

“Natura 2000 and people: a partnership”

**Proceedings of a Conference
held in Bath, UK
on 28-30 June 1998**

Organised by:

The United Kingdom Presidency of the European Council and the Unit for Nature protection, coastal zones and tourism of the European Commission.

Conference « Natura 2000 and People : a partnership »

The establishment of the Natura 2000 network of protected sites is an important element of the Communities' nature conservation policy. In order to give new impetus to the implementation of Natura 2000, the European Commission and the UK Presidency organised a Conference on 28-30 June 1998 in Bath, in the south west of the UK.

The creation of the Natura 2000 network has been delayed for several reasons. One of these has been the resistance of some local people who are concerned that their social and economical interests might be threatened by the designation of a site.

The objective of the Conference was to encourage co-operation and understanding by bringing together Member States, European and national opinion leaders and representatives of local actors concerned with Natura 2000, providing a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience, and an opportunity to discuss problems and issues encountered.

The Conference was opened by the Rt. Hon. Michael Meacher, Minister for the Environment, UK, and Mrs Ritt Bjerregaard, Member of the European Commission with responsibility for the Environment. Mr Franz Fischler, Member of the European Commission with responsibility for Agriculture introduced the Commission's proposals for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. There were also interventions from Prof. Dr Jose Guerreiro, Secretary of State for the Environment, Portugal, and Mrs Caroline Jackson, MEP for Wiltshire North and Bath.

This was followed by workshop sessions covering the problems of managing certain socio-economic activities in Natura 2000 sites (agriculture, forestry, hunting and tourism). A second series of workshops studied the mechanisms for delivering solutions, dealing with the horizontal issues of development of management plans, managing changes on Natura 2000 sites, obtaining funding from local sources, and communicating with local actors. This was followed by visits to some of the proposed Natura 2000 sites in the South West of England, to illustrate the issues under discussion. A summary of the conclusions was given by Mr Currie, Director General DGXI of the European Commission.

This volume contains the speeches and resumés of the presentations given during the Conference, and a summary of the conclusions of each workshop. They have not been translated from the original language (English or French). A list of chairmen, rapporteurs and presenters is also attached. The text is also available on the Commission's web site at [\(LINK\)](#).

The Conclusions will be published separately.

The organisers would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of the event.

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ADDRESS BY MR MICHAEL MEACHER

Madam Chairman, Commissioners, Secretary of State, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be with you this morning at the opening of this conference and to welcome you to Bath. It gives me particular pleasure to welcome Commissioner Bjerregaard, Commissioner Fischler and Secretary of State for the Environment of Portugal, Dr Jose Guerreiro.

I am also delighted to be joined on the platform by Caroline Jackson, Member of the European Parliament for this area and active member of the Parliament's environment committee. In fact, urgent business with the European Parliament will, I regret, take Commissioner Bjerregaard and me away from these proceedings before lunch. My duties as President of the Council of Environment Ministers continue until midnight tomorrow, and my presence in Brussels this afternoon means I must miss the chance to participate more fully in this conference. However I welcome this opportunity to say a few words about the importance of the Natura 2000 enterprise for the European Union and for the United Kingdom and also to make some comments about the important issues which you will be considering during these two days. It was no coincidence that 1992 saw the adoption of the Habitats Directive within weeks of the Earth Summit in Rio.

The twin themes of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development came together then. They are ideas which have captured people's imagination and gained political momentum. Only this month the Environment Council endorsed a Biodiversity Strategy for the EU, - one of my central objectives during our Presidency. The Strategy aims to integrate nature conservation action into sectoral economic and social fields. The Habitats Directive already recognised the need to do this and is, together with the Birds Directive, of course, the central plank of the strategy. Your task over these two days is to explore how people in many different sectors can be involved in partnerships to make Natura 2000 work.

In the United Kingdom an established network of areas identified as important for nature conservation dates back to 1949. We call them Sites of Special Scientific Interest, - or "SSSIs" -and it is on this network that we are building Natura 2000. The fundamental principles underlying the identification and management of these areas are - on the one hand - a sound scientific analysis, and - on the other - consultation and co-operation with land users and managers. We have not sought to designate only those areas under state ownership or conservation control which can be managed directly as nature reserves. As with Natura 2000, the basis for designation is the scientific evidence alone. Once the land is designated, the maintenance of the conservation interest must be sensitive to legitimate land uses. Although I have announced that I wish to strengthen the legislation covering SSSIs - and a consultation paper will be issued shortly - this approach remains fundamental and is even more relevant today. The principle of active co- operation with land managers and users is the only way we can deliver the expectations of Natura 2000 in the UK and I think there are important lessons to be learned in Europe.

Let me tell you briefly how far we have got with Natura 2000 in the UK. Today I can announce the classification of 3 more SPAs, 2 in Scotland - Calf of Eday and Auskerry, both in Orkney, and the East Devon Heaths in England. We are also extending the existing River Crouch Marshes and Broadland SPAs in England. These extensions are also being listed as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar convention. I am pleased to announce these latest sites which bring the UK total of Special Protection Areas to 182. The East Devon Heaths site is important for Nightjar and Dartford Warbler, and the wetland sites for a variety of wildfowl, waders and, in the case of the River Crouch Marshes, dark-bellied Brent geese. Adding to the sites listed under the Ramsar convention is an important priority for the UK - Ramsar and Natura 2000 are complementary and mutually-reinforcing. The sites in Orkney are important for assemblages of sea birds and, in Auskerry, the Annex I Storm petrel and Arctic tern.

Following a further submission earlier this month we have now proposed 315 sites to the Commission as candidate SACs, covering 1.6m hectares. The UK list is a substantial contribution to the proposed network in the Atlantic biogeographical region. I very much look forward to the commencement of discussions with other Member States to establish the list of sites of Community importance for this region. This is an urgent task and there is still a very long way to go. Individual Member States cannot build Natura 2000 in isolation. It is a collective obligation and the requirements of the Habitats Directive must be applied evenly and fairly.

So why are Member States finding the establishment of Natura 2000 such a challenge? When the Directive was adopted, getting the network substantially in place around the year 2000 seemed achievable. The practical realities have proved different. We have seen popular resistance in some places and some countries have faced substantial legislative hurdles. But the public mood is in favour of environmental measures - there is enormous support for biodiversity conservation initiatives as evidenced by the strength of the NGO movement in this field - many of whom are represented at this conference. So, what is taking so long? There are perhaps four main difficulties.

The first problem has been to do with understanding the science. We should not underestimate the importance of the scientific basis for the choice of sites. Understanding their importance will be fundamental to their future conservation and management. The Habitats Directive, though more explicit in its criteria than the Birds Directive, is deceptively simple.

Scientific definition of the habitat types in Annex 1 of the Directive which require site designation has been a major and time-consuming task, and the timetable of the Directive made no allowance for it. It has been necessary in some countries to undertake extensive inventories and surveys. In the UK, though our science base is good, we have recognised that our knowledge will never be comprehensive and there comes a point where we must use the best available scientific information, supplemented as appropriate by extra survey where there are known gaps in information.

The greater difficulty lies perhaps in the application of the Directive's criteria for site selection. These give at best a broad-brush series of considerations to be applied; they do not give - rightly in my view - numerical size or quality thresholds; and they overlap with one another and vary in relevance according to the habitat type or species under consideration. We are concerned with selecting the best and most important sites in

Europe for rare habitats and species, but there is a limit to which the quality of a site can be measured objectively. Informed, subjective judgement must play a large part. Inevitably however, those who will be affected by the designation want to understand - and sometimes to challenge - the scientific reasoning behind the selection and it is not always easy to explain. In the UK we have published a document, which we loosely call "the Explanatory Notes". It is an account of the broad rationale of the process of site selection - applying the Directive's criteria - and an explanation of how each selected site complies with that rationale. We published this to explain the process transparently to a UK audience, to the Commission and to other Member 10 States. We have already found it to be extremely useful.

The second difficulty we have faced is to answer the question, "What will this designation mean for me?" Often there can be no direct or simple answer. Although in most cases it is possible to say that past activities will be able to continue - because the continuing quality of the site is evidence that they are sustainable - we cannot give categorical assurances that designation means no adjustments will be necessary. The management of Natura 2000 sites will depend on processes to be applied in the future, often through the development of management plans, which will sometimes involve a large number of local players. It will not be possible to supply all the answers in advance, but it is of great value to start down the road of discussion with those affected at the earliest stage. This is a process of constructive engagement which begins to consider what a future management plan might look like and to build a consensus which understands the conservation objectives of the site and the human interaction with it.

I am pleased to say that in some of our complex marine sites in particular and with the help of money from LIFE/Nature, local relevant authorities and organisations have already begun to develop shadow management schemes in preparation for designation. **To further help this process, my Department is publishing today, - with the Welsh Office - a guide to the development of management schemes in Natura 2000 sites in the marine environment.** This gives information about the legal framework for the schemes and some practical guidance about the means of establishing management structures, consultative systems and documentation.

It is also helpful sometimes to begin to discuss with local interests, particularly industrial and commercial interests, about how future development proposals are likely to be handled in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 of the Directive. There is sometimes a wrong assumption made at the outset that all future development will be sterilised. It is often more productive to start talking about what might be called "what- if" scenarios. Although the final decision cannot be pre-empted, we see practical sustainable development solutions emerging through this process which give people comfort that they can live, and thrive, with Natura 2000.

Inevitably, as we discuss these "what-if" scenarios, we must explore in greater depth the difficult concepts contained within the Directive of "significant effect", "adverse effect on the integrity of the site", imperative reasons of overriding public interest", and "compensatory measures". We are of course already applying these concepts in practical cases affecting SPAs. These case histories help to build up a body of understanding which I hope will enable us to develop a consensus across Member States about the framework within which such terms apply. I would like us to share our experience with one another and with the Commission. I have recently issued a public statement which

gives the UK Government's outline position on some considerations which will apply to judgements of overriding public interest and compensatory measures as part of the process of understanding and clarification of the Directive.

The third difficult issue we have faced is how Natura 2000 is to be financed. Projects funded under LIFE/Nature are an extremely valuable way of demonstrating the way forward, and I know you will be discussing some important examples to illustrate your themes over the next two days. I trust that the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament will agree in the coming months to continue the fund into a third phase. However, we all know realistically that LIFE/Nature can never be the complete solution to the question of financing Natura 2000. The fund is tiny compared with the main Community agriculture and structural funds. It will be vital to find ways of utilising these other funds to the benefit of Natura 2000 and this fits in with the conference's theme, illustrated in the EU Biodiversity Strategy and Agenda 2000, that nature conservation must be integrated into other sectoral areas: particularly agriculture and infrastructure projects. And of course Member States' own resources must play a significant role in funding Natura 2000; after all this project is a commitment voluntarily entered- into unanimously by Member States.

The fourth obstacle we have all had to overcome is perhaps the most significant, but less tangible. It is a problem that, conceptually and culturally, across Europe people are used to **the "Nature Reserve" approach to conservation**. People expect designated nature areas to exclude them, except as well-behaved visitors on managed tours. People therefore react against the designation of large areas which appear to have the potential to keep them out and to stop them from doing what they have been happily doing for years. Some people even think that their land will be expropriated. The designation of land with the consequent assumptions made about the imposition of controls is sometimes seen as the heavy hand of bureaucratic Brussels.

None of this is appropriate. Ideas have moved on. We all know that many of our important nature conservation areas are very closely juxtaposed and integrated with areas of intense human activity, whether that be farming, forestry, fishing or industry. In the UK our major estuaries are perhaps the most acute examples of this juxtaposition. The concept that nature can be kept in a kind of ghetto is outdated and in the end doomed to fail. To live sustainably with nature is to acknowledge man's place in adapting and managing it and to ensure that our impact respects its dynamic forces. The reason for making designations is, as it were, to put a flag on the site which says - "take notice", not "keep out". Even if man's actions in an area have in the past been benign - and even helpful to nature - we cannot go on doing the right thing by chance; still less doing the wrong thing through lack of care or understanding.

We must manage our interaction in a way which consciously respects nature. We have a duty to explain this to people and to develop partnerships to deliver it. The brochure published today by the UK Nature Conservation Agencies and Environment Departments, and which is included in your delegate pack - **"Natura 2000: Conservation through partnerships"** -, gives a large number of examples of places where these ideas have been successfully applied in the UK. We see instances of industrial concerns and leisure pursuits co-existing with nature to their mutual advantage, and even in some cases turning it to a profit. You will hear of more examples across the EU during the conference. The industries who are kindly helping to sponsor parts of this

event, Wessex Water and ICI, are proud of their work supporting biodiversity and integrating care for nature into their management practices.

So **in conclusion**, I would say that the holding of this conference to explore these issues in key sectors is immensely important. You are all here to explain and to listen and learn. Together we must develop a common understanding of the way forward. Sustainable development is not just a slogan; it is real and we have seen practical examples of it. This is the challenge - to see how current desires and needs can be pursued without sacrificing the nature we value. But some difficult decisions will be necessary: no-one said it would be easy - though perhaps we hoped it would be easier than it has turned out to be.

The Council was far-sighted and ambitious in 1992. I personally do not regret that they were. We owe it to our successors to implement their vision with renewed vigour. I wish you energy and enthusiasm over the coming days. You won't find all the answers but I hope you will gain confidence to deliver some messages which will take us forward with a common purpose. This will be a fitting end to the period of the UK Presidency which I hope will enable Austria to take up the baton knowing that Natura 2000 is accelerating towards its goal.

ADDRESS BY MRS RITT BJERREGAARD

Mr Meacher, Ministers, Commissioner Fischler, Mr Chairman (of Bath and North East Somerset Council)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your hospitality here in this historic city of Bath, and for giving us this opportunity to promote further progress with one of the cornerstones of Community nature protection measures – the Natura 2000 network.

I am getting to know the south west of the United Kingdom quite well. We are not too far here from Cardiff, where an important decision was taken, during the recent Summit, to highlight the integration of environmental issues with other Community policies. This is a renewal of the commitment made in Maasticht, and is a key point in Community environmental strategy. Over the next two days, we will see good examples of how this has been done already, for example, through agri-environmental initiatives and use of the Structural and other funds. The proposed measures under Agenda 2000 and the renewal of the Life instrument will also contribute to this goal, if they are picked up by the Member States, and used positively.

The United Kingdom has a justifiably proud record in nature conservation. The area surrounding Bath testifies to this, as you will see during the field trips on Tuesday. It is very appropriate, therefore, in the last days of the UK Presidency, that we should come here to tackle this important issue which is aimed at the protection of the natural heritage of Europe as a whole.

1. BACKGROUND

Europe has a rich diversity of cultures, identities and landscapes. Biodiversity is one important, rather fragile element of this. Safeguarding its biodiversity is of vital importance to the Union. This major challenge has been taken up at the beginning of the Third Millenium, under the legal framework of the Birds and Habitats Directives, by the creation of a network of sites protected at Community level. This network is known as Natura 2000. It provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate how environmental concerns can be integrated with other policies. To do so, however, requires the co-operation of all concerned.

The setting up of the Natura 2000 network has been hampered by many factors. Not the least of these has been the resistance put up by some local people who find themselves close to or within a proposed area. Perhaps it is not surprising that their first reaction is one of fear that their legitimate social or economic activities may be curtailed by the measures to be applied to protect the site. It may also be hard for them to understand the need for these measures. They probably have good experience themselves of “living with nature”, and may not see the need to formalise this in a legal way.

Sometimes it can be a little hard for the average person, walking in the depths of the countryside, to believe that nature has suffered the degradation which is proclaimed so often by scientists, politicians and the media. Summer, for example where we are today,

in the County of Avon, is a constant buzz of insects, a blaze of floral colours, falcons hunting the verges, swallows diving for insects. Summer also conjures up pictures of green alpine meadows, sparkling fjords, and cool green forests. Can things really be so bad?

We have become very resistant to the constant words of doom and gloom which seem to come from all sides. It can be very tempting to dismiss the scares as media hype, particularly if you are dependent for your livelihood on exploitation of natural resources. "Just another attempt to get funds", you might say, and go back to grubbing up the hedgerow. Nature protection is a luxury, you might think, but life in the real world must go on.

On the other hand, many people have already entered into a partnership with nature, for example through membership of NGOs, or just through their own efforts. Some commercial firms have grasped the need to look after nature, and how, incidentally, to benefit from a "Green Image".

2. DEVELOPMENT OF NATURE PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Nature conservation is on everyone's tongue today. It seems that many are jumping on the bandwagon, but it was not always so. In the early days of European unity, it was not a word which was used very often. When the original Six signed the Treaty of Paris, in 1951, establishing a European Coal and Steel Community, the impact of these industries on the environment was not considered to be an issue.

This first Community was an important incentive for a new spirit of European peace and co-operation after two World Wars. If anyone had recognised the possible damage to the environment that these industries could cause, no one was going to raise the issue, in a world where the mood was for growth, prosperity and peace.

However, the international spirit changed in 1972, with the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, known under the key words " Man and Biosphere". From that time on, the subject of the environment, including nature protection, has been on the political map.

Just one year later, the subject of nature protection entered the stage of the EEC in its own right, with a Council Recommendation for the protection of wild birds and for support for the Ramsar Convention on preservation of wetlands. However, the lawyers would define this only as "soft law".

Nevertheless, this Recommendation was the starting point for legally binding measures in the form of a Directive, dedicated to the protection of wild birds. The resulting Birds Directive will celebrate its 20th anniversary in April 1999, unfortunately even after such a long period of time major difficulties still exist in applying this Directive correctly – as you will have noticed very recently concerning the hunting period dates. As you know in this case the Commission continues to press the Member States vigorously in order that they fulfil their obligations.

It was also seen that other species and habitat types were considerably endangered, with some already threatened by extinction. To meet this concern, a Convention on the

Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats was developed in Bern in 1979, under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

Following that, the Habitats Directive has taken up the objectives of the Birds Directive on behalf of other species and their habitats. Now, in the Birds and Habitats Directives, we have really powerful tools with which to come to grips with the needs of nature protection.

However, we still could ask, “Is it really necessary?”

3. HISTORICAL LESSONS

In 1741, the crew of a Russian ship stranded on Bering Island discovered huge sea creatures in the surrounding waters. They had never seen anything like these before. Instead of eating fish, like seals, they grazed like cows on the seaweed. They soon found out how to kill them, and discovered that they were good to eat. When the sailors were rescued, they were eager to tell others of their find. Many came to reap this wonderful harvest, until the last Stellar’s Sea Cow was killed in 1768.

It took just 27 years for civilised man to destroy what had taken millions of years to create.

Stellar’s Sea Cow, was one of only two members of its family, the other being the dugong, which is now endangered in most of its range. These docile seal-like creatures, also known as sirenes, may well be the origin of the Mermaid myth, and so I, coming from Denmark, have a particular feeling for them.

The loss of Stellar’s Sea Cow robbed us of a possible source of food from otherwise unused seaweed. It robbed us of a major element in the kelp forest ecosystem.

Its loss was a disaster ecologically, economically and ethically.

This was, of course, not an isolated incident. Similar events are occurring daily, destroying incalculable resources. Who knows what medicines go undiscovered because a rare plant is allowed to become extinct? What plant genes are out there which could improve our ability to feed our increasing numbers? Will we find them before they too are extinct?

There is clearly a *prima facie* case for the protection of species and habitats, in order to maintain the biological diversity of the world.

4. PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF NATURE PROTECTION

Mankind now faces one of its greatest challenges – how to feed the ever-growing number of mouths on the planet, without degrading the very substance on which we depend. At the same time, we must keep our natural heritage alive for our children and their children.

The word “sustainability” springs to mind. We do not have the right to exploit resources to the point of extinction. We may only use these resources in such a way that any damage which is done is counterbalanced by nature’s own compensatory measures. Man can also help for example through breeding programmes etc.

However, we must also take care of species and habitats which seem to have little or no economic value. It is just as important to maintain biological diversity. We cannot predict the losses which might result from the destruction of any species, no matter how unimportant it may seem. New drugs, foodstuffs, energy sources; all could be lost if we fail to protect the variety of genetic information. A little known plant or insect may have less obvious public appeal than a squirrel or orchid, but its importance, ecologically and economically, may not become apparent until it is too late.

Nature conservation is not just an ethical consideration. It is not just to provide pretty countryside to enjoy on our walks. It is a practical necessity as we enter a new millennium. Nature conservation does not just benefit the animals and plants; it also safeguards our future on this planet.

5. NATURA 2000 CAN CO-EXIST WITH DEVELOPMENT

Nature includes people. People are part of nature. It is a partnership.

I have heard it said, rather cynically, that a partnership is the worst ship that ever sailed. Too often it is an arrangement where both sides take what they can get, and leave the other to fend for itself. I think that people have had enough of that attitude. They do not want that any more for the environment. They expect to play their part, and they expect others to do so as well.

This is the challenge that we face – how to use natural resources in a sustainable way, and avoid the trap of taking what we can, while we can.

“That may be true, “ you say, “ but what if I cannot fish, or run my ferry, or harvest the crops and trees? I am being asked to loose my livelihood, so that others can look at seagulls and wild flowers.”

This is not true, at least for Natura 2000. Gathered here today is a wealth of experience from Europe, which will demonstrate how Natura 2000 can co-habit with social and economic interests. Natura 2000 makes specific provisions to allow for managed development, even in areas where priority habitats and species exist. How these provisions are put into operation is a matter for the Member States, but the possibility is there.

Natura 2000 sites are not intended to be National Parks, although they can be. They are not intended to be devoid of human activity, although some controls may be necessary. They are not intended to stop legitimate developments which are beneficial to the community, but a proper balance must be achieved.

I can quite understand that the owner of a quarry or a farm, for example, could be seriously concerned about the threat to his livelihood posed by the possible designation of a Natura 2000 site on or near his property. Similarly, I can understand the concern from someone who wishes to build a new port or marina where there is an existing protected site. However, this is not how Natura 2000 should be seen. Following the designation of sites, the Directive requires Member States to take the necessary steps to manage those sites. The way to do this is to start an early dialogue with all the players, to identify problems and find solutions. There may not always be solutions, but mostly there will be, with perhaps some give and take on all sides.

Today, in this magnificent building, we have gathered together as many different players as possible. NGOs are speaking to farmers, who are speaking to nature protection officials, who are speaking to port authorities. The list goes on and on, and I hope the dialogue which we start today will also go on and on. In some Member States, the Natura 2000 Network has got off to a false start. Several Member States have still not proposed a sufficient number of sites. This is extremely regrettable since it is slowing down the implementation of the network. The resistance from several lobbies in those Member States may be linked to insufficient understanding about the aims and the consequences of Natura 2000 and the lack of explanations. Several infringement procedures are now ongoing and the Commission is firmly resolved to use all the necessary means to address this problem as soon as possible. It now needs to get back on track, with the full involvement of all concerned.

You are here together as a group, bound together with one problem in mind – the sustainable use of our natural heritage. You are all contributors, in one way or another, to nature conservation. I would like to think that you will leave as an even more integrated group after each side has explained its own difficulties, and we have explored the possible solutions together.

6. NATURA 2000 AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

You must all be aware that the Commission has recently presented a major package of reforms to the Council, within the framework of Agenda 2000. These include new provisions to strengthen the integration of environmental issues into the CAP and other aspects of rural development. My colleague, Mr Fischler, will give us a much fuller picture of the proposed measures later this morning. We very much hope that these measures will be well supported by the Member States.

These proposals will also create new funding opportunities for Natura 2000 sites. However, this should not be seen as the only answer to financing Natura 2000. A financial commitment is expected down to local level. The site and project managers must seek out appropriate means of funding, and exploit them fully. Do not forget that a Natura 2000 designation may be an attractive label for some commercial activities.

A commitment is required from everyone who benefits. That is why the workshop tomorrow on funding will look at protected sites as an asset. The National Trust of the United Kingdom, who are our hosts for dinner at Dyrham Park on Tuesday night, will tell us how to make money from our heritage, bringing benefits in terms of improved quality of life, conservation and jobs.

7. WORKING WITH NATURE

Some people may wonder how certain activities could ever be compatible with Natura 2000 sites. It is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure that management plans are prepared to allow reasonable, sustainable activities to take place, and this has been successful in several areas. For example, we will learn that bird numbers have risen substantially in some Special Protected Areas, where the hunters have taken a responsible, constructive approach. We will learn that the mineral extraction industry has received nature protection awards for its efforts.

It is possible that some activities may have to be curtailed in the process of constructing the Natura 2000 network. However, I do think that we can overcome the vast majority of problems if we work together, as a partnership, as the title of the Conference puts it.

We have some experience of this in the Commission. I am pleased to note, for example, the number of agri-environmental projects which have started following a dialogue between farmers and conservationists which began in a previous Life Nature project. Life Nature, in its own right, has provided and continues to provide support for the Natura 2000 network. From it, a great deal of experience has been gained. One of the outcomes of this Conference will be to disseminate this experience to a very wide audience.

Let me take this opportunity to draw your attention to the successes enjoyed by our partners in Central and Eastern Europe in protecting their natural heritage under difficult circumstances. In this respect, I would particularly emphasise the role of nature reserves in their strategies.

This Conference has been planned, not for self-congratulation, but as a serious attempt to identify the lessons which can be learned from past experiences, and to use these lessons to make significant progress so that the Natura 2000 list can work for the benefit of man and nature, at the earliest possible date.

On behalf of the Commission, I welcome you all to Bath. I ask you to speak as the Roman orators who once used the famous Baths did in the past – with passion, with enthusiasm, with commitment, and with understanding.

The objective is to return home on Wednesday with new ideas for the future, and with a renewed commitment to nature protection. Let us spend our time wisely.

ADDRESS BY DR. FRANZ FISCHLER

Member of the European Commission
responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development

Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development: How Agenda 2000 will contribute to Nature Protection

**Conference
Natura 2000 and People: a partnership**

Bath, 29 June 1998

Homepage: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg06/com/htmfiles/welcome.htm>

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for the opportunity which has been offered to me to speak at this Conference on the relationship between agriculture and nature protection and to present the environmental aspects of CAP reform as proposed in Agenda 2000.

Although from time to time tensions between nature protection objectives and agricultural interests can be observed, it would not be appropriate to accuse farmers in general of destroying the environment.

The farmed landscape in Europe has proved a nature conservation source. The continuation of well adjusted farming systems is, especially in the Mediterranean, Nordic regions and mountain areas a precaution to avoid desertification and erosion. In many places, extensive types of livestock and arable crop production constitute the basis for maintaining special forms of ecological communities and thereby contribute to preserve biodiversity.

Environmentalists increasingly realize that in many cases its farming which provides the answers to nature management. The complex ecology of flora and fauna have adapted to and been influenced by farming activities. In Europe this symbiotic relationship has evolved over, not only centuries, but thousands of years. The result is that many species are dependent for their life-cycle on the continuation of farming practises: The Chough [*“chuff”*] relies on traditional grazed pastures. Over 70 % of threatened vascular plant species in Sweden depend on the open farmland. And the century-old habit of haymaking has produced adapted populations of field herbs.

Nevertheless, there are problems linked to modern agriculture. In certain areas valuable biotopes have been threatened or even destroyed, biodiversity has diminished and animal welfare standards have deteriorated. Fact is that modern technology and related profit considerations have had their downside in terms of environmental consequences of agricultural production. This is of course a phenomenon not peculiar to this sector.

If sustainable development is – as the Brundlandt report says – "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", than we must recognise that in many instances in the past we have rather moved away from sustainability rather than towards it – at least until 1992.

The 1992 CAP reform introduced the idea of combining environmental policies with agricultural market and income policies in a mutually beneficial way. For instance, it established an agri-environmental scheme, devised accompanying measures such as afforestation, and linked the beef premium to maximum stocking rates. The results are encouraging. Since then, the use of plant protection products went down by about 15 %, that of nitrogen fertilisers declined by about 25 % and that of phosphorus fertilisers by an astonishing one third. And all this while agricultural production kept growing overall.

Where they have been evaluated, Agri-environment measures have proved to be one of the most successful parts of the 1992 reform.

But this is only the beginning of an evolution. Sustainable development has now become a major objective of the Union. Art. 6 of the Amsterdam Treaty makes this clear. Environmental aspects must from now on be incorporated in all Community policies.

Improving the environmental performance of agriculture has become an essential task for all concerned: the regions, the Member States, the European Institutions and the operators.

They can all rely on the innovative concept of integrated farming that aims at achieving both economic viability and environmental soundness of agricultural production. The two can and must go hand in hand. However, where farmers make special efforts to provide environmental goods and services, this economic activity will mostly be carried out only if it is appropriately paid.

Society is willing to pay for such activities as the provision of public goods in the field of environment, and increasingly requests, as a minimum, the respect of codes of good agricultural practice.

The European Agricultural model that is for the first time defined in Agenda 2000 includes a better environment among the six objectives of CAP reform, and considers that objective as important, for instance, as agricultural incomes, food quality, competitiveness, or rural development, and a key element in a new comprehensive policy network. We believe that a further shift as Agenda 2000 proposes from market intervention – which would increasingly assume a safety net role – towards direct payments will help reduce the likelihood of agricultural surpluses and reduce the incentives for using chemical inputs because price reductions call for cost reductions.

Let me now refer to 3 major elements of the proposed reform, which regard the environment:

- 1. THE AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING;**
- 2. THE HORIZONTAL REGULATION, AND**
- 3. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS IN MARKET POLICIES**

1. Agri-Environmental Measures

The core of the Community's agri-environmental strategy is formed by targeted agri-environmental measures which to apply under rural programmes is mandatory for Member States.

The general philosophy of the new rural development policy puts focus on a regional development concept tailored to specific regional circumstances and needs – and therefore leaves the choice of measures and instruments to achieve these objectives to Member States. It is only the agri-environmental measures which are mandatory to be included in any rural development programme. By this agri-environmental measures get a prominent role and particular importance within the new rural development policy.

Agri-environmental measures offer financial incentives to farmers who, on a voluntary and contractual basis, provide environmental services or improve the environmental soundness of farming practices. The premia paid are based on costs incurred and income forgone. In order to increase participation of farmer they may also include a limited incentive element.

The general line of applying agri-environmental measures is strengthened in Agenda 2000: First, the environmental objectives are put more up-front and second, the budget will be significantly increased. It is now explicitly stated that commitments have to go beyond good agricultural practice that is have to deliver additional environmental gains.

The simplified lists of eligible measures highlights biodiversity. Provisions are included to retain “high nature value environments” which are under threat and to maintain “environmentally beneficial low-intensity pastures” – both key instruments for Natura 2000 sites. In future some environmental capital works will come under the agri-environmental chapter, e.g. conservation measures dealing with habitat restoration and re-creation as well as water level management investments.

Payments for the compliance with mandatory environmental legislation cannot form part of possible measures. Payments are only provided for services which are not yet provided for by other support measures.

The revised agri-environmental measures as compared to the present system will allow a better focus on the environmental objectives: Due to its mandatory nature all Member States will have to reflect how to best integrate environmental considerations into their rural development policy. The stricter criteria for obtaining support - which are strictly linked to clear environmental gains - will ensure a significant qualitative improvement of integration of environmental concerns into agricultural practise.

Environmental elements appear also in other parts of the rural development proposal. Preservation of the environment and management of rural landscape can and should of course be an integral part of the adaptation of rural areas supported by rural development programmes.

Let me state only some examples of environmentally orientated measures which will be financed under the new extended rural development policy:

- Support to investments on agricultural holdings can be given for those investments, which preserve and improve the natural environment.

- Support for forestry shall be integrated into the rural development programmes to promote sustainable management and development of forests. A compensatory payment shall be granted to safeguard the public interest in preserving and improving the ecological stability of forests or restoring damaged forests in areas with serious handicaps. The provisions on afforestation require in the case of fast-growing species that the planting is adapted to local conditions compatible with the environment.

- The priorities for training measures include the preparation of farmers for the application of production practices compatible with the maintenance of the landscape and the protection of the environment.

- Let me now come to a point which I believe is of particular interest for this Conference: Agenda 2000 extends the concept of less favoured areas by giving member states the opportunity to include defined areas into the scheme, where farmers are exposed to specific environmental constraints. In this case, the specific natural conditions, for example, in high nature value areas or natural habitats, are materialised through special mandatory environmental legislation.

2. Horizontal Regulation

Next, I would like to draw your attention to the new horizontal regulation concerning all reformed market organisations, which introduces in a very horizontal way the new concept of linking payments under the CAP to environmental requirements.

The new horizontal regulation obliges Member States to introduce minimum environmental standards. It will be up to Member States to decide which measures are necessary or appropriate.

A main reason for not proposing, neither compulsory cross-compliance nor Community guidelines for voluntary cross-compliance, is the huge variety of environmental conditions and agricultural structures, which suggests to leave the application of environmental measures to the regional level.

Cross compliance gives an additional tool to Member States for assuring minimum environmental standards by making compensation payments conditional on good practice. A proportionate reduction of direct payments granted under the market organisations can be used by member states as a sanction for non-compliance with rules.

Money not spent due to the non-respect of environmental conditions – as well as money saved by Member States who make use of the option to modulate direct payments – will be available for re-enforcing a Member State's budgetary envelope for agri-environmental measures.

By introducing this mechanism we back up the new development of stronger linking payments to environmental requirements. The implementation of such a philosophy can only be achieved by following a gradual approach, taking one step carefully after the other. We also have to face the

limitations we are confronted with at this stage since we lack practical experience about how to best apply such a concept.

3. Common Market Organisations

Lastly, let me have a final word on the Agenda 2000 proposals in relation to the market regimes. Also here environmental provisions will be strengthened.

In the case of beef and dairy, national envelopes are established for a part of the direct payment which may be linked to environmental conditions. For this part of direct payment, Member States must apply a stocking rate, which takes account of the environmental impact of the type of production concerned, and the environmental sensitivity of the land used.

Furthermore, the extensification premium granted under the beef regime would become more effective. This is achieved by increasing the premia level significantly, requiring that animals have actually to be grazed on pasture land, and by counting *all* adult cattle on the farm for the calculation of the individual livestock density.

In the context of payments for arable crops, Member States shall take the necessary measures to remind applicants of the need to respect environmental legislation. As regards set-aside, Member States shall apply appropriate environmental measures, which correspond to the specific situation of the land concerned.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude: There are of course those who think the proposals of Agenda 2000 regarding the environment do not go far enough. There are also many who think they go much too far. Be it as it may, to have them accepted will be an uphill fight. We have to be well aware of this.

The Commission proposals represent a solid framework for an integration of minimum environmental concerns into Europe's agricultural and rural policy. It provides efficient instruments to reconcile agriculture with environmental objectives. Thus by reinforcing existing mechanisms such as the agri-environmental measures, and by offering new provisions, as the horizontal regulation, which allow us to ensure a sustainable agriculture.

Nature protection will benefit from all this. If Member States decide to give nature protection the importance it merits as it contributes - as does rural development - to the conservation of the varied forms of European landscape, Agenda 2000 gives them the instruments to do so: Not only can compulsory obligations under Natura 2000 be included in the LFA scheme but also will the reinforced agri-environmental measures allow various actions in order to create, develop and preserve nature protection sites.

Five main objectives cover the CAP reform proposals of the Commission: to increase competitiveness; to assure food safety and food quality; to maintain a fair standard of living for the agricultural community and stabilise farm incomes; to integrate better environmental goals into the CAP and to develop alternative job and income opportunities for farmers and their families. The various roles performed by farmers, in particular in maintaining and conserving the countryside, is under close scrutiny.

On the one hand farmers must reach the minimum standard of environmental care demanded by society including observance of compulsory legislation; on the other hand, if farmers provide environmental services beyond the minimum of good agricultural practice they should be paid for their costs and incomes losses in delivering these public benefits.

The Commission's proposals strike the correct balance and provide Member States and regions with the instruments necessary to assure that minimum environmental standards are observed and to promote the conservation and improvement of Europe's unique environmental heritage.

Now we need to do a good selling job if we want to convince all those who are not yet ready to go down this road.

Thank you for your attention.

ADDRESS BY PROF DR JOSE GUERREIRO

Thank you Madam Chairman, Mr Meacher, Commissioner Bjerregaard, Mr Fischler, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, yes, I probably do have a different vision of nature conservation: it goes with the job. Portugal, for both bio-geographical and historical/cultural reasons, is capable of sustaining a remarkable biological richness and bio-diversity. Furthermore, several species which are rare, or at risk of extinction both in Europe and worldwide, can be found there. We have certain unique eco-systems, both terrestrial and marine, and a considerable amount of research remains to be conducted into our deep eco-systems.

Recently, the Portuguese government approved the designation of two new marine reserves thereby very clearly demonstrating that Portugal takes the responsibility of preserving the bank of bio-diversity seriously. This, in turn, contributes positively to a balanced European bio-diversity.

The Portuguese government, and in particular the Portuguese Minister for the Environment, are very much involved in the Natura 2000 process. Further, as you may recall, it was during the Portuguese presidency of the European Union in 1992 that the Habitats Directive was approved. Once again we are playing a major role in the Natura 2000 project, which aims to ensure the preservation and balanced development of the most outstanding habitats of Europe - the jewels of the common crown. However, in order to achieve these aims, a series of compensatory measures need to be taken in order to preserve, in a sustainable way, a considerable area of European territory. If we all agree that there is a need for nature preservation, and if we have already decided what the real mechanisms to support these areas are, are we ready to do what is necessary to achieve our goals in nature conservation?

Portugal has been prepared to take up the challenge of being at the forefront of this Natura 2000 project. Currently, over 13% of Portuguese territory is designated as part of the Natura 2000 programme. Further scientific studies are being undertaken to investigate whether we can increase the size of the designated areas in Portugal. Having said this, I should like to point out that there are some unique problems facing us in relation to some of these designated areas.

For instance, the mean size of each site in Portugal is 5 times larger than the mean site size for the European Community. In addition, these sites are located, as is the case with most southern European countries, in mainly impoverished and mountainous areas which can be remote and deserted, both in physical as well as human terms. It is necessary to understand these two issues in order to fully appreciate exactly what is required to maintain these sites within the Natura 2000 network. In fact, the reasons for the designation of such sites interact directly, and depend upon, these two issues. Accordingly, a new, global approach to nature conservation is required. In fact, this is an approach where the matrix of socio-economic issues is as large as the one for bio-diversity and we must pay attention to that.

The Portuguese government is well aware of these problems and we have initiated a process of developing a package of new measures which is aimed at maintaining and sustaining these areas. Firstly, the Council of Ministers has approved a resolution which places the onus on the various ministries to favour investment in protected areas and they are working in partnership to this end.

Secondly, sectoral agreements have been reached in such fields as fisheries, tourism, sport and agriculture.

Can we maintain coastal areas whilst implementing measures to prevent industrial fisheries from destroying these eco-systems without supporting, at the same time, additional fisheries such as the small harbours where local fishermen have developed sustainable fisheries? We do not think so. We think that it is absolutely crucial that additional fisheries within those areas are supported.

Can we stop the pressure for mass tourism within those areas without supporting eco-tourism in those areas? We do not think so. Accordingly, an agreement with the tourism sector is required to support, nationally, eco-tourism within these areas. It must be done very quickly because if there is no alternative for those activities then mass tourism will invade those areas sooner or later.

We believe, in addition to the agreements with the sectors as outlined above, that the real challenge is to increase standards for the local population within these areas.

The Portuguese government is developing new financial packages to support these activities, but under two conditions - firstly, local people are to be given priority when it comes to employment.

The second condition, which is as equally important as the first, concerns the special role played by agriculture. Products which are produced within these areas must be specifically labelled so as to clearly identify them with these areas and they should be of excellent quality and marketed as such thereby selling, naturally, for a higher price.

We also have to promote awareness of these areas as we only tend to preserve what we know. We have, therefore, initiated a "nature-sports" programme because sports can be played within, and promote, these areas.

Finally, we must not forget that these areas are, and will be forever, the principal laboratories for studying nature and for learning about the dynamics of these eco-systems. Therefore, programmes of scientific research within these areas must contain all the measures outlined above.

The question, however, is can a country, any country, successfully implement such a policy independently inside the European Union and sustain it alone? I do not think so.

On the other hand, I believe it is crucial that the Commission understands and plays a major role in imposing a new direction, and also revitalising the Common Agricultural Policy, to ensure that member states whose methods of agriculture are environmentally friendly and safeguard the sustainability of natural values are the primary beneficiaries of the new funds. Nevertheless, agri-environmental measures should be applied in the first place where there are specific plans focused on the Natura 2000 sites, SPAs or SCAs.

Thirdly, compensation measures must be formulated to make it clear that economically viable alternatives are available. A special programme for sustainable integrated development should be an issue for serious debate.

Fourthly, should we not investigate issues of social and economic welfare of the local population in these areas in order to monitor the effects that any environmental measures have on them? Should this not be an issue to be discussed?

We believe that not resolving the human factor will ultimately lead us all to failure. Depopulation of these areas is not the way to preserve nature. We do not believe that nature conservation is possible in the absence of people - it is an absurd misconception to think otherwise.

I acknowledge that, in connection with this package of measures that we are taking on, we are not alone. Several countries in Europe are taking the same steps. However, the question remains whether we can rationalise these steps so that they are uniform across Europe.

One may say that the most significant challenge today in Europe will be to reach, in a balanced way, the goal of achieving monetary union and, at the same time, European accord on biodiversity. It would be the first test proving that economic development is not in opposition to nature conservation. In other words, can sustained development become a reality in Europe or do we want to have two conflicting ideologies in the process of building Europe? This is the main question. This is the answer to sustainable development.

Natura 2000 is providing, in the new century, a legacy for future generations. After economic and social cohesion has been achieved we must have the courage to commit ourselves to an inter-generational pact between our generation and that of our sons. Can we put this in writing? - I do not know. Can we preserve the "jewels in our crowns"? - I don't know. It is important to understand, as Serge Moskowitz said, "Everything pushes us to believe that nature is also human and as human as mankind can be natural".

Thank you.

ADDRESS BY MRS CAROLINE JACKSON

Not yet available

Address by Mr Jim Currie

First of all I would like to thank all the rapporteurs for giving such splendid presentations of what were rather complex and difficult discussions. Certainly, the presentations that I have witnessed have paid testimony to that fact. It is not my job today to repeat what has been said already – it is my job to try to draw out one or two of the major ideas which, I think, came through over the last day or two.

It struck me, in the first instance, that there was a certain symbolism in the fact that Michael Meacher, Ritt Bjerregaard and Franz Fischler appeared at the beginning of the Conference and actually met real people on the ground. This is symbolic of the need for us to bring Brussels, Whitehall, the various capitals and the regions much closer to local reality. It is no surprise, therefore, that one of the major themes emerging from this Conference is the theme of partnership and involvement: involvement from the bottom up; involvement at an early stage; and involvement through local politicians, the farming community, the hunters and the people who actually live in the area. This is because, at the end of the day, our success has to do with achieving the right degree of public support.

In that context, I think the Conference has brought out a second idea: namely, that there are instruments that we can use. One of these is the planning instrument. However, plans are not things to be imposed from the top down, they are things to be developed at, or as close to, ground level as one can manage. Some of the discussions which I listened to today brought that experience out in the case studies – the need to involve people early in the planning process. It is not something to be imposed. It is something where there is a need for local involvement, both as part of the preparation, and, ultimately, as part of a process of convincing people.

Of course, there is a need to get the balance right. It is not a question of imposing one party's views over another party's views. It is a question of reconciling, perhaps, differing views in the interests of nature preservation and sustainable activities, thereby making sure that those activities continue, not only for this generation but into the next generation. This, in turn, brings out the question of another instrument, namely, resources. I believe the main resource which we have at our disposal is the effort, the enthusiasm and the commitment of people.

However, there is another issue which, for me, did not really come through as much as I would have liked during the course of the last couple of days. That is the economic dimension. We have got to try to make sure that we promote environmental protection and sustainable development in a way which is not antipathetic to the workings of the local, or the regional, economy. I would have liked to have heard a bit more from the people who actually practise tourism, operate in the business world, or make a living from a particular aspect of the local economy. I would have liked to hear how they see the reconciliation process between what they're trying to do, in terms of making money, and their dependence on the natural resources that they are exploiting.

One of the things that came through in the tourism workshop, for example, was the fact that, although there is £100 million per annum swilling around in the New Forest economy, the people who are actually trying to carry out conservation work are having to scrape together the necessary £2 or £3 million to actually make sure that the conservation work is done properly. That seems to me to illustrate the divide that still exists between economics, on the one hand, and the conservation effort, on the other. We need to work to bring those two together.

Financial instruments have been mentioned during these discussions. Of course, I do believe that we will see the LIFE money and activity continuing. However, it is pump-priming or catalytic work, as somebody mentioned. It is not big money and, in the future, there is not going to be a lot more new money around either - let us be absolutely honest and frank about that. The structural funds of the European Union are not going to grow massively. For some areas they are probably going to diminish gradually. Therefore, what we need to do is to make sure – and this is part and parcel of what Franz Fischler was saying – that we get more environmental value, and more sustainable development value from the money that is available. Accordingly, this requires integration - it means integrating environmental concerns into the structural funds and into the CAP, and using LIFE as part of that process.

That brings us to the role of Brussels which I heard mentioned in quite a few groups, including the one about managing change. Although humility is not a word that one would naturally seize on when one is talking about Brussels, we in Brussels are, nevertheless, conscious that we are relatively distant from the reality that we have been discussing this weekend. However, we are also conscious that there is a rôle for us to play, just as there is a role for national and local government to play. That rôle is something which, perhaps, needs to be thought through further.

The need for clarification of certain concepts in the Directive has been mentioned during these discussions (including Article 6), I think that we have to be careful here. One of my own colleagues has already explained that we are involved in a process, and I believe that this process is becoming more and more successful. However, if we

try to be too specific about definitions they will, firstly, not apply to all relevant occasions and circumstances and, secondly, we will get trapped in a kind of legalistic mentality. As someone who has spent 3 years in Washington D.C., the idea that we will spend more of our time litigating and less of our time co-operating fills me with horror. We need to look at the concepts but I think we have got to be very careful about how far down that particular road we move.

Nevertheless, it is certainly true that the dissemination of good practice, and the use of LIFE in an imaginative way, are things which we in Brussels have to improve. We also have to listen much more attentively to how we can improve the framework within which all of this happens.

In conclusion, I would say that we have got to move on from this Conference. We have got to build on it. I would not like to come to another conference of this kind and to find that we are re-inventing the wheel. Therefore, I hope that Innsbruck and whichever other conferences follow build on the foundation which has been laid very usefully here. In saying that, I would like to say a very hearty thank you to the DETR, for all the organisational work which has gone into this Conference. I would also like to say thank you to all the Chairs, the rapporteurs, and the participants for the time they have given up and the effort they have put into developing the case studies and other information which have been the basis for the Conference. Finally, of course, I would like publicly to thank Bruno Julien and all of his staff very sincerely for the tremendous work which they have been doing over a long period of time and which, I, as the Director General of DG XI, very much appreciate.

With that, let me move on to the final phase, of the Conference and introduce Angela Eagle, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment at the DETR. She occupies a very particular and important place in the political spectrum in the United Kingdom. I would like to pay particular tribute to her efforts during the United Kingdom Presidency, in moving the environmental agenda of Europe forward in a very real sense. Michael Meacher will probably keep it a secret but I know that most of the recent Environment Council was, in fact, chaired by Angela and that a lot of the successful decisions were actually taken under her chairmanship while Michael was negotiating the climate change deal in the back rooms. So I would like to say a very personal thank you to her for all the tremendous work which she has been doing and to congratulate the U.K. Presidency.

CLOSING SPEECH BY ANGELA EAGLE

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to join you once again to draw to a close this important conference - **Natura 2000 and People - A Partnership**. This may well be the final act of the UK Presidency - especially as I understand my colleague Michael Meacher has successfully put the final touches to the delicate negotiations on the auto-oil issue for which he and Commissioner Bjerregaard has to fly to Brussels yesterday!

I hope all of you had some chance to see Bath and that some of you may be planning to come back. This conference has been very lucky to have had the opportunity to use these very special buildings. Most of you will have noticed that these Assembly Rooms are owned and managed by the National Trust, that unique organisation that does so much to conserve our natural and historic heritage. I would like to thank the National Trust most warmly for their hospitality, especially as many of you will have a chance this evening to see another of their fine properties, Dyrham Park. I only regret that I will not be able to join you there for dinner.

May I also thank those others who have helped us with their support for this conference. As you know Wessex Water helped to sponsor the memorable Sunday evening reception and dinner at the Roman Baths and Pump Room while ICI are supporting tonight's event at Durham Park. I would like to thank them both. I am particularly pleased that Commissioners Bjerregaard and Fischler were able to find time in their busy schedules to emphasise the importance of Natura 2000 and I also want to thank Minister Guerriero and Caroline Jackson for their stimulating contributions to Monday morning's session.

This conference has of course been a joint event. The UK Presidency and the Commission have worked together to mount and fund this venture which we both see as a significant milestone towards the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.

You will all realise the complications of organising an event of this scale. It has at time posed some unexpected challenges, including those of combining an historic building with 21st century technology. I would like to thank everyone concerned with the organisation of this conference:- To English Nature who prepared and managed all the field trips so superbly: To all the production, catering and management staff here: To my own officials in the European Wildlife Division, and officials in DGXI who have worked so hard in the past months and during the conference to make it a success. And, of course, there are the unsung heroes and heroines of any international gathering, interpreters. Without them, there really cannot be any conference and they probably work harder than any of us.

The workshops have been the engine room of the conference, where we have been able to bring together so many different interests. That they achieved so much was thanks to the efforts of Chairmen, rapporteurs and presenters, not only in the workshops themselves but through their meticulous preparation over the past weeks. They have been able to draw out the messages of their sessions cogently and quickly, thus enabling Jim Currie to present the conclusions you have just heard and which will form the basis of the important follow-up work he described.

But above all I want to express my thanks to all of you who have participated over the past two days so energetically and constructively.

What we have tried to do here is bring together the widest range of interests from all parts of

Europe including of course those countries who will be facing the challenges of Natura 2000 as they prepare to join the European Union, in the near future. Our purpose was not only to bring together a wide geographic spread of delegates but also to provide a forum where different interest groups could meet to discuss common problems in managing the Natura 2000 network. The process of dialogue which this conference stimulated must continue; I am confident it will do so.

On Monday morning Michael Meacher said we needed to address the question, "What will these designations mean for me?". Commissioner Bjerregaard echoed this idea when she asked how we should respond to those who say, "But what if I cannot fish, or run my ferry, or harvest the crops and trees - I am being asked to lose my livelihood so that others may look at seabirds and wild flowers." They both suggested that the conference should take an important step forward in finding the answers. I think you have taken that step over the last two days. The problems of site designation must not block progress by creating entrenched positions arising from misguided, if understandable fears.

This conference has demonstrated that the way forward must be to start looking towards management solutions, which will themselves help every one to understand how these sites will work. In this way, we will make designation less frightening to the people who live and work in these areas. The workshop presentations have demonstrated how these same issues are already being addressed all over Europe in a wide variety of circumstances facing a range of specific problems. Together you have illustrated some imaginative solutions with those common themes which Jim Currie has just set out.

I am very encouraged by Jim's remarks that there is a central conclusion to this conference - the vital importance of continuing communication. Natura 2000 is certainly not a matter just for bureaucrats in Ministries or in Brussels. Nor can it only be the concern of nature conservation experts. We must involve those people who are most closely in touch with their land and their own local communities. Unless we make Natura 2000 relevant to people it will never achieve its central goal of securing the conservation of European biodiversity.

As has been said many times before, one of the best ways to do this must be to persuade local people that nature conservation is a legitimate land-use, frequently compatible with other land-uses and often supportive of them. But one of the most important lessons is to value the ideas and potential solutions that emerge from people themselves. Let us not impose external prescriptions but be ready to listen and learn from their knowledge and experience. They value diversity of their areas as much as the visitor or the conservationist. Because they live there, they are the ones most concerned to conserve and enhance its value.

Above all there is a need to develop and maintain as close a contact as possible and to act with honesty and candour. Only by creating a climate of trust will we be able to ensure that local people understand the purpose of Natura 2000 and become active and willing participants in its success. That must surely be at the heart of all we are trying to achieve.

But however essential the need to consult and co-operate with local people, there are other important issues. Perhaps the major one to emerge for this conference, not surprisingly, is the need to identify solutions which can be realistically financed, either through local solutions, national funds or community programmes. In many cases all three will have a part to play. People are resourceful and imaginative, but together we at EU level must take every opportunity to adapt Community instruments to ensure that biodiversity objectives are fully integrated into all areas

of policy. Commissioner Fischler indicated how Agenda 2000 is beginning to address these fundamental questions. There are some welcome signs but we have a long way to go.

There is also still much work to be done in understanding how the legal framework of the Habitats Directive should be applied. Again there are no easy answers. But I believe that this conference has done a great deal to provide some signposts for further reflection.

I am sure everyone will agree that we have made a great deal of progress over the last two days but also that further work is necessary. As the UK ends its Presidency I offer my good wishes to Austria in particular as they take up the challenge. I know that they are already well advanced in their preparation for a conference in October on the sustainable management of hunting. I hope that the workshop on this subject here yesterday will have identified some useful pointers to their work.

Here, today, in this special city of Bath, we can appreciate better than in many places that man and nature can work in harmony to enhance the value we place upon our environment. The challenge we face with Natura 2000 is to hand on to future generations a world which has not only conserved and enhanced its natural heritage, but done so through sustainable solutions compatible with the interests of local people.

On that note it gives me great pleasure to close the conference, "Natura 2000 and People - a Partnership"; once again to thank all involved, and to wish everyone a pleasant evening at Dyrham Park and a safe journey home.

OUTLINE OF PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOPS

These preliminary conclusions are taken from the preliminary reports which are included in these proceedings. The detailed conclusions will be published in a special edition of the Natura 2000 newsletter in October 1998.

- People are part of Natura 2000, and must be made to feel as though they are members of the **partnership** from the beginning.
- The management requirements must be **acceptable** to the local people. This will happen only if **jobs and income** are maintained.
- Developments must be **economically sustainable**.
- High priority must be given to **communicating** with the local people at all stages.
- People must be convinced of the **value and importance** of the measures.
- The “**bottom-up**” approach, i.e. where the initiative is taken by people from one or more local interest groups is most likely to succeed.
- A **balance** is needed between economic, social and ecological interests.
- **Article 6 of the Habitats Directive provides an innovative mechanism** for management of change and a framework for the balancing of ecological and socio-economic interests.
- **Management plans** are excellent tools for dealing with change.
- **LIFE Nature** is an important **catalyst** for the setting-up of projects.
- Existing **EC financial instruments** are not fully exploited. They can be complementary to each other but their use is often not properly co-ordinated.
- Other, longer term sources of funds should be used to **ensure continuation of the project**.
- **Resources** must be committed to meet the costs of involving local people.
- **Reforms** in the CAP etc should be used for better integration of environmental and other policies.

TOURISM

THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

J-L Sadorge

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas reflects the wishes of authorities responsible for protected areas and of tourism industry representatives to support and encourage sustainable tourism development in protected areas.

Its purpose is to set standards and provide a guideline to help each signatory to develop high quality, sustainable tourism. defined as :

"any form of development or management of tourist activities which ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic growth and well-being of individuals living in, working in or visiting the protected area".

The originators of this Charter believe that the pursuit of such a balance between conservation objectives and social, cultural and economic development is the best approach for the conservation of protected areas and the viability of tourism, the quality of which depends heavily on the natural, cultural and social environment.

To achieve these aims, the Charter seeks to initiate practical action programmes based on a close partnership between the authorities responsible for the protected areas, representatives of the tourist industry and the local community, which will encourage an integrated and strategic approach to tourism management.

Participation in the Charter is both voluntary and contractual

Each signatory is committing itself, on a voluntary basis, to define and implement a strategy that addresses the 10 principles of sustainable tourism in protected areas set out in the Charter.

This strategy must identify the key elements of sustainable tourism development for the area and the strategic choices made by the signatories.

It will be presented in the form of a five year action plan for the protected area and a one year action plan for tourism businesses.

These documents¹ (strategy and action plan) represent the contractual commitment of the signatory. They must not be simply a declaration of intent but propose practical measures for sustainable tourism development in the protected area.

¹ Which will be accompanied by relevant maps to explain the strategy.

There are three categories of signatory to the Charter.

- authorities responsible for protected areas (Nature and National Parks or any other protected areas where public access is allowed and is compatible with tourism conservation objectives)
- tourist businesses located in protected areas (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, tour guides, etc.)
- tour-operators and transport companies located outside protected areas but which feature them in their programmes.

The Charter consists of five sections

- I. **The 10 principles of sustainable tourism** in protected areas to which all signatories to the Charter agree.
- II. **Sustainable tourism for the authorities responsible for protected areas.**
The commitment by the authority responsible for a protected area to define a strategy for sustainable tourism development and a concrete action plan for the area, in partnership with the tourism industry, local authorities and local people.
- III. **Sustainable tourism for tourism businesses located in protected areas.**
The commitment by the manager of a tourist business to prepare a concrete action plan in order to conduct its operations in a sustainable manner. This programme must be in line with, and contribute towards, the aims of the protected area's strategy.
- IV. **Sustainable tourism for tour-operators and transport companies located outside protected areas but including them in their programmes.**
The commitment of the signatory to conduct its operations in those protected areas included in its programmes in a responsible manner, The signatory may be involved with several protected areas.
- V. **Responsible media promotion for sustainable tourism in protected areas.**
Recommendations on how to present protected areas in the media in an appropriate and responsible manner.

10 Principles of sustainable tourism development in protected areas

Nature and National Parks and other protected areas preserve the special qualities of Europe's most beautiful mountains, coasts and wetland area., which more and more people are keen to discover and explore. They bring together an exceptional density of natural and cultural resources which have considerable potential for tourism.

The originators of this Charter recognise that if sustainable tourism is to succeed in these areas it will require the fulfilment of visitor expectations, profits for the local community and the proper integration of tourism and environmental policies.

To promote sustainable tourism in protected areas, the signatories to this Charter commit themselves to respect the following principles.

1. Managing a range of impacts

Tourism development in protected areas must recognise that there are limits to the capacity of the natural, social and cultural environment to accommodate visitors. To this end, the impact of tourist activities on protected areas should be regularly planned, managed and monitored, based on environmental, economic and ethical criteria.

2. Contributing to conservation

Tourism in protected areas can offer new development opportunities which support conservation and the preservation and enhancement of local heritage. Special care should be taken to channel some of the benefits from tourism towards conservation and management of natural resources.

3. Preserving natural resources

Tourism in protected areas should be managed in such a way as to minimise the use of natural resources (water, energy and land), reduce tourism-related waste and pollution of water, air, and soil, and promote the use of environmentally friendly forms of transport.

4. Supporting the local economy

Tourism in protected areas should make a positive contribution to the local economy by promoting local employment and using local products and skills. Special care is needed to maintain a balance between the benefits arising from tourism and other economic sectors which play a part in conserving the environment. Tourism can provide additional support for traditional sectors of the economy.

5. Involving the local community

The inhabitants of protected areas should be involved in the formulation of projects for sustainable tourism development and in the management of tourist activities. The development of tourism should ensure the highest possible rewards for themselves and for future generations.

6. Developing appropriate, quality tourism

Tourism activities in protected areas should be based on the intrinsic qualities of the area, and on the appreciation and enjoyment of its natural and cultural heritage- They

should be developed on a scale appropriate to the environment, and in a way which will provide visitors with a high quality experience.

7. Welcoming new markets

Tourism in protected areas should encourage the discovery of nature by new types of visitor, It must be inclusive and not elitist. In particular, it should reach out to types of visitor often forgotten by tourist resorts. such as young or disabled people.

8. Creating new forms of employment

Tourism in protected areas should encourage the development or new forms of employment. It can especially encourage the development of multi-activity and social integration, by providing opportunities for women. young people, and people affected by various forms of disability.

9. Encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour

Tourist activity, as well as promotion and communication by all concerned, should raise levels of awareness amongst existing and potential visitors, encouraging responsible behaviour towards the environment and local communities. To that end, tourist facilities and services should provide education and interpretation particularly for the benefit of young people and school children.

Promotional messages and information should highlight the authentic values and assets of the area, and assist visitor management, particularly by encouraging the public to visit protected areas in the low season.

10. Providing a role model for other sectors

Tourism should provide a valuable example of sustainable development in protected areas. By taking environmental, economic. social and ethical factors into account, it can influence practice by businesses and organisations in other sectors.

Securing Natura 2000 Objectives in the New Forest

The New Forest cSAC is a complex matrix of habitats formerly widespread in lowland western Europe but now rare and fragmented. It supports no less than 11 European interests including three priority habitats - bog woodland, Mediterranean temporary ponds and alder woodland on floodplains. The future quality of New Forest habitats depends on the persistence of a pastoral economy, sustained by a small and vulnerable community of "Commoners".

The New Forest is under increasing pressure from the development and recreational needs of the densely populated south east region. This affects the livelihood of the Commoners and the fabric of the cSAC through high recreational usage - approximately 17 million recreational visits a year. Direct impacts resulting from such high recreational usage do occur but these tend to be localised in riverine woodlands and dry heathland which are prone to erosion, and in wetlands where general disturbance affects the habitats associated wildlife. Forestry and natural processes have also resulted in the loss of habitat to exotic trees and shrubs, and damage to wetlands through drainage. The New Forest LIFE Project which is part funded through LIFE Nature provides a package of actions to tackle these threats.

The special character of the area is the main contributory factor in stimulating tourism. Tourism in the New Forest is the largest employer of local people and generates some £100 million per annum throughout the area. However, the special character of the area is inextricably linked to the traditions and activities of the people such as the Commoners who live and work here. While on one hand tourism provides work for those living here, it also raises land values making it difficult for future generations of Commoners to remain living in the Forest.

Implementation of the LIFE Project will involve some significant changes to the New Forest. Throughout the Project increased involvement by local people and raised awareness of the practical works necessary to improve the condition of these rare habitats will be vital if the Project's objectives are to be met.

**‘MANAGED ACCESS TO NATIONAL TRUST CONSERVATION AREAS’
CASE STUDY - ISLE OF PURBECK**

JO BURGON, COAST AND COUNTRYSIDE ADVISER, NATIONAL TRUST

This presentation will illustrate how the National Trust, as a partner with others, is managing for wildlife conservation and public access in an area of high visitor use and pressure.

The National Trust is a non governmental organisation, established in 1895, to promote the permanent preservation of land and building for their historic interest or natural beauty. It has special powers to declare land inalienable which means it cannot be sold and it holds and manages land for the benefit of the nation. The organisation has 2.5 million members and receives considerable financial support from them through membership fees, legacies and donations.

The Trust owns 240,000 hectares of land in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There are over 70 Natura 2000 sites (candidate SACs and SPAs) within this area. The Trust, since 1965, has run a special coastal campaign, Enterprise Neptune, to raise funds to acquire undeveloped coastline. It protects over 900 km of coastline.

The Isle of Purbeck, on the coast of Southern England, is one of the richest and most diverse areas for nature conservation. There are several Natura 2000 sites on Purbeck covering calcareous grassland, coastal and marine habitats and lowland heath with rare species such as the dartford warbler, sand lizard and smooth snake.

The National Trust owns 3238 hectares of land on the Isle of Purbeck (8% of the area). The Trust owns 27 kms of the Dorset coast - one third of its length.

Within Dorset tourism accounts for 14% of the county’s annual income with 4 million overnight visitors and 16 million day visitors annually (4.3million of these to Purbeck). One in nine of county’s workforce is in tourism related employment. Purbeck is one of the most popular coastal tourist destinations and is close to the growing towns of Poole and Bournemouth.

Studland Beach, owned and managed by the Trust, is one of the most popular beaches on the south coast. It receives an estimated million visits a year. This figure is rising as winter visiting becomes more popular.

The Trust provides car parking for 1000 cars. The annual income from car parking fees is £190,000. Other income comes from the lettings of beach huts, retail sales and franchises comes to total of over £100,000. The annual cost of managing the beach is £175,000. The annual cost of nature conservation management in this area for the National Trust is currently £100,000.

Litter is a real problem on the beach. The Trust's overall policy is not to provide bins in the countryside. In the case of Studland litter bins are provided. It costs the Trust £30,000 per year dealing with the management of litter; money that could be better spent on conservation. An information and awareness campaign started in the last three years aims to reduce the scale of the problem and thereby reduce management costs. Visitors are encouraged to take their litter home and clear up after their dog. The information leaflet, handed out at the entrance to the car park, are changed annually so that it remains as fresh as many visitors return to the beach each year. This year a seasonal dog ban is also in place on the busiest section of the beach.

We have made some attempts to reduce packaging of food sold from our beach retail outlets - a switch from polystyrene cups to reusable pottery cups, but sadly many were never returned and so we have had to revert.

The range of outdoor recreational activities has increased in recent years: mountain bikes, jet skis, sailing, windsurfing. These require more space and management. Poole Harbour Commissioners have prepared a water recreation management plan for the harbour, which tackles the issue of zonal management and meeting the needs for nature conservation. The Harbour is a SPA.

Behind the beach is Studland National Nature Reserve - a cSAC. As specific paths are provided to the beach the impact of a million people on wildlife is minimal and localised. There is a trail round the reserve which is not heavily used in the summer - most people coming for sun, sea and sand. However winter walks through the dunes and on the beach are becoming increasingly popular. This is causing disturbance to birds for whom parts of beach are important roosting sites during high tide when the mudflats of Poole Harbour are under water.

Purbeck has a long history of field study. Two new education centres are being created by the Trust; one within the dunes to cater for students coming to study coastal management for a day and a residential centre housed in some redundant farm buildings elsewhere on the peninsula. These will provide new opportunities to raise environmental awareness amongst children and adults alike, which will include studying the management issues facing this part of the coast.

Heathland habitats have declined in Dorset by an estimated 80%-90% over the last 150 years. This is principally due to forestry, agricultural improvements and urbanisation.

Over the last ten years the Trust, along with English Nature, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Dorset Wildlife Trust and others have been undertaking a programme of restoration work, returning land improved for agriculture back to heathland. A new reclamation scheme on a farm at Studland is now possible with a change in farm tenant with a further 40 hectares reverting back to heath. Public awareness and understanding of this work is being achieved through:

- * an interpretive centre strategically located at one of the key road access points onto Purbeck;
- * the production of site information panels and leaflets to help visitors explore areas.

‘Keeping Purbeck Special’ is the title of a strategy prepared by the Purbeck Heritage Committee and published in 1995. The Committee is a partnership of local authorities, parish councils and other interested parties, including the National Trust. It has been in existence for 5 years. The strategy has been produced in consultation with the local community. It describes the important natural, cultural, historic and environmental qualities of the area, the pressures facing the environment and the issues to tackle. The key ones are:

- * land use and the rural economy
- * tourism, and
- * traffic

Traffic congestion is a serious issue during the summer. On a busy summer’s day there are regular 2 hour traffic jams to and from Studland Beach. Up to 1000 cars park during the summer on unofficial sites outside the designated car parks. This is a long running problem and requires considerable cooperation from the police to deal with congestion. The long term solution to this particular localised pressure is some way off as the road along the back of the beach is in private ownership and therefore not under the jurisdiction of the Highway Authority. However it should be able to be tackled within the context of the strategy and the longer term actions the National Trust might be able to negotiate.

The strategic aim for traffic is to:

‘enable people to enjoy moving around Purbeck safely and without harming the environment, through the development of an integrated transport approach encompassing improved management of road traffic and the provision of a wider choice of transport’.

This will involve:

- * minor road improvements;
- * innovative use of signing;
- * restrictions on the use of certain routes;
- * promotion and encouragement of park and ride;
- * better provision of alternative forms of transport other than the car, eg. More foot passengers using the ferry, promotion of the steam railway from Swanage.

Another useful forum is the Dorset Coast Forum. This is the vehicle for one of the EU LIFE coastal demonstration programmes. This project is developing a strategic management policy for the open coast of Dorset based on the principles of integration, subsidiarity and sustainability. Topic papers have been produced on a range of subjects dealing with coastal zone management issues such as coastal defence, marine aggregates, fisheries. This project is establishing new partnerships and approaches of tackling coastal zone management which will be of value to the European coastal ‘community’.

Challenges for the future. The examples I have briefly discussed indicate that through management, partnership and with adequate resourcing the needs of nature conservation can be met while retaining these areas for public enjoyment who wish to undertake wide variety of recreational activities.

The Isle of Purbeck is a fine example of how nature conservation and public access and enjoyment can be managed. In recent years the quality of the partnerships between many agencies and the local community has improved enormously. The importance of tourism to the local economy is significant and from the National Trust's point of view with the income generated from visitors is being used increasingly to maintain and extend the conservation value of the land in its care.

The key challenges are:

- * the need to tackle traffic management and congestion issues;
- * the opportunities provided, as a result of changes in farm tenancies and agricultural support, to maintain and extend heathland habitats in order to fulfill obligations under the Habitats and Birds Directives;
- * the need to strengthen partnerships, as a means of seeking innovative management solutions, which has the support and cooperation of the local community, local businesses, landowners and conservation agencies.

13 July 1998

LES DUNES COTIERES DU CIRCEO

Mr Salvatore Bellassai

La zone d'intervention des programmes LIFE est localisée sur un long tronçon de dunes côtières à l'intérieur du Parc National du Circeo dans la commune de Sabaudia.

Le Parc National du Circeo – établi en 1934 en même temps que la ville de Sabaudia – est situé dans la Province de Latina à 90 km de Rome.

Le parc comprend : 3 réserves intégrales ; environ 2000 hectares de zones humides d'intérêt international aux termes de la Convention de Ramsar. Il est classé « zone de protection spéciale ». Le territoire peut être subdivisé en forêt qui s'étend sur 3000 hectares, 4 lacs côtiers de 2200 hectares, la dune côtière d'origine quaternaire. Elle s'étend à peu près sur 25 km et sépare les lacs de la mer.

La dune arrive en quelques endroits à une hauteur de 25 mètres, elle a une largeur maximale de 70 mètres au sommet et environ 200 mètres à la base.

La dune est recouverte par une végétation souvent épaisse et quelques fois luxuriante.

Sur toute la crête de la dune il y a une route provinciale, large d'environ 10 m. en béton, peu fréquentée en hiver, bondée et souvent bouchonnée en été. La région est densément peuplée.

Le tourisme et l'agriculture intensive sont les deux ressources économiques les plus importantes. En été, des dizaines de milliers de touristes/baigneurs et des milliers de voitures « tombent » sur le littoral, surtout pendant le week end.

LES PROGRAMMES LIFE NATURA

Les programmes de protection et d'entretien de l'écosystème dunaire se sont déroulés à partir de 1992.

Les menaces les plus graves contre l'intégrité de la dune sont:

- la réduction ou même la disparition partielle de la végétation ;
- l'érosion éolienne ;
- le ruissellement des eaux hors de la chaussée ;
- l'excessive pression anthropique surtout lorsque les estivants piétinent la végétation. Les programmes LIFE ont permis l'élimination ou, au moins, la réduction des facteurs négatifs mentionnés ci-dessus, par les interventions suivantes :
- la mise en place de quelques milliers de mètres de « brise-vent » ;

- la mise en place de quelques milliers de mètres de barrières en bois aux pieds de la dune pour arrêter ou limiter l'érosion par les marées ;
- le reboisement de quelques hectares de dunes par la plantation d'essences végétales aptes à accélérer le processus de redistribution de la végétation ;
- le rétablissement de la capacité de drainage du sommet de la dune en ôtant le béton sur un tronçon déjà interdit à la circulation automobile.

Malheureusement, le programme LIFE '95 a rencontré des difficultés énormes pour des raisons qui n'ont rien à voir avec la complexité du programme en soi. Après deux ans d'efforts, il a dû être remodelé et réduit.

Au moment de la définition du programme, l'Administration Communale en charge avait proposé à la Communauté européenne de prévoir la fermeture complète, temporaire et expérimentale, à partir du 15 juin et jusqu'au 15 septembre, d'un tronçon d'environ 1750 mètres, entre deux carrefours très importants du point de vue de la circulation automobile et surtout à l'approche de la plage la plus proche de la route Lungomare.

Il fallait, en même temps, repérer des aires de parking proches des plages et mettre en oeuvre des moyens de transport (« navettes ») entre les parkings et la plage.

Le problème se manifestait pendant qu'une nouvelle administration entrait en fonction à la suite des élections communales et que la population venait d'être informée du contenu du « draft contract » qui devait être souscrit par la « nouvelle » administration, par des renseignements incomplets, partiels, factieux et surtout mensongers.

En d'autres mots, un problème « technique » (comme mettre en oeuvre une organisation efficace du trafic et du parking sur le littoral) devenait une question « politique » exploitée par tous les adversaires politiques de l'administration en charge : les « anciens » et les « nouveaux ». Sans compter l'inquiétude des catégories qu'on appelle « productives » (du ... buraliste au traiteur, à l'hôtelier, au boulanger ...) justement préoccupées par les rumeurs incontrôlables diffusées par des organismes et des associations surgissant tout à coup pour « défendre les intérêts sacrés de la communauté ».

Une espèce de comité de santé publique s'autonomait, en utilisant un slogan très efficace – « OUI À LIFE – NON A LA FERMETURE DE LA ROUTE »

Dans l'impossibilité d'approuver le programme dans son intégrité, l'administration a demandé alors à la C.E. de « remodeler » le programme en supprimant la fermeture expérimentale du tronçon de route.

Après discussions et négociations, le programme a enfin été modifié évidemment avec une réduction de la contribution communautaire.

- Du côté de l'administration, il ne serait pas prudent de s'engager dans un programme qui pourrait demander des sacrifices – réels ou imaginaires - à la communauté sans en avoir informé en détail et à l'avance la communauté elle-même.
- Dans notre cas, l'offre faite à la CE de la fermeture expérimentale d'un tronçon de la route Lungomare, était connue de presque personne. Les citoyens se sont sentis presque trompés.

- La mise en application d'un programme d'envergure devrait être précédée par une campagne d'information opportune, exhaustive, semblable à une campagne de publicité commerciale avec des techniques et des moyens les plus modernes. Même s'il ne faut pas oublier que parfois la parole, le débat, la discussion peuvent être très efficaces.
- Tous les organismes officiels (État, Région, Province) responsables ou seulement « impliqués » dans le programme doivent les supporter sans hésitation. Si je promets aux citoyens qu'un programme comme LIFE apportera des avantages concrets en termes d'argent, main d'oeuvre, etc., je ne peux pas accepter des délais de mois, sinon d'années, avant de recevoir les fonds destinés au programme. Chez nous, c'est presque la règle !
- Il faudrait beaucoup plus de compréhension du côté communautaire vis-à-vis des problèmes particuliers de chaque pays et des situations locales, même politiques. C'est facile à dire au Maire que la C.E. ne tient pas en compte les idées politiques de chaque administration parce que « nous avons un seul partenaire : l'État » (dans notre cas l'Italie). L'état est bien loin d'un Maire de centre-droite qui succède à 50 ans d'administration de centre-gauche qui soutenait des idées et des programmes tout à fait différents !
- Il faut bien tenir en compte les situations locales et éviter – si possible – de forcer la main aux administrateurs qui se trouvent 'on the spot' et peuvent juger la situation locale mieux qu'à Bruxelles. Je dois reconnaître qu'en quelques occasions pendant que je me battais pour pousser le programme, quelques cadres à Bruxelles me considéraient l'ennemi à soumettre et à forcer à la signature d'un contrat que l'opinion publique locale refusait absolument ...à ce moment là.

Un peu plus de confiance dans les administrateurs locaux pourrait parfois soulever à nouveau le destin d'un programme qui semblait compromis à jamais. Certaines fois c'est arrivé, d'autres pas.

Gen. Salvatore Armando Bellassai

Tourism

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Fernando Prats Palazuelo

Rapporteur: Herbert Hamele

1. Tourism is causing significant economic benefits and cultural and environmental impacts. Tourism should be incorporated in the development of Natura 2000 sites towards long termed sustainability. That means: improving compatibility with the local/regional economic, social and environmental requirements. (*e.g. Isle of Purbeck*)

2. Especially in fragile areas, tourism can strongly determine the future of the whole zone:

- by provoking transformations in other economic sectors (farming, handcrafts, services, etc.)
- by affecting all parts of the territory (places of interest)
- by extending its long termed influence
(*e.g. Circeo*)

3. Acting carefully is better than re-acting on negative impacts. Natura 2000 sites need a strategy of prevention with strong use of the instruments of planning and management (e.g. use of GIS), training and education, also because of the estimated growth of tourism within next two decades esp. in natural sites. (*e.g. New Forest, Isle of Purbeck*)

4. To integrate tourism in the (desired) sustainable development of Natura 2000 sites it can be necessary to introduce significant changes in traditional politics. This is not possible without convincing local actors and people that such change is desirable (change of values). The arguments have to fit to their specific objectives (income, jobs, multiplier, reduction of negative impacts, etc.). So the involvement and discussion with people and different interests from the first moment is the base and key factor for long termed success (principle of participation). (*e.g. New Forest, Circeo*)

5. Tourism in Natura 2000 sites should be enabled to and can contribute to main objectives:

- preservation of the eco-system and biodiversity
- overall local economy development
- quality of life for the population
- satisfaction of tourists

(*e.g. Isle of Purbeck, Charter for Parks*)

6. The benefits and charges caused by tourism have to be shared with equity among all actors: between the actors who directly deal with and manage tourism (tour operators, hotels, campgrounds, restaurants, transport and leisure businesses, tour guides, etc.) and the actors who maintain the cultural and natural values of the whole area (farmers, public services, etc.). (*e.g. New Forest*)

7. Considering the economic level of the EU countries and the benefits available from tourism, financial resources are not a real problem. It is mainly the question of setting priorities how to invest the money. A common and strong vision of local (and global) development is the best base for the effective use of the different instruments including planning, legislation, financing, concertation (private and public sector), monitoring, information (incl. examples of good practise) and marketing (incl. labeling, quality control). (*e.g. New Forest, Isle of Purbeck*)

HUNTING FOR GAME SPECIES

MANAGING HUNTING IN DANISH WETLAND SPAS

Jesper Madsen and Preben Clausen, Ministry of Environment and Energy, National Environmental Research Institute, Department of Coastal Zone Ecology, Kalø, DK-8410 Rønde, Denmark

As part of the revision of the Danish Hunting and Wildlife Management Act, 1992, the parliament decided to establish a network of reserves for migratory and wintering waterbirds by creation and extension of 73 reserves in 46 wetland SPAs, to be implemented by the Forest and Nature Agency during 1993-2000. Proposals for each of the reserves were developed through local consultations between the Danish Hunters' Association, the Danish Ornithological Society and the Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature.

An overall, biologically-based strategy for a reserve network in Denmark, as a basis for sustainable development of wetlands for migratory and wintering waterfowl, was developed by the National Environmental Research Institute. As well as securing the future for vulnerable populations, the reserve network should improve conditions for waterfowl staging and wintering in Denmark. The groups potentially most exposed to disturbance from hunting and other leisure activities, i.e. in greatest need of a reserve network, are the geese and the dabbling and small diving ducks. Swans, sea ducks, sawbills and coots have less need for such a network. On this basis, deficiencies in the existing system of reserves were identified.

According to the overall strategy, human recreational activities are considered compatible with sustainable development in SPAs if the use by waterfowl is primarily limited by available food resources. Within each of the principal Danish waterfowl migration routes and wintering areas identified, there should be a network of reserves which provides adequate opportunities for the birds to feed and rest.

The proposed network will amount to a total disturbance-free refuge area of c. 650 km², representing almost a doubling of the refuge area in Denmark. The disturbance-free area

will be supplemented by c. 870 km² with regulation of certain recreational activities or certain hunting methods. Once the new network is fully implemented, 12% of the total wetland SPA area designated to protect migratory waterbirds (9037 km²) will be refuge area and further 25% will have restrictions on some hunting methods or highly disturbing recreational activities.

The new network is expected to result in a considerable increase in the local and national numbers of dabbling ducks and geese, with the potential of holding back substantial parts of some populations at a more northerly position on their flyways than before. In the SPAs, greater species diversity will be achieved. The area available for hunting in SPAs will be reduced but hunting opportunities outside refuges could be expected to improve because the numbers of birds there will also increase. In waterbird populations primarily limited by their winter resources, the network may lead to population increases through improved survival.

For each reserve to be established, the Forest and Nature Agency sets up a local user group with the mandate to give advice on reserve boundaries, zonations and regulations. If local consensus can be reached, a revised reserve proposal is prepared, which is then presented for public hearing. In case that consensus cannot be reached, the Forest and Nature Agency drafts a proposal subject to public hearing and negotiation in the Reserves Committee of the National Wildlife Management Council. The final proposal is submitted to the Minister of Environment and Energy for signature. Once a reserve is established, the local user group meets annually with the Forest and Nature Agency to give feed-back on the functioning of the reserve.

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HUNTING AND HABITAT CONSERVATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dr. Yves LECOCQ

(F.A.C.E., Rue F. Pelletier, 82 - B-1030 BRUSSELS)

Earlier this year IUCN's *European Sustainable Use Specialist Group* already examined a number of case studies in order to identify and to evaluate the principles and elements of management which contribute to enhancing sustainability of uses of wildlife and ecosystems. As *co-ordinator* of its Subgroup "*Use of Wild Fauna*", I have identified or selected four case studies presented by Group members and added one more study which elaborates further on one of them, as they are all relevant to this Conference's topic, namely the importance of local actors or stakeholders to the success of *Natura 2000*.

- ❶ Because of a total lack of management for several decades, a relatively small (13 ha) but ecologically valuable wetland (eutrophic bog) in the Authie Valley, Pas-de-Calais (F), had degraded considerably: overgrown by vegetation, it was gradually turning into a dryland site, further threatened by complete drainage for farming purposes.

In 1959 the site was bought by a person (in competition with someone who intended to turn it into farmland for cereals) whose main objective was to create a suitable habitat for snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*, *G. media*, *Lymnocyptes minimus*) but also for snipe hunting.

A costly private restoration was undertaken following a strict habitat management plan. This resulted in most of the marshland's original fauna (invertebrates, amphibians, birds, ...) and hydrophile flora being restored.

This private landowner has guaranteed the integrity and identity of the site by way of a testamentary will for two generations. The site has in the meantime been classified as a *Special Protection Area* and is listed in the national *Natura 2000* inventory. The bog now hosts several hundreds of snipe during post and pre-breeding migration.

Snipe hunting takes place for a period of 11 weeks, ending on the 11. November, and for a maximum of 3 hours, 2 days a week. No other hunting is practiced on the site (OLIVIER/ESUSG, 1998).

- ▲ Lindisfarne, situated on the Northumberland Coast (N.E. England), extends to approx. 3,550 ha. Designated a Ramsar site and a *Special Protection Area* under the EU "Birds" Directive, it is of international importance, in particular for migrating and wintering waterfowl.

In 1964 it was declared a *National Nature Reserve* due to concerns expressed by local wildfowling and conservationists over unmanaged shooting pressure, and *English Nature* acquired management control over the area.

The immediate management aims were to develop a strategy for wildfowling that would allow for the sustainable use of waterfowl while attempting to optimize conditions for wildlife.

Following discussion between local wildfowling, the *British Association for Shooting and Conservation* (BASC) and *English Nature*, a refuge location was chosen, covering 40% of the previous shooting area. The key to the success of the refuge experiment was to ensure that local stakeholders, i.e. the wildfowling community, were fully involved and had confidence in the data-gathering process.

