

Poland in numbers

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About Polish nature

Poland is a Central European country with total area of 322,575 km². Land area (including inland waters) is 311 888 km², internal waters amount to 2,005 km² while area of territorial sea amounts is 8 682 km². The geographical centre of Poland is situated in the village Piątek located approx. 15 km from Łęczyca and 33 km from Łódź. The cape of Rozewie is the northernmost point of Poland (54°50' N), the most southern point is Opolonek peak in the Bieszczady mountains (49°00' N), to the west - the turn of the Oder River near Osinów Dolny (14°07' E) and to the east - the turn of the Bug River in the village Zosin (24°08' E).

Over half of the area of Poland i.e. 53% is located in the basin of the Vistula River, 34% in the basin of the Oder River and 11% near rivers that drain into the Baltic Sea. The average height of the country is 173 m above the sea level. The lowest point of Poland is located at -1.8m in Rączki Elbląskie.

Poland is mainly lowland with early post-glacial landscape in the northern and central part of the country and late post-glacial landscape on the south. Lowland account for over 91% of the total area, highland - 5.6% and the mountains -3.3% including the area of 0.2% covered by high mountains. The topography of the country slopes towards the northwest. Terrain relief and spatial distribution of postglacial valleys has determined the location of the river system in Poland.

The total Polish border length is 3.511 km including the 1.295 km territorial water borderline. There are seven nations bordering on Poland. We share the longest border with the Czech Republic - 796 km and the shortest with Lithuania - 104 km. The length of the sea border is 440 km. Approx.

Poland, like other countries, does not have a complete list of species representing all of the living world, although year after year, thanks to the efforts of hundreds of specialists, the number of data concerning individual taxa is growing. Species of living organisms found in Poland are associated both with the aquatic (inland and marine) and land environment. Currently, approx. 57.000 species live in Poland. Poland's biodiversity is first of all influenced by its geographic position, climatic conditions and the short period of time that has elapsed since the glaciers have receded. The location, terrain and its land-use, as well as climate variation causes that one can find here species characteristic of lowland and mountainous areas, those associated with Atlantic, and continental climate (boreal and steppe species), forest ones and those inhabiting open areas. Passage areas for migratory birds cross over Poland, therefore the country is regularly visited by birds from the northern reaches of the continent, as well as species from Siberia, less likely to arrive are migratory birds from the far eastern Asia, and quite extraordinarily lost wanderers from North America. Nature in Poland comprehensively represents the living world of the entire continent, and therefore it is of particular value when compared to other natural assets found in Europe. By getting acquainted with Polish nature, one can become an expert for the larger part of Europe.

The number of described species found in Poland so far (Symonides E., 2008, *Ochrona przyrody*, WUW)

Group	Approximate number of species
Algae	14 500
Hepatics and hornworts	238
Moss	697
Lycopodiophyta	13
Equisetales	10
Ferns	62
Gymnosperms	13
Angiosperms	2 405
Fungus	3 198
Lichenes	1 520
Sponges	9
Cnidaria	25
Flatworms	852
Rotifers	545
Gastrotrichs	117
Nematodes	1 250
Acanthocephala	39
Annelids	300
Arthropods	30 120
• Crustaceans	587
• Chelicerata	3 805
• Hexapods	26 579
• Myriapods	149
Tardigrades	87

Molluscs	277
• Gastropods	240
• Bivalvia	37
Bryozoa	18
Echinoderms	5
Chordates	704
• Tunicates	4
• Lampreys	4
• Gnathostomata	696
- fish	129
- amphibians	18
- reptiles	8
- birds	436
- mammals	105