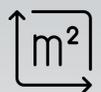


Mid-Pripyat Nature Reserve



Location:

Polesia, Belarus



Area:

93,062.15 ha



National protection
status:

National Nature Reserve



International
protection status:

International protected status: Emerald Network* (BY0000005) – Srednyaya Pripyat (95,488.1 ha); Ramsar Site (BY1090) – Mid-Pripyat National Landscape Zakaznik (93,062 ha); IBA (BY017) – Mid Prypiac` (98,674 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

This is a fragment of the Pripyat River valley in its middle course, winding for about 120 kilometers between the mouths of the Jasielida and Scviga rivers. It is one of Europe's most expansive and untouched floodplains, a rare natural sanctuary.

Each spring, the river spills over its banks in a flood that can last for months. During this time, the water stretches across the landscape, transforming the floodplain into a vast wetland that can be from one to five kilometers wide.

The land here is mostly flat, though occasionally ruffled, and the river itself snakes across it in a series of curves.

Forests cover about a third of the area, while a rich tapestry of grasslands – from waterlogged meadows to drier upland fields – covers another 30%. Open wetlands, dotted with precious and well-preserved lowland fens, make up about a fifth of the reserve; some of these have been managed as hayfields or pastures.

The numerous and inaccessible overgrown oxbow lakes and floodplain lakes, which occupy about 3% of the area, support an incredible variety of plant and animal life, making this landscape uniquely diverse and alive.

Biodiversity and natural values

The territory is a unique river valley with an exceptional richness of meadow, forest and wetland habitats. More than 30 endangered habitats requiring specific protection under the Bern Convention (Resolution No 4 of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention) have been identified here, more than a half of this territory is particularly important for their conservation in Belarus. These natural habitats are Floating frogbit rafts (3150), Floating colonies of bladderwort (3150), Floating mats of *Salvinia natans* (3150), Free-floating vegetation of eutrophic waters (3150), Eutrophic vegetation of slow-flowing rivers (3260), Species-poor beds of low-growing water-fringed or amphibious vegetation (3130), Sparsely vegetated river gravel banks, Euro-Siberian dwarf annual amphibian meadows (3270), Beds of large sedges usually without standing water (7210), Moist or wet eutrophic and mesotrophic grasslands (6440), Riverine willow woods (91E0), Mixed oak-elm-ash woods of large rivers (91F0), Oak-ash-hornbeam woods on eutrophic and mesotrophic soils (9170), and others. The vegetation cover supports at least 725 plant species; wildlife includes more than 1,000 species of insects, 50 species of fish, 6 - reptiles, 12 - amphibians, and 248 species of birds, including 190 nesting species, as well as at least 55 species of mammals.

Mid-Pripyat Nature Reserve

The territory is of great importance for a number of species. The flora and fauna of the area include about 90 protected species of plants and animals. Over 100 species are included into the Resolution No 6 of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention. 17 protected species of insects are registered in the Nature Reserve, including the Stag Beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), the Boros Schneideri, the Great Capricorn Beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*), the False Ringlet (*Coenonympha oedippus*), the Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*), the Scarce Large Blue (*Maculinea teleius*), the Water Beetle (*Graphoderus bilineatus*), the Dark Crimson Underwing (*Catocala sponsa*) and other species.

The territory is the most important habitat of a number of fish species: the White-finned Gudgeon (*Gobio albipinnatus*), the Asp (*Aspius aspius*), the Ukrainian brook lamprey (*Eudontomyzon mariae*), as well as of reptiles and amphibians: the European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), the Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*), the Natterjack (*Bufo calamita*), the Fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*).

The Pripyat floodplain is of high international importance for a number of wetland bird species occurring during spring migration; the estimated number of spring migrants is more than 100,000 individuals. More than 1% of Belarusian populations of 27 bird species nest here. Among them are the Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), the Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*), the Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*), the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), the Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), the Crane (*Grus grus*), the Corncrake (*Crex crex*), the Little Crake (*Porzana parva*), the Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*), the Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), the Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*), the Black Tern (*Chlidonia sniger*), the White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*), the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*), the Azure Tit (*Parus cyanus*), and others.

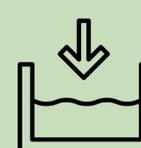
The most important impacts and threats



Illegal hunting



Dead wood removal,
sanitation felling



Old drainage systems

Conservation measures

About 72% of the area is protected within the National Wetland Reserve, where drainage, construction, logging and some other activities are restricted. Special protected areas have been established for some natural habitats and species. Existing conservation measures cover approximately 75% of the area.