



LIFE16 NAT/SI/000644

Newsletter

LIFE FOR LASCA

N. 07/2021

The Ticino basin is currently involved in four other Community projects aimed at protecting native fish species, in addition to LIFE for LASCA LIFE16 NAT / SI / 000644. Thanks to the economic contribution provided by EU funding, it was possible to initiate actions to counter the numerous pressures and threats that put these fish species at risk.

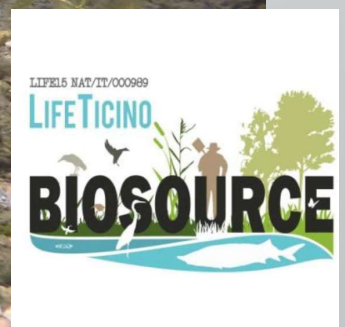
LIFE Ticino Biosource

Among the LIFE projects, instruments directly co-financed by the EU, in our territory we find the LIFE Ticino Biosource LIFE15 NAT / IT / 000989 (<http://ticinobiosource.it/>), whose general objective is the increase of biodiversity in the Ticino Park. The main actions of the project can be summarized in four fundamental points:

- Increase of the biodiversity heritage by protecting 15 animal species
- Creation of new environments, ponds, woods and wet meadows
- Active involvement of volunteers, associations and schools
- Creation of a task force that controls and protects the most sensitive areas of the project.

Huso huso-Photo Angelo Miramonti

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As part of the activities aimed at fish fauna, the Ticino Park has carried out actions for the conservation of the *Acipenser naccarii* population and for the reintroduction of the *Huso huso* through the reproduction in captivity and the release in the wild of young and adult specimens, as well as containment actions of allochthonous fish fauna such as the *Silurus glanis*. Another fundamental activity is the enhancement of the source areas for endemic fish species along resurgences, streams and secondary branches of the Ticino River. In fact, among the target species of the project linked to the wet environments of the Park we find the *Cobitis bilineata*, the *Letentheron zanandreaei* and the *Cottus gobio*, species classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List for threatened species. (Endangered is attributed to a species when its population has decreased by 70% in ten years or when its range has shrunk below 5,000 km² or the number of reproductive individuals is less than 2,500).

In addition to fish, the LIFE Ticino Biosource project focuses on other animal groups related to wetlands, such as aquatic avifauna including the Ardeidae, the *Aythya nyroca* and the *Alcedo atthis*, amphibians such as the *Hyla arborea* and the *Rana latastei* and a butterfly, the *Lycaena dispar*.

Lycaena dispar-Photo Pietro Beretta



IdroLIFE

In the catchment area of the Ticino river, and therefore in the Ticino Valgrande Verbano Biosphere reserve, is active another LIFE project that protects fish species: IdroLIFE LIFE15NAT / IT / 000823 (<https://idrolife.eu/>).

This project is developed in the territory of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola in Piedmont, thanks to a partnership that includes the CNR-ISE of Verbania Pallanza, the Institute for the Study of Ecosystems, the Valgrande National Park, the G.R.A.I.A. Srl and the Province of the VCO.

The territory covered by this initiative is rich in streams and lakes, therefore suitable for hosting a large number of aquatic species, even of considerable naturalistic importance, included in the lists of species to be conserved at European level according to the Habitat Directive 92/43 / EEC.

The project aims to preserve the native species most sensitive to the pressures resulting from the modification of waterways and the introduction of exotic species:

Salmo marmoratus, *Rutilus pigus*, *Chondstma soetta*, *Cottus gobio*, *Telestes muticellus* and *Austropotamobius pallipes*.

The actions are concentrated on the Toce River, the San Bernardino Stream and Lake Mergozzo through:

- The construction of 6 fish passages for the defragmentation of the ecological corridors necessary for seasonal fish migrations
- The reproduction and repopulation of native fauna species with genetically suitable animals
- The containment of invasive alien species.



A third LIFE project that has just been launched is called **LIFEEL**, LIFE19NAT / IT / 000851 "URGENT MEASURES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN FOR THE LONG TERM CONSERVATION OF ENDANGERED EUROPEAN EEL", dedicated to conservation measures of the European Eel and which will be discussed in the next newsletter.



Tributary of the San-Bernardino stream - Photo Pietro Beretta

SHARESALMO

The Interreg SHARESALMO project (<https://progetti.interreg-italiasvizzera.eu/it/b/78/gestioneitticaintegrataecondivisforlaconservazionededisalmonidinative>) involves 8 Italian and Swiss partners, including the Ticino Park. It focuses on the protection of salmonids native to the Ticino, Lario and Sesia catchment areas: *Thymallus aeliani*, *Salmo marmoratus* and *Salmo spp.*

These fish are threatened by various factors, including artificial dams along rivers and introduction of invasive alien species. The emblem of the collaboration between Italy and Switzerland is found in the Maggiore and Lugano lakes, the heart of the Ticino river ecological corridor, where the ranges of native salmonids are most critical for their survival. The project promotes the sustainable management of fish resources with an integrated and shared approach between the two countries and between the stakeholders, ensuring their long-term conservation at a professional, amateur and tourist level for informed and aware fishing.

Project activities focus on:

- Creation of the first basin-scale migration monitoring platform for native salmonids
- Release in the wild of young trout and grayling produced in the ichthyogenic plants of the partners and some sport fishing associations
- Defragmentation of the Sesia River with the creation of passages for fish at the artificial barriers in the municipality of Varallo, which currently prevent the grayling from reaching a particularly suitable part of the river
- Mapping of the potential and already established areas of the *Silurus glanis* in the great pre-alpine lakes and containment of the species.

Barrage on the Sesia near Varallo, near which a fish passage will be built-Photo Alice Pellegrino

