

Natura 2000 management plans specifically designed for the Natural Park Trudner Horn and the Natural Park Fanes Sennes Prags Conservation measures, issues and future perspectives

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The creation of the Natura 2000 network is often referred to as the "cornerstone of Community nature conservation policy". Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) plays a crucial role in the management of the sites that make up the Natura 2000 network. With the spirit of integration in mind, it indicates the various tasks involved so that the nature conservation interests of the sites can be safeguarded.

In South Tyrol, located in the alpine area of Northern Italy, 42 sites have been designated in accordance with the Habitats Directive and 17 sites according to the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), since 2000. The Natura 2000 sites are presently covering 19.9% of South Tyrol's total area, which corresponds to 147.428 hectares. They include the Nature Park Trudner Horn as well as the one of Fanes Sennes Prags. In both parks the types of natural habitats belonging to the Natura 2000 network have been designated and registered on maps.

From 2004 to 2005, the conservation status, the conservation objectives and possible development measures for the natural habitats were defined and the data were summarized in so-called Natura 2000 management plans. The Natura 2000 management plans were realized by two working groups. As it was for the pilot management plan of the Nature Park Schiern, during the implementation period of both plans, the local authorities and population were involved. Several information meetings were organized as well as gatherings between the working group, the responsible of the natural park and the community of interests, in order to discuss possible conservation and implementation measures as well as critical topics.

After the collection of basic data regarding ownership, the actual hydro-geological, touristical, agricultural and forestry land-use along with the legal dispositions for the protected area, the Natura 2000 habitats, flora and fauna were classified on site by use of specialized literature. Moreover, the actual status of the habitats was evaluated in accordance with the Natura 2000 objectives. The collected data were saved in a GIS data base, in order to facilitate the evaluation of information and to be able to follow future developments as well as to guarantee a faster implementation of further measures. The next steps were the definition of the aims of preservation along with the measures of preservation. These tasks required further discussions that have not yet been concluded. It has already been partially possible to determine how and with which financial means the measures will be carried out. Economic interests, high implementation costs and private interests are currently hindering the establishment of a definitive catalogue of measures.

In the future, solutions should thus be found through EU fundings, whereas conservation measures should also be embodied in laws. Since a well structured Natura 2000 management plan facilitates the implementation of an overall concept of a natural park, the drawing up of environmental impact assessments regarding projects in Natura 2000 sites as well as the writing of Natura 2000 interim reports, in the future it would thus be desirable to integrate it into the natural park plan. Development plans like these ones are not only useful tools for the daily management of natural parks or protected areas; they are also important when it comes to obtain more easily and rapidly funds for certain projects through several programmes, to guarantee funding for nature protection and, as a result, to increase the acceptance of protected areas among the population.

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ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Nationalpark Hohe Tauern - Conference Volume](#)

Jahr/Year: 2005

Band/Volume: [3](#)

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