

7. Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

1. **Date this sheet was completed/updated:**

June 1997

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. **Country:** Russian Federation

3. **Name of wetland:** Floodplains of the Oka and Pra rivers

4. **Geographical coordinates:** 55°20'-54°42'N, 39°45'-41°20'E

5. **Altitude:** 92-127 m a.s.l.

6. **Area:** 161,542 ha

7. **Overview:** Extensive floodplain of lowland rivers, including oxbow-lakes, forested peatlands and lakes. The area is important for migrating and breeding populations of waterfowl.

8. **Wetland Type** (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document.)

marine-coastal: A . B . C . D . E . F . G . H . I . J . K

inland: L . **M** . N . **O** . P . Q . R . Sp . Ss . Tp . **Ts**
U . Va . Vt . W . Xf . **Xp** . Y . Zg . Zk

man-made: 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant: M, Ts, O, Xp, U

9. **Ramsar Criteria:** (please circle the applicable criteria; see point 12, next page.)

1a . **1b** . 1c . **1d** ³ 2a . 2b . 2c . 2d ³ **3a** . 3b . 3c ³ 4a . 4b

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 1d

10. **Map of site included? Please tick *yes* ✓ -or- *no***

(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

11. **Name and address of the compiler of this form:** V.N.Efimov: 30 Astrakhanskaya St., Ryazan 390000, Russia.

S.M.Karpov: 20 Moskovskoye Shosse, Ryazan 390044, Russia.

S.G. Priklonsky: Oksky Biosphere Nature Reserve. PO Lakash, Ryazan Oblast 391072, Russia.

12. Justification of the criteria sselected under point 9, on previous page: 1d - the site provides an example of a relatively intact floodplain complex in European Russia.

13. General location: Ryazan Region (central part of European Russia), 120 km of the city of Ryazan, 60 km of the town of Spassk.

14. Physical features: The site is located in the southern part of the Meshchera Lowland. The Pra River is 167 km long (including 56 km within the Oksky Nature Reserve). The Pra catchment comprises a network of small rivers (the Buzh, Pol, etc.), streams and a 48 km chain of lakes interconnected by channels. Lakes are mainly shallow (0.4-1.1 m deep at low water), the shores are low and marshy. The largest lakes are Lake Velikoye, which has an open water area of 20.7 km², Lake Dubovoye (12.2 km²) and Lake Martynovo (2.46 km²). At the confluence of the Pra and Oka rivers, the floodplain is 10 km wide and is found on both banks. The floodplain is inundated every spring, with a depth of floods from 0.5 to 1.5 m.

15. Hydrological values: The Meshcora bogs and fens act as natural filters for waters that discharge into ground water supplies and reach the Oka and Pra rivers. They play an important role in regulating hydrological regime of adjacent areas.

16. Ecological features: There are natural and artificial forests of various types: oak and black poplar groves along the riverbanks, mixed and pine forests. Extensive fens occur in the central part of the nature reserve, and bogs in the northwestern part of the area. Wetlands of these two types occupy 18% of the area of the Oksky Nature Reserve. To the east, forests become sparse and give way to extensive meadows of the Oka floodplain.

17. Noteworthy flora: Plant diversity in the nature reserve is high, with over 800 species of vascular plants from 102 families. Water plants include about 70 species. The area supports a rich relict habitat of *Salvinia* sp. There occur 11 species of caltrop *Trapa*, one species is endemic to the area. Rare species also include *Cypripedium calceolus*.

18. Noteworthy fauna:

Birds: The site is an important staging area for migrating geese, including 50% of the migrating population of white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons*. Among the ducks, migrating species include *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Anas acuta*, *A.penelope*, *A.querquedula*, *Aythya ferina* and *A.fuligula* in spring; *Anas penelope*, *A.querquedula*, *A.crecca* and *A.platyrhynchos* in autumn. Breeding species are *Anas platyrhynchos*, *A.querquedula*, *A.clypeata* and *A.crecca*.

A large colony of grey herons *Ardea cinerea* numbering from 120 to 300 pairs is located near the village of Terekhovo.

There are a few breeding colonies of gulls and terns. In 1987, the numbers were: black-headed gull *Larus ridibundus*, 15,000 pairs; little gull *L.minutus*, 2,000 pairs; common tern *Sterna hirundo*, 350 pairs, and little tern *S.albifrons*, 500 pairs.

Other noteworthy species include: black stork *Ciconia nigra* (to 25 individuals), white-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* (5 breeding pairs; 10-15 migrating individuals), golden eagle *Aquila*

chrysaetos, osprey *Pandion haliaeetus*, saker falcon *Falco cherrug* and short-toed eagle *Circaetus gallicus*.

Mammals: There are 58 species of mammals in the area, including European otter *Lutra lutra*, European beaver *Castor fiber*, red fox *Vulpes vulpes*, brown hare *Lepus capensis*, wolf *Canis lupus*, European mink *Mustela lutreola*, lynx *Felis lynx*, elk *Alces alces* (c.400 individuals), wild boar *Sus scrofa* (c.300 individuals), common mole *Talpa europaea* and European polecat *Mustela putorius*. The site includes the main habitats of Russian desman *Desmana moschata*. In 1975-1985, the desman population in the Oksky Nature Reserve comprised 800 to 2,000 individuals. European beaver was reintroduced in the reserve in 1938. At present, there are about 600 individuals in the area.

19. Social and cultural values: The fish in the rivers Oka and Pra and floodplain meadows are of high value for the local community.

20. Land tenure/ownership: State ownership, except for land under human settlements which belongs to local communities. Small plots of land are of private property.

21. Current land use: All human activity is prohibited in the core area of the Oksky Biosphere Nature Reserve. In the buffer zone, which includes floodplain meadows, hay harvesting and waterfowl shooting and fishing are allowed. In the other sections, forestry, agriculture, vegetable growing, grazing, fishery, hunting and recreation take place.

22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects: Discharges of sewage and industrial effluents into the Oka River. The most important threat used to be drainage of wetlands which has been stopped.

23. Conservation measures taken: The area comprises the 55,722 ha Oksky Biosphere Nature Reserve ('zapovednik'), established in 1935, with a buffer zone, and the Meshchersky National Park which is only now being designed.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: Establishment of the Meshchersky National Park with an adequate protection regime.

25. Current scientific research and facilities: Regular monitoring of natural ecosystems, in particular waterbird populations, has been conducted since 1935, when the Oksky Nature Reserve was established. Ringing of thousands of birds is carried out each year. A Crane Breeding Centre has been established in the reserve. This centre houses all species of cranes that occur in Russia, including Siberian Crane. The cranes are not only bred in captivity but also reintroduced into the wild after going through a 'gradual release programme'. Several research institutes of the Russian Academy of Science and the State Committee of Environment Protection, Moscow University and other academic institutions take part in the research.

26. Current conservation education: A significant amount of publicity has been given to the area

through the publication of books, posters, leaflets, as well as films and television programmes. Field training programmes for students from Moscow University and other educational institutions are carried out regularly in the Oksky Nature Reserve.

27. Current recreation and tourism: Not allowed in the Oksky Biosphere Nature Reserve. In other parts of the area, hunting, fishing and other kinds of outdoor recreation take place. The recreational pressure is relatively low.

28. Jurisdiction:

Territorial: Administration of the Ryazan Region (30 Astrakhansky Street, Ryazan 390000, Russia).

Functional: State Committee of the Environment Protection of the Russian Federation (4/6 Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Street, Moscow 123812, Russia).

29. Management authority: Ryazan Regional Committee of Environment Protection (Moskovskoye Shosse 20, Ryazan 390044, Russia); Oksky Biosphere Nature Reserve (P.O. Lakash, Ryazan Oblast 391072, Russia).

30. Bibliographical references:
