

## WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2012 IN SERBIA



The celebration of WORLD WETLANDS DAY in Serbia took place in Opovo (Potamišje) on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012 and was organized by the **Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia, Provincial Secretariat for Urbanization, Construction and Environment Protection, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and Provincial Institute for Nature Conservation**. The meeting was hosted by Association for the protection of birds „Roda Baranda“.



With regard to this year`s international motto of celebrating World Wetlands Day “Tourism in wetlands – the important experience”, the meeting was organized with the aim of presenting natural values of wetlands and their economic potential in the development of tourism.

Natural and tourist potential of areas Potamišje and lower stream of rivers Drina and Velika Morava, and the impediments and threats for the implementation of concept of natural values protection and sustainable development were presented to this meetings participants, among which were the representatives of ministries, managing entities of natural areas, expert institutions, NGO`s and media.



During the working session the following presentations were showed: ”Our river Tamiš - the natural values of Potamišje in Serbia and their dynamics” (“Naš Tamiš – prirodne vrednosti Potamišja u Srbiji i njihova dinamika”), presented by Mr Marko Tucakov from the Provincial Institute for Nature Conservation, “A fishpond near Baranda as an example of multifunctional water habitat and its sustainable development” (“Ribnjak kod Barande kao primer multifunkcionalnog vodenog staništa i njegov održivi razvoj”), presented by Mr Ljubiša Polić from Association for the protection of birds „Roda Baranda“, “Ecosystem services of water

habitat on the example of Potamišje in Serbia” (“Ekosistemske usluge vodenih staništa na primeru Potamišja u Srbiji”), presented by Jurun Arends from the University of Wageningen, Holland and “Morava and Drina – the necessity and the opportunities for protection” (“Morava i Drina – neophodnost i mogućnosti zaštite”), presented by Mr Goran Sekulić from the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia.

The expert presentations revealed the following facts:

- Potamišje is one of the most valuable water habitats in Serbia and its Province of Vojvodina. In the area of Potamišje there are two internationally important bird areas Gornje Potamišje and Srednje Potamišje, a part of internationally important plant area Srednji Banat, as well as an important area which belongs to the national ecological network of areas. The stream of river Tamiš in Serbia is 118 km long, and along this stream there are also over 15000 ha of wetlands, dynamic water surfaces, along with numerous oxbow lakes, inlets, swamps, depressions, wetland pastures, alluvial forests, as well as fishponds, mosaic-like agricultural land and picturesque rural land. The colonies with largest number of herons, pygmy cormorants, ibis, common spoonbills and terns in Serbia are also there, as well as about 350 nesting couples of white storks. Due to all these reasons there is an ongoing procedure for the designation of Potamišje as protected natural area.

- River Velika Morava is one of the most important ecological corridors in Serbia, representing a connection between Pannonian plain and the rest of Balkan Peninsula. River Velika Morava is the biggest native water stream in Serbia, 185 km in length, with more than 40% water circulation in Serbia. The Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia initiated major research in natural values of Pomoravlje in 2005, focusing on the bird fauna and protection needs. Based on this research, Gornje pomoravlje was designated as internationally important bird area, whereas locality Brzansko moravište, an important wetland habitat for which there is an ongoing procedure of getting protection status, currently has the status of Special nature reserve.

-Lower stream of river Drina, or area Podrinje, according to research in natural characteristics, initiated in 2005, was designated as internationally important bird area. At the beginning of research it was assumed that little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) nests in this area.

With regard to presented data on natural values and stated facts on the use of these rivers, major conclusion was drawn in this meeting that the use of these rivers must not be planned for the sake of just one sector, but in accordance with other sectors as well, which means that one river represents the resource comprising ecology, energy, water supplying, agriculture, tourism, etc. (According to Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010-2020).



After expert session of the meeting the participants joined the excursion around fishpond and parts of Tamiš river wetland valleys near village Sakule.

Reported by: Mr Oliver Fojkar from Provincial Institute for Nature Conservation and Ms Nataša Panić from the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia.