Information Sheet on Belarusian part of Transboundary Ramsar Wetlands "Stokhid-Pripyat – Prostyr" (RIS)

2006-2008 version

5

1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

: A. Kozulin, M. Maximenkov, B. Yaminski, O Belyakova, S. Volosiuk,. Institute of Zoology, National Science Academy of Belarus, Academicheskaya Str. 27, 220072, Minsk,
tel: 375 172 840522, e-mail:borey@biobel.bas-net.by

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

Designation date | Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:
16 May 2008

3. Country: Belarus

4. Name of the Ramsar site:
The precise name of the designated site in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parentheses after the precise name.
Prostyr
(Belarusian part of the Transboundary Ramsar Site « Stokhid-Pripyat-Prostyr")

5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for (tick one box only)**:**
a) Designation of a new Ramsar site ❑; or
b) Updated information on an existing Ramsar site yes

6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

a) Site boundary and area

The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged: ❑

or
If the site boundary has changed:
i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ❑; or
ii) the boundary has been extended **yes**; or
iii) the boundary has been restricted** ❑

and/or

If the site area has changed:
i) the area has been measured more accurately ❑; or
ii) the area has been extended **yes** ; or
iii) the area has been reduced** ❑

** **Important note**: If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:

Changes in the ecological character of the Ramsar site were caused by the following factors.
Extension in the territory of the corresponding state reserve "Prostyr" and efforts for more accurate conservation of the catchment area (detailed explanations are presented below)

---

7. Map of site:
Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:

i**) a hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): yes;

ii**) an electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) yes;

iii) **a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** no.

b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:
e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park, etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

Boundaries of the updated Ramsar site are aligned with the extended boundaries of the national landscape reserve "Prostyr"

---

8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes): 51°56′00″N 26°05′15″E

9. General location:
Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town. Brest Region, Pinsk District

10. Elevation: (average and/or max. & min.) 139 – 141m above the sea level

11. Area: (in hectares) 9,500

12. Overview: Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

The wetland is situated between the rivers Pripyat, Prostyr and Styr. Sedge and reed fen mires dominate the site, with black alder groves and scrub growing here and there along the river banks, and floodplain meadows – on the elevated grounds. Haymaking is the main type of economic activity. Although drainage canals cover a considerable portion of the area, the condition of the wetland is near-natural. It is a breeding ground of the globally endangered Aquatic Warbler (10-100 pairs). One of the most important nesting and concentration sites during the migration of wetland birds in Belarus. A salient feature of this wetland is its transboundary positioning. Within this mire massif on the Ukrainian side, there is the regional national park "Pripyat-Stokhod" and the Ramsar site of the same title.

13. Ramsar Criteria:
Tick the box under each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11). All Criteria which apply should be ticked.

1 •	2 •	3 •	4 •	5 •	6 •	7	8 •	9
yes	yes	❑	yes	❑	❑	❑	yes	❑

14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:
Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

Criteria 1: The wetland is internationally important because it is a typical example of floodplain fen mire preserved in the near-natural condition. Eutrophic floodplain mires, once typical of the Belarusian Polesie Area, have become rare in Belarus as a result of heavy drainage activities, and have practically disappeared in Central Europe. The wetland is one of the largest in Europe, enjoys a transboundary location adjoined by the Pripyat-Stokhod Ramsar site on the Ukrainian side. The analysis of vegetation composition showed that the site is known to support the following Natura-2000 habitat types: 3150 - Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation; 3270 – Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodion rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation; 6450 – northern boreal alluvial meadows; 9080 – Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods

Criteria 2: The wetland is of international importance because it supports 30 to 500 pairs of Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* – a globally endangered species. The wetland is an important bird area of international significance.

In addition, this area is known to support the following species listed in the National Red Data Book of Belarus – 25 bird species (Bittern *Botaurus stellaris,* Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus,* Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina,* Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga,* Snake Eagle *Circaetus Gallicus,* White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla,* Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus,* Black Stork *Ciconia nigra,* Crane *Grus grus,* Great Snipe *Galinago media,* Great White Heron *Egretta alba,* Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo,* Little owl *Athene noctua,* Corncrake *Crex crex,* Little Crake *Porzana parva,* Ruff *Philomachus pugnax,* Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa,* Small Gull *Larus minutus,* Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hibridus,* Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis,* White-Backed Woodpecker *Denrocopos leucotos,* Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis,* Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola,* Azure Tit *Parus cyanus*); 1 reptile (*Emys orbicularis*), 6 plant species (*Salvinia natans, Siella erecta, Urtica kioviensis, Cucubalus baccifer, Nymphaea alba, Iris sibirica*).

30 bird species, 3 mammals (*Canis lupus, Lutra lutra, Castor fiber*), 1 reptile (*Emys orbicularis*), and 2 amphibian (European common tree frog *Hyla arborea, Bombina bombina*), 4 fish species (*Pelecus cultratus, Misgurnus fossilis, Aspius aspius, Gymnocephalus acerina*) listed as IUCN vulnerable and rare status have been recorded within the site.

Criteria 4: Aquatic Warbler and another globally endangered species Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* are nesting there, as well as endangered species (NT) Corncrake *Crex crex,* Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa,* and Great Snipe *Gallinago media.* White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* have been recorded here.

According to survey data of recent years, 133 bird species have been recorded within the Ramsar site in question. Of them 113 are classified as nesting or possibly nesting. (see Annex I)

Criteria 8: High and long floods create favorable conditions for spawning of the majority of fish in the wetland Pike *lucius,* Roach *Rutilus rutilus,* Bleak *Alburnus alburnus,* Silver Bream *Blicca bjoerkna,* River Perch *Perca fluviatilis,* Ide *Leuciscus idus,* Loach *Misgurnus fossilis, Rhodeus sericeus, Cobitis taenia*. This part of flood-lands has a special importance for spawning fishes because vast water-meadows are preserved in the natural condition in this part of the Pripyat flood-lands, while the rest part of river banks (about 50 km) are diked.

15. Biogeography (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

a) biogeographic region:

international: Continenal

national: Polesia Lowland

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

EU Council Directive (92/43/EEC)

National: There are three biogeographical regions in Belarus: Belarus Poozerie, Belarus Hills and Polesskaja lowland (Dementiev, 1959).

16. Physical features of the site:
Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

The site in question is a considerable piece of land under occupancy of fen mires and hygrophilous meadow communities which have been preserved in their natural condition amidst the transformed landscapes of the Western Polesie Area. It is of great importance for the biodiversity conservation in the Polesie Area. Owing to being positioned in the floodplain, this site accumulates moisture and helps keep the water content of the Pripyat River.

Geomorphologically, the wetland is a Holocene monotonous flat floodplain terrace. The floodplain is accumulative, 0.5 – 1.5m high above the water line. The surface is heavily waterlogged, has plenty of oxbow lakes, flow paths and old channels. Absolute elevations vary within 141m and 143m. There are dry elevations which are normally not higher than 0.3-0.5m.

Elevated grounds covering limited areas in the center and on the southern boundary of the site are associated with sod-podzol, poorly and medium podzolized sands and clay sands. Lower grounds feature sod-podzol waterlogged sands and clay sands. Sod-carbonate and sod waterlogged soils are common in the less drained sections. The waterlogged parts of the floodplain are covered with lowland peatland soils. Peat and peat-gley soils with a peat layer of up to 50cm are widely present. The well-drained parts of the floodplain with mineral soils feature a complex of alluvial soils.

17. Physical features of the catchment area:
Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, and climate (including climate type).

Polesie is a stand-alone unique biogeographical area covering all of the south of contemporary Belarus, northern Ukraine and adjacent areas in Poland and Russia, and characterized by specific geological, morphological and hydrological features. In the post-glacial times it was a huge sea (historically called Polesian sea) filled with melting glacial water and surrounded by elevations. As time went by the elevations broke through, giving way to rivers and brooks. With that the sea was gradually getting shallower losing its consolidated entity and breaking into large lowland lakes. With time, the lakes transformed into interlinked wetlands of specific type (called "fen mires" or "lowland mires"), making what we now know as contemporary Polesie. Man interfered with the system in the middle of the XX century: Polesie lost most of its natural wetland areas as a result of drainage, accompanied by irreversible losses to the biodiversity it hosted. Areas that remained natural or semi-natural are extremely vulnerable to outside impacts.

The climate of this part of the Polesie Area is distinguished by being least continental compared with the other parts of Belarus. This is corroborated by mean annual meteorological data harvested by the Pinsk Weather Station. The average temperature of the coldest month of the year (January) is -5.3^{o} C, the warmest month (July) is +18.6^{o} C, the average annual temperature is +6.9^{o} C. Relevant temperatures in general for Belarus are -6.7^{o} C, +17.8^{o} C, +5.8^{o} C, respectively. The number of days in the year with the temperature level above 0^{o} C reaches

250, above 10° C - 157, above 15° C - 95-105 days. The annual precipitation in the Polesie Area is approximately 600mm. This is slightly less than the total national level of 650mm. The stable snow cover remains in the region for about 75 days, from the last decade of December to the beginning of May.

18. Hydrological values:

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

The site under review is located in the upper reaches of the Pripyat River, the most important watercourse of the Ukrainian and Belarusian Polesie Area. The river performs a water regulation and protection function in the region, and is a tributary of the largest and most important rive of the Black Sea Basin – Dnieper.

Within the site, the hydrological network is represented by the following rivers: Pripyat, Prostyr, Gnilaya Pripyat, Styr, Vorotets, as well as numerous channels and oxbow lakes. The key waterways (Pripyat, Styr and Prostyr) are 15 to 40m wide. Of relatively large channels, Vorotets and Plesa are noteworthy. The old drainage system has been in a state of neglect and is of no functional value. The groundwater table is 0.1-0.9m deep reaching the surface in peaty sections. During a spring flood almost the entire area is submerged under water.

Fen mires and wet floodplain meadows cover a better part of the site. They go underwater for a period up to 2-3 months during a regular flood. Taking into account its considerable size, the site plays a role of a water regulator reducing the risk of disastrous floods and inundations in the Pripyat floodplain.

The wetland in question is situated next to the regional Ukrainian national park and the title Ramsar site "Pripyat Stokhod". Jointly they form one of the largest floodplain meadow/mire complexes in Europe containing and supporting rich biodiversity of wetland plant and animal species. They are also one of the major interstate ecological corridors of the common European nature conservation network currently under development.

It is foreseen that a shared transboundary wetland be established here and a joint management plan be developed to help improve the ecological situation on both sides of the border.

The reference to the Habitat Directive Annex I, I would rather recommend to use as justification for criterion 1 in section 12. Thanks

The analysis of vegetation composition showed that the site is known to support the following Natura-2000 habitat types.

3150 - Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation.

3270 – Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodion rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation

6450 – northern boreal alluvial meadows

9080 – Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods

19. Wetland Types

a) presence:

Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar "Classification System for Wetland Type" present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines*.

Marine/coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K • Zk(a)

Inland: *L* • **M** **N** • **O** • **P** • *Q* • *R* • *Sp* • *Ss* • *Tp* **Ts** • **U** • *Va* • *Vt* • **W** • **Xf** • *Xp* • *Y* • *Zg* • *Zk(b)*

Human-made: *1* • *2* • *3* • **4** • *5* • *6* • *7* • *8* • **9** • *Zk(c)*

b) dominance:

List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

Rank types of wetlands by size from the largest to the smallest: U, W, Xf, Ts, M, P, N, O, 4, 9.

20. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

The wetland features the following habitats: floodplain fen mires, meadows, floodplain black alder forest, scrub and different water reservoirs.

Floodplain fen mires largely contribute to the overall ecological background of the site (35 percent of the total area) occupying hydromorphic parts of the flat floodplain between the Prostyr and Pripyat Rivers. The most common species in herbage are *Carex acuta, Carex nigra, Carex vesicaria, Carex disticha, Carex appropinquata, Carex vulpina, Carex rostrata*. In the vicinity of the village of Khoino on the right-bank floodplain of Pripyat and in ravines, *Carex acuta* dominates. Hydrophilous motley grass such as *Myosotis palustris, Ranunculus sceleratus, Galium palustre, Agrostis canina, Caltha palustris, Comarum palustre, Eriophorum polystachyon* is well-represented.

Large areas are covered with reed associations. In addition to *Phragmites australis,* the site is known to support *Glyceria fluitans, Schoenoplectus lacustris, T. latifolia, T. angustifolia, Equisetum fluviatile* and *Equisetum palustre*. The reedstand reaches 3 m of height at the confluence of Prostyr and Pripyat.

Meadow vegetation occupies about 30 percent of the site in question. Wet floodplain associations dominate taking up roughly 25 percent of the total size of the site. Off-floodplain meadows mainly located on mineral islands make up less than 5 percent.

Sections of the land adjacent to the riverbed of Pripyat and Prostyr are covered with tall-herb and motley grass associations with the predominance of *Glyceria fluitans, G. maxima, Poa palustris, Ranunculus flammula, Eriophorum polystachyon, A. plantago-aquatica, Phalaroides arundinacea,* and hydrophilous herbs.

