarantee the preservation of the reserve and its cohesion within the larger area of the nature park.

The Management Plan requested for the Siebengebirge Nature Serve was presented to the Council in June 2015. As explained, in essential parts it is embedded into the Large Scale Conservation Project “Chance7 – Natur-und Kulturlandschaft zwischen Siebengebirge und Sieg”. This national programme with a 14.6 million € budget for a ten-year-period 2013-2023 is laid out to promote nationally important landscapes providing outstanding habitats for protected plant and animal species.

After the tree-year planning phase with the development of a working plan, including broad public participation, quite a number of projects have started to be implemented, such as

- labour and cost intensive removal of brushwood from slopes and outcropping rocks (former 19th century quarries) on Oelberg, Weilberg, Himmerich that have long ago developed to valuable places of refuge for specialised plants and animals (e.g peregrine falcon, eagle owl). Substantial part of this hard work was also done by honorary VVS-members.
- restoration of former vineyards (until about 1940) with natural stone walls on the south-oriented Rhineland slopes of Wolkenburg, Drachenfels, Menzenberg, that give suitable living space to thermophile plants and animals, e.g. wall lizard, solitary bees.
- extension of meadows with scattered fruit-trees on former wine-growing terraces, where almost forgotten former regional apple and pear varieties are cultivated and taken care of by a biological institute. An efficient possibility to avoid these areas from becoming overgrown again and to maintain them in the long run has been found in grazing them with sheep and goats.
- restoration of brooks in the reserve (Tretschbach e.g) to increase the biodiversity of the streamlet and its banks: improvement with stream guidance and gravel banks.
- extension of heather-clad stretches on clayey soil in the eastern part of the Siebengebirge, Eudenbach e.g.
- creation of an improved habitat for some typical animal species of the reserve, e.g. the yellow-bellied toad by creating now ponds (private property donation at Heisterbacherrott) to reduce the distance to spawning grounds, or to create small water holes/tarns as stepping stones between already existing stretches of water.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. in case of changes in the management of the area, the leading role of the VVS (*Verschönerungsverein für das Siebengebirge*), whose work to date has been fully satisfactory in the eyes of the Council of Europe, should be maintained;

There will be a change in the management of the Naturpark Siebengebirge on January 1st, 2018; the Rhein-Sieg-District will take over the management from the VVS (see 1.2 below). According to prior agreement with the NRW-government, the VVS gives up the management of the nature park on Dec 31, 2017 and the Rhein-Sieg-District takes over.

The Siebengebirge, officially declared as Naturpark Siebengebirge in 1958, as Nr 4 in Germany, had a size of 4.580 ha and was 100 % nature reserve. The European Diploma was awarded to the Siebengebirge in 1971 and handed over to the Verschönerungsverein für das Siebengebirge-VVS. The VVS has been

owner of all the essential parts of the Siebengebirge since 1869, when it bought the area from more than 20 quarry owners to protect it from destruction. As there were no nature protective laws in Germany until 1919, the only possibility to protect an area was to purchase land. In order to enable the VVS to do this the Prussian National Assembly granted the VVS a lottery to rescue the Siebengebirge by land acquisition.

At the proposal of the Bezirksregierung Köln and the Rhein-Sieg-District in 2007 the Naturpark Siebengebirge was enlarged from 4.850 ha to 11.200 ha. Large parts (42 %) of this additional area are nature reserve as well, but they go beyond the borders of the original Siebengebirge.

That is why - according to our understanding – the reward refers only to the Siebengebirge in its original, proper, true sense, that means within the boundaries of the Nature Park in its form up to 2007 with 100 % nature reserve area and does not refer to the new extended park. (cf. our letter to Mrs. Françoise Bauer from Nov. 22, 2010).

Up to the end of this year 2017 the Verschönerungsverein für das Siebengebirge VVS has been manager of the Naturpark Siebengebirge (11.200 ha), which the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve is the central and most important part of. This management was performed by the VVS on honorary basis. For more than 30 years it was only the Rhein-Sieg-District and the City of Bonn that contributed (5000 € each/per year) to the expenses of the Nature Park, whereas three communities of the nature park area (Bad Honnef, Königswinter, Sankt Augustin) profited from what the other partners did and paid for. On the long run, however, a nature park cannot be managed with honorary work only, as on this basis it cannot fulfil the growing requirements of a future-oriented nature park.

After long and intensive negotiations the VVS has finally succeeded in achieving a reliable and long term financial concept with all communities, the Rhein-Sieg-District, the cities of Bonn, Bad Honnef, Königswinter and Sankt Augustin. All communities have agreed to contribute together 185.000 € per year (personnel expenditure) for the management of the nature park and have budgeted these amounts for the 2018-2019 period. For the first five years the seat of the management – led by an experienced Rhein-Sieg-District expert plus three staff members - will be the district hall at Siegburg. Later it is planned to be moved into the Siebengebirge.

The decisive role of the VVS in the new nature park assembly has been guaranteed. In recognition of nearly 150 years honorary VVS-work for the rescue and maintenance of the Siebengebirge and its essential landed property (owner of 850 ha/ nearly all roads and hiking trails/ 26 refuge huts/ 185 benches/ 55 signboards/ 400 sign stones/ bridges/ monuments) the VVS has been accepted as experienced and effective partner in the new nature park assembly. In addition to this, the VVS - with its wildernis area - has created a unique selling point in the Siebengebirge area and with the nature park house (Forsthaus Lohrberg) it runs the only information and exhibition centre in the heart of the Siebengebirge. Moreover, the leading Rhein-Sieg-District official of the new nature park management is a member of the VVS-board.

As a conclusion we can say that the preservation of the reserve and its cohesion with the larger area of the nature park is – due to the arrangements with the communities and the VVS-wildernis contract with the NRW government – in good hands.

2. develop a new financial plan together with local communities and the Rhein-Sieg-District;

(cf 2.1)

3. continue the provision of financial support by the North Rhine Westphalia government;

We get financial support from the NRW government: 60.000 € a year as a compensation for our wildernis area where we have given up forestry cultivation and leave this area to its natural dynamics. In addition, we have got financial support for the maintenance of the nature park, 15.000 € in 2017. The NRW

Foundation has granted the VVS a contribution of 78.000 € for the restoration of the Forsthaus Lohrberg/ Nature Park House, classified as a historical monument.

Special emphasis must be laid on the NRW government's effort for the Siebengebirge in a case of heavy rockfall from the Drachenfels (321 m) and the protection of its famous medieval castle ruin. For substantial repair works a very popular hiking trail had to be closed. Since 1973 nearly 80 steel cables (40 m long) with anchors at their ends hold the mountain top with the ruin together, like a steel corset. These anchors are equipped with measuring points of high accuracy. Some of them showed that they cannot stand the pressure any more and have to be replaced. So new holes have to be drilled through the mountain and anchors fixed in concrete bedding with tons of concrete seeping away in the volcanic rock crevices. These reconstruction measures are going to last until autumn 2018 and are estimated at 700.000 € that the NRW-government will bear.

4. maintain great vigilance regarding the possible construction of new roads;

New roads have not been built nor are they planned. One road within the reserve had to be closed because of the danger of former underground quarries collapsing.

5. minimise disturbance caused by traffic on all roads crossing the Siebengebirge area and consider the setting up of a system of public transport for visitors;

Perhaps the new nature park administration succeeds in setting up an improved public transport system in cooperation with the communities that now have boarded the nature park boat.

6. continue investigating the possibility of extending the wilderness area so as to guarantee the preservation of the natural beauty, features, resources and biodiversity of the Siebengebirge as a protected area;

The NRW Foundation in 2015 acquired 90 ha of old oak and beech tree forest on the Petersberg from the Federal Government and now has added this area as wildernis to the already existing "Wildnisgebiet" of the VVS (525 ha) and the "Wildniswald Siebengebirge" of the NRW forestry authorities,(205 ha) so that the coherent wildernis area Siebengebirge covers more than 800 ha. Forestry cultivation in these areas has completely been given up and especially on the VVS areas a natural regeneration of indigenous beech-trees can already be observed.

Deadwood in growing quantities fascinates visitors, but deters others, especially older people who – several decades ago – collected firewood in these forests. Here we have recognized that it is absolutely essential to explain the difference between working forest and wildernis to our visitors. Since January 2018 the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve area has been granted a special forester by the NRW forestry authorities who in addition has experienced a special training in environmental education and executes dozens of events and practical projects within the framework of our annual programme with biologists, geologists and other experts from different fields.

In our nature park House (Forsthaus Lohrberg) the existing exhibition of the reserve has been enlarged by a special section on the subject of wildernis, with topics such as: What is wildernis? What do we need wildernis for? Deadwood – by no means lifeless / Woodpecker trees – next tenants / Colourfulness of deadwood beetles etc. The exhibition has been upvalued by quite a lot of stuffed animals from the Alexander König Museum Bonn and aims at warming visitors up for their encounter with real wildernis in vicinity of the house, where we are just preparing information points on extraordinary wildernis phenomena.

7. encourage the continuation and extension of scientific research

In spite of the large number of geological treatises and studies on the volcanic Siebengebirge (a "highlight for geologists") so far we have missed a comprehensive treatment of its minerals. Now we have finally got it:

Bernd Habel: Das Siebengebirge am Rhein und seine Mineralien. Lapis B 6524, Jg 42, Nr 9, Sept. 2017

3.Site Management

List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

(cf. 2.1)

5. Other information

5. 1. Efforts to decentralize tourism in the Siebengebirge

Every year the Siebengebirge attracts nearly 3.5 million visitors. For many years the Drachenfels and the Margarethenhöhe right in the centre of the reserve were the culmination points absorbing about 70 % of all tourists. The expensive restoration of the 19th century Neogothic Drachenburg Caste has still intensified the Drachenfels attraction.

Meanwhile several steps have been successful to channel visitors also to other attractive parts. Nr 1 is the very attractive 13 th century Zistersian Heisterbach Monastery area, also expensively restored.

Nr 2 is the Bonn area of the reserve on the Oberkassel Rabenley rock, where growing numbers of visitors are attracted by a sky walk/viewpoint high above a Stone Age tomb and the Rhine valley, and surrounded by lakes and former quarries.

Nr 3 are special thematic hiking brochures, e.g. for a circular path to 16 chapels scattered over the reserve, another to 12 geological “windows”, and, in preparation, Nr 4 to outstanding wildernis sights.

5.2 Railway noise pollution in the Rhine valley

Railway noise has been a problem in the narrow Rhine valley for many decades and has been intensively discussed with Federal Railways (DB), as railway noise is an important environmental and public health issue.

Momentarily there are about 200 freight trains every day passing this side of the Middle Rhine valley with 100 db. With growing economy freight transport rapidly increases. Yet it is not only the utilization level of the Rhine line that causes problems. Freight trains increasingly run at night when there are fewer passenger trains on the line. This of course means more noise nuisance for people living along the line.

After strong opposition from action committees Federal Railways (DB) has recognized and accepted the challenge and has set itself the target to halve rail noise by 2020 compared with the 2000 level by fitting freight wagons with so-called whisper brakes.

13. GERMANY/LUXEMBOURG – GERMANO-LUXEMBOURG NATURE PARK

No report / pas de rapport.

14. FRANCE – VANOISE NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions : Lister ici toutes les conditions dont l’octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les conditions ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Déterminer une aire d’adhésion cohérente sur le plan de la conservation des valeurs naturelles, en particulier celles du cœur du parc.

Le décret actant la charte du parc national de la Vanoise a été signé par Madame la ministre de l'Écologie pour le Premier Ministre le 27 avril 2015. Le préfet de région a saisi les 29 communes de l'aire optimale d'adhésion pour délibération sur leur adhésion du 1er juin au 30 septembre, elles-mêmes prenant préalablement l'avis des intercommunalités concernées. Ces dernières ont toutes émis un avis défavorable à l'adhésion des communes, sauf celle de « Cœur de Tarentaise ». Puis, 27 communes sur 29 ont refusé d'adhérer à la charte, hormis les communes de Peisey-Nancroix et de Saint-Martin-de-Belleville.

Le périmètre du parc national de la Vanoise est par conséquent dorénavant constitué par arrêté préfectoral régional du 6 octobre 2015, au moins jusqu'à l'échéance d'une nouvelle adhésion possible par les communes concernées l'année prochaine, du cœur du parc national, ainsi que de la partie des deux communes précitées située hors cœur du parc.

2. Recommandations : Lister ici toutes les recommandations dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les recommandations ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

1. Veiller à bien prendre en compte les enjeux naturels et paysagers lors d'aménagements en zone périphérique et éviter tout impact direct sur le cœur

Les travaux dans le cœur du Parc font l'objet d'une autorisation. La plupart de ces autorisations de travaux ont fait l'objet, au préalable, d'une visite sur le terrain ou d'un contact avec le pétitionnaire afin de mieux appréhender les travaux envisagés.

Jusqu'à la phase d'adhésion des communes, l'établissement s'engageait dans la mise en œuvre des procédures d'aménagement de manière à identifier depuis l'amont du projet les enjeux environnementaux et paysagers dans toute l'aire optimale d'adhésion qui entoure le cœur du Parc. Depuis la constitution de l'aire d'adhésion à l'automne 2015, le périmètre de compétences de l'établissement en la matière est limité à l'aire d'adhésion effective. L'établissement poursuit son engagement pour assurer la préservation du cœur de parc ainsi que l'aire d'adhésion. Il est à ce titre consulté de manière systématique et veille à prescrire toutes les recommandations nécessaires à la préservation du cœur. Le Parc national met par ailleurs en œuvre, grâce au programme européen LIFE GYPHELP en dehors du cœur et de l'aire d'adhésion plusieurs conventions de partenariat avec des acteurs économiques (transport d'électricité, sociétés de remontées mécaniques) afin de réduire les risques de percussio de l'avifaune. Plusieurs centaines de km de câbles sont maintenant équipés ou enterrés.

Par ailleurs, le Parc met à disposition un outil d'observatoire photographique des paysages de manière à sensibiliser et à proposer des éléments de réflexion.

2. coordonner la compatibilité des objectifs du cœur du parc et de l'aire d'adhésion optimale avec ceux de la « trame verte et bleue »

En France, « la trame verte et bleue » se décline régionalement dans un document-cadre, le schéma régional de cohérence écologique (SRCE), le Parc national de la Vanoise ayant été impliqué lors de son élaboration. La charte du Parc national de la Vanoise précise dans son § 3.5.1 son rôle d'accompagnement des collectivités locales dans ce domaine. Plusieurs mesures de la charte vont dans le sens de la prise en compte des corridors écologiques. Associé à l'élaboration du SCOT Tarentaise dans lequel la trame verte et bleue sera déclinée, le Parc a donné un avis favorable au document en juin 2016 lors au cours d'une consultation préalable à l'enquête publique. Il est par ailleurs associé aux réflexions en cours sur le SCOT Haute Maurienne et pour l'élaboration du SRADDET au niveau régional.

3. assurer la pleine prise en compte des intérêts de la protection de la nature et du paysage lors d'arbitrages au sujet des ressources en eau et du renouvellement des concessions hydro-électriques

Le Parc national de la Vanoise n'a pas été sollicité en 2017 pour une demande d'avis relative à d'éventuels projets liés à la ressource en eau ou des concessions hydro-électriques.

4. poursuivre activement les mesures de diagnostic et de gestion permettant d'assurer une cohabitation harmonieuse et une synergie entre les usages agricoles du parc et la protection des valeurs naturelles

Neuf nouveaux plans de gestion pastoraux ont été réalisés en 2016, dont sept qui ont fait l'objet d'un engagement contractuel des éleveurs dans le cadre d'une Mesure AgroEnvironnementale et Climatique (MAEC). A l'issue des deux campagnes de contractualisation 2015-2016, 22 alpages du Parc se sont ainsi engagés pendant cinq ans à adapter leurs pratiques pour une meilleure prise en compte des enjeux environnementaux. Des diagnostics pastoraux sont en cours d'élaboration pour finaliser le suivi des 22 alpages, et des plans de gestion sont mis en œuvre. Parallèlement, le Parc a poursuivi son implication auprès de la commune des Belleville pour la mise en place de baux ruraux à clauses environnementales sur les alpages communaux.

Le Parc est également impliqué dans la mise en œuvre du plan national loup et l'accompagnement des éleveurs face aux dommages : suivi de l'espèce, réalisation des constats d'attaques, mise à disposition d'abris d'urgence, conception d'un prototype de cabane d'altitude d'hébergement de moyen terme, héliportages pour l'approvisionnement de matériel...

Dans le cadre des convention d'application de la charte, le Parc est également investi dans plusieurs projets agricoles sur les communes adhérentes :

- à Peisey-Nancroix : projet collectif de méthanisation des effluents agricoles (organisation d'une visite collective, participation à l'étude de faisabilité...);
- aux Belleville : création d'un conservatoire de l'abeille noire locale *Apis mellifera mellifera*, avec le Centre d'Etudes Techniques Apicoles de Savoie (appui scientifique, mise en réseau...) / étude de réfiguration pour la création d'une maison thématique dédiée à l'abeille noire.

En 2017, le Parc a financé les analyses génétiques et l'installation de ruchers de fécondation. Il a accompagné l'organisation de la fête de l'abeille noire et la mise en place de panneaux d'information du public sur la biodiversité messicole.

5. maintenir un équilibre entre les fonctions d'accueil et de services des refuges et refuges-portes d'une part, leur rôle en matière d'information et de sensibilisation d'autre part, en poursuivant les aménagements en faveur de catégories de visiteurs qui méritent une attention particulière, comme les handicapés

Le Parc national de la Vanoise est propriétaire de 16 refuges dans le cœur du Parc pour permettre l'accueil et la sensibilisation du grand public. Dans les vallées, les agents proposent différentes animations de sensibilisation. Les points information Vanoise ouverts durant toute la durée estivale sont des sources de renseignement pour l'ensemble de la population. Des expositions sont ouvertes au public, de la documentation est mise à disposition. La brochure « Refuges en familles » éditée en 2014 avec le Comité de Savoie des clubs alpins et de montagne (CAF) a conjointement été rééditée en 2016.

Le Parc national de la Vanoise a également obtenu en 2017 la marque "Tourisme et Handicap" pour le refuge de Plan du Lac pour les quatre familles de déficiences (motrice, visuelle, auditive et mentale). L'ensemble des bâtiments, site et promenade accessible aux différentes familles de handicap ont été décrits dans une brochure sur l'accessibilité adaptée. Cette brochure permet d'informer et de promouvoir cette offre. En sus, le Parc national de la Vanoise a assuré un programme de sorties adaptées aux déficiences motrices, visuelles et mentales en partenariat avec les associations représentatives. Une trentaine de personnes en situation de handicap ont ainsi pu être accompagnées par des gardes-moniteurs. Trois refuges ont fait l'objet d'importants travaux d'isolation thermique et de rénovation afin d'améliorer le confort des visiteurs et faire des économies d'énergie.

6. surveiller et réglementer de façon stricte les sports aériens pour limiter les effets négatifs sur la faune.

Le cœur du Parc fait l'objet d'une réglementation spécifique encadrant strictement le survol par tous les moyens. La charte du Parc et ses modalités d'application de la réglementation en cœur de parc réitère cette protection en aménageant toute fois quelques zones bien précises où le survol en parapente est autorisé de manière à permettre un développement harmonieux de l'activité. Les survols en hélicoptère sont interdits sauf autorisation expresse et restent rares, principalement pour l'approvisionnement des refuges en début de saison.

3. Gestion du site : Lister ici toute modification dans la gestion du site détenant le Diplôme européen, en ce qui concerne les environnements terrestre et aquatique (si applicable), et en ce qui concerne les agents et les ressources financières, depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Le conseil d'administration du 23 novembre 2016 a validé la stratégie scientifique de l'établissement. Elle se décline dans une feuille de route à 3-4 ans fixant les objectifs, les résultats attendus et les moyens affectés. Les programmes alpages sentinelles et lacs sentinelles pour l'observation à long terme du changement climatique sont poursuivis.

Un programme européen, ALCOTRA IBEX a été lancé en mars 2016. Il va permettre d'améliorer la connaissance sur le bouquetin. Le Parc de la Vanoise a organisé en octobre 2017 un séminaire européen rassemblant plus de 50 gestionnaires d'espaces protégés alpins, dont certains du Gran Paradiso, pour aborder les questions de capture de bouquetin et améliorer le bien être animal mais aussi les protocoles scientifiques associés. Il publiera un guide « capture » en mars prochain.

Une réglementation pour la régulation de la pêche en coeur de parc a été adoptée. Elle va permettre de réduire la pêche et contrôler les modalités de pêche.

- Gypaète barbu (*Gypaetus barbatus*): Malheureusement, en 2017, sur les 5 nids présents dans le parc, seul un a conduit à l'envol d'un gypaéton.

- Loup (*Canis lupus*): Le loup est en phase de colonisation massive du territoire du Parc national de la Vanoise. On estime en 2017 sa présence à environ 3-4 meutes au sein du Parc. Les prédations sont en augmentation forte en 2017.

En 2017, les moyens financiers se sont stabilisés au niveau de 2016, mais les effectifs ont été réduits de 2 ETP.

4. Frontières : Détailler tout changement apporté aux frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. S'il y a des changements, veuillez joindre une carte appropriée à ce rapport. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Aucun changement

5. Autres informations : Lister ici toute autre information, concernant le site détenant le Diplôme européen, que vous estimez nécessaire de fournir au Conseil de l'Europe.

Néant

15. TURKEY - KUŞCENNETI NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

-Site management is appropriately being carried out by Administration Unit as part of the Ramsar Convention, Wetland Management Plan and 2873 Law of National Parks. There are two statues of the

park. One is Wetland the other is National Park. Therefore, it is prepared Kuşçenneti National Park Longterm Development Plan which is included wetland and national park's regulations. Kuşçenneti National Park Longterm Development Plan is on the process of approval.

- Regular monitoring of the general bird population (breeding, lodged etc) of the park is carrying out both general places and also particularly Sigirci Delta and Kocaçay Delta on the part of Regional Directorate of Forest and Water Affairs Engineers in 2017. Bird counting data is attached (Annex-1)
- The water quality of the lake and of the streams is controlling regularly by National Park management authority and also Research Institutions. National Park Administration is working close cooperation with Local Administrations, Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization and Provincial Directorate of Food Agriculture and Livestock. In addition, measuring of water quality process is carried out by Balikesir University, Department of Environmental Engineering. The process is ongoing.
- The new poultry activity demands and the inspection of existing factories operating in agriculture and poultry activity in neighboring villages in the buffer zone, which are polluting factors to protect the water quality of the lakes and the rivers feeding the lake, are carefully assessed and allowed by Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs to be controlled in strict accordance with these permits.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- Seasonal fluctuating of water level is kept under control by State Water Affairs. The monitoring results show that water level is stable throughout the year. (Annex-2)
 - Total Visitor number is 53.274 persons (January-November period). (Annex-3)
- Especially in intensive period, due to the increase of visitor demand, staff number remained inadequate, for effective visitor management. To tentatively resolve staff inefficacy, 5 persons via service procurement and 5 persons were hired via Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR).
- Specialists who worked the preparation of Kuşçenneti National Park Longterm Development Plan added an article, to realize the recommendation that established a small unit in Kocaçay Delta in south side of lake. After the plan is approved, process will be launched.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- Information boards in around the Visitor Centre were renewed and 8 pieces information boards were situated to specific points in around the lake.
- The national park staff did environmental cleaning in around the lake and settlements around the lake.
- Construction of a building which has WC (also disabled WC), baby care and lactation room and prayer room facilities was started.
- Due to heavy crumbs, feed was thrown to the area for feeding Passeriformes in January '17.
- Total number of bird nests reached 58 pieces, after constructing 10 more bird nests in this year.
- The transferring property procedure to Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs of 120 ha area in the national park's border where is located near the visitor center which owned by The Union of Balikesir Bird Lake ve Kuşçenneti National Park's Protection and Expanding which was established in 1995 by Balikesir Governorship is ongoing.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

-There is no official change in the boundary of the park.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

- An event themed 'Nature Tourism is Flying' was organized by 2. Regional Directorate of Forest and Water Affairs.

- To be broadcast on national channels, the national park's promotional video was made.

- Fishing licenses (6 Pieces) which has given by The Fishing Cooperative is ongoing under control of Administration Unit.

- Domestic and foreign Seismologists who were participated in symposium about earthquake which was coordinated by Balikesir University visited to the national parks.

16. GERMANY – WELTENBURGER ENGE NATURE RESERVE

No report / pas de rapport.

17. GREECE – CRETAN WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Not applicable.

In 2009, there were no conditions attached to the renewal of the award to the Cretan White Mountains National Park, Samaria (Greece), according to the CM/ResDip(2009)3 Resolution, which was *adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 at the 1068th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.*

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The relevant authorities should accelerate actions to extend the boundaries of the national park to cover a much larger area of the Cretan White Mountains;

The Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori was completed in 2009 and was sent to the Ministry of Environment and Energy for examination and approval. The Specific Environmental Study proposes extensive boundaries and zonation of the National Park, in relation to the current boundaries. The approval of the Specific Environmental Study due to bureaucracy reasons was delayed and then in 2011 a new environmental law was put into force, Law No. 3937/2011 "Biodiversity Conservation and other provisions". This meant that the Draft Presidential Decree which was included in the Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori should be revised in order to incorporate the new law in its context. After a period of conflicting decisions it was finally decided that the revision should be done by the staff of the Management Body. This procedure concluded in December 2014. The Specific Environmental Study was approved according to the no. 36130/1119/18-7-2016 Decision of the General Secretary of the

Ministry of Environment & Energy. After the approval, the Draft of the revised Presidential Decree was set to public consultation. At the moment, we are awaiting the signing of the relevant Presidential Decree.

2. An expert on biodiversity should be appointed or contracted to carry out regular monitoring of the flora and fauna of the park;

Samaria National Park Management Body has already established a monitoring program in its jurisdiction area - that includes the Natura 2000 sites GR4340008 and GR4340014 - for the study of important habitat types and species of flora and fauna, according to the European and the Greek legislation, or species which are considered threatened according to international institutions (e.g., IUCN). In particular, monitoring is implemented for: 20 marine and terrestrial habitat types, 33 plant species, 118 bird species, 52 species of fauna (terrestrial molluscs, terrestrial arthropods, amphibians, reptiles, bats, micromammals), the cretan wild goat (*Capra aegagrus cretica*) and the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*). The budget of the monitoring program for the period 2012-2015 was covered from the Operational Program "Environment and Sustainable Development" NSRF 2007-2013. After the end of this funding period in 2015, the monitoring program is implemented from the personnel of the Management Body. However, since some groups of species & habitats require the cooperation with expert scientists, the Management Body prepared a relevant proposal and has received funding from the Operational Program Crete, NSRF 2014-2020 for the continuation of the program until 2023.

3. An annual budget should be allocated to the park, to be administered by the management board. The income from the entrance fee to the park may also be considered to finance monitoring projects, particularly recommendation 2 above.

Both Samaria National Park Management Body and the Forest Directorate of Chania have officially and repeatedly claimed a portion of the income from the entrance fee to the Park from the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The law of establishment of the Management Bodies of Protected Areas in Greece makes provisions for the receiving of income from entrance fees in the protected areas. However, because of the memorandum obligations of the Country the third recommendation has not yet been fulfilled. However, since the monitoring of protected habitats and species is deemed crucial, the Management Body succeeded to ensure that this would not affect the implementation of the monitoring program for the next years (*please, see quotes on recommendation 2 above*).

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

- The implementation of restriction measures against the insertion of domestic goats to the Samaria Gorge has continued. In this way, natural selection and succession were allowed to continue their course without any interference. The effort for the elimination of illegal hunting is an ongoing procedure.

- The first stage of the project "In situ and ex situ conservation of *Zelkova abelicea* in Crete 2014 - 2016" has been completed and the second stage will be continued throughout the years 2017 up to 2020. This project is funded by the University of Fribourg, coordinated in Crete by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICH) and conducted in collaboration with the Forest Directorate of Chania (and other Forest Directorates of Crete), the University of Fribourg, the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the National Research Council (CNR) of Italy and the University of Athens. For more information one may visit the following link (<http://www.zelkova.ch/content/zelkova-abelicea-crete>).

- The "Pilot Project for the long-term monitoring of native aromatic and medicinal plants in the Prefecture of Chania and evaluation of their natural populations" which is financed by the Green Fund

and is conducted by the Forest Directorate of Chania, the MAICH Institute and the Biology Department of the National Kapodistrian University of Athens, continued successfully in 2017. Significant conclusions are being drawn from the program concerning both the proper use and determination of the institutional framework as well as the certification of the amplification materials and the origin safety and processing of the aromatic and pharmaceutical herbs. The program expires in February 2018.

- Samaria National Park Management Body continued the monitoring program of important habitats and species. Particularly, for the monitoring of the Cretan wild goat (*Capra aegagrus cretica*) trail cameras are placed in strategic locations in the National Park. The data collected provides us with valuable information about the ecology of the species and at the same time the existence of cameras helps prevent illegal hunting of the protected animals.

•Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

- According to the relevant Act of Council of Ministers provisions were made for the employment of 26 people as seasonal personnel for the needs of the National Park of Samaria.

The seasonal personnel employed this year by the Forest Directorate of Chania, included two Foresters, two Forest Technicians, one Biologist, two Forest Protection Specialists, one computer operator, one administrative personnel, four rangers, five workers, two drivers, and six muleteers who were employed for the period 12/5/2017 -31/12-2017.

- Three Forest Protection Specialists of the Management Body undertook surveillance and monitoring tasks in the wider area of the White Mountains (Lefka Ori), to assist the Forestry Service and the Fire Department. Moreover, the Management Body, as in the previous years, was responsible for the operation of the radio communication system (complete with a GPS tracking ability) inside the Gorge of Samaria, and provided the Forestry Service and the Fire Department with the specialized equipment. The MB also placed a live streaming camera at the north entrance to the Gorge to assist the personnel with the surveillance of the area.

- The Fire Department employed 8 firemen this year, in the wider area of Lefka Ori.

•Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

Before the opening of the gorge to the public, the central path was restored from the various damages which had occurred during the winter and it was paved with stone where necessary. The task was implemented by the Forest Directorate of Chania and the seasonal staff was responsible for the continuous maintenance along the central path. Moreover, the seasonal staff of the Forest Directorate was responsible for the restoration of the escape paths, along the main route, that lead to the assembly points.

•Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

Samaria National Park Management Body continues to maintain the renewable energy sources systems for the electrification of the outposts inside the National Park of Samaria using (a wind turbine, a water turbine, and PV-panels). As mentioned above (paragraph: Protection against the elements) the MB is responsible for the operation of the communication radio system that the rangers use inside the Park.

•Improvement of infrastructure

- In the spirit of embellishing the northern entrance of the National Park, it was decorated with the emblem of the Park, a bronze statue of a *Capra aegagrus creticus* head, as it is seen at the Park logo.

-At both the northern and southern entrances of the Park, flags have been placed (see section 5 for more information) in the spirit of welcoming the evaluation of the National Park the following year.

-Facility maintenance of the National Park, aiming to the aesthetic improvement of the current infrastructures of the Samaria National Park, was carried out throughout the entirety of the operational season.

-The maintenance of wooden structures (railings, benches, tables, doors and windows as well as their frames) was done by both the permanent and seasonal personnel of the Forest Administration. The wooden floors of the Natural History Museum and Information Center were, also, maintained.

-The already existing infrastructures (outposts, toilets, the garden at the Information Center at “Xyloskalo”, the southern exit at “Agia Roumeli” etc) were also maintained.

-A wall was built in the entrance of a small cavern at the post “Samaria” where the hay for the mules was kept. This structure was necessary to keep the wild goats away and was built by members of the permanent personnel in collaboration with the seasonal staff.

-An additional fount was built, at the post of “Christos”. This structure was necessary to increase the total number of founts along the main route and was built by members of the permanent personnel in collaboration with the seasonal staff.

-The small, portable, wooden bridges used to override the river at the lower parts of the gorge (mainly before the post of “Agia Roumeli” at the southern entrance) were entirely rebuilt by the permanent and seasonal staff of the Forest Administration.

-This year, the outpost of “Samaria”, at the middle of the National Park, has been equipped with a telephone and internet connection via satellite. This has been a most important installation which gave the rangers and other employees of the forest Administration direct contact with the outside of the Park - which is by structure a very secluded environment. Until this installation the post of “Samaria” was connected with the outposts at the two entrances of the Park only through radio system and could have no outside communications.

•Administrative department: changes made

For the current year, 2017, the entrance tickets to the National Park were issued at the front desk of the Museum of Natural History and Information Center, at the northern entrance of the Park (Xyloskalo). This change allowed for a significant increase of the number of visitors to the museum leading to an increase of awareness around the role of the Council of Europe towards the preservation of our National Landmarks.

•Wardens’ department: changes made

In 2017, the permanent personnel of the Forest Directorate of Chania involved in the management of the National Park, as well as the seasonal staff, were trained in first aid techniques by authorized volunteers of the Hellenic Red Cross (Chania department).

•Internal policing measures

-The permanent and seasonal personnel of the Forest Directorate of Chania (rangers, workers, muleteers, foresters, forest technicians and forest protection specialists) took shifts policing the Park, through the main route as well as the adjacent byways, throughout the whole day.

-The internal policing of the National Park extended to the limit of night shifts which took place at the three main posts of the Park [Northern entrance (Xyloskalo), Middle post (Samaria) and the Southern entrance (Agia Roumeli)], where two or more employees of the Forest Directorate spent the night, throughout the months that the Park remained open and for an extended period before and after the closing of the gorge.

-The MB assisted the surveillance of the area through regular patrols and by providing the Forest Directorate with the radio system.

•Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

-Individual attempts of visitors trying to violate the operation regulations of the National Park, concerning the opening hours, were handled successfully by the appointed personnel of the Forest Administration.

-An incident of destruction of Public Property occurred during the summer months at the southern entrance of the National Park (Agia Roumeli), when a civilian destroyed one of the live feed cameras of the outpost located there. Charges were pressed and the matter has since then been left in the hands of the appropriate Local and State Authorities.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes were made in the boundaries of the protected area since the last annual report. As it was already mentioned in section 2, paragraph 1, the Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori, that proposes extensive boundaries and zonation of the National Park, in relation to the current boundaries, was officially approved in 2016. Although in the final stage, procedures for the declaration of the new National Park have not been finalized yet, since the signing of the relevant Presidential Decree is pending.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

-The flags of the European Union and that of the Council of Europe were placed at both the entrances of the National Park, alongside the Greek flag and that of the UNESCO Organization, in order to indicate the significance of the diploma that the site holds under the auspices of these international institutions.

-The logo of the European Diploma has also been placed on the information sign at the entrance of the National Park and on all the signs along the central path. Moreover, the logo appears in the home page of the official website of Samaria National Park Management Body (<http://www.samaria.gr>). In the environmental education program that the Management Body implements, the European Diploma award, as well as its logo, is presented to the students, in order to learn about its meaning and to recognize it when they come across it in the protected area. Finally, the logo of the European Diploma is included in the book about the Gorge of Samaria that was reissued in 2015, in the chapter "Protection and Management of Samaria National Park".

-This year we had the scientific good fortune of encountering one of the most rare and seldom seen species of wild life. A local grazer managed to capture a specimen of the commonly known as "Cretan wild cat", *Felis silvestris cretensis*, in his attempt to protect his livestock. The animal was a young female which was examined by veterinarians and confirmed to be in excellent health. The scientific personnel of the Museum of Natural History, of Heraklion Crete, using a blood sample taken from the animal managed to explicitly confirm that it belongs to the specific subspecies.

-A fish-shaped rock formation was found near the "Samaria" outpost and was at first considered to be a fossil of an ancient sea creature. The object was transferred to the Polytechnic School of Chania, where it was identified by experts as piece of metamorphosed rock and in particular of the slate limestone group. Selective, throughout the years erosion created the fishlike shape, which managed to draw the attention of the local, state as well as the international media.

-In the spirit of interaction between protected natural environments and the civil environment, as it is being suggested by UNESCO, the "Samaria Run", a yearly mountain running race, as well as the yearly fair of the Samaria church was organized and conducted, in collaboration with the Mountaineering Club of Chania.

-Worldwide interest was drawn to the National Park of Samaria this year when a Greek-American father decided to cross the gorge of Samaria with his disabled daughter. The Park does not have the appropriate infrastructure to allow for people with special abilities to cross it, so the parent had to carry the girl along the way. Local, state and international media sawed immediate interest and everyone was touched by this moving story of love and determination.



1. Photograph of the Cretan wild cat (*Felis silvestris cretensis*), in captivity.



2. Photograph of the fish-shaped rock formation found near "Samaria" outpost.



3. Photograph of the father that crossed the gorge of Samaria carrying his daughter on his shoulders.

18. UNITED KINGDOM – MINSMERE NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no conditions attached to the renewal of the European Diploma.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The control of the invasion of bracken using mechanical means should be continued; if necessary very selective spraying of chemical products should be carried out and careful records of this kept: Bracken control continued to restore and enhance areas of lowland heather Heathland and dry acid grassland. Bracken was controlled with Asulox, by a tractor mounted sprayer on 5.53 ha and through spot treatment on sparse areas, with full records maintained on reserve file. No bracken litter removal was carried out during this reporting period, planned litter removal has been rescheduled for autumn 2018.

2. A contingency plan to deal with the issue of sea level rise and increased freshwater flooding of the grazing marshes should be drawn up; in the short term, the feasibility of preventing/limiting the risk of saltwater entering the reedbed and lagoon systems by building up existing internal banks should be studied; in the longer term, a strategy for sustainable management of the coast in conjunction with all key stakeholders should be developed; discussions with the Environment Agency to reduce the risk of freshwater flooding through modification of the Minsmere sluice should be continued:

The Minsmere Coastal and Climate Change Adaptation Plan progressed. This project is to develop a strategic plan for managing coastal and climate change at RSPB Minsmere. It will incorporate planned adaptation of habitats and species, as well as visitor infrastructure, and is currently going through due RSPB project processes. A literature review was undertaken studying all relevant reports regarding coastal processes and change on the Suffolk Coast and climate change predictions. Findings from this part of the project will be shared with the project team with a view to developing the plan during 2018.

A surge tide with a combined height of 2.38m occurred on 13 January 2017, causing some erosion of the dunes but no significant damage.

We continue to liaise with the EA re maintenance of the Minsmere Sluice which is leaking through the brickwork. The Scotts Hall drain tide flap has also needed repairing/unblocking occasionally, this caused flooding of North Girder on one occasion

3. The reserve management plans (2008-2013 and 2013-2018) should be implemented:

All scheduled priority and projects were implemented.

4. The purchase of land should be continued:

There were no land purchases this year. The proposed partnership consortium land purchase referred to in last year's report did not proceed as the land was withdrawn from sale.

5. Vigilance with regard to alien species of flora, especially controlling and managing pirri-pirri bur, (*Acaena novae-zelandiae*) should be maintained, and the control of the American mink (*Mustela vison*) should be continued:

The control/eradication of pirri-pirri-bur control remains a challenge and further work is needed to identify the most successful method(s). Burrs in some areas were collected by hand, but most of the larger affected areas were removed or swept mechanically. Various control methods are being tested and are being supported through the new Countryside Stewardship agreement. Methods to include grazing, cultivation, uprooting, bur collection and chemical control but confirmation of action that will enable eradication remain elusive.

No mink were detected this year. The population appears to be very low and efforts to eliminate this species will continue.

6. The role of the reserve as a demonstration site for a wide range of audiences, especially formal school parties, and for informal education/awareness-raising activities for children and families should be developed:

Seventy nine schools and colleges participated in the reserve's formal education programme, attended by 2,232 children. We have continued to develop our Secondary School programmes and now offer a much more comprehensive set of curriculum focused sessions and students have taken part in practical ecological sampling in a range of habitats including collecting data that will feed in to a monitoring project for the management of invasive species. The newly revised Primary School programmes have been received well by all groups with good positive comments from many new and long standing schools. Links have been maintained with the Green Light Trust and formed with a local home school network delivering sessions outside of the normal range of curriculum focussed programmes.

Minsmere 'Reedlings', a group for under 5's and their parents continues to meet once per month for seasonal fun, stories, crafts and adventures

The Minsmere Young Wardens volunteer group is now well established with older members moving on and some taking up roles within the conservation sector either in full time education or volunteering and new members coming through. This group is aimed at young people aged 13 to 18 years with an enthusiasm for wildlife and the environment. The focus is on practical, hands-on habitat management tasks and offers opportunities to increase skills in conservation management and wildlife knowledge and enables the participants to make new, like-minded friends.

Minsmere continues to host bespoke children's birthday parties and provide activities for local groups on request. We have continued to offer a range of family activities during school holidays with a menu of different facilitated activities such as short guided walks, pond dipping, bird ringing displays, craft activities and owl pellet dissection offered. The seasonal self-led family activities were offered all year round, providing interactive interpretation of the wildlife for visiting families and children. Each child who completes the activities received a certificate and sticker. Our evaluation has demonstrated the success of the events and activities in terms of increased levels of participation and learning amongst our family audience, as well as a source of revenue to support our conservation management work.

We continue to support learning within and beyond the RSPB in regard to our engagement with visitors. Reserve staff participate in the national RSPB Visitor Experience Workgroup, sharing best practice and developing strategy.

7. A rotational fallowing regime on the freshwater sections of the coastal lagoons to increase invertebrate biomass for breeding and passage waders should be implemented:

In 2017 the north section of West Scrape was fallowed then flooded with sea water in August-September (achieving over 20ppt). As well as benefitting invertebrate biomass from fallowing, the introduction of saline water followed trials held in 2016 that concluded that there is no benefit to cutting invasive mare's tail *Hippuris vulgaris* prior to flooding with sea water over simply flooding with sea water so long as the concentration of sea water is kept high enough. It is still a challenge to maintain a high enough salinity to have an impact on mare's tail on West Scrape.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Hannah Jones replaced Amy Lever as part time Visitor Experience Officer. She also supported the Learning Officer as seasonal Learning Assistant, together with Learning Intern, Anna John. Seasonal catering staff were also recruited to support the cafe team through the spring & summer.

The Minsmere red deer control project continued. During a deer census carried out on 10/11/2016, a maximum of 22 red deer *Cervus elaphus* hinds 20 calves and 2 mature stags were counted on the heath and acid grass habitats. On the wetland habitats a maximum of 31 red deer hinds, 23 calves, 4 mature and

3 young stags were counted along with 1 Reeve's muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* and 1 Chinese water deer *Hydropotes inermis*. RSPB Reserves Ecology department undertook a heather condition survey in March which indicated significant recovery in the Heathland vegetation following the reduction in deer browsing pressure post culling activity.

The second phase of the Heathland Restoration Project was completed involving tree felling mostly on the Westleton Walks section of the reserve. The phase 3 works (stump height reduction and litter removal) is planned for completion in December 2018. An assessment of Heathland condition indicated that bracken and bare ground are the main areas for management attention, but this should be achieved by the next phases of the Heathland Restoration Project and associated management work. Additional open patches were created within the heather for nesting nightjars *Caprimulgus europaeus* and more are planned this winter. The reduction in tree cover through the heath restoration project, but with more 'edge', should continue to benefit this species.

The reedbed restoration project continued with a focus on the North Levels where good progress was made towards subdividing the area into separate hydrological units, 1,350m of reed fringed ditches were cleaned out. Work on the Scrape included shingling islands, control of mare's tail with salt water and the usual post breeding season vegetation control by mechanical means and grazing.

Active management of scrub within woodland was undertaken this winter and more is planned for the forthcoming autumn/winter period with a programme of rotational management continuing into the future. There are also plans for additional scrub creation at Minsmere and discussions are in hand with our turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur* officer to explore where the latest advice on management can be incorporated on site.

Sixteen stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* plots were maintained. Either electrified netting or wires were used around all the regularly used stone curlews nesting plots prior to the birds return in March, to reduce the chances of the nest being predated by ground predators. In addition, any pairs nesting off plot were likewise fenced which necessitated limited disturbance whilst the fences were erected. The plots were topped, as required, during the season to maintain open habitat for the possibility of relays and second/third broods.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* productivity on the Scrape is poor with gull predation the main influencing factor. Accommodating a successful gull and tern colony and a successful avocet colony in the same small area appears to be very difficult. However, the avocet population on the wider Suffolk Coast had a successful season and Minsmere successfully fledged Sandwich tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* chicks for the first time for nearly 40 years, so some thought is being given to a wider strategy approach that ensures that provision for breeding avocets, gulls and terns is accommodated across the wider coast and Minsmere supports the development of a sustainable breeding population throughout the area.

There is a need to develop a programme of appropriate annual re-investment in the visitor infrastructure to ensure that the quality of the offer for visitors is maintained and annual engagement and income targets are met.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No additional land purchases or boundary changes this year. The decision was taken to sell Scotts Hall Cottage, currently used as a holiday let, the cottage will be marketed for sale in 2018.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Visitor numbers for the period were 113,854, a slight increase on the previous year

Extensive consultations with EDF Energy continued regarding the plans to develop the Sizewell C nuclear reactor to the south of the reserve. We are continuing to work closely with EDF to understand the specific environmental implications of the Sizewell C proposal. The stage 2 public consultation commenced in November 2016. We were disappointed at the paucity of information contained within the Phase 2 consultation and we expect to be provided with far greater detail in advance of Phase 3. Of particular concern is the impact of the development on the Minsmere coastline, a number of potential impacts on local wildlife especially the impact of noise on the features of European protected sites in the area and the impact on the special qualities of Minsmere beyond wildlife alone, such as peace and tranquillity, and how this might impact on both visitor numbers and the benefits the reserve brings to the community. The risk includes vital income streams to underpin our conservation work and ecosystem services such as health and well being benefits

Acknowledgement of the European Diploma award was included in the Reserve Leaflet which is given to all visitors to the site.

19. UNITED KINGDOM – BEINN EIGHE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Our Vision from our Management Plan 2015 - 2026

Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands NNR is well known as a special place with stunning scenery and iconic Scottish wildlife where people are welcome to explore and get involved.

Our aspirations for Beinn Eighe NNR when we first started woodland management, 85 years ago, have now become a reality. The Reserve supports a thriving western pinewood, regenerating naturally with the planted woodlands well on the way to resembling the ancient remnants in structure and variety of species. Working alongside our neighbour's, this integrated approach to woodland restoration has resulted in 1000 hectares of near continuous native woodland in Wester Ross.

The open habitats, particularly the heaths are some of the best examples of their type in the West of Scotland. Active management has improved their overall condition throughout the Reserve and our trials to expand the areas of juniper and moss-rich heaths have been a real success story. All of our habitat work has been achieved in the presence of a well-managed deer population without the use of deer fencing.

The rare species of mosses, lichens and liverworts are also flourishing together with dragonflies and other insects. Species such as water vole, pine marten, golden eagle and white-tailed eagle thrive on the Reserve, and in recent years, black-throated divers on Loch Maree have started to make a welcomed comeback.

Our adaptive management approach and targeted research has helped improve important habitats and species' resilience to climate change. Monitoring has also proved invaluable to building up our programme of demonstration and training. The Reserve is renowned in the Highlands amongst land managers, conservationists and academic institutes for demonstrating best practice conservation management, and internationally amongst volunteers for providing worthwhile medium to long term volunteering opportunities.

The Reserve continues to be a high profile tourist destination, seen by many visitors as the gateway to Wester Ross and a place where everyone can come to enjoy and be inspired by nature. The visitor centre and trails car park provide a wealth of information and a variety of outdoor experiences suitable for all

abilities and tastes. Other parts of the Reserve offer quiet experiences to explore and to discover nature by seeing wildlife, or simply by taking in the views and absorbing the atmosphere.

The local community is actively engaged with the Reserve and values Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands as a place to visit and enjoy, as well as one that contributes to the local economy of Wester Ross. Local schools use the Reserve as a place for learning, local volunteers play a valuable part of delivery of Reserve management and an annual events programme remains very popular.

Management Objectives

Objective 1: Expand and enhance the quality of the native woodlands by improving the age structure, tree species diversity and connectivity with woodlands in the wider Wester Ross landscape, whilst maintaining the genetic integrity of the Scots pine and habitats for important woodland flora and fauna communities.

Objective 2: Enhance the quality of the heaths, bogs and montane habitats on the Reserve, maintaining their extent where they are not subject to woodland expansion, distribution and associated flora and fauna communities.

Objective 3: Pro-actively manage and maintain habitats for key species of the Reserve, particularly where this can improve species survival in the wider Wester Ross landscape and increases resilience to climate change.

Objective 4: To safeguard the special qualities of the Wester Ross landscape, cultural interests and the geological features of the Reserve.

Objective 5: Undertake and facilitate research, survey and monitoring particularly where this improves our understanding and knowledge of the Reserve and its management requirements.

Objective 6: Establish the Reserve as a gateway to Wester Ross by providing a welcoming, enjoyable and high quality visitor experience whereby 85% of visitors asked rate their experience as good or above.

Objective 7: Promote awareness and enthusiasm for nature, inspire learning and exploration in ways that help people connect with and value nature more.

Objective 8: Establish Beinn Eighe & Loch Maree Islands NNR as a key resource in the Highlands, where people contribute to its management and use it sustainably through demonstration and training, volunteering and recreation.

Objective 9: To manage the land and Reserve properties responsibly following best practice and in collaboration with our neighbours.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Set up and implement the new-style reserve plan and organise the required prior public consultation; The Beinn Eighe NNR Management Plan 2015-26 underwent public consultation in 2015. It has a Habitats Regulations Appraisal undertaken in June 2015. The operational plan has under gone an annual review in 2017.

2. Continue to maintain the native tree/shrub gene bank, as well as the tree nursery, to guarantee the genetic origins of trees planted in the reserve:

The native tree gene bank is being maintained. The following seeds were collected:

Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* **84g,**

Birch <i>Betula pubescens</i>	163g,
Bird cherry <i>Prunus Padus</i>	246g,
Rowan <i>Sorbus</i>	6 litres,
Oak	168 acorns

3. Following the results of the fieldwork for site condition monitoring of upland features of interest, adapt the current deer management to limit trampling impacts from deer on dry heaths;

The deer cull now forms the main focus of management for the Reserve:

Red Deer <i>Cervus elaphus</i> :	39 stags, 22 hinds,	13 calves,
Roe deer <i>Capreolus capreolus</i> :	2 bucks,	2 does, 1 kid
Sika deer <i>Cervus nippon</i> :	4 stag	0 hind 0 calves

4. Monitor the evolution of the American mink (*Mustela vison*) population and its propagation within the area:

Mink are routinely monitored during fieldwork. We continue to use live-catch cage traps. No mink were recorded during 2017.

5. Continue to limit the development of recreational facilities in the core area of the reserve and maintain the existing facilities to the present standard; if possible, investigate ways to improve the standards of visitor facilities:

The existing Visitor Centre was maintained and received the public.

- Visitor Centre Visitor numbers:
 - 23 year average: 12,212 visitors per annum
 - Busiest ever previous year was 1996: 16,648 visitors
 - 2016: 14,415 visitors - 1st year of the North Coast 500 tourist route (www.northcoast500.com)
 - 2017: 18,977 visitors – a record year!
- The village trail was also re-surfaced to bring it up to a high specification suitable for mixed ability's.

6. Improve car park facilities for hill-walkers in Glen Torridon;

We improved the car parking area at Coire an Laoigh NG97725787 at a cost of £15,000. The area is now resurfaced with improved drainage and improved access track.

7. Continue to integrate and implement safety measures in management of the area, particularly checking visitor facilities for hazards and revising the reserve's fire plan.

Hazard auditing of all facilities is completed either monthly or quarterly. Reports are completed and required actions undertaken. Information is also stored centrally within SNH. The fire plan is reviewed annually.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Connectivity between Beinn Eighe NNR and the Coulin SSSI/SAC pinewoods is now complete and work will continue to enhance the area with further planting.

20 hectares of new woodland with **10000** local grown trees planted.

6 hectares of plantation woodland improved through creation of deadwood. We have completed the programme of woodland condition improvement using contractors and have now moved in the phase of undertaking further work as part of the programme of work undertaken by field staff.

84.5 hectares of ground cleared of non-native *Rhododendron ponticum*.

We have several new members of staff replacing vacated posts, including a permanent onsite Reserve Manager in Doug Bartholomew and a temporary Reserves Officer in Jack Ward. Ian Sargent is now responsible for overseeing the management at Beinn Eighe NNR.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Not applicable.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Attainment of the European Diploma is promoted on the Beinn Eighe page of the National Nature Reserve website. The logo is shown with a link to information pages on the Council of Europe website.

Scotland's National Nature Reserves - <http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk/>

20. UNITED KINGDOM – PURBECK HERITAGE COAST

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The terms of the agreement between Dorset County Council and British Petroleum are being strictly adhered to, and BP continues to work to the highest standards.

The Wytch Farm oilfield is now operated by Perenco which took over from BP in 2013. A new agreement has been agreed which ensures:

1.1 Safety in operation and controls to ensure human and environmental health

1.2 Environmental management of areas in the estate in direct control of the company. Significant open habitat restoration has taken place; work continues.

1.3 A contribution (£1,700,000) towards off-site environmental improvements in the landscape character areas affected, largely within the Purbeck Heritage Coast

1.4 Effective decommissioning and site restoration once the operation has ceased

This agreement was finalised in July 2017.

2. The extension of existing quarries or the opening of new quarries conforms to the 'exceptions' principle that they should not be permitted unless they do not impair the character of the Heritage Coast as a result of any one or a combination of the following:

- their scale and length

- their negative impact on the landscape, wildlife, the enjoyment of the area by the public or local communities

- the practical impossibility of achieving satisfactory restoration and aftercare within a period of five years following the cessation of work.

Dorset County Council adopted a new minerals strategy in May 2014, available online (<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/mcs>). This strategy sees a strengthening of policy for the conservation of designated areas (Purbeck Heritage Coast and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Following its adoption, Dorset County Council has been developing a Minerals Sites Plan (draft available here <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/mineral-sites>); it was consulted on between May & July 2016. A pre-submission draft has been produced and is currently open for public consultation until 31st January 2018.

The current draft describes a potential extension to Swanworth Quarry, northeast of Worth Matravers within the Purbeck Heritage Coast area. The Dorset AONB team advises that development of this site would impair the character of the Heritage Coast.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Work should continue on the inventory of Natural Areas calling for more adequate protection and research on these sites, particularly in the marine reserves where the periodic inventories of fauna and flora should be continued.

The Natural Areas inventory has been superseded by the National Character Area profiles managed by Natural England. The relevant areas are the Dorset Heaths (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4961534241406976>) and South Purbeck (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4610950>) which were completed in 2014.

Heritage Coast's coastal waters and Poole Harbour are Marine Protected Areas (<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030382>); data gathering and sharing is encouraged through the Dorset Environmental Record Centre. Seabed mapping and survey information is available from the Dorset Wildlife Trust <http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/doris.html>

3. Any progress will be welcomed to reduce intensive arable use on the immediate edge of the cliffs.

The vast majority of the Purbeck Heritage Coast's clifftop land is in Environmental Stewardship with a focus on extensification. Management agreements (10-year in length) include measures such as:

- conservation headlands (cultivated field margins with little or no agrochemical application with great benefit to rare arable plants and arable fauna)
- grass field margins (tussocky grass margins creating buffer, habitat linkages and tussocky grassland habitat)
- arable reversion to grassland (creation of calcareous grassland)

4. Work should continue to restore eroded paths by using local stone in an innovative way as done at Lulworth Cove.

Efforts continue in this regard led by Dorset Countryside and the Lulworth Estate. Innovative use of local stone is evident.

5. Efforts to promote the use of more sustainable methods of transport to visitors (bus and train usage, improved use of cycling and walking and riding) should be increased.

Dorset County Council leads work to develop the potential of the existing park and ride site at Norden near Corfe Castle. As the rail line between Wareham and Swanage is being reconnected to the main line, the Norden site can play an important part in reducing car numbers travelling to Studland.

Private sector bus company First Bus continues to support and promote the X54 Jurassic Coaster bus service, which continues to serve Purbeck.

The Dorset AONB Partnership won an award from the Government Department for Environment, Fisheries & Rural Affairs (Defra) to develop new cycling routes which help promote healthy travel and local produce. 2 Purbeck routes can be downloaded here:

http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/assets/downloads/Explore/Dorset_Pedal/DPE_Route3.pdf and
http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/assets/downloads/Explore/Dorset_Pedal/DPE_Route4.pdf

6. Measures should be taken to address risks of oil pollution from shipping.

Policy: ship-to-ship transfers in open water are now illegal; activity is policed and compliance enforced by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

Response: Dorset County Council's Emergency Planning unit runs regular Beach Masters' courses to enable an effective and efficient response to spills. No significant spills have been reported in 2017.

7. New resources should be made available to ensure the integrity in perpetuity of the newly designated World Heritage Site and its effective presentation to the public.

Management of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is still financially supported by the local authorities. By mutual agreement, the management team has transitioned from the existing local government host (Dorset County Council) to a charity (the Jurassic Coast Trust). They anticipate the charitable structure will enable greater income generation for ongoing management.

Delivery on visitor management has come under the Dorset AONB team, still hosted by Dorset County Council.

8. Appropriate management should be exercised and sufficient resourcing for this should be ensured, for the proposed South Purbeck National Nature Reserve.

Known as Durlston National Nature Reserve, this site is owned and well managed by Dorset County Council and is deemed to be in favourable ecological condition. A new Countryside Stewardship agreement has been agreed to continue resourcing this site from ERDF-origin funds to 2026.

9. The Heritage Landscape Management Plan for the Lulworth Estate should be implemented.

The Lulworth HLMP continues to be implemented.

