

the Red Kite



and the  
**LIFE MILVUS**  
project

The Red Kite is a magnificent bird of prey that patrols the countryside in search of food. It causes no damage to crops or livestock. On the contrary, it helps control populations of rodents, magpies and crows, and removes dead animals that could otherwise become sources of disease. It therefore plays an important role in maintaining the ecological balance of rural areas.

After disappearing from southern Calabria many decades ago, the Red Kite has returned thanks to a reintroduction programme developed by the Aspromonte National Park as part of the LIFE MILVUS project.

The birds released in Aspromonte are fitted with identification rings, blue with white letters, and GPS transmitters that allow their movements to be monitored.



The countryside in and around the Aspromonte area is dotted with open-top irrigation tanks, known locally as "gebbie". During long periods of drought, when the water level is low, animals trying to drink from a gebbia can fall in and find themselves unable to get out. To prevent this silent tragedy, the Aspromonte National Park, through the LIFE MILVUS project, is installing wildlife escape ramps in dozens of tanks.



Using easy-to-find materials, and at almost no cost, you can build a simple escape structure and save the lives of animals that are only trying to drink and survive.

*If you find a Red Kite or another dead bird in your gebbia, please report it to the Aspromonte National Park (info.posta@parconazionaleaspromonte.it, tel. 0965/743060). Your report will help us plan future action to protect the species.*



e-distribuzione

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Graphic design and illustrations N. Cillo  
Texts A. Cenerini, G. Ceccolini • English adaptation A. Green  
Photos A. Cenerini, B. Maisano, P. Nicolai, S. Urso



**Let's stop  
animals drowning  
in irrigation tanks!**

# Gebbie\*: a lifeline for wildlife, or deadly traps?

★ Gebbie are traditional open-top irrigation tanks used in the Aspromonte countryside.

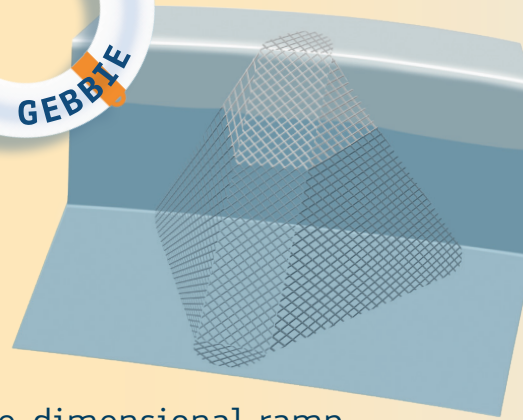
Gebbie allow wildlife to drink even during dry periods, when it is difficult to find water elsewhere. Unfortunately, when the tanks are not full, they can become deadly traps for animals, especially birds, including Red Kites. Once birds fall into the water while trying to drink, they cannot take off again or reach the edge. They are condemned to a terrible death from exhaustion or drowning.

## Let's stop these silent deaths

- If you have a gebbia, install an escape ramp, or more than one if the tank is very large. These ramps allow birds to get out of the water, dry off and fly away, without interfering with the normal use of the gebbia for irrigation.
- Install an escape ramp even if your gebbia is empty, because many animals, not only birds, can fall in and die.

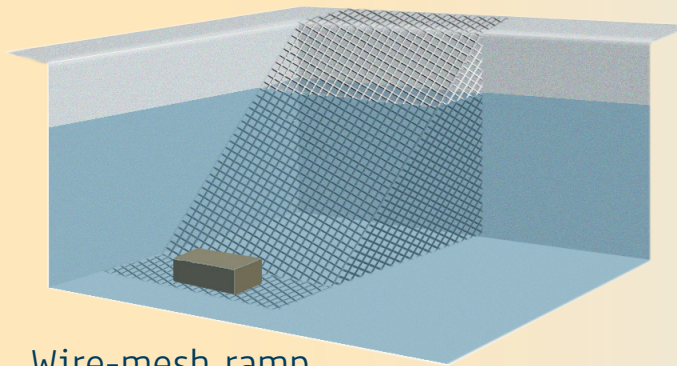


## Do-it-yourself solutions



### Three-dimensional ramp

(Also suitable for round tanks)

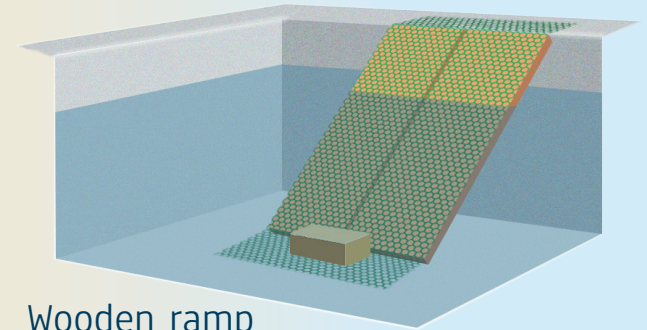


### Wire-mesh ramp

Materials: hot-dip galvanised welded wire mesh with 30 mm x 30 mm square openings and 3-4 mm wire.

Measurements: minimum ramp width 50 cm; slope 35-45°. Cut and shape the mesh as needed to form the ramp. Smooth any sharp edges with an angle grinder to prevent animals from injuring themselves. Make sure the ramp fits closely against one wall of the tank, and attach a brick or iron tube to the lower edge so that it rests firmly on the bottom.

Fix a triangular piece of mesh to the side opposite the tank wall. This is important because it prevents animals from getting underneath the ramp and becoming trapped.

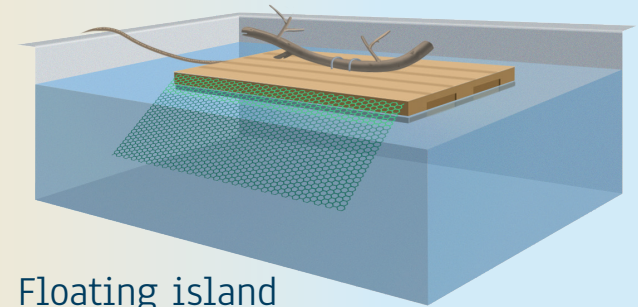


### Wooden ramp

Materials: two pressure-treated wooden boards, each 14.5 cm wide; plastic-coated hot-dip galvanised welded wire-mesh with 10 mm x 10 mm square openings and 3 mm wire; and a weight, such as a brick or iron tube.

Measurements: minimum ramp width 29 cm; slope 35-45°.

Place the two boards side by side and fasten them together, then cover them with mesh. Attach the weight to the edge of the mesh that will rest on the bottom. Fix the ramp to the edge of the tank, at least 50 cm from the nearest wall.



### Floating island

Materials: two pallets, a sheet of expanded polystyrene, plastic-coated hot-dip galvanised welded wire-mesh with 10 mm x 10 mm square openings and 3 mm wire, and a branch.

Insert the polystyrene into one pallet, then use wood from the other pallet to close all the gaps until you have a solid rectangular block. Fix the mesh to one side so that it remains partly submerged, and attach a large branch to the centre of the island. Tie a rope to the pallet so that you can retrieve it.