



## **“Conserving Aquatic Warbler in Poland and Germany”**

**an EU LIFE Nature project  
of OTOP-BirdLife Poland**



**Lars Lachmann,  
RSPB Country Programme Officer  
OTOP LIFE Project Manager**

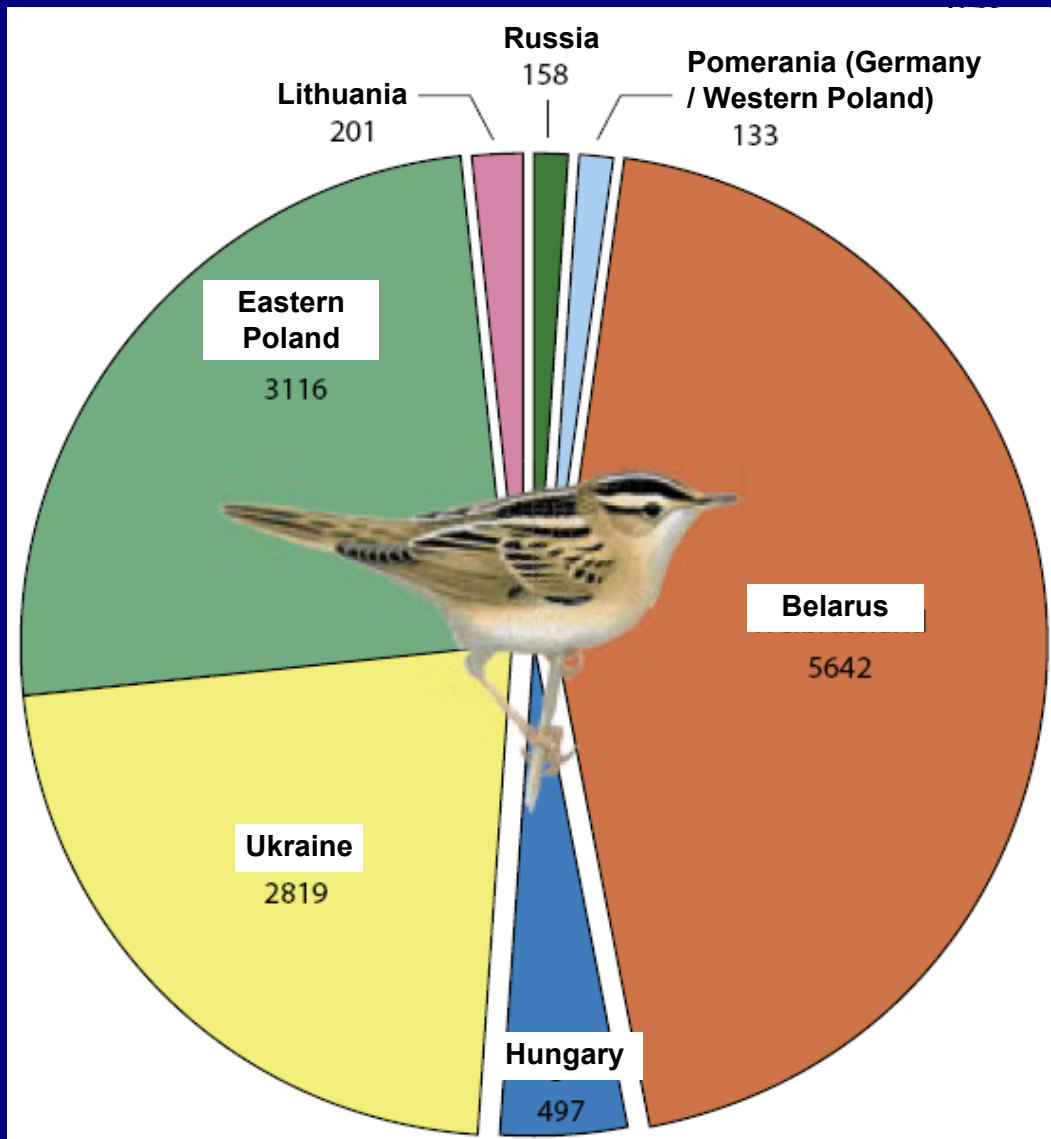
**Sandy/UK, 15 October 2009**



**Why this project?**



# Poland's responsibility for the species:



- 25% of all AW breed in Poland
- The Pomeranian population is threatened with immediate extinction

