

Parks of Croatia

GUIDE TO NATIONAL PARKS AND NATURE
PARKS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA



**PARKS OF
CROATIA**



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
AND ENERGY



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



PARKS OF CROATIA



We cherish the riches that nature has been creating for centuries



Impressum

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AUTHORS

Igor Kreitmeyer, Ivana Horvat, Valentina Futač, Marija Jurčević, Dino Kapuano

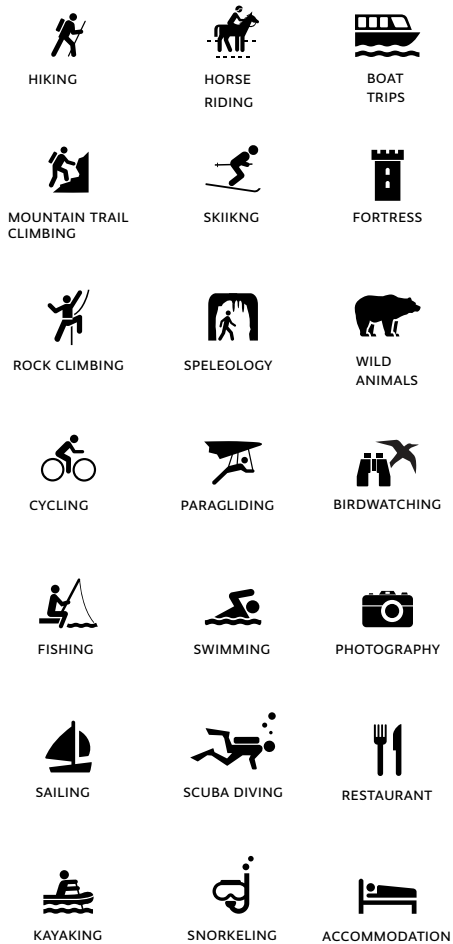
PHOTOGRAPHY

Archives of National and Nature Parks
Mario Romulić, Ante Gugić, Romeo Ibrišević, Marko Vrdoljak, Ivo Pervan, Renco Kosinožić

When it comes to conserved nature, Croatia is among the richest countries in Europe, and conserved nature could be considered one of the strongest Croatian brands. This is also confirmed by the fact that one third of the territory of Croatia belongs to the largest global network of protected areas – the European ecological network Natura 2000. Due to their extraordinary natural and landscape values, our 8 National Parks and 11 Nature Parks have been recognized on the world map as must-see places that are worth experiencing. This brochure offers an essential insight into the unique features and attractions of 19 Parks that annually draw over 4 million visitors, inviting you to discover them yourself. You will be assisted by staff of public institutions managing the Parks and taking care of them in

cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Energy that provides financial support to public institutions, ensuring environmental, nature and biodiversity conservation and efficient management, focusing on sustainable development in particular. Croatia is among few countries with a high percentage of territory under protection, as a result of a high degree of conservation of natural resources, but also a reflection of desire of Croatian citizens to have such policy in place. Conserved nature areas – including National Parks, Nature Parks and other categories of protection, as well as Natura 2000 ecological network areas – constitute the most important values of any country; values that we must protect and wisely manage, so that not only the present generations, but also future ones, might enjoy these riches.

Symbols



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**PLITVIČKA
JEZERA** Nacionalni park
National Park



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1949

INSCRIBED INTO THE UNESCO WORLD

HERITAGE LIST: 1979

AREA: 296,8 km²

16 lakes

BIGGEST LAKES: Kozjak and Prošće

MAIN ATTRACTION: Veliki slap

(Great Waterfall), 78 m

the biggest waterfall in Croatia

HIGHEST PEAK: Seliški vrh, 1279 m

CAVE OPEN FOR TOURISTS: Šupljara

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the word "plitvice", "pličine" which means something shallow, a shallow basin created in the sedimentation process of limestone.

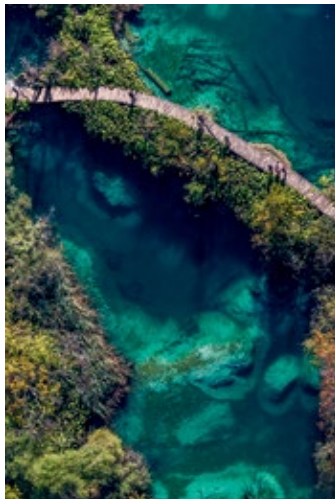
EVENT OF THE YEAR

Plitvice Lakes Marathon in June

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Siberian rayflower, Dalmatian squill, round-leaved sundew, 58 types of orchids – lady's slipper

ANIMALS: brown bear, wolf, lynx, Ural owl, otter



Did you know?

According to a legend, there was a queen, Black Queen, who came down the mountain and after a very dry season sent a strong wind and thunder storm to the local people to finally end the drought. After the rain, 16 lakes remained. The people were very grateful and the queen said: "From now on, people will be coming from all over the world to see these beautiful Plitvice Lakes".



Place of magical beauty

Between Mala Kapela and Lička Plješivica, next to the road connecting Dalmatia to Zagreb, there are 16 cascade-lined lakes with magnificent waterfalls, surrounded by forests with abundant fauna. Plitvička jezera (Plitvice Lakes) was the first Croatian national park whose value was also recognized by UNESCO having placed it on the world natural heritage list.

The two biggest and deepest lakes, Kozjak and Prošće, together with ten other smaller lakes on dolomite substrate make up a group of Upper Lakes, whereas the Lower Lakes are situated downstream from Kozjak in the 70 – 80 meter deep limestone canyon. Just before entering Proščansko Lake, the two rivers, Crna and Bijela, merge into the joint Matica, whereas the River Rječica enters Kozjak Lake and the beautiful Korana River is its effluent. Next to it, at the most impressive part of the park, at Sastavci, together with the waterfalls of the last lake falls the 78 meter high waterfall of the Plitvice Rivulet. The River Korana, on its way to Golubinjača, the deepest cave in the national park, and further on towards Karlovac also forms some amazing waterfalls.

Even though the altitude of Plitvice Lakes is not very high, the rich forests surrounding it give the impression of mountainous landscape; also the best preserved area of original beech-fir forest spreads into the virgin forest of Čorkova Cove.



PAKLENICA

Nacionalni park
National Park



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1949

AREA: 95 km²

HIGHEST PEAK: Vaganski vrh, 1757 m

MAIN ATTRACTIONS: impressive canyons of Velika and Mala Paklenica carved into the mountain from the sea level to the highest peaks of Velebit

BIGGEST CROATIAN ROCK FOR CLIMBERS:

Anića kuk, 712 m

CAVE OPEN FOR TOURISTS: Manita peč

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the word "paklina" which means black pine resin

EVENT OF THE YEAR

International climbers meeting in May

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: sandwort and Lady's Slipper

ANIMALS: chamois, brown bear, wolf, lynx, golden eagle



Do not miss

Through the wild gorge of Velika Paklenica where long time ago highlander women used to carry salt, figs and shallot ("ljutika") on their way back from the coast, and also carried wheat from the fertile land of Lika to the coast, there is a pleasant hiking trail today with many road signs in both Croatian and English.



Heaven for climbers and adventurers

Was it the beauty of this place that the locals from the village at the bottom of Paklenica talked about when they passed on for generations the legend about the fairies that charmed and lured all those who would look at them?

Carved vertically into the south banks of Velebit, the canyons of Velika and Mala Paklenica are filled with rock sculptures amid forests and valleys rich with mountainous flora and fauna. Endemic bellflowers, dense black pine tree forests, orchids and lilies, then various species of butterflies and birds attract nature lovers, whereas steep rocks of Velika Paklenica are a favourite destination for hikers and mountain climbers.

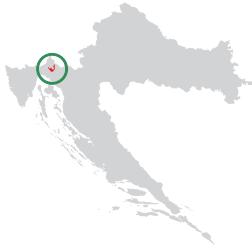
A lavish underground world is best seen in Manita peč, a 175 meter long cave, divided in two chambers of numerous stalagmite, stalactite and calcite columns. The cave entrance is at the altitude of 570 meters, and the ascent from the parking area in Velika Paklenica to the cave takes about an hour and a half.

Visitors who wish to avoid dangerous adventures are attracted by impressive scenes of Velebit overlooking the holiday resorts of Starigrad-Paklenica, Selina and Tribanj. If you wish to see for yourself all the beauties of the National Park, choose one of the 150 kilometer long mountain trails and relax in the best possible way in the beauty of Velebit, in the shades of giant beech and pine forests.



RISNJAK

Nacionalni park
National Park



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1953

Expanded to the Kupa source and Snježnik massif in 1997

AREA: 63,5 km²

ENTRY POINTS: from Crni Lug, from the pass of Gornje Jelenje and from Kupska dolina

HIGHEST PEAK: Veliki Risnjak, 1528 m

MAIN ATTRACTIONS: the source of the River Kupa and the Risnjak massif with a guest house

PARTICULAR FEATURE OF THE PARK: edelweiss and hairy alpenrose

PARTICULARITIES

Forest communities and large carnivores

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the Croatian word for the lynx – “ris”

EVENT OF THE YEAR

A local celebration in August, the so-called “Furman Day”

FLORA AND FAUNA

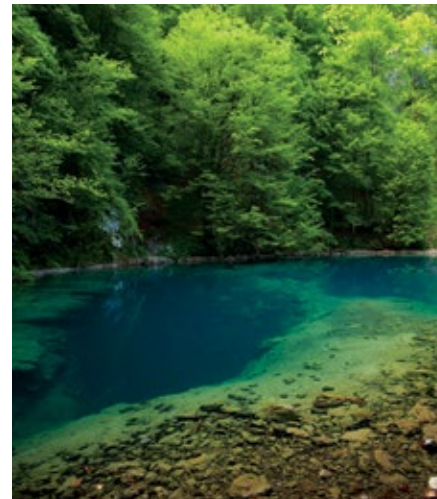
PLANTS: edelweiss, hairy alpenrose, Alpine butterwort, great yellow gentian, lilies, orchids, arnica, silvery yarrow, false aster

ANIMALS: lynx, brown bear, wolf, grayling, butterflies



What to visit?

It is best to follow the Leska educational trail and its 23 viewpoints to encounter the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park Risnjak. It is a pleasant walk even for those who are not in their best shape. The source of the River Kupa and the first five kilometers of its flow are definitely worth visiting together with the massif of Risnjak and Snježnik, and the beautiful mountain grasslands.



In the land of the lynx and edelweiss

Fragmented and steep rocks, abyss, cracks in limestone and sink-holes up to 200 meters deep, coves and karst valleys are the main features of Risnjak National Park located in Gorski kotar, about 15 kilometers to the north-east from Rijeka. On a relatively small area of the Dinarides there are fourteen main types of mountain forests together with about thirty plant communities. Apart from Risnjak Mountain, the National Park also includes the Snježnik mountain massif, as well as the source of the Kupa River. It is possible to reach the source, the only unique blue and green karst spring, following a well marked attractive winding trail from the village of Razloge or from the northern side of Kupska dolina, following a more pleasant but longer road from the village of Hrvatsko.

The National Park Risnjak is abundant with diverse flora and fauna so it's a unique place in Europe where you can still see a bear, a wolf or a lynx in their natural habitat. The lynx, predator of big and small game especially deer, is a loner and hunts primarily in the twilight or at night. The mountain massif of Risnjak was named after the lynx (“ris”) since it wanders around those forests. Nature lovers will enjoy the perfect stone sculptures, rich forests and meadows where you can still see edelweiss, a rare protected flower, and you will surely remember the unique view from Veliki Risnjak or Snježnik on Kvarner bay for a long time.





MLJET

Nacionalni park
National Park



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1960

AREA: 53,7 km²

ISLAND SURFACE: 100,4 km²

Veliko lake 46 m deep

Malo lake 29 m deep

HOW TO REACH THE ISLAND: by regular ferry lines or by own boat
24 sea miles away from Dubrovnik

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the latin words Melita, Meleda

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Marking the anniversary of establishment of the Mljet National Park in November

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Aleppo pine, holm oak, orchids, Dubrovnik knapweed, sea lavender

ANIMALS: Mediterranean gull, European shag, European honey buzzard, common kestrel, eagle-owl



Did you know?

In the coastal part of the sea around Mljet and in Mljet lakes there are about 150 species of bivalves, of which more than 40 species live in Malo lake. The populations of shell St Jacques in Veliko lake are among the best known in the Adriatic and the age of some specimen can reach up to 17 years.



Gorgeous island of the nymph Calypso

According to a legend, the island of Mljet is Homer's Ogygia, the beautiful island of the nymph Calypso where Odysseus stayed for seven years while wandering the Mediterranean. The specifically indented coast of the island with two salt "lakes", the forests of Aleppo pine, holm oak and maquis, as well as the rich cultural heritage are the reason why many people consider Mljet as the most beautiful island on the Adriatic. The landscape beauty is one of the best recognized values of the island. Its north-western part is a national park known for the Mljet lakes which are actually flooded valleys created after the last ice age when the sea penetrated through a narrow opening into carst depressions. The sea enters through the 30 m long and 13.5 m wide canal on the location of Veliki Most, thus creating Veliko lake and Malo lake.

The island of Mljet has a rich cultural and historical heritage which can be traced without any interruptions from the times of Illyrian tribes, the Roman Empire, the Republic of Dubrovnik until today. The settlement of stone houses, Govedari, as the home of the first settlers in the 18th century is particularly impressive.

The National Park Mljet is abundant with numerous gorgeous coves such as Zaobraslo prijeslo, shallow Blace, beaches of Grabove and Polača where numerous islets protect the entrance into one of the safest harbors on the Adriatic. The sights worth visiting on the rest of the island include the Odysseus Cave next to Babino Polje and old settlements such as Korita and Prožure.



KORNATI
Nacionalni park
National Park



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1980

AREA: 217 km²

LARGEST ISLAND: Kornat 32,5 km²

LARGE ISLANDS: Piškera, Kurba Vela, Levrnaka, Lavsa

BIGGEST SETTLEMENT: Vrulje on Kornat island

HIGHEST PEAK: Metlina, 237 m
7 sea miles from Murter island and 15 sea miles from Šibenik and Zadar

HOW TO REACH THE PARK: by boat hired in a tourist agency or by own boat

ENTRY POINTS: Opat and Vela Proversa

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the Latin word "corona" which means a crown

EVENT OF THE YEAR

A pilgrimage to the church of Our Lady of o'Tarca in July

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Adriatic iris, bunch-flowered daffodil

ANIMALS: European shag, noble pen shell, giant tun, loggerhead sea turtle, bottlenose dolphin, pallid swift



What to visit?

Each of the nine diving zones in the National Park Kornati brings its own particular excitement and impression. However, diving in Kornati is only allowed in organized and authorized diving groups. However, swimming in the lush sea is unlimited.



Created out of tears, stars and breath

The Irish writer George Bernard Shaw described this magical archipelago in the Middle Adriatic with the following words: "On the last day of Creation God desired to crown His work, and thus created the Kornati islands out of tears, stars and breath." This is the most indented group of islands in the European Mediterranean of the most exceptional landscape value which was given the status of national park in 1980. More than three quarters of the Park's surface belong to the sea, whereas the land part consists of 89 islands, islets and reefs in the total surface of 50 km².

The two groups of islands in the Park, Kornatski and Pučinski set of islands, are equally beautiful and interesting, however the islands of Pučinski set with their "crowns" (crags or cliffs) are the most valuable ones. The highest peak in the National Park is Metlina located on the longest island of Kornat which also holds the 34 meter long cave in the Stiniva Cove.

Behind the scenes of the occasional settlements on the islands there are remains of Illyrian settlements, Roman saltworks and the Roman fishpond, the Tureta fortress (6th century), medieval saltwork on the Lavsa island and a small church from the 16th century on the Piškera island. There are no water springs nor any water flows on the Kornati islands; fresh water stays only temporarily in the Tarac and Knežak ponds or in carst basins. That is why many water tanks have been built on the islands. Nevertheless, cruising by the "crowns" that vertically rise from the sea, stone houses and the crystal clear sea are undoubtedly breathtaking and worth the visit.



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1983

AREA: 33,9 km²

14 islands and islets

ENTRY POINTS: by boat from Fažana or by own boat

MAIN ATTRACTIONS: Zoo, Boathouse interpretation and education centre, dinosaur footprints, archaeological sites

ACTIVITIES: cycling, golf, tennis, bocce, electric vehicle rides, swimming, snorkeling

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the words "brevona, brevogno" which means shallow sea

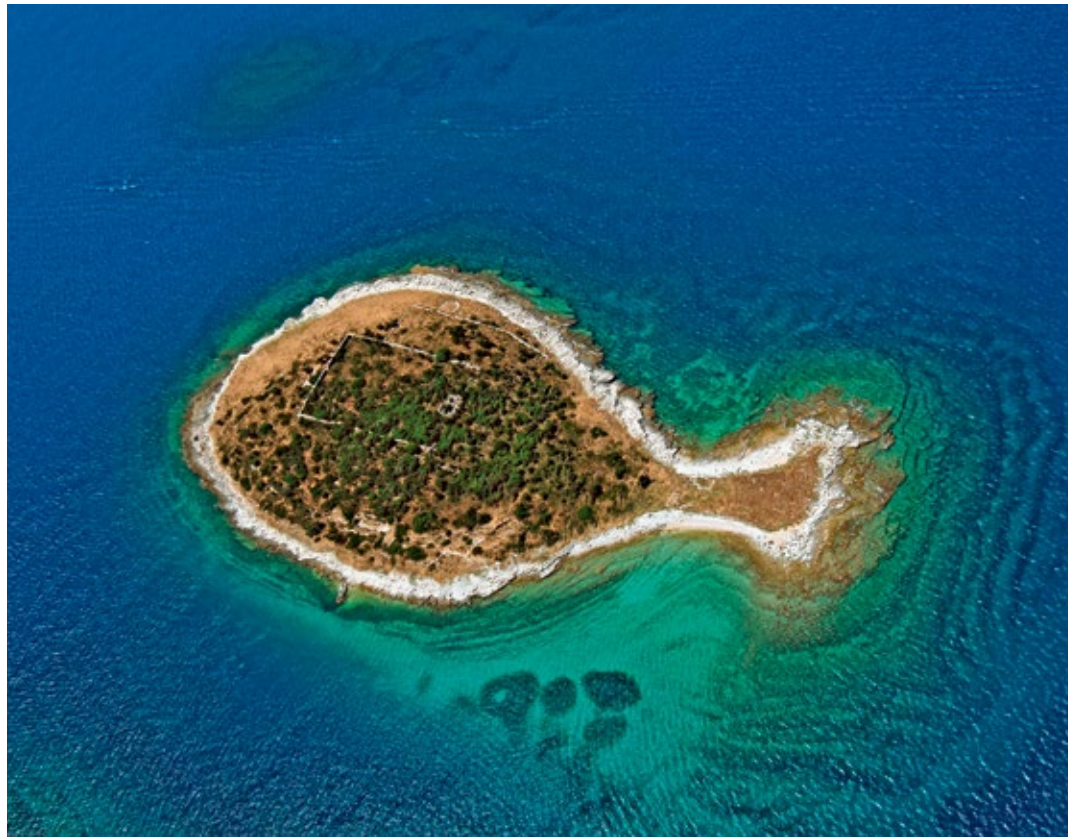
EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Brijuni Marathon at the beginning of spring
Dinosaur Days in April
Brijuni Adventure Race in September
International Bat Night in September
Doors Open Days in the autumn
Concerts and theatre shows during the summer months
Brijuni Adventure Race in September

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: holm oak, Mediterranean maquis and exotic species

ANIMALS: rabbits, squirrels, deer game, mouflon, sea turtles, sea fish, dolphins, bats, various birds



Do not miss

Educational underwater trail in the cove of Verige offers a unique experience of natural and archaeological values contained in the incredibly rich and preserved submarine terrain of the Brijuni National Park. Extraordinarily valuable sites that can be seen only by diving into the sea are presented along the route 500 meters long, including a section of a classical antiquity complex – a splendid Roman villa from the 1st century. There are also numerous populations of fish, algae, sea sponges, crustaceans and bivalves, with the noble pen shell particularly worth pointing out.



