

ENVIROMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE BELARUS

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The most significant issues of ecological situation in Belarus are presented; among them there are the elimination of the consequences of the catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, saving of marsh lakes, water-meadows and peatbogs in Polesse.

Key words: marsh, Polesse, Prip'yatsky National Park.

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ПРОБЛЕМИ НАВКОЛИШНЬОГО СЕРЕДОВИЩА БІЛОРУСІ

Представлені найбільш важливі питання з проблем навколишнього середовища Білорусі, серед яких подолання наслідків катастрофи на Чорнобильській атомній станції, збереження заболочених озер та торф'яних боліт у Поліссі.

Ключові слова: болото, Полісся, Прип'ятський національний парк.

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ПРОБЛЕМЫ ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЫ БЕЛАРУСИ

Представлены наиболее важные вопросы по проблемам окружающей среды Беларуси, среди которых устранение последствий катастрофы на Чернобыльской атомной станции, сохранение заболоченных озер, заливных озер и торфяных болот в Полесье.

Ключевые слова: болото, Полесье, Припятский национальный парк.

Belarus is located on one of the largest marsh territory of Europe - known as Polesse. Belarus in a landlocked, relatively flat and covered with forest territory with smoothly dispersed over the country lakes and rivers. There are, 11,000 lakes in Belarus, but the majority of the lakes as e.g. Naroch are smaller than 0.5 square kilometers. Three major rivers run through the country, the Neman River, the Prip'yat River, and the Dnepr River. Forest covers about 34 % of the total landscape, making forestry one of the most abundant natural resources in Belarus. Other natural resources to be found in Belarus include peat deposits, small quantities of oil and natural gas, granite, dolomite limestone, marl, chalk, sand, gravel, and clay. As many other countries, Belarus is facing number of ecological problems. Those include air pollution both from regional sources and as a result of transboundary transfer, declining quality of surface and ground waters, primarily ground waters. Nevertheless, the key significance for Belarus, will be the elimination of the consequences of the catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power station which resulted in radioactive contamination of over 22 % of its territory. The current environmental situation in Belarus is adversely impacted in the quality of life and health of people, specifically children. Prip'yatsky National Park is located near the Chernobyl in the lowland of Polesye. Crossed by numerous small rivers and spotted by 30 small lakes, the Park has unique population of mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish. Its flora includes among other about 200 moss species. Disappearance of Prip'yatsky marshes that are located near the Prip'yatsky National Park - is threatening for the landscape on the European continent. Belarus object to drainage this biggest swamped area in Europe. We aim to save the biggest and the most valuable marsh lakes, water-meadows and peatbogs of Europe in the lowland of Polesse.

Scientists see the danger of agricultural attack on 175.000 hectares of swamped areas near the river Pripyat' that are planned to be drained to turn them into productive land. This action is supposed to compensate for the loss of useful agricultural lands that were polluted by the radio-activity. For this gigantic project the Belorussian Government has made already an inquiry to the World Bank for a credit that is considered in a range of billion dollars. The view of Pripyatsky marshes from the height of a bird's flight reveals a majestic picture of gigantic water reservoirs, lakes, water-meadows and swamps. Numerous species of flora and fauna, which are now rare or became extinct in other places, can be still found there. This work is proceeding in two main directions: first, they explore the places where a reed-warbler (currently in The Belorussian Red Book) lives; second, more important, they work out the conception of creation of large natural reservoirs. Finally, these areas have already been marked on the Belarus map and are currently under protection.

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