

Climate changes protected habitats – and also their management?

How does the climate change influence habitats in National Parks and Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe? How can these changes be monitored? And how can they be handled best? 40 experts of protection area administrations and from different science disciplines from eight European countries followed these questions in Balatonfüred, Balaton Uplands National Park, Hungary, from 19 to 23 September 2011.

Core issues of the 4th Partner Meeting of the INTERREG IV B project „HABIT-CHANGE – Adaptive management of climate-induced changes of habitat diversity in protected areas” were the assessment and presentation of the impacts of climate change as well as land use on protected habitats. In addition they discussed strategies and measures for protected area management, the preparation of climate change adapted management plans and a decision support system for the dissemination of the project results. Furthermore, practitioners from reserves and scientists harmonised their current state of work and how to proceed in the project, which ends February 2013, by presentations, working group sessions and intensive discussions.

The hosting project partner, the administration of the Balaton Uplands National Park, introduced the investigation area to the participants. During two excursions to the investigation area (Tihany Peninsula, Sásdi meadow) the attendees learnt about the problems of site management, land use, stakeholder involvement as well as climate change impacts. Two success stories of the site management were presented: the relocation and resettlement activities of ground squirrels (*Citellus citellus*) performed at different habitats, and the already “adapted” management practices (controlled grazing instead of regular mechanical cutting; establishment of movable locks for water retaining instead of fixed locks etc.) performed in the Sásdi meadow in order to save the habitats and the population of Bird’s-Eye Primrose the strictly protected and endangered symbol plant of Balaton Uplands National Park definitely infected by drying out that can be considered as a direct effect of climate change.

First results of the EU project are already available at the project website <http://www.habit-change.eu>. The next project meeting will take place in May 2012 in the Romanian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.



Participants of the 4th project meeting in Balatonfüred, Hungary in front of the Hegystű geological formation of Balaton Uplands National Park (Photo: M. Neubert, IÖR)

Contact:

Dr. Marco Neubert, [m.neubert\[at\]ioer.de](mailto:m.neubert[at]ioer.de) (Leibniz Institute of Ecological and Regional Development)

Judit Cservenka, [cservju\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:cservju[at]gmail.com) (Balaton Uplands National Park Administration)

Project homepage:

<http://www.habit-change.eu/>