



A landscape like a park

Some hundred years ago, the Spreewald with its streams totalling nearly 979 miles (1,575 km) in length still was largely a forested area. Legend has it that the streams originated when the Devil's oxen bolted, dragging the plough and creating deep furrows behind them. The people in the region laboured hard to convert this jungle into fields and meadows. They formed the park-like landscape that constitutes the particular charm of the Spreewald. Yet the next generation will only be able to experience this patchwork landscape if people undertake to ensure its preservation. This is why Spreewald locals who cooperate with the biosphere reserve to preserve their home established in 2007 the community

Shaped by the human hand

A unique landscape in Central Europe is located about 62 miles (100 km) southeast of Berlin: the Spreewald. This is where as a result of the last ice age some 12,000 years ago the Spree river split into an intricate web of small streams, creating a large inland delta. Today, these streams meander through a landscape that was formed by humans for hundreds of years yet largely remains a near-natural meadow landscape that provides a habitat for numerous plant and animal species. Many of these have become extinct elsewhere or are endangered. This unique cultural landscape was designated a biosphere reserve in 1990 and gained UNESCO approval in March 1991. This means that the Spreewald Biosphere Reserve encompassing about 183 square miles (475 km²) forms part of a global system currently encompassing some 670 extensive reserves. About 50,000 people live in the cultural landscape of the Spreewald, in 37 villages and the towns of Lübben, Lübbenau and Vetschau.



Arrowhead



Blue Darner



European otter



Black stork

foundation "Kulturlandschaft Spreewald". It explores new approaches to preserving and sustainably developing the Spreewald landscape – shaped by the human hand and yet near-natural. Tourism, previously generating only an additional income to agriculture, now has become an important economic mainstay for the people living in the biosphere reserve. Each year, some 4 million tourists visit the region. The aim is to use the cultural landscape in an environmentally sustainable manner together with the local population. This targets in particular the development of sustainable forms of land use. Here, the Spreewald farmers focus especially on organic farming. Over 50 farms and about 70 percent of the agricultural land in the biosphere reserve are being managed according to organic farming principles. The majority of farms have also rejected genetic modification in the Spreewald production region. Organic farming produce includes in particular milk and beef from happy cows, in addition to vegetables and the famous Spreewald gherkin. The damage caused in the past by intensive agriculture and forestry as well as opencast mining in Lusatia is likewise gradually being remedied. The Biosphere reserve carries special significance for stabilising the sensitive hydrological balance and maintaining the typical habitats.

Biodiversity

The still so remarkable biodiversity in this landscape, so very worthy of preservation, cannot exist without water. This element in particular characterises the Spreewald flora and fauna. 6,000 animal and plant species have been verified in the biosphere reserve. About a quarter of the 1,600 identified plant species are on the Red List of Threatened Plants, including water caltrop (*Trapa natans*), sundew species (*Drosera*), spotted orchids of the genus *Dactylorhiza* and other orchids. The Spreewald fauna is equally rich. The number of verified species is impressive: 937 different species of butterflies, 113 freshwater shells (bivalves) and snails, 52 species of dragonflies and damselflies, 36 species of fish and 61 mammal species have been recorded so far. The Spreewald is home to 152 of 217 Brandenburg breeding bird species. This diversity is due to the numerous habitat types present in the biosphere reserve, including various woodland communities where black storks, cranes and white-tailed eagles find nesting sites. Meadows and fields are home to pollard willows and fruit-bearing trees as well as to bird species favouring open landscapes. These include waders and marsh birds such as the common snipe and the Eurasian curlew, the Eurasian

hoopoe that likes to nest in the cavities of old trees and, of course, the white stork, a typical synanthropic bird. An abundance of water plants, including various pondweeds, arrowhead, water starwort and water lilies, populate the streams, unless slim alders, mighty poplars and other trees cast their shadows on the shorelines. The improved water quality resulting from the filter effect of the Spreewald is responsible for the presence of rare fish species such as burbot in the near-natural sections. The Spreewald is also home to brook lampreys. Specialised dragonfly species such as the green club-tailed dragonfly and the yellow-legged dragonfly are proof of increasingly ecologically intact water bodies.



Discover the Spreewald

Year after year, millions of people discover the beauty and natural abundance of the Spreewald. In order to organise and manage this tourism activity in an environmentally friendly manner, a cooperation was established involving local authorities, the tourism association and the Partner Initiative, which, for example, develops the cycle and hiking trail network and new boat routes. New ways of exploring traditions and the landscape are being created wherever nature can cope with this. The observation of animals in the Barzlin Reserve between Lübben and Lübbenau and the Wussegk in the Lower Spreewald is well worthwhile. Of course, visitors will also learn a lot about the Spreewald landscape and its inhabitants in the biosphere reserve's three information centres. Equally highly recommended are the herb garden and the fully accessible nature experience clock on the Schlossberghof in Burg as well as participation in tours offered by the park rangers.

Research and Protection

The Spreewald Biosphere Reserve is involved with observation programmes in the environmental research system of German large-scale reserves. Additionally, special protection programmes for endangered species are being implemented. Amongst other measures, feeding grounds are maintained and created and nests for the white stork are supervised – a species that is critically endangered in Germany and lives in the Spreewald in a stable population. The common otter, which is particularly protected by the EC Habitats Directive, likewise commands a high degree of attention. The Spreewald is one of the last breeding grounds of this species in Europe. Without taking bird species into account, the Spreewald is home to a total of 20 species that enjoy specifically protected status across Europe.



At the exhibition in the Mankind and Nature Centre in Lübbenau's old town, you can journey together with Bully the Bullfrog through three worlds while learning all about the Spreewald's unique river landscape.

Hikes and bike tours with the Spreewald rangers uncover exciting and often forgotten insights into nature. But the work of the Ranger Service staff is much more than just this: they see to the implementation of the species protection programs, such as the one for the European otter, for bats or for amphibians. They are also involved in the observation program from which valuable information about the development of various species and habitats is won. The rangers also provide for environmental education.



The true magic of the Spreewald is most impressive on a traditional boat trip, which can be begun almost anywhere.



Forest still covers about one-fourth of the biosphere reserve. There are the famous alder-forest in the Upper Spreewald and large ash- and oak-forests in the lower part.



PLACES

PLACES	Accommodations/ restaurant	Canoe departure point	Boat rental	Bike rental	Riding/charabanc	Camping	Vacation on the farm	Learning trail	Museum
Alt Zauche	•	•			•		•		
Burg and environs	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Lübben and environs	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Lübbenau and environs	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Neu Zauche	•	•			•				•
Schlepzig	•	•	•	•	•			•	•
Straupitz	•	•						•	•
Vetschau and environs	•			•	•		•		



"House for men and nature"
Permanent exhibition, administration of the biosphere reserve
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touristinfo-burg-spreewald@t-online.de
www.burg-spreewald-tourismus.de

Schlossberghof Burg
Permanent exhibition, Herb-Garden, Herb-Shop, Burg office of the administration of the biosphere reserve, Ranger Service
Byhleguhrer Str. 17, 03096 Burg
Tel: administration office (035603) 691-0
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Old Mill – Schlepzig
Permanent exhibition, Schlepzig office of the administration of the biosphere reserve, Unterspreewald Ranger Service
Dorfstraße 52, 15910 Schlepzig
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