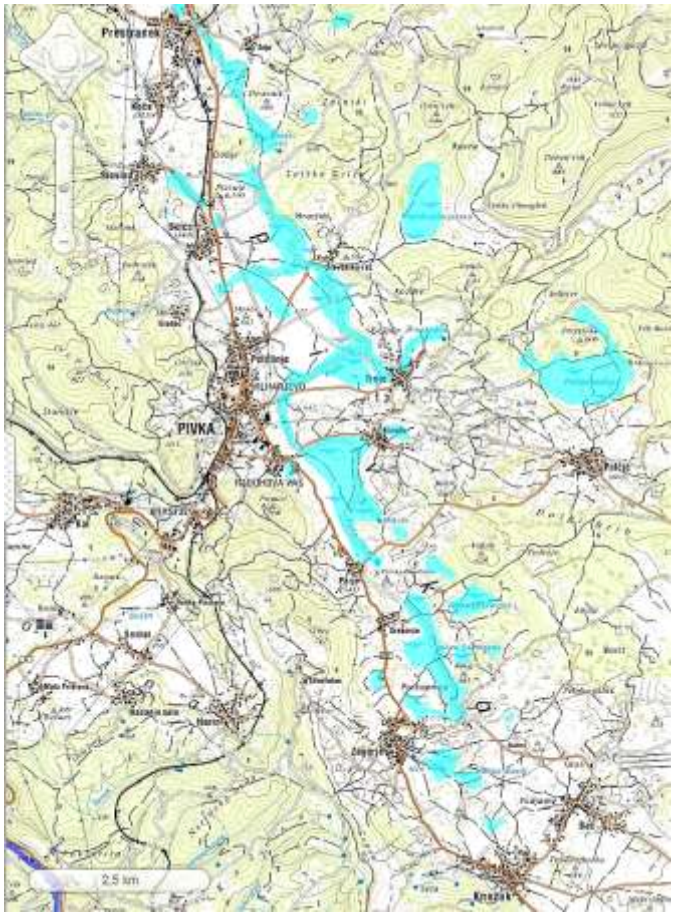
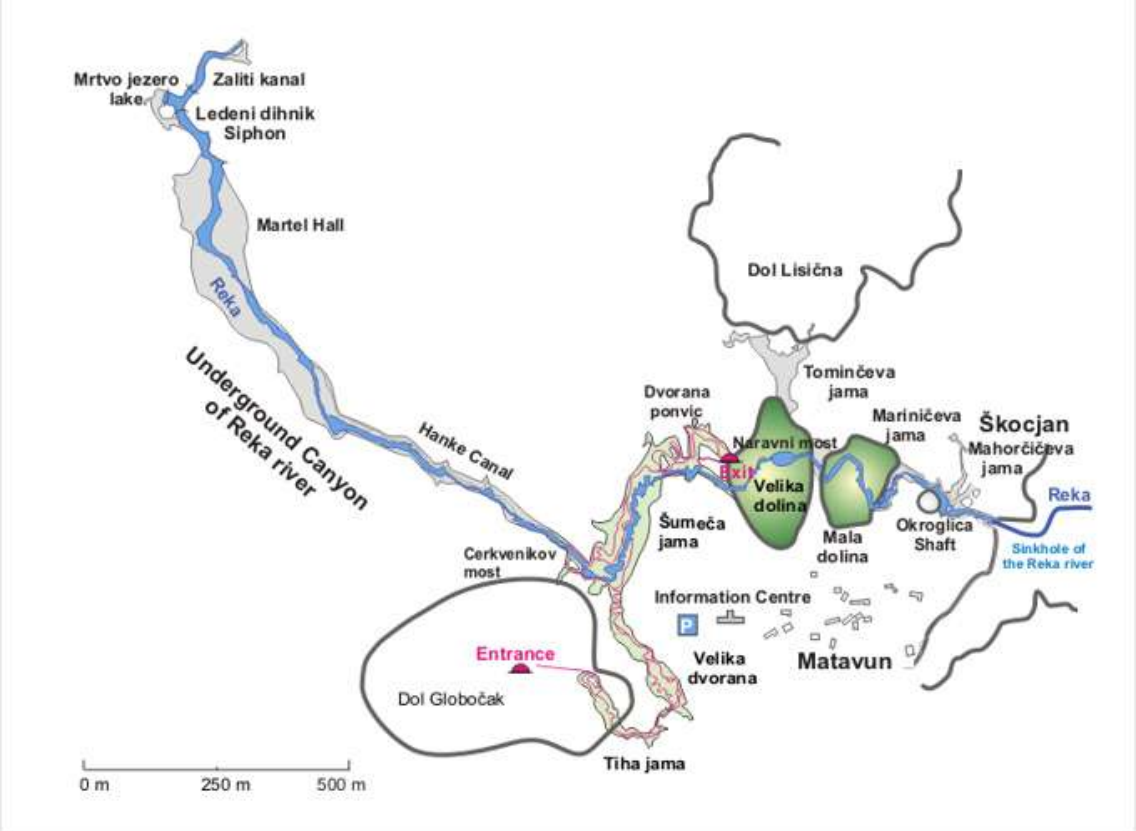
1: Pivka intermittent lakes



