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# Annual Review

Highlights of the year **2019**

SOCIETY FOR  
THE PROTECTION  
OF PRESPA



**20** years  
TRANSBOUNDARY PRESPA PARK

# Annual Review

Highlights of the year **2019**

## A message from the SPP President

- 'The climate apocalypse is coming' wrote Jonathan Franzen in an article titled '*What if we stopped pretending?*' in the New Yorker magazine in September 2019, while Greta Thunberg warned in the UN Climate Action Summit the same month that '*Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction...*'. I guess for many of us 2019 was the year when we stopped pretending that climate change is something distant. The apocalyptic fires in the Amazon and Australia, the floods, and extreme temperatures bring the message home. Apart from feeling sad and heartbroken about these changes around us what can we do? What can SPP do? Surely we cannot change everything but we can make a local, significant impact and that is exactly what SPP has so successfully been doing since its creation in the 1990s and continues to do today.

The vision from the creation of the organisation was to work for nature and people, and as climate change is showing us without nature people's wellbeing suffers immensely. So the work of SPP, which is based on science, good data, respect of the law and collaboration aiming to protect ecosystems, but also support the local community, is more needed than ever before.

That's why the work of the LIFE Prespa Waterbirds is so significant in that it has managed to implement large-scale management in the wetland. Management that can offer protection from fires, more likely now that the water level is so low due to drought, but also management that can provide more habitats to nesting birds and more fish for fishermen, or at least offset reductions that could happen otherwise.

At the same time the work of PoliPrespa which is a pioneering experiment in bringing everyone together around the table, to discuss important issues for the area they live in, is essential going into a new era of uncertainty and change. It is important to build respect and trust in the community for the decisions needed for the future.

And this is not only important at local level but transboundary too. And in that sense the coming into force of the Agreement for the Transboundary Prespa Park is also a sign of hope, ten years since its first ratification.

As Jonathan Franzen writes '*Kindness to neighbors and respect for the land—nurturing healthy soil, wisely managing water, caring for pollinators—will be essential*'. And as he quotes a project in the US that gives him hope for the future, I quote the work of SPP.

The multifaceted work of SPP, working to protect nature, the land, the water, agriculture, and support the people, in a cooperative, open, fair and principled way, gives me hope.

**Dr Claire Papazoglou** SPP President



## *The SPP in 2019: New challenges and a step up in collaboration*

- 2019 was a year where extreme weather events, together the global health crisis that arose in the first months of 2020, lent strength to the voices of environmental awakening worldwide. It seems that the time we are going through will be one in which issues of environmental protection and redefining man's relationship with nature will come to the fore.

In this global picture, collaboration and joint effort have shown us that they are the only way to overcome difficulties and face critical moments. In this small corner of the globe that is Prespa, the SPP is noting down 2019 as a year that collaboration at all levels brought the fruits of long-term efforts. Stockbreeders, fishermen, farmers, transboundary partners local and regional authorities all worked together for the management of wetlands, with the best possible benefits for the environment and the local economy, with the third year of the LIFE Prespa Waterbirds project being one in which the SPP matured in the management of wetlands. Having applied an integrated approach to wetland issues in close collaboration with local actors for many years, the SPP is now also seeking the means to offer stable and guaranteed answers to long-term problems such as the flooding of land around the lake, with the effects of climate change making this need even more urgent. Fires in the wetland and the area's bean monoculture, which uses an outdated irrigation system, urge a definitive solution for wetland management and protection.

During the last year in Prespa, we saw the enhancement of dialogue in the local community, with our own contribution and support. One of these was the first meeting of the Local Action Group in the PoliPrespa project, in which representatives of local and national bodies, producers' groups, external partners and individuals all participated together. This kind of meeting is unprecedented in an area such as Prespa, and its pluralism and the exchange of views, as well the substantial and fruitful discussions, bestowed it the confidence to become an important mechanism for dialogue in the future.

Finally, a transboundary approach to all the issues is a central principle of the SPP, one that entails enduring and patient efforts, whether the results are small and ordinary, or ambitiously large, requiring years of work. One such big result in 2019 was the entry into force of the agreement for the Transboundary Prespa Park. Ten years after its ratification, we finally had the pleasure of celebrating this important development, and are now awaiting the first meetings of the committees and the implementation of its terms, which include exceptional benefits for the protection of the unique natural values of Prespa.

*Myrsini Malakou* Managing Director






# The Society for the Protection of Prespa

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The Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) was formed in 1991, with the area having already attracted the interest of ecologists, nature-lovers and environmental scientists over several decades, due to its exceptional natural beauty and rare biodiversity. A pivotal group of individuals played a decisive role in its formation - the internationally renowned conservationist and philanthropist, Dr Luc Hoffmann, the environmentalist Thymios Papayannis and the biologist, Dr Giorgos Catsadorakis. Together they laid the foundation for the establishment of the SPP, with the help and support of a series of non-profit organisations. Accordingly, the SPP was created with the participation of ten national and international environmental NGOs as its members.





The SPP's mission is to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of the Prespa basin as a whole, for the benefit of all its inhabitants both today and in the future, which it achieves through a wide range of projects promoting the harmonious co-existence of man and nature. Its activities seek to secure the appropriate management of natural resources, the sustainable development of the basin, the protection of threatened species and habitats, and to inform the public and raise awareness of conservation issues. From the beginning the SPP has always understood that safeguarding Prespa's exceptional biodiversity and cultural traditions requires the harmonious co-operation and involvement of the three states that share the lakes. For this reason, in 2013, the SPP launched PrespaNet, a cross-border network of environmental NGOs for Prespa, together with MES and PPNEA.

