

8th September 2021

Dear Honourable Mayor Vitali Klitschko

Re: Wetland Park Osokorky

I hope you are well, and send you warm greetings from the United Kingdom. I am writing regarding the wetland park Osokorky, in Kyiv, Ukraine. From what we understand, the wetland park is under threat from construction. For all cities, open green and blue spaces are very valuable for a number of reasons.

I am based at WWT (the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust) UK, one of the International Organisation Partners of the Ramsar Convention. I help to run a project called the World Wetland Network, a group of NGOs and civil society groups that work to protect wetlands across the world. We are connected to the Ramsar Convention, the global agreement on wetlands, of which Ukraine has been a member since 1991. We welcome your commitment to the wise use of wetlands, and your designation of 50 Ramsar Sites across the country.

WWT runs a number of wetland centres, including urban centres in London and Washington. Our London Wetland Centre is a globally renowned centre, launched in 2000, and with around 250,000 visitors every year, including many international visitors looking for examples of good practice in urban wetland design and function. I would like to explain why urban wetland parks like London Wetland Centre and the Osokorky Wetland Park are so important, and worth protecting.

Wetlands provide many benefits. Firstly, for wildlife, as the most biodiverse habitat in the world. 60% of species have at least part of their life cycle in wetland habitats. Secondly, for people, they provide an amazing resource for recreation, tourism, health and wellbeing, and wetland produces such as fish, rice and timber. Thirdly, they represent a major store of carbon, helping to keep carbon locked away and not contributing to climate change. They also serve to lessen the effects of climate change, storing water in times of heavy rain, and releasing it slowly in time of drought.

Wetlands support the economy as well, particularly those near urban settlements. Our London Wetland Centre has been shown to have increased the price of houses nearby. They make areas more desirable to live near. The tourism and recreation activities it generates also bring money into the local area, directly by people employed at the centre, as well as spending money in local hotels, restaurants and other service industries.

We urge you to consider protecting your wetlands and recognising the precious resource that they are. The Ramsar Convention has recently created an accreditation scheme, for Wetland Cities of the world. Perhaps this could be a prize worth applying for, showing the world that your wetlands are a vital part of the city.



If you would like any further help or information, please let us know. For more information on the London Wetland Centre, visit our website here <https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/london>.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHRISTOPHER'.

Chris Rostron
Deputy Chair, World Wetland Network