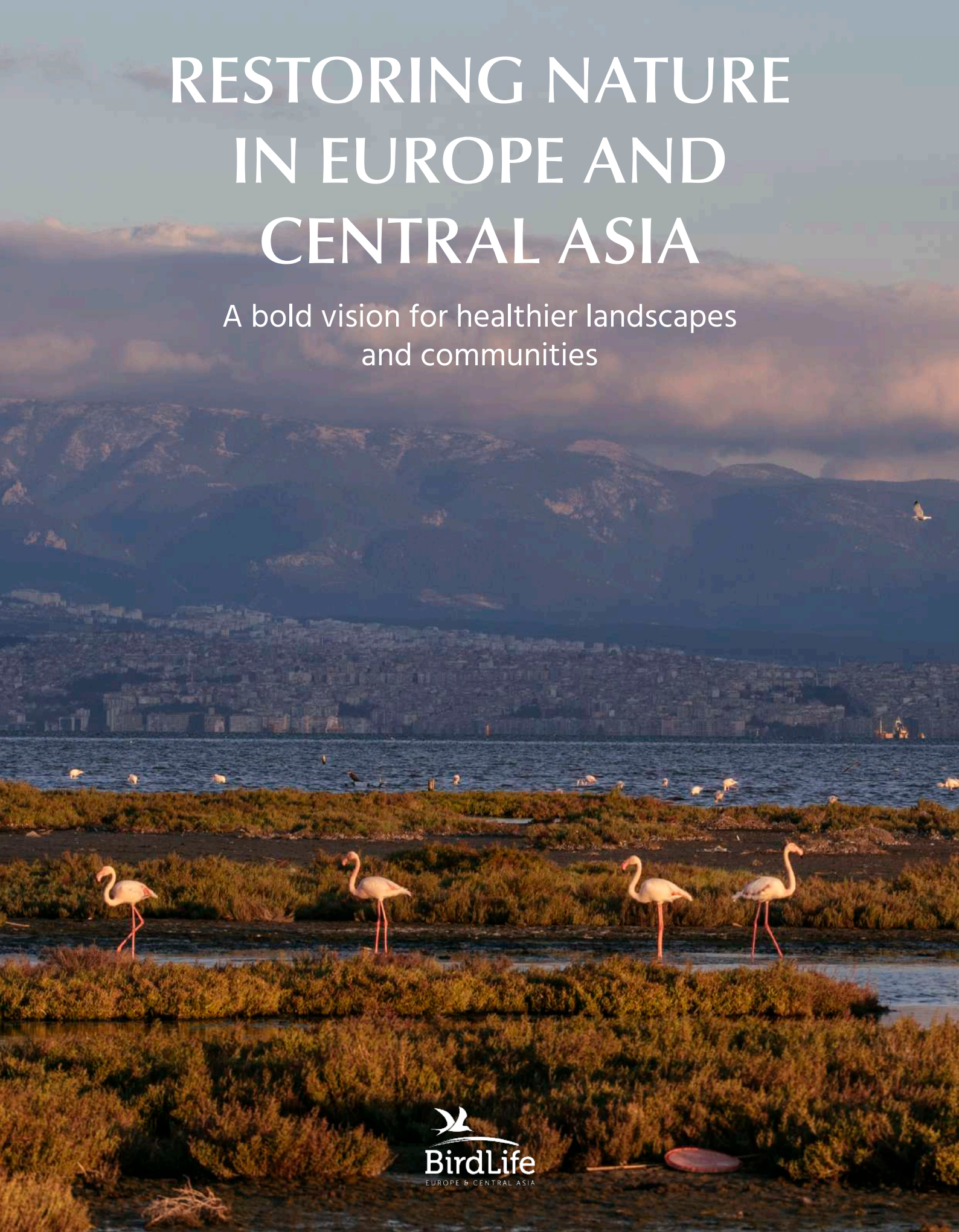
RESTORING NATURE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

A bold vision for healthier landscapes and communities



BirdLife
EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

BirdLife Europe and Central Asia
When birds thrive, nature thrives, and so do humans. Like the birds we look after, we are everywhere. By monitoring and protecting vulnerable bird species, we are able to protect all life. More than any other living beings, birds tell us where and how we can make the greatest difference; they are nature's early warning system. BirdLife is present in 119 countries around the world. Based in Brussels, BirdLife Europe & Central Asia represents 46 national Partners.

Nature is at a tipping point.

Across the world, ecosystems are collapsing under the weight of destruction and climate change. But the story isn't over. We have the power to change the narrative by restoring what has been lost and securing a thriving future for both people and nature.

Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of all life on Earth. They give us clean air, fresh water, food, and the stability we depend on. Yet, for too long, nature has been pushed to its limits. Now we face a choice: stand by as biodiversity disappears or take bold action and bring it back.

At BirdLife, we choose action. From shaping ground-breaking EU laws to leading large-scale restoration projects with our Partners, we are not just protecting what remains – we are bringing nature back to life.

Because without nature there is no future.

RESTORING NATURE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

A bold vision for healthier landscapes and communities

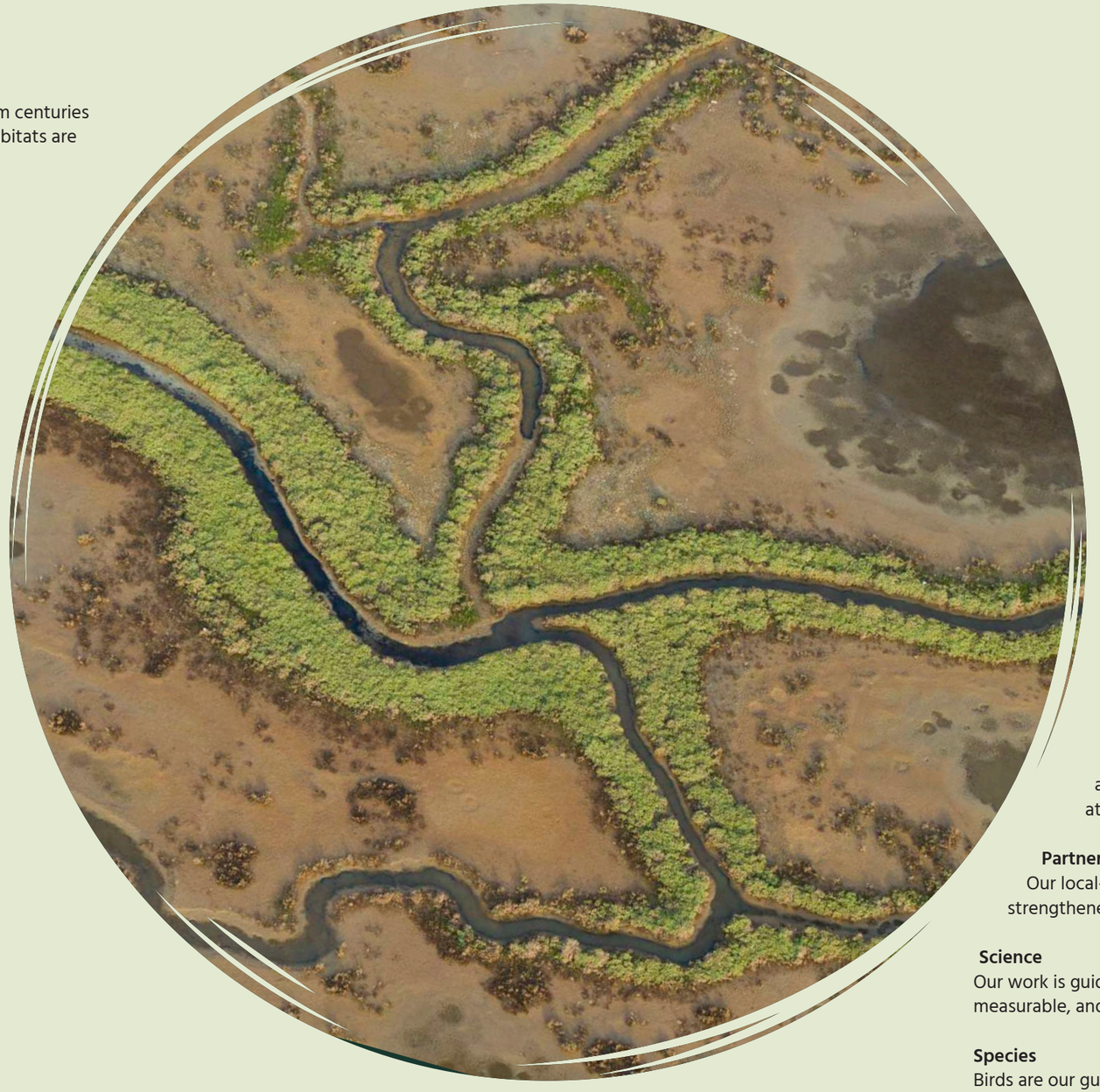
Across Europe and Central Asia, nature is struggling to recover from centuries of exploitation. Forests, rivers, wetlands, grasslands, and marine habitats are now fragile shadows of what they used to be.

Unchecked land use, industrial expansion and habitat destruction have fractured ecosystems, making it harder for wildlife to survive. Overgrazing, poaching, pollution, and overfishing continue to take their toll, while climate change is further pushing nature past its breaking point.

Nature restoration is one of the most powerful tools we have to heal our planet. It means reversing damage, bringing back biodiversity and allowing ecosystems to function as they should.

It's about more than just nature – it's about people, too. Restoring nature means restoring balance. Healthy ecosystems absorb carbon, prevent fires and floods, clean our air and water, and provide food and livelihoods. They help communities adapt to climate change and protect cultural traditions, proving that when nature thrives, we all thrive.

And here's the good news: restoration works. When done right, it transforms degraded landscapes, brings back species from the brink, and deliver lasting benefits. Momentum is building – with the EU Nature Restoration Law, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, and global initiatives like the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration setting the stage for action.



A unique approach

BirdLife is leading the way. Our strength lies in our ability to work at every level, from hands-on, grassroots conservation in the field, to shaping the policies that drive large-scale change.

With a presence in 119 countries, including 46 national Partners across Europe & Central Asia, we are rooted in local communities, working with people who know their landscapes best. We work together with governments, scientists, businesses, NGOs, and engaged citizens, forging powerful coalitions to restore nature at scale. Our restoration efforts are built on three pillars:

Partnership
Our local-to-global network ensures that restoration is locally grounded but strengthened by international knowledge and expertise.

Science
Our work is guided by cutting-edge research, ensuring interventions are effective, measurable, and long-lasting.

Species
Birds are our guide. By protecting them, we protect entire ecosystems, benefitting countless species – including our own.

This approach puts us in a unique position to drive real change, tackling the biggest threats to the natural world in a way that is both sustainable and just.

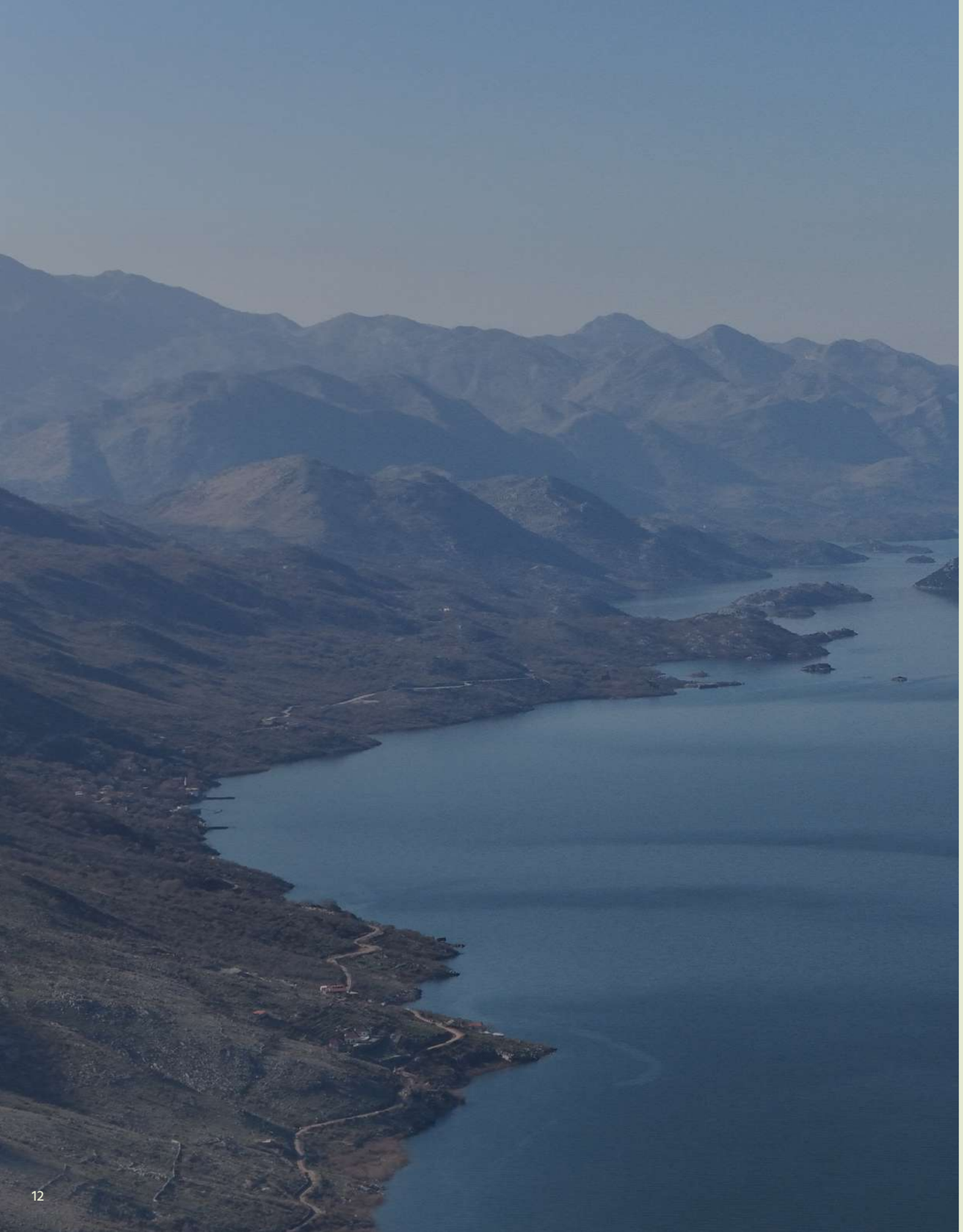
A future we can build together

This portfolio showcases nine restoration sites where BirdLife and its Partners are already making a difference – proof that change is possible.

From revitalising wetlands in Albania to reconnecting forests in Georgia, these projects are beacons of hope in a time of crisis. With the right investment, strategy, and collaboration, we can reverse damage, revive lost landscapes and species, and secure a future for both people and nature.

Now is the time to turn ambition into action. The solutions exist – what happens next is up to us. Together, we can restore nature.

1 **Lake Skadar,** Albania
2 **Carska Bara,** Serbia
3 **Osogovo Mountains,** North Macedonia
4 **Lemnos Island,** Greece
5 **Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar, Western Strandzha,** Bulgaria
6 **Gediz Delta,** Türkiye
7 **Racha and Likhi Ridge,** Georgia
8 **Iori Plateau,** Georgia
9 **Yeghegis River Valley,** Armenia



Lake Skadar

Albania

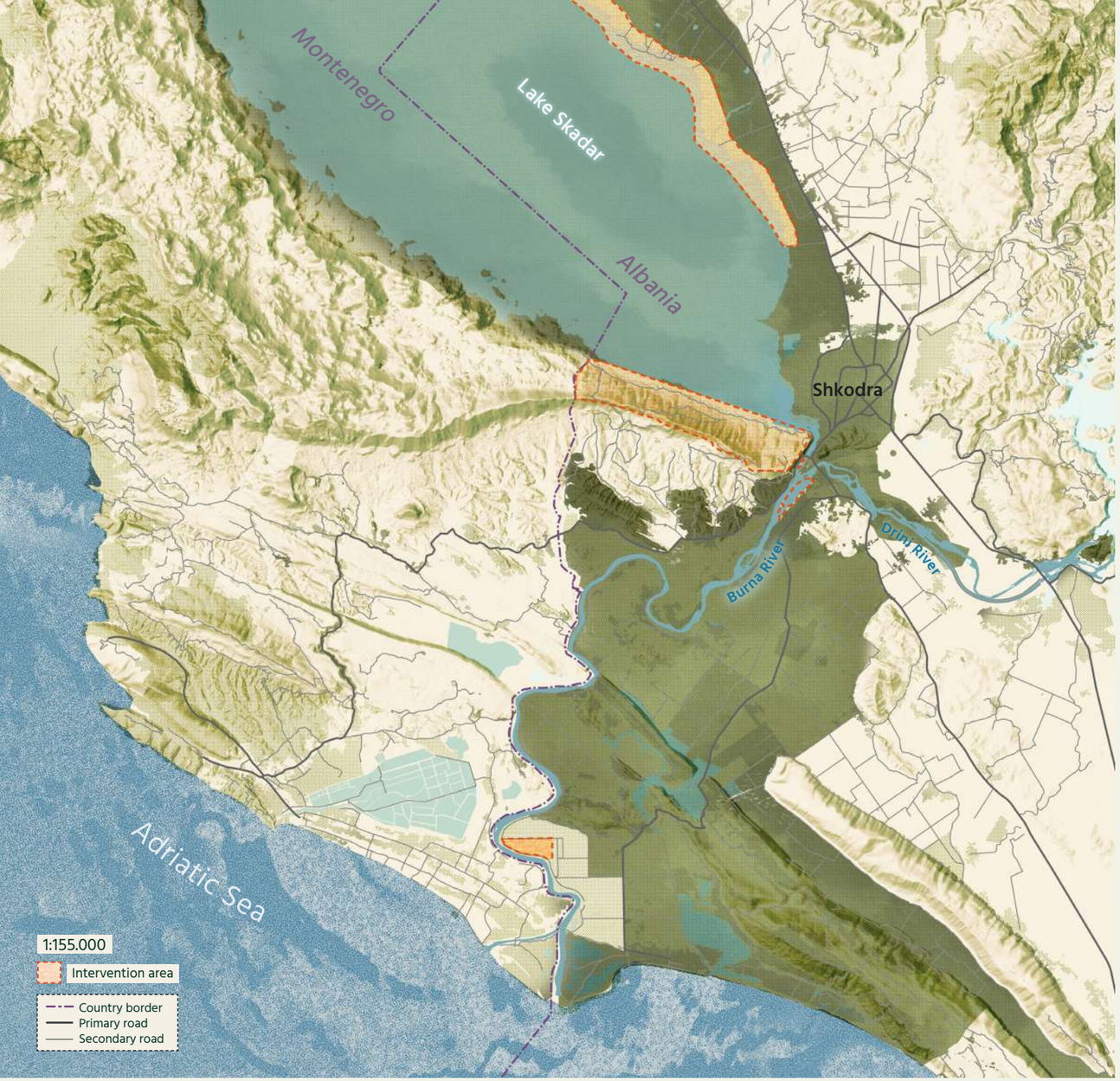
Straddling the borders of Albania and Montenegro, Lake Skadar is the largest lake in the Balkans and a breath-taking natural wonder. Its waters and wetlands are home to a rich array of wildlife, including 281 bird species and 49 fish species, including the majestic Dalmatian Pelican and the graceful Whiskered Tern.

But decades of deforestation and pollution from agricultural runoff have caused extensive damage to this biodiversity hotspot. The once-flourishing riparian forests along the lake's shore have nearly vanished, and the marshlands that once covered thousands of hectares have shrunk to less than 5 km^2. These losses have severed vital wildlife corridors connecting the Accursed Mountains to the Adriatic coast-line. As a result, Lake Skadar is the last known area in Albania where sturgeon species, including the Adriatic and Atlantic sturgeons, were once present.

The Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) is leading a mission to restore Lake Skadar's natural habitats. By replanting forests, revitalising marsh-lands, and addressing the root causes of species decline, we can make the lake resilient to climate change and protect its extraordinary biodiversity for generations to come.

"I grew up by the shores of Lake Skadar, surrounded by the vibrant birdlife that made it truly unique. But over the years, its ecosystems have degraded. It's time to restore what's lost. By bringing back forests, reviving wet meadows, restoring marshlands, and protecting key species, we can rebuild this vital corridor between the Accursed Mountains and the Adriatic Sea, and secure a thriving future for nature and people."

Ledi Selgjekaj
Project coordinator at PPNEA



Dalmatian Pelican
Pelecanus crispus

Small Flowered Tamarisk
Tamarix parviflora

Whiskered Tern
Chlidonias hybrida

Black Alder
Alnus glutinosa

European Eel
Anguilla anguilla

Ferruginous Duck
Aythya nyroca

Eurasian Otter
Lutra Lutra

Twaite Shad
Alosa fallax

White Poplar
Populus alba

Lake Skadar at a glance

Size:
49,600 hectares (with 3,100 hectares targeted for restoration)

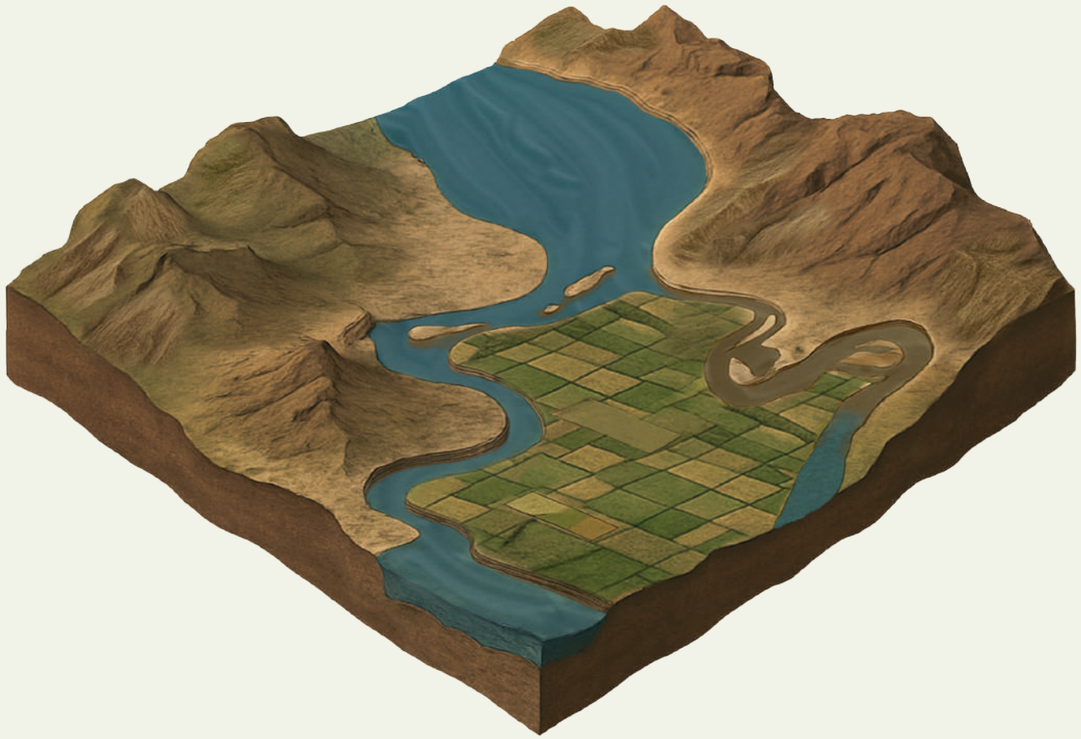
Habitat types:
Wetlands, reed beds, marshes, wet meadows, swamps, riparian forest

Designations:
Protected Area, Ramsar Site

Main causes of degradation:
Deforestation, extensive land reclamation for agriculture, urbanisation, infrastructure development including hydropower plants and dams, wildfires, erosion

Key Species:
Dalmatian Pelican *(Pelecanus crispus)*, Whiskered Tern *(Chlidonias hybrida)*, Skadar Oak *(Quercus robur ssp scutariensis)*, White Willow *(Salix alba)*, Black Alder *(Alnus glutinosa)*, Eurasian Otter *(Lutra Lutra)*, Small flowered tamarisk *(Tamarix parviflora)*, White Poplar *(Populus alba)*, Skadar Bleak *(Alburnus scoranza)*, European Eel *(Anguilla anguilla)*, Twaite Shad *(Alosa fallax)*, Ferruginous Duck *(Aythya nyroca)*

Restoring Lake Skadar for nature, people, and the planet



To revive the waters and wetlands of this natural wonder, we will:

- Restore 2,000 hectares of forests and wet meadows along the northern shores of Lake Skadar, reducing agricultural runoff into the lake and improving water quality.
- Seed and plant 1,000 hectares of the Tarabosh slopes using a blend of native trees seeds and saplings, significantly decreasing the risks of wildfires and erosion.
- Restore 120 hectares of marshland, expanding the marsh area along the Buna River by 20%, boosting the lake's capacity to support wildlife.
- Implement organic farming practices and reduce fertilizer use on at least 100 hectares of agricultural land on the northern side of Lake Skadar.
- Identify and address the root causes of sturgeon decline, restoring habitats and removing barriers that disrupt their migration to support reintroduction of this species, which is essential for maintaining the lake's ecological balance.

These are the first steps towards bringing back a resilient and biodiverse lake for the 170,000 residents in the area who will benefit from better access to recreational areas, sustainable agriculture products, and improved tourism opportunities.
Initial budget needed: 6.5 million euros.

In 2050...

Lake Skadar and its surrounding area are a vibrant natural corridor between the Albanian Alps and the Adriatic Sea, teeming with life and resilient to climate change. Rivers flow freely, unobstructed by new hydropower plants and with some dams removed, wildlife migration and natural sediment transport is restored. Traditional small-scale fisheries flourish alongside sustainable agriculture practices, focusing on organic farming and climate resilience.
Forests and wetlands have been restored, offering diverse habitats that support species like sturgeon and migratory birds. With cross-border cooperation, mindful urban planning, and climate-adaptive practices, Lake Skadar stands as a model for ecosystem conservation, benefiting both nature and local communities.

Carska Bara

Serbia

Nestled in northeastern Serbia, Carska Bara is the country's largest and most unique wetland complex. Designated as a Special Nature Reserve in 1955, this ecological gem is a stunning mosaic of ponds, reedbeds, rivers, canals, and grasslands. Beyond its natural beauty, local communities depend on the wetland's ecosystem services for their livelihoods, living in small villages that dot the landscape. The reserve shelters a wealth of plant and animal life, from the towering Black Poplar trees and the rare Marsh Orchid to an array of fish, birds and amphibians.

But despite its protected status, Carska Bara's very existence is threatened. Unsustainable fishing practices have caused significant harm, leading to mud sedimentation, eutrophication, and the unchecked spread of reedbeds. The construction of channels and dykes around the Begej River stagnated the water flow, while invasive plant species have overtaken native flora. Without urgent action, this vital wetland could soon be lost.

But there's hope! The local waterways management company is ready to improve flood protection and water quality, while communities are eager to revive traditional practices like reed harvesting and fishing. The Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia (BPSSS), BirdLife Partner in Serbia, is excited to collaborate with them to restore Carska Bara, ensuring it becomes a thriving, functional ecosystem for both wildlife and people.

"This project is about more than just conservation. It's about securing the future of Carska Bara as a sanctuary for both people and nature. By restoring a mosaic of habitats, we are stimulating rich biodiversity, water purification, and sustainable livelihoods. It's deeply rewarding to know our work will benefit both the environment and local communities."

Kristina Milosevic
Project coordinator at BPSSS

Fire Salamander
Salamandra salamandra

White Stork
Ciconia ciconia

Eurasian Otter
Lutra lutra

European Bee-Eater
Merops apiaster

Black Stork
Ciconia nigra

Grass Snake
Natrix natrix

Common Spoonbill
Platalea leucorodia

Pedunculate Oak
Quercus robur

Whiskered Tern
Chlidonias hybrida

Carska Bara at a glance

Size:
11,547 hectares (with 1,700 hectares targeted for restoration)

Habitat types:
Wetlands, reed beds, grasslands, freshwater systems

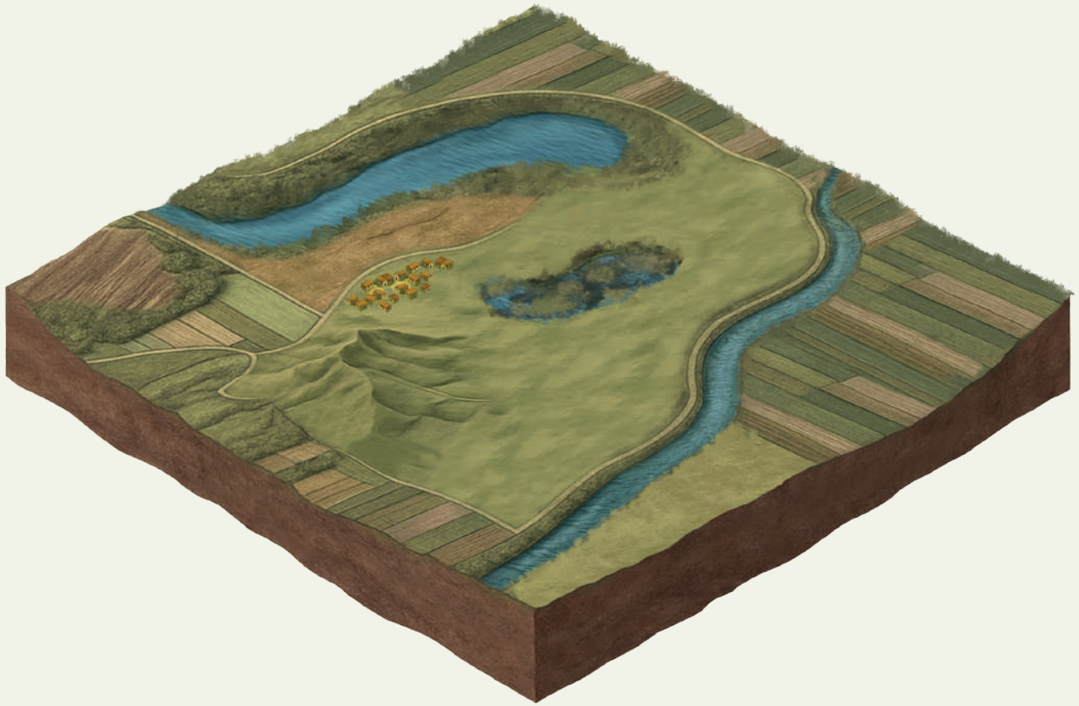
Designations:
Special Nature Reserve, Ramsar site, Important Bird Area (IBA), National Protected Area

Main causes of degradation:
Poor water management, drought, invasive species

Key Species:
Eurasian Otter *(Lutra lutra)*, Common Spoonbill *(Platalea leucorodia)*, White Stork *(Ciconia ciconia)*, Black Stork *(Ciconia nigra)*, European Bee-Eater *(Merops apiaster)*, Whiskered Tern *(Chlidonias hybrida)*, Fire Salamander *(Salamandra salamandra)*, Grass Snake *(Natrix natrix)*, Saltmarsh Thistle *(Cirsium brachycephalum)*, Pedunculate Oak *(Quercus robur)*

COMMON SPOONBILL *(PLATALEA LEUCORODIA).* © VLADIMIR GAGIĆ

Restoring Carska Bara for birds, people and the planet



To breathe new life into this threatened wetland, we will:

- Revitalise the hydrological system of Carska Bara by creating new water passages to restore natural flow, prevent further sediment build-up, and remove existing sediment and biomass. This effort will regenerate a healthy aquatic environment, opening up approximately 70 hectares of open-water marshes.

- Restore 900 hectares of ancient alkaline grasslands by removing drainage channels and reseeding native grass species. This will enhance improve grazing areas for local communities and enhance ecosystem services. To achieve this, we will need to purchase and lease land for restoration.

- Improve reed harvesting practices through the development of standards and trainings for local communities. Reed harvesting will not only support family incomes but also offer energy solutions, such as using reed as insultation in public buildings and low-income households.

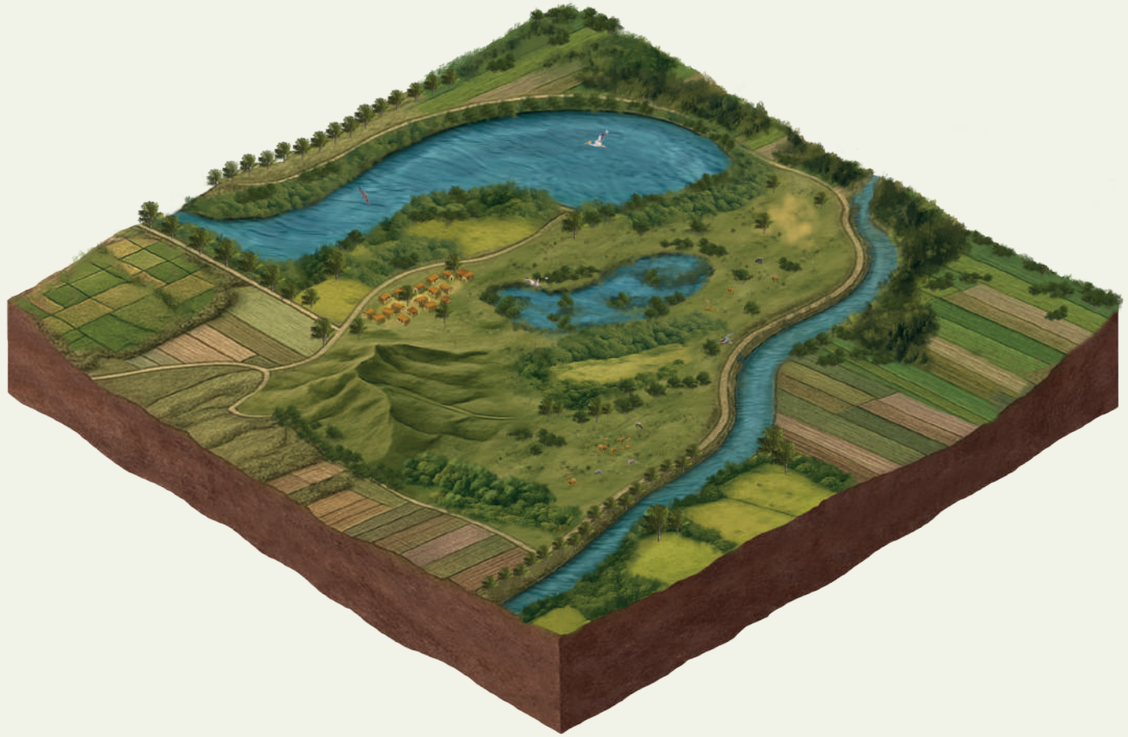
- Combat invasive species by clearing 8,5 km of riverbanks and riverbeds, and across 350 hectares of land, removing invasive trees and allow native trees to recover. This will strengthen habitat connectivity across the Vojvodina region.

- Empower local communities. The 5,000 residents of villages nearby Carska Bara will benefit from extended grazing seasons, improved water availability, and greater resilience against drought.

- Inspire the next generation by leveraging school visits to Carska Bara to teach future generations about the importance of nature and climate resilience.

These are the first steps toward transforming Carska Bara into a dynamic landscape that supports biodiversity, purifies water, and promotes sustainable livelihoods for generations to come.
Initial budget needed: 9 million euros.

In 2050...



Carska Bara is a flourishing natural and semi-natural landscape, home to expansive grasslands, open-water marshes, lush reed beds, fishponds, and gently flowing rivers. Its riverbanks are lined with luscious woodland and waterbirds, alongside a diversity of fish, amphibians, and reptiles, will thrive once again. Residents of nearby villages have sustainable livelihoods, while visitors from nearby cities reconnect with nature in this revitalised space. At long last, Carska Bara has truly become a protected Protected Area, offering vital ecosystem services to all.

Osogovo Mountains

North Macedonia

Stretching across the borders of North Macedonia and Bulgaria, the Osogovo Mountains are a towering biodiversity hotspot, their peaks soaring over 2,000 meters. This majestic landscape, officially protected since 2020, is a sanctuary for Brown Bears, Golden Eagles, and rare Balkan endemic plants. Its mosaic of forests and grasslands is not only beautiful but also vital to the region's environmental health.

But Osogovo is under threat. The fragmentation and degradation of native oak, linden, and beech forests are eroding the mountain's natural defenses, weakening critical ecosystem services like water regulation, carbon storage, and soil stability. These vulnerabilities increase the risk of wildfires and landslides. Invasive species, such as the Tree of Heaven, are further disrupting ecosystems along with unsustainable agriculture and poaching.

Fortunately, there is hope for this mountain range. With much of Osogovo's forests still intact, the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES), BirdLife's Partner in North Macedonia, is spearheading a mission to restore Osogovo's grasslands and forests and revive its biodiversity. Through reforestation, community engagement, and promoting sustainable practices, we can ensure that Osogovo remains resilient and flourishing for generations to come.

"For the first time ever, MES and the Public Enterprise National Forests have come together to create a shared vision for restoring the Osogovo region. This collaboration will help reconnect ecosystems and secure the long-term conservation of the area's natural heritage. We can't wait to begin this important work!"

Despina Kitanova
Project manager at MES

Lanner Falcon
Falco biarmicus

Balkan Crested Newt
Triturus ivanbureschi

European Otter
Lutra lutra

Stag's Horn Submoss
Lycopodium clavatum

Brown Bear
Ursus arctos

Eagle Owl
Bubo bubo

Black Stork
Ciconia nigra

Yellow Genista
Genista fukarekiana

White-backed Woodpecker
Dendrocopos leucotos

Osogovo Mountains at a glance

Size:
110,224 hectares (with 9,000 hectares targeted for restoration)

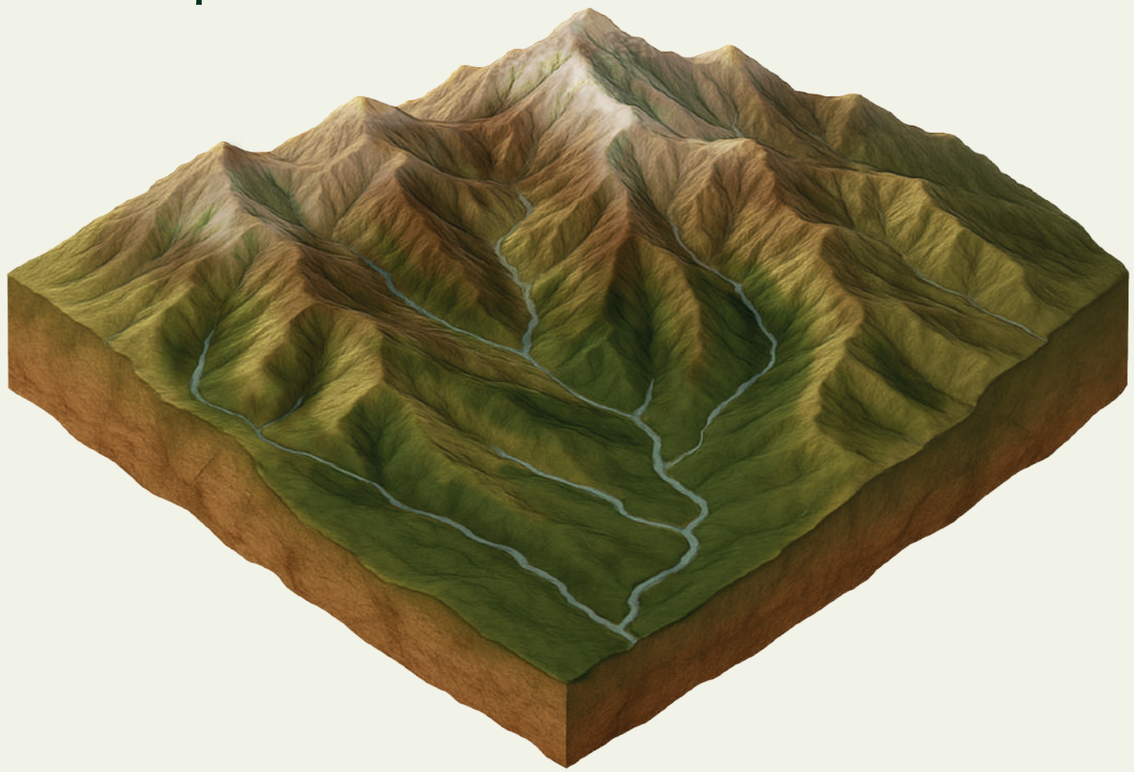
Habitat types:
National Protected Landscape, Important Bird Area, Important Plant Area, Emerald Network

Designations:
Forests, grasslands, farmlands

Main causes of degradation:
Deforestation, poor land management, poaching, invasive species, unsustainable agriculture, wildfires, landslides, erosion

Key Species:
Imperial Eagle *(Aquila heliaca)*, Lanner Falcon *(Falco biarmicus)*, European Otter *(Lutra lutra)*, Stag's-horn Clubmoss *(Lycopodium clavatum)*, Semicollared Flycatcher *(Ficedula semitorquata)*, White-backed Woodpecker *(Dendrocopos leucotos)*, Boreal Owl *(Aegolius funereus)*, Black Stork *(Ciconia nigra)*, Balkan Crested Newt (*Triturus ivanbureschi)*, Golden Eagle *(Aquila chrysaetos)*, Yellow Genista *(Genista fukarekiana)*, Eagle Owl *(Bubo bubo)*, Brown Bear *(Ursus artos)*

