

Annual report for Piatra Craiului National Park – 2013

State: ROMANIA

Name of the area: Piatra Craiului National Park

Central authority concerned:

National Forest Administration – ROMSILVA
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Authority responsible for its management:

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I. General information

1. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – Conservation situation

1.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
No change.

1.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover: presumed causes
No change.

1.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating and breeding places
The chamois population has an increasing trend, especially due to the hunting ban since 2007. The annual monitoring conducted in 2013 showed an increase in number of individuals, from around 110 in 2012 to around 160 in 2013.

2. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

2.1. Cultural heritage

. 2.1.1 Changes concerning cultural heritage.

No change.

2.2. Socio-economic context

. 2.2.1 Changes concerning the socio-economic context.

No change.

3. Education and scientific interest

3.1. Visitors - Information policy

. 3.1.1 Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

The park's web page (www.pcr.ai.ro) was updated with new information and images, and a new layer was added on the web page with accommodation facilities, including information, photos and location on the map.

The webpage had over 2.000.000 hits in 2013, with visitors from 97 countries. Several other materials were printed – posters, calendars, mouse pads, t-shirts.

. 3.1.2 Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

No change comparing with the previous report.

In 2013 we resumed the tourist monitoring inside the park. One of the ranger's tasks is to ask the tourists to fill in the monitoring forms to obtain a feedback and also to assess the tourist trend.

3.1.3 Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

In September 2013 The European Ecotourism Conference was organized in Poiana Braşov. The post-conference field trip was organised in Piatra Craiului National Park.

3.2. Scientific research

. 3.2.1 Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention...)

In 2013 there were monitored several species and habitats from Piatra Craiului National Park. 12 monitoring protocols are included in the SOP Project, including *Ligularia sibirica*, bats species from caves and bats species of European interest, capercaillie, chamois, birds of prey of European interest, forest habitats, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*. During the winter there were monitored the bats hibernating colonies from the caves to assess the conservation status. Most of the caves are closed and the bat population kept its number from the previous years. The large carnivores from the park were also monitored, using the snow-tracking method. During the spring there was monitored the capercaillie at the leking sites. The search for more leking sites is necessary, in order to estimate the population and the conservation status. At the end of spring and during the summer there were monitored several habitats of European importance (mountain hay meadows, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, calcareous and calchist scree of the mountain to alpine level, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*) and also the birds of prey to assess the threats and the conservation status. During the autumn there were monitored the birds of prey' species of European importance during the annual migration and also the red deer at the mating season. In October it was organized a monitoring action to evaluate the chamois population. At the end of autumn and beginning of winter there were monitored also the forest habitats to assess the conservation status and the trend of the clear-cutting areas and to prevent the illegal cutting of the Christmas trees.

There are currently students working on the park territory at graduation thesis, master thesis and PhD thesis, focused on flora, fauna and tourism.

. 3.2.2 Scientific publications

No scientific works were published in 2013.

4. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

4.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

The revised version of Piatra Craiului National Park's Management plan was approved in December 2013 through the Governmental Decision No. 1057/2013.

4.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentings, etc.)

No change

4.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

No change

5. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

5.1. Improvements made

. 5.1.1 Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

No change

. 5.1.2 Protection against the elements (fire, water, regime)

No change

. 5.1.3 Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

The Park Administration installed 10 new panels with general information at Moieciu, Plaiu Fcii, Zărnești, Curmătura, Dîmbovicioara, Zărnești Gorges.

It was also repainted 4 touristic paths in Piatra Mică, Pietricica, Turnuri Peak and Șaua Crăpăturii areas.

The Park Administration restored the Grind mountain shelter together with volunteers from Switzerland.

. 5.1.4 Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

A set of field equipment was bought with the help from a Sector Operational Program Pillar 4 project, « Revision of the Piatra Craiului National Park Management Plan », including one snowmobile.

5.2. Management

. 5.2.1 Administrative department: changes made

In October 2013 the former park biologist returned to the administration, after a postdoctoral scholarship at the University from Brasov.

The park accountant and one of the park rangers left, and new people were hired following a selection process.

The Piatra Craiului National Park is one of the 5 sites in the GEF/UNPD project **Improvement of the Financial Management of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas**. The aim of the project is to identify potential income sources and to create business plans linked to the park management plans, improve the legislation and cooperate with the other parks in the Carpathians.

Piatra Craiului is the leading partner in the Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians – Bioregio.

BIOREGIO Carpathians project is aimed at enhancing the integrated management of the Carpathians protected areas and natural assets in a transnational context and thereby increase the attractiveness of the region. Bioregio Carpathians is a project co-funded by the European Union within the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme and it involves 16 partners from Austria, Italy, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Serbia, Poland and Romania.

In 2013 there were organized 2 projects partners meetings in Austria and Romania and 2 stakeholders meetings in Slovakia and Serbia.

It was organized the 2nd CNPA Conference, the Mid Term Conference (23-26 of April in Slovakia) and the Pan Carpathian Day (24 of May, in 7 countries).

. 5.2.2 Wardens' department: changes made

The park's team is complete, including 12 people.

. 5.2.3 Internal policing measures

No change

. 5.2.4 Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

In 2013 there have been recorded several infringements in the area.

The park administration penalized, together with the Mountain Police, the involved persons according the law and the park's regulation as follows:

- 1 penalty for unauthorized harvesting of non-timber forest products inside the park – 800 RON
- 1 penalty for unauthorized car access inside the park - 3000 RON
- 7 penalties for leaving the marked tourist trails – 21000 RON
- 2 warning notices for park regulation braking attempts.

II. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas

III. Conditions and/or recommendations for award or renewal

The European Diploma was awarded conditioned by the following conditions:

1. complete the process of preparing and approving the new management plan by the end of 2011.

The Management Plan was submitted by the Park Administration to the Government for approval in 2011. It was analysed by all the ministries and it was approved in December 2013 through the Governmental Decision No. 1057/2013.

There were also six recommendations to the renewal:

1. secure the budget of the national park so that the national park administration is able to manage the park appropriately and has all financial resources needed in order to pay the staff on a regular basis;

The park budget is secured by the National Forest Administration (732.000 paid in 2013, 784.000 secured for 2014).

2. complete the construction of the headquarters and other infrastructure, especially the exhibition room and other tourist facilities, within three years and make particular efforts to raise the appropriate funds to achieve this;

The Park Administration has started from the 1st of March 2012 a Sector Operational Program Pillar 4 project, « The improvement of the conservation status of Piatra Craiului National Park's biodiversity by public awareness, information, visiting and monitoring »

The aim of the project is to set up the visitors sector of Piatra Craiului National Park Administration Headquarters from Zarnesti; to build an information point for tourists in Curmatura area; to build 4 information points at the main entrances of the park; to set up four thematic tourist trails, with information panels; to realize a printed thematic guide for the tourist trails with an attached map, and a guide for protected species and habitats; to realize 12 types of leaflets regarding the main elements of the park. The project contains also provisions for the fauna, flora and habitats monitoring.

In 2013 started the building works at Visitors Center in Zarnesti and Information Center at Curmatura. The buildings will to be completed in 2014.

3. elaborate and implement a specific high profile programme devoted to the promotion, preservation and restoration of the local architecture and landscape; this exemplary programme should be implemented with the help of relevant specialists and contribute to making this region a model for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage;

The architect from the Scientific Council, with the support of the Park Administration, elaborated a guide of how to build in order to preserve the local architecture and landscape, inspired also by the European Landscape Convention, and which will be published soon. The building rules were included in the Park Management Plan and encourage the use of local materials (timber and stone) for the new buildings and the preservation of the mountain village style with scattered houses. The guide was distributed at the local authorities and the local communities.

4. pursue the scientific work and monitoring of biodiversity in every sector of the park; those activities should assess the status and trends of species and habitats, considering the national park as

part of a functional ecosystem and consequently use appropriate methods and indicators to keep the national park administration aware of important changes to this ecosystem;

In 2013 there were monitored several species and habitats from Piatra Craiului National Park. 12 monitoring protocols are included in the SOP Project, including *Ligularia sibirica*, bats species from caves and bats species of European interest, capercaillie, chamois, birds of prey of European interest, forest habitats, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*. During the winter there were monitored the bats hibernating colonies from the caves to assess the conservation status. Most of the caves are closed and the bat population kept its number from the previous years. The large carnivores from the park were also monitored, using the snow-tracking method. During the spring there was monitored the capercaillie at the leking sites. The search for more leking sites is necessary, in order to estimate the population and the conservation status. At the end of spring and during the summer there were monitored several habitats of European importance (mountain hay meadows, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, calcareous and calchist screes of the mountain to alpine level, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*) and also the birds of prey to assess the threats and the conservation status. During the autumn there were monitored the birds of prey' species of European importance during the annual migration and also the red deer at the mating season. In October it was organized a monitoring action to evaluate the chamois population. At the end of autumn and beginning of winter there were monitored also the forest habitats to assess the conservation status and the trend of the clear-cutting areas and to prevent the illegal cutting of the Christmas trees.

5. regarding both central and local forest authorities, more attention should be paid to the enforcement of the forest law on the national park's fringe and in the surroundings of the park; the measures taken and the results obtained should be reported to the Council of Europe on an annual basis;

The Park Administration with the central forest authorities organized over 40 control actions to enforce the forest law, *see the results at 5.2.4*

6. pursue the efforts made by the national park administration to address the litter and garbage issues and to engage a new phase of activities facilitated by this administration; a detailed report on the results of those activities should be sent to the Council of Europe every two years.

In 2013 the Park Administration was involved in the "Let's do it, Romania", an awareness campaign for waste collection from all over the country. The areas included in the programme were Valea Raului-Prapastiile Zarnestilor and Plaiul Foi-Valea Tamasului. Another waste collecting action was organized in Magura village. There were collected over 150 garbage bags.

There were as well other 7 garbage collection campaigns, with volunteers organised by the Park Administration.