

WHERE THE BLUE DANUBE GOES GREEN



Donau-Auen National Park



MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG VON BUND UND EUROPÄISCHER UNION



LE 14-20
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WHERE THE BLUE DANUBE GOES GREEN



WHERE THE BLUE DANUBE GOES GREEN



Carl Manzano,
National Park Director

Welcome to the Donau-Auen National Park

Vienna and Bratislava are “twin-cities”, connected by the Danube River. No two European capitals are located in such close proximity. A unique natural landscape begins within Vienna’s city boundary: The “Donau-Auen” – the Danube River wetlands – stretch eastward all the way to Bratislava. The Donau-Auen are one of the last remaining large coherent riverine wetlands of Central Europe. Designated a National Park since 1996, they will be preserved for future generations thanks to the joint commitment of the Austrian Federation and the provinces of Vienna and Lower Austria.

A child of the Danube, the Donau-Auen have constantly been reshaped and recreated. Up until the Danube river regulation of the 19th century, the wetlands were at the mercy of the natural dynamics and shaping force of the river. Today, it is in the National Park where we can still get an inkling of just how powerful and wild such a riverine landscape can be.

Forestry and hunting operations have ceased in the National Park in order to allow a free development of nature. A major revitalisation programme for the river has been launched. “Hard” fixed river banks are successively freed from riprap, backwaters are being reconnected to the main river.

A principle task of the National Park is to enable our visitors to experience nature genuinely. It is in the National Park where we can detect the beauty and the value of all forms of life and rediscover our bonds with every living creature.

We look forward to welcoming you to the National Park.

The Danube plays the leading role in the National Park. With a length of over 2,800 km, the river is Europe’s second longest after the Volga. In Austria, the only remaining free-flowing stretches are in the Wachau Valley and the Donau-Auen National Park; all other sections have been dammed up. The average slope is 40 cm/km; flow speed is from 1 m to 3 m/second. The Danube still retains its alpine character in the Donau-Auen National Park. It is only downstream, at the Slovakian border, that it gradually becomes a lowland river. The river is, and will continue to be, an international waterway. But off the 120 meter wide shipping lane, in the side arms and the wetlands, nature alone rules.

A unique habitat

Since 1996, this area has received special and lasting protection. It all began in the course of a battle over the planned construction of a power plant at



Feel the river with every stroke of the paddle.

Hainburg that would have destroyed this landscape; the plant was ultimately averted. Saving the Donau-Auen wetlands has had a sustained impact on Austria and its attitude towards environmental protection. Today, the wetland forests are no longer

A MORE NATURAL FUTURE

The Donau-Auen National Park celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2016. Much has been achieved in 20 years, yet there is still much to do. The main challenge is to counteract the ongoing deepening of the Danube riverbed. Measures must be taken quickly in the next several years. Technical solutions already exist. Yet the comprehensive river revitalisation programme created by the National Park still awaits full implementation.

The region surrounding the National Park will continue to grow. So will the need for infrastructure like additional airport runways and highways. And to be closer to nature, more and more people will move to the vicinity of the National Park. Because National Park land is no longer used for forestry or hunting, there is still enough space to maintain refuges for White-tailed Eagles and other native species, despite the steadily increasing number of park visitors. However, visitors must have a keener appreciation of the National Park’s uniqueness and the urgent need to protect its precious habitats.



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commercially exploited, and the landscape can revert back to its natural state. People have quickly come to appreciate the uniqueness and treasures of this green wilderness on the river.

The Danube wetlands east of Vienna have been officially recognized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, or IUCN (see sidebar), as a "Category II Wetlands National Park". Its total area of 9,300 hectares is diverse: around 65% riparian forest and 15% meadow; 20% is covered by water. Yet water is the dominant force. Flowing freely through the National Park for 36 km, the Danube leaves its mark on the wetlands. Its water level fluctuations of up to seven metres allow it to forcefully shape and reshape the landscape in a never-ending dynamic process. The wetlands are at the mercy of the river's "tides", yet must no longer fear unwanted human intervention. Nature is left to its own devices.



Discover the Danube wetlands landscape by boat.



The wetlands are the natural back country of the Danube.

Nature conservation unites two capitals

The protected area is jointly managed by the Nationalpark Donau-Auen GmbH together with the ÖBf (Austrian National Forests) Nationalpark-Betrieb Donau-Auen der Österreichischen Bundesforste AG, and the City of Vienna's Municipal Department 49 (Forestry Office and Urban Agriculture). The guiding principles and strategic goals of the National Park include improving the morphological state of the river and the hydrological framework. Human interventions and exploitation should be reduced, and protective zones should be created in the process. These efforts are essential in the conservation of specific habitats and species. They also serve to heighten the impact of nature among visitors to the National Park.

Because the National Park is located between the major metropolitan areas of Vienna and Bratislava, recreational use plays a significant role. But such

WHAT IS A NATIONAL PARK?

National parks are not simply invented; there are internationally-recognized rules governing the foundation, functions and responsibilities of national parks. These are determined and monitored by the environmental network IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). National parks are established in order to:

- Protect the integrity of one or more ecosystems and sustain them for current and future generations;
- Prevent all kinds of exploitation as well as any activities that may damage the area;
- Create a place for research, education, visits and recreation in such a way that is ecologically and culturally sound.

National parks do not hide nature; their task is to make nature accessible to the public. Thus they also serve a restorative function. People must be able to visit the national parks in order to discover and experience untouched nature.

More information:
www.iucn.org



WHERE THE BLUE DANUBE GOES GREEN

use must take place in an ecologically sensitive way, heeding the diverse needs of fragile habitats.

The National Park brings nature and people together. Thanks to its central location, the Donau-Auen National Park is visited free by over a million people each year.

The most important message communicated by all the National Park's employees is that nature is top priority. National Park management strives to inform all visitors in the best possible way about its responsibilities and duties as a protected area in order to ensure that this unique landscape, with its fragile flora and fauna, remains intact for the benefit of future generations.

NATIONALPARKS AUSTRIA

The Donau-Auen National Park is one of six Austrian national parks united under the umbrella association "Nationalparks Austria":



Hohe Tauern National Park: protecting an alpine habitat, it is the oldest, largest and best known of Austrian national parks.

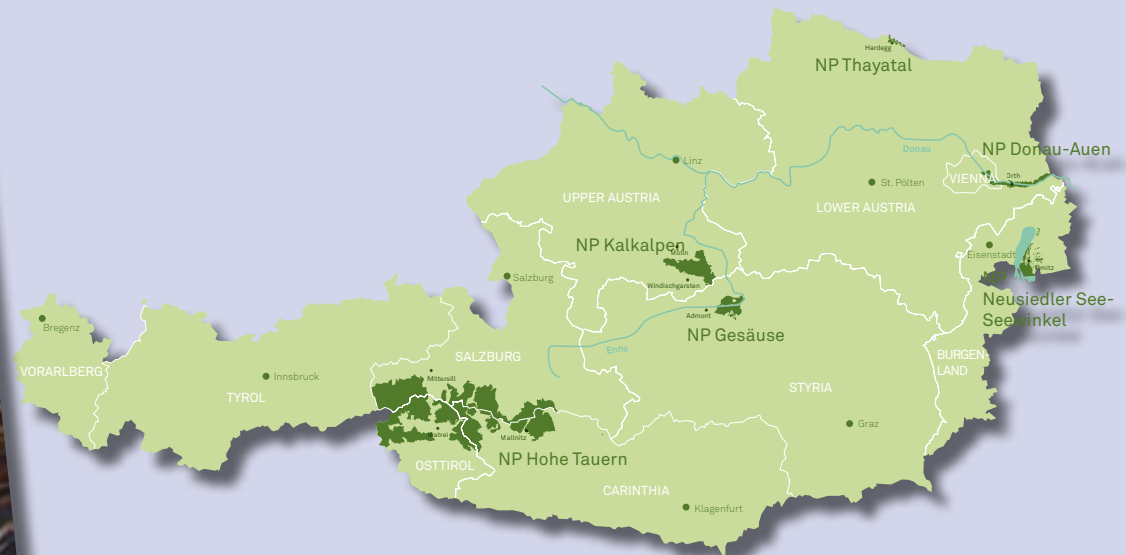
Neusiedlersee-Seewinkel National Park: a unique lake and steppe landscape located in eastern Austria.

Thayatal National Park: in northern Austria, a riverine and forest environment of great diversity stretching across the border into Czech.

Kalkalpen National Park: a dense and wild forest, and mountain habitat at the heart of Austria.

Gesäuse National Park: located along the gorge of the Enns River and crowned by a majestic mountain backdrop.

Together, the six national parks have a total area of 2,376 square km, or around 2.8% of the total area of Austria. The umbrella association coordinates activities among the parks and promotes these to the public.



More information: www.nationalparksaustria.at

WHERE THE BLUE DANUBE GOES GREEN

Visiting the Donau-Auen wetlands paradise

The boat glides silently through the riparian forest. "Look – a beaver!" The boat's human occupants are pleased to spot the mammal, which goes about its business undisturbed. Guided tours in the riparian forest reveal the miracles by the wayside. The Danube and its backwaters can be experienced



wien-lobAU National Park House: Young guests have ample opportunity to explore nature

up close by taking canoe or rubber dinghy tours. But visiting the park is more than just sightseeing: the National Park's visitor programme educates the public about the environment, enables interaction, and thus plays a key role in increasing appreciation for the value of this protected area.

The park's programme is diverse, offering something for both young and old. According to season, weather conditions, water levels, and the personal preferences of its visitors, National Park rangers design activities according to specific themes that spotlight the fascinating and unique aspects of the National Park: gravel islands that emerge from the water, then disappear; tranquil side arms that become roaring floods in times of high water; and the flora that thrive perfectly in these environments. The programme is augmented by events, workshops, project days, and multiple-day camps for children and teens.

Experiencing nature at the National Park Centre

The schlossORTH National Park Centre in Orth on the



Schloss Orth is the heart of the National Park.

Danube and the wien-lobAU National Park House in Vienna's 22nd district are not only the first points of contact for visitors, but also destinations in their own right, offering information and brochures, tips, and assistance when booking excursions.

The schlossORTH National Park Centre's Schlossinsel grounds is an outdoor area showcasing the habitats, flora and fauna of the wetlands. Visitors can experience the many facets of the park in one short tour around this island. A clear highlight is the walk-in underwater observatory offering close-up views of the park's numerous aquatic species.

It is equally rewarding to explore the National Park on one's own. Many of the walking trails crisscrossing the area are circular tours connecting up with the long-distance trail number 07. Some trails are open to cyclists. Select waters may be used for swimming and boating with non-motorized vessels. The banks of the Danube are divided into separate zones regulating the landing of boats.

More information: www.donauauen.at

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR NATIONAL PARK VISIT

The fact that the Danube dominates this habitat has consequences for visitors. In the event of flooding, extreme care must be taken when engaged in all recreational activities. The park's navigational system points to all marked trails and offers information about each trail section. National Park supervisors may also be found on the grounds. Keep in mind that risking your own safety also means risking the safety of others. The National Park protects a huge variety of flora and fauna. While the park aims to help its visitors experience these impressive treasures, it is essential for the safety of all to adhere to codes of conduct in this protected area.

Maps of the area may be found at the visitor centres and at the National Park's homepage. Please contact the National Park offices for more information about the walking trails and codes of conduct established to protect flora and fauna.



ANIMALS IN THE NATIONAL PARK



ANIMALS IN THE NATIONAL PARK

An elk struts proudly through the early morning fog. Minutes later, a beaver swims past, a fresh willow branch clenched between its hardy incisors. Over its head flies the kingfisher, emitting its sharp whistle, while from the reeds sounds the croaking concerts of the European Common Tree frog.

Over 30 mammal and 100 breeding bird species share the Donau-Auen National Park with eight reptile, 13 amphibian, and around 60 fish species. This abundance is augmented by an unquantifiable number of invertebrates such as the European Mantis, the great ramshorn snail, and harmless freshwater jellyfish. Here, many of these creatures find the kind of habitat they require, yet one they can no longer find elsewhere due to river regulation. The formula for success at the National Park is based on a combination of strategic projects designed to protect various species, and prudent natural environment management. The amount of deadwood in the National Park forests has doubled over recent years thanks to the park's philosophy of allowing trees to get old and die, and letting them lie where they fall. This is great news for insects like the Stag beetle, which requires ample oak deadwood and lots of time in order to mature.

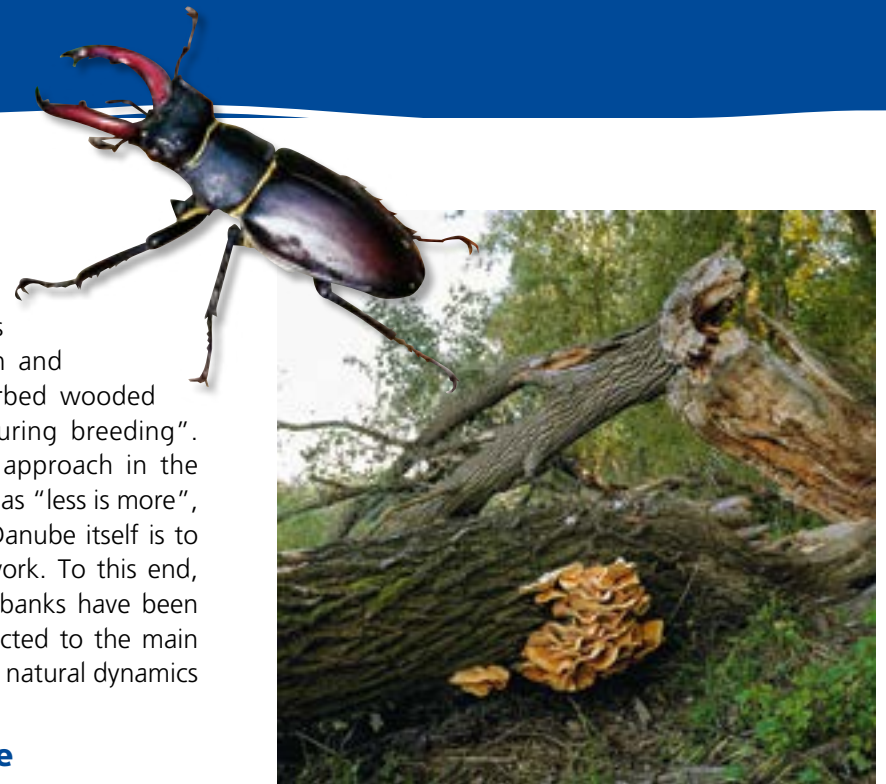
The eagle has landed – again!

Park staff are especially proud of the return of the White-tailed Eagle, which since 2005 has been breeding in the Danube wetlands. Five breeding pairs are currently in the region; during winter, the number climbs to 17, including seasonal guests. The key to success? "The White-tailed Eagle is extremely sensitive to any kind of disturbance, and requires ample and protected space, such as is found in

the Donau-Auen National Park", explains National Park ornithologist Georg Frank. "Here the species not only finds sufficient waters for hunting fish and waterfowl, but also the undisturbed wooded areas it requires for its eyries during breeding". While the forestry management approach in the National Park can be characterized as "less is more", the prevailing attitude along the Danube itself is to allow Mother Nature to do her work. To this end, in recent years many natural riverbanks have been restored, and backwaters reconnected to the main Danube current. This promotes the natural dynamics of the wetlands.

The nose follows its nose

Like other species, the nose also profits from rewilding. With its robust snout, the nose makes very specific demands on its habitat. For the development of its eggs and larvae it requires gravel beds in shallow moving waters. The Little Ringed Plover is another prime example of the ideal habitat many species find along the Danube. Over 30 pairs are once again breeding on these gravel banks and islands. "As soon as improvements are made to the river, the Little Ringed Plover resettles. This makes it the ideal indicator species for the degree to which a riverine habitat has been restored to its natural state", Georg Frank explains. The National Park would not be the same without one of its most prominent animals, and one for which it has a special responsibility: the European pond turtle, which has benefitted from a species protection project started around the same time the park was established.



Deadwood is a foundation for new life.

A head start for young turtles

In order to make life easier for these reptiles, meadows are mown and trails blocked. Since 2007, an ambitious head-start programme for reptiles has also been in effect: stable metal grating to cover the turtles' clutches in order to protect them from nest-robbing foxes and martens. In this way, over 3,000 hatchlings have gotten off to a safe start.

"Twenty years ago, young turtles were an extremely rare sight here. But nowadays, you can see turtles of all ages sunning themselves on tree branches, or on the shores of ponds", says a pleased project director Maria Schindler. "However, it is important to keep your distance and not disturb this reptile. This way, both the visitor and the animal benefit".

WE CALL THE DANUBE WETLANDS HOME

White-tailed Eagle

Haliaeetus albicilla

Once extinct in Austria, this species has now been breeding in the Donau-Auen National Park since 2005. In its high circling flight, the species may be easily identified on the basis of its broad wings with black "fingered" feather tips.



Eurasian beaver

Castor fiber

As the engineers of natural ecosystems, beavers create habitats and shelter for many other species. Since the 1970s, at which time the beaver was resettled in the Danube wetlands, they have gnawed away to their hearts' content. In eastern Austria there are currently an estimated 1,000 beavers.



Stag beetle

Lucanus cervus

The habitat of the Donau-Auen National Park is an ideal match for the special needs of Europe's largest beetle. Stag beetle larvae require old, rotting oak in order to mature.



Common nase

Chondrostoma nasus

As a member of the carp family, the common nase gets its name from the protruding upper jaw that makes its head look like a thick nose, or "Nase" in German. These endangered fish require the spaces between pebbles in shallow gravel banks near the shore for their spawn.



Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

This sparrow-sized bird with the characteristic eye mask is dependent on newly-formed gravel and sand banks bare of vegetation. Once all but vanished from the Danube wetlands, the Little Ringed Plover is again breeding here.



European pond turtle

Emys orbicularis

This creature is the only turtle species native to Central Europe. It can be identified on the basis of its characteristic yellow spots. In Austria, the European pond turtle is found only in the Danube wetlands east of Vienna.



THE NATIONAL PARK AND ITS HABITATS

Flow of the Danube

The lifeline of the National Park is the Danube. As it flows freely for 36 km through the park, it constantly forms new paths and naturally shapes the surrounding landscape.



Side arms and backwaters

While the Danube's side arms are extremely dynamic habitats with widely fluctuating water levels, the backwaters have been transformed into tranquil waters. Cut off from the main current, they nourish a wide variety of lush vegetation consisting of aquatic and marsh plants.



Shallow waters and gravel banks

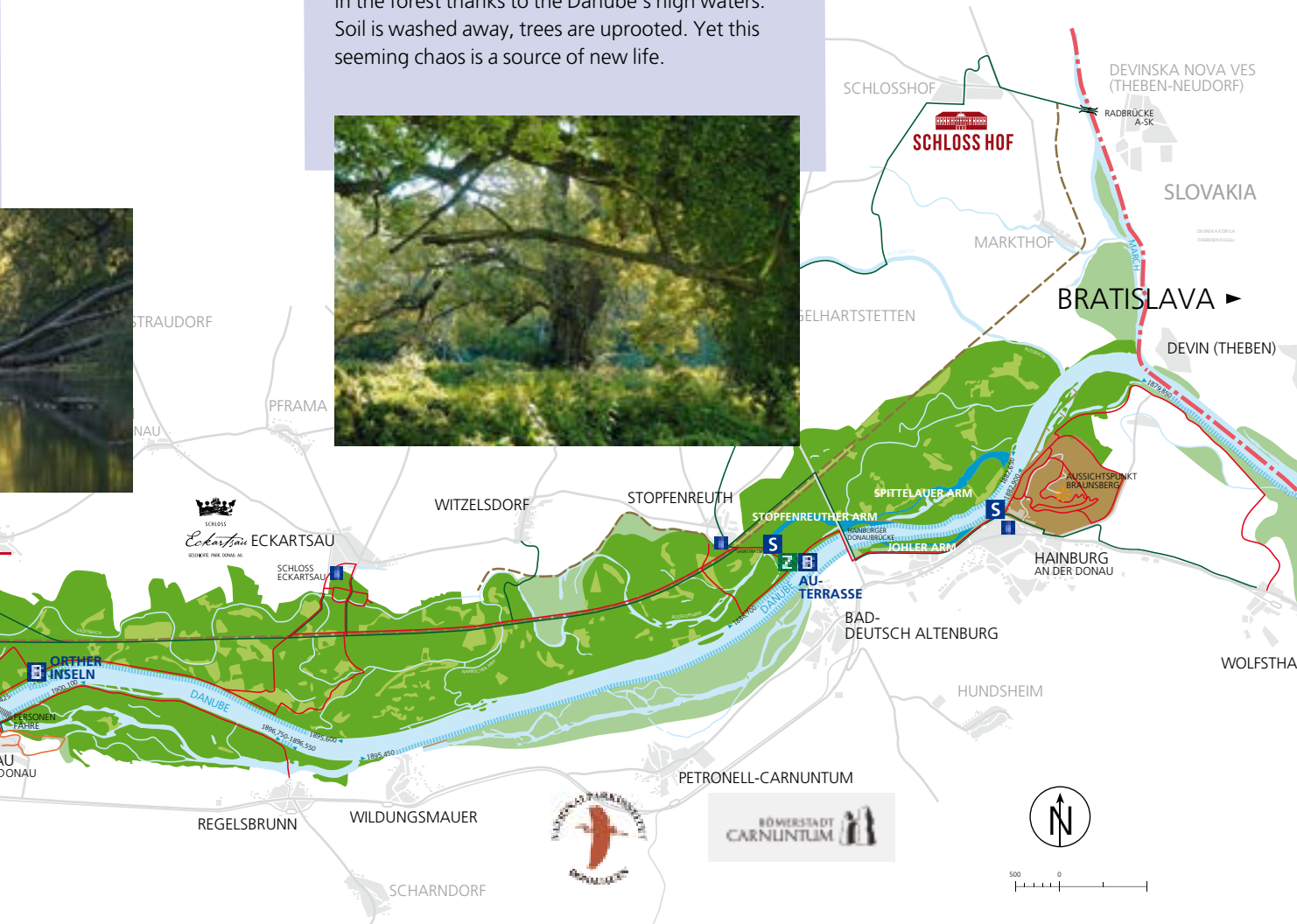
The shallow waters and gravel islands along the banks of the Danube are essential habitats for a variety of flora and fauna.



THE NATIONAL PARK AND ITS HABITATS

Riparian forest

Starting in late spring, no stone is left unturned in the forest thanks to the Danube's high waters. Soil is washed away, trees are uprooted. Yet this seeming chaos is a source of new life.



- Forest
- Meadow
- Waters
- City/Town, Street
- Wetlands outside the NP
- Walking/Cycling Path
- Hiking Path
- Themed trail in Haslau
- Hochwasserschutzdamm (Marchfeld)

- S Mooring
- B Natural Swimming Area
- Z Camping
- I Information

- ▶ 1900 000 ▶ 1950 000 ▶ Designated Boating/Landing/Swimming Area
- ▶ Non-motorized Vessels Permitted

Xeric habitats

The savanna-like environments in the vicinity of the Marchfeld flood protection barrier, built in the 1870s, are an arid home to perfectly-adjusted flora.



WE CALL THE DANUBE WETLANDS HOME

Black Poplar

Populus nigra

The Black Poplar thrives on riverine gravel banks in the softwood riparian forest, a frequently flooded area of the wetlands forest. These fast-growing trees can reach heights of up to 30 m and trunk diameters of 2 m.



Purple Willow

Salix purpurea

The Purple Willow is a true pioneer. Its far-ranging root system penetrates deep into the spaces among the gravel banks with a stabilizing effect on both islets and riverbanks. It prepares the way for other tree species such as the White Willow.



Siberian Iris

Iris sibirica

The threatened Siberian Iris colonizes damp, well-drained meadows. Its stately dark violet flower blooms from May to June. In the National Park, it finds a welcome haven in the wetland meadows located on the northeast Danube banks.



Snowdrop

Galanthus nivalis

In early spring, the snowdrop appears suddenly and dramatically as long as the rays of the sun can still penetrate through the forest to the woodland floor. It transforms the wetlands into a carpet of white flowers.



Wild Grape

Vitis vinifera
subsp. sylvestris

A true botanic treasure of the Danube wetlands and rare ancestor of the Common Grape Vine, this liana is found in forests and at the edges of trails and meadows, climbing to heights of up to 30 m. The National Park boasts the only significant occurrence of this plant in Austria.



Bug orchis

Orchis coriophora

As beautiful as it may bloom, so unpleasant is its odour in the months from April to June, and thus its unflattering name. This critically endangered species is one of 23 orchid varieties found in the Danube wetlands.



THE DANUBE WETLANDS HABITAT



THE DANUBE WETLANDS HABITAT

The mosaic of habitats in the Danube wetlands

Lianas wind their way around huge tree trunks, forming an impenetrable web of plants. Fallen trees dot the forest. Towering sand dunes come and go. Ponds are thick with lush Nuphar and water mint. Now and again is a clearing, site of a damp meadow and home to the Siberian Iris.

The scenery is reminiscent of a tropical jungle, but in fact we are in the Danube wetlands near Vienna. This habitat is formed by the grande dame of the National Park, the Danube River. Here the river has free rein to create a complex mosaic of aquatic and land habitats.



In some places the primeval forest is like a jungle.



Flooding is a fact of life in the Danube wetlands.

The power of water

The Danube is especially creative in late spring and summer, when the waters are high. With water level fluctuations of up to seven metres, the river often overflows its banks, filling the side arms and penetrating deep into the surrounding riparian forest.

This suits the riparian forest just fine. In fact, these wetlands exist only thanks to the formative power of water. The river delivers valuable nutrients in the mud it transports. As deadwood, fallen trees carried by the current form the substrate for new life. And many trees rooted in the soil actually like getting their feet wet: willows, poplars and alders can stand in water for long periods of time without harm.

Riparian forest jungle

The combination of life-giving water and nutrients ensures abundant plant growth. In other words, a near-jungle atmosphere. The fact that the riparian forest has gotten thicker has not escaped the watchful eyes of National Park staff: "These changes

LET IT FLOW!

The Donau-Auen National Park and the waterways operator viadonau have carried out ten river engineering projects to date. In order to facilitate a more free-flowing Danube, formerly cut-off backwaters have been reconnected to the Danube, and rigid riverbank structures and riprap, like those previously built near Hainburg and Witzelsdorf, have now been removed.

"In cooperation with viadonau we have now restored over five kilometres of riverbank and removed around 100,000 cubic metres of concrete block from retaining walls and groynes", says Christian Baumgartner, head of the National Park's nature and research department. These projects have received international acclaim as pioneering in the field of ecological river engineering.

In coming years the National Park will pass new milestones in river engineering in order to halt the creeping erosion of the Danube riverbed. When water levels are particularly low, e.g. in fall and winter, riverbed erosion exacerbates the problem of side arms being cut off from the main current. By implementing strategic renaturalisation measures and adding coarse gravel to the riverbed, this negative development may be counteracted, and the Danube allowed to form the surrounding environment naturally.



Riverbank restoration, before and after.

THE DANUBE WETLANDS HABITAT

have most to do with the fact that there are no commercial forestry operations in the woods. This allows a large number of trees to mature to a very old age, die, then decompose. At the same time, a rich variety of shrub species have developed in the understory”, explains Karoline Zsak, head of natural area management at the National Park.

The primary tasks of the National Park include regular inventories of flora and fauna and the evaluation of these to gain insights. To assist in scientific research, the Donau-Auen National Park cooperates actively with 22 national and international organisations, universities and research facilities.

Sediment catchers are true pioneers

Water unfolds its true creative power not only in the riparian forest, but also on the banks of the Danube. The water forms huge heaps out of floating driftwood, erodes entire riverbanks, and forms new gravel and sand banks. Yet these banks are quickly colonized: shortly after the water has receded, the first pioneer plants like the Purple Willow arrive. They sprout on the gravel and sand and begin to stabilize the subsoil as so-called sediment catchers. The follow-up species have a much easier time of it thanks to these pioneers. Yet many of these sand and gravel-loving species are on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, including the Black Poplar and Myricaria. In this case, dedicated projects for their

FORESTS FREED FROM HUMAN INTERVENTION

“For 20 years we engaged in corrective intervention. But we humans have now retreated”, explains Gerald Oitzinger, Director of ÖBf operations in the Donau-Auen National Park. Up until recently, programme measures included the introduction of native species like the Black Poplar and elm into the existing large stands of hybrid poplars, as well as the pushing back of invasive neophytes like the Ailanthus and the Maple Ash. As of 2016, these activities have ceased in nearly two-thirds of the National Park’s forested areas. Nature is now free to regulate itself completely in these zones, and humans may sit back and observe the changes.



Gravel forms the Danube’s beaches; driftwood floats on the shores.



Dense wild forest in the Danube wetlands.

THE DANUBE WETLANDS HABITAT



Savanna feeling: xeric habitats in the National Park.

conservation are implemented by the National Park in order to provide extra protection.

Hot and dry oases

The so-called xeric habitats, savanna-like environments found in the Upper Lobau, are home to the Stipa grass, Sea Buckthorn, and diverse orchid species. The National Park must also provide special support here, because it is only through pro-active management – the removal of woody trees and shrubs, and sheep grazing – that these biodiverse “oases” can be sustained. The same goes for the Marchfeld flood protection barrier, originally built to protect the region during times of flooding. The dyke

must be mown regularly. It is a vital habitat for over 400 plants species and the European pond turtle, which deposits its eggs here.

In the National Park, it is all about achieving the ideal balance. In some places Mother Nature must

be given free rein, and in others she receives a bit of extra assistance. Only in this way can the biodiversity of the Danube wetland habitats be preserved in future.



DANUBE WETLANDS MAKE HISTORY

The year 1984 marks the most crucial moment in the history of the Donau-Auen National Park. At that time, there was heated debate about the planned power plant to be built at Hainburg which would have destroyed the last intact, free-flowing stretch of the Danube and its riparian forests. The peaceful



What the Hainburg power plant would have been: devastating.

occupation of the wetlands bore fruit. Scientific studies demonstrated that the biodiversity of the region was in fact much higher than previously assumed, and the Danube wetlands were worthy of the designation “National Park”. Thus the construction of the plant was averted, and the idea of the National Park was born.

Yet some years passed before its establishment. In October 1996, the treaty was signed by the Republic of Austria and the two provinces Vienna and Lower Austria for the establishment and preservation of the Donau-Auen National Park.

More information:
<http://infothek.donauauen.at>



THE REGION



Schloss Eckartsau

THE REGION

Excursions to castles, fortresses and ruins

It's worth expanding one's horizons. Natural wonders beckon in the space between the two European capitals through which the Danube flows freely: only 36 km from Vienna to Bratislava, only 4 km from the Marchfeld plains to the edge of the Vienna Basin. The cultural scenery in Vienna and the surrounding region is as impressive as the natural one, and can be easily discovered by a visit to the National Park.

The Marchfeld region is rich in castles, as the German moniker "Schlösserreich" implies. First, Schloss Eckartsau, a Baroque gem embedded in a gorgeous park, a former imperial hunting lodge and the final residence of Austria's last emperor, Charles I.



Schloss Hof is the largest rural castle complex in Austria.

Then there is Schloss Hof, Austria's largest rural palace complex. Renovated extensively in 2005, Prince Eugene of Savoy's former hunting grounds are now a major Marchfeld tourist attraction thanks to the exciting events held here.



Successful landing in Marchegg, city of storks.

On the eastern border to Slovakia is the Baroque Marchegg Castle, a former moated fortress. Here, a natural drama of a different kind plays out: as the stork capital of Austria, Marchegg is home to over a hundred breeding birds, a veritable stork nursery.

On the south banks of the Danube lies Petronell-Carnuntum. The archaeological remains of the Roman city Carnuntum convey the excitement of life in a Danube metropolis over two thousand years ago. But there are more than excavations to be seen: entire homes, baths and even a city palace have been

SO MUCH TO EXPERIENCE

Many of the sights in and around the Donau-Auen National Park can be taken in by bike. The international Danube Cycle Path follows along the Marchfeld flood protection barrier and passes by nearly all the main sights.

The culinary arts have a long tradition in the region, thanks in part to the excellent wine produced in Carnuntum.

