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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

37<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 5-8 December 2017

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**REPORT**

**ON THE SPOT EXPERT APPRAISAL OF THE  
BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA NATIONAL PARK (BELARUS)**

11-13 April 2017

*Document prepared  
by Mr Hervé Lethier (Switzerland)*

## BACKGROUND

The mission aimed to appraise the **BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA NATIONAL PARK** (), Belarus, suitability for the renewal of the European diploma.

The visit took place from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017 (**Annex 1**); according to the Council of Europe requirements<sup>1</sup>, the appraisal was based on the Regulations of the European diploma of protected areas (**CM/ResDip(2008)1, Appendix 3**).

The expert spent 3 days visiting the area and meeting with local experts and officials (**Annexes 2 and 3**).

## INTRODUCTION

The European Diploma was awarded to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park in **1997**<sup>2</sup> and the diploma was then renewed in **2002**<sup>3</sup> and **2013**<sup>4</sup>. 2 conditions and 11 recommendations were attached to the last renewal.

It is located in the extreme West of Belarus, 300 km from Minsk, at the border with Poland, nearby the small town of Kameniuki, Brest region (**Map 1**).



**Map 1** – Location of the diplomed holding area (Source : Wikipedia).

Situated in the continental biogeographical region (**Map 2**), the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park covers more than 150 000 ha of mixed forests (**Map 3**).

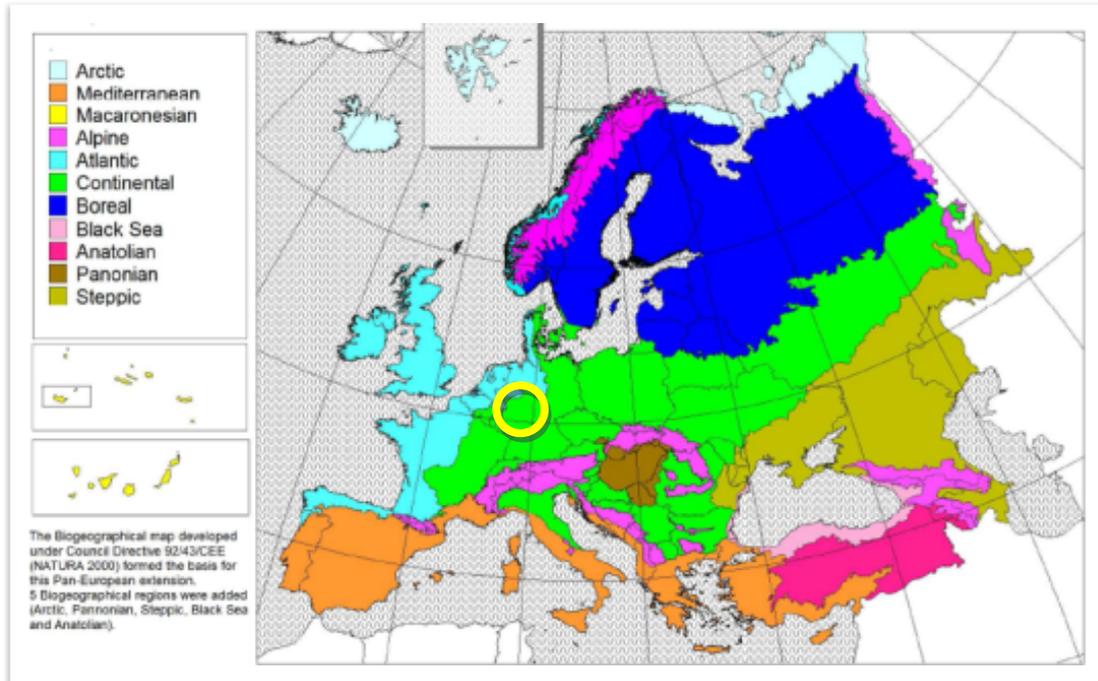
<sup>1</sup> Convocation dated 24 March 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Res. 97/23.

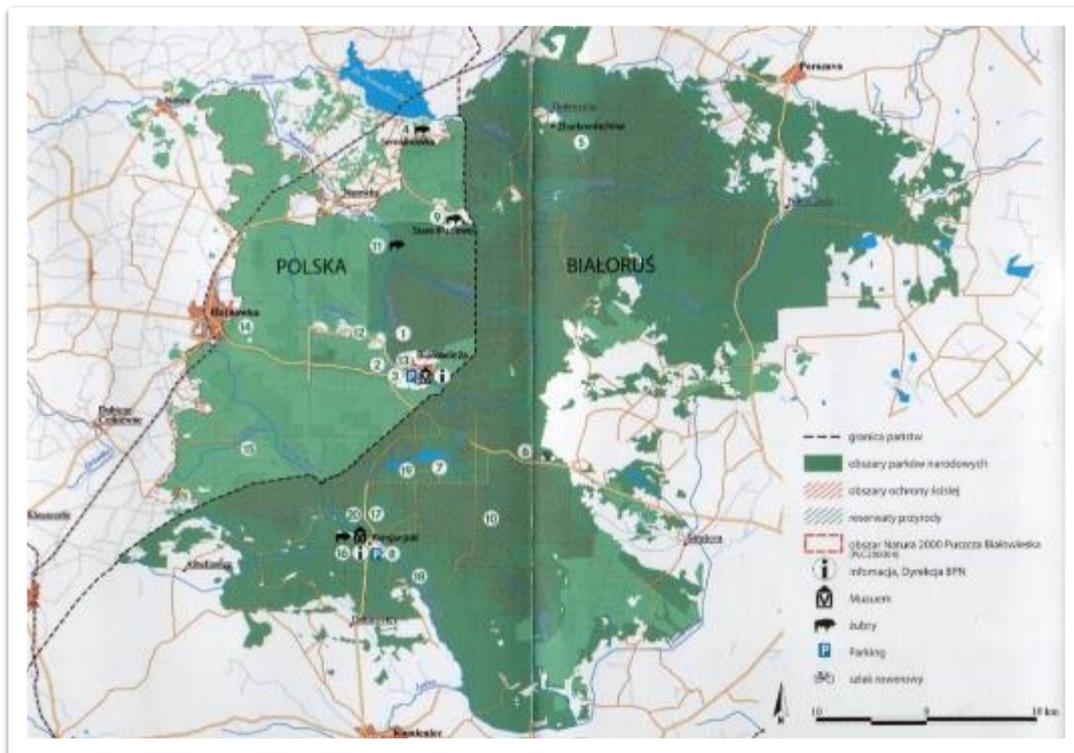
<sup>3</sup> ResDio(2002)4.

<sup>4</sup> ResDip(2013)1.

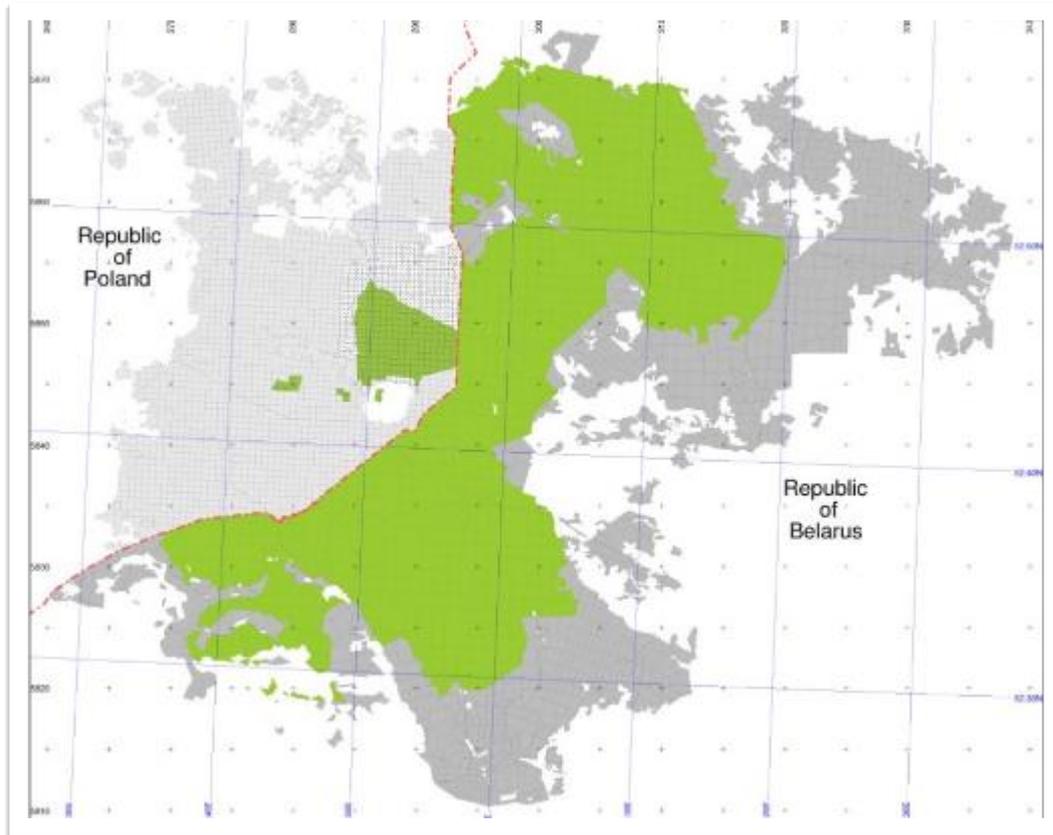
Part of its territory has been listed on the natural World Heritage in 1979 (**Map 4**) and various types of wetlands have been designated on the Ramsar List (**Map 5**) in 2015; it is also covered by a Biosphere Reserve established in 1978 (**Map 6**).



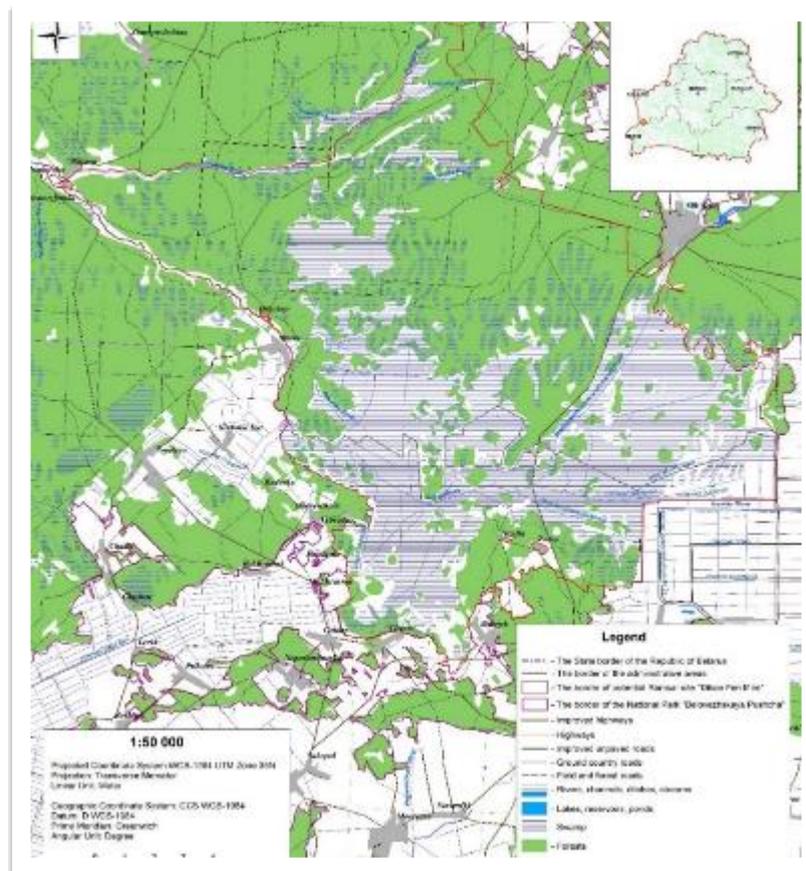
**Map 2** – Biogeographical map, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park location (Source : EU website).



