

Εθνικό Πάρκο Υγροτόπων Αμβρακικού

Amvrakikos Wetlands National Park



Φορέας Διαχείρισης
Υγροτόπων Αμβρακικού
Amvrakikos Management Body

ΑΕΡΟΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ: ΝΙΚΟΣ Δ. ΚΑΡΑΜΠΕΛΑΣ "ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΑΚΤΙΑ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΗΣ" - ΠΡΕΒΕΖΑ
AERIAL PHOTOS: NIKOS D. KARABELAS "AKTIA FOUNDATION OF NIKOPOLIS" - PREVEZA

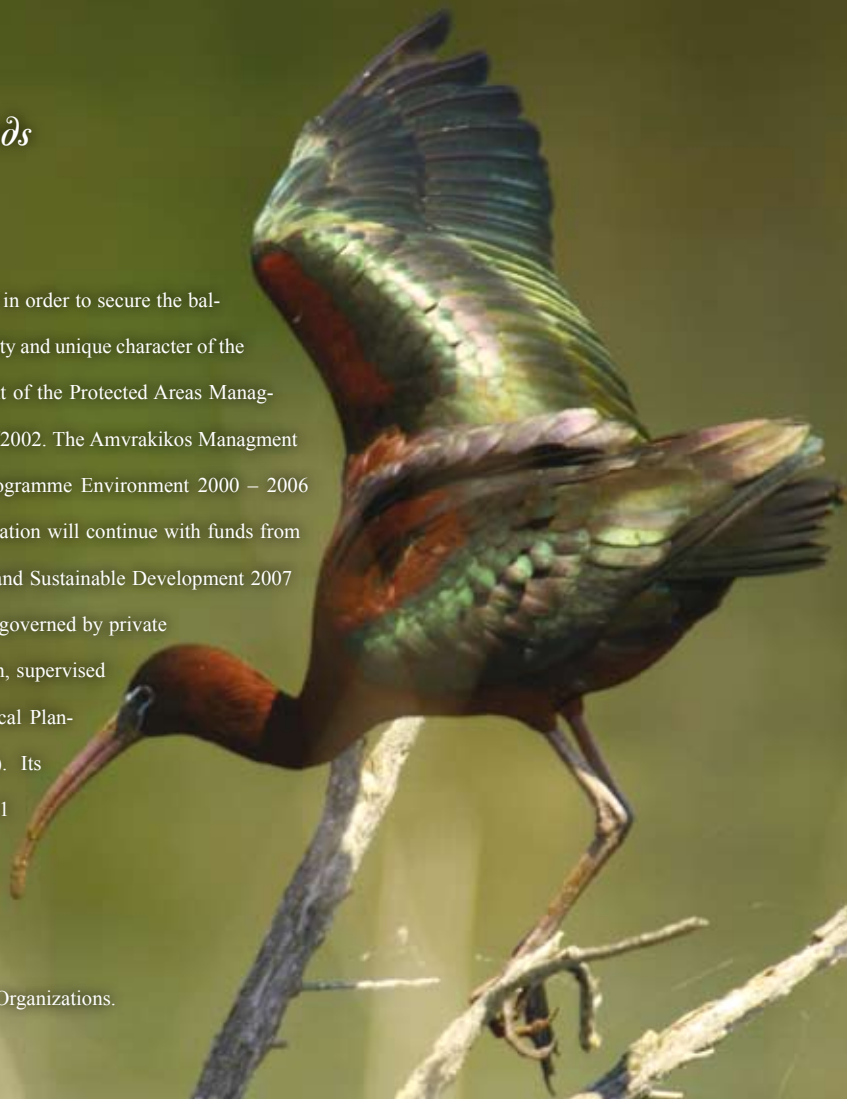
Amvrakikos Wetlands

Management body

The need to protect and preserve nature in order to secure the balance and evolution, as well as the diversity and unique character of the ecosystems, has led to the establishment of the Protected Areas Management Bodies by virtue of the Law 3044/2002. The Amvrakikos Management Body is funded by the Operational Programme Environment 2000 – 2006 and there are commitments that its operation will continue with funds from the Operational Program Environment and Sustainable Development 2007 – 2013. The Authority is a legal person governed by private law and a public non-profit organization, supervised by the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works (YPEHODE). Its Board of Directors is comprised of 11 members- representatives of the competent Ministries, the Local Government, various Fishery Cooperatives and Non-Governmental Environmental Organizations.

The goal

The goal of the Authority is the administration and management of the environmental elements and aggregations of the nature and landscape of the major area of the Amvrakikos Gulf. This area is one of the most important and rare wetlands in Europe.





The role

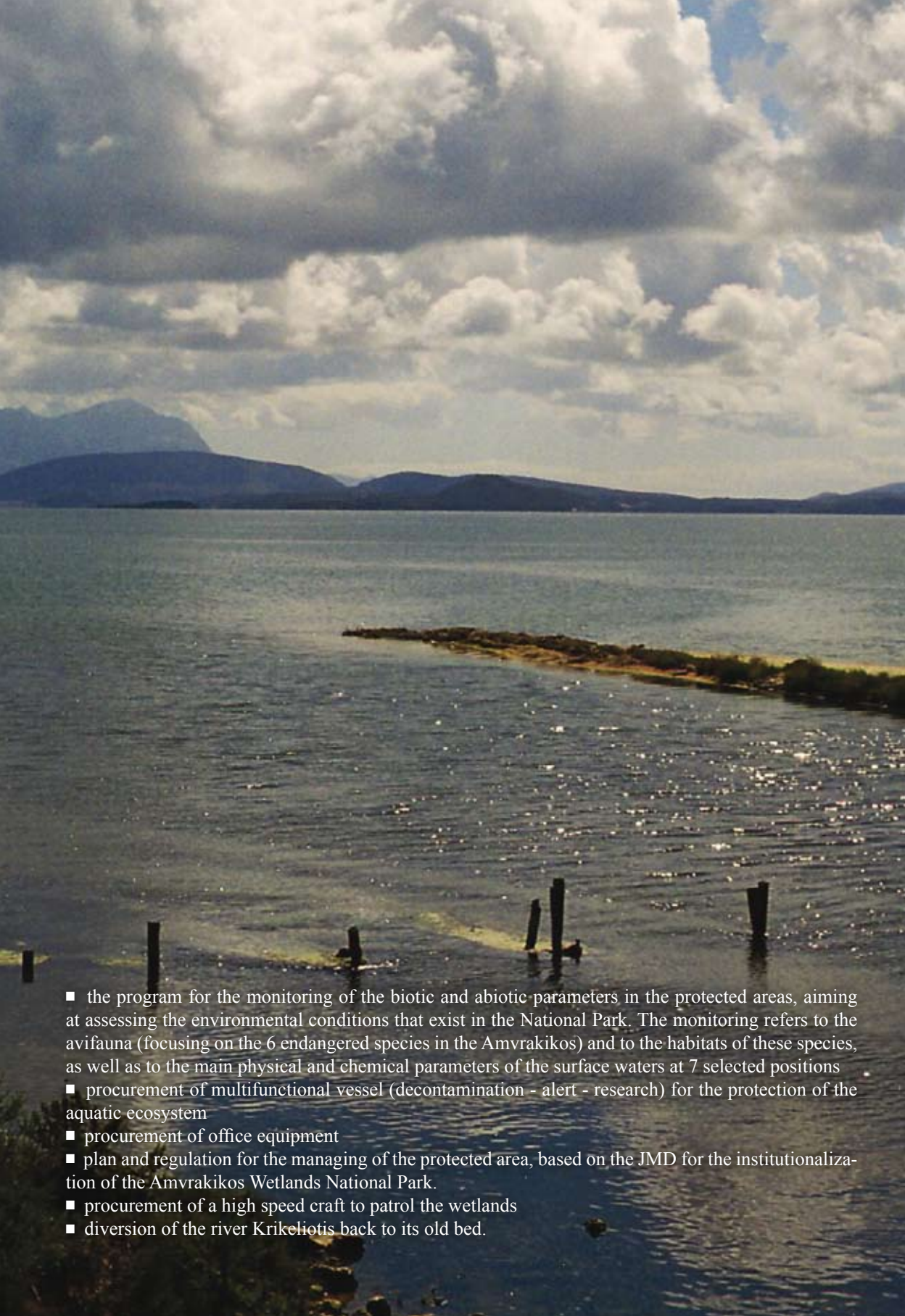
The role of the Authority is not only the management of the Amvrakikos gulf, but also the challenging task to raise public awareness, especially in the young people, regarding the environment and the protected regions. The Authority is not a mechanism for the suppression or patrol of the region. It will not substitute the local government, the Public Sector, or the State in general. The Authority stands as a guard, gives opinions, supports actions for the environment, prevents actions against the environment and is always available to the competent authorities.



