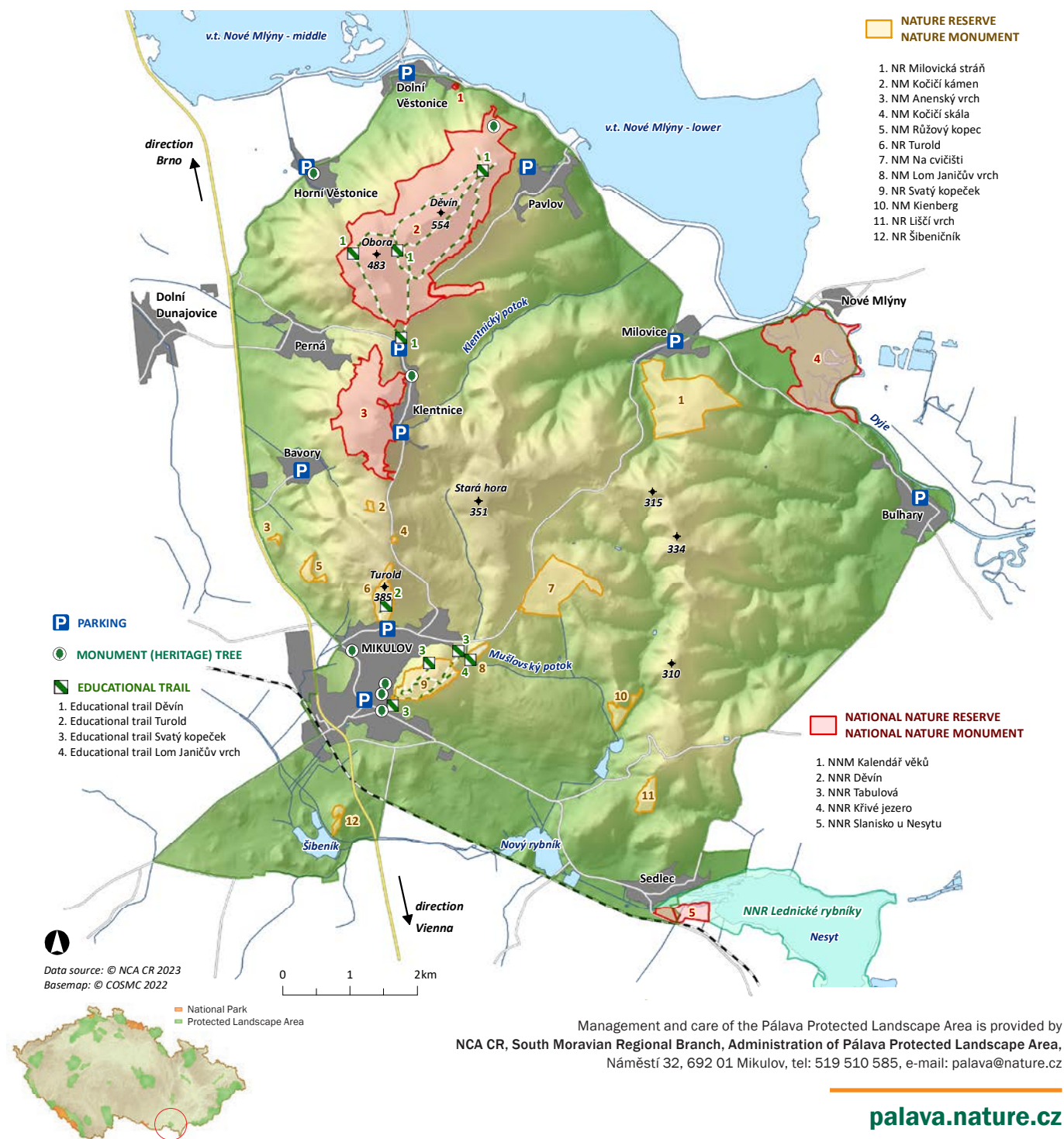


Pálava

Protected Landscape Area



Did you know that...

- the Pálava Hills are the westernmost protrusion of the Carpathians?
- there are 670 species of vascular plants at Děvín national nature reserve? That represents almost a fifth of the flora of the entire Czech Republic.
- the longest earthworm (*Allolobophora hrabei*) in the Czech Republic lives in Pálava? Its length can exceed half a meter and it inhabits deep soils at the flat top of the Tabulová Hill.
- the game reserves in the Milovice forest probably host the richest population of coprophagous insects (popularly known as “dung bugs”) in our country?

We appreciate your considerate behavior towards the nature, especially...

