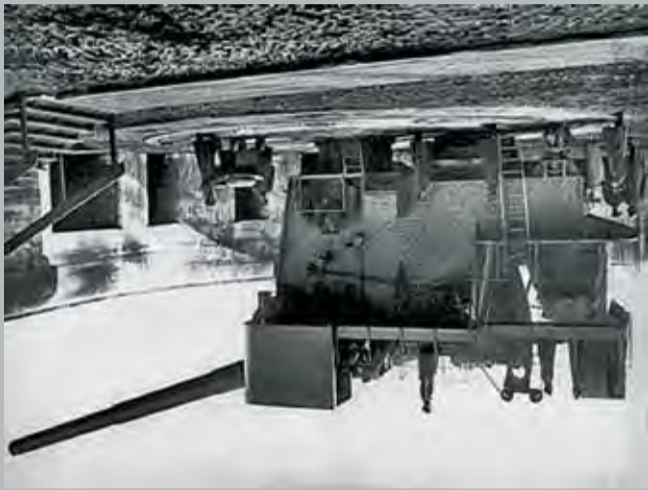




This protected area is under a very high anthropogenic pressure. Its sandy beaches and pine forests attract numerous visitors, who come from several villages and military objects situated in the nature reserve and close to it as well as from St. Petersburg. The traffic on the motorway is intense. Under these conditions, even notwithstanding the protection regime of the reserve, human disturbance remains the major negative factor affecting and nesting birds.



Owing to its position in the entrance to the Neva Bay, the area of Lebyazhye has always been strategically important. Lotsmanskoe (Pilot) settlement, founded there in 1867, was and St. Petersburg. Numerous defence works, built there before the World War I to protect the sea approaches to Kronstadt mostly inhabited by pilots navigating ships to Kronstadt and St. Petersburg. Numerous defence works, built there before the World War I to protect the sea approaches to St. Petersburg, are living reminders of the past battles and the glory of the Russian Army and Fleet. One of them is the famous "Krasnaya Gorka" Fort, which was the defence centre of the Oranienbaum bridgehead in the World War II.

Rules for visitors of the reserve

Prohibited activities:

- unauthorized cutting of trees and bushes
- organization of landfills, dump household or industrial waste
- driving motor vehicles off the roads, parking motor vehicles outside specially designated areas and in water protection zone
- sailing any boats in the water area of the nature reserve during spring migration: from the ice break-up to May 25 and from September 15 to October 31
- camping and making fires outside specially designated areas, burning grass and reeds
- cutting and burning reeds and any other disturbances of coastal plant and animal communities
- hunting
- collection of botanical, zoological and mineralogical collections
- visiting reed beds near Chernaya Lakhta Village in the nesting period of waterfowl (April 20 – June 15)
- training hunting dogs, organisation of field trials and in any other way disturbing waterbirds during their mass stopovers
- collecting/killing protected species of plants, fungi and animals

You may

Walk in the nature reserve, pick mushrooms and berries for personal use, fish in accordance with current fishing regulations*, use personal transport in compliance with the above mentioned rules and restrictions.

Detailed rules and regulations concerning the protected area can be found in the Statute (polozhenie) of "Lebyazhy" state nature reserve adopted by the Government of the Leningrad Region (Decree of the Government of the Leningrad Region no. 74 of 03.04.2007).

* Fishing Regulation for the Western fishery basin is adopted by the Federal Agency for Fisheries (Order no. 393 of 10.12.2008).

Persons found guilty of infringing the protection regime of the reserve will be subject to administrative penalty.

The visitors' respect both to the nature and the efforts at its conservation is essential for the welfare of the protected area. Remember that in certain seasons animals are extremely sensitive to any disturbance and that coastal and wetland plants suffer a lot from trampling. Please take this into consideration when planning your visit to Lebyazhy nature reserve.

Rubbish collection points in the "Lebyazhy" nature reserve are few and far between, being mostly located in the villages. You certainly can take away everything that you have brought with you.