10. Co-operation and the establishment of partnerships in management planning, action and exchange of information between all major bodies involved with conservation and management should continue as it is a key method for future management of the Coast.

The Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area Partnership continues to deliver this function.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Risk: Public finance is potentially an issue; all conservation bodies are working hard to secure funds from alternative sources for the ongoing conservation of the Heritage Coast and surrounding area.

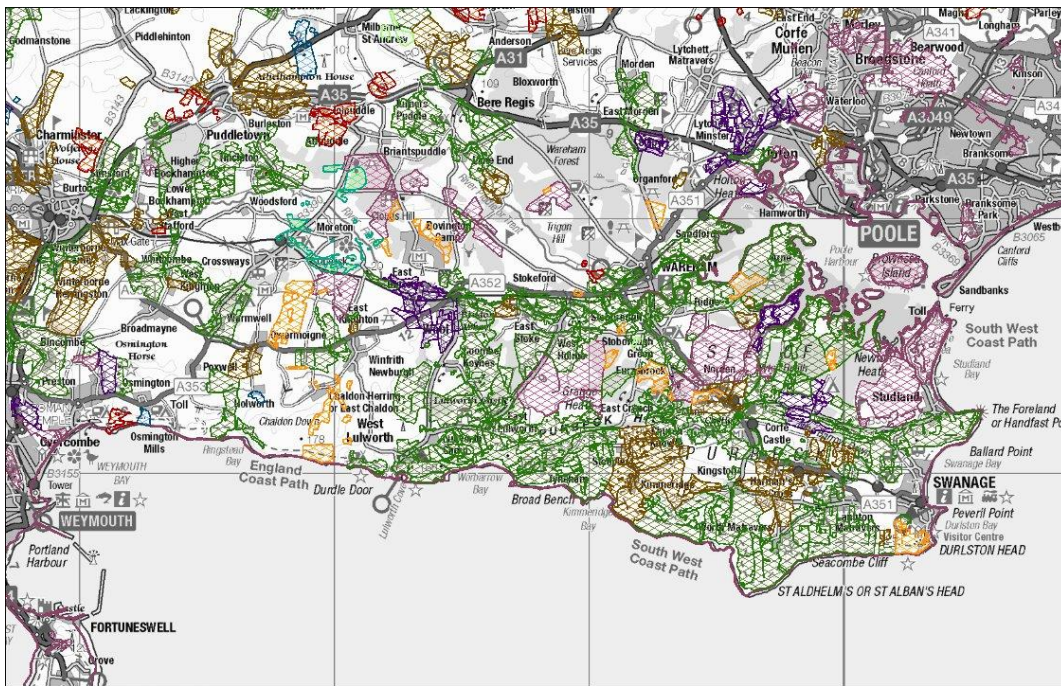
Finances: £1.7M has been transferred to Dorset County Council from the operators of Wytch Farm Oil Field to be disbursed as the Wytch Farm Landscape & Access Enhancement Fund. The target areas cover a large proportion of the Heritage Coast. Application processes are being finalised and we expect the first grants to be awarded in 2018.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

None

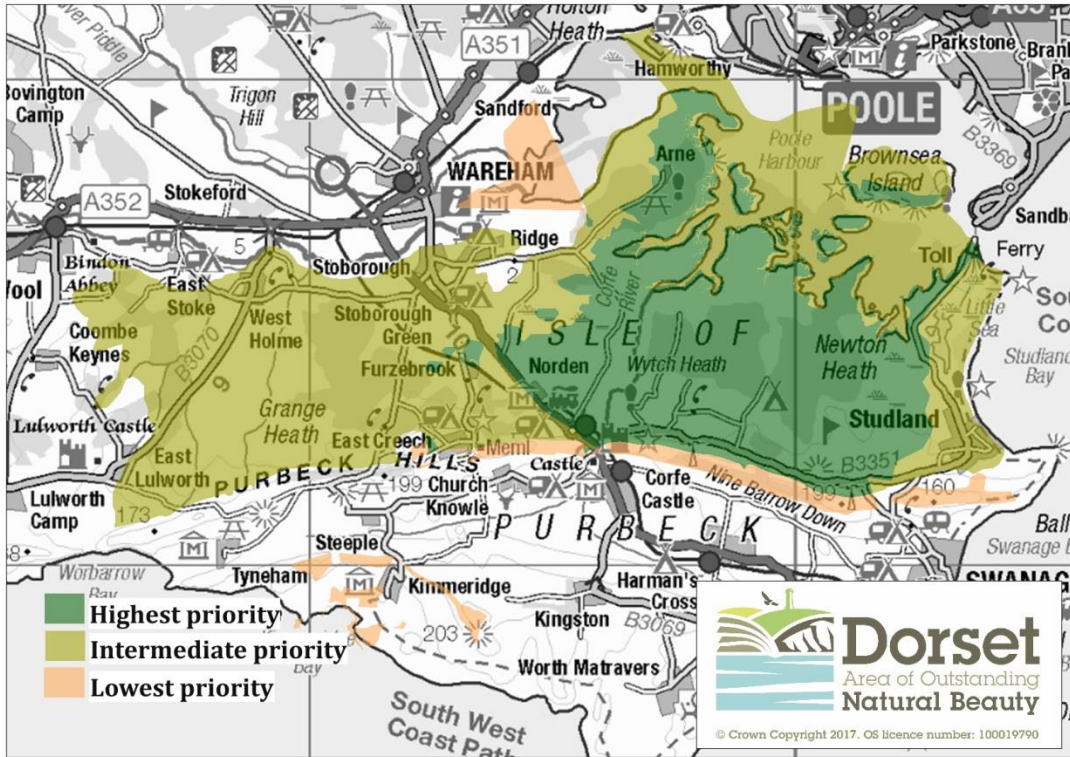
5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

None



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MAP 1



MAP 2

21. UNITED KINGDOM- FAIR ISLE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

To secure the aspiration for a **Marine Protected Area (MPA):**

The next phase

With the first phase achieved in October 2016, lead responsibility for taking the initiative forward is now in the hands of island residents, Fiona Mitchell and Susannah Parnaby. Under their guidance, and with the full commitment of the community and its partners, a new phase in the process was launched, the establishment of a framework for planning and implementation. A critical first task was the recruitment of a Project Officer (PO). This requires funds (estimated at £120,000) for a 3-year initial period. Fauna and Flora International indicated that £30,000 was available through the Orcadia Fund but this needed matching from elsewhere. In the meantime it was determined that the initiative would benefit from legal statute as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). This would help to attract the funds required to implement the MPA, including employment of the PO. To achieve this, Marine Scotland granted £5000 with a further £1000 promised from the NTS for an interim support officer. This role has been taken by an island resident, Eileen Thomson.

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

MPA Steering Group meetings:

A Demonstration & Research MPA Steering Group has been set up to engage all the principal stakeholders. Two meetings were held during the year. Both were well attended. The first, on 15th March, was held in Lerwick, Shetland and with representation from Karen Hall (Scottish Natural Heritage - chair), Afra Skene and Glen Tyler (SNH), Martin Holmes and Austin Taylor (Shetland Islands Council), Martin Schofield (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Pete Ellis and David Okill (Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust), Paul Harvey (Shetland Biological Records Centre/Shetland Amenity Trust), Kerry Whiteside (Fauna and Flora International), Sebastian Howells (Marine Scotland), Kenny Coull (Scottish Fishermen's Federation), Leslie Tait (Shetland Fishermen's Association), Carole Laignel (Shetland Shellfish Monitoring Organisation), Rachel Shucksmith (North Atlantic Fisheries College) & Fiona Mitchell and Susannah Parnaby (FI Community/ FIMETI) by phone.

Scottish and Shetland fishermen's representatives were amongst a good number of attendees who came to Fair Isle for the second Steering Group meeting on 25th August. Shetland MSP, Tavish Scott, also attended.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

MPA Steering Group decisions:

At the March meeting, the general terms of reference were agreed and the various parties stated what their respective organisations could offer ranging from expertise, advice and 'in kind' contributions to actual resources both general and specific – e.g. SNH has obtained funds (£23,000) to enable initial work on data compilation and identifying data gaps as well as identifying small, targeted projects. Sub-surface marine data has been identified as an area that needs to be targeted to help establish a more complete dataset. Use of resources like 'MRV Scotia', when not engaged elsewhere, to undertake survey work around Fair Isle could be a possibility. It was agreed to establish a small working group to discuss research projects. In a wider linked proposal, the Arran 'Coast' project MPA is interested in working with IFF/SNH to progress community involvement in Inshore Participatory Monitoring.

Apart from updates, the August meeting featured feedback on current research projects, proposals for new research and a clear desire for shared input from stakeholders. The meeting was followed by a very well attended MPA launch event the same evening to celebrate the success of the Fair Isle Community and others in getting the project to this stage.

Renewable Energy Project

Fair Isle Electricity Company (FIEC) has developed to an advanced stage a community led project called the Fair Isle Unified Low Carbon Electricity Storage and Renewable Generation project. This project will transform the island's infrastructure providing a dependable 24-hour power supply, something which is not the case today. The community-led project consists of an innovative combination of three new 60kW wind turbines, a solar system, energy storage system, new HV cabling system along with diesel generators and a new control system.

Fair Isle developed the first community renewables system with a wind turbine being erected in the early 1980s and another in the 1990s. These have now both reached the end of their lifespan and this replacement and improvement project will be a fantastic achievement for this small isolated community aimed at building resilience into their infrastructure at every opportunity.

Funding and permissions are on the cusp of being finalised and the project should take place during 2018 and will deliver the following benefits:

- 1) An innovative and collaborative local energy business model.
- 2) A dependable 24-hour, stable, low carbon-based electricity supply, suitable for power sensitive equipment such as computers, monitoring equipment, kitchen appliances, etc.
- 3) Emergency airfield lighting.
- 4) Energy for Water Treatment, airstrip and harbor, bird observatory and additional domestic load, increasing the customer base and providing a sustainable income from electricity sales.
- 5) Significant reduction of CO2 emissions on the island displacing the steady increase in diesel generation.
- 6) Enable use of renewable energy currently not available due to lack of energy storage equipment and provide a more robust and reliable management of the system.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Non

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Christopher Cassels (ccassels@nts.org.uk – 01416162266) remained National Operations Manager for the duration of 2017 however Duncan Stevenson (dstevenson@nts.org.uk) left his post as Fair Isle Property Manager in March 2017.

Chris has worked closely with the island throughout the year supported closely by Estate Surveyor North, Alan Barrow.

22. FRANCE – SCANDOLA NATURE RESERVE

No report / pas de rapport.

23. ITALY – SASSO FRATINO INTEGRAL NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions were attached to the renewal

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 1 . Implement the management plan for the Casentino Forests National Park and reinforce co-operation with the national park in order to co-ordinate all the activities, especially in terms of research.

Cooperation and collaboration with the National Park in research activities in the RNI and adjacent RRNNBB, is getting on. Thanks to the joint work of Reparto Biodiversità and National Park, with collaboration of University of Tuscia and National Park of Abruzzo, the primeval beech forests of Sasso Fratino were inserted in the World Heritage site "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the

Ancient Beech Forests of Germany". All the Biogenetic Reserves and a small part of Park's territory surrounding Sasso Fratino form the buffer zone of the UNESCO site.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 2. The nature reserve should continue to stand out as the reference for nature protection in the region.

The Reparto Carabinieri Biodiversità of Pratovecchio has maintained and expanded its relationships with Universities and research institutes to the multidisciplinary study on the Reserve. Through conferences and articles in the press and television the characteristics and significance of the Integral Reserve have been disclosed at regional and national level.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 3. Care should be taken to ensure that the Sasso Fratino Integral Nature Reserve and the adjacent biogenetic reserves continue to be managed as a cohesive whole.

The Sasso Fratino Reserve and surrounding Biogenetic Reserves are managed by the Reparto Carabinieri Biodiversità of Pratovecchio that pays particular attention to their integrated management. In particular, it aims to limit or remove at all interventions even on the bands of the Biogenetic Reserves bordering Sasso Fratino in order to create a buffer zone.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 4. Special attention should continue to be given to protecting Monte Falco in order to avoid, in particular, the construction of any new ski slopes.

Actions aimed to change the condition of the places or the construction of new ski slopes are not expected.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 5. The necessary funding should be provided in order to maintain the very high standard of scientific research.

In the RNI Sasso Fratino and the adjacent Casentinesi Natural Reserves researches are carried out with LIFE funding.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 6. Any further damage in the buffer zone, such as the laying of new roads or significant improvement work on the ski slopes, should be avoided.

No project to expand the existing sky slopes is expected in the next future. No other changes in the status of sites in the Reserves adjacent to Sasso Fratino were detected.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 7. The number of visits should not be increased and they should be restricted to researchers and people with a genuine interest in the site.

Visits in the Integral Reserve are restricted and authorized only for reasons closely linked to research and University training aiming to ecosystems conservation. Promotional video related to Sasso Fratino's primeval beech forests as UNESCO site are carrying out with National Park collaboration.

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 8. The possibility of extending the European Diploma to include the biogenetic reserves should be studied.

The opportunity of extending the European Diploma to the biogenetic reserves adjacentes to Sasso Fratino is under study.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No change in management is expected, however, according to LEGISLATIVE DECREE 19 of August 2016, n. 177 "Measures for the rationalization of police duties and inclusion of the State Forestry Corps, in accordance with Article 8, paragraph 1, letter a) of the Law 7 August 2015, n. 124, on the reorganization of public administration ", since January the first 2017, CFS duties and functions were

assumed by the Comando Generale dell'Arma dei Carabinieri with new creation of Comando Unità Tutela Forestale Ambientale e Agroalimentare (CUTFAA) meanwhile the Ufficio Territoriale per la Biodiversità of Pratovecchio has taken the name of Reparto Carabinieri Biodiversità of Pratovecchio

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes reported

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

1) Biodiversity conservation and protection activities

the following researches are currently underway:

- LIFE14 NAT / IT / 000759 "WetFlyAmphibia"- Aimed in improving the conservation status of five population of species included in Amphibians Community interest (*Bombina variegata* declining at national level, *Salamandrina terdigitata* and *Triturus carnifex*) butterflies (*Euplagia quadripunctaria* *, priority species, *Eriogaster catax*) and their habitats, and also the habitat of Community interest 6430 (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels) within the Natura 2000 sites included in the Casentino biogenetic National Reserves and National Forest Park. <http://www.lifewetflyamphibia.eu/it/>

- Project Sabiod - Scaled Acoustic Biodiversity - Study of the soundscape in areas with different levels of protection and anthropization -University of Pavia - Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences - Interdisciplinary Centre for bioacoustics and environmental research in collaboration with 'University of Toulon - LSIS.

- Monitoring of Deer population in Casentinesi Natural Reserves

Ended researches:

- LIFE11 / NAT / IT / 000525 "Monitoring of insects with public participations" - Some monitoring areas were included in the RNI and in the adjacent Lama forest of Badia Prataglia RNB – Lama and Campigna RNB.

2) Didactics, popularization and promotion

- Workshop of Casentinesi Forests – Casentinesi Natural Reserves 17 febbraio 2017 – With collaboration of National Park of Casentinesi Forests, Falterona Mountain and Campigna

- Michigan State University – North Carolina (USA). visit of scientific and educational in-depth study.

- Circolo Bateson

- University of Padova

Video and photograph about Reserve as UNESCO site:

- Associazione Sophia in Libris

- Società Limina srl with collaboration of National Park of Casentinesi Forests, Falterona Mountain and Campigna

24. SPAIN – DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The Spanish authorities should continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that development projects of Port of Sevilla have no significant environmental impact on ecosystems of Doñana. Any decision should be conditioned by the results of a supplementary report (EIA) Environmental Impact Assessment study.

The Project has been suspended; it will not be authorized and will not be executed. It should be reiterated once again that, after the approval of the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir River Basin, the Kingdom of Spain has stated its clear position regarding the project: It will not be authorized and, in line with this, there is no budget forecast for the project.

The definitive suspension of this project will be reflected in the next revision of the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir River Basin District.

2. The Government of Andalusia, responsible for managing the national park and also the water management should ensure the high quality of water entering the national park and eliminate illegal extraction of groundwater; in accordance with the Framework Directive on Water, it should check the condition of the aquifer underlying the national park and the surrounding land, the extent of extraction of groundwater and water quality.

We recall, as in previous reports that the water management of the Guadalquivir River Basin corresponds to the General State Administration. In spite of this, within the framework of the autonomic competences, the Special Irrigation Management Plan to the North of the Forest Crown of Doñana has continued to develop various policies for the rationalization and management of water withdrawals from the aquifer.

It is important to unite in this line the closure of more than 300 illegal wells dedicated to the extraction of water for irrigation. Likewise, the regularization of the farms that meet the regulatory requirements imposed by the aforementioned Special Management Plan has been maintained.

These actions together with the measures cited in the report corresponding to 2016, among which were:

- The approval of the annual extraction plan for both basins, as well as the advances in the substitution of surface water for groundwater (for example, the work has been completed to allow the transfer of 4.99 hm³ / year from the Tinto basins, Odiel and Piedras).

- The purchase of the Los Mimbrales property, adjacent to the Doñana Natural Area, which implies the recovery of 6.8 hm³ / year of extraction rights for the aquifer.

- The monitoring of the status of the aquifer that has been carried out by the Hydrographic Confederation of the Guadalquivir (with data since 1970), as well as relevant additional studies, such as the one on Doñana Lagoon Monitoring through spatial remote sensing (already available) or the collaboration agreement between the Guadalquivir Hydrographic Confederation and the Pablo de Olavide University (Seville), for hydrological monitoring and modeling of the lagoon-aquifer relationship in Doñana (with a duration of three years), among others.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. It should make every effort to restore the ecological health of the river catchment (river basin or watershed) level, in the sense of the Water Framework Directive; all appropriate measures should be taken to make use of water and other activities, especially agricultural activities in this basin (basin) support this objective;

The frame of reference for the achievement of this recommendation is the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir corresponding to the Second Planning Cycle (2015-2021), prepared in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

During 2017, the first proposals considered in the Doñana 2021 project that forms part of the aforementioned Hydrological Plan have begun to be outlined. It is expected that during 2018 these proposals will have an important impetus.

2. A specific emergency plan for the Doñana National Park should be prepared, and a map of natural hazards should be developed

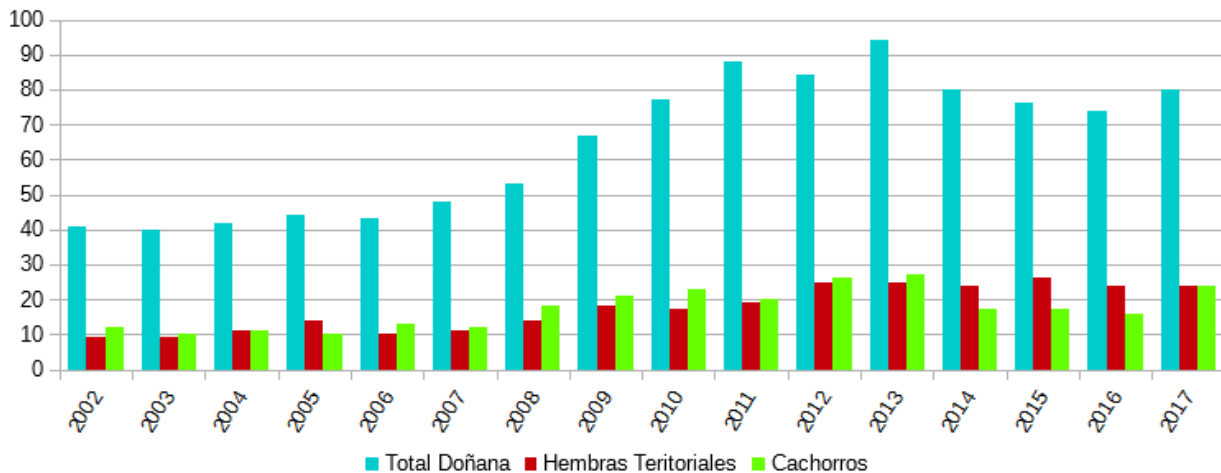
There have been no changes compared to the previous year's report. The Natural Area has a Self-protection Plan against episodes of pollution and is included as a priority area in the plan against forest fires in Andalusia: the INFOCA Plan. During 2018 an update is foreseen for these plans and the design of a coordination document capable of integrating the sectorial emergency plans with which the natural area counts (fires, oil spills, etc.).

3. Implementation of the action plans for the conservation of flagship species, in particular the Iberian lynx and the Spanish imperial eagle, must be actively pursued; new action plans for other threatened species should be developed, if necessary.

Almost all of the threatened species present in the Doñana National Park have specific conservation plans. These plans approved by the Junta de Andalucía, with regulatory status, have been applied for years and have a regional scale.

Some of the plans with a greatest impact in Doñana are developing with remarkable success, as can be seen with the conservation projects of the Iberian lynx, whose population has practically doubled in the last decade. (The data for 2017 is still provisional)

Evolución población Lince Ibérico en Doñana



In addition to this, the following conservation plans are currently being developed:

- Recovery Plan for the Iberian Imperial Eagle.

- Plan of Recovery and Conservation of Necrophagous Birds, in which the Royal Kite is included as an endangered. Species.
- The Steppes Bird Recovery and Conservation Plan that includes two endangered species disappeared in the middle of the last century from Doñana, The Great Bustard and The Andalusian hemipode, as well as five vulnerable species of which, at least three, have a habitual presence in this natural area: Montagu Harrier, Ortega and Little Bustard.
- The Plan for the Recovery and Conservation of Wetland Birds, that includes one species classified as vulnerable - the osprey - and six endangered: the bittern, the gray-winged teal, the brown duck, the white-headed duck, the black-and-white coot, and the crabeater, all of them present in Doñana.
- The Aquatic Invertebrates and Fish Recovery and Conservation Plan that includes eight endangered and seven vulnerable species, such as *Aphanius baeticus*, *Accipenser sturio* and *Lampetra fluviatilis*.
- The Plan on Dunes and Coastal Cliffs in which a large number of species of threatened flora present in Doñana are included, such as Coastal Juniper or *Linaria tursica*. In addition, it has been approved the LIFE Conhabit project, with the purpose to promote the improvement and conservation of priority habitats of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC present in Sites of Community Interest (SCI) on the Andalusian coast, acting on those threats that affect them and in turn, contribute to the improvement of the species they support. This will be done by restoring and managing the various habitats and enhancing social awareness. In Doñana there are 9 of these priority habitats.

During 2017, different actions of the LIFE ADAPTAMED project "Protection of the main ecosystem services threatened by climate change through the adaptive management of the Mediterranean socioecosystems, LIFE14 CCA / ES / 000612" have been developed. This project aims to reduce the negative impact of climate change by focusing on the implementation of adaptation measures specifically targeting those socio-systems with a key role in the provision of the aforementioned ecosystem services. One of the main focal objectives of the project is to increase the resilience of these socio-systems. It is a project with a demonstrative character that focuses on direct experimentation on the mentioned socioeconomic ecosystems. Part of the actions have been developed on forest systems experimenting with different management formulas to analyze which ones have greater capacity to adapt to global change. Various training and follow-up actions have also been developed.

4. Regarding development projects for the Port of Seville, the Spanish authorities should draw upon the best international scientific experience and also take into account relevant international conventions such as the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention and the Bern Convention, and should work closely with relevant international organizations, including the European Union and the European Environment Agency.

As reported in the section corresponding to Condition 1, this project has been officially rejected by the Spanish state.

5. The management plan updating process should start in 2011.

The new planning of the Doñana Natural Area is in force since September 2016 (Decree 142/2016, of August 2, published in the Official Gazette of the Junta de Andalucía of September 26, 2016) and various actions have been initiated to implement the sectorial development foreseen in its reference documents Plan for the management of Natural Resources (PORN) and the Master Plan for Use and Management (PRUG). Specifically for 2018, it is foreseen:

- Approve the following sector programs: beekeeping, pineapple, coquina, public use, research.
- Initiate the preparatory work for the drafting of the Sectorial Program for the management of water resources in the Natural Area.
- Drafting a control and management program for ungulates and other species of the natural area.

6. The extension of the Doñana 2005 project for the riparian vegetation, for correcting erosion problems or for extending its scope to cultivated marshlands, should be undertaken.

As mentioned in the report for 2016, the Measure Program of the Guadalquivir Hydrological Plan, approved in January 2016, includes the development of the new Doñana 2021 project, which will favor the recovery of the masses associated with the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ES6150009 Doñana North and West. The aim of Doñana 2021 is to launch new hydrological restoration actions in the estuary, especially on the left bank of the Guadalquivir, as well as to improve the knowledge and management of the water masses in the natural environment of Doñana.

During 2017, preparatory work has begun for the implementation of some of these projects, although without major advances to date.

7. The possibility of developing cooperation with other deltas holding the European Diploma, such as the National Reserve of Camargue (France) and the Biosphere Reserve of the Danube Delta (Romania), should be explored.

The cooperation between Doñana and the Camargue continues. During 2017, a series of exchanges of experience with social agents of this space were held, in which topics of socioeconomic development, such as traditional exploitation, agriculture and ecological livestock, etc., have been discussed.

A European project of sustainable tourism has also been undertaken, which included other countries of the Mediterranean Arc outside the EU, which has not been completed due to the excessive number of participating countries and which will be redirected in 2018 to neighborhood modalities including Doñana, La Camarga and some other neighboring country.

Contacts have also been initiated with the authorities responsible for the management of the Danube Delta in order to concretize a new twinning with this protected area during 2018.

During the months of October and November, delegations from Turkey, interested in the management models of the Doñana World Heritage, have also been attended; among them, were staff of KIZILIMAK DELTA (BIRD PARADISE), a natural space with many similarities with Doñana.

2. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

In terms of personnel, the figures are similar to previous years with a workforce of approximately 113 workers and a similar number of staff depending on projects that support the management of the protected area. The investment during 2017 in the National Park has remained equally stable with a total investment of around 7 million Euros out of a total of approximately 12 million Euros. Below are the data for 2015 for the entire Natural Area

3. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There have been no changes in the boundaries of the national park

4. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

In June of 2017 there was a large wildfire in the Doñana Natural Park that destroyed approximately 10,300 hectares. This fire was controlled at a distance of approximately 7 km from the national park, without affecting in any way this protected area. Since then an important effort has been developed in

projects to maintain the safety of people and property in the burned area, minimize the effects of fire and properly prepare the restoration project.

25. GERMANY – BAYERISCHER WALD NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions attached

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. secure on a long-term basis the current policy of non-intervention in large areas of the park and continue the corresponding scientific monitoring;

The policy of large-scale non-intervention in the processes of nature with the goal “Leave nature to nature” and the ongoing monitoring of biodiversity and various environmental parameters have been secured on a long-term basis by the statutory regulations covering the Bayerischer Wald National Park and are being consistently implemented by the National Park Administration. No changes! The latest findings and research results were presented at the 2nd International Conference on Forests held on 26. – 29.04.2017 and discussed with experts.

2. pursue consequently a non-intervention policy for 75% of the forests in the older part of the park and progressively implement this policy in the newer part, thus working toward the agreed objective of achieving the same proportion throughout the national park by 2027;

As of 1st December 2017, the area of the non-intervention nature zone is being increased by 184 hectares by resolution of the Municipal National Park Committee. It now totals 16,477 hectares (68 %) of the whole National Park, with currently 6,986 hectares (66 %) in its extension area. With this step, the National Park Administration is consistently pursuing the mandate to continuously extend the area of the nature zone in a uniform manner by 2027 with the aim of developing 75 % of the National Park as a non-intervention zone.

3. continue targeted interventions to control the bark beetle development outside of the park, but limiting it strictly to the buffer zone (or “bark beetle management” zone);

Targeted measures to control and combat bark beetle development on the periphery of the National Park, as well as collaboration conducted in a spirit of trust with the authorities entrusted with management of the state forest and care of private woodlands in the vicinity, have reliably prevented infestations from spreading to neighbouring private woodlands. No changes! Since 2016 standardised bark beetle monitoring has been carried out in the woodlands along the borders of the National Park. The results provide the basis for a coordinated approach in forest protection measures along the borders inside and outside of the National Park

4. pursue and develop the dialogue with local communities; develop synergies with the Bayerischer Wald Nature Park and assess together the potential for the re-establishment of the Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the Sevilla Strategy;

Dialogue with the National Park local communities and associations could be further intensified and cooperation in the field of tourism development was further enhanced. There is currently little political will on local level to re-establish the “biosphere reserve” as a protection category.

5. pursue the collaboration with the Šumava National Park (Czech Republic) and develop further synergies; work towards a joint document “Vision for the Bohemian Forest” including all the protected areas adjacent to, or included in, both national parks as an umbrella document leading to a co-ordinated management and zoning system. Secure together a large joint core zone on both sides of the border;

The collaboration with the Šumava National Park that was resumed in a spirit of trust early in 2014 was further enhanced. This is demonstrated by the following examples:

- *The employment of a permanent member of staff responsible for German-Czech cooperation, on the basis of 50 % for the Bayerischer Wald National Park and 50 % for the Šumava National Park*
- *Reciprocal participation and cooperation in a wide range of activities and events:*

Issue of a bilingual publication on the value of dead wood in nature in the Bayerischer Wald National Park and the Šumava National Park

Meeting of the Czech and Bavarian environmental ministers and opening of a joint exhibition about the Bayerischer Wald and Šumava National Parks on 20th October 2017 at the Bavarian Representation in Prague.

Signing of a cooperation agreement for a joint path concept – particularly regarding an effective protection of the trans-border capercaillie population.

Regular meetings of the management teams of both national parks for discussing joint schemes and projects.

Reciprocal participation of the national park managers at the National Park Advisory Committee Meetings, publication and joint presentation of a wall calendar for 2018 and flyers with visitor programmes written in Czech language for guests from the Czech Republic.

6. maintain the public transportation “Igelbus” network, secure its financial sustainability and possibly develop it across the border in co-operation with Šumava National Park.

The continued operation of the “Igelbus” local public transport service is still secured by a mixed financing system with the participation of the National Park municipalities and the State of Bavaria. Timetables are coordinated with the local public transport service on the Czech side (green Šumava Buses). Extending the scope of the local public transport service on the Bavarian side and adding a cross-border electromobility component are still in preparation. No changes!

In 2016 the Bavarian Forest National Park and its Nature Park were jointly presented the Fahrtziel Natur Award (Destination Nature Award) of the Deutsche Bahn for the development of environmentally friendly mobility in the region.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Following a decision by the Council of Europe, a special appraisal of the plans to set up a wind farm in the vicinity of the National Park was carried out by an independent expert in February 2015. The result was then presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and forwarded to the Office of the Berne Convention with one condition and five recommendations.

In the meantime, two of the local communities that are affected by the wind turbine plans have instigated resolutions by the municipal parliaments, to the effect that the wind power plans were not to be further pursued. The Bavarian State Forests, as owners of part of the potential sites for wind turbines, and “Münchner Stadtwerke”, as potential principal investor, have publicly stated that they will no longer provide the areas for wind farms or will discontinue such plans until further notice. Irrespective of this, the town of Zwiesel is still taking court action against regional plans to establish the priority area 42 for wind power. *No change!*

26. SPAIN – ORDESA AND MONTE PERDIDO NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1.- Implement the National Park’s management plan in accordance with the land use and management plan (PRUG) drawn up in 2004 and Law no. 5/2007 of 3 April on the Network of National Parks.

The 2014 and 2015 reports detailed the procedure followed for the preparation and approval of the Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) from 2012 to April 2015, when the Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) was finally approved by Decree 49/2015, which came into force the day after being published in the Aragon Official Gazette on April 29th 2015. This approval satisfies the provisions of this recommendation.

2.- Finalise the feasibility study on moving the Pineta Valley municipal campsite and examine the available options.

As stated in the 2015 report, the camping area was definitively closed in 2011. In the place previously destined as a camping area, the Bielsa Council has prepared an area for parking. Actually, given that the aforementioned area is part of a mountain of public utility, the Provincial Service of Rural Development and Sustainability has included the vehicles parking area for recreational tourist use in the annual plan for the exploitation of the mountain. In addition, in 2015 the National Park restored the toilets of the old camping area, which were in poor condition, and has modernized them in order to serve to parking users and visitors of the National Park. These actions satisfy the provisions of this recommendation.

3.- Pursue the scheme to make the Añisclo Canyon open to pedestrians.

As stated in the earlier years reports, the 2015 Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) establishes the regulating access by the Añisclo Canyon.

This regulation is the result of the unacceptability of the proposed measures in the study on the risk of landslides and flooding from the environmental and landscape point of view, since they would radically transform the Añisclo Canyon, wasting a substantial portion of its natural values. This regulation is based

on the report of the Director of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, the agreement of the Trust Board (Junta Rectora) and also, the agreement of the Governing Board (Patronato) because of the non-viability of pedestrian access to the Añisclo Canyon. On the other hand, as stated in 2016 report, the satisfaction of the demand for pedestrian visit to the Añisclo Canyon is ensured by SIA1 and SA1 paths.

In April 2017 the second tunnel has suffered a worrying shift and cracks have appeared, so there is a risk of collapse that has forced the Hu-631 road to be cut. As an emergency action, the Puyarruego-Buerba way has been upgraded and improved and a parking lot has been installed in Vio so that visitors could leave their vehicles there and take a free shuttle to San Úrbez for visiting San Urbez hermitage and medieval bridge and walking SIA1 and SA1 paths. Nowadays, tunnel repair work and slope stabilization have begun.

4.- In collaboration with the Pyrenees National Park (France), implement the co-operation measures set out in the Agreement on joint activities of the two National Parks.

As stated in the previous annual reports, since 2012 the collaboration between the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park (OMPNP) and The Pyrenees National Park (PNP) has been carried out in three inter-related ways: The regular collaboration between both National Parks within the framework of the Charter of Cooperation, the joint work within the framework of The World Heritage Site Pyrenees Monte Perdido and the work related to POCTEFA.

As for the regular collaboration between the two parks under the Charter of Cooperation, it has been remained without any novelty. There is a fluent communication and collaboration keeps on going as usual.

Within the framework of the World Heritage Site Pyrenees Monte Perdido (WHSPMP), the last Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting was on March 14th 2016 in Huesca, as stated in the 2016 report. Although the French presidency has not called new meetings, the technical group (three members by country, consisting of a representative of the State, one of the Regional Administration -on the Spanish side, it is the Director of the OMPNP- and another one of local Administrations) has regularly met to track the development of the WHSPMP Management Plan and develop the POCTEFA projects corresponding to the previous and current periods. In addition, the French authorities have made a proposal in order to modify the governance of the WHSPMP which is currently being studied by the Spanish ones.

Finally, under the first POCTEFA, cross-border project in which the Pyrenees National Park and the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park participate, along with other partners as stated in the 2016, regular coordination meetings among its members took place. Likewise, as stated in the previous annual reports, several actions were included in this project, which has already been finalized.

A new POCTEFA project, whose partners are the Pyrenees National Park, the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, the General Council of Hihg Pyrenees, the Tourism Office of Gèdre-Gavarnie, the Region of Sobrarbe and, as team leader, the Municipality of Gèdre-Gavarnie, was accepted for the new programming period 2016/2019 and some of the planned actions have already begun. This new project consists of 5 lines of action: 1) Project management; 2) Communication; 3) Collection and valorisation of knowledge about the Pyrenees-Monte Perdido Site; 4) Creation of a cross-border tourist offer to discover the Pyrenees-Monte Perdido heritage; and 5) Raising awareness and sharing the exceptional universal value of the World Heritage Site

5.- Study the proposal to extend the Park and organise the consultation study.

In this respect there is nothing new about what was indicated in the earlier year reports. There is still no consensus in the area about a possible extension to the Bujaruelo Valley, mainly because of the current high quality of the naturalness and conservation of the present National Park which would weaken with the incorporation of new territory whereby currently runs a cross-border high voltage power line.

Notwithstanding this, one of the ten specific objectives that the 2015 PRUG contemplates is promoting the extension of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone in the future. For that reason, the PRUG's programme of activities No. 9, derived from the above mentioned specific objective, counts on a guideline mentioned in the 2016 report, which involve two activities also mentioned in that report.

Notwithstanding the aforesaid, as stated in the 2016 report, it is necessary to emphasise that Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone coincide with several spaces of the Nature Network 2000 (SPA and SCI). The National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone also coincide with three UNESCO figures: the Biosphere Reserve of Ordesa-Viñamala, Sobrarbe Geopark and World Heritage Site Pyrenees-Mont Perdu, also coincident with the Cultural Landscape Pyrenees-Mont Perdu. The aforesaid spaces of Natura 2000 Network as well as the above-mentioned UNESCO figures extend beyond the limits of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No modifications exist in management concerning aspects of environment, staff and finances.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No boundary changes. Maps of the other protection areas that include the national Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone were attached in the 2014 report: Network Nature 2000, Biosphere Reserve, World Heritage and Geo Park Site.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Regarding the request of the Group of Specialists of the European Diploma, the 2015 report listed the ways that the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park publicizes the European Diploma logo.

On the other hand, in September 2016 the National Park received an expert from the Council of Europe (Mr. Olivier Biber) for on the spot expert appraisal of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park for the renewal of the Diploma in 2018. Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas on 8 March 2017, the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas has made the proposal of renewal the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, until June 2028, attaching three recommendations.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

The 2017 data are presented as a continuation of the tasks that have been performed in the PNOMP since 2013, which was the last time a detailed report of the inventory and monitoring of natural resources of the National Park of Ordesa and Monte Perdido was submitted. (see pictures in the annex).

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated

The reduction in the ice surface area and thickness of the Monte Perdido glacier due to recent climate change must be highlighted.

In addition to this, it is necessary to mention the slope detachment and slide in the Añisclo Canyon, which has caused a shift in the second tunnel of the Añisclo road, as aforesaid in the explanation of the 3rd recommendation.

Regarding the abiotic environment, the following monitoring protocols have been carried out: 1) Monitoring of climatic variables in 5 meteorological stations of the. Periodic maintenance of the stations and monthly download of the climatic data are carried out. These data are sent to researchers at the Faculty of Geography of the Saragossa University for review and validation. 2) Monitoring of the hydrological network of the Park, including physical-chemical parameters of the main springs of the Park and river flow at the river mouth of the Arazas. Isotopic analyzes are also performed. This work is carried out in collaboration with researchers from the Geological and Mining Institute of Spain and the Autonomous University of Madrid. 3) Temperature profiles in the Marboré Lake with thermistors at several water depths in collaboration with the Geological and Mining Institute of Spain and the Pyrenean Institute of Ecology (CSIC).

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

The monitoring commissioned annually to the public company Sarga was carried out on threatened flora in the population nuclei of *Carex bicolor* and *Vicia argentea*. *Carex bicolor* is a characteristic species of the habitat of priority community interest 7240 -Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae (= Caricion maritimae), (Directive 97/62/EC). Their population nuclei of Góriz and Carriata have been monitored. *Vicia argentea* is an endemic legume to the central Pyrenees, which has very few population nuclei in its distribution area; in the National Park the population of the Mondarruego peak scree has been monitored. In addition, monitoring of the following species has been carried out by the National Park personnel: *Cypripedium calceolus*, *Galantus Nivalis*, *Petrocoptis crassifolia*, *Pinguicula alpina*, *Corallorhiza trifida* and also the fruiting monitoring of beech, holm oaks and gall oaks.

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

As aforesaid, some of the tasks associated to wildlife monitoring has been annually commissioned to the public company Sarga. In 2017 they have been the following ones: 1) Pyrenean frog (*Rana pyrenaica*) tracking. It is a species of endemic amphibian only present in the calcareous mountains of the central Pyrenees with a very reduced geographical distribution, mostly in the Aragonese Pyrenees, which includes the great majority of its known population nuclei. In the National Park, since 2007 and annually, the abundance, occupation and annual reproduction of 34 localities of the species have been continuously monitored with the intention of controlling their conservation status and detecting possible changes in their distribution area in the Park. The Ordesa valley houses the smallest population of this species, and it is more abundant in the neighboring Añisclo and Escuaín valleys. 2) Alpine passerines. This task includes the monitoring and marking of alpine passerines, mainly alpine sparrows (*Montifringilla nivalis*) and alpine accentors (*Prunella collaris*) in their breeding areas located at lower elevations in the park. In

addition, censuses were also carried out of the main colonies of alpine chough (*Phyrocorax graculus*), located in Añisclo (Sestrales chasm) and Escuaín (Grajas chasm). 3) Detectability and occupation. This task is performed in the lab and it analyzes the series of field data generated with the selected bioindicators to carry out the ecological follow-up actions in the Park. The analyzes allow adjusting the sampling efforts of each wildlife monitoring program: Pyrenean frog, Pyrenean lizard and snowcap fundamentally. So, the effectiveness and efficiency of the sampling program is improved. 4) Monitoring of lepidoptera. Since 2012, a monitoring program based on common day lepidoptera has been implemented (Butterflies Monitoring Scheme), and it has been consolidated in recent years following the monitoring methodology developed in several European countries, and taking advantage of the bioindicative nature of them. It began with two routes and it was extended in 2014 to a total of six ones distributed throughout the National Park. The field work is done several times throughout the season and informs of the lepidopteran community presence, abundance and possible changes in the composition of species. 5) Monitoring and census of predators. During the last five years, a series of photo-trapping initiatives have been carried out annually, aimed at assessing the possible use of these methodologies for the monitoring of the mesomamifers (carnivores and ungulates). These tasks have allowed the study of the presence, composition and abundance and habits of the species in more than 40 different places, distributed along the different habitats of the Park. 6) Sampling of aquatic micromammals and strategies to eliminate exotic fish species, such as those carried out this year with brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), as we are trying to eradicate their only population nucleus known in the Park (see 10.1.1)

In addition, ungulates tracking has been carried out by the Park staff, with surveys of chamois and roe deer in spring and autumn. Also monitoring of bearded vultures at both the supplementary feeding point and the breeding units

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

The whole Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park and a part of its Preipheral Protection Zone belong to the Pyrenees-Monte Perdido World Heritage Site, cross border between Spain and France. It was selected on the basis of three cultural and two natural criteria.

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

The Nacional Park was a partner of the PMPPM Interreg-POCTEFA projet (2011-2015) and also is a partner of the PMPPM 2 Interreg-POCTEFA projet (2016-2019), as stated in the explanation of the 4th recommendation of the present and previous annual reports. In the framework of this 2nd projet, Carduso cottage has been restored in the Añisclo sector (see pictures in the annex) and another one is planned to be restored in each of the other sectors of the National Park.

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

No changes.

8. Education and scientific interest

In 2015, the training course for guides of the National Parks Network of Spain was held for the first time in the National Park. The course has been repeated in 2016 and 2017. The course consists of 2 phases: the first one, common on-line for all the National Parks and the second, face-to-face in each National Park.

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

4 Visitor Centers (Torla, Tella (2 buildings), and Fanlo); 3 offices (Escalona, Bielsa and Torla); 3 Information points (Ordesa Prairie, Escuaín and San Úrbez); 1 Visitor center adapted for sensory disabled people which opens on demand. Leaflet and map of the National Park; 4 leaflets on paths, one for each sector; Guide of the National Park paths net (book and map). Geological guide of the National Park. Leaflet and map of the Ordesa-Viñamala Biosphere Reserve; Leaflet and map of the Pyrenees- Monte Perdido World Heritage Site.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

The number of visitors to the National Park in the four-year period 2013-2016 has been slightly increasing around 600,000 per year. Specifically, the annual number of visitors has been 589,400 in 2013, 590,050 in 2014, 598,950 in 2015 and 608,950 in 2016. By sectors, the most frequented is Ordesa and its annual distribution has been for the same four-year period 203,650, 203,300, 208.650 and 214,850 visitors respectively. The Pineta sector has received 174,700, 174,450, 178,150 and 180,800 visitors. The Añisclo sector has been visited by 171,950, 173,650, 172,650 and 176,050 people. And the Escuaín sector has received 39,100, 38,950.39,500 and 37,250 visitors. (See graphic in the annex)

Finally, during the same period, 240,622, 250,100, 286,922 and 293,724 people visited some of the visitor centers, offices and information points. In 2017(from January to October), 223.192 people have visited them.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

The National Park considers as a special group of visitors those coming from the Saragossa University or other university centers (studies in environmental sciences). The National Park receives 6 /8 groups per year. The National Park also receives 4/6 groups per year coming from Vocational Training Centers in studies of natural resource management.

In 2016 the National Park hosted the annual congress of the Spanish Association of Municipalities of National Parks (AMUPARNA). The Park was also visited in 2016 by a large representation of mayors, councilors and businessmen coming from the Sierra de las Nieves Biosphere Reserve (next National Park to be declared in 2018), which was interested on seeing the compatibility of the coexistence of a National Park and a Biosphere Reserve. Finally, the National Park hosted the II Congress of Spanish Biosphere Reserves in 2017.

8.2. Scientific research

8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

The 2017 data are presented as a continuation of the work done since 2013: 3 projects of National Parks Agency about Global Change, 2 projects about archaeology by the Saragossa University and the Autonomous University of Barcelona and 2 projects about speleology by speleological Badalona and Otxola groups (see more detailed information in the annex).

8.2.2. Scientific publications

4 by Pyrenean Ecology Institute and 6 by the Geological and Mining Institute of Spain (see more detailed information in the annex).

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

Vulnerability: (threats) Fire (potential, indistinct); reduction of the Monte Perdido Glacier (real, external because of climate change); scrub increasing in pasture areas (real, external of decreasing livestock); reduction of water resources (potential, external because of climate change); population loss and demographic aging (real, external); seasonal overfrequency in high mountain(real, external)

Protection status: National Park (Category II IUCN); Pyrenean Glaciers Natural Monument; Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO); World Heritage (UNESCO); Cultural Landscape (UNESCO); Geopark (UNESCO); Natura 2000 (SPA + SCI).

Ownership: Public (municipalities, commonwealths and Region) 14.763,55 has; Private 928,54 has

Documentation: in the Park there are 15 of the 27 Spanish terrestrial natural systems that the Law of National Parks establishes that they must be represented in the National Parks Network.

35 habitats of Community interest.

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) approved by Decree 49/2015, which came into force on April 30th 2015.

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

No changes.

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

The zoning is defined in the PRUG. The Reserve Zone has increased from 770 to 800.31 hectares on the land surface (6 areas). As a novelty, the entire subsoil of the National Park has become a Reserve Zone (15.696,20 hectares)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

Management plans: Each specific objective of the PRUG corresponds to a program of actions, broken down into general guidelines, specific guidelines and concrete actions. The programs are the following: 1) ensure the maintenance of processes and the conservation of natural resources; 2) promote research and long-term monitoring of natural resources, as well as the development of studies related to human activities and the effects of management; 3) restore the resources that have been subjected to any alteration that has generated its degradation; 4) favor the conservation and recovery of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage; 5) develop the system of public use and the ordering of visits in a manner compatible with conservation; 6) promote education, divulgation and public knowledge of the geological, ecological, cultural and landscape values. 7) favor the socioeconomic and community development of the Park's surroundings, with the integration of the population in the activities generated by the Park; 8) enhance the relationship with the National Parks Network and spaces protected by other protection frames in the regional, national and international scopes; 9) promote the extension of the Park and its peripheral protection zone in the future; and 10) actions for the structure of the management team, establishing an efficient administration system.

Budget: The 2016 budget was € 3,273,109.37, broken down into Chapters I, II, VI and VII as shown in the table. (see table in the annex)..

Personnel: The staff of the Park consists of 33 people: 1 Director/Curator, 1 head of conservation team, 1 head of equipment for public use, 1 head of sustainable development and works team, 1 head of administratives, 2 administratives, 1 chief of maintenance, 4 guides / informers, 1 head of rangers, 13 rangers, 1 driver and 6 peons. In addition, temporary personnel is hired for support information, monitoring or technical tasks to complete a total of 86,09 workers per year.

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

Actions about control and eradication of brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) in the valley of Ordesa. It is an invasive exotic salmonid that was introduced into the Arazas river in the last century to encourage its

sport fishing. As a result of the samplings, a total of 277 brook trouts were captured (sizes between 4 and 20 cm), as well as 137 trouts (*Salmo trutta*) of similar sizes. Brook trouts were eliminated and trouts released into the river.

As earlier years, in 2017 the acclimation of 5 bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) chickens has been done in Escuaín from March to July. Three of them were released in the Europe Peaks National Park in august.

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

Fires: 4 water ponds in the National Park and its peripheral zone. The Provincial Service of Rural Development and Sustainability of Huesca manages the means of prevention and extinction of fires, including what affects the National Park. In the surroundings of the Park, there are 3 ground and 1 helitransported fire fighting teams, 5 surveillance points and 2 fire engines.

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

Ordesa Prairie: prohibited access in private vehicle during easter, summer and the National Holiday Day; access by shuttles from the Torla Visitor Center parking lot during the aforesaid periods.

Añisclo Canyon: In periods of high attendance circulation only in direction of entrance to the National Park, while circulation to exit by the Puyarruego-Buerba asphalted track. As stated in the explanation of the 3rd recommendation, in April 2017 the Añisclo road (Hu-631) has been to be closed because of the risk of collapse of the 2nd tunnel and the access to San Úrbez was ensured by a shuttle system from a parking lot installed in Vio. Nowadays, tunnel repair work and slope stabilization have begun.

National Park paths' net: 6 interpretative and selfguided paths (SIA net) with interpretative panels; 32 selfguided paths (SA net); 19 other paths in the national Park (O net) and 17 peripheral paths (Peri net).

5 parking lots (Torla Visitor Center, Ordesa Prairie, Pineta, La Tella and San Úrbez), plus the Vio temporary one in 2017.

30 view points.

Signposting: 50 interpretive tables, 17 plates at the entrances, 340 signs on paths, 117 plates on regulations, 66 warning signs, 69 service information plates, 7 plaques about recognitions to the Park (Biosphere Reserve, World Heritage, Geopark, European Diploma) and 8 showcases for meteorological information and adverse phenomena.

Fencing: supplementary feeding point fence; 3 fences for exclusion plots to study the evolution of vegetation without grazing cattle; 1 fence for draught-net patches; 7 fenced weather stations; 4 fenced water ponds for fires; 7 access control barriers for vehicles.

21 facilities located between 700 m and 3,100 m altitude (cables, plugs, handrails, chains, etc).

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

Bird observatory with interpretative panels near the supplementary feeding point for beard vultures (*Gypaetus Barbatus*). Acclimation point of beard vulture chickens from non-viable nests born in La Alfranca's recovery center. Seven weather stations. Two flow gauges.

10.1.5. Waste management

Installation of a biological toilet in San Úrbez (Añisclo sector). The garbage collection team of the Park deposits the waste in the containers that the Comarca of Sobrarbe (supramunicipal local entity) has distributed in the municipalities of the area. At the Torla Visitor Center, waste paper, glass and plastic are separated from the rest of the garbage and deposited in specific containers.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

Installation of solar panels in the information points of Escuaín, Pineta and Ordesa Prairie.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

A head of unit/governess job has been removed in 2014. Two jobs of the administrative auxiliary scale (level D) have been reclassified to jobs of the general administrative scale (level C) in 2017.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

The environmental coordinator job (head of rangers) was occupied in 2012 after being vacant for years. A ranger job (level C) has been created in 2014 for the Añisclo sector in 2014. A ranger job in the Ordesa sector (level D) has been removed in 2017 and a ranger job (level C) has been created to replace it.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

The PRUG defines the structure of the National Park, dependent on the General Directorate of Sustainability. It is formed by the Director-Curator of the National Park, on whom depend the Conservation Team, the Sustainable Development and Works Team, the Public Use Team, the Administration Bureau and the National Park Rangers Brigade.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

The Provincial Service of Rural Development and Sustainability of Huesca processes the sanctioning files of the National Park, based on the denunciations made by the rangers of the National Park and the Service of Nature Protection of the Civil Guard (SEPRONA). In 2016, 169 denunciations were processed and 142 sanctions were imposed. In 2017, 132 denunciations were processed and 126 sanctions were imposed.

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The award increases the prestige of the National Park. The fulfillment of the recommendations also implies the implementation of improvement actions in the National Park

27. SWEDEN – STORE MOSSE NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions are listed in the Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)14 on the renewal of the European Diploma.

No conditions are listed in the Resolution (88)11 on the award of the European Diploma.

Therefore, there are no conditions to be explained.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. *Hydrological survey and completion of management plan:* The new equipment for measuring the water levels in the park that were installed in 2016 are working fine. They give us much better data on the hydrological situation. The data have been the basis for planning of the improved management in lake Kävsjön (se p. 2 below)

The management plan and updated regulations was decided by the Swedish EPA in November 2015.

The task with the new, improved and modern management is therefore concluded. During 2017 we have continued the work with fulfill all that is stated in the plan.

2. *Changing inflow of water to Lakes Häradsösjön and Kävsjön:* No changes in inflow have been recorded during 2017 but the situation is still not favorable for the birdlife or the habitats in or around the lakes. The new management plan includes better management actions for the water flow in and out of the lakes. During 2017 we continued working on planning management actions. We have also conducted information events for different groups of stakeholders. This important work will continue in 2018. We have requested special funds at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency for this work.

3. *Monitor the situation of bark beetles (Ips typographus):* The bark beetles are not a problem in the park or in the surrounding forests any more. No actions have been undertaken other than a constant readiness for new storms or bark beetle (or other insects) infestations.

4. *Promote scientific research:* We actively cooperate with universities in Sweden and Europe but the interest from their part is still low. We have limited resources to conduct scientific research on our own so cooperation with other organizations is desirable. Store Mosse is part of the nationwide research projected conducted by the SEPA but it so far only covers certain habitats in the park. We try to be open for ideas when different universities contact us.

5. *Pursue the work on extending the protected area:* All remaining issues regarding land ownership are completed. All land within the park is state owned. All the remaining land-owning issues that were not solved in 1982 when the park was established are now solved and the land is protected as nature reserve. The land within these nature reserves are the same hydrological system as the National park.

2. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The funding situation for 2017 is really good. The grants for managing the national park in all its aspects have continue to increase. We have therefore been able to increase the management of both the nature habitats and the arrangements for visitors. We expect the funding to be at same high level during 2018. In 2018 there is a general election in Sweden so the future after 2018 is very unclear.

One park ranger ended his employment in January but in a relatively short period of time we could find a very good replacement.

3. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

As stated above, all the remaining issues regarding land ownership are solved. All land within the park boundaries are state owned, as it should be according to Swedish law.

After these corrections there are no unresolved difficulties concerning boundaries of the National park.

4. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Since the financial situation for Store Mosse national park is good we have been able to work on many different aspects of the park.

These are some examples:

The works we started in 2016 with extending our buildings for management (i.e. garage, workshop, storage etc.) are concluded. It really improves the situation for the park rangers.

We have done extensive management of the old pasture landscapes at Södra Svänö and Lövö to keep them as grasslands and prevent ingrowth of trees or that the areas become very wet.

We have started work with a new system of sorting waste from visitors. It will include new bins and be concluded in 2018.

We have started work with replacing the old camp fire sites with new ones with better and more fire proof design.

The second trail for bicycles to reduce the need of bicycling on the main road that have heavy traffic was inaugurated in 2017. The trails have been built with a lot of work from volunteers and partly financed from the local municipalities. It has increased the local awareness of the parks existence.

We have continued the large project with implementing the new Swedish brand for national parks in our park. This year focus has been on a new information booklet, trail signs (with more than 250 different signs) and of course the large marker of the National parks in Sweden, the Golden Crown. It is placed near naturum and the large bird watching tower and are has easy access. The crown was mounted with helicopter in the middle of the summer, a well visited event. The project will be ongoing until 2018.

A nature trail for children was built during the winter and inaugurated on European Day of Parks in May. It is called Skogstrollens stig (the Trail of the wooden trolls) and focus on nature values in the park and how one as a visitor can protect them.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated

The situation for birdlife in the lake Kävsjön and its surrounding wetlands are slowly deterioration due to lack of management for the last 60 years. This is anticipated and will be corrected with the planned restoration project, see p. 2.2.

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

The situation for flora in the lake Kävsjön and its surrounding wetlands are slowly deterioration due to lack of management for the last 60 years. This is anticipated and will be corrected with the planned restoration project, see p. 2.2.

The situation for flora in the two pasture areas (Svänö and Lövö) are increasing mainly because of the management activities such as restoration of ditches around an inside the pastures. Badly management ditches caused the area to get wet that makes it less favorable for grazing.

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

The situation for birdlife in the lake Kävsjön and its surrounding wetlands are slowly deterioration due to lack of management for the last 60 years. This is anticipated and will be corrected with the planned restoration project, see p. 2.2.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

The new management plan has an increased focus on cultural heritage. We will therefore increase the information about how humans have affected the area and what remains can be seen. We have also increased the management and care of these remains.

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

A lot of discussion about tourism and how the national parks can be a resource for local companies are happening on central and local level. Store Mosse is part of a local project to find and educate local entrepreneurs that can use the national park. Such use must of course follow the regulations.

With the plans for increased management for Lake Kävsjön we are seeing increased likeness for the park among neighbors and different stakeholders (such as land owner groups).

One local society has during the last three years been very interested in helping the park, mainly with building bicycle trails. This has increased the popularity of the park.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

We are currently working on implementing the new brand for the Swedish National Parks in every aspect. It covers everything from information signs, trail signs, trail markings to information booklets. The project ends 2018.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

We have just analyzed the statistics from our visitor monitor system for 2017 and it shows a significant increase of about 30 %. The park now has a total visitor number of 133 000 visits per year. Most of these visitors come during the summer months and it is our goal to increase the length of the visiting season.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

New trail signs have been installed in all trail junctions.

Trails and boardwalks are continually repaired, with around 50 km of trails this is an everlasting task.