# Distribution and numbers at smaller sites are in decline:

Region	1997	2003	2007
Biebrza	2041-2082	2693-2726	2195-2225
Narew	161	65-82	65-82
Lublin marshes (Chelm, Polesie)	451-498	557-607	343-350
Pomerania (polish part)	247-254	70-79	69
Central Poland	2-3	1	2
<b>RAZEM</b>	<b>2883-2993</b>	<b>3386-3494</b>	<b>2672-2726</b>

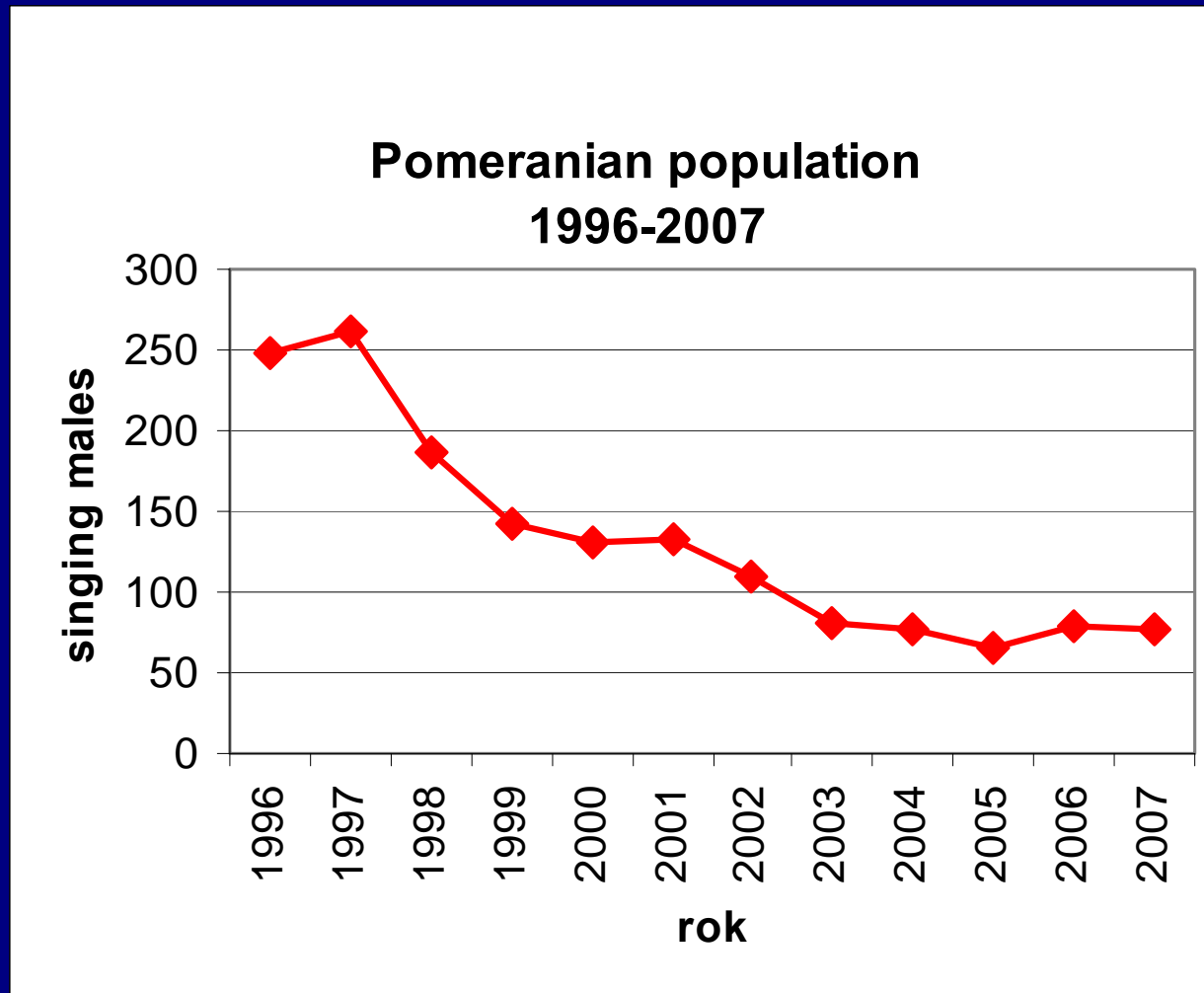


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# The Pomeranian population needs urgent help:



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# Poland and Germany have signed the AW MoU:

Convention on the Conservation of  
Migratory Species of Wild Animals  
(CMS)



## Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler



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The Aquatic Warbler has been a focus species for OTOP since many years:



OTOP created the Karsiborska Kępa Reserve in 1995



This Reserve is  
dedicated to the  
Protection of Birds

Tu chronimy  
ptaki

1995



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Conserving the Aquatic Warbler, you are protecting important sites and other species:



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**The AW population declined by 95%  
in the past century.**

**Why?**



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A tracked excavator is shown in the middle ground, positioned on a raised bank of dark brown peat soil. It has just finished digging a long, narrow drainage ditch that runs from the foreground towards the background. The ditch is filled with water. The surrounding landscape is a vast, flat peatland covered in green grass. In the far distance, a small village or farmstead is visible under a clear sky.

# Melioration of peatlands and intensification of land use



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# Industrial peat extraction



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**Now:  
Many sites destroyed or  
left with disturbed  
hydrology and increased  
mineralisation through  
water and air**



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An aerial photograph of a forest landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by dense, green coniferous trees, likely spruce or pine, which have grown in an area previously used for agriculture. The trees are of varying heights and densities, indicating a successional stage. In the background, a flat, open landscape stretches towards a distant horizon under a clear sky. The overall scene illustrates the process of natural succession following the abandonment of land use.

# Successional overgrowth due to abandonment of land use



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**Abandonment leads to:  
overgrowth with trees and  
bushes**



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**Abandonment leads to:  
overgrowth with reeds**



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**Abandonment leads to:  
accumulation of a thick  
litter layer**



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## Too intensive land use:

- early mowing
- additional drainage



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# Key project facts:



- **Duration: 2005-2010 (2011)**
- **9 project sites in 2 countries, covering 42,000 ha**
- **5 project partners in 3 countries (4 of them NGOs, 1 NP)**
- **Budget:**
  - 5.4 m € (75% EU grant, 25% partners and co-financers)
  - Co-financers: RSPB, Swarovski Optics, Cemex
- **Targeting breeding sites of 81% of the Polish-German AW population = 76% of EU population = c. 15% of world population**
- **Key project for the implementation of the CMS AW MoU in Poland**
- **Concise approach**



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## **Project goals:**

**Prevent the extinction of the  
Pomeranian population**

**Improve and increase habitat  
in Biebrza Valley**



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# The Aquatic Warbler LIFE Project is a project of:

The Polish Society for the Protection of Birds  
(OTOP - BirdLife Poland)



## Partners:



The Royal Society for  
the Protection of Birds  
(RSPB, BirdLife Partner in the UK)



Western Pomeranian  
Nature Society (ZTP)



Förderverein Naturschutz  
im Peenetal e.v. (FVP)



Polish Society for the  
Protection of Birds (PTOP)



Biebrza National  
Park (BPN)

## Main Sponsor:



The EU LIFE Nature Fund



## Additional Sponsors:



CEMEX Polska



Swarovski Optik



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## The LIFE Project sites:



### A. Project sites in Pomerania:

1. Karsiborska Kepa
2. Zajecze Legi
3. Wolin National Park
4. Rozwarowo mires
5. Krajnik
6. Lake Miedwie
7. Lower Peene Valley/Germany

### B. Project sites in the Biebrza Valley:

1. Biebrza National Park
2. Biebrza National Park Buffer Zone



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# Swina Delta

(Wolin NP, Karsiborska Kępa OTOP reserve, Zajęcze Łęgi)



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# Bagna Rozwarowskie



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**Krajnik  
near Gryfino at  
the lower Odra**



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# Lake Miedwie near Szczecin



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**Lower Peene Valley /  
Germany**



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# Biebrza National Park

**Legend:**

- Buildings
- Forests
- Water
- Roads
- BNP boundary
- Project site boundaries in BNP buffer zone
- Aquatic Warblers



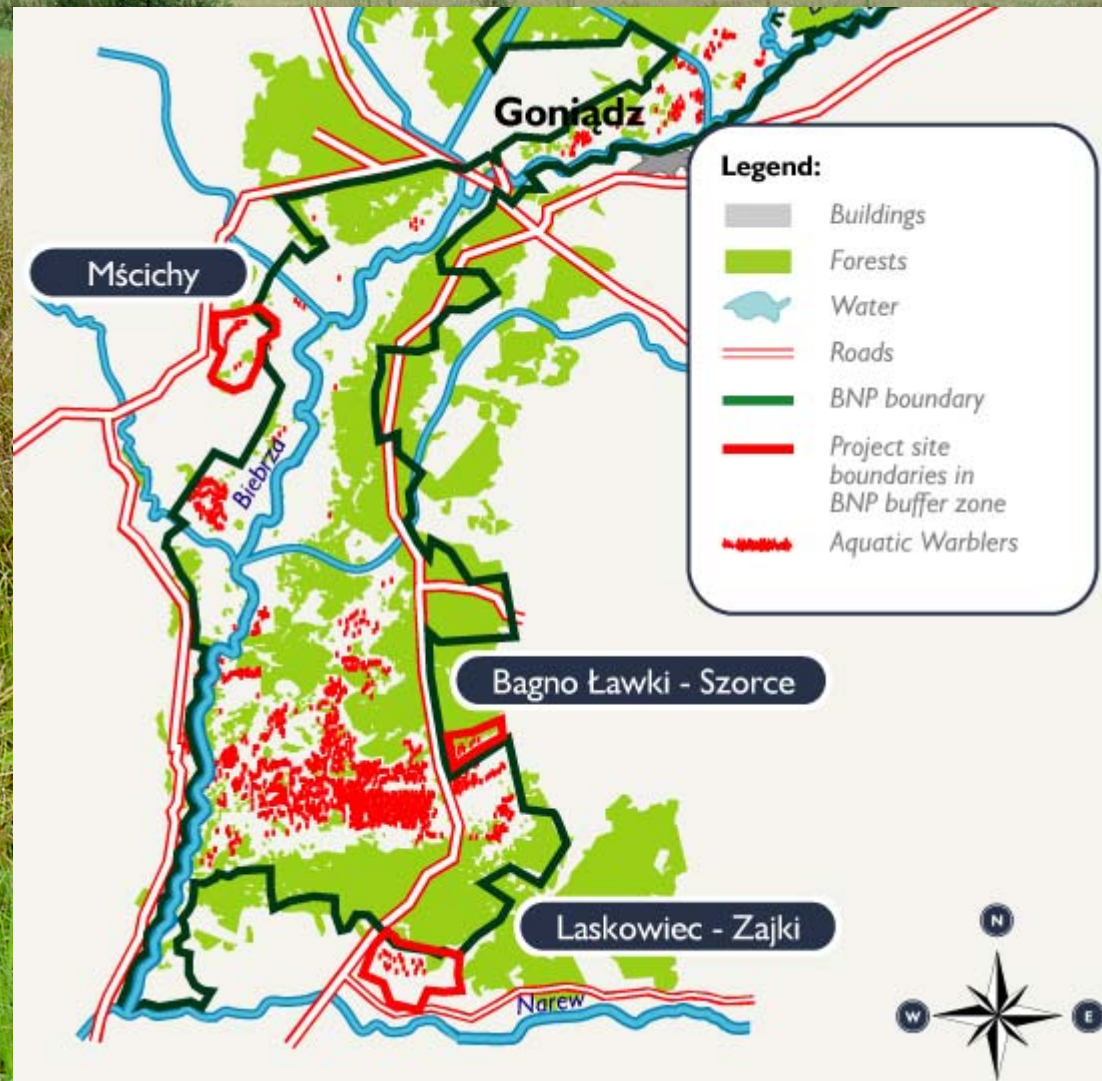
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# Biebrza NP Buffer Zone

