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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

GROUP OF SPECIALISTS ON THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA FOR PROTECTED AREAS

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**ANNUAL REPORTS 2015:
COMPILATION OF
ANNUAL REPORTS SUBMITTED BY
THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AREAS**

*Document prepared by the Directorate
of Democratic Governance*

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1. ARMENIA – KHOSROV FOREST STATE 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. Reserve managers take steps to ensure that the existing water resources facilities do not expand within the area and remain completely compatible with the preservation of the European interest of the area
2. Public motor transport traffic, including the transportation of tourists is strictly forbidden within the area and takes place only by the existing pedestrian natural trails, the movement of the transport is carried out only for management purposes and in case of emergencies.

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. Appropriate efforts are carried out by the managers to protect the reserve and prevent from illegal activities. As a consequence during the period from 2014 to 2015 in the state reserve any illegal activities such as poaching and violations of reserve regime were not registered.
2. The explanatory and eco-educational activities were developed and are carried out in the neighboring communities of the reserve by the employees of the reserve. The investigative visits are organized to the reserve museum and its area for schoolchildren of the neighboring communities. During 2015 about 15 student and schoolchildren groups have visited the museum of the state reserve.
3. There are 5 eco-touristic routes that are approved by the reserve management plan. The first 3 routes include attractions of Garni, Kakavaberd areas, the other two-Khosrov and Khachadzor areas. Groups taking eco-touristic tours have to consist of not more than 10 people and have to move by pedestrian trails or by horses. The entrance to the reserve has to be allowed by the authorized or executive body.
4. As the area included in the Emerald network, habitat and species inventory and mapping works were carried out according to the Res. 6 and Res. 7. According to the management and annual working plans scientific works are being implemented in the reserve. The complete examination works of Flora and Fauna species as well as habitats will be done during the development of the new management plan.
5. Funds provided by the state budget and non-budget are fully allocated.
6. The issues concerning the development of the new management plan of the reserve are in the discussion phase.

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 are 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.

There were no changes of the 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.

There is no other available information.

2. 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 elaboration of the management plan for the National Park Hohe Tauern is going on. The Krimml Waterfalls will be integrated according their rank.

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 fa 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 (see photo).

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 e.g. assessment of forests in the National Park Hohe Tauern, lichens project, monitoring of flowing waters.

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.

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:

With 1. February 2015 the amendment of the new Salzburg National Park Law comes into force. For the Krimml Waterfalls, which are located in the outer zone of the Hohe Tauern National Park, the regional government office of the Land Salzburg, department National Park Administration Salzburg, is the concerned authority instead the district authority Zell am See.

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 372.372. 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 buses and train. For years the arrival is forced by public transport. 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.

Refurbishment of damage the flood 2014

Heavy precipitation into the glacier regions led to flood 2014. The entire "Wasserfallboden" was flooded and the Krimml Ache made her streambed accordingly. First protective measures were implemented cautiously and compatible with nature in the end of the winter.

Krimml Waterfalls recognized as a natural healing resources

The healing effect of Krimml Waterfalls has been scientifically proven by the Paracelsus Medical University in Salzburg. On June 9, the official recognition followed as a natural cure by the province of Salzburg.

50th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

On the occasion of the celebration this anniversary a booklet and an exhibition was created by the Council of Europe. Of course this also the Krimml Waterfalls were transported as one of the most significant natural phenomena in Europe.

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.

3. 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 Podyji 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 current flow regime is already fulfilling part of the requirements of the Podyji National Park Administration (The flow rate in the river is set at a minimum of 2.8 m³/sec between mid-May and mid-October, and at a minimum of at least 3.3 m³/sec for the other 7 months of the year. Three turbines are running only exceptionally).

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;

The bilateral project mentioned in the last report was finished in December 2014. The study is including suggestions to improve the connectivity: Installing fish passes at the two sills in Hardegg, removing part of the sills at *Toifl Mühle* and *Neuhäusl Mühle downside Hardegg*. Mr. Froschauer from the Government of Lower Austria, Department for Water-Management presented the results to the administration of Podyjí National Park at a meeting on July 23rd in Hardegg.

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;

The new study concerning fish ecology and fishing in the river Thaya/Dyje mentioned in the last report will be part of a common INTERREG-project under the leadership of the Czech river administration Povodí moravy. The Government of Lower Austria, Department for Water-Management, Via Donau and Národní park Podyjí will also be partner. It should start in 2016.

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;

In 2015 we have finished a study concerning the occurrence of white-tailed eagle in the National Park. The result is positive: The white-tailed eagle is breeding next to the National Park, there were documented a lot of sights during the breeding season in the National Park. In August Czech and Austrian ornithologists found a nest of Peregrine falcon at one of the rocks in the Western part of National Park.

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.

Our programs for pupils and for groups are including some special offers which are connecting the visit of Kaja Castle ruins with some nature-education offers. In 2015 there was opened a new exhibition about the history of the Thaya-bridge and the common National Park in the old custom building in Hardegg. It is a cooperation between the community of Hardegg and the Thayatal National 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.

Since January 2015 the cutting of the meadows in the National Park is excluded from the Agri-environmental Programme „ÖPUL“. This fact means a loss of income for the work of the farmers. Luckily 2015 all farmers went on cultivating their meadows.

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 of 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 Council of Europe exceptional visit (Michael Usher and Tatiana State-Mason) took place in Thayatal and Podyjí NP from 15th to 17th September 2014. The results and recommendations were presented at the meeting of the group of specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas on 13th March 2015 in Strasbourg.

National Park director Ludwig Schleritzko took part at the 50th anniversary workshop on the theme “Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years”, on 21-22 May 2015 at the Regional Park of Migliarino.

Concerning the use of the European Diploma logo we can inform the Group of Specialists that it is used in our brochures, in the actual visitor programme and on the welcome sign at our visitor center. You can also find it on the mainpage of our website (www.np-thayatal.at) with a link to the European Diploma website of the Council of Europe. There is also a short description of the European Diploma on our website.

4. 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 outdoor visitor center to the Nature Park, realized as a Leader project including EU funding, has been opened on October 4th, 2015, by Lower Austrian State Minister Dr. Stephan Pernkopf.

The Nature Park started off as an, after some years of collaborative management, independent body on January 1st, 2015. Currently, there is no Managing Director, since the old manager quit his job after finishing the visitor center. A new manager has already been chosen and will soon be officially appointed, starting her work probably by the beginning of January or February 2016.

Recommendation #2: The river should be maintained at its present level, guaranteeing the survival of the last alluvial forests

The recently granted LIFE+ project “Alluvial Forest Wilderness Wachau (Auenwildnis Wachau)” has started on January 1st, 2015. All measures taken in connection with the Danube waterway are conducted by via donau, the state-owned company in charge of the Austrian Danube. All measures on land, such as an inventory of the black poplar or the re-settlement attempts of the white-tailed eagle, are conducted by the nature protection manager of Arbeitskreis Wachau, Hannes Seehofer.

In case the transnational Danubeparks Connected project is approved, it will also deal with supporting the alluvial forest development in the region.

Also see chapter 3 (Site management) for more information on this recommendation.

Recommendation #3: Work on restoration of the terraces and integration of the irrigation network should continue

No changes to last year’s report.

Recommendation #4: Strict standards should be imposed on river tourism traffic, to ensure that it meets appropriate quality requirements for the Wachau

During the year, there were significant discussions in the town of Krems-Stein following the construction of a new jetty. The uprise of the local population has been settled by a treaty signed under by the company owning the jetty and the City of Krems.

The Lower Austrian Jetty Holding has become a totally private enterprise by January 1st, 2015, since the State of Lower Austria sold its shares to the private company owning the jetties. Anyway, the Jetty Holding is interested in becoming a partner of the future site management and is actively participating in the planning of the future World Heritage Management Plan, so there will be enough (even formalized) space to discuss the issues arising along the situation of cruise ship navigation in the area in the future.

Recommendation #5: The refurbishment of the Spitz quarry should finally be started; works should be staggered until 2019

Works have not started yet, due to some discussions about the size of the necessary additional exploitation to stabilize the quarry and some special habitats around the quarry affected. This also has to do with the sad fact that the Lower Austrian Environment Attorney surprisingly died last year and discussions have to be started newly with his successor.

Anyhow, the final exploitation will probably take around 20 years, which means that works will go on longer than until 2019. Anyway, we hope that we will be able to present some progress during a potential expert visit in 2018.

Recommendation #6: The moufflon population should be brought within a limit compatible with natural regeneration of the forest, without systematic recourse to protection fences

No changes to last year’s report.

Recommendation #7: Efforts should be continued to preserve the apricot orchards

No changes compared to last year’s report.

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

After the centennial flood in June 2013, the Austrian and Lower Austrian authorities have set aside more money for creating flood protection systems in the remaining unprotected villages in the area.

Also in this case, it is the local municipalities who are in charge of drafting these plans. Therefore it is assured that all flood protection devices can only be built with a strong link to the needs of the local people.

In 2014, the flood protection system in the city of Melk was opened. In addition to the immediate protection measures, the city used the opportunity to re-shape parts of its inner city in a modern style which created a better living space for both citizens and visitors of Melk.

In Dürnstein/Loiben, the system is about to be finished. In the case of Loiben, the municipality chose to use existing walls along the main road and replace them with flood protection walls. This means that at some spots the village is separated from the Danube by substantial walls, but on the other side, the whole protection system is built up much quicker by less people, which is essential to a municipality with around 850 inhabitants, and the municipality needs much smaller storage halls for the aluminum elements, which is essential to the landscape impact of the protection system.

3. Site management

Following the renewal of the Leader region status of the Wachau, the site management has been internally re-arranged. The Leader management is now done by two female colleagues. The site manager, Michael Schimek, who also was in charge of Leader before, now concentrates on project management of regional projects and the site management.

As for nature protection, the State Government of Lower Austria has started an initiative to coordinate Natura 2000 protection management in Lower Austria. All efforts done by our nature protection project manager, Hannes Seehofer, will be fully taken into account and seen as necessary subsidiary action to be supported.

In the meantime, we have handed in a project proposal on coordinating nature protection management together with the two National Parks in Lower Austria, Thayatal and Donauauen. The project proposal is meant to be financed within the Rural Development scheme of Austria but is still under review, since a number of details around the new European programmes still have to be cleared by the State Government.

In addition to that, we became member of the Danubepark association, together with 18 partners from Germany, Austria, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova, led by Donauauen National Park. Thus, we are participating in a cooperative project proposal along the Danube to be filed under the Danube Territorial Programme of the EU.

In case these project proposals will be granted, all of our nature protection staff will be financed by public sources.

Works on the World Heritage Management Plan have started but had to face some delay. We hope to be able to present the finished plan by the middle of 2016. It has already become clear, though, that nature protection on the local and regional level will be mentioned as an integrative part of site management and as a clear task of Arbeitskreis Wachau also in the future.

4. Boundaries

No changes.

5. Other information

The site manager, Michael Schimek, participated in the anniversary event in Pisa in May. The flag distributed there was present at the opening ceremony of the Nature Park visitor center.

Arbeitskreis Wachau has always used the European Diploma logo on its letter paper and on its website, giving an explanation about the label. It is also mentioned in the World Heritage visitor center in Krems-Stein.

5. 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

New environmental legislation (Regulation of National park) was approved and adopted in 2012.

No changes

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 participation of the national park administration.

No changes.

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 (57 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 2015 amounted to 130 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.

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 extensification of agricultural activities leading to semi-natural habitats (hayfields and low-intensity, grazed meadows with only moderate or no use of fertilisers)

There is a constant interaction with the district authorities on the transfer of areas of former agricultural land bordering or surrounded by national park lands under the national park management, as their excluding from active economic using. In 2014, about 150 hectares of such land transferred to the management of the national park.

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;

These types of works will be carried out if funding is available.

This year new government program for the development of nature protected areas system for the 2015-2019 was elaborated and signed. There is planned the realization of couple nature protection measures in Belovezhskaya Pushcha.

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 It was reduces the winter feeding of ungulates. There was dismantled 54 sites of winter feeding ungulates in the territory that became part of the strictly protected area. Present time the winter feeding of ungulates conducted only at peripheral area of national park, mainly in the economic activity zone and Shereshovo game forestry.

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;

The genetic researches of bison populations in the national park were conducted. It's found the presence of Caucasian subspecies gene pool.

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 the its impact on the environment and to avoid exceeding the limit of visitor's number. There is 20% decreasing total number of visitors comparing the 2014.

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 agro-tourism 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 is no significant changes of recreation activity in the national park. The total number of visitors decreased at 10% comparing the last season.

3-day visa-free regime of visiting Belovezhskaya Pushcha for foreign citizens was established since June 2015.

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.

Constant monitoring of water quality (chemical composition, oxygen, minerals) in lakes and rivers is conducted by the District inspection of natural resources and environmental protection.

Monitoring of forestry (logging, the impact of bark beetle) is conducted by Forest department of national park).

Monitoring of wildlife (statistics on the elimination of mammals, populations of alien species) is being by the Department of protection of fauna of the national park.

Ecological monitoring of forest dynamic processes is conducted by scientific department of national park.

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;

Changes that allow for activities aimed at active fight against invasive alien species inside the National Park, including the strictly protected area, in coordination with the National Academy of Sciences, introduced in environmental legislation.

During this year the research on the status of red oak in the national park and recommendations to combat it are conducted.

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).

During this year national cartographic agency carried out the data actualization for the preparing a new national park tourist map scale of 1: 100,000 with new information. Approximately map will be published in next year.

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.

Management plan of the national park for the next 5 years was actualized during this 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.

There are no changes of the national park's 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.

6. 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 improve the protection of natural systems and to conduct the scientific research, a full range of activities has been performed in accordance with the State program for the development of the system of specially protected natural territories of the Republic of Belarus for 2015-2019: information and indication signs have been constructed and installed along the boundaries of the reserve; 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.

At the expense of funds of the Union State of Russia and Belarus a multi-year project was launched 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".

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 and the effectiveness of the existing crossings for amphibians.

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 completed: «Assessment of seasonal and long-term changes in the structure of theriological complexes at the Berezinsky Reserve» and «Seasonal and long-term dynamics in the structure of ornithological complexes at the Berezinsky Reserve». Action plan for the conservation and sustainable use of bison's micropopulation for the years 2015 - 2019 has been started. The network of photo-traps usage in the places of bison's migration has been expanded in order to track their numbers and identify potential threats to their population in the Berezinsky.

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 sustainable eco-tourism development 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 environmental awareness.

Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve became one of the winners of the Contest of «green» initiatives in the framework of the project "Supporting the Transition to a Green Economy in the Republic of Belarus"

funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in Belarus. The funds allocated by the EU during the next two years will go to creation at the territory of the Berezinsky Reserve "The Center of mythological tourism" within the project "Ecotourism in the Berezinsky: innovative approaches, partnership models, "green" consciousness."

After overhaul and reconstruction the hotel complex "Serguch" has been put into service. In the headquarters of the reserve in the village of Domzheritsy a rope park "Forest of Fun" has been built. 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.*

A topic of research in the Reserve "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 as a part of the state program. The program of scientific research on the topics «Dynamics characteristics of the phytocoenosis floristic composition in association with changes of weather and climatic conditions» and «Dynamics assessment of meadow and bog phytocoenosis under the influence of natural and anthropogenic factors» has been completed.

3. Site Management:

An action plan for a five-year period 2015 -2019 was developed as part of the management plan of the Berezinsky reserve.

During the reporting period new jobs were created, which increased the staff of the Berezinsky reserve by 49 people.

4. Boundaries:

The International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) of UNESCO has accepted the proposals to expand the boundaries of the biosphere reserve (within the MaB program) by increasing the transition zone (a zone of cooperation).

5. Other information:

An international scientific and practical conference "Prospects for conservation and sustainable use of natural systems of protected areas", dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the reserve and the 20th anniversary of the assignment to the European Diploma of Protected Areas was held. Following the results of the conference its resolution was adopted, the speakers' materials were published.

Deputy Director for scientific and research work of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve has participated in the events dedicated to celebration of the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma, which took place in the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli in Italy. In the frames of the workshop "Protected areas in Europe: the next 50 years" organized by the Council of Europe, he presented a case study "How networking knowledge contributes to conservation and sustainable development of protected areas: a case of Berezinsky (Belarus), Kampinoski (Poland), and Northern Vosges (France) biosphere reserves". A poster with the photos of the Berezinsky Reserve was presented at the exhibition of posters of Diploma holders' areas.

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.

7. 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. The authorities responsible must express their commitment not to alter the management plan and the conservation regime of the different zones of the Park and to renew the plan respecting similar conservation conditions:

After the public hearing (11th of March 2014) and the submission of the updated Management plan and all necessary documentation by law to the Ministry of Environment and Water (16th of April 2014) for review, on the 5th of March 2015 and on the 14th of October the Plan was discussed at the meeting of the specialized Supreme Expert Environmental Council at the MoEW – part of the legal procedure for updating of management plans of protected areas. In a month after the second meeting Park Directorate was finished the correction of the last shortcomings identified by the experts. 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 an increase with almost five hundred ha of the area of Human limited impact zone on account of the Multifunctional zone. Thus achieved the formation of wildlife corridors between strict nature reserves. Under the new Management Plan will not be 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.

Still expected to happen the last step of the procedure – the adoption of Updated management plan from the Council of Ministers.

2. The authorities concerned must provide a sufficient budget to ensure regular operation of the Park as well as maintenance of its infrastructure:

Since 2010 the Central Balkan National Park Directorate implements different projects financed mainly from Operational program Environment 2007 – 2013 (Priority 3 – Preservation of biodiversity and nature protection). CBNPD has already finished projects for renovation of the tourist infrastructure and preparation of the design for anti-erosion measures in the Park. There are two projects ending in 2015. The first is for actualization of the Management Plan of the Park and the second (“Central Balkan – park for everyone”) is for big varieties of activities divided in four main groups: 1. Protection of species and habitats, 2. Tourist and administrative infrastructure, 3. Interpretation and educational programs and 4. Planning and optimization of the management. The total budget of this project is over 13 000 000 BGN (~6 500 000 EUR) and the deadline is the end of 2015. OP Environment 2007 – 2013 became a main financial source for different activities in the Park that allows the Park administration to implement a lot of projects planned in last 10 years which didn’t happen because the lack of enough financial resources. All this allows to spend the annual budget received from the Government mainly for regular operation of the Park administration.

3. A public advisory council should be established in order to ensure public participation in the management of the Park:

Since September 2010 a Public Advisory Council functions as an advisory body to the Park Management. It was established as a result from the project “Model for Management with the Stakeholders Participation of Central Balkan – part of the National Ecological Network”. The Council consists of 20 representatives of different stakeholders – representatives of municipal authorities and village mayors, chalet keepers, local tourism entrepreneurs, tour operators, artists, representatives of scientific and non-government conservation sector, users of park bio-resources, mass media, Ministry of Environment and Water, and state forest agency.

On the 12th and 13th of November the Public Advisory Board together with the Scientific Advisory Board held a joint meeting. The members of two advisory bodies reviewed progress on the projects “Update of Management Plan for Central Balkan National Park” and “Central Balkan – park for everyone” implemented under Operational Programme Environment. Important topics in the agenda were also the theme about grazing in the National Park and in particular annual grazing plan for 2016 and the theme about participation of the Park in the process of expansion of the existing UNESCO World Heritage Property – “Primeval Beech Forest of Carpathians and Ancient Beech Forests of Germany”. All members from both councils received by e-mail the projects of the Updated Management Plan and Management Plans for Elenova gora Reserve and Chamdzha Managed Reserve. The last two protected areas are located outside the Park but are managed by Park Directorate.

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. A buffer zone around the Park should be established (conformity with the zone, limited impact on forest and agricultural land, protection of water, etc.); the obligation to implement the Natura 2000 network, as prescribed by the Habitats Directive (92/43 EEC) in the National park and its buffer zone should be acknowledged:

Territory bordering the 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. The public discussion of the draft order for SCI is expected in 2016. The National nature protection service (part of MOEW) are committed Central Balkan NP Directorate to take leading role in the discussion of future norms and regimes.

2. No mass tourism activities in contradiction with the sustainable development principles should be authorized in the Park:

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 kilometers, the number of tourists is not high and has not changed significantly in recent years. In 2015 tourist floats in summer months were noticeably higher than those of the rainy 2014. In the highest period – August, monitoring of tourists showed return to normal for the period before year 2014 levels of number of visitors. Three of the eco and interpretative routes were closed (partially or fully) for reconstruction, funded by European fund for regional development through Operational programme Environment 2007 – 2013 as a part of activities of the project “Central Balkan – park for everyone”. The reconstruction ends at the end of high touristic season and was a reason for slightly decrease of numbers of visitors in the regions concerned. The most popular 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. Unlike the summer of 2014, in 2015 the path was not closed due to flood damage and the average number of visitors during the months of July to October reached almost 1,000 people per week. This is the only place where the statistics showed a serious increase in the number of visitors compared to the previous year (not so significant compared to past periods). For rest of the popular routes attendance is between several dozens and 100 visitors per week in summer months. Event tourism in the Park does not develop. There are a few sports (alpinism) and cultural (honoring the memory of fallen revolutionaries) events that attract several dozens of visitors in one day on one place.

3. Well-managed summer grazing should be encouraged; a monitoring programme to determine the ideal number of animals permitted in order to respect biodiversity should be established; the possibility of controlling juniper and other shrub growth by means other than fire should be studied:

Summer grazing in CBNP has 7 centuries of history. The traditional way of use of treeless area of the Park has set its current appearance. Since 1990 significant reduction of livestock on pastures of the National Park has led to the beginning of successional processes leading to overgrowing of pastures mainly by shrubs and precisely mainly by Siberian juniper (*Juniperus communis* var. *saxatilis* Pall.). Since 2007 when Bulgaria became a member of EU the implementation of Rural Development Programme (RDP) increases the interest to High Mountain pasturing in national parks sharply. That was the reason CBNPD to take measures for development of more precise Annual plan for livestock grazing and hay usage in the Park. In early 2015 the draft of Grazing plan 2015 was discussed with livestock owners from all areas adjacent to the Park.

In 2015 the map of pastures was almost the same as this one for 2014. Small parts of them that according to the new Management Plan will be in Human limited impact zone have been excluded. Because of observed new erosion spots some parts have been excluded too. Park Directorate enables users from excluded pastures to move to such that in the last few years have not been used. Thanks to Annual grazing plan for 2015 and above mentioned restrictions the total area of pastures in the CBNP in 2015 was 15 432.9 ha which is about 1 600 ha less than 2014. Another change in the Grazing plan was the possibility users of pastures to clean partially them manually or mechanically from juniper overgrowing after expert evaluation. Given the labor intensity and the financial value of such a procedure there were not interested to do so.

Due to increased interest in the use of pastures last years, Park Directorate applies a step system of assessing applications and allocating eligible pasture areas. During 2015, three-tier system was applied. On the first step, the Directorate provides pastures to those who wish to use the same areas as in 2013. This group includes farmers approved under RDP's sub-measure "Traditional practices for seasonal grazing animals" and farmers that use regularly pastures in last 5 years but with limit 100 ha. On the second step vacant pastures were distributed among remaining farmers from the Park adjacent villages. On the third step remaining free grazing areas (where there was any) were distributed among other applicants.

In 2015 with year delay starts the new programming period 2014 – 2020 for RDP. CBNPD and experts from other national parks proposed changes in above mentioned sub measure in 2014 and now part of them are fact. It is hoped that these changes will make the management of mountain pastures easier and more successful.

4. The situation of the buildings within the Park should be clarified and the necessary means to maintain or improve them should be ensured, as appropriate:

CBNPD has done a geodesic surveying of over 230 buildings and facilities in the Park territory which will be included in the national cadaster. This help to clarify the owners and especially of the abandoned buildings and facilities. On this base the Park administration take the necessary actions to improve or remove them. In 2014 CBNPD signed a contract with a private company for removing of abandoned buildings which were dangerous and in very bad condition. In 2015 activities were held on the terrain and more than 20 objects were removed from the Park. After that the terrain was restored.

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!

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 2015 Park Directorate used in all its presentations, new brochures and leaflets the European Diploma logo dedicated to the 50 anniversary.

8. CZECH REPUBLIC - KARLŠTEJN 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.

No conditions were 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. Continue the restoration of non-forested areas of forest steppes and xerophilous calcareous grasslands through appropriate management; make funding available to conclude contractual agreements with the goatherds and/or shepherds in order to guarantee grazing, and thereby maintenance, in the long term;

Goat and sheep grazing management, shrub and tree removal on dry calcareous grasslands and forest steppe localities continued in the extent of previous years (39 hectares of conservation grazing, few hectares of shrub and tree removal). The obstacle for long term contracts is that financial funding is always announced only for the current year.

2. Continue the restoration of the broad-leaved forests by gradually eliminating conifer plantations; in the interests of allowing natural regeneration, avoid reintroducing non-native game species such as mouflon or fallow deer;

Removal of non-native tree species (Norway spruce – 1.38 hectares, Black Pine – 0.44 hectares and European larch – 0.35 hectares) and their exchange for broad-leaved species (beech, oak, and lime) has continued. No non-native game species has been introduced.

3. Make it compulsory to draw up land-use plans (spatial development) and explore the possibility of reinforcing the special legal competences of the reserve's staff and other authorities responsible for nature conservation; also stimulate the establishment of regular consultation procedures with relevant local and regional authorities, scientists and NGOs;

All local communities have drawn up land-use plans. The cooperation with scientific institutions has continued, mainly on the monitoring of prescribed management, such as grazing or experimental coppicing. The main partner institutions are Charles University in Prague and Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. Monitoring of a non-interventional forest area has been repeated after a 10-year period in 2015.

4. Improve signposting, notably by translating the texts into English, and possibly into German, and by displaying the European Diploma logo on the signs;

Six new information boards about the reserve have been erected in December 2014 in Czech, with short English summary. We forgot to us the European Diploma logo – it will be added in form of a sticker as soon as possible.

5. Stimulate the development of high quality visitors' centres and organise environmental education for the wider public; encourage local authorities to disseminate information on the merits of the nature reserve and its position in Europe in appropriate places (such as railway stations, camping sites, municipal halls, museums, etc.);

The project study of a visitor centre is in progress. Management plan for Karlštejn-Koda Site of Community Interest has been created and will be debated in November 2015 with stakeholders. During the year, several educational excursions for the public were organized by the Administration staff.

6. Ensure that the necessary budget and resources are available for the manifold functions and operational tasks of the reserve's staff, including administration, research, surveillance, education and training, as well as habitat management.

In 2015, the budget of the Administration, including the budget for active management of target species and habitats, was provided in a regular extent in accordance to needs and capabilities of the office. Unfortunately, management budget is fixed for one-year period only and does not allow long term financing.

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.

Site management has not changed.

The Administration office became a part of a Regional Office for Central Bohemia of the Nature Conservation Agency. The financial budget remains at the same 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 took place.

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.

We should focus on broader use of the European Diploma logo. A request has been sent to the webmaster of official pages to display the logo together with a link to to the Council of Europe's website. A sticker with the logo will be ordered as soon as possible and distributed on information post around the reserve.

9. CZECH REPUBLIC - PODYJÍ 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.

Recommendation:

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

The operator of hydroelectric power station in Vranov and Podyjí National Park Administration signed an agreement on flow regime in Dyje river. Podyji National Park Administration afterwards issued an approving statement to the permission of water usage on basis of this agreement. Earlier interrupted procedure thus can continue. Required and legally enforceable minimal residual flow will be embedded in this permission of water usage. The question of the maximum residual flow is still to be solve.

2. secure the adoption and implementation of the management plan for the period 2010-2019

Without changes. The Management plan was approved on June 28, 2012 for the time period 2012-2020. The measures set in the Management plan are being implemented.

3. control the development of leisure activities, and in particular avoid the use of the River Dyje for water sports;

There are no changes planned. According to the current Management plan (2012-2020), the Dyje river in national park won't be able to be used for water sports.

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

Podyji and Thayatal National parks Administrations are preparing common funding application for INTERREG program. We would like to get funding for common research project on state of fish population in Dyje river and its enhancement. Ministry of the Environment will try to continue discussion with the Ministry of Agriculture on legislative changes that would facilitate the regulation of sport fishing rules on the Dyje river..

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 project to plant the trees and restore old roads in agriculture landscape was prepared in coordination with one municipality and Podyji National Park Administration. It will be implemented in 2016 and 2017. Small parts of agriculture land formerly rented to big agriculture firm (overall 2 ha) are now offered to small local farmers in vicinity of Čížov village for diversification of land use. The rest of state own agriculture land in Čížov (150 ha) will be transferred to ecological friendly farming from beginning of 2016.

6. pursue and improve the management of agricultural areas, particularly in the buffer zones;

The Territorial System of Ecological Stability project has been finished on 12ha of land in cadastre of Lukov village. Another 8 new alleys were also planted in big field blocks. The agriculture firm, which didn't respect regulation on usage of chemicals on fields in buffer zone, is now prosecuted.

7. grant funding to public authorities for water supply and purification within the park's perimeter

The building of sewer systems in the last three villages in the buffer zone without sewer system is almost finished.

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

Research on the impact of weirs on fish migration in the Dyje river from 2014 didn't come up with sufficient conclusions The research will continue in 2016 – 2018.

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.

Around 40 ha of forest were reserved for recovery of coppice forests. First coppice forest has been already created on 0.4 ha of land.

Natural disturbance caused by glazed frost in December 2014 was used for succession of natural communities. Glazed frost broke the forests trees on area of 20 ha. Some disturbed areas are even more than 1 ha large. The disturbed areas are keep open for natural development.

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.

Exceptional visit of Michael Usher and Tatiana State-Mason to Podyjí NP and Thayatal NP was held 15th to 17th September 2014 Main themes of the visit was planned wind power station Windpark Nord, water flows in Dyje River (regime of Vranov power station) and sport fishing in the Czech part of area. Report on the visit was approved this year.

*The European Diploma logo was used in Podyji National Park publications (see example: http://www.nppodyji.cz/uploads/002015/maliri_2015.pdf), on homepage of our website <http://www.nppodyji.cz/>. The logo is also present on panels of our field information system and shelters (Almost thirty signs around Podyji National Park). The European Diploma flag was flown over Podyji National Park HQ in Znojmo for almost year. ****

10. ESTONIA – MATSALU 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 ongoing land reform process shall not in any way change the present characteristics of the national park or be detrimental to the park's biodiversity.

This condition has been complied with. The land reform is nearly finished and it has not caused any major problems.

2. Maintenance of the meadows, particularly the coastal ones, shall continue to be given high priority.

The maintenance of meadows, especially coastal meadows, has still the highest priority. We have set high goals for meadow maintenance in the management plan of Matsalu National Park, which was endorsed at

the beginning of the year 2015. In addition to the direct meadow management and restoration, it also includes other supporting means like acquiring cattle and mowing equipment for meadow management also rafts or boats for transporting cattle to Matsalu's islands and islets, building accesses to the meadows and drains to improve the maintenance as well as barns for storing hay etc.

3. The national park's management shall have the necessary funds to continue its monitoring, enforcement and environmental education activities.

Monitoring, enforcement and environmental education is done by three sub-divisions of Environmental Ministry – Environmental Board, State Forestry Centre and Environmental Agency. All three of them have necessary resources from state budget to comply with the tasks given to them.

4. Private open land shall not be developed in any way that would be incompatible with the aims of the park

This condition has also almost entirely been complied with. There was a slightly stronger pressure for development when real estate bubble was in action in 2007, but our firm laws, distance from big centers and effective surveillance prevented big real estate developments. Although we have had some smaller issues with illegal development, these cases are processed by The Environmental Inspectorate.

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. Co-operation with farmers should continue, and where possible increase, particularly in the form of support for traditional uses like grazing or mowing.

The recommendation has been complied with. The free consultations to the (new) farmers and also the opportunity to apply for the rent of state lands for meadow management off charge is provided.

2. The national park's management should continue to play a social role to help the local people within the park's boundaries develop activities compatible with the aims of the park, such as bird-watching, handicrafts and restoration of the historical heritage.

Environmental Board still has a strong social role in developing activities compatible with the aims of the reserve. The co-operation with Terra Maritima (NGO that links local municipalities and tourism entrepreneurs with an aim to achieve a well-functioning network of cooperation among themselves and other partners from Estonia and abroad) has been very effective and as a result Matsalu national park will receive the award of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas at the Award Ceremony, which will take place at the beginning of December.

Also as every year different cultural heritage related workshops and seminars were arranged.

In addition, as mentioned in last year's report the Matsalu National Park Council was formed in January. This has already enabled us to discuss several important issues with reserve's stakeholders (including local residents).

Finally, the Matsalu Nature Film Festival is growing bigger every year and draws together not only local and foreign nature film enthusiasts but also bird watchers and nature photographers who gather to participate in several workshops and organize photographic exhibitions.

3. Potential external threats from industry, agriculture, tourism and development should be continuously monitored and a buffer zone in which hunting is prohibited should be established around the national park

The monitoring is done by two institutions – Environmental Board and The Environmental Inspectorate.

Like was mentioned in last year's report – the non-hunting buffer zone around the reserve was not established and probably will not be in the future. Regulating the number of some wild game is necessary

for certain species and habitats protected in the reserve. For example too high Wild Boar population density will have a negative impact on orchids' habitats and ground nesting waders. Non-hunting zone will also prohibit us from hunting alien species like Raccoon Dogs and American Minks. The specific terms for hunting and list of species that are allowed to hunt are listed in the protection rules.

4. Continue the program for the elimination of alien species

The programs of elimination of alien species is still ongoing. The importance of this matter is also emphasized in the management plan of Matsalu National Park. Last year we had a significant agreement with local hunters, because they voluntarily agreed to visit small islands every year and free them of small predators including Raccoon Dogs and Minks.

5. Reinforce the program of scientific studies.

One of the most important studies that begun this year is monitoring and gathering information about the main predators for ground-nesting birds' nests on coastal meadows.

We have devised to conduct several other studies in the near future with the help of the Matsalu National Park's management plan – study the habitats and condition of several species (bats, fish, plants, mycobiota, insects, lichen etc), also conduct cultural heritage related studies (ancient graves, spiritual legacy) and other important studies (research the possible needs for visitors' infrastructure that are in accordance with the protection aims of the National Park; find additional options to use the wetland's biomass – mainly hay and reed etc).

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.

Here are the most important events in Matsalu National Park this year:

1. Early this year the management plan of Matsalu national plan was endorsed.
2. The proceeding of the draft of the new Matsalu national park protection rules reached next phase and the draft is now being processed by the Environmental Ministry.
3. It is now certain that Matsalu national park will receive the award of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.
4. We tested the brand-new Kloostri and Rõude bridges this year (they were renovated to ensure a sufficient level of humidity of alluvial meadows) and got the assurance that they are working. The precise operating conditions of these bridges are still being developed.
5. As every year the Environmental Investment Centre provided resources for new meadows to be restored and fences built for grazing.
6. Natterjack toads were reintroduced to Saastna peninsula and Kumari Island with the help of Penijõe species rehabilitation center. Also after several years Kumari Island was freed of Raccoon Dogs.
7. New temporary fence was built around Frog Orchid's habitat (extremely rare in Estonia) to keep the plants from being eaten by grazing cattle. Last year's fence worked well and very many Frog Orchids bloomed and fruited.
8. The traditional fishing in Matsalu bay's reedbed was filmed and will soon be presented to wider audience as a documentary.
9. Many cultural heritage related workshops and seminars were arranged (restoration of old furniture, Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus*) weaving, restoration of the facade of old houses etc.)

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 Golden Jackal who was first found in Matsalu National Park few years ago is no longer regarded as an alien species. The animal has now been found in other Baltic countries, Denmark, Belarus etc. and therefore it is considered to have spread here naturally. The Ministry of Environment is now proceeding amendments for hunting regulations in order to regulate the hunting of Golden Jackal.

We have used different possible means to promote that Matsalu National Park has the award of the European Diploma.

The logo together with the information about this acknowledgement is presented on Matsalu National Park's homepage (<http://www.keskkonnaamet.ee/matsa>). At the moment this information is only in Estonian and English, but we are working towards getting more information, as well as about the European Diploma, to be also presented in German, Finnish and Russian.

The information about the award is also presented in Matsalu e-guide (<http://www.matsalu.ee/teejuht/>). At the present the text in e-guide is only in Estonian, but with future projects we hope to translate it in other major languages also. The logo with necessary information will also be presented in our new Matsalu National Park's brochure, which is now being composed and will be finished next year. This brochure will be printed in Estonian, English and Russian.

In addition we have added the European Diploma logo to all of our new information stands set up around the National Park. Lastly we have placed the poster that was made about Matsalu National Park for the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma of Protected Areas in our Nature Centre's auditorium, where it can be seen by all auditorium visitors.

11. 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

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;

- the latest report was published in 2007 and the next is planned to be ready in 2016.
- 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 complied as planned also year 2015, when special attention was paid to inventory methods and developing them.
 - the restoration for damaged communities and the control of alien species: has been complied annually as planned.
- 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:

Have been complied especially in two ERDF (European regional development fund) funded projects during years 2010-2014. Actions included were new exhibition, leaflet, guidance packages and film on nature centre and renewing the infrastructure in national park. Furthermore, year 2014 new webpages were launched and year 2015 new pier and sauna were built to Jussarö Island and new national park film shown in visitor centre was launched.
- 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. Year 2015 new entrepreneurs started in the north harbor and former Jussarö coast guard station, which was sold year 2015 by Metsähallitus.

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 national park and in the national park leaflet/brochure. The logo is also on national parks and visitor centres webpages (finnish, swedish and english pages). <http://www.luontoon.fi/tammisaarensaaristo>
<http://www.luontoon.fi/tammisaarenluontokeskus>

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.

Mink and raccoon dogs have been removed (initiated year 2010) also during the year 2015 from the outer archipelago, which is important for the sea birds and their population. The permission was given to one new person year 2015.

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

New film about the national parks nature was launched year 2015 and is shown in the visitor centre.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Estimated number of visits to Ekenäs Visitor Centre is 16 000, guided groups 120 and number of persons in guided groups approximately 2500. Customer service satisfactory index is 4,4 out of 5 being maximum. Number of visits to national park will be approximately 47 000.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

No special visits.

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 continued in national park year 2015. Special notice was put to inventory methods and improving them.

8.2.2. Scientific publications

- Valanko, S., Heino, J., Westerbohm, M., Viitasalo, M., Norkko, A. 2015. Complex metacommunity structure for benthic invertebrates in a low-diversity coastal system. *Ecology and Evolution* 5(22): 5203–5215.

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations: Former Jussarö coast guard station was sold and a long term land rental contract was done.

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

Restored peatlands (restored 2009) were examined and restoration is in good progress, ie water balance is close to natural and peatland vegetation is returning as expected. A 3-day volunteer camp checked all the known patches of invasive species *Rosa rugosa* (ca. 13) and detected new ones. All the patches were removed and now the number of disappeared *Rosa rugosa* patches has risen to 7.

Metsähallitus is now preparing a LIFE project application including restoration of lagoons and coastal meadows, approximately 20-30 sites in national park.

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

New pier and sauna were built to Jussarö island year 2015.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures: no internal policy measures during 2015.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action: only minor infringement of regulations were discovered and no legal actions were taken.

12. FINLAND – SEITSEMENEN 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.

Metsähallitus ISO 14001-certified environmental management system evaluation was arranged in Seitseminen. Evaluation of recreational facilities, customer service and restoration work was evaluated in September 2015.

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;

- the latest report is published in 2007 and the next is planned to be ready in 2016.

2. Continue the restoration plans for both mires and forests; continue arrangements for the appropriate grazing of meadows to encourage their biodiversity;

- complying as planned. Two forest restoration burnings were carried out successfully.

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 specialists on mires from Estonia visited restored sites in mires and forests. Also a group from Latvia visited restoration sites. Green house gas measures were carried out in co-operation with Natural Institute Research Finland including Peat Land Use Life –project.

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.

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.

A table made from the copy of the award has been on the wall in Seitseminen Nature Centre.

The logo is on the web page of the national park.

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

Metsähallitus has co-operated with the Criminal Sanctions Agency over ten years employing open prison inmates in the management of protected areas, helping them to integrate back into society. In the area of Seitsemien and Helvetinjärvi National Parks cooperation began in 2014 and the input of convicts in various maintenance and restoration duties has been annually 2 person-years.

Metsähallitus has also employed jobless youngsters across the country to gain welcome work experience. In 2015 Seitsemien offered two months work experience in maintenance work.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Estimated number of visits to Seitsemien Visitor Centre is 27 800 and Kovero Crown Tenant Farm 11 700 in 2015. The number of visitors in guided groups will be approximately 5 500.

The number of visits to Seitsemien National Park will be approximately 42 000 in 2015.

The provincial co-operation in environmental education was not very active during the year, due to limited resources of the participants of the environmental education network.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

Co-operation with local entrepreneurs and tourism operators was promoted furthermore. Twenty local entrepreneur has made a partnership agreement with Metsähallitus. Osuuskunta Paluu co-operative (which was created to serve Finns returning home from abroad), arranged an education for local entrepreneurs in marketing and communicational networking, and several educational events were arranged in Seitsemien during the year.

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

Nature center was under a minor interior renovation to improve the facilities for customer services. Renovation was finished by spring 2015.

13. 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.

Le bilan annuel d'activités 2014 a été présenté aux conseils scientifiques et de direction de la réserve en avril 2015 (ce bilan est disponible en téléchargement sur le site www.reserve-camargue.org). En 2015, nous arrivons au terme de ce plan de gestion 2011-2015. L'évaluation du plan de gestion a été réalisée en cours d'année, et sera présentée, avec le nouveau plan de gestion 2016-2020 courant 2016.

Sur 128 opérations prévues, 116 ont été engagées soit 90%. Parmi ces opérations 45% ont été entièrement réalisées, et 45% l'ont été partiellement. Plusieurs raisons, concernant parfois la même opération, expliquent ces chiffres : un manque de temps, de ressources humaines ou de moyens financiers pour 44% des opérations ; un manque de clarté dans la rédaction de l'objectif ou de l'opération à réaliser pour 35% ; des problèmes de technique, de compétence, le manque de mise en œuvre de suivi de l'opération ou des résultats négatifs observés pour 26%.

La SNPN est engagée dans la cogestion des « Etangs et marais des Salins de Camargue », terrains du Conservatoire du Littoral correspondant à plus de 6000 ha au sud-est de la réserve. Cette cogestion nous permet de répondre à certains objectifs à long terme de la réserve, mais a également induit une charge de travail supplémentaire, parfois au détriment de certaines opérations.

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 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.

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 2015, 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. Ce travail a débuté en 2015 avec une demande de financement concernant la rédaction du Plan de gestion à l'Agence de l'Eau. Le dossier est en cours de validation.

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, Marc Girondot, Université d'Orsay, Laboratoire Ecologie systématique et évolution (Paris Sud), Arnaud Elger, Université Toulouse III, Laboratoire Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Environnement, Patrick Höhener, Laboratoire de Chimie de l'Université de Provence.

Ces quatre 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, dimethenamide, 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.

Ce suivi, financé à 50% par l'Agence de l'Eau, 25% par la SNPN, 20% par la région et 5% par la DREAL a donné lieu en 2014 à un rapport couvrant la période 2011/2013 intitulé « **SUIVI QUALITATIF DES ETANGS DE LA RESERVE NATURELLE NATIONALE DE CAMARGUE. Années 2011 à 2013** ».

A la demande de Monsieur le Préfet de Région PACA, le rapport ci-dessus a été réalisé, et une réunion a été menée entre les services de l'Etat concernés (DREAL, Conservatoire du Littoral, DDTM, ONCFS, ONEMA, DRIR,...). Une réunion de réflexion sur des axes d'actions à instaurer s'est tenue au printemps 2015. Suite à cette réunion, une rencontre de la Sous-préfecture et des représentants de la riziculture a été planifiée.

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

Ces cinq dernières années, au moins cinq sujets de stages ont approché la question de la lutte contre les espèces invasives, notamment la Jussie (*Ludwigia peploides*) et le Baccharis (*Baccharis hamilifolia*). 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.

Fin 2014, la SNPN a obtenu une subvention de la Fondation du patrimoine de près de 32 000 € permettant l'arrachage, l'élimination et le broyage de *Fraxinus americana* et de *Baccharis hamilifolia* sur le domaine de la Capelière. 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. Il s'agit d'une première tranche de travaux, qui s'inscrit sur un projet de près de 180 000 € pour lequel nous devons rechercher des financements.

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. Cette année, il est accompagné 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 qui devrait commencer en 2017. Plusieurs autocollants ont été installés dans les lieux d'accueil du public. Le logo apparaîtra sur les dépliants lors de la prochaine réédition. Enfin, le logo anniversaire apparaît dans les signatures mails de l'ensemble de l'équipe de la réserve de Camargue.

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 kilomètre 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.

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 va être abordé dans le futur plan de gestion 2016-2020. 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.

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.

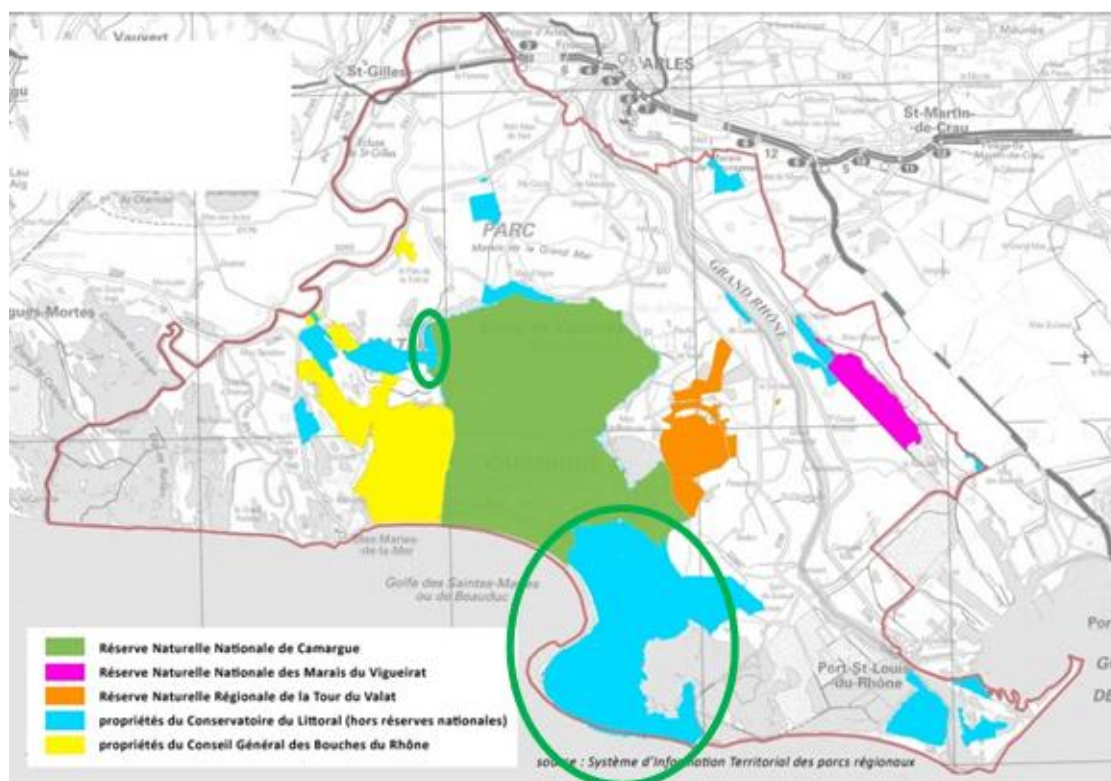
Un seul changement fondamental est apparu depuis le dernier rapport annuel.

Eric Coulet, directeur emblématique de la réserve naturelle nationale de Camargue pendant 40 ans, est parti en retraite le 31 décembre 2014.

Il est remplacé depuis, par Anaïs Cheiron, jeune directrice de 30 ans, qui faisait déjà partie de l'équipe de gestion de la réserve depuis 2010.

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 deux cercles verts correspondent aux sites 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.

14. 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 Ecrins 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 première phase d'adhésion des communes à la charte du Parc national s'est achevée en juillet 2013 avec 78% de communes adhérentes (46 sur 59).

La seconde phase d'adhésion des communes à la charte du Parc national des Écrins s'achèvera le 28 décembre 2015. A la date d'émission du présent rapport, sept nouvelles communes ont demandé à adhérer à la charte (Saint-Bonnet-en-Champsaur, Saint-Julien-en-Champsaur, Chabottes, Mont-de-Lans, Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans, Saint-Clément-sur-Durance et Les Costes). Le Conseil d'administration se prononcera le 14 décembre 2015 sur les nouvelles demandes d'adhésion et proposera au préfet coordonnateur d'arrêter la liste correspondante des nouvelles communes du parc national.

Au total, ce sont **89,8 % des communes de l'aire optimale d'adhésion** qui auront choisi d'adhérer, soit 53 sur 59. La surface totale de l'aire d'adhésion sera portée à 253 155 ha (avec le coeur), soit **93,1 % de la surface de l'aire optimale d'adhésion. 96,6% de la population de l'aire optimale d'adhésion habitera désormais dans le périmètre du parc national.**

Quelques statistiques par communes

- communes de moins de 200 hab : 80% d'adhésion à ce jour

- communes de 201 à 500 hab : 100% d'adhésion.

- communes de + de 500 hab : 94 % d'adhésion à ce jour (dont communes > 1000 hab : 100 %)

Le Parc national a animé une réflexion auprès des communes adhérentes et intercommunalités, pour identifier les projets qui répondent aux objectifs de la charte et contribuent à sa mise en œuvre.

S'agissant des conventions d'application de la charte (signées pour 3 ans), à la date d'émission du présent rapport, 44 des 46 communes déjà adhérentes (96%) ont signé une convention de partenariat.

En 2016, l'accompagnement auprès des communes adhérentes (partenariat technique, ingénierie financière visant à élaborer un programme d'actions) sera mené auprès des 7 communes nouvellement adhérentes.

Au 31 décembre 2016, le Parc national devrait avoir finalisé une convention de partenariat avec chacune des 53 communes adhérentes et engagé une démarche analogue auprès des intercommunalités (le calendrier dépendra de celui de rapprochement des intercommunalités).

Des contrats de partenariat seront également signés avec d'autres structures comme les chambres consulaires et quelques associations représentatives.

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

2015 a vu le développement important de la communauté « Geotrek », outil conçu et développé au départ par le PNE et libéré sous licence « open source » qui devient une référence nationale, et est actuellement utilisé par 20 structures en France (parcs nationaux, parcs naturels régionaux, communautés de communes, conseils départementaux, comités de la randonnée et du tourisme).

Le Parc national a continué à animer la communauté des structures partenaires qui utilisent Geotrek et le font évoluer de manière collaborative en mutualisant les moyens.

Le PNE a libéré ses outils de gestion des données « Faune » et « Flore » (<https://github.com/PnEcrins/GeoNature>) qui sont progressivement déployés dans les autres Parcs nationaux et chez des partenaires comme le CREA (Centre de recherche sur les écosystèmes d'altitude). Ces outils innovants permettent d'avoir une organisation et une consultation des données beaucoup plus efficaces.

Le PNE a aussi documenté et libéré son application web de suivi GPS d'espèces (<https://github.com/PnEcrins/FollowDem>) qui a servi pour le portail web de suivi des bouquetins

(<http://bouquetins.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>), ainsi que son application de gestion des actions de police de l'environnement, utilisée par plusieurs Parcs nationaux (<https://github.com/PnEcrins/Police>).

Au niveau des sciences humaines et sociales, on signalera :

- la fin des fouilles archéologiques sur le site emblématique de Fressinières et l'évolution importante des connaissances de l'utilisation de la montagne depuis le mésolithique ;
- le démarrage d'une thèse de sociologie sur les conseils scientifiques. Celui du Parc national des Ecrins sera ainsi suivi durant les 3 prochaines années.

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

Pour les glaciers, en cette année de « COP-21 » le Parc national a enregistré le deuxième recul le plus important depuis que les suivis sont réalisés. Le bilan de masse par photogramétrie du glacier Blanc permet d'ajuster au mieux les mesures prises sur le terrain. Enfin, un suivi photographique a permis de faire un timelaps pour expliquer les mouvements des glaciers (<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/milieu-coule-glacier>).

Le réseau « Glacioclim » n'a pas encore pu être intégré, faute de financements, mais les liens sont maintenus et la volonté est réaffirmée. Dans ce contexte, un dossier Internet complet a été réalisé et va faire l'objet d'une publication dans une revue scientifique.

Le soutien apporté par le programme européen Alcotra a permis de démontrer l'importance des suivis de la phénologie de la végétation, pour mieux appréhender les conséquences du changement climatique sur le fonctionnement écologique et sur l'évolution de la ressource en alpage. Glacier Blanc, vue du front de glacier

Les programmes « alpages sentinelles » et « lacs sentinelles » se poursuivent et une extension de ces dispositifs en Italie est à l'étude.

Le Parc national a aussi participé au projet e-Pheno dans lequel il a piloté le développement du site internet, de la base de données et de l'application « Phenoclim », ainsi que le développement d'outils de sensibilisation des publics (<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/phenoclim-site-internet-application>). Phenoclim est un projet de sciences participatives dédié au suivi de la phénologie en lien avec le changement climatique.

Dans le cadre de l'année de la « COP-21 », le Parc national a également œuvré à la sensibilisation sur la thématique du changement climatique. Il a notamment publié sur son site un dossier expliquant les suivis effectués.

Il a également accompagné un projet pédagogique mis en œuvre par un lycée de Gap sur cette thématique. Les élèves ont ainsi pu découvrir comment se font ces suivis (des relevés de terrain à l'analyse des données) et quels en sont les résultats et la finalité.

L'établissement donne trois conférences au cours de la COP21.

