Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7, as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

1. Name and address of the RIS compiler:

Opukskyi Nature Reserve

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2. Country:

UKRAINE

3. Date:

April 7, 2003

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Aquatic-coastal Complex of Cape Opuk

5. Map of the Ramsar site:

a) hard copy

yes

b) digital (electronic) format

raster

6. Geographical coordinates:

45°01' N 36°12' E

7. General location:

The Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Leninskyi Rayon (Lenino District); coast of the Black Sea; the site is located 30 km south-west of the city of Kerch (210 thousand inhabitants), 1 km west of the village of Yakovenkove, and 3 km south

from the village of Mar'yivka.

8. Elevation:

0 m; terrestrial area – up to 65 m above sea level

9. Area:

775 ha

10. Overview:

The site is combination of areas of the sea sublittoral, salt lake, labyrinths of a limestone cape, and sandy-coquina spits. Here constantly nest rare in Ukraine and Europe birds Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* (3-4 pairs), Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (3-5 pairs), Saker *Falco cherrug* (up to 5 pairs)~~;~~ thousands of birds of the wetland complex, especially Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos,* Garganey *Anas querquedula,* Coot *Fulica atra,* White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* winter here and stop during their migrations, especially on Koyashske (Koyash) Lake. Among thickets of macrophytic brown, red and green algae, which cover coastal rocks under water and on the stony bottom, the following rare fish species spawn: *Huso huso ponticus, Hippocampus guttulatus, Callionymus belenus, Trigla lucerna*. Crabs *Carcinus aestuarii* and *Pilumnus hirtellus***,** and dolphins *Phocoena phocoena, Tursiops truncatus* occur here periodically.

11. Ramsar Criteria:

1 2 4 6 7 8

12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. above:

Criterion 1:

The site includes typical for the Crimean coast of the Black Sea elements: steep limestone rocks on the seaside, the salt lake and sandy-coquina spits, which are unique on their combination for a comparatively small area. Koyashske Lake separated from the sea by a spit is of medium-size (487 ha) and very typical for the Crimean Peninsula salt lake with salinity of 210 ‰**.** Coastal sandy-coquina spits, located at both sides of the rocky plateau, are among the most preserved in the Crimean Peninsula. The coastal limestone cliff eroded and deeply cut by sea waves, and the stony bottom became a substratum for macrophytes, especially those belonging to brown, red and green algae.

Criterion 2:

Here constantly nest the birds rare in Ukraine and Europe, in particular, Saker *Falco cherrug* (1-5 pairs), Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* (3-4 pairs), Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (up to 35 pairs), Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (3-5 pairs); also occur bat species *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* (up to 20 individuals) and *Myotis oxygnathus* (about 40 individuals). Periodically rare birds are observed: Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca,* Buzzard *Buteo buteo,* Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena,* Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus,* Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea,* Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus,* Great White Egret *Egretta alba* and

others. Four fish species listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine are registered constantly in the sea: *Huso huso ponticus, Hippocampus guttulatus, Callionymus belenus, Trigla lucerna*; crabs *Carcinus aestuarii* and *Pilumnus hirtellus*. Dolphins and porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena, Tursiops truncatus*) are observed periodically; these species are under protection in Ukraine and Europe.

Within the site there are rare habitat types, designated among others by Resolution No 4 (1996) of Standing Committee of the Bern Convention for the Emerald Network, namely: Athalassal saline lakes (for No 23.1) and Sea-grass meadows (No 11.3).

Asparagus litoralis, listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine and the European Red List of Globally Threatened Animals and Plants (Economic Commission for Europe, 1991), grows on coquina-sandy spits.

Criterion 4:

In winter the birds of the wetland complex are abundant (up to several thousand individuals), in particular: Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos,* Garganey *Anas querquedula,* Coot *Fulica atra,* White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* and others.

Both Opukskyi Nature Reserve and adjoining Uzunlarske (Uzunlar) Lake belong to the 138 the most valuable areas of Ukraine identified for the Important Bird Area Programme. The value of the site is determined by the presence of White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* (on Koyashske Lake, up to 7 000 individuals can stay during their migration), Great Bustard *Otis tarda*, and Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni.*

Criterion 6

The value of the site is determined by the presence of White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* that are up to 7000 individuals during their migration (1% =5,300)

Criterion 7:

The following species listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine constantly occur within the site′s waters: Great sturgeon *Huso huso ponticus* (Endangered / IUCN Red List, Appendix II of the Bern Convention (protected fauna), Black Sea salmon *Salmo trutta labrax Pallas* (European Red List of Globally Threatened Animals and Plants), Long-snouted seahorse *Hippocampus guttulatus microstephanus (Slastenenko), Callionymus belenus Risso,* Tub gurnard *Trigla lucerna,* Scaldback *Arnoglossus kessleri (all in the Red Data Book of Ukraine)*

Criterion 8:

The following fish species spawn on shallow water: Spiny dogfish *Squalus acanthias L.,* Thornback ray *Raja clavata L.*, Sprat *Sprattus sprattus phalericus* (Risso), Azov kilka *Clupeonella cultriventris cultriventris (Nordmann)* or *Clupeonella delicatula delicatula (Nordmann)*, Black sea turbot *Psetta maeotica maeotica* or *Rhombus maeoticus (Pallas)*, Flounder *Platichthys flesus luscus (Pallas),* Sea scorpion *Scorpaena porcus L.,* Annular gilthead *Diplodus annularis*

(L.), Solea nasuta (Pallas), Black-umber *Sciaena umbra L.,* Scaldback *Arnoglossus kessleri,* Greater weever *Trachinus draco L.*

13. Biogeography:

Biogeographical region on the map of the Emerald Network of Ukraine: Steppe.

According to geobotanical zoning of Ukraine: Black Sea (Pontic) Steppe Province of the European-Asian Steppe Region.

Basin affiliation: Northeastern part of the Black Sea area in the region of the Crimean Peninsula.

14. Physical features of the site:

The site is located on the southern coast of the Kerch Peninsula of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Its Territory is a part of the Kerch Geomorphological Region. At present, the relief of the territory develops under the conditions of ascending (submerging) movement of dry land.

In the region of Koyashske Lake there is the Middle Pleistocene Ancient Euxinian Uzunlar terrace, which is located at the elevation of 8-9 m above sea level. The terrace is composed of clayey sands, sandstone, and limestone, with separate lenses and layers of pebbles.

Solonetz, black soils, solonetzic and dark-chestnut solonetzic soils on Maikopian clays, and carbonate black soils on limestone occur within the Site.

Water quality in the sea and lake is classified as “good”, fish kills have not been observed. Gales and storms (more than 5 by the Beaufort scale) in this part of the sea are rare (once in several years).

Climate is temperate-continental, droughty, with average annual temperature of +14°C (in January, +2°C, in July, +23°C). Precipitation is 255-300 mm per year. Evaporation exceeds these figures 2.5 times. The stable snow cover is observed only during very severe winters; snow falls several times and thaws quickly. The droughty climate defines the deficiency of the area in fresh and underground waters.

15. Physical features of the catchment area:

The site is a coastal-aquatic area of the Black Sea. The basin of the Black Sea is supplied by runoffs of numerous rivers, the Danube and the Dnipro being the largest ones. Salinity of the Black Sea is constant (18 ‰). In summer, the seawater warms up to +25°C, and in winter cools down to +6-8°C.

The water balance of Koyashske Lake is formed only by atmospheric precipitation (snow and rain).

16. Hydrological values:

The hydrographic network of the site on dry land is represented by Koyashske Lake and the system of shallow hollows and ravines with temporary currents, and one permanent freshwater source. Natural water bodies are represented by the saline Koyashske Lake (487 ha), with depth from 0 m (the lake dry up locally) to 0.6 m and salinity up to 210 ‰. It is isolated from the sea by a sandy-coquina spit about 250 m wide, through which infiltration of the seawater occurs. This water is the basic source of the lake water supply. Each year, by the end of summer, the salt forms a layer of 35 mm thick on the bottom of the dried lake, which is covered by gray and black silt and mud.

Subsoil waters within the site are deposited at depths from 0.5 m to 3.0 m. Most of subsoil waters are saline both because of sea water, and due to dissolution of salts from the Sarmatian and Maikopian saliferous clays.

17. Wetland Type:

J A D E B

18. General ecological features:

The basic types of the site′s habitats are sea sublittoral, salt lake, coastal cliffs and stone schists (reef-limestone origin), sandy-coquina spits.

The stony substrata of the sea sublittoral are tightly overgrown by macrophytic algae, among which often one can meet red algae (Rhodophyta)*: Ceramium pedicellatum, C.ciliatum, Porphyra leucosticta***;** green algae (Chlorophyta)*: Entheromorpha intestinalis, Cladophora albida;* and brown algae (Phaeophyta): *Scytosiphon lomentaria, Ectocarpus confervoides.* No flora is registered in Koyashske Lake. Only in spring and at the beginning of summer on sandy-coquina spits it is possible to see a few plant species, mainly representatives of the genus *Crambe* (*C. mitridatis* and *C. koktebelica*)*, Eryngium maritimum,* and *Elymus sabulosus.*

19. Noteworthy flora:

Valuable species of marine macrophytobenthos are mentioned in i.18. Totally about 40 species of red, green and brown algae grow within the site′s sublittoral.

Such species of vascular plants as *Crambe koktebelica* and *C. mitridatis,* which are characteristic for coquina-sandy spits, are endemic taxa of the Crimean Peninsula.

20. Noteworthy fauna:

Valuable fauna is described in i.12. Rare in Europe and Ukraine reptile *Elaphe quatuorlineata* and birds Great Bustard *Otis tarda*, Crane *Grus grus*, Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* and others are characteristic for the terrestrial part of the site.

21. Social and cultural values:

There are no socio-cultural objects within the site limits, except for the remnants of ancient buildings (Antiquity) in the site of the ancient settlement of Kimmerik (or Cimmeric, borders of the ancient Bosporus Empire).

Fishing within the site is not conducted, though commercial fishery activities occur nearby.

22. Land tenure/ownership of:

site:

State is the ownership of lands, which are transferred to the permanent use to Opukskyi Nature Reserve.

surrounding area:

Lands of state ownership within Opukskyi Nature Reserve and, surrounding it, private agricultural lands (arable lands and pastures) of inhabitants of Yakovenkove and Maryivka villages.

23. Current land (including water) use:

(a) site:

Scientific researches, nature conservation activities and monitoring on the state of environment.

(b) surroundings/catchment:

On terrestrial area: haymaking, grazing, growing of cereals, vegetables and fruits; viticulture near the villages. In the sea: fishing and navigation; in the coastal zone: tourism and recreation.

24. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:

at the site:

In the past: fishing, hunting.

At present: single cases of illegal visiting of the site area by local population, tourists and fishermen are registered.

around the site:

Fishing, navigation, agriculture (mostly plowing and grazing) and recreation.

25. Conservation measures taken:

The site is a part of Opukskyi Nature Reserve, which was created according to the Decree of the President of Ukraine in 1998.

Biodiversity management is carried out in accordance with the Law "On the Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine" (1992), Regulations (By-law) of Opukskyi Nature Reserve (1999), and the Management Plan of the Area and Protection of

Natural Complexes of Opukskyi Nature Reserve (approved by the Order of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine No. 520 of 25 December 2002).

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

Beside the already developed general Management Plan for the Nature Reserve, management plans for conservation of selected species are being currently developed. The special Management plan on the wetland of international importance will be developed.

27. Current scientific research and facilities:

Annually the scientific researches within the framework of the Programme on Chronicles of Nature of Opukskyi Nature Reserve are carried out. Scientific researches are performed mainly by scientists of the Reserve and curator institution, the State Nikitskyi (Nikita) Botanical Garden of the Ukrainian Academy of Agricultural Sciences (Yalta).

28. Current conservation education activities related to communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) related to or benefiting the site:

Ongoing environmental education activities for local inhabitants, especially children, and tourists are carried out. Information leaflets are published annually. In the meantime, the administration building of Opukskyi Nature Reserve in the city of Kerch is used as the Visitors Center.

29. Current recreation and tourism:

The site is not used for recreation and tourism.

30. Jurisdiction:

Functionally the site is subordinated to the Administration of Opukskyi Nature Reserve at the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine.

31. Management authority:

Administration of Opukskyi Nature Reserve

Mr. Semen Kuznetsov

Director

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32. Bibliographical references:

1. Chronicle of Nature: Opukskyi Nature Reserve – 3 volumes (1999, 2000, 2001).

2. Directory of Azov-Black Sea Coastal Wetlands. – Kyiv: Wetlands International, 2002. - 229 p. – ISBN 905882 985 5.

3. Mykytyuk, O. IBA Territories in Ukraine. Kyiv: SoftART, 1999. – 324 pp. ISBN 966-95027-1-3.

4. Red Data Book of Ukraine: Flora - 1996, 608 p.; Fauna - 1994, 464 p. - Kyiv: Ukrainian Encyclopaedia.

5. Reserves and National Nature Parks of Ukraine. – Kyiv: Vyshcha Shkola (Higher School), 1999. – 230 p.