

# Marjana Hönigsfeld Adamič

## KAJ NAM PRIPOVEDUJE VIDRA?

Besedilo: **Meta Krese** Fotografije: **Jaka Adamič**

(28)

**N**a Lutri, Inštitutu za ohranjanje naravne de-  
diščine, kjer biologinja Marjana Hönigsfeld  
Adamič dela kot raziskovalka (pravzaprav  
ga je tudi ustanovila), delajo ta hip na projektu LIFE *Živa  
voda – od biodiverzitete do pipe*. Strašansko zanimiva  
tema, a kaj ko naša sogovornica že leta in leta spremlja  
življenje vidre pri nas. Tako je v pogovoru nehote prevla-  
dala skrivnostna žival, ki jo večina med nami pozna zgolj  
po risbah in fotografijah. Mogoče pa vendarle nismo zelo  
grešili: *Kar je dobro za vidro, je dobro za človeka*, na-  
mreč meni Marjana Hönigsfeld Adamič.

**Čista voda postaja strateška dobrina, vidra pa je njena prerokinja, pravite na vašem inštitutu, ki nosi njeno znanstveno ime *Lutra*. Kateri nauk razširja vidra, česa nas uči?**

*Kaj nam pripoveduje vidra* je večkrat tudi naslov naših delavnic. Vidra je ambasadorka ohranjenih vodnih ekosistemov; predstavnica ima prijeten videz in prijetno podobo; je karizmatična vrsta, zato lahko z njo pritegnemo tudi otroke. Prijazna je, ima okrogel obrazek in majhna ušesa, tako kot medvedki. Ampak vedno opozarjam, da je to leptotica, ki ima tudi svojo zversko naravo. To je zver v pravem pomenu, torej plenilec in na vrhu prehranskega spletja. Na vsak način pa je to živalska vrsta, ki nam pripoveduje zgodbo o ohranjenih vodah ali pa o neohranjenih, če je tam ni.

**Felicita Kalinšek je v *Slovenski kuharici za postne dni* svetovala kva-  
šeno vidro. Ali to pomeni, da je bilo v drugi polovici 19. stoletja, ko je  
kuharica prvč izšla, veliko vider ali pa se je avtorica zgolj bala, da njena  
kuharica ne bo dovolj zanimiva, če ne bo poskrbela za mesne požrtje  
tudi ob postnih dneh?**

Knjiga Kalinškove je res stara zadeva, moram pa reči, da je Cankarjeva za-  
ložba pri njeni dvajseti jubilejni izdaji leta 1985 še vedno ohranila recepte  
za pripravo vidre, divjega petelina in še za marsikatero v naravi ogroženo  
žival. Vidra je tako kot vse živali, ki so prihajale iz vode, veljala za postno  
jed, ki si jo je privočila predvsem duhovščina. Vider je bilo takrat več, še  
vedno pa jih ni bilo veliko.

Vidra živi samotarsko in več, kot jih prenese določeno okolje, jih ne  
more biti. Vsaka vidra potrebuje 15 do 20 dolžinskih kilometrov vodotoka  
za pokrivanje svojih življenjskih potreb. Ampak nekoč so bile vode še do-  
kaj naravne – ne govorimo o onesnaženju, ampak o ekomorfološkem sta-  
nju – in niso bile regulirane. Vidra je imela dovolj možnosti, da se je skrila,  
naredila brlog za mladiče ... Ni je bilo lahko ujeti, tako da lov ni bil množi-  
čen. Manjkajočo je nadomestila nova in populacija se je obnavljala, dokler  
so jih lovili s pastmi. Ko pa je postalorožje bolj sofisticirano, so izginile.

**Torej ni izginila zaradi onesnaženih voda?**

Ne, zaradi lova. To velja tudi za nekatere druge živali, zlasti za plenilce.  
Tudi risa so iztrebili z lovom.

