

Bulgaria's Lakes

Bulgaria's natural lakes (coastal, glacial, karst, landslide, by-river and tectonic) are concentrated along the Black Sea coast and the Danube, and in the alpine regions of the Rila and Pirin ranges.

With reference to their location and hydrographic characteristics, the coastal lakes are divided into three groups: the Dobrudzha lakes (Durankulak Lake, Ezerets Lake, Shabla Lake, Shabla Tuzla, Nanevo Tuzla and Balchik Tuzla); the Varna lakes (the Varna and Beloslav Lakes); and the Burgas lakes (Burgas Lake, Atanasovsko Lake, Mandrensko Lake and Pomorie Lake, Alepu, Arkutino and Stomoplo).

The glacial lakes have formed as a result of the glacial activity during the Quaternary period in the Rila and Pirin ranges.

There are roughly 260 such lakes. They occupy the bottoms of the cirques, cirque terraces, and trough valleys, and they are located at an altitude of 2,000-2,600 meters.

The highest is the Gorno Polezhansko Lake in the Pirin (2,710 meters above sea level), and the lowest is Lokvata Lake (1,858 meters above sea level). The longest is Gorno Ribno Lake in the Rila range (801 m).

More than half of the lakes have areas of less than 10 hectares, while the largest is the Smradlivo Lake in the Rila range, at 212 hectares; the largest lake in the Pirins is Popovsko Lake, measuring some 112 hectares).

Most of these lakes have a maximum depth of 2-5 m, while the deepest the Lake Okoto in the Rila range, at 37 m. The most famous lakes in the Rila Mountains are the Seven Rila Lakes, the Marichini Lakes, the Urdini Lakes, the Ribni Lakes, etc.; and the most famous ones in Pirin include the Vasilashki lakes, the Popovi lakes, the Vlahinski lakes, and the Banderishki lakes.

The most important tectonic lakes are the Skalensko Lake (in the Stidovski section of the Eastern Balkan Mountains), the Kupensko lake (in the central region of the Balkan Mountains), Panichishte (in the Northern part of Rila Mountains) and Rabishko Lake, which has been dammed.

The only relatively important lake among the coastal lakes and wetlands is Srebarna (a UNESCO natural heritage site).

Typical landslide lakes are to be found along the Black Sea coast north of Varna and near the Aladzha Monastery. The Smolyan lakes are located in a vast landslip area north of the city, and consist of three larger and a few smaller lakes.

Medicinal mud deposits are located near the Shabla Tuzla, the Tuzlata, Varna Lake, Pomorie, Atanasovsko Lake, and the Mandra dam. There are turf deposits near the Batak dam in the Rhodopes, in the village of Baykalovo in the Konyavska Mountains), in the town of Straldzha, in the central region of the Tundzha River valley), near Varna Lake, and in the village of Sadovo, in the Gornotrakiyska lowlands).

There are deposits of curative mud in the springs of Marikostinovo village in the Sandanski-Petrich valley; in the city of Banya in the Karlovo valley; in the canals at Ovcha Kupel in Sofia; in the cities of Velingrad and Asenovgrad; at Slivenski Bani, Starozagorski Bani, and Haskovski Bani; in the cities of Sapareva Banya, Blagoevgrad, Hisarya, Pavel Banya, Pomorie, and Primorsko; and at the resort complexes Albena and Sunny Beach; in the city of Burgas; and elsewhere.

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