

NORTH AFRICA PROGRAMME

IUCN - EGA

PROGRAMMES

- 1. Biodiversity**
- 2. Medicinal Plants**
- 3. Education**
- 4. Cheetah (being omitted from the programme)**

Tunis, 29 January 2001

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BIODIVERSITY:

Introduction:

The Project of the "Conservation of Biodiversity Centres" is one of four components of the first phase (1996-98). The Libyan programme focused on the conservation of Abu-Ghilan protected area which represents a mountain plain interface of arid and semi-arid habitat types of North Libya (see the map). Such habitats are also common representatives of arid ecosystems in North Africa. As more work is needed to satisfy the objectives of this programme, our work was extended to another period of two years.

Phase II:

This second phase included Bir Ayyad which is a protected area that lies along the same mountain plain interface of Abu-Ghilan. As no comprehensive surveys of the ecosystems of this 12,000 hectare park area is available, the initiation of a biodiversity work to fill this gap of information was warranted.

The project's main objective is to contribute to conservation of "biodiversity centres" in Libya, particularly those belonging to the Western mountain - Jafara plain interface chain habitats. Conservation work is undertaken in view of sustainable use of resources to ensure long term conservation of biodiversity. The two sites chosen, Abu-Ghilan and Bir Ayyad nature reserve situated along this interface chain of habitats. The two centres are not apart geographically and they are comparable ecologically. Experience gained from Abu-Ghilan is used to enhance implementation of the work and its results.

Activities of phase II:

Only some important points will be mentioned, other points are listed in progress report No. 6, 01/01/2001.

1. Complete work on the definition of the state of biodiversity in Abu-Ghilan leading to a conservation strategy and plan of action based on sustainable use;
2. Define the state of biodiversity in the Bir-Ayyad protected area leading to a conservation strategy and ...
3. Define flora and fauna of special socio-economic and economic values in the project sites with special focus on medicinal plants;
4. Raise public awareness through mass media, workshops...

Public awareness included:

1. Participation and workshops held in Tripoli at the Faculty of Pharmacy with lectures and exhibitions of medicinal plants; (*workshop of 28-30/04/1999 and workshop of 21-23/10/2000*);
2. A biodiversity awareness article also appeared on the national newspaper "Al-Shams", entitled "Dysfunction forever";
3. Two articles were published in the Environmental Publication "Al-Be'ah"; a copy of the journal is handed out during the Tunis meeting (25-28/01/2001); p.16-17 - Dr. F. Wafa; p. 32-37 - Dr. F. Abdulrahman;
4. Assisting and participating in the establishment of an educational museum at EGA/Centre;

Moreover, several activities are done (see report No. 6) for conservation of endangered species; for example, we introduced the aquatic plant species *colochasia antiquorum* to the site of Abu-Ghilan from Wadi Derna in the Eastern part of Libya where it encounters deviation (deprivation) of water stream.

MEDICINAL PLANTS (Report No. 6)

Forty-seven medicinal plant species have been surveyed from the area of study including the nearby areas. Three-hundred and sixty-four questionnaires have been received about these medicinal plant species. The questionnaires were designed to gather as much information as possible about every single plant species of those 47. The lessons that are drawn from these questionnaires and also from the interviews that have been conducted with local expertise (folk physicians) who use medicinal plants as elements of disease treatments.

1. Some plant species come under heavy harvesting because those plants bring high profit for gatherers and sellers; for example *globularie alybum* which is harvested for its leaves costing 100 to 115 Libyan Dinars (= US\$50-60) for one kg.;
2. Some plants grow in restricted isolated locations such as sloppy valley sides far from the inhabitants. Examples: Rosemary (*rosmarinus officinalis*);
3. Other plants are being taken out of the country across the borders, for instance goldylocks (*helichrysum stoechos*);
4. One plant is about to disappear (*verbascum ballii*) even before it comes known to science as a medicinal plant because it is harvested totally or entirely.

Therefore, we as workers with medicinal plants suggest to the authorities to protect those plants by all means. One mean is to cultivate in certain localities those endangered plants.

All the results available now in Arabic will be soon translated to English and will be sent before the end of April 2001. These results have been presented and shown documented at the meeting in Tunis (25-29 January, 2001).

**The most commonly-used and most important plants
In the area of study**

No. of Questionnaire	Scientific Name	Common Name
26	Chamonilla aurea	Camomile
26	Thymus capitalus	Thyme
22	Helichrysum stoechas	Goldylocks
24	Artemisia herba-alba	White worm seed
19	Hyoscyamus albus	White herbare
17	Lapparis spinosa	Cuper bush
12	Lygeum spartum	Fals esparts
18	Marrubium vulgare	White horchound
14	Globularia alypum	Blue daisy
13	Lavandula multifide	Lavender
14	Pegonum harmala	Harmal
13	Artemisa campestris	Worm seed
11	Rosarinus officinalis	Rosemary
9	Teucrium polium	Hulworth
10	Retima raetam	White broom
8	Verbascum ballii	Mullein
7	Umbilicus horizontalis	
6	Haplophyllum turberculatum	
8	Ruta graveslens	
7	Urtica urens	Nettle