

## Ramsar Information Sheet

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**1. Date this sheet was completed:**

05.07.1995

**2. Country:**

Hungary

County : Fejér

Districts: Órpuszta, Sáregres,

Rétszilas villages

**3. Name of wetland:**

Rétszilas Fishponds Nature Conservation Area

**4. Geographical co-ordinates:**

46°50' N - 18°34'E

**5. Altitude:**

99-102 m

**6. Area:**

1508 ha

**7. Overview**

Rétszilas Fishponds were formed in the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It consists of large fishponds and the remnants of marshy river beds. The fishpond system includes 14 larger and several smaller units. The total area of the lakes covers approximately 840 hectares with reed beds and embankments. The extensive reed beds offer suitable nesting place for waterfowl species.

**8. Wetland type:**

1

**9. Ramsar Criteria:**

2a

3a, 3b

**10. Map of site included:**

yes

**11. Name and address of compiler:**

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**12. Justification of criteria selected under point 9:**

The Rétszilas Fishponds site is one of the most significant waterfowl habitat of the Sárrét part of Transdanubia (Western Hungary). The area is an excellent nesting habitat of several strictly protected and endangered bird species and breeding site of the strictly protected otter. Considering the size of the site its nesting heron population and species composition is outstanding.

**13. General location:**

The nearest large town is Székesfehérvár with approximately 100.000 inhabitants.

**14. Physical features:**

Climate : The climate is humid continental. Summers are usually hot, and winters are very cold. The yearly precipitation is about 600-650 mm, annual mean temperature is between 10-11 degree Celsius.

Geology and geomorphology : The Sárvíz valley was formed in the Lower Pleistocene sediment in the direction of NW and S-SE. Its recent position was occupied in the Würm period. The total area its catchment basin covers 3470 km<sup>2</sup> due to the former tectonic landslides and erosion. The Sárvíz valley collects the surface water of the Bakony Mountains from Veszprém to Mór through the streamlets of Séd and Gaja. It also collects the surplus water from lake Velencei and the lake's catchment area through canal Kajtor. Three main types of surface rock formation can be found on the territory of the fishponds : shifting sand, sandy-loess of 3-9 m width and flood sediment from the Lower and Middle Pleistocene. Underneath these layers there is a thick Pannonian sediment layer.

Soils : Characteristic soils are meadow and peat-like soils.

#### **15. Hydrological values:**

Rétszilás Fishponds were developed on the territory of the so-called Őssárvíz after the regulation of the swampy valley of Őssárvíz. The main water supply for the site is the canal Sárvíz-Nádor which crosses the area partly on the eastern edge of the fishpond system. On the western edge there is a canal (canal Malom) which borders the site. The last significant human intervention took place between 1981-1982 when the new lake were established and the others dredged. From that time the lakes have been refilling with sediments. The recent private owners have started to reconstruct a few lakes.

#### **16. Ecological features:**

Habitats : - lakes

- marshland
- meadows
- reedbeds
- willow bushes

The most characteristic vegetation types (associations) are the open water reed-grass vegetation (Lemno-Utriculoetum and Myriophyllo-Potamogetonetum) reedbeds (Scirpo-Phragmitetum and Bolboschoeno-Phragmitetum) the mosaic-like mixture of sedge (Cladietum marisci) communities and the typical Transdanubian sodic pastures along the lakes.

#### **17. Noteworthy flora:**

There are only a few data of the flora of the fishponds and its surroundings. The random sampling carried out in the nineties suggests a high botanical value of the site. The above listed plant communities provide proper place for many endangered and strictly protected species. The orchid population has a high significance including 4 Orchid subspecies (100-2000 individuals) and the threatened *Ophrys sphegodes*. A comprehensive botanical survey could undoubtedly come up more values.

#### **18. Noteworthy fauna:**

Richness of the fauna live is outstanding. 113 bird species have been recorded on the site, 84 among them protected.

#### The most important bird species

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Egretta garzetta</i>      | 4-5 nesting pairs   |
| <i>E. alba</i>               | 20-30 nesting pairs |
| <i>Ardea ralloides</i>       | 8-10 nesting pairs  |
| <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>   | 2-3 nesting pairs   |
| <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> | 20-30 nesting pairs |

*Falco cherrug* - strictly protected

*Merops apiaster* - strictly protected

*Crex crex* - globally threatened

*Larus melanocephalus* - only breeding colony in the Transdanubia can be found here

*Sterna hirundo*

Besides these species, 6 duck species, four grebe species, four heron species, five sandpiper species

Important mammalian species

*Lutra lutra* - strictly protected

**19. Social and cultural values:**

The establishment of the first unit was started in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From that time fish production has been carried out. There is no other relevant cultural value.

**20. Land tenure/ownership of:**

- a. state property : 51,34 hectares
- self-governing property : 0,41 hectares
- cooperative property: 581.19 hectares
- private property: 864,30 hectares

The Budapest Nature Conservation Directorate is going to buy a land of 120 hectares from the cooperatives.

- b. The surrounding are is owned by cooperatives, and also individuals

**21. Current land use/principal human activities:**

- (a) site
- (b) surroundings/catchment

(a) at the site

Fishery activity on the 800 hectares fishpond system. Cattle grazing and mowing are characteristics land use on the meadows. Farming on the arable land.

(b) at the surroundings and catchment area

The surrounding area is one of the best agricultural areas in Hungary. There is mainly cereal production on the farms. North of the site there are smaller fishponds intensively used for fish production. The nearest industrial centre is the town of Székesfehérvár 40 km far from the site.

**22. Factors adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:**

- a. at the site

Earlier, the most important threat was the hunting of the aquatic animals. In the time of autumn migration Hungarian and foreign hunters use intensively the fishponds. In order to avoid the disturbance of hunting, the Minister of Agriculture prohibited the hunting on the whole territory of the wetland (No. 8/1993. I.30.FM). The intensive fish rearing is also a threat for the reedbeds due to its disturbance.

- b. around the site

The water quality is the most important problem. The most turbid water comes from canal Sárvíz.

**23. Conservation measures taken:**

The Rétszilas Nature Reserve was established on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1996.

**24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

Developing a detailed management plan and designation the site for the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

**25. Current scientific and research facilities:**

There is a bird ringing survey carried out by the Hungarian Nature Conservation Society, including bird ringing camps in springtime.

**26. Current conservation education:****27. Current recreation and tourism:**

The volume of tourism is not relevant.

**28. Jurisdiction:**

Budapest Nature Conservation Directorate under the supervisory of the Authority for Nature Conservation (Ministry for Environment and Regional Policy)

**29. Management authority:**

Private fishery company

**30. Bibliographical references:**

Fejér megyei Sárrét meliorációs terve, AGROBER, Székesfehérvár, 1990

Zs. Kalotás-G.Kecvey-G.Lendvai (1989): Javaslat a Dél-Mezőföldi Tájvédelmi Körzet létesítésére, Budapest

G. Lendvai (1993): A Rétszilasi halastavak vegetációja és védett növényei, Sárbogárd