

is grey-brown, often with washed-out, bright spots. Their underside, including the inner sides of the limbs, fingers, and toes, is grey-blue to black-blue with striking, bright yellow to orange spots or patches, usually covering more than half of the underside. It is dependent on temporary small bodies of water on loamy ground, such as tractor trails, puddles, and small ditches. These pioneer species can be found mainly in quarries, clay and gravel pits, and on marching grounds.



**European pond turtle**  
(*Emys orbicularis*)

It is a medium size turtle and varies quite a bit across its distribution, from 12 to 38 cm length. Its shell is brown with a hint of green, spotted yellow. *Emys orbicularis* turtles prefer to live in wetlands surrounded by a large proportion of natural, wooded, landscape. It is also found in upland environments for feeding. It is usually considered semi-aquatic, as their terrestrial movements can span 1000 meters, and occasionally found traveling up to 4000 meters, away from the water. They eat a mixed diet of plants and animal matter that can increase the efficiency of their digestive process.

**Custodian:** Asociația pentru Dezvoltare Comunitară Durabilă **ALUTUS**

Str. Principală nr. 64, Lisnău Vale  
comuna Ozun, județul Covasna

Tel: 0267 332 335

e-mail: dezvoltaredurabilaalutus@gmail.com

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**The project's beneficiary** is Covasna County Council

**Duration of the project** is 21 months, between April 2014 and December 2015

**The overall objective** of the project is the protection and preservation of biodiversity and the natural heritage through the proper management of the protected areas administered by Covasna County Council, and to ensure the local community's and the visitors access to information on the natural values and thus contributing to their sustainable development. Further information about the project on [www.natcov.ro](http://www.natcov.ro), [www.natkov.ro](http://www.natkov.ro)

**Editor:** Covasna County Council

**Edited by:** Incze Anna, Madarasi Csilla

**Drawing and design:** Szederjesi Szidónia

**Map made by:** Pap Endre

**Photo:** Papucs András

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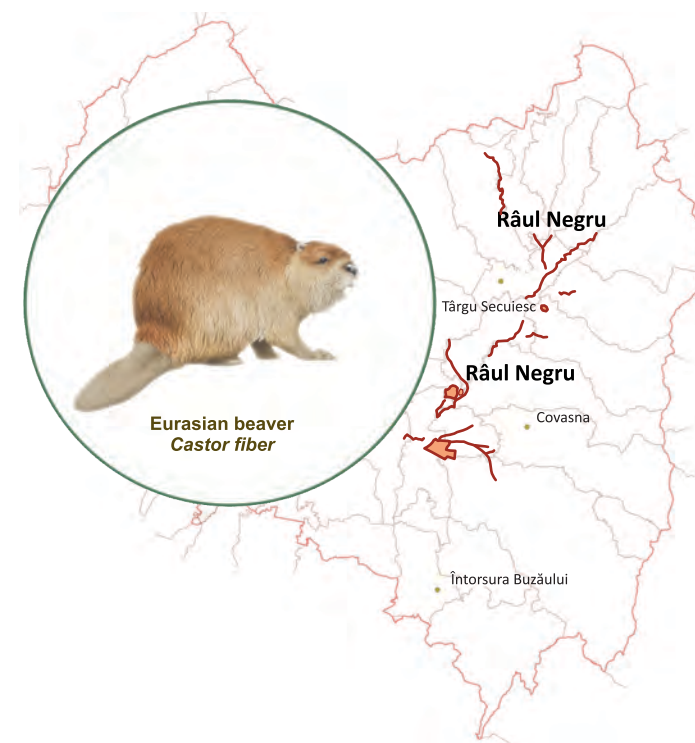
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## Natura 2000 Site Râul Negru

