



# Conservation *and* Management of Wolves in Croatia



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION AND PHYSICAL PLANNING

## What is the project "Conservation and Management of Wolves in Croatia"?

This is a three-year programme of diverse activities intended for the establishment of a mechanism for a long-term conservation of wolves and their living as far as possible in harmony with humans.

## Why a project for the protection and management of wolves?

The wolf is the Europe's most peculiar large beast and as a leading predator represents a significant segment of biological diversity. Due to its way of life, especially with respect to the nutritional basis, the wolf has always been a direct adversary of man. A further contribution to the negative view of wolves comes from prejudices arising from the ignorance of this species' biology. For that reason the wolf has become almost extinct in the most part of Europe and the presence of his threatened species testifies to the value and level of conservation of biological diversity of the respective country.

Croatia is inhabited by a part of the westernmost stable wolf population in Europe, which is all the more reason to highlight conservation and management of wolves as one of the priority action plans under the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity (NSAP) as the fundamental nature protection document.



## By whom is the project executed and funded?

The project implementing authority is the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning in collaboration with the School of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb as a partner. The project is executed with the financial assistance of the European Commission LIFE Programme for Third Countries.



## Who is to be contacted for further information, advice or help?

For all further information and help in relation to concrete problems with wolves and measures that should be taken to protect domestic animals against the attack of wolves you may contact one of the two regional offices operating in your area:

Regional Office for Gorski Kotar and Lika  
"Conservation and Management of Wolves in Croatia" project  
Smiljanska 40  
53000 Gospić  
Phone/Fax No.: +385 (0)53 560-524  
gsm: +385 (0)91 4560-524  
e-mail: uredgospic@life-vuk.hr

or

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning  
"Conservation and Management of Wolves in Croatia" project  
Ulica grada Vukovara 78/III  
10000 Zagreb  
Phone No.: +385 (0)1 610-6448,  
+385 (0)1 610-6468  
Fax No.: +385 (0)1 613-7185  
e-mail: uredzagreb@life-vuk.hr  
web site: www.life-vuk.hr

Regional Office for Dalmatia  
"Conservation and Management of Wolves in Croatia" project  
S. Radića 28  
2200 Šibenik  
Phone No.: +385 (0)22 335-563  
gsm: +385 (0)91 5277-263  
e-mail: uredsibenik@life-vuk.hr

The conservation of wolves as a natural value despite all the above factors that show the complexity of this problem area is undoubtedly one of the major challenges of nature protection. The project "Conservation and Management of Wolves in Croatia" is expected to make a considerable contribution to resolution of this issue.

## Project activities

### *Institutional strengthening*

So far two regional offices have been established: one in Gospić for the region of Lika and Gorski Kotar and another in Šibenik for the Dalmatian region, both managed by regional co-ordinators. By establishing regional offices local communities will be brought closer to those who make decisions on conservation of wolves and provided the opportunity to take an active part in dealing with this problem area. Since a donation of a certain number of pen-guardians and electric fences has been provided for by the project as a measure for the protection of cattle against wolves, these offices will be used for contacts with all those who are interested in such assistance.



So as to improve the current system of compensation and provide a timely assessment of damage, the number of assessors will be increased and workshops organized for the purpose of their training and professional improvement.

### *Monitoring of wolf population and management activities*

The establishment of a mechanism for a systematic monitoring of the wolf population is indispensably necessary to plan future conservation of this species. In addition to telemetric research carried out in the region of Lika and Gorski Kotar and the analysis of the wolf mortality rate, it is envisaged to collect data on all factors affecting the wolf population in our area, such as the number of the game population and cattle and habitat features (vegetation coverage, roads etc.). Besides, data on damages will continue to be collected and processed and the results of measures for the protection of cattle against wolf attacks monitored.



### *Damage reduction*

The reduction of damage caused to cattle is one of the essential activities to be carried out in the context of this project. For this purpose it is planned to donate 60 pen-guardians and 20 electric



fences, and cattle-breeders who will receive the donation will previously be adequately educated. Moreover, a continuous contact with them will be maintained in order to provide an as efficient use of this help as possible and all additional information required.



### *Education and information*

Special attention will be paid to education and information of the entire local population and general public. Beside issuing educational publications and annual bulletins about activities of wolf conservation in Croatia, it is planned to prepare adequate web sites and a documentary on wolves and to give lectures in schools located in the wolf spread area on a regular basis.

### *Strengthening the participation of interest groups in decision-making*



For the purpose of strengthening the participation of interest groups in the decision-making process continuous contacts are maintained with the representatives of cattle-breeders, hunters, non-governmental organizations, local government and self-government units, etc. At common workshops representatives of various interest groups discuss and agree upon the methods of solving the problems relating to conservation of wolves. The result of these workshops was the adoption of *The Plan of Wolf Management in Croatia* as a document that will determine the methods of conserving the wolf in Croatia. It should be particularly noted that representatives from Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are also involved in preparation of the plan, because wolves in Croatia are a segment of a wider population that inhabits the area of Dinarides and therefore their conservation requires planning in the international context.

At the start and upon completion of the project a public opinion poll will be conducted concerning the wolf and the level of knowledge of this problem area. This poll will cover the inhabitants of the wolf spread area and Zagreb as the major urban centre of Croatia.

### *Expected project results*

- More confidence and a better co-operation between all interest groups
- A wolf management plan prepared in co-operation of all interest groups and approved by the general public
- Reduction of damage caused to cattle
- Raised public awareness of wolves
- Better knowledge of wolves
- Participation of local communities in decision-making

