

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

2009-2012 version

Blahnita

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

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

30.08.2012

3. Country:

Romania

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

BLAHNITA

5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for (tick one box only):

- a) Designation of a new Ramsar site ; or
b) Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

a) Site boundary and area

The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged:

or

If the site boundary has changed:

- i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ; or
ii) the boundary has been extended ; or
iii) the boundary has been restricted**

and/or

If the site area has changed:

- i) the area has been measured more accurately ; or
ii) the area has been extended ; or
iii) the area has been reduced**

7. Map of site:

a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:

- i) a hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): yes ;
- ii) an electronic format (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) yes .

b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:

The western limit is set by the national border with Serbia. In the eastern part, the border is formed by dirt roads between agricultural parcels directing to Izvoarele and then to Danceu villages. From Danceu, village passing by Jiana and Scapau villages, the eastern border is assured by county road 564 and after that by the border of Starmina forest. In the north we found the Vrancea, Tismana, Ostrovul Cobului settlements. Inside the site are found the following localities: Burila, Bistretu, Ostrovul Mare, Izvorul Frumos, Devesel, Balta Verde.

The present site surface overrides Nature 2000 ROSPA 0011 Blahnita site perimeter (43 711 ha).

8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes):

44°25'31" N, 22°38'17" E

9. General location:

The site is located in the S-W part of Romania, in the Oltenia Plain. From administrative point of view, the site is situated in Dolj county, on the territory of several villages: Burila Mare (2611 inhabitants), Devesel (3469 inhabitants), Gogosu (5418 inhabitants), Hinova (2759 inhabitants), Jiana (4881 inhabitants), Gruia (3072 inhabitants). The nearest large town is Drobeta Turnu-Severin (112 012 inhabitants), approx. 15 km N-W of the northern border of the site.

10. Elevation: (in metres: average and/or maximum & minimum)

The average elevation is 78 m above the sea.

The minimum altitude is 15 m.

The maximum altitude is 302 m.

11. Area: (in hectares)

45,286 ha

Wetland area: 5,600 ha

12. General overview of the site:

The largest part of the site is situated in Blahnita Plain, a subdivision of the Romanian Plain, situated in the SW part of Romania (the division is called Oltenia Plain). A small part covers the Getic Plateau. The position of the site, the geomorphological and climate conditions (plain, but also hilly relief) caused the existence of a great biodiversity in the area. The landscape is represented by swamps, permanent lakes, sand dunes covered with acacias, poplars and oak forests, grasslands, habitats which are populated by a rich and diverse fauna. Big populations of *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*, *Coracias garrulous*, *Aythya nyroca*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Ixobrychus minutus* etc. find very good conditions for nesting and breeding in the area. The main river of the site, outward Danube, is represented by Blahnita. The site has been designated as a special protection area (SPA) and it is included in the European ecological network Natura 2000, for the protection of 16 bird species listed in the Annex I of the Birds Directive. The site is also important for the protection of many migratory species under the Bonn Convention. Furthermore, the importance of the site is raised by the existence of 2 nature reserve: Padurea Starmina (Starmina Forest) with acacia plantation and Padurea Bunget (Bunget Forest), both of them designated as protected

areas in 2004. As a protected area, Blahnita is taken into account for the planning of the ecological restoration of the Lower Danube meadow in Romania.

12. Ramsar Criteria:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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13. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11 above:

Criterion 2:

The site supports the following species of the Bird Directive Annex I:

Scientific name	Common name	Breeding (pairs)	Winter (individuals)	Migrants (individuals)
<i>Ardea purpurea</i> (Bonn)	Purple Heron	90-100		
<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Squacco Heron	160-230		
<i>Aythya nyroca</i> (Bonn)	Ferruginous Duck	100-120		
<i>Botaurus stellaris</i> (Bonn)	(Great) Bittern	28-44		
<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	Whiskered Tern	90-100		
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Marsh Harrier	20-30		
<i>Coracias garrulus</i> (Bonn)	Roller	170-180		
<i>Egretta</i> (<i>Casmerodius</i>) <i>alba</i> / -us	Great Egret	40-60		
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	420-560		
<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> (Bonn)	White-tailed Eagle	1		
<i>Himantopus</i> <i>himantopus</i>	Black-winged Stilt	12-14		
<i>Isobrychus minutus</i> (Bonn)	Little Bittern	120-140		
<i>Nycticorax</i> <i>nycticorax</i>	(Black-crowned) Night Heron	380-440		
<i>Phalacrocorax</i> <i>pygmeus</i> (Bonn)	Pygmy Cormorant	90-120	240	700-800
<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Spoonbill	54-68		
<i>Sterna hirundo</i> (Bonn)	Common Tern	90-100		

The site additionally supports a number of species protected in Europe, including species listed in **the EU Habitat Directive**:

Amphibians:

Bombina bombina (Annex II, IV)
Triturus dobrogicus (Annex II, IV)

Reptiles:

Emys orbicularis (Annex II, IV)

Testudo hermanni (Annex II, IV)

Mammals:

Spermophilus citellus (Annex II, IV; VU, IUCN))

The data presented above was collected between 2000 and 2010, referenced from the following bibliography:

1. H.G. 971/2011 – Hotarare de Guvern pentru modificarea si completarea H.G. nr. 1284/2007 privind declararea ariilor de protectie speciala avifaunistica ca parte integranta a retelei ecologice europene Natura 2000 in Romania;
2. Papp, T., Fantana, C., - editors (2008) – Important Bird Areas in Romania – published in cooperation by the Romanian Ornithological Society and Association “Milvus Group”;
3. “Romanian Ornithological Society” database;

Criterion 4:

Being located on a major migratory route, Blahnita territory represents an important area for resting and feeding of rare bird species.

