

Report
On the celebrations of the World Wetland Day 2007.

National park Skadar Lake
Montenegro

Lake Skadar is a transboundary lake shared between Montenegro and Albania. In 1983, it has been proclaimed National Park in Montenegro, and in 1995, it was included in the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance (In 2005, Albanian part of the Lake was proclaimed Nature park, and was added to the List). This year, it was the first time that the National Park Skadar Lake has organised an event to mark World Wetlands Day. In such a way, we have joined the global action for promotion of wetlands and the current topics regarding these valuable ecosystems.

The WWD celebration on Skadar Lake was a whole day event, with activities targeting both children and adults. It was held in the Visitor's centre at Skadar Lake, opened in June last year, which is currently the only such centre in Montenegro.

The morning session was a workshop with children on wetlands in general, Skadar Lake values, and the sustainable fisheries. This activity gathered 15 children from the primary school within the Park's borders. The children had a lecture on biological and geographic features of Skadar Lake, a discussion about wetlands and their importance. This was followed by the discussion about problems of wetlands, and this Lake in particular, upon which the children wrote postcards to relevant actors they thought can solve those problems (main polluters, authorities of the surrounding municipalities etc). The children subsequently engaged in the game illustrating sustainable fisheries, where they were presented with the model of the Lake, and acquired the roles of good and bad fisherman. They were also making model fish (supplied within the Ramsar materials), which will be assembled in the model of the Lake and exposed in the Visitors' centre.

Previous to the event, a literary competition was arranged, with the topic of "How to save carp" (carp being the commercially most important fish species of Skadar Lake). On the 2nd, the winners were announced, and awards given to all those who participated in the contest.



The afternoon of the 2nd of February was reserved for the presentations aimed at the representatives of media, institutions, NGOs, international donor agencies and other interest groups. The guests were informed about the importance of wetlands in general, about the values of Skadar Lake, as well as about Ramsar convention and the Ramsar list. More specific information was provided regarding the bird species of the Lake, the monthly monitoring programme and the results of this year's International Winter Bird Census. Representative of the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Protection used the opportunity to present GEF/World Bank project "Integral management of the ecosystem of Skadar Lake", whose phase of direct implementation is starting this year.



Most of Montenegrin media have reported on this event, providing a good media coverage. National Park has for this occasion prepared and published a small brochure containing basic information on wetlands and Skadar Lake. Ramsar's poster and stickers were translated into Montenegrin language, and issued to the public together with the aforementioned brochure.

The whole event was very pleasurable, and received a very positive feedback from all the participants. It is planned to mark subsequent WWDs in a similar manner, hopefully making the events bigger and involving more local stakeholders and a wider general public.

