

Project Update: June 2016

Implementation of project activities started in January 2016. The first activity was the presentation of the project at the four universities in Serbia. Presentation was organised in cooperation with the Faculties of Science in Nis, Kragujevac and Novi Sad and the Faculty of Biology in Belgrade, as well as biology student associations at all four universities (BS „Dr Sava Petrović“ Niš, NIDSBE „Josif Pančić“ Novi Sad, BID „Josif Pančić“ Belgrade, EID „Mladen Karaman“ Kragujevac). During the presentation of the project interested volunteers were able to apply for participation in field research or for conducting surveys. Photos from the presentations are available on the following link:

[http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/en/najava-projektnih-aktivnosti-na-univerzitetima-u-srbiji/](http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/en/najava-projektних-aktivnosti-na-univerzitetima-u-srbiji/)

Group of student volunteers from four NGOs were formed during the promotional period.

T-shirts were designed and printed for the purposes of the project. Front side of the shirt contains illustration of project trademark (Design by: Dimitrija Savić) and Rufford Foundation logo.



We opened a web site for promotion and education that can be found at:

<http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/>

Also, we opened facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/tortoisesinserbia/>

We created a new brochure on Hermann's tortoise. The brochure purpose was education of local residents at studied sites. The brochure is also available online so that any interested individual or organisation can download it. Brochure contains the main information about

tortoises in Serbia. For example, where and when can we meet Hermann's tortoises, information about their safety and how human activity is endangering the species.

The first of two designed and printed brochures is available at the following link:

<http://testudo.bddsp.org.rs/en/nova-brosura-o-sumskoj-kornjaci/>



Design by Dimitrija Savić.

Before the start of fieldwork, equipment was procured and surveys were designed.

During the field research in May over 40% of the planned residents population was interviewed. The surveys contained questions about the customs and beliefs that include sacrificing, or any other use of the tortoises. Also, surveys included short questions about the negative effects of anthropogenic activities on tortoises that people had noticed in their local community.

Field research included investigation on four locations in Serbia. The planned locality Sikole was not processed due to unfavorable conditions and costs that would be higher than planned. Instead of this site, we chose a similar location in the same part of the country near Kladovo. During the preliminary research in this new location we have come to the conclusion that there is a large population of Hermann's tortoises on this locality, and that this site is more convenient for our research in terms of environmental variables. Over 150 individuals were caught and marked on this site.

Collected data and precise results will be available in subsequent reports.

Another satisfying result is that a total of 28 volunteers (even one volunteer from the Czech Republic) participated in the field work and acquired practical skills for working with tortoises and collecting population parameters.

In the second part of field research, we will try to educate a larger number of volunteers, and create teams that will be able to work independently later in their careers.

