



**MILVUS GROUP**

ANNUAL REPORT

2022





## **OUR VISION**

We envision a world where people live in balance with nature, see it as a fundamental value and acts accordingly.

## **OUR MISSION**

We are committed to protecting our natural heritage. We carry out applied research and conservation work for endangered species, raise awareness and educate people, monitor compliance with nature conservation regulations and engage in influencing environmental policies.

## **OUR VALUES**

### **Expertise:**

our staff includes biologists and ecologists with longstanding experience in nature conservation.

### **Credibility:**

in making decisions, we rely on best practice models and our field experience.

### **Perseverance:**

we have been committed to our mission since we founded our organization in 1991.



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## MEANING OF SYMBOLS



project funded  
program



own funds, dona-  
tions supported  
program



made  
by employees



made  
by volunteers

## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In the preface of our 2019 activity report, we enthusiastically reported that the topic of nature protection has never been so present and important in European speeches and plans as it was then. It was the time of the launch of the European Green Deal, a time of optimism and hope. We saw that the European Commission was building its plans by listening to the voice of science and we were delighted. From that moment on, we realised that the reform of the EU's Agricultural Policy is the turning point - without it, the Green Deal sounds nice, but doesn't achieve its goal.

Now, in 2022 we already know that the green reform of the Agricultural Policy has not succeed-

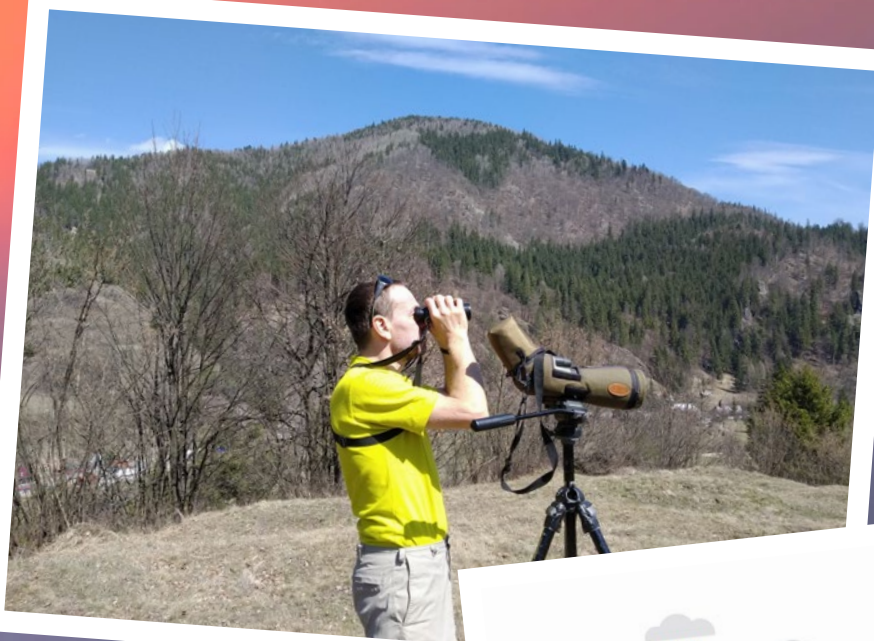
ed as originally intended and many other components of the European Green Deal have been weakened - we see that despite the escalating climate crisis, we are still prioritising (some people's) short-term profit over the long-term welfare of the world.

Romania is no exception. We would be overjoyed to be able to say that our politicians have tried to make good decisions and influence EU policies in a direction that will not lead to climate catastrophe and ecosystem collapse.

But it is exactly the opposite. Unfortunately, both the government and the members of the European Parliament (with a few exceptions) still put the brakes on all EU Commission proposals that would lead us towards a greener future, under the false pretext that first of all we need to develop economically, catch up with Western Europe and only then will we have the resources to think







about nature and the climate. No comment.

In this context, we tried to influence Romania's agricultural policy (National Strategic Plan for Rural Development) - by all possible means, participating in public consultations, submitting proposals to the Ministry of Agriculture and the European Commission together with other nature conservation organisations, organisations representing small farmers or beekeepers, etc. Although, our coalition's proposals were clearly in favour of the

millions of small farmers, nature and the climate, all we succeeded in doing is that the final version of the strategic plan is less harmful than the initial one.

The hope, without which it would be very difficult to continue our activities, now comes from the new law proposed by the European Commission under the European Green Pact, with the telling name of Nature Restoration Law. I hope to have good news about it next year!

In the meantime, I invite you to read about our more concrete activities, through which we try to save and improve nature in Romania.

**Papp Tamás, president**

# 2022

## OUR WORK IN NUMBERS

▶ 82

active members

▶ 30

employees

▶ 944

days spent in  
the fieldworked  
in

▶ 1.584

municipalities  
in

▶ 42

counties

▶ 1.217

children and

▶ 500

adults  
involved in our  
educational  
activities

▶ 12.784

people downloaded the free  
bird determination app

▶ 15.760

birds ringed

we cared for

▶ 187

animals

provided telephone  
assistance in

▶ 2.500

cases in

▶ 14

counties

If you want to  
join our community,  
become a  
member of  
Milvus Group.

[Scan here!](#)





In 2022  
we worked here

The intensity  
of our  
activities:



Photo credit: Gothárd Ferenc Alpár



## CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES ON ENDANGERED SPECIES

In recent decades there have been major changes in the habitats of many species. As a result, their traditional ranges have been drastically reduced. Unfortunately, comprehensive conservation plans cannot be drawn up for every endangered species, and experts need to prioritise. Globally endangered or strictly protected species are targeted for conservation action in most countries, including our own.

In many cases, their protection can only be achieved through habitat conservation. In this way, in addition to the target species, other animal and plant species living in these areas can also be protected. That's why we call them umbrella species.

For endangered species in need of urgent conservation action, the development of action plans and implementation of specific conservation measures are essential.

This year, we have again participated in several international species conservation programmes and have striven to ensure the continuity of similar projects and activities started in previous years.







*Autumn, the Red-footed falcons gather in stopover places*

## RED-FOOTED FALCON



It is a long-distance migratory raptor species that nests in colonies in our country, usually occupying abandoned nests of other corvid species. At EU level, Romania is home to the largest nesting population and, to our knowledge, the most significant part of the entire global population migrates over Romania in autumn. Our country therefore has a great responsibility for the long-term conservation of the species.



together with our colleagues from Hungary, Serbia and Slovakia, we continued monitoring the autumn Red-footed falcon stopover sites in Banat and Crişana. Between August and October, during 7 field days, we counted more than 8000 Red-footed falcons;



for a relatively widespread, but endangered species such as the Red-footed falcon in our country, a wide range of conservation measures are needed to ensure the long-term survival of the population. Adequate funding for such costly programmes is currently inconceivable without targeted projects with significant resources. As we have done several times in the past, this year we have also submitted, together with several partners, a proposal for a LIFE project on the conservation of the Red-footed falcon. Unfortunately, we have not been successful so far, but we will not give up!



artificial wooden nests, installed in previous years, no longer withstand the weather and are increasingly difficult to replace and maintain. We have started to design a sustainable, long-term solution for this type of nest.

## GREAT BUSTARD



The largest flying bird in Europe in the last century has been on the verge of extinction from Romania's fauna. Today, the only viable population - 40-50 birds - in the country is found in the border area between the municipality of Salonta and the neighbouring town of Mezögyán (Hungary). The fact that it is such a small population makes it even more vulnerable, and its long-term conservation requires more concrete protection measures.



as in the past two years, a nesting Great bustard was spotted in Salonta in 2022. Although the farmer using the alfalfa mower stopped work when the nest was found, the disturbed bird did not return and the eggs were predated. All these incidents only highlight the need to find a solution to detect nesting Great bustards and, if necessary (as should have been the case this year), to establish a temporary protection zone;



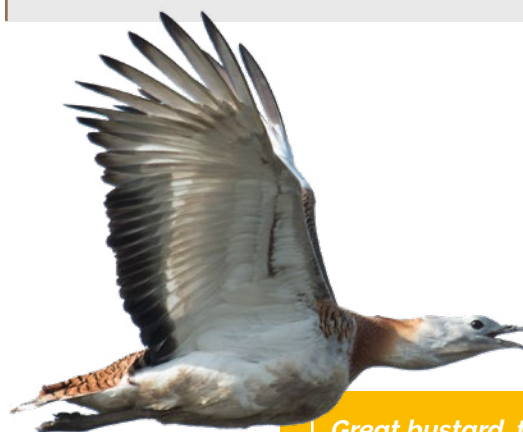
we attended the spring workshop and the annual autumn meeting of the Hungarian Great Bustard Conservation Working Group;



in January we participated at the annual winter census of Great bustards in Central Europe. At the 2022 edition, 24 individuals were observed in the Salonta area;



we spent a total of 17 days in the field observing the Great bustards.



*Great bustard, the largest flying bird in Europe*

## SAKER FALCON



The Saker falcon can be found in open habitats in the western counties of the country and in Dobrogea. Among the species it most often consumes is the European ground squirrel, which lives on meadows. Thanks to international cooperation projects and especially the installation of artificial nests, the population, which had almost disappeared, has increased dramatically in recent years.



35 of the 43 territorial pairs have successfully nested;



at least 109 chicks hatched in nesting boxes set up almost a decade ago;



we also checked the natural nests on high voltage poles in Timis county, but here we did not detect any nesting falcons.

*Thanks to our efforts over the past 10 years, the number breeding pairs of has increased from 1 to over 40*



*The population of the European roller from the West of Romania is steadily increasing thanks to the artificial nests installed by the Milvus Group*

## EUROPEAN ROLLER



In recent decades, European roller populations, once widespread north and west of the Pannonian region (except in the Mediterranean area), have declined dramatically or even disappeared. It is a species characteristic of grassland habitats and open wooded areas. Therefore, the conservation of these populations in the Carpathian Basin is crucial for the perpetuation of the species in Europe and a good knowledge of habitat requirements and threats is indispensable.



we checked the survival rate of the poplar seedlings planted in the LIFE project and after the end of the project, we carried out maintenance and watering of the seedlings in the drought-affected areas;



planted new saplings in place of those that had withered in previous years. In total, we planted 550 grey poplar saplings in 15 locations in 4 counties in the west of the country.





*Golden eagle, the bird from the Coat of Arms of Romania*

## GOLDEN EAGLE



The Golden eagle is the largest bird of prey in the Carpathian Mountains. The aim of the programme is to research the species and monitor nesting success in Romania. The programme is run in partnership with the Albamont Mountain Ecology and Tourism Club.



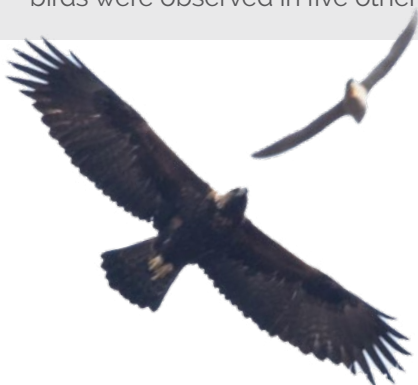
during 52 days in the field, we checked 27 territories in the Apuseni Mountains and 10 territories in the Eastern Carpathians, of which 26 were occupied;



in the case of 3 pairs of eagles that nested on the tree, their nest was destroyed due to bad weather and the chicks perished;



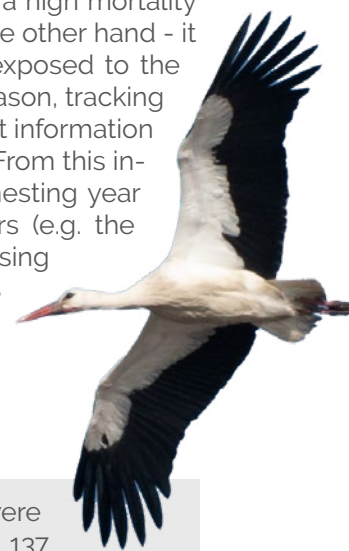
nesting success this year was generally poorer than in previous years. Unfortunately, no data were collected from five nesting territories, no birds were observed in five other areas.



## WHITE STORK



The White stork is a pleasant and familiar neighbour in the countryside, loved not only by ornithologists but also by nature-loving people. Protecting this species is important because, on the one hand - being a migratory species, it has a high mortality rate in its first year of life, and on the other hand - it nests on electricity poles and is exposed to the danger of electrocution. For this reason, tracking nesting success provides important information about changes in population size. From this information it is clear whether the nesting year was poor or whether other factors (e.g. the death of one of the pair) are causing the population decline, which is why action needs to be taken.



63 nests in Transylvania were monitored and a total of 137 chicks were counted in 16 localities;



we ringed 125 chicks in 9 localities in 3 counties (Cluj, Mures, Harghita);



19 storks ringed in previous years with coloured rings were resighted and identified. Of these, 5 individuals were ringed by members of the Milvus Group.

*White storks become sexually mature only after the age of 3-4 years*





Rescued  
bear cub

## BROWN BEAR



There are a lot of myths and misinformation circulating in society about bears, and these have a negative impact on the social acceptance of the species, making it difficult to conserve. There is little credible scientific information about bears in Romania, which raises questions about the effectiveness and results of conservation or management activities. At the same time, however, the species is threatened by real threats, such as the development of transport infrastructure (e.g. motorways), which is damaging and fragmenting the extensive habitats that bears need.



we have produced a new episode of the mini-series "Bear Fact", a series in which we wanted to provide real information about the species. Previous episodes have been watched by hundreds of thousands of people;



we donated and installed 2 electric fences at sheepfolds to prevent further damage from bears;



rescued 4 bear cubs and handed them over to the Bear Again Orphan Bear Rehabilitation Centre. Three of them needed medical care;



we captured 1 bear and her 1-year-old cub, habituated to humans. We relocated the female after negative conditioning, while the male cub, who had lost all fear of humans, ended up at the Libearty Bear Sanctuary in Zărnești;



based on our data from bears monitored with GPS collars, the environmental agreement for the Tîrgu Mures [Craciunești]-Miercurea Niraj section of the future A8 highway (Tîrgu Mures-Iasi-Ungheni) foresees the construction of two 100 m wide green bridges (overpasses) for bears. The structures will ensure the permeability of the highway for wild animals. Furthermore, this section of the future highway will be fenced along its entire length with a reinforced bear-proof fence. Beyond the obvious benefits for wildlife species, these measures will also enhance passenger safety on the future A8 highway by preventing collisions with wildlife.





## EURASIAN LYNX



Next to the Brown bear and the Wolf, the European lynx is the third largest carnivore species in Romania. Unlike the other two species, the European lynx is not the subject of public debate because it does not cause damage to farmers and hunting it does not bring significant financial benefits. The low interest in this species has made it the least known large carnivore in Romania. There is virtually no information on the basic needs of the species or on the factors that threaten the Romanian population.



using motion-sensing cameras, in 2021 we started investigating the habitat preferences of the European lynx in two adjacent hunting grounds. In 2022 we centralised and processed data collected in 2021;



we started collecting video footage to make a short film about the European lynx. In 2022 the 37 motion sensor cameras mounted for this purpose recorded a total of 56 lynx videos. Of course, in addition to lynxes, the cameras also filmed other species: wolf, bear, deer, roe deer, wild boar, wild cat, fox, badger, european pine marten, hedgehog, rabbit and red squirrel.

*Just like human fingerprints, the unique patterns on the lynx's coat allow it to be identified with a high degree of certainty.*



*Italian wall lizard (Podarcis siculus) has already settled in two cities in the country!*

## AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES



Our activities have the overall aim of ensuring the long-term survival of amphibian and reptile species in Romania. Thus, over the years, we have proposed dozens of protected natural areas to be included in the Natura 2000 network, we have participated in inventories of protected species and in the development of management plans, including these groups, we have initiated the first national citizen science database that collects distribution and abundance data exclusively for amphibians and reptiles (OpenHerpMaps). Currently, we are working on the first online atlas and photographic determinator of amphibian and reptile species in Romania. We are initiators and administrators of several social media groups and pages (Herping Romania, Trachemys Adoption, OpenHerpMaps).



we started the first systematic monitoring of the Hungarian meadow viper in Transylvania. With the help of colleagues from the Hungarian Meadow Viper LIFE project and our volunteers we collected abundance data in 5 habitats of the species. Monitoring will continue in 2023, **contact us!**



we collaborated on two scientific papers on allochthonous lizard species (native to other geographical regions) (see list of scientific publications);



in the rehabilitation centre we continued the activities of previous years. Thus, we have released several specimens of native turtles received from keepers. Also this year we continued to raise awareness of the problem of abandoned exotic turtles;



we contributed to the inventory and management plans of 9 new protected natural areas;



we added new data to the distribution of herpetofauna in Romania. The data are partially accessible in the OpenHerpMaps database. If you want to participate in this project, **contact us.**

15.760

ringed birds

## BIRD RINGING ACTIVITIES AND RINGING CAMP ON CHITUC SPIT



We ended our ninth consecutive fall of ringing with fewer birds than we expected, but we're very glad the weather allowed us to stay until November 6 on the Chituc spit. During the 103 ringing days we ringed 114 migratory species, with the total number of birds ringed being 12.429. Although there was an unusually good influx of Pallas's leaf warbler (*Phylloscopus proregulus*) throughout Eastern Europe, ringing 3 individuals and observing one more near camp, the catch of abundant species was lower than in previous years.

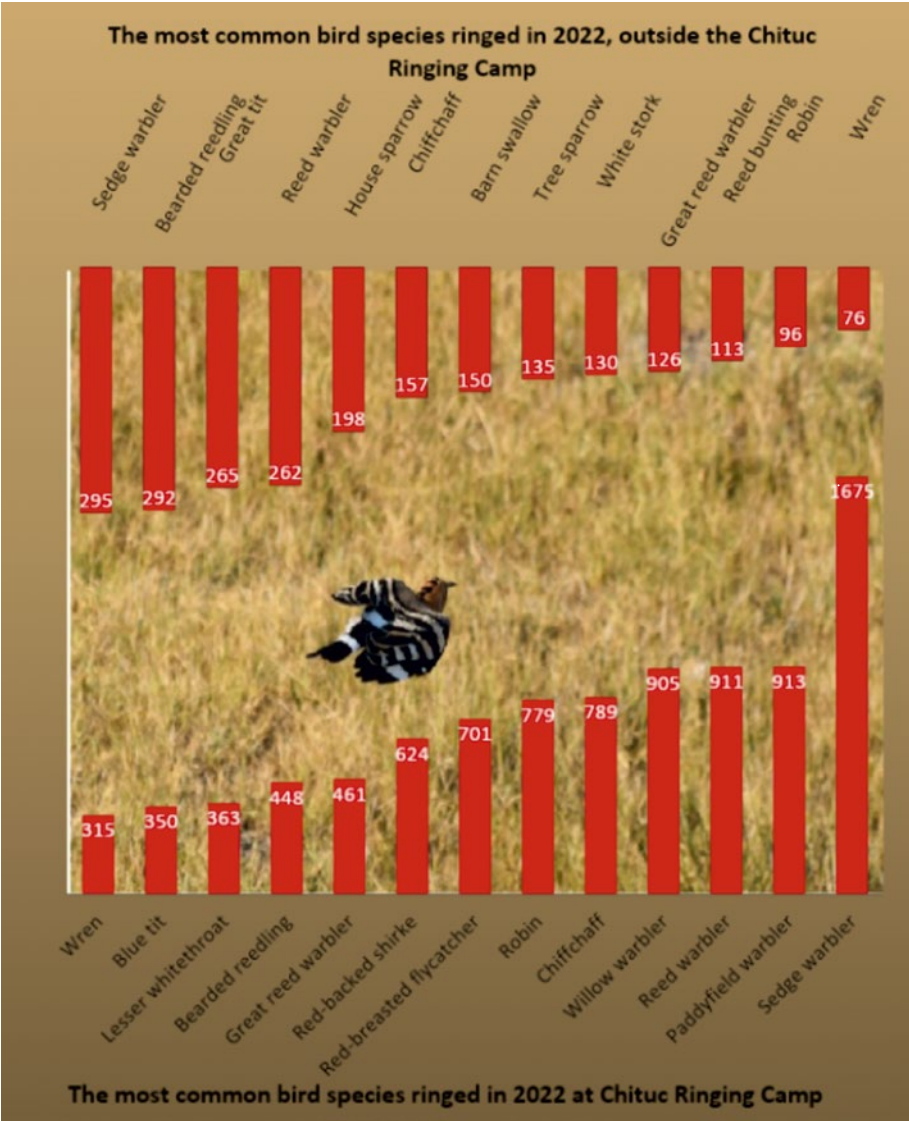
While in previous years we have caught an average of 1.456 Red-breasted flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*), the camp's most abundant species, in 2022 we ringed only 701 individuals (a 52% decrease). The same goes for the European robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), whose multi-year average is 1.382 individuals, and this year's catch is 44% lower: 779 individuals. In contrast, the number of Sedge warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) was 47% higher than the multiannual average of 1.138, and the number of ringed Paddyfield warbler (*Acrocephalus agricola*) was 49% higher than the annual average of 613.

The list of birds ringed in camp and recaptured abroad increased by three: a Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*) photographed near Moscow in May, a Great reed warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) and a Sedge warbler, both recaptured in Israel. We recaptured a Common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and two Blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) ringed in Bulgaria.

The work of the 2022 ringing camp was done by 170 volunteers. The camp was financially and logistically supported by Jenica and Cornel Cotorogea, Lajos Pál, Cătălin Șuba, Denis Stamatescu, Erzsébet and László Böndi, Valentina and Mihai Baciuc, Ionuț Călin and S.C. Softech S.R.L, to whom we are deeply grateful. We thank the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration for the excellent collaboration. We are glad that they have been with us in previous years, and we hope they will be our partners in the future.

Our bird ringers and collaborators have also marked birds in the framework of conservation and rehabilitation, awareness and education programmes, ringing 3,331 birds of 104 species. This brings the total number of birds ringed to 15,760.







## MONITORING PROGRAMMES

Changes taking place in agriculture and forestry, infrastructure projects, tourism or climate change can have significant impacts on flora and fauna species and their habitats. Monitoring changes in populations is therefore essential. This allows early detection of negative effects and helps in developing appropriate conservation measures. The aim of national censuses and monitoring programmes is to gather information from across Romania on: species distribution, population numbers and population changes. We are the coordinators and participants in several national monitoring programmes.







*The Long-eared owls that spend the winter in the villages are not shy and we can admire them in peace. Keep a reasonable distance - you must be careful not to scare them away!*

## MONITORING THE WINTERING LONG-EARED OWL



As part of the Long-eared owl Monitoring Programme we collect information on trends in the overwintering Long-eared owl populations in our country. Since 2015, volunteers have been searching for roosting sites of owls in pre-determined localities according to a standard methodology. In addition to counting the individuals found, potential threatening factors are also noted.

2021-2022 winter:

- 57 volunteers carried out observations in 89 localities in 20 counties;
- roosts were identified in 59 localities, where a total of 2,306 Long-eared owl were counted. No Short-eared owls were observed;
- the highest number of Long-eared owl was found in Satu Mare, where 209 were counted;
- the main threats: felling of trees, renovation of buildings, use of poisons to control rodents.

## WINTER WATERBIRD CENSUS (MIDWINTER)



The Winter Waterbird Census is an international programme, organised every year in mid-January, in which specialists from all over the world carry out simultaneous counts of waterbirds in the most important wetlands. The data from different countries are processed by Wetlands International.

The large amount of data, accumulated over a long period of time, gives a clear picture of the populations of wintering waterbird species. This allows us to detect changes in populations early on, giving us the opportunity to intervene with conservation measures when needed. This programme is run in partnership with the Romanian Ornithological Society.

- 826,495 birds were recorded, of which 733,834 were waterbirds;
- 201 people carried out the census in 494 wetlands;
- the most common species observed were: Mallard (211,541 birds), the Eurasian coot (99,620 birds) and Greater white-fronted goose (76,891 birds)

*The census takes place in mid-winter, but in recent years less water has frozen over, so the birds are more dispersed.*



## MONITORING WINTERING POPULATIONS OF RAPTORS



This programme, also based on volunteers, aims to monitor changes in the populations of wintering birds of prey in Romania. This is one of our longest running programmes, which we started back in 2006.



*The most common species of raptor in our country is the Common buzzard.*

- in the winter of 2021-2022, 79 volunteers from 18 counties conducted 138 field trips, observing diurnal raptors on 75 transects;
- 2,161 raptors, belonging to 16 species, were observed during the field trips, including 140 Great grey shrike;
- the most common species, observed in the highest numbers, was the Common buzzard.



*The population of the Great grey shrike has suffered a significant decline at European level.*



*Lesser spotted eagle population is in decline in Romania*

## MONITORING OF DIURNAL RAPTORS



As species at the top of the trophic pyramid, raptors are the best bioindicators of the state of the ecosystems around us. Their long-term monitoring is essential, as this is the best way to detect population changes at both regional and national level.



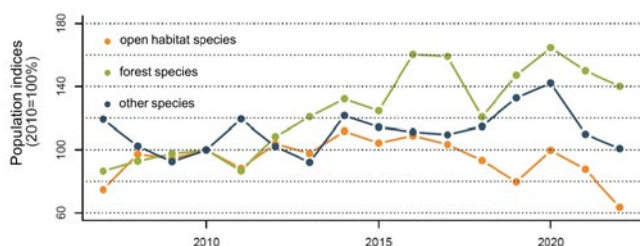
- the experts carried out observations at 42 sites in 16 quadrats and detected 672 birds of prey and 16 black storks;
- in addition to raptors, the observers also collected data on all bird species observed, with a total of 116 other bird species reported.



## COMMON BIRD MONITORING (CBM)



The Common Bird Monitoring Programme assesses the general state of nature by analysing common species through long-term observations on a large territorial scale. Volunteer observers walk a 2x2 km area for two days each year and record birds seen or heard at 10 separate points. The programme is coordinated by the Romanian Ornithological Society in partnership with the Milvus Group Association. The data are centralised at European level by the European Bird Census Council (EBCC) within the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) project.



Indices calculated in the Common Bird Monitoring programme (orange - common open habitat species; green: forest species; blue: other species)

- 36 observers monitored 46 quadrats;
- the composite index of open habitat species continues to decline (calculated as the change between the 2010 baseline and the current value)
- population trends have been calculated for 157 species, of which 117 specifically for reporting to EBCC/PECBMS

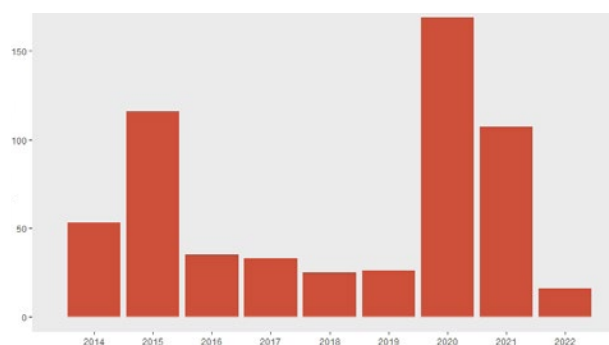


**Corn Crake prefers wet grassland for nesting**

## MONITORING NOCTURNAL SPECIES IN OPEN AND SEMI-OPEN HABITATS

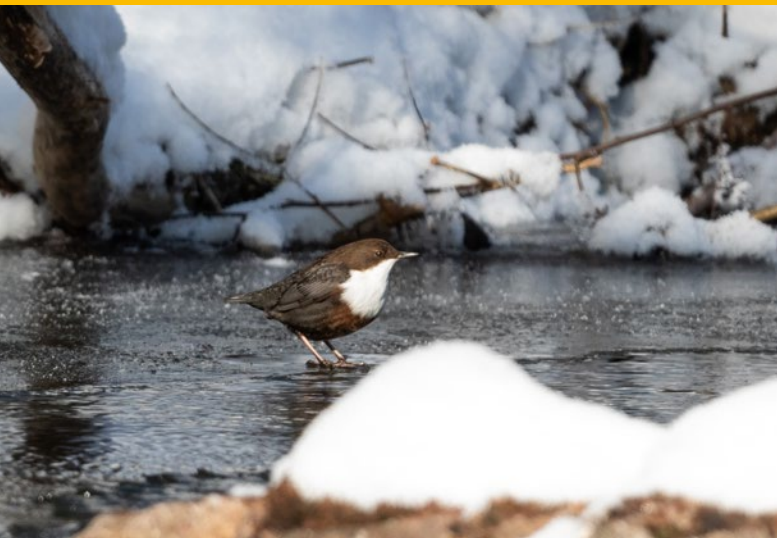


The programme aims to monitor several species characteristic of open and semi-open habitats, which nest in our country, such as Corn crake, European nightjar, Eurasian scops owl and Eurasian stone-curlew. It is usually a self-funded programme, for which we sometimes find funding opportunities.



Evolution of the numbers of squares visited in The nocturnal bird monitoring programme in open habitats, between 2014-2022

- repeated observations in 15 squares with 16 observers
- most of the repeated squares have already been visited for at least 6 years
- the most common bird species were Common nightingale (observed in 94 locations), Eurasian scops owl (85) and Corncrake (33).



