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Parazoanthus axinellae,
Lastovo Archipelago, Croatia.
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Posidonia, the WWF Mediterranean newsletter
for the community of environmental organizations
in the Mediterranean.

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POSIDONIA

GREEK FOREST FIRES: UPDATE

The forest fires ravaging Greece in recent weeks have been unprecedented. More than 60 people died, thousands have been left homeless, and over 250,000ha of forests and agricultural land, mainly olive groves and vineyards, have been destroyed. At the beginning of September the fires were still burning, with the burnt area covering almost 2% of the surface area of the country. Natura 2000 sites Mt Taygetos, Mt Parnonas, the Parnitha National Park and other biodiversity hotspots around the country (including Mt Pelion, Prespa and the Grammos mountain range) have been decimated. Greece remains the only country in the European Union without a national forest registry, without a national spatial plan and with an archaic law dating back 30 years that allows land owners to build anywhere, provided they have at least 0.4ha of land. In the days and months to come, WWF Greece will

be focusing its efforts on the following:

- Assessment of the damage through on-site visits and satellite image analyses
- Restoration plans for specific protected areas and assistance to local authorities
- Targeted legal action to combat illegal constructions and developments

WWF Greece has been working on forest fire issues for years. Perhaps now, under the pressure of the current circumstances, politicians will finally listen.

For the latest updates see www.wwf.gr

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Charred Black pines (*Pinus nigra*) in the haze after a forest fire, Mount Taygetos, Greece
© WWF-Canon / P. MATSOUKAS

HORIZON 2020 INITIATIVE

Regional environmental initiatives in the Mediterranean have not always achieved their expected results, often lacking coordination and coherence. Following the commitment made by Euro-Mediterranean Partners to endorse a feasible timetable to de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by 2020, the EC launched the Horizon 2020 initiative in Cairo in November 2006. The initiative has four parts:

1. Pollution reduction projects
2. Capacity building measures
3. Research on priority areas
4. Monitoring, steering and review.

Horizon 2020 will work to establish a “road map”, a common agenda that includes planned activities and commitments by the EU, UN organisations, multilateral banks (the World Bank, EIB). NGOs have the potential to contribute to Horizon 2020 and beyond by increasing awareness and catalyzing institutional changes

and by running projects in specific areas. Between September and November a questionnaire will be developed and distributed in order to help identify the capacity building needs of environmental NGOs in the EC’s partner countries in the Mediterranean. This data will be used to design training programmes and to identify how NGOs in the region can contribute to the Horizon 2020 initiative.

The Horizon 2020 initiative aims to enhance the efficiency of environmental activities undertaken throughout the Mediterranean. The questionnaire for NGOs is being prepared by Environmental Resources Management Limited (ERM) for the EC, DG Environment in consultation with the Comité de Suivi (CdS), an alliance of seven regional NGO networks who have been working together on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership since 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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HARVESTING NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS

WWF Mediterranean and partners are working to promote sustainable tourism in the Prokletije Mountains Region of Montenegro. During the blueberry festival held in Plav this summer the NGO Green Home and another local partner organization carried out a survey concerning the harvesting of NTFPs. Currently the majority of harvesters use NTFPs, especially blueberries, for their own needs, producing jam, juice and other products. A small percentage manage to sell these products to other markets in the region, but they would like the opportunity to develop this in

the future. Green Home and partners have committed to support harvesters, providing working garments and storage containers in time for the next blueberry season, and organizing training in the marketing of NTFPs.

WWF Mediterranean and partner NGO Green Home are implementing the project *Sustainable development of the tourist sector in the Prokletije region of Montenegro*. The main goal is to promote the area as a viable tourist destination and build local capacities to promote sustainable tourism in the Prokletije Mountains Region. The project is supported by the Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development (AECI).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Procession during the blueberry festival.
Plav, Montenegro
© Green Home / N. DURAKOVIC

MOROCCO CRACKS DOWN ON ILLEGAL FISHING

The Moroccan government has taken strong action against illegal and destructive fishing in the Mediterranean Sea with a law punishing fishermen who continue to use driftnets in its waters. Driftnets – which can extend for up to 14km – are known to cause the accidental death or injury of many marine species. A WWF report has revealed that some 3,600 dolphins and 23,000 sharks are killed annually by driftnets in Moroccan waters alone. Under the new measures, fishermen caught using the destructive nets in Morocco will face up to a year's imprisonment or heavy fines. Confiscated nets will be destroyed, ensuring that the banned gear will not be sold in other countries. Compensation will be provided to Moroccan fishermen who give up their nets, and will enable them to invest in more sustainable activities. Although illegal, driftnets

are still widely used across the Mediterranean Sea. WWF is urging EU fleets in the Mediterranean to follow Morocco's lead in stopping this destructive practice.

Read more on www.panda.org/mediterranean

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EU VESSELS SEEN FISHING AFTER SEASON CLOSED

In defiance of international regulations, European vessels were seen fishing illegally for bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean after the fishery was closed for the season on 1 July. According to WWF field sources, an Italian fleet of industrial vessels set sail from Malta to operate in the Strait of Sicily supported by a spotter plane during the first days of the month. Boats tugging cages were also on hand to transfer any fish caught to Croatian tuna farms. WWF relayed the information to the EC, the new European Community Fisheries Control Agency and the Italian authorities. The issue is currently under investigation. WWF is highly concerned about the management of the bluefin tuna fishery in Mediterranean waters.

The management measures currently in force are far too weak to enable long-term stock recovery and must undergo a radical overhaul at the next

meeting of ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) in Turkey in November.

Read more on www.panda.org/mediterranean

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INSUFFICIENT PROTECTION OF CROP DIVERSITY

While protected areas such as national parks have been established to conserve charismatic animal and plant species, very few have been set aside to protect wild plants from which our crops originate. WWF reports that the centres of diversity of principal cultivated plants are poorly protected, many of them having only 5% protection, some with only 1% or less. Crop wild relatives and varieties are the world's repositories of crop genetic diversity and play a vital role in ensuring future food security. With the world's population increasing and at a time of rapid environmental changes due to climate change, it is crucial that we conserve the widest possible natural genetic base of our food crops. WWF calls on all those who rely on crop genetic resources

and diversity to formulate strategies that promote conservation of crop wild relatives and traditional varieties. They should work together to conserve this vital element of biodiversity, and help secure global food security, especially for the world's poorest.

The WWF report *Food Stores: Using protected areas to secure crop genetic diversity*, was published with the University of Birmingham (UK).

Read more on www.panda.org/mediterranean.

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Wild rice (*Oryza barthii*)
© WWF-Canon / V. J. TOLEDO

GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZE NEED FOR EMISSION CUTS

Governments negotiating a new global deal on climate change have accepted a safe range for emission reductions of harmful climate pollution. Recent talks in Vienna were designed to prepare for the UN's ministerial conference on climate change, to be held in Bali in December. The 100 countries attending were to agree on the level of emissions cuts that are needed from industrialized countries. The

current targets agreed under the Kyoto Protocol end in 2012. In Bali, environment ministers need to formally launch the negotiations that will conclude in 2009 with an agreement on new binding, heavier cuts in heat-trapping climate pollution.

Read more on www.panda.org/mediterranean.

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ROAD THREATENS CRUCIAL HABITAT

A recently announced plan to construct a road in Al Hoceima, Morocco threatens habitat crucial for the survival of animal and plant species listed under the IUCN red list. The local delegation of the Ministry for Infrastructure at Al Hoceima has chosen to build a section of a new land-sea route through the cliffs of Er Moud–Tara–Youssef, which will destroy an area of high ecological interest. This project clearly infringes upon the National Policy for Coastal Protection, as well as several international conventions that have

been ratified by Morocco. It is also against the royal decree which established the Al Hoceima National Park in 2004. The local NGO Association Azir has produced a report advocating less destructive development alternatives which are technically possible. The report has been distributed to the Head of the Province of Al-Hoceima and responsible national ministries.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMER CAMPS

A number of school children in Bosnia and Herzegovina were able to learn first hand the fragility and power of nature along the Neretva river this summer. Local NGOs — Bura Association, CESD, and Youth Centre Livno— organized three summer camps to raise awareness of the beauty of the Neretva river, its biodiversity richness and the need to preserve it. The camps were held in Glavaticevo (Livno), Boracko Lake (Konjic), and in Hutovo Blato National Park and Trebi•at river. The children participated in workshops and games, trekking, bird watching, and a canoe safari. Participants will be involved in future activities including exhibitions and lectures to share information with other students at

their schools, using photos, videos, and other resources developed during the summer.

One of the main environmental threats in the Neretva river basin is the construction of dams. The Living Neretva Project, developed by WWF Mediterranean and partner NGOs, aims to ensure proper public participation in Neretva management. The project supports the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia to manage the natural resources of the transboundary Neretva river basin. The project is implemented by WWF Mediterranean in collaboration with WWF Norway, and is financed by the Norwegian Government.

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MARINE PROTECTION IN CROATIA

The Adriatic Sea is one of the most important resources for the Republic of Croatia, yet there is very little information about the distribution of important marine species and habitats necessary for its efficient management. Public awareness of endangered Adriatic marine biodiversity is also scarce. A new project aims to strengthen the capacity of civil organizations (mainly NGOs and diving clubs) involved in marine activities targeting their knowledge of marine biodiversity data collection and improving coordination and cooperation with state institutions. The project will allow partners to develop a structured programme for the education of

volunteers, implement research activities, workshops, public lectures, and exhibitions. The project will focus on the area of the newly established Lastovo Archipelago Nature Park and Cres-Lošinj Special Marine Reserve.

Strengthening Civil Society for Marine Protection is financed by the European Union through the CARDS 2004 Programme, the NGO SUNCE (project leader), Blue World and the Croatian Ministry of Culture.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Discodoris atromaculata.
Lastovo Archipelago, Croatia
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TRAINING MODULES ON POLICY

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), a new approach to EU relations with neighbouring non-EU countries, has developed very rapidly, giving countries the opportunity to take a stake in the internal market and participate in relevant EU programmes. ENP regions enclose important natural areas, and environmental NGOs need the capacity to play an active role in environmental protection. In this framework WWF has designed a project to enable NGOs to actively participate in the ongoing ENP process. Through three training

modules they will study effective communication and the design and management of environmental projects. The modules were used to help local NGOs organize workshops in Armenia and Azerbaijan this summer.

The modules were developed by WWF Mediterranean Across the Waters with the support of WWF European Policy Office and WWF Caucasus Programme, and the financial support of the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (UK), and the Government of Catalonia.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

New leaders in Mediterranean NGOs

While WWF can train only a limited number of conservationists, their Leadership Programme has an impact on an ever-increasing network of individuals and organisations. This summer two participants completed their Leadership Programme: Heike Thol-Schmitz from Friends of Gökova (Turkey) and Mofadal Elmerzguioui from ATED (Morocco). Mato Gotovac from Youth Center Livno (Bosnia and Herzegovina) recently began the Programme. The WWF Mediterranean Leadership Programme is supported by the Government of Catalonia. For further information: msuarez@atw-wwf.org

A joint website on the programming of EC assistance to eastern European, south Caucasus and south Mediterranean countries was launched recently by WWF, Aprodev, Eurostep and WomNet. It is a tool for following the discussions on the programming of EC assistance under the ENPI (2007-2013) for Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Russia, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine. Civil society actors are invited to contribute to the website and post information. **See www.enpi-programming.eu**

Management plans for Ramsar Sites in central, southern and eastern Europe — a contribution to the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas is a training course organised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with its International Academy for Nature Conservation. **18-22 October 2007, Isle of Vilm, Germany.**
www.bfn.de/06_akademie_natursch.html

Horizon 2020 and private investor involvement

This conference will gather key players in the Horizon 2020 Initiative to explore ways of involving the private sector in support of the initiative. Organized by GWP-Med and MIO-ECSDE, jointly with the European Partners for Environment, Institut Mediterranéen de l'Eau and MedCities. **22-23 October 2007, Athens, Greece.**
www.gwpmed.org/node/31

European Forest Institute Mediterranean Regional Office (EFIMED)

1st annual meeting: modelling, valuing and managing Mediterranean forest ecosystems for non-timber goods and services
26-27 October 2007, University of Valladolid, Palencia, Spain.
www.efi.int/portal/efimed

European Water Management and Climate Change

The 3rd European Water Association (EWA) Brussels Conference will bring together experts from around the European Union to discuss Climate Change, its impact on the water sector and the mitigation and adaptation measures that can be adopted. **5 November 2007, Brussels, Belgium.**
www.ewaonline.de/downloads/3rd-EWA-Brussels-Conference.pdf

EU Energy Policy and Technology Challenges

3rd annual European Energy Policy Conference.
21- 22 November 2007, The Management Centre Europe, Brussels, Belgium.
<http://guest.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?e=455c0ca8-3464-4a45-9181-2c24fb62ff74>

Water culture and water conflicts in the Mediterranean

Organized within the framework of the MELIA project, this conference will pull together scientists, decision and policy makers, water users, relevant NGOs and organizations from around the Mediterranean. **22-26 November 2007, Hammamet-Médenine, Tunisia.**
www.meliaproject.eu

WWF RESOURCES

Sustainable seafood: Consumer guides

Together with the Seafood Choices Alliance, WWF has created consumer guides with information on which fish to buy.

www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/marine/our_solutions/sustainable_fishing/sustainable_seafood/seafood_guides/index.cfm

WWF's Arguments for Protection series, *Running Pure*, *Beyond Belief* and *Food Stores* are available at: www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do

The ENP training module Design and Management of Environmental Projects, used by the WWF network to build the advocacy capacity of NGOs in ENP countries, is available on CD together with background documents.
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WWF Bluefin Witness - voices from the fishery speak out

WWF Mediterranean has launched a new forum - Bluefin Witness - to raise awareness of the tuna crisis.

www.panda.org/mediterranean

The recently released WWF report — *Pipedreams? Interbasin transfers and water shortages* — shows that water transfers between rivers are inevitably costly schemes that damage the natural environment, interrupting flows between rivers and compromising their ability to provide food and water. Basin transfers must be the last resort after all other sustainable approaches have been explored.
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The EU's long-awaited decision to include air travel in its Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) will be an important first step to tackling emissions from aviation. However, a new WWF report— *Allocation of allowances for aviation in the EU ETS* — shows that if not managed properly the scheme could actually drive up emissions.
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WWF has set up a virtual island as a way to help people learn about conservation issues and the need to live sustainably. If you have Second Life installed on your computer, you can access Conservation Island via:

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/WWF/138/199/41/>

More information at www.panda.org.

OTHER RESOURCES

Climate Chaos provides ready-to-use and flexible activities for 9-11 year olds. Texts are in English but can be adapted. To browse and download the material visit www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/climatechange/index.htm

A range of booklets in the *Educational practices* series is available from UNESCO.
www.ibe.unesco.org/publications/practices.htm

The Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species has set up an information exchange tool that compliments the GFU portal.
www.underutilized-species.org/default.asp

The European Commission COST (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research) has published its report on protected forests in Europe.
www.efi.fi/projects/coste27/results/index.html

An animated training film for tourists has been produced by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS UK) in collaboration with MEDASSET. The DVD (in English) illustrates actions tourists can take to mitigate impacts on turtles and nesting beaches in the Mediterranean. *Turtles in Trouble* can be viewed and downloaded at www.mcsuk.org/marineworld/turtles/turtles+and+tourism



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Prepared by WWF Mediterranean Programme.

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