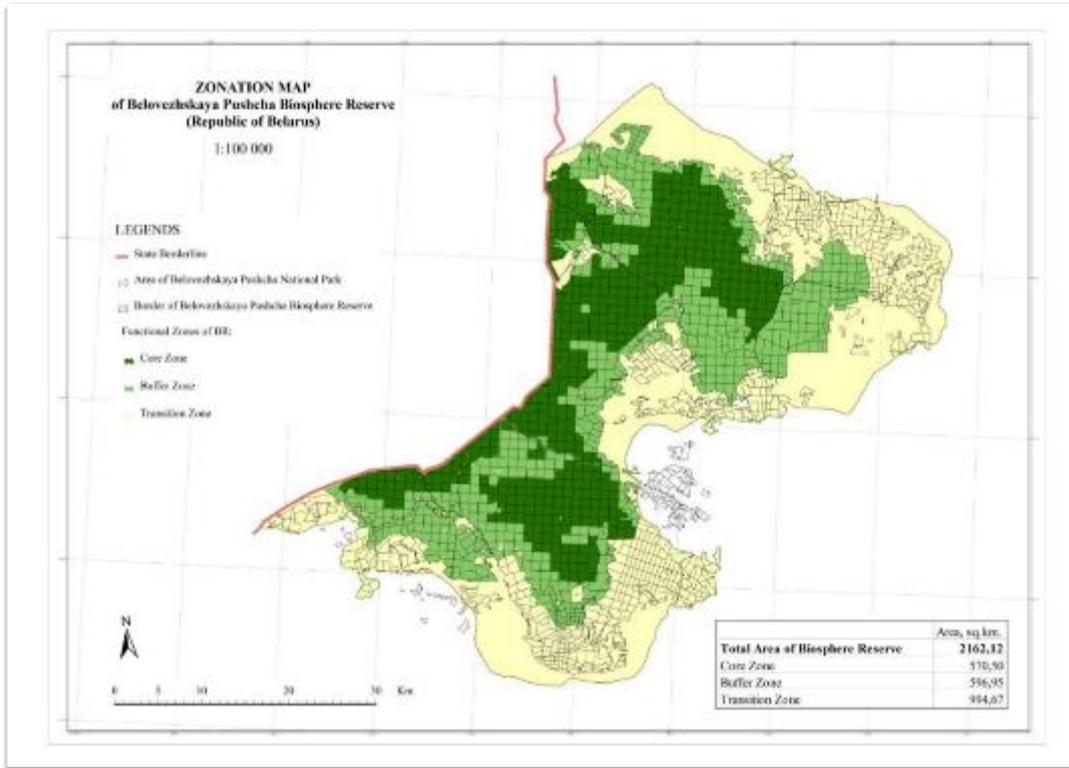
**Map 3** – Location and borders of the diplomed area (2017) (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park).



Map 4 – Limits of the World heritage site, core and buffer zones (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

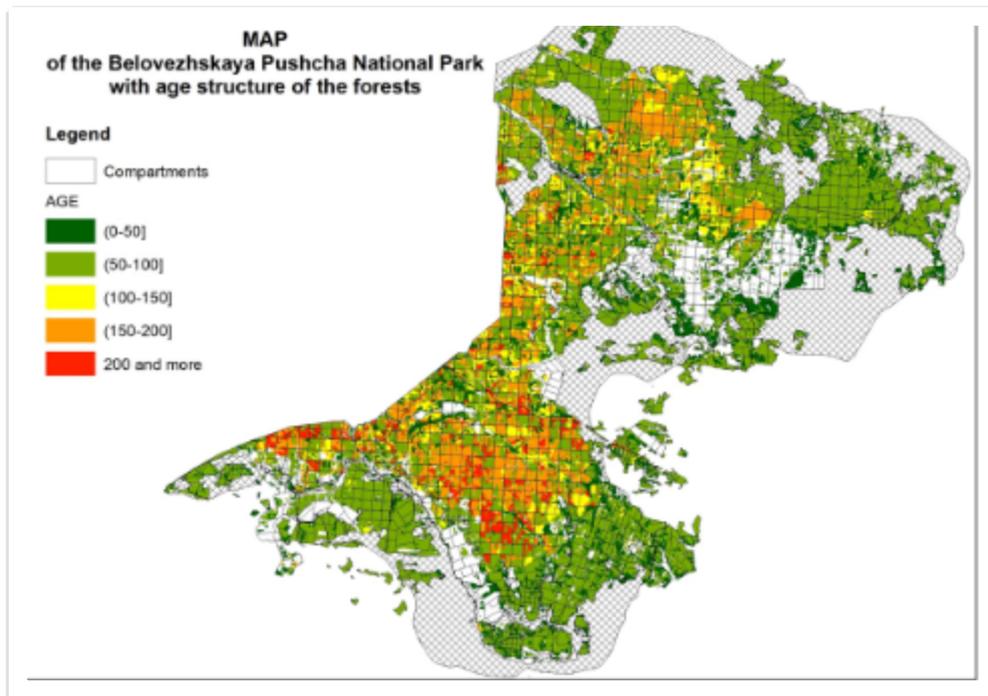


Map 5 – Limits of the Ramsar site (Source: Ramsar website).



Map 6 – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park Biosphere Reserve (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

Natural forests are spread over the area; they cover more than 65,9% of the whole territory of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Map 7). The rest of the territory is composed of semi-natural forests (12,7%), wetlands (7,1%), extensive farming areas (6,9%), opened areas (3,9%) and others (3,5%), mostly infrastructures (Figure 1 and Pictures 1 to 6).



Map 7 – Age structure of the forest in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).



**Picture 1** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, natural mixed forest (Source: EMC2I).



**Picture 2** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, natural pine forest (Source: EMC2I).



**Picture 3** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, natural wetlands (Source: EMC2I).



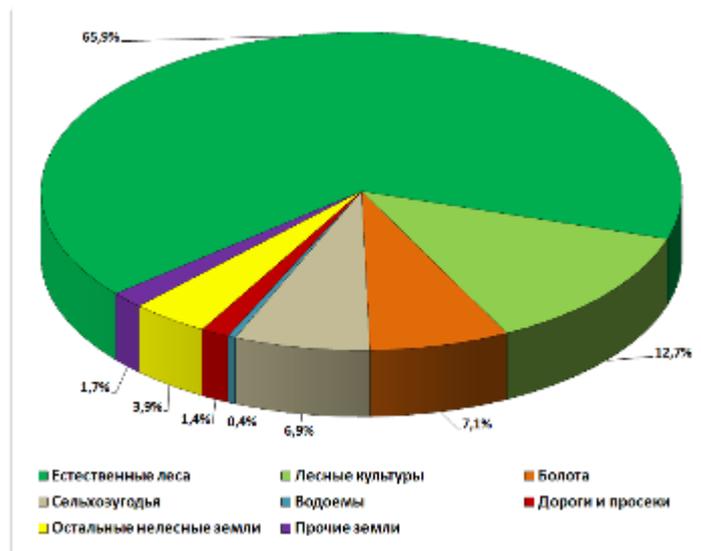
**Picture 4** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, restored wetlands (Source: EMC2I).



**Picture 5** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, natural flooded forest (Source: EMC2I).



**Picture 6** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, meadows with bison grazing (Source: EMC2I).



**Figure 1** – Composition of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration). For further details, refer to the application document (T-PVS/DE (2014) 8).

## 1. APPRAISAL

The information hereafter follows **Res. (98)29** of the regulation of the European diploma of protected areas, **appendix 3**.

### 1.1 EUROPEAN INTEREST

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park comprises many elements of biological European interest; it is known to have an outstanding universal value under both criteria (ix) and (x) of the World Heritage Convention; its biodiversity is extensive and regionally significant (**Table 1**); the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park is also notable for wetlands.

New species have been described here and many rare and threatened species listed on the annexes to the Bern Convention are also represented in the area.

Taxon	N. species	Taxon	N. species
All plants	2406	Mammals	59
Angiosperms	984	Birds	254
Gymnosperms	7	incl. nesting birds	184
Lycopodiophyta, Equisetopsida, Polypodiophyta	33	Reptiles	7
Bryophyta	270	Amphibians	11
Lichenophyta	292	Fish	27
Algae	250	Insects	up to 10000
Fungi	570		

**Table 1** - Biodiversity of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

- together with the contiguous Bialowieza NP (Poland), the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park hosts approximately 900 individuals of the iconic European Bison (*Bonassus bonassus*) which make almost 25% of the total world's population and over than 30% of free-living animals<sup>5</sup>. It hosts wolf (*Canis lupus*) and lynx (*Lynx lynx*), as well as viable populations of other large mammals, elk (*Alces alces*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), fish otter (*Lutra lutra*), European beaver (*Castor fiber*) and wild boar (*Sus crofa*); it is also well-known for bats;
- several important bird areas (IBAs), known as being also of international importance, lie within the diploma holding area; threatened species like aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) and great (*Aquila clanga*) and lesser (*Clanga pomarina*) spotted eagles as well as white tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), white and black storks (*Ciconia ciconia*, *Ciconia nigra*) and corncrake (*Crex crex*), amongst many other species of birds listed on the annexes to the Bern Convention, breed and/or migrate every year in the diploma holding area which hosts also breeding populations of capercaillies (*Tetrao urogallus*), black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) and hazel grouse (*Tetrastes bonasia*);
- the sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) and the spruce (*Picea abies*) are here respectively at their northeastern and southern limits of its northern range of distribution;
- the richness of the natural forests in dead wood, standing and on the ground, leads to a high biodiversity and provides outstanding examples of ecological and biological processes still on-going, in the evolution and development of various ecosystems and communities which are of European interest.

Species	Year					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Red deer	1572	2181	1850	1266	1620	1830
Roe deer	660	732	590	636	665	764
Elk	141	202	85	191	142	170
Wild boar	1872	1633	1340	465	655	36
Bison	428	456	460	462	480	482

<sup>5</sup> Source : World Heritage Centre web site.

**Table 2** – Dynamic of ungulates in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, on the period 2011-2015 (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

As shown in **Table 2**, the red deer population has remained stable since the last renewal; this population is abnormally high due to winter feeding. In addition to a significant negative impact on the forest regeneration, the excessive density of those ungulates leads to the destruction of number of rare and endangered plant species in the diploma holding area<sup>6</sup>.

The boar population has decreased drastically during the reference period, due to recurrent pathologies and the level of the population is still very low.

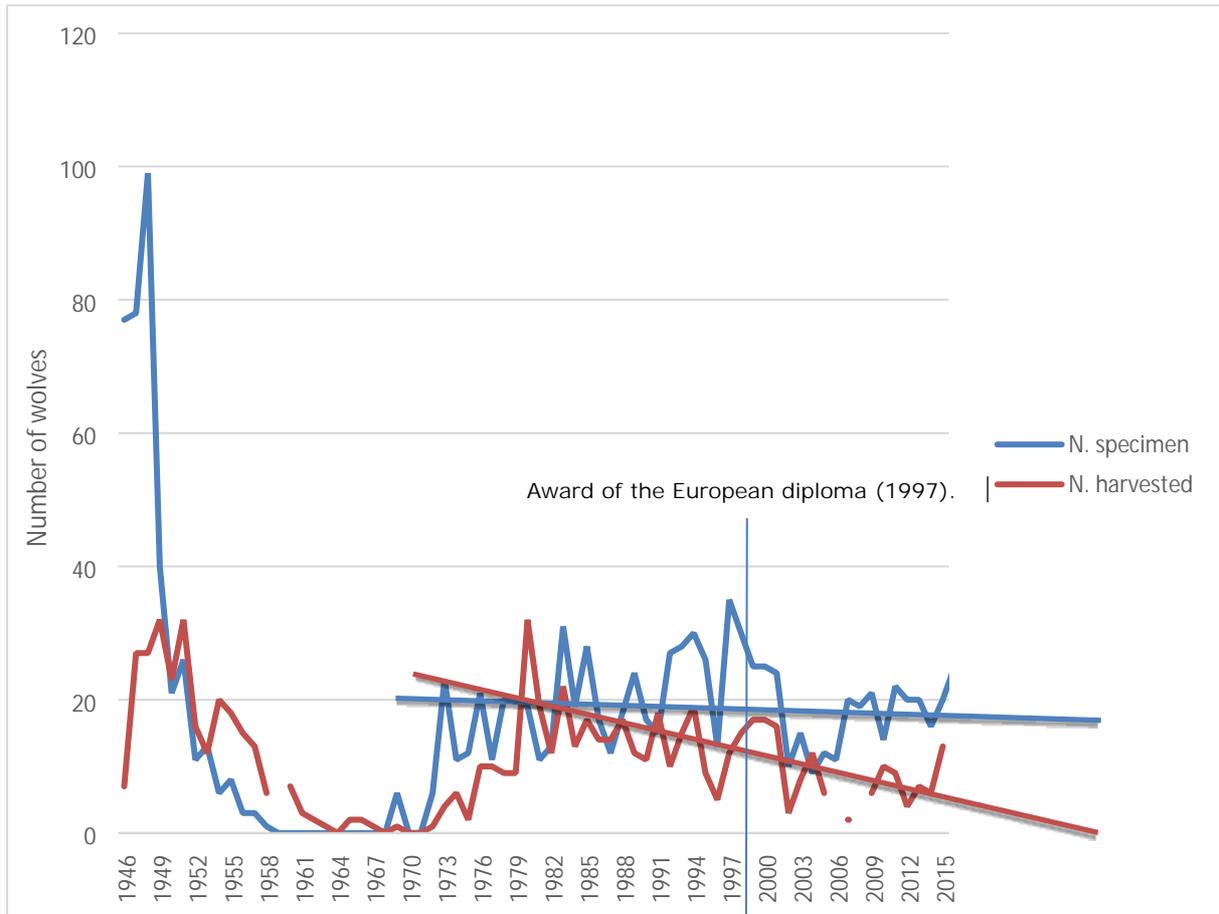
<b>Year</b>	<b>N. specimens</b>	<b>N. /100 ha</b>	<b>N. harvested</b>
1997	<b>35</b>	<b>0,40</b>	12
1998	30	0,40	15
1999	25	0,20	17
2000	25	0,20	17
2001	24	0,20	16
2002	10	0,10	3
2003	15	0,10	8
2004	9	0,05	12
2005	12	0,07	6
2006	11	0,06	-
2007	20	0,12	2
2008	19	0,10	-
2009	21	0,12	6
2010	14	0,09	10
2011	22	0,14	9
2012	20	0,13	4
2013	20	0,13	7
2014	16	0,10	6
2015	20	0,13	13
2016	<b>25</b>	<b>0,15</b>	?
<b>TOTAUX</b>	<b>1253</b>		<b>750</b>

