



PELICAN Way of LIFE

Layman's Report



LIFE-PELICANS.COM

Photographs: Sean Weekly, Neil Aldridge, Jari Peltomäki / Wild Wonders of Europe, Dimitris Vavylis, Sebastian Bugariu, Natalie Clements, Vladimir Mladenov, Svilen Cheshmedzhiev, Jelle Harms, Adriana Todorova, Andriy Nekrasov, Damyan Petkov, Daniela Mihova, Jeroen Helmer, A. Panagiotopoulos, Oksana Sotnykova, Z. Trendafilov.

Design: Oksana Sotnykova

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“Conservation of the Dalmatian pelican along the Black-Sea Mediterranean Flyway”

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Introduction

*Pelican Way of LIFE was a comprehensive conservation initiative dedicated to safeguarding the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) along the Black Sea–Mediterranean Flyway. Between September 2019 and March 2025, it focused on mitigating threats and enhancing habitats across 27 sites in Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Ukraine, while also supporting capacity building and research in Turkey, Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.*

The initiative focused on key objectives to ensure the recovery of the Dalmatian pelican population in Southeastern Europe. It enhanced research to understand population size, reproduction, migration patterns and threats, engaged local stakeholders to reduce illegal activities, and improved nesting conditions through habitat restoration and the construction of breeding platforms. The Pelican Way of LIFE initiative also worked to minimise pelican mortality by addressing hazards such as power lines. In addition, it fostered pride, encouraged support for conservation efforts, and raised awareness in local communities, boosting the number of stakeholders engaged in protecting this iconic species and vital habitats, including **Natura 2000 sites**.

The initiative was coordinated by **Rewilding Europe**, with partners, stakeholders, and volunteers implementing activities on the ground. The main partners included the Society for the Protection of Birds/Birdlife Bulgaria (BSPB) and the Persina Nature Park Directorate in Bulgaria (PNPD), the Hellenic Ornithological Society/BirdLife Greece (HOS) in Greece, the Romanian Ornithological Society/BirdLife Romania (SOR) and Rewilding Romania in Romania, as well as Rewilding Ukraine in Ukraine.

Activities carried out to support Dalmatian pelican populations achieved significant milestones, such as **the establishment of two new colonies in Bulgaria**. The avian flu outbreak in 2022 caused a severe decline in Dalmatian pelican numbers across Europe, interrupting upward population growth trends. Despite this setback, however, the initiative played an important role in stabilising the population and supporting its recovery in the aftermath of the outbreak.

Pelican Way of LIFE has laid the foundation for future rewilding efforts focused on the Dalmatian pelican and its habitats, while also promoting awareness, community involvement, education, and nature-based tourism. **These efforts provide hope for the comeback of these majestic birds across European landscapes.**





About the Dalmatian pelican

With a wingspan of almost three metres and weighing in at over 10 kg, the Dalmatian pelican is one of the most impressive breeding birds in Europe. The sight of a group of these massive fish eaters taking to the air is an awe-inspiring avian spectacle.

In order to breed Dalmatian pelicans need access to still, fish-filled waters undisturbed by human activity, with extensive flooded and shallow water areas. Pelicans feed on fish and hunt singly or in groups, sometimes even joining other species, such as cormorants. They usually return to traditional breeding sites, which may contain anything from a single nest to more than 1,400 (but usually they are less social than other pelican species). Their nests are crude heaps of vegetation, placed on islands or dense mats of vegetation. Females lay between one and three eggs – chicks are born naked, but soon sprout white down feathers. Young pelicans are real record-breakers when it comes to gaining weight. A chick that weighs just 100 grammes at birth already weighs 500 grammes after just six days. Offspring fledge at around 85 days and become fully independent soon after.

The Dalmatian pelican is a globally threatened species. Extremely vulnerable across its entire geographical range, it is classified as “Near Threatened” on the IUCN Red List. The global population of the species has suffered a dramatic decline over recent decades, with the principal causes including collisions with power lines, habitat decline, disturbance, direct persecution by fishermen and a lack of awareness amongst local communities. These threats, combined with a lack of scientific data, make the future of the Dalmatian pelican heavily reliant on conservation action.

The global population is estimated at around 20,000 individuals, with the Mediterranean-Black Sea flyway population – the focus of this initiative – accounting for half of the total (over 8,000 breeding pairs).

In Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania, the Dalmatian pelican is fully protected by law, including nestlings, nesting sites, and fledged birds. National Action Plans have been developed and implemented in Bulgaria and Romania to support conservation efforts. In all three countries, breeding and roosting sites, along with the most critical feeding habitats, are designated as Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). **In Ukraine, the species is listed in the Red Book of Ukraine,** granting it legal protection as well.



Why are we supporting Dalmatian pelican comeback?

The Dalmatian pelican is an ambassador for a rich and interconnected wetland system in Europe.

Supporting the comeback of the Dalmatian pelican as an iconic indicator species can indirectly help to restore vast swathes of wetland, lake, and marshy habitat that is likely to benefit a wide range of other species. **The Dalmatian pelican continues to show signs of recovery within its range in southeast Europe, including the Danube Delta rewilding landscape.** Yet the fragmented nature of populations poses a problem for their long-term stability.

Finding new ways to boost pelican numbers can reinvigorate ecosystems and shine a light on the need for more formal protection of these habitats, the benefits of large-scale wetland restoration, and the value of natural processes. It can also underline the necessity of healthy fish populations, leading to the restoration and rewilding of rivers. The Dalmatian pelican can do all of this, while taking on an ambassadorial role in promoting the need for well-connected, rewilded wetlands across Europe.

As an iconic species, the Dalmatian pelican is also a key attraction for birdwatchers, wildlife photographers, and nature enthusiasts. With its impressive wingspan, striking breeding plumage, and graceful movements, it is a spectacular sight in wetland landscapes.

By supporting sustainable nature tourism, the presence of Dalmatian pelicans helps generate income for communities, while simultaneously raising environmental awareness and the need for conservation efforts. Protecting these birds and their habitats ensures that future generations can continue to admire them in the wild, strengthening the link between biodiversity conservation and economic sustainability.



The initiative in NUMBERS



12 breeding platforms

built and repaired, expanding the nesting range of the species.

300 pelicans ringed and **24** pelicans tagged with satellite transmitters in Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania.

3 Olympiads and one educational camp concluded the partners' educational efforts.

10+ trainings and workshops strengthened stakeholder capacity for pelican conservation.

10+ km of power lines made safer by installing bird diverters, insulating, and burying cables.

2 new breeding colonies established, with **100+** nests recorded in 2025.

5 professional photo missions and **100+** partner-led shoots produced **2,000+** photos.

50+ school visits and education events organised, with **2** educational programmes organised in **26** schools, fostering awareness and appreciation in young people.

59 promotional materials created and thousands of copies distributed.

121 articles published on the initiative website, attracting **122,000** unique views.

9 simultaneous pelican counts conducted across Balkan countries during winter and spring each year.

4 professional video missions and many field shoots, resulting in four videos and **75+** short clips.

7 patrol schemes established, with **1,000+** patrol visits monitoring colonies and preventing disturbance.



3 festivals and **2** exhibitions enhanced community engagement.

27 Natura 2000 sites across Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and also 2 sites in Ukraine were involved in actions carried out as part of the initiative.

10 tourism agreements, **3** birdwatching programmes, and **3** tourist routes promoted nature-based tourism.



7 volunteer camps held to improve habitats and nesting facilities for the species.

12 information panels installed to promote the initiative and support tourism.

2 press trips organised and numerous media visits facilitated by initiative partners.



1,700 publications and posts, reaching **10+** million people via media and partner channels.

2108 social media posts on the initiative's channels reached **733,000** people.

Geographical scope

The Pelican Way of LIFE initiative has been implemented at 27 sites across Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Ukraine, covering diverse habitats such as lakes, islands, wetlands, and marshes.

GREECE

Greece is home to around one-third of the global Dalmatian pelican population. Before the bird flu outbreak in 2022, Greece was home to around six breeding colonies include one on Prespa Lake – the largest in the world with **1,200 breeding pairs**. Efforts focused on the Amvrakikos Gulf and Messolonghi Wetlands, where the colonies have been growing and expanding in the last years.

BULGARIA

Bulgaria's breeding Dalmatian pelican population was estimated at **70–120 pairs** at the beginning of the initiative. The species breeds regularly in Srebarna Lake, and colonies have formed previously on artificial nesting platforms in Peschina Marsh in the Persina Nature Park. The initiative covered 10 key sites, such as Belene Island Complex, Straldzha Complex, and Atanasovsko Lake.

ROMANIA

Romania hosts **450–500 breeding pairs**, mostly in the Danube Delta, with 15 initiative sites, including Razim-Sinoe Complex, Danube Islands, and Lake Taşaul. The species is resident and a partial migrant, with non-breeding birds dispersing along the Lower Danube and the western Black Sea coast.

UKRAINE

The Ukrainian Danube Delta sees **up to 150 wintering pelicans**, while the species was last recorded breeding in the area around six years ago. Activities focused on Kartal Lake and the Danube Biosphere Reserve, where the species roosts and forages.





Activities and achievements

POPULATION MONITORING

Despite ongoing conservation efforts, key knowledge gaps about the Dalmatian pelican remain, affecting its long-term protection. To address this, **researchers studied the species' population status, movements, dispersal patterns, threats, and key sites along its flyway** using satellite telemetry, ringing, and simultaneous censuses.

Since birds do not recognise borders, **a unified monitoring approach was developed across all initiative countries**. Standardised protocols ensured consistency in data collection, while a GIS database was created to centralise and analyse findings.

To provide an accurate picture of the population and habitat use, simultaneous counts were conducted annually across southeastern Europe. Experts and volunteers monitored hundreds of wetlands, offering valuable insights into species distribution. Winter censuses (December) helped evaluate breeding

THE OVERALL NUMBER OF BREEDING PAIRS IN ALL COUNTRIES

2021	1099
2022	807
2023	899
2024	976

success, while spring censuses (May–June) assessed population size and distribution of both Dalmatian and great white pelicans.

During the timeline of the initiative, **a significant population decline occurred due to a bird flu outbreak.** However, monitoring efforts now indicate signs of stabilisation, underscoring the importance of ongoing research and conservation actions to safeguard the future of the species.

BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

In early 2022, a severe avian influenza outbreak devastated Dalmatian pelican populations across the Balkans.

In Greece, over 2,200 pelicans perished, accounting for nearly 40% of the national population.

Romania reported the loss of approximately **158 adult pelicans**, representing about 20% of its breeding adults.

Overall, the epidemic claimed nearly 10% of the global Dalmatian pelican population.

Efforts to mitigate the outbreak included removing carcasses and implementing quarantine measures to prevent further spread. This event underscores

the vulnerability of the species and highlights the importance of ongoing conservation initiatives. Continued efforts within the Pelican Way of LIFE initiative helped stabilise the Dalmatian pelican population in southeastern Europe, which began showing signs of recovery following the outbreak.





TAGGING AND RINGING

To better understand the ecology, movements, and behavior of Dalmatian pelicans, **scientists used ringing and satellite transmitters to track individual birds across their range.** Moving forwards, this will enhance the planning of the conservation measures, ensuring a safer future for these majestic birds across their range.

During successful ringing missions in Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania, **more than 300 fledgling chicks were ringed.** Each bird received a ring with a unique identification number, allowing scientists to identify its birthplace and track its movements.

To gather more detailed, real-time data, **satellite transmitters were attached to 24 Dalmatian pelicans** in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Albania, together with several great white pelicans. These transmitters provided invaluable insights into feeding, breeding, and habitat use, revealing that Dalmatian pelicans typically travel shorter distances, while great white pelicans travel a lot further.

One great white pelican tagged in Bulgaria travelled nearly 56,000 km in three years, crossing 14 countries – from Ukraine to Sudan – with a single-day record of 361 km and a maximum altitude of more than two kilometers above sea level.



