



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

IUCN REGIONAL OFFICE FOR  
EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA





# Annual Report 2016

IUCN Regional Office for  
Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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# MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR



*Boris Erg, Director of IUCN Regional Office  
for Eastern Europe and Central Asia*

In an attempt to embrace the full diversity of the Eastern Europe and Central Asian Region and to address the many environmental challenges which face its communities and societies today, IUCN ECARO embarked on a two-pronged approach in 2016. While rolling out a broad consultative process, aimed at defining the objectives and thematic priorities for IUCN in the region, we have successfully maintained and enhanced a wide range of activities, from policy and institutional development, priority-setting and resource-mobilisation, to capacity-building and community engagement.

We have continued to develop our partnerships, with an expanding network of Members, Commission experts and other new partners across the region. This also includes an enhanced effort to coordinate the activities of various IUCN programmes working across the ECARO. The most notable recent strategic partnerships include that with the GIZ Open Regional Fund for Biodiversity in South Eastern Europe and our support for the newly established Regional Ramsar Initiative for Central Asia. Our commitment to the European Green Belt also remains in the focus.

IUCN continues to deliver on various thematic priorities in the region – from maintaining cooperation at institutional level in South Eastern Europe, improved transboundary management of shared natural resources, to supporting

community participation and sustainable local development. In the wider region of Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus, IUCN helps to strengthen national policy and enhance equitable governance of forest resources.

Whilst our attention has been primarily on partnership and network development, in 2016 we have initiated the first activities in Central Asia for many years. In Russia IUCN has continued to provide highly skilled expertise and professional advice to the government, civil society and the private sector.

With an expanding programme of activities now mapped out, I would now like to take this opportunity to thank all our Members, Commissions, partners and donors for expressing confidence in us and offering invaluable support. We extend our gratitude to the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia for their generous hosting of our office. Without you all none of the successes achieved so far would have been possible.

Yours sincerely,  
Boris

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be 'Boris Erg', located at the bottom right of the page.

# IUCN AT A GLANCE

*IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.*

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Created in 1948, IUCN has evolved into the world's largest and most diverse environmental network.

It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,300 Member organisations and the input of some 16,000 experts.

IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. Our experts are organised into six Commissions dedicated to species survival, environmental law, protected areas, social and economic policy, ecosystem management, and education and communication.

The ability to convene diverse stakeholders and provide the latest science, objective recommendations and on-the-ground expertise drives IUCN's mission of informing and empowering conservation efforts worldwide. We provide a neutral forum in which governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples' groups, faith-based organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges.

By facilitating these solutions, IUCN provides governments and institutions at all levels with the impetus to achieve universal goals, including on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development, which IUCN was instrumental in defining.

Combined, our knowledge base and diverse membership make IUCN an incubator and trusted repository of best practices, conservation tools,

and international guidelines and standards. As the only environmental organisation with official United Nations Observer Status, IUCN ensures that nature conservation has a voice at the highest level of international governance.

IUCN's expertise and extensive network provide a solid foundation for a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects around the world. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being. They also produce a wealth of data and information which feeds into IUCN's analytical capacity.

Through their affiliation with IUCN, Member organisations are part of a democratic process, voting for Resolutions which drive the global conservation agenda. They meet every four years at the IUCN World Conservation Congress to set priorities and agree on the Union's work programme. IUCN congresses have produced several key international environmental agreements including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the World Heritage Convention, and the Ramsar Convention on wetlands. We continue to help these conventions strengthen and evolve so that they can respond to emerging challenges.

Our Member organisations are represented by the IUCN Council – the governing body. Headquartered in Switzerland, IUCN Secretariat comprises around 950 staff in more than 50 countries.



# STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

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*The region of Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia (ECA) is characterised by the vast diversity of natural values, ecological features, environmental policies, cultural heritage and socio-economic conditions.*

Countries vary broadly in terms of their geography, natural resources, population size, ethnic groups, languages, religious affiliations and political systems. The differences in socio-economic conditions and human development are also broad. We work in 18 States<sup>1</sup> of the IUCN Statutory Region East Europe, North and Central Asia as set forth in the Annex to the IUCN Regulations<sup>2</sup>.

*Our major challenge is the need to empower governments and civil society to build trust and confidence, helping to enable good governance and sustainable use of resources in the region.*

Democratic, culturally diverse, and socially inclusive societies are essential components of sustainable development. Environmentally, it is evident that many of the current natural resource use patterns in the region are unsustainable. Biodiversity loss, deterioration of forests, steppe, freshwater and marine ecosystems, climate change, and land degradation are all threats to the natural goods and services upon which the human population depends. The rural poor suffer the most, although the remainder of society is also affected by the consequences.

*Aiming to build a more sustainable future for the region, IUCN ECARO focuses on good governance, long-term protection of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Through its unique convening power it enables cross-sectoral and regional cooperation and links policy and action at the regional and national levels.*





## OUR TEAM

**Boris Erg**, Director

### **Ecosystem Management Programme**

**Sanja Pokrajac**, Programme Officer

**Boško Stamenković**, Intern

### **Protected Areas Programme**

**Tomasz Pezold**, Programme Officer

**Oliver Avramoski**, Project Officer

**Stephanie Gentle**, Intern

### **Project Office in Tirana, Albania**

**Andrea Ghiurghi**, Project Manager

**Sonila Lechwacki**, Assistant and Accountant

**Daniela Godo**, Assistant and Accountant

### **Operations and Outreach**

**Constantine Makris**, European Membership Relations Officer

**Aleksandra Nikodinović**, Operations and Outreach Officer

**Jelena Stjelja**, Finance Assistant

**Andjela Klobučar**, HR and Administration Assistant

**Vladimir Smaglijenko**, Senior ERP/Web Application Developer

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*I most enjoyed being able to experience what it's like to work with IUCN. I learned it takes a lot of accepting and adapting to change and was surprised at how much the work hours, schedule, and even location can change from week to week. I had my share of work at the office, but I was very lucky to travel to field sites where IUCN runs projects—I really enjoy this aspect of the work, even though it can be tiresome. It's one thing to read about project management in a textbook, and a completely different thing to go and actually take part in managing a project or an event—to actually see the difference the organization makes. This is something I could never effectively learn in a classroom or a corporate job. Traveling to field sites also presented many opportunities to learn how to network and engage with NGOs, international agencies, and policymakers.*

*My colleagues also had a big impact on my learning experience. Everyone has a different personality and different ways that they approach tasks and projects, and they were open and shared their insights and experiences with me. I need to embrace talking to people more—you can always learn something new that might turn out to be important!”*  
Stephanie Gentle, Intern

# IUCN ECARO MEMBERS

*IUCN's Membership network in Eastern Europe and Central Asia counts 33 Members in 13 countries.*

*In the course of 2016, the network enlarged by three Members:*

- Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (GA, Macedonia FYR),
- Macedonian Ecological Society (NGO, Macedonia FYR),
- Saint-Petersburg Charitable Public Organisation "Biologists for nature conservation" (NGO, Russia).

