

Project Update: June 2011

We just finished with the training in Dilijan which involved participants from “Dilijan” national park, Aarhus centre in Dilijan and “Sunchild” eco-club. The training programme included lectures supported with PowerPoint presentations introducing the plant and habitat diversity of Armenia, the botanical overview of “Dilijan” national park with the focus on the main threats to the species and habitats and the conservation issues. The participants had a chance to learn about some Red Data Book species and typical representatives of the national park’s flora studying them by the herbarium specimens and in the field: one of the field trips was made to an important plant area – the relict Yew Grove, which is a site of a special protection on the national park territory. The basics of herbarium techniques have been studied by the participants and practised in the field. The first specimens for the newly founded Herbarium of “Dilijan” national park have been mounted by the participants and also during the field trips they collected and pressed a certain amount of plants for the national park’s herbarium.

A few more trips towards different regions of Armenia were made, the sites, representing habitat types of conservation concern have been visited, as, for example the relict lakes of Lori plateau. The main threats for them were identified - they are under danger of drying up because of both climate change and human impact. The overexploitation of the spring water, which has been feeding the three of these four lakes, brings to destruction the ecosystem of the one of the lakes. A number of very rare plant species have been found here before, but now it looks like they might be disappeared. At least we couldn't find them there.

We studied also the population of an endangered species *Asphodeline taurica* in the north, Shirak region and made some trips towards the south - Syunik region. I am sending the pictures of endangered species we found during the fieldwork (*Coronaria coriacea*, *Tulipa confusa*, *Asphodeline taurica*), photo of myself on the drying lake, George's taking picture of endangered *Tulipa confusa* ("Shikahokh" state reserve) and a couple of additional photos on the training (mounting the first herbarium specimen - endangered *Anemone ranunculoides*). All the preparation work is done and we are going to "Shikahogh" for another training this week. I am sending you also a link where the report on our first training is found. It is in Armenian yet, but the English version is also expected.

http://www.aarhus.am/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=161:դասընթացներ-և-ճանաչողական-աղջավներ-դիլիջան-ազգային-պարկում&catid=196:news-and-announcement-am&Itemid=359&lang=am

