

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) – 2009-2012 version

Available for download from http://www.ramsar.org/ris/key_ris_index.htm.

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX.22 of the 9th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).

Notes for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 14, 3rd edition). A 4th edition of the Handbook is in preparation and will be available in 2009.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

Valerija Hima
Lonjsko Polje Nature Park Public Institution
Krapje No. 16
HR – 44325 Krapje
Republic of Croatia
Tel: +385 (0)44 611 190
Fax: +385 (0)44 606 449
e-mail: bio@pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

Ramona Topić
State Institute for Nature Protection
Trg Mažuranića 5
HR – 10000 Zagreb
Republic of Croatia
e-mail: ramona.topic@dzzp.hr

Jasminka Radović
State Institute for Nature Protection
Trg Mažuranića 5
HR – 10000 Zagreb
Republic of Croatia
e-mail: jasminka.radovic@dzzp.hr

Eugen Draganović
Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection
Nature Protection Directorate
Republike Austrije 14
HR – 10000 Zagreb
Republic of Croatia
e-mail: eugen.draganovic@min-kulture.hr

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

June, 2012

3. Country:

Croatia / Republic of Croatia

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

The precise name of the designated site in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parentheses after the precise name.

The precise name: Lonjsko polje and Mokro polje including Krapje Đol

The alternative name: Lonjsko Polje Nature Park

5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for (tick one box only):

a) **Designation of a new Ramsar site** ; or

b) **Updated information on an existing Ramsar site**

6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

a) Site boundary and area

The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged:

or

If the site boundary has changed:

i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ; or

ii) the boundary has been extended ; or

iii) the boundary has been restricted**

and/or

If the site area has changed:

i) the area has been measured more accurately ; or

ii) the area has been extended ; or

iii) the area has been reduced**

** **Important note:** If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:

7. Map of site:

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:

i) **a hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): ;

See Appendix 1. Printed maps in A4 format

1. Boundaries of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (including two ornithological reserves) on topographic map 1: 100,000
2. Land use map of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (Corine land cover)
3. Map of habitats of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (mapping scale 1:25,000)
4. Map of habitats of Krapje Đol Ornithological Reserve (mapping scale 1:5,000)
5. Map showing territorial organization (cities and villages) in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
6. Map showing tourist visiting and fishing zones of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
7. Map showing transportation system in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
8. Map showing water management and flood defence system in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
9. Map showing the spatial plan zoning in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (three sheets)

ii) **an electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) ;

See Appendix 2. CD – folder RIS_Lonjsko_Polje_NP_MAPS (Maps as JPEG and PDF files)

iii) **a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** .

See Appendix 2: CD - folder RIS_Lonjsko_Polje_NP_GIS

b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park, etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

The border of the Ramsar site is identical to the current administrative border of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park as defined in Article 2 of the Law on the Proclamation of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (Official Gazette 11/90).

“The border of the Nature Park runs from the confluence of the Česma and the Lonja, along the Lonja as far as Brežovica Sluice on the southern defensive embankment of the Lonjsko Polje flood water detention zone. Then along the defensive embankment as far as the Gušće-Čigoč road, and along that road to the Sava River. The southern border of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park consists of the left bank of the Sava, downstream to the confluence of the Mali Strug and the Sava River. The eastern border runs from the confluence of the Mali Strug along the eastern defensive embankment of the Mokro Polje flood water detention zone as far as the Lonja-Strug (New Sava) relief channel, then along the embankment alongside the Lonja-Strug relief channel to the western edge of Vrbovljani Fish Pond. Then along the northern edge of the forest to the Zagreb-Belgrade motorway as far as the exit of the motorway from the forest by Novska, then along the edge of the forest to the Veliki Strug, northwards along the edge of the forest of the Trstika I forest management unit to the lateral Novska channel, then along the Novska lateral channel to the motorway, along the motorway to the Muratovica channel. Then it heads to the south along the edge of the forest to the Stara Subocka-Plesmo road, and along the road until it comes out of the forest and along the forest edge of Trstika II forest management unit to the Veliki Strug River. Downstream along the Veliki Strug to the edge of the Žaborski Bok forest management unit. Then along the edge of the forest northwards to the motorway. Along the edge of the Josip Kozarac forest management unit to the Pakra and then along the Pakra to the motorway. Along the motorway to the Ilova, then along the Ilova River to the channel that goes towards Trebež Sluice. Then in the same direction to the connection with the existing forest road – at a distance of about 1,600 m south of the northern defensive embankment of the Lonjsko Polje flood water detention area and along the forest road to the old bed of Kutinica Brook. Along the left bank of the Kutinica to the motorway, and along the motorway until the road for Osekovo. From Osekovo along the road via Bjelovina to the village of Stružec. From Stružec along the embankment to the confluence of the Česma and the Lonja.”

The act proclaiming the Nature Park did not define the buffer zone, nor is it defined by the Nature Protection Law (OG 70/05, 139/08).

8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes):

Provide the coordinates of the approximate centre of the site and/or the limits of the site. If the site is composed of more than one separate area, provide coordinates for each of these areas.

Approximate centre:	Longitude	16°50'02'' E
	Latitude	45°21'43'' N

Southeast corner: 17°12'14,85'' E
45°09'00,69'' N

Northwest corner: 16°28'21,39'' E
45°34'31,33'' N

9. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s) the site lies and the location of the nearest large town.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is located in the area of the central part of the Sava River Watercourse, about 75 km south-east of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. Most of it is located in the Sisacko-moslavačka County, but a small part of it lies in the Brodsko-posavska County.

10. Elevation: (in meters: average and/or maximum & minimum)

The whole Park is a very lowland area, with an above-sea level height of 90-110 m

11. Area: (in hectares)

50,650 ha according to the Law on the Proclamation of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (OG 11/90);
51,218 ha according to the GIS data (tool with a more precise measuring) of the Spatial Plan of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (OG 37/10)

12. General overview of the site:

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

This area is a vast floodplain along the Sava River protected as a Nature Park. It serves as a natural retention area for high waters of the Sava River.

Over 67% of the Park consists of alluvial forest, representing the most integral complexes of oak and ash stands, as well as valuable communities of alder swamp forests. The wet meadows and pastures in the Sava depression are extremely important habitats in the preservation of the biodiversity of riverine ecosystems, and together with the riparian lowland forests make up a mosaic of the most integral floodplain ecosystem in the whole biogeographic region (European Continental region). Due to the fact that local people live here in rather traditional way, using extensive pastures for cattle, horses and pigs (including several indigenous breeds) and conserving the unique traditional architecture of wooden houses, this area also represents a unique feature of the natural, landscape and cultural heritage.

Rich complex of the wetland habitats of the Sava River provides ideal conditions for the survival of rare animal and plant species that elsewhere in Europe are on the verge of extinction. The area supports more than two thirds of Croatian bird species (250 species), 138 of which actually breed in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park. The white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) achieves high breeding success in the Park; the population of spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*) is one of just a few that exist in an alluvial ecosystem. The area also supports stable populations of species that depend on forest integrity, the most important being the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and the other the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomaria*) that also uses agricultural land, especially wet meadows and pastures for feeding.

Apart from rich ornithofauna, in Lonjsko Polje, also recorded are 58 species of mammals, 16 species of amphibians, 10 species of reptiles and 27 species of fish.

Lonjsko Polje is at the same time one of the biggest spawning areas for fish in the Danube basin. Ecological processes and the dynamics of inundation set the pattern for the traditional land use, creating a unique mosaic of anthropogenic and natural habitats; the most important are extensive pastures with indigenous domestic taxa: the Posavac horse, the Slavonian-Syrmian Podolia breed of cattle, the

Turopolje pig. The traditional agriculture and the rearing of indigenous breeds are still kept up, and constitute an important element in the preservation of biological and landscape diversity.

The long-lasting, enduring tradition of adjustment to and living *with* and not *against* the floods has created an outstanding system that impinges on all aspects of human interaction with the environment – the traditional wooden architecture, the pattern of the settlements and the shaping of the landscape. Such an approach has preserved its continuity in the water management flood control system, in which the natural floodplain areas are used for floodwater retention.

The organization of the villages is highly preserved in its traditional features. In Lonjsko Polje this is visible not only in the way in which the houses are used and built but also in the richness of folk customs, costumes, decorations and traditional farm practices.

13. Ramsar Criteria:

Tick the box under each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11). All Criteria which apply should be ticked.

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9

14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

Criterion 1.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region.

Lonjsko and Mokro polje including Krapje Đol is situated in a continental biogeographic region according to EU biogeographic regionalization under the Habitat Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, 92/43/EEC). Source: Map of EU biogeographic regions EU 27+1, Doc. Hab. 11-05/04.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is one of the rare preserved complex wetlands in Europe. It is a highly representative example of an extensive river flooded area covered with a mixture of alluvial forests, wet grasslands, watercourses, oxbows and other wetland habitats. Semi-natural forests are managed in such a way that they contain very rich biodiversity, including good populations of a number of rare and threatened species at a European or even a global level. Due to its ecological characteristics it plays a very important role in the natural functioning of the Sava River as well as of the whole Danube River basin.

Ecological processes generated by both the traditional land use and the dynamics of inundation have created a unique mosaic of secondary and natural habitats, which makes the area the most complete integral floodplain ecosystem of the central part of a river basin. The lowland riparian forests are part of the most complete and largest remaining complex of those oak and ash stands in the world. Change caused by natural geomorphological and flood dynamics may be understood as an essential part of the property's integrity due to the fact that all bird species historically recorded can be found in the property today. The appearance of bird species indicating primeval forest structures and large undisturbed woodland complexes indicates the well-preserved naturalness of the recent riparian forest ecosystem.

Hydrological importance:

- i) Lonjsko polje alluvial floodplains are an important natural retention area for the whole of the Danube Basin
- ii) natural floodplains as a part of the flood control system play a major role in the natural prevention of flooding
- iii) the area has two aquifers: the Lonja (weight of 100 m) and the Sava aquifer (weight of 70 m)
- iv) 70% of the wetland area consists of lowland riparian forests, which have a major hydrological influence on regional climate stability
- v) natural retention areas are important in the water purification processes from streams and in maintaining high water quality standards

Criterion 2.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.

The site supports significant fish populations of the Danube River basin, serving as their spawning area. It is one of the two most important sites for spawning of the wild common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) – VU species of the global IUCN Red List, in Danube River basin.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park also supports many waterbirds populations along the Central European migratory flyway. It is inhabited by a number of animal and plant species threatened on European or even global level like: otter (*Lutra lutra*), lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), fire bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*), mudminnow (*Umbra crameri*), common oak (*Quercus robur* “*tardissimus*”), four leaf clover (*Marsilea quadrifolia*) and others.

A difference of just a few centimeters between the high and low-lying parts of the ground results in big differences in the water regime of the habitat and its water supply. Thus in this area there is a mosaic of very different habitats that, naturally, is reflected in the richness of the various biotopes and plant species. A typical plant adapted to the various hydrological conditions is the four leaf clover (*Marsilea quadrifolia*), threatened in Europe and protected by the Habitats Directive – it grows when the water starts to withdraw from the pasture and in the absence of water it becomes a terrestrial plant.

Globally threatened communities

Alluvial forests in Lonjsko Polje are the part of one of the most complete and largest remained complex of the common oak (*Genisto-elatae-Quercetum roboris*, *Carpino betuli-Quercetum roboris*) and ash (*Leucoio-Fraxinetum angustifoliae*) stands in the world, important for the understanding of the history and evolution of the genes of the genera of *Quercus* and *Fraxinus*. These communities directly depend on the groundwater level, and any changes lead to destruction of the forests.

Criterion 3.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region.

Due to the combination of regular flooding and high level of underground waters, this area contains a great variety of different habitat types, mostly depending on water and belonging to some of the Ramsar wetland types: marshes, wet grasslands and alluvial forests. These habitat types are highly representative for the continental biogeographic region of Europe.

Habitat types and plant species

Surface terrestrial water and wetlands or marshes occupy 2,255 ha, or 4.4% of the area of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park. Oxbows, ditches and pools are overgrown with the following vegetation: *Scripo-Phragmitetum*, *Glycerietum maximae*, *Sparganio-Glycerietum fluitantis*, sedges (*Caricetum gracilis*; *Caricetum tricostato-vulpinae*). Free water areas are covered with freely floating vegetation, in which the most prominent are: *Lemno-Spirodeletum polyrrhizae* and *Myriophyllo-Nupharetum*.

Significant plant species of these habitats include: the four leaf clover (*Marsilea quadrifolia*) – Annex II and IV of the Habitat Directive, michelianus sedges (*Cyperus michelianus*), mare's tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), water soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*), spotless watermeal (*Wolffia arrhiza*).

Grasslands occupy 4,593 ha, or 10.1% of the area of the Park. The most represented habitat types are nitrophilous pastures and hay meadows of the lowland vegetation zone. They are mostly used for grazing and mowing within the traditional animal husbandry system. The grassland areas that are directly impacted by regular flooding are overgrown with the following communities: periodically humid meadows (*Deschampsietum cespitosae*) and Illyrio-Pannonic humid meadows (*Bromo-Cynosuretum cristati*).

Plant

Forests occupy 35,002 ha, or 67.7% of the area. The crucial ecological factor in the origin and development of forest vegetation in this area is water, whether it is to do with flood water, as is the case with the woods of poplars and willows, or ground water (the forests of common oak). In some cases both types of water are very important, as is the case in forests in which the dominant species are the alder or narrow-leaved ash. Forest vegetation of the planar zone in Croatia is characterized by certain specific features such as great richness of communities over a relatively small area, the thriving of the famed Slavonian forests of common oak, the occurrence of the narrow-leaved ash, the high biological diversity, and the good state of preservation of large forest complexes, and other things. The phytocoenological picture of the forests of the lowland vegetation zone is complex, and within it we can distinguish:

- wetland woods along the course of the river - willows (*Salix triandra*, *Salix purpurea*, *Salix alba*), white poplar (*Populus alba*), black poplar (*Populus nigra*), white elm (*Ulmus laevis*), narrow leaved ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia*), common oak (*Quercus robur*)
- woods of depressions - three basic associations can be found: Alder swamp forests (*Frangulo-Alnetum glutinosae* Rauš 1968, Illyrian snowflake ash-oak forests (*Leucoio-Fraxinetum angustifoliae* Glav.1959), Riparian oak-ash forests (*Genisto elatae-Quercetum roboris* Ht. 1938)
- woods of micro-elevations or ridges - Illyrian riparian oak hornbeam forests (*Carpino-betuli-Quercetum roboris*, Rauš 1969)

Fauna

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is of considerable importance for threatened species: marshy and aquatic habitats are permanent habitats for the fire bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*), yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) and 14 other species of amphibians. The European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) with its biology is bound to the water habitats. Threatened fishes include mudminnow (*Umbra crameri*) and wild common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*).

For some bird species this Ramsar site is one of the most important breeding areas in Croatia or even Europe. It is very important habitat for migration and wintering of northern European populations of many species of birds, above all of waterbirds, but also of small birds of prey, songbirds, etc. It represents a significant stop-over site of the Central European flyway for waterbirds (ducks, herons, storks, spoonbills, terns, waders, cranes etc.) The area is rich in various habitats (marshland with luxuriant vegetation, meadows and pastures, forests) that enable nesting to be carried out by many and different species that seek different habitats. Additionally, the area is exceptionally rich as a feeding site (the fishponds, marshes, meadows and pastures).

The white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) is a part of the identity of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park and of all Posavina, as it is accustomed to coexisting with people.

The spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) nests in the Ornithological Reserve of Krapje Đol in a mixed colony with the purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), little white egret (*Egretta garzetta*), squacco heron (*Ardeola ralloides*) and the black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*).

Alluvial forests of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park are the most important breeding place for the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) in Croatia and one of the most important for the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and the black kite (*Milvus migrans*).

Criterion 4.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

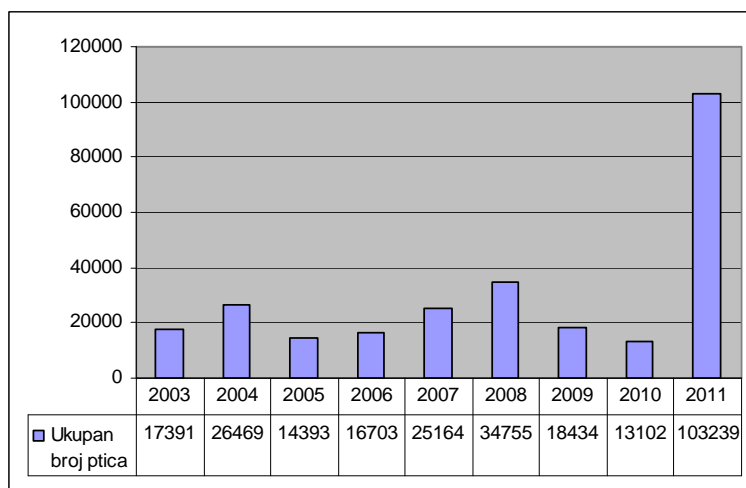
This area is one of two the most important fish spawning sites in Danube River basin. Fish populations migrate during the flooding period from the rivers into depressions of Lonjsko and Mokro Polje where they spawn. Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is also important breeding site for a number of bird species as well as significant stop-over site on the Central European flyway for migrating and wintering waterbirds.

The specific water regime in partly flooded areas enables survival of the rare plant species like the four leaf clover (*Marsilea quadrifolia*) which can survive during the high water as well during the dry periods. Thus in this area there is a mosaic of very differing habitats that are reflected in the richness of the various habitat types and plants species. Some of them (which tend to be rare and threatened in other areas) are maintained in the area of the Park only thanks to the traditional pig pasturing – the pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*), small fleabane (*Pulicaria vulgaris*), water germander (*Teucrium scordium*), four leaf clover (*Marsilea quadrifolia*) and hedge-hyssop (*Gratiola officinalis*),

Criterion 5.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park regularly supports 20,000 waterbirds, particularly during spring and fall migration, as well as in the wintering period. In the 2003-2011 period, a number ranging from 17,391 individuals (2003) up to 103,239 (2011) waterbirds were counted during the mid-January waterbird counts (Source: Lonjsko Polje Nature Park Public Service Management Office).



Criterion 6.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park regularly supports more than 1% of the individuals of a biogeographic region for a number of a waterbird species. This includes:

Compared by the Wetland International Census- „Waterbird Population Estimates 4th edition, Final Draft, September 2006“)

<i>Species</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>range</i>	<i>Migration routes</i>	<i>1% level</i>	<i>Average population estimates in Lonjsko and Mokro Polje</i>	<i>Percentage of population</i>
<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Eurasian spoonbill	breeding	Central, SE Europe	120	125 (2005-2009)	1.04
<i>Anser anser</i>	Greylag goose	wintering	Breeding Central Europe Wintering North Africa	250	3,117 (2003-2011)	12.47
<i>Anas Penelope</i>	Eurasian Widgeon	wintering	Black Sea, Mediterranean	3,000	3,039 (2003-2011)	1.01
<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Mute Swan	wintering	Black Sea, SE Europe	450	805 (2003-2011)	1.79
Source: Lonjsko Polje Nature Park Public Service Management Office						

Criterion 7.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to global biological diversity.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park with the Sava River and its tributaries are all part of the Danube, or Black Sea Basin. The area of the lowland part of the Sava River is rich in mixed fish populations: it is inhabited by about 45 species, classified into 13 families. In Lonjsko Polje Nature Park itself, 34 species of fish from eight families were found. The Danube basin is the only area in Central Europe with a fairly large number of endemic species in the fish fauna; there are seven endemic species here – European mudminnow (*Umbra krameri*), Danube salmon (*Hucho hucho*), Balkan loach (*Cobitis elongata*), Danube gudgeon (*Gobio uranoscopus*), Danube roach (*Rutilus pigus*), striped ruffe (*Gymnocephalus schraetzer*), Danube streber (*Zingel streber*); four of them are found in the Lonjsko Polje Nature Park area: the European mudminnow (*Umbra krameri*), Balkan loach (*Cobitis elongata*), Danube roach (*Rutilus pigus*), Danube streber (*Zingel streber*).

