

About us

Czech Union for Nature Conservation

Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP) is the greatest non-government organization in Czech Republic, associating people who are interested in cover of nature, countryside and maintenance of the clean environment. It focuses on the voluntary work for nature. There are excellent experts, scientecists, professional and amateurish protectors of nature and especially the people here who aren't careless about the environment, where they live, and who are resolved to do something for its improvement.

Our organization

22/07 basic organisation of Czech Union for Nature Conservation was established in 1984. Primarily it especially dealt with activity with teenagers and with arranging of camps for children. Since the end of eighties the care of free-living animals, especially predators and owls, has accrued.

Since 1998 our basic organization has dealt with the maintaining of the small protected areas, also ecologically significant un-protected areas, with the protection of amphibians, predators and owls, with problems in agriculture, with arranging of lectures and discussions for schools, interested groups and public. This year the ecological centre Taurus has begun to work, that offers original instruction programs about the environment and life on the Earth to schools. We also became the members of The Asssocation for Fair Trade and The Education in Underdeveloped Countries and we try to propagate and sell Fair Trade produces. In the frame of our organization there exists the circle of Little Protectors of Nature.

The members in 2005

This year we have 18 members. Their average age is 32 years. The organization hasn't still got any employee.

Several volunteers, beyond registered members, take part in our actions and support our activity, who don't want to become members of any organization because of lack of free time (and several volunteers dislike to became members of any organisation). We call these enthusiasts "non-member". One our friend and colleague thought up this expression, who even drew documents for non-members of his organization.

We co-operate with The Office of environment of Czech Republic, The Agency of nature and landscape protection of Czech Republic and The Regional office of Pilsen region, The Town office in Horšovský Týn, The Town office in Domažlice, The Communal office in Pařezov, The Communal office in Hostouň, The Agrarian fund of Czech Republic, The Museum of Chodsko, The Institut of applied ecology Daphne of Czech Republic, The Town cultural centre in Horšovský Týn, The Zoo-park Chomutov, The Zoo-park Vyškov, The Zoological and botanical garden in Pilsen, The Herpetological clinic in Hradec Králové, The organization Brontosaurus, The Ecological centre of capital Prague Toulcův dvůr, The Animal emergency in Pilsen.

Our activities

The experiment Minotaurus

The purpose of Minotaurus is an utilize of the primitive breeds and the non-traditional herbivorous species for maintaince of countryside and protected areas.

Every year we (and not only we) have problems, what shoud be done with the mowed grassy mass and lack of brigade-worker. The best solution is to let graze the stock on these areas. Unfortunately there are some limitations. The most used sheep and goats need qualitative winter feeding and boxing. The Beefy hilly beef and salers and other known resisted breeds have the high cost (60 000 crowns for one calf, adults two-times more).

Therefore we began look for different suitable animals, which would discharge our consecutive requirements: resistance against weather, ability to graze in all seasons, immunity against illnesses and parasites, the financial accessability, possibility of rearing on the grassland with the simple enclosure (the electrical pillar). We studied the available literature and consulted problems with Mr. Hutka who has big experience with raising of the big herbivorous stock in Canada. Then we decided to try yaks, domestic Hungarian Grey Cattle and regional species of sheep. The other suitable breeds or genera are for example Racka-sheep, the domestic buffalo, tarpan, European aurochs, Przewalskihorse. The purpose of this experiment was: chance of maintenace of countryside without mechanization and chemicals, reduction of cost for maintenace of countryside and protected areas, controlled backspase of big hooves into countryside (European aurochs, tarpan ...), reasonable preservation of primitive breeds of domestic animals Racka-sheep, Hungarian Grey Cattle...). These animals are the source of qualitative and absolutely ecological products - meet, milk ...

