

Who will benefit?

Despite numerous negative changes which took place here, it is still a high nature value area. The entire territory is included in the European ecological network - Natura 2000 as two areas: SOO "Dolina Biebrzy" (PLH 200008) and OSO „Ostoja Biebrzańska" (PLB 200006). We can find here as many as 6 types of habitats covered by the EU Habitat Directive and a number of rare bird species which are endangered in Poland and in Europe including more than 20 bird species listed in the Appendix 1 to the EU Bird Directive such as the Lesser and the Greater Spotted Eagle, the Short Toad Eagle, the Black Grouse, the Corncrake, the Curlew, the Great Snipe, the Eagle Owl, the White-backed Woodpecker, the Aquatic Warbler, the Bluethroat, the Bittern, the Short Eared Owl. The project area is also the refuge of elk, wolves and numerous beavers. We believe that thanks to this project it will be possible to preserve this rich nature and even improve the current situation. Also the local community will benefit. Especially in dry years, these new water constructions will facilitate a good water management so that most of the water could be kept in this area and used for nature protection and extensive farming.

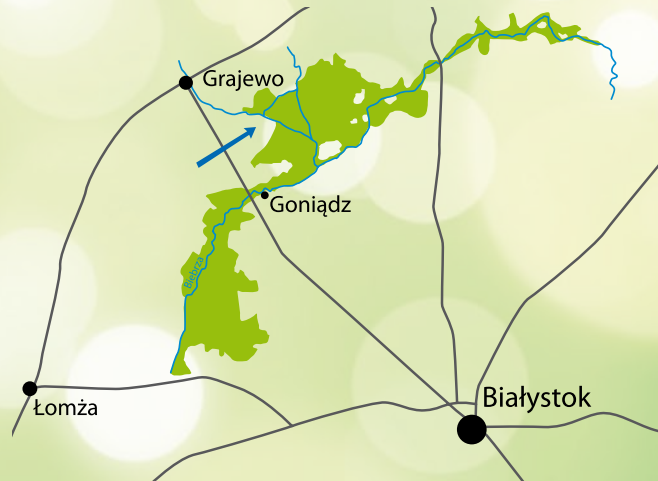


Great Snipe – a rare species inhabiting wetlands



Elk – inhabitant of wetlands

Where is the project implemented?



The project is implemented in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley.

Contact

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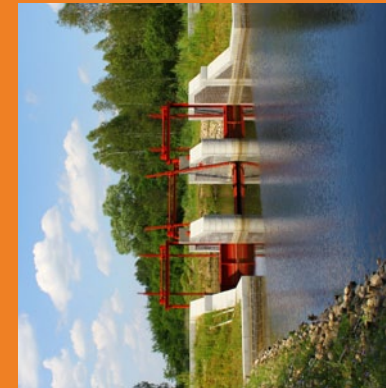
LIFE 09/NAT/PL/000258
**„Restoration of hydrological system
in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley. Phase I"**

The project co-financed from LIFE
– the EU's financial instrument, the National Fund for Environmental
Protection and Water Management and Biebrza National Park.

Photo: A. Wiatr, M. Siłakowski, P. Talała, T. Chilicki, P. Dombrowski, W. Łapiński



w trosce o naszą



RESTORATION

„Restoration of hydrological system in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley. Phase I"
What have we done

Why is Biebrza National Park restoring the natural River system in the Biebrza Valley?

Drainage works conducted in the Biebrza Valley in the second half of the 19th century by the Russian Tsar administration resulted in a faster outflow of water and a decline of groundwater levels. It refers in particular to the works performed in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley, which included, among others, the construction of Woźnawiejski Canal (collecting a part of water from the Jęgrznia River in the area of Kuligi) and Rudzki Canal (collecting the water from the Elk River in Modzelówka). It led to negative habitat changes such as halting peat-forming processes or organic soil degradation, which happened in many places. Habitat degradation is also reflected by decreased diversity of flora and fauna species.

Today, we can also observe the negative effects of drainage on the agriculture. Due to the draining effect of Rudzki Canal in many places the conditions for agricultural production have worsened so drastically that the land surrounding the canal needs to be irrigated.

In 2010, to prevent further degradation and improve the condition of habitats, Biebrza National Park launched a project entitled: **„Restoration of hydrological system in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley. Phase I.”**, which is co-financed by: the European Union via LIFE+ Financial Instrument, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Warsaw and Biebrza National Park.

It is one of the first large-scale restoration projects in Poland and one of the most important ones in Europe. The schedule of works which are now being implemented was prepared in 2001 by the Live Architecture Workshop Association and Biebrza National Park in cooperation with the Provincial Land Melioration and Water Units Board in Białystok, WWF and GEF/SGP.

What is the project objective?

The project aims at improving wetland habitats in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley by:

- stopping the degradation of hydrogenic habitats in the vicinity of Rudzki Canal and in the so-called "Triangle" marked by the Elk River, the Jęgrznia River and Woźnawiejski Canal through controlled water management and water supply to this area;
- improving habitat conditions for avifauna in open wetland ecosystems.

The indirect effect of the implementation of project technical activities will be the improvement of conditions for extensive farming in this region.



Old Elk river bed



Meandering Jęgrznia river

What work has been done in the project?

The following project activities have already been completed:

- the preparation of technical and project documentation needed to rebuild the floodway system in Modzelówka village and restore the Elk River **in the ongoing Phase II** of the Restoration project;
- the construction of a weir and barrages in Woźnawiejski Canal to ensure a proper water configuration and management;
- the renovation of a bridge on the Jęgrznia River in Kuligi, which is also used by local people;
- the restoration of the Jęgrznia River bed;
- a wildlife and habitat assessment including a Digital Elevation Model and a Digital Surface Model as well as a site protection plan;
- the purchase of land needed to implement project activities;
- shrub removal in the most valuable habitats to improve the living conditions for flora and fauna;
- educational activities and information meetings.

It should be emphasized that the wide scope of the restoration concept covers also Rudzki Canal, where two weirs have been built (in Białogrądy and Przechody) in cooperation with the Provincial Land Melioration and Water Units Board in Białystok.



The weir on Woźnawiejski Canal built as a part of the project

Fish bypass



Water threshold built on the Woźnawiejski Canal