

The Little Britain Times



ISSUE 8

LOCAL MYSTERIES OF NATURE

APRIL 2013

Nature takes care of everything so that everywhere you find something to learn.
Leonardo da Vinci.

In nature there is nothing useless.

Michel de Montaigne.

If you understand the spoken language of nature you will say: what a wonderful world!"

IEARN Project Places and Perspectives

Nature takes care of everything so that everywhere you find something to learn. To begin with we decided to go from global to local and addressed our foreign friends in the project Places and Perspectives in Learning Circles of IEARN for help.



Our friends, 9-th grade students and their teacher Natalia Byzova from Kiev Troyeshchyna gymnasium sent us the information about their city. Watching the video we saw some things, which are unusual for our territory. Also there were some unique plants. We saw the beauty of Kiev and it was very exciting.



Many small rivers and creeks fall into Lybid, a right tributary of the Dnipro, and then into Dnipro. The wideness of the Dnipro within the city is about 600 metres.

Many small rivers and creeks fall into Lybid, a right tributary of the Dnipro, and then into Dnipro. The wideness of the Dnipro within the city is about 600 metres.

time of Kievan Rus pagans organized rites there. Ancient Ukrainian magicians—volhvy—made there first underground passages.



“Kyiv is situated on the river Dnipro and seven hills, which are between 100 and 196 meters high. Between the hills there’re ravines and steep banks. When you drive through the city, you feel like getting deaf because of altitude difference.

In Kyiv there’re some endangered species of plants, which are protected by the law and are noted down to the Red Book of Ukraine. They’re pasqueflower, feather grass and scorzonera. They can be found on Lysa Hora. It is known as one of the most mysterious places in Kyiv. In the

In the 19-th century there was a fort, which protected Kyiv. In the 20-th century it was a place of execution. There’re a lot of legends about covens on the hill.



The first officially registered poltergeist was in Kyiv.”



IN THIS ISSUE

Yelnya Bog 2

“Cranes and cranberries” 3

Our Projects 4

Seven Mysteries of Life 5

Fun Corner 6

Seven Natural Wonders of Vitebsk Region

Mysteries and wonders are very close to each other



Any region of our planet has some unique natural feature, something special that distinguishes it from other places.

How many wonders there are in the world! It’s very interesting to know what sets apart your area from the others.

As we live in the Vitebsk region we want to tell about 7 mysteries of it.

1. The biggest swamp in Europe is the Yelnia. To know more about this swamp you should read the next page.

2. The deepest lake is the Dolgoe. !!! In its deepest place it is 53.6 m deep.

3. The longest coastline of Braslav lakes. The length is 79 kilometers.

4. Hydrosulphuric spring “Lazenki”. The water in it is similar to the mineral water "Borjomi" from Georgia

5. The largest boulder. It’s in Shumilino. Its length is 11 meters, width - 5.6 m, the apparent height - 3 m.

6. The unique in our country drifting island Hozyain. It’s in the lake Osveiskoe.

7. The king-oak near the village Tadulino. This oak tree is about 400 years old. It’s height is 26 meters, 1.6 meters in diameter.





Since ancient times the bog has been considered one of the most mysterious places. People tell lots of cryptic stories connected with the bog. In our region we have a unique place—Yelnia Bog. One of the members of our team Veronica Borovik tried to dive into the mysteries of Yelnia Bog. Here are some facts.



Yelnia Bog

Not long ago many people didn't hear anything about such a reserved edge as Yelnia Bog at all. Now the Republican landscape wildlife area "Yelnia" is one of the most unique objects of the reserved fund of Belarus. Yelnia, one of the largest peat bogs of Europe, covers the area of more than 23,000 hectares. The territory of the wildlife area is the upper bog containing powerful deposits of peat. A unique biosystem of Yelnia is a shelter for endangered species of plants and birds. Packs of flying geese and cranes stop here to rest.

The Value of Yelnia

- 1 . It supports a hydrological mode of a natural and territorial complex of the region, and also the river the Western Dvina.
- 2 . It makes an essential impact on the formation of the microclimate of the district.
- 3 . The bog makes it possible to exist for the species ecologically connected with upper bogs.
- 4 . Yelnia serves as a moisture store.
- 5 . It serves as a place of the accumulation of peat.

