

Additional information

Justification for the criteria:

The largest natural lakes in Moldova, Belevu and Manta, are situated within the site . Lake Belevu is situated close to Slobozia Marea and was originally a Danubian lake in that it was connected to the Prut and was affected by floods in the River Danube . It is 5 km long and 2 km wide, covers about 1,700 ha, and has an average depth of 1 .5 m (maximum 2 m) . Water from the Prut now enters the lake via two canals . In low rainfall years the lake can dry out and thus the biodiversity of the wetland ecosystem is adapted to these cycles .

Lake Manta is situated between the town of Cahul and Brinza village . It was formed as a result of a conjunction of several former natural lakes interconnected by natural channels: Drachele (265 ha), Rotunda (208 ha), Surda, Listva, and Badelnik . At the beginning of the 1970s, the Cahul fish farm was established at Crihana Veche by embanking and expanding Lake Fontana (116 ha) a natural lake that lay to the north of Manta, It now consists of eight fish ponds, with a maximum depth of about 1 .5 m even in wet years .

Both Lakes Belevu and Manta can still be considered as natural or at least near natural according to their flooding characteristics. No man made impacts on the sites by hydrotechnical structures or channel dredging are known which could influence the flooding features significantly . The existing dyke systems, designed for a flood with a 1 % probability, are not complete (dyke breaches are widespread, either by failure or by uncompleted construction or by deliberate destruction) .

Besides the River Prut and the remaining larger natural lakes, there are also smaller waterbodies in the floodplain and minor tributaries of the Prut which dry out during the summer. The site also supports grazing meadows and dry pastures on the slopes, and riverine forest. A large part of the floodplain area, especially in the northern part of the site, has been drained to provide farmland (cereals, vineyards, vegetables), but at present only about 40% of the irrigation system is operational . The Prut river's headwater is near village Vorohta, Ukraine (in the Carpathians) . It flows into the Danube River 0 .5 km to south-east from the village of Giurgiulesti . It runs throughout the region Cernauti (the Ukraine) ; then it follows its way on the border between Moldova and Romania . The river length is 967km ; the total area of the Prut river basin constitutes 28400 km² out of which 6710 km² belongs to Moldova, 10690 km² - to Ukraine and 11000 km² - to Romania. The Prut river basin is situated between 45-49 degrees northern latitude and 24-29 degrees eastern longitude . In typical year, the total water availability of Prut River is estimated at 2 .9 min .m³ per year .

A summary of the biodiversity inventory in the Lower Prut Lakes area is given below .

No. of species		No. of species in Moldovan Red List
Mammals	39	5
Birds	203	27
Reptiles	5	2
Amphibians	9	1
Fish*	41	6
Plants	12	

*(includes 5 introduced species)

Several migratory bird species occur that are listed in Appendix I of the Bonn Convention .

Ecosystem services:

Current scientific research and facilities:

Scientific research of the Lower Prut Lakes site have been carried out in the frame of multi-annual plans of scientific research of the relevant institutes of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences.

Current recreation and tourism:

There is no organized recreation/tourism in the Lower Prut Lakes site .

Current land use within the site:

- Arable lands - 51,68 km² , or 21,11 % of the total surface area of the Site,
- Including : irrigated - 20,17 km², or 39,0 % ,
- Including : sustainable harvesting - 20,17 km², or 39 % ;
- pastures - 35,05 km² , or 14,31 % ;
- fish ponds - 15,89 km², or 6,49 % ;
- natural lakes (Beleu, Manta lakes and others) - 38,14 km², or 15,57% ;
- reed beds - 12,98 km² , or 5,03
- woods - 7,84 km² , or 4,02 % * ;
- river (Prut) - 7,11 km² , or 2,90% *;
- others - 48,9 km² , or 19,97 % *

(* - estimated data)