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IUCN REVIEW

World Heritage Nomination

1. NAME: Bialowieza National Park, Poland
2. LOCATION: North east of Warsaw on frontier between Poland and Byelorussian SSR
3. NOMINATED BY: Dr. Krzysztof Pawlowski
Director of Board of Museums and Monuments
2 May 1978
4. DOCUMENTATION:
 - i) Nomination form dated 2 May 1978
 - ii) Map attached to nomination form

The documentation received was inadequate to form a decision. Supplementary documentation consulted by IUCN included the following:

 - a) Okolow, Czlaw, Bibliografia Puszczy. Biatowieskiej (Part II) 1967-1972; Bialowieza 1976. pp. 164.
This reference refers to 1148 reports or articles about the area.
 - b) Wiesko, Edward, Wostepach Puszczy Bialowieskiej. 205 pp. with illustrations, maps, english summary.
 - c) Pamphlet - "National Parks in Poland".
 - d) Wiecko, Edward. In the Bialowieza Forest - 1972.
 - e) Sokolowski, A. Pamphlet, Bialowieza, 23 pp. 1976.
 - f) Czubinski, et al. Nature Reserves in Poland, 528 pp. Cracow, 1977.
 - g) Pachlewski, R. The Bialowieza National Park. State Council for Conservation of Nature, 25 pp. 1960.
 - h) Karpinski, J. Puszcza Bialowieska i Park Narodowy w Bialowiezy (1930).

5. BACKGROUND and SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

Bialowieza National Park (protected since 1919), 5,069 ha., is Poland's most famous park, with a rich fauna of larger mammals exceptional for including the European bison. The "Bialowieski Park Narodowy" protects a unique virgin forest, the last of its kind in Central Europe, which runs across the Polish-Soviet border, the two countries protecting the forests and the free-roaming bison.

Geology - different kinds of soil explain the variety of the forests: a mosaic of mineral soil, sand, clay, peat, marshy-peat, and marshy-mud. Peat bogs are the raised continental type. A substratum of glacial sediments covers a Cretaceous bedrock.

Topography - Two rivers, Narewka and Hwozna, enclose the park, an undulating lowland plain (elevation: 170-202 m.) Several marshes.

Flora - deciduous trees dominate with 12 distinct plant communities: hornbeam, ash, alder, oak, lime, maple, birch, aspen, elm, wild apple, pine, and spruce. Most remarkable are the limes, like long-handled brooms with small crowns and no branches on their tall trunks. Hornbeam (35 percent) dominates the primeval forest, a replica of the ancient forest of eastern Europe. Area also includes mixed forests, pure coniferous forests, and marshes.

Mammals - the European bison formerly ranged the deciduous forest of Europe widely. No doubt this enormous fleshy creature was much coveted, perhaps also feared. This, with reduction of the forests, led to its extermination.

By the Middle Ages the bison had disappeared from most of Europe and by the beginning of the 20th Century was found only in the Bialowieza Forest and in the Caucasus (about 1,700 by World War I). These animals - one of a plains forest, the other of a mountain forest - belonged to different races. The last were shot in Bialowieza in 1921.

Luckily some specimens existed in zoological gardens. In 1929 the Polish Government brought two cows in Sweden and a bull in Germany. In 1952 a few animals were set free in the forest, and by 1969, a number of bison were roaming the forest. At least 154 of them were born free.

Attempts to "restore" the extinct tarpan horse are going forward.

Other mammals living in this national park: red deer, roe deer, lynx, wolf, and beaver.

Birds - Many species of which capercaillie, black stork, and eagle owl should be especially mentioned.

Lindahl/Harroy
Vol. 1 National Parks of the World

EVALUATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

The area has been evaluated against the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention as amended by the World Heritage Committee at its 2nd Meeting.

INTRODUCTION

The Bialowieza National Park is the remnant core of an extensive "cold deciduous broad-leafed forest with evergreen coniferous trees"* which once prevailed throughout central Europe. It has been subject to man's machinations since Neolithic time. According to Bourlière** it was after 1050 A.D. that "the work of European deforestation proceeded on a truly heroic scale" - farming, industrialization and urban growth were root causes - "it is only in the last 100 years that uncontrolled deforestation has been halted in Europe."

The Bialowieza Forest 125,000 ha. escaped the devastation of Western Europe and today consists of a managed forest of approximately 58,000 ha. in Poland (5,069 ha. in the National Park) and 67,000 ha. in the Byelorussian SSR. These 67,000 ha. are incorporated in the Belovezhskaya Puscha which is a nature reserve of 88,000 ha. established in 1939.

