



NATIONAL PARKS IN GERMANY

Wild and Beautiful

Nationale
Naturlandschaften



**Nationalpark
Bayerischer Wald**



Bavarian Forest National Park
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poststelle@npv-bw.bayern.de
www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de/english

**Nationalpark
Jasmund**



Jasmund National Park
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www.nationalpark-jasmund.de

**Nationalpark
Vorpommersche
Boddenlandschaft**



Western-Pomerania Lagoons National Park
Im Forst 5
D-18375 Born/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)38234 502-0, fax -24
poststelle@npa-vp.mvnet.de
www.nationalpark-vorpommersche-
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**Nationalpark
Berchtesgaden**



Berchtesgaden National Park
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D-83471 Berchtesgaden/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)8652 9686-0, fax -40
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www.nationalpark-berchtesgaden.de

**Nationalpark
Kellerwald-Edersee**



Kellerwald-Edersee National Park
Laustraße 8
D-34537 Bad Wildungen/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)5621 75249-0, fax -19
info@nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de
www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de/en/home/

**Nationalpark
Wattenmeer**



HAMBURG

Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park
Neuenfelder Straße 19
D-21109 Hamburg/Germany
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www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de

**Nationalpark
Eifel**



Eifel National Park
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D-53937 Schleiden-Gemünd/Germany
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info@nationalpark-eifel.de
www.nationalpark-eifel.de/go/eifel/english.html

**Müritz-
Nationalpark**



Müritz National Park
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www.mueritz-nationalpark.de/cms2/MNP_prod/
MNP/en/Homepage/index.jsp

**Nationalpark
Wattenmeer**



NIEDERSACHSEN

Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park
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poststelle@nlpv-wattenmeer.niedersachsen.de
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer-erleben.de

**Nationalpark
Hainich**



Hainich National Park
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D-99947 Bad Langensalza/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)361 5739140-00, fax -20
Nationalpark.Hainich@NNL.thueringen.de
www.nationalpark-hainich.de

**Nationalpark
Sächsische Schweiz**



Saxon Switzerland National Park
An der Elbe 4
D-01814 Bad Schandau/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)35022 900-600, fax -666
poststelle.sbs-nationalparkverwaltung@smul.
sachsen.de
www.nationalpark-saechsische-schweiz.de/?lang=en

**Nationalpark
Wattenmeer**



SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park
Schlossgarten 1
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**Nationalpark
Harz**



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**Nationalpark
Schwarzwald**



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**Nationalpark
Hunsrück-Hochwald**



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**Nationalpark
Unteres Odertal**



Lower Oder Valley National Park
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Contents

5	Preface by Professor Dr. Beate Jessel President of the Federal Agency for Nature
6	Interview: Wilderness in Germany? Where is it? Karl Friedrich Sinner
8	National Parks in Germany
	National Park
10	Bavarian Forest
14	Berchtesgaden
18	Eifel
22	Hainich
26	Harz
30	Hunsrück-Hochwald
34	Jasmund
38	Kellerwald-Edersee
42	Müritz
46	Saxon Switzerland
50	Black Forest
54	Lower Oder Valley
58	Western Pomerania Lagoons
62	Wadden Sea
64	Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea
68	Hamburg Wadden Sea
72	Lower Saxony Wadden Sea
76	Jewels of Nature – the National Natural Landscapes
78	Make Nature an experience and enjoyment for all – the National Natural Landscapes and EUROPARC
81	Publishers Information and Credits

Nationale
Naturlandschaften



- Nationalpark Wattenmeer 1
SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN
- Nationalpark Wattenmeer 2
HAMBURG
- Nationalpark Wattenmeer 3
NIEDERSACHSEN
- Nationalpark Vorpommersche Boddenlandschaft 4

- Nationalpark Jasmund 5
- Müritznationalpark 6
- Nationalpark Unteres Odertal 7
- Nationalpark Harz 8

- Nationalpark Kellerwald-Edersee 9
- Nationalpark Hainich 10
- Nationalpark Sächsische Schweiz 11
- Nationalpark Eifel 12

- Nationalpark Hunsrück-Hochwald 13
- Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald 14
- Nationalpark Schwarzwald 15
- Nationalpark Berchtesgaden 16

Preface

*National Parks are
treasure troves of nature*



National Parks are a showcase of the natural features of a country. They are at the centre of public awareness. The tradition of National Parks in Germany is relatively young. Now this tradition is nearly 50 years old. The first National Park in Germany was created in 1970 when the Bavarian Forest National Park was designated. National Parks got a special push in 1990 with the help of the National Park programme of the former German Democratic Republic. Now, the 16 designated National Parks in Germany are widely recognised and accepted among large parts of the population. They also represent a high economic value for the respective regions. Recent studies by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation show that 9.5 million National Park tourists resulted in an additional annual turnover of €487 million. That amount is equivalent of 15,000 incomes. (figures excluding the Hunsrück-Hochwald National Park). Communities increasingly recognise that this is an opportunity and that they can be proud of their natural heritage. In this regard National Parks are also a success story for nature conservation. A contributing factor for this has been the shared public presence of all National Parks under the brand “Nationale Naturlandschaften” (National Natural Landscapes) established by the umbrella organisation EUROPARC Germany. This success can be traced back to the independent management authorities of the respective federal states and the high commitment of their staff. National Park administrations are responsible for a wealth of roles. These include the protection of biological diversity and the management of the area, but also research, monitoring, environmental education, the facilitation of experiencing nature, active public relations work and the close cooperation with other key local players.

It is a central part of future-orientated politics to protect these treasure troves as part of our natural heritage for our children and grandchildren. This includes the rigorous designation and implementation of core areas free of any land use. It also means improving the quality of existing National Parks and considering where future National Parks may be established in Germany. I believe we must achieve the central goal of our national Biodiversity Strategy, to establish 2% of the land area of Germany as a wilderness area by 2020. So far we are not anywhere near achieving this goal, nor have we exhausted all the potential regarding these matters.

For over 100 years nature conservation has been the responsibility of the Government. This must remain so. We will continue to need National Park Administrations that are close to the needs of their communities and are adequately funded, to ensure we can maintain and further develop our natural heritage and to inform our citizens about the developments and processes in these areas. For the future, I want to assure our National Parks of the active support of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation for their many roles and responsibilities.

PROF. DR. BEATE JESSEL
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL AGENCY
FOR NATURE CONSERVATION



Wilderness in Germany? Where is it?

Wilderness simply means to “let nature be nature”. Exactly that is the guiding principle of the 16 National Parks in Germany. In these places, nature can freely develop – not influenced by people. Karl Friedrich Sinner, former Chief Executive of the Bavarian Forest National Park, board member of EUROPARC Germany and expert on all questions on the topic of “wild” areas in Germany.

In large parts of the Bavarian Forest National Park nature can develop into wild woodland according to its own ancient laws of "being – developing – dying"

People often think of the jungle, Siberian landscapes or the Serengeti, when they hear the term "wilderness". Where can we find wilderness in Germany?

You can find a great diversity of wilderness in the core areas of all 16 German National Parks. Wild streams and mountain slopes affected by avalanches, the wild forests of our National Parks rich in spruce, the naturalness of our broad-leaved National Parks in the central parts of Germany and river and coastal landscapes – they all show wilderness.

Can you define wilderness?

Wilderness can only be described in part. It is the individual perception by people when they see nature left to its own devices, nature you can experience in all its vitality and diversity. Wilderness needs space and freedom from the effects of civilisation. At the same time it is a place where we need to behave in a civilised way.

Why is Wilderness so important for Germany?

Recent research shows that the core areas of National Parks are hotspots for biodiversity. For the first time, they give us an impression of what species diversity actually means for our country. Untouched wilderness with its many highly differentiated development phases gives us an important insight into the carbon cycle and carbon sequestration. In water protection areas free of fisheries we can see the diversity that used to exist in our oceans.

To enjoy wilderness is also a deep human experience that people can have when they engage with nature. Wilderness allows people to experience the original and unspoilt – adventure, mythology, fairy tales - an encounter with wild aesthetics and with the power of nature.

The slogan "let nature be nature" is the central principle in National Parks. What is the proportion of untouched wilderness in the National Parks?

The National Parks are relatively young. Currently, the proportion of wilderness varies a lot between National Parks. All National Parks aim for 75% of the area to be untouched nature, to be a new wilderness under development. By the way: it is a common misconception that people are not allowed into the core areas of National Parks. You can experience all aspects of nature and wilderness in all National Parks. However, not everywhere, all of the time, or in every part of the National Park.

What success stories have there been in recent years in the core areas?

The areas of National Parks where wilderness is developing show increasing species diversity and a dynamic development of nature. These are quite different to our traditional views of nature and habitat conservation. Many extremely endangered species, such as mosses, mushrooms, insects, birds and also amphibians, mammals and fish have benefited from this development. Even species previously considered extinct or those that had not been recorded for a long time can be found again in the core areas of National Parks.



Karl Friedrich Sinner, former Chief Executive of the Bavarian Forest National Park, board member of EUROPARC Germany, the umbrella organisation for the National Natural Landscapes

Where do you see the future for German National Parks?

Most importantly to continue the chosen path and implement it rigorously. The history of National Parks in Europe shows that National Parks are important for society and for nature. Communication with citizens in National Park regions is a key to the acceptance of National Parks and to helping people to understand our core principle to "let nature be nature". National Parks are a core element of our National Natural Landscapes. They therefore have the central role of maintaining and preserving the treasure of our natural heritage of our country within the global network of National Parks. Wilderness, as it develops in fascinating ways in National Parks, is a central element of the Biodiversity Strategy of the Federal Government of Germany. We want to see wilderness on 2% of the land area of our country. At the moment it is about 0.6%.



National Parks in Germany

An idea was born in 1872 in the United States, when the natural landscape of the Yellowstone Area was protected by a National Park status. This is the example to follow: Today, there are 3,800 National Parks worldwide in 120 countries. In Europe, the first National Parks were designated in Sweden in 1909 and in Switzerland in 1914. Germany followed in 1970 with the Bavarian Forest National Park.

At the beginning of the 1990s the lynx tip-toed back to its original home. By now it is at home in several National Parks.

Protect, research and facilitate experiencing biological diversity

National Parks are landscapes where nature is allowed to be nature. Like a “Noah’s Ark”, they play a very important role in the protection of plants and animals. They protect the inherent dynamics of nature and preserve refuge areas. They leave space for natural development processes and for the self-regulation of nature. Economic use of nature is largely prohibited in the National Parks. They allow the scientific observation and research of natural processes. Knowledge gathered here helps us to use the power of nature in a sustainable way outside of the National Parks. It also helps to save costs and to avoid future mistakes in how we manage nature.

Many people hardly have any opportunities to experience nature with all their senses. National Parks are a unique space for experiencing nature. They are an excellent place to learn something about the processes and the wealth of the forces of nature, as they freely express themselves. National Parks allow people to experience and gain insight into the eternal cycle of becoming, being and dying.

“Natural” regional development

National Parks are connected to their regional surroundings and give the whole region character. As a shining example of tourism which is sympathetic to nature and local culture, and with their special opportunities to experience nature, National Parks promote a sustainable regional economic development and secure jobs. The German National Parks are far more than heavily guarded nature reserves. They are rather a unique challenge for people and nature to protect the past and the future. With this in mind, National Park administrations consider themselves as organisations, that are accountable to nature and people in equal measure.

Visitors are very welcome

The National Park programme runs 365 days a year. You can experience “festivals” throughout the four seasons – the glorious colours of the autumn as a canvas for spectacular bird migration, forests shrouded in winter clouds, the overwhelming rage of colours in the spring and the warm green of summer, its warm breezes and animal sounds waiting to be deciphered. You can explore the National Parks best on foot, by bike and also by boat.

National Park Partners

Partners of the National Parks in Germany help to protect this unique and fascinating natural environment. Partners are selected based on strict quality criteria, whether they are restaurants, boat companies or represent an accommodation business. You are in best hands with these hosts. You invest directly in the National Park if you choose one of the National Park Partners.

A varied offer

The National Park Authorities and their partners offer a large selection of varied and age-appropriate activities: Nature trails for outdoor enthusiasts, adventure playgrounds for children and seasonal activities for the whole family. Visitor centres will provide you with information about each National Park, the variety of activities offered – for example excursions, wildlife watches and walks to experience nature – as well as the wider region. In addition you can experience regional highlights such as open air museums, farm shops with regional food products or cultural events.

National Parks have become even more attractive in recent years, including for people with mobility issues. By now most National Parks offer activities accessible to all. This number will go up in the future. Please obtain more information about further offers from the National Park Authorities, the tourism agencies and on the internet. There is one thing you have to bring with you though: time. Time to distance yourself from your daily life, to reach places that reveal an impressive diversity of nature.

A photograph of a forest in autumn. The trees are tall and thin, with many yellow and orange leaves. The ground is covered in fallen leaves. The text "Bavarian Forest National Park" is overlaid in the center.

Bavarian Forest
National Park



The Bavarian Forest National Park shows in an impressive way what amazing and vital diversity our native nature can create without any intervention by people. More than 300 kilometres (close to 200 miles) of well-marked paths run over the lonely hills and valleys, make their way through native forest and lead through untouched areas covered in deep snow in winter. With a bit of luck, you can see wild animals like lynx, wolf and bear in their “living quarters” in large open air wildlife enclosures. You will also find the world’s largest tree top path with breath-taking views.

If you walk in the protected area with open senses, you will quickly be captured by the powerful and morbid naturalness. You will encounter enormous root plates from fallen giant trees, granite blocks covered in moss of saturated green, some blocks as large as houses. The many raised bogs, streams and lakes are also characteristic for the Bavarian Forest.

Over hundreds of years people started using the originally nearly uninhabited northern part of the forest. The first glass works were built in the 14th century. There was an abundance of all the raw materials necessary for glass production. From 1850 onwards, all usage and property rights were handed over to the Bavarian state. Rigorous and systematic use of timber from the forest started. Forests in the valleys and on the slopes were felled and soils were drained. Often this resulted in monotonous spruce forests.

More than 45 years ago, in 1970, step by step, nature was left to its own devices. With an equivalent National Park on the Czech side of the border, The National Park Šumava, this is now the largest continuous protection area for woodland in central Europe.

The softly undulating woodland areas are a typical characteristic of the German lower mountains. Lusen, Rachel and Falkenstein are three of the peaks in this area, reaching up to 1,453 metres (4,767 feet). Today, a diverse natural forest with the previously rare white wood fir, beech and also spruce grows from the rotting wood – untouched by human reforestation activities. Large parts of the former forest had become victims of acid rain, extreme weather events and the bark beetle. So called “floodplain spruce” is spreading again in wet valleys where cold air is trapped. The natural mixed mountain woodland however prefers the warmer slopes. “Right at the top” from 1,200 metres (3,280 feet) onwards the winters are long and rich in snow. Only mountain spruce and rowan can withstand this rough climate.

Around 700 types of plants grow in the National Park, including some botanical rarities such as the Bohemian gentian or the Snow Bell (*Soldanella* spp.) with its violet flowers. Other inhabitants of the extensive woodlands are red deer, the European eagle owl, the three-toed woodpecker, the white-backed woodpecker and the smallest European owl, the pygmy owl. Since its successful reintroduction in the Bohemian Forest, the lynx once more roams through the Bavarian Forest.



The brown bear does not live freely in the Bavarian Forest National Park, yet. However, they already feel at home in this large open-air enclosure.

One day in the National Park

Visitors coming to the National Park for the first time should start by visiting the “Lusen” National Park Centre near Neuschönau in the southern part of the National Park or the “Falkenstein” National Park Centre in the northern part of the National Park. The National Park Centres the “Hans-Eisemann-Haus” and “Haus zur Wildnis” offer free entry, individual advice and exhibitions about the wilderness of the forest as well as rooms for children to experience nature.

The National Park Centres “Falkenstein” and “Lusen” are surrounded by extensive open-air enclosures hosting the typical wild animals of the mountain forests, including the extinct brown bears; wolves and lynx as well as wild horses and aurochs (long-horned European wild ox).

The Stone Age cave at the “Falkenstein” National Park Centre invites you to travel back in time, when large herds of animals and not people characterized the landscape.

The open air garden presents the botanical world of the Bavarian Forest National Park. This includes a rockery around the “Hans-Eisemann-Haus”. This is also the end-point of the world’s largest, 1,300 metre (4,265 feet) long tree top accessible path, including a 44 metre (144 feet) viewing platform

One week in the National Park

Monday: “Lusen” National Park Centre with “Hans-Eisemann” house, botanical garden and geological trail, tree-top walk, followed by a 7 km (4 mile) circular walk around the animal enclosure.

Tuesday: A cross-border walk in the walking area “Paths through Nature and time”. A small detour to the source of the river Moldau recommended.

Wednesday: Walk via “Himmelsleiter” (“stairway to heaven”) to peak Lusen. The peak is free of woodland and is covered in thousands of granite blocks at a height of 1,373 metres (4,505 feet).

Thursday: Today you can visit the “Falkenstein” and “Haus zur Wildnis” National Park Centre, the open-air enclosure and the Stone Age cave, as well as the native forest adventure trail “Watzlikhain” near the village of Zwieslerwaldhaus.

Friday: Climb the highest peak of the National Park, the “Grosser Rachel” (1,453 metres – 4,767 feet) via the “Racheldiensthütte” (get there with the “Igelbus” – “Hedgehog” Bus)

Saturday: A day for the children. Visit the woodland natural playground with its unique nature trail to learn about nature in a playful way

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: in South-East Bavaria along the German-Czech border from Bayerisch Eisenstein to Mauth

Area: 243 square kilometres

Height above sea level: 600 – 1,453 metres (2,000 – 4,767 feet)

Opened in: 1970

Habitat Types: floodplain spruce forest, mixed mountain forest, spruce mountain forest

Books and Maps

Hiking map
Holiday Region Bavarian Forest National Park
1:35,000
Purchase via:
Holiday Region Bavarian Forest National Park
Konrad-Wilsdorf-Straße 1
D-94518 Spiegelau/Germany

Bayerischer Wald – Wo Wildnis erwacht
ISBN 3-924044-57-0

Die wilden 14
ISBN-13: 9783942509527

National Park Information

“Falkenstein” National Park Centre
Sat nav: Eisensteiner Straße
D-94227 Ludwigsthal/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)992 5002-0, fax -167
hwz@npv-bw.bayern.de

“Lusen” National Park Centre
Sat nav: Böhmstraße 9
D-94556 Neuschönau/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)8558 9615-0, fax -22
heh@npv-bw.bayern.de

Waldgeschichtliches Museum
(*Museum of Forest History*)
Klosterallee 4
D-94568 St. Oswald/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)8552 974889-0, fax -9
wgm@npv-bw.bayern.de

Accommodation

National Park Partner
www.nationalpark-partner.com

Holiday Region Bavarian Forest National Park
www.ferienregion-nationalpark.de/en.html
Phone: +49 (0)8553 9793943

How to get there

By Rail:
Travel to Plattling by ICE (high speed train), then to Zwiesel, Bayerisch Eisenstein, Grafenau, Frauenau or Spiegelau.

Take the bus with the “Bayerwald”-Ticket from there.

By Car:
“Falkenstein” National Park Centre:
Motorway (Autobahn) A 92 from Munich and A 3 from Regensburg or Passau: Exit “Deggendorf” via the B 11 to Regen, Zwiesel and Ludwigsthal.

For the “Lusen” National Park Centre:
A 3 Exit “Hengersberg”, via the B 533 to Grafenau and further on to Neuschönau.

Accessible visit

You can experience our National Park Centres and our Museum of Forest History with all your senses, at any age and during any season. Smooth paths with low gradients make it easier for older people, people with disabilities and families with buggies or prams to visit natural beauties nearby. Our local contact partner for your individual needs is happy to help you.

Please feel free to email us with your questions before you come: npfueralle@npv-bw.bayern.de



Berchtesgaden National Park





The eastern wall of the Watzmann peak, which ascends to unimaginable heights behind the Kirchlein peak, commands respect. Here, at heights of up to 2,713 metres (8,900 feet) nature, rather than humans, reigns. The two baroque domes on the towers of the pilgrimage chapel of St. Bartholomä on the Western shore of Lake König (Königssee) look tiny and fragile amongst the magical nature and grand panorama of the landscape. The chapel, like only a few other places, characterises the global image of the beauty of Germany around the world.

The grand stage of the Berchtesgaden National Park is like a 70 million year old geological display board. You can find all climate and vegetation zones here, from moderate to polar in close proximity.

You can enter untameable nature via 260 kilometres (160 miles) of well-developed walking paths and alpine climbing routes. You have the choice: a 20-minute walk to the "Malerwinkel" or an extensive alpine trek for the experienced alpine mountaineer. Besides Lake König, well frequented by tourists, the area offers over 200 square kilometres with numerous unforgettable impressions: wild-romantic valleys such as the Wimbach Valley with its enormous gravel streams and the Lake Funte, hiding in a depression in the alpine mountains. It is regarded as Germany's coldest place, regularly hitting the news in winter with extremely low temperature records. Many rustic alpine pasture cottages, only used for agriculture during the summer months, offer the hiker a place for rest on virtually every walk.

The alpine landscape of the Berchtesgaden National Park is characterised by an exceptional diversity of habitats: the now rare edelweiss grows on dry grasslands and difficult to access rock crevices. The white felt-like hair coat helps the plant during high sun exposure and wind to keep evaporation as low as possible.

There are also different kinds of gentian in the National Park: the stemless gentian with its blue, bell-shaped flowers can be found from the valleys

upwards into the alpine mats region. The roots of the spotted and the Hungarian gentian are used for schnapps production. The spring gentian with its radiating blue, star-shaped flowers is known as "Schusternagel" ("shoe maker's nail") amongst the locals. The sycamore maple can grow up to 600 years old and up to 40 meters (131 feet) high. Its bark is smooth, grey-yellow and often covered with ferns, mosses or lichens. It forms the natural mixed mountain woodland together with spruce, fir, larch and beech. Red deer and chamois live at the higher altitudes of the mountains. The cute marmots live in family groups and can be observed around the Jenner peak, the alpine pastures of "Gotzenalm" and "Wasseralm" and Lake Funte. The border between Germany and Austria around the Kahler peak and the Teufelshörner peak is inhabited by Germany's largest ibex population (approximately 200 animals).

These rare climbing artists are not hunted and are therefore not very shy in the presence of humans. However, those who want to get close to them have to pay with a lot of sweat: the climb to the areas where they live takes about three hours. More relaxing is the observation of golden eagles from the valleys. There are a total of four breeding pairs in the protected area. The National Park team currently offers all year round free guided walks in the "valley of the eagles".

One week in the National Park

Sunday: Walk through the impressive and roaring Wimbach gorge into the Wimbach valley with its mighty gravel streams.

Monday: Take the Jenner cable car. From the peak you have a wonderful view over Lake König and large parts of the National Park.

Tuesday: Take the “Alm-Erlebnisbus” (alpine pasture adventure bus) up the Klausbach valley up to the “Hirschbichel” pass. The gentle descend passes the Bindalm (alpine pasture) and the National Park Information Centre “Engert”, goes over the spectacular new swing bridge and ends with a visit at the National Park Information Point at Hintersee with its nature trail and nature exploration area.

Wednesday: Visit the official exhibition on the history of the Third Reich at the foot of the Obersalz Mountain. Optional extra: take the bus to the mountain restaurant “Kehlsteinhaus” – the former symbol of power of the Nazi-regime.

Thursday: Take a boat over Lake König accompanied by the world-famous echo. This will take you to the National Park Information Centre St. Bartholomä. Walk to the “Eiskapelle” (ice chapel – a small peak at 834 metres – 2,736 feet) at the foot of the East face of the Watzmann mountain.

Friday: Visit the “Haus der Berge” National Park Centre (“house of the mountains”) in Berchtesgaden and take a trip to the city of Salzburg, Austria.

Saturday: Extend your visit and start an alpine walk across the “Steinerne Meer” (“rocky ocean”) for several days.

One day in the National Park

In summer, the day starts with a walk to the alpine pastures “Königsbachalm” – always following the trail of the marmots. With binoculars visitors can observe the cute alpine inhabitants on sunny alpine pastures. Having a meal at one of the mountain huts rounds off the day. The National Park management has also something on offer for fans of the hairy Alpenrose, Edelweiss & Co: a guided walk led by one of the knowledgeable rangers will help those interested in plants to discover some of the botanical specialities of the only alpine National Park in Germany.

During the winter months, the National Park Information Centre “Hintersee” is well worth a visit. After visiting the alpine pasture exhibition you can walk or take a horse drawn sledge to visit the red deer feeding place. If you are lucky you can see about 50 red deer and their calves during the winter months.



General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: In the very south-eastern corner of Bavaria on the border with Austria

Area: 210 square kilometres

Height above sea level: : 603 metres or 1,978 feet (Lake König) – 2,713 metres or 8,900 feet (Watzmann)

Opened in: 1978

Habitat Types: broad-leaved, mixed mountain and conifer forests, mountain pine forests, alpine mats, rocky pastures, dwarf shrub vegetation, bogs, streams and lakes

Books and Maps

Im Augenblick der Zeitlosigkeit
Michael Vogel (text), Marika Hildebrandt (photos)
ISBN 978-3-940141-41-5

Die Pflanzenwelt des Nationalparks Berchtesgaden
ISBN 978-3-925647-33-3

Die Tierwelt des Nationalparks Berchtesgaden
ISBN 978-3-925647-42-2

Geologie der Berchtesgadener Berge
ISBN 978-3-925647-27-9

Berchtesgaden National Park
topographical map (1:25,000)
ISBN 978-3-937530-46-8

National Park Information

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Phone: +49 (0)8652 979060-0
hausderberge@npv-bgd.bayern.de
www.haus-der-berge.bayern.de

Accommodation

Berchtesgadener Land Tourismus GmbH
Phone: +49 (0)8652 65650-0, fax -99
www.berchtesgadener-land.com/en/home

Well worth a visit:
The “Haus der Berge”
National Park Centre
in Berchtesgaden
opened in 2013



How to get there

By Rail:

From Munich central station or Salzburg Airport via Freilassing. Berchtesgaden is at the end of the Munich to Berchtesgaden line. Continue your journey with a local bus (transport hub in front of railway station).

By Car:

Motorway (Autobahn) A 8 from Munich in direction: Salzburg, Exit Bad Reichenhall, Continue on the B 20 to Berchtesgaden.

Accessible visit

Berchtesgaden National Park offers activities especially for people with disabilities, e.g. accessible guided walks. In addition, some of the footpaths are suitable for wheelchair users. More information is available in the National Park Information Centre “Haus der Berge”, where you can also see the prize-winning exhibition “Vertical Wilderness”. The “Haus der Berge” centre is designed to be accessible throughout.

Vertical wilderness
in the Berchtesgaden
National Park: there is a
difference in altitude of
2,300 metres (7,546 feet)
between Lake König and
the Watzmann peak





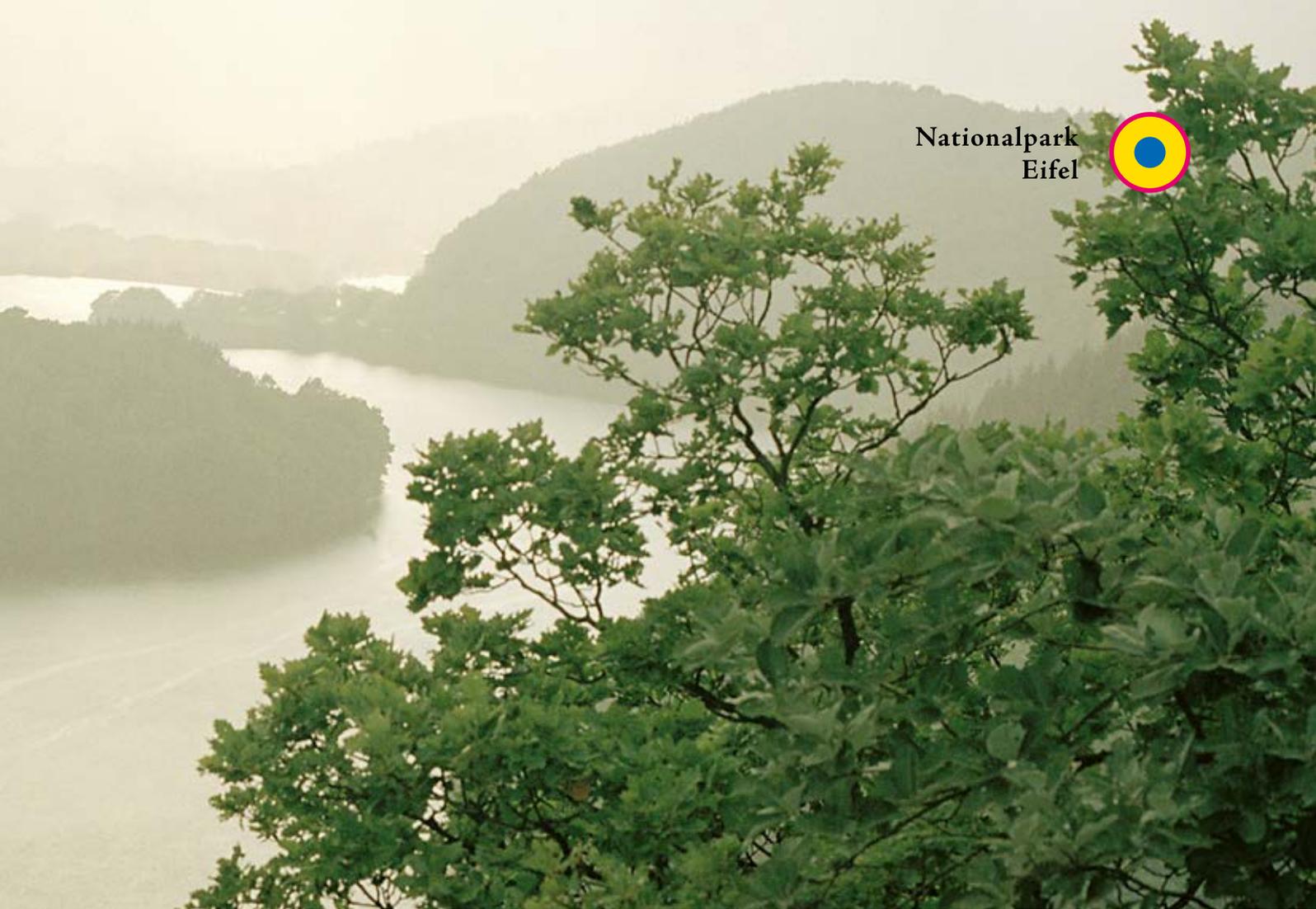
Eifel National Park

Fascinating wilderness
you can experience
in a landscape of
forests and water

The Eifel National Park offers the observer a diverse view of the landscape: steep valleys, large woodlands and clear streams are part of the picture, as you would find it in the landscape of a model railway. The Rivers Rur and Urft shape the landscape. Attractive views from the open grasslands of the Dreiborner high plain (“Vogelsang” former military areas) into the long distance impress as much as the wild daffodils that transform the meadows of the southern valleys into a sea of yellow flowers. Semi-natural beech and oak mixed woodlands enjoy a special level of protection. Wild cats quietly roam through these woodlands during dusk and dawn. Tracks in the snow tell of the presence of this shy and small “Eifel tiger”.

Diversity at day and night: in 2014 the Eifel National Park was awarded the Star Park status by the International Dark-Sky Association.

A large exhibition to experience and dream about wilderness awaits visitor in the newly opened “Vogelsang” National Park Centre (meaning “birdsong”). It is 2,000 square metres large, accessible and can be explored in multiple languages. The exhibition would like to introduce large and small visitors to the special concept, the international National Park philosophy, “let nature be nature”, to show the value of biological diversity.



Broad-leaved mixed woodlands grow on nutrient poor soil and are influenced by the Atlantic climate. They are protected in the Eifel National Park. Water courses run through these lower mountains like the highly branched network of veins through an organism. In the last thousands of years, the river Rur and its numerous tributaries have cut deeply into the undulating wooded tops of the hills, which are so characteristic for this landscape.

In addition to steep rocks, semi-natural broad-leaved woodlands and biodiverse meadows there are also large lakes in the protected landscape.

The area of the National Park used to be covered by a shallow ocean about 400 million years ago. This deposited large amounts of clay as sediment. During the carboniferous period – about 300 million years ago – these sediments were folded into the so-called “variscitic mountains” and pushed up. Due to the high pressure, clay was conformed into slate. Slate is now very common in the Eifel.

More than 8,700 types of plants and animals have been recorded by researchers. They are presented in a digital species list on the internet. Over 2,000 of these species are listed on the red list and are considered “endangered” or even as “threatened by extinction”. The most iconic inhabitant of the well-structured beech woodlands is the wild cat, also called the “Eifel Tiger”. There are about 50 individuals in the protected area. The National

Park has about 1,000 red deer, one of the largest populations in Europe. Beavers, eagle owls and freshwater pearl mussel as well as the extremely rare black stork call this place their home.

The popular viewing point “Hirschley” in the Kermeter region can be independently accessed by all guests to the National Park. The footpath network in the nature adventure area “Wild Kermeter” is completely accessible and can be accessed from the bus stop “Wilder Kermeter” or the car park. A short winding path with a low gradient takes you to the viewing point. There you will find a bronze model of the landscape of the National Park and the reservoirs. You can explore it just with your sense of touch.

To help all people to find their bearings, the network of footpaths has an accessible guidance and information system. There are plenty of benches, weather shelters and accessible toilets.

Since 2014, the accessible nature trail “Der Wilde Weg” (“the wild path”) – with ten interactive stations and a wooden board walk – has been open right next to the “Wild Kermeter”. Boat trips on the Rur reservoir are a very popular way to get a first impression of what the future National Park wilderness may look like. A ranger accompanies the boat trips every first and third Monday from April to October. In total, the rangers in the Eifel National Park offer eight different guided walks every week all year round. They are free to attend and you do not need to sign up in advance.



A true challenge: the wilderness trail allows you to experience all landscape types of the Eifel National Park over a distance of 85 km (53 miles); here at Lake Urft

One day in the National Park

Start your trip at one of the five Information Centres, the Gateways to the National Park with their thematic exhibitions. The Gateways are the starting point for many guided walks and woodland walks. Guided walks are also offered in Dutch and French and in German sign language. The National Park events diary offers family days, wilderness camps, trips by horse and carriage and much more. The Eifel National Park Centre at the forum "Vogelsang IP" opened in autumn 2016. Visit and experience the accessible exhibition "Wilderness Dreams" over 2,000 square metres. Go on an exciting journey on the trail in search of biological diversity and wilderness.

One week in the National Park

Saturday: Visit the National Park Gateway in the village of Simmerath-Ruhrberg. Have a boat or canoe trip on Lake Rur.

Sunday: Join a guided walk through the former Nazi "Ordensburg" castle at Vogelsang and visit the exhibition "Wilderness Dreams" in the Eifel National Park Centre. Round off the day with a free ranger tour or an accessible journey by horse and carriage to the abandoned village of "Wollseifen".

Monday: Visit the National Park Gateway in the village of Schleiden-Gemünd. Have a bicycle tour along Lake Urft to the historic dam wall and take a break at the bird watching station.

Tuesday: Visit the National Park Gateway and the Water Information Centre in Heimbach. Have a walk through natural beech woodland towards Mariawald Abbey.

Wednesday: Visit the Exhibition at the National Park Gateway Nideggen or Monschau-Höfen. Visit the historic town centres of those neighbouring towns.

Thursday: Explore the nature and history of the Eifel in the nature-experience village Nettersheim. The nature centre offers exhibitions and nature trails about the geological and ecological diversity of the region.

Friday: Take a walk on one of the marked themed routes. To experience the starry sky, join one of the evening events in the Astronomy Workshop "Stars without Borders" at the site of the observatory in Vogelsang, for example a star-gazing guided walk.

General Information

You can experience the shining night sky during a star-gazing guided walk at the Eifel National Park Star Park

Facts and Figures

Location: approximately one hour's drive from Cologne, Bonn or Aachen on the German-Belgian border

Area: 108 square kilometres

Opened in: 2004

Habitat Types: broad-leaved woodlands characterised by beeches and sessile oaks, gorge woodlands, open grasslands with rocks, quarries, bogs, heathland, valleys with floodplain woodland and wild daffodils

Books and Maps

Hiking map

Eifel National Park
Eifelverein ISBN 978-3-944620-02-2

Walking Guides (in German)

ThemenTouren Nationalpark Eifel
Volume 1: ISBN 978-3-7616-2068-7
Volume 2: ISBN 978-3-7616-2644-3

Der Wildnis-Trail im Nationalpark Eifel – 4 Tagesetappen zwischen 18 und 25 km
ISBN 978-3-7616-2465-4

National Park Information

Eifel National Park Administration
Urftseestraße 34
D-53937 Schleiden-Gemünd/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)2444 9510-0, fax -85
info@nationalpark-eifel.de
www.nationalpark-eifel.de/go/eifel/english.html

The first point of entry for visitors are the five National Park Gateways with exciting exhibitions and tourist information as well as the Eifel National Park Centre with the interactive exhibition "Wilderness Dreams".

Accommodation

You can find restaurants, hotels, B&B and other accommodation tailored towards the needs of visitors to the National Park at www.nationalpark-gastgeber.eu



How to get there

By Rail:

On the route from Cologne to Trier, exit at railway station Kall or use the Rur Valley Railway ("Rurtalbahn") from Düren to Heimbach. Continue your journey with a National Park shuttle bus or on other bus routes.

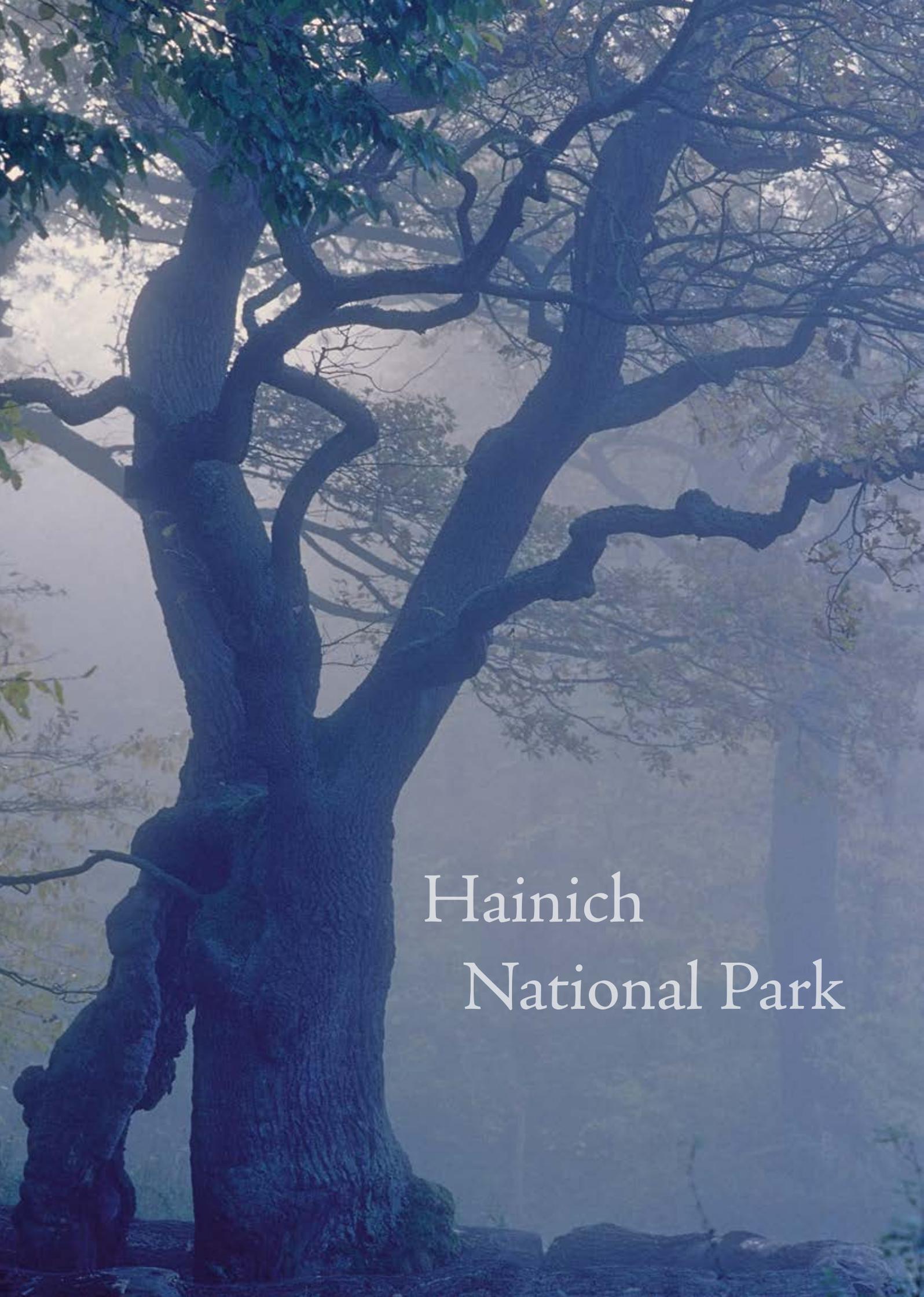
By Car:

Take the Motorway (Autobahn) A1 from Cologne (Exit: Euskirchen-Wißkirchen), the B258 from Aachen, the B56 and B265 from Düren or the A61 from Koblenz. Once within the region, signs will lead you to the National Park Gateways.

Accessible visit

You can experience and access the National Park whether you are disabled or not. There are guided walks in German sign language by rangers and other trained woodland guides. The nature adventure area "Wild Kermeter" is accessible throughout, as well as the nature trail "Wilderness Path" and the Information Centres. Horse drawn carriages and all accommodation will similarly welcome you if you have mobility issues.



A large, gnarled tree trunk is the central focus, set against a misty, blue-tinted forest background. The tree's bark is deeply textured and shows signs of age and weathering. The branches are thick and curve outwards, some ending in smaller, more delicate twigs. The overall atmosphere is serene and somewhat ethereal due to the fog and the monochromatic color palette.

Hainich
National Park



It takes quite some courage to step on one of the two suspension bridges. Once you have overcome the slightly uncomfortable feeling, you can sway your body to the rhythm of the beech trees, perfectly safe at a height of 25 metres (80 feet). The tree canopy path allows the probably most intense encounter with nature in the “native forest at the heart of Germany”. The extensive woodlands of the Hainich are located in the area between the towns of Eisenach, Mühlhausen and Bad Langensalza in Western Thuringia. It is the largest continuous broad-leaved woodland area in Germany. It is nearly free of conifers and there is no land use within the National Park boundary.

The habitat at the “top of the world” of the woodland is very diverse and will need more research. The tree canopy is difficult to reach for people and full of life: During your treetop walk you will meet the inhabitants of otherwise inaccessible habitats such as the middle spotted woodpecker or Bechstein’s bat. Rest zones invite you to stop and wonder. The visit to the path in the tree tops is a unique and exciting experience of nature, bringing nature, arts and science together at an adventurous height. Nature trails at the villages of Stillborn, Brunstal and Feensteg are also part of the accessible environmental education. These very popular paths are not traditional nature trails with lots of interpretation boards, but rather full of surprises and many experiences to explore.

The diversity of types of tree species is one of the hallmarks of the Hainich National Park. The Hainich is a woodland ridge with limestone as its underlying rock. The highest point is the “Alte Berg” (“old mountain”) with an altitude of nearly 500 metres (over 1,600 feet). Trees like beeches, ash, sycamores, lime and the rare checker tree with its small round red-brown fruits grow in this area.

The overall spectrum of different types of plants and animals is impressive. In the Hainich you can find wild cats, bats specialised to the woodland habitat and different types of woodpeckers. Much more inconspicuous are the 650 types of fungi recorded in the area so far. More than 200 of these are on the red list in Germany. Scientists have so far found 223 types of moss and 234 types of lichen.

The woodlands are particularly colourful in spring and autumn. The forest floor is covered with the glorious colours of spring flowers and the tree diversity is reflected in a broad range of colours in the autumn.

According to the principle of German National Parks to “let nature be nature”, 94 % of the area of the National Park is already without any land use. Highly natural beech woodlands were recognised as a world heritage site by UNESCO in 2011 as part of the global convention on natural heritage. The Hainich National Park is an extension of the World Heritage Site “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany” created in 2007). It is one of the most valuable beech woodlands among the five German protected sites.



In spring the beech woodlands are covered in a carpet of flowers, such as the holewort

One day in the National Park

Visit the National Park Centre at Thiemsburg near Bad Langensalza in the morning. The Exhibition “Discover the secrets of the Hainich” invites you to discover and understand the National Park from different perspectives. This includes a tree root cave and meeting wild cats, millipedes and a badger.

The tree top walk takes you to the canopy of the beech woodland. The path is 500 metres (1,640 feet) long and views of woodpeckers and Bechstein bats are inclusive. From Thiemsburg you can start a walk over the Steinberg path (10 km or 6 miles) or the nature trail (4 km or 2.5 miles).

One week in the National Park

Monday: Start with the National Park Centre at Thiemsburg. Explore the tree top walk or the Steinberg Path.

Tuesday: The “Wild Cat” Path between Bad Langensalza and Eisenach starts at the car park Hütscheroda. Afterwards visit Eisenach, home to Martin Luther and Johann Sebastian Bach, and the local Wartburg Castle World Heritage Site.

Wednesday: Visit the natural history museum in the federal capital Erfurt or Friedenstern Palace in the once royal city of Gotha.

Thursday: Visit the National Park Information Centre “Am Harsberg” near the town of Lauterbach. Walk past the tree houses at the youth hostel and its “jungle life camp” and stroll across the tops of the mountains.

Friday: Today’s walk on the nature trail starts at the fox farm near Mülverstedt. It offers a special experience also for those visually impaired or with mobility issues. Spend the afternoon in Mühlhausen, the town with the many towers, and the cloister Volkenroda and its Christ Pavilion.

Saturday: Start your day with a canoe trip from Mihla on the river Werra. Then take a bike tour in the Werra Valley in the Nature Park Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal.

Sunday: The last day starts with a visit to the National Park Information Centre at Kammerforst and ends with a nice walk from the car park “Zollgarten” along the “Beggar’s Oak” Path.

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: In the West of Thuringia, in the triangle of the towns Eisenach, Mühlhausen and Bad Langensalza

Area: 75 square kilometres

Height above sea level:
220 to 500 metres (722 – 1,540 feet)

Opened in: 1997

Habitat Types: beech mixed forest rich in species and structure with a high proportion of dead-wood; large reforestation areas

Books and Maps

*Leisure Map Hainich National Park
plus adventure trails*
ISBN 3-932071-05-0

Nationalpark Hainich. Weltnaturerbe
ISBN 978-3-942062-14-5

The tree top path – you
can be on top of the
ancient forest



National Park Information

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D-99947 Bad Langensalza/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)361 5739140-00, fax -20
nationalpark.hainich@nnl.thueringen.de
www.nationalpark-hainich.de

National Park Centre and Tree Top Walk
Phone: +49 (0)3603 892464

Accommodation

World heritage region Wartburg Hainich
Phone: +49(0)36022 980836, fax 980837
info@welterbe-wartburg-hainich.de
www.kultur-liebt-natur.de/en

How to get there

By Rail:
Stations Eisenach, Bad Langensalza and Mühlhausen; take local bus services for further connections.

By Car:
Motorway (Autobahn) A 4 take Exit "Eisenach Ost", continue on the B 84 to Bad Langensalza and Mihla or take A 4 exit "Gotha" and continue via B 247 to Bad Langensalza.

Accessible visit

The nature adventure trail Brunstal in the National Park has been designed with wheelchair users in mind. Blind and visually impaired people will be directed by a guide system from station to station. All information is available in Braille. More information is available from the National Park Information Centre.





Harz National Park



It is a hostile place. For over 300 days a year the Brocken summit is covered in fog. The average annual temperature is 4 degree Celsius. Storms at speeds of up to 200 km/h (124 miles per hour) move over it. "Nordic" vegetation keeps low among the granite rocks. But sometimes it is also a place of magic. It sets the scene for Walpurgis Night or nearly surreal impressions: everyone knows the pictures of the curious bent-over snow hats, that glitter in the white winter landscape.

The Brocken summit is the most northern part of the German low mountain ranges. With its 1,141 metres (3,743 feet) it is the highest elevation in the Harz National Park and stands tall throughout the year and against the storms. The climate is rough – comparable with alpine areas above 2,000 metres (approx. 6,600 feet) above sea level. The Brocken summit is the highest point in Northern Germany and the highlight of every excursion into the National Park. You can climb it via a number of paths from the villages of Schierke and Torfhaus or the towns of Bad Harzburg and Ilsenburg. Or you can take the narrow gauge railway.

The exhibition on the Brocken summit right next to the restaurant and the broadcasting transmitter offers deep insight and views into the far distance. The Brocken botanical garden was founded in 1890. It displays more than 1,500 alpine plants from all around the world. The legendary Brocken summit is part of a harsh and romantic landscape, characterised by its mountain chains, high level plateaus, cliffs, valleys and gorges. You can find all altitude levels on a very small scale, from the lower hills up to the Brocken summit, the only peak in the Central Northern Mountains with a naturally occurring tree line. Each altitude level offers characteristic conditions for a diverse flora and fauna. The mountain spruce dominates at higher altitudes. This is where you find rocks, piles of boulders and bogs, clear mountain streams with an abundance of voles and dippers on its banks. The black stork lives in lower lying beech woodlands. This is also where the wild cat goes hunting. The gorge woodlands are too wet for beech trees. Mountain ash, the wych elm and sycamore cast their shadows over or diverse ground flora, where alpine sow-thistle and honesty grow. The mixed beech and spruce woodland is the domain of the rare boreal owl, which

lives in abandoned tree nests. Red deer and roe deer need to be watchful because of an ancient enemy: the lynx has returned to the Harz. This large wild cat has its own refuge areas.

The bogs of the Harz are up to 7 metres (20 feet) thick. They have been more or less preserved in their original state. Peat cutting proved not to be very profitable here. The creation of bogs is a consequence of the rough climate: cold and wet conditions and impermeable subsoil created wet areas after the last ice age. Growth of mosses was possible, because dead plants only partially decayed. Decaying peat moss (sphagnum ssp.) has been the main contributor to the slowly growing mighty layers of peat bogs with the highest point at the centre indicating the presence of a raised bog, where hare's tail cotton grass grows. The Harz National Park is one of the largest areas of protected woodland in Germany. Targeted but very careful interventions help to convert the remaining cultivated forests back to a natural woodland. The target is that by 2022, at least 75 per cent of the National Park area will be left to its own devices.

The damage caused by bark beetles in the spruce monocultures cannot be missed. The diversity of life that is now growing from the deadwood without any intervention of humans is clearly visible. The Bark Beetle Path near the town of Ilsenburg with its information station helps the visitor to understand why the "catastrophe" is also an opportunity. Other exciting nature trails await naturalists and discoverers, for example the Dandelion Discovery Trail in the village of Drei Annen Hohne or the Ancient Woodland Trail, a little detour into the native ancient Brocken woodland on the way to the Brocken summit. You can discover the mythical connections between humans and nature on the Mythical Nature Trail near the town of Braunlage.



Success – the reintroduction of the lynx into the Harz

One day in the National Park

Follow in the footsteps of the German writer Goethe on the way to the Brocken summit. This is the magical mountain of Germany. The walk from the village of Torfhaus takes about two hours. Start by getting some information on the walk in the National Park Visitor Centre Torfhaus. Walk along the bogs and natural spruce woodlands. The Brocken summit offers an extensive and modern exhibition about the National Park. A guided walk with one of the National Park rangers on the Brocken circular trail will open your eyes to new impressions and views. The neighbouring botanical garden shows over 1,500 alpine plants from all around the world. The flowering season is from mid-May to Mid-October. During this time there are daily guided tours through the botanical garden.

One week in the National Park

Monday: Discover your relationship to the wolf or listen to the nymphs in the streams on the Mythical Nature Trail near Braunlage.

Tuesday: A National Park ranger will accompany you from the Ilsental National Park Centre on “A walk following in the steps of Goethe and Heine”.

Wednesday: family programme: Explore the Dandelion Discovery Trail in Drei-Annen-Hohne. This is followed by some research and craft activities with the rangers at the Hohne Nature Discovery Farm.

Thursday: Experience pure nature on a cliff top walk on the Hohne mountain ridge to the Leisten cliffs.

Friday: Art Exhibition “Nature – Human Being” in Sankt Andreasberg (only in the autumn). Go on a guided bat walk in the evening.

Saturday: Visit the Lynx Information Centre in “Haus der Natur” (nature house) in Bad Harzburg. After that join a public feeding event of the Lynx in the Lynx enclosures near the Raven cliff

Sunday: Walk with the National Park ranger through the area around Torfhaus and make a “Tour of the seven bogs”.

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: The central part of the Harz in the federal states of Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, south of the City of Braunschweig and north east of the City of Hildesheim

Area: 247 square kilometres

Height above sea level: 230 to 1,141 metres (Brocken) (755 to 3,743 feet)

Opened in: 1990 (Saxony-Anhalt) and 1994 (Lower Saxony) respectively, fusion in 2006

Habitat Types: spruce mountain woodland, mixed mountain woodland, beech woodland, sub-alpine dwarf shrubs, bogs, streams and rock habitats

Books and Maps

You will find a large selection of books and maps in the National Park Information Centres. There is currently one publication in English available for online download: *Legendary Mountain Wilderness – Basic Information about Harz National Park*. Available at www.nationalpark-harz.de/en/downloads/. More information is available for download in German.

National Park Information

Harz National Park Authority
Lindenallee 35
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Phone: +49 (0)3943 5502-0, fax -37
poststelle@nationalpark-harz.de
www.nationalpark-harz.de/en/start

Brockenhaus
Phone: +49 (0)39455 5000-5, fax -6

“TorfHaus” National Park Visitor Centre
Phone: +49 (0)5320 33179-0, fax-19

Sankt Andreasberg National Park Centre
Phone: +49 (0)5582 9230-74, fax -71

Haus der Natur, Bad Harzburg
Phone: +49 (0)5322 7843-37, fax -39

Accommodation

Harz Tourism Centre
Phone: +49 (0)5321 3404-0, fax -66
info@harzinfo.de, www.harzinfo.de

Holiday with one of the National Park Partners
www.nationalpark-harz-partner.de

On a day out with
one of the National
Park rangers



How to get there

By Rail:

From the North via Hanover or Braunschweig to Wernigerode or Bad Harzburg. From the South to Herzberg or Bad Lauterberg. Continue your journey by bus (more information at www.fahrtziel-natur.de) or with a small gauge steam train (more information at www.hsb-wr.de/en/start/)

By Car:

Access via the B 6 (Goslar – Bad Harzburg – Wernigerode), B 81 (Halberstadt – Wernigerode), B 27/B 243 (Osterode – Herzberg – Bad Lauterberg – Braunlage) or B 4/B 242 (Braunlage).

Accessible visit

The journey with the narrow gauge steam train up to the Brocken summit and the visit to the Brocken Visitor Centre and the accessible footpath near the settlement of Torfhaus with views of the Brocken are all part of the easy access offer of the National Park. More information is available from the National Park Authority, the visitor centres or at www.nationalpark-harz.de

Nationalpark
Harz



A scenic view of a forested valley from a rocky outcrop. The foreground is filled with a pile of reddish-brown rocks. The middle ground is a dense forest of green trees, with a darker forest visible in the distance. The top of the image is framed by the branches and leaves of a tree in the foreground.

Hunsrück-Hochwald National Park



It is the diversity that makes this area so exciting. The interplay between nature with its large continuous woodland, and its culture, for example in the wine growing region, the many historic cities, but also the world-famous diamond region around the town of Idar-Oberstein. Well known destinations such as the River Mosel or the River Nahe region are right next to the Hunsrück-Hochwald National Park. World heritage cities such as Trier and Völklingen are just 45 minutes away: this place is natural – with a history.

The Hunsrück-Hochwald National Park is located in the western Hunsrück mountains. It is approximately 10,200 hectares in size and stretches as one continuous area across the higher regions of the Hunsrück mountains. The federal states of Saar and Rhineland-Palatinate jointly created it in spring 2015. The highest German mountain west of the Rhine, the Eberskopf, is the highest point of the National Park at 816 metres (2,677 feet). It is a sparsely populated area with a cool and wet climate at the high altitudes. The natural beech woodlands make up about half of the wooded area. The nutrient poor soils are characterised by quartzite. They alternate with rock formations, boulders, rocks and rubble, and - depending on the lie of the land - with small-scale bogs, locally known as “Hangbrüchern” (slope bogs). These special locations make up about 20 % of the area of the National Park. They are difficult to find in any wooded area in Germany with the above characteristics and features. Woodland and water are the essential factors. The National Park has a watershed in three directions. Some water flows off to the North into the River Mosel, some to the South into the River Lohe and some to the West into the River Saar. The transition from the higher areas to the warm and dry location at the river Mosel – known for its vineyards – happens over a very short distance.

This area has always been a refuge for nature. It is one of the few biodiversity hot spot areas in Germany, as described by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. At the same time, the area is characterised by its cultural and historic highlights: many Celtic and Roman forts can be found in the National Park region. They invite you to take a trip back in history. You can only imagine, how full of tension the past was, from the Wildenburg, the highest altitude Middle Ages castle of the Hunsrück mountains to the Celtic settlement right next to it and the ring wall near Otzenhausen. The foundations of the iron industry in the Saar state were laid in this area. The first professional ironworks and hammer mills were located in the higher altitude woodlands. Famous steel dynasties were founded here. Still today, many old charcoal kilns can be found.



The Celtic ring wall near Otzenhausen is a must-see

One day in the National Park

Go to a place that is still mostly unknown, even amongst the people living in this region: the so-called Vorkastell. It is one of the large south-west facing slopes in the Rossel area. You will have a fantastic view far into the state of Saar. All around you, all you can see are woodlands located in the National Park. Early in the day, the first rays of sunshine will warm the quartzite rocks, creating a hot air thermodynamic used by many birds. A “lounger for all senses” invites you to stay to relax and to dream.

Start the three-hour walk either from the settlement of Börfink, in the Parish of Abentheuer or in Buhlenberg. The 12 kilometre (7 mile) long walk leads you through large and old woodlands – also along a very long established ancient natural woodland reserve – and through rocky fields.

You can find a lovely restaurant in Börfink, the small village located right in the middle of the National Park. More information at www.wanderinstitut.de/premiumwege/rheinland-pfalz/trauntal-hoehenweg/

One week in the National Park

Saturday: climb to the top of the tower in the village of Wildenburg near Kempfeld. Take a walk through rocks and woodlands on the Saar-Hunsrück path.

Sunday: Walk from the Allen stream to the peak of Ringskopf and the natural rock formation “Kirschweil Castle”. Walk in the footsteps of the Celts in the magical woodlands.

Monday: Climb the Eberskopf, the highest mountain of Rhineland-Palatinate, with amazing views. Visit the Hunsrück Information Centre. To round off the day, enjoy the nature and culture of the river Mosel and have a glass of wine.

Tuesday: Trip to the world of diamonds: visit the historic “Weiherschleife” and mount Steinkaulen, the only diamond visitor mine in Europe.

Wednesday: The “Traumschleife” “Oxen tour at Börfink” takes you into the world of bogs and woodlands.

Thursday: Walk into the kingdom of the Celts at the “Dollbergschleife” towards the ringed wall near Otzenhausen. Time permitting visit the “hammer at Züsch”. This hammer mill is an industrial museum, where you can see the works in operation.

Friday: Walk from the village of Kirschweiler towards Hattgenstein. The viewing tower opens fantastic views far into the North-palatine mountain ranges.

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: Western part of the Hunsrück mountains on the border between the federal states of Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate

Area: 102 square kilometres

Height above sea level: approximately 380 to 816 metres (1,247 – 2,677 feet)

Opened in: 2015

Habitat Types: ridge location of the German low mountain ranges, large continuous woodlands; cultural landscapes with grassland on the edges of the National Park

Books and Maps

Hunsrück-Hochwald National Park map
1:40,000, 1st edition 2015. Published by Hunsrück-Hochwald National Park Authority

*Nationalpark Hunsrück-Hochwald:
Im Kleinen das Große entdecken – Fotografischer
Streifzug mit einem Nationalparkförster*
Konrad Funk, Verlag TiPP 4 GmbH
ISBN 978-3-94396914-6
Illustrated book with 335 photos

National Park Information

Hunsrück-Hochwald National Park Authority
Brückener Straße 24
D-55765 Birkenfeld/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)6131 884152-0, fax -999
poststelle@nlphh.de
www.nationalpark-hunsrueck-hochwald.de/en

Accommodation

www.gastlandschaften.de/
nationalpark-hunsrueck-hochwald/

Hunsrück Tourist Information
info@hunsruecktouristik.de, Phone: +49 (0)6543
507700

Naheland Tourist Information
info@naheland.net, Phone: +49 (0)6752 137610

Tourist Information Birkenfeld
info@birkenfelder-land.de, Phone: +49 (0)6782
983457-0

Tourist Information Hermeskeil
info@hermeskeil.de, Phone: +49 (0)6503 9535-0

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info@edelsteinstrasse.de
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Tourist Information Idar-Oberstein
touristinfo@idar-oberstein.de
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info@nohfelden.de
Phone: +49 (0) 6852 885-0

Tourist Information Nonnweiler
tourist@nonnweiler.de
Phone: +49 (0) 6873 660-76

Tourist Information Rhaunen
info@vg-rhaunen.de
Phone: +49 (0) 6544 181-30

How to get there

By Rail:
Frankfurt/Mainz – Saarbrücken.
Railway stations Idar-Oberstein, Neubrücke,
Türkismühle

By Car:
Motorway (Autobahn) from the North from the
Trier A 1 to exit “Hermeskeil” or “Nonnweiler/
Otzenhausen”. From the South West A 1 to exit
“Nonnweiler/Otzenhausen”, from the South A 62
to exit “Birkenfeld”

Accessible visit

“Island tour“ (guided walk led by ranger): 1st
April to 31st October. Tuesdays, 2 pm. Wood-
lands, bogs and water, Rodung Island with villag-
es, Arnika meadows and pastures. Ranger meeting
point at Lake Tranenweier. Duration 1-2 hours.
Primarily flat paths. Suitable for wheelchairs and
prams or pushchairs.





Jasmund
National Park



Green beech woods, white chalk cliffs and the blue sea – The Jasmund peninsula on the island of Rügen is one of the famous character landscapes of Germany. Caspar David Friedrich's painting of the chalk cliff is one of the iconic paintings of the German Romanticism. It still dominates our perception of the coastline of Rügen. The old beech woodlands at the heart of the park are part of the UNESCO world heritage site.

The shining white rocks are made from 70 million year old chalk. Nature has built them up from the tiny skeletons of countless single cellular creatures, left behind by the ocean from the Cretaceous period. The highest and most prominent point of the chalk coast is the "Königsstuhl" (king's seat), towering 118 metres (387 feet) above the beach below. At its foot the surf of the Baltic Sea makes the flint stones crackle. This is where rival successors to the throne stood face to face during the time of the Teutons. With a knife as their only weapon, they had to climb the cliff. Whoever managed to do that was crowned king.

The coastal cliff top path between the villages of Sassnitz and Lohme offers surprising views time after time. From the King's Seat a path leads through the shaded woodlands, with veteran trees commanding respect, and deeply cut valleys to the quiet and mystical lake called "Herthasee". Since the creation of the National Park in 1991 nature has gradually formed a picture of original wilderness in this place.

Jasmund is the smallest of the National Parks in Germany. The chalk cliffs were not the only reason why it was designated. The National Park protects the largest continuous beech woodland area on the Baltic coast with its amazing diversity of different habitats on a very small scale. More than 100 bogs, lakes and natural springs and streams are framed by respectable beech woodlands. The shallow water areas of the Baltic Sea in front of the chalk cliffs are home to a diverse marine environment.

The beech woods of the Jasmund are the youngest and most northern of the five ancient beech woodlands to which UNESCO awarded world heritage site status in 2011. Together with the primeval beech woodlands of Carpathia they tell the globally unique story, how one tree species spread across vast parts of a continent, from mountains to the sea across rich and poor soils. The cycle of becoming and dying can happen completely undisturbed in these ancient beech woodlands. They only remain in small remnants, usually in protected areas. The UNESCO delegation honoured the protection of these refuges by awarding it world heritage site status.



Bogs in the Stubnitz area have always been considered romantic and stimulate your imagination

One day in the National Park

A walk along the chalk cliffs is an unforgettable experience, especially when done first thing in the morning at sunrise. Take the coastal cliff top path from Sassnitz up to the King's Seat towering at 118 metres (387 feet). A visit to the National Park Centre will give you a special insight into the National Park – a great experience for young and old alike.. Before you go back to Sassnitz by bus, it is worth making a little detour to the mystical Lake Hertha. For those who enjoy walking, walk back on the cliff top path to Sassnitz through shaded beech woodlands and with ever changing spectacular views of the chalk coast and the Baltic Sea.

One week in the National Park

Saturday: Take quarters in one of the B&B in Sassnitz. Many of these are in the architectural style "Bäderarchitektur" and with views of the Baltic Sea. Freshly caught fish for tea.

Sunday: Start a guided walk with a National Park ranger from the bus terminus at "Wedding" towards the panorama views of the chalk cliffs.

Monday: Walk starting at sunrise from Sassnitz via the cliff top walk towards the King's Seat and back. At lunchtime guided walk with National Park ranger from bus stop "Königsstuhl" into the world heritage site and experience the wild woodland on the coast. Walk back or take the bus.

Tuesday: Take the steamer along the coast to the King's Seat and back with a diverse range of information about Jasmund and Rügen. Followed by a proper fish dish meal in one of the harbour pubs in Sassnitz and a stroll through the old town.

Wednesday: Cycle tour to explore the Jasmund peninsula. Visit the chalk museum in the village of Gummanz and enjoy the views from the temple mountain "Bobbin" across vast parts of Rügen.

Thursday: Walk with the rangers from the car park "Hagen" to the King's Seat. Visit the King's Seat National Park Centre and immerse yourself into the secrets of the National Park.

Friday: Just you enjoying the sunrise at the chalk coast.

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location The Jasmund peninsula is located on the Baltic Sea island of Rügen in the very North East of Germany

Area: 30 square kilometres

Height above sea level: –10 to +161 metres (–32 to +528 feet; highest elevation is the Piek mountain)

Opened in: 1990

Habitat Types: chalk rocks, shingle and rubble beach, shallow waters of the Baltic Sea, beech woodlands, lakes, bogs, streams

Books and Maps

Jürgen Reich
Nationalpark Jasmund
Hommage an die Kreideküste
Tecklenborg Verlag
ISBN 978-3-944327-16-7

Cycling and Walking map Rügen – Hiddensee
1:50,000
published by Klemmer
ISBN 978-3-940175-03-8

National Park Information

National Park Administration Pomerania
Im Forst 5
D-18375 Born/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)38234 502-0, fax -24
poststelle@npa-vp.mvnet.de
www.nationalpark-jasmund.de

Sassnitz Office Jasmund National Park
Stubbenkammer 2 a
D-18546 Sassnitz/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)38392 350-11, fax -54

“Königsstuhl” National Park Centre
Phone: +49 (0)38392 6617-0, fax -40
info@koenigsstuhl.com
www.koenigsstuhl.com/en

Accommodation

Tourism Centre Rügen
Phone: +49(0)3838 80770, fax 254440
info@ruegen.de
www.ruegen.de

Bogs have become rare habitats important for specialised plants and animals.



How to get there

By Rail:

Via the city of Stralsund and Bergen to Sassnitz, continue by bus to the village of Stubbenkammer

By Car:

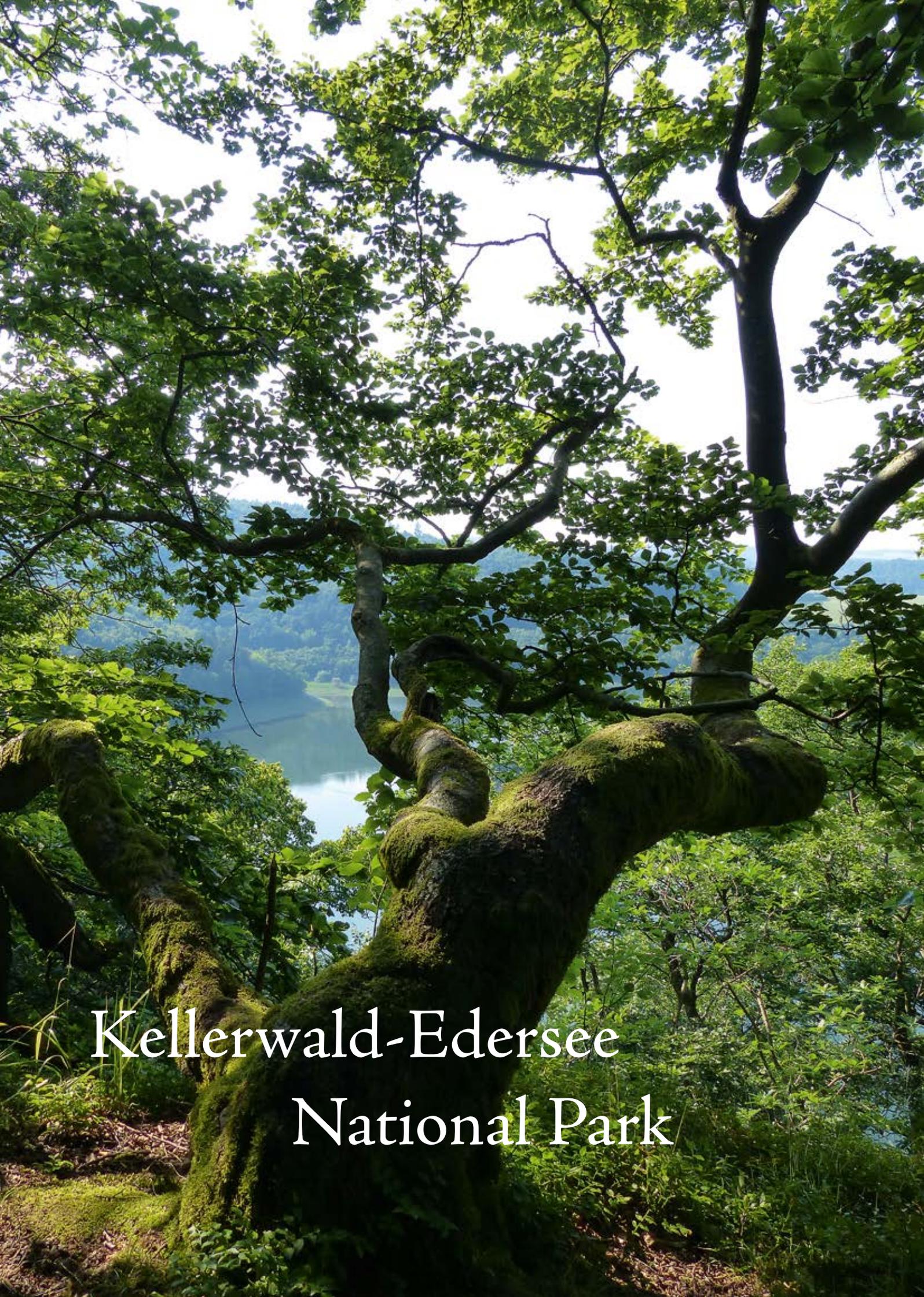
Take the motorway (Autobahn) A 20 exit “Stralsund”, continue the B 96 from Stralsund via Bergen to Sassnitz. Shuttle bus from the car park at Hagen to the King’s Seat

Accessible visit

The “Königsstuhl” National Park Centre as well as all attractions outside are suitable for wheelchairs. (The only exception is the steep walk down to the beach to admire the King’s Seat). The shuttle bus is also suitable for wheelchair users.

Nationalpark
Jasmund





Kellerwald-Edersee
National Park



Kellerwald-Edersee National Park is the only National Park in Hesse. It protects one of the last large natural beech forests in Central Europe. Its treasures include ancient woodland relics, over 1,000 pure springs and natural streams, rocky grassland and fields strewn with large chunks of rocks, forming some valuable habitats. Over 50 mountains and valleys give this German low mountain range its character. From a birds eye view they remind one of a waving sea of beeches. Ancient gnarled beeches, their roots deeply covered in moss, bizarre rocks and clear springs accompany the foot and cycle paths. Through the canopy of the trees view the blue of Lake Eder or the lake Eder "Atlantis" with its palette of brown and green shades. Since 2011, selected parts of the large protected area have belonged to the transnational UNESCO World Heritage Site "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany".

The beech woodlands, with greater wood-rush covering the ground, are something very special. They are characterised by nutrient poor soils and an above average proportion with remains of primeval forests. Keller Forest is characterised by its beech woodland on acid soil on underlying slate and greywacke rock. On steep slopes and in fields strewn with big blocks of rocks and rubble the beech forms bizarre tree figures, so close to its natural tree line. Special treasures are the remains of primeval forest near the Ringel mountain, the Wog cave or the Hagenstein mountain. 18 of 22 bat species present in Hesse, six out of ten central European types of woodpeckers, 14 indicators of primeval forest such as the violet click beetle or the coral tooth fungus prove the diversity of these ancient woodlands. The wild cat calls this place its home, as well as the black stork and the European eagle owl, who have returned into these quiet woodlands. Red and black kite circle above the tops of the trees. The flatworm *Crenobia alpina* and the freshwater snail *Bythinella dunkeri* live in ecologically intact springs – they are indicators of excellent water quality. In total, there are 635 types of plants in the National Park. They include rarities such as the white wood-rush and St. Bernard's lily. In addition to beeches, visitors will find mountain ash, oaks, lime, sycamore and occasionally some conifers. So far 1,108 types of fungi, 340 types of moss and 322 types of lichen as well as 53 types of mammals have been recorded. The red deer is undoubtedly the iconic species of the woodlands of northern Hesse and the largest mammal in the Keller woodland. Other inhabitants include roe deer, wild boars, badgers, foxes, racoons and the hazel dormouse.

The Keller Woodland National Park Centre, the wild animal park Lake Eder with the Information Centre "Buche" (beech) as well as in the future the Keller Woodland Clock ("Kellerwalduhr") allow visitors to get information about the flora and fauna of the National Park in an exciting and eventful way. They are also excellent starting points for excursions into the nearby protected site. In total, there are 19 sign-posted circular bike trails. They can be combined to longer bike tours, of course. A memorable activity experiencing nature is the 70 kilometre (43 miles) long primeval forest path around Lake Eder. Walkers can immerse themselves into the world of goblins and gnomes on windy paths past bizarre tree figures. Cyclists as well can get right up close with the wilderness of tomorrow on several regional and long-distance cycle paths. If you do not want to discover the National Park on your own, you can join one of the guided walks offered weekly by the rangers. Special days at the education centres as well as the annual National Park festival round off the offer. The National Park Partners are a good place to eat, sleep or feel well. Some of our partners are also "MeineCardPlus" hosts and present a special visitor card to guests on the first day of arrival. The "MeineCardPlus" gives you access to 90 leisure venues during your stay, including the National Park Centre and the Wild Animal Park, as well as tickets for bus and rail within the travel zone of North Hesse. All of this free of charge



The Kellerwald-Edersee National Park can be explored on numerous and beautiful routes, for example the Primeval Forest Trail around Lake Eder

One day in the National Park

From the railway station at Vöhl-Herzhausen it is not far to the “Kellerwald” National Park Centre. The multi-media experience exhibition encourages you to discover the empire of the primeval beeches. Equipped with a rucksack, and sufficient food and drink you start the 13 kilometre (8 miles) track. The Hagenstein trail continues into the mount Ringel trail, the official world heritage trail. The path passes gnarled oak and beech woodland and spectacular views into the Eder valley towards the World Heritage Site. It presents itself in many facets from dome-like beech woods with mighty trunks on higher grounds to the enchanted and droll tree figures up the rocky slopes and in the gorges.

One week in the National Park

Monday: Visit the “Kellerwald” National Park Centre, including the 4D-all-senses cinema. Followed by discovery tour into the empire of the rustic beech trees (Hagenstein and Ringel mountain trail)

Tuesday: Tour on the Lake Eder cycle path with romantic views of Lake Eder and the rustic woodlands. During the season, many buses have bicycle racks (route 510 & 550).

Wednesday: Visit to the water fountains in the nearby mountain park Wilhelmshöhe on the outskirts of the city of Kassel (UNESCO World Heritage Site) or GRIMMWELT (exhibition about the Brothers Grimm).

Thursday: Walk in the National Park, for example from the village of Frankenau on the Quern path to the Quern chapel, further on to the World Heritage Site in Ruhlauber and via the “Dreiherrnstein” trail back to where you started.

Friday: Visit wolf, lynx, wild cat and European bison in the wild animal park at Lake Eder. Followed by a tree top walk high above the treetops.

Saturday: Relaxing boat trip on Lake Eder (March to October) with a visit to the reservoir dam.

Sunday: Walk in the National Park, for example on the Bloßenberg trail near Bringhausen. In the early summer the rare Cheddar pink. You can enjoy the ten country-art objects of the Warzenbeiß arts trail all year long.

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: North Hesse, South of Lake Eder

Area: 57 square kilometres

Height above sea level: 200 to 626 metres
(656 – 2054 feet)

Opened in: 2004

Habitat Types: beech woodland on acid soil with greater wood-rush, woodlands with precious wood type, slope woodlands, dry oak woodland

Books and Maps

Cycle and walking map Kellerwald-Edersee

Scale 1:35,000, KKV

Available from regional Information Centres

Urwaldsteig Edersee – Wanderführer

Edersee Touristik GmbH (Hrsg.), 2008,
cognitio Verlag

National Park Information

Kellerwald-Edersee National Park

Laustraße 8, D-34537 Bad Wildungen/Germany

Phone: +49(0)5621 75249-0, fax -19

info@nationalpark.hessen.de

www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de/en.home

www.weltnaturerbe-buchenwaelder.de/en.htm

www.nationalparkzentrum-kellerwald.de

www.wildtierpark-edersee.eu

www.buchenhaus.eu

Accommodation

Holiday with National Park Partners

www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de/en/

holiday/guestofourpartners/

Tourist Service

www.waldecker-land.de

www.edersee.com

How to get there

Mit Bus und Bahn:

Take the bus or train to Bad Wildungen, Korbach or Frankenberg. More busses run from there to the parishes in the National Park, the “Buche” Information Centre, the wild animal park or the National Park Centre.

Every week guided
tours with the
National Park rangers
are on offer



The bus connections in the North Hesse travel zone are complemented by the regional bus operator BKW. There are also comfortable taxi shuttle services available.

By Car:

From the North West: Exit the Motorway (Au-

tobahn) A 44 at “Diemelstadt”. From the North:

Follow A 49 to Marburg, use exit “Fritzlar”,

From the East or South: exit A 7 at “Homberg

(Efze)”. You can find a route planner at [https://](https://www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de/en/aboutus/directions/carrouteplanner/)

[www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de/en/](https://www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de/en/aboutus/directions/carrouteplanner/)

[aboutus/directions/carrouteplanner/](https://www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de/en/aboutus/directions/carrouteplanner/)

Accessible visit

All National Park facilities are accessible for wheelchair users and for families with prams or buggies. A free mobility scooter is on hire at the wild animal park Edersee as well as the Kellerwald National Park Centre. The whole of the Hagenstein trail can be accessed by mobility scooter and allows less mobile people to experience the National Park close up.

Nationalpark
Kellerwald-Edersee



A scenic view of a lake in Müritz National Park, Germany. The foreground is dominated by a dense field of lily pads floating on the water. In the background, a forested shoreline is visible under a clear blue sky. The text "Müritz National Park" is overlaid on the image in a white serif font.

Müritz
National Park



The viewing platform at the top of the 55 metre (180 feet) high tower at Käfling mountain near the small village of Speck offers fantastic 360 degree views.

The three lakes at Speck are right to your feet. On a clear day you can see as far as Müritz. This highest point of the National Park presents the play of nature in all its beauty and all its perfect ways.

The Müritz National Park hosts 107 bodies of water larger than 1 hectare. The River Havel has its spring in this area and its upper course reminds us of pearls on a string. Springs within the Müritz National Park are often entire lakes of boggy places where groundwater comes to the surface – as is the case with the spring of the River Havel. The water in the moor lakes and small woodland ponds is often brown due to the high content of humic substances.

Müritz National Park is part of the Pomerania Lake District. With only 55 inhabitants per square kilometre it is extremely sparsely populated. A ten kilometre (6 mile) long and 500 metre (1,640 feet) wide strip on the eastern shores of Müritz is part of the protected area. There are large areas with pine forests, which were created as part of reforestation efforts. A special little gem are the beech woodlands in the area of Serrahn, once the hunting grounds of the Grand Dukes of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The visitor will find a unique woodland wilderness. Together with the beech forests in the National Parks of Jasmund, Kellerwald-Edersee and Hainich as well as other areas, the beech woodland at Serrahn is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany (2007/2011)”.

During the rutting season in September and October you can observe red deer and see cranes fly to their resting places at Lake Rederang during the evening hours. Thirteen types of bats find ideal living conditions in dying trees, the bogs, lakes, meadows and old buildings. In the National Park Information Centre “Kratzeburg” (literally “scratchy castle”), there is an exhibition about these small mammals. Müritz National Park is well known,

not just for its large rare birds, such as osprey, sea eagles (or white tailed eagles), cranes and bittern, but also for the overall diversity of its bird life. Approximately 250 types of bird have been recorded.

The flora has some special features: some of the reed beds are actually not formed of the common reed plant, but by the rare Great Fen Sedge, forming the largest great fen sedge area in Germany. During the summer months, the white heads of the cotton grass decorate the bogs and moors. In some places, the large round leaves of the water lily cover the water surface like a carpet. The hilly land with its woodlands and lakes develops a special magic during the late autumn.

Many visitor attractions – some of them with easy access – offer an exciting insight into nature. The extensive 650 kilometre (400 mile) network of walking and cycling routes is complemented by viewing platforms, wildlife watching platforms, bird hides and nature trails. In addition, the National Park Information Centres have a lot of relevant first-hand information in their exhibitions. There are also some opportunities for water sport – kayaks and canoes are permitted on some lakes.

The National Park Ticket is the ideal thing if you are planning larger trips. Busses operate on some roads blocked to all other traffic. The combination of bus and boat trip on Müritz is particularly attractive. The boats operate regularly between the villages of Waren (Müritz), Klink Röbel/Müritz, canal at Bolter and the harbour village at Rechlin. As with busses, they take bikes on board.

One week in the National Park

Monday: Discover the landscape with the National Park Ticket by bus from the town of Waren (Müritz), guided walk and boat trip.

Tuesday: Take the National Park Ticket bus to the village of Federow. Have a look at the live camera feed into the osprey nest. From April to September daily an eagle tour, a guided walk into the foraging habitats of the osprey and white tailed eagle. Bad weather alternative: visit the "Müritzeum" in Waren (Müritz), an exciting nature discovery centre for all ages with aquariums.

Wednesday: Cycling tour through a landscape of woodlands, meadows and lakes south of the town of Waren (Müritz). Lunch break at the "Müritzhof".

Thursday: Visit the museum about the discoverer of ancient Troy, Heinrich Schliemann, in the village of Ankershagen. Afterwards walk to the spring of the River Havel.

Friday: Rent a canoe in the villages of Dalmsdorf or Granzin and take a tour on the River Havel.

Saturday: Insider knowledge: nature discovery trail through natural beech woodlands and bogs between the villages of Zinnow and Serrahn. Include a visit to the exhibition "Im Reich der Buchen" ("the beech empire") in the village of Carpin.

Sunday: Walk from the village of Goldenbaum through landscapes formed by the last ice age and spot some beaver tracks. Have a picnic half way, at the stone mill ("Steinmühle") at Lake Grünow.

One day in the National Park

10 am: National Park bus departure from the town of Waren (Müritz), Steinmole.

10:35 am: arrive in the village of Speck at the heart of the National Park

11 am: The National Park ranger delivers an exciting guided walk, have a picnic and take the 2.5 kilometre (1.5 miles) walk to the tower at the Käflig mountain. Fantastic views across Müritz and the woodlands of the National Park.

3:30 pm: Have a cup of coffee in the village of Boek and visit the National Park exhibition "The fisherman of Boek"

4:30 pm: Take the National Park Bus towards the harbour village of Rechlin.

4:50 pm: Departure of the boat and enjoyable crossing of Müritz towards the town of Waren (Müritz).



General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: Mecklenburg Lake District, between Berlin and Rostock

Area: 322 square kilometres

Height above sea level: 62 metres (Müritz) to 143 metres (Hirsch mountain) (203 feet – 469 feet)

Opened in: 1990

Habitat Types: lakes, reed beds, bogs, woodlands, meadows

Books and Maps

Walking and Cycling map Müritz National Park
1:50,000
ISBN 978-3-940175-01-4

Im Land der Tausend Seen
Vögel beobachten
Fischadler im Müritz-Nationalpark
Seeadler im Müritz-Nationalpark
Kraniche im Müritz-Nationalpark
DVD „Waldgeschichten“

All available in all National Park Information Centres

National Park Information

Müritz National Park Authority
Schloßplatz 3
D-17237 Hohenzieritz/Germany
Phone: +49(0)39824 252-0, fax -50
www.mueritz-nationalpark.de
www.mueritz-nationalpark-partner.de

National Park Service
Phone: +49(0)3991 668849, fax -94
www.nationalpark-service.de

Accommodation

Tourist Information Mecklenburg Lake District
Phone: +49(0)39931 538-0, fax -29
www.mecklenburgische-seenplatte.de

How to get there

By Rail:

Railway stations Waren (Müritz), Kratzeburg and Neustrelitz on the Berlin-Rostock route, continue your journey with the bus routes of the Müritz National Park Ticket or with regular public transport.

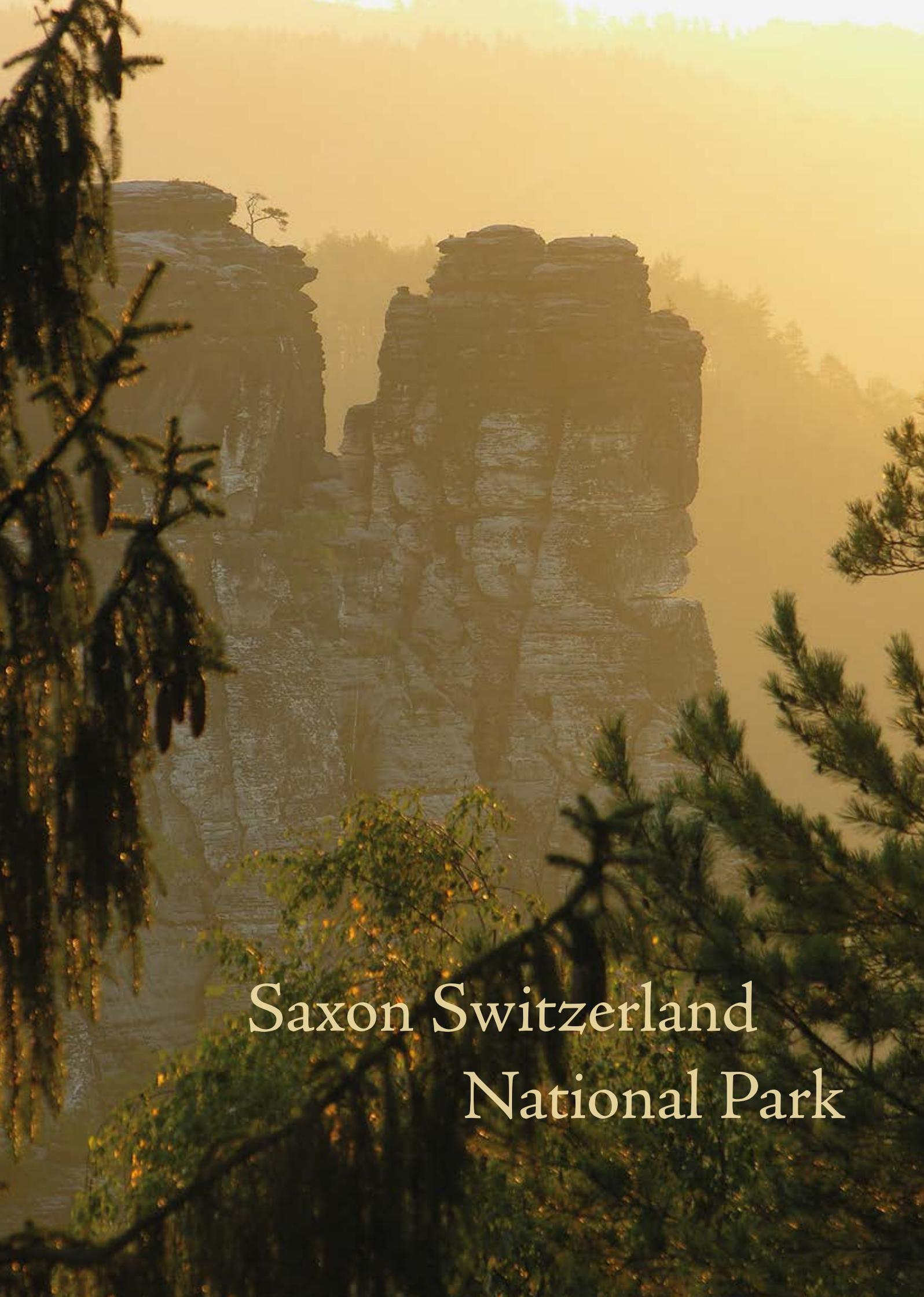
By Car:

Motorway (Autobahn) A 24 and A 19 from Berlin to Rostock, exit at “Röbel/Müritz” or “Waren (Müritz)”; or A 20 exit “Friedland”.

Accessible visit

Accessible exhibitions, wildlife observation hides, footpaths and Nature Discovery Trails. More information available from the Müritz National Park Authority or at www.mueritz-nationalpark.de



A scenic view of a large, layered rock formation, possibly a sandstone cliff, in a forest. The rock face is composed of distinct horizontal layers and is partially covered in snow or frost. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. In the foreground, the dark, silhouetted branches of evergreen trees are visible, some with small, bright spots of light. The background is a soft, hazy expanse of more forested hills.

Saxon Switzerland
National Park



“Rocks are music turned into stone” – we could not describe the sandstone mountains of the River Elbe any better than with this two and a half thousand year old quotation from Pythagoras. Rough rock towers and massive table mountains alternate with lovely plains and dizzy heights and gorges. In the middle of this rocky world the River Elbe has cut deeply into the sandstone. She winds majestically around the Lilienstein (“Lilly Rock”), the king of table mountains. The impression of something extraordinary is further strengthened once you find out that some things here are “upside down”: during the summer, the gorges have a cool and wet microclimate – ideal for many plants and animals. The mountain tops however are warm and dry and attract inhabitants who usually avoid these heights.

The terms River Elbe Sandstone Mountains or also “Saxony-Bohemian Switzerland” are really a con: what we have here is the bottom of a sea that lost its water hundreds of millions of years ago. Through the ages the River Elbe and its tributaries washed out these bizarre formations out of the solid rock. They now offer a habitat for plants and animals, some of them highly specialised. For example the sulphur dust lichen or the twisted-stalk (a lily), which otherwise only grows in alpine regions. Many particularly shy animals have found their refuge in the remote areas of the National Park. This includes otters, black storks, eagle owls and the lynx, which has been observed migrating through this area.

There is hardly any mountain area in the world, where wilderness and loveliness are united on such a small scale. The elevation differs up to 450 metres (1,476 feet) from one place to another. The forests are diverse – on spiky rock towers thinly growing and bizarre pines, in the dark valleys spruce forests and on the slopes quaint oak trees. This romantic mountain area has been shaped by tourism for about 200 years and by mountaineering for over 150 years. Nature conservation has a long tradition in this area, too. As long as 130 years ago, there were demands to reduce sandstone quarrying - and successful opposition to building a cable car to the famous rock “Bastei” and to the Lilienstein Mountain.

The network of footpaths offers everything from pleasant walks to steep mountain paths with steep tracks and ladders up to the rock plateaus. Visitors have the choice between long-distance views and deep and dark paths through gorges as well as dreamy villages on either side of the German- Czech border.

The “Bastei” (“bastion”) – a massive rock at Rathen – is probably the best known natural monument in the Elbe Sandstone Mountains. The rock tower stands 305 metres (1,000 feet) above sea level and 194 metres (636 feet) above the River Elbe and offers an overwhelming view of the landscape. Many other viewing points open up a landscape panorama including all the large table mountains (such as Lilienstein “Lilly Rock”, Königstein “King’s Rock”), the chain of the Schrammstein mountains, the Grosse Winterberg (“big winter mountain”) and further important viewing and climbing rocks, some in Bohemia.

The Schrammstein mountains present themselves as a rugged group of rocks east of the spa town Bad Spandau. A mighty vertical deep cut forms the Schrammtor (i.e. “the gate” through the Schrammstein mountains). The diversity of types or rocks has been caused by millennia of weathering. Further in the East in the National Park parish of Hinterhermsdorf, the Königsplatz (King’s Square) offers a further wide panorama across the silent mountains of the Bohemian Sandstone Mountains National Park. The two National Parks are good neighbours. Hinterhermannsdorf is family friendly and was awarded the prize for “most beautiful village in Germany” in 2001. It has plenty of accommodation and is the ideal starting point for walks across the border. Also worthwhile is a visit starting in Schmilka at the River Elbe into the National Park towards the “Prebischtor”, the largest sandstone rock arch in Europe.

Early in the morning the rocks look even more mystical. View from the “Bastion” Rock onto the “Kleine Gans” (literally: “Little Goose”)



Walkers can dive deeply into the original nature of the gorge of the Kirnitzsch beck, where the Saxon Switzerland National Park and the Bohemian Sandstone Mountains National Park meet.

One day in the National Park

In the morning, start at the “Bastei” (bastion) car park and walk via the Bastion view point and bridge into the valley towards the spa town of Rathen and then via “Amselgrund” (“Blackbird Valley”) and “Schwedenlöcher” (“Swedish Holes”) back up to the car park at the Bastion. Duration: about three hours.

The Bastion is the best known and most impressive view point in the Sandstone Mountains, high above the River Elbe. Even when very busy with visitors, the walk across the Bastion bridge will take your breath away. The wild and steep tracks through the cool canyon of the “Schwedenlöcher” will put you in touch with the vertical sandstone rock columns of the National Park.

Back at the Bastion plateau, the National Park gallery in the “Schweizer Haus” (“Swiss House”) shows in 300 historic paintings and graphics the different ways nature has been perceived since the romantic period. The National Park Centre in the spa town of Bad Schandau invites you to round the day off there. It is a modern visitor centre with generous space for exhibitions with multi-visual and interactive models and exhibits.

One week in the National Park

Monday: Visit the Woodland Discovery Area “Waldhusche” including a walk in the border region around the village of Hinterhermsdorf and a canoe trip on the River Kirnitzsch.

Tuesday: Visit the Bastion and the “Schwedenlöcher” and the National Park Information Centre “Amselfallbaude”.

Wednesday: Visit the National Park Centre in the spa town of Bad Schandau before starting your walk to the “Lilienstein” (“Lilly Rock”).

Thursday: Have a rest day and stroll through the historic town centre of Pirna and relax in the “Toskanatherme” (“Tuscany” thermal baths in the spa town of Bad Schandau).

Friday: Take the National Park railway into the Bohemian Sandstone Mountains National Park. Continue on foot towards the “Prebischtor”, the largest sandstone rock arch in Europe.

Saturday: Walk across the Schrammstein Mountains to the historic mountain inn “Grosser Winterberg” that also hosts the National Park Information Centre, and then further towards the village of Schmilka.

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: East of the City of Dresden on the Czech border on the upper course of the River Elbe

Area: 93 square kilometres

Height above sea level: 110 metres or 361 feet (Elbe) to 556 metres or 1,824 feet ("Grosser Winterberg" – "Great Winter Mountain")

Opened in: 1990

Habitat Types: Sandstone rocks, pine forest, canyon woodland, beech woodlands on basalt rock

Books and Maps

Topographical map National Park Region Saxony – Bohemian Sandstone Mountains 1:25,000 with complementary brochure from the National Park Administration
ISBN 3-89679-361-6

A general information leaflet "Bizarre rock formations – wild gorges" (in English) can be downloaded at www.nationalpark-saechsische-schweiz.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Nationalpark-Grundsatzbroschuere-ENG.pdf

National Park Information

Saxon Switzerland National Park
An der Elbe 4
D-01814 Bad Schandau/Germany
Phone: +49(0)35022 900-600, fax -666
poststelle.sbs-nationalparkverwaltung@smul.sachsen.de
www.nationalpark-saechsische-schweiz.de/?lang=en

The National Park Centre open daily from April – October and open Tuesday to Sunday from November to March. It is closed in January. (large groups please call in advance +49(0)35022-50240)

Accommodation

Tourism Board "Sächsische Schweiz"
Bahnhofstraße 21
D-01796 Pirna/Germany
Phone: +49(0)3501 470-147, fax -148
info@saechsische-schweiz.de
<http://www.saechsische-schweiz.de/en/>
(also information about the National Park)

How to get there

By Rail:

Via Dresden to Bad Schandau (Intercity route Berlin–Prague) continue with suburban railway ("S-Bahn") or take train via Neustadt/Sachsen–Sebnitz.

By Car:

Motorway (Autobahn) A 17 Dresden towards Prague, exit "Pirna", continue on B 172 towards Bad Schandau or take regional road S 164/S 165 towards Hohnstein.

Accessible visit

The railway, steamer and River Elbe boats offer stopping points suitable for people with disabilities. There is a special taxi service. More information is available at the National Park Centre.

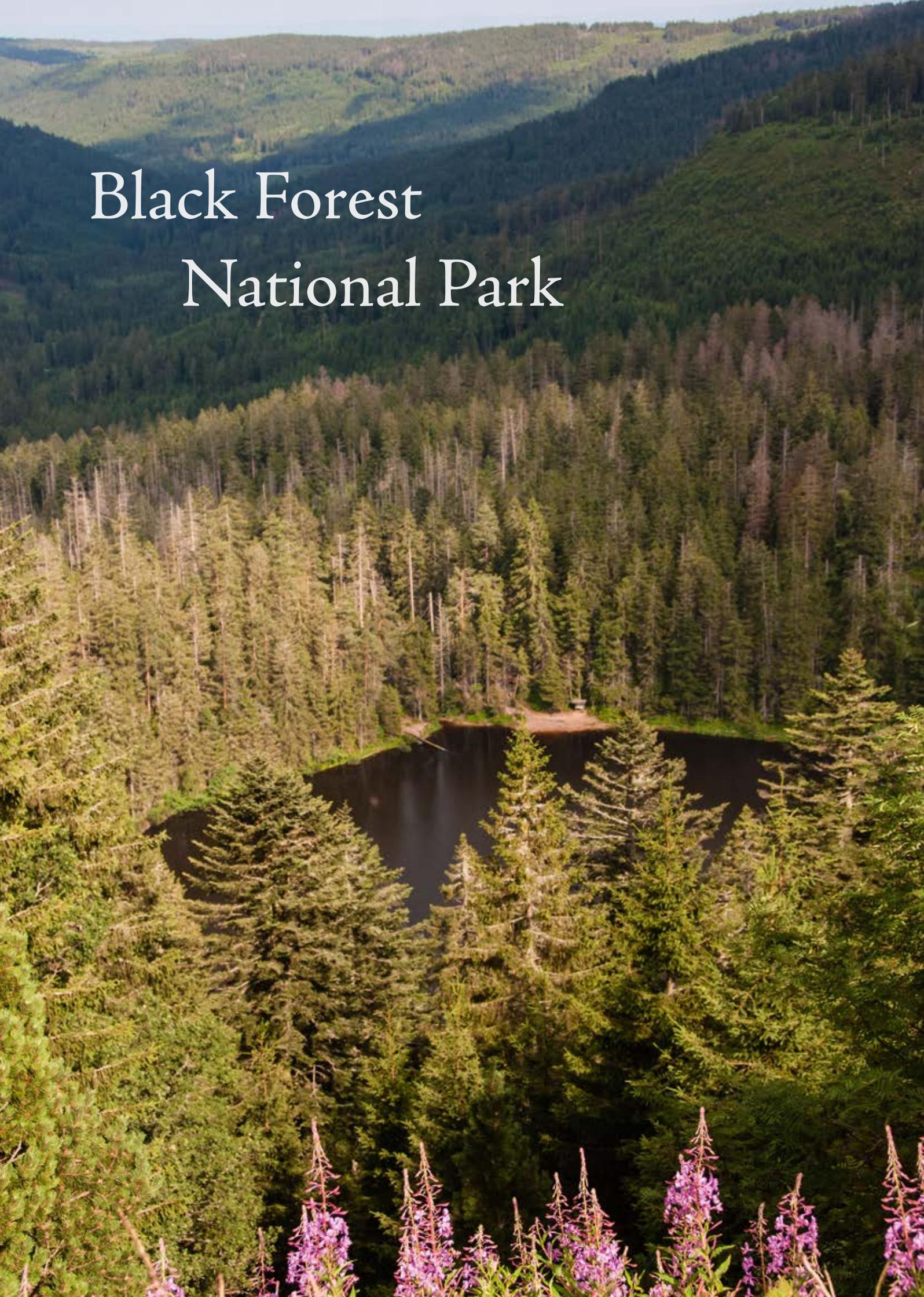


The Saxony steam boat company offers a nature experience with a historic ambience

Nationalpark
Sächsische Schweiz



Black Forest National Park





A touch more wilderness has been permitted in the Black Forest National Park since 2014. It is one of the more recent additions to the line-up of large German protected areas. Dark woodlands, picturesque cirque or corrie lakes and rock walls: the diversity of the landscape in this 10,000 hectare large area is great and spans in two parts across the higher ground between the city of Baden and the town of Freudenstadt. It offers habitat for the capercaillie, the common European viper and many other, often rare species. The young National Park benefits from the so called "Bannwälder" (protective forests where use is banned), some of which have been left to their own devices for more than 100 years.

In many areas the spruce still dominates – a cultural heritage of the black forest – but this is clearly the fir tree National Park of Germany, the latter type of tree making up about 15 % of all trees. In addition to three ice age cirque or corrie lakes ("Kar" lakes in German from the ancient German word for "char" meaning "jar"), two large bogs and the wet heathlands, colloquially also known as "Grinden", are some of the special features of this National Park. The landscape is wild and has a rough beauty. It is covered by mountain pines, shrubs carrying berries, heather and moor grass and reminds one of landscapes in Scandinavia. The special mixture of more open structures makes it a valuable habitat for many rare species of the German low mountain ranges, for example the tree pipit, the common European viper, but also for butterflies and grasshoppers such as the green mountain grasshopper and other insects.

The rare three-toed woodpecker is at home in the Black Forest National Park, as well as the fastest bird in the world, the peregrine falcon, and the smallest owl in Europe, the Eurasian pygmy owl.

A fungi expert discovered the fungus "Antrodiella citronella" in the oldest woodland of the National Park in 2014. This species is considered a primeval forest indicator, as it needs a lot of deadwood for its survival. A team of researchers recorded 185 different types of deadwood beetles in the former "Hoher Ochsenkopf" protective forest, where the conditions are just right for these specialised beetles. Another research team recorded more than 250 types of spiders in the whole of the National Park. Another special feature of the Black Forest National Park is that researchers are not just looking closely at nature, but also at people. What images does the National Park create in their minds, what is the effect of wilderness? Is it exciting or relaxing?

In a few years' time you will be able to enjoy this wilderness not just on guided walks, but also in a new visitor centre. This is being built at the headquarters of the National Park Authority at mount "Ruhstein". Wooden walkways will give the impression of running tree trunks. Both inside and out it will fit very well into the young National Park.

One day in the National Park

Those who only have a single day to visit the Black Forest National Park should start their day early in the morning, for example on one of the popular nature discovery trails. Both the Lothar and Wilderness Trail were created in the wake of hurricane "Lothar" in 1999. They can be explored with all your senses to find out how nature develops without the influence of human beings. The Lynx trail in the South of the area is also well worth a visit – even if the lynx itself has not yet started hunting in the National Park.

After a short lunch break, off into the oldest part of the National Park, the former protective forest "Wilder See" ("Wild Lake") – ideally as part of a guided walk with one of our expert rangers. A narrow path runs down the steep mountain wall towards the picturesque "wild lake" at the heart of the National Park. It will be a bit noisier for the last walk of the day along the "Allerheiligen" ("All Saints") waterfall. For those interested in culture, the ruins of a former cloister are also well worth a visit.

One week in the National Park

Saturday: With some luck, you may see a weather inversion while on the paths around the Schliffkopf peak: fog in the valleys, sunshine in the National Park. Afternoon walk on the Hurricane Lothar Trail.

Sunday: Guided walk to the former protective forest "Wild Lake" and a visit to the National Park Information Centre at the Ruhestein mountain.

Monday: Visit the ruins of the All Saints cloister, walk through the canyon woodlands and the narrow gorge along the waterfalls shrouded in legends.

Tuesday: You can observe wild animals in the open air enclosure in the remote Ton valley. Visit the historic glassworks in the Buhl Valley. Gourmets will be attracted by the star awarded restaurants in the parish of Baiersbronn.

Wednesday: The Wilderness Trail and Lynx Trail in the North of the National Park around the village of Plättig offer eventful walks for confident walkers and primeval forest discoverers. Those who want to go right to the top, can show their courage by doing the high rope challenge at the Mehliskopf.

Thursday: Day trip right through the wild forests of the Ochsenkopf mountain with its tower on the summit. To round off the day have a meal in the high altitude village of Herrenwies.

Friday: The week ends with a visit to the mill at Geroldsau, the Gate to the Black Forest from the city of Baden-Baden, with many products and information about the region.



General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: Higher altitudes of the Northern Black Forest between the city of Baden-Baden and the town of Freudenstadt in South-West Germany

Area: 10 square kilometres

Height above sea level: 470 to 1,150 metres (1,542 – 3,773 feet)

Opened in: 2014

Habitat Types: fir-spruce-beech mixed mountain woodlands, wet heathland, corrie lakes, bogs, streams and waterfalls

Books and Maps

Maps:

Hiking in the Black Forest National Park
ISBN 978-3-939657-78-1

Winter walks in the Black Forest National Park
ISBN: 978-3-939657-81-1

Books:

Nationalpark Schwarzwald
Stephan Voegeli, ISBN 978-3-8425-1426-3

100 Jahre Bannwald Wilder See
Wolfgang Schlund, Charly Ebel and Georg Jehle
ISBN 978-3-00-035118-1

Naturerlebnis Wilder Schwarzwald
Gaby Hufler and Norbert Daubner
ISBN 978-3-9810882-6-7

National Park Information

Black Forest National Park Information Centre
Schwarzwaldhochstraße 2
D-77889 Seebach/Germany
Phone: +49(0)7449 92998-0, fax -499
www.schwarzwald-nationalpark.de

Accommodation

Black Forest National Park Region
Rosenplatz 3
D-72270 Baiersbronn/Germany
Phone: +49(0)7442 84140
info@nationalparkregion-schwarzwald.org
www.nationalparkregion-schwarzwald.org
(also in English)

Root plate on the Lothar Trail, where all visitors can experience the mighty power of nature and get a feeling for how the National Park may develop

The Eurasian pygmy owl is the smallest type of owl in Central Europe



How to get there

By Rail:

From the North take the train to Baden-Baden (continue by bus) or to Achern (continue with the Achern railway or Renchtal railway). From Karlsruhe, take the suburban railway (S-Bahn). From the South take the train to Freudenstadt, continue by bus. More information at: www.schwarzwald-nationalpark.de/service/anfahrt

By Car:

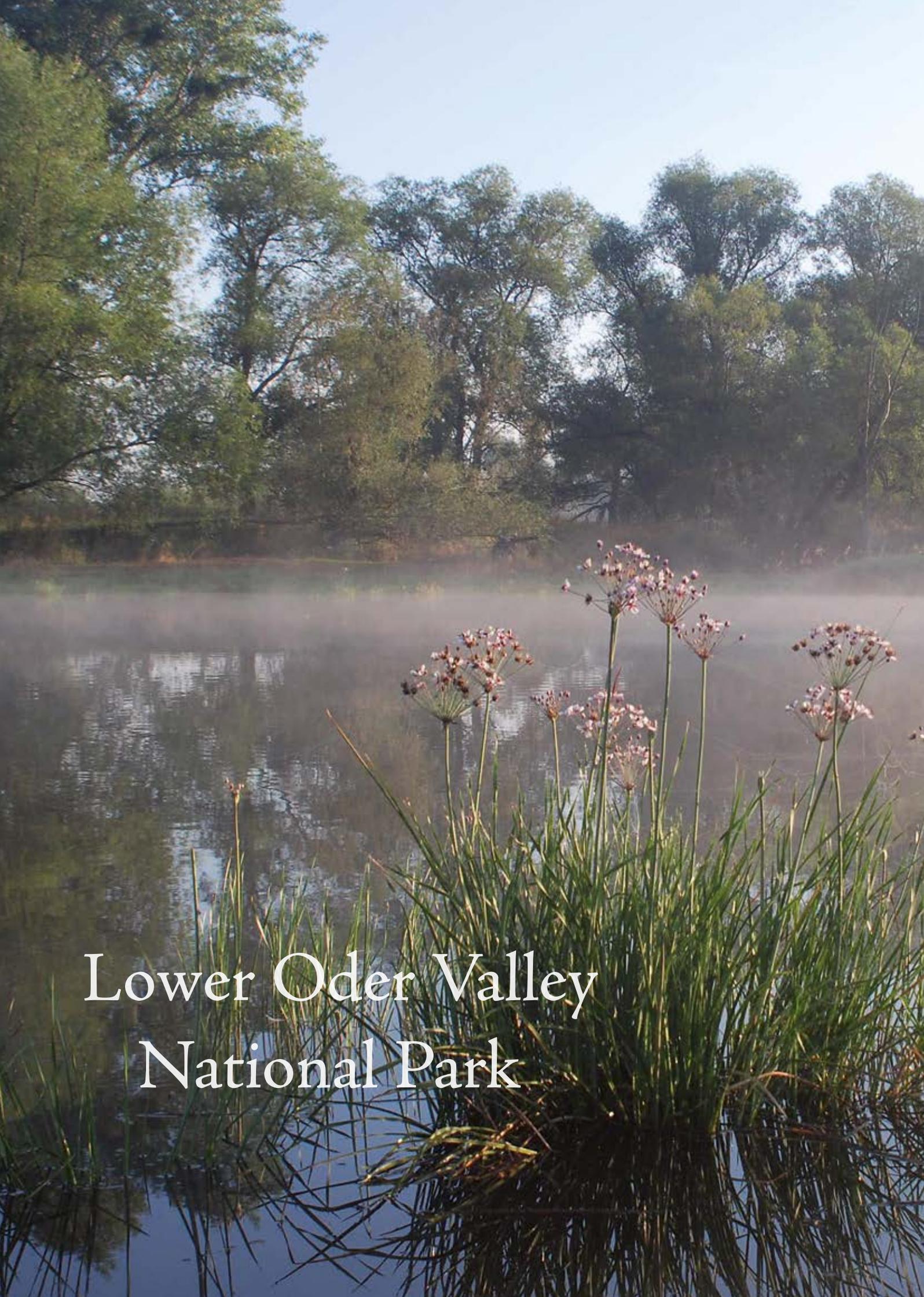
Take the Motorway (Autobahn) A 5 exit "Achern", follow the local road L 87 towards Baiersbronn. From the A 81, take exit "Horb/Freudenstadt", follow signs to "Freudenstadt", carry on towards "Straßburg/Schwarzwaldhochstraße".

Accessible visit

The Black Forest National Park offers several things for people with disabilities. These include easy access guided walks. The rangers will be happy to meet your individual needs.

Nationalpark
Schwarzwald



A serene landscape photograph of a pond in a park. The foreground is dominated by tall, green grasses and several stalks of pink flowers with flat-topped heads. The pond's surface is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery and the light sky. A thick layer of mist or fog hangs over the water, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. In the background, a dense forest of tall trees with lush green leaves stretches across the horizon under a clear, pale blue sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Lower Oder Valley
National Park



The Lower Oder Valley National Park in the North of the federal state of Brandenburg is one of the last natural river landscapes in Central Europe. It is Germany's only river meadow National Park. This is where the National Park forms the only German- Polish cross-border protection area. The 10,400 hectare large National Park – stretching 53 kilometres (34 miles) from North to South – is best known for its abundant birdlife.

The floodplain of the Lower Oder Valley stretches 60 kilometres (37 miles) along the German-Polish border, at a width of three to five kilometres (2–3 miles). In winter and in spring (after the snow melts) the river swells to a mighty size. This is when woodlands and meadows are flooded.

200 kilometres (124 miles) of paths allow extensive bike tours along the Oder plain and neighbouring woodlands and dry grasslands. Naturalists have excellent opportunities to bird watch from the dykes: white tailed eagles, cranes, white and black storks, curlews, redshanks and common snipe are present in the area. The Lower Oder Valley hosts the largest corn crake breeding area in Germany. The globally endangered aquatic warbler can be seen only occasionally. Further treasures are the extensive dry grasslands on the slopes of the Oder valley, illustrious species such as the star gentian, and various orchids, such as the three-toothed orchid, the military orchid or the bridal veil grass, more characteristic for the steppes of Eurasia. In May and June the glorious flowers appear in all imaginable colours.

During the summer months, bog and water plants flower in the branched oxbows of the River Oder. At night, thousands of individuals the edible frog species and marsh frog species take over the River Oder with a deafening concert. Mixed in are the voices of the little and spotted crake. Large flocks of birds migrate through the valley in the autumn through thick fog. At that time, over 100,000 ducks, geese and swans as well as up to 10,000 cranes rest in the Oder Valley. Silent movement of the water under sheets of ice characterizes the wide river on cold winter days.

The flooded river meadows, covered in ice, convey the image of an eternal white expanse. The silence is only broken by the song of the whooper swan, in its own very melodic and at the same time melancholic winter symphony. Dozens of white-tailed eagles gather around perished boar and deer; due to the bodies of open water and the plentiful food, they come from all over Germany and Poland to the River Oder.

In the North East, the National Park borders the Polish landscape protection area Lower Oder Valley (Park Krajobrazowy Dolina Dolnej Odry). Over a total area of 6,000 hectares, the river floods or flows through extensive bogs. Due to the cessation of agricultural activity after the Second World War, this area had 70 years to develop naturally. The Zehden Landscape Protection Park (Cedyński Park Krajobrazowy) lies to the South East of the National Park. Large woodlands with quiet lakes are characteristic for this protection area, where wolves appear regularly. Together with the two Landscape Protection Parks, the National Park forms the Lower Oder Valley International Park, a Polish-German network of protected sites totalling 120,000 hectares.

This is binational protection and it works: nearly one in six plants on the German red list of threatened species and half the species listed as endangered in Brandenburg are present in the Lower Oder Valley. There are 50 types of mammals, eleven types of amphibians and six types of reptiles as well as 49 different types of fish. This makes the Oder Valley one of the most important refuge areas for rare vertebrate species. The highlights of the fish fauna include the wels catfish, sea trout, spined loach and bitterling. The river lamprey and the sturgeon, driven to extinction about 100 years ago, are now back in the River Oder. A reintroduction project started in 1994. Since then more than 1 million young sturgeons have been released into the Oder.

A grand view can be enjoyed from the high point of Zatoń Dolna (Niedersaathen) on the Polish side of the river: A green countryside permeated by blue veins – an amazing sight.



Wet meadows, woodlands and oxbows dominate the character of the Oder Valley

One day in the National Park

Get a good feel for the area by visiting the National Park Centre in the village of Crieven. The exhibition animates the whole family to touch and to join in. The main attraction is the 12 metre (40 foot) aquarium with 25 native fish species. There is also a multi-media show that takes visitors on a journey through time into the wilderness of the year 2095. After enjoying some regional cuisine for lunch take a guided discovery walk with one of the rangers into the Oder Valley.

One week in the National Park

Monday: Crieven National Park Centre, experience the floodplain landscape from there to the viewing tower at the village of Stützkow right next to the River Oder

Tuesday: Cycle tour in the Polish Landscape Protection Park Zehden (Cedyński Park Krajobrazowy).

Wednesday: Visit the lovely tobacco museum and the tobacco barn in the village of Vierraden. Then visit the town fortifications and Stephanus Church in Gartz. Finish the day on a highlight and enjoy the view into the far distance from the Seeberg mountain near the village of Mescherin.

Thursday: Walk through the mixed woodland near Gartzzer Schrey up to the viewing tower in the village of Mescherin, bird excursion into the wilderness area's northern flood polder, visit of the "Seeschwalbe" ("tern") bird hide.

Friday: Visit the traditional Kerkow estate and the farmers' market. Once you have had some food, start off on a bike tour to the medieval "Burgfried" in the village of Stolpe (optional visit of the tower) and further on towards the town of Schwedt.

Saturday: Boat trip on the River Oder starting in Schwedt. Try out some traditional cuisine from the local region of "Uckermark" in the evening.

Sunday: The week ends with a morning ranger-guided walk "Nature's awakening".

General Information

Guided canoe
tours open up new
perspectives

Facts and Figures

Location: Oder Valley between Szczecin (Stettin) and Cedynia (Zehden), on the border of Poland and the federal state of Brandenburg

Area: 104 square kilometres

Height above sea level: 0 to 50 metres (164 feet): Seeberg mountain near the village of Mescherin

Opened in: 1995

Habitat Types: floodplain landscape with wet meadows, rushes, reed, oxbows, remains of river woodlands, broad-leaved woodlands and steppes

Books and Maps

Lower Oder Valley National Park
Map 1:50,000 Land Registry Office

travel guide
NATURA 2000 in the Lower Oder Valley, 2014,
(in German and Polish)
268 pp. free from the National Park
Administration

National Park Information

Lower Oder Valley National Park
Park 2
D-16303 Schwedt/Oder, OT Criewen/Germany
Phone: +49(0)3332 26772-0, fax -220
www.nationalpark-unteres-odertal.eu

Criewen National Park Centre
Phone: +49(0)3332 26772-44

Accommodation

Tourist Information
Lower Oder Valley National Park
Vierradener Straße 31
D-16303 Schwedt/Oder/Germany
Phone: +49(0)3332 255-90, fax -59
www.unteres-odertal.de



How to get there

By Rail:
From Berlin via Angermünde to Schwedt
(Regional Express RE 3), continue by bus or
by suburban train (S-Bahn) to Criewen.

By Car:
From Berlin on the Motorway (Autobahn) A 11
towards Poland/Stettin to exit "Joachimsthal",
continue on the B 198 and B 2 to Schwedt/Oder.

Accessible visit

The tops of the dykes along the River Oder are tarmacked and are extremely suitable for wheelchair users. The exhibition in the National Park Centre allows easy access, too. This also applies to using computers, microscopes and the display models. More information available from the National Park Administration.



Western Pomerania
Lagoons
National Park





The coastal landscape is full of transitions – land and water lie next to each other, closely intermeshed. Sometimes they are connected via large transition areas, but then sometimes they are separated by abrupt lines. The power of nature creates new forms all the time. The key feature giving the National Park its character is the lagoons. (German “Bodden” from the old word for “ground” due to the shallow nature of these coastal lagoons). This includes the chain of lagoons from the village of Darß to the village of Zingst, being separated from the Baltic Sea by a peninsula, and the lagoons at the West of the island of Rügen, being protected from the open Baltic Sea by the island of Hiddensee. This fascinating landscape is characterised by wadden areas, long and thin peninsulas formed by sand sediment, spits, cliffs, quaint beaches and natural woodlands and has been attracting artists and those seeking relaxation for more than a hundred years.

About half of the National Park area is shallow water. 30 marine fish species are present in the National Park. Mussels and mud snails and numerous other invertebrates live on the sea bed of the Baltic Sea and provide food for waders and other water birds. The Baltic coast waters of the National Park are an essential overwintering habitat for birds such as the long-tailed duck: the shallow waters north of the villages of Darß and Zingst often harbour many thousand water birds at the same time.

The lagoon habitat differs from the Baltic Sea in a number of ways: the lower salt content, the lack of swell and a significantly higher nutritional content. Transition areas between land and water that are either covered in water or freely exposed due to different speed and directions of the wind are called “Windwatt” (“wind wadden” areas). They offer a full table for water birds such as the avocet or the sanderling. During the bird migration season, thousands of cranes find a secure resting place in the shallow water areas.

People are always welcome to be a guest of nature. National Park rangers will be delighted to provide information, whether you are on the Darß peninsula, the island of Hiddensee, on the Zingst peninsula, in the village of Barhöft or on the Western coast of the island of Rügen. Guided tours are offered throughout the year. Rangers are present at all viewing platforms and hides during the autumn migration of the cranes.

The Lighthouse at the village of Darß allows a view over the continuously growing and changing landscape. The bird’s eye view allows you to look onto the treetops of the Darß forest and all its characteristic features: strips of higher ground (locally called “Reffen”) and lower depressions (locally known as “Riegen”) and long sand walls interchange with boggy depressions and alder woodland mires. On clear days you can see as far as Denmark and the city of Rostock. The nearby “Natureum” is an outpost of the German ocean museum in the city of Stralsund. This natural history museum informs you about the natural area around Darß, about the animals in the Darß landscape, the Baltic Sea and the coastal dynamics.

A must-see for many tourists is the island of Hiddensee. It can only be reached by boat. The island is car free and can be explored by bike or horse-drawn carriage. The island has a gentle slope from its highest point “Dornbusch” in the North (72 metres or 236 feet) towards sea level in the South. The white light house on the “Dornbusch” can be seen for many miles. Back in the village of Vitte your eye catches a sloped roof, the National Park Centre. An exhibition and the Coast Discovery Trail outside invite friends of nature, whether young or old, to engage and discover. The same applies to the “Haus am Cliff” National Park Visitor Centre (house near the cliff) exhibition near the city of Stralsund, where not just children can become wilderness and National Park experts.

This is the only place where the Baltic coast is left to its own devices over a length of 60 kilometres (37 miles)



Unique and beautiful:
the lagoons have shores
diverse in structures

One day in the National Park

You can best discover the openness and diversity of the lagoons by bike. Start in one of the idyllic lagoon villages between Wustrow and Zingst. Cycle along the lagoons and dykes towards the Darß woodland. The paths lead you to the West Beach through shaded pine forests and beech woodlands, past the quaint alder wet woodlands. Once you have had plenty of wind blowing round your head on this wild coast, a little detour to the village of Darß is well worth it. Depending on your fitness you have two options: walk the circular walk with spectacular views of the land most recently added to the National Park, ideally as part of a guided walk or using one of the e-guides (available at the "Natureum"). Alternatively, go straight to the "Natureum", enjoy the view from the lighthouse, add the museum tour and plan your return journey while enjoying a cup of coffee, choosing one of the many cycle paths that will take you back.

One week in the National Park

Saturday: Settle in your B&B in one of the idyllic locations near the lagoons. We recommend choosing one of the "Partners of the Western Pomerania Lagoons National Park". Explore the vicinity and have some fresh fish for dinner.

Sunday: Have a lie in. After breakfast, hire some bikes, cycle to the beach and have a swim in the Baltic Sea.

Monday: Off to the village of Wiek, visit the "Darß Ark". Afterwards follow the marked paths through the Darß woodland and walk to the quaint West Beach.

Tuesday: Bike tour to the Sundisch meadow and the village of Pramort – you may wish to use the bus & bike service (bicycle trailer) – have some fresh smoked fish in the evening.

Wednesday: Get to know a different side of the National Park at the village of Barhöft. Visit the National Park exhibition and enjoy the view over the National Park from the viewing tower.

Thursday: Guided walk through the National Park around the village of Darß, followed by a visit to the "Natureum" with views from the top of the lighthouse, horse drawn carriage tour and observation of wild animals. Organ concert in the evening.

Friday: Have a day trip to the island of Hiddensee, enjoy the unique landscape and experience a beautiful sunset.

General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: Darß-Zingst peninsula, Baltic Sea island of Hiddensee and the West coast of the island of Rügen

Area: 786 square kilometres

Height above sea level: –10 to +72 metres (–33 to +236 feet; highest point: “Dornbusch” on the island of Hiddensee)

Opened in: 1990

Habitat Types: cliffs and shallow shores, beaches, wind wadden areas, dunes, heathland, bogs, dry grassland, reeds, salt marshes, pine forests, beech woodlands and alder wet woodland

Books and Maps

Walking and cycling map Fischland, Darß, Zingst
Verlag Grünes Herz
ISBN 978-3-86636-220-8

Magische Wildnis an der Ostsee
Hinstorff Verlag
ISBN 978-3-356-01985-8

National Park Information

National Park Authority Pomerania
Im Forst 5
D-18375 Born/Germany
Phone: +49(0)38234 502-0, fax -24
poststelle@npa-vp.mvnet.de
www.nationalpark-vorpommersche-
boddenlandschaft.de

Hiddensee National Park Centre
Phone: +49(0)38300 680-41, fax -43
np-haus-hidd@npa-vp.mvnet.de

Accommodation

Tourist Information Fischland-Darß-Zingst
Phone: +49(0)38324-6400, fax -64034
info@tv-fdz.de
www.fischland-darss-zingst.de

The lagoons on the Baltic Coast are separated from the open sea by islands and headlands



How to get there

By Rail:

For Fischland/Darß/Zingst peninsula, take the train to Ribnitz-Damgarten then the bus A 210. For the western part of the island of Rügen and Hiddensee take the train to Bergen/Rügen, then bus A 402 or A 410, ferry to the island of Hiddensee from the village of Schaprode.

By Car:

Motorway (Autobahn) A 19 exit at “Rostock-Ost”, take the B 105 to Altheide (Darß), Löbnitz (Zingst) or Stralsund; B 96 to Samtens or Gingst (western Rügen) or to Schaprode (for the island of Hiddensee); Alternatively, exit A 20 at “Bad Sülze” (for Fischland/Darß/Zingst peninsula) or “Stralsund” (for the islands of Rügen and Hiddensee).

Accessible visit

The National Park exhibitions are suitable for wheelchair users, as well as some of the paths and the viewing platform west of the village of Zingst, around the villages of Pramort and Darß and around Lake Otto.



An aerial photograph of a wadden sea landscape, showing intricate patterns of green and brown tidal flats. The water is a deep blue, and the land is a mix of vibrant green and sandy brown, creating a complex, organic pattern. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

National Parks

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea

Hamburg Wadden Sea

Lower Saxony Wadden Sea



The Wadden Sea on our coast is unique. Nowhere else in the world can a comparable landscape shaped by the tides be found. In addition to the wadden areas, which turn dry and are flooded during the interchanging tides, dunes, saltmarshes, sand banks, tideways and open water are part of the Wadden Sea habitat. In Germany it is protected by three National Parks. The Wadden Sea was awarded world heritage site status by UNESCO in 2009. This underlines its uniqueness. The Wadden Sea has the same level of importance as the Great Barrier Reef, The Galapagos Islands off the shores of Ecuador or the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, Africa.

The Wadden Sea is a landscape which holds many records: it is the most abundant area for birds in Europe, the largest National Park area between Sicily and the North Cape, with about 10,000 different types of plants and animals. 250 of these only occur in the Wadden Sea. The Wadden Sea is home to common and grey seals, porpoises and the nursery for fish such as herring, plaice and sole.

The Wadden Sea is not just a habitat for many, but particularly for an extremely large diversity of species. You just need to look at the soil to realise this: millions of lugworms, ragworms, blue mussels, mud shrimps, and shore crabs live in and on the mudflats, which appear to be lifeless at first sight. These invertebrates are the fundamental food source for birds, fish and seals and ultimately for people living on the North Sea coast.

The Wadden Sea was created as a consequence of the last ice age. Melting glaciers caused the water level to rise and also deposited sediments.

The salt marshes are typical for the Wadden Sea. They appear in the transition area between land and sea, where enough sediments have deposited. This is where countless types of insects, spiders, small crabs and worms live. Many of these are highly specialised and only feed on a single type of plant. The plants are specialists too. Their glands secrete salt, so that it cannot damage the plant cells.

You can experience wilderness in all of the three Wadden Sea National Parks. It is an intense experience that is not commonplace nowadays.

During guided walks through the mud flats in the National Park you can discover little stars: the lugworm devouring up to 25 kilograms a year; the common shore crab walking sideways; the cockle shell, digging quickly into the soil of the mudflats; the mud snail, the fastest snail in the Wadden Sea; and the North Sea shrimp, which many otherwise only know from a shrimp sandwich.

Bird watchers find ideal conditions in the Wadden Sea National Park. Over ten million waders and water birds use the Wadden Sea throughout the year. They breed, rest, moult or overwinter in this area. Oyster catcher can be seen all year round. During spring they breed in the saltmarsh meadows and their loud call is unmistakable. Migrating birds such as the dunlin and red knot use the Wadden Sea as a resting area in the spring and autumn. They display fascinating aerobatic flight manoeuvres and change between feeding sites in the Wadden Sea and their high tide resting sites in large flocks.

During the winter months, when the wind blows snowflakes across the saltmarshes, a little guest finds this place a pleasant home: the snow bunting. It breeds around the edges of the areas covered in ice around the north pole in the summer and escapes the cold during the winter by moving to the warmer Wadden Sea. The snow bunting feeds on plant seeds being washed ashore the unused saltmarshes and the siltation areas of the National Park.

The most striking mammals, that regularly live in the Wadden Sea are the common and grey seals. Their populations in the German Wadden Sea and Heligoland consist of close to 24,000 common seals and 1,000 grey seals. Boat trips with National Park partners to the seal banks allow the visitor to observe them particularly well.



Schleswig-Holstein
Wadden Sea
National Park



The Wadden Sea is wild, sometimes even stormy, when westerly winds whip up the sea and waves pounce against the dykes. There are ten small islands, called “Hallige”, only protected by low summer dykes. They are flooded up to 70 times a year. At that point only the houses, built on small artificial mounds, rise out of the ocean. You will never forget the impressions of such a storm. But the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is worth a visit at any time of the year.

The five inhabited small islands are part of the Biosphere Reserve, the five smaller islands are part of the core area of the National Park. The Hamburg Island for example is a special gem. It is the only one of the small islands connected with a dam to the mainland. Walkers, cyclists and cars can use the dam. Brent geese rest in the natural salt marshes in spring and autumn, redshank breed here in the summer and the seashore aster flower. A bike tour right through this habitat is an unforgettable experience.

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is the largest National Park in Central Europe. High and low tide, wind and waves create permanent change. The slogan “let nature be nature” is particularly true for this area.

Guided walks and boat trips to the “Small Five”, the “Flying Five” and the “Big Five” allow visitors a special experience of the World Heritage Site.

The “Small Five” are lugworm, mud snail, cockle shell, shore crab and the North Sea shrimp. They are the little stars of the guided walk through the mudflats offered by rangers and National Park Partners. Twice a day, when the water releases the seabed, a great number of specialists appear. They have adapted to the extreme conditions of this habitat.

The bird migration in spring and autumn with up to two million water birds and waders is particularly spectacular for naturalists and bird watchers. The birds breed on the shores of Siberia, Greenland and Canada and take a rest in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park. If you want to observe these birds, you can join a guided walk about these “Flying Five”. This includes five types of birds: barnacle goose, oyster catcher, herring gull, dunlin and brent goose.

Visitors of famous African National Parks know the “Big Five”: elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard are the safari highlights. In the Wadden Sea you can also see big animals, and often up close. The “Big Five” include sturgeon, white-tailed eagle, common and grey seals and porpoises. Seals can be observed up close during one of the boat trips to the sandbanks. The porpoise is the only whale that lives in the Wadden Sea. It nurtures its young in the whale preservation zone west of the islands of Sylt and Amrum.

One day in the National Park

On a nice day, visit the village of Westerhever. Walk from the car park to the dyke. Walk through the salt marshes past the famous panorama of the Westerhever light house. During low tide you can reach the sand bank. Gulls and waders breed there between spring and early summer. Thousands of arctic migratory birds rest on the sandbanks and the salt marshes in late summer and autumn. Large flocks of geese can be seen in winter.

Drive to the small harbour town of Tönning to get some information about the National Park and visit the "Multimar Wattforum" Information Centre. The centre takes you into the exciting world of science in an entertaining way. 37 fish tanks display more than 280 types of fish, crabs, mussels and snails. As a special attraction, you can watch a diver feed the fish in the large fish tank twice a week. The diver has a special under-water microphone and provides information while feeding the fish. Another attraction is an 18 metre long sperm whale, which stranded on the shores of the Wadden Sea many years ago. Children can burn off their energy on a large water-playground.

One week in the National Park

Monday: Arrival at one of the National Park Partner B&Bs on the mainland or one of the islands. Have an evening stroll along the beach and have a fish sandwich at the harbour.

Tuesday: Natural history mudflats excursion with one of the National Park rangers to get to know the "Small Five" of the National Park. Visit one of the nature conservation organisations at one of the local National Park Centres in the afternoon.

Wednesday: Take the National Park Partner ferry from the villages of Büsum or Schlüttsiel into the National Park. On the way join an expert talk on freshly caught sea life.

Thursday: Visit the "Multimar Wattforum" National Park Centre in the town of Tönning. Guided bird walk with one of the nature conservation experts in the afternoon.

Friday: Take the National Park Partner ferry from the settlement of Nordstrand or Wyk auf Föhr to the seal sand banks.

Saturday: Sunshine! A day to go to the beach and to watch birds, for example at the Westerhever light house. Have some delicious North Sea shrimp for dinner.



General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: North Sea Coast of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, from the border with Denmark to the mouth of the River Elbe

Area: 4,410 square kilometres

Height above sea level: –15 to +8 metres
(–49 to +26 feet)

Opened in: 1985

Habitat Types: mudflats, islands, dunes, sand banks, tideways, salt marshes and open water

Books and Maps

Weltnaturerbe Wattenmeer
Martin Stock, Ute Wilhelmsen
ISBN 978-3-529-05321-4

Wissen Wattenmeer
Martin Stock, Ute Wilhelmsen
ISBN 978-3529053504

North Sea Leisure map
North Sea Tourist Information:
www.nordseetourismus.de

National Park Information

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National Park Administration*
Schlossgarten 1
D-25832 Tönning/Germany
Phone: +49(0)4861 616-0, fax -69
nationalpark@lkn.landsh.de
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de

National Park Centre – Multimar Wattforum
Dithmarscher Straße 6a
D-25832 Tönning/Germany
Phone: +49(0)4861 9620-0, fax -10
info@multimar-wattforum.de
www.multimar-wattforum.de/en

Accommodation

National Park Partner
Hosts with quality assurance
www.nationalpark-partner-sh.de/en

North Sea Tourist Information
Phone: +49(0)4841 89750
www.nordseetourismus.de

How to get there

By Rail:

Hamburg-Westerland route with stops at the towns of Heide, Husum and Niebüll; connection from Heide to the village of Büsum, in Husum to the town of St. Peter-Ording, in Niebüll to the village of Dagebüll.

By Car:

From Hamburg the Motorway (“Autobahn”) A 23 to Heide, continue on the B 203 to Büsum, B 202 to St. Peter-Ording or the B 5 towards Tönning, Husum, and Niebüll. Rail & Ride from Niebüll to the island of Sylt and the town of Westerland. Ferries to the islands from the villages of Dagebüll and Schlüttsiel.

Accessible visit

The National Park partners offer many easy access options for accommodation. Selected villages offer the mud-mobile, a special wheelchair that can be pulled over the mudflats.

The National Park administration has extensive information about accessible visits in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea. It is collated in a special publication:

www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/sh/service/mediathek/dokumente/wattenmeer-fuer-alle/2527 (in German only)

The black and white oyster catcher with its red beak is the most recognisable bird in the Wadden Sea National Park

Nationalpark
Wattenmeer



SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN



Hamburg
Wadden Sea
National Park



Like a yellow caterpillar several horse drawn carriages crawl slowly across the dry sea bed of the North Sea. The trek to the island of Neuwerk is up to 12 kilometres (7.5 miles) long, starting at the city of Cuxhaven in the suburbs of Sahlenburg and Duhnen. This is traditionally the most popular way to explore the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park. During your journey across the sea bed at low tide the little island of Neuwerk can be seen from far afield, with its angular light house rising far above the horizon.

During low tide, you can also reach the island of Neuwerk on foot. The route is marked with bundles of sticks (locally known as "Pricken"). The route is secured with three rescue beacons and takes two and a half hours. Another mud flat walk takes you from Neuwerk to the bird island of Scharhörn. During the summer you can also reach the island of Neuwerk by boat from Cuxhaven during high tide.

Other attractions of the National Park are strolls through the salt marshes, climbing up a tower, visits to the seal sands and watching birds during the breeding season or at the resting places of numerous birds. The National Park Centre offers an in-depth view into the habitat of the Wadden Sea.

The protected area in the western estuary of the River Elbe is incorporated into the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park and bounded by the open sea. Wide and mainly sandy wadden areas with meandering tideways characterise this area. Dunes and beaches can be found primarily on the islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn. The salt marshes characterise the foreshore of the island of Neuwerk and now also the shallow area called Scharhörnplate around the islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn. The island of Neuwerk is car free and belongs to the borough of Central Hamburg, as do the neighbouring islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn.

The Wadden Sea is extremely dynamic: The tidal range between high tide and low tide is about 3 metres (10 feet) and determines the rhythm of life. Storm surges with extremely high water levels cause loss of land in some places and the deposit of sediments along some foreshores.

The currents between the River Elbe and the River Weser are particularly strong. They are responsible for extensive sediment movements, which happen at every tide. Especially during easterly winds, flying sand causes significant new deposits of sand.

Thousands and thousands of water birds and waders use the Wadden Sea for breeding or resting while migrating through. This includes sandwich terns, brent geese, oyster catcher and barnacle geese. They all feed on worms, mussels and crabs, which live in unimaginable densities in the soil.

The common seal is the only mammal which is permanently at home in the Hamburg Wadden Sea. Since the big seal deaths which occurred in 1988, the population has now recovered to 500–600 animals. Occasionally grey seals and porpoises can be seen.

Apart from algae, only a few particularly resistant and salt-tolerant plants grow on the wadden areas, for example the common glasswort. In the eastern foreshore area of the island of Neuwerk, sea wormwood, beach aster and sea lavender have slowly reconquered old territory since the restoration of the salt marshes started.



Natural salt marshes developing on the eastern foreshore of the island of Neuwerk

One day in the National Park

A day trip to the island of Neuwerk involves a two to three hour walk, a one hour trip with a horse drawn carriage or a half hour trip by boat. You can gain a good overview over Hamburg's National Park from the light house. It rises over Neuwerk and as a fortified tower has been keeping robbers and pirates in check since the 14th century.

Near the tower is the Neuwerk National Park Centre with an exhibition about Hamburg's Wadden Sea and the island of Neuwerk. Marked paths through the salt marshes allow you to experience many breeding and resting birds close up.

One week in the National Park

Monday: Arrive on the island of Neuwerk by boat. Move into a cosy B&B and have your first circular walk around the island on the Ringel Dyke.

Tuesday: It's raining. Have a lie in and read a novel about the pirate Störtebeker. Visit the National Park Centre next to the light house in the afternoon.

Wednesday: The sun is shining. Enjoy the view from the light house in the morning. Guided walk through the salt marshes by one of the members of the National Park Administration and watch oyster catchers, the emblem of the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park, in the afternoon.

Thursday: Take a walk through the mud flats to the bird island Scharhörn with the charity Jord-sand. As well as the birds the natural development of the landscape is impressive.

Friday: Walk with one of the rangers to the "Vogelsand" ("bird sands") area, an elevated area in the Wadden Sea north of the island of Neuwerk. You can find amber there after storms.

Saturday: Walk to the seal sands with a ranger in the morning. Have a swim in the sea in the afternoon at high tide.

Sunday: After a farewell walk across the island the boat takes you back to Cuxhaven.

General Information

Mit den typischen
Wattwagen nach
Neuwerk

Facts and Figures

Location: Estuary of the River Elbe, about 10 kilometres (6 miles) away from the city of Cuxhaven

Area: 137 square kilometres

Height above sea level: -18 to +6 metres (-60 to +20 feet; highest point is the dyke at Neuwerk)

Opened in: 1990

Habitat Types: mudflats influenced by fresh water from the River Elbe, sand islands, salt marshes, dunes, tideways, sandbanks and open sea

Books and Maps

Nationalpark-Atlas Hamburgisches Wattenmeer
Hrsg. Umweltbehörde Hamburg unter
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de

National Park Information

Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park
Administration c/o Department for the
Environment and Energy
Neuenfelder Straße 19
D-21109 Hamburg/Germany
Phone: +49(0)40 42840 3392
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de

National Park Field Station Neuwerk
Phone: +49(0)4721 69271, fax 28860
np-station@wattenmeer-hamburg.de

Neuwerk National Park Centre
Phone: +49(0)4721 395349,
fax +49(0)4721 395866
np-haus@wattenmeer-hamburg.de

Accommodation

Turm
Phone: +49(0)4721 29078

Haus Seeblick
Phone: +49(0)4721 20360

Das alte Fischerhaus
Phone: +49(0)4721 29043

Nige Hus
Phone: +49(0)4721 29561

Hus Achtern Diek
Phone: +49(0)4721 29076



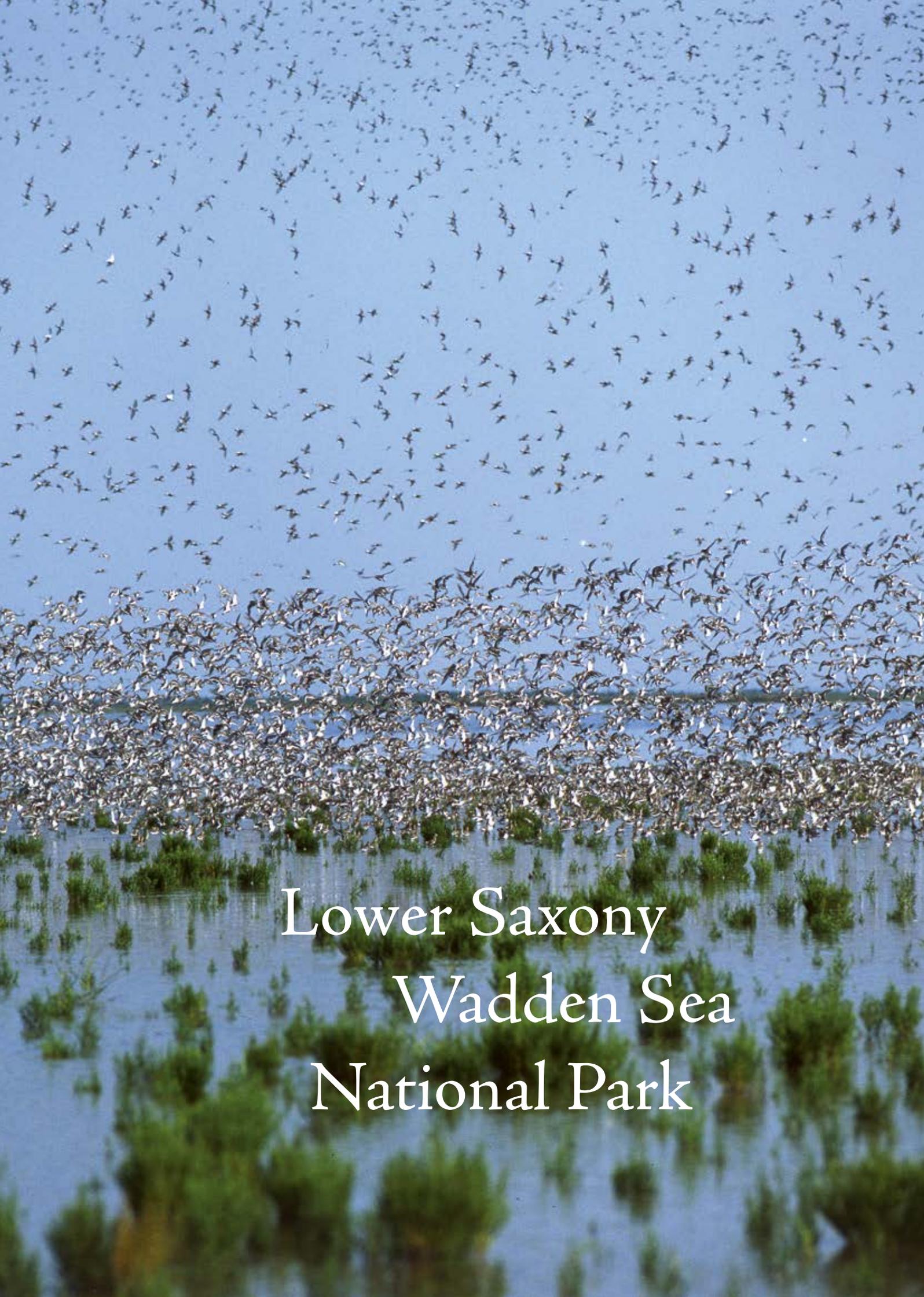
How to get there

Travel by car or train to the city of Cuxhaven. There are three ways of getting to the island of Neuwerk:

- ♦ Take the bus from Cuxhaven Central to the suburb of Sahlenburg and walk from there.
- ♦ Take a horse drawn carriage from Sahlenburg or Duhnen (bus connection from central station).
- ♦ Take the boat "MS Flipper" from Cuxhaven, from the "Alte Liebe" pier, operated by Cassen Eils, Phone: +49(0)4721 32211, www.neuwerkreisen.de

Accessible visit

Unfortunately, the National Park cannot be set up for easy access. Visitors can walk through the mud flats (2–3 hours) or take a horse drawn carriage of boat to the island of Neuwerk. If you are disabled, you should contact the transport company directly before your journey to explore what is possible. On the island of Neuwerk, only the paths in the area of Binnengroden are largely accessible. The National Park Centre is designed to be easy access on the ground floor (exhibition and toilets).

A large-scale photograph capturing a massive flock of birds, likely gulls or terns, in flight over a coastal wetland. The birds are densely packed in the sky, appearing as a textured pattern of white and grey against a clear blue background. Below them, a body of water reflects the sky, interspersed with patches of vibrant green vegetation. The overall scene conveys a sense of natural abundance and dynamic movement.

Lower Saxony
Wadden Sea
National Park



Viewed from a distance you might think nature has created something like minimal art – straight horizontal lines, monochrome areas that appear to be endless, a simple division of space and a manageable number of colours. But the landscape of this UNESCO World Heritage Site is dynamic and rich in species. Nothing remains as it is. The Wadden Sea changes its appearance all of the time.

This is due to the tides. Material that is eroded in one place is deposited as sediment somewhere else. Twice a day, the tides flood raw materials and food into the Wadden Sea. Nutrient-rich sediments deposit on the sea bed. Together with tiny creatures and plankton, this organic substance forms a fertile soil for small animals. One million brown algae, hundreds of thousands of small crabs, mussels, snails and worms live in one square metre of soil. These in return are the food source for a multitude of fish, birds and mammals. An area of 100 by 100 metres (328 x 328 feet) of this microcosm in the mud contains three to twelve tons of biomass. This is more than the tropical rain forest!

Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park stretches from the border with the Netherlands in the River Ems estuary (Dollart bay and island of Borkum) up to the River Elbe West of Cuxhaven on the border with the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein.

Three types of landscape characterise the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea. First, the East Frisian islands with their high dunes and natural salt marshes, which nearly exclusively belong to the National Park. Large mud flats stretch between the islands and the mainland. They include extensive sandy, mixed and muddy wadden areas, which reach up to 20 kilometres (12 miles) into the sea in the area between the Rivers Weser and Elbe.

Immediately in front of the dykes on the foreshore, many places have salt marshes. The Lower Saxony protection area contains large Wadden Sea bays, such as the Jadebusen, Ley and Dollart bay. These were created during medieval times, when the sea broke into the mainland. This is where the typical sequence of sandy wadden areas, mixed wadden areas, muddy wadden areas, silting up belt, salt marshes and dyke is best developed.

This part of the World Heritage Site offers many opportunities to discover habitats and natural cycles close up. The visitor can experience this unique landscape best during the summer: a guided walk through the mudflats near the coast or to one of the dune islands that shelter the Wadden Sea from the open North Sea. At the Eastern end of the islands of Norderney and Spiekeroog there are undisturbed washover areas, where storm surges drive the water right over the island through the dunes and salt marshes in the Wadden Sea.

The dynamic dunes with all their diversity of shapes and forms from the different stages of dune formation, dune valleys and dune ridges, can be experienced particularly well on the islands of Borkum, Norderney, Baltrum, Spiekeroog and Langeoog.

Bird walks by the National Park rangers or taking part in a trip to the seal sands provide an excellent insight into the fauna of the Wadden Sea. To see the diversity of fish in the area we recommend a National Park Discovery Tour with one of the small fishing boats and their trawl nets. These are offered from many of the towns and villages along the coast.

Huge flocks of birds are present on the salt marshes and mudflats during the bird migration period

One week in the National Park

One day in the National Park

On a nice day, we recommend a day trip from the village of Neßmersiel to the island of Baltrum. With a certified mudflats guide you can walk for about seven kilometres (5 miles) through the mudflats to the smallest of the East Frisian islands. You will have about four hours stay on the island and can take the boat back to the mainland. If it rains a visit to one of the National Park Centres, for example Dornumersiel or Greetsiel or in the village of Norddeich is well worth your time. The latter is also a seal rescue centre and you can watch these fascinating marine mammals.

Every year the “Zugvogeltage” (Bird Migration Week) takes place in the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park. From the second to the third weekend in October many events offer something for everyone, from classic bird walks on foot, by bus or by boat to cultural and culinary experiences. You can also book event packages for multiple days. More information and the current programme are available at www.zugvogeltage.de

Monday: Arrive by bike at the City of Bremerhaven main railway station. Take the boat to the island of Nordenham and cycle along the dyke towards the West. There are plenty of nice B&Bs in small villages such as Fedderwardersiel (with National Park Centre and harbour) or Langwarden.

Tuesday: Trip on the Eastern shore of the Jadebusen Bay southbound to visit the world’s only open air foreshore bog in the village of Sehestedt. A discovery trail on a boardwalk takes you through the bog to the bird hide. Stay overnight in the “Brücke” artist village of Dangast.

Wednesday: Bike tour on the Jadebusen Bay towards Wilhelmshaven. Is it raining? A good reason to visit the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage Site Visitor Centre in Wilhelmshaven.

Thursday: Aim for the villages of Harlesiel and/ or Carolinensiel. Get an insight into the world of the North Sea at the “Wangerland” National Park Centre in the village of Minsen. Once at your destination a swim in the North Sea is well worth it.

Friday: Leave the bikes at home today. Have a day trip to the island of Wangerooge. A trip with the island railway, locally known as “Vogelzug” (“bird train” or “bird migration”), right through the flowering salt marshes and countless birds is a unique experience. Don’t forget the departure time while walking through the fragrant dune landscapes.

Saturday: The last leg of your bike tour takes you to Jever, where the train is waiting for you



General Information

Facts and Figures

Location: Lower Saxony North Sea coast and islands, from the River Elbe estuary near the city of Cuxhaven to the border with the Netherlands

Area: 3,450 square kilometres

Height above sea level: –15 to +20 metres (–49 to +66 feet); highest point are the dunes of the East Frisian islands.

Opened in: 1986

Habitat Types: mudflats, sand banks, tideways, open sea islands with dunes and beaches, salt marshes, cliffs, bogs and heathland

Books and Maps

Free regional leaflets and brochure “Unser Nationalpark” (“Our National Park”; in German only)

*Vögel beobachten im Nationalpark
Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer*
ISBN 3-7595-0910-4 (12,90 Euro)

National Park Information

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www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer-erleben.de

*UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage Site
Visitor Centre Cuxhaven*
Phone: +49(0)4721 5905610
www.nationalparkhaus-wattenmeer.de/cuxhaven

Norderney National Park Centre
Phone: +49(0)4932 2001
www.nationalparkhaus-wattenmeer.de/norderney

as well as 16 further information centres
www.nationalparkhaus-wattenmeer.de

Accommodation

Accommodation and catering options from certified National Park Partners:
www.nationalpark-partner-wattenmeer-nds.de

Die Nordsee (the North Sea Company)
Phone: +49(0)4421 956099-1
www.die-nordsee.de

How to get there

By Rail:

The following railway stations (some with bus transfer) have connections to the island ferries: Sande/Harlesiel (for Wangerooge), Esens (for Spiekeroog and Langeoog), Norddeich/Mole (for Norderney, Juist), Neßmersiel via Norddeich (for Baltrum), Emden Außenhafen (for Borkum).

Other destination stations: Wilhelmshaven, Varel, Nordenham and Cuxhaven

By Car:

Via the Motorway (“Autobahn”) A 27 to Bremerhaven/Cuxhaven; A 29 via Oldenburg to Wilhelmshaven/Sande/Varel; A 28 via Oldenburg to Emden/Norddeich; A 31 via Rheine to Emden/Norddeich.

Tip for sustainable mobility: The “Urlauberbus” (tourist bus) takes you to many places on the islands for two Euros per journey on all East Frisian islands. www.urlauberbus.info

Accessible visit

There is plenty of easy access accommodation along the coast and on the islands. Several places, such as Tossens, Wilhelmshaven, Schillig, Carolinensiel and Norddeich offer mud-mobiles. These are specially modified mobility scooters with balloon wheels suitable for mud flats. They allow people with mobility issues to experience a unique excursion over the sea bed. There is an easy access path through the salt marshes in the village of Sande Cäciliengroden. Please enquire about what is offered for the visually impaired, those hard of hearing or with learning difficulties at one of the National Park Information Centres.





The Bastion Bridge in
the Saxon Switzerland
National Park

Jewels of Nature – the National Natural Landscapes

The 16 National Parks, 17 Biosphere Reserves and nearly 100 Nature Parks offer breath-taking views and spectacular encounters as well as tranquillity and relaxation. They also stand for the preservation of biological diversity and the protection of local flora and fauna.

United under the umbrella of “Nationale Naturlandschaften” (National Natural Landscapes) they offer the visitor a spectacular natural scene – from the Wadden Sea and the river landscapes of central Germany to the Alps.

United with one voice – The National Natural Landscapes and EUROPARC Germany

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

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

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

National Parks

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

Biosphere Reserves

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

Nature Parks

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

Wilderness Areas

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





Top: National Park Partner
"Ernsthof" in the Bavarian
Forest

Below: Siesta in a hay
stack – a break from
harvesting hay on the
Arnika meadow in the
Landscape Conservation
Park in the Erz
Mountains/Vogtland



A Special Experience of Nature – Holiday with one of our partners

To spend a holiday in some of the most spectacular natural scenery and to experience it with all your senses – that is what the Partners of the National Natural Landscapes offer you.

Partner businesses see themselves as ambassadors for their protected area. They support nature conservation and climate protection and are a competent first point of contact for their local region.

They consider it their role to design and offer diverse and high quality services which are sustainable for nature and the environment. This will allow you to have a special experience of nature. Enjoy the most valuable natural and cultural landscapes of Germany – the National Natural Landscapes – with all your senses.

More Information:
www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de/partner

Publishers Information and Credits

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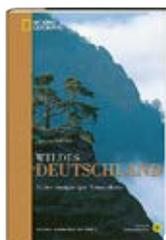
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