

### **Project Update: April 2019.**

Planned activities started a little later than expected, due to the fact that our project was approved at the beginning of September 2018. Project activities started with a team meeting within a science-research camp "Crni Vrh 2018" at Stara Planina Mountain, which was organised by the Biological society "Dr. Sava Petrović" BDDSP. At this camp, about 40 camp participants were able to inform themselves about our project activities and involvement in the project. This meeting was very significant for the project team members since we were able to discuss the project activities and make a detailed plan of further activities (detailed plan for the surveying, field research, fieldwork priority areas and responsibilities of volunteers) Presentation of the project at this camp enabled us to recruit new volunteers, members of BDDSP and Master Students of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics from Niš.



Before field activities began in 2018. (That started belatedly in September), we created a new questionnaire that will allow us to precise statistical data processing and started with procurement of necessary equipment for project team member. Additionally we worked on visual identity of the project and printed out t-shirts and aweatshirts for participants.



Design by: Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković

Fieldwork on Hermann's tortoise populations were conducted in September 2018. In order to realise our field activities in accordance with the lifecycle activities of all planned populations of tortoises, and before the end of their activity period and hibernation in 2018. We decided to do the interviewing of local inhabitants on four localities in the east and south of Serbia in 2019. Research at the locality Kunovica, where we have established ongoing monitoring since 2009, was conducted somewhat earlier with the support of The Faculty of Science and Mathematics in Niš and Serbian Ministry of education, science and technological development. The programme for small grants for local inhabitant interviewing started for the members of BDDSP, and we will soon make an open call and enable grants for the members of other partner organisations and all interested citizens across the country.

In September 2018, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> congress of Serbian Biologists in Kladovo, we presented the results of our research which started with the help of the Rufford Foundation in 2016, with the first small grant (18761-1) and which is ongoing still due to the Rufford Foundation support.

<http://www.serbiosoc.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/DRUGI-KONGRES-BIOLOGA-SRBIJE-knjiga-sazetaka.pdf> (Page 294.)

After our oral presentation at this conference, we had the honor to participate at the 3rd Rufford Small Grants conference "Explore and protect the natural beauty of Balkans" where a plenary lecture named "Local beliefs as a factor of wild flora and fauna endangerment" was held, and a new project that we work on was presented. This conference enabled us to make new connections and discuss many important and "hot" topics and about the common problems we all have in conservation of species in the Balkans.



Presentation at the 2nd congress of Serbian Biologists in Kladovo, 2018.



Plenary lecture at the 3rd Rufford Small Grants conference "Explore and protect the natural beauty of Balkans", Srebrno jezero lake 2018.

We established very successful cooperation with the schools in which we informed all students of primary and secondary schools about our activities and encouraged them to inform themselves more about local beliefs and the influence of local folklore and myths on wildlife. We established an important collaboration with the Youth Office of Babušnica and Municipality of Babušnica. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude towards all the institutions for their collaboration and support.

Education was organised at the following schools at the Municipality of Babušnica:

- Elementary school "BRATSTVO" In the village of Zvonce.
- Elementary school "DOBRINKA BOGDANOVIĆ" in the village of Strelac.
- Gymnasium of Babušnica.



Elementary school "BRATSTVO" In the village of Zvonce



Elementary school "DOBRINKA BOGDANOVIĆ" in the village of Strelac

For the occasion of the International day of Wild Species (3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019), we organised lectures and we hung out with elementary school pupils of "Stefan Nemanja" school in Niš. Special gratitude we owe to their school teacher Marina Cvetković, and the entire school collective. We thank our team members and volunteers for the organisation of this event.





At the meeting in Zaječar, held with regard to future activities in the field of Day butterfly protection in cooperation with the project of Dr Miloš Popović (no. 24652-B), we presented our project activities and discussed further collaborations.  
<http://wildbalkans.com/en/what-are-we-going-to-butterfly-this-year/>



Mutual activities of the members of The Rufford Small grant projects no. 24565-1, 25824-1, 24652-B i and our project (26448-B), but the members of the biological society "Dr Sava Petrović" were noticed by the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, which led to profounding the collaboration with this main institution for nature protection in our country. Such collaboration is of main importance for working in the sphere of nature protection and endangered species conservation. At the ceremony of the celebration of the 70th birthday of the Institute, as well as 20th birthday of the Institute's office in Niš, there was a premiere of a documentary film "The Nature Awakenes" which we created in cooperation with the Institute

<http://www.zzps.rs/novo/index.php?jezik=en&strana=vest&n=578-1>

This documentary is now available at the project of Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković (ID 24565-1) YouTube channel :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mgutIEgaDo&list=PLqCRdZP6DrsVeZXYWNnuihKPtIA-WQ2ql&index=2>

In the following period mutual collaboration with our team and the Institute will be more intensive, at this very moment we are discussing possible work at the newest protected area in our country: the Mountain of Rtanj.

Our project activities were presented at the National Television RTS through a documentary series "Biodiverzitet-mreža života" (eng: "Biodiversity – the web of life").

Collaboration with Wikimedia Serbia was established through a project "In touch with the nature". This project is aiming at presenting endangered species and protected areas that suffer from negative anthropogenic influence, but additionally is intended as a promotion for protected areas and their values through photographs at Wikimedia Commons platform and articles on Wikipedia. In the name of our newly established collaboration, our team members participated at WikiLive 2019. conference, where they presented our activities and the problems we encounter in working on nature protection.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WikiLive\\_2019\\_day\\_two,\\_12.jpg?fbclid=IwAR2RJ6ZOz7vDKO4u-BIEIKQJnQqWGIEMeF3v-cBSfCBGKgj1QuBL1qtSBI](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WikiLive_2019_day_two,_12.jpg?fbclid=IwAR2RJ6ZOz7vDKO4u-BIEIKQJnQqWGIEMeF3v-cBSfCBGKgj1QuBL1qtSBI)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wikilajv\\_2019\\_02.jpg?fbclid=IwAR3hjGdVv273fzbZ-OotL2kDhbGvStELO4XF74TA-Z-f8E-xQJ1nEW8P9nY](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wikilajv_2019_02.jpg?fbclid=IwAR3hjGdVv273fzbZ-OotL2kDhbGvStELO4XF74TA-Z-f8E-xQJ1nEW8P9nY)



Photos of our team members at the WikiLive Conference 2019.

