

Promoting pond conservation in Europe and the Mediterranean region

Type de projet	Recherche appliquée et Développement	 
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Résumé	<p>There are over 10 million ponds in Europe, rich in biodiversity and supporting a wide range of rare and endangered plants and animals. Despite their value, ponds are now amongst the most vulnerable and endangered of freshwater habitats facing many threats, and receiving little effective protection. Although ponds have long been assumed to be unimportant by wetland scientists, recent evidence shows that they support a very large proportion of the aquatic biodiversity in many landscapes. Ponds are unlikely to be included as part of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and currently receive only limited protection under the Habitats Directive. This is unfortunate since the characteristics of ponds, in particular their small size, ubiquitous nature and role as biodiversity 'hotspots', make them ideal for engaging the public in practical action to help maintain and restore the integrity of freshwaters in the landscape. Such public support is vital for the wider success of European strategies to protect freshwaters. Adequate protection for ponds is urgently needed now. The European Pond Conservation Network (EPCN) was established in 2004 to address these issues, and already includes active members in 16 European countries. The mission of the EPCN is to promote the awareness, understanding and conservation of ponds in a changing European landscape. Conceptually, the network fills the gap left by virtually all other water and conservation agencies in Europe. The objective of the present project is to provide a major stimulus to practical pond conservation work across Europe and the Mediterranean basin. Within these areas it aims to generate practical conservation actions (pond management, new pond creation, species protection work) by providing information essential for practitioners and policymakers, and by raising awareness of the importance of ponds amongst politicians and the public. These activities will lead to a step-change in the level and effectiveness of pond conservation in Europe and the Mediterranean.</p>	
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