The site is important for breeding populations of the following species: *Ardea purpurea*, *Ardeola ralloides*, *Aythya nyroca*, *Botaurus stellaris*, *Chlidonias hybridus*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Egretta (Casmerodius) alba/-us*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Himantopus himantopus*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*, *Coracias garrulus*, *Sterna hirundo* and *Platalea leucorodia*.

During migration, the site is important for the following species: *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*, *Limosa limosa* and *Phalacrocorax carbo*.

The site is highly important for waterfowl's habitat, sheltering sedentary wild birds on one hand, as well as northern population that rest during migration periods.

Please see justification of criterion 2 for the list of bird species.

15. Biogeography :

a) biogeographic region:

- 1) Europe: Continental
- 2) World: West Palearctic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

- 1) Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC (1992)
- 2) Donita, N., et al. (2005) Habitatele din Romania, Bucuresti
- 3) Udvardy, 1975

16. Physical features of the site:

Geology and geomorphology:

The largest part of the site is situated in Blahnita Plain, a subdivision of the Romanian Plain, situated in the SW part of Romania (the division is called Oltenia Plain), but a small part of the site covers the SW extremity of the Getic Plateau (the so called Balacita Piedmont). The relief is orientated from NW to SE. The basement is represented by the Moesian Platform, composed by crystalline schistes and covered by a thick layer of sediments: sand, gravels, clay, marls etc. The newest sediments belong to the Quaternary period. The geomorphological conditions are the result of the Danube actions which created several terraces in the area and of Blahnita river, with a large valley, which crosses the site in the southern part. In the northern part of the site, the altitudes are higher and exceed 300 meters, because of the Getic Plateau, a hilly region.

Soil type and chemistry range:

The soils belong to the chernozems class, but on small areas the azonal soils are specific (alluvial soils).

Origins:

Mainly natural and on a small scale human made.

Hydrology:

The hydrology is represented by small rivers, the most important being Blahnita which has its source outside the area in Oltenia Plain. Some old branches of the Danube are also specific to this area (Dunarea Veche – Old Danube). Many lakes (Rotunda, Bistretu, Jirov etc) existed in the past, but they were drained and, today, the agricultural land and swamps replace them.

Water quality: Water quality is good, allowing growth for many fish species and maintaining biological diversity from the area.

Depth, fluctuations and permanence of water:

Maximum depth: 12.5 m; medium depth: 4 m.

Water area: 550ha

Comment [RE1]: Could you please clarify if this refers only to rivers and lakes? The entire wetland area is given with 5600 ha on the map

Climate:

The climate is temperate-continental, with temperature values of over 11⁰ C, dry summers and warm winters (-0.3⁰ C). The rainfall average is exceeding 600 mm per year and the dominant wind is from West direction. The site is located in an area with submediterranean influences.

17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Area: Oltenia Plain

Geological characteristics:

The catchment area is a part of the Oltenia Plain, created by the action of the Danube, Jiu and Olt rivers. The geology of the Blahnita catchment area is represented by crystalline schists in the basement (Moesian Platform) covered by sedimentary rocks, respectively sands, gravels and loess. The Blahnita plain is composed by the 8 terraces of the Danube River which are covered by sand dunes. The altitudes vary from a few meters in the Danube meadow to over 300 meters in the northern part, at the contact with the Getic Plateau.

Soil type:

The soils belong to the chernozems class; they are rich in humus and appropriate for the agriculture.

Land use:

In the catchment, most of the land is arable land, then forests, pasture, built land and aquatic habitats.

Climate:

The climate is temperate continental, with sub Mediterranean influences. The temperature annual average in Drobeta Turnu Severin is 11.6° C, the highest value is in July, 23.1° C, while the January's average is - 0.3° C. There are three months with negative temperature values (December-February). In the summer, the daily temperature can reach 40-42° C. The annual rainfall average is 690 mm, but in the summer the level of aridity is high and the drought very frequent. The dominant winds are the West winds, but there is a local wind, from south direction called Austral.

18. Hydrological values:

Blahnita has an important role in reducing the effects of the Danube flood.

19. Wetland Types

a) presence:

Inland: L • M • N • O • P • Q • R • Sp • Ss • Ip • Ts • U • Va •
Vt • W • Xf • Xp • Y • Zg • Zk(b)

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

b) dominance:

M + O – Permanent rivers and Permanent freshwater lakes – 7,3%

Tp – Permanent freshwater marshes – 6%

1 – Aquaculture ponds – 0.7%

20. General ecological features:

Vegetal associations are characteristic to wetlands and silvo-stepic region.

Aquatic vegetation is represented by *Lemna* sp., *Nymphoides peltata*, *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, *Potamogeton* sp., *Myriophyllum* sp., *Ceratophyllum submersum*, *Vallisneria spiralis*, *Najas marina*.

The swamp vegetation is represented by reed (*Phragmites australis*) alone or in association with bulrush (*Typha latifolia*, *T. angustifolia*), *Sparganium erectum*, *Sparganium ramosus* together with some accompanying plant species like: *Epipactis palustris*, *Carex pseudocyperus*.

The forests are represented by Galleries of *Salix alba* and *Populus alba* (92A0) that is protected under Annex I of Habitat Directive (92/43/EEC).

21. Noteworthy flora: No

22. Noteworthy fauna: No

23. Social and cultural values:

a) Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values:

Hinova, a village situated in Blahnita site is important because of its archaeological value. Hinova was habited since the Roman period and became famous in 1980 when a thesaurus of over 9600 pieces was discovered in the area.

24. Land tenure/ownership:

a) within the Ramsar site: around 73 % of the land are private property and 27 % is public.

b) in the surrounding area: most of the land in the surrounding area is private.

25. Current land (including water) use:

a) within the Ramsar site: most of human activities are related with agriculture, fishing and forestry.

b) in the surroundings/catchment: in the catchment area, most of human activities are also related with agriculture, fishing and forestry.

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

a) within the Ramsar site: the agriculture, the use of the fertilisers, the water pollution, the abandonment of the waste, the poaching, fishing etc.

b) in the surrounding area: land cultivation, grazing, use of fertilizers, poaching.

27. Conservation measures taken:

a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:

The Ramsar site is overlapping for 0.09% with the natural reserve Padurea Bunget and for 0.27% the natural reserve Padurea Starmina, both designated under Law 5/2000 at national level. Since 2007, Blahnita is included in the European ecological network Natura 2000, as special protection area - ROSPA0011 site, designated under the Birds Directive. The Site also includes parts of the Sites of Community Importance ROSCI0173 Padurea Starmina and ROSCI 0306 Jiana.

c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?:

There is no approved management plan.

d) Describe any other current management practices:

In Rotunda fish farm (311 ha) accordingly to the SPA regulation vegetation and reed burn, fishing during the birds breeding season (March – July) are not allowed. Planting alien species in the site forests is also forbidden.

1 ha of *Salix alba* and *Populus alba* has been planted in Rotunda fish farm in 2010 under the LIFE+ project “**Cross-border conservation of *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* and *Aythya nyroca* at key sites in Romania and Bulgaria**” – 2009 - 2012.

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

The management plan will be developed in a project under Operational Program for Environment, Axis 4 – “Implementation of the Adequate Management Systems for Nature Protection” that has been approved in August 2011. The beneficiary of the project is Romanian Ornithological Society, one of the custodians of the sites.

Nets for protecting against the ichthyophagous birds some of the basins in Rotunda fish farm are going to be installed in 2012 under LIFE + project.

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

Romanian Ornithological Society monitors the site in the framework of the LIFE+ project “**Cross-border conservation of *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* and *Aythya nyroca* at key sites in Romania and Bulgaria**” – 2009 - 2012.

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

Five information boards have been installed under LIFE+ project in Gogosu, Izvoarele, Hinova, Balta Verde and Jiana villages.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

There are no recreational activities in the site.

32. Jurisdiction:

Ministry of Environment and Forests
B-dul.Libertatii nr.12, sector 5, Bucuresti

33. Management authority:

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34. Bibliographical references:

1. BirdLife International, 2001, Important Bird Areas and potential Ramsar sites in Europe, BirdLife International, Wageningen, The Netherlands;
2. Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds, "Bird Directive";
3. Donița, N., Popescu A., Pauca-Comanescu M., Mihailescu S., Biris A., 2005, Habitatele din Romania, Editura tehnica Silvica, București
4. H.G. 971/2011 – Hotarare de Guvern pentru modificarea si completarea H.G. nr. 1284/2007 privind declararea ariilor de protectie speciala avifaunistica ca parte integranta a rețelei ecologice europene Natura 2000 in Romania;
5. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
6. Liška I., Wagner F., Slobodnik J. – editors (2008) - Joint Danube Survey 2, Final Scientific Report – published by ICPDR.
7. Lars Svensson, Killian Mullarney, Dan Zetterstrom, 2010 – "Collins Bird Guide 2nd Edition";
8. Munteanu, D., (coord.), 2004 – Arii de importanța avifaunistica din Romania – Documentații. Societatea Ornitologica Romana;
9. OUG 57/2007 – Ordonanta de urgenta privind regimul ariilor naturale protejate, conservarea habitatelor naturale, a florei si faunei salbatice;
10. Papp, T., Fantana, C., - editors (2008) – Important Bird Areas in Romania – published in cooperation by the Romanian Ornithological Society and Association "Milvus Group";
11. "Romanian Ornithological Society" database;
12. UNEP (1979) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals