



Little Switzerland

When you think of »Switzerland« you think of peaks, ravines and views across the countryside. The Brandenburg Switzerland Nature Park has all this to offer – a good 30 kilometres from the eastern edge of Berlin. Even if the peaks are not as high and the ravines (also called gorges) are not so deep: the ups and downs of some routes are as breathtaking as the beauty of the landscape. It has been primarily shaped by the last Ice Age which came to an end here around 12,000 years ago. There are also broad views across the countryside and you can hear an echo can be heard at the »Kleiner Tornowsee« lake. 160 years ago the hilly area got its name as city dwellers in search of relaxation and fresh air increasingly move into the countryside. Since this time almost 70 landscapes in Germany have been given the attractive epithet of a dream landscape: Switzerland. The nature park established under the National Park Programme of the last East German government is, with 205 square kilometres, the smallest yet »longest-serving« in the State of Brandenburg, which today has a total of 15 large conservation areas. It is situated in the district of Märkisch-Oderland between the towns of Strausberg, Müncheberg and Neuhardenberg, well known for its Schinkel-designed buildings and Lenné park. In just a small area almost all types of landscape can be found: lakes and kettle ponds, springs and streams, fish ponds and ditches,

beech forest and pine forests, »mountains« and ravines, bogs, fields, meadows, hedges and even an inland dune. Melting water in the Ice Age washed out the Buckower Rinne which runs through the nature park. In the »Buckower Kessel« (Buckow Kettle) there is the Schermützelsee lake which covers 146 hectares and is 40 metres deep. Just one and a half kilometres away the 129 metre hill, the »Krugberg«, rises up. In the Pritzhagen Hills there are two lakes – the Kleiner Tornowsee and the Großer Tornowsee – which is just 250 metres apart and have a difference in height of 16.5 metres. This is a landscape with many contours, where at every turn the Ice Age is within reach: with the boulders which have been transported here by glaciers which, among other things, have been used to build roads and houses (as well as churches), with the mighty glacial erratics such as the »Bollersdorfer Stein« or deeply cut meltwater channels, such as the Silberkehle, Buchenkehle and Wolfsschlucht, which are among the most idyllic areas in the nature park. There are beautiful broad views across the countryside from the panorama path and from the Bollersdorfer Höhe to the Schermützelsee lake, from the Krugberg and Dachsberg in the Pritzhagen Hills, from the viewpoint at Münchehofe across the Klobichsee lake or from the Galgenberg hill near Reichenberg across to the wide fields of Oberbarnim.



Fuel Station for Birds

Almost all of the nature park is a European bird reserve. Among the over 140 species of breeding birds which have been counted, there are the »big ones«: both black and white storks, both red and black kites, honey buzzards, white-tailed eagles and common cranes. Smaller species such as both the black and middle spotted woodpeckers, green sandpipers or barred warbler also belong to the area and diversity of habitat. In a lakeland area of almost 300 hectares from Altfriedland to Karlsdorf up to 40,000 bean and white-fronted geese rest here in the autumn. Common terns, black-headed and silver gulls equally belong to the scenery, which can be easily seen from the observation tower, possibly with the aid of binoculars. Fishing also takes place here and the fisherman's festival is celebrated in August every year in Altfriedland.

Stairs for Fish

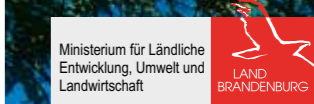
The clear, oxygenrich Stobber is the central flowing water in the nature park. It rises up in the Rotes Luch, flows from the south west to the north east through the lakes of the Buckower Kessel. Marsh areas, remnants of riparian forests, and headwaters line its largely natural course. It is a habitat which has become increasingly rare for the »heraldic animal« of the nature park: the common club-tail (club-tail dragonfly), one of 53 species of the dragonfly which have been verified as living in the area.

The once common species is heavily endangered not just in Germany, even if their numbers are starting to recover. The Stobber rushes through round 25 kilometres of the nature park and drops 43 metres in height. Once it used to drive many mill wheels. They have now largely disappeared. The mill ponds remain, however: a hurdle which cannot be crossed, not just by migrating fish species. Eight dams were made passable again through the use of »fish stairs«, among other things. Around 20 species of fish can be found teeming between the Pritzhagen and Eichendorf mills alone, among which are rare examples such as chub, the European bitterling, European weather loach, spined loach and gudgeon. It used to be just six species. In the nature park the beaver has now joined the otter, the water shrew and the rest.

