



100 YEARS
1924-2024
State Forests Poland

the Forests

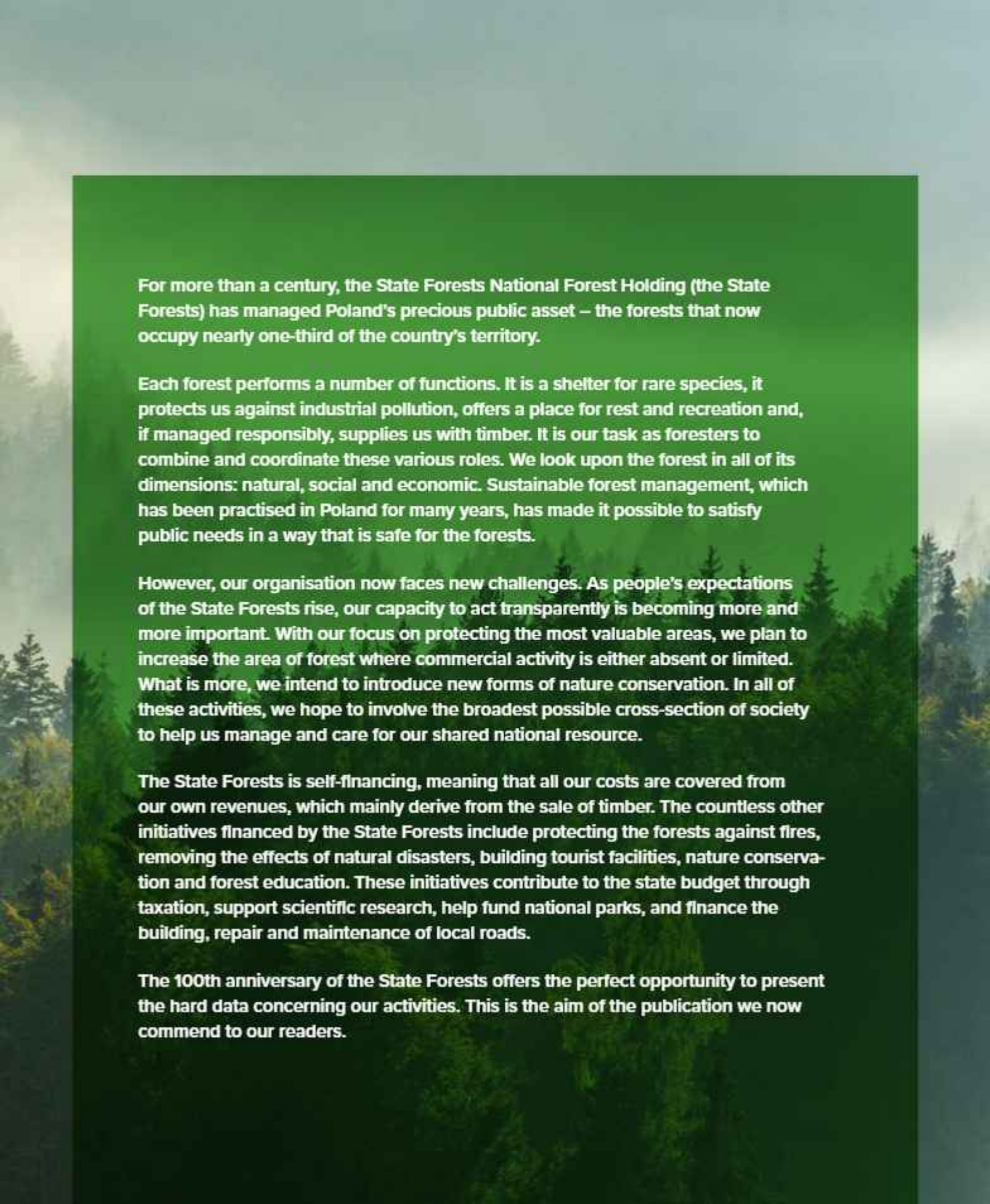
in numbers

ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE FORESTS NATIONAL FOREST HOLDING



The Forests **in numbers**

ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE FORESTS NATIONAL FOREST HOLDING



For more than a century, the State Forests National Forest Holding (the State Forests) has managed Poland's precious public asset – the forests that now occupy nearly one-third of the country's territory.

Each forest performs a number of functions. It is a shelter for rare species, it protects us against industrial pollution, offers a place for rest and recreation and, if managed responsibly, supplies us with timber. It is our task as foresters to combine and coordinate these various roles. We look upon the forest in all of its dimensions: natural, social and economic. Sustainable forest management, which has been practised in Poland for many years, has made it possible to satisfy public needs in a way that is safe for the forests.

However, our organisation now faces new challenges. As people's expectations of the State Forests rise, our capacity to act transparently is becoming more and more important. With our focus on protecting the most valuable areas, we plan to increase the area of forest where commercial activity is either absent or limited. What is more, we intend to introduce new forms of nature conservation. In all of these activities, we hope to involve the broadest possible cross-section of society to help us manage and care for our shared national resource.

The State Forests is self-financing, meaning that all our costs are covered from our own revenues, which mainly derive from the sale of timber. The countless other initiatives financed by the State Forests include protecting the forests against fires, removing the effects of natural disasters, building tourist facilities, nature conservation and forest education. These initiatives contribute to the state budget through taxation, support scientific research, help fund national parks, and finance the building, repair and maintenance of local roads.

The 100th anniversary of the State Forests offers the perfect opportunity to present the hard data concerning our activities. This is the aim of the publication we now commend to our readers.

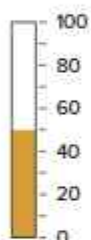
Compared with Europe

The State Forests National Forest Holding is the largest organisation in the European Union administering state-owned forests. What sets us apart from other European countries is our abundant growing stock.

This ratio specifies the quantity of timber (in cubic metres) per hectare. What this means that there is a lot of timber in Poland's state forests.

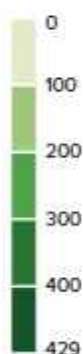
SHARE OF PUBLIC FORESTS IN TOTAL FORESTED AREA

(%)

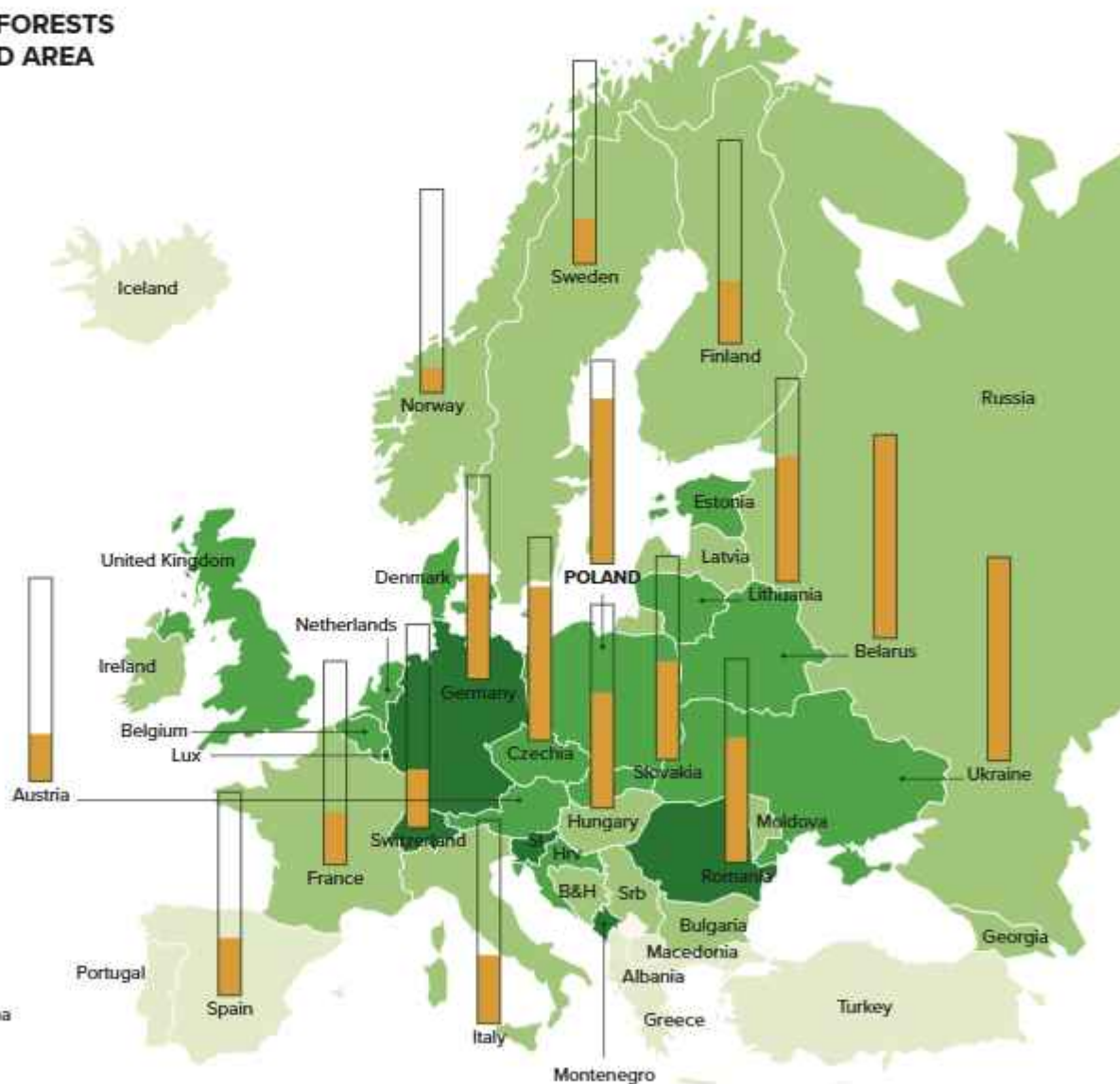


GROWING STOCK

(m³/ha)



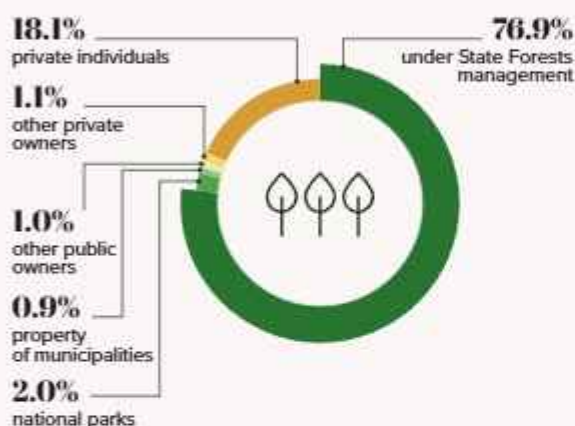
Hrv – Croatia
B&H – Bosnia and Herzegovina
Lux – Luxembourg
Srb – Serbia
Sl – Slovenia



Who owns the forests in Poland?

The vast majority of forests in Poland are publicly owned. They are managed by, among others, national parks and municipalities; the largest area of forest is managed by the State Forests. Entry to all the forests managed by these organisations is free.

OWNERSHIP OF FORESTS IN POLAND



9.3 million ha

Surface area of all forests in Poland

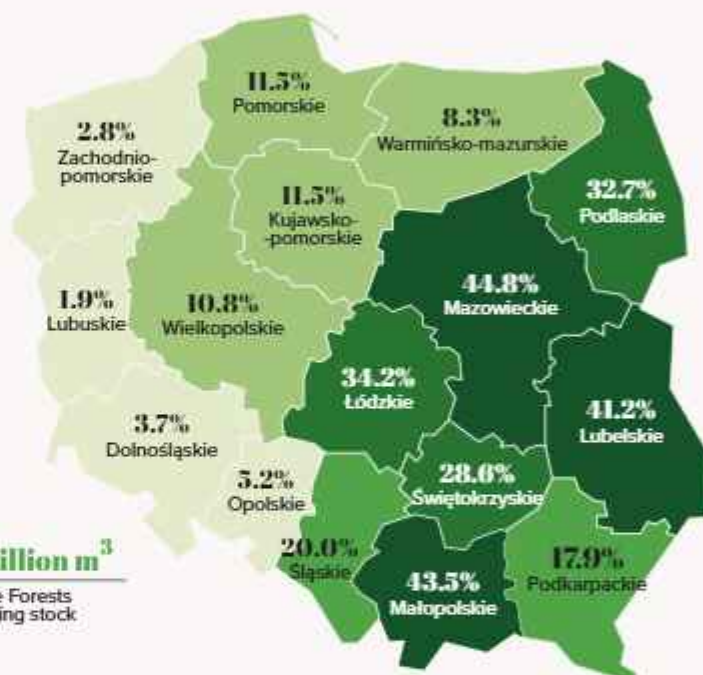
7.1 million ha

Total forest area managed by the State Forests

2.1 billion m³

State Forests growing stock

PROPORTION OF PRIVATE FORESTS BY REGION

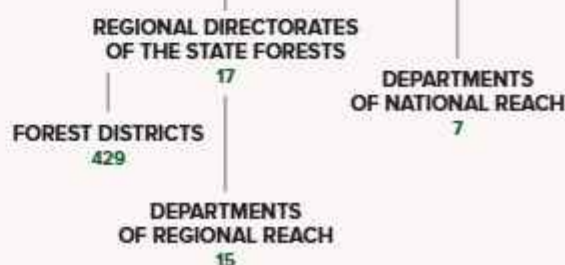


A well-established organisational structure

The State Forests operates according to a proven, three-tier structure. The basic management units are the Forest Districts, which are subordinate to the Regional Directorates. As a whole, the State Forests is run by the director general with the aid of an office; the Directorate-General. The State Forests is supervised by the Minister of Climate and Environment, who also appoints the director general. Other departments support this three-tiered organisational structure.



**DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
OF THE STATE FORESTS**

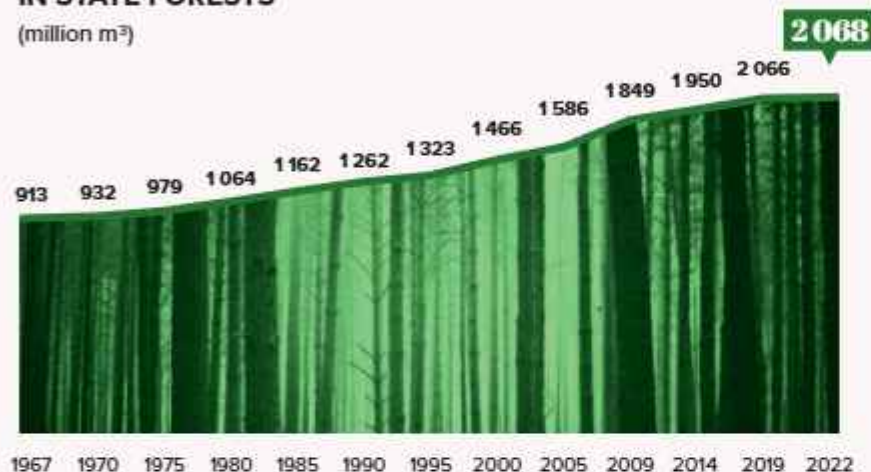


Thriving forests

Contrary to popular opinion, the forests in Poland are flourishing. Not only is their area increasing, but also the volume of the timber accumulated in them. The productive potential of Polish forests is therefore also increasing.