*** "The object of the Bialowieza National Park is - in the first place - to fulfil a scientific, educational and cultural purpose. It plays an important part in the protection of natural sites in Poland and abroad. Its organization is meant to assist scientific research." p. 23

"There is no denying that the Bialowieza Forest is of important and permanent value to Science. In recognition of this fact, a vast natural laboratory - the Bialowieza National Park - has been separated from the Primeval Forest. The Bialowieza National Park is the most important among numerous Polish National Parks and reservations. It is of far-reaching scientific and economic importance." p. 11

"Even now Bialowieza reigns supreme among all European lowland forests, as a unique example of almost primeval environment and scarcely touched silvan biotopes." p. 4

* Schmithusen, Atlas zur Biogeographic (1976)

** Bourlière, The Land and Wildlife of Eurasia, Life Nature Library, 1964

*** All following quotations are from Pachlewski (1960)

"The area covered by the Park is the best preserved part of the Primeval Forest". p. 5

EVALUATION:

Outstanding universal value will be recognized when a natural heritage area meets one or more of the following:

Criteria No. 10 c (ii)

Outstanding example - biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment.

"The results collected from climatic, hydrologic and soil-research have enabled scientists to elaborate a system of ecological factors in various forest biotopes of the National Park, taking into consideration the dynamic powers of these processes and their influence on biocenotic conditions of the Primeval Forest. These materials, still useful, have been an incentive to a series of valuable publications and new scientific conceptions. Thanks to them, silvicultures have acquired new knowledge of the Primeval Forest, and introduced new elements into forestry tuition in all its aspects." p. 16

"Many original works, of great scientific, theoretical, and practical importance in forestry have been published drawing attention to the first rate importance of biological war in forest husbandry." p. 18

"A knowledge of the most essential and fundamental laws governing the biocenotic life of the forest enables Poland to apply them in her silvan economy, in a conscious and deliberate way. It also contributes to the development of many branches of biology". p. 2

In 1949 Prof. J.J. Karpinski published his book, Materials for the Bioecology of the Bialowieza Primeval Forest. This work opens new vistas in the study of forest biocenose, explains the system of interdependence of forest components and discusses in detail the part they play in biocenose." p. 16

"We also have the works of S. Kulczynski (1930-39) on peat-bogs, suggesting new conceptions of their genesis. These works are well known in world literature and show the importance and value of the Primeval Forest, and the Bialowieza National Park for universal scientific research and the natural sciences". p. 14

COMMENT:

The extensive and thorough research going on in this area is closely linked to the concept of the Biosphere Reserve (the Bialowieza National Park was established as a biosphere reserve in 1976). The biosphere reserve does not include the surrounding forest or the forest in the Byalorussian SSR.

There is no doubt that the scientific research meets the criteria insofar as the Primeval Forest is concerned. It is difficult to attribute the results only to the Bialowieza National Park.

Criteria No. C.10 (iv)

- habitats where populations of rare or endangered species of plants or animals survive.

"In spite of these changes, the Bialowieza Primeval Forest is still the world's only shelter of the European bison living in freedom, and again lynx, wolves, boars and stags are hiding in its deep recesses." p. 10

The European bison (Bison bonasus) was exterminated in the wild with the last animal killed in the Bialowieza Forest in 1921. A captive breeding programme based on specimens in Swedish and German zoos has resulted in a successful re-introduction of the European bison to Bialowieza. The European bison is not now considered threatened or endangered. In a natural environment it must be considered rare, there are approximately 230 specimens in the total area of the Bialowieza Forest.

Among the 56 mammal species found in the area is the European lynx which must also be considered rare.

The floral composition of the area is represented by 700 species of vascular plants (i.e. about 32% of the species found in Poland).

COMMENT:

The Bialowieza National Park has undoubtedly played a key role in the preservation of species and as a part of the larger primeval forest it no doubt continues to do so.

INTEGRITY:

"The Bialowieza National Park woods have an almost primeval character. In spite of man's noxious interference in the past, they have preserved the essential characteristics of aboriginal forests - i.e. their dynamic power of self-development". p. 9

COMMENT:

The integrity of the Bialowieza National Park (5,069 ha.) is intricately bound up in the Bialowieza Primeval Forest 58,000 ha. of which it forms a core part. The forest has historically been its buffer and for most of the fauna it continues to serve as such. In addition there is the 67,000 ha. Belovezhskaya Puscha Reserve in the Byelorussian SSR.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Biosphere Reserve

The Bialowieza National Park (5,069 ha.) was established as a Biosphere Reserve in September 1976. The conceptual structure of biosphere reserves has since that time changed to incorporate core areas (which the Bialowieza National Park is) as well as areas in which manipulative management and research can take place.

The research and education activities taking place in the Bialowieza Primeval Forest is illustrative of an ideal biosphere reserve. It is strongly urged that the present biosphere reserve be expanded to incorporate the total area of the Bialowieza Primeval Forest.

In brief, it is the view of IUCN that the Bialowieza National Park and the Bialowieza Primeval Forest combined would be an exceptional biosphere reserve.

SUPPORTING COMMENTS FOR BIOSPHERE RESERVES

Scientific research work of a forestal character in the Bialowieza National Park, is not only of theoretic value but is also very important for elaborating scientific bases for forest economy. In connection with this, the Institute of Forestry Research is planning extensive research work, based on experiments in the cultivated part of the Primeval Forest, as a complementary work to the research carried out in the National Park. This conception of treating the whole territory of the Forest as a simple scientific field of research, proves how important this territory is considered by scientists, and promises in the near future to transform the whole Primeval Forest into a broad Natural Reserve, as a phenomenon unique of its kind and of immeasurable value to science and culture. p. 22

The Primeval Forest constitutes a priceless area for Natural Sciences and Forest Research. It is now the only lowland forest of a primitive character in Europe. Its numerous and various plant associations in an almost intact environment, the forest structure of its biocenoses, rich in strong dynamic activity have preserved the best system of productive powers in biotopes. p. 11

The Bialowieza National Park has particularly favourable conditions for research, as a reservation from which all human interference is excluded. This is extremely important in long-term ecological investigations. It can be assumed that in surroundings where economic activity has been prohibited, all changes occurring can be ascribed to processes peculiar to a given type of biocenoses. This enables us correctly to analyse the influence of biotic and abiotic factors in a given biocenotic system in the natural course of observed phenomena. It shows that National Park and Reservations are the ideal places for ecological research, which is the trend of all scientific work carried out in the Bialowieza Park. p. 12

The scientific value of the Park is increased by the fact that research can be conducted simultaneously in strictly natural conditions, and in the cultivated parts of the Forest, in artificial conditions of human economy. In this way it becomes possible to analyze the influence of man on the trend and character of the changes occurring in the productive forces system on the biotope, and of the forest biocenose, as a result of economic activity. It also makes it possible to devise scientific principles for a cultivation plan of the valuable territory of the Primeval Forest. p. 13

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is not recommended that the Bialowieza National Park be listed on the World Heritage List as presently proposed (5,069 ha.). Three alternate courses of action are suggested:

1. World Heritage List

Option 1

An expanded area preferably to include the Byelorussian section of the Bialowieza Primeval Forest as a joint nomination of Poland and the Byelorussian SSR be formulated. This would undoubtedly create a World Heritage site within the concept "outstanding universal value".

Option 2

2. The Bialowieza Primitive Forest (58,000 ha.) be placed on the List with the understanding that should the Byelorussian SSR area (67,000 ha.) be put forward both the Polish and the BSSR unit would form a single World Heritage Site.

Option 2 is not recommended by IUCN on the basis of the integrity of the natural qualities. Much of the area of the World Heritage site would be subject to commercial exploitation even recognizing that this exploitation would be exceptionally carefully and scientifically managed it cannot be recommended.

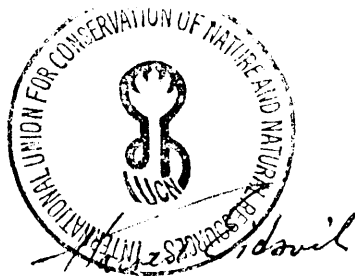
3. Not list as a World Heritage site but expand the biosphere reserve thereby creating a biosphere reserve of outstanding quality.

CONCLUSION:

The great scientific, educational and cultural value of Bialowieza National Park to the Polish people and to the European community are recognized to be of outstanding significance by IUCN.

As a World Heritage site along with the Galapagos National Park, Yellowstone National Park, the Nahanni National Park and proposed sites such as the Grand Canyon, Virunga National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation area, the Bialowieza National Park would be of secondary rank. IUCN does not believe that the site warrants such possible treatment. We therefore propose the expansion of the present biosphere reserve

to incorporate the Primeval Forest. With such an action the Bialowieza National Park and the Bialowieza Primeval Forest would be recognized as one of the outstanding biosphere reserves in the world and such recognition would be totally warranted on the basis of the research and educational functions performed.



International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

April 1979

BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA STATE NATIONAL PARK

BYELORUSSIA



WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN SUMMARY

628: BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA STATE NATIONAL PARK (BELARUS)

Summary prepared by WCMC/IUCN (April 1992) based on the original nomination submitted by the Government of the Republic of Belarus. This original and all documents presented in support of this nomination will be available for consultation at the meetings of the Bureau and the Committee.

1. LOCATION

In south-west Belarus, on the border with north-east-central Poland; Brest Region, Kamenetsky and Pruzhansky Districts, Grodno Region and Svislochsky District. Approximately 87,600ha.

2. JURIDICAL DATA

Declared a state national park in 1991, on the former state hunting reserve farm of the same name. The first recorded piece of legislation on the protection of the forest dates back to 1538. The pushcha is protected under Decision of the Union of People's Commissars, 1944; Order of the USSR Council of Ministers, 1957; and Decree of the Byelorussian SSR Council of Ministers "On Reorganisation of the State Reserve Hunting Farm Belovezhskaya Pushcha" of 1991. The adjacent Polish National Park (5,316ha) was designated in 1932, approved as a biosphere reserve in June 1976 and inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1979.

3. IDENTIFICATION

Situated in the hydrological divide between the Baltic and Black Seas, the area is covered by glacial formations with deposits composed of deep sands overlaying clays, and clays and loams overlying the cretaceous bedrock.

The park is 88% forested by mixed broad-leaved and conifer forests of "old growth" virgin stands. The pushcha is represented by 12 main forest associations, the major type being *Tilio-Carpinetum* in contrast to the typical central European *Quercus-Carpinetum*. Over 900 vascular plant species have been recorded, including 26 species of tree and 138 of shrub. In the entire forest complex there are also 210 lichen species, 80 liverworts and more than 1,500 fungi.

Represented by typical European forest fauna communities, with 55 species of mammal, 212 of birds, 11 amphibians and 7 reptiles. There are over 8,000 insect species throughout the entire forest complex. Notable mammal species include European bison (V), wolf and European lynx, otter and large populations of red deer, roe and wild boar. European bison was exterminated in Bialowieza forest in 1919 and reintroduced there in 1929. To date the number of bison in the pushcha is 315. Birds include capercaillie, eagle owl and large numbers of raptors.

4. STATE OR PRESERVATION / CONSERVATION

The park protects a major proportion of the Belovezhskaya pushcha which is found on both sides of the Polish/Belarus frontier. The responsible management agency is the Forest Department of the former Byelorussian SSR. Protection is by means of cross-country patrol vehicles, and air patrols occur during high fire-risk periods. There is no management plan, although one has been recommended which will parallel and complement the Polish Bialowieza National Park management plan. It has been recommended that management zones should be divided into strict protected zones, partially protected zones and zones for tourism, traditional farming and outer buffer zones. The authorities have indicated that they also plan to increase both domestic and foreign tourism under the guidance of special excursion guides. To date there is limited cooperation between the two national park authorities on either side of the frontier. However, since January 1991 the Director of the Byelorussian Park has been nominated as a member of the Scientific Council of Polish Bialowieza National Park. There have been two meetings of the transfrontier park Polish-Soviet Committee on Environmental Problems.

There is practically no threat to the site, as no large industrial complexes, railways or major roads are located nearby. However, there is a significant number of potential threats to the site, chief of which are pesticide and fertilizer run-off from state farms in or near the park buffer zone, free-ranging cattle and wild deer grazing in the forest, disturbance to the hydrological balance of the forest by land reclamation programmes (90km of canals constructed since the 1960s), and threats from economic changes leading to an increase in the use of timber for the park's saw mill if inadequate regulations are approved. The transfrontier fence has caused major disruption to wildlife movements through the forest.

5. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

The nomination, as presented by the government of the Republic of Belarus, provides the following justification for designation as a World Heritage property:

Natural property

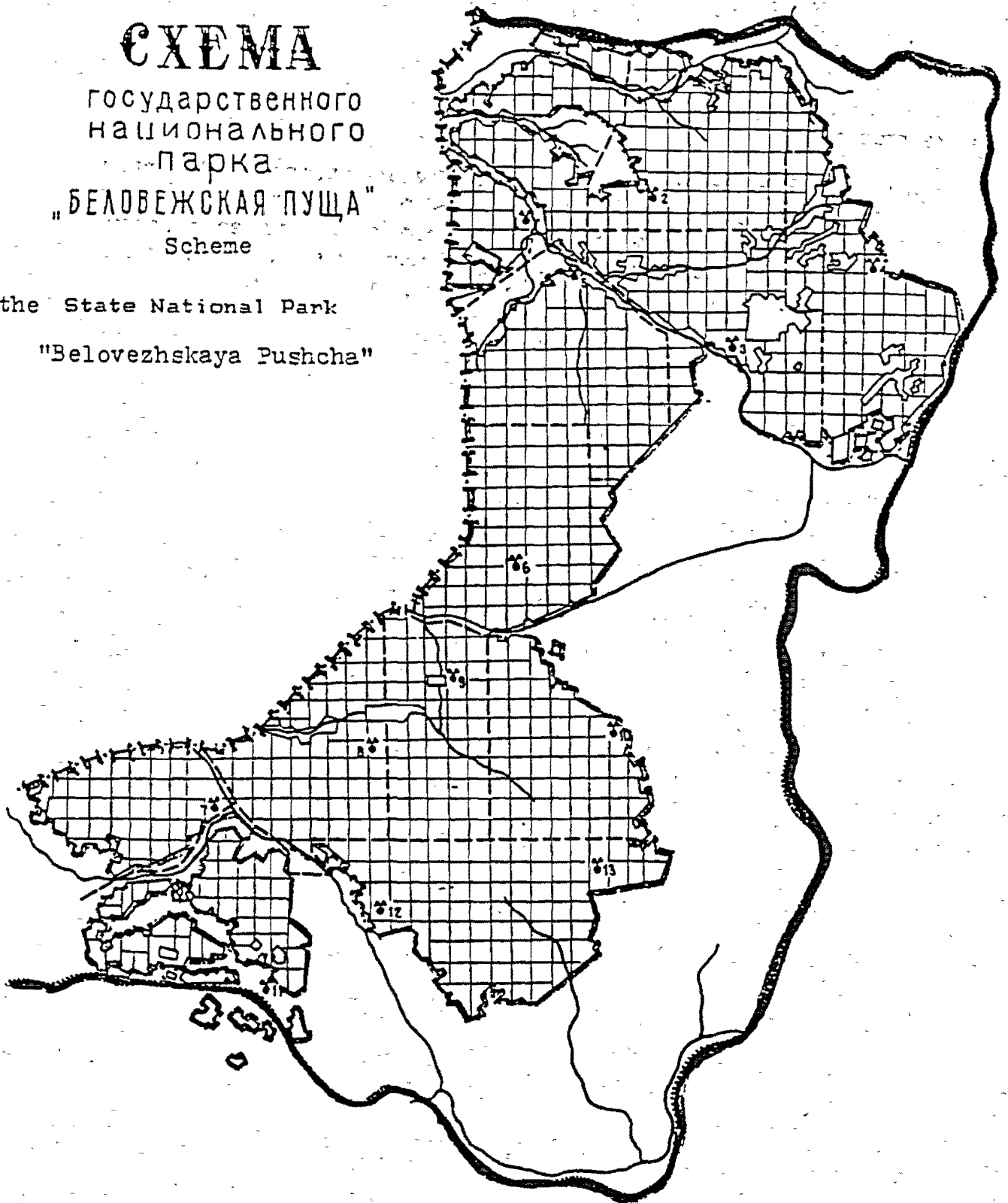
- (iii) **Contains unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.** The state national park is an unique natural complex, the only one of its kind in Europe least subjected to human influences. It is a large massif of old age virgin forest with a protected population of threatened animals and plants.