Figure 1: Membership in numbers per country

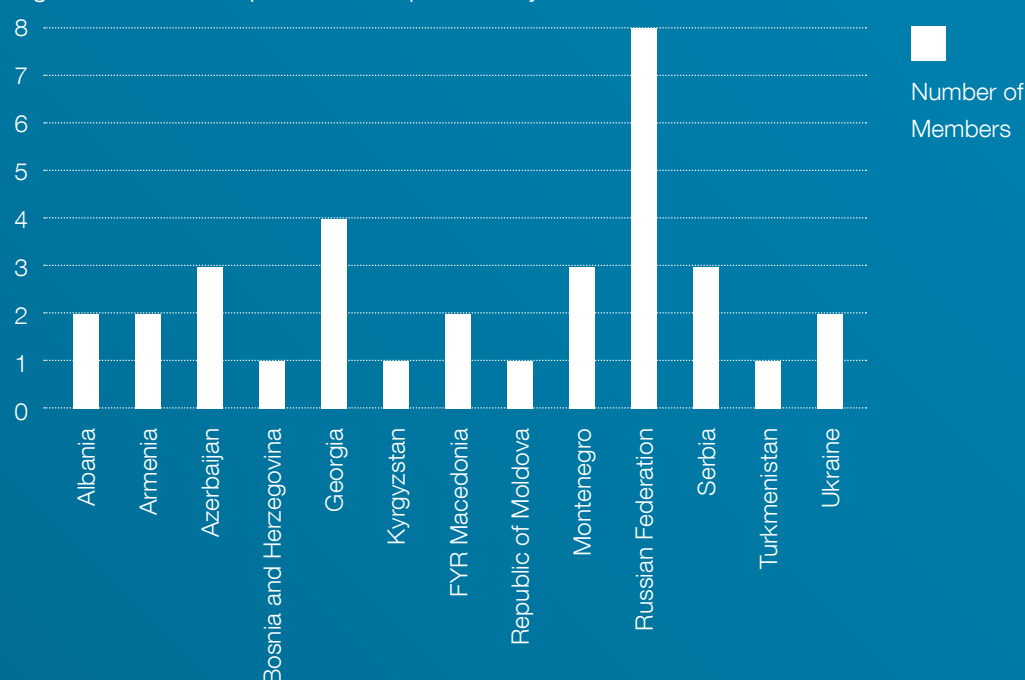
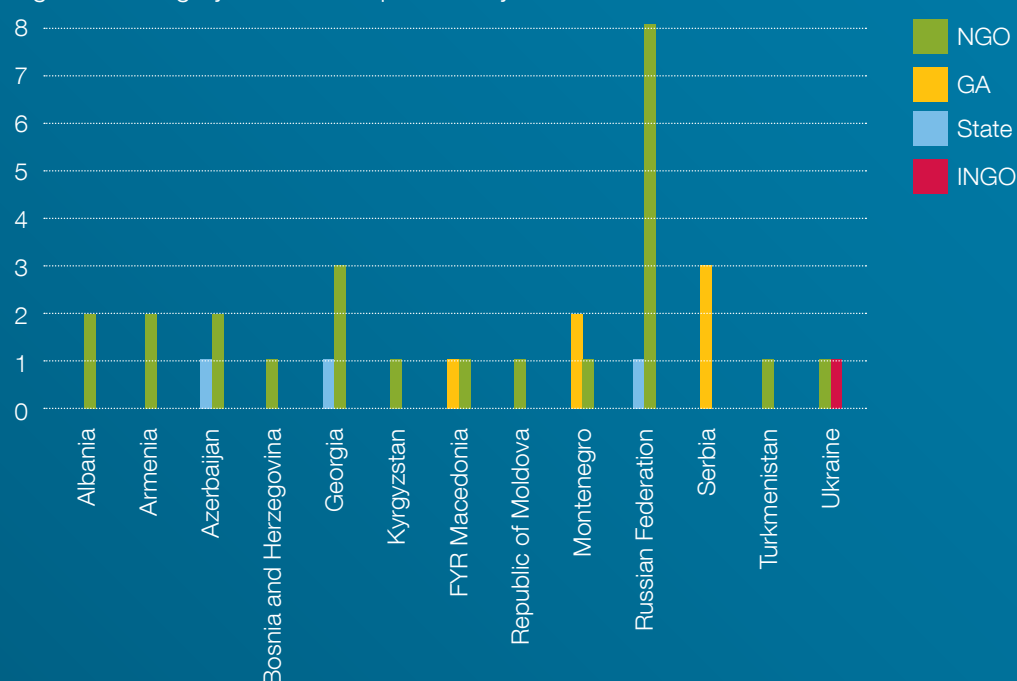


Figure 2: Category of Members per country



### **Albania**

Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA)  
Preservation and Protection of Natural  
Environment in Albania (PPNEA)

### **Armenia**

Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and  
Cultural Assets  
Armenian Society for the Protection of Birds

### **Azerbaijan**

Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of  
Azerbaijan  
Azerbaijan Ornithological Society  
International Dialogue for Environmental Action  
(IDEA)

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Natural Heritage Protection Society - ARBOR  
MAGNA

### **Georgia**

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources  
Protection of Georgia  
Centre for Biodiversity Conservation & Research  
Caucasus Environmental NGO Network  
Field Researchers' Union – CAMPESTER

### **Kyrgyzstan**

Youth Ecological Movement

### **Macedonia (FYR)**

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning /  
Administration of Environment  
Macedonian Ecological Society (MES)

### **Republic of Moldova**

BIOTICA Ecological Society

### **Montenegro**

Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism  
Public Enterprise National Parks of Montenegro  
Centre for the Protection and Research of Birds of  
Montenegro (CZIP)

### **Russian Federation**

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of  
the Russian Federation  
All-Russian Society of Nature Protection (VOOP)  
Wildlife Foundation of Khabarovsk  
Biodiversity Conservation Center  
Environmental Education Centre Zapovedniks  
Saint-Petersburg Charitable Public Organisation  
"Biologists for nature conservation"  
St. Petersburg Naturalist's Society  
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Russia

### **Serbia**

Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental  
Protection of the Republic of Serbia  
Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia  
Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina  
Province

### **Turkmenistan**

Turkmenian Society for Conservation of Nature

### **Ukraine**

National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU)  
Environment-People-Law

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*We are happy to be part of the IUCN community. The ECARO office is very operative and effective at sharing information, which helps us to be part of global IUCN events such as the ones in Helsinki and in Hawai'i. We greatly enjoyed those events and learned more about the IUCN global network. Maybe the greatest thing that we learned is how small we are. Nevertheless, our contribution is very important in the larger process of conserving our nature.*

