

The Chernobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve, the largest nature conservation site in Ukraine, stretching over 226,000 hectares, has become a unique reserve for European forest fauna. The exclusion zone and the unconditional resettlement zone, which were integrated into the reserve on 26 April 2016, have contributed to the restoration of the original landscapes of Polesia (a natural and historical region that starts from the farthest edge of Central Europe, encompassing Eastern Europe, including Eastern Poland, the Belarus–Ukraine border, and Western Russia).

The reserve has seen a positive trend in the growth of the population of large predators, such as wolves, lynxes, and brown bears, and ungulates, including elks, Przewalski's horses, bison, along with rare bird species, including the black stork. The European elk, a typical inhabitant of the reserve, has played a key role in restoring the ecosystem after the Chernobyl disaster and the resettling of people from the radiation-contaminated area.

The European elk (*Alces alces*) is the largest representative of the deer family and the second largest mammal in the fauna of Ukraine. Its height at the shoulder can reach two meters and its body weight can be up to 700 kg. This species is important for maintaining ecological balance by regulating vegetation growth and contributing to biodiversity conservation.

Commemorative coin

CHORNOBYL. REVIVAL. THE EUROPEAN ELK



Elks are extremely adaptable, capable of travelling long distances at speeds of up to 56 km/h, swimming skillfully, and feeding on a variety of vegetation, including tree branches and aquatic and herbaceous plants. Males shed and grow new antlers every year, which is their characteristic morphological feature.

In February 2017, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine imposed a 25-year moratorium on elk hunting throughout the country, and the species was subsequently included in the Ukrainian List of Endangered Species.

The European elk has become a symbol of the restoration of natural ecosystems in an environment affected by radiation contamination. The presence of elks in the Chernobyl reserve emphasizes the need to preserve endangered species and natural ecosystems, and demonstrates the potential of nature to regenerate itself even in difficult conditions.



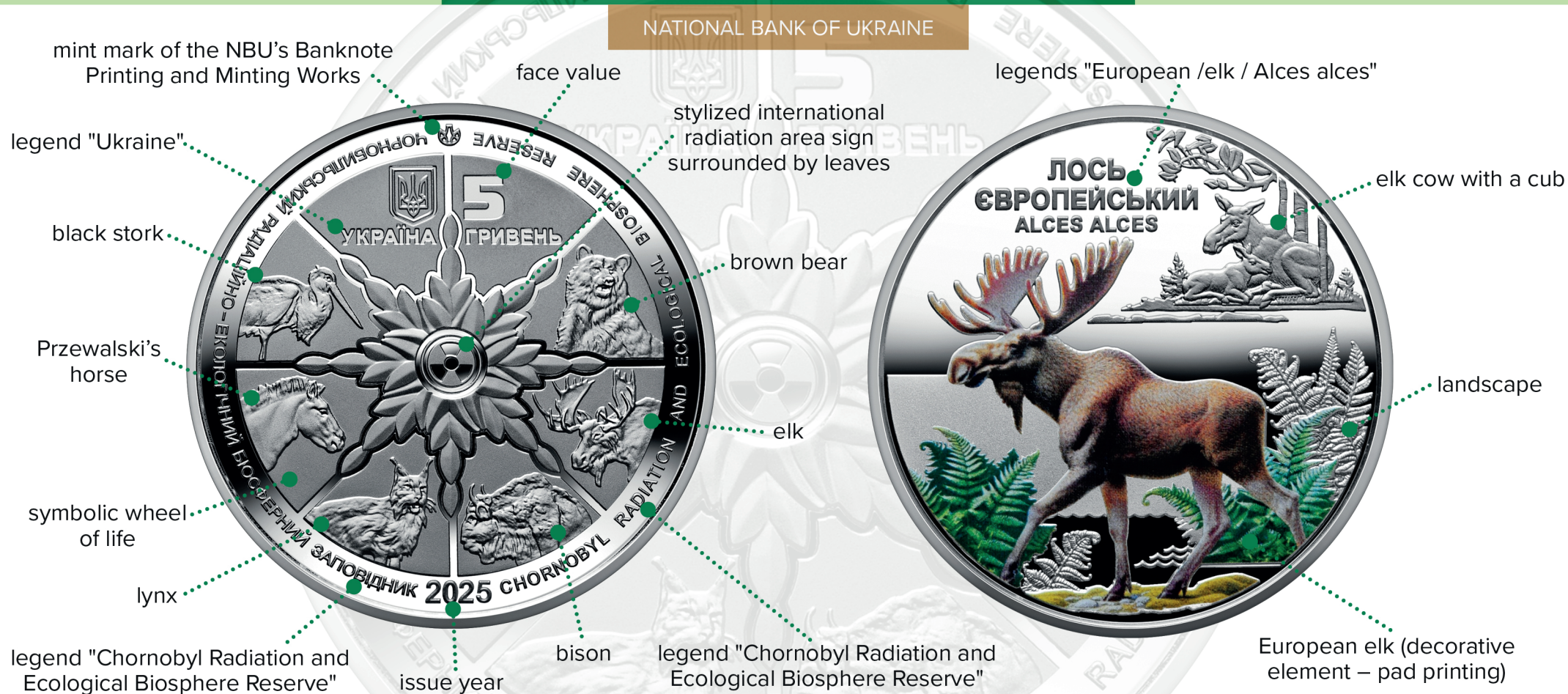
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National Bank
of Ukraine

CHORNOBYL. REVIVAL. THE EUROPEAN ELK



Issue date

25 April 2025

Metal

nickel silver

Diameter

35.0 mm

Quality

special uncirculated

Edge

grooved

Mintage

40,000