

Although the territory with two thirds of forests, the largest lake in the Balkans, salt marshes and salt pans should be a kind of oasis, illegal human activities on the one hand and inaction of responsible government departments and agencies on the other become a dangerous place for plants and animals, including protected species.

The lynx - the largest cat species in Europe is extinct - has been uprooted from Montenegrin forests. Rare and protected birds, snakes, fish and eels, mollusks are endangered. Poaching and other illegal activities of people contribute the most to that, but also the inadequate attitude of the authorities and mild court practice - the research of the Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro (CIN-CG) and the Monitor showed.

The enumeration of individual species whose endangerment is pointed out by ecologists is not complete, because there is still no "Red List of Plants, Animals and Fungi" in Montenegro, a list of endangered species made by the International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN. The Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism confirmed for CIN-CG / Monitor that, according to the Law on Nature Protection, this list is determined by the Agency for Nature and Environmental Protection, explaining that "in the coming period the possibilities of providing funds for this need will be considered. ". The Agency told CIN-CG / Monitor that they have repeatedly asked for money from the budget, but also from foreign donors for this project, for which, as they claim, it is necessary to hire the entire expert staff in Montenegro. Until then, for example, eel hunting, an endangered species on the global Red List, remains allowed in Skadar Lake National Park.

About 200,000 birds die annually in Montenegro, the Center for the Protection and Study of Birds (CZIP) recently warned again. This is the data from the report of BirdLife International "The Killing 2.0 - A view to a kill", from 2018, which states that every year in Montenegro, between 64,000 and 197,000 individuals of protected bird species are killed. When it was published, it provoked fiery reactions and disputes between hunting organizations.

News about the forbidden hunting "checks" found in the Ulcinj Saltworks Nature Park, a nesting place for more than 250 species of birds, the recent killing of a bear in Berane, keeping wolves in a yard in the Podgorica settlement of Tološi, and killing deer and deer testify to the unregulated area.

In terms of biodiversity, diversity of the living world, Montenegro is one of the most important areas in Europe, says for CIN-CG / Monitor biologist Dr. Bogić Gligorović. According to him, 70 percent of mammal species, 75 percent of bird species, 50 percent of freshwater species and 79 percent of marine fish species, and 30 percent of plant species live on the territory of Montenegro. Invertebrates have not been studied in detail, but it is estimated that about 30,000 species live on the territory of Montenegro, and a significant number of relict and endemic species are also present.

The existing national legislation in Montenegro protects 873 species: six algae, 111 fungi,

27 mosses, two ferns, 272 plants, nine sponges, seven corals, common arthropods, 18 mollusks, five arachnids, four species of crustaceans, 14 insects, six echinoderms, 11 fish, 16 amphibians, 26 reptiles, 298 birds and 35 species of mammals. The Ministry of Ecology answered the question of CIN-CG / Monitor that “there are no precise data on the condition and number of each of the protected animal species”.

The fact that more detailed data and estimates have not been published since the 1980s shows the changes in the number and structure of fish populations in Skadar Lake, according to the analysis of Nature Protection in Montenegro published by Green Home. The data that are updated annually are those on the number of hunting animals. Biologists warn that they are collected based on the assessment of hunting associations, that scientific methods are not applied, and that they are not reliable. And they are different. Data on the number of game and shooting are collected by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Nature Protection Agency and Monstat. According to the latest available data for 2019, Monstat states that the number of wolves is 601 and foxes 7,748, the Agency claims - there are 569 wolves and 7,856 foxes.

Monstat states that 31 wolves were shot in 2019, 1,163 foxes, 29 wolves and 1,190 foxes in the Agency. According to the data of the Ministry of Agriculture, the shooting of 181 wolves was approved, and 31 were killed, while out of the approved 1,824, 1,233 foxes were killed. According to the Ministry, 3,091 Zeceva were killed, 2,517 by the Agency, and 3,098 by Monstat.

According to the Law on Game and Hunting, the permanent ban on hunting applies to the great weasel, bears, deer, chamois, hinds, as well as to the great black grouse and hazel. According to the verdicts of the courts, there are almost no cases that, like a killed bear, upset the public and the poachers end up in custody.

According to the data provided by CIN-CG / Monitor, the Basic Court in Podgorica has made two decisions in the last five years for the criminal offense of illegal hunting against three persons, of which only one was given a suspended sentence. Seven decisions were made for the crime of killing and torturing animals and destroying their habitat. In one, which included three people, one was sentenced to work in the public interest. In others, one person was fined and the others were given a suspended sentence.

At the level of Montenegro, 12 people were reported for illegal hunting in 2019, in 2018 ten, a year earlier there were nine, according to the data of the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office. The law prescribes a prison sentence of six months to five years for poaching of a protected species.

Out of a total of 127 court cases, between 2013 and 2018, which included cases of illegal killing of animals, abuse of animals and destruction of habitats, more than half - 84 cases were completely rejected.

According to reliable information from CIN-CG / Monitor, despite the ban on fishing on

Skadar Lake and the public call of the management of this national park for citizens not to buy fish during the ban, hundreds of kilograms are illegally caught every weekend. The management of the Skadar Lake National Park has warned that this is a poaching mafia. The security service of the National Park, as it was announced, recently caught two people on the boat in which there were batteries, and other equipment used for poaching. Prosecutor Ivana Petrušić-Vukašević, as stated by the Skadar Lake National Park, decided that there were no elements of a crime in that case, despite the fact that batteries, a negotiator and probes were found in the boats, so she acquitted the two men. , “which means that the funds for the crime will be returned to them.”

Source: cin-cg.me