*As an NGO coming from a small country, and being the only IUCN member from Bosnia and Herzegovina, we would like to find ways to become more involved in IUCN membership activities and projects. We believe that a regional initiative which connects members from the SEE countries should be established as a way of advancing cooperation in the Balkans.*

*We hope to be IUCN Members for a long time, and to find ways to improve our position from just a member to an active one.” Aleksandra-Anja Dragomirović, “Arbor Magna” Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

# IUCN COMMISSIONS

The six Commissions unite 16,000 volunteer experts that assess the state of the world's natural resources and provide the Union with sound know-how and policy advice on conservation issues:

- Commission on Education and Communication (CEC);
- Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP);
- Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM);
- Species Survival Commission (SSC);
- World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL);
- World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

The six Commissions constitute the knowledge base of IUCN and help generate knowledge products, shape policies and implement the IUCN Programme. They play an important role in establishing and maintaining the knowledge-policy-action axis. All six Commissions are represented in the ECA region, with 497 Commission members. IUCN ECARO plays an important role in mobilizing experts and recruiting new Commission members in the region. One of the challenges is to strengthen the recognition and involvement of IUCN Commission members in the programme implementation.

**Figure 3. Number of IUCN Commission members per Commission by country**

Country	Commission						Total per country
	CEC	CEESP	CEM	SSC	WCEL	WCPA	
Albania	3			7		6	16
Armenia	2			17	1	2	22
Azerbaijan				18	1		19
Belarus				11	1	3	15
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2			6		3	11
Georgia	3	1	1	16	4	5	30
Kazakhstan			3	14	4	6	27
Kyrgyzstan	1		1	3	2	6	13
Macedonia, FYR			1	6		2	9
Republic of Moldova	1	1		1	1		4
Montenegro				4	1	5	10
Russian Federation	4	6	8	174	15	38	245
Serbia	7	1	3	14	1	10	36
Tajikistan		2	1	5		2	10
Turkmenistan				3			3
Ukraine	2	2	3	24	3	2	36
Uzbekistan				13	2	1	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>522</b>



## A word from the Regional Councillors for Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia:



*"The Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia Region is an exceptionally diverse region with unique biodiversity and ecosystems. Despite all these natural values we find here areas under constant threat together with huge space of pristine nature. The IUCN ECARO is uniquely positioned to promote the need for protection and better management of the natural environment in the region. It serves to bring together and promote cooperation between governments, the civil society, business and global corporations, the scientific and local communities, all with the aim to ensure harmonious coexistence of people and nature."* Mr. Rustam Sagitov, Russian Federation

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*"Coming from a policy background, I would say that one of the main niches of IUCN in our region should be its potential to support policy development – our decision makers do their job in a very challenging period, they do need a solid ground, trusted and credible source of advice to make the decisions that will support the sustainability of our countries. IUCN with its knowledge products, experts and networks has the potential to play a crucial role in the knowledge and policy interface. As a regional councillor my role is to support and facilitate this process."* Ms. Tamar Pataridze, Georgia

”



*"The Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia is one of the biggest constituency regions and thus very diverse. You can find here the EU countries on the one hand, and developing countries with various local conditions on the other hand. It makes the mission of IUCN not only more challenging, but also much more important. We are a crucial player especially in states that lack capacities – human, technical, and of course financial. We should help to develop their national strategies and based on them to propose sustainable projects. IUCN is perceived as a leading institution setting the quality criteria in the region. We should not only keep this position, but strengthen it, especially by increasing our own limited capacities for coordinating communication. The region visibly expects that from us."* Mr. Michael Hošek, Czech Republic

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# PROGRAMME WORK AND MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2016

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## Valuing and conserving nature

*We aim to safeguard species and build healthy protected area systems as a foundation for nature and human wellbeing across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.*

IUCN ECARO initiated several partnerships, placing emphasis on a broader application of key IUCN knowledge products that are still not used consistently across the region, such as the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (providing expert guidance and advice for the development and use of the Red List and the Red List Index in setting national and regional priorities) or the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems (assessing the state of the world's ecosystems and their risk of collapse). Support to the establishment of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas remained at the core of IUCN's work in the region.

### Towards a strengthened national protected areas system of Albania

IUCN contributed to the new national institutional framework for protected areas in Albania and strengthened national protected areas policy by mainstreaming international standards into protected areas planning and management processes.

*“IUCN is committed in supporting authorities and communities across the ECARO region in developing sustainable tourism for protected areas, including visitor management planning, development of soft tourism infrastructure, and capacity building for interpretation and visitor management. The activities implemented in Albania can be used as examples for any country, including preparation for the establishment of a dedicated Agency for protected areas.”*  
Mr. Zamir Dedej, National Agency of Protected Areas, Albania

In autumn 2016 two visitor centres were inaugurated, in Fushë Studë (Shebenik-Jabllanicë National Park) and Velipoje (Buna River Velipoje Protected Landscape), Albania. They will promote the protected areas' unique biodiversity and forest/wetland ecosystem wealth of these areas as well as offer the space for promotion and education about their natural heritage and values.

