



**Bulgarian
Biodiversity
Foundation**



biodiversity.bg

2022

Annual report of Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation

CONTEXT

I begin the review of 2022 with Harari's remark that peace requires many clever people, and war only one villain. This is the year that Putin did the unthinkable and in the 21st century unleashed war again in Europe, a place that had experienced terrible and unending wars for centuries. After the last decades, which are the most peaceful era in human history, the voices of those who consider war an inevitable law of nature, like gravity, for example, are rising again.

The problem is that, besides the senseless loss of thousands of lives, war will lead to global consequences - such as the end of international cooperation on issues of national interest like climate, genetic engineering or the militarisation of artificial intelligence and cyber weapons.

As a counterpoint to the countless lives lost, the world population reached 8 billion in 2022. The threshold of 1 billion people was reached in 1803 i.e., only 200 years were needed for the current peak of 8 billion people.

In combination, record heatwaves in China and Europe, floods in Pakistan and melting glaciers in India, Italy and Chile have reminded us how fast our planet's climate is changing and how responsible we are for it.

In Bulgaria, things were less fateful but stormy enough. In the 47th National Assembly, we witnessed the first cabinet ousted by a vote of no confidence since the beginning of the democratic changes in Bulgaria. And again, the dividing line was the war in Ukraine.

Rumiana Ivanova
Executive Director

The Year for BBF

For BBF the year was busy with work in three directions - inwards towards the team and the organizational culture, outwards towards the community - through our work for "For the Nature" coalition, the creation of the social space Shtrak and for the nature of Bulgaria - through the diversity of conservation, information and education activities of the team.

BBF DIRECTIONS

In pursuit of its mission to unite people with different ideas for the conservation of Bulgarian nature, to conserve natural resources and to change attitudes towards protected areas, BBF works in several main areas - Protected Areas and NATURA 2000; Endangered Species; Biosphere Parks and Green Belt; Environmental Legislation; Education and Youth Activities; Communication Activities; Public Campaigns and Coalitions.

What we do is to prepare and implement projects and campaigns that meet the priorities of the respective area.

PROTECTED AREAS AND NATURE 2000

In this direction, BBF works both at the legislative level through its interaction with institutions and locally through the implementation of specific conservation activities.

In 2022:

- We have initiated discussions with the MoEW to establish a mechanism for shared management of the protected areas (PA) by stakeholders and also supporting the process to develop a sustainable management system.
- We filed a lawsuit against the construction of a photovoltaic park in the Aitoska Mountain Conservation Area. We consider this process to be crucial on a national scale because it could set a dangerous precedent for such investments in sensitive natural areas.
- We are taking legal action against the construction of a stone and ballast quarry within the boundaries of the Sredni Rodopi and Dobrostan PA; in the buffer zone of the Red Wall Biosphere Park.
- We actively support civil society organizations and local communities against excessive development on the Black Sea coast. The efforts are focused on the Strandzha PA and the area of the village of Sinemorets. We have provided expert support to the process of proposing new protected areas in the region or increasing the area of the PA Veleka River estuary and PA Silistar.



PROTECTED AREAS AND NATURE 2000

- We have also started discussions with the MoEW on mapping the peatlands and wetlands in the Middle Rhodopes PA, drafting specific management objectives for the area and developing a guide for managing peatland and wetland habitats at a national scale. The grant won from the Ecological Restoration Fund will allow us to develop a management model, pilot conservation measures for the protection of this habitat type and propose an extension to the Chaier Lakes Wetland PA.
- We studied the threats and proposed measures for the conservation of the Venus slipper (*Paphiopedilum*) in an area near the town of Devin with a proposal to extend the boundaries of the Kastrakli Nature Reserve.
- We prepared expert opinions and participated in the discussions on the introduction of a ban on American Mink breeding in Bulgaria and the Amendment to the Wildlife Management Act.
- We have been involved in updating the proposal for the designation of the Western Balkan NP, as well as in the processes for updating proposals for the designation of other protected areas that have been irreversibly delayed in time, some for more than 20 years.
- We participated in the National Biodiversity Council (NBC) meetings during the year and were sought out as partners for a number of Ministry initiatives. Sadly, this all ended with the appointment of a temporary governmental party in July 2022 due to a vote of no trust in the current government. Moreover, all the processes started during the period of the regular government were stopped and some of them even returned to the initial stage. For the first time in 7 years, we will not have a representative in the NBC due to administrative hurdles faced by organisations like BBF.



