



# Workshop for all Beings, Podlaskie Branch

is a non-governmental organization active in the north-eastern part of Poland. Our mission is to preserve and protect the wildlife areas. In the recent years our activity has been focusing on a campaign for the protection of Białowieża Forest.

## Areas of our activity:

- ▶ researches on the relict species in Białowieża Forest. Collected data is being used as an argument to protect the whole Białowieża Forest;
- ▶ participation in the legal proceedings;
- ▶ 'watch dog' activity – monitoring of the part of Białowieża Forest managed by the State Forests National Forest Holding, revealing the improprieties which provides Ministry of the Environment and other institutions with powerful arguments for a better protection of Białowieża Forest.

## Our achievements:

- ▶ putting pressure on Ministry of the Environment to enlarge Białowieża National Park from 9 up to 16% of the forest area in 1996;
- ▶ withholding of the logging in the natural reserves in Białowieża Forest in 2008;
- ▶ revealing hundreds of sites of the relict species (woodpeckers, coleopterans, lichens) in the part of Białowieża Forest managed by the State Forests National Forest Holding in 2008, 2009;
- ▶ providing information about the bad conditions in the part of Białowieża Forest remaining under control of the State Forests National Forest Holding to Minister of the Environment which has induced him to make the attempt to enlarge Białowieża National Park in 2009.

**B**iałowieża Forest is the last large remaining fragment of the primeval deciduous forest in the northern temperature zone in Europe. A relict of vast forests that once covered the European lowlands, it is home to many species that are rare or extinct elsewhere, including large carnivores wolves and lynxes (*Canis lupus*, *Lynx lynx*), woodpeckers specializing in feeding on insects living in dead wood – three toed woodpecker, white backed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*, *Dendrocopos leucotos*), coleopterans, lichens and fungi. Most of them are relict species, organisms dependent on dead wood or large trees.

Białowieża Forest is of a fundamental importance for biological science because it is the only place one can still observe ecological and evolutionary processes once typical of the biome of deciduous and mixed-deciduous European forests.



1 Fot. Janusz Korbel  
2, 3 Fot. Adam Bohdan

Unfortunately only 17% of the forest is protected as a National Park. The rest of the forest is seriously threatened by continuous logging in the stands where the trees replant naturally held with the full approval of the authorities. If this process is not stopped, the majority of the primeval old-growth stands and its biodiversity will soon be gone. Scientists warn that National Park is too small to preserve populations of the endangered species.

**Therefore, according to the demand of the public opinion, logging in the natural stands must be stopped immediately. The best form of protection of the whole Białowieża Forest is to enlarge Białowieża National Park.**



4 Remains of the 300 hundred years old oaks. Fot. Adam Bohdan

6 300 hundred years old oaks. Fot. Marta Popławska

5 Spruces in natural reserve. Fot. Adam Bohdan

7 Białowieża Forest out of National Park. Fot. Adam Bohdan

## Project “Partnership in protection of the relict species in Białowieża Forest as a tool of the Bird and Habitat Directive implementation”

The present knowledge about biodiversity of Białowieża Forest has been limited mainly to the wildest and therefore the most attractive area – Białowieża National Park. However, many of the endangered species also live in the managed part of the forest and knowledge about its distribution is insufficient. Thus, the appropriate protection of the endangered species out of the National Park is impossible. This situation induced us to start a project ‘Partnership in protection of the relict species in Białowieża Forest as a tool of the Bird and Habitat Directive implementation’.

Project assumes researches on the species protected by EU Directives, which have been given high priority of protection in Białowieża

Forest. Works are being conducted in the managed part of the forest where intensive logging is being continued, which is the main threat for the biodiversity. The object of surveys are red book species classified as a relicts of primeval forest: woodpeckers (three toed and white-backed woodpeckers), coleopterans and butterflies. Moreover, many new sites of relict lichens are being discovered. All these organisms (except for butterflies) need large amounts of dead wood in their life cycle. Therefore, Białowieża Forest is the main, and for many species, the last site where they have survived. The collected data about the distribution of protected species will be used for preparation of the Natura 2000 protection plan.



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8 *Usnea florida*. Fot. Marta Popławska

9 Tree toed woodpecker. Fot. Tomasz Tumił

10 *Cucujus cinnaberinus*. Fot. Adam Bohdan

CONTACT

### Workshop for all Beings, Podlaskie Branch

Stowarzyszenie Pracownia na rzecz Wszystkich Istot, Oddział Podlaski

15-082 Białystok, ul. Świętojańska 22 lok. 1 · tel. 509 197 718 · email: podlasie@pracownia.org.pl

[www.pracownia.org.pl/puszcza-bialowieska-wprowadzenie](http://www.pracownia.org.pl/puszcza-bialowieska-wprowadzenie)

Bank account: Invest Bank S.A., Oddział w Białymstoku, 94 1680 1248 0000 3000 0968 1679



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