Green and blue pearl of the Adriatic

Mild climate and favourable geographic conditions, deeply recessed coves and easily defensible elevated fortifications have ensured a continuity of human activity on Brijuni from ancient history until the present. This relatively small archipelago with the surface slightly exceeding seven square kilometres includes approximately one hundred sites and facilities of high archaeological, cultural and historical value – ranging from the first Neolithic dugout settlement in the cove of Soline to an elite tourist and medical resort built by the Austrian industrialist Paul Kupelwieser at the beginning of the twentieth century, and to the presidential residence visited by statespersons from all over the world in the period from 1954 until today.

This concise curriculum vitae of the island, which carefully preserves the traces of 5000 years of human history, makes the legend of its creation even more real and when arriving to the island a part of Heaven discloses in front of our eyes in the unique harmony of the island's flora, fauna and heritage. A unique blend of the green islands sank into the turquoise-blue sea whose bays and hills are laced with the white Istrian rocks.

An exquisite landscape has been created by transforming agricultural and forest areas into parks with spacious open meadows. Nowhere on the Croatian coast can you find such a coherent space where holm oak and laurel blend together and some islands hold the most preserved areas of maquis in this part of the Mediterranean.





MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1985

AREA: 109 km²

LENGTH OF KRKA: 72 km

BIGGEST WATERFALL: Manojlovac 59,6 m

MOST VISITED SITES: Skradinski buk and Roški slap

Organized trips by boat and by bus inside the Park

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the name of the River Krka whose 2/3 flow through it

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Krka Cultural Summer

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: chimney bellflower, grassy bells, forests of downy oak and oriental hornbeam

ANIMALS: olm, bats, otter, Visovac trout



Do not miss

Take the educational trail from Visovac Lake (Stinice) to Roški slap, then take the stone-carved stairs up to Oziđana pećina cave and experience some unforgettable scenes of nature, together with rich flora and fauna, geological phenomena, cultural and historical localities of Krka. The 8,5 kilometer long walk takes three hours.



Green oasis of the Mediterranean

A lively canyon of the River Krka builds waterfalls over travertine barriers and the river continues to flow towards the sea. Out of seven waterfalls, the most often visited and the most beautiful ones are Skradinski buk and Roški slap with ethnographic monuments, some of which have been renovated. Between them lies a three kilometer long picturesque lake, Visovac, in the middle of which rises an islet of the same name with a Franciscan church and monastery. In the middle of the Krka River canyon, in Carigradska draga, lies Krka Monastery, an important spiritual centre of the Orthodox Dalmatian Eparchy.

You can visit the Krka National Park on foot and one part by bike following the Skradin-Skradinski buk bike trail. On the way there are old water mills, stone facilities for washing clothes and monuments of rural architecture.

Apart from the particular beauty of its canyon and cascade course, the Krka River attracts also with its free-flowing lakes and green valleys. Even if you have visited the river many times, you will always be impressed by its beauty. After a long walk you can relax in a restaurant serving traditional dishes.

It is best to visit Krka in spring and autumn to discover medieval fortresses such as the largest one, Ključica, then fortresses Nečven and Trošenj located on the very edge of the canyon, and archeological sites of Burnum near Kistanje where tourists can visit the remains of a Roman military camp and an amphitheatre. According to the number of endemic fish, the Krka River is one of the richest rivers of the Adriatic basin. Also, taking into consideration that there are 225 species of birds, this area has been recognized as ornithologically very valuable.



SJEVERNI VELEBIT Nacionalni park
National Park



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL PARK: 1999

Velebit Mountain was included in UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) in 1978.

Part of the Natura 2000 ecological network

European Destination of Excellence 2009 (EDEN)

AREA: 109 km²

HIGHEST PEAK: Veliki Zavižan, 1676 m

HIGHEST WEATHER STATION IN CROATIA: Zavižan, 1594 m

Velebit Botanical Garden

Strict reserve Hajdučki and Rožanski kukovi 16 kilometers of the Premužić Trail passing through the National Park

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Bike race "Ascent to Zavižan" in June

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Croatian bittercress, Croatian sibirea, Velebit pink, Kitaibel's columbine

ANIMALS: brown bear, wolf, lynx, chamois, capercaillie, woodpeckers, owls, subterranean fauna



Did you know?

Sjeverni Velebit is famous for its deep vertical caves or pits. Almost 400 of them have been discovered and partly explored, including the three deepest pits in Croatia whose depth exceeds 1000 meters (Lukina jama - 1431m, Slovačka jama - 1320m and Jama Velebita - 1026m). The most famous endemic species living there in Sjeverni Velebit is the Velebit leech.



Mountain that conquers

The huge and at first glance naked blocks of rock with numerous crevices, impenetrable forests, small and large grassy karst valleys, pits, sinkholes, ice caves, ponds and cracks in limestone... this is all Sjeverni Velebit, a mosaic made up of most diverse habitats which are home to many species of fungi, plants and animals.

Since the ecosystem is well preserved here, the Sjeverni Velebit is a natural habitat of the bear, wolf, lynx and golden eagle. The territory of the Park has been widely explored and about 1,5 thousand species of plants, fungi and animals have been registered. Zavižan and Alan are areas where open grasslands alternate with green forests and enormous limestone blocks surrounded by peaks offering fascinating views of the sea and Lika.

In the Velebit botanical garden you can enjoy the diversity of flora, whereas Štirovača area is abundant with coniferous forests, as it is also the only moist part of the Park. Lubenovac, a spacious Velebit grassland with numerous remains of dwellings and drywalls bears witness to a life style that once existed on the mountain. The Premužić trail will take you through the most beautiful parts of Sjeverni Velebit. Once they discover the secrets of Sjeverni Velebit, the lovers of an active holiday in the middle of untouched nature always return. It is said that mountains need to be conquered but Velebit is a mountain that conquers its visitors.



KOPAČKI RIT
Park prirode
Nature Park



What to visit?

