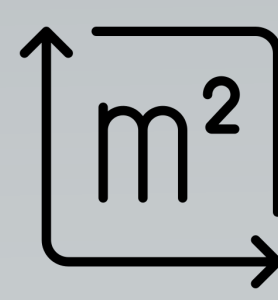


# Almany Mires



Location:  
Polesia, Belarus



Area:  
103,935.0 ha



National protection  
status:  
National Nature  
Reserve



International  
protection status:  
Ramsar site (1091) –  
Olmany Mires Zakaznik  
(94,219 ha);  
IBA (BY018) –  
Al'manskija baloty  
(96,628 ha);  
Emerald Network\*  
(BY000012) –  
Olmanskiye bolota  
(93,135 ha).

\* After denunciation of accession to the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, de jure there are no Emerald Network sites in Belarus.



## General information

The Almany Mires Nature Reserve is a vast area of swampland located between three right tributaries of the Pripyat River – the Gryn, the Scviga and the Lva. It is Europe's largest cross-border wetland of its kind, and it has remained in a natural state, with very little interference from people.

About 90% of the reserve is untouched or only slightly changed. Half of the area is covered by forests (many of which grow on bogs), 40% is open peat bogs, and 5% is rivers and lakes.

The area features two large open transitional and lowland wetland complexes, Galo and Krasnaje, as well as other bogs. The forests are mostly pine and birch, with over half of which grow in bogs. There are also significant areas of oak forests along the Scviga River.

Because it's so big and hard to get to, the Almany Mires acts as a perfect natural refuge for plants and animals that are threatened elsewhere in their natural environment. Nature takes care of itself here, without the need for expensive conservation measures.

## Biodiversity and natural values

The area represents a unique forest and mire complex with an exceptional richness of wetland and forest habitats. About 20 habitats requiring specific protection under the Resolution No. 4 of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention have been identified here, and the area is particularly important for their conservation in Belarus.

The following natural habitats have been identified here: Inland sand dunes (2330), Permanently dystrophic lakes, ponds and pools (3160), Free-floating vegetation of eutrophic waters (3150), Transitional mires and quaking bogs (7140), Beds of large sedges usually without free-flowing water, Riverine willow forests (91E0), Riverine ash-alder forests, wet at high water but not at low water (91E0), Mixed oak, elm and ash woods of large rivers (91F0), Oak, ash and hornbeam woods on eutrophic and mesotrophic soils (9170), Sphagnum birch woods (91D0), Nemoral and boreal coniferous woods (91D0), Raised bog complexes (7110), etc.

There are a few species of mammals rare in Belarus recorded here, such as the Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) and the Badger (*Meles meles*). The more common mammal species are the Beaver (*Castor fiber*), the Otter (*Lutra lutra*), the Moose (*Alces alces*) and the Wolf (*Canis lupus*). The Almany peat bog is one of the last habitats of the European mink (*Mustela lutreola*).

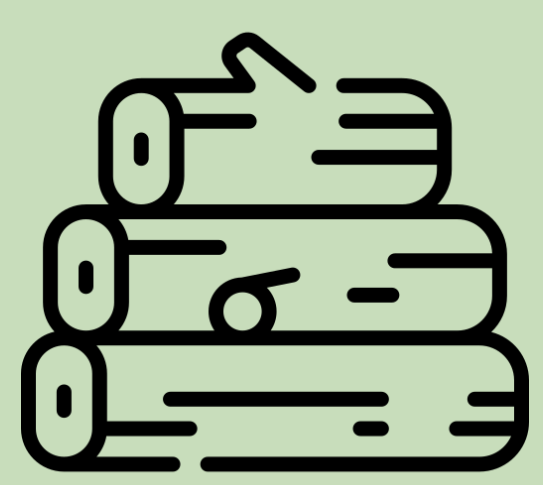


# Almany Mires

The reserve's avifauna includes more than 20 species under national protection and more than 40 under international protection. The largest European population of the Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*) nests here, as well as the largest Belarusian populations of the Short-toed Eagle (*Circus gallicus*) and the Crane (*Grus grus*), the Great Grey Owl (*Strix nebulosa*), the Greenshank (*Tringanebularia*), the Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*), the White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*), the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) and a number of other species.

More than 80 species requiring specific protection under the Bern Convention and included in the Red Data Book of Belarus have been recorded here.

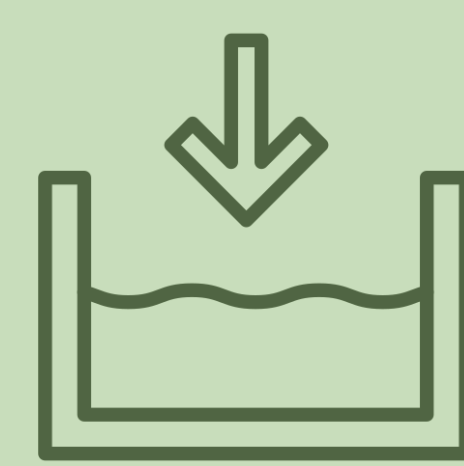
## The most important impacts and threats



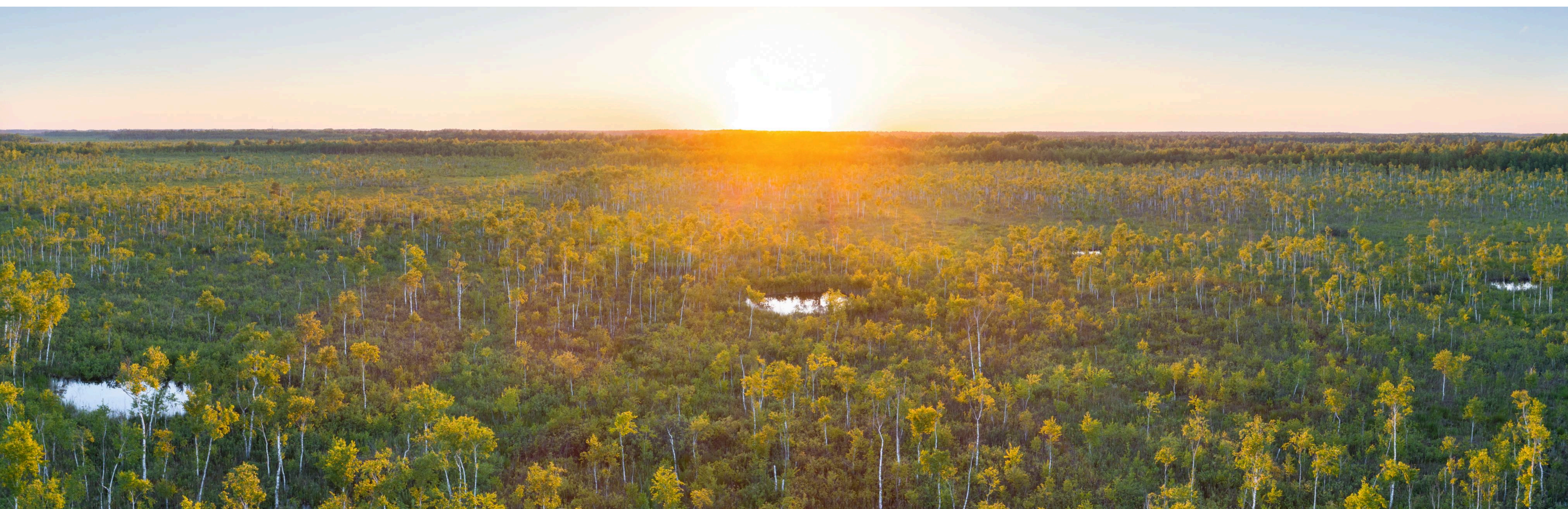
Logging



Dead wood removal



Old drainage systems



## Conservation measures

The area is protected as a landscape reserve of national importance, where drainage, construction, logging and some other activities are restricted. Some of protected species' habitats are under protection of land users. A management plan has been developed for the area.

In order to improve the protection of this valuable area, it is necessary to compile a detailed inventory of the conservation values (species habitats and biotopes) and to ensure their protection by establishing special protection zones/plots. The zoning of the reserve is appropriate, with demarcation of the strict protection zones and total prohibition of all economic activities in them. In addition, artificial afforestation/reforestation and infrastructure construction should be restricted.