

## Nature preservation

Nature preservation in the Drawa National Park depends on retaining, renewing, and proper utilization of the nature's resources, creations, and components. The resources of nature include:

- Plants, animals, and mushrooms
- Natural habitats
- Creation of inanimate nature
- Landscape
- Greenery in the human settlements (manor park, the avenues).

The most important and basic way to preserve the floristic richness is protecting the plant biotopes. The Drawa National Park protects some land fragments from exploitive overuse. The most demanding species of the forest flora have to be removed from the pressures of human interference. The strict preservation zones, where any human interference is prohibited, have been established to serve that purpose. Old trees, dead and decomposing wood, and untouched undergrowth are the biotopes of valuable forest flora, including vascular plants, mosses, fungi, and lichen. Valuable are also non-forest ecosystems: waters (including rivers), and peatbogs, and need to be conserved. Those areas are very sensitive to all disadvantageous changes in their environments, so that the administration of the DPN takes great care to preserve them.

Preservation of these ecosystems depends mostly on retaining proper water relations, supporting hydrological functions performed by those ecosystems, retaining the diversity of species, and counteracting the anthropogenic eutrophization. Meadows also belong to the non-forest ecosystems. They have to be utilized in the traditional way to ensure their richness of flora and fauna. Presently such methods of cultivation tend to be economically disadvantageous, therefore the DPN administration interfere with these habitats by preventing their overgrowing with shrubs and trees, or their dehydration. For this purpose, abandoned meadows are still being moved and superfluous shrubs removed. Because of these actions being taken, we can still pride ourselves in a large population of orchids, dragonflies, and day butterflies, which enables us to keep in balance the biotopes of birds and mammals. Aside from that, we retain the open space, which adds to the natural beauty of the Park's landscape. These types of works are being annually performed on 67ha on average.

It is especially important to preserve the species nationally or regionally endangered. They are included on the so-called Red Lists. A complimentary



conservation method to prevent the destruction of rare and valuable species, especially those commonly known and attractively looking, it the so-called species preservation that includes the ban on picking or destroying of plants. Plants used as herbal produce are under partial preservation that prevents those resources from being overexploited.

To successfully protect the abundance of the Park's fauna, it is most important to preserve the biotopes of the valuable species. Especially crucial is to preserve old standing timbers and forest close to a completely natural state. It is important to retain wealth of dead and dying trees, tree-holes, and other dens and shelters. Only in thus preserved forest can provide a safe shelter for animals typical to the wilderness, ones that are mostly attributed to the uniqueness of the Drawa National Park. We also have to take care to retain a full diversity of trees and shrubs.

On order to preserve the full diversity of water (ex. fish) and peatbog species, we have to conserve their habitats – clean rivers and lakes with the wealth their vegetation, as well as the dead trees fallen into rivers. Some of the animal species are under species preservation. One cannot kill them, or scare them, or destroy their biotopes. Some species are additionally included under the so-called zone preservation. To preserve the populations of those animals that do not appreciate contact with humans, areas of strict reserves were created in the Park. In part because of protecting the animals' peace some parts of the Park are not accessible to tourists. The rarest species are being helped in a special way. Nest-building spots are being provided for goldeneye, grey geese, and merganser that might have difficulty to find such places in the cultivated forests. The Park administration provides special hatching dens for merganser and goldeneye, for the forest birds, as well as shelters for bats. There is a steady number of 5000 hatching dens in the Park. Fish preservation programmes are also in place. They include successive fry stocking, controlling capture, and protection of the spawning and hybernation grounds. We are trying to reintroduce the once disappeared salmon to the Park waters.

It is most crucial to protect those species that are endangered in Poland. They are included in the Red Lists and Red Books. We are make efforts, however, to preserve all the faunistical wealth of the Drawa National Park for future generations by wise and conservative treatment of the area.

Since 1998, a long-term process of the standing timber restoration has been in place. It consists of replanting and removing some threes from improper habitats, especially the pine, and introducing more deciduous trees, especially the oak and beech. This process has a historical grounding, as beech and oak wood used to be more numerously spread across the entire are of the Drawa Wilderness. This was discovered through soil research.

This process of standing timber reconstruction to meet the desired effects is called a naturalization process. The youngest parts of the woods are often being damaged by animals, mainly elk and deer. To prevent that, net fences are being built, protective coverings put on the trees, and repellents applied to the trees. Another



danger are the insects, whose numbers often constitute for a plague. To protect the forests, insects have to be constantly monitored and often destroyed, if it is necessary for the well being of the trees. Since 1990, when the Park was founded, two of such insect plagues took place here and they called for rapid measures of insect termination. In 1997 it was bark beetle, and in 2003 – tussock- moth.

Fires are a great danger to the Park's safety. To protect against this element, there are fire protection belts along public roads that are always being plowed, air-patrols are constantly in effect, the Park administration and the fire department have on-duty assignments to keep the Park safe from fire, and water sources and fire-lanes are always ready in case of an emergency. The area of strict preservation is 569ha. Its detailed description is included in the part pertaining to nature reserves. The preservation consists of constant monitoring of the natural processes, providing research resources, and retaining the gene pool. Those are areas of the highest natural value that demand special care to preserve them for future generations.

The landscape preservation consists of retaining the open space of 313ha. To fulfill this purpose, some of the agricultural land has been rented out to farmers, other lands are being mowed, or passively protected (without human intervention for the next 20 years). The Park protection statute forbids adding elements disharmonious with the landscape, such as dense architecture, foreign elements (such as flat roofs, horizontal fences, etc.).

The inanimate nature preservation can be done through:

- Soil protection – retaining or rebuilding the existing standing timber if the trees grow in improper habitats. The Park administration took steps to protect the soil from anthropopressure by assigning some areas for hiking trails, and by building and conservation of the tourist infrastructure, such as: rails, steps, or fishing docks. The purpose is to limit the tourist movement to the assigned places
- Air preservation, consisting mainly of constant monitoring of the air purity
- Preservation of the erratic boulders
- Protection of water and the well-heads by developing a system of bans pertaining to exploitation,
- Protecting the ecological diversity,
- Protecting from noise by banning motorized vehicles in the Park and establishing silence

The preservation of cultural and historical value of the Park can be done by making the historical and educational spots visible and accessible to the public, providing information about them, and printing guides and informational brochures that describe the natural and cultural value of this Park. Many objects in the park have unique names dating back to the Slavic and German culture. Those names should be reserved in print and make publicly known.



Performing educational and didactic functions also enhance the preservation efforts. The area is available to tourists who take advantage of its value by adhering to some rules. The educational and didactic efforts will bring the Park closer to the people and, hopefully, enhance their care for, and understanding of, nature. Presently, the educational functions are performed by two educational trails (Barnimie and Międzybór) and an educational classroom equipped with a laboratory, where youth workshops are being held.

The Park is endangered from the outside (dangers coming from outside of its borders) mostly by inadequate water and sewage industry, animal farms, and providing areas for recreation and resource exploitation (ex. gravel). Various legislations are in place to prevent and avoid such dangers; however, most depends on the cooperation between local governments and the Park administration. You can also contribute to the preservation efforts in our Park

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