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 environnementale des activités

Le PNE a fourni une expertise et un appui importants dans le domaine des systèmes d'information. Ainsi il y a eu des échanges importants avec les autres Parcs nationaux et Parcs naturels régionaux, ainsi qu'avec des associations comme le CREA ou ASTERS et avec d'autres organismes de l'État avec le PGHM (peloton de gendarmerie de haute montagne) et l'ONCFS (Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage).

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 l'ONF se poursuivent, pour définir une stratégie de gestion des sentiers en terrain domanial. Il s'agit en particulier de rendre opérationnelles les stratégies départementales de gestion des PDIPR et de clarifier les objectifs relatifs à l'entretien du réseau de sentiers en cœur de parc national.

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 (notamment éléments de tendances socio-économiques). Elle contribue à de meilleures intégrations et prises en compte dans les projets et documents d'urbanisme des milieux et paysages du territoire des Ecrins.

En 2015, 5 communes ont souhaité engager cette démarche et ont sollicité l'aide correspondante pour conduire la révision du PLU.

En 2015, un conseil scientifique organisé dans l'Embrunais a porté tout particulièrement sur la thématique des paysages.

Des outils de sensibilisation ont été créés.

Un nouveau module complète la scénographie de la Tour du Paysage à Embrun. Il s'appuie sur le travail effectué dans le cadre des ateliers « Motif paysages ».

Une exposition itinérante photographique de sensibilisation sur les paysages, intitulée « Lumières des Ecrins », a été élaborée.

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

Cinq principaux axes d'intervention en 2015.

- Randonnée pédestre

L'action principale du Parc national concerne l'entretien des sentiers de découverte en cœur de massif.

Le PNE a fait développer une application mobile pour « Rando Ecrins ». Téléchargée plus de 5 000 fois dès sa mise en ligne en juillet 2015, elle connaît un franc succès. L'application a été libérée sous licence libre, comme les autres « outils Geotrek », pour bénéficier aux autres structures utilisatrices de Geotrek.

- Autres activités de pleine nature. L'animation des 3 conventions, « alpinisme », « vol libre » et « vol à voile », s'est poursuivie et la qualité du dialogue a permis d'aborder l'évolution des pratiques sportives et de mettre en place des opérations de sensibilisation adaptées.

Le Parc national s'est mobilisé sur l'animation et le portage d'un programme, intitulé « Grand Tour des Ecrins », visant à redynamiser l'offre d'itinérance à l'échelle du massif. En 2015, l'ensemble des études préalables d'identification des offres existantes, des besoins de qualification, de positionnement marketing... a été réalisé. La mise en œuvre est envisagée à compter de 2016.

Dans le cadre de ce programme, des outils de sensibilisation ont également été réalisés : une campagne de sensibilisation aux bonnes pratiques dans le cadre de la randonnée, un film sur le lièvre variable, 3 courtes vidéos sur l'entretien des sentiers, le comptage des aigles et la réserve intégrale de Lauvitel.

- Déploiement de la marque « Esprit Parc national ».

En 2015, le Parc national des Ecrins a déployé la marque « Esprit Parc national ». Cette marque permet de valoriser des activités respectueuses de l'environnement (maîtrise des impacts et sensibilisation des pratiquants). Les premiers bénéficiaires sont des accompagnateurs en montagne, dans le cadre de sorties à la journée, mais aussi des hébergeurs et des apiculteurs.

- Mise en place d'opérations de « maraudage »

En 2015, le Parc national a fait appel à des services civiques pour des missions de sensibilisation sur le terrain. Ces volontaires ont été missionnés pour aller à la rencontre des visiteurs sur des sites à forte fréquentation. Leur rôle était de rappeler la réglementation et de l'expliquer, tout en proposant des informations ou animations autour des patrimoines. Des supports ludiques ont été développés à leur destination, afin qu'ils puissent créer du dialogue avec tout type de public, y compris les plus jeunes.

Le constat de retours très positifs incite à renouveler cette opération.

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 concertée sur la nécessité de réduire les impacts sur les espèces et sur la naturalité des zones parcourues

Pour la période de référence 1er janvier 2015 – 15 octobre 2015, globalement, le nombre d'autorisations de survol du coeur a connu une légère baisse (-4) par rapport à l'année 2014. A noter que les survols relatifs aux ravitaillement des refuges d'une part, et au transport de cabanes hélicoptables d'autre part, ont quant à eux, sensiblement diminué (-20).

Cette baisse est liée à fin de la rénovation du refuge de l'Aigle, 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 et diminuer les survols.

En revanche, on notera quelques survols supplémentaires pour travaux d'urgence liés aux violents orages de juillet et aux crues torrentielles qui en ont résulté.

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

En 2015, le parc national a été concerné par plusieurs foyers d'attaques de troupeaux. Les principaux concernent les piémonts, en périphérie du massif, là où des meutes sont installées.

Le coeur du parc est encore concerné marginalement par ces attaques. Le bilan global des constats fait apparaître une inflexion par rapport à l'année précédente, aussi bien en nombre de constats réalisés que par rapport aux victimes indemnisées.

Le conseil d'administration du 14 novembre 2014 a adopté un « plan d'action loup », après une large concertation interne et consultation du conseil scientifique. Ce plan sert de lignes directrices aux actions conduites dans ce domaine.

En 2015, l'établissement a renforcé son appui aux éleveurs et aux communes, à la fois par un travail de fond en ce qui concerne l'appui technique pour les cabanes d'alpage relevant d'une responsabilité communale, mais aussi en réaction à des problèmes de prédation : le parc dispose de six cabanes hélicoptables qui ont toutes été installées en 2015 à la demande d'éleveurs.

Une aide a été apportée pour la mise en place d'un réseau radio pour les bergers. Des pièges photographiques ont été installés pour un meilleur suivi scientifique et pour contribuer au dispositif d'alerte.

Les Parcs nationaux sont désormais des territoires éligibles pour un financement à 100 % des mesures de gardiennage complémentaires.

Par ailleurs, le Parc national a soutenu financièrement (par des subventions) les communes qui souhaitaient engager une réflexion sur la rénovation d'anciennes cabanes pastorales ou la construction de nouvelles, dans des secteurs où les enjeux d'amélioration des pratiques pastorales le justifient. Enfin, l'établissement a financé l'étude d'un prototype de cabane héliportable (en 5 rotations) disposant d'un confort satisfaisant, permettant d'équiper, en phase expérimentale ou dans la durée, les alpages dénués d'infrastructures d'hébergement.

Enfin, l'établissement demeure impliqué dans les travaux du groupe de travail « cœurs de parcs nationaux et réserves naturelles », mis en place par les ministères en charge de l'écologie et de l'agriculture, en application des « principes de gestion différenciée » prévus par le plan d'action Loup 2013/2017, et en cohérence avec la charte du Parc national (orientations 3.2 et 3.6).

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.

Le processus d'adhésion à la charte sera clos depuis le 28 décembre 2015. Il se soldera par l'adhésion d'au moins 53 communes.

S'agissant du programme d'actions pour la mise en œuvre de la charte, les faits marquants de 2015 sont

- la signature des 8 nouvelles conventions d'application de la charte (au 30 novembre 2015, 44 des 46 communes adhérentes ont signé la convention d'application). Les autres signatures sont attendues d'ici la fin de l'année 2016 ;
- la signature d'une convention entre la Région Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur et les 4 Parcs nationaux de cette région, portant sur les objectifs partagés en matière de préservation et valorisation des patrimoines, développement d'un tourisme durable, accueil et sensibilisation à l'environnement ;
- la signature de conventions avec les autres collectivités territoriales se poursuivra en 2016 de même que la signature de contrats de partenariat avec d'autres partenaires.

Mise en place du dispositif d'évaluation de la charte

Le dispositif d'évaluation de la charte du parc national des Ecrins est en cours de construction. 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 2020 sur la base des programmes d'actions 2014-2016 et 2017-2019. L'évaluation finale sera faite en 2025. Le CA du 5 juillet 2014 a 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 se réunira à compter de 2016. Un premier recensement des indicateurs que le Parc national doit renseigner (dans le cadre du suivi du COB, de l'Interparcs, de la CETD ou imposés par la charte) a également été réalisé. Il servira de base à la réflexion sur les indicateurs d'évaluation de la charte, qui sera conduite en 2016, dans un souci de mutualisation.

En 2015, un travail a été réalisé en interne avec les chargés de mission et chefs de service pour mettre à jour le tableau de suivi du programme d'actions et préparer le transfert des informations déjà capitalisées

vers EVA, outil de suivi des chartes des parcs nationaux. 2016 sera l'année de déploiement de l'outil EVA.

La préparation de la seconde vague d'adhésion à la charte

Afin, notamment de répondre aux interrogations des nouvelles équipes municipales et d'accompagner les élus dans leur réflexion, une série de rencontres avec les conseils municipaux a été planifiée, ce qui a abouti in fine au résultat mentionné plus haut.

2. Gestion du site

Pour 2015, s'agissant de l'optimisation des missions, des moyens et de l'organisation, l'établissement public a mis en œuvre le second volet de sa réorganisation, et a procédé à la fusion de secteurs administratifs ; l'effectif des gardes-moniteurs étant globalement préservé.

La fusion effective des secteurs a donné lieu à l'organisation de terrain suivante :

4 secteurs couvrant géographiquement le territoire, animés chacun par une équipe secteur :

- Champsaur-Valgaudemar (implantations du Champsaur et du Valgaudemar),
- Oisans-Valbonnais (implantations de l'Oisans et du Valbonnais),
- Briançonnais-Vallouise (implantations du Briançonnais et de la Vallouise),
- Embrunais.

4. Frontières

Comme suite au processus de re-adhésion, qui s'achèvera le 28 décembre 2015, les nouvelles limites du parc national seront définies en application de l'arrêté du préfet coordinateur, qui définira la liste des communes ayant intégré l'aire d'adhésion du parc national, comme suite à la résolution correspondante du Conseil d'administration du 14 décembre prochain.

5. Autres informations

Comme suite aux délibérations favorables des communes de Le Monétier–Les Bains, Villar d'Arène et Pelvoux (2013), les contacts sont établis avec les services de l'État et le ministère de l'écologie, en vue d'anticiper la préparation des dossiers d'enquête publique.

Il s'agit, en application de la mesure 3.2.3. de la charte, « de gérer les réserves naturelles nationales contiguës au cœur du parc et envisager leur évolution » d'intégrer en cœur de parc national, les réserves naturelles du « Torrent de Saint-Pierre » et des « Versants nord des pics du Combeynot ».

La procédure est en cours. Un avis préalable du ministère de tutelle est attendu.

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-protoges>

- 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.

Une information sur le diplôme Européen est effectuée dans les rapports d'activités réalisés chaque année par l'Établissement public du Parc national.

15. FRANCE – MERCANTOUR 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.

La résolution ResDip(2008)17 n'a pas assortie de conditions, mais uniquement des recommandations (Cf. § ci-après)

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.

Les recommandations de la résolution ResDip(2008)17 concernant le renouvellement du Diplôme européen au Parc national du Mercantour ont fait l'objet des efforts suivants en 2015 :

Recommandation 1 : Dans le cadre de ses missions, confiées par la loi no 2006-436 du 14 avril relative aux parcs nationaux, aux parcs naturels marins et aux parcs naturels régionaux, notamment celle de contribuer à la politique de protection du patrimoine naturel, culturel et paysager et de développer des initiatives qui ont pour objet la connaissance et le suivi de ce patrimoine, poursuivre le programme de recherche fondamental visant à évaluer l'impact de la prédation par les loups des ongulés sauvages, en collaboration avec les différents partenaires concernés.

En réponse à cette recommandation, le Parc national du Mercantour a réalisé les actions suivantes :

- participer au Réseau loup-lynx ;
- élaboration et déploiement d'une application informatique « loup » qui permet de saisir les observations du protocole « suivi loup » ;
- suivi hivernal des indices de présence du loup permettant de connaître finement l'organisation des meutes et leur occupation du territoire (dans le cadre du Réseau loup-lynx et en réponse au plan national d'actions 2013-2017
- la poursuite avec des éleveurs volontaires, du test d'une méthode d'analyse des comportements des chiens de protection des troupeaux. La participation au projet « CanOvis », piloté par l'IPRA¹, pour acquérir des connaissances sur les interactions loups-moutons en observant par caméra thermique et suivi GPS le travail des chiens de protection. L'objectif est de réduire l'impact de la prédation du loup sur les troupeaux domestiques en améliorant l'efficacité et la sélection des chiens, ainsi que les stratégies de prévention, ceci en concertation avec les éleveurs ;
- un stage de 5 mois sur la vulnérabilité des troupeaux aux attaques de loup pour tenter de mieux comprendre la vulnérabilité des troupeaux aux attaques de loup. Ce travail a permis de réaliser

¹ Institut pour la Promotion et la Recherche sur les Animaux de protection

plusieurs cartographies de la répartition des attaques sur le territoire du parc et de rencontrer quelques éleveurs pour évoquer avec eux la question de la prédation et des moyens de protection. Une restitution en interne et en externe auprès des différents acteurs du dossier loup (CA 06, DDTM 06, DREAL RA) a été réalisée.

- depuis plusieurs années à Saint-Etienne-de-Tinée, un travail est réalisé avec les classes de 6ème du Collège Jean-Franco sur le thème du loup. Les interventions du Parc consistent à une découverte de l'espèce en 3 séances d'1h15 à la maison du Parc de Saint-Etienne-de-Tinée. Sont abordés les aspects écologiques, mais aussi l'aspect social de la présence d'un grand prédateur sur un territoire. Le professeur de science et vie de la terre, développe un peu plus le thème au collège. Les élèves fournissent un travail en fin d'année avec divers posters et un exposé. Leur travail est valorisé et exposé à la maison du Parc durant tout l'été. Cette collaboration est inscrite depuis plusieurs années dans le projet d'établissement du collège.

Recommandation 2 : Elaborer la charte prévue par la loi du 14 avril 2006 sur les parcs nationaux, qui précisera les objectifs de protection dans le cœur du parc et les orientations de développement de la « zone périphérique », qui devient « l'aire d'adhésion » du parc :

En réponse à cette recommandation, le Parc national du Mercantour a réalisé les actions suivantes :

- la Charte du Parc du Mercantour a été approuvée par décret le 23/12/2012. Elle définit des objectifs de protection pour le cœur de parc et précise les modalités de la réglementation spéciale qui s'y applique. Pour l'aire d'adhésion elle définit des orientations et précise les moyens qui seront recherchés pour les mettre en œuvre par la contractualisation et le partenariat ;
- sa mise en œuvre est en cours avec :
 - l'élaboration des conventions d'application de la charte avec les 21 communes qui avaient adhéré en 2013 ;
 - les premiers actes dérivés en matière de réglementation du cœur, avec notamment la réglementation décidée par le conseil d'administration sur un sujet sensible comme la cueillette.

Recommandation 3 : Maintenir l'investissement financier et humain dans le domaine de la connaissance scientifique et du soutien à la recherche, notamment en valorisant les données issues des différents programmes de recherche en les mettant en réseau et en rationalisant les bases de données existantes et leur utilisation.

En réponse à cette recommandation, le Parc national du Mercantour a réalisé les actions suivantes :

- le Parc maintient son objectif de développement des connaissances avec les suivis d'espèces et d'habitats, sa participation au programme alpin des Lacs sentinelles, la poursuite désormais ciblée sur certains milieux de l'inventaire généralisé de la biodiversité, une modernisation dans la méthodologie de collecte des données avec le déploiement des outils mobiles ainsi qu'une nouvelle étape dans la structuration des données produites par l'établissement et leur valorisation ;
- le maintien de ses objectifs, dans un contexte global de réduction des moyens alloués par l'Etat, est permis par la mobilisation constante de financements externes

Recommandation 4 : Favoriser la réalisation de projets en partenariat avec les communes et les acteurs du territoire ;

En réponse à cette recommandation, le Parc national du Mercantour a réalisé les actions suivantes :

- c'est tout l'objet des conventions d'application en phase finale d'élaboration et qui permettent au Parc son travail d'assistance technique et financière aux communes dans les domaines de

l'accueil du public, de la pédagogie à l'environnement, la valorisation du patrimoine naturel et culturel ou du soutien aux activités pastorales responsables ;

- la réorganisation des « secteurs » en 5 « services territoriaux » permet d'améliorer encore la mise en œuvre de nos politiques de développement durable, en particulier en aire d'adhésion.

Recommandation 5 : Poursuivre la coopération avec le parc naturel des Alpes maritimes (Italie), afin d'établir une zone protégée transfrontalière.

En réponse à cette recommandation, le Parc national du Mercantour a réalisé les actions suivantes :

- ils ont créé un Groupement Européen de Coopération Territorial, le « Parc européen Alpi maritime / Mercantour » par arrêté du 23 mai 2013, organisme public de gestion habilité à intervenir sur le territoire de la France et de l'Italie, en application de la directive 2004/18/CE du Parlement et du Conseil ;
- le Parc européen est porteur du projet d'inscription au patrimoine mondial de l'humanité de l'UNESCO et finalise actuellement la rédaction du dossier
- le Parc européen est entrain de finaliser son plan d'action 2015-2020

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.

Pas d'évolution notable

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.

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.

16. FRANCE - PORT-CROS 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.

La Résolution CM/ResDip(2012)8 ne comporte pas de conditions particulières.

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.

La Résolution CM/ResDip(2012) 8 renouvelle le diplôme européen jusqu'au 30 septembre 2022 et assortit ce renouvellement des 11 recommandations suivantes :

1. assurer que le développement du nouveau Grand Parc consolide la protection de Port-Cros et ne l'affaiblisse en aucun cas ; tenir le Comité compétent informé de l'évolution de la situation ;

La Charte du nouveau parc a été finalisée durant l'année 2015 et publiée par décret le 30 décembre 2015. <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/decret/2015/12/30/2015-1824/jo/texte>

Ce projet de territoire confirme les dispositions relatives au nouveau cœur de parc national sur Porquerolles en plus de celui de Port Cros déjà existant.

Plusieurs propositions de mesures réglementaires (PMR) sont intégrées pour ce qui concerne le renforcement du contrôle sur la pêche maritime (pêche maritime de loisir ou la pêche maritime professionnelle). Celles-ci sont indiquées comme prioritaires dans le calendrier de mise en œuvre de la charte et seront donc mises en œuvre dans le cadre du premier programme triennal.

En cœur de parc, le décret prévoit également une limitation du ramassage des champignons ou des fruits, ce qui n'était pas prévu avant.

Le Conseil National de Protection de la Nature, extrêmement vigilant quant au degré de protection en cœur de parc national a émis un avis favorable sur le projet par 14 voix sur 17, le 1er juillet 2015.

2. mettre en œuvre rapidement la protection formelle de Porquerolles avec sa zone marine adjacente, complément essentiel de Port-Cros ;

Une zone ressource, ou toute activité est interdite, a été mise en place au sud de Porquerolles au mois de juillet 2015. Le mouillage forain a également été supprimé dans 2 nouvelles zones (Cap des Mèdes et Pointe Prime), qui présentent un enjeu particulier pour la Grande nacre (*Pinna nobilis*), espèce inscrite à l'annexe IV de la Directive européenne Habitat-Faune-Flore. Ces nouveaux zonages sont inscrits dans l'arrêté préfectoral 206/2015 réglementant la navigation, le mouillage des navires, la plongée sous-marine, et la pratique des sports nautiques de vitesse dans la bande littorale des 600 mètres autour de l'île de Porquerolles, de ses îlots et des sèches des Sarraniers et du Langoustier en date du 29 juillet 2015.

3. consolider et coordonner la protection de la zone marine environnante initiée dans le cadre de Natura 2000, chercher une solution régionale au problème des eaux sales des bateaux de plaisance ;

Le travail de réactualisation du Document d'objectifs pour les sites FR9310020 « Iles d'Hyères » ; FR9301613 « Rade d'Hyères » et FR9302008 « Salins d'Hyères et des Pesquiers » a été poursuivi en 2015. en s'associant notamment avec les autres démarches en cours sur la Rade d'Hyères. Un groupe de travail a été mis en place et s'est réuni 2 fois pour une meilleure articulation des démarches suivantes : le Contrat de Baie des îles d'Or, le volet maritime du SCOT Provence Méditerranée, le SAGE du Gapeau, la Charte du Parc national et Natura 2000 en mer. Ce travail s'inscrit dans le cadre du projet européen MEDSEATIES.

Parallèlement la pêche maritime de loisir et la chasse sous marine autour de Porquerolles bénéficient depuis le 17 décembre 2014 de mesures plus strictes d'exercice de leur activité. Le nombre de bénéficiaires d'autorisations de pêche est passé de près de 750 en 2006 à 400 en 2015.

L'année 2016 sera consacrée à l'étude de la mise en place de zones de mouillages organisés autour de Porquerolles en laissant la priorité aux navires équipés de caisses de récupération des eaux usées.

La station d'épuration de Porquerolles est en cours de modernisation.

4. travailler activement à l'élargissement du Parc national de Port-Cros par l'établissement d'une zone d'adhésion sur le continent et d'une aire maritime adjacente, engager le processus de concertation pour l'élaboration de la charte du Parc en mobilisant le plus largement possible les acteurs du territoire ;

Le projet de charte a été approuvé lors de l'enquête publique avec plus de 600 avis reçus et un bilan de 95% d'avis favorables.

Plusieurs communes de l'aire optimale d'adhésion ont déjà fait savoir qu'elles souhaitaient intégrer le parc national. Les résultats des adhésions des communes du littoral seront officiels autour du mois de juin 2016.

5. poursuivre l'évaluation de l'impact des activités de loisirs, mettre en place des indicateurs de capacité de charge et de pression sur l'environnement pour assurer que le seuil de tolérance des milieux naturels terrestres et marins ne soit pas dépassé, surveiller le développement et l'impact d'activités sportives nouvelles afin de les encadrer dès qu'elles émergent ; définir et mobiliser les outils nécessaires pour atteindre cet objectif et associer tous les partenaires à leur mise en œuvre ;

L'observatoire de la biodiversité et des usages marins littoraux pensé pour estimer les effets anthropiques est désormais opérationnel et est renseigné depuis 2 ans. Il reste à développer l'interface de rendu pour faciliter l'analyse des résultats.

La question de la capacité de charge a fait l'objet d'un atelier spécifique lors du Conseil scientifique du Parc qui s'est tenu le 3 et 4 décembre 2015. Une étude sur la capacité de charge économique a été amorcée en septembre 2015 et sera poursuivie en 2016 en collaboration avec l'Université de Toulon.

6. poursuivre le suivi de la pêche professionnelle et adapter régulièrement la réglementation et les conventions volontaires avec les pêcheurs pour assurer l'utilisation exemplaire d'une ressource locale ; évaluer l'impact de la pêche de loisirs et affiner la réglementation au besoin

La charte prévoit l'extension sur Porquerolles des conventions et des régimes d'autorisation de la pêche maritime professionnelle qui existent sur Port-Cros

En ce qui concerne Porquerolles, les données sur la pêche de loisir sont également relevées via les déclarations rendues par les autorisées à pêcher dans les zones réglementées. Le carnet de pêche en ligne a été amélioré de façon à faciliter la saisie en ligne de ces déclarations par les pêcheurs de loisir.

7. informer les visiteurs qu'ils pénètrent dans un sanctuaire de nature, par des indications plus visibles dans les ports d'entrée et des annonces dans les bateaux navettes, mieux mettre en valeur le Diplôme européen ;

Le conseil économique social et Culturel a demandé à ce que des panneaux informant les visiteurs de leur arrivée dans un parc national soient mis en place très rapidement. Cette action sera engagée par le parc national dans le courant de l'année 2016.

En outre, le site internet du parc national a été entièrement rénové. La page « coopération » présente les grandes actions du parc dans ce domaine en Europe et en Méditerranée et introduit le diplôme européen obtenu (avec le logo). Cette page du site internet sera développée davantage en 2016.

<http://www.portcrosparcnational.fr/Agir/Missions-et-organisation/Cooperation>

8. poursuivre le suivi et le contrôle des espèces exotiques envahissantes comme *Carpobrotus* spp., *Caulerpa taxifolia*, les rats et les chats haret, participer activement au réseau d'alerte Méditerranée sur les nouvelles espèces à risque ;

Des campagnes de prospection et d'éradication de la Caulerpe (*Caulerpa taxifolia*) se sont poursuivies en 2015 autour de Port-Cros et de Porquerolles. Pour la 3^{ème} année consécutive, aucune tâche n'a été relevée à Port-Cros. A Porquerolles, les sessions d'arrachage se sont concentrées sur la nouvelle zone ressource. Il est prévu un renforcement du protocole en 2016 pour viser à l'éradication totale de la Caulerpe dans la zone ressource.

Sur Port-Cros et sur Bagaud, les efforts de lutte contre les rats engendrent des résultats significatifs.

Le Parc participe aussi au réseau d'alerte sur le charençon rouge (présent sur Port-Cros et Porquerolles et menaçant notamment la collection de palmier dattiers) le frelon asiatique (qui menace, sur Porquerolles, les populations du Conservatoire de l'abeille noire de Provence)

Lutte contre Carpobrotus sur Bagaud : le programme de restauration écologique de Bagaud présente d'excellents résultats avec une reprise très rapide de la végétation indigène qui a fait l'objet de publications et d'un atelier international sur le sujet organisé par le Parc national en 2015.

9. engager le Parc plus activement et visiblement dans les mesures concernant le développement durable et l'utilisation mesurée de ressources comme l'eau douce et l'énergie

Le parc national s'est doté fin 2015 d'un service Développement durable et Transition énergétique dont la mission est de favoriser les mesures de développement durable sur les cœur de parc mais aussi sur le territoire de l'aire d'adhésion. Les premières mesures devraient concerner la réduction des pollutions lumineuses sur plusieurs communes du territoire et ce en 2016.

10. clarifier les responsabilités et tâches formelles et de fait du Parc national d'une part, et des autres acteurs locaux comme les autorités communales, départementales, maritimes ;

La charte du parc présente l'ensemble des mesures liées à la préservation des patrimoines et à la promotion du développement durable. Cette présentation précise pour chacune des mesures, le rôle de l'Établissement public, la contribution des communes et le rôle des principaux partenaires associés.

11. promouvoir la réappropriation locale du Parc en développant des partenariats avec les acteurs politiques, économiques et associatifs du territoire.

Le projet de charte du parc national a été approuvé par plus de 90% des acteurs institutionnels (66 structures ont rendu leur avis) et près de 95% du public lors de l'enquête publique. Il faut maintenir les efforts engagés et plusieurs mesures de la charte du parc national, dans l'ambition n°6 concernent cet objectif.

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.

En termes de gestion du site les modifications principales intervenues au cours de l'année 2015 sont :

- la publication de l'arrêté préfectoral 206/2015 réglementant la navigation, le mouillage des navires, la plongée sous-marine, et la pratique des sports nautiques de vitesse dans la bande littorale des 600 mètres autour de l'île de Porquerolles, de ses îlots et des sèches des Sarraniers et du Langoustier en date du 29 juillet 2015.

- en cœur de parc, le décret de la charte qui prévoit une limitation du ramassage des champignons ou des fruits.

Les ressources humaines et financières sont dans l'ensemble stables en 2015 par rapport à 2014. L'établissement a engagé fin 2015 une réorganisation de ses équipes pour permettre une mise en œuvre efficace de la charte dès 2016.

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.

Il n'y a pas eu de modification de frontières du site en 2015 par rapport à 2014. Suite à la publication du décret de la charte le 31 décembre 2015, le processus d'adhésion des communes littoral aura lieu premier semestre 2016, ce qui permettra de définir le nouveau périmètre du parc en 2016.

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.

17. 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 dans trois ans, du cœur du parc national, ainsi que de la partie des deux communes précitées située hors cœur du parc. Indépendamment de cette adhésion, la commune de Saint-Martin-de-Belleville a fusionné avec une autre commune située hors aire d'adhésion optimale du parc national pour constituer une nouvelle collectivité dénommée « Les Belleville ». Cette fusion ne remet toutefois pas en question son adhésion à la charte du parc national.

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. Certaines visites de terrain ou réunions ont également eu lieu dans l'objectif de préparer des travaux prévus en 2016 (projet d'aménagement du col de l'Iseran, projet d'extension d'un bâtiment d'alpage à Bessans, projet de prise d'eau pour usage agricole, etc.). 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 l'automne, le périmètre de compétences de l'établissement en la matière est réduit à l'aire d'adhésion. L'établissement poursuit son engagement pour assurer la préservation du cœur de parc. Le parc national a signé en 2014 une convention avec plusieurs grands domaines skiables pour la fourniture de données naturalistes afin de créer des observatoires environnementaux des stations.

Un programme Life Gypaète a été obtenu avec d'autres espaces protégées afin de mieux protéger cette espèce et les tétraonidés en aire d'adhésion. Les premières actions ont été menées en 2015.

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). L'avis du Parc national de la Vanoise sur la SRCE avait été donné en 2013 et le schéma régional de cohérence écologique de Rhône-Alpes a été adopté (par délibération du Conseil régional du 19 juin 2014 et par arrêté préfectoral du 16 juillet 2014). 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. Le parc est associé à l'élaboration du SCOT Tarentaise dans lequel la trame verte et bleue sera déclinée.

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 2015 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

La validation des projets agroenvironnementaux et climatiques (PAEC) de Maurienne et de Tarentaise en début d'année 2015 a permis la signature de nouvelles mesures agroenvironnementales et climatiques (MAEC) :

Sur les alpages :

- 15 alpagistes se sont engagés en 2015. Le Parc, en concertation avec les éleveurs concernés, a réalisé les plans de gestion pastoraux qui précisent les engagements de chaque contractant pour les cinq prochaines années

- des démarches ont également été initiées auprès de 9 autres alpagistes qui souhaiteraient contractualiser la mesure en 2016 : visites d'estives...

Sur les prairies de fauche d'altitude en Haute-Maurienne : 7 agriculteurs ont sollicité la mesure, sur un peu moins d'une centaine d'hectares.

Parallèlement, le Parc a poursuivi son implication auprès de la commune de Saint-Martin de Belleville pour la mise en place de baux ruraux à clauses environnementales sur les alpages communaux.

Le Parc et l'Assemblée du Pays Tarentaise Vanoise se sont associés au Parc du Grand Paradis et à l'Institut Agricole Régional du Val d'Aoste pour organiser pour la première année un concours transfrontalier des prairies fleuries. Neuf agriculteurs de Haute-Tarentaise et du Val d'Aoste ont participé. Chaque prairie a été expertisée par un jury composé d'experts français et italiens au cours de deux journées de visites. Les remises des prix ont été organisées dans le cadre de fêtes locales. L'opération a été largement couverte par la presse locale ainsi que la télévision italienne. En parallèle, des formations techniques ont été proposées aux participants au concours pour sensibiliser aux bonnes pratiques agroenvironnementales (thèmes abordés : renouvellement de la végétation / digestibilité des fourrages).

Enfin le Parc est impliqué dans la mise en œuvre du plan national loup et l'accompagnement des éleveurs face aux dommages causés par ce prédateur : réalisation des constats d'attaques dans le cœur du Parc, mise à disposition de cabanes héliportables, héliportages pour l'approvisionnement de matériel, aide aux éleveurs (regroupement de troupeaux, recherche d'animaux perdus...). Le 1er septembre 2015, à l'issue d'une réunion d'information publique sur la charte du Parc, qui s'est tenue à Bramans, en Haute-Maurienne, le Président du conseil d'administration, le Directeur, ainsi que le chef de secteur local du Parc ont été séquestrés durant une nuit et une matinée par une délégation d'éleveurs ovins conditionnant leur libération à un engagement du Préfet de la Savoie pour autoriser le tir de six loups dans le département. A l'issue de leur libération, suivie d'une séance de travail avec les intéressés, cette autorisation de tir a été délivrée hors cœur du parc national.

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 reste propriétaire de 16 refuges dans le cœur du Parc qu'il gère au mieux pour permettre d'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) sera conjointement rééditée en 2016.

Durant l'année 2015, le Parc national de la Vanoise a préparé la maison du parc de Pralognan-la-Vanoise à sa labellisation "Tourisme et Handicap" pour les quatre familles de déficiences (motrice, visuelle, auditive et mentale). Ce label devrait être obtenu en 2016. La maison complète l'offre des trois refuges-portes du parc déjà labellisés. L'ensemble des bâtiments, site et promenade accessible aux différentes familles de handicap ont été décrit 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 des sorties adaptées aux déficiences motrices, visuelles et mentales en partenariat avec les associations représentatives, une quarantaine de personnes en situation de handicap ont pu être accompagnées par des gardes-moniteurs.

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.

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.

La finalisation de la stratégie scientifique, plus longue que prévue, est en cours et sera opérationnelle en 2016. Les programmes alpages sentinelles et lacs sentinelles pour l'observation à long terme du changement climatique sont poursuivis et il est envisagé de les étendre au Gran Paradiso. Des projets sont aussi en réflexion pour transposer les transects de suivi existant dans le Gran Paradiso en Vanoise. Le projet « Alpgrain » s'est achevé. Il a permis de tester différentes modalités de récoltes de graines in situ et de comparer la capacité de revégétalisation à partir de graines du commerce, récoltées sur places ou issues de fonds de grange (suivi en cours autour du refuge de l'Arpont en cœur de parc).

Le Parc a évalué la priorité de conservation de toutes les espèces de plantes vasculaires connues sur le territoire des 29 communes soit 1700 espèces. Pour toutes ces espèces sont définis les besoins en matière de connaissance, de répartition sur le territoire, de suivi de l'évolution des populations. Le suivi des populations s'effectue selon les protocoles du Réseau de conservation de la flore Alpes-Ain. Les espèces suivantes ont fait l'objet de suivis en 2015 : *Astragalus vesicarius* subsp. *pastellianus*, *Cerastium lineare*, *Onosma pseudoarenaria* subsp. *delphinensis*, *Sedum villosum*, *Viola pinnata*. Pour *Linnaea borealis*, dont toutes les populations actuellement connues en France sont localisées en Vanoise, l'évaluation de l'état de conservation s'effectue dans le cadre d'un partenariat avec le Muséum national d'histoire naturelle. L'étude de la variabilité de l'habitat, de la dynamique de la reproduction végétative, de l'ampleur de la

reproduction sexuée aideront le Parc à mieux définir les orientations de gestion pour la préservation de cet élément remarquable et symbolique du patrimoine naturel français.

En 2015, une nouvelle baisse de 1,6 % de la subvention pour charges de service public (SCSP) du Ministère de tutelle, conjuguée avec la stagnation de frais de personnel, a conduit à des coupes importantes sur le fonctionnement général du Parc et en particulier sur les crédits consacrés aux actions (- 20 % entre 2014 et 2015). Ce budget a diminué de 53 % en 5 ans réduisant véritablement la capacité d'intervention de l'établissement et la possibilité d'accrocher des crédits externes du fait d'un autofinancement insuffisant. En corollaire, 2,5 ETP (équivalents temps-pleins) ont été supprimés en 2015 et les contrats saisonniers des hôtesse d'accueil ont été réduits. Cette contrainte budgétaire sera encore renforcée en 2016, le Ministère de tutelle prenant acte de la réduction du territoire d'action du Parc, dorénavant limité au cœur et à l'aire d'adhésion constituée par les parties hors cœur des deux seules communes adhérentes à la charte.

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.

Le territoire du Parc a été réduit, à l'issue de l'adhésion des communes à la charte, au périmètre inchangé du cœur (533 km²) et à l'aire d'adhésion constituée par les parties hors cœur (208 km²) des deux seules communes adhérentes à la charte, Peisey-Nancroix et Les Belleville, soit 741 km² au lieu des 2000 km² antérieurement avec l'aire optimale d'adhésion.

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.

En 2015, le Parc national de la Vanoise a lancé une plateforme en ligne de découverte de l'offre de randonnée et des patrimoines associés. La plateforme concerne aujourd'hui le territoire du parc. Elle sera ouverte en 2016 aux deux pays adjacents au parc et pourrait faire l'objet d'un développement vers le Parco nazionale Gran Paradiso en 2017 pour promouvoir à minima le sentier transfrontalier et reliant les deux parcs, objet d'un programme européen.

Le Parc National du Grand Paradis a utilisé le logo du Diplôme Européen des Espaces Protégés sur:

- son papier à lettre officiel,
- la page d'accueil de son site internet, qui renvoie aux renseignements (en italien, français, anglais et allemand) sur le prix dans les pages internes (par ex. <http://www.pnpg.it/fr/parc-national/reconnaisances>) et au texte en anglais de la résolution d'attribution ;
- la plaquette générale du Parc (par ex. http://www.pnpg.it/sites/default/files/allegati/depliant-generale-ita_0.pdf) publiée en italien, français, anglais et allemand et distribuée dans les centres d'accueil du parc (9), aux manifestations, foires, expositions, dans les hôtels et les sujets qui bénéficient du label du parc ;
- les bureaux du Parc où le drapeau du Diplôme Européen des Espaces Protégés est exposé.

Le Parc national de la Vanoise présente également le logo concerné :

- en pied de page sur son papier à en-tête officiel ;
- sur la page d'accueil de son site internet (<http://www.vanoise-parcnational.fr>) renvoyant vers la page du Conseil de l'Europe concernant l'attribution du diplôme européen au Parc national de la Vanoise (<http://www.coe.int/fr/web/bern-convention/vanoise-fr>) ;
- sur sa newsletter "Lettre Vanoise info", dont je vous enverrai par courriel séparé une copie ;
- sur toutes ses plaquettes d'informations intitulées "fiches services" (cf. image ci-jointe) ;

- sur trois plaques à l'entrée du siège du Parc, derrière la banque d'accueil et dans le bureau du directeur ;
- par mise en place du drapeau officiel à différentes occasions, en particulier lors de la "journée de l'Europe" le 9 mai,
- sur sa carte de vœux 2015 (cf. carte ci-jointe).

Nos deux parcs veilleront à un renforcement de l'utilisation du logo dans nos prochaines parutions papier, sur nos supports d'exposition et sur nos outils de réseaux sociaux.

18. 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.

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;

-Demarcation of Vashlovani Protected Areas has been held and the shelters were cut out of the borders of Vashlovani Strict Nature Reserve. The work is presented to National Agency of Public Registry for registration.

-Existing regulation for grazing in the reserve is rigorously enforced- there are no cases of grazing there.

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);

-EU/UNDP funded project “Sustainable Management of Pastures in Georgia to Demonstrate Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Benefits and Dividends for Local Communities” is being implemented for the purpose of rehabilitation pastures in Vashlovani PAs and develop sustainable grazing practices. Draft of the pasture management plan is ready for future discussion.

- Pasture productivity estimation is being done.

-The map with main co societies of the plants with GIS data was made.

-The map of pastures was made.

-The researches are being implemented.

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 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;

-4 sites have been chosen and fences in traditional use zone of the national park as an exclusive experience in order to conduct long-term observation on anthropogenic pressures. Methodologies is prepared and 1st phase of sampling carried out, 2nd phase is under way.

2. prepare and implement a programme to maintain and renovate field equipment and the infrastructure for tourists and visitors;

-10 year plan has developed with the help of Caucasus Nature Fund and is being implemented step by step.

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;

- pursue, update and complement inventories and mapping of species and habitats are being done continuously

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;

-CNF funds and state budget finances are allocated to implement 2016-19 Plan.

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

-Management plans are prepared to operate during 6 years. It is a third year of current management plan. Drafting of the next management plan will start in timely manner.

6. improve further the expertise and skills of the staff members, especially in the field of ecology and the knowledge and monitoring of species;

-According to the CNF research and management plan improvement of the skills of the staff members are planned.

7. continue and develop cross-border co-operation for the protection of large carnivores.

-cross-border co-operation for the protection of large carnivores is implemented in a regular basis

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 are no changes neither in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments nor in relation to 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.

There are no changes to the 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.

After receiving a diploma, the interest towards Vashlovani Protected areas has increased. Ministry pays more attention to the area and is pleased with this fact.

Famous German Television Deutsche Welle expressed the interest towards Vashlovani Protected Areas and prepared a video about it.

The logo was used in the promotional-informational brochure about Vashlovani Protected Areas that was distributed at central and regional levels.

The logo was used in 2016 wall calendar that was distributed in governmental as well as international organizations operating in Georgia.

19. 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” has been secured on a long-term basis by the statutory regulations covering the Bayerischer Wald National Park. No changes!

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 1 December 2015, the area of the non-intervention nature zone in the extension area of the National Park was increased by 1,914 hectares by resolution of the Municipal National Park Committee. It therefore currently totals 6,632 hectares (62.1 %) of the extension area. The non-intervention nature zone now covers 16,118 hectares (66.5 %) of the whole National Park. With this step, the municipalities in the National Park region have now also taken up the proposal of the National Park Administration and given a clear signal of the intention to develop 75 % of the area of the National Park as a non-intervention zone by 2027.

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 have reliably prevented infestations from spreading to neighbouring private woodlands. No changes! This finding has been confirmed by the recently presented results of a study conducted by the Bavarian Ministry of Forestry.

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 (see also 2.) and associations could be substantially 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 territorial 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 2013 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*
- *Publication of a joint wall calendar and a pamphlet with offers for visitors using a common logo (see Annex for this logo)*
- *Joint organisation of the international TransParcNet Meeting 2015 in June 2015 and*
- *a joint conference under the motto “Current results of research in the Bohemian Forest” in September 2015.*

Following evaluation by an external expert, both National Parks were again awarded the Transboundary Park Certificate by EUROPARC Federation on 26 October 2015 for successful cross-border cooperation.

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). Investigations are currently being carried out to examine whether a cross-border electromobility component could be added to the local public transport system. 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.

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

In the meantime, two of the local communities in the region that are affected by the wind turbine plans (Frauenau and Spiegelau) have instigated citizen surveys and resolutions by the municipal parliaments, under which the wind power plans were not to be further pursued. The town of Zwiesel has decided to take court action against the regional parliament's establishment of priority area 42 for wind power.

The European Diploma logo with the information about the award is presented on Bavarian Forests homepage <http://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de/english/index.htm> and http://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de/english/about_us/awards/index.htm. This information is trilingual in English, German and Czech language. More detailed information on recent actions and reports is available in German language. General information about the ED is available by a link to the European Council's homepage: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/germany>

The Certificate of the renewal of the ED to BF NP in 2011 and the Poster which was made for the 50th anniversary of the ED of PA were placed in our visitor centres where they can be seen by all visitors. We have added the ED logo to all of our publications, flyers and posters: for example http://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de/english/doc/np_plan_main_volume.pdf, http://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de/english/doc/en_fb_grenzenlose_waldwildnis.pdf,

20. 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.

Transformation of spruce forests into mixed forests - control bark beetle - maintain game browsing at an acceptable level

Due to the intensive bark beetle control in the bark beetle management zone, the infestation is on a low level since 2012. Of in total 4870 m³ of timber cut in the national park in 2015, approx. 4000 m³ were classified as breeding material for the bark beetle whereof 3200 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 (22.600) and European beech (12.000). Additionally, the forest conversion was continued by establishing small scale patchy gaps in young pure spruce stands and Silver fir seedlings.

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 2015 and the following years. For a better coordination of the game control activities in the National Park, a specialist is employed on top for the next two years.

A new approach for the updating of the forest development plan was designed in 2015. The bark beetle dynamic as driver for the forest conversation will be focussed in management planning. Also a lot of topics of nature protection will be integrated like the enhancement of habitats of protected species. In addition, the know-how of the staff will be better included.

From 1990 to 2015 1527 ha of wood pasture were detached in the process of separation of pasture and forest. Thereby it newly formed 53 ha of open meadows.

There are still 933 ha of wood pasture, which will be conserved in the 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. 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 management plan is not done, yet. The main reason is the bad stuff situation with lots of changes during the last years. But some important bricks of the plan are already done or we are working on it. For example to fix the index species of the national park as well as some concepts for visitor guidance.

2. Include in the plan provision for continuing a comprehensive long term research programme

Research in Berchtesgaden National Park is permanently checked for its contributions to current relevant topics and the prevailing needs of national park management. Scientific, technical and administrative networks are important platforms of exchange. Main focus fields are in the context of biodiversity and climate change. Long term research programmes are adapted as far as possible to serve current reporting obligations. Data evaluations are focused on practical questions of national park planning and management. As an example chamois monitoring can be cited that has been conducted in two sites since 1997. Detailed analysis of long term population trends revealed stable or slightly rising chamois population sizes. In this way research results served to confirm forest management decisions in the question of ungulate regulation. In the process of the new management plan further needs will arise and research objectives will be adapted adequately. A particular challenge however will be to mitigate the effects of a loss in permanent full-time research staff (effective since September 2015) by an indispensable consolidation of tasks and objectives.

3. Prepare sectoral plans for activities and resource use

Military activities

Since September 2014 there is a common agreement with the federal police, which has its training center at Kühroint in the National Park. The agreement says - both partners have to respect and support the work of each other. So, we try to get the military use in a compatible way with nature protection.

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 build 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.

Within the programme of the National Park children and youth groups 929 children took part in 98 environmental education activities altogether. So the work with the children groups is constant within the last years.

Golden Eagle monitoring program

In 2014 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. Seven fledged youngs have been documented. This means a breeding success of 0.5 youngs per pair and year respectively. Successful couples have been Wimbach, Klausbach, Hoher Göll, Untersberg, Etenberg, Sonntagshorn and Blühnbach. The overall breeding success during 22 years of monitoring (1993 – 2014) is still 0.30 youngs / pair / year.

There was no successful double-breed in 2014, but one breed interruption (before fledging) in the eagle territory of Hochkranz. The reason for breeding-interruption could not be detected. Disturbances caused

by human activities as a reason for interruption are not known and couldn't be observed. In six territories there are no clear results concerning breeding success. Number of non-breeders decreased to five in 2014.

In 2014 only two territories (Gotzen and Hoher Staufen) were not occupied by a territorial pair. Documentation of young after leaving the nest took place in territory (Röthlemons). 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) decreased slightly from 1,345 (54 events) in 2013 to 1.129 (53 events) in 2014. The probability of golden eagle sightings during the guided tours increased up to 95 %.

The cooperation with user groups such as paragliders, climbers and helicopter-associations has been extended successfully. The cooperation-project "Luftige Begegnungen" between Deutschem Hängegleiter Verband (DHV) and Berchtesgaden National Park has been extended by a project with a regional paraglider club in the Chiemgau Alps.

The program has been proceeded in 2015 but results have not been analyzed yet.

Water supply and disposal

Some alpine huts, which exceed the allowed amount of waste water had to built a biological clarification plant to keep the soil and the groundwater free from depositions.

The local authority of Berchtesgaden had to control cliffs in the wimbach valley because of falling stones, which might endanger the water supply of Berchtesgaden. The national park administration supported them and attended the drone fly, which has been necessary for this analysis.

4. see 1. Conditions

5. see 1. Conditions

6. Large carnivores

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.

In the special focus field of aerial image interpretation (which produces datasets of crucial importance for long term landscape monitoring) the exchange ongoing between alpine protected areas since the 1990s has been continued. From 2009-2014 a project team of 4 alpine protected areas (German, Austrian and Swiss partners) has refined our well-established method of aerial image based landscape cartography into a cartography of changes instead of a cartography of mere stages. Presently this achievement is put into practice beyond the test plots on the whole national park area. The result will bring forward all involved protected areas and maintain the database of Berchtesgaden National Park as a strong instrument for well-founded planning and management.

International cooperation

Special visits:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| 13.01.2015: | Visit of a group from Tibet, organized by GIZ |
| 10.04.2015: | Visit of a delegation from Swiss National Park |
| 21.04.2015: | Visit of a delegation from National Park Hohe Tauern, east Tirolean Part |
| 31.05. – 05.06.2015: | Visit of a delegation from Sister Park Yosemite National Park, USA, California |
| 11.06.2015: | Visit of a group from Georgia, Armenia, Aserbaitschn, organized by GIZ |
| 19.06.2015: | Visit of Secretary General of Alpine Convention, Mr. Markus Reiterer, with members of staff |
| 02.09.2015: | Visit of a delegation of people´s Government of Jiangsu Province, China |
| 12.09. – 16.09.2015: | 59. Meeting of Permanent Committee of Alpine Convention with upstreamed meetings of Platforms and Working Groups of Alpine Convention |
| 17.09. 18.09.2015: | Visit of a delegation from Georgia and Armenia, organized by NABU |
| 16.10.2015: | Visit of a delegation from Norway, district Government |

Partner Nationalpark Yosemite

Since November 2014 we are Sister-Park of Yosemite National Park. The parks are quite different in size and history, but similar in characteristic and biodiversity. In the future we will work together for these commonalities especially in science, wildlife management and visitor guidance.

8. Information buildings

The central information center “*Haus der Berge*” in Berchtesgaden has about 520.000 visitors since opening in May 2013 (November 2015). This huge number of visitors is 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. The intensive evaluation (2014) of the exhibitions showed the effectiveness as well as the sustainability of various methods to communicate the main messages and goals of the National Park. There are still some topics and items which have to be improved in order to optimize environmental education and information. In November 2015 some new attractions will be implemented into the exhibitions – according to the results of the evaluation. This is also a permanent process which affects all sectors of the center. Even in the outside area there are still many areas to be completed, which can be done only step by step – caused to staff capacity as well as monetary reasons. On the other hand the play grounds according to the four main habitats have been successfully completed. In summer 2015 a project started which is aimed to derive a strategic paper for the further development options of the National Park center. This paper will be part of the extrapolation of the National Park plan.

Commissioning of the center by the building authority Traunstein is planned for early spring 2016. List of deficiencies will be finished as far as possible - but also will be adopted for the time after that date.

The five peripheral information centers of the National Park are even in a permanent process of improvement. In 2014 a project for the renewal of the exhibition in the information center Hintersee started and is still running in 2015. 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, rocks) of the National Park are topic of the “Haus der Berge” in common as well as the peripheral centers in a regional context. The opening of the new exhibition is planned in spring 2016. The delay of opening date (com. Report 2014) is caused by difficulties to ensure the partially funding of that project by external sponsors.

An automatic census of visitors in the information center St. Bartholomä showed an extraordinary huge number of visitors , namely almost 95.000 visitors per year. This information center is not manned and has to be optimized in the next decade.

The surrounding of the information center Wimbachbrücke has been new designed in Winter 2014 / 2015. An information pavilion has been implemented in the outside area of this center respectively.

In the other two information centers (Engert, Kühroint) no variations took place.

Even the station for feeding game animals (Red deer) in Klausbach valley is unmodified, but barrier free toilets are planned for staff and visitors respectively will be built in winter season 2015 / 2016. Even the toilets in the outside area of the information center Klausbach will be improved in that kind. Another improvement is the availability of WLAN in the same center, which was not possible since 2014 because of limitations concerning administration net specifications.

Section 3 / Information buildings staff moved from the administration (Doktorberg 6, Berchtesgaden) to a decorated building (Gmundberg 4, Berchtesgaden) associated to the "Haus der Berge" in autumn 2015.

9. public transportation system

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.

21. GERMANY - LÜNEBURG HEATH 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 (see Resoultion CM/ResDip(2015)5.

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.

- 2.1. 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;
- Hamburger Wasserwerke (City of Hamburg Water works Company, HWW) applied for a new right of extraction. Authorisation procedures are still going on between HWW, The City of Hamburg, the District of Harburg and Lower Saxony Federal State. They are expected to be finished in the first quarter of 2016. The interests of VNP were taken into account.*
- 2.2. 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
- The Ministry of the Environment of Lower Saxony established a committee for the further development of "large scale nature reserves" ("Großschutzgebiete", like National parks, Biosphere reserves and large scale nature reserves such as Lüneburger Heide). Verein Naturschutzpark Lüneburger Heide (VNP) is a member of this institution. VNP wishes an equal treatment of "Lüneburger Heide nature reserve" and National parks such as "Nationalpark Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer" or Biosphere Reserves such as "Elbtalau", where ranger services, monitoring, environmental education and nature information facilities are financed by the State of Lower Saxony. The standing committee is supposed to finish work on new guidelines concerning financing of large scale nature reserves in 2017.*
- 2.3. 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 EU-funding period 2013-2020
- In 2015 heathland (Calluna dominated heath land habitats on sandy soil) was included in the list of agricultural land defined by the EU. 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 heathlands in comparison to grassland and arable land.*
- The second problem concerning heath land as agricultural land is the so called "100 tree rule". Heath lands are only considered as agricultural land in Lower Saxony, if there are less than 100 trees 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. VNP asks for a more practical regulation that takes the actual land use, i.e. the grazing of the whole area, into account.*
- 2.4. 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

EU and the country of Lower Saxony support breeders of rare breeds of farm animals. In 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.

Unfortunately “Dülmener Horse”, the only surviving German pony breed, is still not included in the 2015 list of rare and endangered breeds. A list for the new EU funding period 2016-2020 is not yet published.

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

An ecological corridor linking the heath lands north and west of Wilsede (forest fringe north of “Heinköpen” Woodland) was not carried out until now.

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

An ecological restoration scheme was carried out on sections of “Schmale Aue”, a small river on the eastern fringe of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve. Schmale Aue suffers from sand erosion due to arable farming in the well area and upper region of the brook. To initialize a dynamic river development, sections of Schmale Aue were improved with gravel banks and stream guidance.

A detailed plan to remove artificial ponds was drawn for “Haverbeeke” (a brook in the central part of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve). Implementation of this plan is scheduled for winter 2015/2016. Financing will be derived from a budget for the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive.

Further restoration schemes concerning “Brunau” and Tütsberg grassland are in preliminary planning.

- 2.7. 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. VNP demands that arable land used for the cultivation of energy crops or renewable resources must not be eligible to payment entitlements.

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

VNP follows ecological forest management guidelines. The forests owned by VNP are certified by PEFC-Standards (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes). VNP promotes species of so called “light woodlands” like oaks, pines and birches.

- 2.9. 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.

Existing ecological information is still not always included in planning processes. E.g.: The regional planning authority (Landkreis Heidekreis) gave planning permission for an irrigation well in the neighbourhood of bog land without a Flora-Fauna-Habitat- impact study.