СХЕМА

государственного
национального
парка
„БЕЛОВЕЖСКАЯ ПУЩА“
Scheme

of the State National Park

"Belovezhskaya Pushcha"



Госграница с Польшей State border with Poland

граница Беловежской пуши Border
of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha

граница буферной зоны Border of the buffer zone

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

628: BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA STATE NATIONAL PARK (BELARUS)

1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) IUCN/WCMC Data Sheet (12 references)
- ii) Additional Literature Consulted: WWF-Austria, 1990. Ecological Bricks for our Common House of Europe.
- iii) Consultations: L. Kuleshova, P. Gunin, A. Nikolski, K. Braden, C. Okolow, T. Wesolowski
- iv) Field Visit: None

2. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

The Bialowieza Forest complex of which Belovezhskaya Pushcha (BP) is a part, is distinct among forest areas in the western Palearctic. Its uniqueness stems from its relative biological richness and its largely undisturbed nature. BP's free-ranging herd of European bison is its third major feature and led to the World Heritage inscription of the Polish portion of the forest in 1979. The extent of old growth virgin forest found here is the largest in lowland Europe. The location of the site in central Europe mixes elements from Scandinavia/Siberia and southern directions and consequently it has a higher diversity of species than other reserves in the Middle European Biogeographical Province.

3. INTEGRITY

The legal status of BP was upgraded in 1991 but it is not clear if all former USSR laws have been rescinded. Details about staffing levels and budget are also lacking and the impact of activities being conducted within the reserve by local residents is not known. An urgent need is for a management plan which should be coordinated with the one prepared for the park on the Polish side. This plan should take into account the activities that are being undertaken in the buffer zone of BP that are affecting the park (e.g. use of pesticides and water reclamation activities).

Although there is now a Polish/Soviet Committee for environmental protection, cooperation between both parks is still only symbolic. A game-proof fence along

the border is still in place. The addition of BP to Bialowieza has the potential to greatly improve the integrity and viability of the wildlife populations and to promote coordination of management. (note that BP is approximately 18 times the size of its Polish counterpart).

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The Bialowieza forest complex is one of a network of 24 transfrontier protected areas proposed in the European NGO initiative called "Ecological Bricks". Two other World Heritage sites in this proposal that are also proposed for extension into the neighbouring country are Pirin (Bulgaria) and Danube Delta (Romania).

5. EVALUATION

Although there are a number of management details lacking and much work to be done to strengthen management of the site, the forest habitat of BP is largely still intact. It would substantially add to the integrity of the existing site particularly if the fence between the two parks was removed. A sharing of experience between the Polish and Belarus sides is essential and a beginning has been made to foster cooperation. The management planning process should thus involve both sides and be seen as a priority activity.

It is also not entirely clear in the nomination that the area being nominated is only the contiguous core of the forest and not the buffer zone nor the isolates in the south-west corner.

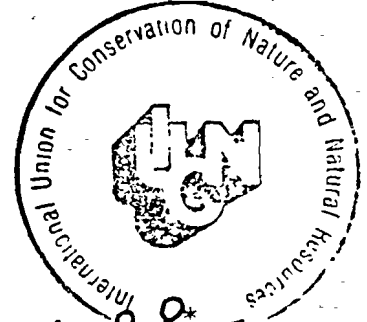
6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The old growth forests and associated fauna of BP clearly meets criteria (iii) and its inclusion on the World Heritage as an extension of Bialowieza National Park in Poland is recommended. The Bureau should request the Belarus authorities:

- to confirm their understanding that the boundaries of the site only include the core zone;
- to undertake (with assistance from the World Heritage Fund if necessary) a management plan for the area which would be coordinated with that for the Polish side;
- to coordinate and share management experience with their Polish counterparts; and

to state their willingness to remove the fence between the two parks if the management plan determines that this would lead to enhanced viability.

In addition, the Governments of Poland and Belarus should be asked if they would agree to designating the Bialowieza Forest as one single transfrontier site on the World Heritage List.



J. Thorpe

**PARC NATIONAL D'ETAT DE
BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA**

BIELORUSSIE



DESIGNATION POUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL RESUME PREPARE PAR L'UICN

628: PARC NATIONAL DE BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA (BIELORUSSIE)

Résumé préparé par le CMSC/UICN (avril 1992) d'après la désignation d'origine soumise par le gouvernement de la République de Biélorussie. L'original et tous les documents présentés à l'appui de cette désignation seront disponibles pour consultation aux réunions du Bureau et du Comité.

1. SITUATION

Au sud-ouest de la Biélorussie, à la frontière avec le nord-est de la Pologne centrale, la région de Brest, les districts de Kamenetsky et Pruzhansky, la région de Grodno et le district de Svislochsky. Environ 87 600 hectares.

2. DONNEES JURIDIQUES

La région a été classée parc national en 1991, en remplacement de l'ancienne ferme réserve de chasse d'Etat du même nom. Le premier texte de loi sur la protection de la forêt date de 1538. La pushcha est protégée en vertu d'une Décision de l'Union des Commissaires du Peuple, 1944; d'une Ordonnance du Conseil des Ministres de l'URSS, 1957 et d'un Décret du Conseil des Ministres de la RSS de Biélorussie "Sur la réorganisation de la ferme réserve de chasse d'Etat de Belovezhskaya Pushcha", 1991. Le Parc national polonais adjacent (5316 ha) a été créé en 1932, approuvé réserve de la biosphère en juin 1976 et inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en 1979.

3. IDENTIFICATION

Située sur la ligne de partage des eaux entre la mer Baltique et la mer Noire, la région est couverte de formations glaciaires et de dépôts composés de sables profonds recouvrant des argiles et d'argiles et de limons recouvrant le lit rocheux du Crétacé.

Le parc est recouvert, à 88 pour cent, de forêts vierges anciennes, forêts mixtes de conifères et de feuillus. La pushcha est représentée par 12 associations forestières principales dont le type le plus important est le Tilio-Carpinetum qui contraste avec le Querco-Carpinetum typique d'Europe centrale. On y a dénombré 900 espèces de plantes vasculaires dont 26 espèces d'arbres et 138 d'arbustes. Dans la totalité du complexe forestier on note également 210 espèces de lichen, 80 hépatiques et plus de 1500 champignons.

Des communautés typiques de la faune européenne forestière y sont représentées: 55 espèces de mammifères, 212 d'oiseaux, 11 d'amphibiens et 7 de reptiles. Il y a plus de 8000 espèces d'insectes dans tout le complexe forestier. Les espèces de mammifères particulièrement remarquables sont le bison d'Europe (V), le loup et le lynx d'Europe, la loutre et de grandes populations de cerfs communs, de chevreuils et de sangliers.

Le bison d'Europe, exterminé de la forêt de Bialowieza en 1919, y a été réintroduit, en 1929. A ce jour, on compte 315 bisons dans la pushcha. Parmi les oiseaux, on note le grand tétras, le grand duc et un très grand nombre de rapaces.

4. ETAT DE PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION

Le parc protège une importante proportion de la pushcha Belovezhskaya que l'on trouve tant du côté polonais que du côté Biélorusse de la frontière. L'organe de gestion responsable est le Département des Forêts de l'ancienne RSS de Biélorussie. La protection est assurée grâce à des véhicules de patrouille tout-terrain et, pendant les périodes à haut risque d'incendie, par des patrouilles aériennes. Il semblerait qu'il n'y ait aucun plan de gestion bien que l'on en ait recommandé un qui fait pendant avec le plan de gestion du Parc national polonais de Bialowieza et qui le complète. Il a été recommandé de diviser les zones gérées en zones intégralement protégées, zones partiellement protégées et zones pour le tourisme et l'agriculture traditionnelle et zones tampons. Les autorités ont indiqué qu'elles prévoyaient également d'accroître le tourisme national et étranger sous la direction de guides spécialement formés. A ce jour, la coopération est limitée entre les deux organes de gestion des parcs nationaux qui se trouvent de part et d'autre de la frontière. Toutefois, depuis janvier 1991, le directeur du Parc de Biélorussie a été désigné membre du conseil scientifique du Parc national polonais de Bialowieza. Le comité biélorusse-polonais du parc transfrontière s'est réuni deux fois pour discuter de problèmes écologiques.