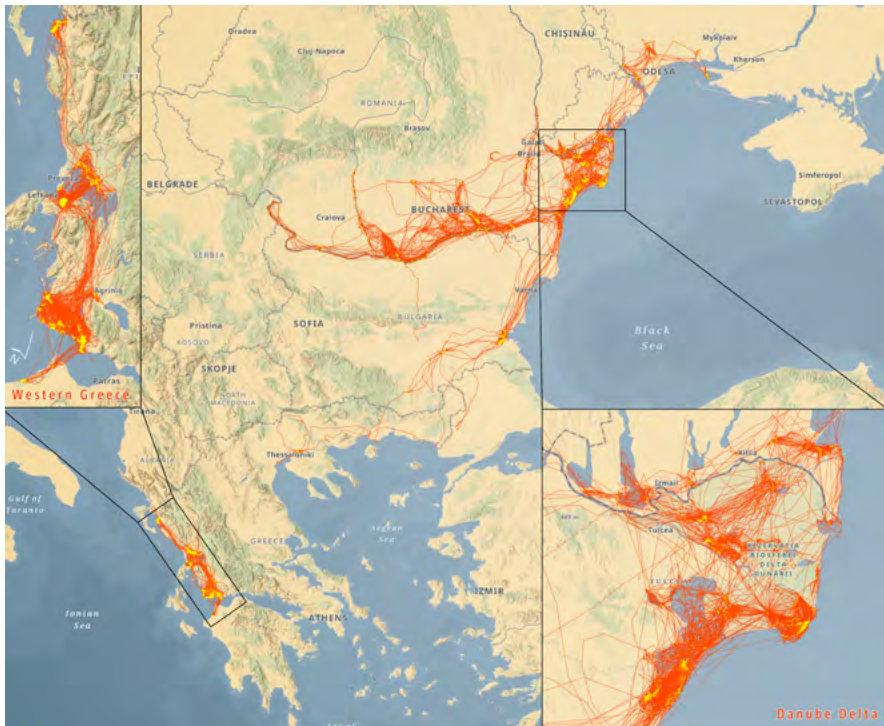


Unfortunately, not all tagged birds survived, but tracking data helped to identify key threats and causes of mortality, guiding conservation efforts to protect the species.

To engage the public, **a dedicated webpage allowed people to track the movements of tagged Dalmatian pelicans in near real-time:**

life-pelicans.com/track-the-dalmatian-pelicans

TRACKING DATA OF PELICANS TAGGED THROUGH THE INITIATIVE



MINIMISING THE RISK OF COLLISIONS

Overhead power lines pose a serious threat to birds – particularly species with limited manoeuvrability such as Dalmatian pelicans – through collision and electrocution. Pelicans often focus on the water while flying, making it difficult for them to see cables, particularly in low-visibility conditions. Collisions and electrocutions result in the loss of more than 4% of the Dalmatian pelican population in southeastern Europe.

To mitigate this risk, the **Pelican Way of LIFE initiative** partnered with utility companies in Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece to make over 10 km of power lines in key areas – including the Burgas Wetlands, Danube Delta, Messolonghi wetlands – safer for birds. Bird diverters, which make power lines more visible, are an effective solution, reducing collisions by up to 94%. Other measures include insulating cables, twisting power lines for better visibility, and burying high-risk sections.

A study was conducted in these countries to assess the impact of 20 kV and 110 kV power distribution networks on Dalmatian pelicans and other birds. **The study identified the most hazardous power lines and prioritised sections for diverter installation and other protective measures.**

In Romania, the study identified 6.5 km of hazardous power lines, with 400 diverters installed at the Chituc sandbar and Lake Iezer Călărași. In Bulgaria, 49 km of dangerous power lines were identified. **The innovative approach of drone-assisted diverter installation was developed**, allowing diverter placement over water and remote areas. This method was piloted near Burgas, in collaboration with the LIFE Safe Grid for Burgas initiative, which will continue efforts in the area. In Greece, 7.4 km of hazardous lines were identified – some high-risk sections were replaced with underground cables by the utility company, which has also installed special insulated cables on the others.





ENHANCING BREEDING AND ROOSTING CONDITIONS

To improve the breeding and roosting conditions of Dalmatian pelicans, **artificial breeding platforms were constructed or expanded at key sites in Bulgaria and Ukraine**. Many of these platforms were equipped with dummy pelicans to attract real birds. Each year, partners and volunteers maintained the platforms, covering them with fresh reeds to make them more appealing during the breeding season.

New or refurbished platforms were established at the following sites:

Bulgaria: Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Area (two platforms), Persin Island (two platforms), Mandra-Poda Complex (three platforms).

Ukraine: Outer Kiliya Danube Delta (two platforms), one of the Danube lakes (one platform), Ermakiv Island (two platforms).

Nesting platforms play an important role in Dalmatian pelican conservation, providing safe breeding places in regions where natural habitats are under threat. Around 80% of European wetlands have disappeared over the last century, while those that remain are largely degraded due to human pressures and highly vulnerable to climate change. These platforms mimic natural islands, offering protection from predators and disturbances. They have already proven highly effective in several countries, serving as a temporary solution while large-scale wetland restoration efforts progress. In Ukraine, such rewilding initiatives are already underway, including the restoration of Danube lakes and floodplain areas.

