

BlackSeaWet Initiative resumes work

13 December 2012

Romania

Two years after its last meeting in Tulcea (Romania), the management body of the Ramsar regional initiative for Coastal Wetlands of the Black and Azov Seas ("BlackSeaWet" for short) met again on 6-8 November 2012 in Istanbul, Turkey. The meeting was hosted by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks in the guesthouse of the Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs. This provided a practical location for over twenty experts, representing Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine, Wetlands International, the MedWet Initiative and the Ramsar Secretariat, to discuss, exchange their ideas and work on common programmes. The Ramsar authority of the Russian Federation apologized for not being present, but stressed its interest to participate in future work.



Kizilirmak Delta: flooded riverine forest in the Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site (Turkey) © N. Alexeeva

After short presentations of the ongoing activities at national level in the six countries present, the meeting split into small working groups to focus on a limited number of priority problems of wetland conservation, management and restoration to be addressed in 2013. The outcome of these discussions was that Turkey (represented by Şerif Hizli) agreed to draft a project proposal for the assessment of climate change impacts on coastal wetland ecosystems along the Black and Azov Seas. Wetlands International (represented by Vasiliy Kostyushin) proposed to develop a regional waterbird population monitoring scheme. And Turkey (represented by Mustafa Akincioglu) made an invitation to host

an expert conference on sustainable waterbird hunting in late 2013. It is hoped that hunting experts from Ducks Unlimited (Americas), FACE (European Union) and others can also contribute to the success of such an international conference. Bulgaria (represented by Aylin Hasan and Neli Mutafova) volunteered to prepare public awareness materials for the initiative, and the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (represented by Camelia Căpriță) promised to update the BlackSeaWet website (www.blackseawet.org) on a regular basis, based on timely inputs provided by all partners of the regional initiative.



Attentive listeners during the reporting session of the Black Sea Wet management body meeting © T. Salathé

The clear focus on a few tangible regional priorities, the Turkish invitation for a regional conference in 2013, and the specific engagements by a number of the countries concerned augur well for an active and successful year 2013 of wetland cooperation in the Black and Azov Sea region. Further details can be found on its website, or be obtained from its national focal points and working groups (as listed on the website in six languages). This Black and Azov Sea region harbours an outstanding density of coastal wetlands that definitively merit better coordinated and sustained efforts.



Reporting session of the Black Sea Wet management body meeting © T. Salathé

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