THE PROTECTION OF WETLANDS AS VALUABLE NATURAL AREAS AND WATER CYCLING REGULATORS

Waldemar MIODUSZEWSKI
Institute for Land Reclamation and Grassland Farming,
Department of Water Resources,
Falenty, 05-090 Raszyn, Poland

Key words: irrigation-drainage system, river basins, water balance, wetlands

Abstract

Wetlands play a significant role in agricultural landscape. They are the areas of exceptionally great natural values able to regulate water cycling in river catchments. In many cases they are the basic food source for bred animals.

Large areas of wetlands (c. 4 million ha) have been drained for agricultural purposes in Poland. Nevertheless, there are still numerous natural (or close to natural) wetlands, part of which is protected in nature reserves or national parks.

Having in mind the transformation of agriculture and the need of protecting water resources and natural environment, it is necessary to regulate the principles of utilisation and management of reclaimed wetlands. Water management should be adjusted to the type of an area and to environmental requirements. Regardless of the type and intensity of agricultural use of wetlands one has to aim at limiting rapid outflow of spring thaw and rainfall waters which means the reconstruction and increasing of natural retention capacity of the river catchment. It is necessary to provide an appropriate number of water lifting facilities and their proper exploitation in land reclamation objects.

It is as well necessary to create appropriate organizational, legal and financial conditions stimulating actions to improve water balance and wetland protection.