



Dear readers, colleagues, friends,

You are getting into your hands the sixth annual special issue of the Ochrana přírody/Nature Conservation Journal. The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first issue of the journal is approaching and the world has changed dramatically in that time. Despite efforts to protect and conserve both terrestrial and marine natural ecosystems, there has been enormous damage to them. We have destroyed a third of all rainforests and degraded another one third. The planet's human population has grown from 2.3 to 8 billion today. Despite

the partial successes in nature conservation, the negative trend is clear and raises the question of whether our efforts are worthwhile. We have not succeeded in halting the negative trends, but we have at least contributed to weakening them. This and partial local successes oblige us. From a geo-evolutionary point of view, it does not matter whether the rainforest, rhinos or the European rhinoceros beetle will fully disappear in 20 or 50 years. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the human community, it definitely matters! We have been creating a valuable time for decisions to be made by ourselves and, more importantly, by those who come after us. They, too, should have the choice of whether to follow the path of sustainable development or to prefer short-term benefits and continue to destroy the biosphere. The search for space-based life forms and the settlement of other planets is scientifically exciting, but it must not give us the impression that we can destroy the Earth, because there are possibilities to settle elsewhere. Therefore, in this context, our activities make more sense than ever.

The European Union's Nature Restoration Law and the Biodiversity Strategy provide a framework for ambitious improvements in the protection, conservation and management of the natural environment. However, they face a number of challenges. Russia's aggression in Ukraine, which can also be seen as the terrifying product of a deranged perception of values, is not helping to eliminate them. Euro-Atlantic society is far from perfect, causing itself many problems, but the Russian approach is

perverse. The ongoing war is contributing not only to the destruction of human lives and property, but also to huge environmental damage on a regional and global level.

Last year also brought news in nature conservation in the Czech Republic. These include the designation of the Soutok/Confluence Protected Landscape Area, which will enable much better to protect, conserve and manage the unique floodplain forests and river floodplains over an area of 125 km<sup>2</sup>. The declaration of a fifth national park, Křivoklátsko, and the transformation of species protection to conserve biodiversity more effectively are in the process of being approved. Complex negotiations are also underway to establish a large protected landscape area, the Krušné hory/Ore Mts. Although it is not possible to predict the outcome at this moment, the fact that the legislative process has been there cannot be considered bad news.

In this anthology, we present a representative overview of selected articles and summaries of other contributions over the past year. This gives even foreign readers a basic insight into the activities in nature conservation and landscape protection in the Czech Republic. I wish you a pleasant and inspiring reading.

**František Pelc**

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of the Czech Republic*

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