

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2020

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: TURKIYE

Name of the area: Kuşçenneti National Park (Bird paradise National Park)

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:
2011-2021

Central authority concerned:

Name: General Directorate of Nature Conservation & National Parks

General Director: İsmail ÜZMEZ

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Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Regional Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry (Mrs. Ferrah ÇAKIR)

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. finalise the revised management plan within one year and commence implementation of all actions and conditions found therein;

Kuscenneti National Park management plan called Long Term Development Plan and Wetland Management Plan was approved by the Ministry Authority in May 2019. The activities defined in the plan were started to be implemented after the approval of the plan.

2. submit any development project regarding the lake, its shores and tributaries, or concerning agricultural or industrial facilities, to a rigorous environmental impact study, the conclusions of which should be communicated to the Council of Europe;

The targets for precision protection in the park have been defined in the already approved plan and have been started to be implemented carefully from 2019 onwards.

In addition, Susurluk River Basin Management Plan prepared by General Directorate of Water Management within the project called "Technical Assistance for the Conversion of River Basin Action Plans into River Basin Management Plans (EuropeAid/134561/D/SER/TR). This Management Plan also involves Kocaçay-Manyas sub basin.

"Manyas Lake Sub Basin Water Quality Action Plan (2016-2021)" has been studied by Meriç Albay.

3. regularly monitor the breeding bird population of the park, and carry out research on the dynamics of these populations particularly at Siğirci Delta and Koçocay Delta;

Since 2010 bird population dynamics have been observed and recorded at 12 different points, especially in Siğirci Delta and Kocaçay Delta. Bird counting data for 2020 is attached (Annex-1).

Meanwhile a research on waterfowl of Manyas Lake remains with the coordination of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynel ARSLANGÜNDOĞDU who is a lecturer in Istanbul University in the scope of the research project titled "Establishment of Integrated Ecosystem Modeling Decision Support System for Management of Manyas Lake Basin".

Beside regular monitoring on breeding bird population in national park, provincial level biodiversity research was conducted in Balıkesir in 2019. A part of research also involves Kuşçenneti. Outputs of the research related to the Kuşçenneti NP involving 3 terms in 2019 is attached (Annex-2).

Also an Action Plan for the conservation of the *Pelecanus crispus* was prepared (Annex-3).

4. continue efforts to control pollution caused by poultry and livestock farming and monitor continually the water quality of the lake and of the streams flowing into it.

The water quality examination and control of Siğirci River is monitored by General Directorate of State Water Affairs.

There are no facilities within the boundaries of the National Park. All facilities in the buffer zone are permitted according to "Annex-2 of the Regulation on the Protection of Wetlands" and related clauses in Kuscenneti National Park Long Term Development Plan and Wetland Management Plan. Within this scope new applications for high capacity stock farming are not allowed.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. increase the number of staff to meet the increased workload due to the park's enlargement;

There have been some changes in the number of park staff with structural change to Bird Paradise National Park Chiefdom. Bird Paradise National Park Chiefdom which was responsible for more area besides national park, was divided into two parts in 2020. Thus staff of Chiefdom which is responsible for only national park decreased. Currently 2 forestry engineer (NP Manager and a consultant), a biologist, a veterinarian, a forest guard, a driver and 5 workers have been assigned to management unit of National Park. In the next years it is planned to increase the number of staff working for national park.

2. ensure the natural fluctuations in the lake's water level, including spring flooding and the drying up of the shoreline in summer;

According to long term monitoring results, the lake's natural water level shows seasonal changes from 14 m to 17 m. There is parallelism between the changes in lake water level and regional precipitation and Manyas Stream flows. In the last 10 years, there have not been any adverse practices resulting from General Directorate of State Water Affairs practices that may affect the bird population. Water fluctuations are caused by seasonal fluctuations and weather conditions. Daily water level monitoring is done according to annual operating programme prepared by General Directorate of State Water Affairs and natural fluctuation is observed. Water level measurement records including last 10 years is attached (Annex-4).

3. set up a small wardening unit on the southern shore of the lake (in the Koçocay Delta area) to guarantee the protection of the area.

In the Kocaçay Delta section, the wardening unit has been defined in the already approved plan and will be implemented according to budget allocation.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances,

since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Site management for the national park is the routine activity of national park authorities. Effectiveness of management activities is also monitored by using The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) in every three years. Also increase in visitor numbers is monitored regularly. Visitor numbers data is attached (Annex-5). Result of outputs of these monitoring efforts directly integrates to the management of national park.

In this context activities implemented in national park listed below;

- Field vehicles that have been allocated for use in the park are a land vehicle, a tractor, a boat and a motor cycle.
- Social facilities included 6 WC, 1 Disabled WC, 1 Baby Change Unit and 2 Prayer Room completed in 2019 and open for usage of visitors in 2020.
- Maintenance and reed coating of (58 pieces) Pelican nests were completed.
- The project included major renovation of the Administration and Visitor Promotion Center has been prepared and approved. Budget allocation for construction has been made and renovation will be started by 2020. Renovation of the Administration and Visitor Promotion Center and entrance control unit will be completed in 2022. Design and current photos from construction area is given at Annex-6.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There is no change in the boundary of the National Park since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated.

As a result of effective management of National Park and its buffer zone there haven't been any negative changes or deterioration in the environmental conditions in last ten years. However especially with the effects of increasing migration to the rural areas even it is not in National Park there are increasing population and settlements have increased in the villages around Kuşçenneti. This situation caused illegal fisheries and land hunting that is difficult to be prevented even if it was constantly controlled.

Only 1.7% (approximately 293 ha) of the National Park area consists of agricultural areas and agricultural activities in the National Park are very limited. However agriculture in the Delta has two-way pressure on the National Park, with the destruction of reeds (cutting, burning and plowing the areas where water is drawn) to open up new agricultural areas, and the effect of fertilizer used in agriculture and pesticide residues.

Again even it is not in National Park there are increasing demand for livestock's in basin. Within the National Park, there are a total of 1,917,261.6 m² of pasture area in 10 parcels belonging to 6 neighborhoods. However, animals are grazed in wet meadows around the lake as well as on pasture areas.

Despite increasing demand for livestock's in basin there are no facilities within the boundaries of the National Park. All facilities in the buffer zone are permitted according to "Annex-2 of the Regulation on the Protection of Wetlands" and related clauses in Kuşçenneti National Park Long Term Development Plan and Wetland Management Plan. Within this scope new applications for high capacity stock farming are not allowed.

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

No major change has been observed in flora and vegetation. Beside inventory works preparation of long term development plan, provincial level biodiversity research was conducted in Balıkesir in 2019. A part of research also involves Kuşçenneti. Outputs of the research related to the Kuşçenneti involving 3 terms in 2020 is attached (Annex-2).

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

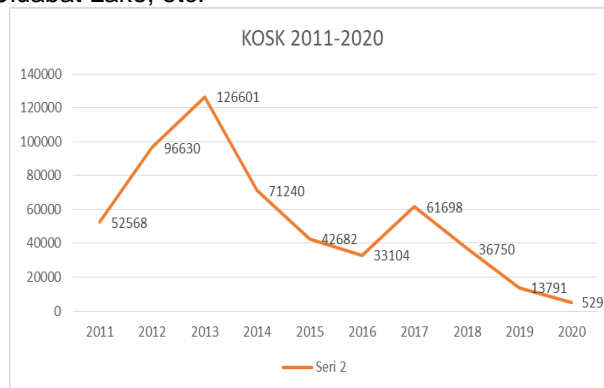
Siğircı and Kocaçay deltas are the most important areas in Turkey as a meaning of bird species that incubate on trees. There are 240 bird species identified in the area and 105 of them are likely or definitely breeding in the area.

Kuşçenneti National Park is one of the the most important incubation areas in Turkey for the dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), whose population size is around 10-14 thousand on earth. It is also the most important wintering area of the *Oxyura leucocephala*, one of the endangered bird species estimated to be 8-13 thousand on earth (Birdlife, 2015). Kuşçenneti meets the IBA-A4 criterion because it contains a significant number of endangered species.

An improvement of waterfowl populations has been observed during the years. Monitoring efforts were repeated at the same points every year in December, January and February and cover the entire Lake. These observations are continued by the supports of NGOs which involves Turkey's most experienced bird watchers.

It is known that before 2010 population of waterfowls were less than 10.000. With increasing effectiveness of management efforts this numbers are increased and according to long term monitoring data on breeding bird population of the park the highest population is reached in 2013 by 126.601 birds.

A diagram including last ten years bird population as a result of long term monitoring efforts is given. As seen in the diagram there is a decrease in numbers. The main reason for this situation could be changes in climate conditions with effects of global warming. Especially the water year of 2020 (October 2019 – September 2020) went on having dried period characteristics. This graph should be read in parallel with the numbers of close wetlands like Uluabat Lake, etc.



Also a decrease is observed in the fish population in the lake in 2020. As a result of the observations made, it is thought to be the result of fluctuations in the water level that are caused by seasonal fluctuations and weather conditions in the habitats of the fish breeding season last year. Accordingly, a decrease is observed in the bird population due to the changes in the seasons.

Also especially in 2020 NGOs couldn't be involved in monitoring efforts due to Covid-19 pandemic conditions. Monitoring was made by national park staff at limited time. Thus other reason for this decrease is experience level of monitoring team and as a result of pandemics limited time for monitoring and do not cover the entire area.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

Archaeological excavations in Daskyleion are still continuing. Some new foundations and pavements have been outcropped. Findings of these excavations are shown in the collection of Bandırma Museum. Effects of Kuşçenneti and natural resources of ancient wetland settlement may be seen on these artefacts which may be seen at enclosed photos (Annex 7). Also academic work on Daskyleion with is the most important cultural heritage of region is also given as annex (Annex 8). In order to increase the recognition of the historical, cultural and natural values of the area at national and international level, to increase the visitor diversity of the area, to protect the area and to ensure that it exists with all its values in the future as it has been for thousands of years, these two values Kuşçenneti and Daskyleion antique city should be handled and evaluated together.

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

No significant change in socio-economic context occurred since 2010.

Local people still earn their living from agriculture, livestock and fishing. The main touristic attraction point for region is Kuşçenneti National Park. There aren't any tourism activities surrounding settlements.

The main livelihood of the settlements associated with the area is agriculture. However, agricultural activities in the National Park are very limited. Only 1.7% (approximately 293 ha) of the National Park area consists of agricultural areas. Very few of these lands are privately owned lands.

The next important source of income of the local people after agriculture is livestock. Within the National Park, there are a total of 1,917,261.6 m² of pasture area in 10 parcels belonging to 6 neighborhoods. Butter, cheese and yoghurt production is an important source of income in the region. Milk and dairy products are both used as a source of income in the villages and consumed for nutrition within the family.

Aquaculture is the leading value for the fishermen produced by Kuş Lake as a wetland ecosystem. But a decrease is observed in the fish population in the lake in 2020.

Number of Cooperative Partners Rented in Manyas (Kuş) Lake:

S.S.Kızıksa Aksakal Town ve Ergili Village Fisheries Cooperative: 45

S.S. Bereketli Village Kuşgölü Fisheries Cooperative :104

S.S. Kocagöl neighborhood Fisheries Cooperative :34

S.S. Gölyaka Village Fisheries Cooperative :33

S.S. Salur, Kızılköy Town and Akçaköy, Gölyaka, Hamamlı Villages Fisheries Cooperative: 64

S.S. Kuşçenneti Town Fisheries Cooperative:30

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

New information instruments (brochures, stickers, booklets, t-shirts and posters) are published. All of these materials are being distributed to the visitors.

There are many arrangements for receiving and informing the public such as distribution of the brochures, direction of the visitors, organizing training programs for child and schools. The visitors are informed in the special information hall by national park staff with using the digital cameras that are located in the field. On the other hand, the visitors can take binoculars in the visitor center to watch the birds by themselves. The guiding services are offered to visitors by National Park staff. These system for increasing awareness of the visitor on national park will be developed by new visitor centre.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

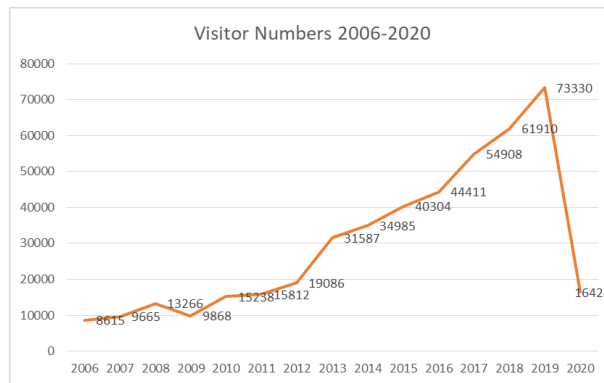
The number and distribution of visitors are given in Annex 5 to this report.

The intensive period to visitation of the park is weekends and closing period of the schools.

During the last years especially the number of the primary and secondary students was increased. The main goal of their visitation is to recognize and learn bird species and watch of the birds in their habitats. The school groups are coming regularly with their teachers.

The foreigner visitors are especially visiting to the area for bird watching. They are mainly ornithologist and they aware of the area and bird species. While there was a significant increase in domestic visitors every year, the number of visitors from abroad remained stable. This situation can be explained by the inadequate promotion, especially abroad.

Kuşçenneti National Park one of the main attraction point and visitor numbers increasing each year. The last ten years before covid-19 pandemics it has increased about five times. On the other hand the profile and increasing trends in visitor numbers has been changed for this year. As a global situation visitor numbers in 2020 decreased with the effects of covid-19 pandemics.



8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

- Since 1987, "International Bandırma Bird Paradise Culture and Tourism Festival" has been held every year in June. Every year, scientists and artists well-known throughout the country participate in the festival. It was held for the 30th time in 2019. All of the festival visitors and participants can visit our area free of charge during the festival. Every year, panels about the introduction of the Bird Paradise National Park and its problems are organized within the scope of the festival with the participation of scientists.

- A competition on concept of "Bandırma Kuşgölü" organized and selected and awarded photographs were presented in the exhibition at the outside of the visitor center in national park.

- Within the scope of the Bird Paradise and Tourism Festival a panel titled "Curt Kossig in the way of Introduction of Bird Lake to the Scientific World." was conducted with the coordination of Prof. Dr. Ali DEMİRİSOY from Hacettepe University Faculty of Biology and expert zootechnics Özgün SÖZÜER.

- Nature educations for the children who are from neighboring schools has been continued with the aim of increasing awareness on national park and nature conservation during the last years.

- Visitor center has an important role especially as a meaning of increasing awareness on nature conservation and protected area. It will continue this role with increasing function after reconstruction. Each year many students visit national park as a group. Meanwhile training programme conservation of biodiversity conducted by staff of our Balıkesir Branch Office. Also there is another course for hunters that mentioned importance of national park and its conservation for future.

8.2. Scientific research

8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

- Regular periodical hydrochemical sampling and monitoring studies are going on Kuşçenneti National Park. Beside this, ornithological surveys and bird census programs are being undertaken.

- Biodiversity and Inventory Monitoring Project for Balıkesir Province is started in 2017 within the scope of The project called "National Biodiversity Inventory Research and Monitoring in Turkey" (UBENİS). Project and accomplished in 2018. Species and areas within the scope of the project to begin to be monitored as of April 2018. In the Kuşçenneti the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), White-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and *Bufo variabilis* are being monitored.

- Also an Action Plan for the conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) was put into force in 2019 and monitoring efforts linked to action plan continues. Monitoring program monitoring studies cover a period of 10 years. Within the scope of this plan, the limit for approaching pelican breeding sites was increased from 500 m to 1 km.

- In addition, TÜBİTAK supported University Research Projects related to the field continue.

- The research called "Trees and Shrubs of Kuşçennet (Bandırma / Balıkesir) and its Surroundings" was conducted by Tümen et.al. (2019). As a result of this research it has been determined that there are 284 genus belonging to 72 families and 419 species and subspecies taxa belonging to these genus. It has been determined that they are the richest families in terms of species and subspecies taxa from *Asteraceae* (61 taxa), *Fabaceae* (47 taxa), *Poaceae* (35 taxa) *Lamiaceae* (19 taxa) and *Brassicaceae* (19 taxa).

- According to the research called "Lake Manyas from past to present" conducted by Tüket et.al. 34 species of fish belonging to 8 families defined to live in area. Detailed list of the fish species in Manyas Lake is given at annex (Annex 9).

8.2.2. Scientific publications

Detailed list of scientific publications is attached (Annex 10).

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

No significant change in legislative or institutional structure occurred since the last reporting period.

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

No significant change in ownership occurred since 2010

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

No significant change in boundaries occurred since 2010

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

The renovation of existing breeding platforms for pelicans has been realized in Sıgırcı Delta. The total number of the platforms is 58 in December 2020.

Protection and control operations are carried out regularly by guards (rangers)

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

A number of studies being carried out protection against the elements (fire, water regime) by National Park Administration. Especially public awareness and capacity building studies are doing close-cooperation with schools, municipalities and other institutions.

They are working close cooperation with General Directorate of Forestry for firefighting and, working with State Water Affairs for the regulation of water regime.

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

The main state road of Bandırma - Balıkesir which passes through the eastern coast has been improved. Relevant signposts and necessary traffic beacons/lights have been installed. The secondary road connecting the park to the main state road has been improved.

The oldest information and direction signs have been renewed.

The trail network has been renewed.

The roads of settlements associated with the lake are asphalt and there is no transportation problem. All settlements have electricity, telephone line, television broadcast, internet and mobile phone access. Except for Kuşçenneti Mahallesi, all settlements supply their drinking and utility water from groundwater through boreholes and there is a water network.

The drinking water, including the Visitor Center at Kuşçenneti district, is supplied from the mains water of Bandırma Municipality. Apart from the 4 settlements, there is a purification facility for drinking and utility water. Drinking water is used without treatment in Aksakal, Ergili, Bereketli and Çepni districts.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

Field vehicles that have been allocated for use in the park are a land vehicle, a tractor, a boat and a motor cycle. There are also enough binoculars and cameras for field works.

10.1.5. Waste management

Balıkesir province has become a Metropolitan Municipality in terms of local governments, and as a result, villages have turned into neighborhoods. Accordingly, domestic wastes in the neighborhoods around the lake are collected by the municipalities and disposed of by the Metropolitan Municipality.

Renewable energy facilities located in Gönen District and Bandırma Edincik District produce biogas by processing the wastes of livestock activities around the Lake.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

Use of renewable energy systems is promoted both in Action Plan for *Pelecanus crispus* and also in Kuscenneti National Park management plan called Long Term Development Plan and Wetland Management Plan. In this context new visitor facilities and park infrastructures planning to build by taking into consideration of renewable energy systems.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

The main instrument for management of the area Kuscenneti National Park management plan called Long Term Development Plan and Wetland Management Plan was approved.

Also in 2020 Bird Paradise National Park Chiefdom which was responsible for more area besides national park was divided into two parts. This structural change in Bird Paradise National Park Chiefdom made it responsible for only national park. Thanks to this reorganization management effectiveness of national park is supposed to be increased.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

No major change occurred.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

No major change occurred since 2010.

Kuscenneti National Park management plan called Long Term Development Plan and Wetland Management Plan was approved and National Park zoning system defined by this plan.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

No significant change in legislative or institutional structure occurred since 2010.

Just Law on Wetlands has been reviewed.

11. Influence of the award of the Euroean Diploma for Protected Areas

Kuscenneti which is second National Park of Turkey is one of the oldest protected areas of Turkey. It is also one of the most effective managed national park and protected with national and international legislations.

The European Diploma is still a source of motivation and increase the awareness for stakeholders. Not only the institutions that are responsible are protecting the area but also the investment side, resource authorities and local people also are using this title as a tool. They are working closely with the Park administration to support conservation activities and public awareness.

On the other hand the Diploma is adding prestige and power for the area. Both related institutions and local administrations are making sensitively their application because of this diploma. This situation is supporting effective management of the area. The diploma is also adding additional interest and attention to the national park.