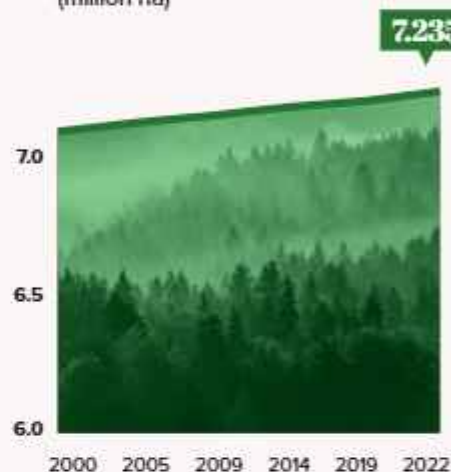
GROWING STOCK IN STATE FORESTS

(million m³)

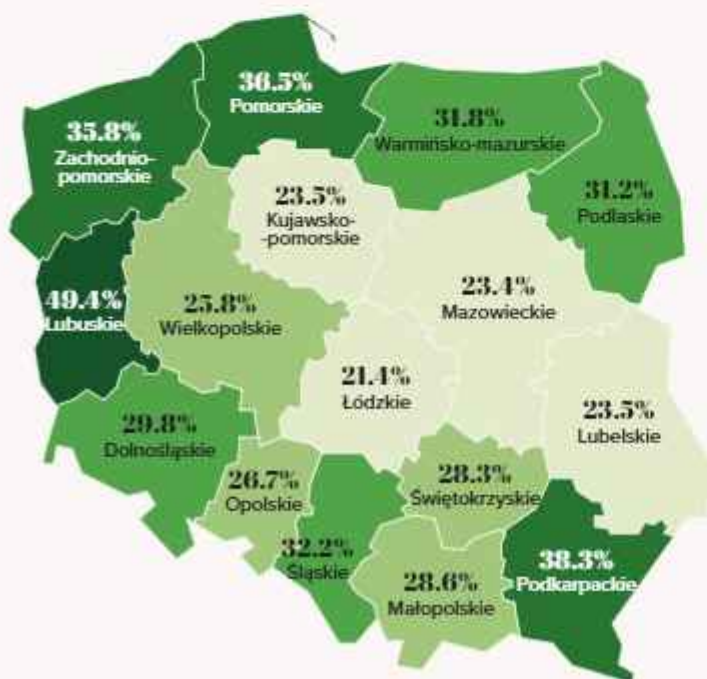


STATE FOREST AREA

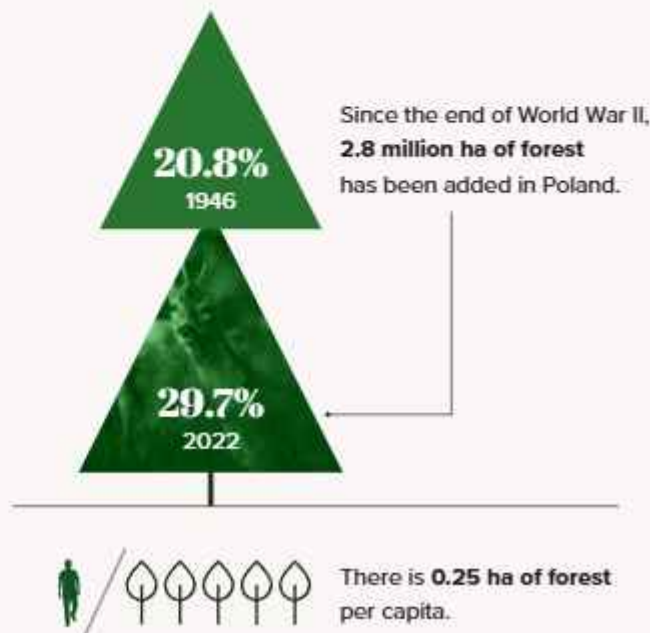
(million ha)



FOREST COVER BY REGION

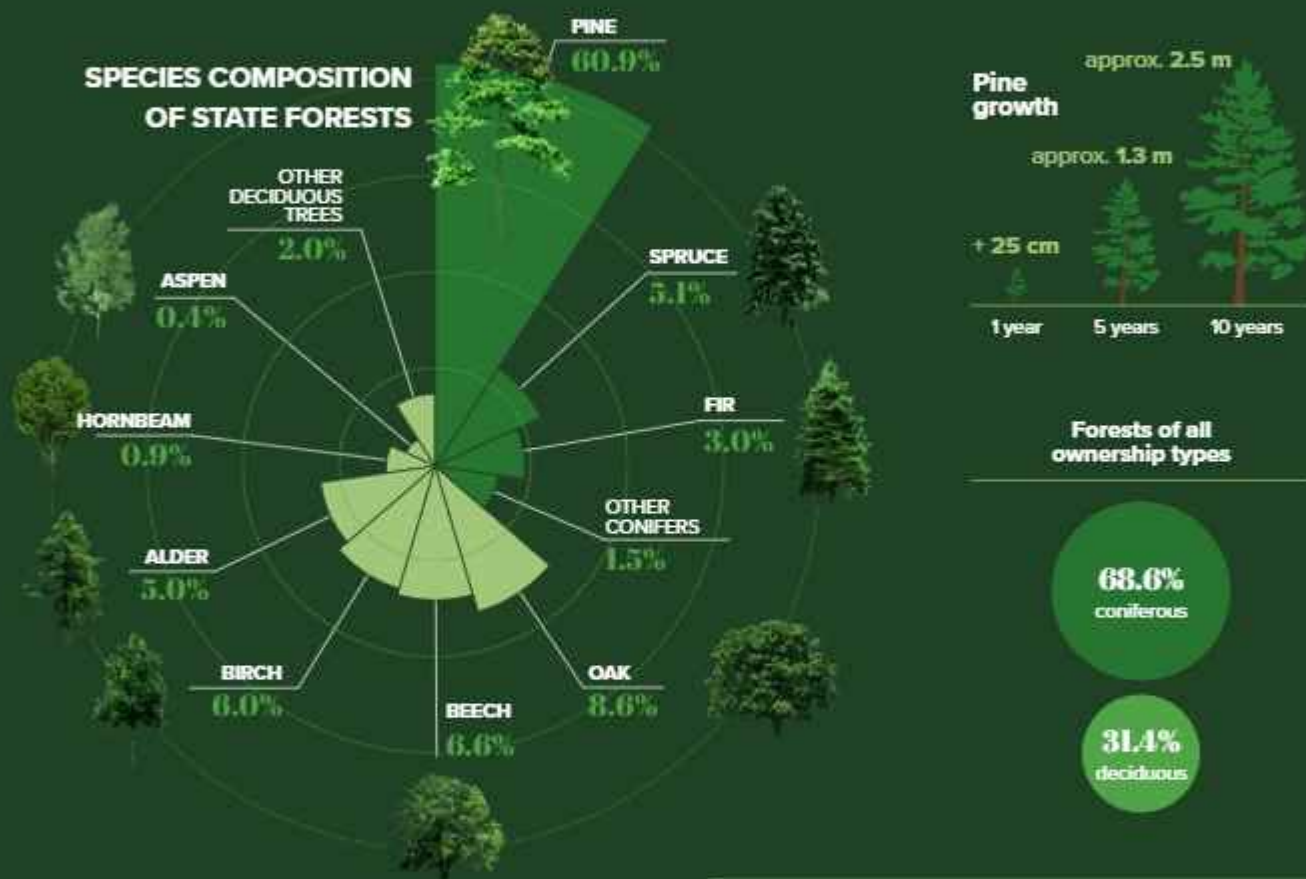


FOREST COVER – POLAND



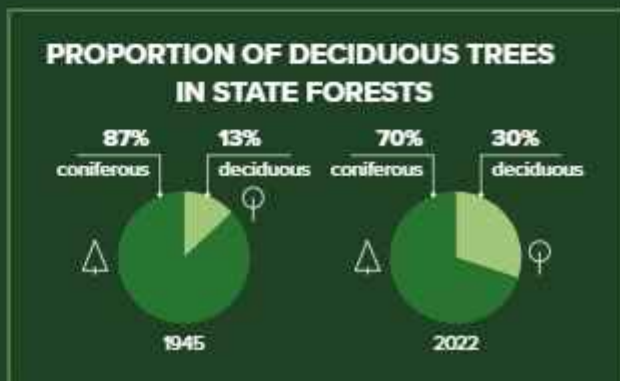
The kingdom of the pine

In Poland, the lowlands are still dominated by single-species stands of pine, while spruce forests are prevalent across most of the mountainous terrain. The predominance of the pine is not, however, due to the need to produce timber quickly, but is rather the result of natural conditions, including soil type. The more fertile land is used for agriculture, while the weaker soils – usually unsuited to agricultural production – tend to be forested.



More deciduous trees

A major change is underway in the forests to make them more resilient to climate change. A stable and sustainable forest needs to consist of trees of a variety of species and ages that are suited to the habitat. Thanks to the work of foresters, the proportion of deciduous trees in Poland has increased significantly.



New forests

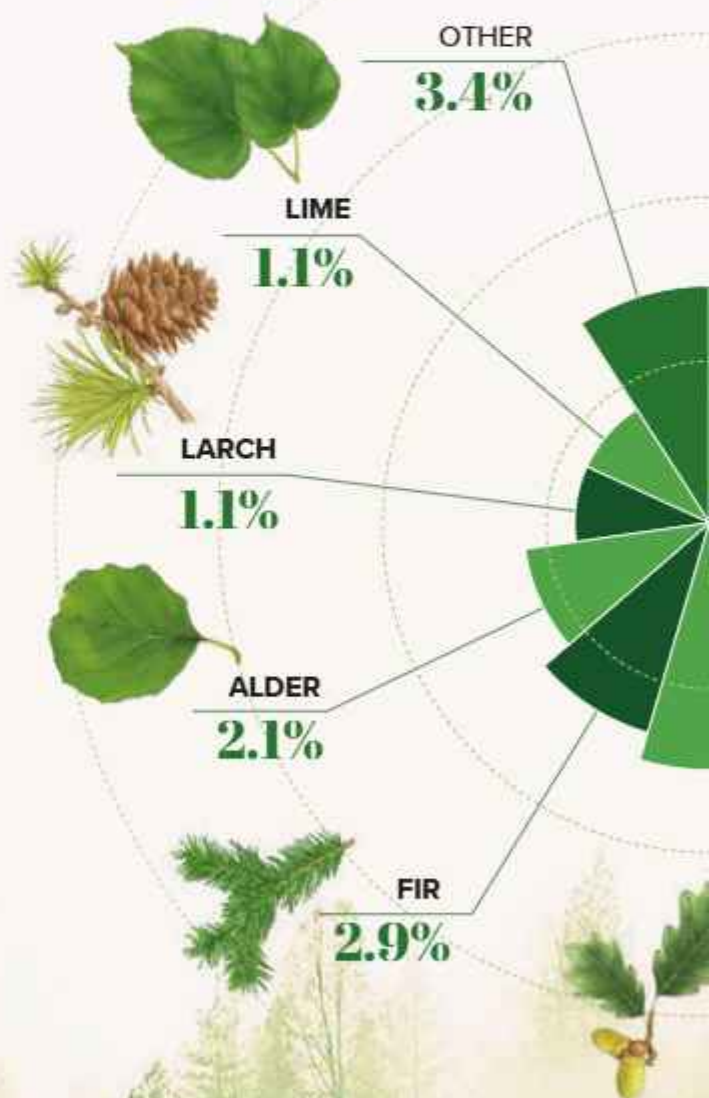
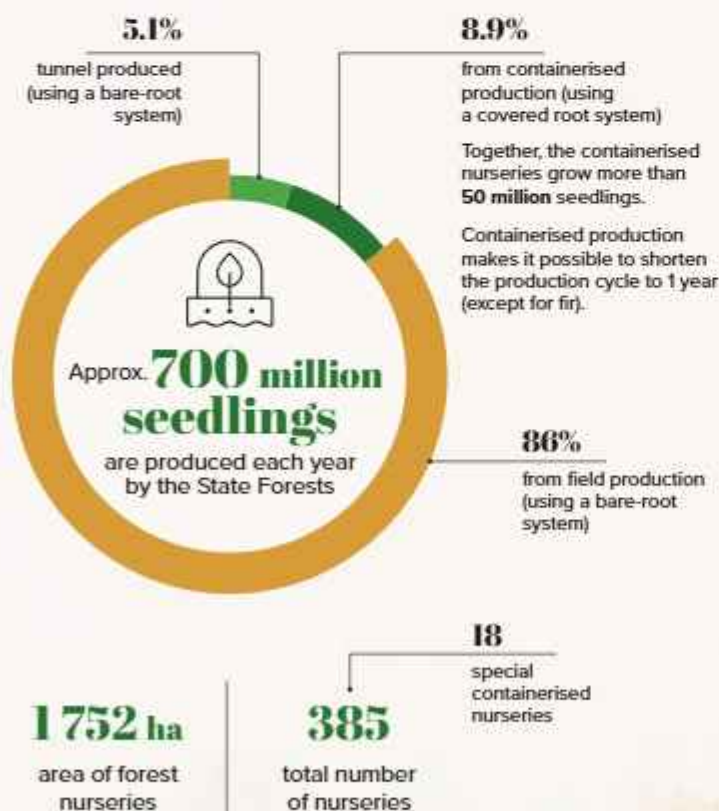
WHAT SPECIES DO WE GROW?

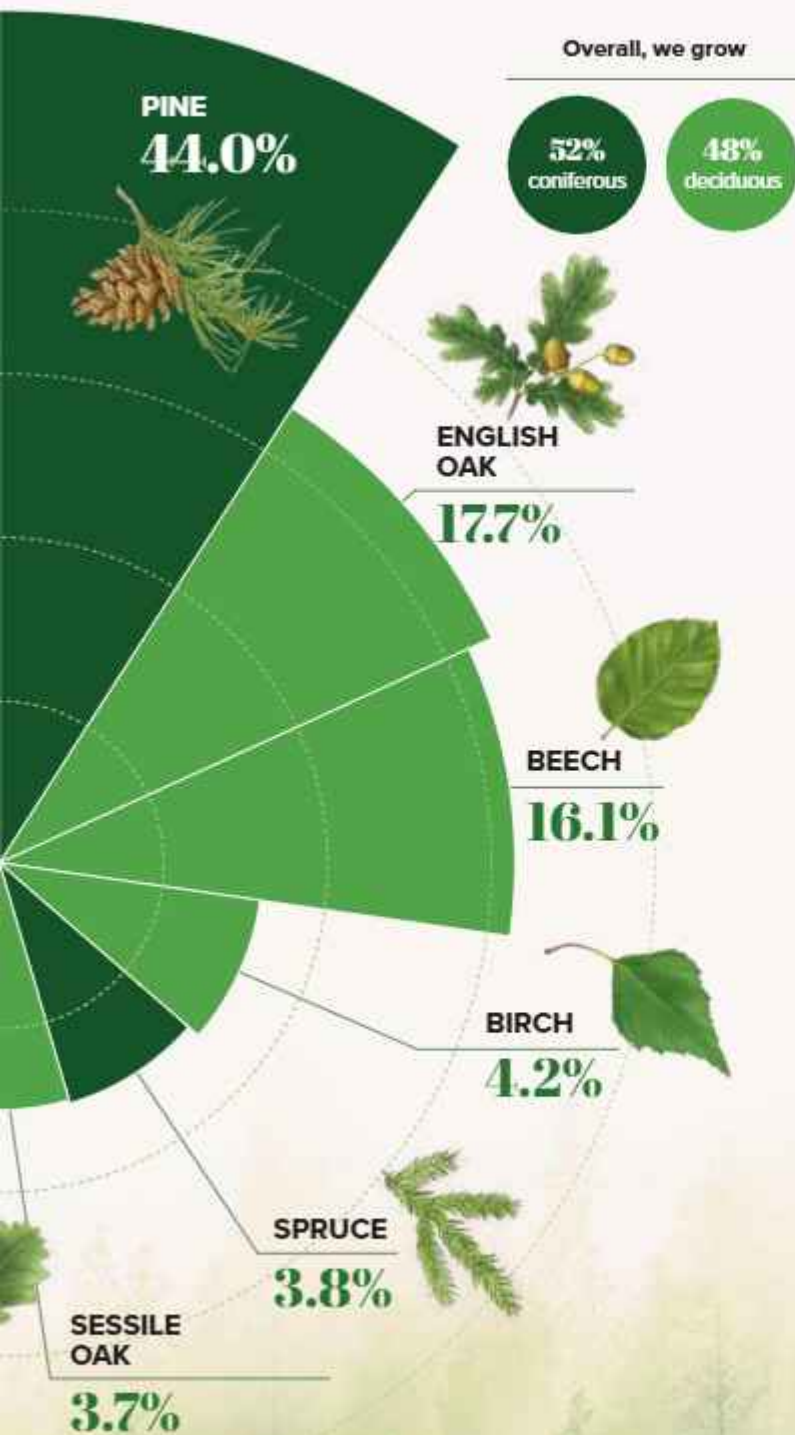
Foresters take care to ensure that there are as many forests as possible in Poland. The State Forests' nurseries grow seedlings not only for forest districts, but also for the private owners of forests and allotments. Natural regeneration is practised wherever possible.



500 million trees

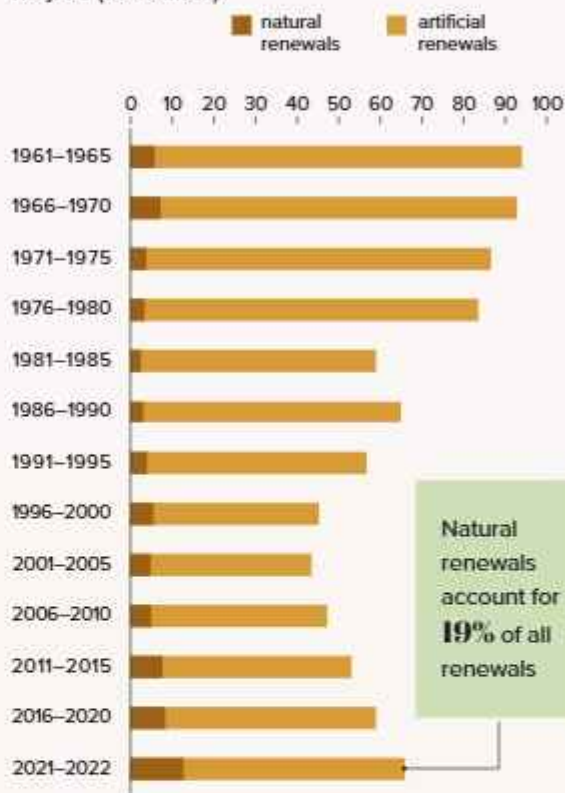
planted every year





HOW MUCH DO WE RENEW?

ha/year (thousands)



HOW MUCH DO WE PLANT?

(units/ha)



Fighting fire

FIRES IN EUROPE

After Portugal and Spain, Poland is third in terms of the number of forest fires that occur in European forests. However, in terms of burned area, the country is in fourteenth place. This means that the fires that start in Poland are considerably smaller in scale – because they are extinguished quickly – than those occurring in other European countries.

● number of fires
(average in 2001–2020 for forests
under all types of ownership)

● area of average fire
(in 2021 for forests under
all types of ownership)



NUMBER OF FIRES AND BURNED AREA IN STATE FORESTS



In 2022, only 34.32% of forest fires occurred on land managed by the State Forests. The vast majority of fires occur in forests under other types of ownership.

The Forests in numbers

CAUSES OF FIRES

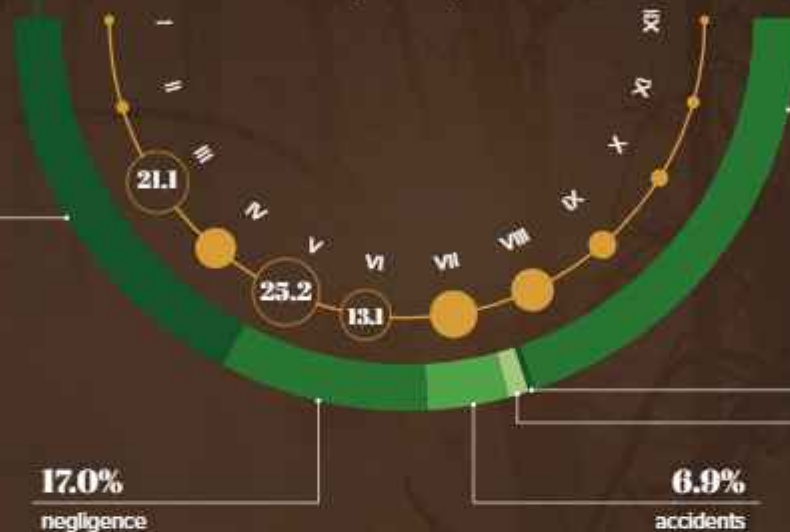
In state forests,
2022

34.9%

arson

MONTHS WITH THE GREATEST FIRE RISK

Forests under all ownership types, 2022
(% of fires)



39.1%

cause unknown

0.7%

reignition

1.4%

natural causes

6.9%

accidents

When a forest is at risk of fire, foresters constantly monitor the moisture content of the tree litter in order to be able to respond to any danger as quickly as possible. When fighting fire, every minute counts.

In 2022

more than
3 100 km

maintenance was carried out on more than 3 100 km of firebreaks

approx.
58 km

approx. 58 km of new firebreaks were established

more than
16 000 ha

an area in excess of 16 000 ha was cleared of flammable biomass

FIRE PREVENTION SYSTEM

MAINTAINED BY THE STATE FORESTS



711

observation towers



5

patrol aircraft



330

patrol cars



11 300

water intake points

> 3 900
natural

> 2 500
artificial

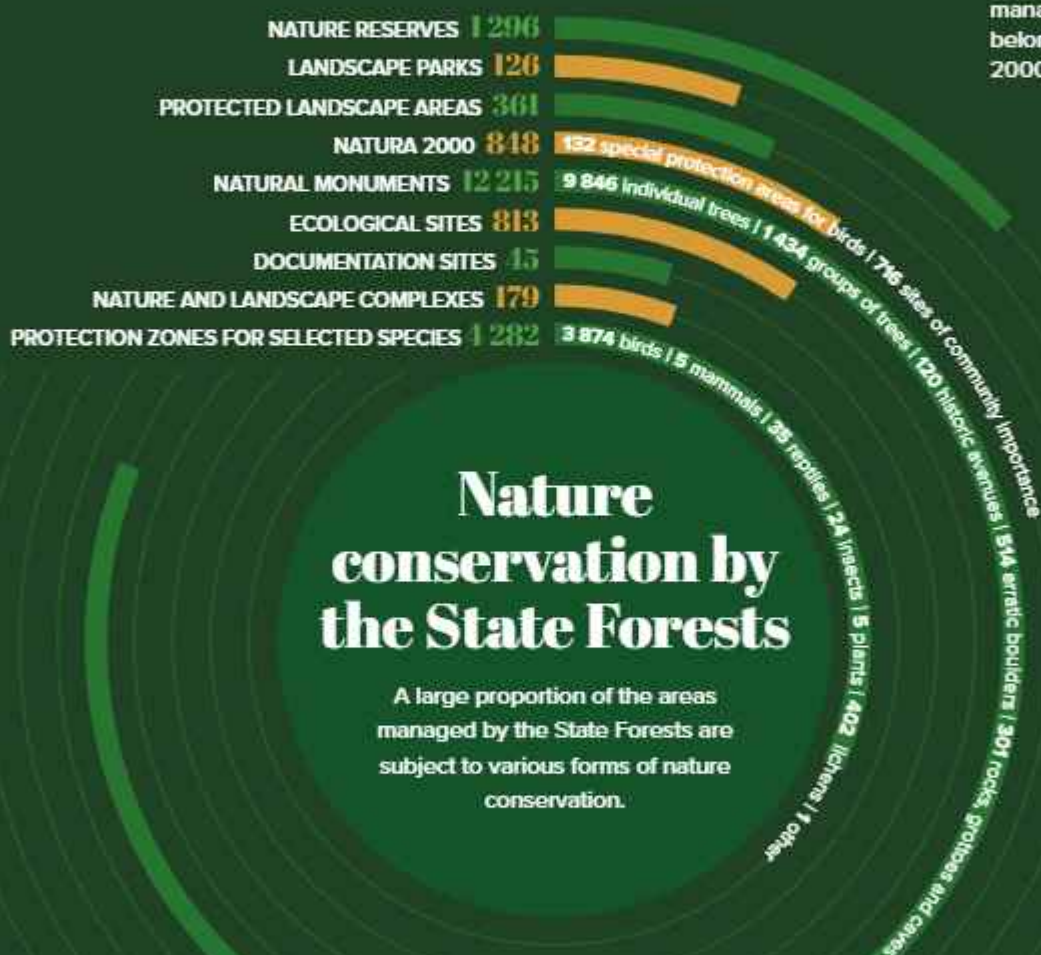
> 4 800
hydrants

For nature

Forests make it possible to preserve biodiversity. They reduce the quantity of carbon dioxide, protect water resources, help prevent floods, and secure soils against erosion. They are home to thousands of species of flora and fauna. It is no accident that this valuable natural resource is most often protected in forests.



proportion of forests under State Forests management that belong to the Natura 2000 network



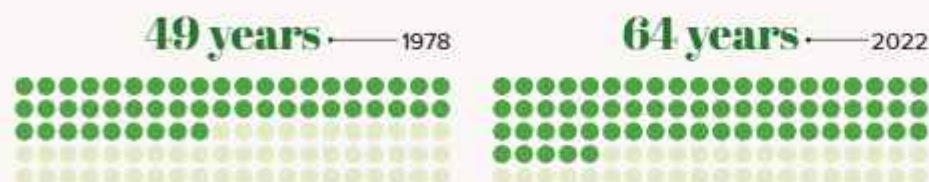
Ever older

The average age of forests is gradually increasing, as is the proportion of the oldest stands, which are more than 100 years old.