Laskowiec-Zajki



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# Biebrza NP Buffer Zone

Mścichy



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# Biebrza NP Buffer Zone

Lawki-Szorce



Jak pomagamy wodniczce przetrwać  
“Conserving Aquatic Warbler” an EU LIFE Nature project  
in Poland and Germany  
cofinansowane przez Unię Europejską w ramach projektu LIFE  
UTOP BirdLife Poland





## Key project actions:

- **Management Planning and Action Plans**
- **Active management**
- **Education and networking**
- **Monitoring**
- **Development of sustainable long-term management solutions**



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**Preparation of management plans for all project sites (42.000 ha)**

# **National Species Action Plan for Poland**



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# Measures to improve hydrological conditions



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## Measures to improve hydrological conditions



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# Bush and tree removal (620 ha)



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## Mechanical mowing (2.100 ha)



Jak pomagamy wodniczce przetrwać  
“Conserving Aquatic Warbler” – an EU LIFE Nature project  
in Poland and Germany. Wynator projekt Utop BirdLife Poland





**Thanks to new machinery now > 3,000 ha regularly mown in the Biebrza NP**



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# Extensive grazing



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# Building of tourist infrastructure



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# Education events for local people and tourists



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# Promotion of AW conservation through media and networking



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A hand is shown holding a small, grey, cylindrical container, likely used for water sampling. The container is positioned over a larger, grey, circular sampling station that is partially submerged in water. The surrounding environment is a wetland with dense green reeds and some brown, dried reeds. The water is dark and still. The overall scene suggests a field monitoring activity in a natural habitat.

**Concise monitoring of the  
results of management  
actions:**

**Hydrology**



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# Vegetation



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## Food base / invertebrates



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## Additional studies:

- best habitat models
- Observation of colour-ringed birds in Pomerania



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wsł Klimaszewnica

Setting up new reserves by purchasing land where needed (up to 900 ha, 500 ha purchased to date)



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**Development of alternative sustainable long-term management solutions :**

**Alternative use of biomass**



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**Alternative use of biomass**



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## Alternative use of biomass



# Lobbying for the legalisation of controlled burning for management purposes



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# New agri-environmental programmes (starting from 2009)

## Amongst them a targeted packages for Aquatic Warblers and fen mire habitats

Poszukiwani mieszkańcy łąk i pastwisk

**Wodniczka**

Dopłata 1200–1370 zł  
za ha trwałego użytku zielonego zamieszkanego przez tego ptaka!

Oferta dla rolników

Utop



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# The LIFE Project ends in 2011. What comes after?

- LIFE+ Project „AW + biomass“ in Eastern Poland
- Sustained management with the support of AES
- Implement Management Plans
- Run and improve new reserves
- Restore potential sites in Pomerania



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# Planning for follow up projects



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**See you all again  
in May 2010  
for our final  
project conference  
in the Biebrza Marshes!**



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