

**JUNIOR  
RANGER**



ENGAGING YOUTH IN NATURE AND SUSTAINABILITY

# The German Junior Ranger Program

Nationale  
Naturlandschaften





# Apprentices for Nature

Since 2008, the exciting nationwide Junior Ranger program of EUROPARC Germany and the Nationale Naturlandschaften has sparked interest in children and young people about nature, the environment, and biological diversity.

As “Junior Rangers”, the children work together in a nationwide network actively supporting nature and environmental protection.

Germany’s national parks, biosphere reserves, and nature parks are model regions for sustainable development and ideal places for learning and discovery.

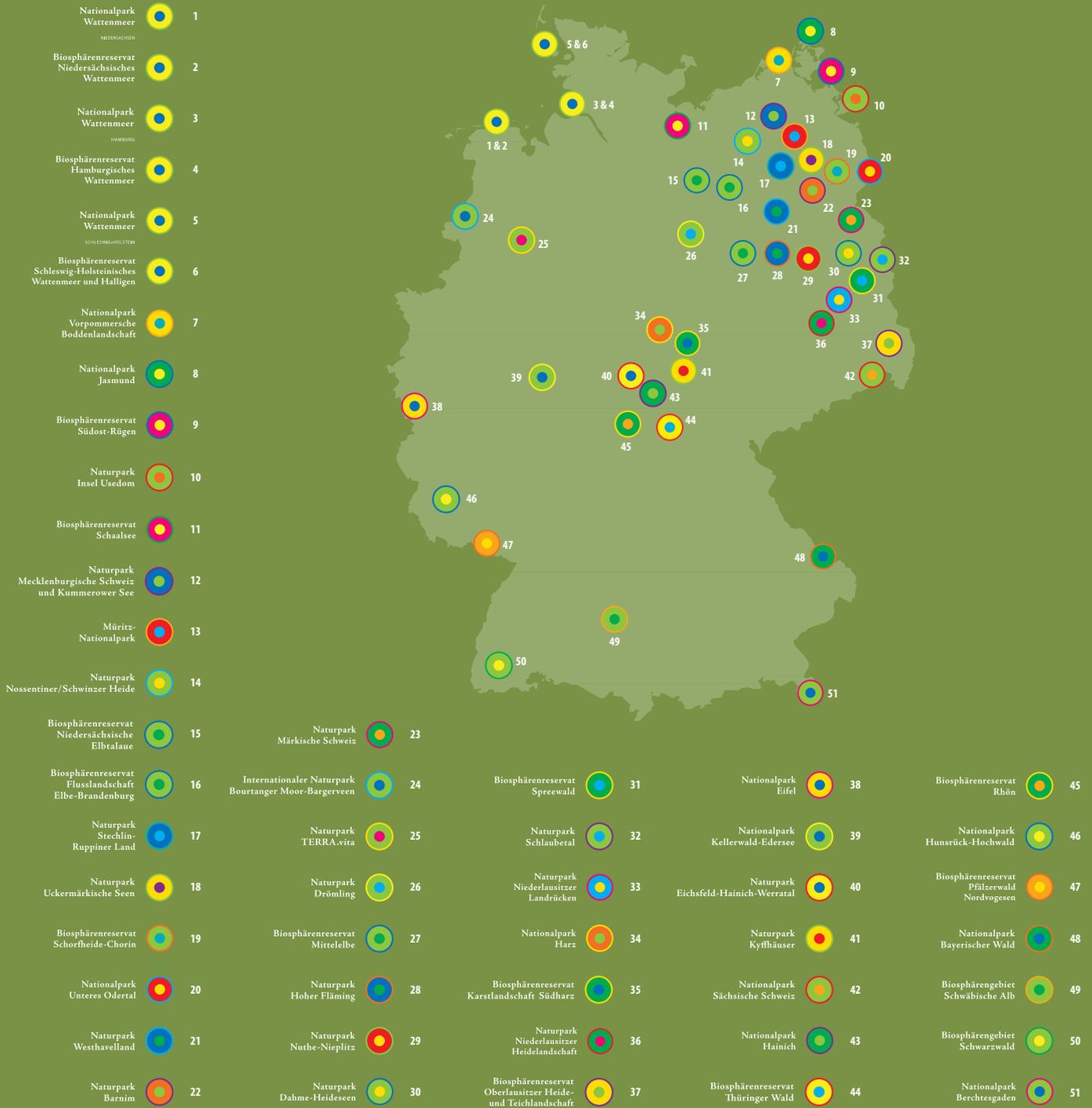
All young people can easily get involved in the Junior Ranger program because the program provides a variety of offers tailored for children and young people.

The main objectives of the Junior Ranger Program are to raise awareness in children and young people about nature, the environment, the protection of plants and animals, and the economical use of resources. Experiencing hands-on conservation work is an excellent way to raise awareness in the above-mentioned themes. Junior Rangers are dedicated friends and advocates of Nationale Naturlandschaften, making the program a significant contribution to sustainable development and offering children and young people a meaningful pastime.

## BACKGROUND

Nationale Naturlandschaften, (National Natural Landscapes in English) is the nationwide umbrella brand that all national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks have been showcased under nationwide since 2005. There are more than 100 Nationale Naturlandschaften in Germany, from the Wadden Sea to the Alps.

As the umbrella organization of the Nationale Naturlandschaften, EUROPARC Germany gives them a common voice, initializes projects, and coordinates joint programs.





## Nationwide Activities

Over 100 Junior Ranger groups participate in nearly 50 Nationale Naturlandschaften, with more than 1,500 young people attending annually. Together, with a ranger from their home region, they explore and learn about their natural environment and cultural and historical heritage, to better understand their natural protected landscape.

The Junior Rangers bring their experience to their families and circle of friends, acting as ambassadors for nature protection and biodiversity conservation.

Annually, a nationwide Junior Ranger meeting is hosted in a selected Nationale Naturlandschaft. This is a national networking event where Junior Rangers from all around Germany explore the host Nationale Naturlandschaften together.

At these meetings, Junior Rangers and their supervisors have opportunities to socialize and share their unique experiences. Fellowship among Junior Rangers is of vast importance in strengthening their ability to be ambassadors of conservation to their friends and family.

Junior Rangers learn new experiences and become familiar with new perspectives that improve their cooperative decision-making and assist them in developing an environmentally conscious mindset for a sustainable future.

*Junior Rangers are at home in Nationale Naturlandschaften – from the Watzmann to the Wadden Sea*

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The Nationale Naturlandschaften that the Junior Ranger program participates in nationwide. (08/2015)

## Attractive Offers

The Junior Ranger program allows every child to experience and involve themselves in nature and the environment. The program is based on four pillars, allowing the children and young people to choose how they want to take part based on their interests.

*A holistic program that offers children various ways into nature*

## The Four Program Pillars

- 1. Junior Ranger Region**  
...allows children (seven and older) to work together with rangers to explore the nature of their homeland. Junior Ranger groups meet regularly over a longer period in their Nationale Naturlandschaften.
- 2. Junior Ranger Explorer Tour**  
... is intended as a tourism and recreational offer for children and their families. A good trip for the holidays or for an informational school field trip.
- 3. Junior Ranger Web**  
... offers entertaining access to the Junior Ranger program using the internet for media-enthusiastic children.
- 4. Junior Ranger School**  
... combines offers and activities from the other three pillars for application in the school context. It promotes innovative, inclusive education for the whole class and is great for school trips.





# Environmentally Committed

*Junior Rangers are actively engaged in nature and the environment. Junior Rangers learn the responsibilities of an adult ranger and are immersed in tangible conservation projects.*

As Junior Rangers, children and young people learn how to appreciate and protect nature and their homeland.

They learn ecological relationships and how to take responsibility for natural habitats in their Nationale Naturlandschaften. Examples of projects Junior Rangers participate in include restoring streams, planting trees, or planting hedges. They are also immersed in cultural experiences such as working on orchards and producing their own fruit juices.

Junior Rangers make valuable contributions to species conservation and are frequently involved in protection efforts for birds and insects. The “Seal Ambassador” program is a great example.

Its goal is to promote protection of the gray seal population by increasing public awareness about preserving their home environment on the Baltic coast.

Junior Rangers assist professional park rangers in many Nationale Naturlandschaften. They count endangered birds, maintain toad fences, and help in other ways such as supervising amphibians traveling across the road to their spawning grounds. Children and young people are not only involved in nature and environmental protection, but are also educators of those around them, promoting a nature-friendly lifestyle and the Nationale Naturlandschaften.

Junior Rangers play and have fun all whilst working for nature conservation. They learn about the landscapes, habitats, and species in their Nationale Naturlandschaften, as well as how one must operate and be equipped in the countryside.

## Sustained Involvement

Junior Rangers 14 years and older are invited to continue in the program and remain involved in conservation. The program intends to foster their skills, expertise, and enthusiasm for Nationale Naturlandschaften. It enables them to connect with other older Junior Rangers and allows them to find out if a career in conservation and environmental protection is right for them.

EUROPARC Germany provides many opportunities for these young people to involve themselves in Nationale Naturlandschaften:

For example, with the “Junior Ranger+” program, experienced Junior Rangers are assisted in accomplishing their own conservation projects with the help of older and more experienced volunteers. These experienced volunteers belong to a program called “Volunteers in Parks” which is also sponsored by EUROPARC Germany. They handle the more complicated details of the project and instruct the Junior Rangers in how the project must be completed.

