

Understanding and Supporting Civil Society in Algeria - CEPF Med update

Title

Algeria now has three active grants from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) covering a range of projects such as helping to create a protected area in a major area of forest.

Programme Officers from the CEPF Mediterranean Hotspot team* make visits to CEPF projects to monitor and evaluate their progress. It also provides a great opportunity to interact with on-the-ground conservationists across the Mediterranean and share their experiences.

The latest CEPF visit to Algeria included attending Algeria's first International Congress on Biodiversity and Wetlands at the University of El Tarf. It was an opportunity to meet grantees and visit priority Key Biodiversity Areas with actual and potential grantees from Algeria and elsewhere in North Africa. During this visit Awatef Abiadh (Programme Officer for North Africa, based at LPO (BirdLife France)) conducted a meeting with the members of Association National Algérienne d'Ornitologie (ANAO), which is the first national NGO specialised in bird conservation and monitoring in Algeria. ANAO was made a sub-grantee partner to Fondation Tour de Valat in the CEPF project *Monitoring of Waterbirds in North Africa for the Conservation of Wetland Areas*.



The meeting on May 27th was to discuss the advancement of the project implementation, and **we are pleased to report that two support groups specialising in bird monitoring have been created**

around Djurdjura National Park wetlands and Macta marsh.

CEPF works by awarding grants to civil society organisations including NGOs, universities, the private sector and others who are engaged, or want to engage, in conservation work for priority sites and species. Some are established international organisations, but priority is given to building the capacity of local organisations, particularly new or emerging groups in places where civil society involvement is weak. In several North African countries, civil society is underdeveloped and often against a governmental background of suspicion of external involvement.

"Different political situations are reflected in capacity," says Awatef. "Algeria has some civil society, but capacity is weak."

However, the inclusion of ANAO and the two new support groups means more capacity for bird monitoring and conservation in Algeria.



During the second part of the visit Awatef visited the site of Edough in northern Algeria. They met in the wetlands and mountains with the members of EcoSTAq research laboratory (Ecology of Terrestrial and Aquatic Systems, University of Annaba) and Green Ground NGO, who are conducting a small CEPF project that aims to classify Edough as a national park.

A survey has already been conducted confirming that **the majority of the local population and municipality support the classification of the site as a national park**. This classification will contribute to limiting urbanisation and regulate building and hunting in this beautiful area.

**BirdLife International - including its Middle East office and the BirdLife Partners DOPPS/BirdLife Slovenia and LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, BirdLife in France) - is providing the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) in the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot (CEPF Med). Find out more at www.birdlife.org/cepf-med.*

**The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Conservation International (CI), the European Union, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation. More information on CEPF can be found at www.cepf.net.*