

An aerial photograph of a wide river with several islands and sandbars. The river is surrounded by dense, lush green forest. The water is a mix of dark and light green, indicating varying depths and sediment. The islands and sandbars are covered in green vegetation or light-colored sand. The overall scene is a vibrant, natural landscape.

THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF ZAGREB COUNTY



ZELENI PRSTEN
Zagrebačke županije

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FOR THE PUBLISHER

dr. sc. Tatjana Masten Milek

EDITOR

Željka Šabarić

EXPERT TEAM

Luka Basrek, Boris Gerenčević, Maja Pintar, Tomica Rubinić, Darko Slukan and Ivana Sučić

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Katerina Vrančić

TRANSLATION

Metis Consulting

PHOTO ARCHIVE

Zeleni prsten Public Institution of Zagreb County, Hyla, the Town of Jastrebarsko, Public institution Nature Park Žumberak - Samobor highlands and Department for physical planning of Zagreb County

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Roman Avdagić, Luka Basrek, Senka Baškiera, Boris Gerenčević, Tomislav Klanfar, Toni Koren, Davor Krnjeta, Tatjana Masten Milek, Perica Mustafić, Nenad Pejušković, Vlado Pirša, Roberta Pišpek, Ronald Popara, Vida Posavec Vukelić, Tomica Rubinić, Darko Slukan, Ivana Sučić, Željka Šabarić, Goran Šafarek, Ivan Batušić, Ana Štih and Mario Žilec

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Marbled White

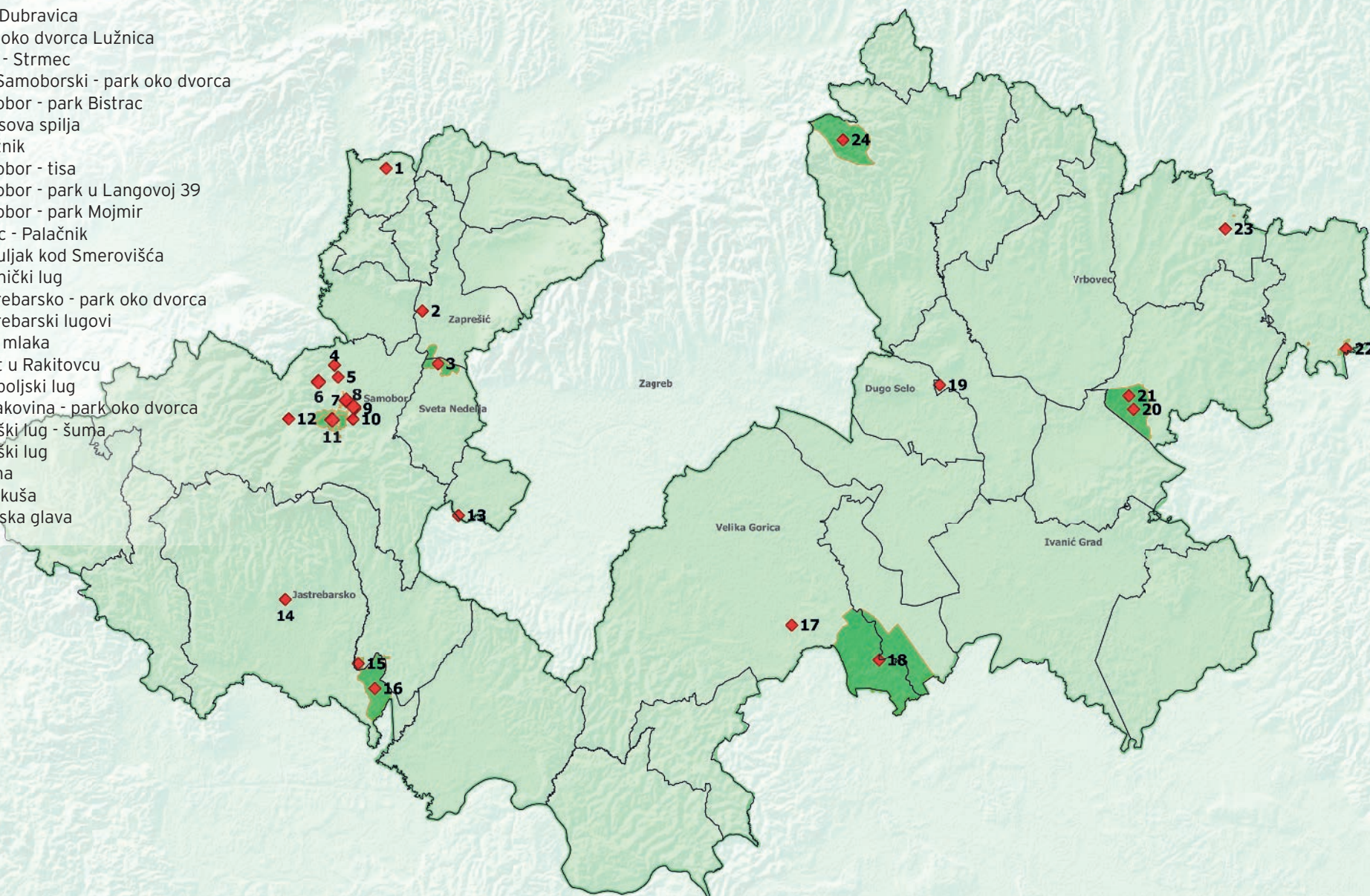


European bee-eater

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Zagreb County is characterized by a wealth of natural resources, especially forests, wetlands, karst phenomena and the great diversity of flora and fauna. Protected areas cover as much as 37,690 ha, which represents 12.2% of the Zagreb County area. Zeleni prsten Public Institution manages protected areas and other protected parts of nature of Zagreb County. The purpose of our activities is to manage protected areas by protecting, maintaining and promoting our natural resources. Our task is to ensure undisturbed running of natural processes and the sustainable use of natural resources. If you are a nature lover, interested in active holidays and recreation, you must visit the protected areas of Zagreb County. The moor frog, carnivorous plant -common sundew, white-tailed eagle, black stork, snake's head fritillary and other exceptional species are eagerly awaiting you...

Zagreb County, popularly known as the "Zagreb Green Ring", surrounds the city of Zagreb with its natural beauty, attractive locations, and the diversity that only a few capital cities have in their vicinity. As a blend of modern urbanism and preserved natural and cultural values, it is an ideal tourist destination. Come and see nature's opulence and enjoy the beautiful, magical and undiscovered protected areas.

Contact information:

151. samoborske brigade HV 1, 10430 Samobor

Phone: +385(0)16111-552

E-mail: info@zeleni-prsten.hr

OIB: 30375380377



zeleniprsten



zeleni_prsten





CRNA MLAKA

SPECIAL ORNITHOLOGICAL RESERVE



Red-crested pochard

Surrounded by lush forests and densely covered with reeds and aquatic plants, Crna Mlaka is a bird's paradise covering more than 640 ha. It is most interesting during the autumn bird migration when more than 20,000 birds can be seen resting or feeding on their way further south.

Crna Mlaka has an extremely rich and diverse ornithofauna. Ornithologists have recorded more than 200 bird species, which is impressive, considering that there are about 400 species recorded in Croatia.

There are numerous nesting birds: grebes, ducks, coots, terns, water rails, as well as many songbirds which nest in reeds and shrubs. Black storks, black kites, white-tailed eagles, buzzards and other predators nest in the surrounding forests and feed on the ponds, linking these two ecosystems. Larger or smaller flocks of ducks, particularly ferruginous ducks, geese, and waders reside on the ponds during the migration.

Since natural wetlands are disappearing due to drainage or river regulation, carp ponds like the Crna Mlaka are very important. They are of enormous ecological importance and have an indispensable role for European migratory birds traveling through the Eastern Adriatic.

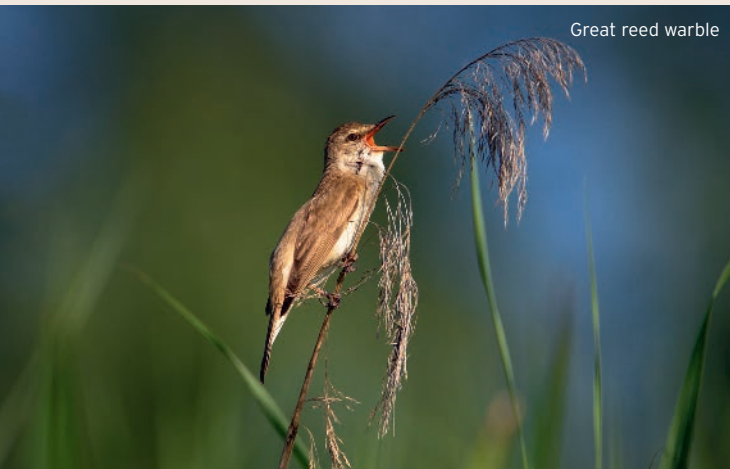
Ponds of Crna Mlaka are home not only to birds but many other animals as well; including the Eurasian beaver, red fox, wild cat, marten, roe deer, water shrew, grass snake, European pond turtle, green frog, tree frog and various invertebrate species. Crna Mlaka is a rich habitat for one of the rarest mammals in the area - the Eurasian otter.



Whiskered tern



Great reed warble



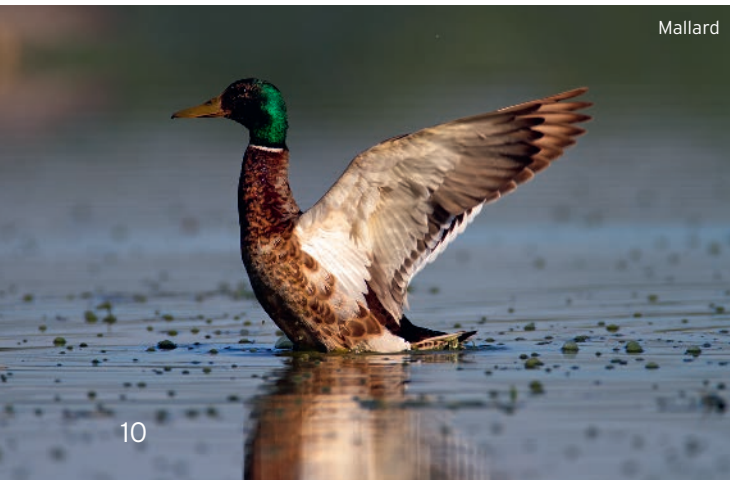
Common kingfisher



The forest ecosystems surrounding the Crna Mlaka ponds belong to three communities: alluvial oak forests, black alder forests, and oak or oak-hornbeam forests. The wetlands and peripheral parts of the fishpond are home to the purple willow, reeds, bulrush and rushes. Water lilies, pond lilies and water chestnuts cover the water surfaces.

Zwilling Castle, or "Ribograd", stands out in the area of the Crna Mlaka Reserve. Architect Julius Deutsch designed a complex of villas, gardens and ancillary buildings in the late Art Deco style, which was constructed between 1914 and 1920.

Mallard



Crna Mlaka was proclaimed a Special Ornithological Reserve in 1980, and in 1993 it was listed as a wetland of international importance according to the Ramsar Convention! The reserve is located in the southwestern part of Zagreb County, in the central part of the wetland forest area of the Kupa River valley. Administratively, it belongs to the city of Jastrebarsko.

The Crna Mlaka Special Ornithological Reserve is closed for tourist visits.



Great crested grebe



Ferruginous duck



DID YOU KNOW?

Crna Mlaka ponds are one of the most important resting sites in Europe for ferruginous ducks; with up to 6000 of them gathering there in the fall. Ferruginous ducks are among the most endangered duck species in Croatia and their numbers are declining throughout Europe. They have chestnut brown feathers, their backs are black, and in flight they can be identified by white feathers on their bellies, on the underwings and under tail. Like other diving ducks or pochards, they collect herbs, invertebrates, fish and sometimes amphibians along the bottom of the pond.

Grey heron





SAVA STRMEC

SPECIAL ORNITHOLOGICAL RESERVE



Eurasian penduline tit

The reserve area partially overlaps with the Natura 2000 site along the Sava River upstream of Zagreb. The value of this area lies in the fact that changes in hydrographic conditions in recent decades have occurred everywhere downstream of the Sava River, draining and urbanizing many of these areas; which made the Sava-Strmec Reserve a refuge for numerous breeding, migratory and wintering birds.



Mute swan

West of Podsused, on the right and left banks of the Sava, there is a special ornithological reserve Sava-Strmec, proclaimed in 1971. It is a unique habitat for numerous bird species, characterised by flood forests of willow, poplar and narrow-leafed ash. In the part of the ornithological reserve there is the natural flow with meanders and backwaters, which is a habitat for numerous bird species.

The reason why this area is proclaimed as the special ornithological reserve is the presence of relatively rare birds, especially near a large city such as Zagreb. To date, more than 150 bird species have been recorded, like a peregrine falcon, little ringed plover, common kingfisher, bee-eater, hoopoe, penduline tit, nightingale and barred warbler. The area is a valuable habitat for four endangered bird species: nesting populations of white-tailed eagle, common sandpiper, sand martin, and migratory population of Caspian tern.

DID YOU KNOW?

The endangered bird species such as white-tailed eagle, black stork and sand martin nowadays nest in and around the reserve, which wasn't the case in the '70s. This is the most important confirmation of the reserve's value and demonstrates the need for its preservation.



European bee-eater



JASTREBARSKI LUGOVI

SPECIAL ORNITHOLOGICAL RESERVE



Black woodpecker

Ornithological Reserve Jastrebarski lugovi (Jastrebarsko Groves) is an area of lowland forests of common oak, ash, elm, field maple and alder; with some oaks, ashes and elms being more than 150 years old. Due to the depression of the area, the water lingers for a long time, turning the forest soil into wetland. The management of this reserve is focused on the preservation of centuries-old groups of trees that are habitats of white-tailed eagles.

The area of Jastrebarski lugovi was proclaimed in 1967 as a special ornithological reserve, being a habitat for the white-tailed eagle, a rare and endangered predator. Jastrebarski lugovi are located in the municipality of Klinča Sela on an area of 62.5 ha, and include forest areas along the left bank of the Okičnica River.



Black stork



DID YOU KNOW?

The white-tailed eagle is the largest eagle in Europe with a wingspan of up to 2.4 meters. Its most striking weapon are the sharp claws on his feet that can grab the prey and take it to a nest or some other quiet place. It lives in a couple its whole life, and the connection between partners is strengthened by display flights. White-tailed eagle pairs nest together in tall ash or oak treetops near ponds, rivers, or lakes.

White-tailed eagle



A photograph of a Brežuljak plant, a low-growing shrub with numerous small, bright yellow flowers, growing on a rocky, sloping terrain. The ground is covered with small, light-colored stones and some dry, brown leaves. The background is a blurred, light-colored rock face.