- 2.10. 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.*
- 2.11. Create suitable ecological corridors between the nature reserve and the black grouse biotopes outside the reserve without endangering infrastructures such as like wind turbines;
- No measures to improve or safeguard existing ecological corridors for black grouse were carried out during this period of report.*
- The regional planning authority (Landkreis Heidekreis) included a zone for wind energy east of Volkwardingen into the "Landschaftsrahmenplan" (regional landscape framework plan), situated in one of the corridors linking Lüneburger Heide nature reserve with important breeding habitats outside the reserve.*
- A small area (20 ha) of "Außenschießstellung Töpinger Heide" (a former military gun range) was cleared of shrubs. The surplus humus layer was removed mechanically, to create open, sandy soil for calluna-regeneration.*
- One flock of "Heidschnucken" is now grazing regularly in this area to keep the heath land open. "Außeschießstellung Töpinger Heide" is a so called "ecological stepping stone", linking Lüneburger Heide nature reserve with the extensive military exercise grounds around Munster (important breeding habitats of black grouse).*
- 2.12. Realise the concept of buffer zone areas with a high protection status in the neighbouring areas of the nature reserve
- A concept of buffer zone areas was not realised during this period of report.*
- 2.13. Establish a corps of rangers (Naturwacht).
- VNP employs and finances four part time rangers. There is still no public funding for this ranger service, but work on new financing guidelines concerning large scale nature reserves is in progress (see recommendation No. 2).*

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 European wolf (*Canis lupus*) showed an enormous increase of packs and individuals during the last four years. A couple of wolves is seen regularly in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve. There are no whelps in the reserve so far.

In 2015 VNP built several new and reinforced fences to protect its own flocks of sheep against wolves. The Country of Lower-Saxony set up a programme to fund so called “wolf-proof” fences. Until now no attacks of wolves on sheep flocks grazing in nature conservation schemes occurred.

All rivers and brooks with in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve are now repopulated with the European otter (*Lutra lutra*).

The project “Pupils Farm” was started in September 2010 with grants from Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. Hamburg. In 2014/2015 structural alteration work started on a new building called “Hillmershof”.

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.

Use of the European Diploma Logo

The European Diploma’s logo will be used during the reporting period on our homepage: <http://stiftung-naturschutzpark.de/index.php?id=811>

Volkwardingen Wind Park

VNP is very afraid about projected “Volkwardingen Wind Park”. This Wind Farm is situated only 1-2 km east of the reserve boundary.

The seven wind turbines (up to 185 m height of driving collar) would spoil the historic cultural landscape of Lüneburger Heide as the mills would be seen from all important view points within the reserve and from outside. Even the most popular view point “Totengrund” - which is also a place of high symbolic value for the history of nature conservation in Germany and the centre of the reserve - will be damaged.

The proposed Wind Farm will also block an important migration corridor for Black grouse and Black stork linking EU Special protected areas (SPA) “Munster Nord / Süd” and “Lüneburger Heide nature reserve”. The area of Volkwardingen Wind Park is an important habitat for bats and particularly for Red kites (*Milvus milvus*) (listed in EU Bird directive 2009/147/EG of 30. November 2009 and on Red list IUCN 2006).

Since planning procedures on Volkwardingen wind park started, nesting Red kites have been disturbed deliberately with drones in order to eradicate the endangered species from the proposed project site.

In 2014 the Higher Administrative Court of Lower Saxony (Oberverwaltungsgericht – OVG) pronounced a judgement concerning the regional planning documents’ zoning for wind turbines (Regionales Raumordnungsprogramm – RROP). The Court declared the planning document inaccurate and removed the zoning for Volkwardingen Wind Park. The area of proposed Volkwardingen Wind Park is now a so called “white area”, i.e. an area without zoning.

Nonetheless is the regional planning authority (Landkreis Heidekreis) still working on a zone for wind energy in Volkwardingen.

VNP expects the assistance of the Council of Europe and its representatives to avoid the aesthetic devastation of one of the oldest “European Diploma Areas”. VNP asks the standing committee of

the Bern Convention to apply to the European Union to protect one of the oldest European Diploma sites with all legal means.

VNP particularly demands a full assessment of environmental effects in accordance with 92/43/EEG Habitats Directive.

“Concerning the environmental impact of the planned zone for wind turbines near Volkwardingen the new draft of the regional planning documents 2015 (Regionales Raumordnungsprogramm RROP 2015) for the area of the administrative district Heidekreis (formerly Soltau-Fallingbostal) does not provide any changes compared to the previous draft. The interference of the characteristic landscape especially at the very prominent view point “Totengrund” in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve is serious and cannot be accepted. The area “Totengrund” is the birthplace of nature site protection in the Federal Republic of Germany. The overall appearance of the landscape in this area has to stay unspoilt.

Furthermore the predication of the RROP that the planned zone for wind turbines near Volkwardingen would not lead to any impacts on the migration routes and habitats of endangered species like the black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*), the red kite (*Milvus milvus*) or several bat species occurring in the planned zone has to be objected. For example in 2013 a couple of red kites verifiably bred only approx. 200 metres from the planned zone for wind turbines and as well was observed many times in this area during the following years. The results of the conducted impact study for the Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area “Lüneburger Heide” (Natura 2000) are altogether defective and incomplete.

Verein Naturschutzpark e.V. (VNP) for the first time since the awarding of the European Diploma for the protected landscape of Lüneburg Heath in 1967 needs the massive assistance of the Council of Europe! The federal state of Lower Saxony and the administrative district Heidekreis have to be persuaded that the plans for the erection of regionally significant wind turbines in this highly sensitive area must not become a reality.”²

22. 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.

After a two-year preparation with partners from all fields of the area we succeeded in presenting the management plan for the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve (4.850 ha) to the Council on June 17, 2015 within the requested three-year-period (A print part and 3 CDs).

It has been developed in cooperation with FUTOUR-Regionalberatung Haundorf (an experienced managing consulting firm) and the Society for Environmental Planning and Scientific Advising Bonn.

As a necessary preliminary stage of this management plan we first ordered a Nature Park Plan for the Siebengebirge Nature Park, the larger unit of 11.200 ha, which the Nature Reserve is the most valuable part of.

Fundamental of the Nature Reserve Management Plan is its embedding into the Large Scale Conservation Project “chance.natur – Natur- und Kulturlandschaft zwischen Siebengebirge und Sieg”. This is a national programme (14.6 million € for a ten-year period 2013 - 2023) designed to promote nationally important natural landscapes that provide outstanding habitats for protected animal and plant species.

² New developments in relation to the implantation of wind turbines on the zone in the vicinity of Volkwardingen highlighted in the e-mail of 10 February 2016.

This project is conducted in two phases: a maximum three-year-planning phase and an implementation phase. For the Siebengebirge-Sieg-Bonn Area the planning phase has nearly been completed and implementation has already started in two 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. 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;
2. develop a new financial plan together with local communities and the Rhein-Sieg-District;
3. continue the provision of financial support by the North Rhine Westphalia government;
4. maintain great vigilance regarding the possible construction of new roads;
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;
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;
7. encourage the continuation and extension of scientific research.

1. The leading role of the VVS so far is seen with great satisfaction by the communities (!), because VVS financial investment and honorary work of many VVS members saves community (and public) money

Meanwhile on the basis of the Nature Park Plan several sessions have taken place during the last months with the District Manager Rhein-Sieg, the Mayors and councillors of Bonn, Königswinter, Bad Honnef and Sankt Augustin communities concerning a new organizational form of the Nature Park. The Rhein-Sieg-District has already consented to contribute 60.000 € per year.

At present we are still optimistic the communities will recognize that VVS-administration plus community support is cheaper to them than running their own administration. Our aim is to have this question settled by the end of 2016.

2. Cf. 1

3. In 2015 the NRW government and the NRW Foundation have granted the Siebengebirge area and the VVS considerable financial support:

- 200.000 € installation of stone signposts for the new system of trails in the Nature Reserve
- 13.000 € contribution to the elaboration of the Nature Park Plan
- 15.000 € maintenance costs within the Nature Park
- 13.000 € repair costs for two brooks after heavy thunderstorms
- 600.000 € building costs to protect vineyards from heavy Drachenfels rockfalls
- 65.000 € subvention of the NRW Foundation to restore the VVS forest house/Nature Park House, classified as a historical monument

4. New roads have not been built nor are they planned. The strictly licensed access to the Drachenfels restaurant is intermittently controlled by wardens and shall – in cooperation with

Königswinter municipal administration - be rendered more difficult with barriers instead of conceivable pollards, as planned so far. The Drachenfels funicular company is flexible enough to transport guests (private festivity groups) in special runs to the valley station even at 2 or 3 o'clock a.m. Thus the VVS as the owner of the only road to the Drachenfels is able to be particularly restrictive what concerns special driving permissions.

5. In order to reduce motorized traffic to the Petersberg (5 star hotel/former guest house of the Federal Republic of Germany) the Steigenberger Company, running the hotel, at summertime has opened a shuttle bus transfer from Königswinter station to the mountain top.

6. In the 2010 treaty with the State of NRW the VVS - on 523 ha of its landed property in the Siebengebirge – established the first “wildernis area” outside national parks in Germany.

Since then the NRW forestry authorities have extended their “Wildniswald Siebengebirge” by 207 ha, directly adjacent to the VVS-wildernis area.

In 2015 the NRW Foundation has acquired 90 ha of beech and oak tree forest on the Petersberg from the Federal Government and has decided to add this area to the already existing wildernis areas of the VVS and the NRW forestry authorities.

So now the coherent Siebengebirge wildernis area covers 820 ha altogether.

As we have realized a strong desire of visitors to enjoy and experience wildernis, and also a growing acceptance of access limitations, we consider it our task in the following months – together with our partners - to develop public awareness of the special qualities of these areas.

7. Of outstanding importance were the archaeological excavations on the Löwenburg (one of the 7 mountains), a castle from the 13th century, erected by the counts of Sayn-Wittgenstein against the neighbouring castles of the Archbishop of Cologne on the Drachenfels and the Wolkenburg. These excavations in 2013/14 under the medieval fortifications were now scientifically scrutinized with astonishing objects found: among them 13th century undamaged stone jugs, 13th century silver coins, 14th century arrowheads, knives, keys and other objects . We are glad of being granted the opportunity of showing nearly 25 of these objects in the Siebengebirge exhibition in our Nature Park House.

In cooperation with the Research Museum Alexander König at Bonn two scientists (Prof. Schumacher/ StD Wolfgang Hürter) have started systematically listing diurnal butterflies and butterfly moths in the Siebengebirge area.

On the occasion of Prussia assuming government power in the Rhineland 200 years ago (in 1815), two VVS experts intensely investigated archives at Coblenz, Cologne, Duisburg and Berlin to assess Prussia's importance for the rescue of the Siebengebirge from destruction by quarries. Their conclusion: Without the immense support of the Prussian state (and the VVS) the Siebengebirge would have been completely destroyed. The results of this research are presented in a remarkable exhibition in our Nature Park House.

Scientific publication: Sven von Loga: 12 Wanderungen auf den Spuren des Vulkanismus im Siebengebirge, Köln 2015

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.

Since September 2015 the VVS has engaged a manager at its own expense. For the administration of the Nature Park (especially in financial respect) the VVS can resort to the support of the Rhine-Sieg-District.

The income situation of the VVS has been improved. On four parking spaces in its possession the VVS has installed parking meters. Accomodating fees and the hint “*Every € is spent on the maintenance of the Nature Reserve*” have probably effected that there are nearly no offences.

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.

5.1 The Siebengebirge Nature Reserve extends to the southern border of North-Rhine Westphalia and meets the neighbouring state of Rhineland-Palatinate. An RP community (Unkel) at a distance of about 10 km from the border has been discussing the construction of a wind energy plant. Originally there were plans to build 18 windwheels. Broad protests of action committees, of environmental organizations, even of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation BfN, and expert opinions on the influence of such a plant on natural surroundings, also the Siebengebirge and the Rhine valley, have led to the result that a maximum of 5 windwheels might be possible, a number probably uneconomical to the investor. Irrespective of these aspects the legal basis of such a plant on that spot is unsolved so far.

5.2 After thorough examination the Siebengebirge Nature Park has been awarded the title of a “Quality Nature Park” by the *Verband deutscher Naturparke* in October 2015, a recognition of the Park’s high standard and of the satisfactory work of the VVS and its partners.

5.3 .As the Siebengebirge with its nearly 200 km of hiking trails is frequented by about 2.5 million visitors a year, accidents of walkers and bikers are not unusual. In cooperation with forestry authorities, local fires-brigades and rescue services the VVS has erected a new system of emergency points in the Nature Park (11.200 ha), each of them registered at the rescue services with location and GPS-data, so that injured persons can quickly be saved.

5.4 We have been using the European Diploma logo on our website (including a special paragraph)), in our exhibition (special poster) und in different flyers.

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

Ivana d’Alessandro’s letter from May 22, 2014 to the Federal Agency of Nature Conservation (BfN) concerning possible threats on the reserve due to a planned construction of a large retail shopping centre may have induced municipal councils members to reflect this plan more critically. The project has meanwhile been cancelled.

Thank you very much for your support!

23. 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

6 recommendations were formulated in the last extension of the European Diploma. The

recommendations 1 – 4 refer among others to the professional fishing activities in the reserve. When the area was protected by the nature reserve order in 1980, fishing was permitted to continue and was legitimated by an inter-state agreement with Switzerland. In order to investigate and to document the disturbance potential (from professional fishing and other sources) in the shallow water zones of the nature reserves on the Bodensee-Untersee, the Freiburg Government Headquarters upon the request of the Ministry established a Round Table where three meetings were held since December 2014. These were attended by representatives of the Nature Protection and Fishery Administration in Baden-Württemberg, NABU, the state fishery association, Max-Planck-Institute for Ornithology, the fishery management of the Canton Thurgau, the waterways police, and locally acting professional fishermen from Germany and Switzerland. A further objective of the Round Table is to reduce documented disturbances in the shallow water zones by common accord and harmonised for both states.

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

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

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

➤ **Re. Recommendation 1:**

In the Round Table talks, fishery representatives pointed out that the water exchange and the quality of the aquatic habitat in a large shallow-water area would be reduced by a further growth of a sediment threshold in the area of the so-called “*Schläuche*”. On the other side, from their point of view the succession and the undisturbed course of limnological processes would be most valuable. Therefore the further discussions at the Round Table abandoned the proposal to remove sediments.

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

All fishing activity must 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:**

As a result of the Round Table, the Freiburg Government Headquarters recommended to the Ministry to carry out an investigation in the core zone of the nature reserve (Hegner Winkel). A multi-stage investigation programme is proposed comprising a certain period of time without fishing activities. Apart from such a period of rest, phases with use for fishery are provided to determine the effects on bird-life on one side and on fishery on the other side.

Recommendation 3:

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. Few studies of this have been conducted, so it should be documented and all potential disturbances eliminated (fishing, water sports, etc.).

➤ **Re. Recommendation 3:**

As in the previous years, the significance of the nature reserve as an over-summering and moulting location for waterfowl is regularly documented within the scope of the extended waterfowl monitoring programme. Since the water levels of the Lake of Constance dropped relatively fast since 24 June 2015, fish trap fishing in the littoral zone had to be terminated early in this year. Apart from some disturbances caused by leisure activities which could be reduced by volunteers at the conservation and observation station “Netta” and the waterway police, disturbance from the air was a considerable nuisance. Hot-air

balloons caused most of the problems whereas the pilots of the Zeppelin NT nearly without exception respected the voluntary agreements in this season.

Recommendation 4:

Throughout the protected area, but especially in the Ermatinger Becken area, an effort is needed to harmonise protection measures by developing co-operation between Germany and Switzerland, for example, as part of the international conference of Lake Constance.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 4:**

Due to the existing inter-state provisions, the cooperation with Switzerland is indispensable. One of the targets of the Round Table talks is to promote a further harmonisation. Contacts between the nature protection administration and authorities in Switzerland with a view to improving protection of the shallow water zone of the Ermatinger Becken area and to harmonizing cross-border cooperation were forged in the framework of the Round Table.

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 be detrimental to the protected area. The compensatory measures necessitated by the work must be implemented as a matter of priority.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 5:**

The most intensive building activities in the period under review took place in the area of the Kindlebild junction and the Southern ramp of the bridge over the railway line. Site fences, anti-splash walls and noise barriers were installed to protect the nature reserve area. Continuous controls carried out by the road work authorities and others to prevent an encroachment of the construction work into the reserve were successful.

The complete relocation of a former cycle path could not yet be achieved since the former line over the existing construction site is still used by some cyclists and its maintenance is requested by a community initiative. Therefore this potential for disturbance continues to exist for the protected area and the green bridge cannot reach its full effect. Hence, nature conservation adheres to the aim of the transfer.

The provided extension of the protected area by 7 ha as compensation, as one of the last measures to be taken in the Eastern section of the B33 extension, could not yet be implemented (see chapter 4), but substantial structural measure were taken in anticipation to connect these areas better to the adjacent bedding meadows of the protected area.

Recommendation 6:

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

➤ **Re. Recommendation 6:**

The new building of the Nature Conservation Centre Wollmatinger Ried shall be dimensioned for 10,000 visitors per year. The necessary funding shall be ensured equally by own resources of NABU and a grant given by the state of Baden-Württemberg. The site has been allocated and design variants are being determined in a restricted architectural competition. The start of construction is planned for 2016.

3. Site management

No changes as against the 2014 reporting year.

4. Boundaries

Due to the necessary coordination with the city of Constance, the planned extension of the nature reserve by 7 hectares on the West of the sewage plant of Constance could not yet be completed. The ministry is presently examining whether Switzerland is obliged to take part. With the same token no progress can be achieved without the agreement of Switzerland for the extension of the nature reserve provided already in the management plan of the EU bird sanctuary on the water side.

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 are causing disturbances and disruptions which must be continuously fended off and traced by the nature protection authorities.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.2. Socio-economic context

The constantly rising housing prices in the Constance region have caused an increasing pressure on open spaces near the developments. Therefore it is planned to overbuild in the next few years the airfield Constance which is separated only by the B33 from the nature reserve. This airfield has consisted so far of grassland and was an important refuge for various animal species of the Wollmatinger Ried, particularly at high watermark.

In the planning and approval proceedings, attention must be paid to adopt compensation measures and any measures targeted at avoiding and/or minimizing interventions.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Material informing the public (building, booklets, maps)

The European Diploma together with its logo will be presented in all measures of Public Relation on flyers, maps, in the exhibition of the NABU Nature Reserve Centre Wollmatinger Ried and on all 22 boards along the information trail Wollmatinger Ried. A link from its website to the European Council is provided. The guides will point out to the European Diploma and its importance in all tours.

8.2. Observation facilities

The observation platform and the access path in the Ermatinger Becken were completely renewed in Winter 2014/15 and are now again available for visiting groups and also for monitoring and survey purposes. The total costs amounting to € 110,000 were borne by the Freiburg Government Headquarters.

24. 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.

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 and the revised presidential decree draft is currently examined by the Ministry's services as to be sent for approval and signature from the President of the Hellenic Republic.

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 started the implementation of a permanent monitoring program in its jurisdiction area - that includes the Natura 2000 sites GR4340008 and GR4340014 - for the study of habitat types and species of flora and fauna. In particular, monitoring programs are implemented for: 20 marine and terrestrial habitat types, 34 plant species, 113 bird species, 51 species of fauna (terrestrial molluscs, terrestrial arthropods, amphibians, reptiles, bats, micromammals), the cretan wild goat (*Capra aegagrus cretica*) and the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*).

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, given the uncertainty regarding the future of Management Bodies in Greece and because of the memorandum obligations of the Country the third recommendation has not yet been fulfilled (concerning the incomes).

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 project "In situ and ex situ conservation of *Zelkova abelicea* in Crete 2014 - 2016" continued in 2015 for a second year. 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.

The project aims at the protection of the endemic tree species *Zelkova abelicea* that is threatened according to IUCN.

In situ conservation actions include:

- The selection of pilot plots for fencing
- The fencing of selected individuals
- Monitoring of the growth of the enclosed individuals
- the selection of pilot plots in other areas, fencing and monitoring of the growth also there.

So far, fourteen (14) plots have been fenced and are monitored in Lefka Ori natural populations of *Zelkova abelicea* (of a total area equal to ~730m²).

The ex-situ conservation actions include:

- Collection of seeds for seedbanking and ex situ cultivation
- Storage of the seeds at the seed bank of MAICH
- Collection of *Zelkova abelicea* cuttings for vegetative propagation and cultivation
- Selection and preparation of a field of the Municipality of Platanias at Omalos plateau for an ex situ plantation and cultivation of *Zelkova abelicea*.
- Planting in the ex situ field.

In 2014, only one seedlot was collected from Omalos population due to the fact that the seed production of last year was almost null. Germination experiments were conducted by MAICH and the seedlings produced are cultivated in the nurseries of MAICH and the Forest Directorate of Chania. Some of these are going to be transplanted in the ex situ cultivation at the field of the Platanias Municipality. In 2015, three seedlots were collected from natural populations of Lefka Ori (Omalos, Therisso, Imbros) and are under curation (cleaning, drying, etc.); however, the % of sound viable seeds is expected to be again quite low, based on preliminary examinations.

Meetings of the project scientific committee are organized at a yearly basis at Chania.

The program also includes actions of public awareness with the dissemination of the project's objectives, actions and results (at local and international level).

- Samaria National Park Management Body, through funding from the Green Fund of the Ministry of Environment and Energy completed the pilot process of fencing ~50 individual forest species in order to protect from overgrazing.

- Samaria National Park Management Body continued the monitoring program for habitats and species.

•Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

- Following a formal request from the central services, an Act of Council of Ministers was signed that made provisions for the employment of 26 people as seasonal staff 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 and two drivers who were employed for the period 12/8/2015 -10/11-2015.

On the other hand, the permanent staff of the Forest Directorate of Chania performs the task of managing and protection of the National Park, including other obligations. The permanent staff is comprised from four people as an advisory staff, twenty five rangers, two drivers, one worker, two Foresters and one forest technician.

- Samaria National Park Management Body (MB) employed the following seasonal personnel in 2015 with a 6-month contract: four rangers, six muleteers and four workers with tasks in the management and protection of the Park during the operation period. Moreover, the three Forest Protection Specialists of the MB undertake surveillance and monitoring tasks in the wider area of the White Mountains (Lefka Ori).

- The Fire Department employed 9 firemen this year, in the wider area of Lefka Ori.

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

- This year, as every year before the opening of the gorge to the public, the central path was cleaned and repaired from the various damages which had occurred during the winter and it was paved with stone where necessary. This task was undertaken by the Forest Directorate of Chania. Also the seasonal staff was responsible for the continuous maintenance along the central path. The severity of last winter caused significant damages along the largest part of the route and destroyed infrastructure (resting points, protection wire mesh, etc.). For this reason, before the opening of the Park, the project "Repair of damages to the central path of the National Park of Samaria" was assigned after a tenders call with a budget of 60.000 €.

- Samaria National Park Management Body also helped with its seasonal personnel in the restoration works of the central path which occurred during the operation period of the Gorge of Samaria. Other mountain trails outside the Gorge of Samaria were also cleaned, maintained and signed. Moreover, with funding received from the Green Fund of the Ministry of Environment last year, the MB completed the restoration of an old well at the area of Ayios Ioannis Sfakion. The aim of this project was the preservation and enhancement of the traditional structure of the well, the providing of better quality water to local users and the creation of microhabitats to support the fauna and birdlife of the area.

•**Field equipment (hides and study facilities)**

- Samaria National Park Management Body this year with funding received from the project "Protection and Preservation of Biodiversity in Samaria (Lefka Ori) National Park" in the frame of the Operational Program "Environment and Sustainable Development", NSRF 2007-2013, proceeded to the electrification of the outposts inside the National Park of Samaria using renewable energy sources (supply and installation of a wind turbine, a water turbine, and PV-panels). Moreover, in order to improve the signal of the communication radio system that the rangers use inside the Park, the MB installed a new transmission antenna.

- In the frame of the "MEET" "Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism Network" project 9 bicycles were bought to be used at activities included in the eco-tourism package designed by the MB and local enterprises.

•**Improvement of infrastructure**

- In the frame of the project "Improvement of Infrastructure in the National Park of Lefka Ori" the southern entrance of the Park was redesigned and a water tank was built at the northern entrance. The construction of the water tank was considered necessary due to indications of contamination of the source water at Linoseli from animal feces (wild goats) that were recorded after the field works of an educational institution. The existing infrastructure was also maintained (outposts, information center, toilets, etc.). As a part of the implementation of the Study for the Forest Fire Protection, signs were placed per 200 meters

along the central path of the gorge to determine the accurate position. Finally, to address any visitors transportation problems the Forest Directorate purchased additionally two mules.

- The Management Body also helped in the maintenance works with its seasonal personnel. Specifically, periodic maintenance was made for the wooden windows of the outposts as well as of the insulation of the buildings.

•**Administrative department: changes made**

No changes were made.

•**Wardens' department: changes made**

- In 2015, the permanent personnel of the Forest Directorate of Chania involved in the management of the National Park were trained in first aid. The seasonal personnel employed in 2015 by the Forest Directorate of Chania, included four rangers for the period 12/8/2015 -10/11-2015.

- Samaria National Park Management Body (MB) employed four rangers as seasonal personnel in 2015 with a 6-month contract with tasks in the management and protection of the Park during the operation period. Moreover, the three Forest Protection Specialists of the MB undertake surveillance and monitoring tasks in the wider area of Lefka Ori.

•**Internal policing measures**

The Green Fund which was established by the Greek Government (Law 3889/2010) collects the income from the entrance fee of Samaria Gorge and allocates small amount for the operation of the National Park. 30% of the same income is allocated to the adjacent municipalities. The Management Body does not receive any percentage from this budget. In previous years the Green Fund supported specific actions of all the Management Bodies of Protected Areas in Greece with an annual funding of projects of ~40,000 euros. In 2015, due to the economic crisis and the subsequent cuts in funding from the Ministry, no funding was given to the MB.

•**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. Moreover, against the regulations of the National Park visitors, who were trapped inside the Gorge during unexpected bad weather conditions, were accommodated in the village of Samaria.

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 boundaries of the protected area were made since the last annual report. As it was already mentioned in section 3, the Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori, that proposes extensive boundaries and zonation of the National Park, in relation to the current boundaries, was completed in 2009. However, the procedure of the declaration of the new National Park has not been finalized yet.

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 logo of the European Diploma was placed on the information sign at the entrance to the National Park and on all the signs along the central path. Moreover, it is 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”. The book was published from Samaria National Park Management Body and the Prefectural Administration of Chania, and was financed through the NSRF 2007-2013.

25. 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 Ipolytarnoc 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 new, discovered fossil footprints on the geological study trail got extended this year. The site provides high-tech interpretation techniques of the prehistoric habitat, the gained scientific knowledge is on display and new papers have been made accessible and downloadable on the site’s website.

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 Geopark with the essential endorsement of the BNPD, became member of the European and Global Geoparks Networks in 2010. After the last year’s on the spot revalidation the EGN officially confirmed the extension of the EGN membership for another 4 years.

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. During EDPA 50th anniversary workshop in Italy this year an oral presentation was given by the site’s representative about the EDPA and Geopark relationship in Hungary.(Look at it’s reference at the photo section.)

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 is panel emplaced in front of the entrance gate, QR code and old Hungarian script alphabet are used beside Hungarian, Slovak and English languages to inform visitors about the site. Due to fire-protection restrictions vegetation cover of the older buildings can not be adopted. The newer buildings blend better into the landscape. Nevertheless, there is a new project plan targeting EU funds, to restructure the visitor information system, it includes landscape oriented extended buildings erected above excavation areas, in place of the old alien structures.

Although there is no new development with the power line's replacement, yet part of the very same, so called GINOP 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, 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 special management work from the Headquarters. Good news that after nine years lacking the site got a new maintenance position filled this fall, now it has 4 in situ permanent staff members (including 2 rangers) running the site all around the year. The personnel enlargement is a welcome development, yet still more staff would be needed to ensure effective long-term management of the site. As a geotourism centre the Fossils provided, with extensions, a year-long seasonal work opportunity for the locally unemployed 33 seasonal workers of the nearby 4 settlements this year.

4. Boundaries:

No boundary changes concerned the site, its buffer and core zones are well defined.

5. Other information:

At the end of the successful 5th follow up year of the accomplished development in 2010, between October 12th 2014 and October 11th 2015 72 242 people visited the site.

Since it was the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Diploma, a broader use of the European Diploma logo became the policy of the BNPD this year. Interpretation panels, website links, brochures and posters depicted the new logo and publicized the establishment of the European Diploma.

A joint presentation was given by the Hungarian EDPA delegation attending the WORKSHOP "Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years" in the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli, Italy, 21-22 May 2015.

26. 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 Duna-Ipoly Nationalpark Directorate and the Pilis Forest:

- 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*
- 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;

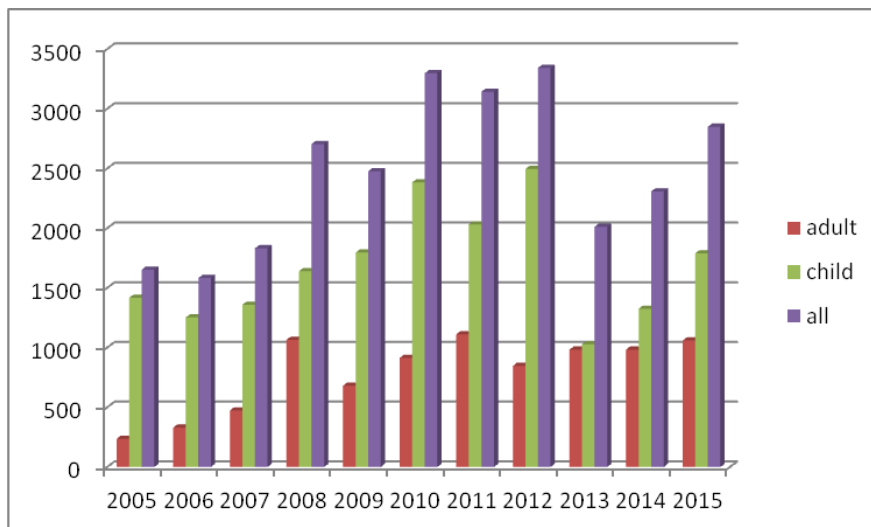
- The game population management (like the annual driven game shooting) is part of the agreement of cooperation between the Duna-Ipoly Nationalpark Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company. Changes in numbers of big game population, resulting from fence building and the operation of game traps, are monitored 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 Duna-Ipoly Nationalpark Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company. There were 200 000 HUF for this purpose this year.
- We had to make a contract of more than 10 million HUF for the repair of the fences damaged by the freezing rain. The process of the repair works are being fulfilled.

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 keeps a nature conservation course for local school children weekly.
- 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 year more innovative programmes and thematic guided tours were entered like «Firebug tours in June, Ecotourism and IT-technics (smartphone), Save the Frogs Day (25/04/2015), Reptiles and Amphibian Day (06/06/2015)»
- Large-scale events were held on World Water Day (21/03/2015) and International Bird Watching Day (03/10/2015). 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 ringing.
- Field exercises were held for university students (several weeks).
- From the year 2016 new opportunities open by a starter European project (VEKOP-4.2.1-15) in which we plan renewing and expansion our visitor centre.
- Number of participants of professionally guided tours, nature conservation courses and volunteer activities in 2015: adult 1060, children 1790, all 2850 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;

- The frame ruling of these subjects changed in the year 2014, by changing the Forest Law (Act nr. 36/2009.). According to this rule horse riding and biking in the forest is free on the roads of forestry.

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 painting wooden equipments of the nature trails happened.
- 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 kept for them to get know the area and its natural assets.

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 the first days of December 2014 freezing rain, ice and strong wind have caused serious natural damages in the woods above 350 metres high in Buda Hills. Numberless amount of trees have broken parts or fallen down and approximately 30-40 % of the fence around the Szénás Hills Protected Area have been damaged. Restoration of damaged fence parts has started this year but not finished yet. After finishing the repair, it is necessary to keep more intensive big game (mainly not the native species) hunting in the fenced area.

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.

- 2015 was a special year for the Szénás Hills Protected Area. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Szénás Hills' s foundation and the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas collaterally.

Our Directorate has an annual programme booklet. We used the logo on the front page with the *Linum dolomiticum*'s photo and it appeared in the booklet too. We published numerous articles in several magazines (local, national releases, our seasonal printed newsletter).

Our Directorate reprinted a brochure about the Hungarian European Diploma Protected Areas. We organize every month a free informative Nature Club – called „Danube-Ipoly National Park Club”– for our visitors. On last September, dr.Pál Kézdy gave a lecture on the 50th anniversary of the Diploma. He used the logo in his presentation too. His lecture’s name was the following: „From the European Bisons to the *Linum dolomiticum*” –the 50- year -old European Diploma–

27. HUNGARY – 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.

« 2. strongly enforce the ban on new buildings on the site; »

- The National Park Directorate could 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 155 000 so far.

« 4. continue to manage and control visitor pressure; »

- 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) is under planning by the national park to renew the most public nature trails on the peninsula. We are planning to start the project in 2016.

« 5. keep the balance between closed forested areas and open areas (meadows with hedges and bushes); »

- The project to forcing back invasive weed species subsidized by a state-tender (Environment and Energy Operational Programme) has been finished. About 60 hectare special pasture land with oak-trees and wild fruit trees has been reconstructed.

« 6. encourage farming and wine-growing practices consistent with the conservation of natural and landscape assets; »

- From the point of view of nature values good practises in farming and wine-growing have been encouraged by law and recommendation, too. The national park experts participate in controlling how farmers get state-subsvention 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. Since then the National Park has had a bigger opportunity to influence fishing management, and to improve the ecological condition of the lake. The next opportunity to obtain the fishing rights will be in 2017, when the current contract expires. A new project financed by a state-tender (Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme) is under planning by the national park to improve water quality and restore the natural state of the lake. We are planning to start the project in 2016.

« 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 the Tihany peninsula the National Park Directorate has not been able to buy new ground here.

« 9. continue to control invasive species such as the *Ailanthus*; »

- The National Park Directorate won subsidies on a state-tender (Environment and Energy Operational Programme) to finance the forcing back of invasive weed species, such as the *Ailanthus altissima* (Mill.) Swingle and *Eleagnus angustifolia* L. The project has been finished with significant results.

« 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. »

- 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.

Information about the European Diploma logo use:

- The European Diploma logo is used regularly in publications of the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate, on the official website of the BUNPD [www.bfnp.hu, (<https://www.bfnp.hu/en/european-diploma>)], on the official website of the Bakony-Balaton Geopark [www.geopark.hu (<http://geopark.hu/en/home/bunpd>)] and the Lavender House Visitor Center (www.levendulahaz.eu). All of these websites contain detailed information about the European Diploma.

- A new brochure was issued about the three European Diploma awarded area in Hungary. The publication was prepared by the European Diploma 50-year anniversary in Hungarian and English.

28. 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; *DAHG have continued funding of the BLP team in 2013, 2014 and 2015 and the funding of the circa 160 farmers has also continued. NPWS (DAHG) and the BLP team continue to engage with all stakeholders with the aim of ensuring the BLP is expanded under the new RDP and in clarifying the detail of such an inclusion. The identification by DAFM of the BLP as a flagship Locally-led Agri-Environment Scheme to be funded under the RDP from 2016 is a significant development. This will require an amendment to the current RDP before the end of the year, with a view to have the new funding regime in place by February 2016. This will include an increased number of participating farmers.*

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 BLP 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 also engage with the BLP 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 ensures that negative environmental damage is avoided.*

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 BLP clients for 2015 is 160 over 15,000ha. Annual spend in 2015 is circa €1m to participating farmers. BLP work is currently focusing primarily on the completion of technical and administrative checks on all 2015 plans. All contracted works are on schedule.

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 BLP, the Burren Connect Project, the Burren IFA, the Burrenbeo Trust, the Heritage Council, Clare County Council and Galway County Council all continue to work together in developing and implementing the Burren Community Charter.

4. to stimulate further development of sustainable ecotourism and practice in the Burren Region; the Burrenbeo Trust continues to place emphasis on sustainable ecotourism and promotes the Burren as a “learning landscape”. The Learning Landscape Symposium took place in July 2014 and brought together leading national and international specialists on how best to use the Burren as a learning resource through different principles and practice in place-based learning. This included keynote speakers, workshops and fieldtrips to investigate ways to use local resources to make learning a richer, more exciting and rewarding educational experience. This all took place in the Burren, the ultimate ‘outdoor classroom’.

5. to discourage mass tourism in the Burren Region which does not accord with the principles of sustainable development; The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark (which covers much of the EDPA area) has an executive board comprising a manager, geologist, tourism co-ordinator and communications co-ordinator. This in turn is led by a steering committee representing Clare County Council, Geological Survey of Ireland, Failte Ireland, Office of Public Works, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, Heritage Council, NUIG, UCD, Burren Ecotourism Network, Burren IFA and Burrenbeo Trust. The Geopark works with local communities and groups to develop work programmes, such as educational programmes and trails. The Geopark has also forged a special relationship with the Burren Ecotourism Network. Both are working closely together to develop the Geopark as a world class, accredited sustainable tourism destination. The Geopark’s work programme in the development of the Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination, in balancing conservation and tourism, in training and educational programmes and in developing policy is being funded to 2017 by EU LIFE.

6. to encourage volunteers to participate in the sustainable management of the Burren Region; the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers is a voluntary community that has been active in 2015 and works towards the sustainable management of the Burren by addressing key conservation issues and needs in the region. The Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers was born out of a need for hands-on conservation workers. In a region of decreasing rural population key conservation issues such as scrub encroachment

and the rebuilding of stone walls are becoming harder to tackle and the conservation volunteers provide a very important resource to address this.

4. 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.

Currently the BLP staff complement is as follows: Sharon Parr (F/T), Brendan Dunford (F/T), Bryony Williams (4 dpw), Caitriona Maher (4 dpw until Spring 2015), Paula McHale (4 dpw) and Anne Mullen (2 dpw). Michael Lynch continues to offer FMA support to the BLP on a part-time (2.5dpw) basis.

In addition to the management of farming within the site by BLP 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 BLP team in terms of ensuring that all proposed works are considered appropriately in terms of the overall conservation interests of the site.

5. 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 adopted of the resolution.

6. 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:

BLP staff have hosted a large number of groups over the past year

In addition BLP staff have:

Presented at a number of conferences and workshops, including at European level

Featured in a range of local, national and international publications

Offered one to one, site-based training to all farm advisors

Supported the work of other LIFE and locally-led projects.

The Burren in Bloom Festival 2015 took place from April 30th to May 18th. This charming festival celebrates the rich and diverse natural heritage of the Burren. The festival itself featured a series of illustrated talks and guided walks which will introduce people to just some of the habitats and species of the Burren. An EDPA poster (pull-up) was on display at all presentations made during the The Burren in Bloom Festival 2015. www.burreninbloom.com

The Burrenbeo Trust held a series of events this year to share the wonder of Ireland's ultimate 'learning landscape', the Burren. These events included monthly walks (on the first Sunday of every month), training courses for people interested in 'Place based learning', events enabling people with physical disabilities to share in the wonder of the Burren, and much more including community feasts and 'wild child' days out for young people. The Burrenbeo Trust also displayed the EDPA pull-up during its monthly talks events (October 2015 onwards). www.burrenbeo.com

The Burren Winterage Weekend 2015 took place from October 22nd – 25th in Corofin, Co. Clare with over 130 delegates in attendance from across Europe. This community-led event highlights the importance of farming traditions to the landscape, culture and heritage of the Burren region. A wide variety of activities and events took place including a ‘Winterage School’ on the theme of High Nature Value Farming in Europe, Herdsmen’s walks with local farmers, a ‘Food fayre’ of local produce and the famous ‘Cattle Drove’ where the community come together to herd the livestock back on to the Burren hills for winter. An EDPA poster was also on display during the feature event of the Burren Winterage Weekend, the annual cattle drove (below). www.burrenwinterage.com

The EDPA continues to be referenced on the Burren Life website <http://burrenlife.com/european-diploma-for-protected-areas-edpa-celebrates-50-years/> while an EDPA poster (pull-up) is on full-time display at the Public office of the Burren Life programme (www.burrenlife.com).

The EDPA logo features on the Burren National Park website <http://www.burrennationalpark.ie/> while an EDPA poster (pull-up) is on full-time display at the visitor centre in Corofin.

A detailed description of the EDPA award for the Burren is featured on the National Parks and Wildlife Service <http://www.npws.ie/research-projects/burren-life-programme/european-diploma-protected-areas-award-2013> with the 50th anniversary logo.

29. 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 est continué pendant tout l’année 2015 avec plusieurs réunions avec les fonctionnaires des Régions Lazio et Abruzzo.

Pour le Plan de gestion des Sites Nature 2000 du Parc (IT7110205 et IT7120132) nous avons pris en charge les observations de la Région des Abruzzes et consigné le Plan définitif à la Direction environnement de la Région des Abruzzes pour ouvrir la procédure d’approbation. Le Plan définitif sera envoyé aux Régions Lazio et Molise. Dans le même temps nous avons présenté le Plan à la Communauté du Parc c’est-à-dire à l’ensemble des maires des Municipalité du Parc. Le plan a été aussi publié dans le site internet du Parc pour le rendre publique.

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 procédure de création des zone périphériques marche lentement : dans le Protocol signé entre Ministère, Régions et Parc, les trois Régions ont pris l’engagement de créer la zone périphériques du Parc prévue par la Lois cadre mais jusqu’à ce moment seulement la Région Molise a institué pour sa part la zone périphérique.

La situation est resté donc la même de l’année passée. Seule nouveauté a été que deux municipalités au dehors du Parc, la commune de Villalago et la commune de Anversa degli Abruzzi, ont demandé de faire partie, leurs aussi, de la future zone périphérique du Parc. Le Conseille Directif du Parc avec une Délibération, datée mars 2015, a accueilli la proposition de deux municipalités et renvoyé la nouvelle proposition pour l’institution de l’aire périphérique à la Region des Abruzzes .

La réglementation de la chasse, de l'autre côté, marche un peu mieux. Dans les régions du Molise et des Abruzzes l'activité de chasse pour la saison 2015-2016 est exercée avec le système de la soi-disant " girata": un groupe de chasseurs avec un ou deux chiens spécialisés pour la recherche du sanglier. Ce type de chasse réduit le nombre de chiens et donc le dérangement pour la faune sauvage, ours en particulier. La saison de chasse ouvre le 1er de novembre dans les Régions des Abruzzes et du Lazio et le 15 de octobre dans la Région du Molise : le Commissaire extraordinaire du Comité de Gestion de l'aire périphérique du Molise a décidé de modifier le calendrier d'ouverture de la chasse au sanglier et fixé l'ouverture au 1^{er} de novembre. Les Régions cherchent en quelque manière de tenir en compte que la saison de chasse, que généralement ouvre aux premiers jours de septembre, coïncide avec la saison dans laquelle l'ours a besoin de se nourrir beaucoup plus pour se préparer à l'hiver et donc fréquente les mêmes zones où se trouvent les chasseurs. Pour minimiser donc l'impact de la chasse sur l'alimentation de l'ours on cherche d'ouvrir la chasse après le milieu d'octobre.

- **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.

- **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 ;**

L'Autorité de Gestion du PATOM dans la réunion du mois de avril 2015 a fixé les objectifs pour l'année 2015 (document en pièce-jointe). Tous les trois Régions sont engagées à améliorer la gestion sanitaire, la gestion de la chasse, la gestion des pâturages. Tous les trois ont inséré dans les objectifs 2015 l'approbation du Plan du Parc. Autres objectifs sont ceux relatifs à la mitigation des accidents d'auto : surtout Région Lazio et Région Abruzzo sont engagée à identifier les routes à risque et à mettre en œuvre des systèmes pour réduire le risque d'accident d'auto. La Région Lazio et la Région Abruzzo sont aussi engagée à repérer les routes forestières que doivent être fermées dans les zones critiques pour l'ours au dehors du Parc.

La Région des Abruzzes a abrogé la loi qui donnait la possibilité de conduire le bétail aux pâturages tout l'année et a fixé une saison de pâturages entre le 10 juin et le 31 octobre.

Tous les trois Régions sont engagées dans la formation du personnel de vigilance pour intensifier la lutte au braconnage et aux boulettes et pour préparer le personnel à la gestion des ours problématiques.

- 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 ;**

Pour l'inclusion des secteurs limitrophes au Parc nous avons produit une cartographie à l'intérieur du plan du Parc.

Les Sites Nature 2000 dont le Parc est gestionnaire et pour lesquelles a fait le Plan de Gestion ont un territoire en partie à l'intérieur du Parc, en partie au dehors. La partie des sites au dehors du Parc a, à son

intérieur, des zones d'intérêt biologique majeur pour les grands carnivores, du point de vue du paysage, du point de vue d'endémisme floristique (par ex. : M. Greco, le Mont Serralunga, la zone du Commune de Alfedena qui forme un coin à l'intérieur du territoire protégé par le Parc). Après l'approbation du Plan ces zones seront directement contrôlées par le 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 ;

Le Plan de développement économique et social est terminé. Le Plan a été approuvé par la Communauté du Parc, a eu l'avis positif du Parc et a été envoyé aux Régions et au Ministère de l'Environnement.

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 2015 le Parc a reçu 123.000 euro en total. Avec ce financement le Parc a :

-créé avec les autres parcs nationaux et régionaux un réseaux de monitoring ours, fait le comptage des femelles d'ours avec oursons, continué les actions concernent les ours problématiques,

-chargé un photographe naturaliste de réaliser un projet de divulgation des forêts de hêtre qui sont à l'intérieur du processus de candidature UNESCO. Dans ce projet on a prévu la réalisation d'un site internet nommé « Forest Beat » ou est possible voir le passage des saisons dans la hêtraie, connaître les fleurs et les animaux de la hêtraie, suivre les recherches en cours. Le projet à été présenté aux journalistes dans une conférence de presse le 6 novembre 2015 ;

- continué l'application du Plan de gestion du chamois ;

-continué le projet de recherche sur le lièvre italien ;

-décidé de réaliser des interventions en faveur des amphibiens (création des petites mares, protection des zones utilisées pour la reproduction, création des barrages pour maintenir l'eau dans de mares naturelles autrement sèches pendant l'été).

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 ;

Dans le Plan de gestion du Chamois produit à l'intérieur du projet Life COORNATA on a prévu di continuer le monitoring du cerf pour contrôler la situation et activer des mesures de contrôle de la population de cerf en cas de nécessité.

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

Le Parc a participé avec les autres parcs nationaux et régionaux à EXPO 2015 avec le stand Casa Abruzzo situé à l'intérieur de la ville de Milan : nous avons eu donc la chance de faire connaître les produits du territoire du Parc au public de l'Expo et de présenter à Expo les aires protégées de la Région des Abruzzes. Nous avons aussi participé à la réalisation du film projeté à Palazzo Italia (le pavillon italien de l'Expo) et préparé par Federparchi.

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 des nourrissages artificiels sont fortement réduits.

Gestion du site

Dans le printemps 2015 la Région des Abruzzes a produit délibération de son conseil (DGR n.348 du 7/5/2015) avec pour objet "Actions urgents pour la gestion de l'ours brun marsicano". Dans ce document la Région a demandé aux municipalité de Gioia dei Marsi, Lecce nei Marsi et Bisegna l'interdiction des pâturages intéressés par le cas de tuberculose de l'année 2014. La Région a demandé aux Municipalités, en accord avec le Parc, de localiser les pâturages concernés et de l'interdire pour la saison 2015 au moins. Malheureusement, malgré tout ça, la Municipalité de Gioia dei Marsi n'a pas suivi la décision de la Région et les pâturages de son territoire sont resté ouverts.

Dans le même document la Région a décidé la création d'une commission régionale pour surveillance sanitaire de la faune sauvage à l'intérieur de laquelle on a prévu la participation de représentants des aires protégées régionaux. La Commission est chargé aussi de préparer un plan pour la surveillance sanitaire de la faune sauvage.

Au niveau national le Ministère de la Santé a produit une ordonnance extraordinaire pour la gestion des maladies comme la tuberculose : dans cette ordonnance pour la première fois on a prévu la possibilité de tuer tous les animaux domestiques positifs qui se trouvent dans les pâturages et que n'est pas possible conduire à l'intérieur d'un enclos.

Le Ministère de la Santé a aussi introduit, pour la première fois, dans le Plan National de Prévention 2014-2018 la réalisation d'un Plan de surveillance sanitaire de la faunes sauvages.

Frontières

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

Autres informations

Dans le mois de mai, chez le village de Villavallelonga, nous avons trouvé une petite oursonne abandonnée par sa mère. Nous avons décidé de nous prendre soin de l'oursonne pour le donner la chance de survivre en considération du fait que la population d'ours a peu d'individus et que c'était une femelle. L'oursonne a été porté dans un enclos loin des personnes avec l'objectif de la laisser de nouveau en nature après quelques mois. Dans les prochaines semaines nous allons choisir ou la laisser et, après avoir mis à l'oursonne un collier pour suivre sa situation, la petite femelle seras livrer.

Le procédé de candidature UNESCO de la forêt de Val Cervara continue. Dans les mois de juillet et de septembre nous avons participé, dans la ville de Vienne, à deux workshop technique pour préparer le dossier de candidature qui sera soumis à UNESCO dans le mois de janvier 2016. Le Parc est le coordinateur du processus de candidature pour l'Italie : au niveaux national les sites concernés sont la Reserve de Sasso Fratino dans le Parc National du Casentino, la foret de Cozzo Ferriero dans le Parc du Pollino, la Réserve de Falascone et Foresta Umbra dans le Parc du Gargano, les forêts de M. Cimino et M. Raschio dans la Région du Lazio.

Le Parc c'est fait promoteur, avec son Président, d'un projet de loi régional (Région des Abruzzes) pour la conservation de l'Ours brun marsicano à l'intérieur du quel on donne la possibilité de faire action de prévention des dommages causés par l'ours à l'élevage dans les zones extérieures aux aires protégées et, dans le même temps, rembourser les dommages de l'ours à la faune domestiques dans les zones dehors des Parcs.

Le Parc a utilisé 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.

Nous sommes en train de créer un link entre le site du parc et le site di Diplôme.

30. ITALY - GRAN PARADISO 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.

Le plan de gestion du parc sera formellement approuvé au plus tard d'ici à 2012.

Les Régions Vallée d'Aoste et Piémont avaient formellement adopté l'année passé le plan de gestion du Parc. Le Parc a achevé le traitement, du point de vue technique, des observations des établissements publics et des citoyens. Selon les règles de la loi 3.12.1991, n.394, le Conseil du Parc doit encore donner son avis sur les propositions de modification et transférer le texte aux Régions pour l'approbation finale.

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 le financement soit essentiellement assuré par l'État, les régions et les provinces et intègre adéquatement d'autres sources de financement ;

Le montant final de la contribution ordinaire annuelle de l'État en 2015 a été de € 6.552.395,87 et une contribution complétantaire de 125.000,00 € a été versée pour les activités de protection de l'environnement et de la biodiversité. Pour mémoire, l'évolution de cette contribution ordinaire annuelle est la suivante: 2011 : 5.983.803,53 € en 2011, 6.260.711,93 € en 2012, 6.419.729,44 € en 2013 et 6.132.753,10 € en 2014. Cette contribution, dans une période de crise économique et de réduction généralisée de la dépense publique, reste néanmoins satisfaisante.

2. doter le parc national du personnel adéquat au niveau exécutif afin de permettre au directeur de se consacrer aux tâches essentielles, notamment sur le plan stratégique ;

Les lois 148/2011 et 138/2012 ont mis en place des réductions du personnel dans toute l'administration publique. Le Parc a eu la chance de pouvoir maintenir sa dotation sur le personnel actuellement existant (88 personnes). Par conséquent, il n'est pas possible à ce stade de prévoir une augmentation du personnel et, plus encore, au niveau du personnel exécutif. Le Parc a renouvelé sa demande de pouvoir procéder au remplacement du personnel qui a quitté le service et est actuellement dans l'attente de la réponse du Ministère de la Fonction publique.

3. défendre activement la prise en compte de mesures de protection des valeurs naturelles et paysagères dans les plans et les décisions d'urbanisation.

La défense active des valeurs naturelles et paysagères fait appel aux mesures de protection et à toute décision pertinente d'autorisation pour modifier la zone protégée. Á ce sujet, le Parc a rejeté un projet de captage de ressources en eau sur le torrent Dres à des fins de production électrique susceptible de nuire à l'environnement et au paysage. D'autres projets ont été approuvés avec des importantes demandes de modification pour réduire l'impact sur l'environnement. Du point de vue de la protection de valeurs naturelles, il faut mettre en évidence la réalisation à titre expérimental par le Parc de deux installations de phyto-pédo-épuration en altitude pour réduire la charge des effluents d'un alpage et d'un refuge. Les indicateurs d'amélioration de l'environnement exprimés en termes de réduction des émissions de CO₂, de consommation des sols, de conservation du paysage, montrent l'excellent état de conservation et le bon travail fait par le PNGP.

4. intégrer les valeurs des forêts comme écosystèmes dans le cadre de l'élaboration des plans de gestion forestiers ;

Toute la surface du Parc est comprise dans le Site d'Intérêt Communautaire SIC/ZPS IT1201000. Les objectifs et les mesures de conservation du plan de gestion du SIC prennent en compte les besoins écologiques de la forêt, différenciés selon les différents degrés de protection (réserves, zones agricoles, zones de promotion économique et sociale). Le plan de gestion établit que la conservation du patrimoine forestier et l'amélioration de sa stabilité sont poursuivies dans le respect de l'écosystème forestier et des habitats d'intérêt communautaire, comprenant les activités de gestion dans les zones boisées, telles que définies par les lois régionales découlant du décret législatif 227/2001, finalisées :

- a) à l'évolution des bois vers structures paraclimatiques en équilibre biologique avec l'environnement,
- b) au renforcement de la résistance et de la résilience des peuplements forestiers aux aléas biotiques et abiotiques,
- c) à l'entretien et à l'amélioration de la fertilité et de la stabilité du sol.

Le plan de gestion a intégré les nouveautés induites par les mesures de conservation de la Région Piémont.

On a appliqué sur le terrain ces indications pour l'aménagement des parcelles sur lesquelles des abattages des forêts ont été demandés.

5. poursuivre les recherches de compatibilité et de synergies entre exploitation agricole et préservation de la diversité biologique ;

Dans le cadre du Programme de développement rural 2007-2013 de la Région Piémont le Parc a obtenu un financement dans le cadre d'un projet d'intervention visant à augmenter la biodiversité par une gestion durable des pâturages et l'application d'une conservation active, comprenant l'implication des acteurs locaux pour le suivi de certains groupements taxonomiques (papillons, libellules, sauterelles, coléoptères coprophages et carabidés) sensibles aux variations de l'aménagement des prairies.

Sur le territoire de l'alpage de Riva, au col du Nivolet (2590 m), une action visant à améliorer la gestion pastorale et des eaux d'irrigation, intégrée avec celle du refuge « Savoia », a été menée avec la réalisation d'un système expérimental de pédo-phyto-épuration pour le traitement des eaux usées et réduire la charge organique produite par l'irrigation fertilisante traditionnelle.

6. éviter tous nouveaux projets de captage des ressources en eau à des fins de production électrique, à l'exception de microcentrales dûment autorisées par le parc national ;

En 2015 le parc national a rejeté un projet de captage de ressources en eau sur le torrent Dres à des fins de production électrique.

7. mettre en place un conseil scientifique consultatif ou tout autre mécanisme susceptible d'apporter la contribution de la communauté scientifique à la gestion du parc.

Le conseil scientifique consultatif n'a pas encore été créé.

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.

Nouvelles observations d'espèces comprises dans les annexes de la directive CE « Habitat »:

- Gypaète barbu (*Gypaetus barbatus*): Pour la troisième année consécutive, les gardes du Parc ont pu documenter le succès de reproduction du nid de la vallée de Rhêmes. La ponte du nid en Valsavarenche

est échoué. Un changement important concerne la vallée de Cogne, où un nouveau couple s'est reproduit avec succès. L'envol des deux poussins a eu lieu dans les premières semaines d'août.

- Loup (*Canis lupus*): Le loup est dorénavant une présence stable dans le parc avec un couple qui s'est reproduit en 2013 et 2014 en Val Soana. Des signalements fréquents ont eu lieu dans la haute vallée de l'Orco aussi, avec deux événements de prédation sur les moutons. Dans cette vallée, la reproduction n'est pas encore documentée.

- Muscardin (*Muscardinus avellanarius*): les enquêtes menées le long de gradients d'altitude ont conduit à la découverte de deux nouvelles localisations de cette espèce dans la zone protégée, dont une est de grande importance puisque située à plus de 2000 m d'altitude.

- Truite marbrée (*Salmo marmoratus*) : dans le cadre du projet LIFE+, une éclosierie de poissons pour la reproduction de la Truite marbrée a été réalisée dans le vallon du Piantonetto et les premiers alevins ont été élevés. Les actions d'enlèvement des individus de truite fario (*Salmo trutta fario*) pour éviter l'hybridation avec la Truite marbrée ont été poursuivies dans le torrent Piantonetto et dans celui de Campiglia.

- L'activité d'éradication de l'omble de fontaine (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) de cinq lacs en altitude est presque terminée. Des signes clairs de reprise des écosystèmes ont été enregistrés: sur le lac du Dres en Vallée Orco. Des dizaines de libellules volent et certaines Daphnies nagent déjà dans la zone pélagique. Dans le Lac Nero à Valsavarenche, il a été trouvé des Dytiscidae (petits coléoptères nageurs). Dans le lac de Djouan, les grenouilles (*Rana temporaria*) y sont abondantes et des trichoptères ont réussi à survivre.

Concernant la flore, le Parc est en train de conduire une action de suivi sur des espèces envahissantes (*Senecio inaequidens*, *Reynoutria x bohemica*, *Budleja davidii*). Cette action a abouti au cours du 2015 à des activités pour contenir et arracher des nouvelles stations. L'augmentation de la présence de nouvelles espèces exotiques et des stations dans les limites du parc est due à la hausse des températures par le changement climatique et à l'utilisation pour travaux de restauration de terres infestées par graines et / ou rhizomes, venants de dépôts localisés à des altitudes plus basses.

Des contrôles périodiques sont effectués sur l'état des populations d'espèces d'intérêt particulier, qui vivent dans des environnements de plus en plus vulnérables (zones humides notamment). Les habitats à altitudes inférieures, où la pression humaine due à l'élevage et au tourisme est plus élevée, sont particulièrement surveillés. Cela concerne en particulier la station d' *Astragalus alopecurus* (all.III de la Dir. 43/92 CEE), qui est partie de celle placée à l'extérieur des limites du parc en val de Cogne, qui a été inséré dans le sentier de la nature « Les Fontaines ». De cette façon on a réalisé le but pédagogique d'informer le grand public sur les espèces et les habitats présents avec des panneaux. Dans le même temps avec la réalisation d'une clôture, on a protégé l'espèce des activités agricoles et d'élevage (notamment la fumure).

Le projet e-Pheno sur la phénologie a été achevé. Il a permis de mettre en place des instruments webcam et NDVI automatisés sur les stations d'observation de la phénologie de la forêt en vallée de Cogne et des pâturages en Valsavarenche. Le parc fait partie du réseau phénologique des Alpes occidentales appelé "Phénoclim". Depuis 2010 des enquêtes phénologiques sont conduites sur 16 stations dans le parc. Pour cela, une application pour smartphones a été conçue pour la collecte des observations phénologiques.

Le projet « Alpgrain » a également été achevé. Il a donné des informations intéressantes sur la possibilité de mettre en œuvre une chaîne d'approvisionnement pour la production de semences indigènes de prairies donatrices.

Ressources financières: voir recommandation 1 - Personnel: voir recommandation 2.

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 aux frontières du site a été apporté depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Aucune difficulté a été rencontrée.

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

31. 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.

Today 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.

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 the local in charge authorities. Now funding is finished but we are looking for other funding to continue the work.

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.

- All studies on the sea protected area are included in the three-years plan of scientific research.
- An office to a marine biologist was given. Now it's finished.
- All necessary studies to fill in the format of request for the Environment Ministry, have been taken.
- From January 2015 a series of meetings between the Park and the stakeholders are organized, to discuss together the proposal of management of the sea protected area, to send to the Environment Ministry.
- A map of the sea protected area has been produced, accompanied by a technical relation.
- The project is to deliver to the Environment Ministry all documents before 31 December 2015.
- The Park is giving another biologist an office to communicate to stakeholders about this theme.

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.

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:

about the increase human resources, not yet about the control, but this year there are two new business collaborations: 1) to one biologist, to manage the project of the creation of the sea protected area, overall to make aware stakeholders of the territory 2) to an expert about communication to increase Park promotion, by social networks, press and the website.

About the level of funding, actually the situation is getting worse, not only because the global crisis, but because the recession of Italy, today in progress. It has caused a decrease of regional and local funding. The number of visitors from the 1st January to the 31 October 2015 is about 39.421. This year we have opened a panoramic viewpoint building along the C1 and C2 itineraries and we have introduced a new way to visit the Park by walk: the crossing of the Park, from the Talamone area, crossing Magliano in Toscana area, to reach Alberese area.

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. We are waiting for the legal decree, to continue the project.

- We constantly organise meetings with the local enterprises (BB, agritourism, restaurants, rent apartments etc.) to update them about the Park events, news and other.

6. Develop action to promote the protection and enhancement of the Park's anthropological heritage.

From April 2015 to 30 April 2016 the exposition "Romani di Alberese" is at the Park Visitor Centre. The exposition shows the restored archeological finds of the "Scoglietto" and "Spolverino" sites. "Scoglietto" is close. About "Spolverino", we have three active site areas and a new archeological area has been located and started during the last summer 2014, and now works are in progress.

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's a group of wolves with adults and sub adults. So a research project named "Monitoring of wolf inside Maremma Park" has begun.

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. Increase of the beach in the area of Marina di Alberese, thanks to the works done during these last years, against the coastal erosion and overall thanks to the building of the sea "brushes".

2. Finances: decrease of regional and local fundings.

3. In the Giannella beach, inside the area of Park community a sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) nested and eggs opened. The Maremma Park has done the first intervention.

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 2015 too, the event “Park’s Festival” during the last two weekends 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 a lot of activities: canoe, trekking, horseback, bicycle excursions, tastings and folk show. The result has been a great success about the number of visitors.
2. The “sustainable mobility” project experimented during 2007 and repurposed in the summer 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 is an excellent managerial model aimed to encourage people to use free public transport rather than private cars. This project, combined with the cycle path from Alberese to Marina di Alberese and the automatic system of the parking area, represents a low environmental impact system of access to the beach and an innovative sustainable model of great importance for a protected area. For the last four summers the Park has done a big sacrifice, because there wasn’t any financing from the Region; a symbolic price of 1,70 euro for the bus ticket, for all the day, has been asked to visitors.
It’s the fifth winter we have the “shuttle bus on call” service to visit the Maremma Park. The shuttle bus is used only if there are people who want to visit the Park. That is a way to economize and to respect the environment.
3. The success about the reintroduction of osprey. This summer we had 1 juvenile.
4. We participated from 7 to 16 August 2015 to the “Festambiente” Festival in Enaoli with a stand where there was a photographic exhibition about the archeological sites in the Park and a video with a series of Park movies.
5. The Park is inside the Tuscany net cetacean mammals and sea turtles observatory. The Park takes part to the Regional Go Green Mare Project and thanks to the Environment Minister authorization the Talamone sea turtle center is a Sea Turtles Rescue Center.
6. About the environmental education there is a new didactic project 2015/2016 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 and evening events to the Talamone Aquarium.
7. The Park has participated to the Fuori EXPO 2015, in Milan, a manifestation in the center of the city, organised by Tuscany region. For a week, from 10 August to 17 August we have exposed local Maremma products and we have organised a lunch for food bloggers and some tastings to let know local Maremma products.
8. To celebrate 40 years from the Park institution we have organised:
 - a party for all the community with a folk concert, butteri show and a catering open to everybody, tourists and inhabitants;
 - one open day to visit Park itineraries for all local residents;
 - a photographic competition;
 - new update brochures and maps;
 - a new and update website;
 - the Park has organised an institutional dinner to celebrate the 40 years from its institution at Festambiente Festival. During this occasion an Audio book “Storie di Maremma” by Vocal Sisters ad Arnaldo Foà, created for the Park anniversary, has been presented.
9. This year the Park has opened a panoramic viewpoint building along the C1 and C2 itineraries.
10. The Park has introduced a new way to visit it by walk: the crossing of the Park, from the Talamone area, crossing Magliano in Toscana area, to reach Alberese area.
11. For the first summer the Park has organised a volunteers camp to the Pinottolaio guest house, to have a help to better protect the environment and the Principina a Mare beach. It was a success.
12. This year too, during the spring, the Park has organised the “horse riding meeting”, two days along the Park horseback itineraries and it has participated to the Verona Horses Fair on the 5th and 6th November 2015.

13. “Gruppo Speleologico” has organised at the Park offices a national professional course to teach realising 3D videos about Speleology and they have produced one 3D video about “Orso” cave and now they are working for another new 3D video about “Scoglietto” cave.

The use of European Diploma’s logo

1. At the Visitor Centre we normally expose the 50 anniversary of EPDA flag.
2. The new brochures and maps have the European Diploma’s logo.
3. In the new website, on the homepage there’s the European Diploma’s logo. Link: <http://parcomaremma.treart.com/> .

32. 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) The plans for a micro-hydroelectric plant in the Rio Meris valley have been completely abandoned now. The landscaping around the Tetti Gaina plant has been completed, this was the refurbishment of an existing hydro-electric plant. No new hydro-electric plants are allowed in the protected area.

2)The plans to pipe spa water down from ”Terme di Valdieri” have been shelved permanently. The Park area would have been involved with a pipeline being laid under the Terme di Valdieri provincial road. No work will be done in this case.

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) Throughout 2015 the Park continued to work on a number of transfrontier activities with Parc National du Mercantour. In 2015 four projects financed through the ALCOTRA 2007/2013 programme were concluded. The final reports for two of these projects have been written and are included, one concerns sustainable tourism and the other transfrontier landscapes. The other two projects, also financed by ALCOTRA finished on 31/12/2015, but the final reports have not yet been written, these will be included in the next report. The first project implemented environmental education actions, in particular aimed at transfrontier schools and the second allowed us to finish the scientific studies for the dossier of the “Alpi del Mediterraneo” (Marittime Mercantour area) UNESCO World Heritage Site candidature. The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) “Parco europeo Marittime Mercantour” and associated partners played a fundamental role in this. Several universities worked on the project including Milano, Genova, Torino, Nice, Montpellier, as did a number of individual researchers. Their work has allowed us to define the necessary scientific criteria to present in the candidature. In particular criteria VIII - IX and X. A draft of the dossier is attached. These documents are the preparatory work for the presentation of the candidature early in 2017. An important aspect resolved in 2015 is the IUCN classification of Parco Alpi Marittime. Following a specific analysis the IUCN recognised that Parco Alpi Marittime can be classified as category II rather than IV, putting it in the same category as national parks and in particular the same as Parc national du Mercantour. Parco Alpi Marittime’s administration has also begun talks with the Italian Environment Ministry to study the possibility of classification as a National Park or International Park, according to the Italian Protected Areas national framework law. In 2015 we remained in contact with the Monegasque government and the Prince Albert II Foundation who financed the publication of the General Biological Inventory and the release of two more bearded vultures (*Gypaetus barbatus*) in Parco Alpi Marittime. This year an important habitat rehabilitation project was financed by WWF Switzerland for *Papilio alexanor* in a disused quarry near the Juniperus Phoenicea Nature Reserve.

2) On 3 August 2015 regional law 19 was ratified, which modifies the Regional Framework Law n° 19 of 29 June 2009. The law provides that the Parco Alpi Marittime authority assumes responsibility for the newly formed Ente di Gestione delle Aree protette delle Alpi Marittime from 1 January 2016. The new body will manage, besides Riserva Juniperus Phoenicea and Riserva delle Grotte del Bandito the now suppressed Ente di Gestione del Parco del Marguareis including 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. A copy of the modified law is attached. The protected area now covers over 38,000 hectares.

In the course of 2015 actions to involve the municipalities neighbouring on the Park continued. Among these Vinadio for its involvement in the UNESCO candidature process. All the neighbouring municipalities (Cuneo, Vignolo, Cervasca, Roccasparvera, Gaiola, Moiola, Demonte, Vinadio, Pietraporzio, Sambuco, Argentera) have signed for favourable letter of intent. The possible extension of the Park into the municipalities of Vinadio, Aisone, Demonte, Moiola and Ormea has been defined. These new areas will be formalised by a regional law planned for spring 2016.

3) During discussions with the municipalities above, they confirmed their intention to ask Piedmont Region for the management of the following Sites of Community Importance (SCI) “Colle della Maddalena” “Tenibres” “Orgials”, “ Stura di Demonte” and the “Valle Stura” SPA to be attributed to the Park authority, Ente di Gestione Aree protette delle Alpi Marittime. Piedmont Region has conferred its willingness to pass management of these sites to the Park in 2016.

4) The EGTC “Parco Europeo Marittime Mercantour” continued to work through 2015, besides the partners’ quotas the institution also received funds from the Prince Albert II of Monaco foundation, Allianz, Cuneo Chamber of Commerce and the Conseil Departemental des Alpes Maritimes and PACA

Region. These resources were destined for studies linked to the World Heritage dossier and communication. The EGTC now has administrative offices in Vernante.

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 staff changes took place in 2015. The grave staffing and financial difficulties continue. Piedmont Region blocked all new jobs for 2015 and has not authorised the replacement of staff whose contracts have expired. At present the Park has 31 employee units, wholly insufficient to manage the protected area. With the annexing of Ente di Gestione del Parco del Marguareis the number of employee units rises to 53 and there will be a reorganisation to optimize various 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.

There were no changes to boundaries in 2015. Which remain as stated in the 2013 annual 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 European Diploma logo is inserted in the Park site at the following address: www.parcopalmarittime.it and in cross-border portal www.marittimemercantour.eu The sites have a link with the European Diploma page on the website of the Council of Europe. The symbol was used on Ente letter head which will be rebuilt in 2016 following the incorporation and entry into Ente of Protected Areas Management of the Maritime Alps. The logo is currently being used in several publications Ente in general. Publications are printed in several languages (French, German and English).

33. 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 a Information System, used for the management activities.**

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 informations 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 2015 the**

effectiveness of ailanthus eradication has been carried out and the remaining sprouts or seedling have been eliminated. Such monitoring activities will be implemented at least until 2019.

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 acorn 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 2015 seeds have been collected and further plantations have been implemented in the fences, and the effectiveness of fencing has been verified.**

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. Every year a population census is carried out, and 13 samples were equipped with gps collar for monitoring. The wild goat population amount is quite stable and shows a good resilience. Five goats have been moved from Montecristo to the Bioparco in Rome, for ex situ conservation and for project demopnstration to a wide audience (about 600.000 visitors per year). This little population is increasing.**

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. The system is still under construction, but we assume that it will be ready within the 2015. 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; **The project and the funding for the replacement have been stated. In the next 2016 we predict to be able to set some photovoltaic panels and a little wind mill, so that the diesel generator will be used only in case of emergency. The system installation has slipped one year because of administrative reasons.**

8. gain more in-depth knowledge of the flora and fauna; **the above mentioned LIFE projects allowed to gain such knowledge. In 2015 exploitations have been carried out in order to quantify the speading of invasive species such as *Oxalys pes-caprae* and *Lepidium didimum*. Furthermore some monitoring activities have been implemented to verify the presence of bats and diurnal butterflies.**

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.

Unfortunately we have recorded a strong decreasing in funding for management activities, as a result of restoring the public finance.

Beside that, the National Forest Corps is going to be totally rearranged and maybe united with other public entities. We are not able to predict how management activities will be carried out in the future, but hopefully an important Natural Reserve such as Montecristo Island will be held in due consideration in such process.

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

34. ITALY - REGIONAL PARK OF MIGLIARINO, SAN ROSSORE AND MASSACIUCCOLI

- **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 des conditions.

- **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 : pour chaque activité ou projet à l'intérieur du Parc, on continue à utiliser le Nulla Osta, soit l'autorisation sans laquelle rien n'est permis. Dans les cas de gros projets prévus à l'extérieur des limites du Parc mais proche aux sites Natura 2000 qui sont dans le Parc, l'instrument utilisé est l'évaluation d'incidence. Cette année cependant il n'y a pas eu de cas de ce genre. Le Parc garde un rôle et une propre compétence en matière de paysage lors de l'octroi des autorisations. La Région, par une loi toute récente (Loi n. 30 du 19 mars 2015) a confirmé les compétences des parcs régionaux en ces sens (Nulla Osta, Natura 2000, paysage).

2. poursuivre les mesures de réduction des daims et des sangliers;

Le contrôle des daims et des sangliers reste une des tâches principales du Parc. Depuis 2004 l'effort de l'administration se base sur une stratégie pluriannuelle et sur des recensements et des objectifs annuels.

Malgré cela, depuis la saison 2013/14 on enregistre une baisse des résultats, surtout en ce qui concerne le contrôle des daims, pour une combinaison des facteurs suivants :

- nouvelle organisation du personnel : les 22 gardes du Parc, dont le nombre a diminué à cause des retraites, doivent accomplir beaucoup d'autres fonctions allant de la prévention des incendies aux contrôles de police judiciaire (notamment sur les constructions), et ce sur plus de 23000 ha. Ils sont les seuls à pouvoir accomplir cette tâche, avec l'aide de 5 ouvriers.
- maladie « blue tongue » suite à laquelle, par des ordonnances sanitaires, les déplacements de tous les ruminants vivants sont interdits, ce qui a fortement limité l'éloignement des daims capturés ;
- présence d'une concentration énorme d'animaux dans deux bases militaires (900 et 450 ha), dont une en gestion mixte Italie/USA. Prélèvement nul dans les deux dernières années pour des problèmes de coordination et d'exigences militaires.

Les graphiques suivants montrent l'écart des deux dernières années entre les objectifs et les prélèvements des daims (fig. 1) et des sangliers (fig. 2).



Fig. 1. confrontation entre les prélèvements (n. d'animaux abattus ou capturés) des **daims** et les objectifs fixés

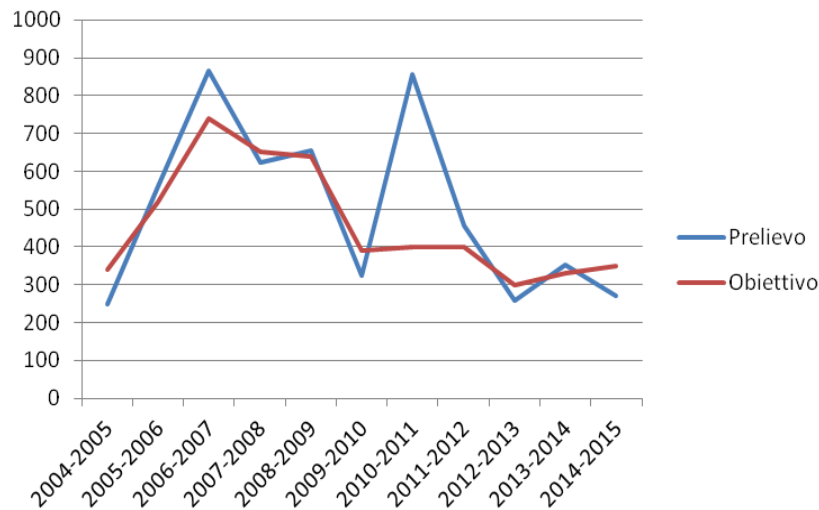


Fig. 2. confrontation entre les prélèvements (n. d'animaux abattus ou capturés) des **sangliers** et les objectifs fixés

Le Parc a donc pris les décisions suivantes :

- demander à une société externe de s'occuper soit des activités de contrôle direct (captures, abattements) soit de la distribution/vente de la viande, comme nous l'avions annoncé lors du rapport annuel 2014. Les démarches bureaucratiques, dues soit aux procédures de loi qu'au manque de fonds sont lentes mais sont enfin parties. L'accord avec les Autorités qui gèrent la Base militaire plus grande (900 ha) pour l'éradication du daim dans cette zone et, par conséquent, dans le moyen terme, avoir davantage de ressources pour travailler dans les autres zones est dans une phase avancée (rédaction de l'appel d'offre). Notons que cet accord est la concrétisation d'une mesure de compensation demandée à la Base suite à la procédure d'Evaluation d'Incidence pour des activités et constructions militaires;
- se concentrer davantage sur les abattements que sur les captures : cela permet une sélection des animaux selon l'âge et le sexe suivant les objectifs annuels. En même temps, cette stratégie est plus éthique : les animaux sont moins stressés que par des captures en gros clôtures et déplacements vers des zones de chasse dans la région ou d'autres régions. Enfin, ce choix tend à décourager la pratique de la chasse en région.

La saison de contrôle en cours (2015/16) semble nous donner raison : elle montre des résultats encourageants d'animaux abattus dans les domaines de San Rossore (près 30% de l'objectif à encore 4 mois de la fin) pour les deux espèces et à Migliarino (zones agricoles) pour le sanglier – avec une meilleure collaboration avec la Province de Pisa qui s'occupe des zones collinaires externes d'où proviennent la plupart des animaux.

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;*

L'étude approfondi du système complexe des eaux souterraines et de l'interaction avec les grands usages pour l'agriculture (projet financé par la Région Toscane) vient de terminer. Les résultats montrent une salinisation importante soit de la nappe phréatique soit de l'aquifère en gravier. Ce dernier aquifère est celui utilisé pour l'agriculture et les terrains de golf (grands usages). Bien que la salinisation de cet aquifère soit moins importante, l'étude a signalé la possibilité d'une contamination entre les deux aquifères due à une mauvaise construction des puits ; elle signale aussi une forte saisonnalité des conditions hydrodynamiques et physico-chimiques de l'eau, liée soit à la baisse des chutes de pluie en été, soit à la hausse des besoins d'eau pour l'irrigation. L'étude donne donc des indications très importantes

pour la gestion de cette ressource qui se traduit en éléments de base pour évaluer la concession de nouveaux puits et en prescriptions techniques précises pour la construction des puits et le pompage d'eau.

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 : dans le Domaine de San Rossore, confié par la Région directement au Parc, les nouvelles coupes de forêt de l'année forestière en cours (septembre 2015-aout 2016) appliquent des mesures de conservation de l'écosystème, tel que l'interdiction d'enlever la canopée des arbres (qui doit rester au sol) et de couper les arbres morts et les feuillus. Ces mesures s'ajoutent à celle déjà en vigueur, comme la suspension des travaux pendant la période reproductive de la faune. Ces mesures seront prescrites aussi pour les coupes dans les forêts de propriété privée, toujours dans le Parc.

Agriculture : Constitution du Registre des entreprises agricoles dans le Parc avec un cahier de conduite et des engagements précis que l'entreprise doit suivre, avec le but de promouvoir les produits agricoles du Parc et en même temps garantir des pratiques agronomiques qui respectent l'environnement.

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 (projets de dérivation fleuve Serchio et inondation de 25 ha de terres agricoles achetées par le Parc ; phytodépuration en cours sur une partie des terres agricoles au sud du Lac)

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. Inversion de tendance par rapport aux effets de desertification dus au piétinement (v. image ci-dessus, issue d'un travail sur le littoral nord du Parc)

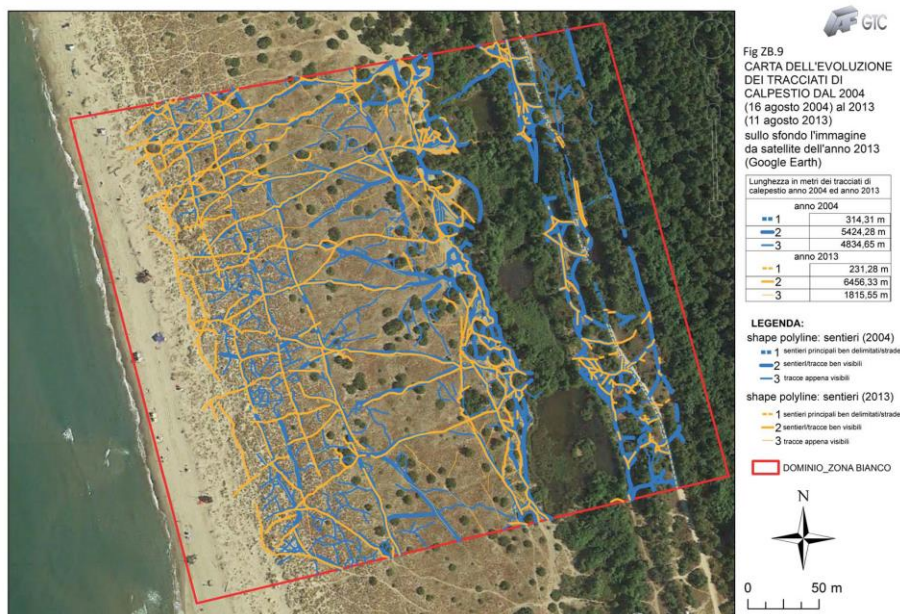


Fig.3. Partie du littoral nord du Parc. Evolution des sentiers de piétinement des dunes, par confrontation entre les photos aériennes de 2004 (avant le démarrage du Projet LIFE Dunetosca) et de 2013. En bleu les sentiers de 2003 qui ne sont plus présents aujourd'hui.



Fig. 4 Un panneau didactique au sommet de la passerelle d'accès au littoral de San Rossore, mis en place cette année.

7. Poursuivre la lutte contre les espèces exotiques envahissantes;

La lutte contre les espèces exotiques se poursuit : dans les milieux des dunes et d'arrière dunes, *Yucca gloriosa* et *Amorpha fruticosa* sont contrôlées par le projet post-LIFE Dunetosca (les travaux sont confiées à une coopérative et toujours suivis par des botanistes) ; *Ailanthus altissima* par les bénévoles dirigés par les techniciens du Parc. Cependant, depuis cette année, le désherbant habituellement utilisé (principe actif : Glyphosate) que sur les tiges précédemment coupés (donc sans dispersion en nature) démontré comme efficace, a été classé par l'IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer) en tant que « probablement cancérigène ». On a donc décidé de le substituer avec l'acide acétique (concentration 26%) qui ne paraît pas aussi efficace. On va monitorer la suite.

8. saisir toutes les opportunités d'améliorer les possibilités de passage pour la faune sous les routes et voies ferrées;

Cette année l'opportunité a été le réaménagement des routes internes à la base militaire de Camp Darby, en pleine forêt. Sous prescription du Parc, la direction de la Base a construit 4 passages pour la faune, selon un projet rédigé par des experts dans le domaine. Le projet prévoit le suivi de l'efficacité de ces passages, afin de calibrer les passages successifs dans le cas d'autres nouveaux projets concernant les routes dans le Parc.

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 Massaciucoli.

Aucune modification.

- **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.

Cette année le Parc, dont le territoire est depuis 2004 Réserve de Biosphère « Selva Pisana » selon le programme MAB de l'UNESCO, a présenté la candidature d'un territoire plus vaste comme nouvelle

Réserve de Biosphère, nommé « Selva costiera di Toscana ». Le territoire comprend les communes des « Monti Pisani », système de moyenne montagne au nord de Pisa, d'une grande valeur naturelle, déjà en connexion avec le Parc par le Musée d'histoire naturelle de Calci (Université de Pisa) et ses activités de recherche scientifique et de didactique avec les écoles et les groupes ; au sud, le territoire de cette nouvelle candidate Réserve de Biosphère comprend des petites zones humides de plaine et un système de forêts et de vestiges historiques de colline en province de Livourne. Ceci dans l'intention de donner au Parc un rôle guide dans une gestion du territoire qui intègre préservation de l'environnement, activités humaines (et développement) et recherche scientifique, avec un modèle de gouvernance qui valorise la participation active de toutes les parties prenantes dès les premières phases de rédaction d'un programme de gestion.

Comme demandé par l'État et de la Région Toscane suite à la baisse des soutiens financiers publics, le Parc travaille pour développer davantage les occasions d'auto financement, notamment par une forte promotion touristique du Parc. Dans ce but, le Domaine de San Rossore a été depuis septembre ouvert au public tous les jours de la semaine avec un ticket journalier ou un abonnement annuel. En effet, San Rossore, l'ancien Domaine du Roi et puis du Président de la République, a été fermé à la population locale pendant des siècles. Durant les derniers 30 ans n'a été ouvert au public que les samedis et dimanches et jours de fête. La décision d'ouverture a été très appréciée et contribue à relancer l'activité du centre visiteurs. Le Parc a aussi récemment approuvé un règlement des guides reconnues par le parc, afin d'assurer et garantir la qualité de l'éducation à l'environnement et en même temps soutenir l'emploi des jeunes.

- **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.

- **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.

Le Parc a donné une large information au public sur l'importance du Diplôme Européen des espaces protégés lors de l'atelier «Espaces protégés en Europe : les 50 prochaines années » du 21-22 mai 2015 que nous avons eu le plaisir d'accueillir près du Parc Migliarino San Rossore Massaciuccoli.

L'atelier a été pour nous, tout particulièrement pour le Service technique « Gestion des Ressources Naturelles » qui a aussi organisé une visite au Parc à la fin des travaux, une formidable occasion de confrontations avec les participants : près de 80 gestionnaires et experts venant de 27 pays.

Dans cette occasion la presse locale, ainsi que notre site internet, a informé la population de l'importance du Diplôme. A partir de cette année, sur tout le matériel promotionnel le logo du Diplôme européen, présent depuis 2006, sera assorti d'une courte explication des raisons de l'octroi du Diplôme avec le link au site du Conseil de l'Europe. L'explication qui sera imprimée est "insieme unico di valori naturali e culturali di interesse europeo, dove la vegetazione boreale s'incontra con la vegetazione mediterranea, con un ricco patrimonio storico-culturale" ce qui en français signifie: "ensemble unique de valeurs naturelles et culturelles d'intérêt européen, où la végétation boréale rencontre la végétation méditerranéenne, avec un riche patrimoine historique et culturel. ».

35. 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 condition where 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 Park in research activities in the RNI and adjacent RRNNBB, is getting on. Particularly, together with the Park and Viterbo Tuscia University, thanks to the National Park of Abruzzo , Lazio and Molise, we're promoting the process for the creation of an European network of ancient beech forests and its acknowledgment as World Heritage, proposing the inclusion of the Sasso Fratino and neighboring Reserves ancient beech forests, in the existing Unesco site "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany".**

CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 2. The nature reserve should continue to stand out as the reference for nature protection in the region. **The Pratovecchio UTB has maintained and expanded its relationships with Universities and research institutes to the multidisciplinary study on the Reserve. Also in 2015, 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-Recommendation3. 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 Office 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 amend to change the condition of the places or 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;. **The Pratovecchio UTB has activated also for the current year, the necessary resources for research developing in the RNI and adjacent Casentino Natural Reserves.**

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. It's also started the project for the re-naturalization of the former ski resort site in Gabrendo mountain, situated in the Biogenetic Natural Reserve of Campigna. At this stage it's provided the dismantling of the head and the queue pylons of the old implantation with restoring of the affected areas. Transport operations of waste material are ongoing by CFS helicopter in order to reduce the impact related to the worksite activities. No other changes in the status of sites in the Reserve adjacent to Sasso Fratino RNI 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; however, were allowed entrances to realize naturalistic documentaries.**

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 changes reported, However, on August 7 2015, was approved the Law n. 124 "Delegated powers to the Government for the reorganization of the Public Administrations" which forecasts the reorganization of the State Forestry Corps and its eventual uptake in another police Force (Article 8 , c.1 letter a).

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 geographic database of Reserves has been updated paying particularly attention on wetlands, on rare and vulnerable species presence aimed, in areas outside the RNI only, to conservation planning. Since October 2015 officially started up the LIFE14 NAT / IT / 000759 "WetFlyAmphibia" project, with the Park as coordinating beneficiary and the CFS - Pratovecchio UTB, as partner

2) Research

the following researches are currently underway:

- 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.

- 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.

- Dendroecological study on gap disturbance renewal in Sasso Fratino RNI - The study aims to analyze the processes which lead to the affirmation of young beech communities generated as result of natural disturbance processes along a large altitudinal gradient. A cycle structure model of Sasso Fratino beech forests will be realized and, alongside the studies on longevity, will be delineated the renewal processes and its affirmation in relation to the altitudinal zone and to climatic changes. The understanding of natural processes can provide useful information for a low impact silviculture tending to reproduce natural processes. - University of Tuscia - DAPHNE Professor Piovesan

- Preliminary analysis on status of "Rufa" group ants population artificially introduced and their ecological impact in Appennino - Preliminary analysis on the actual status of the Group "Rufa" ants populations, introduced over 50 years ago in the Casentinesi Natural Reserves as biological control for the defense of forest phytosanitary condition, for an evaluation on the ecological environmental changes occurred in natural setting and the eventually species colonization of Sasso Fratino RNI. University of Florence - Department of Biology in collaboration with the Pratovecchio UTB staff.

Ended researches:

- Permanent monitoring project on ancient forests in areas managed by national UTB of the Forestry State Corps -University of Molise
- Wildcat Monitoring - Research Project "Conservation Genetics applied to the European population of wildcat (*Felis silvestris silvestris*) in the RRNNBB" - Research conducted by the UTB together with Dr. Marco Lucchesi and ISPRA Bologna.

3) Didactics, popularization and promotion

Laponia World Heritage in Swedish Lapland - 16 to 21 May 2015- Visit of the Vice Chairman of Laponia management board and representatives of the Sami population.

Journalistic photoshoot on "Meridiani Montagne" magazine -Ed.Domus spa 76 - September 2015 - Director Marco Albino Ferrari.

Journalistic photoshoot on "Gardenia" magazine - Photographer dott- Daniele Cavadini – To be published in 2016.

4) Visibility:

1. The European Diploma logo is normally used on information panels sited in different points of Integral Reserve boundary where hikers can easily see.

We will place the poster that was made about Sasso Fratino Reserve for the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma of Protected Areas in our Forestry Museum "Carlo Siemoni" where can be seen by all museum visitors.

We printed a book, only italian language, about 50° Anniversary of foundation of Integral Reserve of Sasso Fratino where logo was included and a specific box is dedicated to European Diploma of Protected Areas. This book is free downloaded by www.wildlifevideo.it

2. Just to know, informations about Integral Reserve of Sasso Fratino, with logo included and linked on specific web page for explanation about the label, can be found on website www.Parks.it which is not under our management.

3. We will provide implementation of using logo by mean:

- o underconstruction web site of our central authority Office of Biodiversity (Ufficio per la Biodiversità) where a box will be probably dedicated to European Diploma (italian and english version)
- o new brochure about Integral Reserve of Sasso Fratino will be probably printed during this year, maybe english version too.
- o reprinting fotografic panels adding logo, normally placed in our Forestry Museum "Carlo Siemoni", in the thematic room dedicated to Sasso Fratino where can be seen by all museum visitors, but also used for mobile exhibitions.

36. NETHERLANDS – BOSCHPLAAT 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.

The renewal of the diploma is not subject to any 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. 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. Additional funding was available this year to pay for the services of a professional employee to monitor the breeding birds most characteristic of this nature reserve. Funding for this will be included as a standard item in the budget in coming years.

Recommendation 2. At Poles 15 - 20, a large-scaled dynamic coastal landscape in which dunes are shifting to the southeast has developed over a length of approximately 5 km. This means that the only path leading to the eastern part of the reserve is becoming buried in sand. To keep from interfering with these dynamic processes, a procedure has been started to relocate the path so that it heads south.

Recommendation 3. Dynamic coastal and dune management is still often called into question locally. To involve the island residents more closely in this management and to inform them better, field visits with explanations provided by site managers and researchers have been organised especially for the villages. Based on reactions from these participants, many of whom had never been on the site before, it appears that this intensive method of communicating and providing information is creating much wider support among the local population (also see Point 5: Other information). A special brochure about this subject was developed in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management. This will be sent separately by e-mail in the form of an attachment.

Recommendation 4. Staatsbosbeheer does not have the capabilities to respond to the consequences of incidents and shipping disasters (e.g. oil and chemical spills) in the North Sea and Wadden Sea. For this purpose, the national, provincial and local levels of government have established the Wadden Sea Disaster Response Network (CRW). This network is responsible for responding to incidents and disasters in the Wadden Sea including its adjoining nature reserves such as the Boschplaat. One of its products is the 'ecological timetable' in which site managers (including Staatsbosbeheer) have arrived at agreements about protecting nature reserves from oil spill disasters. Other aspects of the CRW's activities include public communication and information, education, and plans for emergency drills.

Recommendation 5. No changes occurred with respect to the Boschplaat last year.

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 evaluation of the ‘Management Plan for Government-owned Lands 2003 – 2013’ that involved both an internal and external evaluation team was completed in 2014.

The most important conclusion that could be drawn for the Boschplaat was that the objectives related to dynamic coastal management in the western part of the reserve were achieved. For the dike ‘Stuifdijk’, the desired developments (greater dynamics due to natural processes without human intervention) were not realised.

To begin the discussion about the new site management plan, a ‘learning and hands-on day’ is being organised for the island residents this autumn. The aim of this is to provide the local population with the findings of scientific research as a basis for a discussion of the necessary site management measures for the coming 10 years. For that day, six researchers and professional specialists have been invited to give 24 guest lectures during a simultaneous programme. Topics will include coastal dynamics and morphology, ecohydrology, vegetation development, grazing and cultural history. An amount of € 20,000 has been made available for this public communication activity. The programme will be sent separately by e-mail, in the form of an attachment.

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.

Restoration of cockle beds. Mechanical cockle fishing has been forbidden in the Wadden Sea since 2004. Since then, the cockle population has increased substantially. According to the 2015 monitoring report, large surfaces of cockle beds in the southern part of the Boschplaat reserve (mudflats) are densely populated (more than 1000 - 2000 g biomass per m²). These beds are important feeding grounds for birds that forage on molluscs.

Dark Sky Park. In 2015, the Boschplaat became the second area in Europe to be officially recognised as a Dark Sky Park. This initiative was developed together with the residents of the village of Oosterend. Recreational arrangements were made with local businesses to realise a greater awareness of the importance of a natural night sky and to provide ways to experience this.

Publicity for DPAs. The presentation ‘Sandy Solutions: Solid as a rock?’ which was given as part of the climate change theme at the 50th anniversary of the European Nature Reserves in Pisa, was also given on the island during a number of gatherings of interest groups and political parties.

An extensive article about this subject and the European DPAs also appeared in the local ‘tourist paper’.

37. 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 developments of Lelystad regional airport must not have any negative impact on the reserve; this is to be confirmed after the full procedure of EIA including public consultation has been finalized; 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 with airplanes.

For as far as the development of Lelystad airport is concerned, at this moment there still has no final decision been made about the flight paths of the aircraft. The expansion of the airport itself will take place. For as far as the proposed routes for ascending and descending aircraft the final routes are most likely to remain away from the nature reserve, this mainly due to disturbance and because of the risk of midair collisions with birds. **No change**

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 to the renewal:

- A. The annual reports have to include a specific paragraph on all developments in relation with Lelystad regional airport.
- B. Further convince authorities of the surrounding municipalities and the Province to decrease external impacts on the reserve by reviewing urbanization and zoning plans where appropriate
- C. Ensure the optimal functioning of two visitor centres (Almere and Lelystad) by increasing budgets for personel, 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 trace to the South of this zone with establishment of a new railway station Lelystad-Zuid
- E. Further minimize the visual urbanization impact of Almere aiming a better gradual integration between the city and the open landscape by fully respecting the border and buffer zones of the reserve and by still further lowering the agree building heights and volumes
- F. Implement the recommendations of the ICMO report related to the reserve management and the further extension of the reserve with a corridor to Horsterwold; concentrate all efforts to establish the 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 risks of bird collisions and maximize “wilderness” aspect; avoid new developments, infrastructures and investments in the future corridor zones other than those related to its specific ecological functions; maximize future ecological connecting potentials by constructing ecoducts and tunnels where needed.
- A see the above. **No change**
- B There are regular meeting between the municipalities of Lelystad, Almere, and the province of Flevoland and Staatsbosbeheer at several levels to ensure a proper and well balanced development of the near vicinity of the Oostvaardersplassen, also in regard with Natura 2000. These contacts have been intensified, also because of the fact there is wish to give the Oostvaardersplassen and its surrounding woodlands the status of National Park.
- C Last year a beginning has been made with using both centres as a place where the public can meet with the manager (warden) of the reserve. Also there is a new manager at the centre in Almere who has new idea’s about cooperation and developing activities around, en if possible, within the reserve. All being conducted by Staatsbosbeheer. Within Staatsbosbeheer there has been a, nearly finished, reorganisation for staff. During this process in the centre at Lelystad there has been an increase of staff with 1.5 As part of this reorganisation, the staff for the province of

Flevoland also has been upgraded. As a part of this upgrading there are now several staff members appointed to the reserve. So there is now a ecologist, a landscape architect, a recreational expert and a expert on sociology included in the staff. Also, the Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve, including the surrounding woodlands, has become a independent management area. This means that there now is a separation between the Horsterwold near Zeewolde, (what used to be a part of the total Oostvaardersland area, and the remaining Oostvaardersplassen. Here there also has been a change in management in the way that now the Oostvaardersplassen has it's own manager for the complete area This manager is strictly responsible for the management of this area, now revered to as Oostvaardersplassen area.

D Recently the connection between the adjacent area's (Oostvaardersveld and Kotterbos) has become a fact. Visitors now can enter the Oostvaardersveld through a tunnel from the Oostvaardersplassen. Deer can also use this tunnel, just as it now can use a passage underneath the railroad to the Kotterbos. Also, the connection with the Hollandse Hout for deer will be a fact. Construction of fences and other necessary gates etc is now being done.

E see B. Because of the fact there is the wish to make the Oostvaardersplassen area in to a National park, but on the other hand to minimize the impact of this development on the core of the Oostvaardersplassen as much as possible, while at the other hand this wil mean the numbers of visitors will in crease a overall landscape plan is being made. In this plan there will be room for natural processes, while at the other hand, the public will be allowed to see more of the area . This wil be done by creating new observation points, and creating new possibilities for the public to visit the area. Guideline in these development are the N 2000 legislations and animal welfare. Most of the development will take place in the newly added woodlands. One thing what will be done next year, is the mining of sand in the Hollandse Hout woodland. Because of this mining it will be possible to create a creek in the forest of some 24 hectares. In this way the forest will become much more attractive for birds and wild live, it wil contribute to the achievement of the N 2000 goals, and it will increase the possibilities for the public to experience more. Also the Oostvaardersveld is now finished with more trails, including trails for people who are depending on wheelchairs.

F Earlier this year the former BAC has presented its final report. As a result, the State secretary has accepted this report, and it is now used as a part of the N 2000 management plan. During this process, in parliament there has been a hearing in which the state secretary has been asked to hand over the responsibility for the management issues, regarding animal welfare to the province. The state secretary has agreed with this. Now it is up to the province to see what their influence is this matter and how they will be handling accordingly. The Natura 2000 management plan is nearly gone through al the procedures. It is now open for the last round of comments. As soon as this round has ended in 6 weeks time from now, the implementation can start.

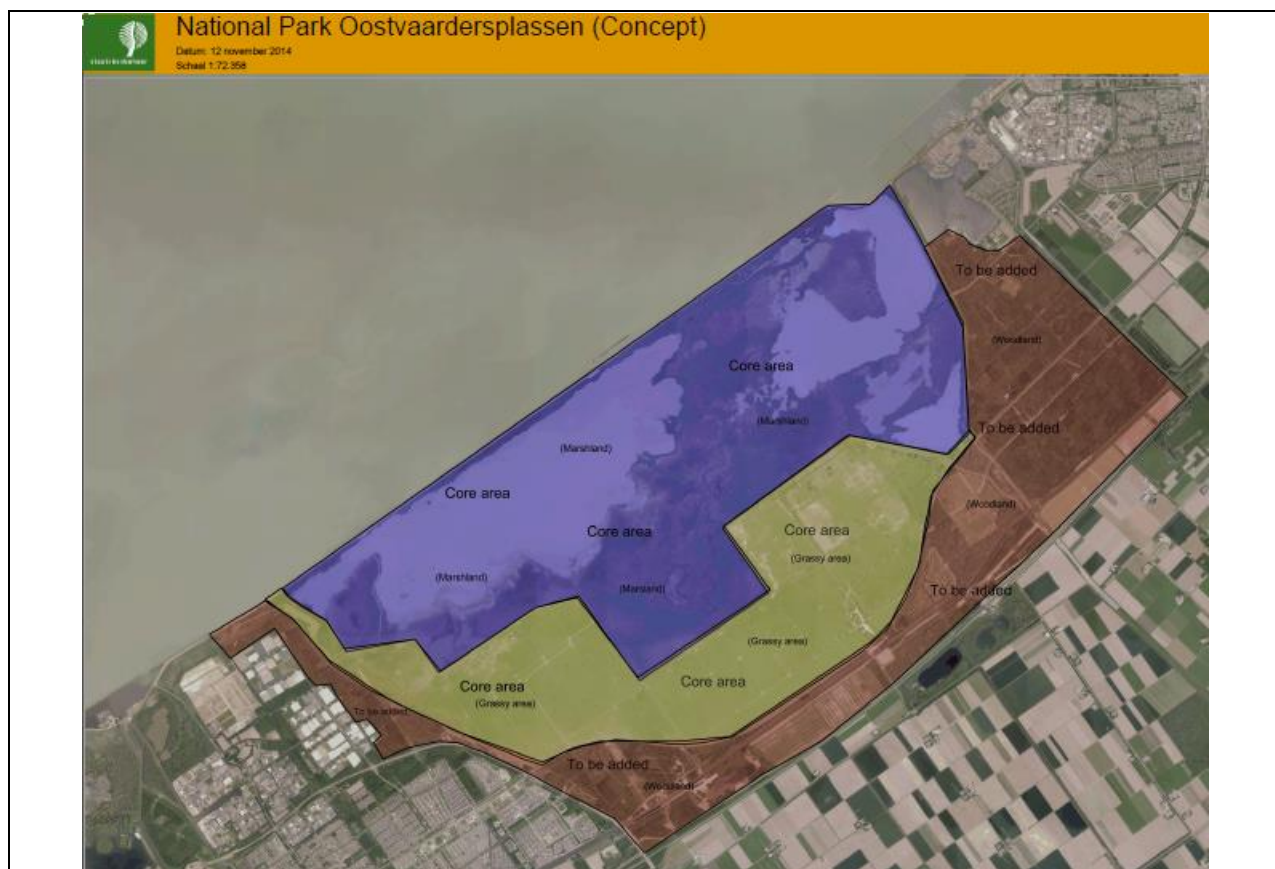
3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved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

In effect the adjacent woodlands, Oostvaardersveld, Hollandse Hout and Kotterbos are added to the reserve, now being part of the Oostvaardersplassen area. There is so far no change in the area itself, but as soon as the Natura 2000 management plan is approved of and put in place, there will be several changes made to the area to meet up with the requirements of Natura 2000. Some of the things that were done this year was the counting of the large herbivores in the Oostvaardersplassen. This counting is done twice a year, (as advised by ICMO2). In spring this is done from ground stations, with staff and volunteers, also including members of a local birding society. Later in the year it is done by helicopter (as suggested by ICMO2). During the second count there also are members of the local birding society

present to witness about the impact this method of counting has on the birdlife. It remains to be seen how effective this way of counting is, and how we will proceed in the coming years. As specially the counting by helicopter is a costly affair. Since the premiere of the film “the Nieuwe Wildernis” in the cinema’s august last year, the number of visitors has tripled, or at some moments in the weekends even quadrupled. This means there now is a problem with parking for our visitors. There are now moments when there are over 250 cars here that need to park, but cannot find a place. At this moment planning is done about changing the management building including its surrounding and also the parking space.

Because of the fact the adjacent area, the Oostvaardersveld, now has been connected with the Oostvaardersplassen and there are several hides and footpaths and deer also will shortly get access to this area, there now is a management plan especially for this area. This plan has been made with the cooperation of several external parties. Also for the Hollandse Hout area a management plan is in development, accordingly to the plan of the Oostvaardersveld. A start is also made with a plan for the Oostvaardersbos. Finally these plans will have to come together in one plan for the management of the outer skirt of the whole Oostvaardersplassen area. This plan will help to make decisions about how to deal with issues concerning the use of the area easier.

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 concept National Park Oostvaardersplassen.

There has not been any real change in the boundaries of the reserve itself. However since this year we prefer to speak of the Oostvaardersplassen in a manner that indicates that the reserve consists of a so called “core area” (the original Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve), and the surrounding areas These

outer layer of the area consists of the following areas: Hollandse Hout, (900 ha) Oostvaardersveld (350 ha), Kotterbos (300 ha), and the Oostvaardersbos (140 ha). All of these areas are more or less directly connected with the reserve itself. At the other side of the Lage Vaart, a canal that forms the boundary of the area, there is a area with a total of 360 ha. Of this area 110 ha will be redeveloped with a aim for more recreational use, combined with foraging area for bird species that are appointed by Natura 2000. Further down this section there is now a proposal by the province of Flevoland to hand over an area of 110 ha to Staatsbosbeheer, also to be redeveloped and used for recreation and as foraging area. In total; this means that the total area will be 7760 ha. The centre than can remain a protected area with its special values, while the surrounding 2160 ha will make recreational activities possible. Within local politics there has a plan brought about, to appoint the Oostvaardersplassen as a newly to develop National Park. This would by including the earlier mentioned core area and its surrounding areas. (see 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.

Like any other year there has been a new annual report made about the management of last year.

This can be found on the website, in the dossier Oostvaardersplassen at:

<http://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/~media/08-dossiers/oostvaardersplassen/2014-2015-jaarrapportage-monitoring-oostvaardersplassen.pdf?la=nl-nl>

Here one can find the latest development about the large herbivores and bird life in the Oostvaardersplassen. This annual report is made available to the public through the website of Staatsbosbeheer.

This year a new start has been made in the participation of the Migratory Birds for People project. Due to several reasons, the participation in this project was put on a hold, but now it has been renewed. This is a project between the visitor centres along the flight way of migratory birds in Europe. This project has been intensified, and at this moment we are looking into the possibilities of looking for Life Funding in order to improve communication about this network..

Since last year the number of tours and visits to the area had increased greatly since the film has been shown in the cinema's, now it is clear that this hype is over. The release in Germany did not have a significant effect. Numbers have decreased, although the attention has not. Especially students and scientific universities are showing a lot of interest in what the Oostvaardersplassen are about. This interest is national, but also international. Also a number of reports have been written for several papers. Now, with N2000 legislation in place, there will be a closer look at the kind of activities and the number of activities that can be held in the Oostvaardersplassen.

The total number of visitors for the complete area is close to 1.000.000 visitors. For the information centre the number is close to 85000 visitors from January until October. The total number of tours etc is nearly 400, although it must be said there has been an other way of registering numbers. This means some groups have not been included in to this count. Shortly we will see how the counting can be done more efficiently and accurately.

Although the sea eagles are still present in the area it is going to be an exiting year because of the fact that their nest has fallen out of the trees this year because of the summer storm that has been here. So far we have not seen a new nest, but we are confident it will come.

