



Project site fact sheet

LI-26 : Nemunas Delta

SPA: LTSLUB001; pSCI : -

Protection status: IBA Nr. Slu-b1 (006)

Habitats

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Animals:

Great snipe (*Gallinago media*),

Corncrake (*Crex crex*)

Aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Site description:

Nemunas delta with Rusne island is located in a western part of Lithuania. It is 4.691 km² and it has 1984 inhabitants. There is only one bridge over the biggest river Nemunas to reach the coast. On most of the island a polders system is installed with many watercourses and ditches. On the island there is an open polder meadow landscape. Part of the inhabitants is working in small extensive farms.

After collective farming has collapsed part of Rusne meadows became unused. Degradation process has begun. Meadow territories became unsuitable for rare birds to breed and rest. New farmers often don't have enough economical resources, theoretical and practical knowledge about farming. Often farmers are seeking economical benefit forgetting about biodiversity and water pollution facts. The experience of activities on meadow management and education of farmers, which began in early 1995, shows, that project activities must be implemented in the future and in more large scale.

Project will protect these globally vanishing birds: great snipe (*Gallinago media*), corncrake (*Crex crex*) aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*). Also project actions will involve focus on birds of EU interest as black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*). Project activity should increase local rare bird's population by 10 to 40 percent. This will be achieved through combination of appropriate grazing through hardy cattle and hay cutting in coherence with both socio-economic demands of local farmers and requirements of species protection. Local communities will take part in monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Project idea:

Coastal Lagoon Habitat Complex with a mouth of Nemunas river (habitat 1130) and smaller affluents - is a degraded lagoon habitat's example. Reed in the East Corneal lagoon is passing to the coastal lagoon and to the bogs in the island of Rusne. Variety of birds migrant is staying in the coastal lagoon and brooding. There was detected few very rare Scolopacidae family and *Calidris alpina* species individuals, also other protected species - Black-tailed Godwit, Corn Crake, and *Gallinago media*.

However most of valuable lagoons are disappearing and losing natural value. Most of meadows are untended and overgrown with reeds, Coastal lagoons are intensely eutrophicated. These meadows are not attractive for the bird's hatching, especially for Ruffs hatching.

Actions:

90 hectares of Uostadvaris meadows is planning to restore by the grazing and haying. It will not be doing for all area, just for separated territories, to keep variety of vegetation. Black-tailed Godwit is nesting in the low level of grass, whereas Corn Crake prefers higher vegetation. Regime of grazing and haying will be running at the second part of the summer and in the autumn, when breeding has finished and left nest.

Local farmers will implement management of meadows.

Grazed area was enlarged as follow:

2005 area was 59 ha;
2006 area was 61 ha;
2007 area was 82,5 ha;
2008 area was 85 ha.

Every year area of the project was mowed in different plots:

2005 area was 117,5 ha;
2006 area was 82,5 ha;
2007 area was 84,5 ha;
2008 area was about 100 ha.

Project website in Lithuania: <http://www.glis.lt/pamarys/?pid=12&lang=en>