

European primeval forest route in the Ukraine and in Romania

Trail research trip with Gerd Simon from the 6th to the 18th of July, 2019

The trip began with a visit of the city of Kosice in eastern Slovakia. We visited the historic center which belongs to the UNESCO-world cultural heritage. The journey across the Slovak-Ukrainian border was easy, after 30 minutes we had passed the border and we were in the lively city of Uzhgorod, the capital of the Oblast Transcarpathia. In Uzhgorod we met Alissa Smyrna, Roman Kish and Alexander Bokotey. Alissa gave us important tips to interesting points in the Ukrainian section of the primeval forest route. With Roman Kish we discussed the documentation of the primeval forests along the trail in Transcarpathia. Also he gave to us useful instructions for our research tour. He will make available information about the primeval forests to us. For the production of infoflyers per primeval forest he looks for a financing possibility. We visited Alexander Bokotey in his office in the bishop's residence. He showed us the progress with the documentation of the wooden churches and monasteries in Transcarpathia. Also he reported about the cooperation with Germany NABU and the Hamburg Protestant church.



With Roman Kish in the café in Uzhgorod



Gerd on the Polonina Runa

The ambitious aim of the next day was the summit Polonina Runa with wide-flat meadows. Already before the place Lipovez the street went off (no asphalt, many deep blow holes). Finally, we went on a concrete paving slab runway. In a extremely bad piece we put down the car and had luck that to us a family from Odessa took in their car up to the Polonina Runa. Many vehicles, completely occupied with the berry collectors, who had end of work met us. The Polonina Runa has three different summits, the long distance trail is marked red and to find easily.

Our next lodging was in Mishhirja, a small town between the Uholka primeval forests and the Synewir-national park. From there we went on the next day to the north to the city of Volovez which disposes of a railway station located on the main line Chop – Lviv. The primeval forest route has passed up to here the nature reserves Sokolovi of Skeli (primeval forest, protection of birds area) as well as Pikui (mountain wood, rare plants) with the summit Pikui of the same name (1.408 m). At the

end of the Beskide-mountains the route reaches Volovez. To the south of Volovez the trail leads by the nature reserve Temnatyk (mountain wood with high biodiversity) about the hilltops of the Borschwawa mountains to Mishhirja. We went in the village Huklyvyi with its old wooden church, Gerd mounted on the summit Plai (1.331 m) and visited a small cheese dairy below the summit.

On the next morning we drove in the national Park Synevyr. The new info hut nearby the national park administration was still without equipment and staff. The timber museum was opened. It concerns a former barrage by the river Tereblia. On boards it is explained with the help of historical photos how the trunks became by the barrage transportet. By means of the barrage the water was dammed up. If it was opened, it gave to the woodworkers swing to ship the timber downstream. Unfortunately, a high water destroyed in 1998 the preserved barrage, one still recognises the river incision and the dimensions of the arrangement. Here we hardly met visitors, quite differently the picture appeared in the brown bear-rehabilitation centre of the national park which many excursionists. To the south of Synevyr, in the place Kolochava, the trail rises on the Krasna mountain range. Above the comb way one reaches formerly from emigrants from the Austrian Salzburg region founded villages Deutsch-Mokra and Königsfeld. On the junction of the comb way to the summit Topas (1.548 m) the side way to the virgin forests Uholka-Schyrokyj Luh begins which belongs to the Carpathian Mts biosphere reserve as well as to the UNESCO world nature heritage and is famous for its copper beech primeval forest.



Timber museum in Synevyr



Family houses of woodworkers in Königsfeld

The journey from Kolochava to Ust Tschorna or Königsfeld was heavy. The street was not asphalted predominantly, a jumping stone hit a hole in the oil pan of our car and finished our journey. Fortunately, there were many assistants. The car was picked up to Königsfeld and was repaired in spite of holiday (Saint Peter) thanks to the engagement by Petro Sojma still in the evening. Petro Sojma belongs to few still resident Austrian-speaking inhabitants and celebrated his 55th birthday on this day. We were invited to the family celebration and could spend the night in his house. He showed us two new established hydroelectric power plants in the place as well as one of few Roman-Catholic churches in the Ukraine. In his photo albums pictures of the numerous relief operations of Upper Austrian organisations, above all from HIKÖDE were found., Among other things, it was built a new water pipe in the place. Also an old ski lift found its way from Upper Austria to Königsfeld. Petro is ready with pleasure, mediate for tourists lodgings with private families in Königsfeld.

In the car with just repaired oil pan we went through the Svydovets mountains to Kwasy. In Kwasy the primeval forest route rises in the black mountains, Tschornohora, first on the Petros (2,020 m) and, finally, on the Hoverla, to the highest mountain of the Ukraine (2.061 m). In the trail information

about the primeval forests and about the vegetation is given. The Carpathian Mts biosphere reserve has formed here an ecological-tourist trail. The beech primeval forests belonging to the UNESCO world nature heritage lie above all along the south flanks of the Tschornohora massif.

Our lodging was in Luhy at the foot of the Hoverla. On our hiking to the Hoverla we had luck. We could go about 10 of a total of 16 kilometres by the bus of an excursion which was organised by the Carpathian Mts biosphere reserve. The participants received nature information during the journey and afterwards were led on the Hoverla. From the mountain station of the biosphere reserve there are still 4.5 kilometres and 400 metres height up to the summit. We reached the Hoverla summit in the rain. From all directions hikers arrived. Some groups carried a flag with themselves. The way between the Hoverla summit and Luhy touches a virgin forest. At the mountain station we found a board of information with explanations into Ukrainian and English language to biosphere reserve.



Research project in the Hoverla virgin forest



On the eco-tourist path at Hoverla traverse

From Rachiw the primeval forest route leads above the hills and by the beech forests of the protective area on the west side of the river Black Theiss to the place of Luh. Unfortunately, the route course cannot be laid through the Ukrainian Marmorosh mountains with their beech primeval forests because this area is neighbouring the border to Romania and so here doesn't (still) exist a border crossing for hikers. We passed the border nearby Sighetu Marmatiei at 10 minutes. In Barsana we visited the first wooden church and drove from there further to our lodging in Botiza. In the Maramuresch region the good tourist development of the historical wooden churches impressed us in which also competent guiding is offered. Beside every interesting wooden church there is a parking bay and a hut of information. Indeed, many of the new established tourism information huts in the towns and villages are not in use and one can buy no hiking maps. In the parish halls one helped us, here often a person could speak English who answered with pleasure our questions.

To the both to the UNESCO world nature heritage belonging beech primeval forests nearby Baiut and Grosii Tiblesului we found neither in the called places nor in the city of Lopus information or tips. On the way to Baiut we met by chance an info board which the WWF has put up. Out of this it arises that the protective zone of the primeval forest borders immediately on the settlement area of Baiut. Baiut is a former mining place. The mine is closed down, however, the tunnel entrances still exist. Also the primeval forests nearby Grosii Tiblesului are in a former mining area at the end of an elongated valley. It concerns a group of high-situated mountain primeval forest cells which the leader of the forestry office showed us in Grosii on a map. Mr. Ing. Pop Marinel speaks English and would be ready on inquiry to offer a guided hiking trip to the virgin forests below the summits Arcer (1.835 m) and

Tibles (1.839 m). In the forest and timber country of Maramuresch ends first the planning of the European primeval forest route.



Historic wooden church in Barsana



Path to the summits Arcer and Tibles

Supplement:

During our trip in the main season we hardly met tourists, in Transcarpathia some small groups from Czechia, in the Maramuresch region twice two visitors from Belgium who were interested in the wooden churches. In Eastern Europe regions with miraculous sceneries have got dressed up for the tourism and wait for visitors. If the prices of long-distance flights as a result of a logical climate protection politics increased, important developing chances would be opened for these regions which would also support the European integration process .