

PL04 - Life nature projects and pond management: Experiences and results

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Since its approval in 1992 the Habitats Directive (HD) of the European Union has been proven as one of the best legal tools for a long-term conservation of biodiversity and natural environment. Its efficacy is mainly a result of the practical sense included in it. Beyond a passive conservation, it promotes an active management on habitats and species, even aimed at the recuperation of highly degraded habitats. But, in most cases, achieving this objective couldn't be possible without other additional resources that help with the implementation of direct management actions.

LIFE Programme started in the same year as the HD. Within this time of over 20 years, it has been the most important investment for a long-term conservation of biodiversity and environment.

Fresh water habitats, and especially ponds, have a particular biodiversity and play an essential role in ecology processes. At the same time, they are highly sensitive to threats, thus are a keystone in the HD. Also, these habitats usually have a positive response to management actions. For some of them, indeed, through LIFE Programme there has been a significant knowledge improvement not only about their ecological dynamics, but also on management techniques.

Results and experiences acquired in Menorca through three consecutive LIFE Nature projects could be an example of knowledge transfer in several areas. From scientific theory to direct management practices, and also addressed to social awareness through close communication with local people and promoting its implication in project development.

The first project (LIFE FLORA MENORCA, 2001-2005) had as its main objective a long-term conservation of endangered plant species. Among them *Marsilea strigosa* Willd., thus a first experience was acquired in the management of temporary ponds. Second one (LIFE BASSES, 2005-2009) focussed exclusively on Mediterranean temporary ponds. It has as a reference a previous project developed in southern France (MARES TEMPORAIRES). LIFE BASSES development made an important contribution to the knowledge of this priority habitat, and as a consequence, management techniques and awareness resources were also improved. Some of them were innovative. At local level temporary ponds had passed from unknown to highly valued habitats. Third project (LIFE+ RENEIX, 2009-2014) aimed to restore large areas degraded by human activities, but they included also fresh water habitats. It was the chance to consolidate and to expand techniques and experiences from previous projects.