

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the Euroean Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year October 2024 to September 2025

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: **Germany**

Name of the area: **Nature Reserve Wurzacher Ried**

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the Euroean Diploma for Protected Areas:

European Diploma extension: Annual report for the year 2019: 6 years since renewal

Central authority concerned:

Ministry of the Environment, Climate Protection and the
Energy Sector Baden-Württemberg
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Authority responsible for its management:

Tübingen Regional Administrative Authority
Departments (Referate) 55 and 56
Konrad-Adenauer-Str. 20
D-72072 Tübingen, Germany
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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet: <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. By 2021, revise the 2007 management plan or draft a new management framework meeting the provisions and objectives of the European Diploma for Protected Areas and complementary to the Natura 2000 management plan in preparation;

The management plan (MaP) for the FFH and bird sanctuary "Wurzacher Ried und Rohrsee" was completed with effect from 1 November 2019. The management plan complements the 2007 Maintenance and Development Plan (PEPL) for the nature reserve (see previous annual reports).

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. investigate the possible technical methods to connect the aquatic system of the Haidgauer high moor, separated by the trunk road B465, through water channels or other technical measures in order to enable more water flow towards the eastern part of the moor and to ensure water exchange, especially in the Randlagg;

The aim is to reconnect the two hydrological bog areas on both sides of the B 465. Various solutions were analysed as part of a feasibility study. The feasibility study was forwarded by the Tübingen Regional Administrative Authority, Ref. 44, to the Ministry of Transport with the recommendation to pursue a technical solution. The Ministry has yet to make a decision on this matter.

A traffic report commissioned by the Regional Administrative Authority is currently being prepared. The report will investigate the traffic share on the B 465. The report is also intended to assess the reasonableness of the traffic load experienced by local residents, and to suggest possible solutions to relieve it, such as the construction of bypasses.

The findings of the report will be coordinated with the Ministry of Transport. They will inform the decision on how to proceed with the reconnection measure on the B 465 through the Wurzacher Ried, alongside the results of other ongoing investigations and expert consultations, as well as the coordination processes still required.

2. draw up a prevention plan to manage invasive species, to be prepared in case of their appearance, according to EU Regulation 1143/2014;

The occurrence or presence of invasive species has been observed every year, and appropriate preventive measures have been taken to systematically combat specific species such as Canadian goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), glandular balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*). To date it has been possible in this way to limit their further spread.

3. pursue the efforts to create an observation tower next to the Torfmuseum to provide an additional attraction in the area without disturbing the ecosystem;

Plans for the construction of a nature experience and observation tower at the Haidgauer Torfwerk (Haidgau peat works), which had been in preparation for many years, were cancelled following a referendum in February 2025. The idea behind the tower was to make the bog, which boasts a European diploma, more visible to citizens and visitors. It would have been an important element of sustainable urban development for the town and an element of environmental education for the Nature Conservation Centre. The municipal council approved the construction project by a large majority.

In summer 2024, concerned citizens launched a signature campaign to petition for a referendum on the issue. At numerous information events, the tower opponents and supporters tried to win over the citizens for or against the project. The Nature Conservation Centre also responded to the public's need for information with statements from the centre manager at events and on numerous excursions to the tower site.

On 19 January 2025, the citizens of Bad Wurzach entitled to vote voted against the tower project. The decision is binding and is equivalent to a decision by the municipal council. Thus, the project is no longer being pursued.

4. in co-operation with the aeronautical authority, stop any unnecessary acrobatic flights over the Ried due to their negative impact on the site and especially birdlife;

Above a certain altitude, aircraft are also legally permitted to fly over nature reserves. This explains why there has been a flight box over the Ried for so long, which the Kunstflugschule Tannheim (Tannheim aerobatics training school) used regularly for training in earlier years. Flight boxes are subject to a time limit, which can be reapplied for after expiry and again if required. An enquiry by the Ministry of the Environment to German Air Traffic Control (DFS) revealed that the time limit for the flight box over the Wurzacher Ried had expired some time ago and that the aerobatic flying school had not applied for a new one. In practical terms, this means that aerobatics are currently not permitted over the Ried.

Renewing the flight box requires a lengthy application process, including an environmental impact assessment and a hearing with public interest organisations. It is currently not known whether a new application for a flight box has been submitted to the responsible aviation authority or whether such an application is planned. However, the Nature Conservation Centre would raise its concerns in any such approval procedure.

5. resume negotiations with landowners in order to acquire land in the outlying areas – mainly near the village of Albers – to limit and eventually stop the deposition of substances harmful to this sensitive environment, such as livestock effluents or chemical fertilisers. In case of inconclusive results, long-term agreements should be negotiated to reduce this;

Baden-Württemberg's property management authority has now completed acquisition of 17 hectares of hillside land near Albers. See previous annual reports.

In the reporting year, the following properties were acquired for nature conservation reasons:

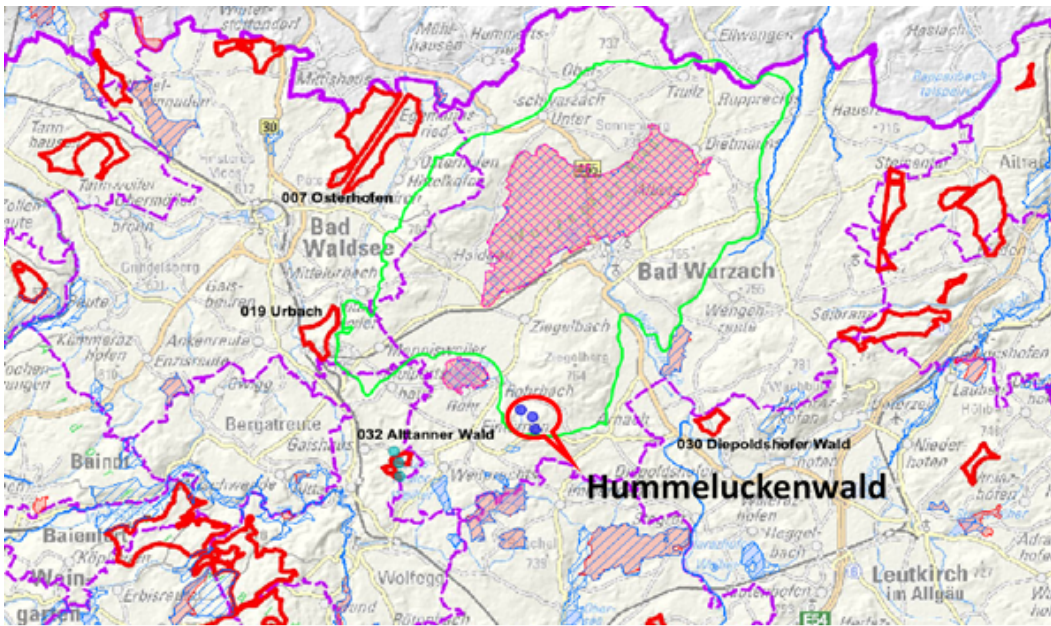
No. area / Flur	Municipality	District	Size (sq. m.)
71/32 - Flur 1	Bad Wurzach	Dietmanns	14.500
40/3 Flur 1	Bad Wurzach	Gospoldshofen	676

6. preserve the integrity of the landscape around the basin of Bad Wurzach and avoid the construction of technical infrastructure on the hills and hilltops in the visual range of the Wurzacher Ried.

The Wurzacher Ried (bog) nature reserve holds the European Diploma in category A. Recommendation 6 of the European Council also includes the protection of the surroundings of the Wurzacher Ried (Wurzach Basin).

This means that the Wurzach Basin should remain free of technical infrastructure within the visual axis of the Ried, in particular wind turbines and ground-mounted photovoltaic systems. In connection with the preparation of the subregional energy plan of the Lake Constance-Upper Swabia Regional Administrative Association and the definition of priority areas for wind power in the region, the Nature Conservation Centre manager was able to comment on this topic at the spring 2024 meeting of the expert group in Strasbourg. An important outcome of this meeting is the designation of the Wurzacher Ried, which holds a European Diploma, as a protected area which must remain free of wind turbines. The Altann Forest wind energy priority area is located outside this protected area and is not viewed critically by the Council of Europe with regard to the extension of the European Diploma.

The situation is different at the Hummelluck Forest wind turbine site (3 wind turbines). This site lies within the protected area. The expert group views this as a violation of Recommendation 6 and has raised serious concerns about the preservation of the diploma if facilities were to be authorised or built in the Hummelluck Forest.



