

3. *Excursion: Zaton – Vjetrenica (BiH) – Ston*

Zaton

The Palata Spring at Mali Zaton Bay is situated on the seacoast, at a reverse tectonic contact between Mesozoic carbonate formations (karst aquifer) and flysch complex (hydrogeological barrier). The spring zone is covered with 15 to 17 m of debris (carbonate blocks, boulder, terra-rosa, and clay) and is under the permanent influence of the tide. The main flow occurs through the zone of boulders deposited over the karstified dolomite. The discharge varies between 0.03 and 25.0 m³/s. The estimated catchment area is at least 50 km, and most probably larger. However, underground connections with the Popovo Polje area do not exist.



Fig. 3.1. Springs

Vjetrenica

The Vjetrenica Cave (Windy cave) is located in the south-western rim of the Popovo polje. It is the most explored speleological object in the karst of eastern Herzegovina. Investigation of the Vjetrenica Cave started at 1858 and the length of surveyed channels has reached 7,503 m. Some 1,250 m has been adapted for tourist visits. The main channel is sub-horizontal and is passable until the Veliko jezero hall (Big Lake). In the 1960s another lateral channel with water flow was discovered by the speleologists. Its length is around 200 m.

An interesting example is the Gaovica fish (*Paraphoxinus ghetaldi*) which spends dry (summer) months in numerous syphonic lakes and estavelle pools. During periods when the polje floods the fish leave the underground through karst channels and openings of estavelles. In this period the estavelles are discharging water. For the duration of inundation, the fish live in the huge temporal lake of the Popovo Polje. For centuries fishing at the openings of estavelles was an important tradition and food source for inhabitants.

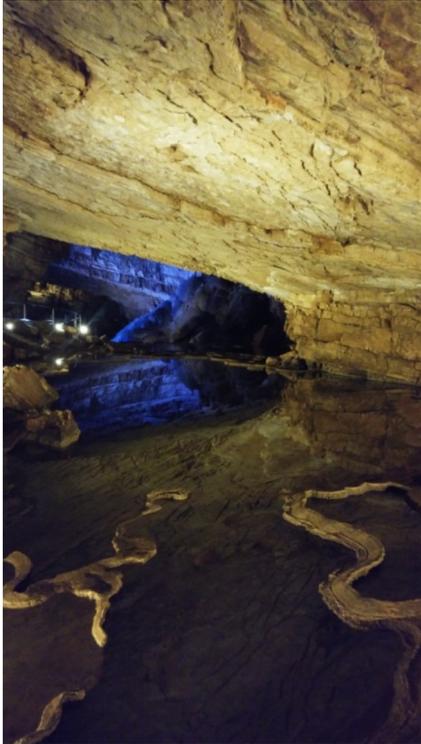


Fig. 3.2. Vjetrenica cave (photo by T. Marković) and Proteus anguinus (photo by Ž. Zubac)

Ston

The Ston area was settled as early as the prehistoric times. The town area of the mediaval Ston expanded over the southern slopes of St. Michael. A settlement on the top has existed since the

prehistory. The St. Michael Church, located in the immediate vicinity of the present-day town, is one of the most valuable monuments from the Early Middle Ages. In Roman times Ston was named Turris Stagi. In 1333 it became part of the Dubrovnik Republic. From that time, all until the fall of the Dubrovnik Republic in 1808, Ston was its integral part and the second largest town after Dubrovnik. The tame and picturesque Mediterranean landscape makes this small town and its environment even more beautiful. Tourists are especially attracted by gastronomic specialities of the region, primarily oysters, mussels and other seafood that makes the Malostonski Bay famous. In other words, Ston should be visited and enjoyed in every sense.



Fig. 3.3 Ston – city walls and saltwort (<http://www.split-excursions.com/destinations/ston/>)

***** Please check if you require visa to enter Bosnia & Herzegovina!***