## MONITORING THE WINTER CENSUS OF DIPPER



One of our longest-running monitoring programmes is the Dipper Census. Since 1990 we have been able to collect a lot of data on this species. Dipper nest along clean mountain streams, and fluctuations in the populations of this species may indicate changes in the naturalness of mountain waters.

- we have expanded the river caption basins where we are conducting the census: Upper Mures River gorge, Crişul Repede and tributaries (Valea Iadului, Valea Drăganului), Iara River, Cerna River, upper part of the Jiu river and on the Mraconia (in the Iron Gates Natural Park);
- 421 individuals observed, in 6 river basins, over 245 km covered with 60 participants.



## MONITORING THE HUNGARIAN MEADOW VIPER IN TRANSYLVANIA



The programme aims at long-term monitoring of Hungarian meadow viper (*Vipera ursinii rakosiensis*) populations and their habitats in Transylvania. At the moment, the programme is run largely on a voluntary basis. The primary activity is to monitor the abundance of the reptiles, i.e. to detect and track changes in the average density of viper populations.

*The Hungarian meadow Viper still lives only in Romania and Hungary!*



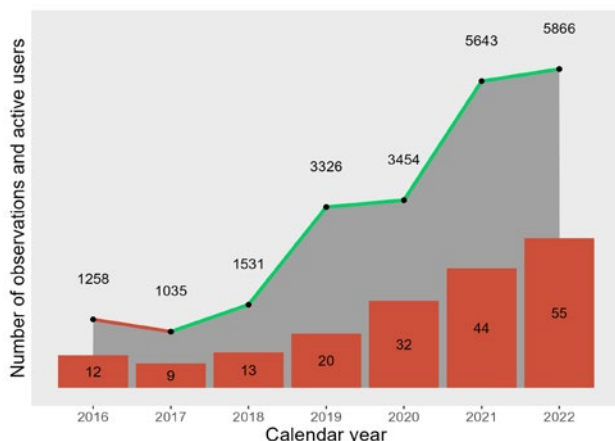
- in 2022 we started detailed collection of distribution data as well as repeated observations to estimate species abundance in 5 habitats in Transylvania.
- according to the first results, the medium density of the subspecies in Transylvania slightly exceeds the density of the Hungarian populations. Moreover, in some habitats the density of the meadow viper considerably exceeds the average calculated in the two countries, an unexpected result, which we are pleased with.
- the programme will continue next year, if you would like to participate, **please contact us!**



## OPENMAMMALMAPS



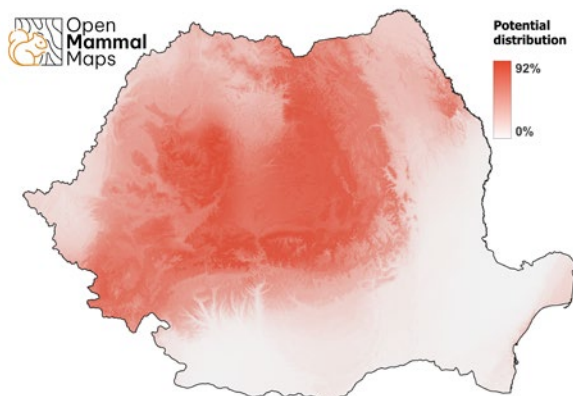
- In 2022 the OMM, or mammals database, has grown by approximately as much as the previous year, more exactly with 5,866 data entered during this year. This year we also recorded the highest number of new users.



The green line shows an uninterrupted increase in the number of data entries until 2021. A decrease in the number of data entries followed in 2022, highlighted by the red line, the reason being the lack of large national projects. The columns show the number of active users.



On days marked in red, the number of observations exceeded 1,500.



Potential distribution of Lesser spotted eagles (the bird from the logo) in Romania after modelling the data accumulated in OpenBirdMaps.



## DATABASES

Collecting data on different species is a widespread activity in the world, in which nature enthusiasts can get involved. By recording occasional observations for monitoring programmes, coordinated by specialists, a growing number of amateurs and nature enthusiasts are making a substantial contribution to the knowledge and conservation of nature. Moreover, without their contribution, many large, national and European studies would not be possible

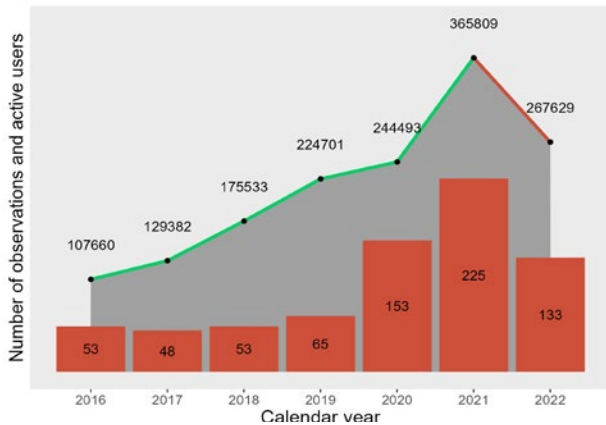
- we managed to develop both the mobile app and the website. We are continuously testing the app and enriching it with new features, making it easier and faster to register data. We would like to thank all users who test and help us improve the app!

- we have renewed the website, where the OpenNatureMaps databases are waiting for you with a new image. Now these pages allow you to view more statistics.

## OPENBIRDMAPS



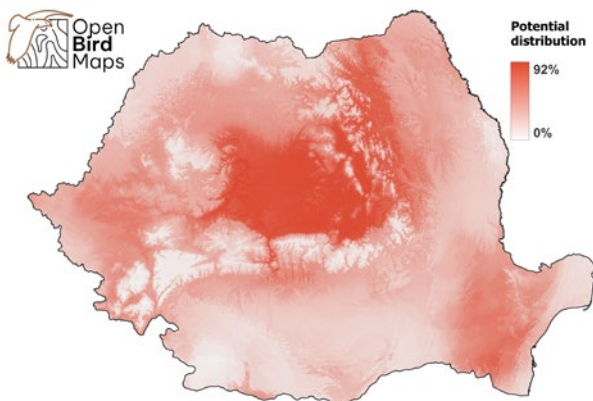
- In 2022, more than 250.000 new records were added to the database, providing information on 341 bird species.



The green and red lines show the trend of data entered since 2016, and the columns show the number of active users.



The most data were recorded in May - and not surprisingly, very few in the cooler months.

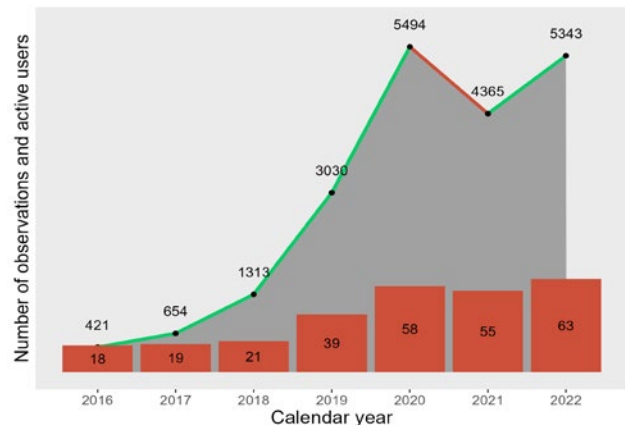


Potential distribution of the European tree frog (from the logo) in Romania, after modelling data entered into OpenHerpMaps.

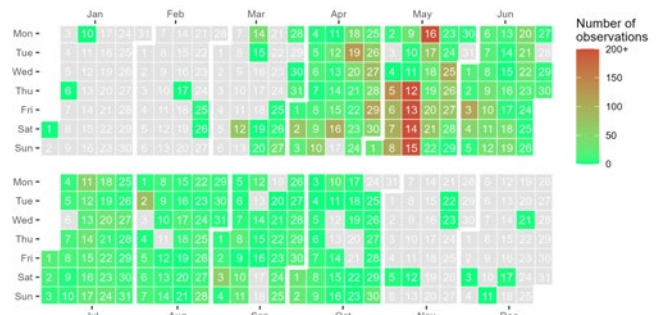
## OPENHERPMAPS



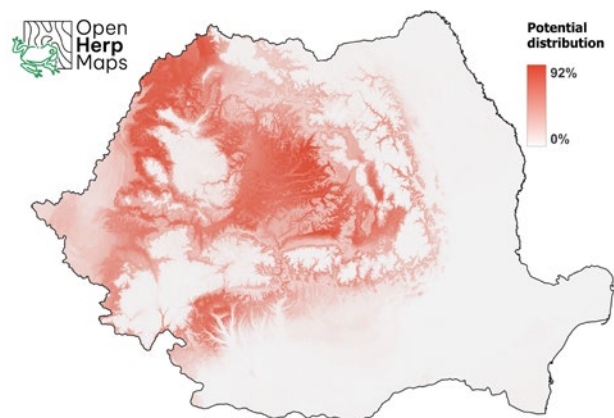
- In the database containing amphibian and reptile species, OpenHerpMaps (OHM), a record 5.343 data were registered in 2022 and the number of photos uploaded exceeded 10.000.



The green and red lines depict the trend of data entered since 2016 and the columns show the number of active users.



Light green - days with no data, red - days with most observations loaded.



Potential distribution of the red squirrel (the mammal from the logo) in Romania, after modelling data entered into OpenMammalMaps.



## EUROPEAN MAMMAL ATLAS

Data collection, partly coordinated by the Milvus Group, continued in the framework of the European Mammal Atlas project. The aim of this volume, to be published in 2025, is to provide a more complete and up-to-date picture of the distribution of European mammal species. In Romania, our goal is also to present the distribution of more than 100 mammal species in the country, based on the best and most recent data. One of our key tools to achieve this goal is the OpenMammalMaps database, which currently holds over 36000 records of 104 mammal species.

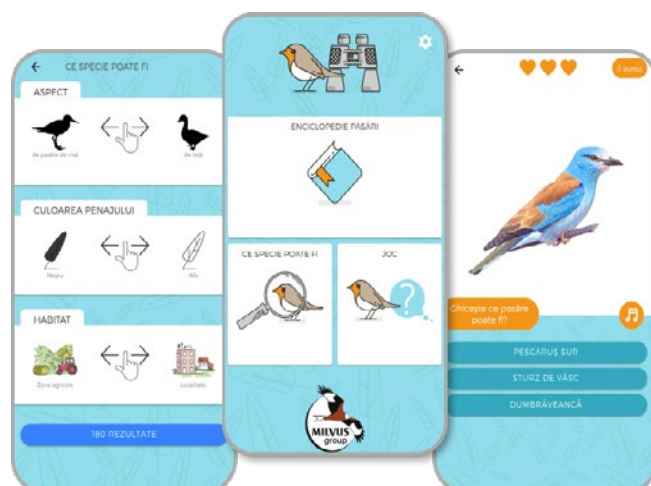
# 12.784

people have  
downloaded our free app.



## BIRD IDENTIFYING APP FOR ROMANIA

You too can do it from Google PlayStore or AppleStore, it's available in Romanian and Hungarian languages.





# ONGOING PROJECTS

## GAME OVER? DO NOT LET CLIMATE CHANGE END THE GAME!

**Game over? Don't let climate change end the game!** project, based on international cooperation, aims to run an awareness-raising campaign that draws the attention of younger generations to global warming. Ten NGOs from eight Central and Eastern European countries are working together on the project.

### The most important results from 2022:

- more than 2 million people were informed about climate change through traditional and social media channels, a similar performance to the previous year;
- we made 17 articles, 7 videos, 40 Facebook posts, 38 Instagram posts and appeared 22 times in print media;
- we launched a competition for youth organisations, called Go Green Fun, to „green up” various festivals and make them greener, more climate-friendly events. In this way, we were able to provide financial support for the greening programmes of two of the best organisations. The AIDE association has been greening festivals in Brezoi, and the Vox Novum association has made greening the Sfera festival a priority.



- Our young ambassadors were again involved in achieving our goals: some organised an interactive exhibition, while others, together with young people from other countries, presented proposals to the European Commission to achieve climate neutrality in PeerParliament. We organised a Land Art camp at the Mumush Festival, where a small water retention dam and an installation highlighting the importance of water were created. One of our ambassadors attended a climate conference in Tallinn for young Europeans, while two of our ambassadors had the opportunity to see firsthand in Guatemala the impact of climate change on countries in the Global South, and three of our ambassadors volunteered at a camp in Sumava National Park, where they worked on wetland restoration. In addition to Milvus Group volunteers, this year our ringing camp on the Chituc grind in the Danube Delta also hosted young ambassadors from six countries. Furthermore, we organised camps and trips for children.
- For geocaching enthusiasts, this year we placed four geocaching boxes in the country's wetlands to raise awareness of their importance.
- Through our policy activities, we have raised awareness of the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss among decision-makers at local and national level.

▪ **Financed by:** Development Education and Awareness Raising Programme (DEAR)

▪ **Project period:** 2019-2023

▪ **Partners:** CEEweb for Biodiversity, Christliche Initiative Romero e.V., BROZ – Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége, Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Latvian Fund for Nature, Na Mysli PersonaR Ltd



## MORE GRASSLANDS, MORE YIELDS!

In Romania, as well as in other European Community countries, there are financial compensations available to farmers, if they comply with specific requirements, with an important role in biodiversity conservation. These are called agri-environment measures. Through the project Improving Agri-Environmental Policies through Participatory Research and Civic Engagement, we set out to investigate whether these measures are really beneficial for nature and farmers. The aim of the project is to preserve the natural and landscape heritage of grasslands in Romania. We also want to make the grasslands known to the general public and, in particular, to students, whom we will encourage to take part in a competition dedicated to the grasslands, not before inviting them to a series of environmental education seminars in six university centres. Also, through the project, we will have the opportunity to initiate legal litigation to stop the disappearance of grasslands from protected areas.

### Here are the most important activities in 2022:

- We organised environmental education seminars in seven university centres - Arad, Cluj-Napoca, Miercurea Ciuc, Oradea, Sfântu Gheorghe, Timișoara and Tirgu Mureș, in Romanian and Hungarian languages;
- We have made a four-part video presentation available to the general public, both Romanian and Hungarian speakers, about the human connection with grasslands, their biodiversity, traditional farming practices and the services they provide us for free;
- We ran the creative competition „With eyes on the grasslands”, aimed exclusively at students and master’s students, who were invited to participate with works (illustrations, posters, animations, etc.), to which we awarded prizes (vouchers) totalling €2,500;

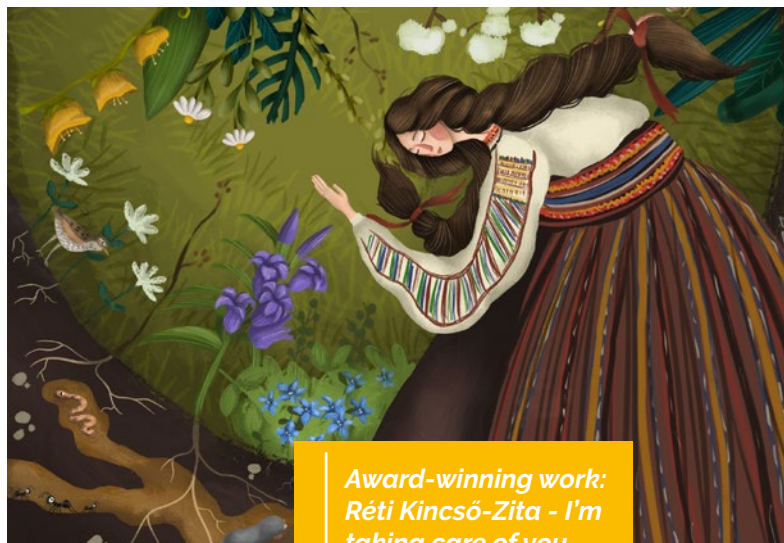


*This is what a field trip to assess the naturalness of a grassland looks like*



*Seminar at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Oradea*

- We launched a questionnaire for farmers to identify problems with the current nature conservation subsidy system;
- We carried out field visits in Bihor, Mures and Satu Mare counties to assess the degree of naturalness of grasslands for which biodiversity conservation grants have been awarded;
- Participated in consultations organised by MADR for the elaboration of the National Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and submitted proposals to the Ministry in line with biodiversity and climate objectives (see chapter Environmental legislation, civic activism).



*Award-winning work:  
Rēti Kincső-Zita - I'm  
taking care of you*

- **Financed by:** Active Citizens Fund Romania, programme funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants 2014 -2021
- **Project title:** Improving Agri-Environmental Policies through Participatory Research and Civic Engagement
- **Project period:** 2021-2024
- **Partner:** Societatea Carpatină Ardeleană - Satu-Mare (SCA)



## PROCESS ORIENTED NATURE CONSERVATION

- a project investigating nature conservation in human development



European society faces many challenges, especially those caused by climate change and extreme weather conditions. To preserve biodiversity and ensure social well-being, we need to find solutions that have the least impact on nature.

The project aims to maintain, restore and create a landscape that is closer to nature and can cope with the challenges of a growing human population, intensive agriculture, poor water management and climate change.

During the meetings, different case studies from Europe were discussed, taking into account possible threats and solutions, which at the end of the project will be compiled in a guide.

- The project's activities have gained momentum in the second year of the project, after the pandemic slowed down. After each partner country investigated several case studies through interviews and field visits, we gained a broader picture of how conservation, reconstruction and restoration projects are approached in different parts of Europe, in natural and semi-natural areas. Learning from the examples of others, we identified obstacles that could jeopardise the implementation of similar projects.
- Two face-to-face meetings were held in 2022. In May, we hosted our project partners in Romania. We tried to give them a unique experience, we



showed them the natural landscapes of the Hârțibaci Plateau, the wood pastures, the habitats of the Lesser Spotted Eagle and the European Water Turtle. With the help of István Imecs from the



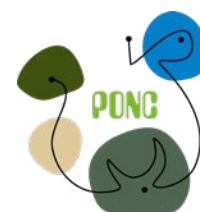




GeoEcological Accent Organisation, we were able to visit the eel reintroduction project. As usual, the field visit was accompanied by a long discussion, this time about the management of protected areas in Romania, nature conservation shortcomings and potential future consequences.

- In the autumn, we visited Sweden, specifically various protected areas on the island of Gotland, where we discussed regenerative agriculture. This practice is becoming more and more wides-

pread, especially in the field of grazing, and has many advantages for farmers, often in addition to its ecological reconstruction character. Grazing has an important role to play in this project: while in Western Europe habitats are being improved and created by reintroducing fallow deer and other animals, in Eastern Europe traditional farming methods still provide conservation value for meadows and grasslands.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



- **Financed by:** Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships (KA2)
- **Project period:** 2020 - 2023
- **Partners:** Natuurinvest (BG) - project coordinator, Milvus Group (RO), Pro Natura (SE), Natuur en Bos (BG), Ark Nature Development (NL), Fjallbete (SE), Knepp Estate (UK).

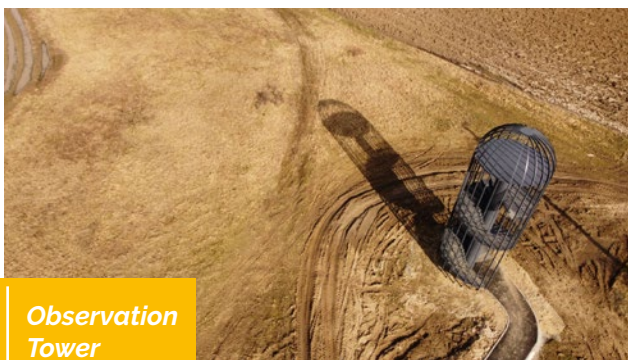


## CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE NATURAL VALUES FROM THE SALONTA-BÉKÉSCSABA CROSSBORDER AREA, ROHU-14 - THE NATURE CORNER



*Great Bustard Nest Visitor Centre in Salonta*

This project aims at increasing the conservation status of the local natural heritage, and promoting natural assets in an integrated way. Cooperation between municipalities (Salonta, Romania and Békés, Hungary) and non-governmental organizations (Milvus Transylvania Vest, Romania and Körösök Völgye Natúrpark, Hungary) is the foundation of the project, and we focus on: nature conservation, tourism, education, and raising awareness.



