

An aerial photograph of a lush, green forest. A stream flows through the center-left of the image, with a small waterfall on the left side. The trees are dense and vibrant green, with some yellowish-green highlights. The overall scene is natural and serene.

# **euRONATUR**

**Annual report 2017**



Photo: Kerstin Sauer

## Dear Friends of EuroNatur,

Among the beautiful concomitants of our work in nature conservation are the exchanges with kindred spirits, i.e. exchanges with committed people who together with us fight for this good cause, whose enthusiasm is infectious, and who inspire us with their passion. Nature conservation is only ever as good as the people behind it and their reasoning. We at EuroNatur and our partners are convinced that people and nature not only can but must coexist. This coexistence as equals is the basis of a liveable future. Our approach to nature conservation is transnational in nature, going beyond borders and nationalities. We do not believe in the resurgent national movements whose

deafening proclamations are roaring up in all corners of Europe. Instead, together with our local partners we work towards the establishment of a civil society that is transnational in its orientation and that is able to stand up and fight back when it comes to the destruction of our common natural heritage.

Nature conservation always has an inherent political component. The destruction of nature has a direct impact on people's everyday lives. Especially in our focal area of south-eastern Europe, the protection of our natural heritage is a dramatic race against time. The landscape there is sold and ruined purely for profit and greed and with complete disregard for the local people. To us this is unacceptable. We are convinced that our reasoning is sound and we believe in the power of civil society, a

European civil society that is, which is focused on the future of the European biosphere as a whole. This conviction is what motivates and binds us and our partners in the EuroNatur project areas.

Once again I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to our donors, funders and sponsors for their most valuable support. We would not be able to do our work without you.

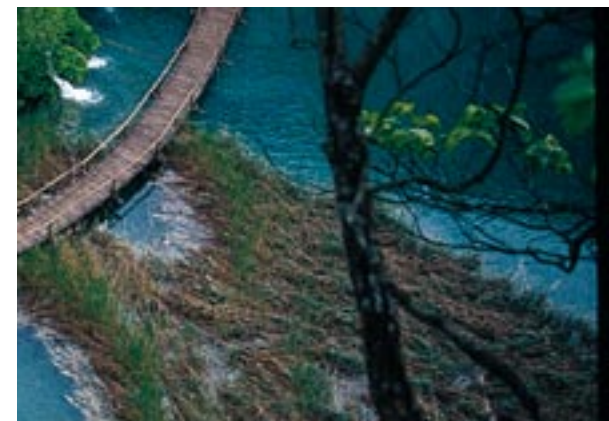
This activity report will give you an impression of what we have achieved together in 2017, and that is quite a lot.

I trust that this report will make enjoyable and interesting reading.

Yours sincerely,

Christel Schroeder  
President of EuroNatur Foundation

Photo: Martin Schneider-Jacoby



## EuroNatur – Connecting nature and people

We are committed to connecting nature and people in a peaceful Europe – beyond national borders. Our donors support us in this endeavour.

The growth-oriented way we lead our lives and run our economies at this point in history is characterized by ruthless exploitation of natural resources and has resulted in the pervasive destruction of nature as well as in drastic climate change. People all around the world are feeling the resultant adverse effects.

Nature is the natural resource base on which all humans depend. Species and habitat diversity are prerequisites of a quality environment. Our aim is a European continent that hosts free-flowing rivers, pristine forests and diverse cultural landscapes and that offers sufficient space for wild animals and migrating birds within these and other ecosystems.

### Our mode of operation

Our efforts for the protection of plants, animals and habitats are transboundary in nature; we strengthen local conservation organizations and create international networks between them. Together with our Europe-wide partner network we create solutions that allow humans to live and work in harmony with nature. In our work we follow a well-proven approach:

#### ■ knowing

Using reputable scientific studies, we provide evidence of the conservation importance and uniqueness of species, landscapes and habitats and of the threats they face.

#### ■ protecting

We work on driving forward the formal protection of endangered species as well as of habitats and landscapes of particular high ecological value. To this end we utilize national and international political structures.

#### ■ safeguarding

Protected areas and species must be given sustained effective protection. We support control measures and make our demands for rigorous protection measures heard in national and international political institutions as well as in the courts. Where necessary, we exert public pressure on decision-makers (for example by way of protests and media attention).

#### ■ living

We generate acceptance of the need for protection and potentially associated restrictions for the local communities. Together with the local people we establish ecologically compatible land-use methods in protected habitats that open up socio-economic prospects. This helps us to win over local people as partners for achieving our conservation objectives, thus laying the groundwork for the long-term effectiveness of our efforts.

Photo: Bernhard Volmer - Cranes (Grus grus)



## Protecting migratory birds in Europe

The flight paths used by migratory birds crisscross our planet. European migratory birds primarily use three of these "highways in the sky" for their twice-yearly journey between their breeding grounds and their wintering grounds. In addition to the western migratory route via Gibraltar and the eastern route over the Bosphorus, there is also the Adriatic route, the 'Adriatic Flyway'. No matter which route they take, the birds must pass over high mountain ranges and barren landscapes. But the resting areas they so urgently need to recover from their journeys are coming under ever greater pressure.

### Under fire from all sides

Every year millions of Europe's migratory birds fall victim to the impacts of habitat loss and illegal hunting. Many of the wetland areas in which birds rest and recover have been drained for agriculture, built over for transport infrastructure, or devalued by mass tourism. Moreover, aquatic birds in particular are being hunted, mostly illegally. In addition to the immediate losses caused by the hunters' lead pellets, every shot causes enormous stress for the birds and makes them consume valuable energy they badly need for their onward journey.

### Our mission

We are committed to ensuring that selected areas along the migration routes are designated as no-hunting zones, so as to provide the feathered nomads with safe stopovers on their migration. Simultaneously, we are fighting to preserve the last semi-natural Balkan wetlands. The Balkan Peninsula continued to be one of the geographical foci of our work in 2017.

### Networking at the international level

Successful protection of migratory birds requires a strong network of allies. Together with the Komitee gegen den Vogelmord (Committee Against Bird Slaughter), EuroNatur held several training workshops for the project partners in nine countries along the Adriatic Flyway with a view to being able to more effectively fight illegal hunting. We have also worked to ensure that the provisions of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) are implemented in the countries along the Adriatic Flyway. As part of this work, in September 2017 EuroNatur contributed their experience from the Adriatic Flyway at a meeting of the working group on waterbird monitoring. In addition, EuroNatur deepened its cooperation with representatives of the Bern and Bonn Conventions – two important international species protection conventions. What is true for migratory birds also holds true for our projects: We need to cross borders.

## Selected EuroNatur projects in 2017

### A network for the White stork

#### Geographical location in Europe

„European Stork Villages“ in Croatia, Hungary, Germany, Spain, Romania, Slovenia, Poland, Austria, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Turkey, Macedonia, Slovakia, Serbia and Greece.

#### Status

Wet grasslands, both meadows and pastures, host numerous rare species of flora and fauna – but sadly they have also seen massive decline. By and large off the general public's radar, these valuable habitats are disappearing one after the other by being converted into arable land or by being built over. Political will to do anything about this is basically non-existent. The well-known and much loved White Stork is a perfect flagship species to draw attention to the risks faced by wet grasslands and their inhabitants.

#### Objectives

Working together with the European Stork Villages, our aim is to combat the loss of white stork habitat in selected European model regions. It is crucial in this context to draw the local communities' attention to the importance of maintaining these habitats. We want to ensure that the "European Stork Villages" are seen as the national vanguard of white stork protection. At the same time, these communities should become attractive destinations for sustainable nature-based tourism.

#### Selected activities in 2017

- In November 2017 the European Stork Villages initiative launched its own website at [www.storkvillages.net](http://www.storkvillages.net) which contains information on these elegant birds, the risks they face and on EuroNatur's initiative for the protection of white storks. At the same time, the website serves to improve networking between the stork villages across Europe.
- The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of European Stork Villages was held May 16-20, 2017 in Poros, Greece. Representatives of almost all the municipalities involved attended the meeting and exchanged experiences on the protection of these majestic birds.

#### Important achievements in 2017

- Several projects designed to improve white stork habitats successfully concluded in the reporting year. In the Bulgarian stork village Belozem a fallow rice paddy was converted into a semi-natural wet meadow. Information panels were erected for the benefit of visitors to the site. Successful restoration measures were also carried out in the Slovakian stork village Buzica.



Photo: Miroslav Fulin, stork village Buzica

- The visibility and external promotion of the European Stork Villages has significantly been enhanced with the new website. For the first time, interested parties can access breeding data from the individual villages online. Information exchange between participating villages has also become easier.

#### Outlook

Additional restoration projects and information campaigns are nearing completion, such as for example in the Serbian stork village Taraš. There will be another meeting of European Stork Villages in 2018. This year's host will be the Swiss stork village Altreu.

**Partners:** Ciconia Foundation, Swiss Stork Society (Gesellschaft Storch Schweiz), European Stork Villages and their national partners in conservation

**Funding:** RHW-Stiftung, Pancivis Foundation, Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, Bristol Stiftung, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors



## Adriatic Flyway – Running the gauntlet on the Balkan Peninsula

### Geographical location in Europe

Bird habitats along the Adriatic Flyway in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania. The Adriatic Flyway stretches from north-eastern Europe through the Balkans down to Africa. Key areas are the Neretva Delta including the Hutovo Blato Nature Park in the border area of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the karstic Livanjsko polje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the near-natural Labudovo Okno wetland along the Danube in Serbia and the Bojana Buna Delta including the Ulcinj salt flats in the border area of Montenegro and Albania (Map p. 27, No. 9, 8, 10, 11).

### Status

The Adriatic Flyway is one of the three main flyways used by European migratory birds. This route along the Adriatic is of major significance in particular for numerous central and eastern European species of wader and other wetland bird species. In addition to illegal hunting, which constantly haemorrhages Europe's birdlife, the feathered nomads are also under threat due to the increasing destruction of important resting areas. For example, compared to their natural potential extent, nearly 70 per cent of the region's natural or semi-natural floodplains and deltas have been lost.

### Special focus in 2017

The Ulcinj salt flats in Montenegro are a classic example of the dangers faced by migratory birds along the entire Adriatic Flyway. Apart from illegal hunting, this bird paradise is primarily under threat from plans to convert the site into a tourist resort including luxury hotels and golf courses. Following the salt pans' privatization it was leased in 2006 to the investment fund operator Eurofond. There are many indications that Eurofond systematically let the salt pans fall into disrepair, resulting in the operation going into bankruptcy in 2012 and site operations – which are important for nature conservation – ceasing in 2014. Since then the Ulcinj salt flats have gradually lost their habitat function for many of the bird species that are specialized on this saltwater ecosystem. EuroNatur and its partners aim to halt this negative trend and are fighting for the salt pans' designation as a protected area.

### Objectives

Our aim is to achieve a consistently monitored hunting ban in selected areas along the Adriatic Flyway, thus providing migratory birds with safe stopover sites on their long journeys. We are fighting to halt the loss of further important wetlands on the Adriatic coast and its hinterland and are

working towards the ecologically particularly valuable sites to be given protective status at long last. Additionally, our aim is to expand the body of baseline scientific knowledge on the Adriatic Flyway and to create greater public awareness as to the major importance of the Adriatic Flyway for bird migrations between Europe and Africa.

### Selected activities in 2017

- In April 2017, EuroNatur, BirdLife and CZIP organized the third international conference on protecting the Ulcinj salt flats. At this occasion, EuroNatur and its partners called on the Montenegrin Prime Minister Duško Marković to make the protection of the Ulcinj salt flats a policy priority.
- The local partners have continued their monitoring of bird populations and illegal hunting in all project areas along the Adriatic Flyway and collected sound data.
- As part of a camp against illegal hunting, bird conservationists in our partner organizations in cooperation with local security forces removed illegal hunting cabins in the Croatian part of the Neretva Delta and confiscated hunting decoys from poachers.



Photo: Andrea Rucigliano - bullet casing

### Important achievements in 2017

- Croatian bird conservationists managed to track down poachers in the difficult terrain of the Neretva Delta. The swiftly called police arrested the men there and then. They are looking at incurring substantial fines.
- Very low temperatures and significant snowfall at the start of the reporting year took their toll on aquatic birds along the Adriatic Flyway. Several countries on the Balkan Peninsula temporarily suspended hunting permits under pressure from our local partners.
- The hunting moratorium in Albania, which EuroNatur and its partners had called for and which had been enacted in 2016, has not been retracted despite significant protests from the hunting lobby. In March 2017, the Constitutional Court in Tirana confirmed the existing hunting ban until 2021.

### Outlook

Saving the Ulcinj salt flats will continue to be a particular challenge for EuroNatur in 2018. As part of our #SaveSalina campaign we and our partners aim to bring more attention to what is happening at the salt flats and thus to further increase pressure on those in charge in Montenegro.

With regard to the illegal hunting of birds we will develop further packages of measures. The camp against illegal hunting in the Neretva Delta for example is to be continued and we aim to transfer successful strategies to other areas along the Adriatic Flyway. In addition to exchanging knowledge, we are working on networking the various active stakeholders who are scattered along the Adriatic Flyway.



Photo: Andrea Rucigliano - Removing of an illegal hunting cabin in the frame of the anti-poaching camp in Neretva Delta (Croatia)

**Partners:** HDZPP, Biom, DOPPS, BPSSS, CZIP, Dr. Martin Schneider-Jacoby Association, Naše ptice, Hutovo Blato Nature Park, Lijepa naša, Galeb Hunting Association, NGO Čaplja, APAWA, PPNEA, AOS, ASPBM, MES, BirdLife, Tour du Valat  
**Funding:** Mava Foundation, CEPF, Ludwig Raue Memorial Fund, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

Photo: Heinz Lehmann - Wolves (*Canis lupus*)



Photo: Wolfgang A. Bajohr - Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*)



## Large mammal protection in Europe

Wolves, brown bears and lynx epitomize untamed nature. Together with our partners we are working to protect these fascinating large mammals and their habitats in Europe. Our declared aim is to make possible the peaceful coexistence of wild animals and people. In the marine sphere we are focusing on protecting the last remaining Mediterranean monk seals.

### Wolf

The European wolf population has returned to growth thanks to the high legal protective status afforded to it and as a result of increased protection efforts. The species benefits from its adaptability and its ability to cover great distances in search of new territories. Wolves are returning to their original range. There are still countries in which wolves are hunted in great numbers, both illegally and legally. However, the wolves' general population trend in Europe is positive. Our activities are primarily focused on Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland, which is also the area in which the story of the wolves' successful return to Germany began.

