

Aquatic Warbler and biomass: A planned LIFE+ project application



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Which conservation problems do we want to address?

- Several important AW sites in eastern Poland were not covered by the existing AW LIFE Project and are deteriorating
- The existing and new AE-Schemes provide financing for ongoing management until 2013, possibly longer, but:
 - There is no sustainable solution to maintain this management, if the schemes end
 - There are and will be huge amounts of low-quality biomass produced, for which there is currently no use = limiting the uptake of the schemes



Current situation of alternative use of biomass in Poland:

- **Non-agricultural (=alternative) use of biomass derived from mowing of grasslands is possible in Poland**
- **This biomass is normally used for burning to produce heat and electricity, either in bales or in pellets or briquettes**
- **None of the existing facilities is a feasible option for any of the eastern AW sites**
- **Existing facilities are not necessarily linked to conservation aims**

The AW LIFE Project provides the basics:

- **Management needs, methods, techniques and costs are known**
- **Estimated biomass harvest is known**
- **State of the art of biomass use in Poland is known**
- **The new AE-schemes guarantee financial support for the set-up of ongoing sustainable systems**

But:

- **The AW LIFE Project has no funds to set up biomass facilities at AW sites**

The aim of the planned LIFE+ project:

Create the missing link between biomass business and AW conservation:

- **Test and implement solutions for the sustainable use of biomass derived from the management of Aquatic Warbler habitats in Eastern Poland**

Indicators:

- sustainable biomass use has been arranged for at least 3 major AW breeding sites in Eastern Poland, and will function beyond the duration of the project (Chelm Marshes, Narew NP and Biebrza Valley)
- X ha of AW habitat has been restored or improved in order to prepare it for sustainable biomass use
- The number of singing males of AW in the areas restored or improved increased from x in t1 to x in t2

Project sites:

3 project areas:

- **Lubelszczyzna:**
 - Chelm Marshes
 - Middle Bug Valley
 - Poleski NP
- **Narew Valley**
- **Biebrza Valley**

All sites are NATURA 2000 sites.

Together they hold 96% of the Polish population of the AW.

Only the Biebrza Valley is also included in the AW LIFE Project.

The project partnership:

- **OTOP (lead partner)**
- **Cemex Polska**
- **RSPB**
- **Local farmers/entrepreneurs**

Potentially also:

- **Site administrations (BPN, NPN, PPN, Chelm PK)**
- **Large land users at AW sites**

- **Planned duration: 2010-2013 (4 years)**

The core idea:

Setting up sustainable systems for the use of biomass from AW sites in 3 areas:

- Chelm

Biomass from the Chelm PK, Poleski NP and the Middle Bug Valley (the latter not an AW site) will be used in the Cemex Cement Plant in Chelm

Concept:

- Large scale burning plant
- use of bales



The core idea:

Setting up sustainable systems for the use of biomass from AW sites in 3 areas:

- **Narew Valley**

Biomass from AW sites in the Narew Valley will be used in an existing small briquetting facility

Concept:

- Extending AW area managed
- Existing small-scale facility
- Production of compressed biomass fuel
- Harvested in bales



The core idea:

Setting up sustainable systems for the use of biomass from AW sites in 3 areas:

- **Biebrza Valley**

Biomass from AW sites in the Biebrza Valley will be used in new briquetting + compost facilities

Concept:

- Enabling large-scale AW area management
- New facility
- Production of compressed biomass fuel
- Harvested in one go (loose+wet)
- Compost as fall-back option



The main activities:

- **Active conservation**

- **No recurring measures financed by the project!**
- **Preparation of areas for ongoing land use (e.g. under AES) = first-time mowing, bush removal**
- **Setting up the biomass use systems**
- **Possibly: hydrological measures**
- **If needed: land purchase**

The main activities:

- **Research and monitoring**

- **Monitor areas covered (land use, harvesting techniques)**
- **Monitor AW numbers**
- **Monitor economical feasibility**
- **Monitor technical feasibility (biomass characteristics, plant specifics)**

The main activities:

- **Dissemination and awareness raising**

- **The usual stuff:**

(2 conferences, website, media work, info boards, exchange visits with UK)

- **Promotion campaign for briquettes and peat-free compost from AW sites**
- **Negotiations with large-scale customers**

The main activities:

- **Planning**

- **AW Management Plans were not existing**
- **Promotion and improvement of AES**
- **Feasibility study for the installation of small-scale biomass ovens at Biebrza + Narew**
- **Feasibility study for a larger-scale electric plant fuelled by biomass from Biebrza**
- **Feasibility study on copying experience to other sites**

Biomass use is great – but we need to be careful:

- **Not every form of alternative biomass use is necessarily good for nature**
- **Biomass needs to be sourced with consideration for conservation**
- **Rules need to be in place (on the side of the source of biomass, and on the side of the use of biomass) that ensure that the system is beneficial for nature**