GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A total of 58 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have been identified in Latvia as of 1998 (Table 1). Of these, 54 are non-marine IBAs, covering 319,799 ha or nearly 5% of the total land-surface area of Latvia (64,589 km²), while the remaining four IBAs are marine with a total area of 766,700 ha.

Latvia has a Baltic Sea coastline of c.500 km, and is bordered by Estonia to the north, by Russia and Belarus to the east and south-east, and by Lithuania to the south. Almost all of the country (97.5% of the area) lies below 200 m elevation. There are two main landscape-types (Anon. 1998a, 1998b): forest (covering 44.6% of Latvia) and agricultural land (38.8%). Mires cover 5.6% nationally, whilst inland waters cover 3.7%.

Forests are mainly mixed, and are dominated by Scots pine Pinus sylvestris (dominant over 39% of forest area), silver birch Betula (28%) and Norway spruce Picea abies (21%), yet are very diverse. Roughly half of the forest area lies on wet soils. Stands of old forest (over 100 years old) constitute c.9% of the forest area. Forty-two percent of the area of mire in Latvia is raised bog, 9% is transitional mire and 49% is fen; 9.8% of the mire area is protected. Semi-natural grasslands occupy less than 1% of Latvia.

Map 1. Location, area and criteria category of Important Bird Areas in Latvia.
## Table 1. Summary of Important Bird Areas in Latvia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IBA code</th>
<th>National 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>LV001</td>
<td>Nida bog</td>
<td>Liepaja</td>
<td>Liepaja</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Liepaja</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>A4ii, B1i, B2, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>LV003</td>
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<td>Liepaja</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Liepaja</td>
<td>Liepaja</td>
<td>409,400</td>
<td>A4i, A4ii, B1i</td>
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<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Skrunda fish-ponds</td>
<td>Kuldiga</td>
<td>Kuldiga</td>
<td>720</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kuldiga</td>
<td>3,700</td>
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<td>6,000</td>
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<td>012</td>
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<td>Ventspils</td>
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<td>1,000</td>
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<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>Ventspils</td>
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<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
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<tr>
<td>051</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Zalve forest area</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
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<td>052</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Zalve forest area</td>
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<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
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<td>LV012</td>
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<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
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<tr>
<td>054</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Zalve forest area</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
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<tr>
<td>055</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Zalve forest area</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>056</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Zalve forest area</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>057</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Zalve forest area</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>058</td>
<td>LV012</td>
<td>Zalve forest area</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>Ventspils</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sites identified in the inventory of IBAs in Latvia (Viksne 1994) but no longer considered to be IBAs:
- LV005 Ziemele–Almaregs sea coast
- LV007 Ovisi–River Irbe mouth sea coast
- LV010 Lake Usma and Plucu-Novadu bogs
- LV022 Daugavgriva wetland
- LV023 Vedeanaus Ravieni
- LV032 Mezole forest area

58 IBAs covering 10,865 km²
The average population density in Latvia (39 persons/km²) is relatively low in European terms.

The distribution of IBAs across Latvia is rather even (Map 1). However, no sites are situated above 150 m elevation, therefore there are fewer IBAs in the higher parts of the central-east and south-east. As a result, most non-marine IBAs relate mainly to coastal lagoons, river flood-plains in the lowlands, the largest bogs, and fish-pond areas.

In comparison with the 10 sites identified in Latvia in the 'original' IBA inventory in Europe (Grummitt and Jones 1989)—all retained in the current inventory—and the 38 sites documented in the national IBA inventory (Viksne 1994), 58 sites have been identified under the current review, up to 1998 (Table 1). A few more IBAs have been identified since the completion of this review and cannot be included in this book. For instance, Sturu bog (Salduis district) and Ozolu bog with Graudupe fields (Kuldiga district) are both important for their regular autumn congregations of more than 1,000 Grus grus (meeting criterion B1i), to name just two of the most prominent candidate sites. This illustrates that the identification of IBAs in Latvia is not yet complete and that the list could grow to an estimated 65–70 sites before the year 2000.

ORNITHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

Altogether there are 109 species of European conservation concern (SPECs) which breed in Latvia (Tucker and Heath 1994). Three of these are globally threatened, i.e. Acrocephalus paludicola, Crex crex and Aerocoephalus paludicolus, although Crex crex is the only one to have a Latvian breeding population that is significant at the European scale, therefore most of the 109 IBAs qualifying under criterion A1 (17 out of 19) are identified particularly for this species (Table 2). Two sites are important for breeding Acrocephalus paludicolus, although neither has more than one certainly identified breeding pair (Table 2). No sites were identified for Aerocoephalus paludicolus because of a lack of data on its occurrence in Latvia. In addition, the near-threatened Haliaeetus albicilla and Gallinago media breed at several IBAs but numbers are too low to meet any IBA criteria.

Only five sites qualify as IBAs solely under the A1 criterion (all for Crex crex)—most other A1 IBAs also meet other criteria, mainly A4ii or B1i as important stop-over sites for migrating geese. Anser and yellow-billed swans—Cygnus cygnus/C. columbianus. Both sites qualifying under A1 for Acrocephalus paludicolus because of a lack of data on its occurrence in Latvia. In addition, the near-threatened Haliaeetus albicilla and Gallinago media breed at several IBAs but numbers are too low to meet any IBA criteria.

The majority (40) of IBAs in Latvia meet criterion B1i, through supporting significant numbers of waterbirds (mainly staging), especially Anser albifrons, A. fabalis, Cygnus cygnus and Grus grus (Table 3). Twelve of these 40 sites also meet criterion A1i. Nearly half (26) of all IBAs qualify under criterion B2, being among the most important breeding sites in Latvia for numerous bird species that have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe, such as Botaurus stellaris, Ciconia nigra, Aythya ferina, Aquila pomarina, Pandion haliaetus, Tachybaptus ruficollis, Crex crex, Grus grus, Larus minutus, Chlidonias niger, Caprimulgus europaeus and Picoidei (Table 4). Other criteria (A4ii, B1ii, B1iv and B3) are met at only a few sites (1, 1, 1 and 3 respectively, based on current knowledge).

Most IBAs in Latvia meet a total of one to three criteria. Five sites qualify under four criteria each (Table 1), while only one site qualifies under either five or six criteria (020 and 014 respectively), out of the total of 10 different criteria that are met in Latvia. Four out of these latter seven IBAs, together with 050, also form the 'Top Five' list for the maximum number of qualifying species per site: Lake Engure (020; eight species), Baltie Klani marshes and adjoining bogs (053; seven species), Teici and Pelecages bogs (050; five species), Irbe strait (014; five species), and Gulf of Riga, west coast (018; five species). However, this kind of ranking alone does not provide a full indication of the value of each area, as the importance of a site is multifaceted and constituted by many factors.

Even though IBAs have been identified for a number of breeding species of European conservation concern (under B2/B3 criteria), such as Ciconia nigra, Aquila pomarina, Pandion haliaetus, Caprimulgus europaeus and Picoidea (Table 4), these and

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>IBA code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aquila clanga Greater Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>045, 056</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crex crex Corncrake</td>
<td>004, 006, 008, 009, 012, 027, 028, 029, 037, 038, 040, 041, 049, 051, 052, 053, 055</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Important Bird Areas in Latvia that support important numbers of one or more congregatory species (i.e. meeting criteria A4 and/or B1). IBAs meeting both criteria A4 and B1 for the species are shown in bold; IBAs meeting only criterion B1 for the species concerned, and not A4, are shown in normal type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>IBA code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gavia stellata Red-throated Diver</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavia arctica Black-throated Diver</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>014, 034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podiceps grisegena</td>
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<td>020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-necked Grebe</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cygnus olor Mute Swan</td>
<td>W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cygnus cygnus Whooper Swan</td>
<td>P</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cygnus cygnus/C. columbianus Bewick’s Swan</td>
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<td>022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mergus merganser</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-breasted Merganser</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mergus merganser Goosander</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grus grus Crane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aythya ferina Pochard</td>
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<td>007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clangula hyemalis Long-tailed Duck</td>
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<td>014, 018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melanitta fusca Velvet Scoter</td>
<td>W</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

### Table 4. Species of European conservation concern with significant breeding populations at Important Bird Areas in Latvia (meeting any IBA criteria).

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<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum national breeding population (pairs)</th>
<th>Proportion (%) of national population breeding at all IBAs in Latvia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botaurus stellaris Bittern</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciconia nigra Black Stork</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aythya ferina Pochard</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquila pomarina Lesser Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquila clanga Greater Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandion haliaetus Osprey</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crex crex Corncrake</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grus grus Crane</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larus minutus Little Gull</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlidonias niger Black Tern</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caprimulgus europaeus Nightjar</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcedo atthis Kingfisher</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picoidea (Picoidea) Three-toed Woodpecker</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accipiter gentilis Sedge Wren</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accipiter striatus Reed Wren</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Only those species of European conservation concern (see Box 1, p. 12) that meet IBA criteria in Latvia are listed.
2. Data are taken from the BirdLife/EBC P European Bird Database 1998 (Heath and Borgstroem 2000). 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.
other non-congregatory breeding species are not and cannot be adequately conserved in Latvia by the IBA network alone, and measures to protect these dispersed species must therefore be targeted at the whole habitat or, where appropriate, at the species itself. Much the same is true for Crex crex, a globally threatened species that is dependent on low-intensity agricultural land-use practices in the wider countryside, and which is still highly dispersed across the landscape—only 2.2–2.5% of the national population, or 575–940 calling males, occur in the IBAs that qualify for this species (Table 4). It is also difficult to assess the importance of the sites identified for migrating waterbirds (under A4i/B1i criteria) because neither the exact population size of the flyway crossing Latvia, nor the precise numbers at sites, nor even the identity of all of the important stop-over sites, are known.

HABITATS

Open habitats are predominant in IBAs (Figure 1), especially wetlands, grassland and agricultural land. Forty-four of the IBAs in Latvia are either wetlands (32 sites) or grassland/agricultural land (12 sites) according to the dominant habitat. Bogs, marshes and fens are the main types of wetland in IBAs, since they cover the majority of 17 IBAs and at least 5% of the area of 30 sites. River flood-plains, meadows and agricultural land constitute the greater part of 12 IBAs (with at least 5% cover at 24 sites). Lakes and reservoirs are the main habitat at 11 sites (and occur at 22 sites), while fish-ponds are the core habitat for four sites (and are contained by a total of six). Only 10 IBAs are predominantly forested, while the majority of IBAs (44 sites) have more than 5% forest-cover (Figure 1), reflecting the dominance of forest across the country (44% cover overall). Finally, four marine IBAs have been identified in the Baltic Sea and Gulf of Riga, covering mainly shallow coastal waters.

The key bird species at mires, which are mainly raised bogs, are staging Anser albifrons and Anser fabalis and local or staging Grus grus that rest, feed and roost here (criteria A4i, B1i). Less common are bogs that qualify for their high numbers of breeding Grus grus and Tetrax tetrix (criterion B2, Table 4). River flood-plains and other types of grassland or agricultural land are also frequented by significant numbers of geese Anser and Grus grus during migration (A4i, B1i), although the key species here are breeding Crex crex (A1) and staging Cygnus cygnus (A4i, B1i). Staging Cygnus cygnus, sometimes with C. columbianus, as well as Anser albirostris and A. fabalis, are the key qualifying species at lakes and reservoirs and also at fish-ponds, where important concentrations also occur of breeding Botaurus stellaris, Larus minutus, Chlidonias niger (all B2 species), and Aythya ferina, Aequorhynchus schoenojohnstoni and Aequorhynchus choreas (B3 species). Another B2 species associated with fish-ponds and other wetlands is Pardus haliatus.

Although most forests in Latvia do not qualify as IBAs, because their birds tend to be distributed in a highly dispersed manner, a number of particularly rich and diverse forest sites have been identified as IBAs. These areas hold notably high breeding densities of Aquila pomarina, Ciconia nigra, Picoides tridactylus and Caprimulgus europaeus (all B2 species) or even support breeding Aquila clanga (A1 species; two sites). The four large marine IBAs are identified on the basis of their wintering, moult and migrating seabirds and waterbirds, such as Gavia arctica, Podiceps gigas, and Mergus merganser, Mergus serrator, Bucephala clangula, Clangula hyemalis, Melanitta fusca (all A4i, B1i) and Cygna pygmaea (A4ii, B1ii).

As expected, forest and agricultural land are ‘under-represented’ in terms of the proportion of IBAs dominated by these habitats compared to the national land-cover statistics, because they either do not usually host distinct congregations of birds, or they are much more difficult to protect, even if such congregations temporarily occur (e.g. geese Anser and Grus grus feeding on fields).

IMPACTS ON IBAs – LAND-USE AND THREATS

Traditionally, forestry and agriculture dominate land-use, together covering 83% of the country’s area, in almost equal proportions. Both of these land-uses occur in nearly all IBAs in Latvia—forestry occurs in at least 69% of IBAs and agriculture in 48% (Figure 2). Only hunting (of mammals and gamebirds) is more widespread across IBAs as a human activity (74%, Figure 2). Despite the considerable number of designated protected areas in the country, only a minority of IBAs (22%) are the subject of nature conservation activities and/or regular research projects (Figure 2). Fishing, and fish-farming to a lesser extent (normally confined to fish-pond areas), also occurs at 22% of IBAs (Figure 2), at both inland wetlands and marine areas. Around 10% or less of sites are known to be used for other types of activities, such as peat extraction in bogs (12.5% of mire habitat in Latvia is used for peat extraction). All four marine areas are affected by shipping and recreation activities.

Every one of the above-mentioned land-uses causes some disturbance of birds’ essential activities, such as breeding or foraging. Most sites, irrespective of their size, location or protection status, are subject to such disturbance (Figure 3). However, there are three major threat-types that not only disturb birds’ essential activities but can also dramatically affect and change their habitat and resource supplies. The most widespread threat currently is intensified forest management, which affects about half of all IBAs (Figure 3).

Interestingly, both abandonment/reduction of land management, and agricultural intensification and expansion, each threaten about 30% of IBAs (Figure 3). It may seem contradictory that these threats could be equally common. The reasons lie in recent trends in land-use and ownership changes. The state’s transition to a growing market economy has been accompanied by a dramatic decrease in agricultural output in many areas. Large expanses of agricultural land have been set aside or abandoned. In the short term, this land is of increased importance for some birds, for instance Crex crex, but it soon loses its suitability for such ‘open-country’ species as the ground vegetation becomes too dense and the land becomes overgrown with bushes and small trees. Similarly, the abandonment of meadows and semi-natural grasslands, through the cessation of traditional stock-grazing and mowing, has already
reduced breeding densities of meadow birds at several sites. At the same time, farming practices are intensifying in other areas of the country, at least locally, and are potentially more hazardous to birds. Such agricultural intensification is likely to increase in extent in the future.

Forestry in Latvia is intensifying and has grown to be the major state export; felling activity has doubled since 1990/1991. Year-round harvesting is causing critical disturbance to sensitive bird species, such as Ciconia nigra and Aquila pomarina, countrywide. The structure of forest stands is changing towards a much lower percentage of older and less disturbed stands. Moreover, a considerable proportion of forest in Latvia has been privatized and thereafter it has become hard if not impossible to influence management for conservation.

The extraction industry (peat mining) has remained a constant threat to most peatland IBAs in Latvia (Figure 3). The potentially high threat to IBAs of drainage (Figure 3) is hopefully over-estimated (it is a costly process), whilst that posed by industrialization, urbanization and growing infrastructure may well increase markedly in (potential) impact in the near future. Hunting pressure has generally increased since 1990, partly due to illegal hunting, and is causing regular disturbance to birds at most IBAs. The use of the coastal zone for recreation and development, as well as the intensification of marine transportation and the offshore industry, are together leading to serious degradation of coastal and marine habitats. Although pollution from Butinge oil terminal in Lithuania had already been listed in the national IBA inventory of 1994 (Viksne 1994), it is a costly process, whilst that posed by industrialization, urbanization and growing infrastructure may well increase markedly in (potential) impact in the near future.

The law on Specially Protected Nature Territories (1993) provides for the following types of protected area (former IUCN category in brackets): [State] Nature Reserves (I), National Parks (II), Restricted Nature Territories (IV), Nature Parks (V), Protected Landscape Territories (V), Natural Monuments (III) (e.g. trees, ravines and waterfalls), and Biosphere Reserves (IX).

At least 11% of the total non-marine area of IBAs is covered by Nature Reserves, at least 4% by National Parks and at least 36% by Restricted Nature Territories (Table 5). Altogether, 1,332–1,560 km² of the total IBA area (up to 50% of their total non-marine area) are nationally protected (Figure 4). Most of the unprotected sites were only recently identified as IBAs; only two sites out of 19 unprotected had already been listed in the national IBA inventory of 1994 (Viksne 1994).

Also, most of these unprotected sites are dominated by habitats that are difficult to protect: (1) forest (five sites), (2) agricultural land/grassland (nine sites), and (3) marine areas (four sites). The most important IBAs that still have little or no overlap with the national protected-area system are Skrunda fish-ponds (007), Uzava river meadows (008), Uzava lowland (012), Zvārde forest area (024), Svetles river mouth (028), Cirgali meadows (041), Dziete area (049), and Pededze and Sita flood-plain (055).

**Figure 3. Occurrence of threats at Important Bird Areas in Latvia (see Appendix 3 for definitions of threat types and impact categories).**

**Figure 4. The national protection status of Important Bird Areas in Latvia.**

**Figure 5. The international protection status of Important Bird Areas in Latvia.**
Under the 1993 law, five Nature Reserves, two National Parks, 11 Nature Parks and one Biosphere Reserve have been designated in Latvia so far. The exact number of other currently existing or planned designations is not clear. Many Restricted Nature Territories are new and not yet officially designated. The full list of protected nature areas in Latvia will be enforced by a new law in summer 1998. Before the ongoing revision of the protected-area system, in 1991, there were 189 sites of the ‘Restricted Nature Territory’ type, six ‘Landscape Territories’ and 271 ‘Natural Monuments’. Protected areas (all types of designations) are said to cover 6.2–6.8% of the total territory of Latvia, according to various sources. In any case, the percentage ranks as the lowest among the three Baltic states.

For the purpose of this review, ‘draft’ protected areas (not yet designated) have been included in the site accounts (and not distinguished from designated areas), although some changes in size or even status may yet occur. If this had not been done, the overall national protection status of IBAs in Latvia would have been greatly underestimated.

Protected areas were traditionally owned by the state or by local government. However, large proportions of land within these areas have been privatized in recent years, with ownership transferred to physical persons or legal entities. These privately-owned areas pose major problems for conservation and management. To date, no nature-conservation areas are owned by non-governmental bodies.

The responsibility for nature conservation at the state level lies with the Nature Protection Division of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. Supervision and enforcement is a task of the State Environmental Inspectorate, the Flora and Fauna Division, and eight Regional Environmental Boards.

### International protection
Latvia has ratified a number of international conventions (see Box 1). There are three designated Ramsar Sites, with a further nine on a ‘shadow list’ of potential sites. Four marine Baltic Sea Protection Areas (BSPAs) have been identified under the Helsinki Convention but still have no legal status.

Three IBAs overlap fully with the designated Ramsar Sites, covering a total area of 43,300 ha, or about 14% of the total non-marine area of IBAs (Figure 5, Table 5). An approximately similar proportion of the IBA area also has some international status through overlap with Biosphere Reserves (Figure 5, Table 5).

#### CONSERVATION

- Few IBAs are covered by bird-monitoring schemes. The longest running and most comprehensive research and monitoring scheme is run at Lake Engure (020) by the Laboratory of Ornithology of the Institute of Biology (Viksne 1997). Monitoring is a duty of the scientific staff at state Nature Reserves (three IBAs: 015, 032 and 050). The four marine IBAs are covered by regular mid-winter waterbird counts.

- About 30 sites (mostly protected IBAs) have been covered by short-term faunistc surveys. There are only irregular visits to, and casual observation data for, the rest of the sites (nearly one third of all IBAs).

- The concept of individual site-management plans for protected areas is still new in Latvia, though developing. Only
26% of IBAs (15 sites, or at least their protected parts) have management plans.

ANALYTICAL METHODS

- The present IBA project took the existing national IBA inventory (Viksnne 1994) and protected areas network, and improved the knowledge base through literature and map searches, requests for data, and fieldwork. New sites were thus identified, and visited in the field so as to make counts of relevant species (e.g. Crex crex), check boundaries, threats, etc. Countrywide bird counts and requests for information were organized, so as to obtain additional data on spring congregations of staging Cygnus cygnus and Cygnus columbianus, and on gathering points for Grus grus and on the stop-over sites of Anser fabalis and Anser albifrons in autumn.
- Except where otherwise stated, counts of staging birds on migration (such as swans Cygnus, geese Anser, etc.) are given as the average number of individuals (minimum/maximum) that have been counted using the site at any one time, i.e. during one day or over a longer period, and counts are not given as seasonal totals.
- It should be noted that the protection status of the IBAs has been assigned only provisionally, since it is based on a new draft list of protected areas that has not yet been officially ratified.

Millions of birds migrate through a narrow belt along the sea coast each autumn and the site is a crucial staging spot for geese before they cross the Baltic Sea. Thousands of Anser fabalis and A. albifrons occur in mixed flocks in autumn and numbers are thought to exceed, by a wide margin, 1% or more of flyway population size for both species, and also probably to exceed 1% or more of biogeographic population size for A. fabalis, although targeted counts are needed. A survey of Acrocephalus paludicola is planned.

Protection status
National Partial International None
1,970 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Nida Bog, 1,970 ha).

Conservation issues
Threats Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Extraction industry (U), Intensified forest management (U)

Peat extraction and drainage are the main threats. Hunting of migratory birds (geese) in autumn causes disturbance to birds, but may be banned. Coastal-zone regulations protect the shoreline from development to some extent. This IBA and the nearby Pape lake (site 002) are included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites, and WWF produced a management plan for this combined area in 1996.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Providing data, advice and valuable comments to the IBA project were Dr Janis Viksnne, Antra Stingiune (Laboratory of Ornithology of the Institute of Biology), Dr Janis Priednieks, Dr Otars Opermans, Aivars Petritns, Elga Strazdina (Faculty of Biology of the University of Latvia, and Latvian Fund for Nature) and Mari Strazd (Latvian Ornithological Society). The outcome of the project is also a credit to many more experts and fieldworkers: Ainars Aunins, Andris Avotins, Illmars Bauga, Dr Janis Baumanis, Ugis Bergmanis, Arnars Berzins, D. Grundulis, Rudite Haule, Dr Mara Janaus, Zurga Jansone, Martins Kalins, Aigars Kalvans, Juris Kazubierins, Oskars Keiss, Maris Kreitis, Janis Kuze, Viesturs Larmanis, Rolands Lebuss, A. Leitands, Andis Liepa, Dr Juris Lipsbergs, Maris Markalsans, Ruslans Matrozovs, Gints Maliknietis, K. Mikss, Ingis Poznaka, Janis Stomers, Agris Strazds, Gvido Sviklis, M. Upeniece, Gundars Vaverins, Ilze Vilka, Viesturs Vintulis, N. Ziedaks and Normunds Zommers.

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SITE ACCOUNTS

Nida bog
Admin region Liepaja
Coordinates 56°07’N 21°05’E
Altitude 0–7 m Area 2,500 ha

Site description
An open raised bog, surrounded by transitional mire, fen and wet forest, and separated from the Baltic Sea by a narrow strip of sand-dunes overgrown with pines Pinus. Land-uses are cranberry Vaccinium collection, hunting and peat extraction in part of the bog.

Habitats
Forest and woodland (alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (sand-dunes/undrained; fen/transitional mire/spring)
Land-use Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research, Urban/industrial/transport

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>Anser albifrons</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>A4, B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anser fabalis</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>A4, B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pape lake
Admin region Liepaja
Coordinates 56°15’N 21°00’E
Altitude 0–3 m Area 4,400 ha

Site description
A shallow coastal lake, richly overgrown with Phragmites, Typha, Scirpus and surrounded by Carex meadows. An artificial channel connects the lake with the Baltic Sea. The lake is used for fishing and hunting.

Habitats
Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Scrub (scrub), Grassland (diluvial grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (sand-dunes/undrained; standing fresh water)
Land-use Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research

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>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cygnus cygnus</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grus grus</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrocephalus scirpaeus</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site holds 20,000 or more waterbirds on a regular basis, and hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of landbirds (diurnal raptors, owls, pigeons and passerines) migrate through the area in a narrow and well-defined stream (between the east coast of the lake and the seashore), mainly in autumn. Mixed flocks of up to 1,000 Anser fabalis and A. albifrons occur on autumn passage. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: Anser erythropus (on passage), Haliaeetus albicilla (non-breeding), Crex crex (breeding), Acrocephalus paludicola (status unknown).

Protection status
National Partial International None
1,205 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Pape, 1,205 ha).

Conservation issues
Threats Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

Coastal-zone regulations protect the shoreline from development to some extent. Pape Reserve was established in 1977. This IBA and the nearby Nida bog (site 001) are included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites, and WWF produced a management plan for this combined area in 1996.
**Dunika bog**  
Admin region: Liepaja  
Coordinates: 56°14’N 21°23’E  
Altitude: 40-43 m  
Area: 1,400 ha

### Site description
A large, open raised bog with natural forest, small lakes and several islands. Unaffected by drainage, the bog is used for cranberry *Vaccinium* collection and for hunting.

**Habitats**  
Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Wetland (raised bog)

**Land-use**  
Forestry, 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anser fabalis</td>
<td>Bean Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1. See main text.*

The area is thought to be an important stop-over and resting site for migrating geese *Anser fabalis*, *A. albifrons* and *Grus grus* in autumn. However, there are no recent counts, and further surveys are needed.

### Conservation issues

#### Threats
- Disturbance to birds (U)
- Drainage (U)
- Extraction industry (U)
- Intensified forest management (U)

The main threat is peat extraction. The site was first designated as a protected area in 1977.

---

**Liepaja lake**  
Admin region: Liepaja  
Coordinates: 56°30’N 21°00’E  
Altitude: 0-2 m  
Area: 5,200 ha

### Site description
A shallow eutrophic coastal lake with extensive areas of emergent vegetation (*Phragmites*, *Typha, Scirpus, Sparganium*), surrounded by seasonally-flooded meadows and arable land. The lake is used for yachting, commercial and leisure fishing, and hunting.

**Habitats**  
Scrub (scrub), Grassland (humid grassland), Mesophile grassland), Wetland (standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use**  
Agriculture, Fisheries/aquaculture, Hunting, Tourism/recreation

### 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>Cygnus olor</td>
<td>Mute Swan</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1. Hundreds in spring.*

An important breeding site for *Crex crex* and for breeding and migrating waterbirds, as well as for thousands of moulting dabbling ducks, and up to 2,400 *Cygnus olor* in mild winters. The IBA supports the only remaining breeding population of *Calidris alpina schetzi* in Latvia, and the globally near-threatened *Gaillanima media* also breeds.

### Protection status

#### National
- Partial

#### International
- None

About 4,500 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Liepaja Lake, c.4,500 ha).

### Conservation issues

#### Threats
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (U)
- Disturbance to birds (U)
- Drainage (U)
- Filling-in of wetlands (U)
- Industrialization/urbanization (U)
- Recreation/tourism (U)

---

**Latvia, west coast**  
Admin region: Liepaja  
Coordinates: 56°35’N 20°55’E  
Altitude: 0-0 m  
Area: 409,400 ha

### Site description
Coastal waters of the Baltic Sea from Nida (on the Lithuanian border) to Pavilosta, extending offshore up to 30 m depth.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (sand-dunes/sand beach), Marine areas (open sea; sea inlet/coastal features)

**Land-use**  
Urban/industrial/transport, Unknown

### 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>Mergus merganser</td>
<td>Goosander</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1, B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site holds 20,000 or more waterbirds on a regular basis, and is an important wintering area for *Mergus merganser* and for divers *Gavia*, and possibly for *Clangula hyemalis* and *Mergus serrator*. Concentrated streams of migrating seabirds and waterbirds fly non-stop along the coast in spring and can be counted from the shore. A total of c.130,000 birds were counted at sea in spring 1989, including (seasonal totals in brackets) *Gavia stellata* (2,400), *G. arctica* (1,176), *Gavia sp.* (3,027), *Anas crecca* (9,072), *Aythya marila* (13,952; up to 2,139 passing per day), *Melanitta fusca* (21,385; up to 3,342 per day), *Clangula hyemalis* (45,140; up to 6,520 per day) and *Mergus serrator* (1,349).

### Protection status

#### National
- None

#### International
- None

The area is threatened by urban development (from Liepaja town) along the coast, downgrading of protection status, increased human disturbance, and pollution by industrial effluent, sewage and agricultural run-off. It is included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites.

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**Durbe lake**  
Admin region: Liepaja  
Coordinates: 56°36’N 21°24’E  
Altitude: 23-50 m  
Area: 2,500 ha

### Site description
Durbe lake (area 670 ha, mean depth 1.5 m) is rich in emergent vegetation, being eutrophic and with low banks. The IBA extends to meadows along the tributaries of the Lanupe and Trumpe rivers and includes several fish-ponds (20–50 ha). Natural habitat diversity is high. The lake lies near Durbe town and is surrounded by several small villages and numerous farmsteads, with land mostly used for agriculture and pasture. The lake is rich in fish and is used for fishing and recreation.

**Habitats**  
Scrub (scrub), Grassland (humid grassland), Mesophile grassland), Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use**  
Agriculture, Fisheries/aquaculture, 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anas crecca</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1. May include some *C. columbianus*.*

*2. 2,500 in autumn 1996 (may include some *A. albirostris*.*)
An important resting place for migrating waterbirds, especially for geese in autumn (reported to be regular; mostly Anser fabalis but possibly mixed with A. albifrons) and for Cygnus cygnus in spring. Migrating ducks, Greylag goose, waders and gulls also rest in good numbers on passage, and the meadows hold breeding Crex crex.

**Protection status**
National None  International None

**Conservation issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural intensification/expansion (U),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance to birds (U)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean water-level of Durbe lake was lowered (from 3.9 m) around 1930. The site has been little investigated.

**Kamburi meadows**
Admin region Kuldiga
Coordinates 57°03’N 21°43’E
Altitude 25–60 m  Area 850 ha

**Site description**
An area of drained fen, now managed as meadows, with small channelized streams, and surrounded by forest. The land is privately owned, and used mainly for low-intensity grazing and haymaking.

**Habitats**
Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Grassland (mesophile grassland), Wetland (river/stream)

**Land-use**
Agriculture

**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>Crex crex</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conditions are favourable for breeding Crex crex.

**Protection status**
National None  International None

**Conservation issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment/reduction of land management (U),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural intensification/ expansion (U)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Human activities have been reduced in some areas in recent years, leading to overgrowth of meadows by scrub.

**Kulidaga forest area**
Admin region Kuldiga
Coordinates 57°04’N 22°03’E
Altitude 2–50 m  Area 13,000 ha

**Site description**
A vast area of mixed forests, mainly Pinus and Picea with Populus tremula and Betula, and with several small mires. Due to the high density of Eurasian beavers Castor fiber, even formerly drained stands of forest are now wetter than before. The area is bordered by the Venta river and its tributary the Abava to the west and north.

**Habitats**
Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Alluvial/wet forest, Wetland (river/stream; fen/transitional/mire)

**Land-use**
Forestry, 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ciconia nigra Black Stork</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquila pomarina Lesser Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandion haliaetus Osprey</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcedo atthis Kingfisher</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The area supports a high diversity of breeding species of forest and mire, with important numbers of several species. Alcedo atthis breeds at particularly high density on the bordering rivers.

**Protection status**
National Partial  International None

1,800 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Mangene forest, 1,800 ha).
**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The site is threatened by the felling of older forest stands. A management plan will be produced by the Latvian Ornithological Society in 1998.

**Protection status**

National None International None

About 1,100 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Sarnate bogs, c.1,100 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Drainage (U)

The adjoining land has been drained for agriculture and forestry. The reserve was designated in 1987. WWF produced a management plan for the Jurkalne area, which includes this IBA, in 1996.

**Site description**

Two raised bogs and a shallow, overgrown lake with wet coastal meadows. The area includes mixed woodland with *Juniperus* bushes.

- **Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Grassland (humid grassland), Wetland (standing fresh water; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation)
- **Land-use** Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research

An important site for migrating geese and *Grus grus*. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Crex crex* (breeding), *Acrocephalus paludicola* (status unknown).

**Protection status**

National Partial International None

About 5,000 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Sarnate bogs, c.5,000 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Agricultural intensification/ expansion (U)

The site is listed as data-deficient in a recent review of actual and potential Ramsar Sites in Latvia. A detailed ornithological survey is needed.

**Site description**

A raised bog with forested sandy islands and peninsulas, surrounded by vast *Pinus* forests. There are several long and narrow lakes among forested sand-dunes. The valley of the Irbe river has many oxbow lakes, broadleaved forests and meadows with a natural flooding regime. Land-uses were strictly controlled by the Soviet military regime in former decades (since the IBA lay near the border of the USSR), and thus the habitats have been relatively unaffected by man.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (broadleaved deciduous forest), Grassland (mesophile grassland), Wetland (sand-dunes/sand beach; river/stream; raised bog; fen/transition mire/spring)

**Land-use** Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research

**Protection status**

National Partial International None

About 5,000 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (name not known, c.5,000 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The main threat is the logging of forests. It is planned to convert this site, together with Slitere Nature Reserve (015), into a National Park with Restricted Nature Territories as core areas. The site was investigated by biologists in 1993–1994 and has been visited almost annually since then.

**Site description**

The strait connects the Gulf of Riga to the open Baltic Sea. It comprises the coastal waters lying between Ovisi village and Cape Kolka, and extending from the shore of Kurzeme county to the offshore border with Estonia. Sand and gravel are the main bottom sediments. The benthic fauna is dominated by shellfish *Macoma*. The main marine-
traffic routes from the Baltic Sea to Estonian and Latvian ports in the Gulf of Riga pass through the strait.

### Important Bird Areas in Europe – Latvia

#### Slitere Nature Reserve

**Admin region** Talsi  
**Coordinates** 57°42’N 22°27’E  
**Altitude** 0–120 m  
**Area** 15,517 ha

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (native coniferous forest; mixed forest; alluvial/wet forest), Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (sand-dunes/sand beach; river/stream; raised bog; fen/tranition mire/spring)

**Land-use** Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research, Tourism/recreation

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Industrialization/urbanization (U), Other (U)

The area is threatened by disturbance and pollution from marine traffic (‘Other’ threat, above) and coastal sources, since prevailing currents reach from as far as the expanding Butinge oil terminal just across the border in Lithuania, or even from Kaliningrad (Russia). Coastal-zone regulations protect the shoreline from development to some extent. Part of this site (from Lieleirbe to Kolka) has been proposed as a Baltic Sea Protection Area. The site should be managed as an integral part of the entire Irbe strait, not as an area separate from the Estonian part.

### Site description

There is a wide variety of habitats, including sand beach, sand-dunes, a mosaic of Pinus woodland and fens, a raised bog (Bazu), and rich broadleaved forest (Fraxinus, Acer, Ulmus, Tilia) on the ancient raised coast and inland plain.

### Birds

#### Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reported to stage regularly in autumn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Gavia stellata** Red-throated Diver
- **Gavia arctica** Black-throated Diver
- **Clangula hyemalis** Long-tailed Duck
- **Melanitta fusca** Velvet Scoter
- **Cepphus grylle** Black Guillemot

#### Conservation status

**National** None  
**International** None

#### Protection status

### Ilini

**Admin region** Ventspils, Talsi  
**Coordinates** 57°17’N 22°22’E  
**Altitude** 30–40 m  
**Area** 3,600 ha

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest); Wetland (river/stream; raised bog); Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting

### Site description

This remote and little-populated area is situated at the edge of a vast tract of forest and bog. Habitats in the IBA include agricultural land, forest and a small raised bog.

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Agricultural intensification/expansion (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Extraction industry (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The site requires further detailed ornithological studies, together with the adjacent Restricted Nature Territory.

#### Birds

#### Species

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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Grua grus** Crane

#### Protection status

**National** Partial  
**International** None

About 700 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Stiklu bags, c.7,000 ha).

#### Conservation issues

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Agricultural intensification/expansion (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Extraction industry (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The site requires further detailed ornithological studies, together with the adjacent Restricted Nature Territory.

#### Birds

#### Species

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Anser fabalis** Bean Goose

#### Protection status

**National** High  
**International** None

15,037 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Slitere, 15,037 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Infrastructure (U), Intensified forest management (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

The main threat is posed by the likely downgrading of the nature reserve to the level of national park, which may result in the development of recreation, tourism and related infrastructure. The area has been a reserve since 1921 and has experienced almost no human activities for 70 years; it is covered by a management plan. It is considered one of the richest areas for nature conservation in Latvia or even in the entire Baltic region, with high scientific, historical, and landscape value. The fauna and flora have been well investigated.

#### Site description

A lake near Spare village with adjoining forests and agricultural land. The lake is rich in emergent vegetation.

### Birds

#### Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
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<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Reported to stage regularly in autumn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Anser fabalis** Bean Goose

The lake is reported to be a regular roosting site for thousands of geese (Anser fabalis and A. albifrons) on autumn passage.
The Gulf of Riga is internationally important for several waterbirds in winter, and for moulting *Bucephala clangula* after the breeding season. This part of the gulf holds 20,000 or more waterbirds on a regular basis.

### Protection status
National None International None

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U)

The site needs further ornithological survey.

#### Site description
A stretch of coastal waters within the Gulf of Riga, from Cape Kolka to the village of Lapmeziems, and extending offshore to 30 m depth. Bottom sediments are sandy with many shellfish, especially bivalves *Macoma*, while in deeper waters (>40 m depth) beyond the IBA the seabed has more gravel and mud. The site includes the sand beach (dominated by shingle and cobbles in places) and coastal meadows, although the latter constitute probably less than 5% of the total area.

#### 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>Podiceps grigenva</em></td>
<td>Red-necked Grebe</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>550</td>
<td></td>
<td>A1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Clangula hyemalis</em></td>
<td>Long-tailed Duck</td>
<td>W 1990</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A1i, B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Melanitta fusca</em></td>
<td>Velvet Scoter</td>
<td>W 1990</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>A1i, B1i, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bucephala clangula</em></td>
<td>Goldeneye</td>
<td>N 1990</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>A1i, B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mergus serrator</em></td>
<td>Red-breasted Merganser</td>
<td>W 1990</td>
<td>1,880</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A1i, B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site was considered data-deficient under a recent review of Latvian Ramsar Sites (actual and potential). The area is covered by a management plan.

### Protection status
National High International None

#### Site description
A freshwater lake with seven islands, separated from the Gulf of Riga by a narrow (1.5–2.5 km) strip of land. About 30% of the lake is covered with emergent vegetation, mainly *Phragmites*, *Typha* and *Scirpus*. The silty lake-bottom is covered with algae (*stonewort Chara*). To the west of the lake, there is a 1–3-km-wide zone of wet, mixed forest. To the east, there are *Pinus* forests between the lake and the sea and a 3-km-wide zone of shallow waters offshore. Human activities at the lake include forestry, haymaking, grazing, hunting and fishing.

#### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Podiceps grigervana</em></td>
<td>Red-necked Grebe</td>
<td>B 1995</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>A, B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Botaurus stellaris</em></td>
<td>Bittern</td>
<td>B 1995</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>A, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aythya ferina</em></td>
<td>Pochard</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>A1i, B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gruus crane</em></td>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>B 1995</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>A, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gruus canus</em></td>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>N 1994</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>A1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Larus minutus</em></td>
<td>Little Gull</td>
<td>B 1995</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chlidonias niger</em></td>
<td>Black Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</em></td>
<td>Sedg Warbler</td>
<td>B 1995</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Acrocephalus rufivus</em></td>
<td>Reed Warbler</td>
<td>B 1995</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lake is one of the most important sites for breeding waterbirds in the Baltic area. The site holds 20,000 or more waterbirds on a regular basis: besides the vast numbers of breeding fowlwld (Anatidae), in the post-breeding season the area regularly supports 13,000 wildfowl, 12,000 *Fulica atra* and 800 *Gruus grus*, and about 5,500 *Bucephala clangula* also gather offshore to moult. Occasionally a stop-over site for geese *Anser* and yellow-billed swans *Cygnus cumbrahannasiC. cygnus*. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Crax crex* (breeding).
**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The main threats are posed by attempts to downgraade the protection status, increased human disturbance, and overgrowth of vegetation due to abandonment and lack of management. A management plan is under development.

**Protection status**

**National High** International 1,128 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lake Kanieris, 1,128 ha). 2,400 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Kemeri, 1,128 ha). 2,600 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Kanieris, 1,628 ha). 1,200 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lake Kanieris, 1,200 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Industrialization/urbanization (U), Unsustainable exploitation (U)

The lake is polluted by agricultural run-off and industrial sewage. It has been a protected area since 1957, and is included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites. The Latvian Fund for Nature launched an investigation of the area in 1998, aimed at producing a management plan.

**Protection status**

**National Partial** International None

About 2,600 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Babite lake, c.2,600 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U)

The lake is polluted by agricultural run-off and industrial sewage. It is important for migrating wildfowl in spring and autumn, especially *Cygnus columbianus* and *Cygnus cygnus*. During the post-breeding period the lake supports about 20,000 waterbirds (mainly *Fulica atra*, ducks and *Cygnus olor*). Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Anser erythropus* (two records on passage).

**Protection status**

**National High** International None

2,600 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Babite lake, 2,600 ha).

**Conervation issues**

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The area comprises about 30 fish-ponds, some with small islands and extensive emergent vegetation, set in a landscape of mixed forests, small fens and extensively used agricultural land (mainly pasture and haymeadows). Land-uses include fish-farming, forestry, and low-intensity farming.

**Protection status**

**National High** International None

2,600 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (name not known, 2,600 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The IBA is threatened by drainage and intensification in all land-uses. It is part of a 3,500 ha site included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites, and a management plan exists.

**Protection status**

**National High** International None

1,000 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (name not known, 1,000 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The area comprises about 30 fish-ponds, some with small islands and extensive emergent vegetation, set in a landscape of mixed forests, small fens and extensively used agricultural land (mainly pasture and haymeadows). Land-uses include fish-farming, forestry, and low-intensity farming.

**Protection status**

**National High** International None

12,000 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (name not known, 12,000 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The area comprises about 30 fish-ponds, some with small islands and extensive emergent vegetation, set in a landscape of mixed forests, small fens and extensively used agricultural land (mainly pasture and haymeadows). Land-uses include fish-farming, forestry, and low-intensity farming.

**Protection status**

**National High** International None

12,000 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (name not known, 12,000 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The lake is polluted by agricultural run-off and industrial sewage. It is important for migrating wildfowl in spring and autumn, especially *Cygnus columbianus* and *Cygnus cygnus*. During the post-breeding period the lake supports about 20,000 waterbirds (mainly *Fulica atra*, ducks and *Cygnus olor*). Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Anser erythropus* (two records on passage).

**Protection status**

**National Partial** International None

About 2,600 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Babite lake, c.2,600 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U)

The lake is polluted by agricultural run-off and industrial sewage. It has been a protected area since 1957, and is included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites. The Latvian Fund for Nature launched an investigation of the area in 1998, aimed at producing a management plan.

**Protection status**

**National Partial** International None

About 2,600 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Babite lake, c.2,600 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The area comprises about 30 fish-ponds, some with small islands and extensive emergent vegetation, set in a landscape of mixed forests, small fens and extensively used agricultural land (mainly pasture and haymeadows). Land-uses include fish-farming, forestry, and low-intensity farming.

**Protection status**

**National High** International None

2,600 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (name not known, 2,600 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The IBA is threatened by drainage and intensification in all land-uses. It is part of a 3,500 ha site included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites, and a management plan exists.
The site includes smaller areas of bog and fen, and two small lakes. The forests are dominated by *Alnus* and *Pinus*, with many beaver-ponds on the small natural streams. The main form of present land-use is intensive forestry.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (broadleaved deciduous forest; mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; raised bog; fen/transitional mires/spring), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research

### 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>Anser fabalis</em> Lesser Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The area holds high densities of breeding *Aquila pomarina* and *Pandion haliaetus*, and *Ciconia nigra* (6–7 pairs) also breeds in good numbers. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Haliaeetus albicilla* (status unknown), *Crex crex* (breeding).

### Protection status

**National** Partial **International** None

About 388 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Viki, c.2,000 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Disturbance to other wildlife (U), Infrastructure (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

The area is managed as an IBA site and is subject to land-use collection (‘Other’ land-use, below).

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mires/spring), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Recreation/tourism

### Site description

A shallow (1.5 m) eutrophic lake surrounded by fens and wet forests, with a silt bottom, low banks and a high (40%) cover of emergent vegetation. Land-uses include fishing, hunting, and cranberry *Vaccinium* collection (‘Other’ land-use, below).

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mires/spring)

**Land-use** Fisheries/aquaculture, Forestry, Hunting, Other

### Protection status

**National** Partial **International** None

About 388 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Viki, 388 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Unknown

The Restricted Nature Territory covers part of the shore while the lake itself remains unprotected. The avifauna of the lake and its surroundings was studied briefly in the 1960s. The importance of the site for roosting geese was discovered in autumn 1996.

### 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>Anser fabalis</em> Lesser Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lake is used during autumn migration by up to 4,000 roosting geese, mainly comprising *Anser fabalis* and *A. albifrons* (the less common of the two). Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Aquila clanga* (1 pair was breeding in 1961, but the species most probably no longer breeds).

