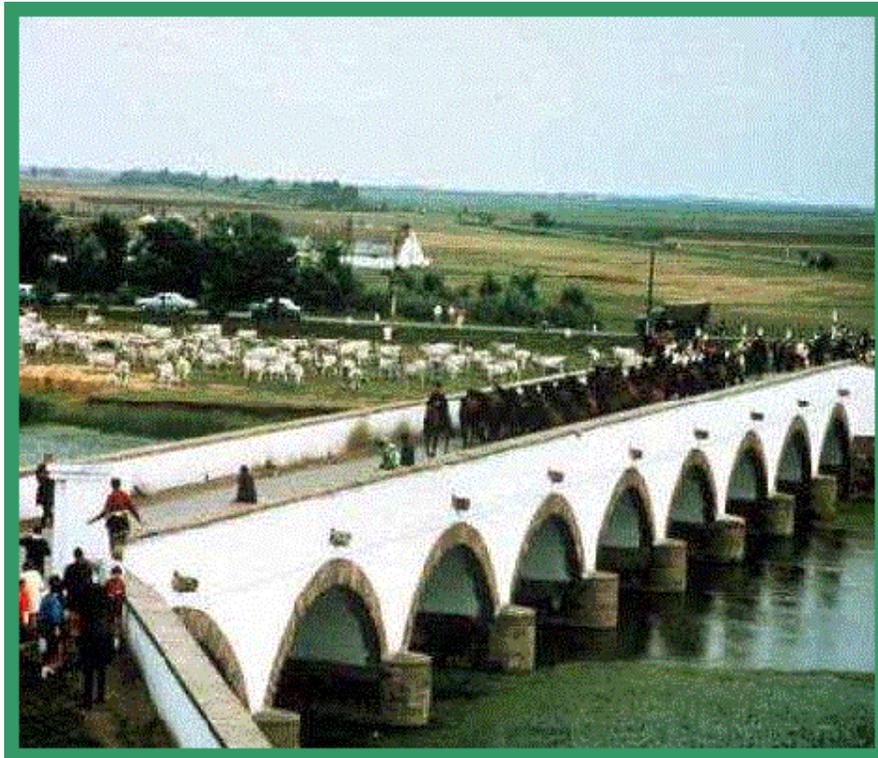




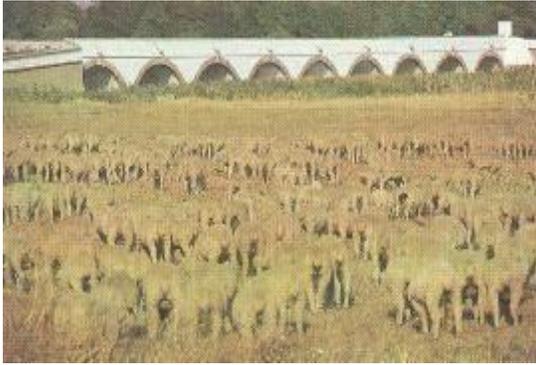
National Natural Protected Areas in Hungary
- Flatlands -



Hortobágy National Park



The Hortobágy, the „Hungarian Puszta” is imagined by most people as a treeless, endless grassy flat land where cattle flocks are grazing, sheep herds are moving slowly along and tasty but spicy mutton stew is awaiting for the exhausted wanderer. Undoubtedly, the thousand-faced Hortobágy may have a face like that, but our first national park, established in 1973 with a surface of 75 000 hectares, has a lot more to offer than “bridge markets” and “Fata Morgana”. In fact, it is a treasure of nature conservation values recalling in Central Europe the mood of Far Eastern steppes.



The trampling and grazing by animal herds is required in the maintenance of the alkali steppe (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

Man played a dominant role in the formation of the landscape on the Hortobágy. The once forested steppe, with impenetrable swamps on its lower areas, used to be under the influence of river Tisza meandering through the Great Plain. The major changes were caused by the river regulating works and the spreading of animal husbandry. The natron content of the soil started to accumulate, large areas became deforested, and the horizon „opened” with the advancement of steppe formation. The myriad of grazing, trampling and defecating cattle and sheep maintained than a very characteristic landscape much similar to open steppes of Asia .



The Hortobágy steppe, the largest staging ground of birds in Hungary (photo: Dr. Kovács Gábor)

Hortobágy is not just only a short grass alkali steppe, either - even if this is the predominant habitat type - but an array of diverse habitats: springs, canals, bogs, swamps, fishponds, woods, meadows, hayfields and even plough fields. The floodplains of Tiszacsege and a large part of Tisza Lake (the northern part of which was previously known as the Tiszafüred Bird Reserve) also belong to the National Park .



Red-footed Falcon (Photo: Kármán Balázs)

The plant and animal life of the protected area is extremely rich. The remnants of the earlier loss meadows and natron steppe oak woodlands preserve valuable plants as *Phlomis tuberosa*, *Amygdalus nana*, Hungarian Leopardsbane, Threeveined Aster. The last witnesses of lowland woods give home to heron and rook colonies, and the deserted nests are later in the year occupied by Kestrels, Redfooted Falcons and Long-eared Owls. Recently the Imperial Eagle, the Saker Falcon and the Longlegged Buzzard also started to nest here. Our largest bird, the endangered Great Bustard lives on the loss elevations. Russian Polecat also occurs here.



The Aquatic Warbler has its second-largest nesting population in Europe on the Hortobágy (photo: Dr. Kovács Gábor)

Typical nesting birds of the dry alkali steppes and barren lands are Short-toed Larks. Dotterels appear at the end of the summer on the short grass steppe around sheep stalls. The herds of grasshoppers accumulating by summer are decimated not only by White Storks and Starlings, but also, in some years, by influx flocks of Rose-coloured Starlings.



The rare White-winged Tern nests on Water-Mannagrass marshlands (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

Aquatic Warblers occupy the Foxtail (*Alopecuretum*) meadows that border the marshes. In recent years, artificial flooding on appropriate habitats helped the expansion of the species on the Hortobágy. The Etyek-Pusztakócs, the Kunkápolnás Marshlands, and the Hortobágy -fishponds give home to an extremely rich bird fauna. Because of several years' observations more than 320 bird species were recorded here, which is almost 90% of Hungary's bird fauna. Many of our protected and rare water birds, like the Glossy ibis, the Spoonbill, the White Egret, Purple Heron and the Bittern nest here and in the reed beds the Pygmy Cormorant, a European Red Data Book species also nest in increasing numbers. The weed associations (Water Chestnut, Water Soldier, Fringed Water -Lily, White Water-Lilly of open waters hide the floating nests of Black Terns, Whiskered Terns, Red -necked Grebes and Black-necked Grebes.

Temporary waters serve as one of the most relevant staging grounds in the Carpathian Basin for ducks, geese, cranes, gulls, lapwings, godwits, ruffs and other shorebird species in spring and autumn. The masses of birds are accompanied by endangered White-tailed Eagles, Peregrine Falcons and other birds of prey. The occasional disturbance of waterfowl is caused only by these raptors since hunting of game birds is forbidden throughout the national park!



Bull of the Hungarian Grey Cattle (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

The landscape of Hortobágy National Park is maintained by the combined efforts on nature conservation and traditional farming. Nomadic animal husbandry is on decline, however - Hungarian Grey Cattle, Racka Sheep, Mangalica Pig, Hungarian half-breed

horses, Curly-feathered Hungarian Geese, Hungarian shepherd dog races (Puli, Pumi, Komondor, Kuvasz) are kept these days predominantly for gene preservation and for show. The visitor of the national park is helped at learning more about the area and people living here by visitors' trails, exhibitions, and by the Hortobágy Shepherds' Museum. The most popular outdoor activities are bird watching and nature photography but shepherd and horse programs, horse-herd shows attract always large numbers of audience.

Where the sky reaches the ground

The most characteristic landscape of Hortobágy is the continuous grassland. A few centimetre difference in level differences are significant for vegetation in the low-lying plain. Their formation is created by a special local environment. The loose upper layer of the alkaline soil can easily be eroded. If the grass is injured by the wheels of cars or hoofs of grazing animals the upper layer of the soil will be eroded by rainfall and goes to ditches by small alkaline brooks. The special micro-geomorphologic conditions maintain the surface of alkaline soils. Due to the soil conditions, the vegetation is a mosaic type.



Higher and drier levels are covered by *Achilleo-Festucetum pseudovinae*. Characteristic species of this alkaline grassland are: Viper's grass, *Achillea setacea*, Dwarf Clover species like Strawberry Clover, Lesser trefoil and some typical halophytic plants like Hungarian Sea Lavender. Dominating grass species is the False Sheep's Fescue. Its typical change in colour, decorates the grassland. After the snow melts, it is bluish-green and during its blooming, it becomes red and finally, during summer, it becomes bright yellow. Where the soil has a high concentration of NaCl *Artemisio-Festucetum pseudovinae* is dominant with *Artemisia*, Annual Gypsophila, Viper's grass, Sea Plantain, Pannonian Sea Aster, and the Hungarian Sea Lavender. Scented Mayweed being an important medicinal herb blooms during the spring. Native species of the Carpathian basin like the *Plantago scharzenbergiana* are protected here. At the bottom of small surface erosion forms of water movements so called „blind szik” can be localised.



The bare soil surface is as alkaline as seashores or deserts. Only a few plant species were able to adopt to the extremely hard conditions characterised by low

water level. Many locusts populate the area during summer, and at the beginning of the century, there were often swarms of locusts. During this time, the puszta provided proper nutritional conditions for the migrating Rose Starling. Birds such as the Sky Lark frequently nest here, however, its close relative, the Short-toed Lark, is rare. Collared Pratincole and Kentish Plover often breed on the bare ground. Common nesting birds are the Lapwing and the Black-tailed Godwit. Long-legged Buzzard and Imperial eagle can be sighted often in the air above the pastures. Sometimes Imperial Eagles from the high mountains and Golden Eagles from the Eastern steppe turns up. Our winter guests are the Snow Bunting, Shore Lark, White-tailed Eagles and Merlins escaping from the winter of the highlands.



Only some old patches of Loess grassland communities have survived until today - mainly on ridges and kurgans - where *Festuca rupicola* is dominant. They are accompanied by the butter-yellow flowered Clary species, the pink flowered Phlomis, and the charming Hungarian Pink and Purple Mullein. Hair-like Feather grass grows typically on kurgans. Bustard, Quail and Grey Partridge hide in the higher grass of unglazed pastures



European Sourslik digs them into the loess soil. They are preys of the Weasel, Stoat and Steppe Polecat. Hundreds of thousands of grazing animals used to live here. The so-called „rounded forests” containing exclusively Locust-trees were planted to protect grazing animals against the bad weather conditions. The typical undergrowth plant is the Nettle especially under Crow colonies because their guano is Nitrogen rich. Hoopoe and Little Owls breed in the cavity of old trees, Red-footed falcons and Long-eared Owls occupy abandoned crow-nests.



People settled in this area and later, our ancestors being nomadic kept grazing animals. Only the long furred Racka sheep was identical to what it was in those times. For centuries, twirled horned sheep were exclusively the Hungarian Racka and only in the 19th century, it was followed by the Merino, which has finer wool. There are at least three theories concerning the origin of Hungarian Grey Cattle. One states that our ancestors brought them with them.



The second explains that they come with nomadic people later, after they settled. The third, states that they were bred from the ancient steer in the Carpathian basin of the middle Ages. The truth may be in all the three versions. The meat from these cattle was world famous in the 15-18th century for its unique flavour. At the end of World War II, their stock was reduced drastically. Fortunately, the Hortobágy and Middle-Tisza State Farms saved this breed using gene banks. One of our national dog-breeds, the long-haired Komondor was used for house-guarding while the other typical Hungarian breed, the Kuvasz was intended to protect herds against wolves and robbers. The Nóniusz horse-breed was the result of crossbreeding Spanish, English and ancient Normandian breeds that were brought into Hungary during the Napoleonic wars. The significance of the flora and fauna of HNP is internationally acknowledged because of its uniqueness.



The Biosphere Reserve and wetlands of international importance, which occupy about one quarter of the whole area, is protected by the Ramsar Convention, which was established to save water birds. Protection of the natural environment is in everybody's interest. For this reason, the area of HNP was divided into zones that operate in different regulations. Visitors arriving from the west, travelling on Route 33, can get information about the visiting policy of the protected areas of HNP at the Western rest-house (Tel.: 00 36 52 378 054) or they may contact the headquarters of HNP directly (4024 Debrecen, Sumen u. 2, Tel.: 00 36 52 349 922).

VISITING THE HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK

The first and so far the biggest national park of Hungary was established in 1973 on a 52000 ha area. This original area is entirely an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The recent (1999) area is about 80000 hectares. Wetlands of international importance occupying about one third of the HNP area are protected by the Ramsar Convention.

To protect the characteristic natural values and to insure the conditions of demonstration in the Hortobágy there are three different areas destined for visitors. The three demonstration trails: Nyírolapos-Nyárijárás puszta, Hortobágy fishpond and the marshes of Egyek-Pusztakócs give an overview of important habitats, natural and historical heritage. The nature trails are equipped with information boards .

Access is permitted only with entrance card. It can be purchased in the Tourinform office in Hortobágy village, in the Western resthouse and in the HNP headquarters in Debrecen (Sumen u. 2.). Further information is also available in the headquarter of the HNP (Tel: 00 36 52 349 922).

Visiting rules

- To protect the very rich natural heritage, the national park has a zone system. Admission to the A zone (natural zone) is possible only with strict restrictions for research purposes, to the B zone (managed zone) only with some time or space restrictions with a guide. C zone can be visited unaccompanied.
- Information boards help visitors at the stations and along the demonstration trail.
- All the plant and animal species are protected in the area of HNP. Disturbing and damaging them are strictly prohibited. So are hunting and angling.
- People entering the HNP area need special permission to carry out research.
- Domestic animals living free can be approached with the permission of their owner.
- Please don't leave dirt roads with vehicles and don't drive on roads soaked! Bike path goes on dirt road so it is suitable only for practiced cyclists.
- Please don't drink from open wells! Please protect the waters of Hortobágy! Don't leave litter about!
- Camping in the area of HNP is prohibited! Making fire is permitted only in the designated spots! Smokers have to be careful because the dry grassland easily catches fire.
- If somebody notices special or rare species please inform the HNP Directorate (52/ 349-922)
- Members of the HNP ranger service are authorized to request the entering people to prove their identity and they can order them to leave the HNP when they carry out forbidden activity.

Szálkahalom – Nature Trail

Demonstration: nature trail with information boards, look-out tower

Accessibility: on the main Road 33 at the 79 km mark

Szálkahalom nature trail shows all the important species and plant communities, mammals, birds, invertebrates and scene of the old Hungarian domesticated animals. Szálkahalom got his name from its burial mound.



These types of mounds were built by nomadic people 3-4 thousand years ago all over in the Eastern European Plain and Hungary. These were used for cultic and burial purposes and served as guarding spots.

Walking along the trail we can find all the plant communities typical for the alkaline grasslands of the Hortobágy. Patches of loess-plant communities can be found on the burial mound and on elevated areas created by old rivers and streams flowing here

long ago. The most important loess-plant species here are the Phlomis, Clary sp, Hair-like Feather-grass, Agropyron pectinatum, Thalictrum minus. With decreasing humus content of the soil, loess grasslands are replaced by Achilleo -Festucetum grasslands, where Achillea setacea and Festuca pseudovinae are the dominant species



Pholiuro-Plantaginetum, with *Pholius* *pannonicus* and *Plantago tenuiflora* as dominating species.

On poor quality, soils *Artemisio-Festucetum* grasslands flourish with *Artemisia maritima* and *Festuca pseudovinae* as the most characteristic plant species. There are two types of plant communities that can survive on barren salty soil patches. Their existence depends on different extent of water-cover during spring. In wet patches *Puccinellietum limosae* dominates, while *Camphorosmetum annuae* lives on drier surfaces. In deeper, wetter depressions one can often find a special community called



In the deepest areas, there is marsh vegetation. Open-water surfaces of marshy meadows transform into reed- and cat-tail bed followed by salty marsh communities like *Bolboschoeno-Phragmitetum* and *Bolboschoenetum maritimi*. In wet areas surrounding marshes *Agrostio-Beckmannietum* community grows on poor quality soil, while places with better quality soil are inhabited by *Agrostio-Alopecuretum*



Spotted Crakes and **Common Snipes** nesting among the tussocks. The most common passerine of alkaline grasslands of the Hortobágy is the **Skylark** .

