

Wetlands and their significance for the sustainable development of society.

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In 1971, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) was adopted in Ramsar, IRI. The Mejlis of Turkmenistan adopted a resolution "On accession to the Ramsar Convention" on February 23, 2008. The official date of accession of Turkmenistan to the Ramsar Convention is July 3, 2009, after submission of the nomination dossier (RIS) on the Turkmenbashi Bay of the Khazar State Nature Reserve to the Secretariat of the Convention.



By joining the international Convention, the government of Turkmenistan has expressed its readiness for conservation and rational use of wetlands. Thanks to the purposeful and consistent policy of the President of Turkmenistan, respected Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, a lot of work on the conservation of water resources, wetlands and biodiversity is carried out in our country.



Wetlands include water bodies - natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, standing or running, fresh, brackish or saline, including sea water areas, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters; and under waterfowl are understood birds, ecologically associated with wetlands.

National experts of the Working Group on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Turkmenistan together with employees of state nature reserves, representatives of public organizations conduct regular monitoring on WBU, and not only on the nominated territory (Turkmenbashi Bay), but also on potential for inclusion in the Ramsar List.



February 2 is celebrated annually as World Wetlands Day, which is celebrated all over the world, including Turkmenistan. The motto for 2021 is "Wetlands and Water", marking the importance of Wetlands as sources of fresh water. The year 2021 is marked by the 50th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention, so all participants - Parties of the Convention, spend these days counting birds on Wetlands, different informational and educational actions and public awareness events.

So, on January 28-29, a group of representatives of the Kopetdag State Nature Reserve, the Public Nature Protection Organization of Turkmenistan (TNPO), with the participation of the TV channel "Turkmenistan", held an ecological action on bird counting in lakes "Altyn köl" (Gurtli), Akhal (Bada) and the Kopetdag Reservoir.

Lake Altyn köl (Gurtli) and Kopetdag Reservoir (Kopetdaghovudan) in 2009 were included in the register of the International Key Bird Areas (IBA) Birdlife International as waterfowl habitats.

The Altyn köl lake (IBA Gurtli) is located in the Rukhabat etrap of the Akhal velayat, 5 km northwest of Ashkhabad. It appeared due to the filling of the Gurtly hollow with the waters of the Karakum canal (Karakumdarya) in 1963. The size of the lake is 5 by 3.7 km, maximal depth is 7 m, area is 80 thousand hectares, length of the coastline is 25 km. This area is an urban wetland and recreation area. IBA Gurtli is located in the flyway zone along the northern foothills of the Kopetdag. In winter, more than 20 thousand waterfowl and near-water birds gather here, including little cormorant, coot, red-nosed dive, tufted duck, mallard, etc.



The Kopetdag Reservoir (IBA Kopetdaghovudan) is located in the foothill plain of the Central Kopetdag, in the Geokdepe etrap of the Akhal velayat. It belongs to the reservoirs of the flooded type, it was commissioned in 1976, its area is up to 39 km², the length of its banks is 42 km. The area is similar in its significance to the Gurtly IBA as it is also located on a flyway running in the latitudinal direction along the foothills of the Kopetdag. In winter, waterfowl stay at the reservoir from mid-

November to early February. Their total number reaches over 20 thousand specimens. The background birds are coots, mallards, Red-necked Pochard, blue duck, but Cormorant, Pygmy Cormorant and White-eyed Duck deserve the most attention.

Wetlands make our lives better because they

improving water quality and reducing the threat of flooding. Only 3% of the water on the planet is classified as freshwater; most freshwater is stored in the form of ice and snow. Water is a very limited resource! Deep underground water stores half of all drinking water, including the water that supplies 2 billion people in Asia and 380 million people in Europe.

Wetlands on the Earth's surface filter the water that percolates underground, which helps renew water supplies. Wetlands make life more livable by filtering and purifying waste water. Soils rich in silt and with a high density of vegetation on the WBU act as filters for hazardous toxic substances, agricultural pesticides, and industrial waste.

Urban Wetlands make life more livable by providing green space for recreation and relaxation, giving stressed city dwellers a chance to recover and admire the diversity of plants and animals. Outdoor recreation helps to revitalize the body and improve health.

Wetlands make life more livable because they provide jobs for local residents: the different types of fish breeding ponds and fish farming on Wetlands make them popular for fishing. The Wetlands produce a variety of products that serve the local population: reeds and grass for weaving, timber for buildings, medicinal plants, and fruits. The Wetlands attract tourists, who are an important source of income.

It is necessary to treat Wetlands properly, to integrate the protection and management of Wetlands into national planning. Management of the Wetlands as a natural part of water infrastructure should be included in state plans. Laws and programs that reduce degradation and promote the efficient use of water should be adopted.

In order to properly handle urban WBU's, it is necessary to involve young people and the local community, organize works to clean the WBU, organize trainings for local residents on the conservation and wise use of the WBU.

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