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Abstract

LIFE FLUVIAL: Improvement and Sustainable Management of River Corridors of the Iberian Atlantic Region †

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† Presented at the IX Iberian Congress of Ichthyology, Porto, Portugal, 20–23 June 2022.
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Abstract: At a global level, different land use change processes (changes in use, presence of invasive alien species, public use activities, intensification in agricultural and livestock activities, loss of compatible and low-intensity traditional uses, climate change, etc.) and phytosanitary problems (black alder disease) are currently threatening factors that generate, with different degrees of intensity, the deterioration and fragmentation of the habitats of river corridors, both in the upper and middle basin, as well as in the estuarine sections. LIFE FLUVIAL (LIFE16 NAT/ES/000771) develops a transnational strategy of sustainable management of river corridor habitats in several Atlantic river basins of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), so the overall objective is the improvement in the conservation status of Atlantic Natura 2000 river corridors and associated wetlands, mainly targeting the 91E0* priority habitat (alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior). Another target habitat is considered in the project, the habitat type 9230 Galician-Portuguese oak woods with Quercus robur and Quercus pyrenaica, which represents continuity with the 91E0* habitat type. To achieve the overall objective, a series of specific objectives are considered, which are designed to combat threats that contribute to habitat degradation: (1) implementation of a transnational model for sustainable management of river corridors for the improvement in their conservation status, through the restoration of the composition, structure and functionality of their types of habitats, as well as improving the connectivity and reduction in fragmentation; (2) control of exotic invasive alien plants; (3) improvement in the plant health of river corridors by the partial removal of dead trees; (4) promoting the dissemination and awareness of the natural values, socio-economic benefits and ecosystem services of river corridors; (5) improvement in training and technical capacity for stakeholders in the management and conservation of river corridors. To achieve these objectives, the project proposes a set of specific conservation actions that constitute a compendium of best practices in relation to the design and execution of viable and effective action measures to improve the conservation status of river corridors and contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity.

Keywords: IAS; fluvial corridors; priority habitats; best practices; Natura 2000

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Citation: Ferreiro da Costa, J.; Rodríguez-González, P.M.; Ramil-Rego, P.; Portela-Pereira, E.; Monteiro, P.; López Castro, H.; Oreiro Rey, C.; Gómez-Orellana, L. LIFE FLUVIAL: Improvement and Sustainable Management of River Corridors of the Iberian Atlantic Region. *Biol. Life Sci. Forum* **2022**, *13*, 89. https://doi.org/10.3390/blsf2022013089

Academic Editor: Alberto Teodorico Correia

Published: 14 June 2022

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Author Contributions: Conceptualization, P.R.-R. and P.M.R.-G.; methodology, J.F.d.C. and E.P.-P.; field work P.M., H.L.C., C.O.R. and L.G.-O.; writing J.F.d.C.; project administration and funding acquisition P.R.-R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by LIFE Programme, grant agreement No. LIFE16 NAT/ES/000771.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are openly available in https://www.lifefluvial.eu.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.