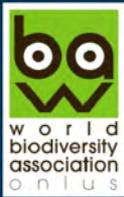


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Muscari gussonei (Parl.) Nyman - Italy, Sicily (CL): Gela, Poggio Arena

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***Muscari gussonei* (Parl.) Nyman.** It is an endemic plant of the Asparagaceae family that lives exclusively in Sicily. It grows solely on sandy soils and on consolidated dune systems, preferring the area behind the dunes, which is less exposed to winds. It is distributed in the south-eastern coast of Sicily from Gela to Vittoria with a highly fragmented range and with a spring bloom. In the last decades, this species has progressively shrunk due to lack of land management policies and the rarefaction of its habitat threatened by greenhouse cultivation and excessive coastal urbanization. *Muscari gussonei* is protected by the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Annex II), by the Berne Convention (Annex I) and is included in the IUCN Red List as EN, for Endangered. During the 2012-2016 period, the project LIFE11 NAT/IT/000232 “Dune habitats protection in the greenhouse landscape of the Gela Gulf for the safeguarding of *Leopoldia gussonei*” was carried out for the conservation of this species. With this project, targeted interventions were carried out in order to identify and monitor populations, decrease anthropic pressure on dune habitats, restore and improve the management of degraded dune and behind the dunes environments, encourage agricultural systems with low environmental impact, increase connectivity to internal ecological network in protected areas and increase information and encourage the didactic use of dune areas compatible with the conservation needs of the species. The beneficiaries involved in the LIFE project were the Department of Agriculture of the University of Catania, LIPU BirdLife Italia as the managing body of the RNO Biviere di Gela and the Rural and Territorial Development Department of the Sicily Region.

