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**COMMITTEE FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
IN THE FIELD OF BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY**

**CO-DBP**

**Group of Specialists – European Diploma for Protected Areas**

**KUŞCENNETI NATIONAL PARK  
(TURKEY)**

**RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA**

**Appraisal Report  
by Mr Francis ROUX (France)**

The European Diploma was awarded to the Kuşçenneti National Park in 1976 and thereafter renewed.

The secretariat did not accompany the expert on his visit to the park.

Appendix III contains Resolution (96) 27, which was adopted when the Diploma was last renewed. Appendix IV contains the conclusions of the expert who proposes a suspension of the European Diploma.

## Acknowledgements

This report was drawn up on the basis of the appraisal made by the author and the technical documents submitted to him for that purpose. Among other things, it is based on documents sent to him on request by the Bureau of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Switzerland.

The author would like to express sincere thanks to all those he met for their kind co-operation throughout the appraisal, and particularly Ms Sevgi Gül, agricultural expert at the Turkish General Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife, who accompanied him throughout the visit, from arrival at the airport in Istanbul to departure.

Mouliherne, 49390, France.

## I. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council of Europe Diploma was awarded to the Kuşçenneti National Park, Turkey in 1976; it has been renewed four times, in 1981, 1986, 1991 and 1996.

In April 2000, I was asked by the Secretariat to conduct an on-the-spot appraisal to establish whether the circumstances which led to the award of the Diploma and the subsequent renewals still applied and were such as to be able to recommend that the Diploma be renewed for a further period of five years. I was familiar with the site, having conducted the previous appraisal in April 1995.

The renewals were subject to a general condition, some specific conditions and a number of recommendations. The general condition was that human activities around the site should not affect its biological and landscape integrity.

The last renewal of the Diploma, up to 14 March 2001, was also subject to the following specific conditions, a number of which were being repeated for the second, third or fourth time:

- “\* all necessary measures must be taken to prevent any adverse repercussions of human activities on the Lake Manyas ecosystem, in particular by constant monitoring of the water quality and by avoiding fragmentation of the habitat through the construction of dikes;
- \* there must be a water management programme such as to ensure the natural fluctuations of the lake's water level, including spring flooding and the drying up of the shoreline in summer;
- \* any project for development of the lake, its shores and tributaries must be subject to a preliminary impact study. [...];
- \* the educational role of the visitor centre must be developed, in particular by renovating the exhibition rooms and installing a video system transmitting live the activities of the bird colony”.

The report also contained the following four recommendations:

- \* that the biological and landscape integrity of the shores of Lake Manyas be preserved;
- \* that, for the future Lake Manyas National Park, a scientific committee be set up to include biologists specialising in the environment, and in limnology and the biology of waterfowl populations in particular;
- \* that, for this future park, a management committee be set up on which the various categories of lake and lakeside users will be represented;
- \* that the Ramsar Convention's declaration concerning Lake Manyas be extended to the whole lake.

The Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas had also asked me to pay particular attention to the following points:

- the consequences of the 1999 earthquake;
- the continuing pollution from industries and households in the region of the Koçacay and Sigirci rivers;
- the role of the Kuşçenneti Environment Union;
- the inclusion of the entire lake in the Ramsar Convention's list of wetlands of international importance.

## **II. CONDUCT OF THE APPRAISAL**

My visit took place between 12 and 14 April 2000.

12 April: Paris - Istanbul.

13 April: Istanbul – Bandırma, by ferry. Welcomed by the national parks delegation who took us to Kuşçenneti. Meeting with the press. Boat tour to the mixed heronry and the mouth of the river Sigirci; car trip along the southern shore of Lake Manyas; boat trip into the delta of the Kocaçay; visit to the Koan Kaya (Sheep Rock) site where the future Lake Manyas interpretation and management centres will be set up; meeting with the vice-governor of Bandırma; departure for Balıkesir to meet the Provincial Director of the Forestry Service.

14 April: Meeting with the Vice-Governor of Balıkesir at the headquarters of the provincial government; return to Bandırma; lunch with the Vice-Governor; reception given by the mayor; return to Kuşçenneti; press conference; final interview at national park headquarters. Bandırma – Istanbul by ferry.

15 April: Istanbul-Paris.

### III. APPRAISAL

#### III.1. The European importance of the area holding the Diploma

Kuşçenneti National Park was set up in 1959. It is located on the northern shore of Lake Manyas – also called Lake Kus – which is one of the four large lakes to the south of the Sea of Marmara in the Anatolia region. The presence of a major arboreal colony of large waterfowl, waders and palmipeds is the only justification for this small 64-hectare park, and is what gives it its European importance. Among the dozen or so species that breed here in large numbers there are some which figure on the list of Europe's endangered bird species: the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), the pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*), the glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), and the spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*). The park is recognised as playing a major role in the preservation of these birds, which are on the red list of endangered European species. Six other species which nest in the colony are included in Appendix II to the Bern Convention.

The colony is located in a stand of willow trees (*Salix alba*).

For it to function normally, it depends on the natural annual fluctuation of the water level in Lake Manyas. It must be high in spring to prevent predators from reaching the nests and low in summer. These variations are also essential to the vegetative cycle of the willows. The foot of the trees must be submerged in spring, while the water must subside in summer to expose the roots.

In other words, it is not enough just to protect the colony to ensure its survival. Its conservation depends on preserving the lake's natural water regime and organic productivity – in short, on preserving intact the whole of the lake's ecosystem.

The lake covers 162 km<sup>2</sup> and is eutrophic. Because it is shallow (a maximum of 3 to 5 metres deep), the water is particularly warm in summer, and hence rich in plankton and with plentiful aquatic animals. The lake's main tributary is the Kocaçay river on the southern shore. The annual inflow is 580 million m<sup>3</sup>. The other tributaries contribute far less water but carry agricultural and industrial pollutants. This is the case with the river Sigirci which flows past Bandırma's industrial district and comes out in the national park.

The river Kara, on the opposite shore, is the lake's outlet channel. It is controlled by a flow regulator which plays a crucial role in the hydraulic management of the lake and the national park.

### IV. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE AREA – COMPLIANCE WITH THE SECRETARIAT'S CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### IV.1. State of the bird populations

The Dalmatian pelican and the pygmy cormorant are Kuşçenneti's two most important nesting species because of their endangered status throughout the rest of Europe. These birds are what has given the site its European reputation. In the park, the Dalmatian pelicans do not nest on the ground as normal, but on specially designed simple wooden platforms resting on piles. The first recorded instance of breeding was in 1968. The population then steadily increased, and reaching 400 pairs by 1997. It has considerably

declined since: only 67 pairs were recorded on 2 May 2000. Likewise, the number of pygmy cormorants has declined in recent years and, following a peak of 700 pairs, numbers have now fallen to between 70 and 80 pairs in spring 2000<sup>1</sup>.

Since 1995 the numbers of other colony nesting birds have declined in a similar or even more alarming fashion (e.g. spoonbill).

Table 1. Changes in the population of the Kuscenneti bird colony between 1995 and 2000 (in numbers of pairs). Sources: for 1995, documents provided by the national park and reproduced in the report of March 1996 (PE-S-ZP (96) 47).

For May 2000, document prepared for the General Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife by Sühenden KARAUZ, with covering letter of 20 June 2000.

	1995	2000
Dalmatian pelican * <i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	220	67
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	4,800	1,500
Pygmy cormorant * <i>Phalacrocorax pygmaeus</i>	400	70-80
Glossy ibis * <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	400	8 (?)
Spoonbill * <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	416	29
Grey heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	272	64
Little egret * <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	346	35
Squacco heron * <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	184	21
Night heron * <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	530	80-100

NB. Species listed in Appendix II to the Bern Convention are marked with an asterisk.

Though it should be said that the figures provided in the past by the national park staff may not be entirely reliable (for instance, three different figures are quoted for the Dalmatian pelican in 1995), it is clear that there has been a striking decline in the colony. Yet it is this colony which gives the site its Europe-wide reputation.

#### IV.2. State of the plant life

The main cause of the decline is the dieback of the willows, all of which are now dead. All that is left for the birds to make their nests on are the bare trunks and remnants of

<sup>1</sup> Figures kindly provided by the National Park Authorities in Ankara, letter of 20 June 2000.

the main branches. A process undermining the biological balance of the lake was set off by the disruption of its water regime. Excessive water levels in summer asphyxiated the willows' root systems, and as they lost their leaves the bird colonies gradually abandoned the site. They are finding it increasingly difficult to build nests in the trees for want of suitable places, and then to bring up their chicks, which are too exposed to bad weather and to corvidae which prey on eggs and hatchlings.

The rise in the water level has also had other negative effects on the breeding birds. It has caused loss of feeding grounds which are submerged during the breeding period. Furthermore, because the lower branches of the willows, which have most foliage, are now under water, the small species of heron which preferred to nest at that height (e.g. *Ardeola raloides*) have not been able to breed.

#### IV.3. Hydraulic management of the lake

The death of the willows in the wooded area of the national park was originally attributed to an infestation of leaf-eating caterpillars<sup>2</sup>. However, even at that time work was being carried out by the DSI (the national water authority) with a view to turning the lake into a hydro-agricultural reservoir for irrigation purposes. A rudimentary regulator built on the lake outlet, the river Kara, brought the natural balance of the lake's water regime under control, and this was taken further in 1992 with the construction of 31 km of dykes on the southern and south-eastern shores of the lake, and in 1994 when a new regulator with a higher flow rate was built at Ergili on the river Kara.

Dyke-building resulted in the drainage and conversion into pastoral farmland of 3,800 hectares of marshes, all of which represented a further loss for the fish and water birds which used to come to feed here<sup>3</sup>.

In 1979 the DSI gave an undertaking to preserve the natural character of Lake Manyas and agreed with the Ministry of Forests to control water levels in accordance with minimum and maximum depths. Despite this, since the completion of the dykes in 1992, levels have been well over the limit (Appendix 2).

Over the ten-year period from 1989 to 1999, only in the year 1998-1999 (not shown on the graph) did water levels fall within the ideal maximum and minimum values. In every other year, the summer levels which are needed for the vegetative cycle of the willows, were considerably higher than the ideal maximum (15 metres) and even exceeded it by one to two metres in five consecutive years (1993-1998)<sup>4</sup>. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that the trees would die.

The question is whether the problem of the lake's hydraulic management has now been resolved. In 1995 the DSI claimed that the solution depended on work on the Kara

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2. Doc. PE-S-ZP(90)40.

3. Doc. PE-S-ZP(96)47.

4. Curve of water gauge values in Bird Lake between 1989 and 1999. Source: Kuscenneti National Park Authorities.

outlet channel, which had insufficient flow; the flow should have been three times higher (70m<sup>3</sup> per second).

Does the fact that water levels returned to normal in 1998-99 mean that the flow in the Kara has reached a satisfactory rate? Or is the improvement the result of the agreement concluded in April 1998 between the Ministry of the Environment, the DSI, and the General Directorate of National Parks, to the effect that water levels in Lake Manyas would be maintained at a suitable level? The timetable of my visit did not provide an opportunity to meet any hydraulic engineers, and so I was unable to obtain a definite reply to these questions.

#### IV.4. Re-establishment of the willow plantation

It is vital to control water levels to preserve the lake's ecosystem and re-establish the willow plantation at the mouth of the Sigirci. Re-establishment has begun, with 16,000 white willows planted in 1998<sup>5</sup>. The saplings were submerged during my visit because of the high water level; only the tops of those planted high up on the lake shore could be seen. The operation is to continue and I was shown a large nursery. These plantations will only survive if they are clear of the water from July to October so that the roots can breathe. Given the rate at which these trees grow, it will be four to six years before they can be colonised by birds.

There is a fine lakeside stand of *Salix alba* at the mouth of the Koçacay on the lake's southern shore, outside the national park. It had been assumed that it might become home to a sub-colony of the Kuscenneti colony<sup>6</sup>. According to information received three weeks after my visit, between 150 and 250 pairs of birds have indeed begun nesting there (spoonbill, squacco heron, night heron and pygmy cormorant)<sup>7</sup>.

#### IV.5. Pollution

Along with the changes in the lake's water regime, pollution is the gravest threat to Kuscenneti Park and the whole of the lake's ecosystem. The problem has been repeatedly underlined, from the time when the Diploma was first renewed. The main polluters are the agro-chemical industries located in Bandırma (including factories manufacturing borax and boric and sulphuric acid) which pump waste into the Sigirci river. Pollution is also caused by poultry farms around the lake, the number of which has increased alarmingly since the previous appraisal. Dozens of such farms have been set up on the eastern shore of the lake; there are a total of 137 in the region. Cleaning with running water produces 12,000 tonnes of waste per day<sup>8</sup>. Leaks from the waste outlet system run down to the lake via the Sigirci river and cause serious organic pollution, particularly in the northern part.

Household effluent from 13 villages in the catchment basin runs into the lake under varying degrees of control. Fertilisers and pesticides spread on irrigated crops also enter the

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5. Annual report of Kuscenneti National Park, April 1999.

6. PE-S-ZP (96) 47.

7. Letter of 20 June 2000 from the National Park Authorities in Ankara.

8. 1<sup>st</sup> interim report of the LIFE ERA programme, April 1999.



lake through run-off and infiltration. In 1998 the University of Ankara carried out a series of physico-chemical analyses under the auspices of the LIFE ERA programme, to evaluate the levels of pollution due to agricultural fertilisers and organochlorine pesticides<sup>9</sup>.

The role of boron pollution in the willow dieback has been suggested. It is indeed at the mouth of the river Sigirci that the highest levels of contamination have been detected. However, the experts believe that the willow dieback can be mainly put down to the excessive water levels in the lake and that the adverse effect of boron is not proven.

In April 1995, the regional authorities had assured us that new measures were to be introduced to control and prevent pollution throughout the entire basin. The new procedure was in fact adopted by ministerial decree in November 1995<sup>10</sup>. However, the water-treatment works built near the Sigirci in 1992 cannot treat a sufficient volume of water. Neither have the authorities been able to ensure respect for the rules under which polluters must connect their drainage systems to the works. It is planned to establish new biological and chemical treatment plants, but their construction represents a major expense at a time when the region's priority must be to counter the social and economic consequences of the two earthquakes in 1999 (see below). Given these circumstances, we should not expect any solution to the pollution problem in the near future.

## **V. EXTENSION OF THE NATIONAL PARK**

This has not taken place in accordance with 1995 plans, which were to extend the national park to cover the whole of Lake Manyas. Part of the lake was designated a permanent wildlife reserve in 1985. In 1996 this protected area was increased to 23,667 hectares. It includes the whole of the lake shore and areas of special ecological interest such as the Koçacay delta where all hunting is prohibited, but it does not have national park status. Nonetheless, the environmental integrity which national park status ensures was granted to a new area bordering the 64 hectares of the Kuscenneti Park, which was made a national park in 1997 and covers a further area of 120 ha<sup>11</sup>. It mainly consists of rushes and reedbeds, but also contains small areas of open water where birds can feed. Willows have also been planted here.

On the opposite, south-eastern shore of the lake another area of 65 ha including the mouth of the river Kara and the Daskylaion archaeological site has also been made into a national park, or is about to be so – the situation has to be confirmed, though the move has been planned since 1995.

## **VI. LAKE MANYAS, A RAMSAR SITE**

A crucial development from the legal viewpoint was the inclusion in 1998 of the entire lake in the Ramsar Convention's list of wetlands of international importance. When the convention entered into force in Turkey in 1994, it applied to only two-thirds of the lake

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9. Ibidem, Soil Department, Faculty of Agriculture, Ankara.

10. PE-S-DE (97) 16.

11. PE-S-DE (98) 16.

(102 km<sup>2</sup>) on the eastern side of the basin. The Committee of Ministers had recommended that this anomaly be rectified when last renewing the Diploma. That has now been done.

## **VII. VISITOR RECEPTION AND INFORMATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS-RAISING**

The park reception centre is perfectly satisfactory; everything is orderly and well kept, but there is hardly anything for visitors to see. The observation tower which used to attract lots of visitors during the birds' breeding season has had to be pulled down. It was built entirely of wood, in 1972, and had become too precarious for 40 people to stand on, 15 metres above ground level. It is planned to rebuild the tower, but the question is when.

I was not able to visit the small two-room zoological museum in which stuffed specimens of the local wildlife are exhibited in display cabinets. I presume that they are closed to the public pending the opening of a new interpretation centre which it is planned to set up 3 km to the east in two semi-derelict buildings owned by the state which have been allocated jointly for this purpose to the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of the Environment.

As for the video system transmitting live pictures from the breeding colony, which was planned in 1989 and was the subject of a specific recommendation in 1996<sup>12</sup>, it has not been installed for lack of funds. It may also be assumed that the current state of the colony provides little incentive to set up such a system for the time being.

The result is that there is little on show to the public. It is hardly surprising that visitor numbers are steadily declining. Entry is now free of charge.

However, this does not mean that the public, and in particular the local community, has lost all interest in the national park. The press conference held following our visit in the village of Kuscenneti attracted over 50 local people in addition to journalists. Their comments showed that locals, and not just the members of the Kuscenneti Environment Union, are seriously concerned about this heritage and its conservation. Everyone wants Lake Manyas and the national park to be a centre of attraction once again and people are becoming more and more involved in the region's tourist boom. They are hoping for aid from European Community to implement the lake management plan which is currently being drawn up as part of the third stage of the LIFE programme.

## **VIII. NEW MANAGEMENT PLAN**

This project for "Ecological Risk Analysis and Management Planning for Lake Manyas" (referred to as "ERA Bird Lake" for short) is the central pillar of an effort to save the lake's ecosystem. With the support of the Environment Directorate General of the European Commission (DG XI), it is being carried out jointly by the Turkish Ministry of Environment (General Directorate of Environmental Protection), the Agriculture Faculty of the University of Ankara (Landscape Architecture Department) and the Ministry of Forests (General Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife). Every aspect affecting the ecological functioning of Lake Manyas and its exploitation, whether physical, biotic, social, economic

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12. PE-S-ZP (96) 47.

or cultural, is being looked into in great detail. This is the first such project in Turkey relating to a wetland area. The study programme is scheduled to cover three years (1998-2001), and the budget of 218,000 Euros is shared between the European Commission and the Turkish Government.

Two interim reports have already been submitted. The second, dated April 1999, is over a hundred pages long.

The main aims are:

- to establish a land use plan based on an ecological risk survey;
- to devise a water management system preserving the lake's natural water regime;
- to prevent pollution and silting up of the lake;
- to restore habitats and create new ones for birds;
- to increase the nesting populations;
- to set up a lake management committee;
- to step up co-ordination and co-operation between the parties concerned;
- to train staff in wetland management techniques;
- to promote international co-operation and exchanges of information.

All of these aims were expressly stated or implied in the conditions and recommendations made by the Council of Europe following the previous on-site appraisals with a view to the renewal of the Diploma. The Committee congratulates the project managers on their inclusion in the programme of action, while regretting that these measures, which it has been recommending for years, have not yet been put into practice. In the meantime the deterioration of the European Diploma site has continued.

## **IX. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1999 EARTHQUAKE**

On 17 August 1999 there was an earthquake in the south of the Marmara region, followed by an after-shock some days later. The inhabitants of Bandirma and the surroundings of the lake were affected economically and psychologically by the disaster, but it did not greatly damage the local buildings or infrastructure. The adverse effects are largely of a budgetary nature, because the Turkish authorities are obliged to give priority to the needs of earthquake victims to the detriment of the installations needed to control pollution in Lake Manyas.

## **X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Suffering as it does from the vicissitudes of a water regime which has been out of balance for years, plus increasing, chronic pollution, Kuscenneti National Park has a

precarious existence. Its only unique feature, the large mixed heronry, which was still thriving in 1995 at the time of the previous appraisal, is fast declining. All the trees which supported it are now dead. Replanting of the willow plantation has begun, but it will take years for the trees to grow big enough for the colonies of arboreal waterfowl to be able to nest there again.

The big observation tower which once enabled visitors to the national park to observe nesting birds conveniently has had to be pulled down because time had weakened it too much. Lack of funds has meant that the promised video system, broadcasting live images of the colony, has failed to materialise. Visitors are shunning the park pending the setting up of a new interpretation centre in keeping with modern museum design. This project, which will be carried out under the auspices of the General Directorate of Forests and the Ministry of Environment, forms part of the management plan for Lake Manyas supported by the European Commission in the context of its LIFE programme.

The future of Kuscenneti appears to depend on the decisions to be taken as a result of this management plan and the funding provided to implement them. The plan is based on data on the area's soil structure provided by satellite imaging, an inventory of all the components of the ecosystem, and a thorough analysis of ecological risks. It was launched in January 1998 and should be finalised in January 2001. It will only be possible to implement the practical measures it recommends if sufficient funding is found. This is a vast, long-term undertaking.

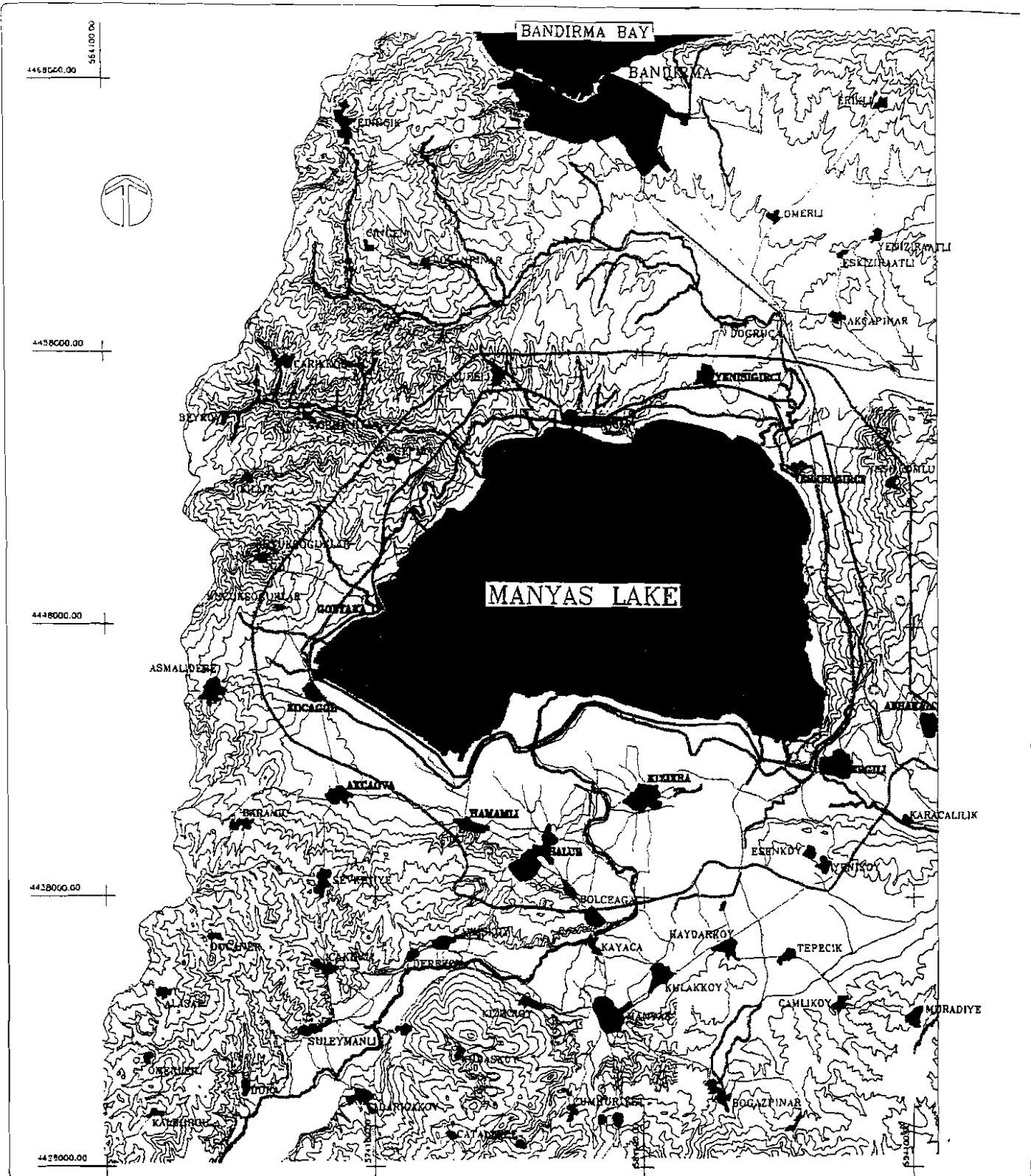
The Council of Europe has acknowledged the outstanding value of Kuscenneti by awarding it the European Diploma in 1976 and renewing it four times since. It cannot abandon this site where the endangered bird species which warranted the Europe-wide distinction it was granted still nest. However, it cannot objectively state that the conditions which prompted the award of the Diploma and its subsequent renewals still exist. It is all the less able to do so because the conditions and recommendations which the Committee of Ministers attached to the four renewals have never been comprehensively acted upon. For the most part, they have elicited only statements of intention.

A pure and simple refusal to renew the Diploma would not serve the Kuscenneti Park's cause and would be a disservice to it vis-à-vis the authorities and the public. We believe, however, that suspending the Diploma for a period of three years would provide a reasonable period of time:

1. for the recovery of the national park's biology and landscape to begin to recover;
2. for the authorities to apply, with all the requisite determination, measures conducive to the strict control of the lake's water regime and to reducing pollution;
3. for a start to be made on renovation of the educational facilities for visitors.

The suspension would be reconsidered after a further on-site appraisal at the end of this three-year period.

## APPENDIX I



## ECOLOGICAL RISK ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR MANYAS LAKE

Supported by European Community

Ankara University Faculty of Agriculture Dept. of Landscape Architecture, 06110 - Ankara, TURKEY  
 Ministry of Environment, General Directorate of Environmental Protection, 06530 - Ankara, TURKEY  
 Ministry of Forestry, General Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife, 06510 - Ankara, TURKEY

LEGAL PROTECTED  
AREAS BOUNDARIES

## LEGEND

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| FISHING VILLAGE          | RESEARCH AREA                          |
| SETTLEMENTS              | 1st. DEGREE NATURAL SIT                |
| RAILWAY                  | WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREA             |
| ROADS                    | 1st. DEGREE ARCHEOLOGICAL SIT BOUNDARY |
| STREAM                   | 2nd. DEGREE ARCHEOLOGICAL SIT BOUNDARY |
| KUSCENNETI NATIONAL PARK | 3rd. DEGREE ARCHEOLOGICAL SIT BOUNDARY |
| RAMSAR BOUNDARY          |  |

STAGE

1

MAP

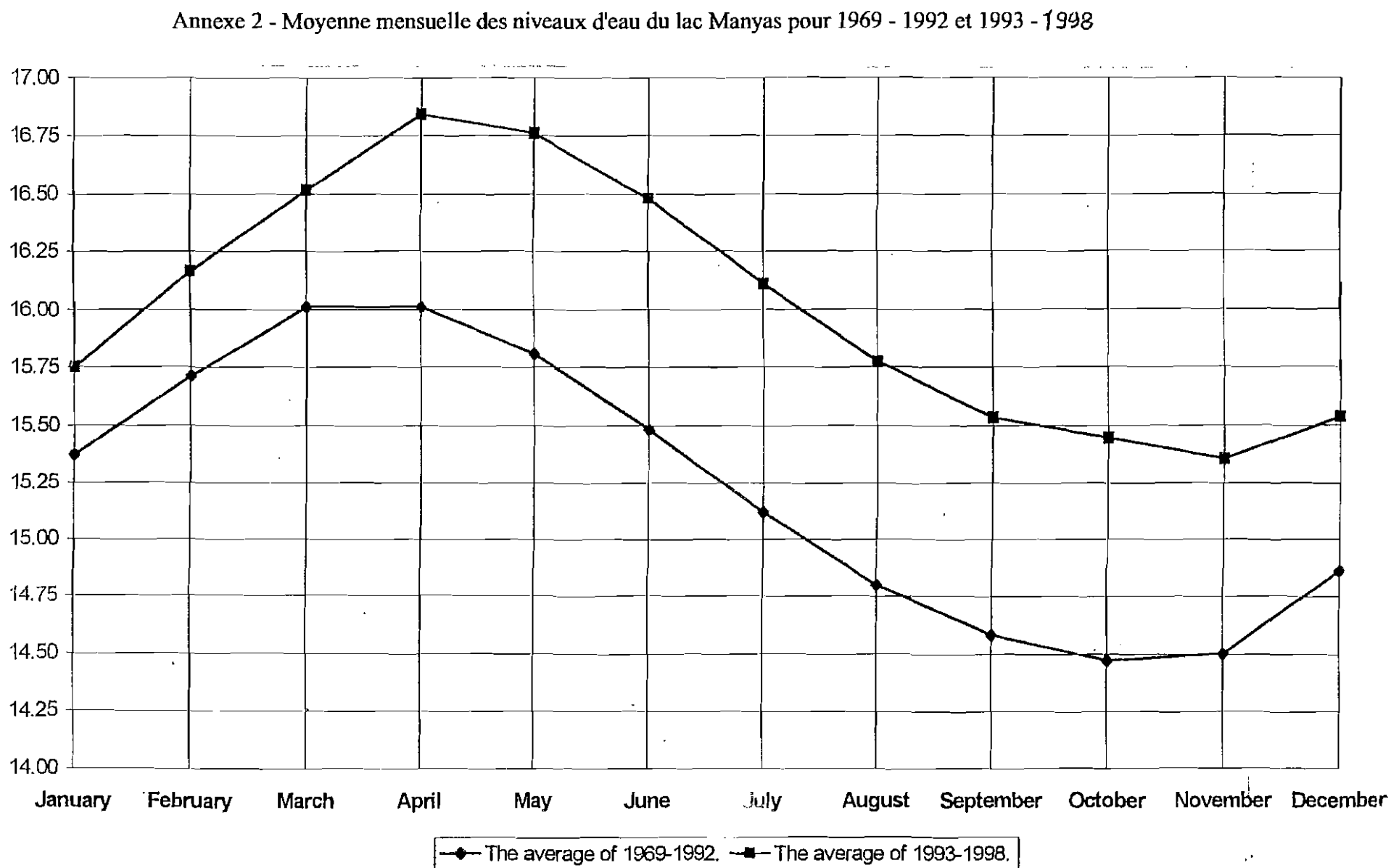
3

SCALE:

0 2500 5000 7500m

## APPENDIX II

Average monthly water levels in Lake Manyas from 1969 to 1992 and 1993 to 1998



d'après

ECOLOGICAL RISK ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR MANYAS LAKE  
 Supported by European Community

APPENDIX III  
COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

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RESOLUTION (96) 27

**ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA  
WARDED TO THE KUŞCENNETI NATIONAL PARK  
(TURKEY)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 19 June 1996  
at the 569th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,  
Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;  
Having regard to Resolution (76) 15 awarding the European Diploma to the Kuşçenneti National Park,  
Renews the European Diploma awarded to the Kuşçenneti National Park in category A until  
14 March 2001;

I. Attaches to the renewal the following conditions:

1. general condition: the biological and landscape integrity of the national park must be maintained within its original boundaries;
2. specific conditions:
  - 2.1. all necessary measures must be taken to prevent any adverse repercussions of human activities on the Lake Manyas ecosystem, in particular by constant monitoring of the water quality and by avoiding fragmentation of the habitat through the construction of dikes;
  - 2.2. there must be a water management programme such as to ensure the natural fluctuations of the lake's water level, including spring flooding and the drying up of the shoreline in summer;
  - 2.3. any project for development of the lake, its shores and tributaries must be subject to a preliminary impact study. The findings of this study will be forwarded to the national park authorities as well as to the Council of Europe;
  - 2.4. the educational role of the visitor centre must be developed, in particular by renovating the exhibition rooms and installing a video system transmitting live the activities of the bird colony;

II. Attaches to the renewal the following recommendations:

1. that the biological and landscape integrity of the shores of Lake Manyas be maintained;
2. that, for the future Lake Manyas National Park, a scientific committee be set up, to include biologists specialising in the environment, and in limnology and the biology of waterfowl populations in particular;
3. that, for this future park, a management committee be set up, on which the various categories of lake and lakeside users will be represented;
4. that the Ramsar Convention's declaration concerning Lake Manyas be extended to the whole lake.

## **A P P E N D I X   I V**

### **The Expert's Conclusions**

The Council of Europe has acknowledged the outstanding value of Kuscenneti by awarding it the European Diploma in 1976 and renewing it four times since. It cannot abandon this site where the endangered bird species which warranted the Europe-wide distinction it was granted still nest. However, it cannot objectively state that the conditions which prompted the award of the Diploma and its subsequent renewals still exist. It is all the less able to do so because the conditions and recommendations which the Committee of Ministers attached to the four renewals have never been comprehensively acted upon. For the most part, they have elicited only statements of intention.

A pure and simple refusal to renew the Diploma would not serve the Kuscenneti Park's cause and would be a disservice to it vis-à-vis the authorities and the public. We believe, however, that suspending the Diploma for a period of three years would provide a reasonable period of time:

1.     for the recovery of the national park's biology and landscape to begin to recover;
2.     for the authorities to apply, with all the requisite determination, measures conducive to the strict control of the lake's water regime and to reducing pollution;
3.     for a start to be made on renovation of the educational facilities for visitors.

The suspension would be reconsidered after a further on-site appraisal at the end of this three-year period.