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Prespa lakes: Wet Meadows and
their contribution in maintaining
the rich Biodiversity of Prespa



**SOUTHEAST EUROPE
THE DRIN RIVER BASIN**



The Drin River Basin is located in the Western Balkans and it is shared between Albania, Greece, Kosovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro. The basin represents a very complex water system where rivers, lakes, wetlands, interact with each other and create a very rich ecosystem in terms of natural resources.

PRESPA LAKES

❖ Big Prespa and Small Prespa are the names of the two lakes.

❖ They are shared between 3 countries. (Greece, Albania and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

❖ 2000: Creation of the Transboundary Prespa Park by the above 3 states to ensure the Protection of the ecological value of the area.



WE ARE HERE



PRESPA LAKES ARE PART OF THE DRIN BASIN!

WHY ARE THEY SO IMPORTANT?

- ❖ Unique Biodiversity, rich flora and fauna
- ❖ Protected by the Ramsar Convention
- ❖ Designated Special Protection Area under the Birds Directive
- ❖ Whole area of Prespa in Greece belongs to “Natura 2000” network
- ❖ 2000: Creation of Transboundary Prespa Park



WET MEADOWS



- ❖ **Wet meadows are littoral areas with low vegetation covered by the water of the lake some seasons, depending on the fluctuation of the water level.**
- ❖ **They are one of the most vital biotopes of the Greek Lesser Prespa Lake ecosystem.**
- ❖ **The whole area covered by wet meadows had by 2000 dwindled to less than 30 hectares as the inhabitants abandoned their traditional activities in the littoral zone.**
- ❖ **The result was the critical decrease of their total surface area at Lake Mikri (Lesser) Prespa, negatively affecting aquatic bird species, which use wet meadows as main feeding and breeding grounds.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF WET MEADOWS

- ❖ Habitats for many aquatic organisms
- ❖ Major breeding and spawning sites for many fish and amphibian species
- ❖ Feeding grounds for many rare water birds
- ❖ Surrounding reed beds, ideal grounds for nesting or wintering
- ❖ many of the species depended on the wet meadows have been characterized as vulnerable or endangered at European or international level.

Two species directly associated with wet meadows.

The *Dalmatian Pelicans* and the *Pygmy Cormorants*, as well as several other water bird species and aquatic organisms, are directly dependent on the appropriate management of the water level of the lake Mikri Prespa and on the presence of wet meadows in the littoral zone.



DALMATIAN PELICAN

- ❖ **One of the rarest birds in the world**
- ❖ **Can reach 11 kilos**
- ❖ **A wingspan of 3,20m**
- ❖ **World population estimated to 12500-16500 adult individuals, showing decline**
- ❖ **Prespa colony = more than 1100 pairs**
- ❖ **This is an increase by 900% since the 1980s**
- ❖ **It is now , the largest colony in the WORLD**



Aiming to ensure and improve the protection status of these endangered species the LIFE-Nature project in Prespa completed the following actions:

a. Reconstruction of the sluice (modernization) that channels the water of lake Mikri Prespa into lake Megali Prespa, in order to improve the management of the water level in lake Mikri Prespa.

b. Restoration of the wet meadows in Lake Mikri Prespa at an overall area of approximately 70 hectares.

c. Monitoring of the avifauna and the vegetation in the managed littoral sites.



SOURCES

www.spp.gr

PDF: Layman report (ee.europa.eu)

www.wikipedia.com



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION