

## **Project Update: April 2003**

The first phase of the project is coming to an end and we are pleased to inform you that activities are being carried out as planned:

### *1) Preparation of field researches*

All the prefield activities have been set out. That includes careful preparation of methodology that has been upgraded with new findings. Those are based on intensive studies of species' biology from both literature and own experience and from intensive editing of data collected in previous years.

Field forms for data acquisition have been prepared and the logistics organized.

The field team has been expanded with a Croatian student of biology who was introduced to us by the Croatian Institute of Ornithology.

Field researches are starting on May 9th if the weather conditions will allow.

### *2) Preparation of poster*

The concept of an educational poster has been set up. Material for the poster was collected and delivered to a designer. We expect the distribution of the posters will take part in May or early June, before the high tourist season.

### *3) Local contacts and project support*

Extensive effort has been put into strengthening of local contacts in the area of research. In February a trip to Dubrovnik, the administrative center of the region, was organized. Contacts have been established with responsible people from Dubrovacko-neretvanska Municipality (administrative region under which the area of South Dalmatia is situated). Both people responsible for nature protection of the area and education showed great interest in our project and offered us strong and pristine support. They promised to help us in organizing the press conference and offered us the town municipality premises which are situated in the very centre of the old-town. They also promised to help us with distribution of posters, organizing of media support and showed strong moral support. We discussed the possibility that main parts of the area where Audouin's Gull breed would be protected and won approval. The results of the research would be passed to the Municipality in order to serve as a faunistic and conservation basis for the subsequent protection.

We have visited also representatives of other institutions somehow connected with the topic of the project. Various experts from Marine and Fisheries Institute of Dubrovnik have been personally contacted and all of them showed interest in project, several local NGO-s have been invited for cooperation and possibilities are being discussed at the very moment.

### *4) Media support*

After the visits of local decision-makers in Dubrovnik in February who showed great interest in the project, we were contacted by newspaper people about what we plan to do. An article describing our activities and the role of Rufford Small Grants was published in leading

Croatian national newspaper Jutarnji list. One reporter expressed a wish to write a longer commentary on our researches and was invited on a part of our field research in May.