In Bulgaria, all platforms were successfully used for breeding, leading to the formation of two new colonies. In the Ukrainian Danube Delta, where pelican breeding has not been recorded for around six years, some platforms were used as roosting sites, which may be a first step towards future breeding. However, military activity and war restrictions have likely disrupted breeding and prevented access to some platforms for monitoring.



MAJOR SUCCESS – TWO NEW BREEDING COLONIES IN BULGARIA

The Pelican Way of LIFE initiative saw a major conservation success in Bulgaria, with the formation of two new Dalmatian pelican breeding colonies in the Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Area and the Mandra-Poda Complex.

In Kalimok-Brushlen, a stilted wooden platform was built in December 2020. One further platform was subsequently built in the area. The first breeding success came in April 2021, with three pairs raising four chicks. Since then, the colony has thrived. In 2024, a record-breaking 92 pairs successfully raised 120 chicks on the platforms

and on fallen trees surrounding it, further strengthening the species' presence in the area.

The second new colony formed in **the Mandra-Poda Complex**, where in **late 2021 two floating platforms were constructed in the oxidation ponds of Lukoil Neftochim Burgas.** These platforms quickly became

preferred roosting and nesting sites of the pelicans and other waterfowl due to minimal human disturbance. **In August 2024, an additional wooden platform was built**, further enhancing nesting opportunities. **By early 2025, the new colony had 23 nests, with more breeding pairs expected.**

These remarkable achievements mark a significant step forward in expanding the breeding geography of the species.





ESTABLISHING PATROLS

To reduce persecution and disturbance of Dalmatian pelicans, **new patrolling schemes were established at seven key sites in Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece, in collaboration with local authorities and hunting associations.** These efforts have helped monitor breeding colonies, prevent disturbance, and improve protection.

In Romania (Lake Taşaul), patrolling was conducted year-round, with increased activity during the breeding season. Patrols took place several times a week, using spotting scopes from the vantage points along the shore to monitor the breeding colonies.

In Greece (Messolonghi Wetlands and Amvrakikos Gulf), a patrolling scheme was designed and implemented, with 435 patrols conducted over four breeding seasons.

In Bulgaria, several initiatives were launched:

Persina Nature Park introduced a new patrolling scheme, monitoring disturbance levels along the Danube River near the park. This effort was later supplemented by an upgraded video surveillance system on Persin Island.

A water patrol was conducted around **the Nikopol Island Group** and **Belene Islands Complex** to assess pelican populations and disturbance levels.

Separate patrol schemes were established in **Studen Kladenetz**, **Ovcharitza**, and **Rozov Kladenec**, with a focus on autumn and winter patrolling.

These patrolling efforts, encompassing **over 1000 patrol visits in total**, play a vital role in protecting pelicans, reducing threats, and ensuring safer breeding conditions across their range.





MONITORING

Monitoring key indicators is crucial for assessing the success of conservation efforts. Throughout the initiative, teams across all initiative countries conducted continuous monitoring to track progress and identify challenges.

These indicators included disturbance levels, persecution, illegal fishing, patrolling efficiency, and the status of roosting and nesting sites. The number of breeding pairs, pelican populations during the non-breeding season, and the effectiveness of bird diverters on power lines were also closely observed. Monitoring efforts were summarised in a number of reports available on the initiative website. In addition, the socio-economic impact of the initiative and its influence on nature-based services were evaluated at its conclusion. This assessment was carried out through stakeholder questionnaires, completed across all participating countries, providing valuable insights into the initiative's broader impact.

To assess levels of human-wildlife co-existence, stakeholder surveys were conducted among fishermen and fishery owners. These revealed a positive shift in attitudes toward Dalmatian pelicans, particularly as nature tourism benefits became more widely recognised.



RIISING AWARENESS FOR THE PELICAN COMEBACK

Community and public involvement were at the heart the Pelican Way of LIFE initiative, fostering a shared commitment to Dalmatian pelican conservation across Europe. Actions engaged people of all ages through interactive workshops, educational programmes, and volunteer-driven activities, creating a wider understanding of the importance of protecting the species.

To elevate human-wildlife co-existence levels, local communities were actively involved in events aimed at changing perceptions of pelicans, which are often viewed as competitors by fishers. One notable example was **the Dalmatian Pelican Festival in Bulgaria**, which was held three times. This event combined games, workshops, lectures, and films to raise awareness and promote the return of pelicans as a nesting species in Persina Nature Park. **A 3D model of a Dalmatian pelican colony** was also created for the park's visitor center, enhancing educational efforts.

To document activities and wildlife, **nine professional photo and video missions** were conducted across the countries involved in the initiative, together with more than a hundred partner-led shoots. This resulted in 50+ short clips and four major videos, including a **high-quality promotional film highlighting conservation efforts and promoting the Dalmatian pelican**.

The outreach of the initiative was further amplified through **information boards, exhibitions, numerous promotional and information materials, and networking with stakeholders and other initiatives.** Active participation in many public events, such as the UK Global Birdfair, coupled with a strong presence on social media channels (Facebook, Instagram) and the initiative website, boosted visibility. Press tours in Romania and active media work, complemented by coverage of activities by all the initiative partners on their online channels, resulted in more than 1,700 publications and posts. These reached over 10 million people, inspiring broader public support for pelican conservation.



The Dalmatian pelican

a flagship species of open water and marsh





EDUCATION

The Pelican Way of LIFE initiative developed and carried out **Dalmatian pelican education programmes across 26 schools in key local communities in Greece, Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova.**

In Bulgaria and Romania, **more than 50 primary schools, secondary schools, and universities** were visited for educational lectures, fostering environmental awareness and understanding of pelican conservation and its benefits for communities. A range of materials for children was produced, including stickers, a board game, puzzles, pelican masks, posters, leaflets and more, to support educational activities.

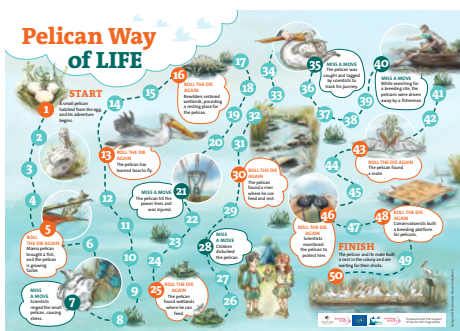
These educational efforts culminated in **the Pelican Education Camp** held in the Danube Delta, bringing together over 50 participants from all countries involved in the initiative. Children aged 12 to 18, accompanied by educators, engaged in



interactive lectures, wildlife-watching field trips, and practical exercises. Participants worked in teams to investigate threats and opportunities for pelican conservation, while educators gained skills and inspiration for future activities.

In Bulgaria, the National Ornithology Olympiad was held from 2021 to 2023, gathering top fifth to eighth grade students from across the country, further promoting environmental education and engagement.

Additionally, the initiative extended its reach to Albania and North Macedonia, **strengthening the capacity of conservationists through seminars and workshops for key stakeholders.** These efforts aimed to build regional support for future conservation initiatives, ensuring long-term success in protecting Dalmatian pelicans and their habitats.





EMPOWERING CONSERVATION THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

The Pelican Way of LIFE initiative engaged over 370 volunteers across multiple conservation camps in Bulgaria, significantly contributing to bird protection and habitat restoration.

The Atanasovsko Lake conservation camp, held annually throughout the initiative, aimed to improve nesting conditions for water birds by repairing artificial islands and maintaining critical infrastructure. Hundreds of volunteers participated in this hands-on initiative, gaining valuable conservation experience as they enhanced the wetland ecosystem.

Similarly, **the Persina Nature Park camp**, organised three times, combined practical fieldwork with educational activities, engaging local communities, university students, and nature enthusiasts. Participants learned about wetland conservation, pelican protection, and the importance of healthy ecosystems.

In addition, **a Rapid Reaction Corp** was established in **the Burgas Lakes area**. This dedicated volunteer team patrols the lakes to detect and report illegal activities, ensuring a safe environment for water birds.

Hundreds of volunteers across all participating countries also took part in monitoring activities for the species.

These volunteer-driven efforts enhanced conservation impact and fostered community engagement, ensuring the long-term protection of Dalmatian pelicans and their habitats.



NATURE-BASED TOURISM

To boost support for Dalmatian pelican conservation, the Pelican Way of LIFE initiative **promoted nature-based tourism, enhancing local community revenue while encouraging sustainable practices.**

In Romania, the first boatman and guide training took place in Sfântu Gheorghe, establishing proper standards and guiding practices to reduce disturbance to wildlife. The programme was later replicated in the Oder Delta, with training materials developed into an online course for nature guides, available in multiple languages.

