Belarus, covering 207,600 km², is bounded by Poland in the west, by Lithuania, Latvia and Russia in the north and east, and by Ukraine in the south. Belarus lies in the temperate forest zone, beyond the steppe zone which dominates areas of Russia and Ukraine to the south and east. The northern part of Belarus (Poozer’e) is characterized by large tracts of coniferous forest and many lakes, raised bogs and rivers. The central part (the Belarus range) is represented by mostly open, hilly landscapes. The southern part of the country (Polesia) is low-lying, with basin mires and broadleaved forests crossed by lowland rivers with mire-rich flood-plains.

A total of 21 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have been identified in Belarus, covering 6,175 km² or 3% of the area of the country (Table 1). Most of the IBAs lie in the northern and southern parts of Belarus (Map 1), and are dominated by large tracts of fen and raised bog, as well as by waterlogged river flood-plains. Few IBAs have been identified in eastern Belarus because of the lack of recent surveys in this region. The previous international IBA inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) identified seven IBAs in Belarus (as part of the former USSR), three of which are included in the current total of 21 (see Table 1). The other four original sites (listed at the end of Table 1) were not confirmed as IBAs during this review because, based on available data, they do not meet any of the current criteria.

Map 1. Location, area and criteria category of Important Bird Areas in Belarus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of IBA (ha)</th>
<th>Highest category of criteria met by IBA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,000 to 6,199</td>
<td>A (15 IBAs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,200 to 14,999</td>
<td>B (6 IBAs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000 to 44,399</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44,400 to 100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000 to 44,399</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,200 to 14,999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 to 6,199</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Map 1. Location, area and criteria category of Important Bird Areas in Belarus.
**ORNITHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE**

There are 119 species of European conservation concern (SPECs) which breed regularly in Belarus (Tucker and Heath 1994, Nikiforov et al. 1997). Of these, *Aythya nyroca*, *Aquila clanga*, *Crex crex* and *Acrocephalus paludicola* are globally threatened, *Haliaeetus albicilla* and *Gallinago media* are globally near-threatened, and a further 69 species have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe (Tucker and Heath 1994, Nikiforov et al. 1997).

Table 1 lists the criteria which each site meets in order to qualify as an IBA. Thirteen sites qualify as IBAs because they hold significant numbers of globally threatened or near-threatened species (criterion A1; see Table 2). *Acrocephalus paludicola* breeds at seven of the sites (Table 2). Indeed, Belarus supports the majority of the world population of this species, according to current knowledge. *Crex crex* also breeds at seven of the sites, the most important being Mid- and Lower Pripyat (sites 017 and 020) and the flood-plain of the Sozh river (021). *Gallinago media* breeds at three sites, and *Aythya nyroca* breeds at two. Breeding *Haliaeetus albicilla* and *Aquila clanga* each meet the A1 criterion at one site in Belarus.

All of the IBAs are important breeding sites for waterbirds, and together they cover all of the most significant such sites in Belarus, comprising river flood-plains, fens, raised bogs and highly productive water-bodies (both natural and man-made). Table 3 shows that three of the IBAs support 1% or more of the biogeographical population of one or more waterbird species (criterion A4i), either when breeding (Lower Pripyat, site 020) or when staging during migration (Mid-Pripyat, 017; Elnya raised bog, 002). Six of the 21 sites do not qualify as globally Important Bird Areas (i.e. under any A criteria) but are of European importance (under B2/B3 criteria) for SPECs (001, 004, 005, 007, 015, 018).

Waterbirds migrate over Belarus mainly on a broad front, stopping and congregating at river flood-plains and raised bogs to rest and forage. Most such visible migration activity of waterbirds is confined to Polesia (southern Belarus), with the main axis of movement being along the River Pripyat flood-plain. Through meeting criterion A4i, Mid-Pripyat (site 017) has global importance as a staging area for *Anser fabalis, Anser albifrons* and *Anas penelope*, as does Elnya raised bog (002) for *Grus grus* in the north of the country. Despite the rapid eastern extension of the wintering range of several species during the past 20 years in Europe, there are no sites with large concentrations of wintering waterbirds in Belarus.

IBAs were identified for the following bird species most often (number of sites in brackets): *Crex crex* (seven), *Acrocephalus paludicola* (13), *Haliaeetus albicilla* (12), *Aquila clanga* (seven), *Grus grus* (seven), *Anas penelope* (seven). Table 3 shows that 17 of the 21 IBAs are important for one or more species, and 14 for more than one species.

