

IN THIS ISSUE:

Editorial _____ 1

Study visit to the Egadi Isl. and Capo Gallo MPAs ____1

Caesar Pass in the Acroceraunian Land ____2

Sea Turtles treated in the rehab.&recov. center ____ 2

Marine Litter Assessment in Vlora Bay _____3

Recycling Cooking Oil ____3

Info & News _____4

Did You Know? _____4

United Nations Development Programme in Albania Supports Nature Protection

UNDP works in some 170 countries and territories, helping to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results

UNDP began its operations in Albania in 1991 and works with the Government and people of Albania, to strengthen the rule of law, promote human rights and freedoms, protect the environment and support economic and social reforms for social inclusion and an equitable society.

UNDP's biodiversity & ecosystems work is organized in three main capacities: mainstreaming biodiversity into development; supporting the protected areas; and managing the impacts of climate change.

Since early '90, it is noticed an increased territory put under protection reaching approx. 17% vs. 6% in 1999. As a result of UNDP interventions, Narta ecosystem has been declared a Sea-Landscape Protected Area in 2005 and the first marine protected area was established in 2010 (Marine Park Karaburun - Sazan). Management plans for several protected areas have been developed and a number of management actions have been undertaken integrating ecological, economic and social goals.

There are important actions taken from the UNDP in collaboration with all concerned actors, stakeholders, and other donors, to extend the protected areas

coverage especially marine and coastal ones ensuring compliance with the *acquis communautaire* in the field of nature conservation bringing the national protected areas in line with the demand of "Habitat" and "Birds" Directives, consequently enabling Natura 2000 designations to be integrated successfully.

UNDP policy is guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The 17 Goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.

Achieving the SDGs requires the partnership of governments, private sector, civil society and citizens alike to make sure we leave a better planet for future generations.

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STUDY VISIT TO THE EGADI ISLANDS AND CAPO GALLO MPAs

On September 2018, the UNDP MCPA2 project office organized a study visit with participation of a team composed by NAPA, Vlora local authorities and UNDP, in Sicilia, Italy in two main protected areas of *Egadi islands* and *Capo Gallo - Isola delle Femmine*.



Work program of the study visit involved meetings and field visits according to the progress made by marine park authorities. In this respect the team visited the main zones (A, B, C and D) with different levels of protection / accessibility and integral parts / ecosystems.

During the field visit, the two marine protected areas in Sicilia region were visited in cooperation with respective park administrations.

The field visit helped decision makers and stakeholders understand

some of the key actions and activities carried out by Italian marine park administration. Through replication of the Italian best actions and practices, National Marine Park Karaburun - Sazan (NMP K-S) could significantly improve management of the protected area, particularly in relation to conservation, education and development. The RAPA Vlorë, supported by the UNDP project, has started to implement some activities and investments in the NMP K-S. (ex. information tables installation, anti-trawling bollards, signal buoys, preparation of an Activities Regulation in the park, creation of mandatory permits for activities issued by park administration etc.).



CAESAR PASS IN THE ACROCERAUNIAN LAND

The beginning of Caesar's Illyrian campaign with the sudden landing on the Acroceraunian banks, at Paleste (Palasa), is mentioned by various historical sources. Referring to the historical books of the time, it was mentioned that Caesar landed in Palasa (Paleste or Pharsalla) via Brindisi, in order to surprise his opponent and avoid the seafront encounter, where Pompey had an absolute advantage. In his book "*De bello civili*", which is a diary of that war, Caesar writes that he had landed at noon on January 5 "... *inter Ceraunorum saxa et alia loca periculosa ... locum, qui appellabatur Palaeste*" (... between Acroceraunian rocks and dangerous places ... in the place called Paleste) (Caesar B. civ. III, 6).

This historical event is one of the added values for two of the most important natural attractions in southern Albania, National Park



"Llogara" and the Nature Monument "Palasa Stream Delta". Positioned very close to each other, these two areas have been part of Caesar's march with his army in the war against Pompey.

The revitalization of these areas and the attention to such an important historical event has been the focus of Regional Administration of Protected Areas Vlorë in cooperation with Regional Directorate of National Culture Vlorë. This has led to the

marking and mapping of "Caesar's Path", which has become one of the main destinations in NP "Llogara". Near Llogara's mountain pass the inhabitants still show "Caesar's Pass" and "Caesar's Stone" (local toponyms), right next to the road where the climbing from Palasa ends. The path continues through the

Llogara pass and connects with another path called "Shtrunga e Gurtë" (Stone Strait), which ends up in the Dukati field.

From there Orik can be easily reached by foot.



