

Approved:
By the Minister of Environment and Water-
Ms. Evdokia
Maneva

**Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in general,
and of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in particular,
during the period since the National Report prepared in 1995
for Ramsar COP6 and 30 June 1998**

Contracting Party: Bulgaria
Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

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Ministry of Environment and Waters

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Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 1

To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.

1.1 *Describe any actions your government has taken (such as hosting regional or subregional meetings/consultations, working co-operatively with neighbouring countries on transfrontier wetland sites) to encourage others to join the Convention.*

- Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), Ministry of Environment and Waters (MoEW) and Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme (BSBCP) have been organizers of the Third Geese Research Group meeting of Wetlands International, Kavarna, February 1998.
- Bulgaria has been invited to participate the First Mediterranean Wetland Committee meeting as a country of the Mediterranean basin, Thessaloniki, Greece, March 1998.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 2

To achieve the wise use of wetlands by implementing and further developing the Ramsar Wise Use Guidelines.

2.1 *Has a National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan been developed, or is one being developed or planned for the near future?*

National Action Plan for the Conservation of the Most Important Wetlands in Bulgaria has been worked out in 1993 and has been implemented successfully. Concrete conservation measures have been applied for 14 most important wetlands (from all 15 wetlands, included in the Plan). All these activities were sponsored by France, Switzerland, Monaco and several international organizations as Ramsar Convention Bureau, Birdlife International, WWF - Austria, and other.

There is a need for new National Plan covering the whole country and National Wetland Inventory also.

If so:

a. *What are/will be its main features?*

The National plan gives the priority to several Bulgarian wetlands and to several main conservation measures for them. Unfortunately the National plan has played its role and needs to be renewed and all newly gathered scientific

information through the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme to be added.

b. Was it, or is it, intended that the Policy/Strategy/Action Plan be adopted by the whole of Government, the Minister responsible for Ramsar matters or through some other process. Please describe.

The above mentioned National Plans are in the priorities of:

- Ministry of Environment and Waters;
- National Forestry Department (Formal Committee of Forestry) at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Agriculture Reforms;
- Several National NGO's as Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, Green Balkans Federation; Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program (BSBCP), GEF Project; the Foundation "Le Balkan", Green Danube Project and other.

c. How does it relate/will it relate to other national environmental/conservation planning initiatives (e.g., National Environmental Action Plans, National Biodiversity Action Plans, National Conservation Strategies)?

The National Plan for Conservation of the Most Important Wetlands in Bulgaria relates to:

- the National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity, prepared in 1993 with the help of USAID - the problems of Bulgarian wetlands are discussed in details in a separate chapter of the National strategy. This strategy was approved officially by the Council of Ministers in March 1998.
- Bulgarian CORINE Biotopes Project - 31 of all 141 such sites are wetlands. This project was implemented with financial support of Phare programme in the period 1996-98.
- Important Bird Areas in Bulgaria (a book, published in 1997) - significant part (27 of all 50 such areas) are wetlands. They are described comprehensively.
- A National action plan for the conservation of the biodiversity is under preparation with financial support from UNDP. Big team of scientists and experts is involved in the elaboration of this important plan. A separate chapter of this plan is devoted to the Bulgarians wetlands and their biodiversity. The plan will be ready in the first half of 1999 and will be in the priorities of several Bulgarian ministries. In all these processes the MoEW has played the leading role.

2.2. If a policy is in place, how much progress has been made in its implementation, and what are the major difficulties being encountered in doing so?

- Management Plans for 4 Ramsar sites (Durankulak lake, Shabla lake, Atanasovsko lake and Arkutino marsh) and other wetlands (Poda Protected Area, Alepu marsh, Stamoplo marsh and Kamchia biosphere reserve) have been prepared by BSBCP;
- Management plan of Vardim island (on Danube river) has been prepared by former Committee of Forestry and Green Balkans Federation;

