

FORESTS

Forests teach people to understand the beauty.

Anton Chekhov
(Russian writer, 1860-1904)

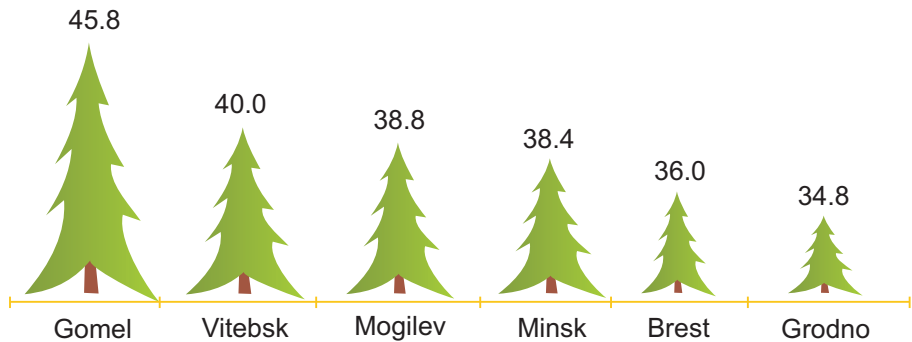
Forests are the most important part of the ecosystem of our country. They play an active role in the cycling of matter in the biosphere, especially in the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Along with this, forests are the source of raw materials for many industries.

At the beginning of 2014, the forest land area in the country was 8.6 million hectares. For a number of indicators measuring forest raw resources, Belarus is among top ten forest states in Europe.

The forest cover makes up 39.4% of the total land area of Belarus.

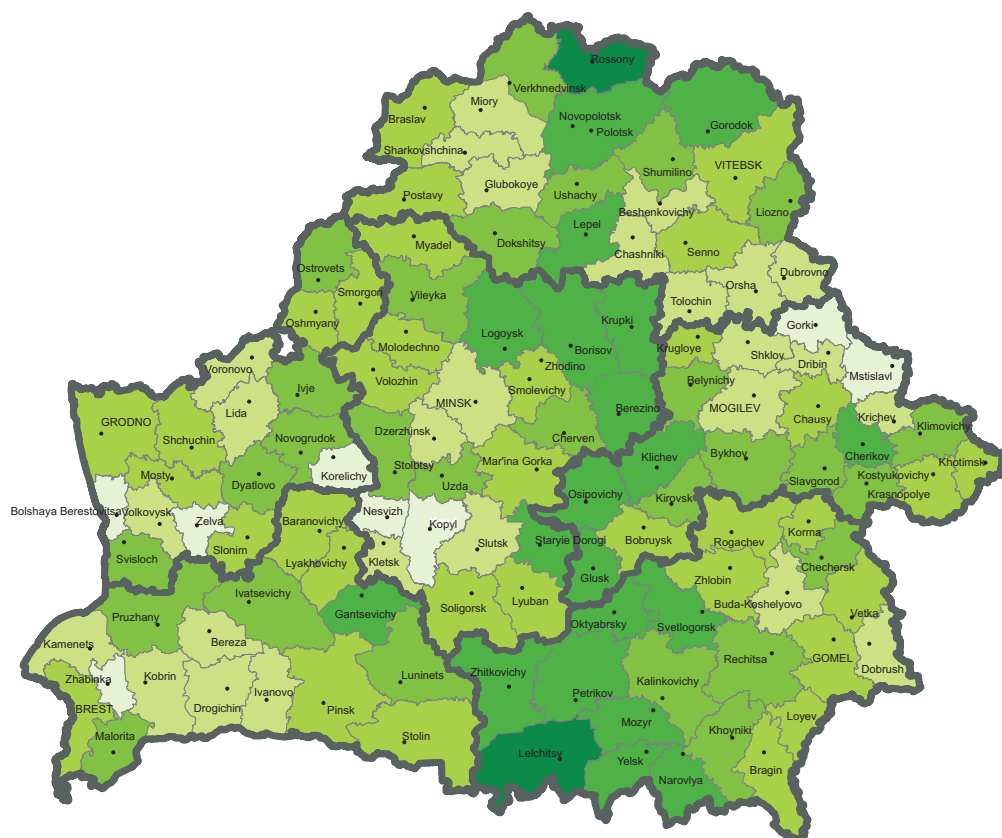
The **forest cover** indicator is computed as a ratio of the area covered with forest to the total land area.

FOREST COVER OF BELARUS at 1st January 2014 (percentage of the total land area of a region)

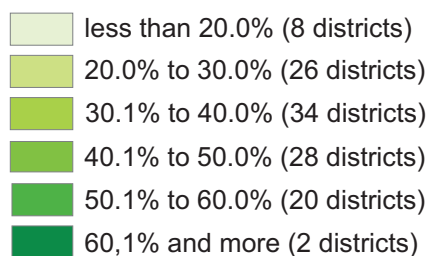


Among the regions of Belarus, the richest forest cover is in Lelchitsy district of Gomel region – 66.5%, and in Rossony district of Vitebsk region – 67%.

FOREST COVER OF BELARUS BY DISTRICTS at 1st January 2014 (percent)

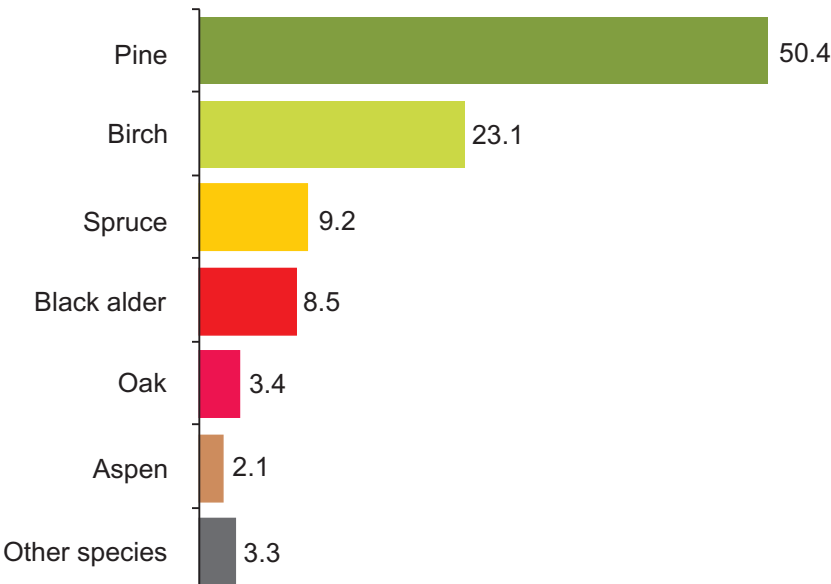


Forest cover of Belarus by districts:

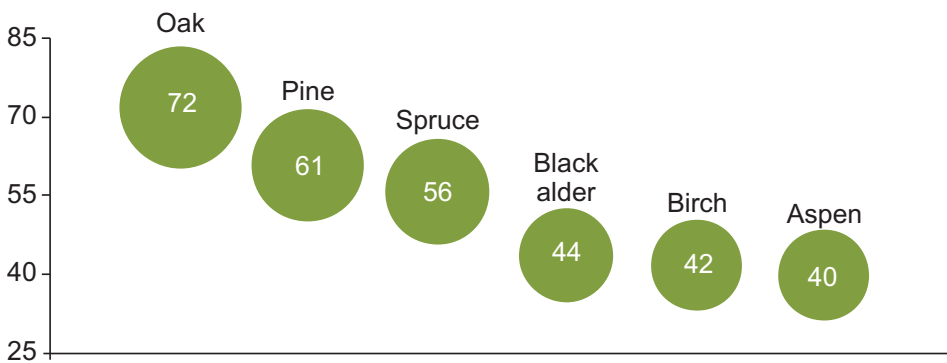


About 60% of forests in the country are represented by coniferous species.

SPECIES COMPOSITION OF FORESTS IN BELARUS
(percent)



AVERAGE AGE OF FOREST PLANTS
(years)



The forests of Belarus are a habitat to the European bison, brown bear, lynx, golden eagle, black stork, aquatic warbler, and other threatened and endangered animal and bird species. Four mammal species have been naturalised – raccoon dog, common raccoon, American mink, and muskrat.

POPULATIONS OF WILD HOOFED ANIMALS

(thousand animals)

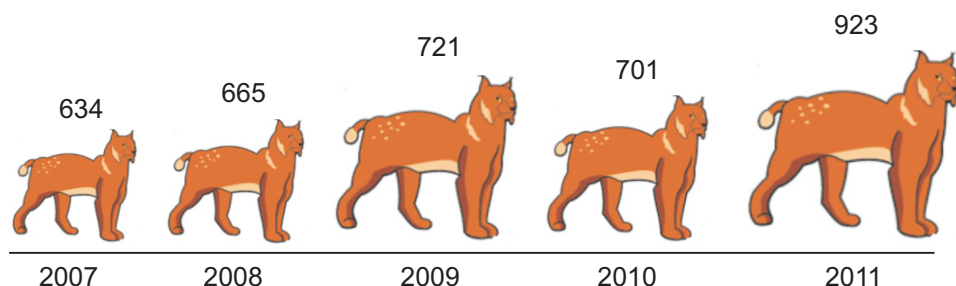
| Species | 2005 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|-------|
| European bison, animals | 681 | 857 | 936 | 1 049 |
| Eurasian elk | 18.4 | 22.9 | 25.6 | 26.2 |
| Red deer | 6.8 | 9.3 | 10.1 | 10.6 |
| European roe deer | 55.4 | 66.1 | 70.6 | 70.3 |
| Wild boar | 44.5 | 67.4 | 73.2 | 76.5 |

In order to expand the species composition of wild hoofed animals (ungulates), the fallow deer and sika deer were introduced to the country. In 2011 their populations numbered 270 and 15 animals respectively.

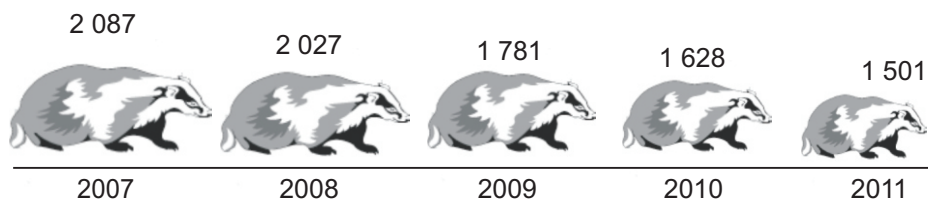
Rare and endangered species of wild animals and plants are listed in the 3rd edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus.

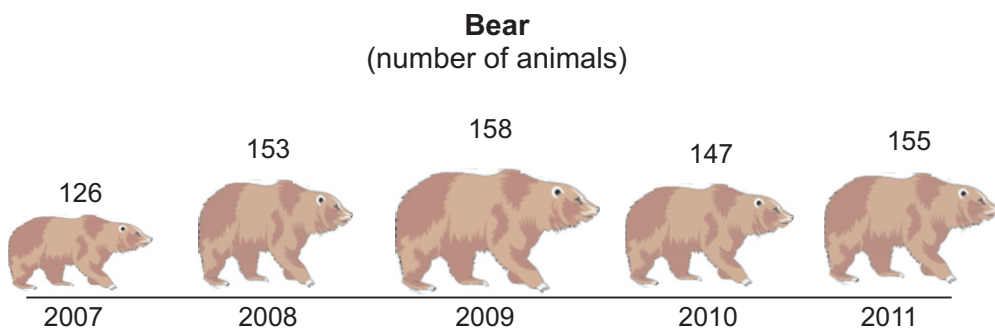
POPULATIONS OF SELECTED WILD ANIMAL SPECIES LISTED IN THE RED BOOK OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

Lynx (number of animals)



Badger (number of animals)



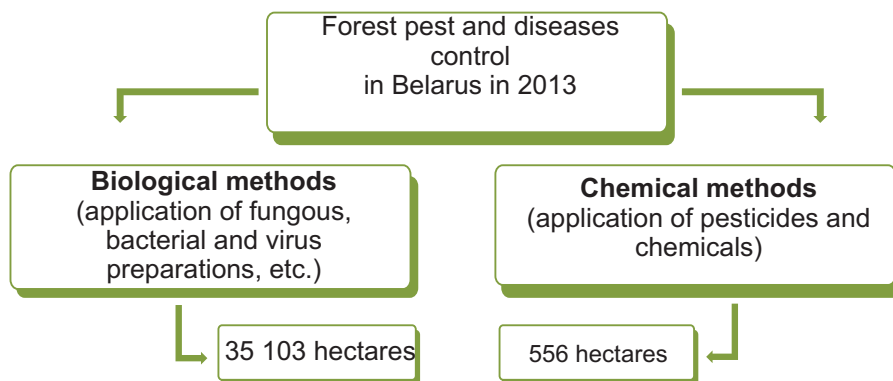


Adverse weather conditions (storms), excessive humidity, forest fires, invasion of insect pests and diseases cause damages to significant forest areas in Belarus.

AREA OF DEAD WOOD in 2013 (hectares)

| Cause | Coniferous forest | Deciduous forest |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Total dead wood | 7 689 | 533 |
| of which due to: | | |
| adverse weather | 6 806 | 339 |
| excessive humidity | 315 | 139 |
| plant diseases and insect pests | 489 | 54 |

In 2013, the area of dead forest was 8.2 thousand hectares (0.1% of the total forested area).



A great damage is inflicted upon forestry by fires. They occur mainly through careless fire handling. Statistics affirm that in 9 cases out of 10 forest fires are the fault of a man.

FOREST FIRES

| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of forest fires | | | | | | |
| Belarus | 2 569 | 1 114 | 607 | 433 | 544 | 272 |
| Region: | | | | | | |
| Brest | 457 | 231 | 86 | 102 | 148 | 35 |
| Vitebsk | 253 | 122 | 50 | 35 | 26 | 32 |
| Gomel | 618 | 357 | 249 | 113 | 142 | 97 |
| Grodno | 419 | 158 | 46 | 65 | 61 | 36 |
| Minsk | 528 | 164 | 58 | 69 | 136 | 48 |
| Mogilev | 294 | 82 | 118 | 49 | 31 | 24 |
| Forest area affected by fires, hectares | | | | | | |
| Belarus | 1 760 | 322 | 423 | 152 | 176 | 72 |
| Region: | | | | | | |
| Brest | 429 | 83 | 56 | 27 | 53 | 6 |
| Vitebsk | 213 | 47 | 46 | 15 | 7 | 8 |
| Gomel | 391 | 117 | 132 | 41 | 54 | 21 |
| Grodno | 383 | 36 | 20 | 18 | 15 | 6 |
| Minsk | 216 | 29 | 20 | 22 | 29 | 9 |
| Mogilev | 128 | 10 | 149 | 30 | 18 | 22 |
| Standing wood burnt and damaged, cubic metres | | | | | | |
| Belarus | 38 539 | 6 332 | 2 165 | 4 197 | 7 675 | 1 572 |
| Region: | | | | | | |
| Brest | 8 440 | 5 679 | 1 826 | 1 023 | 2 092 | 75 |
| Vitebsk | 6 007 | 318 | 52 | 250 | 248 | 83 |
| Gomel | 383 | 85 | 275 | 1 132 | 4 653 | 1 341 |
| Grodno | 10 753 | 108 | 12 | 1 214 | 574 | 30 |
| Minsk | 5 991 | 142 | — | 578 | 80 | 43 |
| Mogilev | 6 965 | — | — | — | 28 | — |

The biggest in human history forest fire raged through the eastern part of the Indonesian island of Kalimantan (Borneo). It continued for 10 months (from September 1982 until July 1983) and burnt out about 8 thous. km² (800 000 ha).

To ensure the continuity and non-depletion of forest resources, conservation of diversity of forest flora and fauna, a system of reforestation activities has been functioning in Belarus.

Reforestation is the restocking of forests that have been depleted – through felling, forest fire, etc.

If a forest is established in an area where there was no forest before, such process is called **afforestation**.

Reforestation and afforestation activities were carried out in 2013 on the area of 30 284 hectares (0.4% of the total forested area), where planting and sowing of forest covered 23 750 hectares and assistance to natural forest regeneration and preservation of undergrowth covered 6 534 hectares.

REFORESTATION AND AFFORESTATION BY REGION in 2013
(by region; hectares)

