



Federal Agency for
Nature Conservation

Places Full of Life – Wetlands of International Importance in Germany



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Easy-to-read summary



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Dear readers,



This year we are celebrating a special milestone: the **50th anniversary** of Germany's accession to the Convention on Wetlands, known as the Ramsar Convention. The Convention was signed in 1971 and

stands, like no other, for the protection and sustainable use of wetlands worldwide. Since 1976, Germany has been one of the now 172 Contracting Parties and has designated 35 sites of international importance, which form part of the more than 2,500 Ramsar Sites worldwide.

Wetlands fulfil a multitude of ecological functions: they provide species-rich habitats for rare birds, valuable insects, amphibians and a unique flora. Furthermore, they store and purify water, protect us from floods and droughts, make an important contribution to climate protection and serve as places of recreation and inspiration. At the same time, many of these vital ecosystems are under considerable pressure. In recent decades numerous wetlands have been drained, polluted, destroyed or built over, and climate change is further exacerbating the threat.

The Federal Agency for Nature Conservation is therefore deeply committed to the protection, restoration and sustainable use of these valuable habitats. Through programmes such as the Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity (ANK) and Germany's Blue Belt Programme we support measures that conserve and restore wetlands and safeguard their diverse functions in the long term.

I warmly invite you to discover the impressive diversity of Germany's Ramsar Sites in this brochure. Each of these protected areas has its own unique characteristics – from the Wadden Sea to lake landscapes and peatlands, right through to riparian forests. They all tell their own story and make an indispensable contribution to the ecological balance. Let yourself be inspired and discover the beauty of our wetlands.

With warm regards

Sabine Riewenherm

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The Convention on Wetlands



Whether they are marshes, rivers, lakes or shallow coastal waters – wetlands around the world are indispensable to nature and humanity: they purify water, protect against flooding, store carbon and, last but not least, serve as habitats or resting places for countless plants and animals. The international community recognised this long ago and, in 1971, adopted an international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands: the Convention on Wetlands (also known as the Ramsar Convention). To this day, it is regarded as a milestone in global nature conservation. Regular reports of the condition of these unique habitats and their species provide valuable insights into how we need to improve our stewardship of nature.

Today, the Convention has 172 Contracting Parties, which together have designated over 2,500 protected areas covering a total of around 2.6 million square kilometres as Ramsar Sites. That is an area as large as Scandinavia, Germany, France and Spain combined. The Federal Republic of Germany acceded in 1976 and thereby committed itself to the long-term conservation and protection of its wetlands. Initially, the Ramsar Convention (official title: 'Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitats') focused primarily on the protection of migratory and wading birds, which depend on intact resting and breeding grounds.

Over time, the scope of the Convention has expanded and now also encompasses aspects such as climate change and sustainable development. It therefore now pursues a holistic approach.

Its key priorities are:

- Protection and sustainable use of wetlands ('wise use')
- Raising awareness of their ecological importance
- International cooperation to protect these habitats

The Convention's most important instrument is the designation of 'wetlands of international importance' (Ramsar Sites) by Member States. This ensures they are recognised worldwide as being particularly worthy of protection. Other key elements include cross-border exchange among stakeholders on conservation measures, mutual support, and the promotion of education and research on wetlands.

In addition, since 2015, cities that are particularly committed to the protection and sustainable use of their wetlands have been awarded the title of 'Wetland City'. Currently, 74 cities in 27 countries hold this title.

The Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) supports the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) and the state authorities in implementing and further developing the Ramsar Convention.



View of Hamburg Harbour from Neßsand Island

Wetlands and humans

Wetlands comprise a wide range of valuable habitats in which water has a decisive influence on flora and fauna as well as the entire environment. The Ramsar Convention distinguishes a total of 42 types, divided into three groups of wetlands:

- inland wetlands
- marine and coastal wetlands
- man-made wetlands.

Wetlands are not only among the most species-rich habitats on Earth and perform vital ecological functions for humanity, they are also important for the economy. Fisheries and agriculture thrive on their shores, and their diverse natural environment is an attractive destination for those seeking recreation. Experts refer to this as 'ecosystem services'.

The Ramsar Convention aims to ensure that wetlands and their services are protected and preserved for nature and for us humans.

Wetlands of international importance in Germany

Most of the 35 Ramsar Sites in Germany are also protected as Natura 2000 sites, national parks, nature reserves or biosphere reserves. Their total area is almost 870,000 hectares – roughly three times the size of the German state of Saarland. A large proportion of these sites is located in the Wadden Sea on the North Sea coast, whilst others are found in the Western Pomerania Lagoon landscape, the North German peatlands, along the rivers Elbe, Rhine and Danube, and in the Bavarian Pre-Alps.

Germany's Ramsar Sites meet a wide range of conservation criteria. These include biodiversity: numerous endangered migratory birds such as the Bewick's Swan, the Taiga Bean Goose and the Long-tailed Duck overwinter there. Rare fish such as the Huchen and the Allis Shad, as well as countless plant and invertebrate species, depend on these protected refuges.

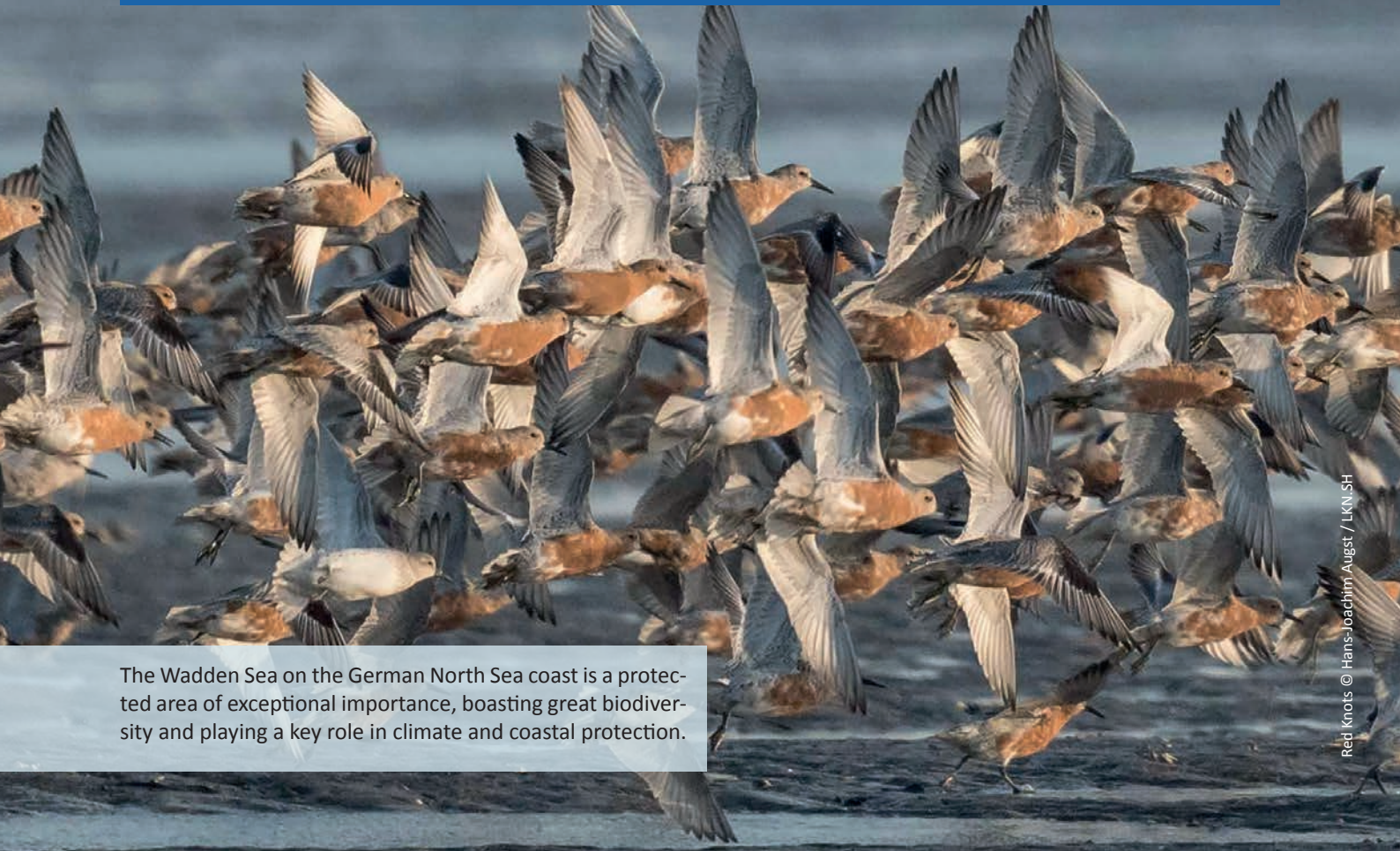


Huchen - *Hucho hucho*

Fragile habitats in flux

Throughout history, many rivers have been straightened and peatlands drained. The input of fertilisers has severely affected many wetlands as well. Yet, despite being designated as internationally significant protected areas, some Ramsar Sites are still being polluted or overused today. This restricts their ecological functions: animal and plant species are disappearing, water quality is declining, the risk of flooding is rising, and the soils are releasing carbon dioxide, which exacerbates climate change. According to recent analyses, only around ten per cent of surface waters in Germany are in good ecological condition. This is precisely what nature conservation organisations and authorities are working on, not least within the framework of the Ramsar Convention: peatlands are being rewetted, streams and floodplains restored, land use regulated more sustainably, and local residents and visitors educated about the importance of wetlands.

The German Wadden Sea



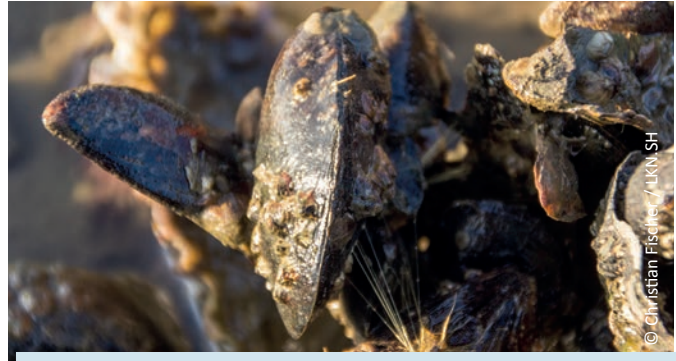
The Wadden Sea on the German North Sea coast is a protected area of exceptional importance, boasting great biodiversity and playing a key role in climate and coastal protection.

The German Wadden Sea comprises five Ramsar Sites, three national parks and three UNESCO biosphere reserves. It stretches from the Danish to the Dutch border and has been part of the Danish-German-Dutch UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site since 2009. In 2015, the cross-border Ramsar Site 'Wadden Sea' was designated. Whilst the core zones of the national parks primarily protect the natural dynamics, the three biosphere reserves serve as model regions for sustainable development, combining nature conservation with adapted human use.

The ebb and flow of the tides in the Wadden Sea create a unique tidal landscape of sand and mudflats that is constantly changing. Specialised plants thrive in the vast mudflat areas, and small animals such as the Lugworm find food and shelter. Many migratory birds stop here to rest on their long journey. The mosaic of water and mudflats, sandbanks, dunes, salt marshes and islands offers a wide variety of habitats for a diverse range of species.



Visitor centre 'Multimar Wattforum' in Tönning



Mussel beds provide shelter and habitat for many animals.



Oystercatchers resting together

Species diversity

From Germany's largest predator, the Grey Seal, to the Harbour Seal, the dolphin-sized Harbour Porpoise, birds, crabs and mussels, right down to microscopic organisms such as Diatoms and Mud Snails – the species diversity in the Wadden Sea is impressive. Many species also live in the seagrass beds. Plants such as Sea Aster and Cordgrass are adapted to the specific conditions of the tidal flats – several of their species are found only here. In spring and autumn, up to ten million birds stop over on the German North Sea coast. In summer, over 30 species of coastal birds can be spotted raising their young in the salt marshes and dunes, including the rare Sandwich Tern and the Common Ringed Plover.



Wadden Sea Visitor Centre
Wilhelmshaven (in German)



Young Grey Seal in the protected habitat of the Wadden Sea



Arctic Tern – a master of coastal hunting



Young people's commitment to wetlands

Young people today have many opportunities to get involved in environmental protection at local, national and global levels. They are also increasingly making their voices heard in international environmental policy. Since 2019, the Ramsar Convention has had a dedicated body for this purpose: the 'Youth Working Group'. In 2025, Germany appointed its first Ramsar Youth Representative, who works on a voluntary basis for two years to champion the interests of young people in wetland conservation.

✉ ramsar-yfp-de@mailbox.org

One example of youth engagement is the **Watt°N** network, the first self-organised volunteer network in a national park. Around 700 young people are working there to protect the Wadden Sea, supporting local initiatives and actively engaging in nature conservation.



(in German)

The Wadden Sea and people

The Wadden Sea makes a significant contribution to climate protection by absorbing large quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. At the same time, the vast mudflat areas and offshore islands, the sandbanks and dunes protect the coasts from storm surges.

The Wadden Sea is also of great economic and cultural significance: traditional fishing for prawns and mussels, life in tune with the tides, and vital coastal protection are integral parts of the regional identity. The charm of this landscape attracts many tourists, who spend a total of more than 43 million visitor days in the region each year, making it an important economic factor. National Park Authorities and tourism associations are working to manage this flow of visitors sustainably and to further raise awareness of the need to protect the Wadden Sea.



Visitor center 'Nationalpark-Haus'
Neuwerk (Hamburg), (in German)

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea



Species-rich salt marshes on Hallig Hooge – one of the flat, undyked marsh islands in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea

Where whales and geese come together

Over half of the German Wadden Sea lies in Schleswig-Holstein. Off the islands of Sylt and Amrum, where Porpoises gather in summer to find food and give birth to their young, Europe's first whale sanctuary was designated in 1999. In the Dithmarschen Wadden Sea, over 80 per cent of north-western Europe's Common Shelducks moult. At this time, they are particularly vulnerable to disturbance. The gathering of resting and breeding birds on the coast of Dithmarschen and North Frisia is a spectacular natural phenomenon. Complemented by the enormous wealth of terrestrial life in the tidal flats and salt marshes, it highlights the outstanding importance of the Wadden Sea as a habitat.

454,988 ha | Schleswig-Holstein | RS No.: 537

Legal designation: UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Natura 2000 site, National Park, Nature Reserve

East Frisian Wadden Sea with the Dollart



Brackish water reed beds at the Ems estuary: Habitat of the sensitive Marsh Beach Grass

Between mudflats, salt marshes and reed beds

The East Frisian Wadden Sea encompasses two sections of Lower Saxony's North Sea coast: the Ems estuary at the Dollart and the East Frisian Islands with their protected back-side tidal flats separated from the open sea by islands and characterised by finer sediment. Here, vast mudflat areas, salt marshes and river mouths, known as estuaries, stretch out. The calm mudflat zones in the Dollart are particularly valuable. They provide important resting and feeding grounds for wading birds such as the Dunlin. Extensive reed beds offer shelter and habitat to many animals here.

121,620 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 82

Legal designation: UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Natura 2000 site, National Park, Nature Reserve

Jadebusen and the Western Weser Estuary



Salt marshes and tidal creeks characterise the landscape on the young dune island of Mellum.

Diversity of the estuary areas

The area is characterised by the estuaries of the Jade and Weser rivers. Between them lie the extensive sand and mud flats of the 'Hoher Weg' tidal flat ridge, stretching all the way to Mellum. Over 30 species of birds breed on the dune island. The Jadebusen bay is a key habitat for rare wading birds such as the Pied Avocet.



Pied Avocet - *Recurvirostra avosetta*

49,490 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 81

Legal designation: UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Natura 2000 site, National Park, Nature Reserve

Elbe-Weser Triangle



The Hohe Knechtsand, one of the many sandbanks off the Wurster North Sea coast.

Dynamic mudflat landscapes

The Elbe-Weser Triangle lies on the Wurster coast between Cuxhaven and Bremerhaven. This stretch of coastline is characterised by a combination of salt marshes, dunes and tidal flats. Unlike other parts of the Wadden Sea, there are no protective barrier islands off the Wurster coast. This has resulted in a dynamic, expansive tidal flat landscape that remains largely free from human influence to this day. This undisturbed environment is particularly important for Common Eiders, which retreat here to moult – a time when they cannot fly and are dependent on safe havens.

38,460 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 80

Legal designation: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Natura 2000 site, National Park, Nature Reserve

Hamburg Wadden Sea



© Martin Elsen / NPHW

The wilderness islands of Scharhörn and Nigehörn – particularly popular with feathered visitors.

Abundance of fish and bird diversity at the mouth of the Elbe

The nutrient-rich waters near the mouth of the Elbe provide ideal conditions for many spawning fish species. At the same time, the area is one of the most important breeding grounds for Common Terns, Arctic Terns and Sandwich Terns. Common Eiders and Shelducks also use the region as a resting and moulting site. In addition, a ground-nesting Cormorant colony can be found here.

Common Eider - *Somateria mollissima*



11,700 ha | Hamburg | RS No.: 501

Legal designation: UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site,
UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Natura 2000 site,
National Park

Wetlands and their value for people and nature



Wetlands are not only habitats for rare and endangered animal and plant species; they fulfil vital functions for us humans. They store and purify water, protect against floods and droughts, and act as natural air-conditioning systems and carbon sinks. Wetlands are the basis of life for millions of people. They serve the purposes of research and recreation.

On 2 February, World Wetlands Day is celebrated worldwide, commemorating the adoption of the Ramsar Convention in 1971 and raising awareness of the importance of these ecosystems through activities, guided tours and events.

Common Mudflat Snail - *Peringia ulvae*



The Baltic Sea Lagoon Landscape



The Baltic Sea Lagoon landscape forms part of the world's largest brackish sea, where fresh and salt water meet to create unique habitats.

Baltic Sea Lagoons of Westrügen - Island Hiddensee - Peninsula Zingst



„Lagoon shores‘ – a paradise for underwater plants

The Western Pomerania Lagoon Area National Park is Germany's third-largest national park. Around a third of its area is designated as a wetland of international importance. The island- and Baltic Sea Lagoon landscape forms a unique mosaic of diverse natural habitats: salt marshes, forests, coastal heaths, wind flats, reed beds, pebble and sandy beaches, as well as steep cliffs in the north of the island of Hiddensee characterise the landscape.



**Exhibitions in the Western
Pomerania Lagoon Area National Park**

Species diversity

Besides Terns and waders, nature enthusiasts can observe majestic White-tailed Eagles and migratory birds such as Golden Plovers and Cranes in the wetlands of the National Park. On the island of Heuwiese, there has been a Cormorant colony for 35 years, now numbering up to 1,200 breeding pairs, as well as a colony of Herring Gulls with around 350 breeding pairs. Many of the 163 breeding bird species found here are considered threatened. Well-protected islands offer them safe havens.

The shallow lagoons of the Baltic Sea – known as ‘Bodden’ – with their low salinity and gentle waves, are a paradise for underwater plants: Stonewort, Widgeon Grass and Comb-leaved Pondweed grow here. Amongst them, tiny Copepods scurry about – an important food source for many fish. Here, freshwater fish such as Pike and Roach live right alongside marine fish such as Herring and Flounder. No wonder so many birds come here to hunt: in winter, hundreds of Great Crested Grebes, Smews, Red-breasted Mergansers and Goosanders rest in the Bodden waters. And when the sun goes down, the vast expanses of water transform into a huge roost – home to up to 40,000 Cranes and 100,000 Greylag, Bean and White-Fronted Geese. The Baltic Grey Seal is also making regular appearances on the beaches again.

In the salt marshes around the lagoons, rare plants such as Baltic Rush and Sea Arrowgrass grow, providing shelter for many specialised insect species such as Ground beetles and butterflies. In the dense reed beds, alongside numerous invertebrates, breeding birds such as the Reed Warbler, the Sedge Warbler and the striking Bearded Tit also take refuge. The tidal flats near the island of Hiddensee provide wading birds such as Sanderlings and Dunlins with an abundant supply of food. The breaks in the steep banks form a small-scale mosaic of plant communities and open ground – ideal for ground-nesting wild bees as well as Digger Wasps and Spider Wasps. Sand Martins also dig nesting tunnels up to two metres deep into the steep banks here. The rare Dune Tiger Beetle inhabits quiet, unused stretches of beach.

Experience and protect the 'Bodden'

Whether on foot, by bike or from the water – the Bodden landscape can be experienced in many different ways. As in all national parks, clear rules ensure that animals and plants can thrive undisturbed. Some sensitive areas are therefore closed to visitors. By staying on marked paths, keeping dogs on a lead and giving nature its space, you actively help to preserve this gem. The National Park Centre in Vitte on Hiddensee offers fascinating insights into life on the 'Bodden' through exhibitions and guided tours. Here, rangers answer questions and share fascinating stories from the protected area.



Species diversity and biodiversity

Wetlands are among the most fascinating and diverse ecosystems on our planet. Whether floodplain, peatland, swamp forest, marsh or wet meadow; whether naturally formed or man-made; permanent or temporary; standing or flowing; freshwater, brackish or saltwater – these water-rich habitats are hotspots of species diversity.

Species diversity and biodiversity are often used interchangeably, but they are different terms. **Species diversity** describes how many different species of animals, plants or fungi live in an area.

Biodiversity encompasses species diversity, the variations within a species (genetic diversity) and the diversity of habitats, such as forests, moors or river landscapes. Species diversity is therefore one aspect of biodiversity. The same applies to both: the more diverse nature is, the more stable its habitats are.

Common Crane - *Grus grus*



Hiking and cycling trails
of the 'Bodden' landscape



In the Land of a Thousand Lakes



The lakes of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania are a paradise for nature lovers: White-tailed Eagle circle overhead, Cranes call out, and Greylag Geese honk along the lake-shores. In autumn, the bellowing of Stags echoes through the colourful forests.

Eastern Shore of Lake Müritz



The Eastern shore of Lake Müritz offers rare species largely untouched swamp forests and reed beds.

Lake Müritz is the largest lake in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and the second largest in Germany after Lake Constance. The name derives from the Slavic word 'morce', meaning 'small sea'. On the eastern shore of the lake there are extensive reed beds and swamp forests. However, the wetland of international importance also includes other lakes: Lake Warnker, Lake Rederang, Lake Specker, Lake Hof and Lake Priestbäker. Between them lie valuable biotopes such as fens, juniper heaths and wet meadows.

Species diversity

The landscape has been largely spared from the intensification of land use and retains its original natural state in many areas. A wide variety of plants and animals have been able to thrive here undisturbed, including rare and highly specialised species. The critically endangered Eurasian Penduline Tit, the iridescent Common Kingfisher and several breeding pairs of White-tailed Eagles live here. The region is a paradise for resting migratory birds. From the end of August, thousands of Cranes gather here and do not move on until the end of October.

Natural attraction Müritz

The natural landscape of the Müritz can be explored via numerous paths and viewing points. From the observation tower at Rederangsee, for example, you can watch the Cranes flying in at dusk to their roosts. Many nature conservation professionals make use of this: a great deal of research and environmental education takes place in the Müritz region.

4,974 ha | Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania | RS No.: 172

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, National Park



Nature experience centre
'Müritzeum'

Eurasian Penduline Tit - *Remiz pendulinus*



Upper Lake Krakow



Upper Lake Krakow – a habitat between islands and reeds

Undisturbed aquatic worlds

Eight islands, reed beds, shoals and wide shallow water zones, surrounding forests, wet meadows and the fen of the inflowing River Nebel, the Upper Lake Krakow, which is up to 27 metres deep, forms an important refuge for numerous species. Waterbirds favour the diverse lake, where they are undisturbed by boat traffic. The White-tailed Eagle hunts here all year round and several pairs breed in the nearby lake area. During the summer months, the Osprey is both a breeding bird and a visitor in search of food. The Upper Lake Krakow is one of the most important moulting sites for Tufted Ducks and Common Pochards in Central Europe. They gather in thousands in late summer and benefit from the underwater plants and mussel populations in the shallow waters between the islands.

893 ha | Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania | RS No.: 171

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve, Nature Park

Lake Galenbeck



Reed beds, marshy swamp forests and grassland areas provide food and roosting sites for migratory birds.

Restored, vibrant, species-rich

Lake Galenbeck is a shallow lake with two basins separated by the 'Teufelsbrücke' peninsula. Reed beds, fens, swamp forests and grasslands provide roosting and resting places for Cranes, Bean Geese and White-fronted Geese, Whooper Swans and numerous duck species. Rare orchids and Mealy Primroses find ideal conditions in the calcareous fens. Of the 309 recorded flowering plants, 14 are classified as critically endangered and 96 as vulnerable. Despite being designated a nature reserve, the lake and surrounding areas were used intensively for a long time. As part of an extensive restoration project from 2005 to 2007, the lake was able to recover. An artificial shoreline approximately seven kilometres long retains the water, thereby promoting new peat growth.

1,040 ha | Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania | RS No.: 177

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Wetland Restoration



The restoration of wetlands involves redesigning watercourses, peatlands and floodplains so that they can return to fulfilling their natural functions: promoting greater species diversity and a stable water balance.

Lowland of the Lower Havel / Gülper Lake / Schollener Lake



Thanks to restoration measures, the Lower Havel can once again flow more freely.

An impressive river landscape stretches along the border between Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg: two shallow lakes, extensive floodplains along the lower reaches of the river Havel, and an interplay of meadows, dykes, canals and ditches. Along the Havel, there are oxbow lakes, reed beds, willow groves and remnants of old riparian forests. By 2033, it is envisioned to flow in a near-natural state once more and serve as an example to other German rivers. Successes are already evident today: new sandbanks, islands and riparian forests have emerged, turning the region into a natural paradise. As a result, the landscape is once again storing much more water, and the risk of flooding has decreased.

