

## **Nature Reserve „ Svētes paliene”**

### **Summary of the Nature Management Plan**

The nature reserve "Svētes paliene" (Svēte floodplain) was established in 2004, to ensure protection of rare species of wild birds and plants as well as biotopes. The EU Biotopes and Bird Directive determined that this territory needed protection. Total site surface area (ha): 904.

The site is situated in the central part of Latvia. The site includes regularly overflowing meadows and agricultural fields at Svete River outfall in the Lielupe River and on the right opposite side of the Lielupe River. Floods occur regularly, since existing drainage systems can prevent flooding only to some extent, mainly focusing on safety of human settlements. The area is flat with few or no vertical elements (trees, buildings) and thus very favourable for different meadow bird species. Following main habitat groups are represented in this area: grasslands 50%, agricultural habitats 42% and permanent or temporary wetlands 8%. Some dystrophy old riverbeds can be found in the area, too. A part of the territory is still managed (primarily mowing, cow grazing on the right bank of the Lielupe river), but scope and intensity of these activities are decreasing. Occasionally some former meadow areas are being ploughed (especially NE part), which is unfavourable for target species. Quite intensive recreational fishing activities are ongoing along the riverbanks.

The long-term management task is to preserve and increase the value of the ecology and landscape in Svēte floodplain - nominated as *Natura 2000* (code LV0303200) site in 2005 - by restoring the natural functions of the floodplain meadows of the rivers Lielupe and Svēte.

The nature reserve has 4 biotopes, specially protected in Latvia and Europe:

- Eutrophic high caulescent plants stands
- Floodplain meadows
- Fennoscandian lowland species-rich dry to mesic grasslands
- Dystrophy old riverbeds

The total number of specially protected species in the territory of the nature reserve is 48 (3 plant and 45 bird species). The nature reserve is an important Corncrake nesting area. It is also very important during the waterfowl spring migration period as the best place for stopping, resting and feeding.

A more detailed description of the biotopes and populations is found in the nature management plan of the nature reserve "Svētes paliene." The aim of the current document on nature management plan in Svēte floodplain is to establish the short and long term aims as well as territorial areas.

The nature reserve "Svētes paliene" is divided into 3 functional areas: restricted area, a nature reserve and a neutral area. The nature reserve area covers 198 hectares and consists of 21.25 % of the territory of the nature reserve. The neutral area consists of 8.27 hectares and is 0.89 % of the total nature reserve's territory. The restricted area 725,46 hectares of the total territory (77.86%).