The White Water Lily Walk and a boat trip to the zoological reserve are the most attractive activities for tourists. The place called Tikveš is known for the 19th century residential facility and a hunters' country villa built by the Habsburg family and used as a hunting hub, thus famous all over Europe.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1976
IMPORTANT BIRD AREA (IBA): 1986
The Nature Park entered the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance in 1993
The Nature Park is part of the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve, proclaimed by UNESCO in 2012
AREA: 231 km²
SYMBOL OF THE PARK: white-tailed eagle

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the Hungarian words "kapocs" which means "a buckle" and "rét" which means "wetlands meadow".

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Day of Open Doors in July

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: white willow, pedunculate oak, black sedge, flowering rush, Siberian iris, great yellow cress
ANIMALS: white-tailed eagle, beaver, otter, red deer, wetland birds, wild boar



Empire of 300 bird species

Located between the rivers Drava and Danube, natural wetland oasis Kopački rit is an attractive tourist destination, but also one of the best preserved wetland areas in Europe. Even though every visitor will surely remember the endless floodplains of cane and reed giving this area its particular characteristics, the largest areas in the Park are actually covered with white willow forests, whereas the oak grows on higher altitudes. The rivers and fluvial wetland in Kopački rit created its unusual relief abundant with sandbanks and river islets, as well as numerous backwaters. Many rare and endangered species of plants and animals found their home there and due to a very diverse fauna, the southern part of the Park has been given the status of special zoological reserve. The birds of Kopački rit are certainly the specific feature of this Park. There are 300 species registered, of which 141 are the species of regular or occasional nesting birds.



BIOKOVO
Park prirode
Nature Park



What to visit?

Do not miss to visit the Biokovo botanical garden "Kotišina", only 3 kilometers away from Makarska.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1981
AREA: 194 km²
HIGHEST PEAK: Sveti Jure, 1762 m
More than 400 caves and pits, the deepest one is Mokre noge (-831 m)
ENDEMIC SPECIES AND SYMBOL OF BIOKOVO: Biokovo bellflower

POINT OF INTEREST

The name of the Park comes from the words for snowy white - "bil, bilak, biokova". Long time ago, ice was taken from the ice pits and carried to the coastal area.

EVENT OF THE YEAR

International mountain race in May, Makarska - Vošac, 0-1422 m

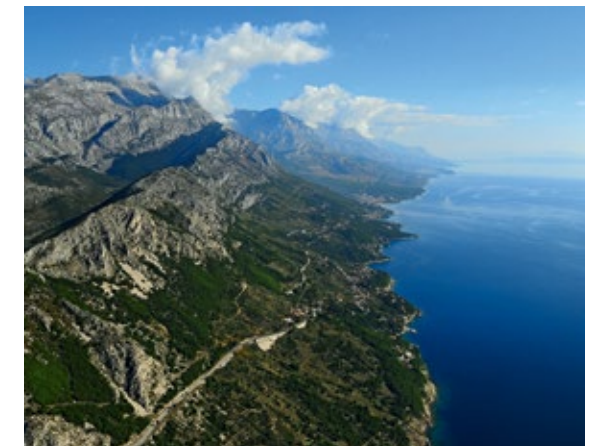
FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Biokovo bellflower, Dalmatian bellflower, moltkia, Biokovo knapweed, Illyrian iris
ANIMALS: wolf, golden eagle, wildcat, nose-horned viper, southern festoon, chamois, mouflon



The closest to the sea from the highest tops

Above the beautiful beaches of Makarska coast rises the fascinating mountain of Biokovo – the mountain whose roots are in the sea, whose head is in the clouds and whose top, Sv. Jure is the second highest point in Croatia. It can be reached following a road with many viewpoints from which it is even possible to see Italy. Those who are in good shape may choose to go on a trip by bike, or on foot or combine hiking with some transport, however it is necessary to bear in mind that this is a very demanding and challenging mountain where the Mediterranean and Alpine climates meet. There are also many archeological sites on Biokovo, as well as stone tumuli, shepherds' dwellings, churches and chapels, towers and fortresses. Today they tell the story of a life that once existed in this area, the customs of local people, their adjustments to the harsh conditions on this beautiful and relentless mountain.





MEDVEDNICA

Park prirode
Nature Park



Did you know?

Only in the Medvednica Nature Park can you adopt a bat for 150 HRK and help this protected species to remain in its habitat – the unique Veternica cave.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1981

AREA: 179,4 km²

HIGHEST PEAK: Sljeme, 1035 m

EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Zagreb Fantastic Film Festival
Medvedgrad Musical Evenings
International Bat Night
Medieval Days on Medvednica
Snow Queen Trophy

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: yew, beech, snowdrop windflower, military orchid, Carniolan lily

ANIMALS: common buzzard, white-throated dipper, yellow-bellied toad, European crayfish, rosalia longicorn, Schreiber's bent-winged bat, Mediterranean horseshoe bat



A step away from Zagreb

Few cities have the sort of privilege enjoyed by the city of Zagreb: an island of lush vegetation, peace and quiet in the immediate vicinity of a centre of a major city. That is precisely what Medvednica Nature Park offers its guests. An average visitor might be inclined to conclude that the plant world of Medvednica is rather monotonous and poor in terms of the number of species; in reality, however, the plant world of Medvednica is amazingly rich, diverse and interesting. As much as 81% of the Park surface is covered in well conserved forests that hide more than 1200 plant species. The animal world is very rich and diverse too, and it still includes species such as wildcat, wild boar, roe deer, fox, marten, rabbit...

Today's numerous visitors can engage in hiking along as many as 70 marked hiking trails, learning many interesting facts about the mountain as they walk along any of the educational trails on offer, or visit a tourist attraction such as the cave of Veternica, Zrinski mine or the medieval town of Medvedgrad. Events such as the Zagreb Fantastic Film Festival, Medvedgrad Musical Evenings and the festival Medieval Days on Medvednica are some of the particularly interesting cultural attractions. Many tourist programs are also available, including the e-bicycle tour (guided tour using electric bicycles) and Underground Medvednica program – bringing visitors to forgotten military tunnels and abandoned facilities such as the Markuševac tunnels and Brestovac sanatorium.

Two hotels and approximately ten catering facilities and mountain lodges on the mountain offer an ideal opportunity for rest and refreshment, particularly during summer, when Medvednica allows visitors to escape the summer heat.



VELEBIT

Park prirode
Nature Park



What to visit?

In the southern part of Velebit do not miss the Cerovac Caves (Cerovačke špilje), one of the largest cave bear sites in Croatia. Out of the three caves with more than six kilometers of explored passages, tourists can visit 700 meters of Donja and Gornja Caves. Located near Jablanac, the Zavrtnica Cove will fascinate you with its beauty, mystique and purity of the sea.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1981

INSCRIBED IN UNESCO NETWORK

OF MAB: 1979

AREA: 2200 km²

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Park Day in May

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Velebit degenia, Velebit bellflower, Croatian sibirica

ANIMALS: capercaillie, wolf, lynx, chamois, brown bear, golden eagle, otter, Croatian minnow



The largest park in Croatia

Whichever educational trail you take in the Velebit Nature Park, you will enjoy the natural and historical riches of this largest protected area in Croatia. The most attractive trail, Premužić Trail, will take you to the most beautiful parts of Velebit. On the Terezijana Trail you will walk on a part of the road built as early as 1786, which used to connect the towns of Karlobag and Gospić. The "Kudin most" trail takes you to the oldest bridge on the Krupa, the river of lavish waterfalls and travertine cascades. If you decide to walk from Starigrad Senjski to Donja Klada you will take the road that was marked back in 1847 and on your way you will see beautiful Adriatic coves, among which Zavrtnica stands out as protected landscape.





TELAŠĆICA
Park prirode
Nature Park



Did you know?

The small island of Taljurić, only three meters high, is entirely underwater during storms so there is no vegetation on it and it looks like a flat surface from afar. Did you know that the carnivorous sponge was found in the underwater cave on Garmenjak Veli at the depth of only 24 m? This inhabitant of great depths has so far only been found in such shallow waters in France.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1988
AREA: 70,5 km²
SCOPE: southern part of Dugi otok and adjoining islets
The Park is a haven for donkeys

POINT OF INTEREST

The old name Tilagus means three (connected) lakes

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Days of Medicinal Herbs in May
Dugi Otok Trail in March

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Dubrovnik knapweed, tree spurge
ANIMALS: red coral, European shag, bottlenose dolphin, short-toed snake-eagle, Eurasian eagle-owl, peregrine falcon, greater noctule bat



Three phenomena

In the south-eastern part of Dugi otok, the nature was generous so a relatively small area contains steep shores and tame coves, forests and fields, vineyards and olive groves, as well as harsh Dalmatian karst. Together with the view on the beautiful Kornati islands, the Telašćica Nature Park holds three phenomena particularly interesting for boaters. There is a calm cove called Telašćica as one of the safest and largest natural harbors on the Adriatic. Then there are cliffs, locally called "Stene", showing the relentless and wild side of the sea and Dalmatian environment. Finally, salt lake Mir gives an entirely different impression. Mir is home to the species of eel, locally called "kajman". Telašćica has been inhabited since ancient times, as can be seen from numerous archaeological remains found in the area like the burial mounds, the Illyrian mounds and the remains of Roman buildings from the first century.



LONJSKO POLJE
Park prirode
Nature Park



What to visit?

Picturesque villages with traditional wooden houses of Posavina, next to the River Sava and its tributaries perfectly fit into the landscape and simultaneously reflect very strict rules about organizing the space, given the constant threat of water and floods. One such village is Čigoč, the first to be given the title of the European Village of White Stork and also Krapje, the village of architectural heritage. Furthermore, the villages of Mužilovčica, Repušnica and Osekovo should not be neglected since they offer a fascinating view on Lonjsko polje, whether flooded or dry.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1990
Inscribed in IBA in 1989 and RAMSAR in 1993
AREA: 50 650 km²

EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Lonja Bike Tour in June
European Stork Village Day in Čigoč in June
European Heritage Days in Krapje in September
Mushroom Festival in Lonjsko polje in October

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: alluvial forests of pedunculate oak and narrow-leaved ash, European waterclover
ANIMALS: 250 bird species – white stork, black stork, white-tailed eagle, spoonbill



Discover the undiscovered

The Lonjsko polje Nature Park is another example of how much diversity there is in Croatia. This is one of the largest protected floodplains of the Danube basin, located by the River Sava between the towns of Sisak and Stara Gradiška. You can enjoy the beauty of the landscape and preserved wooden architecture, moist meadows and pastures, riparian lowland forests of pedunculate oak and narrow-leaved ash, as well as picturesque scenes of traditional system of pasturing. Among many activities you can also enjoy birdwatching, walking, canoeing, cycling, horse riding, photo safari or fishing. Tributaries, ponds, wetlands and pastures are a habitat for wetland birds, together with some very rare species in Europe. So far, 250 bird species have been registered in this area of which 170 species nest here, so some areas such as Krapje Đol and Rakita have been protected as special ornithological reserves. Lonjsko polje is one of the biggest hatcheries in Europe and its pastures feed some original breeds of domestic animals such as Posavac horse, Slavonian-Srijem Podolian cattle, Croatian coldblood and Turopolje pig.





Did you know?

Due to significant lithological diversity of rocks, minerals, fossils, geological structures and textures, and karst phenomena, the Papuk Nature Park became the first Croatian geopark in 2007 and was inscribed in UNESCO's network of geoparks.



MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1999

AREA: 336 km²

HIGHEST PEAK: Papuk, 953 m
95% of the Park is forest

EVENT OF THE YEAR

A medieval vital tournament in forest park Jankovac in September

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: greater pasque flower, Slender fritillary, marsh gentian, lady orchid

ANIMALS: snake-eyed skink, alcon blue, Mediterranean barbel, collared flycatcher, Bechstein's bat



Forest oasis at the heart of Slavonija

In the middle of the endless Slavonian plain mountains rise to almost a thousand meters above ground. One of those mountains is Papuk, the most beautiful one in Slavonija. The diverse and dense forests of Papuk are a habitat and haven for deer, doe, wild boar, fox and marten.... Furthermore, there are habitats of many bird species, whereas fast and cold mountain creeks provide habitat for specific fish species, amphibians and reptiles. The Jankovac Park-Forest is particularly rich with water and water resources. The dominating feature of the Park is certainly the 35 meter high waterfall Skakavac, known for its unique beauty all around Slavonija. The most significant geological site is Rupnica which became the first Croatian geological monument of nature already in 1948.

A great number of medieval fortifications, most of them originating from the 13th century, testify about the importance of the Papuk Hills, especially at the time of the Turkish invasions. Near the town of Orahovica stands the most beautiful and most preserved "old citadel" – Ružica, a valuable example of Gothic and Renaissance art. You can spend a day or a weekend in the Papuk Nature Park enjoying some adventurous activities or just walking, cycling, visiting events or just admiring nature.



Did you know?

