

## Project Update: July 2014

Place and date of mowing using ratrak were determined on workshop with the Sporovo Reserve staff and the director of APB-Birdlife Belarus in September 2013. Pilot restoration of the breeding habitats in the Sporovo Reserve was performed according the approved plan. We found feeding great snipe in these habitats in May 2014. Restoring optimal vegetation structure in these habitats probably will increase the numbers of breeding birds.

Repeated surveys were conducted in floodplains of Pripyat, Berezina and Gayna Rivers during May 2014 in order to find great snipe leks moved in other places. We also carried out monitoring censuses in 15 key breeding habitats. Great snipe leks were found in most key habitats but the number of males decreased by many leks. We recorded the disappearance of two leks in the Dikoe and Servech fens due to overgrowing habitats and increasing the density of vegetation. Fens were the most stable breeding habitats and their overgrowing may be adversely affected by population of the species.



Photo 1: Ratrak mowing the reeds and shrubs in the Sporovo Reserve. Photo 2: Measuring the height of the vegetation at the beginning of the breeding season in restored habitats of the Sporovo Reserve. Photo 3: Search for the great snipe lek on the Dikoe fen (Belovezskaya Puscha vicinity). Photo 4: Elk grazing on overgrown habitats of the Dikoe fen. Photo 5: Search for leks on fen mires in valley of the Servech River.