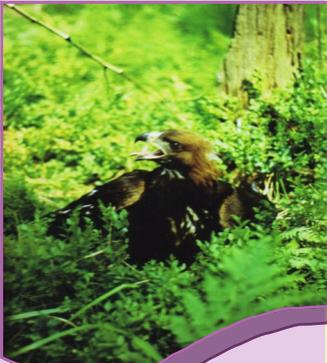
6 . Marsh massifs are the habitat of rare and endangered species of plants and animals; they serve for production of useful plants and fruits, for the recreational and medical purposes. Sometimes they are used as hunting grounds. On the territory of the wildlife area "Yelnia" there are 12 species of trees, 22 species of bushes, 4 – semi-bushes, 5 – low shrubs 134 species of grassy plants revealed. Here one can find the Atlantic type of sphagnum mosses – sphagnum soft which is rare for Belarus and Eastern Europe as a well. According to the account of 2006 on the territory of hunting grounds of the wild

wildlife area "Yelnia" there are 27 elks, 64 boars, 50 roe deer, 30 foxes, 25 –raccoon dogs, 7 wolves registered. The number of the white hare is about 70, the beaver – 50. Also the wildlife area is the habitat of 98 species of birds from which 23 are included in the Red List of the Republic of Belarus. Yelnia Bog is valuable for neutralization of emissions of carbon dioxide. Over time it will start absorbing harmful emissions of more than 1 ton on 1 hectare a year.

In Yelnia there is something close to everyone ... Birds call over in flight. Clouds curl over this corner which has hidden in hope ... a unique shelter of endangered species. But, despite all variety of life in the wildlife area, under still waters of the bog lies the disturbing truth. For many years people devastated Yelnia. The ameliorative channels which were dug more than 80 years ago, led to drying of the bog and fires. In 2002 more than 70% of the area of the bog burned out. And at present a number of projects on protection and restoration of the initial condition of Yelnia works.



Nature is the only book in which on all its pages there is a profound content



num mosses – sphagnum soft which is rare for Belarus and Eastern Europe as a well. According to the account of 2006 on the territory of hunting grounds of the wild



Cranes and Cranberries



The first ecological festival "Cranes and cranberries" was held on September 30, 2012 in our town of Miory. The event was organized by local authorities together with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and "Birdlife Belarus" NGO with the support of EU/UNDP Project "Support to the development of a comprehensive framework for international environmental cooperation in the Republic of Belarus" and the assistance of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Belarus.



This festival takes place in Miory in September because this month cranberries can be picked up and Miory region is very rich in this kind of berries. The "Yelnia" bog has the largest amount of cranberries in Belarus. A large variety of dishes with cranberry was presented on the festival. The visitors could try them or buy cranberries at very good prices. Besides, every year in our region more than 4000 cranes stop for rest at the «Yelnia» bog during the autumn migration. During the festival the questions of the conservation of cranes in the reserve



stop for rest at the «Yelnia» bog during the autumn migration. During the festival the questions of the conservation of cranes in the reserve



stop for rest at the «Yelnia» bog during the autumn migration. During the festival the questions of the conservation of cranes in the reserve



Full of bright impressions the guests of the festival took part in ecological games for kids and adults, elected "Cranberry Princess of Miory" among schoolgirls and sent "crane mail" with warm wishes to their friends and relatives. Every winner got as a present a small souvenir with a picture of a crane and cranberry.



The celebration was very joyful and memorable. Visitors could also enjoy lovely music and beautiful dance.



Everybody could also watch hundreds of cranes, because free bus-trip to the "Yelnia" was organized. People can see about 2,000 cranes.



Our local authorities say that this festival will become a tradition in our region.



10 interesting facts about cranberries and cranes

1. One Cranberry contains up to 90% water.
2. Europeans named the fruit "crane berry" because they thought the cranberry blossom looked like the head of a sand hill crane.
3. Cranberries score among the highest of all fruits in antioxidants.
4. The first commercial canned cranberry sauce was put on the market by the Cape Cod Cranberry Company in 1912.
5. Cranberry juice was first made in the 1683 in America.
6. On Earth, there are cranberry bushes, whose age reaches a century.
7. In 1994, the Cranberries became a national symbol of Massachusetts.
8. Native Americans and Pilgrims used cranberries as a red dye.
9. The first recorded use of the word "cranberries" appeared in 1647 in a letter written by missionary John Eliot.
10. The name of this berry, which came to us from ancient times, literally translates as "sour ball."

1. Today, there are just about 15 species of cranes in the world.
2. Eurasian Crane is the highest flying crane, reaching an altitude of approximately 32,800 feet.
3. Fossils of Sandhill Crane, dating back to 6,000 years ago, indicate it to be the oldest species of bird alive.



4. Belladonna - this is the smallest species of crane.
5. In China and Japan, the crane symbolizes alertness, longevity, wisdom, loyalty, honor.
6. Cranes never sit on trees.
7. Crane Creek is heard at a distance of 2

8. The heaviest is the Japanese crane, its weight is up to 11 kg.
9. Cranes lay only 2 eggs in the nest



10. Observations show that in the wild cranes live at least 20 years, and their conditions of captivity up to the age of 80 years.





Our projects

According to Malcolm Bradbury's saying, if you are not part of solution, you are part of the problem.

Human activity has done a lot of harm to the environment. People believed that, whatever they did, the Earth would remain much the same. Now we know that is not true. Our nature is under threat. REC, European Environment Agency, IPCC, UNEP, LUCN, Birdlife International, WNO, WWF are the most famous worldwide ecological organizations and programmes, which take care about the health of the planet, try to keep the exclusiveness of nature and rare species of birds and animals. But this organizations haven't so much forces to avert all damage inflicted to nature by people. So we should help them! We all need to work together to save our environment. We have a moral duty to look after our planet and hand it on in good order to future generations. Schools and other organizations of Miory also try to be helpful. We hold conferences, actions and take part in different projects and other activities. You can read about some of them below.

The World Day of Birds.

Different activities devoted to the life of birds were held on April 2 in "Miory school #3". 4,8 form students together with the guests made birdhouses, houses for bats. They also wrote their greetings and wishes for birds. Those teams whose birdhouses were the best got prizes and all the birdhouses were placed on the trees around the school.



The students of our school tried to find their solution for the problem of saving our nature and its mysteries organizing campaigns. Here are some of the solutions.

Save our planet

Every year large areas of our planet are destroyed to make way for new houses, factories and roads. And I decide to make a campaign to save our town. The first step that each person in our campaign must do is to plant a tree. The second step is to enter my group vk under the name Save Our Planet Together. later we will shave the ideas on the problem of litter in our town. And the first rule in our campaign is "If you have something you don't need anymore: think what you can do with it. Maybe you can reuse it"

Rabusheva Anatasia 7"A"

Let us help WWF

Recognizing the fact that around the world animals die because of the people, we decided to help them be more careful and to help animals. We decided to help animals by feeding homeless cats and dogs. If it's possible one can take them home. We care about animals. It is easy to join our campaign if you want to help animals.

Dasha Kovalyova 7 "A"

Every day Earth is more and more devastated. Every day factories and mills are constructed, millions of useful minerals are extracted, millions of harmful substances are thrown away into the water and into the air every day The air, rivers, lakes and seas are polluted.

Think about the future! Begin to care about the nature! It is necessary. Begin from yourself, today, now!

Seven Mysteries of Life

Long long ago a tribe, who called themselves "Children of the Sun" lived on their land. They were hardworking and had endless forests, meadows and fields in their possession. They lived peacefully for a long time, but one day they noticed that rivers started turning into swamps and fields into lifeless wastelands. The beauty, that had surrounded them faded. Everything became sad and colourless.

The oldest man called the tribe together. "We've faced some troubles, because we forgot ancient secrets of life". – he said – "We need brave and noble youths and ladies, who will try to find answers to the secrets of life, which will help us to stay alive."

And there were some volunteers. They set out down the river to find answers to the secrets of life and the way they connected with each other with the help of six life fundamentals. They were given little bags with seven white beads and six coloured in each and they also had some leather laces. The oldest man told them, that they had to pass seven tests (according to the number of white beads) and understand how six life fundamentals – light, air, water, ground, animals and plants are connected together and act as a whole.

Young travellers started to solve the secrets. They saw a bright light and every living being began to shine from the inside. They learned the first secret of life - warmth and energy of the Sun exist in every living being. This energy is transmitted from the plants to little animals, from little animals to bigger ones. So they strung a yellow bead – the symbol of the Sun.

When the travellers were ready to

solve the second secret of life everything around them became transparent. Young people in the boat noticed water around them. Water streams connected the earth and the sky, animate and inanimate nature, maintaining life this way.

They understood that fresh water was important for every living being and strung blue bead – the symbol of vivifying water. When travellers strung the third bead, everything around them started to change quickly: heat changed to cold, swamps to deserts, meadows to rocks, one kind of plants and animals to another. They learned the third secret – the diversity of living conditions creates the diversity of wildlife.

That

was a brown bead – the symbol of the mother-Earth, which gives lives to its countless children.

Further tests helped the travellers to learn some other secrets of life. The fourth secret told that death gave a new life. Life and death were connected into a cycle. They strung a green bead, which symbolized plants and eternal life on the Earth. The fifth secret told the travellers that everything was interconnected in our lives, so they strung a blue bead – the symbol of the air.

The sixth secret, which was solved by the travellers, told them that life around them was changing, nothing stayed the

same. The last bead was red. It symbolized quickly changeable world.

Suddenly the travellers saw the oldest man. They asked: "What shall we do with the white bead? Is there any secret that was still unknown to us?" The oldest man said, that he had the last test for them. He made a competition between people and animals and people lost it. The travellers said it was unfair, because each animal had its own power which people didn't have.

The oldest man answered: - "You are right. But you have a special power, too. You have an ability to understand the secrets of life and turn this knowledge for your good. The ability to change the environment differs humans from animals. That's why humans are responsible for every creature and plant on the Earth. Put this necklace on and wear it as a reminder of seven tests and seven secrets of live. The tribe should understand that it is necessary to live in peace and harmony with the Earth, otherwise they will not survive".

And we all should remember that we are responsible for the life on the Earth.

Victoria Zakharevich, the 10-th grade