**Table 3** – Wolf tendencies in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park since the award of the European Diploma (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park<sup>2</sup> administration).

The wolf population has remained also stable since the last renewal (**Table 3**), although it has decreased slightly during the 50 last years and significantly since the award of the European diploma, in 1997 (**Figure 2**).

Despite the moratorium on wolf hunting adopted in 2015, thanks to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration, this situation is rather worrisome and should require greater attention from the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration; the harvest during the last five years have been high, especially in 2015 when more than 60% of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park wolf population have been harvested. Furthermore, the wolf could and should be an effective way to reduce the excessive ungulate density in the whole Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.

<sup>6</sup> See Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park management plan, introduction.



**Figure 2** – Wolf dynamic and tendencies (demography and harvest), period 1946/2015 (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

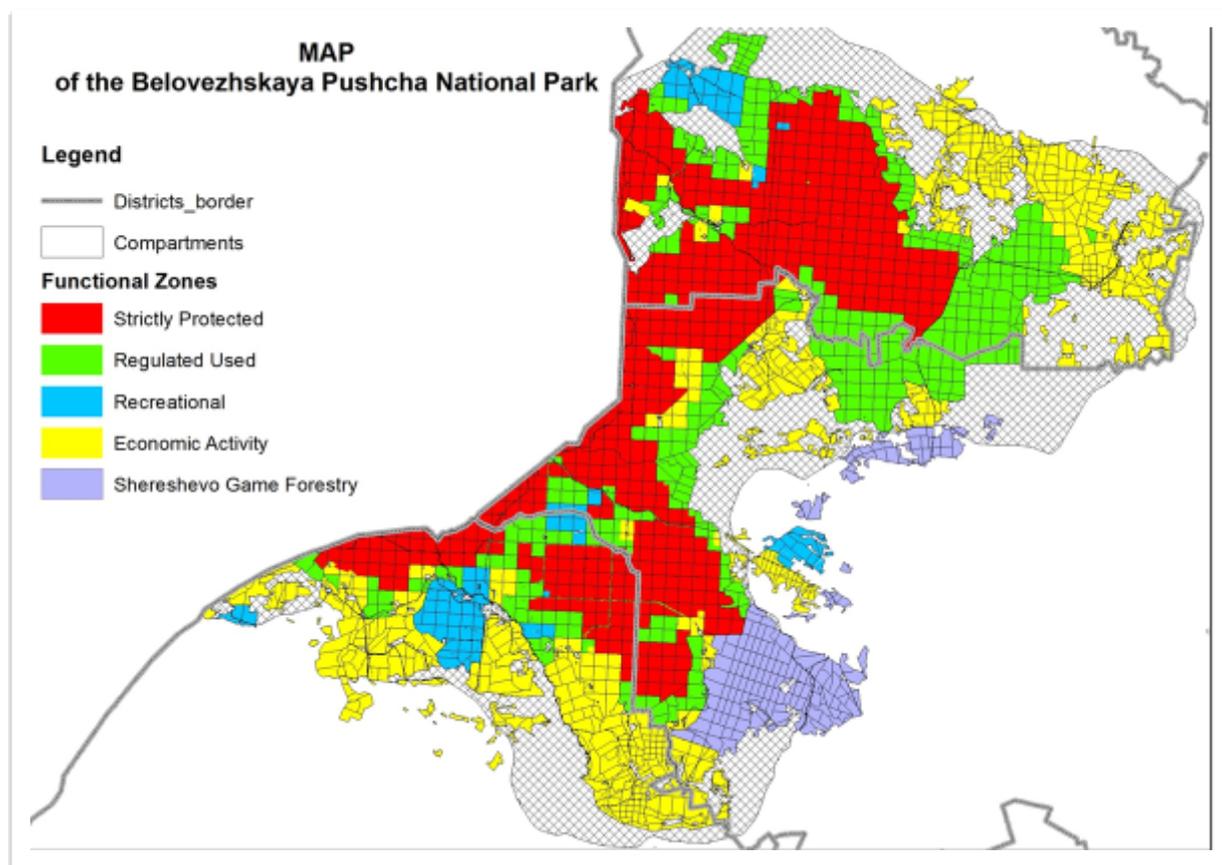
In conclusion, the natural values of the diploma holding area have not changed significantly since the last renewal; the area still meets the requirements of the European diploma regulations regarding the European interest.

However, the abnormal density of red deer in the area should require more efforts from the State party and the legal status as well as the state of conservation of the wolf should be strengthened.

## 1.2 PROTECTION AND ZONING

The diploma holding area is managed under the legal regime of a “national park”; it comprises four “zones” where uses and activities are regulated or forbidden, according to their specific management goals (**Map 8**) and as defined by the Presidential Decree n°59 dated 9 February 2012, amending the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park management plan on 28 May 2012:

- the **nature strict protection zone** (58 300 ha, 38 %) aims at preserving the ecological and biological natural processes as well as the bio and landscape diversity. That zone dedicated to research activities only, is not actively managed; all uses are strictly forbidden, including logging and hunting;
- the **regulated zone** (37 900 ha, 26,1%) aims at preserving the landscape and ecological character of the area; restoration and management activities can be performed as long as they do not affect the values of the diploma holding area and if they contribute to strengthen its values; recreational sustainable activities are allowed but regulated in order to preserve the integrity and naturalness of the area. That zone plays also the role of ecological corridor between natural habitats important for conservation, in and out the diploma holding area;



**Map 8** – Functional zonation of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

- the *recreational zone* (8 000 ha, 5,2%) is opened to economic uses and activities which are compatible with the natural features of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. Only sustainable uses of natural resources and traditional methods are allowed. This zone hosts accommodations, facilities and infrastructures linked to tourism and other recreational activities, such as visitor and information centres, hiking/biking trails, picnic grounds. Visitors are welcomed in that zone, however they must respect the park regulation and they must not compromise the natural features and values of the park;
- the *economic zone* (45 900 ha, 30,7%) aims at developing other economic activities, as much as they are compatible with the ecological character of the diploma holding area; there, logging, farming and hunting are allowed but regulated;

In addition to those restrictions, mining exploration and exploitation, peat extraction, pollution, introduction of invasive species and all uses and activities that may have negative significant effects on the ecological and landscape character of the diploma holding area are forbidden.

The size and proportion of each zone have slightly changed over the years and the core zone of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park has been slightly expanded since the last renewal (**Figure 3**), thanks to minor modifications (**Map 9**)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Decret n°99 dated 16 May 2016.

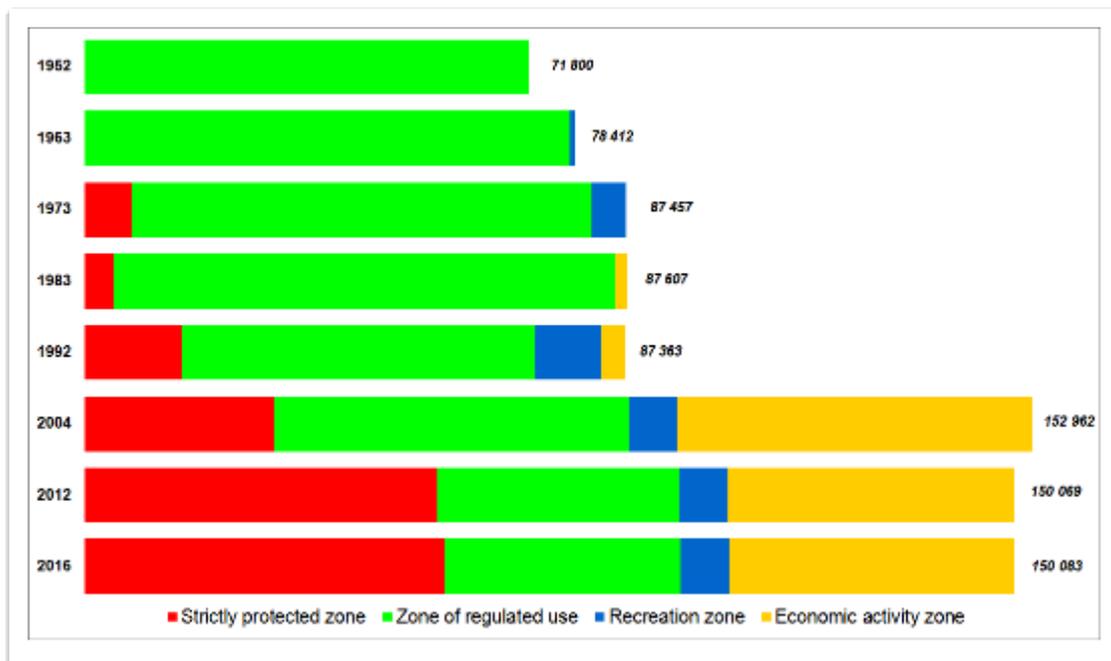
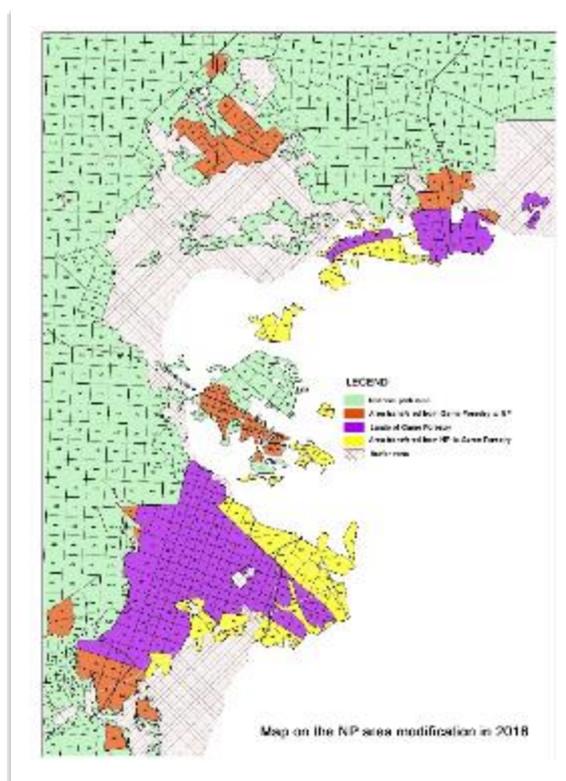


