RESTORING BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE ITALIAN GREENBELT

Forgotten bunkers, abandoned meadows and disappearing ponds

This 2-years project (Nov. 2022-Oct. 2024) aims at restoring biodiversity by re-defining the role of past war-related sites: *from negative elements, to life-giving sites where rare wildlife thrives.*

The project will take place in the Julian Prealps Nature Park (Lusevera municipality, Italy) where we plan various **complementary activities** to ensure the correct dissemination and visibility of EGB values and project actions while promoting capacity building for stakeholders for a sustainable local economy.

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Forgotten bunkers

Challenge: European bats are poorly studied species and are experiencing severe population declines and the loss of roosting habitats is considered a pivotal driver.

Objective: Restore >2 **forgotten** Cold War bunkers which will be actively used by bats.

Approach: Bat-friendly interventions will consist in providing suitable entrances and substrates for bats to roost and hopefully breed. Monitoring before-and-after intervention will occur throughout the project lifetime using camera traps and bat detector.

Challenge: Shrub encroachment processes are causing the disappearance of long-term established alpine grassland habitats and its associated biodiversity.

Objective: In an **abandoned** Cold War shooting range (currently a sub-Mediterranean N2000 dry grassland *Scorzonetalia villosae*), we will remove some encroaching shrubs and trees favoring existing open grassland species.

Approach: Mechanical removal of target trees and shrubs. Biodiversity monitoring before-and-after intervention will be carried out via field observation activities and drone images.

Abandoned meadows

Disappearing ponds

Challenge: Restore 5 **disappearing** ponds threatened by soil and vegetation infilling and spread of invasive species.

Objective: Improving abiotic and biotic conditions for threatened breeding amphibians while providing bats suitable site for foraging.

Approach: Manual removal of overgrowth vegetation, algal blooms and excess soil. Monitoring approaches will assess the change in vegetation and soil depth while monitoring pond wildlife before-and-after interventions.

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