BREŽULJAK KOD SMEROVIŠĆA

SPECIAL BOTANICAL RESERVE



Alyssum of Samobor

Brežuljak kod Smerovišća (Hill near Smerovišće) was protected as a special botanical reserve in 1963. It is a significant floristic locality with the total protected area of 3.04 ha, located on a dolomitic hill composed of sandstone, just above the stream of Lipovačka Gradna (creek) in Samobor, next to an active quarry. It is a home of Samobor alyssum, a delicate bushy plant found in only two locations in the world; and daisy-leaved soapwort, which is a tertiary relic and belongs to the southern European floral element.

Samobor alyssum is a plant of small yellow flowers with modest life requirements. It grows in clusters, and the leaf is hairy on both sides. It blooms in March and April; the leaves are narrow, hairy and greyish green, while the flowers are yellow with four cross-arranged heart-shaped petals. It is affectionately called Samobor degenia. Smerovišće is its only habitat in Croatia.

DID YOU KNOW?

Soapwort is an old medicinal plant, rich in saponins. The plant got its name because saponins create foam after the plant's root is rubbed and submerged in water.



Soapwort



Vankichi/Shutterstock.com



CRET DUBRAVICA

SPECIAL BOTANICAL RESERVE



Round-leaved sundew

A small carnivorous plant, a round-leaved sundew, hides in the bog in Dubravica municipality. The name comes from the tiny transparent droplets that the plant secretes on the leaves, which are reminiscent of dew. The plant is several inches high and has simple leaves like ground rosettes. Since the plant cannot get all the nutrients it needs from the soil, it compensates for the rest by catching small bugs. Tentacles (protrusions on the upper surface of the leaves) secrete a sticky and fragrant fluid that lures insects. When the prey lands on the leaf, the leaf curls to catch it with as many tentacles as possible. The prey is then directed towards digestive glands located at the centre of the leaf. These glands secrete enzymes that break down insect's chitinous armour. The plant absorbs all the soft tissue and the chitin armour remains on the leaf.

The 8.49 ha large area of Cret Dubravica (Dubravica Bog) with the surrounding forest was placed under special protection in 1966. The reserve is located in the Dubrava forest below the Lugaški breg (hill) on the left bank of the Dubrava creek. The bog is almost uniformly covered with low vegetation with occasionally grown shrubs of alder, buckthorn, birch and willow.



Due to their rarity, isolation and small surface area, bogs are listed as the critically endangered habitats of Croatia. One of the last sites of round-leaved sundew in Croatia is Cret Dubravica. Cret Dubravica is also home to a variety of plant species, among which three critically endangered plant species: common cottongrass, fen bedstraw, white beak-sedge; and endangered fungal species: bog bell, sphagnum-bog and galerina are particularly important. Two species of amphibians, forty-three species of butterflies and seven species of vertebrates have also been recorded in the bog area.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sundew can catch up to two thousand insects during the summer!



VAROŠKI LUG

SPECIAL FOREST VEGETATION AND ZOOLOGICAL RESERVE



Black stork



Fox



Wildcat



DID YOU KNOW?

There are two species of storks in Croatia; white and black. Unlike its cousin the white stork, which protects Croatian villages by nesting on rooftops and chimneys; only true and patient birdwatchers can spot the nest of a black stork in the high treetops of old forests. It inhabits quiet forests surrounded by streams, puddles, ponds, canals and wet meadows. Its nests are built on big old trees. Even though black storks are monogamous, the connection during the year usually lasts only for the breeding season and is renewed every spring.

Hare



Varoški lug Special Zoological Reserve (Varoš Grove) covers the area of 897.03 ha and lies southwest of Vrbovec. This area is especially interesting because it is inhabited by numerous representatives of Central European fauna: red deer, roe deer, wild boar, wild cat, badger, pine marten, red fox, least weasel, western polecat and others. There are numerous bird species in the area, such as common buzzard, marsh harrier, great spotted woodpecker, lesser spotted woodpecker, blue tit, marsh tit, nuthatch and many others. This reserve is especially valuable as black stork and lesser spotted eagle are nesting in the area, with the high possibility of the white-tailed eagle nesting. Varoški lug Special Forest Vegetation Reserve is a typical habitat of pedunculate oak forests together with hornbeam, and in the lowlands the pedunculate oak forest with a dyer's whin and remote sedge.



STUPNIČKI LUG

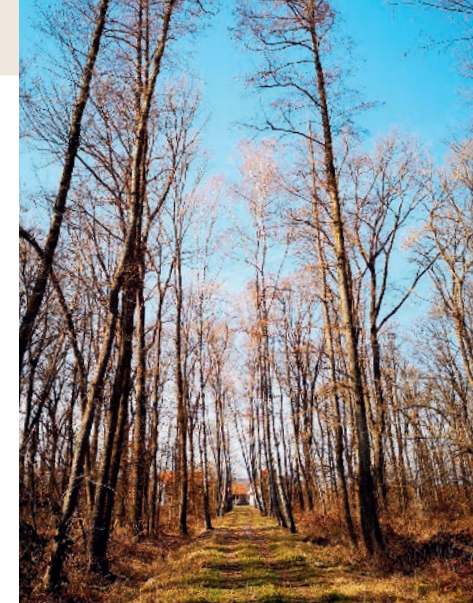
SPECIAL FOREST VEGETATION RESERVE



Dogtooth violet

Stupnički lug (Stupnik Grove) was protected in 1964 as a special reserve of forest vegetation. The reserve is located about 15 km southwest of the centre of Zagreb and covers an area of 19.03 ha.

This area is significant since the basic features of the indigenous pedunculate oak forest, one of the oldest stands of this species in Croatia, have been retained here. Given the indigenusness and age of the pedunculate oak, Stupnički lug has great scientific value for comparative forestry research. Also, it is an ideal area for different outdoor activities - walking, biking, and taking pictures.



DID YOU KNOW?

Stupnički lug is one of the most famous of about fifty remaining localities in Croatia where relict communities of pedunculate oak and hornbeam with beech forests can be found.





ČESMA

SPECIAL FOREST VEGETATION RESERVE

The most prominent natural feature of the Česma forest is the centuries-old, well-preserved forest community of pedunculate oak, common hornbeam and alder forests; with the estimated age of over 140 years. The area is also interesting due to the abundant fauna, as here we can find red deer, roe deer, wild boars, European hares, common pheasants and grey partridges. There are also predators such as foxes, pine martens, wild cats, hawks and owls. The forest is also a valuable habitat for white-tailed eagles.

The area of the Česma Special Forest Vegetation Reserve is one of the typical habitats of pedunculate oak in Croatia, where we can witness drying of pedunculate oak. The regulation of the river Česma significantly changed its flow, creating long and flat beds, and the old winding stream remained in the forest and on plains as a meander in which water is retained.

The total area of the reserve is 50.84 ha. It is located in the eastern part of Zagreb County, in the municipality of Farkaševac, and has been protected since 1982.



DID YOU KNOW?

In the part of the Česma forest there is an alder carr which is caused by the flood of water as a special formation around which the sludge is formed.



Great spotted woodpecker



White-tailed eagle

A photograph of a forest with tall trees and a wooden shelter on the left. The ground is covered in fallen leaves, and there are wooden benches in the foreground. The text 'NOVAKUŠA' is overlaid on the image.

NOVAKUŠA

SPECIAL FOREST VEGETATION RESERVE

The Novakuša area was protected in 1982 and comprises two forests units covering an area of 1.95 ha. It is located in the eastern part of Zagreb County, in the Gradec municipality.

