A new home for the birds of Pomorie Lake

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Article and photos by Green Balkans NGO, Bulgaria

During the period September 2012 to April 2013 in Pomorie Lake (Ramsar Site “Pomorie Wetland Complex” 1229) an insular habitat was constructed, aiming at improving the nesting conditions of a number of bird species and providing a secure place for migratory and wintering birds to rest. The island was shaped by cutting an old useless dyke built in the 1970s for the needs of the salt production industry. The new habitat is appropriate for the birds that are naturally nesting on the ground and are thus extremely vulnerable because of the free access of terrestrial predators and humans to their nests.

The work of the experts from the Green Balkans NGO was rewarded by the great number of birds that chose the new habitat as their nesting place. In July 2013 about 3000 pairs from several wetland species were registered on the island: Sandwich Terns (Sterna sandvicensis), Little Terns (Sterna albifrons), Common Terns (Sterna hirundo), Little Ringed Plovers (Charadrius dubius), Kentish Plovers (Charadrius alexandrinus) and Pied Avocets (Recurvirostra avosetta). On the island successfully nested also Mediterranean Gulls (Larus melanocephalus), Gull-billed Terns (Sterna nilotica) and Black-headed Gulls (Larus ridibundus). International experts also recognized the value of the island during a seminar for exchange of information on wetland conservation practices organized in Pomorie in April 2013 within the activities of the project ‘Environmental management and conservation in Mediterranean salt works and coastal lagoons’ (LIFE10/NAT/IT/000256).
The insular habitat on Pomorie Lake.

The insular habitat is also a secure resting place for thousands of migratory birds following the Via Pontica migration route every year (pelicans, herons, waders, etc.), directly improving the conservation status of a number of bird species protected by national and international legislation. Such initiatives support the implementation of the goals set in a number of trans-governmental agreements such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Birds Directive of the European Union (2009/147/ЕО).

The new insular habitat was constructed within the project “Urgent measures for restoration and conservation of species and habitats of European significance within Pomorie Lake complex of protected natural areas”, funded by the operational program “Environment” 2007-2013 of the European Union. The implementation of this environmental initiative is a good example of a successful partnership between governmental authorities (Ministry of Environment and Waters of Bulgaria) and non-governmental organizations (Green Balkans NGO) working together to implement the actions and recommendations listed in the international agreements ratified by the Republic of Bulgaria.
An aerial view of the island.

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