

THE UNFORGETTABLE GET-TOGETHER ON ZAVIŽAN

Two- days excursion of Croatian meteorological Society to northern Velebit

On the last weekend in September 2001, Croatian Meteorological Society organized a trip to Velebit. Participants were 28 meteorologist, 3 of them from Pula, and 12 hikers from Croatian Hiking Society *Zagreb- Matica*.

Our goal was to reach the hiking lodging and meteorological station Zavižan (1594 m asl), situated on the southern hillside of Vučjak (1645 m), on the northern Velebit. Zavižan is the highest meteorological station in Croatia where regular measurements have been performed for almost half a century.

The pleasant journey started in the bus to Senj. The organizer Milan Sijerković gave us a brief overview of the history of meteorological observations on the northern Velebit, while Zoran Vakula gave at first hand weather forecast for the next couple of days. As soon as we got on Velebit, we started climbing towards Rožanski kukovi. Premužić hiking trail led us to the hiker's shelter "Rossijeva koliba" (Rossi's cabin) at the height of 1580 m through the most beautiful and the most inaccessible parts of Velebit. In the vicinity of the cabin there is long-term rain-gauge (totalizator).

After we had returned to the climbers lodging *Zavižan* and have had dinner, we all hung around until late at night, singing, laughing and having fun. Since that night the sky was clear, some of us decided to examine its details closely, with the help of Ante Radonić, the Head of Zagreb planetarium.

The next morning our host Ante Vukušić gave us a tour of meteorological center, describing all the measurements taken there and the typical extremes of the location. Climate on Velebit, characterized by extremes, sudden changes and interfering of Mediterranean and continental influences, makes its vegetation very specific and even endemic. Therefore the area of northern Velebit has been recognized as a national park in 1999.

After taking some pictures we carried on to the top of Veliki Zavižan (1676 m). It is a rocky area, covered with juniper trees, which gave out an impressive and extraordinary view of the sea, Rožanski and Hajdučki kukovi, Veliki kozjak etc. Then we visited the Velebit Botanical Garden (1480 m), while after that only the most enduring people managed to climb up the Peak of Balinovac (1601 m) and Zavižanska kosa (1622 m).

We are planning to visit Velebit again in the future. That would be a chance for another new and wonderful experience on Zavižan.

Alan Čaplar

(translated by Nataša Škifić)



