

**World Wetlands Day Celebration at Warta Mouth National Park,  
POLAND - 01.02.2009**



As every year, since 2001, we were celebrating World Wetland Day at our headquarters. In this year we organized WWD on 1st February 2009. We have prepared some activities and contests for local people, especially for kids, conducted at the celebration day, before and after it, until the 13<sup>th</sup> of February (as always).

We have started our activities in October 2008, when we announced an art contest titled: "Legends from the Wetlands" for children from primary schools located around the Park. The rule was that an art should be no longer than 20 minutes.

There were 10 groups of kids from 7 primary schools, which took part in that contest. Theatrical groups were composed from 7 to 37 of people and were prepared very good. Of course, the level and kind of performance were very different, so our jury had a big problem to choose a winner, but the winner group had beautiful choreography and costumes what made jury's choice easier. All groups will get diplomas and different prizes on 25<sup>th</sup> of March, during Theatre's Day.



*The winner group during the show.*

The celebration was opened by Park's Director Mr. Konrad Wypychowski who made a short introductory speech about wetlands and Ramsar convention importance. After that we started activities prepared by us specially for this occasion.

First, there was an art showed by group of kids, which won the first prize, titled: „Where are water lilies come from?”. The audience was impressed by kids play and their engagement. Small actors were gifted by a burst of applause.

The second in the schedule was lecture concerning Polish Ramsar's areas, titled: “Polish areas entered on Ramsar List” led by Agnieszka Mielczarek, emloyee of “Warta Mouth” National Park. On her speech she characterized Polish Ramsar's areas, their location, bird species and kind of wetlands they represent.

All the time, during Celebration Day, our guests could eat delicious rice cakes.

After this interesting lecture we have invited all our guests (about 140 people) for a guided excursion to the nearest place where we could watch birds and their behaviour. We visited an environmental path called “Birds' trail”. There were 70 people who decided to go on the excursion. For each participant we have prepared a binocular and additionally both guides took a couple of telescopes. The excursion lasted approximately 1,5 hours. Unfortunately the weather was very bad. It was rainy, windy and frosty day, and because of that people didn't see many species of birds. They were watching mute swans, goldeneyes, goosanders and a lot of mallards. In spite of the weather participants were content with excursion and interested in birdwaching and looking forward to come back in the future.

On the occasion of WWD, there were printed postcards with water and shore birds, by The Polish Post cooperating with Warta Mouth National Park. One set of postcards includes 8 pieces. On each postcard we can find the logo of Ramsar, Warta Mouth National Park and The Polish Post. Each postcard appeared different species of water and shore birds: bean goose, white-tailed eagle, ruff, whooper swan, black stork, crane, white-winged tern. Additionally, The Polish Post made a special stamp, which appeared a bean goose (Park's symbol) and the date of WWD.



*The postcard with white-tailed eagle and a special stamp.*

Furthermore, as every year, we prepared free of charge workshops for students from primary school (age: 12 years), titled: "Why do we need Wetlands?". These activities were taking place from 19<sup>th</sup> of January to 13<sup>th</sup> of February. During this time frame in workshops took part 211 students from 7 local primary schools.

We noticed that, in this year, came more people than before, what showed that local society is more interested in Park's work. More and more people have conscience that wetlands are vitally important areas and want to protect them.

We are satisfied because of that situation and have a new mobilization and willingness to organise next WWD in 2010.

Agnieszka Mielczarek

Ewa Baraniewicz