The bicycle trails are now complete and it is possible to bike to the park from Värnamo and Hillerstorp without using roads with heavy traffic.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

10.1.5. Waste management

We need to replace all infrastructure for visitor's waste management but the local municipality are about to change the regulations. We will continue the project during 2018.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

We are currently using electric power from wind turbines but we have applied at the SEPA for funds to install solar power on the roof the visitor's center.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

The economic situation for the park management is for the time being very good. We have during 2017 received more than enough funds for the management. We have been able to invest in both extensive care of the park but also in machines equipment and materials. The situation looks the same for 2018. After the general election in Sweden late 2018 the future is very unclear.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The influence is of course positive but I think the award is more recognized and valued in the central parts of Europe than in the Nordic countries. We tend to value the award as a national park higher. We need to inform more about the award and the network of awarded areas across Europe.

28. SWEDEN – BULLERÖ AND LÅNGVIKSSKÄR NATURE RESERVES

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The management plans for the two nature reserves have not yet been updated.
2. Talks with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency about establishing the area as a national park are due to restart during the year.
3. The proliferation of toxic algae in the archipelago is being assessed on a regular basis.
4. The sources of disturbances in the reserves and the bird sanctuaries are being supervised.
The efforts to limit the mink population have increased.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The management plans for the two nature reserves have not yet been updated.
2. Talks with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency about establishing the area as a national park are due to restart during the year.
3. The proliferation of toxic algae in the archipelago is being assessed on a regular basis.
4. The sources of disturbances in the reserves and the bird sanctuaries are being supervised.

The efforts to limit the mink population have increased.

- 3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

A new person has been recruited to replace the retirement of the present ranger. During 12 months they are working side by side.

- 4. Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes.

- 5. Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The Diploma logo and text about the European Diploma for Protected areas has been used in the information about Bullerö (Bullero.se) and Långviksskär (<http://skargardsstiftelsen.se/omrade/langviksskar/natur/>) during 2017.

29. ITALY – MONTECRISTO ISLAND NATURE RESERVE

- 1. Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions were attached to the renewal

- 2. Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. in co-operation with the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, finalise and implement the Territorial Information System (TIS) for the planning of management initiatives;

All the informations about the reserve are stored in an Information System, used for the management activities. The TIS has been implemented with 2017 data on the harvesting of seeds and cuttings

2. under the TIS, map the vegetation types present in the reserve, and in particular quantify the spread and distribution of *Ailanthus* populations on the island with a view to control measures;

The *Ailanthus* has been almost totally eradicated thanks to the Project LIFE 08/NAT/IT/000353 “Montecristo2010”. Monitoring activities are ongoing and will be carried on until 2019 at least, according to the After Life conservation program. More information can be obtained visiting the project website www.montecristo2010.it The *Ailanthus* map was the first step for a working plan for the invasive eradication, and was one of the LIFE project deliveries. During 2017 the effectiveness of *Ailanthus* eradication has been carried out and the remaining sprouts or seedling have been eliminated, especially in the Lecci Valley. Such monitoring activities will be implemented at least until 2019. In addition according to the Life Project Resto Con LIFE 13/NAT/IT/000471 an eradication plan for other IAS has been drawn, see n. 8 below. More information can be obtained visiting the project website www.restoconlife.eu

3. limit the spread of *Ailanthus* as far as possible through selective systems and explore the possibility of eradicating it;

See above n. 2

4. pursue efforts to regenerate the population of oak trees by monitoring and conducting regular checks on their development;

An action implemented in Life project mentioned above included the building of fences to preserve natural vegetation from goats. In these areas many helm oak seedlings have been planted. The acorns for seedlings production were collected from the old trees in Montecristo. Also a collection for ex situ conservation is maintained in the National Center for Biodiversity Conservation, together with other important species such as *Arbutus unedo*, *Myrtus communis*, *Fraxinus ornus*, *Dryopteris tyrrena*. Another ongoing LIFE project, LIFE13 nat/it/000471 RESTO CON LIFE, includes action for vegetation protection and creation of seed banks for Montecristo species provenances. During 2017 seeds have been collected and further plantations have been implemented in the fences, and the effectiveness of fencing has been verified. Large holm oak regeneration has been recorded in the fences, so that the only way to save oaks in Montecristo is to rescue them from the goat's grazing, surely with fencing, and maybe by culling goats. In 2017 other species have been harvested, such as *Phyllirea* sp., *Arbutus unedo*, *Juniperus phoenicia*. In addition has been carried out the construction of about 1500 meters of fences more

5. maintain the island's goat population at its current level and take steps to protect the other components of the ecosystem which are under particular threat from the goat population;

Again in project LIFE Montecristo2010 special action for goat preservation were performed. The population census has been carried out in 2017 as well and the results show that the wild goat population amount is quite stable. Surveys are underway in order to draw up the goat management plan as foreseen in the LIFE project, LIFE13 nat / en / 000471 RESTO CON LIFE

6. continue to apply the quota of 1 000 visitors a year recommended when the European Diploma was awarded and pursue the feasibility study on setting up a remote surveillance system; maintain arrangements for supervising groups of visitors;

The limit was met and a remote surveillance system was settled by the Coast Guard, for illegal income prevention. During 2015 a specific surveillance system has been settled, with three cameras and a communicating system sending images and videos to the local office and also to remote stations for the effectiveness of the control. In 2017, together with the the National Park, we have proceeded to the revision of the camera installations. Visitors are guided by Forest personnel and are not allowed to go in the tracks alone. A patrol of two forest officers has been on the island from April to November, preserving from illegal income and fishing. They are equipped with a boat so they can move along the coast. Further surveillance is granted by a larger boat of the national forest corps.

7. pursue discussion and investigations with a view to replacing the diesel generator and using renewable energy sources on the island;

During 2016 a power generation system with photovoltaic panels has been installed. Even if the position and the orientation of the panels do not allow a complete autonomy, the production of energy with the diesel generator has been drastically reduced, especially during the summer months. Thanks to the National Park collaboration, in 2017 some changes to the system have occurred in order to upgrade the charge capacity of the accumulators (batteries) and maximize the use of renewable energy.

8. gain more in-depth knowledge of the flora and fauna;

The above mentioned LIFE projects allowed gaining such knowledge. Also in 2017 exploitations have been carried out in order to quantify the spreading of invasive species such as *Oxalys pes-caprae* and

Lepidium didimum. In 2017 have been carried on all eradicating activities against aliens and invasive floristic species.

9. inform the Secretariat of the progress made in securing approval of the reserve's management plan by the Tuscan regional authorities.

The National Park's Management Plan has been adopted in 2010.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

In spite of reducing funding, the management of the island has been performed in a quite satisfactory level.

As already communicated in 2016, the National Forest Corps has joined with the "Arma dei Carabinieri, with the creation of the "Comando Unità per la Tutela Forestale, ambientale ed agroalimentare Carabinieri", with the "Raggruppamento Carabinieri per al Biodiversità" part of it. Surveillance by military personnel and management activity has been maintained at previous levels. The planned activities have been regularly carried out. In 2017 has been enacted a law that provides temporary workers stabilization, that will surely lead to important positive effects on the management activities.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes reported

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The European Diploma's logo is exposed near the landing site of Montecristo Island Natural Reserve, so it can be seen by every visitor upon arrival.

In addition, near the little museum the flag delivered last May in Pisa San Rossore celebrating the 50 years of EDPA is presented.

Along the Island's paths, where visitors are conducted, several signs recalling the EDPA are placed.

In any official communication on Montecristo Natural Reserve the EDPA is mentioned as a value attribute to the reserve, highlighting the logo

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated.

No significant changes or deterioration in the environment have occurred

- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes.

No significant changes have occurred

- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds.

No significant changes have occurred

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage.

No changes have occurred

- 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage.

No changes have occurred

- 7.2. Socio-economic context

- 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context.

No changes have occurred

8. Education and scientific interest

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy

- 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.).

The refurbishment of the historical building called “Casotto dei pescatori” settled in Cala Maestra, are almost finished. This structure will be functional as support in welcoming visitors and as little center for environmental education activity. These works are part of the LIFE project, LIFE13 NAT/IT/000471 RESTO CON LIFE. In 2018, together with the National Park, will be carried out the refurbishment of the museum. In addition new educational panels with naturalistic details and correct behavior to be maintained in the area are under construction.

- 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Guided visits are limited in 1000 visitors a year, up to 50 people groups, from April to October.

Visitors can choose one of the three proposed itineraries starting from Cala Maestra: Belvedere, Monastero and Grotta del Santo. In 2017 we had 607 visit requests, among which 19 have been authorized for a total number of 910 people. Tours are guided by military personnel working on the island who will also watch over the correct behavior to be taken in the natural reserve.

- 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.).

March 15 2017, took place the visit for the renewal of the European Diploma by Mr Olivier Biber together with Ten.Col. Giovanni Quilghini and App.Sc. Riccardo Micheloni from the “Reparto Carabinieri per la Biodiversità di Follonica”; Dr Giampiero Sammuri, National Park president and Franca Zanichelli, National Park director; Dr Nicola Baccetti ISPRA researcher and Dr Paolo Sposimo expert from “NEMO Ambiente”.

- 8.2. Scientific research

- 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

- Planned activities within the LIFE project, LIFE13 NAT/IT/000471 RESTO CON LIFE
- Florence University – Biology department. Four-year research project on FLORA, VEGETATION and HABITAT worthy of conservation in Montecristo island.
- Updates on the aquatic coleopterofauna knowledge in Tuscan Archipelago. (Coleoptera) Saverio ROCCHI^{1,a}, Fabio TERZANI¹, Fabio CIANFERONI^{1,2}, Leonardo FORBICIONI³, Rossano PAPI¹ & Lucia PIZZOCARO;
- Notulae to the Italian native vascular flora: 3. Italian Botanist 3: 29-48 (05 May 2017) Collections of the Natural History Museum, Zoological Section «La Specola» of the University of Florence, XXVII. Crustacea, Classes Branchiopoda, Ostracoda G Innocenti - Atti Soc. Tosc. Sci. Nat., Mem., Ser., 2009 - stsn.it;
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9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations.

No changes have occurred

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

No changes have occurred

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve).

No changes have occurred

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna. Fences of priority habitat portions have been carried on in order to protect them from goat grazing.

In the enclosures, native species produced from seeds collected on the island were planted. In 2018 will be completed the realization of a surface, near the museum, dedicated to the flora conservation and with educational purposes

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime).

No changes have occurred

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.).

No changes have occurred

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities).

In past years has been equipped a structure to welcome researchers and students engaged in their traineeships or studies for the degree tesi. The Island has been equipped with PC and GPS expeditious for field surveys

10.1.5. Waste management.

Waste is collected separately and periodically transported on continent where is disposed according to current legislation. During the renovation works of buildings, demolition waste has been disposed together with other material transported by the sea and periodically collected.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems.

Since 2016, a solar electric power plant with accumulators has been active. The buildings are equipped with solar system for the production of domestic hot water. The heating in the caretaker's house is powered by wood.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made.

See Point 3. The joint between the State Forestry Corps into the Carabinieri arm did not occur any changes in management

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made.

No changes occurred. A surveillance service by military personnel is active during the year from April to November. Connections to the continent for management needs are ensured by a military vessel

10.2.3. Internal policing measures.

No changes have occurred

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action.

Through years, violations of the regulations regarding access and high penalties have been ascertained. No damage occurred

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The European Diploma for Protected Areas is considered essential to preserve conservation choices. Particularly as regards visits regulation, limitation of allowed activities, flora and fauna habitat conservation advices. The presence of the Diploma ensures greater attention towards conservation, in order to better face growing trends in touristic development.

30. GERMANY – WURZACHER RIED NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions for extension of the European Diploma

No conditions have been imposed.

2. Recommendations for extension of the European Diploma

Recommendation 1:

The Peat Museum on the edge of the nature reserve will represent a new attraction. It aims at providing information about issues of nature conservation, and install suitable facilities, in particular a small tower affording panoramic views. The funding for this should preferably be raised on the basis of a co-partnership arrangement.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 1:**

The Peat Museum with the Peat Railway and Peat Educational Trail has evolved into an attraction and an important and well-attended building block of the educational work carried out in the Wurzacher Ried, with annual visitor numbers reaching again around 15,000 in the year under review. The Peat Museum is run on a voluntary basis by the local culture and heritage preservation society “Wurzen” with the support of the city of Bad Wurzach and the Wurzacher Ried Nature Conservation Centre.

For the planned construction of a viewing tower in connection with guided tours of visitors in the Haidgau peat works, the city of Bad Wurzach has ordered investigations of the foundation in the peat bed to create a planning basis. The Nature Conservation Centre is examining if and to which extent such a project can be funded in the framework of the LEADER promotion program “Württembergisches Allgäu”. In addition, the city of Bad Wurzach is examining if and how far State subsidies from the tourism support budget can be appropriated to this project.

Recommendation 2:

The scale of projects performed by a small permanent staff team is considerable. The special endeavours undertaken to provide guided tours and to host school classes deserve to be supported. In consultation with the school authorities, ways and means must be found to maintain this support.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 2:**

In the Nature Conservation Centre Wurzacher Ried, just under 300 events and projects are executed every year, which are attended by around 22,000 visitors. Around 80 projects in particular are aimed at children, youngsters and school classes within the framework of the nature study curriculum and these are attended by around 1,500 participants.

Contact has been made with the responsible school administration with a view to arranging for an increase in staffing for the Nature Conservation Centre team, and intensive talks aimed at improving the cooperation with the school administration authorities are held. A study group deployed in the reporting

year on the Regierungspräsidium level with the target to improve the cooperation between schools and extra-curricular learning sites and meetings on the level of both competent State Ministries resulted in a closer exchange, but it was so far not possible to obtain concrete results in view of personnel reinforcement.

Recommendation 3:

The road section of the B465 which cuts through the reed is no longer a major problem thanks to the measures undertaken. In the medium or long term, as a result of the demolition of the road, road traffic should give way entirely to pedestrian and cycling traffic.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 3:**

The recommendations of the Council of Europe concerning the B 465 have been successfully implemented meanwhile. In addition, the road section crossing the reed has been given rank number 5 in the list of the most important cross-linking sections in the “state-wide concept of re-linking of roads in Baden-Württemberg” of the Ministry for Transport of Baden-Württemberg”. Against this background, the RegierungspräsidiumTübingen – department 44 [road planning] in technical co-ordination with department 56 [nature conservation and landscape planning] has commissioned in the previous period under review a feasibility study for further-reaching nature-conserving improvement in this road section. In the period under review, all kinds of surveys and site examinations were carried out and appropriate proposals for technical solutions were examined. The results will presumably be submitted in the coming year.

Recommendation 4:

The areas planted with maize on the slopes around the moor are to be restricted, for instance by the purchase of land. This would also have a positive impact on the water quality.

Recommendation 5:

The main endeavours to purchase land in the surrounding areas are to be continued. The problem of the Albers hillsides, in which five hectares of purchased land still continue to be intensively farmed, must be tackled.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 4 and 5:**

The acquisition of land will be continued as the financial circumstances of the State of Baden-Württemberg and the existing offers from private land owners allow. Intensive efforts are currently being made to possibly acquire of the hillside areas around Albers which could, however, not yet been implemented successfully due to the lack of suitable barter areas.

Recommendation 6:

The marked increase in the number of high-voltage conductors in the surrounding area is damaging the countryside. Applications for underground laying must continue to be submitted, even if this involves high costs.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 6:**

In respect of the demolition or underground laying of high-voltage conductors in the Wurzacher Ried nature reserve, contact has been made with the responsible utility company. However, to date no suitable measures have been achieved.

3. Site management

Protected area signposting

Due to increasing use of paths in the protected area by cyclists, official driving ban signs were installed in some areas close to the city.

Maintenance and development work

In the renaturation areas, the vegetation development initiated in line with the stipulations of the maintenance and development plan progressed further. In various reed moor areas, water-logging areas showed gratifying regeneration tendencies with increased peat moss growth. The water-logging measures have permitted the undergrowth proliferation and forestation of the moor to be significantly reduced. The damming activity of the beavers (castor fiber) in residence since the year 2000 is supporting this development and increases the habitat diversity.

The beaver population remains stable with 7 - 10 families. A renaturation area near the former Haidgau peat factory which fell dry extensively in the previous year under review due to the beavers digging activities could be restored and sustainably secured this autumn with the help of large-scale and elaborate securing measures.

In the previous year under review, the new breed of the crane (*Grus grus*) had not survived, but this year the breeding was successful and a young bird could fly out unharmed. For the State of Baden-Württemberg, this is a first breeding success of a crane since many decades which emphasizes impressively the positive development of biotope structures in the renaturation areas of the Wurzacher Ried.

In the maintenance and development zone, comprehensive maintenance measures were carried out in cooperation with local farmers as in past years, in accordance with the nature protection planning (appr. 300 hectares; 35 local farmers).

In the year under review, the Regierungspräsidium Tübingen began the necessary surveys and mapping work for the preparation of a new “Natura 2000 management plan”. The fieldwork is finalized and presently evaluated. The surveys for the FFH-relevant animal and plant species were also completed this summer. The management plan is expected to be finalized in 2018.

Monitoring

In the year under review, the monitoring was suspended. It is planned to invite new tenders upon completion of the Natura 2000 management plan and to carry it on according to the updated maintenance and develop measures.

Moor protection approach of the state of Baden-Württemberg

The State government of Baden-Württemberg expedited the targets fixed in the State’s moor protection concept. This concept aims at the middle and long-term renaturation of all moors capable of regeneration and the adjustment of land use of low moor soils in the sense of climate protection and maintenance of biological diversity. The Wurzacher Ried is one of six pilot sites in this state in which research orders were contracted out to specialized planning offices for the further optimisation of renaturation measures. In the year under record, comprehensive hydrological data were collated with the help of a close-knit measurement level network to prepare and implement an appropriate list of measures for the rewetting of disturbed moor sites. Further planning steps are provided for the coming year.

Nature Conservation Centre Wurzacher Ried

The most important informative facility for visitors is the Nature Conservation Centre Bad Wurzach. In the year under review, the centre carried out about 300 environmental education events and was visited by around 21,000 guests. The new permanent exhibition “MOOR EXTREM” which had opened in the new annex of the monastery building Maria Rosengarten in 2013 with a financial volume of around 800,000 Euro continues to enjoy great popularity and is an important part of the Centre’s education work. In the reporting year, the long-term restoration work of the historic monastery complex Maria Rosengarten could be completed, and the nature conservation centre could finally move its office and administrative rooms into the newly restored and highly attractive premises.

4. Site boundaries

There were no changes in the period under review

5. Further information

Visit of Environment Minister Franz Untersteller

On 10 August 2017, Franz Untersteller, Environment Minister of the State of Baden-Württemberg, came to see the Nature Conservation Centre; he obtained information on the Centre's new premises in the restored former monastery Maria Rosengarten and the present state of the planning and measures in the State's moor protection concept. He was very pleased with the positive developments of the centre's accommodation and the promising measures in the Wurzacher Ried pilot area. In particular, the Minister promised to support the efforts to build a viewing tower (see recommendation 1 for the extension of the European Diploma).

Wind power plants

In particular thanks to former recommendations of the Council of Europe, the Wurzacher Basin and the surrounding ridges could still be kept free from wind power plants.

Public relations in connection with the European Diploma

The wish and request of the European Council that in public relations the importance of the European Diploma be emphasized with a logo informing on the European Diploma areas has been fulfilled.

The diploma with logo is meanwhile integrated in the event program and the website of the Nature Conservation Centre (see www.wurzacher-ried.de), the information flyer Wurzacher Ried and the signboards of the protected area. A special station has been devoted to the European Diploma in the permanent exhibition of the information centre Wurzacher Ried.

In future new publications and/or reprints of existing publications or newly established infrastructures, the European Diploma with logo will also appear as far as possible.

31. SPAIN – TEIDE NATIONAL PARK

No report / pas de rapport.

32. GERMANY – BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Despite of an intense bark beetle infestation in lower situated regions outside the national park, inside the park infestation is still on a low level due to the intensive bark beetle control in the bark beetle management zone. In total 1850 m³ of timber were cut in the national park in 2017. It was mainly spruce from windthrow and bark beetle infestation, classified as potential breeding material for the bark beetle whereof 1280 m³ were debarked and left on forest site. The high proportion of debarked wood, left on the poor sites, is necessary due to sustainable site fertility and for deadwood restricted organisms.

The forest gaps were used to re-establish mixed forests with planted Silver fir (14.500) and European beech (8.000) on 7.4 ha. Additionally, the forest conversion was continued by establishing small scale patchy gaps in young pure spruce stands. Meanwhile we have additionally in parts a good success with natural rejuvenation of also fir and beech.

Regulation of game within the management zone of the National Park is of outstanding importance to enable the rejuvenation of close to nature forest types and conversion of unnatural spruce forests.

Therefore, game control will be still enforced in 2018 and the following years. The internal workflow ensures a continuously improvement of management including the know-how of the whole team.

The field assessment for the forest development plan is terminated. The analysis shows that the process of forest conversion is successful in huge areas of the national parks management zone. It gives a good overview in which parts a management is still necessary and in which parts the forest conversion already takes place without further management measures.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Prepare and adopt by 2012 a new management plan including quantitative objectives to be reached during the next period, and to this effect provide the necessary financial and human resources.

The work for the management plan is ongoing. At the moment we focus on the Natura 2000 Management plan, which will be part of the management plan.

2. Include in the plan provision for continuing a comprehensive long term research programme, in close collaboration with other alpine protected areas and other relevant networks.

In a continuous process short and long-term research in Berchtesgaden National Park is checked for its contributions to current relevant topics, the needs of national park management and the environmental reporting obligations. Research issues are presented and further developed within scientific, technical and administrative networks. Main focus fields are biodiversity and climate change. In addition future research activities will focus more intensely on natural processes that take place in the national park in an unregulated way. The objectives are to elaborate more clearly the value of our long-term protection status since 1978 and to communicate the importance of long-term research and consistent time slices of monitoring data.

Three major projects have been launched since the last reporting period. One of them deals with the monitoring of springs in the context of climate change impacts. The aim is to transfer the Berchtesgaden National Park spring monitoring programme (dating back to the 1980ies) to the Bavarian Forest National Park and to adapt the method adequately so that it can serve as Bavarian standard in future (also beyond protected areas).

Another initiative is to compare time slices of land cover inventories to find out about changes on landscape level occurring since 1980. The results are expected to give insight into the hot spots and categories of changes dominating our protected area over the past decades and to give input to further research and management strategies. The project is realized in exchange with members of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (mainly Gesäuse and Swiss National Parks).

A third project cares for the resurvey of alpine grassland vegetation plots that have been subject to pasturing and abandonment long before the establishment of the national park. Field investigations are foreseen for 2018 and aim to document any changes in floristic biodiversity occurring under natural conditions since the last survey back in the 1980ies.

a) Military activities;

The german army uses the national park for its military exercises. We have an agreement which determine the rules and the rights of the army. Another agreement is about the use of the airspace by the german army. We already managed them to reduce their usage with helicopters in the park. Further there is a jour fixe once a year, to discuss potential problems.

b) recreation and the promotion of nature tourism, in co-operation with the mountain guide organization; providing specific training courses for the guides

Cooperation and visitor management

The strong cooperation with partners in the region (protected areas as well as relevant stakeholders of different sectors - especially the German Alpine Club) which was built up during the last years had and has a great potential to contribute to the conservation of alpine biodiversity. So for nature friendly winter sport activities we work together with the German Alpine Club in the project "Natürlich auf Tour" which is a campaign for visitor management and sensitization. Together with the German Alpine Club and partners from the tourism sector we worked out a network of routes for snowshoeing furthermore to canalize the impact of snowshoe hikers.

The cooperation with stakeholders such as paragliders, climbers and helicopter-associations has been extended successfully. The cooperation-project "Kletterkonzept" will enable a positive side by side of climbing and nature protection. Together with the German Alpine Club, the mountain rescue service, the mountain guide union and some single climbers we defined the content of the project. This should be a good base for the cooperation in the future.

Golden Eagle monitoring program

In 2017 fourteen territorial couples of Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, L.) have been monitored in the observation area of Biosphere reserve Berchtesgadener Land and surrounding mountain regions. Eleven fledged young have been documented. This means a breeding success of 0.75 young per pair and year respectively. Successful couples have been Wimbach, Hoher Göll, Hochkranz (A), Reith (A), Bluntau (A), Untersberg, Saalach, Sonntagshorn and Blühnbach (A). The overall breeding success during 24 years of monitoring (1993 – 2017) is still 0.30 young / pair / year.

There were two successful double-breeds in 2017, but two breed interruptions (before fledging) in the eagle territories of Klausbach and Wachterl. The reasons for breeding-interruption could not be detected for both cases. Disturbances caused by human activities as a reason for interruption are not known and couldn't be observed. In one territory there were no clear results concerning breeding success (Röthelmoos). Number of non-breeders in 2017 was one (Ettenberg).

In 2017 still two territories (Gotzen and Hoher Staufen) were not occupied by a territorial pair. Documentation of young after leaving the nest took place in territory Blühnbach. Dead territorial eagles could not be found / documented as well as no change in pair consumption. Number of visitors attending guided tours (environmental education items) increased slightly to about 1,200 in 2017. The probability of golden eagle sightings during the guided tours is still up to 90 %.

c) visitor infrastructures, trail marking, usage and maintenance of mountain huts

In 2017, 535.000 Euro and about 7500 hours had been invested in road and path maintenance.

d) mountain grazing during summer, including water supply

Action has been taken to adapt the grazing management to recent scientific findings. Collaboration with Mr. Steinberger from ALF (State department of agriculture and forestry)

e) water resources management, taking into account the needs of the surrounding communities

In 2017 the alpine hut "Wimbachgrieshütte" got a new biological water purification plant. Because of the special position of the hut at the foot of Mount Watzmann, a specific solution had to be found.

4. consequently pursue the transformation of spruce forests into mixed forests until the integration of the intervention zone into the core area is finalized

The conversion of the temporary management zone into core zone is complete. All silvicultural measures as well as interventions for the regulation of game could be discontinued on this area.

The core zone now covers 75% of the national park area.

Situation in the management zone: see 1. Conditions

5. continue targeted interventions to control the bark beetle proliferation, but without enlarging the bark beetle management zone, and maintain wildlife pressure at an acceptable level;

see 1. Conditions

6. anticipate and foster the natural return of large carnivores in the park area and communicate with the public about the benefits this may bring; develop a strategy and action plan to deal with this issue, including cattle protection measures and the training of shepherds;

Berchtesgaden National Park is aware of its responsibility for the management of large carnivores and for the preparation of the public for their return. We are therefore in close cooperation with local livestock farmers as well as with the authority (Landesamt für Umwelt) responsible for wildlife management in Bavaria to ensure that all activities are embedded into the Bavarian strategy and in the management plans applying to the respective species. Especially because of the extraordinary mobility and the large territories of lynx, wolf and bear a singular action plan for Berchtesgaden National Park seems not be constructive.

The focus is definitely not on pointing out advantages or disadvantages originating from the return of large carnivores. In fact, the encouragement of a common responsibility of all stakeholders involved, based on the legal foundations is the primer aim. This strategy shall enable people, who are directly affected to endure the impact of lynx, wolf and bear and offer them approaches and thereby a perspective.

7. Pursue the collaboration with the Austrian Administration and the Nature Park, the Biosphere Reserve and the Natura 2000 network, promote exchanges with other alpine protected areas.

Since the beginning of the year 2017 the Alpine Space-Interreg-Project Alpbionet2030 is ongoing. This project emphasizes the establishment of ecological connectivity around the whole alpine arc and the EUSALP region. This network comprises international partners of the alpine arc and fosters the cooperation between them. The Berchtesgaden National Park represents the transboundary area Berchtesgaden-Salzburg. The representatives of the National Park took part in a number of meetings of partners in Austria, Switzerland and Slovenia. Within this project the partners from EURAC Bozen run a stakeholder-workshop in Berchtesgaden on the issue of human-wildlife-conflicts. Partner in this workshop was among others the neighboring Austrian Weißbach Nature Park.

8. Information buildings

The central information center “Haus der Berge” in Berchtesgaden has about 755,000 visitors since opening in May 2013 (status: November 2017). In 2017 we counted about 143,000 visitors until end of October 2017. This almost stable number of visitors is still not a single result of the attractiveness of the exhibition “Vertical Wilderness” but also of the utilization of the building as a meeting place for the public. Otherwise there are still some topics and items which have to be improved in order to optimize environmental education and information. Therefore the next big evaluation is planned for the year 2018, even to get an idea of what visitors would like to experience in our center in 3 to 5 years in future (re-attractivating).

Until November 2017 we implemented some smaller new attractions into the exhibitions. We also substituted some of the older compounds in the main exhibition. The most important alteration is the enlargement of the shopping-facilities in our front desk area. The products have been selected on behalf of following criteria: Sustainability, regionality, specificity and to avoid competition to local merchants.

The main exhibition “Vertical Wilderness” has been visited by almost 55,000 persons in 2017 (status: October 2017). In 2016 overall 8,750 visitors participated during 362 events (guided tours as well as introductions to the exhibition). We offered 162 introductions to the main exhibition (4,200 visitors – 2,400 pupils and 1,800 adults) as well as 200 guided tours into the exhibition (4,500 visitors – 1,600 pupils and 2,900 adults respectively).

The five peripheral information centers of the National Park are even in a permanent process of improvement. The new exhibition in the information center Hintersee (“Klausbachhaus”) has been opened in December 2016. The main topics of the exhibition are alpine pastures and Golden Eagle – especially in the Klausbach valley. This makes sure, that all four main habitats (water, forest, alpine pastures, and rocks) of the National Park are topic of the “Haus der Berge” in common as well as in the peripheral centers for a regional context. Linked to the exhibition the eagle observation station at the Klausbach valley has been opened in December, too. Next milestones are the renewal of the exhibition “Information St. Bartholomä” (peninsula in lake Königssee) - which main topic supposed to be “water” - as well as developing a concept for a new information point in the peak-station on mountain Jenner (topic: “rocks and peaks”).

9. Further promote the development of the public transportation system within the park and adjacent protected territories; develop a strategy to reduce the private vehicle traffic to and within the park.

All of the meeting points of our guided tours can be reached with public transportation und we refer to public transportation at the hiking tips on our website.

So we solicit the public transportation in Berchtesgaden, but it’s in the hand of “Deutsche Bahn” to develop the existing offer.

- 3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No Changes

- 4. Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No Changes

- 5. Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The Berchtesgaden National Park uses the European Diploma logo on its website. It is also presented in our new National Park brochure.

33. FRANCE – ECRINS NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions liées à l’obtention du diplôme

La résolution CM/ResDip(2010)14 relative au renouvellement du diplôme européen du Parc national des Écrins jusqu’au 17 juillet 2020, n’a pas été assortie de conditions, mais de 10 recommandations, rappelées au point « 2 » du présent rapport.

2. Suivi des recommandations

Rec. 2.1. Conforter les partenariats avec les communes du parc, les intercommunalités et les projets de territoire afin de développer les synergies nécessaires à la réalisation d'une politique exemplaire de préservation du patrimoine dans une perspective de développement durable

La charte du parc national des Écrins a été approuvée à l'unanimité de son conseil d'administration le 9 mars 2012 et promulguée par décret en Conseil d'État du 28 décembre 2012 (JORF du 30/12/2012).

53 communes des 59 de l'aire optimale d'adhésion (89,8 %) ont adhéré à la charte (46 en 2016 et 7 en 2015). Le bilan définitif des adhésions est le suivant :

89,8 % d'adhésion

93,1 % de la surface totale du parc national (cœur + aire d'adhésion) maintenue

96,6 % de la population de la AOA dans des communes ayant adhéré à la charte.

Sur les 6 communes non adhérentes, 3 (Le Périer, Chantelouve et Champoléon) ont une partie de leur territoire dans le cœur. A une exception près (Valbonnais), les communes n'ayant pas adhéré sont des communes de moins de 200 habitants et toutes les communes de plus de 520 habitants ont adhéré à la charte, en particulier, toutes les communes importantes accueillant une station touristique d'envergure significative.

La charte est mise en œuvre à travers des programmes d'actions triennaux définis avec les partenaires. Dans ces programmes 2014-2016 et 2017-2019, les actions identifiées correspondent aux missions fondamentales du Parc national dans la zone cœur et aux projets définis avec les collectivités et autres acteurs socio-professionnels de l'aire d'adhésion. Le partenariat entre le Parc national et les communes adhérentes est formalisé dans des conventions d'application de la charte. 46 conventions de partenariat ont été signées pour la période 2014-2016 et 51 (soit 100 %) pour la période 2017-2019 (la fusion de communes ramène le nombre de communes adhérentes du Parc à 51 – voir chap « 4 »).

L'évaluation « chemin faisant » est engagée et s'est traduite par une série de réunions avec les communes concernées. Le bilan de la période 2014-2016 « la charte en actions » a été réalisé : ce document de 36 pages est en cours de diffusion. Il a été présenté lors de la réunion du conseil d'administration du 27 novembre 2017, lors de laquelle le dispositif d'évaluation de la charte a été approuvé.

L'objectif pour l'année 2018 est de poursuivre la mise en œuvre des conventions 2017-2019 avec toutes les communes adhérentes et de poursuivre les phases d'évaluation. Pour cela des rencontres avec les communautés de communes ou autres partenaires (par exemple, partenaires du tourisme, chambres consulaires) sont envisagées en fonction des priorités liées aux projets en cours.

Rec. 2.2. Renforcer les dispositifs de recueil permanent, de catalogage et de diffusion des données patrimoniales, avec une attention particulière aux données culturelles et celles relatives aux savoir-faire locaux, et rendre compte de l'expertise développée par le Parc et ses partenaires en application de la charte

Cette recommandation est satisfaite, depuis 2016, au moyen de l'outil Geonature (<http://geonature.fr>) dont une composante est le Geonature-atlas développé par le Parc national des Écrins et publié sous licence libre.

Cet outil est maintenant déployé au sein de plusieurs Parcs nationaux et Parc naturels régionaux ainsi que quelques associations. Il a vocation à devenir dans les prochaines années un des outils majeurs du SINP régional PACA « Silene » (<http://www.silene.eu>).

En parallèle le Parc national a renforcé ses partenariats en signant une convention d'échange de données avec l'association Flavia (<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/papillons-convention-echanges-association-flavia>).

L'opération « Ecrins de nature » a été organisée sur la commune de Saint-Jean-Saint-Nicolas. (<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/ecole-nature-ecrin-champsaur> ; <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/decouvertes-partagees-ecrins-nature>).

Cette manifestation associant naturalistes et « grand public » a permis de faire découvrir les méthodes d'inventaire et la biodiversité de la commune d'accueil. Elle participe à la démarche d'inventaire de la biodiversité des communes françaises (démarche ABC: <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/seminaire-atlas-biodiversite-communale-abc>).

Geotrek continue sa progression en nombre de structures utilisatrices et devient une référence dans ce domaine. Les rencontres annuelles (<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/rencontres-geotrek-numerique-service-valorisation-territoires>) ont été un grand succès et ont montré tout l'intérêt de l'outil et de la démarche.

Enfin le Parc national poursuit des démarches d'acquisition de connaissance des espèces et des milieux et à ce titre en 2017, il a été le co-organisateur des 1er rencontres régionales de malacologie.

<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/cerveaux-corps-mous>

Rec. 2.3. Positionner le parc national comme sentinelle environnementale, au sein de réseaux d'acteurs institutionnels, en réponse à l'exigence d'observation permanente des changements associés au réchauffement climatique

Suivi des glaciers

Comme il devient coutume, 2017 ne déroge pas à la règle: le bilan glaciaire est fortement déficitaire et c'est même la mesure de l'ablation estivale la plus importante depuis 2003 (<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/forte-perde-estivale-glacier-blanc>) !

Ces données ont été corroborées par les gardiens de refuge qui, lors du bilan de saison réalisé le 27 septembre, ont indiqué avoir eu « un été chaud avec des fontes nocturnes importantes et des épisodes de vent fort » ainsi qu'un constat général d'un recul de plus en plus visible et rapide des masses glaciaires.

Sentinelles des Alpes

Sous l'impulsion des espaces protégés des Alpes et du Parc national des Ecrins en particulier, les réseaux d'observation se structurent sur les Alpes françaises, grâce à un partenariat entre l'AFB et la Zone Atelier « Alpes » (CNRS-IRSTEA).

Sous la dénomination « sentinelles des Alpes », les réseaux Alpages sentinelles, Lacs sentinelles, Refuges sentinelles, ORCHAMPS et le réseau conservation flore « Alpes-Ain » décident de lier leurs existences pour augmenter leur visibilité, leur cohérence et leur potentialités d'acquisition et de valorisation de connaissances.

Stratégie sanitaire

Sous l'impulsion du Parc national des Ecrins, les Parcs nationaux français ont élaboré leur « contribution à une stratégie sanitaire pour la faune sauvage de métropole », stratégie inter-espaces protégés soutenue par l'AFB et dont le positionnement inter-ministériel se précise. Le document cadre a été validé le 29 août 2017. Le réseau sentinelle sanitaire ainsi créé s'étoffera dès 2018, avec la participation des espaces naturels de montagne gérés par l'ONCFS. En outre, le Parc national des Ecrins a accueilli en mai 2017 un séminaire sanitaire associant des experts internationaux (Italie, Espagne, Canada) qui a permis de poser les bases de ce nouveau réseau sentinelle sanitaire. Un programme d'actions quinquennal est en cours de finalisation.

<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/faune-sauvage-strategie-sanitaire-parcs-nationaux>

Programme « bouquetin »

En parallèle un programme international franco-italien sur le bouquetin (Lemed Ibex) doit permettre d'accroître la connaissance de l'espèce, de ses habitats et des corridors écologiques qui sont nécessaires à ses déplacements. La méthodologie adoptée permettra, au fil du temps, d'ajuster les protocoles en fonction des résultats (données recueillies). Le recours à la génétique offre la possibilité de repérer les liens et les échanges entre les différentes populations de bouquetins et d'évaluer la diversité des noyaux de population

<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/dossier/bouquetin-leman-mediterranee-programme>

Alpages sentinelles 2015-2018

Le programme « Alpages sentinelles », dans son nouveau périmètre, est désormais piloté par l'IRSTEA.

Les actions prévues sur les Écrins en 2017 ont été réalisées : relevés de biomasse, relevés des données météorologiques sur les alpages, communication des résultats, etc...

Le Parc national des Écrins continue de jouer un rôle essentiel dans le fonctionnement du réseau, notamment dans l'organisation de séminaires d'échange et par sa participation aux groupes de travail. C'est ainsi que les représentants des sept territoires et les scientifiques impliqués dans le programme étaient réunis à Gap le 5 octobre 2017, au siège du Parc national des Écrins, pour faire le point sur ce dispositif d'étude et de suivi en lien avec les évolutions du climat.

Le dispositif et ses premiers résultats sont présentés à un auditoire composés d'éleveurs, de bergers et de techniciens intéressés, lors de 2 journées d'échange, les 21 novembre et 11 décembre 2017.

Rec. 2.4. Poursuivre, en lien avec les acteurs locaux, le développement de partenariats valorisant les missions d'appui méthodologique, d'évaluation et d'appui technique du Parc national, en vue de garantir l'insertion envi-ronnementale des activités

Le PNE a consolidé sa chaîne de travail dédiée à l'expertise environnementale. Ainsi, les « porter à connaissance » (PAC) fournissent-ils aux maîtres-d'ouvrage de projets l'ensemble des données environnementales connues du Parc national. A ces données s'ajoutent des recommandations et prescriptions de mise en œuvre. Depuis 2013, en moyenne, le Parc national transmet 52 PAC par an.

Certains projets sont ensuite accompagnés dans leur mise en œuvre : par exemple des projets d'aménagement et de valorisation d'espaces (places de village, site d'accueil en espaces naturels, etc.) ou des actions de restauration du patrimoine bâti vernaculaire (fort intérêt pour la qualité des paysages et la vie des territoires). L'accompagnement par le Parc national peut se traduire par des missions d'appui ponctuel à maîtrise d'ouvrage auprès des communes ou autres porteurs de projets.

L'établissement public intervient dès les phases « amont » de l'élaboration des plans locaux d'urbanisme (PLU). Les conseils techniques, juridiques et les expertises (paysages-cf. 2.6, patrimoines culturels et naturels) sont réalisés en coordination avec les partenaires et les institutions compétents dans ces domaines : direction départementale des territoires (DDT), unité territoriale de l'architecture et du patrimoine (UDAP), conseil en architecture, urbanisme et environnement (CAUE), etc.

Variabes en quantité d'une année sur l'autre, ces actions sont le résultat d'un partenariat actif avec le territoire, selon la conjoncture et les cycles institutionnels.

En 2017, 8 PLU ont fait l'objet d'un accompagnement, (réunions, apport de connaissances et expertise) ainsi qu'une douzaine de projets d'aménagement ou de restauration patrimoniale.

A noter.

Les recommandations techniques dans le domaine de l'eau sont en forte augmentation avec la rédaction de nombreux porter à connaissance préalables aux projets. Le Parc national est sollicité pour de nombreux avis relatifs aux prélèvements d'eau (micro-centrales, agriculture, AEP), la gestion des milieux

(ripisylves, zones humides, canaux, adoux, trames verte et bleue, etc.), la morphologie des rivières (intervention sur les seuils, espace de mobilité des rivières, continuité des cours d'eau).

Rec. 2.5 Renforcer le partenariat avec l'Office national des forêts (ONF), les communes forestières et les gestionnaires de la forêt privée (Centres régionaux de la propriété forestière – CRPF) pour inciter à un meilleur échange de données et à la pratique d'une gestion forestière multi-fonctionnelle exemplaire

Les échanges avec les acteurs de la forêt se poursuivent.

Le Parc national participe aux politiques territoriales à travers la charte forestière du Briançonnais-Embrunais et celle du Valbonnais. Il suit la politique « Bois 05 » du département (bois d'œuvre et bois de chauffage). Le partenariat avec les forêts privées (CRPF et les coopératives en charge des travaux forestières) permet au Parc national d'émettre aujourd'hui des recommandations sur des coupes forestières en aire d'adhésion (exemple : préservation de mares intra-forestières en 2017 lors d'une coupe à Ancelle).

L'ONF reste l'acteur forestier partenaire principal de l'établissement public du parc.

La gestion des sentiers en terrain domanial a été améliorée. Il s'agit de rendre opérationnelles les stratégies départementales de gestion des PDIPR et de clarifier les objectifs d'entretien du réseau de sentiers en cœur de parc national.

Un conventionnement en cours sera effectif entre les différents gestionnaires (communes, intercommunalités, PNE, ONF) d'ici la fin de l'année 2017.

Le Parc national fournit à l'ONF un porter à connaissance lors de chaque révision d'aménagement forestier. La participation de l'établissement à la révision de ces documents de gestion est désormais bien ancrée. La fourniture de données environnementales (habitats, flore et faune forestières) permet de justifier les recommandations du Parc national sur les scénarios de gestion proposés par l'ONF. Les points régulièrement traités concernent les modalités de desserte (approche complémentaire entre l'usage de pistes, du câble voire du cheval sur certains espaces sensibles), la prise en compte des espèces forestières patrimoniales et/ou protégées, la présence d'habitats traduisant un fort degré de naturalité des forêts (mise en place d'îlots de sénescence par exemple).

Le caractère multifonctionnel des forêts de montagne accorde une place importante aux fonctions de protection de la forêt (blocs, avalanches) et aux fonctions touristiques. C'est pourquoi les modes de gestion sylvicole (gestion ± irrégulière des peuplements, modalités de coupes, régénération des arbres...) donnent lieu à des recommandations du parc national.

L'ONF est tenu de présenter ses projets d'aménagement forestier rédigés pour avis du Parc national : avis simple en aire d'adhésion ; avis conforme au titre de la compatibilité avec la charte du parc en cœur.

En 2017 :

- 10 porter à connaissance ont été réalisés.

- 6 avis ont été donnés pour les révisions d'aménagement forestier et 2 avis ont été donné, comme suite à une consultation du Parc national par la DDT (opérations de défrichement).

Le PNE s'investit dans l'étude de la naturalité des forêts. Pour cela, la cartographie des forêts anciennes a commencée en 2017, suivant la méthodologie nationale pilotée par l'INRA de Nancy.

L'établissement participe également au nouveau réseau national piloté par RNF pour créer un "Observatoire au service d'une gestion équilibrée des forêts". Cet observatoire recueille des informations sur l'ancienneté et sur la maturité des peuplements forestiers. Le protocole phare de l'observatoire reste le suivi dendrométrique des peuplements forestiers. Préparé dès 2017, il sera appliqué en 2018 sur les 30 placettes forestières de la réserve intégrale de Lauvitel.

Rec. 2.6. Perfectionner les méthodes et les outils existants de suivi physionomique du territoire et les outils de sensibilisation, notamment en vue de dégager des axes d'action futurs et de sensibiliser les acteurs du territoire aux grandes évolutions des paysages

Dans le cadre de sa politique d'animation et de prise en compte des enjeux environnementaux, l'établissement public a mis au point une méthode pour la prise en compte du paysage dans les projets d'aménagement et de gestion du territoire.

La boîte à outils « Motif Paysages » finalisée en 2014 est désormais le support de la démarche d'accompagnement des porteurs de projets et acteurs du territoire, par un apport structuré de connaissances et d'orientations en matière d'évolution des paysages et des usages associés.

Elle contribue à de meilleures intégrations et prises en compte dans les projets et documents d'urbanisme, des milieux, des paysages, des patrimoines construits et des trames écologiques du territoire des Écrins.

En 2017, une commune a souhaité adopter cette démarche pour conduire la révision du PLU. D'autres ateliers « Motif Paysages » sont envisagés en 2018. A noter, que dans cette dynamique, certains bureaux d'étude en charge de l'élaboration des PLU commencent à proposer des démarches comparables, ce qui témoigne de l'appropriation de cet outil.

Rec. 2.7. Etre particulièrement attentif au développement des diverses formes d'activités de loisirs et sportives, notamment en améliorant le suivi de la fréquentation en nombre de visiteurs et en sensibilisant les usagers à des pratiques plus respectueuses des espèces et des milieux

Randonnée pédestre

Le principal axe de travail en 2016-2017 a été le programme « Grand Tour des Écrins » (<http://www.grand-tour-ecrins.fr>) visant la dynamisation d'une l'offre de randonnée itinérante. Ce projet porté par le Parc national a pour objectif le développement d'un tourisme doux et respectueux des patrimoines. Il intègre la réalisation de travaux d'entretien sur des sentiers situés en cœur de parc, la structuration et la valorisation d'offres de randonnée itinérante, ainsi que des actions de sensibilisation des pratiquants aux patrimoines du territoire. Treize chantiers ont été réalisés en 2017 pour remettre en état le GR54. Un important travail de mise en cohérence a également été conduit pour mettre en cohérence la signalétique et le balisage du GR54. L'ensemble des panneaux présents sur les 49 points d'information pour l'accès au GR54 a été renouvelé.

Activités de haute-montagne

Le programme « Destination haute-montagne » n'a pas obtenu les financements escomptés. Toutefois, grâce à un financement de la région PACA, un livret de sensibilisation sur les bonnes pratiques en refuge est en cours d'élaboration. Il sera finalisé et diffusé en 2018.

Des accords ont également été passés avec des éditeurs de topos pour intégrer des messages de sensibilisation dans leurs ouvrages.

Par ailleurs, le Parc national participe à un programme intitulé Biodiv'Sports en lien avec la LPO et d'autres gestionnaires d'espaces protégés pour développer une application permettant de relayer des informations relatives aux zones de quiétude à destination des pratiquants de ski de randonnée notamment.

Esprit parc national

Le déploiement de la marque se poursuit avec l'ouverture de nouvelles catégories de produits et services (séjours, sites de visite, fruits et légumes, viande, etc.). La dynamique est très positive et permet de faire des prestataires marqués de véritables « ambassadeurs du parc ». Des formations sont organisées à leur attention : 8 formations ont été proposées en 2017 pour les accompagnateurs en montagne. Les prestataires marqués sont en nombre croissant et 95 sorties de découverte sont labellisées.

Rec. 2.8. Assurer le suivi des survols d'engins, motorisés ou non au coeur du parc et contenir les besoins en hélicoptage en engageant avec les alpagistes, les propriétaires et les exploitants des refuges, une réflexion con-certée sur la nécessité de réduire les impacts sur les espèces et sur la naturalité des zones parcourues

Pour la période de référence 1er janvier 2017 – 31 octobre 2017, globalement, le nombre d'autorisations de survol du coeur a connu une légère augmentation (+22 / cf infra) par rapport à l'année 2016. A noter que les survols relatifs aux ravitaillements des refuges d'une part, et au transport de cabanes hélicoptables d'autre part, se sont stabilisés.

Cette stabilité relative est liée à la sensibilisation des gardiens de refuges en début de saison ainsi qu'aux bonnes relations avec les sociétés d'hélicoptage qui ont permis de mutualiser les survols.

En revanche, on notera quelques survols supplémentaires concernant les refuges du CAF, du fait d'un vaste programme de travaux.

Rec. 2.9. Poursuivre, en lien avec la stratégie nationale, les actions de coopération et de solidarité avec le monde rural afin de concilier au mieux le retour des grands prédateurs avec les activités pastorales

Le conseil d'administration du 14 novembre 2014 a adopté un « plan d'action élevage-prédation », après une large concertation interne et une consultation du conseil scientifique. Ce plan sert de ligne directrice aux actions conduites dans ce domaine.

En 2017, le plan d'action se décline de la manière suivante :

- appui à la mise en place de cabanes d'alpages permanentes ;
- renforcement du parc de cabanes hélicoptables (10 au total) et mise à disposition de ces cabanes en situation d'urgence l'été, comme suite à des attaques ;
- prêt de 16 postes de radios à des bergers et éleveurs ;
- renforcement des moyens d'observation (pièges photos, relevés d'indices...), transmission des données à l'ONCFS, et alerte des professionnels en cas d'observation fiable ;
- renforcement des équipes de constat : emploi de 3 vacataires « Loup » en appui aux équipes d'agents de terrain titulaires.

Le Parc national a renforcé les actions de communication, notamment dans le cadre de la cohabitation chiens de protection / randonneurs (formation des hôtesse s d'accueil, maraudage).

Rec. 10. Finaliser la charte et par la suite réaliser son évaluation périodique, ainsi que celle des conventions et des programmes d'action pris en son application, et procéder à des ajustements si nécessaire.

Mise en place du dispositif d'évaluation de la charte

Le dispositif d'évaluation de la charte du parc national des Écrins a été validé par le conseil d'administration du 27/11/2017. Le champ de l'évaluation concerne les actions réalisées dans le cadre des programmes triennaux avec les partenaires du territoire et les conditions de leur mise en œuvre.

Afin de s'articuler au mieux avec ces programmes, l'évaluation intermédiaire sera réalisée en 2019, sur la base des programmes d'actions 2014-2016 et 2017-2019. L'évaluation finale sera faite en 2027.

Le conseil d'administration du 5 juillet 2014 avait créé le comité de suivi et d'évaluation de la charte, chargé de mettre en place le dispositif d'évaluation et d'assurer le suivi de la démarche.

Ce comité s'est réuni les 5 décembre 2016, 8 juin 2017 et 7 novembre 2017 :

- il a validé une liste de questions évaluatives le 5/12/2016, fruit d'un groupe de travail interne à l'établissement (une personne par service et direction), de deux rencontres avec les représentants du conseil scientifique puis d'un avis du conseil scientifique du 16 octobre 2015 ;

- il a ensuite orienté puis finalisé le dispositif d'évaluation qui a été validé par le conseil d'administration le 27 novembre 2017, après avis du comité de suivi et d'évaluation (7/11/2017) et du conseil scientifique (24/11/2017).

Ce dispositif comprend des questions évaluatives et des indicateurs, qui permettront de mieux formaliser la réponse aux questions. Pour éviter toute lourdeur excessive, un recoupement a été fait dans la mesure du possible avec les indicateurs renseignés dans le cadre du suivi du contrat d'objectifs, de la CETD, du travail inter-parcs... complété par d'autres indicateurs. Un tableau de bord contenant toutes les informations et croisant les orientations/objectifs de la charte avec les différents indicateurs existants ou mentionnés dans la charte a été réalisé.

Le logiciel EVA, outil de suivi et d'évaluation des chartes des parcs nationaux, a été utilisé pour réaliser le premier « bilan 2014-2016 : la charte en actions ».

En 2017, plusieurs contributions ont été faites pour le collectif des Parcs nationaux dans le cadre de l'Agence pour la Biodiversité, pour améliorer le déploiement d'EVA dans ses volets financier et évaluation.

Les étapes à venir sont les suivantes :

- déploiement de l'outil EVA sur le volet suivi financier (budget 2018) et évaluation (indicateurs) ;
- validation des indicateurs avec les partenaires ;
- continuité du suivi du programme d'actions 2017-2019.

3. Gestion du site

2016 a été l'année de l'engagement du Parc national dans le processus de labellisation internationale « Liste verte », piloté par l'Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature.

A la suite de l'audit de terrain d'août 2016 et d'un examen en groupe de travail liste verte de l'UICN – France, le dossier a été transmis à l'UICN internationale avec un avis très favorable. Les réserves relatives à la finalisation de la cartographie des services écosystémiques et à la mise en place d'une procédure d'évaluation de la charte ayant été levées en 2017, une issue favorable à cette demande de labellisation internationale est attendue pour la fin de l'année 2017.

4. Frontières

Le périmètre des nouvelles intercommunalités du territoire du parc national des Ecrins a été arrêté au 1er janvier 2017.

Les nouveaux EPCI sont : la communauté de communes du Briançonnais (13 communes), la communauté de communes de Serre-Ponçon (17 communes), la communauté de communes du Champsaur-Valgaudemar (27 communes), la communauté de communes du Pays des Ecrins (8 communes), la communauté de communes du Guillemois et Queyras (16 communes), la communauté de communes de la Matheysine (44 communes) et la communauté de communes de l'Oisans (20 communes).

Par ailleurs, on notera la fusion de plusieurs communes :

- dans l'Isère, la fusion de Vénosc et Mont-de-Lans génère la nouvelle commune de Les Deux-Alpes ;
- dans les Hautes-Alpes, la fusion de Vallouise et de Pelvoux génère la nouvelle commune de Vallouise-Pelvoux.

Le nombre de communes ayant adhéré à la charte est donc désormais de 51.

Intégration en coeur de parc national des territoires des réserves naturelles nationales du versant Nord des pics du Combeynot et de la haute-vallée du torrent de Saint-Pierre

Comme suite aux délibérations favorables des communes de Le Monétier–Les Bains, Villar-d’Arène et Pelvoux, les contacts avec les services de l’État et le ministère de l’environnement (MTSE) ont permis d’arrêter la procédure et de définir le calendrier des étapes de consultation institutionnelle et d’enquête publique.

En application des articles R.331-15 et R.331-11 du code de l’environnement, une procédure de reclassement en coeur de parc national de ces territoires actuellement classés en réserve naturelle nationale a été engagée.

En application de l’article R 331-11 du code de l’environnement, le futur décret modifiant le décret de création du parc national¹ abrogera les dispositions correspondantes du décret n° 74-540 du 15 mai 1974.

Le dossier de consultation des personnes morales a été validé en conseil d’administration du 27 novembre 2017. La consultation institutionnelle (des EPCI et des conseils départementaux et régionaux) démarre le 1er décembre 2017. L’enquête publique relative à l’élargissement du coeur de parc national est programmée pour sa part durant les vacances d’hiver (février 2018). Après transmission du rapport d’enquête publique au MTSE, ce dernier consultera pour avis le Conseil national de la protection de la nature et le Conseil interministériel des parcs nationaux.

Au terme de ces consultations nationales, le Conseil d’État ayant été saisi est entendu, les modifications de la charte (approuvée par le décret n°2012-1540), du décret Parc (n°2009-448) et du décret « réserves » de 1974 (n°74-540) feront l’objet d’un décret en Conseil d’État (attendu à l’horizon fin 2018).

5. Autres informations

Communication à propos du diplôme européen

Le logo du diplôme européen est publié de manière permanente sur le site Internet du Parc national dans différentes pages :

- L’information sur l’obtention du diplôme Européen – en 1990 - dans la partie présentant l’histoire du Parc national : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/historique-les-dates-clefs>
- L’explication de l’expertise dans le cadre du diplôme européen qui lui a été octroyé par le Conseil de l’Europe depuis 1990, dans le page Internet traitant du fonctionnement du Parc national : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/thematique/fonctionnement-du-parc-national>
- L’actualité sur le renouvellement, en 2005, du diplôme européen octroyé par le Conseil de l’Europe au Parc national : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/diplome-europeen-des-espaces-protectes>
- Une actualité à l’occasion du renouvellement du diplôme en 2010 : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/le-diplome-europeen-renouvele>

Le diplôme originel signé en 1990 est présenté dans une vitrine permanente à l’entrée de l’accueil « grand public » du siège du Parc national à Gap.

¹ Décret n° 2009-448 du 21 avril 2009 pris pour l’adaptation de la délimitation et de la réglementation du parc national des Ecrins aux dispositions du code de l’environnement issues de la loi n°2006-436 du 14 avril 2006- dit décret « Parc ».

Une information sur le diplôme Européen est effectuée dans les rapports d’activités réalisés chaque année par l’établissement public du parc national.

34. ITALY – MAREMMA REGIONAL PARK

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

To give importance to the points of view of the Scientific Council:

This condition was amply satisfied in 2011 too (year of renewal of the European Diploma), thanks to the Park Plan of 2008, made, overall following the recommendations by the Scientific Council. It represents a summary between the necessity to protect the biodiversity and the landscape of the area, and the necessity of a balanced socio-economic development.

In general the Scientific Council attends in every situation where the Park has to take action about the management of specific areas (forest management, wild fauna management, research plans, and actions against the coastal erosion). In all these cases it has been always possible to work together with full harmony, with the Scientific Council.

At the moment the new Scientific Council has been nominated and it has already at work, in way to go on with the same type of approach and the same recommendations. Over all a new type of cooperation will be between the Scientific Council and the Park Council.

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Develop, in collaboration with the local authorities concerned, an approach to the management of the Ombrone by river basin, pursuant to the EU Water Framework Directive, with a view to attaining good ecological status for the watercourse within the meaning of that directive:

To verify the ecological condition of the Ombrone river final flow and the surrounding habitat, the Park wants to continue the monitoring about the granulometry of the soil, the water, the plant communities in the different habitats (the Pine wood, the dunes and the wetlands), the arthropod communities, the fish communities, the dynamism of *C. nodosa* and the birds communities. It's useful to have the essential knowledges to begin possible management actions by all local responsible authorities. Now funding is finished but we are looking for other funding to continue the work. At the moment we are working to the Agreement with all the other authorities about the management of the Ombrone river.

2. Finalise, within a maximum of two years, the extension of the Park to include the marine environment under conditions to be decided in agreement with local players.

- The new Strategic Plan of the scientific research will maintain the importance to extend the Park to the marine environment.

- All necessary studies to fill in the format of request for the Environment Ministry, have been taken.

We are able to send all documents about the proposal to the Environment Ministry, but it doesn't want to go on with the project, at the moment, so we'll do in a more advanced stage.

3. Designate the Trappola (Ombrona Delta) as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetland.

The Trappola area has been included in the wetlands areas of Ramsar Convention: DM 304 21/10/2013, and it is included in the official website Ramsar wetlands list and to celebrate it, a day of viewings of this area has been organised with researchers and citizens on the 5th February, the wetlands international day .

4. Considerably increase human resources in the Park responsible for field inspections and ensure a level of funding consistent with the increasing needs of optimum management of the diploma-holding area:

No change about the level of funding and the increase of human resources.

Increase of more than 50% of organic plantations in the area. Actually, 600 hectares are in process to become organic.

The number of visitors from the 1st January to the 23 November 2017 is about **49.237**.

5. Step up technical support for local enterprises involved in developing integrated agro-environmental activities and promoting local products and services.

- CETS: European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. Works in progress. The Park is registered at Europarc and an agreement with Federparchi Italia, to work together, has been done. We expect to deliver the candidacy in 2018.

- We constantly organise meetings with the local enterprises (BB, agritourism, restaurants, rent apartments etc.) to update them about the Park events, news and other. The meetings are finalised also to conclude the CETS process.

- We have created the Park trademark about quality, after a series of meetings with the stakeholders. At the moment the trademark is active and the stakeholders can start the process of inscription.

6. Develop action to promote the protection and enhancement of the Park's anthropological heritage.

This year no open archeological site. During a day of visit in San Rabano some people have discovered an ancient imperial roman coin. The original way to San Rabano abbey has been discovered and it will be advised with specific signs. Some ruins of an ancient romanesque church have been discovered on a path in Collecchio area. They will be submitted by a conservation project and specific signs will be place for visitors.

7. Prepare a plan for the management of the wolf population.

The wolf is come back to Maremma Park. Using scout cameras, the wolf-howling system and studying the tracks we have discovered that there are two groups of wolves with adults and sub adults. So a research project named "Monitoring of wolf inside Maremma Park" has begun. The fecal materials have been taken to do the genetic investigation. They are true wolves.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Finances: decrease of regional and local fundings.

2. In the Collelungo beach, inside the area of Park a sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) has tried to nest without success.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No change.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

1. The Park has organized for 2017 too, the event “Park’s Festival” during one weekend of May. The festival represents an important tourist project about trekking and cultural events in different parks in Tuscany, to celebrate the institution of the first Park in Europe. In the Maremma Park it was possible to participate, free, to the cleaning of the beach in Marina di Alberese with the liberation of a sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and to the local products open air market with folk concert and tasting. The result has been a great success about the number of visitors.
2. We have organised several guided Park area crossings during the tourist season.
3. The Park has organized, in collaboration with Tuscany region, “Estate dei Parchi”, a project of journey in the Park for students.
4. We go on, from 2007, with the “sustainable mobility” to reach the beach of Marina Alberese and, from this year, the itineraries departure during the summer, in using the town public transport. We have definitely changed the itineraries departure from “Pratini” to “Pinottolai” location, where there is a small parking. So the shuttle service is no more necessary. That is a way to economize and to better respect the environment and in this way it’s possible to maintain active the mountain bike itineraries all the year.
5. Different promoting events about the ancient jobs and handicraft to the Alberese Visitor Center.
6. The success about the reintroduction of osprey. This summer we had 3 juveniles.
7. We have opened a new itinerary to San Rabano Abbey.
8. We have hosted several Photograph Exhibition to the Alberese Visitor Centre: “Dall’altra parte dell’Estate” and “The Osprey’s life in Maremma exhibition”.
9. 2 events of beach cleaning in July and October to the Principina a Mare beach.
10. Inauguration of a panel about the flora and fauna in the Park dedicated to Franca Micheletti, to the Principina a Mare beach.
11. We participated from 4 to 15 August 2017 to the “Festambiente” Festival in Enaoli with a stand where there was a photographic exhibition about the Park area and a video space with a series of Park documentaries.
12. The Park is inside the Tuscany net cetacean mammals and sea turtles observatory. The Talamone sea turtle center is a Sea Turtles Rescue Center. This year we have taken care of and left free three sea turtles.
13. About the environmental education there is a new didactic project 2016/2017 with relative brochures, about various subjects: prehistory, how to feel the environment, Talamone Aquarium, Maremma Park in general, biodiversity, environment energies, Ombrone river, the sea, the beach and the dune ecological system. All oriented towards the infant, primary and secondary schools. There’s an open didactic laboratory inside the Park.
During the summer the Park has organised didactic laboratories to the Talamone Aquarium with the biologist and the veterinary.
14. For the second summer the Park has organised a volunteers camp to the Pinottolai guest house, to have a help to better protect the environment and the Principina a Mare beach. It was a success.
15. This year too, during the spring, the Park has organised the “horse riding meeting” in March: some days along the Park horseback itineraries.
13. We continue the thematic Photograph Competition on line, named “Le stagioni nel Parco”.

14. Every year, in October, we organise the “Festa del Parco”. All walk itineraries are free for resident people.

35. PORTUGAL – SELVAGENS ISLANDS NATURE RESERVE

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. that The Portuguese Government continues to take the necessary steps to preserve the current islands status of the Selvagens Islands and to unequivocally support the Madeira Regional Government in all matters concerning the nature reserve, in accordance with the provisions of Act No. 15/86 of 21 May 1986:

The legal status of the Reserve has not been changed and there are no perspectives that such changes will occur, even considering a far future.

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Continue to take all precautions to ensure that no non-native species of plants and animals are introduced:

No changes or deterioration of the environment occurred and the policies presented on the earlier annual reports still apply.

2. Continue to improve the accommodation and the radio/phone system, which provides the capacity for wardens to contact their authorities in Madeira and their families:

A VSAT phone system with national indicative is installed, as well as a satellite internet system, fundamental for contacts, either with authorities as family. Small reconstruction and maintenance work was carried out at the biological stations of Selvagem Grande and Selvagem Pequena, to provide a better logistic support to the projects on going in the field and the comfort of the visitors.

3. Continue the studies to survey the effect of the eradication of the alien species of the flora and fauna for the next few years:

The flora and fauna conservation status is improving due to the success of the alien species eradication project (2001 – 2004) (details given on the 2002 annual report). Monitoring of the main actions of this project, is maintained up to present, involving an intensive monitoring on both flora and fauna: evaluate the effects of the programme on non-target species, namely gecko *Tarentola bischoffi* and pipit *Anthus berthelotii*; evaluate quantitatively the regeneration of the natural habitats of the island. Qualitative and quantitative data is being obtained every year and reports are being produced accordingly. During 2017, local and foreign scientists developed various research projects in the fields of flora and fauna in Selvagem Grande, Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora, namely the “Explorations de Monaco, 2017-2020”, a three-year campaign of scientific explorations at sea, which started in Madeira Autonomous Region.

4. Make efforts to eliminate the breeding of the Yellow-legged Gull (*L. m. atlantis*) on Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora:

Although the yellow-legged gull (Atlantic form) *Larus michahellis atlantis* should not be considered an alien species, there is a constant effort to prevent their breeding on the islands (Selvagem Grande,

Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora). Due to the remoteness of Selvagens Islands and to their characteristics this is an easy and forward task.

5. Increase the awareness of the importance of the cultural and geological heritage:

No changes occurred and the policies presented on the earlier annual reports still apply.

6. Continue the programme of reconstruction of the remaining unrestored rubble walls:

Most of the remaining unrestored rubble walls of the plateau are now well preserved and maintenance efforts are considered one of the priority duties of the nature wardens of the Island.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Changes in legislation or regulations: Legislation and regulations were relevantly improved: the responsible regional authority updated the management plan of the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve (for details refer to: https://issuu.com/institutodasflorestaseconservacaoda/docs/pogis_completo), officially published by the President of the Madeira Regional Government in the official journal of Madeira Autonomous Region (for details refer to: JORAM, I Série, nº 86, Resolução nº 303/2017, de 15 de maio - https://ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/images/Doc_Artigos/POG/ISerie08617pogidpogis.pdf). The total area of Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve was unchanged but corrected to 9.471 ha. Selvagens Islands are a Nature 2000 network site with the classification of Special Conservation Area (SAC) whose area coincides with that of the Reserve (unchanged but corrected to 9.471 ha) and Special Protection Area (SPA) whose area was expanded to offshore areas, 124.530 ha, by Decreto Regulamentar Regional nº 3/2014/M (for details refer to: https://ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/images/Doc_Artigos/Legislacao/AreasProtegidas/desertas/zpe.pdf).

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes occurred.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

During 2017, by the inauguration of the Local Command Office of the Funchal Maritime Police and of the Extension of the Maritime Department of Funchal in Selvagens Islands, the Reserve had the official visit of the National Defense Minister and Representatives, Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Navy and Representatives, Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army and Representatives, Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Air Force and Representatives, Secretary of State for National Defense, Regional Secretary for the Environment and Natural Resources and Representatives, Commander of the Madeira Military Operational Command, Portuguese Republic Representative for Madeira Regional Government and Representatives, President of Institute for Forestry and Nature Conservation, IP-RAM and Representatives, Head of the Regional Body responsible for the Public Works Planning, Resources and Management.

All the events and lectures addressed to the public in general and target groups, as well as the website, facebook campaigns and new production of illustrated material, namely informative panels, used to raise awareness about the importance of the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve, were reinforced with the European Diploma logo.

36. FRANCE – MERCANTOUR NATIONAL PARK

No report / pas de rapport.

37. ITALY – MARITIME ALPS NATURE PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Attaches the following conditions to this renewal (2008):

- 1) following the environmental impact studies carried out in the framework of the project to build a micro-hydroelectric power plant in the Meris Valley, keep watch over possible further development of the project and, if the project is to go ahead, the Council of Europe Secretariat must be immediately informed and no decision taken before a special on-the-spot appraisal has been carried out;*
- 2) same condition for the proposed project concerning the piping of the hot spa water from Terme di Valdieri down the valley.*

1) As we outlined in the 2016 report, the plans for a hydroelectric plant in Rio della Meris have been completely abandoned. The area around the Tetti Gaina hydroelectric plant, which saw the refurbishing of an existing plant, has been renaturalized. No new hydroelectric plants can be built in the protected area.

2) As specified in the 2016 report, plans to bring the spa water from Terme di Valdieri further down the valley have been abandoned. The Park area would have been affected by a pipeline laid under the provincial road from Terme di Valdieri, which will no longer be built. In 2017 the municipality of Valdieri prospected for thermal water around the village, which is outside the protected area. Water at a temperature of around 25°C was found in one of the wells drilled, and it is now being analysed.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Attaches the following recommendations to this renewal (2008):

- 1) pursue co-operation efforts to financially support research activity on biodiversity protection and sustainable development;*
- 2) examine the opportunity to implement measures relating to the regional legislation on contiguous areas to the territory of the municipality of Vinadio and to the special nature reserve of Phoenician juniper; and step up, as far as possible, a territorial management project for the area;*
- 3) inform and organise actions for the awareness-raising of local stakeholders, in particular concerning sustainable tourism. Development projects, even those located outside the park border, should be avoided when having potential negative impact on the protected area, considering the priority for conservation and sustainable tourism of the territory as a whole.*
- 4) pursue the co-operation with Mercantour National Park, in order to set up a transfrontier protected area.*

1) In 2017 the close collaboration with Mercantour National Park continued. This collaboration is either directly between the two authorities or via the EGCT “Marittime Mercantour European Park”. Over the year our direct collaboration has allowed us to close the following project.

Project 359 “ALP MEDITERR”

Le Alpi del Mediterraneo

Project leader: Parco Alpi Marittime

Partner: Parc du Mercantour

Budget for actions managed by Ente Aree Protette Alpi Marittime : 358.500,00 €

The “ALP MEDITERR” project ended in the autumn of 2017, amongst other things it permitted us to carry out a specific study of the “Mediterranean Alps” as a destination, which corresponds to the territory included in the dossier for the candidature for Unesco World Heritage status which we will outline in more detail below. The study is attached.

Within the same project, with Parc du Mercantour we renewed our Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Charter renewal entailed a considerable amount of work through meetings with local stakeholders which enabled us to define a number of actions which they will carry out over the coming years. The Charter renewal dossier is attached.

This project also provided for the shared Marittime Mercantour portal, online since autumn 2017. (www.marittimemercantour.eu). The portal includes a specific “Geotrek” module, which guides visitors on their excursions in the two transfrontier parks, with full descriptions of the services and businesses operating on the territory. The same portal provides for a specific EGCT section “Parco europeo Marittime Mercantour”.

Our collaboration continued with the approval of new projects within the European programme for regional cooperation ALCOTRA framework. The following projects have been approved and are under way:

Project 1664 “LEMED-IBEX “

Monitoring and management of Ibex from Lake Geneva (Léman) to the Mediterranean

Project leader: Parc national des Ecrins

Partner: Parco nazionale Gran Paradiso, Aree Protette Alpi Cozie, Asters, Parc national de la Vanoise, Regione autonoma Valle d’Aosta, Parc national du Mercantour, Aree Protette Alpi Marittime

Budget for actions managed by Ente Aree Protette Alpi Marittime: 194.293,00 €

Project 1711 “CCLIMATT”

Cambiamenti climatici nel territorio transfrontaliero

Project leader: Comune di Cuneo – Parco Fluviale Gesso e Stura

Partner: Regione Piemonte, Parc national du Mercantour, Unione dei Comuni Colline di Langa e del Barolo, Parc national des Ecrins, Aree Protette Alpi Marittime

Budget for actions managed by Ente Aree Protette Alpi Marittime: 437.400,00 €

The technical descriptions of the project actions were attached to the 2016 report. The Park has had the following projects approved and work has begun:

Project 1681 “TRACES”

Trasmettere Ricerca Archeologica nelle Alpi del Sud

Project leader: Comune di Bene Vagienna

Partner: Comune di Cuneo Museo Civico, Comune di Chiusa di Pesio, Unione dei Comuni del Fossanese, Conseil Départemental des Alpes de Haute Provence, Comune di Digne-les-Bains, Comune di Castellane, Comune di Costigliole Saluzzo, Aree Protette Alpi Marittime

Ente Aree Protette Alpi Marittime: 229.100,00 €

Project 1745” JARDINALP”

Giardini delle Alpi

Project leader : Conservatoire Botanique National Alpin

Partner: Université Joseph Fourier Grenoble 1, Regione autonoma Valle d’Aosta, Fondazione Saussurea ONLUS, Parco nazionale del Gran Paradiso, Comune di La Thuile, Aree Protette Alpi Marittime

Budget for actions managed by Ente Aree Protette Alpi Marittime: 357.000,00 €

In 2017 the Park continued the actions of the LIFE WOLFALPS project. The Park is coordinating beneficiary of this project, whose actions promote cohabitation of wolves and people across the whole of the Alps. Other project partners include the Italian Alpine Regions, the Corpo Forestale dello Stato and several Alpine Parks and the Slovenian Triglav Park. The project has a number of communication actions. The data from this project was used to support the writing and approval of the Environment Ministry’s National Action Plan on wolves. The project ends in May 2018. A specific website www.lifewolfalps.eu contains all the documents produced by the project.

Through the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) the two Parks, Marittime and Mercantour, have worked throughout the year on an Integrated Territorial Project (PITER) called ALPIMED. Within this project lead by the Metropolis of Nice, there will be a number of sub-projects. The EGTC will be project manager for a Sustainable Tourism and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage project with other cross-border partners. The EGTC will also be partner in other projects concerning innovation, sustainable mobility and climate change.

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) “Parco europeo Marittime Mercantour” played a fundamental role in 2017. It worked on two important projects, the Action Plan 2016/2020 and the dossier for the “Le Alpi del Mediterraneo” UNESCO World Heritage Site candidature.

The Action Plan for 2016/2020 aims to affirm, consolidate and make more of the thirty years of collaboration between the two Parks. The Plan has seven main themes and for each of these the common objectives and tasks are defined.

The Plan is not exhaustive for all activities, but is the starting point to aspire to greater exchange, common activities and integration. In 2017 park staff worked on the following activities:

- 1) Improve sharing of knowledge and management of the natural heritage, as flora and fauna do not respect borders

Staff from both Parks have been working on specific actions on ibex and species particularly susceptible to climate change (rock ptarmigan and mountain hare)

- 2) Improve the enhancement and management of the cultural and scenic heritage, fruit of a common history

Staff from both Parks have been working to enhance our cultural heritage

- 3) Raise awareness in park territory residents in an inclusive way so that they become stakeholders and spokespeople for the European Park

Staff from both Parks have worked with transfrontier stakeholders to build the actions that were the basis for the Common Charter

- 4) Coordinate surveillance work to create a European protected area that is as synergic as possible

We have made contact to organise some cross-border patrols

- 5) Create a renowned sustainable tourist destination to build a sustainable local economy

Staff from both Parks have been working to finalise the project “Alpi del Mediterraneo” as a tourist destination.

- 6) Favour the inscription of the “Alpi del Mediterraneo” territory as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Staff from both Parks have been finishing the dossier for candidature as a UNESCO World Site as outlined in detail below

- 7) Reinforce exchange and communication between staff, residents, professionals and visitors, because collaboration is above all a question of human relationships.

An event is being organised to bring together all the mayors of the transfrontier area to mark the 30th anniversary of the signing of the collaboration charter between the two Parks.

The second important project for the EGTC was dossier for the “Le Alpi del Mediterraneo” UNESCO World Heritage Site candidature under criterion VIII (geology). The scientific component was provided by the universities of Milan, Genoa, Turin, Nice, Montpellier and individual researchers, after which the task of writing the dossier and site management plan was entrusted. The candidature dossier was written in 2017. The site proposed is a serial site and the participating countries are three, Italy, France and the Principality of Monaco. A pre-dossier was presented to UNESCO in September 2017 and is attached here. The final dossier is being concluded and will be presented to UNESCO by the Italian Environment Ministry at the end of January 2018.

Compiling the candidature dossier involved other stakeholders in the Alpi del Mediterraneo territory. Maritime and Mercantour worked together, but there was also a huge contribution made by Province of Imperia, Parco delle Alpi Liguri and the Hanbury Gardens protected area. On the French side the process was made possible and developed by the Département 06 des Alpes-Maritimes. The active participation of over 85 municipalities in the area means that this is a shared process over the vast area that is the Mediterranean Alps.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

In 2017 the amalgamation and rationalisation of the various protected areas that now make up Ente di Gestione delle Aree protette delle Alpi Marittime continued, as provided for by law no.19 of 3 August 2015. The rationalisation of Park activities concerns Riserva Juniperus Phoenicea and Riserva delle

Grotte del Bandito, Parco del Marguareis, Riserva dei Ciciu del Villar, Riserva di Benevagienna, Oasi di Crava e Morozzo, Riserva Grotte di Bossea and Riserva delle Sorgenti del Belbo as well as Parco Alpi Marittime.

After the merger between the protected areas the staff at the end of 2017 totalled 51 people in five sectors of activity. One post was lost in the course of the year because of retirement (ranger).

Parco Alpi Marittime administration has maintained its contacts with the Italian Environment Ministry in 2017 to review the possibility of being classified a National or International Park according to the Italian framework law on Protected Areas.

Piedmont Region financed the compiling of management plans for both Marittime and Marguareis Parks in 2017. These plans include wildlife plans for the protected areas and forestry and pasture management plans.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no changes to the protect areas' boundaries in 2017.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

No information

38. AUSTRIA – WACHAU PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

1. Conditions

Condition #1: *The scheme to build a dam on the Danube at Dürnstein has to be abandoned definitely, as well as a similar scheme within and immediately downstream from the area covered by the diploma:*

The condition has been totally fulfilled – no such plan has recently been discussed nor has any action taken place to create such plans or schemes.

2. Recommendations

Recommendation #1: The existence of the Jauerling protected zone should continue to be guaranteed

The Nature Park has continued its work independently from our institution. It has opened an office of its own in the central Nature Park municipality Maria Laach, which is also used as a tourism office. Main efforts have been invested into creating educational programmes around nature issues.

Recommendation #2: The river should be maintained at its present level, guaranteeing the survival of the last alluvial forests

The planning for the last big reconnection project of old side branches of the Danube to the main river have slowed down a little, due to unexpected difficulties with the necessary agreements with land owners. We are sure, though, that the project will be continued next year.

At the same time, the restoration of autochthonous alluvial forests has continued at full speed, with – again – thousands of girdled non-autochthonous trees which have been replaced by autochthonous trees. Also, the first breeding ponds for alluvial forest amphibia have been created, though it proved difficult to get them started last spring due to the unusual drought period we had to face between April and July. Some more ponds will be dug during the next weeks.

The volunteer cooperation with the two National Parks in Lower Austria has proven very successful and is definitely meant to be continued. From 2018 on, we intend to also involve the other two large protected areas in Lower Austria, Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve and the newly listed World Natural Heritage wilderness area Dürrenstein, in a cooperation which might be called “Big Five Volunteering”.

In addition to that, we are participating in the DTP Interreg project DANUBE parks CONNECTED, which started in January 2017. Amongst other issues, we have taken up the job to be responsible for a general framework study on how to connect wilderness islands all along the Danube. In April 2017, we also hosted one of the work meetings of the network.

Recommendation #3: Work on restoration of the terraces and integration of the irrigation network should continue

Like stated in last year’s report, there is no need to doubt that, as long as winegrowing stays as successful as it is, the vintners will continue to restore the terraces. In case one of the few remaining metal tubes has to be replaced, it will be done by black rubber tubes almost not visible in the landscape.

Recommendation #4: Strict standards should be imposed on river tourism traffic, to ensure that it meets appropriate quality requirements for the Wachau

In the City of Dürnstein, where the impact of river tourism is especially strong, talks with representatives from all businesses bringing larger amounts of tourists at the same time into the region have started in May. They still have to be continued, though, since it is the job of the Municipality of Dürnstein now to present all involved stakeholders with some more in-depth data on the actual number and the financial impact of this kind of tourism.

Recommendation #5: The refurbishment of the Spitz quarry should finally be started; works should be staggered until 2019

In order to find somebody to exploit the quarry to an extent when it is definitely geologically stable, you have to offer these people a certain economic benefit out of exploiting the remains of the quarry.

This extent was discussed and finally opposed by the Lower Austrian Environmental Advocacy, who on its own commissioned a study about the geological stability of the quarry. Since this study pointed out that the quarry is generally speaking stable enough, there is no way of justifying, and financing, a further exploitation at the moment.

The issue therefore urgently needs to be discussed at a potential expert visit next year.

Recommendation #6: The mouflon population should be brought within a limit compatible with natural regeneration of the forest, without systematic recourse to protection fences

As mentioned in the 2016 report, an expert meeting discussing the current state of the issue has taken place in November 2016. The main result is that the regulations around hunting moufflons have been deregulated to give the hunters the chance to hunt more of them in case they are in the situation to do so. The main problem is that moufflons are difficult to hunt because they are very mobile and always stay in herds.

In order to minimize the rockfall problem along the B33 road (on the southern bank of the Danube), the Austrian Office for Torrent and Avalanche Control (Wildbach- und Lawinverbauung) is running a project to enable the protective forests along the road to recover. It will still go on for about 20 years and makes the temporary use of protection fences necessary, not only because of the mouflon population, but mainly because of other forest animals imposing a danger for young low-grown forests, like deer.

Recommendation #7: Efforts should be continued to preserve the apricot orchards

All responsible institutions have continued working along the strategic and operative schedules presented in the last annual reports. No specific projects have been reported, though.

Recommendation #8: Steps should be taken to ensure that consultation on how to protect the Wachau against flooding takes place in cooperation with the local authorities concerned, in order to avoid separating the river from the hinterland by a substantial dyke

The flood protection system in the municipality of Emmersdorf is about to be finished. Some more plans of new devices in Rossatz-Rossatzbach, Aggsbach Dorf and Aggsbach Markt are launched. All these plans involve the local stakeholders.

3. Site management

The final version of the UNESCO site management plan has been presented to the public in March 2017 and printed both in German and English in June 2017.

A hardcopy version of the plan has already been sent to Strasbourg. A PDF version may be downloaded at http://www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at/fileadmin/Bibliothek/projects/_Projekte/WachauProjekte/ManagementPlanWorldHeritageWachau_20170710.pdf

It also contains fundamental strategic and operative guidelines both for the World Heritage and the European Diploma. Nature protection is one of the six key fields of action in the plan. Both 1 ½ people working for the immediate management and the necessary preparations for the future collaboration of the regional network in charge of site management have been fixed, including financing by the Republic of Austria and the responsible departments of the State Government of Lower Austria.

The specific plans and collaborations dealing with nature protection in the region have been described in chapter 3 (recommendation #2).

4. Boundaries

No changes in 2017.

5. Other information

The new regional website has been launched. Information on the European Diploma can now be found at <http://www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at/naturschutz/europadiplom/>

The next step will be to gradually translate the website into English.

Since the current recommendations for the European Diploma date back to the last expert visit in 2003, we urgently ask for the Council of Europe to provide us with a new expert visit in 2018 in order to discuss some more contemporary recommendations for the future management of the site, taking into account all the efforts undertaken during the last 14 years to professionalize the management of the region.

39. RUSSIAN FEDERATION – OKA NATIONAL BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. There were no changes in territorial integrity. In the reserve there is a natural dynamics of ungulates, predatory animals
2. Zoning of the biospherical reserve is observed: three zones of the wildlife reserve are allocated: core, buffer zone and zone of cooperation
3. Effective protection of the reserve
4. Continued research in full, including habitat restoration Desman

5. The ecological education and interaction with the local population

All the conditions have been met

After drawing up the periodic report the Oka reserve received some more remarks from the Advisory board for adjustment of activity of the Oka reserve for renewal of the diploma

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

• Recommendation

Sufficient resources should be made available to ensure proper operation of the reserve and continued scientific research

Response

Currently the state allocates sufficient resources to ensure proper operation of the reserve and continued research.

a) In 2017 during the ongoing inventory of biota were found 42 new species for reserve:

Taxon	Species
<i>Ascomycota</i>	<i>Chaenothecopsis viridireadens</i> (Nadv.) A.F.W.Schmidt <i>Chaenotheca hispidula</i> (Ach.) Zahlbr. <i>Calicium denigratum</i> (Vain.) Tibell <i>Physcia tribacia</i> (Ach.) Nyl. <i>Caloplaca crenulatella</i> (Nyl.) H.Olivier <i>Caloplaca obscurella</i> (Korb.) Th. Fr. <i>Ramalina dilacerata</i> (Hoffm.) Hoffm. <i>Ramalina pollinaria</i> (Liljebl.) Ach. <i>Melanelixia glabratula</i> (Lamy) Sander & Arup <i>Lecanora persimilis</i> (Th. Fr.) Arnold <i>Anthriscus cerefolium</i> (L.) Hoffm. <i>Mentha longifolia</i> (L.) Huds. <i>Hygroaster asterosporus</i> (J.E. Lange) Singer <i>Arrhenia rickenii</i> (Hora) Watling
<i>Oligochaeta:</i>	<i>Limnodrilus claparedeanus</i> Ratzel, 1868; <i>Lumbricus castaneus</i> (Savigny, 1826); <i>Stylaria lacustris</i> (Linnaeus, 1767); <i>Psammoryctides barbatus</i> (Grube, 1861); <i>Pristinella rosea</i> (Piguet, 1906); <i>Aeolosoma tenebrarum</i> Vejdovsky, 1884; <i>Stylodrilus heringianus</i> Claparede, 1862; <i>Nais barbata</i> (O.F. Müller, 1773);
<i>Mollusca</i>	<i>Hippeutis fontana</i> (Lightfoot, 1786); <i>Oxyloma. sarsi</i> (Esmark in Esmark et Hoyer, 1886); <i>Theodoxus fluviatilis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758);
<i>Diptera</i>	<i>Ptychoptera albimana</i> (F., 1787); <i>P. paludosa</i> Meigen, 1804; <i>Tipula obsoleta</i> Meigen, 1818; <i>Phylidorea squalens</i> (Zetterstedt, 1838); <i>Ormosia lineata</i> (Meigen, 1804);

	<i>Tabanus cordiger</i> Meigen, 1820;
<i>Lepidoptera</i>	<i>Nymphula stagnata</i> Donovan, 1806.
<i>Heteroptera</i>	<i>Chartoscirta elegantula longicornis</i> (Jakovlev, 1882) <i>Aradus lugubris</i> Fallen, 1807 <i>Gonocerus acuteangulatus</i> (Goeze, 1778) <i>Heterogaster artemisiae</i> Schilling 1829 <i>Lycotocoris campestris</i> (Fabricius, 1794)
<i>Ephemeroptera</i>	<i>Caenis luctuosa</i> (Burmeister, 1839); <i>Brachycercus harrisella</i> Curtis, 1834;
<i>Odonata</i>	<i>Coenagrion vernale</i> Hagen, 1839; <i>Lestes macrostigma</i> Eversmann, 1836;
<i>Acari</i>	<i>Hydrachna skorikowi</i> Piersig, 1899;

b) Series of long-term supervision on 38 positions have been still conducted.

c) We began to implement a project to study the central lacustrine-river highway of the Mescher lowland. The mainline plays a huge role in the life cycle of many species of fish, providing additional spawning and feeding grounds. Most of the highway passes through the territory of the reserve

d) We have continued researches of biology, ways of migration of gray cranes. According to the agreement with the Jerusalem University 13 gray cranes in the Oka wildlife reserve of GPS trackers with GSM transmitters are marked.

f) The scientific component has continued to develop at both nurseries at Reserve -crane and bison.

For the first time in the nursery eggs were obtained and 5 chicks of the Japanese crane were grown. In addition, 4 eggs of the Japanese crane were transferred to the Khingon Reserve. Five nestlings of the Siberian Crane were grown and released into nature (Astrakhan Reserve).

On crane nursery studying of a shell of eggs of cranes as indicator of conditions of keeping of birds in bondage is begun. It is let out in the nature 13 Siberian cranes (Astrakhan Biosphere Reserve).

Staff of the crane nursery developed a project on environmental education. It is called a "crane in a briefcase." In the portfolio there is a demountable crane dummy, as well as a "teacher" costume - a white robe and a crane mask. The process of nestling, feeding, sounds with the help of which the tutor calls the nestlings is demonstrated to the audience.

At the bison nursery six calves were born.

17 bison brought from Sweden to replenish the gene pool of the herd • **Recommendation**

The measures to regenerate desman habitat in the Oka plain should be continued and ways of mitigating the adverse effect of the drainage canal explored.

• **Recommendation**

The measures to regenerate desman habitat in the Oka plain should be continued and ways of mitigating the adverse effect of the drainage canal explored.

Response

The measures to regenerate desman habitat in the Oka plain have been continued and the impact of negative factors are also studied.

• **Recommendation**

In the Lopata zone, the reserve should be extended south-eastward as far as the river Pra in order to include some typical water meadow not yet represented in the reserve, a number of oxbows and a portion of the river Oka bank.

Response

In the Lopata zone the reserve isn't extended south-eastward to include some typical water meadow because not all shareholders agreed to give the shares and continue them to use as haying areas.

• Recommendation

Effort should be made to encourage the handover to Oka reserve of the hay meadows located on the left bank of the Pra to the south of grid squares 169 to 171 in the central forest section

Response

The handover to Oka National Reserve of the hay meadows located on the left bank of the Pra to the south of grid squares 169 to 171 in the central forest section isn't carried out. Currently purposeful work on preparation of documents for transfer of the marked area is conducted.

• Recommendation

Increase the level of information, environmental education outreach

Response

Condition is satisfied. The level of environmental education and information outreach: in this year about 8000 people attended Reserve, more than 700 excursions organized by the ecological paths, nursery of rare species of cranes and bison nursery, Museum of Nature. This year, there were 11 tour routes. In 2017 annual events Day birds (April), Day a crane (October), Shrovetide (February) of an ecological orientation with attraction of local population, school students of Ryazan city, tourists are held. In this year of mass action "Against the fire" was held.

Leaflets were prepared and distributed. Students participated in the action, handing out leaflets. Discussion with visitors of the Oka reserve was held. In a newly opened Center of ecological information and education (Visit Center) hosts conferences with students, concerts ecological orientation, workshops with teachers and other events (total 4 conferences and workshops in 2017 year). Also, there are 11 art exhibition and photo-exhibition of local artists devoted to Meshchera's nature. Those interested persons can purchase these works.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Response

no changes

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Response

Thus, according to official documents, the core of the zapovednik is 22,749 hectares, the buffer zone is 33,201 hectares (the total area of the zapovednik remains unchanged at 55,950 hectares) and the conservation zone of the zapovednik is 22975 ha.

The biosphere reserve includes the Oka zapovednik, the Ryazan regional reserve (zakaznik), and the zone of cooperation. The core remains unchanged (22,749 ha), the buffer zone at the expense of the Ryazan regional preserve has increased to 91950 ha, the cooperation zone (including the conservation zone of the

reserve and the territories of neighboring districts (Spassky, Shilovsky, Klepikovskiy and Kasimovskiy) after signing agreements with the heads of administrations in 2016 has increased to 1,011,541 ha.

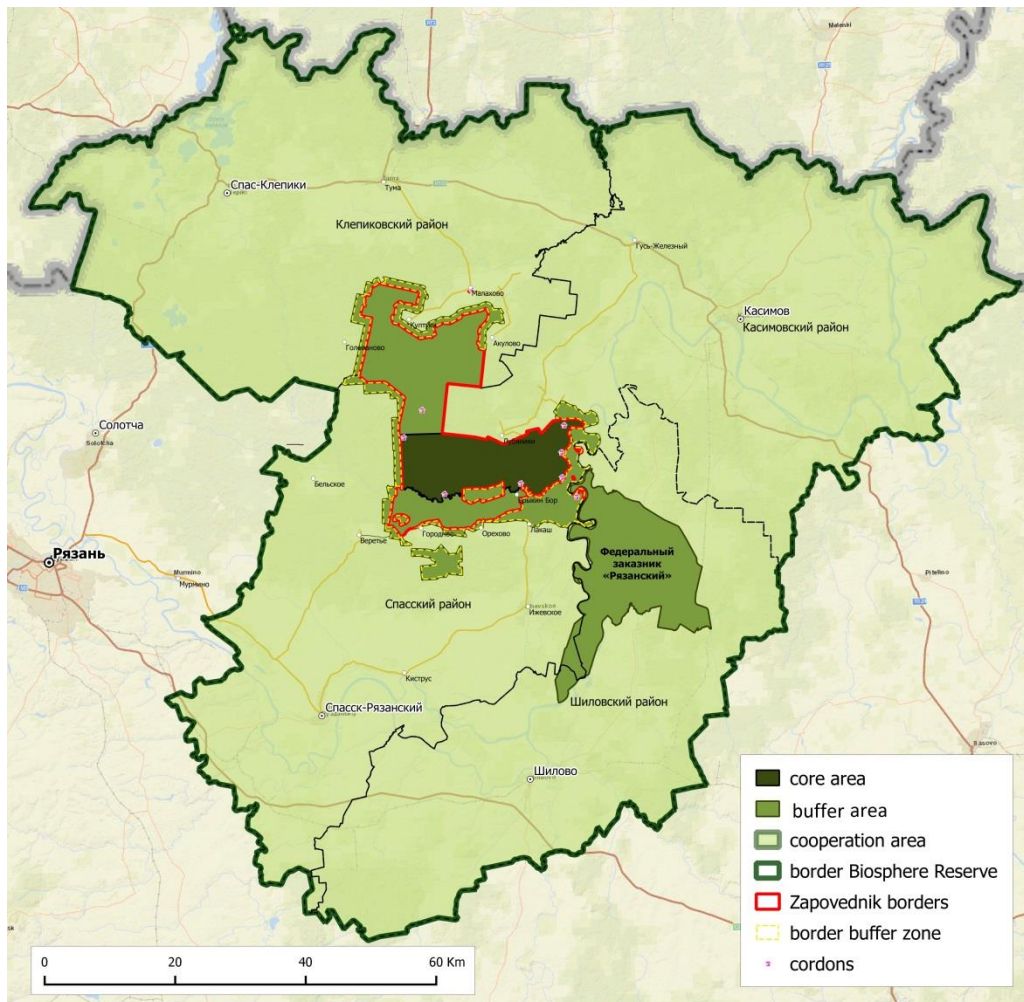


Fig.1. Modern borders of the Okskiy reserve

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The European Diploma's logo was used by us in all presentations about the reserve. The logo is placed on our many notices and documents. The logo is on office building of the reserve and in a director's room.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

In connection with the termination of mowing, the number of meadow species of plants (for example *Trifolium montanum*, *Fragaria viridis*, *Filipendula vulgaris*) and the area occupied by them decreased

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

In connection with the termination of mowing, the number of meadow species of birds decreased (*Crex crex*, *Motacilla flava*). The meadows overgrew with the dog rose (*Rósa majális*), so the number of birds nesting on the bush increased (*Lanius collurio*, *Sylvia nisoria*).

The appearance on the territory of the reserve of representatives of heteropterofauna, typical for more southern regions such as *Cydnus atterimus* (Forster), *Eurygaster austriaca* (Schrank), *Gonocerus acuteangulatus* (Gz.) have been noted. Probably the resettlement of these species is associated with changes in weather conditions in recent decades.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

On the reserve 11 sites of historical and cultural heritage have been identified. Among them there are archaeological monuments, burial of prisoners of war. Reserve staff participated in the regional conference "Preservation of cultural and natural heritage". 5 reports were presented.

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

Number of joint activities with the local population increased in the areas of education, conservation and science. This year, more than 20 educational events were held. Two meetings with the heads of neighboring municipalities, related to fire activities were conducted. The local population is actively involved in the drafting of the phenological calendar

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

This year 7 different types of printed products created by the staff of the sanctuary (banners, calendars, bags, various calendars, booklets, signs)

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

See 2.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

-

8.2. Scientific research

8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

See 2.

For the period 2016-2020 years program of scientific research and environmental monitoring has been approved. It includes 5 topics:

Theme 1. Dynamics of phenomena and processes in the natural complex reserve. This is the most extensive topic and includes data on areas, weather, water, flora and fauna. Section "Flora and vegetation" combines data on inventory of species, vegetation development, productivity berry. Section the «Fauna and animal population» combines data on various groups of animals: mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish, insects, hydrobionts. There is data on the ecology of individual species such as elk, deer, beaver, muskrat, Kingfisher, common crane and others. Also, this broad topic includes data

census of different groups of animals, the winter route accounting, collection and processing of cards of animals, etc.

Theme 2. Structural-functional organization of ecosystems and their components of the Oka nature reserve and adjacent territories. Here the successional processes at the sites of former fires are studied. From 2017, we began a study of the structural and functional organization of the Central lake-river system of Meshchera lowland.

Theme 3. Keeping, breeding and introduction to nature of rare species of animals. Here the scientific activity of two nurseries reserve (cranes and bison) are presented.

Theme 4. The development of approaches and recommendations for the conservation of ecosystems and biological diversity of animals and plants on the basis of long-term databases. Monitoring, development of geographic information systems, preparation of monographs and proceedings of the reserve are included in this topic.

Theme 5. Features of distribution and abundance of some bird species in the European center of Russia

8.2.2. Scientific publications

This year the scientific staff of the reserve was prepared and published 29 scientific articles, 11 scientific recommendations and guidelines

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulation

No changes

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

No changes

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

See 4

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

See 6.2, 6.3

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

See 7.2.1 We constantly hack a wood glade, support fire pits.

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

Approaches and thoroughfare are equipped with boards. This year 3 information boards were added. There are 2 car parks.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

This year, the repair in the laboratory of reserve was held. The laboratory was equipped with new furniture, fume hood.

10.1.5. Waste management

We take out the trash on the engineered landfill

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

Some cordons of the reserve are equipped with solar panels

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

No changes

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

Joint raids with Department of Internal Affairs, prosecuting authority, Russian guard have been held. Such raids will extend the power of our guards

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

-

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

58 environmental violations are revealed. 22 gears (networks) the illegal nature were seized. 58 administrative fines in the amount of 178 thousand roubles were imposed. 6 claims for damages in the amount of 15.825 thousand roubles was charged

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The diploma of the Council of Europe increases the authority of the reserve, provides moral support at various levels, both international and regional. The award of the Diploma may affect land users in the transfer to the reserve of part of the land (some have already agreed).

40. RUSSIAN FEDERATION – TEBERDA NATIONAL BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The tourist facilities in the protected area near Dombai will be neither extended nor developed. The co-operation between the reserve manager and the company running the tourist facilities on joint technical projects should be supported;
2. It will continue to be prohibited to drop off skiers by helicopter;
3. Any regionalization or privatization measures must in no way adversely affect the reserve's current protected status;

All the conditions are strictly met. Dombai tourist sites are not expanding. The management of the Teberdinsky Reserve closely cooperates with the management of the company managing the tourist infrastructure of Dombai, and also ensures that this infrastructure does not expand.

It is still forbidden to throw skiers from a helicopter and it is forbidden to fly a helicopter over the territory of the Teberdinsky reserve below 2000 meters. Privatization of land plots on the territory of the reserve is prohibited. Privatization of land near the reserve territory negatively affects the reserve and the preservation of its ecosystems. There are no difficulties in observing these conditions at the Teberda Reserve.

- 2. Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The management plan should be finalized and implemented;
2. Every effort should be made to provide the reserve with the funding required to maintain and, if possible, improve its functioning;
3. Information and education activities should continue to be further developed as far as possible. The new museum in Teberda should serve as a showcase of the reserve's exceptional heritage value;
4. Scientific research activities should be pursued and any results that have environmental management purposes should be published. The reserve's management should be given the necessary means to facilitate the access of scientists and foreign visitors to the work of the diploma site in the appropriate languages;
5. Cooperation with the nature conservation authorities in Georgia should be pursued and stepped up with a view to creating a transfrontier protected area;
6. The authorities should ensure that the Caucasus Polygon, which was officially established in February 2010, becomes effective.

Most recommendations are also being implemented.

A lot of work has been done to improve the facilities of the Teberda Reserve. Over the past 5 years, the financial security of the reserve has doubled. Information and educational activities are developing. In 2016, the reserve opened a new information visit center for visitors, which demonstrates the uniqueness and fragility of the natural ecosystems of the reserve. Scientific activity of the reserve is at a high level. Each year more than 40 articles and monographs are published. Every year on the territory of the reserve scientists from other countries also carry out scientific research, for example, the Netherlands, France, China, etc. The biosphere polygon of the Teberda Reserve, formed in 2010, is fully functioning. This polygon connected the territory of the Teberdinsky Reserve with the territory of the Caucasian Reserve and became a migration corridor, which favorably affects the preservation of ungulate and predatory animals.

Cooperation with the environmental authorities of Georgia continues. But so far, a transboundary protected territory with Georgia has not been created, due to political realities. In addition, there are no difficulties in implementing the recommendation of the reserve.

- 3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

During the reporting year, there were some positive changes in the management of the territory of the reserve. A zone of cooperation between the Teberda Reserve and the municipalities bordering the reserve was created. In addition, funding for the reserve has been increased. This has a positive effect on the conservation, scientific and environmental education of the reserve. The reserve employs 205 people. So the staff of the reserve is not reduced but on the contrary increases. We have no unresolved problems and difficulties in managing the territory.

- 4. Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please

attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Since the submission of the last annual report, there has been no change in the boundaries. There are no difficulties and unresolved problems along the border of the reserve. The boundary of the Teberda Reserve is clearly defined and it is cadastred.

- 5. Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The European diploma positively influences the image of the Teberdinsky Reserve as an environmental protected area. This helps to preserve and study the natural ecosystems of the reserve. Therefore, the availability of this diploma is important for the reserve.

41. HUNGARY - IPOLYTARNÓC PROTECTED AREA

1. Conditions:

The Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)15 on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Ipolytarnóc Protected Area (Hungary) (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 at the 1091st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) renewed the Diploma to Ipolytarnóc Fossils until 11 September 2020. During the renewal no special conditions were specified.

2. Recommendations:

The Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)15 attached the following 5 recommendations to the renewal:

I. Recognising the site's high potential for further discoveries of geological interest, research – especially the palaeontological excavations – should continue; all appropriate measures should be taken to preserve and, if possible, exhibit the natural resources; the results of scientific research should be made publicly available;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

Research on the fossil footprints on the geological study trail got expanded, dozens of new vertebrate taxons were identified. Lectures were given and research papers were uploaded to the mobile-optimized homepage of the site and were published in book format. Due to the discovered wetland paleoenvironment new animations were created and are in use in the high-tech interpretation. A new, GUIDE@HAND smartphone application was introduced in offline format on our geotrail.

II. The site should take an active role in the management of the Slovak-Hungarian transborder Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark, in order to preserve and interpret the natural assets of the region and to become a focal, multilingual information point for geotourism;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The trans-boundary Novohrad-Nograd UNESCO Global Geopark with the essential endorsement of the BNPD became member of the European and Global Geoparks Networks in 2010 and its membership got extended for further 4 years in 2014, on the spot revalidation is expected in 2018. Luckily, ties with the BNPD got closer and the Memorandum of Understanding was expanded between the two parties this year, yet the management structure of the geopark still excludes the nature conservation agencies in both countries. Although the BNPD could delegate one member (the leader of Ipolytarnoc) to the EGN Coordination Committee, yet further restructurings are needed for the effective geopark management.

The Global Geoparks were recognized by the UNESCO in 2015, and as a follow up the Government established the Hungarian Geopark Committee to endorse the initiative, the BNPD takes part in the Committee's work.

As the main gateway to the geopark, Ipolytarnoc promotes the geological heritage preservation of the region and advocates its resources to the visitors during special events, like the usual Geopark Week at the turn of May.

III. The entrance to the protected area should have an appropriate gateway displaying information in order to control tourism within the site and the buffer zone; the buildings along the geological trail should be further integrated into the landscape; the power line that runs between the village and the visitor centre should be replaced with an underground cable;

Action taken by the site to comply with the new recommendation:

There are information panels emplaced in front of the entrance gate, QR code and old Hungarian script alphabet are used beside Hungarian, Slovak and English languages.

Because of fire-protection restrictions vegetation cover of the prediploma buildings is limited. Nevertheless, there are project plans targeting EU funds, to modernize the visitor information system and erect landscape integrated and enlarged buildings in place of the old, industrial structures. Although there is no new development with the power line's replacement, yet a project plan focuses on underground cable laying. The BNPD intends to apply for funds to achieve this till 2020.

IV. The gradual replacement of the exotic trees with indigenous species should be continued by assisting the natural succession process through ecologically sensitive land management practices; the control of game – causing considerable damage to vegetation and protected animal species – should be continued;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

A larger scale forestry activity goes on covering some 10 hectares, where the former acacia forest section's transformation by indigenous tree samplings is going well, although fencing had to be introduced to prevent game over-browsing. Game management is an ongoing activity throughout the year, since the whole area is a specially designated hunting area managed by the BNPD.

V. The balance between open spaces and wooded areas on the western side of the conservation area, close to the nearby settlement, should be maintained to preserve the mosaic structure of the landscapes there;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

Effective animal husbandry, racka sheep grazing and hay cutting activities manage the mosaic-like structure of open spaces with forested areas at the buffer zone of the Fossils, the meadows are leased to local farmers there. In the border zone tree thinning on forest edges also maintains the mixed vegetation cover of the landscape.

3. Site Management:

The BNPD provides leadership and specialists' expertise from the Headquarters to the site. The mid-term contract for leasing the Visitor Centre to a company was terminated with mutual consent in the summer, the BNPD took back the operation of the building. To staffing it, 1 year-long, fixed-term labor contracts with 6 people from the previously employed ones for public service. Two maintenance positions are also filled up, besides, there are 3 in situ permanent staff members (including 2 rangers) running the site all around the year. The personnel enlargement is a welcome, huge development to ensure effective long-term management goals.

The Fossils provided a year-long seasonal work opportunity for the locally unemployed for public service. 10 people of the nearby 4 settlements were involved this year.

4.Boundaries:

No boundary changes concerned the site, its buffer and core zones are well defined.

5.Other information:

VIP visitors are frequent at the site, due to its prestige. Important bilateral meetings are held there; the significance of the European Diploma is well recognized. The logo of the Diploma is on all the publications and panels of the Ipolytarnóc Fossils, a flag with the Diploma emblem is in front of the Visitor Centre, the visibility is well maintained.

The media attention has been focusing on the new fossil footprint discoveries. Drone photos were taken to monitor vegetation changes of the site.



42. HUNGARY - SZÉNÁS HILLS PROTECTED AREA

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- no conditions

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. the management of the area should be carried out in close co-operation by the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company; the activities of the finished LIFE Programme, such as the conversion of Black pine forests, reduction of game populations, visitor management, guarding and monitoring, should be continued jointly; the area should be provided with human and financial resources commensurate with the site's national and European importance;

Results of the annual agreement of cooperation between the Danube -Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company:

- conservation of habitats: Black pine stand conversion – 200 m³
- monitoring of fenced sample areas – areas keeping big game out
- monitoring of the whole population of *Linum dolomiticum* (new research method too)
- monitoring of the Black pine succession
- employing environmental educator
- environmental education
- servicing of fence

2. inside and near the area, permission should be given only for such game population management operations as are strictly consonant with the nature conservation objectives assigned to the area, particularly as regards eradication of the mouflon and reduction of the population of large herbivores to a level compatible with the preservation of the dolomitic grasslands and natural woodlands; these population control operations should be planned on the basis of accurate population monitoring;

- The game population management (like the annual driven game shooting – in 2017 twice) is part of the agreement of cooperation between the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company. The 1st driven game shooting was held in 22th of November. Changes in numbers of big game population, resulting from fence building and the operation of game traps, are monitored also in the frame of the agreement.

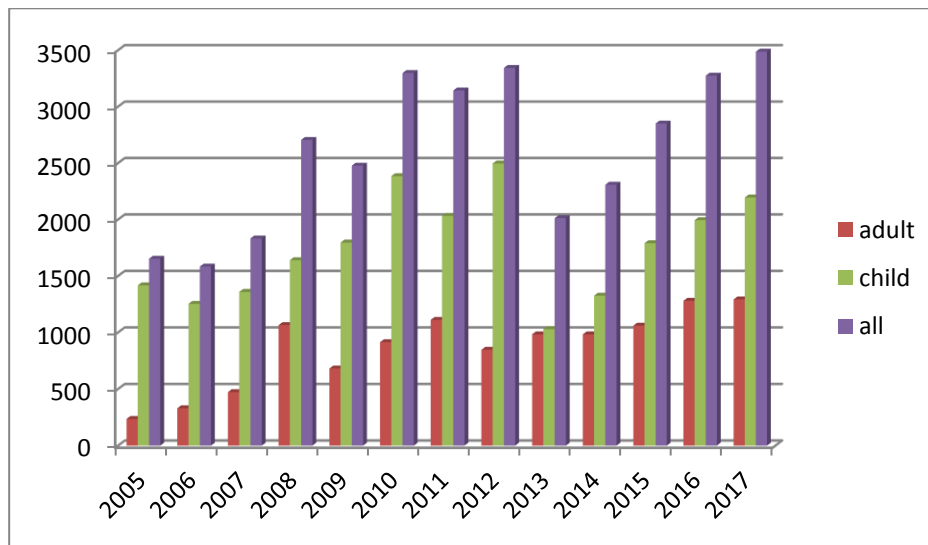
3. the fence enclosing the protected area must be maintained in good condition to prevent technical sport activities from encroaching upon it and also to raise the effectiveness of game population regulation;

- Maintaining of the fence is part of the agreement of cooperation between the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company. There were 200 000 HUF for this purpose this year.

4. visitor reception capacity should be increased by organising guided tours outside the most sensitive zones, to make the public more aware of the importance of preserving the habitats in the area; measures should be taken to prevent motor vehicles from crossing the area;

- The environmental educator (new colleague since 2014) holds a nature conservation course for local school children weekly, organizes guided nature trail tours for children regularly.
- This year the co-operation with the Pilis Forest Company and the Council of Pilisszentiván has expanded with several points, which help the efficient work. The settlement's leadership supports our work too, for example the environmental education work.

- We organize so many outdoor programmes and series of lectures for the local children (primary school, nursery school) continuously.
- Our rangers and the environmental educator regularly guide groups in the field to interpret the natural assets. The most popular guided tours are the *Linum dolomiticum* hikes in May. In the last two years more innovative programmes and thematic guided tours were entered. We joined the International Arbor and Bird Day (06/07/05/2017) too. We organized bird banding programmes, ‘Firebugs and Bats’ night tours in June, Star-gazing night tours in August (based on Perseids), Ecotourism and IT-technics (02/09/2017), ‘Bug tours’ (based on the biggest insect in Europe the bush-cricket (*Saga pedo*)), we had ‘Land art’ tour in October combining arts and hiking.
- Large-scale events were held on World Water Day (22/03/2017) and International Bird Watching Day (07/10/2017). The following programmes were held at these events: hydrobiological tests for children, free guided tours on the nature trail, open-air market of nature publications, bird banding.
- Field exercises were held for university students (several weeks).
- From the year 2016 new opportunities opened by a starter European project (VEKOP-4.2.1-15) in which we plan renewal and expansion our visitor centre. The construction works of the visitor centre are going to start in next year. We are going to renew the nature-trails (Jági), too. The concept plans are ready. We also presented the plans on a local forum (for the inhabitants of Pilisszentiván) in summer too. We have many tasks ahead of us.
- Next year, we would like to combine the new local archaeological excavations (celtic settlements of Pilisszentiván) into our nature trail (Jági).
- Last year, we applied for an INTERREG HUSK project with Nagykovácsi together. We are going to plan our nature trails renewal financed by this source. This co-operation based on a complex project, that Nagykovácsi has planned for so many years.
- Number of participants of professionally guided tours, nature conservation courses and volunteer activities in 2017: adult 1292, children 2195, all 3487 visitors.



5. regulations must be worked out for horse riding paths in the area; also a mountain bike trail should be designated so as to avoid the fenced and strictly protected area;

- no changes

6. the protected landscape status of the two areas adjoining the special protection area, which were also the subject of the diploma application, should be maintained to keep them functioning properly as buffer zones; construction in these areas should not be allowed;

- no changes this year

7. urbanisation pressure must be handled properly; any new development plans of Nagykovácsi, Pilisszentiván and Piliscsaba should be examined carefully;

- no changes this year

8. co-operation with volunteers (schools, non-governmental organisations, local governments, scouts) must be continued, as well as with local residents, police and civil guards.

- Managing some team building days of different groups (mainly company groups) in the zone C. In these occasions cutting of Black pine, planting of deciduous tree plants or planting wooden equipment of the nature trails was accomplished.
- Leading field exercises for university students (several groups from two universities). The students did some conservation jobs (cutting of Black pine and invasive tree species, planting of deciduous tree plants) and guided tours were held for them to introduce the area and its natural assets.
- The local civil guards help our works (regular patrolling, habitat reconstruction works).
- We have some volunteers helping us regularly in the environmental education works.
- Every year, we have “trainees” from universities. It’s a good opportunity for them to learning, but at the same time, they help our work, too.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- We started the new comprehensive in-situ species conservation experiment of *Linum dolomiticum*. We have to research climatic aptitudes of the area, because the population development of *Linum dolomiticum* and the habitat’s microclimate is influenced by the global warming, indirectly. We have to research the effect of the climatic changes.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- no changes

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

In spring, our rangers acted in a new movie (for a national channel), which demonstrate the special protection and the unique nature values of the Szénás-Hills EDPA, too. The movie is coming soon, next summer.

43. BELARUS – BEREZINSKY STATE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Conditions:

1. *The protection regime and ownership of the land should be kept unchanged.*

Ownership of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve remained unchanged and thus, there were no changes in the reserve's current protection status. Protection regime of the reserved area is carried out in accordance with the current nature protection laws.

2. Recommendations:

1. *Sufficient resources need to be generated both by the Government and by the Reserve – to protect effectively the biodiversity resources and to continue scientific research. In addition to extra-budgetary sources of income, other sources should be tapped especially in cooperation with NGOs such as Akhova Ptushak Batskaushchyny (APB) – BirdLife Belarus, and WWF.*

In order to increase the efficiency of the protection of natural systems and to conduct the scientific research, a full range of activities scheduled for 2017 has been performed in accordance with the State program "Environment protection and sustainable use of nature resources for the years 2016-2020": information and indication signs have been constructed and installed along the boundaries of the reserve; a fire engine have been bought; a number of measures aimed at control the invasive alien species of wild plants has been implemented; advertising and informational printed materials about the reserve have been prepared and published, 6 information boards have been installed about the positive role of dead wood in forest ecosystems.

