

Why is Mariborski otok so important that it needs to be protected?

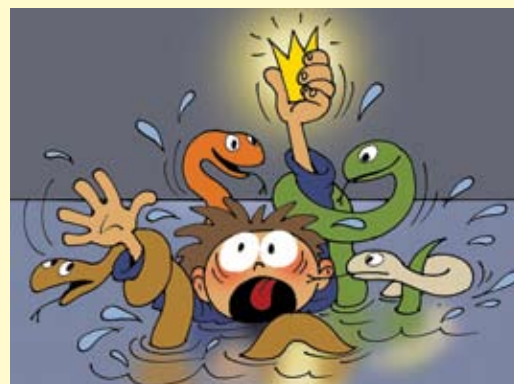
- Mariborski otok is a natural island on the river Drava, the largest river island in Slovenia and the only island without the typical gravelly soil.
- The list of plants, growing on the island, includes more than 330 plant species, which represents more than 10 % of all Slovenian plant species. Some of them are protected. This small area is covered in a variety of sub-pannonian and alpine vegetation.
- Approximately 70 bird species were recorded on the island, half of them also nest here.
- Mariborski otok is of vital importance for the drinking water supply. The water, pumped out on the island, is added to the groundwater of the pumping station Vrbanski plato, the most important source of drinking water in NE Slovenia, which supplies drinking water to 200.000 residents.
- The island's nature is protected by local and numerous state regulations, while the swimming pool area was registered and protected as a cultural monument.

Together we should strive for the conservation of nature on Mariborski otok!

The Fable of the Snake Queen

"The island was once full of snakes and their queen had a precious golden crown. The daughter of the Lord of the Manor from Limbuš gravely desired this crown. A young knight decided to fulfil her wish and was able to kill the snake queen and take her crown. However, as he decided to leave, all kinds of snakes wrapped themselves around him and pulled him in the water, where he drowned."

(Evening paper *Mariborski večernik »Jutra«*, 14th June 1930)



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Design and print: Grafiti studio
Circulation: 2000 copies
June 2013



Nature trail MARIBORSKI OTOK



The nature trail around the island Mariborski otok is appropriate for all, who want to know more about the nature of the island and its main characteristics: plants and animals, their wildlife habitats and the island's geological and geomorphologic characteristics.

The nature trail runs along the existing walking path


Nature Trail Scheme




**The Guide through the
Island's Nature**

Introduction of Stops along the Nature Trail

The following theme stops (green symbols) along the nature trail point to specific natural sites of the island.

 **Starting the Trail**
Information board

 **Ambassadors of Spring**
Multifaceted ground vegetation layer


On this spot, just before entering the mighty beech forest, we can marvel at many plants in the leafy ground vegetation layer, which is full of rare and endangered species (e.g. snowflakes, snowdrops, dogtooth violet, martagon lily, liverleaf and cyclamen), especially in the spring. We do not pick or damage plants. Help us protect the plants, animals and soil and do not walk off the paths.




Dogtooth violet



Liverleaf

 **Remains of the Past**
Geological and geomorphological characteristics

The solid rock beneath the soil consists of sandy marl that crosses the riverbed in the form of a sill. On this spot, where the River Drava lost its speed and power, the water deposited marl and sand sediments, which are covered by fertile humus soil. The process of island formation continues. Even today, at extremely high water, new sand deposits are formed.

 **Feathered Friends**
Forest and water birds


This spot is perfect for bird watching and listening as it is placed between the thick shrub layer, the high trees and within striking distance from the river. This area is appropriate for forest birds (e.g. chaffinch, blackcap, nuthatch, willow warbler) and water birds as well (e.g. coot, swan, mallard, dabchick and gull). Let us be quiet and alert listeners and observers.




Willow warbler



Coot

 **Nocturnal eccentrics**
Small mammals

Small mammals are the most difficult to observe, as they are very timid and they usually hide from us. This spot, where the forest ends and the strip of green begins, is most suitable for mammal-watching in the morning and in the evening, when many bats, squirrels, shrews, wood mice and hedgehogs appear.

 **Forest Giants**
Tree species

More than two thirds of the island are covered by a dense natural forest with beech, common oak, hornbeam and Scots pine trees. Although the island is a small area, there are several tree species with different ecological requirements that usually do not grow next to each other.




Hornbeam



Scots pine trees

The nature trail does not end with the last stop. On the contrary, the last stop represents the beginning of a new trail in exploring the island's nature, which is constantly moving and changing.

 **Colourful Flyers**
Insect diversity

The island is also home to a variety of insects and other invertebrates – there are many butterflies and dragonflies by the water, bugs crawl on the forest ground and spiders make their webs in the riparian vegetation. The diversity of the insect fauna is usually connected to the variety of the flora, the diversity of the wildlife habitat and the preservation of nature.



Dark green fritillary



Scarce chaser