Slightly elevated parts of the relief are under occupancy of miscellaneous and grass meadows. Cereals dominate the species composition: there are 3 species of bent (*Agrostis*), *Anthoxanthum odoratum, Apera spicta-venti, Briza media, Cynosurus cristatus, Cynosurus cristatus, Deschampsia cespitosa, Festuca rubra,* 3 species of fowl-grass (Poa), *Phleum pratense*. Sedges and motley grass are widely represented, i.e. *Viola tricolor, Ranunculus repens, Filipendula ulmaria, Lathyrus pratensis, Geum rivale, Achillea millefolium, Rumex pyramidalis, Plantago lanceolata, Plantago major, Ranunculus acri*s, *Ranunculus flammula, Centaurea jacea, Centaurea jacea*; and in depressions - *Juncus inflexus*.

Black alder forest (ca. 5 percent of the total area) on the territory of the site is represented by small tracts and strips along the left side of Prostyr and along the banks of Gnilaya Pripyat. These are mostly 40-year old stands of *Urtico dioicae-Alnetum* with the underwood made up by *Frangula alnus* and *Ribes nigrum,* in some places by *Salix cinerea*. The grass cover numbers 39 species of higher vascular plants.

Scrub are located mainly along the rivers and channels, represented in the central part by separated clumps or grow sporadically. Cumulatively they cover about a quarter of the site. There are four dominating willow species: *Salix triandra, Salix cinerea, Salix aurita, Salix rosmarinifolia*.

Rivers and lakes of the site (ca. 3 percent of the area) are shallow and heavily overgrown with aquatic and coastal vegetation. A strip of Common Floating Pondweed *Potamogeton natans* combined with Water Thyme *Elodea canadensis* can be found deep in lakes and channels. Closer to the bank, there is a strip of plants with leaves floating on the surface, i.e. *Nymphaea candida, Nuphar lutea, Polygonum amphibium, Hydrocharis morsus-ranae, Lemna minor, Lemna trisulca, Stratiotes aloides*. A strip of coastal and aquatic vegetation includes

Schoenoplectus lacustris, Glyceria maxima, Equisetum fluviatile, Menyanthes trifoliata, Sparganium erectum and other near-water species.

Agricultural land (mainly cropland) accounts for about 2 percent of the total area of the site adjoining for the most part the village of Pare.

21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14, Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS*.

The uniqueness of the wetland is determined by the presence of floodplain meadows and fen mires, previously commonly found in the Polesie Area, but rendered rare in both Belarus and Middle Europe by a large-scale drainage of the last century. Among them, the most valuable are floodplain large sedge mires, which feature not only common species, but rare ones as well, e.g. *Utricularia minor* and *U. vulgaris, Glyceria plicata*.

The flora of this site is studied relatively poorly. 6 plant species listed in the Red Data Book of Belarus have been recorded within the site, i.e. *Salvinia natans, Siella erecta, Urtica kioviensis, Cucubalus baccifer, Nymphaea alba, Iris sibirica*. Also 1 European protection specie (Bern Convention) *Jurinea cyanoides* has been revealed. However, taking into consideration a diversity of ecotopes and the availability of mineral islands with closely bedded carbonate strata, a number of valuable and protected plant species is likely to grow here –*Gentiana cruciata, Pedicularis sceptrum-carolinum, Carex umbrosa, Dentaria bulbifera, Dactylorhiza majalis* and *D. Baltica,* etc.

22. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS*.

As a result of both the Belarusian and adjacent Ukrainian territory being heavily waterlogged, the animal world of the wetland is specific in many ways. A combination of inadequate development, open fen mires, numerous rivers, channels and oxbow lakes coupled with dry tracts in the central part of the site provide favorable living conditions for many animals.

Historically, the inrerfluve of Pripyat and Prostyr, the floodplains of Gnilaya Pripyat and Styr have been a concentration area for Elk *Alces alces.* Female elks with the young from vicinities are attracted to rich food and little chance of encountering people. In the early 90s, about 100 individuals of the species were recorded in willow groves during the winter aerial surveys. The site accounts for the largest increase in the elk young in the entire Polesie Area. In the late 90s, poaching brought the elk population down which did not exceed several dozens of individuals for a long time. Now the elk population is trending upwards.

As for the other ungulates, Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* and Roe *Capreolus capreolus* are common within the boundaries of the site. Mammal predators include Raccoon Dog *Nyctereutes procyonoide,* Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes,* Polecat *Mustela putorius*, there is relatively a lot of American Mink *Mustela vison* along the river banks. With regard to species protected in Europe, Otter *Lutra lutra* is found regularly and Wolf *Canis lupus* is found occasionally within the site. The wetland's rivers, countless oxbows and channels are populated with European Beaver *Castor fiber* and Musk Beaver *Ondatra zibethica*. Floodplain meadows and fen mires support large quantities of Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris*.

According to survey data of recent years, 133 bird species have been recorded within the Ramsar site in question. Of them 113 are classified as nesting or possibly nesting.

The primary value of the wetland is that it supports habitats and offers breeding grounds for wetland bird species. When viewed from this perspective, the site is also an Important Bird Area of international importance. The basis for designation is A1 Criterion – it supports 10 to

100 pairs of Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* – a Globally Endangered species. A number of other rare bird species are also found within the site: Corncrake *Crex crex*, Great Snipe *Galinago media*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Snake Eagle *Circaetus Gallicus*, Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*, Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Little owl *Athene noctua*, Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*, etc.

In addition, this area is known to support the following species listed in the National Red Data Book of Belarus, 2004 – Gray Goose *Anser anser*, Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*, Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*, Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*, Crane *Grus grus*, Great Snipe *Galinago media*, Great White Heron *Egretta alba*, Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*, Corncrake *Crex crex*, Little Crake *Porzana parva*, Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, Small Gull *Larus minutus*, Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hibridus*, Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*, White-Backed Woodpecker *Denrocopos leucotos*, Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*, Azure Tit *Parus cyanus*.

The herpetofauna is relatively poor. One can find *Rana esculenta, Rana Ridibunda, Rana arvalis, Bufo bufo, Pelobates fuscus*, as well as *Hyla arborea and Bombina bombina,* which have intrernational protective status (IUCN) . Reptiles of the site include *Lacerta vivipara, Natrix natrix* and *Emys orbicularis* (the last one is listed in the Belarus Red Data book).

There are 23 species in the composition of ichthyofauna of Prypyat, Styr, Prostyr. Apart from common river species (Pike *Esox lucius*, Roach *Rutilus rutilus*, Rudd *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*, Bleak *Alburnus alburnus*, Silver Bream *Blicca bjoerkna*, River Perch *Perca fluviatilis*, Id *Leuciscus idus*, Ruff *Gymnocephalus cernuus)* the site also supports several rare species needing protection under the relevant international conventions. They include Sabrefish *Pelecus cultratus*, Loach *Misgurnus fossilis*, Asp *Aspius aspius* and *Gymnocephalus acerina*, classified as vulnerable and rare in accordance with IUCN 2002 categories. Pursuant to the Berne Convention, the following species are liable to protection: *Abramis sapa*, Bleak *Alburnus alburnus*, *Chondrostoma nasus*, *Rhodeus sericeus*, *Cobitis taenia*, *Silurus glanis*, *Gymnocephalus baloni*, *Neogobius fluviatilis*, *Abramis ballerus*.

It is noteworthy that high and long floods create favorable conditions for spawning of the majority of fish in the wetland.

23. Social and cultural values:

a) Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values:

b) Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning?

There are no residential localities on the territory of the wetland at the moment. Archeological heritage of the site is insufficiently studied, there are no archeological monuments placed under protection in the established way.

24. Land tenure/ownership:

a) within the Ramsar site:

The land of the site is the property of the state (land of the Pinsk District Executive Committee). Forest has been transferred into long-term use to the Pinsk Forestry, meadows – to agricultural enterprises “Berezovichi”, “Akhova”, “Lasitsk”, “Molotkovichi”, “Pleschitsy”.

b) in the surrounding area:

State-owned land leased to state farms and forest economic enterprises.

25. Current land (including water) use:

within the Ramsar site:

The territory of the site is under the jurisdiction of several agricultural enterprises. There are no on-going economic activities of a large scale within the wetland. Part of the area (about 20 percent) is occasionally used for haymaking; cattle grazing is practiced to a lesser degree here. A small portion of the wetland adjoining the village of Pare is exploited as a cropland. Cases of unauthorized plowing of mineral islands occurred.

Less than 5 percent of the territory of the site is covered by black alder forest, but due to its low economic value it is practically not being exploited.

The road network is non-existent. The only way to reach the Prostyr Reserve is by boat; during a flood this territory is practically inaccessible.

Partially, the area under review is used for hunting; rivers, oxbows and floodplain lakes are used for non-commercial fishing.

Within the boundaries of the wetland, there can be found several low-capacity peatlands, but there are no plans envisaging their exploitation.

in the surroundings/catchment:

The basic type of economy practiced in areas adjacent to the wetland (mostly drained land) is agriculture, i.e. growing perennial herbs, cultivated and grain crops, and cattle grazing.

26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:

(a) within the Ramsar site: *Hydro-amelioration.* In the 60-70s of the last century, the Pripyat floodplain was narrowed and diked. This resulted in floods reaching higher-than-natural levels recorded over many years, the spawning area for fish decreased. Besides, a system of old drainage canals continues to operate on the territory of the natural floodplain dewatering fen mires. The negative impact of the drainage system is particularly evident in the summertime, when it causes the groundwater table to drop significantly. A compromised hydrological regime leads to the transformation of natural fen mires, intensifies scrub overgrowth and leads to a loss of protected animal and plant species.

Fires. Spring fires inflict substantial damage upon the site only in the years with no or very late spring flooding. In such years 20 to 60 percent of the site are burnt out, with fires spreading over the entire area of the site in extremely dry years. When the groundwater level is low, not only dry vegetation, but often the upper soil level burns out. As a consequence, the species diversity, both animals and plants, tends to decline.

Intensified scrub overgrowth. A reduction in the size of areas used for haymaking and cattle grazing leads to overgrowth of open meadows and mires with scrub and reed. Contributing to this process is also the fire-induced soil mineralization. Rare plant associations are squeezed out by scrub and reedbeds, the biological diversity of meadows and hayfield productivity decrease.

27. Conservation measures taken:

a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:
In particular, if the site is partly or wholly a World Heritage Site and/or a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, please give the names of the site under these designations.

Within the site under review, the National Landscape Reserve "Prostyr" was established on 28 February 1984 pursuant to Resolution No 115 of the Council of Ministers of Belarus. The

total area of the specially protected natural area is 3,440ha. The reserve covers the interfluve of Pripyat and Prostyr Rivers and located in western part of the Ramsar Wetland "Prostyr". The ultimate motivation behind the establishment of the reserve was to conserve natural mire/meadow associations, including habitats for rare flora and fauna of Belarus.

Within the reserve the following regime is established by "Statute about republican landscape reserve "Prostyr" with limitations of separate types of using of natural resources.

1. On the territory of the reserve, it is prohibited to: carry out land reclamation and other activities associated with a change of the natural landscape and the existing hydrological regime; damage and destroy trees and shrubs, disturb the topsoil; vegetation burning in early spring (uncontrolled man-made fires); pasture and driving of cattle; discharge of untreated wastewater and household wastes into water reservoirs; clearing and grubbing of aquatic and coastal vegetation; peat and sapropel extraction; tourist camping, fire making, parking in undesignated areas; movement of mechanized vehicles off the road with the exception of agricultural machines; application of mineral fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides; hunting furbearers and wild ungulates, as well as spring waterfowl hunting.

2. Construction of buildings, power lines, roads, pipelines and engineering lines, and mining of common fossil fuels on the territory of the reserve are carried out in consultation with the State Ecology Committee and State Construction Committee.

3. The conservation regime of the State Landscape Reserve "Prostyr" is taken into consideration when designing and adjusting land development plans of the Pinsk District.

4. Designation of the territory as a state reserve does not entail removal of the plots of land occupied by it from landowners.

Landowners whose land carries the State Landscape Reserve "Prostyr" are obliged to observe the appropriate conservation regime.

5. The State Landscape Reserve "Prostyr" falls under the jurisdiction of the Pinsk District Executive Committee, which jointly with conservation agencies ensures its protection in the way that has been established.

6. Any breach of the established protection regime at the State Landscape Reserve "Prostyr" results in liability under applicable national laws.

Individuals and companies, including foreign ones, are obliged to pay damages arising from the breach of the regime applied to a state reserve, in the amount and the way established by the national legislation of Belarus.

b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site (tick the box or boxes as appropriate):

Ia yes; Ib ❑; II ❑; III ❑; IV ❑; V ❑; VI ❑

Taking into account a high conservation value of this site, in 2002 this territory received status of international Key ornithological territory with regard to criteria Ia. Since 2005 the Prostyr Reserve is a Ramsar Wetland

c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?:

At the moment the management plan for the Prostyr reserve is under finalization and, as expected, officially will be accepted by the end of 2008.

d) Describe any other current management practices:

In 2006 a specialized body – State Environmental Establishment "Landscape Reserves "Mid Pripyat" and "Prostyr' was established by Pinsk District Executive Committee with the aim to organize and implement of necessary environmental actions and to ensure sustainable ecotourism development in the reserves.

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:
e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection prepared the Scheme of Rational Distribution of Specially Protected Natural Areas of Belarus for 2008-2015, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in December 2007

.

Within this Scheme it is planning:

- to expand the existing reserve up to 9500 ha by including preserved fen mires and flood plains in-between Gnilaya Pripyat and Styr rivers ;
- to revise and update the Reserve Regulations;

To implement these proposals, it is necessary at this stage to:

- designate the territory which previously was not part of the reserve as a protected area, limit types of economic activities conflicting with the conservation objectives pertaining to this unique wetland;
- place under protection habitats of National Red Data Book animals and plants by preparing conservation commitments.

Considering the transboundary nature of the wetland located within both Belarus and Ukraine, it is necessary to:

- approach competent authorities of Ukraine with a proposal to establish a transboundary Belarus/Ukraine Ramsar site;
- develop a well-coordinated joint Belarus/Ukraine management plan to conserve and manage the transboundary wetland;
- adjust the operating rules of drainage systems abutting on the transboundary Ramsar site on both sides of the border.

Within the framework of the Ramsar site management plan for the purpose of sustainable functioning of mire ecosystems, maintenance of an optimized groundwater table within the entire mire complex “Prostyr” and biodiversity associated with it and taking into account constraints and requirements of land users, the Belarusian side is to:

- study the hydrological regime and the current state of the hydrological network within the site and at its periphery;
- provide for a construction of the necessary water control facilities;
- take action to combat scrub overgrowth of open meadows and fen mires (make sure haymaking and controlled spring vegetation burning take place);
- develop ecological tourism proposals including: tourist trails on the territory of the reserve and its adjacent areas, creating infrastructure to enable and support ecological tourism, as well as protective regime and use of the territory.
- raise awareness of the local population about the biodiversity and importance of the Prostyr Reserve and the Prostyr Ramsar site;
- for the evaluation of the condition of wetland ecosystems and adjustment of the management plan, it is necessary to set up monitoring of:
    - water level and quality within the reserve and in adjacent areas;
    - flora and vegetation associations;
    - populations of animals.

To improve the land use pattern in the wetland, it is necessary to draft a spatial planning framework for the Prostyr Reserve which shall be considered as the legal basis, economically and ecologically justified, limiting economic activities in the site within reason.

29. Current scientific research and facilities:
e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

In 1993 – 1994, during the formulation of a feasibility study for the establishment of the Prostyr Reserve, comprehensive scientific surveys of this territory were undertaken by the experts of the National Science Academy of Belarus. Between 1996 and 2004, this site was repeatedly surveyed by the Institute of Zoology as part of the overall effort to study fen mires of the country and during the implementation of the project on IBA identification.

At the moment, a set of proposals about a significant expansion of the area of the conservation site was worked out and included into the corresponding national perspective Scheme. In 2007 the whole territory of the reserve was surveyed in details in framework of preparing of a Management Plan. This plan should be completed in 2008 and must ensure long-term sustainable use of the territory, conservation of biological and landscape diversity.

30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:
e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

There are related on-going activities, which are curried out by the State Environmental Establishment "Landscape Reserves "Mid Pripyat" and "Prostyr'. Educational activities are undertaken at the regional level through local papers, TV, radio. A set of informational materials about the reserve was published with financial support from the state budget. A booklet with rules about protective regime and use of the reserve was published and disseminated among the locals. Awareness-raising activities are implemented in local schools and gathering places.

31. Current recreation and tourism:
State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

The recreational use of this territory is now limited to hunting, non-commercial fishing and water tourism on Pripyat, Prostyr and Stviga. The necessary tourism infrastructure is lacking.

State Environmental Establishment "Landscape Reserves "Mid Pripyat" and "Prostyr" established on ground border and informational signs to mark reserve's boundaries and to inform visitors about protective regime.

Currently there is no tourist infrastructure in the reserve.

At the same time, this wetland has high potential for the development of international and water tourism. Pripyat, Styr and Prostyr connect Belarus and Ukraine; the Dnieper-Boug Canal can be used to make water trips to Poland. Floodplain biocenoses of these rivers are preserved in their natural or near-natural condition and are of great research, recreation, conservation and aesthetic value. Activities are underway in the country to reconstruct the Oginsky Canal which connects the Black Sea and Baltic Sea basins via Neman, Shchara, Yaselda and Pripyat. The Prostyr wetland can be considered as one of the potential tourism centers of the waterway under construction.

In the light of a possible transboundary Belarus/Ukraine Ramsar site and development of a joint management plan, possibilities for international tourism in this area significantly increase.

32. Jurisdiction:
Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

District level – Pinsk district environmental inspection: Gorkogo str. 36 , Pinsk 225710, Brest Region, Belarus

Regional level - Brest Regional Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection: Svobody Square, 11, Brest, 224030, Belarus.

Republican level - Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus: Minsk 220048, Kollektornaya Str. 10.

33. Management authority:

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

The National Biological Reserve "Prostyr" falls under the jurisdiction of the Pinsk District Executive Committee, which in collaboration with environmental bodies secures its protection.

