

# Tourism in Croatian Protected Areas

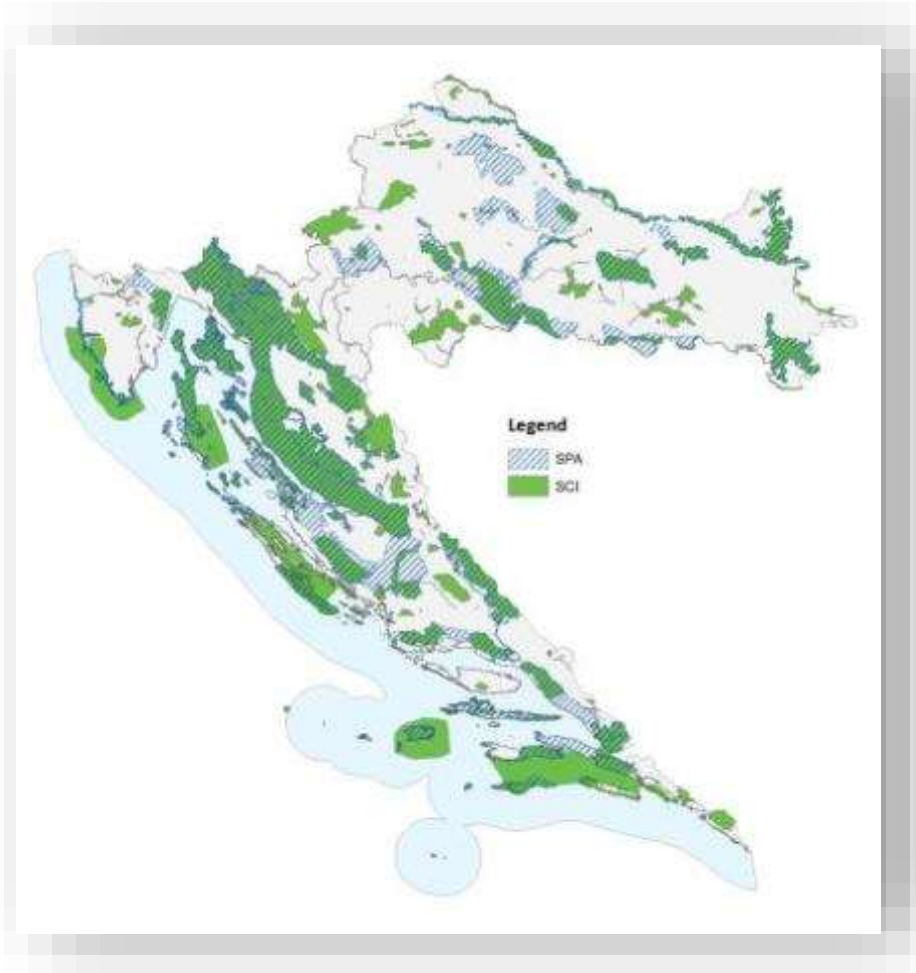
October 2020

WEBINAR\_Rethinking Tourism B2B Event\_Projekt EU "MISTRAL"\_Development  
of tourism in protected natural areas

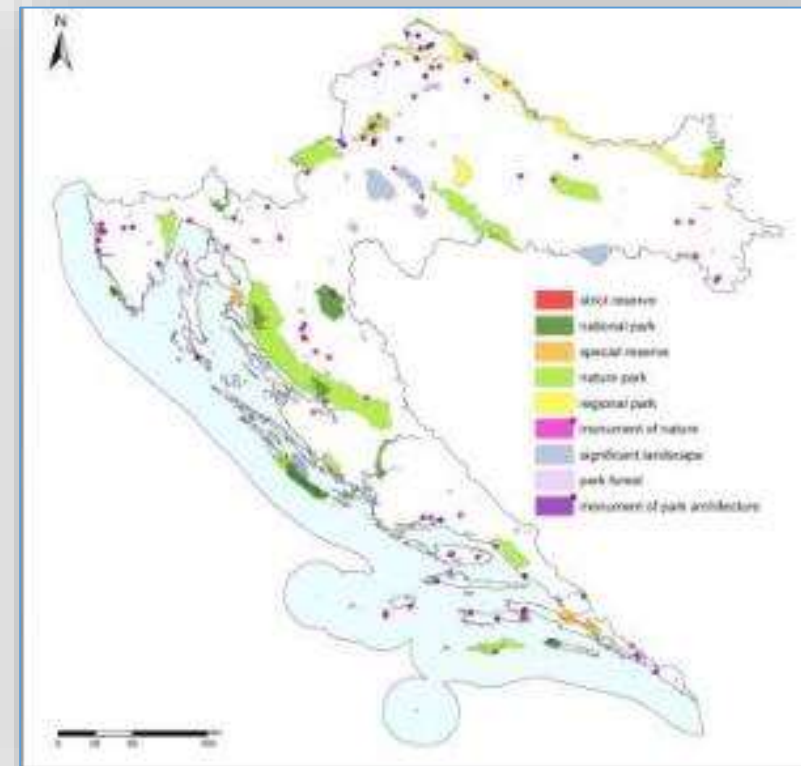
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# Croatia – Natura 2000 and PA's



**Natura 2000** = 37% land, 15% sea  
2nd largest in the EU



- **408** Protected Areas
- **8** national parks
- **11** nature parks (+ 1 NP in process)

# Present PAs tourism numbers

- Croatia

2017.	17,4 M tourists
2019.	21 M tourists

- July/August - **8,5 million** tourists

- **4 million** visitors in 19 national and nature parks →

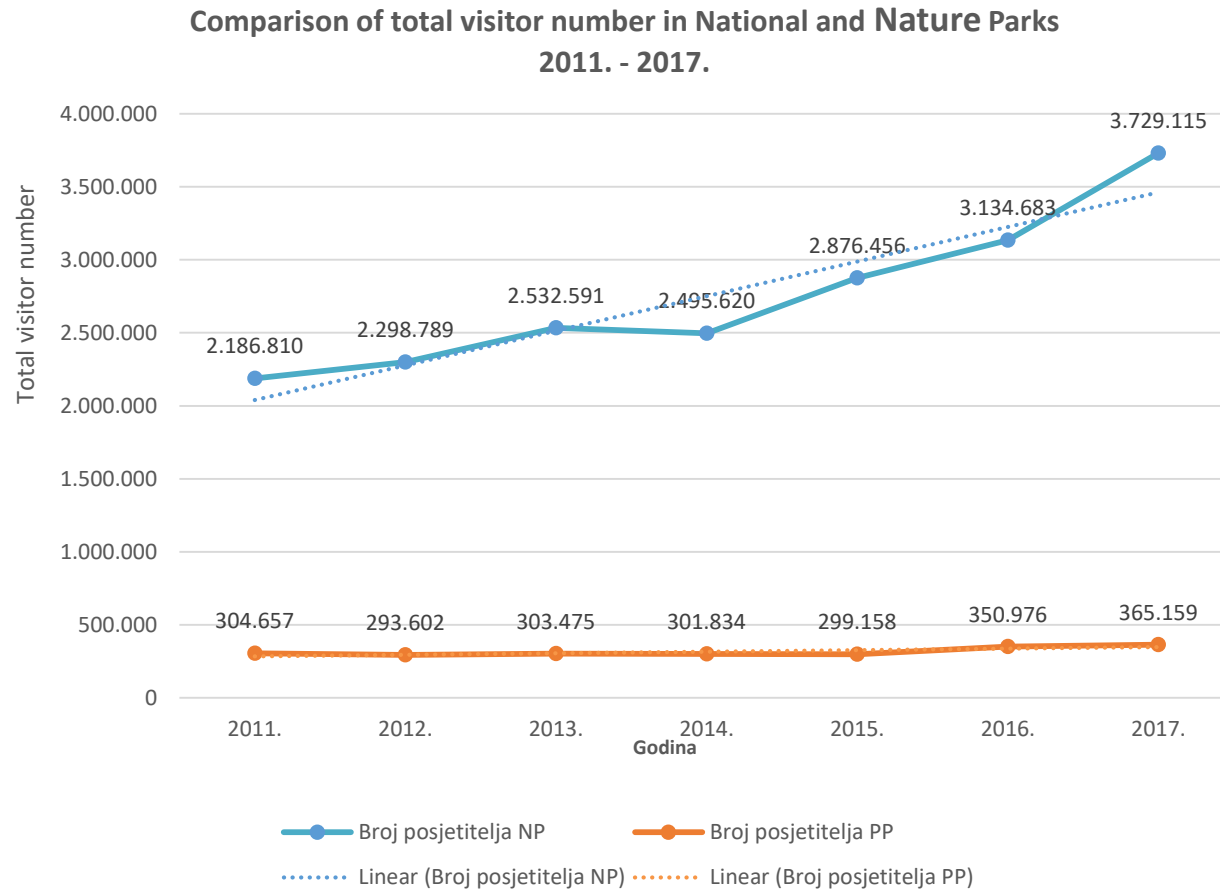
„Tourism exploitation" varies – most of the parks have not yet reached their potential  
**BUT...**

- **3 million** visitors in NP “Plitvice lakes” and NP “Krka”!

August 2019	August 2020
3,24 M	1,19 M



# Tourism numbers increase



- 96,6% **foreign visitors** in National Parks
- 80 % **domestic visitors** in Nature Parks

# Where PAs tourism was 10 years ago?

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In 2010 GAP analysis following was **rated low**:

- A) Insufficient visitor infrastructure
- B) Tourism impact monitoring in PA's
- C) Stakeholder's involvement
- D) Knowledge of tourism management
- E) Promotional / marketing activities
- F) Inadequate visual identity
- G) Inadequate funding (decreasing state budget funding)

*(reference: NIP and PARCS projects 2011-2017 – MEE)*

# P1: Visitor infrastructure projects (with strong emphasis on education and interpretation)



NP Biokovo  
Visitor centre „New Adrion”  
and „Skywalk”



NP Krka Puljane



NP Kopački rit (Castle Tikveš; Sakadaš Lake)



NP Krka „Centar Lozovac”

# P1: Monitoring of tourism impact in PA's / visitor management

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**1st Visitor Management Plans under development** (condition for EU infrastructure projects);

- Recommendations for VMP by former CANEP
- Continuous **Visitor structure and attitudes research**
- Training „**Visitor management planning in PA's – LAC methodological framework**”
- **LAC methodology** – recommended framework (indicators, standards/tresholds)

# Making Nature more visible and accessible

brand  
„Parks of Croatia“



webportal/web shop  
„Parks of Croatia“

- **Standardization** and networking of all 19 PA's
- **Tourist signalization** of Parks on motorways



## P2: Stakeholders involvement in management of PAs

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Destination level and Product level

- Charter for sustainable tourism, Europarc
- Local Ecotourism Clusters (LEC), MEET approach

Characteristics

- longterm, multistakeholder** platforms,
- involving stakeholders into all aspects of PA's work: planning, realization of activities and decision making
- (ownership vs. restriction approach)

# P3: Visitor education and interpretation

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- Educational programs
- Interpretative/guided walks
- Manifestations (EU Bat Night, Earth Day, Week of Parks, etc.)
- Volunteer in Park! Program



# P5: Competences and capacity building

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Development of the Program for education of PA staff (2011-2017)

- 17 thematic educational modules developed (1300 PA staff).
- Training Needs Assessment conducted and National Plan for Capacity Building for Protected Areas Management – 2017;
- LAC methodology education
- Undergoing project “Development of the Natura 2000 management framework” has identified 6 topics for capacity building – one of the topic is “Visitor management in ecological network areas and protected areas”

# P7: Visitor safety

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- Security and safety – part of the visitor management
- **Risk Assessment** - process of evaluating various risk levels of specific threats identified with a particular activity.
- It is important to communicate risks to visitors
- **Procedures in emergency situations** – developing standard coordinated operating procedures.

Threats originate from: visitors, wildlife, environmental hazards and illegal activities.

Climate change and its impact on extreme weather patterns (floods, extreme windstorms, droughts) are increasing steadily.



## P8: „Green line” Program for PAs (mitigation measures)

- Energy sufficient lightning, transport and buildings (headquarters, visitor centers etc.)
- E- tourist boats, e-bikes, e-vehicles



# Processes of sustainable tourism in protected areas

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1. Tourism and visitation management in protected areas ✓
  2. Stakeholder engagement ✓
  3. Communication, education and interpretation ✓
  4. Socioeconomic benefits for local communities
  5. Competences and capacity building ✓
  6. Certification and quality labels
  7. Visitor safety ✓
  8. Climate change ✓
- ...are interconnected and depend on each other

To ensure sustainability of tourism in the protected area you manage, always keep in mind that activities

**SHOULD BE  
CONSISTENT WITH  
OBJECTIVES AND  
PROTECTED AREA  
VALUES – GIVE  
PRIORITY TO  
PROTECTION!**



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# Thank you for your attention!

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