The most common mammal of the loess soil patches is the European Souslik being the most important prey of some raptors like Saker Falcon, Imperial Eagle and Long-legged Buzzard. It is almost the only prey of steppe Polecats, too. Near the mound, in a Locust-tree plantation Red-footed Falcon and Long-Eared Owl nest occupying abandoned nest of Rooks. Avifauna of marshes is characterised by Lapwings, Redshanks, and Black-tailed Godwits nesting on the shore and



In autumn ten thousands of cranes, geese and ducks migrate over the Hortobágy. In October, we can easily watch them near and above the demonstration trail. Winter landscape is characterised by flocks of Snow Buntings, Lapland Buntings and Twits and White-tailed Eagles hovering above the horizon.

Walking along the trail one can meet almost all the old Hungarian breed of domesticated animals. Since grazing is the most important way of managing

alkaline grasslands, herds of Nonius horses, Hungarian Grey Cattle, Water Buffalos and Racka sheep play an important role not only in preserving special breeds but in nature conservation management as well.



Debrecen – In The Heart of Hortobágy

The emblem of Debrecen is the Reformed Big Church. The excavations of 1980-81 brought the remains of a church to the surface from under the north sacristy chapel of the 14th-15th-century St. Andrew's Church. The church was probably built between 1291 and 1311 by local landowners. After 1360, two additional aisles were built.

This church was destroyed in fire in 1564 and was rebuilt in 1626 -28. After the Small Church had been built, St. Andrew's Church was given the name „Big Church”. The town was given a 60 tons bell in 1836, the work of *Johann Regner* at the bidding of The Prince of Transylvania, *Rákóczi György I* . A campanile was built for the bell in 1840-42; this was the so-called „Red Tower”.



In 1802, the church burnt down again. The *Rákóczi*-bell fell down from the belfry and when watered, it cracked and lost its chime.

It was founded again in 1875, the arms of the *Rákóczi* family was cut out of it then; it can be found in the dining-hall of the Reformed College, today.

The church can seat 3000 people. The organ dates back to 1838; it is the work of *Jakob Deutschmann*, a craftsman in Vienna. Thirty years later, the instrument consists of 3096 organ-pipes and 43 registers can be played. In 1927, electric blowing action was applied.

The real importance of the church lies in its historical role. This was the place where *Kossuth Lajos* read the Declaration of independence to the people on 14 April and where he was inaugurated as governor of Hungary .



Behind the Big Church lies an ornamental memorial park. The first monument - The Dying Lion by *Marschalkó János* - was erected in 1865 to the memory of the heroes of the battle of Debrecen on 02 August 1849. At the end of the century, it was moved to the Cemetery of the Heroes. Now the statue of *Bocskai István* stands on its place - it was erected to the third centenary of the peace of Vienna .

The statue is, in fact, the copy of the *Bocskai*-statue by *Holló Barnabás* in Budapest. We can find its „relative” in the capital of Reformation as well: among the great figures of the nation and Reformation, there is *Bocskai* 's statue.

Near *Bocskai* 's statue stands the *Column of Galley-slaves* In the time of re-Catholization 733 Protestant, preachers and teachers stood vehmic court. Forty of the convicts were transported to Naples as galley slaves. The Protestant world did not fail to respond. Protestant cities like Geneva and Zurich collected money to liberate them. By 1676 only, twenty of them were alive; their release was achieved by a Dutch admiral, *Adriansen de Ruyter*. Switzerland, Holland and England were hosts to them until their return in 1681.



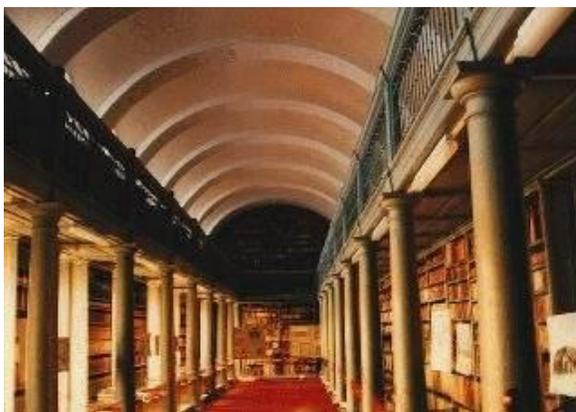
There had been a secular school in Debrecen even before the Reformation. When the monks living here had moved, their school ceased to exist; it was the secular school that the Reformed Church took over .

The College dates back to 1538. It was founded by professors, former students of the universities of Krakow and Wittenberg.

Not only teachers and ministers were trained here; the College gave such an education that enabled the school-leavers to continue their studies; they could find a job as town clerk or go for a jurist, engineer, physician or even bailiff. The leadership and merchants of the town came out of the College.

Since Reformation times the students had been swarming out to universities in Germany, Switzerland, Holland and England where they spent two or three years .

The New College was raised between 1803 and 1816 according to the designs of *Péchy Mihály*. A visitor recorded that „the New College has a stately building even if it cannot compete with the universities of Berlin and Vienna it is a worthy match of the freshly built university of Leipzig and ranks higher than the similarly new university buildings of Halle and Göttingen.... the more humble building of the Old -College behind it contrasts with it.” They could not even think of the restoration of the old building since the oratorio and the Main Library of the new building had to be finished first.



The Old-College was demolished in 1869 and the two buildings were joined together between 1870 and 1874. Thus, the college obtained its present irregular and quadrangular shape.

The facade of the building is ornated by the brass reliefs of *Nagy Sándor János* around the main entrance. The portraits of *Zwingli* and *Calvin*, the great reformers were put up in 1931, on the fourth centenary of the death of the former. Next to them the portraits of *Kölcsey Ferenc*, *Arany János* and

Csokonai Vitéz Mihály, the most famous students of the College and their quotations can be seen.

The Declaration of Independence was worded and discussed here. The printing press that had printed the *Kossuth*-banknotes for the country fighting for freedom worked here.



The main library of the College with its stock of half million volumes is the biggest collection of that kind owned by the Reformed Church in Hungary. Some of its rarities are unique in Europe and in the world, as well. Thirty-nine codices from the 14th - 15th centuries written on parchment by hand can be found here. One hundred and forty-five early printings (books published before 1500) and in the case of hundred and fourteen works the only extant copy is kept here.

Grateful students had contributed to the library of the Alma Mater with valuable volumes: for example, *Marathi György* bequeathed the engravings of *Lucas Cranach* from 1525 to the library.

We can also find the New Testament part of *Luther's* translation of the Bible with *Cranach's* woodcuts (Strasbourg, 1524) here.

The most valuable are the manuscript maps of *Nicholaus Germans* from around 1450 - 1470. The first botanical work in Hungarian, the *Herbarium* from 1578, written by *Peter Melissa Judas* is also significant.

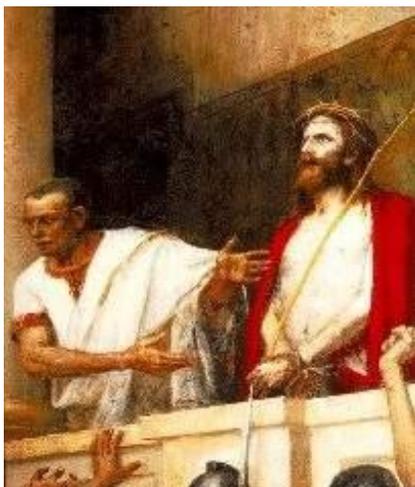


On the *Füvészkert* street side of the Big Church, we can see the remains of the *Verestorony belfry*. On the corner of *Múzeum* Street stands the historically notable boxthorn tree. This plant - the *lycium halimifolium* - grows everywhere in the country; it is neither grass, nor tree. A boxthorn grown into a tree is a botanical rarity.

According to an anecdote minister *Bálint*, a follower of reformation was arguing with master *Ambrosius* on this spot with a branch of boxthorn in his hand. The Catholic *Ambrosius* stated that the doctrines of *Calvin would* never grow into a religion. „ It will be a religion „ - he shouted - „ when box-thorn grows into a tree.” „ It will grow into a tree then! „ - minister *Bálint* answered and he planted the branch into the ground. The little branch grew into a tree and entwined the latticed windows of the vicarage .

The Eclectic building of *Déri* Museum was built at the plans of *Dénes Györgyi* who was rewarded with the Cross of the Legion of Honour and the Officer's Cross of the King of Bulgaria, and *Aladár Münnich*, architect of the post-office administration building between 1926 and 1928.

When *Déri Frigyes* bestowed his collection of great value on the city with the purpose of contributing to the culture and the education of the young a new chapter was opened in the history of the city's museums. The generous man could attend the laying of the foundation stone but he did not live to see the opening of the museum.



The museum was opened in May 1930. Artillery Colonel *Déri György* granted his ethnographic collection to the town in 1938, it enriches the stock of the *Déri* Museum since 1949.

The archaeological collection displays the findings from sites discovered in our county - up to the conquest. The exhibition entitled *Settlement and Society* presents the history, economic and cultural life of Debrecen on to this day.

The *Déri* collection includes Greek, Egyptian, Roman and Etruscan material and the Asian collection of the founder.

The Jesus-trilogy by *Munkácsy Mihály* is guarded in the *Munkácsy*-hall.

Christ in the presence of Pilate and *Golgotha* were displayed to the American public in 1886 - 1887. The two paintings were sold to an American merchant - millionaire, *John Wanamaker*. They had been kept in a private room of the Wana maker store in Philadelphia since 1911. In 1988, *Christ in the presence of Pilate* was bought by a Canadian collector and *Golgotha* by *Bereczki Csaba*, the owner of the Pannonia Gallery in New York at an auction. He deposited the picture to the National Museum, where it was exhibited at Easter 1993.

Ecce Homo, the third piece of the trilogy was presented to the museum by *Déri Frigyes* in 1920. This work is the second piece of the trilogy according to the Biblical story and the third according to the date of painting. After *Golgotha*, only the Resurrection or the Ascension could have been treated. However, after the Dreyfuss - action, the worsening of his disease, his loneliness, the neglect of his art caused him to search back in history and he painted the painful second meeting of Jesus and Pilate in 1895-96.

Address of the Directorate:
Hortobágyi Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság, Debrecen -Hungary, Sumen u. 2. Hungary-4024.

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[Kiskunság National Park](#)

inspired so many of our poets in the last century. The face of the region changed due to centuries-long human activities largely that it did not prove practical to designate the territories of the national park in one block. Instead, the most valuable habitats that still represent the traditional farming activities and the original face of Kiskunság, the characteristic wetlands, geographical formations were put under protection. The seven disconnected areas of the national park represent a total of 35,800 hectares. The Kiskunság National Park is therefore an array of the most diverse habitats with wetlands represented by floodplains, swamps, peat lands, wet grasslands, alkali lakes and with dry habitats represented by sandy and alkali grasslands, loss steppes .



A typical bird on guard on the Kiskunság sands, the Eurasian Roller (photo: Kármán Balázs)

The alkali steppes of Kiskunság which is a biosphere reserve at the same time - can be characterised by the almost perfectly flat natron steppes, halo Phil plant species, snow-white barren salt patches, high, for solonchak steppes characteristic natron banks and by grasslands turning into reddish brown to the end of the summer.

The most valuable members of the wildlife are birds. The elevated plateaux of Apajpuszta give home to the strongest Hungarian population of Great Bustards. The secretive Stone Curlew breeds nowhere else in such a high density than in this region. The stronghold of the endangered Collared Pratinco's also nest here. Sadly, the Redfooted Falcon, a once widespread small raptor of the Hungarian pusztas, is steadily declining with the disappearance of large Rook nest colonies. Lower are as filled up in the spring by water, wet grasslands play a crucial role in the shorebird migration, but they are also ideal nesting habitats for Lapwings, Blacktailed Godwits, and Redshanks at the same time .



A characteristic plant of open sandy steppes, a Thistle species Echinops ruthenicus (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

The alkali lakes of Kiskunság are internationally important in terms of both nesting and staging grounds of waterfowl during migration; they are designated therefore on the list of the Ramsar Convention. The most valuable breeding birds of the barren lakeshores and islands are the Black-winged Stilts, Avocets Kentish Plovers, and Mediterranean Gulls nesting in Black-headed Gull colonies. In the reed and bulrush vegetation of the shallow marshlands Bitterns, Greylag Geese different duck species, Marsh Harriers raise their chicks .



One of the most endangered birds of alkali steppes is the Collared Plover (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

The Colon Lake near Iszak is famous predominantly for its heron colony and the glamorous

flowers of the surrounding marsh meadows, but its rich insect life is also well known .



One of the few halophyte plant species, which manage to survive on, dried out lake bottoms is California prostate (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

In the central park of Kiskunság the fine grained sand that were blown out by wind from the alluvial wash of the ancient Danube formed the variegated dunes and ridges near Fülöpháza and Bócsa-Bugac. The surface engraved by wind, the sand poor in nutrients is still acceptable for Juniper-White Poplar woods, Fescue-grasslands and Feathergrass-dominated sand grasslands. The seemingly poor vegetation hides rare species such as the recently discovered endemic Helleborine orchid *Epipactis bugacensis*, and Joint Pine, a Pink species *Dianthus diutinus* and a Saffron species *Colchicum arenarium*. The insect fauna of the sands is surprisingly rich: the Snouter Grasshopper, a Butterfly species *Acanthaclisis occitanía* and the Moth *Coleophora pilicornis* to name but a Hungari an population of Great Bustards breeds on the ground.



The largest Kiskunság (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

Characteristic vertebrates for the area include the Balkan Wall Lizard, Eurasian Roller and Hoopoe. The stagnant waters on deeper spots are surrounded by marshes and bog meadows. The damp and cool microclimate of the meadows enable the existence of several postglacial relict species in the plant communities including Grass of Parnassus, False Helleborine and further 15 orchid species. Hungary's only endemic vertebrate, the Danubian Meadow Viper still occurs on the meadows and the transitional zones of peat marshes. A strong and new population of the Carpathian Basin endemic race of the butterfly *Rhyarioides metelkanus* was recently discovered.



In the preservation of the Mangalica Pig, the stock of the Kiskunság National Park plays an important role (photo: Dr. Kalotás Zsolt)

The aquatic world of T serd near Lakitelek and the Holt Tisza near Szikra is different from any other areas of the national park. The ox-bows and mort-lakes with water lilies disconnected in time from the main stream of the River Tisza, surrounded by hardwood and softwood gallery forests, the Lily -of the-valley-oak communities preserve the romantic mood of Tisza and diverse wildlif e of wetlands with a unique integrity.

The national park participates in the preservation of the genetic stock of some traditional Hungarian domestic races such as Hungarian Grey Cattle, Cicada Sheep, Racka Sheep, and Mangalica Pig. Live individuals of these races can be seen at the interpretation centre near Nagyállás-Bösztörpuszta. The permanent exhibition in the centre of the national park, the Shepherds' Museum near Bugacpuszta and the „Nyakvágó Csárda-Museum” all serve the purpose of public education.

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Bugac – The Puszta

Bugacpuszta is a world-known tourist area, the discovery of this land started in the last century. Lots of famous writer, poet, and painter visited Bugacpuszta on Kecskemét's mayor's initiative in the end of the last century. Ottó Hermann, famous natural scientist and Member of Parliament, visited here in 1895, studied the ethnographical values and the mysterious world of the nomadic pastoral life. On his own initiative was exhibited the pastoral life of Bugacpuszta on the World Exhibition in Budapest in 1896. After that became Bugacpuszta to a world-known land. To protect these values was founded the National Park of Kiskunság in 1975. The protection of the nature preserved such a speciality like Juniper forest, grazing lands of the flat areas decorated with wild flowers, the buildings of the nomadic pastoral life and the grazing native animals



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Horse-show in Bugacpuszta

Bugac is the second largest puszta of Hungary, „the pearl of the National Park of Kiskunság”. As you later the puszta, you find yourself facing the Karikás Csárda (Restaurant) where - regardless whether you've come through a travel agency or individually - you can choose from a wide range of typical puszta-dishes as well as lowland-wines, while listening to the special gipsy-music. According to the guests wish we can organize the following programme as an afternoon, or an evening programme. Our guests can start with the lunch and than see horse-show as well.



12.00 - Arrival at Bugaci Karikás Csárda. At the entrance of the restaurant, you can taste a special Hungarian pasta-soup with a glass of white wine.

12.15 - You are taken to the puszta by horse-carriages to see the main sights: the Sheperd Museum, the stables and the native animal-species.

13.15 - HORSE-SHOW. The show is guided in English, Hungarian and German. The horse-show is performed by 6-7 horse-herds.

- The horse-herds drive the stud of horses to the spectators
- Drawing up of the horse-herds, greetings
- Show of the „Puszta – fiver”
- Skill games (Laying down horses, sitting horses, whip cracking , trashing the mother-in-law, take a sit game, hitting the jar, gallop with full glasses, fox -hunting)
- Laying down donkey, sitting donkey
- Donkey carriage
- Guests can horseback ride without saddle and whip -cracking

14.00 - You are taken back to Karikás Csárda by the horse-carriages and have a nice meal there. MENU:

- Apricot-brandy
- Open Air Pot Goulash
- Chicken breast „Csikós”style with garnish
- Seasonal Salads
- Bugac Pancakes on Flame
- Red and White Wine, Mineral water, Coffe e

Ópusztaszer - Natural Historical Memorial Park

The walkway leads to the Árpád Memorial, designed in classical style and erected in 1896 by the architect Berczik Gyula and the sculptor Kallós Ede .



The statue was remodelled in 1997-98 by the sculptor Buzár Károly and forms an enchanting backdrop for the national celebration ceremonies and other events organised in the park. The traditional folk festival of Ópusztaszer village held formerly on the first Sunday of September was named after this memorial and is called the „szobori búcsú” (statue fiesta). It is interesting to see the small tree ferns that grow in the limestone of the Árpád Memorial. The curiosity is that this species also lives in the Verecke Pass. (The route by which the conquering Magyars first passed through the Carpathian Mountains into the Carpathian Basin).



The 120 metre long, 15 metre wide and 38 metre across circular panorama painting recalls the events of history eleven hundred years ago. The moment is captured with the help of brush, paint and canvas, artistic skill and some imagined episodes of the conquest plus the imagination of spectators. Many contemporary artists helped Feszty Árpád with the two year task that lasted from 1892 to 1894. Landscapes are by Mednyánszky László and the battle scenes by Vágó Pál.



Archaeologists in 1970 started to excavate Szer in the acacia grove on the site of the current garden of ruins under the leadership of Trogmayer Ottó .

A cemetery of the first Hungarian settlers was found where the dead had been buried according to pagan custom. Their settlement extended as far as the site of the future Monastery. In the centre of the Mediaeval settlement stood the Monastery of Szer, which had three main periods of construction .

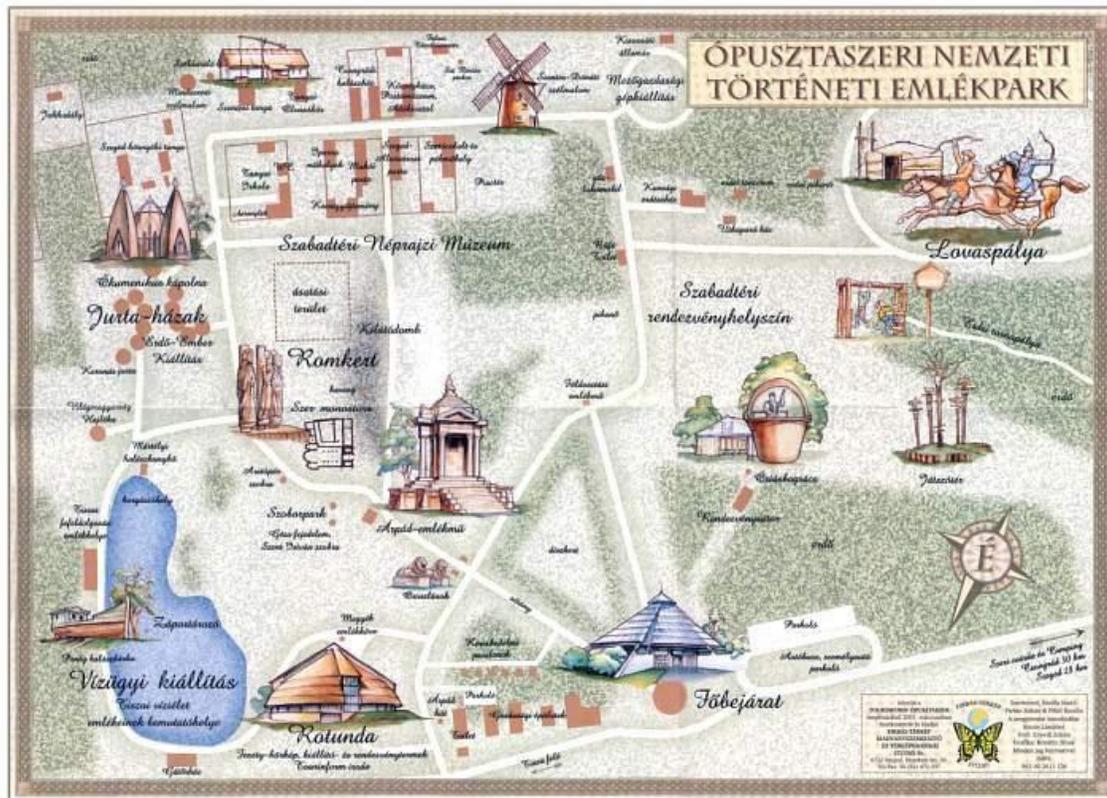


The exhibits in these tent-shaped houses, designed by Csete György and Dulánszky Jen , are very popular and show natural treasures and different building methods. The houses were built by banding the pine wood according to a technique that is many thousands of years old. As in the ancient ayurts” (tents) where fire flamed in the centre these pavilions too are open to the sky .

Decorations in the glass roofs of the lantern light cupola, the church banners (by Csete Ildikó) and the carved pews (by wood carver Nagy István of Mártély) are all inspired by the goldsmiths art from the time of the conquest. Motifs, amulets and buttons all date from that era.



History of wood process in the region of Tisza river,
Dikereveís house and Fishermanís hut, Sheep pen; Windgrist -mills,
Farmstead of Szeged, School of Upper-Pusztaszer, Farmstead of Szentés, Post Office,
The Forge and Workshops of Wheelwrights and Harness Makers, Fare station,
Community House of Vásárhely, Onion Growerís house of Makó, Exhibition of carriages,
Fishermanís house of Csongrád, Tömörkény Village hall, Sun ray decorated house,
Grocery and Bakery (with sale), Foresterís house, Exhibition of Agricultural Machineries,
Narrow Gauge railway, Szentés-Donát Wind mill, Pub, Market-place



In the wooded parts of the Park there are nice clearings with playing fields and a path for circuit training. There are also open fireplaces where you can cook over an open fire, or just have fun. Do not fret if you have no gym gear, you can borrow balls, tennis and badminton rackets even sledges in winter, but also wood and matches for making fire. As we have mentioned earlier, you can see the daily horse show, but you can also book your own horse show and folklore programme. You can taste some local wine and cottage cheese buns baked in the oven in front of you. This will make the day you spend in the Park at Ópusztaszer



International delegation of teachers in Ópusztaszer in January 2002 .



Kecskemét – The Heart of the Kiskunság National Park

Kecskemét lies in the Middle of Hungary, on a table of land between the Duna and the Tisza, 86 km south of Budapest.

The town was established at the junction of ancient commercial routes.

Famous travellers, scientists, and writers have pondered throughout our history, how this flourishing town arose in the bleak sand. The past gives the answer to this question.

Kecskemét arose from the surrounding villages as a market town and place of toll-collection, due to its good location. Anjou Great Lajos king's charter from 1368 mentions it as an agricultural town.

Refugees of the surrounding ruined villages during the Turkish oppression found a home in Kecskemét.



Shepherding, and the rearing of nomadic stock on the immense fields of the town and on the puszta was made famous by traders from far away places. Inhabitants of the town redeemed themselves from the noble dependence in the first half of the 19th century. The land of the town was divided into lots and the first permanently inhabited farms were built. Inhabitants of the farms increased at such rate in the second half of the last century that half of the population were living in farms by the turn of the century.

In the second half of the 19th century, industrialization after the Compromise of 1867, and the developed agriculture made the further development of the town much more possible: the market square of the one-time agriculture town turned into a beautiful main square with Art Nouveau

palaces.

The conscious development of the Kecskemét grape and wine culture with great plantations, is more than 100 year old tradition. The results of this development, by the turn of the century, were the transformation of a one-time agriculture town into a city with elegant buildings. Its history was full of vicissitudes, but the town consciously put the advantage of its geographical location into the service of its development. Since the 1960s industrialisation and the erection of public buildings has increased the population; through the establishment of artistic workshops the town has become a place full culture

The economical structure of Kecskemét is characterised by agriculture, food processing

connected to agriculture (preserves industry), and trade.



Kecskemét has been the county seat of Bács-Kiskun County since 1950 with 108.000 inhabitants. It is a

dynamically developing industrial, commercial and cultural centre. A characteristic of its increasing industrial importance and demand in human resources is the significant rise in the population from 57.000 in 1960 to 108.180 in 1998. Numerous flats and public buildings have been built according to the historical structure of the town. The present and future development of Kecskemét is ensured by national and especially western stock. Since 1989-90, Kecskemét has been taking advantage of the social and economical changes, appraising the local conditions.

The previous heavy industry has been driven into the background to be replaced by privately owned food processing factories (mills, preserve industry, poultry processing), and light industry factories of multinational companies who deal with assembly and processing activities (printing industry, shoe and clothes industry, machine industry).



The town's municipality will help and improve the process possible.

The town was assimilated into the European Road Network by the inauguration of the M5 motorway, which strengthened the economical and regional role of the area.

Huge supermarkets (Pólus, Tesco, Praktiker, Billa) represent the establishment of the town's commerce, entertainment, and tourism, besides the industries.

The town is home to internationally well-known workshops of art and animation, music, and significant research institutes. Their duty is to preserve and present the town's artistic and cultural values. Kecskemét waits for the visitors with recurrent programs and cultural shows.

Address of the Directorate:

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