

## THE MIDDLE-POLISH LOWLANDS

The mid-Polish Lowlands situated to the south of the maximum extent of the last glaciation are generally flat areas up to ca. 150 m a.s.l. incised by wide ice-marginal valleys of pre-Vistulian origin. These pradolinās are nowadays followed by big rivers such as the Oder, Warthe and Vistula. The main features of the landscape, formed by the processes of periglacial denudation, are moraine and outwash plains

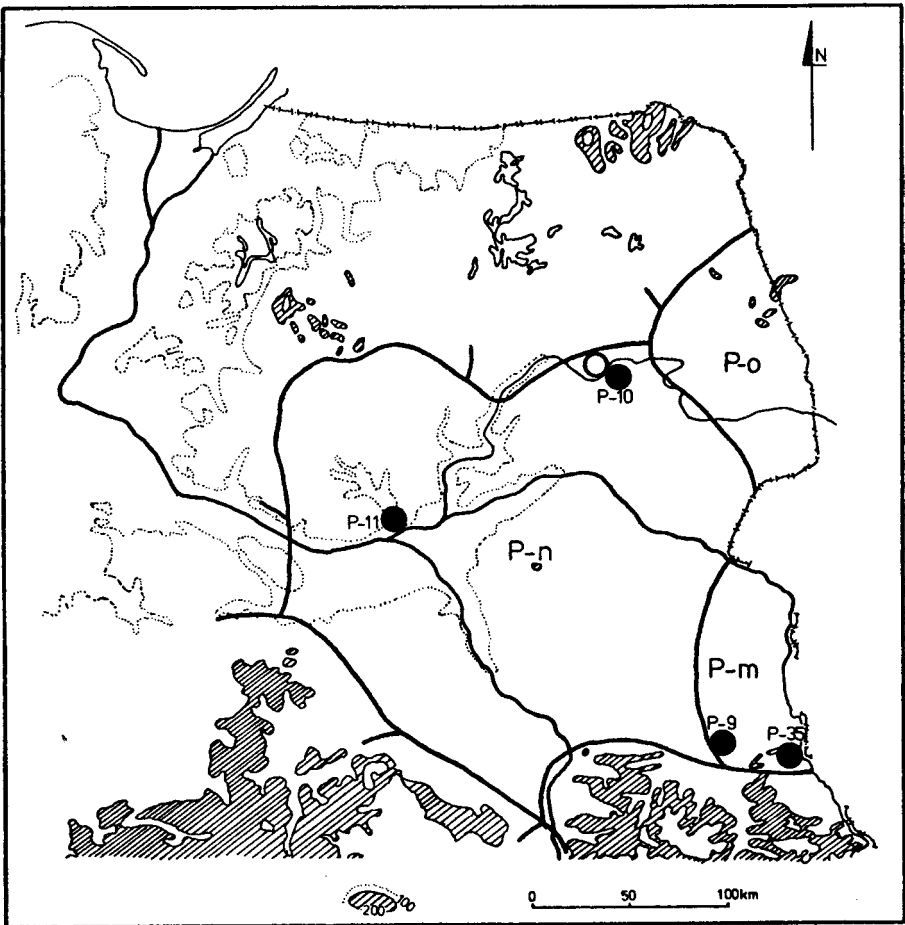


Fig. 1. The subdivision of the eastern middle-Polish Lowlands into the type regions. Black dots — reference, open dots — complementary sites

and denudation remnants of old glacial forms like osars, kames etc. Poor sandy soils prevail here, and the river valleys are covered with wet and periodically flooded warp soils and peat soils. The pine forests and mixed pine forests and riverside woodlands of *Populetalia albae* and *Alnetalia glutinosae* alliances are the dominant forest communities, mixed deciduous forests are of minor importance. Besides, the mid-Polish Lowlands are the areas the most heavily deforested and changed by human economy.

Generally, the lowlands lying in the „climate shadow” of surrounding hills have the lowest annual rainfall in Poland, below 500 mm in their central part. There are however climatic differences between western and eastern lowlands connected with the marine (W) or continental (E) influences — the eastern areas are cooler.

A distinguished part of the lowlands is their-south-easternmost region — Lublin Polesie, with its common karst forms, numerous lakes and peat-bogs, and distinct influences of continental climate.

In this volume 3 regions have only been included into the belt of mid-Polish Lowlands: these are P-n — the Masovia and Podlasie Lowlands, and P-m — the Lublin Polesie besides P-o — the Białystok Upland and Biebrza Basin, which is not represented by any sites. (Fig. 1). Such genetic approach excludes from this subdivision all the areas glaciated by Vistulian ice-sheet, also those occupying western areas of middle-Polish pradolinas (Lubuskie, Greater Poland, Kujawy, Gniezno Lake Districts). By that it differs basically from the scheme of geobotanical division of Poland where all the lake districts above are included into the subdivision of Great Valleys corresponding roughly with the unit of mid-Polish Lowlands.

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