

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. Country: Lithuania

2. Date:

3. Ref: 3LT004

4. Name and address of compiler:

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5. Name of wetlands: Zuvintas

6. Date of Ramsar designation: 04/10/1994

7. Geographical coordinates: 54°28'N, 23°35'E

8. General location: 30km westwards from Alytus

9. Area: 7,500ha

10. Wetland type: U, O, X, S

11. Altitude:

Average height above mentioned sea level 90m, min. 87.2m, max 93.5m

12. Overview:

An overgrown eutrophic lake Zuvintas (970 ha) surrounded by reedswamps, sedge fens (mainly in southeast) and raised bogs. An important breeding and passage site for numerous waterfowl.

13. Physical features:

The site is located in a depression of limnoglacial plain and comprises a eutrophic lake Zuvintas (970 ha), two areas of raised bogs (3,400 ha), fens (about 2,000 ha) and surrounding forests. Lake Zuvintas, which is a flowing one, is shallow (max depth is 3.4m) with a deep bottom mud layer. A large amount of biogenic substances from neighbouring cultivated fields penetrate into the lake.

14. Ecological features:

Lake Zuvintas is a typical overgrowing lake. It's bottom is overgrown with *Chara* and *Potamogeton* species, large surface areas are covered by communities of lymneids (*Nymphaea candida*, *Potamogeton natans*, *Nuphar lutea*). Floating islands of *Typha angustifolia* are particularly characteristic of this lake. Large areas of reedmarshes and sedge fens (with dominating *Carex omskiana*, *C. diandra*, *C. disticha*) occur mainly in the south-east. Bogmoss pine forests grow on the slopes of raised bogs, whereas in open areas, communities with *Calluna vulgaris*, *Eriophorum vaginatum* and *Sphagnum* species (*Sph. magellanicum*, *Sph. fuscum*, *Sph. rubellum*) prevail. Surrounding wet and humid forests consist mainly of black alder and birch. A great diversity of habitats and vegetation creates excellent conditions for numerous waterfowl.

15. Land tenure/ownership of:

(a) site: State ownership

(b) surrounding area: State and private ownership

16. Conservation measures taken:

Territory of 5442 ha is protected in the Zuvintas Strict Nature Reserve, established in 1937.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

Extension of reserve area (to 7,500 ha) and its buffer zone.

18. Current land use:

(a) site: There are no human activities except the regulation of water level in the Zuvintas lake. Forestry and some agricultural activities (pasturing, hay making) are allowed in the buffer zone.

(b) surroundings/catchment: Agriculture, pasturing, forestry, hunting.

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:

(a) at the site: Agricultural runoff from the catchment area of the Zuvintas lake caused successional changes of vegetation which resulted in the disappearance of suitable feeding and breeding grounds of many bird species. The regulation of the water level negatively affects the lake ecosystems.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment: Analogous threats.

20. Hydrological and physical values:

Lake Zuvintas lies in the Dovine river catchment area (589 sq km) for which it serves as a nitrogen sink.

21. Social and cultural values:

Nature conservation, education and scientific research.

22. Noteworthy fauna:

39 mammal species, 253 bird species, of which 135 nest there, 4 reptile and 10 amphibian species, more than 1,700 insect species occur in the Zuvintas. Together with its surroundings, the lake is an important breeding site for numerous species of waterfowl and other birds: *Podiceps cristata* (330 breeding pairs), *Anas platyrhynchos* (120), *Aythya fuligula* (0), *Aythya ferina* (35), *Buteo buteo* (8), *Circus aeruginosus* (45), *Fulica atra* (120), *Chlidonia nigra* (100), *Larus ridibundus* (5500), *Galinago galinago* (50). Lake Zuvintas was starting point for reestablishment of *Cygnus olor* population in Lithuania (at present time 20-30 pairs are nesting there). Very important passage site for many migratory birds: *Anser fabalis* (10,000), *Anser albifrons* (5,000), cranes (about 650) and others. In surrounding forests quite large populations of *Alces alces* (36), *Capreolus capreolus* (57) and *Sus scrofa* (263) occurs. More than 40 species of vertebrates and insects, included in Lithuanian Red Lists occurs in Zuvintas. Otter (3 specimens), *Gavia arctica* (1 breeding pair), *Podiceps nigricolis*, *Podiceps griseigena* (5-7), *Botaurus stellaris* (10), *Anser anser* (5), *Anas strepera* (6), *Anas acuta*, *Anas clypeata* 5, *Aythya nyroca* (4), *Pernis apivorus* (1), *Circus pygargus* (4-8 couples breed every year), *Aquila pomarina* (1), *Lyrurus tetrix* (80 specimens), *Grus grus* (3-4 breeding pairs), *Porzana porzana*, *Porzana parva*, *Pluvialis apricaria* (2), *Tringa glareola*, *Tringa totanus*, *Philomachus pugnax*, *Numenius arquata* (4), *Limosa limosa* (20 couples are breeding), *Asio flameus*, *Lanius excubitor* (2-3 couples constantly breed), *Acrocephalus paludicola* (25-30 couples are reported), *Luscinia svecica* (5-7), *Panurus biarmicus* (7).

23. Noteworthy flora:

Important feature of this site is rich diversity of bogs, fens and aquatic communities and quite rich flora of vascular plants - about 600 species. There are localities of Lithuanian Red Data List species - *Pedicularis sceptrum-carolinum*, *Saxifraga hirculus*, *Viola stagnina*, *Corallorhiza trifida*, *Eriophorum gracile*, *Gentiana pneumonanthe*, *Liparis loeselii*, *Nuphar pumila*, *Salix lapponum*, *Salix mytilloides*, *Malaxis monophyllos*, *Nympaea alba*, *Peplis portula*, *Dactylorhiza* species.

24. Current scientific research and facilities:

Research on ornithofauna (migration, ecology, dynamic of populations), birds ringing are being carried out as well as survey of flora and vegetation and studies of hydrobiology.

25. Current conservation education:

Visitors centre with small museum is established, training courses for students has been organised every year.

26. Current recreation and tourism: None

27. Management authority:

Zuvintas strict nature reserve
Simnas 4583 Alytus district

Lithuania.

28. Jurisdiction:

Environmental Protection department of the Republic of Lithuania.

29. Bibliographical references:

30. Reasons for inclusion: 1a, 1c?; 2a, 2b; 3b.