



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Belarus

26 Ramsar Site(s) covering 777,895 ha

Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve

Site number: 1,927 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Dokshitsy and Lepel districts of the Vitebsk region, Borisov district of the Minsk region

Area: 85,192 ha | Coordinates: 54°43'13"N 28°20'31"E | Designation dates: 25-01-2010

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve in northern Belarus comprises coniferous and broad-leaved forests, floodplains, meadows, transition mires and raised bogs. The Berezina River, which flows within the Site, is important for regulating water levels and ensuring supply; it supplies groundwater over a large area, maintaining water levels for the Site's ecosystems, which is especially important due to the extent of the Reserve. The Site has one of the largest complexes of preserved mires in Europe, which have become rare in Belarus as a result of drainage activities. 23 internationally important biotopes are found, of which the rare ones cover more than half the Site. These biotopes support several nationally critically endangered species, such as the greater spotted eagle, European roller and sterlet sturgeon, and provide breeding and feeding grounds for species such as great snipe and common crane. Threats to the Site include river pollution from neighbouring fields and industrial sites, decreasing groundwater levels and overgrazing by cattle.

Dikoe Fen Mire

Site number: 2,263 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Region/Pruzhany District and Grodno Region/Svisloch District

Area: 23,145 ha | Coordinates: 52°47'23"N 24°14'45"E | Designation dates: 30-03-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is composed primarily of fen mires with numerous scattered forested islands. It is one of the largest mesotrophic fen mires in Europe preserved in its natural state. The wetland supports populations of plant and animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of mire ecosystems of the Continental biogeographic region. The highest diversity of plants is found in the mineral islands, which are microrefugia for several threatened species. The Site also supports open sedge communities of *Caricetum chordorrhizae*, *Caricetum juncellae* and *Caricetum limosae*, providing an important habitat for the globally endangered aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. The globally endangered European bison *Bison bonasus* use the area as a foraging and resting place. The wetland provides important hydrological services, and feeds the Rivers Narev and Yaeslda, which originate in the central part of the mire. Local communities use the Site to collect berries and mushrooms. An information centre is located within the "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" National Park. Due to adjacent melioration systems, the water level in a marginal area of the eastern part of the mire has decreased leading to the development of shrubs and trees. In addition, the area of open sedge mires is shrinking due to the cessation of traditional mire use. This has led to the rapid overgrowth of the open mires with shrubs and reeds, and a decrease in the numbers of the aquatic warbler.

Dnieper River Floodplain

Site number: 2,244 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Bragin and Loev district/Gomel region
Area: 29,352.9 ha | Coordinates: 51°38'17"N 30°36'31"E | Designation dates: 29-05-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Dnieper River Floodplain is a large natural wetland complex consisting predominantly of intermittent freshwater marshes as well as forested and non-forested peatlands, freshwater tree-dominated wetlands and shrub-dominated wetlands. It is one of the last large river floodplains in Europe to be preserved in its natural state. Located along the border with Ukraine, the Site encompasses about 100 km of the river, drainage canals, oxbow lakes and temporary ponds on the Belarus side. The wetland plays a significant role in the natural functioning of the river basin and its underground hydrological systems. It supports the globally threatened lesser white-fronted goose (*Anser erythropus*) as well as nationally threatened plant and animal species. It is one of the most important breeding habitats in Belarus of waterfowl including corn crake (*Crex crex*), and the floodplain meadows serve as spring migration stopovers for many waterfowl, including ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) and Terek sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*). The temporarily flooded water bodies are critical spawning grounds for rare indigenous fish, notably *Acipenser ruthenus*. The Site is used for gathering berries and mushrooms and for recreational fishing and hunting, and it includes numerous important historical and archaeological sites. The main threats relate to pollution by urban waste water, spring burning of vegetation in the floodplains and overgrowing of mires and open meadows with shrubs. The land and water in the Site are affected by radioactive contamination due to the 1986 accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

Drozbicka-Svina

Site number: 2,261 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Polotsk district of Vitebsk region
Area: 6,727.2 ha | Coordinates: 55°35'32"N 29°23'E | Designation dates: 29-05-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Drozbicka-Svina is a forest-swamp massif, located in the floodplains of the Drozbicka and Svina rivers. The Site is composed of fen mires, transition marshes, raised bogs and a hydrological network of permanent freshwater lakes, rivers, creeks and drainage canals. The wetland supports a complex of rare and threatened habitats including Boreal sedge fen mires. The Site is difficult to access and is highly waterlogged, which contributes to the conservation of rare and nationally threatened plant species such as *Salix myrtilloides* and *Carex magellanica* irrigua. It is also an important stopover for the Arctic loon *Gavia arctica* and serves as breeding grounds for the black stork *Ciconia nigra*. The marshes provide important hydrological services linked to water retention, groundwater recharge and water purification, and play a significant role in the natural functioning of the West Dvina River Basin. The Site's active peatlands contribute to carbon retention. A peat extraction plot is located within the territory of the Site. The water bodies are used for amateur fishing, while timber production is ongoing in part of the Site. The main factors affecting the ecological character of the wetland are drainage and hydro-ameliorative works, which have led to the lowering of the groundwater level and acceleration of overgrowing and change in vegetation.

Duleby Islands-Zaozerye

Site number: 2,138 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Mogilev region
Area: 30,772 ha | Coordinates: 53°47'18"N 29°29'47"E | Designation dates: 07-09-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is located some 130 kilometres east of Minsk and consists of two separate areas, Duleby Islands and Zaozerye. Together they make up a mire complex with boreal *Sphagnum* ridge-hollow bogs, pine swamp forests and fens prominent. The Site supports five habitats of international importance that provide favourable conditions for the conservation of plant and animal communities that are nationally listed as vulnerable or endangered. Numerous birds of prey can be found at the Site, including six breeding pairs of the short-toed snake eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) and two breeding pairs of the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*). The wetland plays important roles in purifying and supplying water to the rivers of the Dnieper basin and in recharging groundwater systems. The main land uses within the Site are hunting, forestry, and collecting of berries, mushrooms, and herbal and medicinal plants. The main factors affecting its ecological character are fires, logging, poaching, pollution and increased background radiation caused by the transfer of radioactive elements after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986.

Golubickaya Puscha

Site number: 2,266 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Glubokoe and Dokshitsy districts of Vitebsk region

Area: 18,240 ha | Coordinates: 54°59'05"N 28°02'28"E | Designation dates: 29-05-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The core area of the Site consists of a large complex of raised bogs and transition mires in their near-natural state. Waterlogged meadows and the large Mezuzol and Medzozol lakes are located among the bogs and forests, and their waterlogged state and the preservation of natural habitats have helped to conserve rare and threatened plant and animal species. The Site supports 25 species of vertebrates and nine plant species registered on the Red List of the Republic of Belarus, including the nationally critically endangered golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* and Ural owl *Strix uralensis*. The wetland plays a significant role in the natural functioning of the Berezina River basin and is of great hydrological importance for the adjacent areas including the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve (Ramsar Site no. 1927). The processes of peat accumulation and carbon sequestration are ongoing. Human activities relate to peat extraction, timber production, hunting, fishing and the collection of berries and mushrooms. The main threats to the Site relate to drainage, peat extraction and pollution from an increasing volume of urban wastewaters.

Iput River Floodplain

Site number: 2,262 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Dobrush district/Gomel region

Area: 3,501.8 ha | Coordinates: 52°30'49"N 31°28'42"E | Designation dates: 30-03-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Located near the border with Russia, the Site is a highly waterlogged floodplain complex composed of broad-leaf and indigenous black alder communities, oak woods, meadows and fen mires. Due to the difficult access, this section of the Iput River floodplain has remained in a natural state and is representative of middle-reach river floodplains, which used to be widespread in the Eastern Polesie region. The preserved natural floodplain communities and indigenous old forests create favourable conditions for a large number of nationally protected flora and fauna species. The wetland hosts two globally threatened species of birds, the European turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur* and the common pochard *Aythya ferina*. Globally threatened species of insects include the beetles *Agabus clypealis* and *Dytiscus latissimus*. The open water bodies constitute an important place for traditional amateur fishing. As a result of the cessation of mowing and grazing, the open floodplain meadows are overgrown with shrubs. The territory of the Site is a part of the resettlement and exclusion zone of Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, and almost all economic activities are prohibited.

Kotra

Site number: 1,216 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Grodno Oblast, Shchuchyn District

Area: 10,463.5 ha | Coordinates: 53°56'39"N 24°33'28"E | Designation dates: 21-10-2002

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Situated along the upper reaches of the Kotra River by the border with Lithuania, the Site is composed of waterlogged floodplain forests, raised bogs, transition and fen mires, floodplain meadows and a network of overgrown canals. It supports some 635 species of vascular plants and 156 vertebrates. The diversity of the natural habitats and the inaccessibility of the wetlands create favourable conditions for many rare plant and animal species listed in the National Red List, including the lesser spotted eagle *Aquila pomarina* and black stork *Ciconia nigra*, which use the Site as breeding and foraging grounds. The Site provides important water protection and regulating functions for the transboundary wetland complex. Remains of settlements from the Stone and Bronze Ages have been discovered, as well as numerous medieval burial grounds, and there is an important World War II memorial. There is also an information centre, an ecological trail and two tourist routes. The Site is used for forestry, cattle grazing, hay making, cropping, hunting, and gathering of berries and mushrooms. The main threats to its ecological character relate to drainage, river embankment, forest reclamation, fires, overgrazing, poaching and changes in the hydrological regime as a result of adjacent melioration systems. A management plan was prepared in 2015 and the implementation of priority management activities is planned for 2018-2020.

Kozyansky

Site number: 2,196 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Vitebsk region, Polotsk and Shumilino districts

Area: 28,469 ha | Coordinates: 55°27'32"N 29°21'22"E | Designation dates: 29-03-2013

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kozyansky is a wetland complex of transitional mires, raised bogs, forested and non-forested peatlands, rivers, lakes and farmland. One of the most notable aspects of the Site is its core area, a tract of raised bogs that provide habitat for 21 nationally threatened plant species. The wetland is a biodiversity hotspot for its biogeographical region, containing 583 vascular plant species and 175 species of nesting birds. It is an important breeding and foraging area for 41 bird species nationally listed as threatened, such as greater spotted eagle (*Aquila clanga*), Eurasian curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and common greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*). The representation of mammals is also significant, with the Site containing up to 77% of the species found in the country. The complex provides a very significant hydrological role for the region, maintaining groundwater levels and water quality. It is a popular spot for traditional gathering of berries and mushrooms. Threats to the Site's ecological character include peat extraction, canalization, vegetation succession and pollution from nearby farms.

Mid-Pripyat State Landscape Zakaznik

Site number: 1,090 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Oblast

Area: 93,062.2 ha | Coordinates: 52°07'41"N 27°06'03"E | Designation dates: 10-08-2001

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is on the Pripyat River, between the mouths of the Yaselda and Stviga rivers. It is one of the largest complexes of floodplain meadows and alluvial floodplain forests in Europe. Among 750 plant species and 155 nesting bird species, the Site also supports many rare and vulnerable species of plants and animals including the globally threatened aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* and lesser white-fronted goose *Anser erythropus*. The floodplain supports over 200,000 waterbirds, including over 1% of the biogeographic populations of several species such as the nationally threatened black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* and the ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. It also provides important spawning grounds for many fish species, such as the globally threatened European eel *Anguilla anguilla* and sterlet *Acipenser ruthenus*. The Site plays a substantial hydrological role in the river basin through groundwater regulation and flood control. Human activities include fishing, forestry, grazing, haymaking, wild bee-keeping and hunting. In addition there are several ecological-educational centres and an ecological path. The main threats relate to unsustainable hunting and the disruption of the natural water regime through river embankment and amelioration works, while overgrowing of the open floodplain meadows and fen mires has led to a decline in rare bird populations. A restoration plan is in place to address these issues.

Morochno

Site number: 2,139 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest

Area: 6,444.4 ha | Coordinates: 51°51'08"N 26°38'03"E | Designation dates: 07-09-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a complex mire system, located near the major floodplain of the River Horyn, with Belarusian Polesie ridge-hollow sphagnum bogs predominating. It is one of the few mires in the region to survive a large-scale reclamation process, and is of national and international importance for the conservation of plant and landscape diversity. According to the EU Habitats Directive, 66.4% of the wetland's total areas are rare and unique ecosystems. The Site is an important ecological corridor for many nationally threatened and endangered species such as the short-toed snake eagle *Circaetus gallicus* and the Eurasian lynx. The wetland plays an important role in the maintenance of water quality in the region: during the dry season it stores water and sustains the underground hydrological systems. Land uses within the Site include forestry, logging, hunting and picking of berries, mushrooms, herbs and medicinal plants. The main factors affecting its ecological character are land reclamation and drainage, fires, poaching and peat extraction. Measures implemented to prevent disturbance of the hydrological regime have led to a gradual recovery of water levels and of the mire ecosystems on the natural part of the mire adjacent to peat extraction plots. The Site has been extended by over 10% to match the boundaries of the Wetland Reserve of Republican Importance established in 2015.

Olmany Mires Zakaznik

Site number: 1,091 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Region/Stolin District

Area: 94,219 ha | Coordinates: 51°47'40"N 27°21'03"E | Designation dates: 10-08-2001

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Olmany Mires Zakaznik is one of Europe's largest natural complexes of bogs and transitional mires and is the largest natural swamp of its type in the Pripjat Polesie region. It borders Ukraine in the South and is located between the Lva and Stviga rivers. The Site is particularly important for nesting and migrating waterbirds, and supports more than 1% of the European population of the globally threatened greater spotted eagle *Aquila clanga*. The mires play a crucial role in the hydrological regime of the Pripjat River; their sparse population and limited accessibility have contributed to the Site's functional integrity and the rich flora and fauna. The Site is in a military aviation training area; the military activities have reportedly not caused any degradation of natural communities but have helped to preserve the Site's natural characteristics by limiting other activities. Nonetheless, the Site has been used as the reference area for a study of the consequences of man-induced transformation of natural environments. People use the Site for gathering berries and mushrooms and for recreational fishing. The main threats to its ecological character relate to the burning of vegetation on mires, logging, the unlimited collection of cranberries and the unlimited hunting of wild animals. A site-specific management plan is in place and the implementation of priority management activities is planned for 2018-2020.

Osveiski

Site number: 1,217 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Vitebsk Oblast, Verchnedvinsk district

Area: 30,567.4 ha | Coordinates: 56°04'22"N 28°09'14"E | Designation dates: 21-10-2002

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Osveiski is a large complex of lakes, forests, and transition and bog mires on the border with Latvia and the Russian Federation. The boundaries of the Site were realigned in 2016 with those of the Landscape Reserve, leading to an increase of nearly 8,000 hectares. The core of the site is Lake Osveiskoe, the biggest eutrophic lake in Belarus, which is rapidly overgrowing with aquatic vegetation but still plays an important role in the hydrological and climatic regime of northern Belarus. The Site regularly hosts more than 10,000 migrating waterbirds and provides important breeding grounds for the willow grouse *Lagopus lagopus*, the Eurasian bittern *Botaurus stellaris* and the Eurasian curlew *Numenius arquata*. It regularly supports over 1% of the biogeographic population of the common crane *Grus grus* and the bean goose *Anser fabalis rossicus*. Human uses include logging, cattle grazing, the collection of berries, mushrooms and medicinal plants, fishing, and hunting. Four tourist routes are located within the Site. The main threats relate to drainage, dams and water management, as well as fishing and the harvesting of aquatic resources. After degradation of the lake's ecosystem caused the number of migrating waterbirds to fall, a management plan and a restoration plan were put in place. Work to restore the hydrological regime of mires and repeated waterlogging of degraded peatlands have stabilized the water levels of the mires and the lake.

Podvelikiy Moh

Site number: 2,267 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Gancevichi district/Brest Region

Area: 10,647 ha | Coordinates: 52°44'06"N 26°16'28"E | Designation dates: 30-03-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Podvelikiy Moh is a large mire massif composed predominantly of raised bogs, fen mires, transition mires and waterlogged forests. Together with Vigonoshchanskoe (Ramsar Site no. 2141), the wetland forms one of the largest mires in Europe. This large complex is an active zone of groundwater discharge, and constitutes the source of the Bobrik River, a tributary of the Pripjat River. The raised bogs, which are rare for the Polesie region, provide valuable hydrological services such as flood protection and water regulation. They also influence the climate and geochemical processes through peat accumulation and carbon sequestration. The bogs also provide an important habitat for nationally red-listed bird species such as the black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* and the short-toed snake eagle *Circaetus gallicus*. The Site's flora is diverse due its location at the junction of different floristic complexes - boreal, forest-steppe, nemoral and Eastern European. Oligotrophic and mesotrophic pine and European white birch forests dominate the Site's forest ecosystems. The main threats affecting the ecological character of the Site relate to intensive melioration systems in the surrounding area, the gathering of plants, and recreational and tourism activities.

Polesye Valley of River Bug

Site number: 2,252 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Region/Brest District

Area: 23,159 ha | Coordinates: 51°50'13"N 23°42'52"E | Designation dates: 29-05-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Located along the middle reach of the Western Bug river, the Site encompasses the part in Belarus of a floodplain which follows the border with Poland and Ukraine. It is composed primarily of freshwater tree-dominated wetlands and open water bodies including the Western Bug, but it also includes meadows and open mires. The river has been preserved in its natural state with numerous meanders and oxbows, and the Site is representative of wetlands of the Continental biogeographic region. 209 bird species have been recorded, of which at least 167 are nesting, as well as four bat species and 700 vascular plant species. The Site is also of great importance for the passage of fish including *Barbus barbus* and *Vimba vimba* to spawning grounds. The wetland plays important roles across the river basin, in groundwater discharge and recharge and in water purification. The main activities focus on forestry, fishing and nature-based tourism and recreation. The Site features the "stradach" fish farm, a large complex of old fishponds and two natural lakes which is one of the oldest of its type in Belarus. Several archaeological sites related to the Golendras colonies of the beginning of the 16th Century are located within the wetland. The main threats relate to intensive forestry, drainage, the construction of dams, the late filling and full reconstruction of fish ponds and the overgrowth of open mires with shrubs due to the cessation of mowing. An integrative system has been developed to monitor the river, its ecosystems and the threats it faces.

Pripyatsky National Park

Site number: 2,197 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Gomel Region, Zhitkovichi, Petrikov, Lelchitsy districts

Area: 88,553 ha | Coordinates: 51°59'55"N 28°04'37"E | Designation dates: 29-03-2013

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Located in southern Belarus, Pripyatsky National Park is an extensive floodplain valley composed of regularly waterlogged forests, meadows, shrub and mire ecosystems. The Site harbours 14 internationally protected habitats, which are important for the conservation of biological diversity within the Continental biogeographic region. The floodplain plays an important role in flood regulation and maintenance of water supply, groundwater levels, and water quality. The area is relatively unscathed by development, and its well-preserved habitats provide refuge for globally threatened breeding and migratory bird species such as ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*) and black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*). The Site is also important for providing spawning grounds for to 72% of the country's fish species. Decreasing precipitation, drainage channels and water pollution, and residual radioactive contamination caused by the 1986 accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant are the main threats to the Site. There is a visitor centre.

Prostyr

Site number: 1,611 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Region / Pinsk District

Area: 9,544 ha | Coordinates: 51°55'47"N 26°09'25"E | Designation dates: 18-10-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Prostyr is a complex of near-natural sedge and reed fen mires with black alder groves and scrub formations along the banks and floodplain meadows of the rivers Pripyat, Prostyr and Styr. Such eutrophic floodplain mires are typical of the Belarusian Polesie area, but they have become rare as a result of heavy drainage since the 1960s and have practically disappeared in Central Europe. The Site is a breeding ground for the globally vulnerable aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* and is generally one of the most important breeding and stopover sites in Belarus for migrating waterbirds. The vast natural floodplain meadows and mires also provide important spawning grounds and sources of food for fish. Small-scale economic activities take place within the Site, mainly associated with manual haymaking. Recreational activities are limited to amateur fishing and water tourism along the rivers. The existing network of drainage canals within the Site and in the surrounding areas continues to drain the fen mires. The disruption of the natural water regime as well as changes in traditional economic activities have led to the transformation of natural fen mires, encroachment of shrubs on open mires and meadows, disappearance of some rare plants and animals and also fires.

