



The project aims to:

facilitate Eleonora's falcon adaptation to climate change by the implementation of a series of conservation actions that will improve:

The breeding performance of the species

- ✓ reducing egg losses and mortality rates of nestlings, by controlling invasive species
- ✓ improving the quality and the availability of nesting sites, by constructing artificial nests
- ✓ improving prey availability and quality

The species' conservation status at its foraging areas

- ✓ identifying foraging areas utilized by the species
- ✓ assessing the quality and impact of land use in these areas
- ✓ networking among experts to help design and promote efficient mitigation measures

For more information, visit the website:

www.lifefalcoeleonorae.gr

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The Project is implemented by the University of Patras, in collaboration with the Hellenic Ornithological Society and the NCC Ltd, with the financial support of the European Union Life Instrument and the Green Fund



The Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco eleonorae*) is a migratory falcon, which breeds mainly on islands and uninhabited islets of the Mediterranean Sea during the summer. In our country, the first falcons are observed in March – April, returning from their wintering grounds in East Africa and mainly Madagascar. It is one of the most important bird species in Greece, since more than 85% of its global breeding population nests in the Aegean Sea.

Eleonora's falcon switches its food preferences according to prey abundance. Specifically, it synchronizes its breeding period with the autumn flux of migrating passerines over its colonies, a phenomenon which was predictable both in space and time until recently. However, research studies have provided evidence for changes regarding the timing and pathways of migrating passerines, attributed to global warming. During the rest of its annual life cycle, Eleonora's falcon feeds on flying insects. Therefore, it is frequently observed hunting over cultivated areas, wetlands, lakes and forests, where insects are most abundant. However,



Ringling allows us to investigate the stopover ecology of migrating passerines the main food source of the Eleonora's falcon during the breeding season.

over the past decades these habitats have been largely affected by human activities, such as the use of pesticides, and land-use changes (e.g. logging, construction of wind farms). In addition, although Eleonora's falcon reproduces on relatively isolated islands and islets, it is threatened by invasive species introduced by humans, such as rats that consume its eggs, and rabbits that

feed on vegetation that provides protection from sunlight to the eggs and the nestlings.

The project areas are Antikythera Island and Gramvousa Peninsula, Dionysades islands, Tilos Island, Mikres Cy-

clades, Skyros Island, Lemnos Island, Karpathos Island, Saria Island and the islets surrounding these.

In the frame of the Life EIClimA project the actions that are being implemented aim at assessing anthropogenic pressures, especially climate change. Therefore, we collect the necessary data to evaluate the Eleonora's falcon population status and its breeding performance in the



To monitor the breeding performance of the Eleonora's falcon we check every accessible nest in its colonies in three phases: during egg-laying, hatching and fledgling period.

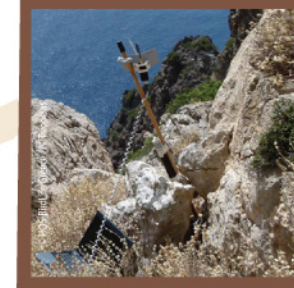
project areas, in order to implement corresponding management measures. Furthermore, we investigate stopover ecology of migratory passerines during their stay on the Antikythera Island, in order to design appropriate interventions which will eventually increase prey availability of Eleonora's falcon, in view of the forthcoming impacts of climate change. Moreover, we identify

To date

- ✓ we have collected the necessary data to assess the population status and the breeding performance of Eleonora's falcon, as well as to determine the factors that influence them.
- ✓ we have identified and mapped the habitats (vegetation types) that are more often used by migratory passerines on the Antikythera Island. Also, we have estimated the time spent by specific species of passerines on the island, by means of radio transmitters and ringing; these data

will enable us to identify trends, which can be attributed to climate change.

- ✓ we have been monitoring the behavior of foraging Eleonora's falcons through visual observations during their stay in Greece, as well as the movements of three adults, throughout the year, via telemetry (GSM-UHF transmitters).



With the aid of telemetry we monitor the movements of Eleonora's falcons throughout their life cycle, both during their stay in Greece, as well as during migration and overwintering.

Moreover, we have been collecting samples of infertile eggs and dead falcons for heavy-metal analysis. Finally, we have been collaborating with species' experts in Madagascar in order to assess the quality of the species' foraging grounds during the wintering period.

In the forthcoming years,

we will be able to assess human pressure on the ecosystems the species' uses for foraging, identify potential threats

and proceed to appropriate mitigation measures, such as elimination of terrestrial predators and construction of artificial nests in the breeding colonies, as well as enhancement of the ecological value of foraging areas. The conclusions resulting from these actions will serve as the basis for the compilation of a Good Practice Guide, which will provide guidance to the relevant authorities to ensure long-term favorable conservation status of the species in its breeding and wintering areas.



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Project LIFE–Nature (EIClimA)
“Conservation measures to assist the adaptation of *Falco eleonorae* to climate change”



we aim to protect it



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