

Editorial

We are pleased to announce that ECNC's Annual report 2006 was published in July, and is currently being distributed.

In June ECNC started a two-year project to create an information network for local and regional authorities in the Netherlands to aid in reaching the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity. The project will raise awareness of the 2010 target and the Countdown 2010 process, and stimulate the target groups to take action.

In this issue, we also focus on the activities surrounding the Year of the Dolphin 2007. NatureNet Europe, of which ECNC is a partner, is coordinating activities as part of its Beautiful Europe initiative. The campaign will draw attention to the need to protect dolphins. This will be achieved through awareness-raising and educational activities among policymakers and the general public.

*On behalf of the Editorial Team
Glynis van Uden*

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Biodiversity 'special issue' at the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe'

The Working Group of Senior Officials preparing the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe', to be held in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October 2007, has decided to prioritize biodiversity as a special issue. In this way, they have met the explicit request of ECNC, IUCN, the Countdown 2010 Secretariat and CEEWEB to upgrade the position of biodiversity conservation on the Conference agenda. ECNC and the other NGOs are now once more committed to participating and contributing to the biodiversity segment of the Conference. ECNC will make various contributions to the Belgrade conference, including the organization of side events on ecological networks with the Council of Europe, the Netherlands Government and various NGOs, and on regions and biodiversity with the Croatian and Netherlands Governments, and the Province

of Noord-Brabant. ECNC will provide direct input into the Ministerial-NGO high-level event and will also be part of the 'biodiversity 2010 corner' of the Conference, as organized by IUCN/Countdown 2010 Secretariat. As part of the SEENET Programme (www.seenet.info), ECNC is coordinating the organization of a contest among schools in the South-East European region to illustrate via posters the concept of ecological connectivity, e.g. migration by large mammals or birds. Representatives of the winning school will receive their prize at the Conference.

For more information: Rob Wolters, Executive Director ECNC; wolters@ecnc.org

NatureNet Europe coordinates Year of the Dolphin

The Year of the Dolphin 2007 was announced in September 2006 by HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, who is Patron of the Year. Worldwide coordination is provided by UNEP-CMS in Bonn, Germany. NatureNet Europe is a Year of the Dolphin Associate and is coordinating the Year of the Dolphin activities as part of the Beautiful Europe initiative. Through its partner EUCC-The Coastal Union, NatureNet Europe and ECNC are involved in building an alliance of government agencies, NGOs and the private sector for improved protection of dolphin populations, in cooperation with European fisheries and tourism sectors.

On 19 June 2007 a seminar took place at the Palace Hotel in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, bringing together various stakeholders in the fields of research, public centres, policy, tourism, fisheries, dolphin refuges and business. During a lively and constructive discussion, ideas and suggestions were exchanged on the themes of 'dolphins and fisheries in the North Sea' and 'whale watching'.



In close collaboration with UNEP-CMS, NatureNet Europe has established a European Dolphin Fund to support activities for dolphin conservation in Europe and the Mediterranean. Priorities of the Dolphin Fund include:

- improvement of the protection of dolphins in practice;
- prevention and reduction of dolphin victims in fishing nets;
- prevention of disturbance of dolphins by whale watching;
- education, awareness and research promoting dolphin conservation;
- collaboration with UNEP-CMS for the Year of the Dolphin campaign.



Dolphin off the coast of Portugal.
(Photo: Francisco Ramos)

NatureNet Europe is encouraging its member organizations to prepare national activities and campaigns in the framework of the Year of the Dolphin.

