

Actions for the conservation of coastal dunes with *Juniperus* spp. in Crete and the South Aegean

Habitat

Coastal dunes with *Juniperus* species are widespread along the sandy coasts of 8 countries of Southern and Western Europe, mainly on Mediterranean and Atlantic coastlines. In Greece, it can be found in 16 Natura 2000 sites mainly in the South, the Aegean islands and Crete. This rare and beautiful habitat has been classified as a “**priority habitat**” (code 2250*) by the 92/43 Habitat Directive which means types of habitats in danger of disappearance of which the Community has a particular responsibility for their conservation.

The two *Juniperus* species growing in this habitat are *Juniperus macrocarpa* and *Juniperus phoenicea*. The presence of other shrubs and herbs adapted to grow in such an unfavorable environment forms another aspect of interesting vegetation.

Project

JUNICOAST is a European project implemented in the framework of the LIFE + Nature and Biodiversity program. JUNICOAST aims to promote and enable the long term conservation of the coastal dunes with *Juniperus* spp. habitats in Greece by consolidating a knowledge base for its protection, restoration and monitoring, by halting present natural and anthropogenic threats and implementing actions for its protection and restoration.

The project includes

- 9 preparatory actions investigating the biotic and abiotic factors that influence the habitat structure and quality
- 8 concrete conservation actions targeting the main natural and anthropogenic threats
- 7 public awareness and dissemination actions and
- 6 project operation and monitoring actions



Project areas



A journey on coastal dunes with Junipers – Fairy tale and Video



Habitat demarcation



Creation of embryonic dunes



Enhancement of *Juniperus* natural regeneration



Ενημέρωση επισκεπτών



On-site environmental education campaign



Waste removal



Information sign



Wooden boardwalk



Main path delineation

Threats

Over the last decades, coastal dunes with *Juniperus* spp. have been subjected to **severe** anthropogenic pressure and are mainly threatened by **uncontrolled** tourism growth, **lack** of public awareness, forest **fires**, **grazing** and **littering**.

The above-mentioned threats in combination with the **restricted natural regeneration** of the *Juniperus* spp. and **climate change** which is expected to affect all natural ecosystems, confirmed the need to undertake **concrete conservation and management actions** in order to protect and to ensure the long-term sustainability of this priority habitat.



Dear visitors, the following practices would minimize the negative impact on the environment and maintain the natural beauty of the habitat.



Don't cut juniper tree branches. Even if they seem dry, do not cut tree branches for firewood, as these branches allow sand trapping encouraging further dune formation.



Collect your rubbish. If you've carried it in, carry it out. Don't burn or bury rubbish, and if you come across other people's rubbish, do the environment a favor: take it with you and dispose it correctly in the appropriate rubbish bins.



Walk on established paths. To prevent damage on vegetation and to reduce soil erosion, please, walk on established paths, where possible.



Avoid lighting fires. Juniper is not a fire-resistant species and it does not regenerate after fire. Do not light fires; there is always a risk of fire. **In case of emergency call 199.**



Respect your fellow visitors and the local community. Keep noise levels to a minimum to avoid disturbing others, respect the privacy, cultural heritage, habits and traditions of local community.

Upon leaving, take with you your **experiences** and **memories**. Leave behind **ONLY** your **footprints**!