

## 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:**

Polissia Mires

**5. Map of the Ramsar site:**

**a) hard copy**

yes

**b) digital (electronic) format**

raster

**6. Geographical coordinates:**

51°31' N 27°56' E (main area "Plotnytsia"); 51°34' N 28°05' E (area near the Zholobnytsya River).

**7. General location:**

The northern part of Zhytomyrska Oblast (Zhytomyr Region of Ukraine, at the

border with Belarus), Ovrutskyi Rayon (Ovruch District), Selezivka village; 60 km west of the town of Ovruch (about 20 thousand inhabitants) and 80 km northwest of the town of Korosten (80 thousand inhabitants).

**8. Elevation:**

About 150 m above sea level

**9. Area:**

2,145 ha

**10. Overview:**

The site is a typical wetland complex of the most swamped regions of Europe – Polissia; it includes area of transitional mires and bogs “Miroshi” and the area of transitional mires and fens in floodplains of the small rivers, the Zholobnytsya and the Bolotnytsia, which are parts of Poliskyi Nature Reserve. Bogs are oligotrophic and are represented by pine-sphagnum communities, transitional wetlands are represented by mesotrophic pine-birch and bush-sedge-sphagnum communities, fens are represented by eutrophic reed, sedge, and forest communities. On water stretches rare plant communities occur: the formation of *Nymphaea candida* and the formation of *Nuphar lutea*. Rare plant species *Scheuchzeria palustris*, *Oxycoccus microcarpus* and *Drosera intermedia* are characteristic for the Site. . The site is extremely valuable for conservation of rare and threatened in Ukraine and Europe flora and fauna species, in particular: birds *Crex crex*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Grus grus*; and mammals *Felix lynx* and *Lutra lutra*.

**11. Ramsar Criteria:**

1      2      3

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

(1) The site includes a typical for Polissya complex of transitional mesotrophic mires and oligotrophic bogs. It is one of the largest swamped regions of Europe. A considerable part of mires is forested with *Betula pubescens* and *Alnus glutinosa*, occasionally with *Populus tremula*, *Pinus sylvestris* with blackberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* or green mosses, bushes of *Salix lapponum*, *S. myrtilloides* and *S. rosmarinifolia*. Here typical for Polissya faunal complex have been formed with the following species: fishes *Esox lucius* L., *Tinca tinca* L., *Misgurnus fossilus* L., *Lota lota* L.; amphibians *Rana arvalis* Nilsson, *R. lessonae* Camerano; reptiles *Emis orbicularis* L., *Vipera berus* L.. Rather often occur birds *Ciconia ciconia* L., *Vanellus vanellus* L., *Anas platyrhynchos* L., *Egretta alba* L.; mammals *Castor fiber* (about 40 individuals), *Sus scrofa*, *Nictereutes procionoides* and others.

(2) The site is very valuable for conservation of rare and endangered flora and fauna species in Ukraine and Europe. The following species are listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine: 3 species of clubmosses (*Lycopodium annotinum* L., *Diphasiastrum complanatum* (L.) Holub, *Lycopodiella inundata* (L.) Holub), 3 species of mosses (*Sphagnum molle* Sull., *Sphagnum subnitens* Russ. et Warnst., *Sphagnum tenellum* (Brid.) Brid.), 1 species of algae (*Bulbochaete subquadrata*

Mrozinska–Webb), and 21 species of flowering plants. Among the flowering plants, such representatives of the orchid family occur within the site: *Goodyera repens* (L.) R. Br., *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Druce) Soó, *Platantera bifolia* (L.) Rich., *Trapa natans* L. s.l., *Drosera intermedia* Hayne, *Juncus bulbosus* L., *Oxycoccus microcarpus* Turcz. ex Rupr. and others. Rare glacial relict and arctic-boreal species *Scheuchzeria palustris* L. and *Oxycoccus microcarpus* Turcz. ex Rupr. grow in oligotrophic mires with brown and red sphagnum mosses. Such species as *Tragopogon ucrainicus* Artemcz. growing on river sands is listed in the European Red List of Globally Threatened Animals and Plants.

Among the fauna species listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine, the European Red List of Globally Threatened Animals and Plants, and Appendices of the Bonn and Bern Conventions, there are *Crex crex* (2 pairs), *Ciconia nigra* (2 pairs), *Grus grus* (3 pairs), *Gallinago gallinago* (over 30 pairs), *Scolopax rusticola* (over 20 pairs), *Tringa ochropus* (over 40 pairs); *Felix lynx* (1 family constantly), and *Lutra lutra* (1 family).

(3) Within the Site there are rare habitat types identified by Resolution 4 (96) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, namely: Transitional mires (for No 54.5), Acidic peat oligotrophic mires (No 52).

Within the site there are also rare plant communities listed in the Green Data Book of Ukraine; in particular, the formations *Nymphaeeta candidae* and *Nuphareta lutae*.

The site, as the part of Poliskyi Nature Reserve, is included into 138 most valuable areas of Ukraine for Important Bird Area Programme, first of all due to nesting sites of *Circaetus gallicus* (1-2 pairs) and *Aquila heliaca* (1 pair).

### **13. Biogeography:**

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

According to geobotanical zoning of Ukraine: Poliska (Polessian) Subprovince (Zhytomyrske Polissya = Zhytomyr Polissya).

Basin affiliation: drainage basin of the Ubort River, which flows into the Prypiat River in the territory of Belarus; the Prypiat flows into the Kyiv Reservoir in the middle reaches of the Dniro.

### **14. Physical features of the site:**

The site is located within the northern part of the Ukrainian Crystalline Shield, which is the oldest core of the East European platform, and has an insignificant sedimentary cover in the Site area. The region of the site belongs to the Zhytomyr part of Ukrainian Polissya; it is a complex of rather high sand ranges, dunes and natural levees, which were formed during the Pleistocene (glacial period), and lowlands between them, which are occupied by river valleys and mires. The site includes mainly floodplains of small rivers of the Prypiat basin, first of all the Ubort and the Bolotnytsa, with a system of mires between them.

The relief is formed by river floodplains, non-forested peat bogs and forest mires, and pine forests. Peat bogs (peat deposits reach 5 m and more in some places), which started their formation 8-9 thousand years ago, occupy almost 65% of the territory of the Site.

Sandy, soddy and –weakly podzolic soils, often gleyey, which alternate with swamp soils, prevail here. Depressions between sand hills are covered by peat-gley soils and peatlands.

The climate is temperate continental. Average air temperatures are the following: annual 6-7<sup>0</sup> C, January, -5.5-6<sup>0</sup> C, July. +17-19<sup>0</sup> C. Annual precipitation is about 530-600 mm. Duration of the steady snow cover period is 90 days in average. The humidity balance is positive. Frequent thaws are typical phenomena in winter.

#### **15. Physical features of the catchment area:**

The site is located in the drainage basin of the Ubort (length 292 km, drainage area 5 820 km<sup>2</sup>), which originates in Zhytomyrska Oblast (Zhytomyr Region) and flows into the tributary of the Dnipro, the Prypiat River (length 761 km, basin area 114 thousand km<sup>2</sup>) in the territory of Belarus.

The tributary of the Ubort, the Zholobnytsya River (length 113 km, basin area 1 460 km<sup>2</sup>) with its tributary, the Bolotnytsya River (length 26 km, basin area 143 km<sup>2</sup>) flow within the Site.

#### **16. Hydrological values:**

Bogs and transitional mires of the “Miroshi” area feed by rain and snow waters, while another part of the Site is of the floodplain type. The Bolotnytsya riverbed is rather straightened, because it was used for timber rafting. Bottom of the Zholobnytsya River is very silted, numerous felt trees are noted in the riverbed. Stable freezing-over of the rivers set in the third decade of November, ice thawing occurs at the beginning of March. The Site's area is covered by water during large-scale spring floods. Low water is marked at the end of August.

#### **17. Wetland Type:**

Xp U M W Ts 9

#### **18. General ecological features:**

Oligotrophic bogs of the “Miroshi” area are represented mainly by typical *Pinus sylvestris* - *Eriophorum polystachyon* - *Sphagnum cuspidatum* communities, although there are also unique small mires with domination of *Sphagnum fuscum* and *Sphagnum rubellum* communities, and transitional mesotrophic – *Pinus-Betula* and *Salix-Carex-Sphagnum* communities. *Phragmites australis*, *Carex lasiocarpa* and forest communities (i.12) are characteristic for eutrophic fens and transitional mesotrophic mires in the Zholobnytsya and Bolotnytsya floodplains; aquatic vegetation is represented by communities of *Trapa natans*, *Nymphaea alba*, *Nuphar luteum*, and *Sparganium minimum*.

## **19. Noteworthy flora:**

Besides rare plant species (i.12), of considerable scientific value are also such relict species as *Salix lapponum* L. and *Salix myrtilloides* L., *Carex limosa* L., and *Pedicularis sceptrum-carolinum* L.

## **20. Noteworthy fauna:**

Beside rare fauna species, which occur within the site (i.12), rare in Ukraine and Europe *Circaetus gallicus* (Gmelin), *Falco cherrug* Gray, *Aquila pomarina* C.L.Brehm., *Aquila heliaca* and other species constantly visit the Site in search of food.

## **21. Social and cultural values:**

Social and cultural values within the site are absent. Fishing and forestry activities (except sanitary felling within forests of artificial origin), are not conducted.

Remains of settlements and flint ateliers of the late Stone Age (V-II centuries B.C.) and bronze decorations of the Scythian period (V-IV centuries B.C.), Ancient Rus period settlements (IX - XII centuries A.D.) are located near the Site.

## **22. Land tenure/ownership of:**

### **site:**

State ownership of land, which was transferred to the Administration of Poliskyi Nature Reserve for permanent use. The Administration of the Reserve has the Certificate on the right of permanent land use.

### **surrounding area:**

Near the site there are lands (about 12 600 ha), which are in permanent use by the Administration of Poliskyi Nature Reserve, and behind them there are lands of other users within the Protection zone of Poliskyi Nature Reserve (area of 9 878 ha; state lands of the forest fund, subordinated to the State Forestry “Zhytomyrlis”) and private agricultural lands, where industrial construction and other activities adversely affecting the environment are not allowed, and private agricultural lands (arable lands, hayfields, pastures, gardens) and state forestries; lands of populated areas (private and municipal).

## **23. Current land (including water) use:**

### **(a) site:**

The site is located within the protected area; therefore, only scientific research, nature conservation activities, including fire prevention measures and sanitary felling, are conducted here.

### **(b) surroundings/catchment:**

The same activities as within the site are allowed in other parts of Poliskyi Nature Reserve; limited agriculture in the Protection zone of the Reserve (cultivation of cereals, potato, flax, vegetables), haymaking and grazing, gathering of mushrooms and berries, hunting and amateur fishing, recreation.

**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:**

In the past: draining melioration, forest felling.

**around the site:**

Agriculture (plowing up of lands, grazing, haymaking), forestry (forest felling), hunting, gathering of berries and mushrooms, recreation.

**25. Conservation measures taken:**

The territory of the site is a part of Poliskyi Nature Reserve (area 20 097 ha), which was created by the Resolution of the Government of Ukraine of 12 November 1968, No. 568 “On organizing of new state reserves in the Ukrainian SSR”, and around it there is the Protection zone with the total area 9 878 ha (approved by the Resolution of the Government of Ukraine of 29 November 1972, No. 544).

Biodiversity management is conducted according to the Law of Ukraine “On the Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine” (1991), the Regulation (By-law) of the Poliskyi Nature Reserve (1994), and the Management Plan of the territory and protection of natural complexes of Poliskyi Nature Reserve (1998).

**26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

Development of a management plan of the territory and protection of natural complexes of Poliskyi Nature Reserve has already started.

It is planned to develop several management plans for conservation of specific rare species of the flora and fauna. The special Management plan on wetlands of international importance will be developed.

**27. Current scientific research and facilities:**

Annually the scientific researches within the framework of the Chronicles of Nature of Poliskyi Nature Reserve are carried out. Scientific studies are conducted mainly by research officers of the Reserve and the curator institution, the M. G. Kholodny Institute of Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kiev).

In the staff of the Reserve there are 4 research officers working in the Scientific Department. The basic research directions are monitoring of the state of biological and landscape diversity within the frameworks of the annual Program on Chronicles of Nature; long-term monitoring of populations of rare flora species; improvement of conservation conditions for *Felix lynx*. Scientific activities are carried out according to the scientific profile of the Reserve as the center on studying and conservation of the Polissia flora and fauna.

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

The Visitors Center is located in the administrative building of Poliskyi Nature Reserve in the village of Selezivka (Ovruch District of Zhytomyr Region). Employees of the Reserve regularly organize excursions on the ecological trail for schoolchildren of the adjacent villages, and for students.

**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

The site is not used for recreation and tourism.

**30. Jurisdiction:**

Territorial jurisdiction – State Administration in Zhytomyrska Oblast (Zhytomyr Region) of Ukraine.

Functionally the site is subordinated to the Administration of Poliskyi Nature Reserve at the State Committee of Forestry of Ukraine.

**31. Management authority:**

Poliskyi Nature Reserve

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**32. Bibliographical references:**

1. Chronicle of Nature: Poliskyi Nature Reserve – 22 volumes (1978 - 2001).
2. Poliskyi State Reserve: Flora / Andrienko, T.L., Popovych, S.Yu., Shelyag-Sosonko, Yu.R. – Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1986. – 208 pp.
3. Red Data Book of Ukraine: Flora - 1996, 608 pp.; Fauna - 1994, 464 pp. - Kyiv: Ukrainian Encyclopaedia.
4. Reserves and National Nature Parks of Ukraine. – Kyiv: Vyshcha Shkola (Higher School), 1999. – 230 pp.