

ANNUAL REVIEW

2022

EMPLOYEES

(in alphabetical order)

MANAGEMENT BOARD

ZAGREB

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Programme Manager

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Associate for Nature Conservation

Dender Dubravko
Programme Manager

Dorogi Tea
Associate for Education

Engelen Andreas
Jacobus Angela
Senior Associate for Nature Conservation

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viši stručni suradnik

Grgić Marina
Associate for Nature Conservation

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Administration and Finance Director, Zagreb Office Manager and Programme Manager

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Expert associate for Nature Conservation

Lukić Jelena
Senior Associate for Administration and Finance

Mihalić Iva
Associate for Nature Conservation

Mladinov Matej
Junior Associate for Administration and Finance

Petrac Nikolina
Senior Associate for Volunteering

Počanić Vovk Paula
Senior Associate for Membership and Fundraising

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Senior Associate for Nature Conservation

Starčević Tanja
Senior Associate for Administration and Finance

Šarić Kapelj Ivana
Programme Manager

Škunca Luka
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Šikić Goran
Programme Manager

Šoštarić Iva
Programme Manager

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Junior Associate for Nature Conservation

Zec Mate
Expert associate for Nature Conservation

SINJ

Budimir Zdravko
Regional Office Manager

Budinski Ivan
Expert Associate for Nature Conservation

Grčić Mario
Technical Associate for Habitat Restoration

Glavinić Melani
Communications Associate

Kekez Ivan
Technical Associate for Habitat Restoration

Kodžoman Ante
Associate for Nature Conservation

Selanec Ivana
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Sotinac Tomislav, Associate for Nature Conservation

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PhD in Biology

Vice President

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PhD in Biology

Silvija Kipson,
PhD in Biology

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LL.M.

Assoc. Prof. Toni Safner,
PhD in Agriculture

Joško Gamberožić,
B.Sc. in visual communication design

Katica Smojver,
B.Sc. in Economics

Željka Rajković,
M.Sc. in Env. Mgt. & Master of Biology
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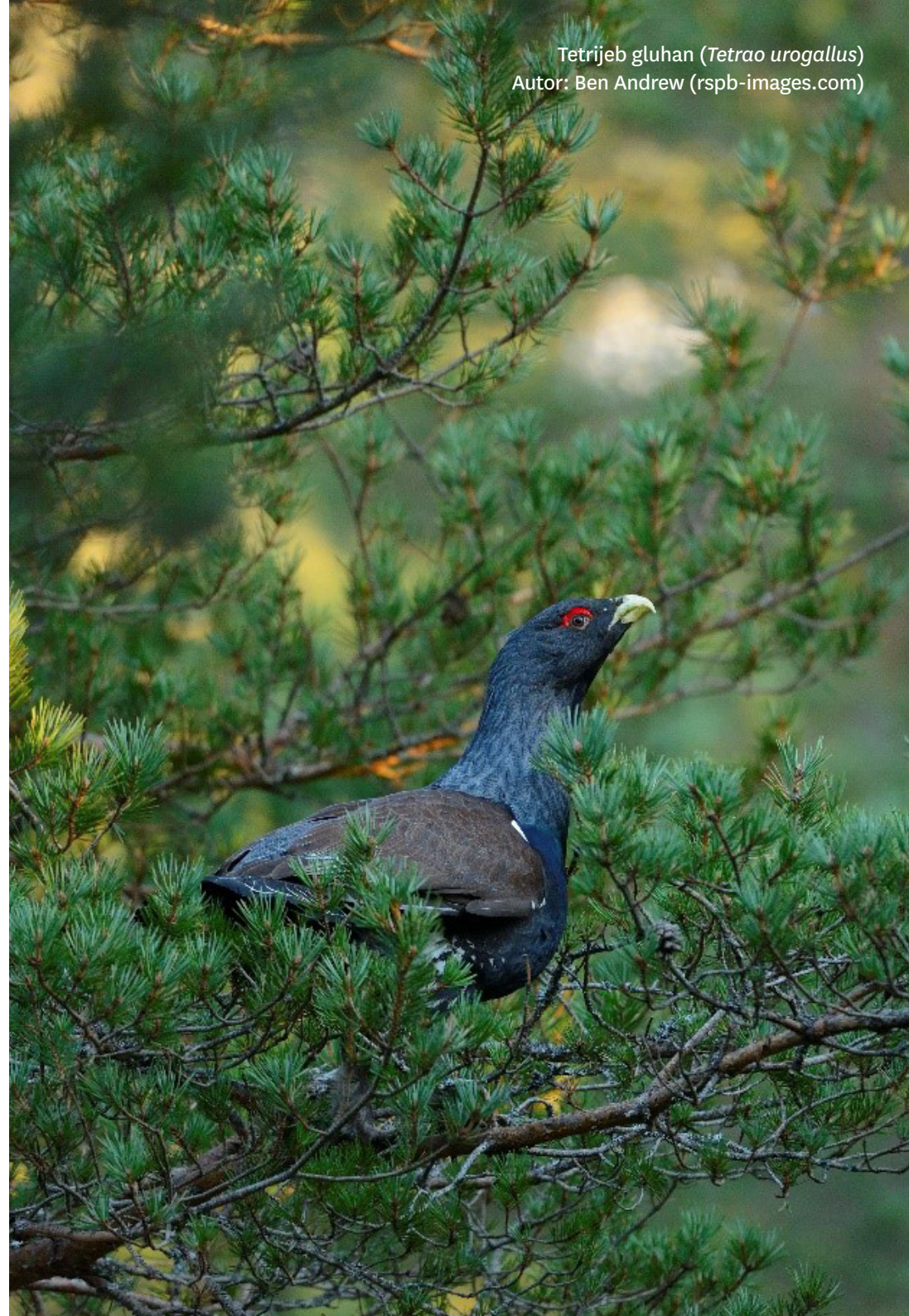
Bird Conservation Program

Conservation of birds and their habitats has been one of the main goals that the Biom Association dedicated a significant part of its work to this year as well. Like in previous years, both us and our numerous collaborators could be seen throughout Croatia. This is primarily the result of implementing monitoring of common bird species in agricultural habitats and the project “Defining Conservation Goals and Measures for Insufficiently Known Bird Species.” Field research for both projects was conducted across Croatia, from the surroundings of Dubrovnik to Istria and all the way to eastern Slavonia.

The results of data analysis collected over several years tell us that a portion of bird populations inhabiting agricultural habitats is not satisfactory, and it is necessary to continue developing and implementing new conservation measures aligned with agricultural production. The existing

measure for preserving the Corn-crake (*Crex crex*) needs improvement, and since this did not happen during the development of the Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy, we are facing advocacy activities to achieve that goal.

Field research conducted through the project “Defining Conservation Goals and Measures for Insufficiently Known Bird Species” was also carried out across Croatia, examining populations of 111 bird species in the NATURA 2000 ecological network areas where birds are conservation targets. The research also includes the detection of various threats encountered by different populations, which will result in proposing new conservation measures for different sectors. This is part of the project that lies ahead of us in 2023. We already know that populations of certain species, such as the Western Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), are





in an unfavorable state in Croatia, as this species no longer inhabits parts of its former range.