---

### Table 1. Summary of Important Bird Areas in Belarus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IBA code</th>
<th>International name</th>
<th>National name</th>
<th>Administrative region</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Criteria (see p. 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001</td>
<td>Ovseya</td>
<td>Ovseya</td>
<td>Vitsebsk</td>
<td>22,600</td>
<td>B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>Elnya raised bog</td>
<td>Elnya raised bog</td>
<td>Vitsebsk</td>
<td>23,200</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>SU012 Kozyany</td>
<td>Kozyany</td>
<td>Vitsebsk</td>
<td>44,400</td>
<td>A1, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>Golubickaya Pushcha</td>
<td>Golubickaya Pushcha</td>
<td>Vitsebsk</td>
<td>6,734</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>SU027 Berezensky Reserve</td>
<td>Berezensky Reserve</td>
<td>Vitsebsk, Minsk</td>
<td>81,023</td>
<td>B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>Bereesina</td>
<td>Bereesina</td>
<td>Minsk</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>A1, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>West Bereesina</td>
<td>West Bereesina</td>
<td>Grodno</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>Swisloch</td>
<td>Swisloch</td>
<td>Grodno</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>A1, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>SU029 Belovezhskaya Pushcha</td>
<td>Belovezhskaya Pushcha</td>
<td>Brest, Grodno</td>
<td>87,000</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>Dikoe</td>
<td>Dikoe</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>A1, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>Selts</td>
<td>Selts</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>A1, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>Vygonoeshchanskoe</td>
<td>Vygonoeshchanskoe</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>A1, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>013</td>
<td>Yaselda-Berioza</td>
<td>Yaselda-Berioza</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>A1, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>Sporovo</td>
<td>Sporovo</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td>8,200</td>
<td>A1, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>Polesia fish-farm</td>
<td>Polesie fish-farm</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>016</td>
<td>Zvanets</td>
<td>Zvanets</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>A1, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>017</td>
<td>Mid-Pripyat</td>
<td>Mid-Pripyat</td>
<td>Brest, Grodno</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>A1, A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>Lower Pripyat</td>
<td>Lower Pripyat</td>
<td>Brest, Grodno</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>A1, A4i, A4ii, B1i, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>021</td>
<td>Flood-plain of Sozh river</td>
<td>Flood-plain of Sozh river</td>
<td>Grodno</td>
<td>13,400</td>
<td>A1, B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sites identified in the previous inventory of IBAs in Europe (Grimmett and Jones 1989) but no longer considered to be IBAs: SU028 Telekhany, Ivatsevichi, and Lyakhovichi, Brest; SU030 Pripyat; Zhitkovichi, Letchitsy and Petrikov, Gomel; SU110* Osveysk oye Ozero (Lake Osveyskoye), Verkhnedvinsk, Minsk.

* Mistakenly treated as part of RSFSR in the previous inventory of IBAs in Europe (Grimmett and Jones 1989).

---

### Table 2. Important Bird Areas in Belarus that are important for species of global conservation concern (meeting criterion A1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>IBA code</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Aythya nyroca</em></td>
<td>009</td>
<td>019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Haliaeetus albicilla</em></td>
<td>008</td>
<td>011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gallinago media</em></td>
<td>007</td>
<td>012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Crex crex</em></td>
<td>006, 012</td>
<td>014, 016, 017, 017, 020, 021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gula aquila</em></td>
<td>003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Also *Crex crex* and *Gallinago media* are likely to meet criterion A1 at site 009.

### Table 3. Important Bird Areas in Belarus that support important numbers of one or more congregatory species (i.e. meeting criterion A4) and/or B1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ciconia nigra</em> Black Stork</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser fabalis</em> Bean Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser albifrons</em> White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser erythropus</em> Lesser White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas penelope</em> Wigeon</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas strepera</em> Gadwall</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas platyrhynchos</em> Mallard</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>017, 020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas querandula</em> Garganey</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Grus grus</em> Crane</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tringa totanus</em> Redshank</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna albifrons</em> Little Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Charadrius niger</em> Black Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Charadrius alexandrinus</em> White-winged Black Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Species of European conservation concern with significant breeding populations at Important Bird Areas in Belarus (meeting any IBA criteria).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species ¹</th>
<th>Minimum national breeding population (pairs) ²</th>
<th>Proportion (%) of national population breeding at all IBAs in Belarus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botaurus stellaris Bittern</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciconia nigra Black Stork</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciconia ciconia White Stork</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anas strepera Gadwall</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anas querquedula Garganey</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aythya ferina Pochard</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aythya nyroca Femeguous Duck</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemis apivorus Honey Buzzard</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milvus migrans Black Kite</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haliaetus albicilla White-tailed Eagle</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincaria gallica Shoveldove</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus cyaneus Hen Harrier</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus pygargus Montagu's Harrier</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquila clanga Greater Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandion haliaetus Osprey</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetrax tetrix Black Grouse</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podzana parva Spotted Crane</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podzana parva Little Crane</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crex crex Crexkie</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geus grae Crane</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallinago media Great Snipe</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limosa limosa Black-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bynia totalis Redshank</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larus minitus Little Gull</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterna abifrons Little Trem</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlidonias niger Black Trem</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bubu bubo Eagle Owl</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stix aluco Tammy Owl</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asio flammeus Shoveldove</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcedo atthis Kingfisher</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus gallica Roller</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picus viridis Green Woodpecker</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparia riparia Sand Martin</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthus pratensis Meadow Pipit</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luscinia luscinia Thush Nightingale</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locustella naevia Grasshopper Warbler</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrocephalus paludicola Aquatic Warbler</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrocephalus soldanarius Sedge Warbler</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanius collardio Red-backed Shrike</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Only those species of European conservation concern (see Box 1, p. 12) that meet IBA criteria in Belarus are listed.
2. Data are taken from the BirdLife/EBCC European Bird Database 1998 (Heath and Borggreve 2000)
3. The percentage of the national population in IBAs exceeds 100%. Usually this is because the national population estimate has not been updated recently whilst the IBA population estimate has been recently updated with new data as a result of comprehensive surveys of IBAs themselves. Also, the individual site count for a species may be the maximum or average over recent years, and summing these may record more birds than are present nationally in any single year.

IMPACTS ON IBAs – LAND-USE AND THREATS

Figure 2 summarizes land-use at IBAs in Belarus. In terms of significant land-uses at sites (those uses that cover 5% or more of an IBA), 12 sites (57%) are used to a significant extent for agriculture, 11 (52%) for forestry, nine (43%) for nature conservation and research, seven (33%) for hunting, and 10% for tourism/recreation, while 10% are not utilized to a significant extent. Regarding the predominant land-uses at sites (those uses that cover 50% or more of an IBA), seven (33%) of the sites are used mainly for nature conservation, 19% mainly for forestry, 10% mainly for agriculture, 14% mainly for fisheries, and 5% mainly for military ranges, while five (24%) are mainly not utilized.

All IBAs are state-owned, but changes in the ownership of protected areas are expected in the near future.

Figure 3 summarizes the threats to IBAs. Some of the threats (e.g. burning of vegetation) have a high impact on particular sites, but only ‘reductions in fish-farming activity’ have had a high impact on more than 10% of the total number of IBAs. The great majority of negative impacts on IBAs are of low to medium

HABITATS

Belarus is situated in the transition zone between forest and forest-steppe vegetation in Europe, and thus a wide variety of different vegetation-types occur. The dominant broad habitat-types are grasslands (31,164 km²), pine Pinus forests (34,327 km²), mires (20,894 km²), lakes (2,000 km²) and rivers (75,000 km). The following particular habitats are the most important for bird conservation in Belarus: flood-plain meadows (1,697 km²), raised bogs (4,339 km²), open fens (7,476 km²), broadleaved Betula alba alluvial forests (973 km²), highly water-logged lowland river flood-plains (4,000 km²) and fish-farm ponds (173 km²).

Figure 1 shows that nine of the 21 IBAs (43%) are predominantly wetlands, five IBAs (24%) are predominantly flood-plain meadows (grassland), and five are predominantly forests. The majority of wetland IBAs cover tracts of open fen and raised bogs, flood-plain water-bodies, rivers and fish-farm ponds. Flood-plain meadows are composed of humid grasslands, steppe and dry calcareous grasslands, while forests comprise alluvial/wet forest and native coniferous forest.

According to these prevailing habitats, IBAs in Belarus can be characterized as follows:

- Large tracts of fen (five IBAs) or raised bog (four IBAs) with surrounding wet forests or drained lands.
- Flood-plains of large and medium-sized rivers with meadows and forests predominating (five IBAs).
- Large, complex mosaics of mire, forest, river and lake floodplain (three IBAs).
- Fish-farm ponds (three IBAs).
- Large tract of forest (one IBA).

Breeding birds that are especially associated with these key habitats are: Acrocephalus paludicola in mesotrophic fens; Anas querquedula, Crex crex and Limosa limosa in flood-plain grasslands; Botaurus stellaris, Aythya ferina and Haliaetus albicilla in highly productive, standing fresh water (natural and man-made); Circus gallicus, Pandion haliaetus and Grus grus in raised bogs; Ciconia nigra and Bubu bubo in alluvial and very wet forests; Sterna abifrons in sand-dunes.

Mid-Pripyat (site 017) is probably the most important IBA in the country, qualifying on the basis of its global importance for 13 species (criteria A1, A4i) as well as its regional importance for 17 species (criteria B1i, B2, B3).
intensity when looked at individually, and are caused mainly by the drainage of areas surrounding IBAs, together with attendant or consequent threats such as agricultural expansion/intensification, the lowering of the water-table, and the dredging/canalization of rivers. Drainage is actually the most important threat to the majority of habitats and birds throughout the country (not just in IBAs), as a result of a wide-scale national drainage campaign over the last 30 years, during which (for example) c.2.5 million ha of mires were drained. At present no new wide-scale drainage activities are planned, but the wetlands that remain (including the IBAs) continue to be influenced by the drastically lowered groundwater levels and by the pollution with nutrients and other chemicals that have followed previous drainage. Commercial logging also affects many IBAs (38% of the total), while the construction of dams, the abandonment of land management, selective logging, illegal hunting and natural events affect a smaller number of IBAs.

