



Project Partners



Deliverable: Minutes of the 3rd Scientific Committee meeting

Action F2: Scientific Committee

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

Konstantinos Dimitrakopoulos

Nicosia, April 2016

ACTION F.2

Scientific Committee

DELIVERABLE: Minutes of the 3rd Scientific Committee Meeting

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
Postal address	Louki Akrita 26, 1414, Nicosia, Cyprus
Telephone	+357 22805501, +357 99 432686
Fax:	+357 22805542
E-mail	ttsintides@fd.moa.gov.cy
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 3rd SCo Meeting

The third 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 April 14th 2016, with the participation of the members of the SCo, the Project Management Team, as well as the personnel from associated beneficiaries involved in the project. It should also be mentioned that after the meeting an excursion to Kavo Gkreko SPA 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).
- 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 Kassinis, Beneficiary Representative of Game and Fauna Service (GFS).
- Dr. Nicolas-George Eliades, Beneficiary Representative of Frederick University - Nature Conservation Unit (FU).
- Dr. Constantinos Kounnamas, 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.
- Mr. Dimitris Lazarides, Forest Officer, DF.
- Mr. Kosntantinos Iosif, Forest Officer, 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 since the beginning of the week (11/4) and until the end of the next one (22/4) returning control of *Acacia saligna* trees will be taking place as well as expansion of last year's operations to the adjacent areas where Acacia trees are abundant. He informed the participants that the success rate of last year's intervention was determined around 85,5%, but was not sure if this rate can classify the intervention as successful or not.

Dr. Jean-Marc replied that the rate is very high, considering the invasive species (*Acacia saligna*) resilience. He explained that it is an extremely hard species to wipe out completely from an area once it has settled. In Kavo Greko area the Acacia trees have a presence of around 30 years, so they have well adapted to the local habitat and established a seed bank that will provide more plants in the future.

Dr. Eliades attributed the high rate to the extremely dry conditions that Cyprus had during this winter and spring.

Mr. Iosif that coordinated the control intervention said that some dry Acacia plants were also found dead without having been treated last year, so the absence of rainfall may have aided to the high rate.

Mr. Tsintides was satisfied with the results and suggested that next year the intervention should move to Koshi along with a returning control of 2016's intervention of Kavo Gkreko. After the end of the project the returning controls at both areas will be carried out by DF personnel and will be included at the After-LIFE Conservation Plan. He estimated that this process may take more than 5 years, but since the endeavor has already started and is going well, it will continue at all costs.

Mr. Charalambides asked if the dead trees are going to be removed or not from the area.

Mr. Nicolaou informed him that the dead trees are going to be removed during May and restoration of the habitat type 9320 will take place through reforestation of its key species. The restoration will cover 0,6 ha approximately, and the rest area that Acacia trees will be removed will recover in time through natural succession (5210 habitat type).

Mr. Charalambides asked about the nest installations if they were occupied by breeding pairs already. He also asked about the crops that were sown.

Mr. Nicolaou explained that ornithologists will be hired within May for that purpose, which is to check the status of all nests, within the framework of action D1 which monitors the impact of the conservation actions. About the cereal fields he later replied that all crops sprouted and flourished, but the lack of rainfall dried them out earlier than expected. However, cereals and legume seeds were produced as pesticide-free food



available for the birds of the area. The ornithologists will also access the usage of the fields by the targeted species.

Mr. Charalambides replied that the traditional agricultural fields, the cereal/legume fields and the infrastructure created by the project for the improvement of the bird's habitats will take years in order for them to make a significant impact to the birds' population that can be recorded with a census. However, he wondered if a difference could be noted within the time framework of the project.

Mr. Kassinis explained that the Game and Fauna Service keeps records of the populations of the areas, so as time passes by the difference will be noticed and then it can be attributed to the beneficial interventions of the project. He suggested that another action of the After-Life plan could be the monitoring of the birds' population of the project areas.

Mr. Tsintides thanked all the participants, the meeting ended and a field visit to Kavο Gkreko followed so as to inspect the project's infrastructure and the on-going control of *Acacia saligna*.

Appendix I:

Pictures of the SCo Meeting and the excursion to Kavro Gkreko:

