

Traditional agriculture practices as sustainable management tool on Biebrza Wetlands

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Sustainable management practices

- Mowing of fen meadows
 - Mechanical mowing
 - Hand mowing with scythe
- Cattle grazing on floodplains





„Ruff Meadow” model project

Goal: to restore openness of fen-moss meadow
(*Scheuchzerio-Caricetea nigrae*) after 20 years of
abandonment

Tool: traditional hand mowing with scythe by local
farmers





„Ruff Meadow” model project



Ecological effects after 5 years:

- Habitat morphology improved for breeding waders (increase of nesting birds density, including: *Limosa limosa*, *Tringa totanus*, *Gallinago gallinago*)
- Increased density of blooming flowers (including: *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, *Caltha palustris*, *Menyanthes trifoliata*)
- Changes in structure of plant communities: covers of mosses and herbs increased.



„Ruff Meadow” model project

Other results:

- Need of active conservation of wetlands widely communicated, eg. **Poland Cup in Hand Mowing for Nature**





„Ruff Meadow” model project

Other results:

- Ecological education for school children – workshops „Ruff Decoys”
- Educational events for adults: Haymaking, Orchid Day, Winter Hay Collecting
- Promoting of tourist attractions in project area
- 40 seasonal jobs for local people
- Experiences from the project used for Polish agro-environmental schemes



„Ruff Meadow” model project

Next step:

- Support for local farmers interested in hand mowing for money > agro-environmental schemes





„Happy Cows from Brzostowo” model project

Goal: to conserve breeding site of water-fowl on Biebrza floodplains

Tool: to ensure economical sustainability of free cattle grazing (milk production, EU donations, eco-tourism development)





„Happy Cows from Brzostowo” model project

Effects:

- Cattle grazing impact on breeding birds recognized during 3 years of monitoring
- Most farmers from Brzostowo are going to apply for agro-environmental schemes
- Awareness of connection between cattle grazing, nature protection and local economy raised
- Brzostowo as tourism attraction promoted





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