

BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN GERMANY

In touch with nature



Nationale Naturlandschaften





Foreword

Global changes in climate and the balance of nature caused by human intervention, the loss of functional efficiency and species diversity suffered by many ecosystems and the economic and social problems that have emerged in the wake of these developments confront us with enormous challenges today. Biosphere reserves are surely not a cure-all. Yet they serve as concrete examples of potential solutions for the urgent issues facing mankind in the future. As model regions, they exemplify the opportunities presented by a new, sustainable lifestyle that will conserve our vital natural resources in the long term without sacrificing quality of life.

In establishing the 'Man and the Biosphere' (MAB) programme 40 years ago, UNESCO demonstrated remarkable foresight. Initiated as a purely scientific program, it today serves as an innovative instrument for realization of the concept of sustainable development. It has generated a great echo throughout the world and is truly a success story. The network currently comprises over 560 biospheres in nearly 110 countries.

Germany is actively represented in that network with a total of 15 regions – from South-East Rügen to the Schwäbische Alb. The work of many committed people at a local level, including numerous volunteers, cooperative dialogue with partners in other countries and, not least of all, Germany's contribution to the progressive development of the MAB programme (in Africa, for example) have earned widespread international recognition. As representatives of our national natural and cultural landscapes, biosphere reserves are among the most valuable expressions of our national natural heritage.

The German Federal Government regards biosphere reserves as a very important element of the national strategy for biological diversity. The Federal Ministry for the Environment has supported the creation and development of these protected areas for many years and will continue to do so – within the framework of a Federal programme launched this year, for example. We are currently involved in projects concerned, among other things, with issues relating to the impact of climate change. A study is now in progress on the economic effects of environmentally friendly tourism as a means of demonstrating how protected areas contribute to the creation and safeguarding of jobs.

Biosphere reserves offer space for creativity and initiatives that extend far beyond the scope of traditional nature conservation, which is concerned primarily with protecting species and habitats. It is also important to show people in rural regions an approach to development that is based on nature and climate friendly resource management. In this way, we hope to gain their support for the protection of biodiversity. And that will surely benefit us all.

DR. NORBERT RÖTTGEN Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

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Hay-making in Lübben, Spreewald Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere Reserves Honour and Mandate

'Biosphere reserve' – the term is by no means self-explanatory, and the model it represents is highly complex. In the following interview, Guido Puhlmann, Director of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve and Chairman of the Board of EUROPARC Deutschland, the umbrella organization of Germany's National Natural Landscapes, explains what biosphere reserves are and what makes them so special.

What are biosphere reserves, and what purpose do they serve?

Biosphere reserves are areas chosen for special recognition by UNESCO. These areas represent a unique opportunity for the regions concerned: biosphere reserves serve as models in which approaches to harmonious co-existence between man and nature can be explored. Their mission is to develop diverse cultural landscapes, to preserve valuable habitats and to protect these against destructive intervention. The foremost goal is to achieve a balanced relationship between the use of these areas by mankind and natural life cycles. Traditional conservation functions are combined with modern methods of sustainable regional development on the basis of scientific principles and supported by educational programmes. Biosphere reserves should of course also be attractive and worth preserving in the eyes of inhabitants and visitors alike.

How have biosphere reserves developed, and how did the idea first emerge?

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed unprecedented industrial development accompanied by the increasingly intensive consumption of natural resources. In response to a growing evidence of damage to the global environment, such as increased carbon dioxide concentrations in the



Comma butterfly

atmosphere, the UNESCO General Assembly launched the international research programme entitled 'Man and the Biosphere' 40 years ago.

The original objective of the programme was to improve our understanding of the consequences of the human use of resources on the entire inhabited world. Today, this narrow focus on research and conservation has given way to efforts to develop biosphere reserves into model regions in which progressive concepts for harmonious coexistence between mankind and nature are drafted and implemented. The urgent question of how to ensure the sustainable use of nature has now become the focus of attention.

How are biosphere reserves structured, and what makes them interesting for visitors?

The international guidelines for biosphere reserves suggest a system of different zones related to the intensity of human use. The primary purposes of biosphere reserves are reflected in these guidelines. In the core areas which comprises three percent of the total territory of a biosphere reserve natural development should be allowed to proceed without direct human influence. Many species need habitats that are rarely permitted in utilized cultural landscapes. One example is the stag beetle, a species that feeds on decomposing trees, which are most likely to be found in core areas. The buffer zones should make up at least 10 percent of the total area of the reserve. They preserve traditional cultural landscapes, such as heaths and meadows that support diverse species as well as forests utilized primarily as natural areas. Principles of conservation take precedence here as well. In the transition area, in which settlements and even cities may be located, the objective is sustainable development of all forms of use. The idea here is to demonstrate the compatibility of natural resource use and sustainable resource conservation. Biosphere reserves are of interest to visitors above all because they are among the most beautiful landscapes in the world and offer opportunities to experience intact natural environments and their diversity at close hand.

What role do biosphere reserves play in the support of biodiversity and adaptation to climate change?

Biosphere reserves are national and international hotspots of biodiversity. Landscapes used by human beings in a sustainable manner support an especially large number of species. They also represent a broad spectrum of German landscapes, from small coastal islands to alpine pastures. By protecting them, we preserve our natural heritage. Sustainable land use, which is an express goal of biosphere reserves, also helps populations make necessary adjustments in response to climate change, including such measures as flood protection or the implementation of new tourism concepts in upland regions where snowfall is expected to decrease in the future. These protected areas also contribute significantly to active climate protection, through organic farming or the preservation and restoration of near-natural forests and moors in which harmful CO, can be absorbed. We also expect the future to bring new ideas and initiatives which can be applied effectively in other regions.

There are 15 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Germany, and the representatives of the Karst Landscape of the Southern Harz Region will hopefully be submitting an application for international recognition very soon. What role does UNESCO play in this context, and what does recognition by UNESCO mean for specific protected areas?

With its 'Man and the Biosphere program', UN-ESCO has established a substantive and organizational framework for all biosphere reserves and developed that framework in cooperation with over 100 participating countries. UNESCO conducts a review of all biosphere reserves with the support of participating national committees every ten years. This alone sets these recognized biosphere reserves apart from other protected area categories.

Recognition by UNESCO is an honour but also a mandate. It honours the diversity, the unique character and the beauty of a cultural landscape, and it confers a mandate for sustainable development and adaptation to change without sacrifice to quality.

Why aren't there even more biosphere reserves in Germany? Is there opposition to them?

Biosphere reserves meet high national and international standards of quality. As model regions, they should be representative. New reserves are established to fill existing gaps in the network and thus the extension of these reserves across Germany is bounded on criteria. However, fulfilling the quality criteria alone does not qualify a region to become a biosphere reserve. It is equally important that the idea is supported by as many inhabitants of a region as possible. Advocates are not alone, of course. There are sceptics and opponents as well. Our task in this context is to pursue an intense, open dialogue and to gain approval by emphasizing the opportunities a biosphere offers, particularly regarding development in structurally weak rural areas. We have succeeded quite well so far. The 15 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Germany are persuasive evidence of that.

How do you view the future of German biosphere reserves?

Biosphere reserves are not merely nine day wonders. That is demonstrated not only by the 40th anniversary of the MAB programme but also by the fact that two of the 15 biosphere reserves in Germany, the Vessertal and the Middle Elbe, have outlived an entire nation, the GDR. However, they must stay in tune with the times in order to justify their existence in future. Expressed in concrete terms, this means that they should find answers to the questions that concern our society at a given time and implement solutions that serve as examples for others.

Years ago, the primary emphasis was on scientific assessment of the various ways in which human activity impacts on the environment. Today, we expect to see concrete examples, such as approaches to the conservative use of our natural resources or the management of economic and social development in rural regions in the face of an aging population and the exodus of young people to the cities.

How can a biosphere reserve contribute to added value in the region and how can the business community contribute to the long-term preservation of the capital that is our natural environment? How can we achieve sustainable use of renewable energy sources without destroying human and animal habitats? What role can biosphere reserves play in efforts to reverse losses in biodiversity? These are question that will be of much greater concern to us in future. The importance of biosphere reserves within the network of National Natural Landscapes will be determined by the quality of our answers and our success in communicating them. Furthermore, we will need support from all sides, from the federal and state governments to local administrations and the business community. I am confident that we will succeed.

The concept of biosphere reserves as model regions of international standing is timely, futureoriented and focused on solutions to urgent global problems. Still, we must go beyond the stage of lighthouse projects and pioneering ventures. The great opportunities, ideas and challenges UN-ESCO offers us through biosphere reserves must filter down more effectively to the state and regional levels. They must become part of a broader movement and that will require the support of all groups and segments of our society.

What recommendations do you have for visitors?

First of all, come and discover the German biosphere reserves. There you will find nature left to itself, spectacular flora and fauna as well as fascinating landscapes. Secondly show consideration for people and the environment. Be fair, the high quality of products and services in the biosphere reserves are worth a reasonable price.



Guido Puhlmann, Director of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve and Chairman of EUROPARC Deutschland, umbrella organization of the National Natural Landscapes April 23, 2009: Ex-Federal President Horst Köhler opens the BUGA [National Garden Show] and visits the exhibition on UNESCO Biosphere Reserves with Minister President Erwin Sellering and State Minister of the Environment Dr. Till Backhaus





The Year of Biosphere Reserves in review

The Year of Biosphere Reserves was celebrated in Germany under the patronage of Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Federal Minister of the Environment Sigmar Gabriel. The occasion was the 30th anniversary of the Middle Elbe and Vesserthal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserves.

The biosphere reserves were presented to over 500,000 visitors during the National Garden Show in Schwerin. They were featured as hotspots of biodiversity, valuable CO₂ collectors and model regions for regional economic systems and environmentally friendly tourism and, not least of all, as pioneering applications of climate-adaptation strategies.

Many people naturally looked back to the beginning – in 1979 – when the first two German biosphere reserves were recognized by UNESCO. On November 24, 1979, the UNESCO International Coordinating Council accepted the petitions of the State Council of the GDR for recognition of the Vessertal Nature Conservation Area in what is now Thuringia and the Steckby-Lödderitzer Forest in the present state of Saxony-Anhalt as biosphere reserves. With that step, the GDR clearly took the lead – no wonder, as the East German leadership was concerned above all with securing international political recognition for the GDR. Things took longer in the West. The Bavarian Forest National Park was not designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve until 1981 – the first area in West Germany to receive that honour.

Even then, active conservationists in the GDR could well have imagined the Schorfheide – now one of three protected areas in the state of Brandenburg – as a biosphere reserve. But it was a state hunting reserve and thus not eligible for consideration according to the East German government. It was nine years before the next German biosphere reserves were created and recognized by UNESCO. After the collapse of Iron Curtain, the first democratically elected government of the GDR enacted the 'National Park Programme' on September 12, 1990. The programme designated national and nature parks and included plans for additional biosphere reserves.

In addition to the official ceremonies in the Vessertal and Middle Elbe regions, the Year of the German Biosphere Reserves was celebrated at numerous events in all biosphere reserves, culminating in the highlight of the year, the ceremony at



Centre: Presentation of the 15 German UNESCO Biosphere Reserves at the joint pavilion for the Yoar of Piorebara

the Year of Biosphere Reserves at the BUGA 2009 in Schwerin Upper right:

July 15, 2009. Federal Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel visiting the exhibition of the Biosphere Reserves at the BUGA

Lower right: August 21, 2009. At the ceremony in honour of the Year of the Biosphere Reserves attended by former Federal Minister of the Environment Sigmar Gabriel and the Director of the UNESCO MAB Programme N. Ishwaran (3rd from the right), Honda donates five hybrid cars to the biosphere reserves the Staatstheater in Schwerin attended by Federal Minister of the Environment Sigmar Gabriel and Dr Till Backhaus, Minister of the Environment for the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. In his address to the audience composed of representatives of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and a number of German counties, Gabriel emphasized that these model regions offer opportunities to gain exemplary insights into the interplay of natural and social processes for the benefit of science and research. He referred to species diversity as a user's manual for the earth and warned against tearing a page from that book every day.

The 35th conference of the UNESCO General Assembly also took place in 2009. A resolution creating the 'Man and the Biosphere' programme was adopted on that occasion. Proposed by Germany, the resolution emphasized the role of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserves as model regions for sustainable development during the national 'Year of Biosphere Reserves 2009'. Over twenty nations supported the resolution, which underscored the important contribution made by the biosphere reserves to the process of sustainable development in the relationship between man and nature in an era of climate change. The resolution contained an appeal to the community of nations to promote cooperation and emphasized above all the significance of 'learning sustainable development' in the biosphere reserves. The UN designated 2010 as the 'Year of Biodiversity', and biosphere reserves play an important role alongside national parks and nature parks in this context as well.

The 'Year of Biosphere Reserves' was organized by EUROPARC Deutschland e.V., the umbrella organization of Germany's National Natural Landscapes, in cooperation with all biosphere reserves. The presentation at the National Garden Show was supported to a significant extent by the Schaalsee Biosphere Foundation and sponsored by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funds provided by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

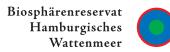
Biosphere Reserves

Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein

> Wadden Sea of Hamburg

Wadden Sea of Lower Saxony

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Biosphärenreservat Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer und Halligen



Biosphärenreservat Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer



Where the seabed meets the horizon

A view of the distant horizon, fresh air and the delightful cooling effect of the soft, invigorating mud on the feet – a pure pleasure for many people. At the same time, water and coastal areas are important habitats for numerous plants and animals. The unique character of the Wadden Sea is underscored by its designation as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site.

Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve

The Hallig islands of the North Sea Coast of Schleswig-Holstein are truly unique in the world. They are a natural and cultural treasure for the whole nation and indispensable protective barrier for the entire western coast – not to mention a highlight for North Sea tourists. Hallig islands are small and unprotected by dykes. When the water level rises, they are completely flooded by the North Sea: 'Land unter' (land submerged), as the locals say.

Thus houses are built on man-made hills called 'Warften'. The salt marshes are home to numerous plants and animals which could not survive elsewhere. From the storm-swept sea to flocks of birds in the air to vast salt marshes and fresh air – no one can escape nature on the Hallig islands. Vacationers and day-trippers enjoy the unique landscape between the land and the sea and join bird-watchers from all over the world to observe at close hand the migrating flocks of brent geese. The region comprising the national park and biosphere reserve has culinary delights to offer as well: North Sea shrimp, mussels and oysters as well as numerous species of fish. North Frisian Poltinger lamb and Ditmarsch cabbage are also regional delicacies.

Wadden Sea of Hamburg Biosphere Reserve

Seemingly endless tidal flats at the mouth of the Elbe near Cuxhaven on the Kleiner Vogelsand off the Island of Neuwerk, a vast sky full of birds as far as the eye can see and water channels, dunes and beaches - the Wadden Sea of Hamburg is a jewel of nature and a cultural landscape. The Island of Neuwerk - one of the oldest city districts of Hamburg, yet over 100 kilometres from Hamburg City Hall - has a colourful history. It was once a medieval fishing port, a haven for pirates, bastion and a grazing area. Its maritime use gave the Island of Neuwerk, which was encircled by dykes in 1556, a distinctive face. Today, about 40 people live on the island and cater for up to 100,000 visitors every year. With its green fields and salt marshes, the Neuwerk foreshore is an important breeding area for waterfowl and birds that inhabit the tidal flats. The uninhabited isles of Scharhörn and Nigehörn are masses of dunes that wander ten metres and more toward the south-east year for year, shifted by the natural dynamics of the sea. They are refuges for numerous aquatic birds. Nigehörn is the baby of the 'family'. Hamburg's youngest island, it was created in 1989, when 1.2 million cubic metres of sand were deposited at the location. Since then, it has been left exposed to the dynamics of nature and kept off limits to human visitors.

Wadden Sea of Lower Saxony Biosphere Reserve

Villages in the typical local building style, churches and organs of superregional renown and the centuries-old struggle for survival against the sea, on the one hand, and marsh, 'Geest', moors and the island's light-coloured sand beaches on the other – all under the umbrella of an indescribably vast sky. The exploding fireworks of the sun setting over the sea after a summer storm. Silent and serene, this is a perfect setting for rest and contemplation.