Servech

Site number: 2,250 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Glubokoe and Dokshitsy administrative districts of Vitebsk region

Area: 9,068 ha | Coordinates: 54°58'02"N 27°29'36"E | Designation dates: 29-05-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Located in the floodplain of the Servech river, Servech Ramsar Site is a complex of fen mires, transitional marshes and raised bogs. This mosaic of habitats supports the existence of rare and vulnerable species listed in the Red List of the Republic of Belarus. The globally threatened aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* and great snipe *Gallinago media* use the fen mires every year for breeding. The Site holds great hydrological value as it stabilizes the hydrological regime of Lake Servech, the Servech river and its tributaries. As a tributary of the Vilia river, the Servech also plays a significant role in the water balance of Vileiskoe Water Reservoir and Vileisko-Minskaya Water System. Lake Servech hosts amateur and commercial fishing. Threats to the Site include the unstable use of floodplain meadows and fen mires: the stopping of mowing and grazing has left the open fens overgrown with reeds, shrubs and trees, and so reduced the habitat of the aquatic warbler and great snipe. Other threats include the pollution of surface water and groundwater from agricultural effluents and the spring burning of the vegetation in the floodplain meadows and fen mires. Although it is currently prohibited, the possibility of peat extraction within the Site is of a certain concern.

Sporovsky Biological Reserve

Site number: 1,007 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Oblast

Area: 19,384 ha | Coordinates: 52°25'15"N 25°19'18"E | Designation dates: 22-11-1999

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Situated along the middle course of the Yaselda River, the Site includes waterlogged floodplains, lakes, reedbeds, sedge fen mires, and mineral islands. The floodplain fen mires stretch for about 35 kilometres along the Yaselda River and cover 75% of the Site's area. The Site provides important habitats for rare plants and animals, including 15 plant species and 48 animal species registered on the national Red List, including the greater spotted eagle *Aquila clanga* and the short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*. The fen mires support over 1% of the European population of the globally threatened aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. Fifteen species of dragonflies can be found in the Site and the globally threatened beetle *Dytiscus latissimus* has been recorded in oxbows of the Yaselda River. The River and Sporovskoe Lake provide freshwater for agricultural needs. By accumulating water during the spring and summer floods, the mires also prevent inundation of settlements and agricultural land. The Reserve's territory is used by local people and visitors for recreation and amateur fishing. There is an education centre and ecological path. The main threats to the ecological character of the Site relate to disruption of the hydrological regime, which leads to the overgrowth of shrubs and reeds and the gradual reduction in the open sedge mire which is critical habitat for the aquatic warbler. However, the hydrological regime has improved in recent years with the implementation of a management plan.

Stary Zhaden

Site number: 2,140 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Gomel region, Zhitkovichi and Lelchitsy districts

Area: 17,048 ha | Coordinates: 51°54'22"N 27°36'37"E | Designation dates: 07-09-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site lies in the south of Belarus, between the Pripyat River and its tributaries the Stviga and Ubort. It provides an important "green corridor" between the Prip'yatsky National Park and Olmany Mires Zakaznik Ramsar Sites; together these three Sites comprise the Prip'yatskoe Polesie Biosphere Reserve. Stary Zhaden is dominated by fens combined with sphagnum-dominated bogs and transitional boreal mires which are typical of the Belarusian Polesie region. The wetland is criss-crossed by a network of overgrown canals and ditches created at the end of the 19th century. The mires and islands are bordered by swampy, waterlogged and dry forests. The Site is characterized by a rich biodiversity including 17 species which are nationally listed as vulnerable or endangered. The Site plays important hydrological roles in water purification, maintenance of groundwater levels and water supply during the dry season. Besides commercial beekeeping, collecting of berries and mushrooms within the wetland are important sources of income for the local population. The main factors threatening its ecological character are logging, fires, drainage, poaching, recreational disturbances caused by the large-scale collection of berries and mushrooms, and residual radioactive contamination caused by the 1986 accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

Svislochsko-Berezinskiy

Site number: 2,268 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Osipovichi, Klichev and Kirov districts/Mogilev region

Area: 18,341 ha | Coordinates: 53°22'29"N 28°58'32"E | Designation dates: 30-03-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Svislochsko-Berezinskiy is located where the Svisloch and Olsa rivers flow into the Berezina river. Over 80% of the Site is covered by forests adjoining the Berezina and Svisloch floodplains, but it also encompasses lakes, fen, transition mires and raised bogs. The wetland supports plant and animal populations which are important for maintaining the biological diversity of the Predpolesie region, which is on the border of the Boreal and Continental biogeographic regions. More than 650 upper vascular plant species are registered within the Site. The floodplain meadows along the Olsa and Berezina are important stopovers during migration for waders and ducks, including large numbers of white-winged tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* and ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. The globally threatened sterlet *Acipenser ruthenus* can also be found on the Site. The Berezina river floodplain, fen mires and lakes are important for flood control. The Site also plays an important role in ensuring water quality and maintaining groundwater reserves which supply surface wetland complexes. The wetland is important for timber production and for the provision of water for industry as well as drinking water. The main factors affecting the ecological character of the Site relate to the burning of vegetation in the floodplains and to unstable flood regimes, which cause the drying out of tree stands, and increase the vulnerability to forest pests and the risk of fires during dry years.

Vigonoshchanskoe

Site number: 2,141 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Region, Ivatsevichi, Gantsevichi districts

Area: 54,611 ha | Coordinates: 52°41'18"N 25°47'38"E | Designation dates: 16-01-2013

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

This Site in south-eastern Belarus straddles the watershed between the Black and Baltic Seas. It is one of the largest forest-wetland complexes in Belarus, and comprises two large lakes, rivers, canals, floodplains and open marsh areas, with waterlogged forests, fens, and transitional and raised bogs. A characteristic feature is the presence of large areas of white birch forests on mires. The core of the Site is Lake Vygonoshchanskoe, one of the largest pristine lakes in Polesie. The whole area is of great importance for the conservation of plant and animal communities nationally listed as vulnerable or endangered, including one of the largest and most stable populations of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) and eight breeding pairs of the greater spotted eagle (*Aquila clanga*). The Site plays a key role in regulating the hydrological regime of the region and supplies water for the Shchara River, one of the Neman River's largest tributaries. Its ecological character is affected by agricultural activities, fires, logging and poaching. Changes in water management including modifications to sluice operations on the Shchara River have also disrupted the level of Lake Vygonoshchanskoe.

Vileity

Site number: 2,251 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Pastavy and Braslavsky districts/Vitebsk region

Area: 8,452 ha | Coordinates: 55°15'03"N 26°46'22"E | Designation dates: 30-09-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Vileity Ramsar Site is a waterlogged forest with a complex of fen and transitional mires, floodplain meadows and marshes, rivers, oxbow lakes and a system of channels overgrown with woods. It makes up the eastern part of a large natural wetland complex located in the transboundary zone between Belarus and Lithuania and is adjacent to the Lithuanian "Adutiskis-Svyta-Birveta wetland complex" Ramsar Site. The floodplains provide an important stopover and migration corridor for threatened waterbirds including the black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*), the ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) and the common greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*). During the spring floods, the Site hosts more than 20,000 waterfowl. More than 1% of the biogeographic population of the greater white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) and the bean goose (*Anser fabalis rossicus*) regularly visit. The Myadelka and Drisyvata rivers which flow through Vileity serve as important migratory channels to allow adult European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) to reach their spawning grounds in the Baltic Sea. The Site plays an important role in regulating the hydrological regime of the Western Dvina River basin and in supporting flood control. The main threats are logging and wood harvesting, drainage and unsustainable agricultural practices in parts of the Site.

Vydritsa

Site number: 2,195 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Gomel Region, Zhlobin and Svetlogorsk Districts

Area: 17,403 ha | Coordinates: 52°44'13"N 29°40'28"E | Designation dates: 29-03-2013

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site lies on a floodplain between the Berezina and Vydritsa rivers in the south-east of Belarus. It is a system of oxbow lakes, forested peatlands, meadows, marshes, swamps and drainage channels. The combination of forest-mire and dry upland plant complexes is a remarkable feature of the Site. Vydritsa is internationally important for the maintenance of biological diversity within the Continental biogeographic region. During spring floods, it serves as a stopover for numerous migrating geese and ducks and as a breeding ground for nationally-threatened bird species such as the marsh sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*) and the ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*). Hydrological values include flood regulation, water supply, and maintenance of groundwater level and water quality, while the peatland areas play an important role in carbon sequestration. The main land uses within the Site are forestry and agricultural activities, recreation and sport fishing. Factors adversely affecting Vydritsa's ecological character are logging, fires, and disturbance of the hydrological regime through drainage and river canalization. Radioactive contamination caused by the 1986 accident in Chernobyl also dramatically impacted the Site.

Yelnia

Site number: 1,218 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Vitebsk Oblast
Area: 25,301 ha | Coordinates: 55°33'11"N 27°51'11"E | Designation dates: 21-10-2002

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site consists of a complex of raised bogs and transition mires encompassing over 100 lakes and small mineral islands covered with small-leafed and spruce forests. The boundaries of the Ramsar Site were aligned in 2016 with the boundaries of the Yelnia Republican Landscape Reserve, leading to an increase of 2,100 hectares. The Site holds one of the largest raised bogs in Europe, which is also representative of the near-natural bogs of the Belarusian Lake District. The Site provides key habitats for a number of stenotopic species associated with raised bogs and is also important for a number of glacial flora and fauna relicts. The large bog and adjacent farmland provide important staging areas and foraging grounds during migration for over 20,000 waterbirds, including more than 1% of the biogeographic population of the common crane *Grus grus* and the globally threatened greater white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons*. More than 15 rivers originate from the Site, and it exerts a significant influence on the hydrological regime and microclimate of the region and acts as a biofilter of anthropogenic pollutants. Due to its inaccessibility, human activities are limited to berry-picking, angling, and hunting, and also forestry on the periphery. There is a visitor centre, ecological trail and observation tower, and guided tours and excursions are organized for individuals and groups. A management plan has been prepared and the priority measures implemented; for example, drainage of the bog and adjacent areas had disturbed the hydrological regime, but following restoration work the distribution of *Sphagnum* mosses has increased throughout the Site.

Zvanets

Site number: 1,219 | Country: Belarus | Administrative region: Brest Oblast, Drogichin and Kobrin Districts

Area: 16,227.4 ha | Coordinates: 52°02'51"N 24°52'24"E | Designation dates: 21-10-2002

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Zvanets is composed of numerous islands characterized by mineral soil and a rich and unique flora. The Site, described as the largest European mesotrophic fen mire, is a typical example of well-preserved sedge-Hypnum fen mires. It is a biodiversity hotspot, with 664 plant species and 168 vertebrate species including a significant proportion which have adapted to the particular environmental conditions. Ten vegetation communities are present which were formerly widespread across the Polesian fen mires but are now rare in Belarus and Europe. The Site hosts the globally threatened greater spotted eagle *Aquila clanga* as well as over 1% of the European population of the aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. The wetland is located on the watershed of two river basins, and plays a significant role in regulating the hydrology of the region. Human activities include small-scale bee keeping, growing of arable crops, hay making, cattle grazing and forestry. An ecological-educational centre is located within the Site. The main threats to its ecological character relate to the disruption of the hydrological regime due to adjacent amelioration and the uncontrolled burning of vegetation, logging, and the extension of arable land. The shrinking area of the open fen mires has resulted in a decline in the aquatic warbler population. The Site's management plan is updated every three years.