We have continued monitoring the status of bird species important for the Nature Park “Telašćica,” which included three shrike species (*Lanius spp.*), the Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), the Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), the Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), the Short-toed snake eagle (*Circus gallicus*), and the European nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*).

In the park, two pairs of Short-toed Snake-eagles are still active, and the Hen Harriers and Nightjars are widely distributed. However, the other species were either not recorded or were observed in extremely small numbers. Therefore, research efforts like this facilitate the work of public institutions by providing them with relevant data on species that do or do not inhabit the areas they manage. This allows them to plan their future work and use their resources appropriately.



This year, we started a project in the National Park “Brijuni,” where we assess the current situation with the populations of target bird species in the ecological network area “Istrian West Coast Aquatorium,” of which a smaller part is located within the park’s boundaries. The target species of the research include the Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), the Black-throated Loon (*Gavia arctica*), the Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*), and the Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), but other

species related to marine and aquatic habitats have also been recorded. Among the target species observed this year, notable observations include the Black-throated Loons, which migrate from colder northern seas and lakes to warmer areas like the Adriatic Sea every autumn. They are excellent swimmers and divers and practically never come ashore except during the breeding season.

During 2022, activities related to the conservation of the Yelkouan Shear-

Ptić gregule (*Puffinus yelkouan*)
Autor: Udruga BIOM



Krški travnjak na Dinari
Autor: Udruga BIOM



water (*Puffinus yelkouan*), Scopoli's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*), and Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*) continued as part of the LIFE Artina and Adriatic Seabird Guardians projects. Through continuous monitoring of rat populations in important seabird colonies around Lastovo, we achieved high breeding success rates, reaching 74% for Yelkouan Shearwater and 53% for Scopoli's Shearwater. We also discovered a new nesting location, but we will provide more detailed reports in the coming years

as we plan to continue our seabird conservation work in other areas.

Furthermore, based on our monitoring and data on marine transects collected over the past years, we identified important marine areas (for foraging and resting) for all three seabird species. This resulted in the declaration of 5 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and the expansion of the boundaries of two existing IBAs, Lastovo Archipelago and Pelagic Islands.

In 2022, we continued mapping the Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*), Greater Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*), and Stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedipnemos*) in the Dinaric region. The good news is that the population of Greater Short-toed Lark has stabilized and even slightly increased thanks to grassland restoration carried out under the Dinara back to LIFE project.

In the Plitvice Lakes National Park, we continued monitoring the status

of the Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*), and we have one more year of research ahead. The White-throated Dipper, our only singing bird that can swim and dive, was found nesting in most suitable locations this year.

In the upcoming years, we will intensify our efforts to conserve the Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) in the Kvarner Islands area. The project partnership, led by Biom, secured

Vodenkos (*Cinclus cinclus*)
Autor: Udruga BIOM



funding from the LIFE program, and the LIFE SUPport project will begin on January 1, 2023. Its goal is to provide better conditions for this formerly widespread species. The project objectives include various activities aimed at reducing the impact of previously identified negative factors on the small population of this species.

Finally, we conducted volunteer bird research actions in collaboration with various partners this year as

well. We highlight the traditional winter bird counting (IWC) conducted in January 2022 at 382 locations throughout Croatia. A total of 153 volunteers from all parts of Croatia participated, and a total of 239,067 individuals of birds associated with aquatic and marsh habitats were counted.

Some of the noteworthy locations include the Donja Dubrava reservoir, Našička Brežnica fish ponds, and the mouth of the Mirna River. At the Don-

Puštanje rehabilitiranih
bjeloglavih supova
(*Gyps fulvus*)
Autor: Udruga BIOM



Patka gogoljica (*Netta ruffina*)
Autor: Olga Zaytseva



Lisaste guske (*Anser albifrons*)

Autor: Olga Zaytseva



Žličarke (*Platalea leucorodia*)

Autor: Udruga BIOM



ja Dubrava reservoir, we recorded 17,833 individuals of 32 different species, with the Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) being the most numerous with 7,786 individuals. This location is also an important wintering site for the Pygmy Cormorant (*Microcarbo pygmaeus*).

Našička Brežnica fish ponds, we recorded the wintering of 116 individuals of the Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), a species that usually leaves Croatia in autumn, so during this counting, only occasional residual individuals are typically observed.

At the mouth of the Mirna River, 1,456 individuals of 27 different species were recorded. The most abundant species in 2022 were Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Eurasian Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*), and Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*). An interesting observation was the presence of the Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), a regular but scarce visitor from the far north.

During 2022, a report was prepared that analyzed all the collected data from 2021 and 2022, including some data from previous years.

Safe Flyways Program

With the wind at our backs from 2021 and the newly established program called 'Safe Flyways', in 2022 we continued our successful work in combating threats to birds and illegal activities against nature such as illegal killing of birds (poaching and poisoning) accidental bycatch of birds in sea fishing, electrocution on power lines, and collisions with power lines and wind turbines.


In 2022, some projects came to the end, including our LIFE project - LIFE Against Bird Crime. This doesn't mean that we will no longer address these issues; rather, we are expanding the scope of our work through new projects that we have successfully launched.

The Biom Association continues to advocate for the prohibition of lead ammunition use in hunting. In 2022, we published the results of a survey on hunters' attitudes toward lead-

free shot and conducted an analysis of the availability of lead-free shot on the Croatian market. In Croatia, almost no one respects the ban on lead shot as prescribed by Croatian legislation in 2013. Lead-free shot is not available in stores because, according to the merchants, there is no demand from hunters. The situation is expected to improve significantly from 2023 when the ban on the use and possession of lead shot in wetland areas, prescribed by the REACH regulation, comes into force. This ban will be accompanied by serious penalties, which will undoubtedly contribute to positive changes. In the coming year, the Biom Association will strive to ensure successful enforcement of this ban and work with hunters to raise awareness of lead poisoning from hunting ammunition.

In early 2022, the Biom Association published a socio-economic analy-





SOCIOEKONOMSKA ANALIZA PERCEPCIJA I UZROKA ILEGALNOG UBIJANJA PTICA NA DELTI NERETVE

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UDRUGA / ASSOCIATION

sis of the perception and motivation behind the illegal killing of birds in the Neretva Delta. The analysis revealed that over 50% of respondents consume the Common Coot once or more times a year, and the tradition of consuming Coot meat creates significant local demand, resulting in increased poaching. The information gathered from the socio-economic analysis will be used to address the direct source of poaching by advocating for responsible consumption of game meat in the Neretva Delta. As our work largely relies on a network of volunteers who serve as our eyes and ears in the local community, we are constantly expanding that network in various areas across Croatia. We educate volunteers on illegal killing of birds (IKB), how to recognize it, and how to report it to the relevant authorities. Just this year, our volunteers have reported several cases of prohibited use of lures for quails. Volunteers, as well as an aware public, can greatly influence decision-makers and create the political will to mitigate specific threats to birds.

We are actively engaged in advocacy, strategically and systematically striving to influence the solving of poisoning, poaching, accidental bycatch, and electrocution issues.

Armed with collected information and concrete arguments, we approach state institutions and other relevant stakeholders responsible for combating these threats. This year, we successfully gathered numerous stakeholders from all relevant sectors - the Ministry of Economy and Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Attorney's Office, the State Inspectorate, the Ministry of the Interior, public institutions and nature wardens, as well as representatives of the veterinary profession. After numerous bilateral and multilateral meetings, we developed the "Unified Protocol for Actions in Cases of Poisoning". This Protocol is just the beginning of addressing the issue of poisoning and all crimes against nature. In 2023, we will continue our work with the same stakeholders and, if necessary, expand it further to produce a document, a Roadmap, that can assist the Ministry in developing a National Action Plan to combat poaching. With the same intention, we have engaged the CMS Secretariat (the global platform for the conservation of migratory species and their habitats) to enhance the capacity of relevant institutions regarding the need and methods of developing the National Action Plan.



In 2022, we had the opportunity to participate in the Wildlife Crime Academy, a prestigious education program on combating poisoning following the best Spanish practices. Our representatives from the State Attorney's Office (DORH), Ministry of Interior (MUP), and Public Institution for Nature successfully attended two courses, and after completing the third education in 2023, they will transfer the knowledge to relevant stakeholders at the national level.

In 2022, we also worked on the issue of illegal wildlife poisoning with toxic baits, which often result in collateral victims, including charismatic and well-known birds such as griffon vultures. In collaboration with the Public Institution "Priroda"

for protected area management, we installed five GPS transmitters to monitor their movements. This activity is being conducted in several Balkan countries with the aim of preventing poisoning and enabling rapid response for rescue.

We continued to actively address the issue of accidental bycatch of seabirds and conducted educational programs for fishermen to emphasize the importance of reporting accidental bycatch. We aimed to encourage improvements and regular data collection regarding this threat through the use of fishing registers and authorized scientific observers. Through two roundtable discussions and cooperation with relevant stakeholders from competent ministries,

scientific community, and the fishing industry, we developed Guidelines for addressing accidental bycatch of endangered marine species. We established a volunteer network for monitoring bird electrocution and, with their assistance, conducted preliminary mapping of high-risk power lines on Učka mountain. This enabled us to successfully complete our project for the EuroNatur foundation, which focused on this issue in recent years. Additionally, we ensured the continuation of bird electrocution monitoring activities in the Kvarner region through the new project called LIFE SUPport. Together with HEP-ODS (Croatian energy distribution system operator), we will continue to reduce the impact of bird electrocution in the Kvarner

area through monitoring and the implementation of direct mitigation measures.

For years, we have been advocating for the improvement of environmental and nature impact assessment systems. Unfortunately, this year we had to actively advocate against its deterioration because the European Commission announced the REPowerEU plan in May, aiming to increase the share of electricity produced from renewable sources (which is positive). However, this is partly achieved by weakening the environmental and nature impact assessment system (which is highly negative).

Mammals and invasive species

During 2022, the Mammal Conservation and Control of Invasive Alien Mammal Species Program focused on the continuation of two ongoing projects: LIFE Lynx - Saving the Dinaric and Southeastern Alpine Lynx Populations from Extinction and the Mediterranean Monk Seal Project in the Eastern Adriatic. As part of the LIFE Lynx project activities, we continued to monitor the impact of lynx repopulation by collecting information on lynx presence and genetic samples to determine whether the released lynx individuals have been successful in dispersing their genetic material in the Dinaric region. Our team has been particularly focused on the lynx named Alojzije, released in 2020 in the Paklenica National Park area. We are pleased to report that offspring have been observed with their mother in his territory, indicating potential breeding by Alojzije, which is one of the goals of this project.

Additionally, within the project, the lynx named Lubomir, originally from Slovakia, was released in the Velebit area, making him the fifth lynx released in Croatia. Furthermore, our colleagues in Slovenia released a lynx named Bliska in the Snežnik area. In addition to lynx releases and monitoring, we continued to work with collaborators in the field and collect information on lynx sightings throughout Croatia. The data is regularly entered into the database and made publicly accessible through the Lynx database website. We also promoted lynx conservation by providing news and updates in Croatian language through the project's website and Facebook field blog.

The Mediterranean Monk Seal Project in the Eastern Adriatic continued its regular activities, analyzing suitable habitats for resting and giving birth to young Mediterranean monk seals in the Adriatic region. Field surveys



were conducted in the Šibenik-Knin and Zadar counties. Moreover, during 2022, the project team worked intensively on the Analysis of the Impact of Fisheries on the Mediterranean Monk Seal and the Guidelines for the Conservation of the Mediterranean Monk Seal in the Adriatic, with their final versions expected in the upcoming

period. We are pleased to confirm two observations of Mediterranean monk seals in 2022 in the Dubrovnik and Mljet areas, and we hope that this is a positive sign for the recovery of their population in Croatia. We will continue working with the same intensity on both projects throughout 2023 and look forward to new topics.

Habitats and Botany

The past year, 2022, was very intense and filled with numerous activities and challenges, mostly within the framework of the Dinara back to LIFE project, as well as other projects, services, and non-project-related activities that Biom is engaged in. We started the year by signing the first six contracts with livestock farmers in the Dinara area, marking the beginning of the formation of project herds that will graze and maintain grasslands which are already in process of succession. Our goal is to encourage farmers to keep mixed herds to increase grazing efficiency and maintain favorable conditions for the grasslands. By the end of the year, we signed a total of 16 contracts with livestock farmers, resulting in the addition of over 30 individuals, including donkeys, horses and buša (autochthonous cattle breed), to the project herds.

We continued the manual removal of woody vegetation from over-

grown grasslands in the Ježevičko suhopolje area, which we initiated in late summer 2021 with a volunteering camp with educational aspects, followed by restoration workers. Restoration activities were temporarily suspended from April to the end of August to avoid disturbing wildlife during their breeding season. Activities resumed in early September and by the end of the year the number of restored hectares of grassland reached nearly 80. In 2023, our goal is to reach a minimum of 100 hectares. One major challenge we faced was the implementation of controlled burning as another restoration method for grasslands, which we carry out through the Dinara back to LIFE project. Although we successfully conducted a test controlled burn on a 6.7-hectare area in early 2021 and obtained the necessary permits, the subsequent implementation of this activity was blocked for almost two years. Many factors con-



Autor: Udruga BIOM



tributed to the uncertainty. Initially, we were unable to obtain permits due to the ongoing development of Forest Management Plans for the forestry unit that includes the areas designated for controlled burning. Subsequently, there was a lengthy saga regarding the interpretation of the Forest Act and the possibility of conducting this activity on forest land, despite the fact that the Nature Protection Act and the Regulation on Conservation Objectives and Measures for Target Species specifically mention controlled burning as one of the methods for maintaining grasslands, which includes forest land. However, after numerous meetings, correspondence and negotiations, representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, State Inspectorate, and Croatian Forests Ltd agreed that controlled burning could be implemented on an additional 50 hectares, which we had previously negotiated to be included in the forest management plan as one of the methods for maintaining grasslands. This represents a significant victory for nature conservation, but we still need to advocate for harmonizing the regulations regarding the implementation of controlled burning in the Forest Act with those

in the Nature Protection Act and the aforementioned Regulation on Conservation Objectives and Measures for Target Species. This is something we will continue to address in 2023.

