

Albania – call for volunteers – from May 2023



We are recruiting volunteers for projects in southern Albania



Ottoman bridge at hot springs, Permet

Where?

Leskovik - a town at about 1000m asl in mountainous terrain near the border with Greece. See <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1-gzXHtnykvvottD6LJih-5s-JU6rStE&usp=sharing>

Why?

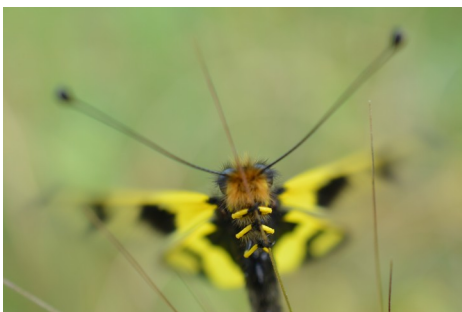
Leskovik is in socio-economic decline. It was a thriving town but has become run-down and is depopulating/ageing. Tourism in Albania is growing rapidly but visitors tend to pass through Leskovik because there is no information about the area, even though it has much to offer.

How?

We are trying to demonstrate a successful alternative to typical mass tourism based on locally-involved, more sustainable tourism that yes, will create jobs in services and hospitality but will also actually **support traditional lifestyles**.

Leskovik remains famous for its local produce. Wine, raki, fruit, vegetables, cheese, honey and handicrafts. We want to set up tours of the producers.

It is also famous for Epirotic music (a Greek/Albanian traditional folk music based on clarinet and violin with polyphonic vocals). One of our aims is to increase the scale and frequency of music festivals there and to create a music museum.



Owl-fly (*Libelloides macaronius*)

What?

The projects can be as varied as the skills our volunteers have. We are always open to suggestions. We will use you for your talents but we will help you gain new skills too.

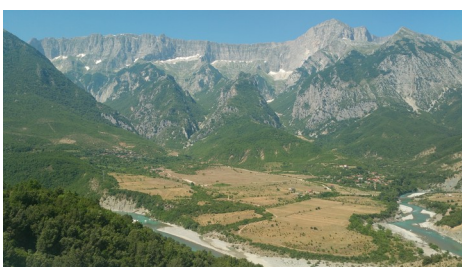
Project examples include: ecology surveys, plotting/marketing hiking trails, setting up tours, teaching English, permaculture/gardening, improving waste management systems, modifying bunkers into bird hides or B&B, filming, developing a website and general maintenance (things like erosion control, drystone walls, hay meadow management, fences).



Communist bunker (and future B&B?)

When?

Jay will be going there in early May (4th?). You can come anytime from then. He will be working elsewhere (in Albania) 13th-24th May and 2nd-12th June but we have other English-speaking hosts. **We ask a minimum stay of two weeks**. Jay expects to be there into August. By the time he leaves, we expect the team will be self-managing.



View of Vjosa river, Kanikol and Maja Fanjas



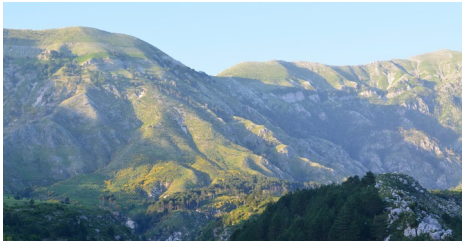
Satyrium spini on Orlaya grandiflora



Hay donkeys, bunker, old church



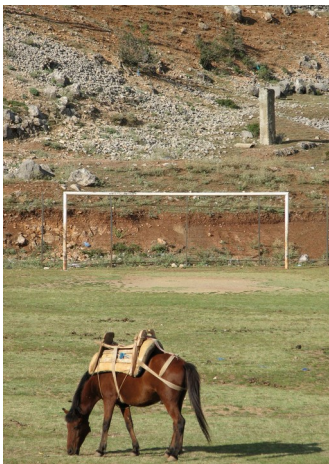
Yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*)



Mountain view



Milking time



Football pitch



Local people



Balkan green lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*)



Sotiri and Jo

Who?

Anyone over the age of 18. If over-subscribed, we will favour people: from neighbouring countries; staying longer; students; unemployed.

For information about us, please visit www.verdantecology.co.uk

Our Albanian contact https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auron_Tare is influential so we have support from celebrities, renowned music producers, academics, ambassadors etc.

For project information see <https://verdantecology.co.uk/index.php/albania/>

Cost

We are applying for funding. If successful, we may be able to subsidise those that need it. Even without funding the cost once there will be low:

Accommodation costs: Free if we can offer you a place in the community house. If not (or you prefer), a homestay or hotel (about €10/night).

Food costs: You can feed yourself for €5/day, less if cooking/eating communally. You can have a big meal with a drink or two at a local restaurant for less than €10. A coffee is €0.4, a big beer in a bar €1.2, a big beer from a shop €0.6, a loaf of bread €0.8.

Travel

You will pay and get yourself to the project. We will guide you through local transport and may be able to meet you. Buses from Saranda (4hrs/€9) or Tirana (6hrs/€11). However, if you do not leave early you may not get all the way in one day without hitching or getting a taxi. A taxi costs about €25/hr.

Health and Safety

Albanians are justifiably proud of their hospitality. The impression often given by media is false. You need not worry about personal security. Traffic should be your main concern. There is a hospital in the town.

Free time. Locally – hiking (peaks up to 1600m), enjoying wildlife (see <https://verdantecology.co.uk/index.php/albania/> for species lists), swimming (streams/rivers), horse-riding, hanging out with local people, military infrastructure, ancient orchards, vineyards, churches, mosques, ruins, villages, waterfalls, folk music. An hour or 2 car/bus ride – hot springs, mountain peaks up to 2500m, archaeological sites, rafting/canoeing, museums.

Weather

Variable. May - new snow is unlikely but rain/cloud common - temperatures: low of 10°C high of 25°C, increasing into summer to highs of 35°C, thunderstorms common.

Wifi

Yes – readily available.

Contact

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