

Green Balkans NGO celebrates the World Wetlands Day

The World Wetlands Day was celebrated on the bank of Maritsa River in Plovdiv near the Water Chamber on the 2 February. The event was organized by Green Balkans volunteers and aimed at informing the citizens about the importance and problems related to conservation of these important habitats.

All passing citizens that expressed interest had the opportunity to observe the birds at Maritsa River through special optical equipment as well as to get additional information related to the biodiversity of Maritsa River and other



important wetlands in Bulgaria. The event's focus was defined by the fact that The United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity.

The World Wetlands Day was also celebrated in Radnevo town with a visit and observation of rare species at Ovcharitsa reservoir - a Natura 2000 site and Important Bird Area. The event was organized by Green Balkans volunteers who provided guiding, optical



equipment to the visiting schoolchildren from the Eco-club of 2nd Primary school "Paisii Hilendarski", representatives of Radnevo Municipality, Regional Environmental Inspectorate - Stara Zagora including the director Penka Nacheva. Ecological experts from Radnevo Municipality gave a short lecture to the students about the reason for celebrating 2 February as WWD and what is the importance of the Ramsar Convention while the Green Balkans team informed the visitors about the importance of Ovcharitsa reservoir

and the rare bird species that are found there. Typical species for the wetland were observed, many of which with high conservation status like Pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), Mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) and Coot (*Fulica atra*).

Wetlands – rivers, lakes, marshes, reservoirs – are of key importance for supporting the life and biodiversity on Earth. Except being source of many resources they play a major role in the correct functioning of the water circle on our planet leading to stable climate conditions and freshwater in the required quantities by humans and other live organisms. **Despite of that during the last century great part of the world's wetlands including these in Bulgaria have been significantly damaged or**



completely demolished by draining and other engineering activities which requires our special care nowadays to secure their existence.

That is why on 2 February, 1971 in the town of Ramsar, Iran a Convention on Conservation of Wetlands was signed and came into force in 1975. Bulgaria joined the Convention in 1976 and was one of the first 10 countries (number 8, 24/01/76) in the world to do that. Ten are the wetlands of international in Bulgaria listed in the Ramsar list: Ropotamo Complex, Srebarna, Atanasovo Lake, Durankulak Lake, Lake Shabla, Belene Islands Complex, Ibisha Island, Poda, Pomorie Wetland Complex, Vaya Lake.

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