



Switzerland inaugurates nature reserve near Geneva

13 April 2001

Switzerland



Teppes de Verbois Restoration Project

"All politics is local", according to former Speaker of the US House of Representatives Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill, Jr., and the same might be said of Ramsar sites of international importance. First of all they are local sites of local importance. This was certainly the impression to be had at the inauguration of the "Teppes de Verbois project" near Geneva last Friday, 6th April 2001.

A crowd of people in rubber boots and anoraks gathered at the site to celebrate the result of 24 years of efforts by local environmental groups to include this major wetland restoration project within the boundary of the recently-extended Swiss Ramsar site of "Geneva Rhône-Allondon-Laire" to the west of Lake Geneva.

Philippe Roch, Director General of the Swiss Federal Agency of Environment, Forest and Landscape, described the site's international importance, and the Geneva authorities spoke of the farsightedness of a succession of Geneva administrations to preserve the site. Overall, about 5 million Swiss francs have been invested jointly by the cantonal Government of Geneva and the Swiss Government, together with support provided by the Firmenich Company.

However, warm tribute was paid to Denis Landenbergue's tenacity over the many years since he first discovered a pair of Melodious Warblers, *Hippolais polyglotta*, nesting in what was then an area of gravel pits, scrubland and industrial sites situated near the Swiss/French border where the Rhône winds down from Lake Geneva into France. Denis (now working for WWF International as Senior Campaigner for Wetland Conservation for their "Living Waters Campaign") and local environmental groups have fought against such projects as a nuclear power plant, a major bypass highway, a navigation channel and a big sports centre to bring the citizens of Geneva a natural reserve of about 25 hectares which includes a leisure zone complete with fishing pond.

For more details (French only) : <http://www.geneve.ch/diae/teppesdeverbois/>

-- reported by Valerie Higgins, Ramsar

Source URL: <https://www.ramsar.org/news/switzerland-inaugurates-nature-reserve-near-geneva#comment-0>