The unique fens of Dikoe (site 010), Sporovo (014) and Zvanets (016) are the most threatened IBAs in Belarus because of the impact of the drainage of the surrounding areas, together with the cessation of traditional land-uses, in particular manual haymaking.

PROTECTION STATUS

Table 5 summarizes the protection status of IBAs in Belarus. Of the total IBA area (6,175 km²), about 2,650 km² (28–29%) are not protected under national or international law (Table 5, Figure 4).

National protection

Regarding the overlap of individual IBAs with nationally protected areas, eight IBAs are each covered by more than 90%, six IBAs are covered by 10–90%, and the remaining seven are not legally protected at all (Figure 4). There are three main types of national protected area in Belarus (Table 5).

1. Zapovednik (Strict Nature Reserve)

These provide the highest level of protection. The protection regime is maintained over the whole area, and land-use is permitted only in special zones.
2. National Park
These have lower protection status than Zapovedniks and allow a higher degree of economic activity within the area, including tourism.

3. Zakaznik
These areas are usually used by collective farms (kolkhoz) for restricted economic (mostly agricultural) activities.

**International protection**
Belarus is a contracting party to the World Heritage Convention, takes part in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme and will sign the Ramsar Convention in the near future (Box 1). Only two IBAs have international protected status (Table 5, Figure 5): Berezinsky Reserve (site 005) is a Biosphere Reserve, and Belovezhskaya Pushcha (site 009) is a Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site. At least three of the IBAs qualify as potential Ramsar Sites under IBA criteria A4i and A4iii (002, 017 and 020; see Table 5). The Belovezhskaya Pushcha is the largest remaining forest in Europe, and is of great importance for the conservation of many species, including the European bison. The Berezinsky Reserve is a large area of wetland, and is an important site for waterbirds. The Belovezhskaya Pushcha and Berezinsky Reserves are both important for their biodiversity, and are managed by the Belarusian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

**CONSERVATION**
- Over the past few years, active fieldwork has been carried out at the most important sites for biodiversity conservation in Belarus, in order to conduct inventories and to prepare for the creation of new protected areas. Preliminary inventories of potential IBAs and potential Ramsar Sites have been carried out. Breeding bird counts have been used as scientific justification for proposed protected areas. The subsequent creation of new Zakazniki, to cover some of the most important unprotected IBAs (sites 013, 017, 018), is almost complete thanks to financial and logistical support to the National Academy of Science from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection, the Wildlife Habitat Charitable Trust, Wetlands International, and the MacArthur Foundation.
- One of the main deficiencies of nature conservation in Belarus is the lack of management plans and management structures for the most significant and valuable protected areas (Zakazniki). Only strictly protected areas (Zapovedniks and National Parks) have a form of management plan and a management structure.

**ANALYTICAL METHODS**
- Published and unpublished material was compiled from the Institute of Zoology, Belarus State University, Vitsebsk State University, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve and some other organizations, as well as from personal communication with field ornithologists.
- The bird data (species composition and numbers) in this inventory were obtained by field ornithologists during monitoring work, with counts deriving mainly from the period 1986–1996. Most waterbird counts are of good quality (verification code A or B) and are based on absolute counts of some species at raised bogs and water-bodies, with some helicopter-based counts of wildfowl along river flood-plains, as well as direct counts of migrating birds. Data for passerines are based on transect counts.
- According to preliminary estimates, about 60% of potential IBAs have now been described. However, the majority of highly waterlogged, lowland river flood-plains, and some large tracts of forest and mire (fens and bogs), have still not been investigated.
- A lack of data on the distribution and numbers of Aquila pomarina, Porzana porzana, Gallinago media and Caprimulgus europaeus meant that several IBAs, which potentially qualified for these species, could not be designated. In addition, IBAs could not be designated under the B2/B3 criteria for certain breeding SPECs (Tucker and Heath 1994) which are dispersed at low density over the landscape in large territories (Picus canus, Jynx torquilla, Dendrocopos medius, Picosia tridactyla, Saxicola rubetra and Muscicapa striata), since to meet the threshold of ‘1% or more of national population’ such an IBA would have to be rather large, with a minimum area of c.3,000 ha.
- Information on land-uses and threats was based on available data from fieldwork and the literature.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
This IBA inventory was completed as a result of field surveys conducted under the following projects: ‘Belarus Forest Biodiversity Protection Project’ (Global Environment Facility grant 65238621-BY), ‘Survey of Aquatic Warbler Habitats in Belarus’ (grant from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection) and ‘Evaluation of the Pripyat River Floodplain Significance for Waterbirds’ (grant from the Wildlife Habitat Charitable Trust and from Wetlands International).

The main data on the composition and numerical abundance of bird species at potential IBAs were provided by the following ornithologists: V. Buryakov, V. Grechik, M. Flade, V. Ivanovski, A. Kozulin, M. Nikiforov and A. Tishechkin. The Institute of Zoology (National Academy of Science) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection also cooperated during the data-gathering phase.

In addition, we would like to extend our thanks to the following ornithologists for their help in data collection at different stages of our field investigations: I. Byshnev, V. Dombrovsky, D. Juravlev, V. Korenchuk, E. Mochin, O. Paseiko, P. Pinchuk, I. Samusenko, N. Tcherkas, S. Shokalo, A. Vinchevski, V. Yurko and V. Yakovitch. We also thank L. Kozulina, T. Pavluschick and B. Roshchin for their help in translation and working with the database.
**SITE ACCOUNTS**

**Osveya**

Admin region: Vitebsk  
Coordinates: 56°06’N 28°01’E  
Altitude: 131–169 m  
Area: 22,600 ha

**Site description**

One of the largest areas of lakes in Belarus, surrounded by natural wet and coniferous forests and raised bogs. The lakes are nutrient-rich and aquatic vegetation is dominated by reed Phragmites, of which there are floating overgrown islets. The forest is dominated by Picea, Alnus and Betula, and bogs are mainly wooded with Pinus.

**Habitats**

- Forest and woodland (50%; mixed forest), Wetland (50%; standing fresh water; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation)
- Land-use: Forestry (50%), Hunting (30%), Nature conservation/research (20%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botaurus stellaris</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aythya ferina</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetrax tetrix</td>
<td>Black Grouse</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers of some breeding waterbirds are very large, and others are also notable, e.g. *Grus grus* (10–15 pairs). Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Haliaeetus albicilla* (1–2 pairs).

**Protection status**

National High: International None

22,600 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Asveisky, 22,600 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats: Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Drainage (B)

The main threat comes from the lowering of water-levels due to the drainage of the surrounding area. Overall the site is relatively well studied. The area is protected as a State Nature Reserve. It is necessary to enlarge the protected area, to enhance its protection status, and to develop a management plan for the site.

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**Kozyany**

Admin region: Vitebsk  
Coordinates: 55°25’N 29°22’E  
Altitude: 139–169 m  
Area: 44,400 ha

**Site description**

A complex of coniferous forests, raised bogs, transitional mires, small rivers and lakes. Oboz, a raised bog with numerous associated lakes, forms the core of the reserve; it was listed as site SU112 (USSR) in the previous international IBA inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989). Land-uses include forestry and hunting of ungulates, but at low intensity.

**Habitats**

- Forest and woodland (65%; native coniferous forest), Wetland (25%; standing fresh water; raised bog), Artificial landscape (10%; arable land)
- Land-use: Forestry (70%), Hunting (30%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penis apivorus</td>
<td>Honey Buzzard</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milvus migrans</td>
<td>Black Kite</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus gallus</td>
<td>Short-eared Owl</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus cyaneus</td>
<td>Hen Harrier</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus pygargus</td>
<td>Montagu’s Harrier</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquila clanga</td>
<td>Greater Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandion haliaetus</td>
<td>Osprey</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetrax tetrix</td>
<td>Black Grouse</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The area supports a high diversity and high densities of raptors. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Haliaeetus albicilla* (1 pair). Significant proportion (21%) of national population breeding at site: *Aquila chrysaetos* (2 pairs). There are also notable numbers of breeding *Ciconia ciconia* (50–70 pairs).

**Protection status**

National High: International None

44,400 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Kozyansky, 44,400 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats: Deforestation (commercial) (B), Drainage (C)

Logging is a threat. The whole site is protected as a State Hunting Reserve, with conservation and management carried out by a special hunting service.

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**Golubickaya Pushcha**

Admin region: Vitebsk  
Coordinates: 55°00’N 28°03’E  
Altitude: 170–182 m  
Area: 6,734 ha

**Site description**

Of any IBA in Belarus, this site holds the largest numbers of breeding species typical of bog landscapes, such as *Gavia arctica*, *Lagopus lagopus*, *Pluvialis apricaria*, *Numenius phaeopus*, *Lymnocryptes minimus* and *Tringa nebularia*. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Gallinago media* (min. 20 pairs).
Important Bird Areas in Europe – Belarus

An area of raised bog typical of Vitebsk region. The landscape is mostly open but parts are wooded with *Pinus* and there are small lakes.

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ciconia nigra</em> Black Stork</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pandion haliaetus</em> Osprey</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site supports the highest density of breeding *Pandion haliaetus* in Belarus. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Haliaetus albicilla* (max. 1 pair), *Crex crex* (min. 10 pairs). Significant proportion (21%) of national population breeding at site: *Botaurus stellaris* (10–20 pairs). There are also notable numbers of breeding *Circus pygargus* (min. 5 pairs), *Aquila pomarina* (10–20 pairs), *Tetrao tetrix* (70–100 pairs), *Grus grus* (5–15 pairs) and *Bubu bubo* (1–3 pairs).

**Protection status**

National High International None

6,734 ha of IBA covered by Biosphere Reserve (Berezinsky, 81,023 ha). 81,023 ha of IBA covered by Zapovednik (Berezinsky, 81,023 ha). 6,734 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Golubitskaya Pushcha, 6,200 ha).

Conservation issues

A threat with relatively low impact is aerial pollution of the forest ecosystem by heavy metal and sulphur compounds, carried from industrial areas by westerly winds, and which damage tree health and growth. The site was designated as a Zapovednik in 1925.

**Site description**

A lowland, middle-river flood-plain with a natural (seasonal) flooding regime. Wet meadows, fens, alluvial forests and riparian thickets predominate. Land-uses include haymaking, cattle-grazing, hunting and fishing.

Habitats: Forest and woodland (15%); alluvial/very wet forest; Grassland (60%); humid grassland; Wetland (25%); standing fresh water; fen/transition mire/spring.

Land-use: Agriculture (50%); Not utilized (50%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas querquedula</em> Garganey</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Perana porzana</em> Spotted Crake</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Crex crex</em> Corncrake</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chlidonias niger</em> Black Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alcedo atthis</em> Kingfisher</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Acronephalus schoenobaenus</em> Sedge Warbler</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important breeding site for several waterbird species.

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

Drainage, water abstraction and agricultural intensification pose threats.

**Site description**

The flood-plain of the middle reaches of the West Beresina river (a lowland tributary of the Neman river), still in a predominantly natural and intact state. Alluvial *Querco forest*, *Salix* thickets and wet meadows dominate the landscape. Land-uses include haymaking and cattle-grazing.

Habitats: Forest and woodland (80%); broadleaved deciduous forest; Grassland (15%); humid grassland; Wetland (5%); river/stream.

Land-use: Agriculture (20%); Forestry (60%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Alcedo atthis</em> Kingfisher</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The river holds the highest density of *Alcedo atthis* in Belarus. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Crex crex* (min. 20 pairs).

**Protection status**

National Partial International None

500 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Naliboksky, 85,400 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Drainage, water abstraction and agricultural intensification pose threats.

**Site description**

The main threat is from drainage, and from canalization of the upper river-bed, which together have resulted in lower water-levels on the river. A small part of the flood-plain is included in the State National Nature Reserve (Zakaznik).
Important Bird Areas in Europe – Belarus

**Swisloch**

**Admin region**: Grodno

**Coordinates**: 53°24′N 23°55′E

**Altitude**: 108–110 m  
**Area**: 3,100 ha  

**Site description**

A riverine flood-plain, most of which is still in a natural state, with wet meadows and fens dominated by sedge *Carex*.

**Habitats**: Forest and woodland (10%; alluvial/very wet forest), Grassland (70%; humid grassland), Wetland (20%; fen/transition mire/spring)

**Land-use**: Agriculture (60%), Not utilized (40%)

**Birds**

An important area of breeding habitat for *Acrocephalus paludicola*, which also supports a rich assemblage of species of flood-plain mires in Europe. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Crex crex* (common), *Gallinago media* (uncommon).

**Protection status**

National: None  
International: None

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**: Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Drainage (A)

The main threat is drainage of the flood-plain. The first investigations of the area were carried out in 1996. The development of a local reserve is planned.

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**Belovezhskaya Pushcha**

**Admin region**: Brest, Grodno

**Coordinates**: 52°45′N 24°04′E

**Altitude**: 145–202 m  
**Area**: 87,000 ha

**Site description**

A low-lying region in the southern taiga zone, covering parts of the catchments of the Neray and Lesnaya rivers near the border with Poland. The area includes vast tracts of primary forest, as well as fens, raised bogs, meadows and two man-made ponds. The site was listed as site SU029 (USSR) in the previous international IBA inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989).

**Habitats**: Forest and woodland (92%; broadleaved deciduous forest; native coniferous forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Grassland (1%; humid grassland), Wetland (7%; standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; fen/transition mire/spring)

**Land-use**: Forestry (10%), Nature conservation/research (80%), Tourism/recreation (10%)

**Birds**

Species of global conservation concern include *Gallinago media* and *Crex crex* (both breeding), and *Aquatic Warbler* (common).

**Protection status**

National: High  
International: High

87,000 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Belovezhskaya Pushcha, 87,607 ha). 87,000 ha of IBA covered by Biosphere Reserve (Belovezhskaya Pushcha, 177,100 ha). Studies of species diversity and census-work have been carried out with financial support from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection.

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**: Forest grazing (B), Groundwater abstraction (B)

The main threats come from the high densities of ungulates in the area, and from the lowering of groundwater levels. The area has been protected in one form or another since the last century.

---

**Dikoe**

**Admin region**: Brest

**Coordinates**: 52°41′N 24°20′E

**Altitude**: 157–161 m  
**Area**: 7,400 ha

**Site description**

An extensive and intact poor fen, with numerous ‘islands’ of wet woodland. The vegetation is dominated by mixed stands of sedge *Carex*, grass *Calamagrostis*, mosses (e.g. *Hypnum*) and bare peat. The only exploitative land-use is cranberry *Vaccinium* gathering.

**Habitats**: Forest and woodland (14%; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (86%; fen/transition mire/spring)

**Land-use**: Nature conservation/research (100%)

**Birds**

One of the last remaining areas in the world of suitable breeding habitat for *Acrocephalus paludicola*. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Gallinago media* (10–20 pairs).

**Protection status**

National: None  
International: None

7,400 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Dikoe, 7,400 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**: Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B)

The main threat comes from changes in the water regime caused by the drainage of surrounding areas by collective farms, following the previous Soviet government policy to enlarge the land area under arable farming. The area has been protected since 1968, and there are plans to make the Zakaznik a part of Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (009).

**Site description**

An extensive complex of small and large, man-made fish-ponds with surrounding mixed and wet forests.

**Habitats**: Forest and woodland (25%; mixed forest), Wetland (66%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (9%), Arable land

**Land-use**: Agriculture (5%), Fisheries/aquaculture (70%), Forestry (25%)

**Birds**

Waterbirds occur at high densities, especially fish-eating species. There are notable numbers of breeding *Circus pygargus* (3–5 pairs) and *Lymna limosa* (100–150 pairs), and of *Pandion haliaetus* on passage (5–15 birds).

**Protection status**

National: None  
International: None

3,000 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Buslovka, 7,936 ha).
### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Aquaculture/fisheries (A), Deforestation (commercial) (C)

The main threat comes from the reduction in fish production due to the current economic crisis, resulting in a decreased area of water and reduced food supply for fish-eating birds. Only the forested areas of the site are protected.

### Site description

A large tract of natural wet forests of *Alnus* and *Betula*, fens, raised bogs with *Pinus* trees, and shallow, nutrient-rich lakes. The main land-use is hunting.

### Protection status

- **National**: None
- **International**: None

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Drainage (B)

The main threat is nutrient pollution by agricultural and industrial waste-water inflows which result from drainage and land ‘reclamation’. This is potentially reversible, at least in part. It is planned to create a protected area by joining this site to Sporovsky Zakaznik (see Sporovo, 014). Studies of species diversity and census-work have been carried out with financial support from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection.

### Site description

A seasonally flooded riverine fen. Vegetation is dominated by wet meadows, sedge communities and *Salix* thickets. The area is used for haymaking and cattle-grazing.

### Protection status

- **National**: Partial
- **International**: None

2,000 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Sporovsky, 11,300 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B), Natural events (B)

The main threats come from the changes in water regime over most of the site following drainage for agricultural improvement, and from shrub encroachment. Funding is being sought for the development of a management plan and a protected area. Studies of species diversity and census-work have been carried out with financial support from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection.

### Site description

An extensive area of suitable breeding habitat for *Acrocephalus paludicola*. Significant proportion (21%) of national population breeding at site: *Botaurus stellaris* (10–15 pairs). The site has a high species richness overall.

### Protection status

- **National**: None
- **International**: None

2,000 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Sporovsky, 11,300 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B), Natural events (B)

The main threats come from the changes in water regime over most of the site following drainage for agricultural improvement, and from shrub encroachment. Funding is being sought for the development of a management plan and a protected area. Studies of species diversity and census-work have been carried out with financial support from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection.

### Site description

One of the largest complexes of fish-ponds, together with a reservoir, in the Pripyat (Polesia) region. The fish-ponds are stocked with carp *Cyprinus carpio* and are highly productive, with a high cover of water-fringe vegetation.

### Protection status

- **National**: None
- **International**: None

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B), Natural events (B)

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- **International**: None

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### Conservation issues

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### Protection status

- **National**: None
- **International**: None

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### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B), Natural events (B)

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### Site description

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### Protection status

- **National**: None
- **International**: None

2,000 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Sporovsky, 11,300 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B), Natural events (B)

The main threats come from the changes in water regime over most of the site following drainage for agricultural improvement, and from shrub encroachment. Funding is being sought for the development of a management plan and a protected area. Studies of species diversity and census-work have been carried out with financial support from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection.

### Site description

One of the largest complexes of fish-ponds, together with a reservoir, in the Pripyat (Polesia) region. The fish-ponds are stocked with carp *Cyprinus carpio* and are highly productive, with a high cover of water-fringe vegetation.

### Protection status

- **National**: None
- **International**: None

2,000 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Sporovsky, 11,300 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B), Natural events (B)

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### Site description

One of the largest complexes of fish-ponds, together with a reservoir, in the Pripyat (Polesia) region. The fish-ponds are stocked with carp *Cyprinus carpio* and are highly productive, with a high cover of water-fringe vegetation.
The site holds large concentrations of breeding, moulting and post-breeding waterbirds, especially fish-eating species. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Halauettus albicilla* (1 pair). Significant proportion (≥1%) of national population breeding at site: *Aythya ferina* (150–200 pairs). Important non-breeding visitors include *Ciconia nigra* (50–70 birds).

### Protection status
National None International None

### Conservation issues
Threats Construction/impact of dyke/dam/embankment (B), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B)

The main threat is the ongoing change in dominant vegetation from sedge to reed, probably caused by the increasing water-levels which have followed the construction of embankments around the fen, although this requires further study. Studies of species diversity and census-work have been carried out with financial support from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection.

### Mid-Pripyat

#### Site description
A seasonally flooded lowland river valley, comprising the largest tract of natural alluvial landscape to remain in Europe. Alluvial forests of *Quercus*, wet meadows and fens are predominant. Land-uses include haymaking, cattle-grazing, angling and hunting.

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Botaurus stellaris</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ciconia nigra</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>A4i</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ciconia ciconia</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Amer fahalis</em></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A4i, B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Amer albifrons</em></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>11i, B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest area of habitat in Belarus for breeding waterbirds, and for migrating wildfowl and waders in spring. The site regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds for each of three sets of species: breeding waterbirds, breeding gulls and terns, and migrating waterbirds.

### Protection status
National Partial International None

6,733 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Nizovie Jaseldy, 6,733 ha). 1,000 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Nizovie Sluchi, 7,200 ha). 3,440 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Prostyr, 3,440 ha). 288 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Ustie Lani, 288 ha).

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**Habitats** Wetland (95%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (5%; other urban/industrial areas)

**Land-use** Fisheries/aquaculture (95%), Hunting (5%)

**Zvanets**

Admin region Brest Coordinates 52°09’N 24°50’E Altitude 145–146 m Area 15,000 ha

**Site description**

The largest intact fen in Europe, with numerous sand islands. The vegetation is dominated by various sedges *Carex* and reed *Phragmites*. Part of the area is used for haymaking.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (38%; alluvial/very wet forest), Grassland (42%; steppe/dry calcareous grassland; humid grassland), Wetland (20%; standing fresh water; fen/transition mire/spring)

**Land-use** Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (10%), Forestry (5%), Hunting (5%), Not utilized (60%)

**Protection status**
National Partial International None

10,460 ha of IBA covered by Zakaznik (Zvanets, 10,460 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Construction/impact of dyke/dam/embankment (B), Drainage (B), Dredging/canalization (B)
**Conservation issues**

The main threats come from the construction of embankments along both sides of the flood-plain (in order to reduce spring flooding of land), the agricultural improvement of farmland, and the drainage of unprotected parts of the site. About 20% of the flood-plain area is currently protected, and a further Zakaznik is proposed within the site (Yastrebel, 4,000 ha). Investigations aimed at increasing the proportion of the site under protection will be carried out with the financial support from the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection; it is planned to protect the whole site as a single Zakaznik. Some of the most important fish-spawning areas in Belarus are situated at this site.

**Protection status**

None

**Conservation issues**

The largest area of breeding habitat for *Circus pygargus* in Polesia. Breeding species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Crex crex* (50–100 pairs).

**Protection status**

None

**Conservation issues**

The main threats are forest-fire, overgrazing of accessible forest islands, drainage of surrounding areas, and timber-felling. The site is a proposed State Landscape Reserve (Zakaznik), following support from the MacArthur Foundation and the Ministry of Natural Resources. Most of the site is included in the Polesky Military Aviation Range.

**Protection status**

None

**Conservation issues**

One of the largest concentrations in Belarus of breeding waterbirds, and one of the most significant staging areas for geese, ducks and waders on spring migration. The site regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds. Significant proportion (21%) of national population breeding at site: *Balaeniceps rex* (min. 100 pairs), *Aythya ferina* (70–150 pairs).

**Protection status**

None

**Conservation issues**

The main threat comes from the reduction in fish production due to the current economic crisis, resulting in a decreased area of water and reduced food supply for fish-eating bird species.

**Protection status**

None

**Conservation issues**

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**Protection status**

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**Conservation issues**

The main threats are forest-fire, overgrazing of accessible forest islands, drainage of surrounding areas, and timber-felling. The site is a proposed State Landscape Reserve (Zakaznik), following support from the MacArthur Foundation and the Ministry of Natural Resources. Most of the site is included in the Polesky Military Aviation Range.
Flood-plain of Sozh river
Admin region Gomel
Coordinates 52°40’N 31°05’E
Altitude 130-132 m Area 13,400 ha

■ Site description
An extensive river flood-plain, briefly flooded in spring, mainly comprising Salix thicketswet meadows and dry grasslands. Landscapes include haymaking, cattle-grazing, hunting and fishing.

Habitats: Forest and woodland (25%); alline/very wet forest; Grassland (75%); steppe/dry calcareous grassland; humd grassland; Wetland (25%); standing fresh water
Land-use: Agriculture (20%), Not utilized (80%)

■ Birds
An important wetland for breeding waterbirds and for migrating geese and ducks in spring.

■ Protection status
National None International None

■ Conservation issues
Threats: Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Drainage (B)

The main threat comes from drainage of the flood-plain. Few field investigations have been carried out.

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