Long time ago Vransko jezero was called "Vedro blato". Its cultural and historical features date back to the year 2000 BC.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1999

AREA: 57 km²

VISITORS' CENTRES: Crkvine - Ornithological reserve, Prosika port and Kamenjak viewpoint

POINT OF INTEREST

Vransko jezero is the largest lake in Croatia and the name of the Park comes from the medieval town of Vrana, seat of Croatian viceroy (ban), the Benedictines and Knights Templar

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Fair of local products *Luka i igara* in July/ August

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: sage, curry plant, Illyrian iris, *Anacamptis palustris*, grass lily, holm oak

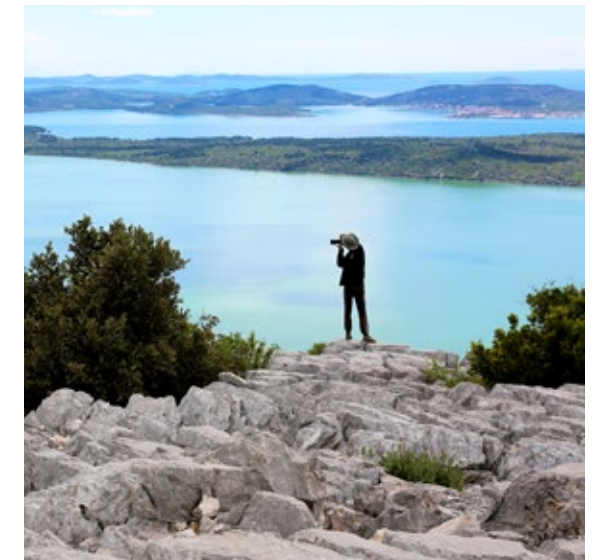
ANIMALS: more than 250 bird species – purple heron, pygmy cormorant, western marsh harrier, bladetail, eel, four-lined snake



Largest natural lake in Croatia

The Vransko jezero Nature Park is the favourite destination for birdwatchers and sport fishermen, however cyclists and hikers will surely enjoy the 40 kilometer long bike trail with the dominant scent of sage, stone viewpoints, rich wetland vegetation and drywalls in the Mediterranean maquis. The northwestern edge of the biggest natural lake in Croatia became a special ornithological reserve because of the great number of wetland birds. Moreover, Vransko jezero has been on the list of important European ornithological areas for more than twenty years now, nevertheless two years ago Vransko jezero joined the world network of wetlands.

Hardly anywhere else could you encounter three entirely different landscapes – the sea coast with a rich archipelago, the Mediterranean wetland and its rich ecosystem and the lively rural environment of Ravni kotari.





Mountain with magnificent view

The Učka Nature Park includes the mountain of Učka and part of the Čičarija massif stretching along the west coast of Kvarner Bay, at one of the most northern points of the Mediterranean. The proximity of the sea and different climate conditions contributed to the development of highly diverse flora and fauna. A special feature of this area is definitely the combination of natural resources and human activities in the form of many tangible remains and archaeological sites testifying about the presence of man in this place since pre-historical times. A viewpoint tower built in 1911 on Vojak, the highest peak of the mountain of Učka, represents a symbol of the Park today, and also a must-see Park destination given the magnificent view offered by the Vojak peak. In addition to mountain biking and hiking enthusiasts, Učka also attracts many free climbers. There are 62 available climbing routes in the canyon of Vela draga, a geomorphological nature monument, with numerous climbers visiting the site during the spring and autumn months.



Did you know?

Back in 1852, a group of mountain climbers from Rijeka completed their first ascent on Učka. The ascent was described in the Zagreb magazine "Neven" under the article title of "Dawn on Učka", thus being the oldest travel chronicle about a mountain ascent in Croatian literature. This is how Učka, until then interesting only to scientists, became a favourite destination among mountain climbers, as well as tourists who were on holiday in Opatija.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1999

AREA: 160 km²

HIGHEST PEAK: Vojak, 1401 m

MAIN ATTRACTIONS: Vojak, Vela Draga Canyon, Korita

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Učka Fair in September

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: Učka bellflower, Justin bellflower, Istrian spearwort, sweet chestnut - marron

ANIMALS: golden eagle, subterranean beetle - Božičević's filtrator (lat. *Croatodirus bozicevici*), alpine salamander



Ideal getaway

With more than 347 kilometers of hiking trails, 200 kilometers of bike trails and two climbing facilities – Okić and Terihaji, then two registered paragliding fields, Japetić and Plešivica, the Žumberak-Samoborsko gorje Nature Park is an ideal destination for a getaway. Visitors and hikers are thrilled by the views from Okić, Plešivica, Japetić or Sv. Gera. Even though it is clear at first sight that this is a typically karst area, the Park holds 828 springs, 260 water courses and 164 ponds. Particularly beautiful are the waterfalls such as Sopotski slap on the River Kupčina near its spring and Brisalo slap and Vranjički slap on the River Slapnica. The traditional way of life and customs in local villages are in tune with the preserved nature, as can be seen from endless vineyards on Plešivica and its top quality wines.

Did you know?

Žumberak has always been the centre of Greek Catholics in Croatia. Their churches were built in the 18th century and still attract visitors with their beauty, such as the church of St. Nikola in Badovinci, St. Petka in Budinjak, St. Juraj in Stojdraga, St. Petar i Pavao in Sošice next to which stands also a Roman Catholic Chapel of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 1999

Area: 342 km²

HIGHEST PEAK: Sveta Gera, 1178 m

SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA: Slapnica near Krašić, Japetić, Okić Grad and the surrounding area

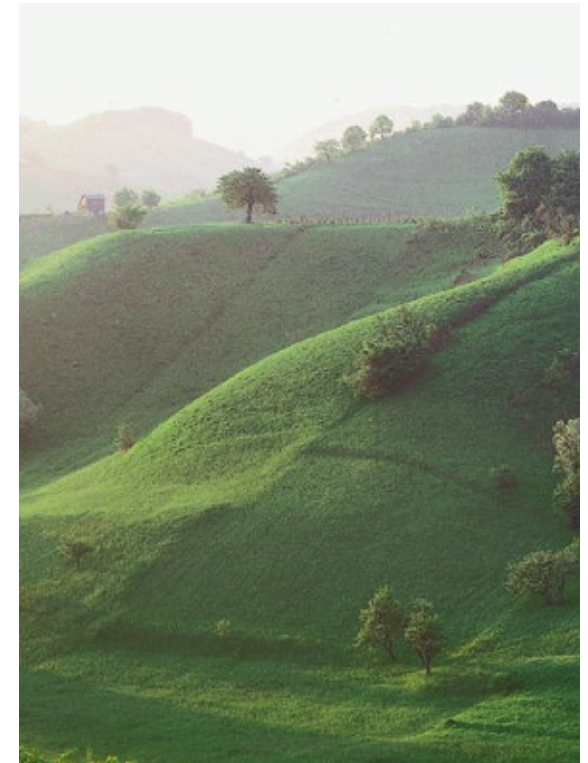
EVENT OF THE YEAR

Culinary Millennia – culinary workshops in September

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: mountain grasslands with more than 40 species of plants on one square meter

ANIMALS: bear, wolf, 11 species of bats, 110 species of birds and numerous endemic cave organisms





**LASTOVSKO
OTOČJE** Park prirode
Nature Park



Fumari - witnesses of life

Lastovo archipelago of mystical beauty with dense forests and fertile fields, enriched with ponds, steep shores, land and underwater caves, as well as numerous rare sea and land species and habitats are among the richest and best preserved treasuries of biodiversity on the Mediterranean. Many stone churches reflect the rich cultural and historical heritage as do the picturesque chimneys called “fumari” which were built to show the status of home owners. The event called “Lastovski poklad” (Lastovo Carnival) gathers all of the islanders. The small town of Lastovo is in the shape of an amphitheatre. There are still stone houses there built in the 15th and 16th centuries. Lučica is the last preserved example of a baroque fishermen’s settlement. The highest peak Hum is the most beautiful viewpoint on the island.

