

## LIFE DRY GRASSLAND IN DENMARK

**Project title: DRY GRASSLAND IN DENMARK – RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION - LIFE08 NAT/DK/000464**

### **Project background**

The Dry Grasslands of Europe and Denmark are considered to be threatened and vulnerable habitat types. In the latest evaluation (2007) of the conservation status of Annex I habitat types in Denmark the 6 targeted habitat types in the project proposal are evaluated unfavourable. The threats to the habitat types vary, but for all of the habitat type's abandonment of pastoral systems including overgrowth with woody species is a significant threat. The threat of fragmentation and / or invasion by alien species is another major problem to different habitat types. The project proposal also targets four species of amphibians. Their conservation statuses vary from bad and deteriorating to favourable. The main threat is lack of suitable ponds for breeding and as a consequence fragmentation of the populations. All four species is known to respond very positively on restoring of breeding habitats (Report on the main results of the surveillance under article 11 for annex I and habitat types and annex II, IV and V species, 2007).

The former LIFE project "Restoration of Dry Grassland in Denmark" (LIFE04 NAT/DK/000020) was implemented in the period 2004-2008. The results of the project included restoration of dry grassland through conversion of plantations and arable land, clearing of scrubs and grazing. The present project aims to continue the restoration and conservation effort of dry grassland in Denmark in new locations using the experience obtained in the former grassland project supplied with other methods.

For this project 7 proposed Sites of Community Importance is selected, covering a project site surface of 55.586 ha, from where 36.934 ha is sea, where no actions are targeted. Conservation actions are planned covering an area of 64 ha of 6210 Semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (\*important orchid sites), 39 ha of 6230\* Species-rich *Nardus* grassland, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and sub mountain areas in Continental Europe), 85 ha of 2130\* Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"), 98 ha of 2140\* Decalcified fixed dunes with *Empetrum nigrum*, 2 ha of 4030 European dry heaths and 3 ha of 6120\* Xeric sand calcareous grassland.

The project sites are selected mainly because of their good potential for creating new dry grassland areas which can develop into the habitat types 6210(\*) and 6230\*. This will be achieved through restoring old habitats of dry grassland and creating new habitats nearby. Conservation actions also include areas outside the targeted habitat types. These habitats are considered to be potential dry grassland habitat types, which over time can develop into the respectively targeted habitats types.

### **Project objectives**

The main objective is to improve the conservation status and increase the dry grassland areas of 6210 Semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (\*important orchid sites) and 6230\* Species-rich *Nardus* grassland, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and sub mountain areas in Continental Europe). When present in a mosaic with 6210(\*) and 6230\* also 2130\* Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"), 2140\* Decalcified fixed dunes with *Empetrum nigrum*, 4030 European dry heaths and 6120\* Xeric sand calcareous grassland is part of this objective.

This objective is in line with the national guideline for the ongoing management planning for all the Natura2000 sites in Denmark which includes an instruction to make a special effort for the

threatened habitat types such as 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (\* important orchid sites) and 6230\* Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe). Furthermore the project aims to evaluate the feasibility of different methods or combination of these in controlling the invasive alien species of *Rosa rugosa*. The objective is optimising the efforts to control the distribution of the species in order to obtain and maintain a favourable conservation status of the dry costal grassland habitat types in Denmark.

### **Actions and means involved**

The project will launch in a start-up workshop involving experts and professional staff working with dry grassland management and conservation. The objectives of the workshop are capacity building of project participants and exchange of experience.

The conservation activities of the project will implement a variety of adequate management techniques: This will include restoration by clearing of woody species, establishment of appropriate grazing regimes, impoverishment of former arable land and creation and / restoration of ponds suitable for amphibians. Experiments of removal of the alien invasive species *Rosa rugosa* is a conservation activity in the project with demonstration character.

Careful project monitoring will be carried out throughout the project period to ensure satisfactory progress of the project. This includes a detailed registration and evaluation of the techniques used in controlling *Rosa rugosa*. The results of the project monitoring will be reported in the activity reports.

Public awareness concerning the values of dry grasslands for conservation of biodiversity and the role of NATURA 2000 in that respect will be raised by means of information boards erected at the project sites, distribution of folders, guide tours, education of children, co-operation and a website.

Dissemination of the results of the project for further capacity building of all professional staff in Denmark involved in management of dry grasslands will be made by means of a seminar, reports and publications.

The Danish Forest and Nature Agency has the overall project responsibility. Associated beneficiary is the Municipality of Thisted.

**Beneficiary:** Danish Forest and Nature Agency

**Project Manager:** Annette Strøm JACOBSEN

Tel: +45 6265 1777

Fax: +45 6360 1049

Email: [ansja@nst.dk](mailto:ansja@nst.dk)

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**WEB site:** <http://www.naturstyrelsen.dk/International/English/Topics/Nature/Overdrev/>