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**NAPA**  
NATIONAL AGENCY  
OF PROTECTED AREAS



# LAKE OHRID

## Our Lake, Our Future



**POGRADEC**  
Protected Landscape

### World Heritage Supplement

to the Management Plan for the Pogradec Protected Landscape

*(Albanian side of Lake Ohrid)*

*A Summary*

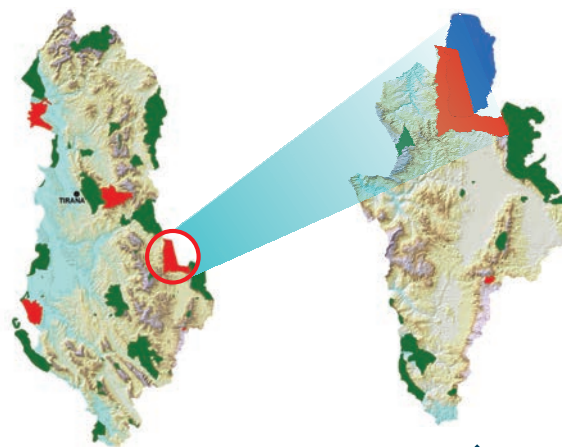


# The Lake Ohrid region

## Natural and Cultural heritage of global importance

► Situated on the Albanian-Macedonian border, the Lake Ohrid region has a rich history and numerous cultural and natural values. Its physical conditions, outstanding age and geographical isolation have enabled an exceptional biodiversity to develop and flourish, making the region a biodiversity hotspot of global importance. Some of Europe's earliest human settlements also surround Lake Ohrid, and archaeological evidence of ancient towns, heritage routes, defensive constructions, and early Christian ruins have resulted in the immense cultural heritage of the whole Lake Ohrid region.

Because of its significant natural capital and overlapping cultural influences, the Macedonian part of the Lake Ohrid region was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1979 as a natural site, and in 1980 as a mixed (natural and cultural) site. An international initiative is underway to ensure protection of the entire Lake Ohrid region by extending the existing Macedonian World Heritage property to include the Albanian part of the lake. The ongoing effort to extend the World Heritage property and its buffer zone seeks to maintain and conserve the region's remarkable values.



Map © NAPA / E.Salihaj

Red square: Protected Landscape  
Green square: Other categories of protected areas

**Pogradec Protected Landscape** is one of the 5 areas of this category in Albania

Key natural values include: the physical environment and biodiversity of the lake, biodiversity of the wider Lake Ohrid catchment, and ecosystems of the buffer zone. Cultural heritage values such as archaeological sites, historically significant buildings, and oral traditions are of particular importance for conservation. Wise management of tourism, agriculture and forestry, and ecosystem services should ensure that the natural and cultural values continue to interact harmoniously in the area.



Lin peninsula ▲

Photos © IUCN / T.Pezold

# Justification for Outstanding Universal Value

► To justify inscription on the World Heritage List, a property must demonstrate that it is of Outstanding Universal Value to humanity. This means that a property's cultural and/or natural significance is so exceptional it transcends national boundaries, and is of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. The convergence of well-conserved natural values and cultural significance makes Lake Ohrid region truly unique, and permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole.

Lake Ohrid is the oldest lake in Europe and one of the oldest in the world. Because of its very old age, geography and ecology, a unique collection of plants and animals has evolved. A number of relict species, or "living fossils", and endemic species including 10 species of fish and numerous species of molluscs, worms and sponges can be found only in this lake. Lake Ohrid supports around 1,500 species, out of which more than 300 are endemic; for its size, Lake Ohrid is probably the most biologically diverse lake in the world. The wider catchment also harbours endemic and rare species, designating the entire ecosystem as a centre for biodiversity and landscape conservation.



Mosaic from early Christian church in Lin Village, Pogradec

Photo © Manderina Promotions



Photo © IUCN / T.Pezold

The Albanian side of Lake Ohrid region is also rich in cultural heritage. The early Christian churches on Lin Peninsula are known for the well-preserved floor mosaics that are of outstanding artistic value. Archaeological findings in the castle area of the city of Pogradec, as well as vernacular architecture in the historic centres of Pogradec, Lin and other local villages, provide rare evidence of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century town planning and associated building design. Furthermore, the Royal Tombs of Selca are evidence of the ancient Illyrian civilization, and the remnants of Neolithic pile dwellings, around and under Lake Ohrid, demonstrate that the region has been continually inhabited since the prehistoric period.

# Ongoing threats and opportunities

► The lake's rich biodiversity and cultural resources are threatened by pollution, unsustainable use of natural resources, and poorly planned and executed urban development. Surface and groundwater systems are affected by organic pollution from untreated sewage and wastewater from settlements around the lake, fish farms near Drilon Springs, agricultural pesticides, and heavy metal contamination from mining operations.

Some of the endemic fish species and ecological communities have noticeably declined over the last few decades. Fish resources in the lake are being depleted through overfishing, illegal fishing, competition with non-native species, and habitat degradation caused by pollution and lake-shore developments and destruction.



© IUCN / T.Pezold



The Ohrid trout (*Salmo letnica*) is an endemic trout species in Lake Ohrid

A noticeable increase in the illegal appropriation, capping, and development of aquaculture at Drilon springs has become a major cause of pollution and the introduction of alien invasive species. Difficulties for the management of fisheries is further exacerbated by a lack of effective transboundary management in this regard.

There has been a significant increase in inappropriate development of roads and infrastructure between Pogradec and Tushemisht, as well as in Lin village and peninsula. The lakeshore is being rapidly urbanized, leading to habitat fragmentation and degradation, as well as an increase in pollution and human traffic. Lack of maintenance and protection for sites of cultural importance, combined with limited awareness and opportunities for public engagement, has led to the degradation and decay of historic buildings and a loss of the area's distinctive local character, traditional skills and physical environment.

At the same time, the capacity to address these challenges is enhanced in recent times by civic society coming together more and more in the Ohrid Region in the form of NGOs, local associations and community groups working with the institutions and drawing on the kinds of social capital, local knowledge and local pride in the lake and its setting that are inseparable from the heritage values of this special place.



Photo © J.Thompson

# Towards more effective management of transboundary Lake Ohrid

► The entire Albanian part of the potential World Heritage property and the buffer zone around it coincide with the territory of the Pogradec Protected Landscape and is entirely within the boundaries of Pogradec Municipality. The proposed extension includes the whole of the Albanian part of Lake Ohrid, Lin Peninsula, the coastal strip north to the Macedonian border, and Drilon Springs with the watercourses linking them to Lake Ohrid, covering 11,378.6 ha in total. The proposed extension also includes a buffer zone comprising 15,944.4 ha.

Efforts to encourage more effective management of the Albanian part of the Lake Ohrid watershed have gained momentum with the Management Plan for Pogradec Protected Landscape for the period of 2014-2019. In order to specify how the Outstanding Universal Value of the prospective property should be preserved, a World Heritage Supplement to this document has been drafted in 2016.

The World Heritage Supplement is integrated with the Local General Plan for Pogradec Municipality and the management plan for the Macedonian part of the World Heritage Property. It provides a basis for coordinated and integrated management between the main responsible entities in Albania: the Municipality of Pogradec, the Ministry of Environment (and through it the Local Environmental Inspectorate), the National Agency for Protected Areas working through its Regional Agency (RAPA), the Ministry of Culture (including the Institute of Cultural Monuments), and the Regional Directorate of National Culture in Korça. The document sets out a long term vision for the region as as a World Heritage property, developed by the main stakeholders:



**“Lake Ohrid region with its unique and inspiring landscape, where natural and cultural values are intertwined with traditional ways of living, constitutes a natural and cultural history archive, a sustainable tourist destination and a source of pride for regional and national identity”**

**In order to achieve this Vision, the following management objectives are identified:**



**Halt and reverse deterioration** of the physical and chemical environment of the lake and its associated ecosystems.



**Protect and sustain cultural heritage** in its built and open landscape setting, and ensure that residents and visitors of the Lake Ohrid region understand and appreciate it.



**Respect the ecological, cultural and landscape values of the area** when planning construction, location and scale of buildings and infrastructure.



**Manage the buffer zone of the World Heritage Extension Property** to protect its integrity and viability and to enable sustainable livelihoods for local communities.



**Implement and integrate management plans** for the Lake Ohrid region with other local strategies and plans.

# Partnership governance and management

► The overall approach to governance of the Albanian side of the World Heritage property will be co-management, under the guidance of the existing Management Committee for the Pogradec Protected Landscape. It will be modified to meet the management needs of World Heritage sites.

Under co-management, all partners cooperate in managing the area and implementing the management plan within their own mandates and responsibilities. This is achieved by endorsing the management plan and integrating its objectives as far as possible into existing plans and programs. Partners also collaborate and communicate on a regular basis in order to ensure that their activities are compatible and efficiently conducted. Special task forces may be established to carry out joint activities and projects.

Guri i Kamjes (Kamja-Stone)

*Co-management also means that the wider circle of partners is fully engaged in a range of ways. These include:*

- > **Consultations** with statutory stakeholders while drafting the management plan.
- > **Participation** of affected groups in related programmes and activities.
- > **Inclusion** of stakeholder representatives in the Management Committee.
- > **Stakeholder participation** in technical of the Management Committee.
- > **Transparency** over decisions and actions of the Management Committee and its members.
- > **Communication and engagement** of stakeholders with management team.
- > **Open and inclusive approach** to working with and engaging local stakeholders.
- > Active efforts **to avoid and resolve conflicts** resulting from the implementation of the management plan.



Photo © Thierry Solignac

# Steps taken to foster integrated transboundary management

► Lake Ohrid is shared between two countries with different management systems, and so management planning processes should be done in coordination between the two countries. It is vital that representatives from around the lake get together to pursue their work in establishing a viable cooperation platform.

A series of transboundary platform meetings were designed to facilitate bilateral cooperation between representatives of both Albanian and Macedonian local and central administrations, the tourism sector, those in charge of urban and rural development, culture, nature protection, resource management and the environment. The initiative aims to support the Albanian and Macedonian governments in their efforts to provide management efficiency strategies for the potential transboundary extension of the mixed World Heritage property.

A core team has been assembled to tackle issues of waste management, unplanned urban development, habitat alteration and the destruction and depletion of natural resources. The opportunities in existing transboundary processes for monitoring of the environment and biodiversity that contribute to the safeguarding of the Lake Ohrid region have also been discussed. Representatives have agreed on the steps to ensure greater synergy and complementarity between the management plans for the existing World Heritage property and the plans for the proposed extension, and to promote, where appropriate, shared responsibility for the implementation and evaluation processes. Overall, the meetings have strengthened integrated approaches to natural and cultural heritage management and advanced information sharing among responsible entities, ensuring that environmental and sustainability concerns are included in decision making processes.

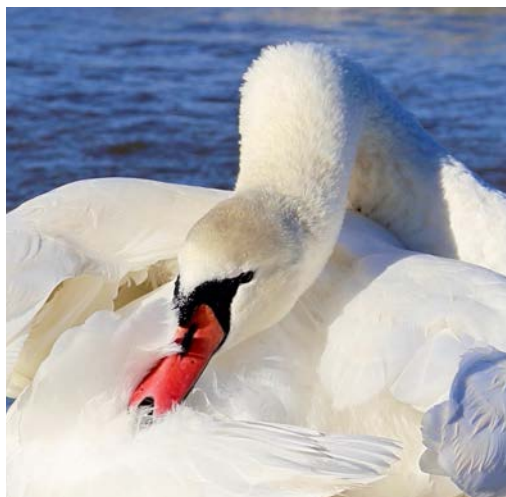


The draft World Heritage Supplement to the Management Plan for Pogradec Protected Landscape can be downloaded from the following link:

<http://www.akzm.gov.al>

Photo © IUCN / T.Pezold

Pogradec Beach ▼

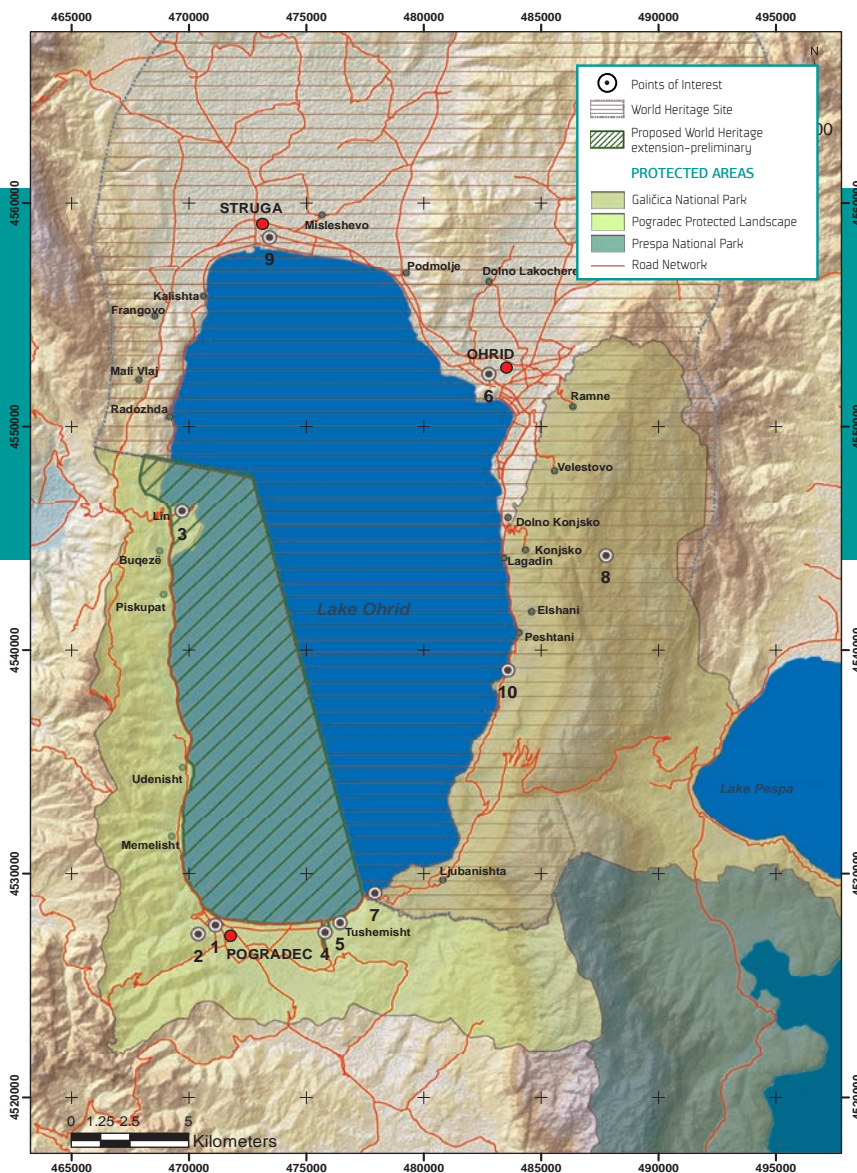


# Visit Lake Ohrid Region

## LAKE OHRID REGION

### Points of interest

- 1-Pogradec
- 2-Old Castle Grounds
- 3-Lin Peninsula, the remains of the Early Christian church and its mosaics
- 4-Drilon Springs
- 5-Tushemisht
- 6-Ohrid
- 7-St. Naum Monastery and the Springs of the Black Drin River
- 8-Galičica National Park
- 9-Struga
- 10-Bay of Bones and Museum on Water



Map © NAPA / E.Salihaj



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