Indicator species of fish that can show changes in habitat quality in Lonjsko Polje are: the Crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*), weather loach (*Misgurnus fossilis*), tench (*Tinca tinca*) and common rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*) as well as the sunbleak (*Leucaspis delineatus*) and European mudminnow (*Umbra krameri*).

Criterion 8.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.

Lonjsko and Mokro Polje floodplain area is important spawning ground for the fishes of the Sava River and its tributaries. From the ichthyological point of view, water in the area of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is classified as the cyprinid (carp) water. Thus, due to the slow current the Sava and its tributaries have created meanders, broad channels, marshes, oxbows and wetlands, forming the characteristic image of this lowland landscape. The water of the Sava River is biologically highly reproductive, because of the high content from the upstream tributaries. Dense populations of plankton are important for the feeding of fish. This is also an area very rich in organic and mineral substances, which is a result of the constant transport and sedimentation of silt and other tributaries – Kupa, Una, Strug, Trebež. Natural watercourses without any flood gates have a great impact on the production of natural food, and hence on the size and quality of the fish communities as well as on the successful production.

15. Biogeography (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

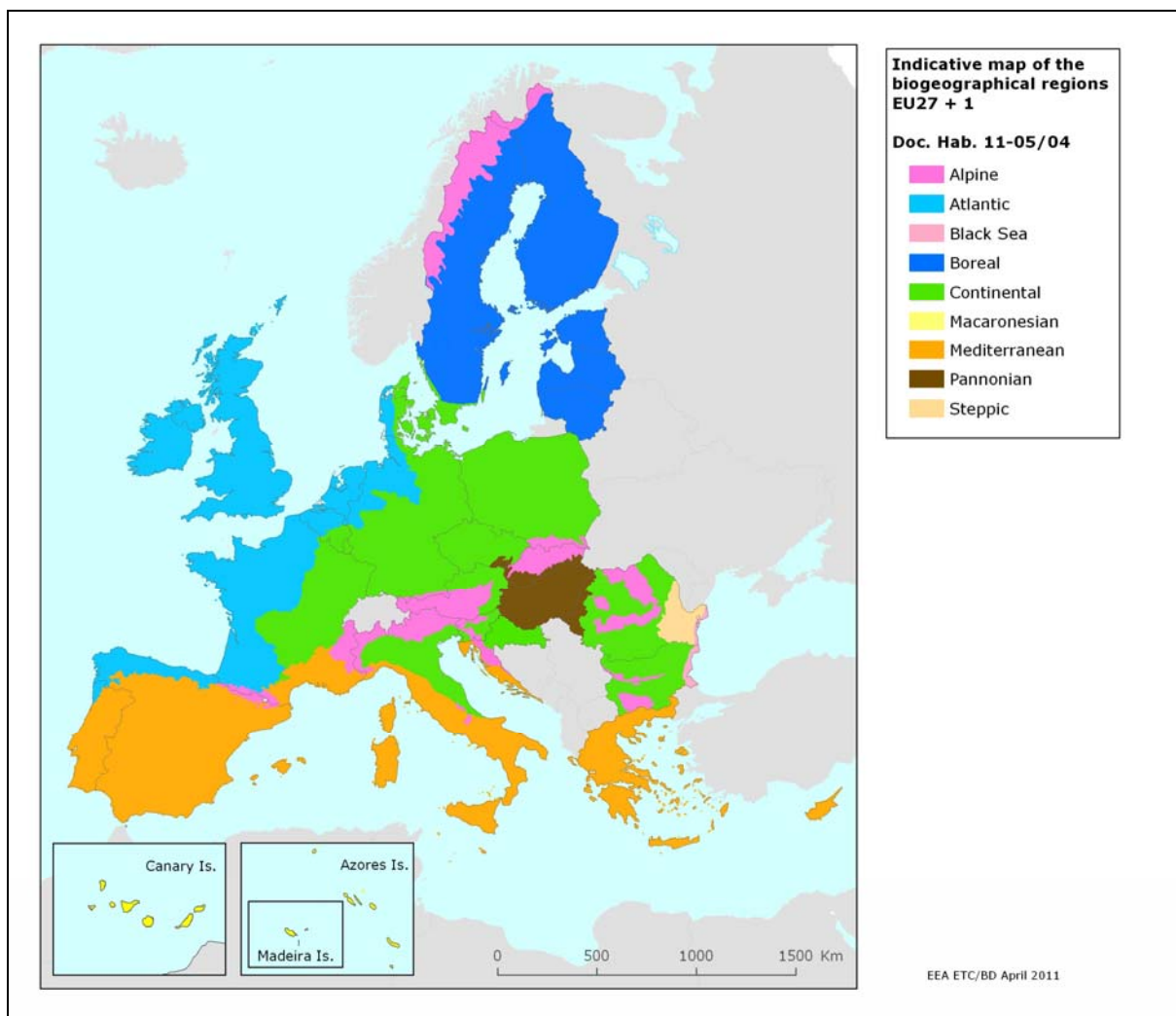
Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

a) biogeographic region:

continental biogeographic region of Europe

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

EU biogeographic regionalization, in accordance with the Habitat Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, 92/43/EEC). EU biogeographic regions EU 27+1, Doc. Hab. 11-05/04



16. Physical features of the site:

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

The Sava River is the fundamental factor affecting natural, cultural and landscape features in the Lonjsko Polje Nature Park. The Sava is the watercourse defining the southern border of the area of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park over its length of 96 km and with its hydrological features has a very strong influence on the water regime of the site.

Geology

The area of the Sava River lies on Quaternary deposits, which build the broad valley of the Sava River and of its tributaries; groundwater reserves are significant. Depending on the genetic type of sediment, in the area there are non-carbonate loess, lacustrine sediments and the alluvial sediment of the Sava terraces, proluvium, alluvial material from rivers and brooks. The Quaternary alluvia are formed by the retreat of flood waters, which behind them leave coarse grained fluvial alluvia. The Sava deposits them in the whole area downstream area from Sisak to the confluence of the Una and Sava.

Geomorphology

Microrelief is one of the most important factors impacting the habitats. In the natural setting a difference of 10 cm will have an influence on the distribution of flora. Through flooding, naturally raised areas (or ridges) were formed, which themselves almost never flood. The flood water in the micro-depressions can disappear only by transpiration or evapotranspiration.

Pedology

Most of the soils of this area are hydromorphic soils of various types, subtypes, varieties and forms. The characteristic of hydromorphic soils is the naturally poor drainage, and the natural process of hydrogenation within a depth of 2 m, brought about by a surplus of surface and/or ground water which is neither alkaline nor brackish. The largest areas of these soils appear as carbonate, and the characteristic of such soils is that they appear almost exclusively in an area with much fine mineral detritus, and the presence of skeleton is very small or hardly perceptible.

Hydrology

The site belongs to the southwestern part of the Pannonian basin. The development of the Croatian portion of the Pannonian basin should be considered in terms of the origin and development of the basin as a whole, whose origin and evolution model was proposed by Royden et al. (1983). The model is based on an extension of the Pannonian lithosphere, on one hand, and the stretching in the areas of the Alps, Dinarides and Carpathians, on the other, caused by developments outside this area dating back to the Eocene. Floods can occur at any time of the year, and several times a year as well. The reason for this lies in the arrangement of the river catchment areas situated in different climate zones. In the **spring**, snowmelt in the Julian Alps causes the Sava River level to rise. In the **summer**, when precipitation is at its peak in the Pannonian highlands, the water level in 3rd and 4th order tributaries flowing parallel to the Sava rises. In **autumn** the Kupa and Una, which mainly rise in the Dinaric and Dalmatian regions, bring a great deal of water into the Sava at their confluence at Sisak and Jasenovac. Primarily, it is Central Posavina that is in most cases indirectly inundated, which means the Sava floodplain is inundated indirectly by the rising water in its tributaries. The difference between low and high water can be over 9 meters, because of the very shallow drop of the river (0.07 m/km).

Natural lowland wetland areas (floodplain areas) are to be found on both sides of the Sava River. Lonjsko, Mokro and Poganovo poljes (plains, fields) are part of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park and are flood water detention zones that have an important role in flood mitigation. The largest flood zone is Lonjsko Polje, which has no direct connection with the Sava, but is a controlled floodwater detention zone with structures allowing for the release of water into and its discharge from the zone.

Water quality

Determination of water quality in the Nature Park is carried out on national and local surface waters in line with the monitoring programme. The main objective of the monitoring is to provide a systematic check of the real state of water resource quality, thus ensuring the information necessary for the creation of rational and effective protection programmes, a precondition for proper management of the resources. Systematic control of water quality in Croatia is carried out according to realistic possibilities, and in the last few years an important optimisation has been carried out, of adjustment to the most recent world and European experiences and requirements, in which a special place goes to documents that were the working base for the adoption of the EU's Water Directive. Croatia is a signatory to several international treaties and bilateral agreements related to monitoring the condition of water resources, which all affect the scope and nature of the annual monitoring. The quality of national surface waters is determined by Croatian Waters after approval of the 2000 Monitoring Programme by the State Directorate for Waters, and Croatian Waters also carry out testing of the quality of surface waters at 7 stations in the area of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (Sava Košutarica, Sava Jasenovac, Stari Trebež Pakra, the canal Lonja – Strug by Stružec, canal Lonja – Strug Trebež Sluice, canal Lonja – Strug by the bridge at Bročice, Ilova at the confluence with the Kutinica). The quality of local surface waters is determined according to the Environmental Protection Programme adopted at the County Assembly in 2003 (Sisačko-moslavačka County *Official Gazette*, no., 15.03). Water quality has been monitored since the end of 2004; the county Public Health Institute samples and analyses the water, and the Administrative Department for Environmental and Nature Protection produces an annual report. Quality testing is carried out at three sites in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (confluence of Česma and Lonja, Krapje Đol, the Lonjsko Polje flood water retention zone) and at 15 sites in the Park's buffer zone.

Climate

This area is strongly influenced by the humid type of continental climate and is affected by air masses moving from the Alps. Average temperatures range from -1.5 °C in January to 20 °C in July. Annual mean temperature is 9.5 °C. Mean annual precipitation is 872 mm, maximum precipitation occurs in June, and the minimum in February. The Lang mean annual precipitation factor is 82.3, which represents a humid type of climate. Mean annual air humidity is 77%, and the maximum occurs in July and December. Evaporation in the central course of the Sava River comes to between 520 and 600 mm p.a.

Late frosts are typical of the region, and there is always the possibility of the occurrence of late spring and of early autumn frost. Temperatures below freezing point do not occur only in the three summer months of June, July and August. According to the mean annual values of cloud cover, this is a cloudy area. The average number of bright fair days ranges from 43 to 59.3, and the number of cloudy days ranges from 132.6 – 142.3. According to data from Sisak weather station, the most frequent winds are from the NE (15%) and from N (13%), they are followed by the winds from W (11.7%), SE (11.6%), SW (11.3%), E (9.5%), NW (9.4%) and S (4.5%); 13% of the time is quiet and windless. The most uncomfortable winds are those from the NE and N, which in winter bring rather severe climatic conditions. The average number of days during which snow lies on the ground is 42.

17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, and climate (including climate type).

General information

The Sava River Basin (Sava RB) is a major drainage basin of South Eastern Europe with a total area of approximately 97,713.20 km² and is one of the most significant sub-basins of the Danube River Basin, comprising 12% of this basin. The Sava RB (Figure) is located between 13.67 °E and 20.58 °E longitude and between 42.43 °N and 46.52 °N latitude.

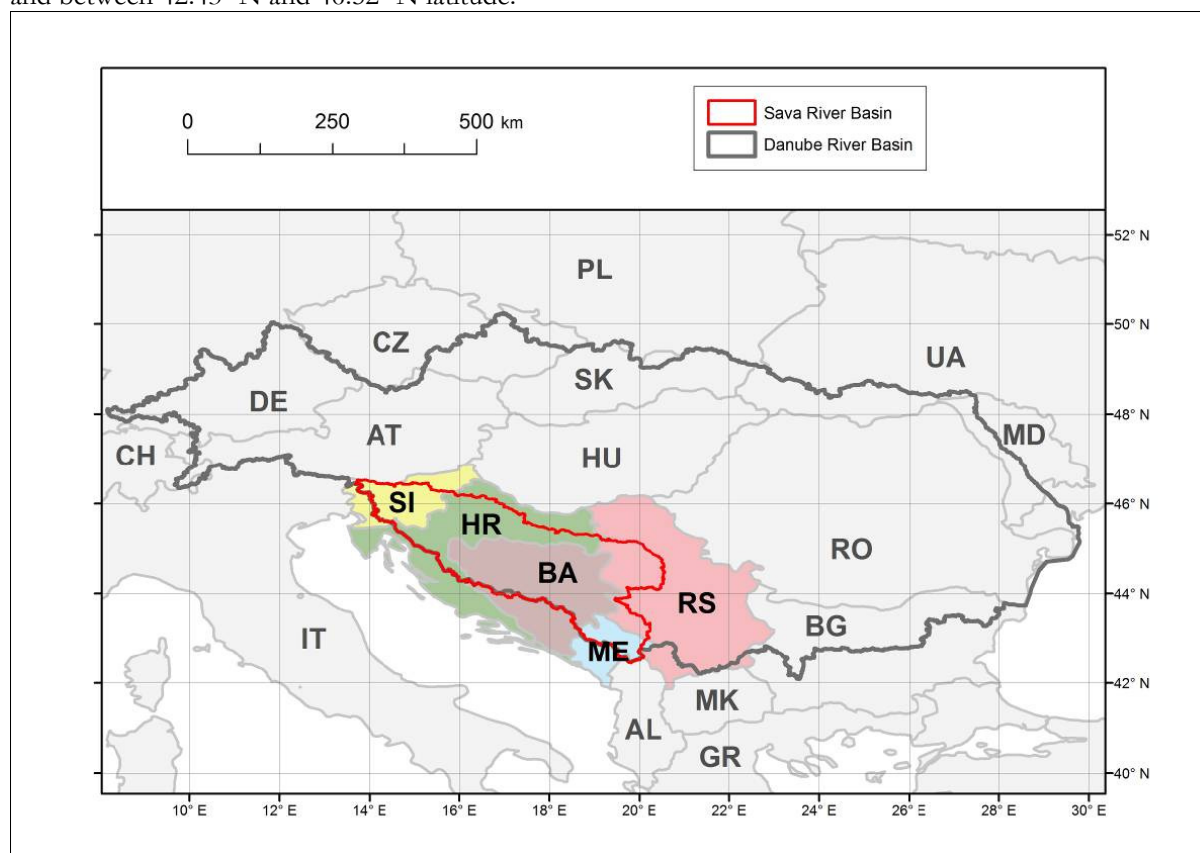


Figure: Location of the Sava River Basin

The basin area is shared among five countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, while a negligible part of the basin area also extends into Albania. Except for Serbia and Albania, its watershed covers 45 to 70% of the surface area of the other four countries. Its water resources constitute nearly 80% of the total freshwater resources in those four countries. Table 1 presents some basic figures with regard to the countries' share of the Sava RB area. A more detailed overview of the location of the basin is presented in Map above.

Over 18 million people live in the five countries of the region and over half of them live in the Sava River Basin.

Climate

The Sava River catchment is situated within a region characterized by the dominant moderate climate of the northern hemisphere, which is modified by the influence of relief. Thus, mountainous zonal climate characteristics are present especially in the eastern southern part of the area. Cold and hot seasons are clearly defined. The winter can be severe with abundant snowfalls, while the summer is hot and long. Climate conditions within the basin can be classified into three general types: Alpine climate; Moderate continental climate; Moderate continental (mid-European) climate.

Relief and topography

The landscape within the Sava River Basin is diverse. The general relief characteristics are illustrated in Figure 2. Mountainous relief (the Alps and the Dinarides) dominates in the upper part of the basin, which is part of Slovenia (the highest peak is Triglav, 2,864 m a.s.l.), and the southern part of the basin is also mountainous.

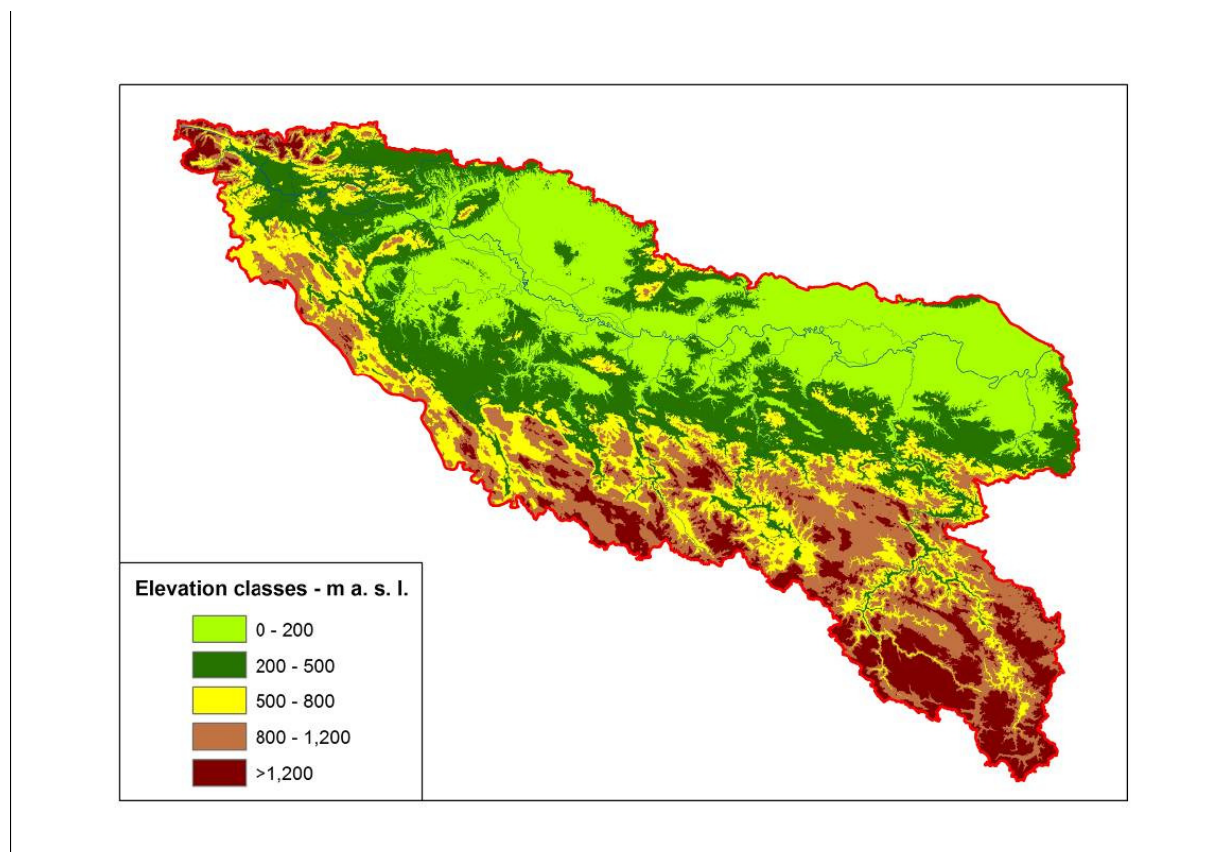


Figure: Sava River Basin elevation

Particularly rugged terrain is a feature of Montenegro and Northern Albania. The mountains of Montenegro include some of the roughest terrain in Europe. They average more than 2,000 meters in elevation and occasionally exceed a height of 2,500 meters (the peak of Bobotov Kuk in the Durmitor

Mountains). The northern part of the Sava River Basin is situated in the Pannonia Plain, which is characterized by fertile agricultural land.

The elevation of the Sava River Basin ranges between 71 m a.s.l. at the mouth of the Sava River in Belgrade (Serbia) and 2,864 m a.s.l. (Triglav, Slovenian Alps). The mean elevation of the basin is approximately 545 m a.s.l.

18. Hydrological values:

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

The biggest water flow through the Sava River is in autumn and spring, and through the Sava tributaries is in spring and summer. In the central Sava basin the flooding is most commonly caused by indirect filling of the tributaries of the Sava and their overflowing their banks into the floodwater retention area. The retention areas of Lonjsko Polje (11,500 ha), Opeke (5,700 ha), Trstika (2,100 ha) and Mokro Polje (12,800 ha) constitute 7% of all the floodplain of the Sava. All except Lonjsko Polje are areas liable to flooding with natural dynamics of inundation. The embankments that lie around the floodwater retention zone to the north, south, east and west of Lonjsko Polje can retain up to 600 million cubic metres of water. Groundwater is derived exclusively from precipitation, the Sava and its tributaries having a subsidiary role, which means that only during flooding do they have any quite major effect on the groundwater level. Groundwater feeding occurs by the infiltration of precipitation, while infiltration from the course of the Sava occurs only during high waters.

At the moment the retention basin Lonjsko Polje is the only regulated inundation zone, where the water can be maintained high or low through a system of weirs. Because the weir Trebež I is also the only outlet of the large alluvial depression with 18,200 ha it has to be normally open. In contrary to the Lonjsko Polje regulated inundation area, the other “poljes” have a unregulated contact with the Sava or Kupa river. Except the Lonja and Česma Rivers, which are now flowing into the Sava through the weir Trebež I, all other tributaries such as the Sunja, Ilova, Pakra, Strug and Odra are unregulated.

19. Wetland Types

a) presence:

Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar “Classification System for Wetland Type” present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines*.

Marine/coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K • Zk(a)

Inland: L • M • N • O • P • Q • R • Sp • Ss • Tp • Ts • U • Va •
Vt • W • Xf • Xp • Y • Zg • Zk(b)

Human-made: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • Zk(c)

b) dominance:

List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

P+Tp = 9816.99 ha

Xf = 35,376.73 ha

20. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

The ecological processes necessary for the long-term ecological viability and appearance of all of the site floodplain habitats and ecosystems are well maintained in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park. Change caused by natural geomorphological and flood dynamics may be understood as an essential part of the site's integrity due to the fact that all bird species historically recorded can be found at the site today.

Habitats

As part of the project LIFE05 TCY/CRO/000111 a Habitat Map of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park was elaborated, to a scale of 1:25000. In line with the National habitat classification six basic habitat types were determined, comprising 113 different habitat types defined at finer level (see maps 3 and 4 in Appendix 1 (printed maps) and Appendix 2 (PDF and GIS files on CD).

Habitat types shown on the map belong to the following broad categories of the National habitat classification:

- A – Surface terrestrial waters and marshland habitats
- C – Grasslands
- D – Thickets
- E – Forests
- I – Cultivated non-forest areas
- J – Artificial and industrial habitats

Threatened and rare habitat types (according to Croatian Nature Protection Act) cover 84.60% of the Park area. Representation of different habitat types in the Nature Park is as follows:

A. Surface terrestrial water and marshland habitats

2.255 ha, 4.4% of the Park's area

The most represented category:

A.4.1.2. Large sedge communities (*Magnocaricetalia*), 457 ha, 0.9% of the Park's area

C. Grasslands

4,503 ha, 10.1% of Park's area

The most represented category:

C.2.4.1. Nitrophilous flood swards (*Agropyro-Rumicion crispi*), 1,660 ha, 3.2% of the Park's area

D. Thickets

1,673 ha, 2.8% of Park's area

The most represented category:

D.4.1.1. Indigo bush stands (*Indigo bush (Amorpha fruticosa)*), 1,201 ha, 2.5% of the Park's area

E. Forests

35,002 ha, 67.7% of the Park's area

The most represented category:

E.2.1.7. Illyrian snow-flake ash-oak forests (*Leucoio-Fraxinetum angustifoliae*), 12,116 ha, 23.7% of the Park's area

E.2.2. Riparian oak-ash forests (*Genisto elatae-Quercetum roboris* Ht. 1938), 11,994 ha, 23.4% of the Park's area

21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14, Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

550 species of flora have been recorded in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park. The meadows and pasturelands of the Central Sava Basin constitute uncommonly valuable habitats and are a unique cultural heritage of Europe. Their survival depends on two factors: flooding and land management.

The degree of threat of some of the species is given below:

Species (latin name)	Species (common name)	Regional threat level (Red List of Croatia)	NATURA 2000 species
<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>	Snake's Head	NT	
<i>Marsilea quadrifolia</i>	Four Leaf Clover	VU	Annex II, IV of the Habitat Directive
<i>Cyperus michelianus</i>	Papyrus sedges	VU	
<i>Hippuris vulgaris</i>	Mare's Tail	VU	

<i>Ranunculus lingua</i>	Greater Spearwort	VU	
<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	Water Soldier	VU	
<i>Wolffia arrhiza</i>	Spotless Watermeal	NT	

22. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

The fauna of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is very interesting since the wetland and other habitats (forests, pastures, hay meadows) are known as habitats with a variety of insects - especially the dragonflies (*Odonata*), the butterflies (*Lepidoptera*) and the beetles (*Coleoptera*).

In the Lonjsko Polje Nature park there are 16 species of amphibians and 10 species of reptiles. One turtle occurs in the area, four species of lizard and six species of snakes. Still, several species are ecologically dependent on water habitats, such as the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and dice snake (*Natrix tessellata*).

According to the data available, about 45 species of fish live in the Sava River, and in the whole of the Danube basin, to which the Sava belongs, 103 fish species have been recorded. In the fish community of the Sava the *Cyprinidae* dominate, providing 19 of the species. Of the total of 34 species that belong to this family that appear in the whole of the Danube catchment area, 55% inhabit the Sava.

In the area of the park, among other mammals, there are species that are deeply dependent on the water habitats: the otter (*Lutra lutra*), the beaver (*Castor fiber*), the water shrews (*Neomys fodiens*), the Southern water shrew (*Neomys anomalus*), the water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) and others. The area provides the optimum conditions for the growth of the red deer, and the population of the wild cat and the otter is stable. The beaver has been reintroduced. Eight species of bats have been recorded, and there is an increasingly numerous jackal population.

About 250 bird species have been recorded, including 134 species that breed in the Lonjsko Polje Nature Park. This area is the most important as a nesting site, especially for the white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), the spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) - the biggest nesting place for the mixed colony of the spoonbill and herons is in the Krapje Đol Ornithological Reserve, the corncrake (*Crex crex*) - population inhabits both natural and anthropogenic habitats, depending on flooding dynamics, the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*). Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is an internationally important wintering and staging area for numerous bird species.

23. Social and cultural values:

a) Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values:

Cultural values

The Ramsar site represents and unites all the aspects of the historical period of the 15th to 19th century reflected in the material and the intangible parts of the cultural heritage. The material heritage of this period includes an intact cultural landscape with a several-century-long land-use pattern related to the traditional way of farming, the chief branches of which are animal husbandry, arable farming and extensive exploitation of the forests, together with its historical distribution of communications, its hydrological system and the function of the space. The cultural landscape represents the intact settlement

pattern of a system of linear rural settlements created in the 17th-19th centuries along the Sava River, the axis of the centuries-old communications, as well as the historical territorial border.

The settlements preserve all kinds of historical buildings characteristic of the historical period, a particularly representative number of original wooden dwellings and pertaining outbuildings produced in the well-known oak timber, with their particular spatial and structural approaches.

Socio-economic values

Current socio-economic values are based on the forestry, water management, agriculture and husbandry, tourism, hunting and fishing.

Forestry

Sixty eight per cent of the Park is covered with forests of common oak and narrow leaved ash. Most of the woodland area is economically exploitable in forest management, while a smaller part, about 10%, consists of protection forests and special purpose forests. Forest land is of interest to the local population for the carrying out of the traditional system of animal husbandry.

Water management

The area of the Park is a natural floodplain region where the naturally flooded land is used as part of the flood control system. The water masses of the Sava River at the time of high water are channelled via sluices, relief canals and some smaller canals into the flood water retention zone of Lonjsko Polje. The areas of Mokro Polje, Opeke and Trstika are not within the controlled flooding system.

Traditional agriculture

The basic way in which the local population in the Park makes its living is agriculture, and within this, animal husbandry, in the form of traditional extensive production (pasturing, foraging, haymaking). The traditional pasturing system is an ideal manner of using the human and natural resources. The indigenous species are an essential component of the pasturing system, of the preservation of extensive farming and the keeping up biological diversity, for they can cope with the extreme conditions of life in the open – they have strong constitutions that enable them to live outdoors, they have modest food requirements and have good social behavior, all of which are adjusted to the conditions of flooding.

