

3.3 *Prealpi Giulie & Triglav - Pasture use, livestock breeding, interactions with ungulates and large carnivores*

Improve the local and transnational cooperation to face the new challenges and promote regional development

Date: 06.10.2017,

Location: Venzone (IT)

Summary of the workshop

The aim of the workshop was to discuss with different kind of stakeholders how to cope with the high presence of ungulates locally and in the transnational environment of Prealpi/Triglav. The participants discussed on carnivores' predation, ungulates grazing and the transnational management of pastures. The topic was not new in this area, but local partners have enlarged the invitations, also due to the presence of the European Platform for Coexistence with Large Carnivores, allowing a greater discussion with a vaster number of perceptions and opinions.

The workshop started with a general introduction by Eurac.

Stefano Santi, Director of the Prealpi Giulie Natural Park, introduced the main issues for the Prealpi Park, going from large carnivores' predation to the carrying capacity of pastures.

Andrej Arih from Triglav NP concentrated more on the management of ungulates, whose grazing creates problems on forest renovation and to orchards.

Sara Vezzano of the Villaggio degli Orsi (*bears' village*) made an overview of the protection and mitigation systems currently available, stressing the need to have a common protocol and agreement between the two countries.

Participants discussed these issues and were then split on 3 round tables, each one with a moderator, in order to discuss the following topics:

1. Compensation and Prevention (moderator: Isidoro De Bortoli, Eurac)
2. Communication and Education (moderator: Sara Vezzano, Villaggio degli orsi)
3. Data Exchange (moderator: Stefano Santi, Prealpi Giulie Natural Park)

After that, a general discussion was held, where new issues emerged that were discussed in the plenary in order to define future steps and common agreements.

INTRO

The Pilot Region of the Eastern Julian Alps is located around the Italian Prealpi Giulie Nature Park and the Slovenian Triglav National Park (Fig. 9). It covers an area of 289.660 ha. The Slovenian side covers the entire area of the Triglav Hunting Management Area (141.461 ha) and part of the Gorenjska Hunting Management Area (31.050 ha), which lies within the borders of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve Julian Alps but outside of an area of hunting management units covering the Karavanke mountains. On the Italian side the entire area of the Tarvisiano Hunting District (117.159 ha) is included, which covers altogether 13 municipalities. The relationship between the two partners is very close and the area composed by Julian Prealps Nature Park, Triglav National Park and Slovenia's Julian Alps MaB UNESCO area has been certified by Europarc as "Transboundary Ecoregion" in 2009. In this territory we find high mountains and green valleys, richness of wildlife and flora with increased levels of biodiversity and villages where old traditions and manufacturing of exclusive typical products are still alive. In 2014 certification was confirmed and the Alpine Convention proclaimed the whole area of two parks as a "Transboundary Pilot Region for Ecological Connectivity".

Due to the wilderness of large part of this territory the whole pilot region represents an extraordinary place for mobile species like birds (e.g. griffon vulture) and big mammals (e.g. large carnivores).

At the end of 2016 the Transboundary Ecoregion Julian Alps was certified with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Charter is both an important recognition of the work done and a model of governance that delivers Protected Areas as sustainable tourism destinations. Collaboration between Prealpi Giulie Nature Park and Triglav National Park is widely recognized as a best practice example of transboundary cooperation.

Proposed conflict issues

The stakeholders' survey (fig. 10) highlighted that the interactions with large mammals are among the most urgent causes of conflict for the transnational area of cooperation. Local partners decided to concentrate more on the management aspects of pastures, livestock breeding, ungulates and large carnivores' transnational management, with the aim to enhance local and transnational cooperation to face new challenges and promote regional development.

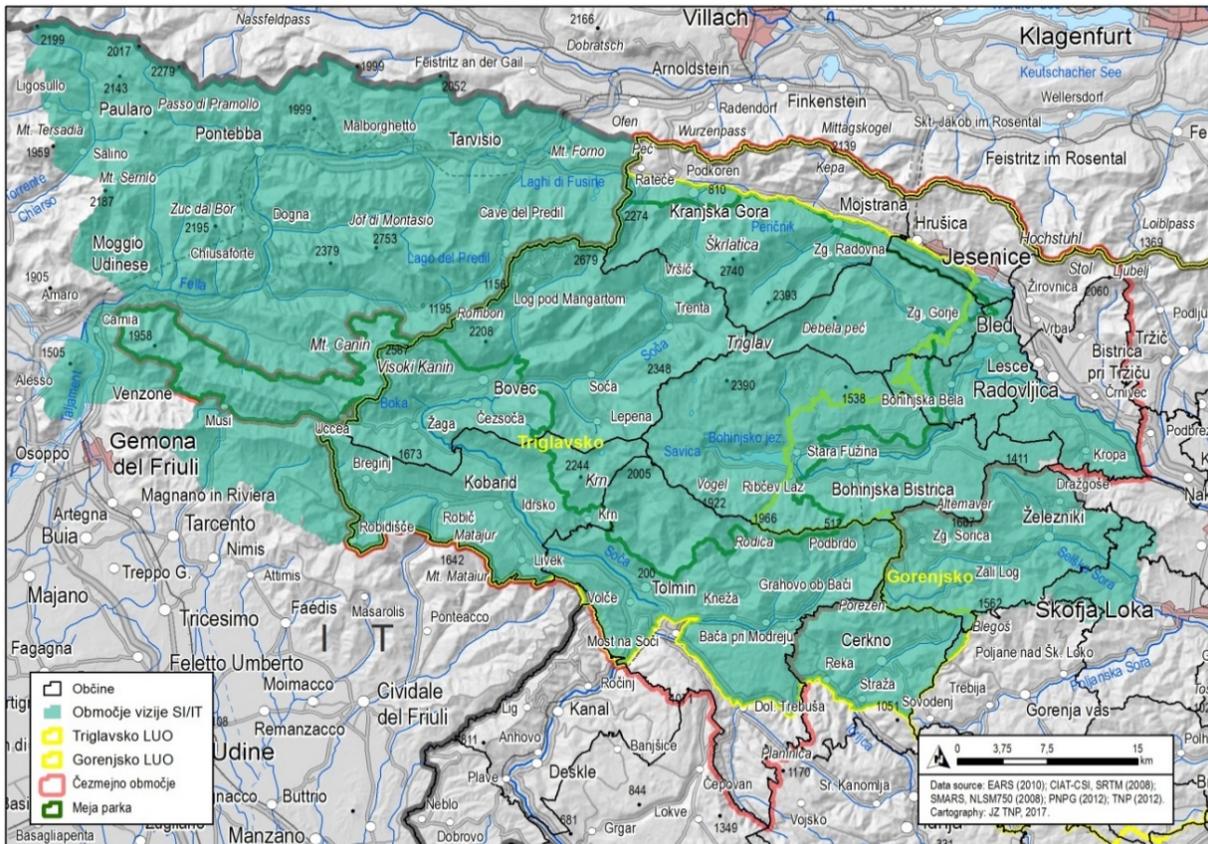


Figure 9 – Area of the Prealpi Giulie Natural Park and Triglav National Park

Large carnivores' predations happened frequently in the last years within the transboundary region and represent a "hot" argument of discussion in both Parks. Farmers, private owners, local communities, and institutions are very interested to get as much information as possible to understand how they can contribute to manage this issue and reduce the current impact of the conflict. Local stakeholders appeared to be highly involved in the local and transnational management process.

Free-ranging herds (Fig. 11), passing also through villages, create complaints by local inhabitants. This is another interesting conflict that local authorities of the two parks are facing. The Prealpi Giulie Natural Park has established specific rules for those operating within its perimeter. Shepherds have to communicate detailed information about their presence in the park, but up to now only poor information are available for local authorities. Local hunters claim the risk of disease transmission between sheep and goat with wild ungulates. Domestic sheep and goats commonly carry these disease-causing organisms, which also typically cause few deaths and little illness in domesticated adults and lambs.

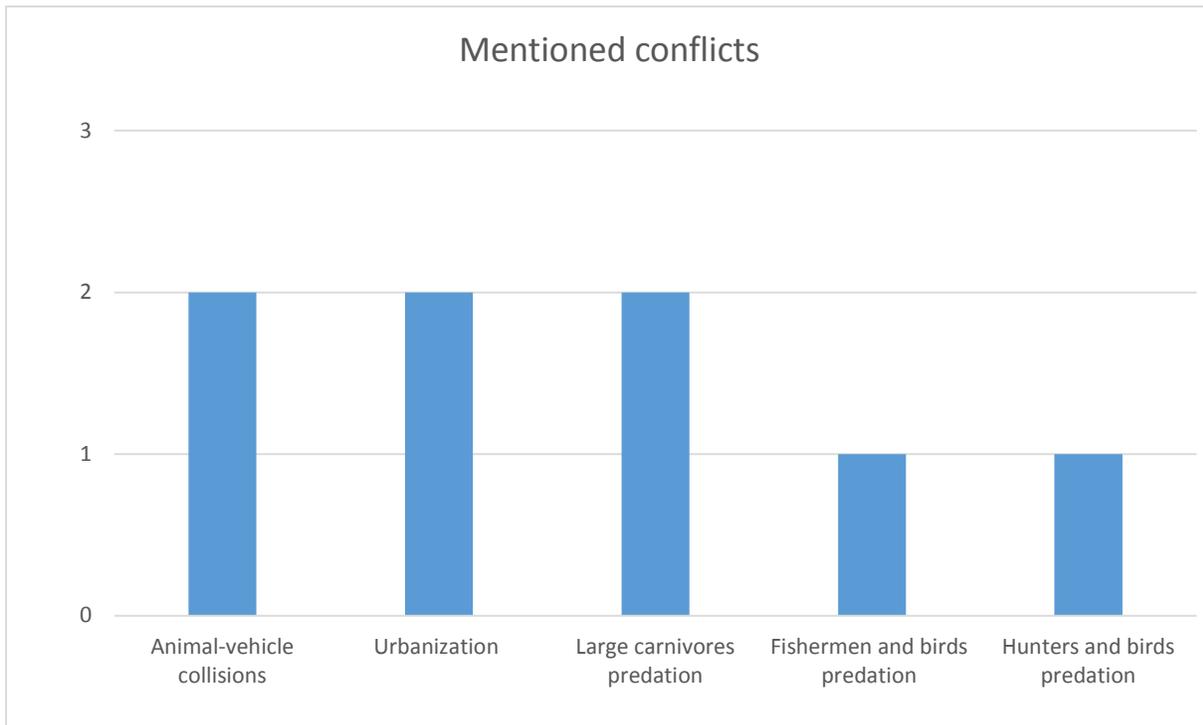


Figure 10 - Proposed conflicts in the Prealpi Giulie / Triglav Project Working Region

In Triglav National Park, where free-ranging herds is a traditional practice, wild ungulates graze on forest renovation and orchards, causing a serious and relevant damage. Furthermore, potential inter-breeding between wild and domesticated animals is common.

In general, in both areas there is ongoing work about mitigation and social measures. Both areas have an agreement to understand and solve the human-wildlife conflict. The technical methods are the most important. Key stakeholders have been involved in both areas thanks to communication and awareness campaigns in some activities. Prealpi Giulie Regional Park also made guidelines promoting the exchange of information between stakeholders.

Prealpi Giulie/Triglav issue in WP5

The workshop has been designed to be inclusive and ensure an integrated audience of stakeholders. A primary purpose of the workshop, for both parks, was to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue: in this respect, farmers, experts, shepherds, and local authorities played a crucial role, presenting their views and sharing their practical expertise on the subject. Within the WP5, the most important purpose is to enhance the cooperation between the two parks promoting sharing of data and experiences.



Figure 11 - Free ranging herds of goats in Prealpi Giulie Natural Park (credits: Parco Regionale Prealpi Giulie)

Involved stakeholders and workshop approach

Many participants (27, Table 3) have attended this workshop, among which parks employees, farmers, people coming from University of Udine, Agriculture Institute of Slovenia, EU platform of coexistence, Federparchi, Forestry department and shepherds. The workshop took place together with the Regional Workshop of the “EU Platform on coexistence between people and large carnivores”, a thematic networking event organized in the context of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process. The main issue was to create a more effective management and protection of large carnivores, in coordination and with the involvement of the European Platform on coexistence between people and large carnivores and the WISO Platform of the Alpine Convention. It was a good opportunity to further discuss the relationship between human and large carnivores and to share good practices for a better management of species and for the prevention and resolution of conflicts across the EU keeping in mind the objective of ALPBIONET 2030.