These are just a few of the many facets of the Wadden Sea of Lower Saxony Biosphere Reserve. Many people are surprised to learn that the Wadden Sea is the second most productive ecosystem in the world, next to the tropical rainforest. Millions of migratory birds feed here, accumulating reserves of fat they will need to breed successfully in the Arctic or for their flight to winter quarters in distant regions to the south. And the Wadden Sea serves as a nursery for many species of fish that appear on local menus. Yet it is also one of Germany's leading tourist regions.

Constantly changing: clouds and Wadden Sea

Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein

Ferry transfer and Wadden Sea Centre

A ferry from Schlüttsiel to Hallig Hooge, bicycles rented at the ferry dock. If it's raining, we take a carriage across the Hallig. Thousands upon thousands of brent geese stop to rest here in the spring and autumn. On a tour of the Hallig we visit a church and the Königspesel Museum, and are treated to a number of beautiful natural settings. When the weather is nasty ('Schietwetter'), we stop in at a restaurant on the Hanswarft. A visit to the Wadden Sea Centre at the Watch Station is a hit for children as well.

- Monday: Arrival at our holiday flat on Hallig Langeneß. We take a walk in the evening, eat fish rolls and have coffee at the Café Pharisäer.
- **Tuesday:** Bicycle tour across the Hallig and a visit to the Biosphere Information Centre and the local museum, followed by a hike over the tidal flats and bird-watching at the Wadden Sea Watch Station.
- Wednesday: Boat ride to Hallig Hooge. Hallig tour to the church, the Wadden Sea Centre and the Königspesel Museum. The we stop for teapunch at the cosy, Halligkrog.
- **Thursday:** Sunshine at last! We enjoy a swim at high tide and watch the sea swallows. Delicious North Sea shrimp in the evening.
- **Friday:** Excursion with a picnic basket. We take along Theodor Storm's *Schimmelreiter* to read. What luck! The children find a piece of amber while collecting seashells.
- Saturday: Breakfast as the sun rises over the tidal flats. The calls of curlews accompany us on our way to the ferry back to Schlüttsiel.



A delightful experience: walking on the bottom of the wadden sea

Facts and figures

Location: North Sea coast of Schleswig-Holstein, from the border to Denmark to the mouth of the Elbe

Area: 4,431 square kilometres

Elevation: -15 to +8 metres

History: founded and recognized by UNESCO in 1990. The biosphere reserve occupies the same area as the national park but also encompasses the five large, inhabited Hallig islands.

Geographic features: tidal flats, islands, Hallig islands, dunes, sandbars, water channels, salt marshes and sea

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Landesbetrieb für Küstenschutz, Nationalpark und Meeresschutz Schleswig-Holstein/ Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer und Halligen Schlossgarten 1 25832 Tönning Tel. 04861 616-0, Fax -69 www.wattenmeer-nationalpark.de nationalpark@lkn.landsh.de

Geschäftsstelle Biosphäre Schlossgarten 1 25832 Tönning Tel. 04861 616-36, Fax -69 www.halligen.de biosphaere@halligen.de

Accommodations

Nordsee-Tourismus-Service GmbH Tel. 04841 8975-0, Fax 04841 4843 www.nordseetourismus.de



Books and maps

Weltnaturerbe Wattenmeer ISBN 978-3-529-05321-4

Die Halligen ISBN 978-3-7793-1114-0

Inseln und Halligen im schleswig-holsteinischen Wattenmeer ISBN 978-3-89876-422-3

Nationalpark-Karten: Sehkarte Westküste Schleswig-Holstein ISBN 978-3-926137-25-8

Kreis Nordfriesland Topographische Kreiskarte 1:100.000 ISBN 978-3-89130-374-0

Directions

By rail: to Heide (connection to Büsum), Husum (connection to St. Peter-Ording), Niebüll (connection to Dagebüll / bus from there to Schlüttsiel or Westerland

By car: Autobahn A 23 toward Heide, then north on B 5. The car ferry to Sylt departs from Niebüll. Ferries to the islands and Hallig islands depart from the harbours in Dagebüll and Schüttsiel.

Peaceful coexistence on the Hallig island: brent geese and cows Biosphärenreservat Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer und Halligen





Wadden Sea of Hamburg Salt marshes and tidal aquarium

No day visit to Neuwerk is complete without a hike through the tidal flats, a mudflat carriage ride or a boat tour. Visitors get to know the island best on walks along the circular dyke that protects it against the tides. The adventure trail offers interesting insights into the environment, culture and sustainable development of the island. The lighthouse, the island's oldest symbol, offers a breathtaking panoramic view over the biosphere reserve to the mouth of the Elbe and the huge container vessels. The Biosphere Reserve and National Park Centre located along the way to the 700-year-old lighthouse houses an exhibition devoted to the Wadden Sea of Hamburg and a tidal aquarium. Visitors encounter breeding and resting birds close-up along a pegged path through the renatured salt marshes on the eastern foreshore of the island. The unique experience of watching migrating birds can be enjoyed in the spring.

Island tour and mudflat wagons

- Monday: Arrival on Neuwerk with the passenger ship 'MS Flipper'. Settling in at a comfortable guest house or – for families and groups – a Neuhotel. A first tour of the island along the circular dyke allows us to discover everything we want to view more closely later on.
- Tuesday: It's raining, so we sleep in and read a novel about Störtebeker, the pirate. Visit to the Biosphere Reserve and National Park Centre in the afternoon, dressed in 'Frisian mink' (typical yellow rain slicker) Look closely! The information plaques posted along the visitors' educational trail offer valuable information about the biosphere reserve and the national park. Perhaps there's even time for a visit to the Amber Museum?
- Wednesday: The sun is shining. Fitness programme in the morning: a climb to the top of the 700-year-old lighthouse to enjoy a view of the natural and cultural landscape. Enjoying the fragrances of the marshes and the sea on an afternoon tour through the renatured salt marshes on the eastern foreshore; observing oystercatchers and sandwich terns and their newly hatched young. And later, the legendary local island culture evening is a must! Lüder sings 'Einmal Neuwerk noch seh'n' (Just to see Neuwerk once again).
- Thursday: Out early to spend the whole day on the tidal flats experiencing the pure natural environment of the Wadden Sea in the core zone of the biosphere reserve. Then a hike with the Jordsand Club to see the birds on Scharhörn Island.
- **Friday:** Hike with a guide from the biosphere reserve administration to the Kleiner Vogelsand, a high ridge on the tidal flats on the northern coast of Neuwerk. Amber is often found there after storms.
- Saturday: After a morning swim at high tide it's time to take the ship back to Cuxhafen while the tide is up. At low tide, we ride the horsedrawn tidal flats wagon to Sahlenburg. Goodbye for now to the Wadden Sea of Hamburg Biosphere Reserve!

Facts and figures

Location: at the mouth of the Elbe, 10 kilometres from Cuxhaven (Hamburg exclave)

Area: 117 square kilometres

History: established and recognized by UNESCO in 1992. The biosphere reserve occupies the same area as the national park (1990).

Elevation: sea level to +6 metres

Geographic features: tidal flats influenced by fresh water from the Elbe, with sand islands, salt marshes, dunes and grasslands in the inland marsh

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservat-/ Nationalpark-Verwaltung Hamburgisches Wattenmeer c/o Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Stadthausbrücke 8 20355 Hamburg Tel. 040 428-2491 oder -3392, Fax -3552 www.wattenmeer-nationalpark.de

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Biosphärenreservat/Nationalpark-Haus Neuwerk 27499 Insel Neuwerk Tel. 04721 395349 np-haus.neuwerk@hamburg.de

Accomodations

Turm Tel. 04721 29078 www.leuchtturmneuwerk.de

Haus Seeblick Tel. 04721 20360 www.urlaubstip.de/seeblick

Das alte Fischerhaus Tel. 04721 29043 www.neuwerk-hotel.de

Nige Hus Tel. 04721 29561 www.inselneuwerk.de

Hus Achtern Diek Tel. 04721 29076 www.husachterndiek.de

Books and maps

Nationalparkatlas Hamburgisches Wattenmeer (available as a PDF in the archives at www.nationalparkhamburgisches-wattenmeer.de)

Herzlich Willkommen in unserem Nationalpark Nationalparkbroschüre Hamburgisches Wattenmeer (available as a PDF in the archives at www.nationalparkhamburgisches-wattenmeer.de)

Directions

By train/'Metronom' or car to Cuxhaven. From there have three travel options to Neuwerk: on foot from Sahlenburg (bus connection from the train station), with the horse-drawn mudflat wagon from Sahlenburg or Duhnen (various providers) or with the 'MS Flipper' from Cuxhaven (Reederei Cassen Eils, Tel. 04721 32211).



With the mudflat wagon to Neuwerk

Biosphärenreservat Hamburgisches Wattenmeer



Wadden Sea of Lower Saxony

Sielhafen Museum and tea room

A day trip from Neßmersiel to the Island of Baltrum is recommended on nice days. Groups led by a national park tidal flats guide stroll at low tide over roughly eight kilometres of tidal flats to the smallest of the seven East Frisian Islands, where they have about four hours to spend – time enough to visit the 'Sleeping Beauty' in the Wadden Sea. A ferry brings visitors back to the mainland at high tide.

A visit to the Sielhafen and Carolinisiel National Park Centre is worthwhile rain or shine. Then on for a traditional East Frisian tea ceremony at a tea room in historical Sielhafen.

Bicycle tour and rhubarb cake

- Monday: Arrival with bicycles at the train station in Bremerhaven. From there by ferry to Nordenham. We pedal our way west along the dyke. There are cosy guesthouses everywhere.
- Tuesday: Trip to the outer dyke moor in Sehestedt (national park station) and on to Dangast. The old 'Kurhaus' in Dangst serves delicious rhubarb cake – but is open only at weekends. Overnight stay in Varel (Dangast).
- Wednesday: Bicycle tour along the 'Jadebusen'. In Cäciliengroden we discover the handicappedaccessible salt marsh adventure path set up in 2010. On rainy days, the programme calls for a visit to the National Park Centre – 'Das Wattenhaus' – in Wilhelmshaven.
- **Thursday:** Today's destination is Harlesiel (Carolinensiel). An excursion to Minsen and a visit to the 'Nordseehaus' are worthwhile activities. By the time we arrived, we had earned a swim in the North Sea.
- **Friday:** Day trip by boat to Wangerooge (without bicycles). We ride the island train through salt marshes in bloom and stroll through a fragrant dune landscape.
- **Saturday:** The last stage of the bicycle tour takes us to the picturesque 'beer city' of Jever.



Facts and figures

Location: North Sea coast of Lower Saxony from the mouth of the Elbe near Cuxhaven to the Dutch border

Area: 2,400 square kilometres

Elevation: sea level

History: established and recognized by UNESCO in 1992. The biosphere reserve encompasses the national park of the same name (1986).

Geographic features: tidal flats, islands with dunes, beaches and salt marshes, moors, heaths, sandbars, water channels and sea

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

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Nationalpark-Haus Seehundstation Norddeich Tel. 04931 8919, Fax 82224 info@seehundstation-norddeich.de www.seehundstation-norddeich.de

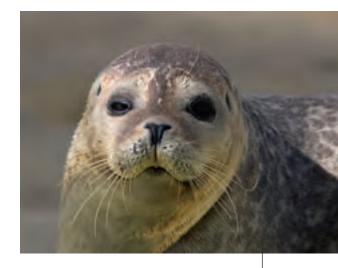
Nationalpark-Zentrum Wilhelmshaven Tel. 04421 9107-0, Fax -12 info@wattenmeerhaus.de www.wattenmeerhaus.de

Books and maps

Vögel beobachten im Nationalpark Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer ISBN 978-3-7959-0910-9

Unterwegs auf Wangerooge ISBN 978-3-930333-19-6

Harlebucht erfahren (Radtouren) www.harlebucht-erfahren.de



Common seal

Accomodations

Die Nordsee-Marketing GmbH Olympiastraße 1, Gebäude 6 26419 Schortens Tel. 04421 956099-0, Fax -9 kontakt@die-nordsee.de

Directions

Train stations with connections to island ferries: Sande / Harlesiel (to Wangerooge), Esens (Spiekeroog and Langeoog), Norddeich / Mole (Norderney, Juist), Neßmersiel via Norddeich (Baltrum), Emden Outer Harbour (Borkum).

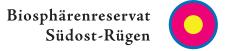
Other train stations (arrival): Wilhelmshaven, Varel, Nordenham, Bremerhaven, Cuxhaven.

By car: A 27, A 28, A 29 or A 31 to Bremerhaven, Cuxhaven, Wilhelmshaven, Sande, Varel, Emden, Norddeich.

> Biosphärenreservat Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer



Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve





Southeast Rügen presents a fascinating mix of land and sea, peninsulas, headlands and promontories, forests, treeless hilltops and cultivated fields. Within the smallest of spaces – many biospheres are much larger – visitors discover an extraordinarily diverse array of natural settings and biotopes, from cliffs, barrier beaches and dunes to nearly all types of moor found in northern Germany to centuriesold forests. Mankind has left its mark here over the course of five thousand years – in wood pastures, heaths, salt marshes and dry and wet grasslands – habitats for a wide range of species.

Several years ago, a number of rarely seen 'guests' began to reappear along the coast and in waters of small bays and the Baltic Sea comprised within the Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve: Grey and common seals have returned to the region. International conservation measures and improved seawater pollution levels have contributed significantly to this gratifying increase in the seal population in the entire Baltic Sea region.



One example of environmentally sound resource management is small-scale coastal fishing – one of the few ecologically unobjectionable fishing operations left today. Herring, cod, garfish, flounder and other species are caught in the waters off the coast of Rügen with passive fishing devices, such as gillnets, weirs and longlines. Small red flags mark the locations of weirs and gillnets; black flags show where eel traps have been set.

Products from Rügen are sold at local markets and farmer's shops. The seal of quality awarded by the Rügen Produkte Verein e.V. identifies products and services that have been produced and processed in strict compliance with the principle of sustainable resource management. It is definitely worth watching for!

Left: The 'Pfarrwitwenhaus' in Groß Zicker

Right: Fisherman at the beach of Binz



Fishing boats in the harbour at Thiessow

Cistercian monks, Groß Zicker and sailboats

Breakfast in Sellin followed by a bicycle tour to Mönchgut. The route passes through the Baaber Heath to Middelhagen. The church and park call to mind the Cistercian monks. The path along the dyke leads to Lobbe, where the best choice for lunch is a dish featuring fish from local waters. Then it's on to Groß Zicker and a visit to the 'Pfarrwitwenhaus' (House of the Pastor's Widow). Next on the agenda is a hike through the Zicker Mountains. The Bakenberg offers a fantastic panoramic view of the bays, the Baltic Sea and the colours of the dry grassland – accompanied by the singing of skylarks. The return journey proceeds through Klein Hagen and Alt Reddevitz and across the Baaber Meadows, with a stop at the Baaber Bullwark with its colourful sailboats and the oar-powered ferry to Moritzdorf.

'Rasender Roland' and Caspar David Friedrich

- **Saturday:** A cosy holiday flat in Göhren. Stroll through the town: seaside resort architecture and Mönchgut museums.
- Sunday: Relaxing on the beach and a walk across the sea bridge
- **Monday:** Off to the Jagdschloss Granitz with the 'Rasender Roland'. A fantastic view from the tower. Hike through Granitz to Sellin and from there along the beach to Göhren. Fresh fish for dinner.
- Tuesday: On the 'Rasender Roland' to Putbus and an evening at the Putbus Theatre.
- Wednesday: With the 'MS Julchen' to the island of Vilm. Guided tour through nature preserve and its impressive primeval forest.
- **Thursday:** A trip to Jasmund National Park. Hike along the 'Kreideküste' (Limestone Coast) in the footsteps of Caspar David Friedrich.
- **Friday:** Sunrise on the Bakenberg with a beautiful view to the distant horizon. Then it's time to pack. But Rügen is addictive. We'll be back.

Facts and figures

Location: south-eastern region of the Baltic Sea Island of Rügen in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Area: 229 square kilometres

Elevation: 0 to 107 metres

History: founded in 1990 and recognized by UNESCO in 1991

Geographic features: coastal landscape with long sandy beaches, deeply intruding bays, coastal cliffs, dry meadows, salt meadows, beach forests, fields and pastures

Books and maps

Elisabeth v. Arnim 'Elisabeth auf Rügen' List-Verlag, ISBN 978-3-548-60247-9

'Rügen – Sagen und Geschichten' Edition Temmen ISBN 978-3-86108-409-9

Insel Rügen / Insel Hiddensee Rad- und Wanderkarte Studioverlag Maiwald ISBN 978-3-932115-26-4

Schlösser und Herrenhäuser auf Rügen Edition Temmen, 3rd edition, revised and updated, 2004 ISBN 978-3-86108-912-4

Rügen. Strand und Steine. Demmler-Verlag, 5th edition 2004 ISBN 978-3-910150-02-7

Wilhelm Malte zu Putbus und seine Fürstenresidenz auf der Insel Rügen Andre Farin Verlag, 3rd edition 2004 ISBN 978-3-00-008844-5

Das Schloss hinter dem Holunderbusch Thomas Helms Verlag, 2nd edition, revised and expanded, 2004 ISBN 978-3-931185-71-8

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Amt für das Biosphärenreservat Südost-Rügen Blieschow 7 a 18586 Lancken-Granitz Tel. 038303 885-0, Fax -88 www.biosphaerenreservat-suedostruegen.de poststelle@suedostruegen.mvnet.de

Accommodations and tours

Naturerlebnisverein Rügen e. V. Zubzow 5 a 18569 Trent Tel./Fax 038309 20126 www.naturerlebnis-ruegen.de info@naturerlebnis-ruegen.de

Tourismuszentrale Rügen GmbH Bahnhofstraße 15 18528 Bergen auf Rügen Tel. 03838 8077-0, Fax 254440 www.ruegen.de, info@ruegen.de

Nature holiday offers at www.natur-auf-ruegen.de, especially: René Geyer Bäckertrift 13 18586 Lancken-Granitz Tel. 0173 9898031 www.naturgeyer.de info@naturgeyer.de

Directions

By rail and bus: via Stralsund and Bergen to Putbus. From there with the 'Rasender Roland' to Göhren or Binz. A bus is also available from Bergen (Lines 20, 23 und 24) to Klein Zicker.

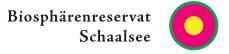
By car: from Stralsund to Bergen and via B 196 to Mönchgut. Or from Altefähr on the 'Bäderstraße' to Putbus and Mönchgut.



Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

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Haven for migratory birds

The Schaalsee is surrounded by moors and lakes, fields, pastures, wet grasslands and near-natural beech forests. The lake is the heart and namesake of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Like the entire local landscape, it is a product of the last ice age. The diverse animal and plant population and the mosaic of large and small biotopes between the urban centres of Hamburg, Lübeck and Schwerin make this a truly unique landscape. Despite its proximity to large cities, the area is home to animals that have long since disappeared from other locales: kingfishers, white-tailed eagles and otters, to mention only a few noteworthy examples.

Human beings and their culture are an important part of the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve, and every visitor is welcome. After German reunification, the region was transformed from a no-man's land for tourists into an insider tip for nature-lovers. One hundred and fifty kilometres of marked hiking and bicycle trains lead visitors through a green puzzle composed of forests, moors and wet meadows, lush pastures and fields of grass. A hike beneath the leafy canopy of trees or along paths lined by hedges in bloom is a truly romantic experience. Shopping opportunities are also plentiful and the Schaalsee Biosphere Market in front of the PAHLHUUS is a lively hub of activity on the first Sunday of every month during the tourist season. The market features excellent products from over 30 producers. The programme includes fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, eggs and cheese - all produced locally and often at organic farms - combined with regional music and cultural events. The regional trademark - 'Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee - Für Leib und Seele' (Biosphere Reserve Schaalsee. For body and soul) - stands for environmentally safe products, services and initiatives. Currently, 78 firms display this trademark. And they all have one thing in common: dedication to the fundamental principle of harmony between ecology and economy and the progressive development of the Schaalsee region.

Left: The Schaalsee at Lassahn

Right: View from a raised stand in Kneese



The Schaalsee at Zarrentin

In search of churches and cheese

The PAHLHUUS in Zarrentin is an interesting starting point. The exhibition at the Information Centre for the biosphere reserve shows how the region was shaped by the ice age and by human hands. The surrounding countryside offers a varied programme for cyclists: observations towers in Klocksdorf and Kneese, homemade cheese in Rögnitz, interesting historical churches in Lassahn, Zarrentin, Neuenkirchen and Döbbersen. Whether you plan your own hike or take part in a walking tour guided by rangers from the biosphere reserve, look forward to an unforgettable experience beyond the realm of the everyday.

Seahorses, elves and robbers

- **Monday:** The 'Seahorse Tour' takes visitors by boat and charabanc through the Schaalsee landscape, then on foot through the limestone swamp. The itinerary also includes visits to the PAHLHUUS and the Zarrentin Cloister.
- **Tuesday:** 'Elf Tour' or 'Robber Tour'? Tour plans are available at the PAHLHUUS.
- Wednesday: Observing waterfowl and whitetailed eagles on Röggelin Lake. Then on to the museum exhibit on the German-German border (www.grenzhus.de).
- Thursday: Visit to the medieval cloister in Rehna (www.kloster-rehna.de), followed by a stop at the Agricultural Museum in Breesen.
- Friday: Visit to the 'MenschNatur-Technik-Wissenschaft' museum of the future in Nieklitz. Bicycle tour to Rögnitz and its two goat farms. 'Art and Cheese' in the old manor house (www. kunstundkaese.de) and on to the Schult goat farm (www.ziegenhof-schult.de). Delicious goat cheese is sold at both places.
- Saturday and Sunday: 'Elf Weekend'. Discover the elves on a hike along fairytale lakeside paths and create your own personal elf in a clay-modelling course (www.schaalsee-lebens-art.de).

Facts and figures

Location: at the border to Schleswig-Holstein in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Area: 301 square kilometres

Elevation: 30 to 93 metres

History: founded as a nature park in 1990. Recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2000.

Geographic features: deep lakes, limestone swamps and moors, beech, ash and alder forests, fen woods, dry grasslands, green meadows, avenues and hedgerows, fields and pastures

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Amt für das Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee Wittenburger Chaussee 13 19246 Zarrentin Tel. 038851 302-0, Fax -20 www.schaalsee.de poststelle@afbr-schaalsee.mvnet.de

Förderverein Biosphäre Schaalsee e. V. Hauptstraße 33 19246 Zarrentin www.foerderverein-biosphaere-schaalsee.de kontakt@kranich-schutz.de

SchaalseeWanderService Info unter: www.schaalsee.de/erlebnis/service/ marke

Accomodations

Tourismusverband Mecklenburg-Schwerin Tel. 03874 666922 oder -666677 www.mecklenburg-schwerin.de

Accommodations awarded the regional trademark Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee – Für Leib und Seele www.schaalsee.de

Books and maps

Hiking trail map Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee ISBN 978-3-932115-02-8

Hiking trail map Naturpark Lauenburgische Seen ISBN 978-3-932115-31-8

The Biosphere Reserve Administration will mail leaflets on request (return postage required)

Directions

By rail and bus: The nearest train stations are in Hagenow, Ratzeburg and Rehna. Buses to the biosphere reserve are available from these stations (www.lvg-hagenow.de or www.sgs-busreisen.de).

By car: Autobahns A 24 (to Zarrentin exit) and A 20 (to Lüdersdorf exit). From Lübeck via Ratzeburg to Zarrentin



Schaalsee Biosphere Market in front of the PAHLHUUS



Lower Saxonian Elbe Valley

Middle Elbe

Elbe River Landscape – Brandenburg

Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Biosphere Reserves





Biosphärenreservat Niedersächsische Elbtalaue Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg



Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Elbe-Mecklenburg-Vorpommern



Lower Saxonian Elbe Valley Biosphere Reserve

The near-natural banks of the Elbe and its lowland meadows featuring oxbows and ponds in Lower Saxony are annual stopping-off points for migratory birds that which rest here in huge flocks before moving on. The Lower Saxonian Elbe Valley is part of one of the most important bird refuge areas in northern Germany. As many as 100,000 Nordic geese and 3,000 whooper and tundra swans spend the months from October to March here. The adjacent rapeseed and grain fields offer plenty of nutritious food - often to the dismay of local farmers. An effective migratory bird management programme funded in part by the EU serves as an example of a successful approach to reconciling the interests of agriculture and nature conservation and a practical demonstration of work in a biosphere reserve.

The interest of business and nature conservation have been united in other areas as well, including the tourist trade, for example. Sustainable, environmentally friendly tourism plays a key role in regional development today. From hiking, fishing and horseback riding to boat excursions, canoeing trips and bicycle tours, the Elbe River landscape has something to offer all year round. In addition to contributing to the preservation and maintenance of the regional natural and cultural heritage, the tourist trade also creates and preserves jobs an important side effect. Increasing numbers of visitors have led to the development of an extensive array of services and information sources along tourist routes. These include bicycle rental agencies, repair services, typical regional pubs and restaurants, accommodations in hotels, 'hay hostels' and guest houses for cyclists, taxi services, on-call buses and other services.

Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve has been a part of the global network of biosphere reserves for over 30 years. An important contributor, though not the only one, is a truly loveable animal that everyone is familiar with: the beaver – more precisely, the Elbe beaver. Roughly 1,200 of these animals live in the biosphere reserve today, and that is a nearmiracle, for the beaver population was reduced to only a few, barely countable individuals around 1920. Although the population has recovered well,

World culture along untamed banks

The Elbe is the third-longest river in Germany - a powerful steam that passes through five German states on its 400-km course through the Elbe River Landscape UNESCO Biosphere Reserve alone. It is also one of the last near-natural rivers in Central Europe. Curious visitors find it easy to explore, either on foot or by bicycle, as the trails and paths along its banks are well laid out. The diverse and impressive array of habitats in the near-natural flood plain and the adjacent marshes, tributary lowlands and sandy elevated areas known as 'Geest' provides homes for a wealth of species. Dark hardwood forests, inland dunes, steep 'Geest' cliffs, expansive meadows, numerous bodies of water with reed beds and aggradations as well as moors shape the landscape of the Elbe floodplain. Numerous plants and animals, including many endangered species, are at home here.

The beaver – on the verge of extinction in the region several decades ago – has returned and occupied the entire course of the river. White storks in the grasslands are an everyday sight during the summer months. In addition to 200 species of breeding birds, Nordic geese and swans flock to the area to rest and spend the winter.

The landscape offers its guests a great deal of cultural history. One fine example is the Dessau-Wörlitz World Cultural Heritage Site, with its enchanting historical landscape gardens.

Flooding and dyke-building are also a part of cultural history. Major dyke relocation projects have been in progress since even before the Elbe flood of August 2002. The preservation and restoration of natural flood plains are essential aspects of modern flood protection and heighten public awareness of the role of biosphere reserves as model regions for a conservative approach to the use of our natural resources. the Elbe beaver remains a strictly protected species under the provisions of the Federal Nature Conservation Act. The beaver is native to a region that encompasses the most substantial hardwood forests in Central Europe. Its lowlands and naturally formed, mature structures are an irreplaceable habitat for numerous species of mammals, waterfowl and insects. Fruit trees, river corridor plants (e.g. Cnidium dubium, Veronica longifolia) and rare species of orchids are found in this landscape.

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve is a cultivated cultural landscape that has been shaped, used and altered by human beings in a highly unique way over a period of centuries. During the regency of Prinz Leopold III Friedrich Franz von Anhalt-Dessau (1740 – 1817), a cultural landscape modelled on English landscape gardens was created on the Elbe floodplain between Dessau and Wörlitz. The gardens were open to the public in keeping with the leitmotif of the Enlightenment: They were meant to 'combine beauty and utility'. The avenues lined with fruit trees, isolated trees, dykes, castles, landscape parks and small-scale architecture have been preserved as a Gesamtkunstwerk (total work of art) to this day. Two other World Cultural Heritage Sites, one of them being the Bauhaus in Dessau, represent magnificent cultural achievements of past centuries. The thousand-year-old city of Tangermünde, the cathedral and imperial city of Magdeburg and the distinctive Jerichow Cloister are outstanding examples of human achievement in the region. The Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz was designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 2000.

Elbe River Landscape – Brandenburg Biosphere Reserve

The Elbe widens in the Northern German lowland plain, meandering extensively and shaping its banks and the Elbe foreland through the rhythm of its floods - year after year. The river forms luminous sandbars, flood channels and oxbows. Its legacy also includes the gnarled remains of old floodplain forests. The different habitats along the Elbe and its tributaries, the Karthane, the Stepenitz and the Löcknitz, are occupied by numerous plant and animal species, many of them quite rare. These species have adapted to extreme wet or dry conditions - and in some cases to both. How wonderful that dyke relocation on the Elbe at Lenzen has created some 400 hectares of new floodplain! Cranes can be seen and heard at several locations such as the Rambow Moor - during the breeding season. With just a little luck, visitors may catch a glimpse of white storks. Nowhere else in Germany is this bird encountered in such numbers! More than 30 pairs breed at the European Stork Village of Rühstädt every year.

While dabbling ducks, rough-legged buzzards and hen harriers spend most of the winter in the region, the huge flocks of bean geese, lapwings and cranes stop here only during migration periods.







A flock of grey geese

With a bit of luck, the white-tailed eagle can be seen at any time of year. A nearly contiguous forest belt follows the river and provides habitats for diverse flora and fauna. More and more guests and locals have come to appreciate the abundance of nature, the beauty of the landscape and the diverse services for body and soul this biosphere reserve has to offer.

Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Biosphere Reserve

'A glacial valley in its entire breadth' – the motto of the Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania describes the various habitats in the Elbe Valley, which have been shaped by successive ice ages and are characterized today by broad floodplains and small tributaries, grasslands, riverbank slopes, inland dunes and heaths. It also refers to the animals that live here permanently or merely stop over during their long journeys. Numerous rare plants are found here as well. The areas between the sandy elevated fields of the Elbe and the regularly flooded lowlands near the small port city of Dömitz are home to such species as gray clubawn grass, armeria, annual vernal grass, spiked speedwell and Spanish catchfly. They also contain softwood marshes that are home to various species of willow and black poplar - found isolated

here and there – which require very special living conditions.

Another type of living environment worth a visit consists of inland dunes, one of the unique landscape and geological features found in the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve. Rising roughly 45 metres above sea level, 600 metres wide and about two kilometres long, the 'Elbtaldüne' near Klein Schmölen is the largest inland dune. A dune educational trail leads visitors to the highest point, where they are treated to an impressive view of the wide Elbe Valley. The partially barren inland dunes near Boizenburg-Gothmann date back to the last ice age and still dominate the vast lowland landscape today.

Considerable effort is being invested along the Elbe in Mecklenburg within the framework of an experimental project devoted to extensive pasture grazing of old species of cattle threatened with extinction, including the 'German black-spotted lowland cow', the 'German shorthorn' and the 'Red Holstein DN'. The goals are to achieve a synthesis of extensive agricultural utilization and nature conservation and to preserve the genetic diversity of cattle species of which many are already extinct or threatened with extinction today.



View of the Elbe from the vineyards in Hitzacker

Lower Saxonian Elbe Valley

'Marschhufendörfer' and storks' nests

A bicycle tour to the 'stork family' (42 km) is a must during the summer months. The ferry carries visitors across the river from Hitzacker to Herrenhof. From there, the journey proceeds upstream past 'Marschufendörfer' (small villages typical of the region) and numerous storks' nests to the enchanted palatial park of Wehningen. After crossing the river again over the impressive Elbe Bridge at Dömitz, it's back to Hitzacker along the opposite bank and a breathtaking view of the Elbe foreland. Winter activities include a visit to the 'Nature on the Elbe' exhibition at the 'Biosphaerium Elbtalaue' in Bleckede and an excursion to the 'Neuhäuser Elbmarsch' to watch the huge flocks of resting birds.

Swimming, boats and the 'Green Belt'

- Monday: Visit to the city of Bleckede, 'Biosphaerium Elbtalaue' and a bicycle tour through the 'Marschhufendörfer'.
- Tuesday: Visits to the 'Green Belt' in Konau-Popelau, the shifting dune in Stix and the 'Storkenkate' Museum in Amt Neuhaus.
- Wednesday: Hitzacker: Archaeology Centre, hike 'Between vineyards and "Wolfschlucht".
- Thursday: 'Sei (k)ein Frosch' exhibition, circular amphibian bicycle tour in the 'Dannerberger Marsch'.
- Friday: swimming and boating on Lake Gartow, 'ascent' of the Höhbeck, 'Nemitzer Heide'.
- Saturday: bicycle tour, 'Border Educational Path', 'Grenzlandmuseum', Schnackenburg.

