

WWD 2013 with Doğa Derneği

Within the 2013 World Wetlands Day celebrations, Doğa Derneği has planned to organize several activities such as short film screenings, water bird watchings, wetland trekkings, wetlands information kiosks in urbans.

DD Staffs and Volunteers together on this day; made wetland trekking in Gediz Delta which is a Ramsar Site and one of the most important deltas of Mediterranean Basin. We watched the water birds in Küçükçekmece Lake that is big one KBAs of Turkey in Istanbul. Also we opened interesting wetlands information kiosks there. Despite the threat of severe urbanization on Küçükçekmece Lake, during the day we observed such birds as Little Cormorant, Tufted Duck, Smew and Common Goldeneye. We performed the film screenings which are; 'Blue Eyes of Desert: Aral Sea' and 'No Lake No Burdur' in around Burdur Lake that is one of 13 Ramsar Sites of Turkey. After screenings we gave a conservation to able to listen the common story of the dried Aral Sea and rapid drying Burdur Lake.

On the other hand during the year 2012, a report that proposes a new crop design based on low water consumption in Burdur Lake Basin is prepared and introduced to public and media. Another report that maps land use patterns and water storage in the basin is also prepared and disseminated. Two other reports, one that puts forward a hydrological program and calendar for water flow from the dams to the lake and another that outlines the hazards of marble quarries for biodiversity in the basin are underway. 2nd edition of the booklet "No Lake No Burdur" (in Turkish) with updated information on lake levels and project activities is published and widely distributed.

Revision of Burdur Lake Management Plan is in progress. DD is fully participating in the process with its proposals for allowing water flow to the lake from the dams, introduction of a new crop design based on low water consumption in the basin and widening the scope of the plan at basin level. 3 new pilot agricultural sites are established in two villages by Burdur Lake as demonstration sites for growing of low-water consuming crops with efficient irrigation systems or with no irrigation. DD staff visited Orumieh Lake in Iran - a lake that is fastly drying for the same reasons as Burdur Lake. DD staff met with activists and public officials working to save the lake to exchange information, share experience and discuss possibilities for cooperation.

Various awareness-raising activities regarding importance of wetlands in general and Burdur Lake in particular are being carried out. A few examples are: national pop star Tarkan's visit to Burdur Lake, celebration of Bird-Watching Day in Burdur city park, a bird-watching workshop organized in Burdur for beginners, World Wetlands Day events, participation in 4-day national Burdur Days Fair in Ankara, the capital. DD volunteers and members in Burdur participate in these activities and additionally they meet on a regular basis under "Nature Gatherings".

In 2012, Gediz Delta project launched a campaign against decisions taken in Rehabilitation İzmir Harbor and Bay project managed by Turkish State Railways and Metropolitan Municipality of İzmir. Project aimed to dump and rehandle 22 million tones of dredged material to Gediz delta wetlands and Ramsar boundary, DD built public awareness on issue with more then hundred news, tv reports and live broadcasts made lobby activities on importance of wetlands and Gediz Delta. Run a research on wise use of dredged material

and promoted lagoon restoration and habitat creation with a scientific report. Campaign was successful, Municipality reconsidered issue and focused on restoration of corrupted Çilazmak lagoon.

DD continued to struggle against the Ilisu Dam Project which will destroy the seasonal wetlands and the Tigris River that the last biggest natural river of Turkey. For this purpose, new cases were opened and last month in one case "stay of execution" was decided. In addition, a new alliance by the name of "Damocracy" was formed for the protection of river ecosystems against big dams in Peoples Summit Rio+20, and the film which is common story of Tigris River and Xingu River in Amazon, are attracted to announce this formation (www.damocracy.org).

DD also became a party to a court case against the hydroelectric plant project on Alakır River in Antalya in southern Turkey, and on Loç Valley in Küre Mountains in middle western Turkey. Finally DD still is following its court case against the Wetlands Regulation of Turkey.

Apart from this; on 2nd of February, Doğa Derneği has prepared a press release in which current situations of the wetlands of Turkey have been emphasized. The press release had a good media coverage and some TV/radio interviews were made on this. Moreover, the book and the poster titled "Ramsar Sites of Turkey" which give detailed information about the current situation of 13 Ramsar Sites of Turkey, has been published with the supporting of "The Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation" and "The Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Environment Natural Conservation and National Parks Directorate General". And its have been shared with the related stakeholders. On the other hand, "Assessment Report of Wetlands Management Plans in the Ramsar Sites of Turkey" has been published with the same supportings, in order to ensure the conservation and rational use of wetlands agreed on its importance by everyone with an holistic approach.

Nevertheless, this year Doğa Derneği will start to create a network between the people who are living in Turkey's wetlands and scramble for the sustention&protection of these areas in order to strenghten to communication and accelerate the exchange of information.