The Backbone of Nature

The richness of habitats and species in the Green Belt is due to the close interconnection of extremely varied landscapes. Forming a backbone of a nationwide network of connections, with roads radiating from it, the Green Belt also links up with other habitats further away. Together with other areas close to nature within a five-mile radius, the area of this ecological network extends to 2331 square kilometres, which is roughly the size of the Saarland.

Ecological Cross-border Traffic

The Green Belt harbours a last retreat for rarities such as bush crickets, black storks, waders, European otters and wildcats, Tun’s cap lilies, globe flowers or pasque flowers. The outstanding ecological value cannot be measured alone from the number of species that are on the Red List, however; the secret lies in the fact that this Belt is hardly interrupted at all. It crosses through seven distinct physiographic provinces, connecting habitats across nine Federal States.

Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) • 200 million euros have so far been invested in nature conservation projects on the Green Belt by the BfN. Its results underline the enormous significance of the Green Belt, some 1400 kilometres in length, more than 600 animal and plant species that are on the "Red List" live here. On a single day, the "GEO Day of Biodiversity", volunteers found more than 600 different animals and plants. Some species were also rediscovered that were considered to have disappeared or become extinct, such as the swallowtail in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Nationwide, 150 nature reserves have been designated along the Green Belt. The Federal State of Saxony is a shining example: the entire Green Belt there has been a protected area since 1996.

The Green Belt: an ideal haven for nature

In 2001 the BUND undertook the "longest" survey in the history of German nature conservation – supported by the BfN. Its results underline the enormous significance of the Green Belt, some 1400 kilometres in length, more than 600 animal and plant species that are on the "Red List" live here. On a single day, the "GEO Day of Biodiversity", volunteers found more than 600 different animals and plants. Some species were also rediscovered that were considered to have disappeared or become extinct, such as the swallowtail in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Nationwide, 150 nature reserves have been designated along the Green Belt. The Federal State of Saxony is a shining example: the entire Green Belt there has been a protected area since 1996.

Investment for the Future

1400 kilometres of deady border corridors through Germany: 3000 kilometres of fences, 200 kilometres of walls, 850 watchtowers, 1.2 million tonnes of concrete, 700 000 tons of earthworks on the former Iron Curtain was huge, but it was not an investment for the future. Protecting the Green Belt, on the other hand, is an investment that will be valuable for many generations: as a living monument to recent contemporary German history, as a cross-section through nearly all German landscapes, as a bond that can no longer be cut between the old and new Federal States.

German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel describes the Green Belt as a "diversified natural heritage" and "part of the richness of our country."

Only a third of the Green Belt is so far subject to nature conservation, projects have been implemented on the Green Belt by the government, particularly extensive and long-term schemes to preserve areas of national significance. Landscape of the lake Schaalsee, Floodplains of the river Ilm near Larchen and Drilling landscape. Other projects are being planned. The Green Belt must be preserved in its entirety!

Become a shareholder of the Green Belt!

Yes, I would like to purchase shares of the Green Belt for my own use.
Yes, I would like to give one share of the Green Belt as a present.

Delivery:
irm person
by post to BUND e.V. · Das Grüne Band · Tel. +49(0)30/27586-424 · Fax +49(0)30/27586-440

Urgent: yes by letter to...

Yes, I would like to support the Green Belt regularly and to give my consent to the forwarding of information.

The Green Belt Europe – Continuous Diversity

Natural miracles still occur in Germany: From the Baltic Sea to the Saxon-Bavarian Vogtland near Hof, a 1383 kilometre long Green Belt stretches right through the middle of the country. A continuous strip of highly valuable habitats, between 50 and 300 metres wide, with unique areas providing refuge for endangered animals and plants: this is the unused land of the former inner-German border. Because of the questionable protection of the inhuman border fortifications, with metal fences, mines and border patrols, nature was granted a 30-year reprieve. And nature took advantage of this. A section of unsold "wilderness" was created, with magnificently fertile grasslands, a world of shrublands and forests, wetlands and nourishing heaths. Where nature was concerned, the death zone turned out to be a lifeline.

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Cracks in the Green Belt

Cracks are threatening to appear in the Green Belt: some 450 roads in total cross it, often insurmountable for most animals. Through the huge array of building projects on transportways and industrial sites, old cracks have widened, and new ones formed. Agriculture is also encroaching on nature: areas formerly used for deciduous trees are ploughed over or degraded to intensively used grassland. But it is especially in the farmland of our countryside, already widely industrialised, that we need the Green Belt as an irreplaceable retreat for endangered animals and plants, and as a natural oasis for our fellow human beings.

