

WORKSHOP RESTORATION OF ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS

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PENICHE - PORTUGAL




Berlengas

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Round Tables 30/01/2018

THEME 1: *BIOSECURITY*

Which are the best methods to implement? Presentation of success and failure results

- Use lethal and non-lethal methods is ideal
- Tracking tunnels along snap traps
- Combination of different methods
- Involve stakeholders (restaurant, construction, boat owners, fortress)
- Try to have detection methods in all likely (in a broad scope view) points of entrance
- Have biosecurity measures in place (check bag signs and awareness info) on the Peniche harbour
- **COMMUNICATION IS KEY!**

How to secure funding for the next stage?

- State owned nature reserves are the easy case. The regular public management funds can be used, but try to maintain costs at a low scale
- Case by case scenario. Private funds can be used
- Create inclusive protocols with several entities. Share responsibilities and possible funding sources.

Identify the elements that should be included in biosecurity systems at different levels (the ecosystem, regional and national)

- Description of the area
- Species of concern
- Main routes and points of entrance
- Create multiple barriers (bait stations, warning signs, kill traps)
- Identify stakeholders
- Prepare first response protocol and have necessary material and responsible identified and in place
- **Do a first intervention exercise!**

THEME 2: COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

How to engage stakeholders

PREPARATION IS FUNDAMENTAL – INSTEAD OF REACTING

- Before starting the project, there should be preliminary work: social economic assessment should be included in the feasibility study. Social assessment to determine issues, risks, audience opportunities (stakeholder mapping)
- When writing the project, it's already important to include budget for comms people (Need to choose the right people with the right skills; (when preparing a project very regularly you do it under pressure, with not enough time and you don't think seriously on the subject)
- It's very important to have Comms strategy, Activities plan and risk assessment (here to identify main risks and how you will deal/communicate with them; evaluate if bad communication could be a risk for project success – identify what activities and what awareness you do need) - with feed from science people (knowledge broker) and from comms people
- Stakeholders should be engaged from the beginning, in the project design and delivery
- Prepare FAQ's for everyone involved in the project (for consistency, credibility). -Answer public questions right away! Have the answers ready. In case we don't have the answer, we take the contact of people, get the answer and then add it to the FAQ's; make sure you know your audience and have the right answers
- Aggressive approaches should be answered by your supporters (key members of the local community). These supporters should be identified and engaged from the beginning. These supporters are also useful to answer/argument to critics about amount of money spent in this kind of projects. Need to use social-economic data as an argument, but data coming from the locals
- Identify risks of partnerships
- The approach will vary even with the size of the companies
- Funding – initial LIFE funding/ find alternative funding sources/
- Your main audience is the people living in the island! The others (animal lovers associations) are lateral audiences. Imposing things to people is never the best option

How to communicate these campaigns and how to deal with opposition groups

- Communications plan – taking the lead of it, for opposition groups VERSUS not speaking about the issue/ maintaining it “secret” – better to communicate it (use of images of invasive species predated seabirds)

- We need a plan to identify audience, key ways of engaging different stakeholders (face to face, press release, social media)
- Welfare credentials – arguments for the poison used (and explain it clearly and openly)
- Explain project internally --- for all the team (with no biology background)
- FLORA: depends on species; with trees is very difficult to explain; with *Carpobrotus* in Sardinia there was no problem; eradication of plants has less opposition; sometimes there is a perception about the impact of the species;
- Comparison between species that are on the Regulation and we are not working on (because it's widespread) and species that are not on the list e.g. *Carpobrotus* (public perception)
- Importance to have good communicators

How to disseminate the Results?

- Celebrate success, depending on the audience (take advantage of local stakeholder events and fund/invest the events)
- Press Release don't work anymore; social media is critical (you can *manage* the information)
- Importance of engaging younger public
- Importance of peer reviewed journals publishing the project results
- Making sure you have not only the support from the authorities (local, national), but also getting the key members of the community to agree (ex. Signing an agreement before the beginning of the project)
- If we fail, it's important to communicate it. Actually we can understand why we failed and learn from there. Important to have a positive approach about failures. Spread information about failure is important to communicate with other projects, but not with the general public (this could undermine the project).

THEME 3: EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF HABITAT RESTORATION

Which methodologies are best suited for assessing impacts after species removal (how to do it and how often?). Importance of evaluating all groups of fauna and flora.

Seabirds

- To monitor breeding success every year or every 2 years.
- Keep 5 year census to assess population sizes
- Maintain artificial nest usable and call system working

Lizards

- Optimal - Maintain the population size monitoring every year for the next 5 years
- Minimum – Every 2 years – 10 years
- Make sure monitoring protocols suit the goals and make sure more sighted lizards correspond to bigger population size, and not a matter of change on detectability

Plants

- Compare samples where rat densities were bigger vs smaller, same for rabbits, same for ice plants, and combination (minimum 25 squares total, optimal 10 squares per combination). Include gulls effect during analysis.
- Keep the same squares monitored every year (twice a year, April + June)
- *Herniaria*, optimal – implement SACS methodology; minimum – sampling the areas where individuals were spot during baseline, use photos of the area, count individuals; once a year
- Record photos of specific areas, 1 per year, to evaluate plant cover over the time

After eradication campaigns how to evaluate impacts on non-target species?

- Minimum - Use the same monitoring for native species
- Optimal – Rapid response in place in case any new invasive is sighted

In cases where it is not possible to remove all *Carpobrotus* or other invasive plants, how to avoid its dispersion (frequency of resprouts removal, monitoring plan?)

- Mark the non-controlled area in the field (eg. stiks)
- Removal resprouts every year, once a year, after summer