



SOBIESZEWO ISLAND



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ENCOUNTER WITH THE NATURE

An island and a city district in one?

You can find this in Gdansk. There is a place here where you can walk along wide beaches and through a seaside forest, marvel at the views from the Kazimierz Reservoir, and watch birds in nature reserves. This district which is worth discovering is Sobieszewo Island.

Sobieszewo Island is surrounded by the waters of Wisla Smiala, Martwa Wisla and the Vistula River. Its geographical location and the developing water infrastructure and sailing creates a perfect space for enthusiasts of active tourism. Here, we can find a marina and kayak rental, a sailing marina, boulevards along Martwa Wisla, and bike paths in forests and along Przekop Wisly. It is the perfect place for people who love the slow life, slow leisure close to nature combined with active lifestyle and recreation.

How did Sobieszewo Island form?

This place has a fascinating story. The winter of 1840 was exceptionally harsh. As a result of an ice jam, the waters of the Vistula River broke through the dunes near Gorki village, dividing it into Gorki Zachodnie and Gorki Wschodnie and creating a new estuary of the Vistula. It was named Wisla Smiala by Wincent Pol. As a result, a peninsula was formed whose western part was the area of the present Sobieszewo Island. And the fact that we are talking about Sobieszewo Island today is a result of human activity. Due to floods that hit Zulawy every year, the Prussian parliament decided to excavate the Vistula River, adjust the Vistula embankments and build floodgates in Przegalina. An artificial canal of 7.1 km was dug in Szewce which stretched to Gdansk Bay. The official opening of Przekop Wisly took place in 1895. As instructed in a telegraphic signal sent by Emperor Wilhelm II, the Upper President of West Prussia himself, Gustav von Gossler, let in the first stream of Vistula waters between the current Swibno and Mikoszewo. From that moment, the waters of Przekop Wisly were connected to the Baltic Sea and Sobieszewo Island was formed.



Did you know...

- 240,000 2.5-metre-long round poles were used to secure Przekop Wisly?
- 100,000 m³ of cobblestones were used to build Przekop Wisly?
- 300,000 m³ of fascine (a construction material made from wicker sprouts) were used for the construction works at Przekop Wisly?

Sobieszewo Island is unique from an environmental point of view. Surrounded by the arms of the Vistula River and the waters of Gdansk Bay, it has wild beaches, coastal lakes with reed fields, numerous willow scrubs, alder swamp forests and swamps. There is also a coastal forest and mixed forest, and meadows and fields in Zulawy Wislane. The location and unique hydrological conditions of the island foster biodiversity, especially the richness of bird species that have favourable conditions here for nesting and moulting, and a place where they can rest and forage when migrating and wintering.

To preserve these precious natural areas, the island has been provided with different forms of legal protection. Two nature reserves: Ptasi Raj (Birds' Paradise), located in Gorki Wschodnie and Mewia Lacha, which spreads between Swibno and Mikoszewo, as well as the surrounding waters, has the status of the protected Ujscie Wisly Natura 2000 area. Moreover, the whole island is the Sobieszewo Island Landscape Protected Area, and both Vistula estuaries, together with the sandbanks and the surrounding waters, were in recent years entered into the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance under the name Ujscie Wisly. Furthermore, active protection activities are undertaken here, such as the protection of the ringed plover which is a rare species on the coast nowadays.



Did you know ...

- is a place where about 40 bird species nest?
- is a place where we can watch about 200 bird species?

Environmental and educational trails in both reserves, together with observation towers, create the perfect conditions for birdwatching, and in the Mewia Lacha nature reserve for watching grey seals resting on the nearby sandbank near the Vistula estuary.

Examples of institutions and pro-environmental associations that help spread the knowledge about the island's nature include: The Ornithological Station Museum and Institute of Zoology Polish Academy of Sciences, the KULING Water Birds Research Group, Friends of Sobieszewo Island Association, and in recent years also local tour guides who lead groups walking around the island as part of a programme called the Local Guides from the City Culture Institute in Gdansk (<http://ikm.gda.pl/>).

Did you know...

- the shore of the lake in the Birds' Paradise nature reserve is home to an observation tower from where we can marvel at the views of Lake Ptasi Raj, the estuary of Wisla Smiala, a stone dam from 1888, Mierzeja Messynska and Gdansk Bay?
- on the way to the Mewia Lacha nature reserve, we pass the entrance to beach no. 1 in Gdansk?

MORE THAN A BEACH



Unquestionable assets of Sobieszewo Island are its beautiful, wide beaches. They are up to 70 m wide and stretch for 11 km along the shore! Everyone who is ready to take a walk by the sea can find a private place just for themselves.

Guided swimming areas on Sobieszewo Island are located at the end of Falowa Street (entrance to beach no. 16), Lazurowa Street (entrance to beach no. 11), and Tralowa Street (entrance to beach no. 7). Lifeguards ensure the safety of beachgoers on 100 m of the shoreline.

Food and beverage outlets are located several hundred metres from the beach. The swimming areas are equipped with toilets, showers with fresh water, beach equipment rental and a small playground. New, beautiful changing rooms and bike racks have been installed.

For enthusiasts of physical activity in the sand, volleyball courts and football fields were set up where you can play beach volleyball and football.

Going to the beach is a great activity, not only on a sunny day. When we go for a walk by the sea just after a storm or a stronger wind, amber nuggets lying near the shore are a great reward for the poor weather conditions.

Sobieszewo Island has many secrets and interesting stories. The area of the former Biological Station on Ornitologow Street used to be an airport for seaplanes at the beginning of the 20th century, and the forests still hold remnants from WWII: traces of trenches and bomb craters. In Orlinki, we can view (from the outside) the former headquarters of Albert Forster, the gauleiter of Gdansk.

Thanks to numerous education boards, a walk along forest paths is a great opportunity to learn the history of settlements on the island, its curative character, unique buildings, as well as the birds that nest here.

A special tourist attraction on Sobieszewo Island is a ferry running through Przekop Wisly, between Swibno and Mikoszewo. We recommend taking the ferry to visit the second, larger part of the Mewia Lacha nature reserve.

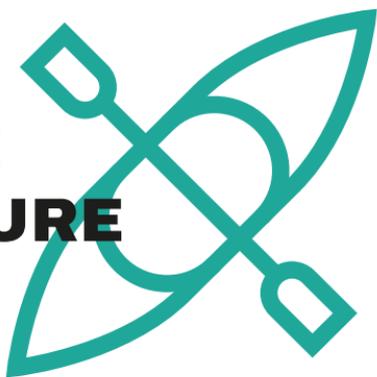


Did you know...

- the bridge of the 100th anniversary of regaining independence is the largest drawbridge in Poland?



CULTURE AND NATURE



Sobieszewo Island is home to several organisations and institutions to provide us with nice ideas for spending free time. Wyspa Skarbow Gdanskiego Archipelagu Kultury hosts the Kite Carnival, film festivals, theatre performances, family events, art exhibitions and creative workshops. The headquarters of Wyspa Skarbow GAK is also home to Wincent Pol's Memorial Room, a famous poet, geographer and traveller, where we can see a permanent exhibition presenting the history of Sobieszewo Island and Zulawy Wislane.

You can take a free tour of Sobieszewo Island with the Local Guides. They explain the past and present stories from everyday life in the district, enriching them with personal anecdotes and memories. Walks are organised in the summertime on three routes: near Gorki Wschodnie, Sobieszewo, and Przekop Wisly in Swibno. More details about them are available on the host's website – the City Culture Institute.

The community of Sobieszewo Island hosts recurring cultural, entertainment and educational events. They include: the Bird Picnic in the Birds' Paradise hosted by the Friends of Sobieszewo Island Association (usually in May), Summer in Swibno, always hosted in July by the Voluntary Fire Department in Swibno, the Amber Running Festival, and the Family Kayak Cross, hosted by the Family Challenge Foundation. Organised by the local community, these events are open to all visitors.



City
Culture
Institute

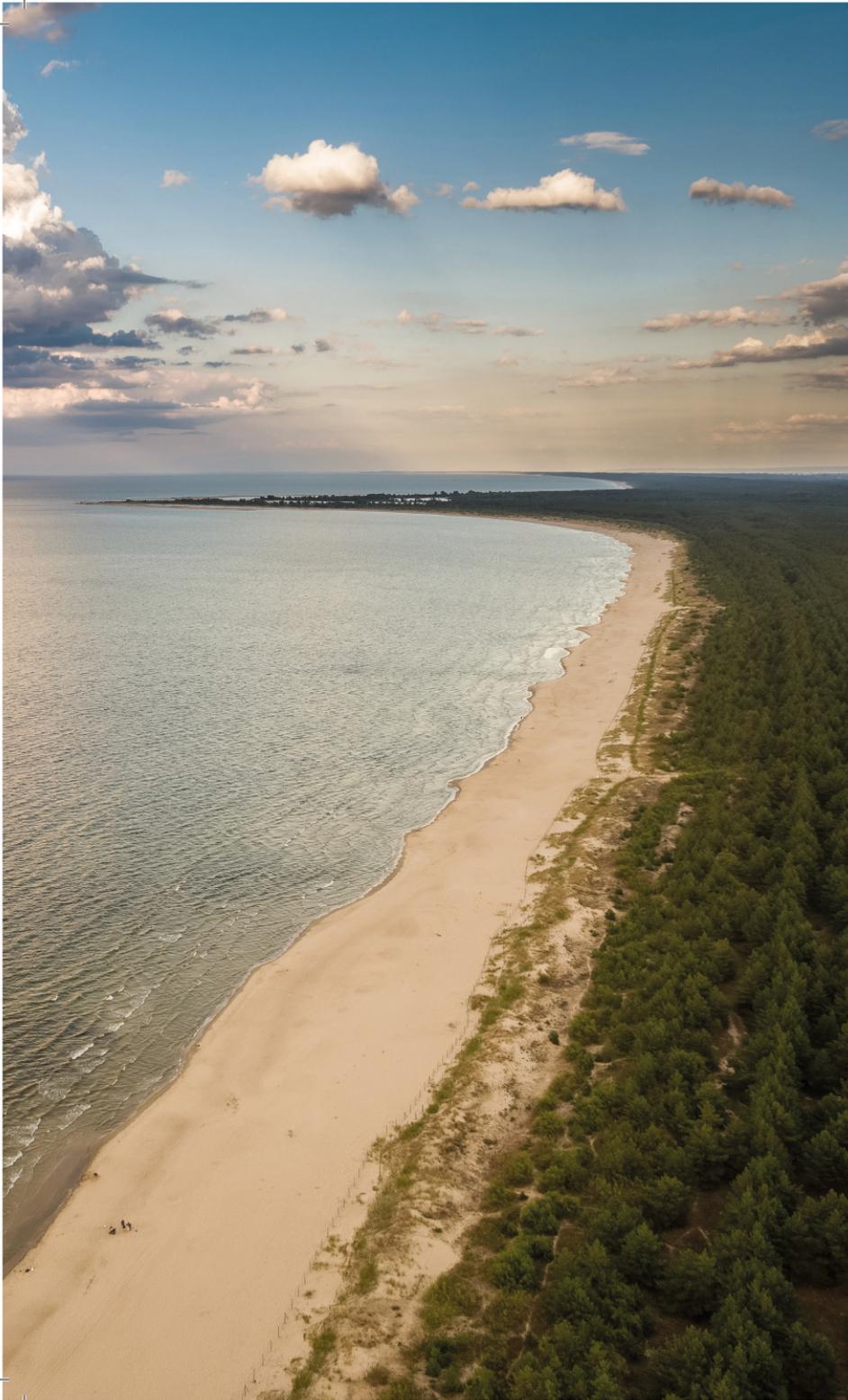


Archipelago
of culture
in Gdansk



Did you know...

- in 2027, Sobieszewo Island will host the World Scout Jamboree which will be attended by around 50,000 young people from all continents?



THE ISLAND FROM ABOVE



Is there one place on Sobieszewo Island from which you can see the estuary of Wisla Smiala between Gorki Wschodnie and Gorki Wschodnie, a wide beach, coastal forest, green and yellow fields, Marta Wisla, and the Vistula estuary leading to Gdansk Bay? Yes! It is the Kazimierz Reservoir, a water tower which works for the benefit of Sobieszewo Island residents and also serves as an educational facility and an observation tower, a part of the Gdansk Water Supply Trail.

From the terrace located 10 m above the tops of the highest trees, so 45 metres above sea level, there is a view of Sobieszewo Island, Zulawy Gdanskie, and Gdansk Bay. Inside, visitors can see a multimedia exhibition presenting the natural values of the island. The Kazimierz Reservoir is an active reservoir which serves a mainly technical function. It was opened in 2015.

From June to September, you can sign up for free entrance to the tower and a tour of the Kazimierz Reservoir.



Gdansk Water
Supply Trail

NORDIC WALKING, RIDING A BIKE, KAYAKING OR BOATING



Nordic walking, running, walking with a stroller, riding a bike or simply walking – Sobieszewo Island is a place where we can find many forest trails to spend our free time actively. The forests there are six Nordic walking trails whose total length is approx. 33.5 km, and the Wincent Pol bike path surrounds the island and is 28 km long.

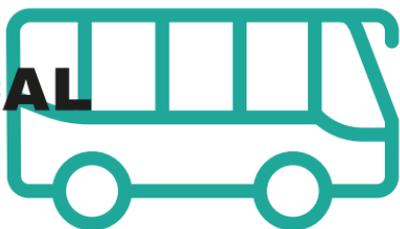




The Nordic walking trails are divided into two areas, the eastern one (in Sobieszewo) and the western one (in Swibno), and each of them has three trails: yellow, green and red, of various length and difficulty levels. The trails are well marked and lead through the Spit Forest and along a wide beach. On the way, you can take a break in covered rest areas and learn more about the history and nature of Sobieszewo Island thanks to special boards. Moreover, a green PTTK trail runs through the whole district.

Sobieszewo Island is always becoming a more friendly place, including for enthusiasts of water sports. In the area of the Birds' Paradise Marina in Gorki Wschodnie, we can rent kayaks and take a trip along Martwa Wisla towards Blotnik and the floodgate in Przegalina. On the way, we pass the Mlynowka kayak marina – a new place for recreation and leisure on Sobieszewo Island. For sailing amateurs, a new yacht marina which can berth up to 72 boats was opened on Nadwislanska Street.

PRACTICAL INFO



Public transport:

You can get to Sobieszewo Island taking city buses no 112 and 186, running every day, and a summer bus no. 612 with bike space (runs only on summer weekends). It takes about 35 minutes to get from Gdansk to Sobieszewo Island, and about 45 minutes to Swibno. Night transport is covered by the N9 bus.



Metropolitan
communication
link of the
Gdansk Bay

Water transport

The Swibno-Mikoszewo ferry

Runs from 1 May to 30 September approx. every 30 mins between 7:00 am and 9:00 pm Ferry crossing – prices and details: www.promswibno.pl.



Swibno Ferry

Tourist Information Centre

Is located at 1 Turystyczna Street Open from July to August.

Information and news about Sobieszewo Island

www.gdanskwypasobieszewska.pl



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Sobieszewo
Island





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Publisher:

Gdansk Tourist Organization

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