

**THE SUBMISSION OF
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT
BY THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

Name of the property:

Plitvice Lakes National Park (Republic of Croatia)

Date of inscription on the World Heritage List:

1979; (extension 2000)

Inscription Criteria:

(vii)(viii)(ix)

Identification number:

98bis

1. Executive Summary of the report

Plitvice Lakes National Park is the oldest Croatian national park and the only area in the Republic of Croatia inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is well known for its magnificent travertine dams that form clear lakes in constant biodynamic process of tufa building and growth. As a result of that process a string of 16 step-like arranged larger lakes and several smaller ones that are the most picturesque part of this park was created. The area of the National Park was expanded in 1998 on the basis of hydrogeological analyses which indicated that the Plitvice Lakes catchment area was larger than the existing scope. This is a karst aquifer which today encompasses 80 % of the surface area of the National Park.

No less than 1267 various plant species are registered in the Park out of which as many as 50 orchid species, 321 butterfly species, 157 bird species, 20 bat species. A special place in the rich fauna is occupied by the largest European carnivores: brown bear, wolf and lynx. Due to its uniqueness, natural beauty and value as a national park, Plitvice Lakes were in 1979 inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Plitvice Lakes are protected according to three criteria of outstanding universal value:

- VII contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance
- VIII are outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features
- IX are outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals

For effective conservation of the lake system and the dynamic growth of tufa barriers as an outstanding universal value it is necessary to ensure an efficient management of the entire Plitvice Lakes catchment area, which is among other ensured through the implementation of the Management

Plan of the Plitvice Lakes National Park as well as the spatial planning documents.

In recent times the growing challenge for the National Park is the excessive visiting in the lake system which was not resolved by the spatial plan but is planned to be regulated through the adoption and effective implementation of the visitor management plan. Concurrently with the preparation of the visitor management plan also a new general management plan will be developed. The old plan was adopted for a period of ten years and will cease to be valid in 2017 when the completion of the new management plan is expected.

Besides the anthropogenic impact also significant is the impact caused by global climate change. Through monitoring of physical and chemical parameters changes in temperature were observed and consequently also in the ecosystem. In the course of the following four years the completion of a project is expected the result of which will be a mathematical hydrodynamic model that will enable continuous monitoring of the Plitvice Lakes underground and terrestrial water system as well as the physical and chemical parameters with the possibility to predict the potential impacts. The climate model as a precondition for the development of a hydrodynamic model will enable prediction of the changes in the water system due to climate changes which will in the future make possible adjustments in the management of the protected area.