SPECIFIC CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

The coastal lagoon Atanasovsko Lake

Effective management of the water regime, water level and salinity of Atanasovsko Lake through the restoration of key infrastructure to maintain the water regime throughout the lake were the main activities for 2022 within the LIFE project "Lagoon of Life" (LIFE17NAT/BG/000558). To restore the optimal water regime in the Coastal Lagoons habitat, three earth dykes (5,800 m) with a height of 1 m and a total area of 7 ha, 31,300 m of mini-dikes and 2,560 m of cleaned salt channels were constructed in 2022 - key elements to maintain a favourable water regime for the habitat and providing 3,85 ha of new favourable breeding areas for birds in the lake. Five hectares of habitats for the Eurasian bittern were created by dredging and developing microhabitats.

Record numbers of Greater flamingos (3,000 birds in December) and the continued presence of relatively large flocks in the lake were observed in 2022 during ornithological monitoring, making the lake the most important site for this species in the country. The poor breeding season for the target species (Pied avocet, Black-winged stilt, Kentish plover, Gull-billed tern) is presumed to be due to the "zero year" for salt mining in the northern salt pans, as the majority of the pools were completely dry and unsuitable for birds. The lack of salt production in the north lake has negatively impacted the entire lake ecosystem. Future impacts of this threat will exacerbate the negative effects and pose a real threat of irreversible loss of areas of Coastal Lagoon habitat (at least 30% of the area) and loss of key functions, including feeding relationships, nutrient cycling, disturbances in population and community structures and functions, etc.

Conservation success and successful innovative activities for Atanasovsko Lake are the results of the restoration activities of *Ruppia maritima*. The accumulated experience, the successful restoration, and the understanding of the biological and ecological mechanisms and limiting factors for the species provide a good basis for future activities with the whole group of seagrasses as a method of coastal habitat restoration and conservation. Increased water clarity due to improved circulation and effective management of the water regime following the reconstruction of the North Main Lock in 2020 has led to the development of a natural colony of *Ruppia maritima* for the first time since 2019.

To promote the lake and its richness, two new products were created - Pelican artisan soap and Salicornia green salt). "Green salt without salt" is a completely new product for the Bulgarian market, made entirely from vegetables, obtained from the wild, a substitute for regular salt. Our motivation for developing it is to increase the profitability of the Atanasovsko Lake protected area by increasing its economic value in a sustainable way for nature and ensuring its conservation.



SPECIFIC CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Conservation of the Pomorie Lagoon

The BBF is an associate partner in the project "LIFE for Pomorie Lagoon" ("Conservation of the Pomorie Lake Coastal Lagoon LIFE 19/NAT/BG/000804") and is responsible for monitoring the Coastal Lagoons habitat in Pomorie PA. The conservation status of the habitat for 2022 is Unfavourable-poor (U2), the main reason being the disturbed salt extraction technology combined with low rainfall. The water regime has been disturbed in more than ¼ of the habitat area, resulting in a permanent but still reversible reduction in habitat area. Conservation activities under the Life for Pomorie Lagoon project have not yet had a significant effect on the quality of the habitat. The dragonfly expert of the BSPB monitors the dragonflies in Pomorie PA in the period from June to September and works for the successful implementation of the activity: dragonfly monitoring as an indicator of changes in water quality.

Protection of habitats and ecological corridors for the migration of large carnivores and other species (Rila-Verila-Kraishte)

The SaveGREEN project aims to monitor some of the facilities, assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures and propose improvements based on suggestions from experts and in consultation with local stakeholders from nearby towns and villages. Project partners have also started using the QField GIS application at some of the green infrastructure facilities to collect data for monitoring target species.