Public participation was exercised for the first time at such a broad scale during the consultation processes, introducing the knowledge of local stakeholders in the area-based management planning. As a result management plans were prepared for the Shebenik-Jabllanicë National Park and of the Buna River Velipoje Protected Landscape, consistent with the IUCN WCPA (World Commission on Protected Areas) Management Planning Guidelines.

A significant step towards the establishment of the Natura2000 network was made by consolidating and updating biodiversity data for Albania in order to develop a preliminary list of Natura 2000 sites. This process was strongly facilitated by the Biodiversity National Network of Albania (BioNNA) database, modelled after the global federated networks of biodiversity data, such as GBIF and BioCASE). Its use will ensure the biodiversity data are collected following standard protocols, stored and made available to the scientific community and interested public.

*“By organising the relevant data through BioNNA we will contribute to the elaboration of policies and strategies, strategic assessments and identification of intervention priorities, both at global and national level.” A.Ghiurghi, IUCN ECARO Project Manager.*

In parallel, IUCN is supporting the implementation of management plans in at least five protected areas of Albania working closely with the Ministry of Environment, National Agency for Protected Areas and 12 Regional Administrations for Protected Areas. An assessment of current management effectiveness in all protected areas in Albania was completed, using the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT). The results revealed poor effectiveness in managing financial and budget security, and for availability and maintenance of work equipment. On the other hand the legal status of protected areas and the condition of its natural values were highly ranked.

*Wildfires were reported as the most common threat to protected areas in Albania, whereas logging and wood harvesting as the most serious threat that causes degradation of their natural values.*

## **Collaboration for the Lake Ohrid region World Heritage nomination**

IUCN, together with ICOMOS and ICCROM, has an advisory role on the World Heritage Convention, and provides capacity building and institutional and organisational development to empower its constituency. Being engaged in a pilot project for the ‘upstream process’ that involves collaboration between governments and the World Heritage advisory bodies, IUCN is supporting preparation of the nomination of new sites for the World Heritage listing. In 2016, the project focused on developing a management plan for the extension of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region in FYR Macedonia into Albania, as well as on improving soft-tourism infrastructure and local solid waste management.

## **Enabling dialog among stakeholders to improve the management of transboundary Lake Skadar**

The strategic relationship between the two national protected area authorities was made official through a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Public Enterprise National Parks of Montenegro and the Albanian National Agency for Protected Areas, providing a formal framework for long-term transboundary cooperation between protected area managers.

*“By signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the National Agency for Protected Areas of Albania, we agree to share information and plan joint activities that will improve management of the protected area and reduce illegal activities resulting in promotion of these areas’ unique natural values and enabling the economic development for the local communities.” A.Vuković, Director of the Public Enterprise National Parks of Montenegro.*

IUCN supported preparation of the new Management Plan for the Lake Skadar National Park by applying the IUCN WCPA Management Planning Guidelines, contributing in this way to institutional development and setting a standard to be followed in the development of management plans for other four national parks in Montenegro. In parallel, the participatory process established for revising the existing management zoning for Lake Shkodra Nature Park involved key stakeholders, such as local fishermen and local government bodies, and resulted in a new zoning scheme, demonstrating a commitment to collaborative management.



## Effective and equitable governance of nature's use

IUCN aims to influence policy and action in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, to assess, evaluate and where possible improve governance of nature's use in the region as a way of improving conservation efforts and strengthening equitable impact on livelihoods.

### Western Gray Whale population recovering

The Critically Endangered Western Gray Whale that feeds in Russia's Far East waters is slowly showing signs of recovery, but its numbers and range are still threatened by industry activities in the region, according to the joint report of IUCN, WWF and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). Under the guidance of IUCN-led independent panel of scientists, Sakhalin Energy – one of the largest companies operating in the area – has made significant efforts over the last 12 years to limit the impact of its operations on whales and their fragile environment. The panel issued more than 539 recommendations to Sakhalin Energy and other parties, 90% of which have been implemented or superseded by subsequent advice. The population of the Western Gray Whale has grown 3-4% annually, from an estimated 115 animals in 2004 to 174 in 2015.



Photo © International Whaling Commission

### Nature conservation partnership in South-Eastern Europe

In the course of 2016, IUCN ECARO continuously facilitated exchange of knowledge and capacity building with aim to develop and nurture partnerships between governments, civil society, local communities and the private sector. These actions will benefit from the assessments and studies concerning good governance in the region, as well as the general IUCN's body of knowledge. On the other hand, capacity building and knowledge sharing will contribute to achieving a more integrated approach to sustainable development, policy making and implementation.

***„Nature conservation and human progress are not mutually exclusive.***

***Cooperation and partnership around common conservation and development goals are the key for the future of our region.“*** Boris Erg, Director of IUCN's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

A third regional meeting of nature conservation directors in South Eastern Europe was held in October 2016 in Budva, Montenegro, ending with a strong plea to continue with the process and maintain the created regional network. Countries proposed to address regional priorities through the creation of thematic working groups on ecosystem services and biodiversity data. Alongside discussions about regional cooperation and exchange of ideas on joint nature conservation priorities, the participants learned about the new global initiatives – outcomes of the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

Photo: Vashlovani Nature Reserve © IUCN / B. Erg



# Deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are defined by IUCN as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”.

***NbS are designed to address major societal challenges such as food security, climate change, water security, human health, disaster risk, social and economic development.***

IUCN actively engages in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Nature-based solutions. In particular with Goal 15 Life on Land – *Protect to restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, to halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*; and with Goal 14 Life below water, with aim to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Also during the project planning and implementation stage, all IUCN projects support Goal 5 on Gender Equality.

Within the framework of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) East Countries Forest Law Enforcement and Governance II Program (FLEG II), IUCN undertook a research to investigate the dynamics between forests and rural communities, so called Forest Dependency Studies (FDS). The study has been implemented in all seven FLEG II countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Russian Federation) with aim to assess the level of dependency of local populations on forest resources. The research helped to obtain valuable and quantifiable information on forest resources, because a significant number of households heavily depend on forest resources. This dependency leads to continuous ‘pilfering’ of natural resources, which has a serious, detrimental effect on forest ecosystems. As a follow up IUCN got involved in testing the Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) initiative in the region which is the “ongoing process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested or degraded forest landscapes” . This project is also in line with and shows support for SD Goal 15 Life on Land.

IUCN ECARO is working to enhance ecosystem management under the umbrella of NbS on a regional, national and local scale. Deploying ecosystem protection as a means to curb the impact of hazards is one of the main foci for IUCN ECARO Ecosystem Management Programme currently. On a country level, two scoping studies were initiated, to look at Ecosystem Services and their role in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. One study will take place in Albania, and the second one in Serbia, under the project “Towards Strengthened Conservation Planning in South-Eastern Europe”. On a regional level, IUCN ECARO has partnered up with BfN to look at Natural Solutions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) with a focus on Flood Prevention in South-Eastern Europe (SEE), involving Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, and an organisation of a thematic workshop on the Isle of Vilm. Studies will inform a full-scale regional project on Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.

IUCN ECARO initiated a regional programme on Ecosystem Services Assessment and Valuation (ESAV) and their integration into policy, based on the “Capacity Development Needs and Priorities for Nature Conservation in South-Eastern Europe” report, developed through consultation process with main stakeholders, and partnership with Biodiversity GIZ Open Regional Fund for South East Europe – Biodiversity (ORF BD). The partnership was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding, recognising joint priorities and the need for enhanced cooperation on a regional level.





## Planet at the crossroads

Held every 4 years, the IUCN World Conservation Congress is a unique event - the world's largest and most democratic conservation event that brings together the expertise of its powerful membership to address the most pressing current issues. It consists of two parts: a marketplace of ideas called the Forum and a voting session for IUCN Members called the Members' Assembly.

*Themed 'Planet at the crossroads' the 2016 IUCN Congress was held in Hawai'i in September, and has without doubts been the most successful one with a record attendance of more than 10,000 participants.*



It came at a crucial time for our Planet, calling for decisions and action as we reach the crossroads facing challenges of unprecedented magnitude. The ecosystems that underpin our economies, well-being and survival are collapsing. Species are becoming extinct at alarming rates. Our climate is in crisis. The time has come to act and move the existing agreements into action.

The IUCN Congress gathered leaders from government, civil society, indigenous, faith and spiritual communities, the private sector, and academia, to collectively decide on actions to address the most pressing conservation and sustainable development challenges. Joint decisions were presented as the Hawai'i Commitments, a document titled "Navigating Island Earth". It outlines opportunities the Humanity has and unifies the collective commitment by all who attended the Congress to undertake profound transformations within human societies living on the Earth, with particular attention to making our patterns of production and consumption more sustainable. Key decisions included closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory, the urgency of protecting the high seas, the need to protect primary forests, no-go areas for industrial activities within protected areas and an official IUCN policy on biodiversity offsets.

Some of the new global standards in nature protection launched at the IUCN Congress are:

- IUCN Red List of Ecosystems that will assess the status of ecosystems – to inform us where and how we can act to secure our future;
- Nature based solutions, that can help the societies prepare, cope and recover from natural disasters (including the low intensity events such as famines);
- IUCN Green List of Protected Areas, aiming to reward and promote successful protected area management practice;
- Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) that will identify the sites of significance for biodiversity protection;
- #NatureForAll, a global movement aiming to inspire the new generations to connect with nature and take action to support its conservation.





The unique role of protected area partnerships was highlighted at the IUCN Congress during the well-attended workshop on The Benefits of Protected Area Partnerships: Fostering Innovative Solutions for a Planet at the Crossroads. Jointly organised by the IUCN Asia Regional Office and IUCN ECARO, it introduced four partnerships that differ in terms of their history, scale and objectives, but that share a common vision of strengthening nature conservation: the Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP), the EUROPARC Federation, the European Green Belt, and the Amur Green Belt.

***The protected area partnerships help to influence regional policy, enhance coordination of multiple stakeholders, strengthen knowledge sharing, unlock funding and technical resources, and build capacity.***

The workshop on the World Heritage (WH) Upstream Processes and Beyond promoted creative approaches that can strengthen implementation of the WH Convention. The speakers offered insights into upstream processes in different regions of the world. These included the experience of identifying potential natural WH sites among the existing protected areas in Georgia or the challenge of mainstreaming a multidisciplinary advice to the State Parties in case of mixed properties, and in a transboundary context, as Lake Ohrid represents in the ECA region.

The Upstream Processes allow for a more efficient use of resources and help avoid potential problems, once a nomination is submitted and enters the evaluation cycle.

To view the Congress in Hawai'i, its working group sessions, interviews, promotional videos and other outputs visit the official webpage [www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/why-attend/videos](http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/why-attend/videos).



# PUBLICATIONS & OTHER OUTPUTS

IUCN is a trusted source of unbiased, evidence-based data and analysis for policy makers on conservation measures and ways in which nature can support conservation and sustainable development efforts.

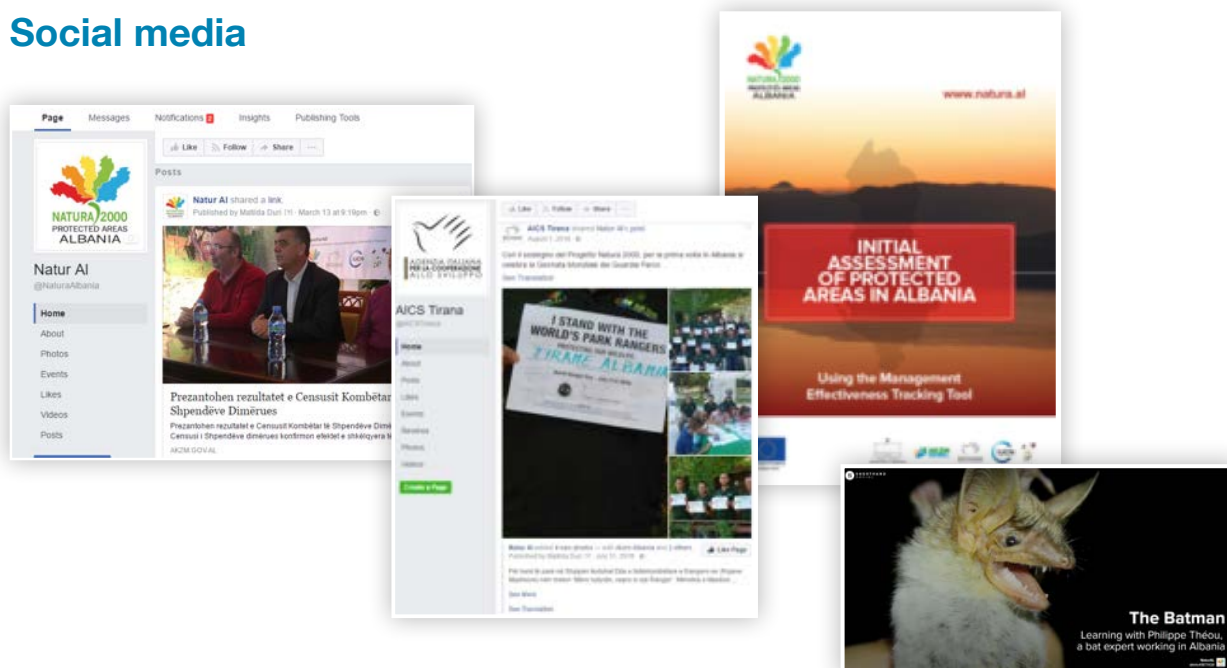


The regional newsletter 'A Voice for Nature' is published bi-monthly aiming to serve as a credible source of information and news on nature conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia. It brings news from IUCN Members, Commissions and the Secretariat to strengthen the network and facilitate information flow across the region.

