

BIODIVERSITY IN THE BULGARIAN SECTOR OF THE DANUBE

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The Bulgarian sector of the Danube covers a 480 km course, between the river's 845th and 375th km of flow. The total area of Bulgarian wetlands has been reduced by a factor of 20 during the last few decades, as a result of an increase in arable lands and other anthropogenic activities, including industrial and household waste pollution. This reduction has led to a considerable decrease in flora and fauna biodiversity, especially in the regions of Svishtov, Belene, Tzibar, Archar, and Vardin.

A recent study carried out by the Bulgarian Academy of Science focuses on the problems of biodiversity in the wetlands near the Danube, as well as its estuaries, and proposes measures for its protection. The status of the Srebarna Biosphere Reserve, as a typical example of the wetlands in the vicinity of the Danube, is also addressed. A brief review of the changes in the biodiversity of amphibians, birds and mammals is made with an accent on rare, endangered and protected species. The different categories of protected areas are reviewed and the possibilities for improving the management for nature conservation through effective use of national legislation, international co-operation and constant monitoring of the region are discussed. Finally, a common economic policy on the Bulgarian sector of the Danube and adjacent territories is suggested.

Professor **Svetoslav Gerasimov Tsvetkov** studied biology at the University of Sofia. He is Head of the Department of Ecology and Biology of Terrestrial Animals and of the Laboratory of Mammalogy at the Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. His research interests are in population biology, systematics of mammals, ecological toxicology and bioindication, conservation status and economic importance of small mammals, and mathematical analyses of biological data. He has participated in and lead numerous scientific projects, both national and international. He has produced more than 100 scientific articles, books, reports and textbooks, and has participated in several international conferences. He is a member of the Rodentia Specialist Group, the INTECOL Workgroup of Agro-ecosystems, the European Society of Mammalogy and the Board of the ETNCH. He is on the editorial boards of several journals and magazines, and Head of the Bulgarian Union for the Protection of Nature.

Ivan Yanchev studied landscape planning and management of recreational areas at the Forestry Research Institute of Sofia. From 1980 to 1983, he was the Editor-in-Chief of the Environmental Conservation Bulletin issued by the Department of Scientific Information at the Forest Ministry. From 1983 to 1996 he worked as an expert in landscape design and nature protection for the Department of Biodiversity and Protected Areas at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He has participated in several scientific research programmes, and was appointed Member of the International Association for Landscape Ecology. He obtained scholarships at the Department of Geography, University of Kentucky, the Department of Agricultural Economics, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, USA, as well as at the Department of Estate Management, University of East London, UK. He is Member of the Bulgarian Society for the Conservation of the Rhodopes, the Bulgarian Society for Bird Protection and the Bulgarian Union for Nature Conservation.