

Community conserved areas as pools of biodiversity – Croatia's study case



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Outline

Introduction

Natura 2000 in Croatia

Legal framework

Gajna, Croatia – example of sustainable grazing as prerequisite for nature protection

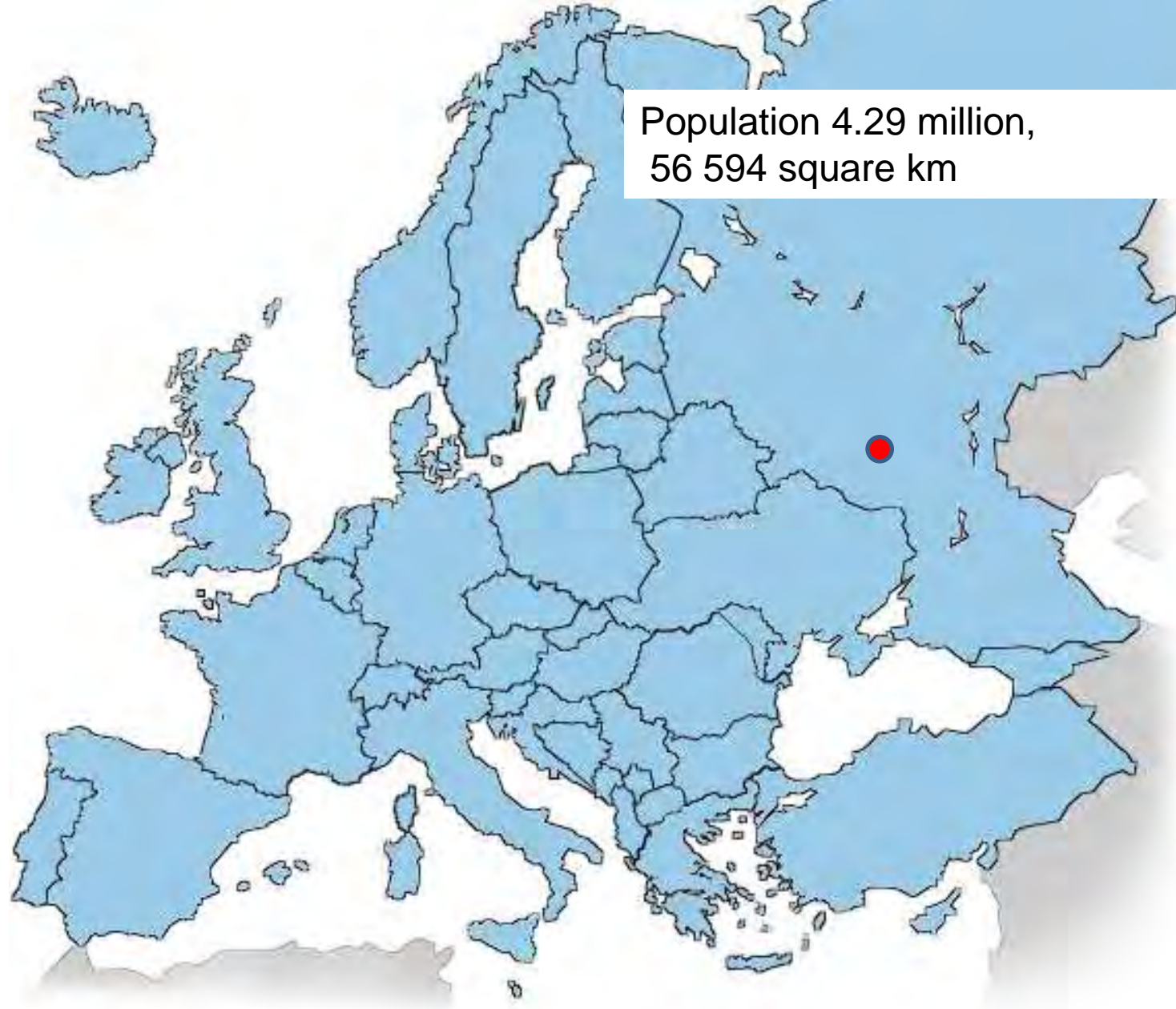
Problems/solutions/joint actions

ICCAs and ICCA Consortium

Geography of

Croatia :

- plains, lakes and rolling hills in the continental north and north-east (Central Croatia and Slavonia, part of the Pannonian Basin);
- densely wooded mountains in Lika and Gorski Kotar, part of the Dinaric Alps;
- rocky coastlines on the Adriatic Sea (Istria, Northern Sea coast and Dalmatia).



Population 4.29 million,
56 594 square km

Mediterranean forests

The Western Balkans - one of the richest parts of Europe in terms of biodiversity.

High number of endemic species and habitats, many of which are either of global or European conservation importance.

Low input orchards and olive groves

wetlands

The density of animal, bird and fish species listed in the Red List of Threatened Species (by area) is two to four times higher than in the 15 older EU Member States (EEA, 2010).

marine areas – sustainable fishery

mountain meadows and pastures

Many of these landscapes and habitats were created by the centuries old practices of extensive grazing and low-input small-scale cropping throughout the Balkans. Still ongoing but diminishing practices of transhumance and nomadic herding, common grazing and forest grazing, making best use of the adapted local breeds and plant varieties.

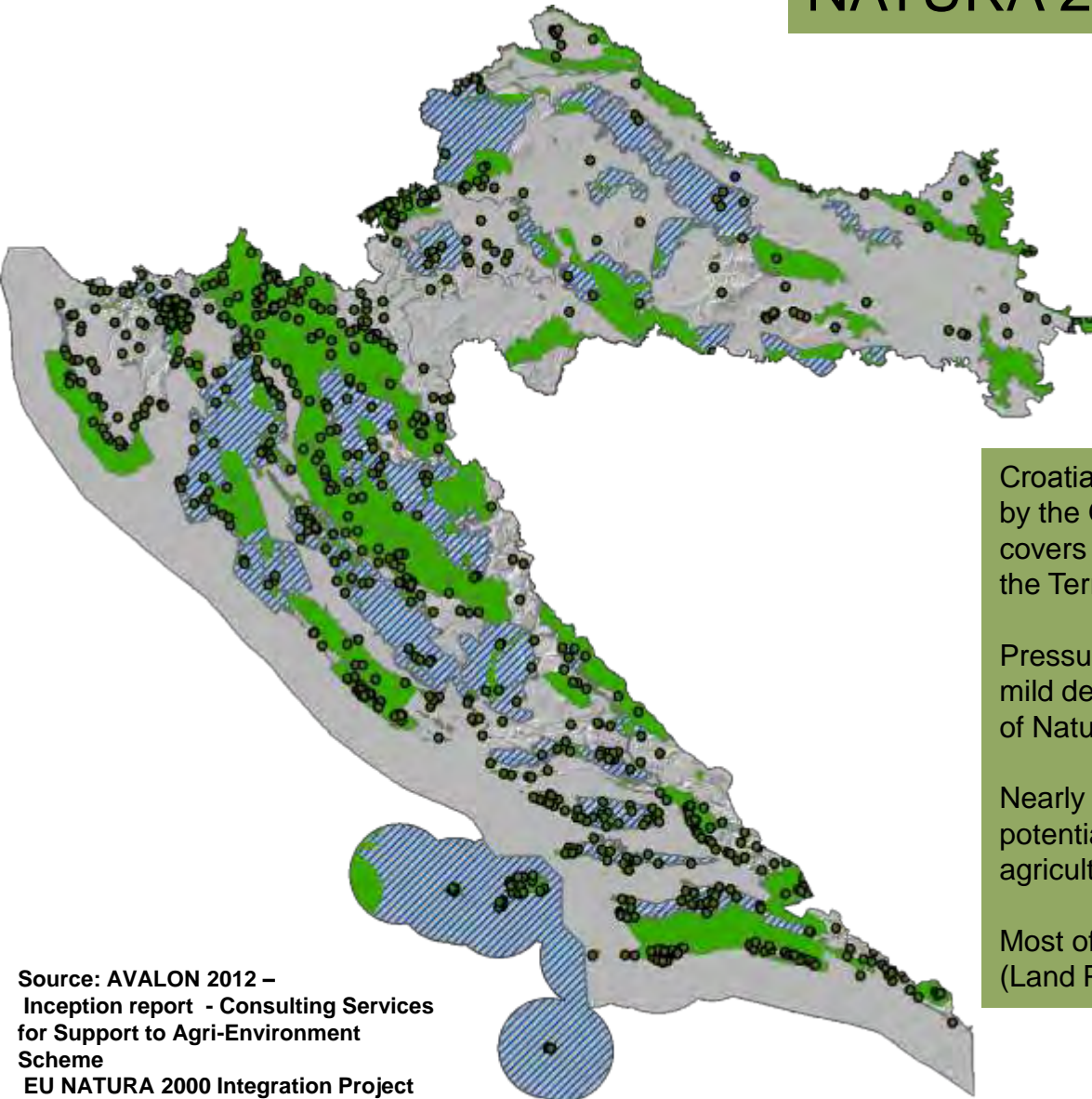
freshwater wetlands

The inter-linkage between HNV farming, bio- diversity and traditional landscapes is very strong. A large number of the future NATURA 2000 sites are or will be located in

karstic terrain natural areas.

And many many many more.....

NATURA 2000 in Croatia – facts



Croatia's Ecological Network (CRO-NEN) proclaimed by the Government of Croatia in November 2007, covers 47 % of Croatian Land Territory and 39 % of the Territorial Sea.

Pressures from different sectors will influence the mild decrease of the percentage of the final proposal of Natura 2000

Nearly every third hectare (31% or 644,000 ha) of potential Croatian NATURA 2000 sites is located on agricultural land

Most of the agricultural N2000 areas are not in LPIS (Land Parcel Identification System)

Source: AVALON 2012 –
Inception report - Consulting Services
for Support to Agri-Environment
Scheme
EU NATURA 2000 Integration Project
(NIP)

Legal framework

Act on proclamation of land and similar communities and property communities' common property, 1953 – common pastures formally transferred to State ownership

Croatia omitted the “social ownership” and passed a property restitution law in 1990, and subsequently amended that law in 1991 and 1993 and the 1996 “Law on Restitution/Compensation of Property Taken During the Time of the Yugoslav Communist Government” However, due to series of reason it was mostly not applicable to the land communities since, to simplify it, the State claimed they lacked unbroken continuity and in many cases just transferred the social ownership of the land to the state ownership.

The Agricultural Land Act (OG 152/08) – ammended 21/10, 124/10 and 63/11

Municipalities have been given the right to decide on the lease of the formerly common and now State owned land. (Out of 547 municipalities 75 do not posses state owned land and 74 never created the Program of distribution of the State owned land as required by the 2008 Act)

Amendments 63/11 introduction of so called *Pasturing communities*. *PCs* - a cooperative – only with people with residence of that or neighbouring municipalities.

The Ordinance on Conditions for Submitting Requirements and Criteria for the Lease of Communal Pastures (OG 135/11)

Newest **Agricultural Land Act 39/13** - Pasturing communities kicked out between two readings in the Parliament – subacts to follow – future of Pasturing communities uncertain. Articles 46 and 47 - biggest differences – any private or legal person instead of PC's ; 5 years instead of 20; proportionally to number of cattle, Agency for agricultural Land taking over the tenders and all procedures from municipalities.

New Nature Protection Act – custodian contracts in parts or whole protected areas.



Case study - GAJNA

In densely populated and intensively cultivated agricultural area close to the Sava River, there are places extremely valuable for nature and directly dependent on traditional land use (common pastures, flooded grasslands and alluvial floodplain lowland forests)

Similar grazing practices throughout centuries – continuous communal governance of the land



Late Bronze Age



1970's



1980's



2010's

Local community and NGO BED founded in 1989 - managing the area together - revitalization, biodiversity protection and protection of cultural and natural heritage



Protected as a significant landscape since 1990, 280 ha of typical flooded pasture, alluvial depressions and elevations,

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Directly dependant on activities of local community for its survival as a valuable habitat

Indigenous and protected breeds – best caretakers of the pasture – low input, high stamina, natural and cultural heritage, gene pool, best for extermination of invasive plant species, adaptation qualities



Black Slavonian Pig



**Slavonian
Syrmium
Podolian
Cattle**



Tsigai sheep



5/30/2013

Posavina Horse



Croatian Shephard Dog

Gajna - Pool of biodiversity- Networks – Emerald, Natura 2000 (SPA and SAC), ELBARN

Four leaf clover– *Marsilea quadrifolia* – EU red list



Numerous alluvial depressions harbour over 250 plant species of marshy and pasture flora. It is important bird feeding and fish spawning area.

Sand martin – *Riparia riparia*



Black stork– *Ciconia nigra*



Invasive plant species poses a major threat, particularly *Amorpha fruticosa* – grazing is the only efficient way of controlling it !!!



Podolians grazing on amorpha



Pašnjačka zajednica osnivanje 25.02.2012.

Gajna – place of the first Pasturing community in Croatia

Eco-cooperative Gajna was founded in 2007- re-registered as Pasturing community in 2012. Management plan created for Common pasture Gajna in 2012.- approved by Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection

www.bed.hr –new english version expected in June 2013

Conservation measures have to be followed: ensure constant livestock grazing in pasture areas; keep 10-15% of the total area under water during non-flooding periods; keep 10% of the total area covered by indigenous forest vegetation (oak, willow, poplar and narrow-leaf ash); prohibit waste disposal in the area; prohibit removal of surface soils with grasses ; favour traditional endangered domestic breeds etc

Problems: Inefficient institutional support, sporadic funding, legal obstacles and ambiguities impede traditional grazing practices, population decrease, high infrastructural costs due to floods, invasive species dispersion and overgrowth, overlapping of jurisdictions.



Most important threats for community conserved areas in Croatia

1. Unclear **legal regimes in governance and land tenure** of former common grounds + overlapping of jurisdictions (water and forest companies, municipalities, nature protection bodies, local communities...) impeding eligibility for subsidies

Without a solution of land eligibility rules for CAP support in particular, even the most perfect set of EU or national subsidies would be wasted. An organizational structure that can administer the agrienvironment measures and payments to farmers is still undercapacited.

2. Disappearance of the last generation of pastoralists, **population decrease and isolation** in the rural areas , **social stigma**

Economic and the the social conditions in areas where common grazing still exist are very unfavourable, most of them being in the so called Areas of special state concern. These areas are in most cases also affected by the war in the 1990's and have suffered additional war related depopulation. The traditional knowledge of extensive grazing regimes and conditions is disappearing since there is no transfer of knowledge to the younger generations. Shepherding wears social stigma as a practice of the poorest.

3. Developmental pressures – intensive agriculture, unsustainable tourism, land purchase

Croatia is not an exemption in transitional societies and is affected by the new type of economy favoring the interests of capital and big corporations.

Links between community conservation and land stewardship

Land stewardship

- What it could mean for Croatia ?
- Land stewardship is an unknown concept in Croatia as is community conservation or Natura 2000 outside the conservation circles
- Problems with the unclear tenure – State owned land

What is certain?

Links , mutual understanding and sync between policies and actors involved are very weak but pivotal for finding viable solutions.

Economic support most important and urgent but should be followed with sets of measures aimed at support towards sustaining social and cultural values.

Through the barricades....

Nature Conservation

- Agriculture is the biggest threat to biodiversity
- Rural people always look after economic interests first
- Communities do not have knowledge necessary for nature conservation – only experts can guide the process
- Nature has to be protected from people



Agriculture

- Greening is more work and less profit
- Are we gonna eat bees, birds and butterflies ?
- Traditional practices are ineffective, that is why they disappeared in the first place
- Protected areas are hijacking land from better use



RED ALERT – The knowledge collected in the last generation of pastoralists and other traditional users will be gone if we do not react jointly

QUESTION - How do we learn each other's languages and find common grounds ?



What does ICCA's stand for ?

Indigenous Peoples' **and Community Conserved Areas** and Territories

3 ICCA defining characteristics:

1. The community is *closely connected to a defined ecosystem* culturally and/ or because of survival and dependence for livelihood
2. The community management *decisions and efforts lead to the conservation of nature*
3. The community is the *major player in decision making* (governance) and implementation regarding the management of the site

The ICCA Consortium is an international association whose Members are organizations

The Consortium also has honorary members (individuals) and partners (e.g., CBD Sec., IUCN, GEF SGP, etc.) –

www.iccaconsortium.org – Iris Beneš Coordinator for Central, Eastern and Northern Europe iris@iccaconsortium.org

The ICCA Consortium is *an international association dedicated to promoting the appropriate recognition of, and support to, the territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs).*

International recognition of ICCAs is also getting stronger by the day World Parks Congress (Durban 2003); **CBD PoWPA**; IUCN Resolutions; UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ; CBD agreements in Nagoya (Oct 2010) and Aichi Targets; International ICCA Registry at UNEP WCMC in Cambridge...

In 2012 CBD studies in 20 countries in the world about the ICCAs recognition and support.

In Europe – Croatia, Great Britain, Italy, Spain – studies can be downloaded at

<http://www.cbd.int/protected/ts64-country-case-studies/>





Thank you for your attention