

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7, as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

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2. Country:

UKRAINE

3. Date:

April 7, 2003

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Lower Smotrych River

5. Map of the Ramsar site:

a) hard copy

yes

b) digital (electronic) format

raster

6. Geographical coordinates:

48°35'N 26°36'E

7. General location:

The Smotrych River in the area of its confluence with the Dniester River.

Administrative location: Khmelnytska Oblast (Khmelnytsky Region), Kamyanets-Podilskyi Rayon (Kamyanets-Podilskyi District), between the villages of Tsybulivka and Ustia; 15 km south of Kamyanets-Podilskyi (100 thousand inhabitants).

8. Elevation:

114 m; canyon banks – up to 208 m above sea level

9. Area:

1,480 ha

10. Overview:

The site is a combination of the canyon and delta areas of the Smotrych River before its confluence with the Dniester River, and is a typical for physical-geographical parameters, structure of aquatic and riparian flora and fauna of small rivers within the Podilska Hights (Podolian Highland), located in the southwest part of Ukraine and having the total area about 100 000 km². Rocky banks of the canyon create good conditions for reproduction of birds of prey, such as Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*, Kestrel *F. tinnunculus*; the floodplain area is suitable for birds of the wetland complex, namely: White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, Corncrake *Crex crex*, Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, and for fishes, such as *Rutilus frisii*, *Chondrostoma nasus*, *Rhodeus sericeus*, *Silurus glanis*, *Gobius fluviatilis*. The area also supports migratory bird species in autumn and spring: Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*, Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*, Crane *Grus grus* and other species. The site is one of the most ecologically preserved parts of the Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park.

11. Ramsar Criteria:

1 2 3 4 7 8

12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. above:

(1) The site represents a unique area of the Smotrych River, consisting of the narrowed canyon area of the river and its delta (floodplain) area. The rocky slopes of the canyon create good conditions for nesting of birds of prey, and the floodplain area – for renewal of bird species of the wetland complex and for spawning of various fish species. At the same time, this site is rather typical for both the Podolian Highland and in some way for the upper Dniester area within the Continental Biogeographical Region.

(2) The following species listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine and Appendix II (subject to protection) of the Bern Convention (1979) occur here: White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*, Kestrel *Falco*

tinnunculus , Corncrake *Crex crex*, Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*, Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* L.

Bats species, which are under protection of the Bern Convention, also occur there, namely: *Myotis myotis*, *Myotis daubentonii* and *Myotis dasycneme*.

(3) The following local flora and fauna species are typical for the whole Continental biogeographical region in Ukraine, where the site is located: algae - *Oscillatoria granulata*, *Euglena acus*, *Bangia atropurpurea*, *Ulothrix tenerrima*; riverside-water vascular plants *Typha angustifolia*, *Typha latifolia*, *Carex acuta*, *Sagittaria sagitifolia*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Iris pseudacorus*.

(4) During the nesting period, the following species fly to this area for feeding: Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, Short-toyed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Bee-Eater *Merops apiaster*, Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. During migrations (especially in autumn) such species as Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*, *Falco columbarius*, Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*, Crane *Grus grus*, *Falco subbuteo* and others visit the site.

(7) Within the delta part of the Smotrych River, the following fish species listed in the Appendix II of the Bern Convention spawn and feed: *Rutilus frisii* Nordman, *Chondrostoma nasus* L., *Rhodeus sericeus* Pallas, cat-fish *Silurus glanis* L., *Gobius fluviatilis* Pallas.

(8) The site is also important as spawning grounds of common fish species, such as pike *Esox lucius* L., crucian *Carassius gibelio* (Bloch), *C. carassius* (L.), perch *Perca fluviatilis* L., roach *Rutilus rutilus* L., dace *Leuciscus leuciscus* L., chub *L. cephalus* L., *Scardinius erythrophthalmus* L., *Gobio gobio* L., *Blicca bjorkna* L., loach *Misgurnus fossilis* L., *Alburnus alburnus* L., bream *Abramis brama* L., *Barbus barbus* L., *Neogobius gymnotrachelus* Kessler.

13. Biogeography:

Biogeographical region on the map of the Emerald Network of Europe: Continental.

According to the geobotanical zoning of Ukraine: Podillian-Bessarabska (Podolian-Bessarabian) Subprovince; East European Province; European Broadleaf Forest Region.

