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Towards the large Białowieża Biosphere Reserve – presentation of an idea and maps

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to present the project of Białowieża Biosphere Reserve in the Polish part of the Białowieża Forests. The unique old Białowieża Forest lies in north-eastern Poland, extending over the Belarussian territory. The future designation of the Transboundary Białowieża BR is now discussed by MAB National Committees of Poland and Belarussia. In view of this prospect, the idea of extension of the small BR, created almost 30 years ago in the Polish Białowieża Forest, has arisen. The project of modern valorization and mapping of the whole Polish part (78,640 ha) of the Białowieża Forests was realized in the years 2002-2003. It was supported by the DANCEE (Danish Co-operation for the Environment in Eastern Europe) and the Polish Academy of Sciences).

Some new computer maps selected from a larger collection are published in this paper. A methodology used for generation of maps and an analysis of local conditions for the zoning of the proposed BR are shown as well. A few pages are devoted to the presentation of the UNESCO Network of Biosphere Reserves.