A treasure trove for special species

The diversity of habitats in the UNESCO-Biosphere Reserve Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond Landscape offers a wide variety of conditions for the existence of many species. The existence of more than 6,000 animal, fungal and plant species has been verified in this area. More than 1,300 species are currently registered in Saxony's Red List.

Invertebrates

In the last 25 years more than 4,000 invertebrate animals have been verified in the Biosphere Reserve. Especially insects. A particularly high number of dragonfly and wild bee species live here.

Amphibians

15 amphibian species live in the Biosphere Reserve. In the early summer you can hear the sound of fire-bellied toads coming from the ponds. Even more noticeable is the croaking of tree frogs during their evening concerts.





Birds

Up to 160 species bread in this area. The white-tailed eagle can be found here in a very high concentration, which is very seldom the case in Central Europe. But you can also quite often spot and hear the sound of bitten, goldeneye duck, crane, kingfisher, nightjar or hoopoe. Furthermore, the Biosphere Reserve is frequented by more than 100 migratory bird species. In winter, for example, you can spot Nordic geese and swans in the fields.

Mammals

Among mammals, of which 62 species are native to the Biosphere Reserve, deserves the otter a very special mention. A very important part of the Central European population of this species lives in the Upper Lusatian Pond Region.
In the meantime, the wolf has also become a constant inhabitant of the area.

Plants

More than 1,700 different plant species can be found in the Biosphere Reserve. As for Germany, some species exist only here in this region. This includes the fen violet and the Turkish marsh gladiolus that can also be found in Eastern Europe.

Exploring the Biosphere Reserve

Cycle routes and hiking trails

A net of appealing cycle routes and hiking trails make the Heath and Pond Region, with its diverse natural areas and villages, accessible. The White-Tailed Eagle Circular Route will lead you through forests and past meadows and fields to an idyllic group of ponds and heaths in the Biosphere Reserve. Long distance cycle routes such as the Spree Cycle Route or the Frog Cycle Route cross the area.

Nature discovery trails

You can experience nature and culture in a playful way and at the same time make impressive observations and learn interesting facts about flora and fauna – the nature discovery trail "Guttauer Teiche and Olbasee" or the nature discovery trail "Biodeversity and Regional History Kreba-Neudorf" make it possible.

Partners of the Biosphere Reserve

Quality, living regionality and ecological awareness – this is what partners of the Biosphere Reserve stand for. They are certified hosts of the accommodation and the hotel and restaurant industry and they support the economic cycle, environmental protection and the preservation of the cultural landscape in a very special way.

Tours, excursions and more

For deeper insights into nature, culture and sustainable land use there is an extensive programme of guided hiking tours, lectures, family offers and camps for children and young people. You will find further information under: www.bioshpärenreservat-oberlausitz.de.

HAUS DER TAUSEND TEICHE

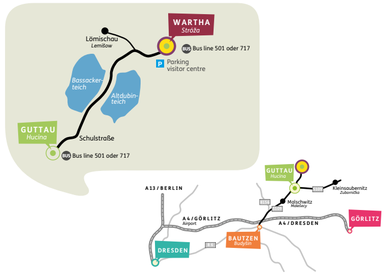


The ideal starting point for your visit in the UNESCO-Biosphere Reserve Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond Landscape is the visitor information centre in the Wartha district of Malschwitz.

Here you can learn many interesting facts about the Biosphere Reserve, carp pond farming and the interaction between human and nature. The adjacent nature discovery trail "Guttauer Teiche und Olbasee" is particularly recommendable if you want to connect your acquired knowledge with great experiences.

www.HAUS-DER-TAUSEND-TEICHE.de

How to reach us:



Arriving with public transportation:

The Biosphere Reserve is easy to reach by bus or train.

Current timetables under:
www.bahn.com
www.zvon.de

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www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de

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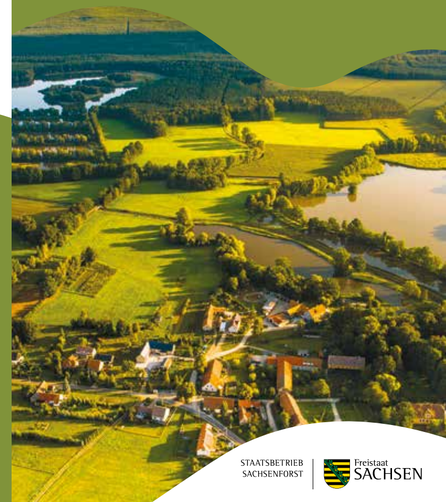
The Biosphere Reserve in the Land of a Thousand Ponds



STAATSBETRIEB SACHSENFORST | Freistaat SACHSEN

A cultural landscape worthy of protection

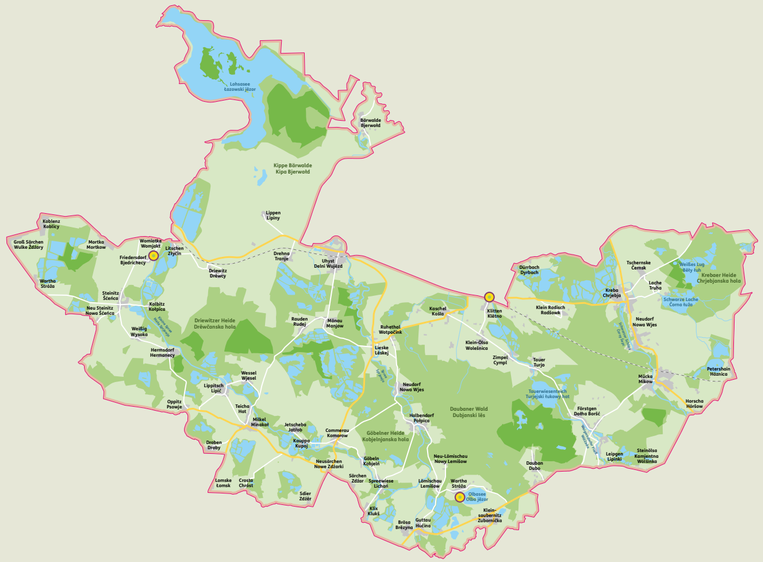
The UNESCO-Biosphere Reserve Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond Landscape is situated in the green heart of Lusatia, the Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond Landscape and it stretches between the Upper Lusatian Gefilde region in the south and the Lusatian Lakeland in the north. The towns of Bautzen, Niesky, and Hoyerswerda are located in the immediate vicinity. The Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond Landscape has been shaped for many centuries by human use. Slavic settlers who settled here around 600. A.D. called the land, which was covered by swamps and forests, „Łužica“ (swamplands). This reminds us why we use the name “Lausitz” (Lusatia). The first documented mention of an area of fishponds dates as far back as 1248.
In the 15th and 16th century the fish farming was already established as an important industry and was considered as a very profitable form of use. Even today the ponds are managed for carp farming.
More than 350 ponds, embedded in forests, moors meadows, barren fields, river flood plains and heathlands, characterise this region in an impressive way. All of this creates a diverse mosaic of dry and wet habitats for rare animal and plant species.





UNESCO-biosphere reserves – A worldwide net

Biosphere reserves are model regions for sustainable development and they preserve natural landscapes and also cultural landscapes within the framework of the UNESCO programme “Man and the Biosphere”.
They contribute to the protection of natural areas, including species that live there.
Moreover, they require and promote sustainable economic activity. Local projects and initiatives such as product marketing, sustainable tourism as well as the support of organic agriculture, contribute to the regional value creation and thus the creation of jobs, especially in structurally weak rural regions. Apart from that they offer space for leisure, recreation, the experience of nature and they are also places of education for sustainable development and environmental research.
In Germany there are currently 18 biosphere reserves (last update 2026), of which 17 are recognised by UNESCO. Worldwide there are 784 UNESCO biosphere reserves in 142 countries. Every ten years, the progress of development in the area is reviewed, and a decision is made regarding the continuation of UNESCO recognition.



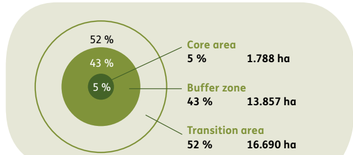


Numbers and facts

Area:	32,335 ha
Foundation:	1994 securing the status as biosphere reserve
Recognition:	1996 recognition as 13th UNESCO biosphere reserve in Germany
Expansion:	2026 amendment of the biosphere reserve regulation, optimization of zoning, and expansion of the area
Inhabitants:	approx. 9,000 in 59 villages twelve municipalities, two districts
Altitude:	112–183 m above sea level
Particularities:	bilingual settlement area (German and Sorbian), contains former lignite open-cast mining areas, Saxony's biggest bird sanctuary, contains Saxony's biggest flora-fauna-habitat-area and is thus part of the European network NATURA 2000

Zoning of the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere reserves are uniformly protected and developed areas. In order to realise the diverse objectives and functions, they are spatially divided into three zones.



Core area

(Nature reserve area)
The focus in this area lies on undisturbed nature. All habitats are without use left to their natural development and they offer a refuge area for sensitive species. Access only on designated paths and during guided excursions.

Buffer zone

(Nature reserve area)
In buffer zones a nature friendly land use takes place and their primary objective is the protection of species as well as the maintenance and development of biotopes. They buffer the core zone against evironmental influences.

Transition area

The focus in this area lies on people. The hotel and restaurant industry, the craft and the land use as well, should develop in such a way that they take the demands of nature and people equally into consideration. In this way the harmonic cultural landscape will remain preserved.

How to behave in the Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere reserves are popular holiday destinations and tourist attractions for an undisturbed experience of nature, exciting animal observations and relaxing hikes. To ensure that this remains the case also in future, please follow the following rules of conduct:

Stay on the paths.
Use only signposted paths for your tours.

Behave quietly and considerately.
That will increase your chances of spotting animals.

Dogs are welcome but they must be leashed.

Do not leave any litter behind! Plastic packaging can become a death trap for wild animals.

Do not remove anything from nature! Picking mushrooms and berries is allowed in small quantities only.

Do not light fire in the Biosphere Reserve!

Camping is permitted only at designated campsites.

The use of drones or model aircrafts of any kind is not permitted. You must not leave the path while taking photographs. Do not disturb fauna and flora.

Fishing is permitted only at designated sites!
Fishing in the ponds without a valid fishing license or permit from the pond farmer is in the Biosphere Reserve not permitted.

Caution! Visitors use paths at their own risk.