Facts and figures

Location: on the Elbe between Schnackenburg and Lauenburg, 50 kilometres south-east of Hamburg in Lower Saxony

Area: 568 square kilometres

Elevation: 5 to 109 metres

History: founded and recognized by UNESCO in 1997

Geographic features: floodplains, wet grasslands, inland dunes

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Niedersächsische Elbtalaue Am Markt 1 29456 Hitzacker Tel. 05862 9673-0, Fax -20 www.elbtalaue.niedersachsen.de info@elbtalaue.niedersachsen.de

Biosphaerium Elbtalaue – Schloss Bleckede Schlossstraße 10 21354 Bleckede Tel. 05852 9514-0 www.biosphaerium.de info@biosphaerium.de

Accomodations

Elbtalaue-Wendland Touristik GmbH, Lübeln Tel. 05841 9629-0

Tourist-Info im Biosphaerium Elbtalaue, Bleckede Tel. 05852 9514-0 Sheep grazing on the Elbe dyke near Wussegel



Books and maps

Elbtalaue – Landschaft am großen Strom ISBN 978-3-9801641-8-4

Elbe-Radweg, Teil 2 ISBN 978-3-85000-079-6

Directions

By rail: to Lauenburg and Dannenberg. *By car*: B 5, B 191, B 195 and B 216



Middle Elbe

First the castle and then the beaver

A visit to the park in Wörlitz. Visitors discover what it once meant to 'combine beauty and utility' and what it still means today. An excellent lunch is served in the 'kitchen building' of the palace in Wörlitz. Next on the itinerary is a visit to the unique beaver reserve and the 'Auenhaus' information centre run by the Biosphere Reserve Administration. Numerous butterflies and dragonflies can be observed in the lowland park and the farmer's garden based on historical models.

In Luther's footsteps Visit to fishermen

- Monday: Wittenberg. A cultural and culinary walk in Luther's footsteps through the city centre of Wittenberg, then on to Wörlitz to visit the Wörlitzer Park in the afternoon.
- Tuesday: city of Dessau-Roßlau: visits to the World Cultural Heritages Sites 'Park Luisium' and 'Park Georgium' in Dessau. Visit to the Bauhaus and the masters' houses in Dessau. Dinner at a restaurant or perhaps visit theatre in Dessau.
- Wednesday: Kapenniederung: visit to the 'Auenhaus' and the beaver reserve on the grounds of the Biosphere Reserve Administration. Hike through the floodplain forest around Lödderitz with guides from the nature conversation society.
- **Thursday:** with the passenger ship to Magdeburg. Bicycle trip to the 'Trogbrücke' at the 'Wasserstraßenkreuz' (where the 'Mittellandkanal' crosses the Elbe).
- Friday: tour of the historical old town of Tangermünde; hike along the nature trail in the 'Bucher Brack – Bölsdorfer Haken' nature conservation area.
- Saturday: bicycle tour along the Elbe bicycle path via Arneburg to Havelburg; organ concert at the Havelberg Cathedral in the evening.
- Sunday: boat ride; Elbe beaver-watching. Visit to fishermen: Havel zander for dinner.



Facts and figures

Location: Elbe Valley lowlands and Elbe-Mulde lowlands in Saxony Anhalt

Area: approx. 1,260 square kilometres

Elevation: 55 to 65 metres above sealevel

History: Parts of the present biosphere reserve were recognized by UNESCO in 1979. The area was enlarged in 1988 through inclusion of the cultural landscape of the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz, which was granted the status of a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 2000.

Geographic features: river valley, flood plain forests, oxbow lake, inland dunes, wet grassland, historical cultural landscapes

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Mittelelbe Kapenmühle, PF 1382 06813 Dessau-Roßlau Tel. 034904 4210 bioresme@lvwa.sachsen-anhalt.de www.mittelelbe.com www.gartenreich.net

Informationszentrum Auenhaus Tel. 034904 40631, Fax 42121

Beguinenhaus (Infostelle Nord) Salzmarkt 1 39539 Havelberg Tel. 039387 20625, Fax 20626

Accomodations

TourismusRegion Anhalt-Dessau-Wittenberg e. V. Tel. 0341 402610, Fax 405857 www.tourismusregion-wittenberg.de

Magdeburger Tourismusverband Elbe-Börde-Heide e. V. Tel. 0391 738790, Fax 730799 www.elbe-boerde-heide.de

Tourismusverband Altmark Tel. 039322 346-0, Fax 43233 www.altmarktourismus.de

Tourismus-Marketing Sachsen-Anhalt GmbH (TMG) Tel. 0391 56283810 info@tm-sachsen-anhalt.de



The conical cut pattern betrays the presence of the Elbe beaver

Investitions- und Marketinggesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt mbH (IMG) Tel.: 0391 568990 welcome@img-sachsen-anhalt.de

Books and maps

Ernst Paul Dörfler: *Wunder der Elbe* ISBN 978-3-932863-40-0

Thomas Weiss (ed.): Das Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz – Kulturlandschaft an Elbe und Mulde ISBN 978-3-939629-11-5

Cycling trail map Dessau-Roßlau und Umgebung ISBN 978-3-928765-28-2

Cycling trail map Tourismusregion Wittenberg ISBN 978-3-928765-30-5

Directions

By rail: via Stendal, Magdeburg, Dessau-Roßlau and Wittenberg

By car: B107, A9 and A2



33

Wörlitz Castle and landscape garden – a fountain of inspiration for artists

Elbe River Landscape – Brandenburg

White storks and the 'Wunderblutkirche'

The bicycle tour begins in Wittenberge and passes by interesting examples of industrial architecture. Upstream on the dyke along the nature route to the European storks' village of Rühstädt. Visit to a white stork exhibition at the visitor centre, historical route through the village and/or a stroll through the Schlosspark; lunch at an inn. Then on to Gnevsdorf, and a rest stop there, where the Havel joins the Elbe.

Along the Gnevsdorf woodcutters' trail and a field path via Groß Lüben to Bad Wilsnack ('Adventure Tour'). A stop for ice-cream and to admire the 'Wunderblutkirche' (Church of the Holy Blood). Rest and relaxation in the Wilsnack thermal baths and then back to Wittenberge (perhaps by train).

Beaver, felt workshop exhibit and an Elbe lamb dinner

- Monday afternoon: Arrival in Lenzerwische. A guest house at the dyke. A stroll along the river.
- **Tuesday:** bicycle tour through the 'Wische' meadow landscape, visit to the carriage house in Eldenburg. Visit to the cranes and geese in the evening.
- Wednesday: Lenzen: visits to the dyke relocation site, a major nature conservation project, Lenzen Castle, the educational nature garden, the felt workshop and a former GDR 'Konsum' shop.
- Thursday: guided tour of Wittenberge, boat tour on the Elbe, visit to the European Stork Village in Rühstadt. Wellness at the Wilsnack thermal baths in the evening.
- Friday: walk or bicycle tour around the Rambow Moor.
- Saturday: exploration of the Klein Schmölen inland dune, visit to the Dömitz Fortress, in Prignitz.
- **Sunday:** with the Elbe ferry to the 'Grenzlandmuseum' in Schneckenburg, walk through Gadow Forest, a dinner of Elbe lamb at a restaurant.
- Monday morning: a quick walk to the dyke, a view of the Elbe, then time to depart.



In the Rambow Moor

Facts and figures

Location: far north-west corner of the state of Brandenburg

Area: 533 square kilometres

Elevation: 13.5 to 54.5 metres

History: founded as a nature park in 1990. Recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1997.

Geographic features: Elbe Valley with wet meadows, oxbow lakes, residual floodplain forests and valley sands, 'Prignitz' and 'Perleberger Heide'

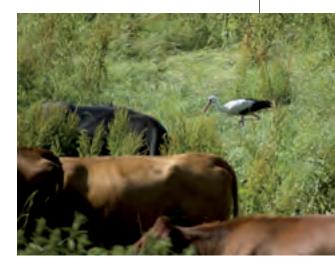
Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Besucherzentrum Rühstädt Neuhausstraße 9 19322 Rühstädt Tel. 038791 980-25, Fax 6718 NABU-Besucherzentrum@t-online.de www.brandenburg.nabu.de

Besucherzentrum Burg Lenzen Burgstraße 3 19309 Lenzen Tel. 038792 5078100 oder 1221, Fax 80673 info@burg-lenzen.de www.burg-lenzen.de

Administration

Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg Neuhausstraße 9 19322 Rühstädt Tel.: 038791 98010, Fax 98011 br-flusslandschaft-elbe@lugv.brandenburg.de www.biosphaerenreservat-flusslandschaft-elbe. brandenburg.de



Accomodations

Tourismusverband Prignitz e. V. Großer Markt 4 19348 Perleberg Tel. 03876 30741920 , Fax 30741929 www.dieprignitz.de info@dieprignitz.de

Books and maps

Elisabeth von Falkenhausen 'Die Prignitz entdecken' ISBN 978-3-930388-27-1

Ernst-Paul Dörfler 'Wunder der Elbe' ISBN 978-3-7977-0454-2

Topografische Freizeitkarte Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg ISBN 978-3-7490-4154-1

Directions

By rail: train stations in Glöwen, Bad Wilsnack, Wittenberge and Karstädt. From there by bicycle or local public transportation

Dyke relocation as part of the major nature conservation project in the Lenzener Elbe Valley lowlands

Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg





Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Lunch at the harbour and dunes educational trail

When the weather is good, visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the southern part of the river landscape from the outlook tower in Rüterberg. Recommended activities include a hike through the 'Dorfrepublik' (Village Republic), to the clay pit and on along the 'Green Belt' to the 'Rüterberg' nature conservation area. The fine pubs and restaurants at Dömitz harbour are worth visiting any time of day. A short 'harbour tour' and a grand boat ride on the Elbe are definitely worth the time. The dune educational trail leads from Klein Schmölen to the largest inland dune along the Elbe. A visit to the pottery centre in Hohenwoos is a good way to end the day. During the winter months, guests can enjoy the fascinating spectacle of countless resting Nordic birds from the viewing screens at the bird observation points near Rüterberg.

Hike along the dyke and a bike tour through 'stork country'

- Monday: Hike through the Vierwald with a panoramic view from the 'Elwkieker' and a visit to the 'Grenzlandmuseum' in Boizenburg/Vier.
- Tuesday: Bicycle tour through 'stork country' from the 'Boizenburger Weidenschneck' along the dyke trail to the 'Teldau'.
- Wednesday: Boizenburg Tile Museum, guided tour of the old town, hike along the Swan Trail, visit to the 'Bollenberg' inland dune near Gothmann.
- Thursday: Bicycle tour from the Brahlstof train station to the English landscape garden in Dammereez and the 'Storkenkate' in Preten.
- Friday: 'Heimatmuseum' in Lübtheen, Waldbad Probst Jesar, 'Rundlingsdorf' Vielank (medieval village with circular configuration) and brewery, historical forester's house and forest museum in Kaliß.
- Saturday: Hike through the 'Village Republic' of Rüterberg ('Heimatmuseum, clay pit educational trail) to the fortress city of Dömitz.
- Sunday: Dömitz Fortress, hike on the dyke along the Elbe or the Müritz-Elde Canal, boat excursion on the Elbe.

Facts and figures

Location: south-western Mecklenburg, on the right bank of the Elbe between Lauenburg and Dömitz

Area: 397 square kilometres

Elevation: 6 to 87 metres

History: recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1998 and a nature park since 1998.

Geographic features: expansive floodplains with tributaries, wet grasslands, Elbe river slopes and inland dunes

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Amt für das Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee Dezernat Flusslandschaft Elbe – Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Am Elbberg 8 – 9 19258 Boizenburg / Elbe Tel. 038847 62484-0, Fax -8 www.elbetal-mv.de PoststelleBRElbe@afbr-schaalsee.mvnet.de

Accomodations

Tourismusverband Mecklenburg-Schwerin e. V. Alexandrinenplatz 7 19288 Ludwigslust Tel. 03874 666922, Fax 666920 www.mecklenburg-schwerin.de

Books and maps

Rad- und Wanderkarte Elbetal (Map West / East) ISBN 978-3-932115-07-3 and 978-3-932115-06-6

Directions

By rail: Boizenburg / Elbe (www.fahrtzielnatur.de), Brahlstorf, Pritzier.

By car: A 24, B5, B191 and B 195.

Observing nature with the rangers from the 'Elwkieker' outlook tower in Boizenburg-Vier





A sandy experience: the dune educational trail to the largest inland dune in the Elbe River landscape

Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve

And I Call Street and Local

Biosphärenreservat Schorfheide-Chorin





Land of cranes and a broad horizon

A fine, impressive meeting of opposites: a sparsely populated landscape with moors, lakes, forests and open countryside shaped by human use. This approach to land management has created a cultural landscape that boasts extraordinary species diversity. White-tailed and spotted eagles and ospreys circle the skies, while European adders, smooth snakes and European terrapins thrive on the ground below. Numerous lakes, moors and wet alder woodlands dot the landscape, providing homes for rare plants and animals that have disappeared elsewhere, such as wild rosemary and moor frogs. Hosting 53 species of dragonflies, the biosphere reserve has the largest dragonfly population of any major protected area in Germany. Preserving this biodiversity is one of the most important goals of biosphere reserves in Germany, and intensive research is the basis for such efforts. North-eastern Brandenburg, for example, is home to a substantial population of grey cranes, and some 350 pairs have found breeding sites in the Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve. Many scientists are engaged in research on these large birds. The spectrum ranges from studies of migration routes to support for efforts to resettle the grey crane in the British Isles.

Left: Dead trees in a lake dessication zone

Right: Napping coenagrion dragonfly The seal of approval of the Schorfheid-Chorin Biosphere Reserve is issued for environmentally compatible products and services and thus contributes to strengthening the regional economy. Consumers can be assured that nearly all raw materials from the biosphere reserve have been produced by environmentally friendly means – from food to wooden houses to herb wreaths. And apropos of food, a great deal of effort is invested in the cultivation of old varieties of fruit and vegetables (which guests are invited to sample and purchase, of course) – in the ecovillage of Brodowin, for example.



Narrow roads pass through old beech forests, which are home to eagles, cranes and red deer.

'Klosterschänke' and ship hoist

Visitors arrive in Chorin by train, bicycle or car. The programme includes a stop at the 'Klosterschänke' (Cloister Tavern), which offers typical regional fare. With a bit of luck, they may be able to attend a summer concert in the monastery's inner courtyard. A farmer's shop in the nearby ecovillage of Brodowin offers organic products for sale.

And then it's on to the Rummelsberg with its beautiful view over forests and lakes. Next on the tour is Niederfinow and the ship hoist on the Oder-Havel-Kanal: engineering art anno 1930. From there, the way leads to Großziethen and its steam mill and later to the 'Kaiserbahnhof' and its radio play performances and the 'Biorama' outlook tower.

Wildlife park, Lake Werbellin and the woods

- Monday: Arrival in Groß Schönebeck. Visit to the Schorfheide wildlife park to see wolves, elk, wild horses, otters and old species of household pets.
- Tuesday: Hike to the 'Kaisergrund' and the 'Jagdschloss Humbertusschloss'.
- Wednesday: Boat ride across Lake Werbellin. Visit to the exhibit at the Schorfheide Information Centre. From Grimnitzsee (a natural swimming lake) to Althüttendorf and the nature observation point at the lake.
- **Thursday:** Bicycle tour or hike via Glambeck to Parlow ('Am Speicher' tavern and exhibit).
- Friday: With the 'Biberbahn' (Beaver Train) from Angermünde to the Blumberg Mühle Nature Centre with its terrapin compound, playground and labyrinth. Zander filet from the Uckermarck for lunch.
- Saturday: Bicycle tour from Wolletz via Redernswalde to Poratz. Ride through a rustic forest to Temmen and the cyclists' hostel in Groß Fredenwalde.
- Sunday: Tour around Oberrucker Lake.

Facts and figures

Location: 80 kilometres north of Berlin in the Uckermark (Brandenburg

Area: 1,300 square kilometres

Elevation: 2 to 139 metres

History: founded and recognized by UNESCO in 1990

Geographic features: hilly, open country, forests, sands, glacial valleys, moors, lakes and kettle holes

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Hoher Steinweg 5 – 6 16278 Angermünde Tel. 03331 3654-0, Fax -10 www.schorfheide-chorin.de

Bürgerbüro Joachimsthal Töpferstraße 1 16247 Joachimsthal Tel. 033361 633-80

Naturerlebniszentrum Blumberger Mühle 16278 Angermünde Tel. 03331 2604-0

Accomodations

TMU Tourismus Marketing Uckermark GmbH Grabowstraße 6 17291 Prenzlau Tel. 03984 835883, Fax 835885 info@tourismus-uckermark.de Built over 700 years ago, the Cistercian monastery Chorin is still a dominant feature in the region and an important attraction for visitors today.



Books and maps

Schorfheide-Chorin, Illustrated Book ISBN 978-3-929743-10-4

Die Uckermark – Zur Geschichte einer deutschen Landschaft ISBN 978-3-89488-103-0

Unbekanntes Deutschland, Illustrated book ISBN 978-3-8231-5003-9

Recreational map Uckermark Schorfheide

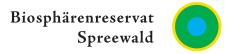
Directions

By rail: via Berlin to Eberswalde, Templin or Angermünde.

By car: A 11 from Berliner Ring toward Prenzlau / Szczecin, B 109 to Templin / Prenzlau.



Spreewald Biosphere Reserve





Where gondolas carry pickles

A delta south of Berlin? Yes, but it is better known as the Spreewald (Spree Forest), which was born 20,000 years ago when the River Spree split into an intricate network of streams. Today, Spreewald barges move calmly up and down the river, dragonflies cavort over the water and with a bit of luck, visitors may spy a water snake out for a swim. The sun sparkles through the dense roof of foliage. The Spreewald often seems like an enchanted forest. Some of the species living live here are endangered or have already died out in other places. Over 100 pairs of white storks breed at many locations. Black storks, cranes, white-tailed eagles and ospreys prefer the quiet, moist forests. They find food in waters full of fish and on wet meadows. And the Spreewald is also a habitat for butterflies. The expansive alder and ash forests are home to 937 species of butterflies - incredible but true! Many of these species exist nowhere else in Germany, such as the scarlet tiger moth and eyed hawk moth.

Traditions, lifestyles and working methods are still closely tied to the land -an essential characteristic of every biosphere reserve. Agriculture has always played an important role in the Spreewald, but small farms have become unprofitable under the conditions that prevail today. In response, the biosphere reserve has initiated the establishment of a Citizens' Spreewald Cultural Landscape Foundation in collaboration with local governments and partners in the region. Its mission is to preserve and develop the man-made cultural and natural landscape of the Spreewald by providing active support to farmers in the form of funding for landscape maintenance measures or the cultivation of traditional crop plants such as Spreewald horseradish. The Spreewald offers visitors unique opportunities to explore the biosphere reserve on barges or rented paddle boats.

Stream in the Spreewald Biosphere Reserve

Right: Spreewald pickles



Fruit trees and lunch with linseed oil

The scattered community of Burg im Oberspreewald offers a broad spectrum of impressions. No comparable assembly of block houses exists this side of the Alps. Visitors can experience many of the typical features of the Spreewald here in just a few hours. Such a visit is particularly delightful in the spring, when the fruit trees and marsh marigolds are in bloom. River excursions depart from the Waldschlösschen barge marina. Like a Venetian gondola, the Spreewald barge is manoeuvred by an oarsman. The trip to the 'Kannomühle' takes a good two hours. A footpath leads back to the centre of Burg. A lunch of curd cheese and linseed oil is followed by a visit to the Schlossberghof Biosphere Reserve Information Centre and the herb and medicinal plant garden.

Invitation to the Spreewald pickle test

- Monday: The week begins with a barge trip from Burg, followed by a bicycle tour through the town.
- Tuesday: Visit to the 'Haus für Mensch und Natur' (Mankind and Nature House) in Lübbenau. Then it's off on a nature study tour by bicycle into the inner Oberspreewald accompanied by Spreewald rangers. The day comes to an end with a stroll through the historical old town.
- Wednesday: Spreewald pickle test at the Rabe canned goods factory in Boblitz. Then on to Leipe via Raddusch by bicycle or on foot. Fish with Spreewald sauce for lunch, followed later by a look at the everyday life of the Sorbs/ Wends at the open-air museum in Lehde.
- **Thursday:** The day begins 'Underway under water' at the 'Alte Mühle Schlepzig', followed by a paddle boat tour through the streams of the Unterspreewald. Swimming in Köthener Lake.
- Friday: Cycling all around Straupitz and a peak into the 'Holländermühle'.
- Saturday: Watching for rare waterfowl from the observation tower at the Kockrowsberg polder. Then a visit to the Regional Museum in Lübben.

Winter landscape in the Spreewald

Facts and figures

Location: roughly 100 kilometres south-east of Berlin in southern Brandenburg

Area: 475 square kilometres

Elevation: 50 to 144 Meter

History: founded in 1990 and recognized as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1991

Geographic features: Wet, swamp and floodplain woodlands, moors, swamps and reed beds, near natural wet and dry meadows

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Haus für Mensch und Natur Informationszentrum und Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Schulstraße 9 03222 Lübbenau Tel. 03542 8921-0, Fax -40 br-spreewald@lugv.brandenburg.de

Informationszentrum Schlossberghof Burg Byhleguhrer Straße 17 03096 Burg Tel. 035603 691-0, Fax -22 br-spreewald@lugv.brandenburg.de

Informationszentrum Alte Mühle Schlepzig Dorfstraße 52 15910 Schlepzig Tel. 035472 648-98, Fax -99 br-spreewald@lugv.brandenburg.de

Accomodations

Tourismuszentrale Spreewald Lindenstraße 1 OT Raddusch 03226 Vetschau / Spreewald Tel. 035433 72299, Fax 72228 www.spreewald.de, tourismus@spreewald.de

Books and maps

Kulturführer Spreewald – Spreewälder stellen ihre Heimat vor ISBN 978-3-927496-30-9

Wander- und Naturführer Biosphärenreservat Spreewald ISBN 978-3-933135-04-9

Topografische Karte Unterspreewald ISBN 978-3-7490-4022-3

Topografische Karte Oberspreewald ISBN 978-3-7490-4013-1

Directions

By rail: from Berlin or Cottbus to Lübben, Lübbenau, Raddusch or Vetschau.

By car: A 13 to Freiwalde, Lübbenau or Vetschau.



Girls in traditional Spreewald costumes



Oberlausitz Heathland and Pond Landscapes Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservat Oberlausitzer Heideund Teichlandschaft





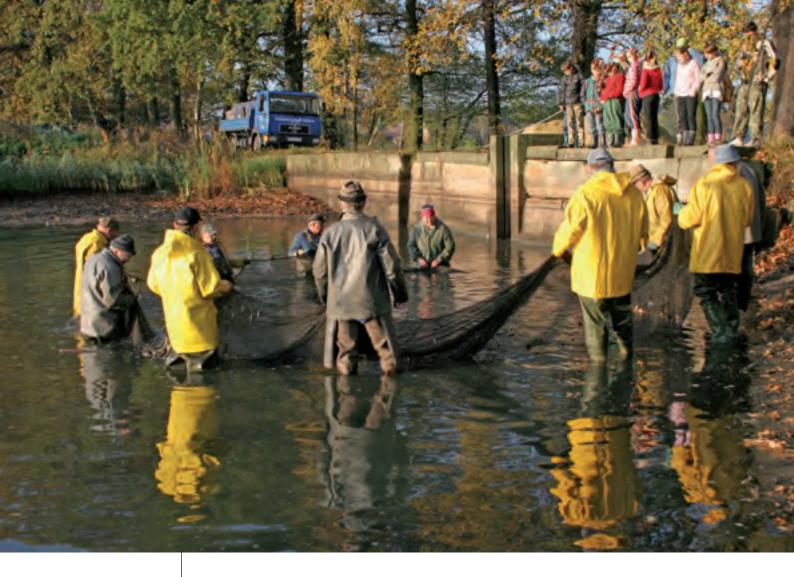
Carp ponds in the heathland

Over 350 ponds interspersed amongst dune woodlands, wet meadows, arid fields, river floodplains and heaths – Eastern Germany offers an extraordinarily diverse array of habitats for rare plants and animals. The Oberlausitz Heathland and Pond Landscapes is the product of many centuries of human settlement. The Slavic settlers who arrived here after 600 AD called the vast region of swamps and forests 'Lužica' (Swampland), which eventually evolved into 'Lausitz'. The first recorded evidence of the creation of man-made fish ponds dates to the year 1248. Pond fishing had become an important commercial enterprise by the 15th and 16th centuries. A highly productive pond economy began to emerge in the early 18th century.

The Oberlausitz 'bio-carp' was introduced to the market in 2008. Kreba-Fisch GmbH and the Bergmann/Klitten and Ringpfeil/Wartha pond management agencies were the first to offer this certified fish for sale. Carp are permitted to enjoy life for some time before they land in the pan. They are raised in near-natural ponds. Fishermen keep a close watch on the carp population to ensure that the carp rely primarily on the small natural organisms in the water and need only small quantities of organically grown groats to supplement their diet. Consequently, the centuries-old tradition of carp production is now being renewed at a sustainable pace. Yet work in the Oberlausitz Heathland and Pond Landscapes is not confined to the water. Such old varieties of grain as 'Jäger's North German champagne rye' and 'Old Pomeranian blockhead wheat' are now enjoying a renaissance on land. Thanks to the reduced use of fertilizers and herbicides, wild field herbs (such as corncockle) now have a chance of survival in grain fields. Long transport routes are avoided, as the grain is ground in regional mills and processed at bakeries in the biosphere reserve, thereby shortening the distance between fields and customers.

Left: Goose pond and Spree meadow

Right: Wading in pond mud on the 'Guttauer Teiche und Olbasee' nature trail



Autumn is harvest time – fishermen from the Klitten pond manage ment agency pulling fish from the 'Heuteich' (Zimpel Pond Group)

Fishermen, knights and white-tailed eagles

A visit to the Biosphere Reserve Centre in Wartha, followed by a hike along the 'Guttauer Teiche und Olbasee' nature trail (the Olbasee is a flooded former soft coal pit where visitors now come to swim and camp). Then on to Guttau and the fisheries exhibition in the former feudal manor. After returning to Warth, we embark on a bicycle tour on the 'White-tailed eagle circuit', which takes us to Mücka via Weigersdorf. After lunch at 'Kiank's Gerichtskretscham' we're off to the 'Landscape history' nature trail

Kreba-Neudorf, and from there to Klitten at Bärwalder Lake – another former open-pit mine. Following a relaxing rest the tour continues to Uhyst, Mönau, Lieske, Neudorf/Spree and Halbendorf/Spree and Lömischau. There we have dinner at the 'Gute Laune' (Good Cheer) tavern before returning to Wartha.

'Gute Laune' and the bird sanctuary station

- Monday: Hike on the 'Guttauer Teiche und Olbasee' nature trail and a visit to the School Museum in Wartha. Lunch at the 'Gute Laune' tavern, then on to the fisheries exhibition in Guttau.
- **Tuesday:** 'Landschaftsgeschichte' (Landscape history) nature trail from Mücka to Kreba-Neudorf. Visit to a 'Schrotholzhaus' (house built of hewn logs) settlement and wolf exhibit in Rietschen.
- Wednesday: Tour of Bautzen: old town, 'Ortenburg', 'Alte Wasserkunst' and the municipal museum.
- **Thursday:** Trips to the baroque castle of Milkel and park tour, followed by visits to the Kleinholscha fishery centre, the bird sanctuary of Saxony, the nature conservation station and the baroque castle.
- **Friday:** Tour of Görlitz: nature and wildlife park, historical old town (World Cultural Heritage Site), parks and the Landskrone.
- Saturday: Visit to Pückler castle and Muskauer Park (UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site), followed by a swim at the adventure pool in Krauschwitz.
- Sunday: Trip to the Oberlausitzer mountains for a breathtaking view from the heights. Dining at a cosy mountain lodge.

Facts and figures

Location: 60 kilometres north-east of Dresden in Oberlausitz (Saxony)

Area: 301 square kilometres

Elevation: 117 to 176 metres

History: The former landscape conservation area was designated as a biosphere reserve in 1994 and recognized by UNESCO in 1996.

Geographic features: dune woodlands, river floodplains, streams, reed beds, fresh-water and flooded meadows, fields, moors, dry grasslands, wet and dry heaths and over 350 ponds

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Dorfstraße 29 02694 Guttau OT Wartha Tel. 035932 365-0, Fax -50 www.biosphaerenreservat-oberlausitz.de poststelle.sbs-broht@smul.sachsen.de

Accomodations

Marketing-Gesellschaft Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien mbH Tel. 03591 4877-0, Fax -48 www.oberlausitz.com info@oberlausitz.com

Books and maps

Biosphärenreservatspläne Teile 1 und 2 (boxed) Obtainable from the Biosphere Reserve Office

Die Brutvögel im Biosphärenreservat Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft Obtainable from the Biosphere Reserve Office

Ratgeber – Geschützte und wertvolle Biotope in der Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft Obtainable from the Biosphere Reserve Office

Touristic hiking and cycling trail map Biosphärenreservat ISBN 978-3-932281-25-9

Directions

By rail: via Hoyerswerda or Görlitz, Niesky to Mücka, then on to Guttau with bus line R 106 toward Bautzen.

By bus: line R 106, Bautzen-Niesky-Bautzen to Guttau.

Heath in bloom near Göbeln



Biosphärenreservat Oberlausitzer Heideund Teichlandschaft



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Rhön Biosphere Reserve





A Land of vast distances

Every biosphere reserve has unique qualities – recognizable in its geographic features, its flora and fauna and the economic and cultural influence of human communities. The Rhön biosphere is special in that it extends across the borders of three German states: Bavaria, Hessen and Thuringia. Together, these three states preserve and maintain an unparalleled cultural landscape shaped over the centuries through farming, hay-making and grazing in the heartland of Germany.

In need of special protection are the roughly 100 endangered species of wild animals and plants that have found refuge in the region. Two examples may serve to illustrate the diversity that characterizes the Rhön Biosphere Reserve: Forty different species of orchids and some 3,000 varieties of mushrooms have been identified here. This diversity has its origins in the wide range of geographic features in the region, from moors, near-natural streams, granite stone heaths and hedgerow areas to extensively used meadows and pastures and near-natural deciduous forests. Thanks to close cooperation with partners in agriculture and gastronomy, the entire Rhön Biosphere Reserve offers walkers, hikers, outdoor sports enthusiasts and others seeking recreational opportunities a programme that appeals to all of the senses. Care to try something? Take your pick: Tender steaks from Rhön grazing oxen, Rhön apple juice and fruit spirits, caraway-seed bread, trout, Rhön mutton chops, 'Zwiebelploatz' (onion cake) and Rhön 'Spatzeklöß' (bread dumplings) await appreciative guests who prefer organic quality.

Left: View of Schwarzerden

Right: Cattle grazing on the prominent and fabled Milseburg phonolite mountain



Propstei Zella – Information Centre and seat of the Thuringian Administrative Office

Upland moors, expansive vistas and fine food and beverages

The hiking tour begins at the Birxgraben car park in the Ulstertal near Seiferts. It leads into the Rhön Highlands and across expansive cattle pastures to the three-state triangle of Bavaria, Hessen and Thuringia. The trail proceeds through a park-like landscape to the 'Schwarzes Moor' car park. Rare plants and animals are encountered along the nature trail through the moor, a raised plank walkway some roughly two kilometres long. The 'Schwarzes Moor' is the most well-preserved, growing highland moor in the Central German Uplands. The Verein Naturpark und Biosphärenreservat Bayer. Rhön e.V. offers guided tours by appointment.

Apple beer, lamb bratwurst and other regional specialities are then served at the 'Sennhütte'. Returning to the 'Schwarzes Moor' car park, the tour then proceeds north to the Grabenberg. Ruins of the former GDR border fortifications serve as reminders of the past. The next destination is the 'Gesunde Dorf Frankenheim', the highest settled community in the Rhön, with its 'Barefoot Panorama Trail' and medicinal plant garden. Behind this mountain village, meadows and pastures extend all the way up to the' Ellenbogen'. From there, visitors enjoy a magnificent view of the Ulstertal. The 'Thüringer Rhönhäuschen' and the 'Eisenacher Haus' hotel invite hikers to stop by. Both offer excellent cuisine featuring Rhön specialities. The route leads south-west along the 'Sophienstraße' and back to the starting point. The hike comes to an end with a refreshing glass of Rhön eco-beer and other delicacies at the 'Schaukelterei' (wine pressing house) in Seiferts.

From early September to early December, visitors who are still not tired can watch the work in progress in the wine-pressing house and cellar next door – or even pitch in themselves. A number of events associated with scattered fruit processing take place at this time of year.

Culture, interesting insights and hiking tours

- **Monday:** Visit to the Information Centre and exhibition at the 'Haus der Langen Rhön' in Oberelsbach. Then it's off on a hiking tour through the 'scattered fruit village' of Hausen – the model community in the biosphere reserve. Who can identify the most types of fruit?
- **Tuesday:** Bicycle tour through the Rhön Highlands or a hiking tour to the mystical Milseburg (former Celtic stronghold). Then it's time for a visit to the museum village of Tann or the openair museum in Fladungen. Visitors can'taste' the landscape in the evening – with hearty fare prepared from regional products.
- Wednesday: Culture day. Visit to the medieval Kirchenburg in Ostheim and the local organ museum. Or an all-day excursion to the baroque city of Fulda, to Bad Kissingen or to Meiningen and a visit to the South Thuringia State Theatre.
- **Thursday:** Visit to the 'Haus der Schwarzen Berge' Information Centre in Oberback and its cafeteria and regional products shop, followed by a hike to the Kreuzberg for a tour of the house brewery and a glass of monastery beer!

- **Friday:** Hike through the 'Ibengarten' and a visit to the Dermbach local culture museum. Interesting attractions include the Propstei Zella Information Centre, the baroque churches in Zella and a number of fortified churches in Kaltensundheim and other towns. Next on the tour is a visit to the Merkers demonstration potassium mine and crystal grotto.
- Saturday: Shopping for souvenirs and a stop for food and drink at the 'Rhönhöfen' in Kaltensundheim. Hike to the former German-German border to visit the Point Alpha memorial near Geisa. Then comes a visit to the 'Stiftskirche' (collegiate church) in Rasdorf. Festivals, folk and cultural events take place nearly every weekend in the Rhön. Special highlights are the Mardi Gras celebration in February and the local fairs in the autumn. The programme also includes village anniversary festivals, folk-dancing events, club events, wine and beer festivals, etc.
- Sunday: A taste of freedom in the land of vast distances: Glider flights or flying tours over the Rhön. Then a visit to the glider museum and the Biosphere Information Centre in the Groenhoff-Haus and the 'Radomkuppel'. An eventful week comes to an end with an afternoon of relaxation for body and mind at one of the wellness baths.

View from the Geba



Facts and figures

Location: Tri-state region of Bavaria, Hessen and Thuringia

Area: 1,850 square kilometres

Elevation: 200 to 950 Meter

History: recognized by UNESCO in 1991

Geographic features: uplands with prominent cones and crests, broad valley lowlands, upland moors, meadows and pastures, near-natural woodlands

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

www.brrhoen.de

www.rhoen.de

Informationszentrum Haus der Schwarzen Berge Rhönstraße 97 97772 Wildflecken-Oberbach Tel. 09749 9122-0, Fax -33 tourismus@info-rhoen-saale.de

Informationszentrum Haus der Langen Rhön Unterelsbacher Straße 4 97656 Oberelsbach Tel. 09774 9102-60, Fax -70 info@nbr-rhoen.de

Informationszentrum Propstei Zella Goethestraße 1 36452 Zella Tel. 036964 93510 propsteizella@web.de

Informationszentrum Rhön Groenhoff-Haus, Wasserkuppe 36129 Gersfeld Tel. 06654 9612-0, Fax -20 vwst@brrhoen.de



Black head and white legs. The Rhön sheep is our best landscape gardener.

Biosphere Reserve Administrative Offices

Bayerische Verwaltungsstelle Biosphärenreservat Rhön Regierung von Unterfranken Oberwaldbehrunger Straße 4 97656 Oberelsbach Tel. 0931 380-1665 oder -1664, Fax -2953 brrhoen@reg-ufr.bayern.de

Hessische Verwaltungsstelle Biosphärenreservat Rhön Groenhoff-Haus Wasserkuppe 36129 Gersfeld Tel. 06654 9612-0, Fax -20 vwst@brrhoen.de

Thüringische Verwaltungsstelle Biosphärenreservat Rhön Goethestraße 1 36452 Zella / Rhön Tel. 036964 8683-30, Fax -55 poststelle.rhoen@br-np.thueringen.de

Accomodations

Informationszentrum Haus der Schwarzen Berge Rhönstraße 97 97772 Wildflecken-Oberbach Tel. 09749 9122-0, Fax -33 tourismus@info-rhoen-saale.de

Rhöntourismus und Service GmbH Landkreis Fulda Wasserkuppe 1 36129 Gersfeld Tel. 06654 91834-0, Fax -20 tourismus@rhoen.de

Rhönforum e. V. Marktplatz 29 36419 Geisa Tel. 036967 594-82, Fax -84 info@thueringerrhoen.de

Books and maps

Hiking trail map Naturpark Rhön ISBN 978-3-86116-068-7

Hiking trail map Hohe Rhön ISBN 978-3-86116-145-5

Hiking trail map 'Urlaub ist schön in Thüringen' der Tourismusgemeinschaft Thüringer Rhön, Parzeller Druck, Fulda Hiking trail map Naturpark Rhön-Südblatt ISBN 978-3-86038-490-9

Hiking trail map Naturpark Rhön-Nordblatt ISBN 978-3-89446-275-8

Hiking guides by the Dehler-Verlag:

Der Hochrhöner ISBN 978-3-00025704-9

Extratouren ISBN 978-3-00-023493-4

Oberes Ulstertal ISBN 978-3-00-026528-0

Rund um die Wasserkuppe ISBN 978-3-9813032-0-9

Hessisches Kegelspiel ISBN 978-3-9813032-2-3

Rund um Fulda ISBN 978-3-9813032-1-6

Fulda Südwest ISBN 978-3-9813032-3-0

Schwarze Berge & Sinntal ISBN 978-3-9813032-5-4

Directions

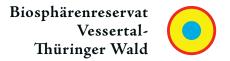
By rail: to the ICE station in Fulda, where rental cars are available; or by rail ('Rhönbahn') on to Gersfeld, via Erfurt (from the north) or Würzburg (from the south) to Meiningen or Mellrichstadt.

By car: Hessian Rhön: A 7, exit Fulda-Mitte, to Dipperz on B 458, or exit Fulda-Süd, to Gersfeld via B 27 / B 279.

Bavarian Rhön: A 7, exit Bad Brückenau-Wildflecken, or A 71, exit Münnerstadt, Bad Neustadt or Mellrichstadt, then west. Thuringian Rhön: from the north, A 4 exit Eisenach-West, B 84 toward Bad Salzungen, B 285 toward Kaltennordheim. From the east, A 71, exit Meiningen-Nord, then west.



Vessertal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve





Forest air and fragrant blossoms

The black woodpecker drums its cadence, the Eurasian pygmy owl raises its young and the shy woodcock hides in these woods. The red deer is the king of the forest. The biosphere reserve is a region of contiguous forest interspersed by grasslands.

The mountain meadows present a parade of different colours in the various blooming periods between spring and autumn. The blossoms of the arnica, a familiar medicinal plant, glow golden yellow. Spignel, St. John's wort, wood cranesbill and numerous herbs give the meadows their characteristic fragrance. Once in a while a common snipe takes the air, and its plaintive wail can be heard as it sings in flight.

The moors, which formed on the ridges of the Thuringian Forest during the last ice age, are home to the sundew, an insect-eating plant, and delicate bog rosemary.

Numerous streams run through the forests and meadows of the biosphere reserve. They are clear and full of life. Fire salamanders lay their eggs in their upper reaches. The larvae thrive undisturbed in the cool water. Farther downstream, red-spotted brook trout can be observed as they hunt for aquatic insects. The dipper lives here as well, the only songbird that seeks nourishment while swimming underwater.

The biosphere reserve has a year-round season. Hikers are drawn to the Thuringian Forest at all times of the year. An especially popular attraction is the 'Rennsteig'. This Thuringian Forest mountain trail runs across the entire breadth of the biosphere reserve. Skiers flock to the many ski hiking trails and downhill slopes in the winter.

Left: Skiers on the 'Rosenkopfchaussee'

Right: Early blooming wood-anemones

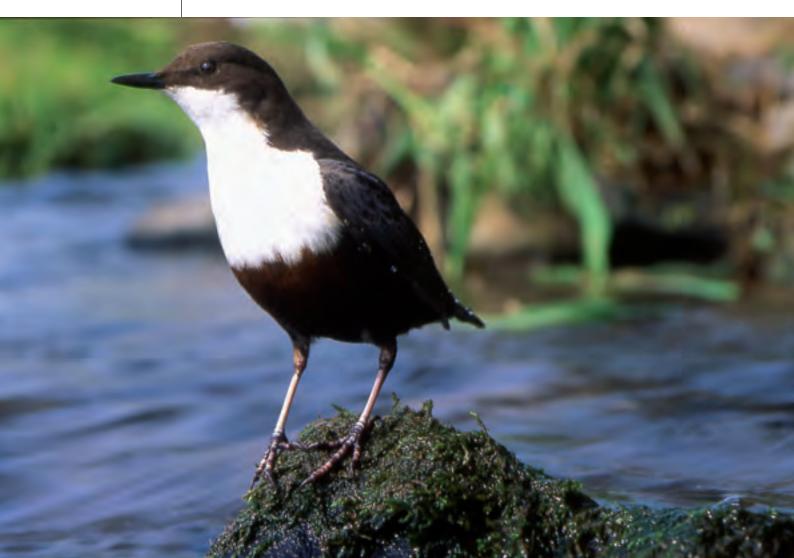
Rustic mountain spruce and healthy forest air

An all-day hike through the largely unspoilt nature of the Vessertal. The tour starts in the town of Vesser and proceeds downhill along the Vesser River, a near-natural stream. Amidst rustic mountain spruce, lush ferns and healthy forest air. After about two kilometres, the trail turns uphill where the Glasbach joins the Vesser and leads to the 'Stutenhauswiese', where horses from the Veßra monastery once grazed. Following a hearty lunch at the 'Stutenhaus', the hike moves along into the Upper Vesser Valley and its colourful meadows. Then it's back to Vesser for a visit to the half-timber church in the afternoon.

'It is these meadows that lend these wooded areas their unique appeal by virtue of the alternative pattern of forests and clearings. The lush green, eye-pleasing carpet they spread before the wanderer makes walking through these forest one of the most pleasant forms of amusement.' (From Der Thüringer Wald – Besonders für Reisende Geschildert, by K.E.A. von Hoff and C.W. Jacobs, Gotha 1807)

Forest tableaux, meadows and the Rennsteig garden

- Monday: A tour through mountain meadows – from Breitenbach to the Roßbachtal, via Kreuzeiche to the Breitenbachtal and back.
- **Tuesday:** With the visitors' service from Schmiedefeld to the Upper Vesser Valley. An evening trip to Frauenwald – and the 'Waldfrieden' tavern for 'Frauenwalder Weidrind' (a local beef speciality).
- Wednesday: Hike through enchanting 'forest tableaux'. From Auerhahn near Stützerbach to the 'Finsteres Loch' (Dark Hole) and the 'Seifigen Teich' (Soapy Pond) and back. A visit to the glass-blower Hartwig Bauer in Stützerbach in the afternoon.
- **Thursday:** Woods, meadows and moors a hiking tour with the visitors' service around the Rennsteig station.
- Friday: From the 'Schmücke' via Güldene Brücke to the summit of the Schneekopf, along the 'Rennsteig' to the 'Suhler Ausspanne' and back along the 'Rosenkopfstraße'.
- **Saturday:** Mountain stream tour along the Schobse and the Wohlrose between Dreiherrenstein, Ilmenau and Gehren.
- Sunday: Ridge walking tour around Oberhof and through the Schützenberg moor. Off to the 'Rennsteiggarten' in the afternoon.



Dipper

Facts and figures

Location: 50 kilometres south of Erfurt in the central part of the Thuringian Forest

Area: 170 square kilometres

Elevation: 420 to 982 metres

History: The first sections were declared nature conservation areas in 1939. Recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1979.

Geographic features: Mixed alpine woodlands, mountain meadows, mountain streams, upland moors

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservat Vessertal-Thüringer Wald Waldstraße 1 98711 Schmiedefeld am Rennsteig Tel. 036782 666-0, Fax -29 www.biosphaerenreservat-vessertal.de poststelle.vessertal@br-np.thueringen.de

Informations- und Bildungszentrum Biosphärenreservat Vessertal-Thüringer Wald Nordstraße 96 98711 Frauenwald Tel. 036782 62947

Accomodations

Regionalverbund Thüringer Wald e. V. Tel. 03677 68996-20 www.thueringer-wald.com

Books and maps

Hiking trail map Biosphärenreservat Vessertal-Thüringer Wald (with ski trails and bicycle routes) ISBN 978-3-935621-18-2

Biosphärenreservat Vessertal – ein Wanderführer 32 attractive hiking routes ISBN 978-3-935621-95-3 Fly agaric mushrooms in the noonday sun



Directions

By rail: (from Erfurt) to Ilmenau, Gehlberg, Oberhof or Suhl; (from Schweinfurt) to Suhl, Oberhof or Gehlberg; further into the area by bus.

By bus: from Ilmenau, Hildburghausen, Gehlberg, Oberhof or Suhl and farther into the area toward Schmiedefeld or Rennsteig.

By car: A 7.1 to Ilmenau, Oberhof or Suhl, A 73 to Schleusingen or Suhl. Farther into the area toward Schmiedefeld Rennsteig.

Further information: www.fahrtziel-natur.de www.rennsteig-bus.de





Pfälzerwald / Vosges du Nord Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservat Pfälzerwald-Nordvogesen



Where the forest kisses the vineyards

Nature knows no boundaries, and that is especially true of the Franco-German Pfälzerwald/Vosges du Nord Biosphere Reserve. Forests, vineyards and red sandstone, the pleasures of life, abundant sunshine and savoir vivre - right in the heart of Europe. Flying over the reserve, which encompasses the largest contiguous forested area in Western Europe (over 300,000 hectares), one sees nothing but trees at first. Yet a closer look reveals the diversity that lies beneath the canopy of leaves to the careful observer. Numerous rare species of plants and animals are at home in the deep valleys and gorges, on bizarre red sandstone cliffs and bright-coloured meadows. As nocturnal hunters, wildcats and lynx - prominent characters in the regional animal world - prefer to evade the gazes of curious wanderers. They are also typical denizens of spacious, intact habitats.

Interaction between man and the natural landscape has been in progress for many centuries. Forestry, mining and viniculture were equally important in the past and continue to shape this unique cultural landscape today. From the Celts to the Romans, from medieval lords to the imperialists of the early modern age – they all left their traces between the Rhine and the Mosel. The Romans carried the sweet chestnut over the Alps into the region. Its wood was needed for the vineyards. Since then, dense forests of chestnut have occupied a prominent place in the landscape. Before the potato was introduced, the chestnut was an important basic staple – often referred to as 'bread of the forest'. Today, it is a favourite of gourmets on both sides of the border. The real jewel in the crown of the forestry industry is the proverbial Palatine oak which is well known world-wide for its high quality since medieval times. Apart from the hilly woodlands, a bit of Mediterranean flair is evident along the eastern fringe of the biosphere reserve. Pampered by over 1,800 hours of sunlight per year, chestnuts, almonds, figs, kiwis and lemons as well as several varieties of grapes thrive here. Visitors to the old villages and the delightful sunken paths that lead through the terraced vineyards sense the presence of the history of a traditional form of viniculture with every step they take.

Visitors to selected partner firms and operations also learn how sustainable resource management functions in practice, where superior quality products from the biosphere reserve originate and what traditional and environmentally sound processing methods look like. These partners include vintners, restaurateurs, farmers, bee-keepers, oil mill operators, bio-bakers, wood processors and wild game vendors.

The love of nature shared by France and the Palatinate involves an element of pleasure as well. Thus visitors are encouraged to visit the Franco-German farmers' market which takes place several times a year. Everything offered for sale there is produced organically and in conformity with the principles of environmental safety.

Left: The silhouette of Berwartstein Castle rises from the mist.

Right: The 'Biosphere Special' – select dishes prepared with regional products from our nature-pampered gourmet region.



View of Villa Ludwigshöhe Castle and the chair lift to the Riethburg over the vineyards

Mediterranean flair and abundant culinary pleasures

The biosphere reserve is best explored from the city of Edenkoben (where visitors arrive by car or train). From there, they take the chair lift from the Villa Ludwigshöhe Castle to the Riethburg. Delicious regional specialities are served on the outlook terrace, and the view of the surrounding 'Weinstraße' landscape is breathtaking. A hiking trail leads to the 'Ludwigsturm' and an expansive view of the Palatinate Forest. The route proceeds from there through sparse chestnut and pine forests to the 'Schänzelturm' and the 'Forsthaus' Heldenstein. The return journey takes hikers through the romantic Edenkobener Valley past the clubhouse of the Palatinate Forest Club and down to Edenkoben (20 kilometres in all; a hikers' bus is also available for eight kilometres of the return journey).

The 'Biosphärenhaus' and a handful of castles

- Monday: Visit to the 'Biosphärenhaus' and the 'Baumwipfelpfad' (Treetop Trail) as well as numerous nature observation stations near Fischbach/Dahn and Berwartstein Castle near Erlenbach*
- **Tuesday:** Tour of Trifels Castle, followed by a hike* to the 'Rehbergturm' and Neukastell Castle
- Wednesday: Visit to the wildlife and hiking park of the southern Weinstraße near Silz
- Thursday: Visit to the Palatinate Gallery in Kaiserslautern and the 'Haus der Nachhaltigkeit' in Johanniskreuz
- Friday: Visit to the Limburg monastery ruins* and the Palatinate Museum of Natural History in Bad Dürkheim
- Saturday: Visit to the exhibition in Hambacher Castle and the old town of Neustadt an der Weinstraße
- Sunday: 'Three-Castle Tour'* including a visit to the demonstration mine in Nothweiler

^{*} Guided tours providing fascinating details of nature and culture are offered by certified nature and landscape guides (year-round; information at www.pfaelzerwald.de)

View of the largest contiguous forested area in Western Europe from the Madenburg

Facts and figures

Location: southern Rhineland-Palatinate along the border to France

Area: 1,790 square kilometres

Elevation: 150 to 700 metres

History: founded as a nature park in 1958, recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1998 and as the German section of the crossborder biosphere reserve in 1998.

Geographic features: substantially subdivided and completely forested uplands flanked by gently sloping, intensively cultivated vineyards.

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Naturpark Pfälzerwald e. V. als Träger des deutschen Teils des deutsch-französischen Biosphärenreservats Franz-Hartmann-Straße 9 67466 Lambrecht (Pfalz) Tel. 06325 9552-0, Fax -19 www.pfaelzerwald.de info@pfaelzerwald.de

Information on partner firms and operations at www.pfaelzerwald.de

Information centres

Biosphärenhaus in Fischbach / Dahn www.biosphaerenhaus.de

Haus der Nachhaltigkeit in Johanniskreuz www.hdn-pfalz.de

Pfalzmuseum für Naturkunde in Bad Dürkheim www.pfalzmuseum.de

Books and maps

Naturpark Pfälzerwald – Wander- und Erlebniskarte 1:50.000 ISBN 978-3-927416-44-4

Radtouren- und Erlebniskarte Biosphärenreservat Pfälzerwald-Nordvogesen 1:100.000 (obtainable on order from Pietruska Verlag Rülzheim)

Alle Wanderwege des Pfälzerwald-Vereins Tel. 06321 2200

Radtouren in der Südpfalz Tel. 06341 940407



Pfälzerwald – Porträt einer Landschaft ISBN 978-3-9801147-1-4

Großer Pfalzführer ISBN 978-3-8134-0106-6

Die Pfalz – Eine Bildreise ISBN 978-3-89234-589-3

Accomodations

Pfalz Touristik Martin-Luther-Straße 69 67433 Neustadt / Weinstraße Tel. 06321 3916-0, Fax -19 info@pfalz-touristik.de

Directions

By rail: train stations in Neustadt / Weinstraße, Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens, Edenkoben, Landau.

By car: A 6 to Kaiserslautern or A 65 to Neustadt, Landau and Bad Bergzabern or A 63 bis Pirmasens.

> Biosphärenreservat Pfälzerwald-Nordvogesen



Berchtesgadener Land Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservat Berchtesgadener Land





Ascending the heights

Imposing mountain peaks that rise to the heavens, blooming alpine meadows and moors, expansive woodlands, clear streams and lakes – this unique alpine biosphere reserve in Germany offers visitors a magnificent array of natural spectacles including the 'Watzmann', the Königssee and many others.

The core and buffer zones of the biosphere reserve consist for the most part of the Berchtesgaden National Park. The development zone extends north to the city of Laufen an der Salzach. The partially undisturbed natural landscape and the cultural landscape designed by human hands offer visitors the experience of eventful holidays and opportunities to relax.

A variety of habitats and a diverse range of plant and animals species are encountered at elevations between 380 and 2,713 metres. In view of the increasing threat to species diversity, they represent both a precious treasure and a mandate for responsible action. Groundhogs, golden eagles and gentian thrive here, but so do people, and humans have played an important part in shaping this beautiful country in south-eastern Upper Bavaria. Our family farms produce healthy food products and contribute significantly to maintaining the cultural landscape.

Salt-mining in the depths of the mountains played an instrumental role in the development of the cultural region. Visitors are invited to discover its traces; in the salt mine at Berchtesgaden, on hikes along the historical brine pipeline or in the old saline Bad Reichenhall. The graduation works in the 'Kurgarten' in Bad Reichenhall were initially used for the purpose of refining this 'white gold'. Today, both the graduation works and the saline fountain enhance the salt concentration in the surrounding air and have a healing effect on the skin and the respiratory tract.

Left: The 'Bindalm' invites visitors to stop and rest and is also easily accessible to inexperienced alpine hikers on the 'Almerlebnisbus' (Alpine Adventure Bus)

Right: St. Bartholomä and the 'Wallfahrtskirche' – a favourite stop for Bavarian kings.

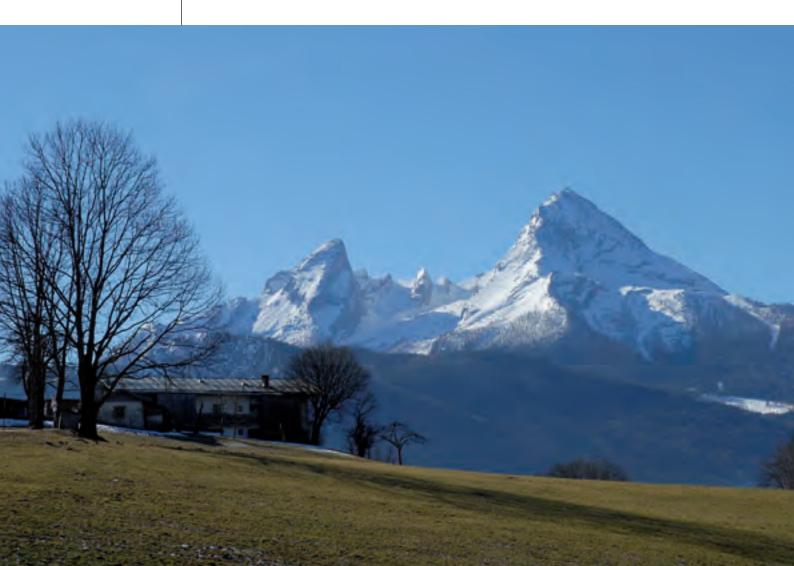
Hiking tours, sledding, and well-tended ski trails

During the summer, guests enjoy visiting the 'Kugelmühle' in Marktschellenberg in the morning. Next on the itinerary is a hike through the impressive landscape of the 'Almbachklamm' to the pilgrimage church in Ettenberg and back to the starting point over the 'Hammerstielwand'. And afterwards? A stroll through the picturesque old town of Bad Reichenhall!

Winter activities include sledding with children on the natural sled run on the Obersalzberg. Then a nice lunch featuring products from the biosphere reserve. There's time in the afternoon for a few circuits on the well-tended cross-country ski trail at the 'Aschauer Weiher' with a breathtaking view of the Alps or a visit to the 'Lokwelt' (locomotive exhibit) in Freilassing.

Swimming, boat ride and a visit to Berchtesgaden

- **Sunday:** Swimming day at the Aschauerweiher nature pool in Bischofswiesen or in the Watzmann thermal baths in Berchtesgaden.
- Monday: Hike and exploration of legendary rock formations such as the 'Steinerne Agnes'. Visitors can also make the ascent to the 'Predigtstuhl' on the cable railway.
- **Tuesday:** Visit to the salt mine in Berchtesgaden, including a mine rail tour and the giant slide. Then it's off to the local culture museum in Berchtesgaden. Events are organized by the National Park or the Biosphere Reserve Administration in the afternoon.
- Wednesday: Boat ride to St. Bartholomä and a hike to the 'Eiskapelle' (Ice Chapel). Visit to a restaurant in the evening to enjoy delicacies from the biosphere reserve.
- Thursday: Excursion to Salzburg, the Theatre Festival City.
- Friday: Exploration of the 'Haarmoos' between Laufen and Saaldorf, a valuable meadow breeding area and home to numerous rare species of birds and plants.
- Saturday: An enjoyable bicycle tour from Bad Reichenhall to Höglwörther Lake. Then a visit to the open-air theatre at the 'Kälbersteinbruch' in Berchtesgaden in the evening.



From the world of legend: 'King Watzmann', his wife the Queen and their five children

Facts and figures

Location: south-eastern Bavaria near the border to Austria

Area: 840 square kilometres of biosphere reserve, of which 210 square kilometres are National Park

Elevation: valley elevation to 2,713 metres

History: established as a National Park in 1978, recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1990. The area was expanded in 2010.

Geographic features: deciduous and mixed forests, alpine meadows, alpine matts and dwarf-shrub heaths, rock reefs, moors, alpine woodlands, settlement and agrarian cultural landscape

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Verwaltungsstelle Biosphärenreservat Berchtesgadener Land Salzburger Straße 64 83435 Bad Reichenhall Tel. 08651 773-539, Fax -111 www.brbgl.de info@brbgl.de

Accomodations

Berchtesgadener Land Tourismus GmbH Bahnhofplatz 4 83471 Berchtesgaden Tel.: 08652 65650-0, Fax -99 www.berchtesgadener-land.com info@berchtesgadener-land.com The Biosphere Children's Group proudly presents the insect hotel built by the children themselves.



Books and maps

Illustrated brochure Nationalpark Berchtesgaden ISBN 978-3-927957-27-5

Topografische Karten 1:50.000 Berchtesgadener Alpen (UK 50-55) und Rupertiwinkel (UK 50-44)

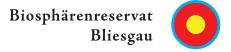
Directions

By rail: via Freilassing toward Laufen, Bad Reichenhall or Berchtesgaden. From there with local bus lines.

By car: from Munich or Salzburg: A 8, Bad Reichhall and Neukirchen exits.



Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve





Land of orchids and savoir-vivre

Mankind and nature united in harmony – that is exemplified in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve. It presents itself to visitors in beautiful, valuable orchards, meadows with a diverse assembly of species, expansive beech forests and the floodplain landscape along the River Blies. Yet its population density is also above the national average, which makes this biosphere reserve unique in the world. Despite the abundance of people, the region serves as a refuge for many rare animal and plant species as well. Here, nature and human culture are the silent architects that blend the existing diversity to create the unity of the biosphere reserve.

The Bliesgau is home to roughly eighty percent of Saarland's entire population of endangered Minerva's owls. The rare marsh fritillary moth is also represented in significant numbers and nearly half of all species of orchids found in Germany can be admired here. They thrive on the shell limestone soil and present an especially beautiful picture in this region.

Yet the Bliesgau is a region in the process of change. Shaped over the centuries by extensive traditional agriculture, it is now attempting to resist the trend toward globalization. The biosphere reserve relies on efforts in support of the regional marketing of its own agricultural products. Thus, for example, the association known as Verein Bliesgau Obst e. V. helps orchard owners maintain their fruit trees and market their harvests. And then there is the 'Bliesgau-Kiste', a charming regional gift idea. The box is filled individually and may contain Bliesgau apple prosecco, several varieties of honey, sausage specialities or outstanding objects of local craftsmanship. Cooperation between the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve and the Bliesgau oil mill has borne fruit of a very special kind and placed the Bliesgau among the various leading oil-producing landscapes in Germany.

Left: The late spider orchid, a diva in the Bliesgau plant kingdom

Right: The village of Medelsheim, just a stone's throw from France



Exploring serene river banks on foot or by bicycle

Untamed romanticism on foot and by bicycle

Start your tour of discovery with a visit to the white storks in Beenden. You can observe the storks as they build their nests near the fishermen's cabin on the banks of the idyllic fishing pond. You reach Kirkeler Castle on foot or by bicycle on shady paths through the Tauben Valley, the largest core zone in the biosphere reserve, and along the Kirkeler rock trail with its impressive red sandstone formations. The 'Kirkeler Bergsommer' festival invites visitors to return to the days of the knights and pages at the over 1,000-year-old castle during the hot summer months.

After a visit to the historical old town of the baroque city of Blieskastel you can ride through the biosphere reserve from north to south on an e-bike along the Bliestafel leisure trail and experience the fantastic natural environment of the untamed, romantic Blies floodplain.

E-bikes and coaches, storks and scattered fruit

- Monday: With an e-bike along the Blies bicycle trail to the German-French culture park of Bliesbruck-Reinheim. The little French city of Sarreguemines is right nearby.
- **Tuesday:** Stroll through the baroque old town of Blieskastel and visits to the Schlosskirche and the Franciscan monastery.
- Wednesday: In the footsteps of the St. James pilgrims through the biosphere reserve to the Gräfinthal monastery and pilgrims' chapel.
- Thursday: Coach excursion with the Myndenbach coach company through the biosphere reserve. Then a visit to the 'Haus Lochfeld' Cultural Landscape Centre and a stroll over the scattered fruit meadow and through the farm and herb garden.
- **Friday:** Visit to the Bliesgau Oil Mill in Einöd, with an opportunity to sample various oils, gold of pleasure oil and the Oil of the Celts.
- Saturday: The biosphere reserve offers sensational revelations on a day visit to the 'Schlossberghöhlen', Europe's largest red sandstone cavern.
- **Sunday:** Guided tour through the orchid park in Gershem. In addition to the numerous orchids, a number of other rare plant and animal species can be discovered here.

Facts and figures

Location: south-eastern Saarland, at the border to France and Rhineland-Palatinate

Area: 361 square kilometres

Elevation: 190 to nearly 400 metres

History: founded in 2007, recognized by UNESCO in 2009

Geographic features: escarpment landscape, with a stronger urban influence in the north, with beech forests and red sandstone. The south is more rural, with semi-arid limestone grasslands, orchid fields on shell limestone soil, scattered fruit orchards, Blies floodplain landscapes.

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Verwaltungsstelle Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau Paradeplatz 4 66440 Blieskastel Tel. 06842 96009-0, Fax -29 www.biosphaere-bliesgau.eu info@biosphaere-bliesgau.eu

Accomodations

Saarpfalz-Touristik Paradeplatz 4 66440 Blieskastel Tel. 06841 104-7174, Fax -7175 www.saarpfalz-kreis.de/urlaub touristik@saarpfalz-kreis.de

Books and maps

Der Bliesgau: Natur und Landschaft im südöstlichen Saarland ISBN 978-3-923877-42-3

Wander- und Freizeitkarte Saarpfalz-Kreis ISBN 978-3-934895-17-1

Radwander- und Freizeitkarte Saarpfalz-Kreis ISBN 978-3-927416-96-3

Jakobswege zwischen Hornbach und Saarbrücken ISBN 978-3-936990-51-5

Glan-Blies-Radweg ISBN 978-3-89920-611-1

Directions

By rail: with the ICE to Homburg or Saarbrücken, then with the regional railway to Lautzkirchen, Kirkel or St. Ingbert; the Saarbahn (Saar Railway) runs from Saarbrücken to Kleinblittersdorf.

