

Newsletter Topics

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Preface

Dear readers of the GNF newsletter,

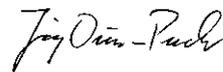
Once again, we have put together an extensive overview of our project fields for this edition of our newsletter. The topics included in the newsletter range from the Steinhuder Meer, which was elected as the German Living Lake of the Year, to our mangrove projects, in which we show our commitment to worldwide biodiversity conservation, and collaborative projects such as the action alliance for sustainable bananas.

Lions for Sale is a project we are carrying out to promote species protection and animal welfare. Our actions to achieve our project goals are implemented in close collaboration with our partners in Africa. Our EcoKarst project is an important project for strengthening/enhancing traditional networks in Eastern Europe. This project is also an important contribution

to enhancing understanding between nations and overcoming current political tensions.

Soon, the GNF will celebrate its 20th anniversary and as such we will use the next few months to consider our achievements and adjust our organization to some extent. We appreciate any feedback, as well as your expectations and ideas for our work in the years to come and are looking forward to receiving many letters, e-mails and calls.

Hope you enjoy reading!



Jörg Dürr-Pucher
Member of the Board
of Directors



Living Lake of the Year 2017 The Steinhuder Meer

The landscape surrounding the Steinhuder Meer, the largest lake in Lower Saxony, is characterized by marshes, wetlands, forests and dunes. The nature conservation efforts that have been implemented here for the last 40 years have proven successful. In 2000, the first white-tailed eagle couple settled here. The same year also marked the return of breeding cranes, which hadn't been seen in the area for over a century. The amount of resting aquatic birds in the region, which reached a low point at the beginning of the 1990's, has seen a fivefold increase. After being absent from the area for a long time, birds such as the osprey, corn crane and the common tern were once again observed around the Steinhuder Meer. The population decrease of the common snipe, lapwing, grass snake, moor frog, the aquatic plant water pineapple and many other species, was halted. Innovative resettlement projects with scientific support have resulted in the successful re-establishment of the

European tree frog, crucian carp, European mink, ferruginous duck and the European pond turtle in or around the lake. The Steinhuder Meer plays a vital role for biodiversity conservation within and beyond the regional borders and is categorised as a Ramsar site, special area of conservation and is part of the European nature protection areas network Natura 2000.

The use of the lake by numerous tourists during the high season, is a major stressor for the lake and surrounding habitats. In order to reduce this pressure, a comprehensive strategy for sustainable tourism has been developed. Among the measures already set in place are a driving ban during winter and the relocation of paths. The large flow of visitors passing through the Steinhuder Meer nature reserve is redirected to less sensitive areas so that the vulnerable habitats remain unperturbed. Through targeted public relations work and environmental education campaigns, the acceptance of



the local community for the new provisions was secured.

By electing the Steinhuder Meer as Living Lake 2017, the GNF has drawn attention to the ecological importance of the lake and connected habitats, for nature and species conservation. Additionally, it was important to stress the success of the collaboration between authorities and associations that are actively involved in nature conservation. (HS)





In the nurseries, seedlings of native mangroves are cultivated by the village community.

Mangroves, a stronghold against forces of nature

Tropical tidal forests are fascinating environments

Every few years, the border region between India and Bangladesh at the Bay of Bengal is hit by a particularly heavy tropical storm. This region is characterised by the largest connected mangrove forest areas of the world, known as the Sundarbans. The forest is an important protection against storm surges which reach the coastal Indian Ocean in the aftermath of tropical cyclones. In many other places however, this protection is no longer present as mangrove forests have been removed to create space for shrimp farms or acreages.

In 2009 the East Indian coast was hit by the tropical storm Aila, which was particularly devastating where the mangrove forests had been destroyed and the dams that had been constructed to protect the villages on a level with the high water mark, could not withstand the storm. Seawater flooded into the settlements, spoiling fields and drinking water wells for a period of several months, due to the high salinity. To the Sundarban population which is highly affected by poverty and thus also mainly dependent on

subsistence agriculture, the saline water influx and resulting issues represented an existential threat.

Ajanta Dey from the GNF partner organization NEWS (Nature, Environment and Wildlife Society of India) in Kalkutta, explains that people in India are slowly starting to rethink their relationship with nature: "Ironically, the storm Aila strengthened the support for our efforts in mangrove restoration. We now have much more backing for our work than we did before, especially from the local population. Most of the communities want to be actively involved in the restoration project."

The GNF has been working towards the protection of mangroves in Asia for over 10 years. At the beginning of 2017, the GNF started another, large scale project for the protection of mangroves, which is carried out together with NEWS and three other partner organizations from India and Sri Lanka. The partner organizations are aiming to restore 150 ha of mangrove forests. Thereby, they actively involve the local population. Previous experience of

the GNF and the partner organizations has shown that communities are more willing to provide long-term protection if they took part in raising the seedlings. An additional aim of the project is to facilitate day-to-day life for the local population. The majority of the Sundarban population lives in huts with open fireplaces and no chimneys or other means of smoke extraction. Women and children in particular, are exposed to the adverse health effects of the smoke on a daily basis. Using a novel construction technique, the simple clay ovens called "Chulhas", are equipped with a smoke extraction mechanism. Due to improved use of the residual heat, the new ovens are much more energy efficient, which also means that less firewood is needed and the pressure on forests is reduced. Ajanta Dey explains, "Our hope is that this highly efficient technique will catch on and make a substantial contribution to reduce the pressure on the mangrove forests. This is the only way we can guarantee the sustainability of our project and the continued existence of mangrove forests for future generations." (TG)

The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through the energy and climate fund.

www.globalnature.org/en/mangroves-sri-lanka-india



Efficient stoves reduce the need for wood.



Mangroves in the tidal area.



Lions for Sale – Bred for the Bullet

Support the awareness campaign by signing our petition

In South African breeding facilities, lions are raised to be a tourist attraction or a target for canned hunting. Dr Thomas Schaefer, head of the nature conservation department, explains that lion breeding facilities in no way contribute to species conservation but are rather a threat to the species, "To keep lions like pigs for slaughter, sell them like cars and shoot them like plastic flowers is simply unethical". Our project partner, the Wildlands Conservation Trust, is working to expose these practices in South Africa. However, the South African government is unwilling to step in, as the industry is a money maker. Therefore, it is even more important to mobilise the general public and also stop the demand for these kinds of activities once and for all!

Information is the key

Apart from travelling and experiencing new, far away countries, young adults in the orientation phase want to make a difference, e.g. by contributing to species conservation. Sadly, these good intentions are scrupulously exploited by the industry behind the lion breeding facilities. In order to prevent this from

happening, we developed a range of information material which has been distributed in colleges and universities all over Germany. Hundreds of students have already seen the documentary "Blood Lions™" and have thus been alerted to the issue. The more young people are informed about the dark side of the volunteering industry and pass on the knowledge, the less new volunteers go into the breeding facilities. Therefore, we are also aiming towards raising awareness in schools.

Success through re-evaluation

We have already strengthened important contacts in the tourism industry, provided information for operators of trips to Africa about the proceedings of South African lion breeding facilities, and urged them to review their tours in regard to this type of offered activity. A few of these operators have already reacted to this and proclaimed their commitment to cut activities involving wildlife species from their offer.

Increase pressure

Together with the Wildlands Conservati-



Please donate so that we can help!

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Purpose of donation: Lions for Sale

on Trust, we hope to increase the pressure on the South African government, with our online petition. So far, we have received more than 300 signed cards.

This is not what species conservation looks like

Please continue to help us so that we can win the battle against the lion breeding facilities. We also promote and support projects that contribute to the protection of wild lions in Tanzania and South Africa. You can help us and ensure that our efforts are rewarded by making a one-off donation or show your much appreciated long-term support with a direct debit authorisation. (MU)

www.globalnature.org/Lions-for-Sale-English

Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Sector

Focus on protecting biological diversity

The Global Nature Fund, Lake Constance Foundation, Agentur AUF! (Germany), the Fundación Global Nature (Spain), Solagro and agoodforgood (France) and Instituto Superior Técnico (Portugal) have initiated the EU LIFE Project "Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Sector".

The main objective is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and company procurement guidelines within the food industry. This is achieved by supporting standard organizations in in-

cluding efficient biodiversity criteria into schemes, and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include biodiversity criteria into sourcing guidelines. Standard organizations like Fairtrade, UTZ Certified, UEBT and Qualitätszeichen Baden-Württemberg as well as companies such as Nestlé, Symrise and Kaufland play an active role in the initiative.

In a first step, the partners analysed 54 standards and labels of the food sector for biodiversity criteria. The results were published in a Baseline Report, which gives an overview on how the protection of biodiversity is incorporated into the standards and labels and where there is still room for improvement. (www.business-biodiversity.eu)

These results are an important basis in formulating recommendations for the standards on how to further reduce impacts on biodiversity. This process commenced as recently as June 2017. However, pilot farms have already been dedicated, in order to underline the recommendations with practical experience

and test measures which support biodiversity.

By 2020, the European sector wide initiative "Biodiversity Performance in the Food Sector" will be established, which aims at further improving and implementing effective biodiversity criteria in the food sector and therefore ensures continuous support for the idea behind our project. This includes close collaboration with stakeholders from the food sector (standard and label organizations, food production companies and food retailers, producer organizations), as well as consumer protection bodies and environmental protection organizations. (TL, SH)

The project is funded by the EU LIFE Programme and the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU).

www.globalnature.org/en/biodiversity-food-industry



How much biodiversity is there in fruit and vegetables?



Ecosystem services provided by protected karst areas Driving force of local sustainable development

Karst areas in the Danube region are home to a unique range of fauna, which is partly threatened by unsustainable agricultural practices. By promoting sustainable business approaches, the pressure on the fauna can be alleviated. Together with project partners in eight different countries, the GNF is working towards identifying the various uses of natural resources and discerning and developing sustainable business approaches.

Recognise values and seize opportunities

The use of natural resources for purposes such as timber, livestock farming, fisheries or agriculture, can have negative effects on sensitive ecosystems. As a first step of the project, the local ecosystem services are identified in the seven project regions that are already designated protected areas or national

parks. A further action is to collaborate with any relevant stakeholders and persons in charge, in order to identify the potential for the sustainable use of ecosystem services by small and medium sized companies.

Strengthen the local expertise and exchange experiences

The project goal is to find the proper balance between protecting and enhancing the ecosystems, and the sustainable use of natural resources. Our aim is achieved by providing workshops for the various local stakeholders in which specific characteristics of the respective protected area are considered. Through close communication and regular meetings with the project partners in the seven national parks, all relevant parties can benefit from the synergies and knowledge transfer. The experiences will be published in



The project partners come together from eight countries.



Karst areas are habitats rich in species.

a guideline document and may therefore be applied to other protected areas. (AP)
www.globalnature.org/en/eco-karst-danube



News

Publications and Online Information

Baseline Report (Mai 2017):

Biodiversity in standards and labels for the food sector

Study (July 2017), OroVerde, Global Nature Fund:

Private capital for nature conservation: Could impact investments be a solution?

GNF Annual Report 2016/2017

Find out more about all our projects in our current annual report – available in German and English.



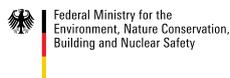
Download of all publications: www.globalnature.org/publications

Events

November/December 2017

29 November - 1 December 2017
Seminar „Current Challenges for Wetland Conservation“
Naturfreundehaus in Markelfingen, Lake Constance, Germany

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Fritz-Reichle-Ring 4
78315 Radolfzell, Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 7732 9995-0
Fax: +49 (0) 7732 9995-88
Chief editor: Udo Gattenlöhner, GNF
Translation: Hanna Ewen
Email: info@globalnature.org
www.globalnature.org

Donation Account:

GLS-Gemeinschaftsbank Bochum
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