In 2022, the monitoring plan for the Rila-Verila-Kraishte pilot zone was implemented with field surveys of some facilities in LOT 1 of the Struma highway between Dolna Dikanya and Dupnitsa. Traces of mammals such as fox, jackal, otter and squirrel were found, which gives hope that the animals successfully passed the facilities and they are really useful for them.

SaveGREEN is helping to develop an application to help centralize data collected on rail and road kills of animals along migration routes to provide solutions to improve transport infrastructure in ways that increase animal safety.

The pilot area has two distinct sections: arable grasslands affected by settlement and industry, and forests fragmented by grasslands. A Local Cross-Sectoral Operational Plan (CSOP) for Rila-Verila-Kraishte, which is currently being prepared under the project, will include all recommendations for improving facilities and will affect sectors such as transport, development and spatial planning, agriculture, forestry, conservation of nature, tourism and nature conservation in Bulgaria. The SaveGREEN project is funded by the Danube Transnational Program 2014-2020 and is concerned with the critical topic of protecting the ecological corridors in the Carpathians and other mountain ranges of the Danube region.



CAMPAIGNS AND COALITIONS

For more than 15 years, BBF has considered supporting "ForTheNature" Coalition as an integral part of its mission. In 2022, three team members worked exclusively on this topic and the results are visible:

Through the "Nature Has No Voice" project and funding from Sigrid Raising Found, we have worked hard to strengthen the Coalition internally and make it more visible on social media. We have initiated more frequent live meetings for Coalition members and friends. The main goal of these meetings was to better communicate with each other, and share experiences and resources. We spent time and resources to create more of our own content on the Coalition's social media networks (we also added [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) accounts) - visuals on important topics, and educational videos to gain new followers for the cause of preserved nature. Such people were badly needed in 2022 when dangers to our environment rained down one after another.

We started the year facing a new threat - the construction of a large-scale photovoltaic park in a protected area. Thanks to our experts detailing the potential damage to nature and people, and the support of like-minded people, the issue has generated a lot of media interest.

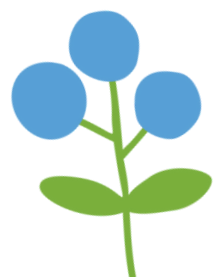
The next encroachment on nature came with the return of the single-instance proceedings for appeals against

Environmental impact assessments (EIA) of sites of national importance. A decision we fought vigorously against with evidence and examples from European law.

Later in the year, the Coalition rallied around imperative changes to the subsidization of seasonal livestock grazing, better known as the Pastoralism Measure. We campaigned extensively to end the subsidies in National Parks and bring them to grazing all across the country.

Throughout the year, forests have been the focus of the Coalition, starting with our position on the need for [the Forestry Agency to get out of the Ministry of Agriculture](#), through the presentation of the struggles and victories in the field in recent years and our calls for a halt to lobbyist amendments to the Forestry Act.

In parallel with the work with experts on hot topics, we supported local groups in Sofia (Boyana district), Leshko (Blagoevgrad), Burgas and others for nature conservation in their areas. We organized events for citizens and volunteers and returned to the Faculty of Biology with lectures for students and friends.



EDUCATION AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

At BBF, we view our educational activities as an investment in the future. We put a lot of effort into educating children and adults in the hope that when each one is faced with their own choices of what to do or not do for our planet, we will have sown the right seeds. In 2022, three projects with completely different focuses worked on this theme.

We developed and adapted specialized teacher materials for two of the projects with different age focuses six topics on circular economy and natural resource conservation for grades 3-7 and 12 educational modules on climate change for junior high and high school. We organized workshops for teachers and launched a Teachers for Climate exchange for educational resources and best practices.

At the end of the year, we renewed our presence in the Faculty of Biology by starting monthly lectures with experts from "ForTheNature" coalition and the student club "The Big Picture". We funded 4 theses and PhDs, on topics related to the study of indicator species for ecological status and climate change in the environment; innovative technological solutions to feed humanity through aquaponics; and environmentally friendly regenerative agriculture.

We have created opportunities for young people to participate in study and research trips to Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Guatemala, thereby learning about best practices for biodiversity research and conservation, as well as the impact of climate in different regions and the topic of climate justice.

We financially supported 6 educational youth organizations, thus promoting new content on ecology and biology in the Cannes Academy Bulgaria platform, created commonly accessible educational climate trails near Tryavna and Veliko Tarnovo, provided work with vulnerable groups in Plovdiv and with youth communities in Smolyan. Together with representatives of the regional structures of the Ministry of Environment and Water and other NGOs, we participated in the design of the Youth Environmental Policy Support Programme of the Ministry of Environment and Water, which funds projects across the country in the second half of 2022.



Game on! Do not let climate change end the game

The project is an international partnership initiative of 10 organisations from 8 countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which aims to communicate climate change issues through gamification, to create opportunities to learn about the consequences of the climate crisis at the global and local levels and to support youth ideas leading to behaviour change and engagement in concrete actions to protect natural resources.

In 2022, the Terra Futura climate board game began rolling out. The game is a classic strategy game in which each participant chooses how to balance resources and production, while also considering the pollution and carbon footprint that each human activity brings with it. The game can be purchased from the BBF online store, with all funds raised supporting the implementation of the project's youth and education activities. At the same time, BBF, through specific campaigns, provides the game free of charge to eco clubs and community centres, where it can be accessed by a larger number of people. Last year, 50 active community centres across the country received the game and the opportunity to use it regularly.

We have started work on the creation of an educational escape room, together with the Natural History Museum at BAS. In the escape room, teams of up to 6 people will be able to work together to solve puzzles related to biodiversity and climate change. The room will be operational in mid-2023.

Another interactive way to learn about important areas for conservation and their role in the climate balance is a treasure hunt game - geocaching. The caches are published on the international platform <https://climategame.eu/climatequest/home/> and are located in the area of Atanasovsko lake.

We continued to organize wilderness camps for schoolchildren and students. This year we held 3 educational camps in Sakar, with the participation of more than 60 students and young people, with whom, together with experts, we studied the characteristic species of the area, their ecological requirements and sensitivity to climate change in this southern region. In a volunteer camp in the village of Salash in Belogradchik, we built irrigation systems and installed a rainwater harvesting container as practical measures to limit the impact of reduced water resources to help 4 rural households. Two young people took part in a bird-ringing camp in Chituc, Romania and visited the remarkable Danube Delta – the best place for any keen ornithologist. Other four people visited one of the best preserved old-growth forests in central Europe - Shuvama National Park.

Most impressive, however, was probably the mission to Guatemala, which involved two of our climate ambassadors learning first-hand about the changes that are taking place, in agriculture, nature and, most of all, in the lives of people in one of the regions of the world more affected by climate change.

We also supported specific youth initiatives such as the one of Dina Sirakova - a climate ambassador for the project and one of the supported through the BBF's thesis fund, who initiated a clean-up of the protected area "Dolni Bogrov - Kazichene". Two campaigns involved over 60 people and removed over 200 bags of rubbish, we contacted the district hall, media and partner organisations, but more action is needed to solve the problem, which we will inform you about in due course in 2023.



Be smart, think circular

This year the main focus was on expert development of five conservation themes - Food Waste, Plastic Pollution, Recycling, Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change.

To help teachers, methodologists created five lessons to introduce these topics into the curriculum. They also developed a model for learning by exploring the themes as a form of alternative and transdisciplinary teaching. A training programme was also created for teachers to help them use the handbook and the educational materials and to provoke in-depth study of environmental topics at school. Three online training sessions were conducted with 50 teachers from 18 schools.

For students, teachers and parents, a handbook has been prepared to facilitate the insight into the topics and to provide information to each according to their needs.

The created learning content was digitized for the purpose of the upcoming online tournaments. An organization was created for the upcoming educational campaigns and online tournaments that will start in the first months of 2023. The most exciting outreach activities are still to come, and we expect to reach over 1000 students from all districts of Bulgaria with the games and campaigns.



EuroBird

The overall objective of the Eurobird project is to promote "birdwatching" as a tool for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Natura 2000 sites. Birdwatching tourism is a recreational activity related to travelling to observe birds in their natural habitat in order to enjoy finding and identifying as many and as interesting species as possible. In recent years, this type of tourism has experienced an unprecedented boom and has become a source of employment and livelihood in various European countries. There is currently no approved certification process in Europe that distinguishes a birdwatcher with a particular education from another who is simply a birdwatcher.

In this regard, BBF together with partners has developed the following resources:

- Methodological guide for ornithological/ birdwatching tourism

<https://sites.google.com/view/euro-bird-bg/p%D0%B5%D0%B7%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8>

- Multimedia materials with free access for training in ornithological tourism.

<https://sites.google.com/view/euro-bird-bg/p%D0%B5%D0%B7%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8#h.bcubfmpnzm9v>

- Distance learning bird watching course on Moodle platform in English and Spanish

<https://sites.google.com/view/euro-bird-bg/p%D0%B5%D0%B7%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8#h.em3j08n41gtq>

- Curriculum Design: Validation and recognition of two units of learning outcomes in Ornithological (Birdwatching) Tourism in the Natura 2000 Network

ERU 1: Interpreting the natural heritage of bird life in the Natura 2000 network.

ERU2: Provision of guiding services to tourists and visitors and design of guided tours.

<https://sites.google.com/view/euro-bird-bg/p%D0%B5%D0%B7%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8>



COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES



2022 - The Year of Nature Inspiration

The inspiration that makes us marvel at the talent of nature, and provokes the talent of people to create, to compose and in turn to inspire.

The calendar for 2022 was created with the beautiful drawings of the young artist Bilyana Desheva from Sofia. She created and published a beautiful book "Flight in the Salt" with her drawings, and donated the profit from its sale to the Bulgarian Biodiversity Fund - for activities related to Atanasovsko Lake.

3in1 - an unexpectedly good combination at Atanasovsko Lake Annual Biodiversity and Climate Awards

For the 11th time, we honoured and awarded the people who work for the preserved nature of Bulgaria. The categories of the Annual Biodiversity Awards are Best Campaign, Journalist, Politician, Business and Nature Activist. This year's exciting ceremony was held at symBiotic - the Atanasovsko Lake Museum. The occasion was celebrated by all 74 nominees in the various categories, many of whom attended the ceremony live.

Traditionally, in each category were awarded "winner of the public" (voted for on Facebook) and "winner of the jury", composed of public figures with an active civic position, which this year was composed of: Iva Doichinova, Radoslav Parushev, Kamen Kalev, Maggie Maleeva and Dimitar Dimitrov.

The biggest victory for everyone is this feeling of a community of like-minded people who are active and passionate about what they do. The shared joy of the Awards is just a small thank you from the BBF team and all the citizens who participated in the public voting to all the nominees in the 5 categories. Two great bands entertained the guests, the Burgas band "Embraced Cloud" who played in between categories and the band "REVIEW" who jammed at the end.

All the nominees can be found here - <https://biodiversity.bg/Nagradite-2022-1-173>

The full ceremony can be viewed here: <https://fb.watch/eXnK4YGxXo/>

The beginning of the Awards the yard of the symBiotic was filled with salt lovers. This year's highlight was the "green salt" - the newest product from the lagoon, which you could try and learn why it is "salt without salt", how it is so green and more. Children's workshops with the pelican and the flamingo, a travelling exhibition of cartoons on the theme "Economy of means" from the 25th Gabrovo Biennial festival.

For more than 20 years now, the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation and the Regional Inspectorate for Environment and Water - Burgas have been organizing a special celebration around August 12, when the order was issued to declare the reserve in 1980, and this year was no exception, and the organizers prepared a big cake for the "health of the 42nd birthday boy".

In 2022, we celebrated World Wetlands Day on 2nd February with an international webinar on "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Saltwater Wetlands in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Region", organised by BBF, BSPB and the Society for Protection and Conservation of the Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA).

We organized a special presentation with our colleagues from Green Balkans in the Exposition Centre "Flora" Burgas on the occasion of the International Day of the Black Sea - 31 October.