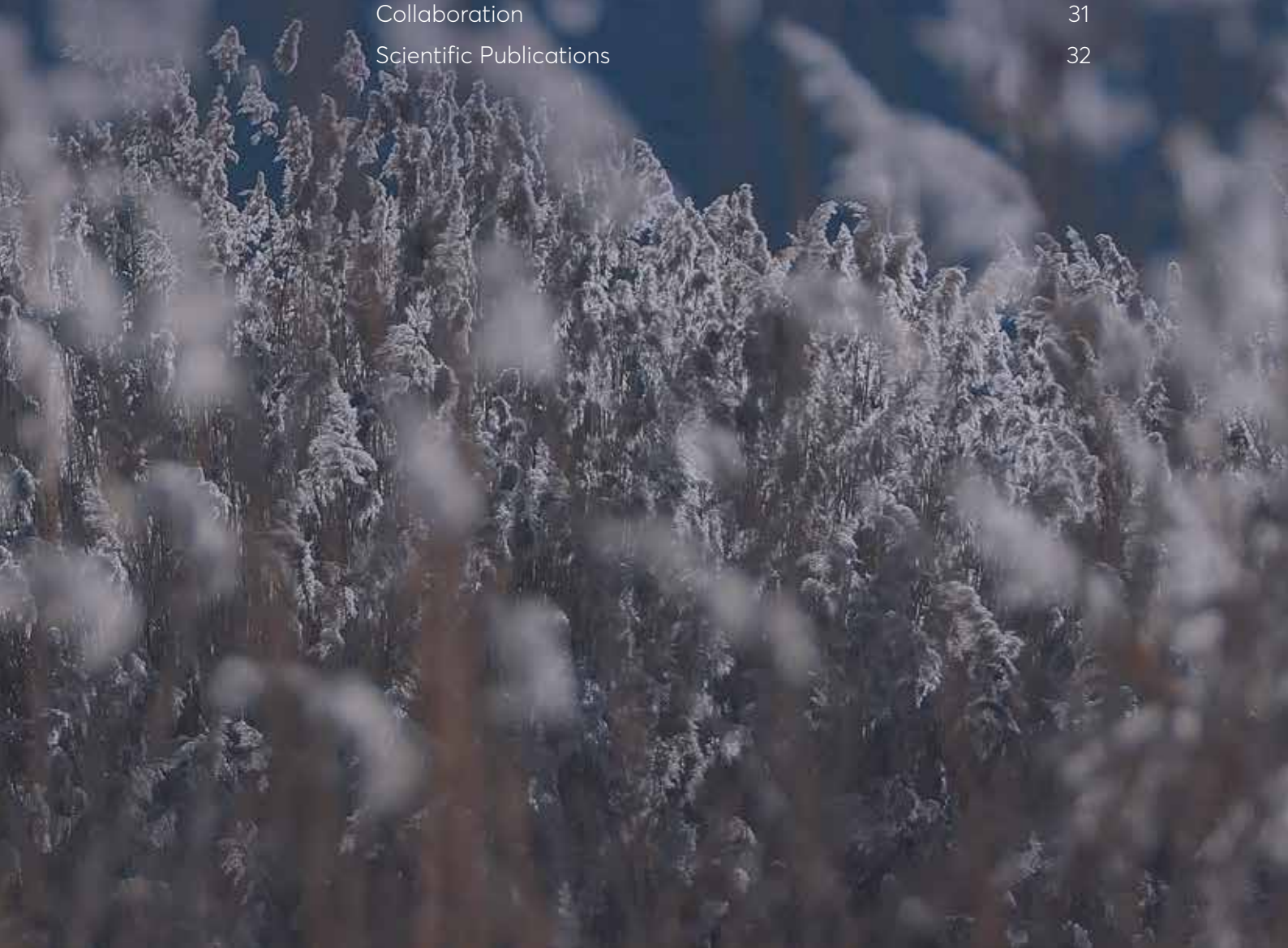
Today the SPP is an environmental organisation whose work is internationally recognised. The organisation is locally based, in the villages of Agios Germanos and Laimos in Prespa, and employs 19 people. One of the basic principles of its work is that common approaches and close collaboration between stakeholders and organisations at local, national and transboundary levels promotes mutual understanding, builds capacity and social capital, and fosters sustainable long-term solutions. As a result, the SPP promotes partnership at many levels, from participatory governance schemes to support for conservation volunteers, and from multi-stakeholder joint projects to international scientific alliances.





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# Joint wetland management brings benefits for all

