

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. Country: Lithuania
2. Date:
3. Ref: 3LT001
4. Name and address of compiler:
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5. Name of wetlands: Cepkeliu raistas
6. Date of Ramsar designation: 01/10/1994
7. Geographical coordinates: 54°00' N, 24°30' E
8. General location: Varena district, 20km north of Varena Town
9. Area: 10590 ha
10. Wetland type: U, X, O
11. Altitude: Average height above mean sea level 130m, min. 129m
12. Overview:
Cepkeliai (5858ha) and Pastalike (966 ha) mires are the largest mire complex in Lithuania. More than ½ territory is covered by raised bogs, also there is a significant area of fens and swamps, permanently flooded forests. A great diversity of vegetation cover creates excellent conditions for numerous species of rare and threatened plants and animals.
13. Physical features:
Mires occur on sandy fluvoglacial lowland. The bog surface is slightly declining to the southeast. Average peat layer is 5-6m deep. There are more than 80 dry forested islands and 21 lakes (total area 55.3 ha) in this mire. In bog surrounding areas podzolic soil is dominating, also podzolic boggy, sodded podzolic, sodded clay soils occasionally occur. Annual rainfall is 560-620mm, average January temperature being - 5.4°C, that in July + 17.7°C.
14. Ecological features:
Bogmoss pine forests (*Pinus sylvestris*-*Ledum palustre*-*Sphagnum magellanicum*, *P. sylvestris*-*Eriophorum vaginatum*- *S. angustifolium*) and open, treeless sphagnum communities (*Calluna vulgaris* - *E. vaginatum* - *S. fuscum*, *C. vulgaris* - *E. vaginatum* - *S. rubellum*) dominate. The bog is surrounded by dry pine forests (*P. sylvestris* - *Cladonia rangiferina* and *P. sylvestris* - *Vaccinium myrtillus* - *Pleurosimium schreberi* communities are common) and only near the bog black alder and fir stands occur, mainly in southeastern part. Transitional mires and sedge fens (with dominating *Carex appropinquata*, *C. omskiana* etc.,) also are concentrated in southeast.
15. Land tenure/ownership of:
(a) site: State owned.
(b) surrounding area: Most of surrounding forests are state owned, small areas of farmlands are privately owned.
16. Conservation measures taken:
This wetland is protected since 1975 in Cepkeliu Strict Nature Reserve. Recent area of this reserve is 105,590 ha.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

None known.

18. Current land use:

(a) site: In Cepkeliai reserve only scientific research is permitted and traditional cranberry picking by a limited number of local inhabitants (about 800-1000) is allowed.

(b) surroundings/catchment: 14 villages with a population of about 2,000 are located near the bog. Main form of land use is forestry, picking of mushrooms and berries.

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:

(a) at the site: It is difficult to control the number of visitors during cranberry picking season. This factor has caused the disturbance of wildlife and great damages of raised bog vegetation cover.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment: Forestry and extensive agriculture do not cause any great disturbance in wetland ecosystems.

20. Hydrological and physical values:

This mire complex is located on the watershed of the rivers Ula, Gruda, Katra and play a significant role for the hydrological balance. Sandy continental dunes neighbouring with the raised bog create a unique landscape in Lithuania.

21. Social and cultural values:

This site with a great biodiversity is very important for nature conservation and scientific research as well as for environmental education.

22. Noteworthy fauna:

227 species of vertebrates, including 36 species of mammals, 176 species of birds (of which 122 nest there), 6 species of reptiles and 9 amphibians, more than 1,500 insect species have been registered. 44 species of animals included in the Red Data Book of Lithuania are found, among them, *Sicista betulina*, *Lutra lutra*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Pandion haliaetus*, *Pernis apivorus*, *Circus pygargus* (1-2 couples breed every year), *Aquila pomarina*, *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Lyrurus tetrrix* (110 individuals), *Tetrao urogallus* (60 individuals), *Grus grus* (about 15 couples), *Pluvialis apricaria* (4 pairs), *Tringa glareola*, *Philomachus pugnax*, *Gallinago media* (15-20 birds are permanent inhabitants), *Numenius arquata*, *Limosa limosa* (10 couples breed there), *Bubo bubo*, *Aegolius funereus*, *Dendrocopos leucotos*, *Picoides tridatylus*, *Coronella austriaca*.

23. Noteworthy flora:

This area is famous for its extremely rich flora - 669 species of vascular plants and mosses. There is a great diversity of natural communities of bogs, fens and swamps. More than 35 plant species from the Lithuanian Red Data List occur in Cepkeliai. In transitional mires and fens *Salix lapponum*, *Salix myrtilloides*, *Hammarbya paludosa*, *Liparis loeselii*, *Dactylorhiza russowii*, *D. maculata*, *Lepidotis inundata* grow, in wet forests - *Epipogium aphyllum*, *Cypripedium calceolus*, *Listera cordata*, *Corallorhiza trifida*, *Huperzia selago*, in wet meadows - *Iris sibirica*, *Cnidium dubium*, *Gentiana pneumonanthe*.

24. Current scientific research and facilities:

Scientific research of birds (especially birds of prey), insects (Hemiptera), flora and vegetation are continuously carried out by the staff of Cepkeliai nature reserve. Some investigations have been done by research institutes.

25. Current conservation education:

There is a visitors centre in Marcinkonys, the Cepkeliai fan club, also, student training is provided.

26. Current recreation and tourism:

Only a small number of specialised groups of visitors have visited Cepkeliai. In nearest future a special route for a limited number of visitors will be made.

27. Management authority:

Cepkeliai State Strict Nature Reserve, Marcinkonys 2638, Lithuania

28. Jurisdiction:

Environmental Protection Department, A. Juozapaviciaus 9, Vilnius 2600, Lithuania

29. Bibliographical references:

Cepkeliu rezervataz (monography) - Vilnius, 1984. 128 pp. (in Lithuanian, summary in Russian).

Cepkeliu raistas marsh and its environs / The geographical yearbook KS. Vilnius, 1977. P. 5-88 (in Lithuanian, summary in Russian, English).

30. Reasons for inclusion: 1a, 1c; 2a, 2b