Figure 3 – Zoning tendencies on the period 1952-2016 (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

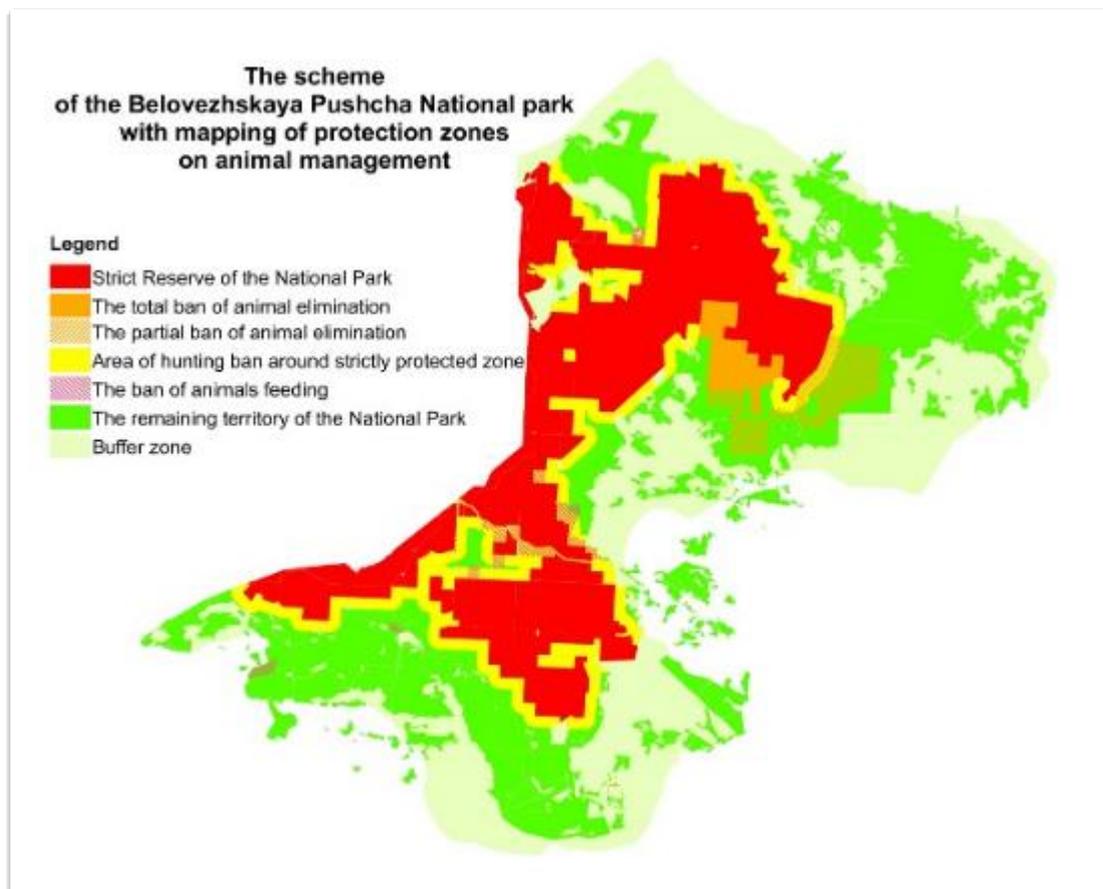


Map 9 – Modification of zoning, 2016 (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration also manages two fenced *game areas* covering 5 000 ha altogether: the Shereshevo and Pashuki game reserves. Those reserves are outside but adjacent to the diplomated holding area and whilst established and managed for game, they host species of European interest, like the black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) and contribute indirectly to the biological values of the diploma holding area.

Ideally, hunting activities should be limited to those two game reserves only. In fact, hunting is forbidden as well as feeding in the strict protected zone and in a narrow strip of land surrounding it

(Map 10); those activities also allowed and practiced on the rest of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park territory.



**Map 10** - Wildlife management zonation (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

A recommendation was made by the Council of Europe in 2002<sup>8</sup> for prohibiting hunting in the whole national park, however this recommendation has not been implemented so far and hunting, as well as feeding of ungulates, remain two important management issues.

Efforts have been done by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration to reduce those activities in the park in general and the number of feeding places has been reduced whilst their location have been adapted also so as avoiding the most sensitive areas. The abundance of ungulates is still subnormal, exceeding the natural carrying capacity of the area; efforts to regulate the deer population and reduce drastically feeding should be strengthened in the future, in order to come back to a less artificial ecological context.

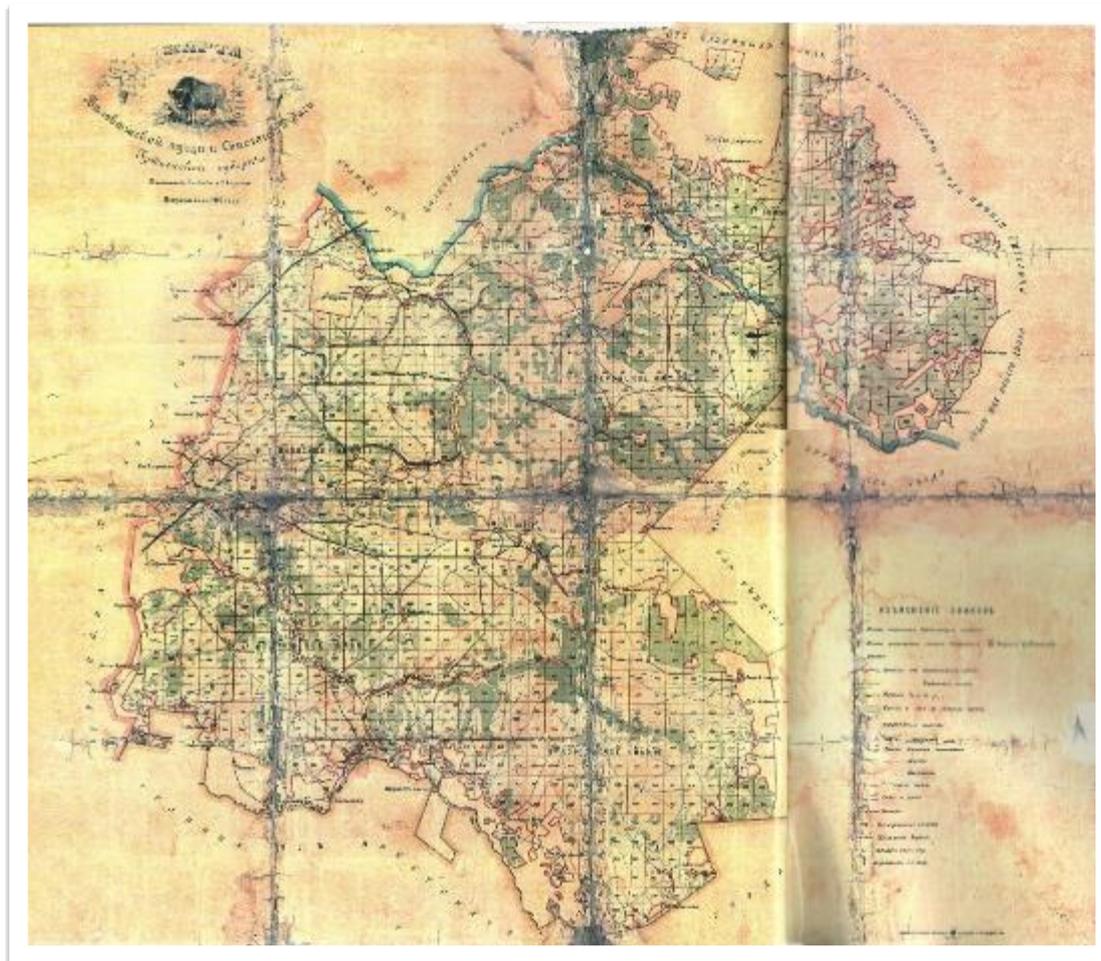
In conclusion, the legal regime of protection of the diploma holding area has not changed since the last renewal of the diploma; only minor border modifications have been made to the zoning, contributing to strengthen the preservation of the diploma holding area. The area still meets the European diploma management requirements.

Finally, the expert wishes to make the following comments, with regards to the management and zoning of the diploma holding area:

- the zonation still looks like a mosaic with several small inclusions in the various zones; this context does not appear to be always comprehensive, and it is probably not easy to manage. Those enclaves should be removed and, as done several times in the past, the strict protection zone should be enlarged to improve the contiguity of the protected areas and to optimize the efforts for preservation of the European interest of the diploma holding area as well as to preserve the ecological and biological natural processes at best;

<sup>8</sup> ResDip(2002)4, Rec. 11.

- as planned when the two game reserves were established, hunting should also be more restricted. The State Party should be urged to strengthen its efforts on reducing the feeding of ungulates. This would require from the State party a clearer vision on hunting leading to ban this activity and stop the feeding of ungulates – except for the bison when necessary - at least from the whole historic Bialowieza forest (Map 11), and ideally from the whole Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park; hunting should be shifted to the two game reserves.



Map 11 – “Historic” limits of the Bialowieza forest (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

## 1.3 MANAGEMENT

### 1.3.1 Planning system

The diploma holding area is covered with a 2016-2020 management plan; this plan contains three main goals that are fully compatible with the European diploma regulation:

- to preserve the ecological and biological features of the area;
- to develop sustainable recreational activities and tourism;
- to improve the knowledge and carry out research activities on forest and wetland ecosystems.

Most activities included in that plan have been and/or are being implemented.

Since the last renewal, the zoning and the legal regime of each zone have been modified in a way to strengthen the conservation of the whole area and its buffer zone. For example:

- land use and management in the local villages and districts must take into consideration the presence of the diploma holding area and they must be compatible with the conservation goals;
- combatting invasive species is allowed, even in the protection zone where it was forbidden to intervene in the past;



conservation of wildlife *stricto sensu*, most employees being engaged in infrastructure management and socioeconomic activities such as hunting, logging and tourism.

The expert had intensive and helpful discussions with the staff of the research and conservation units; the employees are professional and skilled.

Finally, progress should also be noted in the management regime of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park with regard to the cooperation between the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration and the civil society which are represented as well as NGOs, in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park scientific and technical Committee.

### 1.3.3 Accommodations and other technical capacities

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration manages many buildings and accommodations, including hotels, guest houses, restaurants and other tourist facilities.

The best-known facility is the “*Father frost Manor*” complex (**Pictures 7 to 10**) which offer recreational activities for children mostly; thousands of people visit that complex every year. The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park manages also a large headquarter building hosting the office of the administration as well as a visitor centre (**Pictures 11 and 12**), a modern museum and basic accommodations for visitors. All those accommodations were upgraded and renovated for the 600th anniversary of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.



**Picture 7** – Father frost Manor complex (Source EMC2I).



**Picture 8** – Father frost Manor complex (Source EMC2I).



**Picture 9** – Father frost Manor complex (Source EMC2I).



**Picture 10** – Father frost Manor complex (Source EMC2I).



**Picture 11** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park Headquarter (Source EMC2I).



**Picture 12** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park Headquarter (Source EMC2I).

### 1.3.4 Budget and financial capacities

According to the figures provided to the expert by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration, the budget of the diploma holding area has slightly decreased since the last renewal (**Table 6**). However, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park has levered funds from external sources, such as the European Union, the Ramsar Small Grant Fund and the Frankfurt Zoological Society.

Year	Internal resources	State resources	External resources	Total amount (thou. \$)
2016	8510	3965	–	12475
2015	8490	3600	99	12189
2014	11260	6180	141	17580
2013	10960	6090	163	17219

**Table 6** - Dynamic of financial resources of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park for the period 2013-2016 (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

Globally, the financial capacities of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park can be regarded as acceptable and it should be mentioned that the research and conservation budget has increased significantly in 2016 compared to the years before.

However, this budget is currently only partly secured and, as mentioned here above, has tended to decrease globally since the last renewal.

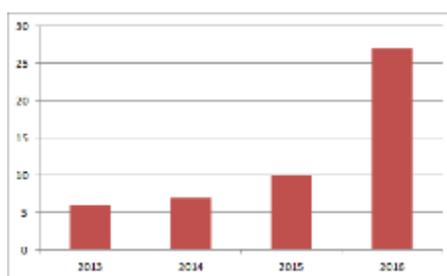
The State Party should be encouraged to secure the overall budget of the diploma holding area and to increase its own contribution.

### 1.3.5 Research and monitoring

Belarus has excellent scientists, working on biodiversity and forest research for long; there is also a long tradition of research on low disturbed forest ecosystems, in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. The state of knowledge on the natural heritage of the diploma holding area is excellent.

This tradition has led to the edition of numerous publications, including the description of new species as in 2016 when new species of odonate and mushroom (*Tuber rufum*) were described, contributing to strengthen the biological values of the diploma holding area.

The number of scientific and technical publications has also increased since the last renewal (**Figure 4 and Annex 4**).



**Figure 4** – Number of scientific and technical publications on the period 2013-2016

(Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

Various monitoring activities are carried out on fauna, mammals (eg.: bison, large predators), raptors (*Clanga clanga*, *Clanga pomarina*), amphibians, reptiles, bats, micro mammals and habitats; surveys on both old growth forests and wetlands (Dzikaje mire complex, Arlova, Hlybokaj) are carried out by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration.

In relation to Rec 8 attached to the previous renewal of the European diploma, efforts should be strengthened towards the construction of a comprehensive overall monitoring programme, including a database for management of all scientific and socioeconomic data and information. This programme should be a priority for the next years and would contribute in the sustainable development of the whole Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park region.

The State Party should be encouraged to develop such efforts and build a strong monitoring programme focused on the most specific natural and landscape features of the diploma holding area, as well as on the main anthropogenic pressures on it. This programme should include the development of a database and the establishment of ecological and socioeconomic indicators that allow to appraise the main ecological and socioeconomic trends and tendencies.

#### **1.4 USES AND SOCIOECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

Most uses and activities which are not compatible with the preservation of the main features and assets of the European interest of the diploma holding area are forbidden.

The main activities that interferes with its preservation, lead to the following comments.

##### **1.4.1 Forestry**

Forestry and tourism are the main socioeconomic activities carried out within the diploma holding area; the forest is elsewhere managed directly by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration and 140 000 m<sup>3</sup> of timber have been harvested in 2016, mainly in artificial and young mature but not ancient secondary forests.

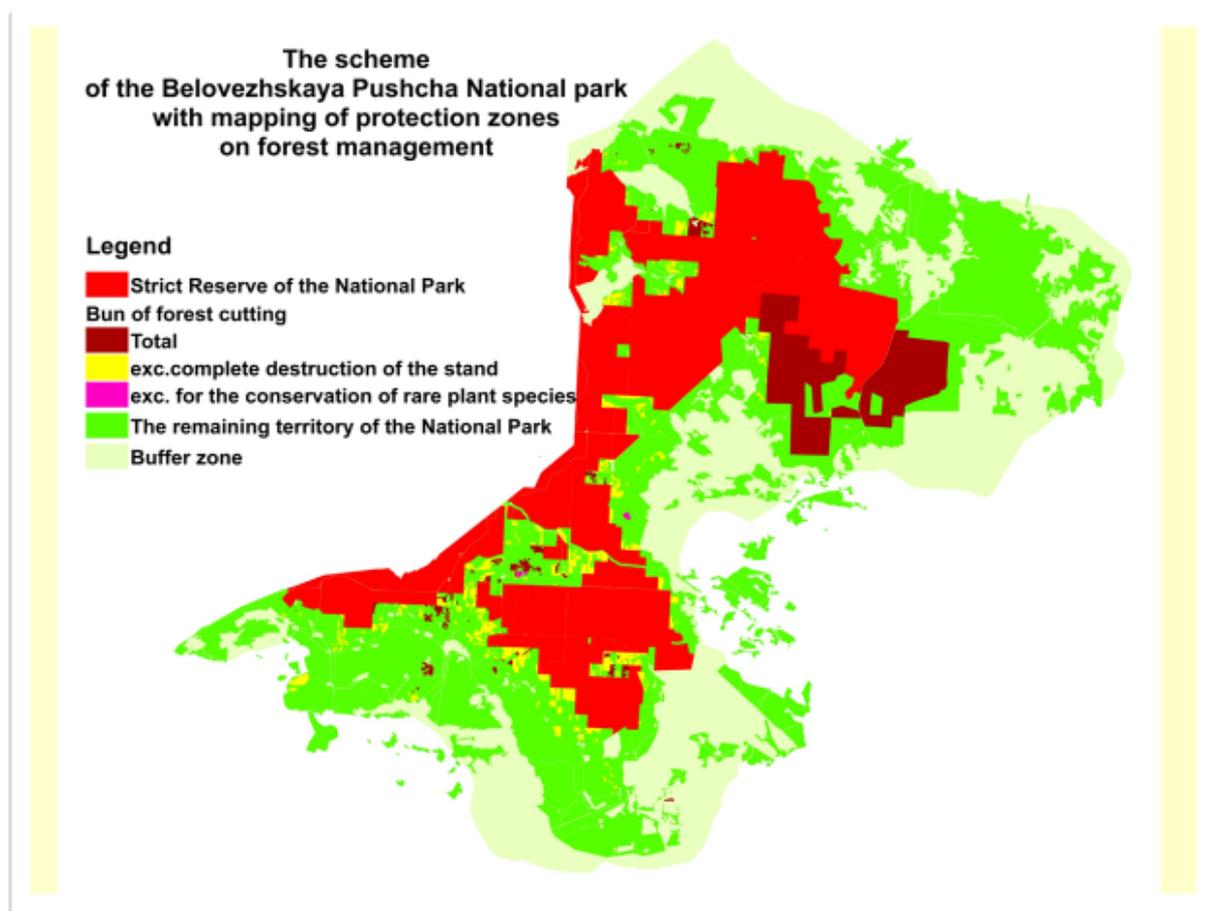
Logging is forbidden in the strictly protected zone of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park as well as in the other strict protected areas. Furthermore, new restrictions have been put in place in 2012, in areas of valuable forest ecosystems that are not included in the protected zone: logging and removal of dead trees as well as sanitary cuttings are forbidden in those areas.

90% of the old growth forests – elder than 100 years - are fully protected; 10% of those forests are however still exploited. The forest classification and zonation is not always fully comprehensive (**Map 12**).

As established in the 2016-2020 Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park management plan, the overall objective of the forest management in the diploma holding area, should seek to enhance the natural ecological and biological processes and to lead this management towards the long-term preservation and restoration of a “wild” forest, at least at the level of the historical Bialowieza forest.

A clear definition of sanitary cuttings as well as guidance on how to manage those cuttings should also be established.

In conclusion, the development of the next Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park management plan should lead to a deep review of the forest management and logging, including the issue of the sanitary cuttings and removal of dead trees; this plan should aim to clarify the current context and to minimize/remove the many enclaves that are still present in the core of the strict protected zone.



**Map 12** – Forest zoning and management in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

#### 1.4.2 Tourism

Development of tourism is one of the three goals of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park management plan.

Tourism is an important socioeconomic activity for the diploma holding area, several hundred thousand people visiting the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park every year.

Public access is strictly regulated and the diploma holding area offers many high standard equipment and tourist accommodations.

Most buildings and the signalisation of the diploma holding area have been upgraded and restored for the 600th anniversary of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park; their maintenance is excellent (**Pictures 12 to 15**).

Except for the Father frost Manor complex which covers 14 ha and for which detailed data on the number of visitors are available, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration does not have a clear overall view on the pressure from tourism on the area; this complex is fenced and it has no direct impact on the diploma holding area and the tourism pressure in general, has slightly decreased in the recent years, due to the economic context.



Picture 12 – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park Entrance (Source: EMC21)



Picture 13 – Hotel/restaurant managed by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration (Source: EMC21).



Picture 14 – Tourist facilities (Source: EMC21).



Picture 15 – Tourist information (Source: EMC21).

For the future, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National administration intends to develop sustainable tourism based on the park natural assets and to avoid a mass tourism which would not be compatible with the overall vision of the State party and could deteriorate the original features of the diploma holding area, degrade as well its integrity and European values.

The development of the next management plan should give the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration the opportunity to review in depth the current context of tourism and to elaborate a strategic approach taking into consideration the limited carrying capacities of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park and its high ecological sensitivity.

This review should address important issues such as the location of the tourism equipment and facilities<sup>11</sup> in the future, the awareness programme/activities for tourists, the staff skills/capacities in ecotourism, the promotion of cultural heritage<sup>12</sup>,... and make recommendations on those matters, amongst others. Those recommendations should be prepared in close cooperation with the local population, living in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.

The local cultural heritage should also become a key asset for the development of tourism.

#### 1.4.3 Agriculture

Farming is not a strategic activity any more within the diploma holding area; the farm lands cover an area of 10 000 ha, only a third of them being still exploited extensively (3 000 ha), partly in order to provide food to bison.

Most farm lands are located at the border of the area, outside the key zones for conservation of biodiversity. However, some of them include wet meadows, swamps and other wetlands of biological value and international importance, offering excellent habitats for rare and threatened fauna and flora species.

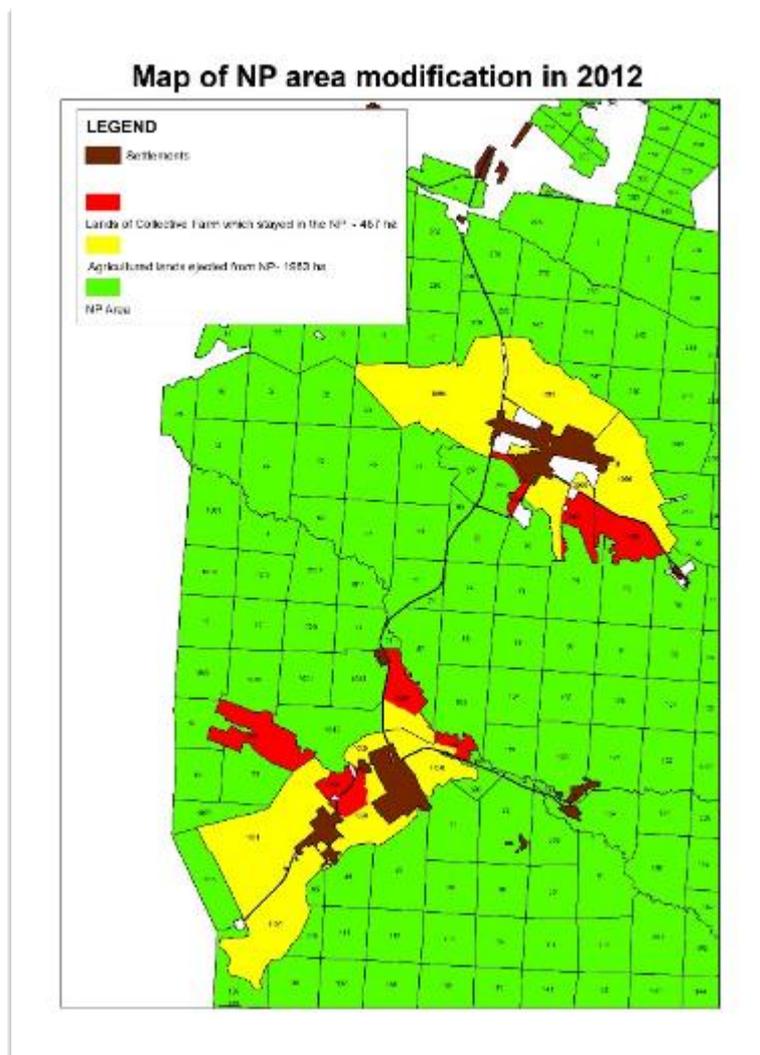
<sup>11</sup> The Father frost manor for example, which is in the core of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, could be removed in a less sensitive area, nearby its border.

<sup>12</sup> Architecture, traditional uses and activities, green products, crafts, ...

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration leads restoration/conversion activities on those lands with support of foreign organisations such as the Frankfurt Zoological Society which funds a large programme on « *wilderness* », and in close cooperation with APB Birdlife Belarus<sup>13</sup>.

2 000 ha of farmlands have been excluded from the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park territory in 2012; they have been compensated by the inclusion of abandoned farmlands (**Map 13**).

In addition to the promotion of the extensification of farming activities, those modifications are regarded to be positive for the diploma holding area.



**Map 13** – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park territory modifications (2012)  
(Source : Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

The State party should be encouraged to sustain its efforts to include and restore the abandoned farmlands, as well as to promote and develop extensification and green farming around the diploma holding area.