### Protection status

**National** Partial **International** None

About 388 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Viki, 388 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Intensified forest management (U), Selective logging/cutting (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Disturbance to other wildlife (U), Infrastructure (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

The main threats are changes in traditional land-use and disturbance to birds. The site has been studied by ornithologists since the end of the 1980s, and the Latvian Ornithological Society has made recommendations for management. The site is of high botanical and habitat interest as one of the last unaltered flood-plain meadows to remain in Latvia.

### Site description

The forests are dominated by *Fraxinus*, with large numbers of old oak *Quercus* trees and rich undergrowth.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (broadleaved deciduous forest; mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; raised bog; fen/transition mires/spring), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Forestry, Hunting, Recreation/tourism

### Protection status

**National** Low **International** None

About 400 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Zwarde, c.2,000 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Intensified forest management (U), Selective logging/cutting (U), Deforestation (commercial) (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Infrastructure (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

The IBA is threatened by additional drainage and by degradation of forest quality as a result of the removal of dead and damaged trees. The site is monitored as a sample plot for studies on *Aquila pomarina* and *Dendrocopos leucotos*.

### Site description

A tract of partly drained broadleaved forest, dominated by *Fraxinus*, supplied with large numbers of old oak *Quercus* trees and rich undergrowth.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (broadleaved deciduous forest; mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; raised bog; fen/transition mires/spring), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Forestry, Hunting, Recreation/tourism

### Protection status

**National** High **International** None

About 1,150 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Viki Garsa, c.1,150 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Intensified forest management (U), Selective logging/cutting (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Disturbance to other wildlife (U), Infrastructure (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

The IBA is threatened by additional drainage and by degradation of forest quality as a result of the removal of dead and damaged trees. The site is monitored as a sample plot for studies on *Aquila pomarina* and *Dendrocopos leucotos*.

### Site description

A shallow (1.5 m) eutrophic lake surrounded by fens and wet forests, with a silt bottom, low banks and a high (40%) cover of emergent vegetation. Land-uses include fishing, hunting, and cranberry *Vaccinium* collection (‘Other’ land-use, below).

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mires/spring), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Fisheries/aquaculture, Forestry, Hunting, Other

### Protection status

**National** Low **International** None

About 400 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Zwarde, c.2,000 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Disturbance to other wildlife (U), Infrastructure (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

The site is monitored as a sample plot for studies on *Aquila pomarina* and *Dendrocopos leucotos*.

### Site description

Natural and cultivated flood-plain meadows of the Lielupe river, situated within the territory of Jelgava town. The main land-uses are mowing and grazing, although land within the reserve is no longer mowed or grazed, and the site is often visited by people for fishing and recreation.

**Habitats** Scrub (scrub), Grassland (mesophile grassland), Wetland (river/stream)

**Land-use** Agriculture, Tourism/recreation

### Protection status

**National** High **International** None

About 190 ha of IBA covered by a Restricted Nature Territory (c.190 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Infrastructure (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

The area supports a rich assemblage of breeding birds of flood-plain meadows, notably *Crex crex*. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Gallinago media* (breeding).
**Svete river mouth**

**Admin region** Jelgava  
**Coordinates** 56°42’N 23°40’E  
**Altitude** 0–2 m  
**Area** 1,100 ha  

**Site description**
The flood-plain of the Svete and Lielupe rivers, near the mouth of the Svete. Most of the area floods in spring. The land is used for agriculture, including arable farming and haymaking.

**Habitats** Scrub (scrub), Grassland (mesophile grassland), Wetland (river/stream; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Agriculture, Water management

**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>Cyprea cygnus</td>
<td>Whooper Swan</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>A4, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anser fabalis</td>
<td>Bean Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anser albifrons</td>
<td>White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crex crex</td>
<td>Corncrake</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protection status**
National None  
International None

**Conservation issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment/reduction of land management</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural intensification/expansion</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barage</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance to birds</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ornithological research has been carried out annually since 1990.

**Cena bog**

**Admin region** Riga  
**Coordinates** 56°51’N 23°51’E  
**Altitude** 10–15 m  
**Area** 3,700 ha  

**Site description**
One of the largest raised bogs in Latvia, with many small lakes, a zone of transitional mire in the centre, and many peninsulas covered by mixed forest. The southern part of the bog is used for peat extraction, and other land-uses include hunting and cranberry Vaccinium collecting.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Wetland (raised bog)

**Land-use** Forestry, Hunting, Urban/industrial/transport

**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>Anser fabalis</td>
<td>Bean Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anser albifrons</td>
<td>White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grus grus</td>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. See main text.  
2. Among highest densities in Latvia.

Thousands of geese occur on passage, mainly Anser fabalis and A. albifrons, and the site is also important for breeding and migrating Grus grus.

**Protection status**
National Partial  
International None

**Conservation issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraction industry</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peat extraction is the main threat. The site is listed as data-deficient in a recent review of actual and potential Ramsar Sites in Latvia.

**Kalnciems meadows and wet forest**

**Admin region** Jelgava  
**Coordinates** 56°52’N 23°35’E  
**Altitude** 0–5 m  
**Area** 1,000 ha  

**Site description**
One of the largest tracts of wet Alnus forest in Latvia, with relatively intact flood-plain meadows, on the left side of the lower reaches of the Lielupe river. Some trees are more than 100 years old and there are many fallen trunks. Part of the area, including the natural and cultivated flood-plain meadows, used to flood in spring.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (alnus/very wet forest), Scrub (scrub), Grassland (humid grassland), mesophile grassland, Wetland (standing fresh water)

**Land-use** Agriculture, Forestry, Urban/industrial/transport

**Liela Jugla river mouth**

**Admin region** Riga, Riga municipality  
**Coordinates** 56°59’N 24°22’E  
**Altitude** 0–3 m  
**Area** 1,600 ha  

**Site description**
The site comprises flood-plain meadows along the lower reaches of the Liela Jugla and Maza Jugla rivers, which flow into Jugla lake, and a set of small ponds and lakes. The area usually floods in spring. The area is close to the city of Riga, being partly within its administrative boundaries, and consequently includes many houses and gardens.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Scrub (scrub), Grassland (mesophile grassland), Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (other urban/industrial/areas)

**Land-use** Agriculture, Unknown

**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>Cyprea cygnus</td>
<td>Whooper Swan</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Species Season Year Pop min Pop max Acc Criteria
2. Among highest densities in Latvia.

According to reports, the flooded areas serve as a regular staging site for migrating waterbirds in spring, and Cyprea cygnus has been confirmed in important numbers. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: Haliaeetus albicilla (status unknown), Crex crex (breeding possible but not verified).

**Protection status**
National None  
International None

**Conservation issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance to birds</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling-in of wetlands</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialization/urbanization</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site was identified very recently and has only been visited during spring counts of migrating waterbirds.
## Important Bird Areas in Europe – Latvia

### Sudas bog

**Admin region**: Cesis  
**Coordinates**: 57°08’N 25°00’E  
**Altitude**: 105–120 m  
**Area**: 2,600 ha

#### Site description

The site is mainly a raised bog, with some transitional mire, fen and lakes. There are several islands with old stands of mixed forest (*Picea, Quercus, Tilia, Populus*). Sulphurous springs and the source of the Sudu river are situated in the southern part.

**Habitats**: Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; raised bog; fen/transition mire/spring)  
**Land-use**: Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research

#### Protection status

**National**: High  
**International**: None

1,581 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (name not known, 1,581 ha).  
2,600 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Gauja, 92,048 ha).

#### Conservation issues

**Threats**: Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The part of the bog within the Nature Reserve is protected and almost unaffected by human activities, but other parts of the IBA are threatened by the drainage of adjacent agricultural land. The site is listed as data-deficient in a recent review of actual and potential Ramsar Sites in Latvia. The area is being surveyed as part of the Gauja National Park breeding bird atlas project (1995–1997).

### Gulf of Riga, east coast

**Admin region**: Riga, Limbazi  
**Coordinates**: 57°10’N 24°18’E  
**Altitude**: 0–0 m  
**Area**: 89,000 ha

#### Site description

A stretch of coastal waters in the Gulf of Riga, from the Estonian border to the mouth of the Gauja river, extending offshore up to 30 m depth. Bottom sediments are sand-dominated and inhabited by shellfish, especially bivalves *Macoma*. Beyond the IBA in deeper areas (>40 m), substrates are also sandy but mixed with more gravel and mud.

**Habitats**: Wetland (sand-dunes/sand beach), Marine areas (sea inlet/coastal features)  
**Land-use**: Fisheries/aquaculture, Tourism/recreation

#### Protection status

**National**: None  
**International**: Low

About 8,500 ha of IBA covered by Biosphere Reserve (Ziemelvidzeme, 450,000 ha).

#### Conservation issues

**Threats**: Disturbance to birds (U), Aquaculture/fisheries (U), Other (U)

There are various threats to the area from pollution (‘Other’ threat, above), seabird mortality in fishing nets, and disturbance to birds by industrial/recreational marine traffic. Coastal-zone regulations protect the shoreline from development to some extent. A stretch of this coast (Estonian border–Dzeni) has been proposed as a Baltic Sea Protection Area, and a part of the IBA is included on the national ‘shadow list’ of potential Ramsar Sites.

### Lielais and Pemmas bogs

**Admin region**: Limbazi  
**Coordinates**: 57°23’N 24°49’E  
**Altitude**: 4,000 ha

#### Site description

Two large and open raised bogs with many small and several big lakes and some forested islands. The bogs are surrounded by forests of different types, from *Pinus* to mixed stands, with many old *Quercus* trees. Land-uses include cranberry *Vaccinium* collecting, hunting and forestry.

**Habitats**: Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (raised bog)  
**Land-use**: Forestry, 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser fabalis</em></td>
<td>Bean Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser albifrons</em></td>
<td>White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Petaurista petaurista</em></td>
<td>Squirrel</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. See main text.

Thousands of migrating geese (*Anser fabalis* and *A. albifrons*) stop to roost at the bog in autumn. Breeding birds include *Gavia arctica*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Circus gallicus*, *Aquila chrysaetos*, *Pandion haliaetus*, *Grus grus*, *Pluvialis apricaria*, *Tringa glareola*, *Numenius arquata* and *N. phaeopus*.

#### Protection status

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

About 3,000 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (c.3,000 ha).

### Madagascar and Augstroze

**Admin region**: Limbazi, Valmiera  
**Coordinates**: 57°15’N 25°00’E  
**Altitude**: 75–105 m  
**Area**: 3,000 ha

#### Site description

A vast, open raised bog with two large and many small lakes. Several islands and peninsulas are covered by different forest-types (from *Pinus* to deciduous). The Briede river flows through the bog. Land-uses include cranberry *Vaccinium* collecting, hunting and forestry.

**Habitats**: Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing fresh water; raised bog)  
**Land-use**: Forestry, 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser fabalis</em></td>
<td>Bean Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser albifrons</em></td>
<td>White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. No counts, but numbers thought to be significant.

The area is important for staging *Grus grus* and geese on migration.
**Protection status**

**National High**  **International High**
3,000 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (Augstroze, c.3,500 ha). 3,000 ha of IBA covered by Biosphere Reserve (Ziemeļvidzeme, 450,000 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Intensiﬁed forest management (U)

The site is threatened by the drainage of adjacent areas. It was ﬁrst designated as (part of) a protected area in 1977.

**Kapzemes, Ollu and Pirtsmeza bogs**

**Admin region** Limbazi, Valmiera
**Coordinates** 57°58’N 24°55’E
**Altitude** 35–60 m  **Area** 11,000 ha

**Site description**

This site, together with the Estonian IBA ‘Nigula Reserve’ (031) across the border, is one of the largest and least disturbed areas of bog in the Baltic region. The site comprises three large raised bogs, with transitional mire in some parts and with many small lakes. The largest bog contains islands of woodland which have remained relatively untouched by forestry. Forests around the bogs are mixed and still largely unaffected by drainage.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (raised bog; fen/transition mire/spring), Artiﬁcial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use** Forestry, Hunting, Nature conservation/research

An area of outstanding value for migrating geese in autumn, with at least 10,000 roosting Anser fabalis and A. albifrons. The globally threatened Aquila clanga has occurred during the breeding season (one pair in 1997, but breeding not conﬁrmed). The site is also important for non-breeding/migrating Grus grus (much more than 200 may occur, e.g. 800 seen across border at Nigula in autumn 1997) and for its diverse assemblage of breeding species.

**Protection status**

**National Partial**  **International High**

About 5,500 ha of IBA covered by two Restricted Nature Territories (totalling c.5,500 ha). 11,000 ha of IBA covered by Biosphere Reserve (Ziemeļvidzeme, 450,000 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Extraction industry (U), Intensiﬁed forest management (U)

The IBA forms part of a transboundary bog complex with Nigula Reserve in Estonia. The Latvian Fund for Nature commenced a research project in 1997, with the support of the Regional Environment Center. The site is included on the national ‘shadow list’ of Ramsar Sites.

**Ruja fish-ponds**

**Admin region** Valmiera
**Coordinates** 57°52’N 25°15’E
**Altitude** 40–60 m  **Area** 4,350 ha

**Site description**

The area comprises a complex of fish-ponds, the ﬂood-plain of the Ruja river, and adjoining forests.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (mixed forest), Scrub, Grassland, Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream)

**Land-use** Fisheries/aquaculture, Forestry, Hunting

**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>Anser fabalis</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Abundant</td>
<td></td>
<td>A1; B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anser albifrons</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Abundant</td>
<td></td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grus grus</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to be used intensively for commercial peat extraction, thus most of the original habitat has been destroyed. However, the excavated areas fill with water and are colonized by vegetation, forming many ponds of different sizes and depths, with diverse habitat features. Some ponds have become reedbeds, while fen and marshland have regenerated in other areas. Flood-plain meadows and wet forests (some being old) dominate the northern part of the site. Extracted peat is used for fuel and is also exported.

### HABITATS
- Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Grassland (humid grassland), Wetland (river/stream; raised bog; fen/transition mire/spring)
- Land-use: Forestry, Hunting, Urban/industrial/transport

#### 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><em>Cygnus cygnus</em> Whooper Swan</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Abundant</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chlidonias niger</em> Black Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Regular in spring.

The area is important for migrating *Cygnus cygnus* (about 500 *Cygnus* counted, mostly this species) and for breeding *Chlidonias niger*. It supports a high overall diversity of breeding and migrating species of wetland and forest. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Halaietus albicilla* (breeding), *Crex crex* (breeding in the meadows). At least 1,000 (and up to several thousand) roosting geese were observed and hunted at the site during autumn 1996, and hundreds of migrant *Grus grus* gather here in autumn.

### Protection status

**National**: Partial  **International**: High

About 6,500 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (c.6,500 ha). 7,500 ha of IBA is covered by Biosphere Reserve (Ziemelvidzeme, 450,000 ha).

### Conservation issues

- Peat extraction should be stopped and further drainage of the area should be prevented. The flood-plain meadows are threatened by overgrowth if management is abandoned. The IBA contains two short-term ‘Forest Sanctuaries’ (434 ha), set up by the forestry authorities to protect particular nest-sites. About 7,000 ha of the IBA is included as a site on the national ‘shadow list’ of potential Ramsar Sites. The site supports a high density of breeding *Crex crex*.

### Site description

A vast Pinus forest, the majority of which burnt down in 1911 and was later restored by planting. About 1,000 ha have not been cut since then. Ground conditions vary widely, from dry areas to wet depressions. In the north, the area borders the Gauja river, where there are many oxbow lakes and natural flood-plain meadows on terraces. The Gauja valley is rich in stands of old broadleaved forest. Human activities include forestry 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 Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Crex crex</em> Comrake</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Caprimulgus europaeus</em> Nightjar</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Up to 200–300 pairs.

The most important site for *Caprimulgus europaeus* in Latvia. The IBA also supports a diverse assemblage of breeding birds of open and closed forest and of riverine wetlands.

### Protection status

**National**: Low  **International**: None

About 350 ha of IBA covered by two Restricted Nature Territories (totalling 350 ha).

### Conservation issues

No conservation activities took place before 1996, when parts of the area were proposed for protection as Nature Reserves (201 ha) and ‘Forest Sanctuaries’ (263 ha; set up by the forestry authorities to protect particular nest-sites).

### Site description

Flood-plain meadows on the left side of the Gauja river, bordering Estonia. Conditions are very diverse, ranging from wet (many oxbow lakes in all stages of succession) to dry (poor sandy soils). Plant species richness and diversity are high. The meadows have been used extensively for grass-mowing and grazing. The area supports a diverse fauna and flora, and is also important for its geological and landscape value.

### 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><em>Anser albifrons</em> White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser fabalis</em> Bean Goose</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. See main text.

The site is an important staging area for migrating geese (*Anser fabalis, A. albirostris*), although no precise counts have been made. There is a diverse assemblage of breeding birds of forest and bog.
### Important Bird Areas in Europe – Latvia

#### Daugava river at Kaibala

**Site description**
A stretch of the Daugava river above the Kegums hydroelectric-power barrage (built in 1939), usually 600–850 m across, with several islands and with banks that are either steep or low and easily flooded. About 10% of the area is overgrown with emergent vegetation.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (river/stream)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting

#### Lobe lake area

**Site description**
Habitats include a shallow lake (520 ha), rich in emergent vegetation, several raised bogs, wet broadleaved forests and agricultural land. Land-uses include forestry, hunting, cranberry *Vaccinium* collecting ('Other' land-use, below), agriculture, fishing and peat extraction, although habitats have been relatively unaffected so far.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing; fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)

**Land-use**
- Forestry, Hunting, Other

#### Panemune forest area

**Site description**
A tract of mixed and broadleaved forest near the Lithuanian border, with large numbers of old oak *Quercus* trees and rich undergrowth. The area has been partially drained.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (broadleaved deciduous forest; mixed forest), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting

### Birds

**Species**
- *Aquila pomarina* Lesser Spotted Eagle

**Protection status**
- National None International None

**Conservation issues**
**Threats**
- Deforestation (commercial) (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U), Selective logging/cutting (U)

Three short-term 'Forest Sanctuaries' (totalling 46 ha) have been established by the forestry authorities, to protect nest-sites of *Ciconia nigra* and *Aquila pomarina*.

**Site description**
The area is particularly important for breeding *Aquila pomarina*.

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Drainage (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The protected areas cover bogs.

**Protection status**
- National Partial International None

**Conservation issues**
**Threats**
- Deforestation (commercial) (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U), Selective logging/cutting (U)

About 1,500 ha of IBA covered by three Restricted Nature Territories (totalling c.1,500 ha).

**Protection status**
- National Partial International None

**Conservation issues**
**Threats**
- Disturbance to birds (U), Extraction industry (U), Intensified forest management (U)

Potential major threats to the site include planned drainage, extraction of curative mud (sapropel), and forest clearance. The protected areas cover bogs, whilst the lake and a proportion of the forest remain unprotected. The site is listed as data-deficient in a recent review of actual and potential Ramsar Sites in Latvia.

### Daugavezva bog and fish-ponds

**Site description**
A raised bog (1,055 ha) with forested peninsulas, several small lakes, surrounding forest stands (*Pinus, Picea*), and fish-ponds. Human activities include cranberry *Vaccinium* collecting, hunting, fishing, forestry and agriculture.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (standing; fresh water; raised bog), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture, Fisheries/aquaculture, Forestry, Hunting

**Protection status**
- National None International None

**Conservation issues**
**Threats**
- Disturbance to birds (U)

Large numbers of migratory waterbirds stage here in spring (daily max. 3,000 birds). The site is especially important for *Cygnus cygnus*, but *C. columbianus* is also present in smaller numbers.

**Protection status**
- National None International None

**Conservation issues**
**Threats**
- Disturbance to birds (U)

The area is only recently identified but its ornithological importance is already rather well documented. Further investigations on other fauna are needed, however.

### Protection status
- National Partial International None

About 1,500 ha of IBA covered by four Restricted Nature Territories (totalling c.1,500 ha).

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Drainage (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The area was only recently identified but its ornithological importance is already rather well documented. Further investigations on other fauna are needed, however.
**Zalve forest area**

Admin region Aizkraukle  
Coordinates 56°22’N 25°09’E  
Altitude 65–80 m  
Area 12,800 ha

**Site description**

Part of an extensive forest area, the site comprises partly drained stands of mixed and deciduous forest, with a significant proportion of oak *Quercus* and other hardwood trees. There are several small raised bogs, and two unregulated rivers and their streams run through the area.

**Habitats**

- Forest and woodland (broadleaved deciduous forest; mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (river/stream; raised bog), Artificial landscape (arable land).

**Land-use**

- Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting

The area is important for breeding *Aquila pomarina*.

**Protection status**

National Low  | International None  
230 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (230 ha).

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Intensified forest management (U)

Nine short-term ‘Forest Sanctuaries’ (totalling 243 ha) have been proposed by the forestry authorities, to protect important nest-sites.

**Abeli forest area**

Admin region Jekabpils  
Coordinates 56°24’N 25°59’E  
Altitude 87–100 m  
Area 1,330 ha

**Site description**

An area of deciduous and mixed forests, dominated by *Populus tremula*, with a good diversity of old stands and of swamp-forest. There is a high diversity of forest-types, with *Alnus, Betula, Picea, Fraxinus* and *Tilia* trees common in places. The small, unregulated *Ziemelsuseja* river flows through the large area of swamp-forests, and natural flood-plain meadows occur along the riverbanks.

**Habitats**

- Forest and woodland (broadleaved deciduous forest; mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Grassland (mesophile grassland), Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream), Artificial landscape (arable land)

**Land-use**

- Forestry, Unknown

An area with an diverse forest avifauna, being notably important for *Picoides tridactylus*. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Crex crex* (breeding).

**Protection status**

National Low  | International None  
230 ha of IBA covered by Restricted Nature Territory (230 ha).

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Intensified forest management (U)

Monitoring of key species would be highly desirable.
This is the best site in Latvia for some breeding species of mire and/or forest, such as Tetrao tetrix, Grus grus, Pluvialis apricaria (70–90 pairs) and Numenius phaeopus (20–50 pairs). The site is also very important for non-breeding and migrating Grus grus, as well as for up to 8,000 geese (Anser fabalis and A. albifrons) which roost on the bogs during autumn migration. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: Anser erythropus (one record on passage), Haliaeetus albicilla (non-breeding), Aquila clanga (status unknown), Crex crex (breeding).

**Site description**

The meadows support a rich assemblage of breeding birds, including one of the highest breeding densities of Crex crex in Latvia, and are also important for migrating waterbirds during spring floods, especially Cygnus cygnus and Cygnus columbianus (several hundreds of yellow-billed swans are thought to use the site) and ducks.

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

Threats Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Agricultural intensification/expansion (U)

Ornithological research commenced mainly in 1996, supported in part by the Latvian IBA programme.
One of the largest and most important bird areas in Latvia, supporting good numbers of rare and threatened breeding species of wetland and hosting large numbers of Grus grus, gosse and other waterbirds on passage. The meadows are important for breeding Crex crex, and Gomelis marsh holds the largest colonies of Chlidonias niger and C. leucopera in Latvia. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: Haliaeetus albicilla (breeding), Aquila clanga (one pair probably nests, having shifted from site 054; birds from two nearby pairs also visit the area to feed), Gallinago media (breeding in meadows).

Site description

Wet flood-plain meadows of the Pededze river and its tributary, the Sita, which are flooded in spring. Among the meadows there are stands of wet forest, overgrown oxbow lakes and scattered old oak Quercus trees. The site is important for breeding Crex crex. Congregations of migrant waterbirds occur (over 1,000 individuals per day). Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: Haliaeetus albicilla (non-breeding).

Conservation issues

Up till now the meadows have been traditionally mown, but due to land privatization there is a high risk of land abandonment, which will lead to overgrowth of the meadows by bushes and trees. Potentially, conversion of part of the area to arable land is also a threat, together with illegal hunting and fishing. The site is listed as data-deficient in a recent review of actual and potential Ramsar Sites in Latvia. The site has been visited by ornithologists since 1992, while entomologists and hydrobiologists surveyed the site in 1996. No botanical survey has been carried out.

Conservation status

None

Protection status

National None

Birds

Species Season Year Pop min Pop max Acc Criteria
Grus grus Whooper Swan P 600 1,000 A1
Aquila clanga B 1996 100 200 A1
Aquila pomarina Lesser Spotted Eagle B 1995 1 2 A1
Aquila radia Greater Spotted Eagle B 1996 10 10 B2

Habitats

Forest and woodland (alluvial/very wet forest), Scrub (scrub), Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (river/stream)

Land-use

Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting

Threats

Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Agricultural intensification/ expansion (U), Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barage (U), Drainage (U), Extraction industry (U)

Criteria

A1

Habitat

Wet flood-plain forests of the Pededze and Aiviekste rivers, forming part of the complex of IBAs in the Lubans lowlands. There are also stands of wet forest, overgrown oxbow lakes and scattered old oak Quercus trees.

Habitats

Forest and woodland (alluvial/very wet forest), Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (river/stream)

Land-use

Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting

Conservation status

International None

Protection status

None

Birds

Species Season Year Pop min Pop max Acc Criteria
Grus grus Whooper Swan P 600 1,000 A1
Aquila pomarina Lesser Spotted Eagle B 1996 10 10 B2
Aquila radia Greater Spotted Eagle B 1995 1 2 A1

Habitats

Forest and woodland (alluvial/very wet forest), Scrub (scrub), Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (river/stream), Artificial landscape (arable land)

Land-use

Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting

Threats

Abandonment/reduction of land management (U), Agricultural intensification/ expansion (U), Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barage (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

Criteria

A1

Habitat

A large tract of forest near the Russian border, dominated by Pinus stands, with alluvial Alnus forests extending along several unregulated or partly regulated streams.
The site is important for breeding *Aquila pomarina*, and *Aquila clanga* may breed (birds are present, possibly representing a breeding pair).

**Protection status**
- National: None
- International: None

**Conservation issues**
- Threats: Deforestation (commercial) (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Drainage (U), Intensified forest management (U), Selective logging/cutting (U)

**Stampaku, Murnieku and Orlovas bogs**

**Site description**
Three open raised bogs, separated and surrounded by vast mixed forests (*Pinus, Picea, Betula, Populus*), and with lakes and several forested islands. Land-uses include forestry, cranberry *Vaccinium* collecting, hunting, and sport-fishing on one of the 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>Anser albifrons</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser fabalis</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B1i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. See main text.

*Anser fabalis* and *A. albifrons* are numerous on passage, although no precise counts have been made. There is a very diverse assemblage of breeding birds of forest and bog. Species of global conservation concern that do not meet IBA criteria: *Haliaeetus albicilla* (status unknown).

**Protetion status**
- National: None
- International: None

**Zablote bog**

**Site description**
A large area of raised bog with adjacent forests near the Russian border (the major part of the bog lies within Russian territory). The bog is comparatively open, with many small lakes and one bigger lake, Pitelis. Mixed, wet forests (*Pinus, Betula, Alnus*) surround most of the bog, with some stands more than 100 years old. The area is little affected by human activities, which include forestry, cranberry *Vaccinium* collecting, and hunting.

**Conservation issues**
- Threats: Drainage (U), Disturbance to birds (U), Intensified forest management (U)

The site is threatened by increased tree-felling, drainage and possibly peat extraction. It is listed as data-deficient in a recent review of actual and potential Ramsar Sites in Latvia.

**REFERENCES**

Important Bird Areas in Europe – Latvia


