



Project Partners



Deliverable: Minutes of the 2nd Scientific Committee meeting

Action F2: Scientific Committee

LIFE 13 NAT/CY/000176 “Improving lowland forest habitats for Birds in Cyprus”

Konstantinos Dimitrakopoulos

Nicosia, December 2015



ACTION F.2

Scientific Committee

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LIFE-FORBIRDS: Improving lowland forest habitats for Birds in Cyprus

Project Data

Project location	Kavo Gkreko (CY3000005), Koshi - Pallourokampos (CY6000009), Stavrovouni – Potamos Panagias Stazousas (CY6000007)
Project start date:	01/10/2014
Project end date:	31/12/2017
Total budget	978.718 €
EC contribution:	489.359 € (50%)
(%) of eligible costs	100%

Beneficiary Data

Name of Beneficiary	Department of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
Contact person	Mr Takis Tsintides
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Project Website	http://www.lifeforbirds.eu

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

Department of Forests



with the support of all consortium members



Action F.2: Scientific Committee (SCo)

Deliverable F.2: Minutes of the 2nd SCo Meeting

The second SCo meeting of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project (LIFE 13 NAT/CY/176), was organised according to the relevant provisions set out in the project's proposal (Action F.2). The meeting was held at the premises of the Department of Forests (Coordinating Beneficiary) located at Athalassa, on November 26th 2015, with the participation of the members of the SCo, as well as the personnel from associated beneficiaries directly involved in the project. It should also be mentioned that after the meeting an excursion to the project sites took place, in order for the SCo to check the on-going progress of the Concrete Conservation Actions of the project.

Participants included the following:

Members of the SCo present:

- Mr. Melis Charalampides, Chairman of the Birdlife Cyprus Council, with extensive knowledge on birdlife of Cyprus and of the project sites, habitats, species and threats.
- Dr. Jean – Marc Dufour, expert on the control of invasive plant species (Applied Ecologist).
- Dr. Pinelopi Delipetrou, researcher of the Department of Botany - National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, expert on flora and habitat types.
- Mr. Takis Tsintides, Project Management Team Leader – Project Manager, Director of the Cyprus Department of Forests (DF).
- Mr. Konstantinos Dimitrakopoulos, Assistant Project Manager (AsPM), Professional Forester M.Sc.
- Mr. Haris Nicolaou, Forest Officer, Conservation Officer, DF.
- Mr. Nikos Kasinis, Beneficiary Representative of Game and Fauna Service (GFS).
- Mr. Constantinos Kounnamas, Frederick University – Nature Conservation Unit (FU).
- Mr. Constantinos Pericleous, Secretary of the Cyprus Forest Association (CFA), Beneficiary Representative of (CFA).

Consortium Members:

- Mr. Takis Papachristoforou, Forest Officer, Flora Expert, DF.



Minutes:

Mr. Takis Tsintides welcomed the attendees and gave the floor to Mr. Dimitrakopoulos who presented the on-going concrete conservation actions progress.

Afterwards, Mr. Tsintides informed the SCo members that up to now a significant number of the project's deliverables and milestones related to actions C has been reached, and that within 2016 most (if not all) will be reached with an exception of action C3. In this action the interventions related to the removal of alien species from Kavο Gkreko and Koshi sites will continue through 2017 as well, due to the significant invasion size of the *Acacia Saligna* trees mapped through preparatory action A1.

Dr. Jean-Marc asked for the success rates of the intervention of the removal of Acacia trees that took place on March 2016 as well as an estimation of the mean value of stems per individual. He also suggested during 2016 a change in the herbicide could be applied in Koshi area by using Aminopyralid, a substance that gave good results in other countries. A comparison of the two control methods in the two areas could give results of scientific value as well.

Mr. Tsintides replied that the success rate was not estimated nor the mean number of stems per individual, however these data will be estimated during spring 2016 with the returning control of the Acacia trees. Regarding the change in the selective herbicide, he replied that DF will check if the substance is available in the Cypriot market under a commercial product name (e.g. Milestone®).

He then changed the subject referring to the E.U letter of 28/09/2015 where a recommendation was made for improving the Conservation Monitoring Protocol of action D1.

A new draft version was prepared for the meeting and circulated among the participants for discussion.

Dr. Delipetrou asked about existing reference baseline value for actions C1, C2 in the areas that the infrastructures were created. She also addressed the issue that the impact of some of the interventions (e.g. plantation of fruit trees in the traditional agricultural fields) will be noted after the end of the project, so monitoring them is possible only through the After-LIFE actions.

Mr. Tsintides replied that although baseline values for C1, C2 are not available for the specific locations of the infrastructures, the whole project sites were surveyed by an ornithologist who created a bird census for each site.

Mr. Kasinis and Mr. Charalambides suggested that since birds are not stationary and some of them are seasonal visitors, monitoring with cameras or by field visits on a regular basis at selected locations of infrastructures (e.g. the water ponds, the watering points, the cereal fields) during specific times of the year, and then comparing the results with that of field visits at other sites of the project areas, could yield valuable information about the beneficiary role of the infrastructures in bird life. Finally, they agreed that another project infrastructure than can serve as a measuring indicator is the nests installation, that can provide a direct estimation of the increase in nesting pairs in the project areas.



Mr. Tsintides said that for actions C1 and C2 the infrastructures provide measurable indicators, whereas the assessment of the birds' habitats improvement through the interventions of C3 is difficult.

Dr. Jean-Marc replied on the subject that the removal of the Acacia trees it self is an anti-poaching measure so the area treated can be an indicator related to the reduction of bird crime as well.

The conversation moved on to the management of the cereal/legume fields created by C2.

Mr. Tsintides asked the participants if they are aware of an optimum way to manage the fields. Since some species prefer openings he suggested that stripes could be created among the crops to favor avifauna. He also replied to a question of Dr. Delipetrou, related to the species that were sown, that the seed mixture used was of cultivated varieties of vetch, barley and peas.

Mr. Charambides replied that stripes should be created so as to leave space for indigenous vegetation to grow. This measure will increase the biodiversity of the insect species and bird species visiting the fields. He and Mr. Haris Nicolaou explained that while the targeted bird species by the project are mostly insectivorous, the crops will attract insects so food will be available for the birds after all.

Dr. Delipetrou suggested that for the small cereal/legumes patches that will be sown inside the traditional agricultural fields, other species that attract insects can be planted as well. In particular thistles, sunflowers and species of the Brassicaceae family favor ants and other insects as well.

Mr. Tsintides thanked all the participants for their contribution, and promised to take under consideration the suggestions made in the meeting. The meeting ended and a field visit to Kavο Gkreko and Koshi followed so as to inspect the concrete conservation actions.

During the visit at Kavο Gkreko, at the site where restoration of 5210 took place, Dr. Delipetrou expressed her concern about the small planting distance used for the plantation of *Juniperus phoenicea*, as this will create a dense Juniper stand in the future.

Mr. Nicolaou explained that thinning of the Juniper stand will take place, if needed, in the years to come so as to achieve an optimum status of the 5210 habitat type restored by the project.

Appendix I:

Pictures of the SCo Meeting and the excursion to the project areas:



Pic.1,2: Presentation of the Project's progress



Pic. 3-7: Inspection of project's C actions in Koshi and Kvaio Gkreko sites