38. NETHERLANDS – DE WEERRIBEN-DE WIEDEN NATURE RESERVE

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. They are working hard on this plan together with the partners in the area. The management plan will be ready in 2016. Meanwhile, PAS (process-based nitrogen approach) has been added to the plan and we are seeing that the Province is increasingly focusing on this. There are regular consultations with the various departments.

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 De Weerribben and De Wieden, the construction of which was finished by the end of 2014, considering the exemplary role of the project;

In 2015, a monitoring programme was carried out by the province of Overijssel. They monitored mainly with the help of camera traps under and near the nature bridge. In 2016, monitoring will be carried out by the two TBOs (terrain managing organisations) with the help of a volunteer. This particular volunteer has always worked for the province of Overijssel and he knows a great deal about the various types of fauna.

2. monitor the further development of fish stocks, with an emphasis on eels, to strengthen the ecological function of the reserves and natural reproduction in line with Natura 2000 requirements;

Meanwhile, an eel conservation plan has been drawn up together with the professional fishermen. DUPAN was closely involved in this process. The plan focuses on both the welfare of the eel and that of the fishermen.

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 De Wieden is possible on a very small scale. There are still only 3 fishing companies active in De Wieden and that will be reduced even further in the future. There are no longer professional fishermen active in De 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 case of increasing numbers of larger boats;

There is no increase in large boats. In 2016, together with the municipality, we want to start with a new monitoring system.

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 De Wieden Nature Reserve between the Zuideindiger Wiede and the Bovenwiede;

In 2016, we will assess the grassland management with the farmers who are doing this work. The main objective is grassland that is rich in herbage and fauna. With the healthy development of herbage and fauna, the grasslands from Zuideindiger Wiede to the Boven Wiede will be a better corridor for the wide range of flora and fauna. The State and the province of Overijssel have delegated the tasks in regard to the National Parks to the municipality of Steenwijkerland. A core team in which the various interested

parties and organisations responsible for the management of the Parks are represented, is considering the position of the New-Style National Park. This means that the implementation of the wildlife corridor to the Rottige Meente has now come to a standstill. However, it will be included in the proposals of the core team, which will present its plans to the Municipal Council in June 2016.

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 through which the reserve authorities have limited leverage;*

Natuurmonumenten still has many regular contracts with reedland owners, as soon as we can cancel them we will do so, and switch to more liberalised lease contracts. This will mean that we will be able to react more quickly to changes. Staatsbosbeheer has worked hard this year to harmonise all currently-existing contracts with the Nature and Landscape subsidy arrangement (SNL).

7. *observe possible threats that may occur due to the intensification of agriculture, changes in water management or construction of wind farms;*

We are monitoring closely every intensification of farming, water management or anything similar in and around the Weerribben-Wieden National Park.

8. *secure adequate funds to convert the Ossenzijl information centre, at least in part, into an educational centre geared towards young people.*

In the coming winter season, the programmes in De Weerribben Visitors' Centre (Ossenzijl) will be changed in order to focus more on education.

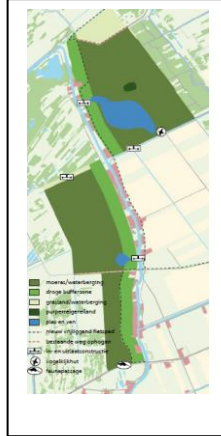
3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved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

At the end of 2014, a nation-wide nationalisation took place at Staatsbosbeheer, resulting in three national divisions and a management structure organised at the provincial level. See website www.staatsbosbeheer.nl. For the Northwest Overijssel area, which covers De Weerribben-Wieden National Park, an area manager has been appointed. There are no changes in the Natuurmonumenten management in De Wieden. 2017 will be the start of a new SNL subsidy period for De Wieden. In order to qualify for this subsidy all criteria need to be reconsidered and newly evaluated. The Nature and Landscape subsidy (SNL) period for De Weerribben runs until 2019. The State and the province of Overijssel have delegated the tasks in regard to the National Parks to the municipality of Steenwijkland. 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 June 2016, the core team will present its plans to the Municipal Council.

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 Natura 2000 management plan anticipates quite a few changes in the future. Next year's Annual Report will include all the changes that have meanwhile taken place. The management plan is currently being formulated.

The newly-established nature and water storage areas in Wetering West and Oost have officially been handed over to Staatsbosbeheer. This is a total area of over 300 ha.



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.

We are also preparing a new nature vision for De Wieden. The old vision was drawn up for a period 15 years (2000 until 2015), and includes many good management visions which we will continue to use. But besides these in-depth management visions, we have asked members, volunteers and residents what they think Natuurmonumenten's vision for De Wieden should be. Together with a focus group, we have prioritised the answers from all these groups. Natuurmonumenten, with local interest groups, has made choices with which will they will draw up their vision for the coming 18 years. This year, Staatsbosbeheer will provide an update for their detailed zoning plans, which will be a first step towards developing a new management plan.

Meanwhile, a start was made with putting our management data in the new management system (CMSi software); this will be continued in the coming years.

5. Visitors – Information policy:

Many sign boards in De Wieden have been updated with improved and more modern explanations.

I In the newly-developed nature area, near the bird observation hut in De Weerribben, new information panels have been placed, now also with information about the European Diploma.

For the anglers, in collaboration with the Oost Nederland Angling Federation and Staatsbosbeheer, new sign boards and leaflets were developed which state when angling is or is not allowed; it also has information about the European Diploma. This year, the Butterfly Foundation [*Vlinderstichting*] celebrated its 100th anniversary with a symposium about the Large copper, and many excursions.

Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, incidental or permanent, actual or anticipated: In November 2015, the second part of the LIFE for Dutch Fens project started. A project that aims to remove woodland in favour of hay-fields.

In November, a pilot project was launched to see whether the furtherance of open water (for terrestrialised vegetation) can be carried out more efficiently and whether the soil made available can be used elsewhere.

Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes:

Next year, the flora inventory in De Wieden will have been completed. The flora in De Weerribben has also been fully mapped out for the Nature and Landscape subsidy.

Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds:

Mammals

The otter population is doing very well in De Weerribben and De Wieden. In the outcome of a legal action, won by the SON (Otter Nederland Foundation), the government is being held responsible for enabling otters to migrate in the best possible way. This has resulted in a variety of passages, even in water control structures. The Province has constructed otter passages at several locations.

Birds

Many Kingfishers were spotted this year with around 22 pairs breeding in De Wieden.

This year, 21 breeding pairs of Great Bitterns, 15 pairs of Marsh Harriers, 98 pairs of Purple Herons, and 93 pairs of Black Terns bred here, 2 pairs of which on natural material. The number of Black Terns is continuing to decrease and we still do not know why. De Weerribben: the new marshes in Wetering Oost and West are developing into bird-rich marshes. In 2015, 5 pairs of Great Bitterns, 1 pair of Marsh Harriers, 2 pairs of Common Terns, 1 pair of Mediterranean Gulls, 1 pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 1 pair of Little Crakes and 1 of Baillon's Crakes and a territory of Whooper Swans bred here. There were many foraging Purple Herons and Spoonbills observed from De Wieden. Other special species observed in the new marshes were Glossy Ibis, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Red-crested Pochard, Little Gull, Red-necked Grebe and Whiskered Tern.

Dragonflies

In De Wieden, the Dainty White-faced Darter was increasingly observed at more locations. The Red-veined Darter and the Lesser Emperor, both new in De Wieden, have both been spotted this year, and the Large White-faced Darter is seen everywhere in De Wieden in windless spots. In De Weerribben an inventory was started in 2015 of dragonflies, grasshoppers, and butterflies. The Spotted Darter is doing very well; there is a large population of some hundred Spotted Darters in the central section of De Weerribben. At several locations, they were seen to be reproducing. On the eastern side, a large population of Dainty White-faced Darters was observed. The Norfolk Damselfly is still only seen flying in one spot. The population consists of around 2,000 individual butterflies.

In recent years, a fauna inventory was carried out in 50% of De Wieden. The Grizzled Skipper was seen in some new locations, and the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was also seen again. Unfortunately, we did not see the Large Copper in De Wieden this year. Behind the scenes, together with the province, we are working hard on a new plan for the Large Copper. In De Weerribben, the Large Copper was seen flying approx. 2 weeks later than in a normal year. In some places this is because some areas had already been mowed. In reaction to this exceptional situation, the mowing dates for a few spots were postponed. The position of the Large Copper is comparable to that of last year.

Cultural heritage:

A cultural-historical study was carried in De Wieden. All the different landscapes have been localised. We want to make a number of objects in the landscape more visible or experiential, so that the cultural history can be given a prominent place in De Wieden.

39. NETHERLANDS - NAARDERMEER NATURE RESERVE

1&2. Conditions and/or recommendations for award or renewal

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

Recommendations:

1. *Long term improvement of the hydrological conditions of the reserve needs reduced pumping of drinking water in the Gooi hills and the separation of sewage water and surface water to increase quality of infiltration.*

Ad 1. No changes or progress.

2. *In order to complete all adequate actions of restoration and nature development it is of high priority that Natuurmonumenten gets financial support to complete the buffer zone around the core area of the reserve. 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 (1993).*

Ad 2. The governmental budget-cuts from the past are to be compensated the next 2 years. This means that the provinces will get more money to complete the National Nature Network. It is likely that Natuurmonumenten is supported, hopefully one of the biggest missing-links in the buffer zone will be in our possession in 2016.

3. *A) The function of the Naardermeer as a core area in the ecological network ("green main structure") needs that all possible measures are taken to avoid habitat fragmentation in the corridor landscapes towards the IJmeer, the IJsselmeer, the Vecht River, the Ankeveense Plassen and the Gooi hills.*

B) In the regional planning the creation of the "natte as" (wet axis or corridor with Naardermeer as core area) between Amsterdam and Hilversum is to be promoted and must be given high priority.

Ad 3. Since last year more and more ecological corridors are being developed. The connection to the Vecht River is under construction and the zone towards IJmeer and IJsselmeer is nearly ready. Also inside the contours of the Naardermeer itself several corridors are under preparation to take away the barrier formed by the railway (f.e. Voormeerpassage).

4. *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.

Ad 4. Currently talks are going on to purchase more farmlands and it is likely to succeed.

5. *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.*

Ad 5. Realised in 2013.

6. *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.

Ad 6D. 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. Due to this widening a few parts of different nature-area's between Naarden and Amsterdam become more influenced and are compensated in acres elsewhere. Since in total 63km motorway is involved in this action, it is impossible to describe all area's and their compensation. Lake Naardermeer is just a small part of this and very little influenced, see also 4.

3. Site Management

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 making progress. The restoration actions will start November 2015. To improve the conditions for marsh birds and peat vegetation young trees in old reedland are to be removed, patches of forest are to be removed and the topsoil of underdeveloped wetland will be removed.

10.1.2. *Protection against the elements (fire, water regime).* The defos-installation is too old to be in process anymore. This installation removes fosfates out of the water to make sure the right conditions for underwater vegetation are available. The Waterboard and Natuurmonumenten are in contact to find a solution for the nearby future.

10.1.3. *Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)* None.

10.1.4. *Field equipment (hides and study facilities).* None.

10.1.5. *Waste management.* None.

10.1.6. *Use of renewable energy systems.* No changes.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. *Administrative department: changes made.* None.

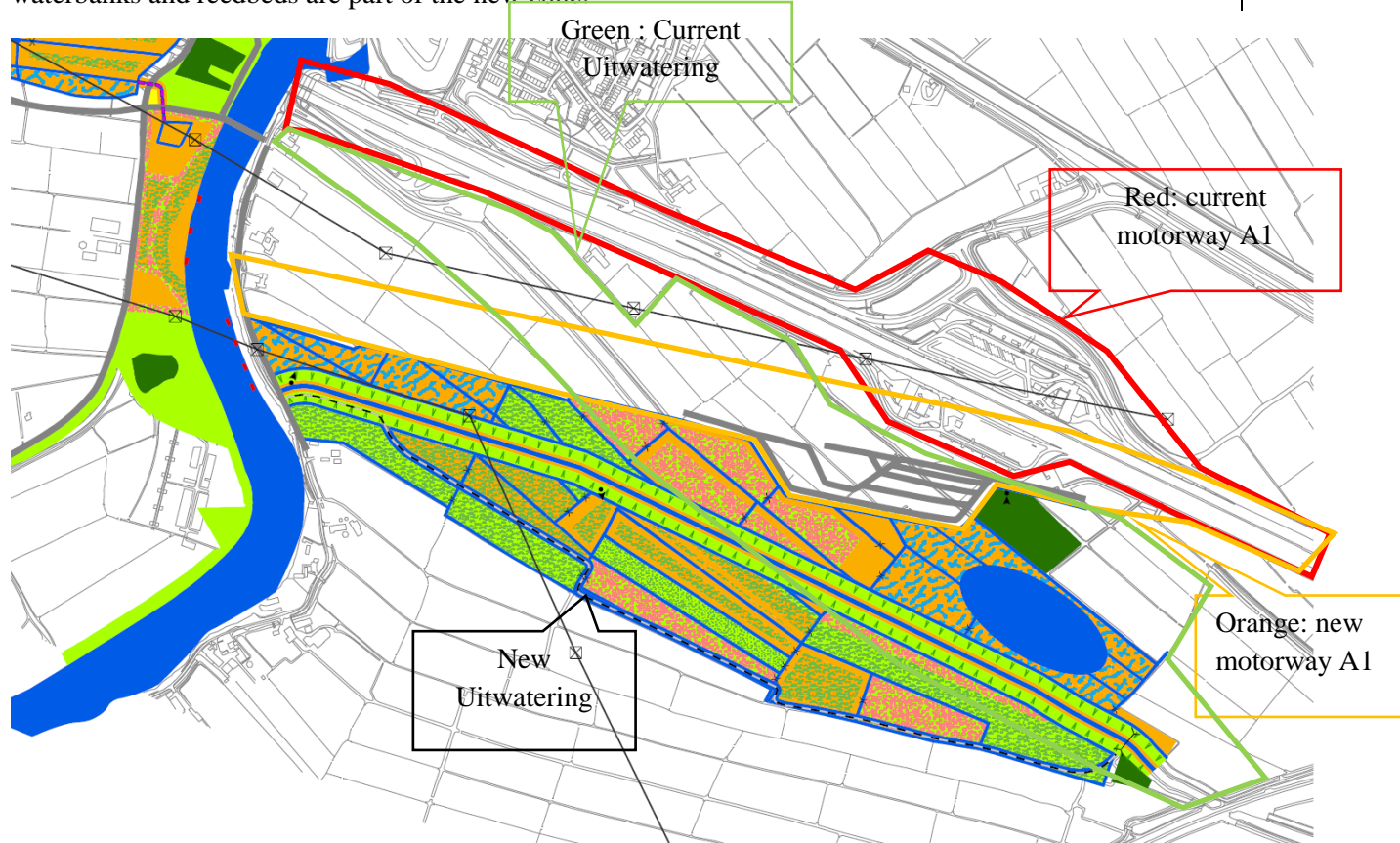
10.2.2. *Wardens' department: changes made.* Currently the whole Natuurmonumenten organisation is being transformed to meet the challenges for the future. Shorter lines from plans to actions and more contact with local communities are two of the goals.

10.2.3. *Internal policing measures.* No changes.

10.2.4. *Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action.* None

4. Boundaries

Due to the widening of the A1 motorway a part of the Uitwatering in the north of the Naardermeer is relocated. Currently this new area is being developed into an eco-zone; wet grassland, shallow waterbanks and reedbeds are part of the new zone.



Legend: orange = reed and marsh, lightgreen = grassland, darkgreen = forest, blue = water. Forms are an indication, not a realistic display.

If more information on this topic is needed, please visit:

http://mirt2016.mirtoverzicht.nl/mirtgebieden/project_en_programmabladen/402.aspx,

<http://www.wegenwiki.nl/Schiphol-Amsterdam-Almere>,

<http://www.rws.nl/wegen/projectenoverzicht/a9-a10-a1-a6-schiphol-amsterdam-almere/index.aspx>,

<http://www.noord-holland.nl/web/Projecten/Groen-in-Amstel-Gooi-en-Vechtstreek/Natuurcompensatie-Verbreiding-A1A6A9-1.htm>.

5. Other information

None.

40. POLAND – BIALOWIEZA NATIONAL PARK (BNP)

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. **Draw up a peer-reviewed ten-year management plan for the national park by the end of 2009** - The Minister of Environment approved the long term Protection Plan for the Białowieża National Park on 7 November, 2014. The regulation of the Minister of Environment of 7 November, 2014 on the establishment of the protection plan for the Białowieża National Park came into effect on 23 December, 2014. English translation of the document was attached to the annual report for 2014.

2. **Have all primeval forest stands and functional corridors linking the various reserves designated part of the Białowieża forest and afforded full protection**

Minister of Environment declared that strengthening protection of the Białowieża Forest is the priority for the Ministry. The decision of limiting timber exploitation from the part of Białowieża Forest managed by the State Forests administration was undertaken by the Ministry in October of 2010. A 10-year management plan for the Forest Districts of the Białowieża Forest was established and accepted by the Ministry of the Environment. It states that within the years 2013–2022 the total timber production cannot exceed 485 thousand cubic meters. In addition, the ban on cutting the trees in treestands over 100-year-old is continued. Meanwhile, the 5-year management tasks for some nature reserves situated outside of the Białowieża National Park and managed by the State Forest Administration were elaborated. Activities planned include mainly: maintenance of tourist trails, roads, division lines and fences protecting young stands against overgrazing, monitoring of xylophages and cambiophages. It is also planned to shape the selected treestands according to Natura 2000 requirements, in accordance with the needs of priority species.

A long-term management plan for the Natura 2000 site “Białowieża Forest” is in final stage of preparation. The project was presented for public consultations and is awaiting signing, which should take place in November 2015.

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.

Also recommends that:

1. **national park regulations and forest management rules be revised to require districts (counties) located within the state forest and the Voivodship Nature Conservation Officer to work with national park management, the scientific council and independent experts, and that public consultation be undertaken in relation to planned activities in all protected areas;**

Institutions involved in the management of the Białowieża Forest cooperate and implement the consultation process on different levels. This is performed mainly by participation of managers, researchers and representatives of local authorities in scientific councils and advisory bodies. Scientific Council of Białowieża National Park includes representatives of local governments (chairman of District Council of Białowieża, member of Regional Council of Podlasie Region, borough leader of Narewka), and other stakeholders (Director of the Regional Directorate of the Environmental Protection, Director of the Regional Directorate of State Forests, as well as representatives of NGOs, scientists, Belarusian National Park “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” etc.) who participate in that way in the national park management. On the other hand the Director of Białowieża National Park is a member of the Scientific and Social Council of the Białowieża Forest Promotional Complex.

The cooperation between the Białowieża National Park and the State Forests Administration was enhanced by joint preparation of the application to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre on change of the name, boundaries and criteria of inscription of the World Heritage Property “Belovezhskaya Pushcha / Białowieża Forest”. The application was accepted at the World Heritage Committee meeting in 2014 in Doha, Qatar, and at present the World Heritage Site “Białowieża Forest” covers almost the whole area of the Forest (the map was attached to the report for 2014). In order to facilitate the cooperation among

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Emergency logging II age class [21-40] | 0 | 0 | 3,9 | 18,55 | 7,15 | 0 | 0 | 29,60 |
| Emergency logging III age class [41-60] | 0 | 7 | 8,45 | 0 | 11,95 | 0 | 1,95 | 29,35 |
| Emergency logging IV older age class [61-80 and older] | 22,8 | 370,6 | 200,22 | 70,8 | 45,75 | 1,3 | 14,3 | 725,77 |
| TOTAL m³ | 22,8 | 377,6 | 212,57 | 89,35 | 64,85 | 1,3 | 16,25 | 784,72 |

Table 2. Timber sold by the State Forest Administration

| Species | Pine | Spruce | Ash, Oak | Hornbeam | Birch | Alder | Aspen Poplar, Linden, Willow | Other coniferous | Other deciduous | Total |
|----------------------|--------|--------|----------|----------|-------|-------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| TOTAL m ³ | 14 610 | 37 081 | 1108,8 | 1 552 | 6 161 | 614,3 | 1187,1 | 477 | 1 227 | 64 018,2 |

3. education and training activities be stepped up so as to support the redistribution of jobs, with a shift away from the forestry sector towards the conservation and sustainable eco-tourism sector, thereby increasing the number of interesting local jobs for young people;

The Education Unit as well as Nature and Forest Museum of BNP provide educational programs for about 60–70 thousand people annually. It includes both passive actions like educational natural science exhibitions and active participation in natural sciences or ecology education (about 4–5 thousand people annually). Main activities include educational projects for schools; outdoor activities for youngsters and adults arranged due to visitors' needs or Park's educational assignments; outdoor courses and trainings for teachers; periodical lessons for local schools' pupils and students; natural science knowledge competitions, art and photography contests related to natural science and culture; educational paths; publications: thematic brochures and leaflets, collections of educational scenarios, and maps. Visits of official delegations can also form the opportunity for natural education concerning primeval forests and natural processes.

Interesting educational events/activities which took part for the first time in BNP in the analysed period are as follows:

- Project ECORCE (2014/2015) concerning education on dead wood for pupils of local primary and lower secondary schools, conducted in cooperation with Deux-Sèvres department, France,
- Conference of Young Naturalists "Biodiversity and conservation of Białowieża Forest" (22 May 2015) connected with workshop on carnivore mammals from Białowieża Forest (about 60 participants from secondary schools)
- Day with European Bison (22 June 2015) - educational event with games, contests and other activities concerning European bison for over 600 participants from the region,
- A series of four workshops on the monitoring of various NATURA 2000 species and habitats for the staff of national and landscape parks from the region, carried out in 2014/2015 within the frames of the project "Fostering management of the Białowieża National Park through harmonization of environmental data" (92 participants),
- A series of ten trainings for local communities "The natural and cultural values of the Białowieża Forest - valuable although less known" (151 participants). Each training consisted of two parts: 1) indoor part of a two-hour introducing lecture and visit to Nature and Forest Museum of BNP, and 2) bike tour (7 hours)

presenting places interesting in terms of nature and culture and often not known by tourists. The training topics included various animal groups of Białowieża Forest (amphibians, birds, bats), invasive plant species, life in dead wood, active protection of nature in the area of BNP, historical traces of human activity in Białowieża Forest, species richness of animals and plants in BNP, etc. The training was free of charge and participants used bicycles purchased under this project.

Periodical events and actions organized by BNP were carried out in 2014/2015 including Green schools organized in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment (280 participants); 5th edition of Regional Competition on Ecological Knowledge for students from secondary schools (650 participants); 13th edition of School Programme of Eco-teams (over 650 participants); Spring Action “Help our amphibians” (about 120 participants); 2nd edition of Great Day of Bees (about 200 people); 21st Exhibition of Fungi of Białowieża Forest (over 500 people).

In 2015 BNP opened a new Tourist Information Point visited in May-September 2015 by over 4440 people, 23% of them being foreigners.

Hajnówka County authorities organized a free training course (2014/2015) for the local communities aimed at becoming a tourist guide in Białowieża Forest region (17 participants).

4. tourist access to fully protected areas be restricted to pre-2006 levels; this means critically reviewing the use of the existing narrow-gauge railway line, including rebuilt “railway stations”, in accordance with the national park’s admission capacity; kayaking and other aquatic leisure activities on the Narewka and Hwoźna rivers should remain strictly prohibited;

The number of tourists visiting the strictly protected area has been kept on the same level for the last dozen years. Some fluctuations are observed but so far there are no reasons for applying additional regulations. No new tourist paths were created. During and shortly after periods of bad weather (lots of rain) when the pressure of trekking groups could affect tourist trails and their surroundings, access for tourists is limited to protect the area from any damage. The idea of revitalizing of a railway through the forest and the national park was dropped. Kayaks and canoes are banned on the Narewka and Hwozna rivers within the borders of BNP.

5. town planning be critically reviewed with a view to preventing the disappearance (as a result of urbanisation) of areas serving as buffer zones for the park and of historic rural landscapes, and guarding against the negative impact of any increase in cross-border motor vehicle traffic within the national park;

The works on establishing the complete buffer zone around BNP including Białowieża and Masiewo Glades are being carried out. Within the frames of a project concerning protection of *Aquila pomarina*, conducted by Regional Directorate of State Forest and Polish Society for Bird Protection and finished in 2014, restoring of agricultural use (mowing and grazing) of grasslands within Białowieża Glades took place to keep the area open. Another activity within this project included ecological restoration of the Narewka river within Białowieża Glade to increase water retention and biodiversity of the river. Any plans of new infrastructure in the nearest neighborhood of the Park are given negative opinions by the administration of the BNP. The current surveys do not show any signs of traffic increase within the area of the Park and in its close surroundings.

6. legislative decisions be taken to give Białowieża National Park authorities the necessary rights and resources to manage the free movement of European bison throughout the Białowieża forest, and that efforts be made to co-operate with a view to opening a large mammal corridor in the border fence between Poland and Belarus, inside the world heritage site;

The border fence is situated within the territory of Belarus so this issue can be solved exclusively by the Belarusian State Party.

The fence is the physical barrier for a few species, mainly ungulates: the European bison, elk, red deer, roe deer, and wild boar. Telemetry studies show that the lynx and the wolf cross the fence. Smaller animals migrating along the river courses, such as the beaver or the otter, may also cross the border fence.

Taking into account scientific data concerning the genetic analysis of the European bison populations from both parts of Białowieża Forest and conclusions on hybridisation of the Belarusian population as well as 85-year long process of the species restoration, we express an opinion that the decision on the further management of the fence existing along the States border shall be preceded by detailed studies of genetic purity of the populations living in both parts of Białowieża Forest. We believe that management of the fence shall be discussed widely and all advantages and disadvantages of its further existence shall be taken into account.

7. a bilateral conservation agreement between the competent Polish and Belarus ministries be ratified by the end of 2008, confirming the necessary principles for cross-border co-operation between the Białowieża and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Parks with regard to priorities for research, management, tourism and education, coupled with ecologically healthy forest management, bearing in mind the “Forest of Hope” appeal, the conclusions of the 2000 Kamenyuki Conference and the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee;

The agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Poland and Republic of Belarus concerning the environmental issues was negotiated and finalized. The agreement was signed in Białowieża, on September 12, 2009. It covers different aspects of cooperation between both countries. The English translation of the agreement was attached to the report of 2012.

In 2012 Polish and Belarusian partners submitted to the World Heritage Center the re-nomination dossier of the World Heritage Site. Almost the whole Polish part of the Białowieża Forest is included into the boundaries of the enlarged area of the World Heritage Property “Białowieża Forest”. The application was accepted by the World Heritage Committee in 2014. Thanks to further cooperation between Poland and Belarus a Transboundary Steering Committee for the World Heritage Property “Białowieża Forest” was established and an agreement on elaboration and implementation of a common management plan for the property was signed (details in part 1 of the report).

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 Minister of the Environment has approved the long term Protection Plan for the Białowieża National Park. The document was signed on November 7, 2014, and came into effect on December 23, 2014.

BNP monitors free-living population of European bison in the whole Polish part of the Białowieża Forest. Some European bison are kept in European Bison Breeding Centre of BNP. The counting of free-living bison is carried out during winter. There were 522 bison in free-living herds and 40 in captivity at the end of 2014. Based on data from previous years we may say that bison population is still increasing. For many years BNP has been working on active involvement of local people into conservation activities, eg private meadows are contracted for the needs of free-living bison and owners of the meadows are paid for preparing and leaving hay for bison there. In 2015 there were 55 farmers involved and about 110 ha of meadows contracted.

In 2014, in the northern part of BNP marking of tourist routes and educational boardwalks were exchanged or renovated. Among other things, the signposts and markings of tourist trails were renewed on the length of 35,5 km. Also over 830 meters of footbridges were modernized and 12 new educational boards were installed on the educational path in this part of BNP. Other field investments included

renovation of access roads and culverts on the mowed areas (riparian meadows) on the length of 225 meters.

The European Bison Show Reserve (Animal Park) is being modernized to provide visitors with better opportunities to observe animals and improve the safety of both people and animals. The fences of enclosures were exchanged. Two observation decks and four observation towers were built. New breeding or quarantine enclosures for elks, bison-cattle hybrids and wolves were constructed. Three ponds were constructed for the use of animals in enclosures of konik horses, elks and deer. A new education and exhibition centre is planned to be built in the Animal Park starting at the end of 2015. The building is planned as a passive construction with various ecological solutions.

Some buildings of BNP administration or residential buildings were equipped with photovoltaic cells and solar panels, and Forest and Nature Museum with an aerial heat pump. Educational Glade 'Forest for those who have little time' created near the Nature Education Centre of BNP was enriched with a new facility for children to play – a statue of European bison for climbing..

In administrative district of Białowieża, a Plan of Low-emission Economy for Białowieża district is being consulted. The Plan was prepared based on an agreement from 2014 between Białowieża district and the Institute of Innovation and Technology of Technical University in Białystok. The main aim of the Plan is to present trends of sustainable and low-emission development of the district up to 2020.

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.

As the European Diploma for Białowieża National Park was suspended in 2007 and we are awaiting the opinion of experts on this issue, we have not made any use of the European Diploma logo.

List of scientific publications concerning Białowieża National Park and Białowieża Forest published in the period 2014/2015 is included in App.2.

Appendix 1

AGREEMENT

among

Director of the Białowieża National Park

and

Head Forester of the Białowieża Forestry District, based in Białowieża

and

Head Forester of the Browsk Forestry District, based in Browsk

and

Head Forester of the Hajnówka Forestry District, based in Hajnówka

and

Starost of the Hajnówka County Authorities, based in Hajnówka

Signed in Hajnówka on May 30, 2014

Regarding establishing of Steering Committee

For the Białowieża Biosphere Reserve

Having in mind common Property of the Bialowieza Forest and with the support from all interested parties, Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve, hereinafter also referred to as 'Reserve', was enlarged to its present size in 2005. New boundaries of Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve encompass the whole Polish part of the Bialowieza Forest and adjacent areas within Hajnówka County, including new administrative units responsible for management of the Reserve: Head Foresters of the Forestry Districts of Białowieża, Browsk and Hajnówka as well as Starost of the Hajnówka County Authorities.

Signatory parties recognize that establishing of the Steering Committee for the Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve is essential for efficient and uniform management of the Reserve. Establishing of the Committee, according to the intentions of the signatory parties, is the proof of involvement of Republic of Poland into the implementation of the International Programme MAB - Man and Biosphere, initiated on the General Conference of UNESCO in 1970, as well as the will of strengthening of cooperation among the units which supported the application on extension of the Reserve. Steering Committee will facilitate the cooperation among the managing authorities as well as the cooperation with the UNESCO-MAB Committee.

Establishing of the Committee consisting of representatives of managing authorities of the Reserve means that the signatory parties pay attention to proper managing of the Reserve and cherish the distinction of being enlisted as a part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It is presumed that the Steering Committee is the task group with the main aim of preparing of the Management Plan for the Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve as well as supervising of the implementation of tasks, preparation of periodic reports as well as implementation of recommendations of the UNESCO-MAB Committee.

Steering Committee for the Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve

- I. Steering Committee is set up and disbanded on the basis of an agreement among the Director of the Białowieża National Park, Head Foresters of the Forestry Districts: Białowieża, Browsk, and Hajnówka, and Starost of the Hajnówka County Authorities. The Committee set up on the basis of this agreement is in force until the Polish-Belarusian Committee for the environmental protection is established which will be done on the basis of the agreement between the Government of Poland and the Government of Belarus. Then establishing of the international working group for establishing of Transboundary Biosphere Reserve "Białowieza Forest" Poland/Belarus is possible.
- II. The Steering Committee consists of:
 1. Director of the Białowieża National Park
 2. Head Forester of the Forestry District Białowieża
 3. Head Forester of the Forestry District Browsk
 4. Head Forester of the Forestry District Hajnówka
 5. Starost of the Hajnówka County Authorities.

In addition the representatives of the following institutions will be invited:

6. The Ministry of the Environment
 7. General Directorate of the Environment Protection
 8. Regional Directorate of the Environment Protection in Białystok
 9. Regional Directorate of the State Forests Administration in Białystok
 10. Representative of the Białowieża National Park designated by the Director of the Park.
- III. Tasks of the Steering Committee

1. Supervising of the implementation of the International Programme Man and Biosphere and recommendations of the UNESCO-MAB Committee;
 2. Undertaking initiatives directed at establishing of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve “Bialowieza Forest”;
 3. Supervising of preparing and implementing of the Management Plan for the Reserve;
 4. Preparing of the joint plan of action;
 5. Stimulation and coordination of actions aiming at the best protection of outstanding universal value of the Reserve;
 6. Initiating of joint projects as well as searching for funds for putting into practice plans of the nature protection and sustainable development in the region as well as educating local community and visitors;
 7. Exchange of knowledge and experience.
- IV. Within the Steering Committee there will be the working group created consisting of the representatives of managing authorities of the Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve:
1. Director of the Białowieża National Park
 2. Head Forester of the Forestry District Białowieża
 3. Head Forester of the Forestry District Browsk
 4. Head Forester of the Forestry District Hajnówka
 5. Starost of the Hajnówka County Authorities
- The tasks of the group will encompass the current analysis of functioning of the Reserve, as well as preparation of the periodic reports and other documents presented later for consultation to the Steering Committee.
- V. Steering Committee undertakes the actions according to the competences of the bodies managing the Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve.

**Detailed outline and principles of
Management Plan for Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve
accepted by Steering Committee for Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve
in Bialowieza on 17 September, 2015**

Having in mind the superior objective of biosphere reserves to become model sites for implementation of sustainable development, where protection of natural and cultural diversity matches economic and social development,

and taking into consideration the principles and objectives of Seville Strategy and Madrid Action Plan,

Steering Committee for Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve accepts the following Management Plan for this area for 2015-2025.

(1) Regarding conservation function:

- Preservation and promotion of world unique forest and non-forest ecosystems as well as material and non-material cultural resources.
- Within the core area, ensuring of undisturbed course of various processes: ecological, evolutionary, geological, geomorphological, hydrological, soil, and soil forming.

- Protection of biodiversity on species, inter-species and ecosystem levels.
- Actions connected with active protection of habitats and species of plants, fungi and animals, when course of natural processes does not ensure the achievement of planned conservation aims.
- Identification and elimination/limiting of the existing and potential threats for preservation of proper state of conservation of natural habitats as well as plant and animal species and their habitats under protection.
- Monitoring and inventory-making of natural habitats and plant, fungi and animal species under protection.
- Maintenance in proper technical state and revitalization of objects from the list of vintage buildings and other objects of material culture, including preservation of archaeological excavation sites.

(2) Regarding development function:

- Based on the case of Bialowieza BR, working out and implementation of a management model of especially valuable natural areas considering active way of making the BR's ecosystems available for tourists (based on scientific research conducted in Bialowieza BR) and in coordination with the management of World Heritage Property.
- Stimulation of socio-economic development of administrative districts of Bialowieza BR based on natural and cultural resources; creation of favourable conditions for enterprise development and job creation in the districts.
- Elaboration and implementation of the concept of integrated tourist development and organization of tourism within Bialowieza BR, providing society with wide access and most sensitive species, habitats and cultural resources with protection. Elaboration of the offer of specialized tourist services and a comprehensive programme of promotion of tourist attractions, including implementation of best practices from other BR.
- Creation of Bialowieza BR brand to promote products and services from the area.
- Modernization and development of local infrastructure in forest areas, connected with tourism and creation of access to educational centres.
- Promotion of regional architecture and traditional constructions and building materials.
- Development of transboundary cooperation in tourism; establishing of economic contacts and scientific and cultural cooperation.
- Improvement of the state of natural environment in the area through:
 - ✓ limiting of low-stack emission,
 - ✓ thermomodernization,
 - ✓ modernization of sewage treatment plants,
 - ✓ development of a system of home sewage treatment plants,
 - ✓ promotion and usage of renewable energy resources (including biomass),
 - ✓ installation of gas-supply lines,
 - ✓ efficient waste management,
 - ✓ care of cleanness of water

✓ efficient usage of electric energy.

- Orienting agricultural production according to the natural conditions of environment and market needs.
- Improvement of communications availability of the area.

(3) Regarding logistic support function:

- Undertaking of actions to shape civic consciousness in the field of nature conservation, economics, environment, and symbiosis between local development and nature.
- Elaboration and support for the programme of interdisciplinary scientific research concerning various aspects of conservation and development of Bialowieza Forest area, supporting working out of a management model of especially valuable natural areas.
- Creation of an integrated educational offer of Bialowieza BR, development of educational infrastructure and its adjustment to the new needs in connection with the programmes of units responsible for the management of areas included in the BR.
- Elaboration and implementation of integrated system of internal interdisciplinary trainings for subjects connected with nature conservation and society's education for sustainable development.
- Effective implementation of efficient model of conservation of endangered species, habitats and material cultural resources within Bialowieza BR.
- Raising the quality and change in the structure of youth education, according to accepted trends in development of Hajnowka County included in *Programme of development of Bialowieza Forest* and *Strategy of sustainable development of Hajnowka County for 2015-2020*, in accordance with intelligent specializations of Podlasie region (development of food economy, tourism, agribusiness, area of renewable energy resources and industry of modern technologies).
- Strengthening of cultural identity.

(4) Regarding management and communication:

- Establishing of a working group responsible for accomplishment of the Management Plan for Bialowieza BR and coordination of activity of the units responsible for the management of areas included in the BR.
- Creation of a coherent and efficient system of communication among key stakeholders.
- Cooperative management of conflicts connected with protection and sustainable usage of Bialowieza BR.
- Cooperation of Bialowieza BR with Polish Committee UNESCO-MAB.
- Cooperation of Bialowieza BR with other BRs in Poland and in the world within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, especially regarding use of best practices.
- Cooperation of Bialowieza BR with Belovezhskaya Pushcha BR, Belarus, and aspiration to establish the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve "Bialowieza Forest" Poland/Belarus.

Appendix 2

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41. 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 the Regulation of the Minister of the Environment implementing this plan. On the basis of a draft plan for 20 years for each year the BNP administration prepares protection tasks. We do expect that project of three years Action Plan for 2016-2018 will be approved by the Minister of the Environment by the end of 2015.

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. Complex includes forest districts of Stuposiany, Lutowska and Cisna and covers the area of 24 234 ha. It seems that "Complex" support the nature conservation in acceptable level.

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;

From 2012, the BNP along with the Pro Carpathia Foundation, Magura National Park and 11 forest districts are carrying out the project "Protection of forest wildlife refuges – migration corridors" founded by Swiss - Polish Cooperation Programme. The aim of the project is to ensure consistency of environment for the animals in the southern part the Podkarpackie province by creating new and maintaining existing ecological corridors.

Apart from public roads monitoring leading to the location of the animal crossings, important component of the Bieszczady National Park activity is to identify the presence and state of indicator species (predators and ungulates) in BNP and its buffer zone. The information collected to date is published on the Park website (www.bdpn.pl) in the "Science" - "Fauna" - „Wildlife Monitoring". The project currently employs two researchers performing monitoring tasks. We plan to further develop the research unit of the Park dealing with the monitoring of large carnivores and herbivores.

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. Representatives of the BNP take part in meetings of the municipal council of Lutowska 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 Slovakia 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 up to aprox. 70% (from 63%)- see map attached. The enlargement is included in Action Plan for 2016-2018 years

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.

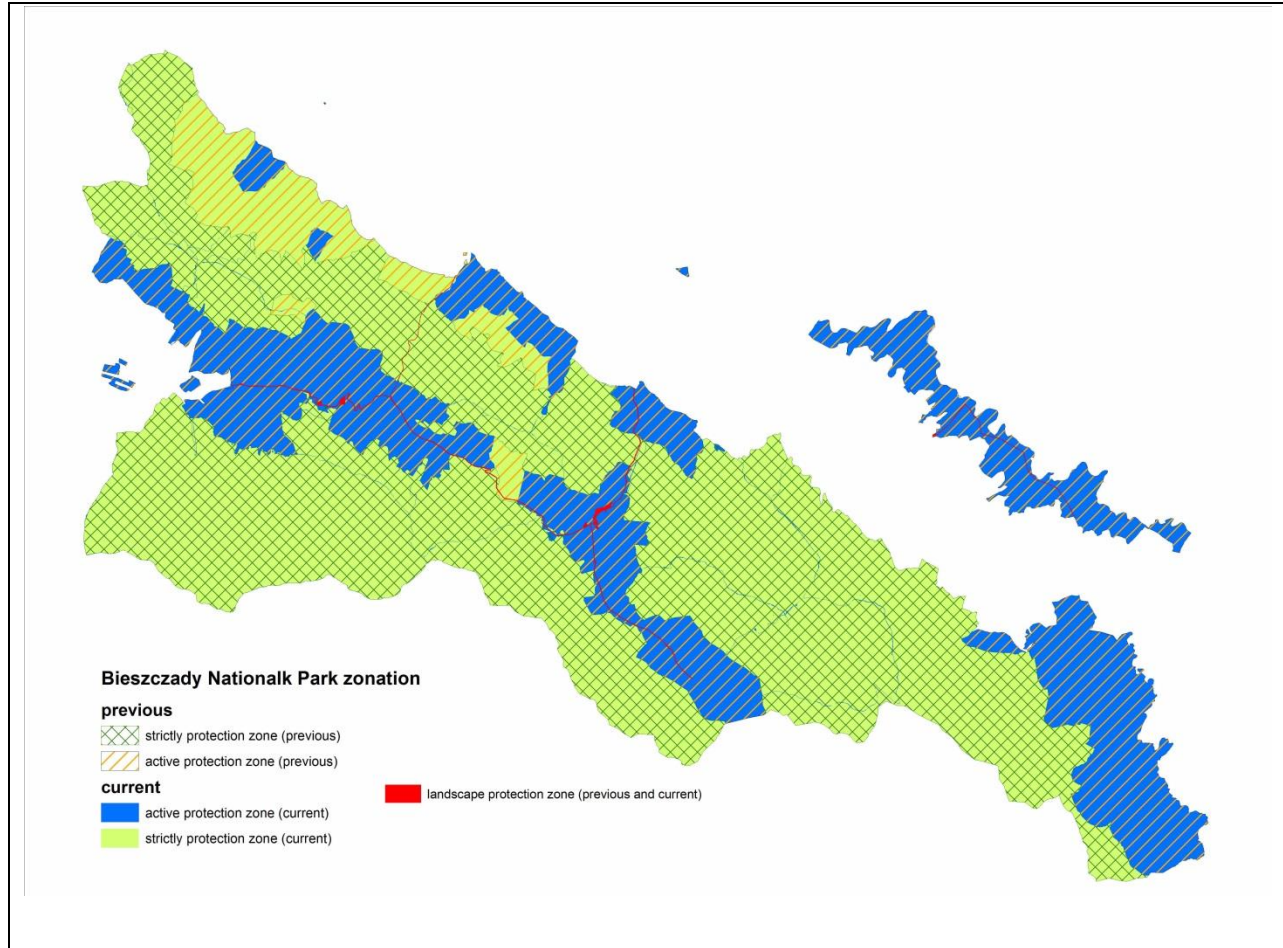
In 2015, the largest ever number of visitors – 389.0 thousand was recorded on the foot trails (in the period from late April to mid-November).

Bieszczady National Park makes formal efforts to incorporate the most valuable fragments of beech forests in the Park to the list of World Natural Heritage.

We use of the European Diploma logo on the official website www.bdpn.pl and on the information boards which were installed in the park area since last renewal.

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.



42. PORTUGAL – DESERTAS 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 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 is committed to update the management plan of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve by the end 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.

1. **take all necessary precautions to ensure that no species of plants and animals are introduced to the reserve:** 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 Madeira Nature Park Service 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 <http://liferecovernatura.pnm.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 2015, local and foreign scientists develop 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 feae* 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 <http://liferecovernatura.pnm.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 Madeira Nature Park Service staff. The Madeira Nature Park Service 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.

No changes occurred.

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 2015, 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.

43. 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, 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 boettgeri* 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 2015, local and foreign scientists

develop various research projects in the fields of flora and fauna in Selvagem Grande, Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora.

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.

No changes occurred.

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 2015, 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.

44. 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 submitted by the Park Administration to the Government for approval in 2011. It was analysed by all the ministries and it was approved in December 2013 through the Governmental Decision No. 1057/2013.

The Park Administration has started from the 2012 a Sector Operational Program Pillar 4 project, «The revision of Piatra Craiului National Park's Management Plan».

The scientific studies conducted under the framework of the above mentioned project were meant to bring certain data on the species and habitats of European interest of Piatra Craiului, included in the EU Habitats Directive, for a more adequate management of these elements.

Based on the result 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 will be sent to the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forest 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.

The park budget is secured by the National Forest Administration (732.000 RON paid in 2013, 731.600 paid in 2014, 929.400 secured for 2015).

The park obtained some additional funds from projects financed by European Regional Development Fund and Romanian Government: 1.293.000 RON in 2004 and 1.380.300 secured for 2015

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 Park Administration has started from the 1st of March 2012 a Sector Operational Program Pillar 4 project, «The improvement of the conservation status of Piatra Craiului National Park's biodiversity by public awareness, information, visiting and monitoring »

The aim of the project is:

- to set up the visitors sector of Piatra Craiului National Park Administration Headquarters from Zarnesti. The visitor sector is almost finalized and the public release will be in December 2015;

- to build an information point for tourists in Curmatura area. The Information Center at Curmatura is almost finalized and the public release will be in December 2015;

- to build 4 information points at the main entrances of the park. The information points were finalized;

- to set up four thematic tourist trails, with information panels - finalized;

- to realize a printed thematic guide for the tourist trails with an attached map, and a guide for protected species and habitats – finalized;

- to realize 12 types of leaflets regarding the main elements of the park – finalized.

The project contains also provisions for the fauna, flora and habitats monitoring.

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 architect from the Scientific Council, with the support of the Park Administration, elaborated a guide of how to build in order to preserve the local architecture and landscape, inspired also by the European Landscape Convention, and which was published as a hard copy.

The building rules were included in the Park Management Plan and encourage the use of local materials (timber and stone) for the new buildings and the preservation of the mountain village style with scattered houses.

The guide was distributed at the local authorities and the local communities.

It is available, as well, to be downloaded in electronic format on the park's web page: www.pcr.ai.ro.

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;

In 2013 there were monitored several species and habitats from Piatra Craiului National Park. 12 monitoring protocols are included in the SOP Project, 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*. During the winter there were monitored the bats hibernating colonies from the caves to assess the conservation status. Most of the caves are closed and the bat population kept its number from the previous years. The large carnivores from the park were also monitored, using the snow-tracking method. During the spring there was monitored the capercaillie at the leking sites. The search for more leking sites is necessary, in order to estimate the population and the conservation status. At the end of spring and during the summer there were monitored several habitats of European importance (mountain hay meadows, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, calcareous and calchist screes of the mountain to alpine level, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*) and also the birds of prey to assess the threats and the conservation status. During the autumn there were monitored the birds of prey' species of European importance during the annual migration and also the red deer at the mating season. In October it was organized a monitoring action to evaluate the chamois population. At the end of autumn and beginning of winter there were monitored also the forest habitats to assess the conservation status and the trend of the clear-cutting areas and to prevent the illegal cutting of the Christmas trees.

All the monitoring protocols were conducted in the field on 2013, 2014 and will be continued in 2015.

There were no significant modification in the species and habitats conservation status from 2013 to 2014. All the monitored species and habitats are in a favorable conservation status.

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;

The Park Administration with the authorities organized 188 control actions to enforce the forest law. The Carpathia Foundation purchased 15000 ha of forest land for conservation in the national park surroundings. The "Forest Radar" regulation is in place since 2 years, and illegal logging and transport has decreased since then.

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 2014 the Park Administration organized 14 garbage collection campaigns, with volunteers. The local authorities in Dambovicioara are regularly collecting the garbage, and they also set up some resting areas along the road, containing also 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 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.

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:

- Piatra Craiului National Park: guide of European and national protected species and habitats (300 pages) – English version and Romanian version;
- Piatra Craiului National Park: thematic guide of the visitor trails (300 pages) – English version and Romanian version;
- 6 information panels inside each of the 4 information points at the main entrances of the park – English and Romanian;
- a total number of 18 information panels displayed on 4 thematic tourist trails - English and Romanian;
- 12 types of leaflets regarding the main elements (species and habitats of European interest) of the park – English version and Romanian version;
- one leaflet for the general presentation of the park – English version and Romanian version
- all the 3 logos (National Park, European Diploma and National Forest Administration) are present on the park official papers and inside the visitor center, on the indoor glass wall.

45. 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;

At this moment Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority is 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)
- Inventory, assessment and remediation of anthropogenic sources of pollution in the Lower Danube Region of Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova

2. the possibility or reactivating the co-operation between other European Diploma sites which are deltas (Camargue National Reserve (France) and Donana National Park (Spain)) should be explored;

It was prepared a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority and the Ministry of Environment, Romania, and the Donana Biological Station, the Donana National Park and the Ministry of Agriculture, Alimentation and Environment, Spain. It was sent to the Romanian Ministry of Environment for approval and for contacting the Ministry of Environment from Spain, according to the Romanian legislation in this field.

The Natural Regional Park of Camargue, France sent this year a Note on the desirability of partnership between our two protected area, and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority sent as well a Note to the Ministry of Environment Romania to approve this collaboration.

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. In 2012, DDBRA prepared a draft Governmental Decision regarding the rules for navigation inside the reserve. The legal document was approved this year, the Governmental Decision nr. 538/2015, attached.

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 Ukrainean 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 (Bistroe), built on the Ukrainian side of the river.

In December 2014 the Danube Delta National Research – Development Institute from Tulcea elaborated a study, having as a result a Monitoring Plan. During the 2015 year the Monitoring Plan was implemented, several actions being developed.

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.

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;

The Tulcea County Council and the National Agency for Fishing started the civil works for a fish bursary, a building for fish market quotation. The project will be implemented with the agreement of the professional fishermen associations from Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

The Governmental Decision no. 763/2015 approved the Management Plan and the Regulations for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, attached.

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

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority has in view to prepare a project for the monitoring of the boats inside the reserve, according to the new regulations for navigation inside the reserve.

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;

In 2013, the Operational Programme for Fishing 2007-2013, launched the first call for project proposals. The projects approved so far are addressed to different kind of activities and stakeholders and beneficiaries, with the same purpose – to enhance the living standards and to offer new opportunities to local communities.

9. the restoration programme of the existing buildings 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 of 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 organised in 2010, ten years after its declaration, with the support of international expertise;

In September 2015 DDBRA organized an international meeting for an external review and assessment of the Conservation Strategy for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, celebrating as well the 50th Anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

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;

In 2013 was approved the Law 216/2013 for the approval of the Governmental Emergency Order 127/2010 for the adoption of some measures foreseen for the economic-social development of the area "Danube Delta". This legal document offers a financial mechanism for DDBRA to use the funds from taxes, fees, permits and authorizations issuing. The Law 216/2013 brings as well some modifications to the Law 82/1993 for the establishment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, to support DDBRA in its activity.

12. the adoption of the legal framework (master plan, Law on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Law on the Protected Areas) should be accelerated;

The Governmental Decision no. 763/2015 approved the Management Plan and the Regulations for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, attached.

13. noting that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure is in operation, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority should continue to analyse carefully the requests for new wind farms in the neighbourhood of the reserve

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve 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.

No changes in site management in relation to finances since the last report.

During this year, the number of the staff was increased through the Governmental Decision no. 216/2015 to 171 persons, and the organization chart was changed, see attached document.

The novelty is the establishment of the Direction – Danube Delta Integrated Commissariat for Control.

The number of the staff increased in 2015 with 20 people.

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.

In September 2015, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority organized an anniversary seminar, with international guests, to celebrate 50 years of European Diploma and 25 years of conservation and protection in Danube Delta (see attachment).

On the www.ddbra.ro web page was posted an announcement (see attached web page) and on the European Council web page dedicated to European Diploma for Protected Areas was posted an advert, attached.

During the year 2015, all the official documents were marked with anniversary logo of the European Diploma and all the information materials produced were marked as well with the anniversary logo of the European Diploma (leaflets, bookmarks, cups, bags, T-shirts, etc).

46. 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.

Two conditions were attached to previous renewal concerning the preparation, or finalizing, a management plan for the Reserve for the next five years. The management plan should be prepared for the whole of the reserve. The other condition concerns the optimization of the Reserve area by incorporating lands at the south-west of the Diploma Area:

1. Prepare or preferably finalise a management plan for the reserve, according to article I.B.4 of Appendix 2 of the Regulations of the European Diploma for Protected Areas, for the next five years;

2. Adjust the reserve's south-west boundary to align it with the natural shore of lake Kamennoye.

In 2014 in the framework of the international project, in conjunction with the reserve "Friendship" was established development strategy of tourism.

The second condition is completely satisfied. After surveying the procedure in 2009, the whole area of the lake Kamennoe and the lake Minozero fully entered into the 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.

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. Continue work on the optimization of the KSNR area which could be expanded through the incorporation of unmanaged woodland along the State frontier and adjacent to the southern and western border of the Reserve including parts of the Kamennoye and Minozero Lakes. In exchange for the forest tracts along the State frontier (sections 4-14 and 27-29) the Reserve could give the local authorities the woodland adjacent to motorway and railway as grounds suitable for the development of road and railways service.

After surveying the procedure in 2009, the whole area of the lake and the lake Stone Minozero fully entered into the reserve The second condition is completely satisfied. After surveying the procedure in 2009, the whole area of the lake and the lake Stone Minozero fully entered into the reserve. Without any exchange on motorway and railway as grounds suitable for the development of road and railways service.

2. Provide sufficient resources to ensure proper functioning of the Reserve. Financial support is needed to carry out basic research and strengthen environmental education activities. Special funds are needed to enable publishing a special jubilee edition to commemorate 25 years of the Kostomuksha Reserve, and to built new tourist paths in the Reserve.