Since 1993, the Lindisfarne wildfowling also manage a wildfowling permit scheme. This ensures that numbers of wildfowling using the area do not exceed appropriate levels and that irresponsible individuals are disqualified from holding a permit.

They have also made the annual Habitat Conservation Stamp of the UK-*Wildlife Habitat Trust* compulsory for all permit holders. To date, this Trust has contributed several thousand pounds to habitat conservation at Lindisfarne - notably towards a programme to promote the waterfowl food source (*Zostera*) by eliminating invasive grass (*Spartina*) (LAWS/ESUSG, 1998).

- ▼ The Ribble estuary - at 12,000 hectares one of the largest estuaries in the UK - lies within the Liverpool Bay area (N.W. England).

In 1980, BASC took the initiative with three local waterfowl hunting clubs to establish the Ribble Estuary Wildfowl Liaison Committee, bringing together wildfowling, conservation organisations, local authorities and other relevant agencies, to exchange views and information and to encourage integrated management of the estuary.

It has proved possible to coordinate further land acquisitions, both by *English Nature* and by local waterfowl hunting clubs (with the financial support of the *Wildlife Habitat Trust*). The areas bought by the hunters were brought into the *National Nature Reserve*. This was a milestone in integrated coastal management: the first example of a local recreational group owning and managing land within an NNR.

Today, most of the Ribble estuary is under closely-coordinated management. This has resulted in a significant increase of wildfowl and waders (from 20,000 to 200,000 over the last 18 years) (LAWS, 1997).

- ☉ With 176,000 hunters in a total population of 5.1 million, Denmark has one of the highest densities of hunters (4%) in the EU.

Game populations are generally stable or increasing, indicating that harvest through hunting is sustainable. Hunting and game management is considered an important incentive for conserving, restoring or creating suitable habitats for game species, in particular on farmland. It is also beneficial to many non-game species, contributing in this way to improved biodiversity.

Investigation by the *National Forest and Nature Agency* (SONDERGAARD & KOCH, 1987) on the use of “marginal” land preferred by farmers, in relation to set-aside programmes, showed that game conservation scored very high - in fact as high as the profitable planting of Christmas trees.

Research by the University of Roskilde (AGGER *et al.*, 1986) confirmed that hunting was the most important impetus for the conservation of small “natural” habitats by farmers on their land.

- ⑤ Surveys and research by The Game Conservancy Trust in the UK have found out more about the real value of hunting and shooting in conservation terms.

For a majority of British landowners, game interests were the second most important reason for retaining existing woodland features as well as for planting new woods (the first one was to maintain beauty in the landscape). Woods, managed for gamebirds (pheasants), have an increased structural diversity which benefits many other wildlife species. That landowners and managers promote small woodlands for pheasant shooting also has direct conservation benefits; small woods (0.5-2 ha) contain significantly higher densities of songbirds than larger ones, for instance.

It was also shown that woodland management intended to benefit pheasants in winter results in better habitats for many woodland butterflies during the summer. Such active management also appears to increase or at least maintain the number of flowering plants and overall plant species diversity.

In cereal fields, the effects of game management on overall biodiversity were even more spectacular. By adopting the use of conservation headlands (where pesticide applications to crop margins are reduced, and 6m strips incorporated around the perimeter of cereal fields), it has been possible to almost double the survival of gamebird chicks - both grey partridge and pheasant - compared to normal sprayed areas.

But other forms of farmland wildlife - songbirds, butterflies, rare arable weeds ... - also benefit from these selectively sprayed headlands (HILL & ROBERTSON, 1988; HUDSON & RANDS, 1988; POTTS, 1986, etc.).

At least 90% of Europe's natural and semi-natural areas are used, among other things for recreational angling and hunting. 20 million men and women are involved in these activities, and do so while conforming to the needs of nature conservation. They are also prepared to invest time, money and effort conserving the wildlife and habitats on which their activities depend.

It is unfortunate that some sectors of the conservation movement have been unable or unwilling to recognize this positive role of hunting. Hunters are carrying out a large number of conservation initiatives all over Europe, principally to boost wild game species but it is simply not possible to separate this from conservation in its purest sense. Whole ecosystems benefit from their investment of time, money and effort. Many of the *Natura 2000* sites would be considerably less valuable without the contribution of the hunting community, a community who has been disturbed by the alleged possibility of the banning of their activities, however responsibly followed.

The fear of seeing hunting activity outlawed by the establishment of the *Natura 2000* network has also engendered misinformation, and lack of awareness of the real legal implications of the FFH Directive.

A clearer position by the EU institutions is needed to allay current fears among countryside-users and to promote a better understanding of the objectives of *Natura 2000*. The Commission should state clearly that hunting is only to be banned from *Natura 2000* sites (or anywhere else for that matter) if it is proved that it has a significant adverse effect upon species conservation and the environment.

CONSERVATION OF LIMINGANLAHTI WETLAND

Mr Jorma Pessa

Project area

The bay of Liminganlahti is one of the most important wetlands in Finland. It is located in central Finland at the eastern coast of Bothnian bay. The size of proposed Natura 2000 area is about 13,500 hectares, mostly open shallow water. The importance of the area is based on the diverse biotopes e.g. emergent reed stands, large low growing meadows, large willow thickets, young deciduous forests and shallow water.

The bay of Liminganlahti is also one of the most popular waterfowl hunting site in Finland. 2000 people, half of which are hunting with bought visitor hunting licences, are hunting waterfowls in the area each autumn.

Drainage of the meadows, clearing of the fields, building, eutrophication and the changes in agriculture has been changed the biotopes and landscape since 1950s.

Life-Nature project as general

The project has two main aims. The first one is to protect the natural values by integrating nature protection, biotope management, hunting and other land use modes in a way compatible with sustainable development. The second aim is to join the project area to the Natura 2000 conservation area network.

The LIFE-project has been divided to three sections: nature conservation, biotope management and environmental awareness raising. All the actions have been done in Co-operation with the local people. The corner stones of the work have been information sharing, negotiations and detailed land use planning.

Conservation aims and solutions

The project has been based on the work of five local working groups where private landowners, municipalities, local hunters associations, game district, fishermen's associations, ornithological societies and NGO nature conservationists have had representatives. These working groups have prepared management and conservation plans. The opinions and aims have varied a lot: hunters have demanded that shooting should be allowed also in future in Liminganlahti, however, some protection areas where hunting will be forbidden have been accepted. Nature conservationists have argued that the best way to protect the nature values is to stop shooting in the whole area. Other organisations have had more arbitrated opinions.

Regional environment centre has been negotiated with landowners and has been shared information concerning protection needs and impacts of hunting restrictions. Two big landowners (group of holdings for redistribution) have made an application to designate a nature reserve and the regional environment centre has made the designation decision. The established protection area is 771 hectares (7 % of the proposed Natura 2000 site).

Hunters associations have accepted this solution and furthermore they have designated an other voluntary game preserve where hunting will be forbidden. The area is 1,050 hectares (9 % of the proposed Natura 2000 site).

Biotope management is a part of nature conservation. Many vulnerable bird and plant species need active management measures. All interest groups have considered biotope management as an essential part of the project. The simultaneous planning of biotope management and designation of the nature reserves have made nature conservation demands easier to accept by the local people.

Co-ordinated action between ERDF project and LIFE

The structures e.g. visitor centre, five birdwatching towers, nature tracks, fire places, cottages for resting and eating has been built by the ERDF project *Management of Liminganlahti*. Co-ordination in planning has been made between ERDF project and LIFE. The structures are situated near the good birdwatching areas so that the people using these facilities do not disturb birds or cause damages to vegetation. Conducted tourism and hiking is also necessary when hiding problems between the land owners and tourists. The co-ordinated and simultaneous actions of ERDF project and LIFE have made nature conservation demands easier to accept by the local people.

Co-ordinated action between agriculture and LIFE

Traditional land use modes e.g. cattle grazing and mowing in coastal meadows has shaped the landscape former. This way of life almost stopped in 1950s and the biotopes start changing rapidly. The aim of the LIFE-project was re-establishing and managing of the former low-growing meadows. Wide reed dominated areas have been mowed with special machines by LIFE support. However, the most suitable managing method is cattle grazing. Co-ordination between the farmers and LIFE has been made when planning and establishing pastures to the coastal meadows in the project area. Most farmers have got 2078-support to the pastures.

Sustainable development plans

The aim of the work of the local working groups, the steering committee and the staff of the project has been a preparation of sustainable development plans. The final plan, where regional plans have been combined, includes protection areas, game preserves, biotope management areas, areas suitable for nature tourism, bird watching towers and nature tracks and the all other limitations concerning land use in the site itself and surrounding areas. The opinions of the interest groups has been put together in the plan. The sustainable development plan is widely accepted and it will be a base when using the area in future.

GESTION DE LA CHASSE DANS LA ZONE DE PROTECTION SPECIALE ‘EL HONDO’, ESPAGNE.

Emilio Laguna

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INTRODUCTION

‘El Hondo’, est une zone humide d’une surface de 1.600 hectares, situé au centre de la province d’Alicante (Communauté de Valence). Elle a été désignée Zone de Protection Spéciale, dans le cadre de la Directive 79/409/CEE et classée Site Ramsar. El Hondo est depuis 1988 un Parc Naturel, d’une surface de 2.378 hectares

‘El Hondo’ est un écosystème artificiel, créé par l’homme pour la rétention d’eau d’irrigation sur un ancien groupe de lagunes desséchées pendant le XVIII Siècle. Le site est presque totalement privé, ce qui pose des problèmes de gestion tout à fait particuliers.

La Commission Européenne a cofinancé deux programmes LIFE-Nature, dont les objectifs sont la gestion et la conservation de ce site et de ses espèces les plus représentatives.

DONNÉS SUR LES POPULATIONS D’OISEAUX ET SUR L’ACTIVITÉ DE CHASSE.

La population d’oiseaux de El Hondo surpasse les 50.000 exemplaires, de 200 espèces différentes. ‘El Hondo’ a quelques unes des populations européennes les plus importantes de trois espèces globalement menacées: *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, *Oxyura leucocephala* et *Fulica cristata*, incluses dans l’annexe I de la Directive Oiseaux. L’espèce la plus importante du point de vue de la conservation est sans doute *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, car 75% de la population espagnole y habite.

La chasse des oiseaux aquatiques –la plupart migratoires –, est une activité traditionnelle pratiqué a ‘El Hondo’ dans 7 chasses-privées, dont la surface atteint 2071 hectares (87% du Parc Naturel). Dans les années 60, plus de 30.000 oiseaux étaient tués annuellement, par un nombre variable de 400 à 500 chasseurs; pendant les dernières années, l’administration régionale a limité progressivement le nombre de chasseurs, les jours de chasse et les espèces permises; aujourd’hui, le nombre maximum autorisé est de 239 chasseurs pendant 12 jours par an. On ne peut chasser que 12 espèces, dont la population moyenne annuelle pendant l’époque cynégétique (hiver) atteint 20.000 exemplaires –12.500 pour les anatidés - ; le nombre moyen actuel d’oiseaux chassés est de 6.550 exemplaires/an. Les espèces gibier les plus abondantes sont *Anas clypeata*, *A.*

crecca, *A. penelope* et *A. platyrhynchos* parmi les anatidés, et *Fulica atra* parmi les rallidés.

La chasse provoque aussi d'autres problèmes importants pour la gestion de la faune, comme le saturnisme (la concentration actuelle est proche de 1.630.000 plombs par hectare, une des sites espagnols à plus hauts risques) et les dérangements produits pour les aménagement liés à la chasse, aussi bien les pratiques traditionnelles (par exemple, le contrôle de la végétation par le feu) ou d'autres plus récentes (par exemple, l'apport d'alimentation supplémentaire).

MÉTHODES DE GESTION

En ce qui concerne la gestion cynégétique, deux différentes phases peuvent être mentionnées. En premier lieu, le contrôle direct de la chasse sans l'existence d'un plan global d'aménagement ; dans une seconde phase, l'application d'un plan de gestion *sensu stricto*. La première phase est composée d'une série de restrictions successives, prises pendant les dernières années:

- réduction progressive du nombre de chasseurs et des jours de chasse (environ 25-30% pendant les 5 dernières années).

- limitation des zones de chasse et création de nouvelles zones de réserve. Aujourd'hui 31.18% de la surface de zone humide est constituée par zones de réserve, dont la plupart ont été créés par motifs légaux (p.ex., 100 m. obligatoires autour du périmètre de chaque chasse-privé) et pour la conservation des espèces cynégétiques. 3 nouvelles zones achetées par l'administration grâce au programme LIFE ont été classées comme réserve.

- retard du début de la chasse jusqu'au mois de novembre - à peu près 3 semaines plus tard que la reste des zones humides en Espagne -, une fois que la migration de *Marmaronetta* a commencé.

- limitation et même interdiction de la chasse s'il y a des facteurs biologiques ou physiques importants (sécheresses, inondations, épidémies, etc.)

La deuxième phase est la rédaction et approbation d'un plan de gestion cynégétique, coordonné pour les 7 chasses privées. Ce modèle est tout à fait différent de celui appliqué généralement en Espagne, étant donné que la Loi nationale 4/1989 et les développements régionaux indiquent que chasse privée doit avoir son propre plan de gestion. L'existence de plans coordonnateurs comme ce de El Hondo n'y est pas prévue.

Pour cette deuxième phase, deux étapes sont prévues:

- 1) Rédaction d'un plan standard, avec les opinions des chasseurs. Ce plan a été rédigé le 1997, et ses rédacteurs ont été M. Montoya et M.L. Mesón, qui sont considérés les plus importants spécialistes espagnols de ce type de travaux.

- 2) Élaboration du plan définitif, une fois le plan initial modifié par l'addition des avis des spécialistes des espèces d'oiseaux, des plans pour la conservation

des espèces menacées, et les rapports des techniciens de l'administration chargés de la gestion de la chasse. Quelques documents, comme le plan de restauration de *Marmaronetta angustirostris* (rédigé par J.D. Navarro-Medina avec la collaboration du Dr Andy Green, le plus prestigieux spécialiste de l'espèce) seront décisifs pour tenter de rendre compatibles l'activité cynégétique avec la conservation prioritaire des ressources naturelles locales. Cette version définitive du plan devrait être approuvée en 1999.

RÉSULTATS

Pendant les trois dernières années, le commencement de la chasse a été retardé jusqu'à janvier, étant donnée l'existence de certains facteurs limitants; par exemple, en 1997, une épidémie de botulisme a tué près de 3000 oiseaux entre septembre et décembre, en affectant gravement les populations de *Marmaronetta angustirostris*.

Les limitations appliquées, ainsi que la politique de compensation pour la gestion de l'eau des barrages aux niveaux les plus recommandables du point de vue de la gestion de la nature - le gouvernement de Valence réserve chaque an un budget de 80 à 120 millions de pesetas (500.000 à 750.000 ECU) pour ce type de compensation -, et l'application directe de mesures de conservation, ont favorisé l'augmentation de la population de *Marmaronetta angustirostris* et d'*Oxyura leucocephala*. De 1991 à 1997, la population de *Marmaronetta* est passé progressivement de 15 à 104 couples nicheurs; pour la même période, la population d'*Oxyura* a augmenté de 1 à 35 couples. La croissance est aussi notable pour autres espèces rares comme *Ixobrychus minutus* (jusqu'à 66 couples) ou *Phoenicopterus ruber* (495 couples ; reproduction avec succès pour la première fois de ce siècle en 1997).

Le plan rédigé –première étape- propose la réduction, déjà accordée avec les chasseurs, de 2868 journées de chasse (239 chasseurs x 12 jours) à 1656 (184 x 9), donc une réduction du 42,2% de la pression effective de la chasse. Cependant aucune modification significative des zones de réserve n'a été proposée; il faudra les adapter en fonction des facteurs biologiques –protection des lieux de concentration des oiseaux protégés et surtout de *Marmaronetta* et *Oxyura*- et pas seulement aux exigences législatives. Des statuts légaux (p.ex, le Refuge de Chasse, où toute forme d'activité cynégétique est interdite) pourront être utilisés.

Malheureusement, on ne peut pas dire encore qu'on soit arrivé aux niveaux de population optimales pour les oiseaux, ni que cette adaptation de l'activité cynégétique se soit faite grâce à un processus consensuel. La partie la plus importante de la concertation entre l'administration et les deux parties de la population locales confrontés - les chasseurs et les collectifs écologistes – reste à faire. Ces deux parties ont initié de fortes campagnes de mobilisation hors la région, avec l'intention logique de déstabiliser à leur faveur la décision finale de l'administration régionale. Tandis que certains essayent d'obtenir une prohibition totale de la chasse, les autres tentent d'avoir une liberté totale pour chasser. La gestion cynégétique proposée par l'administration compétente se base sur le besoin d'arriver à solutions consensuelles, qui permettent à la population locale de s'exprimer et de participer à la décision finale.

Game Hunting

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Palle Uhd Jepsen

Rapporteur: J.P. Taris

The workshop was attended by 43 people.

Four presentations representing practical experiences on site management, experimental research on disturbing activities on waterbird habitats, and monitoring and research stimulated the discussion and contributed in drafting of conclusions from the workshop.

1. Dr. Jesper Madsen, Senior Research Biologist, National Environmental Research Institute, Denmark: Management of hunting i Danish wetland SPA's.
2. Dr. Yves Lecocq, Secretary General, FACE: Hunting and conservation in the European Union.
3. Dr. Jorma Pessa, Site Manager, Finland: Management of hunting in Lminganlahti, Finland.
4. Dr. Emilio Laguna, Director of Conservation Region, Spain: Management of hunting on the El Hondo SPA, Alicante, Spain.

Re 1: Jesper Madsen presented an ongoing project on monitoring the effect of creation of wildlife reserves (hunting and disturbance free core zones) on Danish SPA's. Research within experimental reserves has shown a significant increase in waterbird populations, and the hunting possibilities outside refuge core zones has improved accordingly on some sites. The presentation informed about the establishment of user groups for each site in order to involve local interest groups in the decision and planning process. The Danish project could serve as an example for other European countries as management guidelines on Nature 2000 sites.

Re 2: Yves Lecocq identified five case studies relevant to the importance of local actors and stakeholders involvment on Nature 2000 sites. It was emphasised that at least 90% of Europe's natural and semi-natural areas are used for recreational fishing and hunting. Further, it was cleary stressed that there is a strong need to raise awareness and a better understanding of the objectives of Nature 2000, and it should be clearly stated that hunting should only be banned from Natura 2000 sites if it is proved that is has a significant adverse effect upon species, conservation and the environmet.

Re 3: Jorma Pessa described a sustainable use approach on a Finnish wetland (Liminganlahti) by using a voluntary hunting limitation model based on negotiations with landowners and hunters. The model included hunting free zones, reduction in numbers of hunters, regulation in time of hunting and compensation to landowners. The project is financed as a LIFE-Nature Project supported by ERDF and Agri-environmental arrangements. In conclusion the following benefits were mentioned: improved awareness, involvment of stakeholders including hunters and landowners.

Ad 4: Emilio Laguna presented management of hunting in a Spanish SPA and Ramsar site. A decreasing number of hunters and the shortening of the hunting period have improved the site for waterbird species including three endangered species. It was concluded that the full effect of the scheme is not yet seen, but the development is promising. The project has a strong support from the local government and the EU (up to 750,000 ECU). The following phases will include the development of a coordinated management plan for the whole area and consultations between hunters and conservationists.

General findings

Hunters emphasised that there should be a presumption that hunting could take place in Natura 2000 sites unless it is demonstrated that this is incompatible with the conservation objectives.

For the Habitat Directive sites the reflection to date suggests that disturbance caused by game hunting is very unlikely to cause a problem except for a small number of species. For the Bird Directive sites the issue is more complex and requires more attention and site surveys.

Game hunting can provide incentive and resources for site management. The case studies (used in the workshop) demonstrated that there are a range of possible management techniques (e.g. creation of undisturbed zones, buffer zones and spatial regulations) which can provide significant benefits for the species as well as for hunters (the win-win scenario). However, the conservation requirements may result in the limitation of hunting activities.

The site based approach is largely recommended through the implementation of management plans as well as the development of guidelines for management of species. In this, action plans for hunted species are also a valuable tool, and should comply with site conservation and management. For waterbird species this could be done as a more general approach through the Eurasian-African Waterbird Agreement under the Bonn Convention in order to develop management plans for species or groups of species.

Conclusions

The workshop recognised that hunting is a legitimate activity under the Bird and Habitat Directives and that it was not, *a priori*, to be excluded from Nature 2000 sites. However, hunting should be included in an overall management planning framework.

It further recognised that sustainable hunting should be considered as a possible management option in nature conservation.

The workshop concluded:

1. that it is necessary to involve stakeholders (local users including hunters, landowners and local authorities) in the planning and decision-making process, to respect local peoples knowledge of “their sites”, and to recognise the fact that without local acceptance and understanding of a nature conservation and management scheme it may fail in the longer term.
2. that hunters must play an important role in developing new management schemes on Natura 2000 sites.
3. that true partnership approach includes dual objectives of both 1) maintaining or improving conservation and ecological value for wildlife (safe roosting/feeding/breeding); and 2) maintaining or improving hunting possibilities.

4. that, when they are appropriate, the location of refuges should as far as possible, be based on data collected jointly by biologists and hunters trained in monitoring wildlife.
5. that dual success criteria should be developed for conservation and game hunting.
6. that conservation schemes should be subject to regular review.
7. that the process with participation of local stakeholders including hunters is helping to ensure success and commitment of extra management resources.
8. that information on Natura 2000 sites should be issued in a popular version.

Further there is a strong need to strengthen the dialogue and the exchange of ideas between the different sectors concerned if possible by the establishment of an ad hoc working group and to provide logistical support for such a group to function. The terms of reference for the group should focus on site management planning for nature conservation and hunting on Natura 2000 sites.

AGRICULTURE

PROJECT FOR THE "PRESERVATION AND INTEGRAL MANAGEMENT OF THE GREAT BUSTARD (*OTIS TARDA*) HABITAT IN THE SPA OF VILLAFÁFILA IN ZAMORA, SPAIN" AND OTHER AGRI- ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES IN THE SAME FIELD.

This presentation refers to two programmes of agri-environmental measures that are presently taking place in the SPA of Lagunas de Villafafila (Spain). The Programmes are the following.

-Project LIFE - NAT - B4 - 32001506. (which is specifically for **the SPA** of Villafáfila)

-Programme of Cerealian Steppes in Castilla. y León.(Spain), Reg.207811992.

(which applies to more than one million hectares in Castilla y León, not only in Villafáfila)

The **Project LIFE - NAT - B4 - 32001506** called "Preservation and integral management of the, Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) habitat in the SPA of Villafáfila

Zamora, Spain was approved in the year 1996. The total amount of the approved project was 70,000,000 ptas., 75 % was provided by the European Union and the remaining 25 % by the Junta de Castilla, y Leon.

The project is located in the Natural Reserve of Lagunas de Villafáfila (Spain). This Reserve was officially established in 1986 by the Junta de Castilla y León in the cerealiain pseudosteppe in the Tierra de Campos district. It covers more than 32,000 hectares. It was classified as SPA in 1987 and today it has the world's largest concentration of Great Bustards, 2,270 of them were counted in March of 1998. In this Reserve, you can also find a complex of saline lagoons which is included in the International Convention of Wet Zones of Ramsar". These lagoons house large concentrations of aquatic birds and in particular we must highlight the Graylag Goose (*Anser anser*) with more than 35,000 in January 1998.

The main objective of this Life project is the acquisition of lands in the Reserve to help with the preservation of the Great Bustard and its habitat in the Natural Reserve Zone, lessening the present main threat for the species in the area. The principle danger to the Great Bustard in this area is the decrease in the quantity of land used for the growing of dry land lucerne (***medicago sativa***), This leguminous plant has become an unprofitable crop compared with those which have been subsidised by the CAP in the last years. This project tries to guarantee a minimum of land in which dry land Lucerne is grown. distributed in the places which are preferred by the Great Bustard. This area of land is estimated to be about 8 % of the total area of the Reserve. The fulfilment of this goal will be achieved by the acquisition of certain plots of farm land which will be paid by the grant. Once the fields are acquired, the restoration of dry land Lucia must be carried out in the arm where it has been deteriorated. Also the dry land lucerne is implanted in other zones where there is a high density of Great Bustards.

In order for the Life Project to reach its objectives there are three multidisciplinary teams working together in the following ways;

-Team No. 1, This team is made up of three technicians (2 Forestry Engineers and 1 Biologist) from the Natural Environment and Protected Species of Zamora in Castilla y León. These technicians have several important tasks. They provide the instructions for the project transactions, co-ordinate the different teams working on the project, carry out administrative work, co-ordinate the relationship with other departments and the relationship between the local actors and the Junta de Castilla y León. There are also 8 gamekeepers on the Reserve that assist this team.

-Team No.2, This is the biological team and is made up of two Biologist whose tasks are the following;

- *Give lectures to children in schools in the Reserve and surroundings.
- *Give public Awareness chats to the local actors (Town officials, farmers and members of agriculture and Cattle associations) about the main aspects of the Life Project.
- *Create pamphlets (5,000) and stickers and distribute them to the local actors,
- *Carry out the census of the Great Bustard on the Reserve.
- *Determine how the Great Bustard uses the Reserve of Lagunas de Villafáfila habitat.
- *Biological evaluation of the plots of land localised by an Agricultural expert (team No. 3) which are appropriate for the Great bustard,
- *Observe other biological evaluations of the interactions between the Great Bustard and its habitat in the Reserve.

-Team No.3. This team is made up of an Agricultural Engineer whose principal tasks are the following.

- *Agronomic evaluation of the plots.
- *Pre-contract conversations with the local actors (farmers) about the possible buying of plots,
- *Take inventory of the cultivated dry land lucerne in the Reserve.
- *Set the final price of the plots with the farmers.
- *Obtain the necessary documents for the land acquisition from the

farmers.

*Once the land is acquired, this team will advise to Junta de Castilla y León on the cultivation of dry land lucerne and any posterior management,

In order to co-ordinate the actions taken and to check the progress of the Project, the three teams meet once a month.

Up to the moment, all of the plans for the Life programme of Villafáfila have been successful. This project started in January of 1997, with the objective of acquiring 100 hectares of land in the Reserve. The duration of this project is 48 months. During the first 17 months of carrying out these activities, 35 % of the objective plots have already been acquired. Another 20 % of the plots are waiting payment and another 16 % of plots are in advanced negotiations.

Even though it still too early to judge the results of this LIFE project, we can come to the following conclusions:

-During the first 6 months, teams No.2 and 3 of the project kept an excellent communication with the local actors. The teams workers explained the *project* to the local actors and offered the possibility of selling the lands at a fair play.

-The agricultural team (No.3) has been fundamental to the success of the project. This team has negotiated with the land owners in the towns on the Reserve. The door to door negotiations and special attention, has been highly valued by the local actors. This has been an asset to the credibility of the project.

-The farmers, at an early stage, took the project seriously because of the speedy payments of the acquired plots by the Junta de Castilla y Leon. The news spread quickly among the local actors.

-The farmers have moved towards offering their plots of land because of the fair prices that have been paid for them,

It is very important that this third team fulfils the job of solving all the possible problems that proprietors can have with the documents necessary for selling their plots.

-Until now the Junta de Castilla y León management for the Great Bustard has been on the farmlands of the local actors (almost 100% of the fields are private), From this moment on the actions taken for the management of the Great Bustard habitat have begun in the Regional Government property, thanks to the fields provided by the Project Life. Furthermore the damages caused by the Great Bustard to the farmers fields will decrease.

The Programme of Cerealian Steppes in Castilla Y León (now in its second stage) has its origins in the Zone Programme approved in 1992 by the European Union (Regns 2078/1992 and 6075/1992). This zone programme came into force in Castilla y León in the year 1993 and its aim was to provide farmers with grants. These farmers had to be willing to cooperate in the development of agricultural methods which tended to the need of environment protection of the Cerealian steppes in Castilla y Leon. This programme applies to more than 1,000,000 hectares in Castilla y León.

