

Poland: Project Information

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Title:

Carpathians Unite – traditional sheep grazing as a means of conservation of valuable semi-natural habitats and species in the Carpathians

Funding:

EU Operational Programme “Infrastructure and the environment”

Implementation:

Jan. 2018 – Dec. 2021

Area:

16 mountain meadows in Polish Carpathians (Silesia and Lesser Poland provinces) – approx. 350 hectares – located in (or in immediate vicinity of) 5 Natura 2000 sites.

Partnership:

The Polish Society for the Protection of Birds

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Key Natura 2000 habitats targeted:

- **6230 * Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas;**
- **6520 – Mountain hay meadows (extensively managed)**

Key bird species associated with open habitats targeted:

- **13 (incl. black grouse, corn crake, golden eagle, black stork, eagle owl, pygmy owl, Ural owl...)**

Key pastoral activity to maintain habitats:

- **traditional transhumance-type sheep grazing (approx.. 5-6 sheep/hectare) from April to October – supplemented by mowing (e.g. of uneaten plants remaining after grazing).**

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Result:

- **regular nature monitoring (habitats, birds) demonstrated positive impact on plant communities and bird fauna as a result of extensive pastoral management of mountain meadows.**

Additionally:

- **construction of six new shepherd huts to facilitate grazing activities;**
- **promotion and education on traditional land use patterns as desired means of conservation of semi-natural non-forest / grassland habitats and associated bird species (publications, field classes for school students).**