

# INSTRUCTORS' BROCHURE

**“Our Mediterranean ecosystems' health is in danger. Time to restore it!”**

Natural Heritage Mission's  
1st Summer School



18-20 June 2024

*National Institute of Biology,  
Marine Biology Station Piran, Slovenia*



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## PILAR MARÍN CABEZA

IUCN



Tools for effective restoration through transformative governance and policy upscaling: The RESTCOAST project approach



Pilar Marín Cabeza is a Marine Science graduate with over 20 years of experience in marine affairs, specialising in conservation. Holding a MSc in Protected Areas, she has cultivated a diverse career in the public and private sectors, as well as in research, predominantly within the third sector with a keen emphasis on the Mediterranean Sea. With a comprehensive understanding of ocean policies from both international and European viewpoints, Pilar has recently become a part of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, contributing to the Marine Biodiversity and Blue Economy department. Currently, she is overseeing a European project focused on coastal restoration.

## BOJANA LIPEJ

DOPPS / Birdlife Slovenia



Importance of the Mediterranean wetlands for biodiversity: the case study of Škocjanski zatok



Bojana Lipej is education coordinator at Škocjanski Zatok Nature Reserve in Koper, Slovenia. A biologist born in Maribor, Bojana has worked for the last 36 years on the protection and conservation of endangered species and habitats in Slovenia. First, as an ecologist in the prevention of and response to potential ecological disasters at the Ministry of Environment. And then, at the Institute for Biodiversity Studies at the Science and Research Centre of Koper. In addition, she has organised regional competitions for young researchers and seminars to educate mentors in introducing youth to science.

## DAMIJAN DENAC

### DOPPS / BirdLife Slovenia



From wastewater basins to nature reserve



Damijan Denac has been Chief Executive Officer of DOPPS-BirdLife Slovenia since 2011. DOPPS is the largest NGO in Slovenia working in the public interest of nature conservation through research, management of nature reserves and public engagement. He has a demonstrated history in sites and species conservation, and experiences with large scale wetlands restorations. His research areas are ornithology, population ecology, conservation biology and restoration ecology. He is Assistant professor at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Maribor, The Faculty of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Information Technologies and Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Between 2018-2022 he was elected member of the European and Central Asian committee of the Birdlife International.

## SVJETLANA LUPRET-OBRAĐOVIĆ

### Natura Histrica



Restoration of wetland habitats in the  
Croatian Istria County



Svjetlana Lupret-Obradović is a Senior Adviser of Natura Histrica. Natura Histrica oversees the protection, maintenance, and promotion of protected areas in the region of Istria. This peninsula in the southwest of Croatia is famous for its rich history and biodiversity. Svjetlana Lupret-Obradović is a biologist with hands-on expertise on environmental protection, having worked for many years as Head of the Conservation Department of the Velebit National Park, Croatia, and in the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe. She has also accrued valuable experience in nature interpretation as a children educator.

## ANNALISA FALACE

### University of Trieste



REEForest LIFE Restoration of macroalgal forests in the Mediterranean



Annalisa Falace is Professor of taxonomy and ecology of marine algae at the University of Trieste. Her main research interest is the ecology, conservation and restoration of coastal habitats, focusing on processes affecting the spatial and temporal structure of macroalgal assemblages. She fosters an interdisciplinary approach to address challenging questions using a combination of taxonomy and ecophysiological approaches (both in the field and in the laboratory). She is involved in several research activities aimed at the restoration of macroalgal forests. The main goal is to develop innovative and effective methods for the restoration of furoid forests. Special attention is paid to the early post-settlement stages and seedlings, whose vulnerability has long been recognised, but whose biology and physiology are still poorly known.

## JERNEJA PENCA

### Science and Research Center Koper



EU Nature Restoration Law and its transformative potential



Jerneja Penca works in interdisciplinary sciences for sustainability. She is the head of the Mediterranean Institute for Environmental Studies at the Science and Research Center Koper. Her research spans governance of biodiversity (both terrestrial and marine systems), transnational environmental law, and knowledge transfer between science and policy. She is a lead author at the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Transformative change Assessment and the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECCC) Assessment on the Climate – water – energy – food – ecosystems nexus. She is a member of the editorial board of the journal Sustainability Science and the recipient of several awards for scientific excellence. She received her doctorate from the European University Institute in Florence.

## ROMINA D'ASCANIO

Roma Tre University



The role of stakeholders' engagement  
in nature restoration



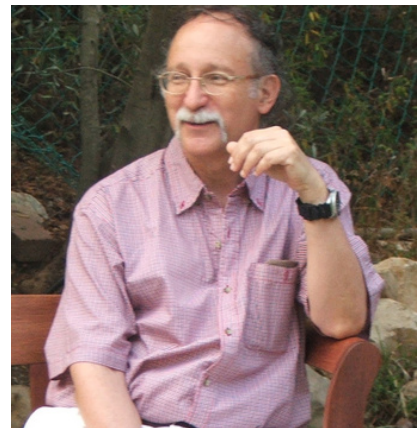
Romina D'Ascanio is an architect and urban planner. She works at the Roma Tre University in the Department of Architecture as a post-doctoral researcher in urban planning and teaching assistant in urban and regional policies. She is also a lecturer in urban and landscape planning in postgraduate specialization courses and doctoral schools. She has been dealing with environmental contracts for many years, as a researcher and consultant. Her interests mainly refer to urban and landscape policies, collaborative governance and green infrastructure planning approach, with particular attention to protected, sensitive and peri-urban areas. She is secretary of the Italian Urban Planning Institute for the Lazio branch and member of the national President Office of the same Institute.

## BUKI RINKEVICH

National Institute of Oceanography,  
Haifa



Overviewing Nearly Three Decades  
of Gardening Approach in Reef Restoration



Buki Rinkevich is a marine biology professor and senior scientist at the Israel Oceanography and Limnological Research Institute, the National Institute of Oceanography, Israel. He is working on marine invertebrates (primarily reef corals and colonial tunicates). For almost three decades Buki has been engaged with coral reef restoration aspects, working on various reefs worldwide. He is interested among others in the 'coral gardening' concept, the floating coral nurseries and the use of ecological engineering approaches in reef restoration. He is also the lead author for the IPCC 'Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in the Changing Climate', an expert Reviewer for the IPCC, the NOAA's Coral Restoration Consortium Steering Committee, and more.

## **XHERRI XHEMAL**

### PPNEA / Birdlife Albania



#### **Alder Forest Restoration in the Transboundary Prespa**



Xherri Xhemal is a project manager at PPNEA - Birdlife Albania, the first environmental NGO in Albania that operates nationwide working on nature conservation, by engaging in scientific research, community involvement, strategic partnerships, and collaboration with decision-making institutions. Recently he has been working on bird conservation (vultures) and wetlands preservation (governance) focusing more on the issue of the Vjosa-Narta Protected Landscape and advocating against airport construction within this area. Parallel, he has been involved in actions focusing on small-scale habitat restoration initiatives in transboundary areas.

## **ANIS GUELMAMI**

### Tour du Valat



#### **Opportunities and priorities for wetlands restoration & The role of stakeholders' engagement in nature restoration**



Anis Guelmami is a project leader at the Research Institute for the Conservation of the Mediterranean Wetlands of the Tour du Valat (France) and Coordinator of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO). He has more than 13 years of experience in the development of tools for the assessment and monitoring of wetlands in all Mediterranean countries. He is also involved in supporting national and local stakeholders in the implementation of global, regional and national policy frameworks related to these ecosystems. He is actively committed in promoting and transferring the developed monitoring tool, in particular through the organization of training and capacity-building workshops.



## PETAR PETROV

### University of Forestry



Monitoring and maintaining restored ecosystems & Introduction on “How to create a restoration Action Plan”



Petar Petrov is an associate professor of restoration of disturbed areas at the University of Forestry (UF), Sofia. In terms of his primary research interests, he is focused on the restoration and rehabilitation of polluted areas and mining sites, wetlands, bioremediation, biodiversity conservation, environmental and ecological monitoring including remote sensing application. He has managed a number of scientific and European projects in the fields of biodiversity protection, reclamation of disturbed areas, environmental impact assessments, climate change adaptation, environmental and ecological monitoring. Between 2020 and 2024, he served as the head of UF's Department of Ecology, Protection and Restoration of the Environment.

## ELENI FITOKA

### Goulandris Natural History Museum – EKBY



Opportunities and priorities  
for wetlands restoration



Dr. Eleni Fitoka is the head of the Natural Areas Inventory Section of the Goulandris Natural History Museum – Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre (EKBY), with more than 20 years of experience in wetland mapping and assessment focusing on wetland delineation and classification, assessment of pressures, habitat connectivity, vulnerability to climate change and promotion of legal regulations for wetland protection. She has also organized vocational training seminars in Greece and in Mediterranean and Balkan countries. She promotes inventory, monitoring and assessment as key tools in wise management and policy making and for halting biodiversity loss.

## CHRISTOPH SCHRÖDER

University of Malaga



Opportunities and priorities for wetlands restoration & Monitoring and maintaining restored ecosystems



Christoph Schröder is geo-data specialist and project manager at the European Topic Centre on Spatial Analysis and Synthesis at the University of Malaga. Over the past 10 years, he has been involved in several European research projects on wetland mapping, monitoring and assessment where he developed wetland mapping products from remote sensing and in situ data in close cooperation with end-users from local wetland managers to European policy-makers. In this role, he has gained profound expertise in effective science-policy interfaces to support conservation and restoration policies and management across the Mediterranean.

## MARIA DEL MAR OTERO

University of Malaga



Monitoring and maintaining restored ecosystems



Maria del Mar Otero is a coastal and marine expert with long experience in the Mediterranean, Europe and Asia. She works at the European Topic Center-University of Malaga (ETC-UMA) as Senior Specialist on Nature based solutions and Marine biodiversity. Over the last years, she has been involved in numerous international and national projects and initiatives generating and facilitating knowledge transfer, developing capacity building, networking and delivering policy outreach on topics for coastal and marine environments, such as wetland restoration and blue carbon assessments for mitigation actions.



## **GIANCARLO GUSMAROLI**

### Technical Advisor



#### Introduction on wetlands importance



Giancarlo Gusmaroli is an environmental engineer with over 20 years of experience in inland, coastal and marine wetlands management, governance and restoration. Responsible for the scientific coordination of several international (mainly EU-funded) and national projects dealing with integrated water and aquatic ecosystems management. Serving as technical advisor for the public sector at national, regional and local level in relation with water governance issues, including stakeholders engagement and active participation with soft skills in coaching and facilitation. Specific technical fields of interest and experience are fluvial hydromorphology, applied ecology, floodplain restoration, integrated river basin management, etc.

## **SHONA BRINCAT**

### Nature Trust Malta



#### Round Table Discussion



Shona Brincat studied at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England, pursuing a degree in Wildlife Conservation. Through their academic endeavors and practical involvement in the field, they discerned the insufficient attention afforded to marine life conservation, highlighting the numerous challenges it confronts. This realization spurred them to explore the marine realm more extensively. Their primary areas of interest center around habitat restoration, particularly focusing on reef protection and the restoration of seagrasses. Upon graduating, they embarked on an internship at the Ċirkewwa Marine Park, where they now contribute as a valued member of the dedicated team working towards the preservation of our oceans.

# FLAMINIA SQUITIERI

## Sustainable Development Foundation



Flaminia Squitieri is a socio-ecological systems analyst and biodiversity project manager at the Sustainable Development Foundation in Rome, Italy. Over the years, she has collaborated with various research centers in Italy and the Netherlands, carrying out projects related to integrated water resources management, climate change, monitoring and management of marine and riverine litter, monitoring and protection of wild pollinators, and identification and assessment of ecosystem services. Flaminia actively works to bridge the gap between science and society through the development of international training and capacity-building workshops. She also promotes the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships and stakeholder engagement in ecosystem restoration projects.





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