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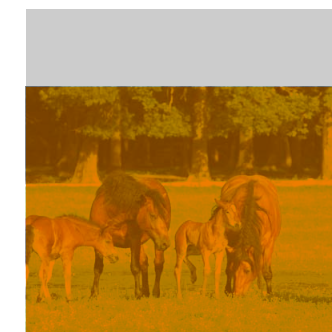
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## Protection of Biodiversity of the Sava River Basin Floodplains



# Lonjsko Polje Nature Park



## Protection of Biodiversity of the Sava River Basin Floodplains

The Sava River is the second largest tributary to the Danube River and is of biological significance because of its outstanding biological and landscape diversity. It hosts the largest complex of alluvial floodplain wetlands in the Danube basin and the largest lowland forests. The Sava is a unique example of a river where the floodplains are still intact, supporting both floods alleviation and biodiversity. To secure the integration of the protection of ecological values along the Sava into the management of the Sava River, the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Wageningen International with technical support from Orbicon have jointly initiated the Protection of Biodiversity of the Sava River Basin Floodplains project to support the Sava Basin countries in identifying, designating and managing the biological and landscape diversity along the Sava River and in supporting the implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. The project is financially supported by the LIFE III programme, SDC, and LNV. The project is being implemented in partnership with the State Institute for Nature Protection (Croatia), the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, the Center for Ecology and Natural Resources of the Faculty of Science in Sarajevo (CEPRES), the Agricultural Institute of Republic of Srpska, and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation.

## Zaštita biološke raznolikosti poplavnih nizina rijeke Save

Rijeka Sava je po veličini drugi prtok Dunava, i biološki je značajna zbog postojeće izuzetne bioraznolikosti i krajobrazne raznovrsnosti. Ovdje se nalaze najveći kompleksi aluvijalnih vlažnih staništa i nizinskih šuma u slivu Dunava. Sava je jedinstveni primjer rijeke u kojoj su poplavna područja još uvijek netaknuta i istovremeno podržavaju bioraznolikost i pružaju zaštitu od poplava. Kako bi osigurali integraciju općih ekoloških principa sa onima zaštite prirode u upravljanju rijekom Savom, IUCN (Međunarodna Udruga za Zaštitu Prirode) i Wageningen International, uz tehničku podršku Orbicon-a, zajednički su pokrenuli projekt pod nazivom Zaštita biološke raznolikosti poplavnih nizina rijeke Save. Cilj projekta je pružanje podrške državama da identificiraju, odrede i upravljaju biološkom i krajobraznom raznolikošću duž rijeke Save, te implementiraju EU Direktivu o pticama i staništima. Projekt se provodi u suradnji sa ključnim organizacijama za zaštitu prirode i uporabu zemljišta iz država kroz koje protiče Sava – Državni Zavod za Zaštitu Prirode (Hrvatska), Centar za ekologiju i prirodne resurse Prirodoslovno-Matematičkog Fakulteta u Sarajevu (BiH), Poljoprivredni Institut Republike Srpske (BiH), Zavod za Zaštitu Prirode Srbije i Institut za Zaštitu Prirode Republike Slovenije. Projekt ima finansijsku potporu LIFE III finansijskog instrumenta Europske Komisije, Švicarske Agencije za Kooperaciju i Razvoj (SDC) i Nizozemske Vlade (LNV).

## The Sava River - The Ruler of Lonjsko Polje

Because of the exceptional arrangement of the Sava River system, which comprehends three different climate regions, inundation may occur at any time of the year. This volatility makes Lonjsko Polje an outstanding example of ecological processes caused by extreme and unpredictable oscillations of inundation dynamics occurring in the central course of a great river. The great importance of the Central Sava Floodplains property is related to the absence in Europe of any other floodplain ecological systems, as a result of the drainage and regulation of the great rivers, particularly in their central courses. It is only in this area that the still surviving habitats and ecological processes of inundation can be protected.

## Lonjsko Polje – The only Example of the Former “Cores” of Central European Animal Husbandry

With its authentic organisation and traditional system of land use, Lonjsko Polje Nature Park constitutes a unique example of an organically evolved landscape with a preserved medieval system of the common pasturing typical of the whole of Central Europe until the second half of the 19th century. Today, traditional animal husbandry systems or remains of them appear mainly in “border” areas such as high mountains, dry southern slopes and karstic or steppe areas. But Europe in particular has lost the former “core” areas of animal husbandry in the lowlands with animals that are naturally more adapted to the alluvial grass- and woodland habitats like horse, pig, cattle and goose. This is why the existence of the traditional pasturing system of the Central Sava River basin is so important. It is the only example that has remained in alluvial lowlands in such a complete manner, still generated, in addition, by the local population.

## Adaptation to Flooding

The cultural landscape of Central Posavina is an outstanding example of an area in which human beings have in the most complete manner adjusted their way of living to the floods. The long and continuous tradition of living with and not against the floods has created an extraordinary system that impinges on all aspects of human interaction with the environment, such as the vernacular building, the settlement pattern and the shaping of the landscape, the use of the land as well as the creation of indigenous domestic breeds perfectly adapted to the conditions of the floodplain. The dynamics of flooding and the shape of the micro-relief are thus intimately bound up with the lives of the people. They established their life, built their settlements, on the safest places, the ridges beside the master river. Behind the villages they created orchards, ploughed fields and meadows, and further off the complexes of hay-making, flood pastures and at the end the riparian lowland forests. This sequence of land use strictly follows the way the floods advance and retreat. It is only here where humanity has deliberately and consciously come to terms with the occurrence of the flooding, while in other properties the idea has been to tame the river.

