Hungary names its 29th Ramsar Site during the European Union Presidency

1 July 2011

Hungary

The Ramsar Secretariat is pleased to announce that the Government of Hungary has designated Fishponds and Marshlands south of Lake Balaton (Dél-balatoni halastavak és berkek), located in the County of Somog. This Ramsar Site (9,483 ha; 46°42’N 017°36’E) is also listed as a Protected Area, Special Protection Area (SPA), and Site of Community Importance (SCI).

The site consists of several sub-sites in the South of Lake Balaton Ramsar Site, the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe. It mainly consists of natural or near-natural marshland, meadows and fishponds including many habitat types listed under the EU Habitats Directive. The site supports globally and regionally threatened species of plants like Water Chestnut *Trapa natans*, fish species like European Mudminnow *Umbra krameri*, several breeding bird species such as Bittern *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* as well as mammal species like Otter *Lutra lutra*. 
As summarised by Kati Wenzel, Assistant Advisor for Europe, this Ramsar Site is also an important staging area during migration and wintering season for more than twenty thousand individuals of waterbirds. This includes about 12,000 Greater White-fronted Geese *Anser albifrons* and 9,000 Greylag Geese *Anser anser* for which this site fulfils Ramsar criterion 6 as it supports more than 1% of the population of these species. The site also hosts more than 1% of the population of the Great White Egret *Ardea alba* and the non-avian species Root Vole *Microtus oeconomus*, which is endemic to the Carpathian Basin (Ramsar Criterion 9). Human use of the site includes fish-farming, fishing, reed harvesting, hunting, forestry, and tourism. The “Balaton Catchment Area Water Management Plan” was completed in 2010 under the guidelines of The EU Water Framework Directive.

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