Game and fishing

Many of the forest, grass and aquatic habitats provide considerable diversity of wild animals, particularly of birds and mammals. The Hunting Law considers some of these wild animals as game species. The fish stocks are used via both sporting (angling) and traditional fishing.

Tourism

Today the natural resources are also used for the purposes of visiting, education and recreation, and tourism, as branch of the economy, is occupying an increasingly important position in the development of the area. In line with the requirements, during zoning of the Park, areas are set aside that are used, as natural resources, in the visiting system. They comprise areas rich in bird life, in forest, grass and water areas, as well as areas with a rich cultural and landscape tradition.

b) Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning?

If Yes, tick the box and describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland:

Water management - natural floodplains are used in the flood defense system. Areas naturally liable to flood are covered in the system, their basic function thus being preserved, and the protection of biological and landscape values going hand in hand with modification of the flood control system.

Forestry - The forests are managed by the state owned corporation Croatian Forests according to the stringent ecological, social and economic standards of FCS certification (Forest Stewardship Council)

- ii) sites that have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland:

Traditional pasturing - this manner of land management preserves biological diversity to the maximum and it should be encouraged and developed by all measures. Such a system of stewardship probably exists nowhere else, and this is one more reason for it to be preserved.

In the area of the Nature Park as many as seven **indigenous breeds** have been recorded: the Croatian Posavac horse, the Croatian cold blooded horse, the Turopolje and black Slavonian pigs, the Slavonian-Syrmian Podola cattle breed, the Posavina goose and the Posavina hound.

Pasturing of the large livestock - the common use of the land by the rural communities means that the traditional management of the land is preserved, and that the local population will be actively involved in the preservation of the environment and the management of the Park.

Grazing of pigs - grazing of pigs takes place on the pastures, in the oak forests and the narrow leaved ash forests. The purpose of this way of feeding is to breed and maintain the pigs in their natural shape.

- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:

Traditional pasturing – the site is an exceptional example of in-situ conservation of endangered indigenous domestic breeds, since it represents the *genus loci* of two breeds: the Turopolje pig and the Posavina horse.

- iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland:

24. Land tenure/ownership:

- a) within the Ramsar site:

Data about proprietary relations are not exact, but unofficially the current state of property ownership shows that 5% of the land is privately owned, and 95% is owned by the State. Most of the Park is classified as forest - 35,002 ha (67.7%) used and managed by the Croatian Forests Ltd. Grasslands and pastures cover with 4,593 ha (10.1%), water and wetland cover 2,255 ha (4.4%), cultivated non-forest land covers 6,425 ha (12.6%), while brush occupies 1,673 ha (2.7%). Areas of the villages covers 388 ha or 0.8%.

25. Current land (including water) use:

- a) within the Ramsar site:

To give a real picture of land use, the table shows the results of research carried out in 2006 - see the map 2 in Appendix 1 (printed) and Appendix 2 (JPEG and GIS files on CD):

Land use category	Area in hectares	%
marshes	1481.5	2.89
arable land	6123.0	11.93
forests	36782.7	71.67
grasslands	5460.7	10.64
urban areas	414.4	0.81
waters	1058.2	2.06

Table . Land use in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park

Forestry

As a branch of the economy forestry occupies an important position in land use, more than two thirds of the Park being covered by forests. The forests are managed by the state owned corporation Croatian Forests Ltd. according to the stringent ecological, social and economic standards of FCS certification (Forest Stewardship Council).

Water management

The development of the flood defense system started in the 1970s, after disastrous flooding in the cities along the Sava. The whole flood defense system is based around three main objectives: to protect people, property and agricultural land.

The system is calculated as being completed to the level of around 40%. In the current period, the system as partially effectuated has proved to be effective but has also thrown some failings into relief. The fact that the planned system has not been built to the full should not be seen as a failure, but as a possibility for the modification of the basic approaches, in line with new results of research and new knowledge about the need to protect biological and landscape diversities. Areas naturally liable to flooding are covered in the system, their basic function thus being preserved, and the protection of biological and landscape values going hand in hand with modification of the flood control system.

The Central Sava basin flood control system, which includes the Lonjsko Polje Nature Park, consists of a series of planned constructions and operations, and covers the area from Zagreb and Karlovac in the West to Nova Gradiška in the East.

The major part of the flood control system is found in the Nature Park area. These are areas for the retention of flood waters, which are for a certain time of the year inundated. This area includes several units, as follows:

- Lonjsko Polje – controlled flood water retention zone of 25,630 ha
- Opeke, Trstika and Mokro Polje, uncontrolled retention area of 20,600 ha.

In Lonjsko Polje Nature Park there are two drinking water sources (Drenov Bok and Osekovo) used in water supply.

Traditional agriculture

The traditional pasturing system is an ideal manner of using the human and natural resources, because its role is positive in several ways:

- local indigenous breeds are best for pasturing due to their adapted to the habitat conditions, additionally. Local indigenous breeds are threatened and thus need to be preserved
- pasturing is a manner of making use of the grassland that best protects the landscape
- this kind of extensive manner of livestock keeping in a preserved environment results in quality products (needing good marketing however), which is essential for rural tourism
- animals kept in the Park in the traditional way are an additional draw for visitors.

Hunting

In Lonjsko Polje Nature Park the hunting is implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Hunting Law and the Nature Protection Law. According to the Hunting Law, in the park it is permitted to hunt: red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), several other mammals as well as certain bird species. According to the Regulation concerning protection of some animal species it is forbidden to hunt the wild cat (*Felix silvestris*), and the edible dormouse (*Myoxus glis*); a ban on hunting all bird game species except for pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) is in the pipeline.

Fishing

In line with the Freshwater Fishery Law and the Nature Protection Law, fishing activities will be carried as recreational fishing and as traditional fishing. For both kinds of fishing the Spatial Plan Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (OG 37/10) foresees fishing zones.

b) in the surrounding area:

In the surroundings/catchment area:

For an overview of the land cover in the Sava River Basin, the EEA Corine database for Europe was used, and prepared for the entire area of the Sava RB, as shown in figure.

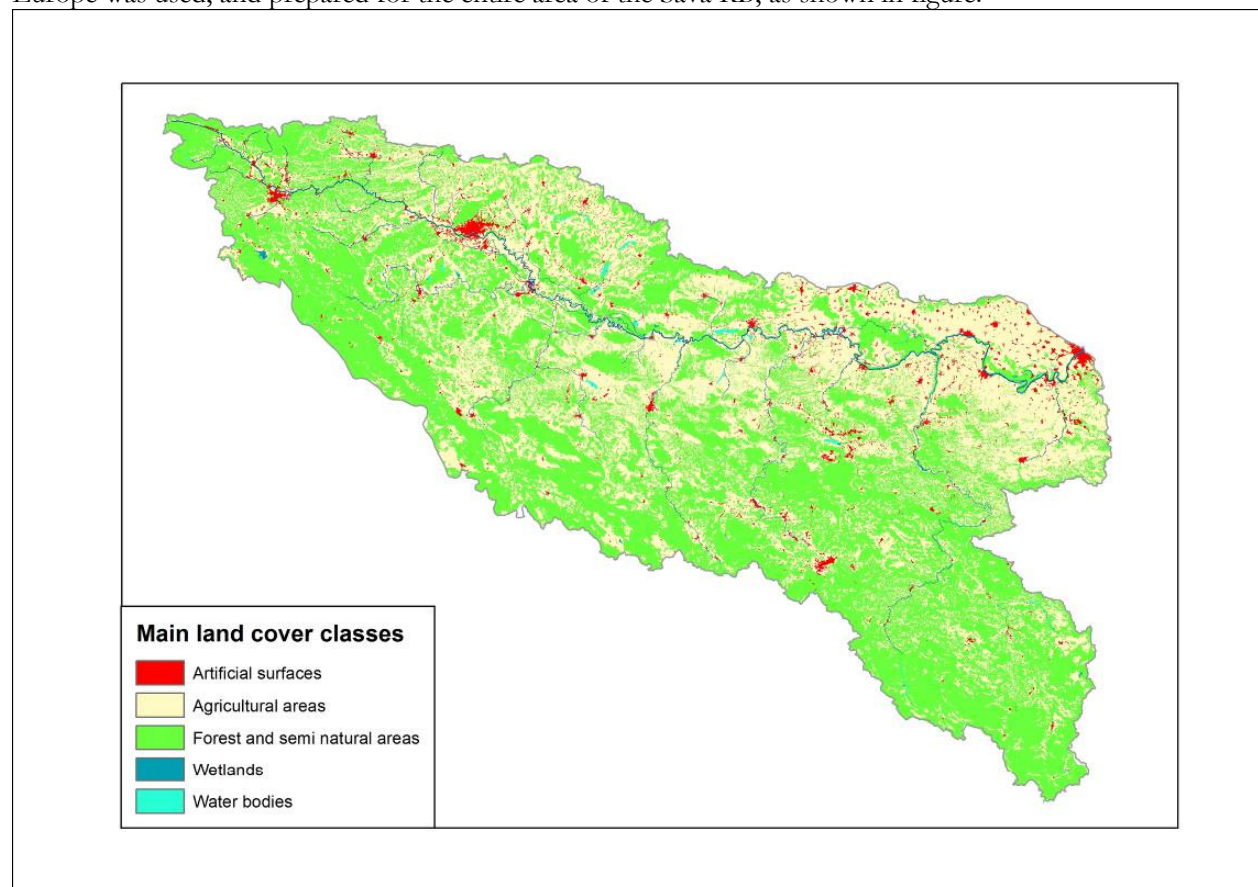


Figure: Distribution of main land cover classes in the Sava River Basin

Land class Share (%)

Artificial surfaces 2.23
 Agricultural areas 42.36
 Forests and semi natural areas 54.71
 Wetlands 0.08
 Inland water (water bodies) 0.63

26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:

a) within the Ramsar site:

Relevant documents (past, present pressures)

Law on Agricultural Land - Public Service does not manage meadows and pastures in state owned land, because according this law meadows and pastures in protected areas can be rented to the pasture's communities or to the people who do not live in or surrounding the Park area.

Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage - there is no modus elaborated for protecting traditional architecture or the heritage of an ambient character, apart from the measure of proclaiming something a cultural heritage, and no making of landscape plans with an identification of the landscape, analysis of features and changes is stipulated.

Law on the Spatial Planning and Construction - the landscapes are not sufficiently well incorporated into spatial plans of counties nor towns and municipalities. The law does not prescribe the elaboration of landscape plans with an identification of landscape, analysis of features and changes.

Areas of Special National Concern Law - a part of the Park belongs to an area of special national concern (the settlement of the municipality of Jasenovac), which has resulted in unbalanced conditions for the development of the area as a whole. It is proposed that this Law should be amended in order to include areas of protection of natural and cultural values as areas of special national interest.

Development pressures (past, potential pressures)

There are no very significant development pressures, because there is little interest in building and making changes in the space, which has been brought about by depopulation and reduced interest in the area for living and settling in.

Pressure is manifested much more in the decline of activity and life and in the motivation of people to invest and make adjustments to the new standards, standards of living and hygiene, the maintenance of settlements and public amenities, joint actions and getting people together around the idea of living together in small village communities.

Demographic factors (depopulation) – past pressures

The fact that the cultural landscape of Central Posavina was created through the interaction of people and nature tells us that abandonment of the area is bound to have negative effect on the landscape. In the 1990s, because of the war, most of the population that dealt with animal husbandry left the area, and hence the herds were reduced. The absence of livestock resulted in vegetation succession on the grasslands. The demographic situation is constantly exacerbated by the drain of population from rural to city areas.

Depopulation, affecting the younger generations living in rural areas, has become particularly crucial in the Park. The end of the era of village life and the poor connections with urban centers and between the right and left banks of the Sava River are the cause of depopulation. And with the people, the development of rural culture, together with the very worthwhile architectural heritage, is also vanishing. Many of the wooden houses have been abandoned and are falling into decay.

Water management (past, potential)

The Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is part of the flood control system built up in 1970. Monitoring and research results signified some negative impacts on biological and landscape diversity:

- The results of soil research show the presence of heavy metals (As, Cd, Hg) which means that the flood water that ingresses into the retention zone does not pass through any treatment plan
- Because of the construction of water management facilities, the natural entry of fish to the spawning grounds has been frustrated, and the result of this is a much reduced spawning success
- Construction of new canals that interrupted the natural flows of the Lonja, Strug and Trebež rivers
- Construction of dikes has resulted in the interruption of the freshwater entering in oxbows
- Drained oxbows, grasslands and pastures have a negative impact on the diversity of flora and fauna
- Regulation of the Sava River and project aiming to upgrade the navigation category upstream and downstream from the Park area can be a threat to flooding ecological system if the flood dynamic will change

Negative factors in arable farming and livestock rearing (present, potential pressure)

Agriculture and traditional farming as the main interest for local people present the main artery in preservation of the biodiversity of grasslands, pastures and little-plot parcels and cultural identity of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park. Since the 1990 war livestock rearing as a main agricultural branch is in the

process of revitalization, but the livestock breeders have many problems that have a negative impact on the revitalization process:

- pastures covered by neophyte false indigo, Indigo bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Rough Cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*) and ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*)
- the problem of “State-Owned Farmland” is unresolved
- the killing of cattle by hunters or poachers
- insufficient communication between breeders and institutions that take care of the selection programme or provide the veterinary services
- the poor work of the organizations that carry out breeding programmes, the absence of any standardization and the marketing of products of traditional farming
- Livestock is not guarded on the pastures.

The expansion of non-indigenous species (past, present, potential pressures)

Indigo bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*) originates from the central and south east areas of North America. It was introduced to Europe as a decorative plant, but soon ran wild and made itself totally at home in southern and central Europe. The indigo bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*) spreads along lowland regions, along the banks of rivers and lakes. In the last 20 years the expansion of introduced and invasive species has become a serious problem. Indigo bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*) creates problems not only in forest ground, but also overgrows the meadows, plough land and pastures. During the homeland war the flight of the local population greatly reduced, which led to a commensurate reduction of the herd.

The absence of traditional agriculture and animal husbandry resulted in our having today hectares and hectares of abandoned land covered with indigo bush. Today, 2.5% of the Park is covered with pure stands of this intruder, or 1,201 ha (see map of habitats), while the mosaic areas that false indigo has started to cover occupy an area of 5,817 ha or 11.4% of the total Park's area.

Cultural Heritage (past, present, potential)

Negative factors and risks in the preservation and revitalization of the cultural heritage are visible at several levels:

- neglect of the settlements and poor physical condition of the traditional buildings
- holdings are neglected
- inappropriate new interventions in historical settings
- property issues
- demolishing houses and moving them out of the Park for secondary uses, illegal export of material
- low awareness of living in wooden houses
- insufficiently well-informed local administration
- a low level of authenticity in the case of restoring the architectural heritage
- the failure to use traditional techniques of building and revitalization (use of sheetrock walls), poor understanding of restoration of the building heritage (the principle of conservation is of prime importance for the preservation of authenticity)
- shortage of qualified tradesmen for the renovation of the architectural heritage
- shortage of cured oak for construction, and the high price of materials makes it difficult to implement the planned objectives
- cadastral data and detailed maps of settlements with all topographic details are not up to date, and have not been digitalized
- shortage of funding
- economic uncertainty for activities that are preferred by the management objectives

Tourism (potential pressure)

The development of the tourist industry in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is still in the initial phases, and for the moment it can be said that with the annual 20,000 entry tickets into the Park sold, there has been no negative impact on the natural and cultural values of the Park. However, for some years, the Park has

experienced the presence of visitors unevenly distributed in terms of time and place. This means that in a certain part of the year (April-June) there is a large number of visitors, who are concentrated in two visiting sites; the rest of the year, the number of visitors is very small.

b) in the surrounding area:

Surface water

Common sources so that data provided by the Sava River Basin countries is comparable with regard to pollution and methodology has been developed for the identification of significant pollution environmental emissions. The methodology for the identification of significant pollution sources in the Sava RB is based on EU Directives – primarily 91/271/EC UWWT Directive and the Directive on Industrial Emissions (2010/75/EC).

These Directives, or as a minimum their main principles, have been transposed into water legislation in all Sava RB countries. Further, the country specific generated load and emissions regarding organic, nutrient and hazardous substance pollution presented in this chapter should be considered in relation to the respective countries' share of the Sava RB.

Organic pollution from urban wastewater - The population of the Sava RB (excluding Albania) is approx. 9.0 million and its activities in urban areas represent the main pressure on the environment.

Industrial organic pollution - Numerous industrial activities are undertaken within the Sava RB. A preliminary inventory carried out during the development of the Sava RBMP identified 1,096 industrial enterprises. The following industrial sectors and industrial facilities were represented: i. energy (11 power plants), ii. chemical industry (38), iii. metal processing (93), iv. Paper and v. wood industry (32), all of which have been present for some time in the region.

Nutrient pollution - The Sava is the third longest tributary of the Danube and discharges the largest volume of water into the Danube of all its tributaries. With regard to nutrients, it discharges into the Danube approx. 1.79 – 6.89 kt/a of total P and 37.86 – 85.59 kt/a of total N. This estimate was calculated from the ICPDR TNMN qualitative data from monitoring sites at Sremska Mitrovica and Ostružica using also hydrological data from the monitoring site at Sremska Mitrovica and from ISRBC and Serbian HMI Yearbooks for 2005 – 2007.

Hazardous substances pollution - Hazardous substances include man-made chemicals, naturally occurring metals, oil and its compounds and numerous emerging substances, e.g. endocrine disruptors, personal care products and pharmaceuticals.

Sources of hazardous substances are primarily industrial effluents, storm water overflow, pesticides and other chemicals applied in agriculture as well as discharges from mining operations and accidental pollution. Atmospheric deposition may also be of significance for some substances. Agricultural pesticides are used in large quantities to protect field and orchard crops, but they are also used extensively to protect livestock. Pesticide application is used preventively, as pre-emergence application, and reactively, as post-emergence application to reduce damage to infested crops and animals.

Hydromorphological alterations - The key driving forces causing river and habitat continuity interruption in the Sava RB are primarily hydropower (78%), water supply (10%), and flood protection (6%). There are 31 barriers in the Sava RB (SI -7; HR - 7, BA – 9, ME – 2, RS - 8) with 8 barriers on the Sava River itself and 23 on the tributaries.

Disconnection of adjacent wetlands/floodplains - The Sava River has lost a significant area of floodplain, although along the lower courses some important floodplains still remain. The Sava River has the second largest active area of floodplains (1,900 km²) after the Danube (exclusive of the Delta, around 5,000 km²).

The lateral connectivity of river and floodplain is included as one of the features of morphological alteration assessment.

Groundwater

Pressures on groundwater quality - According to the collected data, groundwater quality is mostly endangered in urban areas and areas with intensive agriculture production, which are mostly located on the alluvial plains of the Sava River and its tributaries. Groundwater pollution has been recorded in four Sava countries: Savinjska kotlina and Krška kotlina (SI), Zagreb area (HR), Semberija, Lijevo polje (BA) and Mačva area (RS). The main causes of groundwater pollution in the Sava River Basin are:

- Intensive agriculture;
- Insufficient wastewater collection and treatment at municipal level;
- Inappropriate waste disposal sites;
- Urban land use;
- Mining activities.

Pressures on groundwater quantity

Aquifers of intergranular porosity such as the fluvial deposits of the Sava River and downstream sections of its tributaries - Ljubljana, Krka, Kupa, Una, Vrbas, Ukrina, Bosna and Drina are directly hydraulically linked with river courses, which are often used for water abstraction by bank filtration process. The public water supply of major cities such as Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade, rely almost entirely on these water resources.

27. Conservation measures taken:

a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:

In particular, if the site is partly or wholly a World Heritage Site and/or a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, please give the names of the site under these designations.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1963 | Proclamation of the Ornithological Reserve of Krapje Đol (Institute for Nature Protection of Croatia, Zagreb, Act on Proclamation of the Ornithological Reserve no: 24/14-1963., ZM/MZ from 10. 10. 1963.) – an area of high protection corresponding to IUCN category 1b |
| 1969 | Proclamation of the Ornithology Reserve of Rakita (Official News Sisak, no. 40 November 4 th , 1969, Decision on Proclamation of the Special Ornithological Reserve Rakita) - an area of high protection corresponding to IUCN category 1b |
| 1989 | 200,000 ha of Posavina, including Lonjsko Polje and Mokro Polje on the list of Important Bird Areas (IBA code 009, Floodplain of the Sava River) |
| 1990 | Proclamation of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (Official Gazette 11/90) an area of high protection corresponding to IUCN category V, the boundaries of the Ramsar site correspond to the Park's boundary |
| 1990 | Proclamation of village Krapje as protected rural settlement (proclaimed by the Regional Department for protection of the cultural monuments in Osijek, Act, UP-10-03-505/2-90 of November 13 th , 1990) |
| 1993 | January 18 th , Lonjsko Polje Nature Park placed on the list of internationally important wetlands, The Ramsar List |
| 1994 | the village Čigoč awarded the title of European Stork Village by Euronatur |
| 1995 | the village Krapje awarded the title of Architectural Heritage Village by the Council of Europe |
| 1996 | Ordinance of the Government of the Republic of Croatia founding the Public Institution Lonjsko Polje Nature Park |
| 1998 | Organization and beginning of the work of the Public Institution Lonjsko Polje Nature Park |
| 1998 | Proclamation of the village Čigoč as preventative protection of rural settlement (532-19-04-98-01/AM/BS November 16 th , 1998, Ministry of Culture) |
| 1999 | the wetland areas were defined as one of the priorities of the National Strategy for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity with conservation action plans adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia |
| 2005 | Lonjsko Polje Nature Park placed on the Tentative List of the World Heritage List |
| 2007 | By proclamation of the Decree on Ecological Network (OG 109/07), Lonjsko Polje Nature Park proclaimed as a part of ecological network of Croatia |

b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site (tick the box or boxes as appropriate):

Ia ; Ib ; II ; III ; IV ; V ; VI

c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?:

Management Plan of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park for ten years period, 2009 – 2018

d) Describe any other current management practices:

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

The area is a part of the proposal of Croatian NATURA 2000 network. Conservation measures (in preparation) will be implemented after the Republic of Croatia becomes a member of the European Union.

NATURA 2000 proposed sites:

SPA – Special Protection Areas, HR1000004 Donja Posavina

pSCI – proposed Sites of Community Importance, HR2000416 Lonjsko Polje

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

- International Waterfowl Census (accounting of the wintering birds)
- Monitoring and ringing of white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)
- Monitoring of black stock (*Ciconia nigra*)
- Monitoring of white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus alibicilla*)
- Monitoring of corn-crake (*Crex crex*)
- Monitoring of great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)
- Monitoring of herons
- Monitoring of spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*)
- Monitoring of ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*)
- Research into bird populations on the agricultural land (arable land, meadows and pastures, overgrown areas) in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
- Research into the distribution of the Golden jackal (*Canis aureus*) in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
- Research into distribution of the European mudminnow (*Umbra krameri*)

30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:

e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

The Visiting system Program in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park

Two info-centres in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park have been renovated for visiting system, Čigoč No. 26 and Krapje No. 16. Agreements with the local government (the Kutina and Popovača Municipality) have been signed for the purpose of building up two new info-centres, in Repušnica and Osekovo villages. Current info-centres are equipped and have souvenir shops and resting area. Visiting is organized with tourist guides and educational programmes as follows:

- White stork in Čigoč
- Krapje – village of the architectural heritage
- Spoonbill – bird with a spoon
- The Posavina horse
- Amphibians in Lonjsko Polje

- Corncrake – secret meadow bird
- The Sava River
- Special programmes for the groups of the special interest – for example, the lowland riparian forests; original breeds in Lonjsko Polje.

It is expected that the main reception centres (the main entrances into the Park) will direct visitors in the Park. The orientation of visitors in the framework of these measures has the following objectives:

- At the info centre visitors to the Park must be able to pick up a varied menu of interesting activities and an insight into the cultural and natural landscape
- Because of the actual product and the accompanying protection measures, the impacts on the animal and plant species have to be reduced to the lowest possible level
- The population of the Park must have a share in the revenue from tourism, and it is expected that the administration of the Park and the households dealing with tourism will be in close working contact
- The making of a weekend programme for visitors and its implementation in collaboration with households that are licensed to offer bed and board

Several private collections have been set up and opened for visitors. As follows:

- the Sučić Collection, Čigoč No. 32, textiles, tools, vessels; the family inventory has been added to since 1950 by purchases and gifts. The collection has been open to the public since 1990.
- the Ravlić Collection, Mužilovčica No. 72, furniture, textiles; the ethnographic objects of the Ravlić Family is located in the house and outbuildings, and have been accessible to the public since 1999.
- the Blažeković Collection, Lonja 164, fishing accoutrements...
- the Palaić Collection, Krapje 48 (furniture, carpentry tools and so on; family inheritance, open to the public since 1995.
- Each collection numbers several hundred different objects.

Exhibitions at Lonjsko Polje Nature Park info points:

- Čigoč 26, in the renovated traditional wooden house there is a rather small exhibition of authentic traditional items of a carpenter's workshop: chisel, plane, saw, worktable, compass and so on.
- Krapje 1, in the renovated traditional house, ground floor only, there is a small exhibition of photographs, texts on panels, and some artefacts concerning the values and specific features of Lonjsko Polje.

Promotional materials and souvenirs

In the info-centres in Čigoč and Krapje, the Public Service sells promotional material and souvenirs. Specialized publications, tourist maps, LPNP bulletins, bird books, bird guides, the LPNP Book, the Guide for Rangers and Guide for Teachers, can be bought in info-centres.

Trails

The visitors can use the walking trails in LPNP as follows:

- “the Posavac trail” in Čigoč village with five educational signboards
- “the Borderers’ trail” with two observation towers in the Ornithological Reserve Krapje Đol. The trail stretches from Krapje to village Drenov Bok
- “the Tena trail” - educational forest trail

6 cycling routes connect tourist destinations in LPNP as follows:

- *The Posavina Route* follows the left bank of the Sava River along the county road, for a length of 76 km
- *The Subocka Route* is a circular route, 41 km long, starting out from Krapje – Architectural Heritage Village – and heading for the settlement of Jasenovac
- *The Lipovljani Route* is a circular route 39 km long. It starts out from Krapje – Architectural Heritage Village
- The 50 km long *Sunja Route* is reached from the Posavina Route, where from the village of Kratečko with an extremely pleasant ride that makes use of a traditional ferry over the river that gets you to the right bank of the Sava
- *The Una Route*, which is 61 km long, and moves in the same direction as the Sunja Route, splits off however at Sunja and goes through the villages of G. Hrastovac and Stubalj towards Hrvatska Kostajnica
- *The Moslavina Route* is 34 km long, and starts off from the European Stork Village, Čigoč, towards Gušće, and then breaks off to the right towards Svinjičko, a village famed for its traditional style of fishing

31. Current recreation and tourism:

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

The site is used for ecologically sustainable tourism that is organized by the Lonjsko Polje Nature Park Public Service. About 20,000 visitors take organized tours in the area, including boat trip on the Sava River. The number of bird-watchers is increasing, as well as of those engaged in walking, cycling, and angling.

32. Jurisdiction:

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

Sectoral jurisdiction:

Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection
Mihael Zmajlović, Minister
Republike Austrije 14
HR - 10 000 Zagreb
Republic of Croatia

Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection
Nature Protection Directorate
Nenad Strizrep, Deputy Minister
Republike Austrije 14
HR - 10000 Zagreb
Republic of Croatia

Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection
Nature Protection Directorate
Eugen Draganović, Focal point of the Republic of Croatia for the Ramsar Convention:
Republike Austrije 14
HR - 10000 Zagreb
Republic of Croatia

Territorial Jurisdiction:

Sisačko-moslavačka County, County Prefect
Marina Lovrić Merzel
Antuna i Stjepana Radića 36
HR-44000 Sisak

Republic of Croatia

33. Management authority:

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park Public Institution

Krapje No. 16

HR – 44325 Krapje

Republic of Croatia

Tel: +385 44 611-190, +385 44 672 080

Fax : +385 44 606 449

Web : www.pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

e-mail : manager@pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

Manager:

Goran Gugić

manager@pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

Natural Resources Manager:

Valerija Hima

bio@pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

Head of Ranger Division:

Zlatko Posavec

ranger@pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

Head of Department of Tourism and Promotion:

Edvard Bogović

info@pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

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 11. Wetland International, (2006): „Waterbird Population Estimates”, 4th edition, Final Draft, Wageningen, Netherlands
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Please return to: **Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**
Telephone: +41 22 999 0170 • Fax: +41 22 999 0169 • e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org

APPENDIX 1 – Maps

1. Boundaries of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (including two ornithological reserves) on topographic map 1: 100,000
 2. Land use map of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (Corine land cover)
 3. Map of habitats of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (mapping scale 1:25,000)
 4. Map of habitats of Krapje Đol Ornithological Reserve (mapping scale 1:5,000)
 5. Map showing territorial organization (cities and villages) in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
 6. Map showing tourist visiting and fishing zones of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
 7. Map showing transportation system in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
 8. Map showing water management and flood defence system in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
 9. Map showing the spatial plan zoning in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (three sheets)
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