What to visit?

Choose one out of many hiking and cycling trails and discover 46 old stone churches hidden around the island, dive into the Adriatic at some of the most attractive locations and then lift your head up towards the second darkest sky in Europe and observe galaxies as if laid out for you on a silver platter.

MAIN FEATURES

PROCLAIMED AS NATURE PARK: 2006

AREA: 53 km² land surface and 143 km² sea surface

SETTLEMENTS: Lastovo, Zaklopatica, Skrivena luka, Ubli, Pasadur

NUMBER OF ISLANDS: 46 islands, islets and reefs

NUMBER OF HOURS OF SUNSHINE: 2700 annually

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Lastovo Carnival (“Lastovski poklad”), a 500 year old custom

FLORA AND FAUNA

PLANTS: white alyssum, Mauritanian grass, stenoendemic Dalmatian Biserrula, Sušac mustard

ANIMALS: crustaceans – colonies of the European spiny lobster, European lobster, Mediterranean slipper lobster and European spider crab, gastropods - Triton’s trumpet, zoned mitre and giant tun, several species of dolphins and sea turtles



Volunteer programs



Volunteer programs in National Parks and Nature Parks have been implemented in their current form since 2016. The strong appeal of nature-related work reflects in the results achieved so far: in 2016, through various programs, almost 300 volunteers donated over 10,000 working hours (1200 working days) to nature protection.

There are approximately thirty programs on offer each year, and activities available to volunteers include polling and providing information to visitors; data collection and conservation of species and habitats; removal of invasive species; maintenance of botanical gardens, olive groves, dry stone walls and trails; preservation of traditional activities; cleaning of trails and the environment; care for domestic animals; waste collection; support in organizing various events; nature photography. Over 40 trained coordinators and their deputies from public institutions are involved in the development

and management of volunteer programs, and all such programs are harmonized with Park management plans.

A comprehensive list of open volunteer programs and online application form are available at: <http://volonteri.parkovihrvatske.hr/hr/>.



Contacts

NP PAKLENICA

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Dr. Franje Tuđmana 14a,
23244 Starigrad Paklenica

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)23 369 155

00385 (0)23 369 202
(Directorate and Camp)

00385 (0)23 369 803
(Entrance reception of Park)

PP KOPAČKI RIT

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Mali Sakadaš 1,
31327 Bilje, Kopačevo

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)31 445 445
00385 (0)31 752 320
00385 (0)31 752 322

PP LASTOVSKO OTOČJE

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Trg sv. Petra 7, 20289 Ubli,
otok Lastovo, Hrvatska

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)20 801 252

NP KRKA

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Trg Ivana Pavla II. br. 5,
22000 Šibenik

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)22 201 777

NP RISNJAK

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Bijela Vodica 48,
51317 Crni Lug

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)51 836 133
00385 (0)51 836 261

NP KORNATI

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Butina 2,
22243 Murter

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)22 435 740

PP TELAŠĆICA

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Sali IV 2, 23281 Sali

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)23 377 096

NP SJEVERNI VELEBIT

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Krasno 96, 53274 Krasno

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)53 665 393

NP PLITVIČKA JEZERA

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Josipa Jovića 19,
53231 Plitvička Jezera

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)53 751 026
(Additional information,
entrance)

00385 (0)53 751 014

00385 (0)53 751 015
(Reservations, Sales department)

PP PAPUK

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Trg Gospe Voćinske 11,
33522 Voćin

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)34 313 029

PP VELEBIT

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Kaniža Gospićka 4b,
53000 Gospić

TELEPHONE:
Gospić
00385 (0)53 560 450

Krasno
00385 (0)53 851 600

Obrovac
00385 (0)23 689 818

PP VRANSKO JEZERO

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
K. Petra Svačića 2,
23210 Biograd n/m

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)23 383 181

NP MLJET

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Pristanište 2,
20226 Goveđari

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)20 744 041

NP BRIJUNI

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Brionska 10, 52212 Fažana

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)52 525 888
00385 (0)52 525 882
00385 (0)52 525 883

PP ŽUMBERAK - SAMOBORSKO GORJE

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Slani Dol 1, 10430 Samobor

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)1 3327 660

PP MEDVEDNICA

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Bliznec 70, 10 000 Zagreb

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)1 458 6317

PP UČKA

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Liganj 42, 51415 Lovran

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)51 293 753

PP LONJSKO POLJE

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Krapje 16, 44324 Jasenovac

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)44 672 080
00385 (0)44 611 190

PP BOKOVO

LOCATION OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION:
Marineta – Mala obala 16, 21300
Makarska

TELEPHONE:
00385 (0)21 616 924



Explore all 19 Parks of Croatia at www.parkovihrvatske.hr and buy your entry tickets online

Web portal www.parkovihrvatske.hr is an official online guide that visitors can use to take a virtual walk through the Parks, to plan their visit, and to obtain all relevant information, including information about key Park attractions, in four languages: Croatian, English, German and Italian. The web portal contains information about almost 300 attractions and more than 1000 trails and sites shown on the map. All activities accessible to persons with disabilities are specially marked. The web portal also includes a webshop for purchase of entry tickets.

Download the *Parks of Croatia* mobile app

The mobile app facilitates orientation in the Parks, offering an enhanced visitor experience. By using the app during your stay in a Park, you can explore many interesting sites, obtain a range of useful information, or simply have a look at where you might go next. The app uses Bluetooth technology and beacon transmitters to notify users whenever they come near an interesting site or attraction. This free mobile app is available in Croatian and English, and it can also be used offline.

Follow the Parks of Croatia on social networks Facebook and Instagram

Parks of Croatia web portal and mobile app have been prepared within the *PARCS Project*, implemented in the Republic of Croatia by the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant.