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EXPLORING NATURE ALONG THE DANUBE RIVER



DANUBE PARKS
network of protected areas





Nature Tourism in Protected Areas

The Danube - a fascinating and diverse river

Flowing through ten countries, the Danube is the most international river in the world. It hosts a huge diversity, in both cultural and natural terms: The historical heritage, the diversity of ethnic

groups, reflected in arts, language, food and much more. These all raise the fascination for this part of Europe.

The Danube Protected Areas for their part are responsible for preserving the rich natural and landscape diversity, with some of Europe's biggest and most fascinating floodplain areas: Starting with the water world of the Danube Delta and the floodplain forests in the Croatian-Serbian-Hungarian plains, but also covering the scenic valleys of the Iron Gates and the Danube Bend as well as the last free-flowing sections in the Upper Danube.

This is especially true for Protected Areas along the Danube River, with their invaluable natural treasures. The situation of tourism along the Danube is diverse depending on the natural landscape and history.

Currently, Danube tourism is mainly focused on cities and culture, cruising and cycling. Hunting and fishing is of importance in some areas. Birdwatching is a main attraction of the Danube Delta, but yet to develop elsewhere. It is the task and challenge of Protected Areas to steer tourist activities towards sustainable regional development, contributing to protection goals and being implemented with special care whenever operating in ecologically sensitive areas.

DANUBE PARKS

network of protected areas

c/o Donau-Auen National Park

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Imprint

Fresh energy and attention

The newly adopted EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) wants to boost and coordinate development "to promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts". The challenge is to find long-term sustainable development - for inhabitants and for nature.





Protected Areas are major players in environmental education and sustainability. They have an increasing number of education programmes and interpretation infrastructure, offering information about environmental issues. These educational elements and tasks are also integrated into tourism offers.

The **DANUBEPARKS** Network developed a joint position on tourism and environmental education in 2011. Additionally, an Action Plan has been elaborated to define the role of the Network and joint activities in these fields for the future. The strategy can be downloaded on the website, while this brochure gives an overview on our main goals and offers along the Danube.

Nature experience and protection

Visiting a Protected Area is a journey into the most precious natural areas in Europe.

It is also the goal of the Protected Areas themselves to lead people towards this fascination for nature, to let them experience and discover the natural wealth. While this emotional aspect plays an important role, education about the functioning of the ecosystems, their connection to the river, and the measures to preserve this natural heritage for future generations, is always included.

At the same time, the presence of natural areas, especially in the surroundings of large towns, means a high standard of living for the local inhabitants. Protected Areas are also working to protect the area in order to preserve it for leisure time use of the surrounding population.

Most Protected Areas offer visitor centres, guided excursions, and outdoor information points, in order to educate about the value and protection of the area and make it accessible to all. At the same time, it is our task to protect the areas against negative impacts from tourist overuse, which is why some rules need to be respected. A general guideline can be found on page 5.

Our target groups are as diverse as our areas and our tasks: We aim to welcome and inform tourists as well as the local population, with a focus on children and youth. We work together with schools and have special programmes for families. Regarding tourism, there is a high number of offers for individual tourists, but cooperation with tour-operators, regional tourism initiatives or companies bring more and more groups, too.

As diverse as our target groups and offers may seem, the common goal of these actions and all the members of the **DANUBEPARKS** Network is the protection of our joint natural heritage – for nature itself and for our future generations.

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Added value from cooperation

Tourism and environmental education happen mostly on a local level, at the destination, and are the shared responsibility of the Protected Areas with other regional stakeholders. The cooperation within the **DANUBEPARKS** Network can, however, contribute to higher quality and more innovative offers, as illustrated by a selection of our goals:

- To keep and raise the high quality of offers, by the development of joint quality guidelines and joint training of staff
- To develop innovative offers, with an international perspective onto the Danube River as well as cross-border and transnational tours
- To jointly develop didactic materials and cross-border or transnational educational programmes for young people

Here are some guidelines to follow when visiting a Protected Area, for specific rules please ask the respective visitor centre staff.

- **All Protected Areas have specific rules on strictly protected areas that are not accessible to the public:** Visitor centre staff will be happy to show you where to go to see most of the area and cause least disturbance.
- **Do not leave a trace behind you:** Take your rubbish out of the Protected Area.
- **Please stay on the marked hiking and cycling trails:** The Protected Areas give space to endangered species, which has been taken from them elsewhere. Human disturbance can cause serious trouble for nature protection.
- **Not all water bodies allow boating and swimming:** Please find it out at the visitor centres. In general, opt for non-motorized boats – they allow a deeper experience of nature and minimize the impact of your visit.

*The nature and wildlife of the Danube today needs a joint voice in Europe. **The Network of Protected Areas** wants to be this voice. It builds on existing cooperation and creates new framework conditions for continuous and intense collaboration among the Protected Areas of the Danube and its most important tributaries. This Danube-wide cooperation strengthens each Protected Area in the fulfilment of its own tasks.*

DANUBEPARKS is a continuous platform

- **for know-how transfer and exchange of experience among the Danube Protected Areas**
- **for the elaboration of joint transnational strategies and concepts, and**
- **for the implementation of cross-border and transnational revitalization and conservation projects.**

The Network was created by signing of the “Declaration of Vienna” in June, 2009. The establishment of the Network and the implementation of the pilot scheme are currently co-financed by the EU Programme for European Territorial Co-operation in South-East Europe (ETC-SEE).

The DANUBEPARKS Network

Our joint responsibility

Upon your visit, we will be happy to show you the natural wonders of our Protected Areas and enable unforgettable experiences in nature. It is our joint responsibility however to protect our areas for future generations, which is why we need your help.



Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Romania



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At the end of its 2,860 km journey from its source (Black Forest, Germany) to the Black Sea, the Danube has built over 16,000 years one of the most beautiful deltas in Europe and in the world. Due to the richness of its landscape and its fauna, where birds are the most significant element, the Danube Delta represents special interest from all points of view - scientific, touristic and even economic. The main ecosystems of the Delta are the Danube branches, channels, streams, lakes, floating reedbeds, floodplains, levees, sands, river meadows, willow forests, Letea and Caraorman forests.

Specific **tourism programmes** are available: leisure tours; itinerant discovery tourism; specialized trips and scientific tourism (e.g. ornithologists, specialists, researchers, students); special youth programmes; rural tourism; ecotourism; balneary tourism (helio-marine cure on the beaches of Sulina, St. Gheorghe); birdwatching; sport fishing, exploring the Delta in kayaks; visiting localities; traditional meals.

Visitor Centres and Exhibitions

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA) has several Information, Documentation and Ecological Education Centres; one is in Tulcea (DDBRA Headquarters) and another four in the Reserve (in Crisan, Sulina, Murighiol and St. Gheorghe). Visitors and locals can find information in exhibitions, leaflets, brochures, etc., concerning the role and importance of the reserve, of the DDBRA, the role of visitors and of the local population in achieving the objectives of environmental management of the natural heritage.

Our experts organize environmental education programmes for children, combining theoretical concepts with worksheets, free debates, experiments and games, as well as the celebration of important environmental events.

The centres also represent a framework for meeting locals, in order to attract and involve them in the process of adopting decisions of major interest for local communities.

Outdoor Guided Excursions

Tourists who have limited time can have one-day trips on large modern ships or small private boats. Those with more time can choose between itinerary trips of 6-12 days, on modern floating hotels towed along the authorized routes, or stay in hotels and pensions. The passionate ones, who want to discover the beauty of the delta themselves, can hire their own boat.

The DDBRA established 24 authorized tourist routes: 15 boat routes and 9 hiking trails.

Tourist access in the Danube Delta is based on access permits issued by the DDBRA in Tulcea or in Visitor Centres.



Useful links for tourists

DDBRA Website

www.ddbra.ro/en/rules-regarding-tourism.php

www.ddbra.ro/en/tourism-operators.php

Train schedule: www.cfr.ro

Access by water transportation

www.navrom.x3m.ro

Common Central Office of Reservation for Danube Delta and Neighbouring Areas

www.e-deltadunarii.ro

Bookings can be done through various travel agencies, through major tour operators, but also by the niche operators, specialized in nature tourism, bird watching, etc. Potential guests can make reservations directly at the accommodation points found in the delta.





Srebarna Nature Reserve and Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Site

Bulgaria

Srebarna Nature Reserve

is 18 km west of Silistra and 1 km from the bank of the river Danube. The lake occupies a large karst depression, bounded by bare hills to the east, west and south.

The lake is unique, with free floating reed island which change the morphology of the water surface with their movements. An exceptional sight is the frozen lake in winter, which contrasts strongly with the yellow reeds.

Around the lake there is an eco-trail, gazebos and observation sites. Footpaths follow the boundaries of Protected Areas in the surrounding hills. Information boards and wooden benches can be found on the tourist paths. Observation towers

and shelters are planned in two locations. 223 bird species are found in the reserve. Among the rarest birds in Bulgaria to be found here are the Dalmatian Pelican and Great White Heron.

In the southwest of the reserve there is the **Museum of Natural History** with a rich collection of stuffed birds and mammals. In the foyer of the museum there is a video screen that shows images in real-time of the heart of the reserve - the colony of Dalmatian Pelican. Telescopes and binoculars are available to help visitors watching birds.

Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Site

was designed to protect one of the few remaining Danube wetlands and its unique biodiversity. It covers an area of about 6,000 ha. The area can be characterized as one of the ten most representative areas of the country. The main conservation values are the natural marshes, riparian and marshy habitats. This is a habitat for

plant and animal species that are rare on a national and European level.

Because of its rich biodiversity the Protected Area is attractive for tourism. The flora includes 109 species of algae, 10 mosses, 16 mushrooms, and over 300 vascular plants. The greatest richness is in the birds - 242 species, 134 of which are nesting.

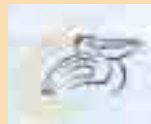
Bird watching is the top priority because the birds are numerous, attractive and easy to see. Species such as Dalmatian Pelican and Spoonbill raise their chicks here. For many protected bird species this site is just a stop gap in their migration. There are birds that are wintering here, which gives an opportunity for ecotourism in the cold months of the year, too. One of Bulgaria's biggest Heron colonies and some of the last remaining ancient Elm, Black Poplar and Valdimski Oak in Bulgaria are located here.

Srebarna Nature Reserve

www.riosv-ruse.org

Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Site

www.kalimok.eu



Useful links for tourists



Rusenski Lom Nature Park

Bulgaria



Rusenski Lom Nature Park is situated in Northeast Bulgaria, along the canyon shaped Valley of the Rusenski Lom river – the last right tributary of the Danube. Its area is 3,408 hectares.

Amazing views burst from all altitudes in Rusenski Lom. Within the endless river valley curves are waved as well as the forests, the wild beauty of rock peaks and the old castles and settlements.

The flora of Rusenski Lom numbers 902 species of higher plants and 13 species of orchids.

Bird species total 192, 174 of them under protection – this is the reason why the Lom river valley has been announced as a significant ornithological site; especially interesting for scientists are the rock dwelling species: Egyptian Vulture, Black Stork, Ruddy Shelduck, White-tailed Buteo, owls, etc.

Along the valley are 70 out of Bulgaria's 90 species of mammals, with 26 of them being various species of bats. The high percentage of rare and protected species of mammals is due to the diversity of living conditions and habitats and proves the exclusive conservation significance of the Park for their preservation.

Historical monuments are an integral part of Rusenski Lom National Park. They are all over. They create a fascinating atmosphere to feel past times and for historical contiguity. There are two archaeological preserves in the Park - Ivanovo Rock Churches and the Middle Age town of Cherven.

The cultural and historical image of the Lom river valley would be dull without the rock monasteries. Only ruins are left, but they colour the rocks all along the valley and maintain the remembrance for the place as famous centre of spirituality, of literature and elite art. They also remind us that many grammarians assembled here from all over the country and founders were Bulgarian tsars.

Frescoes in the rock cloister of Saint Archangel Michael (12-14th century) are one of the heights of Middle Ages Bulgarian art and have been valued among the best works of the Tarnovo painting school. In 1979 the cloister was put on the UNESCO list for the world cultural heritage.

Guided Excursions

Nature, the rich cultural and historical heritage favour the development of tourism and recreation in general as well as the special interest tourism in the fields of ornithology, speleology, bike- and water tourism, archaeology, religion and photography. A visitor center of the Nature Park will be opened in spring 2012.

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Useful links for tourists

**Rusenski Lom
Nature Park**
www.lomea.org

Tourist information
www.lomovete.org





Persina Nature Park

Bulgaria

Persina Nature Park was established in 2000. With a total area of 21,762 ha it covers the areas of the Svishtov-Belene lowlands and part of the Nikopol plateau.

The Park aims to conserve and restore the natural status of the numerous islands, inland marshes and Danube wetlands. There are two island groups – Nikopol island group and Belene Islands Complex. Part of the complex is Persin Island (known also as Belene Island) – the biggest Bulgarian Danube island, where the first restored wetland on the Bulgarian Danube is located.

The most significant ecosystems within the park are the **flooded forests and marshes**. To protect these habitats several protected areas have been designated: Kitka and Milka Reserves, embracing islands of the same name; Persinski blata Maintain

Reserve and Persin-iztok Protected Area, located on the eastern part of Persin Island; Kaikusha Protected Area on the south boundary of the park; Plavala Protected Area, near the town of Nikopol.

The most precious wealth of the Park is the birds – more than 210 species. The natural flooded forests of willows and poplars and the marshes along the Danube are the only place where rare and often threatened birds such as Spoonbill, Pygmy Cormorant, Corncrake, Ferruginous Duck, different species of Herons and Terns are breeding. One of the symbols of the Park is the White-tailed Eagle.

Visitor centres

The administrative building with a Visitor Centre of Persina NP Directorate is situated in Belene. The Visitor Centre regularly hosts local, regional, national and international events and exhibitions. Guests can receive information and advertising materials.

Excursions

Special recreation and bird watching points have been built along the river. They offer spectacular views: flooded forests, colourful landscape and different species of birds.

Five kayaks are available for rent as well as a six-seater motor boat, which is used for a special water route „In the embrace of the Danube“. It is possible to see many Herons, Cormorants, Spoonbills and, in winter, Pelicans and Swans.

There is a specialized route focusing on wetland restoration and bird watching of many rare, threatened and endangered species. This route leads to the restored wetland with inland marshes on Persin Island (special permit necessary!).

As well as the beautiful wildlife, the Park is witness to a rich historical past. Three religious communities live here: Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims, and each group preserves its way of life and traditions.

Persina Nature Park

www.persina.bg

Municipality of Belene

<http://obshtina.belene.net>

Municipality of Svishtov

www.svishtov.bg

Municipality of Nikopol

www.nikopol-bg.com

Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds

www.bspb.org

WWF Bulgaria www.wwf.bg



Useful links for tourists



Djerdap National Park

Serbia



It is magnificent to stand on the banks of the Danube river

Nature has given the region rich and diverse conditions and many different species. You can still meet Lynx, Wolf, Jackal, Deer, Roebuck, and Wild Boar. In the waters are many kinds of fish, including Catfish which can weigh 100 kg. The Danube is a European international highway, along which many bird species pass. What nature has created in Djerdap over the centuries - its forests and sheer cliffs, ridges, gorges and canyons, a rare living history book of flora and fauna - should be preserved for generations to come, for young generations to learn about botany.

Visitor Center

Djerdap National Park is the biggest national park in Serbia which is being situated on the territory of three Municipalities - Golubac, Majdanpek and Kladovo. The Visitor Center is the place of the headquarters of the "Djerdap National Park"

public company, where visitors can be informed about flora, fauna, cultural and historical values of the National Park by using pictures, billboard, information tables and models of historical monuments.

Integral part of visiting the Center is also showing promotional-tourist footage (total length of 17 min) about Djerdap National Park.

More than 1,100 **plant species** have been recorded in a relatively small area of only 640 km², making it one of the most important parts of Serbia and the Balkan Peninsula. This natural wealth, which is under the constant diverse pressures of man, should be preserved because it is irreplaceable.

An area of 63,608 hectares is decorated with fascinating and unique natural monuments which for centuries have inspired writers, poets and painters to produce the most beautiful words, poems and pictures. The Roman historian and writer Pliny the Elder wrote about watching

the slanting rays of the late sunshine in the Djerdap gorge. The wealth of natural diversity, of excitement and awe before the powers of Mother Nature the creator are the end points on a scale to measure what the Djerdap National Park does to humans. The unusual blend of traditional and modern: the harmony of opposites at the crossroads of east and west. Here in Djerdap you will find one of the most beautiful geographical areas in Europe, the longest and the oldest breakthrough, the greatest archaeological and natural open-air museum of the old continent – something that is hard to describe.

Nature and the rich cultural and historical heritage favour the development of tourism and recreation in general as well as the special interest tourism in the fields of ornithology, speleology, bike- and water tourism, archaeology, religion and photography.

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Useful links for tourists

Djerdap National Park
www.npdjerdap.org

Tourism Organisation
www.serbia.travel





Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve Serbia

Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve was established in 2001 and occupies an area of 19,605 ha on the left bank of the river Danube. It is one of the last big oases of swampy wood complexes. There are many different ecosystems: water, pond, swamp, forest, meadow, etc. It is famous for its flora and fauna.

Common trees include White Willow, Black Poplar, White Poplar, as well as the plantations of various clones of Euro-American poplars. The most beautiful and valuable are stands of Common oak. There are about 50 mammal species, from small rodents, such as mice and voles, to large game, with Red Deer at the top.

This area has one of the richest and the most various bird fauna in the country. Almost 248 species have been recorded - over 70% of species that can be found in Serbia.

Most of them are nesting birds. The following species are of special significance:

White-tailed Eagle: 16 pairs nest in the area of this reserve. Together with Kopački rit, it is one of the most compact populations of this kind in Europe.

Black Stork: a natural rarity in Serbia. In this reserve, there are 20-25 nesting pairs, which is a quarter of the national population.

Heron colonies: during 1999 a few permanent colonies were recorded which, according to the latest facts, have changed nesting sites.

Wild ducks and wild geese: these species can be found mostly in winter and during migrations when tens of thousands of them are gathered. What is the most encouraging is the increase in the number of nest pairs of wild ducks.

The dynamics of the water regime create many meanders, stagnant channels, ponds and lakes and, together with periodical flooding of the

Danube, offer perfect conditions for a variety of fish. There are 50 freshwater species, including Carp, Catfish, Pike, Pike-Perch and many others, some of which are on the Serbian red list.

Hunting tourism is an extremely important part of tourism in the reserve, reflecting the traditional link between the people in this area with game and hunting. The most significant species is Red Deer; a trophy from Kozara hunting ground has been the world record for many years.

Excursions

- Footpaths with information boards
- Birdwatching
- Danube cycling route
- Children's education
- Boat rental
- Ethno-tourism
- Fishing and hunting

**Gornje Podunavlje
Special Nature Reserve**
www.gornjepodunavlje.info

**Vojvodinasume,
State Forestry Administration**
www.vojvodinasume.rs

**Institute for Nature Conservation,
Vojvodina**
<http://zzps.rs>



Useful links for tourists



Kopački rit Nature Park

Croatia



Kopački rit Nature Park is in the centre of the Danube floodplain, in the corner formed by the Danube and one of its five major tributaries, the Drava. This is one of the most important alluvial floodplains in Europe with an internal delta having distinct morphological and sedimentation features. The appearance of the whole area depends on regular floods; therefore terrestrial and aquatic parts change their shape and function according to the amount of floodwater.

Kopački rit is one of the most significant destinations in the continental part of Croatia with all its beauty and ecological value. Tens of thousands of birds, lakes and canals filled with fish, deer herds, wild boars and marsh pastures in blossom are only part of the treasures that can be seen and experienced here.

Visitor centres

The main entrance to the Nature Park is **Mali Sakadaš Visitor Centre** situated in an autochthon marshy environment by Kopačevo village, on

the Bilje-Kopačevo-Kozjak road. Visitors can use the parking area for private vehicles and buses, an equipped reception with an information desk and souvenir shop, a gallery for multimedia presentation, exhibitions and lectures.

The international bicycle routes called **Pannonian Peace Route and Danube Route** lead through Kopački rit, which has become the first centre for cycle-tourists in Croatia. An Internet Centre has been set up inside the Visitor Centre. It is possible to walk on the Mali Sakadaš and Veliki Sakadaš nature trails from the Visitor Centre, where visitors can see information panels about the significance of Kopački rit and particular plant and animal species.

Excursions

The main attraction is a boat tour through the Special Zoological Reserve. An empire of birds and fish discover the secrets of the enchanting marshland while the boat cuts through the smooth water surface. If you are lucky, a White-tailed Eagle

may fly over or herons and egrets accompany you, flying by the boat.

It is also possible to visit Tikveš Castle, where many statesmen and famous people lived. Accommodation is offered in the bio-ecological station to visitors that wish to stay longer and a multimedia hall with a capacity for 80 persons is available. The Old Elm nature trail is near Tikveš Castle.

The Park offers all-day and half-day **birdwatching programmes** with guides. The abundance of fish attracts a large number of sport anglers. The well-known fishing areas are: Vemeljski Dunavac, Danube river, Podunavlje canals and the area by Zlatna greda pump station.

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Useful links for tourists



PARK PRIRODE KOPAČKI RIT



Kopački rit Nature Park

www.kopacki-rit.hr

Tourist Board of Osijek-Baranja County

www.tzosbarzup.hr

Tourist Organisation Baranja

www.tzbaranje.hr



Lonjsko Polje Nature Park Croatia

Live with the river

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park is one of the biggest and best preserved wetland habitats in Europe. Hydrological and geomorphological conditions cause great habitat diversity and biodiversity. It is possible to find over 550 species of plants of damp and wetland habitats. There are also rare species, such as Water Clover, which is part of the Nature Park trademark. The animal world is also extremely diverse and interesting. The most significant thing is the great number of nesting birds, particularly wetland birds. White Stork, Spoonbill, a variety of egrets, White-Tailed Eagles and Lesser-spotted Eagles, as well as many migratory birds use the great pasture areas to look for food. Two areas within the Park have been designated special

ornithological reserves. Lonjsko Polje also has a number of indigenous breeds of domestic animals. The livestock, in great common herds, are left freely to graze for most of the year. Tourism as a branch of the economy occupies an increasingly important place in the development of the region.

Visitor centres

The reception of visitors is carried out in the info-education centres at Čigoć no. 26 and Krapje no. 16, which are furnished with little souvenir shops and toilet areas, and via them the visitors to the park are channelled in an organised way. In Krapje there is a new multimedia room for education, workshops and seminars. At these points you will be able to get all the information you need, purchase the mandatory entrance ticket, fishing permits, hire an expert guide (for groups) and buy promotional materials, souvenirs or refreshments. In the educational centres, special programmes for children and adults have been devised, and professional guides are available for help with some of these programmes.

Excursions

Guided tours for visitors are carried out with educators-guides, who, depending on the choice of the visitors, can present the following programmes:

- White Stork in Čigoć
- Krapje – architectural heritage village
- Spoonbill – bird with a spoon
- Posavina horse
- Amphibians
- Lowland riparian forests
- Sava River

Educational programmes are carried out interactively, specially designed worksheets to be filled in by visitors. One set of them is designed for younger and one set for older children and adults. A programme is also laid on for children of pre-school years.

Lonjsko Polje Nature Park
www.pp-lonjsko-polje.hr
Tourist board of the
Sisak-Moslavina County
www.turizam-smz.hr



Useful links for tourists



Duna-Dráva National Park

Hungary



The picturesque floodplain world of **Gemenc** is in Sárköz. There are several 'foks' (narrow canals), used by our ancestors to flood the area, as it was the basis of their living. The floodplain flora is characterized by riverine scrubs, softwood and hardwood gallery forests. There is Wild Vine and Summer Snowflake in the area. Important fauna, besides the famous Red Deer herds, include Common Kingfisher, White-tailed Eagle, Black Stork and Saker Falcon. Gemenc can be visited freely on the marked paths and study paths.

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Béda-Karapanca has some of the significant habitats of the South Hungarian Danube. It has one of Hungary's largest White-tailed Eagle and Black Stork populations. Waterfowl rest in the undisturbed floodplain woods, beautiful flowers bloom in its gallery forests, Grey Cattle herds graze in the meadows, and White Water Lilies can be seen.

All whole floodplain life is based on the river; woods and insects, birds and fish, and even humans make this very complex system.

Visitor centres

The population of Kölked has lived with storks for centuries; White Storks have always had a secure nesting and feeding place. In the unique (in Europe) **White Stork Museum**, visitors can see the lifestyle and migration of White Storks and get an insight into stork ringing. In the breeding season this beautiful bird can also be seen nesting in the surroundings.

Mohács Historic Memorial Park is near Sátorhely. This graveyard for the Battle of Mohács (1526) is the last resting-place of more than 1700 soldiers. Among the mass graves are the wooden sculptures and gravemarks of King Louis II, Pál Tomori, Dorottya Kanizsai, Sultan Suleiman and several unknown warriors. In the Memorial Park there are many symbols that can best be understood with the help of a local guide. The new exhibition building - opened in 2011 - gives place for exhibitions in four floors.

Walking and Canoe Tours with Qualified Guides

The secrets of the Duna-Dráva National Park unfold best when visiting with a qualified guide. On the study paths, visitors can get to know the habitats of the floodplains and forests and their special flora and fauna during interesting guided tours. In summer, visitors can explore the wild world of Béda-Karapanca and Gemenc on canoe tours. On both the **Old Danube** in Gemenc and the **Outer-Béda**, in Béda-Karapanca the National Park Directorate organises canoe tours on fixed dates, but there is a possibility to take part in these programmes on other dates, too (pre-registration is required).



Useful links for tourists

**Duna-Dráva
National Park Directorate**
www.ddnp.hu

DunaTour
www.dunaitura.hu

Tourinform Baja
<http://itthon.hu/tourinform-baja>

Tourinform Szekszárd
<http://itthon.hu/tourinform-szekszard>

Tourinform Mohács
<http://itthon.hu/tourinform-mohacs>

Tourinform Pécs
<http://itthon.hu/tourinform-pecs>





Duna-Ipoly National Park

Hungary

Duna-Ipoly National Park (designated in 1997) is characterised by river valleys, mountains and plain. The most beautiful feature is the Danube-bend, Hungary's most frequently visited tourist destination.

Floral diversity is extremely complex. Many Carpathian species reach their south-western borders and the Mediterranean species region stretches this far as well. The unique botanical value is *Ferula sadleriana*.

The Danube-bend is home to rare and endemic snail species. The river has the precious Barbel (*Barbus peloponnesius petenyi*). Predatory Bush Crickets (*Saga pedo*) live in the dry, mountain grasslands, with Snake-eyed Skink (*Ablepharus kitaibelii*) in the Pilis and Börzsöny Mountains.

Important birds include Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) and Short-toed Snake Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*). Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) nest also in the Park, and significant numbers of White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*) in the older Börzsöny Mountain forests. Mammals include Lynx, Otter and Beaver.

'Plasque Flower' Forest School and Kis-Strázsa Hill Nature Trail

Esztergom Visitor Centre is an ideal place to get to know the National Park for the first time. Upstairs is a permanent exhibition introducing the natural treasures of the Pilis Mountains.

The 1.2 km Nature Trail can be explored in an hour; see the rocks forming the Pilis, Sand Martins nesting in the loess wall and Bee-Eaters shining in their tropical colours, as well as many daytime butterflies. The *Adonis vernalis* field turns the whole hillside yellow in spring. On the peak of the

mountain a wonderful view unfolds before us from an ex-military lookout tower.

The **Sas Hill Protected Area** is in the very heart of our capital, with a breathtaking view over the Danube. It is a shelter and living museum for the ancient flora and fauna of Budapest.

Excursions

The flat surface, low traffic, wonderful natural values, dense settlements, and the tourist services of Szentendre Island make this place ideal for bicycle tours. The National Park offers guided canoe excursions where you can explore the relatively intact parts of the Szentendre branch of the Danube. We step ashore at some interesting shore-habitats, and with the help of our guides, you can observe beaver traces or you have the rare opportunity to catch a glimpse of Kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*), Black Storks (*Ciconia nigra*) and other rare and protected mammal species of the floodplain as well.

Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate
www.dunaipoly.hu

Sas Hill Protected Area
www.sas-hegy.hu

Hungarian National Tourist Office
www.visit-hungary.com

Accommodation:

Rácz Inn - www.raczfogado.hu

Hotel Regatta - www.hotelregatta.hu

Hotel Grante - www.hotel.grante.hu



Useful links for tourists



Dunajské luhy Protected Landscape Area

Slovakia



Over 12,000 ha of floodplain forests, forest steppes, meandering river side branches and lowland meadows begin right in Bratislava. Dunajské luhy is visited by many people from the city and the region as well as many foreign tourists.

There is a **cycling route** along the Danube giving access to the most valuable places in the heart of the biggest inland delta in Europe. This river-branch system is an important bird migration corridor and water bird wintering place, attracting many birdwatchers. The Danube and its side branches are used for canoeing, kayaking, swimming and fishing.

There are many **nature reserves** here. The Protected Landscape Area is divided into five parts; the last one is Veľký Lél island near Komárno. This island is leased long-term by BROZ, and examples of conservation management such as traditional meadow grazing by cattle and horses or native tree planting can be seen here.

Danube floodplain exhibitions

Two interactive **travelling exhibitions** have been prepared – one telling the story of Danube floodplain dynamics and birds living here and the second focused on the secret life of the recently endangered tiny rodent, the root vole, which is represented here by its relict and endemic subspecies of the Danubian lowland.

These exhibitions are mostly shown in different visitor centres, schools, universities, museums and administrations of protected areas. If you wish to visit or host either of these exhibitions please contact BROZ (broz@broz.sk).

Dunajské luhy Protected Landscape Area is administered and managed by the State Nature Conservancy (The Administration of the Protected Landscape Area with offices in Bratislava, Dunajská Streda and Komárno).

BROZ (Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development), as a nature conservation NGO, also deals largely with the management of selected areas in Dunajské luhy.

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Useful links for tourists

BROZ - Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development
www.broz.sk

The Bratislava Culture and Information Centre
www.bkis.sk

Ecotrips www.ekovylety.sk

Tips for trips in the Danube region
www.tipnavylet.webnode.sk

Guided walks and environment education
www.rangers.sk

Bird monitoring and observations
www.watching.sk, www.birding.sk

Centre of Environmental Education
www.sazp.sk/SEV/dropie

Zlatý Hucul horse riding club
www.zlatyhucul.sk





Záhorie Protected Landscape Area

Slovakia

The most valuable part of Záhorie region is a 27,500 ha Protected Landscape Area (PLA) between the Morava river and the Small Carpathians. There are many ecosystems in a small area: submerged alder swamp woods in interdunal depressions, extremely dry tops of sand dunes in the central parts of the lowland, a mixture

of floodplain forests, oxbows and floodplain meadows and xerothermal forest steppes on the slopes of the Small Carpathians.

Various species of birds, amphibians and mammals can be observed here from many trails crossing the area. The geomorphological gateway to the region from Bratislava is **Devín castle**, at the confluence of the Morava and Danube. The central part of the area is covered mostly by oak-pine forest and is famous as a mushroom paradise.

The slopes of the Small Carpathians provide many tourist trails starting in almost every village with wonderful views of the whole Záhorie region.

Great Value of Záhorie

There are tourist information centres in Devínska Nová Ves (north of Devín), Holíč and Skalica. Guides from local **tourist information centres** will guide you through the beautiful historical centre of Skalica. Near the village Kopčany you can find the only remaining Great Moravian Building – St. Margaret's Church.

Záhorie Protected Landscape Area is administered and managed by the State Nature Conservancy (in Malacky). BROZ (Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development), as a nature conservation NGO, has implemented many nature conservation projects and activities here as well.

State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic

www.sopsr.sk

Regional guide

www.ezahorie.sk

Devínska Nová Ves Tourist information centre

www.tikdvnv.sk

Holíč Tourist information centre

www.en.holic.sk

Skalica Tourist information centre

www.skalica.sk

Ecotrips

www.ekovylety.sk



Useful links for tourists



Donau-Auen National Park

Austria



Donau-Auen National Park is located between Vienna and Bratislava. It covers 93 km², protecting important riverine wetlands.

The **Danube** is still free flowing and is the lifeline of the park. The interplay of the river and its environment means that the wetlands landscape is constantly being renewed. Biodiversity is enormous, with over 800 vascular plant species, more than 30 mammalian, 100 breeding bird, 60 fish, 13 amphibian and eight reptilian species, not to mention the countless terrestrial and aquatic insects as well as invertebrates.

The **founding of the National Park** in 1996 put the area under lasting protection. The riparian forests remain sheltered from commercial use in order to allow the ecosystem to develop as freely as possible. Innovative river restoration projects maintain and improve the Danube's dynamics.

The National Park is embedded in a cultural landscape: Vienna, Eckartsau Castle, Imperial Festival Palace Hof, Hainburg medieval city, Carnuntum Archaeological Park.

Visitor Centres

The **Donau-Auen National Park Visitor Centre** in Orth is the first stop on the journey of discovery in the Danube wetlands. On a hands-on guided tour through the 'DonAURäume' exhibit, National Park rangers explain how both the wetland forests and the National Park have come about. Animal species native to the wetlands can be observed close up from the Schlossinsel ('Castle Island') grounds. The main attraction is the underwater observatory, a window to the underwater world of a former Danube river branch.

The **wien-lobAU National Park House** (Vienna) offers information, the tonAU multimedia exhibition and many wetland-related recreational activities.

Further information points are Eckartsau Castle (landscape garden), the Au-Terrasse lookout in Stopfenreuth (views of the Danube), and the Kulturfabrik Hainburg (Danube wetlands panorama).

Guided tours in the National Park

This fascinating wetland landscape can be experienced on land and water. You can go on a guided walk with a ranger, but the best way to explore is a tour with a ranger in a canoe or rubber dinghy on the Danube or a side arm. Different topics are available, depending on season, weather, water levels and interests. The Danube cycle path also makes its way through the National Park.

There are events focussing on special topics, workshops and programmes for school classes. Also, there are special adventures for our young visitors, who can spend several days in camps, encountering fascinating animals and plants.

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Useful links for tourists

Donau-Auen National Park

www.donauauen.at

blog.donauauen.at

www.facebook.com/donauauen

Austrian National Forests Operations

www.schlosseckartsau.at

wien-lobAU National Park House

www.nph-lobau.wien.at

Donau NÖ Tourism, Auland-Carnuntum regional offices www.aulandcarnuntum.com

Vienna Tourism www.wien.info





Donauauwald Neuburg Ingolstadt Germany

The well signed **Danube cycling** trail is the most obvious connection for all nature lovers between the old Bavarian cultural towns of Neuburg and Ingolstadt. It leads through the Protected Area "Donauauwald Neuburg Ingolstadt", where one of the biggest nature protection projects in Germany, the dynamization of the Danube floodplains, has recently been implemented. Apart from the nature experience, visitors can find additional tourist highlights in this region.

Indulge in culinary and cultural highlights in the holiday region of Neuburg:

Schrobenhausen asparagus and potatoes from Donaumoos; magnificent castles such as Neuburg an der Donau with the Bavarian state gallery and Flemish baroque painting.

Ingolstadt seems to be an open-air museum of German fortress architecture. Outstanding sights in the old town, attractive leisure offers such as the Audi Forum Ingolstadt, and an extraordinary assembly of museums provide for an unforgettable visit.

Visitor centres

The Auenzentrum Neuburg is in **Grünau Castle**, in the former hunting grounds of Bavarian kings and dukes in the Danube Floodplains. It consists of a research institute, floodplain forum and floodplain information centre. Find out about the whole Danube River, the importance of floodplain ecosystems, flood protection and revitalization of rivers and floodplains. The Danube cycling trail goes past, carrying 30,000 tourists every year.

Renaturalisation measures in the Danube floodplains, the functioning of the Danube with its floodplains and forests as well as flood protection measures are explained in an easily

understandable and pleasant way with the help of movies, animations and computer models.

The **Donaupavillon** is at Ingolstadt barrage. It has informative temporary exhibitions regarding the Danube and its floodplains.

Guided Excursions

Excursions with certified guides are offered between Neuburg and Ingolstadt, including ornithological hikes, culinary nature tours, and cycling tours to the highlights of the revitalization project. The programme is constantly updated to suit the needs of visitors. The main gateways to the area are the Auenzentrum in Grünau Castle in the west and the Donaupavillon at the Ingolstadt barrage in the east. All tours can be booked in tourist information centres of Neuburg and Ingolstadt, at the Auenzentrum Neuburg, and online.

Nearby are Altmühltal Nature Park, Donaumoos wetlands and visitor centre, and Weltenburg monastery at the Danube break-through.

Donauauwald Neuburg Ingolstadt

www.donauauen.de

www.auenzentrum-neuburg.de

City of Ingolstadt

www.ingolstadt-tourismus.de

City of Neuburg

www.neuburg-tourismus.de

County of Neuburg-Schrobenhausen

www.neuburg-donau.de/tourismus



Useful links for tourists



- 1 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve 2 Srebarna Nature Reserve 3 Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Site 4 Rusenski Lom Nature Park 5 Persina Nature Park 6 Djerdap National Park
 7 Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve 8 Kopački rit Nature Park 9 Lonjsko Polje Nature Park 10 Duna-Dráva National Park 11 Duna-Ipoly National Park
 12 Dunajské luhy Protected Landscape Area 13 Záhorie Protected Landscape Area 14 Donau-Auen National Park 15 Donauauwald Neuburg Ingolstadt



c/o Donau-Auen National Park

Schloss Orth, 2304 Orth an der Donau, Austria

m.wagner@danubeparks.org, www.danubeparks.org

DANUBEPARKS

network of protected areas