We organized 2 events aimed at journalists and journalism students in partnership with the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia University. At these events, the Ministry of Environment's climate policies were presented by the Deputy Prime Minister for Climate Policies, Mr. Borislav Sandov and two of the policy advisors in the cabinet.

We also supported the development of journalistic pieces: Restoring Coastal Ecosystems - mission possible (Asya Chaneva, Green Minutes on Bulgarian National Radio); Eco-anxiety, sollastalgia and why are we afraid? How climate change and human pressure are transforming the Seven Lakes of Rila (Raya Lecheva) and her interview with the climate ambassador of the Game On project Boyan Zafirov.

We took part in the opening conference of the alternative sports festival "Challenge Days", where we led a discussion on the changes in the mountain ecosystems and the challenges of managing the tourist flow of one of the most visited and sensitive high mountain regions - that of the Seven Rila Lakes. The discussion was based on the results of observations during a conservation camp organized by the project in 2021 and led by the Director of Rila National Park Vladimir Milushev and the experts in the camp.



BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Economic activity in 2022 has gone through significant changes and challenges. One of the most significant has been the VAT registration of the Foundation, having passed the 50,000 lev threshold within the last 12 months. The positives of this change are obvious because the economic activity has never crossed this threshold before and is a clear sign that we are moving in the right direction. The intensification of business activity has led to the formation of an entrepreneurial team from BBF team members to support the Economic Activities Coordinator.

In order to promote Atanasovsko Lake and generate funds for its conservation we have expanded the distribution of salt and now, in addition to the gourmet product Fleur de sell, we have started to offer the sale of salt in 25 kg bags, which has significantly increased our sales.

With the creation of the social space Shtrak, in which BBF is one of the three partners, our possibilities to create and offer various workshops and events have increased - e.g., the traditional botany course, and salt and fresh herbs workshop. The shop space enables increased sales of BBF goods.

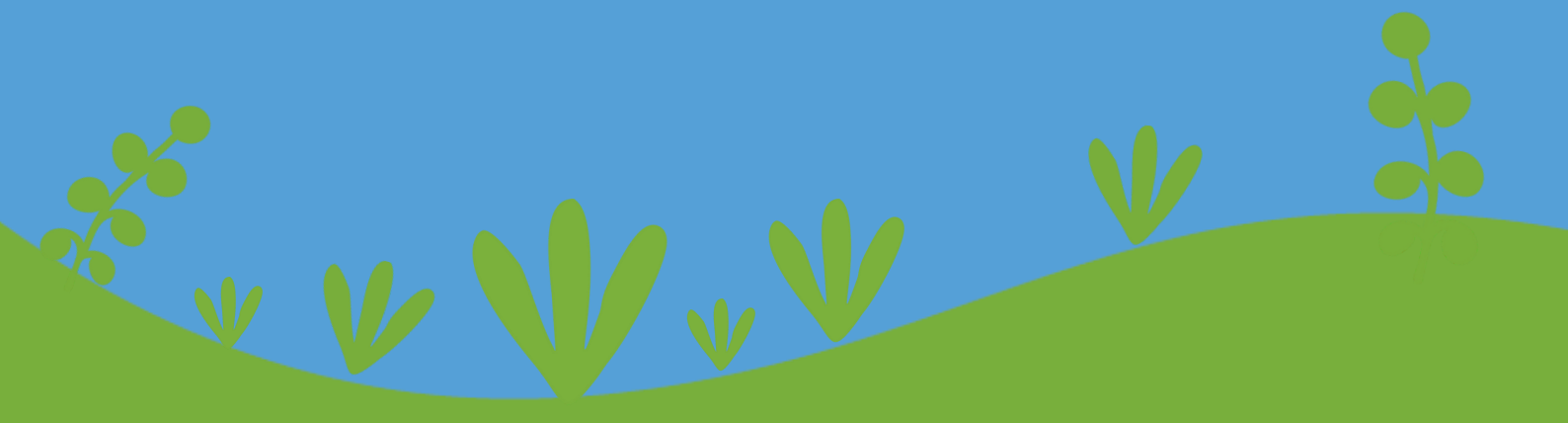
In response to the increased demand from large companies for volunteer actions in nature, we created a new product "My Day in Nature" and held several such actions with great success among employees of UniCredit Bulbank, Mellon, HPE and others.

The business year of 2022 in figures

Income: 58,196.14 lv.

Expenditure: 41,264.33 lv.

Profit: 16,931.82 lv.



FUNDRAISING

As part of the Foundation's development plan, the team decided to make a concerted effort towards philanthropy development and as a result, the funds raised from philanthropy during the year were significantly higher than in previous years. The total amount was 10192 BGN and this includes both funds received from our partnerships with companies and individual donations from our supporters received directly into our fundraising account, via Paypal or through the Benevity platform. Designated donations to the Biodiversity Fund are up 25% on last year, which means it is becoming more recognisable and more people are appreciating the work our organisation is doing in this direction. In spite of the not very favourable situation in the country related to the migrant wave, the energy crisis and inflation, most of the targets for increasing donations were successfully achieved and even during the year we developed and implemented many additional activities. People from the team participated in various training programs, seminars, conferences and workshops on the topics of philanthropy, social corporate responsibility, volunteering and civil society development. As members of the Bulgarian Fundraising' Forum, we were involved in many of their initiatives in an interesting two-way collaboration, where in some of these events our experts were speakers, and in others we had the opportunity to receive help and guidance from the experience and expertise of other organisations. Throughout the year, we continued to work with Hewlett Packard Enterprise as their green strategic partner - we organize thematic workshops, lectures or volunteer actions in nature, and their employees donate to our causes through the Benevity platform.

We implemented the project "Let's Donate for the Curlew Lord of the Lakes", which is part of the program "Development of philanthropy at the local level" by the Association "Platform AGORA" and the "America for Bulgaria" Foundation. . Various actions and events attracted a lot of interest in this species - a charity concert of simBiotic, a sporting event "The Pelican March", "Dress for a Bird", pelican cookies workshops, etc. We raised funds and the artists from SuperGTeam painted a large mural on a 30 m long boulevard wall in Burgas.



Sigrid Rausing Fund's support for the work of the BBF continued this year.

BBF works to ensure landscape connectivity of the Natura 2000 areas Atanasovsko and Pomorie Lake through Advisory Councils. We initiated measures for the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Rila-Verilla-Kraishte pilot area and improved cross-sectoral cooperation to improve coherence of green infrastructure.

We worked to improve the organizational culture and communication capacity within the "ForTheNature" Coalition. The new political situation required a new approach of dialogue between the Coalition and the government. BBF organized the first Coalition strategy meeting in three years. Work began on upgrading the Coalition's main information channel, its website, which was established in 2007. At the BBF's proposal, it will be funded by five organisations.

The coalition supported the fight against political appointments in forest management, the Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development, etc. BBF experts joined with opinions on these issues, including the analysis report "NATURA 2000 and biodiversity conservation in Bulgaria: problems and solutions".

With funding from the Sigrid Rausing Trust and the BBF's own resources, in partnership with BCNL and Jamba, we created a space called SHTRAK for social enterprises and an intersection of social, environmental and legal organizations with a bistro, a product shop and a venue for events, workshops and trainings. We also supported the film "Salty People" (post-production stage) which presents the challenges of running a business in a protected area (Atanasovsko lake) and the socio-economic benefits of maintaining a balance between nature and people.

Teamwork and the involvement of a professional facilitator are key to strengthening the BBF team and its work processes. Work overload remains our biggest challenge. Tests and interviews on time management were conducted and a workshop on the topic and SMART goal setting was organized.

Sigrid Rausing Trust funded our membership of Seas at Risk, where we presented our work on the Black Sea at the Ocean Week 2022 - a high-level event - and at the SAR annual members' meeting; we participate in the alternative seafood, microplastics and waste groups. We initiated a social media campaign on beach pollution.

The BBF expert was included in the IUCN Interregional Commission (Western Europe and Asia). We continue our membership in the Bulgarian Fundraising Forum and have new partners outside the conservation sector.



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