

## Press Release

January 27th, 2012

### 2nd February is World Wetlands Day

#### „Wetland Tourism: A Great Experience“

**Radolfzell.** The eastern Adriatic coast has more to offer than just beaches and a steel-blue sea: underground caves, huge lakes and karst moors - flooded and dried out by subterranean watercourses. At the World Wetlands Day on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Pan-European nature conservation organisation EuroNatur wants to draw the attention to the importance of wetlands on the Balkan Peninsula. This year's campaign day, organised once per year by the Ramsar Convention, will be dedicated to the theme "Wetland Tourism: A Great Experience". "A great abundance of wetlands stretches along the eastern Adriatic coast from Slovenia via Croatia, Bosnia, and Montenegro to Albania. The biodiversity of this natural paradise is, however, severely endangered by drainage, buildings and bird hunting," says EuroNatur executive director Gabriel Schwaderer.

In addition, the wetlands at the eastern Adriatic coast offer not just ecological but also great economic benefits. In contrary to the beaches, nature travel destinations like the caves of Škocjanin in Slovenia, which have been declared as UNESCO world natural heritage, or the great Balkan lakes Prespa and Ohrid in the three-border region between Macedonia, Albania and Greece, have the potential to attract visitors all over the whole year thus providing a constant stream of income. Crane watching on and around the Baltic island Ruegen, for example, extends the summer season from September to October. EuroNatur promotes to introduce similar projects in southeast Europe - as the economical potential of sustainable nature along the Adriatic coast has not been fully used yet. Even though countries like Croatia and Montenegro advertise with slogans like "The Mediterranean - as it once was" or "wild beauty", there is still not enough information for tourists to help them discover the many hidden treasures.

EuroNatur's travel guides "Eastern Adriatic Coast" and "Prespa-Ohrid Region" are first, important steps 'on the journey' to make this part of Europe with its magnificent natural and

cultural heritage more popular and prevent it from destruction. “The countries along the eastern Adriatic coast want to have a longer tourist season. We help them to get there. By doing so, we create solid alternative solutions which hold long-term economical prospects without damaging the nature or shooting birds,” says EuroNatur project leader Dr. Martin Schneider-Jacoby.

## **More information about:**

- World Wetlands Day [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-wwds-wwd2012index/main/ramsar/1-63-78^25324\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-wwds-wwd2012index/main/ramsar/1-63-78^25324_4000_0__)
- about EuroNatur projects for the protection of the Prespa-Ohrid region: [http://www.euronatur.org/Ohrid-Prespa.ohrid\\_prespa0.0.html](http://www.euronatur.org/Ohrid-Prespa.ohrid_prespa0.0.html)
- You are free to one-time use the enclosed photo material together with this press release, giving the name of the photographer © Martin Schneider-Jacoby/EuroNatur. Information about the picture: bird watching in the nature park Hutovo Blato in Bosnia-Herzegovina

## **For questions please contact:**

EuroNatur

Konstanzer Straße 22

78315 Radolfzell

Tel.: +49 (0)7732 - 92 72 10

Fax: +49 (0)7732 - 92 72 22

E-Mail: [info@euronatur.org](mailto:info@euronatur.org)

Internet: [www.euronatur.org](http://www.euronatur.org)

Contact: Dr. Martin Schneider-Jacoby

Press contact: Katharina Grund