It is an honour for us, the Managing Enterprise of Environment Protection Activities, to work for 12 years with the team of the Stara Zagora “Green Balkans” NGO. The Wildlife Rehabilitation and Breeding Centre has maintained the trust of the MoEW and its regional structures, for the Centre’s staff dedication and aspiration in environment and wildlife animal protection activities in Bulgaria. Not only does the Centre work with our country’s effort to enforce the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), but it also works on the protection of endangered species of the Bulgarian fauna. The importance of the Rescue Centre is tangible also in its 2015 activities, more than 6000 signals have been reported. There were 1140 admitted patients, 43% of them were returned to the wild. Griffon Vultures, Eagles, Hawk etc., are just a part of the endangered species returned into the wild.

I would like to thank you for being an example in preserving the harmony between man and nature, for installing in your young visitors commitment, love, and desire for protecting the environment. It is for human activity that is an important factor for the existence of the species. I believe that we will work together for our common cause of protection of the environment and sustainable development, in the future.

I wish all of you good health, and zeal for working for this noble cause – saving thousands of injured birds and their return in the wild.

Reneta Georgieva
Executive manager EMEPA

TEAM:
It is a genuine challenge to be a part of the team of the Wildlife Rescue Centre at Green Balkans. This means that you are innovative, devoted to the green idea and prepared to compromises a lot of your free time!

Meet our team of enthusiasts:

Dr. Rusko Petrov – Operational manager of the Rescue Center for Wild Animals, Veterinarian, in charge of supplies, treatment and admission of patients

Yordanka Vazilova – Associate at Project “Greater Chance for Lesser Kestrel” LIFE11 NAT/BG/360

Ivan Ivanov – Responsible for inpatients and the Visitor section.

Ivanka Lazarova – Veterinary doctor, Associate Resuscitation and Baby Room

Ivailo Klisurov – Manager

Dr. Hristina Klisurova – Veterinarian. Public Relations and Responsible for documentation

Nikola Arabadjiev – Responsible for inpatients and the Visitor section.

Penyo Milev – Associate Maintenance and service in the visitor, rehabilitation and breeding areas.

Darren Weeks – Associate at Project “Reintroduction of the Saker Falcon in Bulgaria”

Yordan Karadjov – Coordinator at Project “People FOR nature – green society in action”, later associate at Project “Reintroduction of the Saker Falcon in Bulgaria”.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galina Simonova – Veterinarian

Ioanna Ivanova – Baby-sitter at Project “Greater Chance for Lesser Kestrel” LIFE11 NAT/BG/360

Antonia Miteva – seasonal worker;

Penyo Miles – Associate Maintenance and service in the visitor, rehabilitation and breeding areas.

Dimitar Dimitrov – seasonal worker;

Tanya Pimpilova – Veterinarian

Marin Stoyn – Veterinary technician

David Izquierdo – Field coordinator at Project “Reintroduction of the Saker Falcon in Bulgaria”

Penyo Milev – Associate Maintenance and service in the visitor, rehabilitation and breeding areas.

David Valchev – seasonal worker;

Stefania Stamova – Associate at Project “Reintroduction of the Saker Falcon in Bulgaria”

Penyo Milev – Associate Maintenance and service in the visitor, rehabilitation and breeding areas.

Ioanna Ivanova – Baby-sitter at Project “Greater Chance for Lesser Kestrel” LIFE11 NAT/BG/360

Antonia Miteva – seasonal worker;

Dimitar Dimitrov – seasonal worker;

Renio Durakova – seasonal worker;

Penyo Milev – Associate Maintenance and service in the visitor, rehabilitation and breeding areas.

It is for human activity that is an important factor for the existence of the species. I believe that we will work together for our common cause of protection of the environment and sustainable development, in the future.

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WILDLIFE REHABILITATION and BREEDING CENTRE – Annual Report 2015

Received animals from all over the country – by sites of finding

- Received animals from all over the country
- By MoEW territorial division

The practice of preventing the admission of young animals at the Rescue Centre we introduced in 2014 was continued throughout 2015. Thanks to this as well as thanks to the efforts of the very people who were calling, many young birds remained with their natural parents and got a much higher chance of survival into the wild.

Regarding the sites of admission, a high number of patients were admitted from the territories of RIEW Stara Zagora and RIEW Plovdiv, which is logical, considering the location of the main offices of Green Balkans.

The highest number of wild animals in distress were admitted through the cooperation of private entities, followed by RIEW, a trend which remained in 2015.

A list of all entities, companies and institutions which have assisted the transport of patients to the Wildlife Rescue Centre in 2015 can be found at: www.greenbalkans-wrbc.org

Animals, sent by various institutions and private entities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animals, sent by various institutions and private entities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Private entities</td>
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<td>Companies</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
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<tr>
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Dynamics of patient flow by months

No one would be surprised by the dynamics of the admitted patients by month, as the trend for admitting more patients during summer remained this year. This fact is naturally related to the admission of young animals at the Rescue Centre.

On the other hand, unlike 2014, the number of admitted patients has decreased with about 300. Our team attributes that to the excellent coordination with the people who are calling with signals and the lesser admission of young, healthy animals, which we do our best to immediately return back to their parents.
Reason for admission

The headliners in this category are young, fallen from nests and unknown reason. And while the first one is related to the active, spring-summer season, the latter is directly attributed to the wild origin of our patients. It should also be noted that gunshot wounds are among the main reasons for admission, a problem we mostly report during the winter period, which coincides the hunting season.

Condition at admission

It should be noted that a high number of patients were admitted in favorable condition in 2015. This is directly related to the high number of young, fallen from the nests, which we could not immediately return to their parents. Fractures of limbs take second place, while emaciated animals are third.

TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION

Veterinary care

2015 turned out a genuine challenge for the team of veterinarians of the Wildlife Rescue Centre. Over 100 surgeries were carried out, many of them were successful so the patients could later be released into the wild.

As seen on the graph, our veterinarians were very busy this year and this is why the number of patients with ‘medical treatment’ is the greatest. Maintenance or no treatment were prescribed mostly to the young birds admitted without physical injuries.

Work in the baby sector

As it became clear, "babies" are among the main patients of the Wildlife Rescue Centre. A total of 645 wild orphans were admitted at the Centre, 353 of them were later released, 9 of them remained in the aviaries of the Centre due to permanent injuries, 40 were put to sleep due to poor overall condition and 8 were transferred to various zoos of Bulgaria as they were not fit for release into the wild, while the rest 225 unfortunately died.

Patients by type of medication

- MEDICAL TREATMENT
- NONE
- MAINTENANCE TREATMENT
- PROPHYLACTIC
- LETHAL
- RELEASED
- EUTHANASIA

Patients by reason for admission

- Wind and rain
- Entangled in fishing lines
- Poisoned
- Fractures of limbs
- Young, fallen from nest
- Stabbed by hand
- Poisoned in captivity
- Fractures of head
--window
- Engraved in nests
- Torn and to
- Repairs in previous treatment
- Poisoned
- Ablation in A
- Fallen in machinery
- Unknown reason
- Poisoned
- Deviation of neck
- Fractures of bones
- Unknown reason
- THV
- Replaced bone
- Caught in a trap
- Hypothe
Foster parents

In 2015 we continued the practice of placing young birds with foster parents. Some of them, such as Common Kestrels, Barn Owls and Little Owls, were birds breeding at the Rescue Centre, while others, such as Swallows and Tits were wild pairs. This year we also installed 25 bird houses near the Rescue Centre. The bird families, which inhabited these houses later, undertook a great deal of the care after the admitted song bird babies.

RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE RESCUE CENTRE

One of the most important things we report every year and which actually proves the point of our efforts is the success in releasing patients of the Rescue Center after completed treatment. Unfortunately the statistics also includes our unsuccessful attempts - the lethal ones, the euthanized ones, cases, when our team fought until the end but lost. This category also comprises the patients which found their second homes through our team, as they could not be released into the wild, as well as those which will forever remain with us, giving their offspring a chance of freedom.

When releasing patients of the Rescue Centre, our team always considers the individual requirements of the given species. We often use adaptation aviaries and only rarely release from hand, usually for education, at the presence of kids, students, institutions and partners of Green Balkans.

Patients by treatment outcome 2015

Breeding programme

The role of the pairs of Common Kestrels, Barn Owls, Little Owls and Long-eared Owls breeding with us double. On one hand they raise their own offspring, yet on the other, they represent the best foster parents for the orphaned wild babies. This is how they save a lot of efforts of the team working in the Baby Room, but most of all - their chance of survival into the wild get significantly increased.

We are also happy to share that the Bearded Vultures kept at the Rescue Centre attempted their first copulations in 2015, unfortunately in vain.
PROGRAMS FOR REINTRODUCTION OF SPECIES GONE EXTINCT

Lesser Kestrel Recovery LIFE11 NAT/BG/360

We had a total of 9 breeding pairs of Lesser Kestrels in the aviaries of the Rescue Centre in 2015. They hatched a total of 31 chicks. 20 of these chicks were marked and released from the Lesser Kestrel release and adaptation Module in Levka, while the rest remained in the aviaries of the Rescue Centre to form the future captive stock for the project.

Vultures Return in Bulgaria LIFE08 NAT/BG/278

Despite the fact that not as many vultures as previous years were admitted at the Rescue Centre of Green Balkans in the last year of the project operation, we still played our role in the project implementation. In 2015 we admitted a total of 5 Griffon Vultures recovered from the nature. One of them was dead, while the other ones were injured in various circumstances.

Saker Falcon Return to Bulgaria

Season 2015 of the Saker Falcon Return to Bulgaria Project can be considered as the most successful until now. We managed to release 19 out of 20 planned young birds – the most numerous group of birds since the start of the Green Balkans activities. The young birds were released from adaptation aviaries following special methodology. The project team was extremely international, comprising a Bulgarian, Englishman, a Spanish and a Canadian.

CAMPAIGNS

Education and Public Awareness Campaigns

In 2015, the Rescue Centre of Green Balkans carried out a total of 9 large-scale campaigns and public events, such as presenting the Annual Report of the Centre for 2014, participating in green initiatives – bazaars, exhibitions and festivals, and organizing release actions for birds successfully treated at the Rescue Center. One of our most successful educational projects “People FOR nature – green society in action”, funded by the Swiss Confederation through the “Reform Fund Linked to Civil Society Participation” ended in 2015. This project successfully mobilized the efforts of volunteers, institutions and citizens for nature conservation initiatives.

Visits to the Rescue Center

In 2015 we kept the trend of welcoming over 3 000 visitors, aged from 3 to 70. They all got closely acquainted with the activities of the Centre, and many of them got involved with our adoption programme, granting money for one or several of the patients of the Centre.

Donation Campaigns

We would like to thank all our donors and adopters, who supported the activities of the Rescue Centre in 2015. We are proud to have deserved your trust!

These are the names of our donors:
Mihail Karayanchev, Kalina Chakarova, Gergana Bryuel, Yuliana Georgieva, Momchil Blaskov, Tsvetelina Zahova, Ekaterina Shirova, Minja Stoyanova, Radoslava Platnikova, Valentina Ivanova, Dimitar Dimitrov & Klima D.Dimitrov Ltd., Veselina Kortsanova, Vyacheslav Rangelov, Petar Petrov, Iva Bakalova, children of „Lyuben Karavelov“ school – Nova Zagora, Dian Valchev, Dimitar Stefanov, Ivo Naev, Raya Popova, M LINGVA Ltd., Kosta Kanchev, Ilyan Ilyev, Yana Grozeva, Silviya Stancheva, Lyudmila Ivanova, Nina Vutova, Diana Pavlova, Nikolay Nenchev, Mihail Handzhiev, Eli Bahchevanova, Grozdanika Stamova, Boriana Petkova, Slaveya Ivanova, Krasimira Gavrailova, the children and their teachers, who have all visited the Rescue Centre of GREEN BALKANS.
FACILITIES, CONSTRUCTION, AND REPAIRS

When you have a base situated on more than 7 decares, with dozens of facilities and a growing number of patients, pairs of birds involved in various programs and new species with specific requirements, you cannot avoid constant repairs and improvements. This is why in 2015 we finished and fully-furbished an aviary for Red-Breasted Geese and reconstructed 10 old facilities to suit the needs of the species which live in them – Egyptian Vultures, Long-eared Owls, Saker Falcons, etc. We also finished the visitor part and we would like to thank our donors who made this possible.

In addition, we will only mention the daily maintenance and periodic improvement and enhancement of the environment of our cages, aviaries and facilities, which currently exceed 62 in total.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

One of the most important things in working with breeding wild animals is the lack of disturbance, as well as patient, periodical observation of the nesting platforms and the bird families. Video-surveillance combines the two. This is why each of the aviaries of the Rescue Centre is equipped with at least one camera for observation. In addition to that, we have a video-surveillance in order to guard the yard and outside the premises. This accounts for a total number of 126 cameras following closely the behavior of the birds at the Rescue Centre. We would like to underline that the video-surveillance network is established entirely by the staff of the Wildlife Rescue Centre.

TRAININGS AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The team of the Rescue Centre carried out four trainings on rendering first aid to wild animals in distress to students from the Veterinary Faculty of the Thracian University. We also implemented over 20 presentations in various institutions in Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Jambol and other cities. We welcomed veterinary interns from Turkey to train them in caring after wild animals. We were also visited by private Bulgarian veterinarians eager to learn more about vet care of wild animals.

VOLUNTEERING

We are proud that in 2015 we were chosen by tens of young people who volunteered with us. Welcoming volunteers is not only an honour for us, but also a great responsibility. Our team is trying to promote volunteering among the young people we work with, as this is the best indicator that our society is ripe, developed and up-to-date.

Here is a list of all those who became our volunteers in 2015 and we would like to cordially thank:

MEDIA ABOUT US

Media are among our main partners promoting nature conservation and the best practices of the Rescue Center. In 2015, more than 100 electronic, printed, local, and national media published information about the Rescue Center.

Donors and Partners

We express our sincere gratitude to our partners:

- Enterprise for Management of Environment Protection Activities (EMEPA)
- Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW)
- Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water – Stara Zagora
- Trakia University – Stara Zagora
- Vocational High School of Veterinary Medicine – Stara Zagora
- Pet Hospital Dr. Tzekov
- INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE CONSULTANTS Ltd. (UK)
- Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF)
- Bulgarian Charities Aid Foundation
- Frankfurt Zoological Society (Germany)
- Praha Minicipality
- Zoo Praha
- EuroNatur – Germany
- Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU)
- Contour Global
- LIFE+ financial instrument of the European Community (EU)
- NATURA 2000 network
- BULGARIAN ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME БЪЛГАРСКО-ШВЕЙЦАРСКА ПРОГРАМ ЗА СЪСЪРДЕНИЕСТВО
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Agency
- CLIMA – D Ltd.
- Boeans Ltd.
- Ekaterina Kabakchieva

Funding

Incomes received at the Rescue Center in 2015:
403,036,04 BGN
206,157 €
161,214,42 £

Costs incurred by the Rescue Center in 2015:

- Administrative costs
- Veterinary service
- Staff and external experts
- Infrastructure development
- Equipment
- Basic maintenance & guard
- P&R education
- Transport costs
- Specialists, food, vitamins and supplement

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