Financial resources for the proper functioning of the reserve found. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation provides financial support. The funds have commemorative booklets, issue of proceedings reserve. During the 2013-2014 year, equipped (fully or partially) 4 tourist route. Completely renovated building of the reserve, visitor center is found.

3. Support the Reserve in its efforts to create mechanism for remitting a part of money due to the water intake from the Reserve. The clear water is taken for municipal purposes in the amount of 8-9 million cubic meters annually and KSNR does not receive any recompense. It is suggested that compensation in the form of subsidies for nature conservation shall be returned to the Reserve.

State policy in the sphere of optimization of water consumption recommendations for the installation of water meters and flexible system of tariffs for water, has led to a reduction in the consumption of water from the lake Kammennoe, located in the reserve of 30%. Increased tariffs for unmetered water use increased revenues to the state budget. What increases the augmentable, and thus the support of reserves as federal agencies.

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.

Research work carried out in the framework of the scientific theme "The observations of phenomena and processes in the natural complex Kostomuksha Reserve and their study program" Chronicle of Nature ". Work plan international reserve "Friendship" in 2015 the Finnish and Russian experts jointly carried out work on monitoring avifauna, flora and fauna of the islands of Lake Stone and places of former settlements along the banks of Lake Stone, identifying migration routes forest reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*), as well as participated in the development of recommendations for the conservation of meadow associations.

Continue to monitor hunting bioresources, soil invertebrates and SOIL, phenological, meteorological and hydrological observations, registration meetings with fauna objects and their registration by the camera gear. In 2015, started work on the inventory of vascular plants, lichens which revealed more than 30 new species.

According to the species included in the Red Books of Russia and Karelia, as well as rare in the reserve conducted research to identify ways to move reindeer between Finland and Russia, the population of the state of freshwater form of the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar* L.) and European pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) living in the district. Stone, population Lobar lung (*Lobaria pulmonaria*).

In order to saturate the territory of historical and natural sites works on finding and fixing the monuments of history and archeology with the subsequent statement of the objects identified in the public records and providing recommendations for their conservation and use in tourism.

Graduate students perform coursework and research amphibiotic and benthic waters of the reserve, the study of the fauna of beetles gravediggers, the definition of the species composition of cuffs (born Alchemill).

In 2015 he published a collection of "Proceedings of the National Nature Reserve" Kostomukshskiy "30-year research in the reserve" Kostomukshskiy ". The collection includes 26 articles, 8 of them in English.

Reserve staff published 5 articles and 2 are presented to the press.

- Parshukov AN Ieshko EP, Ilmast NV Yukhimenko LN, Druzhinin AA, Tarhov SV Cases of infectious disease pike (*Esox lucius*) in the lake Stone (White Sea basin) // Actual problems of veterinary biology. - 2015. - №3 (27). - FROM.
- J. Kurhinen, V. Bolshakov, S. Gashev, E. Gorbunova, Ilpo K. Hanski, S. Kochanov, E. Kulebyakina, V. Mamontov, T. Pavlushchick, V. Pilats, L. Simakin, A. Sivkov, N. Sikkilä, E. Smirnov, U. Timm, E. Muravskaya, D. Nizovcev, E. Zadiraka New data on the areal and territorial distribution of the Siberian flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans* L.) in Eurasian boreal forests 7th International Colloquium on Arboreal Squirrels 1-5 June, 2015 Finnish Museum of Natural History Luomus University of Helsinki p. 20.
- Sikkilya NS Gather information to identify habitats of rare and endangered species of execution of animals, plants and fungi. Monitoring studies and phenological observations for rare plants and animals forks // Research of rare species of plants and animals in nature reserves and national parks of the Russian Federation in 2005-2014 years. / Otv.red. DM homes. Vol. 4. M.: Institute of Ecology, 2015. pp 110-111.
- Kiselev GP, Bazhenov AV Druzhinin SV, Kiseleva IM, Sikkilya NS Natural and artificial radioactive isotopes Stone Lake sediments (Republic of Karelia) // Proceedings of the International scientific conference (School) on marine geology. M.: 2015. In press.

- Kravchenko AV, Sikkilya NS, Mayorov LV Protected species of vascular plants reserve "Kostomukshskiy" // Proceedings of the State natural reserve "Kostomukshskiy". 30-year research in the reserve "Kostomukshskiy" / Ed. NS Sikkilya, Mr. Varkonyi, AV Kravchenko. Petrozavodsk: Karelian Research Centre. Vol. 1, 2015. S. 54-61.
- Becker L., Bologov VV, Sikkilä NS The representativeness of the winter route survey method: an example from Kostomuksha Nature Reserve // Proceedings of the State natural reserve "Kostomukshskiy". 30-year research in the reserve "Kostomukshskiy" / Ed. NS Sikkilya, Mr. Varkonyi, AV Kravchenko. Petrozavodsk: Karelian Research Centre. Vol. 1, 2015. pp 161-166.
- Sent the manuscript «Spatial synchrony in phenological dynamics of species communities» in the magazine «Nature». Group of authors.

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.

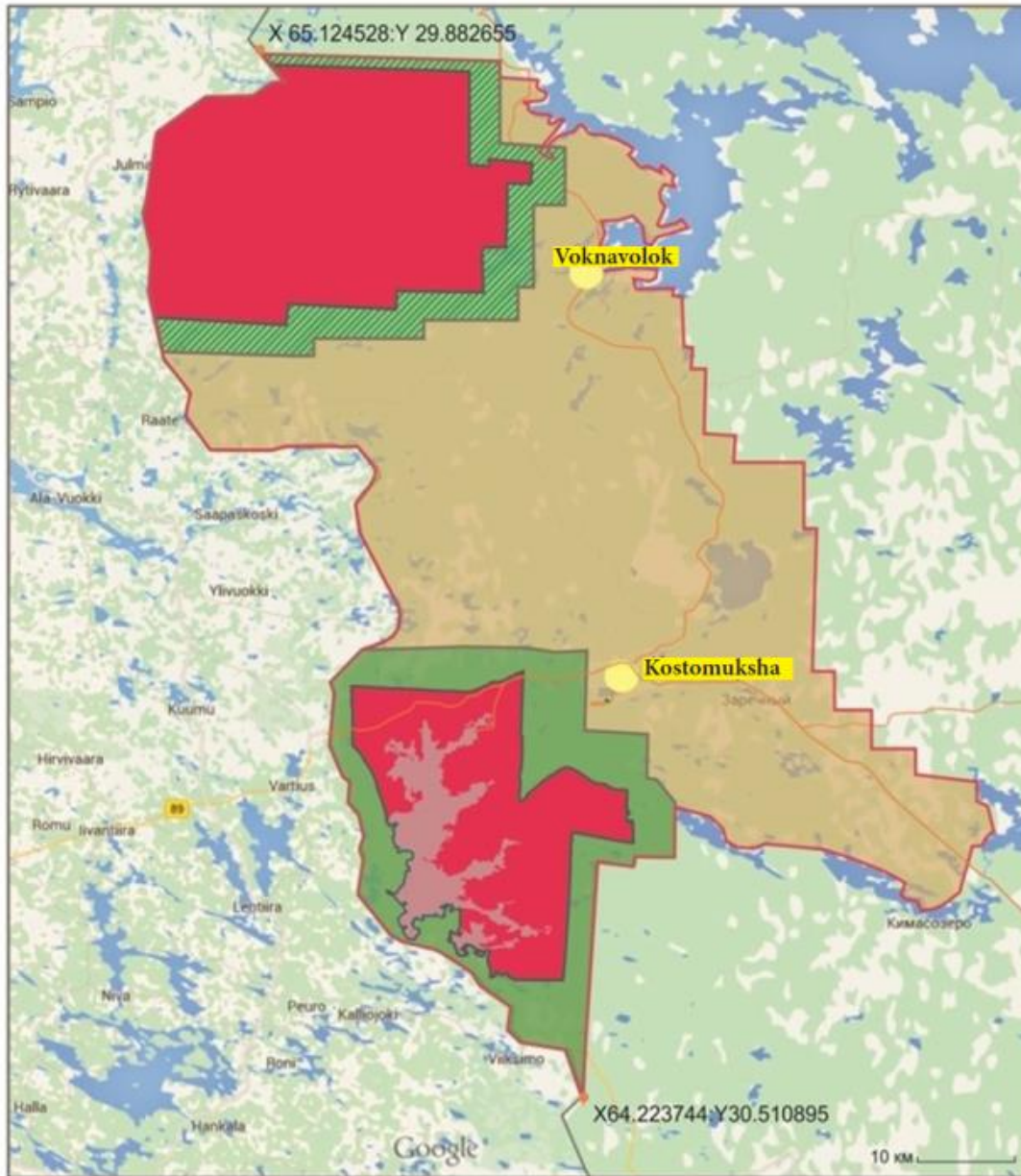
Order No. 100 of 16 March 2015 the Kalevala National Park has been attached to Nature reserve Kostomukshsky. The status of protection of the territory remained unchanged. Map of changing the borders of the reserve is applied

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.

Prepared and approved at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation application for the assignment of the status of a biosphere reserve.

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

MAP OF STATE NATURE RESERVE «KOSTOMUKSHSKY»
AFTER REORGANIZATION
AT MARCH 2015
(INCL. BUFFER ZONES)



- The territory of State nature reserve «Kostomukshsky» after reorganization at March 2015
- Buffer zones of State nature reserve «Kostomukshsky».
- This is not strictly protected area but it is under control of reserve's inspectors.

47. 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 the territory, territorial integrity, the reserve there is a natural dynamics of ungulates, predatory animals

2. External zoning remains unchanged: Biosphere Polygon (buffer zone) security zone (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

Efforts to educate and inform the public have been enhanced with attraction of scientific data and other reserve's actions of sociological character

Impact on the public consciousness is reached by the following actions:

a. Excursion activity. Throughout the year, within the biosphere polygon a 1.5 hour guided tour "Meet the reserve" operates. It includes - a story about the reserve, a visit to bison nursery, nursery of rare species of cranes, access to the pier (the Pra river bank), a visit to the ruins of the pre-revolutionary Russian glass factory-Belgian Society, visit the Museum of Nature. Also historical and thematic sightseeing tours in different directions biology - botanical, hydro-biological, ornithological, mammological et al. in a variety of habitats natural complex buffer zone of the reserve were developed.

b. Activities of the visitor center and museum. Museum of Nature was created in 1937, renovated in 1998-2004. The visitor center was built in 2011. The museum and visitor center form a single complex equipped with modern appliances: TVs, a large interactive screen, a projector, a number of stained-glass window with animals equipped with an audio speaker. Each year the museum is visited by about 4,000 people. In the conference room a conferences on environmental issues with students and teachers is hold. The visitor center has several service clubs for local children.

c. Environmental festivals and competitions. Since 1995, the reserve each year participates in international environmental action "March of Parks", under which there are works on landscaping, various competitions - competitions of drawings, literary works, photographs, and others. Annually on April 1 the Reserve organizes "Day of birds". Every year in mid-September 2002 in the Oka Reserve there is a holiday "Day of Crane." In 2008, the Oka Reserve joined the EAZA campaign - "2008 - The Year of the Frog." Campaign "From egg to flight or one year in the life of the crane" was held in the Oka Reserve in 2008 and was of great interest not only in Russia but also abroad.

d. The revival of traditions. Club of modeling clay toys. Children become familiar with the technology of modeling of traditional Russian toys, organize exhibitions in the region, Ryazan and other cities of Russia. Constantly arranged together with the local population of ethno-ecological holidays such as Pancake week, Christmas.

e. Exhibition activities. First photo exhibition "Reserved Meschera" in 1998 under the name "Tourism and leisure" organized Reserve in conjunction with the Regional Tourist Board. Currently, there are constantly valid photo exhibition of children and employees of the Oka Reserve, exhibition of club "Glinka"; updated annually exhibition of drawings prepared for the March for Parks, Day of Birds, Day of the Crane.

f. Working with the media. Since 1996, in the local newspaper "Spassky news" printed materials about the reserve under a separate heading "Protected Page". Every year about 10 different articles of the reserve and third-party correspondents are printed in national and regional newspapers and magazines. The activities of the reserve created more than ten films.

g. Also as shows our experiment for influence on consciousness of people their involvement in reserve affairs is important

Protection of the reserve is carried out by both stationary cordons, and task forces. Phone numbers of protection are available for everyone in neighboring villages. Besides in structure of task force sometimes attract the most active inhabitants

Attraction of local population to actions for ecological education.

In ethno-ecological holidays we often involve in quality of characters of performance of residents of the neighboring villages, and also their horses for driving of children, products of their production - honey, pies, etc.

The folk theater "Bluebird of happiness" where also the local population gets part of roles is created

Similar actions strengthen trust to activity of the reserve and awareness of need of ecological education

All the conditions have been met

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.

Concerning recommendations of the Committee of Ministers CM/ResDip(2010)/2 the most part of conditions is executed, and the part is in a development condition (difficulties which we faced are designated below)

1. Recommendation

Sufficient resources should be made available to ensure proper operation of the reserve and continued scientific research

Response

Condition is satisfied, increased funding of the reserve. Laboratories of the reserve are equipped with the necessary equipment: the laboratory ware is bought, microscopes are updated. Cameras and photo lenses are acquired. In 2015 during the ongoing inventory of biota 1 species of agarics mushrooms (*Marasmius limosus*), 1 species of mosses (*Dicranella subulata*) and 1 species of Hemiptera (*Cydnus atterimus*) were found. In this year two volumes of Proceedings of the reserve are published. The scientific conference devoted to 80-year anniversary of the reserve is carried out.

2. 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.

3. Recommendation

Efforts to educate and inform the public should be enhanced and stepped up in a way, which makes full use of the reserve's assets and the large stock of scientific data available

Response

Condition is satisfied.

The level of environmental education and information outreach: every year about 9,000 people attend Reserve, more than 500 excursions organized by the ecological paths, nursery of rare species of cranes and bison nursery, Museum of Nature. In 2015 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 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 7 conferences and workshops in 2015 year). Also, there the art exhibition and photo-exhibition of local artists devoted to Meshchera's nature and 80-year anniversary of reserve was organized. Those interested can purchase these works.

4. 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.

5. 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. In 2012-2013, with financial support of WWF, in the territory of a security zone of the Okskiy reserve it was restored (is deepened) 8 shoaled inundated lakes. As a result the total of the reservoirs suitable for safe wintering desmans in this territory, grew by 11,1 %. In proportion to this indicator number of a breeding livestock increases, that is the main link in preservation of local population at the most adverse climatic and hydrological situations.

6. Recommendation

A management plan for the reserve should be produced and implemented as soon as possible.

Response

The management plan of the reserve was developed in 1997 within the WWF project, but he was not confirmed in the Ministry of natural resources

Management plan as well as always includes realization of three main interrelated functions which will lead to sustainable development

1.preservation of natural dynamics of natural complexes typical for a southeast part of the Meshchersky lowland,

2 studying of natural dynamics of processes and the phenomena, background monitoring of the environment, carrying out on the biospheric range of experimental works on an assessment of influence of various forms of economic use of natural complexes, development of scientific bases of conservation

3. ecological education and population education.

Thus the plan has recommendatory character, but generally its provisions are carried out

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 are not present.

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.

Changes are not present

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 collective monograph about a reserve stories where are summed up reserve activity for the 80-year period (1935-2015) is published.

The European Diploma's logo was used by us in all presentations about the reserve including on anniversary celebrations. The logo is placed on our many notices. The logo is on office building of the reserve and in a director's room

48. 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. In 2015 at the expense of means of the Steppe project equipment sets are acquired.

Mobile equipment for monitoring of steppe ecosystems and patrol:

- protected tablet computer – 6;
- tablet computer – 15.

Equipment for monitoring of steppe ecosystems:

- unmanned aerial vehicle – 1;
- tablet computer – 2;
- two-frequency GNSS/GPS receiver – 1;
- microscope – 1;
- digital camera – 1;
- navigation receiver – 2;
- field-glass – 2;
- laser range finder, altimeter, goniometer – 1.

2. The work has been continued on creation of a buffer zone of Poima Psla and Zorinsky sections of the Zapovednik. By present time Regulations about a buffer zone are developed and the approval of a part of land users is received. However some municipal authorities refuse to approve a transitional zone of the reserve therefore on these two sites it is not still formed.

3. In 2015 works have been continued on expansion the zapovednik's territory and creation of biosphere range "Steppe" in Kursk area of 463 hectares. On October 16, 2015 public discussions of materials of complex ecological inspection of the territory of the biosphere range "Steppe" and an assessment of impact of the planned economic activity on environment were carried out.

4. Since 2010 the Zapovednik is involved in the Steppe Project which is financed by international organizations UNDP and GEF as well as by Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of RF "Improving the coverage and management efficiency of protected areas in the steppe biome of Russia". Only 4 zapovedniks throughout Russia have been chosen as pilot territories for this project.

5. The «Belogorye» Zapovednik is an organization with the separate administration and management; the Tsentral'no-Chernozemny Zapovednik can carry out works on optimization only its own 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.

During the reporting period the reserve again faced considerable not mowing of the haying areas on two sites of the reserve. It is connected with the low demand for hay which in turn is caused by gradual decreasing of livestock in the neighboring settlements. The regular number of employees didn't change, financing remained practically at the former level. Additional financing of 10 million rubles for acquisition of automotive vehicles was given (including a new fire truck).

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 borders of the reserve took place in 2015.

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 2015 actions were continued for reintroduction of steppe marmots (*Marmota bobac*) on a pasture of the Streletsky site of the TsChZ within the performance of the works according to Steppe project UNDP/GEF/Ministry of Natural Resources RF.

The working meeting "Management of a fire situation in steppe protected areas " was held by the TsChZ and the Steppe project UNDP/GEF/Ministry of Natural Resources RF (Kursk – the Reserve, on November 24-25, 2015). 35 employees, including representatives of 8 reserves of Russia and other organizations took part in the meeting. 17 reports were represented including directors of TsChZ A.A Vlasov "Features of emergence and suppression of the grass fires in the Central Chernozem reserve and its buffer zone"). The fire fighting equipment of the reserve was demonstrated.

The Group of Specialists on the European Diploma asked the Diploma areas to report on the implementation of its **demand to make a broader use of the European Diploma logo**, for instance on the websites of the areas, in joint presentations, new brochures, maps and leaflets, and in the visitor centers, together with an explanation of the reasons for awarding the European Diploma and the link to the Council of Europe's website. Please include this information in your annual report. One to two paragraphs will suffice.

The logo of the Diploma of the Council of Europe is constantly used in the territory of the central estate of the Reserve (on a facade of an office building, the Museum of Nature and Ekologo-information center) and on the official web site of the Reserve (<http://zapoved-kursk.ru/o-zapovednike/novosti-2015/50-let-evropejskomu-diplomu.html>;<http://zapoved-kursk.ru/o-zapovednike/konvencii/european-diploma.html>).

The logo will also be placed in the book about the Tsentral'no-Chernozemny Reserve which will be published at the end of 2015.

In 2015 in connection with 50-year Anniversary of the European Diploma the Reserve carried out the following actions:

The banner with information on the 50 anniversary of the European Diploma and the planned actions for celebration of the Anniversary was published on the website of the Reserve.

During 2015 all tourists of the Reserve, many of which were photographed against attributes of the Council of Europe, were informed on the 50 anniversary of the European Diploma .

The ecological poster which was developed by the Council of Europe for each natural wildlife reserve was printed and widespread on libraries of the city of Kursk.

In Kursk region the Competition of posters devoted to the 50 anniversary of the European Diploma was announced which results were summed up in November. Rewarding of winners took place on November 28 at opening of the III regional school conference in the Reserve.

49. SLOVAK REPUBLIC - DOBROČSKÝ NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

1. Condition

By the resolution CM/ResDip(2012)11 on the renewal of the European Diploma for the Dobročský prales NNR, adopted at the 1146th meeting of the Committee of Ministers on 20th June 2012, was renewed the European Diploma for the NNR Dobročský prales until 18th September 2018. The resolution sets the following condition:

- ***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 anthropogenic forests in the buffer zone (B zone) of the Dobročský prales NNR continued in the reported period, preferably the calamity timber was processed in a volume of 418 m³ (bark beetle calamity). Other interventions in this area were not implemented.

In the surrounding forest stands (outside of the protected area) prescribed rehabilitation and educational interventions were carried out in accordance with the valid Forest Management Plan as well as the necessary sanitation measures under the current status of 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.

With respect to the first part of the recommendation the exhibition in the Pred Skalickou cottage was supplemented by the lacking exhibits, publications and new promotional materials. The cottage was subject of standard technical maintenance.

With respect to the second part of the recommendation the routine maintenance of the “torso of the Dobročská jedľa” was carried out, as well as the maintenance of the information points in the open air forestry museum. 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 has issued new information leaflets about the Dobročský prales NNR (A3 format), the poster and arranged the production of the documentary “Dobročský prales – Chrám prírody” (Dobročský prales Primeval forest – Nature Cathedral), which were funded from the Swiss-Slovak cooperation program (Swiss financial mechanism - Development of nature conservation and protected areas in the Slovak Carpathians). Promotional materials are in Slovak and English versions.

The basic information about the Dobročský prales NNR is available to visitors in the information centre of the open air forestry museum in the Vydrovská Valley, at the start of “Chodník lesného času”, and also at stop by the torso of the Dobročská jedľa and also on websites of relevant organizations³.

³ <http://www.chkopolana.eu/news/narodna-prirodna-rezervacia-dobrotsky-prales/>; [http://www.lesy.sk/showdoc.do?docid=2693](http://www.lesy.sk/showdoc.do?docid=2693;);
www.pralesy.sk; <http://www.ciernybalog.sk/dobrotsky-prales.phtml?id3=83412>;
<http://www.huculskamagistrala.sk/externe/klaster/home.nsf/page/0be66ae90b0a7bd4c1257baa002a74d9?OpenDocument>;
http://www.enviromagazin.sk/enviro2013/enviro3/22_ste.pdf;
www.pralesy.sk.

Distribution of the information leaflets and documentary about the Dobročský prales NNR is also carried out by the civic association Vydra and by the State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic.

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 the number of visitors indicates a slight decrease.

The occurrence of invasive alien plants has not been recorded.

The results of occurrence of fungi research including those of typical native and undisturbed forest (doc. Ing. Vladimír Kunca, Phd., Technical University in Zvolen) have not been published yet, but these were processed and given to the press.

The partial zoological research in the core of the forest focused on invertebrates continued (lead by Ing. Peter Potocký, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area). It resulted, among others, in founding – for the first time in the Dobročský prales NNR – rare species of the national importance *Eurythrea austriaca* and *Danosoma fasciata* and confirmed occurrence of other 22 significant bio-indicator species. This research is expected to be completed in 2016.

In the reported period a research focused on a change of tree composition in the long-term horizon (40 years) was conducted. It involves the measurement of the thickness of the core zone of forest trees (area of 49.98 hectares) made by experts from the State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic, Banská Bystrica. Its results will be used in a scientific publication which will also analyze the changes in tree composition for the period 1978-2015.

The maintenance of the information facilities was undertaken by the area manager and by the Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area.

3. Local management

In Zone A (the core zone) of the Dobročský prales NNR, 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 State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic (its branch Čierny Balog) did not notice any intentional anthropic interference in the reported period. These facts confirm that only natural processes take place in the primeval forest communities and this part of the protected area could be evaluated as a highly stable and its habitats have favorable conservation status. During the reported period management measures in Zone B (buffer zone – forests influenced by the forestry activities) were focused on calamity wood processing in a volume 418 m³ (bark beetle calamity). There have not been implemented any other intentional interventions in this part of the Dobročský prales NNR. Listed measures were provided by manager and administrator of the area (the State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic (its branch Čierny Balog)).

In the surrounding forests only prescribed renewal and educational interventions were carried out in accordance with the valid forestry management plan, as well as the necessary sanitation measures according to the current status of forest stands with an occurrence of the bark beetle and the other types of calamities.

4. Borders

During the reported period there were no changes in the borders of the Dobročský prales NNR.

5. Other information

The highest visit rate was during the period between May and August.

During the reported period the Dobročský prales NNR was visited by 16 official excursions with a total of 277 experts and guests.

The State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic (its branch Čierny Balog) organised visits for two groups of experts with a total of 80 visitors. Department of Silviculture of Faculty of Forestry of the Technical University in Zvolen arranged 2 field visits for 52 experts (representatives of the National Park Pirin, students of Faculty of Forestry of the University UR Krakow).

Special excursion for participants of summer camp Vydrovo (23 children, 3 adults) associated with the crossing of the primeval forest was accompanied by a specialist of the Protected Landscape Area Poľana.

The Protected Landscape Area Poľana organised at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma for the Protected Areas - on May 19th, 2015 – a special excursion to the Dobročský prales NNR for 30 pupils from primary school Jánošovka from Čierny Balog. It also prepared a field trip for a group of 6 adults and 2 children.

In additions the Administration of the Protected Landscape Area Poľana organized an excursion for an integrated group of visitors (6 adults, 2 children).

The civic association VYDRA accompanied 9 groups (totally 81 visitors) to the buffer zone of the Dobročský prales NNR. These were groups of students of primary schools, temporary workers of VYDRA and individual visitors.

The discussion with 135 pupils of the primary school in Detva called “Discovering the secrets of the Dobročský prales “ took place within the celebration of the Earth Day on April 22, 2015. In addition to information about importance and curiosities of Dobročský prales (also with an exhibition of photographs) pupils were also informed about the European Diploma, its benefit for the territory as well as about upcoming 50th anniversary of the award.

On May 21st -22nd, 2015 the Council of Europe celebrated the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma during the workshop “Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years” at the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli (Italy). Representatives from the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic took an active part. The Dobročský prales NNR was promoted during the workshop by poster “Dobročský prales National Nature Reserve, Slovakia“. At the workshop the premiere of the film “Dobročský prales, Primeval Forest – Nature Cathedral“ was presented.

Thanks to the TV program “Halali“, broadcasted on April, 23rd, 2015 on state TV, the general public could learn about the symbolic torso of the huge fir “Dobročská jedľa“ located in Forestry Open Air Museum in Vydrovská valley.

Within the preparation for the construction of the educational path to Dobročský prales the placement of the information panels was designed. The path will start on car parking near the bus stop “Drábsko, Tlstý javor” by the state route Hriňová – Brezno. From there it will continue along the forest road to the protection zone of the Dobročský prales NNR. Through the buffer zone the path will be heading at the border of the protected area – it will not interfere the protected area. There will be 7 information panels installed. Funding of this activity is based on the Swiss-Slovak cooperation (Swiss Contribution – Development of Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Slovak Carpathians).

Scientific publications:

Gašperíková, L., 2014: Geological evaluation of the National Nature Reservation Dobročský prales. Bachelor thesis. Department of Physical Geography and Geoecology. Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava, 61 pp.

Prečuchová, M., 2014: Integrated management of NNR Dobročský prales. Diploma thesis. Department of the Environment, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, 76 pp.

Mihál, I., Cicák, A., Tsakov, H., 2015: Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.) bark necrotic damage as a serious phytopathological problem in Central and South-eastern Europe. In: Journal of Forest Sciences, vol. 61, no. 1, p. 7-17.

The results of research obtained during the symposium entitled “Cryptogram symposium on natural beech forests in Slovakia, 2011” that was organized by Institute of Botany of the Slovak Academy of Sciences are ready to be published in specialized foreign journal.

6. An influence of European Diploma award on the Protected Area

The resolution has clearly positive influence on the Dobročský prales NNR. This confirms the long-term interest of scientific and educational institutions not only from Slovakia but also from abroad in the area. Equally important is the amount of students wishing to study this area for their bachelor, diploma and PhD thesis.

Great positive influence is also visible at the possibility of using funds from the above mentioned Swiss-Slovak cooperation-Within the project a new brochure and the documentary about Dobročský prales were issued, both in Slovak and English version. Also printing texts and visual materials for the information panels used on Educational path to Dobročský prales were prepared. Within the occasion of the 50th anniversary the European Diploma the poster about the Dobročský prales NNR was prepared. Importance of the European Diploma is also presented at scientific excursions in the primeval forest or even at other public meetings dedicated to this area.

It also enhance the responsibility of administrator and user of this territory for the implementation of the measures proposed in the forest management in the buffer zone of the Dobročský prales (zone B), which are derived from the Management program for the protected area.

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

In October 2014 the Administration of the Poloniny NP finalized the **Poloniny NP Action Plan** that was an important step before development of the official management plan, e. g. the documentation prepared according to the valid legal norms and approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic.

In May 2015 the Administration of the Poloniny NP prepared the **draft Poloniny NP Management Plan** and submitted it to the Directorate of the SNC and to the MoE for comments and suggestions. In addition a **list of stakeholders to discuss the draft of Poloniny NP Management Plan** is prepared along with the **timeframe of meetings during autumn 2015**. The draft Poloniny NP Management Plan (translated into English), the list of stakeholders, schedule of the September meetings and the **roadmap for the next steps** are available at documents 1a “DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN”, 1b “STAKEHOLDERS”, 1c “SCHEDULED MEETINGS” and 1d “ROAD MAP_Poloniny”⁴ at

⁴ http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/

http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/. Later the document was further improved and updated according to the raised comments, this amendments however happened after the reported period.

The draft management plan was developed in compliance with the § 54 of Act No 543/2002 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended (hereinafter the “Act No 543/2002 Coll.”) and the Appendix 18 of the Order of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic No 24/2003 Coll. as amended. It is important to mention that **since 2014 the national legislation has been amended** in order to reflect demands of land owners/users and to update management of the protected areas. They are namely **new instruments introduced to compensate losses of private landowners: concluding contracts on property management, exchange of land, lease of land, purchase of the privately owned land and a financial compensation**. Details are provided in the § 61 of the Act No 543/2002 Coll. and § 60 related to the financial contribution (see document 2 “ACT NATURE”⁵).

According to the the amended legislation the Poloniny NP Administration prepared a **list of forest stands within the proposed and/or existing nature reserves and at the same time used by non-state bodies** (see the document 3a “FORESTRY UNITS.xls”⁵). The SNC has commissioned an expert to perform on the **calculations study** (see document 3b “CALCULATION.pdf”⁵). Based on the data from the list and on the calculation of the lease costs the SNC knows total amount of resources to lease the area with the proposed or existing 5th level of protection in the non-state ownership (see document 3c “LEASE_July_2015.xls”⁵). In practice the actual sum shall depend on the results of the negotiations with the respective stakeholders.

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.

Forest management:

The whole area of the Poloniny NP is protected by the 3rd level of protection according to Act No 543/2002 Coll., e.g. there are specific restrictions and regulations applied, including the forest management (see §§11-16 of the translated part of the Act No 543/2002 Coll. in the document 2⁵). According to the Act No 326/2005 Coll. on Forests clear cutting is exclusively eligible under specifically listed conditions, namely: in pine, poplar, willow and robinia forest stands; plantages for energetic purposes and in the process of forest reconstruction. Such forest does not occur in the Poloniny NP, e.g. clear cutting is not used in the territory.

Forests cover 90 % of the Poloniny NP; 64 % of this area is state-owned, 29 % is owned by copossessorates, 6 % is owned by private landowners and less than 1 % is owned by the church. Forestry is of high importance in the region, both from the point of view of employment and income. As far as the **classification of the forests** is concerned, 64.6 % of the forests belong to the commercial, 7.4 % is protective and 28 % is listed in the category of special purpose. Currently, the **proposal of declaring the Borsukov Vrch Nature Reserve** with the strictest (5th level) protection is in the process of approval (see below at the Condition No. 3). After the approval, the concerned forest currently classified as commercial one will be reclassified as special purpose forests, in accordance with the § 14. 2 e) of the Act No. 326/2005 Coll. on Forests as amended.

⁵ http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/

| Forest category | Surface area until 2014 | Surface area after the renewal in 2014 | Surface area including proposed Nature Reserve Borsukov Vrch |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 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 %) |

Forest classification is approved within **forest maintenance plans** (valid for 10 year period) along with the prescribed measures, methods and models. In July 2015 the SNC commissioned the creation of **management model proposals for selected areas of the Poloniny NP**, where nature-friendly management forms shall be applied. These forestry measures will be reflected in the proposed Poloniny NP Management Plan and they are eligible for the financial support in the frame of the Rural Development Program. According to data provided by MoA there is a significant **difference between the planned annual logging and the annual growth**: within 14 forest units (fully or partially overlapping with the Poloniny NP) 112 042 m³ are planned to be cut comparing to 192 924 m³ gained; e.g. annual harvesting will be only 58 % of the increment.

Game management:

Concerning the requirement of the minimum size of a functional unit (consistent with the management of large herbivores) we are not informed about existence of any relevant legislation or recommendation or analyse stating 4 000 ha as the minimum size of hunting areas. None neighbouring countries have introduced such as legislation.

According to the Act no. 274/2009 Coll. on Hunting and on the amendment of certain acts, as amended the whole Slovak Republic is divided to so called **hunting areas** for management of specific game (with set minimum coverage). Hunting areas have been designated mainly on the bases of orographic units and they are further divided to **hunting grounds**. The Poloniny NP is located in the **Poloninské Karpaty Hunting Area covering 93 033 ha** and also partially in **Vihorlat Hunting Area** and overlaps completely or partially with 19 hunting grounds. **The average size of 19 hunting areas is 3312 ha.**

According to the above Act No 274/2009 Coll. so called **large-scale game management (coordinated planning) is obligatory for each particular hunting area** (e.g. for 93 033 ha in the case of the Poloninské Karpaty Hunting Area). Coordination is via the state authority, i.e. the respective District Office (regional level) and via the **hunting board** which consists of representatives of all hunting grounds, organizations and authorities, including the Poloniny NP Administration. The hunting board evaluates annual hunting plans and sets criteria for next year. The type of management is subject to the § 18 of the Act No 274/2009 Coll. (translation of relevant parts is in the document 4 "HUNTING ACT"⁶). **Similar boards are established at the level of hunting grounds.** Proposed annual plans are approved by relevant District Office and become binding – hunters may hunt only game specified in the permit and they are obliged to report on hunt individuals (hunting without permission is considered as criminal act).

Situation with respect to hunting in the Poloniny NP was subject to the meeting of representatives of MoA, MoE, the Slovak Hunting Chamber, 2 state forestry institutions (main managers of the state land) and the Poloniny NP Administration on August 21st, 2015. Participants agreed that **hunting management is in compliance with national legislation** and that the **Statute of the Poloninské**

⁶ http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/

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. Updated draft will be submitted to the coming meeting of the hunting board.

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 already mentioned the whole area of the Poloniny NP is protected by the 3rd level of protection according to the Act 543/2002 Coll. Nature reserves, national nature reserves and a nature monument have 4th and 5th levels of protection. There were several proposals on creation of natural reserves prepared and negotiated but without a complete support of stakeholders which is irremissible in accordance with the valid Act 543/2002 Coll.

Changed legal framework and improved communication led to the already mentioned proposal to designate Borsukov Vrch Nature Reserve (146,8 ha in the 5th level of protection). In February 2015, the SNC delivered the respective documentation ("Project of Conservation") to the relevant state authority – the District Office in Prešov. On 5th May 2015, the received comments and suggestions were discussed with the entities concerned. None of the entities concerned raised a significant comment or an objection. The final version of the Project of Protection of the proposed Borsukov Vrch Nature Reserve is in the document 5a "BORSUKOV VRCH3.pdf"⁶, the other obligatory documentation – complementary report and the general and specific explanatory reports are in the document 5b "BORSUKOV VRCH_reports"⁶, details on further steps, based on the national legislation, are given in the document 5c "ROAD MAP_Borsukov Vrch"⁶.

The Borsukov Vrch Nature Reserve is expected to be approved by the Decree of the Government by December 2015. It is important to mention that the network of protected reserves (with 5th level of protection) has already been established along the border with Poland (see document 6 _MAP POLONINY"⁶). More protected areas are planned to be designated which fulfil the required conditions for strictly protected areas. They are namely "Černiny" and "Pramenisko Cirochy" [Spring area of the Cirocha river] with proposed 5th level of protection.

In December 2014 the SNC completed process of **evaluation of all 9 national parks and 14 protected landscape areas according to the IUCN criteria**. The Poloniny NP was classified in the category V.

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.

Fulfilled - The 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, contractual measures and financial compensation. The amendment of Act No. 543/2002 Coll. effective from 1st January 2014 has also brought the obligation to prepare the **list of lands eligible for land exchange, lease or purchase and contractual management** until 30th June each year (§ 61.3 – see in the already mentioned document 2). In accordance with the aforementioned provision, the SNC created such a list also for the territory of the Poloniny NP. As already mentioned in the Condition No 1 the 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.

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.

As specified in the previous annual reports, the SNC implements a **project aimed at large carnivores**. Details on the Project is in the document 7 “LARGE CARNIVORES”⁷, the list of relevant projects, research studies and publication is in the document 8 “RESEARCH_Poloniny”⁷. Study on ethology of the brown bear population in Slovakia, study on evaluation of the size of the brown bear, study on healthy conditions of the brown bear population and study on complex identification of the population of large carnivores and a wild cat in Slovakia already resulted in preliminary quantity/quality data on above species.

There are 2 important issues concerning the **wolf: since 2014 it is fully protected species in the area and management plan at national level for wolf** is in the final stage of preparation. It is developed in coordination with the MoA, the National Forestry Centre, the Technical University in Zvolen, University of the Veterinary Medicine Košice and involved NGOs.

Similarly, **management plan for brown bear** is under development to complete already existing procedure – guidance for regulatory hunting brown bear. It is necessary to stress that this species has not been hunt for long period (no permission issued).

The SNC is also finalizing a **scientific protocol** as part of the scientific program aimed at large carnivore population inventory creation and monitoring, which shall contain information on the published scientific publications and documents along with proposed further measures of large carnivore monitoring within the territory of the Poloniny NP. The deadline for this scientific protocol (for the inventory and monitoring of large carnivores populations in the Poloniny NP) is the end of October 2015.

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

Division of the competencies for the management of protected areas among different ministries is model commonly used also in other countries which are members of the Council of Europe. Competencies of relevant ministries are based in the **Act No 575/2001 Coll. on Organization of the Government and Central State Administration Bodies** as amended.

Competencies with respect to the nature protection issues as well as forestry, hunting, fishing, etc. are divided to the administration bodies (ministries, district offices) and other institutions (such as the SNC). The Administration of the Poloniny NP is therefore only part of the relevant institutional framework. Along with the professional employees there is a network of voluntary guards – rangers (specifically for nature, forestry, hunting, fishing) appointed according to the respective legal acts (conditions, rights and responsibilities, training, period etc.). In the Poloniny NP there are 7 voluntary nature guards. According to the Act No 274/2009 Coll., there is an obligation of one person of the hunting guard for each 500 ha of the hunting district.

Responsibilities of the SNC (including its unit - the Poloniny NP Administration) have been significantly strengthened in the amendment to the Act No. 543/2002 Coll.. New rights and obligations have been introduced significantly improving the competence and powers of the organization. The most important one are listed in the § 65a of the Act No 543/2002 Coll. (e.g. signed loan agreements with the land-owners, comment the process of preparation of forestry management plans and providing data for their preparation).

In addition to this, **an inter-ministerial agreement between the MoE and the MoA** was signed in February 2015 aimed at the fulfilment of obligations concerning the UNESCO convention and the

⁷ http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/

European Diploma (original in Slovak language and translation into English is in the document 9_AGREEMENT_MoA_MoE⁸).

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;

Fulfilled – a trilateral agreement (copy in the document “10a_TRILATERAL AGREEMENT”⁸) was concluded on 15th November 2013, as part of the Eastern Carpathian Biosphere Reserve. The Steering Council of this biosphere reserve also includes the administrations of the relevant national parks and protected landscape areas; these jointly manage and coordinate cross-border activities within the scope of the Steering Council in the annual meetings.

Within the management of trilateral international protected area of Natural World Heritage site in Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathian and Ancient Forests of Germany, the trilateral co-operation continued especially with interchange of information and experience at the **Joint Management Committee** session held on 14th May 2014 in Bonn, Germany. During this session, the representatives of the competent ministries of Slovakia, Ukraine and Germany signed the document (attached as document “10b_JOINT DECLARATION”⁸) the *Joint Declaration of Intent*. In this document, the participants expressed their will to provide mutual support and cooperation concerning the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the Joint World Heritage property to future generations. Next upcoming meeting is planned for October 2015 in the Poloniny NP.

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 13 persons in 2015. 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 are secured and provided via projects, grants and contributions from the MoE, Environmental fund etc. directly to the SNC or to the local stakeholders based on their requests.

As part of the project already started and financed from Norwegian funds via the Government Office of the Slovak Republic since **September 2015 there are 3 new positions** within the SNC, including the Poloniny NP Administration. **Another seasonal work position was established** at the information Centre of the Poloniny NP in Nová Sedlica. This person provides information about the Poloniny NP to the public, the tourists and the visitors of the area in the main touristic season. Agenda of the Poloniny NP and its international commitments is tackled also by 2 experts implementing the Swiss project “Development of Nature Conservancy and Protected Areas in the Slovak Carpathians” (hereinafter “Swiss project”) as well as 2 coordinators of international cooperation. Agenda of all these employees is mostly aimed to the Poloniny NP region. In addition to this, multiple activities shall be implemented within the area, outsourced by the SNC. Other possibilities of employment of national park and its cooperating organizations is supported by the different projects (above mentioned Swiss and Norwegian Funds) where also excursions and visits in other countries took place to present possibilities of cooperation and support in the region.

As mentioned above there are **7 voluntary rangers**. Their activities are coordinated by the Poloniny NP Administration and District Office in Prešov and they are mainly oriented on enforcement of the legislation (in the field).

Recommendation No. 4: Give full protection to wolves and ban shooting them throughout the area of the national park.

⁸ http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/

Fulfilled – since 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. Updated draft will be submitted to the coming meeting of the hunting board.

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. Similar support is planned also as part of the Norwegian project.

Excursion for relevant stakeholders was organized in October 2014 to the Switzerland to support the feeling of these responsible stakeholders how to promote their area and commonly support rural development. In 2015, the SNC motivated municipalities to increase their involvement in the **village renewal programme** (traditional instrument supported annually from the state budget). On 5th May 2015 a **seminar in the Poloniny NP was held to inform local stakeholders on the newly approved operational programs to use EU funds (2014-2020)**, namely the Rural Development Program, Environment Quality Operational Program, Poland - Slovakia Cross-Border Cooperation Program. This already resulted in submission of more application for financial support.

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.

As part of the Swiss project the 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.

The proposal of these **forest management measures** was prepared by the professional qualified person in August 2015. It is based on the valid forest management documentation (Directive No 1/2014 of the Slovak National Forest Centre - Forest management planning Institute entitled "Work Procedure for the Creation and Design of Multi-Stratum Vegetation Management Measures in Forest Management Plans"). The proposal consists of general proposals (made according to the age classes) and specific proposals for totally 9 forest units in the Poloniny NP. The proposal is aimed to contribute to the improvement of the state of forests, taking the conservancy of natural beech forests into account. It will be basis for negotiations with the forest-owners during the September 2015 on specific measures.

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:

Appart for already mentioned significant changes of nature protection and hunting **legislation** there were not adopted any significant changes in legislation.

51. 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.

According to the condition, the new law was adopted by the Parliament in 2010. Most of obstacles of the old law were adequately changed, including provision that the government has to provide additional funds for development of local communities inside the park respecting sustainable development. Unfortunately, the economic crisis caused that the budget from 2013 on has been cut and consequently additional funds for development of local communities inside the park were cancelled.

2. The management plan must be finalised and formalised as soon as the new law on the Triglav National Park is passed

According to the new law the MP should be finished in two years after the acceptance of the law. As described in reports from previous years TNP administration started the preparation of MP and followed the process foreseen in the law. In 2012 there was an intensive participatory work on preparing and processing the draft of the MP:

- The purpose of the MP and plan process were presented at the 1st forum in Tolmin
- MP draft was prepared.
- First draft was reviewed by the members of the municipalities in the TNP, TNP Council and TNP Expert Council.
- TNP Expert Council approved the first draft.
- The suggestions of Municipalities members were added to the first draft.
- Second MP draft was publically presented on:
 - o 2nd forum in Bohinjska Bistrica,,
 - o 6 workshops in municipalities Kranjska Gora, Kobarid, Gorje, Tolmin, Bovec in Bohinj,
 - o MP draft was available to the public for comments in all municipalities in the Triglav national park from 30th of October until 29th of December.
- Public was invited to send us suggestions and comments, which were collected until 29th of December.

In 2013 we incorporated more than 500 comments in to the draft MP or we answered on them. The final draft was submitted to the Ministry in June 2013 to be checked. As the circumstances, mostly financial ones, drastically changed during the process, Minister for Agriculture and Environment decided to nominate a working group to redraft the document according to the financial situation in form of a governmental decree. The working document of the proposal of MP was prepared by the end of 2014. It

is planned that the updated document will be the basis for adoption process in 2015. The proposal of MP was completed after several meetings with ministries, agencies and expert institutions in the first half of the year. The existing document is less ambitious than the first draft, however, it seems to be more realistic.

On the 23rd of October 2015 TNP Council adopted the proposal of MP. The proposal was sent to the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. The procedure before the adoption of the Government's Decree on MP is as follows:

- 30 days long public hearing on Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning's web pages (from 16th of November to 16th of December 2015),
- Interministerial and interdepartmental coordination,
- Presentation to the members of the National Assembly Committee on Infrastructure, Environment and Spatial Planning

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 2010 law of TNP defines three zones, 1st and 2nd are central zone, 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 are exclusively under the jurisdiction of municipalities and according to the new Spatial Planning Act all the municipalities have to adopt their spatial planning development plan by the end of the year 2010. It is a certain delay in this process in the state and in the park municipalities as well. Six of the eight municipalities have already adopted the land use plan. The plans of last two municipalities are in the phase of adoption (Bohinj) and the process of preparing (Kranjska Gora). 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 2015 16 of them had wastewater treatment system solved. Alpine Association of Slovenia opened a consultancy office and together with the park staff regular consultancy and monitoring of the waste water is in place. Alpine clubs and managers accepted these activities in a very positive way and they are stimulated for improvements. According to the Decree on the emission of substances in the discharge of waste waters from small urban waste water treatment plants (Official Gazette RS, 98/07, 30/10) which is transposing the Council directive concerning urban waste water treatment (91/271/EEC) the problem in the area of TNP should be solved by the end of 2015. A new Decree on waste waters treatment is in the process of adoption and will extend this period by the end of 2021. The mentioned Decree also permits dry toilets in mountain huts.

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 on population level (alpine subpopulation) 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. Within the next grazing season, the implementation of preventive measures of that kind will continue according to the project's timetable. Furthermore, several educational and awareness raising activities (e.g. guided school visits, exhibitions, etc) took place in 2015 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 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 are currently participating in a project ForAdapt run by the Department Forest- and Soil Sciences (DFS) at the Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU) in Wien. The collaboration is aimed to establish grounds for adaptive cross border brown bear management within the study area.

5. Ensure the best integration possible of the various activities conducted in the Park, for example the integration of organic farming and nature protection.

Agricultural policy and agriculture in the national park have improved greatly in recent years thanks to the co-operation of TNP experts with local farming associations. Special emphasise needs to be given of the Slovenian Agro-Environmental Programme and the programme of organic farming. The programmes include a high number of farmers from the national park. Following Slovenia's accession to the EU, the traceability of subsidies in agriculture and channelling financial aid towards environment-friendly farming practices were also implemented in Slovenia. In 2015 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.

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 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.

7. Develop and implement a detailed management plan and practical measures to cope with problems related to traffic and transportation.

For Management plan an inventory of parking areas in TNP was prepared. Detailed management plan which highlights problems related to traffic and transportation is part of TNP MP. For those areas special measures are foreseen in the MP draft. On the other hand there are some general studies addressing these problems, whereas implementation depends on available financial resources. Most opportunities are seen in project financing. In 2015 a project *Comprehensive Introduction of Environmentally Friendly Mobility in Triglav National Park for the Preservation and Real Experiencing of Nature* has started. For more information see the web page of the project <http://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project/SI02-0005>. A working group on Traffic Management on Pokljuka high plateau was established to find solutions how to manage increased stationary traffic during winter season and winter sports events. In 2015 the bus Hop on hop off operated again from Bled and Bonihj to Pokljuka. For more information see <http://www.tnp.si/news/more/hop-on-hop-off-bledbohinj-pokljuka-triglavski-narodni-park/>

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. In the year 2015 we monitored mountain biking and prepared a selection of biking trails for MP where mountain biking does not have negative impact on nature conservation. We also prepared a report on impact of winter sports on protected wild animals in the park.

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 in order to define the typology and provide potential solutions in construction works. The project is interdisciplinary (in association with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Faculty of Architecture and expert services of relevant municipalities) and subject to available funds. TNP is involved in the licensing process for all building cases.

10. Improve co-ordination and control research activities in the park consider the setting-up of a scientific advisory council

According to the new Law on The Triglav National Park every research institution or individual researcher needs an approval of TNP to conduct researches 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 we have a database of all scientific researches conducted in the territory of the park. In 2011 a system of spatial monitoring of scientific researches was established and is upgraded regularly. In 2015 we continued with systematic data collection on plant alien species in the Triglav National Park, so far we have 1595 locations in our database. A new database of freshwater springs and its monitoring in TNP was also established. We continued with habitat type mapping. In 2015 we finished mapping of 1.400 ha of area which means that 54.846 ha of the park area is now mapped. In 2015 our specialists completed two researches: Impacts of de-icing salt in the ski area Vitranc to the environment and Effects of de-icing salt on Norway spruce (*Picea abies* (L.) Karsten) in the road-side area on Pokljuka.

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 monitors the status of denationalization processes and is in touch with the claimants requiring restitution of land rights. Some claimants, in particular the agrarian communities and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ljubljana, are involved in negotiations on the future management or co-management of these areas.

3. Site Management:

Due to difficult financial situation and governmental structural changes the year 2015 was quite demanding. Management was reduced to basic tasks.

The new information centre in Bohinj was opened.

4. Boundaries:

No changes.

5. Other information:

Triglav National Park and its surrounding were in 2003 declared as a UNESCO MAB Biosphere reserve Julian Alps. In 2015 TNP local communities and Local Tourist Organisation from all municipalities included in MaB Biosphere reserve have started to prepare a Concept of Development of UNESCO MaB Biosphere Reserve Julian Alps as a Sustainable Tourism Destination.

Triglav National Park and the neighbour Nature Park Prealpi Giulie in Italy were in 2009 awarded with Europarc Federation certificate for transboundary cooperation and declared as Transboundary Ecoregion Julian Alps.

At 11th Alpine Conference in Torino in 2014 Alpine Convention and its "Platform for ecological connectivity" declared Triglav National Park and Nature Park Prealpi Giulie as "Pilot area for ecological connectivity" based on exemplary cooperation in the field of Alpine Convention protocols "Nature conservation" and "Landscape management". In 2015 the 15th Meeting of the Platform Ecological network of Alpine Convention was held at the TNP headquarters in Bled. For more information see http://www.tnp.si/news/more/platforma_alpske_konvencije_za_ekolosko_povezanost_potekala_v_tnp/

11th Meeting of the Bern Convention Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species was held in TNP Information Center Trenta in June 2015.

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 2015 and Financial Plan for 2015) 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.

European Diploma was mentioned and its logo was used in all important events of the Park, for example:

- Alien species specialists visited TNP: http://www.tnp.si/news/more/strokovnjaki_sveta_evrope_v_triglavskem_narodnem_parku/
- Presentation of the Management Plan to the members of the TNP Council, mayors of all the municipalities inside the TNP where the Minister for Environment and Spatial Planning was also present: http://www.tnp.si/news/more/predstavitev_nachrta_upravljanja_tnp_za_obdobje_2016_-_2025/

- TNP Council meeting on 23rd of October 2015 when the proposal of MP was adopted http://www.tnp.si/news/more/svet_tnp_potrdil_nart_upravljanja_triglavskega_narodnega_parka_2016-2025/
- Forum for defining a strategy for obtaining a certificate The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas:
- http://www.tnp.si/news/more/forum_za_opredelitev/

52. 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 remains paralyzed. *In addition there has been a judgment of the Spanish Supreme Court which partly estimated the administrative appeal brought by the legal representation of "WWF ADENA" against the Royal Decree 355/2013, of 17 May, approving the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir River Basin, estimating, in consideration of the reasons put forward, not according to the law the performance of the channel dredging. So it is declared invalid only in regard to this issue: Article 11, paragraphs 1 and 4; section 7.5 of the report; section 6.3 of Annex 8; section 5.2.11 of Annex 10; section 2.2.10 of Appendix II of the program of action.*

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;

First it should be clarified that currently the Government of Andalusia is not responsible for water management in the basin of the Guadalquivir. The competencies in this subject correspond to the State Administration (not regional). However, there is close cooperation in this regard between both administrations.

Since the adoption of the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir River Basin (Royal Decree 355/2013, of May 17th), the actions of the responsible authorities for water management in the area of Doñana are aimed primarily at ensuring compliance of current legislation through monitoring, control and closure of illegal wells. They have also begun drafting the second planning cycle covering the period 2015-2021, which has now closed the procedure of Public Information and is expected to be approved about the end of year.

The state of the aquifer is permanently monitored, having published in 2015 a new report from the Hydrographic Authority of Guadalquivir called "Status Report groundwater body 05.51 "ALMONTE MARISMAS" for the 2013-2014 cycle, in which it is performed thorough assessment of it. In every case, the situation, in general remains more or less stable within the Doñana Natural Area compared to the previous report (2012-2013), although with a slight improvement in the north sector.

It's also important to note that at the end of last year was published the Decree 178/2014 of 16 December, by which the Governing Council approves the "Special Plan for the management of irrigated areas located north of the forest crown of Doñana" in the municipalities of Almonte, Bonares, Lucena del

Puerto, Moguer and Rociana del Condado (Huelva province), and the "Accompanying Measures program." With this approval a long and complex process of public participation and social dialogue concludes, and the mechanisms provided in the Plan to solve the existing problems in the management and control of groundwater extractions are available. Many of these measures are already being performed.