The programm

In the framework of the project “Management and Operation of the Amvrakikos Area”, which is funded by the Operational Programm “Environment 2000-2006”, the Amvrakikos Wetlands Managment Body implements the program, which provides for:

- the infrastructure and the recruitment of scientific – technical staff for the start-up of the Authority
- the supervision – safeguarding of the protected area by 6 supervisors-security guards and a coordinator scientist whose duty is to monitor the illegal activities that damage the ecosystem of the region (poaching, illegal construction of projects – road construction, etc., illegal fishing, illegal disposal of waste and debris, illegal timber-cutting and illegal pasturage). Also, the direct cooperation with the Port Authority, the competent Department of Fisheries and the Fishery Cooperatives, in order to monitor illegal fishing, as well as the cooperation with the competent Forestry Departments and Gaming Associations in order to monitor illegal gaming. Finally, the Authority will supervise and protect the lagoons (Rodia, Tsoukalio, Logarou, Tsiopeli) and will reinforce the local society’s appreciation for the region and the importance of the region’s preservation.



- the program for the monitoring of the biotic and abiotic parameters in the protected areas, aiming at assessing the environmental conditions that exist in the National Park. The monitoring refers to the avifauna (focusing on the 6 endangered species in the Amvrakikos) and to the habitats of these species, as well as to the main physical and chemical parameters of the surface waters at 7 selected positions
- procurement of multifunctional vessel (decontamination - alert - research) for the protection of the aquatic ecosystem
- procurement of office equipment
- plan and regulation for the managing of the protected area, based on the JMD for the institutionalization of the Amvrakikos Wetlands National Park.
- procurement of a high speed craft to patrol the wetlands
- diversion of the river Krikeliotis back to its old bed.



*Information -
awareness*

According to the information – awareness program, the authority proceeds to a series of actions in order to inform and raise the awareness of the public and of the local agencies regarding the value of the biotope and the need to preserve it.

The authority aspires to act in collaboration with the local communities and will succeed when the local people stand by its side and show in practice their concern about the ecosystem of the Amvrakikos.



THE FOUNDATION OF THE AMVRAKIKOS WETLANDS NATIONAL PARK

On 21 March 2008, by virtue of the no. 11989 By a common Ministerial Decision, the Ministers of Development – Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works – Rural Development and food – Merchantile Marine, the Aegean and Island Policy, characterize the terrestrial, aquatic and sea regions of the Amvrakikos Gulf as a national park and they specify usages, conditions and restrictions.