Table 3: Participants to the Prealpi / Triglav Workshop

Federica Maino (EURAC)	Filippo Favilli (EURAC)
Isidoro De Bortoli (EURAC)	Cristina Comuzzo (Villaggio degli Orsi)
Paolo Benedetti (Regione FVG)	Andrej Arih (Triglav NP)
Alessandro Bonati (Coldiretti)	Alessandro Manzano (Ape Carnica Friulana)
Tasos Hivardas (EU PF Coexistence)	Stefano Snati (Prealpi Giulie NP)
Irena Bertonceli (Agricultural Institute Slovenia)	Sara Vezzaro (EURAC + Villaggio degli orsi)
Rayna Harizanova (Federparchi)	Marta Pieri (University Udine)
Andrea Beltrame (Prealpi Giulie NP)	Leonardo Cerno (Prealpi Giulie NP)
Verdiana Morandi (Ass Pastori transumanti triveneto)	Giancarlo Morandi (Ass Pastori transumanti triveneto)
Anna Zuliani (University Udine)	Marco Dilenardo (Prealpi Giulie NP)

Marko Pretner (Triglav NP)	Ziva Boncina (Forestry service Italy)
Andrea Repe (Forestry service Italy)	Giuliana Nadalin (Regione FVG)
Graciela Benegas (Az Agricola La Alegria)	Marta Trevisan (Villaggio degli orsi)
Matevz Jersin (Triglav NP)	Peter Skoberne (Min. Env. Spat. Plan SLO)

Report of the meeting

The first part was characterized by a plenary session where stakeholder discussed the main topic described in the introductory presentations. Both parks authorities agreed with the need to have a common database to share data and practices, bearing in mind that data protection is very important. The University of Udine pointed out that farming systems are very different in Slovenia and in Italy. It could be interesting to describe the different systems in order to analyze and choose the best practices for a common management between shepherds, researchers, parks' managers and hunters. Prof. Filacorda of Udine University proposed to map holding's *livestock* covered by these two parks. Hunters have to be integrated into a management plan which should include both livestock and large carnivores. It is very important to define the best way to communicate to local people all the activities described. The perspective of local communities is very important and provides the human dimension that often is still underrepresented in wildlife management plans. Another important aspect underlined is the compensation system for farmers. Administrations have to pay attention to the actual damages, which sometimes may appear different from the actual loss. Cases of indirect damages such as abortion and loss of condition due to stress are difficult to assess, especially for sheep and goatherds. Farmers are, anyway, responsible for carcass disposal. In regards to livestock management, the morphology of the land may represent an obstacle. The difficulties exposed in past years still exist and solutions proposed during past years don't work because the landscape is very "mountainous" and complex. When the flock is too big, even with fences, it is difficult to move and protect sheep.

After the plenary, the stakeholders were split in "round tables" of interest:

ROUND TABLE 1: "Compensation and prevention"

The round table on compensation and prevention measures discussed on the need to spread correct information about the actual opportunities in this regard and to promote a closer collaboration between livestock breeders and crop producers. The Wildlife Damage Compensation Program of the Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) Region is available for all farmers who suffered crop or livestock losses due to wildlife and can compensate up to 100 percent of economic damages without any additional cost. The FVG Region is playing a key role in this issue, although someone complained about a lack of interest in protecting small categories. The Regional administration needs to receive information from the people working on the ground, following a bottom-up approach, in order to stimulate mutual communication and benefits. Ideas came out to create a "risk map" in respect of typology of livestock, analyzing in detail the structure of every farm/company. Guardian dogs could represent a solution but involve a large amount of work and may represent a potential danger for tourists.

Communication plays also a very important role in the prevention system. In Slovenia and Trieste, "Kmecka Zveza" (farmers' association) is a good practice to support farmers while coordinating different agricultural associations (<http://www.kmeckazveza.com>).

This kind of bottom-up approach model could be copied and adopted.

Additional claims came from the absence of prevention strategies in areas closer to an actual risk of predation. Local culture and grazing traditions foresee the grazing of flocks without the presence of shepherds. This traditional activity is difficult to change, but it is something that they all need to overcome. When tradition meets modernity, a compromise is necessary.

ROUND TABLE 2: “Communication, education”

The round table discussed on how to raise awareness about large carnivores’ management among large public. Farmers have to be aware of the new solutions in pastures management, finding, with wildlife specialists and local administrators, the best way to change rooted traditions of leaving herds grazing alone. Livestock often crosses private and public properties, causing several serious complains and conflicts. This situation has created a pretty low level of acceptance that needs to be improved. An idea accepted by the participants is foreseeing the mapping of moving herds. This kind of map would allow the parks and the local administrators to know passages and movements in a time-limited range. This kind of activity would be also important to enhance the transnational cooperation. People and stakeholders ask for a more comprehensive information on the pastures’ utilization and on its relation with tourism and other economic activities.

ROUND TABLE 3: “Data exchange”

This round table underlined the need to develop and share a common database, containing several information (collared bears for example), taking into account and capitalizing the experiences and results from the LIFE Dinalp Bear project and/or other EU projects dealing with the transnational exchange of experiences and common methodological approach in wildlife management.

This kind of database should not focus only on large carnivores but also on other species (for example chamois and alpine ibex - as stated in WP T2 or red deer), providing different kinds of accesses for different people, from the large public to the researcher. Participating stakeholders and experts agree on the need to develop such a database with the help of the Park administration and as a potential new transboundary project.

Conclusions and next steps

Participants stressed the importance of involving hunters in monitoring and managing ungulates and large carnivores - also in preparing common databases in other already ongoing projects (ex. Nat2Care, Italy - Slovenia Interreg programme) - and to enlarge transboundary coordination of some activities.

The matrix (Fig. 12) showed that:

- a) Stakeholders (farmers, shepherds and hunters) show a positive attitude towards a potential coexistence between human activities and wildlife - taking the commitment of changing some of their habits.
- b) Most of the participants believe that this kind of workshop provided a way to better understand the different issues, opening minds to different points of view.
- c) All but one person believe in the opportunity given by the transnational cooperation in managing and solving the different issues that rose.
- d) Participants left the workshop with different opinions. The majority replied to have a better comprehension of the problem and new ideas to face them.

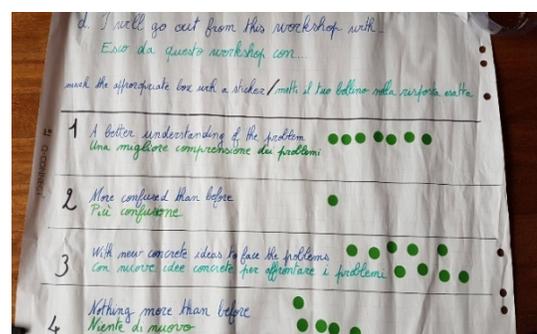
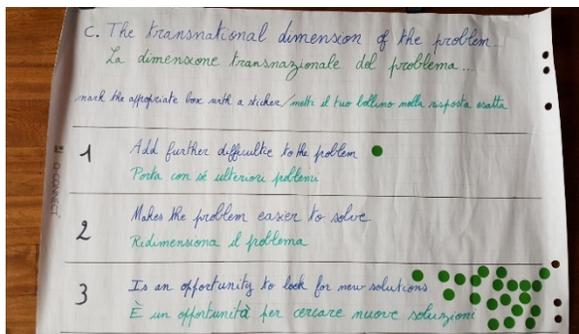
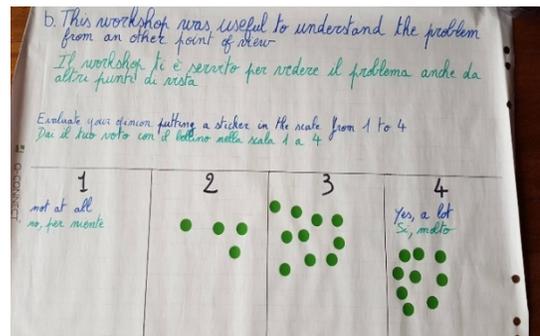
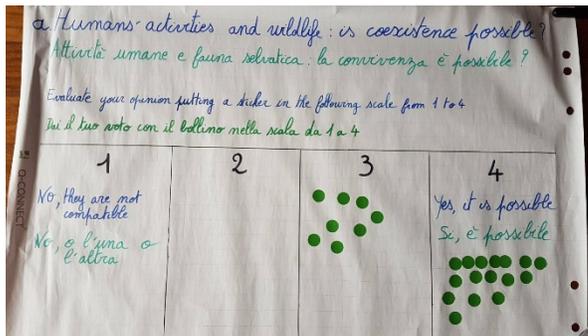


Figure 12 – Answers to the matrix of questions (in order question a,b,c,d, see general introduction)

Main findings in Prealpi Giulie / Triglav

- There is an urgent need to improve communication and cooperation between institutions and farmers, also to avoid frauds in incentives/compensations requests.
- Tourists and local residents should be educated to respect wildlife, by spreading information on occurred accidents/predations through the development a common "accidents map".
- It is important to understand and study the differences between livestock production systems.
- Herds need to be monitored, creating maps and enlarging the group of cooperating shepherds and farmers.
- It seems also fundamental to develop a functional communication tool, able to make local communities and private owners aware of livestock passages.
- Young generations should be informed on the local and transnational importance of these jobs, promoting an active cooperation between the two countries.