By car: A 6 or A 8, St. Ingbert-Mitte, Blieskastel or Homburg-Einöd exits.

A hike in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve gives wings to the soul.





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Schwäbische Alb Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärengebiet Schwäbische Alb



A multifaceted cultural landscape with links to metropolitan area

A perfect landscape for walking, hiking and relaxing – gently rolling hills and rough rock formations, dry valleys and expansive uplands. Old orchards, wooden slopes and gorges, colourful fields of flowers and juniper heaths invite visitors to stop and look. Collared flycatchers, wrynecks, red kites, black woodpeckers, eagle owls and other rare birds feel as much at home in the Schwäbische Alb Biosphere Reserve as the numerous species of bats, which include Bechstein's bat and the mouse-eared bat.

The Schwäbische Alb Biosphere Reserve is located approximately 50 kilometres south-east of Stuttgart. The differences between the city and the countryside – the European metropolitan area of Stuttgart and the rural environment – account for the charm and the opportunities offered by the Schwäbische Alb Biosphere Reserve. The multifaceted character of the landscape, with its alternating patters of woodlands and open country is more pronounced here than in any other biosphere reserve in Germany. In the open country of the



highland plain, the juniper heaths (some of which are still quite large) left behind by wandering herds of sheep exhibit truly extraordinary species diversity. And it is this diversity that best characterizes the Schwäbische Alb Biosphere Reserve.

This diversity is also exploited within the context of a regional development initiatives devoted to environmental protection and nature conservation on the Schwäbische Alb. One example is the 'Albkorn' marketing project in which 40 farmers, a mill and nine bakeries are now participating. Similar projects dedicated to supporting the marketing of regional fruit products and heartwood are also in progress. Innovative organic products such as Alb mozzarella, Alb juniper in various forms, spelt and wild emmer noodles and Alb snails are gradually gaining a foothold in the market.

Left: Teck Castle, surrounded by lush, green beech forest

Right: A view of the romantic Lautertal



A sea of blossoms in summer – scattered fruit meadows

History, something for horselovers and pleasures galore

A visit to the Schwäbische Alb Biosphere Centre in Münsingen is a good way to gain a helpful first impressive of the biosphere reserve. The biosphere is literally laid out at your feet there, and you become acquainted with the people of the region. Afterwards, you might want to take a walk to the old village of Gruorn at the former military training facility in Münsingen, where you can also stop for a hearty meal. Visitors who wish to learn more about military history and life in those times should by all means book a guided tour through the Altes Lager' (Old Military Camp). A trip to the delightful Lautertal or a visit to the 'Haupt- und Landgestüt' (horse-breeding farm) in Marbach are attractive alternatives. The day ends on a pleasant note with a delicious meal of Alb buffalo with spelt spaetzle.

Alb buffalo, Alb cheese and a guided bicycle tour

- **Monday:** Visit to the Schwäbische Alb Biosphere Reserve Centre; a guided bicycle tour of the former military training area in Münsingen, followed by a dinner of Alb buffalo.
- **Tuesday:** Tour of the 'Schertelshöhle' cave in Westerheim, followed by a walk along the former 'Randecker Maar' volcanic vent at Schopfloch and a trip to the Schopflocher Alb Nature Conservation Centre at the Schopflocher Moor.
- Wednesday: Visit to the Zwiefalten Monastery and a hike to Wimsenfor for a boat ride through the cavern.
- **Thursday:** Alb rim hike with the 'Expedition Schwäbischer Alb' to the Uracher Waterfall and along the rim of the Alb. Shopping tour in at the Metzingen outlet city in the afternoon and a relaxing visit to the thermal baths in the evening.
- Friday: 'AlbhofTour' (tour from farm to farm) by bicycle to meet the Alb buffalo. Enjoy a hearty meal of Alb cheese and delicious sausage at one of the farms.
- Saturday: Visit to the Beuren open-air museum, followed by a guided hiking tour to Hohen Neuffen Castle. The day ends with a trip to Neidlingen to see the only ball mill in Germany.
- Sunday: Visit to the train station in Münsingen and from there with a steam locomotive operated by the 'Schwäbischen Albbahn' to Gomadingen. Return hike via the 'Haupt- und Landgestüt Marbach' (a must for horse-lovers) to Münsingen.

General Information

Lush pastures for the Alb buffalo

Facts and figures

Location: 50 kilometres south-east of Stuttgart on the Schwäbische Alb (Baden-Württemberg)

Area: 853 square kilometres

Elevation: 329 to 872 metres

History: founded in 2008, recognized by UNESCO in 2009.

Geographic features: cultural landscape with beech forests, juniper heaths, scattered fruit meadows, dry limestone meadows and grasslands, fields, meadows and settled areas

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Geschäftsstelle Biosphärenreservat Schwäbische Alb Von der Osten Straße 4, 6 (Altes Lager) 72525 Münsingen Tel. 07381 932938-10, Fax -15 www.biosphaerengebiet-alb.de biosphaerengebiet@rpt.bwl.de

Accomodations

Schwäbische Alb Tourismusverband Marktplatz 1 72574 Bad Urach Tel. 07125 948106 www.schwaebischealb.de info@schwaebischealb.de

Books and maps

Naturerbe Biosphärengebiet Schwäbische Alb ISBN 978-3-87407-790-3

Mit Kindern unterwegs – Biosphärengebiet Schwäbische Alb ISBN 978-3-87407-874-0

Hiking and cycling trail map Biosphärengebiet Schwäbische Alb ISBN 978-3-89920-342-4

Recreational map Bad Urach ISBN 978-3-89021-617-1



Directions

By rail and bus: via Metzingen and Bad Urach to Münsingen, from there by bus to the 'Altes Lager'

By car: A 8 Merklingen or Kirchheim / Teck to Münsingen, B 27 to Münsingen.



Karst Landscape South Harz Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz





In our midst

Expansive beech forests are characteristic features of the southern Harz landscape. In the transition area to the 'Goldene Aue' (golden lowland), sinkholes, funnels, rock escarpments and karst springs shape the unique face of the landscape. Karst forms in permeable and water-soluble rock, such as limestone and gypsum, which is leached by surface and ground water. A karst landscape of gypsum along the southern fringe of the Harz extends over 100 kilometres and links Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Lower Saxony. Large areas are in near-natural conditions as a result of intensive human use. Expansive limestone beech forests are found here, along with oak forests and dry grasslands that need more warmth. The warm climate ensures that plants typical of the Mediterranean region also thrive here, as exemplified by several types of orchids, such as the lady orchid.

The Karst Landscape South Harz Biosphere Reserve is home to numerous species, some of which are represented only by isolated individuals. Stag beatles, swallow tails, bats, dormice, and wildcats belong to this group. The undisturbed, near-natural rivers and streams provide habitats for fish that have not been seen in other waters for many years, such as brook lamprey, the bullhead and the loach. But man has shaped the landscape nonetheless, for the southern Harz is an old cultural landscape.

The earliest evidence dates back to the Neolithic Period and medieval fortress and castles bear witness to the historical importance of the region. But 800 years of mining also left its mark on the landscape. The karst landscape was poorly suited to land consolidation – fortunately! Visitors today encounter numerous small, cultivated areas with expansive orchards and pastures, deciduous forests and – again and again – old cities and villages with distinctive character.

Left: Natural forest cell Seeberge near Uftrungen

Right: Questenberg and gypsum rocks



The half-timbered city of Stolberg

Half-timbered city and appealing scattered fruit meadows

A visit to the 'Heimkehle' show cavern near Uftrungen and a hike along the karst hiking trail in the 'Aler Stolberg' nature conservation area. Sights worth seeing include the old deciduous forests and historical stone border markers.

The trip proceeds to the old, historical half-timbered city of Stolberg and a visit to the Biosphere Reserve Information Centre. Then a walk to the 'Großer Auerberg' to see the St. Joseph's Cross is an interesting experience. From there, visitors enjoy an expansive view of the biosphere reserve and – when the visibility is good – the entire Harz region.

The small town of Questenberg is situated in a picturesque setting in a water gap in the heart of the karst region. It has a number of attractions to offer, such as the colourful wooden 'Roland' and castle ruins. Then on to Hainrode on foot or by bicycle or car. A hike along the old road between Questenberg and Hainrode, past the 'Dinsterbachschwinde' (a hole formed by a brook), dry meadows and large scattered fruit meadows is highly recommended, especially when the fruit trees are in bloom in the spring.

Kyffhäuser, demonstration mine and a diverse bird life

- **Monday:** Trip to Hainrode and on along the karst hiking trail past the 'Dinsterbachschwinde' and large scattered fruit meadows to Questenberg for a tour of the town.
- **Tuesday:** Visit to the Kyffhäuser Monument, the Panorama Museum and the Barbarossa Cavern. Another option is a hike around the Helme Reservoir near Kelbra to observe the diverse species of birds.
- Wednesday: Visit to the Röhrigschacht demonstration mine in Wettelrode, followed by a drive to Sangerhausen, and visits to the 'Europa-Rosarium' and the Spengler Museum. The day comes to an end in the old town of Sangerhausen.
- **Thursday:** Hike from Stolberg via Hainfeld to Neustadt, then a tour of this beautiful town and a visit to the impressive castle ruins.
- Friday: Visit to the half-timbered city of Stolberg, then on along the 'Lutherweg' to St. Joseph's Cross.
- **Saturday:** Visit to the 'Kaiserpfalz' near Tilleda and the variety garden with its old fruit trees.
- Sunday: Hike to the 'Bauerngraben', a large water hole that is sporadically filled with water and has a striking rock wall. Then it's time for a visit to the 'Heimkehle' show cavern near Uftrungen.

General Information

Wooden 'Roland' and 'Queste'

Facts and figures

Location: southern Harz region between Stolberg in the north-west and Sangerhausen in the southeast; county of Mansfeld Südharz

Area: 300 square kilometres

Elevation: 145 to 579 metres

History: founded in 2009; plans call for recognition by UNESCO in 2012.

Geographic features: Central uplands (southern Harz declivity), Zechstein mountain range (gypsum karst) with leaching valley: over 2,000 karst hollow forms, such as sinkholes, dolines, rock escarpments, water holes and karst springs; expansive, near-natural deciduous forests, smallstructured open country areas in the Zechstein, scattered fruit meadows. Historical cultural landscape: relics and monuments to over 800 years of mining, European City of Stolberg, towns with typical regional features, castle ruins

Information about the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz Hallesche Straße 68 a 06536 Südharz OT Roßla Tel. 034651 29889-0 E-mail: bioressh@lvwa.sachsen-anhalt.de www.bioreskarstsuedharz.de

Information offices

Harzinformationszentrum Markt 2 06536 Südharz OT Stolberg

Bergbaumuseum Röhrigschacht 06526 Sangerhausen OT Wettelrode

Books and maps

Wandern und Radfahren im Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz Maßstab 1:25.000 ISBN 978-3-86973-019-6

Rund um den Kyffhäuser – Vom Südharz bis zum Unstruttal ISBN 978-3-86037-365-1



Rad- und Wanderkarte Südharz / Kyffhäuser, Maßstab 1:50.000 ISBN 978-3-89920-318-9

Accomodations

Rosenstadt Sangerhausen GmbH Tourist-Information Am Markt 18 06526 Sangerhausen Tel. 03464 58980 www.sangerhausen.de

Stadt Stolberg / Harz Tourist Information Markt 2 06536 Südharz OT Stolberg Tel. 034654 454 www.stadt-stolberg.de

Directions

By rail: via Halle, Sangerhausen, Nordhausen.

By car: A 38.

Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz





National Natural Landscapes in Germany and their umbrella organization Germany's national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks are protected landscapes in which our natural heritage is preserved and nurtured. They are the most spectacular natural settings Germany has to offer. They are 'by nature' – in the true sense of the word – the most beautiful areas in this country. They offer visitors an authentic, original world – from the Wadden Sea to the central German river landscapes to the Alps.



Hand in hand – the National Natural Landscapes and EUROPARC

The over 100 National Natural Landscapes in Germany are served by an umbrella organization that attends to all public matters of mutual interest: EUROPARC Deutschland. EUROPARC Deutschland is a working platform for concerted information, educational and public relations activities, for funding procurement, project and organizational development and for research and political consulting. Junior Rangers form a 'living map of Germany'. Representatives of 35 National Natural Landscapes took part in this nationwide programme.

Biosphere reserves

Biosphere reserves are regions in which approaches to harmonious coexistence of mankind and nature are developed and tested. They preserve, protect and develop cultural landscapes as valuable living spaces for plants, animals and people. They seek to achieve a balance between human use and natural cycles and thus contribute to the creation of added value in the various regions. Biosphere reserves enable scientists and scholars to gain exemplary insights into the reciprocal effects of natural and social processes.

National parks

National parks are landscapes in which nature is allowed to remain in its pure, natural form. In these parks, nature follows its own rules and law, thus contributing to the development of areas that exhibit a highly original character. In this way, national parks offer unique opportunities to experience nature to those who are interested, while preserving the spaces that are needed to promote environmental education and research. At the same time, they create points of attraction which contribute to economic development in the respective regions.

Nature parks

Nature parks stand for harmonious coexistence between man and nature in a form that enables both to achieve self-renewal. Nature parks preserve and develop nature and the landscape, while supporting environmentally compatible tourism. They promote sustainable regional development and play an important role in reconciling the demands human beings pose with respect to their living and economic environment and the requirements of landscape and nature conservation.





Making nature accessible and pleasurable for everyone – the National Natural Landscapes and EUROPARC

> Nature conservation only 'works' when as many people as possible understand why it is important. But nature is also a source of pure pleasure for most people. It offers tranquillity to those who want to 'get away from it all'. It offers various opportunities for sport activity for those who seek physical challenges. And it gives those who are young a chance to have fun. With that in mind, EUROPARC has developed concepts and programmes designed to unite these two aspects. Here are three examples:

Above: National park partner 'Ernsthof' in the Bavarian Forest

Below: Siesta during a hay-making break on an arnica field in the Erzgebirge/Vogtland Nature Park.

Nature – a matter of honour Volunteers in Parks

Doing something worthwhile, getting to know new people, having fun, acquiring new knowledge and skills, shaping the world in small ways - the 'Volunteers in Parks' programme offers all that and more. More and more people perform volunteer service in national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves ever year (2009: > 2,900). Working with full-time personnel in these protected areas, they help preserve valuable ecosystems, plants and animals - with extraordinary pleasure and a laudable thirst for knowledge. It almost goes without saying that this kind of work offers opportunities to experience and learn about nature that are otherwise difficult to come by. Anyone interested in this form of leisure-time activity can find more information at www.ehrensache-natur.de.

Junior Rangers

Forests, tidal flats and moors offer children in particular ideal opportunities to discover the real value of nature and learn why species diversity is so important. Thus numerous national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks invite children and youth between the ages of seven and twelve to participate in the Junior Ranger programme. The concept has proved successful, as over 2,000 children and youth have already qualified as Junior Rangers. The Junior Ranger programme includes contact with a ranger, exploration of the world of plants and animals, the opportunity to make a personal contribution to protecting a small piece of nature - and one other thing above all: a great deal of fun! More information is available on the Internet at www.junior-ranger.de.

Spending holidays with our partners

Thoroughly enjoyable holidays and a clear conscience – that is what the National Natural Landscapes offer vacationers in Germany. Partners of national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves are selected according to strict quality criteria and are committed to protecting nature and the environment in their home regions. Over 500 partners from the hotel and restaurant, rail and bus, tour travel, forest, tidal flat and guest visitor's guide industries as well as numerous other providers of tourist services have now been recruited – a model for success that offers opportunities for fun and enjoyment to more and more people every day.

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www.europarc-deutschland.de www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de

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Nationale Naturlandschaften

