Dear colleagues, partners and volunteers,

As the end of the year comes on all of us as people, organizations and institutions make review of our activities. I’m impressed by the data presented in your report for 2016, realizing that significant part of the work of the Wildlife rescue center is the veterinary medical care, as well as the information-educational activities.

Declared for Rescue center in accordance with the Biodiversity act and Ordinance RD 242/14.03.2003 of the minister of environment and waters, today the center is the only place in the urban environment, offering care and calmness for thousands of birds and wild animals. For us – the employees of RIEW – Stara Zagora it is an advantage that the center is situated here – in the town of the lime-trees. Our good communication and the mutual cooperation with your team offer us an ability to timely and adequately respond to the purposes of the conservation of many species of animals. For over twenty years of hard and consecutive work you have managed to form a great, balanced team of veterinarians and biologists, with enormous volunteer network and followers. Admirations for the hard work you have done for the renovation and reconstruction of the facilities of the Rescue center.

I wish you to be healthy, to inspire with knowledge and enthusiasm and to hand down your experience to more and more adolescents – our future environmentalists!

Sincerely,
Dr. Petrua Papazova
Director of RIEW – Stara Zagora

---

**WILDLIFE REHABILITATION AND BREEDING CENTRE GREEN BALKANS ANNUAL REPORT 2015**

**ADMISSION Signals**

Every year the signals in the Rescue Centre become more numerous and more diverse. We are happy that the society is seeking help from us and at the same time we realize how in fact helpless we are sometimes. Because the signals addressed to us are not only for wild animals in distress, but also for every kind of environmental violations, pets in distress, disorders in the urban environment. For all these cases our team tries really hard to help.

**Admission of patients**

There were 1331 reported patients in total in the Rescue Centre in 2016. Part of them were wild animals, admitted for rehabilitation, others were birds, hatched in our aviaries and third were a part of breeding and reintroduction programmes.
Received animals from all over the country – by sites of finding

In regard to the places of admission this year again most of the patients came from RIEW Stara Zagora, followed by Plovdiv and Burgas. This is reasonable to a certain extent, in view of the location of the Centre, the availability of an office in Plovdiv and the rich biodiversity and our active work in Burgas and the region.

In regard to contribution for admission of our wild patients, the tendency from the last year is kept, as the biggest number was that of patients admitted thanks to the assistance of citizens, logically followed by RIEWS and staff of Green Balkans.

A list of all entities, companies and institutions which have assisted the transport of patients to the Wildlife Rescue Centre in 2015 can be found at: www.greenbalkans-wrbc.org

Animals, sent by various institutions and private entities

In regard to contribution for admission of our wild patients, the tendency from the last year is kept, as the biggest number was that of patients admitted thanks to the assistance of citizens, logically followed by RIEWS and staff of Green Balkans.

A list of all entities, companies and institutions which have assisted the transport of patients to the Wildlife Rescue Centre in 2015 can be found at: www.greenbalkans-wrbc.org

Dynamics of the admitted patients

The number of admitted patients has the same dynamics form as the years before. The strongest period in regard to the number of patients was June. This is so because of the breeding season of the birds. As in this period we admit not only lots of babies, wild orphans, but also most of the birds in our aviaries breed.

Summary of the results of the activity of the Rescue Centre for the period 1992–2016
Reason for admission

The chicks fallen from their nests was the biggest part of the patients admitted in the Centre this year. And this makes sense, because of the peak of admission of patients during the summer months. Second were the unknown reasons, because our patients are wild animals and rarely there are witnesses of the reasons that brought them to us. Fortunately, the number of chicks hatched in the Centre increased and they were on third place, as you can see on the scheme.

Condition at admission

The largest number of patients admitted in 2016 arrived in satisfactory condition, as a logical consequence of the reasons for their admission. After them came those with fractures and the exhausted ones, which were the second most often conditions.

TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION

Veterinary care

Undoubtedly, one of the most important points in the work of the Rescue Centre is the veterinary medical activity. In the past year our team of veterinaries admitted a total of 215 patients with different fractures. 30 of them were released back into the wild, 12 were redirected to different zoos, 22 remained to be bred in aviaries of the Centre, 48 were euthanized and for 112 patients, unfortunately, the stay in the Centre was with fatal outcome.

Work in the baby sector

The work in the baby sector, despite being seasonal, takes time and is labor-intensive. That is why seasonal workers help us during the summer. No small merit for the raising of the orphan babies have the foster parents – Common Kestrels, Little Owls, Barn Owls.

In the past year we admitted a total of 548 wild orphans in the Rescue Centre. 309 of them were released into wild, 192 died, 26 were euthanized and 21 remained for captive breeding.

Foster parents

A good and convenient way for raising wild babies is foster care. That is why we maintain pairs of the most often admitted orphans in the Centre – Common Kestrels, Little Owls, Barn Owls. Wild families of swallows and other songbirds also serve as foster parents, raising the chicks we put in their nests. Growing up under the care of parents from the same species, the chicks have much greater chance to survive into the wild.
RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE RESCUE CENTRE

In terms of the results from our activity, we can boldly say that 2016 was a very successful year. We kept on following our principles and fighting to the end for each patient of the Centre. Fortunately, the graphic shows better results than the previous 2015 for the number of released patients and a decrease in the number of the fatal outcomes and the euthanized animals.

Patients by treatment outcome 2016

In addition to the reintroduction programs of species gone extinct other birds are also bred in the Centre like Barn Owls, Little Owls and Common Kestrels. They are representatives of the most often orphaned bird species admitted in the baby room and they raise wild chicks that have remained without parents together with their own.

In the past year the Barn Owls hatched 3 chicks, the Little Owls - 7 and raised 5 orphans and 4 pairs of Common Kestrels hatched a total of 13 own chicks and raised 21 wild ones.
PROGRAMS FOR REINTRODUCTION OF SPECIES GONE EXTINCT

**Saker Falcon**

In 2016 again we kept on working for the "Saker Falcon reintroduction in Bulgaria" project. In the ten breeding cages that we have there are 8 pairs which raised a total of 9 chicks. 20 young birds were released in the preliminarily prepared adaptation aviaries, as some of the chicks were bought and others were donated to the project by Záchranná stanice pro zraněné živočichy na Huslíku, Czech Republic and the "Science for the nature" foundation.

**Lesser Kestrel**

2016 was the most successful year for breeding of the Lesser Kestrel (Falco naumanni) and the "Lesser Kestrel recovery" LIFE11 NAT/BG/360 project. The breeding stock of Lesser Kestrels in the Rescue Centre – 53 birds in total formed 20 pairs and successfully raised 73 chicks. 63 of them were released into the wild from the Lesser Kestrel release and adaptation module in the village of Levka.

**Vultures**

In the middle of 2016 the "Bright future for Black Vulture" LIFE14 NAT/BG/649 project was officially launched. In the framework of the project the aviaries, which will be home of the vultures in the Centre, were reconstructed. We admitted 15 Griffon Vultures in the clinic, most of them wild birds in distress. We also formed a pair of Black Vultures, which we hope will start breeding soon.

CAMPAIGNS

**Education and Public Awareness Campaigns**

In 2016 more than 9 education and public awareness campaigns were realized, some of them in the Rescue Centre, others outside of it. Most of the participants were kids and students. We also took part in many eco festivals and green events on which we presented the activities of the Rescue Centre and Green Balkans.

**Visits to the Rescue Center**

In the past year the Centre was visited by little less than 1800 people. This number is twice less than the previous years, because the spring/summer season, which is preferred by the visitors, coincided with the major reconstruction works in the Centre and visitors were temporarily not allowed.

**Donation Campaigns**

In 2016 one of the main donation campaigns in the Centre was the adoption programme. In addition to that we developed the payroll giving, as well as the SMS campaign of the Centre.

We would like to thank our donors and adopters: Klima D LTD, Yuliana Georgieva, Gergana Brezul, Zhivka Stefanova, M. D. Koleva, Kalina Chakarova, Lidiya Yordanova, M. Radeva, Valentina Ivanova, Yuliana Georgieva, Petar Ivanov, Pavlina S. Petkova, Tonka Stoyanova, Liubo and Iliya Manchevi, Plamen Nenchev, Boryana Zheleva, Georgi Dinev Ivanov, Zdravko Plamenov Popov, Elena Shopova, Milen Stayanov, Pavlina Petkova, Georgi Savel, Elka Zapryanova Gigileva, Kosta Panchev, Simona Ivanova, Dessislava Keremidchieva, Iliya Mancheva, Petka Doncheva, Veska Dereva, Petka Milcheva, Silvia Stancheva, Ralitsa Mateva, Veselka Rankova, Simon Getov, Nina Velkova, Lazar Veneлин Petrunov, the employees of Contour Global Maritsa East 3 as well as to all the visitors and all those who supported the SMS donation campaign.

**Visits to the Rescue Center**

In the past year the Centre was visited by little less than 1800 people. This number is twice less than the previous years, because the spring/summer season, which is preferred by the visitors, coincided with the major reconstruction works in the Centre and visitors were temporarily not allowed.
FACILITIES, CONSTRUCTION, AND REPAIRS

In 2016 the visitor corner, the food preparation room, the kitchen for the staff and the storage facilities of the Rescue Centre were reconstructed. A large freezer premise was built for storage of food, following a completely innovative and environmentally friendly model.

The aviaries of the vultures were reconstructed as well and new nest platforms and video surveillance were installed.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

At the end of 2016 in the Rescue Centre there are 149 security and behavior observation cameras. All the main communication nodes in the cages are connected with an optical cable, which can give a speed up to 10,000 mbit/sec. At present, the overall assessment of the length of the cables accounts to a total of about 3 – 4 km. The total amount of the communication equipment comes up to some 54,000 BGN.

TRAININGS AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In the summer two volunteers, students in veterinary medicine from Romania, visited the Centre and actively participated in our work for one month. Trainings rendering first aid to animals in distress were organized in the four Professional schools of veterinary medicine, preparing future veterinary specialists in Stara Zagora, Lovech, Dobrich and Kostinbrod.

FIELD WORK

In addition to the work on the territory of the Centre our team is very often on field – on the slopes of the Sakar Mountains in search of Lesser Kestrels and wild horses, in the lowlands of Trakia looking after Saker Falcons, on the cliffs of the Balkan Mountains near the vultures aviaries in “Sinite kamani” Nature park and “Central Balkan” National park, on a yacht in the Black sea chasing dolphins, on the slopes of the East Rhodopes Mountains feeding the vultures… we are always there, side by side with the rest of our colleagues from Green Balkans and the volunteers.

VOLUNTEERING

The Rescue Centre wouldn’t exist and been surviving for more than 20 years without its volunteers. All those who donate their free time and load the team with their will, perseverance and dedication. We would like to thank them. Thank you for your presence and for being with us.

Nikolai Ivanov, Trayan Vasilev, David Valchev, Petar Petrov, Tsutomila Tsanina, Yana Andonova, Iliyan Ivanov, Dimitar Dimitrov, Steliana Stamova, Dimitar Ivanov, Danail Hristov, Lili Ivanov, Egor Vitiuk, Antoniya Mitieva, Alex Brous, Ruta Liva, Laura Hesog, Stefan Penev, Stefan Peev, Antonii Gochev, Martin Slavchev, Vasil Mihailov, Stelyan Yabalkarov, Dimitar Kolev, Kristian Rangelov, Danail Kolev, Vanya Kehayova, Martin Ivanon, Konstantin Nikolov, Stilyan Dimitor, Ana Georgieva, Samuil Petrov, Momchil Kasiimirov, Aleksandra Svetoslavova, Magdalena Yovcheva, Elitsa Argirova, Stanislav Aleksov, Tsvetomir Marinov, Daniel Hristov, Dimitar Ivanov, Tsvetan Terziski, Lyuboslav Trifonov, Chavdar Ibrashimov, Georgi Zhelev, Boshidir Dzhapunov, Atanas Iurukov, Teodor Teodorov, Asen Firdrin, Stanislav Aleksov, Zdravko Kuzmanov, Yoanna Ivanova, Mihaela Krumova, Tosho Todorov, Kalina Borisova, the teams of Contour Global Matitsa East 3 and Overgaz Stara Zagora.
MEDIA ABOUT US

The Rescue Centre keeps on being a curious theme for Bulgarian media. In the past year we had over 80 media appearances in different local and national media. We greatly appreciate media attention, which helps us promote the environmental idea among the society for the sake of our common future.

Donors and Partners

We express our sincere gratitude to our partners:

- Ministry of Environment and Water (MDEW)
- Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water – Stara Zagora
- Trakia University – Stara Zagora
- Vocational High School of Veterinary Medicine – Stara Zagora
- INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE CONSULTANTS Ltd. (UK)
- Bulgarian Charities Aid Foundation (BCAF)
- INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE CONSULTANTS Ltd. (UK)
- Frankfurt Zoological Society (Germany)
- Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU)
- LIFE+ financial instrument of the European Community (EU)
- Mohamed bin Zayed SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Agency

Funding

Costs incurred by the Rescue Center in 2016:

- Food and supplements: 22,648 BGN (1,277 €)
- Equipment: 40,513 BGN (1,301 €)
- Infrastructure development: 79,359 BGN (3,014 €)
- Basic maintenance & guard: 13%
- Transport costs: 3%
- Administrative costs: 6%
- Veterinary service: 6%
- Staff and external experts: 17%

Incomes received at the Rescue Center in 2016:

- 374,797 BGN
- 191,712 €
- £163,453

TOTAL: 730,007 BGN (4,732 €)