To raise awareness, **information boards were installed in Romania and Ukraine,** highlighting the Dalmatian pelican's role as an umbrella species, supporting biodiversity and nature-based tourism.

In Bulgaria, the Poda Nature Centre near Burgas expanded its nature-based tourism network, partnering with 10 local guesthouses and hotels. The centre introduced three new birdwatching programmes, improved facilities, and developed two tourist routes with protective screens and interpretation signs. A large billboard was installed at the main approach to the Poda Protected Area.

In Greece, two nature-based tourism seminars were held for local businesses, including hotels, tour operators, and restaurants. A birding guide in English and Greek was produced for distribution at information points.

These initiatives strengthen nature-based tourism, benefiting local communities while ensuring vital habitat protection for Dalmatian pelicans and other wetland species.



Moving forwards

While the initiative has now come to an end, conservation efforts by partners continue to support the Dalmatian pelican population in southeastern Europe.

The roosting and breeding platforms built during the initiative will continue to be maintained and supported by partners in Bulgaria and Ukraine to further enhance the breeding success of the species.

A unified monitoring approach developed across all project countries will be used for future research on the species. Standardised protocols and a GIS database have also been created to centralise and analyse collected data.

Some actions piloted within the Pelican Way of LIFE initiative can be replicated in the future. **The partners will also continue to promote nature-based tourism, particularly birdwatching tourism, in wetland areas.** All materials produced in Greece will be distributed at initiative sites through tourism enterprises, information centres, museums, and other relevant locations. Additionally, they will be showcased at birdwatching tourism events, such as the Global Birdfair. Furthermore, the signboards and information boards installed across all participating countries during the initiative will continue to be maintained and supported.

Patrolling activities and the training of fishermen and boatmen can be successfully replicated in other initiatives focused on the protection of water birds. This approach has already been promoted through the development of two training courses in the Oder Delta, on the Germany-Poland border, involving 15 fishermen and boatmen. In addition, to reach a wider audience of interested professionals, Rewilding Europe has developed an online training module available for tourist guides, aimed at reducing waterbird disturbance.

Power lines pose a threat not only to pelicans, but also to many other bird species, including birds of prey, vultures, and storks. Partner organisations involved in bird conservation can apply their expertise in reducing collision risks to future conservation initiatives.

Awareness-raising efforts within local communities will continue to foster positive attitudes towards Dalmatian pelicans and other fish-eating birds, helping to ensure their long-term conservation. Educational activities will also continue across all countries involved in the initiative, using the educational materials and programmes developed during its timeframe.

The partners will also continue to **promote nature-based tourism**, particularly birdwatching tourism, in wetland areas. All materials produced in Greece will be distributed at initiative sites through tourism enterprises, information centres, museums, and other relevant locations. Additionally, they will be showcased at birdwatching tourism events, such as the Global Birdfair. Furthermore, the signboards and information boards installed across all participating countries during the initiative will continue to be maintained and supported.





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IN GREECE:

HOS team would like to thank the Society for the Protection of Prespa for their scientific support and hands-on help throughout the initiative; the Management Unit of Messolonghi National Park and Protected Areas of Western Central Greece

and the Management Unit of Acheloos Valley and Amvrakikos Gulf Protected Areas; the Hellenic Electricity Distribution Network Operator for their collaboration to make electricity network of Messolonghi Lagoon safer; and the Hellenic Saltworks in Messolonghi for allowing bird monitoring activities on their premises. Special thanks to Messolonghi By Locals for their collaboration and support with many actions, as well as to the fishing cooperatives of Messolonghi and Amvrakikos, the Sailing Club of Messolonghi, and particularly to the fishermen who helped during the pelican ringing missions. The Information Centre for Workers & Unemployed of Messolonghi and the Information Centre for Workers & Unemployed of Arachthos-Arta. Heartfelt thanks go to all the schools, pupils, and teachers that participated in the initiative's environmental education activities – particularly to the 4th High School of Arta for their participation in the Summer School, as well as the 1st High School and the Art High School of Messolonghi for their participation in the Vlogging Academy. A huge thank you to all NECCA's management units that participated in the pelican spring and winter counts – their collaboration was invaluable – as was that of the different organisations and institutions from Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey that also participated in the counts. Last, but not least, HOS is indebted to all the volunteers who helped them throughout the initiative.

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