



Project LIFE ALBUFERA internacional newsletter No. 4 september 2016

Final Conference of the LIFE ALBUFERA Project

On 29 and 30 June we organised our great final event at the Botanical Gardens of the University of Valencia in which numerous local and international experts of wetland management and conservation, both natural and artificial, participated.

In the following, you find a summary of some of the key messages of those two days.

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INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT



Marion Hammerl , **President, Living Lakes:**

"The purpose of a network is that all partners are active. They must take care of personal relationships and establish bonds of trust, while taking into account different aspects of each partner such as human and financial resources and share information effectively."

Tobias Salathé, **Senior Adviser, Ramsar Convention Secretariat:**

"Wetlands and their contribution to a healthy environment are inextricably linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Projects such as the LIFE ALBUFERA one show that it is possible to restore them convincingly and we can transfer this experience to other wetlands."





Julià Álvaro, Regional Minister of Agriculture, the Environment, Climate Change and Rural Development, Region of Valencia:

"The role and commitment of the Valencian Regional Government is to protect the Albufera. The water in the lake is the key, water quantity and quality."



Mª Ángeles Ureña Guillem, President of the Júcar Basin Confederation:

"The Albufera has a continuous space on the agenda of the Júcar Basin Confederation with the aim of achieving its good ecological potential."

Encarna González Sánchez, Environmental Manager, Acuamed:

"It is very important to work on the renaturation of waters, waters that can return to harbour biodiversity."



Sergi Campillo Fernández, Councillor, City of Valencia:

"The Lake of the Albufera has been suffering severe degradation for decades. It is through projects like this one that you can regain its environmental value."



Ramón Martí Montes, SEO/BirdLife:

"This form of collaboration between various administrations makes us progress to achieve a better conservation status of the Natura 2000 network."

Eva Tudela, Acció Ecologista Agró:

"It is a very positive example of teamwork what has been done and achieved with this project. We offer our long-term experience in protecting the territory, our professionalism, our commitment and good will. We value creating partnerships to continue improving natural areas."



Víctor Manuel Arqued, Subdirector General of planning and the sustainable use of water, MAGRAMA): "

"If the environmental objectives of water bodies are specified in the management plans, these plans must be framed in the European directives"

Félix Francés García, Director, IAMA:

"We are concerned about environmental conservation in general and water in particular. We are interested in having a clean environment from an economic point of view, tourism, among others."



HABITAT



Andrea Kelly, Senior Ecologist, Broads National Park:

"In the Broads National Park we use different vegetation management methods, including ponies, machinery, human labour ... they are used because it is the product that has value (biomass). We are looking for new ways to leverage the dry reeds and use it as energy production and for energy."



Jan Vymazal, Professor, Czech University of Life Sciences:

"In wetland different types of plants can be used. Better results are achieved in aerobic conditions than in anoxic conditions. On many occasions planting wetland plants is difficult due to predation by some animals."

Eduardo de Miguel, Director, Fundación Global Nature:

"It is essential to create such consortia in managing natural areas. The third sector and the university are very valuable complementary agents to private agents and the administration."



Josep Nebot Cerdá, Subdirector General of the Environment at the Department of Agriculture, the Environment, Climate Change and Rural Development, Region of Valencia:

"There is a need for conservation to be part of the Administration. We must begin a process of change, reformulate the role of the public and the private sector in terms of conservation. Strengthen the role of the administration as strategic planner, to facilitate trust in it."

Belén López Precioso, Environmental Consultant, Avinença:

"Land stewardship is a resource conservation strategy that seeks to involve the owners of private and public lands to conserve natural values. There are more than 200 custody entities in Spain, of which 70% are social entities, and for them the networking is paramount."



Javier Pérez Gordillo, Responsible of the LIFE INVASEP Project:

"In the environmental care all social actors should be involved. Civil society must be empowered and public administration can reconcile its work with civil society, NGOs, volunteers ... as long as the work of the latter do not substitute the one of the first."

BIRDS

Graham White, Senior Reserves Ecologist, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds:

"In large wetlands, the management aimed at creating habitat for birds requires the rejuvenation of some areas, creating more habitat types and work, taking into account the ecosystem with a wider biodiversity. It is necessary to make strategic use of water, take advantage of the topography and improve the use of the available water."



Gillian Gilbert, Senior Conservationist Scientist, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds:

"The management of suitable habitat for the species involves the creation, restoration, and conservation of these habitats. If there is a good prior learning about what a particular species needs, there is no reason why the improvement of the species is not achieved through habitat management."



Roberto González García, Technician in Environmental Policies, SEO/BirdLife:

"The campaign on Water Wings has resulted in the realisation of publications that help administrations integrate the three Water, Birds and Habitats Directives in their hydrological plans. In compliance with the three directives, a management plan should go from the local to the national."

Paloma Mateache Sacristán, Director, Natural Park of the Albufera:

"The Master Plan of the Natural Park of the Albufera is outdated and does not conform to the Birds, Habitats and Water Framework Directives. Each rule governing the management plan should be duly justified. Often the thread between the objectives to be achieved and regulations to get them is forgotten."



Juan A. Amat, Researcher, Biological Station in Doñana (EBD-CSIC):

"Birds can be a good indicator of biodiversity. It is not practical to monitor all system elements, but to choose those indicators that allow more information on the ecosystem. A constructed wetland is not the same as a restored one, since a restored wetland contains more biodiversity."

Víctor Gutiérrez, Technician, Fundación Biodiversidad:

"A key strategy when planning restoration and nature conservation projects are integrated projects, which allow the integration of directives and funding."



WATER

Joan García Serrano, Director of the Hydraulic, Maritime and Environmental Engineering Department, Polytechnic University of Catalunya:

"The future is to join the green with the grey infrastructures and to get the industry to use treated water and not potable water. We should improve the perception of the population towards the treated water and call it renatured water or fresh water."



Michael Bender, Head of the Water Policy Office, GRÜNE LIGA:

"People are interested in learning policies relating to water, what is done with water as a resource and fundamental right that is. In Germany very positive and surprising results were obtained in a referendum which measured what was wrong with privatization and water treatment."

Teodoro Estrela Monreal, Head of the Water Planning Office of the Júcar Basin Confederation:

"The public administration will promote a special plan to achieve the ecological potential of Lake Albufera. Water planning has served so that communication between the authorities involved has improved and they exchange more information."



Maria Antonia Rodrigo Alacreu, Researcher, Cavanilles Institute of Biodiversity and Evolutionary Biology, University of Valencia:

"The quantity and quality of water in the wetland is essential. Water controls the environment (wildlife, vegetation and habitats). Constructed wetlands are acceptable eco-technological tools."



Isabel Martín, Researcher and Project Manager, Centre of New Water Technologies (CENTA):

"We have worked with a bio-electrogenetic wetland, where the residual water carries a type of bacteria that use organic matter and release electrons to the medium, which is transformed into energy through conductors."

Dan Hoare, Environment and Design Supervisor, Broads National Park:

"Duck restoration in the Broads has had several benefits: social ones (more visitors), environmental ones (carrizal regeneration areas, improving the water quality and habitat for birds ...) and an economic one (charging navigation rates)."



Francisco Moral Martos, Professor, University Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla:

"Hydrogeological monitoring work within the framework of the restoration of the Los Tollos lagoon in Andalusia have shed light on the hydrological functioning of the system, and have made it possible to quantify the main water outputs and inputs by installing a weather station."



Gustavo Ballesteros Pelegrín, Responsible of the LIFE Malvasía Project, University of Murcia:

"With the construction of new sewage treatment plants, one leaves the old settling ponds as renaturation areas of habitats which creates suitable spaces for waterfowl, especially the white-headed duck, an endangered species that has found in these constructed wetlands the perfect place for reproduction."

The LIFE ALBUFERA Project presents its results: A better water quality, restoration of habitats and species

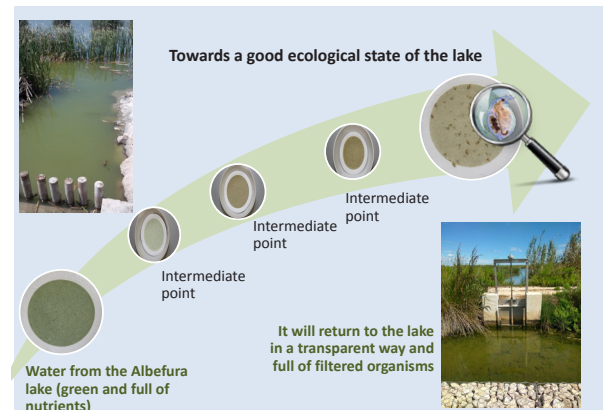
After three years of intense work, the LIFE ALBUFERA project is coming to an end and presents its results: through the implementation of various actions of water and vegetation management in three constructed wetlands (Tancat de la Pipa, Tancat de Milia and Tancat de l'Illa) in the Natural Park of the Albufera of Valencia, an improvement of **the quality of lake water was achieved as well as habitats characteristic of wetlands could be restored and typical species returned to the area.**

The partners of the project have observed many important improvements in the areas directly concerned by the constructed wetlands. Specifically, at the mouth of the Tancat de Milia a decreasing tendency in nutrient concentrations and phytoplanktons could be found. In addition, helofita bushes and submerged vegetation could be restored, including in the environment surrounding the Tancat de la Pipa.

Similarly, the value of fundamental ecosystem services was underlined, including ongoing maintenance of a wide variety of habitats to host birds with different preferences or the possibility of reintroducing other threatened fish species like the Samaruc (*Valencia hispanica*) or terrapin European (*Emys orbicularis*).

Finally, the economic benefits have to be stressed linked to the maintenance of these areas, as well as to the diversity of activities directed at a general public which have taken place in the last couple of years, including the positive economic impact of boat trips, restoration or ornithological tourism.

In fact, all the project results will be gathered in **management plan guidelines** for wetlands to be incorporated in the Júcar Basin Plan and the Albufera Management Plan as part of the Natura 2000 Network. Further and thanks to the different project methodologies indicators for the good conservation of birds were developed, which are not only applicable in the Albufera, but also in other wetlands.



EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES WITH ORGANISATIONS FROM THE UK

Last July after the final conference was over, we visited the United Kingdom to exchange experiences with two organisations dedicated to wetland restoration and the setting up of constructed wetlands to solve pollution problems.

The first one OCEAN ESU "Global solutions for environmental management" located in Barnsley, is a company dedicated to technical assistance, highly specialised in designing sustainable and integrated environmental solutions for a wide variety of industrial activities.

The reason for our visit was related to the treatment of contaminated water, since OCEAN-ESU offers a variety of services related to the design, construction, management and maintenance of treatment systems for effluents from the industry, agriculture or municipalities.

You can find more information on <http://www.oceans-esu.com/products-services/reed-beds/>

We also visited the National Park of the Broads in Norfolk, where we could get an idea at first hand of the restoration projects their technicians had told us about during the final conference of the LIFE ALBUFERA project. The interest of this visit was that many of the problems we find in our lake, have been the same in the Broads and they have already found interesting solutions that we could also apply in the Albufera in the future.

For more information, please consult: <http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects>

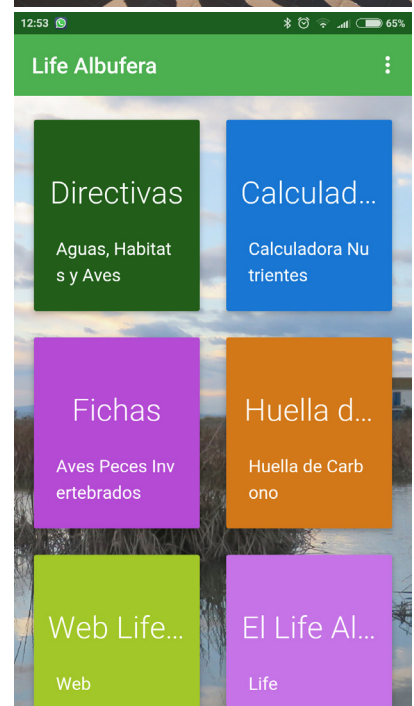
VISITORS FROM CHINA AND COLOMBIA

In this last period we have received the visit of Professor Xiaoliu Yang of Peking University interested in the system of constructed wetlands for the treatment of waster water.

In addition, a group of Colombian students of the University of St. Thomas Aquinas visited the LIFE ALBUFERA wetlands in the framework of a training programme on the planification and management of water resources hosted by IIAMA.

DOWNLOAD OUR NEW LIFE ALBUFERA APP!

The new mobile app is available for download on our website. It allows you to calculate an approximate nutrient reduction made by a constructed wetland depending on the system used and the density of vegetation. It also allows you to calculate the carbon footprint and includes a description of the project, the policies that have guided us and a representation of the flora and fauna in the three Tancats.



LIFE Albufera: “Integrated management of three constructed wetlands in compliance with the Water Framework, Birds and Habitats Directives.”



We started the project with a few partners and ended it with more than 1600 followers.



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