Information in English about sightseeing, dining and accommodations available online at:

www.donau.com/de/roemerland-carnuntum-marchfeld/
www.wien.info/en



Carnuntum makes antiquity come alive.

carefully reconstructed, breathing life into an ancient place.

In Slovakia, the Devín Castle ruins are located on the easternmost boundary of the National Park region. The steep stone walls mark the confluence of the March and Danube rivers.

NATURE PROTECTION WITHOUT BORDERS

DANUBEPARKS – NATURE PROTECTION WITHOUT BORDERS

The Danube is Europe's lifeline. Originating in Germany, it flows through nine countries until it reaches the Black Sea, uniting regions and habitats.

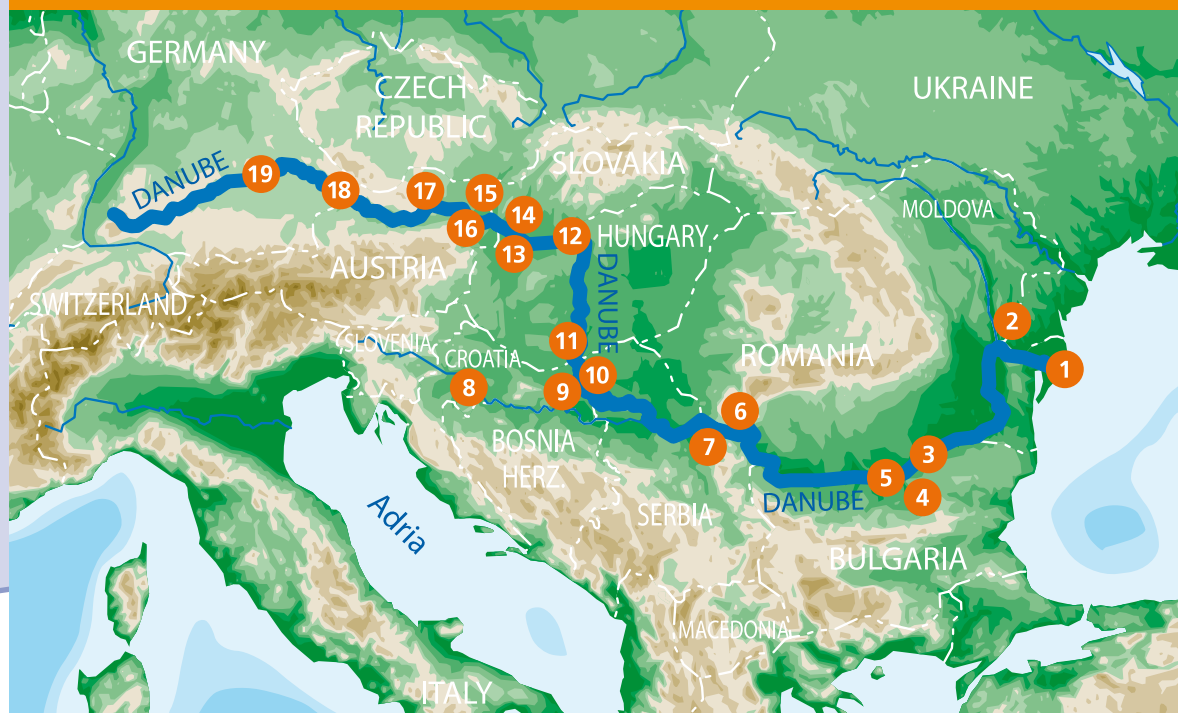
The 19 protected areas that make up DANUBEPARKS share a vision: conserving the biodiverse regions along the river. One of these is the Donau-Auen National Park. Specific aims of DANUBEPARKS include sustaining and/or restoring natural river dynamics; promotion of responsible nature tourism and environmental education; enhancement of awareness, and appreciation, of the Danube as a precious and pan-European natural heritage; and finally, protecting indicator species in the protected areas, such as the Black Poplar and the White-tailed Eagle.

www.danubeparks.org



Promoting responsible nature tourism and environmental education.

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve | 2 Lower Prut Nature Reserve | 3 Schutzgebiet Kallimok-Brushlen | 4 Rusenski Lom Nature Park | 5 Persina Nature Park |
| 6 Iron Gates Natural Park | 7 Djerdap National Park | 8 Duna-Dráva National Park | 9 Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve | 10 Naturpark Kopački rit |
| 11 Naturpark Lonjsko Polje | 12 Duna-Ipoly National Park | 13 Dunajské Luhy Protected Landscape Area | 14 Fertő-Hanság National Park | 15 Záhorie Protected Landscape Area |
| 16 Donau-Auen National Park | 17 Wachau Protected Landscape Area | 18 Narrow Valley of the Danube in Passau district | 19 Donauauwald Neuburg-Ingolstadt | |



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