

Life CICONIAPL 

AFTER LIFE CONSERVATION PLAN

“Conservation of White Stork in the River Valleys of Eastern Poland”

LIFE15 NAT/PL/000728



1. PROJECT SUMMARY

THE MAIN BENEFICIARY:

The Polish Society for the Bird Protection

CO-BENEFICIARIES:

Biebrza National Park (BbPN), Łomża Landscape Park of the Narew Valley (ŁPKDN)

PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT::

01/08/2016–31/07/2020

FINANCING:

European Commission, Vogelschutz-Komitee e.V., own contribution of beneficiaries

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TOTAL BUDGET OF THE PROJECT:

1 419 468 EUR

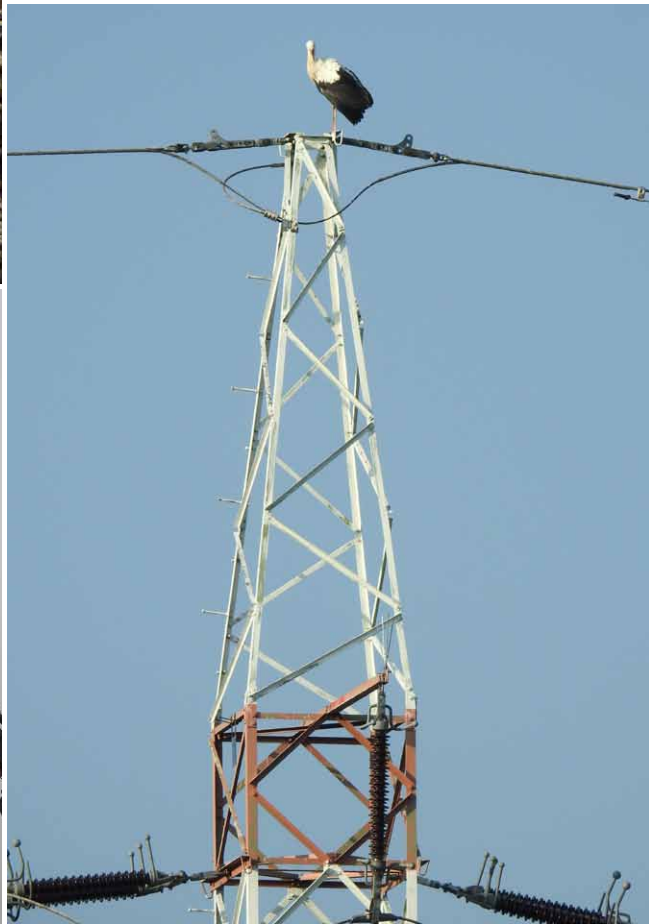
1.1. MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- Improvement of the White Stork population in the eastern Polish river valleys (approx. 1600 pairs).
- Protection of endangered and conflicting nesting sites of the White Stork (400).
- Decreasing the decline in society's tolerance towards the White Stork.
- Reduction of White Stork mortality due to electric shock and medium voltage line collisions.
- Increasing the effectiveness of intervention measures related to the protection of White Stork nests.
- Improvement of the standards of functioning of two rehabilitation centers specializing in treatment of Storks.
- Protecting biodiversity by safeguarding the umbrella species.

1.2. SUBJECT OF PROTECTION

The White Stork is a bird that is well known and recognized throughout Europe. Its characteristic appearance, especially the colors, make it a species that is perceived by the Polish people as a national bird. The latest data from the national census of the breeding population of this species in Poland (2014) indicate a significant decrease in the last decade from 51 700-53 900 (2004) pairs to 42 800-45711 pairs (-11% to -17%). The most important Polish refuges of this species are the northern and eastern regions of the country, with the most numerous populations inhabiting the Warminska Refuge, the Suwałki region, Biebrza, Narew and Bug valley.





1.3. PROJECT AREA

The project consisted of 9 Natura 2000 sites, which constitute refuges of the White Stork important in the country and region scale, where populations of this species are characterized by a high concentration, high stability of the population, and a proper state of preservation.

1.4. KEY ACTIVITIES IN THE SCOPE OF ACTIVE PROTECTION

1.4.1 Protection of 400 nesting sites of the White Stork

As part of the project, we moved more than 300 nests from endangered and dangerous locations (roofs of buildings, active chimneys, old damaged free standing poles, decayed trees) to new free standing poles with nesting platforms and roof platforms. We built solid concrete poles, with many years of durability and high bearing capacity, to serve Storks for decades to come. In addition, we purchased a vehicle with a basket lift, which allows us to reach the nests that require our intervention, located on the roofs of buildings, stand-alone posts and trees, even those located in difficult terrain. As a result, we have carried out more than 60 interventions involving cutting off branches making access difficult, renovating old nests, reducing their weight, levelling and installing platforms, etc.





1.4.2. Securing the power grid

The implementation of measures aimed at protecting the power grid against fatal electric shocks and collisions of birds was possible with the participation and cooperation of power engineers – PGE Dystrybucja S.A. Białystok Branch. We started our work on the task by participating in the design of a device isolating Storks from dangerous power poles. We purchased 270 sets of these devices and handed them over to the power engineers. The second part of the task included marking 4 sections of high voltage lines (110 kV), crossing river valleys, with FireFly tags. This action was carried out with the use of an innovative method of installation – a drone.





1.4.3. Renovation and adaptation of rehabilitation centers for Storks

As part of the project, we have renovated and equipped two functioning medical care points for wild birds: Animal Rehabilitation Center in Grzędy in the Biebrza National Park and the Bird Rehabilitation Center of the Łomża Landscape Park of the Narew Valley (ŁPKDN) in Drozdowo. Renovated and completely new aviaries provide the birds with a safe and peaceful place to stay temporarily during treatment and rehabilitation. The renovations (major overhaul in the case of the ŁPKDN) and new equipment provide a comprehensive improvement in the quality of care in both centers, from the stage of diagnosis, curing, conducting treatments to rehabilitation and release into the wild.





2. PRESENT SITUATION (SWOT ANALYSIS)

STRENGTHS

- a strong and stable non-governmental organization and two state authorities responsible for education and management of Natura 2000 areas,
- experienced administrative and research staff,
- the poles with White Stork nests that have been set up ensure durability of nesting sites for many decades,
- the mortality of Storks on medium and high voltage lines was significantly reduced,
- renovating and further equipping of rehabilitation centers providing professional and comprehensive help to injured and sick Storks,
- development of innovative actions in the field of active protection of the White Stork (e.g. monitoring of nests from a drone, whitening of the transferred nests, installation of boxes for Sparrows and Tree Sparrows, protection of high-voltage lines using a drone, protection of medium voltage line poles, on-line calculator of Stork nest weight),
- launching the procedure and establishing the white stork as a subject of protection in several Natura 2000 areas, which secures more effective long-term protection,
- the existence of a huge group of people interested in the protection of the White Stork in Poland (e.g. The White Stork Research Group),
- the car with a basket lift purchased in the project will be used after the project to secure endangered and conflicting White Stork nests.
- unoccupied poles with nests can be transferred to other locations if necessary,



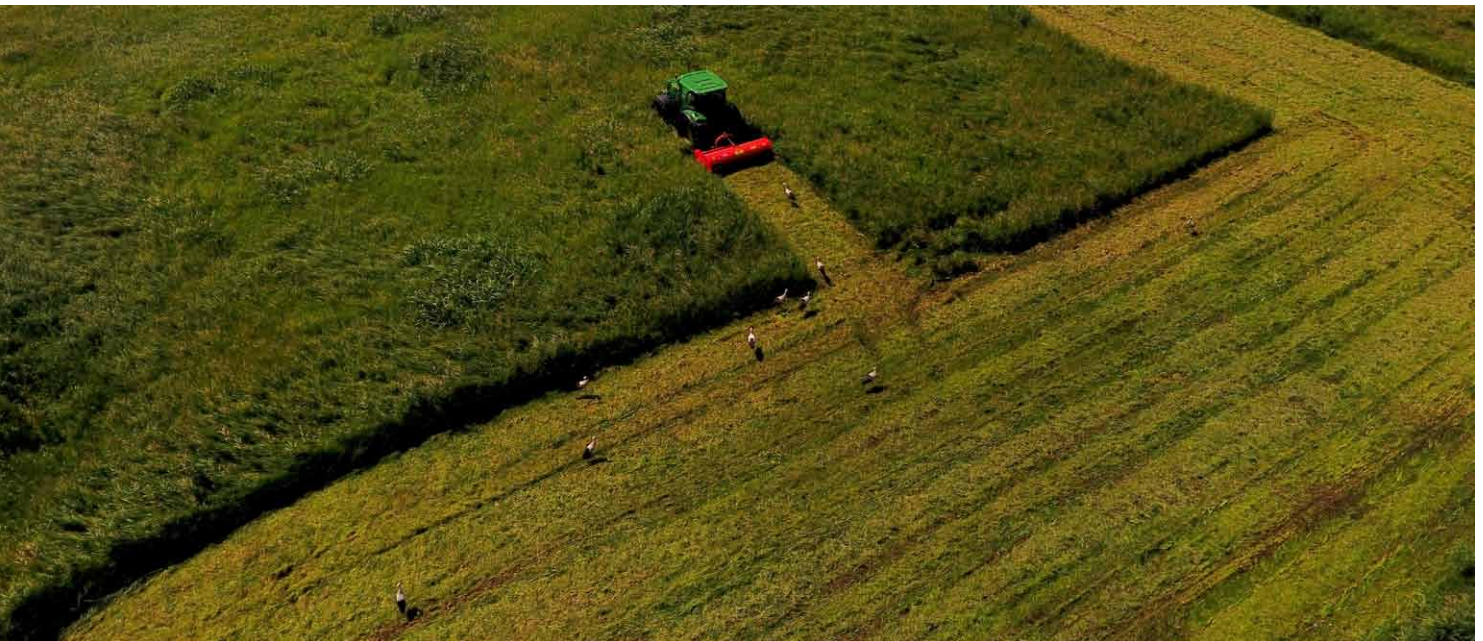
WEAKNESSES

- the funds for future activities come only from the society's own resources,
- some of the nests remained uninhabited after setting up the poles,
- despite the decrease in numbers, the still relatively large population of the White Stork in Poland, in comparison with other countries, may cause the illusion of lack of need for its protection among nature conservation bodies and funders,
- no protective activities were carried out on feeding grounds,
- the maintenance of the lift carries high operating costs.



OPPORTUNITIES

- protection of the species that is a vital part of Polish traditions and culture, as well as the umbrella species,
- ensuring long-term monitoring within the national census,
- drawing attention to the huge problem of mortality of Storks in Poland and Europe on medium voltage lines may contribute to the acceleration of works related to their securing,
- starting a long-term process of burying elements of power grids,
- creating a solution protecting Storks from fatal electrocutions, which starts to be installed by power plants in many places in Poland and abroad,
- the recognition of the species and the great esteem it enjoys among the inhabitants of Poland allows us to raise funds for further protection,
- the possibility of reproducing the developed innovative protective activities in all countries with a breeding population of the White Stork,
- broad publicity of the developed innovative protective activities, including in connection with publication of the results in scientific journals,
- perceiving the landscape with Storks as more idyllic and aesthetic,
- securing important source population of the White Stork in Poland,
- restoration and preservation of old traditions connected with the arrival of Storks,
- the results of the monitoring of the restoration of rehabilitated birds to nature allow for the evaluation of this process.





THREATS

- little impact on reducing the mortality of storks on power grids in other European countries, especially outside the EU (Ukraine, Turkey),
- global climate change and long periods of drought, which drastically damage the Stork habitats,
- increasingly frequent perception of Storks as a conflict species (in case of nesting on the roofs of buildings),
- high unit costs of conducting protective activities,
- high mortality rate of young Storks during migration (80% die in the first year).



3. PLAN OF CONTINUATION OF ACTIVITIES AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT

In order to assess the effects of the activities undertaken after the end of the project, the following indicators were developed and will be monitored:

- (1) the settlement and breeding success of the White Stork on protected nests (monitoring in the period from 1.07 to 20.07 each year, of 301 free-standing poles set up as part the project),
- (2) mortality of Storks on the secured power poles (monitoring at the turn of July and August of over 10% of the secured power poles - 34 objects),
- (3) number of interventions using the car with the lift,
- (4) number of additionally secured power poles,
- (5) number of White Storks rehabilitated in the centers.

Detailed information on the need and scope of continuation of individual activities, together with an indication of the estimated budget, source, priority and the implementing entity, is presented in the table below.



Task	Name of the task	Need of continuation	Scope and period of continuation	Responsible institution	Financing source	Amount of financing (€/year)	Priority
A.1	Selection of nests to be secured	NO	Task completed.	-	-	-	-
C.1	Securing 400 nesting sites	YES	Ongoing maintenance of nests on poles and interventions at the nests. For this purpose the car with a lift purchased as part of task C.3 will be used. Indefinitely	PTOP	Own resources	€€	**
C.2	Securing the power grid	YES	1. Task completed. Maintaining existing protections. 2. Continuation of protection of dangerous power poles and burying of overhead lines (indefinitely).	1. PGE. 2. Power grid operators (continued activity)	1. Power grid operator resources 2. Energy plant resources	1. € 2. €€€	1. *** 2. **
C.3	Purchase of a specialist off-road vehicle with a lift	NO	Task completed. The equipment is planned to be used in ongoing interventions (C.1).	PTOP	Own resources	€€	***
C.4	Renovation and adaptation of rehabilitation centers for Storks	YES	The task was completed and the indefinite rehabilitation of Storks in the centers began.	1. tPKDN 2. BbPN	1. Own resources. 2. Own resources.	1. €€ 2. €€	1. *** 2. **
D.1	Monitoring of the project results	YES	Monitoring of the secured nests, breeding success and power poles. Using the drone in other ornithological research. Tracking Storks with transmitters.	PTOP	Own resources	€	**
D.2	Assessment of social and economic impact of the planned actions on the local economy and society and on restoration of the ecosystem functions.	NO	Task completed.	-	-	-	-

Task	Name of the task	Need of continuation	Scope and period of continuation	Responsible institution	Financing source	Amount of financing (€/year)	Priority
E.1	Promotional and educational activities	YES	Continuation of activities within statutory activities. Indefinitely	PTOP, ŁPKDN, BbPN	Own resources	€	*
E.2	Creating a GIS database of White Stork nests and a project website	YES	Maintenance and updating of the project website.	PTOP	Own resources	€	*
E.3	Trainings on protection of the White Stork	YES	Task completed. Trainings are planned for interested groups if needed (municipalities, fire departments, veterinarians, etc.).	PTOP	Own resources	€	*
E.4	International conference on the protection of the White Stork	NO	Task completed.	-	-	-	-
F.1	Project management	NO	Task completed.	-	-	-	-
F.2	Financial audit of the project	NO	Task completed.	-	-	-	-
F.3	Final Report and After-Life Conservation Plan	NO	Task completed.	-	-	-	-
F.4	Creating networks with other projects	TAK	Transfer of the acquired knowledge with beneficiaries of other projects.	PTOP, ŁPKDN, BbPN	Own resources	€	*

Legend:

The amount of financing: € = up to 1000 euro, €€ = between 1,000 and 5,000 euro, €€€ = between 5,000 and 10,000 euro, €€€€ = over 10,000 euro

Priority: * = average, ** = high, *** = urgent