Junior Rangers 14 years or older acquire specific knowledge from their ranger experiences. Answers to tough questions like “How to handle a wolf encounter?”, “How do windmills and National Natural Landscapes work together?”, or “How do I give first aid in the countryside?” are examples of knowledge acquired through Junior Ranger experiences. Junior Rangers can also learn of other Nationale Naturlandschaften or teach other Junior Rangers about their own.

Junior Rangers 17 and older are invited to experience natural beauty abroad through EUROPARC Germany. Through the European Voluntary Service (EVS), they work in a foreign conservation team or a natural protection team. For one year, they can learn how their own conservation projects could be implemented abroad and brainstorm new learning goals for themselves.

In Junior Ranger+, young people work together and in a fun creative way to discover how humanity must care for tomorrow. Whether it is “Seal Ambassador”, “Wilderness Advocates” or fattening-up migratory birds, every one of these programs contributes to sustainable development in its own unique way.





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Thea Keller (right) working as a Junior Ranger+ shares her knowledge and enthusiasm with a younger Junior Ranger.

*While other 14-year-olds still dream of a career as a ballerina or astronaut, the dream for Thea Keller is already clear: she wants to be a ranger. Since 2009 she has taken part in various conservation projects in the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. She says in an interview, “You can still love a beaver even if it knocked down your favorite apple tree.”*

**You’ve been in the Junior Rangers for six years, how did it all begin?**

When I was in 2nd grade, a ranger from the Biosphere Reserve visited my classroom and advertised the Junior Rangers. He asked “Who wants to help save the world?” That sounded good!

**And how will you save the world?**

Well, I obviously know I can’t save the world by myself. But we are committed to conservation and learned a lot about the plants and animals that live here. We have built and set up nesting boxes, planted plants, and planted trees, and I help regularly with the black locusts on “Helle Sand” cut back, which is a nearby viewpoint on the Elbe river.

**Most other girls your age are more interested in pop stars and horses...**

I have other hobbies also. I play the violin and dance in a modern dance studio, but nature is just so important to me. My father took me fishing when I was still quite small – I think this made me respect nature a lot. The Junior Rangers were also a solid group that I could get involved with. I also think meeting people from around Germany is great, which is why I have been to Schlaubetal and Eifel, it gives a good sense of community.

**Why does the Middle Elbe lie especially close to your heart?**

The symbol of the reserve is the beaver, which I find very exciting. While fishing I see beaver footprints and lodges, but last year beavers took down an apple tree I liked very much... My love was put to the test! We’re now protecting the apple tree next to it with a fence around it.

## Discover Nature

In a “Junior Ranger Explorer Tour”, young people can visit and explore a Nationale Naturlandschaften on a holiday or trip where conservation and regional sustainability topics are conveyed in entertaining ways.

In the Junior Ranger program, young people from all over Germany can find adventure in a National Natural Landscape. They can explore the region and enjoy nature accompanied by real reserve rangers and learn about their job.

With the Junior Ranger Explorer Handbook, Junior Rangers can go on an exciting discovery tours in Nationale Naturlandschaften. The Handbook contains information on each region, a scavenger hunt, and tricky puzzles for children. Complete all the puzzles to crack the “discoverer code” to qualify for a “Junior Rangers Explorer Tour” badge.

The Explorer Handbook is unique because it makes individual and independent research of the Nationale Naturlandschaften possible without a ranger’s guidance. It’s not only suitable for fami-

lies, but great for school classes too.

The “Junior Ranger Explorer Tour” is constantly expanding. For information about the upcoming Junior Ranger Discovery App visit a Nationale Naturlandschaften for an exciting and interactive experience. Schools which are interested should look into “Discovery Tour school trips”.

*High quality educational programs allow young people and tourists alike to strengthen their knowledge of the natural region and pursue their scientific curiosity.*



At [www.junior-ranger.de](http://www.junior-ranger.de) you can start any of the learning adventures from the virtual Ranger Station.

The player can choose between various national areas such as the Coast, the Northern Lowlands, the Central Mountains, and the Alps.



Before the expedition even starts, the young adventurer must first pack their Ranger backpack.

The scenery in the game is always a real, existing Nationale Naturlandschaften, reproduced as realistically as possible.

# Innovative Ideas

The Junior Ranger program uses modern methods to interest children and young people in nature conservation – even those without prior nature experience.

“Junior Ranger Web” utilizes an online learning platform, creating innovative and enjoyable access to program content.

The educational games allow you to explore the diversity of the Nationale Naturlandschaften from an entirely new perspective. Puzzles, complicated tasks, and the option to create a homemade “Researcher’s Book” that allows you to explore conservation in their everyday life in a unique way.

The Junior Ranger Web motivates and raises awareness about the value of the environment, conveying the importance Nationale Naturlandschaften.

Also available online, the “Junior Ranger Lexicon” bundles the expertise of the Nationale Naturlandschaften and offers worthwhile and interesting information for children and young people about local plant and animal species and much more. The lexicon can be used for everyday information, but can also prove helpful in writing school work.

*The online possibilities at [www.junior-ranger.de](http://www.junior-ranger.de) get children up out of their seats, out the front door, and into the environment to become more active in conservation.*

# High Quality Standards

The Nationale Naturlandschaften are the most spectacular natural sites Germany has to offer. The nationwide Junior Ranger program takes place directly in the National Parks, biosphere reserves, and nature parks in conjunction with real rangers, providing an entirely unique environmental education experience. In addition, this program brings together Junior Rangers nationwide and portrays the diversity and beauty of nature from the Watzmann to the Wadden Sea, and everything in between.

The Junior Ranger program compliments the needs, expectations, and opportunities of young people. It equips young people with important tools that are imperative to future generations. It recognizes that the opportunities and contributions that Junior Rangers provide for the preservation of nature and the environment are immensely influential in society, and can be an excellent model for other programs.

This program is designed by the standards of “Education for Sustainable Development” and is run exclusively by trained and qualified professionals.

The Junior Ranger Program follows common quality standards and was quality ensured by guidelines developed by Education Speakers of Nationale Naturlandschaften for the program. Quality standards are regularly checked to ensure compliance with the standards and continuous development of educational programs by the Education Speakers of Nationale Naturlandschaften.

*The nationwide Junior Ranger Program in Nationale Naturlandschaften is the single largest Education Initiative in European protected areas.*



Nationalpark  
Water

# Awards

The nationwide Junior Ranger program was a winner of the 2010/11 UN Decade Project “Education for Sustainable Development“. The program won the award again in 2012/13, because the skills taught in the Junior Ranger program are invaluable in shaping a sustainable society.

The Junior Ranger program was also repeatedly awarded by the UN Decade Project for Biodiversity, as Junior Rangers are exposed to and passionately lobby for and advocate biodiversity.

In 2012, 2013, and 2015 the Junior Ranger program received the quality seal “Werkstatt N“ from the Council of Sustainable Development. This seal is awarded to initiatives in Germany committed to sustainable development.



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In 2013, the Junior Ranger Web was nominated under “Serious Games” for the German Computer Game Award. In a statement from the council, “In the Junior Ranger Web, serious issues are taught in a fun, motivating way where male and female players alike are educated about the skills and knowledge used in sustainability...”



“Educational content designed in an outstanding multimedia format created with help from experts,” stated the Society for Pedagogy and Information. They awarded the Junior Ranger Web game with the “Comenius Edu Media Seal.”



The Junior Ranger Web program was a runner up for the 2013 „Golden Spatz“ Award in the Children’s Media Festival. The Festival provides a common forum where various media experts can meet, drawing professionals from various industries such as film, television and online, educators, journalists, and even politicians.

# Good Reasons to be involved in the Junior Ranger Program

## **They take Action in Nature and Environmental Protection**

The Nationale Naturlandschaften are part of Germany's natural culture heritage. With your commitment, Junior Rangers can discover, experience, and help to maintain these unique landscapes. Junior Rangers are invaluable in helping to preserve biodiversity and through numerous projects contribute to important nature and environmental conservation.

## **Creating the next Generation of Environmentalists**

This program encourages young talent in the Junior Rangers to get involved with Nationale Naturlandschaften throughout the year and take part in various programs full of discoveries, adventures, learning experiences, and fun. The Junior Ranger program equips children for the future by promoting their development and creativity, allowing them to make direct contributions to the design and creation of a sustainable society.

## **They Invest in Sustainability**

The Junior Ranger program educates young people about the principles of sustainable development. Young people learn economically sensible, environmentally sustainable, and socially equitable ways to live, proving to be an important contribution in sustainable development.

## **Junior Rangers are the Ambassadors of the Region**

Junior Rangers help to educate others about the goals and values of the Nationale Naturlandschaften, help to familiarize others, and help to highlight their importance in conservation, tourism, and local jobs, strengthening the region even more.

## **Become a Social Role Model**

Junior Rangers benefit from actively supporting non-profit work and developing synergies nationwide.

*With your active participation and commitment, we work further to develop and better the nationwide Junior Ranger program in German national parks, biosphere reserves, and nature parks.*

**Support our Work**

EUROPARC Germany e.V. in its various tasks and projects. Third Party support welcome.

**Donate under the heading “Junior Ranger“ on our donation account:**

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