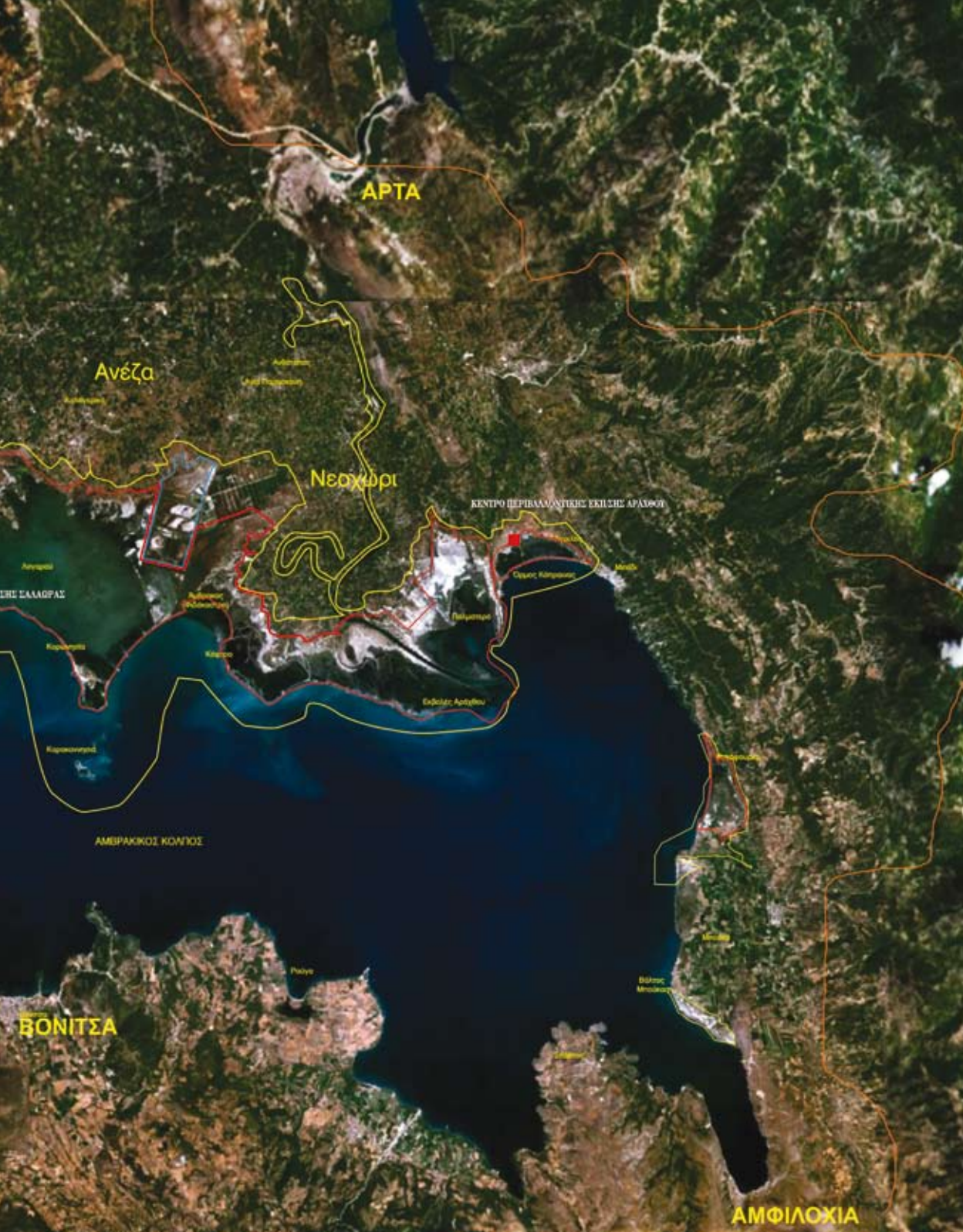
The scope of the JMD, as stated in article 1, is “to protect, preserve and manage the nature and landscape, as natural heritage and valuable national resource of the Amvrakikos Gulf, which are distinguished for their great biological, ecological, aesthetic, scientific, geomorphological and educational value, characterizing them as national park. One of the authority’s competencies deriving from the JMD is its accord opinion on activities referring to the Protection Zones A, A1 and B, as well as the simple opinion on actions and activities referring to the Zone of Environmental Control.

Area of Nature Protection

The Amvrakikos gulf wets three prefectures, while dozens of villages enjoy the refreshing breeze. Thousands of families make a living out of its rich resources. Thousands of visitors seek its fascinating charms.

It is a semi-closed sea, watered by plenty of fresh waters and sediments, thanks to the rivers Arachthos, Louros, Vovos and Krikeliotis. The areas of Koprena, Menidi, Katafourko, Bouka, Amphipholia, Loutraki, Pigadaki, Vonitsa and Koronisia bathe in its waters. The areas of Neochori, Aneza, Kommemo, Sykies, Vigla, Mihalitsi, Sparto and Strogylly are located at a short distance.





- Red: Zone A: Area of Protection of Nature
- Green: Zone B: Area of Special Regulations
- Blue: Zone A-1: Area of Special Water Management
- Orange: Area of Environment Control



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Landscapes of unique diversity and amazing differences with bays, tongues of land, coves, channels, capes, strips, all composing a scenery of exquisite beauty. A small layer of water moves according to the direction of the wind, sometimes towards the land, at a distance of 1000 metres, sometimes retracting from the land, leaving the white trace of salt.

Warm climate, shallow waters at the coasts, lagoons of a small depth, marshlands, they all favour the development of local flora and fauna, making the gulf one the most important wetlands of Europe.



The identity of the setting is amazing: salt meadows, marshlands, zones of silt and sand, swamps, lagoons, delta formations. Cultivable fields, pastures, olive groves, orange groves. The Acarnanian Mountains, Makrynoros, the picturesque hills of Prophet Elias, Peranthi, Salaora, Stroggyli and Koronissia. Eleven small islets.

The ecosystem of the Amvrakikos gulf is a special place that, due to its unique environment, attracts not only the attention of our country and of the European Union, but also the attention of the global community. The Amvrakikos is one of the 11 wetland regions of our country that have been characterized “of international importance” and are protected by the international treaty RAMSAR.

Also, the wetlands of the Amvrakikos, due to the rarity of the morphology and the habitants, and also due to the presence of rare and endangered species, has been characterized as one of the most important regions of the NATURA 2000 Network.

The wetlands of the Amvrakikos is one of the 9 regions of our country which are included in the Barcelona convention (a convention on the protection of the Mediterranean Sea from pollution) and is protected by virtue of the Berne convention (regarding the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats) and the Bonne convention (on the conservation of migratory species of the wild fauna).



Pygmy Cormorant
(photo from the archives)



Ferruginous Duck (photo from the archives)

The meaning of the region for the bird fauna

Due to the geographical position of the Amvrakikos Gulf on the west coast of the Balkan Peninsula, on one of the most important routes of the European migratory birds, the Gulf serves as an intermediate stop for the migratory species that find supplies and rest in this area. 78 out of the 254 species of birds that have been recorded appear throughout the year. A total of 126 species are reported as threatened and protected in the EU. Some of them are the Dalmatian pelican, the Eurasian bittern, the ferruginous duck, the white-tailed sea eagle, the pygmy cormorant, the slender-billed curlew, and many more species such as halcyons, cormorants, seagulls, yellow-legged gulls, mute swans, coots, egrets, ducks, wild fowls, little grebes, great crested grebes, spoonbills, flamingos, spotted eagles, oystercatchers, haggards, short-toed eagles.



Spoonbill



Spotted eagle (photo from the archives)



Heron (photo from the archives)



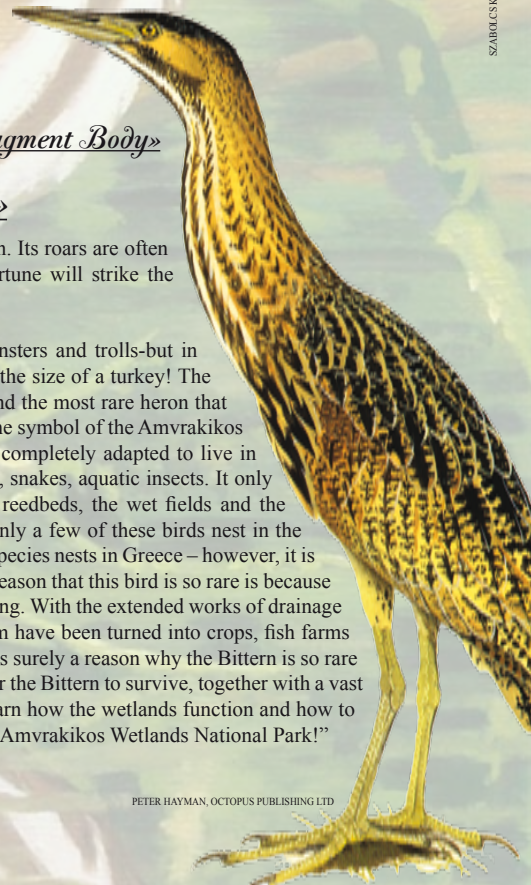


«The symbol of Amvrakikos Wetlands Managment Body»

«The Myth of Bittern»

“...is a marsh. This is the lair of a horrible beast, called the Bittern. Its roars are often heard around the area. And when the Bittern roars, a terrible misfortune will strike the place” (N. Politis, Traditions)

“The sound of the Bittern has been linked to legends about monsters and trolls-but in reality it is a strange song of the swamp sung by a charming heron in the size of a turkey! The legendary Bittern is one of the most unknown birds of the wetlands and the most rare heron that nests in Greece. This big heron that tends to hide is very important as the symbol of the Amvrakikos Management Body. It is a threatened species but highly specialized – completely adapted to live in various reedbeds and fresh water marshes, where it hunts fishes, frogs, snakes, aquatic insects. It only nests in large quite and flooded reedbeds. Without the vast flooded reedbeds, the wet fields and the fresh waters that are full of small fishes, the Bittern will disappear. Only a few of these birds nest in the Amvrakikos Gulf and it is the first place where it was verified that this species nests in Greece – however, it is still unknown whether it nests regularly in other Greek wetlands. One reason that this bird is so rare is because it needs high levels of fresh water in reedbeds and wet fields in late spring. With the extended works of drainage throughout Greece, the wetlands dry earlier in spring and most of them have been turned into crops, fish farms and pastures. Greece has lost almost 70% of its natural wetlands! This is surely a reason why the Bittern is so rare nowadays – a species that was once the legend of the Marsh. In order for the Bittern to survive, together with a vast community of species that live in the fresh water marshes, we must learn how the wetlands function and how to manage and protect their waters. This is also a major challenge for the Amvrakikos Wetlands National Park!”





«The plenitude of the species»

Fishes

Mulletts, shrimps, sardines, striped mullets, skates, red mullets, soles, seabreams, sea basses, gudgeons, eels, spot-tail seabreams, sars, bogues, carps, squids, crayfishes, cuttlefishes, mussels, oysters, clams, escallops.

Aquatic life

Bottlenose dolphins, Loggerhead Sea turtle (Caretta caretta), water snakes, lizards, frogs, toads, water turtles, otters

Animals

Martens, badgers, hedgehogs, squirrels, wolves, foxes.

Fish weirs – farms

The biggest and most important fish weirs are the ones of the Tsoukalio lagoons, the Logarou lagoon, the weirs of Sokoletsio, Koftra and Paliompouka, and the weir of Agrilos. There are also sea units of fish breeding: seabreams, seabasses, soles, mussels. Sea units of shellfish breeding, land units of eel breeding with state of the art facilities, and land units of carp breeding.

The Amvrakikos Managment Body organizes, plans and implements the general suggestion of the community that lives in the region of the Amvrakikos and makes a living out of the Amvrakikos for the sustainable development of the gulf, and in order to effectively handle the socioeconomic problems created by the implementation of the environmental management projects.





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