



# ECOTOURISM DEMONSTRATION AREAS AND NATURE TRAILS IN THE HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK





## THE HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK



Hortobágy is considered the largest pasture on alkaline soil of natural origin in Europe.

Hungary's first national park was established here in 1973, and today it covers 80,000 hectares. The area at the time of foundation is entirely UNESCO Biosphere Reserve; one third of present area is wetland of international importance protected by the Ramsar Convention. Hortobágy National Park has been inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO in December of 1999 as an outstanding example for traditional land-use forms over several thousand years and illustrates harmonious coexistence of Nature and Man. Its territory became a Starry Sky Park in 2011.

On the extended pastures covered by natural grassland communities the once wild ungulates (wild horses, aurochs) were "replaced" with domestic animals (cattle, sheep, horse) of which the local breeds – Hungarian Grey Cattle, Racka Sheep – have emphasized role in the management of natural grassland vegetation.

The knowledge and traditional customs of shepherds grazing huge herds and flocks in the natural steppe are still among the main values of Hortobágy.

Marshes lost their natural water supply by regulating the River Tisza are rehabilitated by the National Park, inundating them seasonally to restore the natural situation. The most important task of the HNP is protecting the natural landscape of the Great Hungarian Plains encompassed by huge arable lands and preserving the diversity of flora and fauna and their habitats by the principles of Rio Convention.

To protect some endangered species like the Great Bustard, the Saker, the Red-footed Falcon and the Lesser White-fronted Goose were launched projects by the national park with the help of the European Union.



## VISITING THE HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK



The Hortobágy National Park Directorate managing the national park is not only a management body of nature conservation but the owner of the majority of the areas (Directorate, phone: +36-06-52-529-920, www.hnp.hu, e-mail: hnp@hnp.hu).

In the centre of the Puszta, in Hortobágy village tourists can get information about the tourist services of the national park at the Hortobágy National Park Visitor Centre (4071 Hortobágy, Petőfi tér 9. phone: + 36 52 589 321, 589 000, www.hnp.hu, e-mail: info@hnp.hu). One can ask here for entrance card and guiding to the national park as well, with previous registration. Bike rentals are also available here. You can see the exhibition on the world heritage values of Hortobágy. In the 'Puszta Treasury', you can get to know the interesting things related to the use of the raw materials provided by the grazed stocks. There is also a gift shop and cafe in the building.

Within a short walk, in the main square, in the circular pavilion of the Hortobágy Info, you can get complete information about the tourism services, and in the Herdsmen Museum, you can gain an experiential introduction to the mysterious world of steppe life. You can take a bus from Hortobágy Info to the Wild Animal Park, which main features are special wild animal species. The Hortobágyi Csárda Exhibition presents local historical curiosities. On the western side of the Hortobágy River, in the Puszta Rare Breeds Park, you can get to know closer with the old Hungarian domestic animal breeds. In Hortobágy-Máta you can see the historical stud and take part in carriage tour in the steppe. With the Narrow-gauge Railway starting from Hortobágy-Halastó, you can discover the wildlife of the fishponds.

Shepherds and their customs in the Hortobágy area can also be admired on the occasion of the "Driving-out" Festival in the spring, the Herdsmen's Competition, Horsemen Festival and the Bridge Fair in the summer and Bull Fair, "Driving-in" and Crane Festival, in the autumn.

Continuing west on Route 33, guests can approach the Lake Tisza Water Promenade and Study Trail with boats departing from Poroszló.

## ECOTOURISM DEMONSTRATION AREAS AND NATURE TRAILS IN THE HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK



In order to preserve the richness of natural values, the area of the Hortobágy National Park can only be visited with some restrictions. To enter the demonstration areas and nature trails you need an entrance card, that is valid for the following areas:

- Nature Trail of Szálkahalom,
- Nature Trail of Hortobágyi-halastó,
- Nature trail on the marshes of Egyek-Pusztaköcs
- (Bird saving centre of Góré and Marsh of Fekete-rét),
- the fishponds managed by Hortobágyi Halgazdaság Zrt. – Fish-farming Company (Gyökérkúti-fishpond system, Derzsi-fishponds, Ohati-fishponds, Akadémia-fishponds, Kungyörgyi-fishpond, Malomházi-fishpond, Elepi-fishpond system, and belongs to the other fishfarming company: Virágoskút-fishpond system near to Balmazújváros).

The Kónyai-fishponds isn't visitable!

### The entrance card can be purchased at the following places

- visitor centre of Hortobágy National Park, in the village Hortobágy (4071 Hortobágy, Petőfi tér 9, tel.: +36 52 589 000, email: info@hnp.hu, www.hnp.hu,) or in Hortobágy Info,
- ticket office of Narrow Gauge Railway of Hortobágy Great-Fishponds at Halaszbarka reception centre, in Hortobágy-Halastó.



Lake Tisza Boardwalk (Loc. Poroszló) and Ecotouristic Trail and 'Mayfly' Floodplain trail (Loc. Szabics Kikötő és Szabadidőpart - Tiszafüred-Örvény) can be visited with separated entrance card. The Malomháza Nature Trail along the River Hortobágy can be visited only with a guide.








### Rules and useful advice for visiting the nature trails

- In the area of the national park, visitors stay at their own risk and use the facilities available for presentation (eg bird watching tower or hide, boardwalks, bridges) also at their own risk. By purchasing the entrance card, the visitor permanently and expressly waives the enforcement of his / her claims against the Directorate of the Hortobágy National Park. Everyone over the age of 18 is responsible for their own physical integrity, and the group leader or adult family member is responsible for those under the age of 18.
- Within the demonstration areas, you can only drive on study trails and biking trails, as well as on the dams of fishponds. The study trail can be visited on foot or by bicycle.
- You can visit the trail on your own, but professional guidance with previous registration can also be requested at the Hortobágy National Park Directorate (phone: +36 52 589 000, +36 52 589 321, e-mail: info@hnp.hu).



- If you choose to take the tour on your own, it is useful to download the relevant e-book. The maps and GPS coordinates in the e-book and the stations on the way help the orientation.
- Please dress according to the weather conditions. In the summer, temperatures can reach 40°C (104 °F), therefore please take enough drinking water with you.
- Toilets are not available along the trail.
- Please keep quiet, don't disturb the natural tranquility of the area and the domestic animals. Please don't collect anything on the trail. Please take your litter back to the trash cans at the starting point.
- 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.
- Domestic animals living free can be approached with the permission of their herder.
- Please don't leave dirt roads with vehicles and don't drive on roads soaked! Bikepath 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 and making fire in the area of HNP is prohibited! Smokers have to be careful because the dry grassland easily catches fire.

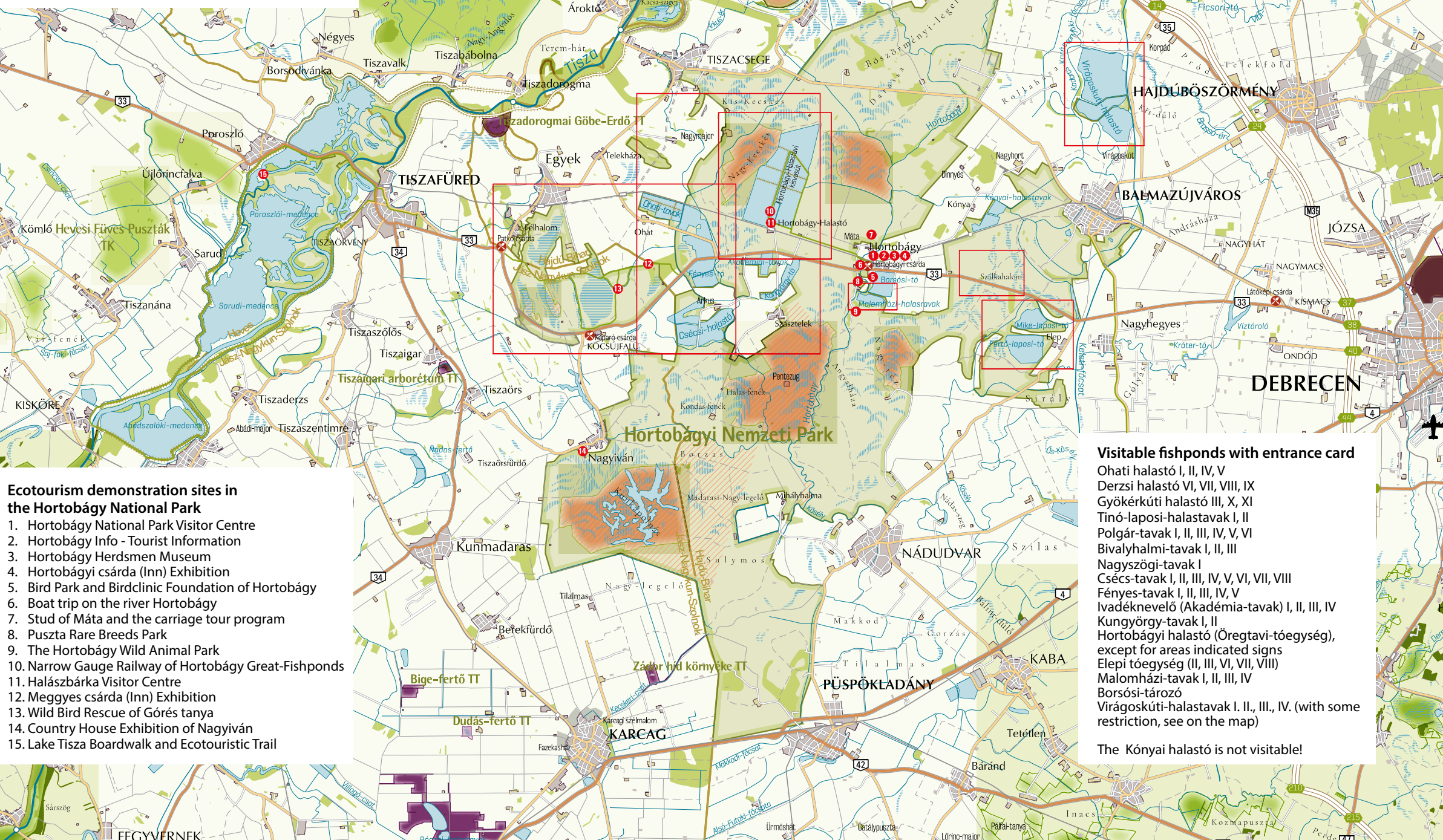


-  Demonstration area shown on the separate map
-  Nature and hiking trail, bikepath
-  Border of the Hortobágy National Park
-  Extensively managed zone
-  Wilderness zone
-  Strictly protected area
-  Restaurant

# HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK

## OVERVIEW MAP

0 10 km



### Ecotourism demonstration sites in the Hortobágy National Park

1. Hortobágy National Park Visitor Centre
2. Hortobágy Info - Tourist Information
3. Hortobágy Herdsmen Museum
4. Hortobágyi csárda (Inn) Exhibition
5. Bird Park and Birdclinic Foundation of Hortobágy
6. Boat trip on the river Hortobágy
7. Stud of Mátá and the carriage tour program
8. Pusztá Rare Breeds Park
9. The Hortobágy Wild Animal Park
10. Narrow Gauge Railway of Hortobágy Great-Fishponds
11. Halászbárka Visitor Centre
12. Meggyes csárda (Inn) Exhibition
13. Wild Bird Rescue of Góré's tanya
14. Country House Exhibition of Nagyiván
15. Lake Tisza Boardwalk and Ecotouristic Trail

### Visitable fishponds with entrance card

Ohati halastó I, II, IV, V  
 Derzsi halastó VI, VII, VIII, IX  
 Gyökérkúti halastó III, X, XI  
 Tinó-laposi-halastavak I, II  
 Polgár-tavak I, II, III, IV, V, VI  
 Bivalyhalmi-tavak I, II, III  
 Nagyszögi-tavak I  
 Csécs-tavak I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII  
 Fényes-tavak I, II, III, IV, V  
 Ivadéknévelő (Akadémia-tavak) I, II, III, IV  
 Kungyörgy-tavak I, II  
 Hortobágyi halastó (Öregtavi-tőegység), except for areas indicated signs  
 Elepi tőegység (II, III, VI, VII, VIII)  
 Malomházi-tavak I, II, III, IV  
 Borsósi-tározó  
 Virágoskúti-halastavak I. II., III., IV. (with some restriction, see on the map)

The Kónyai halastó is not visitable!



## THE NATURE TRAIL OF HORTOBÁGY-HALASTÓ (HORTOBÁGY GREAT FISHPONDS)



### Access:

By car: along the main road no. 33 near the milestone 67 turn to Hortobágy - Halastó to the 'Halászbarka' Reception Centre marked with a traffic sign

By train: on the line Debrecen-Füzesabony, Hortobágy-Halastó railway station; cc. 100 meters from the station

The nature trail can be visited on foot, by bicycle or by the narrow gauge railway.



### Starting point:

GPS: 47.605342, 21.069350

### Information and entrance card:

- in the visitor centre of Hortobágy National Park, Hortobágy village (4071 Hortobágy, Petőfi tér 9, tel.: +36 52 589 000, email: info@hnp.hu) or in Hortobágy Info,
- in the ticket office of Narrow Gauge Railway of Hortobágy Great-Fishponds at Halászbarka reception centre, in Hortobágy-Halastó.

### Sights:

- This nearly 2,000-hectare fishpond system is protected since the time the national park was established. In the last 35 years, more than 300 species of birds have been observed in the ponds making it one of the most important waterfowl habitats of Central Europe.
- Flora and rich avifauna, especially waterfowls of fishponds and marshy meadows, Pigmy Cormorant, Glossy Ibis, Spoonbill, herons, Greylag Goose live here as regular breeder.
- The migration of cranes furthermore geese and ducks is one of the most spectacular events.
- One of the most important stopover-site of the European population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose being globally threatened species. Red-breasted Geese turn up in the flocks as rarities.
- Hortobágy is the most important stopover-site also for the European migration of cranes. Hortobágyi-halastó is a preferred roosting place for large flocks of them.
- In the autumn it is one of the location of programs organized to observe cranes' roosting movements (at the evening and dawn, by train and walking tours).
- Grazing Water Buffalo herd,
- Largest lowland fishpond system of Central Europe with ecological fishfarming activities,
- One of the main venues of the Hortobagy Starry-Sky Park presentation (night tours, 'star walks').

### Facilities:

- watchtowers and bird hides, nature trails equipped with information boards,



- this is the only narrow gauge railway in Hungary running among fishponds. Opening times of ticket office at the Halászbarka Reception Centre: April-November.
- birdwatching tours are organised in autumn to observe the roosting flocks of cranes and geese,
- rent-a-bike service is available at the ticket office,
- playground also awaits children.

The fishponds dammed around, also known as the "Old Lakes", were started to be built in 1916 with manual labor, in a saline-swampy area called „Ugly Land”. In its current form, the 1850-hectare lake unit is the largest contiguous fishpond system in the Hortobágy National Park, where extensive fish production still takes place. The most important natural value of the protected fishponds is the rich birdlife. It has become an internationally recognized Ramsar site by its outstanding waterfowl world, one of the most important waterfowl migration stations in Europe. The Spoonbill nesting colony of the fishponds is the largest in Central Europe, where, in addition to other heron species, some Glossy Ibis also breed regularly. In autumn, the migration of cranes and wild geese is an outstanding attraction. From autumn to spring, a significant number of White-tailed Eagles visit the area around the lakes for food, in the hope of easier wintering. Ponds characterized by a gradually expanding vegetation, including several special and protected water plants such as the Yellow Floating Heart, Water Chestnut, European Water-clover or the Giant Daisy. Representatives of the reptile fauna are the European Pond Turtle and Grass Snake. The Otter is also a common predator.



White-tailed Eagle  
(*Haliaeetus albicilla*)



Great Crested Grebe  
(*Podiceps cristatus*)



Spoonbill  
(*Platalea leucorodia*)



Greylag Goose  
(*Anser anser*)



Great White Egret  
(*Egretta alba*)



Eurasian Otter  
(*Lutra lutra*)



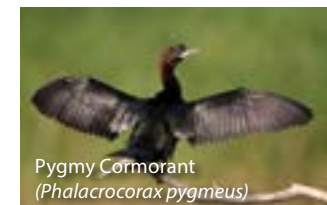
Water Chestnut  
(*Trapa natans*)



Little Egret  
(*Egretta garzetta*)



Crane  
(*Grus grus*)



Pygmy Cormorant  
(*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*)



European Pond Turtle  
(*Emys orbicularis*)



Squacco Heron  
(*Ardeola ralloides*)



Eurasian Penduline-Tit  
(*Remiz pendulinus*)



Yellow Floating-Heart  
(*Nymphoides peltata*)



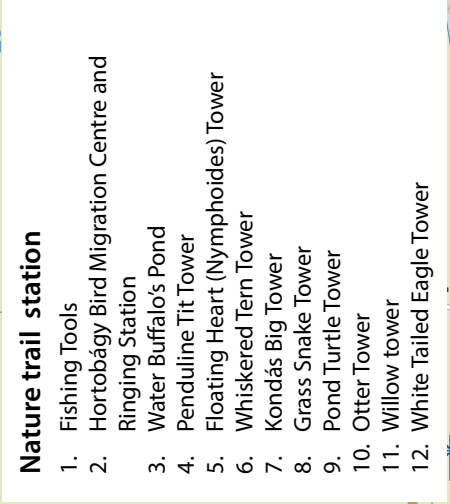
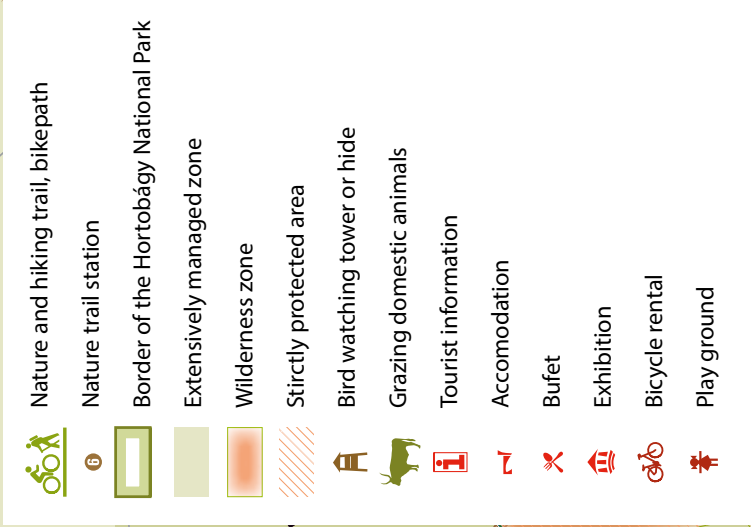
Grass Snake  
(*Natrix natrix*)



Whiskered Tern  
(*Chlydonias hybrida*)












European Waterclover  
(*Marsilea quadrifolia*)

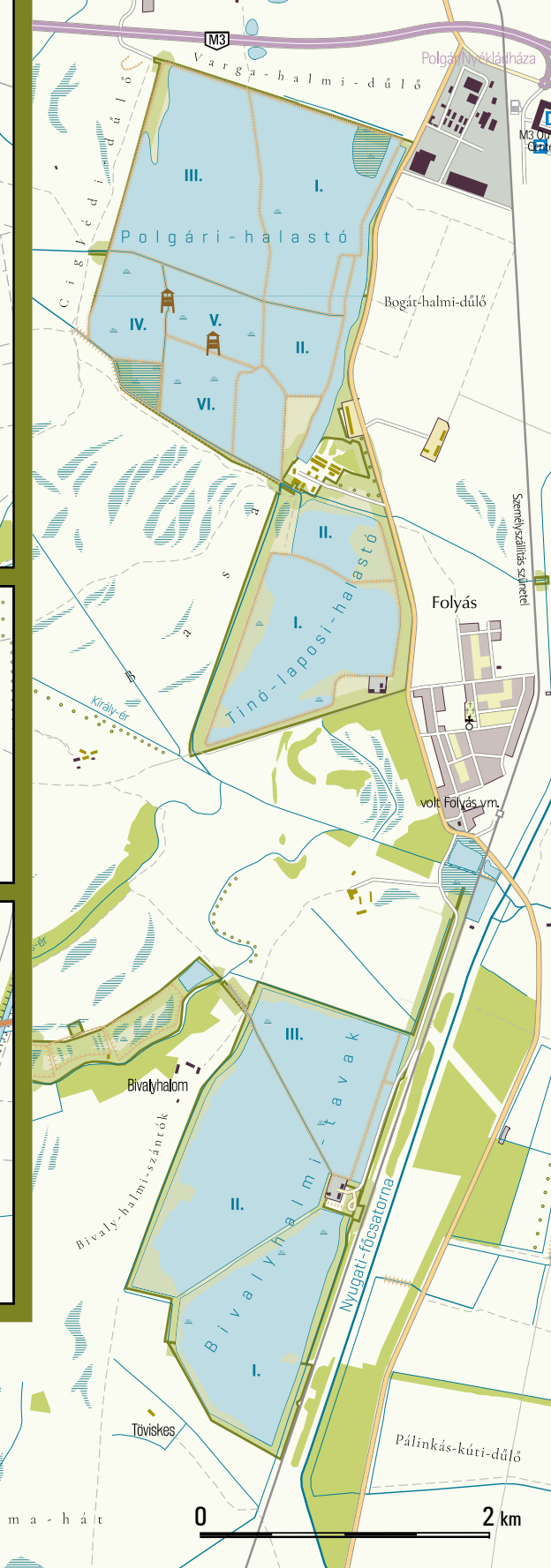
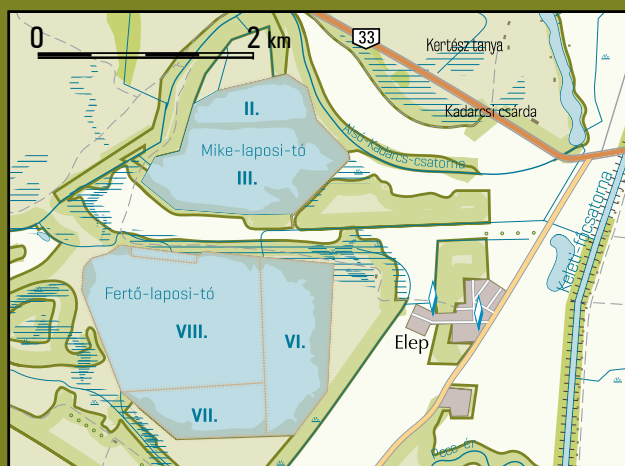
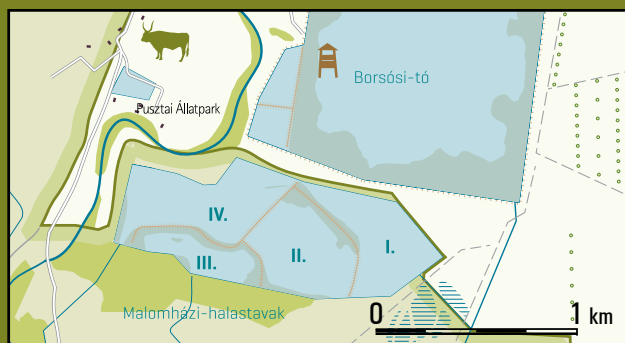
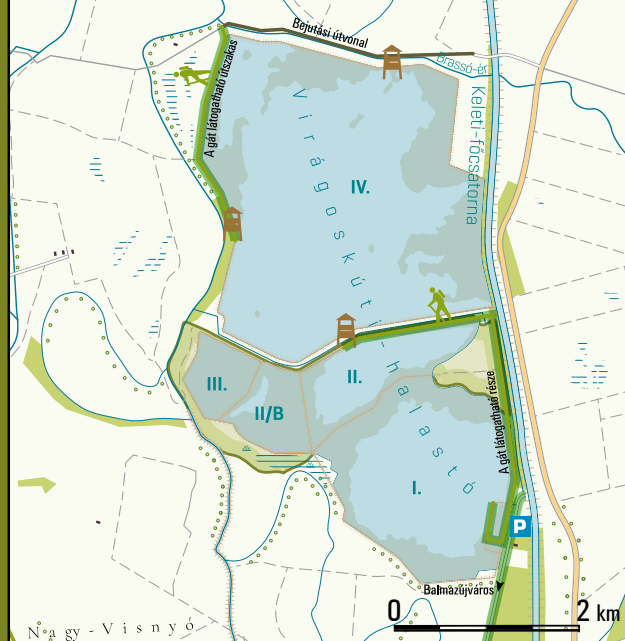




# VISITABLE FISHPONDS WITH ENTRANCE CARD

The location of the fishponds can be seen on the overview map of the Hortobágy National Park

-  Nature and hiking trail, bikepath
-  Nature trail station
-  Border of the Hortobágy National Park
-  Extensively managed zone
-  Wilderness zone
-  Strictly protected area
-  Bird watching tower or hide
-  Grazing domestic animals
-  Tourist information





## THE NATURE TRAIL ON THE MARSHES OF EGYEK-PUSZTAKÓCS



### Access:

along the main road no. 33 to the village Kócsújfalu and from there on dirt road to the Górék tanya.

### Starting point:

GPS: 47.548036, 20.928650



### Information and entrance card:

- in the visitor centre of Hortobágy National Park, Hortobágy village (4071 Hortobágy, Petőfi tér 9, tel.: +36 52 589 000, email: info@hnp.hu, www.hnp.hu) or in Hortobágy Info.

### Sights:

- revitalised marshland by simulation of the water-movements of the once unregulated river Tisza.
- mosaic of different habitats in alkali/loess puszta and wetlands,
- a waterfowl paradise,
- wild bird rescue and rehabilitation centre, demonstration voliers in Górék Tanya (Górék Farm)
- Górék Tanya Nature Trail (Górék Farm Nature Trail) where visitors can read about the history of kurgans (burial mounds)
- On the Fekete-rét Nature Trail (Black Meadow Nature Trail) along a channel dam can be observed the diverse flora and fauna of the marsh from a boardwalk.

### Entrance:

only with the valid entrance card of Hortobágy National Park

The marshland of Egyek-Pusztakócs used to cover about 10000 ha, near the Ohat-Egyek-Tiszafüred. The original marshes were filled up by the huge floods of River Tisza. It is easy to recognise the former riverbed of the ancient River Tisza or of its tributary in the long lying basin of the Kis-Jusztus marsh.

Due to river regulations in the 19th century the natural water supply of the marshland was cut off. The flora and fauna of the marshland forced back into smaller and smaller areas. So the system of marshes of Egyek-Pusztakócs (consisting Fekete-rét, Kis-Jusztus, Meggyes-lapos, Hagymás-lapos, Csattag, Bögő-lapos marshes) called for rehabilitation. When the marshland became a part of the national park, a water supplying canal was introduced into the deepest basin of the marshland, the Fekete rét, as first arrangement. The flood water comes from the Western-Canal deriving from the River Tisza. With building drainig canal several years later water level regulation was accomplished. Subsequent large-scale investments also managed to settle the water supply of the other swamps. In this way water movements of the once unregulated River Tisza can be simulated.

Birds quickly occupied the territory which became a real waterworld. The marshland is internationally protected as a Ramsar site from 1976. The rehabilitated marshes have again central role in the spring and autumn migration of birds. Open water clearings and reed beds are occupied by all the four grebes nesting in Hungary. Whiskered Tern and Black-winged Tern nesting in smaller colonies often occur over arable lands eating insects. Great-white Egrets together with some couples of Purple Heron live in the reeds of Fekete-rét marsh. Marsh Harrier also often occurs here.



Grey Heron  
(*Ardea cinerea*)



Purple Heron  
(*Ardea purpurea*)



European Fire-bellied Toad  
(*Bombina bombina*)



Greater Bladderwort  
(*Utricularia vulgaris*)



Black Tern  
(*Chlidonias niger*)



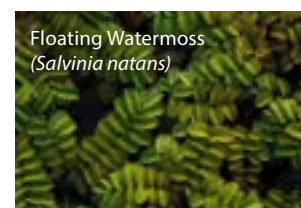
Scarce Chaser  
(*Libellula fulva*)



Western Marsh Harrier  
(*Circus aeruginosus*)



Kestrel  
(*Falco tinnunculus*)



Floating Watermoss  
(*Salvinia natans*)



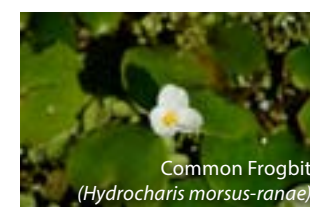
European Sousek  
(*Spermophilus citellus*)



Red-necked Grebe  
(*Podiceps grisegena*)



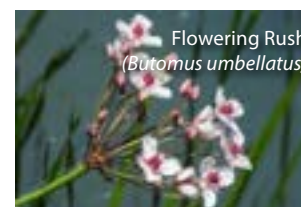
Yellow Water-Lily  
(*Nuphar lutea*)



Common Frogbit  
(*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*)



Eurasian Bittern  
(*Botaurus stellaris*)



Flowering Rush  
(*Butomus umbellatus*)



White Willow  
(*Salix alba*)



European White Water-Lily  
(*Nymphaea alba*)
















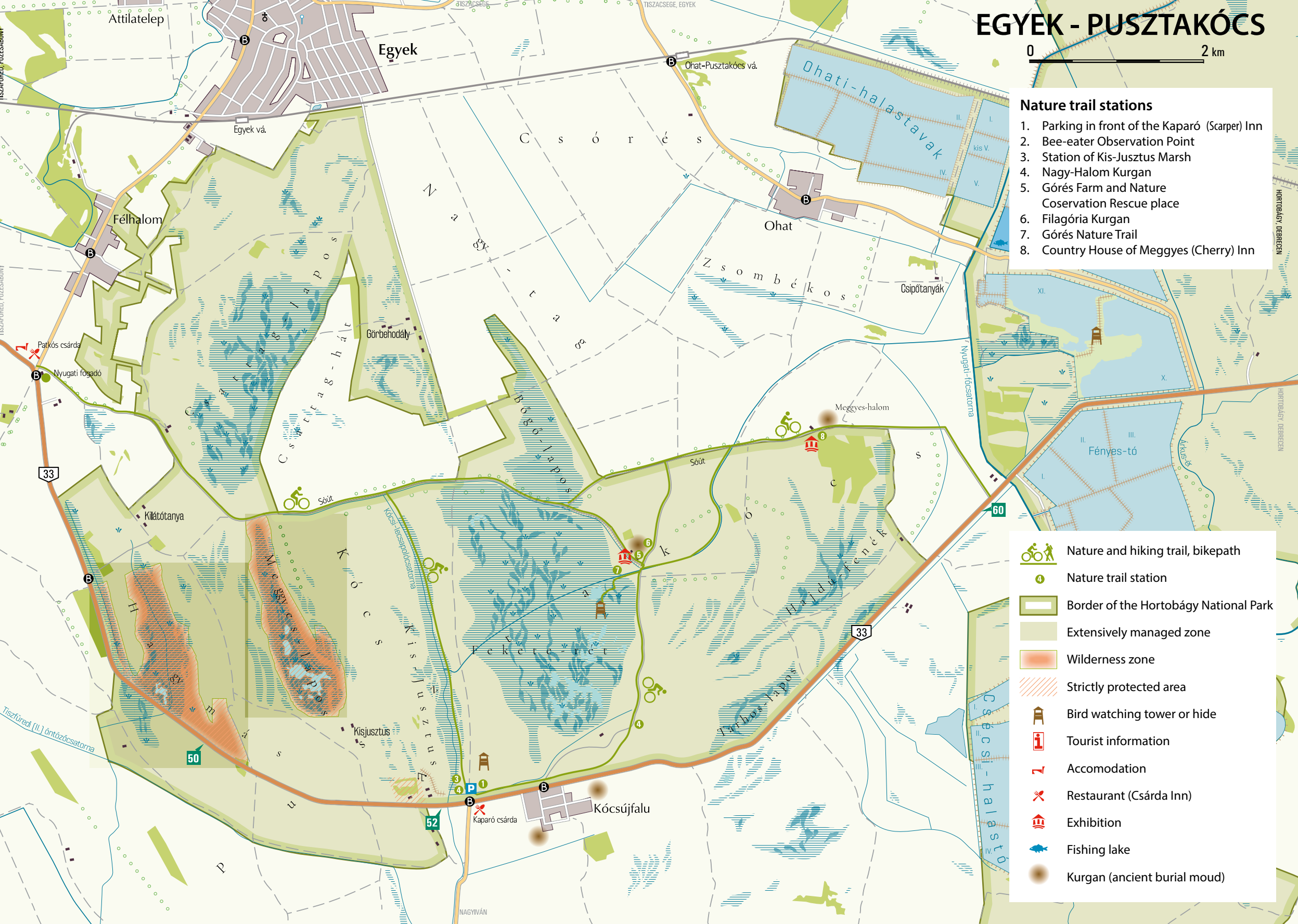
# EGYEK - PUSZTAKÓCS

0 2 km

## Nature trail stations

1. Parking in front of the Kaparó (Scarper) Inn
2. Bee-eater Observation Point
3. Station of Kis-Jusztus Marsh
4. Nagy-Halom Kurgan
5. Górés Farm and Nature Coservation Rescue place
6. Filagória Kurgan
7. Górés Nature Trail
8. Country House of Meggyes (Cherry) Inn

-  Nature and hiking trail, bikepath
-  Nature trail station
-  Border of the Hortobágy National Park
-  Extensively managed zone
-  Wilderness zone
-  Strictly protected area
-  Bird watching tower or hide
-  Tourist information
-  Accomodation
-  Restaurant (Csárda Inn)
-  Exhibition
-  Fishing lake
-  Kurgan (ancient burial mound)





## SZÁLKAHALOM NATURE TRAIL



### Location:

along the main road no.33 at the 79 milestone.

### Starting point:

GPS: 47.575236, 21.243314

### Information and entrance card:

- in the visitor centre of Hortobágy National Park, Hortobágy village (4071 Hortobágy, Petőfi tér 9 tel.: +36 52 589 000, email: info@hnp.hu, www.hnp.hu) or in Hortobágy Info,



### Sights:

The starting point is the kurgan (burial mound) so called Szálkahalom which was erected before 5000 years by nomadic people, and its endpoint is a watching tower at the edge of the wind-break forest.

- typical surface forms and important plant communities for alkaline grasslands of the Hortobágy,
- colonies of Red-footed Falcons and Rooks in wind-brake forest
- grazing herds of cattle

### Entrance:

can be visited on foot only with the valid entrance card of Hortobágy National Park

Salinization started here long before human history and intensive land use, so the open steppe landscape stretching to the horizon has been a characteristic image of Hortobágy for almost ten thousand years.

The steppe has developed due to special climate and soil conditions. The particular microforms of the surface are continuously formed by the eroding activity of precipitation, by the periodic inundations and by the varied alkalization. In the low-lying plain, only a few centimeters of ground level differences are extremely significant for plant species, make a decisive impact on the flora and results a mosaic type vegetation.

On Szálkahalom, in the loess grassland plant association, we can see the Crested Wheat Grass and the Lesser Meadow-rue.



As the humus content of the soil decreases, the loess steppe grassland is replaced by the alkaline grassland (Achilleo-Festucetum), where are the main association-forming plants the Sneezwort and the False Sheep's Fescue, but the Viper's Grass and the British Yellowhead also color the steppe.

On the more alkalized soils we can find Maritime Wormwood and Buttercups. Barren alkaline spots and alkaline streams are characterized by Chamomile. In grassland occur Yellow Wagtails and many species of grasshoppers.

Much of the Hortobágy's marshes were formed by the filling of the former riverbeds. Saline marshes are surrounded by saline meadows that form a transition to saline grasslands at higher ground levels.

In the wind-break forests has developed the largest colony of Rooks and Red-footed Falcons in the area, alongside breed some pair of Common Wood Pigeon.



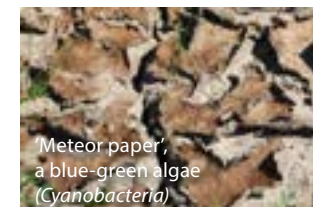
Pennyroyal  
(*Mentha pulegium*)



Western Yellow Wagtail  
(*Motacilla flava*)



Maritime Wormwood  
(*Artemisia santonicum*)



'Meteor paper',  
a blue-green algae  
(*Cyanobacteria*)



Crested Wheat Grass  
(*Agropyron cristatum*)



British Yellowhead  
(*Inula britannica*)



Wood Pigeon  
(*Columba palumbus*)



Tarantula  
(*Lycosa singoriensis*)



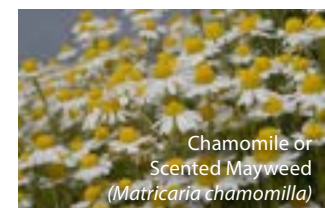
Camphorume  
(*Camphorosma annua*)



Sneezwort  
(*Achillea millefolium*)



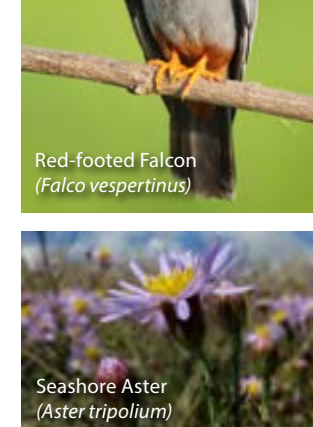
Red-footed Falcon  
(*Falco vespertinus*)



Chamomile or  
Scented Mayweed  
(*Matricaria chamomilla*)



Dropwort  
(*Filipendula vulgaris*)



Seashore Aster  
(*Aster tripolium*)



Buttercup  
(*Ranunculus pedatus*)

# SZÁLKAHALOM

0 500 m



Nature and hiking trail, bikepath



Nature trail station



Extensively managed zone



Bird watching tower or hide



Grazing domestic animals



Kurgan (ancient burial mound)

## Nature trail stations

1. Kurgans in Hortobágy
2. Alkaline Grassland
3. Saline Marshes
4. Marshy Meadows
5. Maritime Wormwood Grassland
6. Barren Alkaline Grounds and Alkaline Streams
7. Fauna of Wind-break Forests
8. Fauna of Alkaline Grasslands
9. Loess Grassland



## Signs



3D cinema



Souvenir



For disabled



Bird watching



Credit card



Ticket required



National park bus line



Starry-sky observation



Luggage



Boating



Photo points



Hiking



Information



Playground



Ticket office, online sale



Bicycle rental



Bike path



Bicycle storage



Exhibition



Fishpond Narrow Gauge Railway



Horse riding



Safari tour



Horse-drawn carriage



Bird-watching tower or hide



Parking



Grazing herds



SZÉP Card



Restaurant, Snack bar



Buffet



Toilet



Zoo





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INFORMATIONS ON VISITS OF PROTECTED AREAS MANAGED BY THE HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK DIRECTORATE  
ARE AVAILABLE IN THE HNP VISITOR CENTER AND IN THE HORTOBÁGY INFO:

4071 Hortobágy, Petőfi tér 9.

phone: +36 52 589-000 • +36 52 589-321

e-mail: [info@hnp.hu](mailto:info@hnp.hu) • [hnp@hnp.hu](mailto:hnp@hnp.hu)

[www.facebook.com/HortobagyiNationalParkAccess](https://www.facebook.com/HortobagyiNationalParkAccess)

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Director of the Hortobágy National Park Directorate

Text: László Lisztes

Translation: László Lisztes

Map: Paulus Map Editing Office

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