There were also numerous other activities, such as the restoration of ponds and wells, clearing overgrown paths to facilitate livestock farmers' access to more distant pastures in the Dinara area, and various educational and promotional activities. In May, a workshop for international experts on drafting Guidelines for the management of dry grasslands was held in Sinj.

In early April began the implementation of another major project called Still Water Revival. The project is related to the restoration of ponds and wells as biodiversity hotspots and the preservation of cultural heritage in karst areas. Availability of water for animal watering is one of the prerequisites for the preservation of dry grasslands in karst regions, where water availability often determines whether grazing will take place or not. The project focuses on the Dinara, Biokovo, Northern Velebit, and Učka areas. In addition to public institutions responsible for managing these protected areas,

Autor: Udruga BIOM



project partners include the Dragodid association specializing in the restoration of dry stone walls and Croatian Forests Ltd, which oversee a large number of ponds and wells in karst areas. Through the project,

we have developed protocols for assessing the condition of ponds and wells, and we have visited nearly 200 of them in the Dinara area. The next steps involve processing the results and prioritizing restoration efforts.

We will start with the restoration of about ten ponds and wells in the Dinara area, and in the following years, similar activities will take place in the remaining three protected areas participating in the project.

Among other things we worked on, it is worth mentioning the continuation of our collaboration with the Public Institution for Nature Protection and Conservation of the Lika-Senj County, where we conducted flora research in the area of Lička Plješevica and Una, with the aim of collecting basic data on the flora of that area as a prerequisite for its better protection. We also provided recommendations for habitat management within the Laudonov gaj Forest Vegetation Special Reserve.

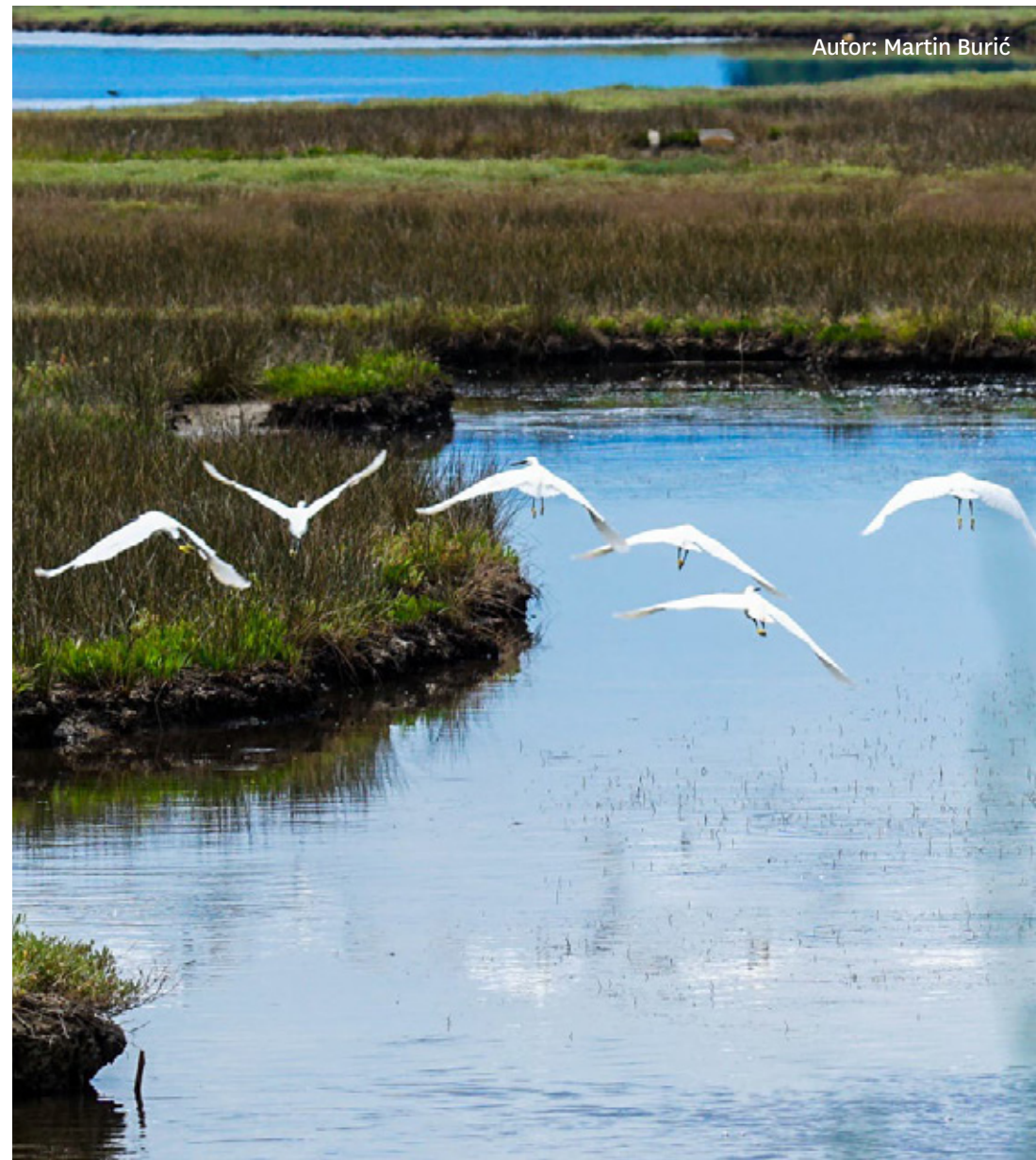
We also participated in data collection on poorly known plant species and habitats in the Dinara, Svilaja and Učka areas, and we hope that our data will contribute to a better understanding and conservation of biodiversity in Croatia.

There were many other smaller and larger activities, planning processes, and the submission of new projects, which will continue in the coming years, and more details may be covered in future work reports.

Protected Areas

As a civil society organisation, we aim to contribute to the improvement of the quality of management in protected areas, as they are one of the most effective mechanisms for conserving species and habitats. In 2022, through the project “Development of a Framework for the Management of the Natura 2000 Ecological Network” by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, in partnership with the Sunce Association and Safege Ltd., and in collaboration with public institutions responsible for managing protected areas, as well as the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, we worked intensively on the development of ten-year management plans for areas within the ecological network and protected areas. We are collaborating with the Krka National Park Public Institution on two major management plans - one for the national park and its wider area, and another, together with the Public

Institution Nature of Šibenik-Knin County, for bird conservation in the Krka area and the surrounding plateau, as well as two significant landscapes. We are working with the Sea and Karst Public Institution on the management plan for the Cetina River Canyon, while with the Biokovo Nature Park Public Institution, we are developing the management plan for bird conservation in the Biokovo and Rilić area, Podbiokovlje, and the Biokovo Botanical Garden Kotišina. Under the guidance of the Sunce Association, we are also collaborating with the Public Institution for the Management of Protected Nature Areas of Dubrovnik-Neretva County on the management plan for bird conservation in the Central Dalmatian Islands and Pelješac area. In close cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, we worked on the management plan for the Dinara Nature Park and connected areas of the



Autor: Martin Burić



Autor: Udruga BIOM

ecological network, including the Cetina River. We conducted a total of 19 workshops. We zoned the areas of significant landscapes, such as the “Cetina”, “Krka - gornji tok” and “Čikola”, as well as the architectural monument of the Biokovo Botanical Garden Kotišina. We planned the necessary capacities for implementing the management plans in all public institutions. We also planned management activities with stakeholders for the Dinara Nature Park and Krka National Park.

As part of the LIFE Artina project, in collaboration with BirdLife, we designated 4 new Important Bird Areas (IBAs), and one area was revised. Next year, we plan to designate additional areas. All of these areas are expected to become part of the Natura 2000 ecological network. We also worked on revising 5 existing IBAs for the Plitvice Lakes National Park, Kornati National Park and Telašćica Nature Park, Vransko Lake, Jasen, the Lastovo archipelago, and the Neretva Delta. At the initiative of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, we submitted our proposals for declaring 30% of the sea as protected areas, with 10% being strictly protected, both on land and at sea.

Advocacy Program

Our goal is to improve regulations, procedures, and practices related to nature conservation, as they provide a framework for good governance and transparent functioning of public administration.

The year 2022 was significant for programming the next EU financial period 2021-2027. We participated in consultations for numerous program documents, such as the Integrated Territorial Program, Competitiveness and Cohesion Program, Croatian Fisheries Program, National Development Plan for Aquaculture, and the Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027. You can read more about our experience in programming in our magazine “Pogled u divljinu” and on the Association Biom’s website. We also participated in consultations for strategic documents in the nature conservation sector, including the Management Plan for the Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) with an Action Plan,

Management Plan for the protected areas and ecological network areas of the Neretva Delta, Management Plan for the Vransko Lake Nature Park, and Management Plan for the Velebit Nature Park. We dealt with secondary legislation in the field of agriculture, particularly the Regulation on the Implementation of Direct Support to Agriculture and the IACS Measures for Rural Development for 2022. In addition to national consultations, we also participated in EU consultations with the support of BirdLife, focusing on renewable energy sources and socio-economic analysis related to lead poisoning. Regarding promoting the transparency of public administration, we provided comments on the National Development Plan for Public Administration and gave feedback on the Law on the Right of Access to Information. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of



Autor: Udruga BIOM

Mi smo mreža nevladinih okolišnih organizacija
Republike Hrvatske s ciljem utjecaja na kreiranje i
provedbu politika zaštite okoliša i očuvanja prirode.

Kako se učlaniti?

Agriculture did not provide us with the requested documentation through the right of access to information. In terms of participating in advocacy processes related to civil society organizations, our data was included in the Ombudsman's Report for 2021. We participated in the work of the Working Group for the development of the National Plan for creating an enabling environment for civil

society development, as well as in a roundtable discussion addressing the development of that plan. We also contributed to two roundtable discussions on biodiversity financing organized by Zelena akcija (FoE Croatia) and EuroNatur. At the 2022 Assembly, Association Biom was elected for another three-year term to lead the Secretariat of the Green Forum, a Croatian

network of environmental civil society organisations. In 2022, we revised the Green Forum's website and continued to improve the work of the Green Forum Coordination.

Screenshot www.zeleni-forum.org

Education Program, Volunteers, and Members Program

Education Program, Volunteers, and Members Program reached numerous nature enthusiasts during 2022, involving them in or bringing them closer to nature conservation. With our role in mind, at the end of the year, we changed our name in English to “Public Outreach Program” in order to more comprehensively reflect our diverse work in engaging the public in nature conservation.

Urban biodiversity and the coexistence issues between citizens and crows were hot topics throughout 2022, starting from February. We emphasized the importance of a strategic approach to urban biodiversity in meetings with representatives of city committees and district councils, through conversations with citizens, a series of educational articles called “Diary of the Hooded

Crow,” and organizing educational crow-watching walks. We didn’t just talk to citizens about crows but also about numerous other animal and plant species that share our living space, which they could get to know better through 25 bird-watching tours and a nighttime wildlife tour in Zagreb, as well as 2 educational walks in Sinj. We introduced the children of Opuzen, Ploče, Hrvace, Sinj, Kijevo, Metković, Nijemci, and Drenovci to the richness of the Dinaric flora, the diversity of birds and pollinators in the Dinaric region, and the complexity of the food web through games and workshops. Additionally, we created a manual called “The Wondrous World of Dinaric Plants” - a friendly beginner’s guide for future young botanists and their independent exploration of the flora of the Dinaric Mountains.



We cared for local biodiversity with the children from Dugopolje by making birdhouses and feeders, while high school students from Biograd na Moru played a role-playing game with us on the issue of illegal hunting. We empowered the employees of the Public Institution “Međimurska Priroda” to conduct their own research and educational ornithological activities through comprehensive training in bird identification. We organized edu-

cation and workshops for rangers and tourist guides on combating illegal hunting and nature protection, and presented our work and challenges in the field of nature conservation to students from the Faculty of Science and Mathematics and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science in Zagreb, as well as the Marko Marulić Polytechnic in Knin. We are extremely pleased with the successful collaboration established this year



with the general education grammar school “Dinko Šimunović” in Sinj - students participated in numerous activities and volunteer actions, and we have many more joint plans for the next year.

2022 was yet another successful year for volunteering, during which 248 volunteers contributed to biodiversity conservation in Croatia, dedicating a total of 11,569.5 volunteer hours. We are extremely grateful to all of them for their effort! The year began traditionally with the winter bird census, the largest citizen science action in the world. This year, in addition to the volunteer meeting, we organized field education for our volunteers. We continued at the same pace with the monitoring of the Eurasian Scops-owl's distribution. Moreover, we expanded the Scops-owl monitoring from continental regions and Istria to the southern parts of Croatia. The end of winter was marked by the first volunteer action of cleaning trails and renovating dry stone walls on Mount Dinara. Spring was focused on counting colonies of the Rooks and, for the first time, their relatives, the Hooded Crows. During the summer, we dedicated ourselves to organizing volunteer camps in the Učka Nature Park. First, we restored meadows on Učka, and later we focused on

monitoring the autumn bird migration during the ornithological camp near Rovozna Pond. Both camps had a strong educational component, allowing us to learn about birds, bird ringing, protected area management, visit local livestock breeders and family farms, and interact with various domestic and international experts. At the same time, our brave volunteers monitored possible signs of illegal hunting at different locations in Croatia. We used the last warm days for beach cleaning on Žut Island, another dry stone wall renovation action, and, finally, the dry stone wall camp on Mount Dinara. In addition to these one-time actions, our volunteers visited power transmission poles multiple times last year to monitor bird fatalities caused by electrocution. They also assisted us in conducting educational activities, supported field research, and provided assistance with numerous administrative tasks. Apart from domestic volunteers, we must once again emphasize the significant contribution and enthusiasm of our international volunteers within the European Solidarity Corps program. From February to December, volunteers from Poland, Georgia, Russia, and France participated in our project “Volunteer for Nature 2022.” They tirelessly assisted in the conservation of endangered seabirds

in the Lastovo archipelago and the protection of Griffon vultures on Cres Island, while raising awareness about the importance of nature conservation in Croatia through the creation of various educational materials. The end of the year was marked by an important moment in Biom's work with youth - we joined the initiative to establish BirdLife's Youth Council, the first council of its kind in nature conservation. Our young representatives spent a week at BirdLife's World Congress in Cambridge. Our young members returned full of desire for action, and we look forward to seeing where these new joint initiatives will take us in the next year.

We can say that 2022 was particularly dedicated to our work with members. To approach this important area of our work comprehensively, we spent a lot of time reflecting on all aspects of membership and, for the first time, developed a strategic approach to working with members at Biom. This will allow us to strategically approach the creation of new activities and the maintenance of existing ones for our members, to the satisfaction of us all. However, in 2022, we didn't just spend time reflecting and planning, but we also enjoyed each other's company in person! Our members showed that passion and love for

nature and birds know no boundaries, observing birds in Međimurje even during downpour and hail. We combined our love for birds and poetry at Biom's poetry evening, dedicated to reading poems on the theme of birds. Traditionally, we celebrated our anniversary with a picnic, and our members had the opportunity to get better acquainted with the flora of Zagreb's Savica neighborhood. We marked autumn with an art workshop called "Western Capercaillie - Star of Watercolors," led by the talented volunteer Alicja. At the end of the year, we celebrated our successes at Biom's Christmas party, and together, during the annual Biom Assembly, we made important changes related to membership for the year 2023.

In addition to membership, many citizens have supported us with donations, and we are very grateful for that! In 2022, we learned how to collect donations more effectively and how to build relationships with our donors, important supporters of our work and nature conservation in general. To simplify the donation process for citizens, we created a donation page for Biom. Our work was also recognized by Procter & Gamble, who donated 100,000 kuna to support our efforts in conserving the Griffon vultures in Croatia. We also established the first



Autor: Udruga BIOM



Ptičja poezija
s članovima

contact with Croatians living in the United States and held two lectures for them about our activities in preserving the grasslands of Dinara, introducing them to ways they can support us. To better showcase our work to the public, we created our first promotional video that introduces viewers to the most important aspects of our work in just a few minutes. Towards the end of the year, we had the opportunity to participate in the “Ostavi dobar trag” program

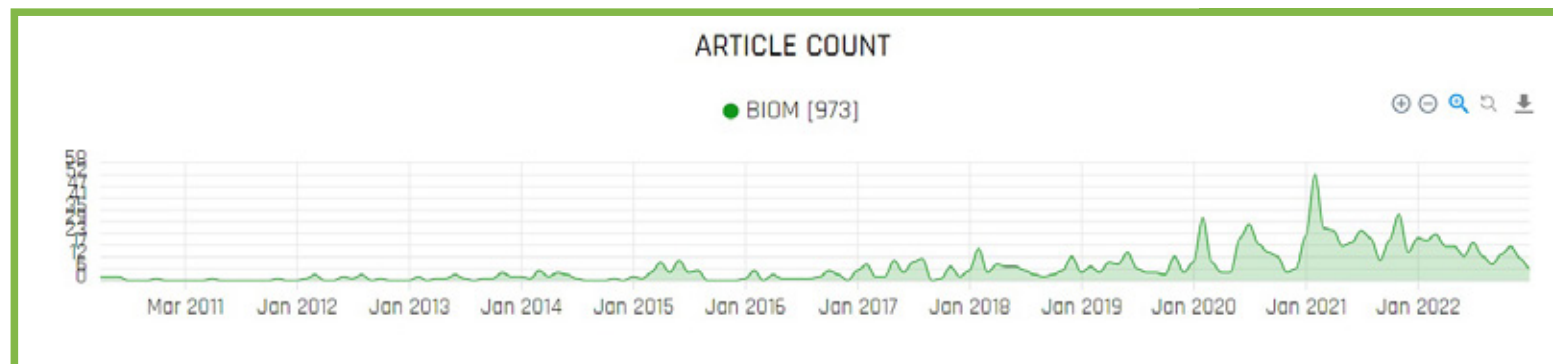
organized by Act Group and Erste Bank, through which we planned our next donation campaign, which we look forward to implementing in 2023. In 2023, we have many exciting events ahead, and we hope to act together even stronger and louder for nature conservation!



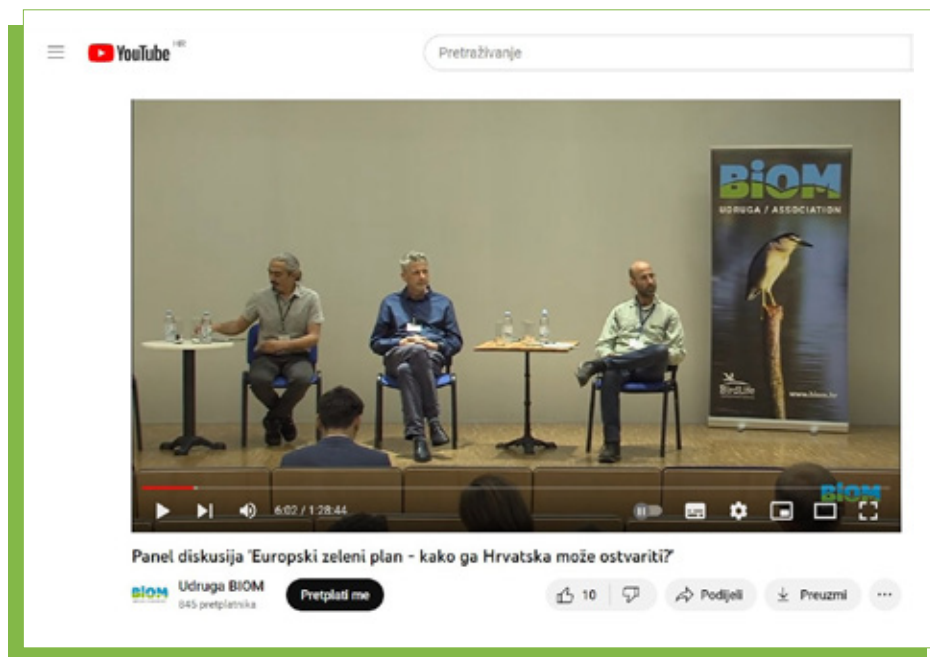
Communications

The Western Capercaillie was chosen as the Bird of the Year 2023 in order to highlight the importance of preserving and protecting forest habitats to maintain its population. This topic was one of the first communication tasks of the year, with the aim of educating a wide range of people about the issue of habitat loss through popularizing the choice of Bird of the Year.

The communication program continuously followed the activities of the Association Biom throughout the country, from bird identification training in the Neretva region and the adoption of the Zadar Declaration at the international Adriatic Flyway conference, to the celebration of 30 years of the EU LIFE program, through which our organisation carries out many nature conservation activities.



Spominjanje Bioma
na hrvatskim
portalima



Among the challenges was the communication of a panel discussion with foreign experts held in Sinj in May on the topic of the European Green Deal. The discussion was conducted in English and the local media in Sinj did not recognize the relevance and timeliness of the topic. However, the panel was live-streamed on YouTube and was watched by nearly six hundred people, and the panelists were represented in national media coverage.

Through press releases to targeted media and posts on Biom's communication channels, we invited volunteers to join activities such as the "Let's Connect" camp in Učka, bird identification training in the Neretva region, or the educational-volunteer dry-stone wall restoration camp in Ježević on Dinara mountain.

We celebrated World Migratory Bird Day in October by birdwatching with schoolchildren in Nijemci, with the



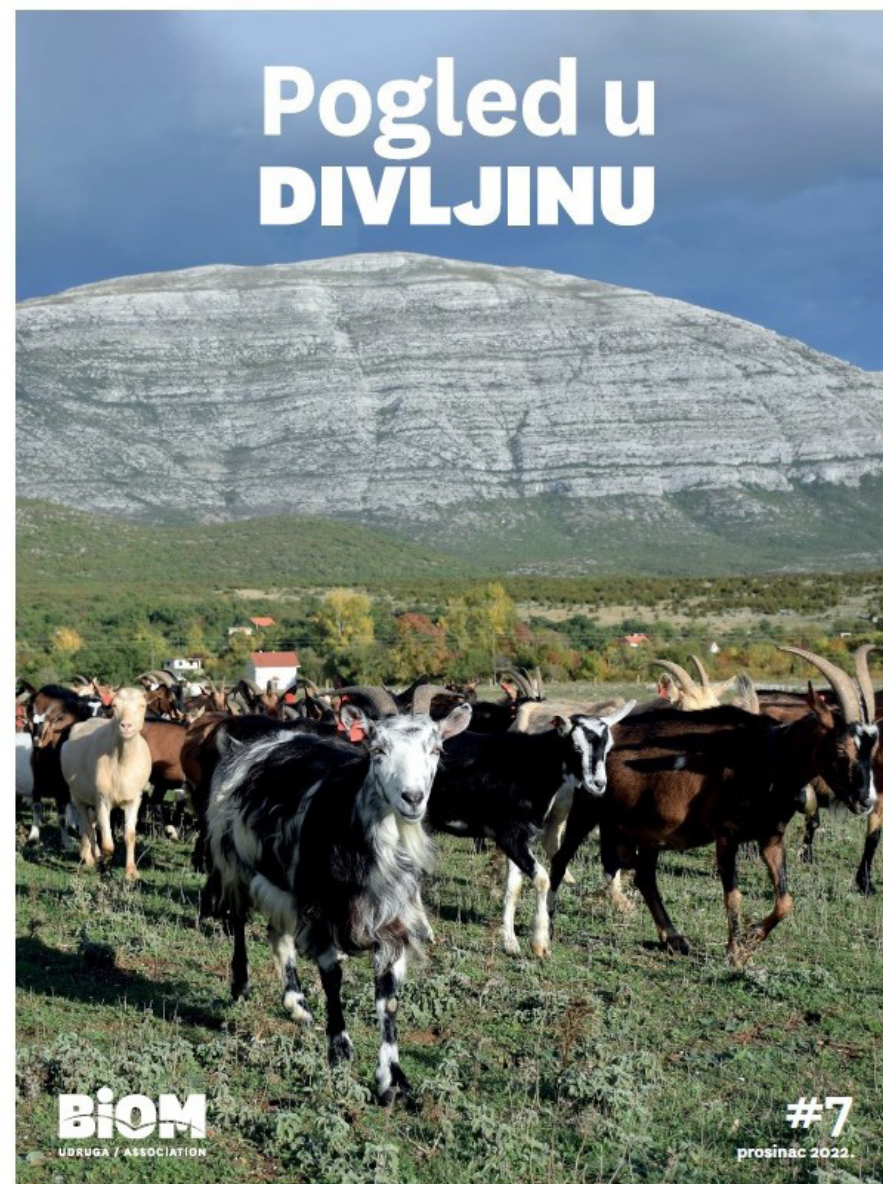
support of local media. We also communicated birdwatching activities at three locations as part of the European Birdwatching Days.

Among the topics we communicated through the media, the most attention was drawn to the Mediterranean monk seal (42 media articles) and the Eurasian Eagle-owl as the Bird of the Year (28 media articles).

We regularly issued statements on important topics such as illegal animal poisoning, the new EU regulation on nature restoration, the State of the World's Birds report, bycatch, and the Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the UN Summit in Montreal in December.

We announced a project for the conservation of the Griffon vulture and presented a project on the restoration of ponds and wells in the karst mountains of Croatia.

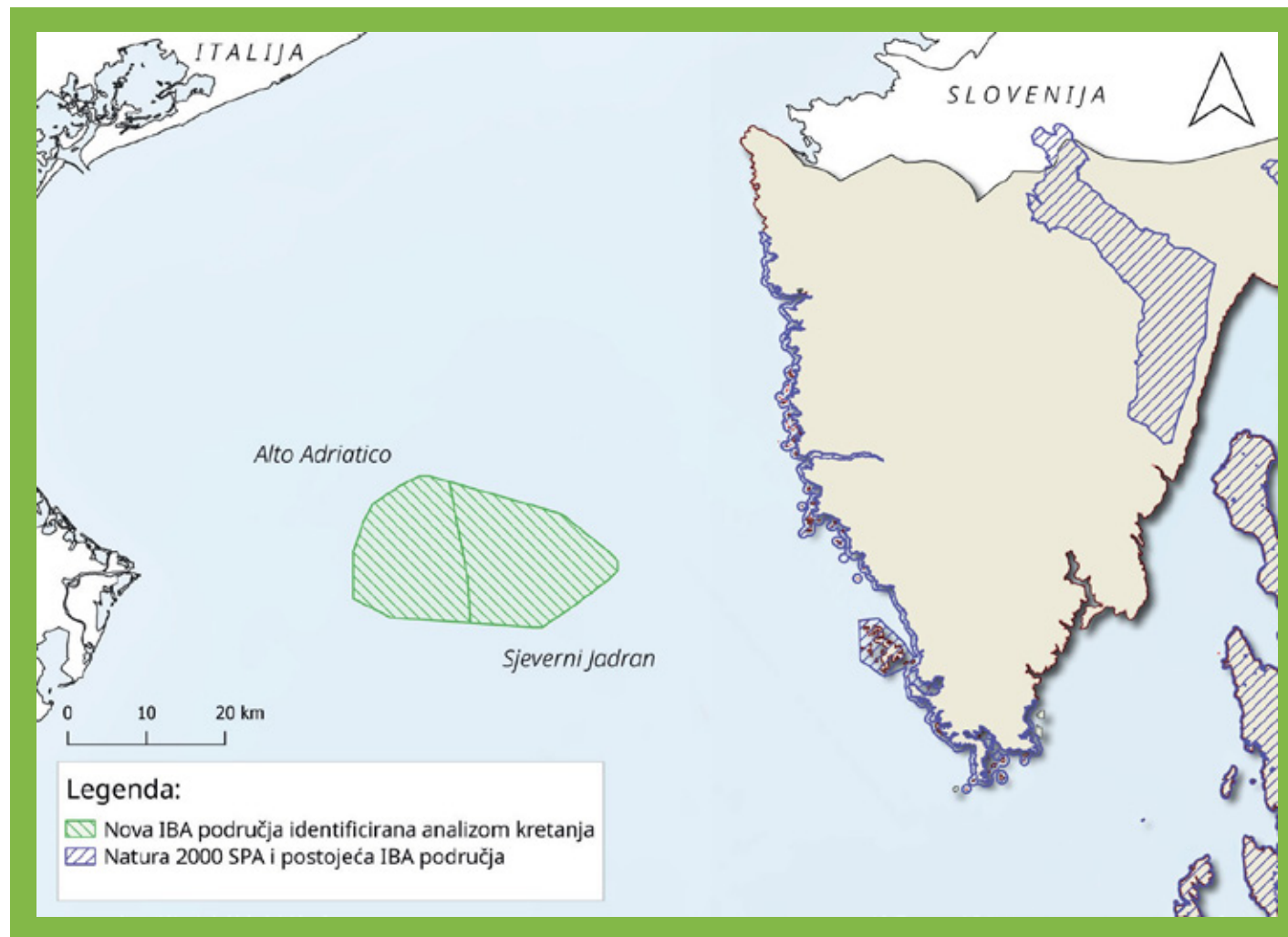
The end of the year was marked by development of communication strategy with the involvement of external consultant Prof. Dr. Marijana Grbeša from the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Zagreb, in which members, volunteers, and employees of our organisation participated in focus groups.