Since 2006 reserve is managed by the State Environmental Establishment "Landscape Reserves "Mid Pripyat" and "Prostyr" with the staff of 5 persons.

Address: State Environmental Establishment "Landscape Reserves "Mid Pripyat" and "Prostyr" Irkutsko-Pinskaya divisia str. 81, app. 349, Pinsk, Belarus
tel: +375 292 046123
Sergeyuk Vladimir – Director

34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

Treasures of Belarusian Nature. 2002. – Minsk.- 160 pp.

Hydrology

Lishtvan I.I., Bambalov N.N. Yaroshevich L.M. 1991. Scientific-engineering solving of Polessia reclamation problems / The problems of Polessia region. Vol. 14. - pp. 3-25. (In Russian).

Climate and geology:

Climate of Belarus. 1996. Ed. Loginov V.F. - Minsk. - 234 pp. (In Russian).

Dementiev V.A., 1959. System of physiographic regions of Belarus/«Physical and economic geography of Byelorussia» Minsk, 150 p. (In Russian).

Vegetation

Parfenov V.I., Kim G.A. 1976. Dynamics of meadow-mire flora and vegetation influenced by drainage. - Minsk, Science and Technics Edition. - 191 pp. (In Russian).

Pygachevsky A.V. Grodno oblast forests: structure, conditions, use. Status and problems of nature conservation and tourism development in the Grodno Oblast. Grodno, Selected papers. pp. 16-24. (In Russian).

Fauna

Dolbik M., Fedushin, 1967. Birds of Belarus, 520 pp. (In Russian).

Doroveef A.M. (chief ed.) 1993. Red Data Book of the Republic of Belarus. Rare and endangered animal and plant species. Minsk: Belaruskaya Encyclopedia. 559 pp. (In Belarussian).

Appendix I.

Current state of the most important avifauna species of the “Prostyr” Ramsar site.

Species	Species	Статус/ Status	Численность, пар /Numbers	Категория Международного Союза Охраны Природы (IUCN)
Great White Heron	*Egretta alba*	B	30	VU
Little Bittern	*Ixobrychus minutus*	B	2-10	VU
Bittern	*Botaurus stellaris*	B	25-40	VU
Black Stork	*Ciconia nigra*	B	3-5	VU
White-tailed Eagle	*Haliaeetus albicilla*	B?	1	EN
Lesser Spotted Eagle	*Aquila pomarina*	B	3-7	VU
Greater Spotted Eagle	*Aquila clanga*	B	4	CR
Snake Eagle	*Circaetus Gallicus*	B	1	EN
Hen Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*	B?	1	VU
Corncrake;	*Crex Crex*	B	520-1020	VU
Little Crake	*Porzana parva*	B	315-530	NT
Crane	*Grus grus*	B	10-20	VU
Great Snipe	*Gallinago media*	B		EN
Back-tiled godwit	*Limosa limosa*	B	13-20	VU
Small Gull	*Larus minutus*	B?		VU
Whiskered Tern	*Chlidonias hybrida*	B		NT
Eagle Owl	*Bubo bubo*	B	3-5	EN
Little Owl	*Athene noctua*	B	1	VU
Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	B	5-20	VU
Green Woodpecker	*Picus viridis*	B	1-3	VU
White-backed Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos leucotos*	B		LR
Aquatic Warbler	*Acrocephalus paludicola*	B	10-100	EN
Azure Tit	*Parus cyanus*	B	50-200	VU

Note:
Status: B –migratory nesting (found during the nesting period), B? – possible nesting of species, Ps – found during spring migration.

Plant species of international importance

	Habitat Directive	Attachment to the Berne Convention
Aldrovanda vesiculosa	II	I
Arnica montana	V	
Caldesia parnassifolia	II	I
Cypripedium calceolus	II	I
Liparisloeselii	II	I
Najas flexilis	II	
Pulsatillapatens	II	I
Saxifraga hirculus	II	I
Thesium ebracteatum	II	
Trapa natans		I
Botrychium simplex	II	I
Botrychium multifidum		I
Botrychium matricariifolium		I
Lycopodium annotinum	V	
Lycopodium clavatum	V	
Salvinia natans		I
Jurinea cyanoides	II	
Dracocephalum ruyschiana	II	
Angelica palustris	II	
Moehringia lateriflora	II	
Cinna latifolia	II	
Agrimonia pilosa	II	

Please return to: Ramsar Convention Bureau, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 999 0170 o Fax: +41 22 999 0169 o e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org