[www.iucn.org/regions/eastern-europe-and-central-asia/resources/voice-nature-newsletter](http://www.iucn.org/regions/eastern-europe-and-central-asia/resources/voice-nature-newsletter)

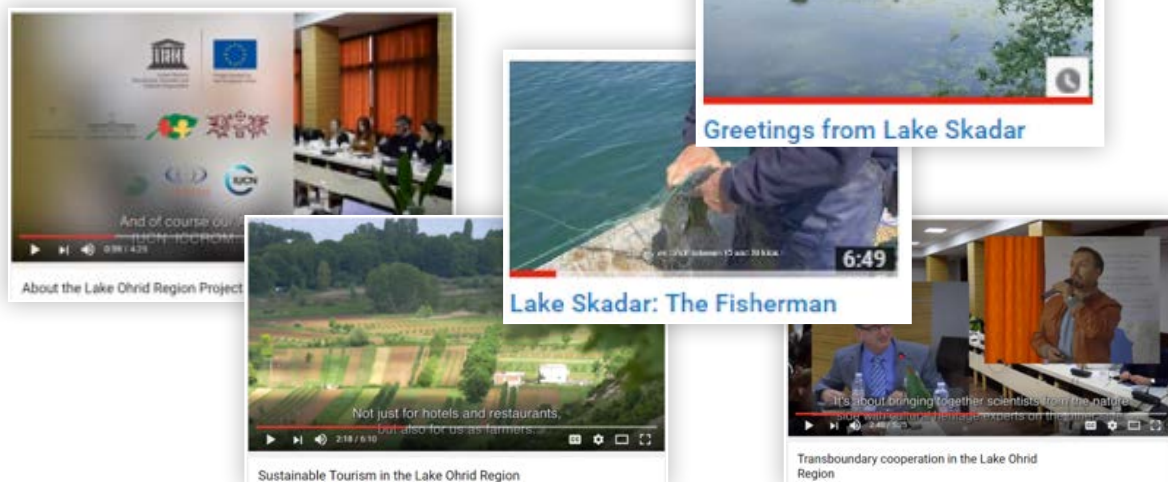
IUCN is a source of project implementation support and best practice for on-the-ground conservation projects that employ nature to address environmental and development challenges and priorities.

## Social media





## Video/video channels



### About the Lake Ohrid Project

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDm8\\_fDzGNo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDm8_fDzGNo)

### Transboundary cooperation in the lake Ohrid Region

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9CpPKR586U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9CpPKR586U)

### Sustainable Tourism in the Lake Ohrid Region

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=bH9Tlymxm-w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bH9Tlymxm-w)

### Lake Skadar: The Fisherman

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeHODWy6EbY&t=4s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeHODWy6EbY&t=4s)

### Greetings from Lake Skadar

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgUZbQfJKLc&t=1s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgUZbQfJKLc&t=1s)

## Events/awareness campaigns

Focusing on nature education this magazine is shaping the attitude of new generations in Albania.



A series of events and awareness campaigns realized in 2016 in Albania have tackled issues related to protected areas' ecosystem services, waste management and recycling, and aimed to promote the important role of rangers in protected areas.

# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Our work is made possible through the generous contributions of a growing number of donors and partners including governments, multilateral institutions, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, and foundations.



Critical Ecosystem  
Partnership Fund



European Union



German Federal  
Environmental Foundation



Italian Agency for the Development  
Cooperation (AICS)



MAVA Foundation



UNESCO

## REGIONAL FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### EXPENDITURE

€

Staff costs	355,660.39
External services	4,315.42
Travel	24,774.12
Equipment and office	21,618.73
Outreach	1,792.65
Financial expenses	9,879.80
	<b>418,041.11</b>

### INCOME

€

Project management fees	88,996.09
Project staff time	190,976.36
IUCN Operational funding	130,181.57
Other income	1,500.00
	<b>411,654.02</b>

1 Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

2 Article 5(a) of the IUCN Statutes and Regulations stipulate that States shall be those which are Members of the United Nations or any of its Specialized Agencies, or of the International Atomic Energy Agency, or parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice". The list is regularly updated in function of the membership of the United Nations, of its Specialized Agencies, of the International Atomic Energy Agency or the parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice and with the names as published on the respective websites of these institutions.



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