Where to watch birds and large mammals of the Białowieża Forest
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This is a preview of the Białowieża Site Guide by WildPoland. Visit www.wildpoland.com for full version.
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The core of the book – bird and mammal locations are the effect of field work and birding of many friends. We cannot list them all but several must be mentioned: Mark Andrews, Peter J. Dunn, Dick Filby, Artur Gierasiuk, Grzegorz Grygoruk, Bogdan Kaspereczyk, Tomasz Kułakowski, Przemysław Kunysz, Lionel Maumary, Sławek Niedźwiedzki, Andrzej Petryna, Michał Polakowski, Jarosław Stepiuik, Arek Szymura, Mateusz Szymura, Tomasz Tumiel, Adam Wajrak, Karol Zub.
How to use this book

What is the Boring Part?

You probably expect to find some basic facts and information about the forest. The aim of this guide is to give you the best possible chance to see most wildlife the forest has to offer. It is not to bore you with historical and statistical information or any sophisticated ecosystem description. But since some facts and numbers show the dangers this forest is in, we find it our moral duty to cite them in The Boring Part.

You will also find pieces of hopefully useful information on getting around the forest, rules for visitors and our hints on how to prepare for your trip. The long chapter on When to visit describes weather conditions and the wildlife that may be seen, at different times of the year.

In the Common birds in the Białowieża Forest section we list and describe how easy it is to watch all the common birds that are omitted in the main text. These are often birds which over the years became rare or have even disappeared from Western Europe so remember to check this chapter if you think we are missing some rare species that you happened to see so often.

In the Rare birds chapter you can find information about the rarest and most wanted birds, their preferred habitat and behaviour—all that to help you find them in the field.

Finally, the Where and how to watch mammals chapter provides information on the recommended time of year and day as well as the proper approach to watch large forest mammals, including Bison, Wolf and Lynx.
The Grand Part structure

WE DIVIDED THE FOREST INTO 8 AREAS

The Białowieża Forest is large and to visit all the 59 sites described in this book you would need at least two weeks. To make browsing through this book easy and efficient we have sorted the sites based upon the most available accommodation places to stay and traffic routes through the forest.

The Białowieża, Hajnówka, Budy, Naręwka and Masiewo areas are located around the towns and villages carrying the same name, respectively. Apart from finding accommodation, you would naturally stop in these places for shopping, petrol or lunch on your way. Therefore, it is much easier to find all the interesting sites not only near your hotel but also any place where you find yourself in and want to squeeze as much as possible out of your visit.

The other two areas are the two main traffic routes through the forest. These are the routes from Hajnówka to Białowieża (The Main Road Area) and from Białowieża to Narewka (The Narękowska Road Area). Since you will be driving there each day, you have all the recommended sites along the route in separate areas. Now you can pick a new stop on your way each day and explore!

The last area is the Siemianówka Reservoir in the N of the forest that we added here as a bonus because most people would naturally visit it having already made the journey to NE Poland. Mind you, it has plenty of wildlife to offer and you could easily spend a couple of days there. 🦌
LIMITED TIME?
If you have limited time to spend and find making the choice on where to visit difficult, we have made it easier for you. We have selected, what we feel are the best sites to visit for wildlife and making the most of limited time. As such we have highlighted them with a black-stroked symbol on the maps and also in the site’s main header text: 

Our top sites!
THE SITES
The sites in each of the areas are further divided into short and long trails. The short ones are less than 6 km (3.7 miles) and allow for a quick excursion without special preparation or equipment. The long ones are over 7 km (4.4 miles) and are either long walks, very long walks or bike rides.

Each site is described with a number of details and symbols helping you to plan your excursion:

SPECIES LIST
To further enhance your enjoyment, we have provided each site with a list of the most likely species to be seen divided into three categories:

COMMON – regular breeders and species that are commonly seen at the site. The appropriate time of the year (usually spring), the time of day (usually early morning) and with perfect weather conditions, you are likely to see most or all of them.

ALSO SEEN – more elusive species that are seen less often, irregular breeders or frequent migrants that have been seen at the site. With perfect conditions and appropriate time of the year, you may see some of them.

RARITIES – species that are very shy or nocturnal, infrequent migrants or rare species that have occurred once or more. You may see some of them if you are lucky or keep returning to the site at different times of day or with better weather conditions.
Each species in the list is preceded with a three digit number that refers to the page number with a plate of this particular species in the Collin’s Bird Guide. The most complete field guide to the birds of Britain and Europe by Killian Mul-larney, Lars Svensson, Dan Zetterström and Peter J. Grant, first edition.

Please note, that a number of common species are not included in these lists and are also often omitted in the text. These are species like tits, Wood Warbler, Haw-finch or Blackcap that are generally so numerous that they can be seen without much effort during many of the walks described in this book. The full list of these species can be found in the Common birds in the Białowieża Forest chapter on page 29.

OPTIONS
In this section, we give useful suggestions that may be helpful in planning a different route than already described, giving you more flexibility to plan ahead.

MAPS
Each site is depicted on a map and all the most important points like parking site, viewing points and walking route are described there.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map symbols</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>meadows</td>
<td>route described in the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Forest</td>
<td>start of the route described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Reserve in the State Forest</td>
<td>point of interest with reference to the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park - Active Protection Area</td>
<td>parking site, area suitable for parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park - Strict Protection Area</td>
<td>petrol station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buildings, inhabited area</td>
<td>bike rental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State border</td>
<td>post rental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>railway</td>
<td>restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main road</td>
<td>tourist information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tarmac road, minor tarmac road</td>
<td>pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dirt track, minor dirt track</td>
<td>hotel/guesthouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forest track, path</td>
<td>National Park HQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marked tourist trails</td>
<td>viewing point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rivers, lakes</td>
<td>bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic church, Orthodox church</td>
<td>roadside cross</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Białowieża Forest and Białowieża National Park

**HUGE PART OF THE FOREST IS NOT PROTECTED**

Białowieża Primaeval Forest, known as Puszcza Białowieska in Polish, is an ancient woodland straddling the border between Belarus and Poland, covering more than 150,000 ha. It is one of the largest remaining parts of the immense temperate broadleaf forest that once covered most of the European Plain.

The forest is protected as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve but just ⅔ of the whole area is protected as a National Park and only half of it is the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Poland. The rest of the area still belongs to the Polish State and is managed by the National Forest Company (Lasy Państwowe). Check out the numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poland (ha)</th>
<th>Belarus (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ha</td>
<td>% of total forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total forest area</td>
<td>63,147 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>10,517 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict Protection Area</td>
<td>5,725 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buffer zone</td>
<td>3,224 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Heritage Site</td>
<td>5,069 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biosphere Reserve</td>
<td>59,726 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>core</td>
<td>10,164 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buffer</td>
<td>16,889 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transition</td>
<td>32,673 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other nature reserves</td>
<td>12,182 19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*numbers in brackets show the area claimed by UNESCO vs the value given by the NP.*

So what happens to the rest of the forest, which is still unprotected? You will see yourself when you get here. On the page 14 there is a photo for those who can’t wait or can’t visit for themselves.

These two main areas, the National Park and the State Forest, can be divided further into four parts where different rules for visitors apply (see map on the opposite page):

1. **The National Park – Strict Protection Area** (Obręb Ochronny Sierchanowo, formerly called Rezerwat Ścisły)
2. **The National Park – Active Protection Area** (Obręb Ochronny Hwoźna)
3. **The State Forest – Managed Part** (Lasy Państwowe)
4. **The State Forest – Nature Reserves** (Rezerwat Przyrody)
THE NATIONAL PARK – STRICT PROTECTION AREA
The oldest part of the National Park, protected since the 1920-ies. This is the core area of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site. No trees have ever been planted there and only a few were cut and that was before 1900s. Stunning, breathtaking and unforgettable views.

Entering here is forbidden except with a licensed National Park guide and even with the guide – only two trails are available: 4 km and 14 km long. You can hire a guide and pay for the entrance in the National Park offices at Park Pałacowy 1, see page 20 but we strongly recommend private expert guides at Sóweczka.
How to get there and avoid the mistakes of others

MOTOR VEHICLE OR PUBLIC TRANSPORT?
Travelling around NE Poland, a rural area, is best done by motor car. This would save you time and trouble as public transport is very poorly served. Otherwise, many of the best sites are difficult to get to and remote, although a few people have managed and been satisfied.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT
If you travel using public transport, the most central area to stay is Białowieża village, where you will find the NP headquarters, Museum and the largest variety of hotels, rooms for rent, shops, bike rentals, etc.

BUS
There is a direct bus leaving from Dworzec Warszawa Stadion at 14:50, arrives to Białowieża at 19:20.
Check the websites www.e-podroznik.pl for bus connections in Poland and warszawa.jakdojade.pl for Warszawa City public transport.

TRAIN
A more sophisticated option is to take a train to Białystok (the largest town in NE Poland) and then a bus according to the place you want to get to. The train journey from Warszawa to Białystok takes approx. 2.5 hrs.
Check the website rozklad-pkp.pl for train connections and www.e-podroznik.pl for bus connections in Poland.

Białystok bus station is just opposite the train station, use the footbridge over the railway. From here, you can take a bus to almost anywhere in Poland, provided you can pronounce the name! :-) There are a few connections per day to Białowieża by Voyager Trans private busses (office at ul. Bohaterów Monte Cassino 6 lok. 12) and several connections to Hajnówka by both private and national PKS buses (the large bus station). Once you get to Hajnówka, just change to a bus to Białowieża (approx. 5 buses a day) or take one of the increasingly common private shuttle buses.

CAR, BIKE OR WALK?
Driving through the forest is restricted to a few public roads only. Most of the sites described in this guidebook require a walk and some require a bike ride. Ideally, the best option to use in the forest is by car and bike. It allows you to stay in the same place overnight and visit all the described sites in several days.
In most cases though, people just use a car. This allows you to visit most of the best sites with short, up to 6 km walks and all the sites if you are willing to walk for 7 km or more. If you arrive by public transport, your only option is to hire a bike. Then you'll be virtually free to visit more than a half of the sites described departing directly from Białowieża village. For the southern and northernmost sites you may have to change your accommodation to Hajnówka (S) or Narewka (N).
When to visit

WEATHER

We are pretty sure you have your own favourite weather websites but since the historical or typical values can be difficult to find, especially for NE Poland, we created the charts below using data from several different sources dating back to 1970s.

NE Poland is under a strong influence from the continental, boreal climate which is dry and cloudy. The average annual rainfall for Poland is as little as 600 mm. In practice, winters are usually cold and snowy. You can expect a good foot or more of snow in January and February. In spring, March and April can be quite chilly whereas May is usually much warmer – see the temperatures chart. Summer is hot and dry. All the rain that we get then is usually during a few large storms. In autumn, September and October are usually quite warm and the landscape is very picturesque with colourful trees. November, on the other hand, is usually cold and grey.

June and July are the wettest months but looking at the number of wet days you can see that the difference between particular months is minor. It is generally difficult to get bad weather throughout a trip of a few days. It may rain for a day or two but the rest is usually dry.

We usually don’t get much direct sunlight but if we do, it can get hot quickly. Winds are generally weak, especially in the forest. However, when out in the open, e.g. the Siemianówka Reservoir, you can expect much stronger and often chillier winds.
Rare birds

We thought this might be useful, otherwise you’re allowed to rip this page out.

If you are an experienced birdwatcher, familiar with bird calls and songs, it shouldn’t be a problem to locate and get good views of the most wanted species. Some basic information on their habitat, behaviour and local habits can always be helpful, especially if you come here after the breeding season, when the birds are less active. The information given here is based upon our experience. This often differs from what you can read in other books. Estimated populations refer to the whole Białowieża Forest on the Polish side and are cited after:


Woodpeckers are amongst the most desired of Białowieża’s rarer birds. They like dead wood. It is where they can find lots of insects, obviously. The number of fungi, mosses, lichens and insects in the decaying wood can be roughly ten times higher than on the living trees. It makes dead wood even more alive than a living tree. Good thing to know is that most woodpecker species usually select the same or similar trees and sometimes even the same branches for drumming. And if you get to see one on a particular, good resonant branch one day, you can expect to see it at the same spot the next day as well.

Three-toed Woodpeckers are spruce specialists. Best to search for them in the dead spruce forests. However, they can also be spotted in the old woodland where old spruce trees grow in groups (like in the Strict Reserve) or at the edges of bog alder forest with spruce trees. They
Where and how to watch mammals

Mammals here are generally shy and most of them are nocturnal or have a dawn and dusk peak of activity which is why not many wildlife tours visiting this area happen to see them. Here at Wild Poland we have successfully shown all the large mammals to our clients but it wasn’t without a sacrifice. If you are willing to give up a few hours of your sleep, you may be amazed by the number of large mammals seen in the forest. All you need is a car and a spot light or a good torch. A good Site Guide may also help! :-)

In general, winter seems the best choice for mammal watching, see also When to visit chapter on page 24. But since most people visit this area in spring and summer, we thought the following information may help. For the complete list of recommended sites for each species see indexes at the back of the book, page 209.

**EUROPEAN BISON**

Bulls are solitary or form loose groups of a few animals with other males, especially in winter and they are much easier to watch than the herds of females with calves which can be quite wary and difficult to approach closely.

In wintertime they all gather in herds and visit forest glades and meadows at the edges of villages and especially the feeding places where hay is put out for them by the NP wardens. Some of these sites are closed for visitors and serve as animal refuges but many are free for you to visit and take advantage of the season’s best. These are described in the sites: 9 Gierkówka Glade, 24 Teremiski Meadows, 44 Kosy Most Bridge, 49 Siemianówka Meadows, 53 Masiewo Green Trail, 55 Babia Góra.

In spring things get a little complicated since the herds disperse in search of fresh greenery and cows give birth to a new generation. At that time, your best chance of spotting them is to explore the numerous forest tracks and glades in the Budy, Narewkowska Road and Narewka areas at dusk and dawn. Best sites are: 28 Dębowy Grąd, 34 Pojedynacki Tryb, 35 Worobiowa Glade, 37 Graniczny Tryb – East, 44 Kosy Most Bridge, 50 Carska Tropina Black Trail. Remember to start at night and be there at dawn or start in the afternoon and stay long into the night.

In summer – July and August are again a good time for watching Bison since bulls get more active and join the herds of females until the end of the breeding period in September. Bachelor groups of young males or larger mixed herds can be spotted at dawn and in the evenings in the forest glades now providing them with the dense sward of sweet grasses to feed on. Best sites at this time are: 28 Dębowy Grąd, 32 National Park Border, 34 Pojedynacki Tryb, 37 Graniczny Tryb – East, 44 Kosy Most Bridge, 50 Carska Tropina Black Trail, 52 Masiewo Red & Blue Trails, 55 Babia Góra.

After the breeding season the groups disperse again and your best chance to watch Bison in autumn is again checking out the numerous forest tracks and glades as in spring.

- Est. population: max. 450 animals
## THE GRAND PART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Short trails</th>
<th>Long trails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Białowieża Area</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Main Road Area</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hajnówka Area</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Budy Area</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Narewkowska Road Area</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Narewka Area</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Masiewo Area</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Siemianówka Area</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Białowieża Area

The Białowieża area lies in the SE part of the forest and for the purposes of this book we include the National Park Strict Protection Area here as well. Białowieża village, has many sites in the area that we recommend. It is a good starting place and good place to stay, with several large quality hotels, pensions and lots of bed-and-no-breakfast farmhouses as well as camping grounds. It also has the National Park headquarters and Natural History Museum in the Palace Park. More accommodation can be found in the nearby villages of Pogorzelce, Teremiski and Budy, NW from Białowieża.
**Góra Batorego**

**TIME OF YEAR** | **TIME OF DAY** | **DISTANCE** | **TIME** | **EASY WALK** | **FOOTWEAR** | **GPS**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
spring | dawn | 0.6 km | 1 h | | | 52°42’02”N
 | morning | 0.4 mile | | | | 23°46’47”E

Very short walk where Black and Three-toed Woodpeckers are likely species in spring. Hobby and Honey Buzzard have also been seen.

Take the main 689 road from Białowieża and continue for 3.7 km from the village petrol station. Drive past the two significant bends with speed limit roadsigns and stop at the first forest tracks crossroads after the bends. Park your vehicle and take the forest track S for 150 m. You will see a perfect Three-toed Woodpecker habitat at the top of the hill. Find an overgrown crossroads and check the tracks E and W as well as the main track S. The good woodpecker habitat extends for the next 150 m S.

### SPECIES LIST

**COMMON**

097  Hobby  *Falco subbuteo*
225  Black Woodpecker  *Dryocopus martius*
229  Three-toed Woodpecker  *Picoides tridactylus*
317  Coal Tit  *Periparus ater*
319  Crested Tit  *Lophophanes cristatus*

**ALSO SEEN**

091  Honey Buzzard  *Pernis apivorus*
211  Pygmy Owl  *Glaucidium passerinum*
311  Firecrest  *Regulus ignicapilla*

Pine Marten  *Martes martes*
Red Squirrel  *Sciurus vulgaris*

An old coniferous stand.
Góra Batorego is a good site to spot a Black Woodpecker.

Three-toed Woodpeckers nesting at the site.
Short trails

Bondówka

**TIME OF YEAR** | **TIME OF DAY** | **DISTANCE** | **TIME** | **EASY WALK** | **FOOTWEAR** | **GPS**
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
spring | dawn | 4.4 km | | | | 52°43'28"N 23°47'18"E
autumn | morning | 2.7 miles | | | | 52°43'28"N 23°47'18"E

**SPECIES LIST**

**COMMON**
105 Hazel Grouse *Bonasia bonasia*
225 Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*
229 White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos*
229 Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus*
301 Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*
313 Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*
315 Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

**ALSO SEEN**
091 Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
227 Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*
229 Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*
341 Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

European Bison *Bison bonasus*
Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*
Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*
Pine Marten *Martes martes*

Short walk, also accessible from Teremiski village. Likely species include Hazel Grouse, flycatchers, Black, White-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers. Good for mammals at dawn: Bison, Wild Boar, Red Deer and Pine Marten have all been seen here.

Driving from Białowieża, take the road NE signposted to Narewka. Drive past Pogorzelce village until you reach the crossroads with Narewkowska Road signposted right to Narewka. Turn left here and after 300 m you will see a clearing with a campfire site and shelter on your right 1. Park your vehicle and walk S into the glade. Arriving early morning you can expect to see Deer, Wild Boar or even Bison so it’s good to be cautious. The glade is oblong and gently swings right. It also narrows and leads to a track marked with a black trail at its other end 2. Follow that track W for 300 m until you reach the intersection of tracks. Be watchful along the edge of the glade and all the way to the crossroads is where you are likely to see Bison, Wild Boar, Red Deer, Pine Marten and Hazel Grouse 3.

Once at the junction 4, turn left and hit the track S as far as 500 m there and return back 5. Bison and White-backed Woodpeckers have been seen there.

You can either come back the way you have just come or continue further W where Bison and Three-toed Woodpecker are likely species. Follow the black trail W and after 500 m you will see a small clearing on your left and many dead spruce trees around, this is where Three-toed Woodpecker and Wild Boar are likely species 6. Walking further W watch out for Bison in the forest, especially at dawn or at dusk. After 900 m you will reach another glade where Bison have been seen grazing in the early summer mornings 7.
At the site in September.

ŁUKASZ MAZUREK
44 KOSY MOST BRIDGE

This is a preview of the Białowieża Site Guide by WildPoland. Visit www.wildpoland.com for full version.
Brief stop on your way to the Siemianówka Reservoir that may bring Barred Warbler, Red-backed Shrike and a Corncrake. Bison might be likely species in winter.

Driving from the centre of Narewka village take a turn SE signposted to Gruszki. Follow that tarmac road for 5.7 km until you get to Olchówka village. Having driven into the village, just after about a 100 m take a left turn signposted to Siemianówka. Continue along the tarmac road for 1.5 km. At first the road goes straight N, then gently swings right and passes a small woodland on the left.

Continue along and stop at a small bridge over a ditch draining the meadows, 100 m past the woodland 1. At that point the village of Zabrody will be visible in front of you. In May and June, SE from the bridge in the willow bushes, a Barred Warbler and Red-backed Shrike can be spotted 2 and NW from the road there are often Corncrakes calling in the meadows 3. Lesser Spotted Eagles can be observed, too.

In winter, Bison may walk out into the surrounding meadows in search of food.
Short trails

Siemieniakowszczyzna

[Syemyenyahkohvshchihzneh] (piece of cake)

Probably the best site for birding around Siemianówka Reservoir. In spring, the specialities of this spot include Citrine Wagtail, three species of marsh terns, Lesser and Greater Spotted Eagles, Black Stork or Hazel Grouse. The list is long.

Driving from Narewka village take the turn signposted to Siemianówka. In Siemianówka turn right and follow the main tarmac road E until you reach Siemieniakowszczyzna village. Turn left at the T-junction and follow the dirt track. After 450 m it divides. The left track

### Species List

**Common**

- 017 Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
- 017 Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
- 019 Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
- 031 Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*
- 033 Great White Egret *Egretta alba*
- 035 Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*
- 053 Garganey *Anas querquedula*
- 075 White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*
- 079 Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*
- 085 Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
- 087 Montagu’s Harrier *Circus pygargus*
- 091 Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
- 105 Hazel Grouse *Bonasa bonasia*
- 175 Caspian Gull *Larus cachinanns*
- 179 Little Gull *Larus minutus*
- 193 Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*
- 193 White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*
- 193 Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*
- 233 Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
- 259 Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*
- 259 River Warbler *Locustella flaviventris*
- 261 Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*
- 301 Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*
- 321 Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*
- 327 Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*
- 329 Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*
- 341 Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
- 359 Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

**Also Seen**

- 017 Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*
- 019 Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*
- 067 Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
- 079 Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
- 097 Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
- 111 Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
- 111 Corncrake *Crex crex*
- 115 Little Crane *Porzana parva*
- 119 Crane *Grus grus*
- 221 Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
- 233 Woodlark *Lullula arborea*
- 281 Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisana*
- 295 Savi’s Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*
- 297 Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*
- 333 Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

**Rarities**

- 083 Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*
- 095 Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*
- 099 Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*
- 207 Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*
- 313 Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Driving from Narewka village take the turn signposted to Siemianówka. In Siemianówka turn right and follow the main tarmac road E until you reach Siemieniakowszczyzna village. Turn left at the T-junction and follow the dirt track. After 450 m it divides. The left track
SIEMIANÓWKA WATER RESERVOIR

In the 1950-ties and 60-ties the Narew River valley and the whole area around Białystok city suffered from drought and the decision was made to build an artificial reservoir as a water supply for difficult times. An electricity plant was also planned to be built and an idyllic view of water sports development and creation of recreational centre in the area was spread.

Building was started in 1977 and by the year 1988 nearly 300 farms from 8 villages were resettled and the wide marshy Narew River Valley was ready to be filled with water. Over 2000 ha of natural sedge marshland hosting many rare breeding birds, including Aquatic Warblers and Great Snipe were flooded. The largest artificial water reservoir in Poland came into being.

Unfortunately it now seems that building water reservoirs in the lowlands is not such a good idea. Because of the average depth of about 2 m only, the water temperature rose very high in summer and blue-green algae found the Lake a perfect habitat in the first few years of the Lake had become a serious biological (and aromatic!) threat to people and animals around.

To fight the toxic algae, water level was lowered to a possible minimum allowing for the shallowest areas to dry out. Hundreds of water birds lost their breeding habitat and the plans to reconstruct the shoreline and manage vegetation to help purify the water were never finished.

It is difficult to judge the effect of the Lake on local birdlife since no proper research had been done here before the Lake was created. There is no doubt, however, that it is still one of the best areas in Poland for breeding water birds. Would it be equally good or better if the valley was not flooded? Or would it be better if they raised the water level to a maximum instead of allowing for half the reservoir to dry out after the algae outbreak? We don't know.

The inscription on a commemorating stone at the main dam in Bondary says:

Water Reservoir Siemianówka. The evidence of an era of a fast development of Białystok county. A symbol of realization of the tasks of development of food ration economy and the social programme of the Party and State. June 1977

Walk up to the embankment and see the great views over the lake 5. In spring likely species include Black, Whiskered and White-winged Terns, Great White Egret, Garganey, Great Crested and Little Grebes. Yellow and Citrine Wagtails, Scarlet Rosefinch and Penduline Tit can be spotted in the willow bushes around. Scanning over the reeds may provide good viewings of White-tailed Eagle, Osprey, Marsh and Montagu’s Harriers, with Black Stork, Lesser and Greater Spotted Eagles, Honey Buzzard or Hobby seen over the lake and the meadows 6 of here 6.

Sand Lizards are numerous on the embankment itself and many can be seen basking on a sunny day. For dragonfly lovers, you may see the rare Yellow-spotted and Ruby Whitefaces, Green-eyed
Hawker and Common Winter Damsel. Feel free to walk along the embankment further E watching out for Sand Lizards on the track and Fire-bellied Toads in the ditch on your right. After 850 m you will get to a sandy opening where Woodlarks are likely and more amphibians have been seen in a tiny pond 7. The coniferous forest E from here can be good for Hazel Grouse 8, just don’t walk too far, the border with Belarus is less than 2 km away.

A better option for Hazel Grouse might be walking in the opposite direction. Continue along the embankment W, walk past the watchtower and the picnic area and straight into the forest as far as 500 m 9.
Bird list

The full list of birds of the NE Poland, in systematic order. Arrival dates – courtesy of Tomasz Kułakowski www.avestom.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Polish</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
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<td>Red-throated Loon</td>
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<td>Plongeon catmarin</td>
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