Our animals

At present we are rearing domestic yaks, one bull from Estonia, two heifers from Czech Republic and Germany, Hungarian Grey Cattle (bullock from the Zoo-park Vyškov and two heifers from the Zoo-park Chomutov). We prepare animals (except for the bull of yak which came at us as adult) for future grass in biologically valuable areas. They will go to these localities by their own feet, therefore they must be accustomed to grass. When they will be physicaly adult, they will carry all provender on their backs. At present we are improving leading, all the four heifers can be simultaneously led by one person. They respect a pillar even it is not connected to the electricity. We were worried if yaks don't suffer by hot summer and exterior parasites. They haven't gone into the shade not even during the noon and they have rather "fried" themselves in the centre of grassland. Except for absolute modesty in feed, yaks surprised us because of minimal consumption of water (6 litres per head). Yaks are very intelligent for domestication and training, they aren't aggressive, they don't scare. Their modesty is so extreme, that they refuse whatever tidbits (old bread, rolls, apples, beet, carrot, sponge-cakes, grit). However Hungarian cows would be able to climb even on the tree for tidbit, obviously they hold this rule: Not even chicken pows gratis. They test every visitor by the dissimulation of the attack. Opposite yaks they are much more dashing. The Hungarian bullock won't be used for rearing but as colleague for the yak bullock. In 2004 we unfortunately didn't gain a drove of the regional species of sheep which names „valaška" in Czech (there live 100 heards around the world), not even a drove of Racka-sheep (they are only three droves in Czech Republic). We have bought from the

ecological farm Marwin in Šumperk 10 lambs (females) of breed ennoblement „valaška“. In the summer 2005 we have bought a ram of original „valaška“, in the end of October he unfortunately took a tetanus and he had to be destroyed. At present we're acting about another one. P.S.: In the autumn the little yak was born.

Hungarian Grey Cattle (*Bos taurus*) It is the medium-sized breed, old 2000 years. Bulls are minimally 150 cm high, their weight is 800 kg. They are coloured dark on the head and the frontal part of body, the rest of body is light grey. Females are 140 cm high and 500 kg weight. They are clearly white, except for surroundings of mucous membranes. These modest and resistant animals are used especially for work.

The natural monument (NM) Meadow by Šnajberk pond

We have been mowing the part of this monument for several years. It is only handiwork in respect of the below-soaking ground. The mowed grass is stored in the compost out of NM. The characteristic genera are *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Orchis majalis*, *Comarum palustre* oder *Scorzonera humilis*. These plants don't like the shadow, therefore we cut sweepy wood here four years ago. The big amount of amphibians appear here, who go across main road into ponds and pools on the other side during season of reproduction. A lot of these animals died under the wheels of cars. It isn't possible to install carriable barriers in respect of dangerous of vandalism on these paths for pedestrians and cyclists. We dug a few of pools, which should serve as the instead for reproduction. Unfortunately the aren't used.

The natural monument Meadow by Old Iron-mill

Mr. Janča was scything and drying hay for his two cows on this 2 ha- large meadow for more than fifty years. We evaluate it as an admirable achievement. This various vegetable association has survived up to this days just thanks to him. The confirmed regular scything prevented from succesion of overgrowing by sweepy wood and preserved genera of plants which have almost vanished else - e.g. *Platanthera bifolia*, *Orchis majalis*, *Scorzonera humilis*, *Senecio aquatikus*, *Eriophorum angustifolium*... We try to continue in work of Mr. Janča, though by using cutting-machines. We hang the part of the mowed grass into driers, the rest we unfortunately throw out into the compost.

The project Accipiter

We develope and make shying instruments which should daunt the *Accipiter gentilis* from off attacks on pets. In 2002 we tested shying instruments made from mirrrors in our raising. There were frequent attacks, especially in the season of the hawk nesting, on this area. Since installation there hasn't been observed any attack in distance 300 m from these instruments. In the spring 2003 we made 390 these shying instruments of various kinds. We contacted 57 breeders who had had problems with regular attacks of hawks in their raisings. We had offered them shying instruments free of charge for testing and then we requested about filling of the enrolment card and giving information about functionality of these instruments. Finally shying instruments were hung at 37 places. Half a year after installation we gained consequent results: Five breeders didn't send us any information. In one cause results can't be proved due to lax of breeder - the instruments fell off because of careless installation by breeder and they weren't

hung again. Allegedly a hawk has again appeared after their falling. The shying instruments were just partly effective or ineffective at four places (two these places were pheasantries), 27 places have been without attack of a hawk. Results were animating, therefore we were curious, what effectiveness of these instruments will be in the season of winter lack of the aliment and during nesting of hawks. This year in the autumn we had again asked breeders by letter but only seven of them sended the answer. All these breeders have still installed instruments and are satisfied with them (except for one breeder). In 2004 we gave sets of the shying instruments to two new breeders and they have been effective to this time.