In the 1960s, conifers, mainly European spruce, European larch and eastern white pine, were artificially introduced into parts of the area. In the forests of pedunculate oak and common hornbeam the following strictly protected plants of the orchid family can be found: broad-leaved helleborine, common twayblade, bird's nest orchid and lesser butterfly-orchid.

DID YOU KNOW?

Edible rhizomes of lesser butterfly-orchid, being rich in starch, were once cooked or baked, then dried and ground into flour.



Lesser butterfly-orchid



Squirrel



TEPEC - PALAČNIK AND STRAŽNIK

PARK FOREST



The Tepec-Palačnik and Stražnik forest parks with a total area of more than 330 ha were protected in 1970. The part of Tepec called Anindol (named after the Chapel of St. Anne) is a home for different types of conifers: spruce, pine, eastern white pine, larch, chestnut and oak. Palačnik is a natural, high-quality beech forest with coniferous trees. Sunny Stražnik is a mixture of sessile oak, turkey oak, sycamore maple and black pine. Unlike indigenous deciduous forests in the Samobor region, coniferous forests were artificially erected by afforestation that began on Stražnik in 1900 and nowadays form a distinctive landscape of the town of Samobor. As early as the mid-19th century, the people of Zagreb began to travel more and more intensively to the surrounding area, primarily for health and recreational purposes.



The remains of the old town of Samobor dating from the 13th century are also found in the Tepec forest. Numerous kings and nobles have been lords of the old town of Samobor for centuries, starting with the Czech king Otakar who built it in 1268, probably on the site of an already existing building. Members of noble families Arpadović, Babonić, Anžulin, Frankopan, Erdödy, Counts of Celje, Matija Korvin, Ungnad, Gruber, Auersperg, Kulmer, Kiepac, Alnoch and Montecuccoli all lived in the old town of Samobor for years and have enlarged and improved it during that period. From the initial Romanesque-Gothic burgh with a large tower, it eventually acquired the Late Gothic-Renaissance forms to become a Baroque castle in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.



There are 73 bird species found in the Tepec area. Some of them are northern goshawk, common buzzard, black woodpecker, long-eared owl, great spotted woodpecker, pied wagtail and Eurasian wren. Surprisingly, here you can find a wallcreeper, a high mountain species that lives on rocks and cliffs above the tree-line, and migrates to lower areas in winter. In the forest park area, this species is present on the ruins of the Old Town, where it lingers until high snow.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some of the Croatian most famous writers - Petar Preradović, Stanko Vraz, August Šenoa, Antun Gustav Matoš - strolled through the forest. The forest inspired Marko Vukasović to write the favourite song of all people of Samobor "Kod kapele Sv. Ane". Also, Anne's park is the location where parts of one of the most famous Croatian movies „Tko pjeva zlo ne misli” (directed by Krešo Golik) were filmed.



ZELINSKA GLAVA

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE

The area of Zelinska glava was protected in 1992 as a significant landscape. The protected area of 1,003.94 ha covers Mala and Velika Reka with valley meadows along Velika Reka, old Zelingrad with its surroundings, abandoned quarry dig in the Velika Reka valley, open areas of vineyards and orchards above Hrastovec, valley and hill meadows of Kladeščica and the forest complex of the Bistrica creek valley.

The significant landscape Zelinska glava extends northwest of the town of Sveti Ivan Zelina and represents the easternmost branches of the Medvednica massif. Spacious mountain meadows alternate in the landscape with forests. In this area of Medvednica the diversity and abundance of terrestrial vegetation were preserved, and the spring flowers are especially prominent.



DID YOU KNOW?

The protected area is dominated by the walls of medieval Zelingrad built in the years after the Tatar invasion. Zelingrad was first mentioned in 1295 when it housed a citadel with a royal crew.





TUROPOLJSKI LUG

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE



Turopoljski lug (Turopolje grove) and wet meadows along the Odra River were protected in 2003 as a significant landscape with a total area of 3,403.56 ha. Here, we can find three interwoven areas: preserved complex of floodplain oak forests - Turopoljski lug, wet meadows along the river Odra and the natural course of the river Odra. Odransko polje with its surrounding forests is natural retention, being able to receive huge amounts of water, thus protecting the settlements located downstream along the Sava River.

Research to date has shown that this area is characterized by a great diversity of habitats and, consequently, an abundance of plant and animal species, most of which are protected by the Nature Protection Act, and some protected at European level. In this area, 48 different habitat types, 358 plant taxa, 133 species of beetles, 60 species of spiders, 73 species of butterflies, 23 species of dragonflies, 13 species of amphibians, 9 species of reptiles, 23 species of fish and 33 species of mammals have been recorded.

These habitats are particularly distinguished by the abundance and diversity of bird species, with more than 200 species recorded. Among the most endangered are the lesser spotted eagle, white-tailed eagle, Montagu's harrier and the corncrake that nest in the wet meadows along Odra.

Due to the regular floods, life in this area is not easy at all, but people, plants and animals that live there are accustomed to such conditions.

DID YOU KNOW?

A mysterious corncrake bird comes here to fall in love and raise a family. During nesting, it rarely flies and spends most of its time hidden in the grass. It is threatened by overgrowing of meadows, premature mowing as well as mechanical and circular mowing from the edge towards the middle of the field. Because of this, both the corncrake and hand mowers are a symbol of the coexistence of humans and nature.



A photograph of the interior of Grčosova Spilja cave. The ceiling is covered with numerous long, thin stalactites hanging down. The floor is covered with many tall, thin stalagmites. The cave walls are rocky and uneven. The lighting is warm and yellow, highlighting the textures of the rock formations.

GRČOSOVA SPILJA

GEOMORPHOLOGICAL NATURE MONUMENT



At the end of 1973, in the village of Otruševac near Samobor, Josip Grgos discovered a cave while looking for the raw materials for lime production. In 1974, the cave was protected as a geomorphological nature monument. Forty years later the entrance to another cave, known as the New Grgos Cave, was discovered and visitors can visit it since 2008. Both caves are relatively small in size, but extremely rich in speleothems. They are a tourist attraction and a recognizable part of Zagreb County geo-heritage.

The special values of the caves are numerous speleothems in different colours: white, pale yellow, yellow, orange and brown. According to the analysis, it was found out that it consists of 95% calcium carbonate and 5% aluminosilicate. So far, the age and the prevailing climatic conditions of two speleothems from the New Grgos Cave have been analysed. One stalactite began to grow 10,500 years ago and stopped growing about 2,300 years ago. During the growth period, it grew at a rate of 0.8 to 1 cm in 100 years. The oldest part of the second stalagmite is about 40,000 years old with a change in the growth rate of 0.1 to 1 cm in 100 years.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nine invertebrate groups live in the Grgos Cave; spiders, pseudoscorpions, isopods, centipedes, millipedes, springtails, two-pronged bristletails, beetles and orthoptera. Croatia is the world's focal point for biodiversity by its richness in subterranean species, and many species that inhabit the Croatian underworld are endemic to Croatia or the Dinarides.



DID YOU KNOW?

In Croatia, there are
36 trees categorised
as nature monuments;
9 of which are
pedunculate oak trees.

In the yard of the Rakitovec Regional School there is a pedunculate oak tree protected in 2001. It is about 110 years old, 22 meters high, its crown diameter is almost 20 meters, the perimeter is about 380 cm and chest diameter is 121 cm. Due to its age, size and magnificence, the Zagreb County Assembly protected it in 2001 as a rare tree specimen in the category of nature monuments.

