

## Project Update: December 2016

July 2016 was planned for realisation of the second part of field research on the same four localities previously visited in the spring. The research conducted on tortoises was finished with great success, and invaluable data were gathered. Simultaneously, a survey was conducted among the local inhabitants about traditional beliefs as potential factors of endangering the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*). In July 2016, a total of 30 researchers participated in the field and completed training for independent field work. Out of these 30 people, 12 conducted the survey with the local community. A total of 76 % of the planned local people were interviewed during field research activities in May and July 2016. The rest of the local people were interviewed in September 2016. During the whole project, a total of 47 people passed the training, they are now skilled for independent field work, and at the end of the project they will be awarded with letters of appreciation for participation in the project.

Information about Hermann's tortoise biology, endangering factors in Serbia and beliefs of local people as a factor of endangerment were presented to the students of Faculty of Science and Mathematics, University of Nis, at the research excursion conducted in the Crni Vrh village at the Stara Planina Mountain. For more information, please see: <http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/en/predavanje-na-crnom-vrhu-stara-planina/>

An average of 70 high school students from Nis were able to hear about preliminary results of the project and about local folklore and beliefs associated with the Hermann's tortoise, at the lecture held at the Regional Center For Education in Nis, in association with the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, University of Nis. The lecture about this project was pronounced as audience favorite, and thus, the high school students from three Gymnasiums in Nis will present the lecture in their schools on 23rd December 2016, so that their peers can also hear this lecture.

The survey results were presented to the members of biological society NIDSBE „Josif Pančić“ and Students of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, University of Novi Sad. The presentation was held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016. For more information, please see: <http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/en/presentation-results-survey-university-novi-sad/>

Education of the local inhabitants through conversation with the visitors and distribution of informative brochures was held at the “Multimedia challenge”, which was organised by NGO “Centar za unapređenje društvene svesti – Super građanin”. School pupils and students showed especially great interest in the project, and on this occasion informative material was donated to the Gymnasium „Svetozar Marković“, in purpose of teaching about negative human impact on *Testudo hermanni*, which will be conducted by a biology teacher which participated in the field research. For more information, please see: <http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/en/multimedijalni-izazov-promocija-projekta/>

The project was presented at the science festival in Belgrade, which lasted from 15th to 18th December 2016. For more information, please see: <http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/promocija-na-festivalu-nauke-u-beogradu/>

The remaining informative material prepared during the activities was distributed to the local people from the village near the city of Leskovac, where field work was conducted at the locality Pašina Česma, during the interviewing in September 2016.