During the first stage, from 1993-1998, it offered the farmers the possibility of choosing among four types of contracts with different criteria. Two of them were negotiated by the Agriculture and Cattle Breeding Council (Contracts No. 1 and No.2) and two others negotiated by the Environment and Zone Arrangement Council (Contracts No.3 and No.4).

This year (1998) the programme has been extended for another five years with some modifications. The more important modifications that have been introduced are the following:

- The number of types of contracts have been reduced to three (one of them negotiated by the Agriculture Council -Contract No. 1 - and two of them negotiated by the Environment Council -Contracts No.3 and 4-.)

- The dry land lucerne has been included in contract No.4 (It wasn't included before).

- The grant in the SPA of Villafáfila for the contract NO.4 is now 20 % more than in other places.

- In contract No.4 the land owners located it) the SPA of Villafáfila have priority over other land owners of others zones.

At this moment the available contracts are the following:

Contract No.1: (negotiated by the Agriculture and Cattle Breeding Council). Length-, 5 years.

It must include whole exploitation. Compatible with CAP grants.

Farmers are not allowed to burn stubble nor harvest at night. Farmers must harvest after the 10 th of July.

Fallow land and pasture must be a minimum of 44 % of the area and 10 % must be destined to leguminous land,

The general grant is about 10,000 ptas per hectare. The pasture grant is about 27,000 ptas per hectare.

Contract No.3: (negotiated by the Environment Council

Abandonment of land for 20 years or transfer of land to the Environment Council for sowing.

Intended for each farm and not compatible with any other &ant. Pasturing is not allowed from February to August.

The grant is about 23,000 ptas per hectare.

Contract No.4.. (negotiated by the Environment Council

- Length: 5 years,

- Intended for each farm and not compatible with any other grant.

- CertEd genetic varieties, which are now disappearing, must be sown

- Some of the points coincide with those of contract number one,
- A grant of 41,300 ptas per hectare. (For SPA of Villafáfila, 20% more).

In order to better understand the roles of both programmes (Life and Reg. 2078) on the SPA of Villafáfila you have to bear in mind the following:

- The SPA of Villafáfila has the largest density of Great Bustard in the world; on the Reserve alone there is almost 10% of the world's population.
- The initial programme of the Cerealian steppes of Castilla y León (Reg. 2078) did not take into account in any contracts the cultivation of dry land lucerne (essential for the Great Bustard in Villafáfila). For this reason the Life project is so important,
- The cerealian steppes programme of Castilla y León applies to more than one million hectares. The Life project concentrates only on the SPA of Villafáfila.
- The Reg. 2078 can change its objectives in the future and not subsidise any actions. The plots of land acquired by the Life of Villafáfila project allows for the appropriate management of the Great Bustard habitat, independent of the possible CAP variations.
- The existence of both EU programmes for the protection of the cerealian steppes in the SPA of Villafáfila, canalises a large amount of economic funds towards the local actors. This canalisation could decrease the risk of carrying out large projects of transformation, These large projects (such as plans for irrigation) would terminate the cerealian steppes and its special and unique fauna.
- Both, the Life Project and the Reg. 2078 programmes, compliment each other in the protection of the Great Bustard and other steppe birds in the SPA of Villafáfila. The existence of both projects make the local actors feel important, The local actors understand that this is the most important area in the world for the Great Bustard. for ibis reason they give positive appraisal to the support of the Environment and Agriculture authorities (of Regional Government of Castilla y León and of the EU).

To conclude my presentation, I would like to say that currently there is a clear need to financially support the conservation project with major funds above all structural funds. The object is to maintain and increase the current levels of conservation of the habitat and species. The co-finance of these actions taken with the administrations of EU countries, in article 8 of the Directive Habitat. Conservation, requires agn-environmental measures with strong support and sufficient funds to continue with conservation projects. Those projects should have the possibility to include the buying of land, gamekeeper salaries and the restoration of 'habitats among other things,

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BIOTOPE RESTORATION WITH THE REGULATION 2078/92 IN THE EMILIA-ROMAGNA REGION

Gianfranco De Geronimo & Roberto Tinarelli

Up to the period 1996-97 the expenditure for the Agri-environment Regional Schemes programme, which applies the Regulation (EEC) No 2078/92 in Emilia-Romagna, was 27.362.918 ECU. About 16 % of the expenditure was used to finance the measures D1 and F1 which foresee the conservation and the restoration of habitats for wild flora and fauna with particular attention for species reported by Directives 92/43 and 79/409.

The measure D1, lasting 5 years, has been applied to 2,540 hectares and is aimed at the conservation and/or the restoration of natural and semi-natural habitats and features of the agri-ecosystem.

The measure F1, lasting 20 years, has been applied to 3,465 hectares and is aimed at the establishment of habitats for survival and reproduction of wild flora and fauna. The measure F1 in particular has already given good results from the ecological point of view; up to the period 1997-1998 the following have been created:

1,300 hectares of permanent wetlands allowing the presence of many waterfowl species, amphibians, reptiles as *Emys orbicularis*, typical emergent and submerged vegetation;

880 hectares of marshy meadows where meadows and ponds flooded at least for 6 months every year and on 50 % of their surface allowing the presence of habitat particularly appreciated by geese and waders both breeding and migrants as Black-winged Stilt, Ruff, Green Sandpiper, Golden Plover and Lapwing;

1,285 hectares of permanent meadows with scrub patches set in rows or like the spots on a leopard. In this kind of habitat, as in restored wetlands, the management of vegetation may be carried out only after 1 August until 28 February to permit the breeding success of bird species as Montagu's Harrier and Skylark.

The measures D1 and F1 have been applied mainly on the plain where suitable habitats for wild flora and fauna were very scarce. The creation ex novo on the plain of 1,500 hectares of hedges, small woods and ponds, 2,180 hectares of permanent wetlands and marshy meadows and 381 hectares of permanent meadows with scrub patches allowed the establishment and the increase of ecological networks and the acquisition by farmers of knowledge about suitable and better methods to create and manage habitat for wild flora and fauna.

Concerning the Sites of Community Interest (SCI) proposed by the General Directorate of Environment of the Region Emilia-Romagna, measures D1 and F1

have been applied to about 706 hectares in 9 SCI located in the Po plain allowing the conservation and the increase of habitats and species, some of them of Community interest. The latter has been verified by a regional monitoring programme started in 1996 and aimed to assess the environmental effects, in particular on animal species, following the application of the EEC Regulation No 2078/92. Birds resulted the first and the most important animal class among those supported by wetland restoration. The monitoring programme played also an important role in the adjustment of management specifications given to the farmers.

Moreover the wetland restoration with the measure F1 has often led to the presence of species, mainly birds as Bittern and Whiskered Tern, of Community interest after only 1-2 years, with populations which should allow the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Areas with naturalistic, hydrologic and landscape protection, parks, protected areas and hunting reserves have been identified as preferential areas for the application of the measure F1 in Emilia-Romagna. About 90 % of the biotopes restored with the measure F1 are located in these kinds of areas. About 65 % of biotopes restored with measure F of the agri-environmental programme have been done in hunting reserve because National and Regional Laws foresee and encourage habitat restorations in hunting reserves.

At the moment both SCI and SPA are not included among the preferential areas for the application of the EEC Regulation No 2078/92 because their location occurred recently and after the application of the above mentioned Regulation.

It now seems necessary to define and coordinate as soon as possible the management plans of SCI and SPA in consideration of the commitments already taken on by the farmers with the application of measures D1 and F1 of the EEC Regulation No 2078/92.

RESTORING THE BIODIVERSITY OF STORA ALVARET (ÖLAND, SWEDEN)

The term "alvar" is used to refer to a type of habitat where hard limestone bedrock is covered by a thin layer of soil. Alvar habitats are found on the islands of Öland and Gotland, in the county of Västergötland and in Estonia. The alvar lands characteristically have a shallow and incomplete soil cover, fluctuating water availability, a harsh climate and, subsequently, a highly-specialised flora and fauna. The largest continuous area of alvar is called "Stora Alvaret" (The Great Alvar) and covers more than 25,000 hectares. Stora alvaret is by far the largest alvar in Europe.

The appearance of much of the present-day alvar vegetation is the result of agricultural activities such as grazing. The use of the alvar for grazing began in the early Stone Age. The grazing animals have created an open, steppe-like landscape. The grazing pressures have been fluctuating over the time. The human population of Öland increased rapidly during the 19th century and large areas of the alvar were heavily grazed and scrub was collected for fuel. Stora alvaret has never been as open as it was at the end of the 19th century. Nowadays, however, junipers (*Juniperus communis*) are spreading onto the deeper, drier soils whereas moister soils are being invaded by birch and shrubby cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*). Scrub-clearance and more widespread grazing are urgently needed to keep the alvar lands open.

Until 1994, year by year, new large areas were left without grazing. In the beginning of the nineties the Kalmar County Administration started negotiations with landowners for protection of parts of Stora alvaret. The first large Nature Conservation Areas were established in 1992. This did not stop the negative trend, so in 1994 the County Administration signed temporary grazing contracts with farmers who still had their livestock in alvarland.

Restoration of small parts of alvar in the Nature Conservation Areas started 1994-95. The following year the Life-project "Protection and restoration of Stora alvaret" started, which made it possible to erect fences around large pastures, to clear large areas and to inform all farmers about the high nature- and cultural values at Stora alvaret. The overall objective of the project is that 90 % of the areas within Stora alvaret that are the subject of this project will have become, by the year of 2000, well established grazing lands with habitats and species that are characteristic of the area. Species that are specific to Stora alvaret, most of which thrive on or are entirely dependent on grazing land habitats, will occur in viable populations.

Since 1996 there is an agri-environmental programme for Sweden, 50 % financed from European Commission. This is the main reason for farmers to let their livestock graze again at alvarland outside protected areas.

Stora alvaret is grazed primarily by cattle, horses or sheep. The levels and types of grazing pressure are settled in the management plan for each SCI site. The

objective is to find a level that ensures optimum conditions for the habitats and species for which the sites are designated. In autumn every year the farmers report the number of animals on alvarland and for how long they have been grazing during the summer. This in combination with monitoring concerning vegetation types, plants, insects, birds etc. makes it possible to change grazing regimes when needed.

There is desirable with more livestock in some areas, and a combination of cattle, horses and sheep in others. Information to and discussions with farmers continue. Temporary grazing contracts with farmers are signed in areas where the agri-environmental regulations don't fit. A long-term goal is that, following completion of the restoration work in year 2000, the Swedish agri-environmental programme will compensate farmers for their contributions to historical and nature preservation.

Stone walls of limestone border the alvarland owned by a village, often also the land owned by a farm. Most of the stone walls are 100-150 years old and are, in wide parts, falling apart. The farmers are sometimes interested in rebuilding them, but mostly they need to be completed with other fences. Farmers are doing most of the fencing work themselves and the project pays for the material.

Private contractors are contracted for clearing of bushes. The contractors have all participated in courses concerning the cultural and natural values of the Stora Alvaret and clearing in alvar landscape. In some of the SCI's, landowners are doing the clearing after agreements with the County Administration.

The need of information has turned out to be larger than for-seen. The Life project and the fact that the cultural landscape of south Öland, including Stora Alvaret, is proposed as a new World Heritage Area for Sweden, are two reasons for that. The media work and the production of information material will increase to meet the interest from landowners, farmers, tourists and other visitors.

The key point which has contributed to the success of this project is the possibility to bring together knowledge from different sides. At the County Administration there are personnel with competence in nature conservation, cultural history and agriculture working together in the project. There is a continuing dialogue going on with farmers, private contractors clearing alvarland, representatives from the municipality, the County Administration, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Central Board of National Antiquities, different wildlife associations and scientists, which leads to increased interest and knowledge among all actors.

The attitudes and awareness of landowners to conservation is changing. The restoration work and other activities in the Life-project are the main reasons for their interest.

Susanne Rundlöf Forslund

Agriculture

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Peter Peacock

Rapporteur: Gerard Van Dijk

1. Acceptability of the management requirements of Natura 2000 sites by the local population (farming populations) is a key issue in the success of the Network,
2. One interesting way to reach this goal is a bottom-up approach. *a priori* involvement of the local (or regional) farming community in the application of the Agri-Environment Regulation (future Rural Development Regulation, agri-environment section) proved to be very effective. Awareness raising and communication also proved to be important. For example in the Spanish Great Bustard area people are now aware that their area supports the largest concentration of this *species in the world*. In the island of Öland, Sweden a big conference for stakeholders was a success. The availability of project officers, like in "Öland" and in UK ESA's was a very good point as well. Good experience also exists with initiatives developed by groups of farmers and other local actors (Netherlands).
3. For the farming community, maintenance or increase of income and/or job opportunities is prerequisite for success of the agri-environment measures and complementary LIFE projects in Natura 2000 sites. So it was reported from Wales that withdrawal of land from agriculture for (possibly well justified) nature conservation reasons was less popular than agreements regarding management by farmers. In the Swedish Island of Öland, the LIFE project was complementary to the agri-environment programme. The latter supports grazing. The first supports scrub clearance and has created 20 jobs. The provision for non-remunerative investments (nature restoration work etc) in agri-environmental schemes in the new Rural Development regulation could have the same effect. Such investments (now paid nationally) are already popular in the UK. Related advantages of Natura 2000 or other nature designations were reported to occur in the marketing of quality label products and enhanced tourism. (See 5)
4. As far as financial support is concerned, there is a need for *a priori* co-ordination between the use of LIFE-nature, Agri-Environmental measures (Regulation 2078, in future Rural Development Regulation) and other Community funds, like the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. To this respect it is important to know that we are at the eve of the new programming period 2000-2007 of the Structural Funds. A major problem here, is that, according to the new framework regulation Article 8 (partnership), it is no longer obligatory to involve the environmental authorities in the planning and implementation. This may cause problems both for the financing of nature conservation measures and for the (mandatory) environmental appraisal of the development plans as a whole. Only the Member States can now try to change this (Agenda 2000 debate),

There was also concern about the co-ordination of potentially contradictory measures WITHIN the new Rural Development Regulation: land improvement, reparation, water management measures, afforestation and agri-environmental measures. A good ex ante evaluation was recommended. That is why particular attention must be given to the requirement of prior appraisal of (*i.a.*) the environmental impact in the new RD regulation.

It goes without saying finally, that LIFE 3 was thought to be essential.

5. However, there is also the need to look beyond LIFE-NATURE and other Community support systems, Farming and local populations should look at the value added products and create a better marketing / public acceptance of the value of high quality farming products from protected areas, income from tourism, etc. (A wonderful example in this respect is the Bavarian municipality of Hindelang, very much dependent on tourism, where almost all farmers have an agreement to manage the Cultural landscape and where many products are processed and sold locally),

Policy issues/ recommendations

- LIFE 3 was recommended as being important
- Agri-environmental measures are important and were recommended to become more central in the CAP. There were concerns about the 4% of the CAP budget: will this be enough?
- In some countries, the nature conservation element of the agri-environmental schemes could be strengthened. The three case studies gave very good examples of highly targeted schemes, going well beyond Good Agricultural Practice.
- There was concern that the cofinancing rate of agri-environmental measures, now 50 % (higher in objective 1 areas) could be lowered (in new regulation: 25-5011/0)
- 10% of member states can be designated as additional Less Favoured Areas in relation to environmental restrictions. Although this is a welcome measure, the question was raised why Natura 2000 is not mentioned,
- There was concern about the future management of land of farmers that use the early retirement scheme. The provisions in the regulation could be improved,
- Great importance was attached to environmental ex ante evaluation (environmental appraisal) within the new Rural Development plans and in the Structural Funds, Member states should try to get the obligatory involvement of environmental authorities back into the structural funds regulation. Moreover, this is important to arrange the financing of environmental projects.

FORESTRY

EU LIFE PROJECT "PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY, AND PARTICULARLY OF FLYING SQUIRREL HABITATS, IN THE NUUKSIO AREA"

Mr. Timo Tanninen

Finnish Forest and Park Service

General description of the area

Nuukio is a large western taiga forest only some 30 km from the urban areas of Helsinki. It is located on the transition between southern boreal and boreo-nemoral vegetation zones. The habitats consist of ecologically valuable coniferous and mixed western taiga forests, swamps, bogs and more than 100 lakes and ponds.

The flora and fauna include 31 species listed in the Annexes 11 and IV of the Habitats Directive or Annex 1 of the Birds Directive. More than 50 species are listed in the national Red Book as endangered in Finland. One of those species is the flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*), which also is a priority species in Annex 11 of the Habitats Directive.

The natural values of Nuukio are focused on and symbolised by the flying squirrel. It is a specialist mammal of the taiga forest. Within the European Union it is only found in Finland and in the Nuukio area it still has the densest population known in Finland.

Main threats to the flying squirrel

Logging is the main threat to the flying squirrels. Their habitats, i.e. old mixed forests, are the most productive forestry areas. The flying squirrel avoids large open spaces, so clear-cuttings prevent it from moving from one habitat to another. Very little was also known about the location of flying squirrel habitats. Therefore habitats could be cut just because the landowner did not know about the squirrel. The knowledge about the flying squirrels habitat requirements, the range and ability to move from one area to another etc., was very deficient, too.

Objectives of the project

The overall objective of the project was to preserve the biodiversity and endangered habitats and species in Nuukio.

Special attention was paid to the protection of the flying squirrel habitats. These habitats are also key biotopes with respect to numerous other species of flora and fauna.

Actions undertaken to reach the project objectives

1. Inventory of the flying squirrel habitats and their status

A thorough inventory of the flying squirrel population and habitats was done in the whole project area. Altogether 196 inhabited habitats were found; 57 of those in the Nuuksio National Park, 29 in the other parts of the proposed Natura-2000 area, 113 on private-owned land and 93 on land owned by municipalities. The habitats were marked on maps, which were distributed to the landowners through their own organisations. The results of the inventory was used when drawing up the general plan for Nuuksio (point 5), in making decisions concerning land procurement (point 4) and in preparing recommendations for forest management of flying squirrel habitats (point 3).

2. Investigation of the habitat requirements and behaviour of flying squirrels

In 1997 ten (10) flying squirrels were investigated with telemetric methods. The same investigation still continues with funding from the Finnish Forest and Park Service. The investigations have resulted in new and interesting knowledge of the ecology of the flying squirrel. Most of their active time the animals use a quite small (0.5-2 hectares) core-area, but especially the males move also in a more wide range (about 100 hectares)" Moving from tree to tree they can glide even 70 meters. The same individual use at the same time several (3-11) nests, usually old woodpecker-holes in big aspens. The results have been used in the general plan for Nuuksio and in preparing recommendations for forest management.

3. Recommendations for the management of flying squirrel habitats

Based on the results of the inventory (point 1) and investigation (point 2) a forest management guide for flying squirrel habitats were drawn up and distributed to all landowners through their own organisations. Representatives of the landowners organisations took also actively part in making the guide. Therefore it is expected, that the recommendations in the guide also will be followed.

4. Purchase of flying squirrel habitats

The habitats of the flying squirrel are, of course, best protected by establishment of protected areas. A central part of the Nuuksio Life-project was to enlarge the Nuuksio National Park by land procurement. In the National Park, no logging is allowed. Altogether 205 hectares of land were purchased and included in the National Park. A great part of that area consists of flying squirrel habitats.

5. General plan for the protection of the Nuuksio area

A general or master plan for land use in the Nuuksio area was prepared in a large planning group consisting of representatives of different interest-groups, including land-owners. The planning group had nine (9) meetings. Two (2) meetings open to the public were also held, especially local people took part in them. The master plan will be used as a recommendation and a tool for the further development of nature protection, outdoor recreation and environmental education in the Nuuksio area.

MEDITERRANEAN OAK WOODS DEMONSTRATION OF INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT

Georges de MAUPEOU,

The LIFE programme "*demonstration of integrated management of Mediterranean holm oak woodland*" applies to two partially wooded massifs in Languedoc - Roussillon:

- ♦ The *massif de la Clape*, covering an area of 7 500 hectares on the Mediterranean coast near Narbonne.
- ♦ The *massif du Gardon*, covering an area of 2 700 hectares north of Nîmes, upriver from the famous Roman aqueduct, the pont du Gard.

These two predominantly limestone massifs have a low altitude Mediterranean climate with low annual rainfall (450 - 800 mm) which is very badly distributed, with very dry summers.

The natural vegetation is holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) garrigue; the open spaces are grasslands dominated by *Brachypodium ramosum*. The massif de la Clape contains a good deal of agricultural land planted with vines; abandoned pastures have been colonised by the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*).

Both massifs are classified as special protection areas under the Birds Directive, in particular to protect Bonelli's eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*).

The massif de la Clape is home to an endemic species, the "centaurée de la Clape" (*Centaurea corymbosa*). On the banks of the Gardon there are a few families of European beaver (*Castor fiber*).

The aim of the LIFE programme is to propose management methods which protect the environment while taking account of local constraints.

The main environmental objectives are:

- ♦ to protect Bonelli's eagle; this requires:
 - quiet areas (cliffs and possibly large trees) for nesting;
 - hunting areas for falconiforms, i.e. open areas (heathland, grassland).
- ♦ to protect the natural habitats in these areas, in particular :
 - Mediterranean holm oak woodland
(CORINE code 45.31 - Natura 2000 code: 93.40) ;
 - Grasslands dominated by *Brachypodium ramosum*
(CORINE code 34.51 - Natura 2000 code: 62.20).

The local constraints are essentially:

- ♦ Heavy tourist traffic owing to the proximity of beaches and the pont du Gard.
- ♦ Certain tourist activities (hiking) and sports (climbing, air sports) which disturb the Bonelli eagles' nesting sites.
- ♦ The risk of forest fires which necessitates permanent surveillance during certain periods (drought and wind) and requires the massifs to be well served by roads and tracks accessible to fire-fighting vehicles.
- ♦ The abandonment of pastures by farmers owing to low profitability; heathland and land grazed by sheep is abandoned and colonised by spontaneous vegetation: Aleppo pine, juniper (*Juniperus*).

The LIFE programme brings together local authorities, associations and individuals concerned by these areas.

At first, they had very different ideas about how the massifs should be managed.

The local authorities wished to preserve an outstanding natural heritage of considerable touristic and economic value, but had difficulty accepting constraints imposed from outside, especially those of the NATURA 2000 network.

The environmental protection associations could not understand why everything was not being done to protect endangered species, in particular Bonelli's eagle (there are only a few dozen pairs in the whole of Languedoc - Roussillon).

Gradually, working together, both parties realised that they must collaborate to define realistic objectives. For example, it is not possible or even desirable to completely prohibit tourist access to these massifs. However, tourism does need to be controlled so that nesting sites are not disturbed and it is not an environmental nuisance to those working in the area (winegrowers in particular) whose presence is vital to its survival (vines make excellent green barriers for limiting the spread of forest fires).

The Office National des Forêts, which manages many areas in France, is attempting, in the "Holm oak" LIFE programme, to reconcile the three functions of the countryside: environmental protection, recreation and economic activity. On this basis, with the involvement of all the local groups and individuals concerned, tourism should be organised and controlled, farming will continue and the exceptional habitats and species will be preserved.

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CALEDONIAN PARTNERSHIP LIFE '97 PROJECT - THE RESTORATION OF ATLANTIC OAKWOODS

Introduction:

This presentation describes the approach being adopted by the Caledonian Partnership to implement conservation measures for Atlantic Oakwood habitat in candidate Special Areas of Conservation in the United Kingdom with assistance from the European Union LIFE-Nature Programme. The emphasis of the presentation is on the issues encountered on those sites in Highland Scotland.

Oceanic 'Atlantic' oakwoods occur along the western seaboard of Scotland, England and Wales and extend southwards into south-west France, the Galician part of Spain and Portugal. Under the CORINE classification this habitat is described as 'Old oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles' and, obviously by definition is confined to Britain. It is characterised by an extremely rich lower plant and fern flora and is a stronghold for migrant song birds.

The Caledonian Partnership:

The Caledonian Partnership is an innovative broad partnership between Government forestry and conservation agencies, conservation NGOs and government grant-aided research organisations. It is led by Highland Birchwoods, a small charitable company established to secure the future of native woodlands as part of the rural economy and culture of the Scottish Highlands, and includes The Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Scottish Wildlife Trust and the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology. Benefiting from the synergy created by a unique partnership it has recently successfully delivered a two year LIFE-Nature funded project to "create a foundation for the long-term restoration and management of Scotland's Caledonian Forest resource", which combined an integrated programme of large scale habitat restoration with a complete resource inventory and underpinning ecological research.

A great deal was learned from this project, both in relation to the development of an effective partnership and the practicalities of managing a LIFE-Nature funded programme of work. Using the experience gained and the synergy created, and strengthened by the addition of the Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature and The National Trust, the partnership made a second successful LIFE-Nature application - for a project on the restoration of Atlantic oakwoods.

The Atlantic Oakwoods Project:

The four year Atlantic Oakwoods project commenced in April 1997 and work is now well underway within 7 candidate Special Areas of Conservation ; 5 in Scotland, one in the English Lake District National Park and one in the Snowdonia National Park in Wales. The four broad objectives of the project are: to move Atlantic Oakwood habitat on candidate SACs further towards favourable condition, to undertake scientific research to better understand the relationship between grazing and the regeneration of Atlantic Oakwoods, to establish integrated management and monitoring systems which will ensure the maintenance of favourable condition, to disseminate information gained through the project which is applicable to other sites by demonstration and promotion to encourage an integrated approach to habitat conservation.

The Challenges faced by the Project:

This presentation draws on our experiences to-date in four cSAC in the north-west Highlands of Scotland which have been chosen because they are under multiple private and public ownership and exemplify the challenges faced by the Caledonian Partnership in the implementation of restoration measures. These sites are located in a remote upland region of Britain with a difficult climate, generally poor soils and a thinly scattered rural population, where the survival of small rural communities is dependent on a diversity of economic activities including marginal hill farming, fishing/fish farming, forestry and tourism.

This conference is about the relationship between people and Natura 2000 which at the most fundamental level is the relationship between local people and how they value and use the land. Atlantic Oakwoods in Britain have a long history of management and utilisation by local communities and were until the present century highly valued for providing grazing and shelter for livestock, a renewable supply of firewood and timber, plentiful wild game and both charcoal for industrial iron smelting and bark for tanning leather. Viewed retrospectively and broadly this traditional use probably amounted to their sustainable management.

Although they have continued to be ‘utilised’ through the 20th century the disappearance of this continuity of traditional and often local management and its replacement by increased grazing by deer and sheep, the under-planting of fast growing commercial conifers, both largely determined by ‘external’ economic forces, and invasion by *Rhododendron ponticum* has left a resource depleted in biodiversity and extent and providing minimal local benefits.

Essentially Scotland has lost its ‘forest culture’ and the primary challenge has been to build on the synergy already created through the first pinewood LIFE-Nature project, and to use the expertise and resources of the key partners to develop effective and stable local partnerships which begin to re-connect local communities with the forest. Experience has indicated that this is essential in order to be able to promote the Natura 2000 designation as providing a range of local benefits rather than being an imposition.

The process of consensus building in the private sector has been the most challenging aspect of the project. There have been concerns from private landowners about a ‘top down’ approach to land-use planning which takes little account of the socio-economic

pressures experienced by individual land owners and small local communities, feelings that they are unable to control their own destinies and general misunderstanding of the purpose of the Directive and the LIFE instrument. The large number of private landowners, many of whom are not locally resident or part of the local community, and the inevitable internal tensions that exist in local communities have also presented problems. Add to these issues the fact that habitat conservation itself is usually not seen as a priority (although any job opportunities it creates may be), a psychological barrier as to what is considered a worthwhile land-use and a liberal sprinkling of apathy and the size of the challenge becomes evident!

