

## **Project Update: November 2013**

After a 6-month study period, the most important outcomes of the project have already been completed. At the beginning of the project we paid key official visits to get necessary permissions for conducting field surveys. In addition, interviews with local community were carried out in order to get a general idea about the awareness and knowledge level of the people. Getting in touch with the management operating in our study area was another positive development. The most important management in Acıgöl is Sodaş Sodyum Sanayi a.ş. which produces sodium sulphate from the lake.

### **PRELIMINARY STUDIES**

The major outcomes achieved within six months are as follows:

- Analysing of habitat features.
- Determining population statuses of *Aphanius* and *Gambusia* in springs.
- Fish introduction to a man-made pool (pilot study).
- Environmental education for elementary schools (pilot study).

#### **1. Habitat assessments**

Since the spring system of Lake Acıgöl is the only natural habitat of *Aphanius transgrediens*, conservation attempts should include an initial assessment of these springs. For this purpose: a) some physical-chemical properties of water have been measured on monthly basis; b) classification of the springs according to their origins was made by isotope analysis; and c) dominant vegetation and plankton communities were determined (photo 1).

#### **2. Population statuses of *Aphanius* and *Gambusia***

One of the outcomes for the first stage was determining the population statuses (absence or presence of the species, abundance of individuals, rate per cents of individual numbers of the species to each other, etc.) of *Aphanius* and *Gambusia*. For these purposes, we carried out fish sampling with hand nets and beach seines for a unit area and accordingly fish counts per each sampling (photo 2).

#### **3. Fish introduction**

We had planned to establish viable stocks of *Aphanius transgrediens* in its native habitat for the second phase of the project. However, we decided to conduct a pilot study during our first activities in order to understand the feasibility of the work. We collected fish specimens from the north side of the area where *Gambusia* has limited distribution due to saline water characteristics (photo 3). We transported a certain number of fish to a *Gambusia*-free man-made pond in the south of the lake, in company with the Head Official and Mayor of Başmakçı District (photos 4, 5, 6 and 7).

#### **4. Environmental education**

Our first environmental education attempt was organised for elementary schools of Başmakçı which is the closest village to our study area. We made a presentation about who we are, what we are doing, why the biodiversity and species conservation are important and what kind of fish species we want to protect or to get rid of, etc. (photo 8). After presentation we distributed t-shirts demonstrating an individual of *Aphanius transgrediens* comics and Rufford to the children (photos 9 and 10). The pre-press Photos of the t-shirts are given in photos 11 and 12.

**Note:** A more detailed report with quantitative results will be prepared after accomplishment of the first stage of the project.



Photo 1. Habitat Assessment



Photo 2. Fish Sampling



Photo 3. Sampling for Introduction



Photo 4. Fish Introduction



Photo 5. Fish Introduction



Photo 6. Fish Introduction



oto 7. Gambusia-free man-made pond



Photo 8. Introductory Presentation



Photo 9. Students with Their T-shirts



Photo 10. Students with Their T-shirts



Photo 11. T-shirt (In Turkish)



Photo 12. T-shirt (In English)