

UKRAINE: Helping to ensure a positive future for the Danube and its delta

Ukraine's Danube Day was all about adventure. Youngsters had the chance to become real botanists, ornithologists and ichthyologists (fish experts) as they explored the Danube Delta. Their mission: to record plants and animals and clean-up the river channels. Organised by MAMA-86 (with support from the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Coca-Cola Ukraine), 114 children from Danube Youth Clubs were able to experience the wondrous wildlife of the region.

Budding young ecologists from the Vylkove Danube Club took part in a 2-day safari. Searching for the *Living Silver in the Danube*, the expedition set out to record the most threatened fish species. The ultimate goal: to find the elusive sturgeon. The Danube is the only Black Sea river that still provides a natural home for spawning sturgeon. Experts from the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve trained the children on how to identify young sturgeon in the Solomon, Ochakiv and Shidnyy branches. The children also netted, measured and weighed other species before returning them to the water, with the largest catch totalling 634 fish from the carp family!

Lucky participants from the Izmail and Vylkove Danube Clubs took part in a 7-day safari to the Kugurluy and Kartal lakes near Izmail. 20 children joined the expedition to study the lakes' plants and animals – particularly exciting as little is known about the rich variety of wildlife found there. With ecologists and teachers on hand to help, the children gathered and identified plants, discovered which were the rarest 'Red Book' species and which were poisonous; studied animals and undertook hydro-biological analyses to establish the lakes' ecological status. They also learnt about local history and traditions. Evening times were spent round the fire, singing songs and having fun.

Three tractor loads of rubbish was the outcome of three inspiring clean-up days carried out by 43 children from Izmail, Odessa and Vylkove clubs. The children worked hard, managing to clear an impressive 800m of Vylkove's *yeryks* (streets).

Danube Day: more than just water!

For general information view www.danubeday.org or email: jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org.



All three events were part of an awareness campaign run by MAMA-86 and Coca-Cola which culminated in a Danube Day press event and expedition to the very endpoint of the Danube. 40 children joined the Danube Day partner organisations and presented the results of their work in front of journalists. Even the very youngest girls and boys joined in by taking part in a *Danube Fairy World* drawing competition. The symbolic *0km* mark, the point at which the Danube becomes lost in the huge waters of the Black Sea, was the destination for the final Danube Day event of 2006. The children greatly enjoyed the chance to swim, play in the sand, make artworks and sail on board the *Pelican*. On reaching the rivers' endpoint, the youngsters cleaned up the area, competing to see who could gather the most rubbish!

In addition, the Ministry for Environmental Protection produced the Ukrainian version of the Danube Day fish-poster and distributed it widely!

“More children were involved in a wider range of local [Danube Day] activities in Ukraine than ever before.”

Anna Tsvietkova, MAMA-86.

Ukraine

Ministry for Environmental Protection • MAMA-86 (Ukrainian National Environmental NGO) • MAMA-86-Odessa • Danube youth clubs from Vylkove, Izmail and Odessa • Danube Biosphere Reserve • Coca-Cola HBC • Coca-Cola Ukraine •

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