Promoting the "Caesar's Path" would augment the monument's touristic value without compromising its natural values.

Archaeological elements are distinguished along the path, particularly the traces of a cobblestone path and several stone stairs. World War I bunkers are encountered near Dhiapori. The bunkers' location is the highest point of the path, 1102 m.

Flora along the path is rich with species such as black pine, mountain maple, Heldreich's pine, flowering ash, holly oak, and bushes such as boxwood, Kermes oak, common holly, hornbeam, and medicinal plants such as sage, oregano, wild rose etc.

@RAPA Vlorë

SEA TURTLES TREATED IN REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY CENTER

A number of sea turtles have been treated in the Sea Turtles Rehabilitation and Recovery Center in Radhima. The majority of the turtles were females and ten of the turtles belonged to the



Caretta caretta species. Seven of these were rehabilitated at the center, while three others were found dead. Three of the seven, received anti-parasitic treatment for a period of 5 days, and one individual was treated for removal of plastic waste from the mouth.

The other individuals were in good health and correspondingly their sheltering period at center was very short.

Two of the sea turtles found dead, died due to injury from motor vehicles, while the third turtle died due to blockage of the respiratory tract from plastic waste. The three dead individuals were identified on the shore of Vlora bay, while the others were identified and transported to the rehabilitation center by fishermen in the area.

Two individuals were marked with GPS system by Professor Idriz Haxhiu. In overall, their length was 60-80 cm and width 50-70 cm.

Two individuals were *Chelonia mydas* species and did not have any health problems. They were identified and transported by fishermen. The period of their sheltering in the center was much shorter compared to *Caretta caretta* species due to the inability to provide the food (algae) needed for their nutrition.

One of the *Chelonia mydas* specimens, treated in the center, was also equipped with a GPS system in order to monitor its movement.

The last treated turtle was named *Teuta*.

Two *Caretta caretta* individuals arrived from Divjaka and one individual came from Lezha.



@RAPA Vlorë

MARINE LITTER ASSESSMENT IN VLORA BAY

Marine litter assessment, performed within the UNDP MCPA2 Project aims to serve as a tailor-made scheme for better understanding and effectively dealing with marine litter patterns in the target area, i.e. NMP K-S in Vlorë region. It is important to highlight that there are no reliable and consistent data with regards to the current situation of the marine litter, and the extent to which the plastic debris is present. This is not only the case for Vlorë bay, but also in the narrower target area, i.e. NMP K-S.



In the frame of marine litter assessment in NMP K-S, de-littering pilot actions have been performed in the:

- Beaches on the eastern side of the Karaburun peninsula, and
- Seafloor (shallow coastal waters) pertaining to one of the most frequented beaches on the Karaburun Peninsula.

A total of 8 beach litter monitoring sites have been identified as the result of marine litter pre-survey on Karaburun Peninsula. Among these beach litter monitoring sites, 3 have been identified as potential “Hotspots”:



1. Shën Jani Beach; 2. Dhimëkushtë Area; 3. Shën Vasili Beach



A summary of the assessment findings is presented below:

- **Artificial Polymer Materials** have been identified as the most present litter group in all three sites.
- The amount of marine litter items found in each area varies from **687 litter items** in Shën Vasil beach to **5440 litter items** in Dhimëkushtë Area (with a maximum of **10095 litter items** in Dhimëkushtë 6 beach!!!)
- The average beach litter density varies from **0.99 items/m²** in Shën Vasil beach to **64.6 items/m²** in Dhimëkushtë Area. This is almost **100 times higher** than the average beach litter density for the Adriatic-Ionian beaches (**0.67 items/m²**).

Technical surveys of marine litter were accompanied with the beach clean-up action, planned within the global initiative “International Beach Clean-Up Day”. Through this initiative, the total weight of the collected beach waste summed up to **205 kg!!!**



RECYCLING COOKING OIL

The UNDP project on MCPA conservation and management addresses some of the most relevant aspects of the MPA K-S management. In particular, the project combines integrating ecosystem conservation actions with sustainable ecotourism approaches through mitigation impact into the ecosystem, and by introducing tourism certification approaches.

The preliminary considerations of environmental impacts from the improper waste management along the Vlorë bay, reveals a very high risk for the marine ecosystem hosted in that area. As such, the rehabilitation measures intend to improve waste collection and disposal systems for the most significant waste streams, mitigating the harmful effects of mainly plastic and used cooking oil on the natural environment.



In this frame, the pilot project that UNDP is conducting locally, with the involvement of private sector (bars and restaurants) and specialized oil recycling company, contributes to the introduction of waste management standards. The standards relate to the collection, separation, treatment and disposal of used oil and plastics.