Geomorphological subprovince: Podilska Height (Podolian Highland) of the Volyno-Podilskyi (Volynian-Podolian) Tectonic Block.

Basin affiliation: the Smotrych River flows directly into the Dniester River within its middle reaches.

14. Physical features of the site:

The site is located within the Volyno-Podilskyi Tectonic Block and is noted by deposition of layers of the crystalline basis coming close to the surface. It is formed by limestone, marls, sandstone, slates, and also granite and gneiss, which

are covered by loess. Within the site, there is only one geomorphological subprovince recognized, the Podilska (Podolian) Structurally-denudated Height. The Neogene (mainly marine) and Quaternary (alluvial and hillside) deposits are of relief-forming importance. The surface of the site is basically high, slightly hilly loess plain.

By the physical-geographical zoning of Ukraine, the territory of the site belongs to the West Podilskyi (West Podolian) District of the West Podilska (West Podolian) Province of the Podilska (Podolian) Forest-steppe Zone. On the site's territory there are dark-gray podzol, chernozem-podzol soils formed mainly on loess layers.

Water in the river is rather transparent. Significant exceeding of concentrations of polluting substances is not registered.

The climate of the site is temperate continental, with mild winters, and warm, humid summers. An average January temperature is -5.5°C , July, $+18.8^{\circ}\text{C}$. The period with temperatures above $+10^{\circ}\text{C}$ lasts for about 168 days.

15. Physical features of the catchment area:

The Smotrych River is a left tributary of the Dniester; its length is 168 km and the catchment area is 1800 km^2 . Its basin is completely located within the Podolian Highland (Khmelnysky Region).

The Smotrych River flows into the Dniester (length 1352 km, drainage area 72.5 thousand km^2), which is formed on the northeastern slopes of the Ukrainian Carpathians, and then flows into the Dnistrovskyi Liman (Dniester estuary) of the Black Sea. Water from the Dniester comes back to the Smotrych during the maximum filling of the Dniester Reservoir.

16. Hydrological values:

Feed of the Smotrych is mixed, with domination of snow above rain; a considerable portion is provided by groundwaters. The Smotrych River, with the current velocity 0.2-0.6 m/s, on cataract areas up to 1.0-2.0 m/s, is characterized by well-manifested spring floods, low summer water level, is broken by rain floods and a rather higher level in autumn and winter. The normal values of annual flow rate of the river ranges from 4.5 to 2.0 m^3/sec . (including from 3.0 to 1.5 of the surface flow); small streams and wells from adjacent limestone rocks flow into the river. The river floodplain varies in its width: in some places it is narrowed to 20-50 m, and in the delta area is expanding to 600 m. During floods the river does not overflow the banks within the canyon, and do not exceed the floodplain limits within the delta.

Average annual precipitation is about 554 mm, the highest precipitation occurs during the summer months. The Laboratory of Ecological Monitoring of Podilski Tovtry National Park and the Dniester Basin Regional Department are responsible for monitoring.

17. Wetland Type:

M L Ts

18. General ecological features:

The value of the site to a considerable extent depends on the canyon, in which the River is located, and also the delta part and its proximity to the Dniester River.

Communities with domination of *Lemna minor*, *Phragmites australis*, *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, *Sparganium emersum*, and *Carex riparia* are the basic communities of the riverside and aquatic flora.

On the steep banks of the Smotrych River the steppe, forest and limestone-petrophytic vegetation communities are widespread.

19. Noteworthy flora:

Rare and threatened in Ukraine and Europe flora species and communities are discussed in the description of the criterion 3 (i.12). Rare community of *Carex humilis*, listed in the Green Data Book of Rare and Typical Plant Communities of Ukraine, is characteristic for the riparian vegetation.

20. Noteworthy fauna:

The site is also important for conservation of rare flora and fauna species in Ukraine and Europe. In particular, the following species listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine and Appendix II (subject to protection) of the Bern Convention (1979) occur here: White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* – 2 pairs, Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* – 1 pair, Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* – 3 pairs, Buzzard *Buteo buteo* – 3 pairs, Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* – 1 pair, Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – 25-40 pairs, Corncrake *Crex crex* – 1 pair, Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* – 1 pair, Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* – 15 pairs, Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – 25-30 pairs, Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba L.* – 11-24 pairs. During the nesting period, the following species fly to this area for feeding: Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, Short-toyed Eagle *Circaetes gallicus*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Bee-Eater *Merops apiaster*, Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. During migrations (especially in autumn) such species as *Gavia arctica*, *Falco columbarius*, *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Buteo lagopus*, *Grus grus*, *Falco subbuteo* and others visit the site.

21. Social and cultural values:

No social and cultural values are present within the site. Upstream the river (over 15 km) in the city of Kamyanets-Podilskyi, there are numerous historical buildings of the XI-XIX centuries.

22. Land tenure/ownership of:

site:

State ownership on lands – lands of the Water Fund of Ukraine, including the area of water and riverside protection belts on both sides of the Smotrych River. The

state of the Smotrych canyon and riverside stripes are controlled by the administration of Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park and the Dniester Regional Basin Department.

surrounding area:

All adjacent lands are within Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park: other lands of state property – lands of the water fund; lands of populated areas (private and municipal), and private agricultural lands (arable lands, pastures, gardens).

23. Current land (including water) use:

(a) site:

Scientific research, nature conservation activities; recreational activities: leisure in designated places, fishing and hunting according to terms and quotas defined in coordination with Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park.

(b) surroundings/catchment:

Recreational and forestry activities, amateur and commercial fishing in designated places of the recreation zone, economic activities according to the types of agricultural lands: pastures, hayfields, arable lands, gardens within Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park.

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

at the site:

Only recreational activities in specially designated sites (leisure, boating, sport fishing), Birds hunting is regulated hunting in the delta part of the River.

around the site:

Recreational activities, influence of the anthropic factors of Kamyianets-Podilskyi upstream, fishing, hunting

25. Conservation measures taken:

In accordance with the Presidential Decree of 27 June 1996, No. 174/ 96, this area is a part of the recreational zone of Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park.

Biodiversity management is performed in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On the Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine” (1992) and the Regulation (By-law) on Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park (1996).

The Dniester Regional Basin Department (Novodnistrovsk, Chernivtsi Region) and the Laboratory of Ecological Monitoring in Podilski Tovtry National Park are responsible for monitoring of water resources.

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

The Management plan for the territory, restoration and recreational use of natural complexes and sites of Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park was approved by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine in 2002. A special management plan on wetlands of international importance will be developed.

27. Current scientific research and facilities:

The Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park, in which subordination the site stays, is a scientific and research institution of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine. The staff of the park includes 6 scientists working in the Scientific Department. Monitoring of the state of biological and landscape diversity within the frameworks of the annual Program on Chronicles of Nature is among the main research activities. Scientific researches are conducted with active participation of the employees of the Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Lviv), M.G. Kholodnyi Institute of Botany, and the I.I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv).

28. Current conservation education activities related to communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) related to or benefiting the site:

Ongoing environmental education activities among local inhabitants, especially children of adjacent villages and tourists visiting Podilski Tovtry National Park. Informational leaflets about the values of the Park are published annually. The administration building of the Park is located in Kamyanets-Podilskyi.

The informational website was developed and launched: www.tovtry.km.ua.

29. Current recreation and tourism:

Recreation and tourist activities are conducted mainly during the summer period and are localized predominantly near the village of Shutnivtsi, where about 100 tourists stay each summer and about 1 000 people come for weekend tours annually.

The tourist route between Kamyanets-Podilskyi and Ustia village is developed (annually up to 1000 visitors use the trail). It is planned to develop an ecological trail within Ustianskyi Zakaznik. Excursions to the Site are organized for schoolchildren and students.

30. Jurisdiction:

Territorially the lands of the site are subordinated to the State Administration of Khmelnytska Oblast (Khmelnitsky Region).

Functionally the site is in subordination of the Dniester Regional Basin Department (areas of the Water Fund) and the Administration of Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park (biodiversity and landscape conservation, recreational activities) of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine.

31. Management authority:

Administration of the Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park

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32. Bibliographical references:

1. Chronicle of Nature: Podilski Tovtry National Nature Park – 6 volumes (1997-2002).
2. Phytodiversity of National Nature Parks / Edited by T.L. Andrienko & V.A. Onishchenko. – Kyiv: Naukovyi Svit, 2003. – 143 pp.
3. Red Data Book of Ukraine: Flora - 1996, 608 p.; Fauna - 1994, 464 p. - Kyiv: Ukrainian Encyclopaedia.
4. Reserves and National Nature Parks of Ukraine. – Kyiv: Vyscha Shkola (Higher School), 1999. – 230 p.