From death zone to lifeline

For nearly 40 years the Iron Curtain separated not only Germany, but the whole of Europe. A political, ideological and geographical barrier ran from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, in which nature was by and large left to its own devices. The German Green Belt is now providing an inspiration for the European version of a Green Belt – through 25 countries, for a length of over 8500 kilometres. From the Arctic north to the Mediterranean south, the European Green Belt links nearly at the natural geographic regions of the continent. The huge variety of landscapes, animals and plants is immeasurable.

The European Green Belt is divided into three main regions: Fennoscandia on the border between Finland and Russia, Central Europe and south-eastern Europe. The overall coordination has been assumed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Each region is supervised by Regional Coordinators, and the BUND is responsible for the central European section from Poland via Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy to Croatia.

Pan-European Initiative

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In the central European section, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN)) and the Euro- pean Union (EU) in particular are promoting a wide range of projects. In order to be able to maintain the Green Belt as a refuge for endangered animals and plants, people must also be included. This is why the project partners are support- ing a sustainable regional development.


Yes, I support the Green Belt regularly and I give my consent to the forwarding of information.
Yes, I would like to purchase shares of the Green Belt as a present.

I, first name/sender
I, Street/Postal Code, City
Phone, Fax
Date, Signature
BIC

Yes, I would like to regularly receive information on the Green Belt by email.

You can contact us at:
E-mail: gespraechen@bund.de
Tel.: +49 (0) 30/27586-60
Fax: +49 (0) 30/27586-61

Facts:
- 1.250 km (the length)
- 17.056 ha (177 km²) area
- 40% of the area: Floodplains
- 40%: endangered habitat types of the Red List Germany: 10% nature reserves
- 35%: under protection of EU Habitats Directive: 10% of the area: extremely used grassland, unsown fallow areas & farmland: 10% of the area: 98% of the length close to nature: 95% of the area: extremely used arable land, greenbelts, meadows & roads/buildings.

Natural Heritage Green Belt


www.greenbeltgermany.info

www.greenbeltgermany.info

From death zone to lifeline

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Frog Concert in the Crane Kindergarten

The Green Belt in Altmark near Salzwedel is dotted with woodlands and wetlands. Here the BUND Saxony-Anhalt created a refuge for northern geese and cranes by re-creating wetlands and grasslands and creating small lakes. Since then, the crane has also been breeding in the Green Belt. This 150 hectares, re-created forest in the Salzwedel forest has become one of the most valuable wetlands of north Germany. White-tailed eagles, black storks and European otters populate the extensive wetlands, common tree frogs and moor frogs feel totally at home in the renatured Cheiner peatland.

Billy Bush Cricket Wants to Go to the Green Belt

The bush cricket is an extremely rare type of grasshopper. Because of its extremely thick "paunch", it is not very mobile and urgently needs connected habitats. Near Mansfeld, in the rural district of Hildburghausen, the BUND is buying arable land that up to now cannot be populated by the bush cricket, and is transforming this into natural grassland. The BUND is regularly maintaining the area so that it does not turn into scrub.

The Ulstersack Region – Home of Kingfishers & Co.

The Rhön region is considered to be one of the most varied and species-rich low mountain ranges in Germany. Since 1991 it has been protected as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The 13,500 hectares of the valley Bode and Oker rivers. In the 1950s and 1960s the area was drained and converted into arable land. Nevertheless it was possible to maintain some relicts from the former wide range of species, such as curlews and northern lapwings. Thanks to the range of services, local people also appreciate the Green Belt more and more, so that the opportunities for environmentally-friendly original development life improving. The project thus supports the long-term preservation of the Green Belt as a unique interlinking of habitats and a living monument to the former division of Germany.

The WestEastern Gate in the Eichsfeld

The former border strip has been transformed through the middle of the long established landscapes of the Eichsfeld. In a joint project with the BUND and the town of Duderstadt, the Lindenberg / Eichsfeld administrative district and the Heinz Sielmann Foundation, the "WestEastern Gate" was realized: two sturdy oak trunks are silhouetted against the surrounding BUND area. Lined on the girdle by a stainless steel band and surrounded by oak saplings, they symbolise the division of Germany that has now been resolved. Even Michael Gorbachev came to the inauguration of the Gate.

Where the Nightjar Calls

Extensive marshland, moorland and wetlands used to stretch the Steinach valley and the Linder Plain between Mittelwi, Neustadt and Sonneberg. Like many other wetlands, the region was drained in the 20th century and used for silphage farming and flood farming. But its position in the shadow of the inner-German border sheltered the valley from total destruction. The BUND Thuringia secured ecologically valuable Noye landscape, dwarf shrub heaths, as well as glacial forests and mines, the BUND Naturstutz in Bavaria purchased meadows and ponds – a home for wood larks, nightjars, marsh cinclodes and round-leaved hokkey. Moreover, sheep and goats here are doing their bit for nature conservation: they are ensuring that the heaths, shrub clearance by BUND volunteers, do not become overgrown.