

Stop 2 THE FOREST IS LIFE

Hey... My dear travellers! I caught up with you!

Let's stop and find out some more new and interesting things!

Take a deep breath and look around you!

You can see a variety of trees because the Zăval Forest is a mixed meadow forest with oak, ash and elm species. Zăval Forest is part of the 91F0 Priority Habitat - Mixed meadow forests of *Quercus robur*, *Ulmus laevis* and *Ulmus minor*, *Fraxinus excelsior* or *Fraxinus angustifolia* along the great rivers (*Ulmion minoris*). It is located in the lower sector of Jiu River, near its confluence with the Danube, in an easily accessible area.

I have another challenge for you! Look also down! Try to penetrate the ground with your foot! What do you think of the soil?

Well, you should know that this type of habitat develops on well-drained soil, which remains wet between floods, and the species of *Fraxinus*, *Quercus*, *Ulmus* that characterize this type of habitat depend on the level of water.



Photo 1: images from the Zăval Forest

The presence of the Zăval Forest Nature Reserve in an environment where there are extensive wetlands, ponds, channels, creates a favourable combination for the species related to both types of habitats: aquatic and forest.

This kind of habitat includes hardwood species located in the major river beds, regularly exposed to floods during the rising of the water levels, or in lower areas, exposed to floods caused by the rise of the underground water.

The mosaic of the beautiful Zăval Forest also includes priority species such as secular oaks and ash trees, which have an estimated age of more than 100 years and can reach up to 200 years!

Part of the Zăval forest, north of DN 55A, is occupied by poplar plantations that most likely replaced the species characteristic to the habitat. In the south there is, however, an area of riparian forest in a very good state of conservation.

This type of vegetation forms mosaics of pioneer forests in the lowlands of the rivers. The Zăval Forest is a moisture-loving meadow forest. Interestingly, the forest is crossed by several water channels that have a temporary status. Depending on the season in which you travel through the forest, you may notice at least one of these channels.

Take a breath of fresh air! Do you feel any difference from the air you normally breathe?

Most likely yes! That's because the best natural remedy for the problem of pollution is the forest. Through the simple process of photosynthesis of trees, which absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, it brings noticeable improvements in the quality of the air breathed. In only one hour, one hectare of forest absorbs the volume of carbon dioxide produced by two hundred people.

In addition, thanks to the shade areas maintained by the trees, the forest provides a cool environment in summer, filters rainwater, mitigates extreme weather, prevents landslides, helps to regenerate the soil.

The foresters are the ones in charge to monitor, study and protect the forest and to manage forestry as harmoniously with nature as possible.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ... just 3 trees planted around the house can lower your air conditioning bills by up to 50% and trees that are planted in front of the house as a shield against the wind can lower your heating bill by up to 30%.

ACTIVITY:

- Gather oak leaves or other trees near the path and you will have the most beautiful foliage! Your colleagues will envy you for how lucky you are to have such natural wealth!

ROUTE DIRECTION

Continue down the path, then turn left at the marked intersection and you'll soon reach Stop no. 3.

