

LAND OF EAGELS AND CASTLES

*“Integrated Participatory Management for
Albanian Costal Biodiversity”*



PPNEA

Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania



BSPB

Bulgarian Society for
the Protection of Birds



CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND

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Introduction of the project



The center for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA), in partnership with the Bulgarian BirdLife partner and the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) started the implementation of the second phase of the “Land of Eagles and Castles” project, with the full title “Land of Eagles and Castles: Integrated Participatory Management for Albanian Coastal Biodiversity”. This project likewise the first phase is financed by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF).

The CEPF is a joint initiative of l’Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. Our project is in line with the CEPF Strategic Direction No.1: “Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the conservation of biodiversity in coastal areas. All our actions are addressing its three following investment priorities:

Introduction of the project



- Engage local stakeholders in conservation actions that address threats to key elements of biodiversity in priority Key Biodiversity Areas in the coastal zone.
- Engage private sector stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices that deliver positive impacts for conservation in priority Key Biodiversity Areas in the coastal zone.
- Support civil society to engage with local or national governments to mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated coastal zone management, land use and development planning process.

The project is focused on two Key Biodiversity Areas identified along the Albanian Coastline such as the area of Vjosë-Nartë (ALB24) and the area of Saranda bay – Butrint National Park (ALB 04). The project duration is 34 months starting from March 1st, 2019.

The total budget of the project is 203 003 USD out of which 166 503 USD is financed by the CEPF and the rest by the project beneficiaries PPNEA and BSPB. For more information about the project, requests for collaboration and synergy, please find or contact us at:

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Introduction of the project

PAVING THE WAY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: THE LANDS OF EAGLES AND CASTLES PROJECT



The “Land of Eagles and Castles 2” initiative follows on the very successful steps of the first project “Land of Eagles and Castles: Pilot Sustainable Tourism Model for the Albanian Adriatic Coastline” which aim was to set progressive examples on community-driven nature-based tourism in three Key Biodiversity Areas of Albania. The second phase of the project will continue on the positive experiences and the foundations set in the first phase, by working with communities in the Narta and Butrint KBAs to support and orient them towards sustainable and nature-friendly models of tourism and alternative income generation.

The LEC 1 and LEC 2 project financially supported by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund have been of massive importance to PPNEA. Through this support, PPNEA has been able to substantially increase its internal capacities on project management, ecological expertise as well as to establish valuable contacts and networks on the ground. In addition, by being able to manage these grants PPNEA has seen direct benefits in its institutional improvement, by following and abiding to the high quality and criteria set by the Fund, which have been used as pivotal directions in improving many institutional aspects of the organization.

Introduction of the project

PAVING THE WAY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: THE LANDS OF EAGLES AND CASTLES PROJECT



The LEC 2 project could not have started at a more timely period. Currently the Narta KBA is facing imminent threats from unsustainable development plans by the Albanian Government, that among others predict the construction of a major international airport completely within the borders of the Vjose-Narte Protected Landscape. In addition, the planning of giant touristic resorts and marinas for yachts are also being discussed to be built within the protected area. Such investments will irreversibly affect the ecological value of the area and will pose major threats to the numerous wildlife, and in particular to the hundreds of bird species that currently find in Narte-Vjose ecosystem a haven for feeding and breeding.

Through the work and support from the programme we hope to act against such insane developments and move away these threats from Narta, once and for all. Additionally, the model projects and local initiatives supported by LEC 2 will pave the way for a successful model of development, one that has nature at its heart, and that will be there to stay for the people and the future of Narta.

Aleksandër Trajçe

Project staff

XHEMAL XHERRI

Project Manager

Xherri is the Project Manager of “Land of Eagles and Castles: Integrated Participatory Management for Albanian Coastal Biodiversity” and is part of PPNEA’s communication and sustainable development department. He has a MA degree in “Languages, Intercultural Communication and Sustainable Tourism” from Tirana University and has a vast experience in nature and culture interpretation. His research interest are sustainable tourism and cultural and natural heritage studies.



LEDI SELGJAKAJ

Project Assistant

Ledi has joined PPNEA firstly as a volunteer and currently she is working as Project Assistant in the project for the Conservation of Egyptian vulture in Albania. She is an Environmental Biologist and has a high interest in the conservation of nature issues, mostly in biodiversity protection and conservation. Ledi is focused mainly on the field of Ornithology. She was part of BirdID 2018 course and now she is a keen birdwatcher, able to identify different bird species.

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Project staff

SABINA ÇANO

Project Coordinator

Sabina works at PPNEA as a Project Coordinator since 2018 for the project dedicated to the most endangered marine mammals on Earth, Mediterranean Monk Seal. She is coordinating the project in Karaburun-Sazan National Marine Park. Sabina's research interests are not limited, she is also involved in projects related to conservation and evaluation of plant habitat, in which is working on the wetland plant mapping on Prespa area.

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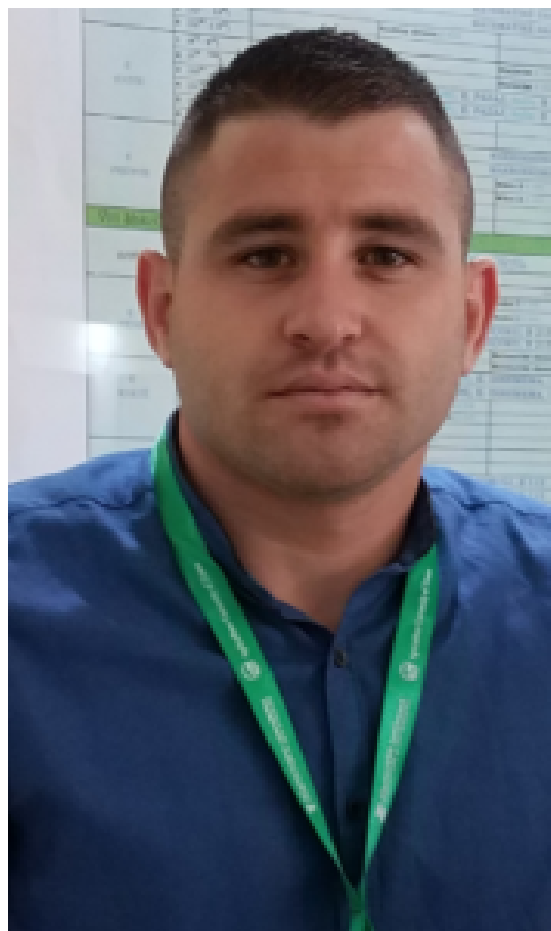


ALEKSANDROS KONOMI

Local officer

Aleksandros is our new local officer in Vlora region. He has a degree in Aquaculture and Fishery Management from the Agricultural University of Tirana and has been involved in several project of aquatic fauna, especially on projects related to the protection and conservation of sharks in Albanian territorial waters. Aleksandros has been volunteering in some of our activities before joining our team and now you may find him in our cool local office located in Vjose-Narte Protected Landscape. For more updated information of Vjose - Narte touristic attractions visit him!

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Tourism Information

A NEW FEATURE ON YOUR WEBSITE
NATURETOURALBANIA.INFO



Often while traveling in Albania, tourists in general face lack of information for touristic attractions, guest houses, and public transport etc. *www.naturtouralbania.info* is a website which promotes Key Biodiversity Areas of Vjose-Narte Protected Landscape and Butrint National Park and development of sustainable tourism in these KBA areas. Recently, on our website we have added a new feature “Tourism information”, which may help tourist and locals that have a guest house. In this section, locals may register they guest houses by adding characteristics of their guest houses and all the services that they offer.

Meanwhile, in this website tourists may easily find services that these two KBA areas offer. Through this platform we invite all owners of guest houses in Vjose-Narte, Butrinti and Saranda Bay to contact us and to enroll they guest houses in this dynamic website and we will promote it consonantly.

Drone

A REVOLUTION IN TOURISM MARKETING



Beside the fact that are very easy to use, drones offer unlimited commercial potential to take tourism marketing to a whole new level. There is nothing that you can't shoot with a drone today, mountains, rivers, sea, forest, cities, everything. Through our website natureturalbania.info and our social Medias we plan to use drone footages to promote two Key Biodiversity Areas, such as Vjose-Narta Protected Landscape and Butrint National Park. Follow us and you will see these tow areas differently.

Nowadays, the drone technology is revolutioning everything, even the tourism marketing, though wonderful aerial videos and photos. The tourism industry has already adopted these new technologies and every day marketers finds drone footage as exotic and a way to give different type of perspective. Aerial videography is pushing today's videographers and marketers to experiment with new trends and shooting techniques to offer a unique view of a touristic attraction or resort. Drones are everywhere and this we can easily notice by watching different promotion videos or wedding events, when day to day it's making even more essential.

Narta Lagoon



Narta Lagoon (Laguna e Nartës) is the second largest lagoon in Albania, and one of the most important sites in the country due to its amazing biodiversity. With an area of 4180 hectares and a water surface covering 42 km², the lagoon is a heaven for nature lovers. In the winter, more than 48,700 seabirds find their home here, creating a true bird watchers' paradise.

The beauty of Narta Lagoon consists of its rich marine life, the diversity of plant species, the remarkable sand dunes created by the wind, Vjosa River's delta and the 195 kinds of poultries counted in the area. Narta Lagoon (Laguna e Nartës) is also important for eco tourism and the production of salt. Besides the fascinating ecosystem that nature has created here, the village of Narta and surrounding area are known for viticulture and some of the best wines in Albania.

The island of Zvërnec



This majestic slice of Albanian cultural heritage is on an island in the Narta Lagoon, a short trip northwest of the city. You can reach it via a rickety wooden bridge that has seen better days, so you'll need to take care on the crossing. Once you make it to dry land you can lose yourself in the island's dense aromatic pine forest and wander around the rocky shoreline to look across the lagoon.

At the centre, in a peaceful little clearing, is this monastery from the 1300s, a lovely example of Byzantine architecture. Relatively few visitors make it to the island so Zvernec is a peaceful place for a picnic on a summer afternoon.

Butrint National Park



The Butrint National Park is located in southern Albania. The park's significance for conservation is reflected in the large number of species with over 1,200 different animals and plants. Its mandate includes the protection of the lake and lagoon of Butrint, the natural channel of Vivari, the islands of Ksamil and as well the archaeological site, that provides valuable remains of ancient civilizations. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the park as Category II. In 1992, the archaeological site joined the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

The lagoon has been further recognized as a wetland of international importance by designation under the Ramsar Convention. Nevertheless, Lake Butrint is an Important Bird and Plant Area, because its abundant to significant bird and plant species of international importance. The park is rich in bird life with over 246 species living in different habitats throughout the territory. Many of these birds are residents and others are travellers passing through the Adriatic flyway.

Wine Festival



The last Saturday of September, PPNEA organized the "Wine Festival" in Vjose-Narte Protected Landscape. Wine Fest was organized within the framework of the project "Lands of Eagles and Castles II", financed by CEPF and with the help of Vlorë Municipality. In this activity participated around 15 wineries from all over the country and it was organized a competition for the best wine, judged by a group of sommeliers. In addition, during the celebration of wine fest different local families presented their products and prepared traditional sea food making this festival unique. The presence of the "Shkolla Tregtare" made the celebration even more unique, though their interesting and creative experience in culinary. The aim of this kind of tradition event give a big contribution in the promotion of natural and cultural values of Vjose-Narte Protected Landscape and the development of social economic in the country.

The project's focus is that in a near future in Vjose - Narte could be organized the "National Wine Fest", similar to Beer fest organized in Korca. Part of this event were the Major of Vlorë, Mr. Artan Leli, representatives from National Administration of Protected Areas, PPNEA, Deputy of Albanian Parliament Mr. Fate Velaj, representatives from Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Association of Winery, Narta NGO, local people and businesses. The opening of the event was announced by the administrator of the central administrative unit Mrs. Margarita Koco when in her introductory speech she mentions the main objective of the event. Furthermore, an introductory speech was held by the major of Vlorë, Mr. Artan Leli, deputy of the parliament Mr. Fate Velaj and also the executive director of PPNEA, Mr. Aleksander Trajçe.

