

Summary

The Balaton region is particularly rich in natural values, offering a variety of sights for hiking tourists and visitors starting off for an excursion. The Balaton "Nagyberek", a unique natural area extends for almost 20 kilometres along the lake in the northern part of Somogy county. In the past the entire area was covered by the waters of lake Balaton, but by now the open water has withdrawn, to leave a unique landscape behind.

The Nagyberek is an entirely flat area, with differences in elevation hardly reaching a few metres, this, however being enough for a variety of different habitat types to develop, ranging from marshes to wet meadows and to arid sandy grasslands. The most extensive and thus most characteristic habitats are various grasslands: bog and marshy meadows, wet pastures and hayfields. The most low-lying areas are occupied by marshes, the most typical being sedge marshes and willow marshes. The most valuable habitats are wetlands including reedbeds and marshes covering several hundred hectares, and the canal network with a length of 220 kilometres, which have valuable plant communities as well as are a true paradise for birds. Not only the amount of nesting birds is important, but these water bodies provide resting and feeding places for migrating birds as well.

The most significant are of the region is the "Fehérvíz Marsh Nature Reserve", where the aim has been to conserve remnants of ancient marshy areas. There is a wide choice for tourists here. The area is freely accessible, therefore visitors can take a nice walk or a bicycle ride, moreover, there is a variety of horseriding programmes for those interested. The small railway departing from Balatonfenyves and crossing the protected area ensures a special experience, and together with other local programmes offers an day full of entertainment.