

Project name:  
**OLD-DRAVA ECOTOURISM  
VISITOR CENTRE AND  
EXHIBITION SITE IN CÚN-SZAPORCA  
(DDOP-2.1.1/E,F-12-K2-2012-0005)**

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## Natural Assets along the Drava

There are few regions in Europe today that remain as untouched as the Drava River Basin. Most of the river is unregulated, meandering in its natural bed with extraordinarily rich wildlife. These are the natural assets that the Duna-Drava National Park, established in 1996, is designed to protect. Along the coast of our great river with the clearest waters, you can admire the still largely undisturbed wildlife of the floodplain. The resulting backwaters and their environs provide a home to many unique plant and animal species and offer peace and tranquillity to visitors. Several animal species can only be found here in Hungary, in the clean, fast-flowing water of the river. The Drava and its tributaries host some 3/4 of native fish species, of which 20 are protected. The Drava is of decisive importance to the migration and wintering habits of waterfowl: in the autumn, spring and especially in the winter seasons, several thousand waterfowl gather on the river. Many protected and strictly protected bird species regularly appear in the area, such as the Pygmy Cormorant, Little Egret, Great Egret, Osprey, and others. Out of the rich birdlife in the willow and poplar forests accompanying the river, the highly-protected Black Stork and White-tailed Eagle are worthy of mention.

Located along the Drava's eastern branch is one of the most valuable areas in Duna-Drava National Park, the Cún-Szaporca backwater system. This region has been a protected site since 1969, and a Ramsar Site since 1979. Its open water surface is small, mostly covered with reeds and willow scrub, providing an excellent habitat for diverse wildlife. Willow, poplar, and hardwood groves are characteristic of the area. The backwaters are also an important habitat for birdlife. The highly-protected Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*), European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*), and Eurasian Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) all live here.



## Study Trails

Three multilingual study rails depart from the visitor centre, and visitors who travel on them can be enriched with experience and knowledge, and can explore the natural assets of the Drava and the traditional world of farming. They will also have the possibility to become familiar with the Old-Drava Programme. The informational materials on the study trails are an excellent supplement to the environmentally-themed educational activities in the visitor centre.



### Study Trail 1: Farming

On this interactive study trail, you can become familiar with the tools and professional tricks of traditional ways of farming – animal husbandry, land cultivation, fruit growing, beekeeping, basket weaving, and spice and herb cultivation. Visitors can hold and try out the objects for themselves, and experience how our ancestors utilised nature's gifts through sustainable methods, living in harmony with their environment.

The study trail can be explored on a guided tour or on your own, with the assistance of a brochure guide or recorded audio.

### Study Trail 2: The Old-Drava Programme

The informational boards on the study trail display the natural and cultural assets of the Ormánság, the old land use prior to regulating the river, and the regulation of the river and its effects. You have the option of exploring the nature trail with the assistance of recorded audio or by requesting a guided tour.

### Nature Trail 3: Wildlife of the Drava

The informational boards on the nature trail allow visitors a glimpse into the varied and unique wildlife of the area, from the open water surfaces through the marshy coastal areas, to the wooded pastures covered with colourful wild flowers. You have the option of exploring the nature trail with the assistance of recorded audio or by requesting a guided tour.

A birdwatching tower, lookout tower, and several resting places, among others, present the area in an experiential way.

## Active recreation

The visitor centre to be realised offers numerous interesting activities and active recreational facilities to visitors. The exciting field activities are a great complement to seeing the exhibition and the indigenous livestock farm. People of all ages will be able to find their preferred activity for them from among the ones offered.

The resting places built at the centre offer a wonderful opportunity for families and friends to take a break after one of the exciting and sight-filled bike tours in the region, during which they can discuss their experiences in an atmospheric setting while frying bacon or cooking on open fire.



A taste of some of the activities:

- guided walking tours in the area around the visitor centre
- guided tours on the three nature trails belonging to the visitor centre
- guided canoe tours on the Drava (half-day or full-day)
- bicycle rental
- guided bicycle tours
- presentations on bird watching and bird ringing
- nature photography
- evening stargazing programmes

The activity components can be combined together if needed, allowing you to spend up to several days in the area enriching yourself with meaningful and diverse experiences.

## Environmentally-themed educational programmes

In addition to its ecotourism-oriented functions, the new visitor centre also provides an opportunity to experience further environmentally-themed educational and awareness-raising activities. The well-equipped multimedia training room is furnished for this purpose and can accommodate more than 50 people. Children interested in this topic will find many fascinating activities here. The information on display strongly supplements the interesting activities.

Everyone can find something to choose from the more than 30 educational programmes compiled from a wide range of offerings:

### Activities presenting the wildlife of the region

- The forest
- The wildlife of the backwaters
- Seasons
- Protected flora and fauna

### Presentations on aspects of nature conservation

- Applicability of alternative energy
- Wildlife management
- Forestry
- Presentation on invasive plants and animals

### Programmes reviving the ethnography of the Ormánság region

- Presentation on farming in the floodplain
- Myths and superstitions



The opportunities offered in the training room are perfectly complemented by the three study trails located right next to the visitor centre, from which interested visitors can learn on the spot about the natural treasures of the floodplain and the associated traditional farming practices, the wildlife of the Drava and the Old-Drava Programme, as well as the geography and culture of the Ormánság.

The wheelchair-accessible reception building and the various programmes developed for specific target groups allow blind and visually-impaired, deaf and wheelchair-bound visitors to also take part in getting to know more about nature.



# Old-Drava Ecotourism Visitor Centre and Exhibition Site in Cún-Szaporca



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## Old-Drava Programme

The Old-Drava Programme is a complex regional development project equally affecting the environmental, economic, and social spheres, which in the long run can create conditions for sustainable development in one of Hungary's most underdeveloped micro-regions, the Ormánság. This plan has become the first domestic model programme for sustainable regional and rural development.



The regions along the Drava once belonged to among the richest lands in the Carpathian Basin under their former natural land use schemes, but this situation changed with the regulation of the Drava, the development of massive, contiguous arable regions, and current water management practices. The present water management of the region and the land use based on this (primarily intensive agriculture) has caused the region to dry out at an ever-advancing rate, and the natural systems in the entire Ormánság to suffer deterioration.

Restoring the former rich natural environment and the land management built upon it is an essential task for the entire territory of the Ormánság. The Old-Drava Programme provides land management conditions that are well suited for natural and social circumstances by improving the environmental conditions, infrastructure, and social standing of the region.



The objective of the "Old-Drava Ecotourism Visitor Centre and Exhibition Site in Cún-Szaporca" is to establish an ecotourist-oriented visitor centre and exhibition space that organically fits with the essential elements of the Old-Drava Programme, and in a narrower sense with the Cún-Szaporca backwater replenishment project.

According to the goals of the project, the completed visitor centre will be the most important institution for ecotourism in the Ormánság and a model for sustainable farming for the region, thus contributing to the revitalisation of the local economy while radiating the spirit of the Old-Drava Programme.

The visitor centre will be unique in this region, and in addition to displaying the natural assets of the area, it will place a strong emphasis on presenting life in the Ormánság and the traditional methods of farming in an interactive way, focusing on raising awareness of natural and land use issues and educating the next generation to be environmentally-conscious.

Its unique feature, in addition to its content not available in such a manner anywhere else, is that it is the first exhibition site in the region to be accessible for disabled persons.

## The main building of the Old-Drava Visitor Centre and Exhibition Site

Inside the main building of the exhibition site, visitors can learn about the characteristic habitats of the region, the species-rich flora and fauna they contain, and the cultural-historical and ethnographic assets of the area through an interesting exhibition. Visitors can get a glimpse into the life of birds living in the swampland on the edge of the backwaters, the extremely species-rich biome of the wooded pastures near the water, and can imagine taking a stroll under the shady foliage of wooded groves. Those interested can also find out how people who once lived here adapted to this environment and how they were able to live in harmony with nature. This unique installation will be available in multiple languages, using various means to present the treasures of the Ormánság in an interesting way for all ages.



The informational material in the exhibition is designed to integrate with the environmentally-themed educational and awareness-raising activities connected with the visitor centre, in which children can take a look into the secrets of nature both in the centre's interactive training room and during field activities with the help of trained instructors.

Visitors can admire the area around the exhibition centre and its surrounding landscape from the building's lookout tower.



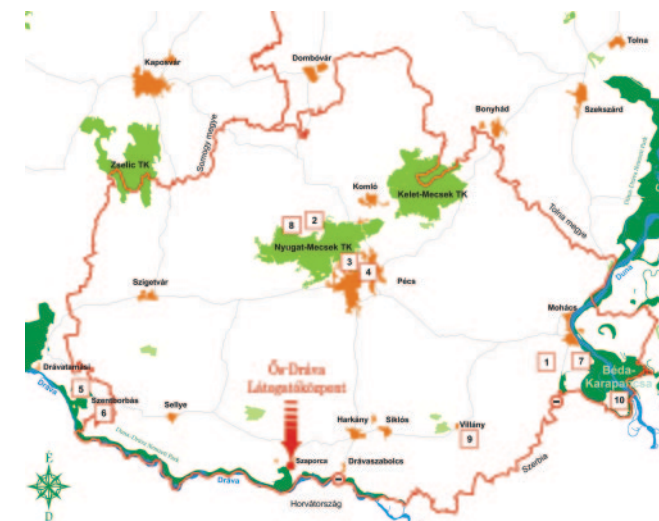
## Domestic livestock exhibition

Built farther from the reception building, a complex of a livestock farm displays traditional Hungarian domestic animals once characteristic to the region. Here you can find animals that once helped our ancestors with their everyday subsistence but nowadays are rarely seen.

Visitors can view Hungarian Grey cattle, Mangalitsa pigs, Hucul ponies, and old breeds of sheep and poultry.



## Exhibition sites operated by the Duna-Dráva National Park Directorate in Baranya County



### A Duna-Dráva Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság bemutatóhelyei

- 1 Mohácsi Történelmi Emlékhely *Mohács-Sátorhely*
- 2 Abaliget-barlang és Denevérmúzeum *Abaliget*
- 3 Pintér-kert Arborétum és Tettye Oktatási Központ *Pécs*
- 4 Tettyei Mésztafa-barlang *Pécs*
- 5 Drávatamási Oktatási Központ *Drávatamási*
- 6 Szentborbási Oktatási Központ *Szentborbás*
- 7 Fehér Gólya Múzeum *Kölked*
- 8 Mészégető-források barlangja *Ortű*
- 9 Szársomlyó és Nagyharsányi Szoborpark *Nagyharsány*
- 10 Boki-Duna halászati bemutató *Erdőfü*

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