



NCPOC Newsletter



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Biodiversity Action Plan Issued

by Olivier S. G. Pauwels, NCPOC Biodiversity Lead

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a set of actions put in place in order to preserve and, where possible, enhance, biodiversity in a given geographical area. It was prepared by NCPOC for the NCSPSA Venture – as represented in the Venture BAP working group - and formally issued during September. This milestone was achieved after detailed and constructive input from the Operator (NCOC), all NCSPSA Agents, and representatives from Authorities and NGOs.



In line with the Venture's Environmental Protection Strategy, implementation of this BAP will help us to achieve the highest reasonable international conservation and environmental standards necessary to protect the special ecological conditions of the Caspian Sea. The objective of the BAP is to:

- Identify Venture activities, products or services that may impact biodiversity
- Comply with relevant national and/or international requirements for biodiversity conservation
- Determine environmental baselines, and then monitor environmental status at Venture locations
- Identify species, habitats and ecosystems that need attention within the Venture zone, taking into account international, national and local biodiversity action plans and related priorities
- Implement specific mitigation measures where needed
- Implement and share best practices in environmental protection

First, potential Venture impacts on biodiversity have been evaluated through environmental impacts assessments. Next, extensive biodiversity inventories carried out by the Venture have given an accurate picture of animal and plant species living in and around the operational areas. Then a shortlist of the ecologically most sensitive species and habitats was defined to prioritize our

1st Venture Eleven-a-side
Football Tournament

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monitoring and conservation efforts. Birds and fish represent the majority of this list of animals of conservation concern, which also includes iconic mammal species such as the Caspian seal and the Saiga antelope.



Current Venture biodiversity monitoring activities include four seasonal offshore surveys in the northern Caspian Sea, spring and autumn onshore surveys in Atyrau and Mangistau Regions, annual bird surveys along the North Caspian coast and on our artificial islands, and annual aerial and icebreaker-based surveys of Caspian seals (see also an article on our support to ecological research on Caspian seals:

<http://ncpoc.newsweaver.co.uk/newsletter/j997qd6tjk1azo7x4wt89r?a=1&p=30735965&t=16156364>).

As part of the BAP development an external Consultative Committee, comprising both Authorities and NGOs from Atyrau and Mangistau regions, has been put in place (see also this local press article on the involvement of BAP external stakeholders: <http://ogni.kz/rubrika/ekologiya/s-zabotoy-ob-ekologii-kaspiya.html>).

These external parties contributed to the BAP and will keep us informed about the key concerns of the local populations and authorities regarding biodiversity and natural resources conservation. As a result of their involvement they are in return kept well-informed of our conservation and monitoring activities.

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