

## Views and experiences for the in-depth review of work on Invasive Alien Species in Poland

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Alien Species in Poland [www.iop.krakow.pl/ias](http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ias)

The present report covers IAS-related views and experiences in Poland between November 2006 and November 2007. Its aim is to supplement the Third National Report submitted to the CBD Secretariat in 2005 (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/world/pl/pl-nr-03-en.doc> ; points 45-56, Box XLVI), and the report submitted in December 2006. For a broader perspective of IAS-related issues in Poland, please consult all three reports.

The level of public awareness of biological invasions and support for solving this problem improves in Poland. For instance, for the past few years there has been a growing concern about the invasion of an alien butterfly, chestnut leaf miner (*Cameraria ohridella*), affecting horse chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*). The invasion was widely publicized in media. As a result, many campaigns were organised to control the species in different places of the country and by different stakeholders (local governments, NGOs) with a remarkable level of participation from the general public.

Information on IAS in Poland is collected and managed at a few levels. The online database “Alien species in Poland” ([www.iop.krakow.pl/ias](http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ias) ) has been developed since 1999 at the Institute of Nature Conservation, Polish Academy of Sciences. This includes adding new species and restructuring the database according to recommendations by Global Invasive Species Information Network (GISIN) and Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP). Currently there are over 760 species in the database. For approximately 40% of species in the database (including most alien species of major concern) risks are assessed.

Another element of data collection on IAS in Poland is the project “Invasive alien species in Poland and conservation of biological diversity”. The project, funded by the Polish Committee for Scientific Research, will be finished in 2008. Its aim is a comprehensive assessment of threat by alien species to the native biological diversity. Several dozens scientists from leading academic centres in Poland participate in the. Plans for 2008 include publishing two books compiling the results of the project and making them available online. Apart from this project, there is an ongoing work in a number of academic centres to study the specific impact of different invasive alien species in Poland. An important step towards assessment of risks posed by alien plants to native Poland’s ecosystems, habitats and species, was publishing a book “The Establishment and Spread of Alien Plant Species (Kenophytes) in the Flora of Poland” (Tokarska-Guzik 2005). Other recent projects include research into adverse effect of an Asiatic nematode *Asworthius sidemi* upon European bison (*Bison bonasus*), testing the level of hybridisation between Asiatic sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) and native red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), and assessing the threat from IAS in Polish national and landscape parks.

The database on alien species in Poland contributes regional exchange of information on alien species and to regional cooperation in order to solve the problem. It was included into

the North European and Baltic Network on Invasive Alien Species (NOBANIS, [www.nobanis.org](http://www.nobanis.org)) and used to provide information to the EU-funded project DAISIE (Delivering Alien Invasive Species Inventories for Europe, [www.europe-aliens.org](http://www.europe-aliens.org)). The aim of the project is to provide European inventories of IAS and establish the basis for an early warning system.

There is an ongoing work in Poland to strengthen national policy, legal and institutional frameworks related to IAS. This includes discussions between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture to coordinate procedures related to IAS. For instance, procedures for giving consent to introduction of alien energetic plants have been discussed between the two Ministries, although the consensus in this respect was difficult to achieve. The potential for making use of the extended phytosanitary system, subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture, for protection against introduction of alien species constituting threat to biological diversity has also been discussed.

Although a comprehensive assessment of legal regulations with respect to the issue of alien species has not yet been conducted in Poland, in 2006 the Minister of Environment invited all interested stakeholders to comment on the existing legislature pertaining to the conservation of nature, and to suggest any amendments. As a result, about 500 changes were proposed, including over 20 amendments in several acts related to invasive alien species, such as Nature Conservation Act (2004), Inland Fisheries Act (1985), and Marine Fisheries Act (2004), the Ordinance of the Minister of the Environment on the list of game species and close seasons for those animals (2001, as amended in 2004), and the Ordinance of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of 2001 on fishing and conditions for raising, breeding and catching other organisms living in water. The proposed changes included e.g. including definitions of “alien species”, “invasive alien species” and “introduction”, as recommended by the „European Strategy on IAS” and CBD’s Guiding Principles. Other changes suggested shifting dates of close seasons for alien species for their more effective control. Also more stringent laws on introduction of alien fish for fisheries and plants for agriculture were put forward. In order to effectively enforce the provision that bans importation of alien species that are potentially dangerous for native biodiversity, it was suggested that in native legislature there should be a clear system of black, grey and white lists of alien species.

The recent initiatives of the Ministry of Environment, related to IAS legislature, include drawing a list of alien species whose import to Poland will be strictly banned. Also, more precise regulations will be introduced for keeping alien farm animals, particularly deer. The Ministry also funded a project to develop the code of conduct for alien species introduced to Poland. The project, completed in August 2005, was led by the Institute of Nature Conservation, Polish Academy of Sciences. It included drawing a list of alien species expanding in Poland, estimating spatial scale and the rate of alien species expansion and changes in population numbers, drawing a list of invasive alien species and assessing type and scale of the impact by each species. The project also suggested methods to control alien species, including possibilities for their economical usage and drew a list of alien species not yet recorded in Poland but expanding in neighbouring countries and likely to invade Poland in the close future. Another element of the project was a list of cultivated alien plants (including energetic plants) and bred alien animals in Poland with threats they may pose for native biodiversity and possible means of mitigating these threats. The outcome of this project may be used for developing a comprehensive strategy on IAS in Poland.

Poland also contributes to regional cooperation and responsibility in IAS-related issues, including participation in NOBANIS and DAISIE projects. In February 2006 Poland ratified the Convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians

(Carpathian Convention, [www.carpathianconvention.org](http://www.carpathianconvention.org)). Article 4.1 of this Convention explicitly refers to the need of reducing IAS problem by the Parties. In June 2006 it entered into force, thus establishing a new instrument for addressing biological invasions in the Poland. In October 2006, options for cooperation between Poland and Ukraine on IAS-related issues were discussed in Kiev, at the “National Workshop on Invasive Alien Species in Ukraine”, organised by the Bern Convention Secretariat.