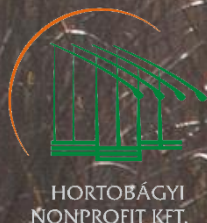




Newsletter about steppe lakes of the Hortobágy (2014)

The fund for the nature conservational project was granted to the Hortobágy Nature and Gene Conserving Non-profit Ltd. (HNGC) in consortium with the Hortobágy National Park Directorate, the Hortobágy Environmental Association and 6 more partners. During the project we eliminate the manmade canals and dikes which are threatening the catchment areas of the steppe lakes, we are increasing the numbers of grazing animals on the project areas, introducing ecologically sustainable high level grazing which extends to the intensive grazing of wetland habitats. We are cutting down plantation woodlands that are not only act as visual barriers but also provide nesting place for the Hooded Crow (*Corvus corone cornix*) which is potentially hazardous to the ground-nesting bird species.



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2014 Spring

We held the kick-off event of the project with a press conference in the Hortobágyi Csárda on the 26th March 2014.

<http://www.legelotavak.hu/en/news/13/press-conference-on-the-project-start>



In Spring monitorings were started in the project sites. The results of the ornithological monitoring were accordance with the inchoative stage of the areas, so target species such as Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank were present only in small number. Instead of this birds, other species connecting to degraded habitats were observed such as Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting. Hopefully by the opening of marshy vegetation, birds of degraded habitats will disappear and target species will appear.



For January of 2015 the **monitoring reports** of the BioAqua Pro Ltd. about 2014 reached completion. These reports contain results of the botanical, the amphibian, and the macrozoobenton monitoring until now. The amphibian monitoring aimed the Fire-bellied Toad.

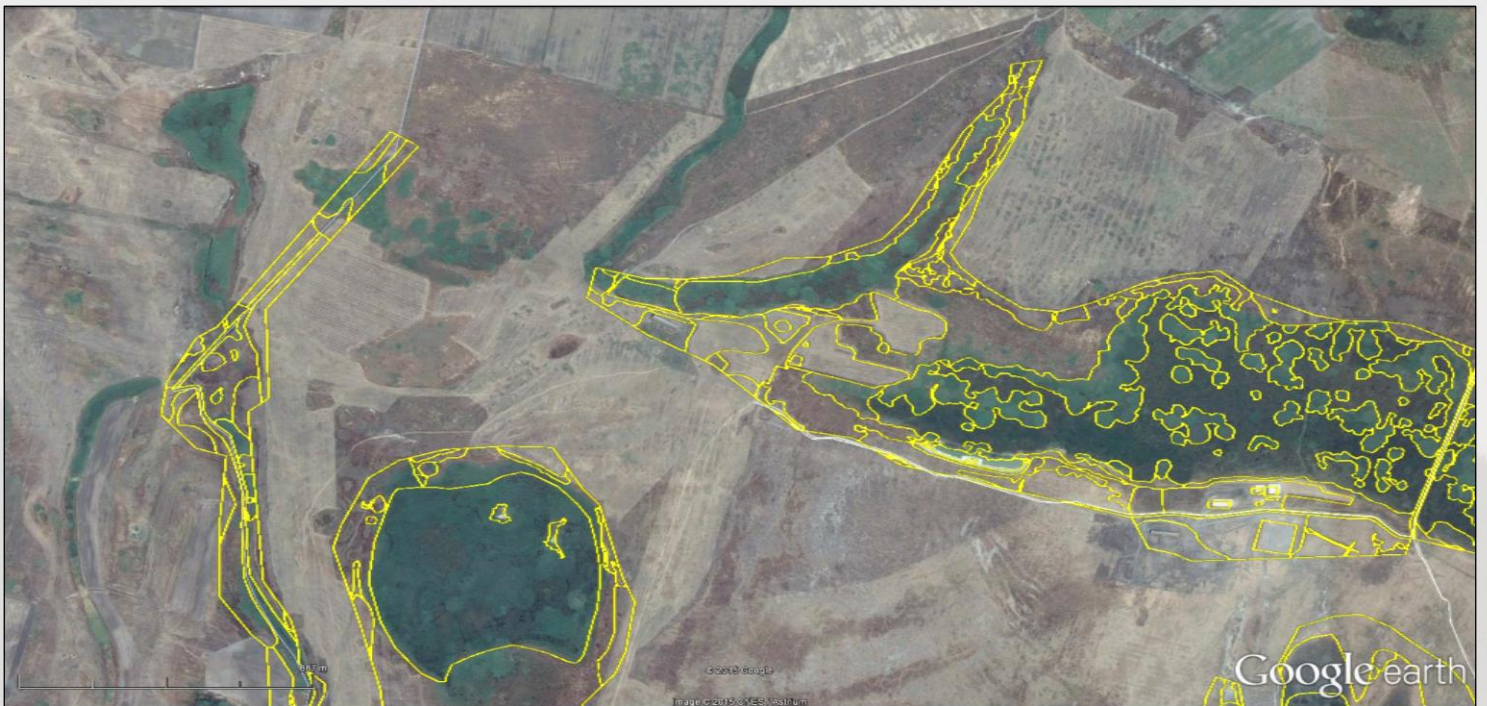
<http://www.legelotavak.hu/en/news/35/the-monitoring-progress-reports-reached-completion>



The Fire-bellied Toad (*Bombina orientalis*) is 4-5 cm long protected species, its conservation value is 2 000 Ft. This species is present in the shallow wetlands of the Hortobágy Special Protection Area (Natura 2000). The red patches on its belly allude to the toxic glandular secretion. In the framework of the project, the Fire-bellied Toad population will be measured in each year in the project sites.

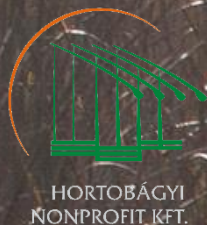


The macrozoobenton monitoring resulted almost hundred taxons. Phitoplankton study was carried out in the botanical monitoring, the researchers identified more than fifty taxons of algae in the monitoring sites. On the map the Ó-Sáros-ér, the Csirés, the Kajla-lapos and the Halasfenék are visible on which sites habitat plotting was carried out even as on all project sites.



On the Northern project sites a new herd of Hungarian Grey Cattle is grazing since the spring of 2014. Taking advantage of the dry period, the herdsmen paid special attention to the grazing of the reeds of Vince-fenék and Kút-fenék so the results were visible in early summer.

<http://www.legelotavak.hu/en/news/17/the-positive-effects-of-the-increased-number-of-grazing-animals-at-vince-fenek>



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2014 Summer

The operation plan for the helpdesk office, which key objective is to convince the herdsmen to graze the steppe lakes with higher intensity to significantly reduce the extension of marsh vegetation, has been completed.

<http://www.legelotavak.hu/en/news/23/helpdesk-for-herdsmen-started-working>



Colleagues of the Hortobágyi Nonprofit Ltd. kept an open sky nature study lesson for the students of the primary school of Hortobágy.

<https://www.facebook.com/hortobagyinonprofitkft/posts/502074119928004>



Our webpage started in late June on the website of www.legelotavak.hu/en where you can read general informations and actual news about the project both in hungarian and in english. Beside we have a facebook page too on which we inform the followers about the implementation of the project: https://www.facebook.com/legelotavak?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

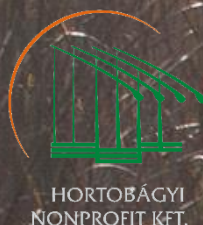


2014 Autumn

In September preparatory actions were started on the project area. Shredding is very important action to open the reed vegetation, to ensure ecologically sustainable high level grazing.

Rare, migrant birds have been spotted in large numbers at the Fekete-rét, belonging to the Pentezug project area (action D.4). We noticed 179 Red-bested Geese, and 5 Lesser White-fronted Geese in a mixed flock of geese.

<http://www.legelotavak.hu/en/news/25/rare-migrant-birds-at-fekete-ret>



2014 Winter

Prior Investigational Documentation was completed in early December. That documentation is important for acquiring the permits.

In winter Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) were observed in the tussocks of the project sites.

<http://www.legelotavak.hu/en/news/27/short-eared-owls-in-the-project-site>



Hortobágyi Nonprofit Ltd.

Hortobágy, January, 2015

