

The Lower Skawa River Valley – Natura 2000 Network

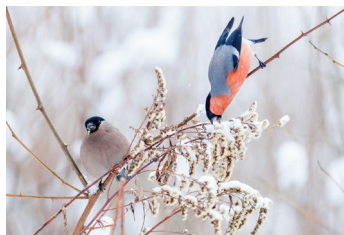


The specific shape of the Skawa River Valley area its human development (fish ponds) have influenced the present shape of its fauna and flora.

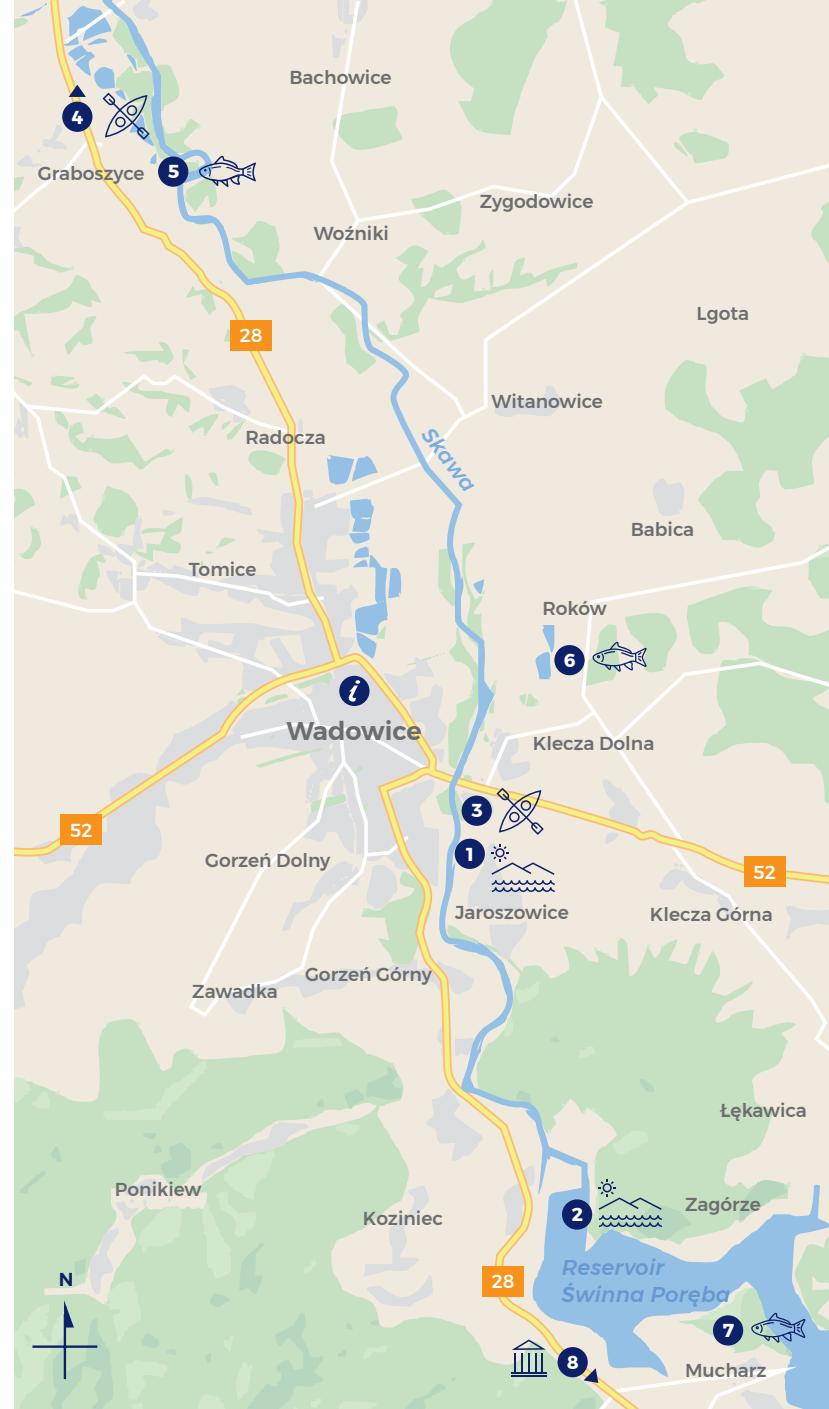
Today the Lower Skawa River Valley is a protected area within the Natura 2000 network (since 2008) as a Special Protection Area (SPA). It covers an area of 7081,7 ha. Geographically it is located in the Oświęcim Basin and in The West-Beskidian Piedmont.

However, its administrative area extends to the territory of 7 communes (Oświęcim, Przeciszów, Babice, Alwernia, Spytkowice, Zator, Wieprz, Tomice, Wadowice) and is part of the Vistula River Valley and the Skawa River.

The Lower Skawa River Valley is one of the most important area for aquatic and wetland birds in southern Poland and the most important Polish breeding site for black-crowned night heron, gadall, pochard, tufted duck and whiskered tern. During the breeding season you can also see the common little bittern, black-necked grebe, great crested grebe and the bluethroat.



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- 1 Wadowice – Boulevard on Skawa
- 2 Świnna Poręba Reservoir
- 3 Kayaks „Kajaki na Skawie” + 48 608 093 166, kajaki-na-skawie.pl
- 4 Kayaks „Kajaki na Wiśle” + 48 668 389 789, kajaki-na-wisle.pl
- 5 Fishery „3 Stawy” in Graboszyce + 48 506 146 777
- 6 Fishery and fish frying bar in Roków + 48 603 823 163, rokow.pl
- 7 Fishery „Szuwary” in Mucharz + 48 880 113 451, lowisko-szuwar.pl
- 8 Town Museum in Sucha Beskidzka + 48 33 874 26 05, muzeum.sucha-beskidzka.pl



WADOWICE
where it all begins

Floating along the Skawa River



**AROUND
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Wadowice is a great starting point, from which you can begin your adventure in Małopolska.

The Skawa River



Świnna Poręba Reservoir



Ponds and fishing



Wadowice – the birthplace of John Paul II, as well as many other cities in Poland and Europe was situated on the river centuries ago. The Skawa River is a Carpathian tributary of the Vistula River with a length of more than 96 km. It starts from several mountain streams flowing below the Szytkowice Pass in the Beskid Żywiecki Mountains, while its estuary to the Vistula River is located near the Smolice village, located beneath Zator in the Oświęcim Basin.

Today's Skawa River is much different from the one that ran through since the time of the earliest settlements in the region. The original river did not have just one main stream but it consisted of several different streams. The local population used the natural resources of the Skawa Valley to fill fish ponds, supply mills, transport lumber, wickerwork or just to catch fish. However, the old Skawa River, through its extensive trough, made communication difficult and it was a natural border between the settlements in Silesia and Małopolska. Skawa as a mountain river was sometimes unpredictable, used to overflow its banks, causing dangerous floods and local permeations. It happens to this day.

The very first attempts to regulate it were made at the end of the nineteenth century, but they only aimed at

limiting flood damage and facilitating rafting. From the 40's of the twentieth century, we can talk about Skawa as a river with a simple channeled trough. At present, the Skawa river and its surrounding nature are one of the riches of Wadowice. It is a true paradise for all canoeing and fishing enthusiasts and naturalists. „**Kajaki na Skawie**” is a company that organizes canoeing trips on the Skawa River. It arranges canoeing trips for tourist groups on Skawa and Vistula rivers as well as individual canoe rental. „**Kajaki na Wiśle**” is another place where the canoes are available for the visitors.

Visitors who want to spend their time by the river in Wadowice, should go along the bridge, where there is a recreational area called the **Boulevard on Skawa**. Everyone will find something for oneself – there is a playground for the youngest tourists, an outdoor gym and beach volleyball courts. In the summer season various outdoor events take place there.



The construction of Świnna Poręba Reservoir on the Skawa River started in the beginning of the twentieth century. The authorities in Vienna, having planned the construction of the Danube-Vistula-Dniestr Canal, first started to regulate the river and then considered having a reservoir as well. Two different locations were considered: the first was for Graboszyce village and the other for Świnna Poręba village. The final decision was taken by the Polish authorities in 1973, choosing the second village to build a dam and a reservoir, but the construction works started in 1986 r.

The Świnna Poręba Reservoir on the Skawa River is located on the Skawa River in the Małopolska Region on the border of two districts - Wadowice and Sucha. It covers the areas of communes: Mucharz, Stryków and Zembrzyce. The dam is located in Świnna Poręba about 6 km to the south of Wadowice, taking the national road No. 28 towards Sucha Beskidzka. The lagoon has a very varied coastline and extends between Świnna Poręba and Zembrzyce on a length of about 11 km. The reservoir was originally designed as a reservoir for drinking water for the Silesian agglomeration. Today, it's more about a better protection against the floods of the Skawa and Vistula valleys (including Cracow), the production of renewable energy,

rearing fish fry in the fish fry production centre and a place of high tourist, landscape and natural values. The reservoir in Świnna Poręba has a capacity of 161 million m³ and occupies an area of 1035 ha. The maximum height of the dam is 54 m and it is 604 m long. Just like the dams in Czorsztyn and Solina it will be available to the public in the future. The Świnna Poręba Reservoir is currently managed by the Regional Water Management Authorities in Cracow.

The area under the water has previously been subjected to many years of archaeological and historical research, which can be viewed at the permanent archaeological and historical exhibition in the Sucha Beskidzka Municipal Museum. The exposition shows the scale of human settlement in the Upper and the Lower Skawa River Valley from pre-history to middle ages. It presents the climate, fauna and flora, epochs and more important archaeological cultures, technologies, beliefs and art, which are the background of the artifacts from excavation in the basin of the reservoir.

The magical corners of Skawa River around the Świnna Poręba Reservoir are shown with the film 'Flow of Life'. More information on the website znurtemzycia.pl

The areas of the Skawa River and its tributaries have always been the place where the ponds were made. They were originally called „ponds”, because the reservoirs were formed in earthworks. The river valley owes its development to the activity of princes of Oświęcim and Zator and local nobility. The ponds were fed with water from both the Skawa River and its tributaries (e.g. Choczenka).

Water reservoirs preserved to this day are a living heritage of the past of the Skawa River Valley. The largest complex of ponds is located in the vicinity of Zator. There are ponds in Wadowice, which were formerly called „Barwałdzkie” (street Podstawie). In the neighbouring village Tomice there are more: Łowisko, Młyński, Bagieniec and others. To some extent, this pond system is the equivalent of those reservoirs that existed already in the sixteenth century. The development of the fishing economy in the area occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century together with the dynamic economic development of Galicia - the province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

At that time, the model fish farming was conducted in Tomice by A. Gostkowski. He made a great contribution to the „Galician carp” farming, which we know today as the „mirror carp”. Thanks to a well-developed and modern fish farm, carp has gained fame not only at national fairs but also on the European fish market. Today, the complex of fish ponds on the Skawa River has different owners. There are also several private ponds covering different areas. There is also the possibility of fishing in the Skawa River provided you have an angling license to do that.

Species of fish occurring in the Skawa river: chub, pike, zander, barbel, ide, nase, brown trout, rainbow trout, grayling, bream.

In the surrounding ponds the following species of fish are cultivated: carp, amur, sturgeon, zander, catfish, trout, pike, perch, bream, tench, crucian carp and roach.