Restoring Osogovo for birds, people and the planet



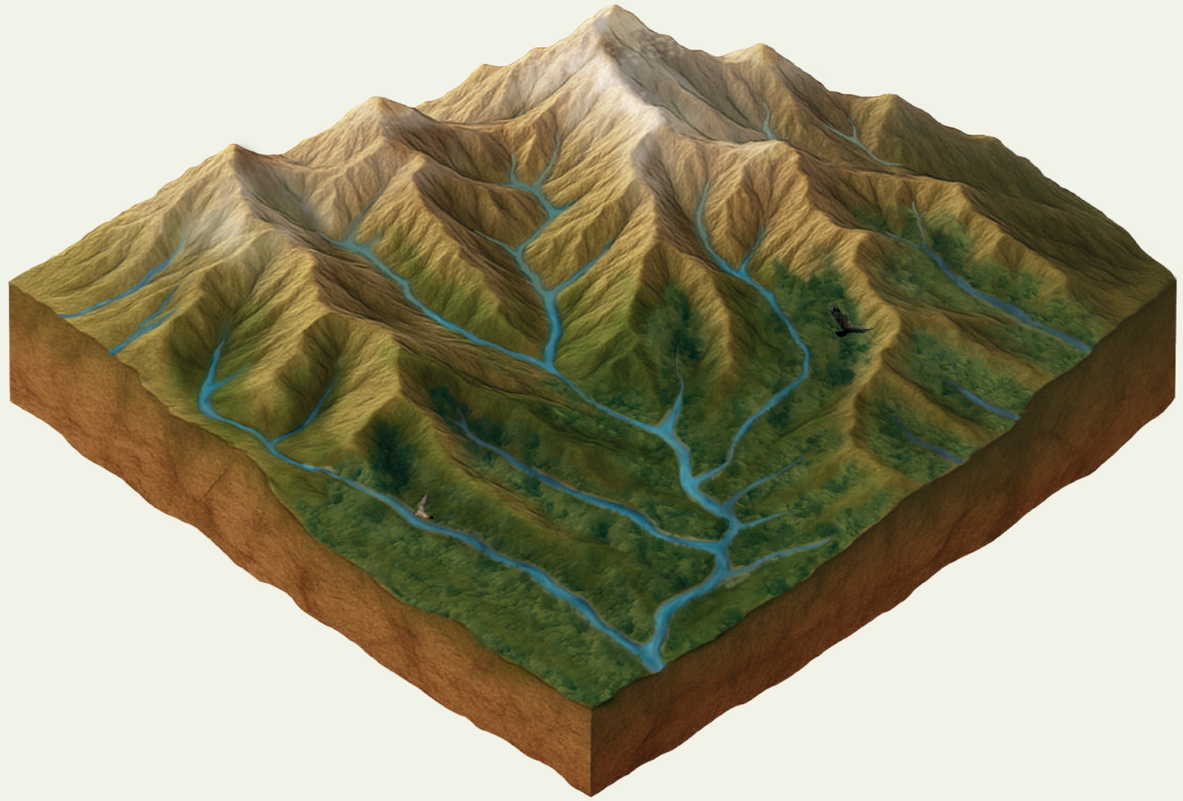
To revive the Osogovo mountain's ecosystems and enhance its resilience to climate change, we will:

- Restore at least 2,500 hectares of degraded forests oak and clear-cut areas while developing a digital spatial database for forest quality and restoration planning. This will improve connectivity, enhance water quality, and reduce erosion.
- Restore at least 340 hectares of riparian alder and willow forests along with over 90 hectares of degraded riverbanks, stabilising slopes, reducing erosion, and benefiting species like the European Otter and Golden-ringed Dragonfly.
- Transform at least 500 hectares of monocultural pine plantations into ecologically diverse mixed forests, reducing the risk of wildfire, disease, and improving carbon sequestration.
- Revive traditional fruit varieties, such as apples, plums, and pears, supporting local economies by promoting value-added products and reconnecting communities with their agricultural heritage.
- Eliminate the invasive Tree of Heaven through control measures following a thorough analysis of its impact on the landscape.

Together with local communities, we are committed to restoring Osogovo's vibrant ecosystems and creating a future that balances the needs of both nature and the people who call this region home.
Initial budget needed: 9.25 million euros.

In 2050...

The Osogovo region serves as a model for the successfully balanced interplay between nature and people, showcasing a landscape where biodiversity thrives alongside vibrant local traditions. Through well-managed forests and restored riparian zones, the mountain stands an example of ecological restoration across the Balkans. Forests are more resilient to climate change, with reduced soil erosion and healthier ecosystems that have brought back species like the Semicollared Flycatcher and White-backed Woodpecker. Traditional fruit orchards flourish alongside a mosaic of healthy forests and meadows. Local communities lead the way in promoting eco-tourism and help protect Osogovo's natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.



BROWN BEAR *(URSUS ARCTOS)*. ©YVES ADAMS

BLACK STORK *(CICONIA NIGRA).* © LJUBOMIR STEFANOV

Lemnos Island

Greece

Once believed to be home to Hephaestus' legendary forge, Lemnos Island today is a stunning landscape shaped by volcanic forces, where coastal and marine ecosystems, wetlands, grasslands, ancient forests, and farmlands converge. Its inhabitants still maintain a deep connection to nature, preserving traditions passed down for generations.

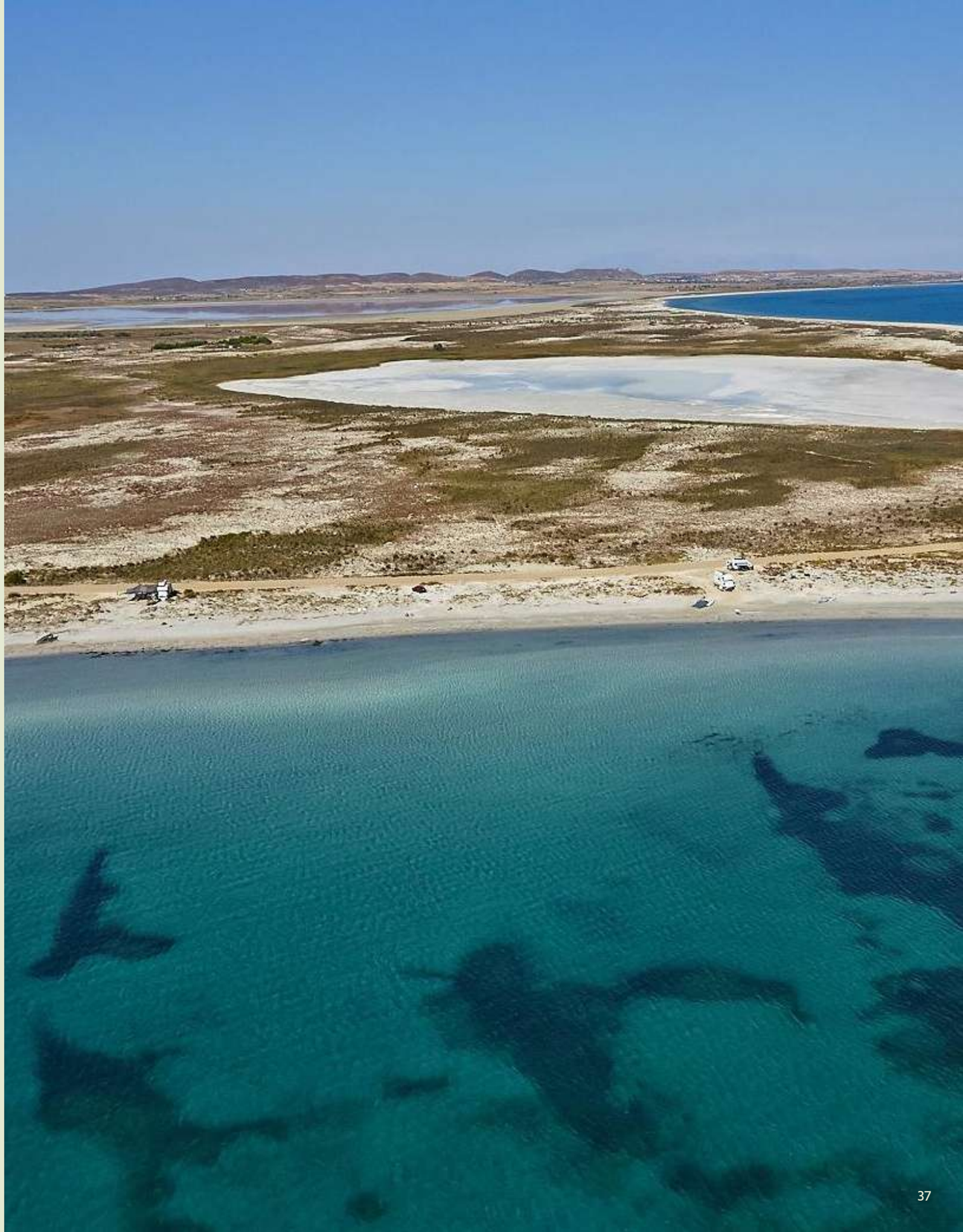
Just off the coast of Lemnos lies the largest seagrass meadow in the eastern Mediterranean, spanning an impressive 82 km^2. The island's sea teems with marine life and is particularly important to seabirds. Along the coast, an expansive wetland system bordered by sand dunes supports a remarkable diversity of species. Further inland, farmlands blend with natural grasslands, forming a mosaic of habitats.

But despite its ecological richness, Lemnos faces severe threats. Its coastal lakes and wetlands—vital breeding grounds for many bird species—dry out completely in summer and are impacted by rising salinity due to excessive seawater influx. Meanwhile, human activities like anchoring endanger the surrounding marine habitats. On land, the expansion of agriculture and illegal construction threaten the island's fragile balance, while the growth of tourism further intensifies the pressure on its ecosystems.

The Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), BirdLife's Partner in Greece, alongside local stakeholders, is on a mission to restore and protect Lemnos' unique natural landscapes and pristine marine ecosystems. By blending conservation friendly land use with traditional knowledge, they aim to enhance biodiversity and ensure a sustainable future for this unique island.

"Lemnos is feeling the strain from growing tourism and climate change. But this is our chance to make a real difference. With a strong plan in place, we can create a future where both the island's stunning nature and its people thrive. The time to act is now, and together we can breathe new life into Lemnos!"

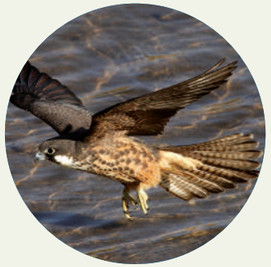
Nikos Tsiopelas
Project manager at HOS



Lesser Kestrel
Falco naumanni

Bottlenose Dolphin
Tursiops truncatus

Audouin's Gull
Ichthyaetus audouinii



Eleonora's Falcon
Falco eleonorae

Posidonia
Posidonia oceanica

Mediterranean Monk Seal
Monachus monachus

Mediterranean Pillow Coral
Cladocora caespitosa

Angelsharks
Squatina squatina, Squatina aculeata

Ruddy Shelduck
Tadorna ferruginea

Lemnos Island at a glance

Size:
47,760 hectares on land (with 5,700 hectares to be restored) and 20,000 hectares to be restored at sea

Habitat types:
Natura 2000 (Special Area of Conservation and Special Protected Area), Wildlife Refuges and small insular protected wetlands

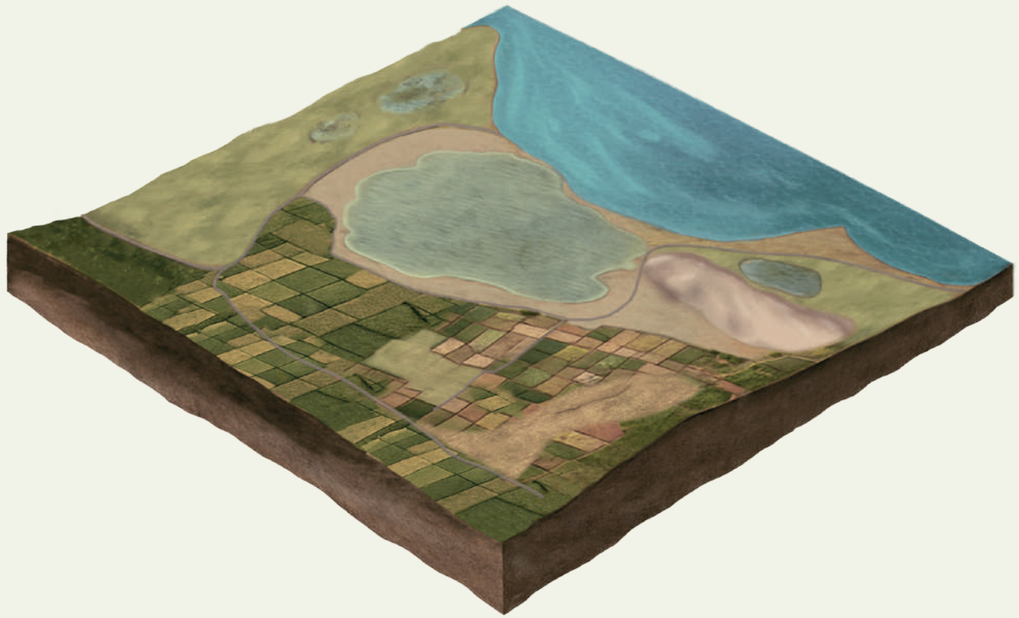
Designations:
wetlands, grasslands, coastal ecosystems, marine environments, sand dunes, uninhabited islets, farmland

Main causes of degradation:
disruption and destruction from human activities, climate change impacts, agricultural pollution, water resource mismanagement

Key Species:
Monk Seal *(Monachus monachus)*, Bottlenose Dolphin *(Tursiops truncatus)*, Eleonora's Falcon *(Falco eleonorae)*, Lesser Kestrel *(Falco naumanni)*, Ruddy Shelduck *(Tadorna ferruginea)*, Audouin's gull *(Ichthyaetus audouinii)*, Yelkouan Shearwater *(Puffinus yelkouan)*, Mediterranean Pillow Coral *(Cladocora caespitosa)*, Posidonia *(Posidonia oceanica)*, Angelsharks *(Squatina squatina, Squatina aculeata)*

Restoring Lemnos for nature, people and the planet

- Reestablish endangered wildlife like the Angel Shark and seabirds by reducing bycatch through training fishers, supporting both nature at sea and local livelihoods.
- Restore 24 hectares of dune ecosystems by removing invasive plants, replanting local flora and carefully managing tourism activities to minimise environmental impact.



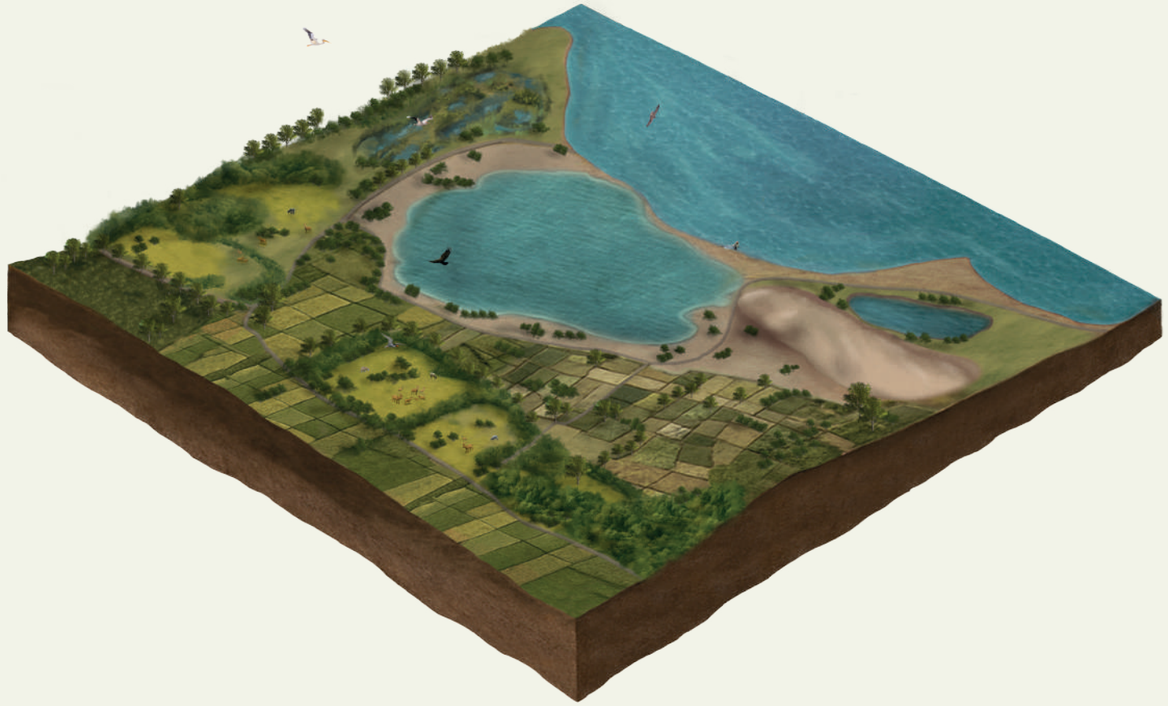
To breathe life back into the blue lungs of Lemnos, we will:

- Revive 1000 hectares of wetlands by restoring their hydrological balance across by constructing micro-dams, managing irrigation wells, and regulating fertilizers runoff from surrounding farmlands. Nature-based solutions such as replanting native vegetation and employing traditional farming techniques will enhance habitat diversity, create microhabitats, and improve water exchange between the sea and coastal lagoons.
- Protect 20,000 hectares of marine ecosystems by designating non-anchoring areas and installing eco-friendly mooring fields to shield the expansive seagrass meadows.
- Conduct comprehensive baseline studies and assessments of grazing capacity, water quality, and carbon stock potential, aligning restoration efforts with ecological and community needs.
- Transform 4,000 hectares of farmland into bio-diversity-rich landscapes through sustainable farming techniques like polyculture and crop rotation.
- Eradicate invasive alien species (IAS) across at least 100 hectares of islets surrounding Lemnos.
- Empower the island's 16,000 residents through community-led restoration initiatives, creating sustainable livelihoods and fostering stewardship, particularly among the 2,500 who dependent on agriculture and fishing.
- Promote eco-tourism and sustainable travel, providing visitors with nature-friendly experiences while ensuring long-term protection for Lemnos' fragile ecosystems.

Together with local communities, we are building a brighter, greener future for Lemnos Island—one that supports both its people and its extraordinary natural environments.
Initial budget needed: 9.25 million euros.

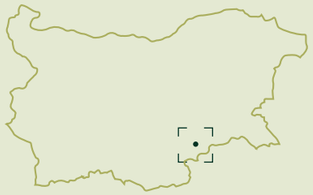
In 2050...

Lemnos island is an ecological beacon, a global model of habitat restoration and nature conservation. Nature-based solutions and sustainable development are at the heart of the local economy, with communities actively protecting their environment. Restored wetlands and marine ecosystems sustain thriving biodiversity, while sustainable farming practices supports the island's residents. All key areas within the network of Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are effectively protected and managed.



Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar, Western Strandzha

Bulgaria



Tucked away in south-eastern Bulgaria, the Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar and Strandzha Mountains rise from the Thracian plains as a natural sanctuary for biodiversity. Positioned along the Via Pontica, Europe's second-largest migratory flyway, this region is a critical stopover for countless bird species. Once cut off by the Iron Curtain, today, this remote landscape is a refuge for wildlife, including 81 species listed on the IUCN Red List, as well as 60% of the raptors in Europe, such as the Eastern Imperial Eagle (Aquila heliaca), Saker falcon (Falco cherrug), Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) and the Lesser Spotted Eagle (Clanga pomarina).

But this invaluable ecosystem is under threat. The recent intensification of agricultural and energy sectors exploits the cheapest land available—the grasslands in remote areas. Unsustainable land use has already damage Strandzha's forests and severely reduced grassland areas through rampant ploughing and indiscriminate clearing of shrubs and trees. On top of this, climate change is wreaking havoc, bringing more frequent droughts and devastating wildfires.

The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), BirdLife Partner in Bulgaria, is actively working to restore the region's ecological balance and expand conservation efforts across the Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar, and Western Strandzha regions.

"The restoration of the Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar, and Western Strandzha is key to preserving one of Europe's last biodiversity refuges. By focusing on reforestation, sustainable land management, and wildlife corridors, we are not just protecting endangered species, we are building resilience against climate change. This project shows how, with targeted conservation and restoration action, we can restore ecosystems and support vibrant rural communities."

Svetoslav Spasov
Project Manager at BSPB

GRIFFON VULTURE *(GYPS FULVUS).* © BSPB

FOREST IN STRANDZHA. © BSPB

Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar, Western Strandzha at a glance

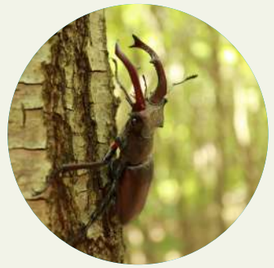
Size:
545,500 hectares (with 342,512 hectares formally protected)

Habitat types:
Forests, grasslands, pastures, freshwater habitats, shrubland with steppe elements

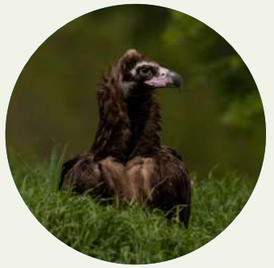
Designations:
Special Protected Area (SPA)

Main causes of degradation:
Wildfires, unsustainable land management, intensive agriculture, aridification, vegetation clearing, climate change

Key Species:
Eastern Imperial Eagle *(Aquila heliaca)*, Egyptian vulture *(Neophron percnopterus)*, Cinereous vulture *(Aegypius monachus)*, Griffon Vulture *(Gyps fulvus)*, Balkan Crested Newt *(Triturus ivanbureschi)*, Mouse-Tailed Dormouse *(Myomimus roachi)*, Greek Tortoise *(Testudo graeca)*, Poplar Trees *(Populus alba, P. nigra)*, Native Oak Trees *(Quercus cerris, Q. pubescens, Q. frainetto)*, European Stag Beetle *(Lucanus cervus)*



European Stag Beetle
Lucanus cervus



Cinereous Vulture
Aegypius monachus

Egyptian Vulture
Neophron percnopterus

Mouse-Tailed Dormouse
Myomimus roachi

Balkan Crested Newt
Triturus ivanbureschi

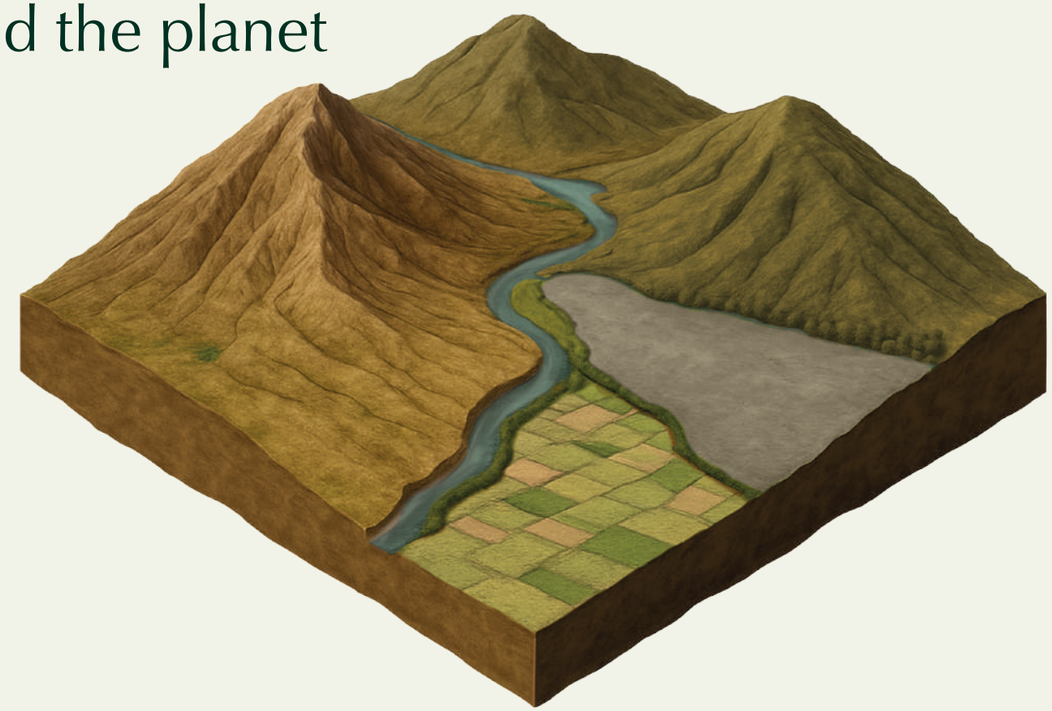
Native Oak Trees
Quercus cerris, Q. pubescens, Q. frainetto

Greek Tortoise
Testudo graeca

Poplar Trees
Populus alba, P. nigra

Griffon Vulture
Gyps fulvus

Restoring Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar, and Western Strandzha for nature, people and the planet

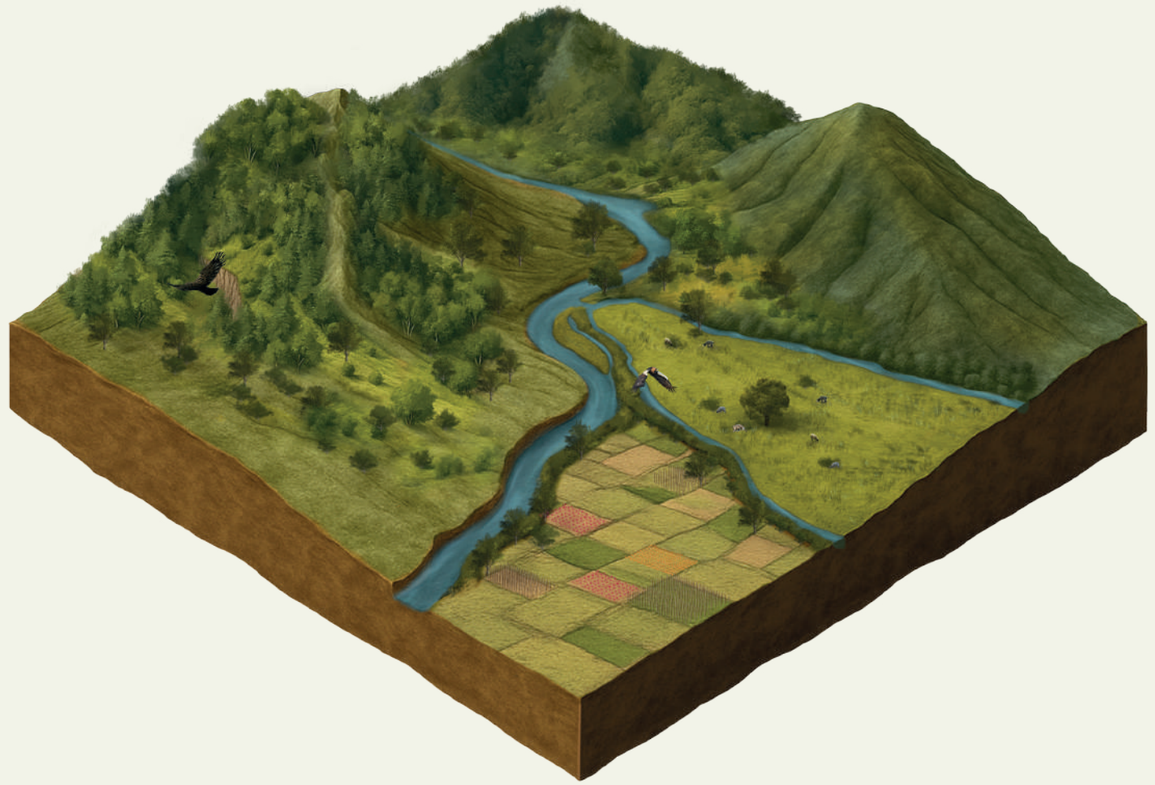


- Restore native woodland by replacing 3,000 hectares of coniferous plantations with fire-resistant native species to boost climate resilience.
- Enhance pasture management across 700 hectares by promoting sustainable grazing and shrubland management schemes, to maintain a balance between productivity and ecosystem protection.
- Strengthen land management across 550,000 hectares of land across the region, ensuring long-term sustainability for both wildlife and local communities.
- Create wildlife corridors by establishing a network of natural and semi-natural habitats that connect different protected areas, allowing species to move freely across the landscape.
- Reintroduce endemic species, and improve the conservation status of key amphibians, reptiles, and other fauna to restore balance to the region's ecosystems.
- Support a sustainable rural economy that protects soil health, prevents erosion, and supports the decline of pollinators.

BSPB is already collaborating with local stakeholders to implement a five-year restoration project. With the right support, we are ready to take the next bold steps toward fully restoring this region's ecological balance.
Initial budget needed: 1.5 million euros.

In 2050...

Eastern Rhodopes, Sakar and the Western Strandzha stand as a prime example of sustainability and biodiversity. The region's ecosystems are resilient and able to withstand wildfires and recover from the impacts of climate change. Resident and migratory birds have a safe harbour as natural and semi-natural environments are fully restored and protected. The ponds scattered throughout the landscape support thriving populations of reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals. Forests are flourishing with new saplings, hosting a healthy population of raptors. Grasslands are preserved through sustainable grazing and conservation, ensuring the area's food chain and natural resources are restored.



Gediz Delta

Türkiye

The Gediz Delta, one of Türkiye's largest coastal wetlands, is a haven for biodiversity. It is home to around 15,000 pairs of the iconic Greater Flamingo—30% of the European population—along with the majestic Dalmatian Pelican and 303 bird species, including 15 threatened and 17 near-threatened species. Beyond its ecological value, the delta sustains essential livelihoods to the local population through one of the largest salt pans in the Mediterranean, supporting 250,000 people in the surrounding region.

Since the 1970s, however, unsustainable irrigation for intensive agriculture has led to severe water shortages, turning the once-thriving delta into a hypersaline, polluted landscape. This transformation endangers both wildlife and the local communities who depend on open pasture farming and the natural resources of the area.

Doğa Derneği, BirdLife's Partner in Türkiye, together with their local partners, are ready to act and resolve the freshwater crisis threatening this vital ecosystem. Immediate action is essential to prevent irreversible damage and ensure a thriving future for both its nature and people.

"The Gediz Delta has endured countless challenges over the centuries, but it's now at a critical tipping point—losing more habitats is simply not an option. Restoring this incredible ecosystem is urgent if we want to protect its unique biodiversity. With the backing of a strong local coalition, Doğa Derneği is ready to take the lead and create a sustainable future for the delta. We're excited to make this vision a reality."

Serdar Özuslu
General Manager of Doğa Derneği

Northern Lapwing
Vanellus vanellus

Red Fox
Vulpes vulpes

Tamarix smyrnensis

Greater Flamingo
Phoenicopterus roseus

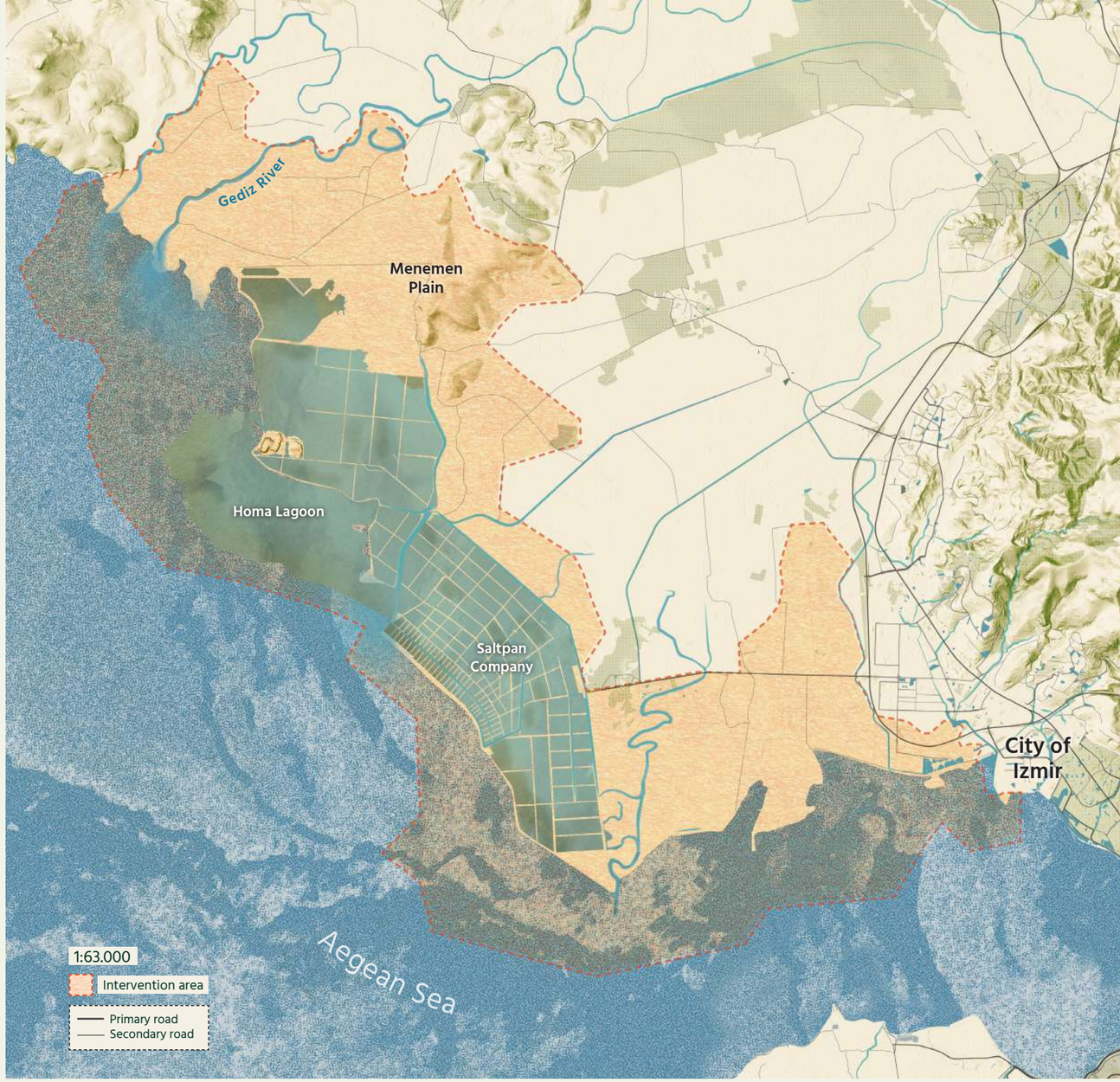
Salicornia
Salicornia sp.

Spur-winged Lapwing
Vanellus spinosus

Wild Boar
Sus scrofa

Oriental Tree Frog
Hyla orientalis

European Bee-eater
Merops apiaster



The Gediz Delta at a glance

Size:
26,000 hectares (with 11,000 hectares targeted for restoration)

Habitat types:
Lagoons, reed beds, fresh and saltwater marshes, salt meadows, dry and wet meadows, seasonally flooded meadows, islets, farmland, and Mediterranean shrubland

Designations:
Important Bird Area, Key Biodiversity Area, Ramsar Site

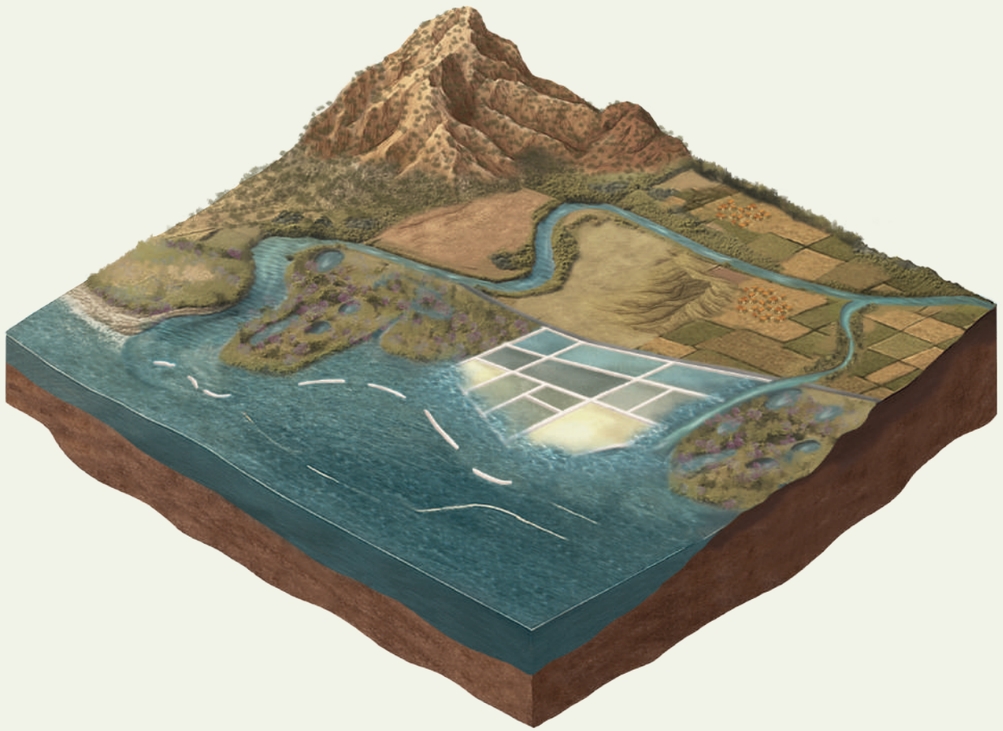
Main causes of degradation:
Habitat loss and degradation due to intensive agriculture, land use changes, water mismanagement, water pollution, rising sea –levels, over-salinization

Key Species:
Greater Flamingo *(Phoenicopterus roseus)*, Dalmatian Pelican *(Pelecanus crispus)*, Salicornia sp. and Tamarix smyrnensis plants, Common and Caspian Tern *(Sterna hirundo, Hydroprogne caspia)* Northern Lapwing *(Vanellus vanellus)*, Spur-winged Lapwing *(Vanellus spinosus)*, European Bee-eater *(Merops apiaster)*, Oriental Tree Frog *(Hyla orientalis)*, Wild Boar *(Sus scrofa)*, Red Fox *(Vulpes vulpes)*

SALICORNIA *(SALICORNIA SP.),* GEDIZ DELTA. © MAHMUT KOYAS

GREATER FLAMINGO *(PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS)*. © DOĞA DERNEĞİ

Restoring the Delta for nature, people, and the planet

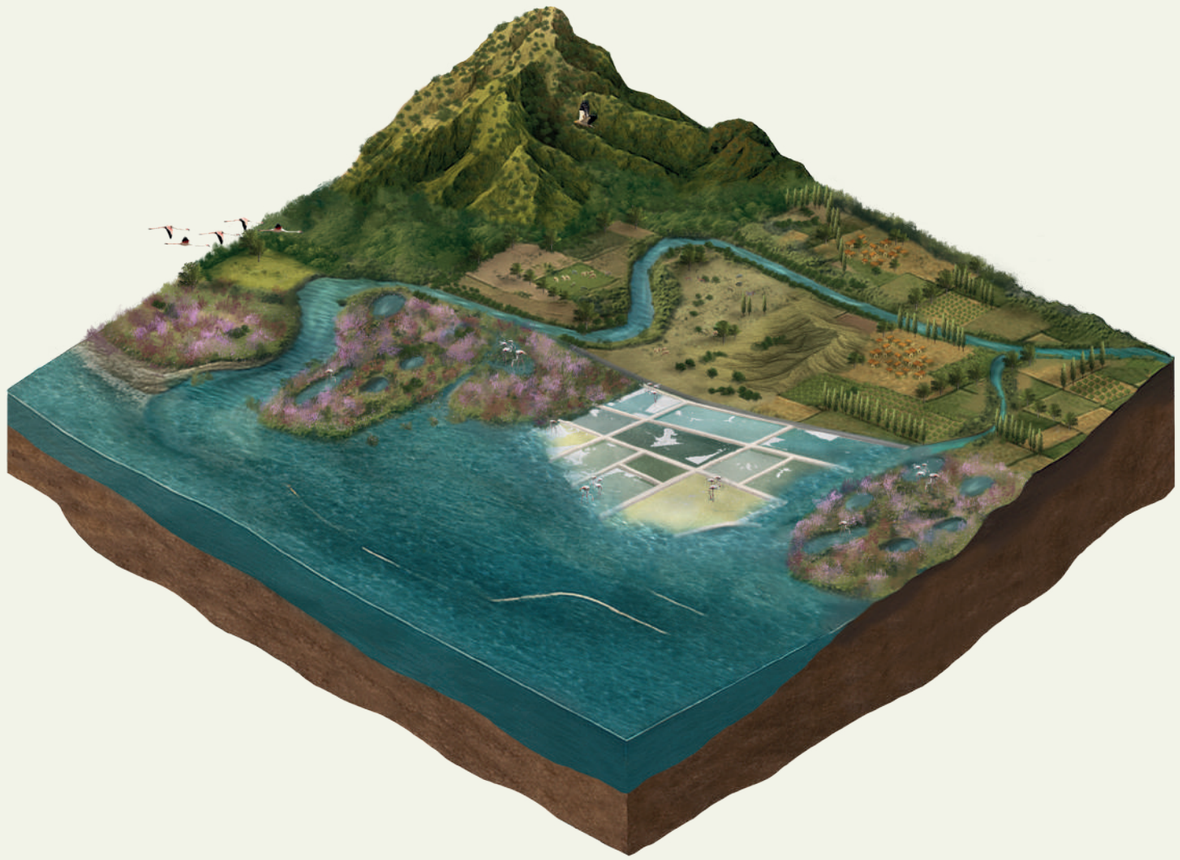


To restore and protect this unique ecosystem, we will:

- Restore 200 hectares of wet meadows to revive natural habitats and boost local incomes through sustainable grazing practices.
- Convert 60% of arable land within the wetland buffer zone to organic farming, reducing water use and pollution. Develop and promote best practices for agriculture, engage farmers in adopting these methods, and closely monitor water quality and usage.
- Transform 40% of current salt production into eco-friendly practices, creating breeding habitats for birds and enhancing native plant species. Convert 300 ha of unused salt pans to natural habitats.
- Restore tidal areas by removing barriers to water flow and reinstating the natural cycle of freshwater and saltwater.
- Protect wildlife by combatting poaching, removing illegal structures, and burying powerlines to prevent harm to birds.
- Involve and empower local stakeholders, including the citizens of Izmir, to play an active role in the delta's restoration and management.

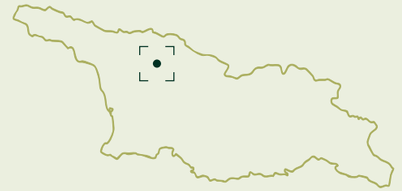
These actions will lay the foundation for Türkiye's first large-scale delta restoration project, ensuring that its rich biodiversity and natural beauty thrive for generations to come. **Initial budget needed: 5 million euros.**

In 2050...



The Gediz Delta is a vibrant and resilient ecosystem, home to flourishing habitats such as wet meadows, native scrubs, and gallery forests. The delta is better protected against the impacts of climate change, with its freshwater inflow better managed, and saltpans ecologically restored. Sustainable agriculture, grazing, and fisheries practices are implemented alongside efficient law enforcement to sustain livelihoods and protect natural habitats. The delta is a UNESCO Heritage site that thrives as a center for eco-tourism, education, and international collaboration.

Racha and Likhi Ridge



Georgia

Nestled in north-western Georgia, Racha and the Likhi Ridge are part of the Caucasus, one of the world's Biodiversity Hotspots. The Likhi Ridge serves as the only natural corridor for wildlife migration between the towering peaks of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus. The region's high mountains and forests are home to an extraordinary range of plants and animals, including the endemic East Caucasian Tur, Caucasian black grouse, and Caucasian snowcock. About 8,000 people live in this region, carrying on rich traditions deeply tied to the land.

But illegal logging, poaching, insufficient grazing, unsustainable forest management, and mining activities have led to habitat degradation and fragmentation. Climate change is further affecting species composition, and although new protected areas have been established, they remain isolated and lack integration into a broader conservation framework.

Recent environmental disasters have fuelled a shared commitment to reverse landscape degradation and build resilience. The Society for Nature Conservation (SABUKO), BirdLife's Partner in Georgia, is ready to lead urgent efforts to ensure this unique landscape thrives for future generations.

"At the heart of our vision is the understanding that humans, with their rich cultural diversity, are a part of nature. The future of the Racha and Likhi ridge depends on protecting and restoring its biodiversity while using resources sustainably so everyone benefits."

Irakli Matcharashvili
Director of SABUKO

Racha and Likhi Ridge at a glance

Size:
103,031.35 hectares (65,632 hectares are already protected areas)

Habitat types:
temperate forests, grasslands and meadows, high mountain krummholz, sub-nival and nival areas

Sweet Chestnut
Castanea sativa

Eurasian Otter
Lutra lutra

Caucasian Snowcock
Tetraogallus caucasicus

Great Rosefinch
Carpodacus rubicilla

Kolchic Box Tree
Buxus colchica

Brown Bear
Ursus arctos

East Caucasian Tur
Capra cylindricornis

Alpine Longhorn Beetle
Rosalia alpina

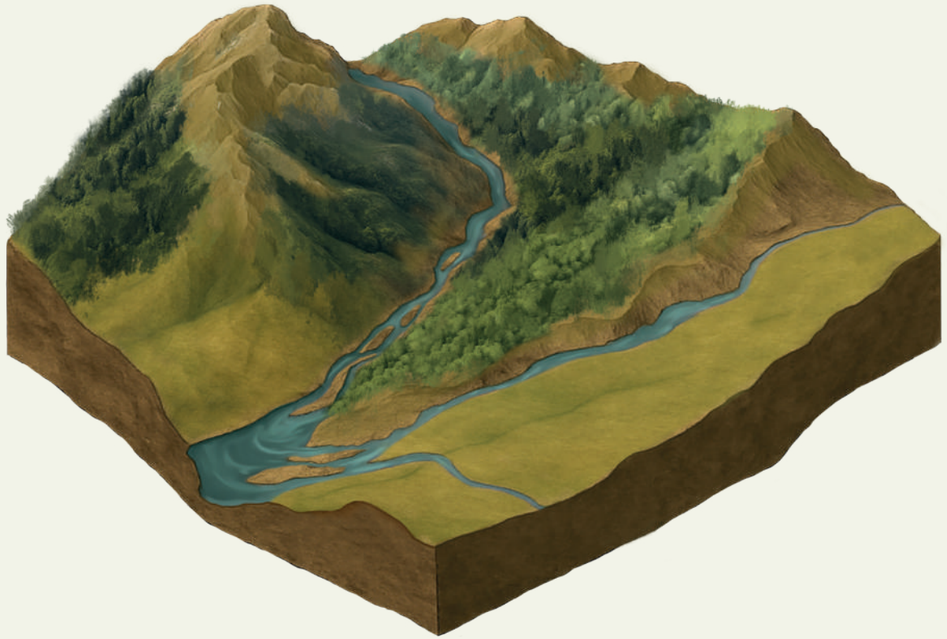
Caucasian Black Grouse
Lyrurus mlokosiewiczi

Designations:
National Park, Managed Reserve, Biodiversity Hotspot, Key biodiversity area, Emerald Sites

Main causes of degradation:
Logging, mining, degradation from land-use changes, insufficient grazing, hydropower development, poaching, and climate change

Key Species:
Caucasian Black Grouse *(Lyrurus mlokosiewiczi)*, Great Rosefinch *(Carpodacus rubicilla)*, Caucasian Snowcock *(Tetraogallus caucasicus)*, Brown Bear *(Ursus arctos)*, Eurasian Otter *(Lutra lutra)*, East Caucasian Tur *(Capra cylindricornis)*, Alpine Longhorn Beetle *(Rosalia alpina)*, Sweet Chestnut *(Castanea sativa)*, Kolchic Box Tree *(Buxus colchica)*

Restoring the Ridge for nature, people and the planet



To reconnect and protect this unique landscape, we will:

- Establish new protected areas within the Racha region, such as Protected landscapes (IUCN category V) and Biosphere Reserves, elaborate management plans of Emerald sites and creating ecological corridors to connect areas with a protected status.
- Sustainably manage 50,000 hectares of subalpine forests and grassland and create a 30,000 hectares Protected Landscape. This will be governed by local communities, balancing conservation and sustainable land use.
- Reintroduce the European Bison and implement a sustainable grazing regime for domestic livestock.
- Evaluate and mitigate existing human-wildlife conflicts by using advanced conflict management strategies and best practices, ensuring sustainable coexistence while effectively navigating the challenges associated with species reintroduction.
- Create eco-friendly economic opportunities for local communities,including sustainable farming and timber production, improved pasture management, and eco-tourism development.
- Develop policies and laws to improve population states and habitats of key species and ensure public participation.
- Involve and support up to 150 conservation experts, whose knowledge will drive ecological sustainability across Georgia and contribute to long-term environmental protection.

These actions, coupled with a comprehensive feasibility study, will mark the first step towards restoring and securing the future of the Racha-Likhi Ridge.
Initial budget needed: 4.1 million euros.

In 2050...

The Racha and Likhi Ridge is now home to a network of well-integrated protected areas, managed by local communities. Restored wildlife populations once again roam freely between the Greater and Lesser Caucasus. Local communities sustainably harvest forests, and pastures are regularly grazed by both livestock and wild herbivores.
The region's natural beauty, rich culture, and local cuisine attract eco-tourists from around the world. There are no active mining sites in critical ecosystems, including Protected Areas and Emerald sites, and former mining areas have bee fully restored. Energy needs are met through solar power, with additional support from hydropower plants regulated through spatial planning and designed to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

SABUKO plans to reintroduce the European Bison to Racha and the Likhi Ridge.
EUROPEAN BISON *(BISON BONASUS).* © LARS SOERINK

Iori Plateau

Georgia

Stretching across sweeping grasslands, arid and riparian forests, the steppes of southeastern Georgia are a refuge for endangered species like the Goitered Gazelle, Eurasian lynx, and countless birds of prey. Even the elusive Caucasian Leopard has been spotted here, raising hopes of its return to the region. Beyond its ecological importance, the Iori Plateau supports traditional semi-nomadic shepherd communities, whose way of life has been intertwined with the land for generations.

This area suffered greatly during the Soviet era, with their "planned economy" dramatically increasing sheep numbers, resulting in widespread overgrazing. As a result, grasslands have heavily degraded and their capacity to act as winter pastures has dramatically reduced. Climate change will accelerate land degradation and desertification.

The Society for Nature Conservation (SABUKO), BirdLife's Partner in Georgia, is ready to lead urgent efforts to ensure this unique landscape thrives for future generations. The Iori Plateau's protected status provides a critical chance to secure its fragile ecosystem, and with rotational grazing practices gaining traction and large areas now protected, restoring native wildlife like gazelles and their predators is within reach.

SABUKO is working with local stakeholders to improve pasture management across more than 2,000 hectares, pioneering eco-tourism initiatives, and advocating for stronger protections for this unique reserve—but there is still more to be done.

"The Iori Plateau is more than just land. It's a lifeline for both nature and the people who call it home. By restoring its ecosystems and embracing sustainable practices, we can build a future where wildlife thrives, communities prosper, and traditions are preserved, all while we adapt to the challenges of a changing climate."

Aleksandre Mikeladze
Project Manager at SABUKO

IORI PLATEAU. © NATELA GRIGALASHVILI

Children of an Azerbaijani farmer, who spend half the year with their family on the Iori Plateau. © NATELA GRIGALASHVILI

Chukar Partridge
Alectoris chukar

Eurasian Lynx
Lynx lynx

Caucasian Hackberry
Celtis caucasica

Brown Bear
Ursus arctos

Eastern Imperial Eagle
Aquila heliaca

Black Francolin
Francolinus francolinus

Saker Falcon
Falco cherrug

Egyptian Vulture
Neophron percnopterus

Goitered Gazelle
Gazella subgutturosa

The Iori Plateau at a glance

Size:
100,000 hectares

Habitat types:
Grasslands, arid forests, riparian forest

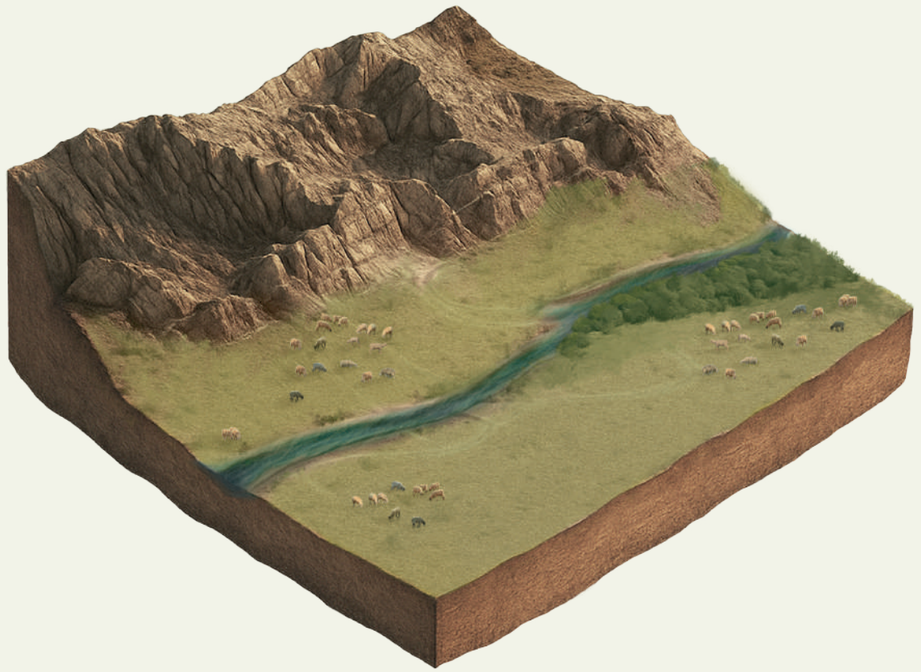
Designations:
National Park, Managed Reserve, Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (IUCN VI category), Emerald Site, Biosphere Reserve, Key Biodiversity Area (KBA)

Main causes of degradation:
Overgrazing, land-use mismanagement, climate change, change in traditional land use practices

Key Species:
Chukar Partridge *(Alectoris chukar)*, Egyptian Vulture *(Neophron percnopterus)*, Eastern Imperial Eagle *(Aquila heliaca)*, Black Francolin (*Francolinus francolinus*), Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), Goitered Gazelle *(Gazella subgutturosa)*, Caucasian Leopard *(Panthera pardus saxicolor)*, Brown Bear *(Ursus arctos)*, Eurasian lynx *(Lynx lynx)*, Indian Porcupine *(Hysterix indica)*, Caucasian Hackberry *(Celtis caucasica)*, Pistachio *(Pistacia mutica)*

Restoring the Iori Plateau for nature, people and the planet

- Strengthen Protected Area management by training and equipping local authorities to improve patrolling, monitoring and enforcement of conservation regulations.
- Advocate for a hunting ban in the newly protected Emerald sites to preserve their ecological integrity Establish a designated hunting reserve outside the project area and Emerald sites.
- Promote nature-based tourism to leverage the region's transhumance tradition and unique biodiversity, creating economic opportunities for local communities and raising awareness about conservation efforts.



- Restore up to 1,000 km2 of grasslands, creating natural corridors that allow wildlife to move freely between protected areas and bolstering biodiversity.
- Reduce grazing pressures across 250 km^2 of steppes by collaborating with local shepherds and farmers to introduce sustainable grazing practices. This will restore grasslands, support coexistence between domestic and wild herbivores, and preserve transhumance, a UNESCO-recognised tradition, using rotational grazing as a conservation strategy.
- Support the return of the Caucasian Leopard and conserving other endangered species, reinforcing a healthy predator-prey balance.
- Achieve good ecological status for the Iori River by developing a management plan that aligns with the Biosphere Reserve and Protected Areas plans, ensuring sustainable water use and ecosystem health.
- Train the next generation of conservation experts through an MSc course in grassland ecology and management at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, equipping future professionals to protect Georgia's wild steppes.

These actions will provide a lasting foundation for preserving outstanding ecosystems of Iori Plateau, while honouring the traditional practices of its communities.
Initial budget needed: 4.5 million euros.

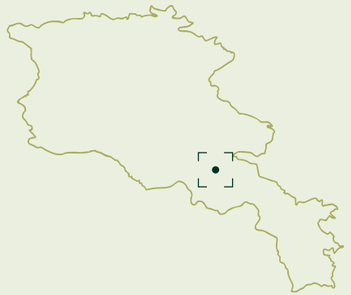
In 2050...

The Iori Plateau is a thriving and resilient haven for both wildlife and local communities. It is well-equipped to withstand climate change and human pressures, serving as a model for landscape-scale restoration across Georgia. Restored wildlife populations, including a robust population of the Caucasian Leopard, roam freely through a network of natural corridors. Healthy steppe grasslands support abundant wildlife alongside sustainable grazed livestock.

Local communities actively embrace sustainable agricultural and grazing practices that balance human needs with nature. Authorities are fully equipped to safeguard the region, with national policies, such as river basin management plans, are efficiently implemented.

Yeghegis River Valley

Armenia



Tucked away in the Caucasus region, the Yeghegis Valley is one of Armenia's most overlooked natural treasures. This river-carved landscape harbors a stunning array of globally and regionally threatened species, including elusive predators like the Persian Leopard (Panthera pardus tulliana), wildcats and lynx, as well as the endangered Armenian Mouflon—of which fewer than 200 individuals remain in Armenia.

But the valley's fragile ecosystem faces mounting threats. Hydropower plants have scarred the Yeghegis River. Unsustainable harvesting of wild fruits, such as pears, cherries, and apricots, is driving human-wildlife conflict in the valley. These fruits are a crucial food source for wild boars, Bezoar Goats, Caspian Snowcocks, and especially Brown Bears, whose diet depends on up to 80% of plant species. Mismanaged waste and overgrazing add to the strain, pushing the valley's delicate balance towards collapse.

Thanks to the dedication of the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC), the valley is now part of Armenia's first Privately Protected Area: the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge. Since 2010, FPWC's work has been a driving force for restoration, reforesting the valley's slopes and reviving its unique ecosystem. FPWC has fostered strong conservation support within the community and is committed to stepping up restoration efforts to ensure the valley's beauty can endure, benefiting both the environment and local communities for generations to come.

"We are at the start of an exciting new chapter for the Yeghegis Valley. By fostering harmony between nature and local communities, we hope to protect this beautiful gem and help its forests, rivers, and wildlife thrive for future generations."

Ruben Khachatryan
Founder and Director of FPWC

Looking out over the Yeghegis Valley. © FPWC

Bezoar Goat
Capra aegagrus

Bearded Vulture
Gyps fulvus

Cinereous Vulture
Aegypius monachus

Weeping Willowleaf Pear
Pyrus salicifolia

Brown Bear
Ursus arctos

Caspian Snowcock
Tetraogallus caspius

Armenian Mouflon
Ovis gmelini

Golden Eagle
Aquila chrysaetos

Persian Leopard
Panthera pardus tulliana

Yeghegis Valley at a glance

Size:
45,450 hectares (with 19,878 hectares targeted for restoration and 18,756 hectares designated as part of the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge)

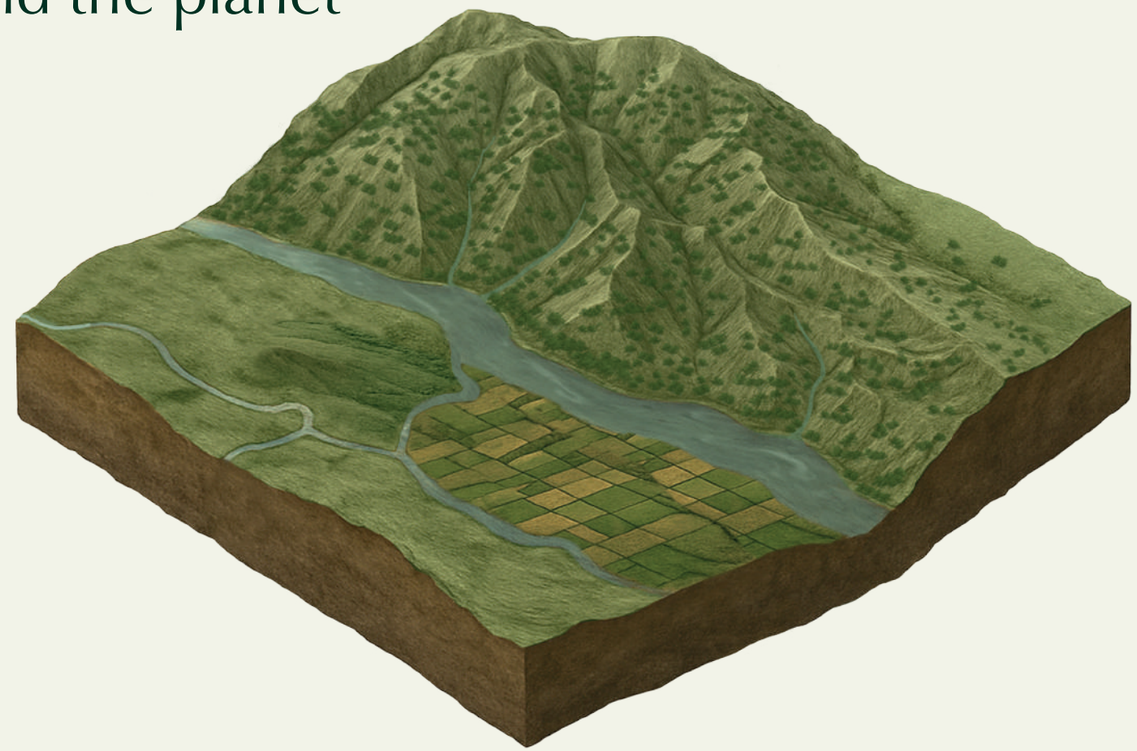
Habitat types:
Mountain steppe with juniper forests and patches of broadleaf forests, Alpine meadows and wetlands, orchards and farmlands

Designations:
National Park, Emerald Site, Privately Protected Area

Main causes of degradation:
Climate change, human-wildlife conflict, waste mismanagement, hydropower developments

Key Species:
Armenian Mouflon *(Ovis gmelini)*, Bezoar Goat *(Capra aegagrus)*, Brown Bear *(Ursus arctos)*, Persian Leopard *(Panthera pardus tulliana)*, Caspian Snowcock *(Tetraogallus caspius)*, Bearded Vulture *(Gyps fulvus)*, Cinereous Vulture *(Aegypius monachus)*, Golden Eagle *(Aquila chrysaetos)*, Weeping Willowleaf Pear *(Pyrus salicifolia)*, Caucasian Oak *(Quercus macranthera)*

Restoring the Yeghegis Valley for nature, people and the planet



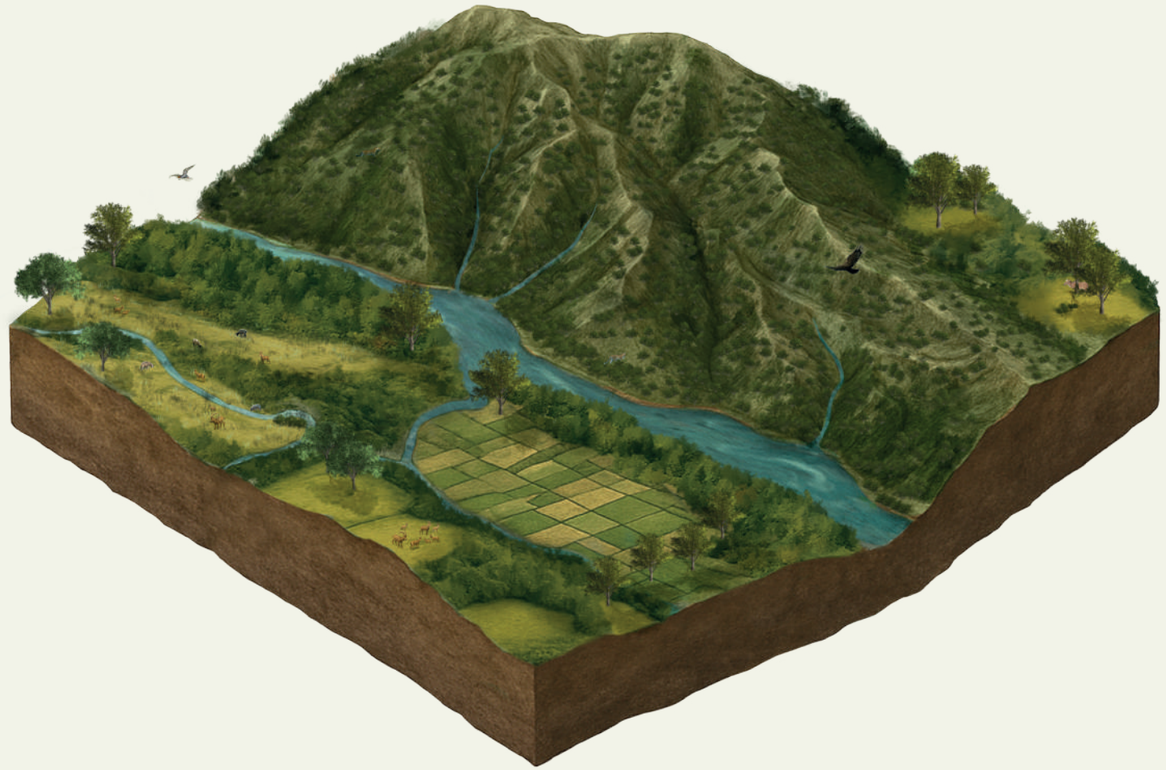
To protect the valley's future and revive its ecosystems, we will:

- Restore natural river flow through a detailed assessment of the 17 hydropower plants impact on the Yeghegis River and its tributaries, decommissioning at least one outdated facility to revive critical waterways.
- Rebuild the valley's natural defences by restoring 150 hectares of riparian and juniper forests and 35 km of the Yeghegis river and its tributaries.
- Reintroduce the Armenian Mouflon in the Vayots Dzor region.
- Reduce human-wildlife conflict by implementing sustainable wild produce harvesting practices, developing a grazing management plan, and improving waste management.
- Foster eco-friendly livelihoods by developing eco-tourism opportunities, sustainable agriculture, viticulture and wine production, beekeeping, engaging local youth in restoration activities.
- Enhance legal protections by advocating for national recognition of Privately Protected Areas, setting a precedent for conservation efforts across Armenia.

Working alongside local communities and stakeholders, FPWC is ready to scale up its efforts to create a future where the Yeghegis Valley's biodiversity can thrive alongside sustainable local economies.
Initial budget needed: 3.5 million euros.

In 2050...

The forests across the Yeghegis Valley are fully restored, and a thriving tapestry of life, with ecologically and economically valuable trees sustainably managed by local communities. At least ten hydropower plants have been removed or restored, allowing the river to flow freely once again. Riparian forests and wetlands are restored and have created a vibrant mosaic of different habitats. Improved national legislation has strengthened the protection of the valley, allowing wildlife populations—including species like the Persian Leopard— to have come back from the brink. Local communities prosper, benefiting from sustainable grazing and agriculture, all supported by the ecosystem services of this restored landscape.



Yeghegis Valley awakening in early spring. © FPWC

This portfolio was made in collaboration with BirdLife's Partners:

Albania — PPNEA
Established in 1991, the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) is the country's first environmental NGO. They work to conserve species and habitats through scientific research, environmental education, and public engagement. PPNEA promotes biodiversity, supports community-based conservation, and partners with institutions to influence national environmental policy.

Armenia — FPWC
Founded in 2002, the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) works at the intersection of nature conservation and sustainable development. They partner with rural communities to protect biodiversity, migratory species, and cultural heritage using education, innovation, ecosystem restoration as tools for long-term impact.

Bulgaria — BSPB
The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) is a leading organisation dedicated to conserving wild birds and their habitats. Through science, advocacy, and public engagement, BSPB promotes biodiversity, supports the sustainable use of natural resources, and defends the right of wildlife to thrive.

Georgia – Sabuko
The Society for Nature Conservation (SABUKO) was founded in 2014 to advance nature conservation and restoration in Georgia. They work on sustainable development, biodiversity research, and environmental education. SABUKO partners with local communities and authorities to promote long-term conservation efforts.

Greece — HOS
Since 1982, the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS) been at the forefront of bird and habitat conservation in Greece. Combining science, public outreach, and policy advocacy, HOS works to protect wildlife and the natural landscapes they depend on. Their goal is a future where nature and people thrive side by side.

North Macedonia — MES
Founded in 1972, the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES) is the country's oldest environmental organisation. They focus on ecological education, conservation research, and sustainable resource use. MES works closely with local communities and supports young scientists to address national environmental challenges.

Serbia — BPSSS
With over 30 years of experience, the Bird Protection and Study of Serbia (BPSSS) in Serbia is dedicated to bird research, conservation, and public awareness. They collect data, implement conservation solutions, and build community support through local initiatives.

Türkiye — Doğa Derneği
Doğa Derneği has championed nature conservation in Türkiye since 2002. They focus on biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration, and community-based projects. The organisation also plays a key role in environmental policy advocacy, ensuring that conservation is rooted in both science and local engagement.

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INTRODUCTION
P.4-8
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ALBANIA, LAKE SKADAR
P.12
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SERBIA, CARSKA BARA
P.19
White Stork *(Ciconia Ciconia)*, © ALEKSANDAR JANČIĆ
P.20
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P.26
Osogovo Mountains, © MES
P.29
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P.37
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P.38
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P.42
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P.48
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TÜRKIYE, GEDIZ DELTA
P.53
Dalmatian Pelican *(Pelecanus crispus)*, © ALPER TÜYDEŞ
P.54
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P.62
Racha and Likhi Ridge, © SABUKO
P.65
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GEORGIA, IORI PLATEAU
P.71
Iori Plateau, © NATELA GRIGALASHVILI
P.76
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ARMENIA, YEGHEGIS RIVER VALLEY
P.80
Yeghegis Valley, © FPWC
P.85
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Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of all life on Earth. They give us clean air, fresh water, food, and the stability we depend on. Yet, for too long, nature has been pushed to its limits.

Now we face a choice: stand by as biodiversity disappears or take bold action and bring it back.

At BirdLife, we choose action. From shaping ground-breaking EU laws to leading large-scale restoration projects with our Partners, we are not just protecting what remains – we are bringing nature back to life.

Because without nature there is no future.

This portfolio showcases nine restoration sites where BirdLife and its Partners are already making a difference – proof that change is possible.

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