

**DPLUS141:
HABITAT RESTORATION & WISE USE FOR
AKROTIRI & CAPE PYLA**



SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR CAPE PYLA & AKROTIRI PENINSULA
RECOMMENDATIONS & MEASURES

July 2024





Suggested citation: Vayanou P., Papatheodoulou A., Hellicar M., Hadjistylli M., Perdiou A., Charilaou P., Sergides L. (2024). Sustainability Plan for Cape Pyla and Akrotiri Peninsula: Recommendations & Measures. “DPLUS141: Habitat restoration and wise use for Akrotiri and Cape Pyla”. Birdlife Cyprus, Terra Cypria, Sovereign British Areas Administration Environment Department (SBBA ED), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared in the frame of Darwin Plus Project: **DPLUS141: Habitat & Wise Use for Akrotiri & Cape Pyla**. The 3-year Project (2021-2024), which is funded by Darwin Plus in UK, aimed to restore important wildlife habitats within the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, focusing on Akrotiri wetlands and native scrub on Cape Pyla (Dhekelia), to promote wise use of the area and at the same time to develop eco-tourism opportunities to support the local economy. The project partners are BirdLife Cyprus (with the leading role), Terra Cypria, the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas Administration - Environment Department (SBAA ED) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

This report provides a **targeted sustainability plan**, as agreed by the SBAA for the target sites -Akrotiri peninsula and Cape Pyla- with clear recommendations of future actions. The plan is developed based on the project partners' experience and deep understanding for these areas, with the aim to provide tools towards sustainability. Even though this plan is structured, based on realistic implementation potentials, it is noted that the implementation of such a plan is subject to the available resources (financial, human resources, etc.) of the competent authorities. However, involved parties should strive to allocate resources for its implementation. It is advisable, that the plan is revised on a 6-year basis, which provides sufficient timeframe for (a) nature to respond to conservation actions, (b) data collection (c) evaluate success, pitfalls and errors (d) update methods based on emerging/ cutting approaches (e) mature management-wise.

The sustainability plan is structured in respective **strategic objectives**, for each of which, information is provided, on the **target**, the **issues** each objective is addressing, **the area** it concerns and the respective **measures**. For each measure the timeframe and priority scale are indicated.

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Strategic Objective | | |
| Target | | |
| Issues addressed | | |
| Area | | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| | | |

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| Timeframe |
| ○ On-going |
| ○ Immediate (1-2 years) |
| ○ Medium- term (3-5 years) |
| ○ Long-term (5-10 years) |
| Priority |
| ○ High |
| ○ Medium |
| ○ Low |

2. SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TARGET SITES

CAPE PYLA

| Strategic Objective | 1. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE INVASIVE ACACIA SALIGNA | |
|--|--|----------|
| Target | <i>Acacia saligna</i> | |
| Issues addressed | Invasive alien species | |
| Area | Cape Pyla | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 1.1 Continuation of chemical treatment applications for acacia | On-going | High |
| 1.2 Support managed grazing in areas with dense acacia thickets – collaboration with local graziers | Medium term | Medium |
| 1.3 Collaboration with research institutes (e.g. Agricultural Research Institute) in methods to control acacia | Long term | Low |
| 1.4 Monitoring and mapping the change of extent of acacia | On-going (annually/ biennially) | High |

| Strategic Objective | 2. HABITAT RESTORATION POST ACACIA CLEARANCE IN CAPE PYLA | |
|---|---|----------|
| Target | Native habitat types | |
| Issues addressed | Invasive alien species | |
| Area | Cape Pyla | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 2.1 Revegetation and on-going support (watering, replacement) of native species (e.g. <i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>) in target areas that have been cleared of acacia | Medium term | Medium |

| Strategic Objective | 3. HALT ILLEGAL BIRD TRAPPING | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|
| Target | Birds | |
| Issues addressed | Illegal bird trapping | |
| Area | Cape Pyla | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 3.1 Continue monitoring program of illegal bird trapping levels. | On-going | High |
| 3.2 Maintain adequate and effective anti-poaching unit on the ground for law enforcement, patrolling and fine issuing for illegal bird trapping. - Use of technological means (cameras/ drones) for maximising enforcement actions. | On-going | High |
| 3.3 Ensure/ maintain high and deterrent fines for poaching and trapping offenses, as stipulated in the relevant legislation. | On-going | High |
| 3.4 Ensure/ maintain partnerships with environmental NGO's to facilitate better exchange of information and maximising resources. | On-going | High |
| 3.5 Capacity Building and training to establish specialised prosecutors for wildlife crime | Medium term | Medium |

AKROTIRI PENINSULA

| Strategic Objective | 4. HABITAT RESTORATION & PROTECTION/ SPECIES PROTECTION IN AKROTIRI | |
|---|---|----------|
| Target | Habitats & Fauna and Flora Species | |
| Issues addressed | - Habitat fragmentation, deterioration and loss - Species disturbance - Trampling - Littering - Poaching - Fires | |
| Area | Akrotiri Peninsula | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 4.1 Update of Akrotiri Peninsula Management Plan (incl. baseline and targets set for species and habitats) according to Sovereign Base Areas environmental legislation with a protection status similar to that of the NATURA 2000 sites & subsequent development and publishing of an SBA Decree on the Environmental Protection and Management of the Akrotiri Peninsula protected areas. | Immediate | High |
| 4.2 Instalment of new access control measures where needed | Medium term | Medium |
| 4.3 On-going maintenance of access control measures (repair/ replacement of gate bars/ barriers, maintenance of soil embankments, trenches) | On-going | High |
| 4.4 Waste collection (bulky waste with excavator & trucks/ + clearance campaigns for other waste) | On-going | Medium |
| 4.5 On-going law enforcement – patrolling and fine issuing for illegal activities (i.e. littering, driving in non-permitted areas, etc) | On-going | High |
| 4.6 Overall Assessment and Evaluation of Hydrological Regime (quantity and quality) of the Peninsula based on existing and projected land uses and water management practices, resulting in forecasting impacts on hydrology and ecology. | Medium term | High |
| 4.7 Habitats and Species conservation/ restoration targeted actions and measures, based on the monitoring results (see Objective 5) | Medium term | High |
| 4.8 Awareness & Education actions through AEEC and collaboration with NGOs to increase awareness of the value of the area. | On-going | Medium |

| Strategic Objective | 4. HABITAT RESTORATION & PROTECTION/ SPECIES PROTECTION IN AKROTIRI | |
|--|---|--------|
| 4.9 Promote nature-based tourism in the area to spread the visitation time period and attract nature interested groups through marketing campaigns, relevant simple infrastructure (creation and maintenance – hides, trails, viewpoints, information signs) and concessions for activities with locals/ NGOs. | Medium term | Medium |

| Strategic Objective | 5. HABITAT & SPECIES SYSTEMATIC MONITORING & ABIOTIC MONITORING IN AKROTIRI | |
|--|---|----------|
| Target | Habitats & Fauna and Flora Species | |
| Issues addressed | - Lack of Knowledge - Effectiveness of management | |
| Area | Akrotiri Peninsula | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 5.1 Define monitoring needs based on management approaches, land use changes, pressures and threats, knowledge needs, species & habitats sensitivity, legislation requirements. --> Resulting in the elaboration of a monitoring plan specific to target theme (species, habitats, meteorology, water quantity & quality) | Immediate | High |
| 5.2 Realistic implementation of the monitoring plans internally (SBAA) and also based on external collaborations (e.g. Game & Fauna Service, BirdLife Cyprus, Water Development Department, Sewerage Board of Limassol and Amathus, Department of Fisheries and Marine Research, Terra Cypria, other scientists/ bodies). | Immediate | High |
| 5.3 Development of a centralised monitoring database & Data input of monitoring results (past, present, future) | Immediate | High |
| 5.4 Evaluation of monitoring results with the aim of adjusting management practices and planning conservation actions (adaptive management). | Medium term | High |

AKROTIRI MARSH

| Strategic Objective | 6. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF AKROTIRI MARSH | |
|---|---|----------|
| Target | Habitats & Fauna and Flora Species | |
| Issues addressed | - Protection, restoration and conservation of species and habitats - Maintenance and promotion of cultural values - Support financial sustainability of grazing (local cattle breed) - Promotion of nature-based tourism | |
| Area | Akrotiri Marsh | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 6.1 Akrotiri Marsh Management Committee: Reinforcement and continuation of its operation under the coordination of SBAA ED and including all relevant stakeholders in order to address the area's issues and reach set targets. | On-going | High |
| 6.2 Define, prioritise and implement conservation, protection and restoration measures for plants, insects, birds, habitats, considering existing agreed conservation actions (e.g. DPLUS141 – Red List Plants Species). | On-going | High |
| 6.3 Water Management: Based on Overall Assessment and Evaluation of Hydrological Regime (see Measure 4.6) and Water Monitoring Program (see Measure 5.1), but also including on-going measures, such as: regular clearance and maintenance of water channels from reeds and sediment. | Medium term On-going | High |
| 6.4 Grazing Management: a. Adaptive land allocation to graziers based on environmental needs and objectives and animal numbers/ grazier. b. Setting and enforcing grazing and animal keeping rules, related to environmental needs of the area, animal health, well-being, feeding requirements, etc. c. Implement capacity building program for graziers. d. Fencing Assessment and Plan, identifying maintenance needs and implement maintenance of | On-going | High |