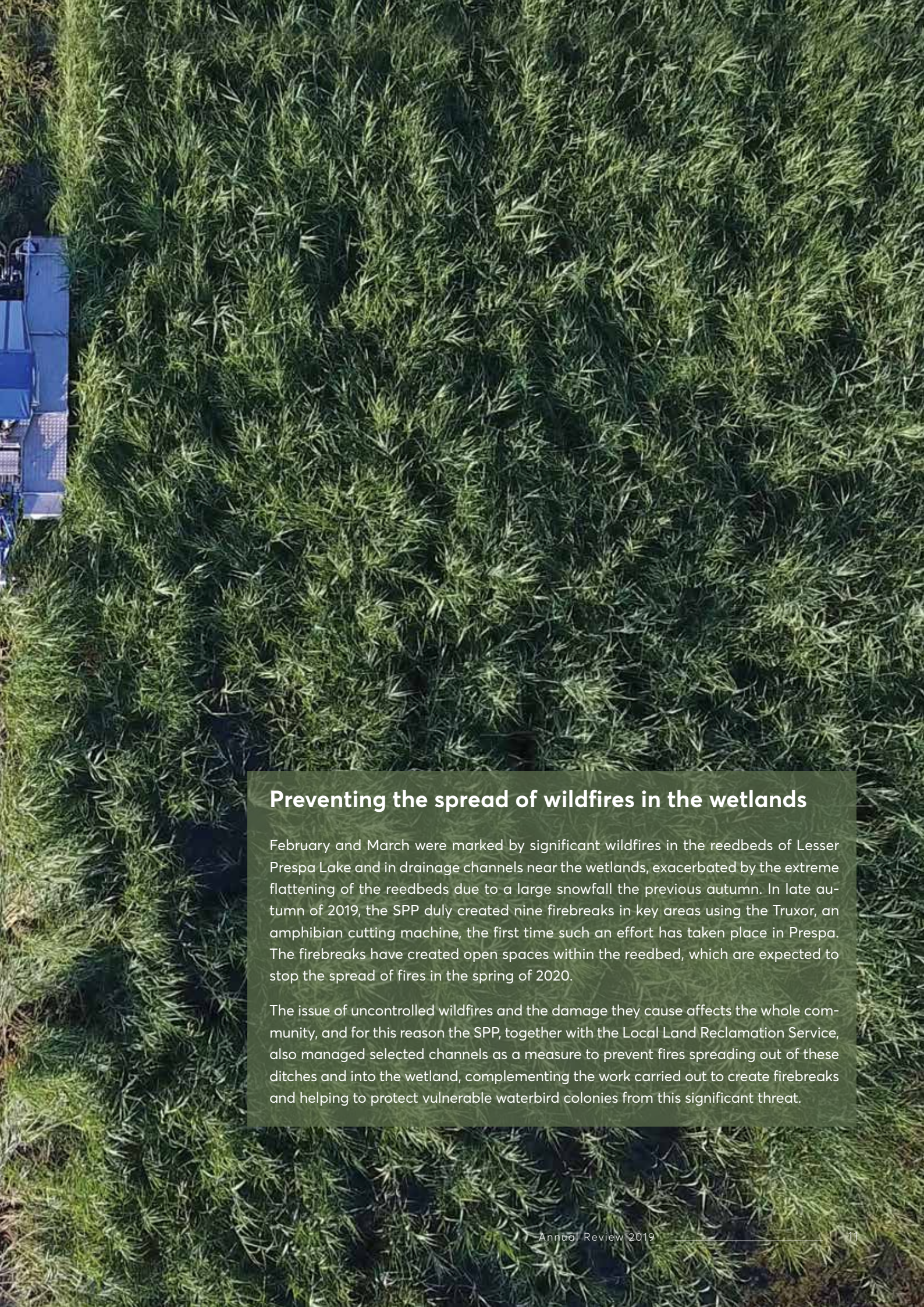
2019 has been a year of strong collaboration for wetland management, with efforts rewarding both man and nature alike.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2019 the lake water level remained low, which meant that limited extents of wet meadows were formed. However, the low water level also allowed all this year's planned cutting and grazing of vegetation to take place, even in the deeper parts of the lakeshore, with a total of more than 83 ha of vegetation being removed in order to allow for the expansion of wet meadows in spring 2020. Management of wetland vegetation was carried out together with local stockbreeders, who undertook about a third of the cutting work using their own means. In total, 238 tons of biomass were cut and distributed for use as cattle fodder, shared between 18 stockbreeders. In addition, some of the cut material was also used in the experiment set up with the University of Western Macedonia, in order to establish whether, and how, wetland vegetation can be used as a soil conditioner by bean farmers.

This year's large-scale interventions in the wetlands would not have been possible without this strong co-operation between Prespa stakeholders and the SPP, the result of many years of good will and collaboration. Likewise, and as in previous years, wetland vegetation management was carried out in close collaboration with, and supervision by, the Management Body for the Prespa National Park (MBPNP). Increased collaboration was also noted at the decision-making level, with several authorities contributing to and supporting management decisions, in addition to the MBPNP, including the Local Land Reclamation Service, the Municipality of Prespa, and the regional authorities, further highlighting the positive level of local co-operation fostered by shared wetland management.

Working together at all levels has not only proved to be the most effective means for achieving both environmental protection and socio-economic benefits, but also strengthens vital social bonds, increasing the resilience of the whole community.





## Preventing the spread of wildfires in the wetlands

February and March were marked by significant wildfires in the reedbeds of Lesser Prespa Lake and in drainage channels near the wetlands, exacerbated by the extreme flattening of the reedbeds due to a large snowfall the previous autumn. In late autumn of 2019, the SPP duly created nine firebreaks in key areas using the Truxor, an amphibian cutting machine, the first time such an effort has taken place in Prespa. The firebreaks have created open spaces within the reedbed, which are expected to stop the spread of fires in the spring of 2020.

The issue of uncontrolled wildfires and the damage they cause affects the whole community, and for this reason the SPP, together with the Local Land Reclamation Service, also managed selected channels as a measure to prevent fires spreading out of these ditches and into the wetland, complementing the work carried out to create firebreaks and helping to protect vulnerable waterbird colonies from this significant threat.



# A world of waterbirds

The protection of waterbirds is at the heart of the SPP's work, especially the two pelican species nesting in Prespa, and the Society carries out a broad range of local, regional, national and transboundary monitoring activities, as well as engaging in collaborative research efforts, in order to secure the future of these emblematic and majestic species.

