

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. Country: Lithuania
2. Date: 26 October 1992
3. Ref: 3LT003
4. Name and address of compiler:
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5. Name of wetlands: Viešvile
6. Date of Ramsar designation: 04/10/1994
7. Geographical coordinates: 55°09'N, 22°27'E
8. General location: In the districts of Taurage and Jurbarkas approximately 12 km south east of the city Taurage.
9. Area: 3235 ha
10. Wetland type: M, O, U, X
11. Altitude: Average height above sea level is 35m, max. 37.9m
12. Overview:
The complex of mires in the upper reaches of Viešvile rivulet, surrounded by dry coniferous forests on a sandy fluvial plane with continental dunes. The site is valuable for its wetland vegetation and is a most important breeding site of Golden Plovers and other wetland bird species in Lithuania.
13. Physical features:
The mire complex of bogs Artoji (1072 ha, average peat layer is 3.6m deep, max. 9.8m) and glitis (455 ha, average peat layer is 2.3m deep, max 6.8m) covers the upper reaches of the Viešvile rivulet, a 21km long right input of the Nemunas river (annual waterflow 0.78 cu m/s). The site lies in the old valley of the Nemunas river, in the sandy alluvial plain with poor podzolic soils. Dystrophic lakes Buveinis (5.4 ha) and Glitis (13.2 ha) together with Viešvile and Ištakos rivulets form a unique hydrological complex surrounded by raised bogs.
14. Ecological features:
Raised bogs vegetation dominate, but vast areas along rivulets are covered by sedge fens (*Carex appropinquata*, *C. vesicaria*, *C. nigra*) and flooded forests of black alder (with *Carex acutiformis*, *Iris pseudacorus*). In the central part of raised bogs open communities of *Calluna vulgaris*-*Eriophorum vaginatum*-*Sphagnum rubellum*, *Baeothryon caespitosum* - *Sphagnum* sp. dominate. On the slopes of raised bog pine forests with *Ledum palustre*, *Rubus chamaemorus* grow. In surrounding forests dry Scots pine stands predominate, and wet fir forests occur only near the bog. Other habitats include small areas of flooded meadows, forest glades and clearings.
15. Land tenure/ownership of:
(a) site: Territory of this site is state owned.
(b) surrounding area: Surrounding forests are State-owned and only small patches of meadows and arable land are in privately owned.
16. Conservation measures taken:
Viešvile strict nature reserve (3216 ha) with a buffer zone (2459 ha) was established in 1991 with the

aim to protect this site. The staff of the reserve control the numbers of visitors.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: None

18. Current land use:

(a) site: Nature conservation only

(b) surroundings/catchment: The immediate surroundings are used mainly for forestry and timber production. A large but isolated bog Laukesa is a peatery. The catchment area (104 sq km) includes some settlements, wooded areas and agricultural lands.

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

(a) at the site: The nearest settlement is the only slight disturbance.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment: None known.

20. Hydrological and physical values:

The river Viešvile is one of the clearest inputs of Nemunas with almost unchanged valley.

21. Social and cultural values:

Important for nature conservation and education, scientific research. Viešvile river is important for trout spawning.

22. Noteworthy fauna:

Breeding sites of Lithuanian Red Data species *Pluvialis apricaria* (4-6 pairs), *Grus grus* (about 7-8 couples), *Ciconia nigra* (2-3 pairs), *Botaurus stellaris*, *Pernis apivorus*, *Aquila pomarina*, *Lyrurus tetrix*, *Numenius arquata*, *Dendrocopos leucotos*, *Lanius excubitor*. An important site for protected insects (*Ceruchus chrysomelinus*, *Peltis grossa*), locally important for mammals, trouts.

23. Noteworthy flora:

The mire is the eastern outpost in Lithuania of raised bog communities with *Baeothryon caespitosum*. Inventory of flora has been started and today about 500 species of vascular plants are known. Localities of Red Data species *Baeothryon caespitosum*, *Saxifraga hirculus*, *Eriophorum gracile*, *Listera cordata*, *Liparis loeselii*, *Dactylorhiza rusowii*, *Dactylorhiza maculata*. A unique composition of plant communities is determined by topographic and hydrological conditions.

24. Current scientific research and facilities:

Inventory and investigations have been done on fauna (birds, mammals, insects) and flora of vascular plants. There are plans to establish permanent plots for bog vegetation surveillance.

25. Current conservation education:

Small visiting centre is planned to be established in 1993.

26. Current recreation and tourism: None.

27. Management authority:

Viešvile State Nature Reserve,
Laukesa
Taurages raj.
5900 Lithuania

28. Jurisdiction:

Environmental Protection Department
A. Juozapaviciaus 9
2600 Vilnius
Lithuania

29. Bibliographical references:

Investigations of ornithological reserve Artoji. Unpublished internal report.

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