



Project Partners



Deliverable: Minutes of the 4th Scientific Committee meeting

Action F2: Scientific Committee

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

Konstantinos Dimitrakopoulos, DF

Nicosia, April 2017

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
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 4th SCo Meeting

The fourth and final SCo meeting of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project (LIFE 13 NAT/CY/000176), 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 5th 2017, with the participation of the members of the SCo and the Project Management Team. It should also be mentioned that after the meeting an excursion to Koshi – Pallourokampos & Kavο Gkreko SPAs 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. Pinelopi Delipetrou, researcher of the Department of Botany - National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, expert on flora and habitat types.
- 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 Kasinis, Beneficiary Representative of Game and Fauna Service (GFS).
- Dr. Constantinos Kounnamas, Beneficiary Representative of Frederick University - Nature Conservation Unit (FU).
- Mr. Constantinos Pericleous, Secretary of the Cyprus Forest Association (CFA), Beneficiary Representative of (CFA).

Minutes:

Mr. Takis Tsintides welcomed the attendees and gave the floor to Mr. Dimitrakopoulos who presented the ongoing concrete conservation actions progress, the results of D.1 Action which assess the impact of the conservation actions, as well as some dissemination activities of the project

Afterwards, Mr. Tsintides informed the SCo members that since the beginning of the week (03/04) and until the end of the next one (14/04), control of *Acacia saligna* trees will be taking place at Koshi – Pallourokampos SPA. Two sites were selected there, which will give space for the restoration of 5220* and 9320 habitat types that will take place during November 2017. He informed the participants that the success rate of last year's intervention at Kavο Gkreko SPA will be assessed during the next day by the expert on the removal of invasive species.

Dr. Jean-Marc replied that the control method for the removal of invasive species has been applied by DF in several locations successfully, so it has become somewhat of a common practice. He expressed his admiration at the encouraging results and the continuous efforts of the project's action so far. He asked for the participants if there is a known positive correlation between planting *Ceratonia siliqua* trees and a noticeable raise in the numbers of *Rattus rattus*. The reason behind his question said is whereas planting carob trees for the 9320 and 5210 habitat restoration will infest the respective areas with rat populations.

Mr. Kasinis replied that all cultivated fruit trees attract rat populations and not specifically carob trees. Carob trees located in western Cyprus are affected the most, where the species is cultivated extensively since it provides a major income source for the locals.

Mr. Tsintides expressed his belief that in the future someone should research the reason why carob trees are preferred by rat populations among other tree species, since *Pistacia lentiscus* trees have been found infected by rat populations as well. However, he believes that there is no reason to abandon the use of these species in DF's reforestations for the restoration of 5210 and 9320 habitat types.

Mr. Charalambides added that rats seem to manifest unknown preference traits among carob trees as well.

Mr. Tsintides replied that there might be a positive correlation between uncultivated carob trees and an increase in rats' preference but it should be investigated. He then moved the topic to the problem that the DF nurseries face at reproducing saplings of *Ziziphus lotus* in adequate numbers for the project needs. He stressed the fact that saplings are viable in the nurseries but when replanted at the field they do not survive. In order to test different propagation methods of the species, planting with seeds will be used up to an extent this November.

Dr. Delipetrou suggested that the plants should be water deprived for some period before outplanting, so as to reduce the transplanting shock induced. She also suggested that some of the cereal-legume fields of C.2



should be only cultivated during next autumn and not sown, so as to test the potentials of the seed bank by the 3 used species (pea, barley and vetch) which produced seeds during the last two years.

Mr. Tsintides suggested that one cereal-legume field at each SPA should be tested as proposed. He then expressed that the project is successful in its goal of increasing DF staff's awareness regarding measures that favor bird-life. This was particularly evident in the measures taken (establishment of watering points, nests etc.) for the restoration of the fire affected areas of Paphos and Solea, originally suggested by local DF employees. The only goal of the project that it is difficult to be reached, he added, is the change in the moral of the local habitants of the project areas regarding bird crime.

Mr. Kasinis replied that it is a complex problem since it reflects the influence of the public to the judicial system, and the inability of the latter to apply the legislation and the respective penalties that are foreseen by law.

Mr. Charalambides informed the participants that through Birdlife Cyprus a workshop was conducted for judges, which informed them about EU and National directives & laws regarding the protection of bird species & bird crime. He found that young judges were particularly interested, and aware of the problems related to bird crime.

Dr. Delipetrou replied that E.U inflicted penalties will put the right amount of pressure to the Cyprus government so as to take this subject seriously.

Mr. Tsintides doubted that it would make any difference, since several parliament members are in favor of bird trapping and they consider its practice related to the tradition of specific areas of the island. He thanked all the participants for their attendance, the meeting ended, and a field visit to Koshi – Pallourokampos and 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 visit to Koshi – Pallourokampos SPA:

