

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

IUCN TECHNICAL REVIEW

1. IDENTIFICATION NUMBER AND NAME 219 SREBARNA NATURE AND BIOSPHERE RESERVE
2. LOCATION: Situated 16 km west of the town of Silistia and 1 km south of the Danube, in the County of Silistra, village of Srebarna
3. NOMINATED BY: Research and Coordination Centre for Preservation and Restoration of the Environment
4. DOCUMENTATION:
 - (i) Nomination form
 - (ii) Supplementary documentation (IUCN)
 - a) Consultations: Dr. S. Nedialkov; Dr. Z. Kostova; Brian Groombridge.
 - b) Committee on Environmental Protection. 1981. Protected Natural Sites in the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Sofia Press, Sofia.
 - c) Institute of Cartography. 1979. Bulgaria Protected Natural Sites. (Map).
5. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Srebarna is a fresh-water lake adjacent to the Danube, covering an area of 600 ha. It provides nesting grounds to 99 species of birds and seasonal habitat to an additional 80 species of migratory birds; Srebarna is protected by international legislation, under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention). The lake is surrounded by hills which provide a natural boundary and provide an ideal means for observing the waterfowl (see attached data sheet for additional details).

6. INTEGRITY

The boundaries are clear and explicit; the area is strictly protected (with only carefully-controlled scientific research allowed). The site has been established as a biosphere reserve and a Ramsar site. The site is relatively small, so the quantities of breeding pairs are low and probably insufficient in themselves to maintain any of the species; only if other areas are also protected can the species be expected to survive. The site is the largest lake left after drainage of the marshy zone along the Danube and was connected to the river until a dyke was built in 1949; its current situation is therefore not completely natural and is maintained by water management measures (primarily drainage by canal). A buffer zone is being developed around the reserve.

7. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

The site is clearly important on a European scale, for both breeding and migratory waterfowl. While its small size means that the quantities of birds are not comparable to other, larger wetlands, it does have outstanding diversity, containing half the Bulgarian bird fauna. With the degradation of the Danube's waterfowl due to human causes, Srebarna becomes an extremely important wetland habitat.

8. EVALUATION

Srebarna, with its important breeding populations of a number of threatened species of birds and as an important wetland on the Western Palaearctic migratory bird flyway, qualifies for the World Heritage list under criteria iv.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Srebarna Nature Reserve should be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Bulgarian authorities should be warmly encouraged for their efforts to create a buffer zone around the property, and the proposal to link Srebarna with other reserves on the Romanian side of the Danube should be commended as a very useful means of enhancing the ecological integrity of the property.

International Union for Conservation of
Nature and Natural Resources

15 April 1983 (revised 8 July 1983)

NAME Srebarna Nature Reserve

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY I & IX (Strict Nature Reserve & Biosphere Reserve)

Nominated as a World Heritage Site (Criteria: iv)

GEOGRAPHICAL PROVINCE 2.11.5 (Middle European Forest)

LEGAL PROTECTION Strict reserve - all economic and tourist activities are prohibited. Established as a Nature Reserve by the Ministry of Agriculture and Foods, 20 September 1948, Decree No. 2-11-931.

DATE ESTABLISHED Declared as a wildfowl refuge in 1942, and altered to a nature reserve in 1948. Acknowledged as a Biosphere Reserve in January 1977.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION The reserve comprises Srebarna Lake, located 19km from the town of Silistra in Silistra province, and 1km south of the Danube (which forms the border with Romania). 44°05'N, 27°07'E.

ALTITUDE No information

AREA 600ha

LAND TENURE State property

PHYSICAL FEATURES Srebarna is a typical freshwater Danubian lake on the flood terrace of the river, formed after the drainage of the marshy zone along the Danube. The marshes are overlooked by a number of hills, which lie just outside the reserve boundaries.

VEGETATION Srebarna is the only natural tract of land of any considerable extent to be protected in north-eastern Bulgaria, a floristic region of the Ukraine-Kazakh biotic province. Plants include the reed community Phragmites communis which occupies two thirds of the reserve, water lily Nymphaea alba and a number of rare marsh plants.

NOTEWORTHY FAUNA Very rich avifauna - nearly 180 bird species (half of the Bulgarian avifauna), including 80 migratory species. 99 breeding species, including the only Bulgarian colony of Dalmatian pelican Pelecanus crispus (V) (50-100 pairs), white-tailed eagle Haliaeetus albicilla (V) (1 pair), glossy ibis Plegadis falcinellus (50-5000 pairs), white spoonbill Platalea leucorodia (3-10 pairs) and little cormorant Phalacrocorax pygmaeus (20 pairs). The reserve is the only nesting place in Bulgaria for the great egret Egretta alba (10-15 pairs), and there are five other species of heron with some 1000 nests. Others species include mute swan Cygnus olor, a variety of geese Anser anser, A. erythropus, and Branta ruficollis, and ducks Anas strepers, Aythya nyroca, Tadorna ferruginea, and Netta rufina; red necked grebe Podiceps griseigena; two of the three European species of marsh tern Chilidonias nigra, and C. hybrida; bluethroat Luscinia svecica; and bearded reedling Panurus biarmicus. The surrounding hills offer a unique opportunity for ornithologists to study the birds without disturbing them. Otter Lutra lutra (V) is occasionally found in the reserve.

ZONING A buffer zone is being developed around the reserve.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT A dam built in 1949 prevented regular inundation of the lake by the Danube, resulting in the lake becoming shallower and turning into a marsh. A project was implemented in 1978 which suppressed part of the dam and restored communication with the river. A project has been discussed regarding the establishment of a joint nature reserve with Romania, incorporating both banks and the islands of the Danube.

DISTURBANCES OR DEFICIENCIES The site is relatively small so the quantities of breeding pairs of birds are low and probably insufficient to maintain any of the species. Muskrats Ondatra zibethica, from central Europe, which are also to be found along the Bulgarian reaches of the Danube, became naturalised in the lake area in 1956. The reserve is well fenced and surrounded by forests, vineyards, arable lands and stretches of steppe (which will be assigned to the reserve). Economic activities around the reserve do not disturb the wildlife within it.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH Only carefully controlled scientific research allowed. There is continuous research, mainly to establish the numbers of the different species and the ecological conditions necessary for their long-term preservation.

SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC FACILITIES A natural history museum and field ecological station.

PRINCIPAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

Bulgurkov, K. (1958). Particularités hydrologiques de la réserve - le lac Srébarna et la composition de sa faune piscicole. Izvestija na Zoologischeskija institut s musej pri BAN. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, vol. VII.

Hodek, R. (1982). Der Wanderer Heim. Mitt. Orn. Ver, Wien. 6.

Micev, T. (1958). La réserve Srébarna. Nachi rezervati i prirodni zabeležitelnosti, vol. I.

Paspaleva-Antonova, M. (1961). Contribution à l'ornithofaune de la réserve Srébarna, région de Silistra. Izvestija na Zoologischeskija institut s musej pri BAN, vol. XV.

STAFF Two guards and the museum staff of 2 biologists and technical personnel.

BUDGET No information

LOCAL PARK OR RESERVE ADMINISTRATION Committee for the Environmental Protection at the Council of Ministers of P.R. of Bulgaria (Administrative); Research and Coordination Centre for the Protection and Restoration of the Environment, B.A.S. (Scientific).

DATE 1982