

The Donau-Auen National Park

Donau-Auen National Park 2012/2013 Group Programmes

Preserving Nature for Generations



The Danube Wetlands

Stretching from Vienna to Bratislava, the Danube wetlands enjoy special protection: in 1996, the entire area was declared a National Park.

A large number of habitats are created by the constant rise and fall of the free-flowing Danube waters and are home to a wide variety of fascinating flora and fauna.

Humans are only guests here, and thus must take care to act responsibly and respectfully when visiting this unique natural sanctuary.

Get to know the Donau-Auen National Park! There are many different ways to discover and experience its wonders – select one which meets your needs. National Park rangers accompanying you can offer insights into how Mother Nature and her cycles work and will direct your attention to special and fascinating things you might have otherwise missed.

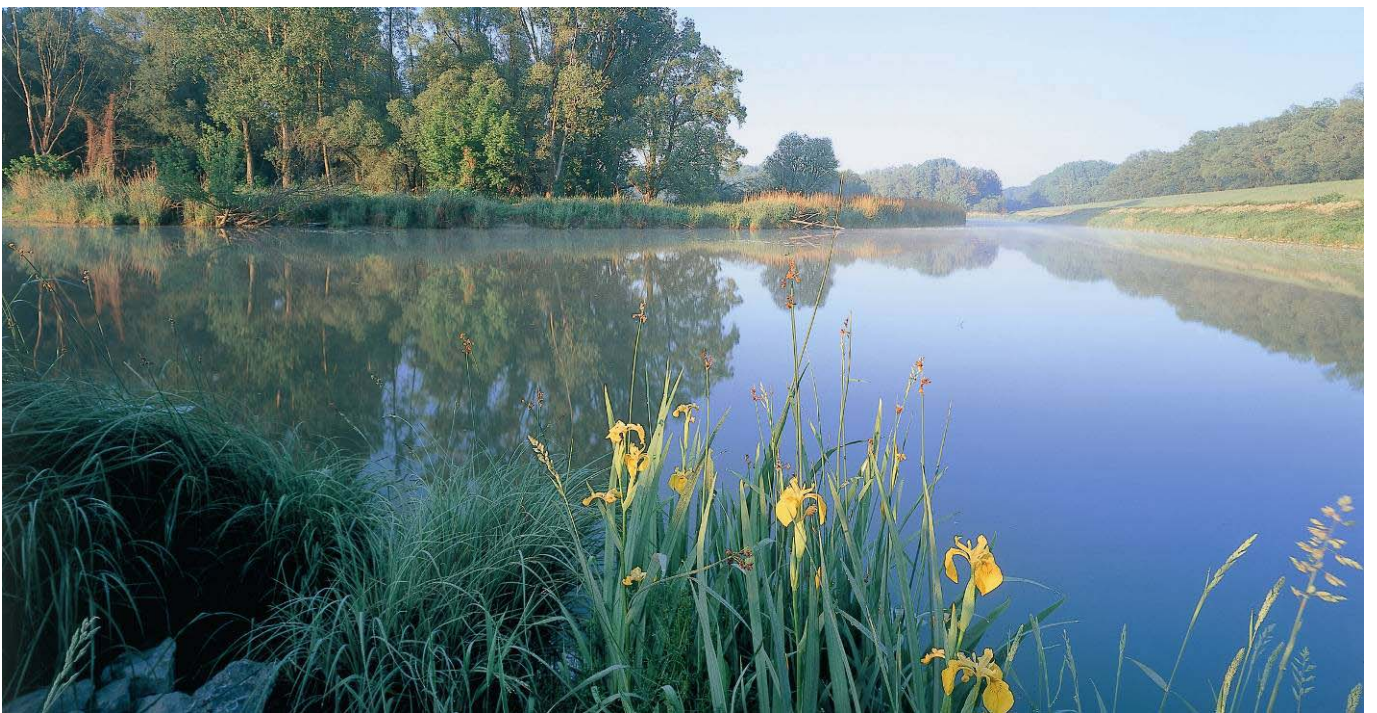
Because time flies quickly on National Park tours, be sure to schedule at least two to three hours for your visit – the memories you have will linger on even longer. Nature can also be unpredictable: be prepared for inclement weather, especially when taking outdoor tours.