*Observation Tower*

- The project completed the construction of a visitor centre in Salonta, built a bridge over a wetland (eutrophic lake), completed the construction of an



*The bridge over Reed Pond*

observation tower and built a bikeway to the observation tower.

- One of the most important activities of the project, in terms of the conservation of this small but unique Great bustard population in the country, was the burial of a 6.6 km length of power line to protect the Great bustards from potentially fatal collisions. Such conservation measures can only be achieved through collaboration between conservation specialists, public administrations and energy companies, and are funded mainly by European projects, although they are still at a pioneering stage in Romania.

- Financed by:** the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund, with the support of the Government of Romania and Hungary, under the Interreg V-A Programme.
- Project period:** 2018-2023
- Parteners:** Municipality of Salonta, Municipality of Békés, Körösök Völgye Natúrpark Association



Cuibul dropiei  
Tűzokfészek  
Great Bustard Nest



nature\_  
corner\_rohu14

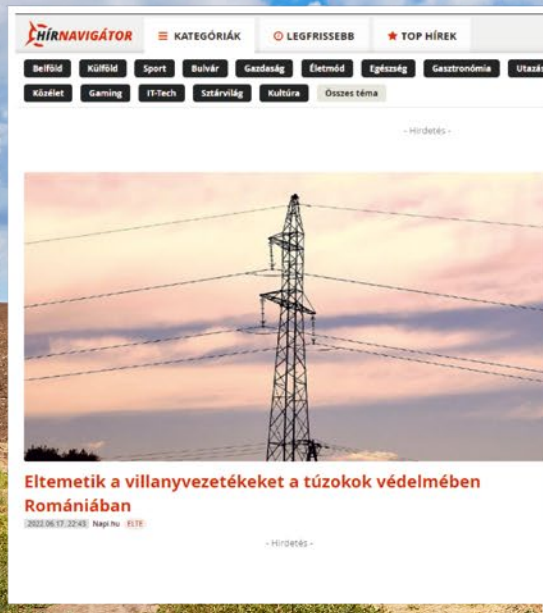


Cuibul dropiei  
Tűzokfészek  
Great Bustard Nest



*Great bustards in the area of decommissioned power line*





## O linie electrică aeriană a fost îngropată pentru salvarea unei specii de păsări amenințată cu dispariția

STIRILE DIVERSE

20-06-2022 | 16:40





# CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

## 2022

- monthly monitoring of ecological corridors overlapping a total of 8 viaducts and tunnels planned on the Tirgu Mures and Ditrău highway section (January-August), respectively the preparation of a monitoring report;
- preparation of a Local Intersectoral Operational Plan for the A8 highway, Tirgu Mures-Târgu Neamţ section.

### SAVEGREEN - SAFEGUARDING THE FUNCTIONALITY OF TRANSNATIONALLY IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS IN THE DANUBE BASIN

Milvus Group was subcontracted in the summer of 2021 for this project, which had started a year earlier and was completed in December 2022. The main objective was to preserve and, in some cases, optimise ecological corridors in the Eastern Carpathians, which are threatened by development and infrastructure projects, such as the Tirgu Mures-Iasi-Ungheni (A8) highway, as well as by other types of investments or unsustainable land use patterns.

- **Implemented Projects:**  
**Austria:** WWF Central and Eastern Europe, Environment Agency Austria  
**Bulgaria:** Black Sea NGO Network; Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation  
**Czech Republic:** Friends of the Earth, Olomouc branch; Transport Research Centre  
**Hungary:** CEEweb for Biodiversity; Szent István University  
**Romania:** Zarand Association; EPC Environmental Consulting Ltd.; WWF Romania  
**Slovakia:** WWF Slovakia; Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava – SPECTRA Centre of Excellence of EU
- **Project title:** Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin
- **Financed by:** Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, co-financed by European Union through European Regional Development Fund
- **Period:** 2020-2022



#### Local Cross-Sectoral Operational Plan

Mureş Valley, Târgu Mureş –  
Târgu Neamţ Pilot Area, Romania

Part of Output T2.2 "Local Cross-Sectoral Operational Plans"  
Csaba Domokos, Milvus Group  
Silvia Borlea, EPC Consultanță de mediu SRL

December, 2022







## SPECIALISED SERVICES FOR THE MONITORING OF BIRD SPECIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BIRDS DIRECTIVE

National bird monitoring programmes provide a lot of useful information on the status of bird species in Romania, especially for monitoring population changes. This approach has provided the most such data, contributing significantly to the knowledge of the status of bird species in the country.

Under this contract, Romania's national report to the European Commission on the conservation status of bird species of Community interest under the Birds Directive is produced. Such reports must be submitted every six years by all EU Member States.

Most of the activities (e.g. data collection, reporting, etc.) under the contract were completed in 2021. However, in 2022 we had two more important activities:

- at the request of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, we held 3 out of 6 training sessions for staff from MMAP-DB, ANPM, ANANP and APM on specific actions to implement the provisions of Directive 2009/147/EC. The sessions lasted 5 days, including a field visit. Basically, our colleagues presented all

the monitoring protocols used in the project and it was a very good opportunity to discuss them with the specialised staff of the state institutions.

- another very important result of the project was the preparation of the documentation for the National Red List of bird species in Romania and the List of species of Community interest for which Romania has a great responsibility in ensuring their conservation - both documents were approved by a ministerial order and published in the Monitorul Oficial gazette.

- **Project coordinator:** Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests
- **Project title:** Completing the level of biodiversity knowledge by implementing the system for monitoring the conservation status of bird species of Community interest in Romania and reporting under Article 12 of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC"
- **Service providers:** Romanian Ornithological Society, Milvus Group Association, S.C. Omnia Development S.R.L. and S.C. Adworks Media SRL.
- **Financed by:** European Regional Development Fund, Large-Scale Infrastructure Operational Programme 2014-2020
- **Period:** 2019-2022

# CENSUS OF THE POPULATION OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE, CAPERCAILLIE AND MARMOT IN THE FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS



In 2020 we signed a contract with the Conservation Carpathia Foundation to develop an action plan for the conservation of the Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) in the Făgăraș Mountains, which involves the following activities:

- A census of the Golden eagle population throughout the Făgăraș Mountains and a repeat census at the end of the project;
  - Monitoring nesting success;
  - Analysis of the feeding of the species during the nesting period;
  - Tracking the birds' range of movement and how they use their territory;
  - Marmot (*Marmota marmota*) population census and analysis of breeding success;
  - Census of the Western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) population;
- All activities are part of a large conservation project.



## EVALUATION OF CAPERCAILLIE

The census of the capercaillie (as a prey animal of the Eurasian eagle) is a relatively small component of a larger conservation project. Information on the distribution and density of the species and, in case of future repeat observations, on population changes, will be collected by designating 120 territorial units in the Făgăraș Mountains from which data on the presence of the capercaillie are collected.

- The territorial units contain 6 squares of 500 x 500 m, in which 2 observers record the signs of presence of the capercaillie (individuals, feathers, droppings, tracks, etc.) during a 1 km walk on a 1 hour route;
- This year we managed to check 93 territorial units, whose distribution is shown on the map below:



Green - verified territory  
Yellow - territory to be checked next year  
Red - inaccessible territory



## EVALUATION OF GOLDEN EAGLE

- we continued to delimit the territories occupied by nesting pairs and to identify the exact nest sites. Our work was hampered by the spring snow and the difficulty of access to the eagles' preferred areas. We identified three nests in two territories;
- we started the process of equipping some individuals with satellite transmitters to track their behaviour in detail throughout the year.

## EVALUATION OF MARMOT

From July 2020, we have committed to evaluate marmot distribution in the Făgăraş Mountains as part of a wider programme. In the first phase of the study we have chosen sampling units, 87 quadrats of 2x2 km, which occupy the entirety of potential habitats for this species. Assessments were carried out in the summer period from 2020-2022 and marmots were identified in more than half of the assessed quadrats. In addition to this work, we collected data on marmot colony size and reproductive success of this rodent.



## EVALUATION OF SONGBIRDS AND WOODPECKERS

From 2022 we have added two new protocols for monitoring bird communities to assess the impact of ecological reconstruction activities on them within the LIFE project. Over two nesting seasons we will visit pre-determined monitoring points in reconstructed habitats and reference habitats, using one method for songbird species and a more specific one for woodpecker species.

- **Project coordinator:** Foundation Carpathia Conservation, in partnership with Asociation Ocolul Silvic Carpathia, HUNting Association Piatra Craiului Făgăraş Conservation, SC Carpathia Agro & Finance SRL, Conservation Capital Consulting Ltd., Basarab I – Argeş County Gendarmerie Inspectorate and ProPark – Foundation for Protected Areas.
- **Project title:** Creation of a Wilderness Reserve in the Southern Carpathian Mountains, Romania (LIFE18 NAT/RO/001082)
- **Financed by:** the European Commission through the LIFE Nature programme ([www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)) and from Arcadia Foundation through the ELP programme (Endangered Landscapes Programme, [www.endangeredlandscapes.org](http://www.endangeredlandscapes.org))
- **Period:** 2019-2024



# HOW WE MADE OURSELVES HEARD



**224**

posts

1.1 million  
people reached

The year 2022 was a year in which we tried to increase our visibility on all online platforms, so that you can get to know our work and bring you closer to the wonderful nature that surrounds us. We did this through 224 posts on Facebook, 96 posts on Instagram, 80 materials published in two or even three languages on our website and almost 60 Youtube videos.

**milvus.ro**

**80**

materials published  
in Romanian and  
Hungarian languages,

**18**

English posts

Thanks to you and the interest shown in our work, we managed to set a new Facebook record, after the information posted on this platform reached over 1.1 million people. Our followers have been very curious about topics related to White storks and, of course, Brown bears.



**96**

posts

&

**16 014**

visitors

Our website has been visited by almost 77.000 people who have read with great interest the materials published in Romanian, Hungarian and English. Our website visitors come from all over the world, from the United States to Sweden.



**59**

new videos  
and more than

**37 000**

views



more than

**150**

press materials

The press has been with us again this year and our work has been covered in 150 press materials. Of course, the most discussed topic was the Red List of bird species in Romania. We are glad that Romanian journalists are interested in environmental issues in our country and we would like to thank them for this.



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

This year has been full of achievements. Partly because, after 2 years of the pandemic, in 2022 we were able to meet again face-to-face with children and adults curious about nature. On the other hand, because there has been a growing interest in environmental education, both from schools, public institutions and civil society.



It would be very difficult to list all the memories we hold dear. We were touched by the eagerness to learn and the curiosity of the children from the Inclusive Education Centre in Targu Mures, who showed their love for animals and nature in a competition organised by their school. Another memorable moment was our participation in an event organised for Global Education Week, when a record number of 100 students from Reghin participated in an outdoor activity.



### Environmental education activities in kindergartens and schools:

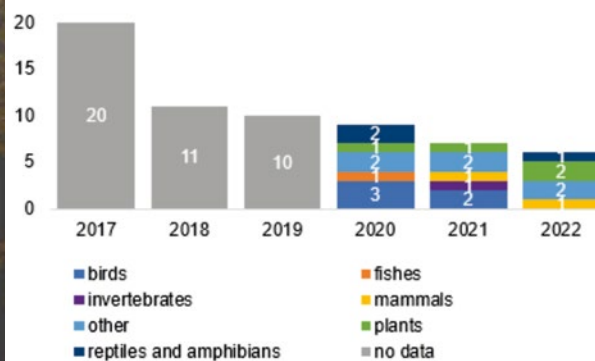
- we organised 24 occasional activities involving 450 pupils and 45 adults;
- 33 groups of schoolchildren and pre-school children regularly invited us once a month to hold activities, either in classrooms or outdoors; 289 pre-school children and 369 schoolchildren took part in these monthly activities.
- we organised three excursions (to the Ilvei Valley and the Salard Valley, to the banks of the Mures river and to Sânsimion) in which 66 pupils and 10 teachers took part;
- at the two camps (in Seliștat and Senetea) we learned about the life of owls, organised treasure hunts, had creative workshops and much more, together with 43 children and 12 adults;
- we were invited to participate with activities at the Volunteer Exchange organized by Caritas, at the Vibe Festival, at the Mures County Museum, at the Mures County Library, at the EduRegun Foundation and others.
- we continued our ActivityBox online competition, in which 57 kids from 5 counties participated. 2022 was also the year in which ActivityBox was enriched with a logo, voluntarily created by a supporter of our educational activities.



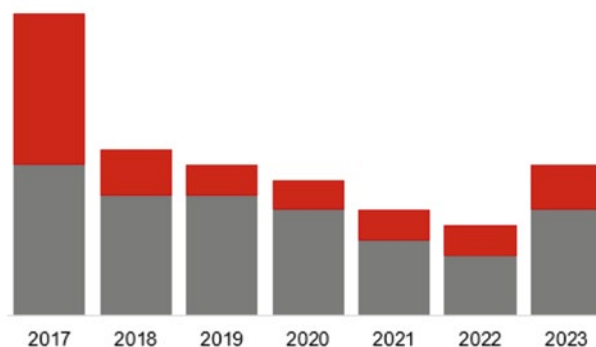
## MILVUS SCHOLARSHIP

Awarding Milvus Scholarships to students passionate about research in ecology and nature conservation is a proud tradition since 2005. Six students have applied to our scholarship programme in 2022, of which we have chosen to fund two projects with scholarships of 4.000 Lei each. Laura-Teodora Tănase assessed the conservation status of *Cakile maritima* ssp. *euxina* on the Black Sea coast and Nándor Erős started a long-term monitoring of amphibian populations in the SCI protected area Fânețele Clujului.

The number of submitted projects by taxonomic groups



The ratio of funded (red) and unfunded (grey) projects





# WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE

111 happy ends, 111 wild animals that were cured and released into the wild. There were also sad situations in which animals died or had to be euthanised as a result of their injuries, but we took heart from these 111 cases, which reinforced our conviction that it is worth investing in their rescue. We didn't do it alone. Over the course of a year we have received more than 2,500 calls to our emergency number from people concerned about the fate of an injured animal. In some



cases it was enough to offer advice, and in more serious cases we had support from ordinary citizens and not least from vets from all over the country, who brought the animal to our centre. It was a team effort, as it is every year, a work in which everyone involved put a lot of heart and dedication.



**187**

injured wild animals  
housed in our centre



**34**

species of  
animals treated



over **2 500**  
calls received from  
counties

**14**





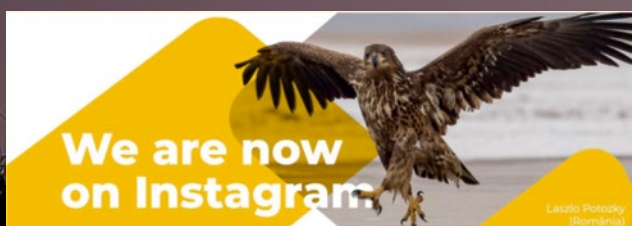
## INTERNATIONAL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST „MILVUS”

As the pandemic affected everyone's lives, we were no exception. Despite our best efforts, we had to cancel the 2021 edition of the contest. But in 2022, we're back with fresh strength and enthusiasm! For the 2022 edition of the Milvus International Nature Photography Contest, Milvus Group has partnered with Forona, the Romanian Nature Photographers Association. Together we renewed the image of the contest, increased the number of jury members, refreshed the website, drafted an ethical code of nature photography, updated the social media channels.

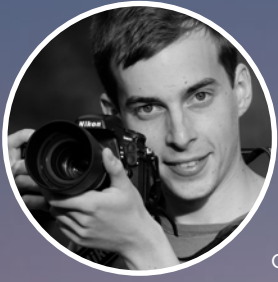


*Dan Dinu*

„As a member of the Milvus Photocontest jury since the first edition, I have to admit that I missed it last year because it was cancelled due to the pandemic. But with the help of FORONA, we had time for a re-branding, and this led to a competition like never before. More participants than ever and impressive images. Of course, the judging task was more complicated, but it's always a pleasure to see this competition grow. We hope you enjoy the contest winners as much as we do. See you next time.”

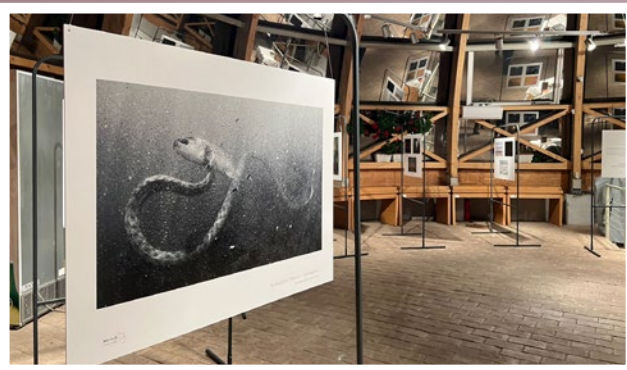






### Nagy Zoltán Gergely

Having taken part in all previous editions of the Milvus Photocontest, it was a nice change to participate this year as a judge. The harmonious collaboration between Milvus Group and FORONA resulted in a very well organised competition, in which we as jurors could work very efficiently and give equal chances to all submitted images. We were looking for fresh visions, top photographic skills, inspiring stories - all within the boundaries of ethical nature photography as laid down in the FORONA code of ethics.



The exhibition, which presents the best of the nearly 1200 works entered by 193 photographers from all over the world, opened its doors in the presence of the organisers and jury members Dan Dinu, Nagy Zoltán Gergely, Dorin Bofan and Daniel Mârlea.

This year's grand prize winner was Moldován Zsolt, a farmer from Romania with a passion for nature and an obvious talent for capturing special moments in the lives of animals. The grand prize winner received a very special gift, a trophy made by a local artist from a piece of wood. The trophy was wrapped in live lichen for our winner to keep as a reminder of this year's achievements.

Thank you to the participants, to those who attended the event and of course to Konika Minolta for their financial support.





# ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION, CIVIC ACTIVISM

Although Milvus Group members prefer to work on the field and carry out concrete conservation activities, in recent years we have devoted more and more energy to civic activism. In this way, we contribute to improving laws and influencing decisions so that they truly focus on biodiversity conservation and habitat protection.


