



THE GOULANDRIS NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM  
GREEK BIOTOP/WETLAND CENTRE

## **PRESS RELEASE**

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

### **WATER AND WETLANDS – THE MISSING LINK?**

Water is indispensable for all forms of life. It is the source of life. Freshwaters meet human needs and support a significant part of biodiversity on our planet.

Wetlands are water providers and users. Through the functions they perform (e.g. sediment trapping, nutrient recycling) they contribute to the improvement of water quality and the replenishment of water aquifers. The level up to where they perform these functions is not infinite, however. Unwise use has impacts in wetland ecosystems and Man. A key requirement for wetland conservation is to ensure adequate water quantity, of the right quality and at the right time. This influences wetland functions and their values to Man.

An evident example of severe degradation resulting from unwise use (mainly water pollution and over-abstraction) is that of Lake Koroneia in Greece, a Ramsar site, enjoying also other international and national designations. Although several experts, for many years, have warned over its degradation, the competent authorities did not make effective use of the proposals. The studies piled up and precious time was lost.

Let the example of Lake Koroneia, especially on the occasion of the celebration of the World Wetlands Day, give us the opportunity to consider the need to manage wetlands sustainably. Immediate measures to conserve and restore wetlands, measures that fight the causes of degradation should be taken up without delay. At a national level, with the start of implementation of the Water Framework Directive, protection and improvement of wetlands should be an integral part of the water management planning of river basins.