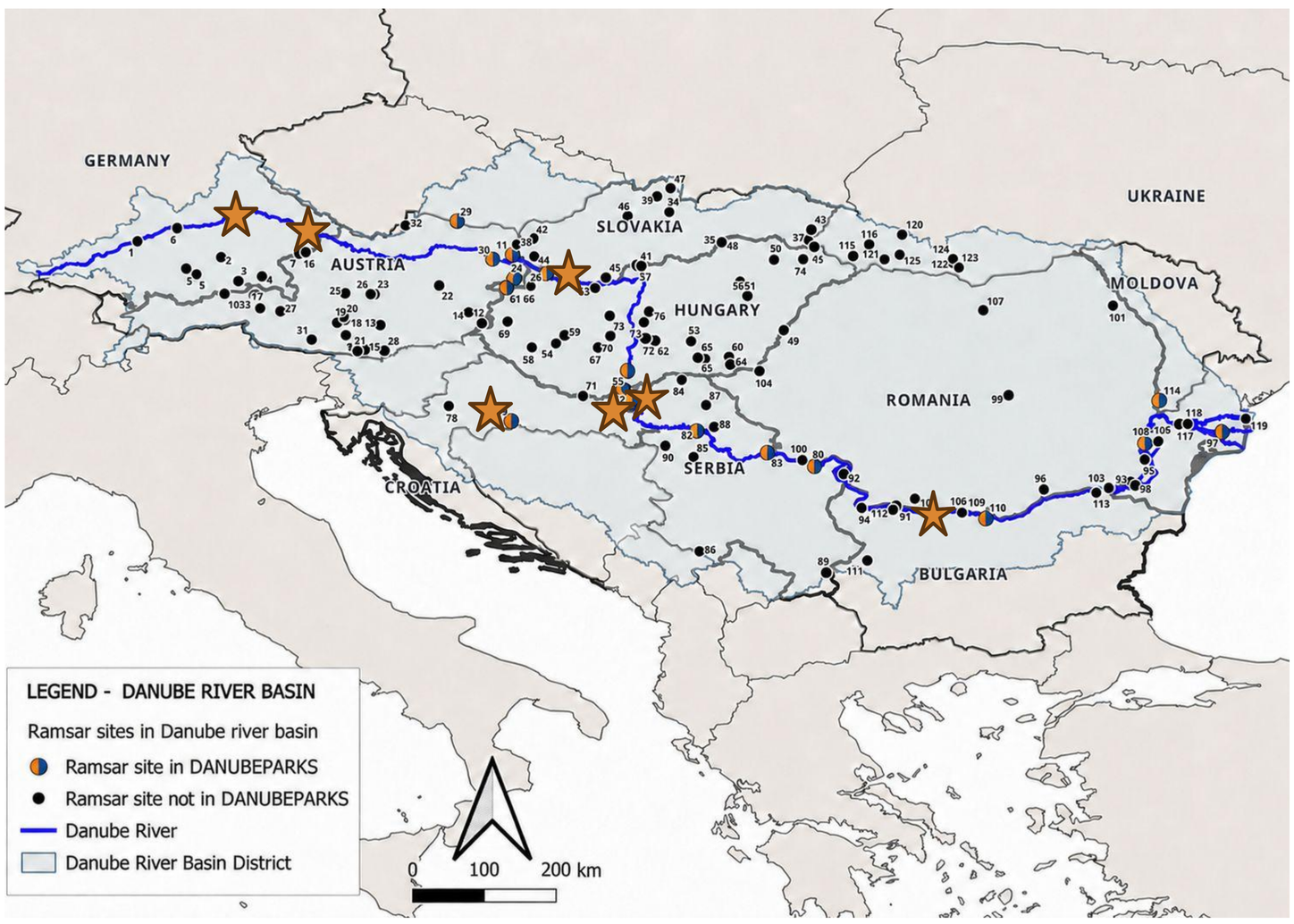
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Pilot Activities within the Danube WILDisland Ramsar Regional Initiative
Pilot aktivnosti u okviru Ramsarske regionalne incijative Danube WILDisland

MATEJ MARUŠIĆ[1], PETAR GLAVAŠ[1], ANITA CHENESHKOVA[1], VLATKO ROŽAC[2]

[1] DANUBEPARKS - Danube river Network of Protected Areas, Schloss Orth, 2304 Orth an der Donau, Austria
[2] Public Institution „Nature Park Kopački rit“, Mali Sakadaš 1, 31327 Kopačevo, Croatia
(E-mail: m.marusic@danubeparks.org)

Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) are officially recognised mechanisms for cooperation under the Convention on Wetlands, known as the Ramsar Convention, through which Contracting Parties coordinate their efforts in wetland conservation. In 2024, DANUBEPARKS - Danube River Network of Protected Areas launched the first European RRI dedicated to riverine habitats, under the name “Danube WILDisland RRI” (*Figure 1*).



Sites with Pilot actions:

1. Lake Albschüttsee (Germany)
– Restoration of a nesting island for Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) (*Figure 2*).

2. Neuburg-Schrobenhausen district (Germany)
– Analysis of approximately 360 Danube islands and identification of ~80 sites with potential for restoration.

3. Veľkolélsky Ostrov (Slovakia)
– Restoration of 2,200 m² of wetland habitat (*Figure 3*).

4. Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia)
– Restoration of two steep riverbanks along Drava river to provide nesting habitat for birds: Sand Martins (*Riparia riparia*), European Bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*) and Common Kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*) (*Figure 4*).

5. Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (Croatia)
– Research on the Thick-shelled River Mussel (*Unio crassus*).

6. Kaykusha wetland (Bulgaria)
– Preparation of a study on improving the water regime.

7. Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve (Serbia)
– Planning of restoration measures.

Figure 1: Map of Ramsar Regional Initiative - DANUBE WILDisland area (author: Petar Glavaš, DANUBEPARKS).

Under measures RRI-1 and RRI-2, seven pilot activities with a total value of EUR 45,822.18 were approved in Germany, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. These activities cover various measures such as habitat restoration, research and monitoring, preparation of future restoration interventions, knowledge exchange, and stakeholder engagement.



Figure 2: a) Restored nesting island in Germany, b) Process of restoration (photo: DANUBEPARKS archive).



Figure 3: a) Restored wetland habitat in Slovakia, b) Process of restoration (photo: DANUBEPARKS archive).



Figure 4: a) Restored river bank along Drava river in Croatia, b) Restored nest of Sand Martin (Riparia riparia) (photo: DANUBEPARKS archive).

The pilot activities demonstrate how an international RRI for the conservation of wild river islands can connect shared strategic objectives with concrete local interventions and provide a basis for their replication in other areas along the Danube river corridor.

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