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 Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir Basin follows the Water Framework Directive, and integrates numerous measures of control and monitoring of chemical and physical parameters determining the ecological status of waters. During the last year the Public Information period of the Second Cycle of Water Planning of the basin has finished, and it is expected to be approved at the end of the 2015.

This new update of planning documents will allow better adaptation to the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and better coordination of the planning periods and the development of actions between different watersheds.

Also highlights, in this sense, that Doñana Natural Space sent the proposals made by the World Heritage Committee to the Guadalquivir River Basin to be incorporated into the new cycle of hydrological planning of the Guadalquivir basin. Among these proposals, can be mentioned:

1. Implementation of the second phase of the restoration of El Partido stream (north of *La Matanza*);
2. Restoration of the marshes of El Rocío.
3. Vegetation restoration of streams and riverside of Doñana's shire;
4. Restoration of the Guadiamar marsh channel in its northern section (from *El Pescador's* riverbed to Veta Hornito);
5. Study on the situation of streams that pours into the Doñana's marshes, fixing of the public domain boundaries, and proposal of actions to prevent erosion;
6. Acquisition of private properties in the Guadiamar marsh channel;
7. Acquisition of *Garrido* and *Cerrado Garrido* farms (1400 ha) and its restoration in order to connect the Guadiamar channel with *El Lobo* and *Caracoles*.

Additionally, during 2015 have come into operation new purifying plants in *Rociana del Condado*, *Bollulos Par del Condado*, and *Almonte*, adjusted to the Water Framework Directive.

Finally, Central and Regional Government have made during the first months of 2014 a working group for the development of the Special Plan for the Guadalquivir Estuary.

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 with the previous year's report. The Natural Area has a Self-Protection Plan against pollution episodes and is included as a priority area in the plan against forest fires in Andalusia: the INFOCA Plan.

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.

There are no substantial variations from that reported in 2013 and 2014. The activities included in the Iberlince LIFE project continue their own development and there are also numerous recovery and conservation regional programs with impact in this area, where are considered most of the threatened species in Doñana:

- Recovery Plan for Imperial Eagle
- Recovery Plan for Iberian lynx.
- Recovery and Conservation Plan for Necrophagous Birds (where the Red kite is included among others endangered species).
- Recovery and Conservation Plan for Steppe Birds, that includes two endangered species recently disappeared in Doñana: Andalusian torillo and Great bustard, and five vulnerable nature of which at least three have regular presence in this natural space: Montagu's harrier, Black-bellie sandgrouse and Little bustard.
- Recovery and Conservation Plan of wetland's birds, including a species listed as vulnerable, Osprey, and six endangered: Great bittern, Marbled teal, Ferruginous duck, White-headed duck, Red-knobbed Coot and Squacco heron, all present in Doñana.
- Recovery and Conservation Plan on Fish and aquatic invertebrates collected eight endangered and seven vulnerable species, including *Aphanius baeticus*, *Accipenser sturio* and *Lampetra fluviatilis*.
- 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.

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 Berne Convention, and should work closely with relevant international organizations, including the European Union and the European Environment Agency.

There have been no substantial changes since the previous report was issued.

However, it should be noted that for the assessment of this project, the specifically named Scientific Commission to issue an opinion on the matter, has probably received the best studies to date by specialists of the highest level. Likewise, the assessment has provided a network of sensors through which millions data have been collected from a battery of sufficient parameters to control all environmental variables of the estuary. This monitoring has allowed to determine the conservation status of all the values that have led to the recognition of Doñana by different international organizations that are related to the estuary.

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

The Draft Decree by which are approved management tools of Doñana Natural Area has concluded its public information procedure. After intense public participation process, in which members of the Participation Council of Doñana, as well as other agents socioeconomic area of Doñana, have been

deeply involved, the document is currently in the final stage of processing. It is also adapted to regulatory changes generated by court decisions affecting standards of equal or higher rank directly related to the provisions of these documents.

The Participation Council of Doñana reported favorably these documents in October 2015 and its approval is expected within the first quarter of 2016.

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.

The projects of permeation of “river mountain” and restoration of Travieso channel have been developed with very positive results in the natural dynamics of the northern part of the marshes of the national park, including the recovery of the tidal influence in the south area.

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.

There is a strong cooperative relationship with the Camargue Regional Park, and, among other initiatives, highlight the recent celebration of the equestrian Camargue-Delta del Ebro-Doñana route and a meeting of the Coordination Committee held in June 2015, in the Ebro Delta Park. Additionally, recently they have begun talks with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment of Spain, to explore the development of a project of cooperation and collaboration with the Danube Delta.

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 staff and financial resources of the National Park have been stable in the last year, despite the context of economic and financial crisis experienced in Spain.

| PERSONAL DE PLANTILLA | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|---------------|------------|-----------|----------------------|------------|
| TIPO | ADTIVO. | MANTENIMIENTO | VIGILANCIA | TÉCNICO | ATENCIÓN AVISITANTES | TOTAL |
| FUNCIONARIOS | 2 | 0 | 32 | 10 | 0 | 44 |
| LABORALES | 0 | 37 | 45 | 1 | 14 | 97 |
| TOTALES | 2 | 37 | 77 | 11 | 14 | 141 |

Tabla 1: Personal de plantilla END 2014

| CAPÍTULOS | PARQUE NATURAL | PARQUE NACIONAL | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| PERSONAL | 1.526.570,57 € | 1.526.570,57 € | 3.053.141,13 |
| SUMINISTROS Y GASTOS CORRIENTES | 208.259,96 € | 1.016.157,29 € | 1.224.417,25 |
| INVERSIONES | 3.280.319,95 € | 6.054.029,77 € | 9.334.349,72 |
| Total Resultado | 5.015.150,48 € | 8.596.757,62 € | 13.611.908,10 |

Tabla 47: Presupuesto ejecutado END (Parque Nacional y Parque Natural) 2014

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 in the boundaries of the national park. These limits have remained steady since the last extension made in 2004. However, an extension of approximately 14,000 hectares in the Doñana Natural Park is being processed, extending peripheral protection of the National 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.

In July 2015 Doñana has been included in the IUCN Green List, recognizing proper management of this natural space.

53. 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 report detailed the procedure followed for the preparation and approval of the Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) from 2012 to October 2014: methodology; presentation of the first draft to the Trust Board (Patronato); requesting and receiving written suggestions (3) and in sectoral meetings (17); obtaining a favorable report from the Trust Board; public information period receiving 19 claim documents which were answered stating the reasons for the acceptance or rejection of each argument; favorable report from the Council of Planning of Aragon (Consejo de Ordenación del Territorio de Aragón); hearing procedure specific to certain agencies and organizations, with the presentation of 4 claim documents which were also answered stating the reasons for the acceptance or rejection of each argument; Legal Service of the Department of Agriculture and Environment report which ruled that the text of the PRUG is lawful; and request of the mandatory reports to the Council of the National Parks Network and to the Department of Finance and Public Administration of the Government of Aragon, which had not been answered at the time of drafting the report corresponding to 2014. Moreover, the new Law 30/2014, of December 3, on National Parks, which derogated the previous Law 5/2007 of 3 April, on the National Parks Network, regulates in Article 20 the National Parks' Master Plans of Use and Management. As a result, the text of the new Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park's PRUG was adapted to the requirements of the new Law on National Parks.

The Council of the National Parks Network issued a favorable report on December 18th 2014 and the Technical Secretariat of the Treasury and Public Administration of the Government of Aragon gave a favorable report on February 23rd 2015. Also, on the same date the Legal Services of the Government of Aragon counsel issued a favorable report.

Finally, at its meeting on April 8th 2015, the Government of Aragon, on the proposal of the Agriculture, Livestock and Environment Councilor, arranged the decree of approval of the Master Plan of Use and Management of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park. On April 29th 2015, the Aragon Official Gazette (BOA) published the Decree 49/2015, by which the Master Plan of Use and Management of the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park is approved. The Decree came into force the day after its publication.

The attached CD includes three documents in pdf format: the Decree approving the Master Plan of Use and Management as it appears in the Aragon Official Gazette and two error corrections subsequently published in the Aragon Official Gazette.

Links to text and mapping PRUG on the website of the Government of Aragon below:

a)Text:

http://www.aragon.es/estaticos/GobiernoAragon/Departamentos/AgriculturaGanaderiaMedioAmbiente/T/EMAS_MEDIO_AMBIENTE/AREAS/RED_NATURAL_ARAGON/01_Espacios_integran_red_natural/01_Espacios_Naturales_Protegidos/RED_ESPACIOS_NATURALES_PROTEGIDOS/ORDESA/ORDESA_PRUG_MAPAS_20150617.pdf

b)Mapping:

http://www.aragon.es/estaticos/GobiernoAragon/Departamentos/AgriculturaGanaderiaMedioAmbiente/T/EMAS_MEDIO_AMBIENTE/AREAS/RED_NATURAL_ARAGON/01_Espacios_integran_red_natural/01_Espacios_Naturales_Protegidos/RED_ESPACIOS_NATURALES_PROTEGIDOS/ORDESA/ORDESA_PRUG_MAPAS_20150507.pdf

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

As stated in the 2014 report, the writing of the study “New situation of the camping site in the valley of Pineta (Peripheral Protection Zone of the Odesa and Monte Perdido National Park)” was finished in 2009. The study contemplates 14 alternatives, six of them on public land (including an alternative to maintain the camping area in the same place) and 8 on private land. On all of them an analysis and evaluation of the risk of flooding, forest fires, soil movement, falling trees, the proximity of a public way, lighting, technological origin and avalanches has been carried out.

On seeing the conclusions, in 2011 the Bielsa Council publicised the closure of the camping site at the foot of the Pineta valley, located on a land held by the municipality in an area outside the National Park but bordering it. At the present time, the camping area is definitively closed. In the place previously destined as a camping area, the Bielsa Council has prepared an area for its use as a 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 has 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 2014 report, in 2007 the writing of the study into the risk of landslides and flooding was finished, within the actions of pedestrianising the Añisclo Canyon, in the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park. The study establishes that the risk of landslides is already considerably high in the canyon and that transforming the access to a pedestrian one, increases the exposure time, since the speed of passing through is reduced thereby multiplying the risks. To this it is necessary to add that the impact of medium and small material on a person could cause death, while the same impact on the chassis of a vehicle only causes material damage.

Concerning to landslides, the study contains a series of risk files for 34 sites extending over 3,322 metres along the road, to which it must be added the corresponding ones on the creation of two viewing points located at kilometers 9.500 and 10.950. For each of these 34 places the study proposes a series of corrective measures consistent with anchoring bolts, metal nets and fences which would extend along the length indicated with varying heights of between 3 and 6 metres.

As for flooding, the study proposes a series of corrective measures based on signs and the installation of electric detectors, warnings and intercommunication.

The proposed measures in the study for the aforesaid 34 places are unacceptable from the environmental and landscape point of view, since they would radically transform the Añisclo Canyon, wasting a substantial portion of its natural values. The study includes a section on environmental impact assessment, which states that fences and fastened meshes would have an irreversible and direct local effects on the landscape, the biological environment and the wildlife. However, in 2007 the fitting of the two places designated for viewing points were undertaken, by installing safety and interpretation features; with these two actions, two areas have been endowed with viewing points in the Añisclo Canyon with information and interpretation panels, while the risk of landslides has been reduced by installing the appropriate security measures. In both cases the work consisted of preparation of the platform, construction of a perimeter wall, wooden lining of the existing safety fences, putting up protective elements and the installation of interpretation panels on the most representative botanical, fauna and geomorphological aspects of the area.

On the other hand, a parallel footpath to the road from the parking area to the San Urbez bridge has been enabled in order to avoid the transit of walkers along the asphalted way. Furthermore, two footpaths belonging to the Park Paths Network start from San Urbez bridge, one short self-guided interpretative tour, the SIA1, from the bridge to the old Asó water mill and one long self-guided tour, the SA1, from the bridge to the Añisclo pass by Fuen Blanca, which both serve to meet the demand of footpaths for visitors who get there by car.

Thereby, on November 28th 2014 the Director of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park drafted a report on the non-viability of pedestrian access to the Añisclo Canyon, which contained the aforesaid considerations and beheld that the best option is to keep the visits regime by private vehicle, regulating traffic along HU-631 road and the asphalted forest track extending it from Ereta de Bies to La Tella in single ascending direction and exiting by using the asphalted track Puyarruego-Buerba during the period of maximum public access (Easter week and summer time), and maintaining two-way traffic the rest of the year. The report was sended to the Governing Board (Junta Rectora) in order to get its relevant agreement and also to the Trust Board so that it issue its own report.

The Trust Board reported favorably on the aforesaid report on December 10th 2014 (agreement No. 9). Meanwhile, on 16th December 2014, the Governing Board adopted an agreement (agreement No. 11), which is literally transcribed below: *"The Governing Board favorably reports on the non-viability of pedestrian access to the Añisclo Canyon report drafted by the Director of the National Park on November 28th 2014 and agrees to keep the visits regime by private vehicle, regulating traffic along HU-631 road and the asphalted forest track extending it from Ereta de Bies to La Tella in single ascending direction, and exiting by using the Puyarruego-Buerba asphalted track during the period of maximum public access, and maintaining two-way traffic the rest of the year. This regulation will be provisional until the inclusion of the Puyarruego-Buerba asphalted track in the Aragon Road Network. Thereafter, the traffic along the Añisclo Canyon road will be permanently carried out only in single ascending direction and exiting by the Puyarruego-Buerba way"*

Finally, the 2015 PRUG establishes regulating access by the Añisclo Canyon as below: *"HU-631 road and the asphalted forest track extending it into the mountain of public utility (MUP) No. 66. In periods of high attendance circulation will take place only in direction of entrance to the National Park, while circulation to exit will be the Puyarruego-Buerba asphalted track. Periods of high attendance considered are holidays of Easter, from June 1st to October 15th, and those dates determined by the National Park Directorate, even outside these ranges, because of being predictable a high number of visitors. During the rest of the year both accesses will maintain two-way traffic. This regulation will be provisional until the inclusion of the Puyarruego-Buerba asphalted track in the Aragon Road Network. Thereafter, the traffic will be carried out only in single ascending direction and exiting by the Puyarruego-Buerba way"*

In conclusion, since the satisfaction of the demand for pedestrian visit to the Añisclo Canyon is ensured by SIA1 and SA1 paths, the decision of keeping the visits regime to the Añisclo sector by private vehicle was made, regulating seasonally the one-way upward circulation along the Añisclo road and exiting by using the Puyarruego-Buerba way in periods of high attendance, and keeping the two-way traffic the rest of the year. This provisional regulation definitively will be consolidated throughout the whole year when the inclusion of Puyarruego-Buerba way in Aragon Road Network occurs.

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.

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, the 2014 report mentioned the activities carried out since 2012: visits by National Park staff each other, the reciprocal participation of each Park in consultative bodies of the other, OMPNP participation in activities promoted by the PNP and OMPNP participation in subsequent meetings in various Spanish, French and Andorran natural protected areas by PNP initiative in collaboration with the Pyrénées Ariégeoises Regional Natural Park and Pyrénées Catalanes Regional Natural Park in order to discuss the possibility of creating a Pyrenean Natural Areas Network. The OMPNP has hosted a meeting held in Torla on March 25th 2015 and has attended to another one in Vitoria held on May 27th and 28th 2015.

Within the framework of the World Heritage Site Pyrenees Monte Perdido (WHSPMP), the 2014 report gathered the advances in the Declaration of Outstanding Universal Value; the establishment, expansion, composition and operation of the Joint Steering Committee; successive drafting joint reports on the status of the WHSPMP, instead of reports that had been delivered separately by the two countries; the periodical report on the WHSPMP; and the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention.

Although the Joint Steering Committee has not met since June 6th 2014 in Huesca, it is scheduled a meeting in late 2015 to transfer the presidency and the secretariat to France for the next biennium, discuss the approval of the Site Management Plan, go through the end of the POCTEFA project for the previous programming period, discuss the new POCTEFA project for the new programming period and talk about the recommendations of the UNESCO. However, the Committee has a technical group of 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. This group has regularly met since the establishment of the Joint Steering Committee to prepare its meetings, the coordination of joint reports, tracking the development of the WHSPMP Management Plan, develop the POCTEFA project of the previous period and prepare the new POCTEFA project for the new period.

On the other hand, the publication of a print run of 1,000 copies of the book *"Writing time. Pyrenees Monte Perdido"* is being prepared, consisting of black and white photographs accompanied by short texts. The book will be edited by several partners, among which are the Pyrenees National Park and the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park. Publication is scheduled for December.

Finally, under POCTEFA, cross-border project in which the PNP and PNOPM participate, along with the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage of the Government of Aragon, the General Council of Hihg Pyrenees, the Community of Municipalities of Gèdre-Gavarnie, the Syndical Commission Baresges Valley and, as team leader, the Region of Sobrarbe, regular coordination meetings among its members took place. Among the works included in the POCTEFA project there is a biennial action 2012-2013, which was extended to 2014, included in the Proceeding No 3 Publicizing and promoting the heritage" consisting of the joint edition by both National Parks of common informative material which culminated

in the publication of a book on the Torla-Gavarnie way and the issue of a map of the World Heritage Site including both Parks. The OMPNP, with the supervision of the PNP, was responsible for editing the book, published in Spanish, English and French in 2014 and the PNP, with the supervision of OMPNP, was responsible for printing the map, also published in the three aforesaid languages.

Another action of POCTEFA, including in Proceeding No 2 "A shared heritage" was conducting two seminars, one in France and one in Spain, on specific topics (pastoralism and landscape, in Gèdre, and development of the territory and promoting tourism, in Boltaña) in order to use the findings of them in preparing the WHSPMP Management Plan.

Another action included in Proceeding No 2 "A shared heritage" of POCTEFA is to improve the knowledge of the other side by each country's information staff; thus, some informants of the OMPNP and Spanish tourism offices visited the French side and some informants of the PNP and French tourism offices visited the Spanish slope. In addition to the exchange of visits mentioned in the 2014 report, the cycle ended with the Spanish informants one, both Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park and the Region of Sobrarbe tourism offices, to the French side on 16th and 17th October 2014.

Proceeding N° 1 " Discovering the heritage" of POCTEFA includes an action consisting of making an audiovisual on the Pyrenees-Monte Perdido Site's geomorphology, already finished.

The educational activity "Know the Pyrenees-Monte Perdido World Heritage Site", included in Proceeding No 2 "A shared heritage" of POCTEFA has been the exchange of students from both sides to the other country. Thus, besides exchange of visits mentioned in the 2014 report, a meeting of French and Spanish students was programmed from 22nd to 25th June 2015 to jointly walk the path from Gavarnie to Bujaruelo. In this action, in addition to these visits, National Park staff has participated in workshops on the World Heritage Pyrenees Site developed in Ainsa and Broto schools for students of 2nd cycle of Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO).

Also within the framework of POCTEFA and within the activities organised by the Rergion of Sobrarbe for the European Network of Geoparks Week, dedicated to the Pyrenees-Monte Perdido Site in Ainsa, on 23rd May 2013, the Director of the OMPNP and the Associate Director of PNP made presentations on the respective National Parks.

Once the previous period POCTEFA project is finished, the project partners has submitted another POCTEFA for the new programming period. In the spring of 2016 it will be known wether the project has been accepted or not

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

In this respect there is nothing new about what indicated in the earlier years 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 (the Bujaruelo Valley) whereby currently runs a cross-border high voltage power line. Notwithstanding this, one of the ten specific objectives that the 2015 PRUG contemplates is to promote 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 the following guideline: *"Establish ways for assessment and collaboration with concerned social agents and public administrations in order to promote the extension of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone"*, which involve the activities: *"to undertake a study of the natural resources in the neighbouring territory of the National Park in order to estimate its adaptability to be part of the National Park and for a better execution of its objectives"* and *"carry out meetings with local administrations and social agents in order to know the level of acceptance of a possible extension of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone, based on the report by the National Parks Agency (OAPN) in 2002"*.

Notwithstanding the aforesaid, it is necessary to emphasise that among the spaces of the Nature Network 2000, the SPA Ordesa and Monte Perdido and the SCI Ordesa-Monte Perdido both coincide with the limits of the National Park. Furthermore, two SPA, Viñamala and Upper Cinca, partially coincide with the Peripheral Protection Zone, extending beyond its limits; and eight SCI, Bujaruelo-Garganta of the Navarros, the Aires river basin, Ara river, the Moors Cave, the high Cinca Valley, Cinca river (Pineta Valley), Tendeñera, and Panticosa, Bramatuero and Brazatos passes, partially coincide with the Peripheral Protection Zone also extending beyond its limits. On the other hand, the Biosphere Reserve of Ordesa-Viñamala was extended in 2013 and counts on an area of 117.364 hectares, in order to include the whole National Park in its core area; the whole area of the Peripheral Protection Zone of the National Park in its tampon area; and the part of the socio-economic influence area of the National Park which the councils have agreed to include in the transition area of the Biosphere Reserve, as well as the entire surface of the 5 municipalities of the region of Alto Gállego that were part of the Biosphere Reserve before its enlargement. In addition, National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone are located in the region of Sobrarbe, whose area of 220.000 hectares was declared Geopark in Belfast on September 21st 2006 during the annual conference of the European Geoparks Network. Finally, the whole National Park and part of its Peripheral Protection Zone are included in the World Heritage Site Pyrenees-Monte Perdido, also coincident with the Cultural Landscape Pyrenees-Monte Perdido, over an area of 31,182.55 hectares.

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. However, we must mention the approval of the National Park's Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) in April 2015. The only modification concerning financial resources is that the National Government again allocated funds for grants in the area of socioeconomic influence, after not doing so neither in 2013 nor in 2014, when the Government of Aragon apported funds for this objective in order to fill the gap of state financing.

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 to report on the use of the European Diploma logo, in the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park this logo is publicized in several ways:

- 1) The OMPNP page of the National Parks Network website: <http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/red-parques-nacionales/nuestros-parques/ordesa/>
- 2) General brochure of the Park: it is included on the back cover, along with the rest of distinctions that the protected area has got (World Heritage, Biosphere Reserve, Special Protection Area). This brochure is distributed for free at information points and Park Visitor Centers.

3) Panels, where the aforesaid distinctions appear, located at the information points in Bielsa, Escalona, Escuaín and Ordesa; as well as visitor centers in Torla, Tella and Olivan house. They are made in two-color screen printing on aluminum plate 40x160 cm.

4) At the entrance to the National Park in Ordesa Valley, the most visited sector of the Park

54. 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 will might 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 will might 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.

Last year the County Administrative Board has decided to manage Bullerö in-house instead of making a new procurement. The staff working at the site have been hired. The workforce has increased to meet the increased number of visitors.

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 has not been used in the information about Bullerö so far. During 2016 the information will be renewed and the Diploma logo will be included.

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

International network and awareness.

55. 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 seven employees and two project workers. 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 transition to the new organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend.

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 Lapponia we are continuously working with the Sami communities and Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB).

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

Laponiatjuottjudus GIS system is under construction. This is mainly due to that we are not granted access to existing systems used by the former county management (CAB). However the work to develop and build up a Lapponia GIS has increased during the autumn of 2015 since Laponiatjuottjudus now has one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. This is a long-term work in progress that will continue during 2016.

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 also give the visitors a broad range of information about the whole Muddus/Muttos area, including the value of forest fires for the biodiversity. During 2015 we have initiated the work of building a new visitor entrance. This is a work in progress and will continue during 2016.

During 2015 we have been cooperating with a company that produce maps in order to produce a map over the Muddus/Muttos area that also includes Sjaunja/Sjávnja nature reserve. We are now happy to announce that the new map over Muddus/Muttos National Park and Sjaunja/Sjávnja nature reserve is available to purchase. 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);

With the new visitor entrance in the National Park we believe that we better can canalise and also monitor the effect visitors have on the area. During 2015 we have been using three visitor counters in Muddus/Muttos and we intend to continue using visitor counters at strategic places in the National Park.

6. Consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks with the Muddus National Park and other conservation areas so that the Lapponia 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.

Laponiatjuottjudus management staff has increased in numbers during 2015 and now consist of five full-time employees, two part-time employees and also two employees working with financed projects.

Laponiatjuottjudus operate at a limited level due to the economic funding. During 2015 the economic funding was strengthened compared to 2014. But still the future funding is very uncertain and varies from one year to another. This insufficient funding of course affect 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 later parts of 2015 Laponiatjuottjudus has started to investigate the suspected establishment of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) in the National Park. This work will continue during 2016 by creating a plan of action for removal of unwanted lodgepole pine.

During 2015 Laponiatjuottjudus has begun the work of building a new visitor entrance in Muddus/Muttos. The entrance will contain an entrance portal, fireplaces, information signs, toilets, a house for wood and garbage and a parking space. The new entrance is financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). The plan is that new visitor entrance in Muddus/Muttos also will contain the European Diploma logo with additional information about this acknowledgement.

In 2015 we have invested in new signs for every tourist cabin and staff cabin in the Lapponia WH area. These will be mounted on the cabins in 2016 and each sign display the name of the specific cabin in both Sámi, Swedish and English. Further we also reinforce the signs for the tourist cabins that are open during the winter with an extra sign in order to make it easier to locate the cabin. The visitor cabins are equipped with suitable information that among others mentions the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

In 2015 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. Hence the intention is to present information about all our different protected areas within the World Heritage. In the information about Muddus/Muttos National Park we will announce that the area is awarded with European Diploma. This is a work in progress that will continue during 2016.

Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*): one observed successful breeding in 2015.

Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*): no observed successful breeding was confirmed in 2015 (compared to two in 2014).

56. 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 seven employees and two project workers. 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 transition to the new organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend.

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).

Last year's project concerning the wolverine, with the aim of improving the predators' inventories by collecting feces and also the use of traditional knowledge from the locals, has in 2015 been assembled into a publication. The project was funded by the Sami Parliament.

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 GIS system is under construction. This is mainly due to that we are not 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 autumn of 2015 since Laponiatjuottjudus now has one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. This is a work in progress that will continue during 2016.

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 2015 we have used visitor counters in a strategic place in Sarek. This is an ongoing work and we plan to increase the numbers of 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.

In the spring 2015 we also cooperated with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) who conducted an investigation in questionnaire form concerning the status of the paths during the winter season. Laponiatjuottjudus was placing the questionnaires in visitor cabins throughout the park for the visitors to answer.

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.

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 sámi 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). Our experience during this first year that the visitor center has been open is that it 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.

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 contains information about the WH site, including the National Parks.

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.

Laponiatjuottjudus management staff has increased in numbers during 2015 and now consist of five full-time employees, two part-time employees and also two employees working with financed projects.

Laponiatjuottjudus operate at a limited level due to the economic funding. During 2015 the economic funding was strengthened compared to 2014. But still the future funding is very uncertain and varies from one year to another. This insufficient funding of course affect 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.

In 2015 we have invested in new signs for every tourist cabin and staff cabin in the Lapponia WH area. These will be mounted on the cabins in 2016 and each sign display the name of the specific cabin in both Sámi, Swedish and English. Further we also reinforce the signs for the tourist cabins that are open during the winter with an extra sign in order to make it easier to locate the cabin. The visitor cabins are equipped with suitable information that among others mentions the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

Laponiatjuottjudus has in 2015 begun a work to develop new signs for directions in the mountain area, including Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks. These signs will be produced and mounted during the following year.

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 the year Laponiatjuottjudus has visited the cabins and also carried out smaller maintenance work.

Laponiatjuottjudus has during 2015 continued the large work of register every path and construction in the National Parks. We are now in the process of prioritize and to develop plans of maintenance for the paths and constructions in the parks. This is an ongoing work that will require the field staffs attention every year.

In 2015 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. Hence the intention is to present information about all our different protected areas within the World Heritage. In the information about Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks we will announce that the area is awarded with European Diploma. This is a work in progress that will continue during 2016.

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*): four observed successful breedings in 2015 (compared to six in 2014).

Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*): three observed successful breedings in 2015 (compared to six in 2014).

Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*): no observed successful breeding was confirmed in 2015 (compared to one in 2014).

Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*): one observed successful breeding in 2015.

57. 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 hydrological survey takes place every second year and was conducted according to plan during 2015.

Work with management plan has been ongoing during the year and was along with new and updated regulations decided by the Swedish EPA in November 2015.

The task with the new, improved and modern management is therefore concluded. Now the work starts to fulfill all that I stated in the plan.

2. *Changing inflow of water to Lakes Häradsösjön and Kävsjön:* No changes in inflow have been recorded during 2015 but the situation is 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. We are planning to start work on these management actions during 2016.

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 sometimes low. There are different scientific research programs running in the park.

We have limited resources to conduct scientific research on our own so cooperation with other organizations is desirable. Store Mosse are part of the nationwide research projected conducted by the SEPA but it so far only covers certain habitats in the park.

5. *Pursue the work on extending the protected area:* All remaining issues regarding land ownership are now completed- All land within the park is now state owned. But that only solves problem within the park. Work with appointing the adjacent Långö Mosse and previous Lake Svanasjön as nature reserve is still undergoing. The land within that nature reserve is the same hydrological system as the National 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.

The funding situation for 2015 was due to the parliamentary situation very unclear. In the autumn 2014 it was announced that the nature conservation management in Sweden would get increased funding. That decision was withdrawn by the parliament in December 2014 and replaced with decreased funding. In

June 2015 the table turned again and we got increased funding for certain projects. The conclusion is that it has been complicated to plan the management according to the funding during 2015.

For 2016 the situation looks as far as we can see now much brighter and hopefully we will get at substantial increase in funding for the management of the National park.

No changes in staff have been made during 2015.

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.

As stated above, all remaining issues regarding land ownership solved. All land within the park boundaries are now state owned, as it should be according to Swedish law. The total area for these changes is 2.5 hectares. Please see the attached map with comments regarding this topic.

After these corrections is there no unresolved difficulties concerning boundaries of the National 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.

Much time and resources have focused on maintaining our structures for visitors. We have rebuilt some of

the wooden trails, built a new bridge in the south of the park, renovated the kitchen in our hostel building and painted five of the houses (including the visitor's center) in the park.

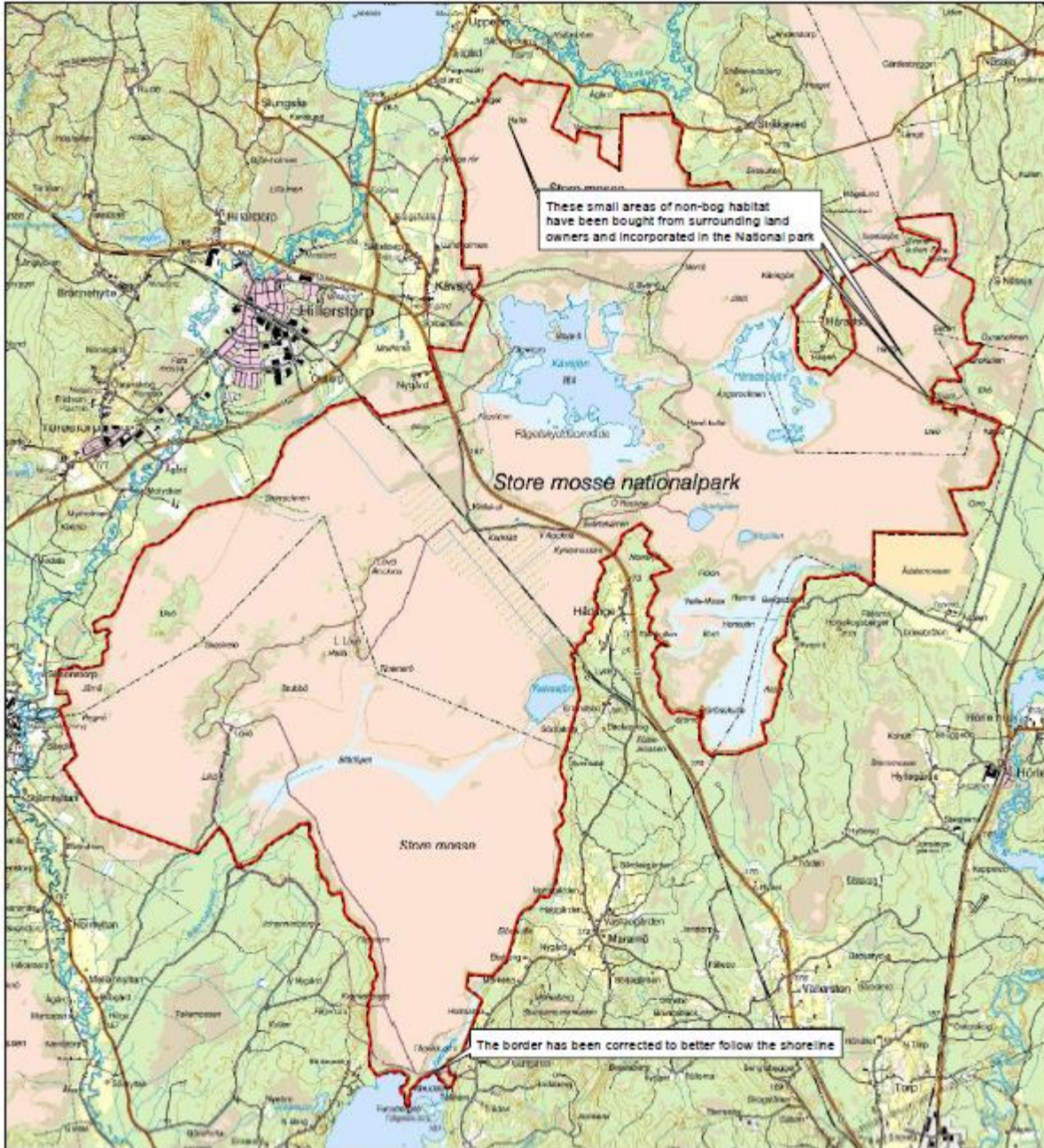
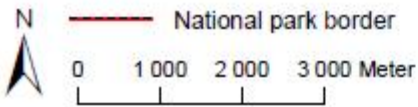
The Life+ project Life to Ad(d)mire has come to an end this year. The project has focused on restoring old peat mining areas in the National park and other protected areas in Sweden. More info about the project can be found here: www.lifetoaddmire.se

We have not used the European Diploma's logo in a sufficient amount. There are two main reasons for this:

1. We did not receive the correct logo until November 2015.

2. Many organizations are involved in the management of the national park and almost all of them wish to have their logo on our websites and/or signs. This is a problem because it gets very crowded. A brief calculation gives at hand at least 8 different logos. But with that said we will do a remake of our information signs in the park during 2016 and 2017 and during that work we will try to address this problem. In the meantime we will incorporate the European Diploma's logo on our website.

Store Mosse National park



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58. SWITZERLAND – SWISS NATIONAL PARK (SNP)

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, no conditions were mentioned.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Reservat da Biosfera Val Müstair Parc Naziunal

"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"

The biosphere reserve buffer zone in the Engadine, to the north of the SNP, demanded by UNESCO, is a political project that cannot be implemented by the administrative body of the National Park. Procedure is consequently drawn-out. The original request, that the necessary adaptations should be completed by 2013, proved to be unrealistic within the framework of the basic requirements of the Swiss democratic system.

In 2015 a cooperation agreement between the five partners (municipalities of Val Müstair, Scuol, Zernez and S-chanf, and the SNP) for a joint UNESCO Biosphere Reserve was put to the vote in the four municipalities: voters in Val Müstair and Scuol were in favour of adopting the agreement, whereas Zernez and S-chanf rejected the proposal. The fundamental demands laid down by UNESCO for the establishment of a buffer zone surrounding the core zone within Swiss territory (= SNP) cannot therefore be fulfilled. 80% of the voting population in Scuol, which is a newly formed municipality, accepted the proposed agreement (which - even though this was of no political relevance - resulted in there being considerable support for the project throughout the Engadine region); consequently the biosphere reserve committee decided that the project should be put forward to UNESCO with the three remaining partners (Val Müstair, Scuol and Zernez). For all pending projects, UNESCO has allowed the deadline for the submission of documents to be extended to 2016. Whether the biosphere reserve can be definitively secured in spite of territorial demands not being fulfilled remains to be seen. At the end of the day it is a question of what UNESCO considers to be more important: strict adherence to the original conditions, or the acknowledgement of the challenges and obstacles of grass roots democratic processes. We hope that the second option will prevail, especially as the eventual development of the biosphere reserve in accordance with the original demands in the course of time cannot be excluded.

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 SNP 100-year jubilee was a resounding success, insofar as organisation was concerned as well as public awareness and funding. This 3.5 Mio CHF project closed with a profit of CHF 58,000.

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). In 2009 an edition of our National Park magazine "Cratschla" was dedicated to the theme of the lynx. Needless to say every opportunity is made use of to inform the public about large predators. However we have no direct involvement with these creatures, since for many years their occurrence within the park and its surrounding area has only been migratory. Relations with the cantonal Office for Hunting and Fishing are excellent, with a positive outcome at various levels.

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"

The main Pass dal Fuorn road cuts through the heart of the SNP, which is problematic; traffic noise is not compatible with our total protection reserve, and the question of safety in parking areas is increasingly worrying. Due to the fact that the road is a through road (providing access to the Val Müstair and onward to South Tyrol) it is difficult to find a solution concerning emissions. The SNP administration has no competence in the matter. Requests to reduce the current permitted speed limit of 80 km/h have no chance of being accepted, neither by the authorities concerned nor by the local population. Noise measurements show that it is mainly vehicles travelling at excessive speeds that cause the greatest noise emissions. For this reason we continually turn to the cantonal police with requests for speed limit enforcement; they

carry out speed controls as frequently as possible, depending on the availability of personnel. Additional traffic signs close to the parking areas (where walkers get in and out of their cars) have improved the safety situation there. An overall concept, which would also cover safety issues, will only become feasible once plans for building alterations in the area of the privately owned Hotel Parc Naziunal Il Fuorn (that lies in the midst of the SNP) have been implemented. Since no building permit has been granted up till now, any further steps are currently blocked.

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 occurrence of a cross-border epidemic of chamois blindness in 2015 also gave rise to close collaboration with the Stelvio National Park. The ibex population was relatively lightly affected, whereas the disease caused an increase in mortality amongst the chamois population. A close watch is being kept on the situation collaboratively by both parks. We do not expect there to be any long-term effects on the chamois population.

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 two persons in authority named at the beginning of this document. 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.

3. Site Management

There were no problems within the National Park administration during the current year. With the exception of the above-mentioned chamois blindness in one area of the SNP, 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). Following the increased workload during the jubilee year 2014, the National Park team was able to return to 'business as usual'. A review of the last few years was carried out in 2015; this established the need to adopt new strategic guidelines, which should be addressed in 2016.

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.

59. 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. Kuşçenneti Milli Parkı Longterm Development Plan is prepared but it is on the process of approval.

-In the existing situation The Manyas Lake has Wetland Management Plan which has prepared according to the Wetland Regulation. So the area has a management plan. On the other hand there are two conservation statues in the side. One is Wetland and others National Park. But all the activities are carrying out according to the Wetland Management Plan. There is no need additional plan.

- Some of the small scale project related with infrastructure and bird breeding nests have been developed and implemented in the area under the National government budget. Although there is a draft project proposal has been developed regarding the lake, it is still under developing. But there is no donor and financial supporter for the draft project proposal.

- Regular monitoring the breeding bird population of the park is carrying out both general places and also particularly Siğirci Delta and Kocaçay Delta. Ongoing years we will carry out research on the dynamics of these populations at Siğirci and Kocaçay Delta.

- 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.

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.

Follow in 2015 the evaluation of the wetland management plan for 2011-2015 and the adopting of the management plan; Revision of Wetland Management Plan will be met on Provincial Wetlands Commission meeting which is planned by the end of 2015. The revision of water management plan is still in progress.

Updating logos of EDPA; The new logo will be added to new materials (in joint presentations, new brochures, maps and leaflets, and in the visitor centers etc.) during the new budget year (after 2015). The national park's poster which is prepared by us for EDPA 50. anniversary and EDPA flame which is taken from Workshop in Italy hung in visitor center.

- Although the number of staff in the area is low, Division Directorate of National Parks from Balıkesir is supporting during the summer season.

- The National Park Administration is working related with agencies and organizations to ensure the natural fluctuations in the lake's water level.

- Beside setting up a small wardening unit on the southern shore of the lake to guarantee the protection of the area, Park Administration is working on public awareness and training for visitors, local users and other stakeholders.

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 is no change in terrestrial and water surface.

During 2015, some of the investments have been implemented for the national park:

-The roof of visitor center has been repaired and regenerated.

-Emergency Evacuation Panels were updated.

-Water tank (60 tons) construction work which will be completed at the end of November..

It has experienced difficulties in recruitment.

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 change in the boundary of National 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.

2015 was 50. anniversary of EDPA. Therefore, "Bird House Contest" was held in collaborate with Şehit Mehmet Gönenç High school as part of Kuşçenneti Carnival at the end of May. Bird houses which were made by students hung on trees around Bandırma province and in Kuşçenneti National Park.

The quality and level of water are regularly monitoring by State Water Affairs (SWA). The monitoring results have been denoted that the level of water higher than previous years. Therefore, shore birds were observed lesser than previous years.

In the next years, The existing camera system will update and converted from 2D than 3D in order to promote the effective visitor management in the area, and a new birdwatching tunnel will be constructed

During the year, some of the scientific studies are supported by officially and official permissions are given for researcher such as;

-"Biodiversity Inventory for Balıkesir province" which is granted by Regional Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks will be conducted between 2015 and 2017.

- The studies named "Distribution area of Water orchid (*Adiantum capillus*)" and "Arthropoda which located in the National Park" was allowed but they haven't started yet.

60. 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.

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.

Most of the annual budget go for scientific research, conservation activities, and ecotourism facilities development. Within last 4 years two new visitor centres were opened; the government has already funded the elaboration of the technical-planning documentation for constructing the International Capacity Building and Research Centre for primeval forests and alternative energy sources. The co-funding for the aforementioned Centre will be fulfilled by the German cooperation program based on agreement with the Ministry of Ecology and Nature Resources of Ukraine; further construction is also planned to be funded through successful fundraising. A so-called “zero stage” of the construction process (building ground preparations) has been launched in 2015.

There’s an annual growth of budget. In 2014 it was 13 048 460, and 14 243 208 in 2015 of the state budget.

So, according to the agreement between the Ministries of environment of Germany and Ukraine the German-funded cooperation program will start granting ca. 10 000 000 Euro for the capacity-building of the protected area network in Ukraine. CBR is one of the 10 PAs selected for participation in this project during the next 5 years. This is the biggest fundraising element at the moment, as the budget assigned to CBR is ca 1 mio Euro.

As well CBR has an access to so-called “regional ecological fund” and the money granted by European Union to the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine within their cooperation program. So annually we submit proposals for improvements of certain elements of the tourism infrastructure, ranger service supply and scientific activity support. In 2015 proposals for the creation of the Ecological School at CBR was submitted to the Ministry for funding this idea through the EU financial support facility. The confirmation for granting this money was obtained. The funds will be transferred to CBR in 2016.

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 CBR is to establish a transboundary biosphere reserve “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 CBR 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. We have held a number of bilateral meetings.

Also a renewed Memorandum of Understanding with more items specifically for TBR establishment in it was signed in 2014.

In 2015 the Romanian side was actively working with the communities which are supposed to become a part of the TBR. The MoU between the Maramures county (RO) and the Rakhiv district and Transcarpathian regional administration (UA) was signed. One of the items of these Memorandums is the organization of the International Conference “The role of the future TBR in conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the region”. The conference is to be held in 2016.

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;

Since 2013 the CBR Coordination Council is working at CBR. According to the Regulations about the coordination council it meets no less than once a year for discussing major community – protected area interaction aspects, cooperation possibilities and mitigation of the conflicts of interests. The Council is made up of core scientists and rangers of CBR together with the main stakeholders from the territory of CBR activity. In April 2015 the 3rd meeting of the council took place.

In parallel to this activity, CBR representatives regularly visit community meetings of the towns and villages within the reserve’s scope and also meet the initiative groups and NGOs. Thus, 9 of such meetings were held in 2015. As well a great number of ecoeducation activities were organized at schools and kindergartens of the CBR 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.

For 10 years there has been fruitful cooperation between Carpathian Biosphere Reserve and University of sustainable development (Eberswalde, Germany). In late May - early June 2015 was organized and held commemorative study tour for students of this International University, which was attended by about 40 students from different countries: Germany, Pakistan, Colombia, Turkey, Bangladesh and Germany and UK. 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 CBR. June 5, 2015 due to the World Day of Environment in Rakhiv held an international round table "Problems of creation and functioning of transboundary biosphere reserves on the example of the projected Ukrainian-Romanian cross-border biosphere reserve in Maramures mountains" with the participation of CBR along with German university of sustainable development (Eberswalde) and Romanian park "Maramures Mountains", as well as representatives of local governments, forestry enterprises, national parks adjacent to the Ukrainian-Romanian border. As well the street poll about the role of CBR for the local communities was held in Dilove village. The results were further processed and presented to the reserve later in 2015.

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 "Regulations on hunting and procedures of Hunting" (1996), the wolf listed as game animals. It can be hunted from early November to late March. However, despite the fact that the intensity withdrawal of wolves is highest among hunting animals (over 80% of the population, and in some parts of the Ukrainian range to 100%), limits for shooting a wolf are not provided.

Till now the Order of the State Forestry Committee of Ukraine № 121 "On measures for the extermination of harmful wild animals" (1997) is valid. According the Order wolf also classified as harmful wild animal. The Law of Ukraine "On Hunting Economy and Hunting" (2000) also doesn't contains any kinds of restrictions on the extermination of wolves.

Ukraine's obligation to provide "appropriate control" on the wolf as a species included in Appendix II of the Bern Convention and "selective regulation of the wolf" requires changes in national legislation of Ukraine. It must be brought into line with international instruments for the protection of nature and international commitments undertaken by Ukraine.

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. Such a program could be a National Action Plan for the Wolf, proposals for which are developing now in the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

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 Chornohirske and Kevelivske divisions. Special measures to restore the population size in the reserve is 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;

CBR's territory consists of five semi-detached massifs and three isolated nature reserves creating a cluster or 'archipelago-like' structure which challenges long-term connectivity between the areas. The southern areas are located at the Romanian border connecting to Romanian protected areas such as the Maramureş Mountains Nature Park. Conservation management beyond the EU-border poses a particular challenge. CBR's functional territorial zoning comprises the core zone (strict protection) and three zones where extensive land uses like selective logging, grazing, picking of berries and mushrooms and hay-making are allowed in a restricted regime.

Much efforts and resources are directed onto monitoring of the reserve's status and nature conservation of the study on the environmental impact of human activities. The monitoring is fulfilled by the scientific department of the reserve which comprises of botanical, zoological, forest science laboratories, and also a special laboratory of ecological monitoring; there is also a special department of research and sustainable development which is also obliged to analyze scientific data and monitor development within the reserve and the vicinity. Annually a volume of Chronicles of Nature is issued by the institution based on the results of research and monitoring conducted by researchers in field and by rangers. The data are analysed and presented in this main report.

As for the monitoring, the system of data collection is based on daily field visits by rangers in charge of the area, and also on scheduled visits fulfilled by the scientists working within the scientific department of CBR.

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.

Since 2013 the CBR Coordination Council is working at CBR. According to the Regulations about the coordination council it meets no less than once a year for discussing major community – protected area interaction aspects, cooperation possibilities and mitigation of the conflicts of interests. The Council is made up of core scientists and rangers of CBR together with the main stakeholders from the territory of CBR activity. In April 2015 the 3rd meeting of the council took place. The stakeholders who are members of the Council are the representatives of the State Forestry Enterprises, tourism sector, agricultural cluster and regional decision makers.

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. The concept was presented at the CBR Scientific-Technical Board meeting at the end of 2015 and was welcomed unanimously. The concrete planning meetings with cost estimations will be held in 2016.

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 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 have been started in this protected massif. The situation had been disturbed here before the area became protected. 3 hydrological constructions (flood-gates) were maintained on drainage channels.

A complex inventory of hunting fauna was held in 2015. It proved that the number of ungulates is stable.

Protection of the territory is fulfilled by 147 (end of 2015) field rangers, who are responsible for keeping to the nature-protection regime.

Inspection and maintenance of 10.0 km of fire-resisting roads was done in 2015 and 61 km of fire-break lines were repaired. Mobilization plan for fire extinguishment for each of the department has been elaborated. No wild fires were registered during the year.

The rangers of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve working in field divisions have renovated 29 km of mountain paths and trails, and 27 km of tourism trails were freshly marked (10 km out of them are on a new hiking trail).

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 2014

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.

61. 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.

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 new Reserve Plan has been completed, reviewed and will soon be a working document.

2. Continue to maintain the native tree/shrub 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* 212 gms, Hazel *Corylus avellana* nuts and Birch *Betula pubescens* 91 gms,

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 *Cervus elaphu*: 97 stags, 44 hinds, 23 calves, Roe deer *Capreolus capreolus*: 6 bucks, 5 does, 1 kid and Sika deer *Cervus nippon*: 1 stag, 2 hinds.

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

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

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 12814. Members of the public visited the Centre has now been refurbished and was officially opened on 9th May 2015 along with the refurbished interpretation, trail network and a wildlife hide.

6. Improve car park facilities for hill-walkers in Glen Torridon. Money has not become available for this project

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.

In keeping with the Reserve Woodland Management Plan we have begun to create deadwood in our No's 8 and 9 Enclosures.

We have also prepared ground in Glen Torridon which will be planted with local provenance seedlings. This will help the continuing connectivity with the ancient pine woods of Beinn Eithe NNR and the remnant pine woods of Glen Torridon. E. Maclean retires as Reserve Manager on 3rd December 2015

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.

During 2014/15 we upgraded the visitor facilities at Beinn Eithe NNR Visitor Centre. The refurbished visitor centre, new wildlife viewing hide and refreshed trails are designed to provide a high quality visitor experience. The interpretation throughout the centre will be replaced with vivid panoramic images to bring the reserve alive for visitors, information on the trails and wildlife will encourage people to explore and experience for themselves. The centre will act as a gateway to the wider Wester Ross area providing tourists with the information on the best places to view wildlife and enjoy the natural heritage in the region. The project has been made possible through SNH securing funding from the European Regional Development Fund. The logo for the European Diploma is used on the welcome panels for the revised interpretation.

Attainment of the European Diploma is promoted on the Beinn Eithe 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/>

62. 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:

In recognition of the internationally important seabird colonies and associated marine environment currently experiencing severe pressure, the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments should use the powers invested in them through the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 to establish the protected marine area which has been called for in successive diploma renewals. A new protected marine area should be in conformity with the Fair Isle Marine Action Plan.

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 needs and aspirations of the local community, as detailed in the FIMP, should be fully taken into account, as should the fragile socio-economic situation;

Concerned for the future sustainability of their community The Fair Islanders, with the endorsement and sponsorship of Shetland Enterprise (a region within Highlands and Islands Enterprise), commissioned and received a study entitled “Securing Fair Isle’s Future: A Plan for Action, April 2015. In essence the plan sets out a vision for the island from a residents perspective and how they could work with the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) as owners of the island. In response the NTS set out their own Fair Isle Plan: August 2015 to develop a joint vision for the island and to set down clear priorities for the future. The islanders plan empowers them as a community and will permit a series of actions to develop and strengthen them as a community. The NTS fully endorses their plan and will work alongside them to deliver the agreed joint objectives. Two island based projects are now well in hand and they are: the appointment of a Community Development Officer to deliver the actions in the community plan and the formation of the Fair Isle Broadband Company to develop a fully integrated fibre optic broadband communications network around the island. For the NTS’s part they are developing plans for the refurbishment of Midway House and croft for a new family and are looking to promote the development of a Community Housing Partnership to manage the islands housing resource. They are also hoping to relet a croft and house that has recently been renounced, February 2016, to a new incoming family.

(2). all efforts should be made to solve the problem of the disposal of plastic in general and agricultural baling plastic in particular.

Fair Isle has embraced a green agenda initiated through the local primary school and recycles as much of their waste as they can. A Recycling Centre was placed adjacent to the school and the various bins including plastic and baling plastic in particular. The island is therefore much tidier as a result and the bins are taken off the isle of the MV Good Shepherd or a regular basis.

Marine Protected Area (MPA)

Progress

After so many years of stagnation there has been spectacular progress during 2015. The key to this progress was the huge effort by the community and its partners to seek consensus with all major stakeholders and in particular the fishing industry. Intensive dialogue led to a measure of understanding, which has been enshrined in the final refinement of the proposal. A series of meetings in Fair Isle and Shetland enabled the community to demonstrate that it wished to work with, rather than against, stakeholders in the development of the MPA so that it becomes a shared approach to sustainable management of Fair Isle waters.

The stakeholder engagement was an integral part of the revision required by the MPA Independent Assessor, Claire Brown of ABPmer, to the original MPA proposal. The assessor was rigorous in insisting that the Scottish Government’s criteria for a Demonstration & Research MPA were met in full. The Assessor identified and sought clarification for items she felt were insufficiently detailed within the proposal (February 2015). The Fair Isle Marine Environment & Tourism Initiative (FIMETI) responded by drawing together a team of skilled technical advisors – in particular the *fauna & flora international* Marine Community Officer, Kerri Whiteside – and seeking dialogue with all stakeholder groups to resolve the gaps identified by the assessor. It was a gradual process requiring a number of drafts before a revised proposal acceptable to all was produced.

The original timetable for the Assessor was delivery of her assessment to the Scottish Government by early 2015. The need to achieve consensus and a more focused proposal delayed the process. Fortunately, the Scottish Government's Marine Scotland consented to an extension to this part of the process, which was completed during the early summer.

