

Foreword

The basic obligations of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands are the following:

- each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion on a List of Wetlands of International Importance;
- the Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List and, as much as possible, the wise use of wetlands in their territory;
- each Contracting Party shall promote the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl by establishing nature reserves in wetlands, irrespective of whether they are included in the List or not, and provide adequately for their wardening;
- the Contracting Parties shall consult with each other about implementing obligations arising from the Convention especially in the case of a wetland extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party or where a water system is shared by CPs. They shall at the same time endeavour to coordinate and support present and future policies and regulations concerning the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna.

In order to streamline and focus the activities for the implementation of the treaty, a Strategic Plan for the Convention was introduced a few years ago. Within the framework of this Plan, international cooperation activities – interalia such related to transfrontier wetlands – have been intensified.

It was clear also that the Plan needed even greater involvement of the community of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), for instance in identifying wetlands of these international importance, including those within shared catchment/river basins.

Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine are members of the Ramsar Convention, and the NGOs, the experts, researchers, and committed individuals of countries who compiled this book endeavoured to put into practice the fourth above obligation as well as the relevant objective of the Strategic Plan.

They collected the necessary Ramsar data, carried out surveys and research in the Upper Tisa river catchment. It is encouraging that NGOs took the initiative and intensively cooperated in order to prepare a possible future transboundary Ramsar site. It is hoped that this initiative will be followed-up by the respective governments of the four involved countries.

Data collection on the physical, ecological features, hydrological, biodiversity as well as social and cultural values and benefits of a wetland – in particular a transboundary one – is a tedious and complicated work constituting an important first step in conserving, maintaining and wisely using this habitat type.

It is well known that the success in any field depends on the willing cooperation of partners fully informed and working together to achieve shared goals. This publication significantly contributes to the revealing and better understanding of the values of the Upper Tisa region.

Therefore the efforts of the authors of this book are to be highly appreciated and commended.

Louise Lakos
Chairperson of the Standing Committee
of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands