Additional information

Physical features of the site

Geology

The region of Pomorie Lake belongs to Burgas synclinorium from the Eastern Srednogorie tectonic region. This is a big and complex structure, which arises from the Nova Zagora and Yambol in western direction and gradually enlarges, in eastern direction. The main axis is with east-west direction. This synclinorium gradually sinks and is lowering near Burgas and in Burgas bay. The geophysical data show that the synclinorium continues in the shelf region. A part of this synclinorium appeared at the land surface between Burgas, Ahtopol and Rezovo.

The Burgas synclinorium is fulfilled by various, thick up to 2 000 - 3 000-m uppercretaceous (coenomanic, turonic and senonic) sediments and volcanogenous rocks. This uppercretaceous sediment - volcanic complex is strongly folded. Thus there many anticlinal and synclinal folds exist. The main axis of these folds is again with east-west direction (S t r a s h i m i r o v, Z a f i r o v, 1981).

Origins

The lake is of natural origin. It is a lagoon separated from the sea by a sand strip- about 7 km long. A canal with a lock, located in its southern part, connects it with the sea.

Hydrology

Saltwater from the Black Sea enters the lake by means of tidal influxes infiltrating through the sand bar. The single canal connecting the lake to the Black sea is located in the southern side of the lake and water is flowing in and out through tidal influxes, gravity and wind dynamics. The water flows from the open lake into the cells or pools, which are located further north, allowing enough time to increase the salinity. Water is then mechanically pumped through a canal to the saltpans inducing further solar and wind evaporation required for the collection of salt. A drainage canal collects all water from the salines and fresh water and returns it to the sea.
The average salinity is about 50‰, but in the evaporation basins of the salines it is much higher. There is only one freshwater tributary that is not constant and a drainage canal has been constructed for protection of the lake from fresh water inflow. In the past the water from the drainage canal was pumped by a pump station via pipeline to the sea but it is disused for past 12 years. At present freshwater is introduced into the lake mainly by rainfall. Evaporation is 3-4 times higher than the inflow of freshwater and seawater.

Soil Characteristics and Type

When taken at ~30cm depth, the soil is fine, homogenous, high viscosity, sulfuric, dark greyblack with 78% water. The substrate of Pomorie Lake is black hydrogen sulphide curative mud, which is a natural resource with particular value. This value is determinate by its high medical quality, restricted deposits (only in Pomorie Lake and Atanasovsko Lake) and very long process for creation (1 cm layer for about 100 years). Medical institutions in Pomorie are supplied with curative mud from Pomorie Lake.

Water Characteristics

The average depth is 0.6m and the maximum is 1.4m. The basins in the western part are extremely shallow at 0.2-0.3 m. Water level fluctuations are from 50 cm below sea level up to 12 cm above sea level (Height system: Baltic sea level, note: average Black sea level is 28 cm below Baltic sea level).

Climate

The average annual precipitation is between 450 and 500 mm. The maximum rainfall is in June and November and the minimum is in August and September. The average annual air temperature varies is 12-13 °C. The region is characterized by a rather mild winter climate the average January temperature is 1.5–2.5 °C. Only 20 days during the total winter period have negative temperature values. The summer rainfall is rather scarce – 90 to 150 mm and the average temperature in July is 22.5-23.5 °C. The summer breeze is quite typical: 13-15 days in June and 18-21 in July and August. Average annual wind speed is 4.1 m/sec.

Physical features of the catchment area

Surface area
33,55 sq. km

General geology and geomorphological features

The area is situated in the northeastern part of Burgas depression. The relief in the lake area is typical coastal plain with average altitude of 1-2 m above sea level. To the west-northwest the relief gradually changes to a slope reaching 80-90 m above Kamenar village.

General soil types

Typical for the catchment area are soils of the type Vertisoils. These are low in nitrogen and phosphorus but have good levels of potassium.

Climate

General climate type is Continental-Mediterranean. Four distinct seasons with a rainy spring, dry hot summer, mild autumn and mild winter with a little and irregular snow. The maximum rainfall is in June and November and the minimum is in August and September.

Ecosystem services

Hydrological values:

The inflow to the lake comes mainly from the sea by means of infiltrations through the sand bar and through the canal connecting lake to sea. The drainage canal in the western part is stopping a great part of the surface and ground waters from the catchment. Only during heavy rains some fresh waters enter the lake when these are above the capacity of the drainage canal. The sand bar separating the sea and lake is fortified with a rocky dike (since 1980s) and is important for the shoreline stabilization. In the past before the rocky dike was constructed during winter storms the sand bar was regularly cut and large quantities of sea water entered the lake causing floods in town.

Current scientific research and facilities

In the past 10 years Green Balkans NGO team has been undertaking regular bird ringing activities during autumn migration.
No specific field station exists but Pomorie Lake Visitor centre is serving these purposes especially during conservation holidays.
Sandwich tern colour ringing scheme was initiated in 2010 and plans for radio-telemetry for 2011 exist.

Regular monitoring of avifauna has been made since 2002. Mapping of nesting birds was done since 2007. Different studies and inventories have been implemented during the Management Plan development process.

Social and cultural values

The site has long history related to human activities. It is one of the oldest sea salt producing areas in the Balkans and the Black sea region and the medicinal mud extraction has started in ancient times, too. In the past the sea salt production was a source of wealth for the town of Pomorie and that was reflected in the fact that during Ottoman times the town had a special position and its inhabitants had a special tax allowance because of the salt production. In recent years the sea salt production has decreased and now just a small part of the former salines are still active. In 2002 a Salt Museum was opened dedicated to the history of salt production.

The medicinal mud is a major natural product procured from the lake. There are two major specialized hospitals for "mud therapy" in town – one belongs to the Ministry of Health and the other to Ministry of Defence. In recent years a large SPA hotel complex was established and several of the hotels in town have created their SPA centres.
In 1930s a fishing cooperation was established but it was a short-lived. Further experiments with fisheries were made in second part of 20th century with mullet and plaice but it also hasn't proved profitable. Nowadays only small scale seasonal fishing activities exist.

Current recreation and tourism

Recreational value is not widely appreciated and utilized yet but a CEPA program is aiming to promote the site. Existing activities include:

Water sports – wind surfing and kite surfing (all year long, but there is official ban for water sports since 2009).

Eco-tourism: birdwatching (mostly in the migration season), conservation holidays for restoration of nesting habitat for water birds (September). Eco-Festival "Magic of Pomorie Lake" was held in 2008 and 2009 with participation of salt producers, medicinal mud hospitals and hotels, eco-tourism companies, directorates of nature parks, etc.

Mud baths along the shores of the lake – summer months.

Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site

Pomorie Lake Visitor Centre was established and opened in 2010. The centre hosts an interactive exhibition and provides optical equipment for observation of birds. Presenting equipment is available and school visits are regular. Two eco-trails have been established – Botanical and Ornithological as well as general information signs with maps of the lake and trails.
Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program has published a leaflet for Pomorie Lake's biodiversity in 2002.
Green Balkans NGO publications on Pomorie Lake: Posters – 2 types (2002 and 2008)
Leaflets: Educational leaflet (2008), Natura 2000 sites (2007), Pomorie Lake Visitor Centre (2011)
Folder and info sheets (2008)
Calendars "Magic of Pomorie Lake" (2008 and 2009) A set of post cards (12) and stickers (6) (2008)
Pins and T-shirts (3 types) (2009)

Canvas bags (2010)
GEF/World Bank project: Pomorie Lake – Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable management" – Layman's report in Bulgarian and English (2010)
Jigsaw Puzzle (2008)
Magic of Pomorie Lake Photo Album (2010) Checklist of Birds at Pomorie Lake (2010)
Collected reports for the Integrated Management Plan of Pomorie Lake (2010)
A set of posters "Fauna of Pomorie Lake" – Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians (2008) Pomorie Lake websites – developed and maintained by Green Balkans NGO:
http://www.greenbalkans.org/pomorielake/index.php?c_lang=2
http://www.greenbalkans.org/pomoriecenter/?lang=1

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