#### 1.4.4 Hunting

This issue has been addressed above in this report. Hunting is an important and traditional activity which is also managed by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration; the park legislation forbids hunting in 65 000 ha of the park territory (**Map 10 and Table 7**).

<sup>13</sup> The Parties have agreed in a MoU to focus their cooperation on strengthening wilderness in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, supporting restoration of natural processes in forest ecosystems, and promoting the area as a wilderness reference area on international level.

Protection status	Area, ha	%
Strictly Protection Zone	57 051	38,02%
The territory of the other functional zones where animal elimination and feeding are prohibited	8 794	5,86%
<b>Total area of lands where animal elimination is prohibited</b>	<b>65 845</b>	<b>43,88%</b>
The territory of the other functional zones where animal feeding is prohibited	2 215	1,48%
<b>Total area of lands with ban of animal feeding</b>	<b>68 060</b>	<b>45,35%</b>
<b>Total area of National Park:</b>	<b>150 069</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

**Table 7** – Hunting and feeding regulation in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

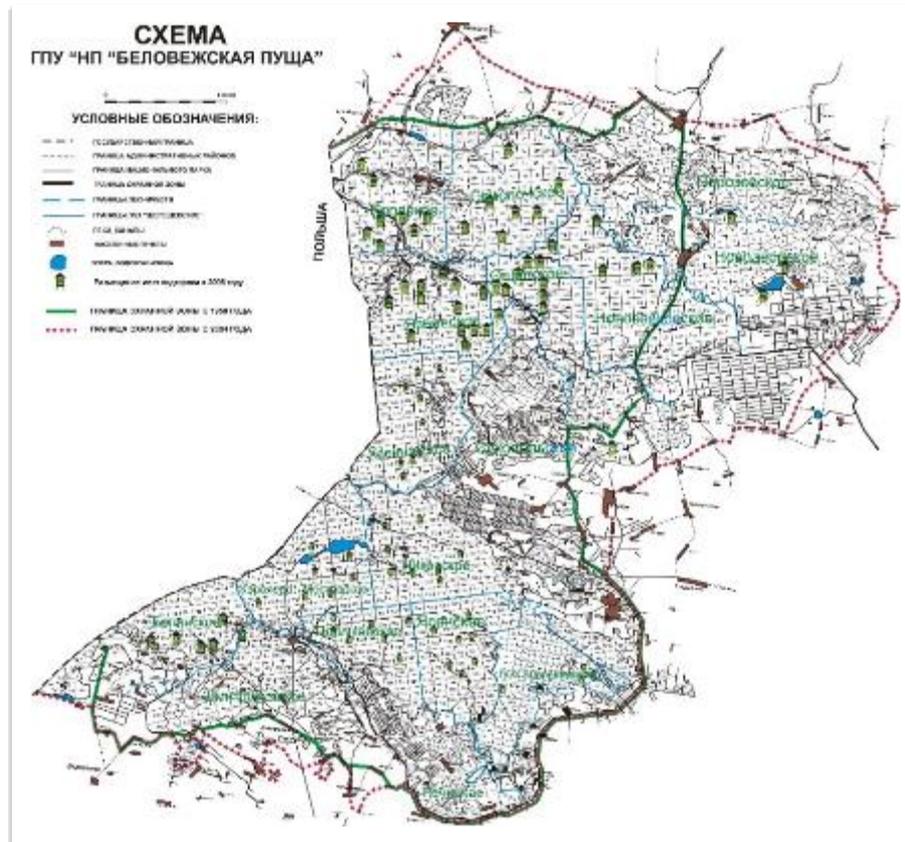
This activity has always been a matter of concern over the years, leading to several recommendations in the previous renewal decisions.

Since the last renewal, efforts have been done by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration to reduce the number of feeding sites in the park and to limit this activity in its periphery, mainly in the economic zone and in the game reserves (**Map 14**); 54 sites have been removed from the park since 2012. Two game reserves were also established at the border and outside the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park territory, with the initial objective to remove game activities from the park.

Despite these improvements, hunting is still controversial and the most recent data collected by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration shows that the deer density has not been reduced drastically as it should have been, since the last renewal.

Efforts for reducing winter feeding of ungulates since the last renewal should be acknowledged; The State party should be invited to continue those efforts and to develop hunting in priority in the two game reserves that have been set up for that purpose and to minimize hunting pressure in the diploma holding area.

Attention should be also paid by the State party to limit hunting on sensitive species like the elk (*Alces alces*). In the long term and as already recommended in 2012, the hunting ban should be assessed, at least in the historical Bialowieza forest, so as to enhance the natural ecological processes on the basis of which the area was recognized in 1997, for its outstanding environmental value and European interest.



Map 14 – Current location of the feeding places of ungulates  
(Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

## 1.5 OTHERS

Two specific issues will be addressed; both led already to recommendations in 2012.

### 1.5.1 Invasive species

Invasive species are another matter of concern in the diploma holding area; 105 alien species of trees, shrubs and herbs are growing spontaneously in the forests of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <sup>14</sup>, several of them being invasive like *Quercus rubra* and *Solidago canadensis*, spread over abandoned farmlands (Picture 16).



Picture 16 – *Solidago Canadensis* in abandoned farmlands  
(Source: EMC21).

Alien fauna species, like exotic carp or fallow deer (*Dama dama*) escaped from hunting enclosures have also been recorded; this species does not seem to be a matter of concern anymore.

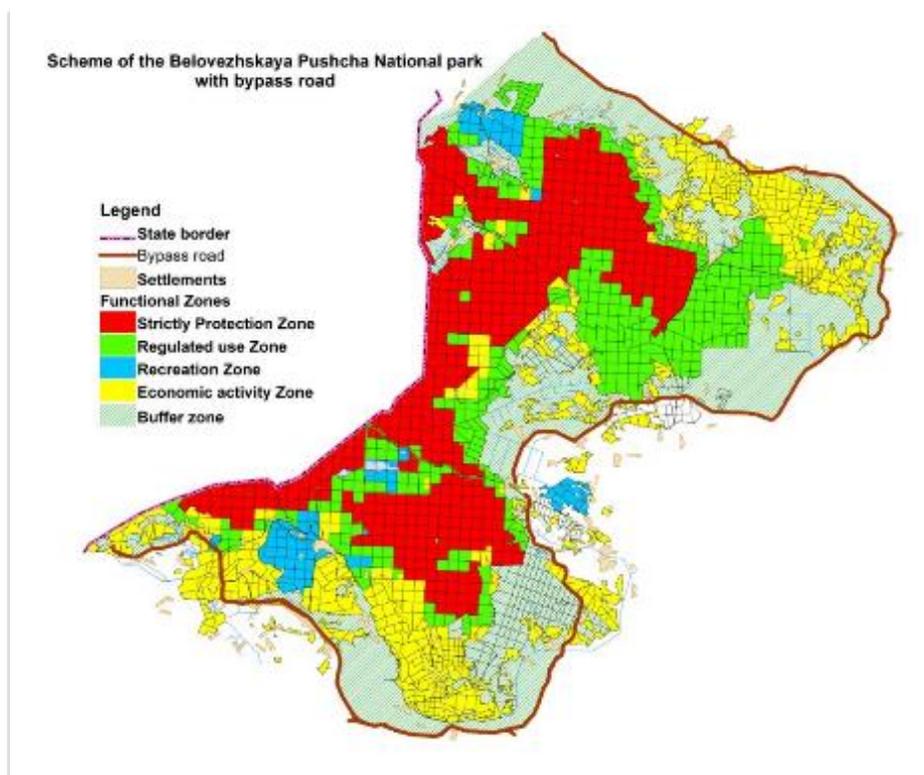
<sup>14</sup> BPNP 2008 Management Plan.

Active management against invasive species is allowed since 2012, in the whole protected area, and the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration has started to implement a specific programme of eradication of the red oak (*Quercus rubra*).

The action of the State party against invasive species should be acknowledged; it should be encouraged to sustain its efforts, especially to combat the dispersion of the red oak and to forbid all introduction and release of alien species including fish.

### 1.5.2 By pass road

The bypass road has been tracked mainly outside the diploma holding area (**Map 15**), along the border of the buffer zone of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park; it does not affect directly the core zone of the park. This road has been built on pre-existing roads as a compensation for the local population, to the expansion of the strict protected zone; it was seen also as a facility for developing ecotourism for the benefit of the local economy, and reducing disturbance from car traffic, on the secondary roads crossing the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.



**Map 15** – Bypass road (Source: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration).

Assessment and monitoring of the impacts of the bypass road is needed, in relation to the long-term preservation of the diploma holding area and to the sustainable development of the region; this monitoring was recommended in the 2013 decision renewing the European diploma.

It should be recommended to the State party to continue monitoring the potential positive/negative effects of this road on the integrity and values of the diploma holding area and to report annually on the conclusions of this monitoring with regard to the European significance of the area.

### 1.5.3 Cultural heritage



Picture 17 – Traditional architecture (Source: EMC2I).



Picture 18 – Traditional architecture (Source: EMC2I).



Picture 19 – Traditional architecture (Source: EMC2I).



Picture 20 – Old orchard (local breeds) (Source: EMC2I).

The cultural heritage is also a key asset of the diploma holding area; unfortunately, poor attention is given to the preservation of this heritage which is collapsing.

The local architecture as well as the traditional rural activities are disappearing and there is a strong and urgent need to stop and reverse those tendencies.

Specific programmes of renovation of old cottages and villages should be engaged; there is also a crucial need to preserve older breeds of fruits and crops varieties and it should be recommended to the State party to develop specific activities for the preservation of the old orchards.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Diploma was renewed in 2013 with 2 conditions and 11 recommendations.

### 2.1 CONDITIONS

- **Condition 1** - *The implementation of the new conservation law in the National Park, including the implementation on site of the relevant conservation management plan attached to the new zonation, is completed within a period of three years:*

A new park regulation was adopted in 2012<sup>15</sup>; this regulation has been implemented since that time.

**This condition is regarded as fulfilled.**

- **Condition 2** - *Any development with possible negative effects on the National Park and its integrity, including the buffer zones, should be subject to an environmental impact assessment and the National Park authorities should be duly consulted:*

The National park regulation imposes the obligation to produce an EIA for any programme and/or project that may affect its values and features, either in the park itself or in its buffer zone.

After discussion with the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration staff, it is recognized that no activity has required such assessment since the last renewal. The expert

<sup>15</sup> Decree n°59 dated 9 February 2012.

recommends no to renew this condition since the park regulation forbids all development which may have potential effects on the diploma holding area.

**This condition is also regarded as fulfilled.**

## 2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1** - *Continue the move from economically driven to ecologically driven management by reducing the forestry activities in the regulated zones and special habitats in other parts of the National Park, by excluding parcels with old trees in all zones (including the buffer zones) from logging, and by presenting data on harvested wood volumes in the annual reports:*

Logging is not allowed in the strictly protected zone (57 000 ha), as well as in the especially protected areas which are located outside this zone (5 000 ha). In addition, the harvesting of the over 100 year trees is also forbidden, except in 10% of the cases where they can be logged, but in accordance with the forest management plan.

In 2015, the volume of timber harvested amounted to 130 thousand cubic meters, logged mainly in plantations and/or less 100 years old secondary forests.

**This recommendation is regarded as partly implemented; it should be maintained and adapted.**

Logging and forest management remain an issue in the whole original Bialowieza forest where intense logging still exists on the Polish side, in relation to recent bark beetle attacks, and in general<sup>16</sup>.

With regards to the diploma holding area, it is strongly recommended the State party to sustain its efforts to maintain and enhance old and/or secondary forests, at least in the whole historic Bialowieza forest as well as in all other old secondary forests in the surroundings. The forest management plan should aim to preserve, restore and expand gradually the ancient forests and to foster the ecological and biological natural processes.

Ideally, those efforts should be pursued in close cooperation with the Polish part and based on a shared vision for the future of the whole historic Bialowieza forest.

- **Recommendation 2** - *Working with the Government of Belarus, ensure that the National Park authorities have the responsibility for the management of a. the zones of special significance for specific habitats outside the strictly protected areas, b. the buffer zones and c. the game zones within the boundaries of the National Park*

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration is under the umbrella of the Ministry of natural resources and environment which provides part of its resources; from a legal view, this administration is a State national company and it works permanently in interaction with this Ministry not only for the management of the diploma holding area but also in its buffer zone and surroundings. This company which concentrates many responsibilities is also in charge of game management, in and outside the park, in the two game reserves, as well as sustainable tourism development.

**This recommendation is regarded as implemented.**

- **Recommendation 3** - *Discussions between the National Park authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture to compensate an agricultural area of 2 000 ha recently excluded from the National Park, by including abandoned agricultural areas elsewhere – also in the buffer zones – and by promoting a gradual intensification of agricultural activities leading to semi-natural habitats (hayfields and low-intensity, grazed meadows with only moderate or no use of fertilizers)*

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration interacts constantly with the district authorities on the transfer of areas of former agricultural land bordering or surrounded by the diploma holding area.

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<sup>16</sup> See the abundant information on that matter on the web as well as the cases opened by the European Union and the World Heritage Committee.

In 2014, this cooperation led to the transfer of around 150 hectares of ex farmlands to the park, which are managed henceforth by the park administration.

This recommendation refers to a continuous process and, so, will never be fully implemented; it links also to important collateral issues like, amongst others:

- fight against invasive species (eg: *Solidago canadensis*);
- development of organic farming including the reduction of use of fertilisers;
- integrated water management and wise use of wetlands;
- protection of domestic breeds (flora and fauna);
- preservation/restoration of the cultural heritage (eg: traditional landscape and architecture of the local villages).

**This recommendation is regarded as partly fulfilled; it should be maintained and adapted.**

It is recommended that agriculture is addressed in the future in a more proactive and systematic way, the future of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park depending widely upon the management of its buffer zone which is mostly used for farming. A specific programme on green agriculture, covering all issues mentioned here above, should be built and implemented, with support from the State party and from foreign European and international funders; this programme should be part of the present and future management plan of the diploma holding area.

Progress has been done since the last renewal such as the new possibility to fight against the invasive species in the strict protected zone of the diploma holding area, as well as the on-going restoration of degraded wetlands supported by external funding. The State party should be acknowledged for those efforts and invited to strengthen them, in cooperation the foreign supporters.

- **Recommendation 4** - *Working with the Government of Belarus, increase budgets for both applied ecological research and nature conservation activities in view of the principles of sustainable management either currently present in, or to be included in, the management plan; special attention is needed both within the National Park and its buffer zones for a. hydrological restoration of all wetland (bog and marsh) ecosystems surrounding the forest, b. water and soil quality in river valleys and c. semi-natural traditionally managed or abandoned farmland*

The budget of the diploma holding area has tended to decrease since the last renewal, partly due to the recent economic context.

Funding remains a key issue for the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration and it will be a concern, as long as the local economic model is based on unsustainable activities. The future of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park which is a key employer in this region depends on the capacity of the government to change from paradigm and to design a new integrated economic approach for the diploma holding area and its buffer zone, based on principles of sustainable development.

A reflection on this subject should be conducted by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration when the management plan is renewed.

Water management and wise use of water resources is a key issue; this matter should be central in the future management plan otherwise the whole ecosystem will deteriorate and lose its integrity and values. Attention has been given by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration to wetland restoration since the last renewal, thanks to external support. The State party should also be acknowledged for those measures and it should be invited to sustain its efforts in the future and provide appropriate funding for strengthening those activities.

**This recommendation is regarded as partly fulfilled; it should be maintained and adapted.<sup>2</sup>**

- **Recommendation 5** - *Reconsider the management of large herbivores with a view to reducing the winter food supply so as to prevent abnormally large population densities (overpopulation), rather than reducing excess numbers by continued or increased hunting*

*practices; this is motivated by aiming to alleviate possible damage to both forestry and agriculture*

The high density of large herbivores is still an issue in the diploma holding area. Efforts has been done by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration in the last years, to reduce the number of feeding places and to remove them from the most sensitive areas; 54 winter feeding places have been dismantled in the protected zone and food is now provided to ungulates, only in the surroundings of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park and in the game reserves. However, the current situation is still not fully satisfactory and the efforts made since the last renewal should be strengthened.

Furthermore, a moratorium on wolf hunting has been adopted by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park in 2015, banning this activity in the diploma holding area; the park administration should be strongly acknowledged for this decision which contributes certainly to stabilise the large herbivore population in the park but however remains provisional and legally weak.

This measure should be expanded outside the park limits and it should be secured in accordance with the management plan provisions<sup>17</sup>; this ban should be formalised and become legally binding.

The State party should be urged to ban wolf hunting in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park and its surroundings at least, in the nearest future, by means of a decision of the government based on the hunting law. This decision will also contribute in reducing potential damages from ungulates to both forest regeneration and crops.

**This recommendation is regarded as partly fulfilled; it should be maintained and adapted.**

- **Recommendation 6** - *Continue research on the genetic aspects of the bison populations, applying the results to further investigate the restoration of a transboundary migration corridor with Poland*

Research on bison has been conducted continuously since the last renewal; this research has led to find the presence of Caucasian subspecies gene pool in the diploma holding area.

Furthermore, two projects on bison have been elaborated by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration, aiming:

- to build a common strategy for conservation of this species, together with the Polish part;
- to promote the European bison as the landmark of the transboundary regions.

A third project is in preparation on exchanging experience with the Polish part on the best practice of European bison conservation across the border.

The state of conservation of the bison in the diploma holding area seems to be satisfactory globally.

**This recommendation is regarded as fulfilled and the State party should be encouraged to sustain its efforts.**

- **Recommendation 7** - *Carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA) concerning mass tourism in the heart of the National Park, including a reappraisal of the boundaries, location and zoning of “Father Frost’s Manor”, and the effects of traffic and pollution, taking into account the increased accessibility of the National Park; in the annual reports state how any concerns demonstrated by the EIA are being addressed in practice*

The annual reports have provided information and data on tourism pressure within the diploma holding area; the number of visitors to the “Father Frost’s Manor” is monitored to appraise its impacts on the environment and to avoid exceeding the park’ carrying capacity.

According to the annual reports, the total number of visitors has decreased in 2015 compared to 2014; this also seems to be the case in 2016, due the economic context.

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<sup>17</sup> Provision 1.2.5 of the management plan.

Furthermore, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration wishes to stabilise this pressure in the future and to orientate its tourism vision towards selected sustainable tourism, instead of developing mass tourism.

**This recommendation is regarded as fulfilled, however, the State party should be invited to develop a strategy based on sustainable tourism when renewing the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park management plan from 2021.**

- **Recommendation 8** - *Monitor and evaluate the ecological side effects of a. the new bypass road, b. the use of fauna tunnels (eco-tunnels) by various species (such as herpetofauna, badgers and large herbivores), c. the expected regional economic investments, d. the increasing agrotourism developments and e. the additional recreation initiatives around the outskirts of the National Park; and report annually on the results of the monitoring and evaluation*

This recommendation is rather complex and partly redundant with several others; to summarize:

- the new bypass road doesn't seem to have significant effects on the main features of the diploma holding area; no accident has been reported so far with key species and the traffic on that road remains relatively low; furthermore, this new road seems to have positive long term effects on the site in reducing the car traffic on the secondary forest roads that cross the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. No specific information has been provided to the expert on the use of tunnels by fauna, whilst he has seen eco-equipment along the road, in several areas;
- the park administration doesn't have an overall view of the tourism pressure, nor on the incomes generated by the diploma holding area; its vision is fragmented and there is not yet a global sustainable tourism strategy. For example, no specific programme/project is devoted neither to the preservation of local breeds in the local villages, nor to the conservation/restoration of the local architecture and other local cultural heritage;
- significant efforts have been done by the Belarus government to facilitate the visit of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park by foreigners who, since 2015, can get a 3-day visa-free; the Father frost complex is visited by thousands of local people every year, and biking is rather well promoted; those efforts should be strengthened and more integrated in an economic model making better use of the natural and cultural assets of this region.

**This recommendation is regarded as partly implemented and it should be maintained and adapted.**

- **Recommendation 9** - *Intensify the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of actual activities such as agriculture (drainage, water quality, use of chemicals), forestry (logging, removal of dead wood, bark beetle effects) and hunting (introduced species, hunting bag statistics), including neighbouring zones outside the National Park in order to adjust the management plan or to substantiate environmental impact assessments*

The question of monitoring has been raised up in several other recommendations and already addressed in the mission report.

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration doesn't have a global monitoring programme covering all issues; monitoring of natural resources is shared between the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park units and other State agencies:

- water quality (physico-chemical composition, oxygen, minerals, ...) in water bodies is conducted by the District inspection of the Ministry of natural resources and environmental protection;
- forest monitoring (logging, impact of bark beetle, ...) is led by the forest unit of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration;
- wildlife monitoring (hunting, invasive species) is led by the protection unit;
- ecological monitoring including natural forest processes is done by the research unit.

It is difficult to have an overall view of the socioeconomic context; furthermore, tourism data and figures are spread over several monitoring programmes and do not allow to have a global vision and understanding of the situation and, in absence of clear indicators, the effects of those activities on the values of the area as well as on its integrity cannot be appraised correctly.

**Strong efforts should be done towards the construction of a baseline of reliable data and indicators, covering both the natural and socioeconomic resources and activities.**

- **Recommendation 10** - *Consider a specific adaptation of the prohibition of all activities in the strictly protected zones so as to control the invasive alien species, thus enabling the control of deer (*Dama dama*) escaped from hunting enclosures and the felling of old red oak (*Quercus rubra*) trees and seedlings that disturb the natural forest ecosystems*

See § I-5-1 here above.

Escaped fallow deer (*Dama dama*) doesn't seem to be a concern anymore and the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration has started an eradication programme of the American oak (*Quercus rubra*) from the diploma holding area.

The park administration should be acknowledged for these efforts that however should be strengthened in the future to prevent from the dispersion of the red oak in the natural forests.

As mentioned above, other species of invasive are matter of concern, *Solidago Canadensis* for example which colonises opened areas, especially abandoned farming plots; this issue is addressed by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration but it is not easy to eradicate a so dynamic alien species. The State party has adapted the park regulation so as to be able to strengthen its efforts and eradicate all invasive species in the strict protected zone of the diploma holding area where it was not allowed to intervene in the past; furthermore, specific eradication activities are carried out by the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration, in close cooperation with the Academy of sciences of Belarus.

**This recommendation is regarded as being implemented and should be adapted. The State party efforts should be sustained and strengthened.**

- **Recommendation 11** - *Prepare a new detailed topographic map (1/50 000) of the National Park and surroundings, indicating the functional zoning (with the buffer zones, game areas, checkpoints, educational trails, etc., all marked) and including the location of the bypass road (with legends in different languages)*

A new Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park tourist map has been published at the scale of 1/100 000, providing new and updated information to the public; however, it seems difficult for security reasons that a more detailed map at 1/50 000 be published in the short term.

**This recommendation is regarded as fulfilled.**

## CONCLUSION

The expert recommends that the European Diploma be renewed to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, for a new period of 10 years, with the condition and the six following recommendations.

### Condition 1 – Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park Management plan

The State party should be invited to start by the end of 2018 a process of renewing the current management plan which will end in 2020, in cooperation with NGOs and the civil society.

A draft plan should be presented to the Group of Specialists for comments by the end of 2019, prior its adoption by the government; this plan should address all recommendations made in the present report – and in the 2018 renewal decision according to the decision of the Committee of Ministers - and it should contain a detailed budget. The State party should also commit to fund its full implementation over the renewal period.

### Recommendation 1 – Strict protection and zoning

The State party should be recommended to expand the strict protected zone of the diploma holding area to the historic Bialowieza forest limits and to manage this zone so as to preserve and enhance the ecological and biological natural processes which are key assets of the European interest of the diploma holding area.

### **Recommendation 2 – Natural resource management**

The State party should be acknowledged for its efforts for:

- protecting old growth trees elder than 100 years ; it should be also encouraged to manage the forest in the diploma holding area in a way to protect totally the old growth tree communities and to restore and enhance old natural forest all over the historical Bialowieza forest;
- restoring and using wisely the wetlands; it should be invited to sustain its efforts to preserve the ecological character of those aquatic ecosystems and towards an integrated management of water resources;
- reducing the red deer population (*Cervus elaphus*) and removing feeding places from the most sensitive areas; it should be invited to strengthen drastically those efforts and to remove all winter feeding places from the diploma holding area (core and buffer zones) as well as from the other strict protected areas and their surroundings; hunting should also be banned in the whole Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park territory and hunting pressure should be minimized in its buffer zone;
- assessing the state of conservation of the elk (*Alces alces*) and designing a hunting regime accordingly;
- addressing the issue of invasive species; it should be encouraged to sustain its efforts on eliminating *Quercus rubra* and preventing/fighting against the spread of all other alien invasive species in the diploma holding area, including exotic fish and *Solidago Canadensis*;
- it should be invited to build up an overall database including performance indicators, covering both natural resources and socioeconomic uses and activities, and managed so as to allow a continuous monitoring of the European significance of the diploma holding area.

### **Recommendation 3 – Administration and other capacities**

The State party should be acknowledged for its efforts for:

- maintaining a high level of human capacities and a skilled and professional staff;
- developing the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park financial resources in leveraging funds from external sources, governmental and non-governmental.

It should be:

- invited to sustain those efforts in the future;
- urged to increase and secure the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park budget with State resources, so as to be able to continue to manage the diploma holding area in an exemplary way, as required by the European diploma regulation.

### **Recommendation 4 – Socioeconomic activities**

The State party should be acknowledged for its efforts for developing tourism activities and restoring abandoned farmlands in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park; it should be invited to build a clear and sustainable tourism strategy and to engage a more active sustainable development policy together with the local stakeholders, promoting and supporting:

- extensive farming;
- manufacture and marketing of green products and services;
- preservation/renovation of cultural heritage.

### **Recommendation 5 – Protection of wildlife**

The State party should be acknowledged for:

- the moratorium on wolf hunting established in 2015; it should be urged to forbid wolf hunting by law, as planned in the management plan, in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park territory, as well as in the whole historic Bialowieza forest;
- its efforts for preserving the European bison, in cooperation with the Bialowieza National park, Poland, and survey the genetic diversity of this species; it should be encouraged to develop a long-term vision for the European bison population and strengthen its scientific and technical cooperation with the authorities of Poland, in the whole historic Bialowieza forest.

**Recommendation 6 – Cultural heritage**

In addition to Rec. 4, the State party should be encouraged to include in the next Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park management plan, a specific programme of activities aiming to preserve/restore the local cultural heritage including architecture, local breeds, traditional uses and activities as well as all other cultural assets of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park and its buffer zone, so as to strengthen a sustainable development in the diploma holding area.

St Cergue, 21 May 2017.

**Annex 1****ON THE SPOT EXPERT APPRAISAL  
OF THE BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA NATIONAL PARK (BELARUS)****11-13 April 2017****DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT*****Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April***

- Geneva/Varsaw (plane).
- Varsaw/Brest (train).
- Arrival to Brest (train station).
- Transfer Brest-Kameniuki (car).
- Hotel accommodation.
- Discussion about the visit programme.

***Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April***

- Meeting with the administration of the National park.
- Presentation of the Management plan of the National park “Belovezhskaja pushcha” (Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park) and implemented activities.
- Discussion about main aims of scientific and conservation work of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.
- Presentation of nature conservation projects.
- Evaluation visit to the southern part of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (ecosystems of the strict protection zone, small watercourses, tourism infrastructure).

***Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April***

- Field visit (full day). Central and northern parts of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (wetlands, peatland restoration projects, monitoring points (permanent sample plots, places of growth of rare plants, ornithological routes).

***Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April***

- Field visit. Southern part of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (monitoring points, broad leaved forest within strict protection, tourism infrastructure, local villages)
- Collect of documents and additional information
- Discussion with the administration of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park and other interested parties (representatives of local authorities, NGOs, media)
- Conclusion of the mission.

***Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April***

- Transfer to Varsaw (car).
- Varsaw/Geneva (plane).

**Annex 2**

**Meeting 11 April 2017**

**List of participants**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mr.	Hervé Lethier	Expert	IUCN
Mgr.inž.	Alexander Bury	General Director	NP “Belovezhskaya Pushcha”
Dr.	Vasili Arnolbik	Deputy Director of science and ecological education	
Dr.	Vasili Filimonov	Head forester	
Dr.	Alexey Bunevich	Senior researcher	
Mr.	Dmitry Bernatski	Leading researcher	
Mr.	Anton Kuzmitski	Researcher	
Mr.	Kniha Ruslan	Researcher	
Mr.	Viacheslav Kravchuk	Leading researcher	
Mr.	Viktor Fenchuk	FZO’s Project coordinator (also interpreter)	“Ahova Ptushak Baćkaushchyny”

**Annex 3****Meeting 13 April 2017****List of participants**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mr.	Hervé Lethier	Expert	IUCN
Mgr.inż.	Alexander Bury	General Director	NP “Belovezhskaya Pushcha”
Dr.	Vasili Arnolbik	Deputy Director of science and ecological education	
Dr.	Alexey Bunevich	Senior researcher	
Mr.	Dmitry Bernatski	Leading researcher	
Mr.	Fedor Saevich	Researcher	
Mr.	Anton Kuzmitski	Researcher	
Mr.	Viacheslav Kravchuk	Leading researcher	
Mr.	Vladimir Kaplinski	Technical assistant	
Mr.	Serge Korotia	Junior researcher	
Mgr.inż.	Olimpia Pabian	Director	Białowieża National Park, Poland
Mr.	Viktor Fenchuk	FZO’s Project coordinator (also interpreter)	“Ahova Ptushak Baćkaushchyny”
Mrs.	Elena Tribuleva	Journalists	Regional socio-political newspaper "Vechernij Brest" <a href="http://www.vb.by">http://www.vb.by</a>
Mr.	Alexander Onischuk		<a href="http://puszcza.urest.org">http://puszcza.urest.org</a>
Mr.	Evgeni Litvinovich		Brest regional newspaper "Zarya" <a href="http://zarya.by">http://zarya.by</a>

## Annex 4

### List of scientific and technical publications 2013-2016 period

#### 2013

1. Aleksei N. Bunevich. Lowland-Caucasian bison in the part of the Belarusian Bialowieska Forest //Zubr w Karpatach Czarna, Miedzynarodowa Konferencja, 5-6 wrzesnia, 2013. – S. 15-16.
2. Бубенько А.Н. Перспективы археознтомологических исследований на территории Беларуси //Зоологические чтения: материалы международной научно–практической конференции Гродно, 14–16 марта 2013 г. / ГрГУ ; редкол.: О.В. Янчуревич (гл.ред.) [и др.]. – Гродно, 2013. – С. 54-57.
3. Бубенько, А.Н. Обзор синантропных жесткокрылых в постройках на территории национального парка «Беловежская пуца» //Природнае асяроддзе Палесся: сб. научных работ / Полесский аграрно-экологический институт НАН Беларуси; редкол. М.В. Михальчук (гл. ред.) [и др.]. – Брест: Альтернатива, 2013. – Вып. 6. – С. 85-90.
4. Кравчук В.В., Кравчук В.Г. Инвентаризация редких средневропейских видов растений в Беловежской пуце //Природнае асяроддзе Палесся: сб. науч. раб. /Полесский аграрно-экологич. институт НАН Беларуси; редкол.: М.В. Михальчук (гл. ред.) [и др.]. – Брест: Альтернатива, 2013. – Вып. 6. – С. 112-114.
5. Кузьмицкий, А.Н. Видовой состав и биотопическое распределение птиц-дуплогнездников в условиях Беловежской пуцы //Природнае асяроддзе Палесся: зб. навук. прац. Палескі аграрна-экалагічны інстытут НАН Беларусі; рэдкал. М.В. Міхальчук (гал. рэд.) [і інш.]. – Брэст: Альтернатива, 2013. Вып. 6. – С. 115-119.
6. Сидор А.И., Арнольбик В.М., Ревяко И.Д., Луферова Н.С., Мальцева Л.В.,Фомин Е.А. Селекционная инвентаризация насаждений сосны обыкновенной и дуба черешчатого в Беловежской пуце //Проблемы лесоведения и лесоводства: Сборник науч. трудов ИЛ НАН Беларусі. Вып. 73. – Гомель, 2013. – С. 253-261.

#### 2014

1. Aleksei N. Bunevich. Effects of European bison within the Belarusian part of Bialowieska Primeval Forest. / Zubr w Bioregionie Miroslawiec. Miedzynarodowa Konferencja, 4-5 wrzesnia, 2014. – S. 37-38.
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3. Бубенько А. Н. Редкие и охраняемые сапроксильные жесткокрылые (Insecta, Coleoptera) Беловежской пуцы // Особо охраняемые природные территории Беларуси. Исследования. - Минск: Белорусский Дом печати, 2014, Вып. 9. – С. 34-44.
4. Бубенько А. Н., Лукашук А.О. Новые для территории Беловежской пуцы виды прямокрылых насекомых (Orthoptera) //Особо охраняемые природные территории Беларуси. Исследования. - Минск: Белорусский Дом печати, 2014, Вып. 9. – С. 45-50.
5. Буневич А.Н. Влияния диких копытных животных Беловежской пуцы на лесовозобновление в местах вырубок короедных очагов. – Особо охраняемые природные территории Беларуси. Исследования. – Мн.: Белорусский дом печати, 2014. – Вып. 9. – С. 51-60.
6. Демянич В.Т., Кузьмицкий А.Н. Мониторинг зимнего питания воробьиного сыча в искусственных гнездовьях Беловежской пуцы. //Птицы-дуплогнездники как модельные объекты в решении проблем популяционной экологии и эволюции: материалы Междунар. науч-практ. конф., 22-28 сентября 2014.
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7. Дерунков А.В., Колосков М.Н., Бубенько, А.Н. Жужелица путаная // Красная книга Республика Беларусь. Животные: редкие и находящиеся под угрозой исчезновения виды диких животных / гл. редкол.: И.М. Качановский (предс.), М.Е. Никифоров, В.И. Парфенов [и др.]. – 4-е изд. – Минск: Беларусь. Эн
8. Кузьмицкий А.Н. Причины потери гнезд у воробьиных птиц-дуплогнездников в условиях Беловежской пуши // Зоологические чтения – 2015: материалы Междунар. науч.-практ. конф., посвящ. памяти проф. Б. Дыбовского, 22-24 апреля 2015 г. / ГрГУ им Я. Купалы; редкол.: О.В. Янчуревич (гл. ред.) [и др.]. – Гродно: ГрГУ, 2015. – С. 146-149.
9. Кипень Т.В. Характеристика растительного покрова вдоль туристического маршрута «лесные тайны» ГПУ «НП «Беловежская пуши» // Проблемы сохранения биологического разнообразия и использования биологических ресурсов: материалы III Международной научно-практической конференции, посвященной 110-летию со дня рождения академика Н.В. Смольского. (7–9 октября 2015, Минск, Беларусь). В 2 ч. Ч. 1 / Нац. акад. наук Беларуси [и др.]; редкол.: В.В. Титок [и др.]. – Минск: Конфидо, 2015. – С.100-104.
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19. Шабашова Т.Г., Бубенько А.Н. *Tuber Rufum Picco* – новый вид для микофлоры Беларуси //Беловежская пуца. Исследования. – Брест: «Альтернатива», 2016. – Вып. 14. – С. 122-133.
20. Якубовский Н.Г. Расчёт рекреационной нагрузки на лесной комплекс, туристические объекты и маршруты ГПУ «НП «Беловежская пуца» //Беловежская пуца. Исследования. – Брест: «Альтернатива», 2016. – Вып. 14. – С. 122-133.
21. Яцына А.П., Мотеюнайте Ю. Новые и интересные находки лишайников и близкородственных грибов НП «Беловежская пуца» // Биология систематика и экология грибов и лишайников в природных экосистемах и агрофитоценозах: Мат-лы II Междунар. конф. (г.Минск – д.Каменюки, 20-23 сентября 2016 г.) – Минск: Колорград, 2016. – С. 320-324.
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23. Коротя С.А. «География зубра в Беларуси» Сборник научных статей по материалам XI Международной научно-практической конференции «Актуальные проблемы экологии», Гродно 2016
24. Коротя С.А. «Особенности пространственного распространения зубра в Беловежской пуце» VII Региональная научно-практическая конференция молодых учёных «Устойчивое развитие: Региональные аспекты» 2016
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