Le site ne connaît, semble-t-il, pratiquement aucune menace car aucun complexe industriel, aucune voie de chemin de fer ou route principale n'est situé à proximité. Toutefois, il existe un certain nombre de menaces potentielles dont les principales seraient le ruissellement de pesticides et d'engrais des fermes d'Etat qui se trouvent dans la zone tampon du parc ou à proximité, le bétail qui se déplace sans contrainte et les cervidés sauvages qui paissent dans la forêt, ainsi que la perturbation de l'équilibre hydrologique de la forêt par des problèmes d'assainissement des terres (90 km de canaux ont été construits depuis les années 60) et les changements économiques qui entraîneront une augmentation de l'utilisation du bois par la scierie du parc si des règlements inadéquats sont approuvés. La clôture qui longe la frontière a gravement perturbé les mouvements de la faune dans la forêt.

5. RAISONS JUSTIFIANT LA DESIGNATION POUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

Pour justifier la désignation du Parc national d'Etat de Belovezhskaya Pushcha en tant

que bien du patrimoine mondial, le gouvernement de la République de Biélorussie a donné les raisons suivantes:

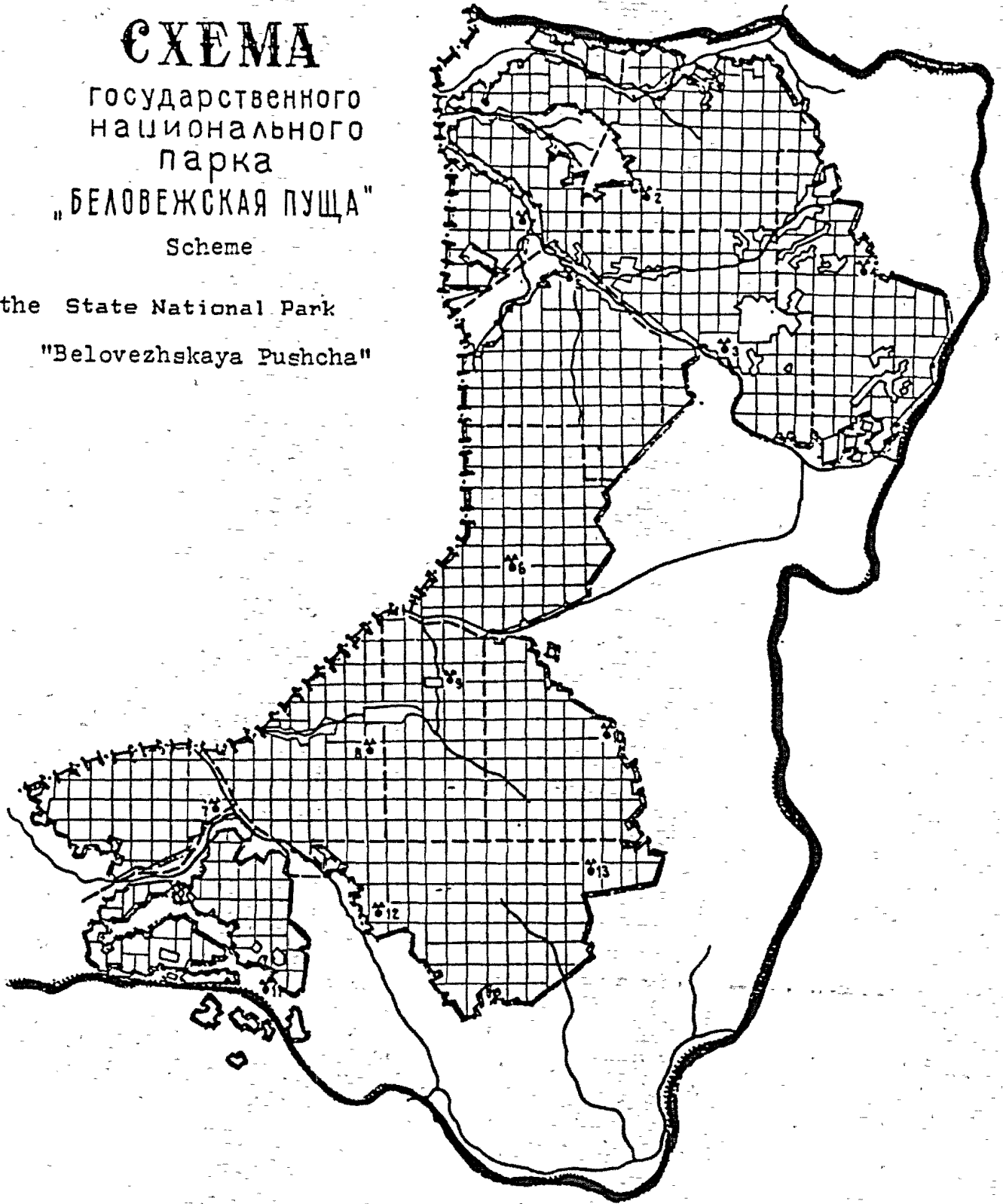
Bien naturel

- (iii) **Contient des phénomènes naturels rares ou exceptionnels, des formations et des éléments d'une beauté naturelle exceptionnelle.** Le parc national d'état est un complexe naturel unique, le seul de son genre en Europe à subir peu d'influence humaine. Il s'agit d'un vaste massif de forêt vierge ancienne contenant une population protégée d'animaux et de plantes menacés.

СХЕМА

государственного
национального
парка
„БЕЛОВЕЖСКАЯ ПУЩА“
Scheme

of the State National Park
"Belovezhskaya Pushcha"



--- Госграница с Польшей State border with Poland

— граница Беловежской пуши Border
of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha

— граница буферной зоны Border of the buffer zone

DESIGNATION POUR LE PATRIMOINE MONDIAL
EVALUATION TECHNIQUE DE L'UICN

628: PARC NATIONAL D'ETAT DE BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA (BIELORUSSIE)

1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) Fiches descriptives UICN/CMCS (12 références)
- ii) Littérature consultée: WWF-Autriche, 1990. Ecological Bricks for our Common House of Europe
- iii) Consultations: L. Kuleshova, P. Gunin, A. Nikolski, K. Braden, C. Okolow, T. Wesolowski
- iv) Visite du site: Aucune

2. COMPARAISON AVEC D'AUTRES AIRES

Le complexe forestier de Bialowieza dont fait partie Belovezhskaya Pushcha se distingue des autres régions forestières du paléarctique occidental. Son caractère unique vient de sa richesse biologique relative et de sa nature largement non perturbée. La troisième caractéristique est le troupeau sauvage de bisons d'Europe de Belovezhskaya Pushcha qui a conduit à l'inscription de la partie polonaise de la forêt à la Liste du patrimoine mondial, en 1979. L'étendue de forêt vierge ancienne que l'on y trouve est la plus vaste dans les plaines d'Europe. De par sa situation en Europe centrale, la région associe des éléments de direction scandinave/sibérienne et méridionale, ce qui fait que la diversité des espèces est plus forte que dans les autres réserves de la province biogéographique d'Europe centrale.

3. INTEGRITE

Le statut juridique de Belovezhskaya Pushcha a été amélioré en 1991, mais on ne sait pas avec précision si toutes les anciennes lois de l'URSS sont devenues caduques. On manque également de détails sur le personnel et le budget, ainsi que sur l'impact des activités des résidents locaux sur la réserve. Il est urgent d'élaborer un plan de gestion en coordination avec celui qui est en préparation pour le parc polonais. Ce plan devrait tenir compte des activités entreprises dans la zone tampon de Belovezhskaya Pushcha et qui affectent le parc (par exemple, l'utilisation de pesticides et les activités d'assainissement).

Bien qu'il existe maintenant un comité russo-polonais pour la protection de l'environnement, la coopération entre les deux parcs est encore symbolique. Une barrière antigibier sert encore de limite entre les deux parcs. Ajouter Belovezhskaya Pushcha à Bialowieza offre le potentiel d'améliorer grandement l'intégrité et la viabilité des populations de faune sauvage et de promouvoir la coordination de la gestion. (A noter que Belovezhskaya Pushcha couvre environ 18 fois la superficie de la section polonaise.)

4. COMMENTAIRES ADDITIONNELS

Le complexe forestier de Bialowieza fait partie d'un réseau de 24 aires protégées transfrontières proposé par l'initiative des ONG européennes, intitulée "Briques écologiques". Deux autres biens du patrimoine mondial figurent dans cette proposition, et leur extension à l'intérieur du pays voisin est envisagée. Il s'agit de Pirin (en Bulgarie) et du delta du Danube (en Roumanie).

5. EVALUATION

Bien qu'un certain nombre de points concernant la gestion fassent défaut et qu'il y ait encore beaucoup à faire pour renforcer la gestion du site, le biotope forestier de Belovezhskaya Pushcha est quasi intact. La désignation serait un plus pour l'intégrité du site actuel, en particulier si la clôture entre les deux parcs était abattue. Le partage de l'expérience entre les autorités polonaises et celles de Biélorussie est essentiel. Les premiers pas ont déjà été faits pour encourager la coopération. Le processus d'élaboration d'un plan de gestion devrait donc faire participer les deux pays et être considéré comme une activité prioritaire.

Il n'est pas entièrement établi dans la désignation si l'aire désignée est uniquement la forêt centrale contiguë et exclut la zone tampon et les enclaves de la zone sud-ouest.

6. RECOMMANDATION

Les forêts anciennes et la faune associée de Belovezhskaya Pushcha répondent sans équivoque au critère (iii), et l'inclusion du site au patrimoine mondial, en tant qu'extension du Parc national de Bialowieza en Pologne, est recommandée. Le Bureau devrait demander aux autorités de Biélorussie:

- de confirmer leur définition des limites du site pour n'inclure que la zone centrale;
- d'entreprendre (avec l'aide du Fonds du patrimoine mondial, si nécessaire) un plan de gestion pour l'aire qui serait coordonné avec le plan de gestion polonais;

- de coordonner et de partager l'expérience de gestion avec leurs collègues polonais; et
- de déclarer leur volonté d'abattre la clôture entre les deux parcs, si le plan de gestion conclut que cela améliorerait la viabilité.

En outre, il faudrait demander aux gouvernements de Pologne et de Biélorussie s'ils acceptent de désigner la forêt de Bialowieza comme unique bien transfrontier inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

