

BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN GERMANY

In touch with nature









Foreword

The German UNESCO biosphere reserves represent unique natural and cultural landscapes. These fascinating landscapes and valuable ecosystems extend from the Baltic Sea to the Alps, from Southeast Rügen to Berchtesgaden. Integrated into the worldwide network of UNESCO biosphere reserves, they are internationally representative model regions. They aim to promote and facilitate sustainable development in all economic and other areas of life, in harmony with nature.

This is a complex task which can only be achieved with the engagement and knowledge of the local people. This includes testing and developing innovative forms of sustainable land use. Energy production, the marketing of regional products made in an environmentally sound way, and nature-friendly tourism are all important elements. They help to establish nature-friendly utilization and lifestyles in the biosphere reserves, while also preserving biodiversity. Biosphere reserves can thus be trend-setting model areas for the long-term conservation of our natural resources.

The UNESCO "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB) programme now has a network of more than 600 model regions in more than 110 countries. In Germany, UNESCO has so far approved 15 biosphere reserves. They cover about 3.5 percent of the land area. With its wealth of plant and animal species worthy of protection, the German biosphere reserves are, alongside the national parks and nature parks, an important component of the National Strategy on Biodiversity.

The federal government supports the development of biosphere reserves by promoting conservation and development measures, for instance in the context of large-scale conservation projects. Thereby it can be shown, for example, that biosphere reserves can promote nature tourism in rural areas.

We all benefit from the strengthening of biosphere reserves. They help to protect our valuable natural resources. They contribute added-value to a region and create jobs in underdeveloped rural areas. They offer space for leisure and recreation, from hiking and biking to very specific local attractions, such as boating in the Spree Forest or boat trips in the Wadden Sea. In this way people are inspired by nature and the landscape, made aware of the careful handling of it, and encouraged to follow natural and environmentally friendly development.

Babas Herbirs

Dr. Barbara Hendricks
Federal Minister for the Environment,
Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

Foreword

Dr. Barbara Hendricks Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

Interview: Biosphere reserves – Accolade and duty together
 Guido Puhlmann

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Building a haystack, Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere reserves

Accolade and duty together

Biosphere reserve – this is a term that is not self-explanatory, and the model that stands behind it is also ambitious. Guido Puhlmann, Director of Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve and Chairman of EUROPARC Germany, the umbrella organization for National Natural Landscapes, therefore explains in an interview what biosphere reserves are and what makes them so special.

What are Biosphere reserves and what is their purpose?

Biosphere reserves are recognition from UNESCO and at the same time an opportunity for the regions involved, because in biosphere reserves the coexistence of man and nature will be tested by way of example. You have the duty to develop diverse cultural landscapes, to preserve valuable habitats and to protect them from destructive intervention. A balanced relationship between human use and natural cycles is the central goal. Classic protective measures with modern methods of sustainable regional development are linked – scientifically based and linked with education. Of course, biosphere reserves should simultaneously be liveable and attractive for residents and visitors alike.

How have biosphere reserves developed, how did the idea come about?

The twentieth century was marked by previously unseen industrial development, which was accompanied by a new, intensive consumption of nature and resources. In response to the increasingly visible global environmental damage, for example the increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, 40 years ago the UNESCO General Conference launched the international research programme "Man and Biosphere" (MAB).



July 15th 2009: German Chancellor Angela Merkel visits the biosphere reserves at the BUGA

Back then it was about improving our knowledge of the impact of human resource exploitation on the entire Earth. Meanwhile, the pure research and protection idea shifted in favour of the development of Biosphere reserves as model regions, where advanced concepts for the harmonious coexistence of man and nature are developed and realized in the background. The pressing question of how sustainable use of natural resources can take place, this is the focal point.

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

The International Guidelines for biosphere reserves provide a division into zones according to the intensity of human use. In these the main tasks of the biosphere reserves are reflected. In the core zone, which is at least three percent of the area in Germany, the natural development of the land is made possible without direct human impact. Some species require habitats that are seldom possible in a shared cultural landscape, an example being the stag beetle; it requires the decay stages of old trees, which can still be found mainly in the core zone. The buffer zone takes up less than 10 percent of the area and helps to preserve traditional cultural landscapes; these may include, for example, heathland, species-rich meadows or semi-natural managed forests. Even here conservation concerns take precedence. In the development zone, in which there are also settlements and in some cases cities, the sustainable development of all utilisation is considered to be the goal to aspire to. Here the compatibility of the use of natural resources should be demonstrated with their permanent preservation for the generations following us. Biosphere reserves are interesting for visitors mainly because they are among the most beautiful landscapes in the world and where quite unspoiled nature and its diversity can be experienced.

What role do Biosphere Reserves play in biodiversity and adaption to climate change in Germany?

Biosphere reserves are national and international hotspots for biodiversity. The wealth of species is particularly high in extensively used man-made landscapes. They also cover a wide range of German landscapes, from the Halligen to the high Alpine pastures. By protecting them we preserve our national natural heritage. Sustainable land use, which is the explicit target of biosphere reserves, also contributes to the necessary adaptation to climate change, e.g. as natural flood protection, or the implementation of new tourism concepts in mountain regions not guaranteed snow in the future. Biosphere reserves also provide active protection against climate change, such as organic farming or the preservation and restoration of natural forests and peatlands, where climate-damaging CO2 can be fixed. We expect further ideas and initiatives that can be successfully transferred to other regions.

In Germany there are 15 UNESCO biosphere reserves. What role does UNESCO play and what does designation mean for the individual protected areas?

With the MAB programme, UNESCO set out the substantive and organizational framework for all biosphere reserves worldwide and developed them collectively across 110 participating countries. They review the biosphere reserves every ten years with an inspection with the help of participating national committees — this is a special case among international protected area categories.

Designation is an accolade and a duty together. An accolade for the diversity, uniqueness and beauty of a cultural landscape, and a duty to make development sustainable, to allow change, but without diminishing the quality.

Why are there not more biosphere reserves in Germany? Is there opposition to them?

Biosphere reserves meet the high quality requirements of the most demanding national and international criteria. As model regions they should be representative - with new areas the gaps in the existing network are closed. A nationwide extension across Germany would not make sense and is not possible. The fulfilment of the criteria alone is not enough on its own to make a biosphere reserve happen. It is equally important that the local population supports this idea as widely as possible.

Of course there are not only supporters but also sceptics and sometimes rejection. Here it is our job to maintain an open and intensive dialogue and to win approval for the great opportunities offered by a biosphere reserve for development in depressed rural areas. So far we have done well. The 15 UNESCO biosphere reserves in Germany clearly show this.

In your view, what is the future of the German biosphere reserves?

Biosphere reserves are not mayflies. This is shown not only by the 40th anniversary of the MAB Programme in 2011, but also the fact that two of 15 biosphere reserves, Vessertal and Middle Elbe, have already survived a previous state - the GDR. But they have to "move with the times" in order to keep their entitlement for the future. Specifically, this means that they should find answers to the current questions of society and implement appropriate solutions as an example to others. For years scientific monitoring on the impact of human activity in this or that way has been to the fore, so today we expect concrete examples of how we can learn to deal more gently with natural resources or economic and social development in times of an aging society and the migration of young people to the cities from rural areas.

What contribution can a biosphere reserve make to value creation in the region and a contribution to the economic needs in order to permanently obtain this capital stock of nature? How to succeed with sustainable use of renewable energy, without destroying the habitats of humans and animals? How can biosphere reserves play a part in reversing the loss of biodiversity? These are issues with which we continue to have to deal with, and much more. The quality of the answers and their successful communication will decide what role biosphere reserves have in the composite of National Natural Landscapes. For this we need the support of all - from the federal government and the state governments to the municipalities and the business community. I am confident that we will succeed. The concept of biosphere reserves as model regions of world renown is contemporary, forward-looking and targeted on solutions to the world's pressing problems. However, we need to get beyond the stage of landmark, pioneer projects. The great opportunities, ideas and challenges that

UNESCO gives us with biosphere reserves have to get even more in the middle of the regions and states; they have to be part of a broader movement, and for this we need the support of all social groups and sectors.

What do you recommend to visitors?

Firstly: come and discover the German biosphere reserves. Here you will find nature for yourself, unique flora and fauna as well as fascinating landscapes. Secondly, however, a request that your behaviour is considerate to people and nature. Be fair – the high quality products and services in biosphere reserves are worth a reasonable price.



Guido Puhlmann, Director of Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve and Chairman of EUROPARC Deutschland, umbrella organisation for National Natural Landscapes

Biosphere Reserves

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea and Halligen

> Hamburg Wadden Sea

Lower Saxony Wadden Sea









Seabed meets horizon

The wide open view, the fresh air and the wonderful feeling of cooling your feet in the soft and invigorating sands – these are a pleasure for many people. At the same time the water and coastal habitats are important for a large number of animals and plants. The global uniqueness of the Wadden Sea has again been underlined by its designation as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea and Halligen Biosphere Reserve

Globally unique - these are the Halligen off the North Sea coast of Schleswig-Holstein. They are a natural resource and cultural asset for the whole country and an indispensable breakwater for the entire west coast, not to mention a highlight of North Sea Tourism. Halligen are small islands without a dyke. At high water levels they are completely flooded by the North Sea, leading to "submerged land". The houses are therefore on dwelling mounds - man-made hills called "Warften". In the salt marshes there are many animals and plants that can only live here. Whether stormy sea, flocks of birds in the air, lush salt marshes or the fresh sea air - the nature of the Halligen eludes no one. Holidaymakers and day visitors can enjoy the unique landscape between land and sea and, together with ornithologists from around the world, can enjoy close up the migration of brent geese. The National Park and Biosphere Reserve also have many culinary things to offer: crabs, clams, oysters and many types of fish. North Frisian salt meadow lamb and Dithmarsch cabbage are also among the specialties of the region.

Hamburg Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve

In the Elbe estuary off Cuxhaven the mudflats seem endless. In addition there are tidal creeks, dunes and beaches – the Hamburg Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve is a jewel of nature and also a cultural landscape. The island of Neuwerk – one

of the oldest districts of Hamburg, yet over 100 kilometres from City Hall - has a chequered history: a medieval fishing base, a refuge for pirates, a bastion and pasture land. Maritime use gave Neuwerk its face; the island was dyked in 1556. Today about 40 people live on the island, and it is visited by up to 100,000 guests per year. The Neuwerk foreland with its grasslands and salt marshes is of great importance as a breeding and resting area for mudflat and water birds. Every year the uninhabited islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn migrate as dune islands ten or more metres to the southeast, following the natural sea dynamic. They support many seabirds. Nigehörn is the baby of the "family" because Hamburg's youngest island only emerged in 1989. It was created in just five weeks from 1.2 million cubic metres of sand and since then has been subject to natural dynamics and an absolute prohibition order.

Lower Saxony Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve

Traditional villages, churches and organs of national importance, and the centuries-long struggle of man with the sea on one side, with marsh, geest, wetlands and the white sand beaches of the islands on the other – all spanned by a indescribably vast sky. The exploding fireworks of the sun setting over the sea after a summer storm. Peace and quiet, contemplation and self-reflection.

These are just some facets of the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve. The Wadden Sea is surprising, because after the tropical rainforest, it is the second most prolific ecosystem in the world. Millions of migratory birds eat here to build up the fat reserves they need for successful breeding in the arctic regions or for migration to wintering areas in the far south. And the Wadden Sea is a nursery for many fish species that are also found on domestic menus. In the tidal flats on Kleinen Vogelsand, a sandbank off the island of Neuwerk, the vast sky is full of birds, but it is also one of the important holiday regions in Germany.

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea and Halligen

Ferry journey and Wadden Sea House

Take the ferry from Schlüttsiel to Hooge Hallig. At the ferry terminal we can hire bicycles, or if it rains we take a carriage across the Hallig. Thousands of Brent geese rest here in spring and autumn. On a Hallig guided walk we can see churches, Königspesel and the natural beauty. If it's terrible weather, we can hide in a restaurant in Hanswarft. A visit to the Wadden Sea Conservation Station is a big hit for children.

Bird watching and shrimp rolls

Monday: arrival in the apartment on Langeneß Hallig. Evening walk, eat fish rolls and drink in Café Pharisäer.

Tuesday: bicycle trip across the Hallig and visit the Biosphere Information Centre and the local museum. Afterwards a short mudflat walk and bird watching with the Wadden Sea Conservation Station.

Wednesday: boat trip Hooge Hallig. Guided walk to the church, the Wadden Sea House and Königspesel. Drink tea-punch in "Halligkrog".

Thursday: sunshine! Enjoy a swim at high tide. Watch terns. Eat delicious shrimps in the evening.

Friday: a trip with the picnic basket and a good book, such as "The Rider on the White Horse" by Theodor Storm. Great luck: the children find a piece of amber while collecting sea-shells!

Saturday: breakfast at sunrise on the mudflats. Curlew calls accompany us on the way to the ferry back to Schlüttsiel.



A special treat: a walk on the sea bed

Facts and figures

Location: North Sea coast of Schleswig-Holstein, from the Danish border to the Elbe estuary

Size: 4,431 square kilometres

Elevation: -15 to +8 metre

History: Established in 1990 and recognized by UNESCO. The Biosphere Reserve is coextensive with the National Park (1985), but additionally includes the five major, inhabited Halligen.

Landscape types: mudflats, islands, Halligen, dunes, sandbanks, tidal creeks, salt marshes and sea

Biosphere Reserve Information

Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defence, National Park and Marine Conservation/ Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea and Halligen Biosphere Reserve Administration Schlossgarten 1 25832 Tönning Tel. 04861 616-0, Fax -69 nationalpark@lkn.landsh.de www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/sh/ biosphaerenreservat

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

Accommodation

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

Getting here/Travel

By train: to Heide (connection to Büsum), Husum (connection to St. Peter-Ording), Niebüll (connection to Dagebüll/Bus to Schlüttsiel) or Westerland.

By car: A 23 towards Heide, then on the B 5 northwards. Car train to Sylt from Niebüll. Travel to islands and Halligen from the ports of Dagebüll and Schlüttsiel.

Biosphärenreservat Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer und Halligen





Salt meadows of the Neuwerk foreland

Island tours and mudflat wagons

Monday: arrival on Neuwerk aboard the passenger ship MS Flipper. Move into a cosy B&B or, especially interesting for families and groups, a hay hotel. A first trip around the island on the ring dike shows us what we will want to look at in more detail later.

Tuesday: because of the rain, sleep in and read a novel about Störtebeker. After lunch put on oilskins and visit to the Biosphere Reserve and National Park House.

Note: The information boards on the adventure path include many interesting facts about the Biosphere Reserve and the National Park. Perhaps a visit to the Amber Museum?

Wednesday: the sun is shining. Morning fitness programme: up the 700-year-old lighthouse and enjoy the views of the natural and cultural landscape. In the afternoon on a guided tour through the restored salt marshes in the east foreland of the island to breathe the scent of meadows and sea, watching oystercatchers and Sandwich terns with newly hatched chicks. And do not miss the island's legendary folk-evening! Lüder sings "Einmal Neuwerk noch seh'n" ("See Neuwerk once again").

Thursday: up early and spend all day exploring nature. Experience the pure nature of the Wadden Sea in the core zone of the Biosphere Reserve. Walk with the Jordsand Club to the bird island of Scharhörn.

Friday: guided walk with a ranger to Kleinen Vogelsand, a high mudflat in the north of Neuwerk. After storms one can find amber.

Saturday: after a morning swim – at high tide – it's unfortunately goodbye to Neuwerk in the afternoon. At low tide we go by horse-carriage across the mudflats to Sahlenburg. Goodbye to the Hamburg Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve!

Hamburg Wadden Sea

Salt marshes and tide aquarium

In the middle of the mudflats is the island of Neuwerk and the dune islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn. Depending on the water level, Neuwerk can be reached on foot, by horse-drawn carriage or by boat. You can get to know the island with a stroll along the ring dike, which offers protection against floods. The lighthouse is the oldest landmark on the island and offers a magnificent view across the Biosphere Reserve to the Elbe estuary and the large container ships.

On the way to the 700-year-old tower is the Biosphere Reserve and National Park House with a Hamburg Wadden Sea exhibition and tide aquarium. A guided trail gives many interesting facts about nature, culture and sustainability on the island. On a marked trail through the restored salt marshes in the east foreland of the island you can watch breeding or resting birds at close range. In spring and autumn, amazing bird migrations can be seen.

Facts and figures

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

Area: 117 square kilometres

History: 1992 established and designated by UNESCO. The Biosphere Reserve has been coextensive with the National Park area since 1990.

Elevation: sea level to +6 metres

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

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservat-/Nationalpark-Verwaltung Hamburgisches Wattenmeer c/o Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Neuenfelder Straße 19, 21109 Hamburg Tel. 040 42840-3392 www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/hh/ biosphaerenreservat

Biosphärenreservat/Nationalpark-Station Neuwerk Turmwurt, 27499 Insel Neuwerk Tel. 04721 69271 np-station@wattenmeer-hamburg.de

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Accommodation

Turm
Tel. 04721 29078
www.leuchtturmneuwerk.de

Haus Seeblick Tel. 04721 20360 www.seeblick-neuwerk.de

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 (as a PDF in Publikationen at www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/hh/)

Herzlich Willkommen in unserem Nationalpark Nationalparkbroschüre Hamburgisches Wattenmeer (as a PDF in Publikationen at www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/hh/)

Getting here/Travel

By train/Metronom or car to Cuxhaven. From there, there are three ways to Neuwerk: by foot from Sahlenburg (bus from Cuxhaven station), with horse carriage from Sahlenburg or Duhnen (various providers) or on the ship "MS Flipper" from Cuxhaven .



Mudflat carriage trip to Neuwerk

Biosphärenreservat Hamburgisches Wattenmeer



Lower Saxony Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve

Sielhafen Museum and tea rooms

In fine weather, a day trip from Neßmersiel to the island of Baltrum is recommended. A National Park tour guide leads groups on foot at low tide for about eight kilometres across the mudflats to the smallest of the seven East Frisian islands, where they have about four hours to explore the "Sleeping Beauty" of the Wadden Sea. At high tide the trip back to the mainland is by ferry.

It is not just in rainy weather that it is worth visiting Sielhafen Museum and the National Park on Carolinensiel. Afterwards there can be a visit to a tea room in historic Sielhafen for the traditional East Frisian tea ceremony.

Cycling trips and rhubarb cake

Monday: arrival with bicycles at Bremerhaven train station. Ferry to Nordenham. We cycle along the dike to the west. Everywhere there are nice B&Bs.

Tuesday: visit the Sehestedter outer dyke wetland (National Park Station) and then to Dangast. The old spa house in Dangast attracts us with its delicious rhubarb cake – but it is only open at weekends. Overnight in Varel (Dangast).

Wednesday: bike trip along Jadebusen (Jade Bight). In Cäciliengroden a barrier-free adventure trail was built across the salt meadows in 2010. If it rains, a visit to the National Park Centre "The Wadden Sea House" in Wilhelmshaven is on the agenda.

Thursday: today's destination is Harlesiel (Carolinensiel). A trip to Minsen and a visit to the North Sea House are worthwhile. Upon arrival we deserve a swim in the North Sea.

Friday: day trip by boat to Wangerooge (without bikes). Ride on the island train through blossoming salt marshes and a walk in the fragrant dune landscape.

Saturday: the last stage of the tour takes in the picturesque town of Jever beer.



Facts and figures

Location: Lower Saxony North Sea coast, on the Elbe estuary from Cuxhaven to the Dutch border

Size: 2,400 square kilometres

Elevation: sea-level

History: 1992 established and designated by UNESCO. The extent of the Biosphere Reserve corresponds with that of the National Park (1986).

Landscape types: mudflats, islands with dunes, beach and salt marshes, wetlands, heathlands, sandbanks, tidal creeks and sea

Biosphere Reserve information

Nationalparkverwaltung
Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer
Virchowstraße 1, 26388 Wilhelmshaven
Tel. 04421 911-0, Fax -280
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www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/nds/
biosphaerenreservat

Nationalpark-Zentrum Cuxhaven Tel. 04721 28681, Fax 69245 nationalparkzentrum.cuxhaven@ewetel.net www.Nationalpark-Wattenmeer-Cuxhaven.de

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



The common seal – the most well-known mammal of the Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve

Accommodation

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

Getting here/Travel

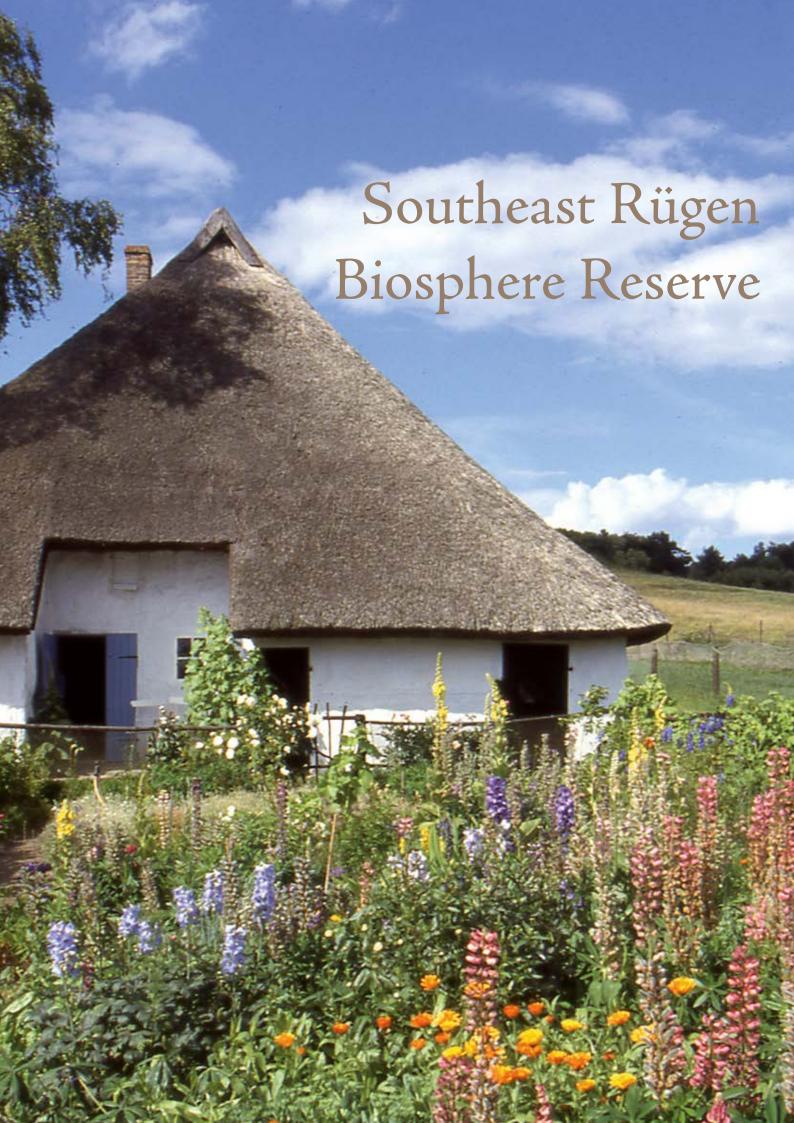
Stations to the island ferries: Sande/Harlesiel (to Wangerooge), Esens (Spiekeroog and Langeoog), Norddeich/Mole (Norderney, Juist), Neßmersiel via Norddeich (Baltrum), Emden Outer Harbour (Borkum).

Other stations: 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





Culture, landscape, sea and more

Southeast Rügen fascinates us with its beautiful, varied interplay of land and sea, of peninsulas, headlands and promontories, forests and bare hill-tops, as well as the farmers' fields. In such a small space – many Biosphere Reserves are larger – there is an unusual variety of places and habitat types, such as cliffs, beach ridges, dunes and almost all known types of wetland in north Germany, or centuries-old forests. Man has left his mark here over the last five millennia, creating wood pastures, heathlands, dry grassland as well as salt meadows and wet meadows with their great biodiversity.

For several years you have been able to see rare "guests" on the coasts and in the Baltic Sea and Bodden waters of Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve – grey seals and common seals have returned to this area. International protection measures and the reduction of pollution have contributed to this pleasing history of the seal population in the entire Baltic region.



The small coastal fisheries are an example of compatible development on the coast – one of the most ecologically sound fishing methods. With passive fishing gear such as gill nets, traps or long-lines they catch herring, cod, garfish, flounder, etc. in the coastal waters off Rügen. In the water they have red flags on gill nets, while black flags show eel baskets or longlines.

Rügen's products are sold in farm shops and markets. Under the label of Rügen Produkte Verein e.V. products and services are offered which are made and processed in strict compliance with the precepts of sustainable management. It's worth stopping to have a look.

Left: Pfarrwitwenhaus ("Parish widow's house") in Groß Zicker

Right: Fishermen on the beach at Binz



Fishing boats in Thiessow harbour

Cistercians, Großer Zicker and sailing boats

Breakfast in Sellin. Afterwards a bicycle trip to Mönchgut. The route leads through Baaber Heath to Middelhagen. The church and manor park are evocative of the Cistercian monks. On the dyke you can go to Lobbe. Here one should choose a fish dish from the local waters for lunch. Next to Groß Zicker. Visit the Pfarrwitwenhaus ("Parish widow's house"). Then walk in the Zicker hills. On Bakenberg you can enjoy the fantastic view over the Bodden and the Baltic Sea, the colours of the dry grassland and the singing of the skylarks. Then along the Bodden coast back to Klein Hagen and Alt Reddevitz. Cross the Baaber meadows and pause on Baaber Bollwerk with its colourful sailboats and rowing ferry to Moritzdorf.

"Rasender Roland" and Caspar David Friedrich

Saturday: comfortable apartment in Göhren. Walk around town: resort architecture, Mönchgut museums.

Sunday: beach life and stroll along the pier.

Monday: to Granitz Hunting Lodge by "Rasender Roland" a steam-powered narrow-gauge railway. Fantastic panoramic views from the lodge tower. Walk through Granitz to Sellin and on the beach towards Göhren. Fresh fish for dinner.

Tuesday: take "Rasenden Roland" to Putbus. Evening at Putbus Theatre.

Wednesday: take the boat MS "Julchen" to the Isle of Vilm. Guided walk through the nature reserve with its impressive ancient forest. Please note: reservation required by calling 038301 61896.

Thursday: trip to Jasmund National Park. Hike along the chalk cliffs in the footsteps of Caspar David Friedrich.

Friday: sunrise at Bakenberg with splendid views. Then pack our bags. 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

Size: 229 square kilometres

Elevation: 0 to 107 metres

History: founded in 1990 and recognized by UNESCO in 1991

Landscape types: 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 2011

ISBN 978-3-86108-912-4

Rügen – Strand & Steine Demmler-Verlag, 2nd edition 2013 ISBN 978-3-944102-00-9

Wilhelm Malte zu Putbus und seine Fürstenresidenz auf der Insel Rügen André Farin Verlag, 5th edition 2012 ISBN 978-3-00-008844-X

Das Schloss hinter dem Holunderbusch Thomas Helms Verlag, 3nd edition, revised and expanded, 2010 ISBN 978-3-940207-64-7

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsamt Südost-Rügen Circus 1 18581 Putbus Tel. 038301 8829-0; Fax -50 poststelle@suedostruegen.mvnet.de www.biosphaerenreservat-suedostruegen.de

Accommodation and guided walks

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

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

Naturerlebnis-Angebote René Geyer Bäckertrift 13 18586 Lancken-Granitz Tel. 0173 9898031 info @ naturgeyer.de www.naturgeyer.de

Getting here/Travel

By train and bus: via Stralsund and Bergen to Putbus, then take the "Rasenden Roland" train to Göhren or Binz. From Bergen by bus (lines 20, 23 and 24) to Klein Zicker or Putbus (line 30).

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





Haven for migratory birds

Wetlands and lakes, fields, pastures and wet meadows, natural beech forests – with Schaalsee in the middle. The lake is at the heart of the UNESCO biosphere reserve and gives it its name. It is, like the whole landscape with its many lakes, a result of the last ice age. The species richness of the landscape and the mosaic of small and large habitats make the area between the cities of Hamburg, Lübeck and Schwerin unique. Despite the proximity to the cities, there are animals that have not been seen in other places for a long time: kingfisher, white-tailed eagle and otter are only the most prominent examples among many others.

People and their culture are an important part of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve and therefore every visitor is welcome. Since the opening of the border, the region has gone from nowhere to a tourist insider tip for nature lovers: 150 km of marked hiking and cycling trails lead through a green puzzle of forest, fens and wet meadows, lush pastures and rolling fields. Walking under the leafy canopy of the avenues or forest trees or along flowering hedgerow

paths is particularly romantic. There are sustainable products available in the hustle and bustle of the Biosphere Schaalsee market in Pahlhuus on the first Sunday of the month, in season. Highquality products from more than 30 producers are on offer. On the agenda are fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, eggs and cheese from local, often ecological, production combined with a regional music and cultural programme. The regional trademark "Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve - for body and soul" is a label for regional and environmentally friendly produced products, services and initiatives. To date 88 companies have been awarded the mark. They all have one thing in common: the basic idea of harmony between ecology and economy, and the development of the Schaalsee region.



Schaalsee at Zarrentin

On the way to church and cheese

Pahlhuus in Zarrentin offers an interesting start. In the modern exhibition you can find a tunnel of life, a digital storybook and many unusual insights about the Schaalsee. In Pahlhuus you can also purchase hiking maps and rent bicycles. The surrounding area offers a varied programme for a bike ride: look-out towers in Klocksdorf and Kneese, homemade cheese in Rögnitz, historic, interesting churches in Lassahn, Zarrentin, Neuenkirchen and Döbbersen. Walk on your own or join a guided tour with the Biosphere Reserve rangers — whatever you do, you will experience a unique day away from everyday life.

Of seahorses, elves and robbers

Monday: "Sea horse trip" by boat and wagon through the Schaalsee landscape and walk through limestone fen. (www.schaalseetour. de.) Then visit Pahlhuus and Zarrentin Monastery.

Tuesday: the Elf trip or the robber's trip? The tour schedule can be found in Pahlhuus.

Wednesday: from the observation tower in Klocksdorf, watch water birds and white-tailed eagles on Röggeliner lake. Then visit the Museum about the German-German border (www.grenzhus.de).

Thursday: sightseeing at the medieval monastery in Rehna (www.kloster-rehna.de). Then visiting the Farm Museum in Breesen.

Friday: bicycle trip to Rögnitz, with its two goat farms. "Art and Cheese" in the old manor house (www.kunstundkaese.de) and the Schult goat farm (www.ziegenhof-schult.de). You can buy delicious goat cheese at both places.

Saturday and Sunday: elf weekend. Discover the elves on a walk along fairytale bank side paths and make your own personal elf with your own hands on a modelling course (www.schaalseelebens-art.de).

Facts and figures

Location: in Mecklenburg Western Pomerania on the border with Schleswig-Holstein

Size: 301 square kilometres

Elevation: 30 to 93 metres

History: Nature Park established in 1990, designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the year 2000.

Landscape types: deep lakes, limestone fen marshes and wetlands, beech forests, alder and ash forests, wet woodlands, unimproved grassland, grassland, avenues and hedgerows, fields and meadows

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsamt Schaalsee-Elbe Wittenburger Chaussee 13 19246 Zarrentin Tel. 038851 302-0, Fax -20 poststelle@bra-schelb.mvnet.de www.schaalsee.de

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

Accommodation

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

Wanderkarte Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee ISBN 978-3-932115-02-8

Wanderkarte Naturpark Lauenburgische Seen ISBN 978-3-932115-31-8

The Biosphere Reserve Administration will send leaflets with return postage.

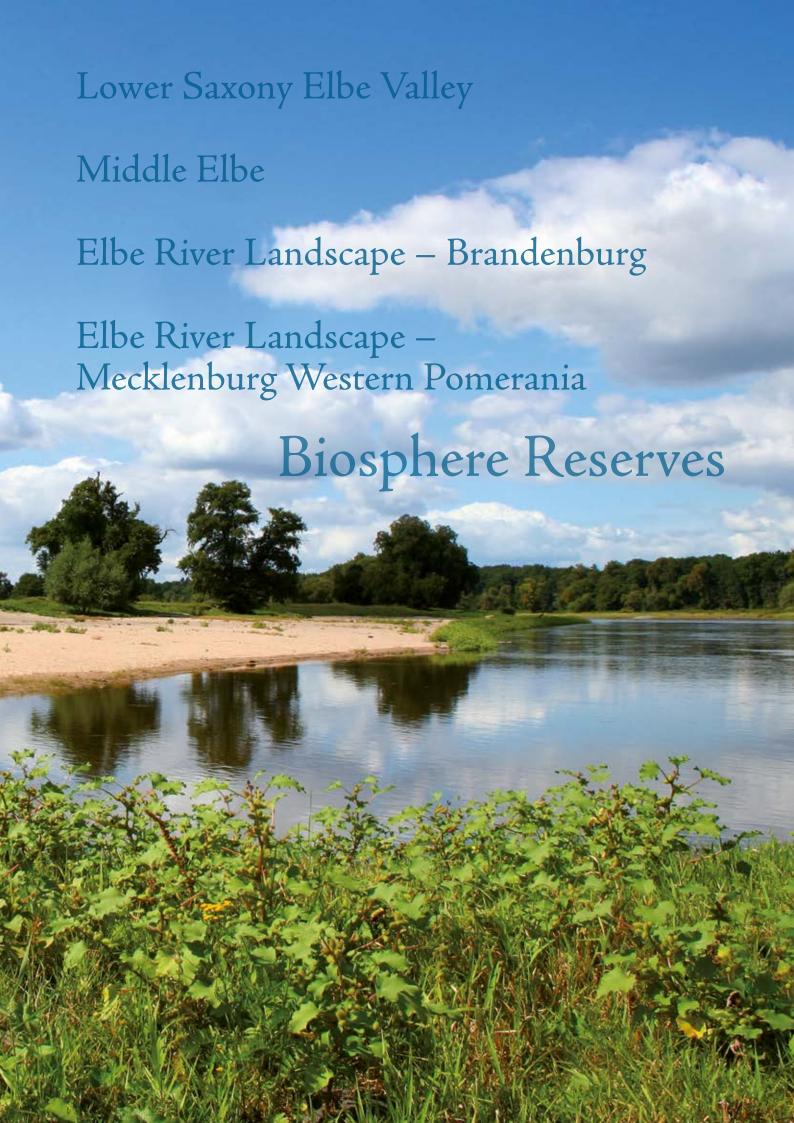
Getting here/Travel

By train and bus: The nearest railway stations are in Hagenow, Ratzeburg and Rehna. From Hagenow you can go by bus to Zarrentin (www.lvg-hagenow.de).

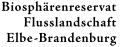
By car: Motorway A 24 (Zarrentin exit) and A 20 (Lüdersdorf exit). From Lübeck via Ratzeburg to Zarrentin.



Schaalsee Biosphere market in front of PAHLHUUS









Biosphärenreservat Niedersächsische Elbtalaue



Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Elbe-Mecklenburg-Vorpommern



World culture on wild banks

The Elbe is Germany's third largest river. This giant flows 400 kilometres through five German states as it passes through the UNESCO Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, and one of the last seminatural rivers in Central Europe. It is very easy to discover it, whether on foot or by bike, because the paths along it are well developed. The variety of different habitats on the semi-natural river banks and adjacent marshes, tributary lowlands and geest is impressive and the foundation for a great diversity of species. The floodplain is characterised by dark hardwood forests, inland dunes, steep geest cliffs, extensive meadow landscapes, many water bodies with reed beds and silting areas, as well as bogs. Numerous plants and animals live here, including many endangered species.

The beaver – almost extinct several decades ago – has reconquered the entire river course as a habitat. White storks in the grassland are an everyday sight in the summer. In addition to the 200 species of breeding birds which use the area in the winter, northern geese and swans also rest and over-winter here.

The landscape also offers its guests some great cultural history. One example is Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm, a World Heritage Site with an enchanting historical landscape garden.

Flooding and dyke construction are also part of the cultural history. Dyke relocation was already being considered before the Elbe floods of August 2002 and June 2013; it has already been implemented in several places in the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. An example is part of the Middle Elbe large conservation project near Lödderitz and in the Mulde valley at Priorau. The preservation and restoration of natural floodplains are an essential part of modern flood protection and highlight the role of biosphere reserves as model regions for putting the careful handling of our natural resources into the public's consciousness.

Lower Saxony Elbe Valley Biosphere Reserve

Each year in Lower Saxony the semi-natural banks of the Elbe and its floodplain meadows, with its oxbow lakes and ponds, are a stopover for large flocks of migratory birds that refuel here before their onward flight. The Lower Saxony Elbe Valley is part of one of the most significant bird resting areas in northern Germany. Between October and March there are up to 100,000 northern geese and 3,000 whooper and Bewick's swans. The adjacent rapeseed and cereal fields provide an attractive, high-energy food supply for the birds - which in the past was often a concern for farmers. An EU co-financed support programme has enabled effective migratory bird management to be developed, which is a successful example of the harmonisation of the interests of agriculture and conservation, and clearly shows the practical work of a biosphere reserve.

The interests of nature conservation and the economy have also been united in other areas, such as tourism. Whether walking, fishing, horse riding, boating, canoeing or cycling, the Elbe landscape has something to offer in all seasons. In addition to the preservation and maintenance of regional natural and cultural heritage, it also creates and protects jobs — an important side effect. With the growing number of visitors, an extensive range of services and information quickly developed around the tourist routes. These include bicycle rental, repair services, typical regional food in pubs and restaurants, hotel accommodation, "hay hostels" and B&B for cyclists, taxi services, call-a-bus and many other services.

Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve has been part of the global network of Biosphere Reserves for over 30 years. One of the important reasons for this is an extremely loveable animal that every child knows: the beaver, specifically the Elbe beaver. There are now approximately 1,200 of them in the Biosphere Reserve which is almost a miracle because in 1920 there were only a very few, barely countable individuals. Although the population has recovered well, the Elbe beaver remains a strictly protected species under the Federal Nature Conservation Act. The beaver has its home in a region that has the most significant hardwood forests

in central Europe. The floodplain and its naturally formed and evolved structures are an irreplaceable habitat for a variety of species of mammals, water birds and insects. Fruit trees, river corridor plants (e.g. Cnidium dubium, Veronica longifolia) and rare species of orchids can also be found in the river landscape.

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve is a managed cultural landscape: man has dominated, designed, used and changed it into its very special form over a long period of time. During the reign of Leopold III Frederick Franz, Duke of Anhalt-Dessau (1740 – 1817), a cultural landscape modelled on English landscape gardens was created on the Elbe floodplain between Dessau and Wörlitz. In the spirit of the Age of Enlightenment, they were open to everyone to "combine beauty with utility". Fruit tree avenues, specimen trees, dykes, castles, landscape parks and small-scale architecture have been preserved as a "total work of art".

Two further World Heritage Sites, including the Dessau Bauhaus, show the great cultural achievements of past centuries. In addition, the thousand-year-old town of Tangermünde, the imperial city of Magdeburg with its cathedral, and the unique Jerichow Monastery are outstanding examples of human achievement in the region. Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm has been a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site since the year 2000.

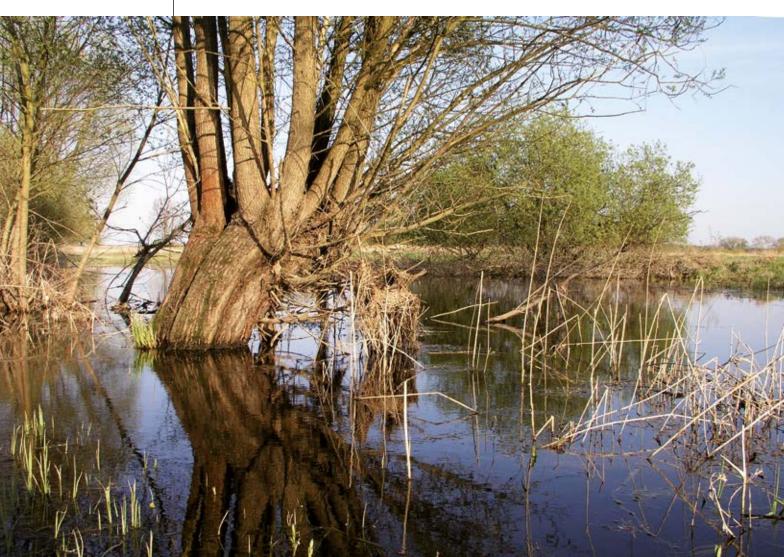
Submerged land on the woodland banks. Softwood floodplain between Dömitz and Rüterberg

Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve

The Elbe flows as a wide river across the North German Plain, drawing its wide meanders and shaping the banks and the Elbe foreland in the rhythm of its flood – year after year. The water level of the river can fluctuate by more than seven metres. The current forms bright sandbanks, flood channels and oxbow lakes. The gnarled remnants of old floodplain forests are also its work. The varied habitats on the Elbe and its tributaries, the Karthane, Stepenitz and Löcknitz, are home to many rare plants and animals. They have adapted to the extreme wet or dry – sometimes both. It's great that the relocation of the Elbe dyke at Lenzen created approximately 420 hectares of new floodplain!

The breeding season is a good time to see and hear cranes in several places, for example Rambower Moor. With a little luck, visitors can see white stork: nowhere else in Germany can it be found in such high numbers! For example, every year there are more than 30 breeding pairs in the "European stork village" of Rühstädt.

Among the feathered winter guests there are thousands of whooper swans and an unusually high number of rough-legged buzzards, dabbling ducks and hen harriers. Huge flocks of bean geese and greater white-fronted geese, lapwings and cranes stop in the area during their migration. With a little luck, it is possible to see the white-tailed eagle at any





A flock of greylag geese

time of year. An almost continuous forest belt accompanies the great river, providing further habitats for animals and plants. The natural riches, the brick and half-timbered villages and towns, the beauty of the landscape and the diverse offerings for body and soul are becoming known and treasured by more and more guests and residents.

Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg Western Pomerania Biosphere Reserve

"A glacial valley in its entire width" is the motto of the Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg Western Pomerania Biosphere Reserve. It describes the various habitats in the Elbe valley, shaped by the ice ages and characterized by wide floodplains and small tributaries, grassland, Elbe river banks, inland dunes and heaths; it also describes the animals that live here, either permanently or just as a stopover in their journey.

Many rare plants are found here. For example, between the sandy elevated fields of the Elbe and the edge of a regularly flooded floodplain near the small port town of Dömitz, there is grey hairgrass, thrift, annual vernal grass, spiked speedwell and Spanish catchfly, as well as young softwood with various species of willows and black

poplars – plants which occur sporadically and have specific requirements.

Another habitat that is worth a visit is the inland dunes, one of the landscape and geological wonders in the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve. Around 45 metres above sea level, 600 metres wide and about two kilometres long, "Elbtaldüne" near Klein Schmölen is the largest. A dune nature trail leads to the highest point and from there you have an impressive view of the vast Elbe valley. The partially vegetation-free inland dunes at Boizenburg-Gothmann emerged at the end of the last ice age and still dominate the wide floodplain landscape.

Special efforts are being made on the Meck-lenburg Elbe with a pilot project to trial extensive grazing with old, endangered cattle breeds, including "German black pied", "German shorthorn" and "Red Holstein". The aim is the symbiosis of extensive agriculture and nature conservation and to safeguard the genetic diversity of ancient cattle breeds, many of which are already extinct or threatened with extinction.



Overlooking the Elbe from the vineyards in Hitzacker

Lower Saxony Elbe Valley

Marsh villages and stork nests

In summer, a bicycle tour to the stork family is recommended (42 km). From Hitzacker you can take the Elbe ferry over to Herrenhof. Upstream it goes past "Marschhufendörfern" (typical marsh villages) and many stork nests and on to the enchanted Wehningen castle park. You can cross to the other side of the river on the impressive Elbe bridge at Dömitz and then back to Hitzacker, with great views of the Elbe foreland. In winter you can visit the "Nature [Experience] on the Elbe" exhibition in "Biosphaerium Elbtalaue" in Bleckede and watching the huge flocks of birds resting on "Neuhäuser Elbmarsch".

Bathing, boats and the Green Belt

Monday: sight-seeing in the town of Bleckede, "Biosphaerium Elbtalaue", bicycle trip through "Marschhufendörfern".

Tuesday: "Green Belt" experience in Konau-Popelau, Archezentrum in Neuhaus and dune walk in Stive.

Wednesday: Hitzacker: Archaeology Centre, walk "between vineyard and "Wolfsschlucht"."

Thursday: "Be (not) a frog" exhibition in Dannenberg, amphibian cycle trail in Dannenberg marshland.

Friday: swimming and boating on Gartower Lake, Höhbeck "ascent", Nemitzer Heath.

Saturday: "Border information trail" cycle, Schnackenburg Borderland Museum.

Facts and figures

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

Size: 568 square kilometres

Elevation: 5 to 109 metres

History: established and designated by UNESCO in 1997.

Landscape types: flood plains with wet grassland, oxbow lakes and riparian forest remnants; inland dunes with pine forests

Biosphere Reserve information

Archezentrum Amt Neuhaus Am Markt 5 19273 Neuhaus Tel. 038841 759614 archezentrum @ amt-neuhaus.de www.archezentrum-amt-neuhaus.de

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

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

Accommodation

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

Tourist-Info im Biosphaerium Elbtalaue, Bleckede Tel. 05852 9514-0

Unterkünfte der "Partnerbetriebe des Biosphärenreservates" www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de Sheep grazing by the Elbe dyke at Wussegel



Books and maps

Leben am Fluss: Am Lauf der Elbe – von Lauenburg bis Schnackenburg ISBN 978-3-922639-20-6

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

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

Getting here/Travel

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

Middle Elbe

First the castle and then the beaver

In the morning visit Wörlitzer Park. As we learnt in Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm earlier today, "beauty is combined with utility". Then a civilised lunch at the "Küchengebäude" of the castle in Wörlitz. Then visit the unique outdoor beaver pen and "Auenhaus" information centre of the Biosphere Reserve Administration. Numerous butterflies and dragonflies can be admired in the summer in the grounds and in the kitchen garden which is based on historical models.

In Luther's footsteps and a visit to the fishermen

Monday: Wittenberg. Cultural and culinary walk in Luther's footsteps through Wittenberg town centre, afternoon drive to Wörlitz and visit Wörlitz parks.

Tuesday: the town of Dessau-Roßlau: tour of World Heritage Sites "Park Luisium" and "Park Georgium" in Dessau. Visit the Bauhaus and the Masters' Houses ("Meisterhäuser") in Dessau. An evening in a restaurant or the theatre in Dessau.

Wednesday: Kapenniederung: visit the "Auenhaus" and the outdoor beaver pen at the Biosphere Reserve Administration. Afternoon walk in the floodplain forest around Lödderitz with the ranger service.

Thursday: by passenger boat to Magdeburg. Bicycle trip to the water bridge at the waterway crossing. Continue to Tangermünde.

Friday: tour the historical old town of Tangermünde, afternoon walk on the nature trail in "Bucher Brack – Bölsdorfer Haken" nature reserve.

Saturday: To "Haus der Flüsse" in Havelberg, evening organ concert at Havelberger cathedral.

Sunday: boat trip on the Havel, Elbe beaver watching. Visit the fishermen; Havel zander for dinner.



The conical cut betrays the presence of the Elbe beaver

Facts and figures

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

Size: about 1,260 square kilometres

Elevation: 55 to 65 metres above sea-level

History: 1979 parts of present-day Biosphere Reserve were designated by UNESCO. In 1988 the area was extended by the Garden Realm of Dessau-Wörlitz cultural landscape, which received UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2000. 1997 extension to the entire course of the river Elbe in Saxony-Anhalt and recognition of the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

Landscape types: river valleys, floodplain forests, oxbow lakes, inland dunes, wet grassland, historical cultural landscape

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Mittelelbe Kapenmühle, PF 1382, 06813 Dessau-Roßlau Tel. 034904 4210 poststelle @ bioresme.mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de www.haus-der-fluesse.de www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de www.mittelelbe.com www.gartenreich.net

Informationszentrum Auenhaus Am Kapenschlösschen 3 06785 Oranienbaum-Wörlitz Tel. 034904 40631

Haus der Flüsse Natura 2000 – Informationszentrum des Biosphärenreservates Mittelelbe Elbstraße 2, 39539 Havelberg Tel. 039387 609976 poststelle@bioresme.mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de

Accommodation

WelterbeRegion Anhalt-Dessau-Wittenberg e.V. Tel. 03491 402610 www.anhalt-dessau-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



Books and maps

Ernst Paul Dörfler Biosphärenreservat Mittelelbe – Reiseführer ISBN 978-3-89920-832-0

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

Radwanderkarte Dessau-Roßlau und Umgebung ISBN 978-3-928765-28-2

Radwanderkarte Tourismusregion Wittenberg ISBN 978-3-928765-30-5

Christian Antz (Hrsg.) und Dana Trenkner Reiseführer "Schöne Wilde Welt – Das UNESCO Biosphärenreservat Mittelelbe" ISBN 978-3-899232-18-9

Getting here/Travel

By train: via Glöwen, Stendal, Magdeburg, Dessau-Roßlau and Wittenberg.

By car: on the B 107, A 9 and A 2.



Elbe River Landscape – Brandenburg

White storks and the Church of the Holy Blood ("Wunderblutkirche")

Start a bicycle ride in Wittenberge, past interesting industrial architecture. Upstream on the dyke along the Elbe, stopping off at the "nature points" and then on to the "European stork village" of Rühstädt. White stork exhibition in the visitor centre, heritage route in the village and/or walk in castle park, lunch at one of the inns. Further on to Gnevsdorf and have a rest where the Havel joins the Elbe. Groß Lüben to Bad Wilsnack ("adventure tour"). Eat an ice cream, admire the Church of the Holy Blood ("Wunderblutkirche"). Recuperate in Wilsnack thermal baths, then back to Wittenberge (also possible by regional train).

Beaver, felt demonstration workshop and eating Elbe lamb

Monday afternoon: arrive in Lenzerwische. A guest house right on the dyke. Stroll along the river.

Tuesday: bicycle trip through Wische, visit the Gutsspeichers ("grange memory") in Eldenburg. Cranes and geese in the evening.

Wednesday: Lenzen: visit the dyke relocation site (large conservation project), Lenzen castle, nature education garden, felt demonstration workshop, former GDR cooperative.

Thursday: guided tour of Wittenberge, boat trip on the Elbe, visit the "European stork village" of Rühstädt. Spa evening in Wilsnack thermal baths

Friday: trip on foot or by bike around Rambower

Saturday: explore the inland dunes at Klein Schmölen, visit Dömitz fortress, evening culture in Prignitz.

Sunday: Elbe ferry to Schnackenburg Borderland Museum, Walk in Gadower Forest, eat Elbe lamb in a pub.



Storks at Rühstedt

Facts and figures

Location: extreme north-west of the state of Brandenburg

Size: 533 square kilometres

Elevation: 13.5 to 54.5 metres

History: established as a nature park in 1990, designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1997.

Landscape types: Elbe valley with wet meadows, oxbow lakes, floodplain forest remnants and valley sand areas, Prignitz and Perleberger heaths

Biosphere Reserve information

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.elbe-brandenburg-biosphaerenreservat.de



Accommodation

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

Getting here/Travel

By train: stations at Glöwen, Bad Wilsnack, Wittenberge, Karstädt. Continue by bicycle or public transport ÖPNV.





Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg Western Pomerania

From village republic to fortress town

In good weather the observation tower in Rüterberg gives a panoramic view of the southern part of the river landscape. From here, a walk through the "village republic" and to clay pit is recommended. It continues along the "Green Belt" on the former patrol road and the Elbe dyke. Eating in Dömitz harbour is recommended, and not just at lunchtime. A small "harbour tour" or a large Elbe boat trip are worth doing. From Klein Schmölen the dunes nature trail leads you through the largest inland dune on the Elbe. "Basically," - the innovative exhibition of the information centre in Dömitz fortress - offers profound insights into our life foundation. Whatever the season, the multimedia shows the human action and the needs - historically and currently - to the basics.

Dyke walks and stork bicycle trips

Monday: Vier forest trip with panoramic views from "Elwkieker" tower and Border land museum in Boizenburg/Vier.

Tuesday: stork bicycle trip from Boizenburger Weidenschneck along the Dyke trail to Teldau.

Wednesday: Boizenburg Tile Museum, a guided walk in the old town, walk on the Swan Path, "Bollenberg" inland dune near Gothmann.

Thursday: bicycle trip from Brahlstorf train station to the English landscape park at Dammereez and onto the Stork Foundation in Preten.

Friday: Lübtheen local history museum, Probst Jesar open-air pool, Rundlingsdorf Vielank with brewery, historical forest courtyard and forest museum in Kaliß.

Saturday: Blücher church tower with an exhibition and viewing platform high above the river landscape, bicycle trip on Blücher Polder – including a detour with partner companies (goat farm, organic pick-your-own fruit, pottery workshop).

Sunday: Dömitz Fortress, dyke walk along the Elbe or Müritz-Elde waterway, boat trip on the River Elbe.

A sandy experience – the dune nature trail to the largest inland dune in the Elbe River Landscape

Facts and figures

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

Size: 397 square kilometres

Elevation: 6 to 87 metres

History: designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1998, since 2015 also a Biosphere Reserve under state law.

Landscape types: expansive floodplain with tributaries, wet grassland, Elbe river slopes and inland dunes

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsamt Schaalsee-Elbe Wittenburger Chaussee 13 19246 Zarrentin Tel. 038851 302-0, Fax -20 poststelle@bra-schelb.mvnet.de

Accommodation

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

Accommodation of "Partnerbetriebe des Biosphärenreservates" www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de

Books and maps

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

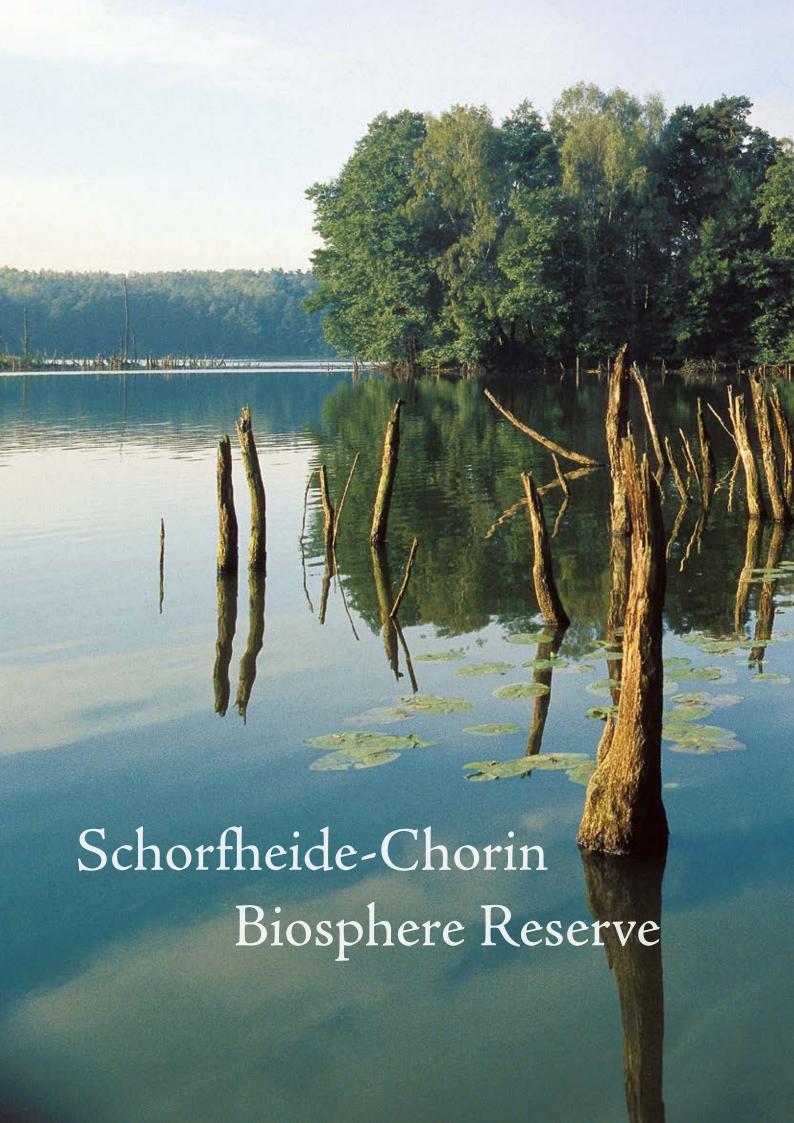
Getting here/Travel

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

By car: on the A 24, B 5, B 191 and B 195.

Nature experience with a Ranger on an Elbe boat trip





Land of cranes with a broad horizon

A beautiful, impressive contradiction - a quiet, sparsely populated land with mires, lakes, forests and open landscapes, yet all shaped by human use. This management has allowed a cultural landscape to grow, which is characterized by its diversity. White-tailed eagle, osprey and lesser spotted eagle circle the skies. Adder, smooth snake and the European pond turtle live here. Numerous lakes, marshes and alder carr woodlands dominate the landscape, providing room for rare plants and animals that are long gone from elsewhere, such as wild rosemary or moor frog. With 53 species of dragonflies and damselflies, the Biosphere Reserve is their biggest large protection area in Germany. Preserving this biodiversity is one of the key responsibilities of biosphere reserves in Germany; intensive research is the basis for doing this. As an example: in the north-east of Brandenburg there are many grey cranes and around 450 pairs of them have made their breeding grounds in the Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve. These big birds are the subject of a lot of scientific research ranging from migration route studies to supporting efforts to re-establish the grey crane in the British Isles.



Schorfheide-Chorin gives its seal of approval to environmentally-sound products and services, thus helping to strengthen regional economic cycles. Consumers can rest assured that all products are predominantly made from environmentally friendly raw materials from the biosphere reserve – whether it is food, wooden houses or herbal wreaths. Speaking of food, the Biosphere Reserve puts a lot of energy into the preservation of old fruit and vegetable varieties – which, of course, visitors can sample and purchase, for example in "Ökodorf Brodowin".

Left: lakes dominate the landscape

Right: resting damselfly (Coenagrion)



Narrow roads lead through ancient beech forests, home to eagles, cranes and Red Deer

Klosterschänke (Cloister Tavern) and boat lift

Visitors arrive in Chorin by train, bike or car. Visit the famous Cistercian monastery. Stop at the Klosterschänke (Cloister Tavern) with its regional dishes. With luck, an afternoon visit to a summer concert in the courtyard of the monastery. Ökodorf Brodowin is nearby, with a farm shop for organic products.

Then on to Rummelsberg with wonderful views over lakes and forests. Next is the Niederfinow boat lift on the Oder-Havel Canal: engineered in 1930. From there, the road leads to Großziethen and its steam mill and later to "Kaiserbahnhof" with its radio play performances and the Biorama observation tower.

Wildlife Park, Werbellin Lake and the forest

Monday: arrive in Groß Schönebeck. Explore Schorfheide Game Park: wolves, elk, wild horses, otters and old breeds of domestic pets.

Tuesday: hike to "Kaisergrund" and Hubertusstock hunting lodge.

Wednesday: boat across Werbellin Lake. Visit Schorfheide-Information exhibition in Joachimsthal. From Grimnitzsee Lake (natural swimming area) to Althüttendorf and the nature observation point on the lake.

Thursday: bicycle trip or walk via Glambeck to Parlow ("Am Speicher" inn and exhibition).

Friday: by "Biberbahn" ("beaver train") from Angermünde to Blumberger Mühle nature centre with its terrapin enclosure, playground, and maze. Zander filet from the Uckermark for lunch.

Saturday: bicycle trip from Angermünde to the World Heritage information point in Altkünkendorf. Walk through Grumsin beech forest – part of the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Ancient Beech Forests of Germany.

Sunday: trip around Oberucker Lake.

Facts and figures

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

Size: 1,300 square kilometres

Elevation: 2 to 139 metres

History: founded and recognized by UNESCO in 1990

Landscape types: open hilly landscape, forests, outwash plain, glacial valleys, moors, lakes and kettle holes

Biosphere Reserve information

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

Schorfheide-Info Joachimsthal Töpferstraße 1 16247 Joachimsthal Tel. 033361 633-80

NABU-Naturerlebniszentrum Blumberger Mühle 16278 Angermünde Tel. 03331 2604-0

Accommodation

TMU Tourismus Marketing Uckermark GmbH Stettiner Straße 19 17291 Prenzlau Tel. 03984 835883, Fax 835885 info@tourismus-uckermark.de More than 700-yearsold, Chorin Cistercian monastery still dominates the region and continues to cast its spell over visitors



Books and maps

Schorfheide-Chorin, Bildband ISBN 978-3-929743-10-4

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

Unbekanntes Deutschland, Bildband ISBN 978-3-8231-5003-9

Freizeitkarte Uckermark Schorfheide

Getting here/Travel

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

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



Where the forest is reflected in the water...

A delta south of Berlin? Yes, but it is better known as Spree Forest. It was formed around 10,000 years ago when the River Spree divided into an intricate network of streams. Today the Spree Forest barges quietly carry their loads, the dragonflies flit over the water and with a little luck you can see a grass snake swimming. The sun shines through the canopy of leaves - the Spree Forest often seems like an enchanted forest. Species live here that are threatened or already extinct elsewhere. There are more than 100 breeding pairs of white stork in many locations. Black storks, cranes, white-tailed eagles and ospreys prefer the quiet and damp forests; they feed in the rich fishing waters and on the wet meadows. Plus, Spree Forest is also a habitat for butterflies. In the vast alder swamps and riparian forests 937 species of butterflies and moths have been recorded - amazing but true. Many of them there are not found anywhere else in Germany, such as scarlet tiger moth or eyed hawk-moth.



At the same time, traditions, lifestyles and working methods are still closely linked to the landscape, an important characteristic of every biosphere reserve. The Spree Forest was dominated by agriculture for centuries, but the small farmsteads are unprofitable under current conditions. The Biosphere Reserve has therefore initiated the establishment of a community foundation for the Spree Forest cultural landscape. It promotes sustainable development and preservation of the manmade cultural and natural landscape of the Spree Forest by supporting farmers active in landscape management measures or the cultivation of traditional crops such as the Spree Forest horseradish. Furthermore, Spree Forest is the organic farming Biosphere Reserve - 70 % of the fields and meadows are farmed according to organic guidelines, so healthy milk and beef are produced. There are numerous ways for the visitor to discover Spree Forest, such as by bike, but there is also a unique possibility to explore the Biosphere Reserve - by traditional boat or rented canoe.

Left: stream in Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve

Right: Spree Forest specialties from traditional crops



Fruit trees and lunch with linseed oil

The dispersed settlement of Burg in Oberspree-wald provides manifold Spree Forest impressions. On this side of the Alps you will find no other such collection of log houses. Here you can experience the typical Spree Forest in a few hours. It is particularly attractive in spring, when the fruit trees and marsh marigolds bloom. From Waldschlösschen barge harbour you can take a river tour. Like a Venetian gondola, a Spree Forest barge is punted by a boatman. After about two hours Kannomühle is reached. A footpath leads back into the centre of Burg. After a lunch of curd cheese and linseed oil, visit Schlossberghof Biosphere Reserve information centre with its medicinal and aromatic plant garden.

An invitation to a Spree Forest gherkin test

Monday: start with a barge ride from Burg. Back on land, explore the area by bike.

Tuesday: visit the "Haus für Mensch und Natur in Lübbenau". Then natural history bicycle tour in the inner Oberspreewald with the Spree Forest rangers. Finally, stroll through the historic old town.

Wednesday: Spree Forest gherkin test in Rabe canning factory in Boblitz. Then by bike or on foot via Raddusch to Leipe. Fish with Spree Forest sauce for lunch. Later, trace the life of the Sorbs/Wends in Lehde open-air museum.

Thursday: start by "Going underwater" at the Old Mill in Schlepzig. Afterwards explore the lower Spree Forest by canoe. Swim in Köthener lake.

Friday: cycle right around Straupitz. Have a look in the smock windmill!

Saturday: go with the park rangers to the observation tower on Kockrowsberg Polder to look out for rare waterfowl. Visit the Regional Museum in Lübben.

Winter landscape in the Spree Forest

Facts and figures

Location: about 100 kilometres south-east of Berlin in south Brandenburg

Size: 475 square kilometres

Elevation: 50 to 144 metres

History: founded in 1990, recognised as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1991.

Landscape types: marsh, swamp and floodplain forests, bogs, swamps and reedbeds, semi-natural wet and dry meadows

Biosphere Reserve information

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 276, Fax 035472 648-99 br-spreewald@lugv.brandenburg.de

Accommodation

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

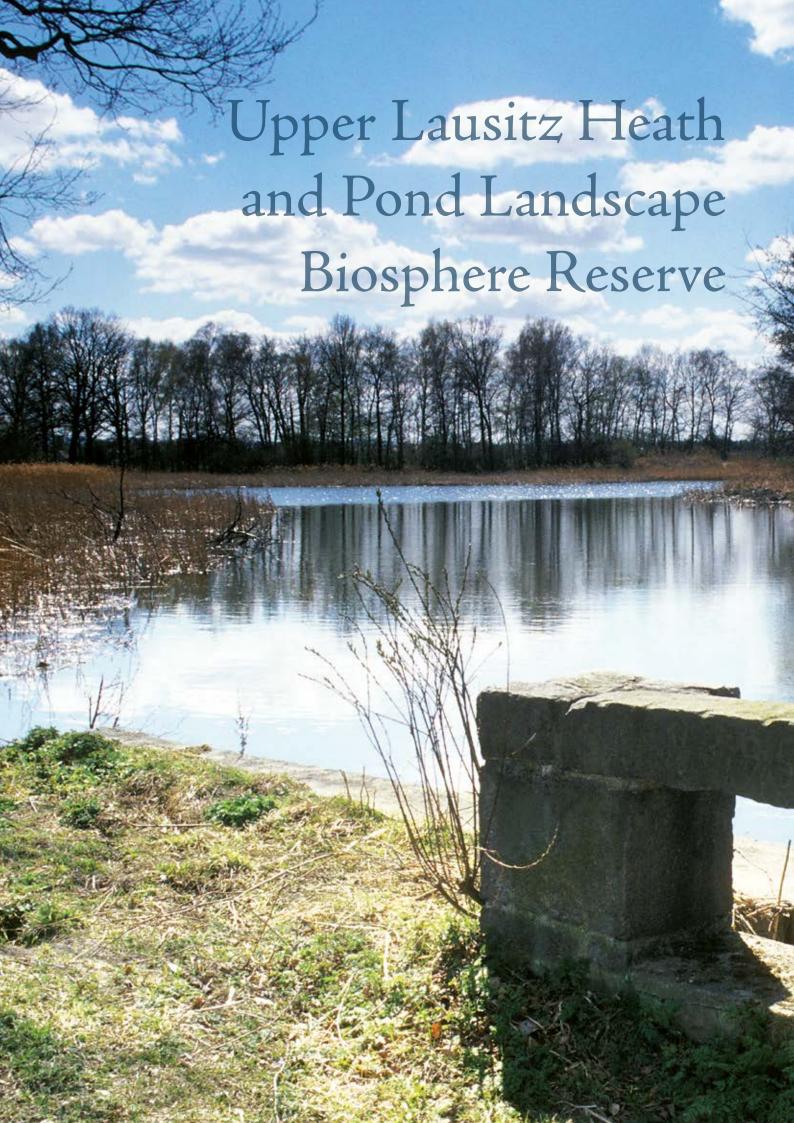
Getting here/Travel

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

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



A girl in traditional Spree Forest costume





Carp ponds in the heathland

More than 350 ponds nestling in dune forests, wet meadows, unimproved fields, floodplains and heaths — an extraordinary diversity of habitats for rare plants and animals can be found in eastern Germany. The Oberlausitzer Heath and Pond Landscape has developed as a result of centuries of human habitation. Slavic settlers arrived here after 600 AD and they called this large area covered by swamps and forests "Lužica" (swampland), which evolved into "Lausitz". The first recorded evidence of the system of fish ponds dates back to 1248. In the 15th and 16th centuries the fish ponds were already an important business. In the early 18th century a highly productive fish farming business had developed.

Oberlausitzer organic carp has been on the market since 2008. Kreba-Fisch GmbH and Ringpfeil/Wartha fish farm are the first companies to offer this certified fish. The carp here are allowed to feel good before they land on the plate. They grow in semi-natural ponds. The fishermen make sure there is a suitable population so that the carp can mainly use the naturally occurring organisms in the water and need only a small amount of organically produced grains to supplement their diet. This centuries-old tradition of carp production lives on again in this new and sustainable manner.

The work of the Oberlausitzer Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve Management doesn't just focus on pond management; there is also a renaissance of old grain varieties such as "hunter's North German champagne rye" or "old Pommeranian block head wheat". Reduced fertilizer and herbicide use creates the best conditions in arable fields for arable weeds to have a chance of survival, e.g. the corn-cockle. Long transportation is avoided because the grain is ground in a regional mill and processed by bakeries in the Biosphere Reserve, which shortens the distance from the field to the customer.

Left: Goose pond in Spree meadow

Right: flowering corn-cockle (Agrostemma githago)



Autumn is harvest time
– fishermen from the
Klitten pond management
agency pulling fish from
the "Heuteich"
(Zimpel Pond Group)

Fishermen and white-tailed eagles

Visit the "Haus der Tausend Teiche" information centre at Wartha in the centre of the Oberlausitzer Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve. Visit the "carp breeding in the changing four seasons" exhibition with its giant aquarium and outdoor water adventure area. Lunch with typical regional dishes. Then walk along the "Guttauer ponds and lake Olbasee" nature trail (the Olbasee is a flooded former lignite mine, which today offers camping and bathing), and after to the school museum in Wartha, with dinner at the "Eisvogel".

Alternatively, start the morning with our bike ride along the white-tailed eagle trail. The trip goes to Mücka via Weigersdorf and Kreba-Neudorf passing many information points and observation towers. From there to Klitten on Bärwalder Lake (this is also a former open pit). After a good rest and refreshment on the marina it's on to Uhyst, Mönau, Lieske, Neudorf/Spree and Halbendorf/Spree and then Lömischau. Stop here for dinner in the restaurant "Gute Laune" and then back to Wartha.

"Gute Laune" and the Ornithological Station

Monday: excursion to the wolf area, in the afternoon visit the "Schrotholzhaus" settlement in Rietschen Erlichthof and the farmstead museum. Also visit the wolf exhibition there, dinner in the Erlichthofsiedlung.

Tuesday: Haus der Tausend Teiche, "Guttauer ponds and Olbasee" nature trail, Wartha School Museum. Lunch in the "Gute Laune" restaurant with Lömischau fish from Lausitzer recipes. Afterwards the fishing exhibition in Guttau.

Wednesday: sightseeing in Bautzen: old town, Ortenburg, old waterworks, City Museum.

Thursday: Milkel Baroque castle with park tour.
Then visit Kleinholscha fish farm, Saxony Bird
Observatory and the Nature Conservation Station, visit the Baroque castle.

Friday: visit Görlitz. Conservation 200, historic old town, parks and Landeskrone (Hausberg).

Saturday: visit Pückler castle and Muskauer Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site). Then Krauschwitz adventure pool.

Sunday: to Oberlausitzer mountains. Magnificent view from the heights. Food in a cosy mountain lodge Bergbaude (Baude Lausitzblick, Monumentberg).

Facts and figures

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

Size: 301 square kilometres

Elevation: 117 to 176 metres

History: the former landscape protection area was designated as a biosphere reserve in 1994 and recognised by UNESCO in 1996.

Landscape types: dune forests, floodplains, rivers, reedbeds, fresh and wet meadows, fields, moors, dry grasslands, wet and dry heaths and more than 350 ponds

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Warthaer Dorfstraße 29 02694 Malschwitz OT Wartha Tel. 035932 3650, Fax -50 poststelle.sbs-broht@smul.sachsen.de www.biosphärenreservat-oberlausitz.de

Haus der Tausend Teiche Warthaer Dorfstraße 29 02694 Malschwitz OT Wartha Tel. 035932 36560, Fax -61 tausendteichehaus.sbs@smul.sachsen.de www.haus-der-tausend-teiche.de

Accommodation

Biosphärenpartner (Wirte): www.biosphärenreservat-oberlausitz.de

Touristische Gebietsgemeinschaft Heide und Teiche im Bautzener Land e.V. Gutsstraße 4c, 02699 Königswartha Tel. 035931 21220 info@oberlausitz-heide.de www.oberlausitz-heide.de

Books and maps

Biosphärenreservatspläne Part 1 and 2 (box-set) Available from BR-Verwaltung

Die Brutvögel im Biosphärenreservat Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft Available from BR-Verwaltung Ratgeber – Geschützte und wertvolle Biotope in der Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft Bezug über die BR-Verwaltung

Touristische Wander- und Radwanderkarte Biosphärenreservat ISBN 978-3-932281-25-9

This and other mostly free information material is available at: www.biosphärenreservat-oberlausitz.de

Getting here/Travel

By train: to Bautzen, continue with bus line R106 to Guttau.

By bus: line R106 Bautzen-Niesky-Bautzen to Guttau.

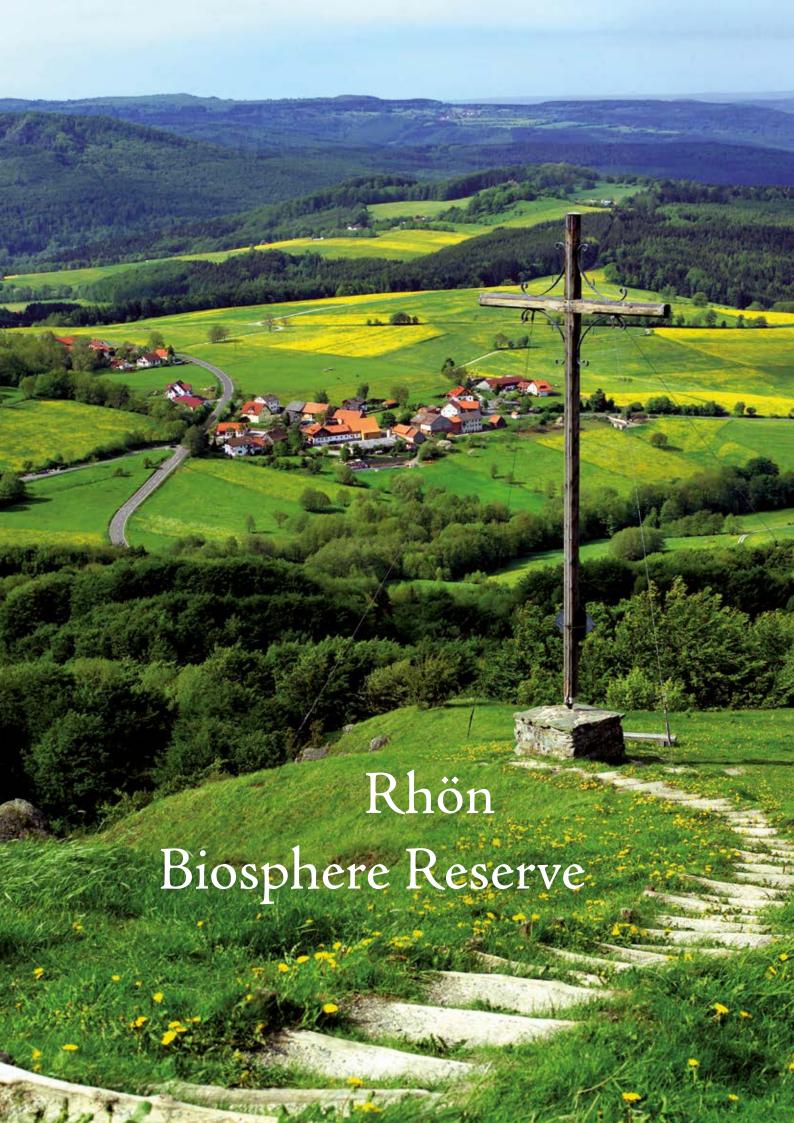
By car: A 4 exit for Bautzen-Ost, B 156 towards Weißwasser, at Stausee Bautzen turn right towards Niesky (S 109), in Guttau turn left to Lömischau and Wartha.



Heide in bloom

Biosphärenreservat Oberlausitzer Heideund Teichlandschaft







A Land of open distances

Each biosphere reserve is somewhat unique – recognizable by its landscapes, flora and fauna and the economic and cultural influence of mankind. The Rhön Biosphere Reserve is special because it is a protected area which extends across three German states: Bavaria, Hesse and Thuringia. Together these three states preserve a unique cultural landscape in the heart of Germany, which has developed over centuries as a result of farming, mowing, grazing and forestry.

Particularly in need of protection are the approximately 100 species of wild plants and animals that are in endangered in Germany which have found a refuge in the region. Two examples illustrate the rich diversity in the Rhön Biosphere Reserve: 40 different orchid species have been recorded here and approximately 3,000 species of fungi. This variety has its origin in varied land-scapes, including raised bogs, semi-natural streams, boulder piles, hedgerow areas, extensively used meadows and pastures, as well as semi-natural deciduous forests.

Thanks to close collaboration with partner companies from agriculture and gastronomy throughout the Rhön Biosphere Reserve, walkers, hikers, outdoor sportsmen and other recreationalists are offered something they can enjoy with all their senses. Would you like a taster? Tender steaks from the Rhön meadow oxen, Rhöner apple juice and fruit spirits, caraway bread, trout, Rhön sheep chops, onion cake ("Zwiebelploatz") and Rhöner bread dumplings ("Spatzeklöß") await the connoisseur who prefers organic quality. There are also organic wines or beer from the Biosphere Reserve, whichever you prefer!

Left: View over Schwarzerden

Right: Livestock grazing in front of the prominent and legendary Milseburg – an extinct volcano



Propstei Zella – information centre and headquarters of the Thuringian Administration

Raised bogs, wide vistas and great gastronomy

The walk starts at Birxgraben car park in the Ulstertal valley near Seifert. It leads up to the Rhön Highlands and it goes over extensive cattle pastures uphill to the border triangle of Bavaria, Hesse and Thuringia. The path continues through park-like landscape to Schwarzes Moor car park. A two-kilometre-long boardwalk carries the nature trail through the bog, allowing rare animal and plant species to be discovered. Schwarzes Moor is the best preserved, growing raised bog in the central German highlands. The Verein Naturpark und Biosphärenreservat Bayerische Rhön e. V. offers tours which can be arranged in advance.

In the "Sennhütte" (chalet) there is apple beer, lamb sausages and other regional specialties. Back to Schwarzes Moor car park the path leads north to Grabenberg. Remains of the former GDR border installations remind us of the past.

The next goal is the "healthy village" of Frankenheim, the highest community in the Rhön with its "barefoot panorama trail" and medicinal plant garden. Behind this mountain village the meadows and pastures extend up to Ellenbogen. From here a magnificent view opens over Ulstertal valley. The "Thüringer Rhönhäuschen" and the "Eisenacher Haus" hotel both offer superb cuisine with Rhön specialties. The path runs southwest along Sophienstraße back to the starting point. The walk ends with a refreshing glass of Rhön organic beer and other delicacies at the "Schaukelterei" (wine pressing house) in Seifert.

From early September to early December, anyone who is not yet tired can then watch the work in the Schaukelterei and the cellar next door, or even join in themselves. At this time of year there are also many meadow orchard events.

Culture, interesting facts and hiking

Monday: visit the "Haus Lange Rhön" information centre and exhibition in Oberelsbach. Then walk through the meadow orchard village of Hausen – the model community of the Biosphere Reserve. Who can identify the most types of fruit here?

Tuesday: bicycle tour through the Rhön Highlands or hike to mystical Milseburg (former Celtic refuge fort). Then visit the museum village of Tann or the open-air museum in Fladungen. In the evening you can "taste" the landscape – with hearty dishes made from local produce.

Wednesday: cultural day. Tour around the medieval fortress church in Ostheim with a visit to the organ museum. Alternatively: all-day trip to the Baroque city of Fulda, to Bad Kissingen or to Meiningen with a visit to the South Thuringia State Theatre.

Thursday: visit the "Haus der Schwarzen Berge" information centre in Oberbach with its cafeteria and regional produce shop. Then walk to Kreuzberg to visit the hotel's own brewery – and drink abbey beer!

Friday: walk through Ibengarten and visit Dermbach heritage museum. Attractions worth seeing include Propstei Zella information centre, the baroque churches in Zella and Dermbach, and various fortified churches such as in Kaltensundheim. Afterwards drive to Merkers potash show mine and crystal grotto.

Saturday: shopping for souvenirs as well as food and drink at the "Rhönhöfe" in Kaltensundheim. Walk to the former German-German border, visit the Point Alpha memorial site in Geisa. Then visit to the Stiftskirche (collegiate church) in Rasdorf. Almost every weekend there are festivals, traditional and cultural events taking place in the Rhön. Highlights include Fastnacht (carnival) in February and the fairs in autumn. There are also village anniversaries, folk dances, club parties, wine and beer festivals, etc.

Sunday: a sense of freedom in the land of open distances: from Wasserkuppe a glider flight or sightseeing flight sailing over the Rhön. Afterwards visit the glider museum and the Biosphere Information Centre in Groenhoff-Haus as well as the radome. At the end of an eventful week, your body and mind can relax in one of the spa baths.

View from Geba



Facts and figures

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

Size: 2,433 square kilometres

Elevation: 180 to 950 metres

History: recognised by UNESCO in 1991.

Landscape types: highlands with distinctive cones and knolls, wide floodplains, raised bogs, meadows and pastures, semi-natural forests

Biosphere Reserve information

www.brrhoen.de

www.rhoen.de

Black head and white

legs - the Rhön sheep

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



Biosphere Reserve Admininstrative 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

Accommodation

Informationszentrum Haus der Schwarzen Berge Rhönstraße 97 97772 Wildflecken-Oberbach Tel. 09749 9122-0, Fax -33 infozentrum@rhoen.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 Nature Park 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" Tourism Community Thüringer Rhön, Parzeller Druck, Fulda Wanderkarte Naturpark Rhön-Südblatt ISBN 978-3-86038-490-9

Wanderkarte Naturpark Rhön-Nordblatt ISBN 978-3-89446-275-8

Hiking guides from 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

Getting here/Travel

By train: Fulda ICE train station, car hire is available or continue by Rhönbahn to Gersfeld, via Erfurt (from the north) or Würzburg (from the south) to Meiningen, Hammelburg, Bad Kissingen, Bad Neustadt or Mellrichstadt.

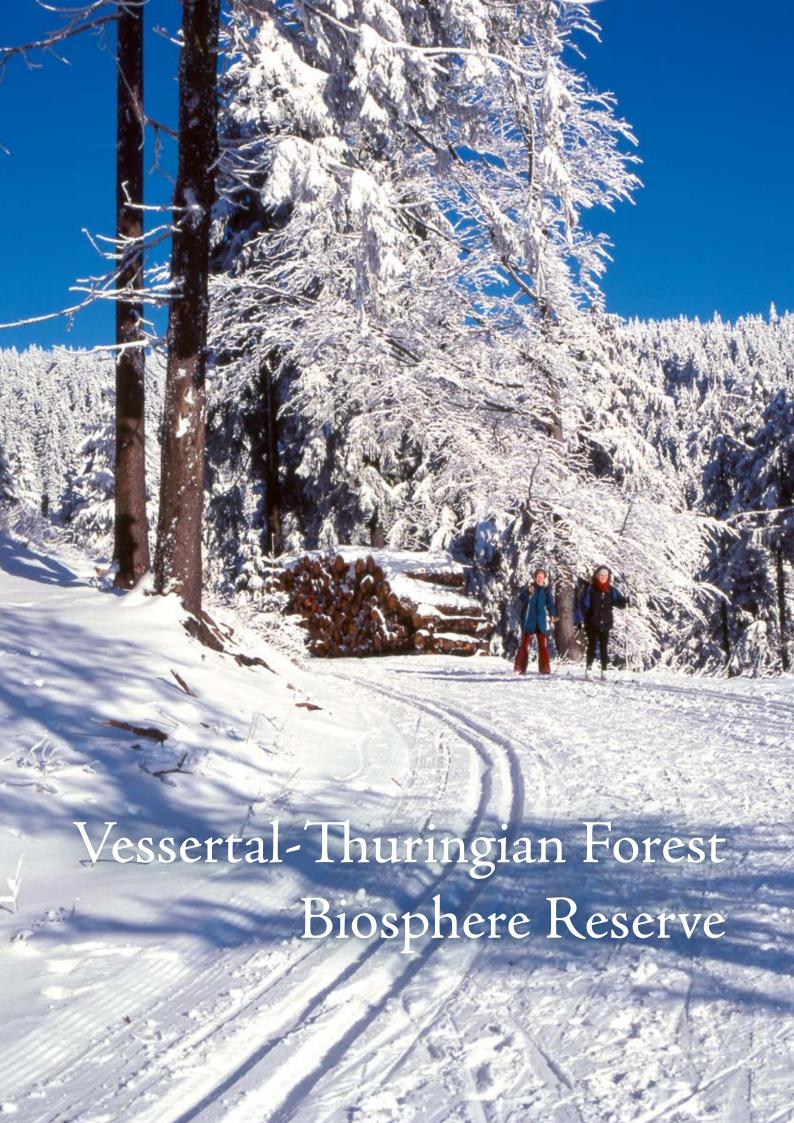
By car:

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

Bavarian Rhön: A 7 exit Hammelburg, alternatively A 71 exit Bad Kissingen, Bad Neustadt or Mellrichstadt, then in a westerly direction.

Thuringian Rhön: from north A 4 exit Eisenach-West, B 84 towards Bad Salzungen, B 285 towards Kaltennordheim. From the east A 71 exit Meiningen-Nord, then in a westerly direction.







Lively silence - naturally

In these woods the black woodpecker drums, the pygmy owl raises its young, and the shy woodcock hides. The red deer is king of the forest. The Biosphere Reserve is a contiguous forest area interspersed with meadows.

The mountain meadows inspire with their many-coloured flowering periods from spring until autumn. The flowers of that well-known medicinal plant Arnica glow golden yellow. Spignel, St. John's wort and wood cranesbill as well as numerous herbs give the meadows their characteristic aromatic fragrance. Occasionally a snipe rises from the meadow and you can hear its plaintive flight call.

The mires, which formed on the ridges of the Thuringian Forest after the last ice age, are home to sundew, an insectivorous plant, and the delicate bog rosemary.

Numerous streams run through the woods and meadows of the Biosphere Reserve. They are clear and full of life. The fire salamander spawns in the upper streams; its larvae grow undisturbed in the cool waters. In quiet spots downstream you can watch the red-speckled brown trout as it hunts for aquatic insects. The dipper also lives here, the only songbird that seeks food underwater.

The Biosphere Reserve is always in season – walkers come to the Thuringian Forest all year round. The Rennsteig is a particular attraction. This Thuringian Forest ridge walk runs right across the Biosphere Reserve. In winter, many skiers use the numerous cross-country skiing trails and downhill ski runs.

Unspoilt mountain spruce and healthy forest air

A whole-day hike in the largely unspoilt countryside of Vessertal: start in Vesser, at the edge of the village the along the Vesser valley with its seminatural steam. Surrounded by unspoilt mountain spruce, lush ferns and healthy forest air. After about two kilometres along the flowing Glasenbach turn uphill into the Stutenhaus meadow which was once grazed by horses from Veßra abbey. The trail leads further to Upper Vessertal with its colourful meadows. In the afternoon back to Vesser to visit the half-timbered church.

"These meadows give the forested areas their unique appeal, with the alternating pattern of forests and clearings, the lush green eye-catching carpet laid charitably in front of the wanderer, making a walk through the forest a most pleasant diversion", from *Der Thüringer Wald – Besonders für Reisende geschildert* by K.E.A. Hoff and C. W. Jacobs, Gotha 1807

Forest landscape, meadows and der Rennsteiggarden

Monday: circular walk from Oberhofer car park in Löffelbrunn through the "Hohen" and "Ausgebrannten Stein" to Upper Sieglitzteich, afternoon visit to Rennsteig garden

Tuesday: mountain meadow experience – walk from Breitenbach (St. Kilian) into Roßbachtal, via Kreuzeiche into Breitenbachtal, afternoon visit to Bertholdsburg Schleusingen museum

Wednesday: circular walk through "magical forest landscape" in Stützerbach, from walkers' car park in Auerhahn to Knöpfelstaler pond, Finsteres Loch (Dark Hole) and back to Auerhahn

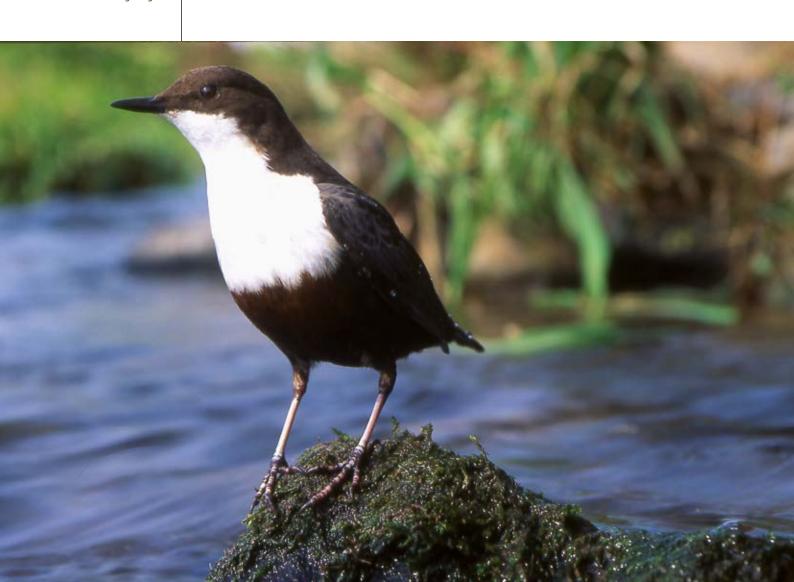
Thursday: walk in Gießübler or Fehrenbacher Schweiz, visit Schönbrunn Spice Museum, or Rennsteigwarte at Masserberg with views over Thuringian Forest to the Rhön

Friday: visit Goethe Town Museum in Ilmenau, afterwards visit "Volle Rose" show mine

Saturday: day trip on the Mylius Way, starting in Großbreitenbach, visit the Thuringian Forest Creative museum in Großbreitenbach

Sunday: walk from Rennsteig station to Frauenwald, on the way back visit the Bunker Museum

The dipper – the only diving songbird



Facts and figures

Location: 50 kilometres south of Erfurt in the centre of the Thuringian Forest

Size: 170 square kilometres (as in 2015)

Elevation: 420 to 982 metres

History: The first areas were declared as a nature reserve in 1939; recognised as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1979.

Landscape types: mixed mountain forest, mountain meadows, mountain streams, raised bogs

Biosphere Reserve information

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

Informationszentrum im Haus am Hohen Stein Brunnenstraße 1 98711 Schmiedefeld am Rennsteig Tel. 036782 666-0

Accommodation

Regionalverbund Thüringer Wald e.V. Tel. 03682 47769-0 www.thueringer-wald.com

Books and maps

Wanderkarte Biosphärenreservat Vessertal-Thüringer Wald (with ski trail and cycling routes) ISBN 978-3-935621-18-2

Biosphärenreservat Vessertal – ein Wanderführer 32 attractive circular walks ISBN 978-3-935621-95-3 Sustainable travel



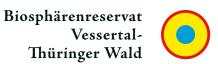
Getting here/Travel

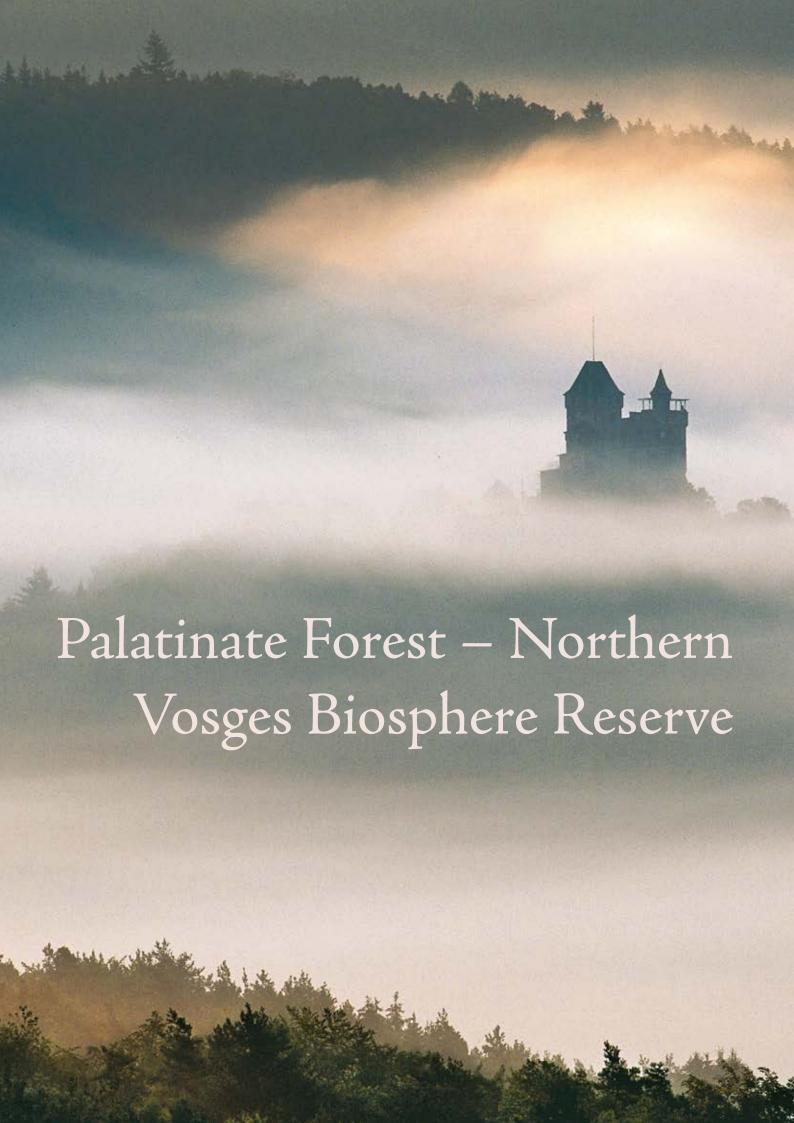
By train: from Erfurt to Ilmenau, Gehlberg, Oberhof or Suhl. From Schweinfurt to Suhl, Oberhof or Gehlberg. Further into the area by Bus.

By bus: from Ilmenau, Hildburghausen, Gehlberg, Oberhof or Suhl. Further into the area towards Schmiedefeld or Rennsteig.

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

Further information: www.rennsteigbus.de www.rennsteigshuttle.de





Where the forest kisses the vineyard

Nature knows no borders and that is particularly true in the Franco-German Palatinate Forest – Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve. Forest, wine and mottled sandstone, joy of life, a lot of sun and savoir vivre – right in the heart of Europe.

If you fly over this forest, the largest contiguous forest area in Western Europe (over 300,000 hectares), at first you only see trees. But on closer inspection the careful observer can uncover the diversity under the canopy. There are many rare animal and plant species in the deeply incised river valleys, on the bizarre mottled sandstone cliffs, and in the colourful meadows. Wildcat and lynx, "characteristic animals" of the region, hunt at night and prefer to avoid the attention of curious hikers. They are also typical inhabitants of unfragmented habitats.

Man and landscape have been closely interlinked for a long time. Forestry, mining and wine production dominated in the past and continue to shape this unique cultural landscape we have today. From the Celts to the Romans, from medieval noblemen to modern imperialists – all have left their visible mark between the Rhine and Mosel. The Romans for example brought sweet chestnut trees over the Alps to the region; its wood was necessary for viticulture. The lush sweet chestnut forests have since become characteristic of the countryside. Prior to the introduction of the potato, the sweet chestnut played an important role as a staple food – often called the "bread of the forest". Today it is appreciated by gourmets on both sides of the



border. The real highlight of the timber industry is the proverbial Palatinate oak – known worldwide for its high quality since the Middle Ages.

Alongside the hilly forest areas on the eastern edge of the biosphere reserve there is a bit of Mediterranean flair. With more than 1,800 hours of sun per year, sweet chestnut, almonds, figs, kiwis and lemons thrive here, as well as many grape varieties. In the old villages and charming sunken lanes through the terraced vineyards you can feel the history of a traditionally developed wine culture with every step.

To see how sustainable development really works, to see where quality products come from in the Biosphere Reserve, and to see traditional and organic methods of processing – visitors can go to selected partner establishments – for instance organic winemakers, restaurateurs, farmers, beekeepers, oil mill, organic bakeries, timber processors and game producers.

With the love of nature, which unites the Palatinate and France, pleasure should not be missed out on. All visitors are therefore encouraged to visit the Franco-German farmers' market, which takes place several times a year. The produce available there is always environmentally friendly and organic.

Left: the silhouette of Berwartstein looms out of the fog

Right: the Biosphere plate – selected dishes with local products from this nature-blessed gourmet region



View across the vineyards of Villa Ludwigshöhe castle with the chairlift to Rieth Castle

Mediterranean flair and plenty to savour

The best way to explore the Biosphere Reserve is from the city of Edenkoben (arrive by car or train). From here you can float in a chair lift from Villa Ludwigshöhe Castle up to Riethburg. On the terrace you can enjoy regional specialties and take in the magnificent view of the "wine route" landscape. A hiking trail then leads to Ludwigsturm with further views over the Palatinate Forest. From there it continues through open chestnut and pine forests to Schänzel Tower and Heldenstein forester's lodge. The way back leads through the romantic Edenkobener valley past the Palatine Forest Club and back down to Edenkoben (total length 20 kilometres, with 8 kilometres of the return journey possible by hiker's bus).

The Biosphere House and a handful of castles

Monday: Visit the Biosphere House with a treetop trail and many nature information points at Fischbach/Dahn and Berwartstein Castle at Erlenbach*.

Tuesday: visit Trifels castle, then walk* to Rehberg Tower and Neukastell castle.

Wednesday: visit the wildlife and hiking park of the southern Wine Route in Silz.

Thursday: walk around the Palatine Gallery in Kaiserslautern and visit the House of Sustainability in Johanniskreuz.

Friday: visit Limburg monastery ruin* and the Palatinate Museum of Natural History in Bad Durkheim.

Saturday: visit the exhibition at the Hambach Castle and the old town of Neustadt on the Wine Route.

Sunday: Three-castle tour* with a visit to the show mine in Nothweiler.

^{*} Certified nature and landscape guides offer guided tours with fascinating details of nature and culture (all year; further information at www.pfaelzerwald.de)

View from Madenburg over the largest contiguous forest in western Europe

Facts and figures

Location: southern Rhineland-Palatinate on the border with France

Size: 1,790 square kilometres

Elevation: 150 to 700 metres

History: founded as a Natural Park in 1958, recognized as a UNESCO- Biosphere Reserve in 1998 and in 1998 as the German part of the transboundary biosphere reserve.

Landscape types: highly fragmented and heavily forested highlands edged by gently sloping, intensively used wine-growing area

Biosphere Reserve information

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

Information on Partner businesses 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 (available 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



Natur und Kultur – Das Biosphärenreservat Pfälzerwald – Vosges du Nord Tel. 06325 95520

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

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

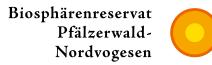
Accommodation

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

Getting here/Travel

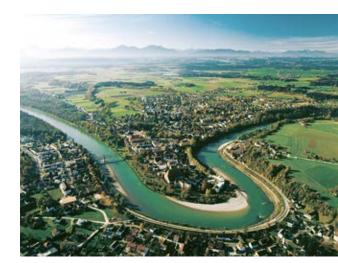
By train: train stations in Neustadt/Weinstraße, Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens, Edenkoben, Landau.

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



Berchtesgadener Land Biosphere Reserve





High above

Imposing peaks that tower into the sky, fragrant Alpine meadows, vast forests, colourful meadows and mysterious bogs - the only Alpine biosphere reserve in Germany offers its visitors grandiose natural features. The combination of an unspoiled natural landscape and rural cultural landscape gives you a holiday full of experiences and relaxation.

Between the high Alpine peaks of the Bavarian Alps in the south and the banks of the river Salzach in the foothills of the Alps to the north, there are a variety of habitats with a great diversity of flora and fauna, including many special species such as edelweiss, golden eagles, ptarmigan or otters.

The core and buffer zones of the biosphere region are essentially the Alpine Berchtesgaden National Park. The buffer zone extends across an Alpine cultural landscape, a hilly moraine landscape to the large floodplains of the Salzach.

In Alpine areas, looking ahead and resourceefficient land use have always been important. Flower-filled Alpine meadows, hay meadows and straw meadows are the epitome of biodiversity, but they are primarily cultural habitats that are summer pasture or cultivated land for winter feed and stable bedding, which are the basic requirements for durable, functioning mountain agriculture.

Sustainable management and coexistence between man and nature therefore have a tradition in Berchtesgaden Land. Even now, family farms produce healthy food and preserve the traditional cultural landscape.

A special feature of Berchtesgaden is salt extraction which has characterized the region since time immemorial. Agriculture has operated alongside the work in the salt mines and the salt pans. The resulting patchwork landscape has a high biodiversity as well as important landscape aesthetics.

Left: Bindalm invites you to rest and with the Almerlebnis Bus it is also easily accessible even for inexperienced hikers

Right: The biosphere region extends from the Salzach loop at Laufen up into the Berchtesgaden Alps

The whole of the mountains

From the mountain village of Ramsau, the Alps can be easily explored with the Almerlebnisbus. Simply get off the road and into the mountain pasture where the dairymaids make traditional dairy products, or at Hirschbichl discover the interactive and cross-border theme and adventure trail "Nature knows no borders". On the way back you should definitely plan a break at the idyllic Hintersee.

Diversity is the key

Sunday: an introduction in the truest sense is the impressive Almbach gorge in Marktschellenberg, which can be easily traversed and at the end of which lies Germany's only ball mill.

Monday: In the morning a stroll around Berchtesgaden market or a visit to the National Park centre "Haus der Berge", then to Schoenau on Lake Koenigssee, which fascinates everyone. Haarmooses, between Laufen and Saaldorf-Surheim, is the largest meadow bird area in the region.

Tuesday: After a tour of the historic old town of Schifferstadt Laufen, it is time to relax at the beautifully situated bog bathing lake at Abstdorfer. It is especially worth visiting at dusk.

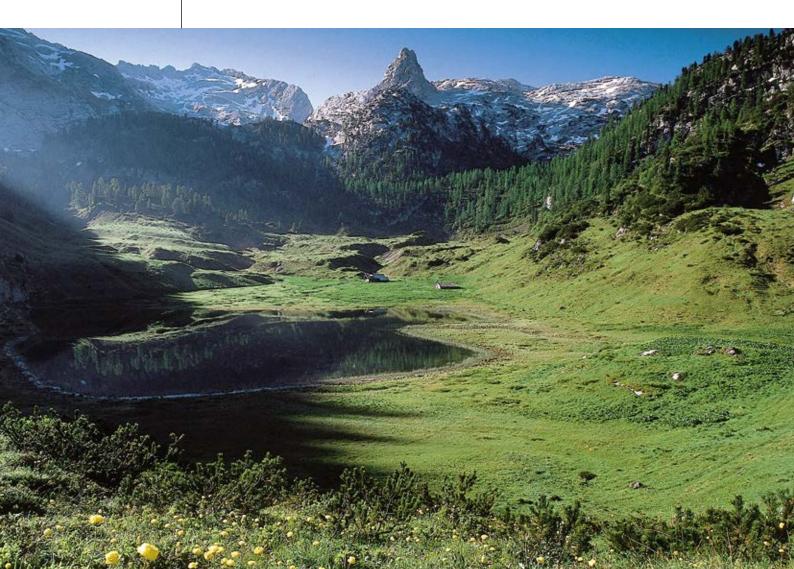
Wednesday: The day begins in Ainringer Moos where fascinating natural and cultural history can be experienced equally. Afterwards a visit to Freilassing and Lokwelt. Then it's only a short hop to the city of Salzburg.

Thursday: From the idyllic market in Teisendorf go by bicycle: our top tip is Höglwörther lake over to Anger with its famous village square. From there continue on the Högl at Piding where the wonderful panoramic views of Salzburg are a reward for the climb!

Friday: From the Weissbach falls follow the Soleleitungsweg (Salt water trail) through the imposing Weissbach ravine through Schneizlreuth, Lake Thumsee and onto Bad Reichenhall. A visit to the old Salt Works rounds off this day in the land of salt.

Saturday: Walk from Bayerisch Gmain to the wildly romantic Lattengebirge up to Bischofswiesen and there end the afternoon by relaxing in the idyllic natural pool of Aschauer.

The Alpine world is characterized by incomparable natural features, as here at Funtensee



Facts and figures

Location: south-east Bavaria on the border with Austria

Size: 840 square kilometres of biosphere reserve of which 210 square kilometres is national park

Elevation: 380 to 2,713 metres

History: established as a national park in 1978, in 1990 the national park communities were recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. In 2010, the area was extended to the whole of Berchtesgaden and renamed.

Landscape types: rock fields, Alpine meadows, dwarf shrub heaths, Alpine pastures, mixed mountain forests, lakes and ponds, fens, straw and wet meadows, lowland and mountain hay meadows, alluvial forests

Biosphere Reserve information

Verwaltungsstelle Biosphärenregion Berchtesgadener Land Außenstelle der Regierung von Oberbayern im Landratsamt Berchtesgadener Land Salzburger Straße 64 83435 Bad Reichenhall Tel. 08651 773-540 info@brbgl.de www.brbgl.de

Accommodation

Berchtesgadener Land Tourismus GmbH Bahnhofplatz 4 83471 Berchtesgaden Tel. 08652 65650-50, Fax -99 info@berchtesgadener-land.com www.berchtesgadener-land.com

Books and maps

Das höchste Leben – Almwirtschaft im Berchtesgadener Land (2004) ISBN 2-9506864-7-8

Die Tierwelt des Nationalparks Berchtesgaden (2006)

ISBN 3-925647-42-2

Die Pflanzenwelt des Nationalparks Berchtesgaden (2003) ISBN 3-925647-33-3 Almabtrieb (drive from mountain pastures) at Lake Königssee with Pinzgauer cattle, an old livestock breed. In the background is St.Bartolomä

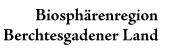


Topografische Karten 1:50.000 Berchtesgadener Alpen (UK 50-55) und Rupertiwinkel (UK 50-44)

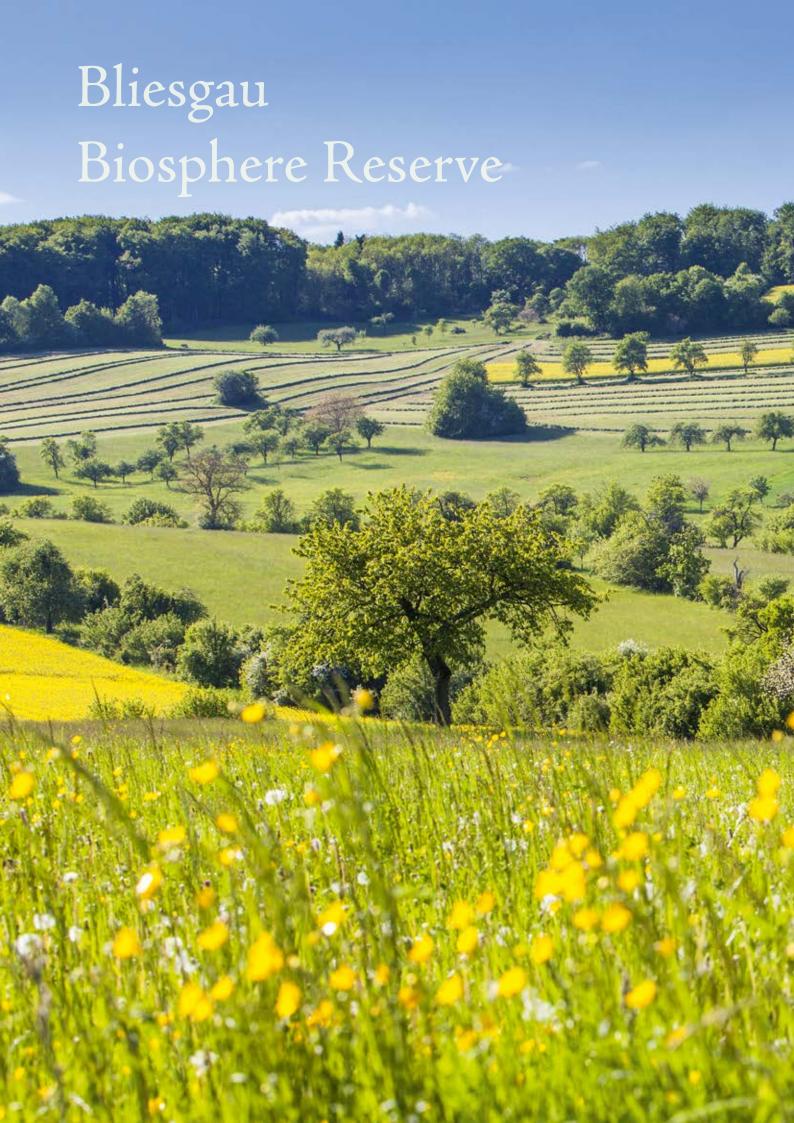
Getting here/Travel

By train: via Freilassing towards Laufen, Bad Reichenhall or Berchtesgaden. From there by bus.

By car: From Munich or Salzburg: A8-exits for Bad Reichenhall and Neukirchen.







Land of orchids and savoir-vivre

Man and nature in harmony – this is impressively demonstrated in Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve. A visitor can see it in the valuable and beautiful meadow orchards, species-rich meadows, extensive beech forests and the floodplain of the river Blies. However, it also has a population density that is higher than the national average, a fact that makes the biosphere reserve unique in the world. Despite so many people, the region has become a refuge for many rare animal and plant species. Nature and culture are the silent architects here, connecting diversity to unify the biosphere reserve.

Bliesgau is home to around eighty percent of the Saarland population of the endangered little owl. The population of the rare marsh fritillary is particularly high and on the Muschelkalk (shellbearing limestone) soils one can admire nearly half of all orchid species occurring in Germany; their display is particularly beautiful.



However, Bliesgau is also a region in transition - shaped over the centuries by traditional extensive farming, it is now trying to resist the trend towards globalization. The biosphere reserve promotes the regional marketing of its own agricultural products. So, for example, the local fruit association Verein Bliesgau Obst e.V. helps orchard owners in the care of their fruit trees and in the marketing of the crop. Then there is the Bliesgau box, a gift idea with regional charm; it is filled individually with, for example, Bliesgau sparkling apple secco, various honeys, speciality sausages or selected handcrafts. Something that has been especially fruitful is the cooperation between Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve and the Bliesgau oil mills, which has meant that Bliesgau is one of the most diverse oil landscapes in Germany



The "Beeder Biotop" amid the Bliesaue

Wild romanticism on foot and by bike

Begin your journey of discovery with a visit to the water buffalo in "Beeder biotope". From a viewing platform you can also watch white storks nest-building. Follow shaded paths through Tauben valley, the largest core zone of the Biosphere Reserve, and along Kirkeler rock trail with its impressive bunter sandstone formations, and reach Kirkeler castle – over 1,000 years old. In the warmer months of summer, the Kirkeler Burgsommer festival recreates the days of knights and knaves.

After a visit to the old baroque town of Blieskastel, you can cycle by e-bike from north to south through the Biosphere Reserve on the Blies valley trail, enjoying the fantastic nature of the wildly romantic Bliesaue.

E-bikes and carriages, storks and meadow orchards

Monday: By e-bike along the Blies to the Franco-German Culture Park at Bliesbruck-Reinheim. The French town of Sarreguemines is nearby.

Tuesday: A tour on the Biosphere Bus offers the opportunity to get off at individual stops in order to explore the region.

Wednesday: In the footsteps of the St James pilgrims through the Biosphere Reserve to Gräfinthal monastery with its pilgrims' chapel.

Thursday: Carriage trip with the Fuhrhalterey Myndenbach through the Biosphere Reserve. Then visit Haus Lochfeld Cultural Landscape Centre and stroll through its meadow orchard, then walk through the farm and herb garden.

Friday: Visit Bliesgau oil and mustard mill in Einöd and sample the different oils, such as Camelina - the oil of the Celts.

Saturday: Below ground the Biosphere Reserve guarantees sensational sights with a visit to Schlossberg Caves, Europe's largest mottled sandstone caves.

Sunday: Guided tour of the orchid area in Gersheim. As well as the numerous orchids there are other rare animal and plant species to discover.

Facts and figures

Location: in south-east Saarland, on the border with France and Rheinland-Palatinate

Size: 361 square kilometres

Elevation: 190 to almost 400 metres

History: founded in 2007, recognized by UNESCO in 2009.

Landscape types: escarpment landscape. In the north, more urban influence with beech forests on mottled sandstone, in the south very rural: semi-dry limestone grassland with orchid meadows and orchid-beech forests on limestone soils, meadow orchards, Blies floodplain landscape

Biosphere Reserve information

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

Infostelle Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau "Haus des Bürgers" Luitpoldplatz 5 66440 Blieskastel Tel. 06842 926-1314

Accommodation

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

Books and maps

Reiseführer Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau ISBN 978-3-89920-810-8

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

Wander- und Freizeitkarte Saarpfalz-Kreis ISBN 978-3-89920-717-0

Radwander- und Freizeitkarte Saarpfalz-Kreis ISBN 978-3-89920-672-2

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

Getting here/Travel

By train: by ICE to Homburg or Saarbrücken, by regional train to Lautzkirchen, Kirkel or St. Ingbert; the Saarbahn runs from Saarbrücken to Kleinblittersdorf.

By car: take the A 6 or the A 8, exit for St. Ingbert-Mitte, Blieskastel or Homburg-Einöd.

Young little owls need an intact cultural landscape







Cultural landscape with history

A landscape made for hiking, cycling and relaxing – the steeply sloping Albtrauf alternate with gentle hilltops, dry valleys and wide plateaus. Old orchards and hanging ravine forests, flower meadows and juniper heaths invite you to linger. Collared flycatcher, wryneck, red kite, black woodpecker, eagle owl and other rare birds feel just as much at home in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve as do numerous bat species, such as Bechstein's bat and the mouse-eared bat.

The Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve is located about 50 kilometres south-east of Stuttgart. The contrasts between the countryside and the metropolitan region of Stuttgart create the charm and opportunities of the biosphere reserve.

No other biosphere reserve in Germany has such great scenic diversity as here with its alternating forest and open land. On the plateau a special feature is the juniper heaths with their species richness, a result of the work of nomadic shepherds. At the foot of Albtrauf there are great contiguous meadow orchards, forming a sea of flowers in spring.



This diversity is also apparent in the environmental and nature conservation-oriented regional development of the Swabian Alb. One example is the "Albrecht Leisa" marketing project; lentils are grown by around 70 organic farmers and it is a real regional success. In a similar way projects were launched to encourage the marketing of regional orchard products and timber. Innovative ecological products such as Alb mozzarella, juniper products, spelt pasta and emmer pasta or Alb snails have been established on the market and put on the menu of the "biosphere hosts" – a grouping of quality gastronomic establishments.

Left: Teck castle surrounded by lush beech forests

Right: A view of the romantic sea of spring blossom in Lautertallm – the meadow orchards



A sea of blossoms in summer – scattered fruit meadows

History, something for horselovers, and plenty to enjoy

A visit to the Swabian Alb Biosphere Centre in Münsingen is a good way of getting a first impression of the Biosphere Reserve. The Biosphere Reserve is laid out at your feet in the form of a huge aerial image and you can learn about the people of the region. Afterwards you can take a walk to the abandoned village of Gruorn on the former military training area in Münsingen; at weekends you can get a hearty meal there. If you want to learn more about the military history and the former life here you should definitely book a tour of the "Altes Lager" (old Military camp). Alternatives include a trip to the charming Lautertal or, for horse lovers, a visit to the State Stud in Marbach. A great end to the day is delicious roast Alb lamb with spelt noodles.

Alb buffalo, Alb cheese and breathtaking adventures

Monday: visit the Swabian Alb Biosphere Centre, guided bicycle trip through the former military training area at Münsingen, and then stop at a biosphere partner.

Tuesday: visit Schertelshöhle (cave) in Westerheim, walk along Randecker Maar – a former volcanic pipe – then drive to Schopfloch Alb Nature Conservation Centre.

Wednesday: visit Zwiefalten monastery then hike to Wimsen and go on a boat into the cave.

Thursday: Alb edge hike on the "Grafensteigen" to Urach waterfall and along the Alb edge; afternoon shopping in Metzingen Outlet City, then relax in the evening at AlbThermen spa.

Friday: "Albhof Tour Tour" by bike from farm to farm, face to face with the Alb buffalo, hearty meals with Alb cheese and delicious sausages at one of the farms.

Saturday: visit the Beuren open-air museum, then a guided walk on the Gustav-Ströhmfeld-way to Hohenneuffen castle with its panoramic views, and then drive to Neidlingen to see the ball mill.

Sunday: from Münsinger Station (Centre for Nature, Environment and Tourism) ride on a Schwäbischen Albbahn steam train to Gomadingen. Return hike via the State Stud in Marbach to Münsingen.

General information

Lush meadows for Alb buffalo

Facts and figures

Location: 50 kilometres south-east of Stuttgart in the Swabian Alb (Baden-Württemberg)

Size: 853 square kilometres

Elevation: 329 to 872 metres

History: established 2008, recognised by UNESCO 2009.

Landscape types: cultural landscape with beech forests, juniper heaths, meadow orchards, limestone meadows and grasslands, fields, meadows and settled areas

Biosphere Reserve information

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

Accommodation

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

Rad- und Wanderkarte Biosphärengebiet Schwäbische Alb ISBN 978-3-89920-342-4

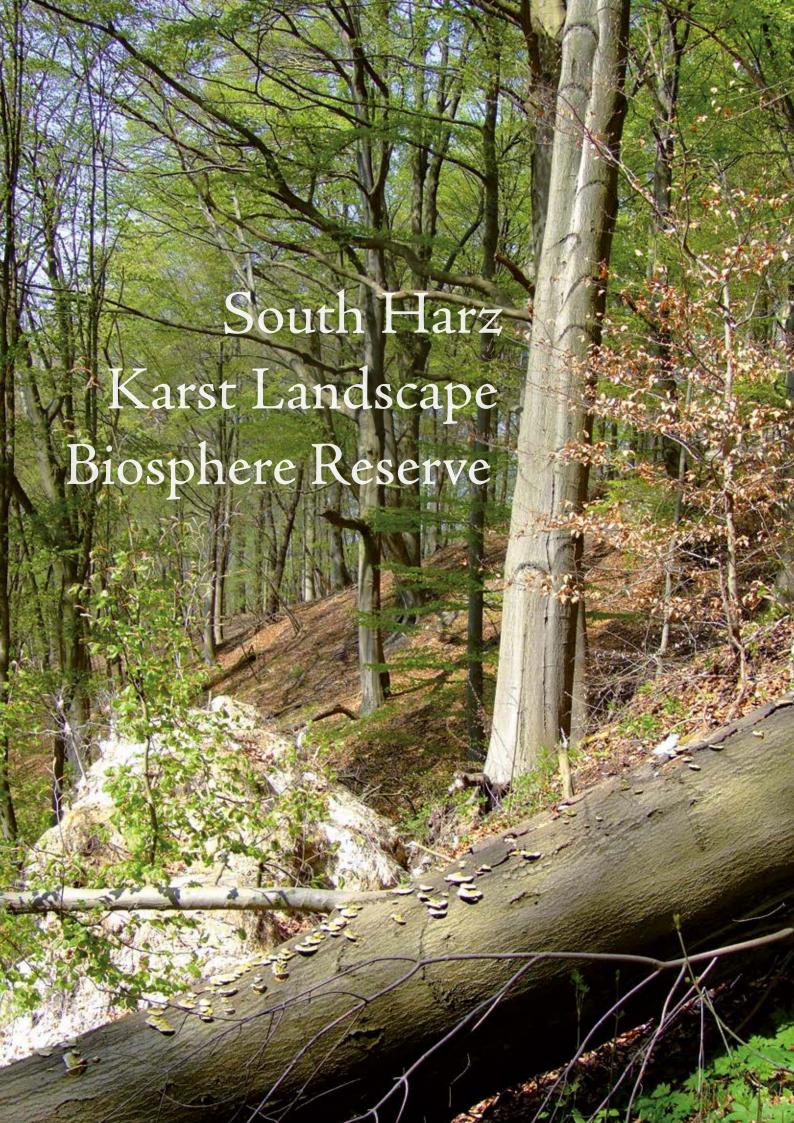
Freizeitkarte Bad Urach ISBN 978-3-89021-617-1



Getting here/Travel

By train and bus: from Stuttgart via Metzingen and Bad Urach to Münsingen. From Ulm via Schelklingen to Münsingen. In Münsingen by bus to the Alte Lager.

By car: on the A8 Merklingen or Kirchheim/Teck to Münsingen. From Tübingen/Reutlingen on the B27 to Münsingen.



Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz



In our midst

Extensive beech forests characterize the southern Harz landscape. In the transition to the Goldene Aue ("Golden Shire") the unmistakable face of the landscape is characterized by sinkholes, dolines, rock falls and karst springs. Karst is formed in permeable and water-soluble rocks. These include, for example, limestone and gypsum, which are leached by surface waters and groundwater. On the southern edge of the Harz mountains, a gypsum Karst landscape stretches over 100 kilometres and links Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Lower Saxony. Large parts are in a semi-natural condition due to extensive land use. Widespread limestone beech forests are found here and, on the southern slopes, thermophilous oak forests and dry grasslands. The warm climate means that plants grow here which are otherwise typical of the Mediterranean, for example some orchid species such as the lady orchid.

The South Harz Karst Landscape Biosphere Reserve is a habitat for numerous animal species, including stag beetles, swallowtail butterflies, bats, dormice and wild cats. The unspoilt, semi-natural

rivers and streams ensure that there are fish that have not been seen in other waters for a long time, such as brook lamprey, bullhead and loach. However, man has also shaped the landscape, because the southern Harz is an old cultural landscape. The first evidence dates back to the Neolithic Age and medieval castles bear witness to the historical importance of this region. In addition, 800 years of mining has shaped the landscape. Fortunately the karst landscape has not been suitable for land consolidation. This means that visitors can find a patch-work of agricultural land with extensive meadow orchards and wood pastures, deciduous forests and – again and again – old towns and villages of great character



The half-timbered Stolberg

Half-timbered town and beautiful meadow orchards

In the morning visit "Heimkehle" show cave at Uftrungen and then follow the Karst Trail in "Alter Stolberg" nature reserve where it's worth seeing the old deciduous forests and historic border stones.

Continue to the old historic half-timbered town of Stolberg, with a visit to the Biosphere Reserves information centre. To finish off it is worth visiting the Großen Auerberg with the Joseph Cross tower; from here you have a wide view across the biosphere reserve and, in good visibility, over the entire Harz.

The small town of Questenberg has a picturesque setting in a water gap valley in the heart of the karst area. It offers numerous attractions, such as the colourful wooden Roland and a ruined castle. Continue on foot, by bike or car to Hainrode. A walk along the old local road connecting Questenberg and Hainrode is recommended, past Dinsterbach swallow hole, dry grasslands and vast meadow orchards; this is especially recommended in spring because of the fruit blossom.

Kyffhäuser, show mine and rich bird life

Monday: drive to Hainrode, continue on the Karst Trail past Dinsterbach swallow hole and extensive meadow orchards and then a tour of Questenberg.

Tuesday: visit Kyffhäuser Monument, the Panorama Museum, and then visit Barbarossa cave or walk around Helme reservoir at Kelbra, watching the rich bird life.

Wednesday: visit Röhrigschacht show mine in Wettelrode, then drive to Sangerhausen to visit the "Europa Rosarium" and Spengler Museum. Then finish off in the old town of Sangerhausen.

Thursday: walk from Stolberg via Hainfeld to Neustadt, wander around the beautiful village and the impressive castle ruins.

Friday: visit the half-timbered town of Stolberg and its old coins, then along the Luther Way to Joseph Cross.

Saturday: visit the Imperial Palace in Tilleda and the fruit variety garden with old fruit trees.

Sunday: walk to "Bauerngraben", a large intermittent lake, which has an impressive cliff.

Afterwards a visit to Heimkehle show cave at
Uftrungen

General information

Wooden "Roland" and "Oueste"

Facts and figures

Location: the southern Harz between Stolberg in the northwest and Sangerhausen in the southeast; District of Mansfeld Südharz

Size: 300 square kilometres

Elevation: 145 to 579 metres

History: Founded in 2009, recognition by UNESCO is pending.

Landscape types: highlands (southern Harz declivity), Zechstein range (gypsum karst) with leaching valley: over 2,000 karst formations such as sinkholes, dolines, rock falls, ponors and karst springs; large, semi-natural deciduous forests, patchwork open land areas in Zechstein, meadow orchards. Historic cultural landscape: traces and monuments of more than 800 years of mining history, European city of Stolberg, towns with typical regional character, ruined castles.

Biosphere Reserve information

Verwaltung Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz Hallesche Straße 68 a, 06536 Südharz OT Roßla Tel. 034651 29889-0 poststelle@bioressh.mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de www.bioreskarstsuedharz.de

Dauerausstellung in der Verwaltung Mon. – Fri. from 08:00 – 16:00 Uhr, Saturday, Sunday, or other times by appointment

Exhibition "Buchen sollst Du suchen" on Stolberg Castle, 06536 Südharz OT Stolberg

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

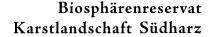
Accommodation

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

Getting here/Travel

By train: via Halle, Sangerhausen, Nordhausen. By car: on the A 38.







Wasserkuppe in the Rhön Biosphere Reserve

Jewels of nature – National Natural Landscapes

The 16 National Parks, 16 Biosphere Reserves and over 100 Nature Parks offer breathtaking views, spectacular experiences as well as peace and relaxation. They are also for the preservation of biological diversity and the protection of native flora and fauna.

United under the umbrella of National Natural Landscapes, they offer visitors spectacular scenes of nature – from the Wadden Sea to the central German river landscapes to the Alps.

With one voice – National Natural Landscapes and EUROPARC Deutschland e.V.

EUROPARC Germany is the umbrella organisation for the National Natural Landscapes. This gives German National Parks, Biosphere Reserves, Nature Parks and Wilderness Areas a single united voice.

EUROPARC has charitable status and since 1991 has been supporting the ongoing development of the protected areas and works in partnership with the individual areas.

Several projects encourage and promote exchange of knowledge and information among the members. EUROPARC initiates and coordinates national programmes in the areas of environmental education, volunteering or quality management. In addition, EUROPARC and its members jointly design new strategies for the preservation and further development of the National Natural Landscapes.

National Parks

National Parks are landscapes where nature can be nature. They protect Natural Landscapes by preserving nature's own dynamics and offering refuge areas for plants and animals. By doing this, the National Parks create unique areas to experience nature and secure the necessary learning spaces for education and research. They are invaluable for the biological diversity on earth. At the same time, National Parks increase the attractiveness of their region and contribute to their sustainable economic development.

Biosphere Reserves

Biosphere Reserves are model regions, where examples of the joint existence of mankind and nature are being developed and tested. They protect cultural landscapes from destructive forces and maintain and develop valuable places to live for people and nature. They create a balanced approach to human land use and natural cycles. They thereby are adding economic value to the region. Biosphere Reserves enable exemplary discoveries for science and research about the interactions between natural and societal processes.

Nature Parks

Nature Parks are regions where people and nature can find relaxation. They protect and develop the landscape and nature and support sustainable tourism. They promote a sustainable regional development. They develop environmental education and public engagement opportunities. They thereby contribute to bringing together the demands of people on their environment with the requirements for protection of landscapes and nature.

Wilderness Areas

Wilderness Areas allow the dynamic powers of nature to develop uninhibited. They protect large-scale areas which can develop freely and naturally. That means without any aims or targets set by people. They offer habitats for wild animals and plants which depend on natural processes and large and undisturbed areas. Wilderness Areas enable the experience of an unguided nature, where people are not at the centre. Beyond that, they are important places to learn about and research natural processes and developments.





Make Nature an experience and enjoyment for all – the National Natural Landscapes and EUROPARC

To create synergies between nature and society – this is the challenge the umbrella organisation for the National Natural Landscapes, EUROPARC Germany, has taken on. EUROPARC offers a unique network and the possibility to get involved in the following programmes for nature and to experience nature with all your senses:



Junior Rangers form a live map of Germany. 40 National Natural Landscapes members currently participate in this national programme

Junior Rangers

Junior Rangers enjoy nature and actively discover their local area and country. In over 40 National Natural Landscapes experienced rangers take children from seven years upwards into open fields and meadows. They get to know their own environment in a playful and creative way and are enthused to take committed action for nature. From the Watzmann peak to the Wadden Sea about 1,500 children all over Germany have been active since 2008. Everybody can become a Junior Ranger, through activities in your own region, discovery tours on holiday or on the web.

More information: www.junior-ranger.de

Nature Marketplace – Benefits for People and Nature

The Nature Marketplace ("Marktplatz Natur") presents a diverse range of projects from the National Natural Landscapes on an internet platform. National Parks, Biosphere reserves and Landscape Conservation Parks have the opportunity to present their project ideas on topics such as education, biodiversity, climate change, tourism, sustainable land use.

This platform provides background information about the projects. It shows ways you can help with your commitment and engagement. By making a donation or getting actively involved you can support the most valuable natural landscapes in Germany. Your commitment for nature will be well worth it!

More Information: www.marktplatz-natur.de

Nature – a Matter of Honour – Volunteers in Parks

Get involved. Over 40 National Natural Landscapes in Germany offer you the opportunity to join projects, from habitat protection to environmental education. "Nature – a Matter of Honour – Volunteers in Parks" ("Ehrensache Natur – Freiwillige in Parks") welcomes volunteers of all ages and with all qualifications and with whatever time they are able to give.

Nature conservation is a matter of honour and a great opportunity to experience National Natural Landscapes in action, to expand your knowledge and to meet like-minded people. Please join us like 3,000 other volunteers each year. Local qualified volunteer co-ordinators are happy to give you further advice.

More information: www.ehrensache-natur.de



Top: Ernstlhof National Park Partner, Bavarian Forest

Bottom: Siesta in the hay – taking a break from mowing an arnica meadow, Ore Mountains/ Vogtland Nature Park



A special nature-experience: holiday with our Partners

Spend a holiday in the most spectacular scenes of nature and experience it with all your senses – that is what National Natural Landscapes Partners offer.

Partner businesses see themselves as ambassadors of their protected areas. They are committed to the protection of nature and climate, and they are competent contact people for their home regions.

Together, they aim to make their products high quality as well as nature – and environmentally friendly, to give you a unique nature experience. Enjoy with all your senses the most valuable natural and cultural landscapes in Germany – National Natural Landscapes.

Further information: www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de/partner

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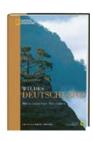
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