Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Poland

19 Ramsar Site(s) covering **152,964 ha**

Biebrzański National Park

Site number: 756 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Podlaskie
Area: 59,233 ha | Coordinates: 53°30'14"N 22°45'31"E | Designation dates: 24-10-1995
View Site details in RSIS

Biebrzanaki National Park is one of the largest and most well-preserved areas of natural swamps and peatlands in the Continental biogeographical region. It comprises several types of swamp, grass tussock communities, alder forest and some cultivated land. The Biebrza river that runs through the Site features a number of meanders and oxbows in various stages of succession, which provide a great variety of habitats. The area hosts a large number of rare, endemic and endangered species, including such rare taxa as the moth *Catocala pacta*, European fire-bellied toad, otter, musk rat, wolf and elk, for whom this variety of habitats is essential. Moreover, numerous migrating waterbirds use the wetland for feeding, resting, moulting and breeding. Flower meadows provide nourishment for breeding wild animals, and they support insects which also serve as pollinators of nearby crops. The area is also valuable for human populations, as in and around the Park there are over 600 kilometres of canoeing, cycling, running and walking trails and educational paths equipped with viewing towers, platforms and boardwalks. The local population also earns some additional income by gathering herbs and fruits. The area faces some increasing threats, which include dredging, canalization, water management and invasive alien species. A management plan is currently being prepared.

Czerwone bog woodland - nature reserve

Site number: 2,339 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Małopolskie
Area: 114.7 ha | Coordinates: 49°27'28"N 20°02'19"E | Designation dates: 11-12-2017
View Site details in RSIS

The Site is an active raised bog which, together with the surrounding bog woodland, represents a typical example of a mountain bog. It is a rare complex of three bog habitats of European importance: transition mires and quaking bogs; bog woodland; and active raised bogs. The raised bog has a well-developed dome of between 50 centimetres and 5 metres in height, covering around 35 hectares and overgrown with pine and sphagnum communities. The dome is surrounded by transition mires, which are overgrown in places by shrubs of pine or birch. Noteworthy species include the nationally threatened common sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, the pine *Pinus x rhaetica* and black grouse *Lyrurus tetrix.* The Site is actively managed: much of the scrub was removed from the dome of the peat bog in 2012 and new shoots are removed every two years. The Site is of great importance for carbon storage, education, long-term monitoring and research; it is used as a scientific reference and demonstration site for students. It is also important for recreation.

Druzno Lake Nature Reserve

Site number: 1,563 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Area: 3,068 ha | Coordinates: 54°04'53"N 19°27'47"E | Designation dates: 29-10-2002
View Site details in RSIS

The Site consists of a shallow and largely overgrown lake in the Vistula Delta region near the Baltic coast, with surrounding wetlands, reedbeds and swampy alder forests which are a relic of a much larger water body that was once part of the Vistula Lagoon. The Site has diverse vegetation cover, with more than 56 plant communities found, most of them aquatic. During summer, more than 140 bird species find refuge within the Site, 108 of them regularly. The region owes its origins to human draining and damming activities. In 2011, the Elblag Canal was declared as a historical monument by the President of the Republic of Poland. In several settlements, typical old Dutch buildings constructed by Mennonite immigrants have been preserved, and religious memorials such as 18th-century Mennonite cemeteries; the Site's pumping stations, sluices from the 19th century and inclined planes on the Elblag Canal are industrial monuments of European significance. The main uses of the lake are fisheries, tourism and recreation activities such as cruises for tourists. A management plan has been implemented on the Site since 2005.

Glacial lakes in the Tatra National Park

Site number: 2,340 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Małopolskie
Area: 571.1 ha | Coordinates: 49°13'02"N 19°59'36"E | Designation dates: 11-12-2017
View Site details in RSIS

The Site consists of ten separate areas, and includes the small lakes of the High Tatra mountains and their immediate surroundings, together with the Dudowe Stawki ponds and the Siwe Stawki lakes in the Western Tatra mountains. The biggest lakes are Morskie Oko, Wielki Staw and Czarny Staw pod Rysami. The majority of the lakes are situated in depressions created by erosion and in areas of glacial accumulation; however the lakes in the Gąsienicowa valley are the result of karst genesis. The marshy lake banks and the adjoining peat areas provide habitats for some notable vascular plants such as the Alpine bulrush *Trichophorum alpinum* and the rush *Juncus triglumis*, which is limited in the Polish Carpathians to the Tatra mountains only. The mosaics of dwarf-pine scrub, grasslands, tall grass swards and the lakeside wetlands provide habitat for the boreal-alpine form of the bluethroat *Luscinia svecica svecica*, which is protected in the Tatry Natura 2000 site. It is exceptionally rare: its only breeding areas in the whole Carpathian mountain range are in the Tatra (on both the Polish and Czech sides of the border). The Site is entirely located within the borders of the Tatra National Park, which is popular for hiking, nature observation and other forms of recreation. It is also a long-term monitoring site.

Karaś Lake Nature Reserve

Site number: 284 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Area: 815 ha | Coordinates: 53°33'31"N 19°28'42"E | Designation dates: 03-01-1984
View Site details in RSIS

This Nature Reserve in northern Poland is composed of a lake, Jezioro Karaś, which is surrounded by mires and swamps. The Reserve has a relatively small extension of 815 hectares, but includes a variety of wetland habitats, from the lake's open water to swampy forests. It is surrounded by farmland, and its boundaries can be clearly distinguished due to its different land uses. Human activities at and around the Site also include commercial fishing and forestry. The lake is divided into two different basins surrounded by a ring of reedbeds, after which successive habitats support important populations of waterfowl species such as spotted crake (*Porzana porzana*) and little crake (*Porzana parva*), which regularly breed there. More than 175 species are found within the Reserve, most of them protected under Polish legislation. Changes in plant communities have been noted, which may lead to changes to the Site's ecological character. The Reserve is currently managed by the Forest District of Iława and the Regional Water Management Authority of Warsaw. The management plan in force grants strict protection, maintaining existing habitats and their hydrology.

Krkonoše/Karkonosze Subalpine peatbogs

Site number: 1,566 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Dolnośląskie
Area: 40 ha | Coordinates: 50°44'30"N 15°42'29"E | Designation dates: 29-10-2002
View Site details in RSIS

The Site is in the south-west of Poland, along the border with the Czech Republic in the Karkonosze Mountains. A major part of the wetland, covering about 250 hectares, is situated in the Czech Republic, and in 2009 the Site was designated as a Transboundary Ramsar Site together with the Czech Krkonošská rašeliniště (Ramsar Site no.637). On the Polish side lies a complex of eight separate peat bog areas with vegetation typical of subarctic tundra, combining arctic and alpine species. Their combined surface area is about 40 ha. The Site lies on the watershed between the Baltic and North Sea basins, giving it importance in groundwater recharge and flood control. The surfaces of the bogs feature hummocks, oblong ridges, trough-like hollows which gather water, and permanent pools. Unique and rare algae, for instance *Corcontochrysis noctivaga*, thrive in the pools. The Site provides breeding refuge to protected and endangered bird species, such as the bluethroat and the nationally endangered Eurasian black grouse. The major threats to the bogs are trampling, littering and water pollution from tourism and recreational activities. Since 1992 the Site has been part of a Bilateral Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme.

Lake of Seven Islands Nature Reserve

Site number: 285 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Area: 1,763 ha | Coordinates: 54°18'28"N 21°34'54"E | Designation dates: 03-01-1984
View Site details in RSIS

The wetland in north-eastern Poland, near the town of Węgorzewo, encompasses a 300-hectare shallow lake with 14 forested islands, a peninsula with surrounding mires and forests, and a stretch of the Oświnka river which flows into the lake. Most of the lake's surface is overgrown with reedbeds; it is surrounded by a belt of sedges and reeds, and in its immediate vicinity there are meadows and patches of forests. The Reserve is not inhabited, and so provides a good resting and feeding refuge for migratory birds: at least 28 species listed in Annex I of the European Union Birds Directive have been found to breed within the wetland, for example the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), the western osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) and the black tern (*Chlidonias niger*). The Site is regularly used for scientific purposes, which include ornithological and ecological studies. It is also important for nature enthusiasts and birdwatchers, as its birds can be watched from the hills on the western edge of the Site. The main threats are shrinking of the water surface as the lake becomes shallower, overgrowing with marshland vegetation, and eutrophication caused by agricultural effluents. As of 2019, a management plan was being prepared.

Luknajno Lake Nature Reserve

Site number: 166 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Area: 1,189 ha | Coordinates: 53°48'55"N 21°37'52"E | Designation dates: 22-11-1977
View Site details in RSIS

The Reserve consists of the shallow and moderately eutrophic Lake Łuknajno and its surrounding habitats. The Lake's shoreline is densely covered with abundant vegetation. The other habitats in the Site are mainly reed and sedge beds, willow communities and alder carr. The Reserve supports numerous species of breeding and wintering birds, with the Lake providing food to great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, mute swan *Cygnus olor* and several ducks, among other species. The field station of the Warsaw University Zoological Institute, which is in the Site, promotes research and organizes educational activities. The main threats are eutrophication caused by nutrient runoff from nearby fields, and predation by invasive American mink (*Neovison vison*). As of 2019, a management plan was being prepared.

Milicz Fishponds Nature Reserve

Site number: 758 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Dolnośląskie
Area: 5,298.2 ha | Coordinates: 51°31'34"N 17°14'05"E | Designation dates: 24-10-1995
View Site details in RSIS

The Ramsar Site includes five separate sub-sites featuring fishpond complexes that have been in place for several centuries; it also features marshlands, meadows and forests, while most of the ponds are surrounded by a wide belt of rushes. The ponds are fed by the waters of the Barycz river; the water quality is high because of the lack of industry and low population density of the river's catchment area. The Reserve hosts 137 breeding bird species, of which many are rare, and over 50 further migrant species pass through. Large flocks of ducks, geese and other waterbirds gather during their spring and autumn migrations. There are also numerous species of rare plants found in the reserve, mainly aquatic species. Nature trails have been established, as well as two sightseeing spots with observation towers. The ornithological station of the University of Wrocław, located in Ruda Milicka at the edge of the Reserve, plays a significant educational and information role. Human intrusions and disturbance and invasive species are among the most important threats to the area; a management plan has been in place since 2013.

Narew River National Park

Site number: 1,564 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Podlasie
Area: 6,810 ha | Coordinates: 53°03'18"N 22°52'57"E | Designation dates: 29-10-2002
View Site details in RSIS

The Site covers a 35-kilometre section of a natural valley within the borders of the Narew River National Park in north-eastern Poland. The lowland river follows a sinuous path through the moraine hills of the wide valley with a well-developed system of meanders and oxbows. It is fringed with fens and reed and sedge beds interspersed with willow, alder and birch woods. Most of the swampy Site is inaccessible to people and provides excellent refuge for a rich flora and fauna, especially local and migrating waterbirds. It is one of the most important breeding sites in Poland for the aquatic warbler *Acocephalus paludicola*, and regularly hosts significant numbers of black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*. The main threats to the Site are the reduction in water input because of the upstream Siemianowka dam at the border with Belarus, and the water pollution caused by towns upstream. The water quality is however steadily improving because of progress in its treatment.

Peat bogs in the Tatra National Park

Site number: 2,341 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Małopolskie
Area: 741 ha | Coordinates: 49°13'43"N 19°57'35"E | Designation dates: 11-12-2017
View Site details in RSIS

The Site consists of four separate areas representing diverse types of mountain wetlands of European importance, and almost all typical Carpathian wetland types such as mountain raised bogs, transition mires and quaking bogs, small dystrophic lakes and Bazzanio-Piceetum spruce forest. It comprises wetlands in the High Tatra and in the Western Tatra mountains, and a bigger forest area in the Pańszczyca and Sucha Woda valleys. There are transitional mires in the marginal zones of small mountain raised bogs and acid fens among montane belt grasslands and in upper montane spruce forests. Some of the peatlands were born of vegetation succession in water bodies. The valuable wetlands occur mainly in the depressions on acid and poor habitats and they are supplied by rainfall. The plant life is dominated by numerous sphagnum and sedge species including the rare *Carex pauciflora* and *Carex limosa*. Animal species of interest include the Carpathian newt *Lissotriton montandoni* and dragonflies such as the bog hawker *Aeshna subarctica* and the Alpine emerald *Somatochlora alpestris*. Spruce forests in the Pańszczyca valley, Toporowe Stawy and the Smerczyński Staw region provide habitat for the western capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus.* The Site is located entirely within the borders of the Tatra National Park, which is a popular destination for picnics, touring and nature observation, as well as being important for monitoring and science.

Peatland of the Izera River Valley

Site number: 2,319 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Lower Silesia
Area: 529.4 ha | Coordinates: 50°51'02"N 15°21'18"E | Designation dates: 09-04-2015
View Site details in RSIS

The Site consists of peat bogs and transitional mires along the flood plains of the Izera River in the central Izera Mountains, on Poland's south-western border with the Czech Republic. It is the largest mountain bog complex in Poland, with no equivalent in any other part of the country. The mires feature subalpine tundra vegetation, and the peat bogs host communities which are significantly rare in mountain areas of the Continental biogeographical region. Species of European importance include the Boreal owl *Aegolius funereus,* the Eurasian eagle-owl *Bubo bubo* and the Eurasian black grouse *Lyrurus tetrix.* The mires play important roles in flood protection, by capturing the spring floods of the Izera River and its tributaries. Other important functions of the wetland are carbon sequestration and storage, and soil formation. It also provides scientific and educational opportunities. It is adjacent to similar large mire complexes on the Czech side of the River, which have been designated as Jizera Headwaters (Ramsar Site no. 2074).

Poleski National Park

Site number: 1,565 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Lubelskie
Area: 9,762 ha | Coordinates: 51°25'45"N 23°11'17"E | Designation dates: 29-10-2002
View Site details in RSIS

The Site is situated at the watershed between the basins of the Bug and Wieprz rivers in south-eastern Poland, near the border with Ukraine and within the pan-European ecological corridor of the Bug river, and has the same boundaries as the National Park. With its complex of shallow lakes and mires, Poleski National Park has habitats ranging from raised bogs to transitional and calcareous mires and alkaline fens, with vegetation indicating some features of woodland tundra. Forest communities vary from pine woods to alder swamps with a typical hollow-and-mound structure. The Site supports about 146 breeding bird species including raptors such as the lesser spotted eagle, hen harrier and Montagu's harrier. The only sparsely populated area, which features traditional wooden cottages, is used for extensive agriculture, fishing and forestry. Water habitats are endangered due to falling water levels and eutrophication. A management plan has been put in place by the Park authorities, and is renewed on a yearly basis.

Przemków Fish Ponds

Site number: 2,320 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Dolnośląskie and Lubuskie Voivodeship
Area: 4,605.4 ha | Coordinates: 51°34'26"N 15°48'40"E | Designation dates: 09-04-2015
View Site details in RSIS

The Site includes two fish pond complexes with a total of 35 ponds, together with adjacent wet meadows, reedbeds and riparian forests. It boasts an abundant birdlife: out of 216 species observed, 48 are waterbirds. The Site is one of the most important areas in this part of Europe for resting and feeding migratory birds, and especially for bean goose *Anser fabalis,* with 19% of its non-breeding population supported by the Site. It is also of great importance for breeding birds, with as many as 147 species recorded, including waterbirds of European importance such as the common kingfisher *Alcedo atthis,* the corn crake *Crex crex* and the red-backed shrike *Lanius collurio.* Various threatened amphibians, reptiles and mammals are also present. The Site plays a valuable role in flood control and soil formation, and provides recreational, educational and scientific opportunities. It is a model for local cooperation, with the Lower Silesia Landscape Park Complex, the Polish Angling Association, the Roma People Association and other organisations working together to support traditional fisheries, promote their products and raise the awareness of fishermen of the importance of birds to the health of the ecosystem.

Słowiński National Park

Site number: 757 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Pomorskie
Area: 32,744 ha | Coordinates: 54°42'51"N 17°18'25"E | Designation dates: 24-10-1995
View Site details in RSIS

The Słowiński National Park covers a 33-kilometre stretch of the Baltic coast near the town of Łeba, and includes a two-mile-wide belt of shallow coastal waters. The Site boasts a wide range of strikingly diverse habitats ranging from sand beaches, notable "moving dunes", lakes, mires, meadows and forests, and these and the transitional "ecotones" between them support a wealth of biodiversity. Within the Site there are at least 25 bird species listed in Annex 1 of the European Union Birds Directive, of which 15 are listed in the Polish national red list, including *Aegolius funereus*, *Asio flammeus*, *Botaurus stellaris* and *Philomachus pugnax*. During winter the unfrozen mouths of the Łeba and Łupawa rivers provide favourable conditions for 73 wintering bird species, and during spring and autumn the lakes become very important foraging and resting sites for waterbird species. The Site is visited annually by about 500,000 visitors who use the marked trails, viewing towers and educational trails to observe these rare animals and plants in their natural habitats. At the same time, the high number of tourists results in dune trampling, habitat destruction and disturbance of breeding birds. Falling water levels, lake eutrophication and the presence of invasive species also present threats to the Site. The Słowiński National Park Organization, the management authority of the area, is implementing a management plan.

Swidwie Lake Nature Reserve

Site number: 283 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Zachodniopomorskie
Area: 891 ha | Coordinates: 53°33'45"N 14°21'36"E | Designation dates: 03-01-1984
View Site details in RSIS

The Site is located in north-western Poland, between the Wkrzańska Primeval Forest and the border with Germany. Swidwie Lake is bordered by a mosaic of different habitats, including reed beds, meadows, alder carrs, fresh conifer forests and mixed oak-linden forests, while the Lake itself is eutrophic, shallow and overgrown by reeds. The area is important for breeding, feeding, moulting, wintering and resting birds including several endangered species. The Reserve is a regular feeding area for birds of prey such as white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), which also nests in the area. Numerous flocks of migrating birds, especially geese, gather on the lake during spring and autumn migrations. Flood control, erosion protection, water purification and maintenance of hydrological regimes are among the services which the Site provides. A centre for ecological education has been opened next to the Site in Zalesie, and some birdwatching towers and marked paths have been installed. Between successive updates of the Ramsar Information Sheet in 2007 and 2018, the Site faced increasing urbanization of nearby areas, and the loss of some habitats.

Vistula River Mouth

Site number: 2,321 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Pomorskie voivodeship (Pomerania)
Area: 1,748.1 ha | Coordinates: 54°21'13"N 18°55'38"E | Designation dates: 09-04-2015
View Site details in RSIS

The Site consists of two separate areas of the Vistula River estuary, the largest estuary in Poland. The western part is the Ptasi Raj (Bird's Paradise) Nature Reserve located on the westernmost section of Sobieszewska Island, covering a wetland and a partly dyked section of the mouth of the western arm of the Vistula (called Wisła Śmiała or "Bold Vistula"). The eastern part, which includes the Mewia Łacha Nature Reserve, covers the main river mouth (known as Wisła Przekop or "Vistula Canal") and an area of sea. The Site is one of the most important areas in the country for migratory and wintering coastal waterbirds, as the only nesting site in Poland of the sandwich tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* and one of the most important nesting sites for the little tern *Sternula albifrons* and the common tern *Sterna hirundo*. It is also an important resting area of grey and harbour seals: it hosts Poland's main population of grey seals. Harbour seals occasionally breed at the Site, the only breeding location of the species in Poland. Visitor facilities include an educational trail with two observation towers in the Ptasi Raj Nature Reserve, and a trail in the Mewia Łacha Nature Reserve.

Warta River Mouth National Park

Site number: 282 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Lubuskie
Area: 7,956 ha | Coordinates: 52°35'51"N 14°46'12"E | Designation dates: 03-01-1984
View Site details in RSIS

The Site covers the Warta River floodplain, near the border with Germany, and the surrounding marshes, meadows and pasture. It is one of the most important areas for waterfowl in Central Europe. The Park has a characteristic open landscape of seasonally flooded meadows and pastures, dotted with willows and criss-crossed by a dense network of river channels, ditches, canals, oxbows and small reservoirs. The annual fluctuation in the river level is as great as 3.5 metres, and the regular flooding favours the development of particular vegetation which creates the appropriate conditions for supporting a large concentration of migrating birds. It is also an important moulting site for geese, ducks, swans and cranes, and of the 279 species of bird recorded within the Park, more than 170 use the Site for breeding. An education centre, which organizes activities such as excursions and lectures, is found in the management headquarters of the Site. As of 2018, a management plan was being prepared.

Wigry National Park

Site number: 1,567 | Country: Poland | Administrative region: Podlaskie
Area: 15,085 ha | Coordinates: 54°02'39"N 23°05'57"E | Designation dates: 29-10-2002
View Site details in RSIS

Wigry National Park, close to the border with Lithuania in the north-east of Poland, is a diverse wetland system which encompasses Wigry Lake, several peat bogs, and woodland surrounding the Lake. The Site and its landscapes, which range from hills of glacial moraine in the north to flat land in the south, provide a wide variety of ecological niches which support a rich biodiversity. The Site supports globally endangered bird species including the red kite, white-tailed eagle and corncrake, and a further 150 breeding bird species. The numerous small rivers in a natural state provide habitat for beavers, which affect the water regime with their damming activities. The Site also includes Paleolithic archaeological sites, with remnants of stone and iron age nomadic hunter settlements, a graveyard of the Jacwing people with mounds from the 3rd and 4th centuries, and a valuable baroque monastery. Environmentally friendly methods are used for agriculture, forestry and fishing on the Site, and they are widely accepted by local communities for the preservation of the Site. Nonetheless, urbanization, water pollution, habitat destruction and the presence of alien species still remain significant threats. Site management plans are developed each year, and they establish the protective actions which the land managers use to protect the Site from these threats.