Conserving wild plants and habitats for people in the south and east Mediterranean

Gil, T.1; Valderrabano, M. 1; Mc Carthy, B.2; Montmollin, B. 3; Beghami, Y. 4; Benaida, H. 5; Benhouhou, S. 6; Bessah, G. 7; Hafir, H. 7; Medenica, K. 8; Rebbas, K.9; Toubal, W. 7; Vela, E.10; Yahi, N.11

1 UCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, (Spain); 2 Plantlife International, (UK); 3 IUCN/SSC Mediterranean Plant Specialist Group, (Switzerland); 4 Université de Batna (Algeria) ; 5 Parc National de Gouraya (Algeria); 6 Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie (Algeria) ; 7 Direction Générale des Forêts. Ministère de l'agriculture du développement rural et de la pêche (Algeria); 8 Green Home, (Montenegro); 9 Université Mohamed Boudiaf de M'sila (Algeria) ; 10 Université de Montpellier -2 (France (Algeria); 11 Université de Sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumédiène, Bab Ezzouar.

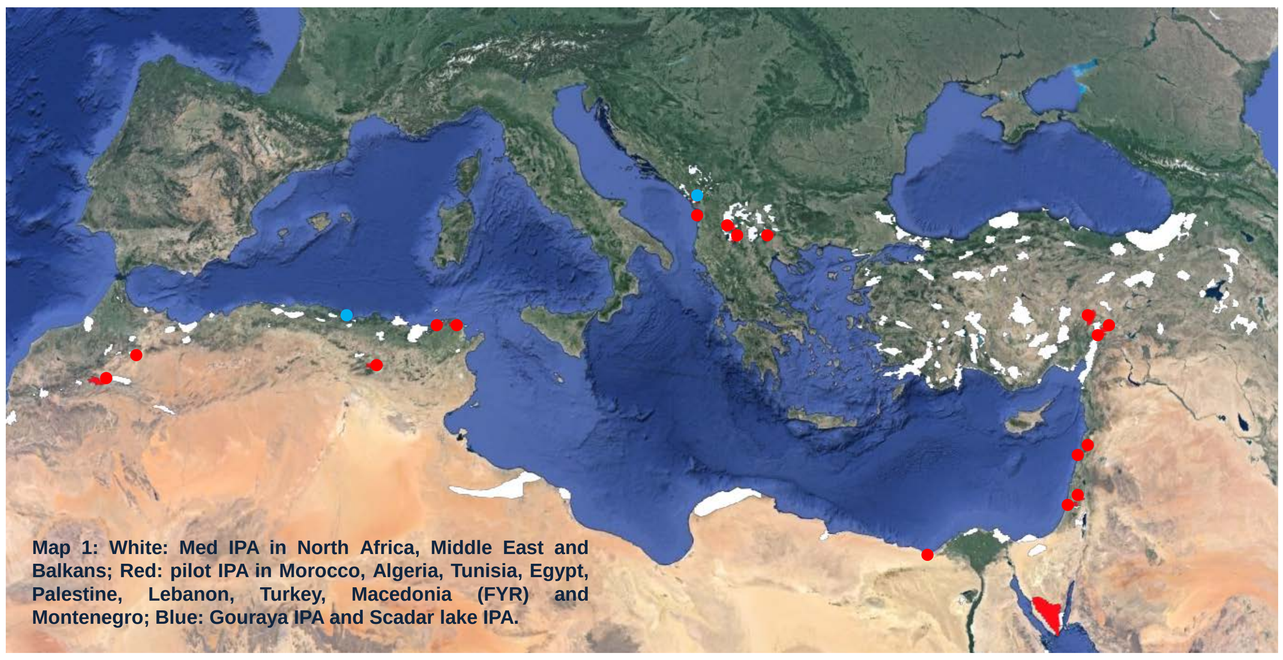
Contact email: teresa.gil@iucn.org

XV OPTIMA Meeting June 6-11, 2016. Montpellier, France

In terms of plants diversity, the Mediterranean Basin is the third richest biodiversity hotspot in the world. Around 10% of the world's known flowering plants (25.000 sp.) are found in this region which represents 1.6% of the Earth's surface. Over 50% of the plant species are endemics of the area.

The region's flora is critically threatened from human development and requires urgent protection.

Important Plant Areas (IPA) are internationally important sites for wild plants and fungi. Over 360 Important Plant Areas had been identified in North Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans at national level using standard criteria.



Map 1: White: Med IPA in North Africa, Middle East and Balkans; Red: pilot IPA in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Macedonia (FYR) and Montenegro; Blue: Gouraya IPA and Scadar lake IPA.

It is necessary to encourage and support general public, local and national governments, management authorities, botanists and NGOs to conserve Mediterranean wild plants.

Approaches for plant conservation

Involvement of public administration
Mixed model
Involvement of civil society

Project goals:

to promote the value of Important Plant Areas (IPA) as a tool for Mediterranean plants diversity conservation
to demonstrate what can be achieved when management authorities and citizens are empowered to work together for Mediterranean plant conservation

Project activities:

Knowledge improvement :

- ❖selection of endemic and/or threatened wild plants and habitats in IPA
- ❖diagnosis of distribution & conservation status of selected wild plant and habitats. Field studies, data collation and habitat mapping
- ❖conservation suggestions at IPA level by scientists

Implementation of site-based conservation actions in pilot IPA :

- ❖participatory design of IPA action plan for plant conservation and management with stakeholders
- ❖conservation actions implementation
- ❖effectiveness assessment of conservation actions

Networking, influence relevant policy mechanisms and public awareness:

- ❖capacity building of technicians, scientists, managers and NGOs
- ❖building an active and strong network to promote exchange of experiences and ideas
- ❖integrating plant conservation objectives and actions into spatial planning
- ❖raising awareness and communication actions

North Africa example of pilot IPA

Gouraya National Park IPA (Algeria)

Stakeholders:

❖National and regional authorities, Botanists, National Park managers and local NGOs

Knowledge improvement (species monitoring):

❖ *Bupleurum plantagineum, Erysimum cheiri subsp. inexpectans, Hypochaeris saldensis, Silene sessionis, Erodium battandieranum, Pancratium foetidum var. saldense, Sanguisorba ancistroides var. battandieri, Sedum multiceps*

Site-based conservation actions:

❖Action plan for plant conservation
❖*Ex situ* conservation. Collection and cultivation of endemic species
❖Management of impacts from recreational activities (litter)
❖Regeneration areas for the only known *Erodium battandieranum* population through fenced enclosure

Networking, policy and communication:

❖Communication action plan
❖Capacity building of rangers and touristic guides on flora identification and conservation
❖Meetings with local population and scientists
❖Signposting of public and touristic paths

Balkans example of pilot IPA

Scadar Lake IPA (Montenegro)

Stakeholders:

❖Local volunteers, Green Home staff, students

Knowledge improvement (species monitoring):

❖*Trapa natans, Cymbalaria ebelii, Minuartia velenovskyi, Marsilea quadrifolia*
❖Mapping of invasive species

Site-based conservation actions:

❖Control of invasive species (*Amorpha fruticosa, Ambrosia artemiisifolia*)

Networking , policy and communication:

❖ Building an active and strong network of local NGOs
❖ Raising awareness activities among University and school students
❖ Communication materials

http://www.iucn.org/mediterranean

Photos: Green Home; Bessah, G.; Rebbas, K.; Gil, T.; UICM-Med; Drawing: Macedonian Ecological Society

Project partners:

Project donor: