

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025¹ “POLONINY NATIONAL PARK”

State: The Slovak Republic

Name of the area: National Park POLONINY (hereafter the “Poloniny NP”)

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas:

The Resolution CM/ResDip(2018)11 on the renewal of the European Diploma of the Protected Areas awarded to the Poloniny NP (Slovakia)² /hereafter “Resolution No (2018)11”³

Central authority concerned:

Name: Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (MoE), Directorate of Nature and Landscape Protection

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Tel: (+ 421 2) 5956 2211;

e-mail: jana.durkosova@enviro.gov.sk (contact person);

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Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Poloniny National Park Administration with Headquarters in Stakčín (hereafter the “The Poloniny NP Administration”)

Address: Mieru 193, 067 61 Stakčín, Slovak Republic

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1. Conditions:

Resolution CM/ResDip(2018)11 contains 3 conditions

Condition No. 1: By 31 December 2021, submit to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe a detailed report, covering the implementation of each of the 52 actions in the Poloniny National Park Action Plan (Appendix 6.6.17 of the Poloniny National Park Management Plan for 2017-2026)

Condition completed:

The detailed report on the implementation of the Poloniny National Park Action Plan, adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 7th July 2016 (its Appendix 6.6.17 of the Poloniny National Park Management Plan for 2017-2026), was sent in the separate document to the Bern Convention Secretariat on 18th February 2022. The Group of Experts for European Diploma discussed the issue at the meeting on 23rd- 24th February 2022⁴.

Condition No. 2: By 31 December 2023, initiate the revision of management and action plans for the Poloniny National Park so that they can be approved (by government resolution, if necessary) before they are due to be implemented on 1 January 2028;

Condition completed:

The original draft of the Management Plan for Poloniny National Park and its buffer zone for 2023–2032 was delivered to the Prešov District Office on December 13, 2022, and the process of its discussion was subsequently conducted in accordance with § 50 of Act No. 543/2002 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended (hereafter only „Act on Nature Protection“). This documentation was continuously revised between 2023 and 2025 mainly based on fundamental comments from interested parties. After all comments had been duly evaluated the revised draft Management Plan for Poloniny National Park and its buffer zone for 2026–2035 was submitted by letter on July 14, 2025 to the Prešov District Office which is the body in charge of the procedure given by § 50 of the Act on Nature Protection and after finalizing process submits the complete documentation to the MoE.

¹ reported period 1st September 2024 – 31th August 2025

² adopted at the 1321th meeting of the Committee of Ministers on 4 July 2018, valid by 18 September 2028

³ Originally resolution No (1998)26, resolution No (2003)2, No (2008)3 and resolution No (2012)19, respectively

⁴ With reflection on pp 136-138 of the Document <https://rm.coe.int/de10e-2022-compilation-analysis-2021annual-reports/1680a59691>

Condition No. 3: *Deploy adequate resources, both financial and human, in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome of the actions detailed in the Poloniny National Park Action Plan;*

Condition completed:

The total number of employees at the Poloniny NP Administration increased from 33 (in 2022) to 36 (in 2023), in 2024, the number remained the same at 36 employees. In 2025, the Poloniny National Park Administration has 36 permanent employees and 3 project positions outside the organizational structure.

The budget of the Poloniny National Park Administration was approved by the MoE - in 2023 in the amount of EUR 1,365,353 in 2024 EUR 1,532,344 and in 2025 EUR 1,731,277. In the reference period (2025), revenues were diversified: EUR 75,785 was received from the state budget, the contribution from the Environmental Fund amounted to EUR 1,460,492 and the approved budget from own resources was EUR 195,000.

In addition, it should be noted that the Poloniny NP Administration also obtained funding through EU financial mechanisms. As part of the Slovakia 2021-2027 Operational Program, the project "*Care for the territory administered by the Poloniny National Park II*" is being implemented in the period from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026, with a total budget of EUR 1,578,640.57. The project "*Monitoring of habitats and species of European importance in Slovakia*" is still ongoing (project duration from April 1, 2024, to December 31, 2029, with EUR 365,081.80 in funding provided to the Poloniny National Park as a participating partner).

As part of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Program, a project entitled "*Tourists and Nature Together*" has been launched. The project runs from January 1, 2025 and it is planned to be completed by December 31, 2028; the amount of funding provided to the Poloniny National Park as a project partner is EUR 1,882,643.;

Poloniny National Park is a project partner in the INTERREG Next Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine project "*Introduction of monitoring of wetlands of international importance in the Carpathian region*" (abbreviation: WeVaRe). The project runs from May 1, 2025 with planned implementation by April 30, 2027. The budget for National park Poloniny in the project is EUR 125,496. As part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan, Component 5 – Adaptation to Climate Change, S – NP Poloniny received funding of EUR 130,724.30 under a project call aimed at supporting development projects for the transformation of the Muránska Planina National Park and Poloniny National Park regions. These funds are currently being used to renovate information panels for visitors to the national park in the form of a traditional architectural element, known as an "oboroh", and to reconstruct a building in a depopulated part of the Poloniny National Park a field station. After reconstruction, the building will be used to conduct surveys and research in the Poloniny National Park area and will provide facilities for new planned jobs – scientific researcher, tourist guide. The project activities will be completed in March 2026.

The state continues to pay compensation from the state budget through decisions of district offices (environmental departments) in connection with (i) financial compensation for restrictions on the common management of land and (ii) compensation for damage caused by selected protected animal species. During the period under review, (i) 102, 765.35 EUR and (ii) 1 656.70 EUR were paid out.

2. Recommendations

Resolution CM/ResDip(2018)11 contains 8 recommendations

Recommendation No. 1: *By 2020, develop a prioritised plan for all land in State ownership to be reclassified as levels 3, 4 or 5; and demonstrate significant progress in reclassifying the level-3 forest as either level 4 (with exploitation by a silvicultural selection methodology) or as level 5 (no exploitation)*

Recommendation completed:

The Poloniny NP Administration has prepared documentation for the zoning of the Poloniny National Park, which reflects significant progress in reclassifying forest land from level 3th to either 4th (zone B) or 5th level of protection (zone A with a non-intervention regime).

The current share of the territory with 5th level of protection before zoning is 2,656.33 ha (8.61 %), with 4th level of protection 1,061.02 ha (3.44 %), and 27,127.90 ha (87.95 %) with 3rd level of protection out of the total area of the national park of 30,845.25 ha (according to GIS). The national park's protection zone with 2nd level of protection covers an area of 10,552.15 ha.

According to the Poloniny National park zoning proposal, which was to be submitted to inter-ministerial consultation in November 2025, the area with 5th level of protection (zone A) covers 5,201.10 ha (16.73 %), with 4th level of protection (zone B) 1,259.31 ha (4.05 %), with 3rd level of protection (zone C) 23,852.91 ha (76.73 %), and with 2nd level of protection (zone D) 772.77 ha (2.49 %) of the total area of the national park, which was increased to 31,086.09 ha. The NP protection zone with 2nd level of protection covers an area of 10,461.94 ha.

This zoning proposal demonstrates a significant shift in the reclassification of state-owned forest land to higher levels of protection. The current area of the national park is increased by 240.83 ha, with the maximum amount of state-owned land classified as the strictest protection zones. The core of the territory is designed with the largest possible area and full compatibility with international requirements. The most significant shift is achieved in the transition of forests from the current 3rd level of protection to 4th and, in particular, 5th level of protection. The area of zone A (5th level of protection) will almost double compared to the current situation, by 2,544.77 ha, while its share of the total area will increase from 8.6 % to 16.7 %.

The government regulation (zoning) is scheduled to take effect in January 2026.

Recommendation No. 2: Encourage church, association and private landowners to reclassify their land as level 3 or 4, utilising a single-tree or group-selection silvicultural system wherever appropriate;

Recommendation in progress:

As mentioned in the previous report in national parks there is legal obligation to apply only close to nature forestry⁵ - e.g. special purpose silvicultural system or selection system or shelterwood system of small felling areas, where the area of one felling plot must not exceed 0,2 ha; in terrain with slopes more than 40 %, in inaccessible terrain and on poor load bearing soil it must not exceed 1,5 ha with felling plot not wider than mean height of logged forest stand.

The area of the Poloniny NP belongs to 7 forest management plan units. The new forestry management plan has to be approved by the regional government authority and comply with the Poloniny NP management plan as according to the national law⁶ (there is an obligation to respect the Poloniny NP Management plan in decisions of state bodies including decision on the forestry management plans).

In 2024 the process of renewal of the forest management plan for the **Topoľa, Ulič** and Zboj Forest Management Units for decade 2024-2033 finalized. In this process the Poloniny NP Administration applied the same requirements as for the Forest Management Unit Starina and Nižná Jablonka Forest Management Units (specified in the previous reports), which have been accepted. These forest management plans were in the process of approval during the previous assessment period and have now been approved.

Recommendation No. 3: Maintain the management of meadows outside the World Heritage Site, preferably by summer grazing by livestock or alternatively by cutting and removing the cut material from the site;

Recommendation in progress:

Meadow maintenance is mainly carried out by mowing and removing cut vegetation and in line with the Poloniny National Park Management Plan. Maintenance was carried out to the same extent as in the previous period as part of the sustainability of the project "Maintenance of the area administered by the Poloniny National Park." As in the previous years, meadow management (mowing or mulching of self-seeded shrubs and trees) was carried out on an area of 52.7 ha.

Mowing and shrub removal is currently carried out by the Poloniny NP Administration using its own tractor and equipment. In addition to tractor mowing, mowing of fens and mesophilic and wet meadows was also carried out using hand-held machinery, financed from the budget of the Poloniny NP Administration.

The new project "Care of the Territory Administered by the Poloniny National Park II" (EUR 1,578,640.57) added another 6.76 ha of land, which was mowed during the period under review. This area is added to the original 52.7 ha, thus expanding the total area of maintained meadows and improving the condition of non-forest habitats threatened by succession.

At the large scale maintaining of grassland was supported in the frame of Strategic Plan of Common Agricultural Policy of Slovak Republic 2023 – 2027, this programme is co-financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Recommendation No. 4: Liaise with appropriate stakeholders, especially those involved with sustainable tourism, to prepare an inventory of objects of cultural significance within the national park and support a prioritised programme of restoration of these culturally significant objects;

Recommendation in progress:

The Poloniny NP Administration is currently preparing to open the site of the former church, which is the only surviving building from the village and the adjacent cemetery in the cadastral area of the extinct village of Dara, where there is also a military cemetery from World War I.

NP Poloniny is a project partner in the EU Interreg Central Europe 2021–2027 program "Multidimensional and Inter-Territorial Governance Model for the Activation of World War I Heritage to Support Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Remote Areas in Central Europe" (abbreviation: GOV4PeACE). The project runs for 30 months (May

⁵ In accordance to § 18.4 of Act. No 326/2005 Coll. on Forests as amended

⁶ § 54. 5 of the Act No 543/200 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended

2024 – October 2026). The total budget for the project is EUR 1,699,120.24, of which NP Poloniny's budget is EUR 181,439.65. A total of 11 project partners from 6 different countries – Slovenia, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Belgium, and Slovakia – are participating in the *GOV4PeaCE* project. The aim of *GOV4PeaCE* is to overcome complex territorial and sectoral barriers in the management of World War I heritage that hinder its socio-economic activation for the integrated development of remote areas of Central Europe, where the main front lines of World War I took place and whose legacy remains untapped. economic activation for the integrated development of remote areas of Central Europe, where the main front lines of World War I took place and its heritage remains untapped. Central Europe has an extensive cultural heritage related to World War I with significant potential to accelerate the socio-economic development of rural areas. However, the joint management of this heritage remains challenging as it is scattered across different countries and lacks a coherent strategy for its protection and use. The *GOV4PeaCE* project creates a shared vision for the management of war-related cultural heritage across borders and sectors. The project tests innovative approaches to museum concepts, cross-border heritage routes, and cross-sectoral cooperation with the aim of better utilizing past heritage for the future.

During our involvement in the *GOV4PeaCE* project, the Poloniny NP Administration organized several local workshops, cross-border workshops, and a transnational conference focused on the protection and presentation of World War I heritage, where the results of the collection of war memorial data were presented on a digital map available at <https://www.thewalkofpeace.com/ww1-across-europe-map/>. The activities also included field visits to war memorials with an emphasis on the role of communities and cross-border routes. As part of our further activities, the Poloniny NP Administration participated in the second transnational conference in Rovereto, Italy, which focused on the initial testing of the World War I heritage model, developed as a strategic document adapted to three types of territories – developed, developing, and emerging.

More information and updates about the project can be found on the website: <https://www.nppoloniny.sk/gov4peace-multidimenzionalny-a-medziteritorialny-model-riadenia-na-aktivaciu-dedicstva-prvej-svetovej-vojny-na-podporu-trvalo-udrzatelneho-socialno-ekonomickeho-rozvoja-vzdialenych-uzemi-strednej-eu/> and <https://www.interreg-central.eu/projects/gov4peace/>.

As part of Slovakia's Recovery and Resilience Plan, Component 5 – Adaptation to Climate Change, the Poloniny National Park is implementing the project “*Restoration of Traditional Architectural Elements and Reconstruction of the Field Station*”. The aim of the project is to improve the tourist infrastructure and preserve the cultural values of the landscape by restoring traditional architectural elements called “oboroh” and reconstructing the Ruské field station in the depopulated part of the territory due to the Starina water reservoir. An oboroh is a traditional wooden structure used for storing hay, which is a typical element of Carpathian farming and cultural heritage. EUR 130,072.40 was spent on the project. As part of the project, apart for the field station building there were also 12 hayracks reconstructed and repositioned in the area in the form of information and interpretation panels, reminding visitors of the traditional architecture and farming methods in the Poloniny region.

Recommendation No. 5: Develop effective research and monitoring programmes which provide data helpful to the management of the national park's resources;

Recommendation in progress:

Many ongoing activities are part of the research and monitoring programs listed in the Poloniny National Park Management Plan or its Action Plan. They are carried out either by Poloniny NP Administration staff (monitoring of beavers, otters, amphibians, etc.) or by external researchers (who finance their activities themselves). Compared to previous assessment periods, the following new research and monitoring activities were carried out in the Poloniny National Park during the period under review:

- Assessment of the brown bear abundance in the Poloniny National Park based on non-invasive hair sampling.
- Completion of systematic (opportunistic and deterministic) monitoring of the Eurasian lynx in 2024 - 2025 in the Poloniny National Park as part of the Interreg Central Europe project “*Supporting the coexistence and conservation of large carnivores in the Carpathians*” (abbreviation: *LECA*).
- The Poloniny NP Administration is also a partner in the international project *WeVaRe – Introduction of monitoring of wetlands of international importance in the Carpathian region (INTERREG VI-A NEXT Hungary – Slovakia – Romania – Ukraine, 2025–2027)*. The aim of the project is to create a modern multi-element monitoring system for Carpathian wetlands using remote sensing, GIS technologies, and sensor measurements. The project includes an inventory and assessment of the condition of wetlands in the border areas of Slovakia, Ukraine, and Romania, the creation of digital maps, and the establishment of an open IT platform called *WeVaRe* for processing, archiving, and interpreting the data obtained. The budget for Poloniny National Park in the project is EUR 125,496. The project significantly strengthens the monitoring of aquatic habitats, which are key to biodiversity and adaptation to climate change in the national park.