8,920 ha | Brandenburg / Saxony-Anhalt | RS No.: 173

Legal designation: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve,

Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve, Nature Park

Species diversity

The Lower Havel is a habitat for over a thousand animal and plant species; around 120 bird species breed here – including specialised wetland dwellers such as the Black and Whiskered Tern, Black-necked Grebe and Spotted Crake. Every year, over 20,000 waterbirds stop over on the Havel, including swans, geese and cranes. And special plants grow here too: the Fen Orchid, a rare orchid species, and the Water Soldier. The latter serves as the almost exclusive egg-laying site for a very rare dragonfly species, the Green Hawker.

In Schollener Lake, one finds large floating reed beds where Marsh Fern, Kievan Nettle and Great Water-parsnip grow. The waters are home to fish species such as European Bitterling and Weatherfish, as well as amphibians such as the European Fire-Bellied Toad and Great Crested Newt. Otters and Beavers also thrive here.



Green Hawker
(*Aeshna viridis*) emerging from its exuvia

Natura 2000 information centre
„Haus der Flüsse“ (House of Rivers)



Lower Oder Valley, Schwedt



© Tim Bornholdt /
Nationalparkverwaltung

The winter flooding of the polders makes the area unique.

Diversity of the floodplain

Floodplain forests, wet meadows, reed beds, oxbow lakes and the river Oder itself characterise this richly structured lowland landscape in north-eastern Brandenburg. The meadows in the polders, which are flooded in winter, provide an ideal resting place for around 60 species of waterbird, including Whooper Swan and Taiga Bean Goose. The breeding area is also of supra-regional importance for meadow-nesting birds such as the Corn Crake, Northern Lapwing and Common Snipe. 46 documented fish species underscore the high level of species diversity.

The Ramsar Site is part of the Lower Oder Valley National Park, the only floodplain national park in Germany, which stems from a Large-Scale Nature Conservation Project in the 1990s.

5,400 ha | Brandenburg | RS No.: 174

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, National Park, Nature Reserve

Today, the primary conservation objectives are to preserve natural processes and restore near-natural water conditions.



Discover the floodplain landscape
at the Criewen National Park House

Approaching nature conservation and climate protection together



The German government supports projects for nature and climate protection through a variety of programmes: the federal 'Blue Belt Germany' programme with its 'Floodplains' funding scheme, the Federal 'Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity' (ANK), the 'Federal Biological Diversity Programme', and the 'chance.natur – Federal Funding for Nature Conservation' programme assist local stakeholders in planning and implementing their measures. In this way, ecologically valuable natural and cultural landscapes typical of Germany are preserved for the long term. Peatlands are revitalised as carbon sinks, and rivers, lakes and floodplains are designed to be as close to natural as possible. In this way, they store more water and make important contributions to species diversity, climate protection and flood control.



Migratory Birds and their Routes

Migratory birds such as cranes, geese and starlings put on an impressive natural spectacle every year. In step with the changing seasons, billions of them set off on long, perilous journeys across the globe. Wetlands are vital to their survival, as they provide safe resting places where the birds can regain their strength. Cranes wade in shallow water, Starlings hide in dense reeds at night, and wild geese sleep on the water to keep safe from predators such as foxes. There, the birds also find plenty of food, such as fish, crabs and worms.

Germany lies right in the middle of the East Atlantic Flyway, one of the birds' most important migration routes. It runs along the Atlantic coastline of Europe and Africa. That is why it is so important that the protection of these animals and their habitats does not stop at national borders. And it must be flexible: because, not least due to climate change, living conditions are changing, and the birds must adapt to these changes too. For example, many bodies of water in Germany no longer freeze over in winter. That is why more and more northern waterbirds are overwintering here rather than further south.



East Atlantic Flyway

Eastern European Flyway and Central Asian-Indian Flyway


Arctic Tern - *Sterna paradisaea*

Record-holder: the Arctic Tern

The Arctic Tern holds the record for the longest migration route: despite its light weight of just around 100 grams, it flies between 40,000 and 90,000 kilometres every year – from Greenland to Antarctica and back again. Over the course of its roughly 20-year lifespan, it may thus cover more than a million kilometres: that is roughly three times the distance from the Moon to Earth. In doing so, it does not take the direct route between the North and South Poles but often makes long detours to find better feeding grounds or avoid bad weather. Ramsar Sites such as the Camargue in France, the German and Danish Wadden Sea, and the Sine-Saloum Delta in Senegal offer them essential opportunities to rest.

Research is fun!

Apps such as iNaturalist or ObsIdentify help us to better understand nature. For birdwatching, ornitho.de is one of the most important online platforms in Germany.

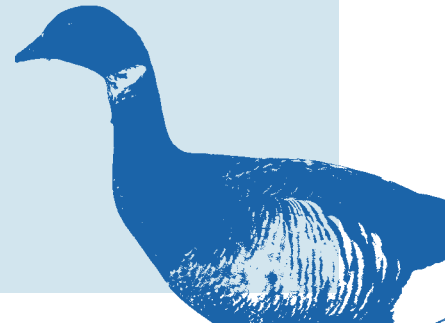


Would you like to know which fascinating bird species can be found in your area? Or would you like to contribute to research yourself? On www.ornitho.de, dedicated bird enthusiasts compile more than ten million observations every year. The German Association of Avifaunists (www.dda-web.de) analyses them and creates an increasingly accurate picture of our birdlife. Every entry counts – including yours! (Websites in German)


Common Starling - *Sturnus vulgaris*

Brent Goose - *Branta bernicla*

Film (in German):
A journey with
the Brent Geese



Diversity Created by Humans



Fishponds, irrigation areas, storage ditches, reservoirs, canals and quarry lakes – all of these are man-made wetlands. Their numbers have risen significantly in recent decades. As habitats, they can make a valuable contribution to the preservation of species diversity.

Peitzer Ponds



Exemplary already in GDR times: nature conservation and use at the Peitzer Ponds

A cultural landscape in transition

The 30 fishponds near Peitz in Lower Lusatia are among the largest pond complexes in Europe. Created as early as the 16th century, they are still in use today and form a cultural landscape where centuries-old fish farming coexists with exceptional species diversity. Over 100 species of breeding birds live amongst dry grasslands, reeds and riparian forests. During the summer months, the ponds provide undisturbed moulting grounds. In autumn, the drained mudflats become a paradise for waders, geese, ducks, as well as Great Egrets and Grey Herons. During the GDR era, the local 'well-balanced' management, which took nature into account, was regarded as exemplary. Today, fish farming is less profitable but continues to be practised to preserve this natural area.

1,060 ha | Brandenburg | RS No.: 175

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Weser Barrage Schlüsselburg



Teal and Snipe like to rest at the 'Kleiner Teich' (Small Pond) of the Weser barrage.

Grassland, reeds and still waters

This slow-flowing stretch of the middle section of the river Weser was created by the construction of a dam in the 1950s. Beyond the banks, with their extensive reed beds, lie extensively farmed meadows, nutrient-poor, lean pastures, as well as marsh and riparian forests.

The gravel ponds created by excavation, with their shallow banks and gravel islands, provide a habitat for many species, particularly amphibians, dragonflies and grasshoppers. Waterbirds and waders use the area throughout the year for breeding, moulting, resting and overwintering. Northern goose species, swans and storks find food on the adjacent arable and grassland marshes. Rare farmland bird species such as the Lapwing, Skylark and Grey Partridge also breed there.

1,612 ha | North Rhine-Westphalia | RS No.: 278

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

The Wastewater Irrigation Fields Münster



Reed Warbler: The 'reed' in the name refers to its importance for the bird.

What once began as a technical solution for the city of Münster's wastewater disposal has today been transformed into a unique natural refuge: the Wastewater Irrigation Fields Münster. The irrigation areas established at the start of the 20th century have developed into a lake landscape with over 90 ponds. In the north, plots laid out in a chequerboard pattern serve as a reminder of the original use. In the south, a vibrant nature experience landscape prevails, featuring two retention areas, meadows, pastures and old fruit trees. Thanks to targeted water retention and irrigation with treated water from the municipal sewage treatment plant, diverse habitats have emerged: from wet pastures and open water areas to dense reed beds, providing refuge for countless species of birds, insects, amphibians, reptiles and fish.

233 ha | North Rhine-Westphalia | RS No.: 277

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Species diversity

As a significant inland resting and moulting site, the irrigation fields play a vital role for migratory bird species threatened across Europe. In the shallow water zones, waders such as the Common Greenshank and the Spotted Redshank find food. The wet meadows, reed beds and mudflats provide for Snipes, Ruffs, Curlews, Black-tailed Godwits, Little Ringed Plovers and breeding bird species such as Gadwalls and Northern Shovelers, as well as the now rare Bearded Reedlings, Spotted Crakes and Lapwings.

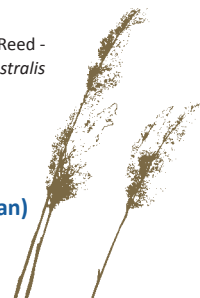
Experiencing and preserving natural habitats

In the Wastewater Irrigation Fields Münster, nature lovers of all ages can discover a wealth of things. Observation points along the cycle paths and partly accessible footpaths, as well as footbridges over small bodies of water, offer insights into the diverse flora and fauna. Mixed orchards and avenues of fruit trees alternate with wet meadows, which are gently grazed by free-range cattle to prevent them from becoming overgrown.

Common Reed -
Phragmites australis



Biological Station
Rieselfelder Münster (in German)



Helme Reservoir Berga-Kelbra



Nestled between the Harz and Kyffhäuser mountains:
Helme reservoir Berga-Kelbra

Between the Harz and Kyffhäuser low mountain ranges, in the border region of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, lies an unusual natural gem: the Helme Reservoir Berga-Kelbra. Originally constructed as a retention basin to protect the fertile 'Golden Aue' from flooding, the area has developed into one of the most significant wetlands in central Germany. Surrounded by reed beds, wet meadows, floodplain forests and salt springs, the area is particularly spectacular in autumn. When the water is drained, vast mudflats are exposed, forming a veritable paradise for migratory waders. Up to 50,000 Cranes have been counted per day on the drained reservoir.

Species diversity

The lake is one of the best-studied birdwatching areas in the region. In late summer and autumn, more than 20,000 waterbirds visit here, including up to 5,000 Mallards, 1,000 Teals, 2,000 Pochards, 5,000 Lapwings and 9,000 Bean Geese. Particularly noteworthy is the regular passage of the globally endangered Sedge Warbler, which finds shelter in the lake's dense reed beds. In the north of the Kyffhäuser Mountains, there are unique saline wetlands (inland salt marshes) where rare salt-tolerant plants grow.

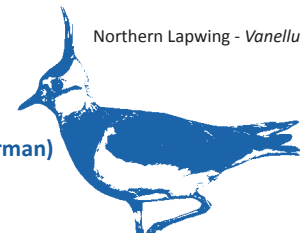
Ecology and recreation in the floodplain landscape

The wetland, with its well-signposted paths, observation towers and nature trails, is an insider's tip for nature tourism. It offers an exciting contrast to the rather dry habitats of the nearby Kyffhäuser Nature Park and is also frequently visited by ornithologists and other nature enthusiasts.

1,453 ha | Thuringia / Saxony-Anhalt | RS No.: 176
Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve



Kyffhäuser
Nature Park (in German)



Northern Lapwing - *Vanellus vanellus*

Ismaninger Water Reservoir with Fish Ponds



Unable to fly during moulting season: Red-crested Pochard with still short, but regrowing flight feathers

From sewage treatment plant to habitat

Originally, the facility built in 1929 in Ismaning near Munich served to generate energy and provide natural secondary treatment for the Bavarian capital's wastewater. However, a natural paradise has emerged around the resulting seven-kilometre-long reservoir, which also encompasses 95 former fish ponds.

It is important for breeding and wintering, but above all one of the three most significant moulting areas in Central Europe for around 100,000 waterbirds annually.

Gadwall and Red-crested Pochard, Coot, Tufted Duck and Common Pochard, Little Grebe and Black-necked Grebe – a total of 30 species of waterbird – come here every year to moult. Various rails, Marsh Harriers and Reed Warblers are among the 97 breeding bird species recorded here. The European Tree Frog, Crested Newt and dragonflies such as the Migrant Hawker also find an ideal habitat in the shallow waters and along the banks.



The Elbe: A Lifeline



The Elbe is one of the longest rivers in Europe. Despite centuries of human activity, natural habitats have been preserved where many rare animals live: floodplain forests, wet meadows, dunes, old river meanders and seepage water appearing when river water is forced through the dyke.

