## POPIELNO RESEARCH STATION Photography by Mamadou M. B<mark>ah</mark> and Remigiusz Łoboda The Polish primitive horse, or konik, Poland's only domestic breed of horse, is the only breed descended directly from wild tarpans. The PAS Research Station in Popielno is working hard to preserve the konik,

which remains threatened with extinction.

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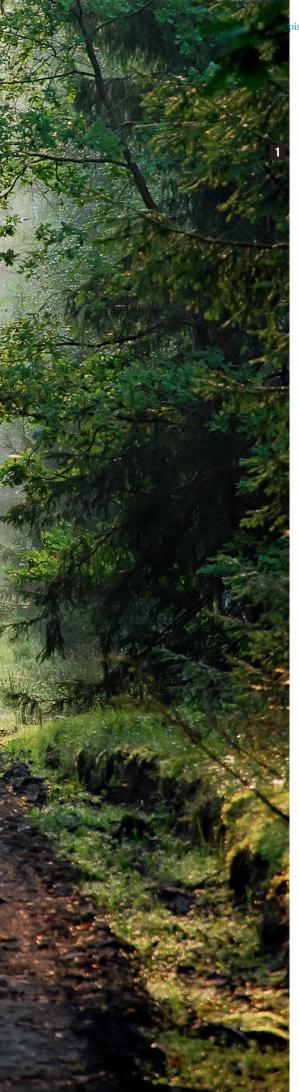






Fig. 1.
One of the free-living herds
of Polish koniks, strolling
along a bike path through
the Kończewo Forestry
in Popielno

Fig. 2. A young beech tree

Fig. 3. **A well-aged oak** 

A heard of semi-wild Polish koniks exploring the shore of Lake Bełdany





Kurze Swamp





The crowns of tall pine trees



Fig. 1.
A herd of deer amidst the Popielno pasturelands

Fig. 2. Polish koniks out to pasture

Fig. 3. A pine stand amidst the Kończewo Forestry in Popielno





he Popielno Research Station of the PAS Institute of Animal Reproduction and Food Research is located on the Popielno Peninsula in Poland's Mazurian lake district. The peninsula is a picturesque piece of land situated between three lakes (Śniardwy, Bełdany, Warnołty), covering an area of more than 1600 ha.

The road to the station leads through beautiful forests, mostly of pine, which have been utilized by the station by 1956. The station also possesses the Kończewo Experimental Forestry, situated in the Pisz Forest. Lake Warnołty, on which it boarders to the east, has a nature preserve and an island where a cormorant population nests every year.

The most important task of the station since 2016, when it was taken over by the PAS Institute of Animal Reproduction and Food Research in Olsztyn, is preservational breeding of the Polish konik, in both stable and natural conditions. Behavioral research is carried out on the 42 koniks living freely in the forest, whereas in the stable, 49 koniks are studied in terms of their specific traits.

Although 80% of the forest here is dominated by pines, visitors can also admire beautiful sections of ash-alder riparian forest and subcontinental oak-hornbeam forest (i.e. a mixed forest with a prevalence of oak, hornbeam, linden, spruce, and beech), as well as shrubs: hazel, buckthorn, bird cherry and hawthorn. Forest-explorers will also be delighted to find specimens of anemone, hepatica as well as sweet woodruff, martagon lily, wild ginger, guelder-rose, and mezereum.

There are also Smolak Duży and Smolak Mały, two dystrophic lakes – barren reservoirs with low biological production which become overgrown to form mires and bogs.

Dr. **Mamadou Bah**, DVM Head of the Popielno Research Station

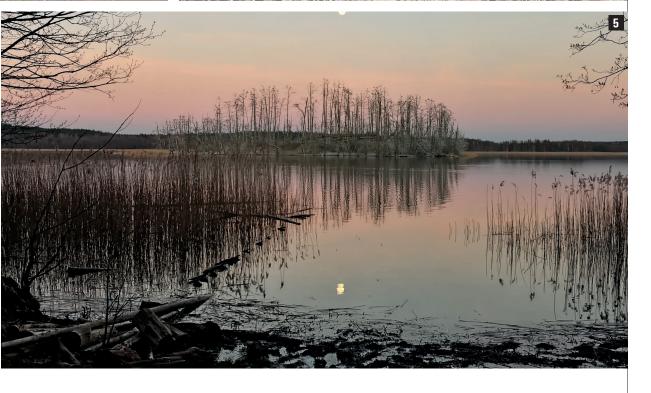


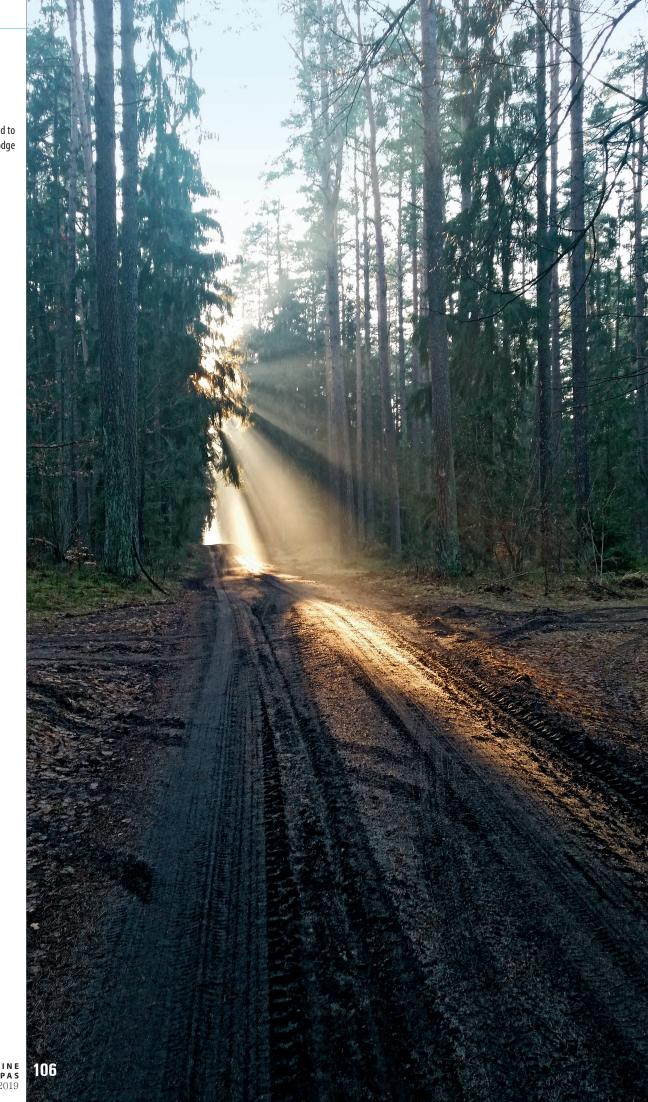




Fig. 4. A capercaillie in mating season

Fig. 5. Cormoran Island





Pine forest along the road to a forester's lodge