| Strategic Objective | 6. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF AKROTIRI MARSH | |
|--|---|--------|
| existing fencing, identifying areas that require new fencing and evaluate the option of fenceless grazing (e.g. pilot implementation). e. Support in the economic viability of grazing | | |
| 6.5 Promotion and upgrade of the site for ecotourism purposes and visitors & cultural values a. Maintenance of ecotourism facilities (i.e. bird hides, signs, paths, etc.) b. Upgrade and/or better maintenance of grazing facilities (e.g. fencing, animal shelters). c. Support of basketry | Medium term On-going | Medium |
| 6.6 Implementation of monitoring program (see Measure 5.2) | Immediate | High |

ZAKAKI MARSH

| Strategic Objective | 7. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF ZAKAKI MARSH | |
|---|--|----------|
| Target | Birds | |
| Issues addressed | - Sustainable Management of Reeds - Creation and maintenance of diverse microhabitats and open pools to enhance biodiversity, esp. designating species - Promotion of nature-based tourism | |
| Area | Zakaki Marsh | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 7.1 Implement agreed action plan as a result of DPLUS141 for reed management of the marsh | Immediate | High |
| 7.2 On-going reed clearances based also on the results of the implemented above action plan | On-going | Medium |
| 7.3 Maintenance of bird hide | On-going | Medium |
| 7.4 Implementation of monitoring program (see Measure 5.2) | Immediate | High |

LADY'S MILE

| Strategic Objective | 8. HABITAT RESTORATION & PROTECTION/ SPECIES PROTECTION IN LADY'S MILE AREA | |
|--|--|----------|
| Target | Habitats and Species | |
| Issues addressed | - Habitat fragmentation, degradation and loss through trampling (off road driving, walking, sun beds/ umbrellas), littering, expansion of existing infrastructure (parking places, boat accesses to the sea) - Enforcement of legislation (umbrellas/ sun beds extent, lighting, noise, off road access, littering) | |
| Area | Lady's Mile Area | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 8.1 On-going law enforcement – patrolling and fine issuing for illegal activities (i.e. umbrellas/ sun beds extent, lighting, noise, off road access, littering, illegal parking space expansions, etc) | On-going | High |
| 8.2 Ensure that all restaurant facilities comply with their licensing conditions and apply a zero-tolerance approach where illegalities are detected i.e. umbrellas, sun beds, lighting, noise etc). | On-going | High |
| 8.3 Instalment of new access control measures where needed | Medium term | Medium |
| 8.4 On-going maintenance of access control measures (repair/ replacement of gate bars/ barriers, maintenance of soil embankments, trenches) | On-going | High |
| 8.5 Waste collection (bulky waste with excavator & trucks/ + clearance campaigns for other waste) | On-going | Medium |
| 8.6 Habitats and Species conservation/ restoration targeted actions and measures, based on the monitoring results | Medium term | High |
| 8.7 Awareness & Education actions through AEEC and collaboration with NGOs to increase awareness of the value of the area. | On-going | Medium |
| 8.8 Implementation of monitoring program (see Measure 5.2) | Immediate | High |

MERRAS AKROTIRIOU

| Strategic Objective | 9. HABITAT RESTORATION & PROTECTION/ SPECIES PROTECTION IN MERRAS AREA | |
|---|--|----------|
| Target | Habitats and Species | |
| Issues addressed | - Habitat fragmentation, degradation and loss through trampling (off road driving) - Enforcement of legislation (off road access) - Knowledge gaps | |
| Area | Merras Area | |
| Measures | Timeframe | Priority |
| 9.1 Elaboration of access control & management plan to be revised based on the recommendations of DPLUS141, implement required consultations and finalisation of agreed plan | Medium term | Medium |
| 9.2 Implement access control measures based on the above agreed plan | Long term | Medium |
| 9.3 On-going law enforcement – patrolling and fine issuing for illegal activities (off road access, littering, etc) | On-going | High |
| 9.4 Promotion and upgrade of the site for ecotourism purposes and visitors & cultural values (information signs, walking trails, viewpoints) | Long term | Medium |
| 9.5 Implementation of monitoring program (see Measure 5.2) | Immediate | High |
| 9.6 Conservation Actions based on the updated Management Plan (see Measure 4.1) | Medium term | High |