As every year, the SPP continued to monitor rare species of waterbirds, and not just in Prespa, as pelicans are known to use wetlands all over northern Greece and beyond for feeding, resting, breeding and migration. This work also sees the SPP collaborate with many partners and share the data it collects with managers for protected areas, as in Lake Cheimaditida, for example, where monitoring of the Dalmatian pelican colony revealed a two-fold increase in breeding attempts in 2019, results which the SPP shared with the lake management body in order to support efforts for the protection of the colony. Meanwhile, wide collaboration with research institutes enables the SPP to interpret and utilise the data it gathers, as is the case with co-operation with the University of Glasgow, UK, for analysis of the SPP's pelican and greylag goose data.

Waterbird monitoring in 2019 showed that the breeding populations of pygmy cormorants and night herons had increased, while pelicans and other waterbirds varied within the same numerical range as in recent years. In collaborative work on waterbird species at transboundary level, MES and Galičica National Park carried out a census of great cormorants and herons nesting on Golem Grad Island in North Macedonia, while the 2019 trilateral mid-winter count saw more than 47,000 waterbirds recorded on Great Prespa Lake.

The SPP has also been participating in a new international project for pelicans, led by Rewilding Europe and implemented in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Ukraine. In addition, in activities related to the Pelican Network, the SPP participated in an international consultancy meeting in Mongolia, on the conservation of the critically endangered East Asian population of the Dalmatian pelican, and became a member of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Dalmatian Pelican Task Force. In addition, the Society also presented its Dalmatian pelican conservation work at the 43rd Annual Conference of the Waterbird Society in Maryland, USA.





## The SPP far and wide

Scientific research is an integral part of the SPP's work and the Society disseminates the knowledge it gains through these efforts in articles and journals, notably in studies on Dalmatian pelicans in "Acta Ornithologica", "Sandgrouse", and "Zoology in the Middle East". The SPP's Dalmatian pelican transmitter data were also used to demonstrate that "Large birds travel farther in homogeneous environments", in the journal "Global Ecology & Biogeography". Moreover, an article about the pollen performance of *Juniperus excelsa* trees was published in the "Journal of Forest Science". The Society's work on climate change, in collaboration with the National Observatory of Athens, was presented at an international conference in Crete, whilst the SPP was honoured by the presentation of the work of Prof. Arne Strid on the flora of Prespa at the Conference of the Hellenic Botanical Society.




# From streams to lakes - water protection and management



A holistic approach to the management of freshwater resources has long been a priority for the SPP, recognising the importance of water to Prespa's unique ecosystems. In addition to the well-known lakes, a number of streams and rivers also contribute to the region's rich biodiversity, forming a fertile interface between the terrestrial and aquatic systems. Closely linked with both the natural environment and human needs, Prespa's waterways continue to provide beneficial functions to many wild species, despite their lower reaches having been regulated in the past for drainage purposes. Rubbish dumping and reed burning have been identified as significant harmful practices, which the SPP has already been working to address for some years, while the importance of careful planning for any future stream related works is also of vital importance.

Valuing these delicate ecosystems, the SPP is seeking to better assess the current status of stream ecosystems and identify the main challenges for their conservation. In this context the Society welcomed a visit to Prespa by Danish experts on the maintenance and restoration of rivers and wetlands. The visit confirmed that Prespa's streams and rivers still retain the capacity to naturally regrow into healthy and rich ecosystems. In this area of work, the SPP is focusing on integrating the green infrastructure concept in future river interventions, and has particularly supported the municipality in designing river restoration works in line with the ecosystem approach.





## Bringing together water scientists from around the lakes

Water is the most vital common natural resource in the transboundary Prespa basin and its protection and management can only be accomplished through collaboration between the three littoral states and the active involvement of stakeholders. The primary factor for sustainable water management being the harmonisation of national water monitoring systems, the SPP continues to promote interaction between specialists in this field. To this end, the Society maintained its support for the dialogue it initiated a year ago, by setting up an online discussion forum to further foster joint work. Moreover, the Society brought about a second face-to-face workshop in the autumn, at the water-monitoring station in Stenje, North Macedonia, where scientists were given the opportunity to engage in fieldwork together, exchange know-how and deepen discussions on streamlining Prespa's water monitoring systems.

### ***The Water Framework Directive still protects Europe's waters***

*The SPP joined its voice with other environmental NGOs in the recent fitness check of the Water Framework Directive, lobbying to maintain its effective protection of freshwater ecosystems, with the European Commission ultimately concluding that the cornerstone of EU water policy is fit for purpose.*

### ***Wetlands in alliance***

*An active member of the international conservation community, the SPP contributes to the work of wider freshwater networks such as the Mediterranean Water Alliance and the MAVA Foundation initiative for integrated water resource management in Mediterranean river basins.*



# Challenges and collaborations in environmental policy

In collaboration with the Management Body for the Prespa National Park, ministerial officials and other national organisations, the SPP has a long history of seeking to bring to light the serious issues that often arise regarding environmental legislation and its implementation, as well as other institutional matters. This long-term co-ordinated effort has borne fruit that is reflected in a variety of examples, one of which is the shared effort to take the first steps necessary for implementation of the agreement for the Transboundary Prespa Park on the Greek side, and in particular to establish the long-awaited multi-stakeholder Prespa Park Management Committee, the main transboundary body to be set up under this initiative. In addition, and aiming to advocate for the natural and environmental values of Prespa in all its body of work, the SPP also works intensively to ensure that any poorly set-up projects to be implemented in the region are redesigned to the benefit of both man and nature.

