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Cross-border conservation of Pygmy cormorant and Ferruginous duck

Time scale: January 2009 – June 2013

This good practice is part of the project:

Cross-border conservation of *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus* and *Aythya nyroca* at key sites in Romania and Bulgaria

Coordinated by:

Association WWF Danube Carpathian Programme, Romania (WWF DCP)

In cooperation with:

- Environment Protection Agency Olt, Romania (EPA OT)
- Environment Protection Agency Teleorman (EPA TR)
- Romanian Ornithological Society, Romania (ROS)
- Association WWF Danube Carpathian Programme, Bulgaria
- (WWF DCP BG)
- Persina Nature Park Directorate, Bulgaria (PNP)
- SC Mediator Trans SRL, Romania (MT)

Total project budget: 1.318.765 €

Project policy area:

LIFE+ Nature: Best practice and/or demonstration project contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives (Council Directives 79/409 EEC and 92/43/EEC)

Pygmy cormorant breeds patchily in southern and south-eastern Europe (75% of its global breeding range), its european breeding population being estimated to <39,000 pairs. The breeding population in Romania account for 11.500 - 14.000 pairs, and in Bulgaria for 350-400 pairs.

Ferruginous duck is evaluated as vulnerable in Europe, its breeding population being estimated at <18.000 pairs (% of its global range). The populations in Romania (6.500 breeding pairs) and Bulgaria (230 breeding pairs) are considered of international importance, especially in the context of the overall declining trend.

Overall goal of the project: A network of cross-border protected areas established for to ensure favorable conservation status of priority species established and thus contributing to the implementation of the Lower Danube Green Corridor

Verifiable indicators of the overall goal:

- 44.297 ha of cross-border protected areas
- 2.650 ha of functional wetlands integrated in the Lower Danube Green Corridor
- 2.650 ha reconnected to natural river dynamics
- 2 priority species have conditions to maintain their populations

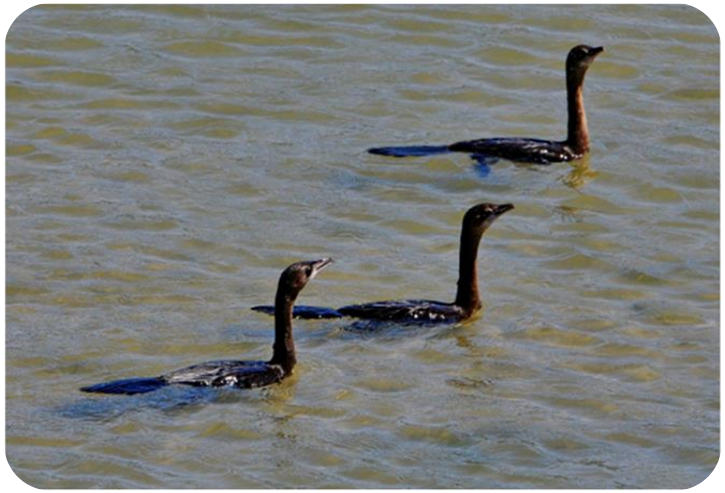
Project purpose:

Conditions to achieve and maintain favorable conservation status for Pygmy cormorant and Ferruginous duck ensured across key sites along lower Danube in Romania and Bulgaria

Verifiable indicators of the project purpose:

- Number of Pygmy cormorant breeding pairs maintained at 1.590 in RO and 400 in BG and conditions to increase created at 4 key sites by 2012.
- Number of Ferruginous duck breeding pairs maintained at 770 in RO and 155 in BG and conditions to increase created at 4 sites by 2012.

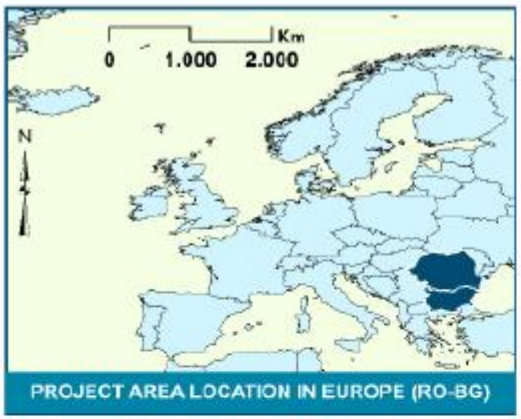
Target species



Pygmy cormorant

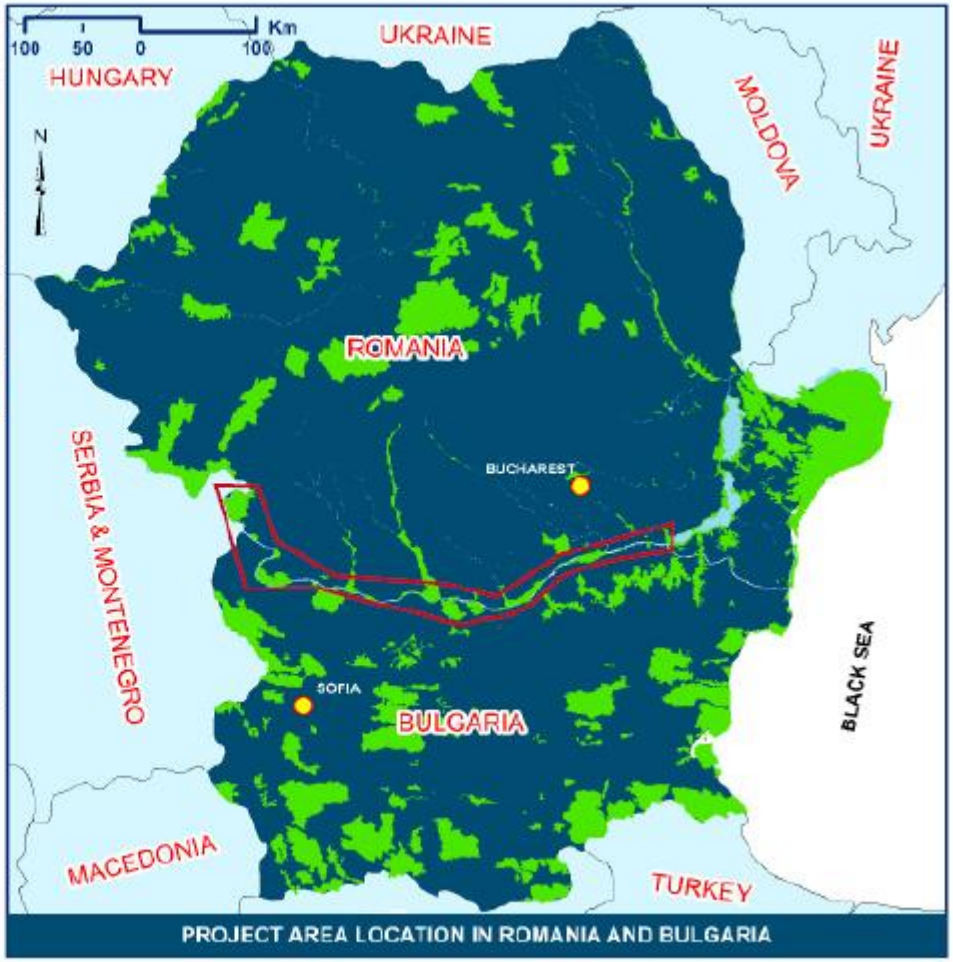
Ferruginous duck

Location



Legend:

- Danube River
- Special Protected Areas (SPA)
- Romania and Bulgaria
- European and neighbourhood countries
- Project area



Wetlands and ecosystem services

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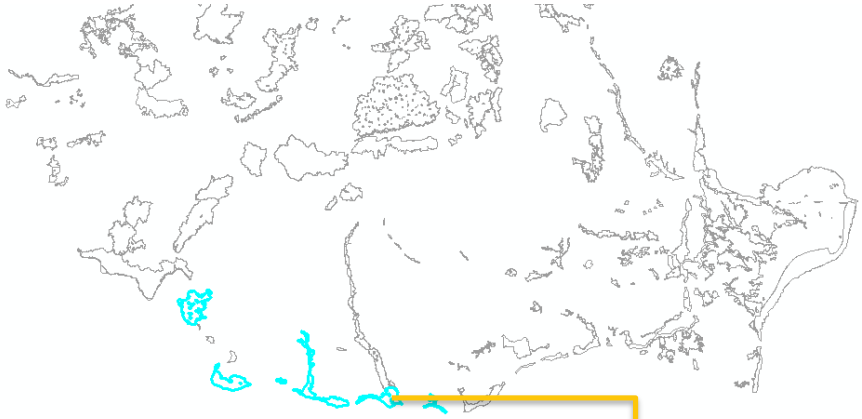
Wetlands have a number of important functions for both humans and wildlife, which we mention:

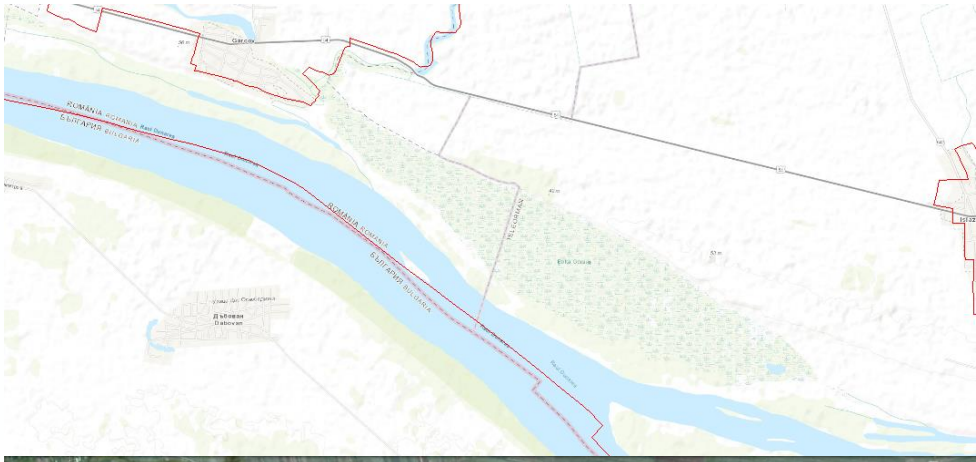
- they represent the habitat of a large variety of plants and animals;
- filters, purifies and stores water, acting as the kidneys for ecosystems;
- collect and retain water during floods;
- reduce the force of wind and currents or tides on the shore, reducing erosion.

Considering these functions, the best practices for wetland management demonstrated by the project, taking into account the following wetland conservation actions:

- efficient water management in wetlands, including fish farms, through measures of ecological reconstruction of abandoned areas;
- management of habitats for birds through vegetation management measures, in particular the reed and the meadow forests;
- management measures for protected bird species, in particular for pygmy cormorant and ferruginous duck.

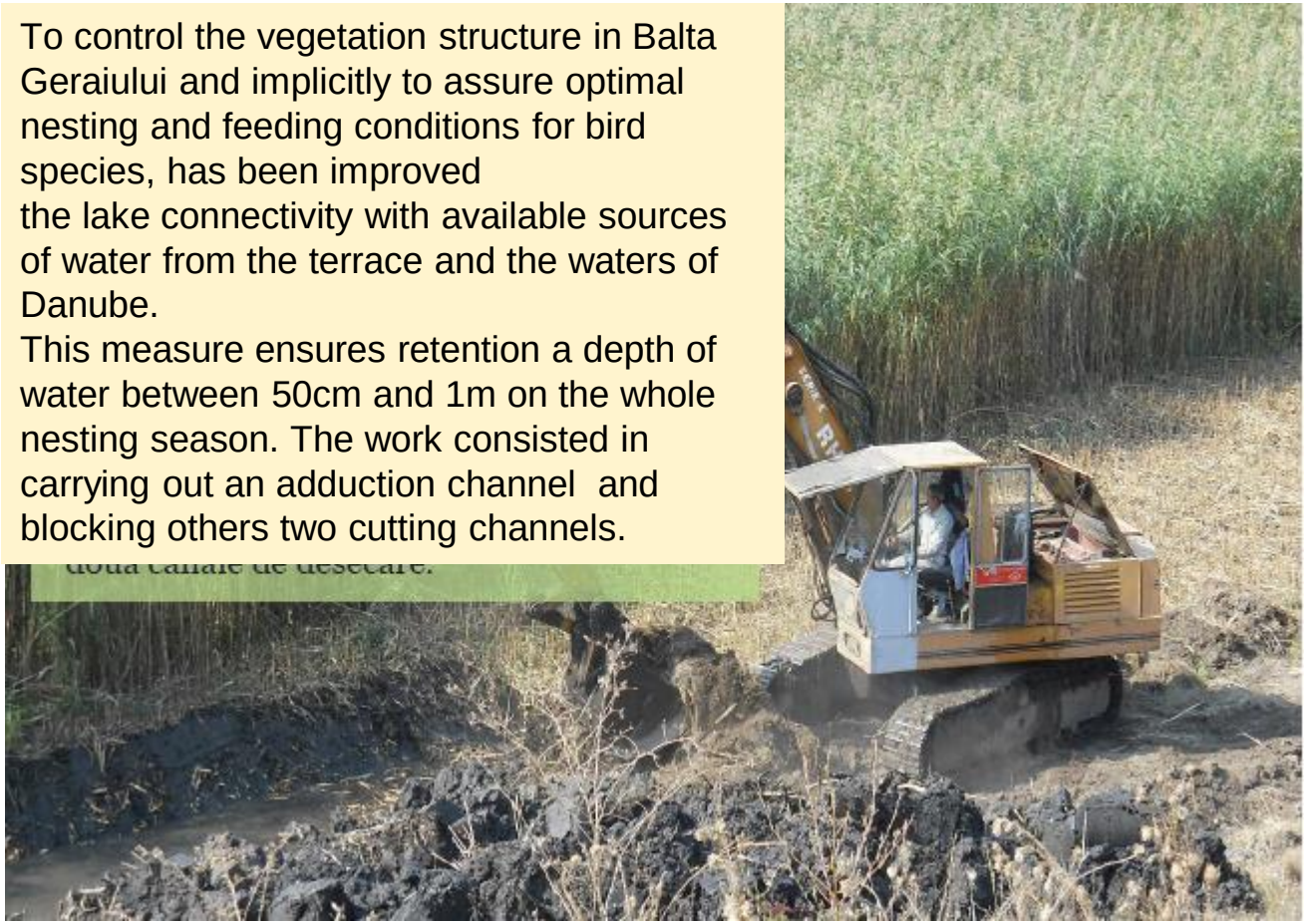
Balta Geraliului

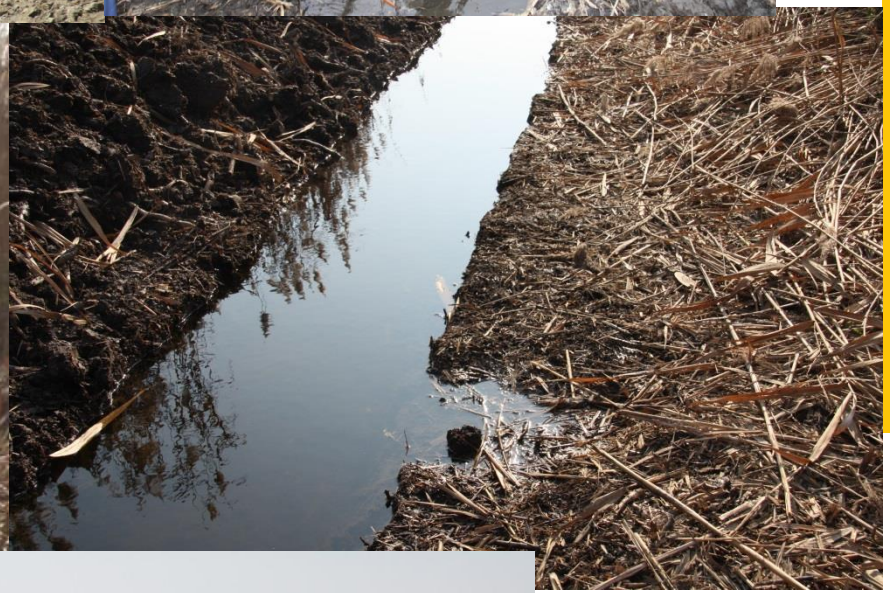




Good practices in Balta Geraiului

To control the vegetation structure in Balta Geraiului and implicitly to assure optimal nesting and feeding conditions for bird species, has been improved
the lake connectivity with available sources of water from the terrace and the waters of Danube.
This measure ensures retention a depth of water between 50cm and 1m on the whole nesting season. The work consisted in carrying out an adduction channel and blocking others two cutting channels.





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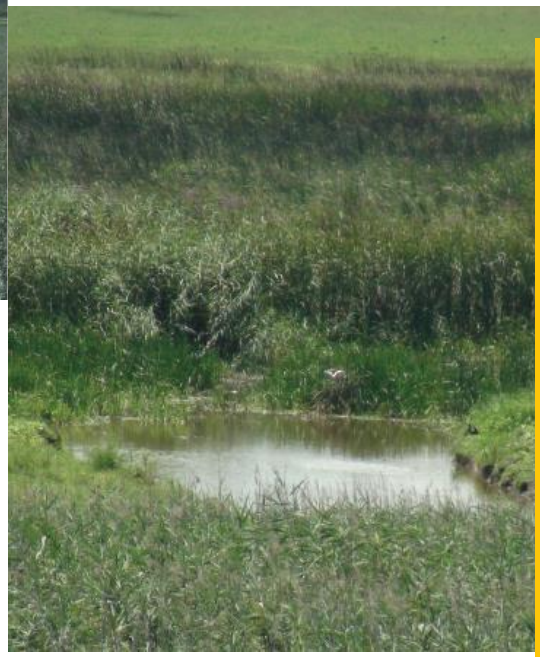
By creating the adduction channel and locking the drainage channels, water level increased by 15 cm to 30 cm above land on an area approximately 20 ha.

Mechanical cut of reed has increased the size of water eyes, as feeding and nesting areas, with 2 more ha.



Through excavating coastal areas along the drainage channel, the surface of the water eyes has expanded at the depth of 0,5 m, with 1 ha. These areas was immediately visited by aquatic birds, demonstrating in this way the uselfulness of these measures.

Evidence of success:

According to the standard monitoring records completed in the field, the maximum number of small cormorant nests was registered in 2012 at 386 active nests.

According to the standard monitoring records completed in the field, the maximum number of pairs of red duck nests was registered in 2012 of 303 pairs on all key sites monitored in the Danube meadow.

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Thank you!

Questions welcome

Project smedia