

Title A new documentary film entitled 'Bird Migration on the Bihar Plain' has been produced by the Wings Over Wetlands demonstration project team in Hungary. The film documents the importance of the Bihar Plains as a breeding, wintering and stop-over area for hundreds of thousands of migratory waterbirds, highlighting the role played by the fishponds found in the area as a source of food and as an important place for the birds to rest during their often long and arduous journeys. The WOW project is the largest international wetland and waterbird conservation initiative to take place in the African-Eurasian region. Each year, tens of thousands of migratory waterbirds visit the fishponds around the Bihar Plains. Some of these birds spend long periods there to nest and raise their hatchlings, while others simply stop for a short time to rest or fatten up for the long journeys ahead, which can start in the frozen Taymyr region of Russia and can extend as far as the warm coastline of Africa. The Bihar region offers abundant nourishment and a tranquil spot for the birds to have undisturbed rest, making it one of the most important habitats in Central Europe for migratory waterbirds. The local economy is also dependent on the fishponds found in the Bihar region and the enterprises which manage them. "Our aim with the film was to not only show the actual habitat where the project was implemented, but also highlight the importance of the project's achievements?" said Gábor Simay, the WOW Demonstration Project Manager at the site in Hungary. In particular, the demonstration project has helped to highlight the importance of nature-friendly fish-farming, holding two technical workshops for fish-farmers and producing a technical publication to promote the adoption of new nature-friendly fish-farming methods by others in the surrounding area and in other parts of the country. Perhaps the most notable achievement of this initiative is the significant change in the fish farming techniques used by Agropoint Ltd., the company which has been overseeing one of the main fish-pond enterprises in the Bihar region for years and is now acting as an ambassador for integrated conservation. "We also found it very important to show how these wetlands belong to a chain of habitats which are important for migrating and breeding waterbirds and that Biharugra and its surrounding area is only one, though very important part of this chain" said Simay, who was also closely involved in the production of the film both in the field and in the studio. "It was a great experience for me to be able to be closely involved in the entire film making process. I was responsible for writing the rough version of the film's text, helped the camera man in the field and was also able to assist the film makers in the post-production phase, by helping to select the important scenes which were included in the film?" said Simay. In addition to the fishponds, the film also highlights the importance of the other surrounding habitats, showing how the ponds are part of a complex and valuable mosaic of habitats which is used by many different birds, including huge flocks of geese which visit the area. The film was entirely produced with the support provided in the context of the WOW demonstration project in Hungary. and was made by Sándor Karácsony and Róbert Ványi and two of the local partners - BirdLife Hungary and Bihar Public Foundation - which both played an important role during the preparations. The film has already been played by two national TV channels in Hungary and there are plans for it to be shown in a number of different local television outlets and in one of Hungary's most important TV channels. The film has also won the first prize in its category ("landscapes around the world") at the Hungarian Naturefilm Festival, Pusztaszer, which is the most important event for nature films in the country.