eco.mont - Volume 2, Number 1, June 2010
ISSN 2073-106X print version
ISSN 2073-1558 online version: http://epub.oeaw.ac.at/eco.mont

Editorial by Guido Plassmann – The Year of Biodiversity
Protected areas – privileged territories of research

Biodiversity is the key word of this new edition of eco.mont. Whoever thinks that biodiversity protection means the conservation of species is certainly not wrong but this is only the top of the iceberg of the enormous complexity of the topic. From natural factors like habitat evolution with its different elements (soil, vegetation, fauna, aquatic environment, …), geomorphologic phenomena linked to avalanches, erosion and tectonic movements, to questions of land management, conservation of single species or the acceptance of protected areas and the last wildernesses in them – there is a broad field of action for research, planning and management to preserve biodiversity in an integrated approach of numerous scientific disciplines and topics.

These topics are presented in this edition of eco.mont. Avalanches contributing to an increase in biodiversity by keeping habitats open is one of these complex features of alpine geomorphologic dynamics, illustrated here by examples from Austria. The importance of soil crusts for plant biodiversity is developed in the article about a high alpine site in the Hohe Tauern National Park.

Land management and planning is probably the most complex and essential measure for conserving biodiversity in a long term approach. Inventories help to take into account species and habitats in the Mercantour National Park and the Alpi Marittime Nature Park. The distribution of the fire salamander, an endangered species in Europe, and the strictly protected alpine salamander, an endemic alpine species, were studied using a new community-based monitoring approach. A typical tree species of the Southern Alps, the sweet chestnut, contributes to alpine biodiversity and regional development as demonstrated in an article analysing large parts of the Southern Alps of Italy, Switzerland and Slovenia.

For efficient nature protection and generally for protected areas, a broad consensus of acceptance by local stakeholders is essential. The key elements for such acceptance were analysed with reference to the Stelvio National Park.

How much wilderness is needed to guarantee biodiversity? Taking the example of the Gesäuse National Park, one article demonstrates the importance of biodiversity management through public awareness raising and economical sustainability for the region as main conditions for a broad and continued acceptance of this protected area. This is also reflected in another article on Gesäuse NP about management efforts to raise ski tourers' awareness of the winter habitats of capercaillie and black grouse.

All these issues are dealing directly or indirectly with biodiversity and this shows how important it is to recognize biodiversity not only as a matter of the classic disciplines associated with the term biodiversity but as a complex interaction of many, often very ordinary, subjects.

eco.mont tries to forge a link between basic and result-orientated research and very pragmatic management questions of the protected areas. The added value of this journal is indeed that it makes research projects and long-term monitoring in protected areas more transparent and shows how its results are used for management strategies and, vice versa, how data and management experiences from protected areas contribute as inputs to research activities.

In this sense, eco.mont closes a gap not covered as yet by classic science journals. Research is indeed one of the official tasks of most of the protected areas. Numerous research projects are realized in protected areas, many of them deal with biodiversity. In turn, their methodologies and results make a contribution to management questions. The protected areas with their special status and their often very developed and rich infrastructure, logistics and, last but not least, their staff on the ground, guarantee a good basis for research activities and especially for long-term observations.

In the coming years we will try to develop this journal more and more into a modern medium that forms a link between the results of scientific research for the management of protected areas and the numerous interesting features of protected areas for basic and applied research.

Guido Plassmann
Task Force Protected Areas /
Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention
Coordination unit of ALPARC

2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Related projects according to the **European Mountain Pool**

At the editorial office of eco.mont we maintain the **European Mountain Pool** on research in European protected mountain areas.
http://www.alparc.org/our-actions/research-platform/european-mountain-pool

eco.mont - Volume 2, Number 1, June 2010

Related Projects in the **European Mountain Pool:**

Identifying Significant Determinants for Acceptance of Nature Reserves: A Case Study in the Stilfserjoch National Park, Italy *by Georg Leitinger, Janette Walde, Roberta Bottarin, Gottfried Tappeiner & Ulrike Tappeiner*

Mose Ingo: Biosfera Reserve of Val Müstair – Parc Naziunal: Acceptance of the planned UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, PN: CH-3611
Hunziker Marcel: How does the local population view biosphere reserves? A cross-cultural study between Ukraine and Switzerland, PN: CH-2227

Species composition and pedological characteristics of biological soil crusts in a high alpine ecosystem, Hohe Tauern, Austria *by Thomas Peer, Roman Türk, Johann Peter Gruber & Angelika Tschaikner*

Halada Lubos: Responsiveness of alpine vegetation to N Inputs – a comparison between Central European and North American Sites, PN: CH-3018

Exploring factors influencing the attitude of on-site ski mountaineers towards the ski touring management measures of the Gesäuse National Park *by Petra Sterl, Renate Eder & Arne Arnberger*

Stöcklein Bernd: Besuchermanagement-Konzept für winterliche Freizeitnutzung und Möglichkeiten der GIS-gestützten Visualisierung im Nationalpark Berchtesgaden, PN: CH-3695

Creating a biodiversity inventory in protected areas to increase knowledge of their natural heritage and to improve land management *by Marta De Biaggi, Marie-France Leccia, Alexander Kroupa & Juan Carlos Monje*

Dämon Wolfgang: Biodiversity database of the Hohe Tauern National Park Biodiversitätdatenbank des Nationalparks Hohe Tauern, PN: CH-2713
Hintermann Urs: Biodiversitäts-Monitoring Schweiz (BDM-CH), PN: CH-2209