Let's keep Lebyazhy tidy!

In the late 19th-early 20th century Lebyazhye was a favourite summer haunt of St. Petersburg inhabitants. Mikhail E. Saitykov-Shchedrin, the classic of the Russian literature, had a country seat there. Vitaly Bianki and Aleksey Liverovskiy, well-known Russian naturalist writers, spent their childhood and youth in Lebyazhye. A municipal protected area "Bianki's meadow" was founded in 2008 by the Lebyazhye Deputy Council to commemorate the famous countryman.



The nature reserve is flanked by Lebyazhye, one of the largest settlements on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland. This place has a long history of human habitation, having been populated by the Finno-Ugric tribes, the Novgorod Slavs and the Swedes. After the Great Northern War (1700-1721), these lands were gained by Russia.



Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) in the Leningrad Region



Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention develop and maintain an international network of Ramsar sites ensuring their protection and wise use.

The management authority of "Lebyazhy" state nature reserve is the Committee for Natural Resources of the Leningrad Region.



You can learn more about this and other protected areas of the Leningrad Region at: www.nature.lenobl.ru

Attention!

The protected area is situated in the border zone.

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The second (modified) edition of the booklet was prepared by the Committee for Natural Resources of the Leningrad Region and the Forest Management Board of the Leningrad Region (Lenobles) in 2012.

For centuries Lebyazhye has been a stopover and feeding site for waterbirds on spring and autumn migration. The importance of this site is associated with its strategic position on the major White Sea-Baltic flyway and its highly bioproduktive coastal zone, providing enough food for the migratory birds. Another advantage are climatic conditions: in spring the ice on the Gulf of Finland begins to break 10-14 days earlier in this area than in the nearby water bodies. The Russian name for the reserve is derived from the word meaning "swan" - lebed'.

Many species from the above groups are listed in the Red Data Book of the Russian Federation and in the Red Data Book of the Leningrad Region. Many species are also included in the IUCN Red List and the Red Data Book of the Baltic Region.

- numerous species of invertebrates, bryophytes, lichens and fungi, which are still poorly studied in the reserve
- 30 species of mammals
- over 150 species of birds
- over 35 species of fishes and cyclostomes
- 14 species of macroalgae
- 406 species of vascular plants

The protected area provides habitats for

- threatened plant and animal species
- stopover sites and nesting areas of waterbirds
- coastal shallow water areas
- of the Gulf of Finland
- typical and unique natural complexes of the coastal zone

The Ramsar site and the nature reserve are established in order to preserve

Total area: about 64 km², including 53 km² of the Gulf of Finland water area.

The nature reserve comprises 35 km of the coastline of the Gulf of Finland and its shallow water area with prevailing depths of 1-3 m.

"Lebyazhy" regional state nature reserve (zakaznik in Russian) is situated on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland between the village of Bolschaya Izhora and the town of Sosnovy Bor (from Shepelsky Cape in the west to the village of Dubochki in the east). Its borders coincide with those of the Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site) "Southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, Baltic Sea" (commonly known as "Lebyazhye").

"Lebyazhy" Protected Area

Regional state nature reserve



LEBYAZHY



Wetland of International Importance "Southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, Baltic Sea"

(Ramsar site no. 689)

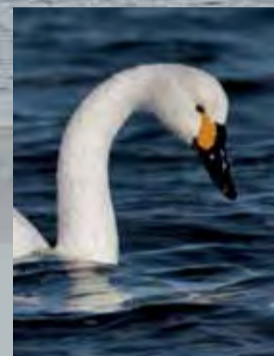
This wetland area has been designated by the Government of the Russian Federation for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance established under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (signed in Iran in 1971)



The outstanding value of this protected area is associated with massive concentrations of migrating waterbirds, first of all, swans, whose numbers at the stopover can exceed 10 thousands. The most regular swan stopovers are observed near the villages of Chernaya Lakhta, Lebyazhye and Bolshaya Izhora.



In autumn the cygnets of all swan species are coloured differently than the adults; their plumage is not white but greyish-brown.



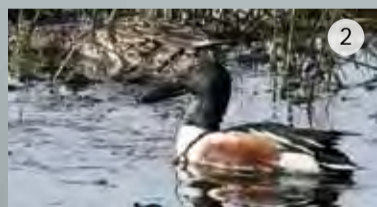
The first swans arrive in the reserve in spring, as soon as the ice melts. The usual time of mass arrivals is the second half of April, with large stopovers observed until mid-May. Migrating swans choose for their stopovers shallow water areas overgrown with pondweed and charophytes. Underwater parts of these plants, roots and nodules rich in starch, are the basis of their diet. The depth is of crucial importance: the water should be shallow enough for the bird to reach the bottom by stretching its neck. Sadly, intensive construction works in the Gulf of Finland (hydraulic deposition of soil, dredging) considerably disturb the habitats of swans, and their numbers on stopovers in the Bay of Neva are gradually diminishing. Large flocks of these magnificent snow-white birds will soon cease to be the spectacular feature of the coast close to St. Petersburg. In this connection, "Lebyazhy" nature reserve is becoming all the more important for sustaining the numbers of swans.

Three swan species occur in the area: mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), whooping swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) and Bewick's swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). Anyone can recognize a swan but to identify its species is more difficult. The first thing to pay attention to is the shape and the colour of the bill. An adult mute swan has a red bill with a black pronounced knob at the base. Cone-shaped bills of the whooping swan and the Bewick's swan are black-and-yellow. A big yellow spot at the base of the whooping swan's bill is sharply wedged into the black maxilla. In Bewick's swan, the border between the yellow and black parts of the bill is rounded and passes closer to the maxilla's base. These two species may form mixed flocks, and then it is easy to tell them apart, as the whooping swan is almost by half larger than the Bewick's swan.

The wintering sites of the swans are situated in Western Europe. The Bewick's swan spends the summer in the Arctic tundras and can be seen in the Leningrad Region on passage only. The whooping swan does sometimes nest in quiet areas of the Leningrad Region but mostly prefers the areas further to the north-east, up to the tundra zone. The mute swan is, on the contrary, a "European". In recent years it has actively been colonizing areas in the north-eastern direction, and can now be found nesting in the west of the Leningrad Region, on the coast of the Gulf of Finland and on islands off the coast. The mute swan may also start nesting near Lebyazhye in the near future, especially since, contrary to the other swans, this species easily becomes habituated to humans.



Some coastal stretches are overgrown with reeds, providing habitats to nesting birds. Many wetland birds can be found there in large numbers, such as various ducks (mallard – *Anas platyrhynchos*, teal – *Anas crecca*, shoveler – *Anas clypeata* (2), gadwall – *Anas strepera*, tufted duck – *Aythya fuligula* (1), common pochard – *Aythya ferina*), coot (*Fulica atra*) (3), moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), water rail (*Rallus aquaticus*), spotted crake (*Porzana porzana*) and other species.



A characteristic landscape feature of the reserve is a raised cliff of the ancient Littorina sea. Stretching along the whole southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, it comes up to the water line only in the small area near Krasnaya Gorka. This unique geological landmark calls for special protection. Construction works at the edge of the shore terrace accelerate the gradual natural collapse of the cliff, so that it moves 1-2 meters inland every year.



The nature reserve is one of the few places in the Leningrad Region where the population of bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*) can still be found. This lowly poignantly-scented shrub is listed in various Red Data Books.

Dwarf cornel (*Cornus suecica*) is associated with black alder forests. Its fruit resembles lingonberry but, unlike the latter, has an indifferent farinaceous taste.

Birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus ruprechtii*), typical of coastal habitats in general but rare in the region, can sometimes be found on sandy shores.

