

Project Update: November 2022

At the very dawn of our project, on the 30th and 31st July 2022, we took the opportunity to organise a conference and celebrate the 12th anniversary of capture-mark-recapture studies of European pond turtles at Ludaš Lake (Photo 1.). This is especially important knowing that this is the pioneering population study of European pond turtles in Serbia, and that it is still ongoing! We summed up our data, performed preliminary analysis and invited our colleagues from Serbia and Montenegro to discuss current results and future plans for the study and protection of *Emys orbicularis* in both countries, and in the region. Although we also invited colleagues from North Macedonia, Croatia, Hungary and Bulgaria and hoped they will also join us at this gathering that was not the case due to various reasons.



Photo 1. Ludaš Lake, home of the longest studied population of European Pond Turtle in Serbia (© Marko Maričić).

Our conference gathered seven speakers who prepared talks addressing various topics revolving around the European pond turtle such as: distribution at national levels, population characteristics, investigation of haemoparasites infection, protection of nesting sites and nesting females (Photo 2.), and conservation status of the species at the national levels. We are especially proud of the fruitful discussions which were

encouraged after each presentation. PhD students, future young conservationists, had great hands-on learning opportunity.



Photo 2. A morsel of the atmosphere during the lecture of David Grabovac, veteran of the Ludaš turtle research (© Ana Golubović)

The conference was generously supported by the Palić-Ludaš enterprise, which provided us with both accommodation and food during the conference. We are thankful to the Palić-Ludaš enterprise for the 12-year long collaboration and their continuous support, especially in terms of providing us with equipment for work on water and for the accommodation and alimentation during our field work sessions. They are also readily accepting our suggestions for active protection of European pond turtle population at Ludaš Lake, giving the example of good nature reserve management in accordance with the scientific findings.