Please be aware that dogs are not allowed at the schlossORTH National Park Centre, on the schlossINSEL, or on boat excursions.

If for any reason a booked tour cannot take place as scheduled (due to flooding, inclement weather, storms, mosquito plagues etc.) we will make every effort to arrange an interesting alternative plan for you.

We highly recommend the following gear: weatherproof clothing, rain gear, sturdy footwear, head covering, mosquito repellent, sun screen and something to drink. The Nationalpark-Donau-Auen GmbH and National Park rangers assume no liability for personal injury or property damage.

We invite you to turn the page and discover the many ways to experience the Donau-Auen National Park!



Bookings and Information

schlossORTH National Park Centre

Schloss Orth, 2304 Orth/Donau

21 March to 30 September: daily from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

1 October to 1 November: daily from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

2 November to 20 March: closed for the winter

For telephone inquiries during winter season: Mon-Fri from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Tel. +43 (0) 2212/3555, Fax +43 (0) 2212/3450-47

E-mail: schlossorth@donauauen.at

www.donauauen.at, blog.donauauen.at, www.facebook.com/donauauen

National Park Info Point Schloss Eckartsau

Schloss Eckartsau, 2305 Eckartsau

1 April to 31 October: daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

1 Nov to 31 March: telephone enquiries only, Mon - Fri from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Tel. +43 (0) 2214/2335-18

E-mail: infostelle.donauauen@bundesforste.at

www.bundesforste.at/donauauen

Rates valid as of 1 January 2012.

Please contact us for more information about special rates for tour operators.

Please be sure to book your tour at least 7 days in advance.

Tours may also be carried out in English or Slovakian. Other languages available upon request.

The Region as Destination

The Donau-Auen National Park is embedded in a region boasting many sights of cultural and historical interest such as the Imperial Festival Palace Hof, Eckartsau Castle and Schlosspark, the medieval city of Hainburg, and the Carnuntum Archaeological Park. The Marchfeld and the Römerland Carnuntum – the ancient Roman Lands of Carnuntum – border directly on the National Park. And not to forget: just as appealing as the many sights are the fine wines and culinary specialities of the region!

For more Information and Bookings:

Donau Niederösterreich

Regional Tourism Office Auland-Carnuntum

Tel. +43 (0) 2163 3555 Ext. 10

Fax +43 (0) 2163 3555 Ext. 12

E-mail: auland-carnuntum@donau.com

www.aulandcarnuntum.com

Boat Tours

Experience Nature on the Danube

Boat tours on the Danube are probably the most up-close and immediate way to get to know the National Park.

With National Park rangers as your guides, get into a rubber dinghy and float down the powerful Danube, passing steep bluffs, gravel banks and ships. Become one with nature! Feel the elementary power of the river with every paddle. If you listen carefully, you might even hear the siren-like song of the Danube gravel beds.

Kick back and relax on one of the many gravel banks. Take in the wetlands with all your senses. Observe the lush flora and be on the lookout for rare fauna. National Park rangers will let you in on nature's secrets and point out the many fascinating and unique aspects of the Danube wetlands.

Schönau – Orth Danube Boat Tour

Meeting point is at the Uferhaus restaurant in Orth/Donau. National Park rangers will lead the group on a shuttle bus to Schönau. After participants have been given instructions on how to paddle, the group and the rangers set off in dinghies. First stop is an idyllic Danube side arm. Things get really exciting when the boats enter the free-flowing reaches of the Danube and are carried along down the river by the strong current. The focus during this part of the tour is on the unique water connectivity project being carried out by the National Park and the benefits it brings to native fauna. The tour ends full circle at Orth/Donau. An experience never to be forgotten, this tour is one of the most popular of all National Park tours.

The Tour at a Glance

Schönau – Orth Danube Boat Tour

Meeting point: Orth/Donau, parking lot at the Uferhaus restaurant

Approx. 3 hours

Minimum of 6, and maximum of 10 persons per boat; participants must be at least 15 years old

€ 215 per boat

Please contact us if you would like us to make arrangements for food & beverages for your group.

Danube Boat Trip

The home harbour of the cruise vessel "Carnuntum" is Hainburg, which is also the point of departure for this tour guided by National Park rangers. The confluence of the March and the Danube along with the newly re-emerged gravel islands and natural steep banks across from Hainburg are the highlights of this tour. Experience the dynamic Danube in all its power on one of the last free-flowing stretches in all of Central Europe.

The Tour at a Glance

Danube Boat Trip

Meeting Point: Hainburg, parking lot on the Danube landing

Approx. 2 hours

Minimum of 20 and maximum of 50 persons (seating available for 25 below deck)

€ 25 per person

This tour may be booked year round!

Please contact us if you would like us to make arrangements for food & beverages for your group.



Experience Nature in the Backwaters

Canoe Tour in Stopfenreuth

Experience one of the most beautiful former branches of the Danube in a canoe with National Park rangers. In Stopfenreuth you will learn the basics of paddling and then set out across the calm waters, going only as far as the mouth of the branch at the Danube.

Stopfenreuth is known as the "birthplace" of the National Park. It was here, in 1984, where protesters were able to put a stop to plans for a Danube power plant at Hainburg by occupying the wetlands.

When water levels are as they should be, the waters are very clear. Fish can be observed swimming among the lush aquatic plants and floating lilies. Depending on the season, tour highlights may include sightings of European pond turtles, beavers, kingfishers, wild boars or deer.

Once the opposite Danube bank has been reached, the group disembarks and enjoys the marvellous view of the city of Hainburg and the Schlossberg. In the summer, take a refreshing dip in the river or look for shells, pretty Danube pebbles or even beaver tracks.

Stopfenreuth Wetlands Information Centre on the Dyke

Approx. 3 hours

Minimum of 9 and maximum of 27 participants

€ 215 per canoe (min. of 6, max. 9 persons)

Please contact us if you would like us to make arrangements for food & beverages for your group.



Combination Tours

Experience Nature on Water and Land

Our combination tours are the best possibility to experience the Danube wetlands in all their complexity.

What makes the Danube wetlands so complex? The Danube and its branches form invaluable habitats. The dynamics of the river have always shaped the surrounding landscape in a very special way. Riverine wetlands exhibit enormous biodiversity! This is why the Danube wetlands have been granted the highest protection status possible and have been made into a National Park. By taking a combination tour on land and water, guided by National Park rangers, you will be able to discover all the many facets of the wetlands.

Alternative A – Dinghy Tour and Wetlands Walk

Together with National Park rangers, take a rubber dinghy on a side arm in Orth/Donau. You will receive basic instruction in paddling. See the characteristic wetlands willows from the water. Take a closer look at beaver tracks and learn to identify the tracks of nocturnal wetlands inhabitants. If water levels allow, a gravel bank may also have emerged, providing a good look at what is essentially the nucleus of the wetlands.

Afterwards, your National Park ranger guides will accompany you on a walk through the wetlands. No matter the season, this walk always holds any number of surprises. The flora and fauna in the periodically flooded areas of the Danube are especially diverse and fascinating.

The Tour at a Glance

Dinghy Tour and Wetlands Walk

Meeting point: Orth/Donau, parking lot at the Uferhaus restaurant

Approx. 3 hours

Minimum of 15 persons required

€ 23 per person



Alternative B – Tschaike Tour and Wetlands Walk

For those who do not wish to paddle themselves, going by *tschaike* – a replica of one type of historic Danube vessel – is a good alternative. Feel the power of the free-flowing Danube as you float past steep banks and gravel shoals. Both rigid river embankments and stretches of revitalized banks can easily be seen from here. And here the Danube's importance as an international waterway becomes apparent. National Park rangers explain what these things have to do with each other and outline the important goals of National Park projects.

Afterwards, your National Park ranger guides will accompany you on a walk through the wetlands. You will be astonished by the diversity of plants and animals. And the closer you look, the more interesting wetlands flora and fauna become!

The Tour at a Glance

Tschaike Tour and Wetlands Walk

Meeting point: Orth/Donau, parking lot at the Uferhaus restaurant

Approx. 3 hours

Minimum of 15 and maximum of 50 persons

€ 23 per person

Please contact us if you would like us to make arrangements for food & beverages for your group.

SPECIAL TIP:

For groups travelling by way of own coach, the dinghy and Tschaike tours may be combined with a visit to the schlossINSEL or an exhibition at the schlossORTH National Park Centre. We regret that due to organizational reasons, such combination tours are not possible for individual visitors.



Get to know nature

schlossORTH National Park Centre

Welcome to the Donau-Auen National Park!

As the gateway to the wetlands, the schlossORTH National Park Centre offers many exciting possibilities to learn more about the Danube wetlands. National Park rangers are available to accompany visitors on science and nature tours.

Guided Tour of the National Park exhibition "DonAUräume"

The fun way to discover how the wetlands came about – in our Baroque theatre! Afterwards, take a multimedia journey through time in the wetlands landscape.

An unusual bird's-eye view of the Danube wetlands is provided by a map as big as an entire room that you can even walk on. And finally, the virtual Danube Mermaids tell stories about the precious wetlands of the Donau-Auen National Park.

Schlossinsel Tour

The Schlossinsel has a landscaped wetlands garden whose many special secrets may be revealed during a tour accompanied by National Park rangers.

Observe the European pond turtle, *Emys orbicularis*, from up close! Once a popular fasting food, this turtle is now one of the most prominent – and most popular – of the many natural species protected by the National Park.

Discover one of our native snakes such as the colubrid, a non-poisonous snake which is a master of camouflage. With luck, you may even get a glimpse of it sunbathing or hunting for prey.

Enter the world under the water's surface and see all the different kinds of fish native to the Danube. Our walk-in underwater pond allows you to admire not only fish, but flora such as the Nuphar and Mare's-tail. See the pearl-like bubbles produced by the plants as they "breathe" underwater.

Learn to identify the different animal tracks which help naturalists recognize the presence of various species.

No matter what the season, the sheer variety of plant species in the Danube wetlands forms a stunning green curtain, from the climbing vine Traveller's Joy to tasty hops to the rustling leaves of the White Poplar.

The Tour at a Glance

Guided Tour of the National Park Exhibition and Schlossinsel

Approx. 3 hours (including breaks)

Minimum of 15 persons

€ 10.50 per Person

Special additional offer: enjoy the Donau-Auen daily special at the schlossORTH Café for €12.80 (three courses and one beverage)



The Wetlands Q&A Programme

This group programme allows you to get to know the National Park Centre and the Schlossinsel – and put that knowledge to use right away! After a guided tour of the National Park exhibition, small teams spread out to explore the Schlossinsel. Then, National Park rangers will test your knowledge of nature in a question & answer session. And physical fitness is also put to the test in a fun team obstacle course on the rope bridge and the nature path. At the end of activities, participants will receive a "researcher's diploma" as a reward!

The Programme at a Glance

Guided Tour of the National Park Exhibition and Q&A Programme on the Schlossinsel

Approx. 3 hours (including breaks)

Minimum of 20 persons

€ 12.50 per person

Special additional offer: enjoy the Donau-Auen daily special at the schlossORTH Café for €12.80 (three courses and one beverage)

Wild Herbs Brunch on the Schlossinsel

Are you interested in both nature and healthy food? Then your interests are ideally combined in this group programme.

