

SUMMARY

Protection of wetlands in national parks

National parks in Poland have been treated as the most important and the most efficient form of nature conservation. In 23 national parks major geographic regions and landscape zones are represented. They are characterized by high diversity of vegetation and animal life. In total 354 plant associations including 269 non-forest communities, mostly represented by water-swamp phytocoenoses, were recorded. Amongst 70 associations of endemic range type there are 11 bog and fen phytocoenoses. In parks 184 vascular plant species are under law protection as well as 44 endemic taxa are protected. There are representatives of all living mammalians, ca. 200 bird species and numerous reptiles, amphibians and fish species as well as a few thousands of insects and other invertebrates.

Each national park protects non-forest areas, including water and swamp habitats referred as bogs and wetlands which are environs of rush-sedge, fen and aquatic communities. Of 23 national parks 7 parks are distinguished in which contribution of non-forest areas amounts to more than 40% (on the average 72%) and 7 other parks with smaller area of non-forest vegetation (ca. 30%). In remaining national parks role of non-forest areas is secondary or minimal (tab. 1 and 3). The participation of swamp and water habitats is considerably higher in lowland national parks and there woodiness is lower. However, mountain parks, generally rich in non-woodland vegetation (montane glades and alpine meadows) are characterized by poverty of water and swamp ecosystems (tab. 3).

Practical methods of protection of wetland areas must take into account type of vegetation communities, their current state of preservation in natural habitats, and degree of anthropogenic transformations. In the management plans which comprise partial and strict protection also diversity of water and swamp areas and their ecological characteristics (water bodies, head-waters, streams and rivers, fens, transitional mires and bog, desiccated wetlands) should be taken into account and specific methods of their protection ought to be applied. Using particular protection methods of wetland environs one should remember that they are habitats of specific fauna which represent precious value in functioning of natural systems which undoubtedly are national parks.