For more information visit www.yod2007.org or www.jaarvandedolfijn.nl or contact Hanneke Wijnja, ECNC Communication Officer; wijnja@ecnc.org

Nature and Society

Training workshops 'Communicating for nature conservation in the Balkan region'

18-22 June 2007, Croatia and Macedonia

The project 'Communicating for nature conservation in the Balkan region' involves two pilot projects in Croatia and FYRO Macedonia. With the support of the Croatian State Institute for Nature Protection and the Macedonian Ministry of Environment, the projects will assist key stakeholders in agreeing on and establishing a collaborative platform for the management of the nature parks in Neretva Delta (Croatia) and Mavrovo (FYRO Macedonia). The aim is to build the capacity of the key actors in the parks to manage the process of stakeholder involvement in order to:

- increase understanding of the issues involved;
- reduce potential conflict;
- increase consensus;
- include and involve as many stakeholders as possible;
- maximize the integration of the different aspects of land-use management;
- maximize acceptance of the process and future management of the nature parks;
- maximize the effectiveness of the implementation of future management of the parks.



Neretva Delta.
(Photo: Lawrence Jones-Walters)

On 18 and 19 June 2007 ECNC's project team met stakeholders at the Neretva Delta, Croatia. The workshop participants received training in stakeholder participation techniques and there was also an opportunity to develop the nature conservation 'vision' for the Delta.

The second workshop was held in Mavrovo National Park, FYRO Macedonia, on 21 and 22 June and was attended by over 30 participants. The participants were pleased to be part of the management plan of the National Park. During the workshop they collaborated in developing their visions and learned advanced techniques of stakeholder participation and facilitation processes.



Mavrovo National Park.
(Photo: Lawrence Jones-Walters)

The participants of both workshops appreciated the expertise and experience of ECNC's project team. They said that they would like to apply the techniques learned at future stakeholder meetings, which will be held at the local level until September. Both workshops

were considered very productive and beneficial for the future decision-making processes of the two parks and in both countries.

This project is funded by the Norwegian Government.

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Workshop participants at Mavrovo National Park.
(Photo: Lawrence Jones-Walters)

Countdown 2010 Partners Assembly *11 June 2007, Brussels, Belgium*

Countdown 2010 is an active international network of partners working towards achieving the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss. ECNC has been an active partner since the establishment of the initiative some years ago.

The annual Partners Assembly, held on 11 June at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels, brought together 80 partners of Countdown 2010. They proposed strategies and actions to move towards the 2010 biodiversity target and called upon governments to report on their achievements so far.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, summarized the challenge as follows: 'We still have a lot of work to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels and the time is ticking. But the target can be achieved through local actions and global programmes. Most important is the engagement of all in the spirit of collaboration, including governments, local authorities, local and indigenous communities, scientific institutions, NGOs, the private sector, women, and youth. We owe future generations a healthy environment. There is no time for delay.'

Ladislav Miko, Director DG Environment, European Commission, called upon all participants to contribute to meeting the challenge

of halting biodiversity loss: 'We seem to be very good at producing ideas – now let's get even better in making them a reality.'

The annual Countdown 2010 Partners Assembly also appointed a new Advisory Board to provide strategic guidance for the initiative. The 15 advisors work for all sectors, from local biodiversity initiatives via national governments to international organizations. ECNC's Executive Director Rob Wolters was re-elected to the Countdown 2010 Advisory Board.

The meeting was held at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, which joined Countdown 2010 with a strong commitment to upscale its communications on biodiversity conservation and further strengthen its role as a national focal point for the biodiversity convention.

For more information visit
www.countdown2010.net



Halt the loss of biodiversity

Expanding Countdown 2010 in Noord-Brabant

The Province of Noord-Brabant wishes to strengthen its leading role in the Countdown 2010 process. Therefore, it has awarded ECNC a new project to support the Province's regional activities to widen enthusiasm for Countdown 2010 and to involve regional municipalities and trade and industry.

At present, 48 organizations (including 20 municipalities) in the Province of Noord-Brabant have signed the Countdown 2010 declaration. The activities under the new project should result in about half of all municipalities and three enterprises joining Countdown 2010 by the end of 2007. This means that about 34 municipalities in the Province of Noord-Brabant will sign the declaration.

ECNC will contribute to the production of a catalogue with practical examples of biodiversity projects. The production of the catalogue will be led by the Province of Noord-Brabant and the Molo Working Group on Countdown 2010 and Biodiversity.

ECNC will also assist the Province in exchanging knowledge and experience with three other EU regions and in drawing up a programme of cooperation.

For more information: Peter von Meijenfeldt, Partnership Manager for the Brabant&Europe Partnership for Sustainability; vonmeijenfeldt@ecnc.org

ECNC to stimulate local and regional biodiversity action in the Netherlands

In June 2007 ECNC started a two-year project that will create an information network for local and regional authorities in the Netherlands as a support to reach the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity.

In 2006, with funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, ECNC worked to stimulate the involvement of local and regional authorities in the Netherlands in reaching the European target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. This led to the establishment of a national network of contacts and to basic information material for the target groups concerned.

This new project, which runs until June 2009, will raise awareness of previous work by the Government on 'Biodiversiteit werkt' (biodiversity works), the 2010 target and the Countdown 2010 process. It will stimulate the target groups to take action, will collect best practice projects in an online register, organize a contest for successful projects, and stimulate an active network of partners.

The Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) is funding this project.

For more information: Ben Delbaere, Head of Programme Development; delbaere@ecnc.org

Business and Biodiversity



Seminar on banking and sustainable rural landscapes

13 June 2007, Frankfurt, Germany

During the LIFESCAPE - YOUR LANDSCAPE Partner Forum held in June in Frankfurt, Germany, ECNC organized a seminar at the European Central Bank on 'Banking and Sustainable Rural Landscapes'. The goal was

to discuss and disseminate LIFESCAPE project results on economic and financial mechanisms to make sustainable business and policy decisions related to landscape management.

Three LIFESCAPE project outputs related to biodiversity, business and banking are:

- *The economic value of investments in sustainability projects:* Three investment strategies have been calculated through social Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA): socio-cultural investments, nature and landscape related investments and recreation/tourism related investments. It was concluded that investing in sustainability projects within Het Groene Woud (the Green Forest) pays off.
- *A model that estimates the impact of projects on the regional economy:* The effects of a wide range of possible projects on the countryside can be calculated with the model: landscape, nature, culture, local economy, including agriculture and recreation. The conclusion was that investments in nature and landscape are very profitable for the rural economy.
- *The Regional Account for sustainable development:* In this account part of the interest earned from savings in the account is put into a fund to support projects that will enhance the quality of the region. This is a win-win-win situation: the account holder receives a normal market interest rate over his savings, the bank gains customers and increased turnover, and the fund receives money from the bank to support local sustainable projects. All in all, this is an excellent instrument to obtain extra money for regional landscape quality projects.



Recreation and tourism can be good for the rural economy.
(Photo: Vlaamse Landmaatschappij)

These LIFESCAPE outputs show that investing in sustainability projects and nature and landscape is very profitable for the rural economy. Also, through an innovative financing instrument, funding streams can be made available for landscape conservation activities, while the scheme also benefits the participating bank and the supporting local authorities, companies and private persons.

For more information, contact Yuca Waarts, Project Manager; waarts@ecnc.org

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

Ground-breaking workshop takes monitoring forward in the Ukraine

3 & 4 July 2007, Kyiv, Ukraine



Workshop participants.
(Photo: Grigoriy Kolomytsev)

More than 50 scientists and researchers met for a two-day workshop in Kyiv, Ukraine, on 3 and 4 July 2007 as part of the ECNC-coordinated project 'Supporting public involvement in building capacity for Ukrainian biodiversity monitoring'. It was the first time that people active in biodiversity monitoring in the Ukraine had come together to hear about the project; to listen to a series of excellent presentations about current progress in the field; and, in some cases, to meet each other for the first time.

'Biodiversity monitoring in Ukraine: current status and perspectives' was organized by

Dr Vasilij Kostyushin of the State Institute of Zoology, who leads the project in the Ukraine. The delegates made significant progress through a series of active discussion sessions during which they identified issues and barriers to change, began to form objectives for the future and agreed on the need for a coordinated strategy for monitoring biodiversity across their country.

ALTER-Net workshop on the science-policy interface

3 July 2007, Brussels, Belgium

The ALTER-Net 'Network of Excellence' aims to create durable integration of biodiversity research capacity in Europe. ALTER-Net is clustered into 15 work packages focusing on integration and specific research topics. ECNC leads the work package on integration of policy and science.

On 3 July 2007, three of the work packages (science-policy integration, I5; partnership between scientists and science communicators, I4; and communication and dissemination, E2) organized a joint workshop at the Institute of Nature and Forests (INBO) in Brussels. The aim of this workshop was to discuss further development of tools to support the science-policy interface effectively. Leaders of the work packages, invited guests and experts in this area presented their visions and ideas to develop new tools where necessary. The workshop participants agreed that the International Press Centre for Biodiversity Research (IPCB) should be further developed to support press contact in local languages. Development of an expert database as a tool enabling both journalists and policymakers to contact researchers was also accepted. Another idea was the estab-

An overview of the project can be found at <http://www.ecnc.org/MonitoringUkraine>. For more information please contact the Project Coordinator, Ana Nieto; nieto@ecnc.org



lishment of a journal aimed at policymakers. This journal would enable researchers to publish standard scientific papers, but would supplement them by providing expert assistance in writing a linked policy journal paper as well. In order to complement these tools, the ALTER-Net Communication Group will also develop an online information bank, which will feature a glossary of terms, articles on 'hot topics', and online discussions/debates on issues surrounding biodiversity.

Following on from the workshop, the team has started developing a communication strategy encompassing all these ideas, which will support and guide communication activities in the continuing ALTER-Net Network.

More information: Aysegul Cil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society; cil@ecnc.org and <http://www.alter-net.info>

Staff news

On 31 July 2007 Natasja Hulst left ECNC. Natasja worked with ECNC for two and a half years, as Project Manager in the Nature and Society Programme area.

ECNC Organizationally

New ECNC publications

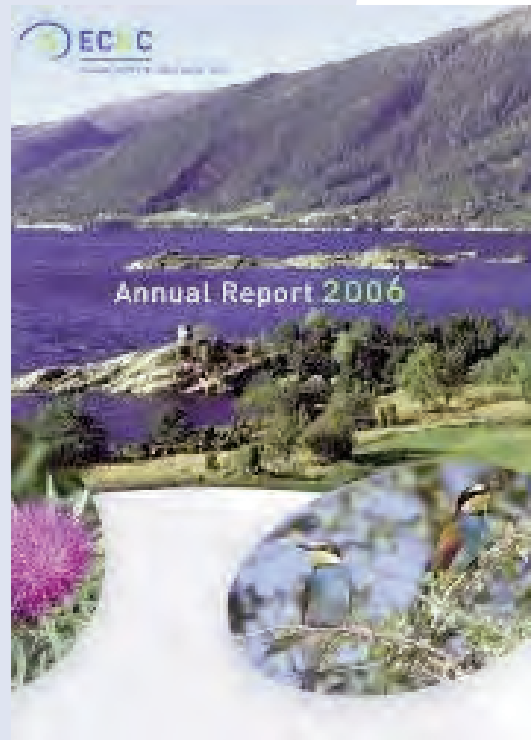
SEENET: South-East European Ecological Network: A programme as part of the Pan-European Ecological Network

In June a brochure was produced for the SEENET Programme, outlining the background to the Programme, achievements to date and lessons learned. The brochure was distributed at the Convention on Biological Diversity's SBSTTA-12 meeting in Paris.

ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation, Annual report 2006

In July ECNC's Annual report 2006 was published and is currently being distributed. The report illustrates the range of ECNC's activities in 2006, and how ECNC continues to generate new activities at the interface of science and policy, and economy and ecology.

This year the Annual report is also available online, together with extra online information, at <http://www.annualreport.ecnc.org>



For details of all ECNC publications, visit www.ecnc.org

New issue of *Journal for Nature Conservation*

Volume 15, issue 2 of the *Journal for Nature Conservation* (published by Elsevier in affiliation with ECNC) was published in July 2007.

For further information, please consult:

http://www.ecnc.org/JournalForNatureCons/Index_36.htm



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