

SUMMARY

Landscape and peatlands of the Narew National Park

Numerous river channels of various size divided by wet interchannel areas forming the irregular anastomosing system and large peatlands on the alluvial plain are main features of the landscape still preserved in the meridional segment of the Narew River Valley in NE Poland (Fig. 1). The valley bottom between Suraż and Żółtki (about 25 km SE of Białystok) is almost completely covered with organic sediments represented by peat 1-2 m thick, locally up to 5 m (Okruszko, Oświt 1973, Oświt 1991). Detail studies on the network of many river channels was carried out few years ago (Gradziński et al. 2000, Gradziński 2001). Willow peat overlain by reed peat and sedge peat is most widespread (Fig. 2). These deposits were dated with the radiocarbon method and are of the age from 1300 ± 50 PB up to 3200 ± 90 BP being locally some older (Gradziński et al. 2000). Oldest ones have been found near Kurowo and are of Early Holocene age (9727 ± 294 BP). Peat-like mud and calcareous gyttja with numerous shells of snails and bivalves were found in the bore-hole 1 (E-1) situated near Kurowo on the depth 2,84-2,98 m (Fig. 2). They rest on sand and gravel and are covered with willow peat. Species typical of temporary water bodies and of permanent water basins dominate in assemblages of molluscs (Tab. 1, Fig. 3). These lake sediments and fauna are connected with the ancient ox-bow gradually growing up and transformed into a peatland during the climatic optimum of the Holocene. The rate of peat accumulation was estimated according to results of ^{14}C dating: the youngest peat grew 0,78-0,84 mm/yr., while the older one about 0,61 mm/yr. The anastomosing system of the Narew River is the best example of such environment in Poland forming the unique, natural landscape less transformed by human activity. To preserve it the Narew Landscape Park was created in 1985 and eleven years later (1996) the Narew National Park was appointed.