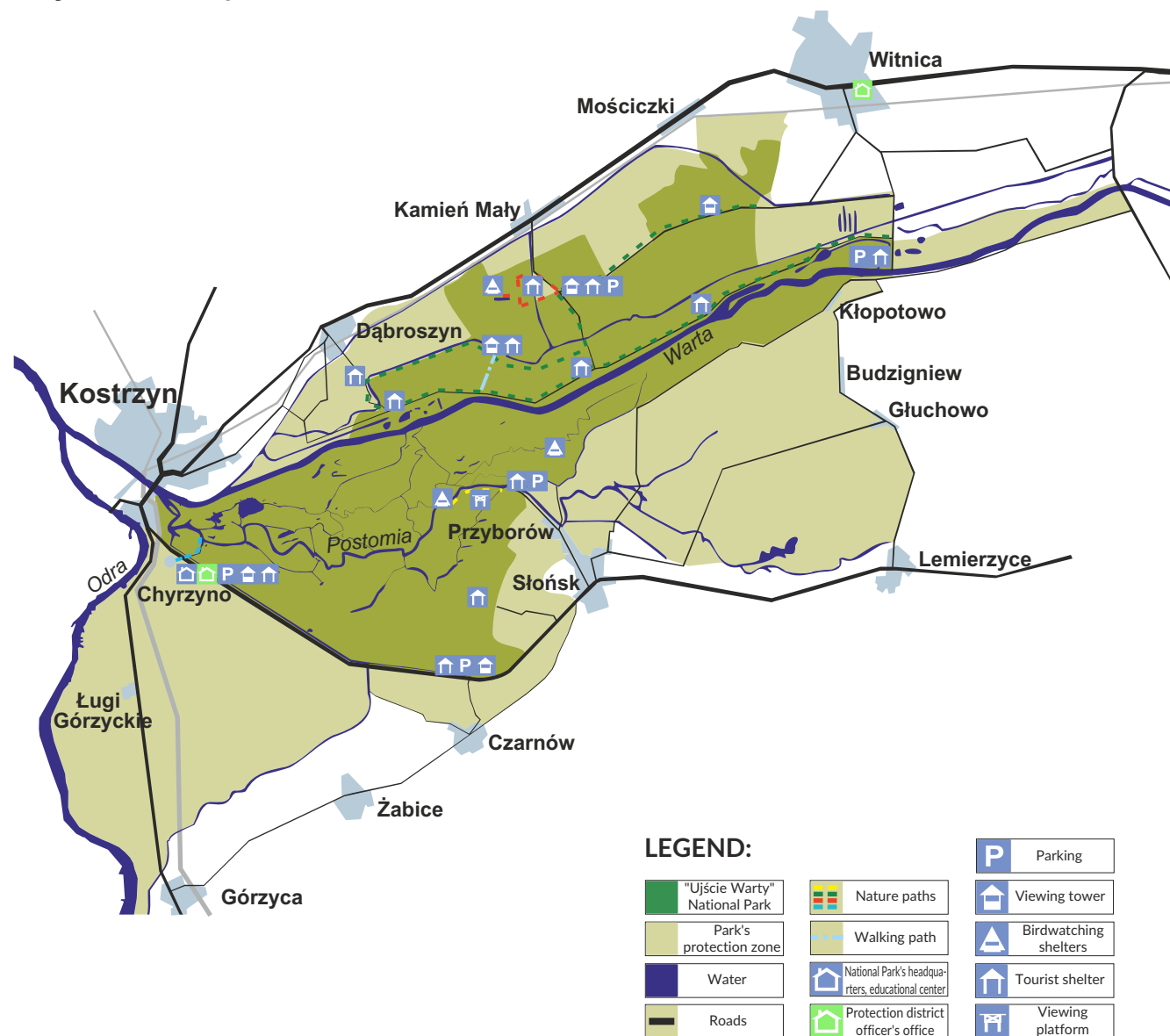


"Ujście Warty" National Park



Address:
 "Ujście Warty" National Park
 Chyrzyno 1
 69-113 Górzycza

Contact:
 tel.: +48 95 7524027
 fax: +48 95 7524016
 sekretariat@pnujsciewarty.gov.pl

www.pnujsciewarty.gov.pl
www.facebook.com/PNUjścieWarty/

Text: Magda Mądrawska-Okotów, Dorota Wypychowska
 Map: Magda Mądrawska-Okotów
 Translation: Anna Marciniak
 Publisher: "Ujście Warty" National Park, Chyrzyno 2018



Let the wetlands buzz with life!



"Ujście Warty" National Park Nature directory



Bean goose fot. P. Szymoński

Let the wetlands buzz with life!

"Above the forest, a flock of wild geese,
weary from flight, honking leads the way.
Beyond them, cranes whose wailing would not cease."

A. Mickiewicz. *Pan Tadeusz. Księga XI* (translation by Leonard Kress)

By the north-west border of Lubuskie Voivodship, where Warta River ends its flow and melts into the waters of Odra, lies a real birds' kingdom. There aren't many places in Poland where appear such abundant variety of bird species. So it isn't surprising, that since many years the flood lands of Warta had been under protection, first as "Słońsk" protected area, having international significance, protected under Ramsar convention, after the area was extended forming Landscape Park "Ujście Warty". From 1st July 2001 this terrain was finally taken under the highest protection category and on around 8 hectares National Park "Ujście Warty" has been created.

The Park is located within the Toruń-Eberswalde proglacial stream valley. Its landscape includes mainly open meadow and pasture habitats, cut across by a dense net of ditches, old river beds and willow shrubs. Warta River flows in the middle of the Park, dividing it into north part called

Protection District Polder Północny and south part located on the flood lands, the Protection District Słońsk and Protection District Chyrzyno. Annual water level fluctuations may reach up to 4 meters, so the landscape and habitat conditions change here frequently. On the other hand the Polder Północny is separated from Warta by an embankment, therefore the hydrological conditions are here rather stable.

Vegetation cover

In the past the area of National Park "Ujście Warty" was primarily covered with carr forests. These were mainly dominated by willow-poplar and ashe-alder carr. The 18th century melioration works, deforestation and long pasture economy formed wide-open ecosystems. To the primeval character of plant world refer only willow shrubs and remnants of the

carr forest - single impressive willows, poplars and elms. Presently existing pant communities are typical for big lowland rivers. Approximately 60 plant communities and about 500 vascular plants species have been recorded so far. Here grow plants like: floating watermoss, adder's-tongue, white water-lily, garden angelica. You can see here also rare in Poland and endangered or extincting species as: wild pea, fen ragwort, smallflowered bittercress, fries' pondweed, *Cindium dubium* or common in this area penell's speedwell.

The biggest area of the Park is covered with rush communities with dominating reed canarygrass, reed mannagrass, slender tufted-sedge, great yellow cress. Equally common are tall-herb and pastures communities with meadow foxtail, spiked loosestrife, marsh- marigold. In the canals and shallow old riverbeds appear water plans communities of simple structure, formed by small floating plants: common duckweed, gibbous duckweed, greater duckweed. In deeper stagnant reservoirs develop groups of water-lilies.

The world of animals

National Park "Ujście Warty" is one of the most precious ornithological areas in our country. Unique marshes, broad meadows and pastures are one of the most significant water birds habitats in Poland. The record of bird species has almost 280 species including 170 breeding species. In this terrain nest: 4 grebe species, 8 duck species, 5-6 rail species, 4-5 species of seagulls and terns, 6 species of plovers. For numerous birds it's one of the most crucial breeding areas in Poland. These species

are: shelduck, gadwall, oystercatcher, black-necked grebe, graylag goose and white heron. Many birds are considered rare or endangered by extinction in Europe: aquatic warbler, corn crane, spotted crane, black tern, whiskered tern. The area of the Park is also important for birds outside the breeding season. During summer months ducks (mallard, Eurasian teal), graylag geese, mute swans, Eurasian coots and cranes molt here. Big amounts of birds stop in this area while migration season. In autumn the Park becomes a kingdom of arctic geese (bean and white-fronted geese) which may concentrate into flocks having around 100.000 individuals (the biggest record is 200.000 individuals). The bean goose dominates among them, so it became the symbol of the Park. The National Park "Ujście Warty" is also an important wintering site for whooper swans (even 3000 individuals) and mute swans, white-tailed eagles, rough-legged buzzards, ducks and geese.

Among other animal families appear 43 mammal species like: otters, ermine, badger, beaver, wild boar, deers or species from other places in the world: American mink, raccoon, raccoon dog and muskrat. Amphibians are represented by 2 species of tods, 5 species of frogs, European fire-bellied toad, garlic toad, smooth newt, northern crested newt. From reptiles appear here only: grass snake, sand lizard, viviparous lizard and slowworms.

Waters of the Park are rich in fish, 35 species have been recorded. Very common are fish from carp family, like: bream, white bream, roach, common rudd, Prussian carp. Numerous are also fish fro predatory families: northern pike, european perch, zander and the biggest Polish fish - wels catfish. Very special species are: amur bitterling, european weatherfish, balkan loach, asp. In the waters of Warta migrate salmon and sea trouts swimming to their spawning area in the Drawa River water-basin.



Eurasian bittern fot. A. Tabor
Photos bought thanks to project LIFE09/NAT/PL/000257 Bagna są dobre!-Stage 2.

History

Watching the richness of birdlife, people marvel at the ruggedness and mysteriousness of Warta wetlands. However, to a great extent the local landscape was formed by humans.

Nearly three centuries ago Warta flew simultaneously in many river beds, that covered a few kilometers broad bottom of Toruń-Eberswalde proglacial stream valley. The valley was marshy and covered with carr forest, in which lived even big predators like bears and wolverines. In the 18th century, during the rule of Frederick the Great, began big regulation and melioration works. The waters of Warta were directed into newly dug canals, many old river beds were cut off by dykes, forests were cleared, embankments were build and the valley was meliorated. The area, snatched from the influence of water, was intended for settlements and agriculture. This way unique, open birds breeding areas were formed.

Threats

One of the Park's key problems are unfavorable habitat changes, like overgrowing of meadows and pastures through secondary succession. As a result open habitats being a living place for many endangered bird species shrink. To prevent this process, since many years the Park is mowing meadows and allows cattle and horse glazing.

Other crucial problem is existence of invasive plant species (in some places numerous) like cocklebur or small balsam there are also invasive mammals from North America like: American mink and raccoon. Its food are birds, their nestlings and eggs. These invasive species don't have natural enemies, so their big pressure put on the environment is a worrying phenomenon.

Nature 2000

It's a system of protected areas, that aims to protect and preserve of the most important and most representative ecosystems in Europe, together with its characteristic plants and animals species. The Nature 2000 net includes areas of special bird protection and areas of special habitat protection. "Ujście Warty" is one of sites designated in the net Nature 2000 (PLC 080001). It has a status of "bird" and "habitat" area.

Tourist information

The Park has 60 km of roads available for tourists. As the terrain is quite specific, it's a floodplain, only part of them are PTTK trails (Polish Tourism and Sightseeing Society) - around 20 km. We recommend our visitors to use marked nature paths:

- "On the Bird's Trail" ("Ptasim szlakiem")- 2 km long, leading across attractive birds' breeding areas, so the best time to come is spring.
- "By two wheels across the Northern Polder" ("Na dwóch kółkach przez Polder Północny") - it's a 30 km long nature and historic bike trail. It goes across vast meadows of Northern Polder and its considerable section leads along Warta.
- "Wetlands" ("Mokradła") - 1 km path located close to Park's headquarters. It shows different roles of wetlands.
- "Alder swamp" ("Olszynki")- a 3 km path situated on the Northern Polder. Visitors can walk on a wooden footbridge going through a forest (alder blackcurrant swamp), communities of herbs, wet meadows.
- "Peat bog" ("Torfianka")- 1 km long path leading on a wooden footbridge along a peat bog and phalaris reed beds
- "Natural Garden of Senses" ("Przyrodniczy Ogród Zmysłów")- it's a educative garden designed in a form of interactive plays, located near the Park's headquarters