Wine Festival



All of them expressed their enthusiasm and also support for this event and also for other activities similar to this one. One of the objectives of this event, except the promotional part was also to have similar impact or high interest like the Beer Fest, which is organized every year in Korca. In this activity participated 15 wineries from all over the country and also it was organized a competition between them to announce the best wine for this year with the best taste, judged by a jury of sommeliers. An artistic performance was also held in the stage by an artistic group that performed, sang and danced representing the tradition of Narta village. In the end of the event three prizes were given for the best wine producers and also certificates for all the winery participants.

Except tasting the wine, different products and traditional sea food were presented and also the presence of the “Shkolla Tregtare” made the celebration even more unique, though their interesting and creative experience in culinary. As concluding remarks, the event resulted to be very successful. Also the people, organizers showed to be very motivated and ambitious for further activities. While all the participants enjoyed traditional products under the sounds of folk music of the area, the wine tasters carried out for the wine tasting process. Step by step they took sampling of the wines participated in the event and in a very professional way the tasters evaluated the balance of components such as: sugar, acidity, saltiness and bitterness.

Recycling on Friday

"9 TETORI" SCHOOL



Recycling of waste project

BUTRINT, SARANDË



Plastic pollution is one of the biggest problems that our planet is facing nowadays and in touristic cities such as Saranda, the problem is bigger because affects a lot the tourism industry. PPNEA starting implementing an activity related to this, within the framework of the project "Land of Eagles and Castles". During the previous project, a recycling activity was started in Butrint which appeared to be very successful. Related to this a primary school of the Saranda area it was engaged for following up this recycling tradition activity process.

Students of "9 October" primary school under a biology teacher coordination, started the first step of the activity. Having into consideration the collection and recycling of household waste and continuing with the creation and recreation of the artistic artwork. During September, pupils, tried to collect the waste material in framework of the exposition "We recycle" which took place in their school places.

The students used plastic and glass bottles, card boards and other recycle materials converting them into functional and innovative objects. It was very successful for PPNEA and for this big initiative, to be expanded the awareness feelings through a small TV show presentation. PPNEA together with biology teacher and pupils of primary school "9 Tetori" were invited at "Vizioni Pasdites" TV Show to present their initiative "Recycling on Friday". This initiative started three years ago, supported by PPNEA, and it is still continuing to be implemented, thanks to the great work and support of school's teachers. The process is now on going, and under their initiative "Recycling on Friday", together with the biology teacher and others and pupils of primary school "9 Tetori", in implementing once a month aiming gathering and recycling plastic of this city.

The Egyptian Vulture

HEALTHY FOOD FOR THE ALBANIAN NATURE –
CLEANING CREW, SECURED BY PPNEA'S
SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING STATIONS

The Egyptian vulture is the last of the four species of European vultures that still breeds in Albania, with less than 10 occupied territories. A recent evaluation of the threats for the species in the country has shown that

The SFS in Glina was supplied with 5 kg meet every second day, while the SFS in Nivica (which access is harder) – with 30 kg of meet once or twice per week. The results did not delay – a pair of Egyptian vultures started to

the use of agricultural chemicals, veterinary medical products, electrocution and collisions with energy infrastructure, and direct persecution have a marginally negative impact, while the major threat for vultures is the use of poison baits due to human-carnivore conflicts. To provide locally predictable and poison-free food for vultures, by the meantime hardly working in close collaboration with the AOS, VCF and relevant authorities to mitigate the problem with poison use at the national level, the PPNEA has piloted two supplementary feeding stations (SFS) in 2018. Although the SFS were built following the best practices from other Balkans countries, they did not operate efficiently in the first year of their establishment. However, thanks to the expert guidance from the BSPB and the improvement of their management, the situation changed in 2019. Both SFS operated from May to September.

use the SFS in Glina since May. The SFS was provided with a trail camera that allowed monitoring on the frequency of vulture visits and individual recognition of the birds. Later on, during the breeding season, the SFS was visited by a third adult bird from the neighboring territory and also fresh juveniles. The results for the SFS in Nivica are still far from the expectations, but this will be one of the pleasant challenges for PPNEA's team in 2020. Besides the positive impact of providing Egyptian vultures with predictable and safe source of food, the operation of the SFS can also benefit the local communities. In the Albanian case, both SFS were maintained by local people. They helped for raising the awareness of these endangered birds among the local stakeholders and media, and in the future may provide opportunities for rural and wildlife tourism.

Thank you!



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