## **Protected areas**

*Amongst the SPP's lobbying efforts in 2019, a highlight was the successful effort of the big environmental Greek NGO alliance, in which it played an active role, to convince the environment ministry to abandon the idea of reassigning the administration of all protected areas to the country's elected regional authorities, which would have seriously upset the balance of power regarding the local consensus building currently established in the multi-stakeholder boards.*

## The agreement on the Prespa Park entered into force!

*The highlight of the year has certainly been the entry into force of the "Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park", adopted in 2010 by Albania, Greece, North Macedonia and the EU for the protection of the trilateral Transboundary Prespa Park, which was established in 2000. Less than one year before the 20th anniversary of the Prespa Park, which was the first transboundary protected area in south-eastern Europe, and more than 10 years after the 2010 agreement was signed, the news arrived on 29th May 2019 that the agreement had finally come into effect. This was a special day in the long course of transboundary collaboration in the basin, the result of two years of lobbying at many levels by the SPP and its international partners, and a cause for celebration for all stakeholders committed to this joint endeavour for conservation, sustainable development, peace and prosperity. New challenges now lie ahead with the establishment of the transboundary institutions to be set up as the platforms for cross-border dialogue and joint actions.*

## Support for managing the Prespa National Park

*A crucial part of the SPP's programme is its close and ongoing collaboration with the Management Body for the Prespa National Park (MBPNP). Following the Society's re-appointment to the new board of the management body, the SPP has provided technical support to the new chair and members on many of the issues the management body is faced with, including assistance with redrafting the MBPNP's proposal of activities to be funded under the current EU funding programme for Greece. The Society has also supported the MBPNP in its work on improving human - brown bear co-existence, while the two organisations have furthermore closely collaborated on many instances of responding to threats to the natural wealth of the area.*



# PrespaNet in action

Collaboration across borders is a central pillar of the SPP's work in Prespa, in recognition of fact that the shared lakes basin and biodiversity require co-ordinated efforts for their protection, and the PrespaNet partners – the SPP, MES and PPNEA – continued to strengthen their network in 2019, particularly focussing on transboundary activities and shared objectives. Filling a significant gap in our knowledge at transboundary level, the partners have been mapping Natura 2000 shoreline habitat types around the basin, sharing capacity in this important conservation skill with protected area managers, making a vital contribution to wetland management in all three countries and creating an important knowledge base for the future protection of habitats that are a priority at European level.

Similarly, the partners also continued their work on learning more about the large mammals of Prespa through closely co-ordinated transboundary studies, this year adding surveys on the damage caused by wild boar in Greece and by large carnivores in Albania and North Macedonia. As part of this work the partners also produced shared communications material, not only to highlight the extraordinary values of the basin's large mammal wildlife but also to acknowledge the crucial role that volunteers have played in all these activities in each country, with young people from all three sides eager to learn more about and protect these emblematic animals.

PrespaNet's work aims to bring greater emphasis to the transboundary aspect of nature conservation in the basin, highlighting the necessity of cross-border collaboration and of following common, shared objectives in such efforts. In addition, the activities, which have included opening local offices for MES and PPNEA on their respective sides of the basin, aim to strength and develop the network, and foster stronger collaborative ties between all the organisations working for nature protection basinwide.





The SPP's transboundary **environmental education** programme for 2019 was designed and implemented under the PrespaNet project, and focused on the ecology and values of wild plants. As in previous years, the programme was carried out at transboundary level, highlighting the shared ecological values of the basin and the partners' common approach to educational principles.



# PoliPrespa: the many sides of Prespa

PoliPrespa is a unique experiment in bringing the many voices for Prespa together under a joint effort to sustainably develop the area through a wide range of community, social and agricultural activities. PoliPrespa aims to build capacity amongst local institutions and organisations, as well as utilise the area's natural values wisely for the benefit of the economy and society, acting as a unique role model for the development of other protected areas in Greece. This innovative and co-operative coalition of local stakeholders and decision-makers, acts together to bring new resources and innovative ideas to the area.

In a landmark development for Prespa, and the first of its kind in the region, the inaugural meeting of the newly established Local Action Group (LAG) was held in September 2019. The LAG is a trailblazing platform for dialogue and consultation between a range of public and private, local and national participants, representing a broad cross-section of socio-economic sectors, and its basic objective is initially to act as the platform for dialogue on future of Prespa, for the PoliPrespa project, and a potential body for steering the sustainable development of the area.





The THESPRES cultural exchange tour for young people from the region and Greece's second city journeyed by train from Thessaloniki to Prespa, stopping at various points of interest along the way, with participants sharing their images, newly gained knowledge and experiences in an exhibition.

A collaboration with the Architecture Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki saw a visit by students to propose restoration plans for several of the area's old buildings, later presented at an exhibition at the building of the Byzantine Collection in Agios Germanos.



Local delicacies, Prespiot dancers and musicians travelled to Athens airport to promote Prespa as part of the national "Fly Me to the Moon" programme aiming to highlight Greece's regions

Investing in young people is one of the primary goals of PoliPrespa, which supports a broad range of athletic, cultural, educational and developmental activities.



A seminar on sustainable development in agriculture, looking at challenges and perspectives for creating added value in the region of Prespa, was held at the end of the year, kicking off the partners' collaborative agricultural programme.



# Talking, sharing and listening

With a view to aiming information and awareness-raising efforts at a wider national and transboundary audience, the SPP communications team promotes all the many different project activities far and wide. Its efforts are focussed on connecting with the local communities around the lakes in particular, through the collaborative partnerships and bonds that the Society has forged in the region over many years and with constant re-appraisal of the most effective ways and means for this purpose. Regular newsletters, with information about the SPP activities, reach every household on the Greek side of the basin, and are also widely shared by our partners' newly established local offices across the borders, while younger audiences on all three sides give us an enthusiastic reception for our work on social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. However, few means of communications are more effective than having people participate in our work first-hand, giving them the chance to experience for themselves the values that the organisation professes and the practices it supports.







Following a series of photography seminars, the Presplorers club for local youngsters held a photography exhibition entitled "(Our) changing landscape", presenting the changes which both time and wetland management have brought to the landscape of the area through their eyes

Local voices were also heard in the PrespaNet video about the fantastic contribution volunteers have made to the SPP's PrespaNet studies on large mammals, working on wildlife camera trapping, as well as studying the diet of brown bears.



Close co-operation with the Municipality of Prespa saw the conclusion of the Society's well-received campaign for the reduction of plastic bag use, with reusable eco-friendly canvas bags produced and distributed for free to local shops and each household in Greek Prespa.

The restored watermill in Agios Germanos has had another successful year. This positive collaboration on a tourism offer firmly based in the area's natural and cultural values further highlights the shared understanding of the benefits to be gained from a conservation-friendly approach in the region.





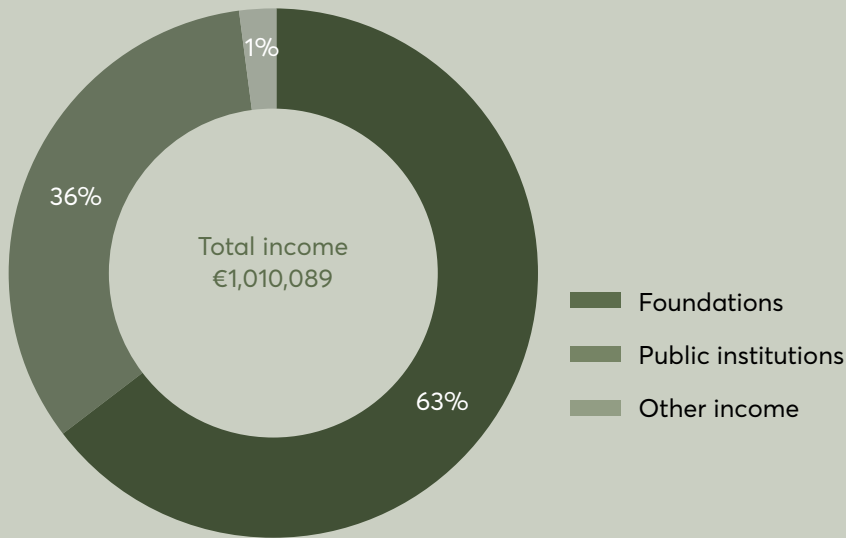
# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY - DECEMBER 2019

The Society for the Protection of Prespa manages the financial resources entrusted to it by its donors and sponsors with transparency and accountability. The society applies robust financial procedures and accounting standards in order to ensure the direct control and verification of the organisation's finances. The annual financial statements are audited by independent auditors and the audit report is published on the SPP's website.

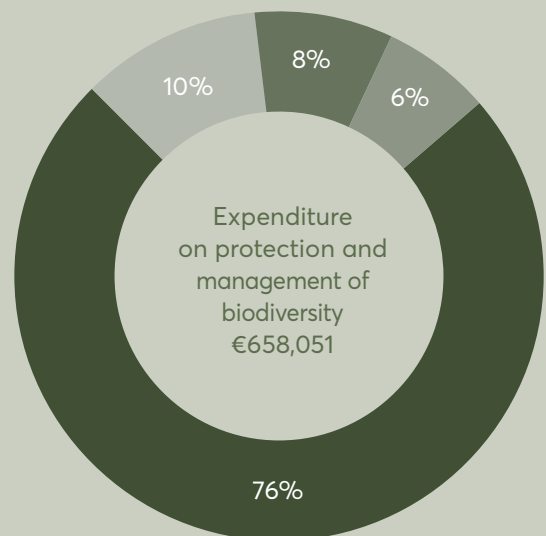
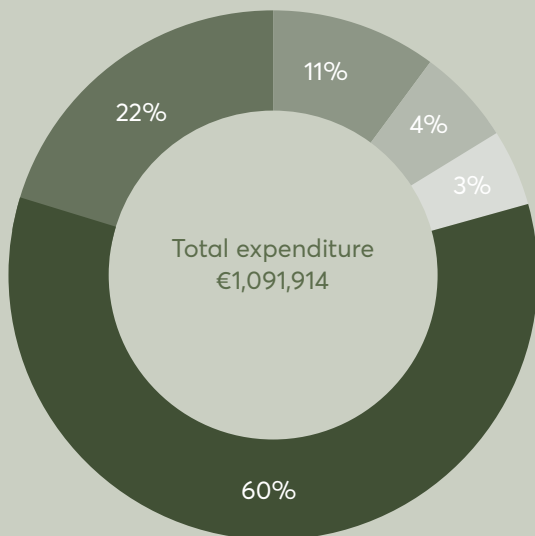




## Sources of income



## How we spent our resources



### Conservation Programme

- Protection & management of biodiversity
- Sustainable development & local community engagement

### Operational Programme

- Administration
- Communication
- Fundraising

- Conservation of species & habitats
- Research & monitoring of species & habitats
- Water protection & management
- Networking & institutional development



## INCOME ANALYSIS

### FOUNDATIONS

<i>Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust Fund (PONT) / MAVA Foundation - support for the whole SPP programme</i>	650,000
<i>The Stauros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), for the "PoliPrespa" project</i>	286,204
<i>The A. G. Leventis Foundation, for the Agios Germanos Watermill: Mapping its future</i>	5,800
<i>EuroNatur / Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, for the "PrespaNet" project</i>	28,853
	<b>Sub-total €970,857</b>

### PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

<i>Ministry of Finance and Development: Interreg - IPA CBC Greece-Albania, for the "Net Metering" project</i>	8,814
	<b>Sub-total €8,814</b>

### OTHER INCOME

<i>Private donors</i>	18,857
<i>Trading sales</i>	7,096
<i>For services provided</i>	2,782
<i>Other</i>	1,683
	<b>Sub-total €30,418</b>

## ANALYSIS OF EXPENSES

### CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

<i>Protection and management of biodiversity</i>	658,051
<i>Sustainable development and local community engagement</i>	236,198
<i>Administration</i>	119,210
<i>Fundraising</i>	39,337
<i>Communication</i>	39,118
	<b>Total €1,091,914</b>

### ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURE ON PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY

<i>Conservation of species and habitats</i>	502,908
<i>Research and monitoring of species and habitats</i>	68,744
<i>Water protection and management</i>	49,238
<i>Networking and institutional development</i>	37,161
	<b>Total €658,051</b>







## FOUNDATIONS



### MAVA Foundation

The MAVA Foundation is a charitable foundation which supports activities for the protection of the environment. The existence of the SPP would not have been possible had it not been for the valuable and generous financial support of the MAVA Foundation, from its earliest years until the present day. From 2018 onwards, MAVA funding has been channeled through the Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT).



### Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT)

The Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT) is a transboundary conservation trust fund. PONT funding is long term, and designed to ensure the sustainable management of the Prespa Ohrid ecoregion. Since 2018 it has supported the overall SPP programme and been the main funder of the work that the organisation carries out. Thanks to its generous support the SPP is able to continue to plan for the long term and implement its programme to protect and promote Prespa and the wider region. PONT support also provides co-funding for all the SPP's activities across the whole programme.



### Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation (AVJCF)

The Danish Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation operates all over the world via ownership as well as support of research and nature projects. Many SPP activities, both in the past and today, have been implemented with the generous and longstanding support of the AVJCF. Most recently these have included the project, "Enhancing the Eco-tourism Identity of Prespa", which aims to strengthen ecotourism and has recently published the book "Flora and Vegetation of the Prespa National Park, Greece", as well as the PrespaNet project, "Strengthening NGO-led Conservation in the Transboundary Prespa Basin", which has aimed to protect and preserve the rare natural environment of the transboundary region since 2018. The SPP and the AVJCF are currently exploring ways in which the foundation might further support the long-term work of the society on wetland management in Prespa, with the foundation supporting a visit to Prespa by Danish experts on the maintenance and restoration of rivers and wetlands, as well as a new pilot project on the acquisition of land around the shore of Lesser Prespa Lake.



### Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) is one of the largest private charitable foundations in the world and provides grants to a wide range of non-profit organisations. In 2018, the SNF launched a prototype three-year collaboration with the SPP, the Municipality of Prespa and several local associations, known as the PoliPrespa project. PoliPrespa seeks to contribute to the sustainable development of Prespa using the natural capital of the region as a vehicle, creating a model for sustainable development in protected areas, with activities ranging from support for environmentally friendly agriculture to wetland management, from support from the public library to sports activities for the young, and from cultural activities to educational equipment in Prespa's schools. In the past the SNF has also generously supported the restoration of the Agios Germanos watermill.



### A.G. Leventis Foundation

Established in 1979, from the outset the A. G. Leventis Foundation has focussed its charitable programme on society, education and culture. The valuable funding of this donor joins that of the SNF to support the restoration and operation of the watermill of Agios Germanos and the SPP's work to ensure its maintenance as a unique cultural landmark for the area in the future.



## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS



The SPP also participates in national and European projects funded by public institutions, either as the main beneficiary, or as a partner. The European Commission's **LIFE programme** funding instrument for nature and biodiversity is one such source of funding. This is a financing tool for important species and habitats which currently co-funds the LIFE Prespa Waterbirds project which has as its main aim the management of wetland vegetation in Lesser Prespa, as noted on pages 10-11. LIFE funding has also supported LIFE JunEx, as well as the LIFE project for the "Conservation of Priority Bird Species in Lake Mikri Prespa, Greece", in the past.



In addition, the society is a partner in the Net Metering project, entitled "Integration of photo-voltaic plants for self-consumption in public buildings and the replacement of low-efficiency municipal / street lighting with LED lights", which is funded by the Ministry of Development and Investments, as part of the **Interreg - IPA CBC Greece-Albania** programme, with the Municipality of Prespa as the lead beneficiary, as well as in the Holy Water project, entitled "Enhancing the cultural touristic product of the cross-border area of Prespes through the promotion of the natural and cultural heritage", as part of the **Interreg - IPA CBC Greece-Republic of North Macedonia** programme.



# MEMBERS OF THE SPP

The SPP has organisations as its members, rather than individuals, with the following eight environmental organisations being the current members: Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature, ELLINIKI ETAIRIA – Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, Hellenic Ornithological Society, Goulandris National History Museum/Greek Biotope Wetland Centre, Friends of Prespa, WWF Greece, Arcturos and MedIna, while the Danish Ornithological Society and the Tour du Valat research institute participate in its general assemblies as permanent observers. These members play a key role in the governance of the SPP, not only with their presence at the organisation’s annual general assembly, but also with their ongoing support across the whole programme that the SPP carries out. The contribution of all the members to the issues that the SPP faces, their assistance at critical junctures and the knowledge and experience they continue to offer are of vital importance for the SPP.





# COLLABORATION

Seeking out collaborative partnerships has been a longstanding and fundamental priority for the SPP since its establishment, and for this reason the organisation has invested in maintaining strong collaborations, as well as in finding new partners in relation to its needs and new activities. For the implementation of its programme the SPP collaborates with a wide network of environmental organisations from Greece and abroad, international organisations, management authorities for protected areas, universities and foundations, as well as local authorities at national and transboundary level.

## GREEK ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS:

Callisto  
Anima  
Mediterranean SOS  
MOM – Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal  
Medasset  
Archelon  
Greenpeace  
Ecological Recycling Society

## LOCAL ACTORS & STAKEHOLDERS:

Management Body for the Prespa National Park  
Municipality of Prespes  
Pelekanos Bean Farmers' Co-operative  
Local Land Reclamation Service  
Cultural and Sports associations  
Schools' and parents' associations  
Farmers' and stockbreeders' associations  
Fishermen's associations  
Regional Veterinary Unit of Florina  
Florina Ephorate of Antiquities

## TRANSBOUNDARY & INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement  
BirdLife International  
Wetlands International  
IUCN SSC Pelican Specialist Group  
KORA  
EuroNatur  
Macedonian Ecological Society  
Protection and Preservation of the Natural Environment in Albania  
Galičica National Park  
Pelister National Park  
Municipality of Resen  
Prespa National Park (AL)  
Regional Administration of Protected Areas (AL)  
Municipalities of Pustec and Kolonja

## MANAGEMENT BODIES FOR PROTECTED AREAS:

Koronia / Volvi / Chalkidiki  
Thermaikos Gulf  
Evros Delta / Samothraki  
Kotychi / Strofilia and Kyparissia Bay  
Messolonghi Lagoon / Akarnanika Mountains  
Nestos Delta, Lakes Vistonida – Ismarida Lakes and Thasos  
Lake Kerkini  
Kalama – Acheron - Corfu  
Amvrakikos Gulf and Lefkada  
Pamvotis Lake  
Karla – Mavrovouni – Kefalovriso Velestino – Pineios Delta

## UNIVERSITIES & RESEARCH INSTITUTES:

National Observatory of Athens  
Radboud University  
B-Ware Research Centre  
Department of Fine Arts,  
University of Western Macedonia  
Department of Forestry and Natural Environment Management, Agricultural University of Athens,  
Hellenic Centre for Marine Research  
School of Agricultural Technology, Technological Education Institute of Western Macedonia

## NETWORKS:

European Green Belt  
Pelecanus Group  
Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance  
Medforval



## SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

- Alexandrou O. & G. Catsadorakis. 2019. Changes to Dalmatian pelican *Pelecanus crispus* ecology brought by climate change: observations and findings from a 40-year study in Prespa, northern Greece. 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Waterbird Society, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Campus, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (Oral presentation)
- Ashoori A., Amini H., Khaleghizadeh A., Manolopoulos A. & G. Catsadorakis. 2019. What caused the strong increase of the winter population of the Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*, in Iran in the last two decades? *Zoology in the Middle East* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09397140.2019.1663866>
- Catsadorakis G. 2019. Establishment and growth of a new Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* colony in Central Greece. *Acta Ornithologica* 54: 125–132. DOI: 10.3161/00016454AO2019.54.1.010
- Catsadorakis G. & O. Alexandrou. 2019. Status of knowledge about the population trends and conservation developments for the Dalmatian pelican *Pelecanus crispus* in the world. 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Waterbird Society, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Campus, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (Oral presentation)
- Catsadorakis G., Alexandrou O., Papadopoulos K. & T. Nazirides. 2019. Feeding of Dalmatian pelicans *Pelecanus crispus* by fishermen and photographers in Lake Kerkini and its importance for the ecology of these birds. *Oionos*, Vol. 59: 6-8 (In Greek)
- Christopoulou A., Manolopoulos A. & G. Catsadorakis. 2019. The distribution of the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) in the Central Asia flyway between 1990 and 2015. *Sandgrouse*: in press.

- Karapatzak E., Varsamis G., Koutseri I., Takos I. & T. Merou. 2019. The effect of pollen performance on low seed fertility in a Greek population of *Juniperus excelsa*. *Journal of Forest Science*, Vol.: 65, pp. 356 – 367.
- Sakellarakis F. N., Manolopoulos A., Fotiadis G., Kazoglou Y., Vrahnakis M., Swinkels C., Sebastian U., Strid A. & E. Bergmeier. 2019. Flora of Prespa area database, NW Greece. 16th Conference of the Hellenic Botanical Society – Athens, Greece.
- Tucker M., Alexandrou O., Bierregaard Jr R.O., Bildstein K. L., et al. 2019. Large birds travel farther in homogeneous environments. *Global Ecology & Biogeography* 28(5): 576-587. DOI: 10.1111/geb.12875. <https://rdcu.be/bg2Yn>
- van der Schriek T., Giannakopoulos C. & K. V. Varotsos. 2019. The impact of future climate change on bean cultivation in the Prespa Lake catchment. 2nd International Conference Adapt to Climate – Heraklion, Crete, Greece.
- van der Schriek T., Varotsos K. V. & C. Giannakopoulos. 2019. The impact of future climate change on the water level of Lake Lesser Prespa: assessing the vulnerability of fish spawning grounds, and bird nesting- /foraging sites. 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference Adapt to Climate – Heraklion, Crete, Greece.



SOCIETY FOR  
THE PROTECTION  
OF PRESPA



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