Po drugi svetovni vojni, v času velike industrializacije, ko se je tudi  
kmetijstvo intenziviralo, pa se je okolje tako poslabšalo, da si ni več  
uspela opomoči. Leta 1973 so se lovci odločili, da jo zavarujejo; od leta  
1976 pa se je sploh ne sme več loviti. Po letu 2000 se je populacija že toliko  
popravila, da se vrača v nekdanje habitate.

**Kje jo najdemo danes v Sloveniji?**

Mislim, da je še vedno najmočnejša populacija na severovzhodu, torej na  
Goričkem, sploh v Prekmurju, v zadnjem času pa se vrača tudi drugam.  
Tudi na Cerkniškem polju je.



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#### **Ali jo lahko naključni sprehajalci opazimo?**

Ponavadi je tako, da je tisti, ki jo ciljno čaka, ne dočaka. Vsa opazovanja so naključna. Prideš in je slučajno tam.

#### **Najbrž pa vseeno ni pošteno, da bi se z vami, ki ste ustanoviteljica inštитuta za ohranjanje naravne dediščine, pogovarjali samo o vidri? Gotovo delate še kaj drugega ...**

Naše delovanje smo razširili na vidrin življenjski prostor, torej na vode. Tu pa je dela več kot dovolj. Ukvaramo se z okoljskimi poročili, vendar ostajamo bolj ali manj pri vodah. Pri ciljnih živalih pa postaja v zadnjem času zanimiv bober, ki je tudi že pred stoletji izginil iz zahodne in osrednje Evrope. Na Hrvaškem so v letih od 1996 do 1998 ponovno naselili evrazijske bobre v Posavini (Sava, Drava) in v zadnjih letih prodira ta vodna žival proti nam. Prišel je po Savi in zavil takoj levo v Krko. Zdaj pa je že na Muri in Dravi, kjer že lahko opazimo oglodana in podrta drevesa.

#### **Svoje pripadnosti Muri ne skrivate. Pri izkazovanju naklonjenosti do Save ste včasih precej ostri tudi do strokovne javnosti.**

Še vedno imam v omari zelen Murin plašč, ki sem ga nosila pred več kot 20 leti v akciji za ohranjanje Mure, ko so začeli govoriti o elektrarnah na tej reki. Potem je ta ideja potihnila in zdaj je ponovno aktualna. Zdaj pa tudi strokovno sodelujemo pri presoji, kje naj bi stale, če sploh bi. Mislim, da lahko prav tu naredimo največ. Dravske elektrarne so začele na pravem mestu. Skupaj z drugimi organizacijami smo zbrali bazo podatkov, iz katere lahko marsikaj presodijo. Zagovarjamo stališče, naj gradijo elektrarne tam, kjer je Mura že večinoma regulirana in ni več v naravnih rečnih strugi. Le če uspejo znotraj gradnje elektrarne narediti boljše okoljsko stanje, kot je, naj mogoče zgradijo kakšno hidroelektrarno.

#### **In Sava?**

Nihče se ne zmeni za Savo, čeprav je naša osrednja vodna žila; več kot polovica Slovenije spada v porečje Save. Hidroelektrarne gradijo brez vsakih ribjih, kaj šele drugih stez. Že zdaj je katastrofa, a narejen je tudi plan, po kateremu naj bi bilo na srednjem odseku Save še devet hidroelektrarn. Po naročilu Holdinga Slovenske elektrarne smo delali v skupini za inventarizacijo in naši rezultati govorijo, da je Sava naravovarstveno izredno pomembna. Zaravanim vrstam, ki tam živijo, ne smemo poslabšati življenjskih razmer. Z gradnjo elektrarn pa bi habitate vsekakor poslabšali ali celo uničili. Ampak ko gre za velike posege, prevlada tako imenovani nacionalni interes.

Pri Muri je interes za ohranjanje star in pravzaprav tradicionalen. Za Savo še nisem slišala, da bi kdo rekел o njej v tem smislu kaj dobrega. Ne-kako ni pripadnosti tej reki.