The following new scientific articles were published during the period under review:

- Bezáková, Magdaléna & Bezák, Peter. (2025). Long-term socio-ecological research at Poloniny National Park LTSE platform. ARPHA Conference Abstracts. 8. 10.3897/aca.8.e148415.

- Danilák, Martin & Didirka, Tomáš & Čeluch, Martin (2025). Findings on bats in Poloniny National Park and its surroundings (Chiroptera). *Lynx new series*. 55. 143-156. 10.37520/lynx.2024.005.
- Halapy, J., Šnábel, V., Antolová, D., Cavallero, S., Guimarães, N. F., Ďurová, J., & Štofík, J. (2025). *Echinococcus granulosus sensu lato* in grey wolves (*Canis lupus*) population in Slovakia—epidemiology and genetic analysis. *Scientific Reports*, 15(1), 22590.
- Perzanowski, K., Wołoszyn-Gałęza, A., Januszczak, M., Maryskewych, O., Vlasáková, M., & Štofík, J. (2024). Forest Corridors Crucial for a Metapopulation of Wisents in the Carpathians—a Potential Rescue for Ukrainian Population of the Species.

Recommendation No. 6: Devise and implement with local stakeholders a tourism development strategy and a prioritised action plan so that the infrastructure facilities can be developed for the benefit of both the national park and the economic well-being of the people who live in the area;

Recommendation in progress:

As part of the predefined project "Tourists and Nature Together" (Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Program, 2025–2028), in which the Poloniny NP Administration has been allocated a package of EUR 1,882,643, preparations are underway for a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Poloniny National Park until 2035 and a Sustainable Mobility Plan. These are key documents for setting up a priority action plan and for linking the newly built infrastructure with the needs of municipalities, entrepreneurs, and the local community.

The project also includes the modernization of tourist infrastructure in the Poloniny National Park (renovation of footpaths, shelters, footbridges, signage, information panels, including elements for the visually impaired), the installation of digital kiosks, and the creation of new outdoor services (e.g., the Forest Spa product). These investments will enhance the quality of the visitor experience and bring economic opportunities to local communities.

Cooperation with municipalities, entrepreneurs, tourism organizations, and LAGs will continue through the "Poloniny Future+ National Park" platform, which is intended to function as an open mechanism for participation in the future development of the area. These activities represent the direct implementation of the recommendation to prepare and implement a tourism development strategy with local actors so that the newly built infrastructure benefits both the national park and local residents.

The Poloniny NP Administration also actively participated in regional tourism planning processes. It participated in a destination workshop on the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Prešov Region (April 3, 2025), whose program included presentations by Prešov Self-Governing Region, regional and district tourism organizations, local action group, and subsequent group work on defining priorities for tourism development in the region. This meeting enabled the direct involvement of local partners in the creation of strategic goals and a future action plan.

Recommendation No. 7: Maintain co-operation with the other nations which incorporate parts of the Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe World Heritage Site, as well as with Bieszczady National Park in Poland, the East Carpathian Biosphere Reserve and the two neighbouring Landscape Protected Areas – Východné Karpaty and Vihorlat;

Recommendation in progress:

The Poloniny NP Administration has good contacts with neighbouring protected areas in Slovakia - Vihorlat Protected Landscape Area (PLA) and also with Východné Karpaty PLA. There is an excellent cooperation in the frame of the UNESCO World Heritage Property.

In 2025, the Poloniny NP Administration actively cooperated with the Bieszczady National Park, partners of the Eastern Carpathians Biosphere Reserve, and other countries that manage parts of the Old Beech Forests and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians World Heritage Site. Long-term and successful cooperation with the Bieszczady National Park continued within the framework of the project "Natural and Cultural Treasures of the Eastern Carpathians – Know, Love and Protect" (Interreg Poland – Slovakia 2021–2027), which included joint working meetings, expert workshops, a 4-day hike along the Slovak-Polish border, and outputs such as a bilingual photo exhibition, a children's coloring book, a cross-border tourist map, and a mobile application.

On June 4–6, 2025, the Poloniny National Park hosted an international meeting of Pro Silva, a European network of foresters, forest owners, researchers, and other experts focused on nature-friendly forest management. The event was attended by 60 experts from various European countries. The program also included expert excursions to the Rožok and Stužica primeval forests. The Poloniny NP Administration also represented the World Heritage Site at the SK UNESCO Partners Forum "UNESCO at Your Fingertips" (June 12, 2025), where it strengthened the presentation and cooperation of UNESCO sites through an information stand, educational activities, and participation in a panel discussion.

An important element of international coordination was also participation in the meeting of the Joint Management Committee (JMC) of the Old Beech Forests World Heritage Site (October 6, 2025, Muczne, Poland), which addressed the preparation of a multi-year strategy, monitoring indicators, fundraising, and the harmonization of

procedures between countries. The Poloniny NP Administration also participated in the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas in Granada (May 21–22, 2025), which brought together representatives of all diploma holders and created an opportunity to strengthen European cooperation.

Through these activities, the Poloniny NP Administration systematically strengthens cross-border ties, joint promotion, experience sharing, and coordination with countries and organizations managing parts of the World Heritage Site, as well as other organizations in the field of nature conservation.

Recommendation No. 8: Continue the dialogue with local communities in order to build confidence and foster involvement in the diploma-holding area.

Recommendation in progress:

The Poloniny NP Administration, in cooperation with the Slovak Association of Equestrian Tourism in Humenné, has prepared a proposal for horse riding trails in the national park. If horse riding trails is once completed, it would need to be approved according to the relevant legal procedures and then marked in the field. The Slovak Association of Equestrian Tourism also plans to operate a mobile application with maps of these trails.

During the period under review, the Poloniny NP Administration continued its active dialogue with local communities as part of the Interreg CE "LECA" project. Foresters, hunting entities, and landowners were involved in monitoring the Eurasian lynx, conducting field surveys, collecting data, and submitting it to the Technical University in Zvolen. The project brought about a fundamental shift in our knowledge of the lynx – from almost zero data initially, it was possible to determine the actual number and movement of individuals in the area, which allows for the implementation of effective protective measures. The activity also included education about the life and ecological needs of the lynx, which strengthened support for its protection among local actors.

In 2025, the Poloniny NP Administration strengthened its cooperation with local actors by participating in working meetings organized in the region, in particular the "First Hand" event held on October 30, 2024, February 27, and June 18, 2025. At these meetings, the Poloniny NP Administration presented its activities and vision for the development of the area. The event was organized by the Prešov Self-Governing Region in cooperation with the World Bank, the Catching-UP Regions initiative, the municipality of Stakčín, and regional tourism partners.

Public awareness and dialogue with local communities The Poloniny NP Administration also strengthened its presence through active participation in community events organized by local governments. At events such as St. Hubert's Day in Humenné (September 8, 2024), Welcome, Adventurer in Humenné (November 23, 2024), Meeting of Starina Natives (July 9, 2025), Stakčín Folk Art Festival (July 12, 2025), and Harvest in Topoľa (July 26, 2025), the administration prepared information stands, presentation materials, and educational activities for children and adults. These activities contributed to a better understanding of the importance of nature conservation in the Poloniny Mountains and at the same time strengthened the trust of local residents in the Poloniny NP Administration.

During the period under review, several meetings were also organized with stakeholders, mainly concerning the proposed zoning of the national park.

In accordance with a significant amendment to the *Act on Nature Protection*, the legislation stipulates that all national parks in Slovakia have a national park council, which should serve as an advisory, consultative, or expert body. In 2022, the Poloniny National Park Council was established, with 15 members at that time. The National Park Council includes representatives of regional governments, non-governmental organizations, landowners, scientific institutions, directors of neighboring national parks in Poland and Ukraine, and other stakeholders (tourism associations). The NP Council is one of the tools that should improve relations between the Poloniny NP Administration and local communities. The number of council members increased to 19 in 2023 and to 22 in 2024. The Council held one meeting during the period under review.

Site Management:

According to the amendment of the *Act on Nature Protection* valid since January 2020, sites of international importance were defined. The list and fundamental data on their list (including the European Diploma holders) is available at the <https://www.minzp.sk/ochrana-prirody/medzinarodne-dohovory/uzemia-medzinarodneho-vyznamu/>. Other changes are mentioned under individual conditions and recommendations.

3. Boundaries:

In accordance with the proposed zoning of the Poloniny National Park, which is to be submitted to the inter-ministerial level, a change in boundaries is being prepared. Approval of the zoning is expected in early 2026. The government regulation (zoning) is planned to take effect in January 2026.

4. Other information:

The visibility of the independent Poloniny NP Administration as a legal entity has improved – see the official website <https://www.nppoloniny.sk/> and Facebook profile <https://www.facebook.com/NarodnyParkPoloniny>. Information from the Facebook profile is often used by the media as a source of information about the activities carried out by the Poloniny NP Administration. The daily newspaper SME often covers topics related to the Poloniny National Park through its regional daily Korzár Horný Zemplín <https://hornyzemplin.korzar.sme.sk/search?q=Poloniny&period=all&order=date>. As part of Slovak Television and Radio broadcasting, a report entitled "Do you know the largest primeval forest in our country? Only here can you encounter bison in the wild" (<https://www.stvr.sk/novinky/tipy-z-programu/375635/poznate-najvacsi-prales-u-nas-len-tu-stretnete-zubra-volne-v-prirode>). On October 27, 2024, TV JOJ broadcasted a report entitled „Repairing roadside crosses“ in its Noviny TV JOJ program, which features information about efforts to gradually restore roadside stone crosses that are of significant value to local residents ([https://videoportal.joj.sk/noviny/epizoda/129957-noviny-tv-joj?](https://videoportal.joj.sk/noviny/epizoda/129957-noviny-tv-joj?_gl=1*1vuubdk*_ga*MTA4MTgxODc5My4xNzIzNTM1MDg4*_ga_9FWZQ15GJL*MTczMDEzMjQ2MS4yLjEuMTczMDEzMjQ4NC4wLjAuMA)

[_gl=1*1vuubdk*_ga*MTA4MTgxODc5My4xNzIzNTM1MDg4*_ga_9FWZQ15GJL*MTczMDEzMjQ2MS4yLjEuMTczMDEzMjQ4NC4wLjAuMA](https://videoportal.joj.sk/noviny/epizoda/129957-noviny-tv-joj?_gl=1*1vuubdk*_ga*MTA4MTgxODc5My4xNzIzNTM1MDg4*_ga_9FWZQ15GJL*MTczMDEzMjQ2MS4yLjEuMTczMDEzMjQ4NC4wLjAuMA)). On August 28, 2025, Slovak Television and Radio broadcast a French documentary entitled „The European Bison Escaped Extinction by a Hair's Breadth. Do You Know Where It Lives Here?“, which maps the occurrence of bison in Europe, including the territory of the Poloniny National Park.

The logo of the European Diploma is promoted in all the relevant occasions.

December 2025, prepared by the Administration of the Poloniny NP (Zuzana Bartušová), State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (Michaela Mrázová) and the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (Jana Durkošová)

Annex: overview of the environmental awareness activities

- The Poloniny NP Administration participated in the organization of the 35th edition of the long-distance stage hike along the ridge of the Poloniny Carpathians, organized by the Slovak Tourist Club TK LOKO Humenné on 12–14 September 2024. The photo gallery is available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=936989448464397&set=pcb.936990188464323&locale=sk_SK
- On 26–27 September, we took part in the celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of the declaration of the Orava Protected Landscape Area (PLA Orava). The program included an expert conference, craft workshops, and informational and educational booths prepared by staff from other protected areas in Slovakia. As part of these activities, the Poloniny NP Administration provided information about the area and prepared playful educational activities. Inspiring documentation is available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=945828094247199&set=pcb.945828187580523&locale=sk_SK
- On 27 September 2024, the Poloniny NP Administration organized an educational field excursion with expert commentary for Naturpack staff, attended by 50 participants.

October 2024

- In October, we prepared an online quiz competition titled *From Primeval Forest to Primeval Forest*. The knowledge-based competition was organized on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the designation of the oldest nature reserves in the Poloniny National Park area—Havešová and Jarabá skala. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMb7Rr8_sot0Ws8Cke81cY8DlfgbC-aXXXPUALWLuHu4E1ig/viewform?fbclid=IwY2xjawOJHbRleHRuA2FibQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzIxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeXfvUliulasS90kl-sAjob-Jm-PnhXZO4E2yvh87H9K3LBZZLgt5PvhojDjY_aem_s_NCSlvumtiqjlf89o0T4w
- On 20 October 2024, an Open Day was held at the East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve and Poloniny National Park, organized on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the declaration of the Havešová and Jarabá skala nature reserves. The event was attended by 50 people and included a guided excursion led by staff of the Poloniny NP Administration in the Jarabá skala National Nature Reserve, a campfire gathering at the Grófske chyžky mountain lodge area, goulash cooking, and a knowledge quiz for participants. A rich photo gallery and more information are available on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=962503489246326&set=pcb.962507539245921&locale=sk_SK
- The event „*Legendary Poloniny*“ focused on exploring legends connected with Poloniny National Park and the cultural, historical, and natural features of the area (the Grandpa Večerníček's House in Nová Sedlica, the School Museum in Zboj, the wooden church in Uličské Krivé, the skete of Ignatius Čokina in Uličské Krivé, the Tri studničky site in Runina, and the Runina Waterfall). The event was intended for the general public and was

organized by the Horný Zemplín Regional Tourism Organization in cooperation with the Aevis Foundation and the Poloniny NP Administration on 27 October 2024. A total of 40 people took part in the event.

- On 25 and 28 October 2025, excursions were carried out for pupils of the P. O. Hviezdoslav Primary School in Snina. The events were held on the occasion of Tree Day. A total of 90 participants took part, visiting the primeval forests of Jarabá skala and Stučica, the Medová baba site, as well as the Kremenec tripoint. A short video highlight is available at:

https://www.facebook.com/NarodnyParkPoloniny/videos/586954493752877?locale=sk_SK

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=976324811197527&set=pcb.976324874530854&locale=sk_SK

November 2024

- On 5 November 2024, an excursion was held in the Havešová primeval forest for pupils from the Czech Republic who practice nature-based home education. As part of the expert interpretation and educational hands-on activities, participants also visited other locations in the Poloniny region – Jaro Lechan, where they learned to bake traditional homemade bread; the Chomanič family in Kolonica, where they tasted buckwheat flour; and the observatory at Kolonický vrch, where they learned about stars and the night sky directly at the Astronomical Observatory. A selection of activities is available on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=992662206230454&set=pcb.992663949563613&locale=sk_SK

December 2024

- The event *“Poloniny under the Christmas Tree”* was intended for the general public. The Poloniny NP Administration also co-organized the program. The event featured our mascot, Víčko Ňufáčik. It was held on 10 December 2023 at the Poloniny Tourist Information Centre by the Snina Fish Ponds. The photo gallery is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=290368580645848>

January 2025

- The eco-educational program *“Tracking Forest Animals”* for pupils of the Stakčín Primary School with Kindergarten was organized on 16 January 2025. A total of 25 participants took part. Information and a photo gallery are available at:

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1029181825911825&set=pcb.1029188245911183&locale=sk_SK

February 2025

- During the spring holidays at the Leisure Centre, we organized the program *“Holidays with the National Park”*. The program presented Poloniny National Park and its points of interest, while children created their own track books and prepared food for birds. The activities, held on 18 February 2025, were attended by 10 children.

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1056708753159132&set=pcb.1056710019825672&locale=sk_SK

- The Poloniny NP Administration celebrated *“World Wetlands Day”* together with pupils of the Church United School in Snina, who also participated in an eco-educational program. A total of 20 participants took part on 2 February 2024. The photo gallery is available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/NarodnyParkPoloniny/posts/783383020491708>

March 2025

- The Poloniny NP Administration also commemorated *“World Wetlands Day”* on 3 March 2025 together with children from the Zemplínske Hámre Kindergarten. Twenty children participated in the educational program, which included playful activities and a visit from our mascot, Víčko Ňufáčik. The photo gallery is available at:

https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1064546322375375&set=pcb.1064549569041717&locale=sk_SK

- During March, the Poloniny NP Administration carried out the online challenge *“Let's Help the World Become More Beautiful”*, focused on individual or group litter collection in participants' local surroundings. Staff actively took part by collecting litter at several locations within the Poloniny National Park territory: Magurčia in the cadastral area of Stakčín, Kalná Roztoka – Klenová, and Kalná Roztoka – towards the Havešová Nature Reserve. Selected participants of the challenge received commemorative items.

The challenge is available on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1067614515401889&set=a.213989670764382&locale=sk_SK

- Practical nature conservation activities by the Poloniny NP team on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1067719298724744&set=pcb.1067719408724733&locale=sk_SK

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1078925240937483&set=pcb.1078928654270475&locale=sk_SK

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1091253866371287&set=pcb.1091256726371001&locale=sk_SK

- On 11 March 2025, an information day titled *“The Carpathians – Home of Large Predators”* was held at the Obyvačka venue in Snina, attended by 50 participants. The event was aimed at the general public, particularly pupils of Študentská Primary School in Snina.
- We commemorated *World Water Day* together with pupils of Ulič Primary School on 21 March 2025. The activities were attended by 30 children.
- On 24 March 2025, an educational program titled *“Wild Nature”* was organized for pupils of the Combined Boarding – Special Primary School and Vocational School in Snina on the occasion of World Wildlife Day. The program included a presentation, playful educational activities, and a visit from the beloved mascot, Víčko Ňufáčik. A total

of 40 children from marginalized groups participated. More information is available on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1084602277036446&set=pcb.1084603990369608&locale=sk_SK

April 2025

- An educational program titled *"Life in the Forests"* was organized for pupils of Humenné Primary School, focusing on UNESCO World Natural Heritage – the Carpathian beech forests. The event was attended by 50 pupils.
- The Poloniny NP Administration organized educational activities for Earth Day for children from Udavské Kindergarten (40 participants), the Kindergarten on Čsl. armády Street (60 participants), and the Kindergarten on Budovateľská Street in Snina (60 participants).
<https://www.msbudiceksnina.sk/fotogaleria-1/fotky-z-akcii-2024-2025/den-zeme-808sk.html>
- On 24 April 2025, the Poloniny NP Administration participated in a program organized for *Earth Day*. The event for young children was held in the courtyard of the Manor House in Snina in cooperation with the Municipal Cultural and Educational Centre in Snina. Approximately 200 children from kindergartens in Snina and the surrounding area took part. The children engaged in educational activities, such as creating and exploring tracks in sand and learning about forest animals and their sounds. The event's highlight was the mascot, Vlčko Ľufáčik. The photo gallery is available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1272731901521520&set=pcb.127273868188990>
- The Poloniny NP Administration actively participated in a cultural-educational program organized for *Earth Day* in the cinema hall of the Snina Cultural Centre. The program was aimed at the general public, particularly pupils of primary schools in the Snina district. It was held on 28–30 April 2025 and was attended by approximately 1,600 participants. The photo gallery is available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1280630414072372&set=pcb.1280631400738940>
- On 29 April 2025, an informational and research program titled *"One Square Meter of the Landscape"* was organized for children from the Kindergarten on Budovateľská Street in Snina. The program was carried out in the surrounding nature and was attended by 30 children.
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1113192400844100&set=pcb.1113195837510423&locale=sk_SK

May 2025

- On 19–21 May 2025, staff of the Poloniny NP Administration participated in a working meeting that included presentations, workshops, and inspiring discussions as part of the cross-border project *"Natural and Cultural Treasures of the Eastern Carpathians – Explore, Love, and Protect!"*. The photo gallery is available at:
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1132045895625417&set=pcb.1132046142292059&locale=sk_SK
- The educational program *"Fauna of Poloniny"* was held for pupils of Komenský Primary School in Snina on 23 May 2025, attended by 40 pupils, and for Roma and children with disabilities from the Special School SŠI in Snina on 15 May 2025, attended by 30 pupils.
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=709787574769728&set=pcb.709792198102599&locale=sk_SK
- An educational program on the theme of water was organized for pupils of Komenský Primary School on 23 May 2025. A total of 35 pupils participated.
- On 13 May 2025, excursions were organized for pupils of a primary school in Košice to visit the attractive sites of Poloniny National Park, attended by 45 participants.

June 2025

- The educational program *"Fauna of Poloniny"* was held on 4 June 2025 for pupils of Hviezdoslavova Primary School at their school premises. A total of 20 pupils participated.
- The Poloniny NP Administration participated in the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak republic (ŠOP SR) in the city park of Banská Bystrica, actively contributing through an informational booth and educational presentation activities.
https://www.facebook.com/NarodnyParkPoloniny/videos/1402353281188509?locale=sk_SK
- On 6 June 2025, the Poloniny NP Administration organized the 18th annual competition titled *"Poloniny National Park in 101 Questions and Answers"*. The regional knowledge competition took place at the Information Centre in Nová Sedlica, with the Leisure Centre in Snina participating in its organization. The competition is aimed at pupils in the 5th and 6th grades of primary schools within the park's territory. This year, nine primary schools participated, each represented by three-member teams. The photo gallery is available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/NarodnyParkPoloniny/videos/1230504435755245>
- On 9 June 2025, an *Eco Day* was held at the Vihorlat Museum in Humenné on the occasion of World Environment Day. The Administration of Poloniny National Park participated with presentations and educational activities focused on the Carpathian beech forests – a UNESCO World Heritage site. The event was attended by 30 high school students.
- On 9 June 2025, a program titled *"Wandering through the Poloniny"* was organized for a primary school from Sečovce. The excursions, guided by park staff, were attended by 45 participants.
- On 9 July 2025, a variety of playful educational activities were organized for children from the summer camp in Humenné, in collaboration with Pugačevova Primary School in Humenné.

- On 15 June 2025, an event for the general public, *Open Day of Poloniny National Park and the East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve*, was held, attended by 50 people. The program included an excursion along the Ruské – Ivankov Čierťaž route, a communal barbecue, and discussions among participants. A rich photo gallery is available on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/NarodnyParkPoloniny/videos/2899873963534129>
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=122241924326239118&set=pcb.122241925820239118>
- On 18 June 2025, an educational program titled “*Young Nature Protector*” was held at the Information Centre in Nová Sedlica, attended by 30 participants, including children, parents, and teachers from Stakčín Kindergarten.
<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1697246110905903>
- On 22 June 2025, the Poloniny NP Administration participated in the event “*Swap the Blue of Santorini for the Green of Poloniny*”. The cycling tour took place along the route: Stakčín – Jalová (intersection) – loop along the Starina Reservoir – Ruské – Runina – Topoľa – Príslop – Stakčín, with stops at the Košiar Craft Centre and the wooden church in Topoľa.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1150668247096515&set=a.213989670764382>
- On 26 June 2025, an informational and research day titled “*One Meter of the Landscape*” was held at the Information Centre in Nová Sedlica, attended by 35 children and teachers from Ubľa Primary School.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1171808701649136&set=pcb.1171810298315643>
- On 26–27 June, staff of the Poloniny NP Administration participated in the nationwide event *Tatranská kosba a Špica guľáš*, organized by colleagues from TANAP, where they had the opportunity to test their skills.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=747244087979044&set=pcb.747245964645523>
- On 27–28 June, the team of the Poloniny NP Administration actively participated in organizing the 31st annual nationwide gathering of visually impaired hikers. The event was attended by 60 participants, who were divided into three groups based on their disability and physical fitness, with guided routes prepared for each group.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1180791564084183&set=pcb.1180795524083787>

July 2025

- On 3–6 July, staff of the Poloniny NP Administration participated in a Polish-Slovak hike organized as part of the cross-border project “*Natural and Cultural Treasures of the Eastern Carpathians – Explore, Love, and Protect!*”. The event was attended by 30 participants from Slovakia and Poland.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1176659201164086&set=pcb.1176665121163494>
- On 23 July 2025, we organized an excursion with expert commentary for members of the Slovak Union of People with Disabilities from Michalovce. The event, featuring a rich program, was attended by 45 participants.
<https://www.facebook.com/NarodnyParkPoloniny/videos/761343833147917>

August 2025

- In cooperation with the Regional Tourism Organization (KOCR) in Prešov, we organized an expert commentary and educational activities along the trail to the Zboj viewpoint on 2 August 2025.
- An excursion with educational activities was organized for a group from the Centre for Children and Families along the NCH Osadné – Udava trail on 6 August 2025.
- The Poloniny NP Administration contributed to the experiential festival “*Discover Poloniny*”, held on 15–17 August 2025. During two days, 36 participants were guided along the Havešová primeval forest trail.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=619105187913135&set=pcb.619106211246366>
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1204891468340859&set=pcb.1204893515007321>
- On 21 August 2025, an excursion with expert commentary was organized for participants of the EXOD event (Trade Union of Education and Science Workers in Slovakia) to the Hodošík – War Cemetery site. The event was attended by 50 participants.