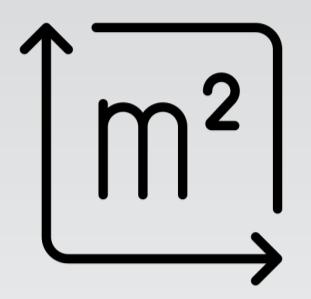


Lva Floodplain



Location:
Polesia, Belarus



Area:
2,400 ha



National protection status:
Local Nature Reserve



International protection status:
Emerald Network*
(BY0000049) – Lva
Floodplain (17,710.4 ha);
IBA (BY030) – L'va
floodplain (16,854 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 protected area encompasses an extensive tract of deciduous forest situated within the floodplain of the Lva River, positioned between the Garyn River valley and the Almany Mires. This landscape is characterized primarily by waterlogged deciduous forests, interspersed with sedge meadows, mixed herbaceous and cereal meadows, and swamp habitats along the river course.

The Lva River itself is a dynamic system, with a meandering channel measuring between 10 and 25 meters in width. Its flow is occasionally impeded by natural damming and dense vegetation, forming multiple tributaries that contribute to the site's wetland diversity.

Historical land-use changes during the 1970s and 1980s, including extensive drainage of adjacent swamplands and the construction of a reclamation system in the central area, have significantly altered the site's hydrology. These interventions have had measurable impacts on wetland function and forest health.

Biodiversity and natural values

About 20 endangered habitats requiring specific protection under the Bern Convention (Resolution No 4 of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention) have been identified here. These are the following natural habitats: Floating water-soldier rafts (3150), Floating bladderwort colonies (3150), Floating *Salvinia natans* mats (3150), Free-floating vegetation of eutrophic waterbodies (3150), Rooted submerged vegetation of eutrophic waterbodies (3150), Transition mires and quaking bogs (7140), Beds of large sedges normally without free-standing water (7210), Riverine willow woodland (91E0), Riverine ash - alder woodland, wet at high but not at low water (91E0), Sphagnum birch woods (91D0), Oak - ash - hornbeam woodland on eutrophic and mesotrophic soils (9170) etc.

The site is an important habitat for a globally endangered species – the Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*) (more than 2% of the national population); about 1% of the national population of the Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*) and the Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) have also been observed breeding there. Breeding sites of the Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), and the White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) are registered here. Several breeding seasons of the Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*), the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), the White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*), and the Azure Tit (*Parus cyanus*) were recorded. Six plant species protected in Belarus have been identified there. As many as 588 species of vascular plants have been identified in the area.

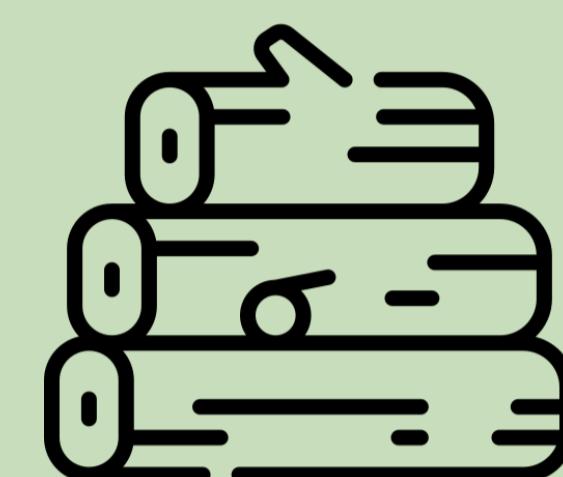
Lva Floodplain

The most important impacts and threats

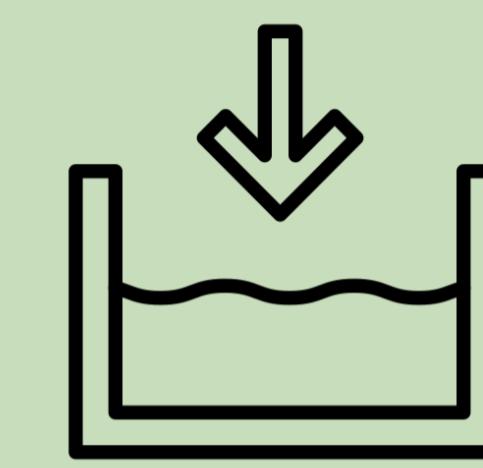
The forest habitats and species are threatened by clearcut logging, sanitation felling, deadwood withdrawal, and forest plantation. The main threats to the meadow ecosystems are overgrowing with shrubs due to abandoning of hay-making and grazing, as well as ploughing of the area. Polder systems in the outskirts as well as existing drainage systems and ditches impact negatively the wetland ecosystems.



**Meadows
overgrowing with
scrubs**



**Dead wood removal,
sanitation felling**



Old drainage systems

Conservation measures

Part of this area has been protected as a nature reserve of local importance, where economic activities are restricted. Part of the habitats of protected species and valuable biotopes are under the protection of land users. In order to improve the condition of the area, it is necessary to make a detailed inventory of the conservation values (species habitat and natural complexes) and to ensure their protection by creating special protection zones/plots. Systematic monitoring of conservation values and a management or conservation plan development are also desirable.