**Dijaki murskosoboške Ekonomski srednje šole so opravili anketo med prebivalci Prekmurja o tem, katera je prepoznavna žival v Prekmurju. Večina ljudi je postavila vidro pred štokljo. Je to »krivda« vašega inštítuta in vašega Aqualutra centra?**

Verjetno. Vidra je bila daleč na prvem mestu ...

Evropska komisija je leta 2004 odobrila financiranje štiriletnega projekta LIFE - NATURA z naslovom Ohranjanje populacije vidre na Goričkem, ki ga je zasnoval naš inštitut, prijavila pa osrednja gorička občina, Gornji Petrovci. S projektom smo končali, ostal pa je center Aqualutra.

Projekt smo razdelili na dva večja sklopa: v prvem so bile akcije, direktno namenjene izboljševanju vidrinega življenjskega okolja, v drugem pa izobraževalne in ozaveščevalne akcije, skratka delo z ljudmi.

#### **Vidra je torej izgovor ...**

Vidra je povezovalka. Vse se začne in konča pri njej. No, vsaj pri nas.

# Marjana Hönigsfeld Adamič

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## WHAT DOES THE OTTER TELL US?

Text: Meta Krese Photography: Jaka Adamič

The staff of the Lutra Institute for the Conservation of Natural Heritage, where the biologist Marjana Hönigsfeld Adamič works as a researcher (she is actually also the institute's founder), are currently working on a LIFE project called *Live water – from biodiversity to the tap*. An extremely interesting topic, but given that our interviewee has spent years following the life of the otter in Slovenia, the conversation is inevitably dominated by this mysterious creature which the majority of us only know from drawings and photographs. This is not necessarily a bad thing: *What is good for the otter is good for human beings*, believes Marjana Hönigsfeld Adamič.



**Clean water is becoming a strategic advantage, and the otter is its prophet – according to the Lutra Institute, which bears the animal's scientific name (*Lutra lutra*). What message does the otter have for us?**

**What does it teach us?**

"What does the otter tell us?" is actually a frequent title of our workshops. The otter is the ambassador of preserved aquatic ecosystems. A representative with an attractive appearance and a friendly image; it is a charismatic species, which means we can also use it to attract the interest of children. It is a friendly animal with its little round face and small ears like those of a teddy bear. I always warn people, however, that this beautiful creature also has a wild nature. It is a carnivore in the true sense of the word, meaning that it is a predator and that it is at the top of the food web. Be that as it may, the otter is an animal that tells us the story of preserved waters – or of unpreserved waters, if there are no otters around.

**Felicita Kalinšek, the author of the famous cookery book *Slovenska kuharica*, recommended marinated otter as a suitable Lenten dish. Does this mean that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when this cookery book first appeared, there were many more otters, or was she simply afraid that her book would not be sufficiently interesting if she did not provide some meaty treats even for days of abstinence?**

Felicita Kalinšek's cookery book is very old, although it must be said that the publisher Cankarjeva Založba retained the recipes for otter, capercaillie and many other endangered species for the jubilee twentieth edition of the book in 1985. Like all animals that come from water, the otter was considered a suitable dish for fast days, eaten above all by members of the clergy.

There were more otters than today, although their number was still not great. The otter lives territorially, so there cannot be more of them than a given environment can support. One otter needs 15–20 kilometres of watercourse to meet its survival needs. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Slovenia's waters were still fairly natural – we are not talking about pollution but about the ecomorphological state – and they were not regulated. The otter had sufficient opportunities to hide, to build a holt for its cubs, and so on. Otters were not easy to catch, so hunting remained on a small scale. If an otter disappeared from the habitat it was replaced by a new one and the population renewed itself, at least while otter hunting was limited to trapping. When firearms became more sophisticated, the otters disappeared.

#### **So they did not disappear as a result of water pollution?**

No, it was because of hunting. This also applies to certain other animals, particularly predators. Hunting also caused the lynx to become extinct.

After the Second World War, a time of great industrialisation which also saw the intensification of farming, the environment deteriorated so badly that the otter population was no longer able to recover. In 1973 hunters decided to protect the otter, and there has been a total ban on otter hunting since 1976. Since 2000 the population has recovered to such an extent that the otter is now returning to its former habitats.

#### **Where are otters found today in Slovenia?**

I believe that the strongest population is still in the north-east, in the Goričko area and in the Prekmurje region in general, while recently the otter has also been returning elsewhere. It is also found on Cerkniško Polje.

#### **Can we see otters when out walking in the countryside?**

Most often if you deliberately set out to see them you will be disappointed. Sightings are a matter of chance. Sometimes you arrive somewhere and an otter just happens to be there.

#### **It is probably not fair of me to ask you only about otters, given that you are the founder of an institute dedicated to the conservation of natural heritage. I am sure you are involved in lots of other things...**

We have expanded our work to include the otter's habitat, in other words water. There is more than enough work here. We deal with environmental reports but continue to focus more or less on the water environment. Among our target animals, the beaver has recently begun to interest us. This is another animal that disappeared from western and central Europe centuries ago. Eurasian beavers were reintroduced to the Sava river basin region (Sava, Drava) in Croatia between 1996 and 1998 and in recent years they have been penetrating into Slovenia. Beavers came up the Sava and immediately turned left into the Krka. Now they can be found along the Mura and the Drava, where we are already observing trees that have been gnawed and felled by beavers.

#### **You make no secret of your fondness for the Mura. In showing your support for the Sava you are sometimes quite critical of other members of the expert community.**

I still have in my wardrobe the green Mura cape that I wore more than 20 years ago during the campaign to conserve the Mura, when power stations on the Mura were being discussed. That idea later petered out, but now it is topical again. Now we are among the experts involved in deciding where such power stations should be sited if they decide to built them. I believe that this is where we can achieve the most. The Company Dravske elektrarne Maribor began in the right end of the stick. In collaboration with other organisations, we compiled a database which facilitates the decision-making process in many regards. Our position is that power stations should be built where the Mura is already largely regulated. This is not a natural riverbed. If they succeed in improving the state of the environment as part of building a power station, then perhaps they should also build some hydroelectric plants.

#### **And the Sava?**

Nobody cares about the Sava, even though it is our principal water artery; more than half of Slovenia belongs to the Sava river basin. Hydroelectric dams are built without fish passes, let alone passages for other animals. Even now it is a catastrophe, yet a plan has been drawn up to build a further nine hydroelectric plants on the middle section of the Sava. We were commissioned by Ljubljana-based power company HSE to take part in an inventory group, and our results show that the Sava is extremely important from the point of view of nature conservation. We must not worsen the living conditions of the protected species that live there. There is no question that building power stations would damage or even destroy habitats. And yet whenever major developments are involved, the so-called national interest prevails.

In the case of the Mura, interest in conservation is long-established and actually traditional. I have yet to hear anyone saying anything positive in this sense about the Sava. Somehow this river does not enjoy the same support.

#### **The students of the Secondary School of Economics in Murska Sobota recently conducted a survey among the inhabitants of Prekmurje to find out what animal was identified most closely with the region. The majority placed the otter ahead of the stork. Is this the fault of your institute and the Aqualutra centre you have set up?**

Probably. The otter was a clear winner...

In 2004 the European Commission approved funding for a four-year LIFE-NATURA project called *Conservation of the otter population in Goričko* which was designed by our institute and submitted by the municipality of Gornji Petrovci, the main municipality in the Goričko area. The project is now finished, but the Aqualutra centre is still there.

We divided the project into two major sections. The first included campaigns directly aimed at improving the otter's habitat, while the second consisted of educational and informative activities, in other words working with people.

#### **So the otter is just an excuse...**

The otter is what links it altogether. Everything begins and ends with the otter. At least for us it does. 