



Closer  
to Nature

## PRESS RELEASE

### New Hiking Destination near Prague – Bird-watching Site at Litovice Pond

**Hostivice (January 18, 2011); The Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP) and their general partner NET4GAS jointly present a great new destination for getaways near Prague to the general public: a bird-watching perch on the bank of Litovice Pond. This marks the forty-seventh site made accessible for nature lovers under the Closer to Nature program; another eight are set to open in the course of this year.**

Litovice Pond, or “Litovický rybník”, is a part of the “Hostivické rybníky” nature sanctuary, located in the Central Bohemian Region not far from the western border of the capital city of Prague. Aside from the eponymous local ponds, the nature sanctuary also serves to protect the nearby forest and wetland areas, with the main focus being on protecting the numerous birds that either come here to nest or are endemic to the region all year round.

A unique 2.5 km educational trail intersects the “Hostivické rybníky” sanctuary. Panels have been installed at the entrance, which provide information and show a map of the trail. Individual stops along the trail, however, are only marked with numbers (with a visitors’ guide being accessible on the Internet).

The third stop along the trail is a new bird-watching perch, which facilitates the observation of birds on the surface of Litovice Pond and in the vegetation near the bank. Previously, the propagation of reeds along the pond’s bank obstructed the view of the pond’s open water surface. This bird-watching spot thus adds to the attractiveness of the local hiking paths used by day-trippers and the local residents of Hostivice alike. “At the perch itself, panels with photographs and information on the various local species make it easy for visitors to identify the birds that they are seeing,” says Jiří Kučera of the ČSOP Local Chapter Hostivice.

“This bird-watching perch is a beautiful example of how we put the mission statement of NET4GAS Closer to Nature into action. People who come here really *are* closer to nature: thanks to the elevated platform, they can watch birds from a closer distance, and learn all sorts of things about them, in an unobtrusive manner,” adds Jan Nehoda, GM of NET4GAS, the general partner of ČSOP. Litovice Pond is a regular nesting site for ducks, swans, pochards (or “diving ducks”), grebes, crakes, and rails. Cormorants, herons, gadwalls, teals, curlews, seagulls, and kingfishers make regular visits, usually during their migration in spring or fall.

You are cordially invited for a walk around the pond – don’t forget your binoculars!

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**The Czech Union for Nature Conservation** is a civic association of people who share an active interest in nature conservation and the environment. ČSOP's mission is to protect and restore nature, the landscape and the environment, to promote environmental education and support sustainable living. The Union currently has 9,000 members coming from the ranks of professional naturalists, experienced volunteers as well as pure enthusiasts who simply love nature. In 2009, ČSOP celebrated its 30th anniversary. For more information please go to [www.csop.cz](http://www.csop.cz).

**NET4GAS** is aware of its social responsibility and therefore develops and constantly deepens its concept of sponsorship and corporate philanthropy. The company acts as a reliable and safe gas transmission system operator and develops a responsible environmental policy that takes into account the interests of future generations. The NET4GAS long-term sponsorship strategy - which is put into practice through the NET4GAS Closer to Nature programme - springs from the close relation between the line of business pursued by NET4GAS on the one hand, and nature-conservation and environmental issues on the other. Supporting also various other entities, NET4GAS is the general partner of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation and of the Peat Bog Revitalization project in the Ore Mountains, organized by the civic association DAPHNE ČR – Institute for Applied Ecology. For detailed information on the locations newly opened to the public and on other natural spots of interest, as well as for destination tips, please see [www.blizprirode.cz](http://www.blizprirode.cz).