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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Working Party - European Diploma

Strasbourg, 20-21 March 1975

KUSCENNETİ NATIONAL PARK

Application presented by Turkey

38.696
09.3

Name of the site: KUŞCENNETİ NATIONAL PARK

Name and address of the body responsible for its management

Ministry of Forestry,
General Directorate of Forestry,
National Parks Department,
ANKARA

Country: Turkey

Proposal for the award of a European Diploma to:

NATURE RESERVE

1. Type of the reserve (Fen, swamp, wood, lake... etc):

The reserve is located at the north coast of Kuşgölü (Lake Manyas). It consists of willow with a reed belt. However, the vegetation of the reserve changes according to the water level of the lake and the seasons. In early spring, water level rises and trunks of trees remain in water until late June. This phenomena provides ideal nest security and feeding facilities for migratory birds which nest in trees and reeds. Retreat of the water allows thick grass to grow under the trees.

2. Characteristics and scientific description justifying conservation

The national park is very small, (only 52 hectares). However, it has great ornithological significance at European level. This is why it is classified as a national park, despite its small size.

Morphologically, the area is extremely flat. Altitude varies from 20 to 22 metres. The national park is divided into two parts by the Sığircı stream. The terrain is alluvial. Kuşgölü is a freshwater and eutrophic lake. From a limnological view point it is argillotrop.

Willow trees (*Salix* sp.) dominate the vegetation. Other main species of vegetation are: *Phragmites* sp., *Typha* sp., *Scirpus* sp., *Juncus* sp., *Cyperus* sp., *Digitaria paspaloides*, *Oplismenus crus*, *Althea* sp.

Aquatic animals are abundant in and around the national park, Snakes, frogs, salamanders, tortoises are plentiful. On the other hand, fish provide the main source of food for the waterbirds. More than 20 species of fish live in the lake, among them *Silurus glanis*, *Esox lucius*, *Cyprinus carpio* and *Caspialosa meotica*; these have a commercial value.

Birds are the vital elements of the national park. Particularly in the breeding season, large colonies of various birds inhabit the woods and reeds. Approximately 50 species of birds nest in Kuşçenneti. More than 200 species were recorded in the national park and 150 of them make annual visits.

Spoonbills (*Platalea leucordia*) have the biggest breeding colonies. In the 1970 census, 515 pairs were recorded within this area of half a square kilometre. 300 more pairs were recorded in other parts of the lake.

Other major breeding colonies are:

Common heron	(<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)	300 pairs
Night heron	(<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>)	80 "
Little egret	(<i>Egretta garzetta</i>)	50 "
Squaco heron	(<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>)	40 "
Purple heron	(<i>Ardea purpurea</i>)	15 "
Little bittern	(<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>)	10 "
Bittern	(<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>)	2 "
Cormorant	(<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	350 "
Dalmatian pelican	(<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>)	30 "

These are the average numbers, according to the annual springtime censuses which have been carried out since 1967.

Kuşçenneti possesses approximately 1500 breeding pairs of waterbirds, and almost as many passerine birds. Most of the nests are in trees, and the national park is therefore very spectacular in the spring.

In the autumn, many passing migrants spend several weeks at Kuşçenneti. These include White pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and White storks (*Ciconia ciconia*), which are found in thousands. Warblers (*Phylloscopus* sp.) are also quite common.

In winter, ducks, geese and coots replace the other species and starlings roost in millions.

3. European interest justifying the application:

The intensive breeding colonies of birds and the ecological system which supports them provide the main interest.

Kuşçenneti National Park is the most important breeding place for the European spoonbill (*Platalea leucordia leucordia* L.).

Most of the birds nest in trees, which gives visitors outstanding possibilities for observation.

Dalmatian pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*) are ground nesting birds, but they have adapted themselves to nest on man-made platforms in the trees since 1969.

Although the area of the national park is very small, during the spring more than 3000 pairs of birds breed here. This breeding population uses the whole lake and its vicinity as feeding grounds (more than 200 sq. km).

4. Description of geographical positions, and/or sketch or tracing on map:

Kuşçenneti National Park is located on the north-east coast of Kuşgözü. The lake is south of the Marmara Sea. The area is renowned as a crossing route between Asia and Europe for migratory birds.

Administratively, the area is within the boundaries of Balıkesir province, Bandırma subprovince, and comes under Balıkesir Regional Forest Directorate and Bandırma National Forest. The nearest settlement is Sığirciatik village, about a kilometre from the park.

Geographical references:

28° 00' E
40° 15' N

Annual rainfall	640 mm	
Annual average temperature	14° 3 C	
Minimum	"	-14° C
Maximum	"	38° 7 C

Maps have been sent to the Secretariat.

5. Photographs:

Three photographs are available in the Secretariat:

- No. 1 General view of the park in early June. Looked at from the west, Kuşçenneti appears as a peninsula.
- No. 2 Cormorant colonies in early March.
- No. 3 A view of the sanctuary in February.

6. Conservation measures taken so far: (see Appendix)

Kuşçenneti was discovered by Prof. Dr. C Kosswig and his wife in 1938. In 1952 a small research station of the Hydro-biological Institute of the University of İstanbul was established here and the task of protecting the breeding colonies was given to the station guard. In 1959, on a proposal of the Faculty of Science of the University of İstanbul, the area was taken into the forest regime by a decision of the Cabinet, according to Forest Law No. 6831, article 24. It was classified as a national park according to the same law article 25.

Since that time the national park has been administered by the Ministry of Forests. With the help of interested organisations a buffer zone has been set up round the park. Appropriate land use is under the control of Balıkesir province. The buffer zone is 200 metres wide.

The Central Hunting Commission, which holds meetings according to Hunting Law No. 3167, forbids hunting and fishing within a zone 500 metres wide around the national park.

By oral agreement, Bandırma Air Base has altered flight routes in order not to disturb the breeding colonies.

7. References to published descriptions: (see attachment 2)

Kuşçenneti Milli Parkı, by Tansu Gürpınar, published by the General Directorate of Forestry.

General review of the Lake Manyas Sanctuary and its environment, by Tansu Gürpınar, IUCN Publication New series No. 12.

Special Problems of the Lake Manyas Bird Sanctuary (Manyas Kuşçenneti National Park), by David Lea, IUCN Publication New series No. 12.

Results of the ringing of Breeding Species at Lake Manyas, by Prof. Dr. C. Kosswig, IUCN Publication New series No. 12.

APPENDIX

I REGULATION ON NATIONAL PARKS

Classification, planning, implementation and management of national parks in Turkey are regulated according to the REGULATION attached.

Except in very special cases, commercial production, grazing and hunting which could destroy natural, cultural and scenic integrity in national parks is not permitted.

Basic management policy is to balance protection and use of national parks.

II FOREST LAW
No. 6831

Article 23 - Forests located in regions where there is a danger of landslip or pluvial erosion, as well as the State forests, maquis and areas covered with heather which purify the air of inhabited areas, protect roads and railways against dust and sand tempests, prevent the blocking of stream beds, and of which conservation is indispensable from the national point of view, can be qualified as protected forests for ever; whereas State forests which have been destroyed or burnt can be qualified as temporary protected forests until replanted by the Ministry of Forests.

The boundaries of protected forests are published in nearby villages and towns. Conditions and reasons, period of qualification, administrative regulations, etc, as well as types of use are decided by the Ministry of Forests.

Article 24 - All forests that should be qualified as protected forests but which do not belong to the State, as well as all privately owned areas that should be added to the protected forests to complete them, can be qualified as such by decision of the Council of Ministers. In cases where the owners do not agree, the areas are expropriated by virtue of general dispositions.

Article 25 The General Direction of Forests can classify as "national parks" the woods and areas which come under the forestry regulations because of their location and characteristics, with a view to conserving them for the benefit of the country's scientific life, to preserve nature, to guarantee environmental beauties, to satisfy people's needs for sport and rest and to allow development of expanding tourism.

The rules to be applied to national parks are identical to those for protected forests.

AppendixIII. DECISION OF THE CENTRAL HUNTING COMMISSION
FOR THE 1974-75 HUNTING SEASON

Hunting periods, methods, protected species and prohibited areas are defined by the attached document which is prepared annually according to Hunting Law No. 3167 Article 16. Those decisions are enforced by central and local authorities.

Item 6 - Within national parks established with the approval of the Ministry of Forests (which covers KUŞCENNETİ National Park), protected forest lands, forest recreation areas, reafforestation and soil conservation practice areas, and in a 500 metres wide buffer zone around them, hunting is prohibited throughout the year.