At the expense of funds of the Union State of Russia and Belarus a multi-year project (2015 -2017 years) was completed in the Reserve on the following topic: "To develop a pilot geo-information system (GIS) of satellite monitoring of marshes for the purpose of their protection and restoration under intensive anthropogenic impact".

The realization of a two-year (2016-2017) scientific project on the topic "Natural succession of forest ecosystems after different types of anthropogenic disturbances" is being continued at the expense of the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Fundamental Research.

2. *Further efforts should be taken to prevent negative effects of fragmentation of the Reserve by the M3 road, and to preserve the integrity of the core zone.*

Monitoring has been continued to assess the impact of the M3 road on death of large mammals (registration of cases, places and time of death) and the effectiveness of the existing crossings for amphibians. Negotiations were held with the State Automobile Inspectorate on the possibility of reducing the speed limit on the M3 road in the night time. Along the road dead and fallen trees are preserved, shrubs are not cut down.

3. *Further study of the dynamics of the mammal populations, animal movements and fauna migration between the core and the buffer zones should be carried out – to monitor the current situation affected by hunting.*

Implementation of the following parts of scientific and research work has been continued in 2017: "Analysis of modern state and perspectives of development of theriocomplexes of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve", "Analysis of modern state of diurnal birds of prey on the territory of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve". Measures for feeding and evaluation of the state of the free-living herd of bison in accordance with Action plan for the conservation and sustainable use of bisons' micropopulation in the Republic of Belarus for the years 2015 - 2019 have been realized. The network of photo-traps (15 pieces) usage in the places of big mammals' (ungulates and predators) migration has been expanded.

4. *Continue with the efforts for ensuring that the development of tourism is well controlled.*

Tourism development is controlled effectively on the basis of scientific research. With assistance of the scientific department the recommendations for the organization and conduction of ecological tours on observation of wild animals in natural habitats were made. One-day weekend excursions into the wildlife of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve were conducted from March to September of the current year under

the guidance and supervision of the research department staff. Primary emphasis is made on the ecological education of population.

Changes and additions were made to the management plan of the Berezinsky Reserve in terms of determining ecological paths and routes on the territory of the reserve. In accordance with the new edition of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Specially Protected Areas" for the development of ecological tourism. The changes were made in compliance with the procedure for public hearings.

In 2017 was created "The Center of mythological tourism" in the frames of «green» initiative "Ecotourism in the Berezinsky: innovative approaches, partnership models, "green" consciousness". The activities are funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Program in Belarus through Belorussian nongovernmental association "Rest in Countryside" in the framework of the project "Supporting the Transition to a Green Economy in the Republic of Belarus".

Proper information policy to attract visitors for the purpose of environmental education is carried out.

5. In order to mitigate possible risks and hazards connected with climatic changes and possible large-scale disturbances on the reserve, the study program focused on these topics should be carried out.

Realization of research subject "Complex analysis of state and dynamics of nature ecosystems of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, scientific support to its protection and sustainable use" continues in the Reserve within the state program "Biological diversity, biological and forest resources in terms of climate change and development of innovative environmental technology" has been accepted for execution and included in the work plan for 2016 - 2020". In accordance with this recommendation, the studies are conducted on the topics "Influence of climatic changes, anthropogenous and zoogenous factors on the hydrological regime of wetlands of the Reserve" and "Dynamics of the structure of forest ecosystems of the Reserve in the conditions of long-term regime of strict protection".

3. Site Management:

After annual audit conducted by the staff of the certificated organization FSC Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve has confirmed the certificate for the system of forest management and supply chain of FSCTM available until 2020.

The main activities planned for the current year as part of the Berezinsky Reserve Management Plan for the five-year period 2015-2019 have been implemented.

During the reporting period new jobs were created, which increased the staff of the Berezinsky reserve by 4 people.

4. Boundaries:

The boundaries of the Reserve in the current year have not been changed.

5. Other information:

Employees of the Berezinsky Reserve took part in the work of the International Congress of National Committees MAB and biosphere reserves of Europe and North America, EuroMAB-2017 "Building a sustainable future together", in Sarlat la Caned, biosphere reserve Basin de la Dordogne (France) and the First World Youth Forum of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program "Biosphere Reserves: Opportunities for Growth and Development", in Porto Viro, Biosphere Reserve "Delta River Po" (Italy).

Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve extensively uses the logo of the European diploma. Thus, in the presentations at the above mentioned events this logo was used. A logo and a brief information about awarding the reserve the European Diploma is put on the official website of the protected area <http://www.berezinsky.by/> in the sections "Partners" and "General information", as well as a link to the website of the Council of Europe. It is possible to acquaint oneself with the original of the

European Diploma awarded to the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve in 1995 in the Museum of nature conservation history, which is located in the visitor center.

44. NETHERLANDS – NATIONAL PARK WEERRIBBEN-WIEDEN

1. Conditions: List here all conditions that were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Urge the responsible authorities to adopt the joint Natura 2000 management plan, by the end of 2016, as an official and binding document that will be considered as covering the requirements of the European Diploma;

The Province of Overijssel is responsible for drawing up the N2000 Management Plan.

After some delay, the N2000 Management Plan was at last finalised. A copy was sent by e-mail to the Council in July 2017.

The implementation of the PAS (Process-based Nitrogen Approach) has been postponed. Due to the large number of intended management measures in the Weerribben, an environmental impact report must be drawn up in advance of the implementation. This does not apply to all the measures in the Wieden. In the case of some of the PAS measures, Natuurmonumenten will only start in 2018. This concerns measures that are not subject to an EIA requirement.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations that were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. *Implement a monitoring programme to evaluate the effects – at least on important and/or endangered species – of the new connection between the Weerribben and the Wieden, the construction of which was finished at the end of 2014, considering the exemplary role of the project;*

In 2017, a start was made on collecting observations of the larger mammals by means of trace research.

Traces of otter, deer, fox and martens have been found under the bridge. Points of special interest were the presence of the Large Copper in areas on either side of the Steenwijk-Blokzijl road. On the Weerribben side, small populations were found in two places, the nearest was 500 m from the road and 700 m from the nature bridge. Further research into the use of the bridge will continue in 2018.

2. *Monitor the further development of fish stocks, with the emphasis on eels, to strengthen the ecological function of the reserves and natural reproduction in line with Natura 2000 requirements;*

Natuurmonumenten is now in the process of terminating the lease agreements with the fishermen fishing for eel in the Wieden. This will continue in 2018.

3. *Limit the impact of fishing by defining a maximum number of licenses or limiting the catch; define methods for avoiding secondary catches of otter or other species; ensure the further development of a management plan for fish stocks covering all species, as requested in the previous resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma;*

Angling in the Wieden is possible but on a very small scale. There are still only 3 fishing companies active in the Wieden and that will be reduced even further in the future. See answer to question 2. There are no longer professional fishermen active in the Weerribben, although there is some angling in restricted places.

4. *Carefully observe the development of boating on the Kalenberger Gracht and set limits (for example a maximum number and/or size of boats) or provide for measures in the event of increasing numbers of larger boats;*

No changes.

5. *Continue with the designation of adjoining areas as extensions of, or buffer zones to the protected areas, especially to the north (Rottige Meente) and south-east (Staphorster Veld), and create a connection between the two separate parts of the Wieden Nature Reserve between the Zuideindiger Wiede and the Bovenwiede;*

Following the adoption of the N2000 Management Plan, the province of Overijssel organised meetings this autumn to explain its plans to the residents. It is not yet clear when these will be carried out. Within the terms of the PAS, the province of Overijssel will work on the connection between Rottige Meente and the development of Noordmanen, which must be completed by 2023.

In the zone between the Bovenwiede and the Zuideindigerwiede, a few farmers are encouraging herb and fauna-rich grassland to create a type of corridor between these two areas. They are still working hard on this.

6. *Review contracts with business owners and landowners with regard to habitat management, and especially the duration of these contracts, to ensure that management can be directed by the responsible authorities and to prevent long-term and irredeemable contracts whereby the reserve authorities have limited leverage;*

In 2016, agreement was reached with the reed sector and the Province of Overijssel on changes in the Provincial Nature and Landscape subsidy (SNL). With the new subsidy scheme, the threatening problem of VAT levying for reed growers was averted. Staatsbosbeheer supervises the management which is carried out by the tenants. The Province pays 80% of the management fee directly to the reedland tenants.

In 2017, Natuurmonumenten started a natural farming course for its tenants and a number of farmers have already completed the first stage of this course. The course will be extended in 2018 to include other farmers (tenants) as well as the next stages of the study.

7. *Observe possible threats that may occur due to the intensification of agriculture, changes in water management or construction of wind farms;*

Flight path over Weerribben-Wieden National Park.

In 2015, the government decided to expand Lelystad Airport, which needs to be operational for tourist flights in 2019. The new airport will have flights approaching from all corners of the world, including from above the province of Overijssel. The final approach routes have now been published.

At most places in the Kop van Overijssel, Salland and the Vechtdal areas, the aeroplanes will be flying above Overijssel at an altitude of 6,000 feet (1,500-1,800 metres).

For the National Park this means that one of the routes will fly over the nature reserve. And there will be a type of holding stack above the National Park, where aeroplanes will continue to circle until they receive permission to land at Lelystad Airport. We do not exactly know what this means in terms of emissions above the area and the resulting disruption to people and animals.

Many concerned residents have filed a petition with the authorities and are opposed to these low approach routes. On behalf of its members, Natuurmonumenten has submitted an opinion on this expansion of Lelystad Airport, <https://www.natuurmonumenten.nl/over-natuurmonumenten/pers-en-nieuws/nieuws/zienswijze-natuurmonumenten-uitbreiding-lelystad-airport>.

8. *Secure adequate funds to convert the Ossenzijl Information Centre, at least in part, into an educational centre geared towards young people.*

The nature trail near the Weerribben Visitor Centre in Ossenzijl has been renovated this year and made accessible to wheelchair users. The educational part of it will be completed next spring. In collaboration with the IVN Nature Volunteer Organisation, various educational programmes have been carried out in the National Park this year with the focus on primary school pupils. There are also ongoing talks to renew the Weerribben Outdoor Centre in Ossenzijl. Initially, a new start will be attempted with existing entrepreneurs. The Centre will serve as a gateway to the National Park.

In the Wieden Visitor Centre the slatted path has been renovated. This slatted path was repaired by a group of volunteers from Natuurmonumenten, who have been working on it throughout the entire year. It is now easily accessible to wheelchair users, for example, so that they can also enjoy the experience of the Wieden.

The active Junior Rangers group of the Weerribben-Wieden National Park celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. These young people in the age group of 12 to 18 help with maintenance, the monitoring of plants and animals, and with educational and nature events.

In addition to this group of youngsters, there are also 2 youth nature clubs active in the National Park where children aged 7 to 12 can participate.

3 Site Management: *List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.*

After the reorganisation at Natuurmonumenten, the Management Team was reinforced with two wardens for communication and for optimising the experiential aspects, and two other wardens for monitoring and management activities respectively.

The State and the Province of Overijssel have delegated the tasks relating to the National Parks to the municipality of Steenwijkerland. A Core Team in which the various interested parties and the organisations responsible for the management of the Parks are represented, is considering the position of the New-Style National Park.

In February 2017, the Core Team presented its final recommendations. In these recommendations, the proposals made by the Core Team in May 2016 were examined in greater depth. For example, there is now a long-term implementation programme and a proposal for an independent organisation in the form of a foundation.

The Municipal Executive and the Municipal Council of the municipality of Steenwijkerland are in agreement with these final recommendations. The municipality of Steenwijkerland has also made funds available for various projects for the years 2017 and 2018.

The Weerribben-Wieden Foundation

- focuses on ensuring tourist brand development and visibility in the area;
- stimulates cooperation between the sectors in the area and with the government;
- operates in a project-oriented manner on the demonstrable added value of the two-unit economy and ecology;
- aims to make visible and strengthen the synergy between the National Park and the region;
- stands for a welcoming and congenial area for residents and entrepreneurs;
- is an organisation in which the area partners participate on the basis of respect, trust and equality;
- is an organisation that is smart (effective and efficient) and responsive.

On 1 November, Jurr van Dalen was appointed Director of the Weerribben-Wieden Foundation

4 Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered

In 2017, Natuurmonumenten purchased a number of small plots at the border of the Wieden to be used in order to achieve the Natura 2000 targets. This will be expanded further in 2018 with the help of the province which purchases areas and transfers them to Natuurmonumenten to be established as nature reserves

5 Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The Wieden nature vision has been completed. The nature vision will be shared with residents, businesses and holidaymakers.

Meanwhile, a start has been made with putting our management data into the new management system (CMSi software); this will be continued in the coming years.

Natuurmonumenten and Staatsbosbeheer have all their data in CMSi, and we are currently working out our nature management in combination with the OGIS Geographic Information System (GIS) programme. Still ongoing. Natuurmonumenten has processed all its nature management in CMSi and now works fully with Ogis.

Visitors – Information policy:

Since 2016, Natuurmonumenten has been maintaining and operating a ferry service between the various villages in the Wieden: Giethoorn, Blokzijl and St. Jansklooster. With a special electrically-driven boat (the ecoliner), cyclists and ramblers can experience the area better, both on land and on water, and recreational routes connect well with each other.

This year, 23 entrepreneurs attended the Hosting Workshop. The aim of this workshop is to involve entrepreneurs more in the activities of the National Park, in nature and in local cultural-historical values.

The Weerribben-Wieden Foundation intends to focus more on brand development in the area in the coming years. Through greater collaboration with its partners outside the National Park, these outside areas will also be referred to as the Weerribben-Wieden. In order to show the joint brand's visibility, with the permission of entrepreneurs, land management organisations and the municipality, a new logo has been developed which reflects the coherence and balance between ecology and economy.

Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, incidental or permanent, actual or anticipated:

In order to implement the PAS measures, specific sites where these measures are planned have been examined for the presence of vegetation and breeding birds. The results will be used when choosing the sites to be developed in order to prevent harm to protected species or habitat types. This data is also needed for obtaining permits and exemptions.

Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes:

In the Weerribben, we have observed an increase in floating fen species; Galigan (*Cladium marsiscus*) in particular, is increasing significantly, especially in the cut reedlands. Also species such as Flat-leaved Bladderwort (*Urticularia intermedia*), Small Bur-reed (*Sparganium*

minimum) and Bog Orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*) have found a new habitat. This increase is mainly the result of the good water quality. The areas of Water Soldier (*Stratiodes alloides*) are also still increasing. In some areas, terrestrialisation has progressed so much already that small fields of Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolium*) are forming as pioneers to the new floating reed vegetations.

At the beginning of October, a fourth spot of the rare Yellow Scorpidium Moss (*Scorpidium scopioides*) was discovered in the Wieden. This is a spot where Red and Green Scorpidium Moss were already found, but now also the Yellow Scorpidium Moss. This Yellow Scorpidium Moss is found in 4 other places in the Netherlands, but it was first found in the Wieden, namely in the Meppelerdieplanden. It is monitored every 2 years and the location in the Meppelerdieplanden has been expanding in recent years.

Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds:

Mammals

It is 15 years ago this year that otters were reintroduced into the Netherlands. The starting population of 32 animals, which were released in the Weerribben-Wieden National Park, has now increased to 185 animals spread over seven provinces.

There are still obstacles, particularly on the north side of the Weerribben, that prevent the otter from migrating towards the province of Friesland. Within the framework of the PAS, work is being done on a connection between the Weerribben and the Rottige Meenthe marsh area in Friesland. This will resolve some of the obstacles, but its implementation will only take place in 2021.

Last winter, a Raccoon Dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoids*) stayed in the Weerribben. Within the framework of a national investigation into the behaviour of raccoon dogs in the Netherlands, attempts have been made to catch and tag the animal. However, these were not successful.

Despite the many wildlife exits, two badgers (*Meles meles*) drowned last winter in the Steenwijk Ossenzijl canal, which runs along the east side of the Weerribben. These were the first observations of this marten species in the area. The badgers probably came from around the woodlands on the higher grounds around Steenwijk, east of the Weerribben. The badger is increasing significantly here, so we expect that more observations will be made in the future.

Birds

Many Kingfishers were spotted this year with around 16 pairs breeding in the Wieden.

This year, 2017, 16 breeding pairs of Great Bitterns, 21 pairs of Marsh Harriers, 76 pairs of Purple Herons, and 114 pairs of Black Terns bred here, 3 pairs of which on natural material. There was an increase in the number of Black Terns this year, this is an opportunistic species.

There were many foraging Purple Herons and Spoonbills observed in the Wieden. Other special species observed in the new marshes were Glossy Ibis, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Little Gull, Red-necked Grebe, Little Tern, White-winged Tern and Whiskered Tern. The number of sightings of Osprey and White tailed Eagle are increasing, it may be the start of a breeding attempt.

In 2017, a total of 1,150 ha were surveyed for breeding birds in the Weerribben, which is approximately a third of the area. In the northeast, a block of 845 ha was investigated in which the following rare species were found: 2 pairs of Marsh Harrier, 4 pairs of Bittern, 23 pairs of Common Snipe, 19 pair of Grasshopper Warbler, 27 pairs of Savi's Warbler, 195 pairs of Sedge Warbler, 11 pairs of Bluethroat.

Furthermore, the Woldlakerbos in the southeast was surveyed for breeding birds, there were only a few marshbirds here: 1 pair of Bittern, 1 Common Snipe, 3 Grasshopper Warblers, 6 Sedge Warblers. Significant were the high numbers of Yellowhammers, no fewer than 19 pairs, we also counted many Golden Orioles: 6 pairs.

Black Terns have bred in 2 locations in the Weerribben, both on breeding rafts. Thirty pairs bred on the old site near the neighbourhood of Nederland, there was a new nesting place in the central part, which had 1 pair. In the new Wetering East and West marshes, geese did particularly well with no fewer than 180 pairs. Furthermore, the Purple Heron colony in Wetering West expanded from 5 to 19 pairs. No fewer than 7 pairs of Bittern were found in the two areas, about half the Weerribben population. Furthermore, there were 4 Bearded Tit territories and 2 for Baillon's Crakes.

In addition to rare breeding birds, many rare migrants and winter guests used the area such as the White-tailed Eagle, Osprey, Hen Harrier, Great Grey Shrike, Red-necked Grebe, Little Gull, White-winged Black Tern, the Whiskered Tern, and even Little Terns were observed.

Dragonflies

An inventory was carried out in the Wieden. Started in 2013, this inventory now includes the whole Wieden area, a report of this was prepared. An extraordinary sight is the dozens the Small pearl-bordered fritillary (*Boloria selene*) that are often seen in June. The Dainty White-faced Darter (*Leucorrhinia caudalis*) was also increasingly observed at more locations in 2016. The Spotted darter (*Sympetrum depressiusculum*) was seen this year for the first time in the Wieden, and the Large White-faced Darter (*Leucorrhinia pectoralis*) is seen everywhere in wind-free locations.

This inventory in the Wieden was restarted in 2017 so that, in 2021, the entire Park will have been surveyed for butterflies, dragonflies and grasshoppers.

In the Weerribben, a two-year inventory of dragonflies, grasshoppers, and butterflies was carried out, ending in 2017. Here are some results: the Spotted Darter is still doing very well; there is a large population of some hundred Spotted Darters in the central section of the Weerribben and many new populations have been found throughout the area. The Dainty White-faced Darter is still booming in the Weerribben, and it can be found in every site where there is shallow water, especially in reed fields where sods are cut. The species has now also been found outside the Weerribben in de Wieden and other marshes; these are populations that originated from the Weerribben. The Norfolk Damselfly is still only seen flying in one spot and is therefore very vulnerable. The population consists of around 2,000 individuals. In total 50 species of dragonflies are found in the Weerribben, it is one the most important dragonfly areas in the Netherlands.

Butterflies.

In recent years, a fauna inventory was carried out in the whole of the Wieden. The Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*) was seen in some new locations, and the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria selene*) was also seen again in large numbers. One Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar batava*) is believed to have been observed in the Wieden this year.

Behind the scenes, together with the Province and Staatsbosbeheer, we are working hard on a new plan for the return of the Large Copper. The connection with the Weerribben in particular will be improved.

In the Weerribben, there were more sightings of the Large Copper butterfly, than in previous years. This is probably due to the postponed start of the mowing of the haylands, so there was already an area of habitat. In the egg counting site of the Large Copper no big differences were seen. On some sites there was a decline, but on others there was an increase in this butterfly. In

2017 more attention was given to the protection of the reproduction sites and the feeding areas. In the eastern part of the Weerribben in particular, a lot of egg locations were found and protected.

Cultural heritage:

In the Weerribben, one of the authentic Tjasker mills has been renovated, this could be realised due to the tremendous efforts of volunteers.

In the Wieden, the peat shed was rebuilt after it had burnt down. The shed has been refurbished for visitors to the Visitor Centre. The story of peat winning in the Wieden is explained here.

The complete cultural history of the Wieden has been mapped out and a report will be published on this at the end of this year. Natuurmonumenten will highlight specific points throughout the area where the landscape itself demonstrates something about its history; in this way, visitors can also experience this aspect of the landscape.

45. FINLAND – SEITSEMINEN NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Implement the new master plan for the Seitseminen National Park and evaluate by 2014 if there is a need of a new updated management plan.
Implementation is going on and no need of an updated management plan has occurred.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Inform the Secretariat of the result of the management effectiveness evaluations (Report of the state of the parks) which will be made at five years intervals;
Seitseminen National Park is completely overlapping with European Union Natura 2000 site FI0311002 (SAC - Special Area of Conservation). The National park and Natura 2000 site are covered by an integrated management plan which takes into account all key values, threats and pressures and necessary conservation and other measures.
The former site-specific Management effectiveness evaluation (MEE) has been replaced by a formalized Natura 2000 Site Condition Assessment (NATA). This assessment is conducted every 6/12 years, as necessary. The first NATA assessment of Seitseminen NP/ Natura 2000 site FI0311002 was done in 2010 and the results were taken into account in the subsequent management plan. In the Pirkanmaa regional master plan (2017) an update was evaluated as not being urgent for this site. However, management effectiveness indicators (e.g. habitat management impacts, condition of visitor facilities and trends in visitor numbers etc.) are followed continuously/annually.

2. Continue the restoration plans for both mires and forests; continue arrangements for the appropriate grazing of meadows to encourage their biodiversity;
- grazing complying as planned.
- 25 hectares mires restored.

3. Metsähallitus should continue to bring together people with interests in biodiversity so as to foster the transfer and exchange of knowledge; scientific research should actively continue;

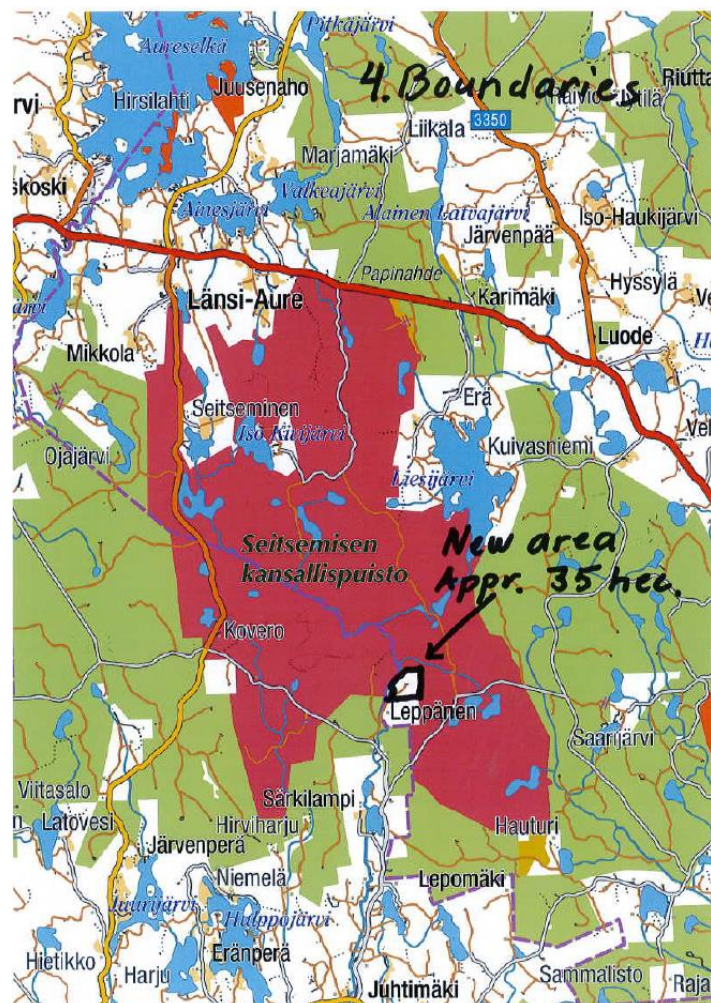
- complying as planned. Group of Finnish specialists on mires visited restored sites in mires
- 4. Deepen co-operation with local stakeholders, especially in the nature tourism sector:
 - complying as planned. Several events were organized for the local nature tourism enterprises.
- 5. Provide the necessary funding to continue the renovation of the recreational facilities; customer services and nature interpretation should be further developed;
 - complying as planned.

1. **Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes.

2. **Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

State bought an area about 35 hectares to the National Park. See map



3. **Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

46. FINLAND - EKENÄS ARCHIPELAGO NATIONAL PARK

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Condition: within one year finalise and complete the approval process of the management plan (master plan) which itself will include plans to enlarge the national park.

Situation: Management plan was accepted year 2012 and it included the plan to enlarge the national park. Metsähallitus also made year 2014 a report/appraisal on the needs of the existing marine national parks including Ekenäs archipelago national park. It included the same suggestion on enlargement but the inventory data and biological, especially marine values were explained more detailed. More precise landuse plan (zoning) concerning the eastern part of Jussarö island was completed year 2015 to define more precisely which parts should be added to national park, this work as official procedure has continued 2016-2017 with authorities.

In 2017, the Ministry of Environment started the enactment process of nature reserves in Uusimaa region. The national parks planned enlargement area, Segelskär (appr. 6200ha to be established by a government statute) next to national park, was included in the process. This ensures the protection of this area before the enlargement of the national park itself.

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Make efforts to implement all aspects on the new management plan
 - Implementation has been described in annual reports.
2. Inform the Secretariat of the result of the management effectiveness evaluations (Report of the state of the parks) which will be made at five years intervals;
 - No changes after 2016. The management effectiveness evaluation (MEE) has been replaced by formalised Natura 2000 Site condition assesment (NATA). The renewal of Ekenäs archipelago NATA is anticipated by 2020.
3. Continue the management of habitat types and species, particular attention should be paid to
 - the inventory of marine habitats and improvement of methods involved: has been continuing and complied as planned also year 2017.
 - the restoration for damaged communities and the control of alien species: has been complied annually as planned. Again, one new derogation for mink and raccoon dog control was issued to a new hunter, with the aim of minimizing the predation on nesting water birds.
4. Continue to pay close attention to the recreational facilities and educational issues, in particular
 - improve the safety, quality and quantity of the infrastructure
 - further develop customer service and interpretation and

- raise the public awareness of nature conservation in Ekenäs Archipelago National Park:

New developments were not made in year 2017. Metsähallitus applied with partners funding from Interreg Central Baltic programme to improve the facilities in Jussarö. The funding was granted and project will take place during 2018-2020. Approximately 190 000 euros will be invested to Jussarös service (piers, recreational infrastructure).

5. Review and where necessary renew the regulations of the national park within two years:

Totally complied. New regulations were given year 2013.

6. Deepen co-operation with local stakeholders, especially in the nature tourism sector:

- Complying as planned. Several events have been organized during years.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

See sections 6-9 for details and explanations.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The diploma and logo can be seen in Ekenäs Visitor Centre. The logo is also in the information boards at the nationalpark and in the nationalpark leaflet/brochure. The logo is also on national park and visitor centre webpages (Finnish, Swedish and English pages).

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation:

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated: no changes

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes: peatland vegetation & insects are returning steadily on restored peatlands.

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds.

Invasive small predators have been removed during 2017, within the same frames as during previous years.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage. No changes.

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context: No changes

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
No changes.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Estimated number of visits to Ekenäs Visitor Centre is 16081 visitors year 2017, guided groups 156 and number of persons in guided groups approximately 1 932. Customer service satisfactory index is 4,51 out of 5 being maximum. Number of visits to national park year 2017 was approximately 55 000, of which Rödjan was 8 000 and Jussarö 11 000.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

No distinguished persons or groups.

8.2. Scientific research:

8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

Marine bottom habitat inventories with scuba diving and drop video continued in national park year 2017 concentrated on 15 coastal lagoons and open water inventories on outer archipelago. Special notice was put to inventory methods and improving them.

8.2.2. Scientific publications:

Marine inventories conducted on this area during years 2005-2016 were included to Parks & Wildlife Finland's report "Meri ja rannikon suojelualueiden tietotarpeet - MeriHOTT-hankkeen loppuraportti" <http://julkaisut.metsa.fi/julkaisut/show/2069>

Soft bottom species study conducted on this area in year 2012 were included on scientific article "Template for using biological trait grouping when exploring large-scale variation in seafloor multifunctionality". Villnäs et al., Ecological Applications 2017.

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations: No changes

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.): no changes

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve): no changes

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

A 3-day volunteer camp checked again (started year 2011) all the known patches of invasive species *Rosa rugosa* (ca. 14 [a couple of new patches]) + surroundings. All the patches were re-

treated and now on all sites there is left only 1 - 15 small stems of *R. rugosa* left. *R. rugosa* has died completely on 9 patches so the work is helping.

Young pines & birches were removed from *Salsola kali* (EN) site in Jussarö southern beach. The population of *S. kali* here is one the few vital remaining in the Gulf of Finland. The picking up of the young tree seedlings has been done annually during last 3 years and earlier every other year.

The control of invasive species (mink, racoon dog and whitetailed deer) has continued as in previous years. Even more efforts has been put into the eradication of all three species.

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime): no changes

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

No changes in 2017.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities): no changes

10.1.5. Waste management: no changes

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems: no changes

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made: From the beginning of the year 2018 new Coastal area will take place in organisation. Mr Henrik Jansson will start as a regional director in the Coastal area of Metsähallitus Park and Wildlife.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made: no changes made

10.2.3. Internal policing measures: no internal policy measures during 2017.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action: only minor infringement of regulations were discovered and no legal actions were taken.

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

47. BELARUS – BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The implementation of the new conservation law in the National Park, including the implementation on site of the relevant conservation management plan attached to the new zonation, is completed within a period of three years:

A new park regulation was adopted in 2012. This regulation has been implemented since that time.

Conservation management plan (Management plan) of the National park was revised in 2015 broad participation of stakeholders for the period of 2016-2020 and is currently implemented.

2. Any development with possible negative effects on the National Park and its integrity, including the buffer zones, should be subject to an environmental impact assessment and the National Park authorities should be duly consulted:

Under the current environmental legislation, conducting any types of infrastructure works inside a national park and its buffer zone, except for construction in the settlements are possible only after the EIA with the participation of the national park administration.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Continue the move from economically driven to ecologically driven management by reducing the forestry activities in the regulated zones and special habitats in other parts of the National Park, by excluding parcels with old trees in all zones (including the buffer zones) from logging, and by presenting data on harvested wood volumes in the annual reports:

Removing the timber not conducted in strictly protected areas (58 th.ha) and the especially protected areas outside the strict protection (5 th.ha). The obtaining of timber is prohibited at 90% of the old-age stands (over 100 years old). The annual volume of timber harvested in 2017 amounted to 150 thousand cubic meters, mainly in the artificial forests and secondary or artificial forests less the 100 years old.

2. Working with the Government of Belarus, ensure that the National Park authorities have the responsibility for the management of a. the zones of special significance for specific habitats outside the strictly protected areas, b. the buffer zones and c. the game zones within the boundaries of the National Park

There is an interaction and constant monitoring on the management of resources of the National Park by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

The National park has responsibility for the management of these zones according to the relevant legislation - Law on the protection of the environment and the Provision on the National park "Belovezhskaja pushcha"

3. Discussions between the National Park authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture to compensate an agricultural area of 2 000 ha recently excluded from the National Park, by including abandoned agricultural areas elsewhere – also in the buffer zones – and by promoting a gradual intensification of agricultural activities leading to semi-natural habitats (hayfields and low-intensity, grazed meadows with only moderate or no use of fertilizers)

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park interacts constantly with the district authorities on the transfer of areas of former agricultural land bordering or surrounded by the diploma holding area. In 2014, this cooperation led to the transfer of around 150 hectares of ex farmlands to the park, which are managed henceforth by the park administration.

Also 14 hectares of forest-covered area of Shereshevo game forestry were included in the National Park territory.

4. Working with the Government of Belarus, increase budgets for both applied ecological research and nature conservation activities in view of the principles of sustainable management either currently present in, or to be included in, the management plan; special attention is needed both within the National Park and its buffer zones for a. hydrological restoration of all wetland (bog and marsh) ecosystems surrounding the forest, b. water and soil quality in river valleys and c. semi-natural traditionally managed or abandoned farmland

In the framework of government program for the development of nature protected areas for 2015 – 2019 and joint programs of the National Park, "APB-BirdLife Belarus" and the Frankfurt Zoological society (Germany) activities for ecological research and nature conservation in 2017 were funded in the amount of 120.000 euro.

5. Reconsider the management of large herbivores with a view to reducing the winter food supply so as to prevent abnormally large population densities (overpopulation), rather than reducing excess numbers by

continued or increased hunting practices; this is motivated by aiming to alleviate possible damage to both forestry and agriculture.

Since 2012 winter feeding of ungulates is being reduced. 54 winter feeding places have been dismantled after they became part of the strictly protected area. Currently, the winter feeding of ungulates is conducted only at peripheral area of national park, mainly in the economic activity zone and Shereshevo game forestry.

On the area of 65 thousand hectares, mainly in the old-growth forest, current legislation forbids feeding of wild animals and regulation of their numbers.

6. Continue research on the genetic aspects of the bison populations, applying the results to further investigate the restoration of a transboundary migration corridor with Poland

Research on bison has been conducted continuously since the last renewal; this research has led to find the presence of Caucasian subspecies gene pool in the diploma holding area. The process of creation such corridors is suspended until decision on expediency of genetic exchange between two populations.

7. - Carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA) concerning mass tourism in the heart of the National Park, including a reappraisal of the boundaries, location and zoning of “Father Frost’s Manor”, and the effects of traffic and pollution, taking into account the increased accessibility of the National Park; in the annual reports state how any concerns demonstrated by the EIA are being addressed in practice.

It’s conducted constant monitoring of the number of visitors to the “Father Frost’s Manor”, in order to determine its impact on the environment and to avoid exceeding the limit of visitor’s number.

8. Monitor and evaluate the ecological side effects of a. the new bypass road, b. the use of fauna tunnels (eco-tunnels) by various species (such as herpetofauna, badgers and large herbivores), c. the expected regional economic investments, d. the increasing agrotourism developments and e. the additional recreation initiatives around the outskirts of the National Park; and report annually on the results of the monitoring and evaluation

There are no significant changes of recreation activity in the national park. In the reporting year there is a decrease of visitors of the national park by 3% in comparison to 2016, with 286 thousand people visiting the park in 10 months.

There are 29 objects of agro-tourism which are located in buffer zone of national park in 2017.

9. Intensify the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of actual activities such as agriculture (drainage, water quality, use of chemicals), forestry (logging, removal of dead wood, bark beetle effects) and hunting (introduced species, hunting bag statistics), including neighbouring zones outside the National Park in order to adjust the management plan or to substantiate environmental impact assessments

Monitoring of natural resources is shared between the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park units and other State agencies:

- *water quality (physico-chemical composition, oxygen, minerals, ...) in water bodies is conducted by the District inspection of the Ministry of natural resources and environmental protection;*
- *forest monitoring (logging, impact of bark beetle, ...) is led by the forest department of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration;*
- *wildlife monitoring (hunting, invasive species) is led by the protection department;*
- *ecological monitoring including natural forest processes is done by the research department.*
- *laid the basis of the monitoring network at sites with restored hydrological regime.*

10. Consider a specific adaptation of the prohibition of all activities in the strictly protected zones so as to control the invasive alien species, thus enabling the control of deer (*Dama dama*) escaped from hunting enclosures and the felling of old red oak (*Quercus rubra*) trees and seedlings that disturb the natural forest ecosystems

Escaped fallow deer (Dama dama) doesn't seem to be a concern anymore and the National Park administration has started an eradication programme of the American oak (Quercus rubra) from the diploma holding area. Specific eradication activities are carried out in close cooperation with the Academy of sciences of Belarus.

In 2017 activities on eradication of red oak were implemented on the area of 158 hectares.

National academy of sciences implemented research work on alien species of plants and animals in the National park. According to the report, the list of alien species contains 58 plants and animals, also on its basis have been prepared the action plan and recommendations.

11. Prepare a new detailed topographic map (1/50 000) of the National Park and surroundings, indicating the functional zoning (with the buffer zones, game areas, checkpoints, educational trails, etc., all marked) and including the location of the bypass road (with legends in different languages)

A new Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park tourist map has been published at the scale of 1:100 000, and providing new and updated information to the public; however, national legislation does not allow publishing maps in scale 1:50000.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

48. FRANCE – PORT-CROS NATIONAL PARK

No report / Pas de rapport.

49. UKRAINE – CARPATHIAN BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions were attached to the award of the European Diploma

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. continue efforts to provide the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve with more appropriate funding and to raise more additional funds from external sources;

Funding of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is accomplished by means of the State Budget of Ukraine according to the valid Legislation. At the same time, costs from local budgets, charity funds, institutions, organizations and citizens or other sources are not forbidden by the Law and may be involved. There's an annual growth of budget. In 2016 it was 16 674 526 UAH, and 24 859 400 UAH in 2017 of the state budget. Most of the annual budget goes for scientific research, conservation activities, and ecotourism facilities development. The government has already funded the elaboration of the technical-planning documentation for constructing the International capacity-building and research center for beech primeval forests and sustainable development. The Reserve has submitted request for financing the construction of this Center to the Government.

In 2016, the implementation of the Ukrainian-German project "Support for Protected Areas in Ukraine" (2016-2022) with a total budget of 14 million euro was launched. The main objective of the project is to improve the management and effectiveness of the selected protected areas in Ukraine (the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is one of them), as well as to increase or maintain a high level of perception of such territories by local communities. In particular, with the financial support of the project an international scientific-practical conference was held in 2017 under the title "The 10th anniversary since the inscription of the UNESCO World Heritage Property «Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany»: History, status and problems of the Integrated Management System implementation» (Rakhiv, 26-29th September 2017), also professional training was provided for a representative of the institution and an all-terrain vehicle was purchased.

2. accelerate liaison with the authorities of Romania so as to complete the process of establishing a transfrontier Biosphere Reserve within the next two to three years;

An important objective for the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is to establish a transboundary biosphere reserve in the Maramures Mountains together with the Romanian partner – the Maramures Mountains Nature Park. This activity is envisaged by “The strategy of the Carpathian Convention implementation” adopted by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 11-p on January 16, 2007.

The first version of the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine) and Maramures Mountains Nature Park (Romania) in 2009. The MoU envisages establishment of the transboundary biosphere reserve in the Maramures mountain range, and it clearly regulates interaction of the parties and provides a roadmap for future steps to be undertaken to reach this goal.

In 2014 the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve together with the Romanian partners finished participation in the international project BIOREGIO-Carpathians. One of the important issues for us was to establish the TBR in the Maramures Mts. Also a renewed Memorandum of Understanding with more items specifically for TBR establishment in it was signed in 2014.

In 2014, the Romanian partners prepared a nomination dossier for obtaining the status of the UNESCO biosphere reserve. This status is a prerequisite for establishing a transboundary biosphere reserve in the Maramures Mountains. However, the process of preparing the nomination dossier is currently incomplete, since not all the communities located in the territory of the Maramures Mountains Nature Park (Romania) have agreed on the above-mentioned document. Currently the active work is being carried out jointly with the administration of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve to convince the Romanian territorial communities in the feasibility of signing the nomination dossier. In particular, in December

2014 the Memorandum of Understanding between the County Council of Maramures (Romania) and the Rakhiv District State Administration and the Rakhiv District Council of Zakarpattia region (Ukraine) was signed on solving environmental and socio-economic problems in the settlements in the upper Tisza basin on the Ukrainian-Romanian border - the communities which were planned for the agreed international Ukrainian-Romanian Maramures Mountains Biosphere Reserve.

3. pay more attention to the elaboration and implementation of clear strategies and actions plans for the development of co-ordinated green activities around the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, working in close co-operation with the local stakeholders and in line with the presidential guidance;

The Coordination council is working at Carpathian Biosphere Reserve. According to the Regulations about the Coordination council it meets no less than twice a year for discussing major community – protected area interaction aspects, cooperation possibilities and mitigation of the conflicts of interests. The council, in addition to a wide representation of the reserve's employees, includes local authorities, mayors of towns and villages, directors of the state forestry enterprises, major entrepreneurs, and representatives of the wide public, NGOs, educators and activists. In 2017, 2 meetings of the Coordination Council took place in the administrative district centers - Rakhiv and Tiachiv, where the main part of CBR is concentrated. At these meetings, important issues of socio-economic development of the region, environmental situation in the context of development programs, plans for the future and mechanisms for improving cooperation between the administration of CBR and stakeholders were considered.

In the context of ecological activities, the completion of works on the creation of a transition area for connecting the massifs of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is of great importance. It was approved by the decision of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Program in March 2017. In early 2017, CBR administration finished signing a number of relevant agreements with local communities. Thus, as of the end of 2017, 17 territorial communities of Rakhiv and Tiachiv districts, as well as the territory of 5 state forest enterprises, have become part of a transition area with a total surface of more than 160 000 hectares.

In parallel to this activity, the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve representatives regularly visit community meetings of the towns and villages within the reserve's scope and also meet the initiative groups and NGOs. As well a great number of ecoeducation activities were organized at schools and kindergartens of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve area of activity. The reserve actively disseminates the ecological knowledge and information about green economy, sustainable development, balanced nature resource use and alternative energy sources.

In previous years, on the initiative of the reserve's administration, several important documents of the national level were adopted (Decree of the President of Ukraine (2013), Resolution and Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2014, 2016)) aimed at ensuring sustainable development and improvement of mountain settlements in the scope of CBR's activity. These documents, in particular, envisage the restoration of the railway connection between the town of Rakhiv and Kyiv, solving problems of collecting, storing and utilizing domestic hard waste, financial support of the construction of the International Capacity Building and Research Center for Primeval Beech Forests Research and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, the restoration of motorways and some elements of tourist and recreation infrastructure, development and implementation of pilot projects for refurbishing the heating systems, restoration of the damaged automobile border-cross on the Ukrainian-Romanian border and others. Some of the measures have already been implemented, the other part of them have remained without funding, and, accordingly, are postponed to the future. In particular, new railway connections with the largest cities of Ukraine were opened, which has significantly intensified tourism in this territory, and, accordingly, revenue in local budgets and the growth of the local population's welfare. Another example of implementation of the above-mentioned documents, which really improve the

economic situation, is the program of major repairs and construction of roads leading directly to the reserve's territory.

4. provide the Council of Europe with adequate and detailed figures, information and data on the legislation concerning the wolf (Canis lupus) in Ukraine and the enforcement of that legislation in the country, especially with regards to Article 6 of the Bern Convention; the State Party should be urged to report on this issue to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention at its next meeting, and encouraged to strengthen its efforts on reducing the poaching activities in and around the Diploma-holding area;

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Protection of wildlife" and "On Environmental Protection" wolf as wild forest animal are an integral part of forest ecosystems and the State property. Fact that wolf lives in more than one region of Ukraine, commits to apply to him the status of a natural resource of national importance.

In 1994, the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention implies that the wolf should be protected as an animal that exists here in in-situ conditions, ie in its native wild.

In 1996, the Parliament ratified the Berne Convention with reservations, one of which relates to the wolf: "Ukraine is allowed in limited quantities, in terms of the appropriate control on such species listed in Annex II to the Convention: selective regulation of wolf (Canis lupus) number ...".

According to the Law of Ukraine "On game management and hunting" (2000, No. 1478-III (as amended)), wolf shooting in Ukraine is carried out based on a hunting license in the period from October to February inclusive. The price for obtaining a license on wolf is set by the user of the hunting grounds. The shooting licenses are issued to hunters, indicating dates and place of hunting, taking into account hunting limits. The wolf hunting is also allowed if a hunter has a license for other game fauna representatives (that is, along with hunting other animals).

For a comprehensive solution the problem of preservation and regulation of the wolf population in Ukraine a state program that provides comprehensive research and adequate funding is needed. The scientists of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve developed the Action Plan for Wolf Conservation in the scope of CBR's activity (covering an area of about 300 000 hectares), which contains specific recommendations aimed at preserving the wolf population in this part of the Ukrainian Carpathians.

5. devote priority efforts to the monitoring and conservation of the European mink and to the control of the population of the American mink within the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve;

In the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve only European mink is revealed. The state of its population is monitored. Every year there is 1-2 individuals in Chornohora and Keveliv field divisions. Special measures to restore the population size in the reserve are not carried out due to lack of special funding.

6. follow up the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations made in the reports on inventory and monitoring, and on the challenges and solutions for the management of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, published in 2008 and 2011, giving the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve the capacity to undertake these;

The territory of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve has a distinct cluster character. CBR's functional zoning of the territory comprises the core zone (strict protection) and three zones where extensive land use practices such as selective logging, grazing, picking berries and mushrooms and hay-making are allowed in a restricted manner. During 2017, active work was devoted to the development of a new management plan for the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve for the next decade. Within the framework of this document, functional zoning of the territory will be reviewed, and first of all, for those areas that have become part of the reserve in 2011. The new zoning will retain the basic principles outlined above but will have some differences. In the first place, they will relate to the territory of the UNESCO World

Heritage Property, formed by beech and mixed primeval forests, which will be fully included into the core area, and thus will be withdrawn from any economic use. This will also apply to other primeval forest sites that are not part of the World Heritage Property, for example, spruce primeval forests.

In 2017, the researchers' team of the institution prepared a scientific basis for the CBR's territory expansion using the primeval and oldgrowth forest sites in Rakhiv (394 hectares) and Tiachiv districts (9301 hectares). The relevant materials are sent to the authorities for consideration.

Much efforts and resources are directed at monitoring the status of the conservation status of the reservoir of human activities. The monitoring is carried out by the scientific department of the reserve, which includes a botanical, zoological, forest science laboratories, and also a special laboratory for ecological monitoring; There is also a special department of research and sustainable development which is also required to analyze scientific data (in particular, using GIS technologies) and monitor development within the reserve and the neighborhood. Annually a volume of Chronicles of Nature is issued by the institution based on the results of research and monitoring conducted by researchers in the field and by rangers. The data are analyzed and presented in this main report.

As for the monitoring, the system of data collection is based on day-to-day visits by rangers responsible for the area, as well as scheduled visits by scientists working in the scientific department of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

It is important that within the framework of the already mentioned Ukrainian-German project "Support of the Protected Areas in Ukraine", a special environmental component is foreseen, which deals with developing special management plans aimed at preserving the most vulnerable habitats in the territory of the reserve. These management plans will include alpine meadows, forest glades and flood meadows, wetland ecosystems, natural forests, and primeval forests in particular.

7. strengthen co-operation with the local socio-economic stakeholders, including the forest and the tourism sectors, and develop specific awareness pilot activities targeted on them; these activities should address the issue of climate change, and promote local adaptation measures to global warming, including alternative socio-economic measures, such as schemes for green tourism, carbon sequestration and payment for ecosystem services.

Around the massifs of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, which have significant legislative limitations as for the use of natural resources, a transitional area that is deprived of these restrictions has been formed. This is the territory that serves as a pilot area for the implementation of various socio-economic projects that are consistent with the concept of sustainable development. The administration of the reserve, in close cooperation with local communities and key stakeholders, develops and implements a strategy for implementing this concept. Importantly, the above-mentioned Ukrainian-German project "Support of the Protected Areas in Ukraine" deals with the development of local communities as one of the key directions. This subprogram is a key one, and considerable funds will be allocated for its implementation. Practical implementation of this direction will start in 2018. To implement the aforementioned activities, changes are introduced to the staff structure of the reserve, which involve the creation of a special unit that will deal with this problem.

For the full implementation of the strategy, the Coordinating Council of the Reserve, which unites both local authorities and local self-government bodies, as well as key business stakeholders of the region, is a very important instrument. (see also the information on recommendation No. 3 attached)

One of the first joined pilot activities with the local authorities is launching of the demonstrative alpine sheep farm, which would combine modern approaches in energy efficiency and principles of sustainability with the traditional practices of sheep keeping. In 2016-2017, special agreements were elaborated dealing with the development of highland farming in the territory of the reserve. During the reporting year, these agreements were practically implemented on the territories that are subject to the joint management of the biosphere reserve and two local communities - villages Lazeshchyna and Dilove.

The experience gained will be used as the basis for the dissemination of this cooperation to the rest of the communities in the scope of CBR's activity.

An important role was played by the adoption of the national documents at the initiative of the administration of the reserve, such as the Decree of the President of Ukraine (2013, Resolution and Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2014, 2016)) aimed at ensuring sustainable development and improvement of mountain settlements in the scope of CBR's activity (see also information on recommendation No. 3 attached)

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no changes in the management of the institution neither in recent years nor in 2017 in particular.

The logistical support of the ranger service belongs to the key areas of the reserve's management, which is more important due to its clustered structure and those clusters are located at a considerable distance from settlements in inaccessible mountainous sites. The rangers require special all-terrain transport, special field gear, communication equipment, weapons, etc. The administration of the institution is not able to provide all the requirements because of the budget constraints. The Ukrainian-German project "Support of the Protected Areas in Ukraine", mentioned above partially solves this problem by the allocation of significant funds for strengthening the material and technical assets, in particular giving funds for the needs of the Rangers Service. Also, the issue of improving the protected area ranger service was reflected (as suggested by the propositions of the administration of the reserve) in the Presidential Decree "On additional measures for the development of forest management, rational nature use and protected areas preservation" (No. 381, 2017).

Management problems are also observed for certain types of ecosystems. The most threatened ones are meadow ecosystems, as well as wetlands. One of such problems is the forest succession in the territory of the Narcissi Valley, where semi-natural flood plains, which can also be treated as wetlands, are present.

During last year traditional nature use actions (haymaking and willows cutting) have been carried out in "Narcissi Valley" massif to maintain meadow plants communities and conservation of *Narcissus angustifolius* population. Activities aimed for the hydrological balance restoration are held in this protected massif. The situation had been disturbed here before the area became protected. 4 hydrological constructions (flood-gates) were maintained on drainage channels.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes since 2016

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

CBR actively disseminates information about the European Diploma during all meetings and presentations, at all reports and information booklets about the reserve. The European Diploma logo is used in presentations and in information materials.

In 2017, in addition to the mentioned above, the following important events took place at the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve:

1. The Carpathian Biosphere Reserve organized and held the International Scientific and Practical Conference "The 10th Anniversary Since Designation of the UNESCO World Heritage Property "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany ": history, state and problems of the implementation of the integrated management system" as a part of celebration of the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's decision to include the Ukrainian-Slovak nomination "Beech Forests of the Carpathians" into the World Heritage List. The event took place in Rakhiv on September 26-29, 2017. It was attended by over 120 people from 7 European countries; the volume of conference proceedings was published. Also in the framework of the conference preparation the compilation "World recognition of beech primeval forests of the Carpathians: history and management" was published. These are the materials dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Property "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany".
2. On July 7, 2017, the expansion of UNESCO World Heritage Property (natural list) "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany", was held. The newly-coined property now includes 78 plots of beech primeval and oldgrowth forests from 12 European countries, and it is named "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe". The scientists of the reserve ensured the coordination of the material preparation process on the newly added 9 components from 5 protected areas of Ukraine.
3. The scientists of the reserve took an active part in the implementation of international scientific projects "Cooperation in Forest Research Ukraine-Switzerland", "Beech Forest Network of Europe", "Transboundary cooperation for ecosystem-based sustainable development".
4. For 12 years there exists a fruitful cooperation between Carpathian Biosphere Reserve and University of sustainable development (Eberswalde, Germany). In late May - early June 2017 was organized and held commemorative study tour for students of this International University, which was attended by about 50 students from different countries from Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. The main issue of educational practice was the management question of the Biosphere Reserve in terms of the Carpathian region of Ukraine on the example of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

50. SLOVAK REPUBLIC – POLONINY NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions:

Resolution No(2012)19 contains 5 conditions

Condition No. 1: Finalise and adopt the management plan for the park within two years of the renewal

As mentioned in the previous reports the **Management Plan for the Poloniny National Park for 2017 – 2026** („the Poloniny NP Management Plan“) was finalized by the SNC – Administration of the Poloniny National Park and the MoE. On July 7th 2016 this document **was approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic**. Thanks to the preparatory and consultation process the document was accepted by local stakeholders also as a basis for future common projects. The document is valid since January 2017 and it sets long-term and operational objectives set up as well as measures, responsible bodies and expected financial resources. The project preparation (within the Operation Program Quality of the Environment) has started.

Condition No. 2: Start work on devising a new blueprint for forestry and hunting management in the diploma-holding area, taking greater account of the biological imperatives dictated by its European significance, within one year of the renewal. The national authorities shall supply a strategic plan for the sustainable development of the woodland during the next period of validity of the diploma and inform the Group of Specialists on the Diploma each year of the progress made. This blueprint shall include revision of the current hunting allocation in the diploma-holding area, ensuring that the

functional units each cover a surface area of 3 000 to 4 000 hectares, consistent with the biology of large herbivores.

Regarding **forest management** there were no changes in the reported period. As specified in detail in the previous report, the area of the Poloniny NP is protected by the 3rd level of protection according to Act No 543/2002 Coll. (National) nature reserves within the Poloniny NP are in the 5th level of protection (non-intervention regime).

Forest categorization is in accordance with the approved **Forest Maintenance Plans** (valid for 10 year period) along with the prescribed measures, methods and models. **The present structure of forests according forest categories** is as the following:

Forest category	Surface area until 2014 (in %)	Surface area after the renewal in 2014 (in %)	Surface area after decision regarding the Natural Reserve "Borsukov Vrch" (in %)
Commercial forests	17,751.68 ha (65.23 %)	17,599.04 ha (64.59 %)	17,527.20 ha (64.32 %)
Special purpose forests	7,330.16 ha (26.94 %)	7,630.43 ha (28.00 %)	7,702.27 ha (28.27 %)
Protective forests	2,131.17 ha (7.83 %)	2,018.22 ha (7.41 %)	2,018.22 ha (7.41 %)
Total:	27,213.01 ha (100 %)	27,247.69 ha (100 %)	27,247.69 ha (100 %)

With respect to the **game management** there were no changes comparing the previous reports, the mutual **cooperation between 2 sectors continues**. As documented in the previous report the SNC - Administration of the Poloniny NP has its representative in the Advisory participates in the Board for the breeding area Poloniny Carpathians (body that decides on hunting management in the breeding area). The SNC - Administration of the Poloniny NP also **collects data from controls** of antlers organized by Regional Hunting Chamber in previous years. After their analysis we would know how the quality of antlers developed till present time and it will be also used as a basis for evaluation of development in next years. **Cooperation** between the SNC – Administration of the Poloniny NP and the District Hunting Chamber in Humenne on education of professional hunters through various seminars, training courses and practical demonstrations continues, too. One employee of Poloniny NP Administration in

Condition No. 3: Create a functional network of protected areas during the next period of validity, meeting international standards in this area and complying with the national Law on Nature and Landscape Protection (notably sections 28 and 30).

As mentioned in the previous report, within the Poloniny NP Management Plan an **ecological-functional area (hereinafter EFA) No. 1b was defined**. It includes forest stands outside existing nature reserves, which are owned or managed by non-state owners, and which are part of the component Stuzica-Bukovské vrchy of the „Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe“ UNESCO World Heritage Site. These forest stands are in the 3th level of protection according to the Act. No. 543/2002 Coll. But during the negotiations of the Poloniny NP Management Plan the land-owners and land-users gave their preliminary consent to define EFA No. 1b and at the same time consent with non-intervention regime under condition of compensation from the state.

In line with it during the reported period SNC SR – the Poloniny NP Administration **elaborated proposals for two new natural reserves (NR)** which should cover that EFA No 1b. (NR Černiny and NR Pramenisko Cirochy). Negotiation process with owners and users of land is running.

Condition No. 4: Pursue the steps taken to purchase private forests and draw up a future purchasing plan with specific objectives, indicating the funding to be assigned to this purpose each year.

In the previous reports it was explained that purchase of land from private owners is only one of the possibilities how to maintain suitable management of the area. Other instituted instruments to rearrange relations in the protected areas are lease, exchange of land, contractory measures and financial compensation. SNC elaborated an official **calculation of leasing amount for different private (non-state) owners**. That is another important document for negotiations with the land owners. Based on this document and future discussions and change of their thinking and expectations, negotiations on compensations (or land loaning) is going on – mentioned in condition no. 3.

Equally important is to **provide the opportunities to the local communities** with respect to sustainable tourism. On May 2017 the MoE and SNC were co-organizers of a **very important conference in the town of Bardejov** (city on the World Heritage List, in Eastern Slovakia)¹. Almost 250 experts from Slovakia, Poland, Israel, Germany, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom and other countries as well as UNESCO and other important international institutions took part and discussed opportunities how to use UNESCO and its benefits for sustainable tourism and how to deepen the cooperation between UNESCO and Central Europe Region in this respect. Sustainable tourism is the big opportunity to the region of Poloniny.

