

Annual REPORT

Association Biom
Year 2023






The Association Biom, founded in 2006, is one of Croatia's leading civil society organizations for nature conservation. We represent Croatia in BirdLife International, the world's largest network for bird and nature conservation.

We are engaged in the protection of wild birds, other species, and habitats, combating wildlife crime and other threats to the natural world. We bring together nature enthusiasts, organize volunteer activities, and provide education for both youth and adults.

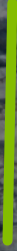
We are a professional, open, and innovative organization that, with a broad network of members, volunteers, and partners, contributes to biodiversity conservation and influences public behavior and relevant stakeholders in Croatia. As a BirdLife partner, we participate in shaping international nature conservation policies and advocate for improvements in national legal frameworks and institutional capacities. In short, our mission is to conserve biodiversity for the benefit of nature and society.



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The natural world surrounding us is not indestructible, and it is our duty to preserve it for nature itself and for the well-being of people. All our work in Biom is aimed at biodiversity preservation – the richness of plant and animal species and their habitats



Bird Conservation Programme

Birds are one of the best indicators of the state of nature and its various changes. Our longstanding work is dedicated to conserving birds and their habitats, thereby contributing to the vitality of ecosystems for the benefit of both people and nature. Together with numerous collaborators, experts, and volunteers, we have diligently worked on various projects across Croatia over the past year. Whether it involves field research, highlighting positive and negative practices, or advocating for better solutions in nature conservation, we have invested significant effort, knowledge, and resources to achieve the best possible results. Although the year was challenging, we completed several projects that have yielded potentially good solutions for the future of many species.

A significant achievement is completing three years of research and species monitoring through the Service for Defining SMART Conservation Goals and Basic Conservation Measures for Target Species and Habitat Types: "Defining Conservation Goals and Measures for Insufficiently Known Bird Species." In the NATURA 2000 ecological network areas where birds are conservation targets, we studied 111 species. This challenging and extensive project has resulted in new and improved population assessments of the studied species in Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA). For many species, conservation measures have been modified, while new conservation areas have been proposed for some species to truly preserve their populations in Croatia. For instance, due to the unfavorable population status of the Western Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) in Croatia, confirmed by this project's research, Plješevica Mountain has been proposed as a new conservation area.

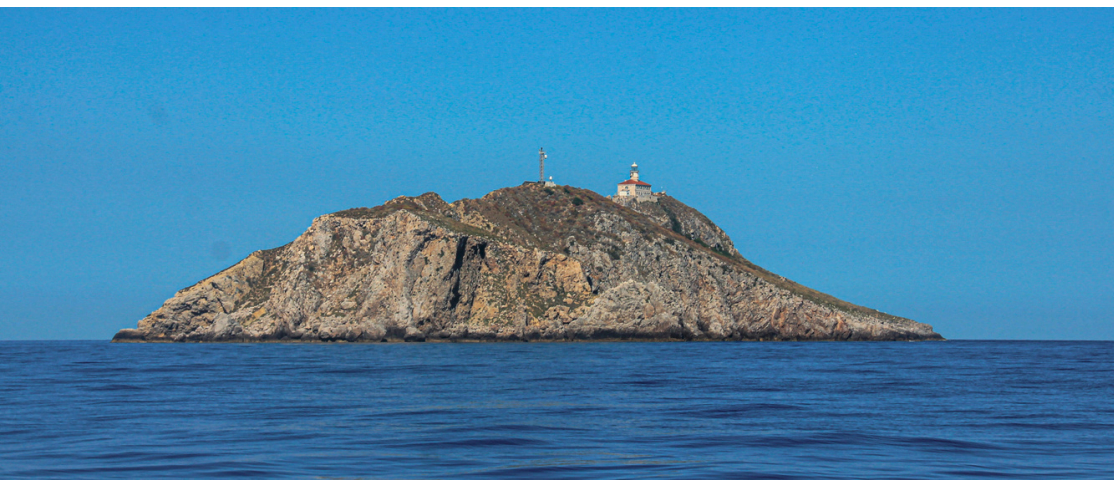
Similarly, for the Olive-tree Warbler (*Hippolais olivetorum*), one of the rarer breeding birds in our country, the wider Dubrovnik area has been proposed.

At the end of the year, we also completed the activities of the LIFE Artina project, through which we have spent the past five years working to improve the status of three endangered seabird species in Croatia: the Scopoli's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*), the Yelkouan Shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*), and the Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*). Thanks to extensive research, the implementation of biosecurity measures, and our efforts, specifically the removal and control of invasive mammal (rat) populations in seabird colonies, the breeding success of the Yelkouan Shearwater increased by 41%, and that of the Scopoli's Shearwater by 15%. Rats, which have been introduced to these islands through human activities, were successfully eradicated from five islands, and are not expected to return. However, biosecurity measures will still need to be implemented on the other five islands due to the potential return of rats. Additionally, based on GPS tracking and movement analysis, the first Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) at sea in Croatia have been identified.



In these areas, the mentioned seabirds most frequently feed or rest, and a total of five such areas have been identified, with two existing specifically as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) expanded in their marine parts. To ensure that threats to seabirds, such as potential wind farms, accidental bird capture in fishing gear, overfishing of their prey, or marine pollution, are mitigated or eliminated, these areas should become part of the ecological network Natura 2000 in the future, specifically as IBAs. These concrete results have laid a solid foundation for the conservation of the Scopoli's Shearwater, Yelkouan Shearwater, and Audouin's Gull in the Adriatic. Not only will they have long-term benefits, but they also serve as a good example of the kind of work that should be conducted for other seabird species with the aim of their conservation.

Crucial to maintaining the health of these islands and ensuring the continued successful breeding of seabirds is the ongoing control of rat populations in nesting areas and the prevention of invasive species returning to the islands. Thanks to LIFE Artina and its excellent results and extensive experience, these activities will be possible through the new project LIFE Tetide, through which we will expand our efforts to other areas, particularly the Pučinski Islands ecological network managed by the Public Institution More i Krš, which is also a project partner.



However, our work with seabirds does not end there. We have expanded our knowledge related to biosecurity and seabird conservation through collaboration with numerous public institutions, such as the Public Institution of Dubrovnik-Neretva County, the Public Institution of Mljet National Park, and the Public Institution of Maksimir. In the future, we plan to invest more effort and expertise into addressing biosecurity issues, bycatch, and accidental catches.

In addition to these major projects, we have assessed the population status of target species in the "Aquatorium of the Western Coast of Istria" within the boundaries of Brijuni National Park. Here, we studied the Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Black-throated Loon (*Gavia arctica*), Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*), and Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*). The collected data will enable public institution staff to define future activities in the national park and beyond.

We have also completed a three-year study of the Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and the White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) in Plitvice Lakes National Park. Additionally, a detailed analysis of the population status of target bird species related to open habitats was conducted in parts of Krka National Park. Along with research in this area, a review of literature data was performed, and restoration measures were defined to enable certain bird populations to inhabit this region, considering that these species thrive in open grassland habitats (karst meadows). We have dedicated significant effort and work to monitoring common bird species in agricultural habitats, with a large number of field researchers participating across Croatia since 2015. The goal of this continuous national monitoring has been to track the population status of species that inhabit agricultural areas and to determine the impact of agricultural practices on their habitats.

The results indicate that the situation is not satisfactory for certain bird species, and it is necessary to continue creating and implementing new conservation measures aligned with agricultural production. Our key recommendations include changing the data collection methodology and gathering data on more bird species, not only in agricultural habitats but also in other habitats, as is done in almost all EU member states.



At the beginning of the year, we launched the LIFE SUPport project, through which we will work on the conservation of the Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) in the Kvarner region, the last remaining vulture species in Croatia. We conducted regular bird monitoring in colonies, visited Sardinia and Cáceres in Spain to network with other projects and experts, held very successful preparatory meetings with stakeholders on Krk, Cres, and in Rijeka, and organized a workshop on electrocution monitoring, among many other activities that will continue over the next four years of the project. Although this is just the beginning, it is important to persist in addressing certain activities that have a negative impact on this endangered species. Additionally, the long-term goal is not only to conserve the Griffon Vulture but also to preserve traditional extensive livestock farming on Krk and Cres. A concerning issue is the appearance of non-native game on Cres and the presence of the golden jackal on Krk.

It is also important to highlight the numerous volunteer bird surveys, such as the traditional winter bird count (IWC), which we conduct with many volunteers and public institutions as part of a citizen science initiative. Data on the abundance of waterbirds in specific areas help preserve internationally important wetland habitats, and these data inform many bird protection decisions at both international and national levels.

In recent years, we have increasingly witnessed that people, particularly due to media coverage, are starting to notice certain bird species, leading to the perception that, for example, corvids are becoming more prevalent in cities. However, research shows that the second most numerous corvids species in Zagreb, the rook, is still less numerous than it was ten years ago, following a significant population decline. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor the status of birds in urban environments, especially for those species for which urban areas are among the most important habitats.

We are extremely proud of the result of eagle-owl monitoring, the scientific paper "Five-Year Study (2018 – 2022) of the Eurasian Eagle-Owl (*Bubo bubo*) in Croatia – Recolonization and Population Assessment in Lowland Croatia," authored by Biljana Ječmenica, the project coordinator and initiator,

along with Petra Čulig, Luka Meštrović, Ivan Budinski, and Vedran Lucić. We also commend all the volunteers who participated across Croatia, diligently collecting data on the distribution and breeding of this species, thereby contributing to its better protection.



Habitat and Botany Program

The Habitat and Botany team has had a very successful year! The Dinara back to LIFE project concluded at the end of the year, boasting many positive results, including successful collaboration with livestock farmers, which is a significant achievement and an important step in the restoration of grasslands. Besides manually clearing 112.3 hectares of grassland on Dinara, the greatest success was the implementation of controlled burning of overgrown grasslands. Although this method cleared about 56 hectares through the project, the "invisible" part of this demanding activity is far more powerful and crucial for the future of grasslands on Dinara and in other areas. We demonstrated that the method is possible, feasible, and beneficial, and our work has been recognized by decision-makers and local residents who see the benefits of this activity, especially local livestock farmers.

However, even though controlled burning was not included in the amendments to the Forest Act, for which we, along with the Ministry of

Economy

and Sustainable Development, vigorously advocated, our efforts still resulted in changes regarding grassland restoration by allowing the removal of undesirable woody vegetation from overgrowing Natura 2000 grasslands. Nonetheless, we will not abandon controlled burning as a desirable measure for grassland maintenance and will continue to pursue it through new projects.



As the Dinara back to LIFE project was coming to an end, we organized the international conference "Intersectoral cooperation towards sustainable management of grasslands", which attracted about a hundred local and foreign experts from various fields. Rich knowledge and shared experience have contributed to the creation of guidelines for the restoration and sustainable management of dry grasslands, which will be of great use for future similar projects, but also for independent initiatives of protected areas that will engage in the restoration of overgrown grasslands, either through the Restoration Regulation Nature restoration law, Competitiveness and Cohesion Program at the local level or another source of funding.



Work on Dinara also continued through the project "Restoration and Conservation of Small Freshwater Ecosystems of Karst Mountains in the Mediterranean" (Still Water Revival). This year alone, our partner Croatian Forest restored eight ponds, and the Dragodid Association organized two volunteer actions in the Rože-Voštane and Čubrice areas. In total, around twenty water bodies have been restored so far, and we feel pride each time the local community recognizes the importance of pond and well restoration for the entire ecosystem and joins the activities.

At the end of the year, guidelines for the traditional restoration of wells and ponds were developed, providing an overview of the most common ponds and wells in karst areas, their functions, and basic steps for traditional restoration. While intended for public institutions managing protected areas, they can also be useful for anyone interested and willing or needing to restore a pond or well in their surroundings. The importance of restoration and biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation activities we conduct through the Dinara back to LIFE and Still Water Revival projects has been recognized by the Ecological Restoration Fund (ERF), which financially supported the restoration of these bodies of water.



In addition to working with wells and ponds on Dinara, we have engaged in the study of intermittent ponds in the Krka National Park area, providing recommendations for restoration, and we hope to participate in the practical part of restoring some ponds next year.



[Guidelines for pond and well restoration using traditional methods](#)



[Guidelines for dry grassland restoration and sustainable management.](#)

Together with partners from the Western Balkans, we joined the Forest beyond Borders project, working on remote research of forests, primeval forest areas, and identifying regions exposed to deforestation. Field research and analysis of the current situation indicate that, besides the primeval forest areas already recognized and protected as such in Croatia, other areas identified as potential primeval forests through remote research are actually older managed forests.

We continued our collaboration with the Public Institution for the Protection and Preservation of Nature of the Lika-Senj County, researching the flora of the Lun Botanical Reserve - wild olives. Besides revitalization, the public institution aims to work on education and interpretation of the rich landscape, ecology, and sustainable tourism, which needs to be carefully managed.

This year has been turbulent for decision-makers at the European level due to the voting on the Nature Restoration Law. Through our social and media engagement, numerous comments, and opinions, we endeavored to encourage our representatives in the EU Parliament to make a sound and positive decision and vote for the Regulation. Additionally, we engaged in monitoring agricultural policies, participated in the working group for the evaluation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and contributed to the drafting and commenting on the proposed measures of the same.



Ante Gugić



It was a year marked by victories both administratively and on the field. We believe that in the coming year, we will continue in the same or even better direction; advocating for a healthy nature and environment, reasonable decisions, and the preservation of rich natural heritage. Additionally, we look forward to working on restoration and writing new projects, such as the continuation of Dinara back to LIFE.

Mammal Conservation and Invasive Mammal Control Program

In 2023, the mammal conservation and invasive mammal control team continued its regular activities of monitoring, reporting, and advocating for improved habitat conditions for the species they focus on.

As the year drew to a close, the seven-year LIFE Lynx project - Saving the Dinaric and Southeastern Alpine Lynx Population from Extinction, which we conducted in Croatia together with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb and the Karlovac University of Applied Sciences, was successfully concluded. Close cooperation between neighboring countries, numerous experts, and local populations resulted in the relocation of a total of 18 individuals from Slovakia and Romania to Croatia and Slovenia. The last lynx, named Kras, was released in mid-March in the forest of Plitvice Lakes National Park.



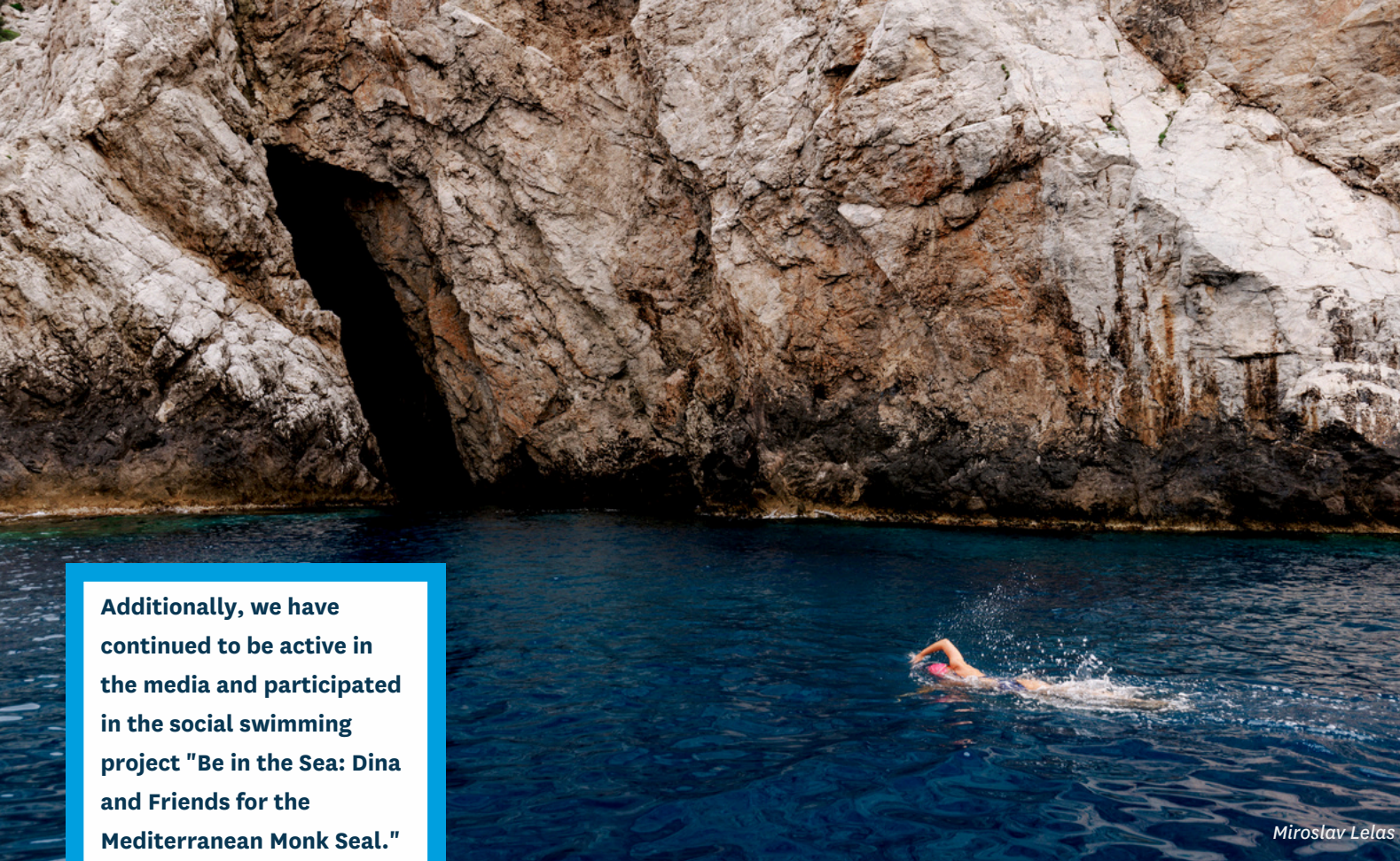
Symbolically, the released lynx was named after the Croatian and Slovenian term "kras," which denotes karst phenomena on water-soluble rocks like limestone, the most widespread type of rock in the Dinaric Alps and Lika, and a significant feature of the karst landscape of Plitvice Lakes.



Together with our partners, we organized an International Conference in Zadar in the fall, which brought together over 150 scientists and experts who study and protect lynxes. Additionally, besides numerous positive results, the project's success is also confirmed by the fact that the lynx Goru, the first lynx released at the project's start, became a grandfather three times! A local female lynx, a descendant of the Romanian lynx Goru and the lynx Teja, was recorded in the fall with three of her own cubs.

Apart from the large projects that are often highlighted in our work, this program also deals with invasive mammal species such as raccoons and raccoon dogs. The state has finally taken action regarding the spread and reproduction of invasive species in Croatia and has announced calls for population control, in which we hope to participate in at least some of these activities. We also participated in the 5th Croatian Symposium on Invasive Species in Zagreb, where we presented the paper "Three invasive species of small carnivores in Croatia: Presence and Control" (Ivan Budinski).

It is less known to the public that we are part of the Intervention Team for Wolves and Lynxes in Croatia, established by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. To preserve these strictly protected species and maintain a healthy ecosystem, while also protecting people living near wolf and lynx habitats, this team's task is to react promptly in all unusual situations and to take action in cases of suspected illegal activities.



Additionally, we have continued to be active in the media and participated in the social swimming project "Be in the Sea: Dina and Friends for the Mediterranean Monk Seal." On this occasion, our long-distance swimmer and marathoner Dina Levačić swam the route from Cape Stupišće to Medvidina Cave to encourage public reporting of sightings and raise awareness about the importance of preserving the Mediterranean monk seal's habitat.

Miroslav Lelas

We are delighted with any public engagement, but we often need to emphasize that the Mediterranean Monk Seal Project in the Eastern Adriatic does not deal with the seal species itself, but rather its habitat, analyzing and mapping breeding sites and caves. To help the Mediterranean monk seal, it is necessary to create conditions that will enable its natural return to its former range. Given that the monk seal population in Greece is growing due to active protection, and is therefore more frequently seen in the Adriatic, it can be expected to start breeding here as well, provided we do not occupy its breeding and resting sites with uncontrolled tourism. Therefore, identifying and effectively protecting the last remaining favorable habitats is of great importance for the overall survival of the species.

The Mediterranean Monk Seal Project in the Eastern Adriatic concluded its regular activities of analyzing and mapping habitats suitable for the rest and breeding of Mediterranean monk seals in the Adriatic. We are partly responsible for the result of this multi-year effort now being cited as the value of the new protected area near Vis, Cape Stupišće, whose designation is expected next year. The protection of this area, along with strict supervision, will contribute to the restoration of habitats and species, as confirmed by experiences from other Mediterranean countries like Italy, France, and Spain.



Safe Flyways Program

Through our Safe Flyways program, Biom contributes to meaningful changes in combating wildlife crime. By collaborating with public institutions and engaging in dialogue with key stakeholders, we've made significant strides in reducing common quail poaching and enhancing national capacities to tackle the illegal killing of birds, focusing on both poaching and wildlife poisoning.

In February 2023, significant news made a strong impact: the use and even the mere possession of lead shot ammunition in wetlands and within 100 meters of them is now illegal and penalized in all 27 EU countries as well as in Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein. We have long advocated for this decision and consider it a great victory in eliminating lead, which has severely impacted the populations of birds of prey and waterfowl. We have educated the public, especially hunters, on this issue, with around 120 people attending our lectures and workshops.



But, although we've hoped that as a society we had made a significant change in our approach to wildlife, we witnessed the worst possible scenario occurring with the Northern Bald Ibis, Gipsy, on its journey across our country. After the first confirmed wintering in Croatia in nearly a century, Gipsy was killed. Thanks to a swift response, we secured the scene, contacted the relevant authorities, and closely monitored the case through our advocacy efforts. It is disheartening that we had to intervene multiple times to prevent the case from being closed prematurely. We provided evidence that contradicted the initial report which claimed the bird died of a stroke, insisting that further investigation was necessary. Nearly a year has passed since Gipsy's death, yet we still lack answers regarding the violent nature of the bird's death and the strong suspicion of poisoning, given the presence of cow carcasses at the scene. While the authorities continue to investigate Gipsy's case, we will persist in seeking the truth.

We are proud of our longstanding hard work and efforts in combating common quail poaching, as we have finally begun to see increased societal awareness and stricter, more unified actions from hunters themselves. We successfully continue to develop a volunteer network for monitoring common quail poaching. Thirteen volunteers participated in this network in 2023 and reported poaching incidents six times, leading to the discovery of decoys near Dubrovnik, on the island of Brač, near Slatina, near Garešnica, and near Prelog.

We have continued to intensively strengthen our efforts in addressing cases of wildlife poisoning. In collaboration with representatives from the General Police Directorate, the State Attorney's Office, the State Inspectorate, and the Public Institution Priroda, we participated in and completed the Supreme Level 3 course of the Wildlife Crime Academy in Spain, focusing on the analysis and collection of data on wildlife crimes.

As a result, Croatia now has five experts trained in the research and analysis of wildlife crimes, marking the first time we have individuals educated on crimes against nature in the country. Additionally, two public lawyers are currently undergoing training on prosecuting these crimes. Next year, we will begin collaborating with the judiciary to raise awareness and sensitivity towards criminal offences against nature.

At the end of the year, we hosted Dr. Oliver Krone, one of the most influential researchers on lead intoxication in wild animals. He held meetings in Zagreb and Čakovec as part of the "Hunter2Hunter" lecture series. We also attempted to analyse the use of lead shot in Croatia, and we are planning future joint activities with the State Inspectorate of the Republic of Croatia to increase capacity and enforce the ban on lead.



As part of the BalkanDetox LIFE project, we have published a Standardised Protocol for coordinating actions in cases of illegal poisoning and other punishable offences against wild animals. The protocol outlines six steps to follow when an animal is found dead under suspicious circumstances. Previous experiences have demonstrated that the most effective tool for combating illegal and punishable actions against wildlife is coordination between state institutions. Numerous state institutions collaborated with our expert team in drafting the Protocol. This marks the first attempt at joint action to regulate existing practices for successfully prosecuting and punishing offenders.

The Ministry of the Interior played a major role by prioritising environmental crimes and the illegal killing of birds. The impact has been significant: in 2023, common quail poaching decreased by 50% since we began addressing this issue.



We concluded a year rich in variety and education with a swift response and coordination with the police to prevent a major poisoning incident in Lika. Someone had set up a poisonous bait, which could have caused significant harm to nature, wildlife, and humans had it not been discovered and dealt with in time.



STANDARDIZIRANI PROTOKOL za koordinaciju djelovanja u slučaju nezakonite upotrebe otrova i drugih nezakonitih i kažnjivih radnji protiv divljih životinja

Prikupljeno iskustvo na razini EU u posljednjih dvadesetak godina pokazalo je da je najučinkovitije sredstvo protiv nezakonitih i kažnjivih radnji na štetu divljih vrsta dobra koordinacija između državnih institucija koja omogućuje optimizaciju korištenja raspoloživih resursa te izbjegavanje dupliranja poslova i uplitanja u istražne zadatke ove vrste kažnjivih djela. Ovaj Protokol je izrađen u skladu s važećim propisima¹, s namjerom da se ispravni proces sankcioniranja otkrivenih slučajeva konsolidira, ojača i stvori odvraćajući učinak te da se podizanjem društvene svijesti u konačnici smanji upotreba otrova i generalno smanji pojavnost kažnjivih djela na štetu divljih vrsta.

Cilj Protokola je:

- Definiranje nadležnosti institucija za učinkovito postupanje u postojećem normativnom okviru.
- Uspješno procesuiranje slučajeva trovanja i drugih kažnjivih djela na štetu divljih vrsta.

¹ Kazneni zakon NN 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19, 84/21; Zakon o odgovornosti pravnih osoba za kaznena djela NN 151/03, 110/07, 45/11, 143/12, 114/22; Zakon o zaštiti prirode NN 80/13, 15/18, 14/19, 127/19; Zakon o lovstvu NN 99/18, 32/19, 32/20; Zakon o prekograničnom prometu i trgovini divljim vrstama NN 94/13, 14/19, 69/22; Pravilnik o strogo zaštićenim vrstama NN 144/2013; Pravilnik o izmjenama i dopunama Pravilnika o strogo zaštićenim vrstama NN 73/2016; Prekršajni zakon NN 107/07, 39/13, 157/13, 110/15, 70/17, 118/18

- Definiranje dodatnih koraka koji bi se mogli pojaviti u procesu, a koji su se pokazali neopodnošnim u uspješnom procesuiranju kažnjivih djela na štetu divljih vrsta.

U provedbi ovog Protokola sudjeluju:

- Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova RH – Ravnateljstvo civilne zaštite – Centar 112,
- Stručni tim²,
- Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova RH – Policija,
- Državni inspektorat RH,
- Državno odvjetništvo RH,
- Ovlaštene veterinarske organizacije
- Službeni laboratoriji i ustanove za provođenje istražnih radnji i vještačenja: Hrvatski veterinarski institut, Veterinarski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Centar za forenzična ispitivanja, istraživanja i vještačenja „Ivan Vučetić”,
- Ministarstvo gospodarstva i održivog razvoja – Uprava za zaštitu prirode; Zavod za zaštitu okoliša i prirode.

² U provedbi ovog Protokola sudjeluju članovi stručnog tima educiranog u sklopu BalkanDetox LIFE projekta: čuvari prirode, članovi Interventnog tima za vuka i risa i Interventnog tima za smeđeg medvjeda, lovučuvari za lovnu divljač, relevantne nevladine organizacije (npr. Udruga Biom) i drugi. Članovi stručnog tima osposobljeni su za postupanje i osiguravanje šireg područja mjesta događaja kako ne bi došlo do uništavanja dokaza. Ovim se Protokolom predviđa da oni, ukoliko je potrebno, prema nadležnosti i dostupnosti, osiguravaju mjesto događaja do dolaska policije. Ovisno o području s kojeg dolazi dojava (nacionalni park, park prirode, područje nadležnosti županijske javne ustanove za zaštitu prirode ili lovište) moguće je i preklapanje nadležnosti.

Public Outreach Program

Modern trends demand a constant flow of information, so a significant part of our work involves informing the public about our activities and sharing important messages from the world of nature conservation. However, it would be dull (and limiting!) if we only 'shared' information and fascinating facts about nature. Continuous interaction with the community, experiencing new collaborations, and addressing challenges highlighted by nature enthusiasts across Croatia are what drive our continuous growth and progress. Our vibrant Public Outreach Programme team, responsible for education, member and volunteer engagement, fundraising, and communications, understands the importance of being present—whether in the local community, on social media, or out in nature. This presence allows us to learn and develop every day.

EDUCATION

Throughout 2023, we diligently developed a series of educational materials, primarily through the Dinara back to LIFE project. To showcase the beauty and natural and cultural heritage of the Dinara mountain to both newcomers and the local population, we created a bilingual tourist guide, "Walking on Dinara". This rich and diverse guide covers topics such as nature, biodiversity, species found on the mountain, the importance of coexistence with the Dinara, and its cultural treasures. Local primary school children as well as other visitors at the foot of Kamešnica can enhance their experience with the educational cards 'Let's Get to Know the World of Karst' and walk along the educational path in Gljev with their teachers. We are particularly proud of this educational set, as it is applicable not only to Dinara but also to our other karst mountains.

For plant enthusiasts, we have created a short guide titled 'How Can I Help Urban Biodiversity?' This guide is designed for anyone interested in planting native species to support urban biodiversity. If you missed our activities on the Dinara back to LIFE project or overlooked some of the published materials, you can always find them on our channels and enjoy the content. We will continue to organise educational walks and encourage people of all ages, both local and foreign, to preserve and care for Dinara's biodiversity.



We strive to continuously spread knowledge and love for birds, and we are particularly delighted by the interest and eagerness to learn that we encounter among nature enthusiasts of all ages. Throughout the year, bird and nature lovers have had the opportunity to join us for relaxed, free weekend birdwatching sessions. Additionally, we have worked to strengthen the birding community by reviving our popular Bird Identification Training (BirdID). During this programme, motivated participants had the chance to learn about the birds of Croatia through 13 field excursions in beautiful nature.

VOLUNTEERS

Traditional one-time or long-term volunteer activities, such as the International Waterbird Census (IWC), Rook [IS1] colony counts, and monitoring Eurasian eagle-owls, have been ongoing for years and continue to attract a significant number of enthusiastic volunteers.

These volunteers eagerly ventured forth in the field, collecting valuable data. Additionally, this year we held another traditional Ornithological Ringing Camp on Učka, hosting many volunteers who dedicated their free time, and passion for learning, to nature.



This year, European Solidarity Corps (ESC) volunteers Palina Adamovich from Belarus, Lejla Skrijelj from Sweden, Anton Fernandez from Spain, and Colin Vergne from France joined us at the camp.



For the first time, we also welcomed a local volunteer, Ivana Lokas from Šibenik, who joined our regional office in Sinj. She contributed to our work and the 'Odrasti zeleno' ('Grow up green') project with high school students from Sinj.

We are particularly thrilled about the establishment of the 'Primar' youth group, initiated by our long-term volunteers and interns. Their independent actions, initiatives, and first project on urban biodiversity provide a valuable opportunity for young people interested in learning about nature protection and preservation. Notably, two members of the group are also part of the Youth Council of the City of Zagreb, representing the interests of young people in the City.

MEMBERS

Engaging with people and conveying our vision and mission can sometimes be challenging. Our members show interest in various topics within nature conservation, so we saw an opportunity to connect them with some of our associates who are doing fantastic work. This year, we launched 'Chatting with Experts', a series of hybrid lectures for members, featuring experts who are dedicated to benefiting nature and people. In April, we visited the Dinara area with our members, where we restored grasslands and water bodies, learned about its biodiversity, and observed birds. This well-spent weekend provided additional motivation and inspiration to continue in this spirit in the next year.



We refined our membership options and introduced a family membership fee, which has proven to be an excellent step based on the interest it garnered. We are grateful to everyone who embraced this option and included their whole family in Biom's flock!

FUNDRAISING

In recent years, we have actively focused on learning about fundraising to support our non-profit activities. We were also recognised in Erste Bank's educational and mentoring support programme for non-profit organisations, "Ostavi dobar trag." We reached the finals in their campaign competition.

We applied our newly acquired knowledge and experience to launch our first independent fundraising campaign, 'Neka moj let ne bude posljednji' ('Let My First Flight Not Be the Last'), seeking support for the protection of griffon vultures. We presented the campaign to the public before summer and during the Christmas period, gaining the support of 123 donors and successfully raising 3,039 euros.

Our efforts were also recognised by Pivnica Medvedgrad, which donated part of the proceeds from the sale of this year's charity beer, Zeko, to our mission of saving griffon vultures.

We are particularly pleased to end the year with 213 members, dedicated individuals who inspire us to work even harder, both in creating diverse content and in our overall efforts.



Tvoja podrška u sprječavanju stradanja mladih supova, neizmjerljivo je važna. Pomažeš nam očuvati najugroženijeg posljednjeg strvinara čija je uloga u našem okolišu neprocjenjiva!

Puna to hvala na tome!

URBAN BIODIVERSITY

This year, we have leveraged our many years of experience to advocate for healthier and greener cities that support urban biodiversity. By advising city officials, conducting field work, and creating guidelines for planting species that enhance the urban environment, we have aimed to preserve the diversity and richness of both the cultural and natural heritage.

One notable outcome of our efforts is the increased tolerance of Zagreb residents towards crows, evidenced by a significant decrease in negative inquiries, media reports, and pressure to remove crows from urban areas. This development is particularly gratifying as it demonstrates the positive impact of being actively present in the community and addressing both societal and ecological needs.



As we move into the coming year, we are committed to continuing our energetic and distinctive work, encouraging, inspiring, connecting, and learning from one another.

COMMUNICATION



829 Media Mentions



51 Appearances on TV and Radio



Most Followed Media Topic:
Bald Ibis "Gypsy"



46,796 Users on the website
www.biom.hr



75 articles on the website
www.biom.hr



Most read articles

Destruction of Swallow and Swift Nests is Illegal, There's a Better Solution (2836 Users)

Things You Probably Didn't Know About Sparrows (2244 Users)

"Gypsy Met with Violent Fate" (1401 Users)



11307
303



2693
80



1914
22



Most Popular Post in 2023:
Release of Griffon Vultures



Bird of the Year 2023:
Western Capercaillie



TOP NEWS

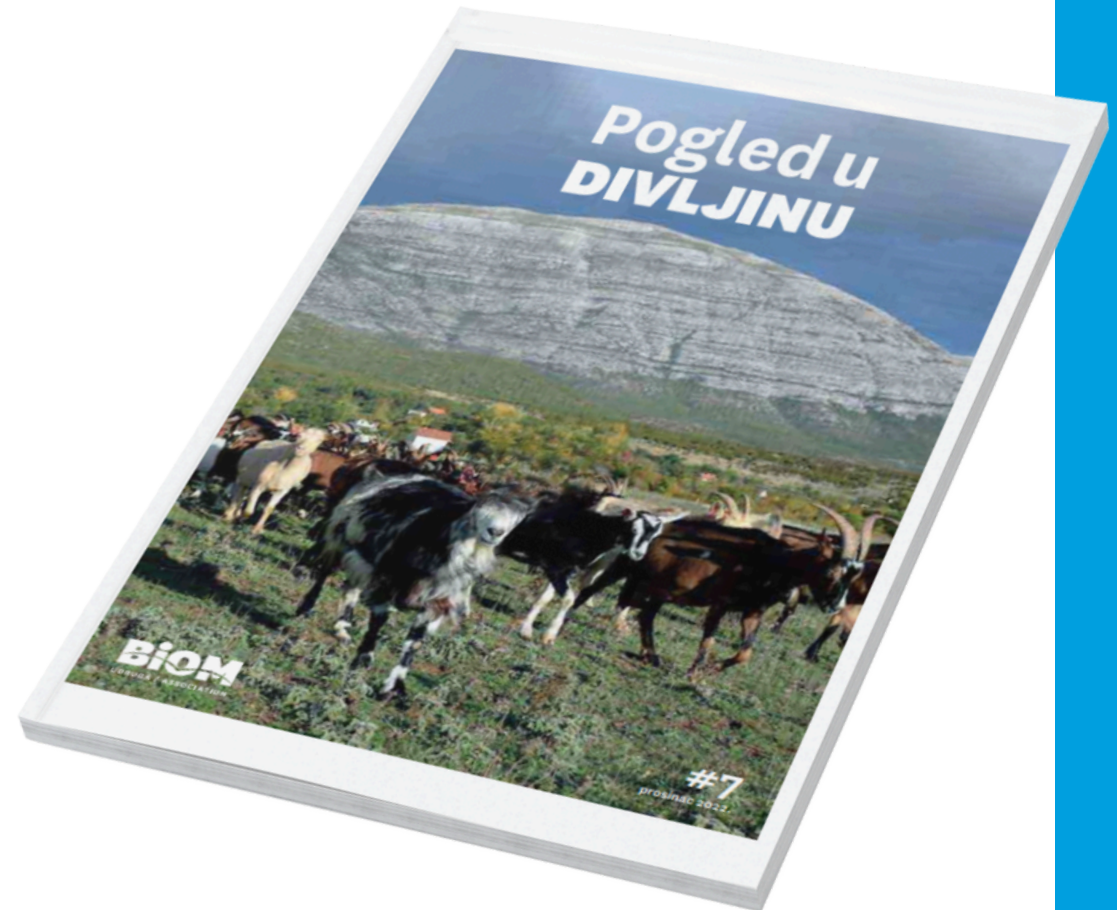
Griffon vulture Shot down near Imotski

Lynx Ljubo released on Velebit

Collective Annual Award of the City of Vrljika
Goes to the Dinara back to LIFE Project

Our Colleagues Participated in the Wildlife
Crime Academy

We Celebrated 30 Years of the LIFE Programme



The new edition of the Magazine "Pogled u divljinu" published in December 2022.

The participation of the Biom Association in networks and initiatives

Legend

	observer membership		exchange of knowledge and experience
	full membership		exchange of information
	secretariat		advocacy at EU level, exchange of knowledge and experience
	candidate member		advocacy at national level, exchange of knowledge and experience

BirdLife International

The largest international partnership of non-governmental organizations for the conservation of nature, birds, their habitats, and global biodiversity



Green forum

Informal network of environmental non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Croatia aimed at influencing the creation and implementation of environmental protection policies and nature conservation



International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

International association of governmental and non-governmental organizations for nature conservation, focusing on the preservation of nature and sustainable use of natural resources



Together for Med

Network of non-governmental organizations, international organizations, research centers, private companies, networks, and foundations dedicated to reducing pressures on Mediterranean biodiversity



Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity (CROSOL)

A national civil society organization active in the field of international development cooperation and humanitarian aid



Mediterranean Alliance of Wetlands

An informal international organization aimed at connecting and supporting organizations involved in wetland areas in the Mediterranean



National Rural Network

Stakeholder Network in the Agriculture Sector led by the Ministry of Agriculture



Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI)

The network of non-governmental organizations and electricity transmission system operators from across Europe working on the energy transition



Croatian Youth Network

Alliance of 77 youth organizations across the territory of the Republic of Croatia.



Finance and administration



7

BOARD
MEMBERS

29

EMPLOYEES

168

VOLUNTEERS

213

MEMBERS

REVENUE

481.389 €
SERVICES

2.848 €
MEMBERSHIP FEES

973.671 €
DONATIONS

5.662 €
OTHER SOURCES

1.471.484 €

EXPENSES

600.713 €
EMPLOYEES

451.667 €
MATERIAL EXPENSES

225.800 €
DONATIONS TO PARTNERS

66.500 €
DEPRECIATION AND OTHER

1.344.682 €



737 FIELD DAYS



23 PROJECTS



13 SERVICES

// Investing in environmental organizations is not just about preserving nature; it is an investment in the well-being of future generations. Every dollar spent on conservation today ensures a richer, more sustainable world for tomorrow.

Unknown author

List of Employees and Members of the Board

EMPLOYEES OF THE ZAGREB OFFICE (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER):

Bijelić Marija, **Bogdanić Sanja**, **Čeprija Hrvoje**, **Čulig Petra**,
Dender Dubravko, Dorogi Tea, Engelen Andreas Jacobus
Angela, **Fabijanić Nera**, **Grgić Marina**, Hudina Tomislav,
Ivanko Martina, Kapelj Sven, Lukić Jelena, **Martinko Ivanov**
Marija, Mihalić Iva, **Mladinov Matej**, **Petrac Nikolina**,
Počanić Vovk Paula, **Rajković Željka**, **Ribić Ivana**, Slocinski
Boleslaw Jan, Starčević Tanja, Šarić Kapelj Ivana, Škunca
Luka, Šikić Goran, Šoštarić Iva, Taylor Louie Thomas, **Zec Mate**

EMPLOYEES OF THE SINJ OFFICE (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER):

Budinski Ivan, Budimir Zdravko, **Gaurina Siniša**, **Grčić Mario**,
Glavinić Melani, **Kekez Ivan**, Kodžoman Ante, **Modrić Saša**,
Selanec Ivana, Sotinac Tomislav

* New employees in 2023

* Employees who decided to continue their career elsewhere in 2023

MANAGEMENT BOARD

Management Board President: **Silvija Kipson**, PhD in Biology

Management Board Vice President: **Assoc. Prof. Duje Lisičić**, PhD in Biology

Assoc. Prof. Tvrtko Dražina, PhD in Biology

Joško Gamberožić, B.Sc. in visual communication design

Katica Smojver, B.Sc. in Economics

Assoc. Prof. Toni Safner, PhD in Agriculture

Klara Horvat, LL.M.

Ivana Selanec, Master's in Ecology and Environmental Protection

(ex officio, without voting rights)



List of Funders, Co-Funders, and Donors in 2023



EURONATUR



THE SIGRID RAUSING TRUST



HEIDELBERGCEMENT


MONACHUS



KONZUM



Your faith in our projects and the financial support you have provided have enabled us to do what we love for the benefit of both people and nature. Encouraged and guided by your recognition, you have given us the momentum for a smoother flight this year. We wish to express our gratitude for your trust and contribution.



In today's busy world, amidst the clamor of choices and constant pressure, giving your free time and endorsing the idea of contributing to nature is truly priceless. Your support empowers us and fuels our drive to meet conservation goals for nature and its endangered species. Without you, our mission would be incomplete.

Thank you for your support, dedication, and enthusiasm.

Are you a nature lover and do you find our work inspiring?

Everyone can contribute, whether in nature conservation, scientific work, or citizen science, in education, as a volunteer, a member of the association, a responsible tourist, a nature lover, or parent... Be part of the change and join us!

✓ BE OUR MEMBER!

You can choose your membership type (regular, reduced, student, or family), and upon joining, you'll receive a membership package that includes a membership card, the latest issue of the "Pogled u divljinu" magazine, a 15% discount on purchases from our webshop, and this year's member badge. You can receive your card and magazine in either digital or printed format.

> [JOIN NOW](#)

✓ DONATE AND GIVE BACK TO NATURE!

Your donation helps us protect birds and other species and their habitats, enables the implementation of regular and new conservation activities, and supports independent, strong, and vocal advocacy for the public interest. By building a larger community of nature enthusiasts, we become stronger and more vocal in nature conservation! Donate and support us in protecting birds and nature because we are all part of nature!

> [DONATE](#)



✓ VOLUNTEER!

You can donate your free time to contribute to nature in various ways. You can participate in citizen science actions we organize to collect bird data or simply record your observations in nature through the Naturalist app. Join us for one of our actions or volunteer camps where, through active contribution to protecting local habitats, you will gain extensive knowledge about the wildlife inhabiting them.

> [VOLUNTEER](#)

✓ LEARN WITH BIOM!

Knowledge is most valuable when shared, so education is one of the core areas of our work! We want to share our experience, expertise, love for nature, and passion for its preservation with you. Join us in one of the many educational activities we organize to introduce nature to you from a new perspective!



Bird of the year 2023
Western Capercaillie
lat. Tetrao urogalus

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UDRUGA / ASSOCIATION

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