

The LIFE Project:

OTOP has gathered a partnership of seven NGOs and National Parks from three countries to implement a concise five year project (until 2010) addressing the key conservation needs of the Aquatic Warbler at nine key sites in Poland and Germany. The largest part of the funding is contributed by the EU LIFE Nature Fund.

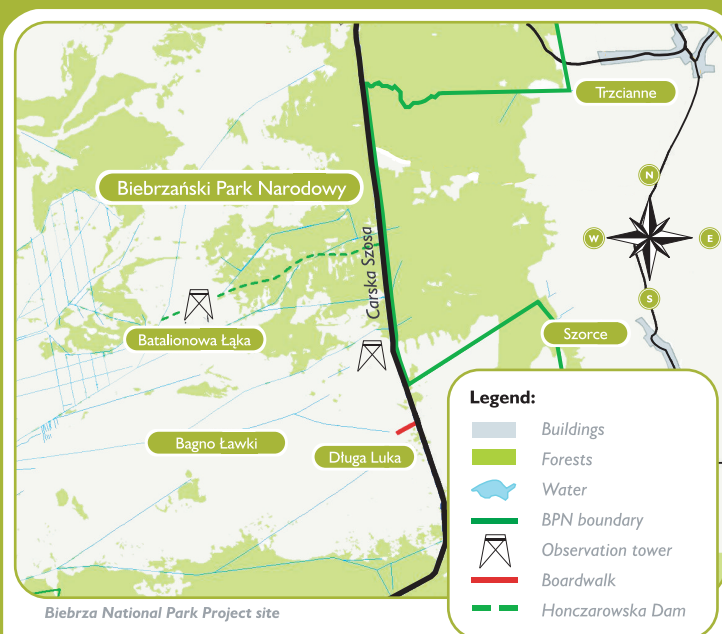
The LIFE Project aims to:

- prevent the extinction of the remnant Pomeranian Population
- to improve and increase suitable habitat in the EU stronghold of the species, the Biebrza Valley

Thereby, the project is targeting about 75% of all Aquatic Warblers breeding in the European Union.

To find out more about project, visit:

www.wodniczka.pl or www.seggenrohrsaenger.eu



Biebrza National Park Project site



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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)



North-Podlissian Society for the Protection of Birds (PTOP)

Main Sponsor:



The EU LIFE Nature Fund



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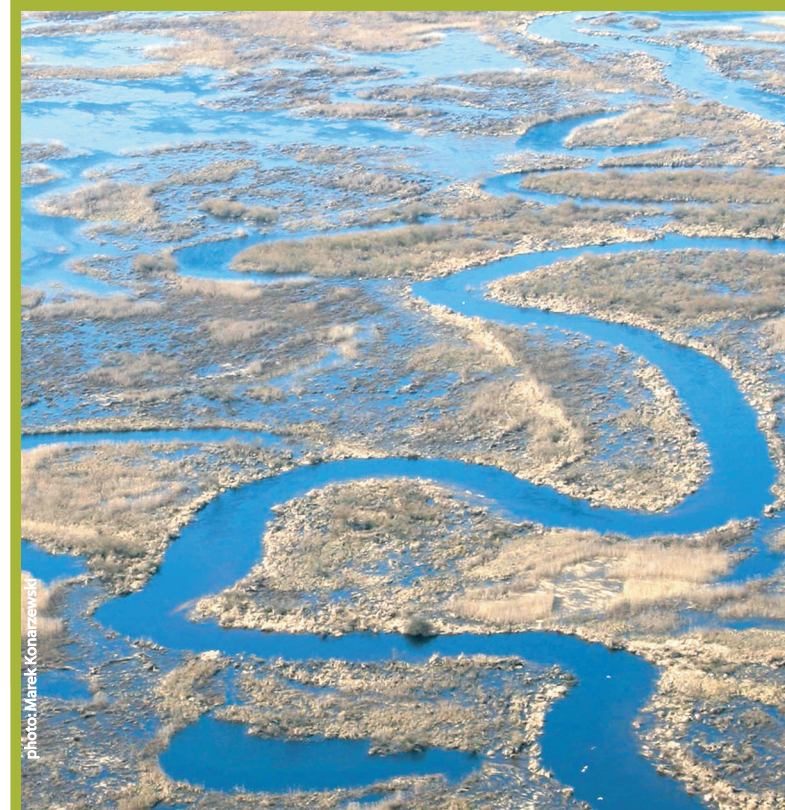


Swarovski Optik



Wykup gruntów w Biebrzańskim Parku Narodowym współfinansuje NFOŚiGW

Additional Sponsors:



photos: Piotr Dombrowski



Biebrza National Park

Project site of the EU LIFE Nature project

Conserving Aquatic Warblers
in Poland and Germany



Biebrza National Park LIFE Project site

The Aquatic Warbler LIFE Project covers the non-forest habitats of the Biebrza National Park (almost 37,000 ha). Together with its surroundings, the park is included in the EU's Natura 2000 network, as Special Protection Area "Biebrza Valley".

"Natura 2000 - Europe's wildlife for you." This place is a part of Europe's Natura 2000 network, which means, that this area is inhabited by the most endangered species of plants and animals in Europe. 27 EU countries created a joint network of Natura 2000, to protect the most valuable items of the continent's wildlife heritage."

photo: T.G. Klosowcy



Aquatic Warbler habitat

Conservation activities at this project site

Maintenance of such a big population of Aquatic Warbler in the Biebrza River Valley demands active conservation activities - bush and tree removal and regular mowing. The Aquatic Warbler LIFE Project is the biggest project to prevent the secondary succession of plants ever implemented in the Biebrza National Park. Part of the Aquatic Warbler breeding grounds belong to private owners, which makes it more difficult to implement the activities. This is why land purchase is also conducted in the project.

In order to monitor the effects and inform the conservation work of the project ongoing research is carried out, focusing on numbers, distribution and habitat preferences of the Aquatic Warbler.



photo: T.G. Klosowcy

Aquatic Warbler

Project site characteristics

The Biebrza National Park was established in 1993 and covers an area of 59,223 ha. It protects the largest and best conserved river valley fen mires in the European Union and boasts a unique diversity of ecosystems, plants, birds and other wildlife. Since 1995, the park is designated as a wetland of international significance under the Ramsar Convention. It is also recognized by BirdLife International as a globally important bird area. Apart from Aquatic Warbler, the Biebrza Valley is also especially valuable for Greater Spotted Eagle, Black Grouse, Great Snipe and several mammals like Elk and Wolf, and rare plant species like Lady's Slipper, Fen Orchid and Marsh Saxifrage.



photo: Marek Kohnarzewski

Great Snipe

Why did we choose this place?

The Biebrza National Park together with its buffer zone is the biggest breeding site of Aquatic Warblers in the European Union and the second biggest in the world. The local population of this species constitutes 90% of the Polish, 70% of the EU, and 17% of the global population. The best Aquatic Warbler habitat within the valley are the fen mires and moss bogs in the Bagno Ławki area of the southern Biebrza basin. The species breeds here in very high densities. Unfortunately, the optimal breeding grounds are threatened by overgrowth with reeds, bushes and trees. The most important aim of the project is therefore to improve and restore these deteriorating open habitats. This will have a profound effect on the world population of this small bird, but will at the same time support many other valuable species of animals and plants.



photo: Piotr Marczakiewicz

Bush removal

Where to observe Aquatic Warbler?

The Biebrza National Park offers the world's most accessible and spectacular place to observe Aquatic Warblers: a boardwalk stretching 400 m from the main north south road through the park (Tsar road) into the mires of Bagno Ławki.

The best time to watch Aquatic Warblers is May-July in the hours before sunset, when the males are most actively singing from an exposed place.

Another place, also in Bagno Ławki, where Aquatic Warblers can be easily seen is Batalionowa Łąka, but this requires a 3 km walk along the green tourist route of Grobla Honczarowska.