

symbiotic

Traveling exhibition of Atanasovsko Lake

The symbiosis is a specific nature phenomenon, where two or more organisms derive mutual benefit from their joint partnership. This is the invisible bond, which keeps them in constant equilibrium, where they retain their individuality, but cannot exist without each other. The symbiosis – mutuality, commitment, dependency, but at the same time trust and dedication.



This is exactly Atanasovsko Lake – seemingly invisible network of complex relationships and processes, a mysterious organism, who lives, breathes and pulsates near the heart of Burgas. This tender oasis would not be the same without its strange interchange, hidden in its colourful water and salt crystals, without its inhabitants and people.

Atanasovsko Lake exhibition is dedicated to the symbiosis, because it makes it a special place, we see it today. The magic mix of invisible connections, compelling feelings, enchanting colors, lights, scents and sounds may not be fully explained, it must be experienced.

Let us tell you about the Lake, but not just with facts, but with a mixture of themes, pictures, sounds, games, flight over the lagoon, with memories of the past and mostly - with a smile.

We present to you our exhibition about the Atanasovsko Lake,
In the way we feel it,
In the way we want you to see it.
Our symbiotic Lake.

Symbiotic Exhibition is a team work of Mariana Sarbova (GamaLogika - architect), Diana Pavlova (BBF - ecologist), Galina Milkova and Nedko Nikolov (Think Forward - architects). The drawings are done by Mariana Sarbova, the animation is created in Pavilion studio and the texts are written by the team of Salt of Life Project.

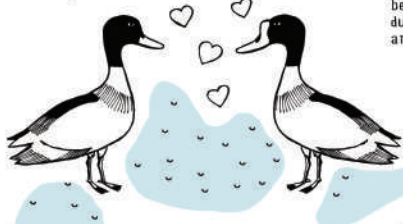
All photos and videos are provided for free by their authors, for which we are cordially grateful.

The exhibition is created within The Salt of Life Project of BBF, implemented in partnership with BSPB and Black Sea Salinas Ltd. It is financed by LIFE+ Programme of European Commission.

www.saltoflife.biodiversity.bg



The salty Atanasovsko Lake freezes only during the coldest winters, so it is a favourite place for wintering and roosting of Dalmatian pelicans, Greater white-fronted geese, Northern pintails, Green-winged teal, etc.



The lake is the most significant place for breeding of the Common shelduck in our country.

More frequent guest here is the Pink Flamingo. Separate birds prefer to spend the winter in the lake, possibly because of the milder conditions during the last years, the calmness and food abundance.



The climate change impact is more evident.

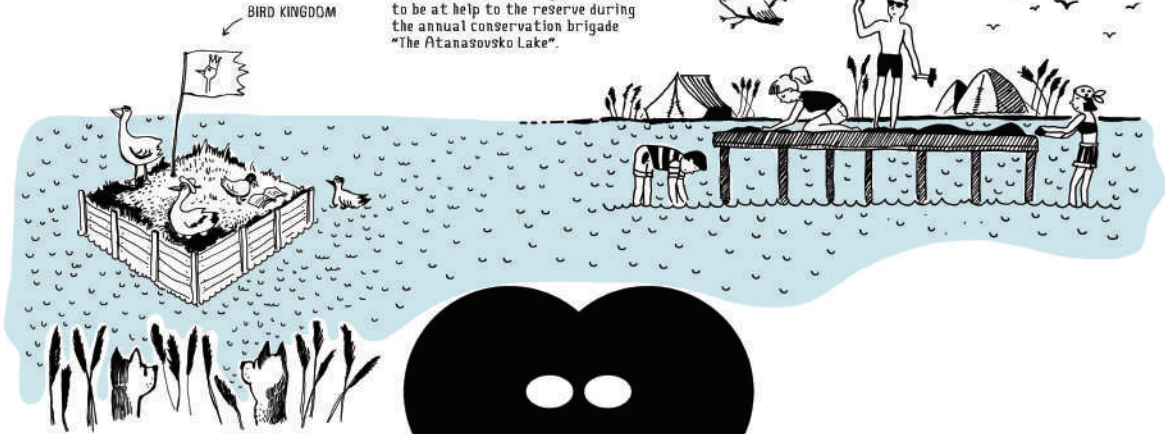
The strong rainfalls and floods during the last years left many birds without home and the Salinas company without salt-yield.

It is important that the lake be protected: for this is purposed the bypass canal. When it is in a good condition, it protects it from floods:



The lake in its current appearance is entirely made by man.

At the end of August volunteers from the whole country arrive here to be at help to the reserve during the annual conservation brigade "The Atanasovsko Lake".



At the end of the 80ies of 20th century volunteers built up here the first in Bulgaria artificial islands for birds nesting in order to ensure more and safer places for raising their little ones.

"THE POINT"



From here has started the professional experience of the best ornithologists in Bulgaria.

The best is to visit the Atanasovsko Lake and to feel the lake atmosphere in live, but while planning your trip, look through the binoculars in order to prepare what to expect in the lagoon.

"The Point" is a world-known place for bird-watching.

People from all over the world come here in autumn to watch the large flocks of storks, pelicans and birds of prey, which travel extremely long distances on their route to faraway Africa.

At the end of August on the lagoon coast itself an unusual event happens – the Salt Festival, which gathers people with ideas, challenges and adventures for the birds, salt and lake.



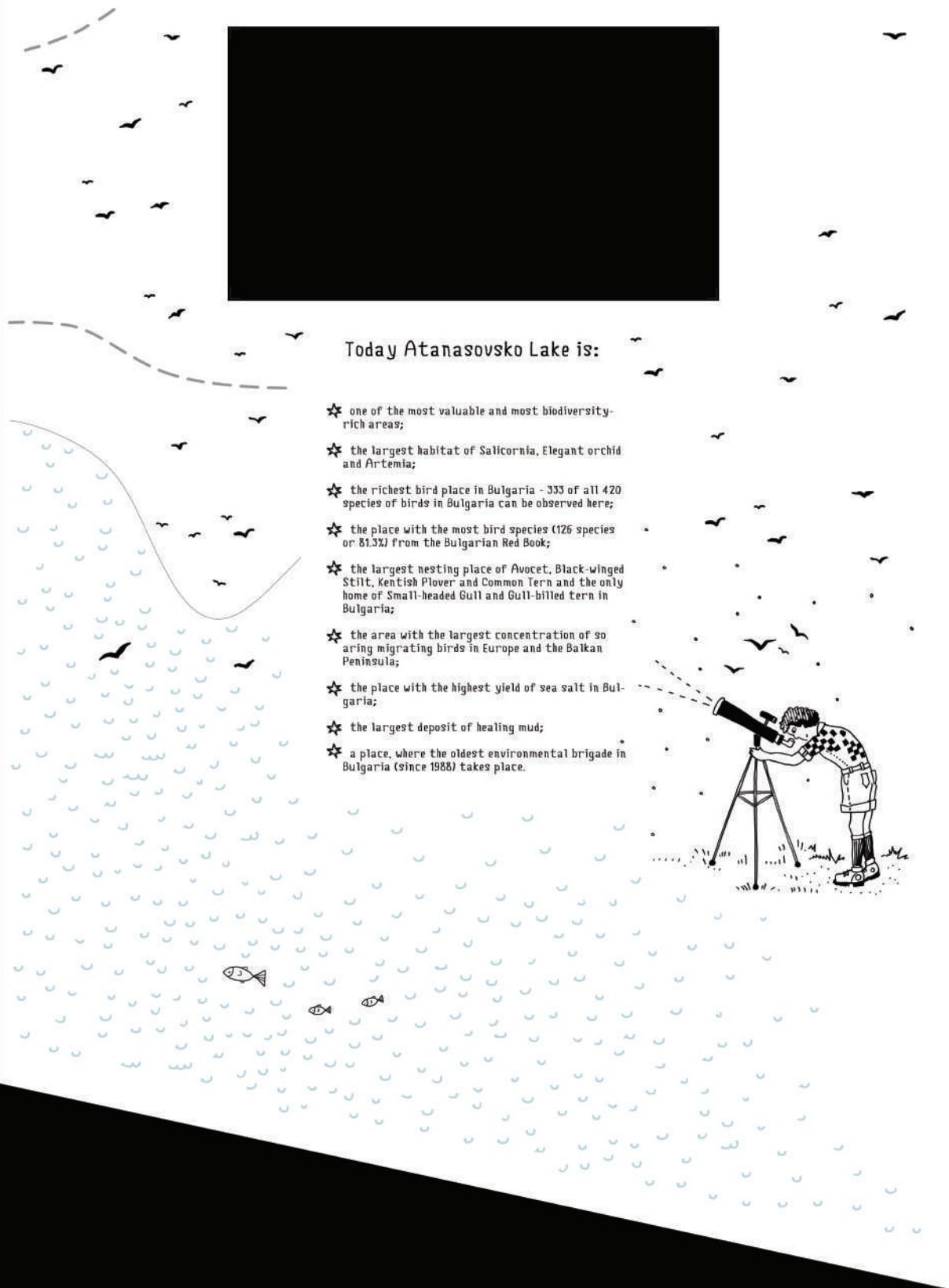
Many artists are inspired by the remarkable lake forms and colours, by the queer salt traces, by birds' flight, by the fascinating sunrises and sunsets.

Atanasovsko Lake – the Lagoon of the countless flocks, dazzling salt, hot summers and fierce winter wind.
A Lagoon of the Point (a famous place for birdwatching) and the Brigade, where the roads of many people start and give a direction to the nature conservation in the end of August.
A Lagoon of the purple water, coloring in a wonderful palette one of our last wild places.
A Lagoon of the salt workers, who keep the secret of centuries-old traditions and under the scorching sun collect salt.
A Lagoon of migration and eternal flight of birds, who found here security and protection on the long road to home.
A Lagoon of the sun, gleaming in each diamond crystal of salt, warming the silhouettes of thousands of birds nestled in the silence of the sunset.



Today Atanasovsko Lake is:

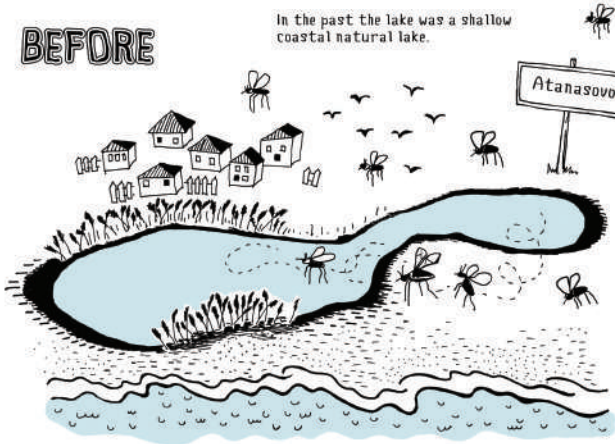
- ★ one of the most valuable and most biodiversity-rich areas;
- ★ the largest habitat of *Salicornia*, Elegant orchid and *Artemia*;
- ★ the richest bird place in Bulgaria - 333 of all 420 species of birds in Bulgaria can be observed here;
- ★ the place with the most bird species (126 species or 81.3%) from the Bulgarian Red Book;
- ★ the largest nesting place of Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish Plover and Common Tern and the only home of Small-headed Gull and Gull-billed tern in Bulgaria;
- ★ the area with the largest concentration of soaring migrating birds in Europe and the Balkan Peninsula;
- ★ the place with the highest yield of sea salt in Bulgaria;
- ★ the largest deposit of healing mud;
- ★ a place, where the oldest environmental brigade in Bulgaria (since 1988) takes place.



The lake is a complex system of invisible mutual relations where there are no useless elements and the balance is fragile.

BEFORE

In the past the lake was a shallow coastal natural lake.



It was named after the nearby village Atanasovo, today the Burgas residential district Izgrev.

In the beginning of 20th century the malaria in the Burgas region expanded to epidemical scope. The issue was raised for draining of the three lakes around the town which infest the mosquitoes.

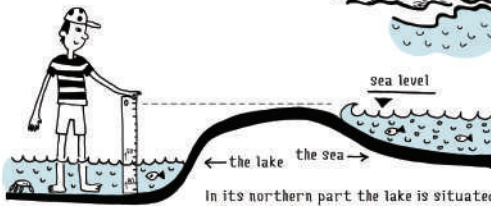
In 1906 the Atanassovsko Lake was turned into salt-pans.

The larvae of the malaria mosquitoes cannot exist in over-salty waters and this turned to be a proper decision for coping with the epidemic.

The villages spread and became part of Burgas. For the town needs a road was built which divided the lake into two parts.

NOWADAYS

Due to traditional salt-producing the Atanassovsko Lake has been turned from a swamp infesting mosquitoes and malaria into one of the most valuable wetlands in Europe.



In its northern part the lake is situated at 1,5 m below the sea level, which makes it the lowest point of the relief of Bulgaria.

Atanassovsko Lake is a shallow lake. Its average depth is only 30 cm and its waters are from salty to over-salty.

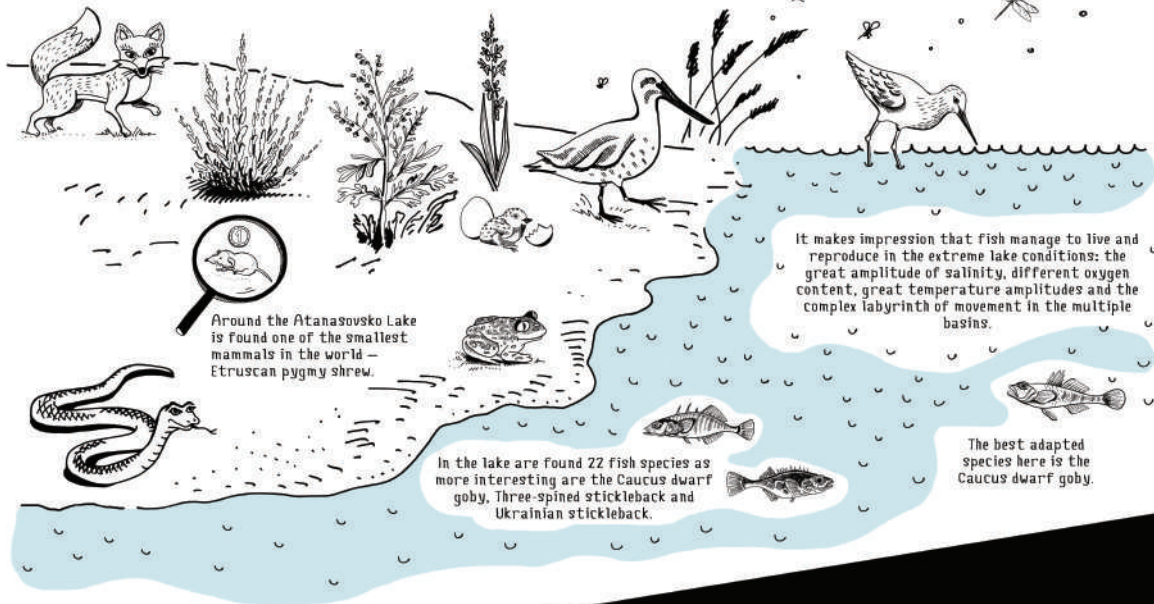
Among the most typical lagoon inhabitants are the plovers. You can see how the nature has adapted them to this environment.



Despite the town nearness the lake bounds in life.

Glasswort and Sea wormwood cover vast territories on the mainland and decorate the lake with their pastel colours.

The elegant green-veined orchid has chosen exactly this place for its largest habitat in the country.



Around the Atanassovsko Lake is found one of the smallest mammals in the world – Etruscan pygmy shrew.

In the lake are found 22 fish species as more interesting are the Caucus dwarf goby, Three-spined stickleback and Ukrainian stickleback.

It makes impression that fish manage to live and reproduce in the extreme lake conditions: the great amplitude of salinity, different oxygen content, great temperature amplitudes and the complex labyrinth of movement in the multiple basins.

The best adapted species here is the Caucus dwarf goby.

Because of its natural value and vulnerability, the Lake is protected by the Law via several different, by their goals and regimes, protected areas.

In 1980, with the enthusiasm of many people, the northern half of the Lake is declared as a nature reserve and the southern – a buffer zone, which later in 2007 became a protected area.

Over the years, the Lake has acquired even more titles and today it is already:

- A wetland of international importance, included in the Ramsar Convention list
- Globally important birds area, announced by BirdLife International
- A site of European importance in the conservation of rare and endangered species of birds according to CORINE biotopes
- Natura 2000 site, a part of the European Ecological Network.

Total area of the lake is 1960 ha, it is nearly 9 km long and 4.3 km wide.

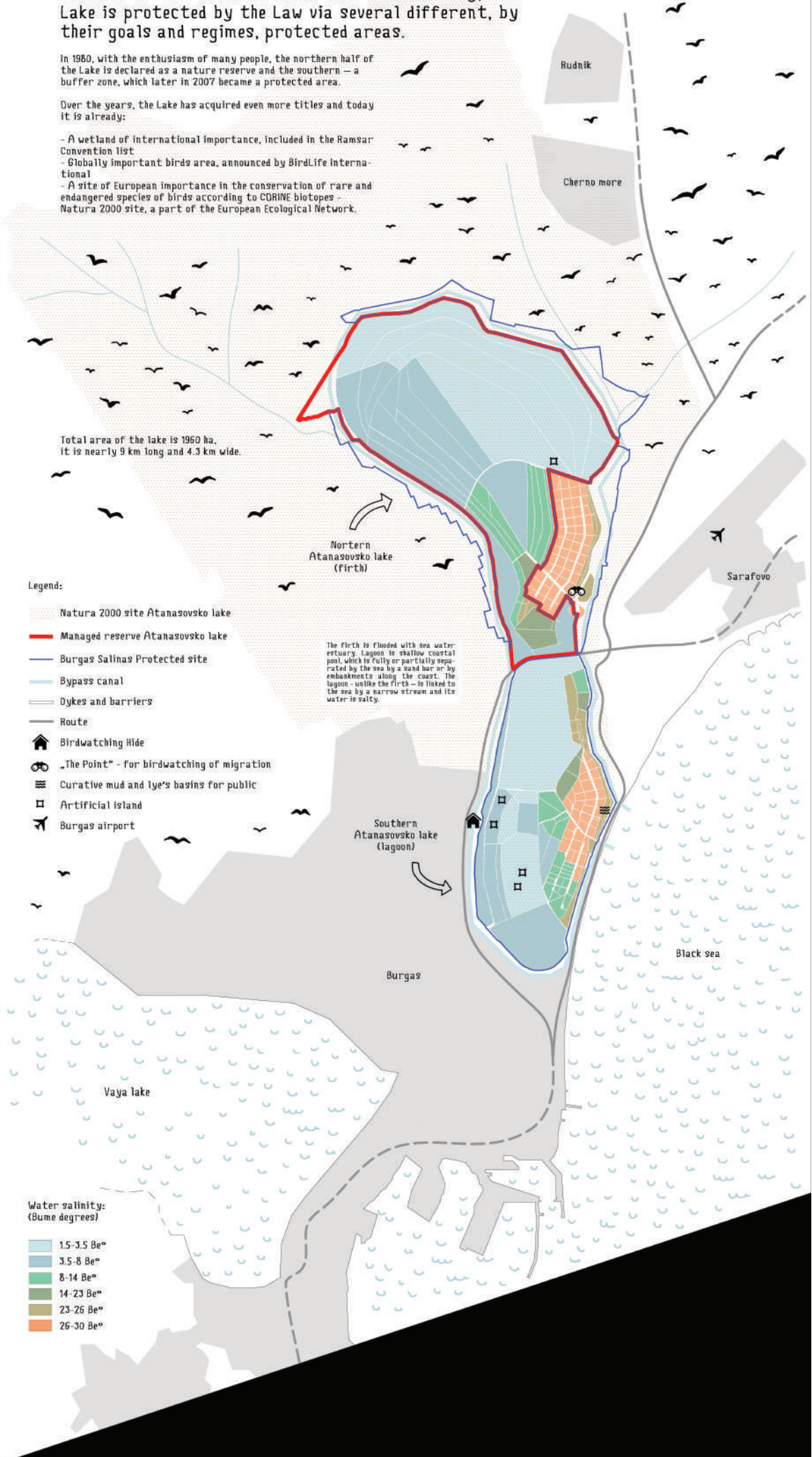
Legend:

-  Natura 2000 site Atanasovsko lake
-  Managed reserve Atanasovsko lake
-  Burgas Salinas Protected site
-  Bypass canal
-  Dykes and barriers
-  Route
-  Birdwatching Hide
-  „The Point“ - for birdwatching of migration
-  Curative mud and lye's basins for public
-  Artificial island
-  Burgas airport

The firth is flooded with sea water estuary. Lagoon is shallow coastal pool, which is fully or partially separated by the sea by a sand bar or by embankments along the coast. The lagoon - unlike the firth - is linked to the sea by a narrow stream and the water is salty.

Water salinity:
(Bume degrees)

-  1.5-3.5 Be°
-  3.5-8 Be°
-  8-14 Be°
-  14-23 Be°
-  23-26 Be°
-  26-30 Be°



VIA PONTICA

Since ancient times above the lake and the Black Sea coast has passed the bird migration route, "Via Pontica" (second largest in Europe).

Over the Atanasovsko Lake the air highway narrows and forms one of the most important in Europe, the so called narrow frontages of migration.

This is the richest in birds place in whole Bulgaria

The various habitats ensure ideal conditions for breeding, feeding and roosting of many bird species.

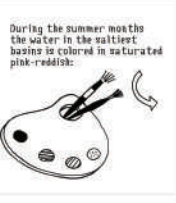
333 species of total 420 for the country.

For the needs of the salt-producing the lake is divided into basins with the support of dikes and barriers. By a complex system of canals salty sea water is flown into it and the freshwater is led into the sea.

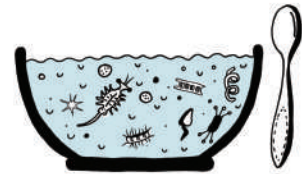
The production of salt is carried out in a traditional way more than 100 years - by solar evaporation of concentrated sea water.



The birds nest on dykes and barriers and in the water of the basins they feed on specific organisms.



During the summer months the water in the saltiest basins is colored in saturated pink-reddish.



The microscopic algae and animals, worms, mollusca, crustaceans and larvae are main food for many of the lake inhabitants.

The Atanasovsko Lake is the place with greatest production of sea salt in Bulgaria (up to 50 thousand tons per year).

The brine shrimp is one of the most tolerable to the high salinity lake inhabitant. Here is its largest habitat in Bulgaria.



The Atanasovsko Lake is also renowned for its medicinal eye and healing mud.



The man benefits from the lake in various ways.

Except for its main purpose - the salt production - the lake is a place for science and education; for sport and culture, for leisure and walking, etc.

The lake gives unique charm to the town.

The roads around the lake are a favourite place for the Burgas cyclists and sportsmen.