**In 2022, we have sought to influence the following policies:**

Probably the new National Strategic Plan (PNS) developed under the Common Agricultural Policy has required the most consistent effort on our part. This is because we are convinced that the way we practice agriculture is very important from a nature conservation perspective. The correct implementation of the European Union's Farm to Fork strategy is essential to preserve the services that nature provides. Throughout the year, we have continued to participate in public consultations organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) and have submitted proposals together with farmers, beekeepers and other conservation organisations. We felt it was important to work with these organisations because the first version of the National Strategic Plan was not only unsatisfactory from a conservation point of view, but also negatively affected small farmers and beekeepers. The two propos-

als we submitted (our organisation's proposal and the joint letter from several organisations to the MADR) were not taken into account by the Ministry, so we and our partners expressed our concerns to the European Commission, where we found much more receptive ears. As a result, the Commission incorporated some of our suggestions into the first assessment of the strategic plan and sent it back to the Ministry of Agriculture with a number of comments and requests for improvement. Unfortunately, all we can say about the final version is that it is a less damaging version than the first, but we still have serious concerns that Romania will not be able to meet the objectives of the Farm to Fork strategy. **In our opinion, this new strategic plan not only disadvantages small producers who produce in a more nature-friendly way, but also fails to change the harmful effects of agriculture on biodiversity, and favours the short-term profit of some over the long-term welfare of all.**

We are increasingly focusing on the protection of grasslands, which are important for biodiversity and climate protection, and we are keeping a close eye on the laws and investments that affect them. We are also careful to ensure that green energy investments are made in a way that does not harm natural habitats. In many cases, the green energy produced does not bring as many benefits as it





causes disadvantages by decreasing the capacity of natural habitats to capture carbon dioxide, or by decreasing the biodiversity of these habitats. We have also tried to raise awareness both in the Government's Sustainable Development Department and among representatives of the various political parties. We can only hope that the services provided by nature will be taken into account when planning green energy investments.

The Ministry of Environment has lost several court cases in the past (2020, 2021) because it could not provide scientific data justifying the shooting of large numbers of migratory birds. The invalidation of harvest quotas by several courts resulted in the suspension of migratory bird hunting in those hunting seasons. The logical and ethical step would have been to carry out studies, research to be able to scientifically assess whether or not quotas affect populations. It is very sad that instead of relying on science, the legislators decided to amend the hunting law in such a way that such scientific data and annual quotas are no longer needed - practically the only way to control the number of birds shot in a year on Romanian territory.

After the law passed both chambers of parliament (despite civil society's insistence) in our last desperation, at the end of 2021 we sent an open let-

ter to the President of the country. The President returned the law to Parliament, but to no avail, because in 2022, the Law on Hunting and Protection of Hunting Grounds was amended in such a way that the number of birds shot in a year can no longer be controlled.

We continued our work in the Commission for the control of urban tree cutting in Tirgu Mures.

Although sometimes it seems that we are fighting the windmills, we continue our work and we are happy whenever our voice is heard and we can contribute to nature-friendly legislation.

We end with a happy end case - a good example to follow, propagated by a bank (Procredit Bank) which granted a loan to an investor to build a photovoltaic park in a Natura 2000 site, only on the condition that the investment does not harm biodiversity. In addition to the fact that the investment was made on arable land, the connection to the medium voltage grid was made in such a way that the birds would not be electrocuted. At the same time, the investor offered to plant 50 oak saplings and to install 20 artificial nests for the Red-footed falcon (the site is an important site for Red-footed falcon).



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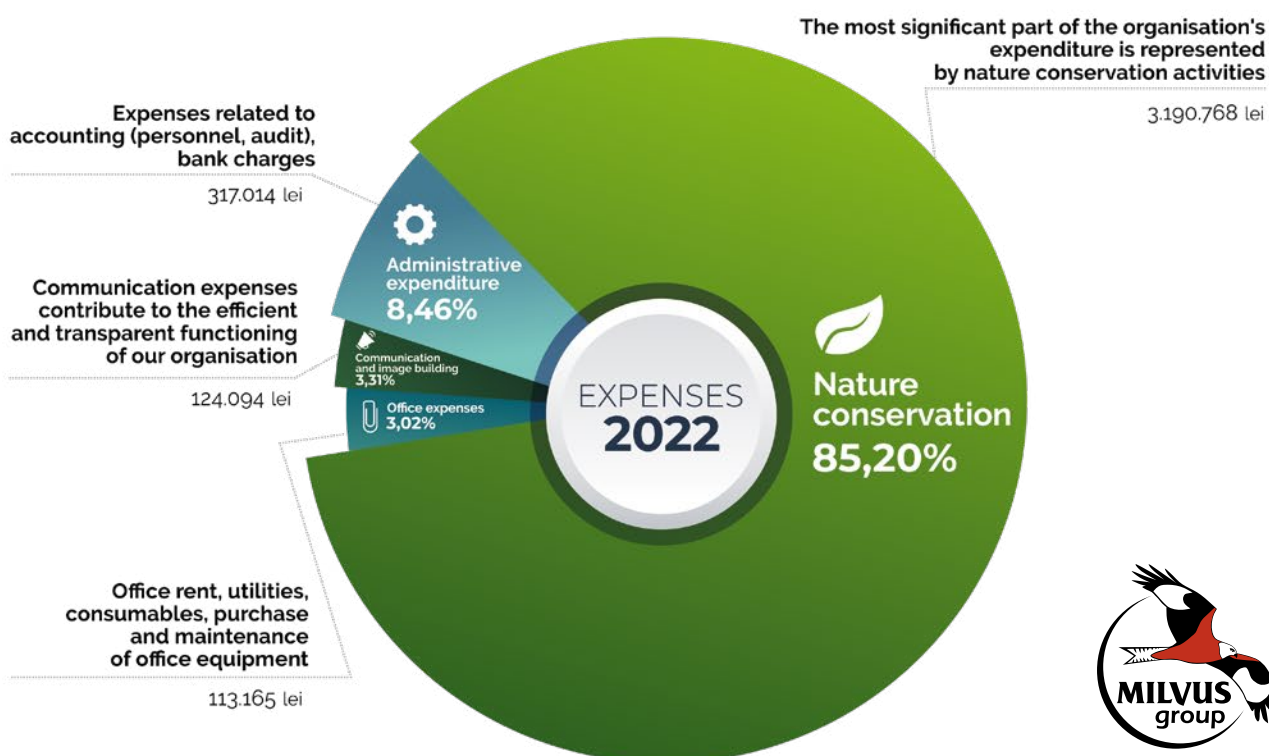
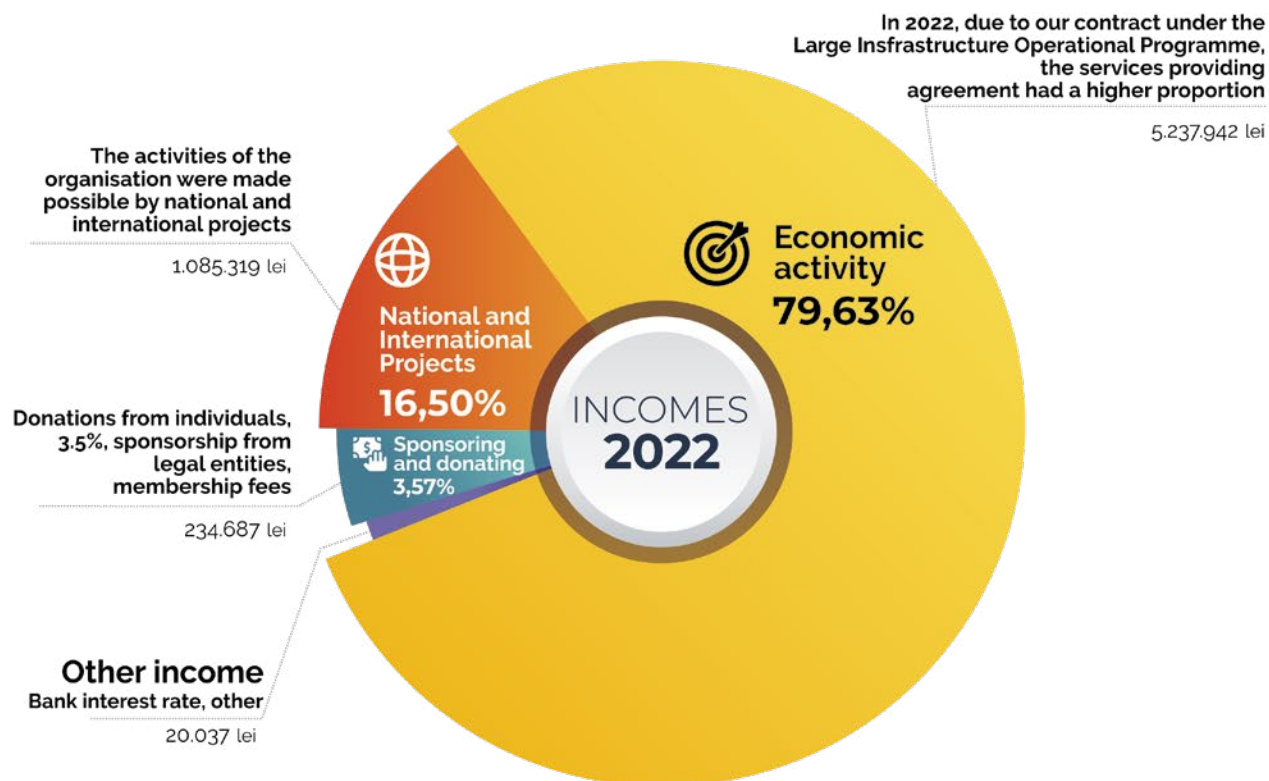
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# FINANCIAL REPORT







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As non-governmental organisations do not receive any state support, all our activities are supported by projects and community support (sponsorships, donations). As project funding lines and funds change and shrink from year to year, maintaining a long-term team of professionals and implementing activities that do not depend on projects are real challenges. Fortunately, support from society is growing and it is a great joy for us to see that our principles and objectives are shared by more and more people.

Thank you for your financial support so far, without it we would not have been able to get through the difficult times and continue many essential activities for which we do not have a budget from the projects.

We thank the sponsors for their trust in our association. Their support has contributed to the maintenance of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, to the organisation of the ringing camp on the Chituc Spit, to the running of educational activities and to the core activities of the organisation.

Thanks to individuals for their donations and for redirecting 3.5% of their income tax!

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Our work continues to be supported by a large numbers by volunteers. Most of them have participated in the ringing camp on the Chituc Spit, but many have accompanied us or participated individually in monitoring programmes, environmental education and Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre activities. We had 82 paying members in the three categories: individual, student/student and group.

We thank all volunteers and members for their efforts in the conservation of Romania's natural heritage!









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