Lower Elbe, Barnkurg-Otterndorf



Barnacle Geese: Arctic breeding birds with lifelong pair bonds

Passing through the Elbe Marshes

The Lower Elbe is the section of the Elbe near the mouth that is influenced by the tides and is therefore also known as the 'Tideelbe'. Marshland, salt marshes, sandbanks, islands and mudflats characterise the landscape. Barnacle Geese, Bewick's Swans, Wigeons and wading birds such as Golden Plover, Lapwing and Ruff rest here during their migration. There is also plenty to discover during the breeding season in spring and summer. Skylarks sing and Black-tailed Godwits perform courtship flights in the sky. At night, the call of the Corncrake can be heard; the Lower Elbe is one of the most important breeding areas in Germany for this species. In total, more than 160 bird species are found here.

11,760 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 83

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Mühlenberg Bay



Mühlenberg Bay: southern bank and view of the Hahnöfer Nebelnde

Unique freshwater mudflats

Freshwater mudflats are among the most productive ecosystems in our river landscapes. They filter nutrients from the water and store them, making them ideal nurseries for fish and resting places for birds. However, they have become rare due to the construction of dykes. In the Mühlenberg Bay, a bay on the southern bank of the Lower Elbe, just about two kilometres behind the Port of Hamburg, mudflats and water, tidal reed beds and floodplain forests provide a home for numerous species. It is one of the most important resting places for migratory birds such as the Common Teal, Common Shelduck and Northern Shoveler on the Lower Elbe. Harbour Seals and occasionally Harbour Porpoises can be spotted here. In hot summers, the Mühlenberg Bay is a vital refuge for many fish.

675 ha | Hamburg | RS No.: 561

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Aland-Elbe Lowland and Elbe-Wetland Jerichow



Near-natural floodplains provide a safe environment for Cranes and their young.

The Aland-Elbe Lowlands and the Jerichow Elbe Floodplain lie in the heart of the Elbe Valley in northern Saxony-Anhalt. Together they form a Ramsar Site, divided into northern and southern sections, and are part of the UNESCO Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve. In the northern Aland-Elbe lowlands, the Elbe meanders through the flat floodplain landscape: the extensive meadows and pastures are interspersed with remnants of floodplain forest and small ponds, fed by seepage water and the backwater of the Aland. The Jerichow floodplain in the south of the area has also retained its natural character. The surrounding grassland features numerous wet depressions, flood channels, siltation zones and reed beds.

8,605 ha | Saxony-Anhalt | RS No.: 1307

Legal designation: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Species diversity

The Aland-Elbe lowlands and the Jerichow Elbe floodplain attract migratory birds from all over Europe: in autumn and spring, thousands of Bean Geese, White-fronted Geese, Pintails, Northern Shovelers, Cranes and waders stop over here. In total, over 20,000 waterbirds are regularly counted. For the Corncrake, Spotted Crake, Little Crake, Black Tern, Red-backed Shrike and Barred Warbler, the Ramsar Site is one of the most important breeding areas in Saxony-Anhalt. The waters are also home to endangered fish and amphibian species such as Asp, Spined Loach, River Lamprey, Weatherfish, Sea Lamprey, Fire-bellied Toad and Northern Crested Newt. And last but not least, the European Otter.

Where the river shapes the land

The Elbe floodplain is not only valuable for animals and plants – it also has much to offer to us humans: whether it's nature observation, environmental education or simply a peaceful stroll along the river – in the Elbe floodplain, you can experience just how dynamic and vibrant a natural river can be. Furthermore, here you can explore how near-natural river landscapes can be restored.



**„ZÖNU“ Centre for Ecology, Nature
and Environmental Protection (in German)**

Elbe Floodplains, Schnackenburg-Lauenburg



Areas flooded by rising floodwater are important spawning grounds for the Fire-bellied Toad.

Nature in tune with the rhythm of the water

The floodplain of the Middle Elbe thrives on the interplay of the water. Between Schnackenburg and Lauenburg, regular floods characterise the region – fed by meltwater in the cold spring and heavy rain in early summer. Then the rivers burst their banks, and the floodplains behind the dykes fill with rising floodwater. Newts, Pike and other species reproduce in the floodplains. Rare Tadpole Shrimp, whose eggs have survived in the dry soil, emerge. Fire-bellied Toads and Tree Frogs call out, Cranes and Storks waddle through the shallow water, and White-tailed Eagles circle in the sky. The Eurasian Beaver finds abundant food in softwood floodplains with willows and poplars.

7,560 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 84

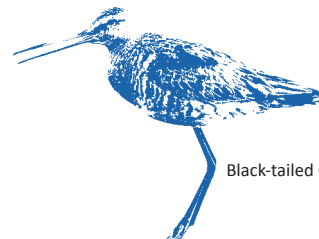
Legal designation: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

The All-rounder: Floodplain Forest



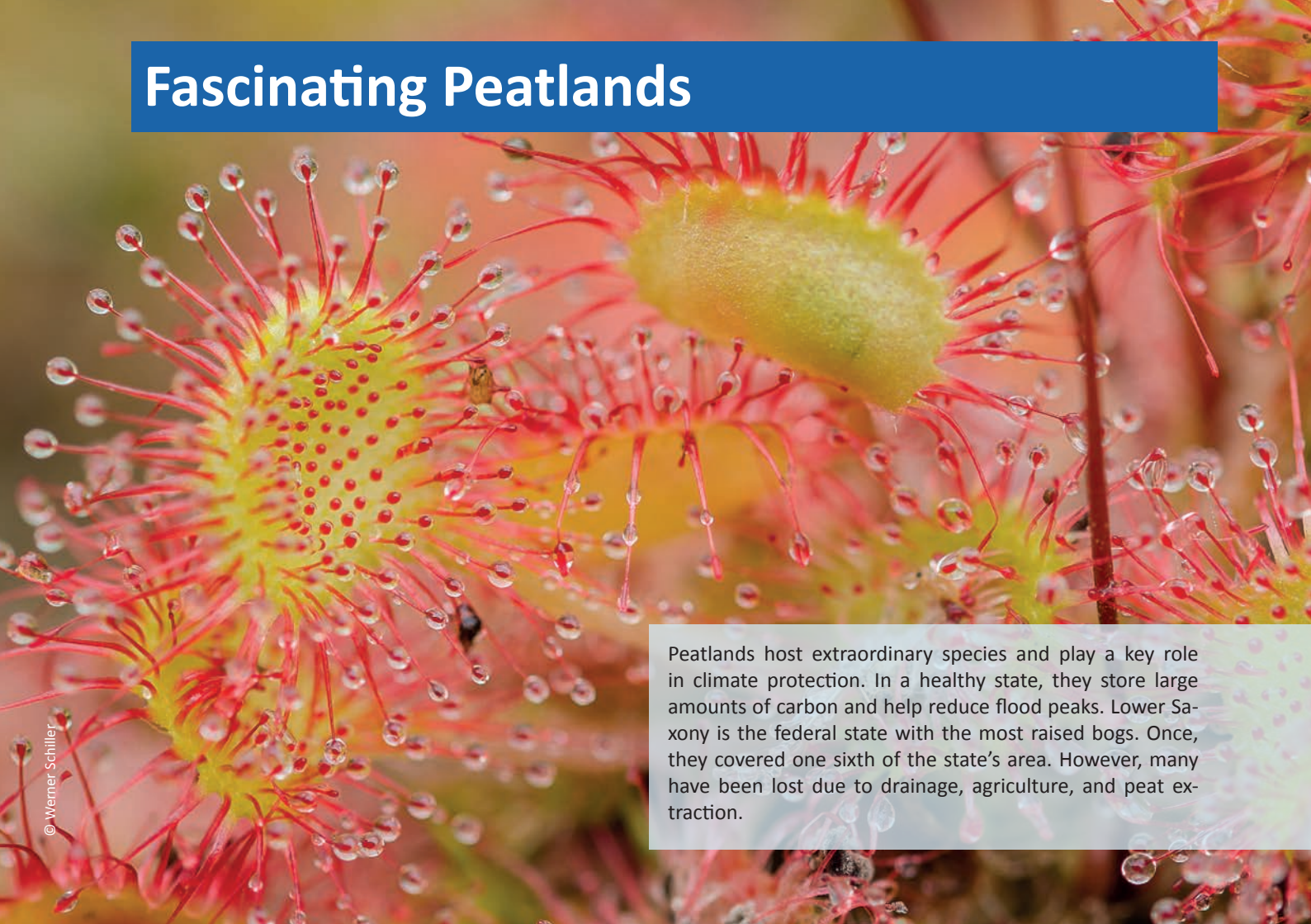
Floodplain forests are among the most species-rich habitats in Germany. They form important green corridors along rivers and connect various habitats such as river branches, wet meadows, reed beds, pools and sandy areas. This is vital for many animals: they must be able to migrate between these areas to find food, reproduce or explore new habitats. And because their habitats are changing ever more due to climate change, these corridors are becoming all the more important.

Healthy riparian forests mitigate climate change-induced fluctuations, for example in precipitation, whilst simultaneously protecting the climate by storing greenhouse gases in the soil and trees. Healthy riparian forests are therefore important for humans too.



Black-tailed Godwit - *Limosa limosa*

Fascinating Peatlands



Peatlands host extraordinary species and play a key role in climate protection. In a healthy state, they store large amounts of carbon and help reduce flood peaks. Lower Saxony is the federal state with the most raised bogs. Once, they covered one sixth of the state's area. However, many have been lost due to drainage, agriculture, and peat extraction.

The Diepholz Moor Lowlands



Raised bogs and wet meadows – perfect habitats for Redshanks

Surrounded by wet grassland, the Hannover-Bremen-Osnabrück urban triangle is home to extensive areas of original raised bogs that still contain intact sections. These are being actively restored and rewetted and together form a wetland of international importance: the 'Diepholz Moor Lowlands'.

Cottongrass - *Eriophorum*



15,060 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 86

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Species diversity

In the raised bogs and wet meadows, the Common Snipe, Curlew, Nightjar, Redshank and Black-tailed Godwit breed. Eurasian Hobby uses the area as a hunting ground, and migratory birds such as the Hen Harrier are frequent visitors. The Crane has even established itself as a breeding bird. The varied mosaic of open grassland, peatlands and heathland with structurally rich transitions to the cultivated landscape offers ideal conditions for the Stonechat and the rare Great Grey Shrike. Botanically, too, the area has much to offer: Bog Rosemary, Common Cranberry, White Beak-sedge, Heather, Sphagnum Moss, Cottongrass and the carnivorous Sundew all grow here. Dragonflies such as the Large White-faced Darter, butterflies such as the Cranberry Blue, reptiles such as the Smooth Snake, and amphibians such as the Smooth Newt and Great Crested Newt are native to this area.

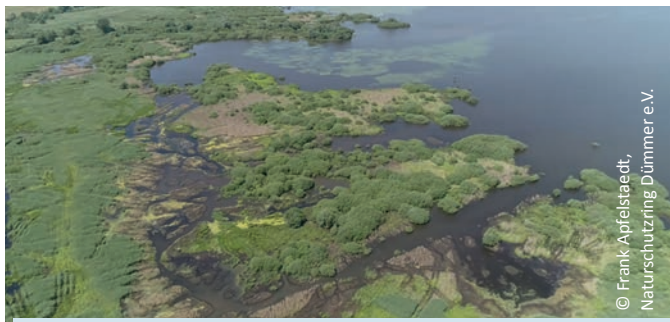
Peatlands in transformation

Many former peatland areas have been severely or completely destroyed by over-use or drainage. However, conservationists are safeguarding the remaining moors through protection and management measures, as well as targeted land purchases. Some are being restored through rewetting.



Neustädter Moor
nature experience map (in German)

Dümmer



© Frank Apfelstaedt,
Naturschutzing Dümmer e.V.

Siltation zone at Dümmer – habitat for waterbirds, amphibians and insects

Nestled amidst peatlands and wet meadows

At the heart of the Dümmer Nature Park lies the lake of the same name – surrounded by a diverse landscape of fens and raised bogs, wet meadows and ancient swamp forests. The species diversity follows the rhythm of the seasons: from winter to late spring, it is dominated by migratory and breeding birds such as the Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Lapwing and Common Redshank. In spring, wet meadows come to life. Summer is the season of flowering tall herbaceous vegetation, dragonflies and butterflies. In autumn, northern ducks and geese return. The Osprey has been breeding here again for more than 20 years. The White-tailed Eagle is also returning. If you look and listen closely, you may spot the rare Moor Frog – during the mating season it turns a brilliant blue, a true wonder of nature.

3,600 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 85

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve, Nature Park

Habitats with depth: bogs and fens



Peatlands are unique habitats, characterised by permanently high water levels and a correspondingly pronounced lack of oxygen in the soil. They form where water remains stagnant due to impermeable soil layers and dead plants decompose only slowly, resulting in the formation of peat. There are two main types of bogs: fens and raised bogs.

Fens are mainly fed by nutrient-rich groundwater or surface water. Typical plants include Reeds, Cattails, Sedges, Rushes and Alders. **Raised bogs** obtain their water primarily from precipitation. As rainwater is nutrient-poor, raised bogs are also nutrient-poor and acidic. Specialised plants such as Sphagnum Mosses and Sundews grow here.



You can discover the fascinating world of moors in the 'World of moors' exhibition at the European Centre for Moors and Climate in Wagenfeld.

(in German)

Environmental station Dümmer
,Naturschutzing Dümmer e.V.' (in German)



Lake Steinhude

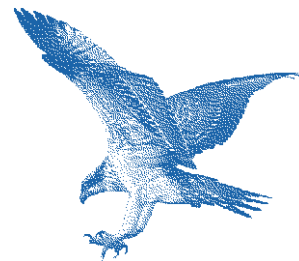


Smews: nimble diving masters with excellent flying ability

In the Smew's paradise

In addition to Lower Saxony's largest lake, lake Steinhude, this internationally significant wetland also encompasses raised bogs and fens. It is the heart of the nature park of the same name. Up to 40,000 waterbirds rest here at the same time. The lake is one of the largest inland resting places for rare Smews in Germany. These birds feed on fish, which they catch with their serrated beaks.

The area is of great importance for numerous threatened breeding bird species such as the Lapwing, Snipe, Redshank, Ruff and Northern Shoveler. The Natterjack Toad, European Tree Frog, Common Spadefoot Toad, Moor Frog, Pool Frog and Great Crested Newt – six amphibian species with special protection status across Europe inhabit the fen area in the 'Meerbruchswiesen' west of the lake. Since 2006, Ospreys, classified as endangered throughout Germany, have once again been breeding at Lake Steinhude.



Osprey - *Pandion haliaetus*

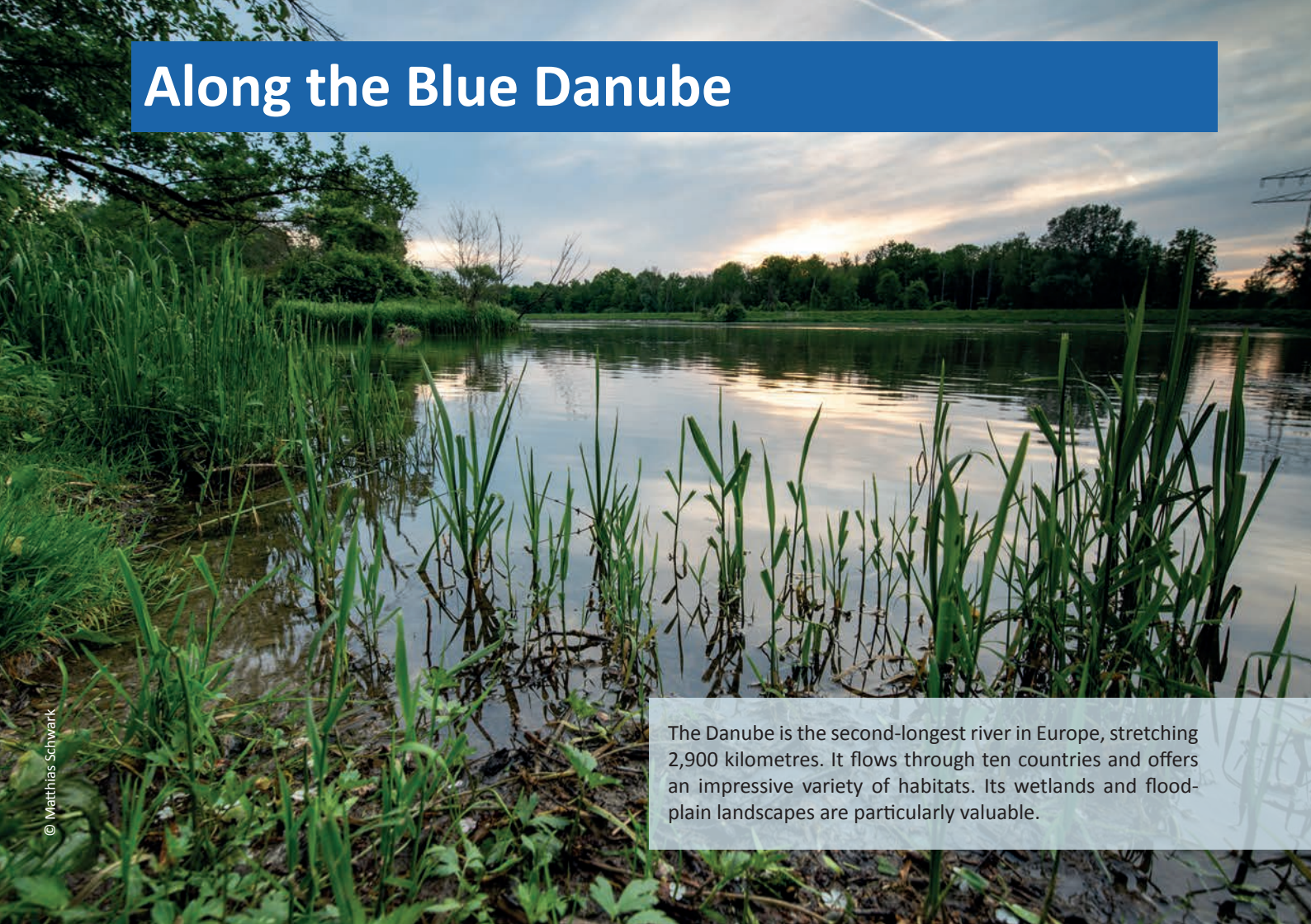
5,730 ha | Lower Saxony | RS No.: 87

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve



Ecological conservation station Lake Steinhude
„Ökologische Schutzstation Steinhuder Meer e.V.“
(in German)

Along the Blue Danube

A scenic view of a river, likely the Danube, with tall reeds in the foreground and a sunset sky reflected in the water. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding greenery. The reeds are tall and green, growing in the shallow water. The background shows a dense line of trees and a distant bridge.

The Danube is the second-longest river in Europe, stretching 2,900 kilometres. It flows through ten countries and offers an impressive variety of habitats. Its wetlands and flood-plain landscapes are particularly valuable.

Lower Inn between Haiming and Neuhaus



Reservoir: a vital habitat on the Lower Inn

A river landscape in a new balance

Stretching along the border between Germany and Austria, the Lower Inn Nature Reserve covers 55 kilometres of river – from the river Salzach to the mouth of the river Rott. After the Inn was dammed on numerous occasions in the mid-20th century to generate power, several shallow reservoirs with islands and bays were created, which quickly silted up. New floodplain forests developed on the mudflats, which today serve as a refuge for around 300 bird species. Black-crowned Night Herons, Kingfishers, Gadwalls, Little Bitterns and Goosanders breed or rest here. The nearly extinct Huchen, also known as the ‘Danube Salmon’, uses the remaining and restored free-flowing sections of the Inn and the Salzach for spawning.

1,846 ha | Bavaria | RS No.: 96

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

The Lower Inn has undergone extensive renaturation in recent years. Two cross-border projects between Bavaria and Austria (INNsieme connect and LIFE Riverscape Lower Inn) are restoring typical riverine habitats such as floodplain forests, islands, and sand and gravel banks.

Common Kingfisher - *Alcedo atthis*



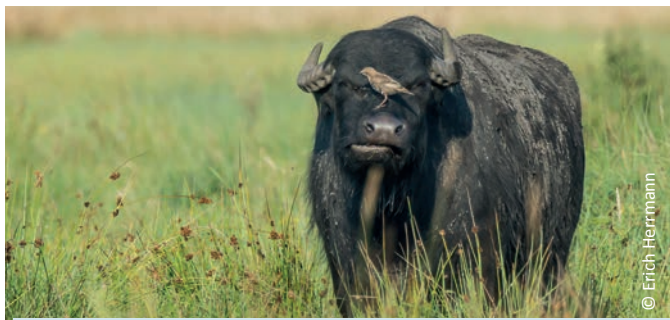
„Naturium am Inn“ – the cross-border nature conservation and environmental education centre (in German)



New approaches for living wetlands

The Ramsar Convention aims to promote the principle of ‘wise use’ – sustainable, environmentally sound utilisation. One example of this is paludiculture (‘palus’ – Latin for ‘marsh’) – the management of wet peatland areas, as moors can only fulfil their vital role as carbon stores and sinks when they are healthy, i.e. wet. Many paludiculture plants are of economic interest. On pilot sites in the Donaumoos Ramsar Site, paludiculture is being trialled using Reed Canary Grass and Sedges as raw materials for climate-friendly construction panels.

Danube Floodplains and Donaumoos peatlands



© Erich Herrmann

Extensive grazing with Water Buffalo keeps the wet meadows open.

For thousands of years, groundwater has been rising to the surface from the gravelly layers and karst rock of the Swabian Alb. This has created an impressive natural heritage: the approximately 4,000-hectare fen in the Swabian Donaumoos area. With peat layers up to three metres thick, it is one of the last intact fens in Bavaria. It is connected to the near-natural floodplains and renaturalised wet meadows of the Danube floodplains – the Danube Forest. The floodplains require regular flooding to preserve their natural state. However, due to the use and regulation of the Danube, they are now only flooded during extreme high-water events. Today, they require special protection to ensure they remain a refuge for rare species.

Species diversity

This ancient moor is home to specialised animals and plants that have long since disappeared elsewhere. Over 70 protected waterbird species and several endangered plant species have been recorded in the Donaumoos. This is where the Snipe, known as the ‘sky goat’ due to its courtship call, and the rare Bluethroat breed. The extensively farmed wet meadows are inhabited by rare butterflies such as the Dusky Large Blue and the Small Heath. Globeflower and Bird’s-eye Primrose are among the botanical relics of the moor. And the Red-crested Pochard uses the area as a resting place.

Model region for ‘wise use’

In the Swabian Donaumoos, the Ramsar principle of sustainable use is being successfully implemented. Since 2011, over 180 hectares have been rewetted in the core areas of the Leipheim Moos and Gundelfingen Moos, with further areas to follow. This halts peat loss and ensures greater carbon sequestration. Extensive grazing with Water Buffalo and other hardy cattle breeds keeps the wet meadows open, enabling them to serve as habitats for threatened meadow-nesting birds. Mowing is also timed to coincide with their breeding seasons.



Working Group Swabian Donaumoos ,Arbeitsgemeinschaft Schwäbisches Donaumoos e.V.’ (in German)

Lech-Danube Corner



Intact river ecosystems provide ideal habitats for rare species.

Focus on river islands

The largest contiguous floodplain forests on the German Danube lie between the mouth of the Lech and Ingolstadt. Floodplains, marshes, fens, quarry lakes and reservoirs characterise the landscape. The region is surrounded by agricultural land and extensive pastures. Natural river islands are valuable components of intact river ecosystems: they provide ideal habitats for characteristic riverbank species such as Beavers, Kingfishers, Sand Martins and the now rare Little Ringed Plover. They serve as breeding grounds for rare fish species, resting places for migratory birds and are home to pioneer plants.

4,014 ha | Bavaria | RS No.: 91

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

For a vibrant Danube



The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), founded in 1994, coordinates transnational cooperation among 14 riparian states. EU funding programmes are key instruments here for the protection and sustainable use of the Danube and its catchment area.

Since 2024, Germany has been a member of the Ramsar Regional Initiative Danube WILDIslands, which connects ten countries along the Danube. Its aim is to preserve the Danube as an ecological corridor, for example by protecting and restoring near-natural river islands. The Danube thus forms the lifeline of a network of pro-



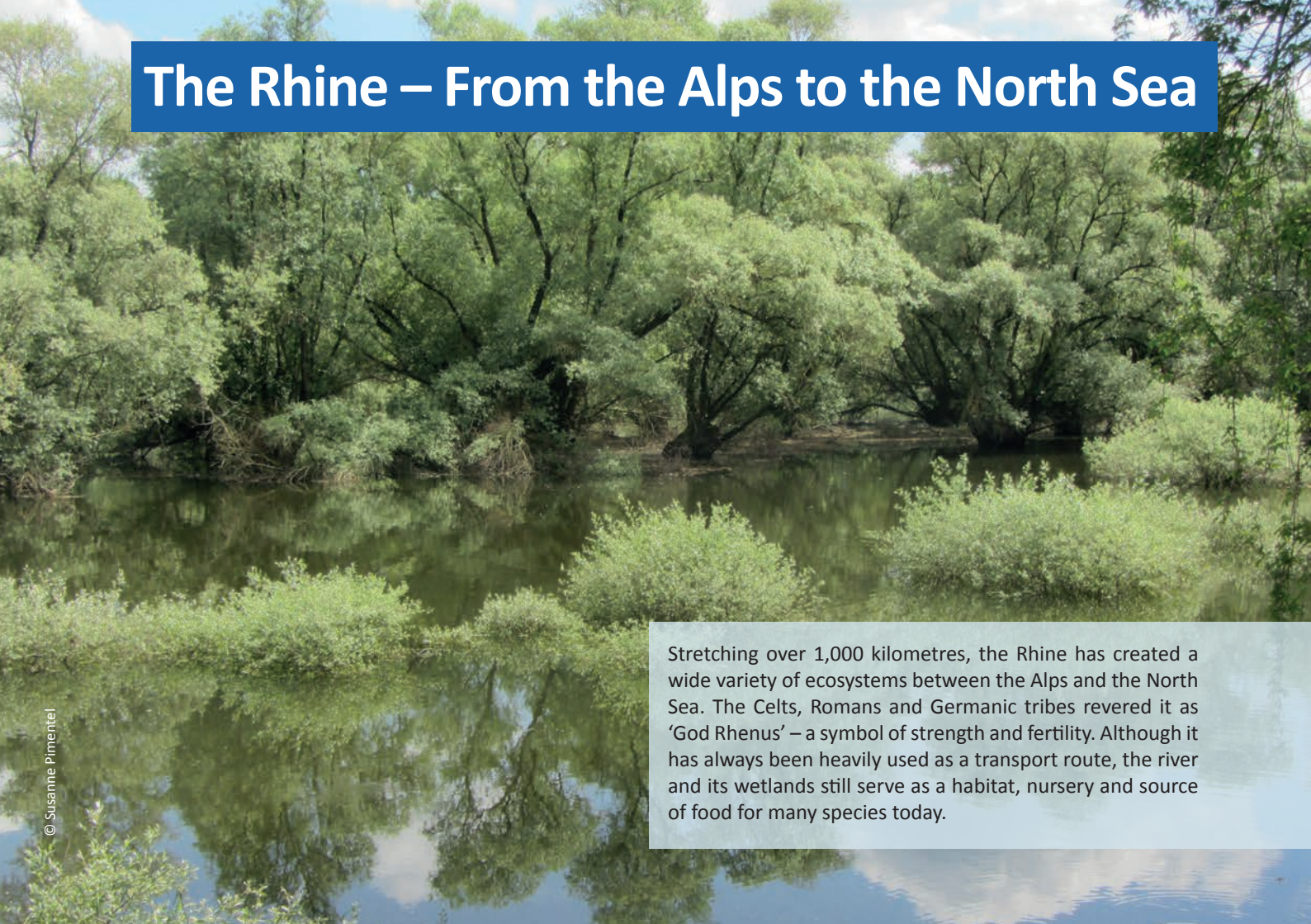
(in German)

ected areas that not only safeguards valuable ecosystem services such as water purification, climate protection and species diversity, but also offers space for experiencing nature, recreation and sustainable tourism.

European Beaver -
Castor fiber

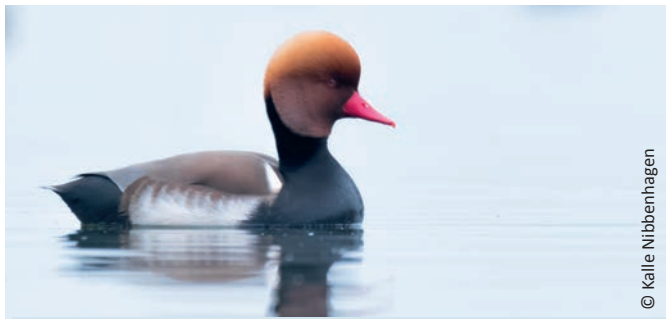


The Rhine – From the Alps to the North Sea



Stretching over 1,000 kilometres, the Rhine has created a wide variety of ecosystems between the Alps and the North Sea. The Celts, Romans and Germanic tribes revered it as 'God Rhenus' – a symbol of strength and fertility. Although it has always been heavily used as a transport route, the river and its wetlands still serve as a habitat, nursery and source of food for many species today.

Lake Constance: Wollmatinger Ried - Giehrenmoos and Lake Mindel



© Kalle Nibbenhagen

A riot of colour in the Wollmatinger Ried: the Red-crested Pochard

On Lake Constance, the Wollmatinger Ried, together with the Giehrenmoos and the Lake Mindel, form a unique interplay of natural and cultural landscapes – a wetland of international significance. Numerous animal and plant species inhabit this diverse landscape. It is preserved and protected through targeted management measures.

Between tradition and natural dynamics

With its shallow water zones, extensive reed beds and seasonally flooded litter meadows and riparian forests, the Wollmatinger Ried is the largest and oldest nature reserve on the German shore of Lake Constance. Natural fluctuations in water levels promote species diversity.

Bird species living here include the Great Reed Warbler, Bearded Tit, Little Bittern and Red-crested Pochard. Rare stone-worts, dragonflies and butterflies also find suitable conditions here.

The hay meadows were created through traditional use: For centuries, they were used as so-called litter meadows – the dried grass served as bedding in livestock farming. Plants that have adapted to the conditions grow on the gravelly shore areas. Here one finds the rare lakeshore grassland and the Lake Constance Forget-me-not, which occurs almost exclusively on the shores of Lake Constance. In total, over 600 fern and flowering plant species have been recorded in the area.

In the Wollmatinger Ried, regular flooding prevented intensive use. Consequently, the landscape was able to develop largely undisturbed, with near-natural shores and species-rich cultivated areas in the higher-lying sections, which are now preserved as a cultural landscape through targeted measures.

1,286 ha | Baden-Württemberg | RS No.: 89

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve



Nature conservation centre at Lake Constance
„NABU-Bodenseezentrum“ (in German)



Red-backed Shrike – a skilled hunter of field hedgerows

Diversity in a sheltered environment

Lake Mindel complements the reed area with its open water, extensive reed zones, further fen habitats, calcareous fens and near-natural forests. Over 2,000 species live here – including butterflies such as the Dusky Large Blue, 20 orchid species such as the rare Marsh Helleborine, and the Ferruginous Duck, which is endangered in Europe. Around 150 bird species have been recorded, over 70 of which are breeding birds. These include the Golden Oriole, Black Woodpecker, Red-backed Shrike and Common Tern. At Lake Mindel, sustainable use and nature conservation go hand in hand: extensive agriculture and forestry, nature-friendly grazing and mowing as part of landscape management, as well as sustainable fishing, preserve species diversity.

Working together for connected wetlands



The Ramsar Convention promotes cooperation between states, particularly where shared wetlands or ecological corridors link them. In transboundary Ramsar Sites, countries coordinate on protection, monitoring and sustainable use. This strengthens ecological functions and the conservation of biodiversity, whilst promoting regional cooperation and the exchange of knowledge.

Among the more than 2,500 Ramsar Sites worldwide, there are only 22 areas that are also officially designated as transboundary Ramsar Sites. In Germany, these include the Wadden Sea, the Upper Rhine / Rhin supérieur and the Bavarian Wildalm.

Black Woodpecker - *Dryocopus martius*



Lake Mindel exhibition (in German)



Upper Rhine / Rhin Supérieur



German-French training for effective cooperation on the Upper Rhine

The Upper Rhine is one of the most species-rich landscapes in Germany and France. Stretching for almost 200 kilometres, it offers a diverse range of riverine habitats. Near-natural hardwood floodplains with Oaks and Elms, as well as softwood floodplains with Poplars and Willows, form important habitats for many endangered animal and plant species. The 'Rhine Rift' is one of Europe's largest groundwater reservoirs. Through numerous cross-border measures, the neighbouring countries have promoted the restoration of typical floodplain landscapes with gravel banks and shallow water zones and have contributed significantly to natural flood protection and the safeguarding of groundwater.

Species diversity

The Upper Rhine lies on a key migration route for birds between northern and southern Europe and serves as a resting and breeding ground for species such as the Kingfisher, Northern Lapwing, Little Ringed Plover and various duck species. Beavers and many bats also live here. The 'Oberrhein / Rhin supérieur' Ramsar Site lies directly on the German-French border between Basel in the south, Lauterbourg in France and Karlsruhe in the north. The mild climate benefits species that are otherwise only found south of the Alps. Endangered insects such as the Scabious Sand Bee, the Southern Migrant Hawker, the Elm Jewel Beetle and the Marsh Cricket can be found here. 40,000 waterbirds rest in the area in winter and 46 fish species call it home.

Cross-border collaboration

Administration and efficient management across the border strengthen Franco-German cooperation in the Upper Rhine region. Excursion weeks, film evenings, exhibitions, guided tours and school exchanges foster a shared understanding of this natural landscape. This close bipartite cooperation sets standards for what cross-border nature conservation and ecologically sound management should look like.



Rhine Floodplains between Eltville and Bingen



© Dr. Wolfgang Henkes

Well-fed in the Rhine floodplains: the Black Kite

Between Eltville and Bingen on the Rhine, an extraordinary river landscape stretches for over 20 kilometres: the Rhine floodplains, also known as the 'Island Rhine'. Unlike many other regions, the river has not formed meanders here, but has created a network of gravel and sandbanks, shallow water zones and islands, which are referred to as 'Auen' here. The landscape is highly dynamic, constantly changing under the force of the water – for example, during seasonal flooding. Softwood and hardwood floodplains alternate; waterbirds rest in areas of still water; and many rare plants and animals fill the floodplains with life. Particularly impressive are the Oak Trees, some of which are over 400 years old.

Species diversity

Over 200 bird species have already been recorded in the Rhine floodplains. Due to fluctuating water levels, the use of the land changes constantly throughout the year. Black Kites and Golden Orioles breed here and, like Cormorants, Grey Herons and Kingfishers, can be observed all year round. Particularly worth seeing are the elegant courtship displays of the Goldeneyes in winter as they court mates. Wading birds such as Greenshanks and Wood Sandpipers stop off on the mudflats and sandbanks on their way to South Africa.

Floodplains serving people and nature

The Rhine floodplains offer more than just impressive natural scenery. Extensively managed areas such as floodplain forests and wet meadows store water, cool the surrounding countryside and act as natural carbon sinks. At the same time, they serve as green oases on our doorstep, inviting us to enjoy local recreation. The 'Floodplain Service' is a unique offering in Germany: NABU staff travel between Bingen and Budenheim on foot or by bike as nature guides to explain the importance of the floodplains for people and the environment.



Nature conservation centre
,NABU-Zentrum Rheinauen' (in German)

Lower Rhine



Lower Rhine: A winter paradise for White-fronted Geese

Conservation and use on the path to balance

Close to the Dutch border lies a charming floodplain landscape comprising wet meadows, pastures, farmland, oxbow lakes, dykes, floodplain forests and former gravel pits. It is not only beautiful but also ecologically valuable. In winter, up to 200,000 northern geese, mainly White-fronted Geese, stop over and overwinter here. Rare meadow-nesting waders and other migratory birds can also be seen. Even the White-tailed Eagle now breeds here again. As recently as the 1990s, the area was considered at risk due to human intervention. Since then, work has been underway to restore the balance between nature conservation and cultural use.

25,000 ha | North Rhine-Westphalia | RS No.: 279

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Cultural landscapes with history and a future

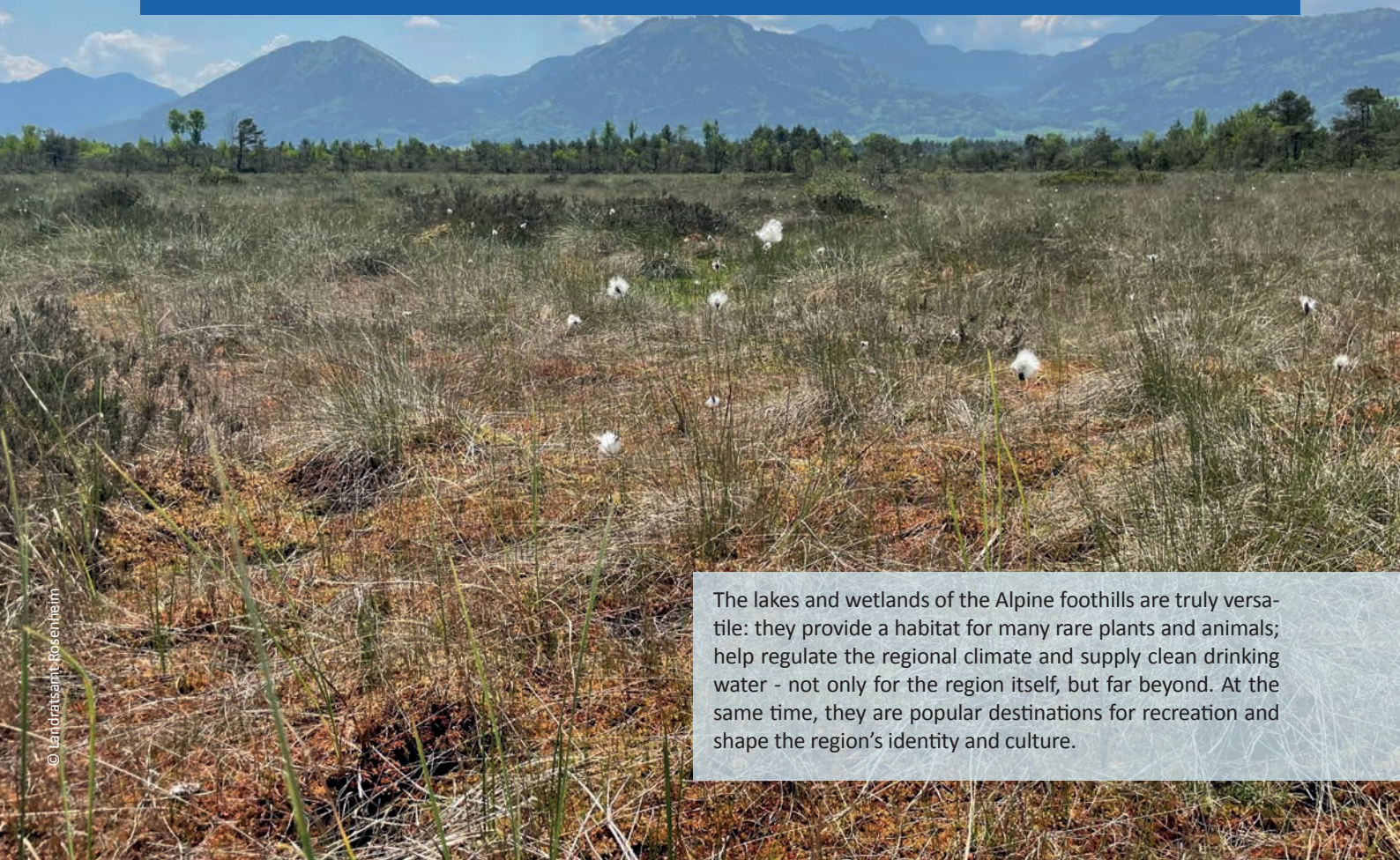


Wetlands are deeply rooted in our culture. Over the centuries, they have shaped people's lives and have themselves been influenced by human activity. At the same time, they have both great ecological and economic significance. Their productivity depends on an intact natural environment, enabling them to serve as a source of income for fisheries and a source of food for people. They are often an integral part of regional identity and tradition. Fishing techniques, customs and festivals are closely linked to the cycle of the year and the waterways. Litter meadows, a typical feature of many wetlands, provide valuable natural products such as bedding and hay. When used extensively, they offer ideal habitats for rare plants, insects, birds and amphibians. As places of tranquillity, inspiration and learning, wetlands support recreation, environmental education and sustainable tourism. Their conservation is in everyone's interest.



**Biological stations
on the Lower Rhine (in German)**

Pre-Alpine Diversity



The lakes and wetlands of the Alpine foothills are truly versatile: they provide a habitat for many rare plants and animals; help regulate the regional climate and supply clean drinking water - not only for the region itself, but far beyond. At the same time, they are popular destinations for recreation and shape the region's identity and culture.

Lake Chiemsee



Nature experience at Lake Chiemsee: sustainable and environmentally conscious

Covering around 80 square kilometres, Lake Chiemsee is the largest pre-Alpine Lake in Bavaria and the third-largest lake in Germany. Its shores are largely unspoilt and diverse, featuring a mix of shallow water zones, mires, wetland and riparian forests. The Tiroler Achen flows into the lake in the south and, with its floodplain forests and mudflats stretching over 1,265 hectares, forms the best-preserved naturally developed inland delta in Central Europe.



White Water Lily - *Nymphaea alba*

8,231 ha | Bavaria | RS No.: 95

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

Species diversity

Lake Chiemsee and its surrounding wetlands constitute an internationally significant resting and wintering area for waterbirds. Bird species such as Little Ringed Plovers, Gadwalls and Black-necked Grebes live here, alongside rare fish and plant species, for example the critically endangered Pearl Roach and Danube Bleak, as well as various Stoneworts. White Water Lilies and Yellow Water Lilies bloom in the bays. The Tiroler Achen delta is a particular hotspot for species diversity.

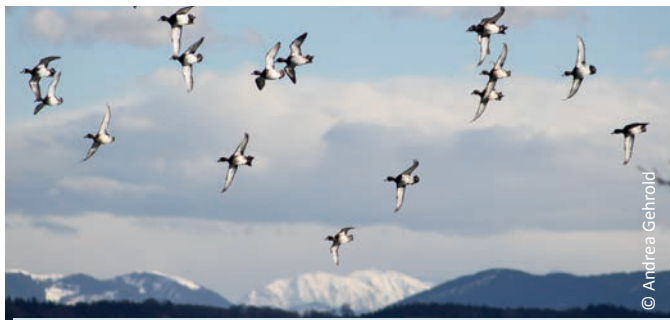
A cultural landscape with a future

Lake Chiemsee is not only an ecological gem but also an important part of regional culture. It shapes the way of life and identity of the local people, offers a wide range of opportunities for recreation and leisure, and attracts many visitors. Traditional fishing still holds a firm place here: it combines historical craftsmanship with culinary diversity and enriches the regional cuisine with fresh specialities straight from the lake.



**Guided nature and landscape tours
at Lake Chiemsee (in German)**

Lake Starnberg



Tufted Duck – a nimble diver with bright eyes

Bird conservation on the clear-water lake

Lake Starnberg is Bavaria's second-largest and most water-rich lake. Because there are hardly any sediments washed in due to a lack of tributaries, its water is very clear – visibility often extends to a depth of 14 metres. Rare Stoneworts thrive particularly well in such clear water.

In spring and summer, the lake appears rather calm, with 'only' around 2,000 waterbirds to be observed. In the autumn and winter months, however, their numbers increase tenfold, with rare visitors such as the Black-throated Loon, the Red-throated Divers and numerous duck species arriving from northern and eastern Europe and even from Siberia – some travelling over 4,000 kilometres.

5,652 ha | Bavaria | RS No.: 94

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve



**Bird life and nature conservation
at Lake Starnberg (in German)**

In summer, a raft provides safe nesting sites for the rare Common Tern. The lake is also rich in species underwater: Whitefish and Lake Char are particularly important for sustainable fishing.

As early as 1997, organised water sports clubs and lake users committed to a 'winter rest period for waterbirds'. In 2025, a sovereign designation of an approximately 120-hectare winter rest zone for birds was established to protect the resting birds in the area around Rose Island from disturbance. Nature conservation organisations and authorities carry out extensive environmental education and public awareness campaigns to raise people's awareness of the need to preserve this unique ecosystem.



Fragile Stonewort -
Chara fragilis

Lake Ammer



Lake Ammer: a natural treasure – view from the southern shore

In the realm of Harriers and meadow breeders

The Lake Ammer Ramsar Site encompasses not only the lake but also the adjacent Ampermoos Nature Reserve and the Lake Ammer South Shore Bird Sanctuary. It is characterised by particularly valuable habitats such as underwater calcareous tufa banks, reed beds, fens and litter meadows. Rare species such as the Lake Ammer Deep-water Char, the Thick Shelled River Mussel and the endemic Lake Ammer Ruffe live here, as do around 135 species of breeding birds. In winter, the area serves as a resting place for Harriers and many waterbirds. The litter meadows are particularly important for endangered meadow-nesting birds such as the Common Snipe and the Whinchat. Dragonflies, butterflies and snails, including the Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail, enrich this diversity.

6,386 ha | Bavaria | RS No.: 93

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site, Nature Reserve

The area is also a botanical treasure: The Traunstein Orchid and the Fen Orchid thrive in the wet meadows. Thanks to years of effort, the Eurasian Curlew has returned, and for the first time in Upper Bavaria, the Osprey is even breeding here.



Regional nature site management
in Bavaria (in German)



Traunstein Orchid -
Dactylorhiza traunsteineri

Bavarian Wildalm



Bavarian Wildalm – peatland landscape in a karst depression

Climate protection from the alpine pasture

The Bavarian Wildalm Ramsar Site is a high-altitude alpine pasture and peatland landscape at an altitude of around 1,425 metres in Upper Bavaria. This ecosystem extends into Austria and, together with the neighbouring Wildalmfilz, also forms a cross-border Ramsar Site. Nestled in a karst basin – a round depression in the limestone created by rain – it offers a unique microclimate for specialised moorland and marsh plants such as Sundew, Bottle Sedge and Sphagnum Moss. A total of 90 plant species grow here. The Bavarian Wildalm makes an important contribution to flood protection in the region and, as a carbon sink, helps protect the climate.

6.5 ha | Bavaria | RS No.: 1723

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site

Rosenheim Basin Bogs



Intact peatlands are ideal habitats for various species of Darter dragonflies.

Successful restoration in the Alpine foothills

The Rosenheim Basin Bogs were formed during the last Ice Age and are among the largest and most valuable peatland landscapes in the Alpine foreland. Since the early 19th century, they have been systematically drained for peat extraction to provide fuel for salt works and breweries. Today, however, they stand as a prime example of successful nature conservation: as part of various initiatives, including a European LIFE project, around 650 hectares of raised bog have been rewetted and partially restored. Rare animal and plant species such as the Yellow-winged Darter, the Meadow Pipit and the Adder can now thrive here once again.

1,039.2 ha | Bavaria | RS No.: 2444

Legal designation: Natura 2000 site

Arable marshland – marsh landscapes used primarily for agriculture.

Backwater of a river – accumulation of water due to natural or artificial obstacles.

Biosphere Reserve – a large-scale protected area serving as a model for sustainable development.

Brackish water – water where fresh and salt water meet, e.g. in estuaries.

Breeding ground – an area where animals – particularly birds – raise their young.

Calcareous tufa banks – natural, solid deposits of limestone.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) – a natural greenhouse gas produced during combustion processes or released when moors are drained.

Cultural landscape – a landscape shaped by humans and used for agricultural purposes.

Danube WILDislands – a Ramsar Regional Initiative linking ten countries along the Danube.

Ecosystem – a functional unit where living organisms interact with each other and with their non-living environment.

Ecosystem services – contributions that nature provides to humans: such as clean water, pollination, protection against flooding or recreation.

Estuary – the area near the mouth of a river where fresh water from the river mixes with salt water from the sea.

Extensive farming – land use characterised by low intensity and minimal impact on nature and the environment.

Floodplain – a generally flat or low-lying area of land next to a river or stream that is naturally flooded regularly.

Floodplain forests – moist to wet forests on moorland or marshland.

Floodwater / seepage water – water or water bodies that appear when water is forced under dykes during high tide.

Freshwater mudflats – mudflat areas with low salinity.

Grassland marshes – marshlands predominantly used as grassland.

Gravel bank – deposits of gravel in rivers or along coasts, an important habitat.

Greenhouse gases – gases that contribute to the warming of the Earth's atmosphere.

Habitat – an area in which organisms live and carry out their life functions.

Litter meadows – extensively farmed wet meadows with late mowing dates.

Heathland – open landscape with nutrient-poor soils characterized by low-growing, woody vegetation such as heather and grasses.

Karst basin / Karst depression – natural depression in karst areas, often filled with water.

Marshland – flat, fertile landscape near the coast or along major rivers.

Mating season – the period in the annual cycle of animals during which they court a mate.

Microclimate – climate in a small-scale area, e.g. at ground level or in a forest.

Migratory bird – a bird species that travels seasonally between breeding and wintering grounds.

Moulting (moulting season) – period during which birds change their plumage.

Mudflat – a flat area of very wet soil where fine sediments like silt and clay are deposited by tides and rivers; important feeding grounds for birds.

National park – a large protected area in which natural processes are allowed to proceed with as little human influence as possible.

Natura 2000 site – an area that forms part of the EU-wide network of protected areas (Natura 2000) for the conservation of endangered species and habitats.

Nature park – a large-scale natural and cultural landscape serving conservation and recreational purposes.

Nature reserve – legally protected area for the conservation of plants, animals and habitats.

Orchard – meadow with standard fruit trees, a species-rich habitat.

Oxbow lake – a former river course separated from the main river.

Paludiculture – agricultural use of rewetted peat soil.

Peatland (fen & bog systems) – peatlands with different water and nutrient conditions, see page 37.

Ramsar Regional Initiative – an alliance of several countries to implement the Ramsar objectives.

Ramsar Site – a wetland of international importance under the Convention on Wetlands.

Rewetting – raising the water level in previously drained areas.

Reed – a tall, grass-like plant that grows in wet areas such as marshes, riverbanks, and lakesides.

Reed bed – plant community consisting of reeds and similar plants in riparian zones.

Resting place – area used by migratory birds to rest.

Restoration – returning habitats to a near-natural state.

Riparian forest – forest community along rivers, characterised by regular flooding.

Riparian zone – transition zone between water bodies and land.

Salt spring – natural saline spring with distinctive vegetation.

Salt marshes / tidal marshes – a wetland with waterlogged soils dominated by salt-tolerant plants like grasses and sedges.

Silt – a fine, granular sediment composed of rock and mineral particles (like quartz) that are larger than clay but smaller than sand.

Siltation zone – area in which water bodies are gradually filled in by sediments.

Still water bodies – water bodies without significant flow, such as lakes or ponds.

Swamp forest – wet or waterlogged forests on peat or marsh soils.

Tidal flat – coastal area that falls dry at low tide.

Tidal creek – a natural watercourse system in the mudflats.

Tideelbe / tidal Elbe – a section of the Elbe near its estuary influenced by the tides.

Water balance – the totality of all water movements in an area.

Water retention – measures for storing water in the landscape.

Wet meadows – very damp areas of grassland with soil that is periodically waterlogged.

Wetland City – award for cities demonstrating a particular commitment to wetlands under the Convention on Wetlands.

Wind flats – shore areas that are temporarily exposed at low tide due to strong offshore winds. In Germany, these are mainly found on the Baltic Sea coast. The water is pushed out of shallow Baltic Sea Lagoon bays into the Baltic Sea by the wind, exposing nutrient-rich areas that serve, for example, as feeding grounds for migratory birds.

Wise Use Principle – Sustainable, environmentally sound use.

ANK – Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity (ANK)

BfN – Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz)

BMUKN – Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Klimaschutz, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit)

BR Mittelelbe – Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

BUND – Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland / Friends of the Earth Germany

DDA – The Umbrella Organisation of German Avifaunists

EU – European Union

GNF – Global Nature Fund

ha – Hectare – A unit of area, equivalent to 10,000 square metres

ICPDR – International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

LBV – Bavarian Society for the Protection of Birds and Nature

LIFE (EU LIFE) – EU funding programme for environmental, nature and climate protection projects

LKN.SH – State Agency for Coastal Protection, National Parks and Marine Conservation Schleswig-Holstein

NABU – Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union Germany

NAZKA – Nature Conservation Centre Karlsruhe-Rappenwört

NLPV – Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park Authority

NPHW – Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park

ÖSSM – Steinhuder Meer Ecological Conservation Station e. V.

RS No. – The sequential Ramsar Site number assigned upon official listing

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve – a biosphere reserve with international recognition by UNESCO

UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site – natural sites of outstanding universal value

Watt*N – Wadden Sea Volunteer Network

ZÖNU – Centre for Ecology, Nature and Environmental Protection

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) in Germany

1 Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea	14	19 Aland-Elbe Lowland and Elbe-Wetland Jerichow	35
Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer		Aland-Elbe-Niederung und Elbaue Jerichow	
2 East Frisian Wadden Sea with the Dollart	14	20 Elbe Floodplains, Schnackenburg-Lauenburg	36
Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer mit Dollart		Elbauen, Schnackenburg-Lauenburg	
3 Jadebusen and the Western Weser Estuary	15	21 The Diepholz Moor Lowlands	38
Jadebusen und westliche Wesermündung		Diepholzer Moorniederung	
4 Elbe-Weser Triangle	15	22 Dümmer	39
Elbe-Weser Dreieck		Dümmer	
5 Hamburg Wadden Sea	16	23 Lake Steinhude	40
Hamburgisches Wattenmeer		Steinhuder Meer	
6 Baltic Sea Lagoons of Westrügen-Hiddensee-Peninsula Zingst	18	24 Danube Floodplains and Donaumoos peatlands	43
Boddengewässer Ostufer Zingst, Westküste Rügen-Hiddensee		Donauauen und Donaumoos	
7 Eastern Shore of Lake Müritz	21	25 Lower Inn between Haiming and Neuhaus	42
Ostufer der Müritz		Unterer Inn zwischen Haiming und Neuhaus	
8 Upper Lake Krakow	22	26 Lech-Danube Corner	44
Krakower Obersee		Lech-Donau-Winkel	
9 Lake Galenbeck	22	27 Lake Constance: Wollmatinger Ried-Giehrenmoos and Lake Mindel	46
Galenbecker See		Bodensee: Wollmatinger Ried-Giehrenmoos und Mindelsee	
10 Lowland of the Lower Havel / Gülpsee / Schollener Lake	24	28 Upper Rhine / Rhin Supérieur	48
Niederung der Unteren Havel / Gülpsee / Schollener See		Oberrhein / Rhin supérieur	
11 Lower Oder Valley, Schwedt	25	29 Rhine Floodplains between Eltville and Bingen	49
Unteres Odertal, Schwedt		Rheinauen zwischen Eltville und Bingen	
12 Peitzer Ponds	29	30 Lower Rhine	50
Teichgebiet Peitz		Unterer Niederrhein	
13 Weser Barrage Schlüsselburg	29	31 Lake Chiemsee	52
Weserstaustufe Schlüsselburg		Chiemsee	
14 The Wastewater Irrigation Fields Münster	30	32 Lake Starnberg	53
Rieselfelder Münster		Starnberger See	
15 Helme Reservoir Berga-Kelbra	31	33 Lake Ammer	54
Helme Stausee Berga-Kelbra		Ammersee	
16 Ismaninger Water Reservoir with Fish Ponds	32	34 Bavarian Wildalm	55
Ismaninger Speichersee mit Fischteichen		Bayerische Wildalm	
17 Lower Elbe, Barnkrug-Otterndorf	34	35 Rosenheim Basin	55
Niederelbe, Barnkrug-Otterndorf		Rosenheimer Stammbeckenmoore	
18 Mühlenberg Bay	34		
Mühlenberger Loch			

What can we do for wetlands?



Protect what remains

→ Place existing wetlands under protection and preserve their ecological function.

Restore what has been lost

→ Rewet drained peatlands and restore floodplains and rivers.

Work together locally and globally

→ Advocate for the protection of wetlands at regional and international levels.

Shape policy and planning responsibly

→ Incorporate wetlands into spatial planning, develop forward-looking legislation, invest in wetland restoration, promote sponge cities, and become politically active as a citizen.

Strengthen knowledge and awareness

→ Educate people on the importance of wetlands – in everyday life, in the media and in politics.

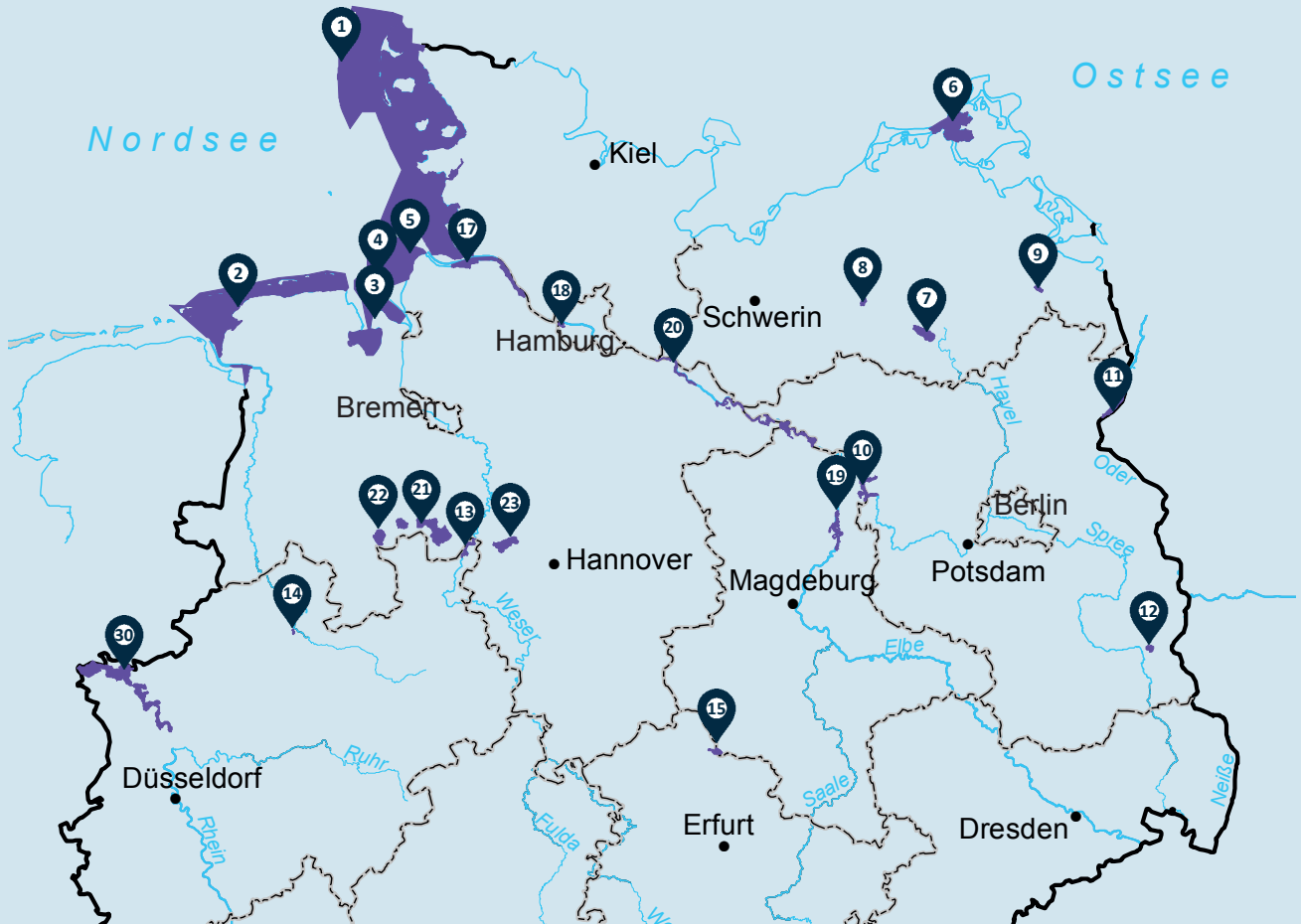


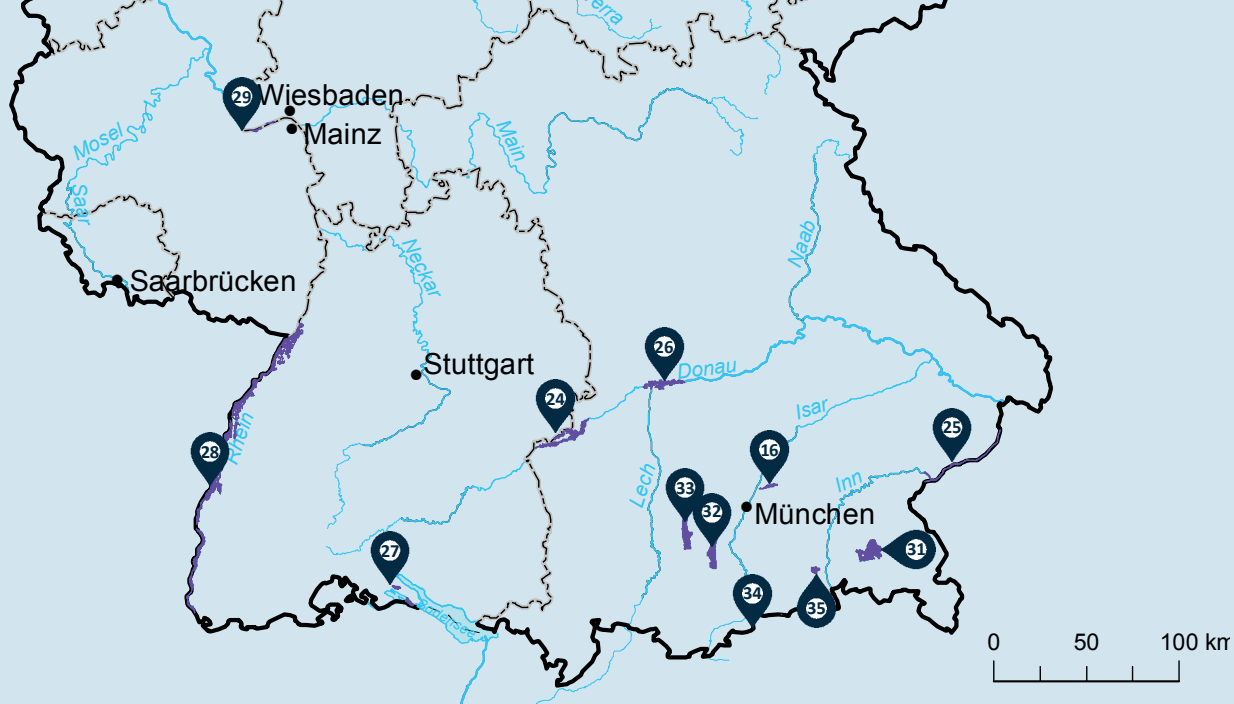
Ramsar Sites
in Germany



Opportunities and Prospects for Wetlands –
Global Nature Fund

35 Ramsar-Gebiete in Deutschland





 Ramsar-Gebiete

Datenquellen:
 Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN) 2021
 nach Angaben der Bundesländer
 Geobasisdaten: © GeoBasis - DE / BKG 2019
 Datenlizenz Deutschland - Namensnennung - Version 2.0
 (www.govdata.de/dl-de/by-2-0)
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Convention on Wetlands
Convention sur les zones humides
Convención sobre los Humedales



ramsar.org –
Convention on Wetlands
of International Importance

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Nature Conservation