Condition No. 5: Set up a scientific programme inventorying and monitoring the large carnivore populations in the diploma-holding area; the national authorities shall submit the scientific protocol for that programme for opinion to the Group of Specialists on the Diploma within one year of the renewal.

SNC completed the **project on large carnivores and currently prepares its second phase**. This new project is **to implement measures of management plans for all 3 large carnivore species (wolf, brown bear, lynx)** in the national level, that were **approved on May 2016 and February 2017 by the MoE**.

These management plans were developed in cooperation with the MoA, the National Forestry Centre, the Technical University in Zvolen, University of the Veterinary Medicine Košice and involved NGOs and represent the official documentation according to the § 54 of the Act No 543/2002 Coll.

Cross-border bilateral cooperation on the issue also continued with the **Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary** (SNC prepared a common CZ-SK project).

2. Recommendations

Resolution No(2012)19 contains 7 recommendations

Recommendation No. 1: Give the management of the diploma-holding area greater responsibility for forestry and hunting matters and involve it in the corresponding decision-making process

The SNC – Administration of the Poloniny NP has a stable team with responsibilities given by the valid legislation. There were no changes in the reported period.

Recommendation No. 2: Consider the signature of a simplified agreement between the bodies directly responsible for managing the protected areas on the borders of the three neighbouring countries (Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine), based on the programming of joint activities;

A trilateral agreement concluded on 15th November 2013 (as part of the international Eastern Carpathian Biosphere Reserve) is being implemented. The Steering Council of this biosphere reserve

¹ <http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2017/tlacove-spravy-maj-2017/pod-zastitou-unesco-bardejove-konala-medzinarodna-konferencia-podporu-najmenej-rozvinutych-regionov.html>

includes the administrations of the relevant national parks and protected landscape areas that jointly manage and coordinate cross-border activities. In the reported period there was **an annual meeting of the Steering Council in the Bieszczady National Park, Poland.**

Similarly there is the frame for coordination within the UNESCO Site. For the previous “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathian and Ancient Forests of Germany” during the **Joint Management Committee session held on 26.-27 October 2015 in Snina, Slovakia** the *Joint Declaration of Intent between the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic concerning the Cooperation on the Protection and Management of the Joint World Heritage property “Primeval Beech forests of the Carpathians (Slovak Republic and Ukraine) and the Ancient Beech forests of Germany (Germany)”* was signed. The next meeting is planned in September 2017 in Ukraine.

Recommendation No. 3: pursue efforts to upgrade human resources, in particular by taking on more technical staff and wardens, and very substantially step up funding, at least doubling the annual ratio per hectare for the period of validity of the diploma.

The number of basic staff members increased from 12 persons in 2014 on 15 persons in 2017. In addition, there are **7 voluntary rangers.** Their activities are coordinated by the Poloniny NP Administration and District Office Prešov and they are mainly oriented on enforcement of the legislation (in the field).

Institutional financing of the administration which was assessed by the expert are only the part of financial sources which the Poloniny NP Administration has in disposal. Large amount of money is secured and provided via projects, grants and contributions from the MoE, Environmental fund etc.

Recommendation No. 4: Give full protection to wolves and ban shooting them throughout the area of the national park.

This recommendation was fulfilled in 2014. Wolf is fully protected species in the whole area of the Poloniny NP, its protective zone as well as in the adjacent Východné Karpaty Protected Landscape Area. This is result of amendment (and compliance) of both the nature protection and hunting legislation, namely the Order of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic No. 344/2009 Coll. executing the Hunting Act as amended and the Order of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic No 24/2003 Coll. implementing the Act No 543/2002 Coll. as amended. According to the official hunting statistic since 2013 no wolf was hunt in the Poloninské Karpaty Hunting Area.

Recommendation No. 5: Strongly consider the designation of a hunting district within the park as a strict cynegetic reserve.

As already mentioned under the Condition No 2 hunting was subject to intensive consultation among MoE, MoA (and their institutions) and the Slovak Hunting Chamber. At their meeting with the 2 main local stakeholders on August 21st, 2015 it was concluded that **hunting management is in compliance with national legislation** and that the **Statute of the Poloninské Karpaty Hunting Area** (lastly updated in 2010) will be amended to more consider objectives of the Poloniny NP and to apply experience from the Poľana Protecting Hunting Area. The employee of Poloniny NP Administration became a member of Regional hunting board, where the opinion of the nature conservancy bodies is implemented.

Recommendation No. 6: Pursue the efforts to restore buildings in the traditional regional style; the park might devise a charter of architectural rules for local authorities.

Activities related to this recommendation undertaken by the municipalities, local companies and NGOs (tourist, culture and nature heritage) were supported from **Swiss project** mainly via small grant program and also in the frame of the Norwegian project.

In 2016, the SNC SR motivated municipalities to increase their involvement in the **village renewal programme** (traditional instrument supported annually from the state budget). Some villages situated in the area of the Poloniny NP or its buffer zone applied for financial support from the “Village renewal programme” and afterwards successfully realized these projects:

- Village of Hostovice - Wells for Tourists in the Village of Hostovice
- Village of Klenová -Restoration of public area – creation of infopoint about the UNESCO world heritage
- Village of Kolbasov -Restoration of public areas in centre of village Kolbasov
- Village of Kolbasov -Rain garden in village Kolbasov
- Village of Nová Sedlica -Restoration of public area in the Village of Nová Sedlica
- Village of Nová Sedlica -Well for tourists in the Village of Nová Sedlica
- Village of Pčoliné -Restoration of water source “Kvasná voda”
- Village of Príslop - Restoration of public area in the centre of the Village of Príslop
- Village of Ruský Potok - Restoration of the central part of the Village of Ruský Potok and increase of safety of night environment in the Poloniny NP
- Village of Stakčinska Roztoka -Reconstruction of the willage well near the circle
- Village of Topoľa - Restoration of the central part of the Village of Topoľa and increase of safety of night environment in the Poloniny NP
- Village of Topoľa - Water well for visitors of the Village of Topoľa
- Village of Ubl'a - Fullfilment of conditions of the European Diploma for the Poloniny NP – preservation of a traditional craft
- Village of Uličské Krivé - Restoration of public space, restoration of supplementary infrastructure of a cycling trail
- Village of Zboj - Restoration of the central part of the Village of Zboj and increase of safety of night environment in the Poloniny NP

Recommendation No. 7: Start experimenting with the selective felling of beech forest in a state-owned woodland unit; the national authorities shall inform the Group of Specialists on the Diploma each year of the progress made.

Within the Swiss-Slovak project SNC has commissioned the "**Creation of a Proposal of Forest Management Measures for the Buffer Zone of the Carpathian Beech Forests**" in the Poloniny NP.

Professional qualified person prepared in 2016 a study “**Price Demands of Realization of Forestry Management in the buffer zone of the Primeval Beech Forest in the Poloniny National Park**”. This study will be basis for negotiations with land-owners and land-users.

These were used as background documents for negotiations.

3. Site Management:

No changes of the environment since the last annual report. Changes regarding to staff/finances are described under recommendation No 3.

4. Boundaries:

No change of the boundaries.

5. Other information:

Except to already mentioned information there was no change in nature and culture heritage, education and scientific interests.

6. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

Awarding the European Diploma for the Poloniny NP means an international appreciation of the nature values and effort to preserve them. This was fully confirmed during the appraisal visit of Prof. Usher, the independent expert of the Council of Europe that was organized in August 2017 in the Poloniny NP. The visit was of crucial importance for both SNC and MoE and involved stakeholders and proved the good direction in both protection nature and cooperation with all the stakeholders.
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51. POLAND - BIESZCZADY NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Condition 1: the government concerned must undertake to adopt a management plan for the diploma-holding area, within two years at the most following the renewal of the period of validity;

The Protection Plan for the years 2011-2031 was made and submitted in the Ministry of the Environment. Further work is underway on the preparation of the Regulation of the Ministry of Environment implementing this plan. On the basis of a draft plan for 20 years for each year the BNP administration prepared protection tasks for three years period. Three years Action Plan for 2016-2018 was approved by the Minister of the Environment at the beginning of 2016.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Recommendation 1: extend the perimeter of the diploma-holding area by including in the park the territory currently separating its two cores;

The current legal situation in Poland does not make it possible to extend the area of the National Park without consent of local communities. Due to reluctance of local authorities, it is not appropriate to initiate the procedure of Park enlargement. However, in the area separating the enclave of the Park from its main complex, the Promotional Forest Complex "Bieszczady Forests" was created on 29th of November 2011. The Complex includes forest districts of Stuposiany, Lutowska and Cisna and covers the area of 24 234 ha. It seems that the "Complex" supports the nature conservation in acceptable level. Furthermore, in this region operates the area of Natura 2000 PLC 180001 "Bieszczady", whose protection objects are largely identical to the objectives of the Bieszczady National Park.

Recommendation 2: implement a programme to study and monitor the status and development of the large predators on the scale of the BNP and the three neighbouring parks of Cisniansko-Wetlinski, Dolina Sanu and Nadsanski; recruit for this purpose a zoologist responsible for this programme to the diploma-holding area's scientific team;

In 2012-2017, The Bieszczady National Park together with the Pro Carpathia Foundation, Magura National Park and 11 forest districts have implemented the project "Protection of forest natural refugees - migration corridors", financed by the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Program. The aim of the project was to ensure environment consistency for animals in the southern part of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship by creating new and maintaining existing ecological corridors. At the beginning of 2017 some materials and maps presenting the final results of the project have been published.

The research team of the Bieszczady National Park monitors ungulates and large predators both within the National Park as well as the buffer zone (Ciśniańsko Wetliński Landscape Park, San Valley Landscape Park). There are no legal possibilities for the Polish side to monitor these animals in the Ukrainian Nadsański Landscape Park. Nevertheless, the BdPN receives information about the state of animals in this area as a part of cooperation in the International Biosphere Reserve "Eastern Carpathians".

In 2017, the following monitoring actions were carried out:

- 1. The Inventory of ungulates in the Bieszczady National Park and in a part of the buffer zone -- https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2010&Itemid=183**
- 2. Monitoring of large predators in the buffer zone of the BdPN in the Cisna commune - https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2018&Itemid=183**
- 3. Monitoring of the rutting season of red deer in the area of the Bieszczady National Park in 2017 season https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2066&Itemid=183**

Recommendation 3: step up cooperation between the management of the BNP and the municipalities, with a view to forging a common vision and designing common objectives for regional planning and development, taking the biological and landscape interest and sensitive nature of the sites into account;

Local governments have their respective representatives in the Science Council of the Bieszczady National Park. The work progress within the Protection Plan has been presented to them at the Scientific Council meetings. The Council had two meetings in 2017. Representatives of the BNP take part in meetings of the municipal council of Lutowiska where discussion is held on the spatial management and sharing of land for tourism.

Recommendation 4: draw on the activities and expertise of the framework Convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, particularly for the application of its articles on (4) conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, (5) spatial planning and (7) forestry.

Bieszczady National Park together with the partners from Slovak Republic and Ukraine is carrying out the tasks of trilateral Transboundary Biosphere Reserve "Eastern Carpathians". There is common protective zoning in the Reserve area in the countries involved.

The Park participates in the broad cooperation in terms of the natural heritage protection in Reserve countries, as well as scientific cooperation between institutions dealing with nature protection in the countries stated above.

This includes: organizing and hosting various conferences, seminars, research expeditions and the publication of the scientific journal "Roczniki Bieszczadzkie" (Bieszczady Annals) containing the articles of the Polish, Slovak and Ukrainian authors.

- 3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The BNP administration extended the total size of strictly protected areas in the park (presently 70%). The enlargement is included in Action Plan for 2016-2018 years, accepted by the Minister of Environment.

In November 2017, there was a change in the position of the director of the Bieszczady National Park. Inż. Leopold Bekier resigned as director and Dr Ryszard Prędko was appointed to his place.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes of the BNP's external boundaries

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

In 2017, the largest ever number of visitors – 513 thousand was recorded on the foot trails (in the period from late April to mid-November). In 2017, the BNP signed a new agreement to finance the improvement of the area of routes and nature protection in the immediate vicinity of the routes from the resources of EU's.

Unfortunately, the efforts to include the most valuable fragments of beech forests of the BNP to the list of World Natural Heritage have failed. In June, Poland withdrew its application due to the need for public consultation on the planned entry. At the turn of 2016 and 2017, the BNP carried out social consultations among the local community and at the national level. Local governments received positive opinions from three local government units (two counties and one municipality), two municipalities did not support the project.

In a nationwide online survey 217 people (96%) have voted for an entry and 9 people (4%) answered against. Negative responses were justified:

- anxiety that the BNP wants to limit the availability of this area and reduce tourist traffic;
- apprehension that an increase in the number of tourists will result in the destruction of natural values;

We use of the European Diploma logo on the official website www.bdpn.pl and on the new information boards which were installed in the park area since last renewal.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma of Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

Since the last report which was extended in this section the Bieszczady National Park submitted in 2013, the following data cover the period not yet covered by the report, i.e. the last four years (2014-2017)

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated

No significant changes to the environment were found. Only locally in the high-altitude zone along tourist routes, soil damage have been recorded due to increasing tourist traffic. These destruction were tried to have been neutralized through various types of protection and improvement of the routes surface.

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

In the last four years have been monitored:

-beech and sycamore forests (<https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/roczniki/rb25/art07.pdf>),

-mat-grass communities

(<https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/roczniki/rb25/art03.pdf>),

- the subalpine meadows communities (<https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/roczniki/rb25/art02.pdf>),

- some communities along tourist routes (data not published)

- peat bogs communities (data not published).

There were no significant changes in the forest and the subalpine meadows communities. Only the communities of mat-grass for many years are showing a tendency to reduce the area.

As a result of the rare and endangered species monitoring, performed for 18 species at 36 sites, it was found that populations of these plants showed a slight increase or maintained a constant level in their numbers.

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

The activities related to fauna monitoring:

1. Monitoring of predators in the buffer zone – Cisna Commune.
https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/nauka/2017/2017-07-27_monitoring%20drapie%C5%BCnikow%20w%20gminie%20Cisna_raport%20podsumowuj%C4%85cy.pdf

2. Monitoring of the red deer rutting season in the area of the Bieszczady National Park in 2017
https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/nauka/2017/2017_monitoring%20rykowiska_raport.pdf

3. The Inventory of ungulates in the Bieszczady National Park and in part of the buffer zone -
https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/nauka/2017/2017-07-21_inwentaryzacja%20kopytne_2017.pdf

4. Telemetry of a wolf female called "Freja" in the area of BdPN and lagging
https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/nauka/2015/2015-04-20_raport_freja.pdf

5. Monitoring of predators in BdPN periods 2012/2013 and 2013/2014
https://www.bdpn.pl/dokumenty/nauka/2014/2014_monitoring%20drapie%C5%BCnik%C3%B3w.pdf?v=2

5. The yearlong monitoring of the BNP with the use of « hidden eye » cameras – presentation of the data at the home page of the BNP www.bdpn.pl. for example:

https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1753&Itemid=183

All year monitored the basic parameters of a population of large carnivores and ungulates. On the basis of the data obtained no significant (disturbing) changes in the monitored populations of predators and prey (red deer, roe deer).

Due to the occurrence of African swine fever (ASF) in Ukraine in the border zone (30 km from the borders of the Bieszczady National Park) on the order of the Minister of Environment and the poviata veterinary surgeon, 40 boars were shot on a sanitary hunting. The aim of shooting was to reduce the risk of spreading the virus by reducing the concentration of wild boars to the level of 0.1 pcs / km².

Also, monitoring of amphibians and insects associated with ponds and monitoring of selected species of saproxylic insects was carried out.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

Remains of the old culture like cemeteries and Orthodox Church remains were exposed by grass cutting combined with the removal of unnecessary shrubs. Later cemeteries and church sites were fenced and opened to visitors as an important element of historical and natural marked trails. Information boards were installed near some objects of special cultural value. The boards contain information about the history of the region and particular object. Renovation of few tombstones was supported by non-governmental organizations.

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

From 2012, the Bieszczady National Park is under independent financial management and implemented protective measures are financed from own resources and revenue expenditure. The economic situation of the company remains good and stable.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

In the last four years, the Bieszczady National Park has visited the following number of tourists: in 2014 - 355 thousand, in 2015 - 388 thousand, in 2016 - 485 thousand, in 2017 - 513 thousand.

The Museum of the Bieszczady National Park in Ustrzyki Dolne has been visited in the last four years by the following number of people: in 2014 - 20105 people, in 2015 - 18012 people, in 2016 - 23234 people, in 2017 - 20821 people.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

In the last four years, four conferences of the International Biosphere Reserve "Eastern Carpathians" were organized, in which about 100 people participated each year.

All the parts of IBR were represented: San Valley Landscape Park, Cisna-Wetlina Landscape Park, Bieszczady National Park, Poloniny National Park, Nadsyansky Regional Landscape Park, Uzhansky National Nature Park. **Materials from the conference were published in the "Annals of the Bieszczady"**

https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&page=shop.browse&category_id=1&Itemid=1

Bieszczady National Park also hosted employees of the National Park "Bavarian Forest" during a study visit.

8.2. Scientific research

8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

In period 2014-2017, in the area of Bieszczady National Park, 105 long-term researches were carried out, including 8 projects carried out by four researchers of Bieszczady National Park. Number of studies were performed including: 33 zoological, 44 botanical, 16 in the field of inanimate nature, 12 in the field of

tourism and one other. A full list of research topics being accomplished in the Bieszczady National Park is available on the website –

https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=234&Itemid=155

8.2.2. Scientific publications

Annals of Bieszczady were published:

Volume 22, page 408, contains 24 scientific papers and a chronicle of events in Bieszczady National Park for the year 2013)

https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=shop.flypage&product_id=67&category_id=1&manufacturer_id=0&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=1

Volume 23, page 395, contains 21 scientific papers and a chronicle of events in Bieszczady National Park for the year 2014).

https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=shop.flypage&product_id=73&category_id=1&manufacturer_id=0&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=1

Volume 24, page 330, contains 22 scientific papers and a chronicle of events in Bieszczady National Park for the year 2015)

https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=shop.flypage&product_id=75&category_id=1&manufacturer_id=0&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=1

Volume 25, page 434, contains 34 scientific papers and a chronicle of events in Bieszczady National Park for the year 2016).

https://www.bdpn.pl/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=shop.flypage&product_id=76&category_id=1&manufacturer_id=0&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=1

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

There was no significant change

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

In 2015 Bieszczady National Park took over the hostel on Polonina Wetlińska.

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

In 2015, the area of strict protection was increased by almost 2 thousand hectares. Currently, the area of strict protection includes 20 336,2870 ha (previously 18553,65 ha)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

Active protection of vegetation:

- Mechanical mowing of the traditionally shaped meadows with a collection of biomass - about 600 ha per year (including land leased by the National Park),
- Manual cutting of valuable non-forest plant associations - about 37 hectares per year
- controlled and extensive grazing of sheep and Hucul horses to maintain grassland vegetation - about 450 ha per year

- alpine grasslands protection and regeneration (technical safeguards applied against tourists hiking over valuable surroundings of marked trails)
- elimination of invasive, foreign species - cutting Sosnowski hogweed (*Heracleum sosnowskyi*) – 1,1 ha
- extensive grassland fertilization with manure – about 50 ha per year
- cultivation of rare and endangered plant species in the garden (23 species).
- valuable patches of hygrophilous vegetation in the horse grazing areas were secured.

Active protection of fauna:

- Taking care of the fish fauna during spawning season and low river stage - supervision along mountain stream valleys in order of fish poaching prevention .
- Amphibians fauna protection in sections of busy roads during mating season (prevention against higher mortality).

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

- In order to protect the forest from fire, areas close to the tree line with a high percentage of dry biomass were mowed - especially next to the spruce stands.

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

The National Park maintained a network of more than 140 km of hiking trails and nature trails. The most damaged section of the route from Wołosate to Tarnica and Bukowe Berdo was renovated. A few new sanitary facilities were built next to car parks. Maintenance works were carried out and repairs of several dozen of small wooden architecture objects along routes and parking lots.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

Equipment (tractor) was purchased for various works carried out in the Park

10.1.5. Waste management

BNP conducts proper waste management on routes and own facilities. Garbage is regularly collected and transported to landfills. Unfortunately, some private accommodation and catering facilities do not have garbage cans secured properly. There are sporadic cases of dumpsters penetration by bear.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

Solar water heating systems were installed in 18 facilities of the Park and in 3 buildings (wastewater treatment plants, water intakes) photovoltaic power systems.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

In November 2017, there was a change in the position of the director of the Bieszczady National Park. Inż. Leopold Bekier resigned as director and Dr Ryszard Prędko was appointed to his place.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

There was no significant change

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

The legislative process is still on-going.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

There was no significant change

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas

The European Diploma of Protected Areas significantly helped the Park in gaining financial resources from the national authorities as well as European Union. The award was the strong argument against the continuing plans to create the border crossing with Ukraine in the village of Wolosate.

52. SLOVAK REPUBLIC - DOBROČSKÝ NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions

The following condition is determined by the resolution CM/ResDip(2012)11:

- Pursue the process of transforming anthropogenic forests into semi-natural forests, mainly in the buffer zone of the Dobročský prales National Nature Reserve, in compliance with the management plan.

Process of transforming of anthropogenic forest in the buffer zone (B zone) of the Dobročský prales National Nature Reserve (“Dobročský prales NNR”) - continued in the reported period by preferential calamity wood processing: wind calamity in a volume of 404 m³, bark beetle calamity in a volume of 694 m³. Other interventions in this area have not been implemented. In May 2017, regeneration interventions in a volume of 700 m³ were marked in a part of the buffer zone. The aim was to differentiate the forests structure, to release the place for natural regeneration of beech and to prevent a significant spread of bark beetle calamity.

In the surrounding forest stands, outside of the protected area, prescribed regeneration and educational interventions were carried out in accordance with the valid Forest Management Plan (prepared and approved for the years 2016-2025 for forest unit “Dobroč”) as well as necessary sanitation measures in the forest stands with an occurrence of the bark beetle calamity and other types of calamity.

2. Recommendations

Two recommendations have been set up by the Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)11:

1. Promote awareness-raising activities, mainly:

- *updating the exhibition on the Dobročský prales NNR in the Pred Skalickou cottage;*
- *in co-operation with the forestry authorities, installing the information point on the Dobročský prales NNR in the Forestry Museum in the Vydrovská valley, near Čierny Balog (village).*

With respect to the first part of the recommendation the exhibition in the Pred Skalickou cottage was supplemented by the lacking publications and promotional materials issued in the last years in Slovak and English versions: a video film about the Dobročský prales NNR and folded information leaflets in Slovak and also English languages. The cottage was subject to standard technical maintenance. The surroundings of the building are regularly maintained.

With respect to the second part of the recommendation there was the routine maintenance of the “torso of the Dobročská jedľa” and nearby installed information points in the open air forestry museum in Vydrovska Valley. The points inform visitors about the largest silver fir (*Abies alba*) in the primeval forest called “Dobročská jedľa” and give basic information on the Dobročský prales NNR.

State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic distributed and presented the newest leaflets about the Dobročský prales NNR in A3 format and the production of a video film “Dobročský prales – Chrám prírody” (Dobročský prales Primeval forest – Nature Cathedral), which were funded from the Swiss financial mechanism (project Development of nature conservation and protected areas in the Slovak Carpathians). Both promotional materials were prepared in Slovak and English versions.

The basic information about the Dobročský prales NNR is available to visitors in the open air forestry museum in the valley "Vydrovská dolina" in its information centre at the start of the educational trail "Chodník lesného času", at a stop by the torso of the "Dobroč fir" and also on websites of relevant organizations³. The following information panels were added to the forestry open-air museum: "Trees and allergens" and "Rakes". The current number of stops on the educational trail "Chodník lesného času" is 86.

The tree day with a visit of 15 000 people was organized in the forestry open-air museum on 8th July 2017. This event was also attended by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Ing. Gabriela Matečná and Head of the Office of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Ing. Jaroslav Regec.

³ <http://www.chkopolana.eu/news/narodna-prirodna-rezervacia-dobroccky-prales/>; [http://www.lesy.sk/showdoc.do?docid=2693](http://www.lesy.sk/showdoc.do?docid=2693;); www.pralesy.sk/; <http://www.ciernybalog.sk/dobroccky-prales.phtml?id3=83412>; <http://vydra.sk/>; <http://www.huculskamagistrala.sk/externe/klaster/home.nsf/page/0be66ae90b0a7bd4c1257baa002a74d9?OpenDocument>; http://www.enviromagazin.sk/enviro2013/enviro3/22_ste.pdf; <http://slovakia.travel/dobroccky-prales/>; <http://horehronie.sk/sk/atrakcie/prirodne-zaujímavosti/dobroccky-prales/>; <http://www.muranskaplanina.com/zaujímavosti-uzemia/priroda/npr-dobroccky-prales/>

On 21st April 2017 on the occasion of the upcoming Earth Day employees of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area –Biosphere Reserve participated in organization of events at the square SNP in Zvolen and in the Forestry Museum in the Vydrovská Valley, near the Village of Čierny Balog. During both events "Dobročský prales" was presented as a gem of Slovak nature. Children could participate in a drawing competition with the theme: "My idea of the forest."

Distribution of the information leaflets about the Dobročský prales NNR is carried out by the civic association VYDRA – rural development activity, the Forests of the Slovak Republic, state enterprise – branch Čierny Balog, the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and Administration Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area – Biosphere Reserve.

2. Implement other activities listed in the management plan, particularly research and monitoring.

Monitoring of the status of the territory does not indicate any significant changes in comparison with the previous period.

Monitoring of the number of visitors indicates a slight growth.

The occurrence of invasive alien plants has not been recorded.

The results of mushroom research with emphasis on several indicative species of native and undisturbed forests (doc. Ing. Vladimír Kunca, Phd., Technical University in Zvolen, 2014) have not been published yet. The research continues and it is fluently put together with the next research, which continued in this reporting period, too. It is realised also by the Technical University in Zvolen by doc. Ing. Vladimír Kunca, PhD and aimed to study the abundance of fungi fruiting bodies with emphasis on the presence and location of dead fir wood in various stages of decomposition and to find the missing mushroom *Pseudorhizina undulata* in Slovakia. The research is long-term and its results will be published in the future.

In the reported period Faculty of Forestry of the Technical University in Zvolen (prof. Ing. Milan Saniga, DrSc.) carried out research "Structural diversity, disturbance regime and successive developments of selected beech and mixed forests and research on the conservation of common yew (*Taxus baccata* L.) in beech ecosystems of Slovakia ". The results of this research have not been published yet (expected in 2019).

The maintenance of the information objects was ensured by the area manager (The Forests of the Slovak Republic, state enterprise – branch Čierny Balog), the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area – Biosphere Reserve.

3. Site Management

In Zone A (the core zone) of the “Dobročský prales” National Nature Reserve, which is a fragment of the original ecosystem of the Carpathian natural forest, only natural processes characteristic for climax forest stage are still ongoing.

Forest manager and administrator of the territory the “Forests of the Slovak Republic, state enterprise – branch Čierny Balog” neither noticed any intentional anthropic interference in reported period, nor in the zone A did registered any calamity, although recently observed dieback of spruce due to the bark beetles attack also in younger age classes, but this is considered as a natural development. Mentioned facts confirm that in primeval forest communities natural processes occur and this part of protected area could be evaluated as a highly stable with favorable status of habitats.

Managing interventions in Zone B (buffer zone – forests altered with forestry activities) were focused on calamity wood processing: wind calamity in a volume of 404 m³, bark beetle calamity in a volume of 694 m³ in the reported period. Any other intentional interventions in this part of NNR have not been implemented.

In surrounding forests outside the protected areas were carried prescribed renewal and educative interventions under the valid Forest Management Plan for forest unit “Dobroč”. It was prepared in cooperation with the Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area –Biosphere Reserve and approved for the years 2016-2025. Planned forestry interventions in Zone A (fifth level of protection) remain fully respecting the mode "no intervention". In zone B (fourth level of protection) measures were proposed to reduce as far as possible effects of anthropogenic activities from the surrounding commercial forests to Zone A, to ensure the smooth functioning of the climax ecosystems stages and to increase gradually the ecological stability of forests (especially in parts of higher representation of non-original habitat of spruce). These functions will be provided by the gradual modification of tree species composition in favor of habitats suitable tree species, encouraging natural regeneration, keeping dead wood biomass and the support of deciduous trees and fir. In parts with favorable structure there will not be interventions. Such management enables the differentiation of vegetation and creates conditions for a gradual return to the functioning of natural processes.

4. Boundaries

During the reporting period there were no changes in borders of the Dobročský prales NNR.

5. Other information (on visitation)

The highest visit rate was in the period from May till August 2017.

The Dobročský prales NNR was visited by 5 excursions with totally 169 experts and visitors. The Forests of the Slovak Republic, state enterprise - Čierny Balog forest administration guided visits for 3 groups with totally of 59 experts. The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area separately provided 2 excursions for 60 pupils of Hrnčiariska Elementary School, Zvolen and 50 employees of Duna-Ipoly NP.

The civic association VYDRA – rural development activity - accompanied 8 groups (totally 271 visitors) to the Dobročský prales NNR. The groups were made up by primary and secondary school pupils. The tour was also attended by 131 individual visitors.

In addition to these guided excursions to the Dobročský prales NNR, an excursion for participants of the „Vydrovský” Summer Camp was organized for 30 children and 3 adults. The

excursion was over the border of the forest and was very instructive to the children, bringing them a new perspective on nature conservation, forest development and a comparison of human history with the life of trees (preserved buildings: pyramids, castles, blocks etc.)

The visit of the Dobročský Prales NNR was part of the program of the EU Nature and Biodiversity Directors Meeting that took place in the Nízke Tatry National Park, from 10th to 12th October 2016 (<http://www.minzp.sk/sekcie/temy-oblasti/ochrana-prirody-krajiny/medzinarodne-dohovory/stretnutie-riaditelov-ochrany-prirody-biodiverzity-clenskych-statov-eu/>). This was an informal meeting organized during the Presidency of the Slovak Republic of the Council of the EU. It was attended by 69 participants, of which 51 were representatives from 22 Member States of the EU, 3 representatives from the European Commission and 15 representatives from 11 NGOs. The event was organised by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic.

From 6th till 8th June 2017, there was on the spot appraisal of the independent Council of Europe expert Robert Brunner to evaluate situation of the Dobročský praes NNR with respect to the European Diploma. The programme was prepared by State Nature Conservation of the Slovak Republic, Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area – Biosphere Reserve Poľana and representatives of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Forests of the Slovak Republic, state enterprise – branch Čierny Balog, the science and research institutions as well as representatives of the self-government and civic associations VYDRA – rural development activity and Prales took an active part "Cooperation between nature conservation, forestry, self-government, scientists and non-governmental organizations is excellent and should be an example for other areas of Slovakia. It will also help to achieve the results of nature conservation not only in the Dobročský praes, but also in the whole region," said the Council of Europe expert Robert Brunner. The appraisal mission consisted of an informative meeting at the headquarters of the Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area – Biosphere Reserve and a discussion with representatives of the scientific sphere at the Technical University of Zvolen and, in particular, visits to the Dobročský praes NNR and Baďínsky praes NNR (representing another type of virgin forest located within the scope of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area. Information on the appraisal mission has been published in some media and on the website:

<http://www.dobrenoviny.sk/c/102533/expert-zisti-plnenie-kriterii-europskeho-diplomu-pre-dobroccky-prales>

<https://naszvolen.sme.sk/c/20551604/expert-prisiel-skumat-dobroccky-prales-pozrite-sa-s-nami-don.html>

<http://www.enviroportal.sk/clanok/expert-zistuje-plnenie-kriterii-europskeho-diplomu-udeleneho-dobrocckemu-pralesu> Tento odkaz na webovú stránku nefunguje

<http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2017/tlacove-spravy-jun-2017/dobroccky-prales-obhajil-prestizne-ocenenie-europsky-diplom.html>

In the period under review, two RTVS sessions were shot and broadcast. Radio session:

RTVS – Regina - Bells over the country, 23.10.2016:

<https://www.rtvsk.sk/radio/archiv/1709/544659>

TV show: RTVS 1, Generation, April 2017: <http://www.rtvsk.sk/televizia/archiv/11736/123914>

In the period under review civic association VYDRA – rural development activity realized the printing of information and promotional materials about Dobročský praes NNR in the amount of 2,000 pieces with financial support of the municipality of Čierny Balog.

6 State of Conservation, cultural heritage, socio-economic context, education and scientific interest, site description

There were no changes within the reported period (apart for already mentioned research and education activities).

7. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The Dobročský prales NNR is a very precious protected area, being part of Natura 2000 network and since 1998 awarded by the European Diploma. The European Diploma contributes significantly to the interest and prestige of the site not only from researchers and public within the Slovak Republic, but also from abroad.

The continuation of the European Diploma for the Dobročský Prales NNR will increase the responsibility of the manager for the implementation of the measures of the adopted management plans.

53. RUSSIAN FEDERATION – KOSTOMUKSHA STRICT NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There are no conditions found in the last Attachments.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The following recommendations could be proposed to be attached to this renewal to ensure that precautions are sufficient for the protection of the Kostomuksha State Reserve of Nature against foreseeable threats:

1. In cooperation with the Finnish authorities, remove security equipment (wire fences, electric fencing and other devices) on the border between the two countries to optimise links between the two sides of the border and to foster ecological functionalities.

Work is under way to establish mutual cooperation with the Russian border guard service to clean the territory of metal fences. Written letter to the relevant organizations. At this stage, there is a search for funds to implement measures to clean up.

2. Implement individual training plans for field staff in the conservation/management of natural environments and in natural sciences in general so as to broaden the scope and raise the level of skills of such staff in matters which are central to their work.

Every year we send employees for advanced training to the ecocenter "Zapovedniki" in Moscow - in the following specialties: environmental education and development of cognitive tourism - work with visitors.

In addition, the security department conducts joint exercises with the Border Guard Service and the Prosecutor's Office on legal issues concerning the protection of the territory for security officers.

3. Consider the renewal of the management plan for the diploma-holding area for a period that is consistent with the duration of the renewal of the European diploma and with a view to its updating in the context of the integration of the diploma-holding area in the Kostomuksha Nature Reserve since 2015.

The plan for the management of the territory until 2028 will be part of the overall plan for the development of the Metsola biosphere reserve. At the beginning of 2018 we will begin work on the creation of the Coordinating Council, and then begin work on the creation of a common development plan.

4. Finalise by 2022 the project for the establishment of the biosphere reserve including the diploma-holding area. Ensure the strong commitment of local authorities and socio-economic stakeholders to help the authorities of the diploma-holding area to preserve it. This should also help adapt the composition of the diploma-holding area and in particular its buffer zone and if possible extend them, so as to confirm its European significance and the preservation of the diploma-holding area; it is referred in particular to the central area of the Kalevala National Park.

The Metsola biosphere reserve was established in June of 2017.

5. Ensure the long term preservation of the natural aspect of the diploma-holding area, which helps to maintain its European significance by the appropriate management of fires and other natural processes as a whole.

Annually, fire safety plans are drawn up, which have rules for extinguishing and attracting other organizations to extinguish. In 2018-2021 the reserve will participate in the international project on forest fire monitoring "Biocarelia"

6. Develop a regional vision of "scientific, and/or nature-based" tourism development so as to optimise the potential of the diploma-holding area and of the Kostomuksha Nature Reserve as a whole; this should (1) be considered with the support of the UNESCO MAB (Man and the Biosphere) programme and of the Council of Europe, (2) involve regional and local authorities and the private sector and (3) exclude all tourist practices that are incompatible with the natural aspect of the diploma-holding area, such as artificial feeding of wildlife.

The vision of "scientific and / or environmental" tourism development will be developed in accordance with the recommendations within the framework of the plan for the integration of federal protected areas into the socio-economic development of the Kostomuksha urban district.

7. Continue monitoring the pumping of water in the diploma-holding area and provide regular information on its impact on the diploma-holding area in the annual reports on this area.

Annual monitoring of the state of water is conducted. Reports are included in the Chronicle of Nature (site of the reserve www.kostzap.com)

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The administrative building of the reserve is located in the city of Kostomuksha. The population of the city is 30 000 people. In the office there is a modern visitor center, which tells visitors about the nature of the northern taiga, about the culture of the local population - Karelians, about the need to recycle garbage, about the need to reduce the use of plastic bags and dishes. In the set, there is also a cinema and a room for working with children.

In the same building, on the second floor there are offices of employees of the reserve and national park. The staff is 27 people. Work is conducted on the following departments: 1. Protection of the territory; 2. Scientific research; 3. Environmental education, tourism and international cooperation.

With regard to the protection of the territory - every year information slots are updated, border marking is updated, pedestrian and auto-moto patrolling is carried out, explanatory work is carried out with the population, fire-fighting measures are organized.

In terms of science - annually contracts are concluded with the Karelian Research Center and the Finnish Environment Institute for monitoring the environment - water, biodiversity, populations of certain species. Students practice on topics of geocology and nature management are conducted. A Nature Annals is compiled, which can be found on the site of the reserve www.kostzap.com

Every year, the department of environmental education holds classes with children of kindergartens and schools in Kostomuksha. Participate in the activities of 2500-3000 children annually. The department also conducts excursions along the ecological routes of the reserve. Each year an agreement is concluded with colleagues from Finland on the implementation of activities for the development of tourism and eco-awareness on both sides of the border. In December 2017, there was a qualifying round for international grants 2018-2021. The reserve participates in five projects. Detailed information can be found on the site of the reserve in the section "International cooperation".

Financing from the budget of the Russian Federation is stable every year.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Since 2015 border did not changed. The map with current areas is attached.

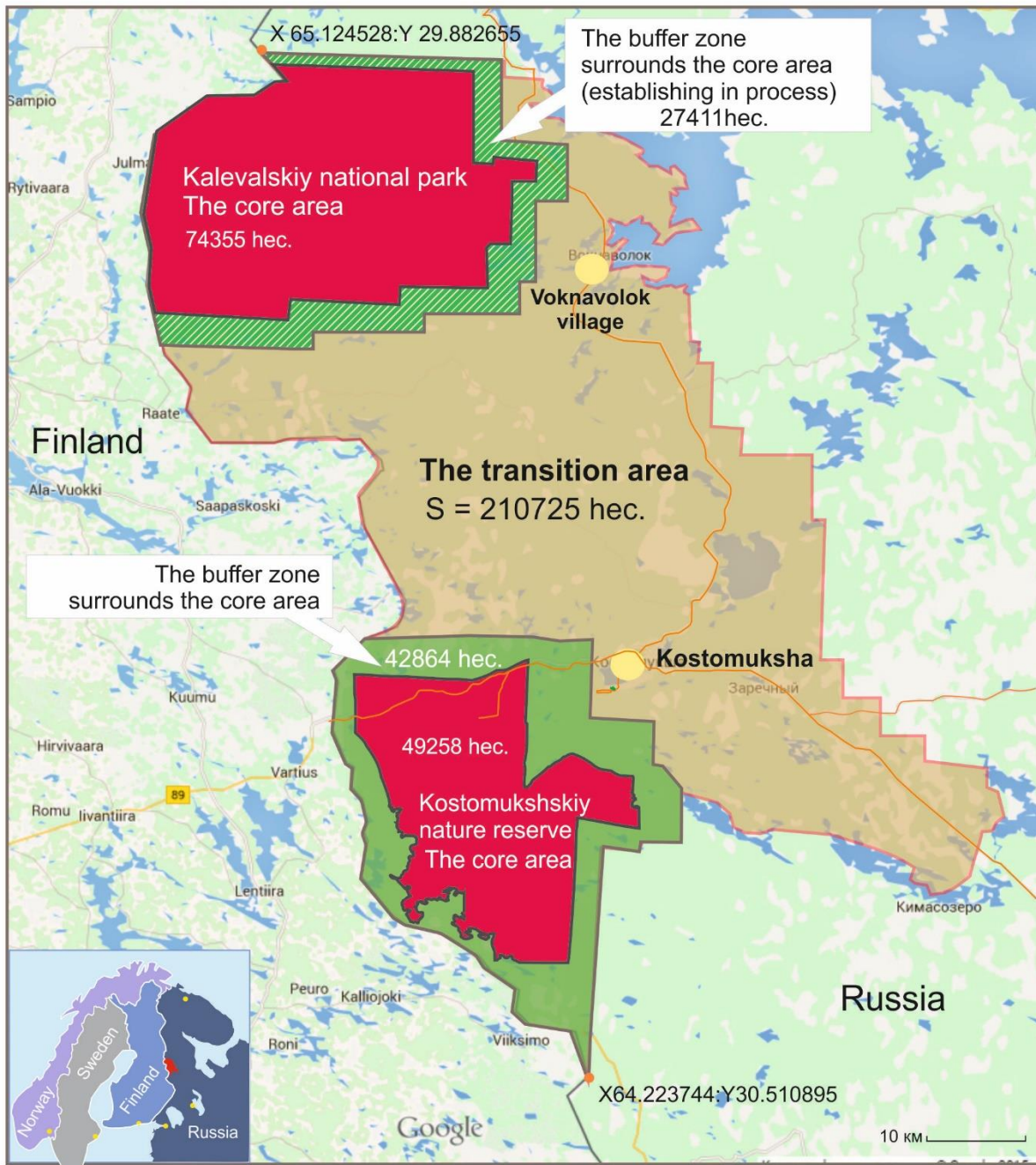
5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The status of Biosphere reserve was given to Kostomuksha nature reserve in July 2017. The biosphere reserve Metsola includes Kostomuksha nature reserve, Kalevala national park and Kostomuksha urban district. Detailed map is in attachment.



Current territories

Three interrelated zones BR «Metsola», that aim to fulfil three complementary and mutually reinforcing functions:



- The core area
- The buffer zone surrounds the core area
- The buffer zone surrounds the core area, which is under establishing process
- The transition area

2. Detailed information about the size of core areas, buffer zones and transition area

	<i>Zones of BR «Metsola»</i>	<i>Size (in hectares)</i>	<i>% of BR area</i>
1	<i>The core area</i>		
	Nature reserve «Kostomukshskiy»	49258	12
	National park «Kalevalskiy»	74355	18
	Total	123613	30
2	<i>The buffer zone</i>		
	Around nature reserve	42864	11
	Around national park	27411	7
	Total	70275	18
3	The transition area	210725	52
	Total size of BR «Metsola»	404613	100

The size of buffer zone, surrounds the national park «Kalevalskiy», is already agreed with Ministry of nature-using and ecology of Republic of Karelia. Next step is to confirm the status in Ministry of natural resources and ecology of Russian Federation. This work planned for the nearest future - until the end of 2018.

54. RUSSIAN FEDERATION – TSENTRALNO-CHERNOZEMNY BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no conditions, only recommendations were attached to the renewal of the Diploma in 2008 (see below).

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The following recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma were given in 2008:

1. provide sufficient resources to ensure proper functioning of the reserve. Financial support is needed to carry out basic research and establish infrastructure for the development of ecological education, as well as for strengthening the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve protection capacity;
2. carry on systematic efforts to extend all the Reserve territories, especially their buffer zones and to establish and/or restore ecological corridors between these territories;

3. continue efforts to search for new valuable steppe territories which could be joined to Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve or constitute stepping stones or ecological corridors between the existing territories of the reserve;
4. encourage further co-operation projects with international participation – such as the “Yaroslavna” project – in the sphere of nature and landscape conservation and sustainable development;
5. continue work on the optimisation of territory of the Belogorye Biosphere Reserve. This reserve might be expanded through incorporation of new steppe ecosystems, which would strengthen the interest of the diploma-holding area. Possibly consider the extension of the European Diploma to the Belogorye Reserve.

In accordance with these items, the Zapovednik’s administration emphasizes the following:

1. The Administration makes efforts to obtain additional extrabudgetary funding: in 2017, charitable assistance was received from the Kursk nuclear power plant – 700 thousand rubles. An agreement was concluded on research work with the Mikhailovskiy ore mining and processing enterprise for the amount of 1400 thousand rubles.
2. The necessary documentation for the creation of a biosphere range and a buffer zone was sent to the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia
3. A new site of the reserve - biosphere range "Stepnoy" – was proposed by the administration of the TsChZ for the expansion of the protected area
4. In connection with the political situation, the implementation of the "Yaroslavna" project has been suspended.
5. Administration of the reserve "Belogorye" independently undertakes efforts to optimize its territory.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

For two years already all the planned areas have been mown on the territory of the reserve. This can be done with the help of a new partner of the reserve with the assistance of the Kursk Region Administration. The staff number of employees did not change; the total funding remained practically at the previous level.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes in the borders of the reserve took place in 2017.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

In 2017 the reserve administration received from the Council of Europe the Draft Resolution CM/ResDip(2018) on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve until 2028 and will take into account the conditions and recommendations outlined in it in the future. The Administration expresses the hope that in 2018 the Draft Resolution will be approved by the Committee of Ministers.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma of Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal. **2017 – year 9 after its renewal for the TsChZ/**

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – Conservation situation

No changes have taken place since last year

6.1 Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated.

In the buffer zone of the Streletsky site a part of the square has been occupied by the constructing of houses; the administration of the reserve tries to counteract this process.

6.2 Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover, presumed causes.

New species were revealed on the territory of the reserve in 2017:

vascular plants – 2

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating egg-laying and breeding grounds:

No changes

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7. 1. 1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

No changes

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context.

On the territory of the buffer zone of the reserve there is a potential danger of expanding the boundaries of settlements and the construction of industrial and agricultural facilities.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors — Information policy

From January 1 to November 30, 2017, (It was the Year of Specially Protected Natural Territories and the Year of Ecology in Russia) 2,650 people visited the reserve. There were 88 excursions to the Nature Museum and the ecological excursion path. 25 video lectures were held in the Ecological Information Center of the reserve, 2 circles (ecological and applied creativity), 26 lessons with schoolchildren took place. 14 photo exhibitions were organized and 44 lectures were given in schools, libraries and colleges of the Kursk region. The press published 40 popular science articles about the reserve. There were 59 reports on regional television and radio, of which 2 reports on the central television. 7 television programs about the reserve were filmed and shown on regional television. In April, the annual international environmental campaign "March for Parks-2017" was held, in May – an action to record singing nightingales in the city of Kursk, in November – a regional action on feeding wintering birds, which involved about 2000 people.

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.

In the reserve there are buildings of the Museum of Nature with an area of 164.3 square meters, functioning since 1971, and the Ecological Information Center with a total area of 128.5 square meters,

taking visitors since 2003, two excursion ecological trails. There is a replenishment of a videoshop, photograph collection, library of methodical literature. The reserve produced 1,000 copies of leaflets, 700 copies of pocket calendars, 500 copies of wall calendars of A3 format, 200 copies of postcards, 100 copies of ceramic souvenirs with the symbols of the reserve.

8.1.2 Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

The territory of the reserve was visited by 2650 people. Most tourists come in May and June. At this time, the steppe has the most attractive appearance. During the winter months, there are almost no excursions. 80% of excursions are schoolchildren and students. The number of family excursions has increased. All visitors are registered on the Streletsky site, where there are two ecological trails, the Museum of Nature and the EcoCenter.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

On May 27, 2017 the reserve accepted participants of the International soil congress SUITMA-9 (Soil of Urban, Industrial, Traffic, Mining and Military Areas) which was carried out with assistance of Erasmus + Jean Monnet and the Russian Geographical Society.

Within a year the reserve was visited by 37 foreign guests from Tajikistan, Bulgaria, Germany, some countries of Africa.

8.2. Scientific research

8.2.1 Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention...)

In 2017 the Zapovednik carries out works on the following scientific themes:

- "Chronic of Nature" (Observation and study of processes and phenomena in the natural complex of TChZ). Constant. It's been done since 1936.
- "Biological monitoring of the environment on the territory of the sanitary protecting zone of Kurskaia atomic power-station". It is financed by Kurskaia atomic power-station.
- "Study of biological diversity (flora and fauna) of man-made landscapes of the Mikhailovskiy ore mining and processing enterprise". It is financed by the Mikhailovskiy ore mining and processing enterprise.

8.2.2. Scientific publications

In 2017 there were published totally 76 scientific articles by employees of the Zapovednik.

The Reserve together with other organizations participated in preparation and the edition of such materials:

Flora and vegetation of the Central Chernozem Region - 2017: materials of the interregional scientific conference dedicated to the Year of Especially Protected Natural Territories and Ecology (April 8, 2017, Kursk). Kursk, 2017. 185 p. Circulation 150 copies. (in Russian).

Number, projective covering of feather grasses and some characteristics of meadow steppes of the Central Chernozem Reserve. // N.I. Zolotukhin, I.B. Zolotukhin, T.D. Filatova, O.V. Ryzhkov, A.V. Poluyanov, A.N. Zolotukhin, P.A. Dorofeeva. Kursk, 2017. 108 p. Circulation 150 copies. (in Russian).

Monitoring of the biological diversity of technogenic landscapes of the Kursk region / O.V. Ryzhkov, A.A. Vlasov, N.I. Zolotukhin, A.V. Poluyanov, G.A. Ryzhkov, V.P. Soshnina, O.P. Vlasova, E.A. Vlasov, T.D. Filatova, D.O. Ryzhkov, V.I. Mironov, A.A. Benediktov, A.P. Mikhaylenko. Kursk, 2017. 300 p. Circulation 500 copies. (in Russian).

Professor V.V. Alyokhin is the founder of the Central Chernozem reserve. Booklets / Originators: A.A. Vlasov, O.V. Ryzhkov, V.P. Soshnina, N.I. Zolotukhin, T.D. Filatova. Photo: P.G. Soshnin and from archives. Central Chernozem reserve, 2017. 20 pages. Circulation is 500 copies. (in Russian).

ECO-World around nuclear power plants. Kursk, 2017. 22 p. Circulation 1000 copies. The ecological brochure was prepared based on the materials of the scientists of the Central Chernozem Biosphere Reserve, the Kursk regional branch of the Writers' Union of Russia with the support of the Kursk nuclear power plant at the expense of the State Corporation Rosatom within the framework of the contest of socially significant projects. (in Russian).

Guidebook for field excursions of the 9th International Congress on Soils of Urban, Industrial, Traffic and Military Areas «Urbanization: a challenge and an opportunity for soil functions and ecosystem services» (21-30 May, 2017, Moscow) / Editors: Vasenev V.I., Gerasimova M.I., Prokofeva T.V., Dovletyarova E.A. Moscow, 2017. 163 p. The guidebook was prepared under the auspices of 18 companies and organizations, incl. Central Chernozem Reserve (among 52 authors - 10 are employees of the Reserve) (in English).

Vlasov E.A. Helminths of wild mammals of the Central Chernozem reserve (fauna, ecology, pathogenic value). The abstract of the thesis for a scientific degree of Candidate of Biology. Kursk, 2016. 25 p. Circulation 100 copies. (in Russian).

Employees of the reserve participated in 20 scientific conferences and workshops; 33 reports were presented there.

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

No changes

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, renting, etc.)

No changes

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

No changes.

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

Receipt for the period since October 1, 2016 till October 1, 2017.

	Russian Rubbles
Budgetary means:	18769200
including Item 1 "Wages"	9030535
Item 2 "Wage's extra charge"	2727222
Means from grants	-
Other means for the maintenance of the Zapovednik	2535810
Total:	21 305 010

For October 1, 2017 the number of employees of the Zapovednik is 59 people.

The basic document which regulates main activities on the territory of the reserve is “Ustav of the Federal State Budgetary Organization “Tsentralno-Chernozemny state nature biosphere reserve named in

honor of Prof. V.V. Alekhin". It was approved on 25.05.2011 by the Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation YU. P. Trutnev.

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

- In 2017 the hay mowing was carried out by the Zapovednik at the area of 1173 hectares (the plan was - 996 hectares):
- The pasture of the cattle was carried out at the main field of the Zapovednik at the area of 93.5 hectares.
- The pasture of the cattle was carried out after mowing (during the aftermath) at the area of 131,2 hectares.
- In 2013 actions for reintroduction of steppe marmots (*Marmota bobac*) on a pasture of the Streletsky site of the within the performance of the works according to Steppe project UNDP/GEF/Ministry of Natural Resources RF are carried out.
- measures were taken to conserve the reintroduced population of steppe marmots (*Marmota bobac*) on the Streletsky site of the TsChZ: in 2017, about 30 steppe marmots lived here.

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water, regime).

Floods and fires were not fixed.

Before the beginning of the fire-hazardous period some preventive measures were held: fire-preventive mineralized stripes were organized along 27 km; controllable preventive burning of the dry grass was carried out on 16 ha along the Reserve's boundary on the territory of the buffer zone; clearing from branches and tree trunks of 22,4 km of wood roads, 32 km of quarter paths.

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

On the forested territory 22,4 km of forest roads and 32 km of quarter paths were mowed.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

During participation in the Steppe project (financed by international organizations UNDP and GEF as well as by Federal Ministry of Natural Resources of RF "Improving the coverage and management efficiency of protected areas in the steppe biome of Russia") (2010-2016) the technical equipment of the reserve was substantially improved, as reported in previous annual reports.

In 2017 it is acquired: the harvester grassy for mowing, the network store, the dosimeter, the radar, a tent and 2 TVs for department of ecological education.

10.1.5. Waste management

Waste is utilized according to the signed contracts with the specialized organizations. Passports of waste 1-4 classes of danger are developed. The draft of standards of formation of waste and limits on their placement is developed and agreed in accordance with the established procedure.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

Renewable energy systems aren't applied.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

The Zapovednik is under the authority of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

The total staff of the wardens' department - 19 employees, including 5 people with higher education.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

No changes

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

Since January 1, 2017 till October 1, 2017 11 records of evidence were made by the state inspection of the Zapovednik for the violation of the Zapovednik's core area and its buffer zone regime. The sum of fines paid by the poachers for this period totals 24 000 rubles, the sum of damage - 0 rubles

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas.

The reserve annually participates in International Kursk Korenskaya fair under the invitation of the Administration of the Kursk region.

The position of the reserve which territory has the international nature protection importance is almost completely supported by electronic and print media for preserving the regime of the buffer zone.

55. NETHERLANDS - DE OOSTVAARDERSPLASSEN NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Any development of Lelystad regional airport should not have any negative impact on the reserve; this is to be confirmed after the full EIA procedure, including public consultation, has been finalised; in particular:

1. All alternative locations with least disturbing effects on the Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve and its surroundings;
2. All flight routes and heights and their risks of disturbing the fauna making use of the reserve and its surroundings and the risk of birds colliding with aeroplanes.

The flight paths were determined in 2016, with due observance of the Natura2000 requirements, i.e. that flights above the Oostvaardersplassen reserve will only be at a high altitude, and that ascending and descending flight movements will not take place above the nature reserve. Compared to last year, no changes have been made here.

2. Recommendations List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Recommendations for the renewal:

- | | |
|----|--|
| A. | The annual reports must include a specific paragraph on all developments in relation to Lelystad regional airport. |
| B. | Further convince authorities of the surrounding municipalities and the Province to decrease external impacts on the reserve by reviewing urbanisation and zoning plans where appropriate. |
| C. | Ensure the optimal functioning of two Visitor Centres (Almere and Lelystad) by increasing budgets for personnel, including communication experts. |
| D. | Complete the further integration of adjacent green areas such as Hollandse Hout into the reserve management; give priority to rebuilding the railroad along a new route to the South of this zone with a new railway station Lelystad-Zuid. |
| E. | Further minimise the visual urbanisation impact of Almere aiming for a better gradual integration between the city and the open landscape by fully respecting the border and buffer zones of the reserve and by further lowering the agree building heights and volumes. |
| F. | Implement the recommendations of the ICMO report relating to reserve management and the further extension of the reserve with a corridor to Horsterwold; concentrate all efforts on establishing Oostvaarderswold as a multifunctional corridor with combined importance for conservation, recreation, and water management; review the existing windfarms along the future Oostvaarderswold corridor to reduce the risk of bird collisions and maximise the “wilderness” aspect; avoid new developments, infrastructures and investment in the future corridor zones other than those related to its specific ecological functions; maximise future ecological connection potentials by constructing ecoducts and tunnels where needed. |

- A. The developments relating to Lelystad Airport are fully under way. An exit will be built from Larserweg towards the Airport. Staatsbosbeheer is participating in the construction of this exit and supplies sand for the construction of the road. The opening is scheduled for 2019.**
- B. In 2017, the Municipality of Lelystad and the Municipality of Almere continued to work on the 'gates' on the Lelystad and Almere sides of the Natura2000 area as part of the development of a National Park. As already indicated in the 2016 report, this concerns the development of (peripheral) zones in which a qualitative improvement is made in terms of recreation and nature experience. This zoning makes it possible to limit recreational pressure on the core area of the OVP and to stop urban development.**
- C. In the context of the gate development on the Almere side, investments will be made in ‘The Oostvaarders’ Nature Experience Centre in the coming years. From 2018 onwards, Staatsbosbeheer will have a more physical presence in the Centre enabling it to offer activity programmes and carry out on-site management. In the operating budget for the Almere Gate, funds have been set aside to carry out management and programming on a multiannual basis and resources are earmarked to attract 2 additional staff (management and communication).**
- D. The integration of the core area with the woodland shell (in this case Hollandse Hout) was further developed in 2017. The connection for red deer between Oostvaardersveld and Hollandse Hout has been realised, but has not yet been opened due to construction work on the gully and the frequent transport of sand from the area. In the summer of 2017, the first red deer reached the Oostvaardersveld through a tunnel underneath the railway line. A number of does are permanently present in the area.**

The ambitions for urban development for De Warande area (Lelystad) have been scaled down, making the development of a Lelystad-Zuid station uncertain. As part of the

development of the gate area in Hollandse Hout, thought is being given to improving the accessibility of this area.

- E. In the planning around the gate area on the Almere side, the scenic visual effects of urban development along the peripheral zone are explicitly taken into account. Urban development in the immediate vicinity of Oostvaardersbos and Kotterbos will continue to be low, also in the future.
- F. The year 2017 was dominated by the planning for the implementation of the Natura2000 management measures for the marshland and grassy areas of Oostvaardersplassen. The main tasks focused on the regeneration of reed by means of a reset of the marsh, the construction of fish ladders allowing the migration of sticklebacks to the area, and the construction of ponds with ungrazed islands in the dry part of Oostvaardersplassen. The planning of a number of other tasks has also been completed: the softening of transitions between marshland, the grassy area and the wooded shell, and the creation of shelters for the large grazers. A start will be made in the autumn of 2018 with the implementation of the Natura2000 measures in the marshland area.

In the autumn of 2017, work continued on the shelter tasks for Oostvaardersbos, Kotterbos and De Driehoek. Trees have been planted with individual tree protection and, as in previous years, 'corrals' (an enclosed, fenced-off area) have been used in the woodland areas to protect young plants from damage by large grazers.

- 3. **Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The plans for the Natura2000 management measures were developed further in 2017. Considerable time and effort will continue to be put into the further development and implementation plans for these measures in the coming year, and the implementation of the measures in the marshland area is likely to start by the end of 2018.



Implementation plans were also developed and partially implemented for a number of other tasks last year.

- 1. Involvement of the peripheral zones (Hollandse Hout, Kotterbos and Oostvaardersbos) in the core area and making these zones more experiential (partly in relation to the development of the Nieuw Land National Park);
- 2. Enhancing the visual perception of the landscape;

3. **Greater involvement of society in Oostvaardersplassen;**
4. **Greater involvement of science and higher education in Oostvaardersplassen.**

1. The ambition to have Oostvaardersplassen become part of a new Nieuw Land National Park was given further shape in 2017. A master plan for the National Park (with Lepelaarplassen, Markerwadden and Markermeer) is being drawn up and will be submitted next year for the purpose of obtaining National Park status. At the same time, as part of the development of the National Park, we are strengthening the quality of the recreational facilities and infrastructure in the peripheral zones.

An integrated management plan is currently being drawn up which describes the management of both the core area and the peripheral zones.

In the gate areas there is close cooperation with the municipalities of Almere and Lelystad, both as regards the development measures (hardware) and the programming (software). As area partners, they contribute to the financing as does the Province of Flevoland.

2. In combination with Natura2000 and the shelter tasks, resulting from the recommendations of ICMO 2 plans are being drawn up to strengthen the transitions between the marshland zone, the dry section and the periphery of the landscape. The construction of fish ladders, possibly along the railway zone (area between the management road and the rail track) and along the marshland, could be combined with the construction of ponds, inundation areas and ungrazed islands with reed development.

3. In order to strengthen public support for the management of Oostvaardersplassen, a number of initiatives were taken in 2017. In addition to environmental participation and regular consultations with stakeholders, greater efforts were made to use social media to reach and involve a wider public. In addition, a start was made with a series of 'wilderness cafes' facilitating communication with local residents and specific target groups.

4. The scientific and other research in the Oostvaardersplassen area is further shaped by means of a broad research agenda in which various universities and colleges participate.

In line with this, education (primary and secondary schools) will also receive more attention in the coming years in the form of specific programmes and activities tailored to the area. A new management building with a field station will be built in 2018. This field station will accommodate scientists for research.

Personnel developments:

The management team for Oostvaardersplassen was supplemented in September with a new staff member who will be responsible for social media and recreational facilities, and with a Forestry and Nature management student.

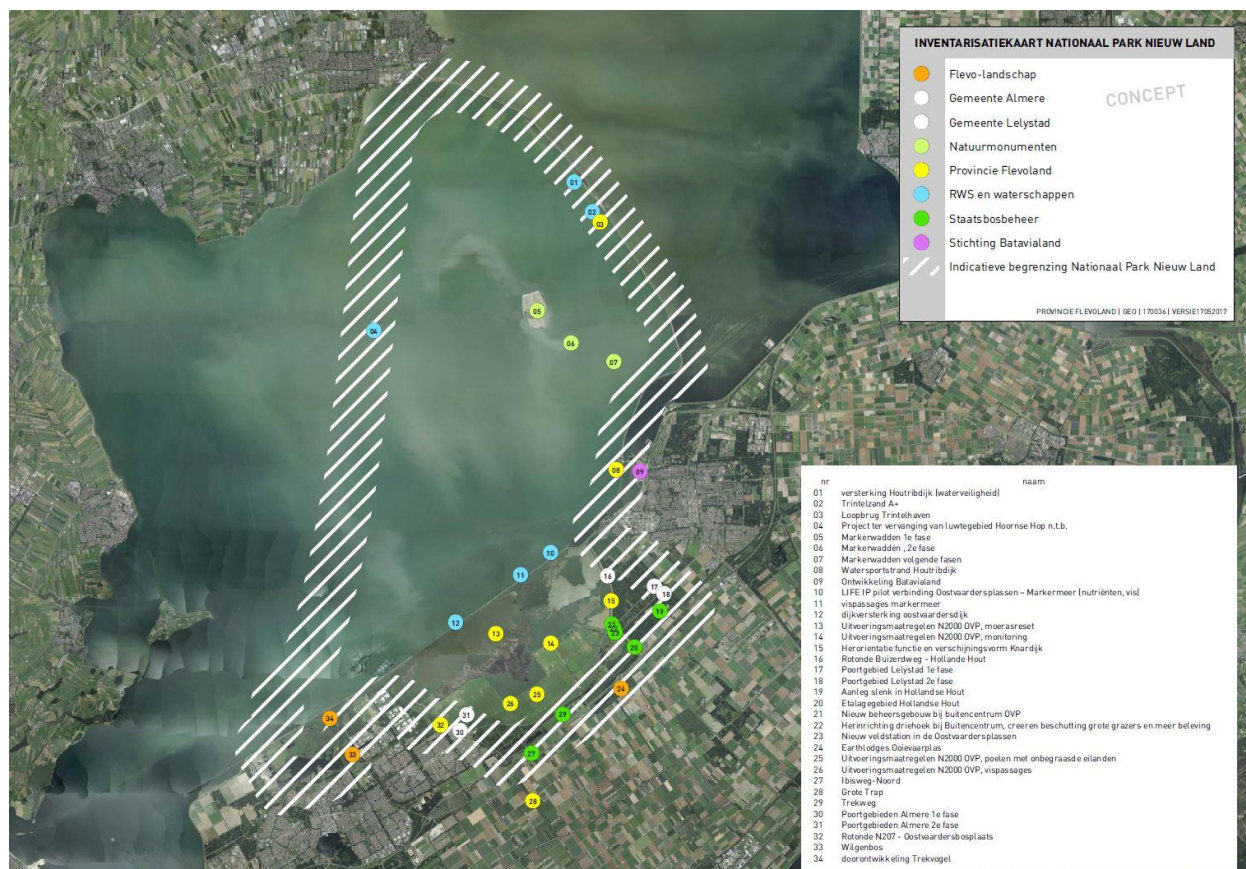
The team is again at full strength. The Outdoor Centre has also recruited a new employee, who will be working partly in the Visitors' Centre on the Almere side of OVP.

A number of projects that reached the planning stage in 2017 (Natura2000, Nieuw Land National Park, New Nature Projects along the A6 motorway, the development of gate areas and other structural measures) will be partly implemented in 2018. This creates a major challenge for the existing team and, for the coming year or years, the team will need to look for additional reinforcement in the domains of project management and implementation, quality management and hostmanship.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please

attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no boundary changes last year. With the development of the National Park, cross-border initiatives will be developed and ecological and recreational connections will be made with the adjacent nature reserves such as Lepelaarplassen, Markermeer and Marker Wadden. In cooperation with the various regional parties (mainly the Municipality of Almere, the Municipality of Lelystad and the Province of Flevoland) the challenge is to match ambitions and to pace. In the second half of 2017, the Province of Flevoland took more decisive control of this coordination.



The Nieuw Land National Park concept

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

As in other years, a new annual report has been prepared about the management of last year.

This can be found on the website, in the Oostvaardersplassen dossier at:

<https://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/-/media/08-dossiers/oostvaardersplassen/2016-2017-jaarrapportage-monitoring-oostvaardersplassen.pdf?la=nl-nl&hash=205D3501AACED87ECE41290E2BA4EB5A00D98512>

Here one can find the latest developments relating to the large herbivores and bird life in Oostvaardersplassen. This annual report is available to the public through the Staatsbosbeheer website.

Transfer of responsibility for animal welfare from Government to Province

In December 2016, the responsibility for the welfare of the large grazers was transferred from the State to the Province of Flevoland. In the coming period, a new policy framework will be prepared which is expected to be completed in early 2018. Staatsbosbeheer is involved in the role of administrator.

Integral large grazer management plan

An integrated management plan is currently being prepared for the large grazers for the entire Oostvaardersplassen area (Natura2000 core and surrounding woodland shell). The starting point is that the current early-reactive management in the core area is a well-functioning instrument.

As it has become clear that the Oostvaarderswold corridor (between Oostvaardersplassen and Horsterwold) will not be realised, the options for a sustainable shelter must be sought in the peripheral zones and the core area. In this context, in addition to the construction of 'corrals with young plants', a start was made in the autumn off 2017 on the planting of trees with individual tree protection in Oostvaarderbos, Kotterbos and De Driehoek.

56. CZECH REPUBLIC - BILÉ KARPATY PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AREA

No report / pas de rapport.

57. CZECH REPUBLIC - KARLŠTEJN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

No report / pas de rapport.

58. CZECH REPUBLIC – PODYJI NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There weren't any conditions attached to renewal of European Diploma.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

<p>1. ensure, in collaboration with the operator of the hydroelectric power station at Vranov, that the negative amplitudes in the flow regime from the dam sluices are reduced and that a minimum residual flow rate is guaranteed</p>
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The new permissions for water use adopted in 2016 are still valid and are being respected. The minimum residual flow is officially set to 2.8 m³ / s, in reality the minimum residual flow in Dyje in 2017 was around 3 m³ / s. Exceptional handling has now been approved due to the extreme lack of precipitation. The flow can thus drop below 2.8 m³ / s, but this is in line with the natural river regime. The Handling regulations (manipulační řád) are being prepared. The confirming procedure should start in the first half of the next year (2018).

<p>2. secure the adoption and implementation of the management plan for the period 2010-2019</p>

No changes – we are still implementing our management plan for years 2012–2020.

<p>3. control the development of leisure activities, and in particular avoid the use of the River Dyje for water sports;</p>

No changes – water sports in the Dyje River are still prohibited.

4. intensify co-operation with the Thayatal National Park to harmonise the fishing regulations within the two parks and reduce the negative effects of fishing in the core zones

The research (which is part of The Dyje 2020 / Thaya 2020 project) will model the impact of sport fishing on biota in both, in the river and on the bank. Recommendations for necessary changes in the conditions for fishing in the core zone will result from this research. The project has started with a delay (due to complicated administration). The research work itself will start in 2018.

5. develop relations with municipalities and the local community in order to encourage sustainable management of their land within the national park, in line with the principles and rules laid down in the management plan

The Podyjí National Park Administration has helped two municipalities to get grants for the care for green areas in the villages and in their surroundings. Three municipalities have received with Podyjí National Park Administration help a subsidy to reduce light pollution from public lighting.

6. pursue and improve the management of agricultural areas, particularly in the buffer zones

Three new grassed areas were created in the agriculture landscape. Their area is not large, but they have contributed significantly to the diversification of the landscape because they are located within large areas of big agriculture fields. The revitalization of the old orchards (about 5 ha) continues to keep these landscape elements functional. New trees were not planted this year. Our workers haven't the capacity to do so, due to importance of taking care of newly planted tree areas in previous years.

7. grant funding to public authorities for water supply and purification within the park's perimeter

All municipalities in the national park area are already connected to a sewerage system with sewage treatment facilities.

8. undertake research on the influence of the artificial barriers on the ecosystem of the Dyje River. Mitigation measures on the riparian ecosystems should be adopted

One of the activities of the Dyje / Thaya 2020 project (see point 4) will be focused on assessing the permeability of historical weirs and the degree of impact on the river ecosystem. The aim is, among other things, to recommend possible solutions that will mitigate negative anthropic influences, while at the same time respect the value of weirs as historical monuments.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The approval of an amendment to the Nature and Landscape Protection Act brought major changes in the zoning of the national parks. These changes will be implemented in next two years. The new zoning will better correspond with concept of nature and landscape management formulated in our Management Plan for the 2012 - 2020. We do not expect a significant impact on practical conservation management of the area. The area of the forests left to spontaneous development is likely to be slightly increased.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The boundaries of Podyji National Park and its buffer zone were more detailed specified as part of the amendment to The Nature and Landscape Protection Act. It was formal step to remove inaccuracies and confusions in old maps. The actual change of the declared area is not specified. It probably not exceeded the minor tens of square meters.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

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59. ROMANIA – DANUBE DELTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no conditions attached to the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. the process of co-ordinating the ecological management of the delta system with the three countries concerned (Moldova, Romania and Ukraine) should be continued and strengthened and the possibility of establishing a cross-border protected area should be considered in the framework of the trilateral agreement signed by the three countries concerned, under the auspices of the Council of Europe;

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority was partner in two projects financed under the Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, with the participation of entities from all the three countries:

- Consolidation of the nature protected areas' network for biodiversity protection and sustainable development in the Danube Delta and Lower Prut river region (PAN Nature)

and

- Inventory, assesment and remediation of anthropogenic sources of pollution in the Lower Danube Region of Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova

First project was finalized. The Republic of Moldova is still working on declaring on its side a biosphere reserve for the Lower Prut River region.

2. the possibility of reactivating the co-operation between other European Diploma sites which are deltas (Camargue National Reserve (France) and Donana National Park (Spain)) should be explored;

In October 2016 was signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (Romania) and the Joint Union for the Management of the Natural Regional Park of Camargue (France) on the cooperation in the protected areas. In 2017 a student from France developed a study tour in Danube Delta and Camargue.

3. the monitoring of the ecological services and of the socio-economic activities carried out on the reserve (fishing, hunting, shipping, agriculture, forestry, logging, tourism) should be strengthened in relation with the carrying capacity of the natural ecosystems and the value of the reserve; special attention should be paid to the shipping activities (movement of boats and speeding) as well as to illegal fishing and hunting;

The integrated monitoring programme of the reserve includes monitoring of the ecological services and of the socio-economic activities carried out on the reserve (fishing, hunting, shipping, agriculture, forestry, logging, tourism) and all the other aspects mentioned above. The rules for navigation inside the reserve are stipulated in the Governmental Decision no. 538/2015.

4. potential external threats should be continually monitored, especially the likely adverse transboundary impact on the ecosystem of the whole delta of the works related to the Bystroe canal in the Ukrainian sector;

The integrated monitoring programme of the reserve includes as well the monitoring of the aspects on the impact of the transport activities from the Chilia channel, as a consequence of the functioning of the navigation channel Danube – Black Sea (Bystroe), built in the Ukrainian side of the Danube Delta.

5. the usefulness of banning hunting, or of managing hunting on a demonstrably sustainable basis, on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, especially in the most sensitive areas, should be studied;

The hunting activity on the protected area's territory was banned from 2013. During the year 2017 the hunting activity was allowed for concerned authorities in view to monitor the spread of the disease like African swine fever, present on the other side of the border, in Ukraine.

6. a system for better management of natural fisheries resources should be explored for the benefit of the local people, in order to reduce the categories and number of intermediary actors/stakeholders; the fish resources should be managed by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority;

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority managed the fish resources on the reserve's territory, based on the Management Plan and Regulations approved by the Governmental Decision no. 763/2015.

7. information concerning access of boats to vulnerable parts of the reserve should be made readily available to the public;

All the necessary information related to the economic activities allowed on the protected area's territory are posted on the web page: www.ddbra.ro

8. the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority should continue to bring technical and financial assistance to the local populations, municipalities and private operators in different fields (land planning, water supplies, sewage treatment) and assist with information on organizing and developing activities compatible with the aims of the reserve, such as ecotourism, bird watching and handicrafts;

For the financial period 2014-2020 there are several financial programmes supporting different kind of activities and stakeholders and beneficiaries from inside the reserve. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority supports local communities in accessing the funds.

9. the restoration programme of the existing building should be continued, using traditional materials and natural local products; the cultural value of the reserve, especially the different ethnic roots of the populations, should be enhanced with the engineering and technical input of specialized institutes;

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority surveys the ways that the objectives presented by the implementation on the Building Regulation in Reserve are followed.

10. an external review and assessment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve's Conservation Strategy (for example, priorities, management objectives, operational objectives and financial requirement) should be organized in 2010, ten years after its declaration, with the support of international expertise;

In September 2015 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve organized an international meeting for an external review and assessment of the Conservation Strategy. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority has in view in the next years to improve its legal framework and the strategies for the conservation of the Danube Delta's biodiversity and ecosystems.

11. the necessary funding should be provided in order to improve the capacities/ performance of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority; a feasibility study on the creation of a financial mechanism should be undertaken so that all commercial activities and uses (not only tourist activities) contribute to the financing of the reserve;

The legal framework foresees measures for economic-social development of the Danube Delta area. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority improves its budget with funds from taxes, fees, permits and authorizations issuing.

12. *the adoption of the legal framework (master plan, Law on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Law on Protected Areas) should be accelerated;*

Based on the Management Plan, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority proposed every year new legal documents to be adopted by the Government, in view to support its activity for nature conservation and protection and sustainable development in the area.

13. *noting that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure is in operation, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority should continue to analyze carefully the requests for new wind farms in the neighborhood of the reserve*

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority surveys carefully the development of wind farms in the reserve's neighborhood area.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

From July 2017, the Law 82/1993 was modified by the Government of Romania, and the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority is from this year subordinated to the General Secretariat of the Government.

During the 2017 year some specialists have left the institution and others were employed in different positions. The staff number in November 2017 is of 142 persons.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There are no changes to the boundaries of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve since the last report.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

60. AUSTRIA – THAYATAL NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions, which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There are no conditions attached to the award or to the renewal of the European Diploma.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations, which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. as soon as the results of the study on the ecology of the Thaya River and how it is affected by the Vranov Dam operations are received, the Thayatal National Park, as well as the Podyjí National

Park in the Czech Republic, should undertake to translate the proposed measures into action. The ideal flow rate of 2.4 cubic metres per second already set by the Czech experts must be achieved;

The Vranov river power plant was refurbished and a small auxiliary power plant, Vranov 2, was added, almost immediately downstream from the main dam by a preexisting weir. In accordance with its operating permit, issued by the administrative authorities of the Southern Moravian district, this project guarantees a minimum flow rate of 2,8 m³/sec. Typically, the (off-hours) flow rates are now between 3,0 – 3,3 m³/sec. In addition there is an agreement between the administration of the Národní park Podyjí and E.ON, the operating company of the Vranov power plant. It provides for an additional cap on the maximum flow rate. Only in case of special circumstances (e.g. flooding conditions, energy shortages) may all 3 turbines be operated simultaneously. Peak flow rates under regular conditions could thus be reduced from 45 to 30 m³/sec. For the last two years E.ON always adhered to the provisions of this agreement.

2. in view of the four or five artificial sills across the Thaya, consider renaturalisation work to recreate rocky rapids over a longer stretch of the river. In terms of priority, the sill immediately upstream is most in need of improvement;

As part of the 2011-2014 INTERREG project „Gemeinsame Maßnahmen im Bereich des Wasserschutzes im Grenzbereich der Thaya“ („Joint measures regarding river protection in the border stretch of the Thaya river“), where both national parks participated as strategic partners, potential improvements regarding the river ecology downstream of the power plant were evaluated. In this effort, the provincial government of Lower Austria has worked out measures to improve the passage for fish and other aquatic organisms across the weirs along the border stretch of the river, and has coordinated these plans with the Czech river administration Povodí Moravy. For the weirs in Hardegg, fish ladders are being suggested. The two weirs by the Neuhäusl castle ruins are to be partially removed.

With the successor INTERREG project „Dyje/Thaya 2020“ (2016-2020) fish ecology studies will continue to evaluate the passability of these weirs. The Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH participates in this project as a partner, with the river administration Povodí Moravy as the lead partner and Národní park Podyjí as a strategic partner. The aim here is to show under which conditions what fish species are able to overcome and pass the weirs. The new minimum flow rate of 2,8 m³/sec is to be considered in this study, which is to serve as a base to plan concrete measures.

3. ensure that transfrontier projects and activities involving both the Thayatal and Podyji National Parks are increasing in scope and are well funded and intensified, particularly with a view to taking essential measures on the impact of the Vranov Dam;

Due to increases in the funding of the federal and Lower Austrian provincial governments in 2015, the general budget of the Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH rose from € 600.000 to € 800.000 annually. In addition, many measures were taken under grant projects co-financed by the European Union. The INTERREG program aims to facilitate activities across national borders. Consequently, both national park administrations are keen to make use of this program to finance joint activities. Thayatal Nationalpark currently participates in three INTERREG projects. The above mentioned „Dyje/Thaya 2020“ project includes creating a cross-border fish spawning site in the river as well as a study to reduce the introduction of fine sediment by the Fugnitz tributary and the coordination of fishing regulations along the border stretch of the river. With „Connecting Nature AT-CZ“ (2017-2020) Nationalpark Thayatal is the lead partner for a large project that combines 11 partners in the support of so-called green infrastructure (joining previously isolated habitats, protective measure for moors, biodiversity research at the Thayatal/Podyjí national parks). For the INTERREG Central Europe program „Magic Landscapes“, Nationalpark Thayatal reviews wildcat (*Felis sylvestris*) migration corridors in the Weinviertel, Waldviertel and Southern Moravia regions.

4. given the spontaneous establishment in the park of new species such as the otter and beaver and the current study on the wild cat, there is a need to document the presence of roving animals as fully as possible and consider the full potential of the park's habitats;

As basis for the Nationalpark Thayatal management plans, thorough initial surveys regarding the species inventory were taken. In the years following, monitoring surveys were already taken for a number of animal categories. This is being done in close coordination with Národní park Podyjí but also with the Natura 2000 area surveys conducted by the Lower Austrian provincial government. Regarding recently incoming species wide-spread camera-trap monitoring was conducted as part of our research of wildcats. Specific studies have reviewed the breeding of Eurasian Sea Eagles (White-tailed Eagle, *Haliaeetus albicilla*) and the potential migration of Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) and Raccoon Dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) into the area. Sightings of roving species, e.g. Moose (*Alces alces*) and already established species, Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and Eurasian Beaver (*Castor fiber*), were collected. For some species, targeted searches were conducted, e.g. documented breeding of Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) in 2017 with potentially 2 – 4 breeding pairs. Wildcats represent a focus of research in the Nationalpark Thayatal, with the potential for further migration into the park area and population support measures being studied as part of the Connecting Nature project.

5. develop the use of the Kaja Castle ruins in the park's education programmes as an example of how historical monuments can be incorporated into education on the environment.

The Kaja castle ruins were included in numerous events as part of the Nationalpark Thayatal visitor programs. In this, the aim was to show how much the natural environment of the national park is linked to human history and how they influence each other. A focus is on the animal species that currently inhabit the ruins. Further educational topics are the former castle's history as exemplary for the history of this border region, former uses of the landscape around the castle and folk stories around the structure.

There are specific programs for student groups as well as adults that combine a trip through the national park with a visit to the ruins. From 2013 to 2017 there were 1.596 students and 744 adults that visited the Kaja ruins as part of their national park experience. Additionally, special events (e.g. „bat night“) were conducted for the „Nature Research Youngsters“ program as well as for regular visitors.

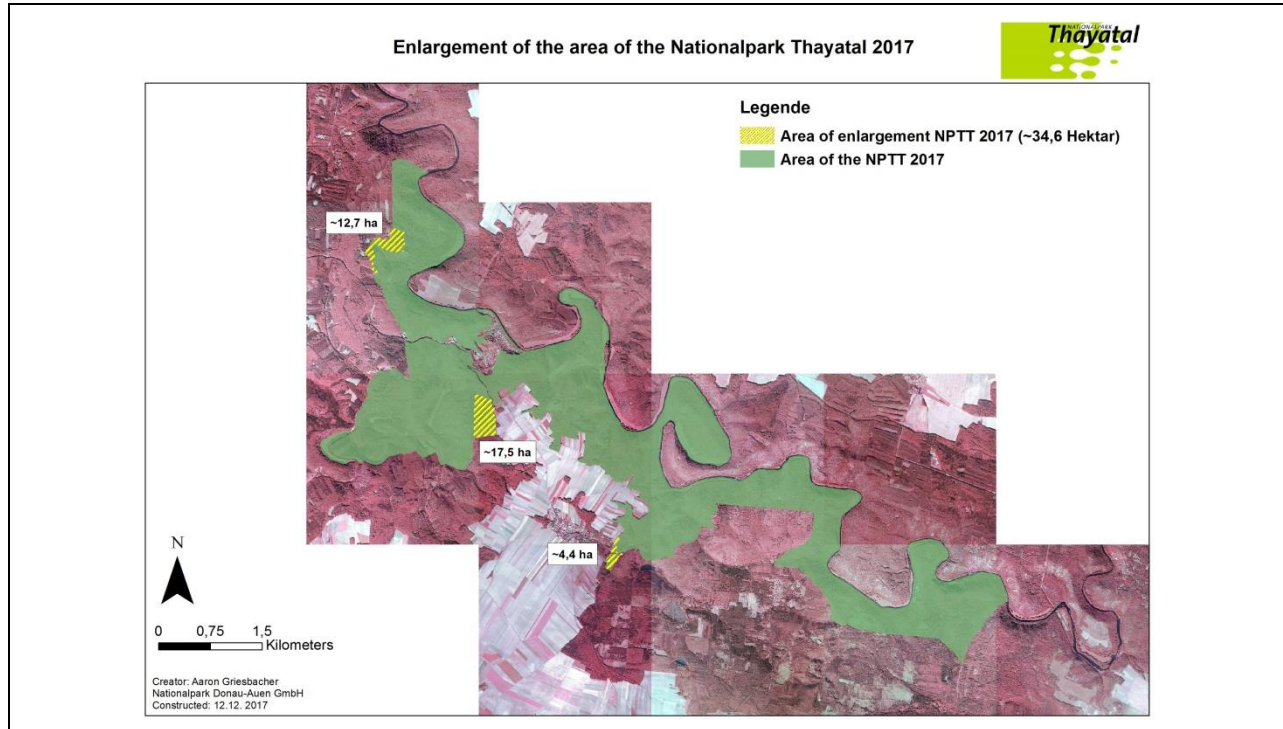
3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The management of the Nationalpark Thayatal continues in accordance with the annual plans that are derived from the longer-range management plans. Severe drought conditions in summer 2017 have led to the dieback of quite a number of stands of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*).

Two additional staff members were hired into the national park administration, one biologist and one administrative assistant (see also 5.).

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

In April of 2017, a revised national park executive regulation became effective. In this the national park was extended with three parcels of land at the periphery of the existing park area. Its total area now stands at 1358,5 ha. See also 9.1 and the attached overview-map.



5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Also in April of 2017, the national park director Ludwig Schleritzko accepted a new position as Secretary of Finance in the provincial government of Lower Austria. Currently the national park administration builds accommodations to house students and youths during project weeks in the vicinity of the existing visitor center. It offers enough space for up to 60 persons and aims to facilitate an intense nature experience during stays of several days.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated.

In December of 2014 a rare combination of weather conditions brought an ice storm resulting in whole hillsides losing the majority of their mature tree population due to breakage and toppling.

As a consequence, the deadwood proportion in the national park's forests has markedly increased (~ 100 ha) with unexpected speed, clearly an improvement towards a more natural state, and offering the increase in diversity regarding forest structure and habitats that was envisioned by the management plans all along. This has already become evident by a noted increase of the park's woodpecker populations, specifically a tripling of the population of the Middle spotted woodpecker (*Leiopicus medius*). A detailed mapping of these zones and their further development is under way.

Starting in 2016 and now fully under way, the widespread dieback of ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) due to infestation by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbus* has reached the national park and has devastated the population of these trees. For safety reasons, large numbers of ash trees along one of the most popular hiking paths had to be cut. It is expected that ashes will be

largely diminished in the park for the foreseeable future and a return of this species in significant numbers is entirely uncertain.

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

The systematic and planned removal of Spruce (*Picea abies*) and Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) according to the management plans has continued. Of originally 400 ha of spruce and pine stands that were established in the course of commercial forestry before the establishment of the national park, only 150 ha remain of this tree species that are foreign to the natural forest communities of this region and badly adapted to the relatively warm and dry conditions that have rather intensified of late. Completion of this management measure that was already included in the original strategy for the park is planned for 2030.

Likewise, the eradication of stands and individual specimen of Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), technically an invasive species, continues on an annual basis with an improved method to suppress regrowth from the roots.

Dry grassland management remains a focus for the park management. In order to preserve and support the very specialized and rare plant communities in specifically mapped areas, bushes are removed, the ground vegetation is mowed and much of the plant matter is removed in accordance with an established dry grassland management concept.

Regarding other invasive species, *Impatiens glandulifera* has practically vanished from the park due to the regular and systematic eradication measures in the past.

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

An increased migration of Sea Eagles (White-tailed Eagle, *Haliaeetus albicilla*) into the park's region was observed. However, presumably due to the increased eagle population, the number of Black Storks (*Ciconia nigra*), a species known to be especially sensitive to disturbances, have apparently decreased. Also increased have the sightings of Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*) and Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). There was one confirmed find of wildcat (*Felis sylvestris*) each in 2013 and 2014, in addition to the previously published finds.

A study found no evidence of racoon or racoon dog migrating into the park area.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

The Kaja castle ruins are now an integral part of the national park experience for many visitors (see also 5.) In addition, cooperation with the Hardegg castle and the Ruegers palace (e.g. bat-night) were established and has led to an integrated program offer for day-trippers to the region. Our cooperation with the neighboring Národní park Podyjí in many respects of park management and research has added to the strengthening of ties between the Austrian and Czech people on either side of the border.

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

Very close cooperation between the local community of Hardegg and the national park has markedly enlivened the community. The national park center's event hall and other facilities may be used for purposes of general interest to the community, e.g. continued education courses,

Yoga instructions, etc. The national park has created 10 jobs in the community and, 20 more rangers, some of them recruited locally have found additional part-time income.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

The overall interpretive goal of the national park is to present to the visitor a place where nature and its habitats are allowed to develop, evolve and change through their own processes, in their own time, unimpeded and largely unmanaged by human intervention (process conservation). In addition, and sometimes also in contrast to academic learning, we endeavor to let visitors experience with all their senses a type of natural place that has become quite rare in many developed countries. In this we follow the motto of the Association of Austrian National Parks (Nationalparks Austria): “Nothing touches us quite like the untouched.”

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

The national park visitor center stands at the center of our interactions and communications with visitors. Our central publication is the annual program each year, detailing the multitude of regular and special events as well as general information important to any visitor. A small image-folder as well as a 4-part nature guidebook through all seasons supplements our promotional literature that is always available. Beyond a free-of-charge hiking guide, we also offer a detailed and specialized hiking map for both national parks combined, which was developed in a joint Czech/Austrian project. As is obligatory these days, the national park is available and present on the Internet, via homepage, facebook and instagram. Once inside the center, our visitors can further learn about the park and the region in our tablet-guided exhibition and multi-media presentation. Occasional advertisements and special supplements in regional newspapers as well as scholarly papers in academic journals complete our public presence.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Approximately 25.000 visitors are counted at the national park center annually, with another 25.000 estimated to hike only the park. Most visitors arrive on long weekends in May or June, many more spend a few days of their summer vacation at the Nationalpark Thayatal. Most stay close by the visitor center or in the vicinity of Hardegg. Many sections of the national park are not accessible to visitors.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

During the last 3 years, delegations of officials from Korea and Croatia and from Eastern Europe, concerned with conservation and the management of protected areas in their home countries, visited Thayatal national park. In addition, a meeting between the Czech and Austrian ministers of environment visited the site in 2015.

8.2. Scientific research

8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

See also 2.4. . In recent years, research focused on river ecology. The two Thaya tributaries, Fugnitz and Kaja creeks were characterized with regard to water quality, makrozoobenthos and driftwood. Extensive studies were conducted along the Thaya river – see 2.3. As part of the Connecting Nature project a review of all vascular plants and fungi will be conducted.

8.2.2. Scientific publications

An online meta-database (www.parks.at) was created in cooperation with the Nationalparks Austria association, which allows public access to all publications of the Nationalpark Thayatal.

They may also be downloaded in the .pdf format. Further there is the „Thayensia“ series of publications where study reports of both national parks are published.

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

Pursuant to the pertinent national park legislation, a revised national park executive regulation was issued, effective April 2017, by the Lower Austrian provincial government. Amongst others, it incorporates some land additions, a minor land exclusion (Parkplatz in Hardegg), some changes in zoning, important for the practical management in proximity to populated areas outside the park. A revision of the national park act is currently being prepared at the provincial legislative level.

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

A sizeable tract of land of 312 ha that is included in the park area changed ownership in 2017 as part of a larger transaction that also included land outside the park.

Note that most national park land is incorporated under indefinite use agreements, rather than being outright owned by the national park corporation. As said agreements are linked to the land title and thus remain in effect regardless of ownership, no immediate effect is expected from the transaction. Further, legal protection of the national park status is not only provided by said use agreements with individual land owners, but much more importantly by the provisions of the national park act itself.

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

The park area was extended by approx. 31 ha, comprised of 12,6 ha at the Schwalbenfelsen location and 18,3 ha at the Kreuzmais location. Within the village of Hardegg, certain areas, e.g. on slopes behind houses, were rezoned to allow management measures that would protect buildings and inhabitants from damage or injury due to toppling trees. An area by the Thaya, frequently used for parking, was excluded from the park. Along a stretch of the Fugnitz tributary, starting immediately upstream of Hardegg village and continuing approximately 300 m upstream, the removal of debris and driftwood from the creek is now permitted to protect the downstream village from the effects of blockages during times of flooding.

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

Since 2015 there are cooperations with the Europe diploma protected area Wachau and the Nationalpark Donau-Auen with regard to natural space management and the exchange of experiences with particular management methods and techniques. See also 6.2.

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

Management is primarily guided by the principles of process conservation. However, for safety reasons, the removal of blockages from the Fugnitz creek is permitted and trees that critically endanger hikers must be removed (see above). Monitoring of the Thaya riversides for driftwood logs has been instituted ever since the potential danger for the downstream dam at Znoimo has been recognized. However, woody debris that may become driftwood is currently only being monitored, not removed.

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

Most paths and roads that once criss-crossed the land that later became the national park were purposely left unattended, unmarked and are now derelict. This serves to establish the intended preserves within the park that are to be almost entirely devoid of human visitors and disturbance, as visitors are strictly confined to the official and marked paths. Those, however, have recently undergone a major overhaul, albeit very conservatively, by hand and with in some parts to broaden and even the way, in order to ensure access for emergency vehicles to locations at the bottom of the river valley, and to enable the hay harvest on those meadows that the management plan has destined for extensive use. Additional outside material (sand, gravel, etc.), however, was NOT used for this project.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

Hides and similar structures for hunting purposes that predated the establishment of the national park have not been kept up and are now either destroyed or unusable. Similarly, three fishing huts, no longer in use, have also been removed. Fenced-in areas for studies of wildlife ecology or the protection of certain endemic plant species are largely maintenance-free.

10.1.5. Waste management

Along an upstream section of the Fugnitz tributary at the village of Pleißing a new waste water treatment plant was built, which reduced the pollutive stress to this creek. Within the national park there are hardly any issues regarding waste. There are no trash receptacles as visitors are asked to take their trash back along with them. Occasionally, the river Thaya deposits some trash along the banks, which is being collected and removed at irregular intervals by the national parks staff on both sides.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

In the area of environmental protection, a number of technological measures were taken at the Nationalpark Thayatal. Amongst them were a photovoltaic installation, solar collectors for hot water preparation and conservation schemes regarding energy, water and trash. In recognition of these efforts the national park administration received the „Österreichisches Umweltzeichen“ (Austrian Ecolabel).

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

In 2014 a new national park director (Dipl. Ing. Ludwig Schleritzko) was appointed to follow his retiring predecessor (Dipl. Ing. Robert Brunner). With Mr. Schleritzko accepting a post in the provincial government of Lower Austria in 2017, Mr. Christian Übl, BSc was appointed his successor.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

11 new rangers were trained and completed the course successfully during the 2015/2016 period. Preparations are being made to commence the next ranger training program in early 2018.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

Rangers are called upon to patrol assigned stretches of hiking paths and areas within the park every weekend and holiday from spring to fall. For this purpose they are sworn to fulfill and respect the pertinent laws and regulation as public officers. Joint patrols are also conducted with personnel from Národní park Podyjí. In order to gain new experiences and lend different perspectives, personnel for patrols is also exchanged between the Thayatal Nationalpark and the Donau-Auen Nationalpark. As part of the continuing education program for rangers, a workshop

was recently held with an expert of the National Police's regional security branch regarding legal and practical aspects of enforcing the conservation laws within the national park.

A new fishery warden was recently appointed from amongst the still active fishers along the Thaya river in the national park.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

A serious incident occurred in 2016, when the owner of a pond upstream from the Kaja creek failed to properly secure against erosion while repairing the pond's dam. This led to significant downstream pollution and sedimentation of silt from the flooded construction site. The competent authorities at the district level were informed and commenced legal action within the framework of administrative law, as well as oversaw remedial work. Potential damage to the significant local population of European crayfish (*Astacus astacus*) in this creek is still being studied.

Czech fishers fishing in Austrian waters not zoned for fishing pose an infrequent, but consistent challenge.

Ultralights, gyrocopters and other hobby airmen in light fixed-wing aircrafts, apparently enjoying the spectacular views of the river valley, are a constant worry for us with regard to disturbance-sensitive bird species.

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

We appreciate very much the honor and distinction in the public eye that this diploma carries and consider it further motivation to continue in our efforts towards efficient and effective nature conservation and protection. This diploma has also encouraged us to strengthen our cooperative efforts with the nearby Wachau diploma area. Last but not least, we see this diploma as a contribution to foster mutual understanding and cooperation between Austrians and Czechs that live in this region and were separated for much too long by the iron curtain of the past.

61. ESTONIA – MATSALU NATIONAL PARK

No report / pas de rapport.

62. HUNGARY – VOLCANIC PHENOMENA OF THE TIHANY PENINSULA

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- There were no conditions attached to the last renewal of the European Diploma.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

« 1. translate the management plan into more detailed and practical measures; »

- The development of the management plan is in progress. It will be supplemented with special regulations in terms of Natura 2000. Furthermore, detailed proposals for good agricultural practices will be included. We take into account the experiences that have been collated during the field visit of the expert Mr Galland.

« 2. strongly enforce the ban on new buildings on the site; »

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report. The National Park Directorate has been able to reinforce the ban on new buildings on the site with the help of the municipality and other state authorities.

« 3. pursue the planning and construction of the visitor centre near Lake Belsö; »

- The Lavender House Visitor Centre, the visitor centre of the European Diploma area, was opened on the 1st June 2011. The number of visitors has been over 200 000 so far. The National Park Directorate has renewed the exhibition of visitor centre. The renewal will be continued next year in the Park of the visitor centre. The new plans prepared by the National Park Direction are ready.

« 4. continue to manage and control visitor pressure; »

- We have seen a visible increase in the number of tourists on our nature trails. We have tried to reduce damages caused by numerous visitors on the site by mapping out routes, by developing nature trails and small areas with many sights near the village. A new project financed by a state-tender (Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme) has been started by the national park to renew the most public nature trails on the peninsula. Detailed plans are in progress.

« 5. keep the balance between closed forested areas and open areas (meadows with hedges and bushes); »

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report. The results achieved till now have been maintained with mechanical and manual activities by the national park.

« 6. encourage farming and wine-growing practices consistent with the conservation of natural and landscape assets; »

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report. From the point of view of natural heritage, good practises in farming and wine-growing have been encouraged by law and recommendation, too. The national park experts participate in controlling how farmers receive state-subsidies due to nature friendly farming practises.

« 7. encourage the transfer of management rights on fishing in Lake Belsö to the Balaton Uplands National Park; »

- The management rights of Lake Belsö were transferred to the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate by the state in 2013. The procedure for obtaining fishing rights to the national park is in progress, the results are not yet known. A project financed by a state-tender (Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme) has been started to improve water quality and restore the natural state of the lake by the national park. Detailed plans are in progress.

« 8. encourage the transfer of state properties to the Balaton Upland National Park and pursue the acquisition of private land; »

- Because of the very high land prices on Tihany Peninsula, the National Park Directorate has not been able to buy new land here. We acquire ownership of approximately 5 ha lawns by replacing areas.

« 9. continue to control invasive species such as the *Ailanthus*; »

- The achieved results have been maintained with mechanical and manual activities by the national park. A detailed survey was carried out on the spread of invasive non-native species. The NP participates in the Life4Oakforests project, which was started in 2017, as part of which will again be a large scale intervention on the peninsula to reduce invasive species.

« 10. develop co-ordinated management with nearby protected areas such as the reed beds on the shore of Lake Balaton and the Külső and Felső marshes. »

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report. The National Park has managed the reed beds on the shore of Lake Balaton and Lake Külső and Felső marches with the same method as other parts of the protected area. The project of forcing back invasive weed species involves this area, too.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- No changes have occurred since the last report.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

- Two day's long on-the-spot appraisal visit was made by Mr Pierre Galand on the peninsula in May 2017. Rich and useful program and very valuable professional consultation took place with Mr Galand.

63. SLOVENIA – TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. A new law should provide the adequate legal basis for the conservation of the Triglav National Park as early as possible.

As mentioned in previous reports new Triglav National Park Act was adopted in 2010. In 2017, an Act Amending Triglav National Park Act was adopted. It brings the following changes: building of water reservoirs in existing recreation centres is permissible, a legal possibility for park municipalities to plan smaller spatial arrangements in those areas where spatial plan act should be drawn up is established, design and construction of roads in special protected areas such as natural monuments and natural reserves, where the use of roads is not possible due to natural disasters is allowed, gives the possibility to legalize existing incompatible construction of water reservoir at ski centre Triglav on Pokljuka and rehabilitate it properly.

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO7642>

2. The management plan must be finalised and formalised as soon as the new law on the Triglav National Park is passed

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted Triglav National Park Management Plan for the period 2016 – 2025 in May 2016:

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED6942>

The Triglav National Park annual program of work for 2017 was prepared according to the MP as well as the Triglav National Park annual report. All national and international projects which were already approved or are in the process of evaluation were selected and prepared according to the content of MP.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Ensure that, when the new zoning is in place, any further change of zones is in favour of increased protection.

The Triglav National Park Act defines three zones, 1st and 2nd are central zones, 3rd is peripheral zone. The surface of central zone is now 63.900 ha which is 8.568 ha larger than before and the total park area is bigger because of the enlargement in its south part. The new law encourages transformation of 2nd zone to 3rd or 1st zone with the condition that the central part does not decrease. The main opportunity is to transform the zonation towards 1st zone (wilderness) and keep 3rd zone for sustainable use.

2. Apply strictly the land-use planning regulations related to new constructions and renovation work

Spatial planning at local level is exclusively under the jurisdiction of municipalities. Seven of the eight municipalities have adopted the land use plan. The plan of municipality of Kranjska Gora is still in the process of preparing. In the process of drafting a municipal spatial development plan and a municipal spatial order, the Public Institute Triglav National Park takes an active part, in accordance with the Nature Conservation Act and the new law on TNP, in preparation of nature conservation guidelines.

3. Continue to work on adapted solutions to solve the problem of wastewater, especially for buildings and huts with intensive human occupation.

There are 36 mountain huts in the Triglav National Park and at the end of the year 2017, 16 of them had wastewater treatment plants. For a few years Slovenian Alpine Association has a consultancy office that helps to solve environmental issues on the mountain huts. Together with the park staff regular consultancy and monitoring of the treated waste water is in place. Alpine clubs and managers accepted these activities in a very positive way and they are stimulated for improvements. A new Decree on the discharge and treatment of urban wastewater (Official Gazette RS, 98/15) was passed. According to the new Decree the proper treatment and discharge of the wastewater should be settled by the end of 2021. As a proper treatment of wastewater on the mountain huts are considered: wastewater treatment plants, 3-compartment septic tanks with drain field and dry toilets.

Four of six TNP mountain huts have wastewater treatment plants.

4. Continue to develop schemes to enable the co-existence of sheep farming and the presence of large carnivores such as the bear, wolf and lynx, with the aim of increasing the carnivore population in the park

In 2013, the TNP Scientific advisory board adopted a strategy for the managing large carnivores within the protected area where the general policy and measures are foreseen. In practice, defined criteria and measures are applied in conflict situations in which the TNP's assessment should be elaborated regarding the stakeholders requests for applying the radical measures with taking animals from the wild. In 2014, TNP officially entered a five-year project LIFE+ WolfAlps (LIFE12 NAT/IT/000807) with a focus on wolf conservation and the improvement of its coexistence with humans. The actual project implementation concerning the mitigation of potential conflicts between wolf and humans started in 2015 with a purchase of two sets of preventive tools (electric fences) by TNP and donation to farms facing with damages on livestock caused by large carnivores. Fencing of grazing animals combined with a regular presence of Slovenian NGO members (DINARICUM society) was recognized as an effective preventive measure since no livestock losses have been detected. It was expected that the implementation of such measures will continue. However, according to the results of comprehensive winter monitoring

(snowtracking) within TNP during the winter time 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, no wolf presence was confirmed therefore no mitigation measures were needed with that regard. Furthermore, several educational and awareness raising activities (e.g. guided school visits, exhibitions, etc) took place in the last three years in order to increase the acceptance for large carnivores by the general public and different users of the Triglav National Park area. Since the Triglav National Park together with the Prealpi Giulie Nature Park was nominated as a Transboundary pilot region for ecological connectivity of the Alpine Convention in 2014, we're also active in integrating conservation activities across political borders. Namely, public institutions of both protected areas participated in a project ForAdapt run by the Department Forest- and Soil Sciences (DFS) at the Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU) in Wien. The collaboration was aimed to establish grounds for adaptive cross border brown bear management within the study area. As a Transboundary pilot region for ecological connectivity of the Alpine Convention, we also participate in a project AlpBioNet2030 (Alpine Space Programme) led by the ALPARC. The project is also focusing on an issue of human - nature coexistence, including with regard to large carnivores.

5. Ensure the best integration possible of the various activities conducted in the Park, for example the integration of organic farming and nature protection.

In 2017 we continue to work on launching a brand for local products – ‘Sign of Quality’ – testifying that the product was produced in local environment of the Triglav National Park.

Together with the Municipality of Bohinj, Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and other experts a strategy of development of high-altitude pastures in Bohinj was prepared last year. The strategy is now ready to enter the discussion and get the approval of the Bohinj Municipal Council.

6. Pursue all measures aimed at converting artificial spruce forest to climax mixed forests and at increasing the area of protection forests

In general, the forests in TNP are well preserved. However, in some areas of intensively managed forests, the process of forest regeneration in the past was significantly influenced by human, with intentional introduction of spruce in particular. As a result, current share of spruce in some stands is significantly higher than expected. Today, forestry management plans do not encourage such practice since they require for the artificial regeneration to be carried out with pioneer vegetation only or with other broadleaved tree species occurring naturally in affected area. The main principle of today's forest management is to encourage natural regeneration; human induced one is recognized as an exemption only in order to improve the naturalness of altered forest stands or to increase their stability and resistance. TNP together with the Slovenian Institute for Nature Conservation are taking part in a process of forestry management plans preparation. Also the TNP Management Plan (2016-2025) requires that some forest stands with significantly changed tree species structure should be gradually improved. However, even artificial, some conifer forests in Triglav National Park (e.g. high karst plateaus Pokljuka and Mežakla) are also important from nature conservation point of view (e.g. glacial relics such as Capercaillie and Three-toed Woodpecker) which presents an additional challenge for the proper management of forests in Triglav National Park.

In January–February 2014, an extreme ice storm caused damage to 51 % of forests across Slovenia and this event is recognized as the most catastrophic natural disturbance recorded for the country. However, in Triglav National Park direct impacts of an ice storm were not so severe since the damages were limited to the lowland forest stands. However, the expectations of increasing attacks of bark beetles within the protected area came true in 2016 and 2017. Due to bark beetles infestation intensive interventions are required in order to limit further spread of insects to healthy coniferous stands. It is expected that the abovementioned pressure on coniferous forests will continue also in 2018.

7. Develop and implement a detailed management plan and practical measures to cope with problems related to traffic and transportation.

Detailed management plan which highlights problems related to traffic and transportation is part of TNP MP where transport and environmentally friendly mobility are on-going tasks. Most opportunities to fulfil the tasks are seen in project financing. In 2017 as part of the project Comprehensive Introduction of Environmentally Friendly Mobility in Triglav National Park for the Preservation and Real Experiencing of Nature a web portal on sustainable mobility was developed. It covers the area of MaB Biosphere Reserve Julian Alps <https://mobility.julian-alps.eu/en/>. The platform is also assessable from info points dedicated to promotion of sustainable mobility which were established in info centres and info points of the Triglav National Park in Bohinj, Kobarid and Bled and from TNP web page <https://www.tnp.si/sl/zemljevid/>

Hop on hop off bus continued to operate this summer.

https://issuu.com/tnp-publikacije/docs/tnp_2017/16?ff=true&e=1275262/49482618

Working group on Traffic Management on Pokljuka high plateau continues to work on finding solutions on how to cope with increased stationary traffic during winter and winter sports events on Pokljuka.

8. Prevent the extension of existing installations for downhill and cross-country skiing as well as jumping. Renovation and upgrading should be accepted only if that nature and landscape protection's interest are duly taken into account. Continue to monitor the various sporting activities practised in the national Park and ensure that they remain compatible with the conservation objectives.

According to the new law on TNP it is forbidden to construct new installations for downhill and cross-country skiing and enlarging of the existing ones in the whole territory of the park. Where in the the TNP cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, paragliding and mountain biking is allowed is shown on detailed maps which are part of TNP MP.

In order to reduce the impact of winter sport practitioners on wildlife in the Alps TNP experts participate in the project WeWild – We respect Alpine wildlife in preparation of joint communication strategy for the protected areas in the Alps.

9. Encourage the best integration of new buildings and the renovation of old buildings in respecting the traditional local style

The TNP Authority is running expert groundwork and an inventory and evaluation of the existing building stock (including alpine pastures) in order to define the typology and provide potential solutions in construction works. The project is interdisciplinary (in cooperation with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, expert services of relevant municipalities and local experts in the field of spatial planning and architecture) and subject to available funds.

In 2017, we prepared valorisation of the building typology for three villages in the Upper Bohinj Valley. Expert basis contents also guidelines and recommendations for placement and architectural design.

Public institute TNP is also involved in the consultative and licensing process for all building cases in the national park.

10. Improve co-ordination and control research activities in the park consider the setting-up of a scientific advisory council

According to the Triglav National Park Act, every research institution, scientific organization or individual researcher must obtain an approval of TNP to conduct research activities in the TNP. This gives park a possibility to control research activities, get results and have a spatial overview on research activities. As mentioned in previous reports, the Triglav National Park generally does not conduct basic research. Nevertheless, a database (developed in 2011) of all permitted and reported researches is

maintained on a regular basis. There's also an active and fruitful cooperation between the TNP Public Institution and scientific institutions in several approved projects (e.g. LIFE WolfAlps, LIFE NaturaViva, AlpBioNet2030, Links4Soils, Nat2Care, etc.)

11. Follow closely the transition of ownership in the park, encourage quick decisions on pending questions and ensure that the interests of the park are fully taken into account.

TNP does not have an active role in the denationalization process but we collaborate closely with the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the State Attorney and Administrative Unit Radovljica in order to follow the process as an interested party and to contribute in a decision making process. According to the Denationalization Act when the state property is part of the denationalization process state attorney represents the state. First-instance authorities who consider the requests for denationalization are administrative units, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning.

According to the Triglav National Park Act, Public institution Triglav National Park has a public authorisation to exercise pre-emption right on agricultural land, forest land, water areas and urban or built-up land in the name of the state of Slovenia. This year pre-emption right was exercised on 6,19 ha of land.

3. Site Management:

As in previous years management was reduced to basic tasks.

4. Boundaries:

No changes.

5. Other information:

A research on visitation in the Triglav National Park has been made and a scientific paper has been prepared and published in Acta triglavensia 5 <https://www.tnp.si/sl/spoznajte/publikacije/>

The survey on Triglav National Park visitation represents a base for long term visitation monitoring and definition and implementation of measures oriented to nature conservation and protection of cultural heritage.

Triglav national Park entered to the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism and gained the Slovenian Green sign. <https://www.slovenia.info/en/business/green-scheme-of-slovenian-tourism>

Transboundary Ecoregion Julian Alps organised 3rd forum for sustainable development for tourist organisations and providers from the Ecoregion. To promote local typical products a leaflet on this topic was prepared. <https://www.tnp.si/sl/javni-zavod/obvestila/forum-za-trajnostni-razvoj-v-cezmejnih-regijah-julijske-alpe/>

In 2016, the Platform Ecological Network of the Alpine Convention carried out an evaluation process of officially nominated Pilot Regions for Ecological Connectivity in order to verify that Pilot Regions, which would like to be furthermore designated as a Pilot Region for Ecological Connectivity of the Alpine Convention, prove to be still active in promoting and improving ecological connectivity both, at the local level and as a model region nationally. All evaluated Pilot Regions, including the Transboundary pilot region for ecological connectivity Triglav National Park - Prealpi Giulie Nature Park successfully proved their continuous strong involvement on the topic of ecological connectivity therefore The Platform Ecological Network confirmed the recognition of all eight regions as Pilot Regions for Ecological Connectivity of the Alpine Convention for the upcoming four years.

6. Promotion of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

In the Presentations of the Triglav National Park to the general and expert public receiving the European Diploma for Protected Areas is mentioned as a milestone in the history of the Triglav National Park and Diploma's logo is included into the presentations.

In the important documents of the Park (Management Plan, Work Plan for 2017 and Financial Plan for 2017) recommendations listed in the Diploma were taken into consideration when planning annual activities of the TNP, also Diploma logo was used on above mentioned printed documents.

Diploma logo was also on the publications produced by the Triglav National Park such as Svet pod Triglavom <http://www.tnp.si/razumeti/C69/>

Diploma logo and short description of the meaning and importance of Diploma is also on our new web site. <https://www.tnp.si/sl/spoznajte/>

European Diploma was mentioned and its logo was used in all important events of the Park.

64. NETHERLANDS - NAARDERMEER NATURE RESERVE

1&2. Conditions and/or recommendations for award or renewal

Based on the Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)7 on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Naardermeer Nature Reserve (Netherlands) the following condition and recommendations are

Condition:

- 1. The authorities concerned are urged to respect the integrity of the open polder area surrounding the Naardermeer and to abandon all projects related to the motorway connection (A6-A9) which would have negative effects on the diploma area*

The A6-A9 project has been cancelled. In 2006 the decision was made to widen the current A1 motorway instead of connecting A6-A9 with a new motorway. Nevertheless attention will be paid to any eventual revival of these plans. We also continue monitoring possible threats caused by planned large infrastructural projects in the surroundings of the Naardermeer, even in the earliest stage.

Recommendations:

- 1. The efforts to improve the hydrological conditions of the reserve must be continued by focusing on reducing the pumping out of drinking water in the Gooi hills and completing municipal sewerage plans in order to increase the quality of infiltrated water.*

The pumping out of drinking water is at a sustainable level and is not affecting the water level of the Reserve. One possible threat is the recently planned development of small scale ground water winning by the Gooische Hockey Club to irrigate their hockey fields. The plans were revealed in November 2017. We immediately undertook action towards the club by taking part in the planning process.

- 2. The decreasing area and quality of reedbeds (phragmites and other pioneer vegetation) should be subject to specific research and increased management efforts;*

Research on a more flexible water lever is developed by the Regional Water Authority (Waternet). Additionally, an expert meeting took place to discuss the subject. One of the outcomes of this meeting was the decision to raise the upper limit of the water level by 10 cm in winter time. According to the information provided by the Regional Water Authority (Waternet), this change will soon be reflected in a new water level agreement. The decision to raise the water level has to be formalized via a so called Water Plan, which is a legal document. We expect the start of processing the Water Plan in 2018.

- 3. Nature restoration and development around the Naardermeer core area is to be fully completed; to that end missing lands (notably in polders south of the lake) should be made available to Natuurmonumenten, mainly in view of the long-term maintenance of optimal water level management and the restoration of biodiversity. The province and the Dutch Government Service for Land and Water Use are urged to make greater efforts to finalise the Naardermeer recovery plan.*

Although it was not yet possible for Natuurmonumenten to acquire all the missing lands and this way completing the Naardermeer Recovery Plan, it was possible to buy a large property in the south-western part of the Naardermeer Nature Reserve, the so-called De Jong grounds. Next to that, Natuurmonumenten has a fair chance to buy and trade several properties on the north side of the Naardermeer, in the Overscheensepolder. When both projects are finished (estimation 2020) the Naardermeer Nature Reserve will be almost totally surrounded by nature restoration areas.

