

Nesting in the Arctic and inspiring children in the Mediterranean

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Departure: **Arctic** – Norway

Arrival: **Mediterranean** – Greece

Traveler: **Lesser White-fronted Goose**

The Fennoscandian population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose is the most threatened waterbird of Europe. It breeds in Arctic Norway and spends ca. 6 months in Greece during winter. A comprehensive education programme was developed and implemented that recruited the younger generation into the international conservation efforts for the species.

A SONG FOR the BIRD with the bright **YELLOW EYE RING**: Ideas, projects, events devoted to the Lesser White-fronted Goose

More than **6,000 schoolchildren** met the rarest goose of Europe by participating in school projects and open events organized by schools, local Educational Directorates, Environmental Education Centres, Management Authorities and the Hellenic Ornithological Society.

School Network: “The Lesser White-fronted Goose at Lake Kerkini”, a local environmental network (endorsed by the Greek Ministry of Education). Ca. 1,000 students delivered a large variety of creative school projects (role games, composing and performing songs, theatrical performances, posters, informative panels, street demonstrations, etc.).

The Lesser White-fronted Goose goes wild: field visits with ca. 600 schoolchildren. Although the Lessers can be bit shy and hard to see, children developed a **personal connection** with its habitat.



Don't Forget!!

- The **yellow ring** around my eye.
- The pattern on my belly. *
- The **white** blaze on my forehead.
- The dark brown colour on my head.
- My short neck.

LESSERS AND CHILDREN: Friends?

Main threats of the Lesser White-fronted Goose are induced by human activity (e.g. hunting, illegal killing, wetland drainage).

Engaging the educational community into species conservation may contribute to: **short-term**: positive feelings towards the protection of the threatened species and communication of the need for its protection to the local community

long-term: next generations' attitude towards the species can be affected in a positive way through the development of critical thinking on Lesser White-fronted Goose threats and danger of **extinction**

SOLUTION PROPOSAL: an environmental program that will ensure a lasting implementation.

The primary aim of the environmental education actions: an annual program that would be incorporated into the curriculum of schools near the wintering areas of the Lesser White-fronted Goose.

ENGAGING THE EDUCATIONAL

COMMUNITY: how we did it

- 48 educational activities / 3 age groups (4-8, 9-12 and 13-16 years old) implemented throughout the school year influencing children's level of knowledge, attitude, belief and environmental perception.
- Activities piloted and evaluated by the teachers
- Final material presented to 247 teachers – all very enthusiastic!
- Complementary editions: story “A goose no less... a Lesser White-fronted Goose” used drama, storytelling, creative learning; colour book, floor game, memory game, poster.



The environmental education material: Educational Activities (4-8 and 9-16 years old), Children's Story, Colour Book, Memory Game, Floor Game

LESSONS LEARNT: A long term relationship

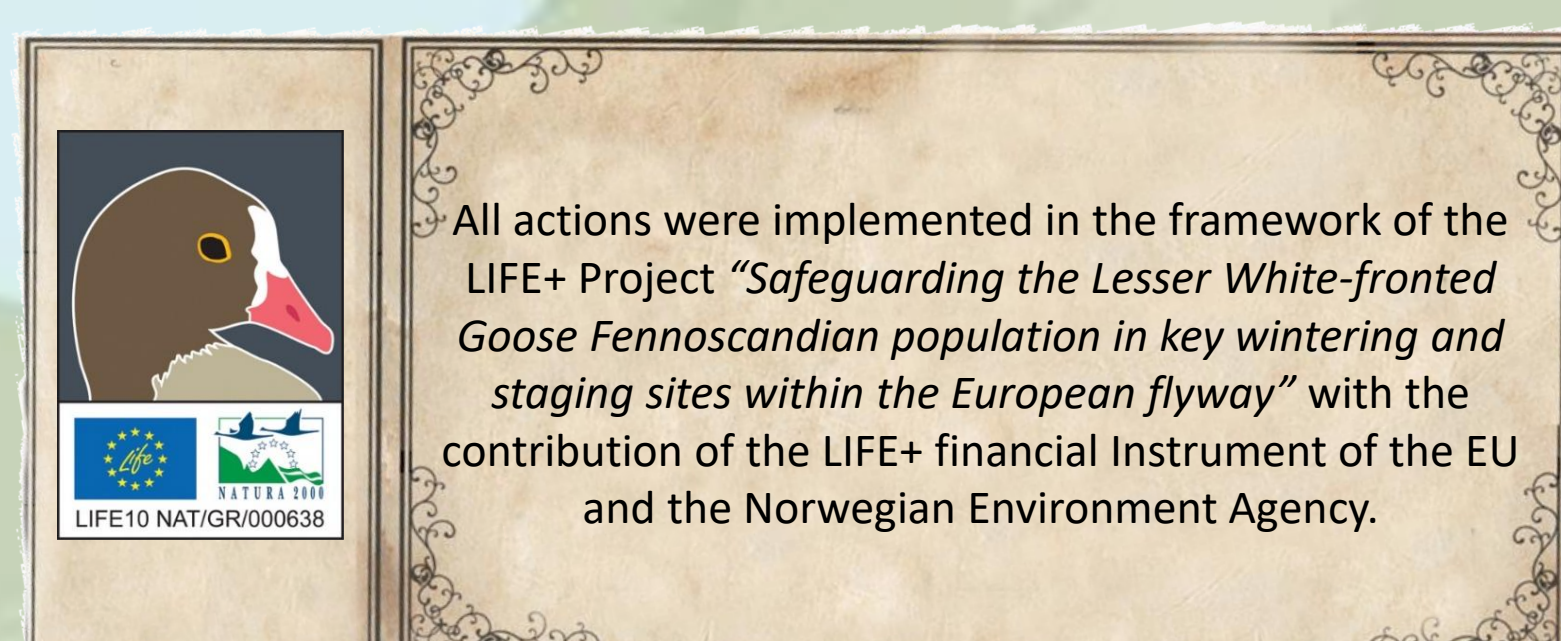
- Proud network members: pupils and teachers enjoyed Lesser White-fronted Goose “ownership”
- Stewards of the environment: knowledgeable young conservationists, ready to protect their local environment
- It takes time but it is a good investment since teachers take on and develop the material further
- International efforts: Pupils and teachers became an active part of a global conservation effort
- Illegal killing? No thank you!
- Let's work together in and out of school



Young artists: The **yellow eye ring** was a characteristic that stood out during the EEP / Evros Delta Management Authority Visitor Centre © HOS



The environmental education material in English: Educational Activities (9-12 years old), Children's Story, Colour Book, Floor Game



All actions were implemented in the framework of the LIFE+ Project “Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose Fennoscandian population in key wintering and staging sites within the European flyway” with the contribution of the LIFE+ financial Instrument of the EU and the Norwegian Environment Agency.

WHAT NOW? Educational material is adapted into English, Norwegian, Russian and Farsi and is available at www.ornithologiki.gr/lwfg

TALK TO US ABOUT: Implementing environmental education programmes in your country!

More info on the LIFE+ Project and the Lesser White-fronted Goose: www.wwf.fi/lwfg and www.piskulka.net

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