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## WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

### SREBARNA NATURE RESERVE (BULGARIA) – ID No. 219

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IUCN carried out a desk review of the proposed creation of a buffer zone for the Srebarna Nature Reserve, Bulgaria, taking into consideration comments from three external reviewers.

#### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Srebarna Nature Reserve was inscribed on the World Heritage List with an area of 600 ha in 1983 on the basis of criterion (x). No buffer zone was identified at that time. In response to the Retrospective Inventory and the Periodic Reporting follow up, the World Heritage Centre received on 26 October 2007 a proposal from the State Party for creation of a buffer zone, which was transmitted to IUCN on 2 November 2007 for review.

With its proposal the State Party submitted a sufficiently scaled topographic map clearly showing the boundaries of the World Heritage property and the proposed buffer zone. The State Party notes that, following more precise measurements, the area of the World Heritage property is now considered to be 638 ha rather than 600 ha. The State Party further notes that the protected area category of the World Heritage property was changed from “nature reserve” to “managed reserve” under the Bulgarian Protected Areas Act of 1998.

#### 2. SHORT SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The State Party proposes to create a 673 ha buffer zone for the 638 ha World Heritage property. The buffer zone for the World Heritage property would consist of two components:

1) The portion of the Srebarna Nature Reserve (254 ha) that is protected according to Bulgarian legislation but is not part of the World Heritage property as it consists of areas that do not meet the requirements of the World Heritage Convention. These areas include agricultural lands and poplar plantations as well as the Danube river banks, the water area between the river banks and Devnja island, and natural forests on the island.

2) The buffer zone (419 ha) surrounding the Srebarna Nature Reserve, as protected according to Bulgarian legislation, which was determined by Order No. 1 of 3 January 1983 of the Environment Preservation Committee (the institution in charge of protected areas at that time). The aim of this buffer zone is to

prevent and reduce negative human impacts on the reserve. The buffer zone is subject to prohibitions relating to the introduction of non-local plant or animal species, pollution from domestic, industrial or other types of waste, hunting during bird nesting and breeding periods, burning of reeds without approval of the Ministry of Environment and Waters, and other activities that could disturb the nesting and breeding bird colonies.

#### 3. IMPLICATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE AND INTEGRITY

The proposed creation of a buffer zone for the World Heritage property will help to protect the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the property by preventing and reducing negative human impacts. The proposed buffer zone is as large as the property itself and entirely encircles the property with the exception of short sections in the southwest (around the village of Srebarna) and southeast of the property. The size and shape of the buffer zone therefore appear to be adequate.

In conclusion, IUCN considers that the proposed creation of a buffer zone should be approved.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopt the following decision:

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. Having examined Documents WHC-08/32.COM/8B and WHC-08/32.COM/INF.8B2,
2. Approves the proposed creation of a 673 ha buffer zone for the 638 ha Srebarna Nature Reserve, Bulgaria, in order to strengthen the integrity of the World Heritage property.

**Map 1: Boundaries of the property and proposed buffer zone**