4. *Regional planning processes should avoid further habitat fragmentation in the corridor landscapes towards the IJmeer, the IJsselmeer, the Vecht River, the Ankeveense Plassen and the Gooi hills. The realisation of the Dutch ecological main structure, its “wet axis” and “robust connections” with the Naardermeer as a core area must be given high priority.*

The landscape concept of a wet axis crossing The Netherlands was somehow revoked by a past government, but we hope that soon it will be returned if under a different name. Some important measures were nevertheless implemented aiming at reducing the barrier effect caused by the major roads that delimit the Reserve.

- a. *A) The establishment of larger ecological zones in the surrounding agricultural area enabling the further restoration of water levels is recommended, in order to avoid leakage from the reserve and further sinking of peat layers.*
B) Restoration programmes transforming polders into wetlands must be encouraged in order to link the Naardermeer with its surroundings; this needs agro-environmental agreements with the agricultural sector.

As said, in the near future most of the area around the Naardermeer Nature reserve will be purchased by Natuurmonumenten. Together with the Regional Water Authority and the province of Noord-Holland we're making a restoration plan for the complete surroundings of the Naardermeer Nature Reserve, including the planned water level raise.

- b. *The possibilities to improve the connecting corridor between Naardermeer and Ankeveense plassen by reconstructing the actual road on pillars (removal of a barrier) are to be considered.*

The corridor has been realized and has been proven to be very effective. The arrival of the European Otter in the Naardermeer at the beginning of 2017 is the biggest succes so far, being absent for 50 years. The corridor consists of two separate broad passages under the road, with both wet and dry components. .

- c. *A) In relation to the construction of a new motorway connection (A6-A9), the zero option, alternative routes and the possibility of underground passage NW of the reserve are to be duly investigated in a preliminary Environmental Impact Study.*
B) The effects of widening the A1 on the nearby reserve are to be minimised.
C) Risks for pollution deriving from transport along motorways and railroad are to be minimised and carefully caught.
*D) In 2009 the Committee of Ministers renewed de EU diploma under the **condition** that:*
- the authorities concerned are urged to respect the integrity of the open polder area surrounding the Naardermeer and to abandon all projects related to the motorway connection (A6-A9) which would have negative effects on the diploma area.

In 2006 the decision was made to widen the current A1 motorway instead of connecting A6-A9 with a new motorway. Since then the possibilities of an underground passage or alternative routes are abandoned. In the years following 2006 the plan for widening the A1 became more concrete and in 2013 the actual widening started. If everything goes as planned it will be finished in 2020.

3. Site Management

Natuurmonumenten is collaborating with the Dutch Rail Organisation ProRail and the province of Noord-Holland to create no less than 8 ecological passages under the rail road which divides the Naardermeer in two separate parts. These passages will be finished in August 2019. There will be no direct exchange of water between the two parts to secure the water quality in the southern part of the Naardermeer (Wijdeblik). The water quality of Wijdeblik is of a better quality compared to the northern part. When in the future both water qualities are comparable the wet fauna passages can be easily opened to create direct exchange.

Further aspects will be described at 10.

4. Boundaries

There has been no recent change to the boundaries of the Naardermeer

5. Other information

None.

6. Natural heritage (general a biotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. *Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated.*

No changes.

6.2. *Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetation cover; presumed causes.*

In the Laegieskamp at the eastern part of the Naardermeer Nature Reserve New Zealand Pygmy Weed has been found in an isolated pond. This invasive species tends to be very aggressive and has the potential to cover a pond and edges completely within one year, suffocating all native plants. We immediately undertook action to remove all visible plants on a weekly basis for 4 months in a row. By now it looks like it's under control. Nevertheless we will monitor the pond in 2018 very closely.

In 2009 the Committee of Ministers renewed de European Diploma under the recommendation that: the decreasing area and quality of reed beds (Phragmites and other pioneer vegetation) should be subject to specific research and increased management efforts.

In the middle of the Naardermeer a few small reed beds are fenced out since 2012 to restore reed beds as a breeding habitat for Purple Herons. Nets surrounding several reed beds disable geese to fly in and forage on young reed stems. After testing several types of nets the past year we had a break-through this year. The amount of breeding pairs of Purple Herons in the netted reed beds almost doubled towards 101 breeding pairs. For 2018 more reed beds are planned to be fenced off to get an even better result.

6.3. *Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds.*

The success has of the Purple Heron has been mentioned above. The Black Terns however failed to return, despite the installation of artificial nests. The terns also seem to favor other sites to breed, and no pair has bred recently in the Reserve. Other important breeding birds populations or wintering bird populations have been stable.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. *Cultural heritage: changes concerning cultural heritage.*

No changes.

7.2. *Changes concerning the socio-economic context.*

No changes.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. *Visitors — Information policy*

8.1.1. *Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.).*

Several new information signs have been placed. Next to that, the Naardermeer website is updated several times per month with relevant information and news. We also have an active Naardermeer Facebook and Twitter account.

8.1.2. *Frequented by visitors and behaviour (number, distribution in time and space).*

During the year almost all of the excursions on Lake Naardermeer were full-booked. Approximately 7000 visitors enjoyed a boat-trip to the cormorants or the duck-decoy in 2016.

8.1.3. *Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)*

This year we've had the pleasure of a very special guest: Mrs. Ana Rainho from the Council of Europe, regarding the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Naardermeer Nature Reserve. In October we've had Noah Janssen (Director Nature Conservation Natuurpunt, the Belgian Nature Conservation) visiting the Naardermeer Nature Reserve to discuss nature management in swamp and peat areas.

8.2. *Scientific research.*

8.2.1. *Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.).*

In October we've started a monitoring research towards the European Otter in (the surroundings of) the Naardermeer, in collaboration with the Dutch Otter Research Group (CaLutra) and the province of Noord-Holland. Main goal of this research is to learn about the actual distribution and movements of the otters, related to possible threats (especially dangerous road crossings). The research will be continued till October 2019. Next to the otter research we've had the ongoing monitoring of breeding birds and wintering Great White Egrets in the western part of the Naardermeer Nature Reserve.

8.2.2. *Scientific publications.*

None.

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. *Changes in legislation or regulations.*

In January 2017 the new nature legislation became active by the Wet natuurbescherming (translated: Nature Protection Law). In a nutshell: no major changes regarding the protected status of the Naardermeer Nature Reserve.

9.2. *Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)*

No changes.

9.3. *Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve).*

No changes.

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. *Improvements made*

10.1.1. *Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna.*

LIFE programme New LIFE for Dutch fens is finished. The restoration actions improved the conditions for marsh birds and peat vegetation. It is not yet known how the bird population has reacted, data-analysing is not completed yet.

10.1.2. *Protection against the elements (fire, water regime).*

The current defosforsation installation, which is used for the inlet of clean water into the Naardermeer Nature Reserve in times of drought, will be replaced at the beginning of 2018. In 2017 Natuurmonumenten, the Regional Water Authority and the province of Noord-Holland signed an agreement. This new installation removes fosfates out of the water to make sure the right conditions for underwater vegetation are available.

10.1.3. *Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)*

No changes.

10.1.4. *Field equipment (hides and study facilities).*

No changes.

10.1.5. *Waste management.*

No changes.

10.1.6. *Use of renewable energy systems.*

No changes.

10.2. *Management*

10.2.1. *Administrative department: changes made.*

No changes.

10.2.2. *Wardens' department: changes made.*

In 2017 the reorganisation of Natuurmonumenten finished. For the Naardermeer Nature Reserve a new team has been finalized, containing of previous staff members and newly arrivals. The previous staff and rangers preserve the memory and fundamental knowledge of the area. The Reserve staff is now complete and includes 17 people covering different skills.

10.2.3. *Internal policing measures.*

No changes.

10.2.4. *Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action.*

No changes.

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas

Due to the European Diploma both the Regional Water Authority and Natuurmonumenten were very aware of the necessity of getting a new defos-installation. Both parties, along with the local and regional governments, have agreed to take all the steps necessary to protect the water vegetation the Naardermeer is famous for.

65. ITALY – REGIONAL PARK OF MIGLIARINO, SAN ROSSORE AND MASSACIUCCOLI

1. Conditions : Lister ici toutes les conditions dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les conditions ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les

progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Le renouvellement n'indiquait pas de conditions.

2. Recommandations : Lister ici toutes les recommandations dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les recommandations ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

1. Veiller à ce que les nouvelles activités ou nouveaux développements ne portent pas préjudice au patrimoine naturel et paysager;

Aucune modification.

2. poursuivre les mesures de réduction des daims et des sangliers;

Le rapport annuel 2015 indiquait une baisse des résultats à partir de la saison 2013/14, avec un écart sensible entre les prélèvements et les objectifs, et ceci surtout pour les daims.

La saison 2015/16, et encore plus la saison 2016/17 qui s'est achevée cet automne, a vu par contre un nombre important de sangliers et encore plus de daims abattus et capturés, avec des valeurs enfin en ligne avec ceux précédentes la saison 2013/14.

Cependant, il reste encore un écart important par rapport aux objectifs.

Les graphiques suivants montrent l'écart des trois dernières années entre les objectifs et les prélèvements des daims et des sangliers (fig. 1) mais aussi la reprise des prélèvements des deux dernières années.

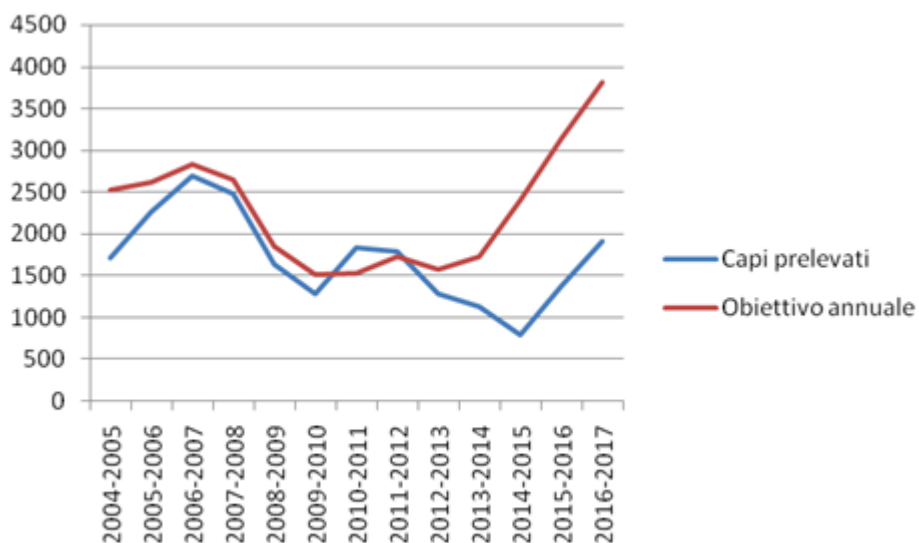


Fig. 1. confrontation entre les prélèvements (n. d'animaux abattus ou capturés) des **daims** et **sangliers** et les objectifs fixés

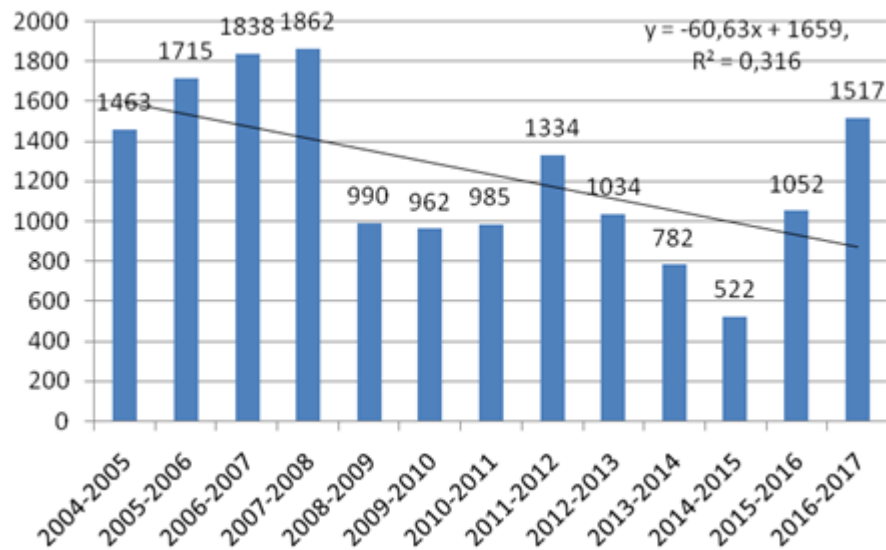


Fig. 2. La série des daims capturés dans le Parc. On note la reprise des deux dernières années, notamment la dernière.

Une importante contribution à ce résultat vient de la forte activité de contrôle de daims, depuis novembre 2016 (saison 2016/17) dans la Base militaire plus grande (900 ha). Cette activité, confiée à une société externe spécialisée, selon le protocole technique du Parc, a vu en une seule saison la capture de 819 daims, ce qui se rapproche à l'objectif qui était de 900 daims. Un très bon résultat parce que dans cette base les derniers prélèvements remontaient à la saison 2012/13. La Base militaire va continuer avec le même système pour cette saison 2017/18.

Ce résultat montre que le contrôle de daims par les captures est très efficace si confié à l'extérieur, surtout quand le personnel du Parc dédié à cette tâche est désormais réduit à moins de 10 personnes. Pour la prochaine année on propose donc que le personnel du Parc ne s'occupe que des abattements; les captures, par contre, devraient être confiées à une entreprise externe qui s'occupe aussi de la première transformation et de la vente.

3. *prendre en compte la conservation de la nature dans la gestion de l'eau, en particulier dans la mise en œuvre des mesures hydrologiques;*

Aucune modification.

4. *inclure plus activement les valeurs naturelles dans la gestion des zones situées hors des réserves naturelles, notamment dans les zones forestières et agricoles*

Sylviculture : les valeurs naturelles sont prises en compte par l'application, pendant les coupes, de mesures qui respectent la période de nidification de la faune et le sol (litière et micro morphologie des dunes) ; le paysage aussi est davantage pris en compte par une évaluation de l'effet visuel des coupes dans le court, le moyen et le long terme. A ce propos le Parc, qui gère 3000 ha de patrimoine forestier dans la Tenuta di San Rossore, a décidé de ne pas procéder aux coupes à blanc dans la pinède de pin parasol (Pins pinea). Ces coupes, faites à la fin du cycle productif de cette culture forestière (à l'âge de 90 ans et plus), depuis l'époque historique avaient et ont comme objectif le reboisement du même pin et donc la continuation, sur le long terme, de la formation forestière de Pinus pinea. Cependant, même si faites sur des surface limitées, ces coupes ont un impact immédiat sur le paysage et sont mal vues par une partie du monde des associations pour la protection de la Nature. Pour cette raison depuis fin 2016 et pour cette saison 2017 aussi le Parc a décidé de suspendre ces coupes. En même temps, le Parc a enfin pu

commencer le reboisement de 6,8 ha d'anciennes coupes qui n'avaient pas encore été reboisées dans les années dernières à cause du manque de fonds. Le Parc pourrait évaluer de reprendre les coupes à blanc (coupes de régénération forestière) une fois que toutes les anciennes coupes ont été reboisées.

Agriculture : aucune modification.

5. Accélérer la mise en œuvre des mesures destinées à limiter les impacts négatifs sur le Lac de Massaciuccoli, en particulier la pollution d'origine agricole et poursuivre l'amélioration de la qualité des eaux du lac ;

Aucune modification : les projets et bonnes pratiques des années dernières continuent.

6. poursuivre et consolider les mesures destinées à mieux protéger les dunes côtières et en faire connaître la valeur ;

Aucune modification : les bonnes pratiques de gestion des dunes côtières, notamment de nettoyage continuent. Continue aussi l'inversion de tendance par rapport aux effets de désertification dus au piétinement. Les activités de nettoyage des dunes avec les touristes, les écoles et les bénévoles continuent.

7. Poursuivre la lutte contre les espèces exotiques envahissantes;

Aucune modification concernant *Yucca gloriosa* et *Amorpha fruticosa*. La lutte contre *Ailanthus altissima* a repris suite à la décision de reprendre à utiliser le désherbant à base de Glyphosate, dans une formulation et avec une méthode qui ne prévoit pas la dispersion en nature (injections dans le tronc).

8. saisir toutes les opportunités d'améliorer les possibilités de passage pour la faune sous les routes et voies ferrées;

Aucune modification : on suit l'efficacité des passages récemment aménagés.

9. limiter les émissions sonores dans les zones vouées à la détente

La répression des émissions dans la zone plus critique de « Marina di Torre del Lago » s'est poursuivie, en constante coordination avec le Procureur de Lucca.

10. Achever la relocalisation des activités artisanales aux abords du lac de Massaciuccoli.

Aucune modification.

3. Gestion du site : Lister ici toute modification dans la gestion du site détenant le Diplôme européen, en ce qui concerne les environnements terrestre et aquatique (si applicable), et en ce qui concerne les agents et les ressources financières, depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Le Parc a enfin réussi à présenter les bilans économiques et financiers qui, jugés en ordre par les organes de contrôle financier, ont été approuvés par la Région Toscane. Désormais le Parc sort d'une situation de forte limitation des dépenses qui perdurait depuis 2013 (de 2013 à 2016 les bilans devaient être mis en ordre) et peut penser à des investissements pour le futur.

4. Frontières : Détailler tout changement apporté aux frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. S'il y a des changements, veuillez joindre une carte appropriée à ce rapport. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Aucun changement.

5. Autres informations : Lister ici toute autre information, concernant le site détenant le Diplôme européen, que vous estimez nécessaire de fournir au Conseil de l'Europe.

Malgré la reprise financière le Parc continue à ne pas avoir de Directeur à temps plein. Le Parc a fait un accord avec le Parc de la Maremma pour que son Directeur dédie au Parc de Migliarino San Rossore Massaciuccoli 2 jours par semaine. Le personnel est toujours moins nombreux et dans le court terme on ne prévoit pas de remplacement par des nouvelles embauches.

66. ITALY – GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK

No report / pas de rapport.

67. ROMANIA – PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. complete the process of preparing and approving the new management plan by the end of 2011.

The management plan was approved in December 2013 through the Governmental Decision No. 1057/2013.

The Park Administration implemented a Sector Operational Program Pillar 4 project, «The revision of Piatra Craiului National Park's Management Plan». Based on the results of field studies there were included in the park's management plan some activities in order to maintain or bring the species and habitats of European interest in a favorable conservation status.

The revised management plan was approved by the Scientific Council of Piatra Craiului National Park and it was sent in October 2015 to be approved by the National Environmental Protection Agency. By the end of 2015 the revised plan was sent to the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forest and is still waiting for the final approval.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. secure the budget of the national park so that the national park administration is able to manage the park appropriately and has all financial resources needed in order to pay the staff on a regular basis;

There is an administration contract with National Forest Administration (RNP Romsilva) that secures 90% of the national park budget. The rest of 10% comes from the national park administration efforts (visitor fee, selling products at the Visitor Center, guiding fees, approval documentation taxes etc). The total budget is 1,2 mil. lei and the staff salaries 851000 lei.

2. complete the construction of the headquarters and other infrastructure, especially the exhibition room and other tourist facilities, within three years and make particular efforts to raise the appropriate funds to achieve this;

The Visitor Center in Zarnesti was opened in April 2016 and has received until now over 10000 visitors. The budget for construction works came from a SOP project implemented between 2012-2015. During this project an information point at Curmatura and 4 information kiosks were also built.

The tourist facilities were improved with a cycling network (42 routes with over 200 kms) and new marked trails.

3. elaborate and implement a specific high profile programme devoted to the promotion, preservation and restoration of the local architecture and landscape; this exemplary programme should be implemented with the help of relevant specialists and contribute to making this region a model for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage;

The management plan of Piatra Craiului National Park establishes several principles for the sustainable development of human settlements to preserve the local architecture and traditions: 1.Keep the existing parcels in the historical format; 2.Encourage the preservation and reconversion of the existing constructed parcels; 3.Encourage the use of historical architecture, adapted to the modern needs; 4.Fit the new buildings into the local landscape and climate; 5.Keep the existing vegetation; 6.Use of local materials and traditional crafts.

In 2013 there was printed a Building Guide in the Sustainable Development Area of Piatra Craiului, created by the architect Raluca Munteanu, one of the member of the Scientific Council of Piatra Craiului National Park. The principles of this guide are inspired from the Architectural Policy in Romania for 2010-2015 – the culture of the constructed environment and the quality of life, promoted by the Architects Order in Romania.

4. pursue the scientific work and monitoring of biodiversity in every sector of the park; those activities should assess the status and trends of species and habitats, considering the national park as part of a functional ecosystem and consequently use appropriate methods and indicators to keep the national park administration aware of important changes to this ecosystem;

There are several monitoring protocols, aproved by the Forest and Environment Ministry in 2010, targeting especially the species and habitats of European importance. 11 monitoring protocols, including *Ligularia sibirica*, bats species from caves and bats species of European interest, capercaillie, chamois, birds of prey of European interest, forest habitats, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*, were established during one of the last projects implemented whose goal was the improvement of the conservation status for the biodiversity in Piatra Craiului National Park.

The scientific work was also important during another implemented project, aiming for the revision of the management plan of the National Park and ROSCI0194 site. On this occasion there were identified new species in the southern part of the protected area.

In 2016 another Natura 2000 site (ROSPA0165 Piatra Craiului) was established that covers the National Park territory whose main objective is the protection of bird species.

For the large carnivores species there is also a collaboration protocol with Conservation Carpathia Foundation to collect samples for genetic analyses that will help to asses the population and the status of these species in and around the Piatra Craiului National Park.

5. regarding both central and local forest authorities, more attention should be paid to the enforcement of the forest law on the national park's fringe and in the surroundings of the park; the measures taken and the results obtained should be reported to the Council of Europe on an annual basis;

In 2017 the Park Administration organized 207 control actions to enforce the forest law, 124 of them with the help of authorities. The result was 12 contraventional fees with a total of 67.000 lei.

The Carpathia Foundation purchased 16.000 ha of forest land for conservation in the national park surroundings. 2.500 ha of this surface are situated inside the national park. The foundation rented

also 2 game management areas in the national park surroundings and the main goal is the conservation of game species.

The "Forest Radar" regulation was established in 2014. As a result the illegal logging and transport has decreased since then at national level.

6. pursue the efforts made by the national park administration to address the litter and garbage issues and to engage a new phase of activities facilitated by this administration; a detailed report on the results of those activities should be sent to the Council of Europe every two years.

In 2017 the Park Administration organized 6 garbage collection campaigns, with the help of volunteers, along the touristic trails, with a total length of 25 kms.

The local authorities in Dambovicioara are regularly collecting the garbage, and they also set up some resting areas along the road, containing garbage bins for the tourists.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no significant changes since last annual report.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No change.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The European Diploma logo was broader used on the Piatra Craiului National Park's printed materials, together with an explanation of the reasons for awarding the European Diploma.

All the 3 logos (National Park, European Diploma and National Forest Administration) can be seen on the park official papers and inside the visitor center, on the indoor glass wall, on all the panels installed in the field, on our tourist maps etc.

68. ROMANIA – RETEZAT NATIONAL PARK

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There haven't been conditions attached to the renewal of the Diploma.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The Romanian authorities should secure a sufficient budget for the national park and allocate the funds early enough in the year to ensure favorable working conditions for the staff, the completion and

maintenance of the park's infrastructure, more information for visitors and the improvement of tourist facilities;

Even if the central public authority for environment didn't finance at all the park's activity, National Forest Administration has ensured a reasonable financial support in order that we have been able to perform our basic activities without financial constraints.

2. The competent Romanian authorities should work together to harmonize the different national and international designations in order to achieve efficient joint management and to implement joint scientific research and monitoring programmes;

Last year has arisen a problem related to the international designation of Retezat National Park as Biosphere Reserve: we have received a recommendation letter from the MAB Secretary General to finalize the completion process of the conditions registered in Madrid Action Plan or to propose a plan through which to get to the implementation of those conditions. Practically it's very difficult to harmonize the purpose(s) and objectives of a real National Park - IUCN categ. II with those of a Biosphere Reserve - IUCN categ. VI. However, in collaboration with the Romanian National MAB Committee and the Ministry of Environment, we have elaborated that document and we have submitted it to the International MAB Committee for analysis; now we are waiting for an answer.

3. The management plan should be approved as soon as possible, and at least an executive summary should be translated into either English or French;

The existing management plan for Retezat NP was reviewed by RNPA and sent for analysis to the Ministry of Environment in September 2016, but it was returned to us with several remarks and recommendation in December 2016. In early 2017 RNPA found out a financing opportunity for the elaboration of a complex project whose main outcome is the elaboration of the second edition of park's management plan. We have managed to finalize that project proposal in September 2017 and we have submitted it to the competent authority for analysis and approval; until now we didn't get any final answer about that issue.

4. The park, in close collaboration with the mountain rescue services Salvamont, should maintain or renew, when necessary, the tourist infrastructure (Trail marking, information signs, etc.); a particular effort should be made to solve the problems of the toilets in the camping areas and near the huts;

There are about 90 information and guiding panels on the park's territory, as well at the entrance points. RNPA staff has built a dry toilet near the remote parking place at Gura Bucurei (the end of the forest road along the Lapusnicul Mare Valley).

5. The park should maintain pressure on local communities to prevent constructions of inappropriate buildings either in the park or in its immediate vicinity;

As we have explained earlier, the current legislation is very strict regarding to the possibility of building new construction in the park, so we don't have such problems. According the law, the competence of RNPA is strictly limited to the park territory, so it's enough difficult to influence the building process in the surrounding areas.

6. The park rangers should monitor the pastures in order to identify early possible changes due to over grazing and/or under grazing; before the next evaluation, the park should carry out a new study on the pastures; the changes in terms of species composition, erosion, etc., should be analyzed in relation to the type and amount of grazing.

The proposed project for reviewing the management plan (see expl. no. 3) includes a series of studies on habitats and species that will be mapped and evaluated from the conservation point of view, and conservation measures will be issued for each of them. The existing monitoring plan will be also reviewed to include the new conservation measures.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

In November 2014, the central public authority for environment renewed the contract with the National Forest Administration subsequently with the Retezat National Park Administration, for the next 10 years. In that document it's clearly mentioned that the Gemenele Scientific Reserve's (IUCN categ. I) management is done by the same structures that administrate the Retezat National Park. However, the collaboration with the Romania Academy is maintained for scientific aspects related to the territory of that reserve.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no changes to the boundaries of the park since the last annual report, the boundaries being the same since the re-establishment of the park, in 2000.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

At the moment, we don't have any other special information to communicate to the Council.

69. BULGARIA – CENTRAL BALKAN NATIONAL PARK

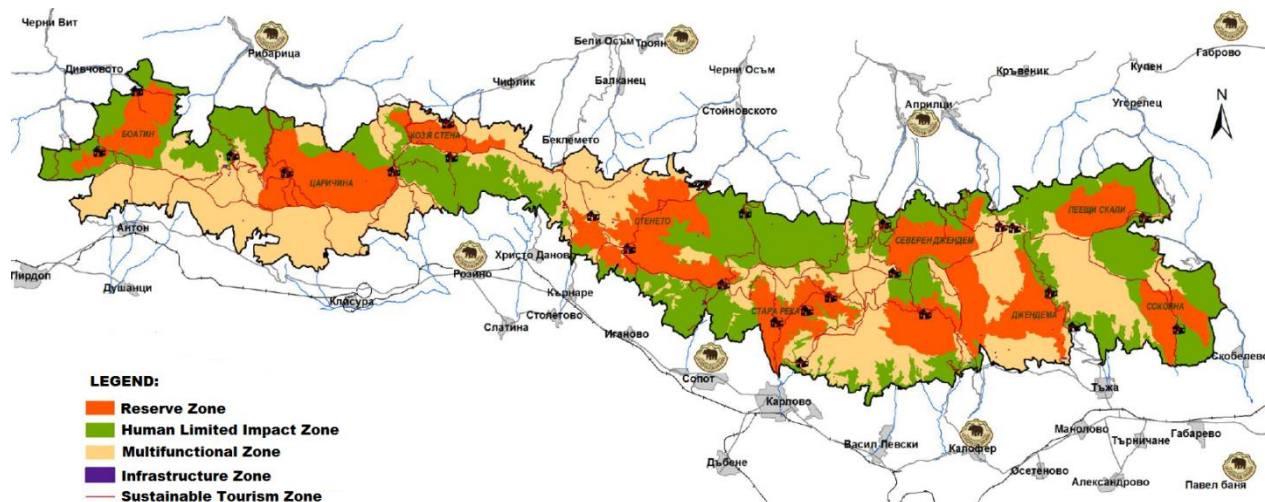
1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Finalize and approved a new management plan as soon as possible, with no alteration of the conservation regime in the different zones of the Park and with similar conservation conditions. In particular it should not allow an increase of the overall capacity for summer grazing and continue to forbid goat grazing in the Park as well as commercial timber.

With a decision of Council of Ministers of 24th of March 2016 the actualized Management Plan of Central Balkan National Park was approved. A few days later – on the 5th of April 2016, came into force and will be implemented in the period 2016 – 2025. The new Management Plan of the park has been developed within the project Update of the Management Plan of the Central Balkan National Park, funded by the Operational Programme Environment. Initially actualization was due to the end of 2014 but there was a delay with the preparation of both the descriptive and the prescriptive parts of the plan due to delayed public tenders, insufficient time for field work and delayed work by part of the contractors. The procedure for elaboration or updating, adoption and entry into force of the management plans for protected areas under Bulgarian law has required several stages passing through which was also longer than expected.

Zoning regimes and norms in the park remain the same as those in the proposal in the updated plan. They essentially retain regimes and norms stipulated in the first Management Plan 2001 – 2010. In the Updated plan there is a significant increase with around 10 thousands ha of the area of Human limited impact zone on account of the Multifunctional zone (see the map below). Thus achieved the formation of wildlife corridors between strict nature reserves. Under the new Management Plan is not possible livestock grazing (and any other uses) in the Human limited impact zone. Therefore, grazing areas are slightly reduced. Norms for pastures remain the same as those in the previous Management Plan. Although the

included new areas in this zone are mainly from the forest fund and less treeless territory, increasing wilderness area with no economic use is among the greatest achievements of the new management plan.



2. Change the regulations regarding the EU subsidies for the next period, starting 2014, in order to make them compatible with the new Management Plan.

According to the rules for implementation of agri-environmental measures of Rural Development Programme in the period 2014 – 2020 there is a significant change in livestock eligible for support – only sheep and cattle without horses.

The existing mismatch between the 5-year agri-environmental commitment and one year's validity of the grazing permit is offset by the grassland allocation mechanism in the park set out in the annual plans for grazing and use of hay. For the group of users with a valid agri-environmental commitment an advantage is provided in the process of pasture distribution, which guarantees the fulfilment of their commitment.

3. Finalize the designation of Natura 2000 areas around the Park following the Bird and habitat directives, and adopt a management plans for the areas located in Stara Planina which must be coordinated with the Management Plan of the National Park

Territory of the park is fully overlapped by SPA Central Balkan and SCI Central Balkan (BG0000494) with the same boundaries as the park. The regimes of the territory are fully determined by the Protected Areas Act (PAA) and the Park Management Plan.

Territory bordering the Central Balkan National Park was declared as follows:

- SPA Central Balkan – buffer, BG 0002128 – Decision №335/26.05.2011 of the Council of Ministers. The area has been declared by Order RD-321/04.04.2013 of the Minister of Environment and Water.
- SCI Central Balkan – buffer, BG 0001493 – Decision №802/04.12.2007 of the Council of Ministers. The complete mapping of all areas in Bulgaria under the Habitats Directive was carried out in the period 2011 – 2012. Declaration order for SCI is expected. In 2017 the MOEW took the decision for territorial approach for the management of the Natura 2000 sites. This includes each administrative district in the country (there are 28 districts) to established a council and to elaborate management plan for the management of the N2000 sites on its territory. Park Directorate will participate in 5 such councils (5 are the districts around the park) as a stakeholder.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Reestablish a Park directorate with a Director as soon as possible and secure a regular budget for the coming years

Director of the Park's Directorate is a position occupied after a competition held by MOEW. After the last competition held in 2014 a Director was appointed.

Regular budget is secured. More than a million BGN is the annual budget for the maintenance of staff and buildings of the Directorate. This funding is fully provided by the State Budget. Since Bulgaria is a member of the European Union (2007) the main source of funding of activities on biodiversity conservation and on planning and maintenance of protected areas comes from OP Environment (European Regional Development Fund). During the last program period the 2007 – 2013 Park Directorate has implemented four projects funded by this program (Priority 3 – Preservation of biodiversity and nature protection). In the current program period, a procedure for the implementation of a complex project for maintenance and restoration of natural habitats in the park started.

2. Take the necessary measures to harmonize the international designations before applying for a new category; in particular modify the design of the Biosphere reserves to make them fully operational and compatible with the Seville strategy or take the necessary steps to remove them from the UNESCO MaB list.

In the summer of 2016 CBNPD filed the application form for two of the parts – core zone and buffer zone, of the proposed post-Seville Biosphere Reserve Central Balkan. Four of the nine strict nature reserves in the park were declared as a biosphere reserves in 1977. These reserves were BR from old type. After Second International Congress on Biosphere Reserves in Seville, Spain in 1995 these reserves did not meet the requirements for functional zoning. Indeed they were only core zone without possibilities for any interaction with people living in the region. On the 29th session of the Man and the Biosphere Programme International Co-ordinating Council (MAB-ICC), held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, from 12 to 15 June 2017, the decision for the extension and renaming of previous four into one new type BR Central Balkan was taken. In the new BR all nine nature reserves in the park are the core zone, the rest parts of the park are buffer zone. The territory of adjacent municipalities (Trojan, Karlovo, Sevlievo, Anton and Pavel banya) is the transition zone of BR Central Balkan. First steps for establishing Coordination council of the BR were made.

3. Modify the conditions for summer grazing in the park; make the necessary changes in order to allow long-term pasture concession and set up a programme for renovation of the corresponding infrastructures (shelters, dairies, etc.).

Since Bulgaria became an EU member and implementation of CAP started here the interest in summer grazing in CBNP increased sharply. This process is regulated by Management Plan and Annual plan for grazing and use of hay. Since 2015 there are no significant changes in the way of pasture distribution. This gives security to the traditional livestock owners and to those with agri-environmental commitment for implementation of traditional practises of livestock grazing. Of course, there are some limits set out in the annual plans that prevent the uncontrolled extension of used areas from some users on account of the lack of pastures for other users. Thanks to these predictable annual plans and the strict limits in them there is no increase of the number of grazing domestic animals in the park.

According to the legislation (PAA) renovation of the pasture infrastructure is possible when it is clear who the owner is. Most of the shelters for herdsman in the park are with unclear ownership. New ones cannot be built because it is not allowed from the legislation for the 2nd category protected areas (PAA and IUCN categories).

4. Provide new water sources or rehabilitate and increase the capacity of existing ones in order to avoid erosion caused by daily large concentrations of cattle around them. Study the possibility for controlling the growth of the Junipers without burning them.

Park Directorate through a project funded by OPE already planned an activity for planning new and rehabilitation of existing water sources from pasture regions in the park. The physical implementation is set in the new Park Directorate project implemented in the current program period. This will minimize the negative impacts caused by the accumulation of large numbers of animals around the watering points. This will also be useful for preventing and fighting fires.

In last two annual plans for livestock grazing and use of hay there is a possibility for manual removing of bushes from the pastures after expert evaluation. Still the users of the pastures consider this activity as very labor intensive and those that perform it are a few.

5. Continue to support the ongoing study of the grazing impact in the park and implement its conclusions and recommendations

Study on grazing impact and grazing capacity of the pastures in the park will be conducted in the new Park Directorate project implemented in the current program period. This includes elaboration of methodology for monitoring the condition of grassland habitats in pasture regions that will provide more effective control and planning of annual use of pastures.

Annually park experts conduct a survey on a primary production, carrying capacity and the condition of the grassland habitats in the pastures in the park.

6. Undertake negotiations with the Bulgarian Tourist Union regarding the maintenance and improvement of the mountain huts; look at their ecological impact, especially regarding the energy and water supply, as well as the waste and waste water management.

According to the ownership of the mountain huts there is no instrument for their maintenance and improvement that can be used from Park Directorate. Now in the frame of Central Balkan Biosphere reserve new possibilities for cooperation between hut managers and authorities will be searched. It should be noted that in recent years all huts in the park have started to use renewable energy sources – mainly photovoltaic systems, solar water heating systems and energy from water in the streams. Most of the hut managers implement program for waste management based on separation of the rubbish. All hut managers transport the waste to the collection points in the settlements near to the park.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes in the Site Management!

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes in boundaries!

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

- 6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation**
 - 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated – **no changes.**
 - 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes – **no changes.**
 - 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds – **no changes.**
- 7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context**
 - 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage – **no changes.**
 - 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context – **continue depopulation and aging of the population in the region around the park, especially the northern municipalities. The rate of unemployment is relatively high. The newly established Central Balkan Biosphere reserve is recognized by a part of local communities as an opportunity for sustainable development and they rely that this will help to slow down the negative demographic trends.**
- 8. Education and scientific interest**
 - 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.) – **The Park Directorate built in 2016 a new visitor center in the area of Vezhen hut and a new complex for interpretation on forest theme, not far from the town of Apriltsi. Both centers are within the park. In a contemporary and fascinating way, they represent the natural wealth of the protected area. Thanks to the projects funded by the Operational Program Environment, besides the mentioned centers the park has acquired also new information boards, new information signs indicating the entrances of the protected area and the boundaries of the reserves. Also large part (about two-thirds) of the summer and winter tourist marking has been rehabilitated. In 2017, in partnership with volunteer organizations, the Park Directorate developed and installed over 650 new indicator pointers on the tourist routes in the Central Balkan. The total length of the routes is approx. 580 km. Their inventory is annual and maintenance is provided on an ongoing basis.**
 - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space) – **CBNP annually is visited by 60 – 70 thousand tourists, mainly hikers from Bulgaria. Traditionally in the park hiking is stimulated and the infrastructure is adopted mainly for this type of tourism. Into account the size of the park and the total length of tourist routes – about 580 km, the number of tourists is not high and has not changed significantly in recent years. In 2017 tourist floats in summer months were almost the same (slightly higher) than those of the 2016. The highest period again is the summer months, especially August. The most popular interpretative route in the park is still Byala reka eco path (1.8 km) that is situated on the park border near town of Kalofer, Municipality of Karlovo with average number of**

visitors during the months of July to October reached almost 1 000 people per week. For rest of the popular routes attendance is between several dozens and 100 visitors per week in summer months. From hikers routes the most popular is still the route Kalofer – Ray chalet again in park section Kalofer. Event tourism in the park is not developed.

- 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.) – **no such visits.**
- 8.2. Scientific research
 - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.) – **as a part of project for Updating Management plan of the park, project Central Balkan – park for everyone and of the projects related to mapping habitats and species from Natura 2000 network several researches were conducted since 2010 till now. In the frame of the Park Directorate projects researches on the condition of some abiota components, forestry planning and condition of some animal species were conducted.**
 - 8.2.2. Scientific publications – **each of the researches mentioned in p. 8.2.1 ended with scientific report. They are available as collections-annexes to the Park Management Plan and as part of the products made during the implementation of the other projects.**
- 9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)**
 - 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations – **there are no changes in legislation related to protected areas in Bulgaria. The only change in regulations in the park came with the approval of the Updated Management Plan of the park – see above mentioned (1st condition).**
 - 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.) – **no changes.**
 - 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve) – **no changes.**
- 10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)**
 - 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna – **in two projects of Park Directorate funded by OPE some of the activities included measures for restoration of habitats suffering from erosion processes. Park administration was an associate partner in several Life projects for the restoration and support of populations of predatory birds and large predators.**
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime) – **annually with the cooperation of local firefighting authorities, local municipalities and local forestry departments Park Directorate elaborate a plan for fire prevention and firefighting in the park. During the summer period additional staff for fire prevention was hired.**
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.) – **the inventory of the roads and paths in the park is annual and their maintenance is provided on an ongoing basis. There are facilities for prevention of illegal entry with motor vehicle on controlled access roads.**
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities) – **in 2017 such equipment was not purchased.**
 - 10.1.5. Waste management – **there is no program for waste management common for all the park and huts in its boundaries. Most of the huts implement program for waste management based on separation of the rubbish and its transport to the collecting points in the settlements around the park.**

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems – **two of five temporary control points in the park and the visitor’s center use photovoltaic systems and solar water heating systems. The same systems are installed also in three of our 7 local offices that were built and equipped with project funded by OPE.**

10.2. Management

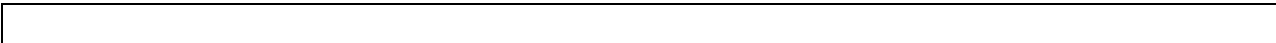
10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made – **no changes.**

10.2.2. Wardens’ department: changes made – **no changes.**

10.2.3. Internal policing measures – **only some changes in the internal rules for document processing and some improvements in the policy on administrative services for citizens.**

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action – **in 2017 126 acts of administrative violation were issued up to now.**

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas



70. ARMENIA – KHOSROV FOREST RESERVE

No report / pas de rapport.

71. IRELAND – THE BURREN REGION

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. the Irish authorities should ensure the budget for the maintenance and development of the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; *NPWS (DCHG) funded the BFCP, including farm payments and the cost of a local team, from 2010-16. In 2017 the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) launched the Burren Programme, funded through a new ‘locally led’ measure in the Rural Development Programme. This effectively ensured funding of a new, expanded ‘Burren Programme’ until at least 2020 when the current RDP finishes. NPWS continue to support the running costs of the project office which now houses an expanded programme team. In 2017, 270 farmers, farming c.25,000ha of the Burren, were participating in the expanded Burren Programme.*

2. the national and local authorities should prevent possible negative environmental damage from the surrounding areas of the Burren Region; *in addition to the management of farming within the site by BP staff, there is also management of compliance with the Habitats Directive and the Wildlife Acts by regionally based NPWS staff, under the direction of Dr Enda Mooney. Conservation rangers for the site have engaged with the BP team in terms of ensuring that all proposed works are considered appropriately in the context of the overall conservation interests of the site. The implementation and regulation of cross compliance, EIA (Agriculture) Regulations 2011 and the local planning acts offer a strong deterrent against damaging the Burren’s important habitats and those in the surrounding areas.*

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. to encourage the participation of more farmers in the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; *the number of Burren Programme participants for 2017 is 270 (up from 160 in 2015), farming c.25,000ha. A further 100 farmers will be recruited in 2018, in effect including all Burren farmers who*

wish to participate in the Programme. Approximately €0.75m was allocated to these farmers in 2017 on the basis of the environmental condition of their land. This will increase significantly from 2018 onwards with the re-commencement of conservation works on farms.

2. to plan subsequent steps in the second phase of European Union funding of the BurrenLIFE project through the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; see Condition 1 above.

3. to stimulate the further development of the Burren Community Charter; *the Burrenbeo Trust, with support from the Heritage Council, and in consultation with a range of local stakeholders, continue to organise activities under the Burren Charter including stakeholder workshops (e.g. on sustainable farming), festivals (e.g. the Burren Winterage Weekend) and projects (e.g. the ChangeX Burren community wellbeing initiative).*

4. to stimulate further development of sustainable ecotourism and practice in the Burren Region; *The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark (BCMG) (which covers much of the EDPA area), in conjunction with the Burren Ecotourism Network, continue to support and promote sustainable tourism practices and businesses in the Burren. In addition, the Burrenbeo Trust continues to place emphasis on sustainable ecotourism, promoting the Burren as a “learning landscape” and organising an annual ‘Learning Landscape Symposium’ every March.*

5. to discourage mass tourism in the Burren Region which does not accord with the principles of sustainable development; *The BCMG project and its partners (including Clare County Council and Failte Ireland) continue to monitor visitor numbers and impact, and promote sustainable practices. While visitor numbers continue to grow, thanks in part to the success of the Wild Atlantic Way (a Failte Ireland Marketing Initiative), the BCMG project strives to balance tourism and conservation and create a world class, accredited sustainable tourism destination. To achieve this, it supports the Burren Ecotourism Network, organizes training and educational programmes, publishes support materials and promotes best practice in destination management.*

6. to encourage volunteers to participate in the sustainable management of the Burren Region; *the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers (BCVs) is a voluntary community that remains very active in the region with monthly outings, including an annual outing in conjunction with the Burren Ecotourism Network. The BCVs were born out of a need for hands-on conservation and promote a ‘learning by doing’ approach to conservation.*

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

A positive development regarding site management has been the extension of the Burren Programme budget (up to €2-3m available per annum) and an expansion of the Programme Team who have been awarded a 6-year contract, during which the team will oversee the expansion of the BP across the entire Burren (target area: 30,000ha).

Currently the Burren Programme staff complement is as follows:

Sharon Parr (F/T), Brendan Dunford (F/T), Tim O’Connell (F/T), Donal Hogan (F/T) Paula McHale (4 days per week (dpw)), Anne Mullen (4 dpw), Bryony Williams (3 dpw), Michael Lynch continues to offer Field Monument support to the BP on a part-time (2.5dpw) basis.

In addition to the management of farming within the site by BP staff, there is also management of compliance with the Habitats Directive and Wildlife Acts by regionally based NPWS staff, under the direction of Dr Enda Mooney. Conservation rangers for the site also engage with the BP team in terms of ensuring that all proposed works are considered appropriately in terms of the overall conservation interests of the site.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There have been no changes to the boundary of the European Diploma area since the adoption of the resolution.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Education and Communication:

In May 2017, the BurrenLIFE Project was joint winner of the EU LIFE Green Week Award for the best LIFE Nature Project of all time. Minister for Agriculture Michael Creed presented the award at a homecoming ceremony in August in the Burren to a crowd of close to 200 farmers as well as a range of other stakeholders (including EDPA assessors)..

Several major 'sustainability' events were held in the Burren in 2017:

The Learning Landscape Symposium (Burrenbeo Trust, March 2017)

Burren in Bloom (Burrenbeo Trust, May 2017)

The Burren Winterage Festival (Burrenbeo Trust and the Burren Programme), October 2017

The BCMG Final Project Conference (BCMG, November 2017)

In addition, Burrenbeo Trust carried out 10-week heritage-education courses in local schools (8 primary, 2 secondary) and organised monthly heritage walks and talks.

Burren Programme staff hosted a number of international study groups – including a number of farming groups wishing to avail of European Innovation Partnership funding to establish their own sustainable farming programmes. The work of the BBT, BCMG and BP featured on National TV, Radio, Newspapers and social media.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated No significant recorded change.

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes *Ongoing recruitment of scrub, being addressed by payments and actions under the Burren Programme and by NPWS on State Lands.*

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds *No significant recorded change.*

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage *No significant recorded change. Ongoing field research is taking place, mainly through researchers at NUI Galway.*

7.2. Socio-economic context

- 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context. *No available data but the past 4 years have seen a general economic recovery in Ireland. In the Burren, while farmer numbers and income fluctuate, these are generally declining; in contrast tourism numbers and revenues appear to be growing.*

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

- 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.) *No new infrastructure (buildings) but ongoing public information provided through BCMG and Burrenbeo Trust – including websites and social media.*

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Visitor numbers to Ireland grew significantly over the past 4 years. The Cliffs of Moher, on the edge of the Burren, had over 1.4m visitors in 2016, up from 960,000 in 2013. Considerable research has been carried out by the Burren Geopark Project looking at visitor distribution, behavior etc – see www.burrengeopark.ie Issues around visitor management at the Burren National Park are being addressed through the development of a Visitor and Traffic Management Plan for the Burren National Park.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

Since 2013 distinguished visitors to the Burren and to the Burren Programme Team have included HRH Prince Charles (2015), EC Agricultural Commissioner Phil Hogan (2016) and German President Joachim Gauck (2015).

8.2. Scientific research

- 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

No significant new current/completed research

8.2.2. Scientific publications *No significant new publications*

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations *No significant changes*

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.) *No significant changes*

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve) *No significant changes*

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

- 10.1.1. *Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna Ongoing intervention by NPWS in the control of hazel scrub in the Burren National Park, ongoing work across the Burren undertaken as part of the Burren Programme*

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime) *No changes*

- 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.) *No changes but research project currently underway into a Visitor and Traffic Management Plan for the Burren National Park*

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities) *No changes*

10.1.5. Waste management *No changes*

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems *No changes*

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: *changes made Additional Administration personnel recruited by the Burren Programme (Admin Assistant, F/T, recruited June 2017)*

10.2.2. Wardens’ department: changes made *No Changes*

10.2.3. Internal policing measures *No Changes*

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action *No significant issues*

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The EDPA award has positively influenced the 2016 decision to expand the Burren Programme, a decision which has been fundamental to the management of the Burren’s natural and cultural heritage over the next 6 years or more. This means that up to 30,000 ha of the Burren region, including most of the Natura 2000 designated land, will be managed under BP, a very positive long-term investment in the future of the region and its communities.

72. PORTUGAL – DESERTAS NATURE RESERVE

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. that The Portuguese Government continues to take the necessary steps to preserve the current islands status of the Desertas Islands and to unequivocally support the Regional Government of Madeira in all matters concerning the nature reserve:

The legal status of the Reserve has not been changed and there are no perspectives that such changes will occur, even considering a far future.

2. that the responsible regional authority updates the management plan of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve by the end of 2016: a. taking into consideration the enlargement of the strictly protected area; improving conservation efforts in terms of personnel, logistics and budget necessary for the proper management of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve:

The responsible regional authority updated the management plan of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve (for details refer to: https://issuu.com/institutodasflorestaseconservacaoda/docs/pogid_completo), officially published by the President of the Madeira Regional Government in the official journal of Madeira Autonomous Region (for details refer to: JORAM, I Série, nº 86, Resolução nº 304/2017, de 15 de maio - https://ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/images/Doc_Artigos/POG/ISerie08617pogidpogis.pdf)

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. take all necessary precautions to ensure that no species of plants and animals are introduced to the reserve: s

Stringent quarantine measures are rigorously implemented to ensure that no species of plants and animals are introduced to the reserve. Visiting boats are forbidden to pass any ropes to land and all the food and equipment of the site management staff, or other visitors, are transported in sealed containers.

Additionally, during the summer, when the number of visits to the island increases, a cordon of tubes with rodenticide is placed around the only official anchoring place of the island and these are inspected regularly.

2. improve the existing monitoring system for the fauna and flora populations of the Desertas:

The flora and fauna conservation status is improving due to the success of the main actions of the project LIFE RECOVER NATURA - Recovery of the species and land habitats of the Natura 2000 sites Ponta de São Lourenço and Desertas Islands LIFE12 NAT/PT/000195 (2013-2017) (details given in <https://liferecovernatura.madeira.gov.pt/>). The main actions of this project, involves an intensive monitoring on both flora and fauna and an evaluation of the regeneration of the natural habitats.

3. analyse and publish studies carried out on the flora and fauna on Bugio, following the total eradication of alien species:

During 2017, local and foreign scientists developed various research projects on Bugio. Qualitative and quantitative data is being obtained every year and reports are being produced accordingly.

4. increase the efforts to combat soil erosion on the plateau surface of Bugio:

Monitoring of the main actions of the project LIFE SOS Freira do Bugio – Urgent actions for the recovery of *Pterodroma deserta* and its habitat LIFE06 NAT/PT/000184, which was developed between 2006 and 2010, has been maintained up to present, involving habitat restoration. There is a constant effort to combat soil erosion, considered one of the priority duties of the nature wardens of the Reserve.

5. eradicate the goat population from Deserta Grande or at least keep the population very low and subject to a strict monitoring scheme:

The main actions of the project LIFE RECOVER NATURA - Recovery of the species and land habitats of the Natura 2000 sites Ponta de São Lourenço and Desertas Islands LIFE12 NAT/PT/000195 (2013-2017) (details given in <https://liferecovernatura.madeira.gov.pt/>), involves an evaluation of population densities and distribution of goats; a significant reduction in the goat population and establishing a monitoring scheme that allows the evaluation of the success of the management measures implemented to control the goat population.

6. promote the training of nature guides to accompany tourists in this area:

Visitors are met by the Nature Wardens, accompany them along the informative circuit and then to the reception centre. In the case of maritime-tourist visitors, this guided tour is made by the staff of each company; whose employees have received specific training provided by the site management staff. The site management has also signed a protocol with the Regional Delegation of the National Trade Union of Tourist Activity, Translators and Interpreters, under which these professionals receive specific information that results in a better quality of information provided at the location.

7. investigate if the increasing colony of yellow-legged gull (*Larus michahellis atlantis*) on Ilhéu Chão is having a negative impact on the breeding seabird populations on Deserta Grande and Bugio:

Although the yellow-legged gull (Atlantic form) *Larus michahellis atlantis* should not be considered an alien species, there is a constant effort to prevent their breeding on the islands (Ilhéu Chão, Deserta Grande and Bugio). Due to the remoteness of Desertas Islands and to their characteristics this is an easy and forward task.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Changes in legislation or regulations: Legislation and regulations were relevantly improved: With the management plan of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve update (for details refer to: https://issuu.com/institutodasflorestaseconservacaoda/docs/pogid_completo), officially published by the President of the Madeira Regional Government in the official journal of Madeira Autonomous Region (for details refer to: JORAM, I Série, nº 86, Resolução nº 304/2017, de 15 de maio - https://ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/images/Doc_Artigos/POG/ISerie08617pogidpogis.pdf), the total area of Desertas Islands Nature Reserve was unchanged but corrected to 11.457ha. Desertas Islands are a Nature 2000 network site with the classification of Special Conservation Area (SAC) whose area coincides with that of the Reserve (unchanged but corrected to 11.457ha) and Special Protection Area (SPA) whose area was expanded to offshore areas, 76.462 ha, by Decreto Regulamentar Regional nº 3/2014/M (for details refer to: https://ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/images/Doc_Artigos/Legislacao/AreasProtegidas/desertas/zpe.pdf).

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes occurred.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

During 2017, the Reserve had the official visit of H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco and Representatives and of the President of the Madeira Regional Government and Representatives, within the scope of the “Explorations de Monaco, 2017-2020”, a three-year campaign of scientific explorations at sea, which started in Madeira Autonomous Region.

All the events and lectures addressed to the public in general and target groups, as well as the website, facebook campaigns and new production of illustrated material, namely informative panels, used to raise awareness about the importance of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve, were reinforced with the European Diploma logo.

73. GEORGIA – VASHLOVANI PROTECTED AREAS

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Conditions:

1. By the end of 2015, remove the shelters located on the immediate border of the Vashlovani Strict Nature Reserve, and rigorously enforce the existing regulation for grazing in the reserve;
2. accelerate the drafting process of a comprehensive sustainable grazing management plan, taking into account the socio-economic context and the effects of grazing, positive and negative, on the long-term conservation of the features of the Vashlovani Protected Areas; this plan will have clear objectives, a time frame for implementation and indicators of progress, and will address the matter of dismantlement and relocation of grazing equipment and activities outside the strict nature protection areas and the restoration of degraded zones of the Vashlovani National Park. A draft will be submitted to the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma by the end of 2016, with alternative grazing areas located at a reasonable distance from the borders of the zones where these activities are forbidden; the State Party is also urged to enforce the existing regulation on grazing in the whole Diploma area, without delay, and to limit grazing activities to the carrying capacity for the Vashlovani Protected Areas (to be determined);

Response:

With the purpose of rehabilitation of grazing areas on Vashlovani Protected Areas and to introduce sustainable grazing practices, the Agency of Protected Areas completed the Project “Sustainable management of pastures in Georgia to demonstrate climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits and dividends for local communities” - project was financed by EU and implemented UNDP.

The project aimed to rehabilitate 4,064 ha of degraded pastures, about 300 ha of migratory route and introduce and implement sustainable pasture management practices among farmers and sheep-breeders in the Vashlovani Protected Areas. The project referred to livestock winter flats (45 farms) located on the protected area; it also implied measuring the pasture productivity. GIS database has been created and added to the map. Pastureland management plan is already developed.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and fund an operational and comprehensive monitoring programme of the Diploma area; this programme should be focused on the specific natural and landscape features of the Diploma area and the anthropogenic pressures on it;
2. prepare and implement a programme to maintain and renovate field equipment and the infrastructure for tourists and visitors
3. Pursue, update and complement inventories and mapping of species and habitats (distribution, abundance, state of conservation and tendencies), taking into account the Emerald Network’s standards and requirements
4. secure the Vashlovani Protected Areas core budget, from internal sources preferably, and provide funding to ensure that the 2013-19 management plan is fully implemented
5. start the process of drafting the next management plan in a timely manner, so that the whole award period of the European Diploma for the Vashlovani Protected Areas is covered
6. improve further the expertise and skills of the staff members, especially in the field of ecology and the knowledge and monitoring of species;
7. continue and develop cross-border co-operation for the protection of large carnivores

Response:

- For maintaining and renovating field equipment and infrastructure 10-year project is implemented in Cooperation with CNF.
- The inventarisation of the species is carried out permanently.
- The budget for financing 2016-2019 management plan activities consisted by state budget and the funds from CNF.
- 5-year Management Plan is elaborated.
- Management Plan as well as CNF activities imply Capacity building activities for staff members.
- Experience sharing activities with partner international organizations is carried out regularly.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances,

since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes have been done.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Amendment of the boundaries of Vashlovani Protected Areas has not been undertaken for the current reporting period.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

It's worth mentioning that the number of local and international visitors at Vashlovani Protected Areas is increasing permanently. Based on the source of APA, according to the data of September 2017, 10 164 visitors have visited Vashlovani Protected Areas.

The interest toward Georgian Protected Areas is rapidly increasing year by year – according to data by the September 2017 the number of local and international visitors to all protected areas of Georgia has achieved 856 186.