Map of the Wurzach Ried with the Wurzach Basin conservation area (green line) and designated priority areas for wind power (red) as well as the Hummellucken Forest site

Although the Regional Administrative Authority took the protected area into account when drawing up the subregional energy plan and did not designate the Hummellucken Forest as a priority area for wind energy, a wind power project developer stuck to its plans and submitted an application for authorisation shortly before the plan came into force.

Both the town of Bad Wurzach and the nature conservation authorities took a critical view of this project from the outset due to the threat to the European Diploma. However, there were no legal grounds on which to reject the application for authorisation with legal certainty. After lengthy negotiations with the applicant, the latter was ultimately persuaded to withdraw the planning application. The nature conservation authority's view that the two wind farms for the Hummellucken and Alttann Forests are subject to cumulative environmental impact assessments proved decisive in this case. While they are harmless individually, a devaluation of Rohrsee (located approximately two kilometres south of the Wurzach Ried) as a resting area for migratory birds and a considerable restriction of seasonal bird migration cannot be ruled out when they are combined.

As an environmental impact assessment for both wind farms would have caused a considerable delay and thus financial losses and also posed a high approval risk for the Hummellucken Forest wind farm, the investor decided to withdraw the application for the Hummellucken Forest wind farm. The "Wurzach Basin conservation area" will now be spared from wind turbines, which means that the Wurzach Ried will retain its European Diploma.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Staff:

The following people worked for the Nature Conservation Centre (NCC) in the 2025 reporting year

- Dr. Siegfried Roth (Head of Centre, 100%)
- Dr. Nicole Jüngling (Deputy Head, Environmental Education, 60%)
- Sabrina Schiller (Environmental Education, 60%)
- Valeska Ulmer (Marketing / Public Relations, 50%)
- Regina Kuhn (Secretariat, 60%) and Belinda Tosun (Secretariat, 50%)

Part-time employees: Karin Kasper, Christine Reichle, Renate Schiedel, Irma Heine, Elisabeth Manz. All at the cash desk for the permanent exhibition MOOR EXTREM/Shop

Voluntary Ecological Year: 2 positions - Federal Volunteer Service: 1 position

Financing

The Nature Conservation Centre is financed from subsidies granted to the centre's sponsors as well as from the income generated by the centre itself. The ongoing operating costs of the Nature Conservation Centre are

borne proportionately by the founders of the Nature Conservation Centre (State of Baden-Württemberg, District of Ravensburg, town of Bad Wurzach).

Based on figures up to the end of September 2025, we can expect good overall financial results due to the high visitor numbers at our events and the "Moor Extrem" exhibition, as well as strong sales in the shop. In terms of costs, high building-related costs (particularly energy costs) and IT costs (such as the use of Infoma and the integration of the NCC into the city's invoicing process) are significant factors.

Landscape management

In the context of the Habitats Directive, the Wurzacher Ried nature reserve is particularly important for the following habitat types: Habitat type 7110* (active raised bogs), habitat type 7140 (transition mires and quaking bogs) and habitat type 6410 (molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soil). The aim is to maintain these habitat types in a favourable conservation status or to develop them towards this goal. The usual management measures for habitat types 7140 and 6410 are mowing the areas and reducing the growth of woody plants. The following measures were implemented in the reporting year:

District	No. Area/Flur	Habitat type	Maintenance	Hectar
Bad Wurzach	1741, 1751, 1770		Reduction Undergrowth	0,2
Wurzach			Neobiota	
Dietmanns	89		Reduction Undergrowth	
Dietmanns	98 Nord, 131 NO, 105	6410	Reduction Undergrowth	1,1
Dietmanns	131	6410	Reduction Undergrowth	0,5
Wurzach	1780, 1079, 1807, 1808, 1811, 1818, 1821	7140	Reduction Undergrowth	0,5
Wurzach	889/6		Installation of litter storage area	0,1
Unterschwarzach	div.	7140	Reduction Undergrowth	7
Dietmanns	98 Nord, 131 NO, 105	7140	Reduction Undergrowth	1

Agreements will be reached with numerous farmers for the maintenance of the reed beds in the peripheral areas of the bog. Throughout the reporting year, 19 contractors maintained a total of 112 hectares of wet and hay meadows in line with Baden-Württemberg's Landscape Maintenance Ordinance. 23 contractors maintained a total of 165 hectares under contracts of use. Wet and hay meadows, which are inaccessible to agricultural machinery, are mowed with one state-owned and one commissioned mowing caterpillar. The area comprises 20 hectares of mowed area.