On 1st September 2015 Claire Brown, accompanied by Sebastian Howell of the Scottish Government's Marine Scotland, made a presentation in Lerwick, Shetland, attended by a wide range of stakeholders including the fishing groups, FIMETI supporters and council representatives. Brown and Howell repeated the presentation the following day on Fair Isle.

The presentation comprised an item by item assessment of the extent to which the Fair Isle proposal met Government criteria for a Demonstration & Research MPA. The outcome, and conclusion, was that the proposal met all the criteria; indeed in all but one of the criteria, the Assessor felt that the proposed MPA was ideally suited to the Government's concept of local community, science and industry working together.

The one element highlighted by the Assessor as lacking clarity was the actual programme structure of the MPA. However, the community's view prevailed that it needed to seek consensus and not impose a rigid programme from day one. This was made clear in the proposal document. A timetable has been set. Funding will be sought for a MPA steering officer who would work with stakeholders to develop an agreed programme, including the management measures needed to support the research. The officer would also draw together the various research groups currently monitoring Fair Isle waters to seek a higher level of integration and cross-over of information. The Assessor was satisfied with this approach. She recommended that the MPA should run for at least 20 years for maximum results and benefit. There should be an annual evaluation and a detailed assessment to correct or amend shortcomings in the programme after 10 years. She felt that there was no reason why it should not continue beyond 20 years as a successful venture beneficial to stakeholders and Scotland.

Outcome of Assessor presentation

The presentation event allowed plenty of time for discussion and comments. Fair Isle MPA supporters were hugely gratified (and pleasantly surprised) when fishing interests, including The Shetland Fishermen's Association and Scottish Fishermen's Federation, indicated their support for the proposal. The Shetland Islands Council also indicated strong support. Most other stakeholders had already declared support.

The high level of consensus was achieved by direct engagement with stakeholders. A Governance Framework has been set up to ensure the inclusion of their interests in the development of the MPA. The Governance structure comprises: at the Executive Level, a Steering Committee; at the Project Management Level, a Project Officer Support Team; and at the Implementation Level, a Project Officer (plus technical/scientific inputs).

The SFA, SFF, Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation, NAFC Marine Centre, Shetland Fish Producers Organisation and SIC Coastal Zone Management service are amongst 14 members of the Executive Steering Committee.

Responding to this high level of consensus, Claire Brown indicated that her assessor's report to Marine Scotland would confirm that Fair Isle met the criteria for a D&R MPA. Sebastian Howell indicated that receipt of this affirmation would prompt Marine Scotland to recommend the proposal to the Scottish Ministers.

What happens next?

The process is far from finished. If the Scottish Ministers are minded to accept the recommendation, they will instruct Marine Scotland to put the proposal out to public consultation. The consultation normally takes the form of a document outlining the proposal and framing questions which elicit an answer (often

in *yes* or *no* form) from respondents. The consultation is open to the general public and organisations alike. The final government decision rests heavily on the responses received.

No timetable has been indicated yet regarding Marine Scotland recommendations, Ministers' decisions or the consultation process. FIMETI will be seeking to give maximum publicity to the consultation when it happens and encouraging supporters to respond.

Support

FIMETI continues to publicise the MPA proposal through its website www.fimeti.org.uk. It has also established a facebook presence. These communication media have proved effective at reaching a wider audience and achieving good positive responses.

The news of progress was picked up by the highly respected Blue Marine Foundation which featured the development in its mid-year newsletter. A very good summary of the more than 25 years of effort by the Fair Isle community ended with the comment: "This is a perfect example of how Marine Protected Areas can bring benefits to island communities – in this case more fish mean more birds, more birds mean more tourists, more tourists mean more money. Everyone wins." The link to the full article is as follows: <http://www.blumarinefoundation.com/uncategorized/islanders-a-big-step-forward-in-25-year-fight-for-marine-protection/>

Further publicity is planned to coincide with the MPA consultation announcement. The NTS is supporting this with funding as well as ideas as part of the NTS, Community and *ffi* Fair Isle MPA working group partnership.

Petition to the Scottish Parliament

The *Scottish Parliament Petitions Committee* will be made aware of developments the moment a decision is made public regarding the MPA.

Shetland Marine Spatial Planning Advisory Group

Members of the SMSP Advisory Group were invited as stakeholders in relation to the Fair Isle MPA and most were present in their particular roles at the series of stakeholder consultation meetings held in the run up to the Independent Assessor's presentation and decision in September. This also opened up a direct dialogue with the Shetland Shellfish Monitoring Organisation regarding data gathering for the Fair Isle inshore shell-fishery, which has been identified as a measure to incorporate within the MPA Research programme.

3. 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 –

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:

Use of the Diploma's logo

Scottish Ministers have now approved that the proposed Development and Research Marine Protection Area status goes out to final public consultation and is a major step forward in the case for Marine protected status. This is expected in March 2016. Several references Fair Isles status a Council of Europe Protected area are made to bolster the case from protection.

There are several references on the Official fair Isle website to the European Diploma status.

The European protected area status plaque is displayed at the airport and the pier.

The Wider Environment

Flora & Vegetation

Oysterplant

The annual oysterplant *Mertensia maritima* census achieved a count of 106, down from 171 in 2014.

The counts were as follows (*with 2014 counts in parentheses*):

| | Small | Medium | Large |
|----------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Inside MUG enclosure | 43 (22) | 9 (27) | 34 (59) |
| Outside, north | 10 (30) | 1 (3) | |
| Outside, east | 2 (0) | 0 (1) | |
| Outside, south | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | |
| Outside, west | 6 (1) | 0 (0) | |
| Peerie Uri Geo | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | |
| Sma Geo | 1 (12) | 0 (16) | |

Key:

MUG = Muckle Uri Geo

Further substantial gales over winter 2014-15 will have contributed to the decrease. South-east gales had an especial impact, all but wiping out the Små Geo population. The signs are that this decrease will be short-lived. The well-established large plants at Muckle Uri Geo are now immense, with heavy seed production; and the new gales have re-graded the stones on the beach so that more suitable areas are now available, particularly to the south-west of the current clusters.

Orchids

A second winter of endless rain left water levels the highest they have been in Schoolton wet meadow by May 2015. This was reflected in the second lowest study area count of flowering northern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella* spikes on record. The 2015 count was a mere 52, one above the 2004 total. There had already been a marked decrease in 2014 to 456 spikes from 1,327 the year before.

When the study started, northern marsh orchid was extremely rare away from Schoolton meadow. Since then, and particularly over the last 10 years, the population has rocketed and large numbers occur at a number of sites; and expanding south and north of traditional sites. The numbers distributed round the isle were the highest ever in 2015. Damp soils after winter rains may have stimulated this spread.

Clearly the species has relatively narrow ecological requirements which require soil which is neither too wet nor too dry. The Schoolton study no longer reflects overall population trends but retains value in assessing the soil wetness tolerance levels of the species.

Other notable plants

All-seed *Radiola linoides* was the major winner from the wet soil conditions across the isle. It was more numerous than ever before and could be found the length and breadth of the isle, including coastal turf. Fair Isle remains a successful refuge area for a species in drastic population decline elsewhere.

It is not the only rare species which is extending its Fair Isle range. There was a marked further extension of round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*. Restricted 30 years ago to a tiny population in the north of the isle, it gradually extended southwards until reaching Sukka Mire in 2001. It is now plentiful well to the south of Sukka Mire burnt mound where even last year there were very few plants.

It is interesting to note that a botanist familiar with the isle in the early 1970s remarked on the extraordinary amount of ivy-leaved water crowfoot *Ranunculus hederaceus* in the ditches and wet patches of the in-by. He remembered just one small patch of this nationally rare species. This major expansion is real; and it has taken an astonishing and unexpected step northwards. A small colony is growing in shallow water and mud around the edge of Sprittery Hole, taking the species into the Special Area of Conservation. The plant has colonised all the drainage systems in the south in recent years but this is the first to be found in the north; at a considerable distance from any other colony. Ivy-leaved crowfoot has very specific habitat requirements and shuns acidic waters. Sprittery Hole is used extensively by bonxies and, in winter, large gulls. Their contribution of nutrients may be the deciding factor in making the habitat suitable to the plant.

Elsewhere a change of land use at Setter, from a field left fallow, produced a large population of field horsetail *Equisetum pratense*. This plant was last recorded in 1980 from the same location. The spores from this plant must have responded to the change in management after remaining dormant for over 30 years.

New species

A clump of black horehound *Ballota nigra*, a plant not known from Shetland, was found in a “wildlife” part of Setter garden. It was growing in the shade of recently planted shrubs, including apple *Malus*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, and is thus clearly a casual arriving (presumably as seed) with the shrubs.

There was a considerable number of other additions. The majority were from groups not previously studied in detail. They included the leaf-spot fungus *Septoria scabiosicola* on devil’s-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, the leaf-mine fly *Chromatomyia horticola* on marsh ragwort *Senecio aquaticus*, rusty false-keeled slug *Arion fasciatus* and the mould beetle *Latridius minutus*.

One group, the lichens, received particularly detailed attention. At the beginning of June they became the subject of the first expert study since 1961. In a week’s intensive investigation, Steve Price of the British Lichen Society added no fewer than 49 species to the Fair Isle list.

Most of the additions mentioned above can be assumed to be overlooked residents rather than new arrivals. The same cannot be said of a colourful micro moth found near the school on 20th August. It required two months and the opinion of a Swedish expert to identify it as *Phyllonorycter apparella*. This constitutes the first British record and follows two years of explosive abundance in southern Scandinavia. It is unlikely to breed on the isle because its host plant, aspen *Populus tremula*, is not present.

An even more extraordinary find was the migratory locust *Locusta migratoria* which appeared on 29th September with easterly winds. Weather charts suggest that the Fair Isle individual derived from the central Asian part of its range. This species of hot and desert climes usually remains within its normal range but is irruptive at high population levels. Irruptive movements can take migratory forms into central Europe but they are an extreme rarity in the UK. There are only two previous records for the Shetland Isles, the last in October 1939.

A noctuid moth and three fungi were other newcomers. The moth was a dotted clay *Xestia baja*. It is widespread in Scotland but not a known migrant. High population levels in its breeding range may have prompted the movement.

Two of the fungi were bracket species: *Melanotus horizontalis*, growing on a rung of a ladder accessing a bird trap at Funniequoy; and the split gill *Schizophyllum commune* on a trunk, possibly of spruce *Picea*, found floating on the sea and brought ashore only a few months earlier. In October two small colonies of the eyelash fungus *Scutellinia scutellata* was found on a muddy footpatch behind the Houll.

The *Melanotus* has been spreading in the UK in recent years. Split gill was rare before expanding its range after the Second World War. Both may have colonised from wind-borne spores. However, the occurrence of split gill on a tree trunk pulled from the sea raises the possibility that spores had survived prolonged exposure to the sea. The eyelash fungus is common throughout the UK north to Orkney. The Fair Isle record extends its distribution northwards. The track is used by numerous birdwatchers and it is feasible that the fungus came as spores on their boots.

Other non avian highlights

Rivalling the locust in size and another long-distance migrant, from southern Europe or Africa, was a convolvulus hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* which appeared in September. It was part of an influx to Britain large enough to be mentioned in a national newspaper. The slightly smaller hummingbird hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* from southern Europe occurred in August and September.

A dotted rustic *Rhyacia simulans* in August was the second Fair Isle record, following one in 2004. More significantly, there have been no other Shetland records in the last 71 years.

Birds

General

Apart from a few moderate influxes in spring, 2015 was notable for the low numbers of commoner passerine migrants until October when the thrushes moved through in force. Fortunately for the many birdwatchers attracted by the isle's reputation the rarities continue to appear in regularity and variety. Hardly a year goes by without one or more new birds being added to the Fair Isle list. In spring 2015 these comprised a great white egret *Ardea alba* and a Moltoni's warbler *Sylvia subalpina*. Recent genetic studies have demonstrated that the latter, formerly considered a form of the subalpine warbler is a species in its own right, with Italy being the centre of its breeding range. Other spring highlights included a goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* in April. There are very few Fair Isle records.

The low numbers of small migrants in September were hugely recompensed by exceptional numbers of raptors, including plentiful sparrowhawks *Accipiter nisus*, kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* and merlins *Falco columbarius*. A roost established at Da Water comprised 4 hen harriers *Circus cyaneus* and a juvenile pallid harrier *Circus macrourus*.

This was followed by an unprecedented and prolonged arrival of yellow-browed warblers *Phylloscopus inornatus*. On one particular day a record 75 were estimated on the isle and every garden had some. This tiny migrant from easternmost Europe eastwards far outnumbered all other warblers on the isle. A Siberian thrush *Zoothera sibirica* from the same general range was seen briefly on the west cliffs – a second Fair Isle record. Five glossy ibises *Plegadis falcinellus* on the pond in front of the bird observatory were also a second record, quickly following the first in 2014. Three settled on to the isle for a fortnight. They were relatively approachable and Islanders, particularly, enjoyed the exotic sight of glossy ibises feeding tamely amongst their sheep.

A further unprecedented arrival occurred at the end of October in the form of a major irruption of long-eared *Asio otus* and short-eared owls *Asio flammeus*. The short-eared owl invasion was unprecedented with up to 40 on the isle before the end of the month.

Throughout the autumn there was a steady flow of the more regular rarities to keep the birdwatchers happy, spiced with less frequent species including Radde's warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*, Pallas's grasshopper warbler *Locustella certhiola* and aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. The last is listed by the IUCN as globally threatened.

The autumn's last birdwatchers were treated to a Siberian rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*. This remains an extremely rare and much sought-after species in the UK but in recent years has become almost annual on Fair Isle.

Breeding landbirds

The breeding highlight of the summer was a pair of redshanks *Tringa totanus* raising at least two young on Da Water. This is the only the second breeding record, twenty years after the first.

Twite *Carduelus flavirostris* numbers have declined markedly in western Europe in recent years. They are a secretive breeder so it is difficult to assess population levels on the isle during the summer. However, there were exceptional numbers in September, including flocks of over 200. The flocks will include substantial numbers from Shetland but indicate that regionally at least the twite had an excellent breeding season.

Seabirds (data provided by David Parnaby, FIBO)

It was a summer of mixed fortunes for Fair Isle seabirds. After the rarity, for recent years, of a good breeding season in 2014, the population trend appeared to be downwards for all but shag and Arctic skua. Breeding success was mixed but productivity for two of the most vulnerable species, Kittiwake and Arctic tern returned to very low.

In addition to population counts and breeding success, Fair Isle Bird Observatory monitoring, as part of the National Seabird Monitoring Programme administered by the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, includes studies of seabird diets, feeding frequencies and puffin adult survival. Results of 2015 work are set out below:

Seabirds: scientific names

| | |
|--|--|
| (Northern) Fulmar <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> | (Northern) Gannet <i>Morus bassanus</i> |
| (European) Shag <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> | Arctic Skua <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> |
| Great Skua <i>Stercorarius skua</i> | (Black-legged) Kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> |
| Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> | Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> |
| (Common) Guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i> | Razorbill <i>Alca tarda</i> |
| Black Guillemot (Tystie) <i>Cephus grylle</i> | (Atlantic) Puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i> |

Population monitoring

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Northern Fulmar (plots) | - 11.1 % since 2014 to AOS |
| Northern Gannet (whole-island) | - 6.3% since 2014 to 3,363 AON |
| European Shag (plots) | + 37.5% since 2014 to 33 AON |
| Arctic Skua (whole-island) | + 23.3% since 2014 to 37 AOT |
| Great Skua (whole-island) | - 55.7% since 2014 to 188 AOT |
| Black-legged Kittiwake (plots) | - 20.7 % since 2014 to 46 AON |
| Black-legged Kittiwake (whole-island) | - 10.8% since 2014 to 859 AON |
| Arctic Tern (whole-island) | - 69.4 % since 2014 to 30 AIA |
| Common Tern (whole-island) | no change from 2014 at 1 AIA |
| Common Guillemot (plots) | - 5.0% since 2014 to 1,286 individuals |
| Common Guillemot (whole-island) | + 7.3% since 2010 to 20,924 individuals |
| Razorbill (plot) | -11.0% since 2014 to 23 individuals |
| Razorbill (whole-island) | + 41.2% since 2010 to 1,930 individuals |

Black Guillemot (east coast) - 1.0% since 2014 to 194 breeding plumage adults

Breeding success monitoring

Northern Fulmar (plots) no change at 0.54 chicks fledged per AOS
 Northern Gannet (plots) + 8.8% to 0.74 chicks fledged per AON
 European Shag (plots) - 12.4% to 1.62 chicks fledged per AON
 Arctic Skua (whole-island) - 42.6% to 0.27 chicks fledged per AOT
 Great Skua (whole-island) + 328.6% to 0.9 chicks fledged per AOT
 Black-legged Kittiwake (plots) - 79.0% to 0.13 chicks fledged per AON
 Arctic Tern (whole-island) - 50.0% to 0.03 chicks fledged per AIA
 Common Tern (whole-island) no change (0 in 2014)
 Common Guillemot (plots) + 3.5% to 0.59 chicks fledged per AIA
 Razorbill (plot) + 2.9 % to 0.70 chicks fledged per egg laid
 Black Guillemot (east coast) N/A (monitoring sites no longer viable)
 Atlantic Puffin (plots) - 17.9% to 0.64 chicks fledged per egg laid

Adult survival monitoring

In total, just 12 colour-ringed Atlantic Puffins were resighted in 2015, but a large number of birds were seen that were unidentifiable due to having incomplete combinations, so it seems unwise to use these figures to produce a year-to-year survival estimate. Finding new ways of marking the Roskillie population (or a new population to study) is an urgent priority for 2016.

Diet assessment

The number of occasions when fish were observed being brought back by Common Guillemots during a 24hr watch was 71.1% less in 2015 (105 return flights with fish) than 2014 (364 return flights with fish) Sandeels were the most common prey-type seen in 2015 (40.0% of fish brought back were this species), then Gadoids (31.4%) and then Clupeids (14.3%); see Table 15. Sandeels were the commonest fish observed during the 24hr watch in 2014 (44.5%), Gadoids were the second commonest (32.4%) followed by Clupeids (8.0%). The majority of fish brought back by Common Guillemots in 2015 were judged to be 1-1.5x the length of the bill, unlike in 2014, when the majority of the fish were judged to be equal to the length of the bill; see Table 16.

The total number of occasions when fish were observed being brought back to burrows by Atlantic Puffins during a 24hr feeding watch was 19.6% higher in 2015 (189 return flights with fish) than in 2014 (152 return flights with fish). The majority of the fish being brought in were recorded as too fast to positively identify prey (61.9%), a large increase on 2014 (with 29.1% of the feeds too quick for prey identification).

In 2015, the majority of the prey types in the food samples collected were unidentified, with the second most abundant being Clupeids. Interestingly, the next most abundant prey-type recorded during the 24hr feedwatch (after samples too quick/small to identify) were large Sandeels.

No prey samples were collected from European Shags, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Razorbills and Common Guillemots in 2014

Chick feeding frequency assessment

During 24hr feeding watches, daily chick feeding frequency by Common Guillemots was 70.8% lower in 2014 (1.54 feeds per chick per day) than in 2014 (5.27 feeds per chick per day) and by Atlantic Puffins was 15.9% higher in 2015 (7.0 feeds per burrow per day) than in 2014 (6.04 feeds per burrow per day).

Sea Mammals

Marine mammal sightings are becoming ever more frequent and regular, and this is proving a valuable extra draw for Fair Isle visitors. Whereas in previous years killer whales *Orcinus orca* (orcas) were a rare unexpected bonus for lucky visitors, in 2015 orcas were seen in spring, summer and autumn. They were particularly regular during September and October and, with the modern technology of mobile phones, it was more than just the lucky few who got to see them.

Another cetacean which had a bumper autumn was Risso's dolphin *Grampus griseus*. They were particularly easy to see, with pods of up to 19 inshore for much of September and early October. On the debit side, only one minke whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* was seen (in June) and harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* records were few.

Seals: grey seals *Halichoerus grypus* were abundant throughout the year, and especially appreciated by visitors from continental Europe. After none in 2014, common seals *Phoca vitulina* were seen occasionally during the summer.

Fish (summary provided by Stewart Thomson, Quoy)

The season started slowly with generally poor catches of saithe *Pollachius virens*. They were of mixed size and the smaller fish were unseasonably small which tends to indicate a time shift in their breeding cycle. However, as the season drew on there was an increase in shoal density to the extent that on one occasion the fish-finder was finding them all the way to the seabed! The shoals are still present at the time of writing (late October) but the size of fish remains very mixed.

Pollock *Pollachius pollachius* were present in quite good numbers. They were in good condition and mostly in the 2 kg class although there has been a few up to 3.6 kg. Overall it was a better year than the previous few.

There were no haddock *Melanogrammus aeglefinus* or whiting *Merlangius merlangius* on the inshore ground this summer. The only fish caught locally on this habitat were flounder *Platichthys flesus*, gurnard *Eutriglia gurnardus* and lesser spotted dogfish *Scyliorhinus caniculus*. With the lack of the whitefish, fishing effort during the year was minimal.

Mackerel *Scomber scombrus* were sporadic for most of the season and catches were small, reflecting the situation in Shetland. However, in October they appeared in decent numbers (October). These were of a good size and condition but nearly all spent.

There has been an upswing in ling *Molva molva* abundance on traditional grounds and a reasonable number have been caught despite difficult weather. There were fewer cod *Gadus morhua* this year but substantial marks were recorded between Fair Isle and Shetland.

A feature of captures has been the lack of sandeels *Ammodytes* and small whiting in fish stomachs. Mostly contents have been tiny shrimps although there were a few herring *Clupea harengus* fry in a couple of coalfish and one of the last ling caught regurgitated a herring about 18 cm long.

Slowly and gradually the basking shark *Cetorhinus maximus*, historically regular in summer, is beginning to return. One was seen in August and there were a further three sightings in September. Mobile phone alerts gave more people the opportunity to see them than just the initial observer.

One noticeable difference this year has been the lack of "green sea". Students from the University of Plymouth seeking plankton samples failed to find the amounts they anticipated, which was not surprising given the lack of bloom. This phenomenon and the change in breeding cycle noted for the saithe may be linked as part of a wider disruption to the ecosystem perhaps related to a warming sea or shifting salinity levels at different depths. These are issues which need to be researched; a Demonstration & Research MPA may provide the incentive and means to do this.

Fair Isle weather and the local environment

Farther south in the UK and Europe warmer springs – perhaps related to climate change – have brought the environmental seasons, particularly for plants and insects, forward by up to two weeks. Fair Isle bucks that trend. A combination of a winter of exceptional rainfall and cold spring temperatures delayed the growing season for wild plants, crops and gardens by at least 10 days. Whether to compensate or not, the flora took advantage of mild conditions from mid summer well into autumn with a second flush of flowering for some plants into October.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Agriculture & the Environment

Kenaby

Modern agriculture, and the chemical input which goes with it, have had a huge negative effect on a suite of arable plant species in the UK and beyond. Fair Isle has long been a refuge for these, thanks to a more extensive low-key approach to agriculture. Kenaby is a magnificent example of this approach.

The main park is cut annually for silage. Nevertheless, it has all the criteria for a fully functioning hay park - the best seen on the isle for a long time. Scattered plants of bush vetch *Vicia sepium* and tufted vetch *Vicia cracca* grow within the lay but the concentration lies along the edges – great swathes along with dense banks of meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*.

Added to this, a thin fallow strip alongside an active tattie rig had a full complement of arable flora. The absolute highlight was several hundred sun spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia* plants in full flower. Sun spurge was last recorded in 2009, at the same location. The supporting cast included large numbers of bugloss *Anchusa arvensis*, two species of hemp-nettle *Galeopsis* (*G. tetrahit* considerably outnumbering *G. bifida*), corn spurrey *Spergula arvensis*, northern knotgrass *Polygonum boreale*, northern dead-nettle *Lamium confertum* and red dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum*.

The sun spurge demonstrates that seeds can lay dormant in the substrate for considerable periods of time awaiting the right conditions to grow.

Da Water

Da Water, part of Schoolton croft, is an environmental management success story. Da Water translates as “The Water” but from the mid 20th Century, at least, it had no standing water, just rough wet herbage. The site is a basin mire and thus difficult to drain. The decision to maintain only the main drainage channel and leave side channels to naturally choke with vegetation was taken in 1989 by the new tenants. The first pool appeared at the turn of the 21st century. The habitat is now a series of shallow pools within a complex of wet grassland, rough herbage and marsh. Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, curlew *Numenius arquata* and lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* are established breeders and redshank breeding for the first time brings the number of breeding waders to four.

The site can be observed with no disturbance to the birds from the road and the precincts of the Kirk. The pools are favoured throughout the year by waders, ducks and, in winter, whooper swans *Cygnus cygnus* and roosting geese. The marsh attracts harriers *Circus* and short-eared owls *Asio flammeus*. Rare birds drawn to the pool and marsh have included great snipe *Gallinago media*, green-winged teal *Anas carolinensis*, Bewick’s swans *Cygnus columbarius bewickii* and this year’s great white egret. Wetter areas host a large population of marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* at one of only two sites on the isle. The driest area to the west of the pools hosts a large expanse of the bushy Cladonia *Cladonia arbuscula*, a lichen which has suffered massive declines in Shetland (probably through overgrazing) but retains important colonies at ungrazed sites on Fair Isle.

Events**Da Fishing Hands**

The seminal work *Da Fishing Hands* composed by Inge Thomson and the late Lise Sinclair – a creative piece spotlighting tradition and change in the Fair Isle marine environment - continues to act effectively as a powerful form of cultural advocacy in favour of a Demonstration and Research MPA for Fair Isle. A *Da Fishing Hands* CD with proceeds going to FIMETI has now been produced for sale on and off the isle; and songs from that album have featured at a number of events and concerts including at the Edinburgh Festival in August, which was also broadcast on Radio Scotland.

Da Voar Redd Up

The schoolchildren once again organised the whole community and the accompanying charity fundraising effort for the Shetland-wide Da Voar Redd Up in May.

EDUCATION & SCIENTIFIC INTEREST***Education*****Fair Isle School**

Isle resident Pat Thomson and the Fair Isle Ranger Chris Dodd shared the environmental activities for the School. Together they introduced the pupils to biological classification, led art projects such as making models of birds, and field expeditions ranging from geo-caching to seashore studies and aquatic invertebrate monitoring.

Ranger Service

It was a busy year for the Ranger, part financed by the NTS and hosted by FIBOT. Introductory talks to visitors, interpretive walks, giving and organising presentations, working with the Fair Isle schoolchildren and liaising with cruise ships were all part of his remit. There was a welcome upswing in number of cruises visiting and the number able to land passengers – thanks to clement weather conditions.

Scientific Research**Long-term studies**

FIBO continued its long-term high profile monitoring of seabirds as part of the national Seabird Monitoring Programme, begun in 1986 and coordinated by the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee; and the Fair Isle Meteorological Station continued to send full data to the UK Meteorological Office, including sea surface data. A team from the RSPB-led *Future of the Marine Atlantic Environment* (FAME) project continued their research into foraging patterns of Fair Isle seabirds, concentrating in 2015 on razorbills and shags; Dr PGH Evans (Bangor University) and Prof. Jane Reid of Aberdeen University continued to lead the long-term investigation into the genetics and ecology of Fair Isle starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*; and veterinarian Jason Waine continued his autopsy investigations into disease and mortality amongst birds from systematically collected casualties around the isle.

Dr Will Miles presented the findings of his detailed analysis of FIBO ornithological data during a visit in September. The analysis revealed major changes in migration patterns over the past 60 years. There has been a marked phenological shift towards earlier migration for many migrant species. This shift stands out clearly in the analysis. The results have enormous significance at the national and international level. This is the first analysis of its kind and leaves no doubt to the huge ecological and conservation value of FIBO's long-term monitoring programmes at the national and international level. Dr Miles is contracted to FIBO through a partnership between the Observatory and the University of Aberdeen, sponsored by FIBOT.

Away from birds, FIBO continued to log Fair Isle cetacean and migrant butterfly records. It is also one of three moth monitoring stations on the isle, with the records provided to the National Moth Recording Programme (www.mothscount.org).

Resident ecologist NJ Riddiford (Schoolton) continued his investigations into lesser known elements of Fair Isle's biodiversity. For the last four years, flowering dates and other phenological events (such as first frog spawn) have been recorded by NJR, schoolchildren and FIBO staff to set a baseline against any future trends, including those driven by climate change. The flowering season was atypical in 2015 as mentioned previously (see *Fair Isle weather and the local environment*).

New in 2015

Following the exceptional berry productivity of 2014 Dr Shelagh McCartan, seed scientist with Forestry Research and Coordinator of the juniper berry collection for the UK National Tree Seed Project (*safeguarding juniper for future generations*), made a successful visit on 7th September to collect viable berries from Fair Isle's nationally important prostrate juniper *Juniperus communis nana* population for the national collection.

Dr Alex Twyford of the University of Edinburgh spent five days in early August studying eyebrights. His sphere of study is evolutionary relationships using genetic markers, part of a 5 year investigation. He was drawn to Fair Isle for its thriving and diverse *Euphrasia* communities. He considered his visit highly successful. He recognised eight *Euphrasia* species including one possibly new to science. He was much taken with Fair Isle for its diverse and abundant flora in general and the potential of the isle for evolutionary studies. A proposal by Dr Twyford to begin a study programme by sending an MSc student in 2016 is at an advanced stage.

Two MSc students visited in August to undertake preliminary sampling of plankton offshore. Unfortunately they found atypically low amounts of plankton, insufficient to meet the needs of their study. This is another reflection of the current malaise in the marine environment which impacts the entire foodchain.

Steve Price of the British Lichen Society visited at the beginning of June to investigate the Fair Isle lichen flora. He made a number of interesting discoveries, re-discoveries and additions to the Fair Isle list (see *New species* above). His most prominent re-discovery was *Lecanora straminea*, a first for the UK in 1961 but not seen on the isle since. It resides on the South Gavel of Bunes. His thorough coverage of the isle showed that the nationally rare *Anaptychia ciliaris mamillata* is distributed along the coastline from one end of the isle to the other, prompting him to call Fair Isle "the British capital" for the taxon.

Bat sightings are few and infrequent on Fair Isle. However, recording equipment brought by bat specialist Andrew Chick in October picked up night-time activity during the very first night: two separate contacts with the migrant Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii* and one short one from a possible common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Andrew indicated that he would seek an independent expert opinion on the latter before confirming the record. The Nathusius was the second for Fair Isle and the only taxon to have been identified to species.

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- White, S. & Kehoe, C. 2015. Report on scarce migrant birds in Britain in 2011-12. Part 1: non passerines. *British Birds* 108: 126-157.
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63. 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:

Good progress in reducing bracken extent continues using Asulam on annual emergency use terms, concentrating mainly on those areas treated previously. Full records are maintained within the reserve

filing system. These actions will aid process by which Natural England are able to designate additional areas of heath as being in favourable conservation condition.

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:

Two Environment Agency cross bunds between dunes and secondary defence at Minsmere were repaired by RSPB staff in spring 2015 (damaged during December 2013 surge tide).

As part of the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management, the decision has been made to step back from repairing any breaches from the sea into North Marsh. As a result of this, over time, North Marsh will become brackish. Currently the only supply of water to East scrape (a freshwater lagoon) comes from North Marsh therefore an alternative source of fresh water needs to be found in order to allow the current management regime to continue. The proposed new freshwater feed will use water from the main reedbed. Excess water from this area which would normally be allowed to drain out of the site will be collected in the two newly cleared out pools and these will act as a reservoir to feed East Scrape. Water levels in the main reedbed will continue to be maintained at the optima agreed in the management plan from January to September (subject to climatic conditions). Work on this scheme is due to start in November 2015.

A new footpath is proposed under of Coastal Access legislation designed to create a connecting public footpath around the coast of England. The new route will be required to replace the current route across the dune system that may be lost when the sea eventually breaks through into North Marsh. A start was made to planting a new hedgerow, this hedge will act as a screen to prevent disturbance to breeding stone curlews when the new footpath is created.

Further plans are underway in the process of adapting the reserve to the threats posed by rising sea levels and freshwater flooding. The North Suffolk Coast Reserves Coastal and Climate Adaptation Plan has been proposed. This seeks to develop an overarching strategy setting out aims over several time periods for adaptation of the North Suffolk Coast Reserves (including Minsmere) with a suite of proposed site management projects to implement the strategy. Draft project aims are to ensure that the freshwater habitats are protected *in situ* for as long as it is environmentally and technically sustainable to do so, while planning ahead for adaptation in advance of significant coastal and climate change. To seek management options which maximize the ecological potential of new and adapting habitats, including consideration of provision for new colonists. To identify likely requirement for compensatory habitat. To ensure effective public affairs profile during the public consultation and beyond to manage the concerns of RSPB members and the general public and to minimize financial and reputational risks and maximize opportunities for public engagement

Site staff attended an iCOAST workshop developing an interactive tool to interpret coastal change in Suffolk in July and undertook training in Coastal Processes and monitoring techniques to assist with this project in October

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

All scheduled priority one projects were implemented. Writing of a new Management Plan, combining the management of Minsmere with the neighbouring Dingle Marshes was completed.

4. The purchase of land should be continued:

There were no land purchases this year.

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:

Pirri-pirri-bur continues to be spot treated using Roundup Bi-active. Trials of Forefront T (a broadleaf herbicide) continued, under licence and with permissions from Natural England. As with Roundup Bi-active, there wasn't a complete kill but the grassland sward remained intact. As success has been limited, further advice is being sought from Natural England and RSPB Reserves Ecologists

Mink traps were deployed at various locations at Minsmere, but no mink were trapped. The population appears to be very low (although there were two incidences of a mink being caught on camera) but 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 three schools participated in the reserve's formal education programme, attended by 2,230 children. We have continued to develop our Secondary School programmes and have invested in surveying equipment to enable students to undertake practical ecological sampling. In conjunction with Greenlight Trust, Minsmere is planning to host the 'Conservation Generation' project, this project is aimed at Year 10 students from local Secondary Schools who wish to pursue a career in conservation. Staff from both the RSPB & GLT will deliver practical skills sessions, sharing their skills and resources, whilst giving the participants a broad experience of a career in the conservation sector, the first session is scheduled to take place in November 2015. Primary School programmes have been reviewed and further developed with our experience being used to inform the RSPB's UK wide education programmes.

A new event for pre-school children commenced in September 2015, the Minsmere 'Reedlings' group meets once per month for seasonal fun, stories, crafts and adventures.

The Minsmere Young Wardens volunteer group is now established. 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 Brownie, Guide and Scout 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 and owl pellet dissection offered. In addition, we trialled some new seasonal self-led family activities, for instance during summer 2015 we offered the 'Eel Trail'. The purpose of the trail was to promote awareness about the European eel *Anguilla anguilla*, show the public what conservation measures we are undertaking for eels and to educate families about this endangered species. Each child who completed the trail received a certificate and sticker. We continue to evaluate the success of the events and activities to ensure that they encourage increased levels of participation and learning amongst our family audience.

Minsmere hosted two further demonstration days for the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Wetland Biomass to Bioenergy Project on 14 & 15 January 2015. We welcomed delegates from the Wild Bird Society of Japan 20 March 2015 to share knowledge regarding the challenges of reserve management and increasing support for conservation. On 4 June 2015 Minsmere hosted a visit for RSPB Council members and senior staff to discuss the challenges that the nature reserve faces in the longer term and how the reserve has achieved its recent visitor experience success. We continue to review and evaluate the Discover Nature project and share learning with colleagues planning similar projects. On 5/6 May we hosted a workshop with Natural England and RSPB colleagues to review the impacts of climate change on Minsmere and neighbouring Dingle Marshes and the initiatives that were in place to

enable future adaptation. During 22/23 September we hosted a practical workshop on Dynamic Habitat Management for RSPB conservation staff across the UK.

RSPB Minsmere presented to the Museum and Heritage show on 29 April on our work with broadening audiences (see <http://www.museumsandheritage.com/show/visiting/free-talks/understanding-your-visitors>) and a workshop session at the Heritage Lottery Fund Inclusive Heritage conference focussing on improving accessibility in London on 30 October and featured in a film associated with the conference (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHj4AD4gdD0>). The Minsmere Discovery Centre was also featured as a case study in the Space for Learning publication launched in October (see <http://www.spaceforlearning.org.uk/home>).

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:

Due to the dry conditions in 2015, East North West was allowed to fallow and East South was flooded with sea water although both reflooded with freshwater soon afterwards following heavy rain in late July. The new water control structures and drier conditions allowed North Girder to be run drier in 2015 than in previous years. This resulted in improved avocet and passage wader feeding conditions. Greater overall variation in water levels in 2015, although more time consuming for site staff appeared to directly benefit passage waders. Phase 2 of the Scrape Enhancement project includes measures to improve the ability to fallow lagoons.

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.

Annette Rayner's & Katie Fairhurst's secondments to Warden were made permanent. The national review of education and visitor engagement delivery on RSPB reserves resulted in several staff changes: Tim Rose, Centre Manager was replaced by Louise Gregory, Visitor Operations Manager; Learning Manager, Sarah Wood was replaced by Chris Ford, Learning Officer. Sarah Wood was recruited into the new role of Visitor Experience Manager, but has since left leaving this role vacant. The team of Field Teachers were replaced by a seasonal Learning Assistant, Alison Cross. The Visitor Services Officer & Marketing & Publicity Officer roles were replaced by two Visitor Experience Officer roles, one of which was filled by existing staff member, Ian Barthorpe, the other, temporarily by Siobhan Thomson. One further new post was created, Membership Recruitment Manager, filled by Alex Pilling. Two further part-time Visitor Experience Officers were seconded from the land management team for the busy summer holiday season. Seasonal catering staff were also recruited to support the cafe team through the spring & summer

The Minsmere red deer control project continued, with 238 animals culled. The cull was achieved efficiently, with little disturbance to the reserve and very little negative feedback from the public. Deer impact appears to be reducing the amount of reed dominated habitat at the west end of the Minsmere main reedbed. This will be monitored via aerial photographs and drone footage to inform modifications to the deer control programme. Deer numbers during the rut have been considerably lower in 2015, with casual maximum counts of 80 animals. As in the past, it is thought likely that numbers will build up again post-rutting and it has been decided to postpone culling until later in the year, or early in 2016 so that a more realistic count can inform the programme.

Felling of up to 40 ha of trees over two winters is due to begin in November 2015. Plans are being put in place for large-scale tree removal works through Heathland Restoration Project in order to achieve the prescriptions within the HLS agreement and as a stage towards eventually achieving Favourable Condition across more of the heathland SSSI Units. Following the removal of the litter layer, which has built up under bracken and tree cover, dormant seed will germinate to recreate heath and acid grassland

communities through a process of natural regeneration. The proposed works will increase the extent of heath and acid grassland and benefit a number of species including woodlark, nightjar and adder. Permissions are currently being sought from the Forestry Commission, to fell c2,800 tonnes of timber (mostly birch and pine) to be undertaken over the winters of 2015 and 2016. Public consultation has been undertaken through a FC directed EIA procedure.

Phase 1 of the Scrape Enhancement project was completed. A new 2km perimeter fence was erected in winter 2014/15 with the design following latest guidance from RSPB Reserves Ecology. No badgers or foxes were able to gain access to the scrape during the 2015 breeding season, this resulted in the highest avocet productivity since the 1980's. Common tern and redshank also fledged good numbers of young. Twelve new sluices/culverts were installed and 744m of perimeter ditch was slubbed out in early 2015. Plans for Phases 2 to 4 of this project include provision of shingle islands to be provided for little terns, varying the topography of West scrape by creating low points in the bed of the lagoon and new islands and improving the hydrology of the area by reducing the number of separate hydrological units. It is hoped these works will be authorised in the near future.

The reedbed rejuvenation area in South Girder was grazed with highland cattle from June to September. A closer inspection of the area in September 2015 showed that the habitat had become more open with a wider variety of annual plants growing. Both lapwing and redshank nested in the compartment in 2015 and birds which had nested successfully on the scrape moved their young into the area. The Reedbed restoration Project is due to commence in November 2015. The project aims to rejuvenate 1ha of the main reedbed by bed lowering, creation of two new pools, installation of new sluices and restoration of ditches on the North Levels. All necessary consents are in place and a contractor has been selected

Contractors ploughed and harrowed half of each of the sixteen stone curlew plots. All the previous years half plots were sprayed with Roundup Bi-active to help maintain more open conditions by reducing the cover of ragwort, nettle and thistle. 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. Vegetation close to the electrified fencing was removed on a regular basis throughout the season.

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 Management Plans and budgets of Minsmere Reserve have been combined with Dingle Marshes.

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 BBC's 'Springwatch' & 'Unsprung' programmes were again broadcast live from Minsmere between 25 May and 11 June 2015, attracting audiences of up to 2.7 million viewers on national television. The reserve remained open to visitors throughout the broadcast period.

Visitor numbers for the period were 122,115, a 12% increase on 2014 and the highest number ever recorded. The presence of BBC Springwatch gave visitors an added dimension to their visit and some schools were given tours of the BBC village and filming studio.

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, with many aspects of the proposed

development still being clarified. We are also working with them, and other key stakeholders, to address our specific concerns.

Minsmere staff attended the 50th anniversary workshop in Pisa in May, which provided valuable networking opportunities with other managers of Protected Areas in Europe. There was not a suitable opportunity to include recognition of the award in our communications this season, but we will address this issue with planned materials in 2016.

64. 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.

Implementation of the 2012 to 2017 National Park Management Plan continues and we are planning the review of the existing plan in 2016/17, including a more substantial update of the National Park 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 agri-environment schemes. In addition a partnership project on grasslands has been initiated, identifying priority sites and reviewing options for their conservation. There have been no further SSSI designations. A successful Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid for the South West Peak Landscape is enabling the development of projects for future delivery e.g. Future Farmscapes, Glorious Grasslands and Slowing the Flow.

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 Moors for the Future Partnership (MFF) continues to co-ordinate major landscape scale delivery across moorland habitats with an £11m partnership with Natural England on agri-environment schemes; completion of EU funded MoorLIFE and in particular a successful successor programme MoorLIFE 2020 funded by EU LIFE for 16m euros. Engagement and awareness raising is being carried out by the HLF funded Citizen Science project. The RSPB published the results of work at their Dovestones Reserve. The Authority produced a position statement on moorland burning.

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 project in the South West Peak, wader populations are being addressed through habitat management and proposals for predator control. This approach is being modelled on our Warslow Moors Estate. Wader recovery work continues through advice and encouragement to farmers.

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

The clough woodland project has secured 67 ha of native woodland creation across the Dark Peak and in the Dane Valley 237 ha of native woodland has been managed and created. A significant project was the restoration of 34 ha block of conifer woodland to native woodland and moorland at Burbage Moor. Ash Dieback has now been confirmed in the National Park and 100 long term monitoring plots have been established within the Peak District Dales SAC as part of a collaborative approach with key partners and landowners. Strategies to diversify these woodlands are being agreed to secure longer term resilience and diversity. A new partnership arrangement with the Woodland Trust has been agreed and includes the assessment of and negotiation of agri-environment agreements to secure the management of ancient and semi-natural woodland sites in the National Park.

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

Implementation continues through the range of projects and interventions outlined above.

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.

96.3% of Authority owned SSSI land was in favourable/recovering position as at March 2015. A new management plan has been drafted for North Lees/Stanage Estate. The Warslow Estate business plan is on target for full cost recovery.

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

In the South West Peak conservation and community work is being carried out in the development stage of the HLF funded landscape partnership scheme. The Authority, through its North Lees Estate, contributes to the Sheffield Moors Partnership. In the Dark Peak an integrated approach is co-ordinated through Moors for the Future. The Authority is working with partners to address issues in the White Peak in an integrated way.

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, working with partners and stakeholders, including Historic England/English Heritage. Excavations occurred at Ecton mine for National Trust, Ecton Mines Educational Trust and Ecton Hill Field Studies Association to inform management and interpretation. Cultural heritage is one of the main objectives of the developing South West Peak Landscape Partnership application to Heritage Lottery Fund (£5m project) and Ecton mines and its communities of place and interest are party to and included in that work. The project considering opportunities and constraints for designating underground heritage assets for and funded by English Heritage and using the Peak District as a pilot was submitted in March 2015. The HE-funded farmsteads characterisation project, in partnership with two constituent local authorities, continues and will deliver assessment guidance, advice and policy direction in 2016. During the year, another Conservation Area Appraisal was completed, for Pott Shrigley; another, for Longnor, is underway, number 104 out of 109 Conservation Areas, The percentage of Listed Buildings at risk remains relatively constant at c.6%.

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

The Authority continues to champion the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark and has been providing advice on energy and water savings, waste management and renewables to land based

businesses. The Authority continues to take a role in the Peak Leader programme. Only authorise new mineral extraction or extensions to existing mineral operations to meet essential national needs; for example, if the minerals are not available elsewhere or to provide traditional building materials in the park; seek restoration of mineral quarries to enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park.

10. Only permit mineral workings to meet essential national needs if the minerals are not available elsewhere or are needed to provide traditional building materials in the Park.

In the period of review the Authority has granted permission for mineral extraction at four sites.

At Once a Week Quarry an extension was permitted to facilitate the ongoing extraction of limestone after existing permitted reserves were exhausted. The stone is an unusual limestone with embedded fossils which can be polished for decorative use, and is otherwise used for building, walling and dimensional uses. The permission has a legal agreement which limits the end use of the stone to non –aggregate uses and requires that the majority of the stone is used in the National Park.

At Birchover Quarry permission was granted to consolidate old mineral permissions and to facilitate the relinquishment of a permitted area with significant archaeological interest, in exchange for another area of less environmental impact. The site in its entirety is subject to better, more modern environmental controls and has a reduced impact on the National Park when operated under the new planning permission.

Milldam Mine was permitted for the continued underground extraction of fluorspar beyond the previously permitted period. The Authority acknowledges that major proposals for underground fluorspar ore mining may be able to demonstrate some of the exceptional circumstances in terms of policy in MPS1, in view of the limited availability of alternative sites in England, and the importance of fluorspar to the English economy. The importance of the fluorochemical industry may well be considered sufficiently exceptional to continue to supply fluorspar ore, as a departure from the overall strategy to run down the supply of minerals from the National Park, provided that individual schemes can be developed underground.

The majority of sites operating in the Peak District National Park undertake progressive restoration as part of their working schemes. There are 14 sites in the National Park which are currently undergoing restoration or are in a period of prescriptive aftercare to bring the site to a beneficial after use such as agriculture, forestry, or amenity (nature conservation). Most restoration is designed to help the National Park achieve targets in the biodiversity action plan.

On 27 November 2015, the park authority clarified the following concerning the mineral extraction. In March 2015, the Department for Transport published the Trans Pennine Routes Feasibility Study. This study had two main outcomes; a set of proposed schemes for the A628 and a further study to examine the feasibility of a Trans Pennine tunnel.

Highways England has been tasked with implementing the proposed schemes for the A628. There are two schemes that are proposed within the National Park (climbing lanes and a safety and technology package), but the others may have impacts within the National Park. The schemes are at a very early development stage, with no firm proposals announced by Highways England, and therefore, there are no impact evaluation study's available to date. Works for the proposals have to be started on the ground by 2020. We are on the stakeholder reference group for these works, and are influencing Highways England at every opportunity to gain the most benefit to the National Park.

The Trans Pennine Tunnel Study is being overseen by the Department for Transport, but they have commissioned Highways England to undertake the study. This is to examine the strategic options for a new tunnel between Manchester and Sheffield; its viability, costs and deliverability. The study will not be completed until late 2016. As with the proposed schemes, we are on the stakeholder reference group for

these works, and are influencing the Department for Transport and Highways England at every opportunity to gain the most benefit to the National Park.

The National Grid proposed 12 national projects for undergrounding high voltage lines, 3 of which are in or adjacent to this national park. Again, we are engaged at an early stage. Dunford Bridge has been given the go ahead and is likely to proceed within the next 5 years, the 2 Longdendale projects didn't make the first stage but are still under consideration as part of the longer term approach. The Authority is also currently considering bidding for part of a £24M grant nationally to carry out landscape mitigation measures for high voltage electricity lines.

There is considerable landscape gain to the national park from these proposals but there are also heritage and ecological issues to be resolved.

We can assure you that we will be influencing the outcome of these negotiations.

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.

Although not pursuing the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism we will still be working with a range of partners to pursue approaches that put into practice the aims of the Charter. This includes developing responsible event management approaches, responsible visitor management campaigns and early scoping of the LDF Development Management Policy on Visitor Hubs. Various sustainable transport projects (including a new cycle shuttle bus) are being delivered. The Authority is working with other tourism partners to secure additional funding to enable a programme of sustainable tourism development that will grow the sustainable Peak District tourism product, especially in relation to rural cycle tourism and developing the brand of the Peak District based on its environmental qualities.

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 next review of the National Park management plan will include a review of moorland management issues to address concerns about birds of prey populations, moorland infrastructure and burning on deep peat.

Reduced agri-environment scheme support is likely to impact on the area of the National Park that is safeguarded. The Authority continues to explore ways of mitigating the impact of this, for example by continuing to influence the refinement of the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme so that it can deliver in a protected upland landscape, exploring other sources of funding e.g. HLF and exploring opportunities for payment for ecosystem services as our own resources reduce.

The Authority has produced a 3 year financial plan and is reviewing its corporate strategy as part of planning for a period of reducing resources from government. This gives clarity on what statutory services we will give strategic certainty to. At the same time strategies are being developed and implemented for income generation and giving to enable us to continue education, engagement and conservation work.

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 boundary 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.

Major infrastructure proposals for undergrounding high voltage electricity lines were successful in the north east of the National Park. The Authority's long term aim is to secure similar arrangements in the Longdendale Valley.

Proposals to improve the A628 trunk road across the National Park were put forward by Highways England. These include proposals to investigate the feasibility of a major new tunnel to replace existing road traffic.

In March 2015, the Department for Transport published the Trans Pennine Routes Feasibility Study. This study had two main outcomes; a set of proposed schemes for the A628 and a further study to examine the feasibility of a Trans Pennine tunnel.

Highways England has been tasked with implementing the proposed schemes for the A628. There are two schemes that are proposed within the National Park (climbing lanes and a safety and technology package), but the others may have impacts within the National Park. The schemes are at a very early development stage, with no firm proposals announced by Highways England, and therefore, there are no impact evaluation study's available to date. Works for the proposals have to be started on the ground by 2020. We are on the stakeholder reference group for these works, and are influencing Highways England at every opportunity to gain the most benefit to the National Park.

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The National Grid proposed 12 national projects for undergrounding high voltage lines, 3 of which are in or adjacent to this national park. Again, we are engaged at an early stage. Dunford Bridge has been given the go ahead and is likely to proceed within the next 5 years, the 2 Longdendale projects didn't make the first stage but are still under consideration as part of the longer term approach. The Authority is also currently considering bidding for part of a £24M grant nationally to carry out landscape mitigation measures for high voltage electricity lines.

There is considerable landscape gain to the national park from these proposals but there are also heritage and ecological issues to be resolved.

We can assure you that we will be influencing the outcome of these negotiations.⁹

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

We are celebrating our 50th anniversary of holding the European Diploma for Protected Areas in the same year that the Council of Europe award celebrates its 50th year.

We have added the Council of Europe's 50th anniversary logo to our headed notepaper and displayed the Council of Europe poster at our headquarters.

Articles have been published in our staff and member ezines and we will be holding a major celebration in March 2016 with a record of achievements over the last 50 years.

⁹ Clarifications on the infrastructure proposals received by e-mail on 27 November 2015.

The Authority and its partners are proud to be involved in the award and this helps to drive our work to continue conserving and enhancing the National Park. We will be using the 50th anniversary to draw people's attention to our work as well as what is special about our landscapes.

65. 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 still being operated by Perenco. Negotiations between the operator and Minerals Planning Authority (Dorset County Council) continue; the site will either
- remain in operation with significant security for post-operation restoration along with a landscape compensation (value £1.7M) for strengthening landscape character in the landscape units affected, or
- be decommissioned and restored

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 environmental protection, particularly for the 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>) on which public consultation closed in October 2015.

This draft describes a potential extension to Swanworth Quarry, northeast of Worth Matravers within the Purbeck Heritage Coast area. The Dorset AONB team believes (and has advised Dorset County Council accordingly) 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 (designated /candidate European Marine Sites); 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>



MAP: Dorset's marine protected areas.

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.

Senior Countryside Ranger Katie Black reports, "this year repairs and restorations to paths have been undertaken using Purbeck limestone, some section have been restored with crushed limestone, with some sections improved using Purbeck limestone steps and stone pitching."

The steps to the beach at Durdle Door were repaired by Lulworth Estate and opened in March 2015 following a lengthy closure after the steps were washed out in winter storms.

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.

The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Partnership continues to work with the private sector bus company First Bus to support and promote the X53 Jurassic Coaster bus service, which continues to serve Purbeck.

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 2015.

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.

The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Partnership continues to gain support from the local authorities, communities and other stakeholders across its length. They have considerable success in the effective presentation of the site to the public as evidenced in their annual review (<http://jurassiccoast.org/conserving-the-coast/management-files/category/37-annual-reviews>)

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. The site is managed under an Environmental Stewardship Scheme until 2016.

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. While the 3-year funded programme of biodiversity improvement completed in March 2015, the Partnership, facilitated by the Dorset AONB team, is continuing with a renewed work programme. Securing resources to deliver that programme is its initial priority.

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.

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.

The offshore wind farm project described in last year's report has been turned down by the UK Government. The refusal to allow permission to develop the site is a benchmark decision; the main reasons for refusal were the development's likely landscape and visual effects on the Heritage Coasts of Purbeck and the Isle of Wight, as well as the protected landscapes of the Dorset AONB, the Isle of White AONB and the New Forest National Park.

PROMOTION OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA

The logo was promoted in an e-news article celebrating the Purbeck Heritage Coast's Diploma to the Dorset AONB's database of over 3000 on the 50th anniversary.