

## Project Update: August 2021

In July and August 2021, we continued our research efforts, but this time focusing on the highest peaks of Mokra Gora mountain. As a part of promotional activities in our project, we were joined by students and researchers from the Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics from the University of Niš. During our search, although we found favourable habitat conditions (plenty of prey Orthopterans, vegetation and altitude), we did not encounter any meadow vipers. On the other hand, we've found several adders, which might be suggestive that this habitat is more favourable for the adder or that the meadow viper didn't ever inhabit this area at all.



One out of 6 tracks during our search

Nevertheless, we continued our fieldwork on lower altitudes, putting special attention on the newfound locality for the meadow viper from our last field trip. For the end of our fieldwork, we had students from the Faculty of Biology, University of Belgrade, join us to boost our field effectiveness. Again, we encountered the same situation where we found favourable conditions, but did not find any trace of the now elusive meadow viper. All this raises question whether some biotic factors were influencing their activity, since the presence was already confirmed in some places we searched.



Searching for meadow vipers

In our continued talks with mountaineers and locals, we heard about the increasing logging activities in the area. Although we noticed some illegal logging on our last trip, the area and the extent of this activity is exponentially increasing, especially near some of the confirmed localities for the meadow viper. This is undoubtedly one of, if not the only, activity that endangers the meadow viper, and more conservational efforts need to be put into sanctioning these kinds of activities. We plan to send a report to the Ministry of Environmental Protection, in which we will point out this issue and propose conservation measures that will help to diminish impact of this activity.

Our next fieldwork will once again cover the localities with suitable habitats, and extend it to areas in this region. Until our next field efforts, we will continue our promotional activities during the winter part of the year.



Illegal logging