

ANALYSIS OF MONK SEAL (*MONACHUS MONACHUS*, HERMANN 1779) SIGHTINGS IN THE CROATIAN PART OF THE ADRIATIC (2006-2009)

ANALIZA OPAZOVANJ SREDOZEMSKJE MEDVEDJICE (*MONACHUS MONACHUS*, HERMANN 1779) V HRVAŠKEM DELU JADRANSKEGA MORJA (2006-2009)

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ABSTRACT

The Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*, Hermann 1779) belongs to the order Pinnipeds (Pinnipedia), seal family (*Phocidae*) and sea monk genus (*Monachus*). Its total population amounts to about 350 individuals in smaller, isolated and endangered groups. The aim during our 4-year systematic research (2006-2009) was to gather data on Monk Seal sightings in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea. The result: 79 sightings in the above-mentioned area. According to the systematic research of their habitat (21 caves) on the Adriatic open-sea islands and on the coast, it has been determined that the Monk Seal inhabits them. The conclusion: for the survival of the species, it is essential to protect the areas of the open-sea islands in the Adriatic and to place infrared cameras inside the caves, thus giving us the insight as to their use.

IZVLEČEK

Sredozemska medvedjica (*Monachus monachus*, Hermann 1779) spada v red Pinnipedia, družino pravih tjulnjev (*Phocidae*) in rod *Monachus*. Njena populacija dosega kakih 350 osebkov, živečih v majhnih, izoliranih in ogroženih skupinah. Namen naših štiriletnih sistematičnih raziskav (2006-2009) je bil zbrati podatke o tej vrsti v hrvaškem delu Jadranskega morja. Rezultat: 79 opazovanj v zgoraj omenjenem delu Jadrana. Glede na sistematske raziskave njihovega habitata (21 jam) na odmaknjenih jadranskih otokih in na obali sami je bilo ugotovljeno, da jih sredozemska medvedjica vsekakor naseljuje. Sklep: za preživetje te redke vrste je nadvse pomembno, da se zaščitijo območja otokov na odprtem morju v Jadranu in postavijo infrardeče kamere v jame, da bi dobili vpogled v njihovo rabo.

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