

Annual report 2020
on the nature and protected landscape area of the
“Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee” (Germany)

Site Code: DE940007

- Reporting period:** October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020
- Country:** Germany
- Name of the area:** Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve
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1. CONDITIONS

The extension of the Europa Diploma for the Wollmatinger Ried until 28.11.2029 was approved by the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe on September 4, 2019 and was linked to three conditions.

a. **Study on the expansion of the core zone of the nature reserve**

(Prepare a study on the legal possibilities to enlarge the strict core zones of the Wollmatinger Ried–Untersee–Gnadensee Nature Reserve and report to the Secretariat by 2024)

The legal regulation for the nature reserve does not provide for zoning – consequently, there is no core zone.

The Higher Nature Conservation Authority (HNB) of the Regional Administrative Authority, Freiburg will create a compilation in which the worthiness of protection and the legal framework conditions for the extension of the protection zone will be presented with special consideration for the bilateral regulations with Switzerland. This study has not yet been initiated.

b. **“Schneggisand-Wälle”, sedimentation areas and natural processes preserved**

(Reject any proposals or plans aiming to eliminate naturally-built barriers like the so-called Schneggisand and silting areas and enable natural processes to take place undisturbed and without human intervention in a larger area, except where this takes place in the case of public interest e.g. flood protection).

The dredging of the estuaries was no longer an issue during the reporting period. The erosion and sedimentation processes therefore take place naturally.

To date, the nature conservation administration has seen no reason and no legal possibility to intervene in these processes.

In the case of a new version of the legal ordinance by the Freiburg Regional Administrative Authority, it must be examined whether or not a ban on changes to the morphology of the water bodies should be included

c. **Management plan**

(By 2022, draft and adopt a management plan meeting the provisions and objectives of the European Diploma for Protected Areas and addressing the recommendations attached to the renewal of the Diploma)

The Freiburg Regional Administrative Authority (HNB), is currently working on the performance specification for a management plan. The necessary award procedure will be initiated at the beginning of 2021, after which the contract can be awarded.

The flood dynamics vary greatly from year to year, making it necessary to carry out the surveys of the basic biodiversity data in cycles of at least two years.

This is why it is already foreseeable that the completion of the management plan will extend into 2023.

2. Recommendations

The Council of Ministers also issued six recommendations, the implementation of which has progressed as follows:

a) Harmonisation of the protective provisions and NSG (nature reserve) extension on the water side

(In cooperation with the Swiss authorities, assess the possibilities for harmonising the regulations for the protection of nature at both shores and to extend the Wollmatinger Ried–Untersee–Gnadensee Nature Reserve to the state border in order to enlarge the water zone, which is especially important during low water periods in winter)

Since the study on the extension of the protected area formulated under 1 a has not yet been completed, no contact has yet been established with the Swiss canton of Thurgau or at the Swiss federal level.

b) Improvement of the networking between the NSG (nature reserve) and the hinterland *(Pursue the efforts to improve the connections between protected sites in the hinterland and the Wollmatinger Ried–Untersee–Gnadensee Nature Reserve in connection with the extension of the trunk road B33, including the enlargement and/or adaptation of the nature reserve's boundaries. Compensation measures should be continued and construction is to be carried out in such a manner that the protected area is impacted as little as possible)*

More extensive expansions of the protected area are planned in the wake of the ongoing development of the B33 (see chapter 4). These expansions will be taken into account in a legal regulation amendment to be implemented.

The responsibility for the implementation (commissioning) of the compensatory B33 measures for landscape conservation has been transferred from the New Construction Management Department of the Freiburg Regional Administrative Authority to the Road Maintenance Department of the County of Constance. Deficits in the implementation of the measures occurred due to the new contractors, making it necessary to re-align the development goals. During a clarifying discussion between the HNB and the District Administrator's Office, it was agreed that the Lower Nature Conservation Authority, the Landscape Conservation Association Constance and the NABU would be involved in the awarding of the landscape conservation measures in the future, thus ensuring quality assurance.