Cultivated Landscape Meets Wilderness

A good third of the area of the nature park is forest: with a noticeably high population of elm, copper beech, common hornbeam, common oak, sessile oak ... and deadwood. In the Buckower Kessel, a large basin with lakes and ravines, mist and high humidity are often prevalent: it is a good place for the copper beech. Buckow is derived from the Slavonic word »buk« meaning copper beech. The manor system which once dominated today's nature park with relatively large fields is one of the reasons for the unspoilt views across the country-

side in many places. Things are rather different in the narrow Buckower Kessel, where the town's farmers only cultivated small areas of land. So it was that the Buckow vineyards and the field lots at Fontaneweg, for example, came about. So that these cultivated landscapes which came about through cultivation remain intact, the management of the nature park organises contractual nature conservation, such as the mowing of the water meadow to protect orchids, grazing to maintain the species-rich dry grass and the planting of hedges, which provides all-round ecology that shapes the landscape in many areas. Intervention by humans is not necessary everywhere: such as in alder and ash forests in the Stobbertal nature conservation area, the deciduous forests by the Schermützelsee lake, the mature forest in the Tiergarten nature conservation area, in the Silberkehle and the Wolfsschlucht. Here in the apparent disorderliness you can make out the natural order which supports the lives of many species.



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Märkische Schweiz Nature Park



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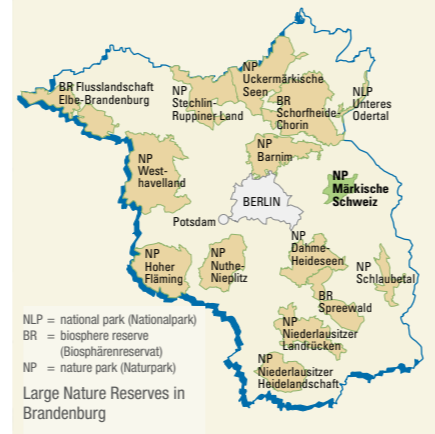


Multitasking: For visitors and people who live in the nature park, fishermen and farmers the staff of the Nature Watch (Naturwacht) are point of contact. They manage biotope and species conservation projects, as well as carrying out constant monitoring of rare species such as beavers, otters and bats, offering guided walks and looking after the junior rangers, the »Swiss Bears«.

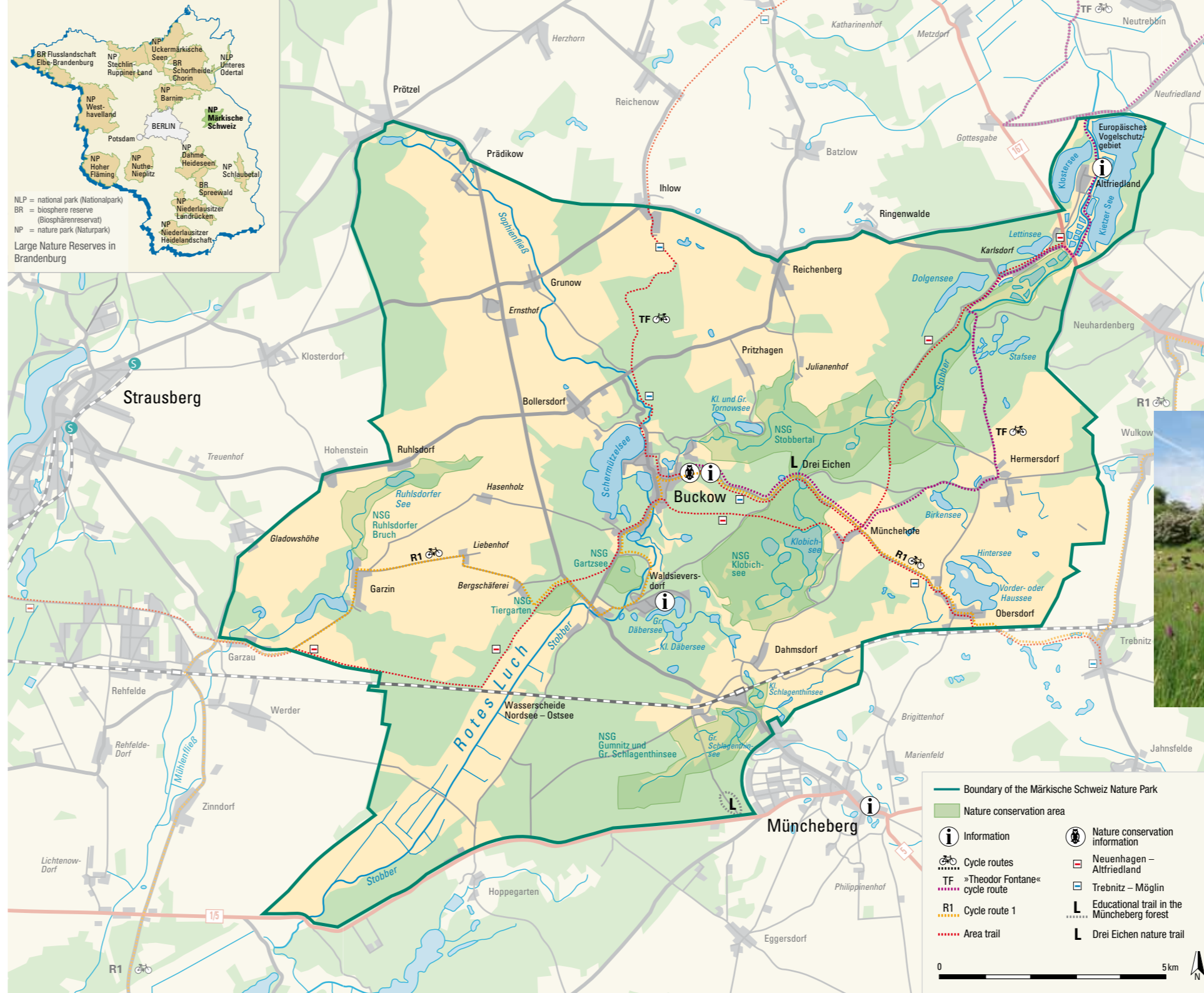


The black woodpecker is a characteristic species of natural forests. Here there are, for example, sufficient old trees to make nesting, sleeping and hiding holes. Wherever the black woodpecker is, numerous new tenants are not far behind, bats for example.

Deadwood: an all-rounder. Depending on the phase of decomposition, it is a supply of insects for woodpeckers and others, offers them a place to make a home, offers wild bees a hatchery, the common toad a place to overwinter, shelter for small mammals, and food in the form of mushrooms. The list of species which live off deadwood or in it ranges from ants to tinder fungus. And what is left over from the deadwood? Nutrients for the forest.



NLP = national park (Nationalpark)
BR = biosphere reserve (Biosphärenreservat)
NP = nature park (Naturpark)
Large Nature Reserves in Brandenburg



— Boundary of the Märkische Schweiz Nature Park
 ■ Nature conservation area

i Information
 🚴 Cycle routes
 TF »Theodor Fontane« cycle route
 R1 Cycle route 1
 ⋯ Area trail

🦇 Nature conservation information
 🏠 Neuenhagen – Altfriedland
 🏠 Trebnitz – Möglin
 📖 Educational trail in the Müncheberg forest
 🦇 Drei Eichen nature trail

0 5km

Natura Trail
www.naturfreunde-brandenburg.de

Nature Park Route
www.wanderbares-deutschland.de

Julianenhof Bat Museum
www.fledermausmuseum-julianenhof.de/



Numerous areas significant for species protection and natural scenery are disregarded by industrial farming. In order to prevent natural reforestation and thus conserve endangered species, those areas are being conserved by compatible grazing or mowing as two means of landscape management. Grazing mixed flocks has been found especially successful here.

PLACE

| PLACE | Accommodation/Inns | Tourist information | Bathing | Environmental education facilities | Museums/local heritage museums/exhibitions |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------|------------------------------------|--|
| Altfriedland | • | • | • | | • |
| Bollersdorf | • | • | • | | |
| Buckow | • | • | • | • | • |
| Garzau | • | | | • | • |
| Garzin | | | • | | |
| Hermersdorf | • | | | | |
| Ihlow | • | | | | |
| Julianenhof | | | | | • |
| Müncheberg | • | • | | • | • |
| Münchehofe | • | | • | • | |
| Neuhardenberg | • | • | | | • |
| Obersdorf | • | | • | | |
| Pritzhagen | • | | | | |
| Prötzel | • | | | | • |
| Reichenberg | • | | | | |
| Ringenwalde | • | | | | |
| Ruhlsdorf | • | | | | |
| Waldsiedersdorf | • | • | • | • | • |
| Werder | • | | | | |

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 np-maerkische-schweiz@lfu.brandenburg.de
www.maerkische-schweiz-naturpark.de

Märkische Schweiz Culture and Tourism Office and the gallery »Zum Alten Warmbad«
 Sebastian-Kneipp-Weg 1, 15377 Buckow
 Tel. (03 34 33) 5 75 00 o. 6 59 82, Fax 5 77 19
touristinfo@amt-maerkische-schweiz.de
www.maerkischeschweiz.eu

Müncheberg local information in the »Torwächterhäuschen«
 Ernst-Thälmann-Str. 101, 15374 Müncheberg
 Tel. (03 34 32) 7 09 31, Fax 8 11 43
touristinfo@stadt-muencheberg.de
www.stadt-muencheberg.de

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 Tourist information and exhibition »Altfriedland local history« (Visitation by prior appointment)

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OFFERINGS