Visitor guidance and path construction

Regular maintenance work is carried out on various path sections, especially wooden walkways, in cooperation with the State Forestry Office, the municipal construction works department and the Bad Wurzach local heritage society. This also includes removing dangerous trees along hiking trails in connection with path safety.

Sections of wooden walkways have to be repaired or renewed at irregular intervals. In autumn 2025, the public works department completely renovated the old wooden walkway from the start of the Riedsee (display 9) along the bog adventure trail, extending it by approximately 200 metres and replacing the wood with plastic planks. In November, 50 metres of the wooden walkway near the moor treading pool will also be renewed. After weighing up all the pros and cons, the municipal council opted for recycled plastic for the surface.

The flood event in early summer 2024 also left its mark on Bad Wurzach. The Wurzacher Ach river flooded large parts of the spa gardens, causing some wooden bridges to be lifted off their hinges and closed to visitors. All bridges in the spa gardens were replaced by new bridges in the year under review. The spa gardens can now be used again without restriction as part of the NCC's educational work.

Species protection - Birds

The results of the avifauna mapping carried out in the entire nature reserve in 2023/24 are now available. On this basis, an expert office was commissioned to develop action plans for the species for which the Wurzacher Ried is of regional importance. Examples are the northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), corn crake (*Crex crex*), spotted crake (*Porzana, porzana*), common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*).

Example northern lapwing

In 2024, 12 pairs of the endangered bird species northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) are thought to have bred in the Wurzacher Ried area. Near Haasen, a 400 m long electric fence was used for the first time during the breeding and rearing season as a defence measure against ground predators. The creation of bog pools in combination with effective predator protection should enhance the habitat and significantly increase the lapwing population in the peatland. This could be brought about as early as winter 2025/2026.

Osprey and crane: here to stay?

The osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) was historically extinct as a breeding bird in southern Germany. However, there are signs that the species could breed in the region again. In 2025, two artificial nests were installed in the Wurzacher Ried with the aim of establishing the species as a breeding bird in the Ried. Two free-standing trees (spruce and pine) were selected in the rewetting area and the artificial nests were installed at the end of August by a team of tree climbers after felling the treetops. To encourage the species to breed, small branches, pieces of bark and peaty turf were placed in the nest. A mount for a camera makes it possible to follow the breeding activities online via webcam if the nests are colonised.

Since 2016, a pair of cranes (*Grus grus*) has been breeding in the Wurzacher Ried with varying degrees of success. 2 chicks were raised in 2025. A second pair was observed for the first time, and their behaviour indicated that they were attempting to breed.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no changes in the boundaries of the protected area in the reporting year.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The European Diploma turns 60!

The European Council took the 60th anniversary of the diploma as an opportunity to celebrate this important instrument of European nature conservation with all diploma holders. The celebration took place from 21-23 May in Granada, Spain. Many representatives from European degree programmes attended the anniversary conference. The head of the Wurzach Nature Conservation Centre took part in the ceremony on behalf of the State of Baden-Württemberg.

40 years Wurzacher Ried Nature Conservation Centre

The 40th anniversary of the Wurzacher Ried Nature Conservation Centre was celebrated on 21 September. Around 130 invited guests attended the ceremony. The ceremony honoured the impressive development of the Centre, which began four decades ago as a small institution in the attic of the Bad Wurzach town hall.

Environment Minister Thekla Walker praised the Nature Conservation Centre as a “lighthouse project for nature conservation in the state” and emphasised the outstanding role of the Wurzacher Ried as a habitat for a large number of animal and plant species. In particular, the rewetting of the peatland, a central project of the Centre, is an important contribution to climate protection. Walker highlighted the Centre’s expertise in the field of peatland protection and emphasised the importance of nature education for the next generation.

In the afternoon, the Nature Conservation Centre celebrated its 40th anniversary with a varied afternoon programme for young and old. The former and current Nature Conservation Centre managers presented important milestones in the history of the Centre to guests during two anniversary hikes in the Ried in 2025.