Developing Effective Local Partnerships:

The first step in the strategy has been to tap into existing local knowledge, expertise, credibility and communications channels through the establishment of '**Local Operational Planning Teams**' for each cSAC, responsible to the overall project manager at Highland Birchwoods. These teams, comprising local officers from the relevant countryside conservation agency, Forestry Authority (representing private sector ownership) and Forest Enterprise (representing the public sector ownership), have been well placed to engage private landowners at a 'grass roots' level and to develop consensus and added value to ensure the most effective conservation solutions are implemented and there is maximum benefit to local owners. They have provided a professional focus for local action.

There have been a number of key components to this strategy. The participation of private landowners has been on an entirely voluntary 'opt-in' basis and the flexible use of the Forestry Authority's 'Woodland Grant Scheme' (WGS), which is a **well recognised economic incentive** for sensitive native woodland management, combined with the promotion of LIFE-Nature funds as a 'top-up' grant to encourage the highest quality and most extensive conservation management has been critical. The Forestry Authority's own environmental standards associated with the WGS and the consultation on each separate grant application with the relevant countryside agency has been important to maintain best nature conservation practice. Additionally, the ability to **interchange lead organisations** within each Local Operational Planning Team to best fit changing local circumstances and maximise 'user friendliness' has also been important.

Members of the Local Operational Planning Teams have not always been best placed to directly harness local opinion and mobilise resources but the ability of team members to identify well respected local residents with appropriate expertise to act as '**Local Community Catalysts**' to introduce the project in a non threatening way through direct face-to-face contact, and to build local consensus has been a particularly important factor at some sites. At one site this has facilitated a co-operative approach between public and private sector owners to fencing deer out of a large area which has maximised value for money and provided wide ranging ecological benefits which would not have accrued through a piecemeal approach to fencing on an ownership by ownership basis.

Partnership added value has also been a key component. The synergy resulting from a broad partnership well networked with other funding organisations, such as Local Enterprise Companies, The Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust and the Leader II Programme, and involved in additional 'external' partnerships has functioned to add

value to the project by, for example, using new funds to create a pool of skilled local labour available to undertake restoration management.

The project is however in its early stages and there are still issues to be addressed, particularly on those SACs which are in multiple ownership and where individual owners may have very different objectives for their land. A primary issue in Scotland is the development of SAC-scale integrated deer management plans in a situation where a single deer herd can range across a large number of different ownerships, where deer are traditionally managed as a resource divorced from their relationship with their habitat and where the numbers of deer present on a particular ownership determine the capital value of the land. The contracting of well known and respected specialists to produce these plans, combined with the involvement of local deer management groups and the Deer Commission for Scotland, and the commissioning of new research on the relationship between deer grazing and oakwood natural regeneration, has gone some way to allay local concerns.

However, the most crucial issue is the *long-term stability of the local partnerships* established under the project. Whilst these partnerships have already developed their own synergy, it is essential that this is maintained once the project is completed to provide *real and sustainable long-term benefits to local communities*. Without this it will be extremely difficult to ensure local commitment to the best conservation management of cSAC. Our experience to-date has shown that this will require continuing commitment from staff who are locally based, who are known and respected, who understand local needs and aspirations and who have the patience and time to adopt an open approach requiring a great deal of attention to detail.

Tim Clifford, Project Manager, Caledonian Partnership, 09/07/98

Forestry

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Phillipe Pointereau

Rapporteur: Helene Lindahl

1. The European Union has not had a lot of direct involvement in the work towards the creation of a sustainable forest management policy until now. The proposed CAP reform will offer good opportunities to take part in and make a contribution to that work. Also, it is important for the EU to take part in the process of creating a European Forestry Certification System which currently is becoming more important in Europe and which includes important conservation issues.
2. Forests owned by the State should be used for the creation of good examples of how sustainable forestry can be carried out inside and outside Natura 2000 sites.
3. Private forest owners in Natura 2000 sites need to be motivated to use their forests in a sustainable way. There were good examples of this in the forestry workshop. Such motivation can be created by
 - a) informing the landowners so that they take pride in the conservation value of their land. In the Flying Squirrel LIFE project in Finland, research on the species and a brochure was made.
 - b) including them in long term partnerships, where management plans, control of animals and species, guidelines for sustainable management and canalization of tourists etc, can be discussed and decided upon. The UK Restoration of Atlantic Oakwoods LIFE project showed an especially excellent example of this. Broad and flexible networks and partnerships were formed in that project involving landowners, NGO's, national agencies, etc. An interesting method was to use a local "mediator" who was a trusted member of the local community and could help by linking into it.
 - c) Offering landowners financial incentives for their work towards sustainability, i.e. a possibility to live and thrive on their land.
4. Natura 2000 needs to include, besides the sustainably exploited forests, a network of old unexploited natural woodland reserves. Others, especially southern deciduous woodlands, are enhanced by management and can keep high conservation values whilst still being used for timber extraction and meat production, for example. The French LIFE project on Mediterranean Oak woods is a potential example of this. Using those open woodlands for grazing would be good for the birds needing open glades and creates a need for caretakers (shepherds) who also can act as fire preventers. Thereby a solution with economy, jobs, conservation and a beautiful landscape could be created. The often northern coniferous natural woodlands are mostly enhanced by natural successions and development. Obviously, fire has been an important factor here in nature's management of such forests. Today we

have to use this method in a controlled manner in order to help create or maintain a natural mixture of species, including deciduous trees and high amounts of decaying wood for the benefit of p. ex. woodpeckers, insects and mosses.

5. The first pilot LIFE Nature forest protection projects have found many good examples of how to create understanding and build local and national partnerships in Natura 2000 sites. They must be used as a source of good ideas and be allowed to continue to seek new ones. For instance, they could also try various financial solutions for long term use.

MANAGEMENT PLANS INVOLVING LOCAL ACTORS

PRESERVING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF THE DRUGEON

Setting up management plans

1) General background

The Drugeon Valley is one of two high-lying wetland areas listed in the French inventory of areas of Community importance for birds, within the meaning of Directive 79/409/EEC.

Having survived down the centuries, the area no longer meets modern profitability criteria and has for 40 years been deteriorating extremely rapidly compared with its slow rate of change in the past:

- the main watercourse, the Drugeon, has been straightened;
- farmers no longer maintain the wetlands (wet meadows, fens); mowing and extensive grazing have been abandoned, leaving land to fall fallow;
- the wetlands have been drained for farming
- softwoods have been planted, agriculture intensified around the periphery, etc.

In this agriculturally oriented valley, 3 800 hectares of land situated to either side of the Drugeon deserves special attention. This includes 1 760 hectares (46%) in private hands.

Viewed as a whole, the valley is a remarkable ecological unit comprising complementary juxtaposed environments. At its heart are the marshes, whose very high primary productivity does much to underpin the food chain, one important link in which is the biomass of plant-eating invertebrates.

2) Action ahead of the management plans

- 2.1 An **initial ecological inventory** (of plants and birds) by the Franche-Comté Conservatoire des Espaces Naturels. This should suggest technical solutions for restoring the environment.
- 2.2 A **Drugeon rehabilitation study** will underpin the “recorrection” scheme to reconnect the river to the adjacent wetlands.
- 2.3 A **study of land ownership** will produce a list of landowners, showing that almost 80% of the area is common land.

2.4 An **agricultural study** will indicate which transition zones are to be preserved.

3) Implementing the management plans

3.1 Preliminaries

The Conservatoire has divided the catchment area into 20 consistent phyto-ecological units. In the light of the inventory, it has devised a management plan for each unit.

Each management plan is structured as follows:

- an initial restructuring phase (where necessary)
- a long-term management phase
- a scientific follow-up phase

Given the size of the geographical surface to be preserved (almost 3 500 ha of wetlands), operational criteria have been established:

- a) Severity of the ecological deterioration of the environment (plant communities and capacity to host birds);
- b) Ease of access depending on who owns the land. Ecologically interesting common land will be dealt with as a priority.

3.2 Organisation on the ground

- Site restoration breaks down into a number of activities:
 - mechanical or manual clearing of wetlands which have closed up (following abandonment of agricultural practices);
 - closure of drains
 - restoration of the Drugeon's meanders; filling-in of the rectilinear bed.
- Site management involves maintaining open environments capable of hosting birds and remaining very wet.
 - mechanical management: cutting
 - management through grazing
 - monitoring of water levels
 - reduction of fertilisers; late cutting in agricultural areas.

3.3 Conditions for implementing management plans

- Working parties (hunting/fishing, agriculture, land ownership) to be set up from the outset, to follow discussions and debates. The working parties should include local residents.
- Each restoration or management operation to be scrutinised at public meetings of those concerned.
- The local farming community called upon primarily to introduce grazing. In addition, farmers called upon to extend moves in wetland areas to agricultural peripheral areas, thanks to substantial financial incentives in the “*Local Agri-Environment Operation*” and to the “*Standards Alignment of Livestock Buildings*”.
- A sizeable financial commitment from the local authorities and the State (in all, almost FF 50 million, i.e. ECU 7.5 million).
- A long-term commitment from the local authorities by including the valley in the **Decree on Biotope Protection** and as a **Special Protection Area** in the **Natura 2000** network.

4) **Lessons learned from this experience**

A project such as this requires a major communication exercise with the local population (meetings, publications, films, exhibitions, practical courses, etc.)

Local people need to take part and get involved. Success will depend primarily on involving elected representatives, but also on nature conservation/hunting/fishing associations.

The farming community is still lukewarm about what has been done, and is wondering whether agri-environmental contracts will be renewed beyond the next five years.

In respect of farmers and local political representatives, financial incentives remain the best approach.

Ecological motivation still seems confined to associations and scientific circles, though local elected representatives have been won over.

Association of local authorities of the Plateau de Frasne
Drugeon Valley

Geneviève MAGNON

May 1998

THE LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE (*CARETTA CARETTA*) NESTING IN CRETE

Thomas Arapis

The Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) has been proven to nest in significant numbers on the sandy beaches in three areas of Crete, Greece. These are the coast east of Rethimno, the coast west of Hania and in the Bay of Messara. An average of 560 nests are laid each year, with an estimated 34,700 hatchlings leaving the beach by the end of each summer.

Tourism development in Crete began long before the Sea Turtle Protection Society (STPS) started monitoring the nesting beaches in the area. A challenging task was the design of a management plan that takes into account the local needs for growth and suggest conservation solutions that can be easily implemented and at the same time minimize the need for further legislation regarding protection. The main problems for nesting turtles and hatchlings are:

- Artificial lighting (both deliberate and indirect lighting of the beach);
- Private and public coastal protection engineering works;
- Use of heavy machinery for construction works on, and alterations of the beach;
- Changes in land use of areas directly behind the beach, destroying the natural coastal and dune systems;
- Increases in the area of nesting beach occupied by recreational beach equipment (sunbeds, umbrellas and boats);
- Litter and methods used for beach cleaning;
- Exotic dune and beach vegetation;
- Nest loss to abiotic factors (inundation and erosion);
- Lack of information and data on some important aspects of the turtle population that nests on Crete;
- Still a low level of awareness about the sea turtles of Crete, especially amongst local populations, and local and national authorities;
- Absence of existing legal protection, enforcement, and poor legal framework for coastal issues;
- Lack of co-ordination for activities, leading to many small isolated activities/impacts, each having a relatively low impact, but combine to cause significant deterioration of the overall nesting area.
- Strong possibility of publicly/E.U.-funded works being approved in the next few years, that would cause significant deterioration of the nesting areas.
- Threats in the marine environment include pollution, accidental fisheries bycatch, boat collisions, entanglement, and ingestion of marine debris.

Rationale and strategy

In order for the plan to achieve its conservation objectives, and at the same time to be widely accepted by local authorities and businesses, it is expected that it must:

- have clear and realistic objectives, backed by scientific justification;
- balance the conservation needs of the sea turtles with the local need for sustainable tourist development;
- incorporate eco-tourist initiatives, to help the tourist industry maintain the high quality of their product;
- consult with and incorporate proposals from local authorities and businesses, and obtain clear statements of support from them;
- make maximum use of existing regulations;
- be easily implemented and enforced.

Objectives

- Continuation of present levels of nesting, with eventual recovery of sea turtle populations
- Any further development of the areas must be consistent with their continued viability as turtle nesting habitats
- Reduction of hatchling disorientation by reduction in levels of light pollution
- Effective control of vehicular use of the beaches
- Protection of all nests by caging
- Reduction in nests lost to inundation by transfers and natural beach hatcheries
- Extended research program, to improve long-term sea turtle conservation management
- Extensive program to increase public awareness aimed at tourists and locals, in co-operation with local authorities and businesses
- Guidelines and planning directives to reduce coastline destruction and light pollution from all new developments adjacent to the coastline
- Publicly funded works should undergo environmental assessment with STPS playing an important advisory role
- STPS strategy proactive rather than reactive, with attempts to solve potential problems before they appear

Summary of recommendations

1. Turning off problem lights
2. Minimizing beach lighting from outdoor sources
3. Coastal Protection
 - . Land Use
5. Beach cleaning
6. Beach use
7. Public awareness
8. Legal framework
9. Conservation work

10. Monitoring and research

TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE NECESSARY CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR UK MARINE SACs

Dan Laffoley, Head of Marine Conservation, English Nature UK.

The paper will focus on how the necessary conservation measures, in the form of management schemes, are being put in place for marine sites in the UK with assistance of the LIFE Nature programme. The aim of the work is to achieve the effective implementation of the Directive on marine sites, involving the full range of individuals and organisations that wish to have a say in their management. To be successful it is important to work with the many people who use or manage the marine environment, if not with their consent then at least with their Co-operation. And all this being based and driven forward on the soundest scientific advice that can be provided.

Implementing this Directive on marine areas presented the UK with a number of challenges. When the Directive was signed up to by Members States in 1992 the UK had no suitable legal mechanism to implement it in the marine environment, in contrast to land. The position was compounded by an already existing and complex framework where over 91 Acts of Parliament already applied to the sea. The situation of sites varies from remote locations to those with large population centres nearby and high usage by a wide range of interests. Many traditional interests exist which gives an added dimension to the vast number of organisations and individuals that need to be involved. Their importance in the process is reflected by the consultation Government undertook at the outset on all UK marine sites. Finally, the science base underpinning the development of conservation measures needed rapid expansion to ensure the best advice was provided in a timely manner.

An effective legal framework was achieved for the UK by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 which create the management framework for marine sites. This legislation gives the duty to implement the Directive to all the organisations with responsibility for marine matters. This is further supported, where necessary, by an ability to develop a single locally-based management scheme for each site. The legal framework for management schemes is now supported by policy guidance in England and Wales.

The legal or policy framework is only the start of the process. The overall experience in the UK is that progress is greatly dependent on developing effective communication and mechanisms for involving all the local actors and national organisations throughout the process. To help with this work the UK statutory nature conservation agencies applied for and were successful in being awarded a grant of 4.8 million Ecu from the European Union LIFE Nature programme, for UK marine SACs. The aim is to explore the establishment of management schemes on UK marine SACs by using a subset of the sites and to complete this process by the end of the year 2000. Through these efforts a number of issues are emerging that lead to some conclusions on developing and promoting conservation measures.

The first issue is about being clear and realistic over what the Directive will achieve for sites. Given the wide range of interests involved and that the marine aspects of the Directive are brand new areas of law and policy, people develop their own often misconceptions as to what the Directive is about. These misconceptions can be either overly positive or unduly negative and need careful handling to ensure a balanced view is maintained on which to develop management schemes. The Directive is about encouraging the sustainable management of the wildlife interests. Part of the message to be clarified, therefore, is that sites will not exclude human activities but ensure that the economic use of an area does not harm its nature conservation interest now, or in the future. This results in clear demands on all those who are involved in management schemes at all levels, from central Government to local communities and individuals, particularly developers, to provide the basic information to underpin this process.

How the message is conveyed is equally as important as being clear over what the message is. In the UK meetings have been held at most sites to explain and discuss the Directive, with both the organisations who have legal responsibilities for these areas, and interest groups. These 'face-to-face' meetings play a fundamental role in developing the management scheme. Targeted publications have also been useful, aimed at meeting the needs of particular sectors of the community. In the early stages general leaflets and information sheets have helped answer commonly held questions. More recent publications have helped the range of organisations with legal responsibilities to better understand the process of developing conservation measures for the sites. This process will, however, need time if the energy and concerns of all the local actors are to be brought into play. Too little time and the Directive will feel like an imposition, too much and frustrations over delays will occur. Such experiences should help inform on realistic timetables for Member States who have yet to embark on similar programmes.

Underpinning the messages is the need to build lasting partnerships with the range of organisations and individuals who wish or need to be involved in the process. In the UK over the last decade a considerable amount of work has been put into developing management plans and strategies for many estuaries, inlets and coastal areas. Whilst this was an entirely voluntary process, the partnerships developed and experiences gained have provided an excellent basis on which to build the implementation of this Directive. The legally responsible bodies are now working together in management groups on most sites, with particular support on some from LIFE Nature. Progress is also being made on establishing advisory groups to enable the views of local interests such as recreation and fisheries, and groups such as wildlife trusts and other NGOs, to be taken account of when developing conservation measures. In this way the socio-economic issues generated by the Directive will be addressed as conservation measures are developed. In some instances more detailed work has, and is, required, particularly with some interest groups who feel particularly threatened by the Directive. Significant contact has been made for the first time with a number of important industries and water users such as Ports Managers. Whilst some may still vigorously oppose the Directive, work has been undertaken to understand their concerns and this has helped everyone focus on real issues and reduced unnecessary tensions as a result.

Management Plans involving local actors.

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Michael Canny

Rapporteur: Folkert De Jong

Three presentations were given at this workshop, covering a wide range of aspects of involving local actors in developing management plans.

The Drugeon valley project, presented by Ms. Magnon, deals with a wetland ecosystem. In this project, which ran from 1993 to 1997, local actors, mainly hunters, fishermen, farmers and land-owners were involved in a very early stage of defining the goals. In the subsequent phases of scientific research, the drafting of management recommendations and the implementation, there was an intensive interaction between the actors.

Mr. Arapis gave a detailed description of a LIFE-funded project, to develop a management scheme for the protection of sea turtle nests (*Caretta caretta*) on beaches of Crete. Although the project dealt with one species, many interest groups were involved, mainly hotel owners, tourists, beach-umbrella keepers, local and regional authorities.

Mr. Laffoley presented an evaluation of experiences so far in the UK with developing management schemes for estuaries and marine areas.

In these presentations and in the plenary discussion the following issues emerged:

1. In drafting a Management Plan it is essential that all local actors (stakeholders) are involved as early as possible and in all phases of the process.

This can be considered the central issue in the presentations and the plenary discussion. There was general consensus that without active involvement of local actors the chances of successfully managing sites are very much decreased. Local actors first of all have an important role in the practical implementation of management schemes. But also in the early stages of formulating goals and solutions for improvement, local experience may be helpful.

Some critical remarks were made however. It is first of all important to determine who the local actors are. Visitors to an area should certainly be taken into consideration, for example the tourists on Crete. But also landowners who do not necessarily live in the area concerned.

The question of scale was raised in this respect. In small-scale projects the main involved actors may be very different from those in large scale projects of (inter) national interest. Policies should in this respect allow for flexibility: they should be enabling and not restricting.

2. Local elected representatives and dedicated project managers (not necessarily scientists) are crucial for the successful interaction between and within stakeholders

In both the Drugeon project and the Caretta project the role of “intermediairs” was underlined. The Drugeon project made use of elected representatives of local communities as important mediators. Also the project officer had an essential mediating role. In the Caretta project officers participated in local committees (for example clean beach committee) to show involvement and build up credit. Also the work of the volunteers on the beaches (caging and relocation of nests) was an important factor in establishing communication with local actors.

Laffoley mentioned the build up of advisory groups to enable the views of local interests to be taken into account.

The role of scientists as mediators was questioned. Natural scientists are not necessarily best suited for establishing communication between a wide range of interest groups. Effective communication is not simply providing information but requires specific skills.

3. There should be real partnership involving

= all parties being taken seriously

= the need to compromise.

Mr. Laffoley stressed the importance of lasting partnerships between authorities and user groups amongst others through advisory groups. In the discussion the role of the partners was considered. Planners should not merely involve other stakeholders with the aim of transferring their message. There must be a will (also at the side of the conservationist) to compromise.

4. The process of drafting management plans involving local actors (stakeholders) is resource consuming (time and money).

From the examples which were presented it became very clear that involving local actors is time and consequently money consuming. Especially at the start of a project time is needed to build up mutual trust and structures to maintain, improve and strengthen first contacts. A network must be developed.

The continuation of the LIFE program in one form or another was seen as indispensable for this work.

5. LIFE funding is essential for initiating projects. However structural funding (CAP, Fisheries, Rural Development) should follow, to enable sustainable development.

As was outlined above, LIFE funding is of utmost important to get a project off the ground. It was stressed by the speakers and in various interventions that a minimum requirement for continuation of the management is that there are lasting financial incentives for local actors.

In the Drugeon project the production of region specific cheese was given as a positive economic factor, although not sufficient by itself. In many cases management schemes will apply to remote areas with high unemployment rates and a decreasing population. Here an integrated approach is necessary, applying also structural funds such as CAP, CFP and Rural Development, aiming at sustainable use in combination with nature protection.

6. In communicating messages the source should be the peer group (contrary to a top-down approach).

As was stated under “2”, communication is more than producing information material. Laffoley stressed that the way the message is conveyed is equally important as the message itself.

The question was already put forward whether the art of conveying the message should not best be done by experts instead of natural scientists.

One specific point that was put forward is who’s message it is. There was general agreement that a bottom up approach is better than a top down approach. As an example the production of an information brochure for yachtsmen about how best to behave in a nature area was given. The brochure had been written in their own language and published by their own organisation.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC
AWARENESS**

Navigating with Nature : Producer Responsibility in Action

Governments past and present have long encouraged voluntary industry initiatives as a means of addressing environmental concerns. This approach allows for flexibility in achieving environmental improvements and low cost implementation relative to regulatory control. Navigate with Nature, an industry-led awareness raising programme for boat users, is an excellent example of how such initiatives can work in practice and has wide applicability for all types of recreational activity taking place in the Natura 2000 network.

The British Marine Industries Federation (BMIF) is the trade association to the UK marine industries, representing over 1350 companies operating in all sectors of the industry. BMIF members supply the boats, equipment and services that enable over 5 million UK citizens to enjoy every type of boating and water sports activity, on inland and coastal waterways. The quality of the marine environment is fundamental to the enjoyment of these activities. In recognition of this, the British Marine Industries Federation (BMIF), the industry's trade association, launched a major environment programme in 1991.

As a cornerstone of the programme, the UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UK CEED) carried out a comprehensive environmental review of the industry, the first in the UK both to examine an entire industrial sector and also to look at one comprised predominantly of small and medium-sized companies (SMEs). The review covered everything from craft construction through marina development to the use of craft. It identified potential impacts arising both directly from the manufacture and provision of marine goods and services and also indirectly from the use of the products.

To address the former, the BMIF produced a detailed and award winning Environmental Code of Practice for marine industry companies, reinforced by a continuing information and training programme.

To address the potential impacts arising from the use of marine industry products, an innovative producer responsibility programme, *Navigate with Nature*, was developed by the BMIF, in conjunction with UK CEED.

Navigate with Nature seeks to:

- Improve the provision and availability of environmental information about marine industry products to boat users

- Encourage watersport participants to be aware of their interaction with the local environment and to respect bye-laws and waterspace management strategies
- Raise awareness of how users can purchase, maintain and use their craft in an environmentally responsible manner

Navigate with Nature is a joint programme of the BMIF and UK CEED. It is funded by the BMIF, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, under the Environmental Action Fund, the RSPB and Perkins, a major marine engine manufacturer. It is targeted at users of all craft, including sailing and motor boats, sailboards and personal watercraft. The project was piloted in Poole Harbour in 1996 and expanded the following year to the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and Coasts, Chichester Harbour, the Humber and Tees Estuaries and the West Midlands Canals.

Since 1996, over 30,000 boat users have received leaflets providing information on various topics including marine habitats and wildlife, waste management, noise and craft maintenance. The leaflets contain a tear-off post-paid slip with which the recipient can obtain further information on environmental issues. In the pilot project, 10% of leaflet recipients requested a follow-up information pack, 1000 of which were subsequently distributed. For the other case study areas, 10,000 booklets have recently been printed to cater for the demand for follow-up information.

A comprehensive consultation and monitoring programme has played an integral role in the project. Before the material was developed, the project team consulted with 300 organisations with an interest in the marine environment. Having identified the need for specific environmental information targeted at boat users, an independent steering group consisting of representatives of the industry, user groups, local authorities, the Harbour Authority, environmental groups, English Nature and the Environment Agency, guided the development of the material.

The leaflets in Poole Harbour were distributed at the height of the boating season through marine industry companies, boat clubs and directly by post to swing mooring and marina berth holders. One year on from the launch of the pilot project, boat users who received the information and organisations were surveyed to determine their recall of Navigate with Nature, their view on the quality of the information and whether they had modified their behaviour as a result of the programme. 50% of the boat users surveyed returned completed questionnaires. Of those, 78% could recall Navigate with Nature, 40% had retained the information and 43% of respondents suggested their behaviour had changed as a result of receiving the information. Of the 25% of organisations who replied, 41% could recall the leaflet and 78% of respondents thought the leaflet was very good or excellent.

To date Navigate with Nature has proved a big success. Feedback from boat users suggests that the information is user-friendly and useful and the project has also received widespread support from both statutory and also non-governmental nature conservation organisations. Much of this success can be put down to the following key project features:

- Partnership of industry, user and environmental groups
- Thorough research to identify information need
- Wide consultation during material development
- Accurate, informative and readable material
- Two or more levels of information
- Post paid information request coupon
- Carefully targeted information dissemination
- Receptive audience
- Incentives for survey response

In recognition of the project's success, DETR has extended funding for a further 3 years, with BMIF, the RSPB and Perkins also extending their support. For 1998/99, Navigate with Nature will be launched in three new case study areas: Plymouth Sound; the Essex estuaries; and the non-tidal Thames. In addition to leaflets and booklets, a more participatory element of the programme is being developed. This will include electronic media and a number of demonstration projects covering issues such as waste management, young boater education and environmental monitoring.

To ensure that Navigate with Nature continues to flourish, a number of challenges lay ahead for the project team and sponsors including:

- Ensuring material remains relevant and fresh
- Developing new dissemination techniques
- Continuing to target audience effectively
- Undertaking continuous and effective monitoring
- Building results of feedback into project development
- Maintaining successful partnership approach

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The British Marine industries Federation is....

For more information on BMIF contact.....

Founded in 1984 in response to the UN World Conservation strategy, The UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UK CEED) is an independent, charitable foundation committed to the promotion of environmental excellence within enterprise, government and individual activities.

BEAR PROTECTION PROGRAMME IN AUSTRIA

The recent history of the occurrence of brown bears in the Eastern Alps of Austria is quite short. After the extinction during the 19th century, it took about 150 years, for a bear to return into the northern parts of the Austrian Limestone Alps. This was the motivation for WWF to start a reintroduction program in 1989. Three bears were reintroduced into this area in the following years. They adapted quite well to their new environment, which was proved by reproduction and an inconspicuous behaviour of these bears.

At the beginning of the project only few people were involved, mainly the land owners and the hunters of this area. During the project it became clear, that the bears used a much larger area than expected, and that a change in behaviour of brown bears has led to a negative change of attitudes because of an increase of interaction and damages of bears to livestock and bee hives in this area. We had to take note of the fact, that a much higher involvement of different groups and people was necessary for the acceptance and thus for the survival of the bears in the Eastern Alps.

The first action taken in 1994, was to change the role of our scientists, who accompanied the project since the beginning, into communicators between people who are confronted with bears and the bear itself. To make this fact public we called them “Bear Advocates” and communicated this name very intensive. Today the “Bear Advocates” are well known and accepted in their job description and journalists ask especially for interviews with them, because they represent the interesting lifestyle of wildlife researchers with a high experience in the field. In the continuation of the LIFE-program the “Bear Advocates” represent the key persons in bear conservation.