c) Ending fishing in the most sensitive zones

(End fishery in the most sensitive areas, mainly estuaries and southern Hegne Bay, under the provisions of the bilateral treaty between Germany and Switzerland with the aim to improve the quality of the area as a breeding ground, wintering place and moulting area)

To avoid jeopardising the efforts to designate a new nature reserve "Markelfinger Winkel and Western Gnadensee" (an important waterfowl sanctuary 8 km west of the European Diploma area), no talks concerning the reduction of fishing in the estuaries and southern Hegne Bay took place.

d) Closure of the cycle path

(Abandon the still existing cycle path between the B33 road and the protected area boundaries, which is only used by a limited number of cyclists, and include the path in the Wollmatinger Ried–Untersee–Gnadensee Nature Reserve to enable an efficient control)

The former road plots between the NSG border and the B33 have not yet been included in the nature reserve.

In spite of the negative stance of the lower and higher nature conservation authorities, the municipality of Reichenau is still adhering to its intention to reactivate the path.

If the municipality of Reichenau initiates a planning procedure to this end, the Regional Administrative Authority must make it clear that such planning has no chance of success, also

because of the Council of Europe's recommendation.

Despite several announcements from the NABU to Google, it has not yet been possible to have the former cycle path deleted from the maps of the online portal.

e) Reduction or termination of disruptions

(Reduce or stop disturbances which have an impact on the protected area and are caused by leisure activities and sports through raising awareness and disseminating information to boat rental companies, and to hot-air balloon and Zeppelin tour operators)

Throughout the entire water sports season from May to October, NABU volunteers were on duty at the floating protection and observation station to inform water sports enthusiasts about the protection regulations and considerate behaviour.

When the waterfowl in the Ermatingen basin had yet again been badly disturbed several times by overflying Zeppelin airships, the Zeppelin shipping company, at the request of the NABU, warned its pilots to conscientiously adhere to the voluntary overflight ban.

Together with the museums of the city of Konstanz, the NABU has published a new "Stand-Up-Paddler" brochure on behaviour that conforms to nature conservation.

3. Consideration of interests of the protected area during constructional development of adjacent municipalities

(Strictly consider the boundaries of the protected area, their potential for further development and the need for sufficient buffer zones to meet the objectives of the protected areas when examining the further expansion of building areas in the municipalities concerned)

The municipalities continue to carry out urban land use planning adjacent to the buffer zones of the protected area.

The Freiburg Regional Administrative Authority has not yet communicated more intensively with the municipalities about this issue.

4. Area management

In the Freiburg Regional Administrative Authority, Ms. Bianca Eblen has been in charge of Department 55, Nature Conservation and Law, since succeeding Dr. Seuffert on September 1, 2020.

5. Borders

In the course of the extension of the B33, plans have been put forward to extend the protected area (on a small scale) up to the new roadway at a point between the Kindlebild crossroads and the railway level crossing.

However, the areas between the Constance sewage treatment plant and the Kindlebild crossroads are particularly critical in terms of cycle path use – and they have not yet been included in these road extension plans.

In the "Bibershof" (Reichenau-Damm) zone, areas are to be transferred from the currently protected landscape to the more strictly protected nature reserve.

6. Other information

Other relevant information on incidents in the protected area during the reporting period can be found in the detailed annual report of the NABU. The information can be summarised for the condensed report for the Council of Europe as follows:

In the year under review, the amplitude of the water level fluctuations of the Lake Constance water level was only 1 m instead of the usual 2 m. This meant that the silt zones hardly dried up at all and the summer flooding of the reed beds did not take place. The dry and hot spring-time was also a characteristic feature once again.

In addition to several record values, the development of the value-determining plant species thus showed worrying developments (decreases in the number of individuals).

The international importance of the protected area for resting and wintering waterfowl was also confirmed this year. The breeding success of the waterfowl was strongly influenced by the water level dynamics. A brood of the black-necked grebe was once again observed.

The planned landscape maintenance work could be more or less carried out to the extent planned.

The protected area was heavily burdened by the greatly increased number of visitors as a result of the corona lockdown.