



Association Hyla (former Croatian Herpetological Society – Hyla) is an NGO founded in 1997 by biologists and nature enthusiasts in order to become a platform for conservation of bio- and geodiversity. We also aim to raise public awareness in that regard and to promote sustainable development.

MISSION

The Association Hyla works in the field of nature research and education with the purpose of evaluating, protecting and conserving nature and the environment.



VISION

The Association strives towards conducting biodiversity and geodiversity research, with emphasis on amphibians, reptiles and habitats in Croatia and worldwide, with the implementation of efficient conservation measures.



sustainable
development

biodiversity

conservation



education



geodiversity



The Balkan terrapin conservation project

European threat category : LC
National threat category: EN B1 + 2ab (ii,iii); C1 + 2a (i)

The main threat to the population is the degradation and disappearance of habitats.

From 2004 till 2014 Hyla has been conducting studies on the Balkan terrapin (*Mauremys rivulata*) in Croatia. The aim of these studies was to identify all of the localities where the Balkan terrapin had been recorded and to define the distribution of the species in Croatia, and to estimate the approximate population size utilising the capture-mark-recapture method. Also, the species' habitat preferences were described and the potential threats to this species were investigated.



The 11-year long survey showed that *Mauremys rivulata* occurs in three geographically isolated populations, which is one of the reasons for its uncertain future. There are approximately 600 individuals combined and it is one of the most endangered reptile species in Croatia. It is strictly protected by the Nature Protection Act and is categorized as "endangered" in the Red book of Croatian Reptiles and Amphibians. It is also included in international nature protection legislations such as the Annexes II and IV of The Habitats Directive.



Association Hyla

Proteus anguinus conservation project

European threat category: VU
National threat category: EN B2ab (II,III,IV,V)



The olm (*Proteus anguinus*) is one of the most evolutionarily distinct amphibian species in the world and the only European cave dwelling vertebrate that can be found in freshwater underground karst habitats.

The distribution of the species stretches over approximately 100 000 km² from Trieste in Italy, through Slovenia and Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina.



It can grow to a total body length of 40.6 cm. Growth and development are slow, with adulthood being achieved after 14-18 years. It is the amphibian with the longest life span and can live for more than 60 years. It breathes using gills and through its skin, while in hypoxic conditions it breathes using lungs.

The olm is ranked 3rd on the Top 50 Evolutionarily Distinct Amphibians EDGE List.



The project was funded by the MAVA Foundation (2013–2016). The main objectives were to improve the general knowledge of the olm's distribution and record possible on site threats for better planning of conservation actions whilst raising awareness among relevant stakeholders and local communities, all the while facilitating conservation activities in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.



Photographs: Vedran Jaltić, Petra Kovač Konrad



IUCN World Conservation Congress, Hawaii 2016



Reptiles and amphibians of Croatia



Croatia is a small country, with a total land area of 56 538 km² and can be divided into three major biogeographical regions: Continental, Alpine and Mediterranean. The extant flora and fauna of the region is the result of a number of geological, geographical, climatic and biological influences that dominated in the past. The Alpine and Mediterranean regions are particularly rich in flora and fauna, and over the past represented glacial and interglacial refugia for the northern species. For this reason, these regions are recognized as part of one of the world's centres of biodiversity.


Lacerta viridis

Vipera ursinii

Zootoca sibilatrix

Testudo hermanni

Hyla arborea

Ichthyosaura alpestris

Malpagon insignitus

Croatia is characterized by a large number of endemic species and subspecies due to its geographic position. With its 59 species of reptiles and amphibians, it is one of the countries with the highest number of amphibian and reptile species in Europe. As much as 67% of the total number of species are reptiles, and most of that number consists of two large families: lizards (20%) and colubrids (20%). Among the amphibians the most numerous are the Ranidae (12%) and Salamandridae (10%) families.


Bufo viridis

Lepidoptera survey project

Butterflies


Polyommatus damon

With 197 butterfly species on a land area of just above 56000 km², Croatia is one of the richest European countries in regards to butterfly diversity. The country is the meeting point of the Continental and Mediterranean biogeographical regions, with elements of the Alpine and Pannonic regions. Although no endemic species occur in the country, several very localised subspecies evolved in Croatia (e.g. *Proterebia afra dalmata*, *Erebia stirius kleki*).


Carterocephalus pallescens

Polyommatus nesiotes

Lycæna dispar

Apollonia cremona

Charaxes jasus

Limnitis reducta

Tritonus belknapii

Moths


Mitochrista miniata

About 3000 species of moths are assumed to occur in Croatia. However, the moth fauna is poorly known, due to the lack of experts, amateurs and continuous moth surveys. Almost every faunistic survey reveals new records for the country, with at least one newly recorded species being published each year.


Diachasma stenochrysis

Plusia festucae

Minucia lunaris

Rhyarctodes metakana

Ourapteryx sambucaria

Sphragodius similis