The Pivka intermittent lakes appear when high karst waters flood large and small karst depressions (poljas and dolinas) thus forming intermittent lakes lasting for several days to several months. Flora have adapted to the naturally changeable water regime forming a distinct patchy and zonal pattern of diverse wetland vegetation depending on flooding interval length. The largest lakes are Palško jezero and Petelinjsko jezero with longer axis of the lake bottom larger than 1500 m. The other depressions have bottom diameter between 100 and 300 m. Their rocky bottoms are covered by a layer of sediment and soil which in most cases is not thicker than 0.5 m. Transition from a levelled bottom to the steep slope is morphologically strict and distinctive. When water in numerous channels rises it appears on the surfaces of these depressions and also in the bed of the Pivka river. The area is at the junction of two phytogeographical areas, Submediterranean and Dinaric. The plants cannot migrate during flooding so several of them are well adapted by their physiology and/or morphology and similar situation can be found in several other intermittent lakes along the Dinaric range. 182 plant species are reported for the wetland habitat types, but in iddaiton to that submediterranean dry grasslands around the lakes and natural forests hold a very rich plant diversity. Some interesting plants: *Allium angulosum, Clematis integrifolia, Gentiana pneumonanthe, Gladiolus illyricus, Iris sibirica , Ophioglossum vulgatum, Pseudolysimachion longifolium, Viola elatior*, vegetation: *Gladiolo-Molinietum, Deschampsio-Plantaginetum altissimae* etc. The area is part of a Natura 2000 SCI Javorniki-Snežnik with 14 qualifying plant species and 12 qualifying habitat types.

More information: http://www.pivskajezera.si/

2: Škocjan caves



As early as in 1887, Carlo Marchesetti provided a botanical description of the Škocjan Caves in a guidebook about this natural valuable feature. The deep collapse dolines surprise phytogeographers with their numerous kinds of frigophilous species (e.g. *Primula auricula, Saxifraga crustata Kernera saxatilis*) and a variety of thermophilic (e.g. *Adiantum capillus veneris, Centaurea rupestris, Chrysopogon gryllus, Cleistogenes serotina, Digitalis Laevigata, Pulsatilla montana, Potentilla tommasiniana, Ruta divaricata*), sub-Mediterranean species co-existing nearby. Some taxa are particulary interesting as *Orobanche mutelii, Campanula justiniana* (locus classicus), *Aconitum anthora, Hyssopus officinalis, Juniperus oxycedrus, Ranunculus pospichalii*. Vegetation shift between the Carstic thermophilous vegetation around Škocjanske jame and the bottom of the collapse doline is imense as the bottom of these dolines is 120 to 160 m deep with ecological conditions more similar to the Central-European ones than those in the Karst area.

Vegetation: Karst forests *Ostryo carpinifoliae-Quercetum pubescentis,* grasslands *xxx*

The cave system of Škocjanske jame is one of the most diverse in the whole Dinaric Karst area wit total kength of cave passages more tha 6 km, deepest point 223 metres (from the surface), with Reka river having 26 underground waterfalls and one of the deepest underground canyon up to 146 metres heigh. First tourist trails in the cave: 1884-1906, today around 100,000 visitors per year. Managing authority: Javni zavod park Škocjanske jame. UNESCO World heritage site since 1986, Regional Park since 1996, Underground wetland (Ramsar) since 1999, Karst biosphere reserve (MAB) since 2004. Part of a Natura 2000 SCI Kras with 3 qualifying plant species and 8 qualifying habitat types.

More information: http://www.park-skocjanske-jame.si/