

LIFE RESTORE FOR MDD

UNESCO Five-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube

BJELOBRDSKA OXBOW LAKE



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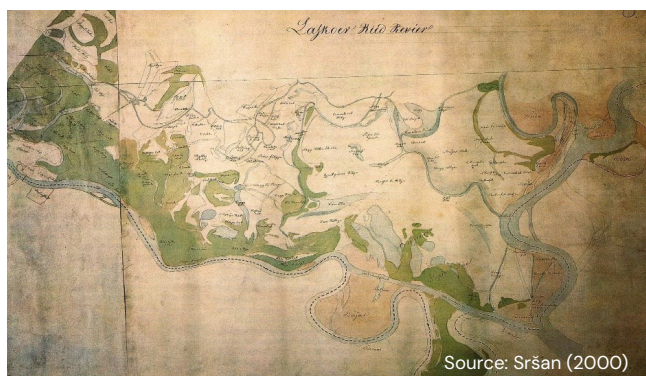
FACTSHEET

Bjelobrdaska Oxbow Lake is located in a floodplain along 12 km of the right bank of Drava River, upstream from the confluence with the Danube. It is the remnant of a former meander of Drava, which has been cut-off by regulation works in the beginning of 19th century.

It is part of the Regional Park "Mura-Drava", two areas of the ecological network Natura 2000 in Croatia: SPA HR1000016 Podunavlje i Donje Podravlje (under the Birds Directive), and SAC HR2000372 Dunav-Vukovar (under the Habitats Directive), and UNESCO Five-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube.

HARD FACTS – PLANNED ACTIONS

- Restoration of ~5.5 km (65 ha) of the water body.
- Hydrological improvement and enhancement of floodplain forest habitats on 193 ha
- Habitat and flora monitoring: assessment of floodplain forest habitat 91E0*, flora analysis, and invasive species risk.
- Fauna monitoring: inventory and status of invertebrates and vertebrates, focusing on endangered and Natura 2000 species.



Source: Sršan (2000)

Bjelobrdaska Oxbow on a map (around 1810), showing the newly excavated Drava riverbed from 1805 and 1807.

Current conditions:

- Up to 40% of the oxbow dries out during droughts.
- Water depth in the rest of the oxbow: 20–40 cm.
- Shallow eutrophic lake (high phosphorus and nitrogen levels).
- Excessive vegetation and oxygen depletion
- Fish die-offs recorded.



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PLANNED RESTORATION WORKS

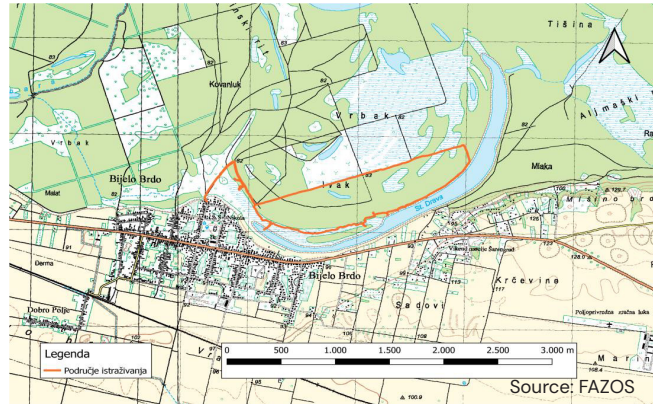
Overview:

- Budget: 3.2 million €
- Goal: to restore ecological integrity and hydrological balance of the oxbow.
- Expected results: improved hydrological connectivity and forest habitat structure on 193 ha of floodplain ecosystems.

Restoration works:

- Implementation period: 09/2024 – 09/2027
- Sediment removal: ~200,000 m³ (dredgers, excavators).
- Reopening barrier between Bjelobrdaska Oxbow and Malo Renovo channel.
- Restoration of hydrological flow from Drava to Danube through Aljmaški Rit (10 km) and ~5.5 km of the oxbow.

Status of floodplain forests and fauna of the Bjelobrdaska Oxbow Lake, affected by eutrophication and water loss, will be preserved and improved through planned restoration measures.



Map of the area along Bjelobrdaska Oxbow with the marked transect of biotic monitoring

BASELINE BIOTIC MONITORING ALONG THE BJELOBRDSKA OXBOW LAKE

Floodplain Forests (91E0* – *Salicion albae*)

Habitat types: White willow forests (*Salicetum albae*), White willow-poplar forests (*Salici-Populetum nigrae rubetosum caesii*).

Flora: 128 vascular species, 11 threatened species, 14 invasive alien species.

Birds: 60 species (≈16% of Croatia's total), 19 Natura 2000 target species, 6 Red List species, 5 woodpecker species.

Amphibians and reptiles: 5 frog species, 7 reptile species (pond turtle, lizards, snakes).

Mammals: 10 species, notable: otter (*Lutra lutra*), beaver (*Castor fiber*), common in floodplain forests: red deer, wild boar, marten, golden jackal, badger.



Grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

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