Another important step within the LIFE-program was the development of a management plan. It was designed on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and the local governments of the four federal states, where bears occur. The goal was to work out a manual for bear conservation, concerning different biological and management aspects, administrative structures and of course also financial issues. Three groups were involved into the process:

- Working team of WWF Austria, Munich Wildlife Society and the Inst. of Game Management/Univ. of Agricultural Sciences/Vienna (17 members)
- Authorities; as the clients (16 members)
- Stakeholders, local interest groups and district authorities (74 members)

Within one year, there were three meetings with the clients were held, three meetings with the stakeholders and several meetings among the working team. The proposals concerning the different issues were worked out by the working team in co-operation with the clients. The proposals were sent out to the stakeholders. They had the possibility to bring in their needs and interests before and/or during the discussions at the meetings.

The general communication approach was to start with a survey, if it is the general opinion of the members of this process to discuss how to protect the brown bears in Austria and not how to keep the numbers of bears as small as possible. Then we developed general guidelines and made a ranking of their importance. Afterwards we proposed and discussed the goals, objectives and the actions, that would be necessary to reach them. Goals and objectives were defined in the following topics:

- Administration
- Habitat and populations trends
- Management of nuisance bears
- Damage compensation and prevention
- Monitoring
- Education and development of bear managers
- Public awareness and PR

Several NATURA 2000 sites are located in the habitat of brown bears in Austria. Especially the Dürrenstein area covers the most valuable virgin forests of the bear core area. So the occurrence of bears is a strong argument for the identification of NATURA 2000 sites in this area. During the development of the management plan, the NATURA 2000 process was also presented to the members of the different groups.

The plan was accepted by the authorities, who were the clients and is now implemented and works well. We laid very strong emphasis on not to work out this plan as an expertise made by scientists in the “Ivory Tower”, but to involve as much people and interest groups as possible, make them partners in the process and give them a possibility to decide on actions in bear management, too. The representatives of stakeholders came from many different fields of interests: farming, bee keeping and the local authorities, but also from school administrations, tourism and conservationists dealing with insects or botany, who were worried by the possible meeting a brown bear during fieldwork. This process of involving local actors brought only some sporadic new aspects, the draft of the plan was in our heads at the beginning, but it was highly important not only to give them the feeling of making decisions, but to have them make decisions.

Another priority was to establish a regular contact with local people. We organised lectures and presentations at different occasions and designed seminars for hunters and foresters. Especially the presence in the areas and the discussions in the pubs have been a key factor to change attitudes and to make the public more interested in bears and to motivate them to become involved into brown bear conservation in Austria.

BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN NATURA 2000 AREAS OF THE YYTERI PENINSULAR

Juha Manninen, *project co-ordinator*

The project area is situated in Pori, a town of 76 000 inhabitants on the west coast of Finland. The river Kokemaenjoki estuary and the adjacent Yyteri peninsular NATURA 2000-areas form one of the most diverse and unique complex of habitats in northern Europe: Scandinavia's Largest river delta, large shallow marine coasts, lagoons, reefs, shore meadows, dunes, primeval forests and small lakes. Both areas are also very important resting sites for migrating arctic birds. Over 2000 hectares of the project area are included in the national conservation programme for waterfowl.

The main goal of the LIFE-project is biotope restoration in the shore meadows of Yyteri. Peninsular Restoration work is done by the *Environmental Protection Office of the City of Pori*. The amount of open shore meadows is decreasing because of land uplift and cessation of grazing in the 60's. Because most of the meadows are private property, land purchasing is of great importance. To avoid environmental conflicts in the project area it is important to start a participatory planning process, where opinions of all interest groups can be taken into account. Also forestry in the vicinity of the NATURA 2000-areas must be planned so, that it does not affect negatively to habitats of endangered animals or plants.

The practical biotope management work begun in the river Kokemaenjoki estuary and in the meadows of the Preiviiki bay in January 1997. The biggest trees were removed and the reed was cut. Smallest wood was transported from the meadow to a sawmill in order to use the timber to building of observation platforms, nature trails, fences, information structures etc--- Part of the wood was taken away to be used as firewood in state-owned recreation areas. A meadow area of about 5 hectares in the Kokemaenjoki estuary was cleaned. Buildings of a mink farm were removed and the trees and bushes were cut from a former meadow area.

Some nature trails have been built during the project. The aim is to build a 12 km trail connection on the southern part of Preiviiki bay to the Yyteri area. In the near future all 9 - 10 observation platforms are going to be connected with each other by nature trails. One new nature trail has been built to Preiviiki near the local elementary school. The school's teachers and children have taken part in the planning. Some fences have been built round old pastures. Three observation platforms for birdwatchers have been built on the shores of Preiviiki bay and Lake Enajarvi, one of the best waterfowl lakes in Finland.

The Regional Environment Centre of Southwest Finland has bought about 150 hectares old shore meadow areas in order to restore them during the project.

Satakunta Environmental Research Centre prepared a participatory planning scheme in co-operation with the partial disposition planning process, which was accepted by local authorities. The different land use options of the proposed NATURA 2000 areas were formed in summer and brought to daylight by local, land use authorities of the City of Pori.

The ecological surveys have focused in shore meadows of the proposed NATURA 2000 areas and their present biodiversity, but the study areas were selected also so, that it could also be possible to estimate the past and the present impact of the grazing of the cattle on biodiversity of the areas. As the project area is well known for its bird fauna, it was logical to invent the present state of birds especially in the shore meadows. Butterflies and carabids are good indicators of the state of the shore meadows and they can be identified in species level with a relatively small amount of work- The butterfly fauna gives also indirect information about the plant species of the certain area. In spite of this, a botanical inventory was also done. In addition, there has been a waterfowl survey with local birdwatchers- Field work for the surveys has already ended and the further processing of data is going on.

Southwest Finland Forestry Centre has done the field work during the summer 1997 for a multipurpose forest plan which takes into consideration nature conservation, biodiversity, recreation, berry- and mushroom picking landscape and shelter effects. In planning process the information from the participatory planning was used.

The interactive forestry planning for the Yyteri landscape area has been realised in co-operation with South West Finland Forestry Centre and UPM-Kimono Ltd., which is the biggest forest company in Finland and also the biggest landowner in the landscape area. During the planning process, two public events concerning the forestry planning of the landscape area have been held. Southwest Finland Forestry Centre has implemented the key biotope search in the forests that are located less than 7 km outside the Natura 2000 area. The aim of the work is to find out the key biotopes and conserve their natural conditions- In that way they could serve as stepping stones for some species that try to migrate from one area to another.

The project group has organised one press conference concerning the project in March. Several articles of the project have been published in local newspapers. The project was also introduced in local radios and in Finland's television. A poster presentation about our LIFE project was given in the international Baltic Cities Conference in Stockholm in May 1997. A multimedia program about the project has been prepared in 1998. Preparation of a video movie of the project started in April 1997. A leaflet for birdwatchers has been printed and distributed to birdwatchers. An article about the project and coastal habitat conservation in Pori was published in Coastline.

Communications and awareness-raising

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Barbara Young

Rapporteur: Greg Neale

1. The workshop heard presentations by Norbert Gerstel on 'Bear protection programme, Austria', Jonathon Selwyn and Fergal Quinn, on 'Navigating with Nature: how to educate small craft users to environmental sensitivities in protected areas and elsewhere'; and Juha Manninen, on 'Yyteri, Finland: protecting birds and jobs'. (See fuller summaries elsewhere).
2. Baroness Young, chairing the workshop, suggested that practical gains would be obtained from seeking to answer the questions:
 - What do we want to communicate?
 - Who do we want to communicate with?
 - How can we best do this?

In essence, we concluded that we want to communicate the value and desirability of nature conservation in general, and, where appropriate, Natura 2000 projects. The target audience is those people who will be involved in or affected by a particular project, and whose support will ensure its successful implementation and sustainable development. Objectives are most likely to be achieved if such communication is inclusive, honest, transparent, proactive and simple. Above all, an effective strategy must be led by conservation objectives.

Among our main conclusions were:

3. The involvement of local actors and stakeholders is essential. Several participants stressed the importance of having projects adopted by local people. This can best be done by emphasising the positive advantages of a project, appealing to local aspirations -- economic, ethical and 'quality of life' issues as well as conservation ones. (Many participants emphasised, however, their belief that DGM sometimes overemphasised the importance of economic issues -- many people support conservation initiatives on other grounds.) Farmers and local landowners can, understandably, be suspicious of what they may see as attempts to impose new land use practices. Yet they are often proud of the conservation value of their locality.
4. Communications should be addressed to the relevant audience, and in a relevant manner. For example, some local stakeholders benefit from face-to-face meetings. Group meetings can allow for local community discussions. Involving special interest groups can help incorporate specialist or local expertise that may not previously have been available to conservationists.
5. Communication and awareness-raising should place a high value on honesty, transparency, simplicity and attractiveness. It should be proactive as well as reactive. For example, if a change in land use is proposed that would limit access, this should be stated openly. While full information should be given at all times, it is equally important not to swamp recipients with excess material. Norbert Gerstel pointed out that focal points for information (the appointing of 'Bear advocates') helped direct public and media attention. Equally, he maintained, confronting the potential conflicts of conservation (in this case, the fact that bears can be dangerous, that they should be discouraged from becoming accustomed to human contact, and in extreme cases, could be shot), was an honest policy which helped prevent such conflicts, and increased public enthusiasm for the reintroduction programme.

6. It should be born in mind that many people are suspicious of attempts to impose conservation solutions. One participant reported how a meeting to discuss a conservation proposal turned into a general - and angry discussion -- of people's concerns with the EU. Clearly, conservation issues can often be caught up in wider European considerations, and this should be accepted.
7. Consultation, consensus-building and other participatory techniques can all be employed.
8. Communication must be carefully targeted if it is to be effective. The examples of the Navigating with Nature campaign showed the value in publicity, which is attractively, presented -to school children, or special interest groups, for example. Devices such as pre-paid coupons help ensure interest and response is high.
9. Equally important, monitoring and evaluation must be employed to ensure that communication and awareness-raising strategies are effective (and cost-effective).

MANAGING CHANGE ON NATURA 2000 SITES

**MANAGING COASTAL PROCESSES:
DEALING WITH SEA-LEVEL RISE ON A NATURALLY ERODING COASTLINE**

Paul Raven

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this brief presentation is to describe the broad issues involved with sustainable management of sea defences on naturally-eroding 'soft' shorelines and the implications for the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

2. BACKGROUND

Sea defences

- 2.1. Without sea defences and pumped drainage, 80.000 ha of England and Wales would be tidally flooded. Much of this land supports prime agricultural land, urban areas and, in many cases, freshwater areas of conservation interest. An example close by is the low lying area reclaimed from the sea several centuries ago and today known as the Somerset Levels and Moors. The coastline would look entirely different if the sea walls were not maintained.
- 2.2. The Environment Agency is responsible for maintaining tidal and sea defences along low-lying shoreline and estuary areas of England and Wales - 800 km in total . The annual cost of maintaining these defences is £60m (about 90 million ECUs).
- 2.3. Some of these defences are natural dune but in many cases, artificial sea-walls and gravel ridges have been constructed. Many of these walls were built some time ago and some distance from the natural rise of land, to improve agriculture or enable industrial development to take place.

Sea-level rise and coastal squeeze

- 2.4. Many parts of southern and eastern England are tilting downwards as a result of local changes in the Earth's crust associated with the last Ice Age. The resulting sea-level rise is about 4-6 mm per year. Taking account of global warming predictions, there could be a rise of 0.5 to 0.7m over the next 100 years.
- 2.5. A rise in sea-level means that saltmarsh and other intertidal habitats will migrate up the shoreline.
- 2.6. However, in many cases, this upshore migration is truncated by sea walls - the effect is that saltmarsh is 'squeezed out' and, as the shore steepens, mudflats are eroded.
- 2.7. This loss of both saltmarsh and intertidal mudflat to the seaward side of seawalls is giving serious cause for concern on two fronts:
 - the loss of conservation interest, and

- the loss of a natural 'buffer' to protect the sea wall structure - saltmarsh is often an integral part of the sea defence and erosion could undermine the foundations.
- 2.8. Where sea walls have naturally breached in the past, intertidal habitats have re-established, forming a new natural line of coastal defence. Many of these areas have high conservation interest and are protected as part of SPAs or candidate SACs.

3. MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- 3.1. Coastal defence strategies now take a much longer term view of how best to manage or harness natural processes. Management units are based on sediment cells, There are 11 major cells and 43 sub-cells around the coast of England and Wales. Non-statutory shoreline management plans, are based on these cells or sub-cells and identify how best to protect both natural and economic assets.
- 3.2. Government guidance is that any strategic coastal defence option must be sustainable and compatible with the preferred options identified for adjacent management units and the processes at work within the sediment cell.
- 3.3. Consultation and agreement of objectives by all interested parties are essential prerequisites for the successful implementation of a shoreline management plan. All options need to be appraised in economic, engineering and environmental terms. Grant-aid from central government for any work will not be given if these criteria have not been met.
- 3.4. Management options for individual sea defences within the natural coastal unit include:
- do nothing
 - hold the line
 - retreat the line
 - advance the line
- All these options equate to a plan or project under the Habitats Directive. In the context of sea-level rise, do nothing is in reality equivalent to "retreat the line" over a 50 or 100 year time period.
- 3.5. Retreating the line means allowing the sea to advance to the natural rise in the land – an option known as "managed retreat" or "setback". The sea defence is either allowed to deteriorate over time or purposely breached in a controlled fashion.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR NATURA 2000 SITES

- 4.1. The Habitats Directive requires that Member States take appropriate steps to maintain favourable conservation status of those areas as contributing to the Natura 2000 network. Any deterioration has to be resolved through the provision of habitat compensation measures, to ensure that the integrity of species and habitats is maintained within the Natura 2000 network as a whole.
- 4.2. The coastal zone is extremely important in wildlife conservation terms and this is reflected in the designation of mudflats, shingle, dunes, lagoons and coastal grazing marsh as Natura 2000 sites, either as classified SPAs or candidate SACs. There are 51 such sites around the coast of England and Wales with a total area of ha.

- 4.3. One particular dilemma is that some areas of freshwater grazing marsh classified as SPA under the Birds Directive are largely protected from sea level rise and the resulting upshore migration of saltmarsh by sea walls.
- 4.4. In many cases, maintaining favourable status for these freshwater marshes would mean raising the sea wall. This in itself is unsustainable, and would accelerate the coastal squeeze loss of saltmarsh and mudflats to the seaward side.
- 4.5. Retreating the line, either by doing nothing, or a controlled breach would irreparably damage the freshwater marsh but allow for development of saltmarsh and mudflats.
- 4.6. In some instances, there is a freshwater SPA on one side of the wall and a candidate SAC saltmarsh on the other. Holding the line would be increasingly unsustainable, and mean long-term damage to the SAC; retreating the line would mean damaging the SPA.
- 4.7. On a national (England and Wales) scale, it is estimated that, over the next 50 years, there could be significant losses (4150 ha) and gains (700 ha) of coastal habitats, in Natura 2000 sites. There will also be significant changes elsewhere along the coast, mostly in eastern and southern England.
- 4.8. There are many assumptions in these estimates, not least that retreating the line is politically feasible in all instances. However, the main points are that, whatever the scenario of sea-level rise
 - Future management of sea defences will be a significant factor in determining the survival of coastal habitats,
 - Whatever management option is taken, there will be a loss of at least some protected habitats.
- 4.9. By way of a more local example, the North Norfolk Coast sediment sub-cell has a shoreline management plan which identifies preferred coastal defence options. The implications are for an estimated gain of 672 ha of saltmarsh, but a loss of 580 ha of freshwater grazing marsh and 92 ha of reedbed.
- 4.10. Under the Directive, measures are required to compensate for habitat loss. This will certainly mean land use change to relocate freshwater grazing marshes for the inland, but outside the current SPA and SAC boundaries.
- 4.11. There are agricultural areas in England and Wales which could potentially revert back to freshwater grazing marsh or saltmarsh. For freshwater habitat replacement, the indicative cost of this is estimated at £50m to £60m (75-90 million ECUs). The technical financial mechanisms for implementing this are not yet determined.
- 4.12. In order to maintain the integrity of the Natura 2000 network it is anticipated that replacement habitat would need to be developed prior to the loss or damage of existing SPAs or SACs. This would mean that the replacement cost would need to be spent over the first 20 years of the 50 year plan.
- 4.13. Grant-aid incentives through the agri-environment scheme (saltmarsh habitats and water fringe) are available, but are inadequate, given the scale of the problem.
- 4.14. The involvement and, more important, support by farmers and other landowners affected by these changes, both in terms of holding or retreating the line, and compensatory schemes for habitat recreation, has not yet been established. We are at the early stage of determining the scale of the problem, not identifying detailed solutions.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. Sea-level rise and the management of sea defences have significant implications for the long-term sustainability of coastal Natura 2000 sites.
- 5.2. Traditional demarcation of static site boundaries for protected areas is probably not practical given the dynamic nature of coastal processes,
- 5.3. There are conflicting requirements for the protection of adjacent Natura 2000 sites along some parts of the coast.
- 5.4. Compensatory measures for habitat replacement will inevitably involve changes in agricultural land-use outside current SPAs and SACs. Landowners must be involved at an early stage; measures should be seen to be practical, and incentives should be used to deliver the necessary change.
- 5.5. The issue highlights the need to take account of wider land-use and coastal management policies in determining the long-term sustainability of the very best areas of nature conservation interest.

LIFE-PROJECT MARS

Patrick Meire

The Schelde estuary is one of the few remaining European estuaries that include the entire gradient from fresh to saltwater tidal areas. Along this gradient mud- and sandflats as well as marshes occur. Fresh and brackish water tidal marshes are extremely rare habitats. The Schelde is protected by national and international legislation, following Directive 79/409/EEC (EC Wild Birds directive), Directive 92/43/EC (EC Habitats directive), and the RAMSAR convention.

The ecological value of the Schelde estuary is clearly linked to the presence of the tidal marshes, mud- and sandflats and shallow water areas. These habitats are subject to both habitat loss and degradation due to reclamation, sediment dredging and dumping, industrial expansion and other human activities. Conservation of the ecological values requires full legislative protection of habitats and management measures, based on a long term philosophy on development and wise use of the estuary.

The project MARS (Marsh Amelioration along the River Schelde) is a co-operation between public authorities from the Netherlands and Flanders and local nature conservation organisations, to preserve and manage this ecosystem. It consists of the preparation, application and evaluation of several measures to protect or restore marshes along the Schelde. Four project sites are involved, one in the Netherlands and three in Flanders. The action consists in purchase of land to obtain the project site, and specific measures on the project site (see enclosed folder). European financial support involves only a first phase of the project, in which the purchase of land and the execution of two minor projects will take place.

One of the essential conditions for a successful nature conservation project is the commitment it gets on all levels of government and administration. Unfortunately, this condition is not always fulfilled. Competition between different interests often results in neglecting the environmental issues.

Due to the very important economic value of the estuary (entrance to the port of Antwerp) economic planners were reluctant to see an increasing awareness of the natural values and measures to improve it. However, by a strategy of communication (e.g. Schelde symposium) and co-operation, important steps toward an integration of ecological and economical interests were taken. Especially the fact that it was shown that intertidal areas have also an important economic value was very important. This economic value consists of water storage area enhancing safety, nutrient transformation, sedimentation areas etc.

The fact that the European Community assesses the importance of this project and gives it financial support contributes much to the recognition and political support this project gets. An other strategic choice in the design of this project was the participation of two countries in one joint project. Public authorities are concerned by the international prestige of the country, especially when the neighbouring country also invests his best forces in the project.

Local authorities and local nature conservation organisations were informed and consulted about the project in an early stage of the project. The recognition they got from administration resulted in their full collaboration to the project.

The production of a regularly published news letter about the river Schelde, and of an information folder about the project Mars, contributes to the appreciation of the project in the public opinion.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the project was and is still subject to several difficulties. These problems resulted in a severe retardation of the project execution.

Major problems occurred in the purchase of land.

The project sites are still private propriety, landowners were not willing to sell their land for many different reasons. Therefore the Minister started an expropriate procedure. Although the project gets full support from the ministry, juridical and administrative problems (reservation of money, acquirement of necessary licences concerning the environmental legislation, administration of justice) slow down these procedure. For the moment, the purchase procedure is in the final stage for two of the three sites to be purchased.

The problem of pollution is also a topic of major concern. As was shown in an exploratory investigation, one of the project sites has a soil that may be severely contaminated, by a former human activity. Full investigation of the degree of contamination and sanitation cost asks for extra prolongation of the purchase procedure, but is necessary to be certain that the costs are acceptable. Another site is polluted with heavy metals, caused by sedimentation of contaminated particles from the river Schelde. Original expectations about the quality of the soil are not fulfilled. As a consequence, the material which will be dug out from the site can't be recycled and has to be dumped on a dumping ground in accordance with legislation. This will represent a severe extra cost. An additional problem is the fact that legislation about contaminated soil is still incomplete and subject to discussion.

A last topic of concern is the innovative and situation specific character of the projects. This complicates the making of good estimates of budget and time needed to realise the project. By an intensive collaboration between different services of the administration, this problem is solved. The scientific knowledge of biologists and environmentalists about the goals to be realised and methods to obtain this is combined with the practical experience of engineers about realising infrastructure works in direct contact with a tidal river. The fruitful contacts between these different services in the framework of this project leads to an improved understanding, and opens perspectives for future intensified co-operation.

PRÉOCCUPATIONS ET CONTRIBUTIONS DE L'INDUSTRIE DES CARRIÈRES EN REGARD DE LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE

Yves de Lespinay

Avec environ près de 30.000 sites exploités au sein du territoire de l' Union Européenne, l'industrie des carrières rencontre une demande de près de 2,8 milliards de tonnes de granulats. Ceci revient pour l'image à édifier 560 pyramides de Cheops chaque année, mais plus concrètement, à construire les bâtiments publics et privés, écoles, hôpitaux, infrastructures routières, portuaires, aéroportuaires, ferroviaires. En fait les besoins en pierre sont nombreux et envahissent notre vie quotidienne : la pâte dentifrice, le papier, le sucre, la moquette, la peinture, le plastique, la porcelaine, le verre, l'acier.

Ces carrières, gravières et sablières occupent une surface de 0,1 à plus de 200 hectares ce qui doit compter dans la gestion de l'aménagement du territoire. La localisation de notre industrie est directement liée à la présence d'un gisement de minéraux accessible et économiquement exploitable. Cette spécificité restreint le choix d'établissement ce qui peut être une source de conflit dans l'occupation des sols.

L' U.E.P.G. (Union Européenne des Producteurs de Granulats) nourrit des craintes sérieuses quant au gel attendu ou suppose de l'activité au sein des zones de protection spéciale pour les installations qui s'y trouvent déjà ou qui sont appelées à s'y étendre.

Au risque de déplaire, nous expliquons cette préoccupation par

- Un manque de transparence au niveau national ou régional quant au choix des sites proposés pour intégrer le réseau Natura 2000
- Un flou juridique résultant d'un manque de clarté dans la définition des zones de protection en particulier au niveau régional voire national
- L'absence d'enquête publique et d'étude d'impact économique

Or, l'extraction des minéraux s'exerce dans une dynamique qui impose de s'étendre là où le gisement se trouve. En professionnel, l'exploitant doit se ménager des réserves de gisement pour une période d'activité planifiée sur 30 ou 40 ans. Qu'en sera-t-il de l'accès à ces territoires en réserve s'ils sont couverts d'une protection pour la faune et la flore, les habitats ou les oiseaux ?

Il ne s'agit pas ici de dresser un catalogue des difficultés car la liste pourrait se révéler longue mais bien de rappeler combien l'extraction de minéraux est compatible, voire même indispensable à la conservation de la nature.

Pratiqué en concertation entre les industriels, les pouvoirs publics, les ONG, les milieux universitaires et scientifiques, le ré-aménagement intelligent et créatif de sites carriers en cours ou après exploitation permet de développer un capital naturel ignoré.

Les réussites sont nombreuses et procèdent de plusieurs éléments essentiels :

- L'étude des impacts sur l'environnement d'un projet carrière constitue un investissement certain pour apprécier notamment le devenir du site après exploitation
- L'exploitation sur une surface importante dont l'accès est interdit au public constitue un atout
- L'exploitation s'exerce sur une période généralement longue ce qui permet une réflexion approfondie et une répartition des efforts, dans le temps.

En effet, bien connaître son site avant et pendant l'exploitation, évoluer avec une présence humaine réduite, réaménager avec une patience organisée permet une haute valeur ajoutée dans la reconstruction de milieux proches des écosystèmes initiaux. Une gestion correctement menée permet de considérer les carrières aujourd'hui comme des biotopes essentiels au maintien de la diversité des habitats, de la faune et de la flore. Cette richesse ignorée ou méconnue n'est pas le fruit du hasard.

En Belgique par exemple, dans le bassin carrière du Tournaisis, se distinguent des pelouses calcaires dont l'originalité des espèces est liée à la présence de milieux secs. D'autres endroits sont remarqués par des fosses dont la qualité de l'eau autorise une espèce aussi rare que l'écrevisse à pied rouge. Dans la vallée mosane ou dans les Ardennes, des colonies d'hirondelles du rivage ou la présence de Grand Dues se confirment depuis plusieurs années.

En Irlande, la population du faucon pèlerin connaît une progression importante dans 7 régions différentes qui ont un point commun, la présence de carrières : sur les 35 carrières recensées dont la moitié toujours en activité, 40 % d'entre elles connaissent une occupation du faucon pèlerin. En France l'aménagement d'anciennes gravières sont à l'origine d'une richesse et d'une diversité naturelle remarquable. Citons en particulier la valeur pédagogique et scientifique du site de Chambeon dont l'intérêt se vérifie pour la migration et l'hivernage des oiseaux tant pour la diversité de plus de 214 espèces que pour la taille des effectifs, tel le Canard Souchet, le Canard Chipeau ou à ce seul endroit le stationnement hivernal de près de 1 % des effectifs nationaux du Grand Cormoran. Citons encore la nidification de plus de 55 espèces d'oiseaux telle la Nette Rousse rare et en déclin dans toute la France ou encore 32 espèces différentes de libellules.

En Autriche l'ORF (Osterreichischer Rundfunk Fernsehen) a trouvé matière à produire un film démontrant le développement impressionnant de la faune et de la flore dans les carrières et les sablières.

Aux Pays-Bas les Kraaijbergse Plassen dans la vallée de la Meuse se distinguent sur plus de 155 ha par sa population de blaireaux, de salamandres, de caujek, de chevaliers guignette et quelques 51 autres espèces d'oiseaux attirés par des biotopes reconstitués au cours du temps, et pendant ce temps l'exploitation de granulats se poursuit sans gêner la croissance des giroflées d'eau. Des histoires naturelles et industrielles se conjuguent de la même manière en Suède, en Espagne, au Royaume-Uni, en Allemagne Fédérale et commencent à apparaître en Europe centrale.

De nombreuses zones naturelles existent aujourd'hui là même, où la pierre était extraite hier, bien souvent cette extraction continue dans un voisinage proche sans que cela ne perturbe ou ne contarie la conservation de la faune et de la flore. Au contraire, la présence d'une carrière démontre souvent que cette activité agit comme un accélérateur. Moyennant un partenariat approprié, des contraintes adaptées aux situations locales, la compatibilité entre l'extraction de minéraux et la conservation s'est vérifiée dans les faits, ce serait se priver d'un atout que de ne pas la promouvoir.

Managing change on Natura 2000 sites

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Richard Buxton

Rapporteur: Ursula von Gliscynski

The object of this workshop was to see how better to deal with changes on Natura 2000 sites – both coping with natural pressures and development projects. Different types of change were illustrated by three presentations:

- Change which is inevitable. Paul Raven from the UK Environment Agency described the difficult choices the Agency faces in how best to manage sea level rise around the coast, having due regard for Nature 2000 sites. Where sea defences may be reduced or moved, some important habitat types may benefit, but to the detriment of other types.
- Change which the Habitats Directive obliges, by virtue of its requirement to maintain or restore sites to favourable conservation status. Patrick Meire from Belgium's Institute for Nature Conservation described the difficulties with restoring habitat on the estuary of the River Scheldt. The project had met with resistance from many parties (including environmental NGOs and commercial interests). Encouragingly, the project was beginning to be seen as having both a high ecological value and, by better protection of the estuary, a high commercial and safety value as well.
- Change where the law offers a choice for development which may affect a Natura 2000 site, or not, providing the conditions of Article 6 are satisfied. Yves de Lespinay from the European Aggregates Association set out the problems that the quarrying industry faces, and emphasised that industrial activity is compatible with Natura 2000 designations, given dialogue and mutual understanding.

At least for some pressures, (particularly proposed development) that may affect Natura 2000 sites, Article 6 provides an innovative mechanism for dealing with change and for balancing ecological and other interests.

One recognises that there is potential for time consuming and costly conflict between different interests. The objective of the workshop was to find ways of reducing the scope for such conflict. If there was no tension between different players, that might be unsatisfactory, being symptomatic of inappropriate compromise to the detriment of Nature 2000 sites. On the other hand, unnecessary conflict delays the achievement of the objectives of the Nature 2000 programme.

Article 6 contains many points where there is scope for clarification. For example:

- What are the legal obligations involved in maintenance and restoration of sites?
- What do the public expect, particularly in situations involving inevitable change?
- What is the scope of the term "plan or project"?
- What sort of assessment is necessary under Article 6.3?
- Should it (if not, why not?) correspond to environmental assessment under directive 85/337/EEC?
- How strict is the requirement to "ascertain" no adverse effects on a site under Article 6.3? Is one seeking practical certainty or legal certainty?
- What does "taking the opinion of the general public" mean? When is it "appropriate"?
- What is the standard of "imperative reasons of overriding public interest"?
- Is there confusion between "public interest" and "public acceptance"?
- How far is cost relevant to the question of whether something is really an "alternative" solution?
- Should a "do nothing" option always at least be considered as an "alternative solution"?
- If reasons of imperative public interest apply, who should be responsible for compensatory measures - the state and its taxpayers (in the public interest) or the developer who directly benefits from the project?
- What will the public accept by way of compensatory measures. What is an acceptable time frame?
- What risk is acceptable (or degree of certainty that the proposed measures will be adequate)?
- How does, or should, the Commission make exceptions under the last part of Article 6.4 to the stricter protection given to priority species and habitats?

However, considering the theme of the conference "Nature 2000 and people: a partnership", and the limited time available, discussion attempted to focus on the interests of people in the various aspects of the application of Article 6. Many of the above issues had to be left for another day!

The general conclusions from the workshop were that it would help manage change on Nature 2000 sites, and therefore reduce the potential for conflict:

- if the public was better informed - about projects, about industry's intentions, and about the Natura 2000 network. There is little understanding about what Natura 2000 as a "coherent whole" means, or will mean. Presently the focus is usually on particular sites. Perhaps the management of change on particular sites could be handled better if the whole network were better understood. Both Member States and the EC Commission must work hard to make matters clear.
- if people understood that change is not necessarily bad - it may bring opportunities and advantages for Nature 2000 sites and other players. The Scheldt estuary presentation showed this to be the case. The same may occur through proper planning and dialogue even with potentially damaging activities, such as quarrying.
- if there was more clarity about the system of compensatory measures. In particular it would help if it were clear in advance of consideration of a project what compensatory measures were proposed, and what investment was involved (and who would be paying).

Ultimately the success of Natura 2000 may turn out to be a matter of public acceptance. Will people accept the economic costs of eg. more expensive quarry products, or more expensive water?

**FINANCING MANAGEMENT OF NATURA
2000 SITES**

**PROTECTION THROUGH USE IN THE BIOSPHERE RESERVATION RHOEN – COORDINATED
USE OF DIFFERENT PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR INTEGRATED INITIATIVES IN THE
REGION**

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Rhoen is a volcanic low mountain range in the heart of Germany. It extends over three Bundeslaender and was recognised in 1991 as a biosphere reservation. In the last months here - consequent to certain LIFE-Projects - about 30 SCIs were suggested.

The Rhoen is characterised by a multiform cultural landscape with interspersed forests on the summits of many small hills.

The culture landscape Rhoen has been shaped for centuries by an extensive, highly structured agriculture with sheep and cattle pastures, mountain hay meadows and few fields.

Today the main problem in the Natura 2000-areas, which are characterised particularly by mountain grassland, is how to preserve agriculture.

Many farms are missing the successors, since traditional agriculture appears unprofitable.

Intensification is only possible at the lower altitudes. Therefore, in recent years, many areas were afforested or were left to grow unused. If this process would advance, not only different priority types of habitat would disappear, but the Rhoen would lose also its advertising slogan for tourism - "country of open views" - and thus some of its attraction and sources of income.

Therefore, in the last few years, different paths have been taken, in order to turn around these negative trends. A first step for the preservation of the existing mosaic of the cultivated landscape - and about 10 priority types of habitat listed in the Habitats Directive occurring here - was the acquirement of the so-called "framework concept for the Rhoen biosphere reserve". With this, it should in future be possible to maintain, on the one hand, the landscape as an extensively-used cultivated landscape, and, on the other, to offer to the people a perspective for long-term possibilities for making money. Since the strategic concept with participation of the local actors (politics, administration, economics, private organisations for example from the fields of conservation, tourism) developed, it became the recognised basis for the entire further development of the biosphere reserve.

A further condition on the conservation side was the development of several management plans for the most sensitive areas in the biosphere reserve, where the landscape had

already suffered some degradation, in order to prepare appropriate conservation measures. This applies particularly to the two largest of today's pSCIs. With over 2500 hectares and over 3000 hectares surface, they are the largest connected grassland areas in the raised areas of the Rhoen.

Legal protection and planning on their own are not however sufficient for the preservation of the cultivated landscape. One of the most important factors for a lasting protection is the continuation of smallholder agriculture. Therefore, on the basis of the strategic concept and the management plans, different initiatives were taken, in order to recover the open natural spaces, with the help of agriculture.

I would like to present to you some of the initiatives that use several promotional programmes at different administrative levels.

Firstly, I would like to mention the European promotional programmes which were used in the biosphere reserve. Of course, a contribution is required from our own resources: these originate from the most diverse areas, for example funds from the Bundeslander, the municipalities, and private funds. There are also special conservation projects which are supported with national promotional programmes.

1. Regulation 2078/92:

With help by the Bundeslander several promotional programmes were created using this Regulation. They have two goals: Some of the programmes are aimed at the general extension of land use by agriculture. They are usually called the "cultural landscape programme". The other part promotes special measures for the care of areas for the purpose of the conservation. This part is usually called "contract conservation".

With the application of Regulation 2078, many measures can be covered, which both serve the conservation measures and offer compensation at the same time for losses of agricultural income.

2. The LIFE-Instrument:

In the years 1993 to 1997, in the central areas of the Rhoen, an initial LIFE Project was established, for preservation and development of the priority types of habitat occurring there. Meanwhile a second LIFE-Project was requested, to take further areas and measures into account.

With the help of this project, special measures could be carried out, which could not have been covered by other programmes. These include the purchase of particularly valuable areas and, in particular, protection measures for extensive grassland areas. This particularly concerns the mat grass meadows and important orchid sites in lime meadows which occur here. For both types of habitat, the Rhoen has a special importance in Germany, since it has the most extensive sites in low mountain ranges.

Since the protection work (removing bushes and special mowing) was carried out by resident farmers, these measures also contributed to agricultural incomes, since some substantial work had to be carried out. The farmers had some substantial additional income from these tasks.

In addition to the help from the LIFE-Projects, some mapping was carried out, a pasturage concept was created, and different measures to assist with public relations were accomplished. Among other things, five brochures were created covering the priority types of habitat occurring in the Rhoen, which were given free of charge to the different visitors information centres.

3. LEADER and Structural Funds:

I must treat the two programmes together, since they are usually used in such a way that that they complement each other.

Here, accompanying measures are carried out, which assist, for example, agriculture and, at the same time, the catering and the processing trades (particularly in the field of handicraft), providing new sources of income.

Some initiatives already created a turning point for agriculture, by assisting with the marketing of regional agricultural products, and at the same time improving the cultural landscape. Farmers and other interested persons have been trained as nature and landscape leaders, with the help of Objective 5b-measures. This provides an additional source of income in the tourism area. The conservation value of this cultural landscape is brought closer to the visitors, by running excursions or horse coach trips. A charge is made for these excursions.

4. Finally, there is another particularly complex example, in which the different promotion possibilities in the Rhoen were interwoven, with particular accent on the protection by use. Through this, areas of Community interest are supported the development of extensive agriculture: This is the so-called "**Rhoen sheep project**" :

The Rhoenschaf is an old breed of sheep, which originally developed in the Rhoen and has spread widely from there. The characteristics of the Rhoen sheep are a black head and an otherwise white body (also the legs are white). It is a relatively small and light land breed of sheep; its wool is rough. It survives very well on the sparse vegetation of the mat grass meadows and lime lawns, associated with the rough climate of the Rhoen. Since however the meat and wool yield are small compared with the meat and wool breeds of sheep, the race has been superseded since the beginning of this century.

In order to protect the Rhoen sheep from becoming extinct, in the '80s, with the help of a conservation federation, the Rhoen sheep project was initiated. A herd of 70 animals was established at the beginning, purchased from several people. It has now risen to nearly 1000 sheep. As an accompanying measure, marketing the Rhoen sheep meat was developed, which is now offered in the local hotels as a delicacy. To allow the Rhoen

sheep to feed again at their original places, the remaining disused pasturelands were restored. Meanwhile, the Rhoenschaf became a true indication of the Rhoen and is even sold as a cloth toy or wooden figure (manufactured in local enterprises). The shepherd maintained his agricultural enterprise fully operational; without the new sources of income, he would have had to look for additional income outside agriculture.

The Rhoen sheep project was however only possible by the joint use of different European promotional programmes:

Thus marketing was developed by LEADER and Objective 5b-measures:

The initiative "From the Rhoen - for the Rhoen".

In this, several catering trade enterprises joined together and committed themselves, as far as possible to use only products of the region, and from the biosphere reserve, in their meals. Not only the meat of the Rhoenschafes is used. Other products from other initiatives are marketed here, such as, for example, various apple products from the so-called Rhoener apple initiative (this was by the way also promoted with LEADER means) and beef from the regions pastures.

Today's owners of the Rhoen sheep flock have stimulated an interest in the improvement of marketing the Rhoen sheep products, with the help of 5b-means, and with the help of LEADER-I. With the help of these initiatives today, not only products of the Rhoen sheep are marketed, such as sausage specialities, but also other products of agriculture, such as geese, eggs, potatoes etc.. from the region. The shepherd himself has opened his own farmer shop, with the help of the LEADER- in which he sells all Rhoen sheep products -from meat and sausages up to wool, and also other products of his and other farms from the region (e.g. eggs, bread, wood toy, fruit products).

The re-establishment of pastures:

In the upland areas of the Rhoen, we began, with the help of the LIFE project, to make an area of about 140 hectares of mat grass meadows and flat moorlands useable again as pasture and hay meadows (except in the wet areas). Because of the loss of use during the previous years, hard grass species (particularly *Deschampsia cespitosa*) had spreaded strongly. This is not eaten by the sheep, and forms high tufts, which cannot be mowed with normal mower mechanisms. Therefore, first of all, the surface of about 15 hectares was mowed by farmers with special machines, in such a way that already after one year the typical picture mat grass meadow has become clear for low grazing, rich in species again. The surfaces can be mowed now again with normal machines and be grazed later in the year by the Rhoen sheep. This consecutive use is promoted now with help from the State of Bavaria. The restoration of pastureland will be continued with the help of the second Rhoen LIFE project, which I hope, will be approved by the Commission soon.

Thus, different ecologically and economically oriented projects interlink into one which helps all: both nature and the human being. This is the basic concept of the biosphere reserve, which is a part of the UNESCO programme "Man and the Biosphere".

Our main problem in the Rhoen is to ensure that the individual ideas, which concentrated until now on a few individuals, can expand to an entire movement within the biosphere reserve. It is necessary to convince the people, especially the farmers, of the fact that their agriculture has a future – but only, if new sources of income are found at the same time. These can lie in tourism or in the direct marketing, but also in the area of the professional preservation of the countryside. Still many niches can and must be found here, and the EU programmes offer financial aid and perspectives for this.

I thank you for your attention.

VISITOR PAYBACK

Richard Denman Director, The Tourism Company, UK

This paper is about raising financial resources for conservation from visitors. At a time when the public exchequer in many countries is under pressure, yet the level of personal interest in natural environments is increasing, methods of tapping the goodwill of visitors can offer a potentially useful source of support for conservation.

The concept of Visitor Payback

'Visitor Payback' is a term introduced by The Tourism Company in a study for the European Commission, DG23. It refers to the process of visitors giving money voluntarily to conserve the places they visit. The study was carried out from January 1996 to June 1997.

Whereas obligatory charges and taxes can play a very important role, the essence of the Visitor Payback approach is voluntary giving. This process enables the donor to relate to a specific conservation cause (unlike a tourist tax which often simply goes into a general budget) but without necessarily requiring a specific service or facility to be offered to the visitor in exchange. An important aspect of Visitor Payback is that it is sought from visitors at the time that they are in the area concerned, seeking to get them to respond to the message "If you have enjoyed the natural beauty of this area please help us to conserve it". It therefore has more direct relevance to them than requests for donations in the home or High Street.

Experimental work

The study was based on research and experimental work in five European destinations:

- Ski resorts in the French Alps. Three tour operators raised money through donation boxes in chalets and asking for donations on transfer busses.
- The Ionian Islands of Greece. A voluntary environmental organisation working with travel companies and local communities established a donation scheme linked to self guided trails and other activities.
- Tenerife in the Canary Islands. Research amongst visitors in this mass tourism destination was carried out to establish potential support for contributing to whale conservation.
- The Stockholm Archipelago. The City Authority introduced mark ups on the sale of T-shirts and other items and on cottage rental.

- Tarka Country, North Devon, England. A range of approaches was tried, including levies on payments for accommodation and activities, donation boxes and contributions to a Friends membership scheme.

The study also drew on some more established Visitor Payback schemes:-

- A comprehensive scheme in the Peak National Park in the UK, involving a donation scheme handled by tourism enterprises and specially adapted donation ticket machines in car parks.
- The long established Yosemite Fund in the USA which raises money from visitors through Friends of Yosemite, legacies, sponsorship, merchandising etc.
- The Patenschaftsaktion and Friends schemes in Austria's Hohe Tauern National Park, involving various ways of recognising and rewarding donors.
- The Invest in the Lakes scheme in England's lake District National Park, where a number of donation and levy schemes have been established with accommodation operators such as timeshare companies and self-catering agencies.

Types of Visitor Payback scheme

The basic components of a Visitor Payback scheme include:

- Identification of local conservation or management causes, as beneficiaries.
- Involvement of tourism enterprises.
- Publicity for the scheme, in the destination and, if possible, reaching visitors before they arrive.
- A simple method of approaching visitors and a process for them to make payments.
- A method of collecting money and distributing it to beneficiaries.
- Monitoring and providing feedback to visitors, enterprises and other supporters.

Seven different methods of raising resources from visitors can be identified, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. These include:

- simple donation via collection points, including the use of donation boxes, envelopes for mailed response, etc. backed by publicity and information leaflets and posters;
- more elaborate sponsorship schemes;
- membership schemes where the visitor pays to join a club or group;

- adding a voluntary supplement to payments such as for hotels or meals. These can be opt-in supplements (Visitors are asked to add an amount, which may be specified or left to the visitor's discretion) or opt-out (A small sum is automatically added to the bill, which is clearly stated and visitors are asked to indicate if they do not wish to pay it).
- creating specific items for merchandising with a conservation mark-up;
- introducing a voluntary admission charge to a site or special event;
- seeking non-monetary support from visitors through their direct participation in conservation.

Results obtained

Will visitors be willing to pay?

Visitors show considerable willingness to help to pay for conservation, through voluntary schemes. Evidence for this is available from attitude surveys and from the experimental projects. For example:

- In the Peak District National Park, in the UK, 75% of visitors agreed with the principle of visitors contributing financially to local conservation.
- In a more mass market destination such as Tenerife, 31 % were willing to pay.
- On buses of ski tourists in the Alps, an average of 60% of passengers made a donation on request.
- Where tourism enterprises have added a payment automatically, usually less than 2% of visitors have indicated that they do not wish to pay.

How much can one expect to raise?

In practice, the amounts paid per head can be quite low, but can make a significant contribution in total. Some results from the Visitor Payback Project and elsewhere showed that:

- Amounts people say they are willing to pay can be quite high. In Tenerife, those prepared to pay indicated 15 ECU on average, equivalent to 5 ECU amongst all visitors surveyed.
- In reality, amounts donated may be lower, but this may relate to the particular circumstances of the collection. Amounts collected in donation boxes averaged 4.7 ECU per donation in the Ionian, where this was linked to a heritage trail. On ski buses in the Alps, 0.5 ECU was collected per donor.

- 'Mark ups' on merchandise can vary considerably. The Tarka Project added 5% to their range of items. Stockholm City used a 20% mark up on T-shirts (1 ECU per shirt) and found no resistance to this.
- Supplements on bills using the opt-out method are usually kept low, maybe 1-2% of a hotel or meal bill, in order not to be seen to be imposing on guests. The 0.6 ECU per night at a hotel in the Tarka project is typical. This may underestimate the amount many people would be prepared to pay.
- Carefully targeted approaches to people for more significant personal donations or sponsorship could reasonably be pitched at a quite high guideline figure. The 15 ECU minimum sought by a timeshare operator in the English Lake District was readily accepted, with many people giving more than this.

The total amount raised per scheme will clearly depend on its size, the number of tourist enterprises and others who are involved in reaching visitors, how long it has been running and the vigour with which it is pursued.

The \$1 million raised per annum by the Yosemite Fund shows what can be achieved by a major scheme in a high profile and much visited area. At an enterprise level, the 12,000 ECUs raised per year by each of two accommodation operators in the English Lake District, using a donation and an opt-out supplement method, is an encouraging result.

The above examples are well established schemes. The results from the small pilot schemes set up under the Visitor Payback Project strike a more cautionary note. Total amounts raised were very small. This was partly due to the small amount of time they had to become established, the limited nature of the schemes and the quite restrictive methods that were used. An important factor was the difficulty in persuading private tourism enterprises to become involved.

Pointers to successful 'Visitor Payback' schemes

Create an effective organisation to run it. It is important that environmental, commercial tourist and community interests in an area are involved in any scheme. A good approach may be to establish a joint project between them, appointing someone to develop the scheme in the early years. This may require core funding to get properly established.

Involve local tourism businesses. They have most interface with visitors. The Project found that it can be a challenge to persuade them to become involved; this takes time and careful negotiation. They may be too busy, see it as someone else's problem or be worried that visitors will treat it as a price rise, but experience shows that they can gain many p.r. benefits from such schemes.

Make it easy for visitors. This is critical. Visitors will pay if they can do so quickly and easily, without having to make an effort. Hence the great advantage of opting out supplements added at the point when visitors are making a payment anyway.

Make a direct appeal. People are much more likely to respond if asked directly and personally. Leaving them to find out about a scheme on their own is not productive.

Sell it hard. Successful Visitor Payback requires creative action and enthusiasm in approaching visitors. Simple donation boxes which are not backed up by promotion have proved very ineffective. Messages need to be very clearly spelt out with great attention to detail.

Make the conservation benefit the primary sales pitch. Although merchandise and membership schemes, which provide some return to visitors, can be helpful in winning support, it is important that people are not asked to make a decision on the basis of whether they like a merchandised item or not - the actual conservation cause can be more powerful than this.

Select clear conservation themes which are real and local. Visitors will want to have an idea of how their money is going to be spent. Although a specific project which visitors can see happening has particular appeal, the Project found that visitors will also support general conservation themes local to the area they are visiting.

Choose beneficiaries sensitively. The Project found that visitors are more receptive to supporting voluntary organisations than public bodies. It is also important to find beneficiary schemes for which even small amounts of money raised by visitors can be of significant help and can be spent quickly.

Provide feedback to tourism businesses and visitors. It was found that tourism businesses like being involved in deciding how the money raised will be spent and like to hear back about progress. Through them and in other ways this can be passed on to visitors and helps to secure loyalty towards schemes.

Conclusions

It is likely that admission charges and general visitor spending will continue to be the main way in which tourism contributes to conservation in an area. However, Visitor Payback can provide useful additional support for specific causes, tapping the additional goodwill which visitors show to the environment. As a new source of money it could lever still further resources through matching funding from public sources. Beyond the purely financial return, it is also a fulfilling process which brings tourism enterprises, environmental interests and visitors together in a practical way.

In order for the concept to flourish, it needs to be expanded so visitors come to anticipate it as a natural activity in their destination and tourism enterprises have confidence in supporting it.

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**SYNERGIC USE OF “LIFE” WITH OTHER FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS IN BELGIUM.
VARIOUS EXAMPLES. RNOB-BIRD LIFE BELGIUM**

Three additional aspects are examined and discussed:

- synergy between LIFE and local financial instruments for land management and nature conservation;
- relations with other local bodies;
- designation of areas protected through LIFE for uses other than nature conservation.
-

1. In Belgium, the characteristics of property law and certain provisions of the Nature Conservation Act are such that the purchase of land of major biological interest is the most effective formula to safeguard it in the long term.

However, this solution is expensive; various additional financial sources would have to be found in order to bring together the necessary funds to pursue conservation programmes.

Réserves Naturelles RNOB have for a long time worked in areas of major biological interest which are currently designated under Directives 79/409 and 92/43, having recourse to European financial sources, formally under ACE and ACNAT and currently LIFE.

Two recent examples will clearly illustrate the role which *Réserves Naturelles RNOB* play in bringing together the necessary financial resources.

The LIFE programme for the protection and restoration of corncrake populations (*Crex crex*) (1994-96): the land purchase programme (ECU 1 060 000; European contribution ECU 530 000) received supplementary funding from the Walloon Region, Flemish Region, King Baudouin Foundation, and members and supporters of *Réserves Naturelles RNOB*.

The LIFE programme for the protection and restoration of alkaline low-lying marshlands in Belgium (1995-97) (ECU 504 356; European contribution ECU 252 178) received supplementary funding from the Walloon Region, Flemish Region, King Baudouin Foundation, Lefèbvre Foundation, and members and supporters of *Réserves Naturelles RNOB*.

For work involved in conservation management, the financial resources supplementing the European contribution (50%) come from the Walloon and Flemish Regions, from sponsoring by private companies and from the association's own funds.

2. With regard to the partnership with other actors, in particular local bodies, the RNOBs have a policy of getting them involved in the programmes. Such involvement is

particularly focused on farmers. Under the LIFE programmes for alkaline low-lying marshlands and corncrakes in particular - although this is a general attitude of the RNOBs -, whenever it is possible to entrust the management of particular stretches of land to a farmer, this is the formula chosen. There are a number of advantages:

- farmers become involved in the management of protected areas and are motivated to contribute to their conservation;
- land managed in this way is not removed from the total usable agricultural area; on the contrary, it contributes to the equilibrium of farms; land no longer farmed (including zones replanted with spruce, for instance) is recovered as grassland and assigned to farmers to manage, giving them an agronomic mission;
- the constraints of nature conservation in farming these areas have a demonstration value for farmers in comparison with more extensive farming techniques.

With this in mind, the RNOBs have concluded an agreement with the Walloon Region under which farmers managing and farming such land can benefit from agri-environmental support. Moreover, the Minister for Agriculture of the Walloon Region has just entrusted to the RNOBs the task of promoting and accompanying agri-environmental measures among farmers in the Fagne-Famenne region. This is the very region where the RNOBs have conducted the LIFE programme for corncrakes: the experience of promoting grassland farming techniques benefiting corncrakes has definitely been decisive in assigning this task to the RNOBs. The nature reserves managed by the RNOBs will be an ideal demonstration medium.

There are numerous other local bodies: local authorities, tourist offices, schools, local associations, etc. Cooperation covers many aspects, including special events at schools, joint management, supplying hiking routes and producing brochures.

3. Nature conservation in areas protected through LIFE does not exclude other uses compatible with the objective of protection. Two main types of use are being developed in this connection, viz agricultural production, as described in paragraph 2 above, and tourism.

Protected areas constitute a remarkable heritage, often of great natural beauty. With this in mind, the RNOBs are opening up these areas to the public and making them available for regional tourism.

In the Haine valley, the Prés de Grand Rieu nature reserve (acquired through financial support from LIFE) and the Marionville nature reserve have been provided with footpaths, observation posts, information panels and brochures with financial assistance from the ERDF (Objective I). They thus contribute to the attractiveness of the region.

In the framework of the corncrakes LIFE project, a tourist itinerary, *Au Pays de Roi des Cailles* (In the Land of the Corncrake) has been designed and publicised with the aid of local partners. The itinerary consists of a one-day hiking tour for tourists.

The network of nature reserves of the *Cigogne Noire* (black stork) programme, financed by an ACE, is highlighted by special activities and an interactive play module devoted to the life and migrations of the black stork. This module has been installed at Houtopia (in

the town of Houffalize), an important tourist attraction located in the geographic centre of the region covered by the black stork programme.

Jean-Paul Herremans

Secretary-General

Financing Management Of Natura 2000 Sites

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Chairman: Claus Stuffmann

Rapporteur: Carlos Romão

- 1) The case studies from RNOB and the Rhön are very good examples showing the integrated use of existing financial instruments (EU, national, regional, public and private).
- 2) The Visitors Payback study is an example of a scheme to encourage tourists to give money, on a voluntary basis, to conserve the places they visit. It is also an example of involvement of national and regional government agencies, local tourism offices, protected areas and tourism business.
- 3) The publication "*Financial instruments for the Natura 2000 Network and nature conservation*", presented by Carlos Sunyer, is a comprehensive overview of existing EU funds with examples of their use by different countries.
- 4) LIFE-Nature has acted as an efficient catalyst to start and promote co-ordinated activities using different financing sources.
- 5) There was a strong call for the continuation and strengthening of LIFE-Nature in future, but it is recognised that LIFE, by itself, is not enough and one should use its experience to develop appropriated co-ordination mechanisms at all relevant levels.
- 6) A wide range of financial instruments exists, but they are not fully used. Several reasons were indicated:
 - lack of awareness among agents related with the implementation of Natura 2000;
 - lack of awareness or under-estimation of the real value of nature;
 - lack of awareness about the need to integrate site management plans into wider sustainable management plans;
- 7) Given the close relation between nature and agriculture, the Common Agriculture Policy in general and the Agri-Environment measures in particular, are considered a fundamental financial instrument for Natura 2000 and sustainable development.
- 8) Need to make the competent authorities aware of the opportunities offered by the EU funds before the preparation of the next Community Support Framework. It is important to exert pressure on relevant authorities to make Natura 2000 a high priority when formulating the programme proposals for the definition of the next generation of EU funds.
- 9) Member states have to further develop the estimation of additional costs of the implementation of Natura 2000, for priority species and priority habitat types, as indicate in Article 8 of the Habitats Directive.
- 10) Private initiatives and local fund-raising may increase awareness and usefully add to public expenditure. This was shown in the Visitors Payback Project.

- 11) Equitable distribution of the resources to the different categories of actors is important.
- 12) Effective and clear management plans are a very important tool for sustainable use, and for finding the optimum combination and distribution of available resources.
- 13) As shown in the case study of RNOB, small nature areas may act as a touristic attraction for a wider region, but the most important incomes do not stay there. In those circumstances, tax and other mechanisms should be used to return back some of the incomes for the management and conservation of those nature areas.

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To be completed