



ROMANIA

REPORT REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN- EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

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The Ministry of Environment and Forests has been primarily responsible for the preparation of this Report. Other institutions and organizations that have provided input are: the National Environmental Protection Agency, “Grigore Antipa” National Institute for Marine Research and Development”, Emil Racoviță Institute of Speology, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration, “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History, the „Danube Delta” National Institute for Research and Development, the Romanian Ornithological Society/BirdLife Romania, the Association for Bird and Nature Protection „Milvus Group” and the Romanian Association for Bat Protection.

1. Scientific research and monitoring

Monitoring activities of the waterbirds and their habitats were realized by the ornithologists from universities, institutes, national and natural parks, the Romanian Ornithological Society, the Association for Bird and Nature Protection “Milvus Grup”, EPAL-Ro Association and other NGOs.

The „Danube Delta” National Institute for Research and Development carries out basic and applied research to scientifically support the management in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and other wetlands of national and international importance for the biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the following domains of activity: ecological rehabilitaton of some threatened species, making the social-economic interests agree with the biodiversity conservation goal, Management Plans for administrating wetlands and aquatic resources, monitoring of the biological diversity and environmental

factors, research and studies for implementing the international conventions and agreements, restoration of the ecosystems that have been injured by the negative human activity, international research projects for wetlands of conservative interest in flora and fauna, development of the Geographical Information System and use of the teledetection techniques, issuing thematic maps and atlases, support studies for the elaboration of the restoration solutions for ecological reconstruction and the improvement of the environmental conditions and impact and environmental balance studies.

„Biological and ecological research on some bird species of Community interest in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve - Natura 2000 SPA” and the „Monitoring the species of Community interest in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and Natura 2000 sites” are two projects implemented by the „Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development.

The Romanian side of the Danube hosts almost 140 islands which lie on 35 000 ha, covering about 30% of the Romanian natural floodplain forest, together with sand banks, lakes, marshes and natural channels.

The islands are the home of incredibly rich ecosystems, which are vital for conserving the biodiversity of the entire Danube Basin.

Small Braila Island Natural Park situated in the floodable riverside of the Danube River is well known due to its ornithological importance, as it is situated on the most important bird migration corridor, in the Lower Danube Basin. A large number of waterbirds can be met here, 169 of them being endangered species internationally protected.

The inventory activities of waterbirds were in all Romanian counties. An inventory of all species and habitats from the Nature 2000 sites is very important for the development of a minimum set of management measures especially for the natural protected areas without a Management Plan approved.

A lot of work was done for identifying, designating and promoting of Romanian IBAs and lobby was for their designation as SPAs (so far about 70% of these IBAs are officially declared SPAs under the EC Birds Directive).

During the Common Bird Monitoring Program, International Waterbird Count, a lot of migratory waterbirds were monitored. Over 50 conservation experts have been working on 260,000 ha of Nature 2000 sites in Transylvania region, conducting the waterbirds Census in order to compile an inventory, essential for the Management Plan of the Podisul Hartibaciului - Târnava Mare - Olt area.

The Management Plan will be finalized in 2015, as part of a Project funded by the Environment Operational Programme of the European Commission.

Implemented by WWF, the project will ensure the conservation of species and habitats of community and national importance.

Field conservation activities on waterbirds (Red-breasted goose, Dalmatian pelican, etc) and their habitats from the Danube Islands, European biologically important forests, Lower Prut Floodplain Natural Park, Dumbrăvița Fishing Complex, Danube Delta and other natural protected areas to creating the conditions needed for surviving, for breeding migratory waterbirds and a safe migration in passage.

Stâncă Costești Lake is an important stop-over site for passage waterbirds due to its location on a migration route for birds which are moving to the Danube Delta and the Black Sea. More than 124 species have been recorded in this IBA.

The waterbirds species from the Siret River valley were also studied by the experts from the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University - Faculty of Biology, Romanian Ornithological Society and the Association for Biological Diversity Conservation.

It was be done advocacy work with national and regional governments and institutions regarding the Nature 2000 sites protection, the hunting activities, the agricultural practices, the wind farms development, the sustainable use of natural resources etc. Warning signs specifying the critical period for birds breeding (from March to June) and the penalties for shooting protected waterbirds were installed in the natural protected areas.

The Forestry Directorates agreed to intensify the control in the areas and do not perform any kind of forestry works (logging, rearing the trees, clearings, etc) which can produce disturbance during the breeding season.

There is need for special protected areas investigations, to complete the existing data about the migratory waterbirds, to maintaining the breeding platforms and visitors' facilities on the islands for waterbirds by the WWF and the local environment protection agencies.

2 Education and public awarness

The objective of awareness-raising and communication was to build understanding and engagement among decision-makers, industry, interest groups and the general public.

The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated every year in Romania. The Ministry of Environment and Forests encourages the Local Environmental Protection Agencies (LEPA) and all NGOs in the field of biodiversity to organizing activities for celebrating the International Day of Biological Diversity.

„National awareness campaign regarding the importance of biodiversity conservation through Nature 2000 sites in Romania" was a project financed by the European Union through the Sectoral Operational Programme, priority axis 4: "Implementation of Adequate Management Systems for Nature Protection".

The main activities are the development of the infrastructure and the Management Plans for biodiversity protection of the Nature 2000 Network.

The Project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund being implemented during the period 2010 - 2013 by the National Foundation Centre for Sustainable Development.

The project's location is in 381 Nature 2000 sites and the objectives of the project are: the conservation of biodiversity by enhancing the awareness of central and local authorities, of public and by strengthening the institutional capacity in nature protection, implementation of biodiversity conservation measures, enhancing the visibility in the media of the importance of biodiversity conservation and the role of the ecological network Nature 2000.

The main activities were:

- ❖ Elaborating the manual and the Guidebook for the appropriate evaluation of the impact of plans/projects on the conservation objectives of the Nature 2000 sites;
- ❖ Editing of the Nature 2000 photo album;
- ❖ Organization of awareness events at central, regional and local levels;
- ❖ Preparation and dissemination of documentary video on the Nature 2000 sites in Romania;
- ❖ Development of the dedicated website on the Nature 2000 Network;
- ❖ Updating the National Strategy for the enhancing public awareness about the European Network Nature 2000.

During the project's implementation the public and the decision makers became aware for the importance of biodiversity's conservation. The participants understood the benefits of the Nature 2000 Network in their communities and were aware that the European ecological network produces more advantages than disadvantages.

Decision makers undertook actions that favor biodiversity conservation during the Project implementation period. Information contained in the circulated printed materials was used by decision makers. The general public took action in favor of biodiversity conservation.

The experts from the Environment Association have elaborated the Management Plan and organized awareness campaign in Grădiștea – Căldărușani - Dridu Nature 2000 site.

„Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History, the Bios Association, the EPAL-RO Association, the zoos gardens, the local municipality, the Romanian Ornithological Society have been organizing many symposiums about the importance of biodiversity, the conservation status of migratory waterbirds and their natural habitats.

Using the Sectoral Operational Programme for Environment 2007-2013, the Regional Environmental Protection Agency Bacău organized awareness activities during the Project “Management Plan for Buhuși – Bacău – Berești Nature 2000 site.

Other achievements:

- Held camps, including a youth camp on 'the environment and ecology' with an emphasis on ornithology;
- Held seminars on the protection of White Stork populations in Romania and continued to monitoring the populations of species;
- Running public awareness and environmental education programs, promoting knowledge of waterbirds and support for nature protection for a positive attitude towards nature;
- Organizing the Bird Day celebration every year on the 1st April;

- Founded a new branch in Ineu - Arad county, situated in the western part of Romania;
- Published the first- ever Romanian birds guide.

The Project “For nature and local communities - the basis for an integrated management in Hartibaciu -Târnava Mare area” was implemented in partnership with ADEPT Foundation, “Mihai Eminescu” Trust, the Regional Environmental Protection Agency Sibiu and Ecotur Sibiu Association.

Celebrating the “Danube Day”, reminded everyone that the Danube is a living river, not a transport corridor.

Leaflets, posters, brochures named “The Romanian floodplain forests – past, present and future” and “Flora and fauna of the Danube islands” as well as a DVD resuming the projects were produced. The project offered the chance of producing a documentary, called “My Island”, which was directed by a Romanian TV.

Seminars were organized by the local and regional Environmental Protection Agencies, NGOs in many regions and thousands participants were attended.

Elaborating the Communication Strategy for the Black Sea is one of the important targets of the Black Sea SPA Association.

Each year on the 2nd of February we celebrate the World Wetlands Day. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and for waterbirds conservation. Children and adults participated in an impressive variety of activities such as cleaning nests, bird watching and bird drawing. The events were supported and transmitted by mass-media.

World Migratory Bird Day is an annual awareness campaign to promote the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats worldwide.

During the Programme “The school in other way” the Local Environmental Protection Agencies organized activities specifically aimed at children such as a competitions, educational workshops about migratory waterbirds, distribution of posters and T-shirts, photo exhibitions etc.

The NGOs developed strategies on how to be “friendly” with the waterbirds. The children participated in workshop with enthusiasm and the activities ended with a drawing session of their favorite species.

The impact on biodiversity of plan/project was analyzed in the study of adequate evaluation. It was an active involvement of communities in decision-making process through SEA.

2. Capacity building

The Regional Environmental Protection Agencies (REPAs) represent the Ministry of Environment and Forests at regional level.

They overall aim is to lead and support the development of regional environmental policy, to undertake environmental planning and regulatory functions for environmental protection, to provide technical assistance and to develop, review and manage projects and programmes for environmental protection in the region.

REPAs provide assistance in the designation and management of sites which are not within national or natural parks.

International cooperation

The transnational cooperation Programme for South – East Europe “Better management and implementation of Nature 2000 sites” is favouring the better management and implementation of Nature 2000 sites in the eco-regions, focussing in particular on wetlands.

The partners are: the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority, the „Danube Delta” National Institute for Research and Development, “Nimfea” Environment and Nature Conservation Association, Vienna University of Technology, the Agricultural Research and Education Centre Raumberg - Gumpenstein, the Development Agency for South Epirus - Amvrakikos S.A. L.G.O., Strandja Nature Park Directorate-Bulgaria etc. The period for the project’s implementation is 2011-2014.

The exchange of knowledge and best practices within the consortium will be the basis for the definition of a Transnational Joint Strategy for the better management and improvement of Nature 2000 network. The activities planned are based on learning process as the constant and proper management of the protected areas.

Deltanet international conference “Deltas and Wetlands” was organized in September 2011 in Tulcea for setting up the learning and policy network of the European delta regions.

The scope of the conference was the exchange of good practices in research, monitoring and management, on healthy delta.

Supporting institutions were the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, Tulcea county Council, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority and the European Centre for River Restoration from Netherlands.

The Hungary - Romania cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 is supposed to meet the challenges and opportunities of the border area, based on previous cross border cooperation experience and also to integrate the region at European and global level through increasing competitiveness and ensuring sustainable development (e. g: “Development and promotion of ecological

tourism in the Hungarian North Eastern Plain and Apuseni Mountains & Habitat and ecosystem goods and services evaluation in the Mureş/Maros and Crişul Alb/Körös River valleys”).

One of the important financing Programme is the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 that supports, the social and economic cooperation between regions.

A special attention was given to the natural habitats of community interest, specified in Annex I of the Habitats Directive whose conservation required the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

Nine Delta areas throughout Europe decided to start an international cooperation for exchanging experience and improve their regional policy instruments, methods and approaches.

Within the DANUBEPARKS project – Danube River Network of Protected Areas – Development and Implementation of Transnational Strategies for the Conservation of the Natural Heritage at the Danube River, financed by ETC Programme – South East Europe (SEE), Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority elaborated a Report regarding the experience of Danube River Protected Areas in implementing „Nature 2000” Programme.

The DANUBEPARKS” Project has been initiated and implemented by 12 protected areas from Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania, which established the „DANUBEPARKS” – Danube River Network of the protected areas, to promote conservation activities on transnational level and to increase the management capacity of the natural protected areas by development and implementation of joint transnational strategies for conservation, coherent management approach and common identity of Danube River Protected Areas.

5. Protection, conservation measures

The Project "Measures to increase the efficiency of conservative and participatory management in the Măcin Mountains area", was financed by the European Union through the Sectoral Operational Programme Environment, "Implementation of Adequate Management Systems for Nature Protection".

The main intervention area was the "Development of the infrastructure and the Management Plans for biodiversity's protection and Nature 2000 Network". The Project was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and was implemented by the National Foundation Centre for Sustainable Development, during the period 2010-2011.

The main objective of the project was the conservation of biodiversity through sustainable use of the natural capital in the Măcin Mountains.

The specific objectives were elaboration of the required strategic and scientific documents for the effective implementation of a participatory Management Plan, enhancing the information and awareness of the local population and of the potential visitors about the value of natural assets and the importance of conservation.

The targets groups were the administration of the Măcin Mountains National Park, the local public administrations, the local communities, the business sector, the tourists and visitors.

Principal activities envisaged within the project were to produce a strategy and an Action Plan for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components in the Măcin Mountains, evaluating the support capacity of the ecosystems in the area, to produce information and awareness materials for the visitors regarding the importance of biodiversity conservation in the Măcin

Mountains. Specific outputs were more efficient conservation management in the Măcin Mountains, the increasing the awareness of the local population about the importance of biodiversity conservation and its impact on the sustainable development of the area, enhancing the public awareness about the biodiversity conservation in the area.

Strategic partnerships included the Environmental Protection, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme Romania, the Forestry Directorates, the Institute of Research and Forest Management and the Romanian Ornithological Society.

The Project „Management of the natural capital in Black Sea ROSPA0076” is implementing by the Romanian Ornithological Society, the custodian Eurolevel in the period 2012-2014 having the following objectives: creating the data base, assessment of the conservation status of waterbirds from the Black Sea areas, developing a monitoring Plan for the waterbirds species from annex 1 of the Birds Directive and other migrant species listed in the annexes of the Convention on conservation of migratory wild animals.

For the natural protected areas which have not approved yet the Management Plan, minimum set of conservation measures for maintaining the species in a favorable conservation status was elaborated. Establishing a Plan of conservation measures is important for the compensatory payment.

An integrated Management Plan was elaborated for the Lower Siret River Nature 2000 site, which has included the conservation measures for the waterbirds species.

6. Administrative institutional and legislative measures

Romanian Ornithological Society, WWF Romania and the custodians of the Nature 2000 sites continued to lobby and support the central authorities for the elimination of the legal provisions that are contradictory with some conservation measures, for a better reflection of the Nature 2000 sites in the

economical legislation and for securing the protected areas financing, including payments for ecosystem services.

Regarding the implementation of “Nature 2000” Network, Romanian legislation transposed the provisions of the two Directives through Government Emergency Ordinance No. 57/2007 on the regime of protected natural habitats, conservation of natural habitats of flora and fauna approved with amendments by Law No. 49/2011, the Minister Order No. 2387/2011 on the establishment of protected natural area regime for the sites of community importance and by Decision No. 971/2011 regarding the declaration of Special protection areas as integrant parts of the European ecological network „Nature 2000” in Romania.

Romania were identified 556 sites in „Nature 2000” Network (383 SCI and 148 SPA), with a total area of 23 % of the national territory.

7. Activities planned for the next year

- ❖ Increasing the efficiency of the waterbirds monitoring system in the relevant sites for waterbirds species;
- ❖ Evaluate the breeding populations of the target species regularly regarding to get up-to-date knowledge about their trends;
- ❖ Elaborating and implementation the Single Species Action Plans for the target waterbirds species;
- ❖ Improving of nesting circumstances for waterbirds (especially for target species) in sites with high strategic importance;
- ❖ Designation of new Special Protected Areas;
- ❖ Controlling the waterbirds hunting;
- ❖ Modern survey and research equipment;
- ❖ Considering the National Strategy for biodiversity the highest priority component of the national development strategies;

- ❖ Take measures to conserve migratory waterbirds, giving special attention to endangered species as well as to those with an unfavourable conservation status;
- ❖ Identify sites and habitats for migratory waterbirds occurring within their territory and encourage the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of these sites;
- ❖ Preventing or limiting the damage to the quality of waters bodies;
- ❖ Cooperate in emergency situations for identifying the species of migratory waterbirds which are the most vulnerable to these situations;
- ❖ Protecting and maintaining the rich biodiversity by implementing an adequate management in the natural protected areas;
- ❖ Prohibit the deliberate introduction of non -native waterbirds species into the environment and take all appropriate measures to prevent the unintentional release of such species;
- ❖ Limiting the negative impact of the navigation on the waterbirds habitats
- ❖ Take immediate action to stop the decline of migratory waterbirds species and their habitats;
- ❖ Develop and maintain programmes to raise awareness and understanding of migratory waterbirds conservation issues;
- ❖ Exchange information and results from research, monitoring, conservation and education programmes.