

# Management of the National Parks

Detelina Hadjieva,  
Senior Auditor, Department VIII



# Scope and duration of the audit

The audit on management of National Parks (NPs) covers the period from 01.01.2010 till 31.12.2012.

The engagement was assigned at the end of May 2013.

The audit report was adopted by the Bulgarian National Audit Office's Board on the 23-th of July 2014 (Decision N 150)



# Audit Objectives

1. Assessment of the effectiveness of the management of the national parks in Bulgaria and the extent of achieving the set objectives and priorities.
2. Assessment of the reliability of the systems for the monitoring and control on the implementation of the planned measures and activities on the national parks territories.
3. Supporting the legal and executive authority and the management of the audited entities to improve the effectiveness when managing the national parks.



# Audit questions

**Are the national parks being managed effectively and is the main objective for their creation achieved – preservation of the biodiversity in the ecosystems and of the natural processes ensuing from them?**

1. Are there sufficient preconditions created for the effective implementation of the management of the NPs and the conservation of the biodiversity?
2. Is the management of the NPs related to conservation of the biodiversity and the ecosystems and the natural processes ensuing from them being carried out effectively?
3. Is there a monitoring and control system established that guarantees the implementation of the measures and activities included in the NPs' Management Plans?
4. Are there suitable procedures for creation of new national parks or expansion of existing ones established?



# Audit methods

## Information gathering methods:

1. Study and analysis of documents, including legal ones;
2. Questionnaires and interviewing of employees;
3. On the spot checks at the National Parks Directorates.

## Data analysis methods:

1. Data summarizing;
2. Comparative analysis.



## Main conclusions

1. There are general conditions created for the biodiversity protection through developing of the national regulatory framework, which is harmonized with the EU law.
2. The Government estimates the loss of biodiversity as one of the main risks for the environment and defines objectives and priorities toward the biodiversity protection in planning and programming documents, national and sectoral policies.
3. The national environmental protection legislation permits the development of the protected territories system as a mean for conservation of the natural ecosystems, the species' variety and the natural phenomena by delegating the initiation of the procedure for declaring or change of the protected territories to a maximal range of interested persons.



## Main conclusions 2

4. The main problems related to ensuring of preconditions for the effective implementation of the management of the NPs and the biodiversity protection in the protected areas are:
- legally restricted powers of the control authorities in protected areas ;
  - the reduction of the budgetary financing for realization of measures and activities in the NPs;
  - the lack of up to date Management Plans for two of the three NPs;
  - lack of approved requirements towards the content and form of the documents for the annual planning of the activities in the NPs.



## Main conclusions 3

5. The management of the NPs is not sufficiently effective, as:

5.1. The borders of the NPs on ground are not clearly marked and no complete refreshment of the terrain marking of the borders is done.

5.2. The established organization of the activity on guarding and control of the protected territories does not guarantee permanent guarding and maximal coverage of the guarded sectors as in none of the NPs the normative requirement for maximal allowed territory of guarded sector of up to 1 500 ha is kept.

5.3. The carried out by the National Parks Directorates administrative control does not achieve the expected preventive effect.



## Main conclusions 4

5.4. The activities on monitoring of the biodiversity in the NPs are not implemented to a full extent. There is not enough comparable data about the status of the monitored species. There are no endorsed methods for monitoring of all objects, defined for monitoring in the NPs. The number of some of the endangered species is decreasing.

5.5. The system for monitoring and control on the activity of the NPDs does not ensure enough data about the results on NPs management and the status of the biodiversity therein.



## Main conclusions 5

6. The data from the system for monitoring and control of the management of the NPs hinders:

- carrying out of comparative analysis of the management of the various NPs;
- the analysis and assessment of the progress in the implementation of the objectives, set in the long-term planning documents for the management of the protected territories;
- taking managerial decisions for change and/or optimizing of the regulatory framework in the field of the protected territories and biodiversity protection.



## Lessons learned

1. The earlier implementation of the on-the-spot checks in the NPs, gave us an opportunity to address strictly main issues and to put findings on the right context.
2. The lack of expertise and sufficient knowledge of biodiversity, was one of the main reason to exclude from the scope of the audit deep research of the problems about establishing the National system for monitoring of biodiversity.
3. The legal framework give a huge varieties to increase the protected areas including the territories of the NPs, but the authorities did not use them sufficiently.
4. To increase the administrative capacity of BNAO through participating in the cooperative audits is a necessity and grate possibility.





*Thank you for the attention!*

