

## THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES WILL AFFECT:



Pond in Konavle field



Hatching of the Balkan Terrapin



Volunteer cleaning action at Majkovi pond

# LIFE FOR MAUREMYS

## HABITATS

- ✓ Restoring aquatic habitats (karstic ponds, canals) and nesting sites.
- ✓ Improving quality of habitats by installing new basking areas and corridors for safe connection between feeding and nesting areas.
- ✓ Removing alien invasive species from the habitats.
- ✓ Securing of the Balkan Terrapin nesting sites from wild boars using repellents.
- ✓ Developing Guidelines for restoring and managing of Mediterranean freshwater habitats and nesting sites.
- ✓ Directing and encouraging agriculture towards "turtle friendly" practices.

## POPULATIONS

- ✓ Conducting a breeding program in the Zoological Garden of Zagreb to restore the Balkan Terrapin population in Ston, a population that was considered extinct until 2019.
- ✓ Preparing Guidelines for ex-situ breeding of turtles to help future population reinforcement activities.
- ✓ Collaborating with fishermen and experts to design, manufacture and test a new type of selective fyke nets against turtle by-catch.

## LOCAL COMMUNITY

- ✓ Encouraging positive attitude of the local community towards the Balkan Terrapin and karstic wetlands.
- ✓ Organising various events: workshops, local and foreign volunteer actions, educational program and exhibitions.
- ✓ Participating in events to promote connection and cooperation with other experts, LIFE projects and the wider community.
- ✓ Working with landowners in the areas where the Balkan Terrapin occurs to revitalize and maintain favourable condition of the aquatic habitats for the species.
- ✓ Developing small-scale agriculture and agrotechnical Guidelines.



Be a shell for the  
Balkan Terrapin



### Note:

Think about the environment before throwing this flyer away. Pass it on to someone or put it in the paper bin.



Would you like to be a part of the Balkan Terrapin conservation team in Croatia?

Find out more on our web site:  
<https://life4mauremys.agrh>

Follow us on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lifeformauremys>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/life-for-mauremys>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/life\\_mauremys](https://www.instagram.com/life_mauremys)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LIFEforMauremys>

Research Gate: <https://www.researchgate.net/project/LIFE-for-Mauremys>

Or contact us by e-mail: [life4mauremys@gmail.com](mailto:life4mauremys@gmail.com)



Find out more on our web site



Co-funded by  
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**Zajedno čuvamo prirodu**  
Sufinancirano sredstvima Fonda za zaštitu okoliša i energetska učinkovitost



GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF CROATIA  
Office for Cooperation with NGOs

**Full project name:** *Mauremys rivulata* - conservation of the umbrella species of the Mediterranean wetlands in Dubrovnik -Neretva County

**Short project name:** LIFE for Mauremys

**Reference:** LIFE21-NAT-HR-LIFE for Mauremys (G.A.: 101071737)

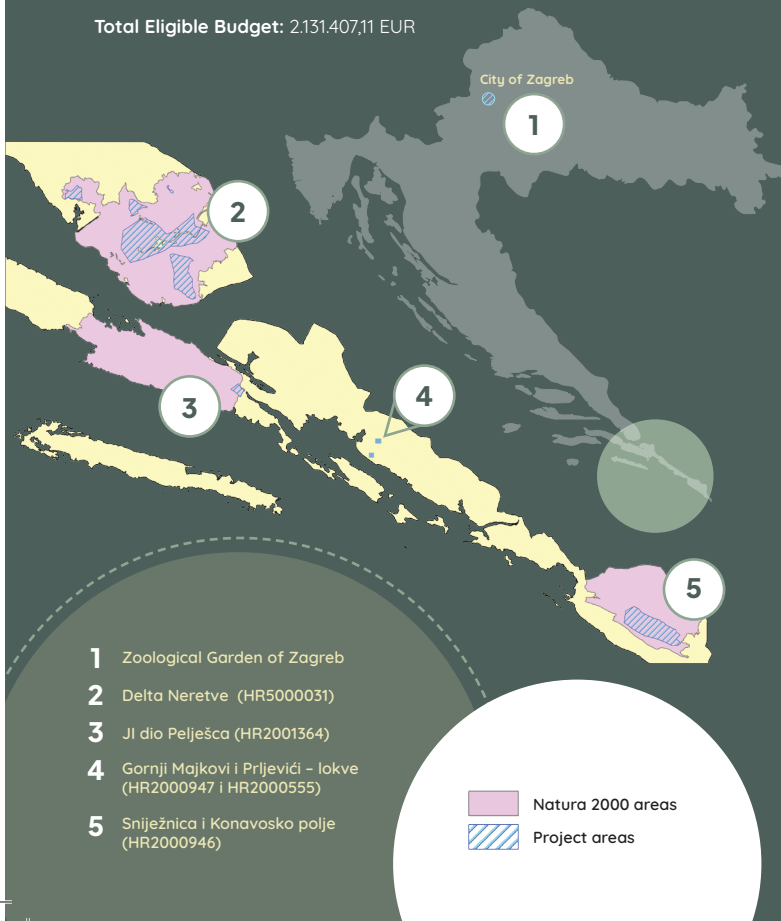
**Project duration:** 01 October 2022 - 30 September 2026

**Project coordinator:** University of Zagreb, Faculty of Agriculture



**Project partners:** Zoological Garden of Zagreb, Hrvatske vode, Association Hyla, Public Institution for Management of Protected Natural Areas of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County

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**Total Eligible Budget:** 2.131.407,11 EUR



- 1 Zoological Garden of Zagreb
- 2 Delta Neretve (HR5000031)
- 3 JI dio Pelješca (HR2001364)
- 4 Gornji Majkovi i Prljevići - lokve (HR2000947 i HR2000555)
- 5 Sniježnica i Konavosko polje (HR2000946)

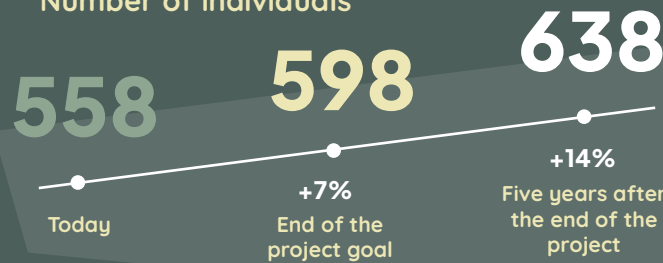
-  Natura 2000 areas
-  Project areas

## MAUREMYS RIVULATA – THE BALKAN TERRAPIN

Turtles have the status as the icons of stability, longevity, and often wisdom, and are an exceptional example of overcoming the natural disasters throughout the long history of life on Earth.

The Balkan Terrapin is unique for its flattened and oval-elongated shell, which is why it is popularly known as the flat turtle. Characteristic longitudinal pale yellow lines run down its olive green neck and limbs by which it can be distinguished from another native freshwater species, the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*). The Balkan Terrapin is protected by European Directives. It is on Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive and on Annex II of the Convention for Protection of European Wild Species and Natural Habitats.

### Number of individuals



### Geographic distribution

Balkan Terrapin is a Mediterranean species, distributed from the Balkan peninsula countries all the way to the western Asia. In Croatia, its distribution is limited to the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, where it occurs in four geographically isolated, small subpopulations, which represent the north-western edge of the species range.

### Habitat

Balkan Terrapin is mostly a lowland species. It lives in stagnant or slow flowing waters with muddy bottom and dense vegetation and usually does not prefer fast river flows. It inhabits streams, irrigation canals, ponds, lakes, and swamps. Aquatic as well as terrestrial habitats are important for the long-term survival of the species. Although Balkan Terrapin spends most of its time in the water where it feeds

and mates, spending time on dry land is crucial for laying eggs and exposure to sunlight. Basking is essential for maintaining body temperature and metabolism, as well as saving energy. It is also vital for drying of the terrapin's shell to prevent the accumulation of algal fouling that can lead to viral and bacterial infections. The Balkan Terrapin basks on a shore, stone, or a floating branch of its aquatic habitat.



## LIFE FOR MAUREMYS PROJECT

The LIFE for Mauremys ensures long term survival of the Balkan Terrapin, through mitigation and elimination of all the threats identified in the National Management Plan with Action Plan for the *Mauremys rivulata* in Croatia. Considering that the Balkan Terrapin is largely dependent on human impact, this project will ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders in species conservation activities. Together with local organisations, landowners, food producers, fisherman, tourism sector, artists, schools and kindergartens, teachers, students, media representatives, local and public institutions we are going to be a shell for the Balkan Terrapin. By organising workshops, educational programs, and content, involving local and foreign volunteers, we'll improve the status of the Balkan Terrapin and its co-residents in ponds, streams, rivers and canals, not only for the duration of the project but also for years after its completion.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

We aim to improve the conservation status of the Balkan Terrapin in Croatia through:

- ✓ assisted breeding and population reinforcement,
- ✓ restoration and improvement of the habitats in Dubrovnik-Neretva County,
- ✓ mitigating the threats defined in Action Plan for the species,
- ✓ raising the public awareness of the Balkan Terrapin as the umbrella species for the Mediterranean wetlands.