

Title A colony of [White-headed ducks](#), a globally threatened species and extremely rare in the Ukraine, was seen at the Lake Yarylhach together with other rare birds. Despite the obvious importance of the Yarylhach wetland in terms of biodiversity richness, the conservation status of this area is at high risk.

At the occasion of the International geese count that took place during the first weekend of February in the Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania, 30 White-headed ducks were registered by the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds ([USPB](#); [BirdLife in Ukraine](#)). The White-headed duck is a globally threatened species originated in the [Palearctic](#). In the second half of the 20th century the population has decreased in the Ukraine and has just recently started to recover. One reason, confirmed by a survey run by USPB in February, is that the Ukrainian wetlands are rich habitats for waterfowls and water birds, providing them with resources they need to survive and reproduce. Indeed, the survey showed that the Ukrainian wetlands are key wintering areas to tens of thousands of geese, different species of ducks, swans, herons, sandpipers and gulls. Rare species, such as the White-headed ducks also gather in these wetlands. "Registration of White-headed ducks is an extremely important event for the Ukraine, as it is an indication that our wetlands meet international standards," says Oleg Dudkin, Director of the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds. However, USPB recorded a series of alarming threats to birds and the wetlands they inhabit; Ukrainian wetlands and especially the lake Yarylhach coast where the White-headed ducks nest, are suffering from pollution and destruction due to salt mining, which is also a violation of Ukrainian and International laws. It is important that Ukrainian wetlands are protected by an effective legislation and preserved from damages linked to human activities. For more information please contact [Olga Yaremchenko](#), Conservation Projects Director at the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife in Ukraine)