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FACTSHEET

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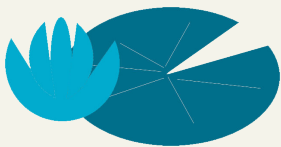
2015

Freshwater

Green Infrastructure for Europe: The Lower Danube Green Corridor



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€500

PER HECTARE A YEAR
IS THE VALUE OF
DANUBE FLOODPLAINS

WHAT IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

Europe is densely populated, with much of its land intensively used and fragmented. As a result, the continent has lost many habitats and ecosystems, and with them a host of valuable ecosystem goods and services. The idea of “green infrastructure” is to reconnect and restore nature areas in order to improve the overall quality of the countryside and urban areas while delivering valuable services to society like fresh water, clean air, healthy soil, flood control, fish and fowl.

In contrast to most “grey” infrastructure such as motorways, bridges, water and sewage treatment plants, “green” infrastructure provides multiple benefits: wetland areas for example help mediate floods and droughts, purify water, provide vital nurseries for fish and habitats for other animals, but also are areas for rest and recreation.

Recognising these benefits, the EU and member states have recognized Green Infrastructure as an important tool for conserving biodiversity as well as for regional development, water management and adapting to climate change¹.

¹ EC Communication: Green Infrastructure – Enhancing Europe’s Natural Capital, COM(2013) 249 final.
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm

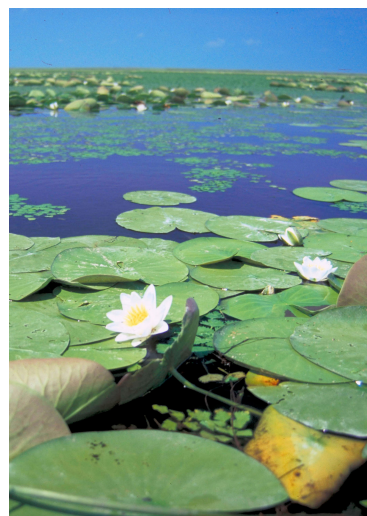
The most ambitious wetland protection and restoration initiative in Europe

In 2000, the governments of Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine pledged to work together to establish a green corridor on the river's final 1,000 km. Recognizing benefits not only for nature, but also for flood management and water purification, the four governments committed themselves to preserve a total of 935,000 ha and to restore 224,000 ha of former wetland areas. The agreement represents a significant investment and commitment to secure and restore a vital element of Europe's Green Infrastructure.

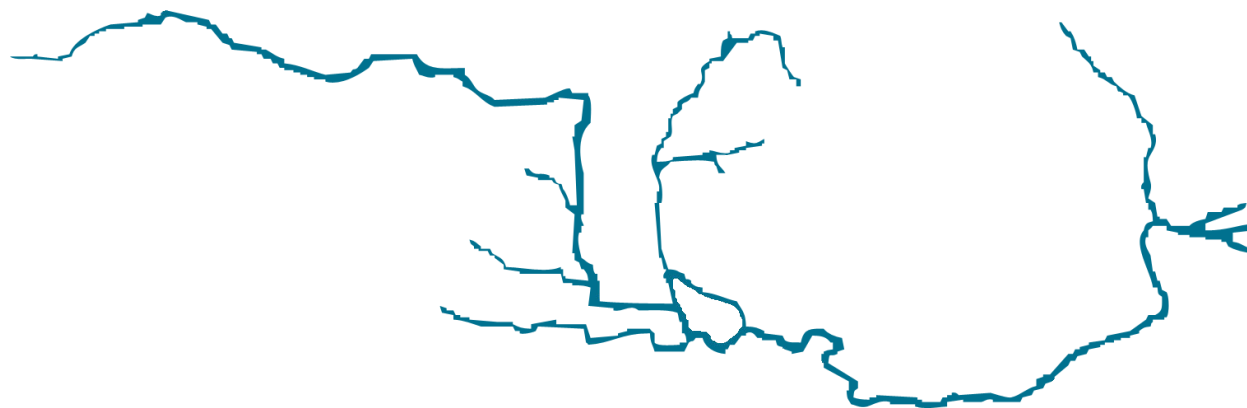
ABOUT THE LOWER DANUBE

After squeezing through the Iron Gates gorge and dams between Serbia and Romania, the Danube flows free for 1,000 kilometers through Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine before emptying into the Black Sea. The Lower Danube is one of the last free flowing stretches of river in Europe. Dependent on this part of the river are not only some of Europe's greatest natural treasures, but also the 29 million people who live in the Lower Danube River basin – people who directly benefit from the many services that the river provides.

Wetlands are important not only for nature but also for humans, providing a host of different services. The wide array of benefits they provide include flood and drought management through holding and slowly releasing water, water purification through filtration, production of natural resources (e.g. fish and reeds), recreation and many others. The value of various benefits from Danube floodplains has been estimated to be at least €500 per hectare per year.



Blue and green corridor



The Danube serves as an important migration corridor for fish, fowl and other fauna, including the massive Beluga sturgeon, which spends most of its 100 year lifespan in the Black Sea but makes regular trips up the Danube to spawn. The Lower Danube and Danube Delta are especially important as breeding and resting places for some 331 species of birds, including the rare Dalmatian pelican, the White-tailed eagle, as well as 90% of the world's population of Red-breasted geese.

	<p>Why we are here To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. wwf.panda.org/dcpo</p>
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