



## **Inventory of coastal protected areas and historical heritage sites (North Bulgarian coast)**

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Coastal protected areas and historical heritage sites in Bulgaria are established by national policy instruments/laws and EU Directives to protect a wide range of natural and cultural resources along the coast. Within the framework of HERAS Project (Submarine Archaeological Heritage of the Western Black Sea Shelf), financed by European Union under the CBC Program Romania-Bulgaria, we made an inventory and identification of protected areas, nature reserves, monuments, parks and onshore historical sites along the North Bulgarian coast (NUTS III level). The adjacent coastline is 96 km long between cape Sivriburun to the border of Romania on the north and cape Ekrene on the south. Coastal zone here is mostly undeveloped and low urbanized compared to other coastal regions in Bulgaria. It comprises of large sand beaches, vast sand dunes, up to 70 m spectacular high limestone cliffs, coastal fresh-water lakes, wetlands etc. This coastal section includes also one of the most important wetlands and it is migration corridor for many protected birds in Bulgaria, that host one of the rarest ecosystem types with national and international conservational value. Added to ecosystem values, the region is also an archeologically important area, where numerous underwater and coastal archaeological sites from different periods have been discovered – Prehistory, Antiquity (ancient Greek, Hellenistic, Roman), Mediaeval (Early Byzantium, Bulgarian). Research was made within 2100 m zone from the coastline (in accordance with zones defined by the Black Sea Coastal Development Act) for territories with protected status in the framework of many national laws and EU Directives. The total area of this strip zone is 182, 6 km<sup>2</sup> and around 67% is under protection. There are 11 unique NATURA 2000 protected areas (6 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and 5 Sites of Communities Importance (SCI), 2 nature reserves and 1 Nature Park. Some of them are also onshore historical sites. In Bulgaria such sites and monuments are legally protected under the Law of cultural heritage and managed by the Ministry of culture and local authorities.

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