



# Czech Republic designates cave complex for the Ramsar List

7 December 2004

Czech Republic



Punkva Caves named as a Ramsar site

The Secretariat is pleased to report that the Administrative Authority in the Czech Republic, the Ministry of the Environment, has nominated "Punkva subterranean stream (Podzemní Punkva)" (1,571 hectares, 49°25'N 016°44'E) for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, as of 18 March 2004. The site is already a Protected Landscape Area and Nature Reserve, as well as a well-known tourist wonder in South Moravian region. The Czech Republic now has added 11 Ramsar sites since the country joined the Convention in 1990 as part of Czechoslovakia, and then succeeded to Czechoslovakia as the Czech Republic on the first of January 1993. Ramsar's Estelle Gironnet has prepared a brief site description of the site, based upon the Ramsar Information Sheet submitted with the designation instrument.

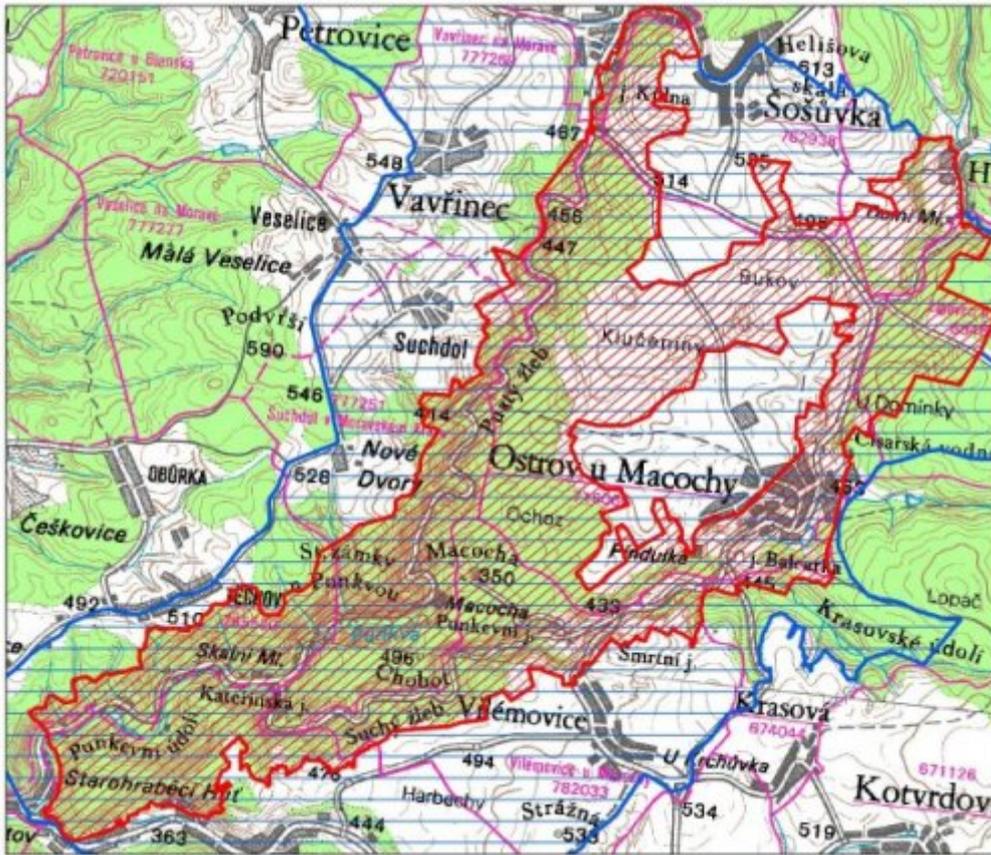
Punkva subterranean stream (Podzemní Punkva). The subterranean system belongs to the most valuable karst area in the Czech Republic, and the 'Amateur Cave' complex with 34 km of known cave passageways is its largest cave system. The site includes springs, several sinkholes, permanent and intermittent subterranean tributaries to the Punkva stream that are connected to caves. Through the sinkholes, surface streams disappear underground where they flow into the caves, some of which are permanently filled with water, with open water surfaces or flooded throughout their whole profile. Other caves flood periodically or have no running water.

The site hosts the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*), the bats *Myotis dasycneme*, *Myotis daubentonii* which overwinter or stopover during migration, and characteristic communities of cave fauna. Several species of fauna new to science have been found, which may be either endemics or newly-described species with a wider distribution such as the springtails *Onychiurus rauseri* and *Arrhopalites ruseki*.

At the surface, most of the site is forested and a small area is covered by extensively managed agricultural land. The major problem affecting the site's ecological character is the discharge of poorly-treated wastewater from surrounding villages - the installation of wastewater treatment plants in the areas above sinkholes, changes in agricultural practices, regulations imposed in the caves with public access and for cave research have improved site conservation. A management plan is under implementation. The site presents some archaeological and cultural values with remains of an old settlement (cave Kulna), ruins of castles (Holčejn and Blansek), and a wind mill designated as a cultural monument. Ramsar site no. 1413.

Tourist information, plans, and photographs can be found at <http://www.cavemk.cz/en/jp.htm>, <http://www.blansko.cz/en/kras/mk-punkevni.php?lang=en>, and <http://www.showcaves.com/english/cz/showcaves/Punkevni.html>.

## RAMSAR SITE PUNKVA SUBTERRANEAN STREAM



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