

## The LIFE Project:

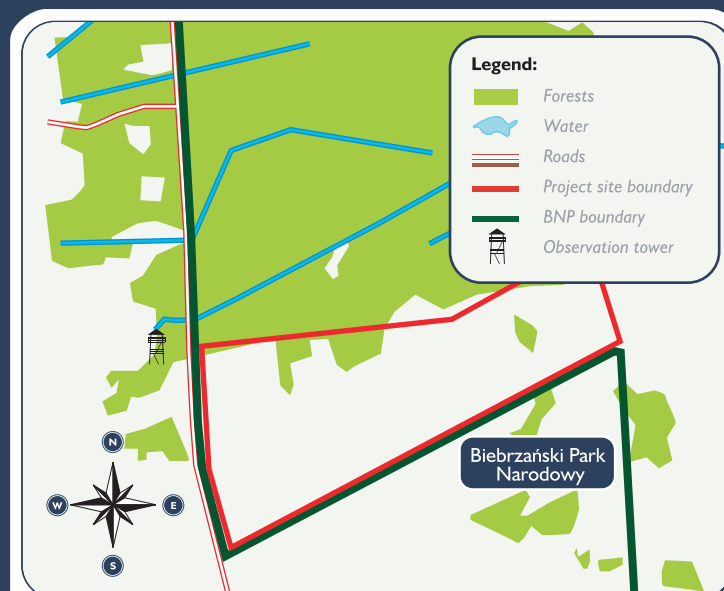
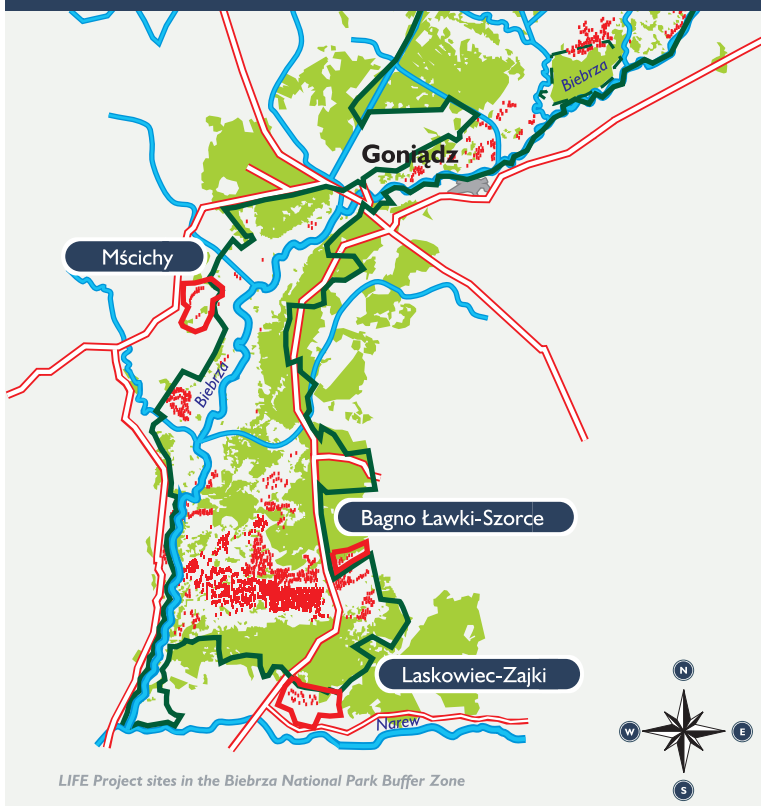
OTOP has gathered a partnership of seven NGOs and National Parks from three countries to implement a concise five year project (until 2010) addressing the key conservation needs of the Aquatic Warbler at nine key sites in Poland and Germany. The largest part of the funding is contributed by the EU LIFE Nature Fund.

### The LIFE Project aims to:

- prevent the extinction of the remnant Pomeranian Population
- to improve and increase suitable habitat in the EU stronghold of the species, the Biebrza Valley

Thereby, the project is targeting about 75% of all Aquatic Warblers breeding in the European Union. To find out more about project, visit:

[www.wodniczka.pl](http://www.wodniczka.pl) or [www.seggenrohrsanger.eu](http://www.seggenrohrsanger.eu)



Bagnó Ławki-Szorce Project site



Project office:

**OTOP-BirdLife Poland**

ul. Odrowąża 24,  
05-270 Marki, Poland  
tel. (48) 22 761 82 05  
fax. (48) 22 761 90 51  
[www.otop.org.pl](http://www.otop.org.pl)



### Partners:



The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, BirdLife Partner in the UK)



Western Pomeranian Nature Society (ZTP)



Förderverein Naturchutz im Peenetal e.v. (FVP)



North-Podlissian Society for the Protection of Birds (PTOP)



Biebrza National Park (BNP)

### Main Sponsor:



The EU LIFE Nature Fund



### Additional Sponsors:



CEMEX Polska



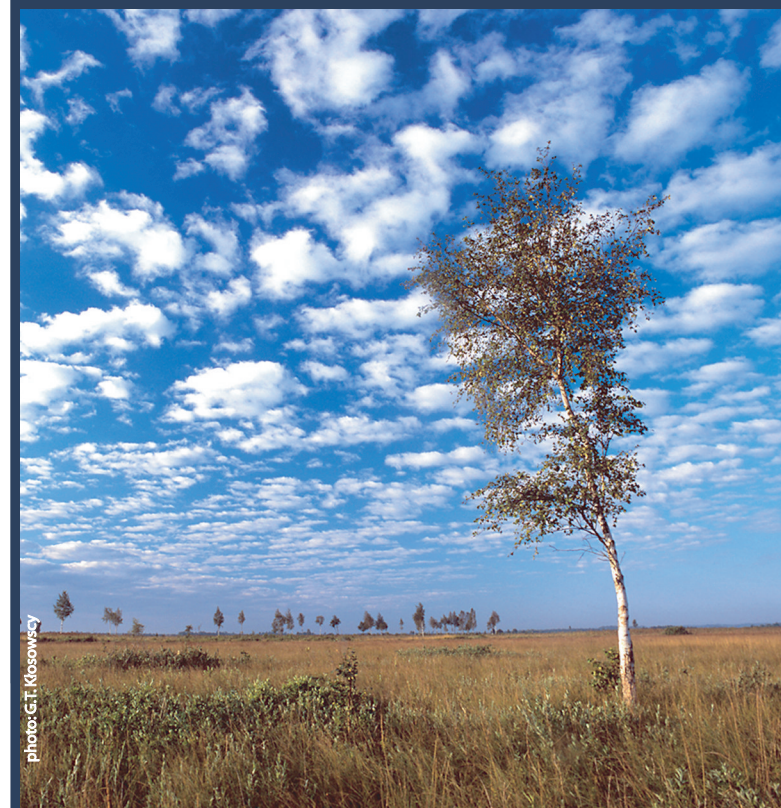
Swarovski Optik



# Bagnó Ławki Szorce

Project site of the EU LIFE Nature project

Conserving Aquatic Warblers  
in Poland and Germany



## LIFE Project sites in Biebrza National Park Buffer Zone

The LIFE Project includes three areas in the buffer zone of the Biebrza National Park with a combined area of c. 1,060 ha. These are: Laskowiec-Zajki, Mścichy and Bagno Ławki-Szorce. The Bagno Ławki-Szorce site covers about 76 ha and is like the National Park included in the EU Natura 2000 site "Biebrza Valley".

"Natura 2000 - Europe's wildlife for you." This place is a part of Europe's Natura 2000 network, which means, that this area is inhabited by the most endangered species of plants and animals in Europe. 27 EU countries created a joint network of Natura 2000, to protect the most valuable items of the continent's wildlife heritage."

### Bagno Ławki-Szorce Project site characteristics:

The site is covered by peat fen mire vegetation, partly overgrown by reeds and forest in early stages of succession. It is part of the extensive Bagno Ławki fen mire whose main part is located within the borders of the Biebrza National Park. The site is separated from the main part of the mire by the main north-south road through the park that runs on an artificial dam. It is - like the rest of the Bagno Ławki mire - flooded with high standing ground water during most of the year. Water from the river Biebrza does not reach this site.

In the past, the site has been used as extensive meadows. But the difficult conditions with long standing water and low hay quality led to the abandonment of this land use in the 80-ies of the past century. Today, the site is used only sporadically to obtain reeds for thatching during winter.

In the parts that are not yet overgrown, the Aquatic Warbler still hangs on. In 2006, 18 singing males have been counted at the site. Other rare bird species nesting at the site are Crane, Common Snipe and Bluethroat, and amongst mammals, Elks and Beavers are most prominent.



photo: G.T. Kosowscy

Aquatic Warbler

### Why did we choose this site?

The site Bagno Ławki-Szorce is one of the best places for Aquatic Warblers outside the Biebrza National Park, but is not covered by any form of formal protection. Chances to improve and re-establish suitable habitat for this species are especially good at this site.

Experience from previous habitat management implemented at neighbouring areas by the Biebrza National Park shows that the number of Aquatic Warbler can increase manifold after the removal of bush and reed overgrowth. Hence, active habitat management is needed at this site to create good nesting conditions for the Aquatic Warbler and to allow the species to increase their numbers.



photo: Lars Lachmann

Browsing elk help to slow down overgrowth by bushes



photo: Małgorzata Górska

Hand mowing

### Conservation action

The aim of the project at this site is to re-introduce extensive mowing. In most parts, this requires the previous removal of bushes and accumulations of reed and sedge biomass. After that, the area will be mown regularly with a 2-year cycle. Because it is very difficult for heavy machinery to access the site, part of the work will be done traditionally, i.e. by hand scything. The mowing date is chosen in a way that allows the Aquatic Warbler to successfully finish its second annual brood, which takes place until early August. Where landowners are not interested in extensive land use, we try to purchase their parcels in order to ensure suitable conditions for breeding Aquatic Warblers. Local people have the chance to be employed for the implementation of the project actions.



photo: Krzysztof Górski

Special machinery used for mowing on delicate peat soil