

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

1. Date this sheet was completed/ updated:

March 2002

2. Country: BULGARIA

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Designation date Site Reference Number

3. Name of wetland:

IBISHA ISLAND

4. Geographical coordinates: 43°49'30" / 23°31'02"

5. Elevation: 50 m

6. Area: 372.19 ha

7. Overview: (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

An island in the Danube River (km 717) covered mainly by seasonally flooded forest. It is of global importance for the Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) as well as one of the most important sites in the country for the Night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Squaco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*), and Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*).

8. Wetland Type (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types; in the present document, the "Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type" is found on page 9)

marine-coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K • Zk(a)

inland: L • M • N • O • P • Q • R • Sp • Ss • Tp

Ts • U • Va • Vt • W • Xf • Xp • Y • Zg • Zk(b)

human-made: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • Zk(c)

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant:

Xf-M

9. **Ramsar Criteria:** (Please circle the applicable Criteria; the *Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance* are reprinted beginning on page 11 of this document.)

1 • **2** • **3** • **4** • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 2

10. Map of the site included? YES

(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

Irina Kostadinova

Member of the National Ramsar Committee

Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds / BirdLife Bulgaria

Yavorov Complex, Bl.71, Ent.4, Ap.1, P.O.Box 50

1111 Sofia, Bulgaria

e-mail: bspb_hq@bspb.org;

website: www.bspb.org

12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page.

Criterion 1 – The Ibisha Island is a good representative example of seasonally flooded forested wetland, typical to the Danube River.

Criterion 2 - The wetland supports:

- It is a regular breeding ground for three species from the Annex II of Bon Convention and the AEWa list – Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) which is also a globally threatened species, Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) and Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)
- 18 species of birds are included in the Bern Convention List
- The importance for other threatened animal species, as well as plant species is not described.

Criterion 3 – The site contains a specific habitat type – flooded riverine forest, which is rare in Europe and thus contributes to conservation of biological diversity in the biogeographic region.

Criterion 4 – It provides significant breeding ground for a number of bird species, especially mixed colony of Common and Pygmy Cormorants, Night Heron, Squaco Heron, Purple Heron and Spoonbill.

13. General location: (include the nearest large town and its administrative region)

Ibisha Island is located on the kilometer 717 of Danube River, east of the town of Lom and opposite to the village of Dolni Tzibar.

14. Physical features: (e.g., geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth; water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

➤ Origin

Ibisha island has naturally originated as a result of simultaneously creative and destructive influence of the river stream. It has evolved due to the sand and mud sedimentation in the parts where the stream is lower.

➤ Geology & geomorphology (including soils)

The soils are sandy-clay rich in organic substances

➤ Hydrogeology & hydrology

The hydrology of the island fully depends of the hydrology of the Danube River. During the high water levels the water from the Danube flow into the island and floods the forest. The water regime of Danube River highly depends on Iron Gates Reservoirs upstream.

➤ Climate

The climate is continental. The average annual rainfall is 571.8 mm with February minimum and May or June maximum. The average monthly maximum temperature (August) is 36,8°C and the minimum temperature (January) is 14,7°C below zero.

15. Hydrological value: (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation, etc.)

Not specially studied, but some of the known hydrological values are – water retention, flood control, sediment trapping

16. Ecological features: (main habitats and vegetation types)

Riverine seasonally flooded forests – association dominated by *Alnus glutinosa*, *Salix fragilis*, *Populus alba* and *Populus nigra* with combination of dense liana and shrub layer dominated by *Rubus sp.*;

Cultivated tree-plantations of *Populus hybridus* (in the western part of the island);

Sand bars without vegetation;

River stream and its banks at the Bulgarian side;

17. Noteworthy flora: (indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered, or biogeographically important, etc.).

The present type of the natural flooded forest is a threatened at European level. The flora is not described in details.

18. Noteworthy fauna: (indicating, e.g., which species are unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important; include count data, ect.).

Fish – in the river stream around the island occur the fish species specific to this part of Danube – *Esox lucius*, *Cyprinus carpio*, *Tinca tinca*, *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*, etc. During the high water level fish enter the island (through a channel) serve as a trophic base for the bird species nesting in the colony

Amphibians – not described

Reptiles – not described

Birds – 18 bird species with unfavorable European status (Tucker, Heath, 1994) occur in the island. The flooded forest of the island is one of the most important sites in Europe for the mixed colony of waterbirds - Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – 250 pairs, Squaco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*) – 50 pairs, Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) and Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) – 10 pairs. All of these species together with are listed in the Bulgariand Red Data Book. **18** species are listed in the Bern Convention Annexes. **2 species** are included in Annex II of Bonn Convention, as well as **7 species** - in the list of threatened species of the Corine Biotopes Programme, determining the site as important on a European level.

Mammals - not described

19. Social and cultural value: (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archeological site, etc.)

Not described

20. Land tenure /ownership of: (a) site (b) surrounding area

(a) site - State

(b) surrounding area - state, municipal, private, foreign state

21. Current land use: (a) site (b) surroundings/catchment

(a) site

Nature conservation, forestry, fishery

(b) surroundings/catchment

Fishery; shipping; hunting; agriculture

22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:

(a) at the site

- introduction of intensive forestry based on non-native species cause changing of the habitat types and reduction of the threatened riverine forest communities
- Forestry activities close to the colony during the breeding season cause disturbance of birds
- Illegal cutting of trees in the reserve

(b) around the site / catchment area

Due to the constructions at the Iron Gates dike, regulating the water level of the Danube, spring floods are less pronounced and the forest loose its riverine type.

23. Conservation measures taken: (national category and legal status of protected areas – including any boundary changes which have been made; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

- Designation of “Ibisha” Managed Reserve 34,3 ha with 200 m Buffer zone
- The whole island has been designated as Important Bird Area to the presence of colonially breeding birds in significant numbers, as well as site of European Importance (CORINE Site) because of presence of threatened plant communities, as well as bird species.

24. Conservation measured proposed but not yet implemented: (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area, etc.):

- The protected regime to be expanded to the whole island;
- The hybridised poplars and the withered trees should be removed. The utilization of the island as a poplar plantation should be restricted to sustainable forestry based on native species

25. Current scientific research and facilities: (e.g., details of current projects; existence of field station, etc.)

Irregular bird monitoring carried out by BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria.

26. Current conservation education (e.g. visitors center, hides, info booklet, facilities for school visits, etc.)

The area was included in the special brochure produced and in the slide show by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds about Important Bird Areas along the Danube. They are spreaded in the main Bulgarian towns along the river.

27. Current recreation and tourism: (state if wetland is used for recreation/ tourism; indicate type and frequency / intensity)

No

28. Jurisdiction: (territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional, e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.)

The described territory is under the general jurisdiction of the Municipality of Valchedram, and in parallel under the jurisdiction of the District Body, based in the city of Montana

From functional point of view:

The “Ibisha” Reserve is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Waters. The forest areas and the agricultural lands, which are state property are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

29. Management authority: (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)

Regional Forestry Department - Lom

Address: Alexander Stambolijski Str. 27, BG-3600 Lom, District of Montana, Bulgaria
and

Regional inspectorate of the Ministry of Environment and Waters, based in Montana

Address: RIOSV- Montana, Zitmirska Str. 4, BG-3400 Montana, Bulgaria

30. Bibliographical references: (scientific/ technical only)

Antonov, A. 1997. Ibishia Island. In: Important Bird Areas in Bulgaria. BSPB Conservation Series. Book 1. Kostadinova, I. (comp.). BSPB, Sofia, BG, 55-56

Rose, P.M., D.A.Scot. 1997. Waterfowl Population Estimates. IWRB Publication 44, Slimbridge, UK.