The project is implemented with the support of Vlorë Municipality, recycling companies, hotels & restaurants, and tourism associations.

They have all contributed to: base-lining the waste recycling situation in Vlorë; awareness raising campaigns on plastic bottles & used cooking oil recycling; and providing education and informative tools for the local community and the wider public.

Some collection bins (prototypes) for plastic bottles were produced in cooperation with professional high school in Vlorë in order to test and implement the plastic recycling actions. Several studies reports that the waste generation forecast is from 54166 ton/a in 2017 to 71095 ton/a in 2036 with more than 90% coming from Vlorë Municipality and tourism activities. The recyclable fraction makes up 36%. The hazardous waste is at approx. 350-400 ton/a with used oil representing a part of this waste. The official waste monitoring reports indicates that 4000 liters of used oil was generated in 2016. However, no operators or licensed subjects handled the recycling of this waste stream.



Since June 2018, 24 economic operators (mainly bars and restaurants) have been involved and applied used cooking oils collection by special tanks, as per agreed schedule. They are assisted by the specialized recycling company who also explains and informs how the recycling initiative works. In total 1800 kg of used oil has been collected and shipped to specialized recycling facilities.

Needs related to further training and capacity building are identified with respective authorities and stakeholders. It is very important that used cooking oil recycling actions in Vlorë are promoted and shared, also at national level.

INFO & NEWS

UNDP organized the environmental activity “Blue Guardian” at the VC of NMP K-S, in collaboration with RAPA Vlorë, Green Recycling company and Orikumi and Dukati elementary schools. The purpose was to raise awareness and educate students on the negative effects of marine litter and simple actions aiming at the marine environment protection locally and globally. The students were divided into two teams, Turtle and Monk Seal, and involved in games and preparation of many objects with plastic bottles, showing them the importance of nature and biodiversity and how to reuse plastic, therefore reducing pollution in surrounding areas of NMP K-S. All students were trained on how to be and act as a blue guardian to protect marine park. They also received a blue guardian certification.

This activity is in line with VC Strategic Plan regarding the education and awareness on marine environment protection.



On November 7, 2018, a presentation on ecosystem services was held at the Radhima Visitors Center. The presentation focused mainly on ecosystem services related to CO₂ seizing. Participants in this activity were the partners of “Public Authorities Supporting low-Carbon Growth in European maritime border regions - PASSAGE” project.

This project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the Framework of Interreg Europe programme. PASSAGE is a cooperation project that includes 11 partners from 8 countries and 5 maritime borders. The Regional Council of Vlora is one of the beneficiary partners.

The International Day of Tourism was celebrated at the VC of NMP K-S, by organizing an environmental learning session with the students of “Hasan Mëhilli” school, Dukati. The aim was to promote sustainable tourism in the protected areas of Vlora Bay.



On October 16th, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco visited Albania.



During His visit, the “Association pour le financement durable des AMP de Méditerranée”, benefiting from the support of the “Foundation Prince Albert II de Monaco” formalized His financial support to the NMP K-S. His Excellency Mr. Bernard Fautrier, in his capacity as treasurer of the environmental fund for the Mediterranean AMP, signed a tripartite convention with the Albanian authority responsible for the management of Protected Areas in Albania.

On October 8, 2018, a special visit with the Ambassador of Croatia in Albania, Ms. Sanja Bujas Juraga was organized at the VC of NMP K-S. Ambassador Juraga was familiarized with the marine park and the work done by RAPA Vlorë with the support of UNDP project.



DID YOU KNOW?

The cave of Haxhi Ali was the **safest residence of Haxhi Ali Ulqinaku** from Ulcinj. Together with his tartans he was the commander-in-chief of the Turkish Mediterranean fleet. At the end of the 19th century, he came to Karaburun and defended the Albanian coast from the attacks of Venetians, Saracens from Malta and Egypt, Spaniards, English and French. For 22 years he was the defender of these shores. He was killed during the war with Venetians and it is said that he was buried at sea.



Close to Karaburun lies the wreck of the passenger ship “Principe Umberto”. Torpedoed by an Austro-Hungarian submarine in June 1916, the ship sunk taking with it **over 1900 people, causing more casualties than the Titanic**.



Posidonia oceanica is **the main flowering plant** living underwater in the Mediterranean. Its fruit is free floating, greenish and known as “*the olive of the sea*”.



The black goat of Karaburun distinguishes itself from other species, because **both females and males have horns**. This gives them a unique look.



3 of the 34 **recognized animal Phyla** are found on coral reefs **compared to 9 Phyla** in tropical rainforests.