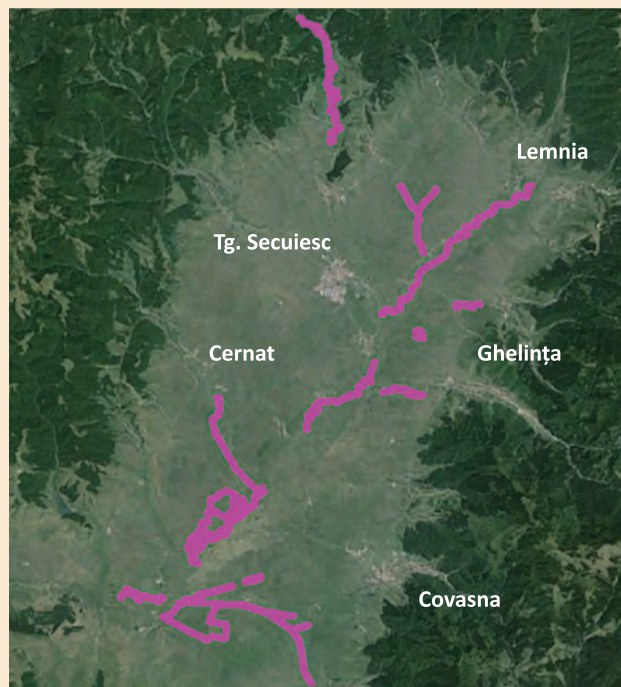
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## The Natura 2000 Network

Natura 2000 is a network of nature protection areas in the territory of the European Union established in 1992. It is made up of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated respectively under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive. These sites protect vulnerable habitats such as wetlands, which in turn helps to safeguard the animals and plants which need these places to survive. Across the EU a diverse range of habitats are protected, from flower-rich meadows to vast expanses of estuaries, even cave systems, and a huge variety of animals throughout the EU benefit from this, such as golden eagles, flamingos, otters and lynx.

### The Natura 2000 Site Râul Negru, ROSCI0374



It is Natura 2000 site since 2011, and has a surface area of 1001 ha. Râul Negru (Black River) is by far the most important affluent at the upper course of the river Olt. Nearby its spring is characterized by steep slopes. With the exit to the lowland plains, the slopes sharply decrease, remaining constant and at very low values. This leads to a sinuous watercourse, with sides made of fine sedimentary deposits, which are ideal for the installation of the beaver. Many tributaries of the Râul Negru have same features. Due to the low flow of the tributaries most of the beaver families have built dams to improve hydrological conditions. This is considered a unique site on the course of the Olt, no other river basin in Romania contains so many dams built by beavers.

Important habitats of the site are: the water course itself, eutrophic lakes and backwaters, the groves with black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), white willow (*Salix alba*) and white poplar (*Populus alba*) and wet grasslands.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation for the following species of Community interest: mammal species (beaver, otter), amphibians (yellow-bellied toad) and reptiles (European pond turtle).

### Description of the species



#### Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*)

One of the largest rodents in the world, they weigh around 11-30 kg. The semi-aquatic Eurasian beaver inhabits gentle streams, rivers, lakes and swamps. It generally favours freshwater habitats that are surrounded by woodland, but may sometimes use a river or stream flowing through agricultural land or even urban areas. It was hunted to near-extinction for both its fur and castoreum. In Romania it went extinct. The resettling actions started in 2006 and were successful.



#### European otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Brown above and cream below, these long, slender creatures are well-equipped for their aquatic habits. Normally, this species is 57 to 95 cm long, not counting a tail of 35-45 cm. They may inhabit any unpolluted body of fresh water, including lakes, streams, rivers, and ponds, as long as the food supply is adequate. European otters may also live along the coast, in salt water, but require regular access to fresh water to clean their fur. The European otter's diet mainly consists of fish.



#### Yellow-bellied toad

(*Bombina variegata*)

This species is distributed over much of central and southern Europe. It has an altitudinal range of 100-2000 m. The yellow-bellied toad dwells in mountainous and hilly countries in middle and southern Europe. The larger of the males and females are between 35 and 55 mm. Their top side