Learn to identify wild herbs and their uses on a walk around the Schlossinsel with National Park rangers. The flora and fauna of the Danube wetlands will also be explored on this tour. Afterwards, enjoy the aroma and taste of freshly-picked wild herbs according to season. Delicious spreads, sandwich fillers and herbal drinks await you. Whenever weather conditions allow, alfresco dining will enhance the experience!

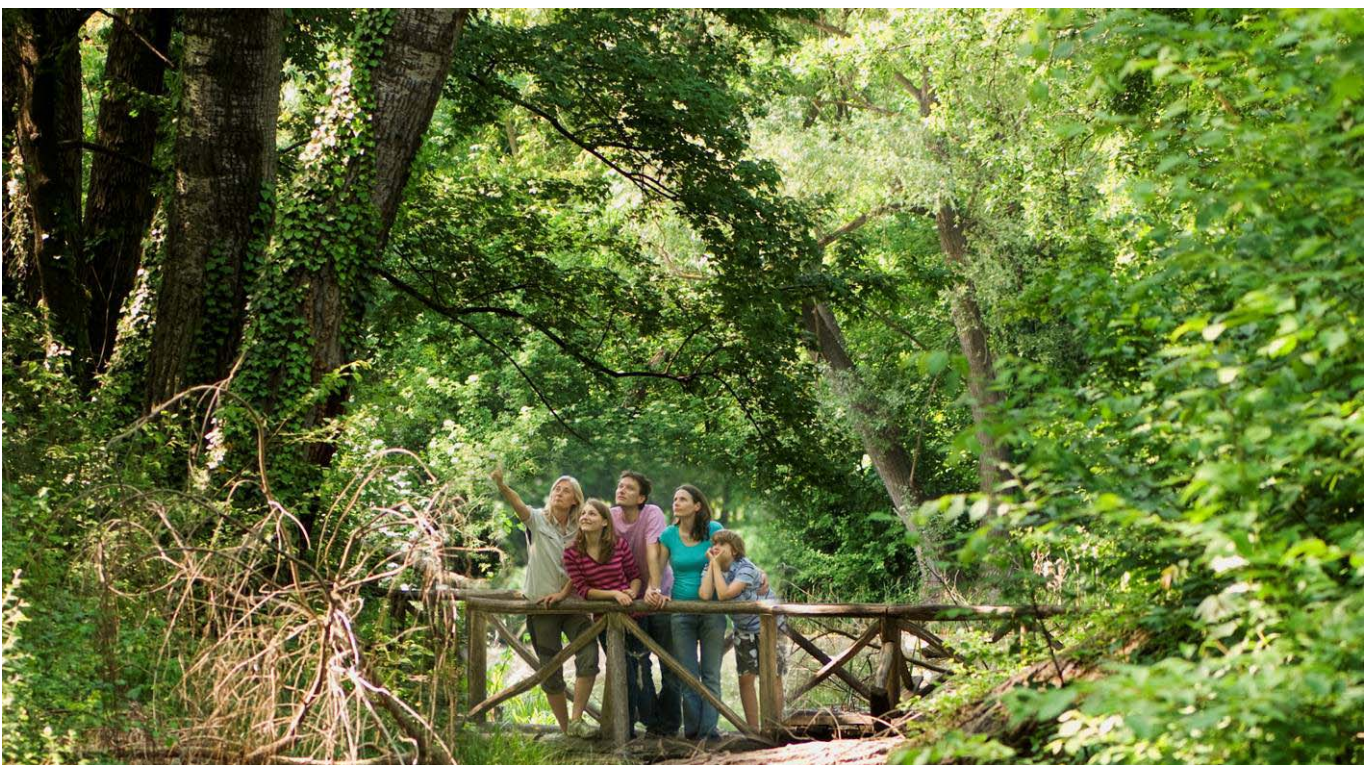
The Programme at a Glance

Guided Walk on the Schlossinsel, Preparation of Wild Herbs Brunch and Shared Meal

Approx. 3 hours

Minimum of 20 persons

€ 25 per person



Walks and Hikes

Discover Nature on a Walk or Hike through the Donau-Auen National Park

Taking a wetlands walk or hike with a National Park ranger or forester as your guide will open your eyes to the many hidden wonders of nature. The best seasons for tours on foot are spring, fall and winter.

Select from among the following programmes:

Lobau Nature Discovery Walk

Xeric (very dry) landscapes are one unique characteristic of the Upper Lobau. In the spring an amazing variety of native orchids bloom here. This environment is home to rare insects such as the Praying Mantis. The reed belts in the backwaters provide a safe haven for native bird species.

In the fall, attention is turned to the many wild fruits such as the Blackthorn and barberry.

For history lovers, this tour may be adapted to include relevant points of interest. The paths hiked by visitors together with National Park and forestry staff from the Vienna centre are between two and five kilometres long.

wien-lobAU National Park House

Approx. 3 hours

Minimum of 6 persons

€ 10 per person (reduced rate of € 5)

Please be sure to book this tour at least one week in advance of your planned tour date.

Booking and Information:

wien-lobAU National Park House

Municipal Dept. 49 (Forestry Office and Urban Agriculture)

Dechantweg 8, 1220 Vienna

Tel. +43 (1) 4000-49495, Fax +43 (1) 4000-49500

E-mail: nh@ma49.wien.gv.at

www.nph-lobau.wien.at

Danube Wetlands Walks with Various Individual Starting Points in Lower Austria

Schönau

Near Schönau it is possible to experience a huge variety of wetlands habitats within a relatively limited area: dyke, former river branch, dynamic wetlands, side arms replenished with fresh water, and of course the free-flowing Danube itself. You will be amazed at the richness of flora and fauna in these habitats.

Snack stand on the dyke

Orth/Donau

Two possible routes may be selected: either the dammed-up side of the wetlands which is no longer directly affected by high waters; or the dynamic side, which is flooded regularly. The dividing line between the two is the dyke, which itself has developed into a valuable habitat for numerous plants and animals over the years.

*Route A (wetlands outside the flood area): schlossORTH National Park Centre
Route B (wetlands inside the flood area): parking lot at the Uferhaus restaurant*

Eckartsau

The traditional imperial hunting grounds of the past live on today as spacious meadows offering sanctuary to many plant and animal species. The expansive Schlosspark surrounding Eckartsau Castle is a marked departure from the wild meadows. The charm in this route lies in the transition from controlled nature in the Schlosspark to the broad meadows and again to the wild wetlands formed by the powerful Danube.

Eckartsau Castle National Park Info Point

Stopfenreuth

A tour through the Stopfenreuth Au, the site of the legendary wetlands occupation of 1984, leads along the dyke and then into the flood areas, across former river branches and all the way out to the Danube. A towpath and then the riverside road lead back to the point of departure. Feel the magic of the wetlands while walking, and learn interesting facts about the area from your National Park guides.

Stopfenreuth, Wetlands Information Centre at the dyke

Hainburg

Here is where the Danube carves out its bed through the *Porta Hungarica*. First, the tour leads downstream along the foot of the Braunberg then moves upward toward the old Röthelstein ruins. A scenic path offers panorama views of the newly emerged, revitalized gravel banks across from Hainburg as well as interesting perspectives of the medieval city itself.

Parking lot on the Danube landing

Maria Ellend – Haslau/Donau

In marked contrast to the north bank, the banks on the south side fall steeply down to the National Park. This unique aspect is reflected in the special flora to be found here.

For nearly 20 years, the mighty Danube has again been able to regularly replenish her side arms, leading to the formation of impressive and fascinating landscapes.

Maria Ellend railway station

The Programme at a Glance

Approx. 3 to 3½ hours (for two to five km respectively)

Package price € 145 (for a maximum of 20 persons)

Please book walks and hikes in Schönau, Orth/Donau, Eckartsau, Stopfenreuth, Hainburg, Maria Ellend/Haslau at the schlossORTH National Park Centre.





General Map of the Donau-Auen National Park

Donau-Auen National Park GmbH
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