Site extension in Romania

6 July 2021

Romania has extended the Dumbravita-Rotbav Fishpond Complex, which now covers five times its original area. This system of a reservoir and fishponds featuring mudflats and surrounded by fields of crops, meadows, wet grasslands, marsh areas and dense emergent vegetation with reedbeds was extended in 2021 to include the Rotbav fishpond complex, and align with the wetland habitats of the Dumbrăvița-Rotbav-Măgura Codlei Natura 2000 Site. This caused the area to increase from 414 to 2,282 hectares.

The Site (no. 1605 on the Ramsar List) supports a rich plant life and provides an important breeding site for over 30 waterbird species and a staging area for more than 100 bird species. Through targeted integrated management, the number of passage species of conservation concern, such as black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and great white egret (*Ardea alba*), has increased significantly in recent years. Besides the most abundant species, some species which are rare in Romania can be found, such as *Platalea leucorodia*, *Plegadis falcinellus*, *Cygnus cygnus*, and *Branta ruficollis*.

The entire pond system, with its highly productive mudflats is largely covered in reedbeds and used for aquaculture. Other uses include recreation, and agriculture including livestock grazing and haymaking which contribute to the annual regeneration of grasslands and marshes and prevent overgrowing.

Threats include illegal waste dumping and uncontrolled reed burning. The increased number of fish-eating cormorants around the ponds could potentially lead to a human-wildlife conflict between farm owners and birds, to prevent this the Site management plan proposes non-violent solutions including compensation measures.

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