- camping and making fires only in designated places
- driving and parking only where permitted
- walking along marked paths in the national nature reserves
- cycling with caution and respect to the nature and other visitors
- protecting animals and plants in their natural environment
- not littering the nature



4 educational trails
.....
85 km² of protected area



Iris pumila | Photo Jan Miklín



Lacerta viridis | Photo Jan Miklín



Dianthus lumnitzeri | Photo Jan Miklín

Not many places in the Czech Republic offer so many stunning and diverse natural beauties and a variety of landscapes like Pálava, with its gleaming white cliffs, spring mosaics of blossoming steppes, vineyards located on sun-lit slopes and oak groves.

Crossroads of cultures

This sun-drenched landscape, scented by the scorched limestone, carries a history older than the Egyptian pyramids, older than the Olympian Gods. Walking around Pálava is like reading through the chronicle of humankind. The first chapters were written in times of eternal winters when people, hunters, came here following the herds of reindeer and mammoths. Pálava also played a significant role in later historical periods. The Celts, Germans, and Romans all left their marks here, as well as the ancient Slavs who came here to build their new settlements. Not only has Pálava been a place where different cultures met, it is also a place where the fauna and flora from various regions mingle. Pálava has always been a crossroads, always a place teeming with exceptional diversity.

The unique flora of Pálava

On Pálava, you can find eight unique species of plants that do not exist anywhere else in the Czech republic. The feather grass *Stipa eriocaulis* is bound to the driest steppes on the southern slope of the Svatý kopeček Hill, while the Large-flowered Sandwort (*Arenaria grandiflora*) and Hungarian Pink (*Dianthus lumnitzeri*), surviving here from the last Ice Age, inhabit the crevices of the northern limestone cliffs of Děvín. The Mountain German-der (*Teucrium montanum*) seeks the sun-lit rocky steppes on hilltops, while the Austrian Bedstraw (*Galium austriacum*) prefers sites on the northern foothills. Another three species thrive on disturbed grassy turf, such as the African Sage (*Salvia aethiopsis*; on the upper edge of the southern slope of the Tabulová hora Hill) and White Laceflower (*Orlaya grandiflora*; on the southeastern slope of Děvín).



Upupa epops | Photo Jiří Neudert



Grazing in reserves | Photo Jan Miklín



Tourists in Pálava | Photo Jiří Kmet

The surprising beauty of animals

The diversity of local animal species is perhaps best illustrated by the exotically colored Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*). Game reserves in the Milovice forest are a home to its most numerous population in the Czech Republic. Pálava is the only place in our country where you can encounter three types of beautifully coloured steppe spiders. The nature reserve Holy Hill is an ideal place to observe them. In the spring, you might catch a glimpse of male *Eresus moravicus* and *E. hermani* looking for their females' burrows. On the other hand, the quite common Ladybird Spider (*Eresus kollari*) only becomes "ardent" in the autumn. That is also the time when you can see our largest grasshopper, the predatory bush cricket (*Saga pedo*), which can grow up to ten centimeters.

When mowing and grazing is not enough

The beauty of Pálava is a result of its unique position in Europe and the farming methods of our ancestors. To maintain its diversity, human care is essential. We primarily focus on the steppes and meadows. We provide regular mowing and grazing, as it was common in the past. In places where the meadows and steppes have been neglected, shrubs are cut to prevent overgrowth. We also promote less common measures. These include creating fallow lands in the buffer zones of some reserves or using military vehicles in the "Training Grounds" reserve. These methods support species that need exposed soil surfaces. We look after the forests too, focusing on opening up overly dense and shady areas. We also reintroduce formerly abandoned coppicing. Many endangered forest insect species are dependent on sunlight in addition to the presence of trees.

What to see?

If you have only a few hours to spare, be sure to visit Děvín (you can walk through the entire reserve in about 3 hours). The most varied palette of plants typical for local rocky steppes can be found on the southeastern slopes, marked by the green hiking trail. In spring, carpets of Dwarf Iris (*Iris pumila*) bloom, and on warm sunny days, a vigilant visitor might even spot the rare European Green Lizard (*Lacerta viridis*). If you make it to the ruins of the Maiden castle, you definitely should walk up to the peak of Děvín (550 m above sea level). There, you can enjoy breathtaking views of the entire South Moravia. On a clear day, you can see the cooling towers of the Dukovany nuclear power plant to the north, and even the distant Großer Priel in the Austrian Alps (250 km) to the south. Děvín attracts many visitors and therefore we appreciate that you only use the marked paths and that you are respectful to the local nature.