

SUMMARY

Jubilee of 50th anniversary of three Carpathian national parks

In October 2004, 50 years have passed since the decision by Polish Cabinet about foundation of three mountain national parks: Tatra NP, Pieniny NP and Babia Góra NP. In this way number of national parks increased from two, earlier ones are – Białowieża NP (1947) and Świętokrzyski NP (1950), to five. Each of them has a long history of efforts inspired chiefly by prof. W. Szafer and each of them plays different role in the country network of these protected areas, encompassing now 23 objects (total 314508 ha, i.e. 1% of the territory of the country).

The longest making efforts for a conservation of nature and landscape lasted in Tatra Mountains. First proposals, about establishment of national park there, were postulated a few years after creation of, the first in the world, Yellowstone National Park in the USA (1972). Unfortunately specific circumstances in mountain regions and political background were not favorable for nature protection, therefore only after 75 years of endeavors of naturalists succeeded, when in 1954 the authorities decided to establish the national park in Tatra Mts. After ca. 40 years Tatra Mts. succeeded one more time, because in 1992 the national park has been listed as biosphere reserve by UNESCO. At present Tatra NP comprises 21164 ha, including 11514 ha (54.4%) being under strict protection and 15189 ha (71.82%) are covered by woodlands. Protective zone comprises only 181 ha.

A little easier way was came through by Pieniński NP. Shortly after regaining of independence by Poland in 1918, already in 1921 the nature reserve in Czorsztyn including Góra Zamkowa Mt. was established and one year after this event the first project of creation of Pieniny NP, which was supposed to contain Trzy Korony and Pieninki Mts., was issued. After 10 years, in 1932 decision proclaiming establishment of national park in Pieniny Mts. by Minister of Agriculture appeared. In the meantime in Slovakian part of Pieniny range the national park was founded too, as a result Pieniny became the first in Europe and the second in the world transboundary and international park. During the World War II activity of the park ceased and it was reactivated in 1945, and in 1954 was confirmed by the act of Polish government. Contemporary the territory of Pieniński NP covers 2346 ha of an area, including 777 ha (31.1%) which is strictly protected. Forests occupy 1664 ha (70.9%). In the surroundings of the park protective zone, encompassing 2682 ha, is founded.

Babia Góra NP has similar history; it was created in 1933 in the part of property of the PAU (Polish Academy of Learning) in Kraków. During the war (1939-1945) it suffered from destruction of natural resources by occupation authorities. The park reactivated activity in 1945 and in 1954 state authorities issued the decree about new establishment of national park in Babia Góra Mt. In 1977 the park was enrolled by UNESCO in the list of biosphere reserves. It was one of the first of this kind of protected areas in Poland. At present the territory of the park amounts to 3392 ha. This is typically woodland protected area because forests cover 94.3% (3198 ha), but under strict protection there are 1061 ha (31.3%). The wide protective zone encompasses 8474 ha.