



HELLENIC ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## REPORT

Athens, 25/10/2019

### A. Introduction

The Hellenic Ornithological Society, a partner of Birdlife International, is an environmental non-profit organization with the aim of protecting wild birds and their habitats in Greece, considering them as essential elements of Greek nature.

As part of its activity, the Ornithological Society implemented the program "Monitoring program of the bird fauna in the wetlands of Attica", an effort to systematically record and collect population data for the birds that live in these wetlands, in order to assess the situation and trends of species populations.

Among the wetlands recorded and evaluated is the Great River of Rafina, which according to the new Regulatory Plan of Athens (N. 4227, Official Gazette 156 A'/2014) is classified among the "main watercourses of priority A" (article 20, par. 4, para. e) of the basin of Attica, while with regard to the protection of the hygroscopic characteristics of the wetlands and its catchment basin, it is classified among the "A' priority" wetlands (Annex IX, Article 20, Par. 2.caa). Also, it has been characterized by the decision No 9173/1642 dated 3.3.1993 of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (Government Gazette 281 N/1993), as "Of special natural beauty interest".

Pursuant to Decision YPEN/DIPA/49828/981 of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the environmental conditions for the construction and operation of the project "Arrangement – Delineation of the Rafina River" were approved. The approved works are in fact tending to the management of the river and will permanently and irrevocably change its natural form, effectively turning it into a rainwater catchment. These projects completely ignore the wetland character of the stream, while they are now considered outdated and regressive, both at the European and international level, where the preservation of islands of natural environment and biodiversity in the urban fabric is a priority.

We find it completely unacceptable that in the decision approving the environmental conditions there is a complete absence of references to the avifauna and in general to the remarkable natural

landscape of the specific area (as this also follows from its current institutional status). On the contrary, and rightly so, there are references to cultural heritage, as well as clear provisions and commitments for its protection. Regarding the natural environment, however, we find that there are only minimal and formal references (in P.O. 5.2.5) with a complete lack of any care, prediction or even reference to the avifauna. Correspondingly, the environmental conditions that would ensure the protection and/or restoration of the bird fauna during the construction phase of the works and/or immediately after its completion are absent. Therefore, the conditions for reducing the impacts of the projects during the breeding season of the birds, as well as the conditions for avoiding the disturbance of the birds during their rest and feeding, are absent.

#### B. Description of the Ornithological value of the area

In the Great River of Rafina, around 100 species of birds have been recorded so far (See Appendix). The majority of them have been observed near the estuary, due to the increased presence of observers and the fact that the brackish ecosystem of the estuary attracts large numbers of migrating terns and herons. Of the species that have been observed, **22** are species of Annex I of Directive 2009/147/EC. The vast majority of them are herons, gulls and waders. The remaining two (Petritis and Peregrine falcon) are predators seen during migration (Peregrine falcon) or in winter. Despite the cementation that the Great Stream estuary has undergone, the birdlife remains remarkably diverse, mostly during the migration season. Nesting species within the stream are relatively few, with the most important being the River Whistler which nests in dry places within the bed. It would be a welcome project to open up the cemented estuary and grow more vegetation on its banks to create even more suitable habitat for the avifauna (and more species). Other species associated with wetlands and nesting in the river are the moorhen, the Cetti's warbler, and the reed warbler (mainly, however, in the sections of the stream upstream of Karamanli Park and the section that runs through Spata). In the trees and bushes that grow on the banks, several ostriches nest, such as wagtails, ash-flycatchers, black-billed swifts, goldfinches, florets, and nocturnal predators such as the scops owl. The trees and bushes are a place of rest and feeding for a very large number of ostriches and other species (e.g. raptors, herons) depending on the season. It is certain that the loss of the large (in height and age) Sycamores, Whites and Willows will be a serious blow to the bird populations. There will also be major impacts on the populations of amphibians, reptiles and freshwater fish that live in the waters of the Great Πτῶερ, especially in the sections that run through the Municipality of Artemida-Spata and in which dredging is planned using wire boxes, mainly due to the lack of knowledge of their existence by the EIA. This in turn will cause a loss of available food to birds feeding on the above organisms.

The contested approval of environmental terms and conditions (AEPO) is judged to be inadequate and scientifically unsupported in terms of the bird fauna and fauna in general. The planned projects will cause significant degradation in the wetland ecosystem of the Rafina river, with adverse effects on avian species, many of which are strictly protected by national and EU law.

ANNEX

List of Birds recorded in the Great River of Rafina (in bold the species that nest in the stream or in the riparian vegetation)

Scientific name	Greek name	Greek red book	Red book	Annex I Directive 2009/147/EC
Tachybaptus rufficollis	Νανοβουτηχτάρι			
Phalacrocorax carbo	Κορμοράνος			
Ixobrychus minutus	Μικροτσικνιάς			YES
Ardeola ralloides	Κρυπτοτσικνιάς	Vulnerable		YES
Ergetta gartzetta	Λευκοτσικνιάς			YES
Ardea alba	Αργυροτσικνιάς	Vulnerable		YES
Ardea cinerea	Σταχτοτσικνιάς			
Cygnus olor	Κύκνος			
Annas crecca	Κιρκίρι			
Buteo buteo	Γερακίνα			
Aquila pennata	Γερακαετός	Endangered		YES
Circaetus gallicus	Φιδαετός	Near threatened		YES
Circus aeruginosus	Καλαμόκιρκος	Vulnerable		YES
Accipiter nisus	Ξεφτέρι			
Falco tinnunculus	Βραχοκιρκίνεζο			
Falco vespertinus	Μαυροκιρκίνεζο		Near threatened	YES
Falco peregrinus	Πετρίτης			YES
Rallus aquaticus	Νεροκοτσέλα			
Zapornia pusilla	Νανοπουλάδα			YES
<b>Galinula chloropus</b>	Νερόκοτα			
Haematopus ostralegus	Στρειδοφάγος			
<b>Charadrius dubius</b>	Ποταμοσφυριχτής			
Charadrius hiaticula	Αμμοσφυριχτής			
Charadrius alexandrinus	Θαλασσοσφυριχτής			YES
Pluvialis scatarola	Αργυροπούλι			

<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Χοντροσκαλίδρα			
<i>Callidris alba</i>	Λευκοσκαλίδρα			
<i>Callidris minuta</i>	Νανοσκαλίδρα			
<i>Callidris temminckii</i>	Σταχτοσκαλίδρα			
<i>Callidris ferruginea</i>	Δρεπανοσκαλίδρα			
<i>Callidris alpina</i>	Λασποσκαλίδρα			
<i>Callidris falcinellus</i>	Μπεκατσιοσκαλίδρα			
<i>Callidris pugnax</i>	Μαχητής			YES
<i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	Μικρομπεκάτινο			
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Μπεκατσίι			
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Κοκκινოსκέλης			
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Λασπότρυγγας			YES
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Ποταμότρυγγας			
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Χαλικοκυλιστής			
	Μαυροκέφαλος			
<i>Ichtyaetus melanocephalus</i>	γλάρος			YES
<i>Hydrocoleus minutus</i>	Νανόγλαρος			YES
	Καστανοκέφαλος			
<i>Croicocephalus ridibundus</i>	γλάρος			
<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	Λεπτόραμφος γλάρος	Vulnerable		YES
			Near	
<i>Ichtyaetus audouinii</i>	Αιγαιόγλαρος	Vulnerable	threatened	YES
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Μελανόγλαρος			
<i>Larus michahelis</i>	Ασημόγλαρος			
<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Γελογλάρωνο	Vulnerable		YES
<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	Χειμωνογλάρωνο	Vulnerable		YES
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Ποταμογλάρωνο			YES
<i>Columba livia domesticus</i>	Περιστερί			
<b>Streptopelia decaocto</b>	Δεκοχτούρα			
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Κούκος			
<b>Otus scops</b>	Γκιώνης			
<i>Apus apus</i>	Μαυροσταχτάρα			
<i>Apus pallidus</i>	Ωχροσταχτάρα			
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Αλκυόνα			YES
<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Μελισσοφάγος			

<i>Upupa epops</i>	Τσαλαπετεινός	
<i>Galerida cristata</i>	Κατσουλιέρης	
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Σταυλοχελίδονο	
<i>Delichon urbica</i>	Λευκοχελίδονο	
<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	Μιλτοχελίδονο	
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Λιβαδοκελάδα	
<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Νεροκελάδα	
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Κιτρινοσουσουράδα	
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Σταχτοσουσουράδα	
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Λευκοσουσουράδα	
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Τρυποφράχτης	
<b><i>Erithacus rubecula</i></b>	Κοκκινολαίμης	
<i>Phoenicurus ochruchos</i>	Καρβουνιάρης	
<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Μαυρολαίμης	
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Σταχτοπετρόκλης	
<b><i>Turdus merula</i></b>	Κόττυφας	
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Τσίγλα	
<b><i>Cettia cetti</i></b>	Ψευταηδόνι	
<b><i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i></b>	Καλαμοποταμίδα	
<b><i>Iduna pallida</i></b>	Ωχροστριτισίδα	
<b><i>Sylvia melanocephala</i></b>	Μαυροτσιροβάκος	
<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	Κοκκινοτσιροβάκος	
<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Θαμνοτσιροβάκος	
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Μαυροσκύφης	
<i>Pylloscopus collybita</i>	Δεντροφυλλοσκόπος	
<i>Pylloscopus trochilus</i>	Θαμνοφυλλοσκόπος	
<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Γαλαζοπαπαδίτσα	
<b><i>Parus major</i></b>	Καλόγερος	
<i>Lanius collurio</i>	Αετομάχος	YES
<b><i>Lanius senator</i></b>	Κοκκινοκεφαλάς	
<b><i>Pica pica</i></b>	Καρακάξα	
<b><i>Corvus conix</i></b>	Κορούνα	
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Ψαρόνι	
<b><i>Passer domesticus</i></b>	Σπιτοσπουργίτης	

Passer hispaniolensis	Χωραφοσπουργίτης
<b>Passer montanus</b>	Δεντροσπουργίτης
Fringilla coelebs	Σπίνος
<b>Serinus serinus</b>	Σκαρθάκι
<b>Chloris chloris</b>	Φλώρος
<b>Carduelis carduelis</b>	Καρδερίνα
Linaria cannabina	Φανέτο
<b>Emberiza cirlus</b>	Σιρλοσίγλονο
Millaria calandra	Τσιφτάς
Psitaculla clameri	Πράσινος παπαγάλος

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