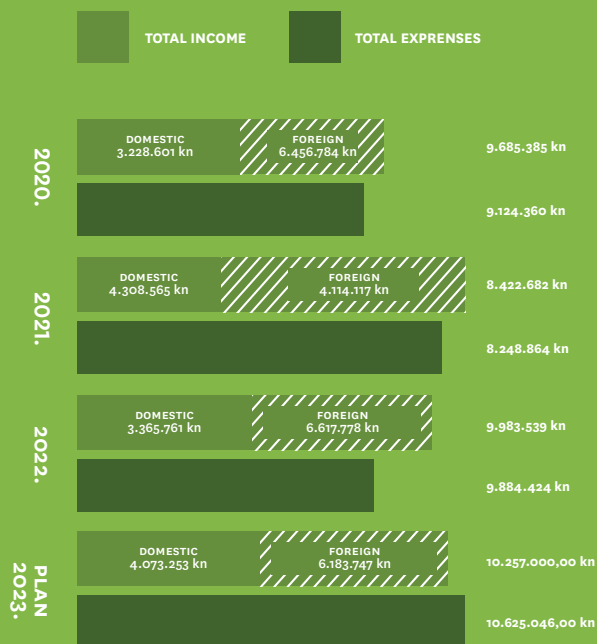
IT and Data Analysis

2022 was the last year of the independent Program for IT and Data Analysis. Towards the end of the year, the program was reorganized into the Bird Conservation Program and the Botany and Habitat Program.

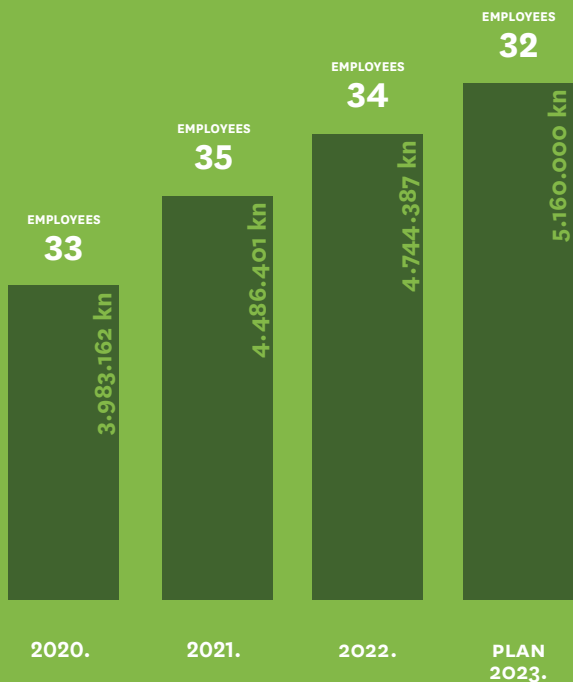
The main topics we worked on included analyzing the movements of sea-birds for the designation of Important Bird Areas (IBA), conducting analyses for monitoring common bird species, and calculating the Farmland Bird Index (FBI).



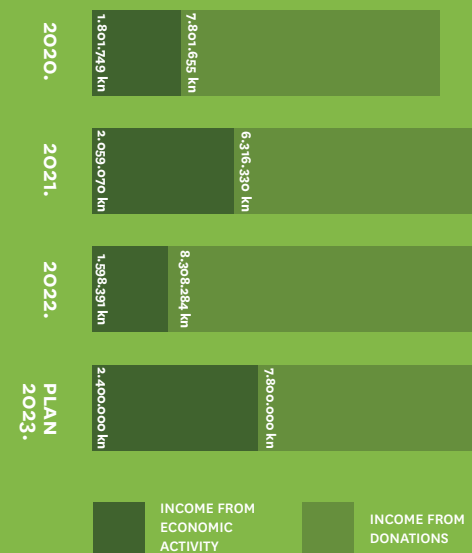
TOTAL INCOME AND EXPENSES



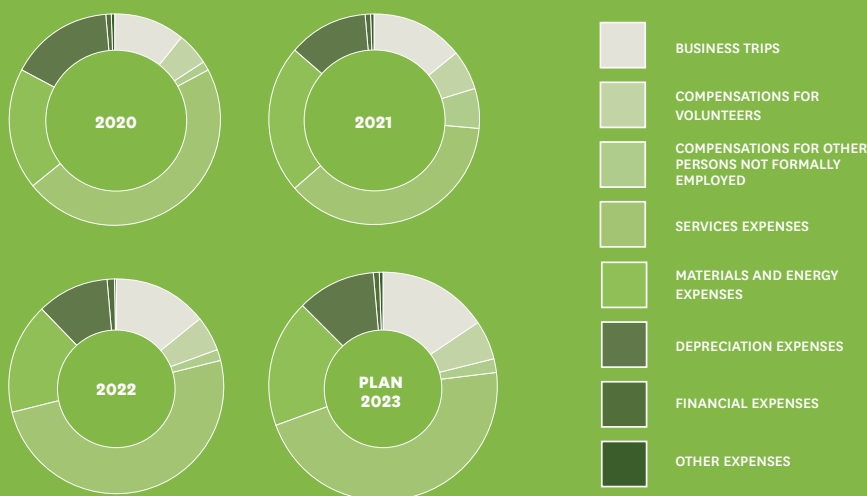
EMPLOYEE EXPENSES



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND DONATIONS



EXPENSES BREAKDOWN



MEMBERS AND MEMBERSHIP FEES





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UDRUGA / ASSOCIATION



SIGRID RAUSING TRUST



HEIDELBERGCEMENT

MONACHUS



MAIN OFFICE

Čazmanska 2, 10 000 Zagreb

01/5515324

info@biom.hr

REGIONAL OFFICE SINJ

Matića ulica 12, 21 230 Sinj

021/274946

info@biom.hr

IBAN HR4724020061101060150 (ERSTE)

IBAN: HR912340009110249630 (PBZ)

OIB: 02969783432

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