



Biosphere reserves in Germany

Crazy for tomorrow



Tomorrow is created here.

As part of the global network of over 700 UNESCO biosphere reserves, we try out the life of tomorrow so that we have a shared future on our planet! In the 18 biosphere reserves here in Germany, we contribute with innovative ideas to enable a sustainable and climate-friendly coexistence between people and nature, for all of us.















Your biospheres.






crazy-for-tomorrow.com









- Biosphärenreservat
Schleswig-Holsteinisches
Wattenmeer und Halligen**  1
- Biosphärenreservat
Hamburgisches
Wattenmeer**  2
- Biosphärenregion
Niedersächsisches
Wattenmeer**  3
- Biosphärenreservat
Südost-Rügen**  4
- Biosphärenreservat
Schaalsee**  5
- Biosphärenreservat
Flusslandschaft Elbe -
Schleswig Holstein**  6a

- Biosphärenreservat
Niedersächsische
Elbtalau**  6b
- Biosphärenreservat
Flusslandschaft Elbe -
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**  6c
- Biosphärenreservat
Flusslandschaft
Elbe - Brandenburg**  6d
- Biosphärenreservat
Mittelelbe**  6e
- Biosphärenreservat
Schorfheide-Chorin**  7
- Biosphärenreservat
Drömling**  8

- Biosphärenreservat
Spreewald**  9
- Biosphärenreservat
Karstlandschaft Südharz**  10
- Biosphärenreservat
Oberlausitzer Heide-
und Teichlandschaft**  11
- Biosphärenreservat
Rhön**  12
- Biosphärenreservat
Thüringer Wald**  13
- Biosphärenreservat
Bliesgau**  14

- Biosphärenreservat
Pfälzerwald-
Nordvogesen**  15
- Biosphärengebiet
Schwäbische Alb**  16
- Biosphärengebiet
Schwarzwald**  17
- Biosphärenregion
Berchtesgadener Land**  18



Content

Foreword	5
Biosphere reserves	6
Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein Hamburg Wadden Sea Lower Saxon Wadden Sea	8
Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein.....	10
Hamburg Wadden Sea.....	12
Lower Saxon Wadden Sea.....	14
South-East Rügen.....	16
Schaalsee	20
Elbe River Landscape.....	24
Lower Saxony Elbe Valley.....	28
Middle Elbe	30
Elbe River Landscape – Brandenburg.....	32
Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	34
Schorfheide-Chorin	36
Drömling.....	40
Spreewald	44
Karst Landscape South Harz.....	48
Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape	52
Rhön	56
Thuringian Forest.....	62
Bliesgau	66
Palatinate Forest and Northern Vosges.....	70
Swabian Alb	74
Black Forest.....	78
Berchtesgadener Land	82
National Natural Landscapes	86
Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V.....	88
Volunteers programme	89
Junior Ranger	89
Certified partners	90
Imprint.....	91

Foreword

From the Wadden Sea to the Alps, Germany's biosphere reserves represent diverse habitats with rich biodiversity. Old beech forests, meadow orchards and clear lakes form unique natural and cultural landscapes.

Through this booklet I sincerely invite you to get to know the diversity of German biosphere reserves.

As part of the family of "National Natural Landscapes", they are an important component of the national strategy on biological diversity. The National Natural Landscapes today consist of 18 biosphere reserves, 16 national parks, 104 nature parks, and 3 certified wilderness areas.

As part of the UNESCO network, the German biosphere reserves promote sustainable development in which people and nature are in harmony. In Germany there are 17 biosphere reserves recognized by UNESCO, which cover around 3.9 per cent of the country. These "real-world laboratories" help us to test if we can live and do business in harmony with nature.

This includes environmentally and nature-friendly land use, innovative forms of management, regional product marketing, and sustainable tourism. Biosphere reserves thus contribute to regional added value, create jobs and maintain livelihoods, while offering space for leisure and nature experiences.

UNESCO biosphere reserves should be developed in line with the 17 sustainability goals of the Agenda 2030. The German federal government supports this by promoting protection and development measures, including via large-scale nature conservation and research projects.



Sabine Riewenherm | President of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)

In the midst of crises such as the climate crisis, species extinction, anti-democratic tendencies, and international conflicts, biosphere reserves play a crucial role as model regions for sustainable development.

They offer the opportunity to test transformative approaches and implement them together with the local inhabitants. In addition, through international contacts and cooperation in the global network of biosphere reserves, they actively contribute to international understanding and UNESCO's core goal of maintaining peace.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sabine Riewenherm'.

Sabine Riewenherm

President of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)



Biosphere reserves

Sustainable life and economy

Biosphere reserves primarily protect, manage, and develop cultural landscapes that have grown over centuries and created valuable habitats. The most important task of biosphere reserves is to develop and test the coexistence of humans and nature in an exemplary manner. Biosphere reserves thus bring people and nature together (again).



Peter Südbeck, head of the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve administration, and chairman of the board of the NGO Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V.

Peter Südbeck, Chairman of the Board of the NGO Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V., the umbrella organization of German national parks, biosphere reserves and wilderness areas, and himself head of the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Administration, explains what biosphere reserves are in practice, what role they play in biological diversity, and why they are so special for visitors.

How did biosphere reserves develop, how did the idea come about?

In 1968, UNESCO addressed the environmental problems that had been growing steadily since the beginning of the 20th century, and the associated decline in biological diversity, at the first “Intergovernmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use and Conservation of the resources of the Biosphere”. Following this “Biosphere Conference”, the interdisciplinary, intergovernmental programme “Man and the Biosphere” (MAB) was created in 1970. The programme was intended to take on the challenge of exploring and reconciling the interactions between human activity and the natural environment.

After the programme was introduced, the first international biosphere reserves were recognized in 1978. A year later, the first two German biosphere reserves followed – Middle Elbe and Thuringian Forest. In 1995, the Second International Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Seville transformed the MAB programme; what had had started as an interdisciplinary scientific programme became true real protection programme, guided by thinking about people and nature together and their mutual influence. Since then, nature conservation, culture, networking, research, and education have been the keywords for these model regions of sustainable development. They also have a special responsibility for local implementation of international environmental agreements on biodiversity and climate protection. As of 2023, the world network of UNESCO biosphere reserves has over 740 protected areas in 134 countries that represent this programme.

What is the structure of biosphere reserves?

Biosphere reserves are spatially divided into three zones, each of which are subject to a different degree of human impact. They are designated as core, buffer, and transition zones, with each fulfilling different tasks.

In the core zone, which should make up at least three per cent of the total area, nature can develop undisturbed by human use. This is where many species find important habitats and refuges. Only research and monitoring are permitted in these areas. This is followed by the buffer zone, covering at least ten per cent of the total area. It includes particularly sensitive or representative sections of the characteristic cultural landscape, such as heathland, species-rich meadows, orchards meadows, or forests managed in a semi-natural way. The transition zone typically takes up the majority of the total area. This surrounds the core and buffer zone and serves as a place where people can live and engage in sustainable economic and recreational activities. The focus in this zone is on testing and promoting balanced, sustainable regional development and strengthening the (mostly rural) area, including its identity.

What role do biosphere reserves play for biological diversity in Germany?

Biosphere reserves are both natural and cultural landscapes. A careful approach to nature and the landscape is always on the agenda. In the core zone, biodiversity can develop in its own way; habitats can develop for plant and animal species from the later stages of succession (e.g., species in dead or rotten wood). The extensive management of various habitats in the buffer zone also helps to ensure a varied diversity in the landscape (e.g., mountain meadows, juniper heaths, orchard meadows, and hedges). Without human use, such valuable habitats would not exist for the many rare plant and animal species that have adapted to them. With their often historically modified structures, biosphere reserves therefore play an important role in biological diversity both nationally and internationally. It is also essential for us humans to preserve these valuable natural and cultural landscapes: if biological diversity dwindles, our livelihoods also dwindle.

There are 17 UNESCO biosphere reserves in Germany, and one biosphere reserve that is still aiming for this special seal of quality. What role does UNESCO play and what does recognition mean for the individual protected areas?

UNESCO's MAB programme forms the content and organizational framework for the establishment of all biosphere reserves. The selection and recognition of biosphere reserves by UNESCO is based on how representative the landscape is; it is carried out nationally by the respective MAB National Committee, which reviews the status quo every ten years.

Designation is also linked to the mandate to sustainably preserve and further develop the uniqueness and beauty of these valuable natural and cultural landscapes. South Harz Karst Landscape Biosphere Reserve is still aiming for this special UNESCO accolade.

How will German biosphere reserves develop in the future?

In March 2016, the fourth World Congress of Biosphere Reserves adopted the Lima Action Plan for the further development of biosphere reserves until 2025, together with a new MAB strategy (2015 to 2025) approved by the UNESCO General Conference. Since then, the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030 has been the focus of biosphere reserves worldwide. Since then, a large number of ideas and projects have

been developed in the German regions, including for biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation, or education for sustainable development, all of which are directly attributable to the SDGs (including SDG 15: Life on land, SDG 13: Climate action, and SDG 4: Quality education). Regional value chains for classic biosphere products have been re-established in many places, built-up or developed into entire product lines in many places (see Albgemacht (Swabian Alb), Deichlambratwurst (Wadden Sea), Berchtesgaden Biosphere juice; SDG 12: Sustainable consumption and production).

The fifth World Congress of Biosphere Reserves will take place in China in 2025. The world is facing very big challenges: climate change and the global loss of biological diversity, two major driving forces heading in the same direction that will impair or complicate the ability to live well (together) in the future. Biosphere reserves are important learning places and real-world laboratories for finding specific, sustainable solutions to these challenges. In this process, the joint search for solutions with the local people plays a crucial role, as does the exchange of experience and mutual learning in the global network of biosphere reserves. In this respect, biosphere reserves are real model regions for the future of our planet.

What makes biosphere reserves interesting for visitors and what do you recommend for their visit?

With their unique natural features and wide range of cultural offerings, biosphere reserves are popular leisure and recreational destinations for both visitors and residents: they offer space to experience and discover nature in a variety of ways. The combination of regional characteristics and regional identity with a forward-looking identity make biosphere reserves special places to experience. Each biosphere reserve offers individual cultural attractions which are complemented by a variety of regional products as well as sustainable tourism and environmental education opportunities for the whole family.

If you want to get to know biosphere reserves better and take advantage of sustainable offers, we recommend a visit to our partners. The "Partners of National Natural Landscapes" are reviewed and certified nationwide according to uniform quality criteria, helping them to represent the sustainable development of their region. As experts and ambassadors of their biosphere reserve, they offer visitors and residents a wide range of experiences. A visit is therefore definitely worthwhile.

Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein | Hamburg Wadden Sea | Lower Saxon Wadden Sea



Where the seabed meets the horizon

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

Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein

From the stormy sea, to large flocks of birds, vast salt marshes, and fresh sea air – on the Hallig islands and the island of Pellworm you can experience nature, culture and everyday life up close. The unique Halligen are small and unprotected by dykes. When the tide is particularly high, they are flooded by the North Sea. In order to be inhabitable, houses are built on man-made mounds called “Warften”. The surrounding salt marshes are the habitat for many specialised animal and plant species. The brent geese migration in spring is a unique experience. Visible from the Halligen is the island of Pellworm: Sheep and cattle graze on the fertile marsh soil, numerous oystercatchers and avocets breed in the meadows, all well protected by high dykes around the island. The picturesque lighthouse and centuries-old churches can be easily explored by bicycle. The rich menu of the Wadden Sea has created a paradise for birds, but human guests will also find culinary delights here: North Frisian salt marsh lamb, scrambled eggs with brown shrimp and Frisian tart are among the region’s specialties.

Hamburg Wadden Sea

In the Elbe estuary near Cuxhaven the tidal flats and a sky full of birds stretch far into the distance. The landscape a network of islands, tidal creeks, dunes and beaches – the Hamburg Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve is a jewel of nature. In the middle of it all lies the inhabited island of Neuwerk with its dikes, monuments and ancient cultural landscape. The island is one of Hamburg’s oldest districts, despite being located over 100 kilometres from Hamburg City Hall, and it has a colourful history. It was at various times a medieval fishing port, a haven for pirates, a fortification, and pastureland. Its maritime history has given Neuwerk, which was surrounded by dykes in 1556, a distinctive face. Today, the island has about 30 residents who cater for up to 100,000 visitors every year.

With its salt marshes, the Neuwerk foreshore is an important breeding and resting area for waders and waterfowl. The uninhabited islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn consist solely of sand dunes. Natural coastal processes cause the islands to slowly grow towards each other and, at the same time, change their positions bit by bit. They are refuges for many seabirds. Nigehörn is the most recent addition to the group: Hamburg’s youngest island was created artificially in 1989, when 1.2 million cubic metres of sand were deposited in only five weeks. Since then, the island has been left to develop through natural coastal processes.

Lower Saxon Wadden Sea

Villages in the typical local style of construction, churches with organs of trans-regional renown, all shaped by the centuries-old struggle for survival against the sea; marsh, geest, moors, and the islands’ golden sand beaches, over-arched by an indescribably vast sky. The exploding fireworks of a sunset over the sea after a summer storm. Silent and serene, a perfect place for rest and contemplation. These are just a few of the many facets of Lower Saxon Wadden Sea biosphere reserve. Many people are surprised to learn that the Wadden Sea is the second most productive ecosystem in the world, after the tropical rainforest. Millions of migratory birds feed here, accumulating the reserves of fat that they will need to breed successfully in the Arctic, or for their flight to their winter quarters in distant regions to the south. Every October bird lovers and nature enthusiasts have the opportunity to experience the fascinating world of migratory birds in the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea during the “Zugvogeltage” (engl.: “Migratory Bird Days”). The Wadden Sea also serves as nursery for many species of fish that appear on local menus. At the same time, the area is also one of Germany’s leading tourist destinations. The biosphere partners offer a wide range of tourist experiences in a sustainable way.



Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein



Marsh landscape and the iconic lighthouse of Pellworm island.

Hallig life and national park visitor centre

Take the ferry from Schlüttsiel to Hallig Hooge. Upon arrival you can rent bikes from a rental service at the ferry terminal. Or, if you want to be more comfortable, take a carriage across the Hallig. In spring and autumn, thousands upon thousands of brent geese take a rest here during their migration. Visit the church and the Königspesel Museum, and take in the beautiful natural vistas. If the weather is unpleasant (what the locals call “Schietwetter”), stop at the restaurant on Hanswarft. A visit to the Conservation Station’s (Schutzstation Wattenmeer) national park visitor centre is a sure hit with children.

Island tour and brown shrimp rolls

- **Monday:** Arrival at the holiday apartment on the island of Pellworm. In the evening, we take a walk along the dyke. We eat brown shrimp rolls and drink a local specialty coffee, a “pharisee”.
- **Tuesday:** Bicycle tour across the island. We visit the old church in the west of the island, followed by an interesting guided tour of a working farm.
- **Wednesday:** Boat trip to Hallig Nordstrandischmoor with the MS “Nordfriesland”. A local takes us on an interesting tour past the little school, the pub and the new “climate warft” that was built to withstand rising sea levels. Next time we will take the boat trip to Hallig Gröde, famous for its eye-catching sea lavender bloom in August and of course home to many, many sea birds. Fascinating landscape between land and sea!
- **Thursday:** Sunny day! At high tide we go for a swim at the “Hooger Fähre” swimming spot. We stay up late in order to look at the stars. The night sky on this Dark Sky island is spectacular!
- **Friday:** Mudflat hike to Hallig Süderoog with the Conservation Station. What an experience so far out in the Wadden Sea. What luck! The children find a piece of amber on the way.
- **Saturday:** Delicious breakfast in the idyllic garden of the holiday apartment. The calls of oyster-catchers accompany us on the way to the ferry that will take us back to Nordstrand.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Size: 4,449 square kilometres

Elevation: -15 to +8 metres above sea level

History: The biosphere reserve was established and recognised by UNESCO in 1990. The biosphere reserve occupies the same area as the national park (established in 1985), but additionally includes the five large, inhabited Halligen as well as – since 2023 – the island of Pellworm.

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

Biosphere Reserve information

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Gemeinde Pellworm
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projektmanagement@gemeinde-pellworm.de
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Nationalpark-Zentrum Multimar Wattforum
Dithmarscher Straße 6a
25832 Tönning
Phone: +49 4861 96200
https://multimar-wattforum.de/en/

Accommodation

Nordsee-Tourismus-Service GmbH
Phone: +49 4841 8975-0
www.nordseetourismus.de

Nationalpark-Partner
www.nationalpark-partner-sh.de

Books and maps

UNESCO Weltnaturerbe Wattenmeer
ISBN-10 3529054909

Die Halligen
ISBN-10 3898765164

Maps of the National Park: Sehkarte Westküste
Schleswig-Holstein
ISBN-10 3926137452

Information material by the biosphere reserve administration:
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/service/publikationen



Never far from the North Sea: Life on Hallig Hooge

Directions

Public transport to island ferries: By train to Husum, then by bus to Strucklahnungshörn/Nordstrand (car ferry to Pellworm). By train to Bredstedt, then by bus to Schlüttsiel (car ferry to Hallig Hooge and Hallig Langeneß, tour boats to all Hallig islands upon prior arrangements).

By car: Autobahn A23, direction of Heide, then north on the B5. Road signs point the way to the island ferries (Strucklahnungshörn/Nordstrand, Schlüttsiel).

**Biosphärenreservat
Schleswig-Holsteinisches
Wattenmeer und Halligen**



Hamburg Wadden Sea



Scharhörn and Nigehörn dune islands

Salt marshes and tidal aquarium

The island of Neuwerk and the dune islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn are located in the middle of the tidal flats. Depending on the tide, you can reach Neuwerk on foot, in a horse-drawn carriage (the so-called Wattwagen), or by boat. Walking the ring dyke that protects the island from the high tide is a good way to get to know the island. The 700-year-old Neuerker Tower, the oldest secular building on the German North Sea coast, offers a magnificent view of the biosphere reserve all the way to the mouth of the Elbe, and the large container ships. Close to the tower is the biosphere reserve and national park centre with an exhibition on the Hamburg Wadden Sea including a tidal aquarium. Following a marked path through the restored salt marshes on the eastern foreshore of the island, you can see birds at close range, whether they are breeding here or just passing through. The magic of bird migration can be observed in spring and autumn.

Touring the island: on foot or with the Wattwagen

- **Monday:** Arrival at Neuwerk with the passenger ship MS Flipper. Settling in at a cosy guest house or – for families and groups – at a “hay hotel”. A first tour of the island on the ring dyke gives us a first impression of everything that we may want to explore later.
- **Tuesday:** It’s raining, so we sleep in and read a novel about the pirate Störtebeker. In the afternoon, we dress in “Frisian Mink” (the typical yellow

raincoat) to visit the biosphere reserve and national park centre. The adventure trail offers interesting information about the biosphere reserve and the National Park.

- **Wednesday:** The sun is shining. Fitness programme in the morning: a climb to the top of the 700-year old lighthouse to enjoy a view of the landscape – natural and man-made. We breathe in the fragrance of meadows and sea on an afternoon tour with the Jordsand Association through the restored salt marshes on the eastern foreshore, watching oystercatchers and Sandwich terns and their newly hatched young.
- **Thursday:** Out early to spend the whole day on the tidal flats experiencing nature in the core zone of the biosphere reserve. In good personal condition and weather conditions, hike with the ranger to the bird island Scharhörn.
- **Friday:** With a ranger we hike to the “Kleiner Vogelsand”, a high ridge on the tidal flats on the northern coast of Neuwerk. Amber is often found here after storms.
- **Saturday:** After a morning swim – at high tide – we say goodbye to Neuwerk in the afternoon. At low tide, the horse-drawn “Wattwagen” takes us over the mudflats to Sahlenburg. See you again at Hamburg Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve!

General information

Facts and figures

Location: at the mouth of the Elbe, near the Lower Saxony mainland near Cuxhaven (Hamburg exclave)

Area: 117 square kilometres

History: The biosphere reserve was established and recognised by UNESCO in 1992 and occupies the same area as the National Park that was set up in 1990.

Elevation: Up to 6 metres above sea level
Geographic features: tidal flats, islands, sandbanks, tidal creeks, salt marshes, grassland and sea

Biosphere Reserve information

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Accommodation and Wattwagen companies

Das alte Fischerhaus (Hotel und Wattwagen)
Phone: +49 4721 29043
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www.wattfahrten.de

Nige Hus & zum Anker (Hotel)
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www.inselneuwerk.de

Hus Achtern Diek (Hotel und Wattwagen)
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Haus Seeblick (Hotel und Wattführungen)
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Thomas Fischer (Wattwagen)
Phone: +49 4721 28770
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By Wattwagen to Neuwerk

Books and maps

Nationalparkatlas Hamburgisches Wattenmeer
(Available as a PDF file at
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de)

Herzlich Willkommen in unserem Nationalpark
Nationalparkbroschüre Hamburgisches Wattenmeer
(Available as a PDF from publications at
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de)

Directions

By train "Metronom" **or car** to Cuxhaven. From there, you have three options of getting to Neuwerk: on foot from Sahlenburg (bus connection from Cuxhaven train/bus station); with the horse-drawn Wattwagen from Sahlenburg or Duhnen (various providers); or with the MS Flipper from Cuxhaven "Alte Liebe" (shipping company Cassen Eils, Phone: +49 4721 667600, www.cassen-eils.de).



Lower Saxon Wadden Sea

Tidal flat walks and “Migratory Bird Days”



Flock of dunlin

On fine days a day trip from Harlesiel to the island of Spiekeroog is recommended. At low tide, groups led by a National Park guide stroll over roughly ten kilometres of tidal flats to the greenest of the seven East Frisian Islands, where they will have about four hours to explore the “Sleeping Beauty” in the Wadden Sea. At high tide, a ferry takes the visitors back to the mainland. A visit to the Sielhafen Museum and the Carolinensiel national park centre is worthwhile, rain or shine. Don’t miss a traditional East Frisian tea ceremony at a tearoom in the historical Sielhafen.

Bicycle tour and rhubarb cake

- **Monday:** Arrival with bicycles at Bremerhaven station. From there by ferry to Nordenham. We pedal our way west along the dyke. Cosy guest houses are everywhere.
- **Tuesday:** Trip to the marshland outside the dyke in Sehestedt (National Park Interactive Station) and to Dangast. The old “Kurhaus” in Dangast serves delicious rhubarb cake – but it is only open at weekends. Overnight stay in Varel (Dangast).
- **Wednesday:** We leave the Jade Bay to explore the traditional landscape of the biosphere region and head past former ponds, which were once created by clover mining and are now a biotope for water and wading birds, to Zetel. We continue on to Neustadtgödens, passing traditional windmills on the way to today’s overnight stay Sande.
- **Thursday:** We discover the salt marsh adventure trail in Cäciliengroden and then follow the Ems-Jade-Kanal. The Altmarienhausen estate is a landmark project of the biosphere community of Sande. The café invites you to take a break and explore the garden. A canoe hire station offers canal trips. The tour continues to Schortens.
- **Friday:** On the way to the picturesque town of Jever, you can visit the ecological show garden at the Regional Environmental Centre in Oestringfelde Klosterpark. After a visit to Jever Castle, the route continues to Wilhelmshaven.
- **Saturday:** The last day is perfect for a guided tour or a national park excursion by boat organised by the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage Centre. If it rains, we can visit the exhibition.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 4,171.31 square kilometres

Elevation: Sea level

History: The biosphere reserve was established and recognised by UNESCO in 1992. It encompasses the National Park of the same name, which was set up in 1986. Recognised again in 2023 with an extended transition zone, that includes areas from 12 municipalities.

Geographic features: tidal flats, islands with dunes, beaches and salt marshes, moors, heath, sandbanks, tidal creeks and sea, marsh, and geest

Biosphere Reserve Information

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An overview of all information centers including the websites can be found here:
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/besuchen/infozentren/

Books and maps

Vögel beobachten im Nationalpark Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer

ISBN 978-3-7959-0910-9

Cookbook: Watt'n Kochbuch
ISBN 978-3-98726-026-1

paddle & bike
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Directions

Train stations with connections to island ferries:

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

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

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



Lower Saxon Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserve – linking natural and cultural landscapes in the Wadden Sea region



South-East Rügen

Culture, landscape, sea and more



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



Fishermen on the beach at Binz

South-East Rügen fascinates us with its beautiful, varied interplay of land and sea, of peninsulas, headlands, and promontories, forests and bare hilltops, 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, centuries-old forests, and almost every type of wetland in north Germany.

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 now you have been able to see rare "guests" on the coast as well as in the Baltic Sea and Bodden waters of South-East 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 welcome development for 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 longlines, they catch fish such as herring, cod, garfish, and flounder 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.





Fishing boats in Thiesow 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, on 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 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 the 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 “Rasender 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 +49 38301 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.

General information

Facts and figures

Location: south-east part of the Baltic island of Rügen in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Size: 228 square kilometres

Elevation: 0 to 107 metres

History: established in 1990 and designated by UNESCO in 1991.

Landscape types: coastal landscape with long sandy beaches, deeply indented Bodden, cliffs, dry grasslands, salt meadows, beech woods, fields and pastures.

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsamt Südost-Rügen
Circus 1
18581 Putbus
Phone: +49 385 588633-00
poststelle@suedostruegen.mvnet.de
www.biosphaerenreservat-suedostruegen.de/en/

Accommodation and guided walks

Naturerlebnisverein Rügen e. V.
Zubzow 5a
18569 Trent
Phone: +49 38309 20126
natur-ruegen@t-online.de
www.naturerlebnis-ruegen.de

Tourismusverband Rügen e. V.
Markt 25
18528 Bergen auf Rügen
Phone: +49 3838 8077-0
www.ruegen.de/en/

Guided nature walks
René Geyer
Leopold-Spreer-Straße 3
18581 Putbus

Books and maps

Elisabeth v. Arnim
Elisabeth auf Rügen List Tb.
ISBN 978-3-548-60247-9

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

Insel Rügen/Insel Hiddensee
Cycling and hiking maps
Verlag Maiwald-Karten, 6th edition
ISBN 978-3-932115-26-4

Schlösser und Herrenhäuser auf Rügen
Edition Temmen, 3rd edition
Revised and updated in 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, 7th edition 2018
ISBN 978-3-00-0088 44-X

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

Directions

By train and bus: via Stralsund and Bergen to Putbus, then take the “Rasender Roland” train to Göhren or Binz. From Bergen by bus (lines 20 or 21) to Klein Zicker or Putbus (line 30 or 31).

By car: from Stralsund to Bergen and by the B196 to Mönchgut. Or by the old ferry along “Bäderstraße” to Putbus and Mönchgut.



Schaalsee

A resting place for migratory birds





On the moor adventure trail through the Zarrentiner limestone moor

Bogs and lakes, fields, pasture and wet meadows, natural beech forests – with the Schaalsee in the middle of it. The lake is at the heart of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and gives it its name. Like the whole landscape with its many lakes, it is 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 here that have not been seen in other places for a long time: kingfisher, sea eagle, and otter are the most prominent examples among many others.

People and their culture are an important part of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve, so every visitor is welcome. Since the opening of the border, the region has gone from nowhere to a top tourist tip for nature lovers: 150 km of marked hiking and cycling trails lead through a green puzzle of forest, bogs and wet meadows, lush pastures and rolling fields. Walking under the leafy canopy of the avenues or forest trees, or along flowering hedgerows paths is particularly romantic. There are sustainable products available in the hustle and bustle of Schaalsee biosphere market at PAHLHUUS on the first Sunday of the month in the season, from April to November.

High quality products from more than 30 producers are on offer, including fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, eggs, and cheese from local often ecological production, combined with original music and cultural programme. The regional trade mark “Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve – for body and soul” is a label for regional and environmentally friendly products, services, and initiatives.

To date, 100 companies have been awarded the trade mark. They all have one thing in common: the basic idea of harmony between ecology and economy, and the development of the Schaalsee region.



Experience nature and culture

PAHLHUUS in Zarrentin am Schaalsee offers an interesting start. A “tunnel of life”, a digital photo book, and many unusual insights of and into the lake Schaalsee await you in this modern exhibition. You can also buy hiking maps and rent bicycles at PAHLHUUS. The surrounding area offers a varied programme for a bicycle tour: observation towers in Klocksorf and Kneese, hedge-lined cycling and hiking tracks, historic churches worth seeing in Lassahn, Zarrentin, Neuenkirchen, and Döbbersen. Hike on your own or go on a tour with the biosphere reserve rangers.

Elves, monasteries, and border stories

- **Monday:** The “Schaalsee-Tour” takes you by boat and electric train through the Schaalsee landscape and on foot through calcareous fen (www.schaalsee-tour.de).
- **Tuesday:** hiking day: Bauernweg (farm trail) or Elfenpfad (elves path)? The tour schedule can be found in PAHLHUUS.
- **Wednesday:** From the observation tower in Klocksorf, watch water birds and white-tailed eagles on Röggeliner See. Then visit Schlagsdorf information centre about the German-German border (www.grenzhus.de).
- **Thursday:** Sightseeing at the medieval monastery in Rehna (www.kloster-rehna.de). Then visit Museumsanlage Gadebusch.
- **Friday:** Schaalsee round trip, about 45 km around the lake. Afterwards, treat yourself to a massage at Tiger-Gesundheitszentrum in Zarrentin am Schaalsee.
- **Saturday and Sunday:** Elf weekend. Discover the elves on a walk along fairy-tale bankside paths and make your own personal elf with your own hands on a modelling course (www.schaalseelebens-art.de).

Excursion to the Schaalsee



General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 310 square kilometres

Altitude: 30 to 93 metres

Development: Established in 1990 as a nature park, recognised in 2000 as a UNESCO biosphere reserve

Landscape types: deep lakes, calcareous marshes and bogs, beech forests, alder and ash forests, swamp forests, unimproved grasslands, grassland, avenues, hedges, and fields

Biosphere Reserve information

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Wittenburger Chaussee 13
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poststelle@bra-schelb.mvnet.de
www.schaalsee.de/en/

Förderverein Biosphäre Schaalsee e. V.
Hauptstraße 13
19246 Zarrentin am Schaalsee
Phone: +49 38851 32136
info@biosphaere-schaalsee.de
www.biosphaere-schaalsee.de

Accommodation

Tourismusverband Mecklenburg-Schwerin
Phone: +49 385 59189875
www.mecklenburg-schwerin.de/en/

Accommodation with the regional trade mark
Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee – Für Leib und Seele
www.schaalsee.de/en/

Comprehensive information about Schaalsee –
Schaalsee Info
Phone: +49 38851 333435
www.schaalsee-info.de

Books and maps

Hiking maps for Schaalsee UNESCO Biosphere Reserve:
Zarrentin map
ISBN 978-3-932115-86-8

Gadebusch map
ISBN 978-3-932115-84-4

Wittenburg map
ISBN 978-3-932115-87-5

Hiking maps for Lauenburgische Seen Nature Park:
Ratzeburg map
ISBN 978-3-932115-83-4

Mölln map
ISBN 978-3-932115-85-1

Illustrated book:
UNESCO-Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee –
Eine Bilderreise
ISBN-13: 978-3000511967

Directions

By train and bus: The nearest train stations are in Hagenow, Ratzeburg, and Rehna. From Hagenow you can get to Zarrentin am Schaalsee by bus: www.vlp-lup.de.

By car: via the A24 motorway (exit Zarrentin am Schaalsee) and A20 motorway (exit Lüdersdorf). From Lübeck via Ratzeburg to Zarrentin am Schaalsee



Schaalsee biosphere market, first Sunday in the month (April–November) in front of PAHLHUUS



Elbe River Landscape



Aerial image of the Elbe at the village of Drethem

World culture along wild banks

The Elbe is the third longest river in Germany, a mighty presence flowing through five German states on its 400-km course through the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve. It is one of the last semi-natural rivers in Central Europe. Interested visitors find it easy to explore, either on foot or by bicycle, following well laid out trails and paths along the riverbanks. The diverse and impressive array of habitats in the semi-natural floodplain and the adjacent marshes, tributaries, and raised areas of sand (known as *geest*) provide homes for a wealth of species. Alluvial hardwood forests, inland dunes, steep *geest* cliffs, expansive meadows, numerous bodies of water with reed beds, aggradations and marshlands all shape the landscape of the Elbe floodplain. Numerous plants and animals occur here, including many endangered species.

The Elbe beaver, which was on the verge of extinction a century ago, has returned and now lives along the entire length of the river. White storks are an everyday sight in the grasslands during the summer months. In addition to 200 species of breeding birds, wild geese and swans migrate through the area, resting and spending the winter.

The area also offers extensive cultural history to its visitors. A fine example is the Dessau-Wörlitz World Cultural Heritage Site, with its enchanting historical landscape gardens.

Flooding and dyke-building are also a part of the area's cultural history. After the Elbe flooded in August 2002, and again in June 2013, the need for dyke reconstruction became abundantly clear, and work is already underway at several locations in the UNESCO biosphere reserve, including one site that is part of the large "Middle Elbe" nature conservation project, near Lödderitz, and another in the floodplain of the Mulde River near Priorau. The preservation and restoration of natural floodplains are essential aspects of modern flood protection and a very visible tool in raising public awareness of the biosphere reserves role as a model for the careful use of our natural resources.

Lower Saxonian Elbe Valley Biosphere Reserve

In Lower Saxony, the semi-natural banks of the Elbe and its lowland meadows, with their many oxbow lakes and ponds, are an annual stopover for migratory birds, which rest here in large flocks. The Elbe valley floodplain in Lower Saxony is part of one of the most important staging points for birds migrating through northern Germany. Between October and March up to 100,000 geese and 3,000 whooper and Bewick's swans can be seen here. The adjacent fields of rape-seed and grain offer plenty of nutritious food – often to the chagrin of the farmers – at least until recently. An effective migratory bird management programme, funded in part by the EU, serves as an example of a successful approach to reconciling the interests of agriculture and nature conservation, as well as a practical demonstration of how a biosphere reserve works. The interests of nature conservation and business have also been reconciled in other spheres, such as tourism. From hiking, fishing and horseback riding to boat trips, canoeing, and bicycle tours, the Elbe River Landscape has something to offer all year round. In addition to the preservation and maintenance of the natural and cultural heritage of the region, tourism also creates and preserves jobs, which is an important additional benefit. Increasing numbers of visitors have led to the development of an extensive array of services and information sources along tourist routes. These include bicycle rental and repair, pubs and restaurants typical of the region, accommodation in hotels, "hay hostels" and guesthouses catering for cyclists, taxi services, on-call buses, and many other services.



Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve has been a part of the global network of UNESCO biosphere reserves for 45 years. One reason for this, and an important one, is the presence of a truly charismatic animal known to everyone: the beaver. Or more precisely, the Elbe beaver. Roughly 1,200 beavers live in the biosphere reserve today – a highly gratifying result for beaver protection, which has a long tradition on the middle Elbe. Over the last few decades, the species has made a remarkable comeback from a small remnant population. Nevertheless, the Elbe beaver is still strictly protected under the provisions of the Federal Nature Conservation Act. The beaver is native to a region that also encompasses the most important alluvial hardwood forests in Central Europe. The floodplain and its natural structures are an irreplaceable habitat for a variety of mammals, water birds, and insects. Fruit trees, riparian plants (e.g. a species of snow parsley *Cnidium dubium* and *Veronica longifolia*) and rare orchid species are found in this river landscape.

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve is a managed cultural landscape that has been formed, designed, used, and altered by people in a very special way and for a long time: During the reign of Prince Leopold III, Friedrich Franz von Anhalt-Dessau (1740–1817), a cultural landscape modelled on English landscape gardens was created on the Elbe floodplain between Dessau and Wörlitz. The gardens were open to the public in keeping with the leitmotif of the Enlightenment: “to combine beauty and utility”. Avenues lined with fruit trees, solitary trees, dykes, castles, landscape parks and small-scale architectures have been preserved as a “Gesamtkunstwerk” (“integral artwork”). The cultural landscape created by the Prince has been a World Heritage Site since 2000. Other World Heritage Sites, the Bauhaus in Dessau and the Masters’ Houses as well as Martin Luther’s places of action in Wittenberg, represent magnificent cultural achievements of past centuries. The town of Tangermünde, which is over a thousand years old, the cathedral and imperial city of Magdeburg, and the distinctive Jerichow Monastery are other outstanding examples of human achievement in the area.

Elbe River Landscape – Brandenburg Biosphere Reserve

As it crosses the North German Plain, the Elbe widens, meandering across the landscape, shaping and re-shaping its banks and forelands with the rhythm of its floods, year after year. The river level can fluctuate by more than seven metres. It forms sandbanks, flood channels and oxbow lakes. The gnarled remains of old riparian forests are also the work of the river. The different habitats along the Elbe and its tributaries (such as the Karthane, Stepenitz, and Löcknitz) are occupied by numerous plant and animal species, many of them quite rare. These species have adapted to extremely wet or extremely dry conditions, and in some cases to both. It is wonderful to see that the reconstruction of the Elbe dyke at Lenzen has created approximately 420 hectares of new floodplain!

During the breeding season, cranes can be seen and heard in a few locations, such as Rambower peatland. With just a little luck, visitors may catch a glimpse of a white stork: nowhere else in Germany can it be found in such high numbers! More than 30 pairs breed every year in the European Stork Village of Rühstädt. The feathered winter guests include several thousand whooper swans as well as 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 over during their migration. At any time of the year, a lucky visitor might see a white-tailed eagle. Visitors and locals alike have come to appreciate the abundance of nature more and more, the villages and towns of brick and half-timbered houses, the beauty of the landscape, and the diverse services for body and soul which this biosphere reserve has to offer.

Winter flooding of Löcknitz extends to the foot of the inland dunes at Klein Schmölen





Bean and greylag geese flying up

Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Biosphere Reserve

“A glacial valley in its entirety” is the motto of the Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Biosphere Reserve. This refers to the various habitats in the Elbe valley, which have been formed by successive ice ages and are characterised today by wide floodplains and small tributaries, grasslands, riverbanks, inland dunes, and heaths. It also refers to the animals that live here permanently or stop over during their long migrations. Numerous rare plants are also found here. The sandy areas between the river groynes of the Elbe River and the regularly inundated floodplain near the small port city of Dömitz are home to such species as grey hair-grass, thrift, annual vernal grass, spiked speedwell and Spanish catchfly. They also contain marshes with various willow species and black poplars – plants that only occur in a few places and require very special conditions.

Another habitat worth a visit are the inland dunes, one of the geological and landscape features that make the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve so special. Located near Klein Schmölen, rising about 45 metres above sea level, 600 metres wide and about two kilometres long, the Elbtaldüne (Elbe valley dune) is one of the largest inland dunes. An educational trail takes visitors to the highest point, where they are treated to an impressive view of the Elbe valley. Dating back to the end of the last ice age, the partially barren inland dunes near Boizenburg-Gothmann still dominate the vast floodplain landscape.

Life on a large river like the Elbe has many advantages but, at the same time, people need to protect themselves from the dangers of flooding. In recent years, the consequences of flooding have become increasingly devastating as water does not respect borders. The open-air exhibition “EinFlussReich” on Elbberg in Boizenburg explores the issue of flooding and how the people live with it: How and why does the Elbe flood? What experiences of flooding do the people on the Elbe have? How effective and useful are flood defences?

Elbe River Landscape – Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve

The smallest part of the biosphere reserve is located in Schleswig-Holstein. In Herzogtum Lauenburg, southeast of the city of Lauenburg, there is an area called “Lauenburger Elbvorland” nature reserve. Another nature conservation area, “Hohes Elbufer, extends between Tesperhude and Lauenburg”. Together they form an area of 553 hectares, 65 % of which is forested.

The Elbe Foreland is lined with river banks with fluctuating water levels, herb fringe communities, reedbeds, and willow shrubs. Semi-natural softwood meadows with purple willow and native black poplars cover high sandbanks and embankments.

The steep slope of the Elbe glacial valley, which slopes southwards and is rich in springs, is predominantly forested. In conjunction with the warm, humid microclimate of the banks of the Elbe, the influence of the dry, warm, continental weather provides conditions for the occurrence of numerous rare animal and plant species.

Many species have their northernmost or westernmost distribution limit here, and in northern Germany they only occur in the Elbe glacial valley. These include field eryngo, Kashubian vetch, Carthusian pink, motherwort, black horehound, and wood cow-wheat.

The occurrence of river lamprey and sea lamprey, asp, sand lizard, moor frog, beaver, and various species of bat are of European importance.

A hiking trail in the western part between Lauenburg and Schnakenbek resembles a jungle path and makes the wildlife experience here particularly attractive. There are information panels about beavers here. The European beaver (*Castor fiber*) finds the perfect habitat on the Elbe. It is now also at home again in the Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve. If you're very lucky, you can even see it; in any case, you can't miss the signs of feeding, some of which may even be fresh. As you walk, look out for gnawed and fallen trees, an unmistakable sign that the beaver was at work here.



Lower Saxony Elbe Valley



View of the Elbe near Damnitz

Picturesque villages and vibrant birdlife

A bicycle tour to see the storks (42 km) is a must during the summer months. From Hitzacker, take the Elbe ferry to Herrenhof. From there, proceed upstream past picturesque villages and numerous stork nests to the enchanted park of Wehningen Castle. After crossing over the river on the impressive Elbe Bridge at Dömitz, return to Hitzacker on the opposite bank, enjoying a wonderful view of the Elbe foreland. Winter activities include a visit to the Nature on the Elbe exhibition, in Biosphaerium Elbtalau in Bleckede, and an excursion to Neuhäuser Elbmarsch to see huge flocks of migrant birds.

Beavers, boats, and the Green Belt

- **Monday:** Visit the city of Bleckede, Biosphaerium Elbtalau, and take a bicycle tour in the marshland between Radegast and Barförde.
- **Tuesday:** Visit the Archezentrum in Konau and the shifting dune in Stixe.
- **Wednesday:** Hitzacker, with its Archaeological centre, and experience the hike “Zwischen Weinberg und Wolfsschlucht” (“Between vineyards and Wolf Gorge”).
- **Thursday:** Exhibition at Dannenberg Market and take a bicycle tour through the picturesque villages of the Dannenberger Marsch.
- **Friday:** Swimming and boating on Lake Gartow, climb Höhbeck, visit Nemitzer Heath.
- **Saturday:** Bike tour on the Educational Border Trail, Schnackenburg Border Museum.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 568 square kilometres

Elevation: 5 to 109 metres above sea level

History: Founded and recognised by UNESCO in 1997; since 2002, the biosphere reserve has also been protected under state law

Geographic features: Floodplains with wet grassland, oxbow lakes, and remnants of riparian forests; inland dunes with pine forests

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphaerium Elbtalae – Schloss Bleckede
Schlossstraße 10
21354 Bleckede
Phone: +49 5852 951414
info@biosphaerium.de
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Archezentrum Amt Neuhaus
Elbstr. 11
19273 Amt Neuhaus OT Konau
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www.archezentrum-amt-neuhaus.de

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung
Niedersächsische Elbtalae
Am Markt 1
29456 Hitzacker
Phone: +49 5862 96730
info@elbtalae.niedersachsen.de
www.river-elbe-biosphere.niedersachsen.de

Accommodation

Wendland.Elbe
<https://wendland-elbe.de/en/>

Erlebnis Elbe
www.erlebnis-elbe.de/en

Accommodation provided by biosphere
reserve partners
www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de

Books and maps

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

einFlussReich: UNESCO Biosphärenreservat
Flusslandschaft Elbe
ISBN 978-3-944327-85-3

Flusslandschaft Elbe
ISBN 978-3-86263-188-9

Elbe-Radweg, Teil 2
ISBN 978-3-85000-447-3

Biosphärenregion Elbtalae-Wendland
ISBN 978-3990446157

Directions

By train to Lauenburg and Dannenberg.

By car via the B5, B191, B195 and B216.



The European beaver (*Castor fiber*)



Middle Elbe



7 km wide floodplain with riparian forests between Lutherstadt Wittenberg and Wörlitz

With charm and biodiversity

Spend the morning exploring the Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz (“Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz”), and discover how beauty and utility are still combined in the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz today. An excellent lunch is served in the kitchen building at Wörlitz Castle. Next on the itinerary is a visit to the beaver enclosure in Oranienbaum and the Auenhaus information pavilion of the biosphere reserve offices. The spacious outdoor area features characteristics and habitats of the floodplain. Numerous butterflies and dragonflies can be marvelled here in summer. The Beaver cinema shows interesting film snippets of their active nocturnal life.

In Luther’s footsteps and visit the fisherman

- **Monday:** Take a cultural and culinary walk through the centre of Wittenberg, following the footsteps of Martin Luther. In the afternoon, travel on to Wörlitz to visit Wörlitzer Park.
- **Tuesday:** City of Dessau-Roßlau: visit the World Heritage Sites of Park Luisium and Park Georgium in Dessau. Visit the Bauhaus, Bauhaus museum and the Masters’ Houses in Dessau. Have dinner at a restaurant in Dessau or, perhaps, watch a theatre production.
- **Wednesday:** Kapenniederung: visit Auenhaus information pavilion, and follow the nature trail in Kapenniederung (about 2 km). In the afternoon, walk in the alluvial forest around Lödderitz – the original area of the biosphere reserve – with guides from the nature conservation society. Finally, enjoy a small refreshment in the nearby Marie Gerda ship restaurant.
- **Thursday:** Take a passenger ship to Magdeburg. Go on a bicycle tour to the Trogbrücke at Wasserstraßenkreuz (where the Mittellandkanal crosses the Elbe). Continue to Tangermünde.
- **Friday:** Visit to the historic old town centre of Tangermünde, in the afternoon continue to Arneburg to hike along the floodplain trail of the same name.
- **Saturday:** Visit the House of Rivers in Havelberg; in the evening, experience an organ recital in Havelberg Cathedral.
- **Sunday:** Take a boat ride on the Havel River to watch the Elbe beavers. Visit the fisherman: Havelzander for dinner.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: approximately 1,260 square kilometres

Elevation: 55 to 65 metres above sea level

History: Parts of the present biosphere reserve were recognised by UNESCO in 1979. The area was enlarged in 1988 through the inclusion of Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz cultural landscape, which was granted the status of a UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Site in 2000. In 1997, the area of the biosphere reserve was expanded to include the entire course of the Elbe River in Saxony-Anhalt and recognised by UNESCO as the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve.

Geographic features: river valleys, floodplain forests, oxbow lakes, inland dunes, wet grassland, historical cultural landscapes

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung MittelElbe
Kapenmühle, PF 1382, 06813 Dessau-Roßlau
Phone: +49 34904 4210
poststelle-orb@biores.mwu.sachsen-anhalt.de
www.mittelElbe.com/en/
www.haus-der-fluesse.de
www.gartenreich.net/en/
www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de/en/

Information centre Auenhaus
Am Kapenschlösschen 3
06785 Oranienbaum-Wörlitz
Phone: +49 34904 40631
auenhaus@biores.mwu.sachsen-anhalt.de

Haus der Flüsse
Natura 2000 – Information centre
of Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve
Elbstraße 2, 39539 Havelberg
Phone: +49 39387 609976
hausderfluesse@biores.mwu.sachsen-anhalt.de

Accommodation

Altmärkischer Regionalmarketing- und
Tourismusverband e. V.
Phone: +49 39322 72600
www.altmark.de

Tourismusverband Prignitz e. V.
Phone: +49 3876 30741920
www.dieprignitz.de

WelterbeRegion Anhalt-Dessau-Wittenberg e. V.
Phone: +49 3491 402610
www.anhalt-dessau-wittenberg.de

Magdeburger Tourismusverband Elbe-Börde-Heide e. V.
Phone: +49 391 738790
www.elbe-boerde-heide.de

Books and maps

Gesellschaft für Naturfotografie e. V. (Hrsg.)
Wilde Elbe, Naturschätze zwischen Riesengebirge und
Wattenmeer
ISBN 978-3-95728-668-0

Christian Antz (ed.) and Dana Trenkner
Reiseführer “Schöne Wilde Welt – Das UNESCO
Biosphärenreservat MittelElbe”
ISBN 978-3-899232-18-9

Thomas Weiss (Ed.)
Das Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz – Kulturlandschaft an
Elbe und Mulde
ISBN 978-3-93962 9-11-5

Tourist map of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve
www.mittelElbe.com/besucherinfos/information-
material/ or administration of the biosphere reserve
Middle Elbe

Radtourenkarte Elberadweg 2
Dessau-Wittenberge
ISBN 978-3-89920-242-7

Thomas Hinsche (photographs)
Lebensraum großer Strom – Tierwelten im
Biosphärenreservat MittelElbe
ISBN 978-3-89923-353-7

Directions

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

By bike: Elbe Cycle Route and European Cycle Route (R1)

By car: on the B107, A9 and A2.



Elbe River Landscape – Brandenburg



Dyke reconstruction in the large-scale nature conservation project in the Elbe Valley at Lenzen

White storks and the “Wunderblutkirche”

The bicycle tour begins in Wittenberge and passes interesting examples of industrial architecture. Following the dyke upstream, you stop every so often at the “Haltepunkte Natur” (“nature stops”), then continue to the European Stork Village of Rühstädt. After visiting the white stork exhibition in the visitor centre, walk the historical trail in the village or stroll through the Schlosspark (castle park), stopping for lunch at one of the inns. Continue to Bad Wilsnack (“Adebar” tour) via Groß Lüben. Stop for cake and admire the “Wunderblutkirche” (“Church of the Holy Blood”). Rest and relax in Wilsnacker Therme (spa), then back to Wittenberge (perhaps by train).



Storks near Rühstädt

Beavers and a dinner of Elbe lamb

- **Monday afternoon:** Arrive at Lenzerwische, a guesthouse directly on the dyke. Stroll along the river.
- **Tuesday:** Lenzerwische bicycle tour (25 km), visit to the granary of the manor in Eldenburg. To finish the day, drop in on the cranes and geese in the evening.
- **Wednesday:** Visit Lenzen. There is so much to see and do: Lenzen Castle; the Nature Poetry Garden, and “Auenerlebnisgelände AuenReich”; the site of the (first large) dyke reconstruction.
- **Thursday:** Take a guided tour of Wittenberge, a boat trip on the Elbe, and visit the European Stork Village in Rühstädt. In the evening, enjoy the spa at Wilsnacker Therme.
- **Friday:** Walk or cycle around Rambower peatland.
- **Saturday:** Explore Klein Schmölen inland dune and visit Dömitz Fortress; in the evening, enjoy the cultural programme the Prignitz which to offer.
- **Sunday:** Take the Elbe ferry to the borderland museum in Schnackenburg, walk in Gadow-er Forest, and enjoy the traditional “Elblamm” (“Elbe lamb”) for dinner.

General information

Facts and figures

Location: the far north-west of Brandenburg state

Area: 533 square kilometres

Elevation: 54.5 to 13.5 metres above sea level

History: founded as a nature park in 1990. Recognized as a biosphere reserve in 1997.

Geographic features: Elbe valley with water meadows, oxbow lakes, remnants of alluvial forests and valley sand areas

Biosphere Reserve information

NABU-Besucherzentrum Rühstädt

Neuhaus 9

19322 Rühstädt

Tel. +49 38791 806555

info@nabu-ruehstaedt.de

<https://nabu-ruehstaedt.de>

BUND-Besucherzentrum Burg Lenzen

Burgstraße 319309 Lenzen

Phone: +49 38792 5078100 or 1221

info@burg-lenzen.de

www.burg-lenzen.de

Administration

Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg

Neuhaus 9

19322 Rühstädt

Phone: +49 38791 801810

br-flusslandschaft-elbe@lfu.brandenburg.de

www.elbe-brandenburg-biosphaerenreservat.de

Accommodation

Tourismusverband Prignitz e.V.

Großer Markt 4

19348 Perleberg

Phone: +49 3876 30741920

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 (Marvels of the Elbe River)

ISBN 978-3-7977-0454-2

Topografische Freizeitkarte Biosphärenreservat

Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg

ISBN 978-3-7490-4154-1

Directions

By train: Train stations Glöwen, Bad Wilsnack, Wittenberge, and Karstädt. Continue by bike or public transport (PlusBus) to Lenzen.



Elbe River Landscape – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania



The observation towers at Elwkieker in Boizenburg or in Rüterberg provide beautiful panoramic views of the Elbe River landscape

From village republic to fortified city

In good weather, visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the river landscape from the observation tower in Rüterberg. Recommended activities include a hike through the “Dorfrepublik” (“village republic”), to the clay pit, and along the Green Belt on the former “Kolonnenweg” and the Elbe dyke. A visit to the Hotel Dömitzer Hafen is a good idea, and not just for lunch: short harbour tours and a boat trip on the Elbe are also on offer here. The educational dune trail leads from Klein Schmölen to one of the largest inland dunes on the Elbe River.



Across the drawbridge to the largest fortress in Mecklenburg

Hike along the dyke and cycle through stork country

- **Monday:** Visit the open-air exhibition “EinFluss-Reich” with a panoramic view from Elwkieker in Boizenburg-Vier. Follow this with a circular walk in Vierwald, formed in the ice age.
- **Tuesday:** Bicycle tour through stork country from the “Weidenschneck” near Boizenburg harbour along the dyke trail to Teldau.
- **Wednesday:** Boizenburg Tile Museum, guided tour of the old town, hike on the Swan Trail; visit Bollenberg, an inland dune near Gothmann.
- **Thursday:** Cycle tour from Brahlstorf railway station to Dammereez English landscape park and to the “Auerochsen und Koniks” near Preten.
- **Friday:** Lübtheen museum of local history; “Rundlingsdorf” (medieval village with a circular configuration) Vielank and its brewery; Alt Jabel forest lido; historical forest farm and forest museum in Kaliß.
- **Saturday:** Visit Blücher church tower with its exhibition and observation platform high above the river landscape; take a bicycle tour around Blücher polder, including side trips to partner businesses (goat farm and organic fruits).
- **Sunday:** Dömitz Fortress, dyke walk along the Elbe or the Müritz-Elde canal, boat trip on the Elbe.

General information

Facts and figures

Location: south-western Mecklenburg, right bank of the Elbe River, between Boizenburg and Dömitz

Area: 461 square kilometres

Elevation: 6 to 87 metres above sea level

History: recognised as a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1997 and protected as a biosphere reserve under national law since 2015

Landscape types: extensive floodplain including tributaries, wet grassland, Elbe banks and inland dunes

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsamt Schaalsee-Elbe
Wittenburger Chaussee 13
19246 Zarrentin am Schaalsee
Phone: +49 385 58863100
poststelle@bra-schelb.mvnet.de
www.elbetal-mv.de/en/

Freiluftausstellung “EinFlussReich”
Elbberg 8–9
19258 Boizenburg-Vier
www.elbetal-mv.de/en/

Information centre at the fortress Dömitz
Auf der Festung 3
19303 Dömitz
www.doemitz.de/sehenswuerdigkeiten/
besucherinformationen/

Förderverein Biosphäre Elbe MV e. V.
Am Elbberg 8–9
19258 Boizenburg/Elbe
foerderverein@biosphaere-elbe.de
www.biosphaere-elbe.de

Accommodation

Tourismusverband Mecklenburg-Schwerin e. V.
Puschkinstr. 44 / Rathaus
19055 Schwerin
Phone: +49 385 59189875
info@mecklenburg-schwerin.de
www.mecklenburg-schwerin.de/en/

Accommodation provided by
biosphere reserve partners
www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de

Maps

Rad- und Wanderkarte Elbetal
www.biosphaere-elbe.de/shop/

Directions

By train: Boizenburg/Elbe (www.fahrtziel-natur.de), Brahlstorf, Pritzler.

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



Schorfheide-Chorin

A landscape full of life



Lakes dominate the landscape



Resting damselfly (*Coenagrion*)

A quiet, sparsely populated land – and yet full of life! For centuries, small-scale and often extensive human use has formed this landscape. This management has allowed a cultural landscape to grow, which is characterised by its diversity. White-tailed eagle, osprey and lesser spotted eagle circle the skies. Adder, smooth snake and the European fire-bellied toad live here. Numerous lakes, marshes and alder carr woodlands dominate the landscape, providing space for rare plants and animals that have long since disappeared elsewhere such as wild rosemary or the European tree frog. Preserving this biodiversity is one of the key responsibilities of biosphere reserves in Germany.

The biosphere reserve is also characterised by its ancient lowland beech forests. One of its core zones, the “Grumsin” beech forest, has been developing towards a primeval forest for more than 30 years. Since 2011, the Grumsin is a component part of the World Natural Heritage site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe”. The variety of species that exist even today in the biosphere reserve is also fostered by the adapted agricultural use, in particular organic farming.

Also the cooperation with many local businesses that support the aims of the biosphere reserve contributes to the quality of the landscape.

The biosphere reserve’s seal of approval can be awarded to businesses that offer products or services which are produced in a nature conservation and environmentally friendly manner. The certified products are predominantly made from environmentally friendly raw materials from the biosphere reserve – whether these are fruits or other products from agriculture and forestry, building craft, or gastronomic offers. 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 the “Ökodorf Brodowin” (ecovillage).





The old beech forests are characteristic of the landscape: home to eagles, cranes and red deer.

Cloister and boat lift

Visitors arrive in Chorin by train, bike or car. Visit the famous Cistercian monastery with an exhibition and exciting guided tours. Stop at the “Klosterschänke” (“Cloister Tavern”) with its regional dishes. On summer afternoons, concerts are often held in the large monastery church, which is open to the inner courtyard. “Ökodorf Brodowin” is nearby, with a farm shop and restaurant, a dairy with cheese production, farm tours and various hiking opportunities. Then on to the Rummelsberg (hill) with wonderful views over lakes and forests. Finish in Niederfinow boat lift on the Oder-Havel Canal: engineered in the 1930s and 2019. A suitable rail connection is available in Niederfinow for the return journey.

More than 700-years-old, Chorin Cistercian monastery still dominates the region and continues to cast its spell over visitors.



Wildlife Park, Werbellin Lake and the forest

- **Monday:** arrive in Groß Schönebeck. Explore Schorfheide Wildlife Park: wolf, elk, wild horses, otters, and old breeds of domestic pets.
- **Tuesday:** hike to “Kaisergrund” and Hubertusstock hunting lodge.
- **Wednesday:** boat across Werbellin Lake. In Joachimsthal a walk through the town and visit the Schinkel church and the BIORAMA observation tower. To Althüttendorf to the nature observation point at the lake.
- **Thursday:** bicycle trip or walk via Glambeck to Parlow (“Am Speicher” and exhibition in the attic).
- **Friday:** by “Biberbus” (“beaver bus”) from Angermünde to Blumberger Mühle visitor information centre with its terrapin enclosure, playground, and maze. For lunch there is a burger made with regional Uckermark ingredients.
- **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 Site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions in Europe”. From there to Groß-Ziethen and the Geopark information centre.
- **Sunday:** trip around Oberucker Lake.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 1,300 square kilometres

Elevation: 2 to 139 metres

History: founded and recognised 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
Phone: +49 3331 3654-0
www.schorfheide-chorin-biosphaerenreservat.de/en/

Schorfheide-Info Joachimsthal
Töpferstraße 1
16247 Joachimsthal
Phone: +49 33361 64646
br-joachimsthal@web.de

Biosphere reserve information centre
NABU-Naturerlebniszentrum Blumberger Mühle
Blumberger Mühle 2
16278 Angermünde
Phone: +49 3331 2604-0
<https://blumberger-muehle.nabu.de/>

Accommodation & tourist info

TMU Tourismus Marketing Uckermark GmbH
Stettiner Straße 19
17291 Prenzlau
Phone: +49 3984 835883
info@tourismus-uckermark.de
www.tourismus-uckermark.de

WITO Wirtschafts- und Tourismusedwicklungsgesellschaft GmbH
Alfred-Nobel-Str. 1
16225 Eberswalde
Phone: +49 3334 59100
www.wito-barnim.de

Books and maps

Beate Blahy and Martin Flade
Grumsin – Weltnaturerbe im Biosphärenreservat Schorfheide-Chorin (2017)
Verlag Natur+Text GmbH, Rangsdorf
ISBN 978-3-942062-20-6

Flade, M., H. Plachter, R. Schmidt & A. Werner (eds, 2006): Nature Conservation in Agricultural Ecosystems. Results of the Schorfheide-Chorin Research Project.
Quelle & Meyer, Wiebelsheim (720 p.)

Ministerium für Ländliche Entwicklung, Umwelt und Landwirtschaft des Landes Brandenburg (Hrsg.)
Regionaltypisches Bauen und Sanieren (2019)

Ministerium für Ländliche Entwicklung, Umwelt und Landwirtschaft des Landes Brandenburg (Hrsg.)
Praxishandbuch – Naturschutz im Buchenwald

Ministerium für Umwelt, Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz des Landes Brandenburg (Hrsg.)
Wanderungen im Weltnaturerbe Buchenwald Grumsin

UNESCO-Club Joachimsthal (Hrsg.)
30 Jahre UNESCO-Biosphärenreservat Schorfheide-Chorin – Innenansichten (2020)

Directions

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

By car: A 11 from Berliner Ring towards Prenzlau/Szczecin, B 109, L 100 after Templin/Prenzlau.



Drömling

Land of a thousand ditches



Rimpau's peatland dam cultures are only found in the Drömling



Alder swamp forest in Breitenroder-Oebisfelder Drömling

The Drömling is an ecologically and aesthetically particularly valuable, historical cultural landscape with various wetlands on the border between the federal states of Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt in northern Germany.

For more than 200 years, the Drömling has been a landscape shaped by humans. When the morning mist rises and the sun appears, it reveals a charming semi-natural cultural landscape, where the characteristic ditches alternate with fields, meadows and countless rows of trees and hedges. Because of the 2,200 km of watercourses in the area, the Drömling is also called the “land of a thousand ditches”.

While only remnants of the original alder swamp forests exist today, meadows and fields continue to dominate the landscape. A species-rich fauna and flora has been preserved, particularly in the meadows and wooded areas. The Mittelland Canal is a valuable habitat and migration route for many species of animals. The shallow water zone in Piplockenburg is structurally diverse, different zones being established within the body of the water and forming a diverse range of habitats. Together with the unique landscape of the Drömling, the shallow water zone in Piplockenburg has great potential for developing tourism in a way that is compatible with nature.

The 132-kilometre Drömling hiking circuit connects all the regions of the Drömling and their most beautiful places. The circular route consists of five separate circuits in Saxony-Anhalt and Lower Saxony. No matter whether you cycle, walk, ride a horse, or take a charabanc, if you are looking for peace and quiet or want to leave your normal life behind, the Drömling is the right place for you.





Shallow water zone at Mannhausen

Carriage rides and birdwatching

Some visitors to the Drömling are hoping for a peaceful nature experience; others wish to improve their knowledge by taking part in one of the guided walks. Cyclists can discover the Drömling via a network of signposted tracks. Carriage rides are also enjoying increasing popularity with visitors. Small guesthouses, farms, and hotels offer accommodation for every taste and budget.

A visit to the information centre in Kämkerhorst will give you an idea of all the available options. Originally built as a ditch master's workshop, the building now houses an exhibition of native animals and their habitats. The outdoor area includes a small-scale model of the Drömling.

Hike along the Ohre, Sachau Dam, and the shallow water zone in Piplockenburg to observe various water birds, discover traces of otters and beavers and, with a little luck, catch a glimpse of a white-tailed eagle. In late autumn and early spring, the shallow water zone is a sleeping and resting place for thousands of Nordic geese, ducks, and cranes. To see this spectacle, a visit to the bird hides right on the edge of the shallow water zone is worthwhile.



Guided nature walk with a ranger

Peatland dam cultures (digging ditches and sanding bogs) and half-timbered construction

- **Monday:** A walk in the northern Drömling in the midst of the former peatland dam cultures, with its countless ditches is well worth the effort. Meadow and water birds live here, as do numerous species of insects and amphibians. The landscape shaped by bog soil-cover cultivation gives the Drömling a selling point that is unique among UNESCO biosphere reserves worldwide. Restoring and maintaining this rare small-scale form of land use for the long term is a major challenge.
- **Tuesday:** The Drömling offers its visitors some memorable sights, especially in the villages. These include Kunrau Castle, built in the style of the Italian Renaissance, with its observation tower and park, and the half-timbered churches in Dannefeld, Jeggau, Miesterhorst, Peckfitz, Röwitz,

Trippigleben, Wenze, and Wernitz. The church in Dannefeld is of particular interest, with its winged altar dating from the 16th century and a churchyard portal from 1735.

- **Wednesday:** A charabanc ride in the Drömling is always a great way to experience nature. From high on the charabanc you can see the Drömling in all its uniqueness, variety, and beauty. Certified nature and landscape guides will be happy to accompany you.
- **Thursday:** The family-run stud farm “Kleines Gestüt im Drömling” in Krügerhorst near Mieste gives you “Himmel auf (Pf)Erden” (“heaven on horseback”). Horseback trekkers are just as welcome here as families with their children or organised groups of children.
- **Friday:** Seasonal creative courses using natural materials, exclusive beer brewing courses, nature hikes, special cultural events – the programme at Kreativhof in Kunrau is varied.
- **Saturday:** In many villages you can still find old farmsteads built in the half-timbered or red brick style typical for the region, dating back from when the Drömling was cultivated. The idyllic location of the villages can be enjoyed with a piece of homemade cake and a cup of coffee in Wiesencafé in Breiteiche. The ditch and channel systems for Moordammkultur in the Drömling give many insights into cultural and historical usage, for example Friedrichskanal and Wilhelmskanal.
- **Sunday:** Oebisfelde Castle is one of the historical architectural monuments of the town and is considered to be the oldest preserved swamp castle in Europe. It was built to protect the land and its inhabitants on this side of the Drömling from enemies, while at the same time securing passage along an important trade route. Oebisfelde Local History Association has created an attractive castle and local history museum in the rooms of the former servants’ house. The history of the town and its residents is shown in permanent and changing exhibitions. Every year, “Open Monument Day” is celebrated with a variety of activities, such as tours of the town and castle led by guides in historical costume. Nicolai Church in Oebisfelde is neo-romantic but also includes neo-gothic parts. This historically valuable building has been renovated and now serves as a venue for events, concerts and exhibitions.

General information

Facts and figures

Location: On the south-western edge of Altmark, along the Mittelland Canal, Ohre and Aller, at the border of Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt

Area: 452 square kilometres

Elevation: mostly between 55 and 58 metres above sea level

History: Founded in 1990 as a nature park, it was recognised as Drömling Saxony-Anhalt Biosphere Reserve on 23 June 2019. Recognised as a cross-border UNESCO biosphere reserve since 14.06.2023.

Geographic features: Watercourses, grassland areas, deciduous forests, and bogs

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung Drömling

Bahnhofstr. 32

39646 Oebisfelde

Phone: +49 39002-8500

www.biosphaerenreservat-droemling.de

poststelle-obf@biores.mwu.sachsen-anhalt.de

Accommodation

Accommodation, restaurants, and other partners can be found on our homepage www.biosphaerenreservat-droemling.de Information material is available from the biosphere reserve administration.

Directions

By train: stations on the Magdeburg-Wolfsburg line: Wegenstedt, Rätzlingen, Bösdorf or Oebisfelde. Stations on the Stendal-Wolfsburg route: Mieste, Miesterhorst, Oebisfelde

By car: Please contact the biosphere reserve administration for more information.



Spreewald

Where the forest is reflected in the water ...



Stream in Spreewald Biosphere Reserve

The landscape of the Spreewald is crossed by a finely structured network of streams, which are considered the lifeblood of the area. They were created over 10,000 years ago, after the last ice age. Today the Spreewald barges quietly carry their loads, 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 Spreewald often seems like an enchanted forest. Species live here that are threatened or already extinct elsewhere. There are more than 80 breeding pairs of white stork in many locations. Cranes and white-tailed eagles prefer the quiet and damp forests; they feed in the rich fishing waters and on the wet meadows. Plus, Spreewald 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 are very rare 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 Spreewald was dominated by agriculture for centuries, but the small farmsteads are unprofitable under current conditions. The biosphere reserves has therefore initiated the establishment of a community foundation for the Spreewald cultural landscape. It promotes sustainable development and preservation of the man-made cultural and natural landscape of the Spreewald by supporting farmers active in landscape management measures or the cultivation of traditional crops such as the Spreewald horseradish.



Spreewald specialties from traditional crops

Furthermore, Spreewald is the organic farming biosphere reserves – 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 Spreewald, such by traditional barge, but by canoe or bicycle are other possibilities for exploring the biosphere reserves.





Spreewald winter landscape

Fruit trees and lunch with linseed oil

The dispersed settlement of Burg in Oberspreewald provides manifold Spreewald impressions. On this side of the Alps you will find no other such collection of log houses. Here you can experience the typical Spreewald 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 Spreewald 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. After lunch with curd and linseed oil, you can visit the “Kräuterey” herb garden and farm shop run by Lebenshilfe Werkstätten Hand in Hand.

An invitation to a Spreewald gherkin test

- **Monday:** Start with a visit to the Schlossberghof in Burg. Here you will find the herb shop, the herb garden, and the Spreewald Biosphere Reserve exhibition.
- **Tuesday:** Visit the “Haus für Mensch und Natur in Lübbenau”. Then natural history bicycle tour in the inner Oberspreewald with the Spreewald rangers. Finally, stroll through the historic old town.
- **Wednesday:** Spreewald gherkin test in Rabe canning factory in Boblitz. Then by bike or on foot via Raddusch to Leipe. Fish with Spreewald sauce for lunch. Later, trace the life of the Sorbs /Wends in Lehde open-air museum.
- **Thursday:** Explore the streams of the Unterspreewald by paddle boat. Afterwards swim in Köthener lake.
- **Friday:** Cycle right around Straupitz. Have a look in the dutch 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.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 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
Information centre and administration
of the biosphere reserve
Schulstraße 9
03222 Lübbenau
Phone: +48 3542 892130
br-spreewald@lfu.brandenburg.de
www.spreewald-biosphaerenreservat.de/en

Information centre Schlossberghof Burg
Byhleguhrer Straße 17
03096 Burg
br-spreewald@lfu.brandenburg.de

Information centre Alte Mühle Schlepzig
Dorfstraße 52
15910 Schlepzig
br-spreewald@lfu.brandenburg.de

Accommodation

Tourismusverband Spreewald
Lindenstraße 1
OT Raddusch
03226 Vetschau/Spreewald
Phone: +49 35433 72299
tourismus@spreewald.de
www.spreewald.de/en/



A girl in traditional Spreewald costume

Books and maps

Spreewald – Geschichte, Landschaft, Kultur
Peter Becker
ISBN 978-3-89809-239-5

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

Topographical map of Unterspreewald
ISBN 978-3-7490-4022-3

Topographical map of Oberspreewald
ISBN 978-3-7490-4013-1

Directions

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

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



Karst Landscape South Harz

Diversity in the South Harz





Gypsum boulder on Questenberg

Extensive beech forests are a characteristic feature of the southern Harz landscape. In the transition area to the Goldene Aue (golden lowland), sinkholes, shafts, rock falls, and springs shape the landscape in a unique way. Karst forms from permeable and water-soluble rock, such as limestone and gypsum, which are leached by surface and ground water. A karst landscape formed from gypsum extends over 100 kilometres along the southern fringe of the Harz, linking Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, and Lower Saxony. As this landscape has been subjected to extensive rather than intensive use, large parts of it are still in a semi-natural condition. Extensive limestone beech forests occur here, and thermophilic oak woods and dry meadows are found on the south-facing slopes. The warm climate ensures that plants more typical of the Mediterranean region also thrive here, such as lady orchid and several other types of orchids.

Karst Landscape South Harz Biosphere Reserve is a habitat for numerous species of animals such as stag beetles, swallowtail butterflies, bats, dormice, and the wildcat. The undisturbed, semi-natural rivers and streams provide habitats for fish that have disappeared from other areas many years ago, such as brook lamprey, European bullhead, and stone loach. Even so, humans have had an impact, for the southern Harz is an old cultural landscape. The earliest evidence of human activity dates back to the Neolithic Period, and medieval castles bear witness to the historical importance of the region. 800 years of mining have also left its mark. Fortunately, the karst landscape was poorly suited to land consolidation. Today's visitors encounter many small-scale cultivated areas with extensive orchards and grazing areas, deciduous forests and – again and again – old cities and villages with their own distinctive characteristic.





The half-timbered town of Stolberg

Half-timbered town and beautiful orchards

Visit Heimkehle show cave near Uftrungen and follow the Karst Hiking Trail in Alter Stolberg Nature Conservation Area. Sights worth seeing include the old deciduous forests and the historical border markers made of stone. Proceed to the old, historical half-timbered city of Stollberg, take a tour of the castle and visit the exhibition “Buchen musst Du suchen” (Beech you must seek). Then walk to Große Auerberg with St. Joseph’s Cross on top. From there you have an uninterrupted view of the biosphere reserve and – if visibility is good – the entire Harz region. Right in the centre of the karst landscape is Questenberg, a small town located in a water gap (valley) in a picturesque setting. It has a number of attractions to offer such as the colourful wooden figure of the knight Roland and a ruined castle. Travel from there to Hainrode, on foot, by bicycle, or car. A hike along the old road between Questenberg and Hainrode is highly recommended, especially in spring when the fruit trees bloom.

Wooden Roland figure and Queste



Disappearing streams, show mine and St. Joseph’s cross

- **Monday:** Take a trip to Hainrode to visit the old smithy and the workshops of the broom-maker and the watchmaker. Hiking on the Karst Hiking Trail past Dinsterbachschwinde (where the Dinsterbach disappears into the depths of the earth) and extensive orchards to Questenberg.
- **Tuesday:** Visit the half-timbered town of Stolberg, tour the castle and the Old Mint, followed by a hike along the upper or the lower Bandweg with views of the village.
- **Wednesday:** Visit Röhrigschacht show mine in Wettelrode, then drive to Sangerhausen to visit the Europa-Rosarium and Spengler Museum. End the day in the old town of Sangerhausen.
- **Thursday:** Visit the Kyffhäuser Monument, Panorama Museum, and Barbarossa Cave. Alternatively, hike in the area around Helme Reservoir near Kelbra to observe the rich birdlife.
- **Friday:** Visit the church of St. Cyriakus and Nicolai in Schwenda, affectionately called the “little sister of the Frauenkirche”. Then hike to St. Joseph’s cross on Große Auerberg.
- **Saturday:** Hike from Grillenberg to Pölsfeld, visit Grillenburg ruins, and enjoy the view from the Gedankenbank (“bench for reflection”) on the Karst Hiking Trail.
- **Sunday:** Hike to Bauerngraben, a large sinkhole with an impressive rock face. Then visit Heimkehle show cave near Uftrunge

General information

Facts and figures

Location: southern Harz region between Stolberg in the north-west and Sangerhausen in the south-east; district of Mansfeld Südharz

Area: 300 square kilometres

Elevation: 145 to 579 metres above sea level

History: Protected by general decree according to the Nature Conservation Act of the State of Saxony-Anhalt in 2009; currently not recognised by UNESCO.

Geographic features: central uplands (southern Harz declivity), Zechstein mountain range (gypsum karst) with strike valley: over 2,000 karst formations, such as depressions, dolines, cliffs, sinkholes, and springs; expansive, semi-natural deciduous forests, small-structured open landscapes in Zechstein, orchards.

Historical cultural landscape: Remnants and monuments of over 800 years of mining history, Stolberg City of Europe, communities with typically regional character, castle ruins.

Biosphere Reserve information

Verwaltung Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz
Hallesche Straße 68a
6536 Südharz OT Roßla
Phone: +49 34651 29889-0
poststelle-RLA@biores.mwu.sachsen-anhalt.de
www.biosphaerenreservat-karstlandschaft-suedharz.de

Permanent exhibition in the biosphere reserve administration
Mo. – Thu. from 08:00 am – 3:30 pm,
Fri. from 08:00 am – 12:00 pm
Sat., Sun. or other times by arrangement
Exhibition “Buchen must du suchen” at Stolberg Castle
06536 Südharz OT Stolberg

Information points:
Bergbaumuseum Röhrigschacht
06526 Sangerhausen OT Wettelrode

Accommodation

Touristinformation
Am Rosengarten 2a
06526 Sangerhausen
Europa-Rosarium (Haupteingang)
Phone: +49 3464 19433
info@sangerhausen-tourist.de
www.sangerhausen-tourist.de

Touristinformation Stolberg (Harz)
Niedergasse 17
06536 Südharz OT Stolberg
Phone: +49 3465 4454 or 3465 419433
ti@rossla.de
www.tourismus-suedharz.de

Books and maps

Hiking and Cycling: Wandern und Radfahren im Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz
Scale 1:25,000
ISBN 978-3-86973-130-8

Hiking Trail: Karstwanderweg Südharz
Scale 1:33,000
ISBN 978-3-86973-111-7

Travel Guide: Unterwegs im Biosphärenreservat Karstlandschaft Südharz – Zwischen Stolberg und Pölsfeld
ISBN 978-3-86037-448-1

Cycling and hiking map: Rad- und Wanderkarte Südharz/Kyffhäuser
Scale 1:50,000
ISBN 978-3-89920-318-9

Directions

By train: via Halle, Sangerhausen, Nordhausen, in Bergaz/Kelbra or Roßla – stops/stations

By car: on the A 38, exit Roßla or Berga.



Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape

Carp ponds in the heathland



Galgenteich ("Gallows Pond") near Crosta

More than 350 ponds nestling in dune forests, wet meadows, sandy fields, floodplains and heaths – an extraordinary diversity of habitats for rare plants and animals can be found in eastern Germany.

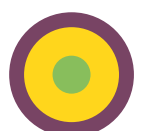
The Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape has developed as a result of centuries of human habitation. Slavic settlers arrived here after 600 AD and they called this large area covered by swamps and forests “Łužica” (swampland), which evolved into “Lausitz”. The first recorded evidence of the system 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.

The continuation of semi-natural pond management for the production of carp and other edible fish is paramount for the region. Ideally, production should be based on guidelines for organic output, as has already been done in the “Upper Lausitz Organic Carp” project. The conditions for ecological management of the carp in Upper Lausitz are met thanks to its certification as a “protected geographical indication of origin”. The fishermen make sure there is a suitable stock so that the carps can mainly feed on 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 Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve Management doesn't just focus on pond management; there is for example also a renaissance of old grain varieties such as “Hunter's North German champagne rye” or “Old Pomeranian block head wheat”. Reduced fertilizer and herbicide use creates the best conditions in arable fields for wild herbs 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.



Flowering corn-cockle (*Agrostemma githago*)





Autumn is harvest time – fishermen harvesting fish from “Heuteich” pond (Zimpel pond group)

Fishermen and white-tailed eagles

Visit the “Haus der Tausend Teiche” (house of a thousand ponds) information centre at the village Wartha near Malschwitz in the the Upper Lausitz 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 Sorbian School Museum in Wartha, with dinner at the “Eisvogel” (“Kingfisher”) restaurant.

Alternatively, start the morning with a bike ride along the “White-tailed eagle trail”. The trip goes to Mücka via Weigersdorf and Kreba-Neudorf passing many information and observation options. 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” (“Good Mood”) and then back to Wartha.

“Gute Laune” and the Ornithological Station

- **Monday:** Excursion to the wolf area, in the afternoon visit the “Schrotholzhaus” (old wood hut) settlement in Erlichthof Rietschen 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. Lunch in “Gute Laune” restaurant Lömischau with fish dishes from Lausitz recipes. Afterwards Wartha School Museum.
- **Wednesday:** Sightseeing in Bautzen: old town, castle “Ortenburg”, old waterworks, City Museum.
- **Thursday:** Milkel Baroque castle with park tour. Then visit the Neschwitz Castle and Park with its bird protection pavilion and Nature Conservation Station.
- **Friday:** Visit Görlitz: conservation zoo, historic old town, parks and the local mountain “Landeskronen”.
- **Saturday:** Visit Pückler castle and Muskau Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site). Then Krauschwitz adventure pool.
- **Sunday:** To the Upper Lausitz hills. Magnificent view from the heights. Food in a cosy lodge hut “Lausitzblick” on “Monumentberg” in the municipality Hohendubrau.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 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, mires, dry grasslands, wet and dry heaths, and more than 350 ponds

Biosphere Reserve information

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltung
Warthaer Dorfstraße 29
02694 Malschwitz OT Wartha
Phone: +49 35932 365-0
broht.poststelle@smekul.sachsen.de
www.biosphaerenreservat-oberlausitz.de/en

HAUS DER TAUSEND TEICHE
Warthaer Dorfstraße 29
02694 Malschwitz OT Wartha
Phone: +49 35932 365-60
tausendteichehaus.broht@smekul.sachsen.de
www.haus-der-tausend-teiche.de



Common heather (*Calluna vulgaris*)

Accommodation

Certified partners of the biosphere reserve
www.biosphaerenreservat-oberlausitz.de

Verein zur Entwicklung der Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft e. V.

Gutsstraße 4c

02699 Königswartha

Phone: +49 35931 21220

info@oberlausitz-heide.de

www.oberlausitz-heide.de

Books and maps

Cycling and hiking map: Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft (Publicpress-Verlag)

Scale 1:50,000

ISBN 978-3-7473-0481-5

Cycling and hiking map: Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft und Umgebung (Verlag Dr. Barthel)

Scale 1:50,000

ISBN 978-3-89591 147-7

Directions

By train: to Bautzen or Mücka, continue with bus line 501 to Guttau or Wartha, from Guttau on foot along the nature trail to Wartha.

By bus: line 501 Bautzen-Mücka-Bautzen to Guttau or Wartha, from Guttau on foot along the nature trail to Wartha.

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



Rhön

Land of open spaces



View of Schwarzerden



Cattle grazing on the prominent and fabled Milseburg Mountain, a phonolite

Each biosphere reserve is unique and distinctive in its geographic features, its flora and fauna, and the economic and cultural influence of human communities. Rhön Biosphere Reserve is remarkable in that it extends across the borders of three German states – Bavaria, Hesse, and Thuringia. Together, these three states have preserved and maintained an unparalleled cultural landscape in the heartland of Germany that has been shaped over the centuries by farming, haymaking, and grazing. The roughly 100 endangered species of each animals and plants that have found refuge here are particularly in need of protection. The biosphere reserve is one of the hotspots of biodiversity in Germany. More than 40 different species of orchids and some 3,000 varieties of mushrooms have been identified here. This diversity reflects the wide range of geographic features in the region: fields of basalt blocks, semi-natural streams, granite boulder fields, and hedgerows to extensively used meadows and pastures, and semi-natural deciduous forests.

Thanks to close cooperation with partners in the agricultural and gastronomic sectors, the entire Rhön Biosphere Reserve offers walkers, hikers, outdoor sports enthusiasts and others seeking recreational opportunities a programme that appeals to all of the senses. Care to try something? Take your pick: tender steaks from the Rhöner Weideochsen, Rhöner apple juice and fruit spirits, bread with caraway seeds, trout, Rhön mutton chops, “Zwiebelploatz” (onion cake), and “Rhön Spatzeklöß” (bread dumplings) are on offer for appreciative guests who value organic quality. To drink there is organic wine or organic beer from the biosphere reserve, just as you like it! Another special feature of the Rhön: since 2014, the biosphere reserve, where you can still experience a breathtaking starry sky, has held the title of International Star Park. With this designation by the Dark Sky Association, the region has committed itself to protecting the existing natural night landscapes by taking measures to reduce light pollution. On top, the “German Green Belt” stretches over a length of 113 km through the Rhön and is recognised as a National Nature Monument.



Raised bogs, wide vistas, fine food and beverages

The hiking tour begins at Bixgraben car park in the Ulstertal (Ulster Valley) near Seiferts. It leads up to the Rhön Highlands and across expansive cattle pastures to the tri-state triangle of Bavaria, Hesse, and Thuringia. The trail proceeds through a park-like landscape to Schwarze Moor (Black Bog) car park. Rare animal and plant species can be encountered along the nature trail laid out through the bog, a raised boardwalk some two kilometres long. Schwarze Moor is the best preserved and still growing raised bog in all the low mountain ranges in Germany. The association “Verein Naturpark und Biosphärenreservat Bayerische Rhön e.V.” offers guided tours by appointment. Afterwards, apple beer, lamb bratwurst, and other regional specialities are served in the Sennhütte. Returning to Schwarzes Moor car park, the tour then takes the visitor north to Grabenberg, where remnants of the former GDR border fortifications serve as reminders of the past.

The next destination is the “Healthy Village” Frankenheim, the highest settlement in the Rhön, where visitors can walk on a Barefoot Panorama Trail and visit a medicinal plant garden. Behind this mountain village, meadows and pastures extend all the way up to Ellenbogen, from where visitors may enjoy a magnificent view of the Ulster Valley. The Thüringer Rhönhaus hotel tempt hikers to stop, offering excellent cuisine featuring Rhön specialities. The route leads south-west along Sophienstraße and back to the starting point. The hike comes to an end with a refreshing glass of eco-beer from the Rhön and other delicacies at the “Schaukeltere” (“show wine press house”) in Seiferts.

From early September to early December, those who aren't tired out yet can watch the work going on in the wine press and the cellar next door – or even pitch in themselves. A number of events associated with the processing of fallen fruit also take place at this time of year.

Propstei Zella information centre and seat of Thuringian Administrative Office



Culture, interesting facts and hiking

- **Monday:** Visit the information centre “Haus der Lange Rhön” in Oberelsbach and see the exhibition. Then take a hike through the orchard village of Hausen – the model community of the biosphere reserve. Who can identify the most types of fruit?
- **Tuesday:** Visit the sky showplace in Danzwiesen, from there hike to the mystical Milseburg (a former stronghold of the Celts). Visit the museum village of Tann or the open-air museum in Fladungen. In the evening, get a taste of the landscape – with hearty fare prepared from regional products.
- **Wednesday:** Culture day. Visit medieval Kirchenburg in Ostheim and the local organ museum. Alternatively, go on an all-day excursion to the baroque city of Fulda, or to Bad Kissingen belonging to the UNESCO-Great Spas of Europe or to Meiningen with a visit to the South Thuringian State Theatre.
- **Thursday:** Visit the Haus der Schwarzen Berge information centre in Oberbach and its cafeteria and regional produce shop, followed by a hike to the Kreuzberg for a tour of the in-house brewery and a glass of monastery beer!
- **Friday:** Hike through Ibengarten and visit Dermbach museum of local history. Interesting attractions include Propstei Zella information centre and the baroque churches in Zella and Dermbach, as well as a number of fortified churches like the one in Kaltensundheim. Next on the programme is a visit to Merkers mine and crystal grotto. Potash used to be mined here, but now the mine serves as an in-situ exhibition of its past history.
- **Saturday:** Shop for souvenirs and stop for food and drink at the Rhönhöfe in Kaltensundheim. Hike to the former German-German border to visit the Point Alpha memorial near Geisa. Afterwards, visit the Stiftskirche (Collegiate Church) in Rasdorf. Festivals, folk, and cultural events take place in the Rhön nearly every weekend. Special highlights are the Fasching celebrations (German carnival) in February and the local fairs in autumn. The programme also includes village anniversary festivals, folk-dancing events, club events, wine and beer festivals, and much more.
- **Sunday:** A taste of freedom in the land of open spaces: visitors can fly over the Rhön in a glider or take in the scenery during a sight-seeing flight in a small propeller plane on the highest mountain in the Rhön, the Wasserkuppe. Follow this with a visit to the glider museum and the Radome. An eventful week comes to an end with an afternoon of relaxation for body and mind at one of the spas.

View from Geba Mountain





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

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 2,433 square kilometres

Elevation: 180 to 950 metres above sea level

History: Recognised by UNESCO in 1991.
2014: Designation as International Star Park by the IDA (International Dark Sky Association).

Geographic features: Uplands with prominent cones and crests, wide floodplains, raised bogs, meadows and pastures, semi-natural forests

Biosphere Reserve information

www.biosphaerenreservat-rhoen.de
www.rhoen.de

Biosphärenzentrum Haus der Schwarzen Berge
Rhönstraße 97
97772 Wildflecken-Oberbach
Phone: +49 9749 9122-0
infozentrum@rhoen.de

Biosphärenzentrum Haus der Langen Rhön
Unterelsbacher Straße 4
97656 Oberelsbach
Phone: +49 9774 9102-60
info@nbr-rhoen.de

Biosphären-Infozentrum Propstei Zella
Goethestraße 1
36466 Dermbach OT Zella/Rhön
Phone: +49 36964 93510
propsteizella@web.de

Biosphären-Infozentrum Hilders
Marienstraße 13
36115 Hilders
Phone: +49 661 6006 7800
info@br-rhoen.de

Biosphärenreservatsverwaltungen:

Bavarian administrative office
 Biosphärenreservat Rhön
 Regierung von Unterfranken
 Oberwaldbehringer Straße 4
 97656 Oberelsbach
 Phone: +49 931 380-1665 or -1664, fax: -2953
 brrhoen@reg-ufr.bayern.de

Hessian administrative office
 Biosphärenreservat Rhön
 Marienstraße 13
 36115 Hilders
 Phone: +49 661 6006 7800
 info@br-rhoen.de

Thuringian administrative office
 Biosphärenreservat Rhön
 Goethestraße 1
 36466 Dermbach OT Zella/Rhön
 Phone: +49 361 573923330, fax: -55
 poststelle.rhoen@nnl.thueringen.de

Accommodation

Rhön GmbH – Gesellschaft für Tourismus
 und Markenmanagement
 Rhönstraße 97
 97772 Wildflecken-Oberbach
 Phone: +49 9749 930080-0
 kontakt@rhoen.info
 www.rhoen.info

Books and maps (selection)

Hiking maps: Wanderkarte Naturpark Rhön
 ISBN 978-3-86116-068-7

Hiking maps: Wanderkarte Hohe Rhön
 ISBN 978-3-86116-145-5

Directions

By train: to the ICE train station at Fulda, where rental cars are available; or continue by rail (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 via B 458, or exit Fulda-Süd, to Gersfeld via B 27/B 279.

Bavarian Rhön: A 7, exit Hammelburg; alternatively, A 71, exit Bad Kissingen, Bad Neustadt, or Mellrichstadt, then west.

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



Wasserkuppe massiv



Thuringian Forest

Lively silence – naturally





Living silence

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 bogs, 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.



Out and about on the DR FOREST path – breathe a sigh of relief for body and soul.

The DR FOREST path encourages you to enjoy the relaxing and health-promoting effects of the forest.

The 13 km circular route between Stützerbach, Frauenwald, and Schmiedefeld runs through the middle of Thuringian Forest UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. 15 sensory stations and attractive resting points along the path invite you to enjoy the forest with all your senses. DR FOREST benches, sky loungers, and a sky swing allow you to let your eyes wander and to unwind.

In Stützerbach Kneipp Park, on the Panorama Trail, at Massenmühle in Gläserthal, and at the Schwarzwasser rest area there are picnic tables where you can sit down and take a break.

You can design the circular route to completely meet your own needs – from a relaxed day of swimming in the forest (day trip) to a sporty hike (4 hours including a rest) to smaller circular routes of 3.5 or 6 km. An easy walk between Rennsteig and Stützerbach train stations (stops on the Rennsteigbahn) is also possible in two variants (4.9 or 6.7 km).



Forest landscape, meadows, and Rennsteig Garden

Monday: Hike from Neustadt a.R. through Reuscheltal to Großbreitenbach, visit the Thuringian Forest Creative Museum.

Tuesday: Hike from Stützerbach on the Goethewanderweg to Ilmenau, visit “Volle Rose” show mine.

Wednesday: Hike on the Jüchnitzgrund primeval forest trail, starting at the school hostel in Geraberg.

Thursday: Hike on the “Gipfelwanderweg” (“Peak Hiking Trail”) from Schmücke via Sachsenstein to Schneekopf, Visit the Thuringian Museum Park Gehlberg for insights into regional history, including the glass and poaching museum.

Friday: Circular hike from Oberhof via Flößgrabenweg to Ausgebrannten Stein and Sieglitzteich, visit to Rennsteig Garden.

Saturday: Hike through Gießübeler-Fehrenbacher Schweiz to Rennsteigwarte in Masserberg, visit the Spice Museum in Schönbrunn.

Sunday: Hike on the family adventure trail in Schmiedefeld a.R., followed by a visit to the information centre with the Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve adventure exhibition.

DR FOREST path



General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 337 square kilometres (as of 2020)

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

UNESCO-Biosphärenreservat Thüringer Wald – Administration

OT Schmiedefeld am Rstg.

Brunnenstraße 1

98528 Suhl

Phone: +49 361 573924610

poststelle.thueringerwald@nnl.thueringen.de

www.biosphaerenreservat-thueringerwald.de

Information center with experience exhibition

UNESCO-Biosphärenreservat Thüringer Wald – Administration

OT Schmiedefeld am Rstg.

Brunnenstraße 1

98528 Suhl

Phone: +49 361 573924622

Accommodation

Regionalverbund Thüringer Wald e. V.

Phone: +49 3681 35305-0

www.thueringer-wald.com

Books and maps

Hiking map: Biosphärenreservat Thüringer Wald (with ski trail and cycling routes)

ISBN 978-3-86636-324-3



On a discovery tour with the ranger

Directions

By train: via Erfurt ICE train station to Ilmenau or via Würzburg (ICE) and Schweinfurt to Suhl. Continue with buses into the area

Further information:

www.bus-bahn-thueringen.de

www.fahrtziel-natur.de



Awarded the BNE seal and recertified in 2021



Bliesgau

Land of orchids and savoir-vivre





Pyramidal orchid, one of almost 30 orchid species in Bliesgau

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 (shell bearing 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 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 handicrafts. 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.

As a long-inhabited area, Bliesgau also offers many opportunities to search for traces of Roman and Celtic settlements. And the scenic charm in the south of the region is complemented in the north by the town of St. Ingbert, with its industrial history and extensive culture.





The “Beeder Biotop” amid the Bliesau

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 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 Blies flood plain.

Donkeys and E-bikes, 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.
- **Thursday:** Below ground the biosphere reserve guarantees sensational sights with a visit to Schlossberg Caves, Europe’s largest mottled sandstone caves.
- **Friday:** A morning visit to Bliesgau oil mill at Gut Hartungshof to taste the different oils, such as Camelina – the oil of the Celts. And in the afternoon a walk on the educational trail “Ecological backpack through Blieskasteler Forest”.
- **Saturday:** Discover the southern Bliesgau region by donkey. Enjoy the landscape more slowly and consciously, at the pace of our long-eared four-legged friends.
- **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.

General information

Facts and figures

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

Area: 361 square kilometres

Elevation: 190 to almost 400 metres

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

Landscape types: hillside 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

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Tourist Info der Stadt Blieskastel
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tourismus@blieskastel.de
www.blieskastel.de

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Phone: +49 6841 104-7174
touristik@saarpfalz-kreis.de
www.saarpfalz-touristik.de

Books and maps

Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau – Ein Reise- und Freizeitführer

Robert Dawo

ISBN 978-3-95602-250-0

Wander- und Freizeitkarte Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau

ISBN 978-3-945138-14-4

Der Bliesgau: Natur – Menschen – Geschichten
ISBN 978-3-96176-106-7

Wilder Bliesgau

ISBN 978-3-96227-015-5

Faszination Bliesgau

ISBN 978-3-96227-000-1

Arten, Biotope und Landschaften im Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau

ISBN 978-3-923877-62-1

Nationale Naturlandschaften im Saarland

Bestellung über Biosphärenzweckverband Bliesgau



Young little owls need an intact cultural landscape

Directions

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 A6 or the A8, exit for St. Ingbert-Mitte, Limbach, Blieskastel or Homburg-Einöd.



Palatinate Forest and Northern Vosges

Where the forest kisses the vineyards



A break on one of the many sandstone rocks in the southern Palatinate Forest

Nature knows no boundaries – this is especially true of the Franco-German Palatinate Forest/Vosges du Nord Biosphere Reserve. Forest, vineyards, and Buntsandstein (sandstone), the pleasures of life, abundant sunshine and savoir vivre – right in the heart of Europe.

Fly over the largest contiguous forest in Western Europe (over 300,000 hectares) and you may think there is nothing but trees. But a closer look will reveal to the careful observer the diversity that lies beneath the canopy. Numerous rare species of plants and animals are at home in the deep valleys, on bizarre boulders of red sandstone and in the colourful meadows. The wildcat and the lynx – distinctive animals of the region – search for their prey at night, evading the gaze of curious hikers. These are typical inhabitants of these unfragmented, intact habitats.

Humans and the landscape have been closely inter-linked for centuries. Forestry, mining, and viticulture were equally important in the past and continue to shape this unique cultural landscape. From the Celts to the Romans, from medieval lords to the imperialists of the early modern age, they have all left their traces between the Rhine and the Moselle. The Romans, to name but one example, brought the sweet chestnut tree to the region from the other side of the Alps to supply wood for the vineyards. Since then, dense forests of chestnut have given the landscape on the eastern slope of the mountains its distinctive look. Before the introduction of the potato, the chestnut used to be an important staple food, often referred to as the “bread of the forest”. Today, it is a favourite of gourmets on both sides of the German-French border. However, the real jewel in the crown of the forestry industry is the “Pfälzer Werteiche” (“Praised Palatine Oak”), which since the Middle Ages has been well-known for its high quality timber.



A view over the vineyards of the German Wine Route

In addition to the hilly woodlands, the eastern edge of the biosphere reserve has a bit of Mediterranean flair. With over 1,800 hours of sunlight per year, almonds, figs, kiwis, and lemons – as well as several varieties of grapes – thrive here, in addition to the chestnut. Walking through the old villages and terraced vineyards on delightful sunken lanes you may sense the presence of a traditional form of viticulture with every step you take.

Visitors to selected partner businesses can learn how sustainable resource management works in practice, where exactly in the biosphere reserve the high-quality products originate, and what traditional and ecological processing methods look like. Partners include organic winegrowers, restaurateurs, farmers, beekeepers, an oil mill operator, wood processors, and marketers of game meat.

Needless to say, the love of nature shared by the Palatinate and France also includes an element of simple pleasure. Visitors are encouraged to visit one of the Franco-German biosphere farmers’ markets, which take place several times a year. All products that are for sale are regional and organically produced.



Mediterranean flair and abundant culinary pleasures

The town of Edenkoben (where visitors can arrive by car or train) is a good point of departure to explore the biosphere reserve. From Edenkoben, take the chairlift from Villa Ludwigshöhe Castle up to Rietburg castle. Delicious regional specialities are served on the panoramic viewing terrace, and the view encompassing the landscape of the Weinstraße (Wine Route) and the Rhine Valley is breath-taking. A hiking trail leads to the Ludwigsturm and an expansive view of the Palatinate Forest. From there, the trail continues through bright chestnut and pine forests to Schänzelturm and Heldenstein forester's lodge. The return route takes hikers through the romantic Edenkoben Valley past the cabin of the Palatinate Forest Club back down to Edenkoben (20 kilometres in all; a hikers' bus is available for 8 kilometres of the return trip from Heldenstein).

Forest, rocks, and a handful of castles

- **Monday:** Embark on a circular hike from Roppeviller (France) over the German-French border to the Altschlossfelsen.
- **Tuesday:** Tour Trifels Castle, followed by a hike* to Rehberg Tower and Neukastell Castle.
- **Wednesday:** Visit the Wildlife and Hiking park on the southern Wine Route near Silz.
- **Thursday:** Visit the Museum Pfalzgalerie (Palatinate Art Museum) in Kaiserslautern and the Haus der Nachhaltigkeit (House of Sustainability) in Johanniskreuz.
- **Friday:** Visit Limburg monastery ruins* and the Pfalzmuseum für Naturkunde (Palatinate Museum of Natural History) in Bad Dürkheim.
- **Saturday:** Visit the exhibition in Hambach Castle and the old town of Neustadt an der Weinstraße.
- **Sunday:** Embark on the three-castle tour* along the French border including a visit to the show mine in Nothweiler.

* Guided tours providing fascinating details of nature and culture are offered by certified biosphere guides all year round (information at www.pfaelzerwald.de/biosphaeren-guides/)

Biosphere guides lead visitors through the Palatinate Forest; in this case, near the Altschlossfelsen close to the French border



General information

Facts and figures

Location: southern Rhineland-Palatinate along the border with France

Area: 1,790 square kilometres

Elevation: 150 to 673 metres above sea level

History: founded as a nature park in 1958, recognised as a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1992 and the German part of the cross border biosphere reserve since 1998.

Geographic features: strongly structured and completely forested low mountain range flanked by gently sloping, intensively cultivated vineyards.

Biosphere Reserve information

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www.pfaelzerwald.de

Information about partner businesses at
www.pfaelzerwald.de

Information centres

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

Pfalzmuseum für Naturkunde in Bad Dürkheim
www.pfalzmuseum.de/english/english.html

Accommodation

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www.pfalz.de/en



Meadows, vineyards, and forest: grazing sheep near Albersweiler

Books and maps

Biosphärenreservat Pfälzerwald
Südteil 1:40,000
ISBN 978-3-945138-03-8

Naturpark Pfälzerwald
Nordteil 1:40,000
ISBN 978-3-934895-92-8

Book recommendations:
<https://shop.pfalz.de/pfaelzer-buecher>

Directions

By 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 62 to Pirmasens.



Swabian Alb

Cultural landscape with history



Hohenneuffen castle ruins on the Albtrauf give a wonderful view



Young people in front of the Swabian Alb biosphere centre

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.

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.

In 2009, Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve received UNESCO recognition. The state of Baden-Württemberg and its residents have opted for the term “biosphere region” instead 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. High-quality products from the region are produced under the ALBGEMACHT product brand, with the aim of preserving and promoting the biodiversity of the unique natural and cultural landscape of the Swabian Alb Biosphere Region. A further example is the “Albrecht Leisa” marketing project; lentils are grown by around 70 organic farmers and it is a real regional success. 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.



Alb buffalo, Alb cheese, and breath-taking adventures

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. About the military history and former life here, you should definitely book a guided tour of the “Albgut” (an 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.

History, something for horse-lovers, and plenty to enjoy

- **Saturday:** visit the Swabian Alb biosphere centre, guided bicycle trip through the former military training area at Münsingen, and then stop at a biosphere partner.
- **Sunday:** Trip on the Swabian Alb Railway, for example from Münsinger train station to Gomadingen. Return walk via the Marbach main and state stud farm to Münsingen.
- **Monday:** visit Schertelshöhle (cave) in Westerheim, walk along Randecker Maar – a former volcanic pipe – then drive to Schopfloch Alb nature conservation centre.
- **Tuesday:** visit 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.

In the spring a sea of flowers – the meadow orchards



- **Wednesday:** visit Zwiefalten monastery with its Baroque minster and Peterstor biosphere information centre. Then hike to Wimsen, where the boat takes you to the Wimsen cave.
- **Thursday:** Hike on one of the certified “hochgehberge” premium trails through impressive and valuable nature, past castles and fortresses, afternoon shopping tour in Metzingen outlet city, evening visit to the Metzingen vinotheque to enjoy the ALBGEMACHT wines with live music.
- **Friday:** Ride a rented e-bike from Münsingen mobility centre on one of the guided e-bike tours. Visit the “Hohle Fels” cave in Schelklingen, where the “Venus of Hohle Fels” was found, the oldest figurative depiction of a human being.



Swabian Alb biosphere centre provides information with an interactive exhibition and is the starting point for hikes and bike tours through Münsingen former military training area

General information

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 in 2008, 10th anniversary of UNESCO recognition in 2019.

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

Biosphere Reserve information

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72574 Bad Urach
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info@schwaebischealb.de
www.schwaebischealb.de

Books and maps

Rad- und Wanderkarte Biosphärengebiet
Schwäbische Alb
ISBN 978-3-7473-0342-9
Freizeitkarte Bad Urach
ISBN 978-3-89021-617-1

Directions

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 Swabian Alb biosphere centre.

By car: on the A 8 Merklingen or Kirchheim/Teck to Münsingen. From Tübingen/Reutlingen on the B 27 to Münsingen.



Black Forest

Forests, pastures, far-reaching views



Itinerant shepherd on Belchen

Semi-natural mixed mountain forests, colourful wild-flower meadows and pastures, landscapes shaped by the ice age, regional specialities and living traditions characterise the Black Forest Biosphere Reserve. The region offers many contrasts and experiences. It is located in the extreme southwest of Germany, near the borders with Switzerland and France. It extends from 310 to 1,420 metres above sea level – ranging from a mild climate, suitable for fruit growing, to a snowy mountain climate. During the last ice age, glaciers reached all the way into the valleys, and their legacy can still be seen today in the shape of moraines and u-shaped valleys. No fewer than six glaciers merged in the “Präger Gletscherkessel” – unique in the world.

The wooded heights, the grasslands, and the valleys cutting deeply into gneiss and granite make up the picture-book Black Forest landscape, which also includes traditional Black Forest farms with their long hipped roofs extending down to ground floor level. Mountains such as Schauinsland, Belchen, and Herzogenhorn offer panoramic views as far as the snow-covered Alps and across the Rhine to the Vosges. During milder times of the year, the distinctive landscape can be explored on numerous high-quality hiking trails. During winter, visitors are attracted to wonderful cross-country ski trails and snowshoe tours, without another person in sight.

Above all, the species-rich communal mountain pastures characterise the cultural landscape of the Black Forest biosphere region. For centuries, the farmers have been driving their cattle herds to and from these high pastures. The resulting “grassland-rich forest landscape”, which has been recognised by UNESCO, includes imposing “pasture beech trees”, whose growth is shaped by browsing animals. Endangered cattle breeds, such as Hinterwald, continue to contribute to the preservation of the landscape. One of the aims of the biosphere reserve is to secure the continued existence of these ancient breeds, for example through new marketing strategies for meat.



Mountain arnica (wolf's bane) with six-spot burnet in the Präger Gletscherkessel

In this densely forested region, the people of the Black Forest have acquired a great deal of knowledge about the use of timber as a sustainable raw material, ranging from timber construction techniques to woodworking and carving. For the purpose of climate protection, it is important that this technical knowledge originating in the biosphere region is made use of elsewhere. Various traditions typical of the Black Forest continue to be practiced by the inhabitants of the remote valleys. Almost every village has its own traditional dress, customs and festivals. The highlight of the year is the Alemannic carnival, including processions and rituals. The Alemannic dialect, still maintained with enthusiasm, contributes to the high level of identification of the people with their region. Interesting museums such as the Resenhof Museum of Local History in Bernau, Hebel Museum in Hausen, or the Textile Museum in Zell vividly bring traditions and customs to life.



Schauinsland: vistas, nature, history

Take the Schauinsland cable car from Freiburg to one of the highest peaks of the Black Forest biosphere region. Enjoy the view all the way to the Alps from the observation tower (1,284 m). Explore the historical silver mine. Hike through open mountain forests and wildflower meadows to the over 400-year old “Schniederlihof”. Experience the history of the Black Forest in the museum. Continue the walk to Hofgrund and from there to Oberried by bus. Make a final stop at the inn “Zum Goldenen Adler”. Back to Freiburg by bus and train.

From the origins of winter sports to the magical summit

- **Monday:** Take the Höllentalbahn to Hinterzarten. Visit the Black Forest Ski Museum. Hike along the Hochmoor Rundweg or to the Ospelehof, which produces its own natural cosmetics.
- **Tuesday:** Drive to St. Blasien and visit the cathedral, one of the largest domed churches in Europe. Menzenschwand: relax in the Radon Revital Baths or visit “Le Petit Salon” museum for information on Europe’s court painters, F. X. and H. Winterhalter.
- **Wednesday:** Take the train to Zell im Wiesental. Visit Wiesental Textile Museum. Hike to Hög-Ehrsb erg. Take the bus back to the starting point.
- **Thursday:** Bicycle tour around Schluchsee (18 km), stopping for a swim in summer. Have a drink at Unterkrummenhof on the south side of the lake. Afterwards, take a trip on the lake with MS Schluchsee, starting at the lido.
- **Friday:** Visit Bernau and the Hans Thoma Museum of Art or Resenhof Museum of Local History for information on the tradition of timber processing; hike on Hochtalsteig.
- **Saturday:** Hike the 14-km leg of the Hebel Trail from Zell im Wiesental to Steinen, following the Alemannic verses of Johann Peter Hebel through the biosphere region.
- **Sunday:** Excursion to Belchen, take the cable car to Höhengasthaus. The “magic summit” offers distant views of the Swiss Alps, the French Jura, and the Vosges mountains.

Snowshoe hiker on Schauinsland



General information

Facts and figures

Location: Southern Black Forest in the south-west of Baden-Württemberg, the border triangle between Germany, France and Switzerland.

Area: 632 square kilometres

Elevation: 310 to 1,420 metres above sea level

History: Established in 2016, recognised by UNESCO in 2017.

Geographic features: Mixed mountain forests, communal pastures, stone runs, and raised bogs

Biosphere Reserve information

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www.schwarzwald-tourismus.info

Books and maps

Konold, Werner and Bernd-Jürgen Seitz:
Biosphärengebiet Schwarzwald – Mensch und Natur
im Einklang,
Silberburg-Verlag 2018

Directions

By train: from Freiburg by Höllentalbahn to Kirchzarten or to Schluchsee, from there by bus to the biosphere region. From Kirchzarten by bus to Todtnau. From Basel (Badischer Bahnhof) by Wiesentalbahn to Zell im Wiesental

By car: A 5 to Freiburg, B 31 to Kirchzarten, L 126 to Wiesental via Notschreipass; A 81 to Geisingen, B 31 to Titisee-Neustadt, B 500 to Todtnau via Feldberg

Typical Black Forest farm house



Berchtesgadener Land

High above



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



Volunteers cut alpine pastures of emerging spruce or blackberry bushes to prevent these valuable grazing areas from overgrowing

Imposing peaks that tower into the sky, fragrant Alpine meadows, vast forests, colourful meadows and mysterious bogs – the only Alpine UNESCO 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 resource-efficient 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 characterised 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.





View over Bad Reichenhall and the Berchtesgaden Alps

Close to the mountains

From the mountain village of Ramsau, the Alps can be easily explored with the “Almerlebnisbus” (hikers bus service). Simply get off the road and into the mountain pasture where the dairymaids make traditional dairy products, or at “Hirschbichl” alpine inn 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 (lake).

Diversity is the key

- **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. A visit to the Haarmooses between Laufen and Saaldorf-Surheim, the largest meadow breeding area for birds in south-eastern Bavaria, is particularly worthwhile at dusk.
- **Wednesday:** The day begins in “Alnringer Moos” (moorland) where fascinating natural and cultural history can both be experienced. Afterwards a visit to Freilassing and the “Lokwelt” (locomotive museum). 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” (mountain) at Piding where the wonderful panoramic views of Salzburg are a reward for the climb!
- **Friday:** From the waterfalls “Weissbachfälle”, follow the “Soleleitungsweg” (the salt water trail) through the imposing Weißbach Gorge via Schneizlreuth, Lake Thumsee and Thumsee and onto Bad Reichenhall. A visit to the old salt works “Alte Saline” rounds off this day in the land of salt.
- **Saturday:** Walk from Bayerisch Gmain to the wildly romantic “Lattengebirge” (mountain group) up to “Bischofswiesen” (meadows) and up to Bischofswiesen and there end the afternoon by relaxing in the idyllic natural pool of Aschauer.
- **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 Königssee, which fascinates everyone.

General information

Facts and figures

Location: south-east Bavaria on the border with Austria

Area: 840 square kilometres of biosphere reserve of which 208 square kilometres is national park

Elevation: 383 to 2,713 metres above sea level

History: established as a national park in 1978, in 1990 the national park communities were recognised 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.



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

Biosphere Reserve information

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info@berchtesgaden.de
www.berchtesgaden.de/en/home

Biosphärenregion Berchtesgadener Land
www.brbgl.de/en/tourist-information

Books and maps

Das höchste Leben – Almwirtschaft im Berchtesgadener Land (2004)
ISBN 4101530001270

Die Tierwelt des Nationalparks Berchtesgaden (2006)
ISBN 3-925647-42-2

Die Pflanzenwelt des Nationalparks
Berchtesgaden (2003)
ISBN 3-925647-33-3

Nationalpark Berchtesgaden – Im Augenblick
der Zeitlosigkeit (2010)
ISBN 978-3-922325-64-2

Topographical map 1:50,000
Berchtesgadener Alpen (UK 50-55)
and Rupertiwinkel (UK 50-44)

Directions

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

By car: From Munich or Salzburg: A 8 – exits for Bad Reichenhall and Neukirchen.



National Natural Landscapes

Fascination – Joy – Confidence



Hike through the Zickersche Berge in the South-East Rügen biosphere reserve

Covering one third of Germany's national territory, the National Natural Landscapes are an alliance of 16 national parks, three wilderness areas, 104 nature parks, and 18 biosphere reserves committed to nature conservation, climate protection and sustainable living. Together they invite all people to preserve fascinating nature, to experience joy in and with nature, and to shape the future with confidence in a sustainable and climate-neutral way – locally, nationally, and world-wide.

United by this common vision, they set different priorities in their work. National parks and wilderness areas focus on letting nature be nature, exploring nature and making its fascination tangible for all. Nature parks sustainably shape natural and cultural landscapes so that people can experience joy and quality of life in nature. Biosphere reserves develop sustainable and climate-friendly models for the future, and invite people to live in harmony with nature and generate confidence.

National parks

National parks preserve the wild countryside that provides habitats for animals and plants, fascinates people, and safeguards the natural diversity of our Earth. On the majority of their land, national parks ensure that natural processes and their natural dynamics flow as undisturbed as possible. Therefore, the guiding principle of the 16 German national parks is: Let nature be nature. New wilderness is emerging.

No later than 30 years after the establishment of a national park, 75% of its area should be free from human influences. As far as this central protective purpose allows, national parks also serve scientific environmental monitoring and nature education. In this way, national parks provide fascinating insights into the “workshop” of nature.

Nationalparke Deutschland



Wilderness areas

The dynamic forces of nature can operate in an undisturbed way in the three certified wilderness areas in Germany. Wilderness areas protect large tracts of land that can develop freely and naturally – in other words, not according to goals created by people. They therefore provide habitats for wild animals and plants that rely on natural processes and large, undisturbed areas.

Wilderness areas allow people to witness and experience unguided nature, in which humans are not the main focus. In addition, they are important places of learning for research into natural processes and development.

Wildnisgebiete Deutschland

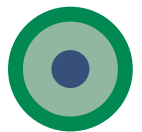


Nature Parks

Nature parks are large natural and cultural landscapes that offer space to develop diverse nature, mitigate climate change, and create attractive recreational areas. The 104 nature parks in Germany cover around 28% of the country; in them, people can experience pleasure and quality of life by being in the countryside and seeing nature, as well as becoming active in the development of their region and climate mitigation.

In addition, the nature parks support sustainable tourism and regional development, as well as special experiences and educational opportunities via education for sustainable development.

Naturparke Deutschland



Biosphere reserves

The 18 biosphere reserves in Germany are characterised by a particularly distinctive and intact natural and cultural landscape with a high level of biological diversity. At the same time, they are living, economic, and recreational areas reflecting a balanced coexistence between people and nature.

Biosphere reserves test new methods, develop holistic solutions, and offer insightful knowledge for research and science. They also create awareness of relevant topics through education for sustainable development. They protect historical cultural landscapes and develop valuable habitats for people and wildlife. In particular, regional value creation and sustainable business are promoted in biosphere reserves.

These model regions for sustainable development should be brought to life by the local people – for the benefit of current and future generations and with an awareness of social, ecological, and economic responsibility. The basis for this is the UNESCO MAB programme (Man and Biosphere) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Biosphärenreservate Deutschland



Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.

With common voice



A common voice for National Natural Landscapes

Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. is the umbrella organization of the German national parks, biosphere reserves and wilderness areas. Together with the Verband Deutscher Naturparke e. V. (Association of German Nature Parks), it is the bearer of the umbrella brand “Nationale Naturlandschaften” (“National Natural Landscapes”). Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.

brings together experts and interested parties from national parks, nature parks, biosphere reserves, wilderness areas and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) so that positions can be coordinated and projects implemented for the benefit of the National Natural Landscapes.

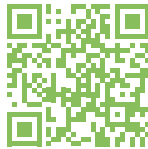
Volunteers programme

Joining in with nature conservation

Join in! About 40 National Natural Landscapes nationwide offer hands-on projects, from habitat protection to environmental education. In the volunteers programme everyone is welcome, irrespective of age or skill, no matter what your time budget is. Nature conservation is a matter of pride and a great opportunity to actively experience National Natural Landscapes, to expand knowledge, and to meet like-minded people.

You too can be a volunteer in the National Natural Landscapes, like around 4,000 others every year. Qualified volunteer coordinators on site are happy to advise you.

www.ehrensache-natur.de



Volunteering day for biotope care, Schorfheide-Chorin UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Junior Ranger

Young talents for nature conservation

In the nationwide Junior Ranger Programme, children and young people are committed to wildlife, the environment, and sustainability. Supervised by experienced rangers, they discover the National Natural Landscapes and get to know the specific characteristics of these protected areas in their free time. In a creative and fun way, Junior Rangers learn how active nature conservation works and experience many adventures outdoors together with other interested young people.

Become part of the Junior Ranger family – in your region on your doorstep, or on a discovery tour on holiday. The commitment is worth it!

www.junior-ranger.de

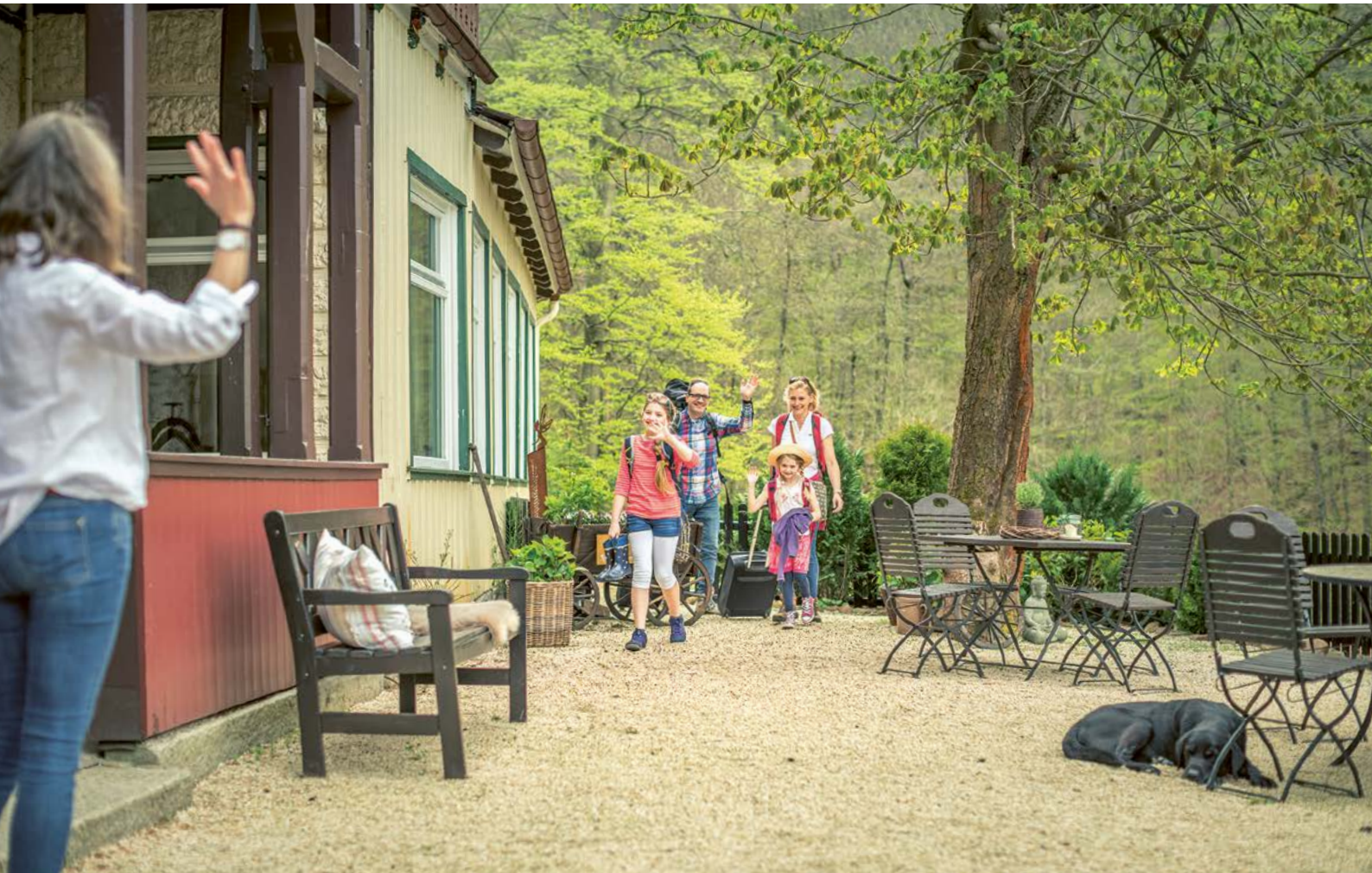


Explore nature together



Certified partners

Sustainable and regional offers



Welcome to the partners of the National Natural Landscapes

Would you like to experience a vacation in harmony with nature and enjoy its beauty and diversity with all your senses? Then discover our “Partners of the National Natural Landscapes”. Whether it is a holiday apartment, hotel, café, restaurant, bicycle or canoe rental, guest information, guided tours, or regional crafts – our partner businesses stand for sustainability, quality, regionalism, and passion.

We welcome you with our ecological and environmentally friendly offers. Enjoy and experience the National Natural Landscapes with our partner businesses in a sustainable way.



Come in and enjoy regional specialties

www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de/partner

Imprint

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On behalf of:



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



Federal Agency for
Nature Conservation

of the Federal Republic of Germany

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Nationale
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Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. is the umbrella organization of Germany's national parks, biosphere reserves and wilderness areas. Together with the umbrella organization for nature parks – Verband Deutscher Naturparke e. V. – it is the bearer of the umbrella brand "National Natural Landscapes". The national parks, biosphere reserves, nature parks and wilderness areas united under this umbrella brand preserve fascinating nature on around one third of Germany's surface area. Together with the people in their region, they provide joy in experiencing nature and they confidently shape a sustainably future. | www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de

