

# **PUBLIC AWARENESS OF WETLANDS AND THEIR CONSERVATION**

## **OZAVEŠČENOST PREBIVALČEV O VAROVANJU MOKRIŠČ**

Katarina Polajnar



KATARINA POLAJNAR

The Sečovlje salt pans are a unique habitat for plant and animal species.  
Edinstveni habitati rastlinskih in živalskih vrst v Sečoveljskih solinah.

## Public awareness of wetlands and their conservation

DOI: 10.3986.AGS48105

UDC: 91:502.51(285.3)

502.51(285.3):659.3

COBISS: 1.01

**ABSTRACT:** A negative attitude toward wetlands along with an ignorance regarding them and a lack of awareness about their value have often led to their transformation by humans. Their massive degradation and consequently their disappearance were the main reasons for the establishment of the Ramsar Convention, the first intergovernmental agreement on the preservation and sustainable use of wetlands. There are three wetlands in Slovenia on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance: the Sečovlje salt pans, Škocjan Caves, and Cerknica Lake and its surroundings. Using a questionnaire survey, we tried to ascertain the level of public awareness about wetlands and attitudes toward their conservation. On the basis of the results acquired, we discovered that public awareness about wetlands conservation depends primarily on the location of residence and the social structure of the population. A negative opinion on the advantages of life in the protected areas within which the Ramsar localities are located was revealed, the result of a lack of information and insufficient knowledge of the environmental and economic functions of wetlands. Effective programs of education and involvement of the population in activities in protected areas must be implemented in the future. The comprehensive education of local people and interdisciplinary cooperation are the key points for changing human perception on the importance of protecting these vulnerable ecosystems.

### KEY WORDS:

geography, Ramsar Convention, wetlands, public awareness, environmental protection, Slovenia, Sečovlje salt pans, Škocjan Caves, Cerknica Lake.

The article was submitted for publication on January 22, 2008.

### ADDRESS:

**Katarina Polajnar, B. Sc.**

Anton Melik Geographical Institute

Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Gosposka ulica 13, SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

E-mail: katarina.polajnar@zrc-sazu.si

## Contents

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 1   | Introduction  | 123 |
| 2   | Wetlands  | 123 |
| 2.1 | Spatial features of studied wetlands                    | 125 |
| 3   | Links between local populations<br>and studied wetlands | 125 |
| 3.1 | Sečovlje Salt Pans                                      | 125 |
| 3.2 | Škocjan Caves   | 126 |
| 3.3 | Cerknica Lake   | 126 |
| 4   | Attitudes of the population toward wetlands             | 127 |
| 4.1 | Basic features of the study                             | 127 |
| 4.2 | Results and discussion                                  | 128 |
| 5   | Conclusion  | 134 |
| 6   | References  | 136 |

# 1 Introduction

Rapid economic development and the improvement of people's economic prosperity result in the ever more extensive exploitation of natural resources that often leads to their exhaustion and destruction. Due to ignorance and their own private benefit, people are frequently unaware of the consequences of such activities, a fact reflected in a worsening of the quality of the living environment, which in recent times has become one of the important values of modern man. Due to the ever-greater concentration and interdependence of various activities in space, there are frequent conflicts and divisions between economic and public interests and conservationists. Thus economic and social development frequently has an advantage over conserving and protecting the ecology of important natural areas, among which not a few wetlands and water ecosystems unfortunately appear (Smrekar 2006).

The land on the contact between water and soil in many places is out of sight and therefore has always been exposed to illegal encroachments by the urban population, resulting in ever increasing degradation. In many cases, this landscape has not found its proper place in the value system of the population, who consider it only as a natural resource and a place for illegal encroachments. The good example are dumping sites and gravel pits (Breg, Kladnik, Smrekar 2007).

We wished to determine the level of public awareness about the conservation of the wetlands that are covered by the Ramsar Convention and represent a unique, complex, and dynamic natural asset with outstanding environmental, economic, cultural, and scientific significance. We wished to illuminate the problem of insufficient knowledge of the role of wetlands in numerous natural functions highly significant for human survival, an ignorance that is one of the most frequent reasons for their degradation and disappearance. This article presents the fact that there is little public awareness regarding the conservation of wetlands and that the population is quite unaware of the importance of conserving the wetlands. The major differences in the attitudes of the population toward wetlands are primarily reflections of differences in the education, age, and vocations of the population surveyed.

Attitudes toward the environment and nature are formed on the basis of how various groups of the population know, understand, and perceive their environment. Factors that influence the varied understanding and perceptions of the natural environment and form diverse conceptions of nature are combined in groups of social-geographical filters that variously sieve influences and information from the environment or about it. According to Gold (1980), the elements and processes that influence understanding of the environment can be divided into three categories: learning processes that form spatial schemes, personal character, and social culture. Together these factors influence the flow of information about the environment, allowing individuals to perceive only limited groups of potential information about the environment. In our opinion, the primary factors that influence public awareness of the environment are age, vocation, and education (Špes 1998).

## 2 Wetlands

Wetlands comprise an extremely dynamic ecosystem in the transition area or ecotone between land and water. They are areas of high biodiversity and are among the most productive ecosystems on the planet, immediately following tropical forests (Sadoul et al. 1998). They are the habitat of many plant and animal species, a significant source of food and storehouse of genetic plant material. Wetlands play an extremely important role in the cycle of water and chemicals and can therefore be termed 'kidney regions' (Plut 2000). Through the reciprocal activities of physical, biological, and chemical components such as soil, water, flora, and fauna, wetlands operate on numerous ecological functions (What are ... 2003). In addition, they also serve economic and social functions, provide numerous benefits, and represent unique areas for the preservation of cultural heritage and local traditions (Bolješič 1999).

Wetlands are among the most rapidly disappearing types of habitat, and due to a lack of knowledge of their nature and social value in the past have been frequently degraded and transformed by human activity. Seen in the past as unhealthy and unproductive areas, they were often perceived as having great potential for drainage, urbanization, farming, tourism, and other activities. The landfill of wetlands with refuse, the dumping of waste material, urbanization, and the transformation of cultivated surfaces are only a few of the human encroachments that are destroying the diverse world of the wetlands. Experts

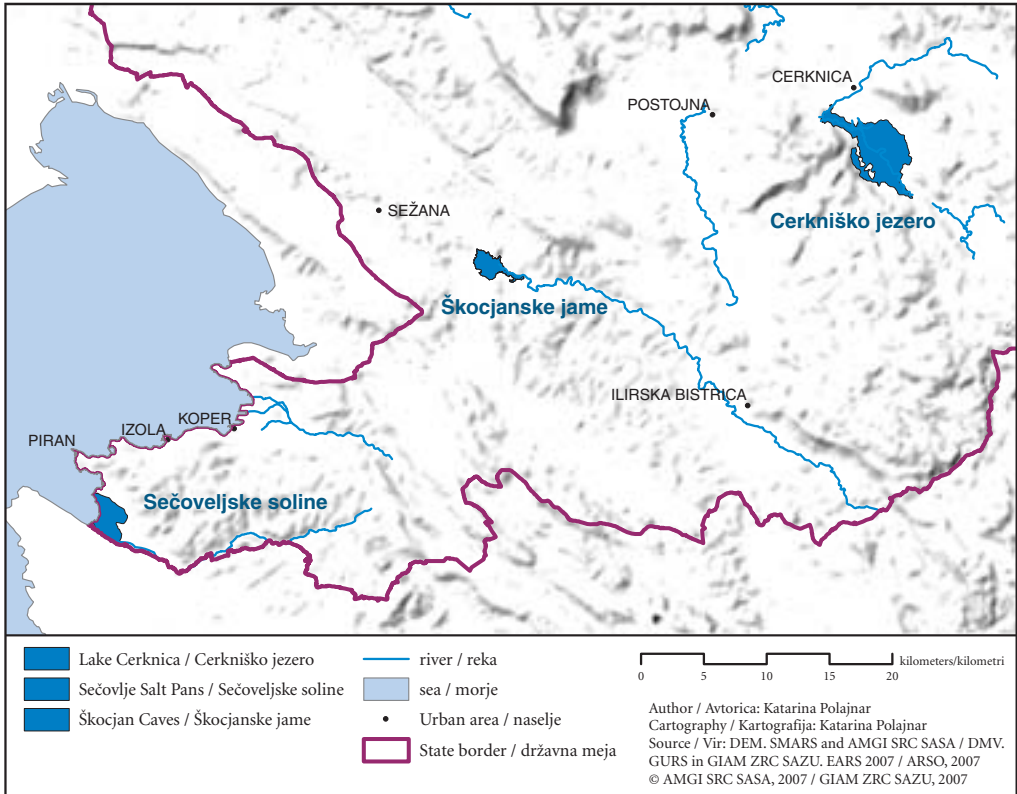


Figure 1: Ramsar Convention wetlands in Slovenia.

estimate that due to negative attitudes toward wetlands and ignorance of their role, at least half of all the wetlands in Europe have been destroyed in the last hundred years (Beltram 2000). In Slovenia, agricultural drainage projects and the acquisition of new areas for cultivation have had the greatest influence on the disappearance of wetlands. According to the data, Slovenia lost 40% of its wetlands between 1952 and 1990, particularly along the central and lower sections of rivers (Kogelnik 2006).

In the twentieth century, the international community began to realize that the disappearance of wetlands meant the loss of an invaluable ecosystem that served numerous functions. Thus with the aim of conserving wetlands, which represent an important component in the planetary water cycle, the Ramsar Convention for the preservation, protection, and appropriate use of wetlands was adopted in 1971, the first worldwide agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of natural assets.

In the framework of its principles, this international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands foresees the inclusion of the greatest number possible of wetlands, and to date there are 1,702 sites in 157 countries on the *List of Wetlands of International Importance* (The Ramsar ... 2007).

Slovenia became a member of the Ramsar Convention in 1992, and in 1996 the National Council for the Ramsar Convention was established. So far, three wetlands in Slovenia have been included in the *List of Wetlands of International Importance*: the Sečovlje salt pans, which in the past had an extremely positive and significant influence on the economic development of the coastal region and today remain an area of rich natural and cultural heritage of exceptional regional and ecological value; Škocjan Caves, a unique example of karst underground wetlands with an incomparable occurrence of plant and animal species; and Cerknica Lake and its surroundings (hereafter Cerknica Lake), which offers the natural phenomenon of an intermittent karst lake, great biodiversity, and a valuable cultural heritage.

The principal documents linked with the conservation of wetlands in Slovenia include the Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) and the Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats

and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC), which are related to the Nature 2000 network, the Law on Waters (Uradni list 67/2002), the Law on the Preservation of Nature (Uradni list 96/2004), the Ramsar Convention, and the National Program for Environmental Protection (Uradni list 2/2006). In addition to these documents, there are also separate laws regarding the protection of national, regional, and landscape parks. However, a weakness in the documents that define the protection of wetlands is that the goals of environmental policy are planned and implemented by different sectors. Therefore it is necessary to emphasize and recognize the trend toward a lack of intersector cooperation or a common definition of environmental policies. Another reason for this is the various definitions of 'wetlands' employed in individual laws. In implementing the Ramsar Convention, Slovenia applies the Law on Waters and the Law on the Preservation of Nature, which cover wetlands in various ways. For example, the Law on Waters does not specifically define wetlands. Article 2 of this law states, »... *The goal of managing water, watercourses, and coastal areas is the achievement of the good condition of water and other ecosystems linked with water, the guarantee of safety from damaging activity of water, the preservation and regulation of water quantity, and the encouragement of the sustainable use of water that will allow various types of water use while respecting the long-term security of available water sources and their quality* ...«. Article 11 of the law defines areas of continental water as »... *land on which continental waters are permanently or periodically present and therefore form special hydrological, geomorphological, and biological conditions that establish water or riverine ecosystems* ...«. These laws are certainly a good legal basis for the preservation and prudent use of wetlands; however, it is necessary to harmonize between sectors not only these laws but also all the documentation dealing with the preservation, protection, and management of wetlands (Beltram 2005). And finally the question arises of whether all these documents together actually comprise an adequate instrument for the effective conservation of the wetlands.

## 2.1 Spatial features of studied wetlands

All three wetlands included in the study are located in the southwestern part of Slovenia; however, due to the irregular and varied terrain and different climate conditions they differ considerably. The Sečovlje salt pans lie at the contact of land and sea on largely soft Eocene flysch sediment carved by the Dragonja River that has created an extensive delta of alluvial deposits. In contrast, the origins of the other two Ramsar sites, the Škocjan Caves and Cerknica Lake, are quite different. Both these wetland areas are closely linked to their locations in the karst ecosystem and are conglomerations of unique underground and surface karst phenomena. The Škocjan Caves developed in an area of contact karst where at the junction of impermeable flysch rock and permeable carbonate stone the Reka River hollowed a unique and biologically diverse series of underground caverns. In the framework of the area protected under the Ramsar Convention, the Cerknica Lake area includes various karst ecosystems: Cerknica Lake itself, a unique example of a flooding karst polje characterized by oscillations of karst water, the Križna jama cave with its underground lake, and the remarkable karst valley of Rakov Škocjan.

## 3 Links between local populations and studied wetlands

With the reciprocal interaction of natural and social elements, the environment is constantly changing along with its functions and the social and economic structure of the population. The factors that influence the attachment of people to the environment in which they live also change in different historical periods (Špes 1998).

To more easily present and analyze the results in a comprehensive paper, we use the term »area population« of the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park, Škocjan Caves, and Cerknica Lake. Here it is necessary to emphasize that we wish to include all the people who live in areas within which the Ramsar sites are located. A specific example is the Sečovlje salt pans where there is no permanent population but where we sought out the views of the population in surrounding settlements where local life has always been linked to saltworking.

### 3.1 Sečovlje Salt Pans

The Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area population has always been linked to the sea and the production of salt. The methods of harvesting salt and the construction and maintenance of the salt pans have been passed

from generation to generation for centuries. While the salt pans were in operation, people from various places were employed in saltmaking. In the beginning, residents of Piran were most closely connected with saltmaking and every summer moved to the salt pans to work. After World War I, the farm population from the immediate coastal hinterland was employed at the saltworks, and following the period of Italian emigration from the area, incoming settlers from various parts of Slovenia were employed here. Today, with the modernization of the work, saltworkers no longer live on the salt pans since the standard eight-hour workday applies, but they enjoy remembering the past spent in close relationship with the salt pans (Žagar 1988).

In the past, the role of the salt pans was primarily of economic rather than natural scientific importance. For the population of the time, the salt pans represented a source of survival income and were valued from this viewpoint. Few were aware that the salt pans were an area of extraordinary biological diversity and uniqueness. However, in recent years with active promotion and the inclusion of the local population in various activities sponsored by the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park, public awareness of the need for the environmental protection of this wetland area has increased.

### 3.2 Škocjan Caves

Many archeological discoveries from Cooper and Early Bronze age around 5000–3700 year B. C. prove that humans have always lived in and around caves (Kranjc 2002). Caves initially provided a refuge from danger, and later people were often drawn to explore the mysterious underground world of caves. The local population in fact deserves the greatest credit for the discovery and exploration of the Škocjan Caves. Life in the immediate vicinity of the caves and familiarity with the surrounding karst world and the features of the Reka River allowed the local population to contribute invaluable knowledge during the entire period the caves were explored. The local population is very well aware of the significance of the Škocjan Caves and the importance of their protection, but primarily from the viewpoint of conserving the cave ecosystem. Awareness among the local population that the Škocjan Caves contain an important wetland is relatively modest.

The area of the Škocjan Caves Regional Park includes only three villages, whose residents have been traditionally involved in agriculture although the farming was never intensive. Due to the nature of the karst world, cultivation in this area is limited to sinkholes and dolines where thick layers of soil have accumulated. Mostly corn was grown and sheep, goats, and pigs raised, so this area was never strongly transformed by human activity. People lived in the traditional fashion in the villages within the regional park until recently, which today is reflected in a rich cultural heritage.

Although there is no intensive farming or developed industry in the area of the Škocjan Caves, research shows that the studied area is still subject to extensive agricultural pollution. Thus, samples taken from trickles of water in various parts of the cave system below the village of Škocjan contain raised levels of nitrates (up to 85 mg/l), sulfates (up to 53 mg/l), phosphates (up to 5.5 mg/l), and chlorides (up to 16 mg/l) as well as organic pollution with COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand) levels up to 8.7 mg/l (Kogovšek 1999). In addition to agricultural sources of pollution, a major issue in the past was the pollution of the Reka River by the chemical and wood industries in Ilirska Bistrica.

### 3.3 Cerknica Lake

The unique features of the disappearing Cerknica Lake early led men to the desire to control its natural filling and emptying. In various periods in the past, different trends appeared in the economic use of the lake area and its surroundings. In the agrarian period, the idea dominated of draining the lake to enable farming over a wider area. In the industrial period, the trend shifted toward creating a permanent lake that could be exploited for electrical power as well as for tourism. None of these ideas, however, were completely realized since major misgivings about the consequences of such interventions constantly arose. Thus, in spite of minor damming and drainage projects, the nature of Cerknica Lake retained its original features. Today the idea of reestablishing the original state of the lake and its surroundings is increasingly voiced. It is particularly emphasized that the local people are traditionally linked to the fluctuations of Cerknica Lake and over the centuries have learned to adapt and coexist with its natural cycles (Smrekar 2002).



BOJAN ERHARTIČ

Figure 2: Cerknica lake and its surroundings.

Cerknica Lake differs from the other Ramsar sites by having an above-average density of settlement in its immediate vicinity. Along with denser settlement, there is also a concentration of numerous activities such as farming, industry, traffic, and tourism in the area.

Although in the past many plans regarding the economic exploitation of the lake were suggested, the primary concern of local residents today is that they be allowed to decide on the fate of the lake themselves. The greatest debates regarding the use of the lake are mainly between farmers and fishermen and among farmers themselves. Some farmers lean toward draining the lake while fishermen and other farmers favour its damming. However, the local people are mostly skeptical about such interventions and are therefore occupied primarily with its conservation and the reestablishment of its original state. The ideas of maintaining a balance between farming and fishing and the development of natural science tourism are gaining favour (Schein 2002).

## 4 Attitudes of the population toward wetlands

### 4.1 Basic features of the study

In the framework of the study, one hundred questionnaires (Polajnar 2007) were distributed and answers were thus acquired on average from every thirtieth resident of settlements canvassed within and near each of the Ramsar conservation areas. Altogether, the survey was conducted in twelve settlements in three municipalities. In the Municipality of Piran, where the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park is located, questionnaires were distributed in the settlements of Seča, Parecag, and Sečovlje. In the Municipality of Divača, where the Škocjan Caves Regional Park is located, questionnaires were distributed in the settlements of Mata-vun, Škocjan, and Betanja. In the Municipality of Cerknica, where Cerknica Lake is found, questionnaires

were distributed in the settlements of Zelše, Dolenja vas, Dolenje Jezero, Otok, Laze pri Gorenjem Jezeru, and Gorenje Jezero. We distributed forty-two questionnaires in the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area, the same number in the Cerknica Lake area, and sixteen in the area of Škocjan Caves Regional Park. Young people (to age 25), the most poorly represented age group, returned 17% of the questionnaires, while the 40 to 65 age group was most represented and returned 41% of the questionnaires. The 25 to 40 age group and those over 65 returned an equal number of questionnaires (21%). Relative to education, around half of those surveyed had secondary school education, followed by those with university and graduate school education (18%) and with vocational college training (16%). Some 13% of the respondents had finished elementary school, and 3% were »without formal education.« Half of the respondents were unemployed or retired, while 17% were employed in industry or small manufacturing, 16% in the tourist industry, and 10% in other service activities. Only 6% were employed in the quaternary sector (education, health, culture).

## 4.2 Results and discussion

From the questionnaire distributed to people living in the vicinity of the protected areas that include the studied wetlands, we gleaned some interesting findings. In the first part of the questionnaire, we were interested in their perception of the wetlands and of the Ramsar Convention and its goals. Later followed questions about life in these protected areas and about the factors that most threaten the wetlands.

In all three protected areas together, some 78% of the respondents were familiar with the concept of wetlands while 22% were not. There was no great difference in knowledge of the wetlands among the individual areas. Residents of the Škocjan Caves area were most knowledgeable, followed by those of the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area and Cerknica Lake. The results reflect the fact that the longer the areas with the wetlands have been protected, the more knowledgeable their populations are since over a longer period the parks have involved local people in their operation and activities. A longer period of operation also results in a more organized and skillful approach to involving the local population in activities and their wider inclusion in various development programs.

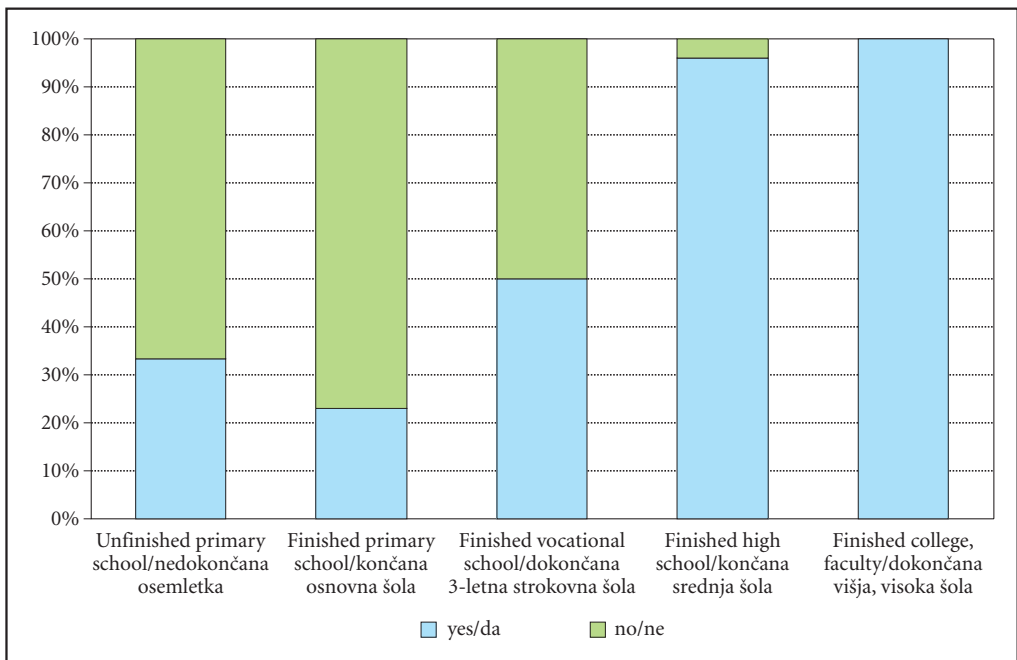


Figure 3: Knowledge of wetlands relative to level of education.



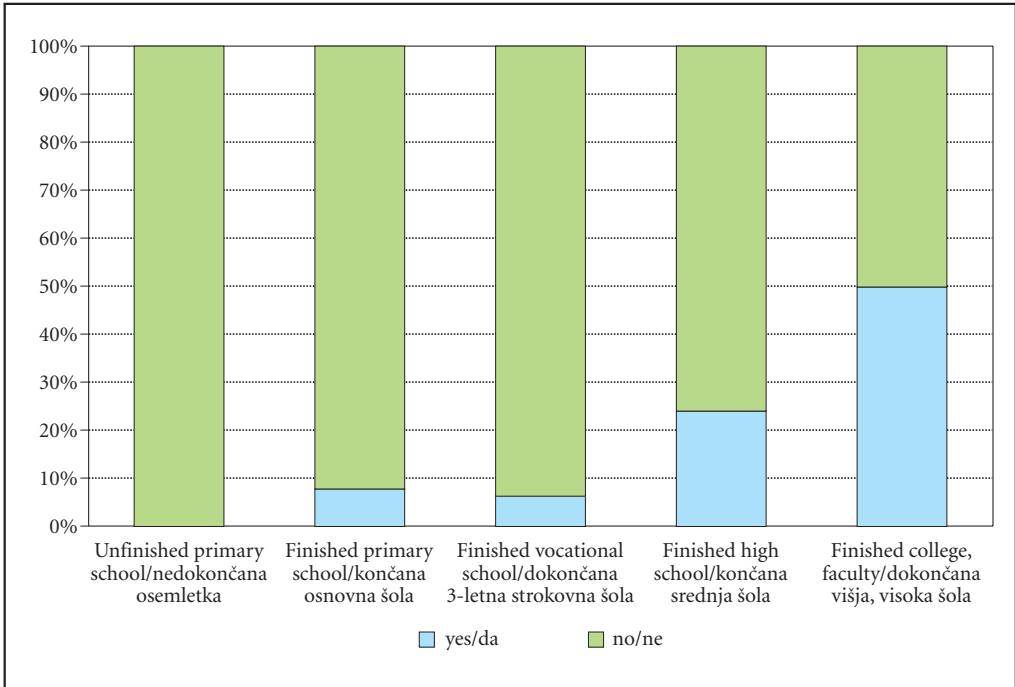


Figure 4: Knowledge of the Ramsar Convention relative to level of education.

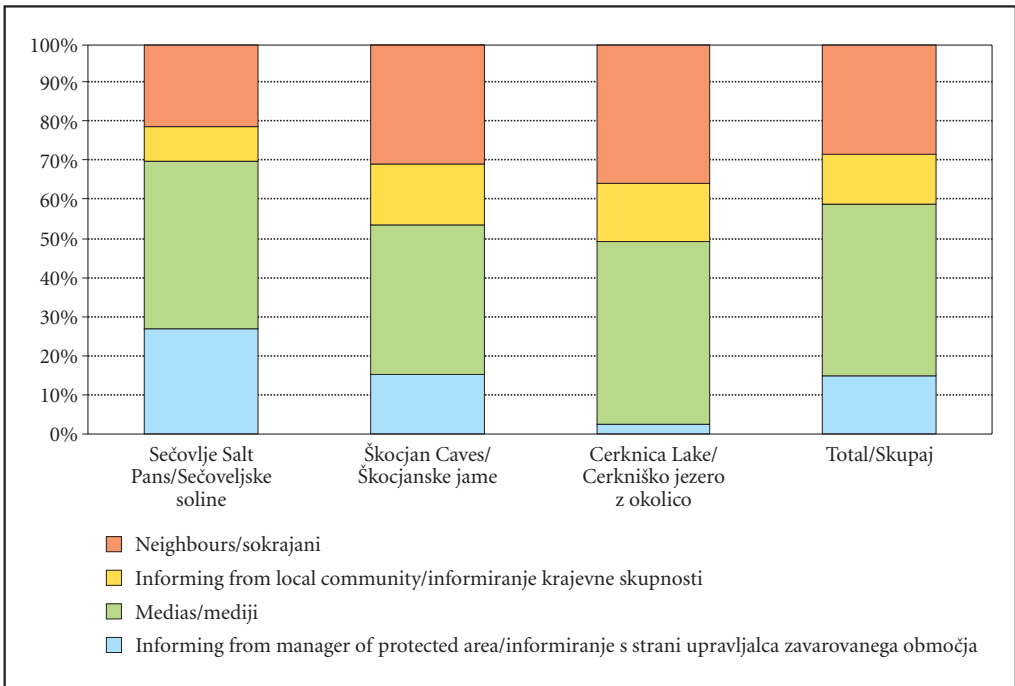


Figure 5: Main sources of information about protected areas.

Examining knowledge of the wetlands relative to education, we determined that a third of the respondents who had not finished elementary school were familiar with wetlands. This group included the youngest respondents, who learned about wetlands in elementary school. The other respondents in this group were older than 65 and were largely unfamiliar with the concept of wetlands. Respondents who had finished elementary school were the least familiar with wetlands. This group includes the majority of the older populations. Half of the respondents with three-year vocational school education were familiar with wetlands, while those who had finished secondary school or university and graduate programs were almost all familiar with wetlands. From these results it is obvious that knowledge of the wetlands among the respondents increases with their level of education.

Our analysis of results showed that 77% of the respondents did not know of the Ramsar Convention that covers the protected areas in which they live. Around half of the respondents in the Škocjan Caves area were familiar with the Ramsar Convention, a quarter of those in the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area, and only 12% in the Cerknica Lake area, largely because this area was only added to the list of Ramsar sites at the end of 2006. Furthermore, the Notranjska Regional Park is relatively young and its activities to raise awareness among the population are only just beginning.

In contrast, a surprisingly large proportion of the people in the area of the Škocjan Caves Regional Park were familiar with the Ramsar Convention. The reason for this level of awareness may be the implementation of the Ramsar Convention CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) program and other education and public seminar programs on the theme of wetlands. Other reasons may include the small number of people who live within Škocjan Caves Regional Park and that among the three areas studied, this park has the longest period of existence and operation. The park's education programs and cooperation with the local people have a greater effect given the small population. It should also be emphasized that the people in the area are well connected with the park, and many of them are natural scientists or otherwise involved in the activities and operation of the park.

During the research on knowledge of the Ramsar Convention relative to level of education, we found that none of the respondents who had not finished elementary school were aware of it, while 7% of those who had completed elementary school were. Only 6% of those who had completed three-year vocational programs knew of the convention, while those who had finished secondary school (24%) or university and graduate programs (50%) were most familiar with it. It is therefore clear that knowledge of the Ramsar Convention is very poor among the least educated population and that it grows with the level of education. However, the results show that even among the most educated, knowledge of the convention is relatively poor.

The media is the main source of information about the protected areas that contain the wetlands (44%) followed by information from neighbours (28%), from park authorities (15%), and from the local community authorities (13%). In the area of the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park, 43% of the population was most informed by the media, followed by the park authorities (27%), neighbours (21%), and the local community authorities (9%). In the area of the Škocjan Caves Regional Park, 39% of the population was most informed by the media, followed by neighbours (31%) and the park and local community authorities (15% each). In the Cerknica Lake area (Notranjska Regional Park), 47% of the population was most informed by the media, followed by neighbours (34%), the local community authorities (15%), and the park authorities (3%). From these figures we can conclude that information activities by the Notranjska Regional Park authorities are only just beginning in contrast to the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park and the Škocjan Caves Regional Park where activities to inform and educate the public have carried out for some time.

The most mentioned restrictions in the Cerknica Lake area are the restrictions on mowing hay during the nesting period of the corncrake and on agriculture. In the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area, the restrictions most frequently mentioned include limitations on access to the salt pans and areas forbidden to walkers and the prohibition of access by motorized vehicles and boats. The prohibition of access by motorized vehicles was a major complaint mentioned by 21% of respondents in all areas. Some 32% of those questioned in the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area voiced this complaint. This can be explained by the fact that in the past the salt pans were an important source of animal and plant species that people used for various purposes. After the saltworks ceased operation, the population had unlimited movement, and access with vehicles was possible practically everywhere. One negative result was the collection of *Artemia* Salina crabs, an endemic and very important species in the food chain of young fish, for fish bait. In the Škocjan Caves Regional Park area, the most frequently mentioned limitations were prohibitions on con-

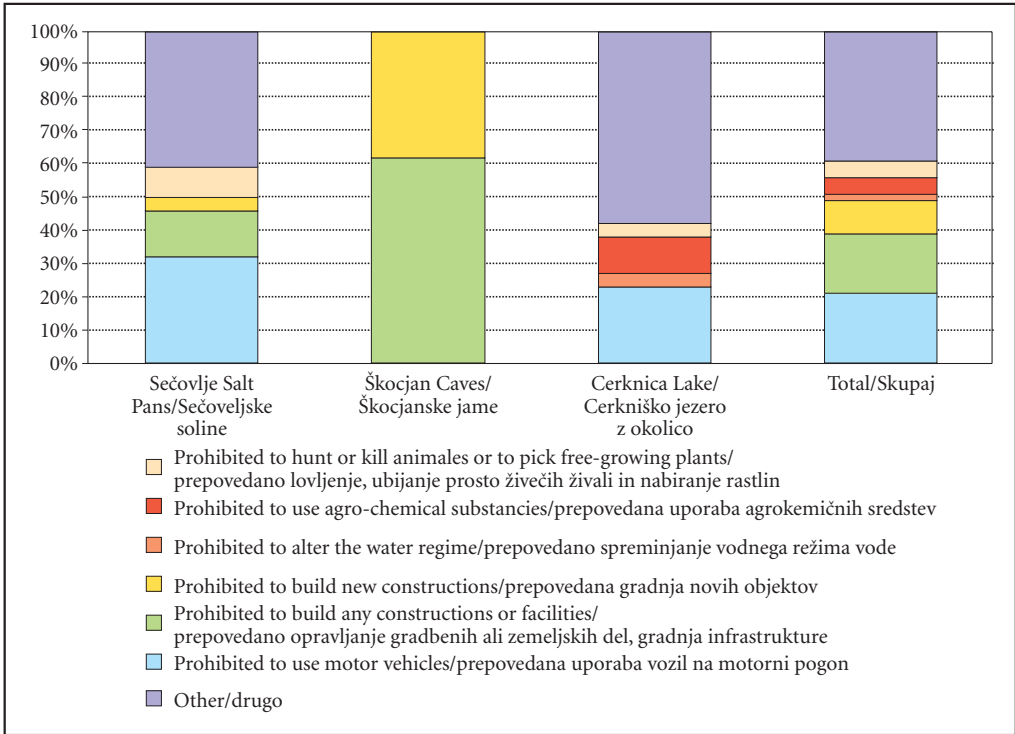


Figure 6: Main restrictions facing the populations of protected areas.

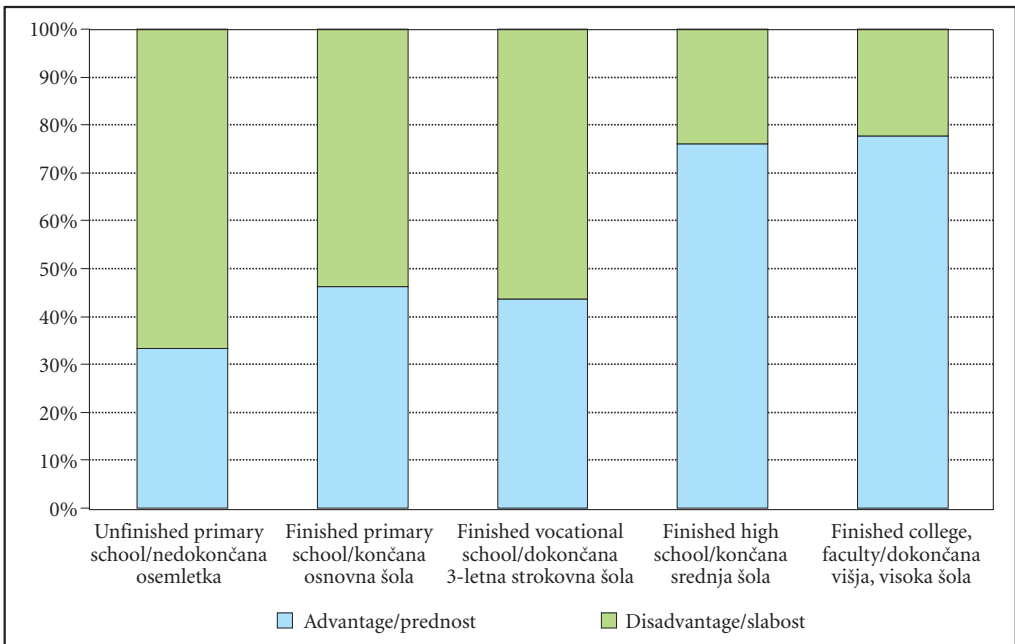


Figure 7: Opinions on living in protected areas relative to level of education.

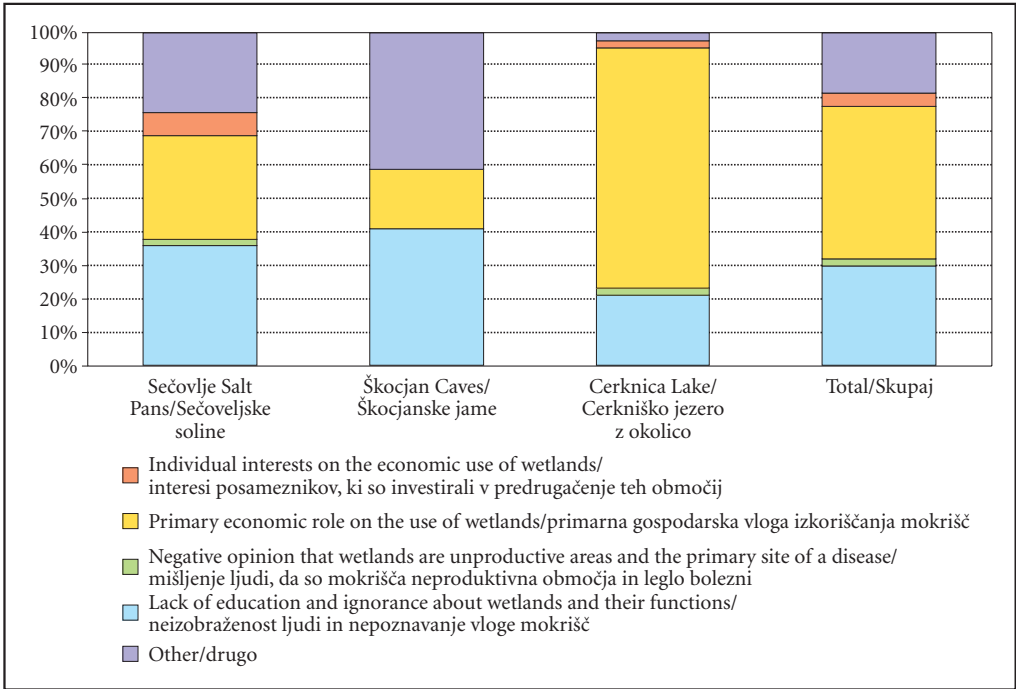


Figure 8: Past transformation of wetlands and their destruction.

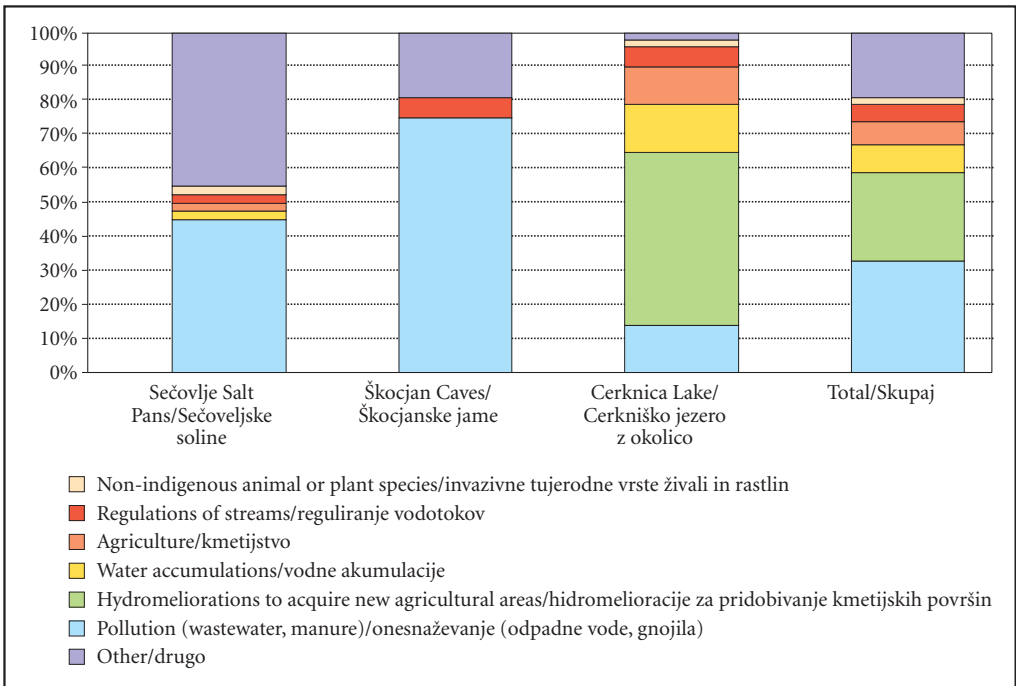


Figure 9: Activities that most threaten wetlands.

struction or farm work cited by 61.5% of the respondents and prohibitions on the construction of new buildings cited by 38.5% of the respondents.

Living in a protected area was seen as an advantage by 66% of those responding to the questionnaire. Here they primarily emphasized the possibility for the development of tourism and indirectly for related economic branches. This possibility was mentioned mainly by the younger respondents, while older residents saw an advantage in living close to unspoiled nature and clean air. On the other hand, 21% of the respondents believe that the protected areas brought disadvantages such as a large number of tourists who polluted their environment. In the Cerknica Lake area the limitation on farming was seen as a disadvantage, and in the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area, the limited access to the salt pans. Only 13% of the respondents saw neither advantages nor disadvantages.

Agreement that living in a protected area is advantageous rises with the level of education. Only 33% of those who had not finished elementary school agreed with this view while more of those who had completed elementary school or three-year vocational programs held this view, 46% and 44% respectively. It is interesting that more of those who finished elementary school held this view than of those who attended three-year vocational programs. The reason is that the majority of those with lower education are involved in farming and live hand in hand with nature. They are therefore aware that nature is not an inexhaustible source of resources intended for human consumption but that nature must be carefully protected and its resources exploited in a sustainable manner. Those with somewhat higher educations are mostly employed in industry where the awareness of the importance of protecting the environment is less immediately present. Most secondary school graduates (76%) and those with university or graduate school education (78%) saw living in a protected area as an advantage. From these figures we can conclude that the awareness of the population regarding the necessity to protect nature or of the advantages of living in a protected area increases with greater education.

Most respondents, some 46%, believe that the primary reason for the past draining of wetlands was economic exploitation, while 30% believe that the wetlands were transformed due to people's lack of education and ignorance of the role of wetlands from the natural science viewpoint. In the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area the opinion prevailed that lack of education was responsible (36%) followed by economic exploitation (31%). A similar result appeared for the Škocjan Caves Regional Park area, where 41% of the people felt lack of education was responsible for the transformation of wetlands. Here it is necessary to point out that 41% of the respondents in the Škocjan Caves Regional Park area and 24% of those in the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area chose »other« as the reason. The former said they chose »other« because they did not believe the wetlands had been degraded in the past, while the latter primarily emphasized the past neglect and abandonment of the salt pans. In the Cerknica Lake area, 72% blamed economic exploitation of the wetlands as the reason for their transformation while 21% blamed lack of education. The respondents primarily emphasized that the degradation of the Cerknica Lake area was due to the desire to acquire more farmland.

The largest number of respondents (33%) believe that pollution is what threatens wetlands most, followed by water regulation schemes to acquire farmland (26%). In the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area, 45% of the respondents believe that pollution is the greatest threat while an equal number do not believe the salt pans are threatened by pollution. Here some emphasize the neglect and abandonment of the saltworks. In the Škocjan Caves Regional Park area, 75% believe the area is threatened by pollution, citing the previous pollution of the Reka River by the chemical and wood industries in Ilirska Bistrica. Some 19% of the respondents believe that the Škocjan Caves Regional Park area is today no longer under threat. Answers were varied in the Cerknica Lake area. The largest number of respondents (51%) believe that drainage most threatens the wetlands, followed by pollution and damming (14% each), while 11% of the respondents believe that the lake is most threatened by agriculture.

Some 39% of all respondents believe that conservation is necessary to protect and suitably manage wetland areas; however, 20% believe it should be done in a manner that does not limit the satisfaction of human needs. According to 41% of the respondents, the conservation of wetland areas represents an important potential for the development of local tourism and the development of nearby places.

On the basis of the questionnaire results, we can see that people are relatively well aware of the importance of conserving wetland areas. In our opinion, the surprising fact that none of those surveyed believed the protected areas represented an unwelcome barrier is extremely positive. By the time the questionnaire had been analyzed, our hope had grown that the attitudes of people are slowly changing and that from

the viewpoint of environmental protection, the future promises a different more positive approach toward wetlands and their vulnerable ecosystems

## 5 Conclusion

Wetlands are areas of extreme landscape diversity characterized by the interweaving of land and water ecosystems. At the same time, they rank among areas with high biodiversity and among the most productive ecosystems. Due to ignorance of the role of wetlands and their functions from the natural science viewpoint in the past, they were often included in programs that anticipated their draining and transformation. With the goal of protecting and revitalizing degraded wetlands, the first worldwide intergovernmental agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, the Ramsar Convention, was signed in 1971.

Slovenia became a member of the Ramsar Convention in 1992. Since then, the convention has provided a framework in which environmental policies have been adopted through which we are striving for the conservation and prudent use of Slovenia's wetlands. So far, three wetlands in Slovenia have been added to the List of Wetlands of International Importance: the Sečovlje salt pans (1993), the Škocjan Caves (1999), and Cerknica Lake and its surroundings (2006). Each of the wetlands included in the convention represent a unique and constantly varying habitat for threatened and rare plant and animal species.

This article is based on research into public awareness of the conservation of wetlands and on the issue of insufficient knowledge of the role of wetlands from the natural science viewpoint that frequently leads to unsuitable use of wetlands or to their disappearance. A questionnaire survey of residents of the protected areas in which the Ramsar sites are located formed the basis for acquiring information on public awareness regarding these sites.

In all three study areas, the population was well acquainted with the concept of wetlands, but in contrast, few of those surveyed were familiar with the Ramsar Convention and its goals. Knowledge of wetlands



PRIMOŽ FIPIAN

Figure 10: Thematical workshops.

and the Ramsar Convention increases with the level of education, while differences in the level of knowledge also appear relative to individual sites. Thus among social filters, education is the one most clearly reflected in variations in knowledge of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention. The main sources of information about protected areas are the media and neighbours, while the population gets the least information directly from local community authorities in the protected areas.

The analysis of the questionnaire showed that one third of the population feels subject to limitations in living in a protected area. They most often mentioned specific limitations, such as the restrictions on mowing hay during the nesting period of the corncrake and on agriculture in the Cerknica Lake area. In the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area, the most frequently mentioned restrictions include limitations on access to the salt pans and areas forbidden to walkers and the prohibition of access by motorized vehicles and boats. In the Škocjan Caves Regional Park area, the most frequently mentioned limitations were prohibitions on construction or farm work and prohibitions on the construction of new buildings.

In general, though, the respondents were satisfied with life in the protected areas since the majority stated that life there held advantages. The least satisfied were in the Cerknica Lake area where they were subject to limitation on agriculture. The positive opinion regarding the advantages of living in a protected area increased with higher levels of education, although on the other hand it decreased as the age of the population surveyed increased.

Over all three Ramsar site areas, the respondents considered pollution the greatest threat to the wetlands. In the Cerknica Lake area, respondents identified draining to acquire more farmland and damming as major threats, while a large proportion of the respondents in the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park area and the Škocjan Caves area believe that nothing threatens the wetlands in their areas.

The majority of those surveyed believe that wetlands require protection and appropriate use. In the opinion of some, it is necessary to find a suitable plan for their protection that does not limit the satisfaction of human needs. None of the respondents believes that the protected areas represent an objectionable



Figure 11: Summer camps.

barrier for the life of area residents. While the wetlands represent an important potential for the development of tourism for most, this view is less widely held in the Cerknica Lake area where the negative effects of tourism development were mentioned.

Our study partially confirmed the assumption that the public awareness of protected wetlands is modest and that the population is too little aware of the importance of conserving wetlands and of the numerous functions wetlands serve. It also confirmed the hypothesis that great differences are a reflection of differences in the education, age, and occupational structure of the surveyed population. We determined that the level of public awareness of the suitable conservation of wetlands rises with the level of education and increasing employment in the quaternary sector, while the inverse only occurs with rising age levels. Major differences appeared between the individual Ramsar sites. The studied wetlands lie within three protected areas that differ relative to their period of operation, the level and type of protection, methods of operation, strategies for raising public awareness, and a series of other factors that influence the attitudes the public has toward wetlands.

In the future it will be necessary to establish effective education and information programs to raise public awareness of the suitable conservation of wetlands. Of key importance in this endeavour is cooperation between local community authorities and the local populations. The population must be included and involved in activities undertaken in the protected areas. The best method for improving the public's attitude toward wetlands is to organize various educational activities in the form of workshops in the protected areas and in schools and other institutions. Education can also take place through brochures and printed materials, through the presentation of documentary films, web sites, examples of good practice ... Along with education programs, it is also necessary to organize various events (such as »wetland days,« etc.) and excursions in the framework of tourist associations. Another approach to raising public awareness could lie in integrating the protected areas with the local economy and local communities to allow the local population to cooperate in all key projects in the protected areas.

For more effective cooperation among the protected areas that contain Ramsar sites, it will be necessary to establish the so-called 'network of Ramsar sites in Slovenia'. Its goal will be to create links and cooperation between the protected areas, local community authorities, local populations, state institutions, research organizations, schools, and other interested partners. The universal education of local populations and intersector cooperation are basic keys to convincing people of the importance of conserving these extremely \_roctor\_e ecosystems.

## 6 References

- Beltram, G. 2000: Mokrišča: prezirano bogastvo narave. *Proteus* 62, 5. Ljubljana.
- Beltram, G. 2005: Ramsarska konvencija in slovenska mokrišča. Novi izzivi za ohranjanje mokrišč v 21. stoletju. Ministrstvo za okolje in prostor. Ljubljana.
- Bolješič, R. 1999: Konvencija o mokriščih, ki so mednarodnega pomena, zlasti kot habitati vodnih ptic. Ramsarska konvencija in slovenska mokrišča. Nacionalni odbor Republike Slovenije za Ramsarsko konvencijo pri Ministrstvu za okolje in prostor. Ljubljana.
- Breg, M., Kladnik, D., Smrekar, A. 2007: Odlagališča odpadkov na vodovarstvenem območju Ljubljanskega polja, glavnem viru oskrbe Ljubljane s pitno vodo. *Geografski zbornik* 47-1. Ljubljana.
- Gold, R. J. 1980: *An Introduction to Behavior Geography*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- Kogelnik, M. 2006: Ohranjanje mokrišč v kmetijski kulturni krajini. Funkcije mokrišč za življenje in razvoj. Ministrstvo za okolje in prostor, Društvo za preučevanje ptic in varstvo narave. Ljubljana.
- Kogovšek, J. 1999: Hidrologija krasa, Onesnaževanje vode na krasu. *Kras Pokrajina – življenje – ljudje*. Ljubljana.
- Kranjc, A. 2002: Zgodovinski pregled in opis jam. *Park Škocjanske jame*. Škocjan.
- Plut, D. 2000: Geografija vodnih virov. Oddelek za geografijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani. Ljubljana.
- Polajnar, K. 2007: Odnos prebivalcev do ramsarskih lokalitet. Diplomsko delo. Oddelek za geografijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani. Ljubljana.
- Sadoul, N., Walmsley, J., Charpentier, B. 1998: *Salinas and Nature Conservation*. Arles, Tour du Valat.



- Schein, V. 2002: Jezero in jezerci-posebnosti skozi način življenja jezercev. Jezero, ki izginja: monografija o Cerkniskem jezeru. Društvo ekologov Slovenije. Ljubljana.
- Smrekar, A. 2002: Gospodarski načrti in posegi. Jezero, ki izginja: monografija o Cerkniskem jezeru. Društvo ekologov Slovenije. Ljubljana.
- Smrekar, A. 2006: Zaveščevalci o pitni vodi. Geografija Slovenije 12. Ljubljana.
- Špes, M. 1998: Degradacija okolja kot dejavnik diferenciacije urbane pokrajine. Geographica Slovenica 30. Ljubljana.
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Internet: <http://www.ramsar.org/> (4. 12. 2007).
- Zakon o vodah. 2002. Uradni list Republike Slovenije 67. Ljubljana.
- Zakon o ohranjanju narave. 2004. Uradni list Republike Slovenije 96. Ljubljana.
- Žagar, Z. 1988: Življenje in delo v solinah. Sečoveljske soline včeraj – danes – jutri. Pomorski muzej Sergej Mašera. Piran.
- What are wetlands? 2003. Internet: [http://www.ramsar.org/about/about\\_infopack\\_1e.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/about/about_infopack_1e.htm) (2. 1. 2007).

## Ozaveščenost prebivalcev o varovanju mokrišč

DOI: 10.3986.AGS48105

UDK: 91:502.51(285.3)

502.51(285.3):659.3

COBISS: 1.01

**IZVLEČEK:** Mokrišča je človek v preteklosti zaradi negativnega odnosa in nepoznavanja njihovih funkcij in vrednosti pogosto spreminjal. Njihovo množično izginotje in degradiranje sta bila glavna povoda za nastanek Ramsarske konvencije, prve medvladne pogodbe o ohranjanju in trajnostni rabi mokrišč. Do sedaj so bila v seznam ramsarskih lokalitet vključena tri slovenska mokrišča: Sečoveljske soline, Škocjanske jame in Cerknjsko jezero z okolico. Na podlagi metode anketiranja, smo ugotavljali, kakšna je ozaveščenost prebivalcev o mokriščih in odnos do njihovega varovanja. Ugotovili smo, da se ozaveščenost prebivalcev o varovanju mokrišč povečuje z višanjem izobrazbe prebivalcev, višanjem zaposlenosti v kvartarnem sektorju in nižanjem starosti prebivalcev. Zaradi pomanjkljivih informacij ter nezadostnega poznavanja naravovarstvenih in ekonomskih funkcij mokrišč se na nekaterih območjih ustvarja negativno mnenje o prednostih življenja na zavarovanih območjih, znotraj katerih ležijo ramsarske lokalitete. V prihodnosti bo potrebno izdelati učinkovite programe izobraževanj in vzpostaviti aktivnejše vključevanje prebivalcev v dejavnosti, ki se izvajajo v zavarovanih območjih.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** geografija, Ramsarska konvencija, mokrišča, ozaveščenost prebivalcev, varstvo okolja, Sečoveljske soline, Škocjanske jame, Cerknjsko jezero

Uredništvo je prispevek prejelo 22. januarja 2008.

**NASLOV:**

**Katarina Polajnar, univ. dipl. geogr.**

Geografski inštitut Antona Melika

Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti

Gosposka ulica 13, SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija

E-pošta: katarina.polajnar@zrc-sazu.si

### Vsebina

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 1   | Uvod  | 139 |
| 2   | Mokrišča  | 139 |
| 2.1 | Prostorske značilnosti preučevanih mokrišč                | 140 |
| 3   | Povezanost lokalnih prebivalcev<br>in preučevanih mokrišč | 141 |
| 3.1 | Sečoveljske soline  | 141 |
| 3.2 | Škocjanske jame   | 141 |
| 3.3 | Cerkniško jezero  | 142 |
| 4   | Odnos prebivalcev do mokrišč                              | 142 |
| 4.1 | Temeljne značilnosti raziskave                            | 142 |
| 4.2 | Rezultati in diskusija                                    | 143 |
| 5   | Sklep   | 145 |
| 6   | Literatura  | 146 |

## 1 Uvod

Hiter gospodarski razvoj in izboljšanje ekonomske blaginje ljudi vplivata na vedno obsežnejše izkoriščanje naravnih virov, kar pogosto vodi k njihovemu izčrpanju in uničenju. Človek se zaradi nevednosti in lastnih koristi pogosto ne zaveda posledic takšnega delovanja. To se kaže v poslabšani kakovosti življenjskega okolja, ki je v zadnjem času postalo ena izmed pomembnih vrednot sodobnega človeka. Zaradi vedno večjega zgoščanja in medsebojnega prepletanja različnih dejavnosti v prostoru, pogosto prihaja do nesoglasij med gospodarstveniki in investitorji ter naravovarstveniki. Tako ima gospodarski in družbeni razvoj pogosto prednost pred ohranjanjem in varovanjem ekološko pomembnih naravnih območij, med katerimi se žal nemalokrat pojavljajo mokrišča in vodni ekosistemi (Smrekar 2006).

Prostor, kjer se stikajo kopne in vodne površine je pogosto odmaknjen pogledu, zato je že od nekdaj izpostavljen nedovoljenim posegom urbanega prebivalstva, s čimer postaja čedalje bolj degradiran. Obvodni prostor pogosto ni našel mesta v vrednostnem sistemu prebivalstva, ki je v njem videlo zlasti naravni vir in razpoložljiv prostor za nedovoljene posege. Dober dokaz za to so gramoznice in divja odlagaljšča (Breg, Kladnik, Smrekar 2007).

Ugotoviti želimo stopnjo ozaveščenosti prebivalcev o varovanju mokrišč, ki so vključena v Ramsarsko konvencijo, ter predstavljajo edinstveno kompleksno in dinamično naravno dobrino z izjemnim okoljskim, ekonomskim, kulturnim in znanstvenim pomenom. Osvetliti želimo problematiko nezadostnega poznavanja vloge mokrišč pri opravljanju številnih, za človeka izredno pomembnih funkcij, kar je eden od najpogostejših vzrokov za njihovo degradiranje in izginotje. V članku predpostavljamo dejstvo, da je ozaveščenost prebivalcev do varovanja mokrišč skromna. Prebivalci se premalo zavedajo pomembnosti varovanja mokrišč in njihovih številnih funkcij, ki jih mokrišča opravljajo za človeka. Pomembna razlikovanja v odnosu prebivalcev do mokrišč so predvsem posledica razlik v izobrazbeni, starostni in poklicni strukturi anketirancev.

Odnos do okolja in narave se oblikuje na podlagi dejstva, kako različne skupine prebivalcev zaznavajo, razumejo in sprejemajo okolje. Dejavniki, ki vplivajo na različno razumevanje in dojemanje naravnega okolja ter oblikujejo različne predstave o naravi, so združeni v skupino socialno-geografskih filtrov, ki so različno prepustni za vplive in informacije iz okolja ali o njem. Elementi in procesi, ki po mnenju Golda (1980) vplivajo na razumevanje okolja se delijo v tri kategorije: spoznavne (oblikujejo prostorske sheme), osebnostne (čustva, motivacije), socialno-kulturne procese. Le-te skupaj vplivajo na pretok informacij o okolju, kjer lahko posameznik sprejme le omejeno skupino potencialnih informacij o okolju. Za nas so bili pomembni predvsem naslednji dejavniki, ki vplivajo na ozaveščenost prebivalcev do okolja: starostna, poklicna in izobrazbena sestava anketirancev (Špes 1998).

## 2 Mokrišča

Mokrišča so izredno dinamični ekosistemi na prehodu med koptim in vodo, ki jih lahko imenujemo ekotoni. So območja z visoko biotsko raznovrstnostjo in med najbolj produktivnimi ekosistemi na planetu, takoj za tropskimi gozdovi (Sadoul et al., 1998). So življenjski prostor za mnoge rastlinske in živalske vrste, pomemben vir hrane ter skladišča rastlinskega genskega materiala. Mokrišča imajo izredno vlogo tudi pri kroženju vode in kemijskih snovi. Tako jih lahko označimo kot 'ledvice pokrajine' (Plut, 2000). Z medsebojnim delovanjem fizičnih, bioloških in kemičnih komponent, kot so prst, voda, flora in fauna mokrišča izvajajo številne ekološke funkcije (What are ... 2003). Poleg tega opravljajo ekonomske in socialne funkcije, nudijo številne dobrine in so edinstvena območja za ohranjanje kulturne dediščine in lokalnih tradicij (Bolješič 1999).

Mokrišča so ena izmed najhitreje izginjajočih habitatnih tipov, ki jih je človek v preteklosti zaradi nepoznavanja njihove naravne in družbene vrednosti pogosto degradiral in spreminjal. Razumeli so jih kot zdravju škodljiva in neproduktivna območja, zato so bila pogosto velik potencial za izsuševanje, urbanizacijo, kmetovanje, turizem in druge dejavnosti. Zasipavanje mokrišč z odpadnim materialom, odlaganje odpadkov, pozidave, spreminjanje v obdelovalne površine so le nekateri od človekovih posegov, ki uničujejo njihov njihovo pestrost. Strokovnjaki ocenjujejo, da je bilo zaradi negativnega odnosa in nepoznavanja vloge mokrišč v zadnjih 100 letih v Evropi uničena vsaj polovica vseh mokrišč (Beltram 2000). V Sloveniji je kmetijs-tvo z načrtnim izsuševanjem in pridobivanjem novih površin za namene obdelave najbolj vplivalo na

izginotje mokrišč. V Sloveniji je med letoma 1952–1990 izginilo 40 % mokrišč, še zlasti v srednjih in spodnjih tokovih rek (Kogelnik 2006).

V 20. stoletju se je mednarodna javnost začela zavedati, da z izginjanjem mokrišč izgubljam nepremljive ekosisteme, ki za nas opravljajo številne funkcije. Tako je bila za varovanje mokrišč, ki so pomemben sestavni del planetarnega vodnega kroga, leta 1971 podpisana Ramsarska konvencija, katere namen je ohranjanje, varovanje in smotrna raba z mokrišči. Konvencija je tudi prvi svetovni dokument o ohranjanju in trajnostni rabi dobrin.

Mednarodna pogodba o ohranjanju in trajnostni rabi mokrišč v okviru svojih načel predvideva vključitev čim večjega števila mokrišč v seznam mokrišč mednarodnega pomena. Tako je v mrežo mokrišč danes vključenih že 1702 mokrišč iz 157 držav (The Ramsar ... 2007).

Slovenija je postala članica Ramsarske konvencije leta 1992. Leta 1996 je ustanovila Nacionalni odbor za Ramsarsko konvencijo. Do sedaj je v seznam mokrišč mednarodnega pomena vključila tri mokrišča in sicer Sečoveljske soline, ki so v preteklosti izredno pozitivno in pomembno vplivale na gospodarski razvoj obalnega območja, danes pa predstavljajo območje bogate naravne in kulturne dediščine izjemnih pokrajinskih in ekoloških vrednosti, Škocjanske jame, ki so edinstven primer kraškega podzemnega mokrišča z enkratno zastopanostjo rastlinskih in živalskih vrst ter Cerkniško jezero z okolico (v nadaljevanju Cerkniško jezero), edino presihajoče slovensko jezero z edinstveno biotsko raznovrstnostjo in kulturno vrednostjo.

Poglavitni dokumenti, ki so povezani z varovanjem mokrišč v Sloveniji so: Direktiva o ohranjanju prostoživečih ptic (79/409/EEC) in Direktiva o ohranjanju naravnih habitatov ter prosto živečih živalskih in rastlinskih vrst (92/43/EEC), ki se povezujeta v omrežje Nature 2000, Zakon o vodah (Uradni list 67/2002), Zakon o ohranjanju narave (Uradni list 96/2004), Ramsarska konvencija in Nacionalni program varstva okolja (Uradni list 2/2006). Poleg navedenih dokumentov obstajajo tudi posamezni zakoni o varovanju narodnih, regijskih, krajinskih parkov. Vendar je slabost dokumentov, ki opredeljujejo varovanje mokrišč ta, da so cilji okoljske politike zastavljeni sektorsko. Tako bi bilo treba poudarjati in uresničiti težnjo po medsektorskem sodelovanju in skupnem zastavljanju okoljske politike. Eden izmed razlogov za to je tudi različno opredeljevanje mokrišč v posameznih zakonih. Tako za izvajanje Ramsarske konvencije uporabljamo Zakon o vodah (Uradni list 67/2002) in Zakon o ohranjanju narave (Uradni list 96/2004), ki različno opredeljujeta mokrišča. Na primer Zakon o vodah (Uradni list 67/2002) ne opredeljuje mokrišč (2. člen: *»... cilj upravljanja voda ter vodnih in priobalnih zemljišč je doseganje dobrega stanja voda in drugih z vodami povezanih ekosistemov, zagotavljanje varstva pred škodljivim delovanjem voda, ohranjanje in uravnavanje vodnih količin in spodbujanje trajnostne rabe voda, ki omogoča različne vrste rabe voda ob upoštevanju dolgoročnega varstva razpoložljivih vodnih virov in njihove kakovosti ...«* ter 11. člen Zakona, ki opredeljuje vodno zemljišče celinskih voda kot *»... zemljišče, na katerem je celinska voda trajno ali občasno prisotna in se zato oblikujejo posebne hidrološke, geomorfološke in biološke razmere, ki določajo vodni ali obvodni ekosistem ...«* (Uradni list 67/2002). Zakona sta sicer dobra pravna podlaga za ohranjanje in preudarno rabo mokrišč, vendar bi bilo treba medsektorsko uskladiti ne le omenjena zakona, pač pa vse dokumente, ki se nanašajo na ohranjanje, varovanje in upravljanje z mokrišči (Beltram 2005). Na koncu se poraja vprašanje ali so vsi ti dokumenti zadosten instrument za učinkovito varovanje mokrišč?

Slika 1: Ramsarske lokalitete v Sloveniji.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

## 2.1 Prostorske značilnosti preučevanih mokrišč

Vsa tri mokrišča, vključena v raziskavo, ležijo v jugozahodni Sloveniji, vendar se zaradi razgibanega in raznolikega površja ter podnebja med seboj razlikujejo. Sečoveljske soline ležijo na prehodu med kopnim in morjem ter na stiku fliša z apnencem, kjer je reka Dragonja oblikovala obsežno naplavno aluvialno ravnico. Z razliko od Sečoveljskih solin je nastanek ostalih dveh ramsarskih lokalitet Škocjanskih jam in Cerkniškega jezera tesno povezan z okolico. Obe mokrišči namreč ležita na kraškem ekosistemu in predstavljata skupek edinstvenih podzemnih in nadzemnih kraških pojavov. Škocjanske jame so nastale na območju kontaktnega krasa, kjer je reka Reka na stiku nepropustnih flišnih kamnin in apnenca v slednjem izdolbla raznolike in biotsko raznovrstne jamske rove. Cerkniško jezero z okolico v okviru zavarovanja obsega edinstvene kraške ekosisteme. Tako so v okviru Ramsarske konvencije zavarovani Cerkniško jeze-

ro, ki je edinstven primer poplavnega kraškega polja, za katerega je značilno nihanje kraške vode, Križna jama s podzemnimi jezeri in znamenita kraška dolina Rakov Škocjan.

### 3 Povezanost lokalnih prebivalcev in preučevanih mokrišč

Okolje se s součinkovanjem naravnih in družbenih sestavin nenehno spreminja, prav tako se spreminjajo tudi njegove funkcije ter tudi družbena in ekonomska struktura prebivalstva. Dejavniki, ki vplivajo na povezanost prebivalcev na okolje, v katerem živijo, se v različnih obdobjih spreminjajo (Špes 1998).

Za lažjo predstavitev in analizo rezultatov v celotnem članku uporabljamo besedno zvezo 'prebivalci na območju' Sečoveljskih solin, Škocjanskih jam in Cerkljskega jezera. Pri tem moramo poudariti, da želimo z omenjeno tezo zajeti vse prebivalce, ki živijo na zavarovanih območjih znotraj katerih ležijo ramsarske lokalitete. Specifičen primer so Sečoveljske soline, kjer ni stalnih prebivalcev, a v članku vseeno opredeljujemo mnenje prebivalcev na območju Sečoveljskih solin. Na tem območju smo namreč ankete izvedli v okoliških naseljih, kjer je bilo življenje domačinov že od nekdaj povezano s solinami.

#### 3.1 Sečoveljske soline

Prebivalci na območju Sečoveljskih solin so bili že od nekdaj povezani z morjem in pridelavo soli. Postopki pridobivanja soli, ter gradnja in obnavljanje solinskih bazenov so dolga stoletja prehajali iz roda v rod. V času svojega delovanja so se s solinarstvom ukvarjali prebivalci z različnih območij. V začetnem obdobju so bili s solinami tesno povezani predvsem prebivalci Pirana, ki so vsako poletje odhajali na delo v soline. Nato se je po prvi svetovni vojni v solinah zaposlovalo kmečko prebivalstvo iz bližnjega obalnega zaledja. V obdobju odseljevanja italijanskega prebivalstva po drugi svetovni vojni pa so se v solinah zaposlovali priseljenci iz različnih krajev Slovenije. Danes zaradi modernizacije dela solinarji ne živijo več v solinah, saj opravljajo osem urni delavnik, vendar se radi spominjajo preteklega časa, preživetega v tesni povezavi s solinami (Žagar 1988).

V preteklosti je bila vloga solin predvsem gospodarska in ne naravovarstvena. Soline so bile v takratnem času vir preživetja in zato tudi cenjene. Le malokdo se je zavedal, da so soline območje izredne biotske pestrosti in edinstvenosti. Vendar se v zadnjih letih z aktivno promocijo in vključevanjem okoliškega prebivalstva v različne aktivnosti, ki jih izvaja Krajski park Sečoveljske soline, povečuje vedenje prebivalcev o naravovarstvenem pomenu mokrišča.

#### 3.2 Škocjanske jame

Arheološka odkritja iz bakrene in zgodnje bronaste dobe izpred približno 5000–3700 let pr. n. št. dokazujejo, da je človek že od nekdaj bival v jamah na Škocjanskem krasu in njihovi okolici (Kranjc 2002). Jame so bile zatočišče pred nevarnostmi, kasneje pa je človeka v jame največkrat pritegovalo njihovo skrivnostno podzemlje. Domačini so bili najbolj zaslužni za odkritje Škocjanskih jam. Tamkajšnjim prebivalcem je življenje v neposredni bližini jame, dobro poznavanje kraškega sveta in značilnosti toka reke Reke omogočilo, da so v celotnem obdobju raziskovanja jam pridobivali neprecenljiva spoznanja. Tamkajšnji prebivalci se tako izredno zavedajo pomena Škocjanski jam in pomembnosti njihovega varovanja, vendar predvsem z vidika varovanja jamskih ekosistemov. Vedenje o tem, da so Škocjanske jame tudi pomembno podzemno mokrišče, pa je med prebivalci še razmeroma skromno.

Površje Regijskega parka Škocjanske jame obsega le 3 vasi, kjer so se ljudje tradicionalno ukvarjali s kmetijstvom. Vendar to kmetijstvo ni bilo nikoli intenzivno usmerjeno. Zaradi narave kraškega sveta je poljedelstvo na tem območju omejeno na vrtače in dole, ki so na debelo prekriti s prstjo. Pridelovali so predvsem žito, od živine pa so redili drobnico. Tako tega območja človek ni nikoli močno ekološko obremenjeval. V vaseh, ki ležijo znotraj regijskega parka so ljudje do nedavnega živeli na tradicionalen način, ki se danes kaže v bogati kulturni dediščini.

Čeprav na območju Škocjanskih jam ni intenzivnega kmetijstva ter industrije, raziskave kažejo, da je preučevano območje vseeno podvrženo obsežnemu onesnaževanju. Tako so v vzorcih iz curkov v različnih delih jame pod naseljem Škocjan izmerili povišane vsebnosti nitratov (do 85 mg/l), sulfatov (do 53 mg/l), fosfatov (do 5,5 mg/l) in kloridov (do 16 mg/l), ugotovljeno pa je bilo tudi organsko onesnaženje (KPK do

8,7 mg/l) (Kogovšek 1999). Poleg omenjenega onesnaževanja pa je bilo v preteklosti pereče tudi onesnaževanje reke Reke s strani kemične in lesne industrije v Ilirski Bistrici.

### 3.3 Cerknško jezero

Edinstvene značilnosti presihajočega Cerknškega jezera so človeka že zgodaj vodile k želji po nadzorovanju njegove narave polnjenja in praznjenja. V preteklosti so se v različnih obdobjih pojavile različne težnje po gospodarski rabi pojezerja in njegove okolice. V agrarni dobi je prevladovala ideja po njegovi izsušitvi, s čimer bi omogočili kmetovanje na širšem območju pojezerja. Nato so se v industrijski dobi pojavile težnje po njegovi stalni ojezeritvi, s čimer bi lahko jezersko vodo izkoriščali kot energetski vir. Posledično bi ga lahko izkoriščali tudi za turistično rabo. Vendar nobena od teh idej ni bila popolnoma realizirana, saj so se nenehno pojavljali veliki pomisleki o posledicah tovrstnih posegov. Tako je kljub manjšim zaježitvenim in osuševalnim posegom narava Cerknškega jezera ohranila svoje prvotne značilnosti. Danes se vse bolj pojavlja težnja po vzpostavitvi prvotnega stanja jezera in njegove okolice. Predvsem se poudarja dejstvo, da so ljudje že tradicionalno navezani na muhasto naravo Cerknškega jezera, saj so se že stoletja učili prilagajati in sobivati z njegovimi značilnostmi (Smrekar 2002).

Cerknško jezero z okolico se od ostalih lokalitet razlikuje po nadpovprečno gosti poseljenosti njegove neposredne bližine. Na tem območju so zgoščene tudi številne dejavnosti, kot so kmetijstvo, industrija, promet in turizem.

Čeprav je bilo v preteklosti mnogo idej in teženj po gospodarskem izrabljanju jezera, je danes prebivalcem pomembno to, da sami odločajo o usodi jezera. Največja neusklajenost o rabi jezera je predvsem med kmeti in ribiči ter med kmeti samimi. Nekateri kmetje se nagibajo k izsuševanju jezera, ribiči in ostali kmetje pa k njegovi zaježitvi. Vendar je prebivalstvo večinoma skeptično do kakršnih koli posegov v jezero, zato se zavzemajo predvsem za njegovo ohranjanje in varovanje ter vzpostavlanje njegovega prvotnega stanja. Tako se porajajo ideje o ohranjanju sonaravnega kmetovanja in ribolova ter o razvoju naravoslovnega turizma (Schein 2002).

Slika 2: Cerknško jezero z okolico.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

## 4 Odnos prebivalcev do mokrišč

### 4.1 Temeljne značilnosti raziskave

V okviru raziskave smo izvedli sto anket (Polajnar 2007) in tako zajeli mnenje vsakega tridesetega prebivalca preučevanih naselij zavarovanih območij in njihovog zaledja. Skupno smo anketirali v treh občinah in dvanajstih naseljih. V občini Piran, kjer leži Krajinski park Sečoveljske soline, smo ankete izvajali v naseljih Seča, Parecag in Sečovlje. V občini Divača, kjer leži Regijski park Škocjanske jame, smo anketirali v naseljih Matavun, Škocjan in Betanja. V občini Cerknica, znotraj katere leži Cerknško jezero z okolico, smo izvajali ankete v naseljih Zelše, Dolenja vas, Dolenje jezero, Otok, Laze pri Gorenjem jezeru in na Gorenjem jezeru. Na območju Krajinskega parka Sečoveljske soline smo izvedli 42 anket, enako število anket na območju mokrišča Cerknško jezero z okolico, na območju Regijskega parka Škocjanske jame pa smo izvedli 16 anket.

V anketi je sodelovalo 17 % mladih, kar je bila tudi najslabše zastopana starostna skupina. Najbolj zastopana je bila skupina od 40 do 65 let (41 %) anketirancev. Starostni skupini od 25 do 40 let ter skupina nad 65 sta imeli enako število anketirancev (21 %). Glede na izobrazbo je imelo kar polovica anketirancev srednješolsko izobrazbo. Sledili so anketiranci z visoko in višjo šolo (18 %) ter tisti s poklicno izobrazbo (16 %). Anketirancev z dokončano osnovno šolo je bilo 13 % ter 3 % anketirancev brez formalne izobrazbe. Polovica anketirancev ni bila zaposlenih. Sledijo zaposleni v industriji ali proizvodni obrtni dejavnosti (17 %). V turizmu je zaposlenih 16 % anketirancev, desetina je zaposlenih v ostalih storitvenih dejavnostih. Le 6 % anketirancev pa je bilo zaposlenih v kvartarnih dejavnostih.

## 4.2 Rezultati in diskusija

Iz rezultatov anketiranja prebivalcev, ki živijo na območju zavarovanih območij, v katera so vključena preučevanja mokrišča, smo izluščili zanimive ugotovitve. Uvodoma nas je zanimalo njihovo poznavanje pojma mokrišče, pojma Ramsarska konvencija ter njenega namena. Nadalje pa so sledila vprašanja o življenju na zavarovanem območju, kjer ležijo preučevana mokrišča ter vprašanja o dejavnikih, ki najbolj ogrožajo mokrišča.

Na vseh treh obravnavanih območjih je bilo kar 78 % anketirancev seznanjenih s pojmom mokrišče, 22 % anketirancev pa pojma mokrišče ni poznalo. Med samimi območji ni bilo večjih razlik v poznavanju omenjenega pojma. Najbolj seznanjeni so bili na območju Škocjanskih jam sledi območje Sečoveljskih solin ter območje Cerkniskega jezera z okolico. Rezultati odražajo dejstvo, da daljše časovno obdobje delovanja zavarovanega območja, znotraj katerega leži mokrišče, vpliva na boljšo obveščenost prebivalstva o zavarovanem območju, saj se ljudje daljše časovno obdobje vključujejo v aktivnosti, ki se odvijajo v sklopu parka. Daljše časovno obdobje delovanja prav tako vpliva na boljšo organiziranost in poznavanje pristopa vključevanja prebivalcev v aktivnosti ter širše vključevanje v različne razvojne programe.

S primerjavo poznavanja pojma mokrišče glede na izobrazbo smo ugotovili, da tretjina anketirancev z nedokončano osnovno šolo pozna pojem mokrišče. V ta delež spadajo najmlajši anketiranci, ki se o pojmu mokrišče seznanjajo preko osnovne šole. Ostali anketiranci iz tega sklopa so starejši nad 65 let in pojma povečini niso poznali. Anketiranci s končano osnovno šolo so v najmanjši meri poznali pojem mokrišče. To skupino predstavljajo večinoma starejši prebivalci. Med anketiranci s triletno strokovno šolo je kar polovica anketirancev poznala pojem mokrišče. Ljudje z najvišjo izobrazbo, kamor spadajo anketiranci s končano srednjo, višjo ali visoko šolo, so skoraj vsi poznali pojem mokrišče. Iz navedenega lahko sklepamo, da se z višanjem izobrazbe anketirancev viša tudi poznavanje pojma mokrišče.

Slika 3: Poznavanje pojma mokrišče glede na izobrazbo.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

Na podlagi analize rezultatov ugotavljamo, da kar 77 % anketirancev ne pozna Ramsarske konvencije, v katero je vključeno zavarovano območje, v katerem živijo. O Ramsarski konvenciji so najbolj seznanjeni anketiranci na območju Škocjanskih jam, in sicer kar polovica vprašanih. Na območju Sečoveljskih solin je četrtnina prebivalcev seznanjenih z Ramsarsko konvencijo, na območju Cerkniskega jezera z okolico pa le 12 %. Vzrok za nepoznavanje konvencije na območju Cerkniskega jezera z okolico je v tem, da je bilo to območje vključeno v seznam Ramsarskih lokalitet šele konec leta 2006. Prav tako pa je relativno mlad tudi Notranjski regijski park, ki svojo dejavnost ozaveščanja prebivalcev šele začelja.

Na drugi strani pa je v Regijskem parku Škocjanske jame presenetljivo velik delež ljudi poznalo Ramsarsko konvencijo. Vzrok za navedeno je lahko izvajanje programa CEPA (*Communication, Education and Public Awareness*) Ramsarske konvencije ter izvajanje drugih izobraževanj in okroglih miz na temo mokrišč. Eden izmed vzrokov je lahko tudi v majhnem številu prebivalcev, ki živijo znotraj Regijskega parka Škocjanske jame ter najdaljšega obdobja obstoja in delovanja parka. Izobraževanje in medsebojno sodelovanje je bolj učinkovito in odmevno znotraj manjšega števila prebivalcev. Poudariti moramo, da so ljudje, ki živijo v Regijskem parku Škocjanske jame, z njim dobro povezani, mnogi izmed njih so naravovarstveniki ali drugače sodelujejo v dejavnostih parka.

Slika 4: Poznavanje Ramsarske konvencije glede na izobrazbo.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

Iz odgovorov na vprašanje o poznavanju konvencije glede na izobrazbo razberemo, da nihče od anketirancev z nedokončano osnovno šolo ni poznal navedenega. Izmed anketirancev s končano osnovno šolo je Ramsarsko konvencijo poznalo 7 %, izmed tistih s končano triletno strokovno šolo pa le 6 %. S konvencijo so bili najbolj seznanjeni tisti, s končano srednjo šolo 24 %, ter višjo ali visoko šolo 50 %. Znanje o Ramsarski konvenciji je izredno šibko predvsem pri slabše izobraženem prebivalstvu, ter s stopnjo izobrazbe le ta narašča. Vendar je glede na rezultate tudi pri najbolj izobraženih vedenje o konvenciji relativno majhno.

Slika 5: Glavni vir informacij o zavarovanem območju.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

Mediji so poglavitni vir informacij o zavarovanih območjih, v katerih ležijo mokrišča (44 %), sledi informacije s strani sokrajanov z 28 %, 15 % anketirancev največ informacij prejme s strani upravljavca zavarovanega območja, 13 % anketirancev pa od krajevne skupnosti. Tudi na območju Sečoveljskih solin ljudi najbolj informirajo mediji (43 % anketirancev), sledi informiranje s strani upravljavca zavarovanega območja z 27 %, 21 % anketirancev je informiranih s strani sokrajanov ter 9 % s strani krajevne skupnosti. Na območju Škocjanskih jam je prav tako največ ljudi informiranih s strani medijev 39 %, sledi informiranost s strani sokrajanov 31 %, ter s strani upravljavca zavarovanega območja in krajevne skupnosti 15 %. Na Cerknškem jezeru z okolico prevladuje informiranje s strani medijev 47 %, sledi informiranje s strani sokrajanov 34 %. Najmanj prebivalcev je informiranih s strani krajevnih skupnosti (15 %) ter s strani upravljavca zavarovanega območja 3 %. Iz navedenega lahko razberemo, da se na Cerknškem jezeru z okolico informiranje s strani upravljavca šele vzpostavlja, z razliko od Krajinskega parka Sečoveljskih solin in Regijskega parka Škocjanske jame, ki v okviru svojih dejavnosti že nekaj časa aktivno obveščata prebivalce.

Slika 6: Poglavitne omejitve, s katerimi se soočajo prebivalci zavarovanih območij.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

Omejitve pri življenju na zavarovanem območju čuti 35 % anketirancev. Največkrat so omenili specifične omejitve, za katere pa niso podali natančnih opisov. Na območju Cerknškega jezera z okolico so največkrat navajali omejevanje košnje v času gnezdenja ptice kosec ter omejevanje kmetijstva. Na območju Sečoveljskih solin so največkrat omenjali omejevanje dostopa do solin oziroma prepovedano prosto sprehajanje po solinah, prepovedan vstop z vozili in prepovedano vožnjo s plovili. Kar precejšnja omejitev, ki jo je omenilo skupno 21 % anketirancev, je prepovedana vožnja z motornimi vozili. Tukaj prednjači območje Sečoveljskih solin, kjer se je za ta odgovor odločilo 32 % anketirancev. Vzrok za negativno mnenje o omejevanju dostopa do solin z vozili je dejstvo, da so bile soline v preteklosti pomemben vir živalskih in rastlinskih vrst, ki so jih prebivalci uporabljali za različne namene. Prebivalci so se po zapuščenem delu solin neomejeno gibali, dostop z vozili je bil mogoč praktično povsod. Ob tem lahko navedemo negativni primer nabiranja solinskega rakca (endemit in izredno pomemben v prehranjevalni verigi ribjih mladice) za namene ribolova. Na območju Škocjanskih jam sta bili najpogostejši omejitvi prepovedano opravljanje gradbenih ali zemeljskih del, kar je omenilo 61,5 % anketirancev, ter prepovedana gradnja novih objektov, kar je pomenilo 38,5 % anketirancev.

Življenje na zavarovanem območju je prednost za 66 % anketirancev. Pri tem so poudarjali predvsem možnost razvoja turizma in z njim posredno povezanih gospodarskih panog. Za omenjeno dejstvo so se opredeljevali predvsem mlajši anketiranci. Starejši pa vidijo prednost v življenju v bližini neokrnjene narave in na čistemu zraku. Na drugi strani 21 % anketirancev meni, da jim je zavarovanje območja prineslo slabosti, kot je na primer veliko turistov, ki onesnažujejo njihovo območje. Na območju Cerknškega jezera z okolico slabosti vidijo v omejenem kmetovanju, na območju Sečoveljskih solin pa v omejenem dostopu do solin. Le 13 % anketirancev pa v tem ne vidi ne prednosti ne slabosti.

Slika 7: Mnenje prebivalstva o življenju na zavarovanem območju glede na izobrazbo.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

Mnenje prebivalstva o tem, da življenje v zavarovanih območjih predstavlja prednost, narašča z višanjem stopnje izobrazbe. Le 33 % tistih z nedokončano osnovno šolo meni, da je življenje na zavarovanem območju prednost. Takih je 46 % z osnovno šolo in 44 % s triletno strokovno šolo. Zanimiv je podatek, da se anketiranci s končano osnovno šolo bolj zavedajo prednosti življenja na zavarovanih območjih, kot tisti z končano triletno strokovno šolo. Razlog je v tem, da se večina tistih z nižjo izobrazbo ukvarja s kmetijstvom in živi v stiku z naravo. Tako se zaveda, da narava ni neizčrpajoč vir dobrin, namenjenih človeku, ampak jo je treba skrbno varovati in izkoriščati njene dobrine na sonaraven način. Tisti z višjo izobrazbo pa so večinoma zaposleni v industriji, kjer je zavedanje o pomenu varstva okolja najmanj prisotno. Anketiranci s srednjo šolo oziroma višjo ali visoko šolo doživljajo navedeno kot prednost v 76 % oziroma 78 %. Iz navedenega sklepamo, da se zavedanje prebivalstva o nujnosti varovanja narave oziroma zavedanju prednosti življenja v zavarovanih območjih z višanjem izobrazbe praviloma povečuje.

Slika 8: Preteklo spreminjanje mokrišč je pogosto vodilo v njihovo uničenje.  
Glej angleški del prispevka.



Največ anketirancev (46 %) meni, da je vzrok za preteklo izsuševanje mokrišč predvsem v primarni gospodarski vlogi izkoriščanja mokrišč, sledi mišljenje, da so bila mokrišča predrugačena zaradi neizobraženosti ljudi in nepoznavanja vloge mokrišč v naravovarstvenem pogledu (30 %). Na območju Sečoveljskih solin prevladuje mnenje o vplivu neizobraženosti ljudi s 36 %, sledi pa mišljenje o primarni gospodarski vlogi z 31 %. Podobne rezultate smo dobili tudi na območju Škocjanskih jam, kjer je 41 % ljudi odgovorilo, da so spremembe mokrišč posledica neizobraženosti ljudi. Na območju Škocjanskih jam je 41 % anketirancev ter na območju Sečoveljskih solin 24 % anketirancev navedlo še druge vzroke za spremembe. Pri odgovoru 'drugo' so na območju Škocjanskih jam anketiranci mišljenja, da ni bilo preteklega degradiranja mokrišča, na območju Sečoveljskih solin pa so poudarjali predvsem preteklo zanemarjanje in opuščanje solin. Na območju Cerkniskega jezera z okolico pa so anketiranci največkrat (72 %) omenjali predrugačenje mokrišč zaradi primarne gospodarske vloge izkoriščanja mokrišč ter neizobraženost prebivalcev (21 %). Pri tem so anketiranci poudarjali predvsem degradiranje Cerkniskega jezera z okolico zaradi želje po pridobivanju kmetijskih zemljišč.

Slika 9: Dejavnosti, ki najbolj ogrožajo mokrišča  
Glej angleški del prispevka.

Največ anketirancev, 33 %, meni, da onesnaževanje najbolj ogroža mokrišča, sledijo hidromelioracije za pridobivanje kmetijskih površin s 26 %. Na območju Sečoveljskih solin 45 % anketirancev meni, da onesnaževanje najbolj ogroža mokrišče, enako število anketirancev pa, da Sečoveljskih solin nič ne ogroža. Pri tem so nekateri poudarjali zanemarjanje in opuščanje solinarstva. Na območju Škocjanskih jam jih 75 % meni, da jih ogroža onesnaževanje. Pri tem so poudarjali preteklo onesnaževanje reke Reke s strani kemične in lesne industrije v Ilirski Bistrici. 19 % anketirancev pa je menilo, da Škocjanskih jam danes nič ne ogroža. Tudi na območju Cerkniskega jezera z okolico so bili odgovori raznoliki. Največ anketirancev, 51 %, meni, da so hidromelioracije tiste, ki najbolj ogrožajo mokrišče, sledita mnenja, da jezero najbolj ogrožata onesnaževanje in vodne akumulacije z enakim deležem odgovorov (14 %), 11 % anketirancev pa meni, da jezero najbolj ogroža kmetijstvo.

Anketiranci tudi menijo (39 %), da je zavarovana območja treba varovati in z njimi smotrno gospodariti, vendar po mnenju petine anketirancev na način, ki ne omejuje človeka pri zadovoljevanju njegovih potreb. Po mnenju anketirancev imajo zavarovana območja pomemben potencial za razvoj lokalnega turizma in za razvoj okoliških krajev. Za omenjeni odgovor se jih je namreč odločilo 41 %.

Na podlagi rezultatov anket vidimo, da se ljudje razmeroma dobro zavedajo pomena zavarovanja mokrišč. Izredno pozitivno nas je presenetilo dejstvo, da nobeden od anketirancev ni mnenja, da so zavarovana območja neprijetna ovira za življenje. Tako se nam ob zaključku analize anket poraja upanje, da se miselnost ljudi počasi spreminja in da se v prihodnosti obeta drugačno, v okoljevarstvenem pogledu pozitivnejše ravnanje z mokrišči in njihovimi ranljivimi ekosistemi.

## 5 Sklep

Mokrišča so območja izredne pokrajinske pestrosti, za katere je značilno prepletanje vodnih in kopenskih ekosistemov. Hkrati jih uvrščamo med območja z visoko raznovrstnostjo in med najbolj produktivne ekosisteme. V preteklosti so bila zaradi nepoznavanja vloge mokrišč v naravovarstvenem pogledu in nepoznavanja njihovih funkcij mnogokrat vključena v programe, ki so predvidevali njihovo izsuševanje in predrugačenje. Za varovanje in revitalizacijo degradiranih mokrišč je bila leta 1971 v kraju Ramsar (Iran) podpisana prva svetovna medvladna konvencija o ohranjanju in trajnostni rabi mokrišč, t. i. Ramsarska konvencija.

Slovenija je postala članica Ramsarske konvencije leta 1992. V okviru njenega izvajanja se skozi celotno obdobje v okviru okoljskih politik zavzemamo za varovanje, ohranjanje in preudarno rabo mokrišč. Do sedaj so bila na Seznam mokrišč mednarodnega pomena vključena tri mokrišča, in sicer leta 1993 Sečoveljske soline, leta 1999 Škocjanske jame in leta 2006 Cerknisko jezero z okolico. Vsa mokrišča, vključena v konvencijo, so edinstveni, stalno spreminjajoči se habitati ogroženih in redkih rastlinskih in živalskih vrst.

Članek ugotavlja ozaveščenost prebivalcev do varovanja mokrišč ter obravnava problematiko nezadostnega poznavanja vloge mokrišč v naravovarstvenem pomenu, kar pogosto vodi k neprimerni rabi mokrišč oziroma k njihovemu izginotju. Osnova za pridobitev informacij o ozaveščenosti prebivalcev do omenjenih lokalitet je bilo anketiranje znotraj zavarovanih območij, katerim pripadajo ramsarske lokalitete.

Na vseh treh preučevanih območjih so bili prebivalci dobro seznanjeni s pojmom mokrišče, nasprotno pa je pojem Ramsarska konvencija in njen namen, poznalo malo anketirancev. Poznavanje pojmov mokrišče in Ramsarska konvencija se z višanjem izobrazbe veča, prav tako pa se razlike o poznavanju omenjenih pojmov kažejo glede na lokacijo. Tako je bila med socialnimi filtri izobrazba tista, ki je najbolj nazorno prikazovala razlike v poznavanju mokrišč in Ramsarske konvencije. Glavni vir informacij o zavarovanih območjih so mediji in sokrajani, najmanj informacij pa prebivalci dobivajo neposredno od upravljavcev zavarovanih območij.

Analiza anket je pokazala, da tretjina prebivalcev čuti omejitve pri življenju na zavarovanem območju. Le ti so največkrat omenjali specifične omejitve, kot so omejevanje košnje v času gnezdenja ptice kosec ter omejevanje kmetijstva na Cerkniškem jezeru. Na območju Sečoveljskih solin so največkrat omenjali omejevanje dostopa do solin oziroma prepovedano prosto sprehanje po solinah, prepovedan vstop z vozili in prepovedano vožnjo s plovili. Na območju Škocjanskih jam pa sta bili najpogostejši omejitvi prepovedano opravljanje gradbenih ali zemeljskih del ter prepovedana gradnja novih objektov.

Anketiranci so zadovoljni z življenjem na zavarovanih območjih, saj povečini menijo, da jim tamkajšnje življenje predstavlja prednost. Manj zadovoljni so le na območju Cerkniškega jezera z okolico, kjer so izpostavljali omejitve pri kmetovanju. Mnenje prebivalcev o prednosti življenja na zavarovanem območju se povečuje z višanjem stopnje izobrazbe, na drugi strani pa se le ta zmanjšuje z višanjem starosti prebivalstva.

Po mnenju anketirancev na vseh treh območjih onesnaževanje najbolj ogroža mokrišča. Na območju Cerkniškega jezera z okolico so anketiranci sicer izpostavljali predvsem hidromelioracije za pridobivanje kmetijskih površin in vodne akumulacije. Velik delež prebivalcev na območju Sečoveljskih solin in Škocjanskih jam pa meni, da teh dveh mokrišč nič ne ogroža.

Večina anketirancev meni, da moramo mokrišča varovati in smotrno uporabljati. Po mnenju nekaterih je potrebno najti ustrezen način njihovega varovanja, ki ne omejuje človeka pri zadovoljenju njegovih potreb. Anketiranci nikakor ne menijo, da so zavarovana območja neprijetna ovira za življenje okoliških prebivalcev, saj so mokrišča tudi hkrati potencial za razvoj turizma. V manjši meri se se z navedenim strinjali na območju Cerkniškega jezera z okolico, kjer so navajali predvsem negativne posledice razvoja turizma.

V članku predpostavljeno dejstvo, da je ozaveščenost prebivalcev do varovanja mokrišč skromna ter da se prebivalci premalo zavedajo pomembnosti varovanja mokrišč in njihovih številnih funkcij, ki jih mokrišča opravljajo za človeka lahko delno potrdimo. Lahko pa potrdimo hipotezo, o tem, da se velike razlike odražajo v razlikah med izobrazbeno, starostno in poklicno strukturo anketirancev. Ugotovili smo, da se z višanjem stopnje izobrazbe in povečevanjem zaposlenosti v kvartarnih dejavnostih viša tudi stopnja ozaveščenosti prebivalcev o smotrnosti varovanja mokrišč, obratno pa se le ta s starostjo niža. Velike razlike so tudi med posameznimi zavarovanimi območji. Preučevana mokrišča namreč ležijo v treh različnih zavarovanih območjih, ki se med seboj razlikujejo po času delovanja, stopnji in vrsti zavarovanja, načinu delovanja, strategiji ozaveščanja prebivalcev ter vrsti drugi dejavnikov, ki vsekakor vplivajo na razlike v odnosu prebivalcev do mokrišč.

V prihodnosti bo treba vzpostaviti učinkovito izobraževanje in ozaveščanje prebivalcev o smotrnosti varovanja mokrišč. Pri tem je ključno predvsem medsebojno sodelovanje med prebivalci in upravljavci zavarovanih območij. Prebivalce je treba vključiti v aktivnosti, ki se izvajajo v zavarovanih območjih. Najboljši način za izboljšanje odnosa prebivalcev do mokrišč je organiziranje različnih izobraževanj v obliki delavnic v zavarovanih območjih, na šolah in drugih ustanovah. Izobraževanja lahko potekajo tudi preko brošur oziroma pisnih virov, prek predvajanih informativnih filmov, spletnih strani, in predstavljanjem primerov dobrih praks. Poleg izobraževanj bi bilo treba tudi organizirati različne prireditve (na primer ob dnevu mokrišč), izlete v okviru turističnih društev. Eden od načinov ozaveščanja prebivalcev je lahko tudi povezovanje zavarovanih območij z lokalnim gospodarstvom in lokalnimi skupnostmi. Tako bi lahko pri vseh ključnih delih na zavarovanih območjih sodelovalo tudi lokalno prebivalstvo.

Za učinkovitejše sodelovanje med zavarovanimi območji, znotraj katerih ležijo ramsarske lokalitete, bi bilo treba vzpostaviti tako imenovano 'mrežo ramsarskih lokalitet v Sloveniji'. Njen namen bi bilo medsebojno povezovanje in sodelovanje med zavarovanimi območji, lokalnimi skupnostmi, lokalnim prebivalstvom, državnimi ustanovami, raziskovalnimi organizacijami, šolami in drugimi zainteresiranimi partnerji. Izobraževanje lokalnega prebivalstva ter medsektorsko sodelovanje je ključ za spreobrnitev mišljenja ljudi o pomenu varovanja teh izredno občutljivih ekosistemov.

## 6 Literatura

Glej angleški del prispevka.