- Management plan for two wetlands on Black sea coast (mouths of Silistar and Veleka rivers) has been prepared by MOEW with the financial support of the Kingdom of Monaco;
- Management plan for one Ramsar site (Srebarna biosphere reserve) is under preparation by MoEW and Central Laboratory for General Ecology with the financial support of Ramsar Bureau
- New structure for conservation and management of wetlands and biodiversity in South Dobrogea (Nature Conservancy “Dobrogea”) has been created in the frame of a project, implemented by “Le Balkan” with the financial support of French government. Several international and foreign nature conservation organisations are members of this conservancy.
- A part of Vaya lake has been designated as protected site with 379 ha; this area has an international importance for wintering of globally threatened Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant, White-headed Duck and other.
- The Fish Ponds on Danube bank known as “Nova Cherna” Protected site) with 520 ha. have been bought by Green Balkans Federation. The intentions of this NGO are to manage this area in favor of the rare and endangered water birds.
- The reservoirs “Ovchariza” and “Rozov kladenez” with their surroundings are in a process of designation as protected sites with respectively 878 ha and 735 ha. Both are wetlands with international importance according wintering of geese, pelicans, cormorants and other bird species.

A new law for the protected nature territories, which contains a chapter, devoted to the problems of Management plans, is recently produced and adopted by the Parliament

(Governmental News Paper No 113/ November 1998).

A difficulty is connected with the lack of sufficient funds for implementation of already elaborated Management plans.

2.3 *If a Policy/Strategy/Action Plan is in place, is the responsibility for implementing it with:*

a. a single Government Ministry,

Yes - by the Ministry of Environment and Waters.

b. a committee drawn from several Ministries, or

No

c. a cross-sectoral committee?

No. After 3 governmental changes since January 1997 the established National Ramsar Committee is not functioning more. We are in a process of establishing of new one.

2.4 *For countries with Federal systems of Government, are there Wetland Policies/Strategies/Plans in place, being developed or planned for the provincial/state or regional levels of Government?*

Bulgaria has not a Federal system of Government.

2.5 *Has a review of legislation and practices which impact on wetlands been carried out, and if so, has this resulted in any changes which assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention? Please describe these.*

A group of experts has worked out new Law for protected territories, including the wetlands. A special chapter of the law is devoted to preparation and implementation of Management plans.

2.6 *Describe the efforts made in your country to have wetlands considered in integrated land/water and coastal zone planning and management processes at the following levels:*

a. national

At a national level the municipalities situated along the Black sea coast have prepared Territorial Development Plans (TDP) financed by the World Bank. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been worked out for each of them and approved by the High Expert Council at MoEW in 1997.

b. provincial

- At a provincial level a new structure for conservation and management of wetlands and biodiversity in South Dobrogea (Nature Conservancy “Dobrogea”) has been created in the frame of a project, implemented by “Le Balkan” with the financial support of French government.

c. local

Territorial Development Plan for Durankulak lake (Ramsar site) has been worked out by the foundation “Le Balkan”.

A new foundation “Burgas Wetlands” is planned to be established by BSBCP. It will incorporate the efforts of different governmental bodies and non governmental organisations for conservation and wise use of all wetlands around the city of Burgas.

2.7 *. Have there been any publications produced, or practices documented, which could assist other countries to promote and improve the application of the Ramsar Wise Use of Wetlands Guidelines?*

Yes:

If Yes, please provide details and copies

- Bulgarian Natural Heritage - large scale and rich illustrated book, published by MoEW (Phare Department) in the end 1995 in 6 European languages (Bulgarian, English, French, German, Greek and Italian).
- Important Bird Areas in Bulgaria (a book, published in 1997 by BSPB and compiled by I. Kostadinova) - significant part of IBA's (27 of all 50 such areas) are wetlands.
- The White Stork in Bulgaria (a book published by BSPB in 1997 , compiled by Tz. Petrov)
- News Letter of the BSBCP in Bulgarian and English language (No 1 - 4).
- Magazine “Branta”, published in Bulgarian and French language (No 1- 3).

- Biodiversity of Srebarna Biosphere Reserve- Checklist and Bibliography. Ministry of Environment and Waters, 130 p. [by Michev, T., B. Georgiev, A. Petrova, M. Stoyneva (eds), 1998].
- The Biodiversity of Shabla Lake - V. Golemansky & V. Naidenov (eds), 1998
- A collection of International Conventions for the Conservation of Biodiversity (first edition 1996 and second edition 1998, both in Bulgarian language) by Green Balkans Federation.
- Bulletin of the project “Burgas Wetlands” in the frame of BSBCP.

2.8. *Noting COP6 Recommendation 6.14 relating to toxic chemicals and pollution, please advise of the actions taken since then “to remedy and to prevent pollution impacts affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands” (Operative paragraph 9).*

A special department at the MoEW has been established to implement the international obligations in this field.

- A new law for toxic chemicals is under preparation. It will be ready by the end January 1999.
- A decree No 268 / 1998 of the Council of Ministers contains of UNO’s list of dangerous substances and postulates the regime of their registration and use.
- Bulgaria has ratified in January 1997 the Basel Convention for transport of west products.
- The Regional Inspectorates of MoEW have obligations to carry out monitoring of toxic chemicals in the country.

2.9 *Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions.*

No such steps have been taken.

2.10 *Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country?*

Yes. Environmental Impact Assessments are required always at actions connected with Bulgarian wetlands.

2.11 *Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country? If Yes, describe the actions that have been taken to identify wetlands in need of these actions and to mobilise resources for restoration or rehabilitation.*

Yes. These activities are described in details in the “National Plan for Priority Actions for conservation of the Most Important Wetlands in Bulgaria”. The most of them were implemented successfully with the exception of establishment of administrative structures. Such a structure was created only for Srebarna and Ropotamo nature reserve. According the new Law for the protected territories the MoEW has the obligation to establish an administrative structure for management and patrolling of all Ramsar sites.

There are some activities by several NGO’s as it follows:

Activities by BSPB:

Belene Island

- A draft restoration and management plan was prepared for restoration of the water regime and ecological value of the site;

- Project proposal for restoration of the wetland ecosystem was prepared by BSPB together with the NGO “Green Balkans” under the WWF “Green Danube” programme;

Poda Lagoon. This lagoon is protected area managed by BSPB. Management plan for the site was developed with help from the Swiss Government and BirdLife Switzerland in the framework of the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme (BSBCP). The priority conservation measures were undertaken. The uncontrolled access was stopped, the area was cleaned up and a Nature Conservation and Information Centre was built. These actions resulted in stopping pollution and disturbance of birds colonies.

Garvan Marsh. A Restoration Project for this wetland is under preparation by BSPB and WWF Green Danube project.

Former Straldzha Marsh. This was the biggest inland marsh in Bulgaria in the beginning of the century (about 100 sq. km). In 1998 BSPB together with the local Natural History Museum and the local municipality carried out an investigation on the possibilities for restoration of the marsh.

Dragoman Marsh. BSPB is carrying out regular monitoring of the marsh with respect to explore the possibilities for future restoration if it.

Activities by Green Balkan Federation:

- Protected site “The old oak” - conservation and restoration of the habitats of rare and globally threatened bird species on the Danubian island Vardim
- Wetlands restoration along the Danube between Belene and Svishtov
Both projects are funding by UNDP.

2.12 *Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.” (refer to Actions 2.7.1-4 in the Strategic Plan).*

- The MoEW with the Silistra Municipality has organized the celebration of 50 anniversary of Srebarna biosphere reserve on 20 September 1998.
- MoEW together with several NGO’s and media organized the celebration of 2 February as World Wetland’s day.
- All municipalities with territories, included in the prepared Management plans for several Bulgarian wetlands, have been involved in the process of their preparation and implementation.

Activities by BSPB:

- Close collaboration was established between BSPB and local communities and hunter organizations in the region of the two Ramsar sites - Shabla and Durankulak Lakes.
- BSPB reached an agreement with the local fishermen in Poda Lagoon area and their negative impact on the protected site was minimized.
- A Nature Conservation and Information Centre was built by BSPB at “Poda” protected area under the BSBCP. The centre started to operate in May 1998. Its main goal is to ensure long term sustainability in the conservation of the biodiversity

through local people's involvement in the preservation and wise use of "Poda" protected area.

- Close collaboration between local communities and BSPB in the wetland conservation was established in the regions of: Danube river and Danube coastal wetlands (Vidin, Svistov, Russe, Tutrakan, Silistra); Black Sea coast (besides the above mentioned two sites, agreement was made with the municipality of Beloslav for managing the IBA Yatata near Varna, where BSPB hired a warden); Plovdiv, Zvanichevo and Rakovski Fish-ponds, Konush and Pyasacnik Reservoirs, and Maritza River valley near Plovdiv; former Straldzha marsh near Karnobat. BSPB has signed Memorandums of co-operation with the municipalities of Karnobat, Belogradchik, Haskovo, and Burgas.
- BSPB took part in the annual Mid-Winter Count of the Waterfowl on a way to involve as many local people, communities and institutions as possible. This monitoring activity helped to communications and collaboration with the municipalities and regional inspectorates to be improved

Activities by Green Balkans Federation:

- Action plan for activities against the poaching in wetlands with the financial support of the British Embassy in Sofia and Regional Ecological Centre. The plan includes producing of video film, a leaflet, TV reportage and other.
- Conservation brigades in Pomorie lake, Protected site "Nova Cherna" and Maritza river at the village of Popovitzha with international participation.
- Cooperation with the Municipalities of Svishtov, Tutrakan and Pomorie in the field of wetlands management activities
- Encouraging of the Municipalities of Galabovo and local communities to establish the reservoirs Ovcharitzha and Rozov kladenetz as protected territories and to prohibited the shutting waterfowl in the area.
- Establishing of a Centre for recovering of rare bird species in the town of Stara Zagora
- Organizing of a campaign for protection of native vegetation of Maritza river bed-April 1998.
- Publishing of leaflets for Nova Cherna and Kaikusha wetlands

Activities of Foundation "Le Balkan"

- Creating of the Nature Conservancy "Dobrogea" with participation of two municipalities and local organizations. Two Ramsar sites are subjects of activities of this Conservancy - Shabla and Durankulak lake.
- Conservation measures for two globally threatened bird species - Dalmatian Pelican, Leseer White-fronted Goose and Red-breasted Goose

Activities of the Bulgarian Ornithological Society

- International Summer Camp and brigade in 1996 with representatives of France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Bulgaria and other countries at Atanasovsko lake reserve.
- Summer seminar and brigade in 1997 at Atanasovsko lake from different Bulgarian NGO's.

2.13 Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands” (refer to Actions 2.8.1-4 in the Strategic Plan). Has this included a review of fiscal measures (taxation arrangements, etc.) to identify and remove disincentives and introduce incentives for wetlands conservation and wise use?

No, unfortunately.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 3 **To raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels**

3.1 Is there a government-run national programme for Education and Public Awareness in your country which focuses on, or includes, wetlands?

No, unfortunately

If yes, what are the priority actions under this programme and who are the target groups? (Refer also to question 9.4)

3.2 Describe the steps taken to have wetlands issues and Ramsar’s Wise Use principles included as part of the curricula of educational institutions. Has this been at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and adult)? Please give details.

No, unfortunately

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 4 **To reinforce the capacity of institutions in each Contracting Party to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.**

4.1 Describe the mechanisms in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the various institutions responsible for actions which can have an impact on the conservation and wise use of wetlands. If one of the mechanisms is a National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee, please describe its composition, functions and modus operandi.

- Ramsar National Committee - members of this committee are representatives of different organisations, involved in wetland conservation and management.

Unfortunately this committee does not function at the moment.

- Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme, which involved during the first phase (1995-1997) more than 600 experts, wetland specialists and other people from different governmental and non governmental organizations. In the beginning of 1998 a second phase of the programme started with 5 projects, 3 of which include important wetlands along Black Sea coast

- Nature Conservancy “Dobrogea” incorporates two municipalities and several governmental and non governmental organizations. It works with funds provided by French government.

4.2 *Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:*

- a. *a review to identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands. No.*
- b. *If yes, please indicate the major findings of the review.*
- b. *a review to identify training opportunities for these people both within your country and in other countries. No.*
- c. *the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers. No.*
- d. *people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. Yes/No? If yes, please give details.*

Within the country:

- reed-bed management workshop, organised in February 1998 by BSBCP
- Summer international brigade for reconstruction of artificial platforms for breeding of avocets, terns and gulls in Atanasovsko lake, organised by BSBCP, 1996.
- Summer seminar for identification and counting of soaring birds in Atanasovsko lake nature reserve, organised by Bulgarian Ornithological Society, 1997.
- Summer brigade for construction of artificial platforms in the Protected area "Poda", organised by BSPB, 1995-1997.
- summer brigade for construction of artificial platforms in Pomorie lake, organised by Foundation "Green Balkans", 1996 - 97.

Outside the country:

- participation of two people in the summer course "Restoration of lakes", organised by Wetlands International in Sweden, 1996
- participation of 3 people from Green Balkans Federation and one person from BSPB in training seminar in Austria, 1998.
- participation of IBA officer from BSPB in International course on wetland management in Holland, 1998

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 5 To ensure the conservation of all sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List).

5.1 *Of the Ramsar sites in your country, how many have formal management plans:*

a. *being prepared?*

For six sites (Durankulak lake, Shabla lake, Atanasovsko lake, Arkutino marsh, Alepu marsh and Stamoplo marsh).

b. *fully prepared?*

Six plans

c. *being implemented?*

None.

Please indicate in the attached table of Ramsar sites which sites these are and what category they fall into.

Name of site	Date	Area	Map	RIS	MR	MGP	MR off	MP	MP+ Monit.
Arkutino	24/09/75	97	X					x	
Atanasovsko Lake	28/11/84	1,050	X					x	x
Durankulak Lake	28/11/84	350	X		x			x	x
Lake Shabla	19/03/96	404	X	x				x	x
Srebarna	24/09/75	902	X		x			in prep.	X

5.2 Of the management plans referred to above, which ones have included a monitoring scheme or programme to allow changes in ecological character to be detected? Please indicate this in the attached table of Ramsar sites also.

All of them (without Arkutino) have been included in monitoring schemes for the second phase of BSBCP (1998-2000).

5.3 Has there been a change in the ecological character (either positive or negative) at any of your Ramsar sites or is this likely to occur in the near future? If Yes, please give details.

Positive - in Srebarna Lake after the building of a canal with two sluice gates between Danube and the reserve were built in 1994.

5.4 In the case of Montreux Record Ramsar sites where the Management Guidance Procedure has been applied, what is the status of the implementation of the MGP report recommendations? What is the expected time-frame for removing the site from the Montreux Record?

There will be a decision about Srebarna reserve in December 1998. Several years will be needed to remove Srebarna for Montreux Record.

5.5 For those countries referred to in COP6 Recommendations 6.17.1-4, "Ramsar sites in the Territories of Specific Contracting Parties", please provide advice on the actions that have been taken in response to the issues raised at that time.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 6

To designate for the Ramsar List those wetlands which meet the Convention's criteria, especially wetland types still under-represented in the List and transfrontier wetlands.

6.1 Has a national inventory of wetlands been prepared for your country?

Yes, only for Black sea coast and for the bank of Danube in 1992-93. There is an idea the “National plan for” to be updated and supplemented with the wetlands in the rest part of the country.

Where a national inventory exists please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept and what information it contains.

An information on this topic has been supplied with the previous national report

6.2 *Does there exist a list or directory of “important” wetlands for your country or region?*

Yes:

- in the “National plan for....” there is a wetlands list with several categories of importance: global, continental and national importance, finalized in 1993.

If yes, please provide details of when it was finalized, where it is kept, what criteria for “important” were used, and the types of information it contains.

- there is also published a book of Important Bird Area, in which all important wetlands are included. This information is finalized in 1997. The BirdLife International criteria have been used.

6.3 *If it is known, please provide an estimate of the area of wetlands in your country at present and any information on rates of loss or conversion to other activities.*

It is not known the exact estimate due to the lack of National Wetland Inventory. If such an inventory would be prepared it will be very easy to answer this question. The Corine project contains description of 141 sites, 31 of which are wetlands with inventory of plant and animal species.

6.4 *Have any actions been taken in response to the COP6 Resolutions and Recommendations that Contracting Parties should give priority to listing Wetlands of International Importance which:*

- a. meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),*
- b. meet the 1% criterion for waterbird populations using data provided by the International Waterfowl Census (Resolution VI.4),*

There is rich data gathered through International Mid-winter counts in Bulgaria, which is proving the fulfillment of 1% criterion for Mandra and Vaya lake, and Ovcharitza reservoir. The Ministry is ready to take the necessary steps for their declaring as Ramsar sites.

- c. are subterranean karst or cave wetland systems (Resolution VI.5), **No***
- d. are peatland ecosystems (Recommendation 6.1) **No***
- e. are coral reefs and associated systems (Recommendation 6.7) **No***
- f. are under-represented wetland types (which apart from d. and e. above include mangroves and sea grass beds) (Strategic Plan Action 6.2.3) **No***

6.5 *If your government indicated at COP6 that it would be proceeding to list further specific sites, please advise of the status of this action.* **No**

6.6 *Please advise which of the sites included in the Ramsar List from your country are transfrontier wetlands (Refer also to 7.1).*

Srebarna biosphere reserve is a transboundary wetlands with Danube river.

6.7 *Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also to 7.1).*

There are not such plans or actions

***Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 7
To mobilise international cooperation and financial assistance
for wetland conservation and wise use in collaboration with other
conventions and agencies, both governmental and non-
governmental.***

7.1 *Briefly describe any bilateral or multilateral activities that have been taken, are under or are planned for the management of transfrontier wetlands or their watersheds/catchments (Refer also to 6.6 and 6.7).*

There are not such activities

7.2 *Do you have Ramsar sites that are “twinned” with others, either nationally or internationally?*

No

7.3 *Where your country is also a signatory of any of the following Conventions, describe what mechanism(s) exist to assist regular dialogue and cooperative actions between the personnel responsible for their implementation and the Ramsar Administrative Authority:*

a. Convention on Biological Diversity

There are several experts in the National Nature Protection Service, who are responsible of the implementation of this Convention. They are in close relations with the experts in the same Service working with the Ramsar convention.

b. Framework Convention on Climate Change

One person of the MoEW is responsible for the implementation of this Convention since 23 March 1995. The connections with this persons may be improved

c. Convention to Combat Desertification

Bulgaria is not a part of this Convention

d. Convention on Migratory Species

Recently MoEW has decided to sign this Convention and AEWA agreement. The expert from National Nature Protection Service will be responsible for their implementation.

e. World Heritage Convention

There is one expert in the National Nature Protection Service, who is responsible of the implementation of this Convention. She is in close relations with the experts working with the Ramsar convention

7.4 Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species?

Yes. Different Bulgarian organizations are part of bilateral or multilateral cooperation as it follows:

- Dalmatian Pelican - cooperation in the field of research the migration and ecology of the species between Dr. A. Crivelli from Biological Station "Tour du Valat"- France Dr. T. Michev from Central Laboratory for General Ecology- Bulgaria since 1985.
- Dalmatian Pelican (attempts to organize bilateral actions for the species between BSPB and the Romanian Ornithological Society);
- Pygmy Cormorant (work started on cooperative monitoring and conservation activities for the species between BSPB and Greece through Hellenic Ornithological Society)
- Lesser White-fronted Goose (joint Bulgarian-Norwegian activities for conservation of the species at its wintering sites)- by BSPB
- Red-breasted Goose (parallel counts and planification of the conservation activities between BSPB and the geese specialists from Romania, it includes the other species of geese in Shabla and Durankulak Lakes, too)
- Ferruginous Duck (synchronized survey and conservation activities for the species between BSPB and the other Central European countries)
- Slender-billed Curlew (close link of BSPB with BirdLife International concerning conservation of the species)
- Red-breasted Goose - a cooperation research between The Foundation "Le Balkan" and the Biological Station in Kreis Wesel, Germany
- Lesser White fronted Goose - a cooperation research between The Foundation "Le Balkan" and the Biological Station in Kreis Wesel, Germany
- Globally threatened water bird species - Conservation plan, prepared by the Green Balkan Federation for Maritza and Tundga river valleys.

7.5 Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country?

Yes. There are several international donors, contributing to the work of Bulgarian organizations with respect to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. The most important of them are as follows:

- Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme supported management activities of three regional wetlands projects along the Black Sea coast.
- The Government of Monaco allocated financial funds for preparing and implementing of a Management plan for two sea coast wetlands - Silistar and Veleka
- The French government allocated financial funds for the project "Protection and Valorization of the Ecosystems in Bulgarian Dobrogea" of the Foundation "Le Balkan"

- Ramsar Convention bureau sponsored the preparation of a Management plan of Srebarna nature reserve with 35 000 SFr
- World Heritage Convention sponsored the monitoring of Srebarna nature reserve.
- BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) provided funds for the permanent BSPB activities related to the Important Bird Areas Programme, Globally Threatened Species Programme, the annual Mid-Winter Count of Waterfowl, etc.
- WWF Green Danube Programme supported small restoration project of BSPB and “Green Balkans” for Belene Island on Danube
- Norwegian Ornithological Society/BirdLife Norway supported the Lesser White-fronted Goose Survey in Bulgaria 1996-1997 and the other conservation activities on the geese.
- British Ornithologists’ Trust and Bavarian Ornithological Society (LBV) supported the BSPB conservation work on the Ferruginous Duck
- BSPB won the national Henry Ford European Conservation Award 1996 and the funds were spent for the Nature Conservation Centre “Poda”.
- UNDP, WWF, USAID, Programme “Phare”, REC- Budapest and British Embassy-Sofia for period of three years have allocated 77 865 USD for Green Balkans Federation activities in the field of Bulgarian wetlands conservation.

7.6 Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country?

Yes. The MoEW has allocated small amount of funds to support several projects as it follows:

- administrative expenditures for Srebarna nature reserve
- publishing of books for Shabla and Srebarna lake
- biological monitoring of Srebarna nature reserve (1995-96)
- International Mid-winter counts-partly.

If yes, is this a specific allocation to a wetlands programme or as part of a larger environment or natural resource management budget?

This is a specific allocation to a specific wetlands programme

7.7 If your country has a development assistance programme, does it include funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries?

No, unfortunately

7.8 Is there a formal process in place for consultation between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the development assistance programme in your country, where one exists?

No.

***Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 8
To provide the Convention with the required institutional mechanisms and resources.***

8.1 *Has your government made voluntary financial contributions, other than the invoiced contributions or to the Small Grants Fund, to further the work of the Convention globally?*

Unfortunately no, due to financial and economic difficulty of the country.

8.2 *If your country is in arrears with the payment of its annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention, please indicate the reasons for this situation and the prospects for paying these arrears in the near future.*

There are not such arrears.

Optional section - Participation of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention

These are ***optional*** questions relating to cooperation with and involvement of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

At COP6 some 42 NGO's made the "Brisbane NGO pledge of support for the Ramsar Convention". The Standing Committee agreed that for COP7 there should be an effort made to gauge the level and type of cooperation which is occurring between government Administrative Authorities and the national and international NGO's with an interest in wetlands issues.

*In this ***optional*** section of the National Report, you are asked to describe the nature of the cooperation and relationship with any other international, regional, national and provincial NGO's operating within your country.*

9.1 *Approximately how many NGO's have wetlands as part of their regular "business" in your country?*

Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds - registered 1989 with 3000 members
Green Balkans Federation - Plovdiv and Stara Zagora - registered 1990 with 700 members
Green Balkans Federation - Burgas
Foundation "Le Balkan"
Bulgarian Ornithological Society
Eco Club "2000"

9.2 *Is there a regular forum or mechanism through which these NGO's express their views on wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation:*

a. to each other?

There is an Consultative Committee for all Bulgarian NGO's.

b. to the government?

MoEW usually invited different NGO for discussion all problems for legislation and management of wetlands.

9.3 *Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs?*

No, due to the lack of financial funds. During the Pan-European Ramsar Convention meeting in Varna (1995) BSPB was on a some way co-organizer of it together with the Ministry of Environment. On Riga Pan -European meeting June 1998 two Bulgarian NGO's were presented (Le Balkan and BSPB).

9.4 *Do any of the NGO's run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country? Yes/No. If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1).*

Activities of BSPB:

Education and Public awareness on conservation of birds and their habitats are among the priorities of BSPB in its National programme. Special attention on wetlands is given at national and local level. At national level the education and public awareness are included as part of Important Bird Areas Programme. Special education and public awareness programme was developed in 1996-1997 at local level for "Poda" protected area and coastal wetlands in Burgas region under the BSBCP. A part of the education programme of BSPB (started 1997) for Plovdiv region under the Democracy Network Programme is focused especially on wetlands.

Activities of Green Balkans Federation:

Education materials as study notebook and post cards have been published with different water birds. Traveling exposition with photos of wetlands have been showed in different villages in the country. Video film and a lot of posters have been distributed specially in Burgas area..

9.5 *Where they exist, do Ramsar site management advisory committees include NGO representatives?*

BSPB has representative in the working group, formed in June 1998 for preparation of the national report about Srebarna Ramsar site to be sent to UNESCO. BSPB provided data about the changes in the bird fauna of Srebarna during the period 1980-1998.

9.6 *Describe the themes of the Convention (refer to General Objectives 1-8 of the Strategic Plan) where you perceive the national/provincial NGO's to be most active.*

BSPB and Green Balkans Federations are very active in management planning of wetlands, community involvement, bird conservation, monitoring, policy making and legislation improvement. These refer to General Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Strategic plan)

Green Balkans Federation is very active in publishing of the texts of different conventions and national legislation for free of charge distributing.

Final comments:

10.1 *General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.*

Nevertheless the economic difficulties in the last several years, Bulgaria managed to implement the Ramsar Strategic Plan thanks to:

- The existing National Action Plan for Most Important Wetlands in Bulgaria

- The good will of some governments (France, Switzerland, Monaco) and international and national organizations (SVS and Pro Natura - Switzerland, USAID - USA, UNDP, Phare Programme, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Bureau, WWF International, Wetlands International, Birdlife International). All these organizations provided invaluable financial support and technical assistance for many programmes and projects in Bulgaria.
- The great activities of the Bulgarian NGO's, working in the field of nature and wetland conservation to achieve the general objectives of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

10.2 Observations concerning the functioning of, relations with, and services provided by:

- a. The Ramsar Standing Committee*
- b. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel*
- c. The Ramsar Bureau*
- d. The Ramsar NGO partners*

There are very good relations between Ramsar Bureau and the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters for implementation of National programmes and projects.

10.3 Any other general observations and/or recommendations for the future.

Having in mind the need of education, training and enhancing the public awareness, as well the great importance of Burgas wetland complex as a place with big concentrations of water birds during all seasons, we would like to propose a Wetland Centre to be established in this region of Europe. This Wetland centre will play an important role for dissemination of knowledge about wetland conservation.

Appendices:

1. Important Bird Area in Bulgaria
2. Biodiversity of Shabla Lake System
3. Biodiversity of Srebarna Biosphere Reserve - Checklist and Bibliography
4. The White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) in Bulgaria
5. International Convention for the Biodiversity Conservation
6. A set of leaflets for Bulgarian Wetlands, produced by BSBCP
7. Newsletter No 4 of BSBCP
8. Magazine of the BSPB "For the Birds" No 1, 2, 3 and 4.
9. Magazine of the Foundation "Le Balkan: -"Branta" No 1, 2 and 3.
10. A leaflet and a poster for 50 anniversary of Srebarna nature reserve
11. Leaflets for Nova Cherna and Kaikusha wetlands, produced by Green Balkans Federation
12. A Law for the Protected Territories, approved by the Bulgarian Parliament in November 1998

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