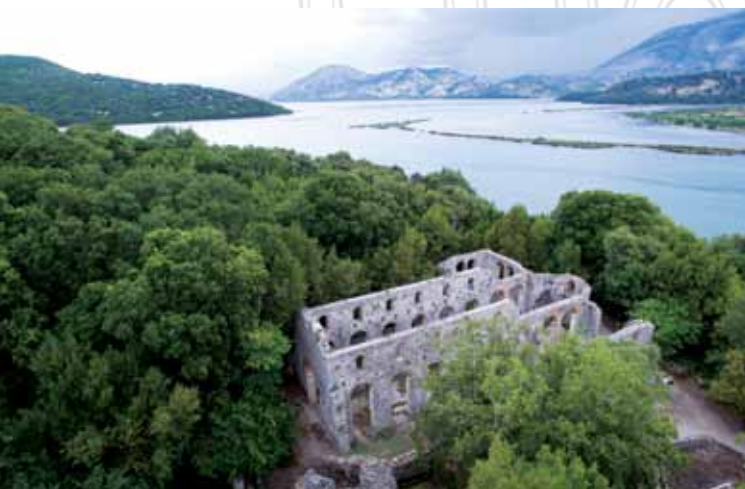


Butrint wetland ecosystem is an area with rich biodiversity, with a variety of habitats and species. There are about 1500-2000 insect species, 105 fish species, 247 bird species, of which 70% are water birds, 10 amphibians and 28 reptiles (representing 60-75 % of the country's herpetofauna), and 39 mammals (cc. 60 % of the country's mammalofauna). Of the mammals we can mention the *bats, foxes, wolf, wild pig, marten, rabbit, wild cat* etc.

About 140 plants and animals species found in Butrint National Park are of National Conservation Concern, while 35 animal species (2 Amphibians; 6 Reptiles; 13 Birds and 14 Mammals), are of global conservation interest (IUCN, 2001).



The flora of Butrint is rich and diverse, consisting of 800-900 species of plants of which 32 plants are part of the Albanian Red List. 16 of them are considered as Endangered, 12 as Rare and 4 species are insufficiently known.

Endangered Plant Species: *Laurus nobilis, Quercus ilex, Origanum vulgare, Capparis spinosa*

Rare Plant Species: *Limonium anfractum, Scabiosa epirota, Euphorbia dendroides, Alkana corcyrensis*

Insufficiently Known Plant Species: *Centaurea spruneri, Scabiosa epirota, Stachys sericophylla*

The natural significance of Butrint Wetlands were recognized by the Ramsar Convention in 2002. In 2005, Butrint was declared a National Park. The national and regional institutions competent for the protection of natural sites and the tourism development are the Ministry for Tourism and the Environment and the National Agency for Protected Areas, which operates in the region through the Regional Agency for Protected Areas, Vlorë.

"Let me tell you that Buthrotum [Butrint] is to Corcyra [Corfu] What Antium is to Rome – the quietest, coolest, most pleasant place in the world"

Cicero, Letters to Atticus (56 BC)



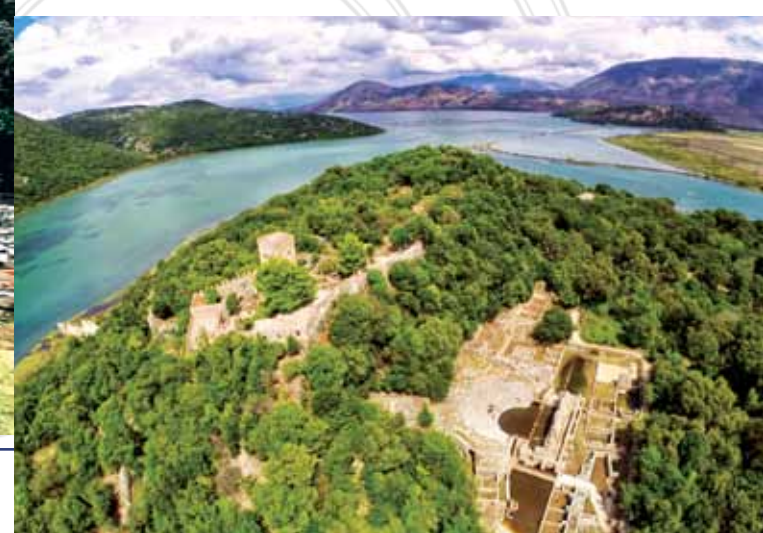
The ancient city of Butrint, together with its surroundings, constitutes an extraordinary cultural landscape, which has developed organically over centuries. Inhabited since prehistory, Butrint has been a testimony of the rise and fall of the great empires that dominated the region. According to classical mythology, Buthrotum was founded by exiles fleeing the fall of Troy. On arrival, Priam's son Helenus sacrificed an ox, which struggled ashore wounded and died on the sea shore. Taking this as a good omen, the place was named Buthrotum meaning "wounded ox".

The ancient city of Butrint was included in the National List of Cultural Monuments in 1948 and in 1992 it was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site based on cultural Criterion (iii) as: *"...an archaeological site that provides valuable evidence of ancient and medieval civilizations on the territory of modern Albania"* and was extended in 1999.

The Board of National Park, chaired by the Minister of Culture, is responsible for managing the World Heritage Property. The Office for the Administration and Coordination of the National Park is responsible for the administration of the areas of cultural importance. The National Institute for Cultural Heritage and the Institute of Archeology are responsible for research, excavation and conservation of architectural and archaeological remains.

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<https://www.monumentnature.com/>



Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co-existence in Butrint

Butrint is a microcosm of Mediterranean history. It is a magical landscape created by a rare combination of archaeology and monuments with the exceptional biodiversity and diverse natural, semi-natural and artificial habitats, that illustrates the interaction between man and nature over three millennia. The site, surrounded by the waters of the Vivari Channel and Lake Butrinti and hidden by woodland, is a place with outstanding universal values. The unique combination of archaeology and nature creates a special atmosphere unique in the Mediterranean.

Butrint presents the highest figures ever registered in an Albanian wetland complex regarding the diversity of its flora and fauna, including nearly 17% of the country's species.

Butrint National Park stands out for its high biodiversity: there are 27 types of habitats, of which 5 are priority habitats for Europe. It has been listed among the key biodiversity areas of the Mediterranean, as well as a National Park, RAMSAR site and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

If you walk within the ancient city of Butrint, it is impossible to encounter the water turtles *Emys orbicularis* and *Mauremys rivulata*. *Mauremys rivulata* lives together with *Emys orbicularis* in Butrint.

POND TURTLES (Linnaeus, 1758) - *Emys orbicularis*

Widespread in Albania, in the plains and hilly zone up to the altitude of 1000m. It is encountered in various watery surroundings such as swamps, canals, pools, streams, water reservoirs, freshwater lakes as well as in brackish ponds close to the sea. It prefers waters rich in aquatic plants.

Haxhiu, Idriz; "The Reptilia of Albania - Species composition, distribution, habitats", 1998



THE EPIRUS WATER FROG - *Pelophylax epeiroticus*

The Epirus water frog (*Pelophylax epeiroticus*) is a species of frog in the Ranidae family. It is found in western Greece, including Corfu, and the southern areas of Albania in Butrinti Lake.

Like most frogs, Epirus water frogs show sexual dimorphism. Males can grow to 74 mm in length, with females growing larger up to 84 mm. The dorsal side is typically green with irregular black spots. The underside is pale. Male vocal sacs are olive aside from mating season, when they can turn a dark gray.



TOOTHCARP OF BUTRINT (Sauvage, 1880) - *Valencia letourneuxi*

The Toothcarp (Corfu killifish) *Valencia letourneuxi*, is an endemic species to the western part of the Ionian Ecoregion, and has been reported in Albania from a single location, Butrinti Lake. Recently, in June 2019, the species has been rediscovered at a very low population density (only 11 individuals collected) in a spring-fed stream in the vicinity of Butrinti Lake. *V. letourneuxi* has been included in the lists of the Bern Convention as an endangered and strictly protected species, and has been characterized as a priority species for conservation in Annex II of the European Union Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. It was also classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN on 1996.

Despite its small size it is of particular importance because it serves as an indicator of the environment where it grows and has a narrow geographical distribution.

Shumka S, Kalogianni E, Šanda R, Vukić J, Shumka L, Zimmerman B. 2020.



POND TURTLES (Valenciennes, 1833) - *Mauremys rivulata*

Common in western Albania in the low and hilly regions which belong to the hilly and lowland Mediterranean climatic region. It lives in watery surroundings with or without swamps, canals, pools, or streams, as well as in brackish water near the sea.

Haxhiu, Idriz; "The Reptilia of Albania - Species composition, distribution, habitats", 1998



THE MARGINATED TORTOISE (Schoepff, 1792) - *Testudo marginata*

It is encountered in southwestern Albania. This species was found only in recent years in some places in the Saranda district. It lives in zone in sympatry with *T. Hermanni*. It prefers places with bushes and plants, with stones and rocks, and also lives in valleys with dense vegetation.

Haxhiu, Idriz; "The Reptilia of Albania - Species composition, distribution, habitats", 1998



BLACK SEA MUSSELS - *mytilus galloprovincialis*

Since 1968, Butrinti Lake is well known for the cultivation of artificial rearing of black sea mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*), the amount of which from 2000 to 7000 kg for year.