On the occasion of Earth Day the Zeleni prsten Public Institution, together with schoolchildren, planted the "younger brother" near this century-old oak to raise awareness and influence children on issues of nature protection and conservation of our planet.

HRAST U RAKITOVCU

NATURE MONUMENT - RARE TREE SPECIES





msnobody/Shutterstock.com

This common yew, protected in 1963, is located next to the building at 17 Perkovčeva Street in Samobor. It is a centuries-old beautiful specimen of an indigenous coniferous tree. The trunk of the said yew branches at a height of 50 cm in two arms, with a magnificent, more than 10 metres high, treetop.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to family records, the yew tree is over 250 years old.



SAMOBOR - TISA

PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



SAMOBOR - PARK U LANGOVOJ 39

PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



Wood anemone

This park that stretches at 0.61 ha, is located in Samobor, in 39 Milan Lang Street (next to the Wagner - Bilokapić house), near the main square. It was created in 1878 as a small landscape park with valuable and harmonious clusters of trees, and in 1962 it was protected as a park architecture monument.

Since its inception, the floral composition of the park has changed, but it has maintained its garden specialty with exceptionally beautiful specimens of trees that still adorn it. The oldest specimens of trees in the park are the old copper beech (over 3m in diameter), planted when the park was founded, and the giant redwood (over 5m in diameter), planted in 1880. Notable species in the park include white fir, thuja, red secar, tulip tree, cedar of Lebanon, ginkgo, Veitch's silver-fir, eastern hemlock, European larch, Norway spruce, common yew, eastern white pine, catalpa, honey locust, Kentucky coffee tree, Norway maple, English oak, common beech and common hornbeam.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is the only specimen of the Cedar of Lebanon in Samobor.



Spring crocus





LUG SAMOBORSKI - PARK OKO DVORCA

PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



The park in Lug was protected in 1964 and covers an area of 6.46 ha. It was erected around the historicist castle "Balagovi dvori" with the baroque style elements. In the past it was owned by the noble families Drašković, Erdödy, Kulmer and Kiepach. The castle and park got their present appearance in 1830 and until today remain the largest castle park in the Samobor area.

The park was erected on the natural habitat of the pedunculate oak, hornbeam and beech forests, of which small groups are still preserved. The park itself is home to a large number of exotic deciduous and coniferous trees, of which the plane trees, bald cypress, eastern white pine, larch and western red cedar are worth mentioning. Of the native species, the impressive century-old pedunculate oak, wild chestnut, beech and hornbeam group stand out. The oldest specimens of trees in the park are the old plane tree (3 m in diameter) and the pedunculate oak (4.5 m in diameter) which were planted around 1880.

DID YOU KNOW?

The park is designed in the free English style with a small lake and islet in the middle and is the only one of its kind in Samobor.





SAMOBOR - BISTRAC PARK

PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



Common hepatica

Bistrac Park was protected in 1969 and covers the area of 2.13 ha. The park around the curia was founded by the original owner, family Ruic de Roxas. It is designed in a free style, with deciduous trees and conifers, of which the copper beech with a diameter of 1.30 m, London plane tree as well as larch and spruce trees, stand out in particular. In addition to these trees, there are specimens of wild chestnut, hornbeam and other native tree species.

The park, like the castle, often changed owners and users, but was regularly maintained until the 1980s.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the spring the park is populated by numerous spring flowers. The most common are snowdrops, spring snowflakes, spring crocus, primrose, snake's head and buttercups. The snowdrop is the earliest spring flower, it already blooms under the snow, but the spring crocus does not thrive in the shade, it likes bright and airy environment.





JASTREBARSKO - PARK OKO DVORCA

PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



The Jastrebarsko park architecture monument is landscaped in English style, characterised by the space design which harmoniously interweaves spirit and nature. Like many other similar parks, this one is intended primarily for relaxation and citizens' recreation. The 10.1 ha of the park have been under protection since 1963.

There are about sixty plant and animal species in the park with approximately 9000 specimens. The park harbours many valuable plant species, such as native specimens of pedunculate oak, maple, copper beech and hornbeam, and an impressive group of old spruce, larch and Scots pine.



In terms of age and development of treetops, significant exotic species are catalpa, Japanese pagoda tree and weeping willows in the castle's moat.

Due to its size and its beautiful and wide canopy, beech is a frequent resident of parks and gardens. One particular example was the centuries-old beech tree in Erdödy castle park in Jastrebarsko. Unfortunately, it was destroyed during the 2013 storm.



DID YOU KNOW?

The park also houses Erdödy Castle. In its original function, it was a Wasserburg-type castle, a lowland fortress surrounded by water trenches that are now saturated and green but still visible in the terrain. According to archival records, the castle was built by Matija Gereb between 1483 and 1489. In the first half of the 16th century, the Erdödy family came into possession of the Jastrebarsko manor, including the castle, and owned it until 1922.





BOŽJAKOVINA - PARK OKO DVORCA

PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



The park surrounding the castle in Božjakovina covers an area of 7.39 ha and was protected in 1965. The property and the castle first belonged to the Frankopan family and later to the Drašković family. In the second half of the 19th century, the park was renovated and used by the Zagreb Forestry Academy, when the park and its surrounding area became an exemplary terrestrial asset. Later the park was treated as an arboretum of Savska Banovina. Since 2005, the park is owned by the private company. The park contains old and preserved specimens of trees, most notably giant redwood, plane trees, Caucasian, Spanish and white fir, spruce, northern white-cedar, Jeffrey pine, American storax, Osage orange, Norway, silver and sycamore maple, pedunculate oak, linden, wild chestnut and narrow-leafed ash.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first gardening school in Croatia was founded in Božjakovina in 1931.





SAMOBOR - MOJ MIR PARK

PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



Mojmir Park in Samobor at 43 Giznik, is located on the gentle north-western slope of Giznik hill. It was protected in 1976 on an area of 1.02 ha. Judge Stjepan Drčić founded it and had the trees planted in the second half of the last century. Today it is owned by the Muačević family. The composition of the park is freestyle. The central part of the park was once symmetrically planted with boxwood hedges and peony shrubs in the Baroque parterre style.

The park has very rich dendroflora dominated by Spanish fir, Greek fir, Sitka spruce, Siberian larch, Port Orford cedar, Japanese cypress, American tulip tree, plane tree, copper beech, American linden, black poplar, Norway and sycamore maple.

DID YOU KNOW?

Siberian larch is an interesting species. Even though it has needle-like leaves, it is a deciduous plant. The tree can grow up to 40 meters high with a trunk diameter greater than 1.5 meters.



Hacquetia



PARK OKO DVORCA LUŽNICA

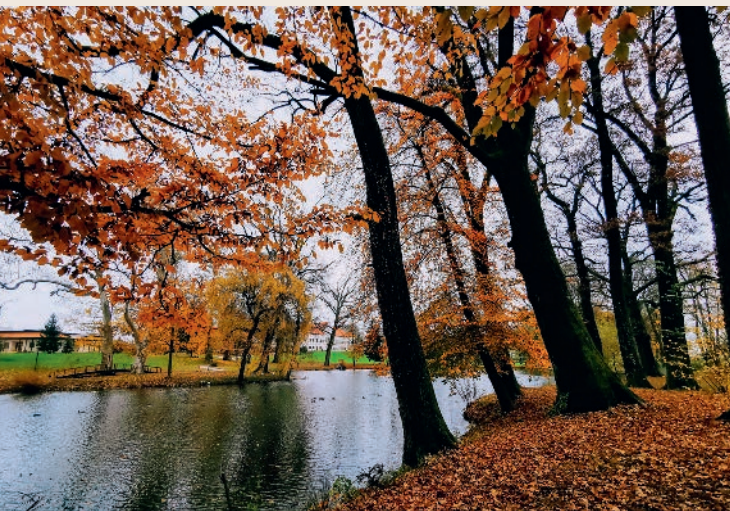
PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT



The park surrounding Lužnica castle was protected in 2019, covering an area of 11.65 ha. The park was designed as an English garden influenced by the French late Baroque garden; with hedges and colourful flower beds. One of the most important features is the lake on the southwestern side of the park, rich in flora and fauna. Two pathways are leading to the lake, and in the immediate vicinity are two groves (small forest areas) adjacent to the resting spaces.

