

CREATION HISTORY

State nature biosphere reserve 'Kerzhenskiy' is situated on the left bank of a Volga tributary – the Kerzhenets river – in its middle stretch. Its eco-center is located in the village of Rustay, Borskiy region, 55 kilometers North-East from Nizhny Novgorod (ex-Gorky). The idea to create a reserve in Gorky region first came in 1920s from the scientists of the Gorky State University. But only on the 23-rd of April, 1993, the Government of the Russian Federation issued a decree number 360 that founded the reserve on the territories of Borskiy and Semyenovskiy regions with the main goal to preserve the nature of Zavolzhye.

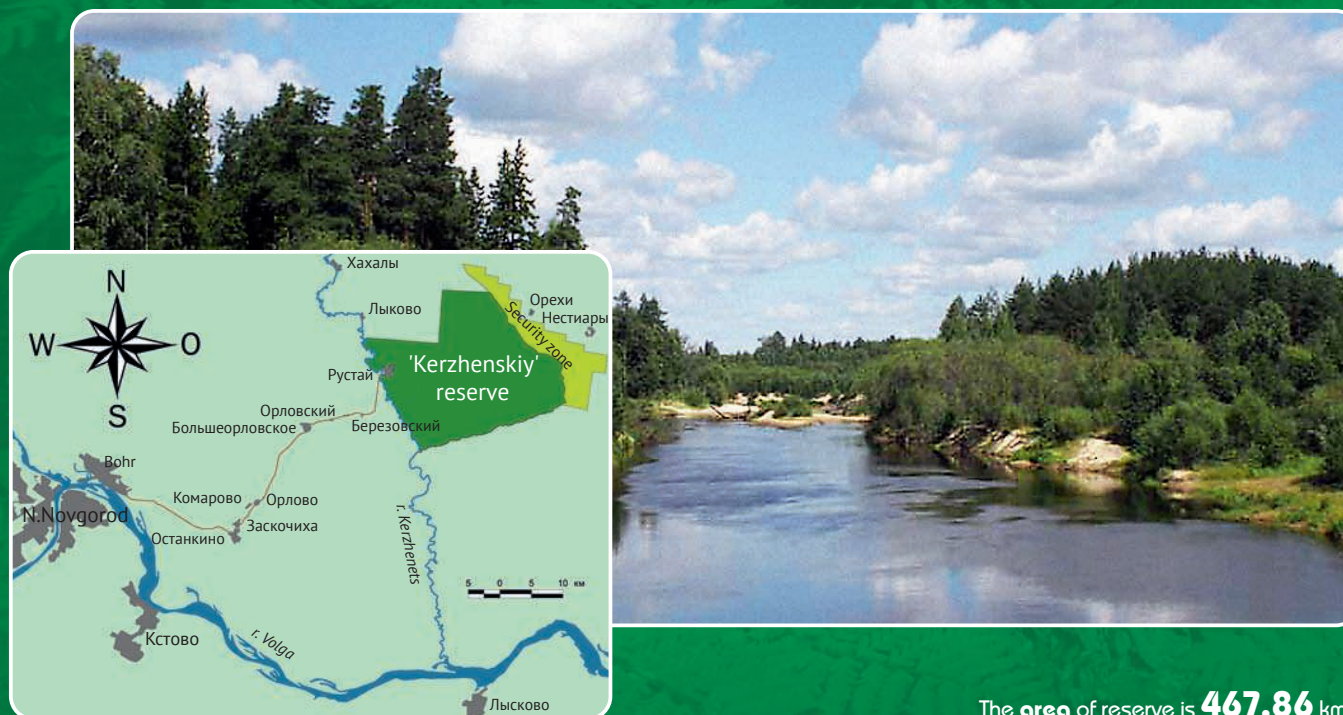
In 2002 by the decision of UNESCO Man and Biosphere program International Coordination Committee 'Kerzhenskiy' was granted its biosphere status and became the core of 'Nizhegorodskoe Zavolzhye' biosphere reserve.

MAIN NATURE HABITATS

'Kerzhenskiy' reserve covers major part of the rivers' Vishnya and Pugai basins and the drainage basin of the Chernaya river. In here you can find both well preserved lakes, bogs, river basins and old growth areas together with natural territories recovering from different types of damage: logging activities zones, former settlements areas, post-wildfire territories after the big fires of 1972 and 2010.

All types of pine forests can be found at the reserve: with lichens, green mosses, sphagnum and bilberry. Large areas of wetlands of 'Kama-Bakaldino Mires' are designated as Ramsar wetlands and therefore of international importance.

The middle stretch area of Kerzhenets is also noteworthy in geographical respect. On a relatively small territory of the reserve three different zones meet: coniferous forest (taiga), broadleaf forest and steppe. There is also an interaction between the species of northern and southern fauna of the European part of Russia.



WILDLIFE

There is a huge variety of wildlife in the reserve. 370 species of fungi, 206 lichens, 812 algae, 184 mosses, 637 plants, more than 1300 arthropods, 21 fish, 7 amphibians, 6 reptiles, 156 birds and 46 mammals live here. 'Kerzhenskiy' protects such endangered Red Data List vertebrates as indigenous Russian desman, rare birds (golden eagle, greater spotted eagle, short-toed eagle, white-tailed eagle, peregrine falcon, osprey, Eurasian eagle-owl, black stork, Eurasian curlew, Eurasian oystercatcher, great grey shrike), invertebrates (Parnassius apollo, Gymnodus cararius, Parnassius mnemosyne, Orussus abietinus, Carabus menetriesi), plants (Cephalanthera rubra, Neottianthe cucullata) and lichens (Lobaria pulmonaria and Menegazzia terebrata).

The area of reserve is **467.86** km²

RESERVE'S ACTIVITIES

Natural reserves are restricted areas protected on a long-term basis in Russia. Their main goals are preservation of natural habitats, scientific research and ecological education.

With a few exceptions, all activities are prohibited on the reserve's territory and admission is only possible with a special permit. There is a cooperation zone around Rustay village where some activities necessary for the citizens of the settlement are allowed (e.g., grazing, mowing, mushroom and berry picking, limited harvesting of medicinal herbs).

'Kerzhenskiy' reserve studies natural processes that are not affected by human. The results are published in annual book 'Chronicles of Nature'. The lists of local animals, plants, fungi and lichens are constantly revised and updated. Stocktakings of game birds and animals are annually conducted together with programs for reintroduction of endangered Russian Red Data List species (Russian desman and willow grouse).

A great deal of attention is paid to the studies of forest natural recovery after fires and logging along with a hydrological research and studies of the water balance between rivers and wetlands on the territory of the reserve.

Since its very first years of existence 'Kerzhenskiy' reserve became a base for the ecological education in the region. In the eco-center you will see a collection of skillfully carved wooden birds¹, nature photographs and an exhibition of embroidery works with animal designs². Exciting and educating out-door excursions, display of unique movies and presentations about the reserve can be organized with preliminary arrangement.

EXAMPLES OF EXHIBITS AT THE ECO-CENTER

1. Diorama 'The Birds of the Kerzhenskiy Reserve'.
Wooden carved birds by E. Emelyanov



2. Embroidery works by L. Suslova



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