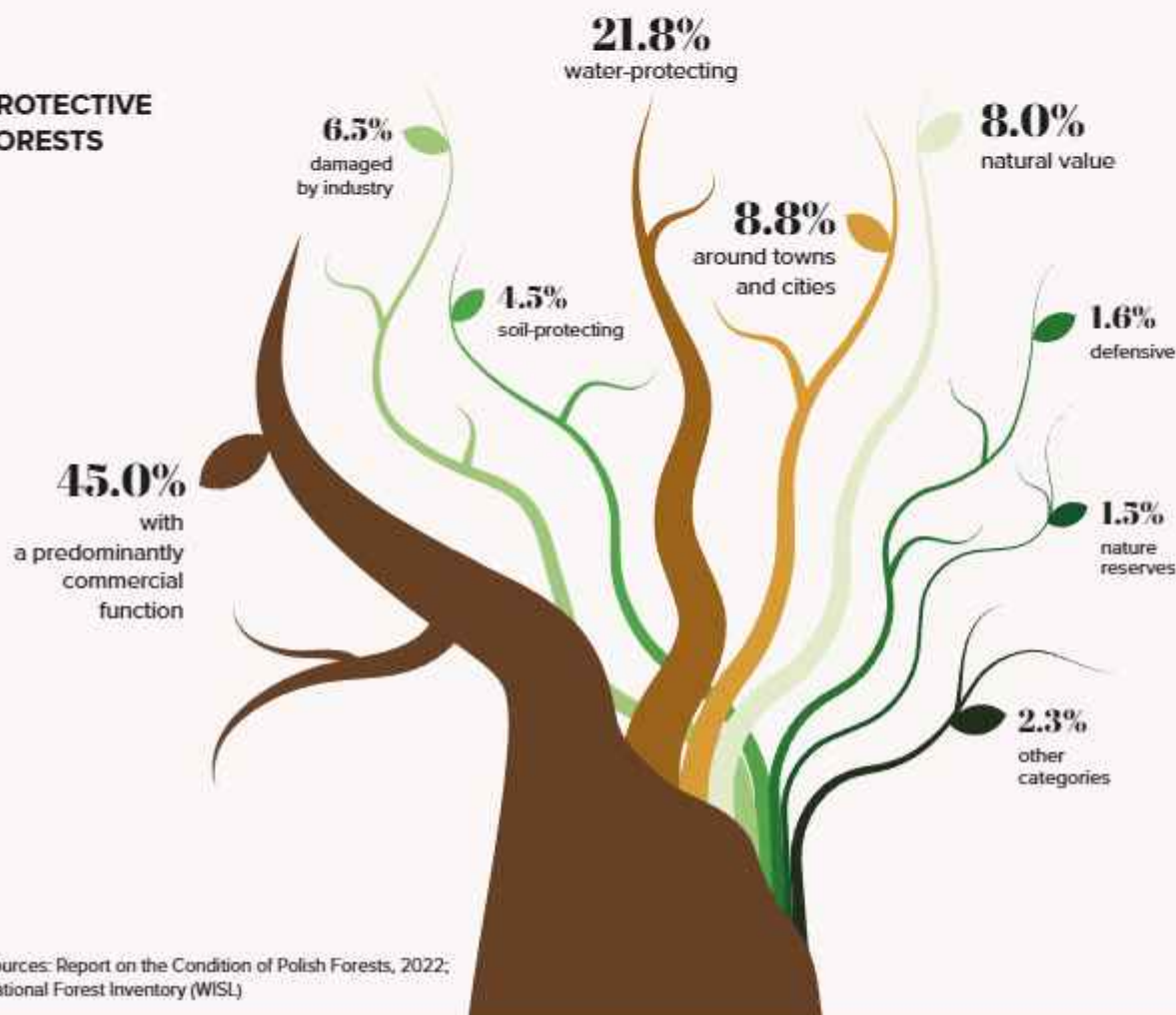


proportion of stands over 100 years old in the State Forests

AVERAGE AGE OF TREES IN STATE FORESTS



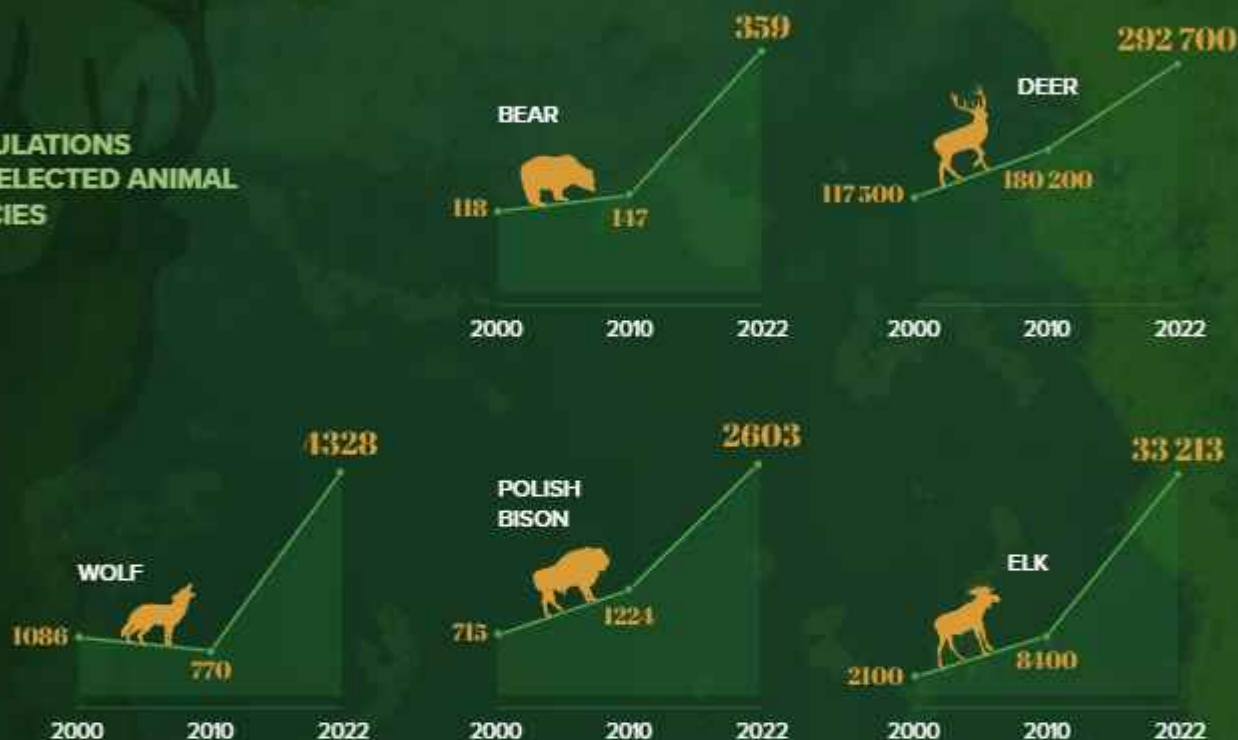
PROTECTIVE FORESTS



Bursting with life

The populations of many wild animals, for which the forests provide refuge, are increasing year on year.

POPULATIONS OF SELECTED ANIMAL SPECIES



THE STATE FORESTS OPERATE

botanical gardens

8

10
14

arboreta

display enclosures for various species of animals, including Polish bison, Polish konik horses, capercaillies, pond turtles, owls and other birds

8

animal rehabilitation centres

Water retention in forests

Ensuring that forests retain as much water as possible is a vital element of environmental care. For this reason, since the 1990s, the State Forests has implemented small-scale retention programmes. Excess water is collected in small reservoirs and ponds, and its run-off is slowed. To serve these two purposes, **17 000 installations** have been constructed in forest areas.

The estimated volume of water (from projects carried out in 1998–2020 alone) is approximately **57 million m³**.

65%

of plant, animal and mushroom
species are associated
with forests

86%

of Polish nature reserves
are on land managed
by the State Forests

168 700 ha

of the State Forests stands
are seed stands under
special protection

For people

Tourism facilities

State forests are open to all and are becoming an increasingly popular destination for trips and excursions. Foresters have prepared and continue to develop the tourist infrastructure in forests to make them easy to enjoy.

FOR TOURISTS, FORESTERS
HAVE PREPARED:

600 000 ha

of sites forming part of the
Stay Overnight in the Forest
project

445

bivouacking
spots

18

campsites

36

recreation
centres

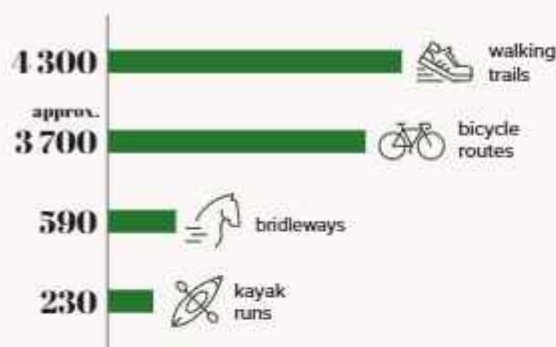
4 384

parking spaces and forest
car parks

1 736

resting places

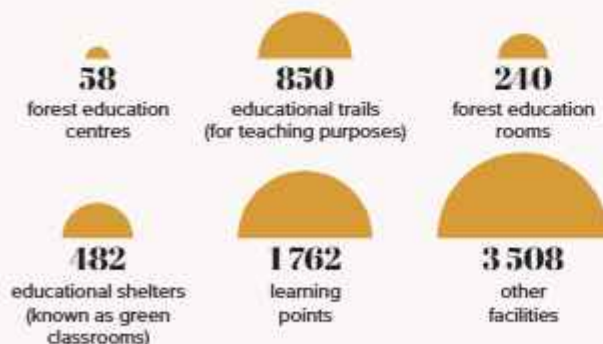
IN STATE FORESTS THERE ARE:



Learning about the forests

Public forestry education is one of the priorities of the State Forests. The State Forests' educational programmes are aimed at children, teenagers and adults, as well as people with disabilities. Their overall goal is to disseminate knowledge about the forest environment and forest management.

FOREST EDUCATION FACILITIES USED BY THE STATE FORESTS:

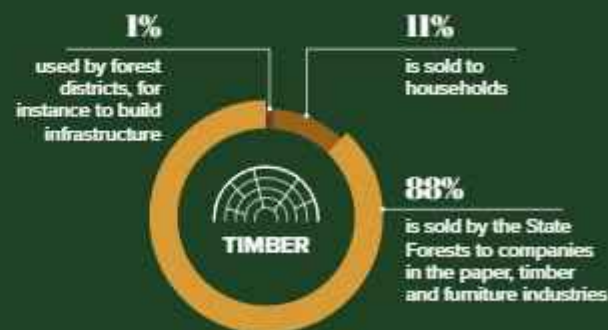
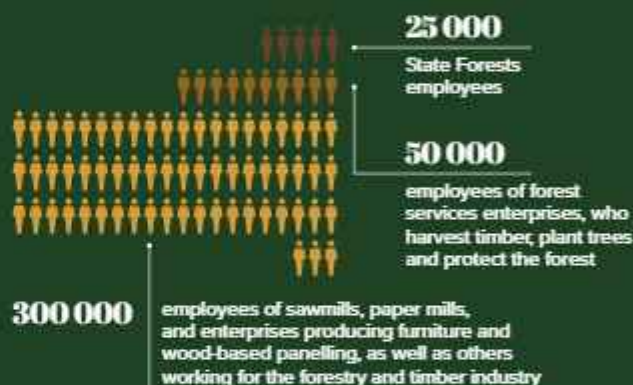


Approximately **3.6 million** people took part in various educational activities organised by foresters in 2022.

The forest creates jobs

The State Forests is one of Poland's largest employers. But the forest and its timber also provide a living for the employees of several thousand forest services enterprises, which are commissioned to plant and care for trees, harvest and remove timber, and many other things. Primarily, though, the forest provides work for the people employed by the thousands of companies in the wood, furniture and paper industries.

THEY HAVE WORK THANKS TO THE FORESTS

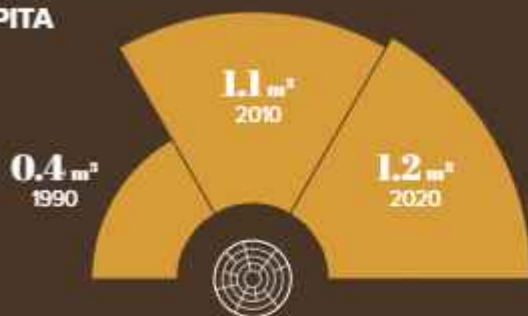


The timber supplied by the State Forests has a huge impact on the development of the Polish economy. In fact, the timber industry generates **2.3%** of Polish GDP.

The annual value of timber products exported by Poland is **10.9 billion Euro**, which accounts for approximately **3%** of all Polish exports.

The perfect raw material

**TIMBER CONSUMPTION
PER CAPITA**



**ANNUAL PAPER USAGE
PER CAPITA**



A renewable resource

Meeting our demand for timber and ensuring the sustainability of forests are not conflicting interests. In Poland, timber is a natural resource, which is completely renewable. This is guaranteed by the multifunctional, sustainable forest management practised by the State Forests.

**TIMBER HARVESTING (LARGE TIMBER NET)
IN STATE FORESTS**
(thousand m³)



Source: Report on the Condition of Polish Forests, 2022

Even though timber has been a part of people's lives for thousands of years, it remains one of the most important raw materials. Today it is the first choice of discriminating consumers. The more modern and developed an economy is, the more timber it needs.

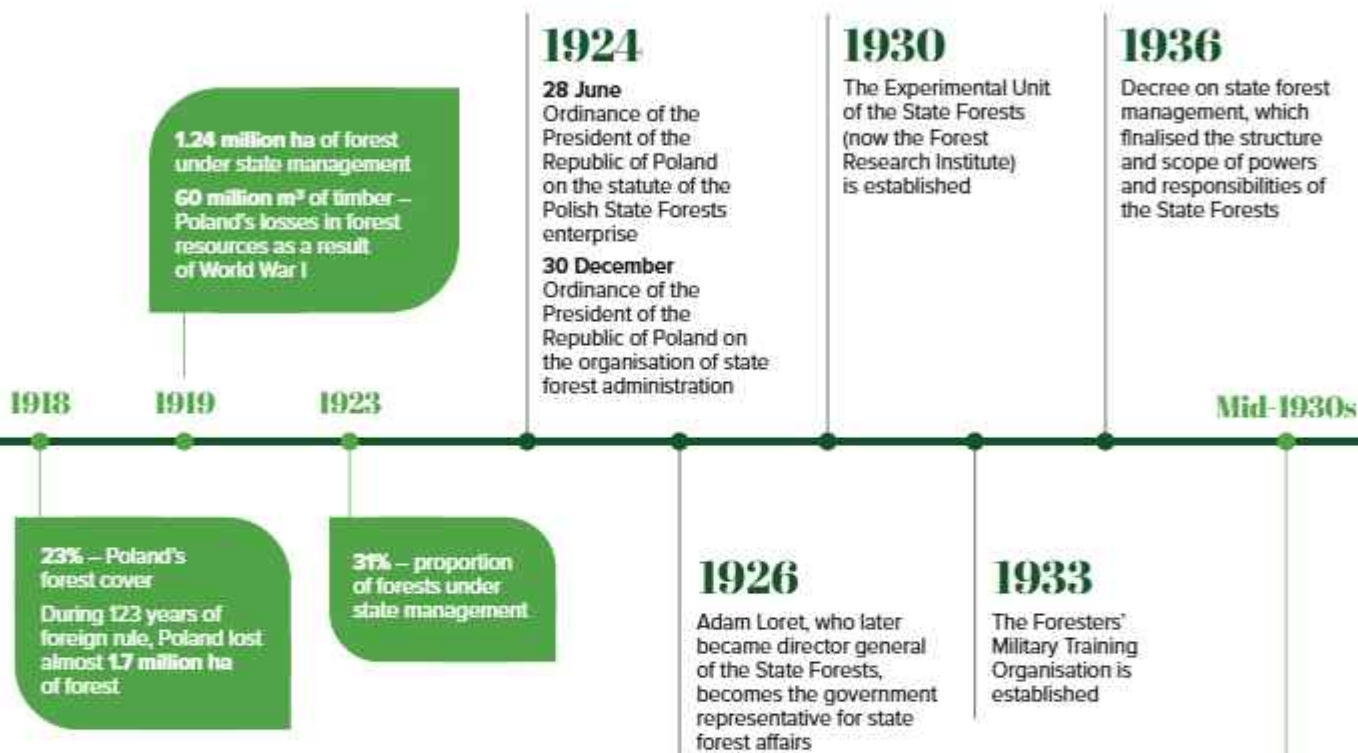
Timber has approx. 30 000 different uses

Wherever we are, there will definitely be many objects around us that could not have been created without the use of timber. It is the most natural and friendly material, and is used on a gigantic scale. It forms an essential component of today's fashionable "eco" lifestyle: in harmony with nature and health.



One hundred years of the State Forests

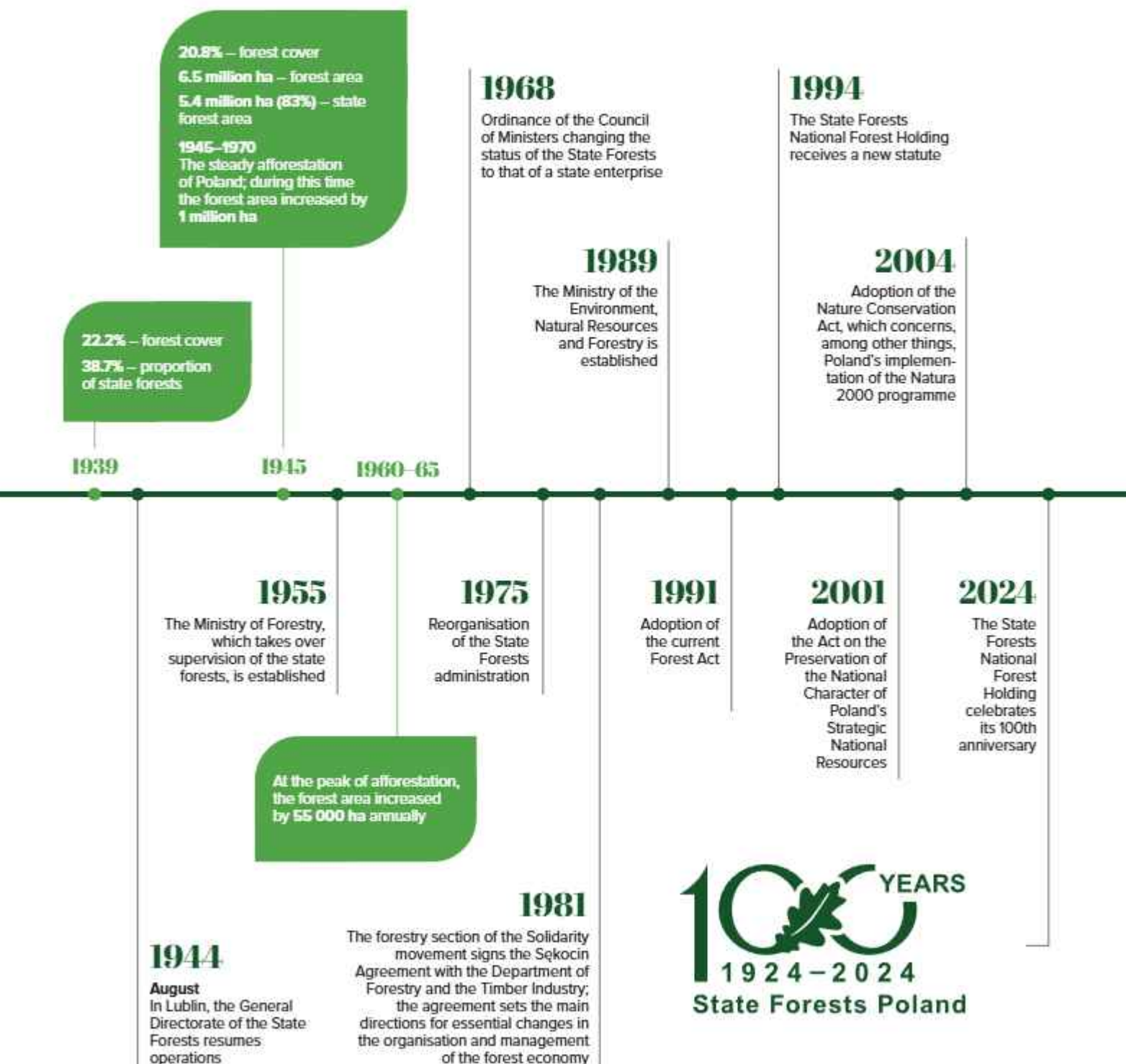
The State Forests was established in 1924, which is a long time on the scale of modern Polish history: World War II, three different political systems, and several generations of Poles. Yet this is not a long time in the life of a forest: sometimes less than just one generation of trees. This is why, in the work of foresters, as in no other profession, the saying about working for future generations is so true. Trees planted today will be nurtured for several decades, and after a century or so they will make way for a younger generation trees and serve as a valuable raw material.



The importance of forest management is not restricted only to the economic side of national life. Forests possess many other irreplaceable properties for the country. We need only mention their influence on the climate, on soil moisture and protection, and on health. Only the state, as an owner, is capable through rational management of the forests of bringing out all of the economic, natural and cultural benefits that flow from them for the country.




Adam Lorek









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 ECHA LEŚNE




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