The upper part of the park is dominated by maintained lawns, while the lower level is dominated by landscape style flower meadows with arches, bridges and benches with rest areas. Along with solitary trees, there are groups of trees, groves; while the lower levels of the garden are dominated by ornamental shrubs and floral elements, predominately tree roses. The tree line surrounds the eastern border up to the park entrance.





DID YOU KNOW?

On the north side of the castle is a plane tree which is, according to records, over 400 years old!

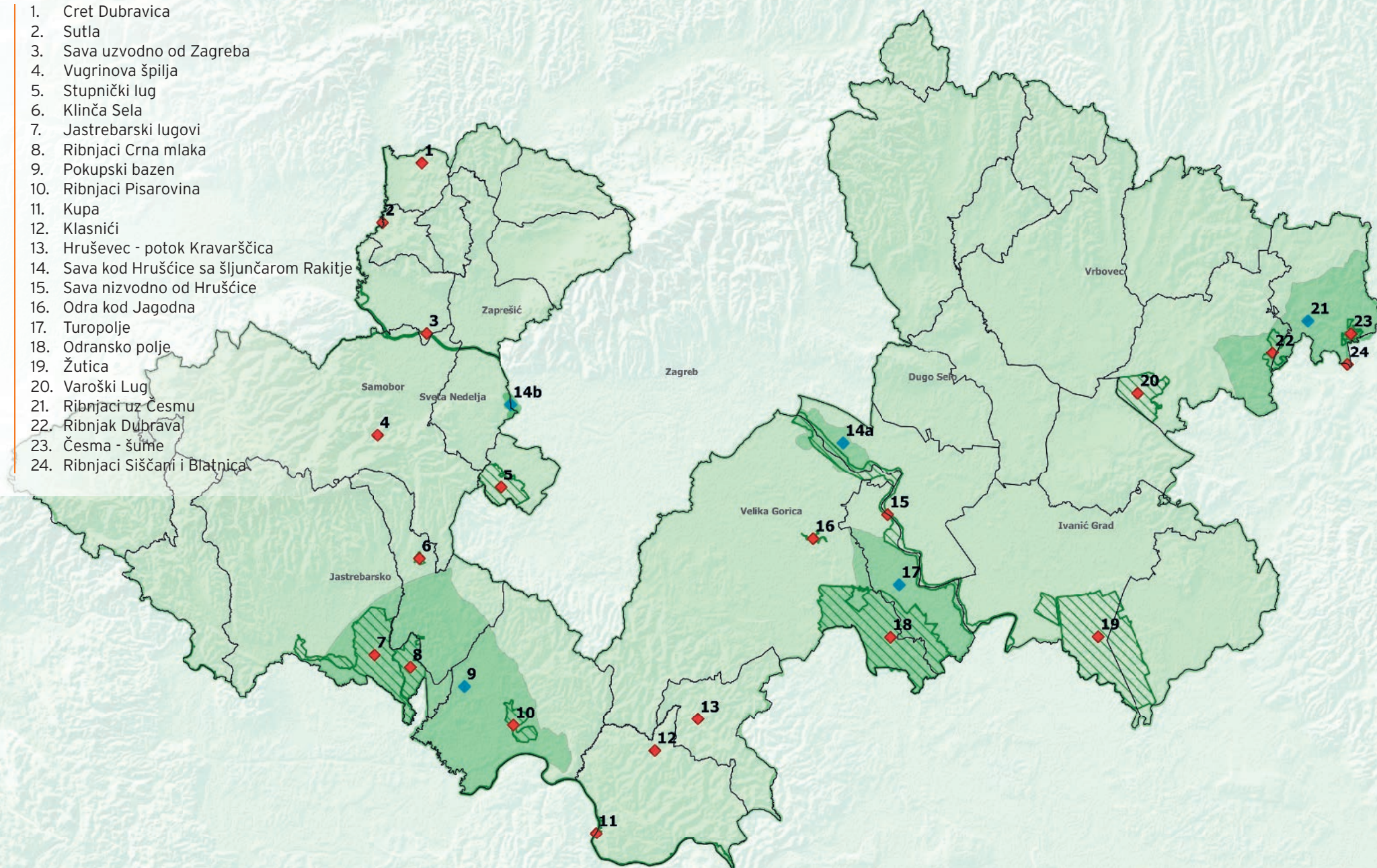


Lužnica castle was built in the second half of the 18th century and is an example of a multi-winged open castle, a type of castle often found in Hrvatsko Zagorje. The castle has the status of a first-class cultural monument. It is owned by the St. Vincent of Paul Sisters of Charity Congregation, and there is a Spiritual-Educational Centre Mary's Court, run by the nuns.



MAP OF NATURA AREAS

1. Cret Dubravica
2. Sutla
3. Sava uzvodno od Zagreba
4. Vugrinova špilja
5. Stupnički lug
6. Klinča Sela
7. Jastrebarski lugovi
8. Ribnjaci Crna mlaka
9. Pokupski bazen
10. Ribnjaci Pisarovina
11. Kupa
12. Klasnići
13. Hruševac - potok Kravarščica
14. Sava kod Hrušćice sa šljunčarom Rakitje
15. Sava nizvodno od Hrušćice
16. Odra kod Jagodna
17. Turopolje
18. Odransko polje
19. Žutica
20. Varoški Lug
21. Ribnjaci uz Česmu
22. Ribnjak Dubrava
23. Česma - šume
24. Ribnjaci Siščani i Blatnica





European tree frog

What is Natura 2000?

Natura 2000 is an ecological network composed of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species and some rare natural habitat types of European Union. Its goal is to preserve or restore the favourable status of more than a thousand endangered and rare species and about 230 natural and semi-natural habitat types. So far, the network includes around 26,000 areas on almost 20% of the EU's territory, making it the largest network of protected areas in the world.

Natura 2000 includes areas important for the preservation and conservation status of wild bird species of interest to the European Union, as well as their habitats, and areas important for the conservation of migratory bird species, in particular wetlands of international importance - Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and areas important for conservation and preservation of the favourable status of other wild species and their habitats, as well as the natural habitat types of European Union interest - Special Areas of Conservations (SACs)

In addition to the protected areas, the Zeleni prsten Public Institution of Zagreb County manages 24 areas of the ecological network. Of these, 4 relate to conservation areas with importance for birds (SPAs) (Sava kod Hrušćice, Turopolje, Pokupski bazen and Ribnjaci uz Česmu) and 20 conservation areas important to species and habitats (SACs) (Cret Dubravica, Vugrinova špilja, Gornji Hruševac - potok Kravarščica, Klasnići, Česma - šume, Varoski lug, Ribnjaci Pisarovina, Sava nizvodno od Hrušćice, Stupnik lug, Kupa, Odra kod Jagodna, Žutica, Ribnjaci Crna mlaka, Klinča Sela, Sutla, Ribnjaci Sisčani, Odransko Polje, Jastrebarsko lugovi, Ribnjaci Dubrava and Sava uzvodno od Zagreba).

A landscape photograph capturing a sunset over a rural scene. The sky is filled with vibrant orange and red clouds, with the sun partially obscured by a dark line of trees in the distance. In the foreground, a group of dark-colored horses stands in a grassy field. A body of water in the lower part of the frame reflects the colorful sky and the silhouettes of the horses and trees. Bare tree branches are visible in the upper right corner.

ŽUTICA

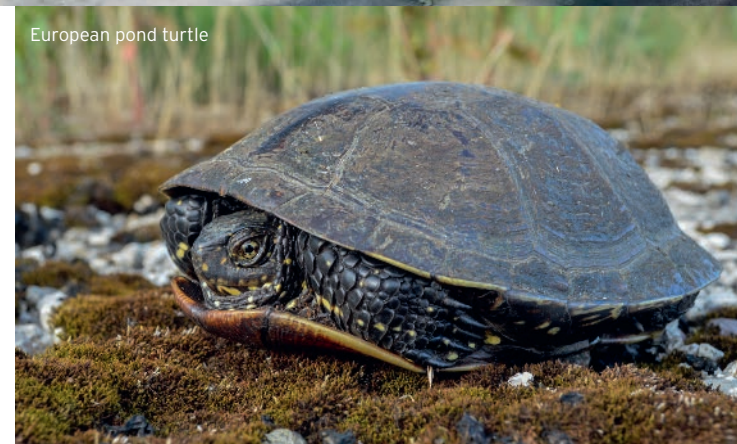
NATURA AREA



The Žutica forest is one of the largest lowland floodplain forests in Croatia and the first natural retention of the Sava River downstream of Zagreb. It extends over 4.600 ha in the floodplain area of Lonjsko Polje and belongs to lowland floodplain forests. It is located about thirty kilometres from Zagreb in the town of Ivanić-Grad and the municipality of Križ. The floodplain of the Žutica forest is characterized by backwaters, canals, ponds and is a suitable habitat for diverse wildlife.

In addition to the vast wetlands, Žutica is characterized by a forest of giant green pedunculated oak trees. A dyer's broom, after which the forest was most likely named, grows in the shadows of these giant trees. At the edge of the forest is one of the most dynamic, but unfortunately the most endangered habitats - floodplain pastures of the Žutica forest.

This area has been an oil field with more than 200 wells for 40 years, and yet there are rich flora and fauna typical for marshy forests of northern Croatia. In the Žutica forest we find a very large number of different habitats. It is interesting to note that a quarter of the total amphibian and reptile species living in Croatia were found in Žutica.



European pond turtle

Due to this extraordinary richness of flora and fauna, Žutica is part of the European Ecological Network - Natura 2000.

To date, 309 species of nocturnal butterflies, 9 species of amphibians and 6 species of reptiles have been reported. Žutica is an important habitat for the Italian crested newt and Danube crested newt; European fire-bellied toad, European pond turtle, Eurasian beaver and otter.

Žutica is included in the ecological network to preserve four valuable habitat types: natural eutrophic waters with vegetation of sub-Atlantic and central European oaks and oak-hornbeam forests, alluvial forests and floodplain mixed forests.

Snake's head fritillary



Croatian Posavac



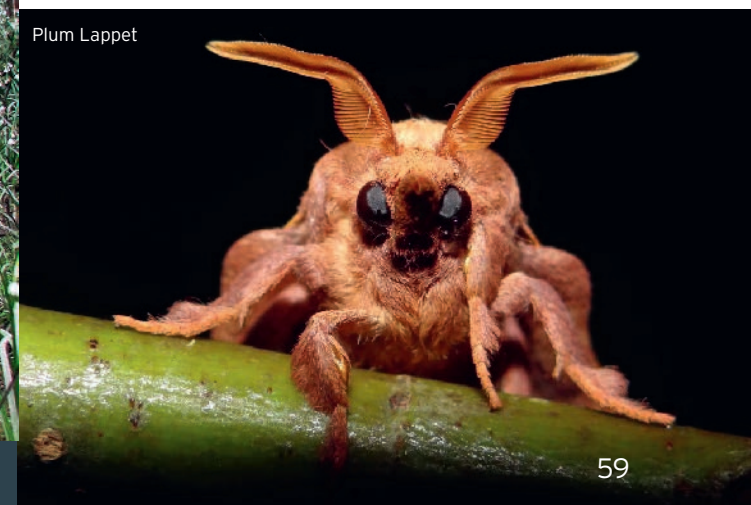


Moor frog



DID YOU KNOW?

Blue frogs aren't always blue! To attract females during mating season, brown males of moor frogs gradually change colour to sky-blue. The more perfect the blue - the more offspring!



Plum Lappet



SAVA KOD HRUŠĆICE

NATURA AREA



Sand martin

Sava kod Hrušćice (Sava near Hrušćica) is the last remaining site on the Sava River where habitats of natural gravel-bars and islands are still being created to a significant extent. Steep river banks without vegetation and poorly overgrown or bare gravel-bars are essential habitats for nesting birds such as terns and plovers that nest on gravel banks; as well as for sand martins, bee-eaters and common kingfishers that nest on steep shores without vegetation.



Since 2019 this site includes the Rakitje gravel pit, the location of the largest Croatian colony of the common tern. Up to 130 pairs of terns nest there but feed mainly on the Sava River. The rest of the population of about thirty pairs of terns nests on a platform built as part of the Interreg project "Čigra" on lake Siromaja in the municipality of Rugvica. In addition to the little and common tern, this Natura site is also important for the preservation of kingfisher, common sandpiper, sand martin, and red-backed shrike. The size of their population indicates the quality of water in the Sava River.



Common tern





POKUPSKI BAZEN

NATURA AREA



Ruff

Pokupski bazen (Pokupsko basin) is a spacious wetland area with very rich floodplain pedunculated oak forests and grasslands that covers more than 35,000 ha of the southwestern part of Zagreb County and the northern part of Karlovac County. The forest complex is one of the largest in Croatia and covers the lowland basin of the Kupa River. Wetland habitats include the Crna mlaka, Draganići and Pisarovina fishponds, as well as the moist grasslands and forests surrounding them.

More than 20,000 birds are present in this area during autumn migration. About 250 bird species have been recorded so far. Most of them are wetland birds, but fish ponds are also important for forest nesting birds, such as white-tailed eagle, black stork and lesser spotted eagle. Pokupsko basin area is important for the conservation of 43 species, of which 12 are endangered, i.e. they are at high risk of extinction.

These are: lesser spotted eagle, western marsh harrier, Montagu's harrier, white-tailed eagle, black kite, purple heron, black stork, red-crested pochard, great bittern, corn crake, little crake and spotted crake.



Purple heron

left: Great egret, right: Grey heron





KUPA
NATURA AREA



The Kupa River is part of the Natura 2000 network in its entire length of 296 km, from the spring in Razloge in Gorski Kotar to its mouth into the Sava River near Sisak. It consists of valuable habitats - watercourses of plain to montane levels with vegetation, hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels, petrifying springs with tufa formation, calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation, alluvial forests and riparian mixed forests. Some of the target Natura species inhabiting this area are the spined loach, southern barbel, Vladykov's lamprey, white-finned gudgeon, European bullhead and Danube salmon; stone crayfish, butterflies: scarce fritillary, jersey tiger and large copper; Eurasian beaver, and thick-shelled river mussel.



Blue-tailed damselfly



Thick shelled river mussel





SAVA UZVODNO OD ZAGREBA

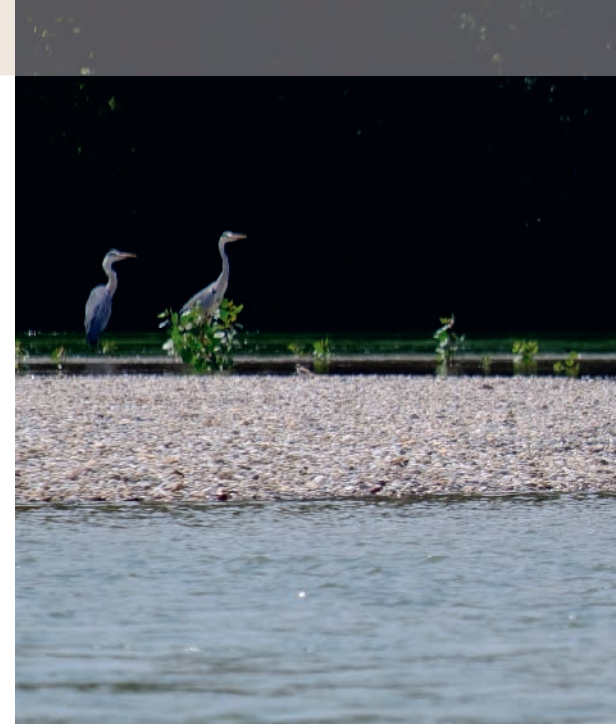
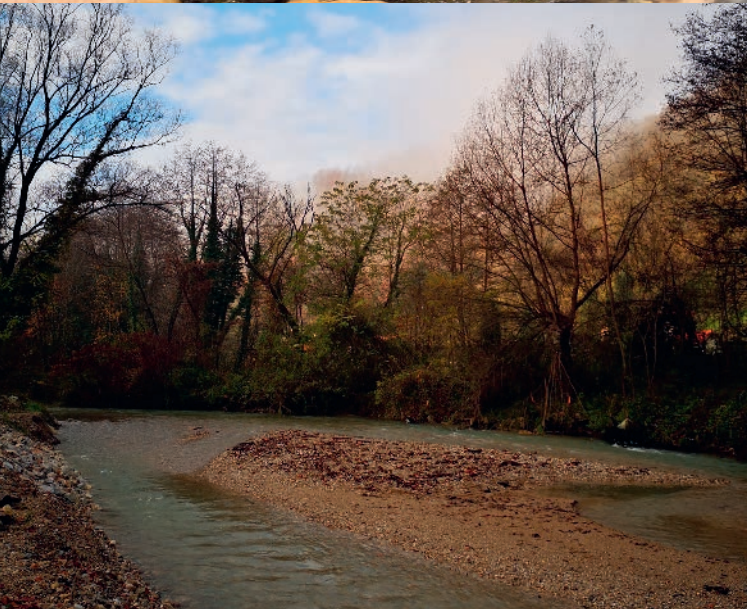
NATURA AREA



Souffia

The Natura 2000 site Sava uzvodno od Zagreba (Sava upstream of Zagreb) extends from the border with Slovenia to the border of Zagreb County and the City of Zagreb, and includes the Bregana creek, a tributary of the Sava River. Bregana creek is included in the National Ecological Network as the only known souffia habitat in Croatia. Other important fish species inhabiting this Natura site are Danube barbel, Balkan spined loach, Danube spined loach, Vladykov's lamprey, stone gudgeon, Danubian roach, Balkan golden loach and streber.

The souffia is a small, freshwater cyprinid fish. It lives in flocks in fast-flowing, clear waters with sandy or rocky bottom. It is very unusually coloured and recognizable by its dark line along the flanks of the body and the orange-red coloration of the bases of the abdominal and pectoral fins. It remains unknown to fishermen as it is very rarely caught.



Common sandpiper



Danubian roach



ODRANSKO POLJE

NATURA AREA

Yellow-bellied toad



The Odra River forms the backbone of the hydrological regime of this area, and originates from several groundwater sources north of Velika Gorica, flows through the Odransko polje (field) parallel to the Sava and flows into the Kupa near Sisak. This flood area is characterized by micro landscape forms that condition the occurrence of different wetland habitats of grassland plant communities and forest communities depending on the flood regime and the level of groundwater.

The target species for this site are European fire-bellied toad, yellow-bellied toad, Italian crested newt, Danube crested newt, European pond turtle, water beetle, stag beetle, great capricorn beetle, marsh fritillary, large copper, Eurasian beaver, Eurasian otter, greater horseshoe bat, Geoffroy's bat, barbastelle bat and water shamrock. The target habitat types are: oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation, natural eutrophic lakes with vegetation, lowland shay-meadows sub-Atlantic medio-European oak or oak-hornbeam forests and alluvial forests.



Otter

Large copper



Stag beetle



White-tailed skimmer





SAVA NIZVODNO OD HRUŠĆICE

NATURA AREA



The Natura 2000 site Sava nizvodno od Hrušćice (Sava downstream of Hrušćica) extends from the border of the City of Zagreb and Zagreb County near the settlements of Hrušćica and Drenje Ščitarjevsko to the border with Serbia. The Sava River is characterized by exceptional biological and landscape diversity. Its basin contains large areas of river wetlands and lowland forests and is a unique example of a river with floodplains that mitigate floods as natural retentions. Valuable habitats found here are natural eutrophic lakes with vegetation, rivers with muddy banks overgrown with vegetation and alluvial forests.

The target species in this site are fish: Sava bleak, asp, Balkan spined loach, Danube spined loach, Vladykov's lamprey, striped ruffe, European bitterling, Danube white-fin gudgeon, Danubian roach streber; dragonfly: green snaketail and shellfish: thick shelled river mussel. Important species for this site are also sterlet and burbot, as well as plants species of gecebiten and water soldier.



Broad-bodied chaser



Swallow



Fire salamander



Deer



European robin



Moor frog



Dusky meadow brown



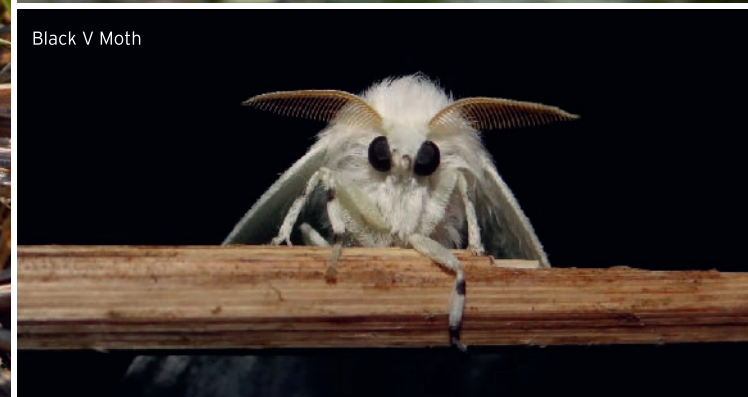
Balkan emerald



Grass snake



Squacco heron



Black V Moth



ZELENI PRSTEN
Zagrebačke županije

Zeleni prsten
Public Institution
of Zagreb County

151. samoborske brigade HV 1
10430 Samobor, Croatia
Phone: +385 (0)1 6111-552
E-mail: info@zeleni-prsten.hr
www.zeleni-prsten.hr