The Štítary hill

We have been taking care of southern part of significant element of surroundings and regional bio-centre The Štítary hill. It is biologicaly and historicaly significant locality where xerothermic lawns, designed dry tap-dances, too, have been preserved as grasslands thanks to confirmed cutting of forest since prehistoric dates and thanks to millenium utilizing of ecological system. The xerothermic lawns and extensive grasslands are largely overgrown by shrubs today. The southern rocky slope is the worstest area according to experts. We were liquidating extended sweeps here in winters 1999 - 2003. It is physicaly very difficult activity. It isn't easy to work with power saw or rotary scrub-slasher on rocky slopes even apt 60 degrees. We keep all gained wood at the bottom of hill according to adjustment with experts because it isn't possible to sear it safely. This bulwark is very utilized by plenty of bird kinds as cover against enemy and as a safe place for making of nests. It is common that bare cutting of sweepy wood isn't sufficient because these trees and shrubs intesively grow repeatedly. Therefore we begun on stumped area an extensive graze of goats and sheep in 2003. We are going to continue in graze in following years. In the winter 2005 we cut place for conducting of pillar for Mr. Pikhart who grazes sheep and heifers on the less proned land. In March 2005 we stumped acacias on a cliff above The old mill and we cut the most of blackthorns which hadn't been grazed. Typical thermophilous plants begin to grow on the cut grazed areas fast again and plenty of insect kinds enhances here. We co-operate with The town office Horšovský Týn, with The agency of nature and countryside cover of Czech Republic and Mr. Martin Horal.

History of The Štítary hill

The Štítary hill is significant cultural monument - the largest western Bohemian Slavonic oppidum, which has an area of 13 ha. The centre of the fort was protected by three bands of huge bulwarks, which are well visible till today. The greatest prosperity of this tribal oppidum was in the second half of the nines and the first half of the tens. Already in 1870 Czech historian M. Kolář visited and described Štítary. In 1875 bone burials were found next to the Saint Lawrence's church, located in the oppidum, dating into the 11th century. This oppidum was settled three times according to the investigation. The oldest settlement began along year 800 and continued to 850. Then the most intensive development of settlement begins till 950, when the utilize of oppidum quickly decreases and preserves only sporadically. At this time it is located only around a church where shivers from the 13th century were found, too. The Saint Lawrence's church with the cemetery stands on the highest place, a younger cemetery is located any lower. The building of the church, constructed on emeritus oppidum, is minimally from the half of the 13th century. The church was very much reconstructed in the 14th century. First scriptural mentions about the church come from the 14th century only. Cast-iron crucifixes and sculptures are preserved on the cemetery, made in iron-works in the close Ferdinand's valley.

There is a memorial, devoted to victims of parish in Štítary, behind the church from The first world war.

The dry tap-dances of the Štítary hill

These thermophilous plants appear in plenty here: grasses (e.g. *B. Koeleria macrantha*, *Carex caryophylla* und *Poa angustifolia*); herbs (e.g. *Verbascum lychnitis*, *Agrimonia eupatoria*, *Ajuga genevensis* und *Scleranthus perennis*). The extensive grazing, reflexing an activity of man, has caused an appearance of these kinds of plants: e.g. *Cynoglossum officinale*, *Cardaria draba*, *Inula conyza* und *Anchusa officialis*. The xerothermic lawns and the extensive grasslands are largely overgrown by shrubs today that causes their destruction. Sweepy wood is especially blackthorns, wild-roses, whitethorns and euonymus. The abundant appearance of berberry in plenty is exceptional, regionally very precious among shrubs here. The Štítary hill is a significant locality because of an appearance of precious thermophilous animals as well. Grass-snake and other vertebrata have been observed here, it is species very sensitive on civilization alterations of environment; wild swines influence its amount negatively, which find calm cover in growth of spines and May bushes. Kinds of ground-beetle (precious in Czech Republic) appear in this locality. They are typical for dry till very dry sites without shade. Next kinds of nosatců etc. Displacement of sweepy wood (especially rose acacia, blackthorn) and extensive graze on the most valuable areas are condition of surviving of this flora and fauna.

The graze of goats and sheep on the Štítary hill

Since 2003 we graze goats and sheep on this locality. The grassland is fenced by pillar because animals shouldn't bum in non-synoptical landscape. The herd grazes under ceaseless check of voluntary herdsman. The basis is built on holdings of Mr. Horal by The Radbuza river. Here is a night barrier for animals where they have got water and salt. At a distance herdsman live in teepee. The grazing begins in daybreak, the herd grazes till about 11 a.m. Then it returns into the night barrier to drink and have a rest in shadow. It starts grazing at

4 p.m. again and continues till dusk here. Neither goats or sheep have any problem with rocky landscape. The animals prefer shrubs and their browse, they eat herbage and various grasses even last time.

The Pařezov hill

This significant element of surroundings is formed by drier barrens with strewed sweepy wood. At past they were being utilized as grasslands. It is a locality with the appearance of precious and protected kinds of plants (*Orchis morio*, *Platanthera bifolia*, *Digitalis grandiflora*, *Polygala vulgaris*, *Ononis repens*) and insect (*Iphiclides podalirius*, *Cicindela campestris*, *Opatrum sabulosum*, *Xylocopa* sp., *Bombus* sp.). Nobody has taken care of holdings already for a few years, step by step they began to overgrow by sweepy wood and precious kinds of plants began to vanish. In 2003 we cleaned majority of holdings from sweepy wood thanks to backing of town Domažlice. We started extensive grazing of sheep and goats here at the beginning of the summer 2004 because this activity helps against overgrowing of ground. At the beginning of March 2005 we cleaned grasslands from woody remains of browse which couldn't be eaten by animals. The grazing run over in this year, too. We co-operate with The communal office Pařezov, The town office Domažlice, The agency of nature and countryside cover of Czech Republic and with owners of grasslands.

The Mělnice fort

We started taking care of this historically and biologically significant locality three years ago. The well fair fort is composed of oval acropolis, surrounded by 3 meters deep dike and steep bulwark. The fort arose in the half of the 13rd century according to results of archaeological exploration and it was destroyed by blaze already in the end of the 13rd century. At past sheep were grazing here, therefore various association of grasses and herbs has preserved. The amount of various kinds of insect serves as aliment for a lot of tiny birds. The fort was overgrowing by sweepy greenness after ending of graze, especially by barches and prickles. A dike between bulwarks served as an ideally hidden illegal dump. In 2003 the graze of goats and sheep run over in this locality. In the spring 2004 we carved and cleaned the western part of the fort on approbation. On a carved flat the xerothermic lawns appeared again and a generic variety of grasses and plants enhanced. In the summer 2004 goats, sheep, yaks and Hungarian Grey cattle clentch were grazing here in order to avoid growing of carved shrubs. In the autumn 2004 we stumped and seared sweepy wood on majority of area and finished chares of illegal dump thanks to huge help of our colleagues from ČSOP Trója. On last March Saturday 2005 we finished fell of sweeps and chares of fort, again together with friends from Trója. The next maintaining will be provided by our four-footed "choppers". The commune Hostouň and The agency of nature and countryside cover of Czech Republic participate in this action, too.

The frog Anička

We record an appearance of amphibians in division Domažlice. We are trying to make wide public take part in this action by the medium of articles in regional newspaper and transmissions. The project Anička was realized in 2003 as the part of programme of The Czech association protectors of nature: The cover of bio-variety. It had backing of The ministry of environment of Czech Republic. We charted 242 localities and recorded an appearance of 15 kinds of amphibians. A lot of volunteers took part in this action. Mr. Roman Rozínek (he works in The herperological clinic in Hradec Králové) has been a great reliance for us since the beginning of mapping in 2000: We gave him information about localities, where we recorded an appearance of genera, mentioned in Narura 2000, for following processing.

The band marking of borders of small protected areas

In 2003 we renewed band marking of borders of following natural monuments and natural reservations per order of The regional office of Pilsen region: Bystřice, Červený vrch, Drahotínský les, Herštýn, Hora, Jezvinec, Malý Zvon, Mlýneček, Mutěňínský lom, Nad Hutí, Německá hora, Netřeb, Orlovická hora, Pleš, Salka, Skalky na Sádku, Sokolova vyhlídka, Starý Hirštejn, Svatý Bernard, Hvožd'anská louka a Dlouhý vrch. We renewed band marking of 30 km long border. This year we made and installed 16 woody racks for marking of borders of The natural parks Sedmihoří and Zelenov.

We made and hang up booths for tiny singing-birds, owls and kestrels.

We arrange meetings, exhibitions and lectures about nature, environment, travelling, universe and history for schools and public.

The ecological centre

We are interested in the ecological education long term, therefore in this year we have founded The ecological centre Taurus. This centre tenders instruction programs about nature and protection of environment and history of region to schools and parties concerned (Interested groups??). The instruction programs about animals are completed by an alive exhibition, e.g. we introduce permanently handicapped kestrel, buzzard and owl during the program The predators and owls. The mysterious world of insect appries pupils of leaf insects, spectre insects, stick insects, black beetles, etc. Besides we prepare the instruction program about primitive breeds of domestic animals with alive representatives of individual breeds. This program is completed by demonstrations of seasonal agrarian works with draught cattle: ploughing, harrowing, sowing, cutting, tossing of hay, harvest of corn. The prepared instruction programs are focused in pupils of basic schools and in students of high schools. In future we want to offer our programs to kindergartens, too. We arrange exhibitions for wide public, e. g. on November the exhibition of photographies called Trees took place in Horšovský Týn. On November the lecture about Japan and talking about The Štítary hill took place, the action making of booths has taken place on the square in Domažlice. We prepare "Fair breakfasts" (tasting of FAIR TRADE produces and their promotion) for high schools. Besides we offer guidance especially on field of environment (what detergents to use, what to do with dangerous scrap, we can help to orientate in legislative, concerning of cover nature etc.) Everyone, who needs an advise, can visit us in the office of the eco-centre on The peace square in Domažlice or call or write e-mail.

FAIR TRADE

We have been interested in the idea of Fair business on this year's international market of non-gaining organizations "NGO-market" in Prague. We are interested in FAIR TRADE because of many reasons - it is an acquisition for environment, it enables to handicapped little growers and craftsmen to help theirselves by their work and by their skills, by claused origin of goods etc. They needn't to wait for an abroad help passive. In the spring we became the members of The association for FAIR TRADE and the education in underdeveloped countries. By then we sell especially FAIR TRADE coffee, cocoa, tea and chocolate. We spread an offering of workmanlike fabrics.

The circle of little nature protectors

In the beginning of the year 2005 The circle of little nature protectors (MOP) arose as a component of our basic organization. Its name is KDOVÍCI. At present it has 24 members. It functions as a component of the basic school in Hostouň, the leader of this organization is Mgr. Gabriela Doležalová. In January of this year we founded MOPíky and children decided to call them KDOVÍCI. These children have met each other regularly every week from the beginning of school year 2003 - 2004 in The apiculture circle. So we have got a small apiary at school. We began with one group of bees and this year we have added the second one. The children learn morphology of bees and cognize their life. Of course, the practical activity doesn't lack - work with bees, check of fetus, treatment against mites, adding of a new mother, extraction of honey, feeding etc. The president of the local basic organization of The Czech federation of men interested in apiculture - Mr. Forst - has been helping us with bees.

We have "the ZOO - corner" at school and we take care of it, too. It was founded in 2002 altogether innocently. It began by fish in one aquarium, then in the second one. Of course,

the fish hadn't been enough for us, therefore hamsters accrued at them. Everything was in our classroom. However, this space began to be completely insufficient betimes. So we had to ask our director Rauchová for a place for our enlarging fauna. She had given us a room which we immediately cleared, brought old benches and suddenly we had a lot of place for our animals. Nowadays we have got not only gnawings but even birds and vertebraeless.

We hadn't assorted rubbish in our school before, therefore we decided to make containers for assorting of rubbish for paper, glass and plastic. We hope the other schoolmates will learn to throw rubbish correctly to these three containers. We have made wall-newspaper about assorting of rubbish, too.

We take care of flora in our school campus. We try to preserve clean environs of our school. We make biological outings, too etc. In the winter we make feeders for birds and we feed them.

This year we have got the next room, too and it is our club-room.

Translation by Lucka