### Brown bear

Brown bears continue to be among Europe's highly endangered species. It is no coincidence that they are under such strict protection. But that is not enough. Humans continue to present the greatest threat by far to these huge furies: both illegal killings and excessive cull quotas threaten the brown bears' survival in Europe. Additional risk factors are the destruction of their habitats and habitat fragmentation by roads and settlements. In 2017, EuroNatur's protection programme primarily focused on two regions: the Cantabrian Mountains in northern Spain and the Dinarides on the Balkan Peninsula. From the Balkans the bears may one day be able to resettle the Alpine arc.





### Lynx

The Eurasian lynx originally occurred almost all over Europe. Today, significant natural lynx populations are limited to the northern and eastern parts of the continent. While the lynx is flexible when it comes to its habitat requirements, it does depend for its survival on unfragmented landscapes and sufficient prey, both of which have become rather rare in Europe. Illegal hunting is also a massive problem for this species. The Balkan lynx, a subspecies of the Eurasian lynx, is critically endangered. Its survival and the protection of its last remaining habitats continued to be one of the focal areas of EuroNatur's activities in 2017.

### Mediterranean monk seal

Ecosystem destruction, marine pollution and overfishing have brought the Mediterranean monk seals to the brink of extinction. These seals used to roam the entire Mediterranean Sea and adjacent marine regions but now count among the world's most highly endangered animal species. Undisturbed sandy and rocky shores have become rare throughout the monk seals' range. The last truly sizeable surviving colony of Mediterranean monk seals lives at Cap Blanc, a peninsula on the Mauritanian Atlantic coast. The number of these marine mammals surviving in the Mediterranean as a whole is not known. In order to change that, we expanded our activities in 2017 to the islands around Corfu and the neighbouring Greek coast.



## Selected EuroNatur projects in 2017

### In the hunters' scopes – Spain's last brown bears

#### Geographical location in Europe

The Cantabrian Mountains in northern Spain (Map p. 27, No. 1) are home to two brown bear populations that are in contact with each other: one in the west, the other in the east of the mountain range.

#### Status

Spain's last bears live in the expansive forests of the Cantabrian Mountains. They had been very close to extinction but our intensive protection measures have so far averted that fate. Meanwhile, the bear population in the western part of the Cantabrian Mountains has grown fivefold and year after year more female bears with cubs can be observed. The development of the eastern bear population however continues to be worrisome. Even though this population is tiny, illegal killings continue. Since 2017 the province Castile and León has even allowed hunting drives in areas populated by bears. Therefore we have strongly increased our activities in the eastern region.

#### Objectives

Our aims are to prevent the extinction of brown bears in the Cantabrian Mountains and to allow them to once again expand their range, especially in the eastern region.

#### Selected activities in 2017

- Intensive field studies were conducted in the Cantabrian Mountains including, for the first time, the eastern region. Fapas staff travelled more than 1,000 kilometres on foot in search of bear tracks. The data collected confirmed existing estimates: only 20 to 25 bears remain in the eastern Cantabrian Mountains. The presence of Fapas staff in the area is also something of a deterrent to poachers.
- In order to protect the bears, Fapas systematically deploy a sniffer dog trained to search for poisoned bait. The Belgian Alsatian named Mira regularly accompanies Fapas staff on their patrol rounds in the brown bear region.
- In the eastern range, Fapas was able to provide direct evidence of illegal hunting in two cases and filed charges against the perpetrators.



Photo: Fapas - camera trap - bear with juvenile

#### Important achievements in 2017

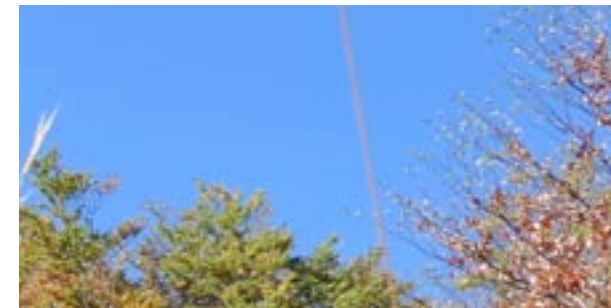
- The increased deployment of sniffer dog Mira has paid off: no further poisoned bait was found in the landscape in the second half of 2017.
- In 2017 the Asturian government finally passed a law that allows livestock carcasses to be left on the land, which is of great benefit to carrion consuming species such as bears and vultures. EuroNatur and Fapas had prepared the ground for this decision by achieving that a similar ruling was made at the EU level a few years ago.
- The measures taken by Fapas are having a positive effect: the number of bears in the western part of the Cantabrian Mountains has remained high and the brown bears are further expanding their range.

#### Outlook

Combating illegal hunting continues to be a focus of our conservation efforts, especially in the eastern part of the Cantabrian Mountains.

**Partners:** Fapas

**Funding:** EuroNatur's donors and sponsors



## Protecting Brown bears on the Balkan Peninsula

### Geographical location

The range of the Dinaric-Pindos brown bear population covers seven countries in the south-western Balkans and stretches down as far as Greece. The project's focus is on Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.

### Status

On the European map of bear populations, the south-western Balkan Peninsula is a blank spot. There is currently no reliable information on the brown bear populations residing in countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina or Montenegro. At the same time there are no management plans which could ensure that the number of bears shot is not excessive and that conflicts between bears and humans are avoided, a problem that is exacerbated by the fact that bears are coming under ever greater pressure. Every year numerous brown bears lose their lives to legal or illegal hunting. Forests are dissected by new roads or are cut down altogether and the large-scale collection of wild fruit for commercial purposes diminishes an important food source for the bears. Brown bears need protection before it is too late. The Dinaric-Pindos population is the only one that could also naturally expand and resettle the Alps.

### Objectives

Our aim is to provide clarification as to the current brown bear population in Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina and to contribute to the long-term transboundary conservation of one of Europe's last major brown bear populations.

### Selected activities in 2017

- The hunting associations are our most important partner in monitoring bear populations. Almost 40 hunting and forestry associations were contacted in Bosnia-Herzegovina alone, resulting in valuable emerging cooperations.
- In order to obtain initial solid data on the brown bear population in Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina, a pilot study was conducted from September to December 2017 in two selected areas as part of which bear faeces were sampled and later genetically examined.

### Important achievements in 2017

- Our lobbying over the past two years is bearing fruit: The government of the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina has taken initial steps toward the establishment of a brown bear emergency team primarily with a view to

mitigating human-wildlife conflict. Suitable persons were selected and trained accordingly. The training was led by the Croatian brown bear expert and long-term EuroNatur Partner Prof. Dr. Djuro Huber who has crucially contributed to the fact that there are now functioning bear emergency teams in Croatia.

- The Montenegrin government has finally recognized the need for a brown bear management plan. Our partners were explicitly asked to contribute to the work on this plan and will thus ensure that the management plan will be to the bears' benefit.
- Our pilot study constitutes an important step towards a scientifically solid transboundary assessment of the brown bear population in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.

### Outlook

We will continue to work towards sustainable brown bear management in both Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Such management also includes the establishment of effective brown bear emergency teams.

**Partners:** CZIP, CZZS

**Funding:** EuroNatur's donors and sponsors



Photo: Bruno Ditzrich - Wolves (Canis lupus)



## Poland: Protecting wolves under adverse conditions

### Status

Together with our partner organizations we have been fighting for wolf protection in Poland for many years now – and we have been successful: the wolf population has been growing continuously. And during this time, society has also become more accepting of wolves. The fact that we support livestock keepers in protecting their herds or flocks against attacks by wolves has been crucial to this success. The example of western Poland shows that this approach has put us on the right track. For a long time there were no wolves left in western Poland but now the number of animals is growing year after year while neither wolf attacks on livestock have increased nor have more wolves been shot illegally. The conditions for the protection of wolves in Poland have nonetheless deteriorated significantly following the electoral success of the conservative PIS in 2015. The resultant restructuring of key governmental positions has adversely impacted the cooperation between public authorities and our NGO partners. Moreover, there are attempts on the part of the government to weaken provisions for the protection of wolves and sadly some of them have met with success.

### Objectives

- Our aim is to accomplish a further expansion of the wolves range within Poland. Additionally, we endeavour to achieve a high level of acceptance for wolves in the general public, thus setting a counterpoint to the Polish government's hostile ambitions.

### Selected activities in 2017

- The EuroNatur partner NGO Wilk further intensified its public relations work. TV reports, newspaper articles, social media and presentations reached half a million people in 2017 and educated them on the ecology of wolves, on how to deal with their presence and on the reasons as to why they are so valuable for the ecosystem. Additionally, several false reports on dangerous situations involving wolves were debunked.
- The Polish government is pursuing upgrades to the road network, with many infrastructure projects intersecting with important wolf migration corridors. The EuroNatur partner organization "Workshop for all beings" together with experts developed wolf-friendly solutions for the most dangerous road segments and provided advice to the road construction firms in charge in this regard. In Poland such companies are authorized to autonomously install wildlife crossings.

### Important achievements in 2017

- The Polish public is well informed and supportive of wolf protection efforts. Numerous critical comments written by Internet users in response to sensational articles on wolves clearly demonstrated that people now question the Big Bad Wolf image.
- Wolves in Poland continue to enjoy strict protection despite the fact that there were attempts on the part of both the hunting lobby and government representatives to weaken the wolves' status as a protected species.

### Outlook

We will continue to adapt the wolf protection efforts in our eastern neighbour's territory to the difficult political environment. The focus will be on intensive pro-wolf awareness-raising and public relations work.

**Partners:** Wilk, Conservation organization "Workshop for all Beings", MRI

**Funding:** EuroNatur's donors and sponsors, Lappat Fund, Elisabeth Seifert-Becker's endowment fund for the protection of wolves in memory of Viktoria Neumann, Emilie and Franz Seifert



## Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic: Wolves need transboundary protection

### Geographical location in Europe

Western Beskids (part of the Western Carpathians, Map p. 27, No. 5) in the tri-border area along the junction of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as Central Slovakia).

### Status

Due to an EU exemption it is entirely legal to hunt wolves in Slovakia. Despite the fact that there are no solid data on the country's wolf populations, a cull quota is established every year. In contrast, wolves are strictly protected in the two neighbouring countries. However, given that many wolf packs occupy cross-border territories, the Slovakian practice also impacts on the Polish and Czech populations.

### Objectives

Our aim is to achieve a lowering of the annual cull quota for wolves in Slovakia and, as soon as possible, a complete cessation of wolf culls. Moreover, we aim to expand the knowledge base on wolves in the tri-border area along the junction of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia and to achieve transboundary wolf protection.

### Selected activities in 2017

- In two central Slovakian sample areas, our partner organization CWS developed and successfully tested a method for obtaining solid survey data on the wolf populations. On this basis, CWS recommended to the government that a cull quota of 70 wolves should not be exceeded.
- We continued fieldwork in the tri-border area and have gathered data that prove just how dangerous the Slovakian culls are for wolf populations in the neighbouring countries. Among other parameters, data were collected on the number and size of transboundary packs. Several camera traps were used to this end and a GPS tracking collar was placed on one of the wolves. Additionally, genetic analyses were conducted on samples of faeces, urine and fur.
- Our Polish and Czech partners conducted regular patrols in Natura 2000 sites in the regions bordering Slovakia, primarily with a view to preventing illegal hunting.

### Important achievements in 2017

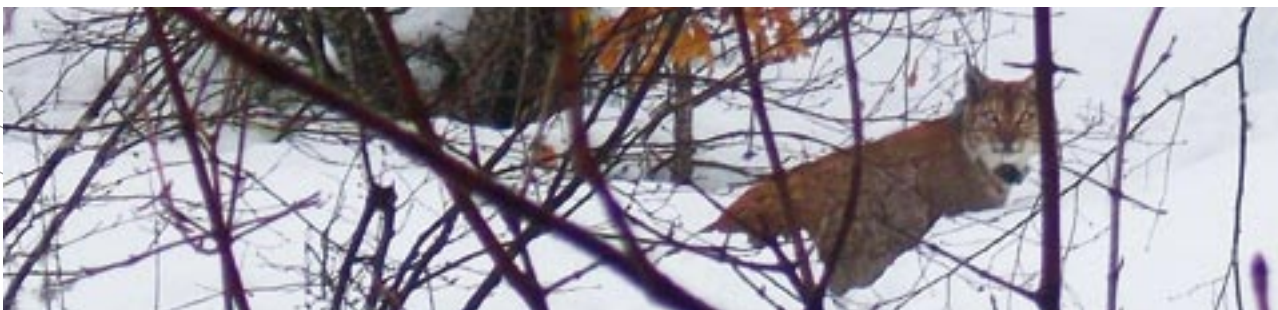
- We were able to influence the Slovakian cull quota for 2017/2018 in the wolves' favour. The quota was set at 76 specimens which is only half of what it was at the time of its introduction in 2010.
- The data gathered as part of the project proved useful to increase pressure on Slovakian decision-makers. The protection zones for wolves in the border regions with Poland and the Czech Republic, which were designated in 2016, have been extended.
- In the course of their patrols in the Natura 2000 sites in the border region with Slovakia, our Polish and Czech partners did not find any evidence of illegal hunting – this is thought to be a positive outcome of the regular monitoring regime.

### Outlook

We will keep working on strengthening cross-border wolf protection in the tri-border region along the junction of Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Our long-term objective is to put a complete halt to wolf culls in Slovakia by presenting sound arguments for their cessation.

Partners: Hnutí Duha, Wilk, CWS

Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors



## A glimmer of hope for the Balkan lynx

### Geographical location in Europe

Mountainous border regions as part of the Balkan Green Belt between Albania and Macedonia as well as between Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo.

### Status

Habitat destruction, direct persecution, and the reduction of its prey base due to hunting has brought the Balkan lynx, a subspecies of the Eurasian lynx, to the brink of extinction. According to recent estimates the Balkan lynx population has been reduced to fewer than 50 individuals. The Mavrovo National Park and the Munella Mountains in northern Albania (Map p. 27, No. 14) are the only regions known to date in which the Balkan lynx has been shown to still reproduce.

### Objectives

In order to afford the lynx effective protection we must sustainably safeguard their last remaining habitats. The long-term objective is a coherent network of protected areas on the Balkan Peninsula which is managed with a view to the needs of the Balkan lynx and its prey. To this end, we must further develop and strengthen our local partner organizations, plug knowledge gaps with regard to the Balkan lynx's distribution, and raise greater awareness in the political and public spheres as to the species' need for protection.

### Selected activities in 2017

- The Albanian PPNEA activists, who are working to protect the lynx, together with official representatives of the Bern Convention in Albania submitted an application to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, petitioning for the recognition of the Balkan lynx as a separate subspecies and thus to achieve their stricter protection. They were successful in this endeavour (see below). The Bern Convention is one of Europe's most important conservation conventions.
- In Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro there are now well-trained lynx teams which continued their monitoring work using camera traps. Moreover, they have for the first time successfully fitted a female with a GPS tracker and even managed to photograph "Maya's" (as this female is called) offspring.
- In Macedonia we continued the educational programme started in 2015 which aims at raising awareness for the conservation needs of the Balkan lynx. The campaign has reached more than 1,000 pupils to date.

### Important achievements in 2017

- The need to protect the Balkan lynx has been confirmed at the international level. According to the Bern Convention, Balkan lynx must not under any circumstances be captured, killed, disturbed or traded as of December 2017. This has provided us with a powerful defence against activities that are detrimental to the Balkan lynx.
- Following the change in government in 2017, our cooperation with the Mavrovo National Park with a view to protecting the Balkan lynx can now finally continue. The previous government had put a stop to the national park administration's cooperation with us because of the initiative on the part of EuroNatur and its partners against the hydropower plants planned for Mavrovo.

### Outlook

We will continue to run trainings and pilot projects with a view to establishing a basis on which to effectively combat illegal hunting and, in the long-term, achieve a sustainable wildlife management regime that protects both the Balkan lynx and its prey.

**Partners:** MES, PPNEA, CZIP, Finch, ERA, Kora

**Funding:** Mava Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors



## Mediterranean monk seal: Detective work in the Ionian Sea

### Geographical location in Europe

Ionian Sea between the islands of Othonoi to the north and Antipaxos to the south, including the neighbouring Greek coastline (Map p. 27, No. 22).

### Status

The Mediterranean monk seal is one of the world's rarest marine mammal species. Today, the last known sizeable colony can be found at the Mauritanian Atlantic coast. This colony's recovery is owed solely to intensive protection measures. It is estimated that there are only about 300 additional specimens left in the Mediterranean Sea. No one knows for sure. To ensure the species' long-term survival we need more clarity about the actual number of monk seals left in the Mediterranean Sea, about where they live and where they give birth to their young. Only then – similar to the Mauritanian Atlantic coast – will we be able to initiate the necessary protection measures and ensure that sensitive areas such as caves used by colonies to raise their offspring are designated as protection zones or that marine protected areas are designated which also safeguard the seals' prey base.

### Objectives

Our aim is to save the last Mediterranean monk seals from extinction and enable them to recover their range.

### Selected activities in 2017

- A first expedition to the islands around Corfu was undertaken by staff of the Greek conservation organization "MOm". Their aim was to find out whether this region, on account of its location, might have something of a bridge function for Mediterranean monk seal dispersal from the Ionian Sea to the Adriatic Sea. While there are confirmed records of breeding seals in the Ionian Sea, only individual specimens have been sighted along the Adriatic coast at the latitude of Croatia.

### Important achievements in 2017

- Thanks to the Corfu expedition we are now aware of which areas are of particular importance for the protection of Mediterranean monk seals. A dozen caves were identified that are suited to serve Mediterranean monk seals as resting places and for rearing their young. The expedition even found strong evidence of pups having been born in recent years in one of the grottos.
- Our theory on Corfu's bridge function was confirmed.

### Outlook

The Corfu expedition has also shown that fishermen, shell collectors and divers are causing serious disturbance especially in the Mediterranean monk seals' last refuges. The ever-growing number of tourists is exerting enormous pressure on these areas. We will lobby for the Mediterranean monk seal areas to achieve protected status. The experience gained at the Mauritanian Atlantic coast has shown that the populations develop exceedingly well once they are left in peace. At the same time we will extend our activities to the Croatian, Montenegrin and Albanian coasts and continue the protection efforts at the Mauritanian Atlantic coast in cooperation with CBD Habitat.

Partners: MOm

Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

Photo: Gavriilo Knezevic - Balkan Green Belt photo competition



## Transboundary nature conservation

The European Greenbelt conservation initiative aims at transcending borders and eliminating prejudice. In many areas along the 12,500 kilometers long corridor along the route of the former Iron Curtain, people are now peacefully coming together, communicating and engaging in lively exchanges. As the former border fortifications were restricted areas to which ordinary people had no access, a wealth of endangered species of flora and fauna managed to survive here. The European Greenbelt, which extends from the northernmost Fennoscandia all the way south to the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea, is a refuge for these species and it is crucial to their survival. From stark mountain massifs to charming lakelands and species-rich cultural landscapes – the habitat types found along the European Green Belt are as diverse as the people who live there, and nature is what connects them all.

### Multifaceted threats

In the shadow of the Iron Curtain a unique habitat network developed in the course of the Cold War period. However, the "closed season" for nature ended in the early 1990s. Increased infrastructure development, excessive hunting pressure and ruthless exploitation of natural resources are increasingly restricting the range of species of flora and fauna. Especially in southern Europe the Green Belt is perilously exposed.

### Fighting the rise of nationalism

We are sending a clear message against the increasingly nationalist voices in Europe and a resurgence of the East-West conflict in that we engage in transboundary cooperation in nature conservation, countering isolationist agendas and sabre-rattling. In our role as regional coordinator of conservation activities along the Balkan Green Belt, EuroNatur together with the local partners is developing pilot projects for effective transboundary cooperation. These also serve as models for other European regions. Our aim is to maintain the valuable natural and cultural landscapes along the Green Belt and to establish the idea behind the initiative more firmly in

society. Close cross-border cooperation involving all relevant public and private conservation bodies along the European Green Belt is crucial to achieving these objectives.



For accordance with UNESCO map and opinion of I.C.C.  
© European Green Belt Initiative/Coordination Office



## Selected EuroNatur projects in 2017

### European Green Belt Initiative: Many actors – one vision

#### Geographical location in Europe

Ecosystem network with an extraordinarily high level of biodiversity, forming a 12,500 km long corridor along the route of the former Iron Curtain (Map p.27). The European Green Belt connects eight biogeographical regions and 24 nations. The Balkan Green Belt constitutes its southernmost section.

#### Status

Conservation activities carried out by the numerous actors involved are coordinated by four regional coordinators – one for each of the Green Belt's four sections. EuroNatur is the regional coordinator of conservation activities at the Balkan Green Belt. EuroNatur, with BUND as its deputy, also chairs the European Green Belt Association e.V. (EGBA). Governmental and non-governmental European Green Belt stakeholders work together in this association, which was established in 2014.

#### Objectives

Our aim is to structurally advance and bring substantive progress to the European Green Belt Initiative, to gain backing and support in society at large and in the political sphere for the Green Belt as a pan-European habitat network, and to highlight the initiative's contribution to

achieving important international conservation objectives. Moreover, we hope that our transboundary conservation projects serve as examples of cooperative partnerships, especially in strained political times.

#### Selected activities in 2017

- On September 24, 2017, the second European Green Belt Day was celebrated in many places along the Green Belt. Together with local partners, EuroNatur organized a major event in the Serbian town of Kladovo on the Danube where the river forms the Serbian-Romanian border. The event attracted and brought together many people from the region who informed themselves about the initiative and their region's natural treasures.
- For the Balkan Green Belt region, we commenced a detailed spatial analysis of the protected areas and selected habitat types, the outcome of which will be an overview of the ecological status along this section of the Green Belt.

#### Selected achievements in 2017

- The spatial analysis has provided the first ever standardized cross-boundary maps and baseline data as well as detailed information on habitats and protected areas in the southern-

most section of the European Green Belt. This information allows for the solid coordination of activities as well as a defined focus on specific thematic aspects and geographical areas for further collaboration at the Balkan Green Belt.

- The winner of the Balkan Green Belt photography contest was honoured as part of the Green Belt Day. This was the second time the photography contest had been held. It successfully contributes to the local people identifying more deeply with the ecological and cultural treasures of their home region.

#### Outlook

We endeavour to continue to foster exchange between stakeholders along the European Green Belt and to raise the initiative's profile. The 10th Pan-European conference, which will be held in Germany in October 2018, is expected to contribute to these aims. We are working on generating awareness of the ecological and economic value of the natural treasures along the Green Belt, especially in the Balkan Peninsula. The 2018 European Green Belt Day will therefore once again be celebrated in the form of a cross-border celebration spanning several countries along the Green Belt.

**Partners:** BUND, IUCN and all stakeholders at the European Green Belt

**Funding:** BfN with funds provided by BMUB, DBU, EuroNatur's donors



## Šar Mountains: Local people won over for national park idea

### Geographical location in Europe

The Šar Mountains (Map p. 27, No. 16) as part of the Balkan Green Belt are located in the north-westernmost region of Macedonia. A greater part of the mountain range also extends into Kosovo and a smaller part is located in neighbouring Albania.

### Status

The Šar Mountain massif is highly biodiverse. It hosts not only large mammals such as wolves and brown bears but is also home to many rare species of flora. At the same time, the mountains are very important for supplying water to the region's settlements. But clear-felling, construction projects and ruthless hunting activities put at risk not only the Šar Mountains' biodiversity but also its natural resources. The previous government in Skopje had done nothing to protect the area but the new government, which was instated in May 2017, is more open to the idea of designating a national park. However, there is as yet no sign of any tangible measures being taken.

### Objectives

Our aim is to achieve that the local population is behind the idea of establishing a national park and actively engages in developing plans for a future protected area. Our hope is that by increasing grassroots pressure we will

be able to compel the Macedonian government to designate the Šar Mountains as a national park. Improved marketing of local products as well as ecotourism offers are to provide direct value added for the local communities' benefit.

### Selected activities in 2017

- In May and June 2017, two delegations of foresters, conservationists and staff of environmental authorities from all countries the territories of which contain parts of the Šar Mountain massif visited the German-Czech Bavarian Forest/Šumava National Park. The participants were thus introduced to a practical example of successful cross-border cooperation in a large-scale protected area. The benefits of a national park in a previously disadvantaged region also became evident.
- In the middle of 2017, construction work commenced on a new road the corridor of which runs through the core zone of the envisaged national park. The local "Friends of Shara" action group, which had already been established in 2015 as part of the project, held a press conference in response to the commencement of works and produced a short video on the issue which rapidly spread in the local and national media.

### Important achievements in 2017

- The "Friends of Shara" action group autonomously organizes events and advocates the idea of a national park. With their committed public relations work they managed to halt the road development for the time being.
- Restoration work on the mountain hut "Ljuboten" in Leshnica purchased as part of the project was completed in 2017. Hikers can book this hut as accommodation. A hiking map containing more than 50 routes throughout the region was also completed and is complemented by the "Explore Šar Mountain" app which contains further routes and additional information. These measures add significant value to the area by providing for gentle nature-based tourism.

### Outlook

EuroNatur and its local partners will continue to work towards the designation of a national park in the Macedonian part of the Šar Mountain massif. Until such time as this has been accomplished we must avert plans that would result in the destruction of nature and maintain the region's high ecological value.

**Partners:** GIZ, MES, Finch, PPNEA, "Friends of Shara" action group

**Funding:** DBU, BMZ, EuroNatur's donors



## Connecting people and nature in the Osogovo Mountains

### Geographical location in Europe

The Osogovo Mountains (Map p. 27, No. 18) are situated at the Balkan Green Belt in the border region of Bulgaria and Macedonia. More than two thirds of this pristine natural region is located in Macedonia.

### Status

The Osogovo mountain range is characterized by native beech and oak forests as well as expansive orchid-rich meadows. This precious region as part of the Balkan Green Belt is not dissected by any major roads. The local inhabitants have used Osogovo's natural resources for hundreds of years and are practicing small-scale family farming. But land-use pressure is growing: In the mountain range's southern foothills, numerous semi-natural slopes have already been converted to arable farming. Old-growth forests have been cut down and replaced with pine plantations.

### Objectives

Our aim is to preserve the Osogovo Mountains' outstanding biodiversity and to forge partnerships with the local communities in the process. To this end, we are striving for the adoption of ecologically compatible strategies of resource utilization, for example by establishing sustainable forestry.

In addition, we are working on gathering more information on bears, wolves, and lynx in the mountain range so as to prevent human-wildlife conflicts. A further objective is the establishment of ecologically compatible tourism which provides the local communities with an assured income, as an alternative to the destruction of nature.

### Selected activities in 2017

- When it comes to protecting large mammals, trans-boundary cooperation is the be all and end all. In March 2017, Macedonian and Bulgarian experts came together to discuss the latest population figures for the Osogovo Mountains and worked on plans for joint efforts for the protection of large mammals. The footage from camera traps deployed in the region was mostly collected by local foresters, hunters and border police, all of whom had received technical training in how to handle these cameras.
- We have demonstrated Osogovo's major potential for gentle ecotourism in the region. Suitable cycle trails were identified on both sides of the border and presented to sector stakeholders in cross-border promotional events.

### Important successes in 2017

- The camera traps' footage provides evidence of the region's high species diversity. The images were useful for public relations activities and have contributed to the local people in Osogovo identifying more deeply with their home's natural values.
- Local tourism operators are open to the idea of establishing gentle ecotourism in the Osogovo Mountains.

### Outlook

A focus of our work in 2018 will be to promote ecologically compatible forestry in the Osogovo Mountains in order to protect the old-growth forests from clear-felling. Workshops are to be held which will give local foresters the opportunity to exchange information and network with international forest experts.

Partners: MES, BBF

Funding: DBU, ZGF, Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, EuroNatur's donors

Photo: Theresa Schiller - River-Valbona



## Protection for free-flowing rivers

With their banks, floodplains, islands, kolks and fords, natural rivers are amongst the most varied and biodiverse ecosystems at our latitudes. But very few people in central Europe have ever seen a true river. Most of these lifelines in the landscape have been dammed, diverted, or channelled and Europe's last free-flowing rivers are also at great risk of suffering the same fate.

### The myth of hydropower as a green energy source

In addition to uncontrolled gravel extraction and development for shipping, it is primarily technical flood protection measures and hydropower projects that destroy Europe's rivers. Hydropower is posited as a fix in the fight against climate change. It is however neither a green nor a renewable form of energy generation. Quite to the contrary: Hydropower plants irretrievably destroy valuable natural landscapes and contribute to climate change at the same time. The reservoirs even produce climate-damaging greenhouse gases such as methane. The construction of embankments is no less harmful for people and nature. Today, many formerly species-rich alluvial forests stand isolated and dry at a good distance from the current course of the river. Cut off from floodwaters they have lost their special characteristics and their function as water retention areas for flood waves.

### Our mission

Together with our partner organizations we aim at protecting the last remaining intact rivers on our continent

and strive for their sustainable utilization. Hydropower projects must give due consideration to aspects of nature conservation and species protection, rather than destroy species diversity and habitats under the guise of "green" energy generation. Instead of further constricting rivers through technical flood protection measures, they should be given back more room, thus allowing them to achieve their potential for natural flood protection.

### The focus in 2017

As in previous years, the Balkan rivers are at the heart of our conservation activities. The Balkans host Europe's last free-flowing rivers and these are one of Europe's main biodiversity hotspots. But the Balkan rivers are also of economic significance, for example for traditional low-input agriculture and soft ecotourism. But the Balkans are being suffocated by something akin to a hydropower boom which puts at risk not only one of the gems in the crown of European natural heritage but also the future of people in the regions affected.

## Selected EuroNatur projects in 2017

### SavaParks – a network for the Sava river

#### Geographical location in Europe

Sava river along its entire course from its source in the Julian Alps to its confluence with the Danube at Belgrade. Along its length of more than 900 kilometers, the Sava river connects four countries: Slovenia, Croatia (Map p. 27, No. 7), Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.

#### Status

Over large sections the Sava river follows its course still largely undisturbed. Extensive alluvial forests make the Sava one of central Europe's ecologically most valuable river landscapes. But like other rivers, the Sava has significantly been impacted by human interventions. New dams and embankments are being planned, rather than utilizing the Sava floodplains' huge potential for natural flood protection. Moreover, the Sava is at risk from hydropower and shipping projects as well as from massive levels of gravel extraction. The SavaParks Network – an association now consisting of more than 20 protected area administrations, nature conservation authorities and conservation NGOs along the Sava river – was established in order to address these concerns. It is also in this context that the "Sava White Book" was produced. It includes the first succinct

description of this unique river's ecological importance and the threats it faces. It also describes tangible opportunities for preserving the Sava river as an ecological lifeline and for improving natural flood protection.

#### Objectives

The aims of the SavaParks Network are to render the work of the protected area administrations more effective beyond national borders, to safeguard the river along its entire length, and to counter the interests of the hydraulic engineering and hydropower lobbies. SavaParks advocates sustainable use in the Sava river landscape.

#### Selected activities in 2017

- Representatives of the SavaParks Network, with EuroNatur among them, introduced the initiative at the European Parliament and presented the "Sava White Book", thus generating awareness at EU level of the Sava's high ecological value and the risks it faces.
- The "Sava White Book" was presented to representatives of the Croatian, Slovenian, and Serbian environment ministries.



Photo: EuroNatur - presentation of "Sava White Book"

#### Important achievements in 2017

- In order to safeguard the initiative's future, members of the SavaParks Network jointly applied for and were granted EU financial support. Moreover, as a result of the intensive technical exchanges as part of the application, the network has become more integrated and united.
- The "Sava White Book" significantly strengthens the position of nature conservation. Initial reactions from the environment ministries in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia have been very positive. The ministries are under permanent pressure from lobbyists of the construction, energy and shipping industries. The expert knowledge compiled in the White Book provides the ministries with welcome discussion aids to counter the lobbyists.

#### Outlook

We are working on making the SavaParks Network even more powerful. Our aim is to continue to use the "Sava White Book" to gain support for the protection of the Sava from the relevant contacts in the countries bordering the river.

**Partners:** HDZPP, SavaParks Network  
**Funding:** Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation,  
Environmental Foundation Michael Otto,  
EuroNatur's donors



## "Save the Blue Heart of Europe" campaign

### Geographical location in Europe

Streams and rivers in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Kosovo. Key areas of the "Save the Blue Heart of Europe" campaign are the Mavrovo National Park (Map p. 27, No. 14) in Macedonia, the Vjosa river (Map p. 27, No. 17) in Albania, and the Sava river in Slovenia and Croatia (Map p. 27, No. 7), as well as a number of ecologically particularly valuable rivers in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### Status

Nowhere else on our continent is there a greater number and diversity of pristine river landscapes than in the Balkans. The Balkan rivers are the "Blue Heart of Europe". However, hydropower plants are planned for almost all rivers between Slovenia in the north and Albania in the south. Not even protected areas are spared, and in many cases thorough and reputable environmental impact assessments have not been carried out. In order to protect the most valuable rivers from destruction, EuroNatur and the Austrian organization Riverwatch in cooperation with local partners in the Balkans established the "Save the Blue Heart of Europe" campaign.

Since the time the campaign commenced in 2013, we have been able to significantly improve the knowledge and data

base on the ecological value of the Balkan rivers, the extent of the threat, and its drivers. There is now a large network of fellow campaigners who fight against the destruction of this unique natural treasure. Our campaign has brought the issue to the attention of the national and international public as well as important EU institutions. In its official reports on the political and legal progress attained in the accession countries, the EU Commission now regularly makes reference to the threat to the Balkan rivers. Similarly, the European Parliament is calling for the protection of the Balkan rivers. We have been able to prevent the construction of some of the planned hydropower plants in particularly sensitive areas, at least for the time being. But the threat is far from having been averted.

### Objectives

Our aim is to preserve the Balkan rivers in all their beauty and with all their biodiversity. Plans for hydropower expansion must urgently take into consideration aspects of nature conservation and species protection. We endeavour to halt all dam projects in the campaign's four key areas, for example at the Vjosa river, the last remaining major wild river in Europe outside of Russia.

### Selected activities in 2017

- We updated our information on hydropower projects on the Balkan Peninsula and thus highlighted the terrifying scale of the threat: There are plans for 2800 hydropower plants, with 188 being under construction. More than 1000 of these (close to 40%) are situated in high-level protected areas.
- We commissioned studies to determine which of the river sections host endangered fish species. Scientific studies of this nature help us to define no-go zones for hydropower projects.
- As part of a research week held in the vicinity of the Pocem hydropower project on the Vjosa river, 25 scientists from Albania, Austria, Germany and Slovenia produced initial baseline data for reputable environmental impact assessment. They carried out measurements, documented the floodplain vegetation and recorded the area's fauna. In a single week they recorded roughly 300 species of fauna, including some species previously entirely unknown to science. The event received a great deal of national and international media attention. At a subsequent press conference the scientists called on the Albanian Prime Minister to halt the construction of the Pocem hydropower plant as it would destroy one of the ecologically most valuable sections of the Vjosa river.



- Between January and May, hearings were held with regard to the case brought against the Pocem hydropower plant. The lawyer hired by EuroNatur advocated halting the project – and he was successful (see below). We had filed the case together with local residents in December 2016 at the Albanian administrative court.
- Protests were organized at several of the Balkan rivers. For example, conservationists together with fisheries associations protested for free-flowing Balkan rivers using a more than life-size Danube Salmon (Huchen) dummy during the Drina Regatta, an event attended by approximately 20,000 visitors. In Tirana, two prominent Albanian singers organized a musical protest in aid of the protection of the Vjosa river; the concert was attended by more than 4000 people.

### Important achievements in 2017

- The administrative court, as the court of first instance, decided to halt the Pocem hydropower project. This was the first ever court case in Albania that dealt with a conservation issue. However, shortly after the ruling was issued the Albanian government appealed the decision. The case has not yet been definitively decided in our favour.
- Resistance in Albanian society to the planned damming of the Vjosa river and its tributaries has continued to grow. Even the major industry lobby appealed to the government in an open letter, calling for the abandonment of the hydropower plans.
- Our international lobbying is having an effect: In December 2017, the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention – one of the most important conservation conventions in Europe – expressed its concern about the continued existence of plans for hydropower plants in the Macedonian Mavrovo National Park. The Committee called on the government in Skopje to place under a moratorium the construction of all hydropower projects in accordance with the Committee's recommendation issued in 2015.
- The Ministry of the Environment of Bosnia-Herzegovina refused permission for a dam on the Sana river. The installation would have destroyed a segment of the river which is important for the very rare Danube salmon (Huchen).

### Outlook

We will continue the campaign with a high degree of intensity. This includes the ongoing closing of knowledge gaps, legal challenges as well as civil society mobilization in the countries affected. We will also continue our media and lobbying activities at the European and national levels. It would be a Sisyphean challenge to protest every single hydropower plant in the Balkan peninsula. Therefore, we will complete the 'Eco-Masterplan' in 2018 which sets out no-go areas for hydropower projects in the Balkans. Our aim with this plan is to ensure that financial institutions will endorse it, i.e. that they will commit to denying funding for hydropower projects in those areas.

**Partner:** Riverwatch, Front 21/42, Eko-vest, EcoAlbania, HDZPP, CZZS

**Funding:** Mava Foundation, Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Patagonia, Fondation pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature, Bristol Stiftung, EuroNatur's donors

**Internet:** [www.balkanrivers.net](http://www.balkanrivers.net)

Photo: Matthias Schickhofer - Ucea Mare Valley (Natura 2000 area)



## "SaveParadiseForests" campaign

### Geographical location in Europe

Romanian Carpathian Mountains (Map p. 27, No. 20). These mountains host the European Union's last sizeable ancient and primary forests.

### Status

Romania's paradise forests are among the few remnants of untamed nature we have left in Europe. Since Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007 and its opening to the global markets, land-use pressure in the country's forest areas has increased dramatically. Week after week thousands of trees in the Romanian ancient and primary forests are legally or illegally being cut down. The timber is sold abroad or to large timber companies in Romania. There is an almost impenetrable and opaque web of responsibilities, personal interests, corruption, foreign investors and timber companies. Large sections of the more than 6000-year-old forest

ecosystems have been cut down over the past decade, and the destruction continues even in National Parks and in sites as part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas. "Romsilva", the national forestry authority is in charge of the management and funding of almost all national and nature parks. For the purposes of profit maximization, a large proportion of the protected areas are managed as commercial forestry holdings. In order to put an end to this overexploitation, EuroNatur and the Romanian conservation organization Agent Green have started the joint "SaveParadiseForests" campaign.

### Objectives

Our objective is to protect Europe's paradise forests from being cut down. Together with other organizations and committed people we aim to create awareness at the national and international levels of the risk facing the Romanian ancient and primary forests and we push for improved provisions for their protection. Timber companies should make a commitment to refrain from using wood from ancient and primary forests.



### Selected activities in 2017

- The Romanian paradise forests got prominent international support: In March 2017, the renowned forest expert Prof. Dr. Hannes Knapp and 30 fellow campaigners from a total of six EU countries occupied a loaded truck on the "Trans-Fagarash" National Road not far from the Vidraru primary forest. The protest was transmitted live on Facebook.
- More than 200 leading forest experts from 27 countries around the globe have publicly advocated a halt to timber extraction from the Romanian primary forests. The memorandum initiated by EuroNatur was presented to the then Minister of the Environment a few days after the protest.
- With its investigative TV documentary series entitled "Out of control", Agent Green uncovered illegal timber trade in the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park and in the Semenic National Park. Primary forests in both these protected areas are subject to massive wood extraction.





- As part of a survey, eleven timber companies active in Romania were asked to disclose the origins of the timber they purchased. The dialogue between conservationists and timber companies was intensified and a platform for regular exchanges has been created.
- As a result of pressure exerted by Agent Green, an additional 3,800 hectares of old-growth forests were included in the "National Catalogue of Virgin Forests" in 2017; the catalogue represents a protection programme for primary forests and is designed to preserve remaining primary forests. However, at present this catalogue still only contains a fraction of the existing primary forests. The government is blocking this process.

### Important achievements in 2017

- The protest in the vicinity of the Vidraru National Park brought major national attention to the issue. While the protest was ongoing, Gabriel Paun, President of Agent

Green, was invited to a meeting at the Romanian Ministry of the environment. The Facebook livestream reached more than 4 million people and created something of a media storm. Gabriel Paun also gained publicity in a debate with the director of "Romsilva", the state forestry authority, that was live streamed on television. Subsequently, investigations commenced in the Vidraru National Park which resulted in four criminal proceedings.

- The largest Romanian private broadcaster (Antena 3) aired two "Out of control" episodes at prime time. An internal audit of the forestry administration at the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park was conducted as a result. Similarly, the Semenic National administration was scrutinized by the competent authorities and was given the lowest possible rating for its management.
- Four of the timber companies surveyed have committed to no longer accepting wood from primary forests or from national parks that do not meet the IUCN criteria for national parks (Category II).

### Outlook

The network of fellow campaigners working to save the Romanian paradise forests has steadily expanded. As part of the "SaveParadiseForests" campaign we will continue to increase the pressure on the Romanian government, the forestry authorities and the timber companies at the national and international levels.

**Partner:** Agent Green

**Funding:** Manfred-Herssen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, Christian Martin Stiftung, Maiores Foundation, Pancivis Foundation, Bristol Stiftung, EuroNatur's donors

**Internet:** [www.saveparadiseforests.eu](http://www.saveparadiseforests.eu)

Photo: Peter Rütther - Marsh cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*)



## Brandenburg: Enchanted landscape just outside of Berlin

Eastern Brandenburg (Map p. 27, No. 3) hosts some areas of extraordinary ecological value. The sites – for which EuroNatur has assumed responsibility – are situated in three nature parks and form a varied landscape mosaic of lakes, peatlands, orchid-rich meadows, and pine forests. The latter are successively being converted into semi-natural mixed forests. Ecological forest conversion measures continued to be a focus of our work in 2017.

These measures foster natural forest dynamics: Clear-felling creates clearings that allow for the establishment of new plant species, including woody species, on which endangered insect and bird species depend. These sites host significantly greater biodiversity than the site-inappropriate pine monocultures. The areas managed by EuroNatur are home to breeding Eurasian cranes, red kites, and beavers that are busy building their lodges. Moreover, wolf tracks can now regularly be spotted in these areas.

**Partners:** Nature Park administrations at Dahme-Heideseen, Märkische Schweiz, and Schlaubetal; German Federation for Nature Conservation (NABU) - Märkische Schweiz regional association; Stiftung Naturschutzfonds Brandenburg; local conservation groups and farmers

**Funding** EuroNatur Trust for Eastern Germany (thanks to generous financial endowments this trust now holds approximately EUR 370,000), EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

## Senne: Experiencing nature with all one's senses

For many years now, EuroNatur has been supporting the "Paderborn-Senne Biological Station" in their work to protect and maintain the extensive Senne heathlands (Map p. 27, No. 2) at the foot of the Teutoburg Forest. A number of different grazing projects play a special role in this regard. The grasslands and heathlands are grazed by goats and by Senne horses, Germany's oldest breed of horses. In May 2017 the herd grew when mare Maia

gave birth to a handsome colt who was christened Warantus (the guarantor). The media also paid increased attention to the Senne horses. Warantus and his kind played the leading role in two documentaries on the history of this endangered horse breed and on nature and landscapes in the Senne region respectively. Additionally, the year 2017 saw the commencement of the "Senne für alle Sinne" project (Senne for all one's senses). As part of this project, a new hiking trail was established which takes walkers around the Senne military training ground and connects

a number of nature discovery sites that allow for tangible sensory experiences: a heathland site for example invites visitors to pick a posy of heather (and take in its scent) while a section of stream encourages walkers to feel its water.

**Partner:** Paderborn-Senne Biological Station  
**Funding:** Gelsenwasser AG, Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH (public utility), EuroNatur's donors

## Important project areas

- ① Cantabrian Mountains (Spain)
- ② Senne (Germany)
- ③ Brandenburg (Germany)
- ④ Narew/Podlasie (Poland)
- ⑤ Western Beskidy Mountains (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia)
- ⑥ Bohemian Forest/Šumava (Czech Republic)
- ⑦ Sava floodplains (Croatia)
- ⑧ Livanjsko Polje (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
- ⑨ Neretva Delta (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina)
- ⑩ Labudovo Okno (Serbia)
- ⑪ Bojana-Buna and Lake Skadar (Montenegro, Albania)
- ⑫ Karavasta Lagoon (Albania)
- ⑬ Albanian Alps (Albania)
- ⑭ Munella Mountains and Mavrovo National Park (Albania, Macedonia)
- ⑮ Jablanica-Shebenik Mountains (Albania, Macedonia)
- ⑯ Šar Mountains (Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo)
- ⑰ Vjosa (Albania)
- ⑱ Osogovo Mountains (Bulgaria, Macedonia)
- ⑲ Sakar (Bulgaria)
- ⑳ Carpathian Mountains (Romania)
- ㉑ Northern Dinarides (Croatia)
- ㉒ Corfu (Greece)



Photo: Kerstin Sauer - grain & chamomile (Matricaria chamomilla L.)



## EU citizens want sustainable agriculture!

Climate change and industrialized agriculture are among the most pressing environmental concerns of our time. In the absence of swift and rigorous change in energy and agricultural policies, we humans do not only endanger biological diversity but we also put at risk the very resource base on which our lives depend. EuroNatur is active at the international level to promote necessary change.

**Partners:** AbL, Agricultural Platform as well as other farming and conservation associations

**Funding:** BfN with funds provided by BMUB, EuroNatur's donors

Work on the reform of the EU agricultural policy for the 2021–2028 financial period commenced in 2017. This was preceded by a public internet consultation in which 320,000 people from all over Europe participated. Eighty percent of the participants advocated a fundamental reform of the European Union Common Agricultural Policy.

One month after the consultation concluded, a positive sign did indeed emanate from Strasbourg: In mid-June the European Parliament decided to ban the use of environmental toxins such as glyphosate in ecological focus areas. Since 2013, every farmer in the EU must dedicate 5 per cent of their arable land to 'ecologically beneficial elements' in order to qualify for direct farm payments from Brussels. The pesticide ban agreed by the Parliament – which acted against the recommendation issued by its Committee on Agriculture by the way – was long overdue but is also far from sufficient.

It is not looking good for species diversity in Germany; the first ever report on species protection published by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation has made this very clear. The report states that one third of the approximately

72,000 known species of animals, plants and fungi in Germany are endangered. In response, EuroNatur together with other conservation foundations signed the 'Überlingen Declaration' (Überlinger Erklärung) in October 2017 which calls on the federal government, the federal states and the municipalities to engage in decisive action to combat the ongoing loss of species and valuable habitats. They urge the political actors to create, as a matter of urgency, a network of interconnected habitats and to also promote such a network at the European level.

Therefore, one of EuroNatur's key demands in 2017 was a dedicated budget for Natura 2000. While the European network of habitats of conservation concern has meanwhile almost been completed, site management plans are often still missing and these are indispensable for effective conservation management in the areas concerned. One of the reasons for this shortcoming is a lack of targeted funding for Natura 2000 sites. They are in competition with other projects financed from the EU's regional development funds; in the fight for funding, nature conservation often emerges as the loser. A dedicated Natura 2000 budget would address this problem. EuroNatur will continue in its efforts to ensure the establishment of such a budget.



## Energy transition in Poland: A tougher political context

Lignite and bituminous coal still continue to dominate the energy sector in much of Poland. In the province of Podlasie (Map p. 27, No. 4) however, many leading politicians at both the state and local levels would like to see renewable energy sources to become a central pillar of the region's economic development. This puts the Podlaskie Voivodeship at the vanguard of resource-conserving and climate-friendly regional development. EuroNatur has been advising the voivodeship's Marshal's Office as well as a number of municipalities in the region for a number of years now on how to transition their energy policy.

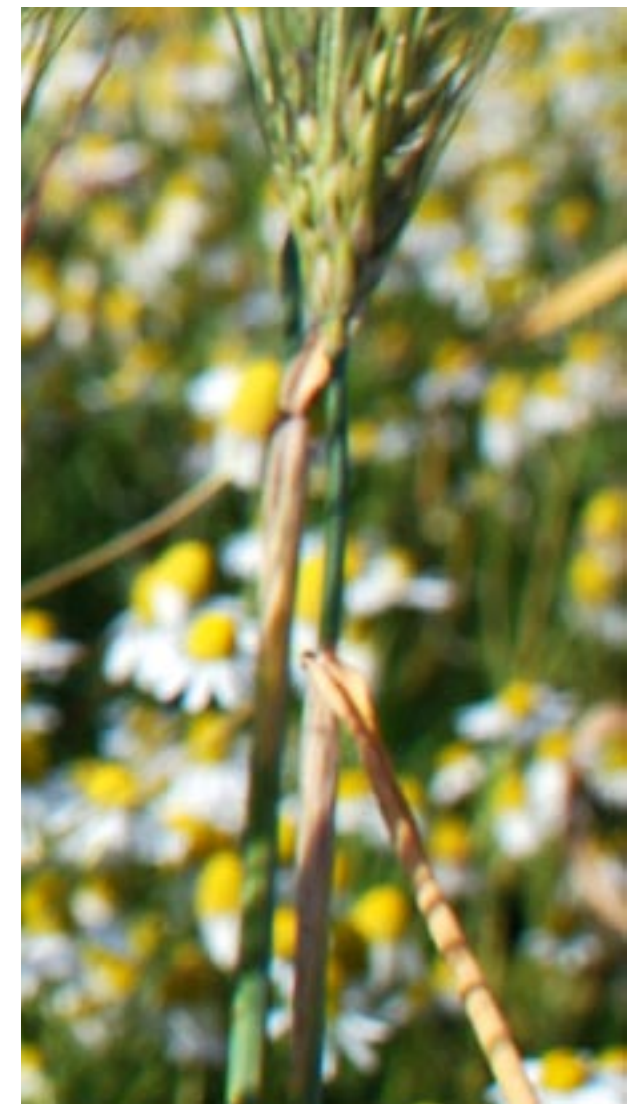
The public awareness work conducted by EuroNatur and its partners has led to a steady increase in the local population's approval of renewable energy sources. An estimate of the potential for wind energy in the region carried out in 2017 has shown that a relatively small number of installations could ensure a high regional level of energy supply; this finding also improved the positive image of regenerative energy sources.

The exchange visits by Polish and German energy experts and representatives of municipalities which we have been organizing for many years now have contributed to a relationship of trust, and these visits were continued in 2017. During their visits to Rhineland-Palatinate and Bavaria respectively, delegations from a number of different municipalities in Podlasie gathered information on opportunities for the production and sale of electricity for example. International workshops

allowed for intensive knowledge exchange. Various projects commenced on foot of these trips; several universities in the voivodeship, for example, are planning to establish their carbon footprint and work towards making their individual campuses carbon neutral in the medium term. The conversion of the existing street lighting to LED technology in the Łapy municipality of Podlasie has been further pushed forward.

In the Hajnowka district in north-eastern Poland, EuroNatur's objective is not only to draw up a qualified energy and climate change mitigation plan but to do so with the involvement of the local population. We have come a good bit closer to meeting this objective. In almost all of the municipalities, staff has been designated to advise and assist on the project's technical aspects. These staff members attended a training seminar in Bamberg in October 2017 and could in future become their municipalities' climate change mitigation officers; in this role they could continue to drive forward the grassroots energy transition.

These grassroots efforts are all the more important in light of the current administration in Warsaw which is creating adverse framework conditions for sustainable energy policy, especially when it comes to the preparation and implementation of tangible investment projects. The Polish government's new energy policy is slated for publication in 2018 and there are as yet few signs of any support for green energy.



**Partners:** Białystok Marshal's Office, Politechnika Białystok, the town of Łapy, Hajnowka District, LEADER regions, Energievision Frankenwald, the town of Wunsiedel and the Wunsiedel Department of Public Works  
**Funding:** UBA with funds provided by BMUB



## Protection for Albania's beech forests

Two of EuroNatur's project areas in Albania received good news in 2017: The Rrajca core zone of the Shebenik-Jablanica National Park (Map p. 27, No. 15) in the border region with Macedonia and the "Lumi i Gashit" nature reserve in the planned Albanian Alps National Park (Map p. 27, No. 13) in the border region with Kosovo and Montenegro became part of the "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe"

UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2017. EuroNatur, its Albanian partner PPNEA and international forest experts had strongly lobbied for the UNESCO to recognize the global importance of these forests. On foot of the designation the Shebenik-Jablanica National Park employed four new rangers to help manage the Rrajca World Heritage Site. EuroNatur and its partners also engaged in intensive awareness-raising in order to convince the local communities of the benefits of this designation. Financial support for small projects helps to protect the buffer zones around the two

World Heritage Sites; this is important given that the locals traditionally heat their homes with firewood. A first step has been taken but the local communities must receive continued support for their sustainable development. In September 2017, the project was named "Project of the Month" by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN).

**Partners:** PPNEA, local NGOs

**Funding:** BfN with funds provided by BMUB, EuroNatur's donors

## Karst poljes need to be protected at long last

The karst poljes of Bosnia-Herzegovina play a key role for the protection of migratory birds. These often agriculturally used depressions in the karst regions of the Dinarides are valuable resting and breeding sites for many waders and other wetland birds. The EuroNatur project aims at improving the protection status of 14 selected poljes in Bosnia-Herzegovina in tandem with the sustainable advancement of the local communities, both in economic as well as in touristic terms. In 2017, applications for 13 poljes were submitted to BirdLife

International requesting their designation as Important Bird Areas. As a nice side-effect, two bird species new to Bosnia-Herzegovina were recorded in the course of investigating the areas, i.e. the pine bunting (*Emberiza leucocephala*) and the shore lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). In order to foster the area's tourism development, a second bird observation tower, three picnic sites with information panels and 40 signposts were erected in the Livanjsko Polje pilot region (Map p. 27, No. 8). Local nature guides have also been trained. The introduction of sustainable management practices in Livanjsko polje and Duvanjsko polje is the second approach taken. The provision of funding for

several cows and a bull allows for the native traditionally kept Buša cattle to once again be bred in the region. The cows' milk is used to produce the traditional sack cheese. A number of effective public radio and TV appearances as well as information transfer in schools continue to draw attention to the karst poljes' major importance.

**Partners:** Naše ptice, Naša baština, Youth Centre from Livno

**Funding:** Mava Foundation, EuroNatur's donors



## Fewer wolves in Croatia

Croatia's wolf population is shrinking – this is evident from figures gathered in recent years. While Croatia has made much progress in protecting wolves, not least due to EuroNatur's support, illegal culling continues to be a major problem. Habitat fragmentation, for example as a result of motorway construction, is also troubling Croatia's conservationists. While the animals have adapted well to protection measures such as vegetated overpasses, these are not available everywhere. As in the year prior, our Croatian partners had proposed that there should be no legal wolf culls in 2017, and this proposal will remain on the agenda when it comes to the revision of the wolf management plan for 2018. We hope that the improved data basis will strengthen our argumentation. In 2017, 400 samples of wolf faeces were collected for genetic analysis with a view to determining population size. Once evaluated, these figures will be crucial for management planning going forward. Wolves are among the species that are strictly protected in the EU. On account of its geographical location and its bridge function between the Alpine and Dinarides populations, Croatia plays a very prominent role in wolf protection.

**Project partners:** University of Zagreb, Carnivora Magna

**Funding:** EuroNatur's sponsors and donors

## Tourist resort threatens Pelican paradise

Looking at our efforts to protect the Dalmatian pelicans in the Lake Skutari National Park in Montenegro (Map p. 27, No. 11) and the Divjake-Karavasta National Park in Albania (Map p. 27, No. 12), light and darkness seem to never be far apart. In these two countries, the two national parks host this striking bird's last breeding colonies; the Dalmatian pelican is also the heraldic animal of both of the parks. The protection of their wetland breeding grounds is a matter of international importance. The positive population figures for 2017 show that the measures taken by EuroNatur and its partners in both Montenegro and Albania are successful: 50 breeding pairs with 58 offspring were counted at Lake Skutari, and 52 breeding pairs with 55 offspring were recorded at the Karavasta lagoon. The population figures have steadily been rising in recent years and in Albania they have now reached the level recorded 20 years ago. The floating nesting platforms installed by EuroNatur's partner organization in Montenegro were well received by the birds and have contributed to the positive trend.

The Dalmatian pelicans are at risk nonetheless: The Mabetex Group is planning to build a large-scale holiday resort in the Karavasta lagoon consisting of hotels, golf courses and wellness areas as well as a marina and a heliport. The resort will be dimensioned for up to 18,000 guests. In May 2017, EuroNatur and the project partners organized a local press conference in order to draw attention to these destructive plans. Worse still, construction has actually begun on the "Porto Skadar Lake" resort in Montenegro despite national and international protests. Both these construction projects demonstrate just how lax the Albanian and Montenegrin governments are when it comes to dealing with protected areas of the highest category. Developments of this kind undermine not only successful efforts to increase the number of breeding birds and public awareness in both of the project areas, but for all intents and purposes they spell the de facto end to the areas' protection. EuroNatur will continue to highlight these very issues.

**Partners:** Noé Conservation, Lake Skutari National Park Administration, Tour du Valat, APAWA, CZIP, Natural History Museum of Montenegro, Lake Kerkini Management Authority, Divjaka-Karavasta National Park Administration, SPP, IUCN/WI-Pelican Specialist Group, INCA, PPNEA

**Funding:** Mava Foundation, CEPF, CMS, Botiaux Dulac Foundation, Lush Cosmetics, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

Photo: Kerstin Sauer - exhibition Culture Night



## EuroNatur's public face: Media and PR work

### EuroNatur Award for Diplomat

In October 2017, the former German ambassador to Montenegro, Gudrun Steinacker, was awarded the EuroNatur Award for her outstanding commitment to protecting the Ulcinj salt flats (please refer to p. 6-7). With this award, EuroNatur is shining an international spotlight on the drama surrounding this avian paradise of European importance. It would appear that the salt flats were strategically neglected, aided by the Montenegrin government. Now it is at risk of being developed for mass tourism. Even during her term of office from 2014 to 2016, the diplomat Gudrun Steinacker continued to publicly highlight this maladministration and thus supported local civil society stakeholders in their fight to save the Ulcinj salt flats.

### Drawing attention to Romania's primary forests

In 2017, the national media were increasingly joined by international media in their reporting on the destruction of ancient and primary forests in the Romanian Carpathian Mountains (please refer to p. 24-25). Spiegel-TV for example uncovered dubious practices such as

clear felling in protected areas and illegal purchases of forests by foreign timber companies. The Romanian paradise forests were also the subject of a fundraising campaign and a multimedia presentation in Constance, organized by EuroNatur as a GivingTuesday 2017 event. As a countermovement to pre-Christmas consumerism, the GivingTuesday movement encourages millions of people around the world to give back.

### Record number of submissions to the EuroNatur photography contest

Once again, the "Europe's natural treasures" photography contest significantly contributed to highlighting the beauty of Europe's natural heritage. A total of 1,130 enthusiast and professional photographers from 41 countries participated in the contest and submitted a total of 4,000 nature photographs taken in Europe, more than ever before. This was the 24th time EuroNatur held this contest; it was organized in cooperation with the monthly magazine "natur", the NaturVision film festival, and the utilities company Gelsenwasser AG. The winning entries were presented in the Spanish online edition of National Geographic among other sites and, thanks to the support of globalmagazin and Infoscreen GmbH, they were also presented in selected subway stations across Germany. Highlights of the previous 23 photography contests were exhibited at the well-attended Radolfzell Culture Night.

### New euronatur.org website

The EuroNatur Foundation website got a new look in March 2017. The fresh design caters to current user requirements. Improved navigation, greater integration with social media and optimization for mobile users help us to connect to a wide audience. Nature photography and videos make EuroNatur's work in nature conservation more tangible.

### 30 years EuroNatur

In 2017, the EuroNatur Foundation turned 30. An anniversary celebration was held in Radolfzell on April 7 at the Scheffelsaal venue and was attended not only by many of EuroNatur's donors but also by representatives of the policy arena, the media, nature conservation and the business world. Large-format photographs selected from the submissions to the "Europe's natural treasures" photography contest over the past 23 years were also on display during the event and in the days following, when EuroNatur project managers presented insights into the work of the Foundation. Prompted by the anniversary, EuroNatur also launched its first ever writing contest with a call for participants to submit their own writing on the topic of "Europe's nature". A total of 145 authors from eight different countries submitted their works. The three winning submissions were published in the digital EuroNatur advent calendar. Given the very good response, the writing contest will be held again in 2018.



Photo: Kerstin Sauer - German iris (Iris germanica)



## **A Foundation to protect Europe's nature**

EuroNatur is a non-profit foundation established in 1987 by Friends of the Earth Germany (Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland, BUND), the German Federation for Nature Conservation (Naturschutzbund Deutschland, NABU) and German Environmental Aid (Deutsche Umwelthilfe, DUH). It is headquartered in Radolfzell. EuroNatur is legally, organizationally and financially independent, autonomous and non-partisan. A foundation having legal personality (rechtsfähige Stiftung) such as EuroNatur differs from a registered voluntary association (Verein) in that it has no membership base. The latest exemption notice (Freistellungsbescheid) was issued by the tax authority in Singen on April 19, 2018. EuroNatur is a member of, amongst others, the following organizations: European Green Belt Association, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), European Habitats Forum, German League for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection (DNR), Association of German Foundations, AgrarBündnis e.V., Europarc, and Wetlands International - European Association.

The current Articles of Association can be downloaded at [www.euronatur.org/statutes](http://www.euronatur.org/statutes)

## **Presiding Committee provides strategic orientation**

New members of the Presiding Committee are proposed by existing members and elected to the Committee by majority vote. The President is elected from among the members of the Presiding Committee. In 2017 EuroNatur's Presiding Committee had six voting members and one non-voting member, all of whom served in a voluntary capacity. Their duties include determining the organization's strategic orientation, approving annual budgets, and approving the annual accounts. The Presiding Committee oversees the work of the Executive Director and the Director of Conservation Policy with a view to its lawfulness, expediency and economic efficiency. Detailed Committee member profiles can be accessed at [www.euronatur.org](http://www.euronatur.org).

## **Board of Trustees serves as an advisory committee**

EuroNatur's Presiding Committee can nominate persons to the Board of Trustees who support the organization's concerns. In 2017, EuroNatur's Board of Trustees had 20 members, all of whom served in a voluntary capacity. They support EuroNatur in three areas: technical advice, especially with respect to access to funding; public relations work; establishing the organization and its work more firmly within society. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees attends the meetings of the Presiding Committee in an advisory capacity. Detailed profiles of the Members of the Board of Trustees can be accessed at [www.euronatur.org](http://www.euronatur.org).

## **Salaried management staff in charge of operative implementation**

The full-time salaried management team consisting of the Executive Director and the Director for Nature Conservation Policy is in charge of and responsible for steering the organization's operative work. In 2017, EuroNatur maintained two offices in Germany and employed a total of 21 staff. Central functions such as managing donors, bookkeeping, general administration and public relations work are based in Radolfzell at Lake Constance, as are most of the project management activities. The conservation policy office is based in Rheinbach near Bonn. More than 30 voluntary collaborators support the work of EuroNatur Foundation.

## **EuroNatur Service GmbH**

More than 20 years ago, the European Nature Heritage Fund established a wholly owned subsidiary, the EuroNatur Service GmbH, a limited company. This small but efficient service provider publishes and markets landscape and wildlife calendars and guidebooks on EuroNatur's project regions as well as a wide range of reference books and exclusive items. Additionally the EuroNatur Service GmbH has specialized on layout and mail order services which it provides to the European Nature Heritage Fund and other clients.

Photo: Dietmar Nill - Brant (Anser anser)



## Economic situation in the 2017 financial year

### Donors form the basis

In 2017, EuroNatur Foundation's regular donors, sponsors and legacy donors continued to provide the financial footing for our tangible conservation efforts in Europe as well as for political lobbying, awareness-raising and environmental education. Once again, EuroNatur also attracted substantial financial support for project implementation from private foundations and associations as well as public sector funding in 2017, most notably from the Mava Foundation, the Dr. Manfred and Gudrun Keim Fund, German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU), Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND) and BUND Nature Conservation in Bavaria, the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, the Bristol Stiftung, the Christian Martin Stiftung, the Pancivis Foundation, the Fondation pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature, the Maiores Foundation, the Frankfurt Zoological Society

(ZGF), the Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, the Federal Environment Ministry (BMUB), the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA), the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the European Commission. Moreover, EuroNatur's work was financially supported by certain commercial enterprises in 2017. These included i.a. the utilities company Gelsenwasser and the Bielefeld public utilities.

### Income and expenditure headings based on DZI specifications

The income and expenditure headings used for the purposes of this activity report correspond to the prescribed specifications as part of the guidelines for the DZI (German Central Institute for Social Issues) Seal of Approval. The headings therefore diverge somewhat from the customary breakdown set out in the Handelsgesetzbuch (German Commercial Code),

especially in the profit and loss account. Amongst the criteria assessed by DZI are two important threshold values, i.e. the share of expenditure on advertising and administration in total relevant expenditure, and the ratio of expenditure on advertising to total income from donations. Not all expenditure is included for the purpose of calculating the share of administrative expenditure: Expenditure on portfolio management is only taken into consideration if its total is a negative amount. Commercial activities are not considered at all.

### DZI Seal of Approval

In November 2017, EuroNatur Foundation was again awarded the DZI (German Central Institute for Social Issues) Seal of Approval. EuroNatur had applied for the seal in August 2017 based on its 2016 annual accounts. The result of the DZI assessment of EuroNatur Foundation was a positive one: It confirmed that we meet the seven DZI Seal of Approval standards (see p. 43).



### Appropriate proportion of advertising and administrative expenses

Compared to the previous year, EuroNatur Foundation saw its income decrease considerably by € 2,676k to a total of € 3,639k (see p.41). Additionally, we received € 20k in endowments (€ 96k in the previous year). Endowments (donations towards the Foundation's capital stock) are not shown in the profit and loss account. However, the DZI includes endowments in the total income. For the purposes of the DZI calculations therefore the total income was € 3,659k. Total income from donations including endowments in 2017 was € 868k, a decrease of € 3,217k. This considerable decrease was essentially due to one very large

bequest having been made in the year prior. Relevant total expenditure for calculating the proportion of administrative expenses in 2017 (total expenditure minus expenditure on portfolio management) stood at € 3,579k, up by € 497k compared to the previous year. Our projections for 2017 show that EuroNatur Foundation spent approximately 16.7 % of relevant total expenditure on advertising and administration. DZI will assess our results at a later point in time. The institute considers appropriate a proportion of expenses for advertising and administration of up to 20 %. The previous year's figure was 18.2 %.

In 2017, the proportion of advertising expenditure in total income from donations was 36.7 % according to our own calculations. DZI had calculated a figure of 7.1 % for 2016 and 17.3 % for 2015. The maximum acceptable proportion of all expenditure on advertising (which according to DZI definitions also includes general PR work) is 30 % of total income from donations (as an average of the three latest financial years). While we exceeded this maximum in 2017, at 13 % the three-year average is well below the 30 % threshold.



### Individual sources of revenue

There was a considerable decrease in 2017 in revenue from donations (not including endowments and fines) (-€ 3,135k) compared to the previous year which was due to very large donations from bequests in the year prior (+€ 3,090k). Third-party grants for concrete project implementation increased once again in 2017 (+€ 602k). This increase was almost exclusively due to greater financial support received from private foundations and associations. EuroNatur Foundation's non-profit tax-exempt commercial activities saw a significant decrease in turnover (-€ 26k) compared to 2016. Interest and capital gains in 2017 were significantly lower than in the previous year due to a decrease in major nonrecurring items (-€ 107k).

### Expenditure in detail

Compared to 2016, EuroNatur Foundation increased its total expenditure on projects, campaigns and education by € 459k. More than 80 % of total expenditure therefore went directly into work on projects, campaigns and education. There was a nominal increase in expenditure on advertising, general PR work and administration in 2017 compared to 2016 (+€ 38k). The share of expenditure under these headings in total relevant expenditure decreased and now stands at approximately 16.7 %, which according to DZI is an acceptable proportion of expenditure for general PR work, advertising and administration. Purely administrative expenditure actually accounted for less than 8 % of total relevant expenditure, with advertising and public relations expenditure accounting for approximately 4 % and 5 % respectively in 2017.

### Successful conclusion of the 2017 financial year

EuroNatur Foundation concluded the 2017 financial year with a balanced operating result. € 31k were withdrawn from project-specific reserves for site protection in Brandenburg. As revenue from testamentary gifts and legacy bequests was very low, only € 30k could be added to the revenue reserves. Overall, EuroNatur Foundation was able to further stabilize its financial foundation in 2017.



## Notes on the 2017 Statement of Financial Position

Compared to the previous year, 2017 saw an increase of € 83k in EuroNatur Foundation's total assets which now stand at € 9,668k. At the end of the financial year, non-current assets (fixed assets) stood at € 6,356k, whereas current assets stood at € 3,312k. Fixed assets decreased slightly by € 27k compared to 2016, while current assets, i.e. primarily liquid funds, increased by € 110k. Accounts receivable were decreased by € 22k to a level of € 198k. These are all considered recoverable and € 112k are due within the next twelve months.

At the end of the 2017 financial year, the foundation's capital stood at € 5,502k, i.e. € 21k higher than in the previous year. Compared to the previous year, equity was increased by € 19k to a total of € 7,725k. Revenue reserves remained largely unchanged compared to 2016 and stood at € 2,223k at year's end. The liabilities of 1,725k primarily consist of project grants already received but not yet spent in 2017.

## Economic development in recent years

EuroNatur Foundation's statement of its financial position clearly shows that recent years have not only brought successes in the organization's conservation endeavours but that its work has also been successful in economic terms. Over the past five years, i.e. since 2012, total assets increased by € 5,770k and thus more than doubled by far. Over the past ten years, i.e. since 2007, total assets even increased by € 7,360k and thus more than quadrupled. The increase in equity, i.e. the foundation's core capital including endowments and revenue reserves has been similarly positive. These developments demonstrate that EuroNatur is on a secure financial footing and has been able to significantly improve its financial position in recent years.



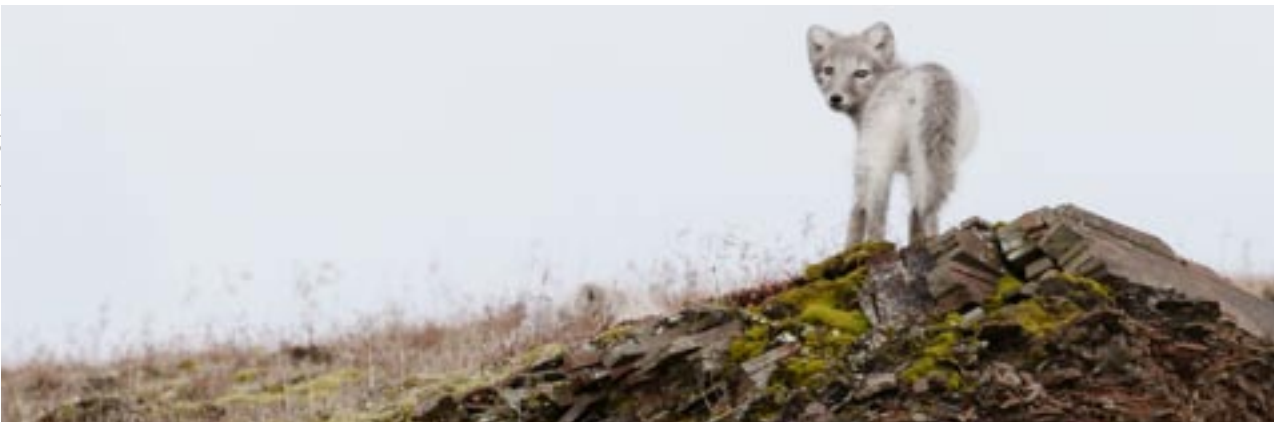
### Planned giving for European nature

A further strengthening of EuroNatur's asset base is of great importance for the foundation's independence and performance as a successful advocate for nature in Europe. The increase in the foundation's capital creates planning certainty and independence. Endowments and bequests therefore provide immensely valuable support to us and are a great sign of confidence, confidence that we endeavour to honour with our commitment. In 2017, all endowments and yields from bequests were transferred to the foundation's capital stock. This has further strengthened EuroNatur Foundation's financial position. We expect that revenues from portfolio management will increase in coming years.

### Bequests and legacies in 2017

In 2017, Gerth Rudolf Richter from Klingenberg am Main bequeathed funds to EuroNatur Foundation upon his death. We are greatly indebted to him and will honour his memory.





### Dependent foundations and named funds

In 2017, EuroNatur managed three dependent foundations and three earmarked named funds. The named funds' capital (€ 485k) remained unchanged compared to the previous financial year while the capital of the dependent foundations (€ 2,159k) increased by € 16k. In the reporting year, yields from dependent foundations continued to exclusively benefit EuroNatur project activities.

- Dr. Manfred and Gudrun Keim Fund
- Ludwig Raue Memorial Fund
- Lappat Fund
- EuroNatur Fund for Eastern Germany
- EuroNatur Fund for the Protection of Migratory Birds
- Elisabeth Seifert-Becker's endowment fund for the protection of wolves in memory of Viktoria Neumann, Emilie and Franz Seifert

### Working together for Europe's nature

EuroNatur's successes in nature conservation in Europe in 2017 could only be achieved with the support provided by our donors, sponsors and legacy donors as well as providers of grants and commercial sponsors. We are most grateful for your support!

## Statement of Financial Position as at 31.12.2017

ASSETS		2017		2016	
		“000 €	“000 €	“000 €	“000 €
A. Fixed assets			6,356		6,383
	I. Intangible assets + tangible assets	6		11	
	II. Tangible assets	1,640		1,663	
	III. Financial assets	4,710		4,709	
B. Current assets			3,312		3,202
	I. Stocks	14		11	
	II. Accounts receivable and other assets	198		220	
	III. Liquid funds, short-term securities	3,100		2,971	
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>9,668</b>		<b>9,585</b>

LIABILITIES		2017		2016	
		“000 €	“000 €	“000 €	“000 €
A. Equity			7,725		7,706
	I. Foundation's capital				
	Core capital	77		77	
	Endowments (financial year, € 20k, previous year € 96k)	5,425		5,404	
	II. Revenue reserves	2,223		2,225	
B. Provisions			218		163
C. Liabilities			1,725		1,716
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>9,668</b>		<b>9,585</b>

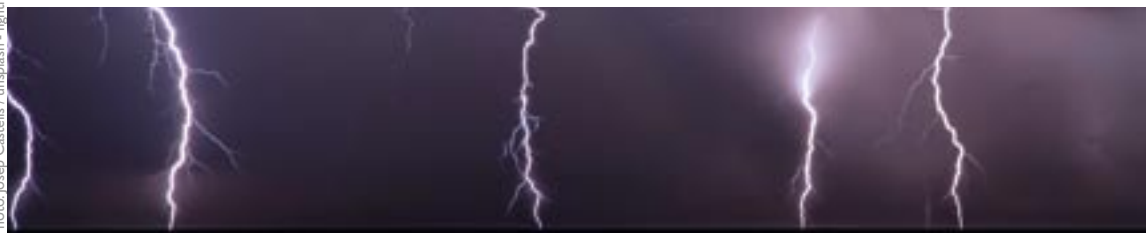


# Profit and Loss Statement for 2017

Revenue according to DZI	2017		2016	
	“ 000 €	%	“ 000 €	%
Cash donations*	821	22.56	868	13.75
Donations in kind	16	0.44	24	0,38
Bequests	10	0.27	3,090	48.93
Fines	1	0.03	7	0.11
<b>Subtotal</b> (total income from donations excluding endowments)	<b>848</b>		<b>3,989</b>	
Government grants	305	8.38	314	4.97
Grants from other organizations	2,195	60.32	1,584	25.08
Nonprofit tax-exempt and taxable commercial activity	2	0.06	28	0.44
Interest and capital gains	251	6.90	358	5.67
Other revenue	38	1.04	42	0.67
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>3,639</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6,315</b>	<b>100</b>
Withdrawals from revenue reserves	31		8	
	<b>3,670</b>		<b>6,323</b>	

\* In the 2017 financial year we received € 844k in monetary donations, € 23k of which have not yet been claimed due to earmarking. The latter are expected to be claimed in the following year and at the time of actual spending of funds.

Expenditure according to DZI	2017		2016	
	“ 000 €	%	“ 000 €	%
<b>Expenditure on project aid</b>				
Staff-related expenditure	467	12.83	382	11.92
Administrative and other expenditure	2,022	55.53	1,663	51.89
<b>Expenditure on project monitoring and assistance</b>				
Staff-related expenditure	238	6.54	228	7.11
Administrative and other expenditure	28	0.77	36	1.12
<b>Expenditure on campaigns, education, public awareness</b>				
Staff-related expenditure	163	4.48	153	4.77
Administrative and other expenditure	63	1.73	60	1.87
<b>Expenditure on advertising and general PR work</b>				
Staff-related expenditure	169	4.64	160	4.99
Administrative and other expenditure	150	4.12	128	3.99
<b>Expenditure on administration</b>				
Staff-related expenditure	206	5.66	196	6.12
Administrative and other expenditure	73	2.00	76	2.37
<b>Expenditure on portfolio management</b>				
Portfolio management	62	1.70	123	3.84
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>3,641</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Transfers to the Fund's capital stock	0		2,456	
Transfers to revenue reserves	29		541	
Transfers to „Umschichtungsrücklage“ (special reserve for gains from transactions to cover potential losses of future transactions)	0		121	
	<b>3,670</b>		<b>6,323</b>	



## Dealing with potential risks

For a non-profit foundation, EuroNatur Foundation's capital stock is relatively slim. Therefore the organization is urgently dependent on donations and third-party grants in so as to be able to discharge its mandate as an advocate of nature in Europe. We are aware of the fact that with this funding comes great responsibility and day in, day out we work towards using the funds as efficiently as possible. The manner in which these grants and donations are passed on to partner organizations in the east and south of Europe is also a sensitive issue, one that is predicated on a very good network of contacts built up over many years. Moreover, a multi-level control system is essential for the correct assessment of and effective response to risks. Risk mitigation measures must also be adopted for capital investments.

### Potential risks and the measures we take to avert them

#### Financial and economic crises

The global financial and economic crisis which began in 2008, and the impacts of which are still being felt, has shown once again that our lives' economic circumstances can change swiftly and

dramatically. That there is no interest without risk has now become an undisputed fact. In this light it is becoming increasingly difficult to find some middle ground between security and financial returns. Charting our course in this respect we abide by the following principles: EuroNatur Foundation invests its equity capital in low-risk funds, taking into account ethical and environmental criteria (please refer to the chapter on "Transparency"). Moreover, reserves are built up in order to be able to even out fluctuations in revenues. We have established a special reserve for gains from transactions which can in turn be used to cover potential losses of future transactions ("Umschichtungsrücklage") as a safeguard against potentially required depreciation of fixed assets.

#### Lack of competent and trustworthy partner organizations

EuroNatur Foundation has very consciously not opted for a Europe-wide network of offices with full-time employees, thus eliminating the considerable administrative expenditure such a network would incur. We are primarily concerned with cooperating with existing conservation organizations that are well connected in their local areas and are successful in their endeavours. In many countries of southern and eastern Europe, powerful non-profit and independent conservation organizations are few and far between. The lack of competent and trustworthy partners limits our options. It is for this reason that EuroNatur invests in the systematic development and strengthening of civil society in southern and eastern

Europe. EuroNatur's project work is always predicated on cooperation with a local partner organization. If there is no such partner organization in a particular region, it is reason enough for EuroNatur not to engage.

#### Misappropriation of funds

We have self-imposed strict rules on budgetary control. All outward payments are checked for mathematical and factual correctness. Payment orders are always subject to the "Two-man rule". Target-performance comparisons are carried out on a monthly basis, allowing for swift detection of potential irregularities. Our 2017 annual accounts were audited by the independent auditing and tax accounting firm WISTA AG and endorsed with an unqualified audit certificate.

#### Inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in project work

We regularly scrutinize our internal processes, which allows us to continuously increase our efficiency. We also analyse the work of our partner organizations and work with them to find solutions to increase their efficiency. Our partners' statements of expenditure are checked by the project liaison person for factual accuracy and by the accounting department for financial accuracy. All statements of expenditure are submitted to the managing director for approval prior to funds being released. In order to increase the efficiency of our work we conduct staff development and training, in terms of both content and methodology, for ourselves and our partners on an ongoing basis.

# Transparency – one of EuroNatur’s important tenets

## EuroNatur was again awarded the DZI Seal of Approval

In 2017, EuroNatur Foundation was once again awarded the DZI (German Central Institute for Social Issues) Seal of Approval. It will expire at the end of the third quarter of 2018. The Seal of Approval certifies that, amongst other things, EuroNatur meets the DZI's seven standards as follows: EuroNatur conducts its work in keeping with its statutes; the organization's management and oversight are adequately structured, clearly separated and are being exercised effectively; in our solicitation of donations and public relations work we provide information in a clear, truthful, factual and open manner; we openly and comprehensively report on our work, structures and finances; remuneration is paid taking into consideration the organization's charitable status, qualifications, levels of responsibility, and industry pay standards; the procurement and use of funding as well as the organization's financial status are traceably documented and adequately verified; the proportion of funds spent on advertising and administration in 2017 was at an appropriate level in accordance with the DZI standards ("appropriate" = 10 % to 20 %). The effectiveness of the organization's spending is monitored and results are documented and published.

## Initiative for transparency in civil society

EuroNatur has been a signatory to Transparency International Germany's "Initiative Transparente

Zivilgesellschaft" (Initiative for transparency in civil society) since 2010. Signatories to the initiative voluntarily commit to publishing ten particular items of information about their organization on their homepage. These include i.a. their statutes, the names of essential decision-makers, and information on how they are funded, how they use their funding, and their personnel structure.

## Auditing

In 2017, EuroNatur once again voluntarily submitted to an audit of its annual accounts by an auditor. The auditing and tax accounting firm WISTA AG audited EuroNatur Foundation's 2017 annual accounts in accordance with Par. 317 of the German Commercial Code (HGB) and in accordance with the accepted standards for the review of financial statements as set out by the Institute of Public Auditors in Germany (IDW) and endorsed the accounts with an unqualified audit certificate. An extract from the audit certificate states the following:

*„We have audited the annual financial statements – consisting of the balance sheet, profit and loss account, and an appendix – taking into account the accounts and the management report of EuroNatur – Stiftung Europäisches Naturerbe, Radolfzell, for the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31, 2017.*

*In our opinion, based on the information obtained during our audit, the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the relevant regulatory requirements and*

*convey, in accordance with the principles of proper accounting, a true and fair view of the Foundation's net assets, liabilities, financial position and results of operations. The position statement complies with the statutory provisions and the supplementary provisions of the Foundation's statutes and it is consistent with the knowledge we have gained in the course of the audit. The position statement, as a whole, provides an accurate picture of the Foundation's position and adequately depicts the opportunities and risks arising from future developments. [...] Our audit did not lead to any objections."*

*May 22, 2018, WISTA AG, Mannheim*

## Capital investment based on environmental and ethical criteria

EuroNatur Foundation's foundation capital now amounts to almost EUR 5.5 million. Moreover, EuroNatur Foundation holds trust property of more than EUR 2.4 million in trust for the benefit of three non-autonomous foundations. In keeping with the organization's philosophy, investment decisions are based on environmental and ethical criteria. Both inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied to these decisions. As a minimum, investment products are not considered if they invest in companies involved in nuclear power, agrochemicals, weapons, genetic engineering, pornography, alcohol, tobacco, the motor industry, the oil and coal industries, airline companies, or if they are invested in government bonds in nations practicing capital punishment, actively driving forward nuclear energy, or which are considered corrupt. Our main financial service providers for asset management purposes in 2017 were the Umweltbank AG, the Bank Vontobel, the Bank J. Safra Sarasin AG, and the GLS Bank. Additionally, since the summer of 2017 we have consulted with an independent financial advisor on a fee basis.



## System of remuneration

EuroNatur's employees are assigned at five different functional levels, in addition to the management team. These five levels are Administration I and II, Divisional management, and Project management I and II. Remuneration bands have been set for each of the levels, extending 20 % either side of the mid-point. The mid-points are EUR 35k and EUR 39k for Administration I and II respectively, EUR 49k per annum for Divisional management, and EUR 44k and EUR 54k respectively per annum for Project management I and II.

In 2017, the Executive Director received an annual remuneration package of EUR 94k gross. Without exception all members of the Presiding Committee and the Board of Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and only receive reimbursements for cost incurred, but no flat-rate expense allowances.

## Advertising and donor information

Six times a year EuroNatur Foundation sends out information to its donors to keep them in touch with ongoing projects and request support for concrete endeavours. Similarly, support for individual projects is solicited, and information provided, through the organization's website at [www.euronatur.org](http://www.euronatur.org), the digital EuroNatur newsletter and emailings. In addition,

regular donors receive the EuroNatur magazine as well as topical project reports containing comprehensive information and reports on current developments in the projects. In 2017, EuroNatur Foundation conducted its own donor information and fundraising. With the exception of printers, no aspect of these tasks was outsourced to any agency or external service provider.

## Impact monitoring and impact analysis

One of the most important tenets of EuroNatur's work is the efficient deployment of funds entrusted to us by our donors and by the organizations (both governmental and non-governmental) that support our work. Systematic planning of activities and comprehensive impact monitoring are preconditions to the efficient use of funds.

EuroNatur Foundation takes both a supportive and an operative role. For projects undertaken by EuroNatur in cooperation with its partner organizations, and which in most instances are in receipt of third-party financial support (from both governmental and non-governmental sources), EuroNatur reports back in detail to the financial backers. Impact monitoring already begins at the stages of project development and project application. EuroNatur

develops projects based on comprehensive situational analysis and needs assessments. Together with our partners we formulate the overall objectives and prepare project applications based thereon. These can only attract funding if the objectives are clearly set out and if activities are proposed that serve to meet these objectives. Evidence of the use of funds must include comprehensive evaluations of the achievement of set objectives as well as rationales for potential changes in or adjustments to activities or even objectives. In order to receive grants from EuroNatur, applicants must present cohesive project designs in keeping with the principles set out above. The partner organization's reports are subject to comprehensive evaluation by EuroNatur and our project managers regularly visit the project areas to discuss the projects' progress.

Both positive developments and difficulties arising are assessed in order to allow for procedural adjustments to be made and to learn lessons for the future. Progress reports document project development up to the point of the projects' completion.

Photo: Hans-Joachim Grund - Meadow orchard, Franciscan Switzerland



## My legacy does good

To create something of lasting value that continues to bear fruit, to pass on to the next generation and to society something one considered important during one's lifetime – these are expressions of the deeply human desire to leave traces in the world beyond one's passing. A representative study on charitable bequests in Germany ("Gemeinnütziges Vererben in Deutschland") has shown that one in ten people over the age of sixty can imagine to bequeath part of their estate to a charitable cause; among childless people the number is as high as one in three.

Over the last three decades, bequests and endowments made to EuroNatur have significantly strengthened the Foundation's financial asset base. Financial support of this nature is particularly valuable to us as it enables long-term planning of project activities. EuroNatur Foundation, as a non-profit foundation, is exempt from inheritance tax and gift tax. Any gifted or bequeathed assets can therefore be devoted exclusively to the pursuit of the Foundation's objectives. Bequests will not burn away in one-off activities. Instead, they will lay a solid foundation for effective nature conservation and thus generate far-reaching prospects for people and nature.

Questions surrounding the issue of charitable bequests are answered on the [www.mein-erbe-tut-gutes.de](http://www.mein-erbe-tut-gutes.de) platform. EuroNatur has already been a member of the "Mein Erbe tut Gutes" ('My Legacy Does Good') initiative for three years

now. A total of 23 organizations currently participate in this initiative – all are non-profits. As a neutral platform offering information and inspiration, the initiative aims to support people in their endeavour to use their estate to pass on their own values. It offers advice and guidance to potential testators as to how they can actively frame their will to this end and shows how bequests and endowments sustainably safeguard the successful work of charitable organizations. In order to be able to offer independent legal advice, the initiative cooperates with the Deutsche Vereinigung für Erbrecht und Vermögensnachfolge e.V. (a German paralegal association for inheritance law and asset succession).

Are you too thinking about considering EuroNatur in your will? If you would like to find out more about this issue please get in touch with us. Your contact: **Sabine Günther, Tel.: +49 (0)7732-927217.**

Photo: Lubomir Stefanov / MES - Šar Mountains



## EuroNatur's project foci in 2017

In 2017, the projects implemented by EuroNatur Foundation focused on the following areas:

- Protecting the European Green Belt and further advancing the European Green Belt Initiative
- Protecting Europe's rivers
- Protecting migratory birds in Europe
- Large mammal protection in Europe
- Protecting Europe's last wilderness areas
- Agricultural policy, biodiversity policy, energy policy

This Annual Report describes in some detail a selection of projects under individual priority headings. EuroNatur Foundation has supported and implemented a number of additional projects and initiatives over and above these priorities, a more detailed description of which is beyond the scope of this report.

### Priority "European Green Belt"

Funding spent on this priority: 399,000 Euro

#### Projects:

Development of the European Green Belt as part of the Green Infrastructure (Partners: BUND; Funding: BfN with funds provided by BMUB, EuroNatur's donors), **Strengthening the cooperation along the Balkan Green Belt** (Partners: IUCN, PPNEA, BBF, Green Balkans, Callisto, ERA, MES, CZIP, BPSSS, DAYKO, ASER; Funding: DBU, EuroNatur's donors), **Nature conservation and sustainable development along the Green Belt in Albania** (Partners: PPNEA, local NGOs; Funding: BfN with funds provided by BMUB, EuroNatur's donors), **Transboundary protection for the Osogovo mountains** (Partners: BBF, MES; Funding: ZGF, DBU, Manfred-Hermsen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, EuroNatur's donors), **Biodiversity protection in the Macedonian Šar Mountains** (Partners: MES, "Friends of Shara" action group; Funding: DBU, EuroNatur's donors), **Transboundary protection for the Šar Mountains** (Partners: GIZ, MES, Finch, PPNEA, "Friends of Shara" action group; Funding: BMZ, EuroNatur's donors), **Protection of the Šumava National Park** (Partners: Hnutí Duha; Funding: EuroNatur's donors), **Elaboration and implementation of a monitoring scheme for the conservation of selected species at Lakes Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar** (Partners: GIZ, CZIP, MES, PPNEA, government ministries and public authorities in Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro; Funding: BMZ)

### Priority "Protecting Europe's last wilderness areas"

Funding spent on this priority: 248,600 Euro

#### Projects:

Protecting primary forests in Romania (Partner: Agent Green; Funding: Manfred-Hermsen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, Christian Martin Stiftung, Maiores Foundation, Pancivis Foundation, EuroNatur's donors), **Inscription of Albania's last primeval beech forests as UNESCO World Heritage Sites** (Partners: PPNEA, local NGOs; Funding: BfN with funding provided by BMUB, EuroNatur's donors), **Ecological forest conversion of monoculture pine forests in Brandenburg to semi-natural mixed forests** (Partners: Nature Park administrations at Dahme-Heideseen, Märkische Schweiz, and Schlaubetal; German Federation for Nature Conservation (Nabu) - Märkische Schweiz regional association; Stiftung Naturschutzfonds Brandenburg; local conservation groups and farmers; Funding: EuroNatur Trust for Eastern Germany, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors)



Photo: Goran Safarek - River: Mat



### Priority "Protecting Europe's rivers"

Funding spent on this priority: 630,400 Euro

#### Projects:

"Save the Blue Heart of Europe" campaign (Partners: Riverwatch, Front 21/42, Eko-svest, EcoAlbania, HDZPP, CZZS; Funding: Mava Foundation, Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Patagonia, Fondation pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature, Bristol Stiftung, EuroNatur's donors), **Protecting the Sava floodplains** (Partners: HDZPP, Lonjsko Polje Nature Park; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **SavaParks network for transboundary protection for the Sava river landscape** (Partners: HDZPP, all members of the SavaParks network; Funding: Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, Environmental Foundation Michael Otto, EuroNatur's donors)

### Priority "Protecting migratory birds in Europe"

Funding spent on this priority: 682,400 Euro

#### Projects:

Safeguarding important resting areas for migratory birds **along the Adriatic Flyway** (Partners: HDZPP, Biom, DOPPS, BPSSS, CZIP, Naše ptice, APAWA, AOS, ASPBM, MES, PPNEA; Funding: Mava Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting the Ulcinj salt flats** (Partners: CZIP, Dr. Martin Schneider-Jacoby Association, BirdLife, Tour du Valat; Funding: Mava Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Combating illegal hunting in the Hutovo Blato Nature Park and safeguarding Mostarsko Blato as an important resting ground for Eurasian cranes** (Partners: Hutovo Blato Nature Park, Naše ptice, Lijepa naša, NGO Čaplja, Galeb Hunting Association; Funding: CEPF, Ludwig Raue Memorial Fund, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting the Dalmatian pelicans at Lake Skadar and in the Karavasta Lagoon** (Partners: Noé Conservation, Lake Skadar National Park administration, Tour du Valat, APAWA, CZIP, Natural History Museum of Montenegro, Lake Kerkini Management Authority, Divjaka-Karavasta National Park administration, SPP, IUCN/WI-Pelican Specialist Group, INCA, PPNEA; Funding: Mava Foundation, CEPF, CMS, Botiaux Dulac Stiftung, Lush

cosmetics company, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting Ospreys in Asturia** (Partners: FAPAS, Funding: EuroNatur's donors), **Protecting migratory birds in the Senne landscape** (Partners: Paderborn-Senne Biological Station; Funding: Gelsenwasser AG (water and energy supply company), Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH – public utility, EuroNatur's donors), **Lesser kestrel reintroduction at Sakar** (Partners: Green Balkans, Dema; Funding: Life+, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Bright Future for Black Vulture in Bulgaria** (Partners: Green Balkans, VCF, FWFF; Funding: LIFE+, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting European wet meadows and pastures, in particular in the European Stork Villages** (Partners: Ciconia Foundation, Swiss Stork Society (Gesellschaft Storch Schweiz), European Stork Villages and their national conservation partners; Funding: RHW-Stiftung, Pancivis Foundation, Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, Bristol Stiftung, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting the karst poljes of Bosnia-Herzegovina as important bird resting and breeding areas** (Partners: Naše ptice, Naša bastina, Youth Centre from Livno; Funding: Mava Foundation, EuroNatur's donors)



### Priority "Agricultural policy, biodiversity policy, energy policy"

Funding spent on this priority: 335,600 Euro

#### Projects:

Agricultural platform – alliance consisting of roughly 30 associations representing the concerns of nature conservation, environmental protection, animal welfare, family farming, organic farming, and development policy in the process for the reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (Funding: BfN with funding provided by BMUB), Guidance for the establishment of regional, decentralized economic and supply structures in Podlasie/Poland with a focus on renewable energy (Partners: Bialystok Marshal's Office, Politechnika Bialystok, the town of Łapy, Hajnowka District, LEADER regions, Energievision Frankenwald e.V., the town of Wunsiedel and the Wunsiedel Department of Public Works; Funding: UBA with funds provided by BMUB)

### Priority "Large mammal protection in Europe"

Funding spent on this priority: 641,000 Euro

#### Projects:

Protecting brown bears in the Cantabrian Mountains (Partner: FAPAS; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protecting brown bears in Bosnia–Herzegovina and Montenegro (Partner: CZIP, CZZS; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protecting brown bears, lynx and grey wolves in the northern Dinarides (Partner: University of Zagreb, Carnivora Magna; Funding: LIFE+, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme (Partners: MES, PPNEA, CZIP, Finch, ERA, Kora; Funding: Mava Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protection of grey wolf populations that have recolonized western Poland (Partner: Wilk; Funding: Lappat Fund, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protection of large carnivores in Poland, with special emphasis on wolves and lynx (Partner: MRI; Funding: Elisabeth Seifert–Becker's endowment fund for the protection of wolves in memory of Viktoria Neumann, Emilie and Franz Seifert, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Maintaining the ecological integri-

ty of migration corridors for large carnivores (especially wolves) in Poland (Partners: Conservation organisation "Workshop for all Beings"; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Transboundary protection of wolf populations in the Western Beskids (Partners: Hnutí Duha, Wilk; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Monitoring of the wolf population in Slovakia (Partners: CWS; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protection of large carnivores in Baden–Wuerttemberg, Guidelines for dealing with wolves (Partners: EuroNatur is a member of the 'Arbeitskreis Wolf' working group as part of the 'AG Lynx Baden–Wuerttemberg' working group, Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protecting the Mediterranean monk seal colony at Cap Blanc (Partner: CBD Habitat; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Monitoring and protecting the Mediterranean monk seal populations in the northern Ionian Sea (Partner: MOM; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors)





## Abbreviations

### Partners:

Abl: Association for family farming in Germany  
AOS: Albanian Ornithological Society  
APAWA: Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife of Albania  
ASER: Speleological Association Explorers Romania  
ASPBM: Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds and Mammals  
BBF: Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation  
Biom: BirdLife Croatia  
BPSSS: Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia  
BUND: Friends of the Earth Germany  
CWS: Carpathian Wildlife Society  
CZIP: Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro  
CZZS: Center for Environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina  
DAYKO: Foundation of Protection of the Natural Life  
DOPPS: BirdLife Slovenia  
EHF: European Habitats Forum  
ERA: Environmentally Responsible Action group

FAPAS: Wild animal protection fund (Spain)  
FWFF: Fund for Wild Flora and Fauna  
HDZPP: Croatian Society for Bird and Nature Protection  
INCA: Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania  
IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature  
KORA: Coordinated Research Projects for the Protection and Management of Carnivores in Switzerland  
MES: Macedonian Ecological Society  
MOM: Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk seal  
MRI: Mammal Research Institute  
PPNEA: Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania  
SPP: Society for the Protection of Prespa  
VCF: Vulture Conservation Foundation  
WI: Wetlands International  
Wilk: Conservation Association "Wolf"  
WWF: World Wide Fund For Nature

### Funding:

BfN: German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation  
BMUB: Federal Environment Ministry  
BMZ: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development  
CEPF: Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
CMS: Convention on Migratory Species  
DBU: German Federal Environmental Foundation  
GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit  
UBA: German Federal Environment Agency  
ZGF: Frankfurt Zoological Society

Photo: Gerald Jarausch - Team of EuroNatur in Radolfzell



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The DZI (German Central Institute for Social Issues) seal of approval certifies that EuroNatur is serious, transparent and uses donations wisely and effectively.

## Conservation needs action – and money!

Our successful work is built on targeted strategies, efficient methods, sound knowledge, rich practical experience and respectable partner organisations in the project regions. But existing opportunities translate into concrete measures only with the help of our donors.

Donations to registered charities such as EuroNatur are tax-deductible. Please help us help Europe's nature and wildlife.

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