

AUSTRIA

Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity

Location
Neurum

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P4 – Restoring, Preserving
and Enhancing Ecosystems

Measure
M19 - LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 77 315.52
EAFRD 49 481.93
National/Regional 12 370.49
Other 15 463.10

Project duration
2016 – 2018

Project promoter
Verein natopia

Contact
wildbiene@natopia.at

Website
www.natopia.at/bluehendes-und-summendes-wipptal/

Using LEADER support to provide information and raise awareness about wild bee protection.

Summary

Around 700 different species of wild bees exist in Austria. Indications show that in Austria more than 50% of all known wild bee populations are classified as endangered species. Wild bees are greatly affected by intensive farming methods, settlements and new infrastructure.



The project was set up to raise awareness Wipptal region about bee protection. Project activities included setting-up artificial nesting places close to hiking ways or other facilities; providing environmental education about wild bees in primary and secondary schools; environmental education events and workshops about wild bees in all villages of the region; providing information through a webpage and leaflets; cooperating with farmers; monitoring of bees population by an expert and guided nature tours.

Results

More than 20 artificial nesting sites were installed at different places in the Wipptal. They provide more than 1000 bees with a new habitat

13 schools joined the education program. 2 of the 3 days took already place in all schools, the third day will happen in 2018.

Road shows were organised on different levels and through different channels, for example radio broadcasts, press conferences, etc.

Up to now, observers have identified 283 different species of wild bees in Tirol.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ It is vital that projects are prepared thoroughly from the first stages till the end, and are attractive enough to bring the general public on board.

Context

Austria is home to around 700 different species of wild bees. As efficient and sometimes unique pollinators, wild bees have not only an important part in sustaining the highly diverse flora and cultural landscapes, but play also a very important in providing and saving the income of farmers.

The way humans use the land influences the existence of wild bees to a great deal. Wild bees are affected by intensive farming methods, settlements and new infrastructure. Land overuse creates a lack in food sources and nesting places and weaken wild bee populations. A research of wild bees in Tirol – like all over Austria – is still its initial stage. However, it is assumed that the situation is similar to Germany, where more than 50% of all known wild bee populations are classified as endangered species. That's the reason clearly defined measures are needed to protect wild bees and guarantee their survival.

The region "Wipptal" is famous for its beautiful nature and cultural landscape as well as a high variety of flowering meadows. Local stakeholders would like to preserve this landscape in a sustainable way and thereby keep a high biodiversity in place. It is also aimed to preserve the high quality of life of the local people and to do something for the protection of wild bees in this region.

Objectives

The objective of this project is primarily to provide information and raise awareness on bee protection. In addition, it is aimed to amplify our knowledge about wild bees by scientific monitoring: i.e. where do which wild bee types exist and what is known about the state of the different species of wild bee colonies in the Wipptal region. These aspects will provide the basis for funded measures in the future.

Specific project objectives are to:

- protect natural food sources and nesting places;
- improve the nutritional condition and bees' natural habitat;
- construct additional nesting places for wild bees;
- set up special programs for pupils to transfer knowledge and create awareness;
- provide information to sensitize humans about the importance of wild bees and the value of habitats which closely resemble nature;

- contribute to carrying out research on those wild bee populations in Tirol, which can be supported by artificial nesting places.

Activities

One of the activities carried out as part of the project was to set-up artificial nesting places. Carpenters were asked to contribute and worked along with an organization that cares for people with intellectual disabilities who supported this work. Together they produced artificial wooden nesting places. The nests were installed close to hiking ways or other facilities. This helps to provide wild bees with new nesting areas and raise awareness among people

Developed an environmental education programme about wild bees for primary and secondary schools. A three-day program was created for pupils aged 10-12 years and accomplished it with the support of certified nature education trainers. During these 3 days course pupils receive information about wild bees, construct and install artificial nesting sites and monitor them. Information material is also distributed. Specific activities of the programme include constructing and installing artificial nesting sites for bees, laying out a bee-friendly flowerbed, planting flowering bushes; sowing places around the school with special seeds that flower and cater to bees.

Environmental education events and workshops about wild bees are organized at all the villages in this region. These events aim to educate the audience and try to encourage them to actively support the project by implementing their own measures for bee-friendly habitats

In terms of public relations information is made available to the wider public through the project's webpage and leaflets.

The networking component involves cooperating with farmers and cultivators of the land. Cooperation is ensured with other initiatives, like the "Working Group Hay" who dedicate themselves to the production of autochthone seeds for meadows

Scientific monitoring is carried out by an expert for wild bees and will provide the project with greater know-how about the existence and colonization of wild bees in the Wipptal region.

Guided nature tours for children and adults are organised around the artificial nesting sites in Wipptal.

Main Results

The artificial nesting sites were constructed and installed in the summer of 2017. Project holder are very proud of two big pilot objects, which are 2 m wide and 1.7 m high. Both were produced by a carpenter. Some more bee hives were constructed together by an artist and a biologist and installed in the villages Stainach, Ellbögen and Obernberg am Brenner.

In total more than 20 artificial nesting sites were installed at different outdoor places in the Wipptal. They provide more than 1 000 bees with a new habitat and research is on going to get more information about which species of bees are already using these places.

13 schools joined the education program. 2 of the 3 days took already place in all schools, the third day will happen

in 2018. In 2018 the monitoring of the bees in their nesting sites will be completed.

Road shows were organised on different levels and through different channels, for example "Good Morning Austria" (TV talk show), radio broadcasts, events in cooperation with "Nature Connects," press conferences, etc.

Up to now, observers have identified 283 different species of wild bees in Tirol.

Key lessons

It is vital that a project has been prepared thoroughly from the first stages till the end, and is attractive enough to bring the general public on board.

Report from a project partner: "When we erected the nesting places we met some hikers. Their reaction was like "marvellous that you are so active in nature protecting"."



Additional sources of information

n/a