

Annual Report 2015
On the Nature Reserve and Protected Landscape Area
"Wollmatinger Ried - Untersee - Gnadensee" (Germany)

Period under review: 1st October 2014 to 30th September 2015
Country: Germany
Name of the Reserve: Naturschutzgebiet Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee
European Diploma extension 2009 to 2019 (currently 4 years)

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Reporting body: Freiburg Government Headquarters
Higher Nature Conservation Authority

1. CONDITIONS

The last extension of the European Diploma for the Wollmatinger Ried was not linked to any conditions by the European Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

6 recommendations were formulated in the last extension of the European Diploma. The recommendations 1 – 4 refer among others to the professional fishing activities in the reserve. When the area was protected by the nature reserve order in 1980, fishing was permitted to continue and was legitimated by an inter-state agreement with Switzerland. In order to investigate

and to document the disturbance potential (from professional fishing and other sources) in the shallow water zones of the nature reserves on the Bodensee-Untersee, the Freiburg Government Headquarters upon the request of the Ministry established a Round Table where three meetings were held since December 2014. These were attended by representatives of the Nature Protection and Fishery Administration in Baden-Württemberg, NABU, the state fishery association, Max-Planck-Institute for Ornithology, the fishery management of the Canton Thurgau, the waterways police, and locally acting professional fishermen from Germany and Switzerland. A further objective of the Round Table is to reduce documented disturbances in the shallow water zones by common accord and harmonised for both states.

Here are our comments on the individual recommendations of the European Council:

Recommendation 1 – Self-perpetuating development of the shallow-water zone:

It is extremely important to allow the nature reserve to develop naturally, particularly in the shallow water sections. To this end, there should be no obstacles to the natural erosion and sedimentation processes.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 1:**

In the Round Table talks, fishery representatives pointed out that the water exchange and the quality of the aquatic habitat in a large shallow-water area would be reduced by a further growth of a sediment threshold in the area of the so-called “*Schläuche*”. On the other side, from their point of view the succession and the undisturbed course of limnological processes would be most valuable. Therefore the further discussions at the Round Table abandoned the proposal to remove sediments.

Recommendation 2: Tentative suspension of fishing in particularly sensitive core areas

All fishing activity must be halted in the *Schläuche* and the Hegnebucht “lagoons” for an experimental three-year period in order to further reduce the disturbances arising. An overall assessment of this measure should cover both the waterfowl and fish ecology.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 2:**

As a result of the Round Table, the Freiburg Government Headquarters recommended to the Ministry to carry out an investigation in the core zone of the nature reserve (Hegner Winkel). A multi-stage investigation programme is proposed comprising a certain period of time without fishing activities. Apart from such a period of rest, phases with use for fishery are provided to determine the effects on bird-life on one side and on fishery on the other side.

Recommendation 3:

The Wollmatinger Ried is a refuge area for avifauna sensitive to disturbances, particularly during the moulting season. Increasing numbers of ferruginous ducks (*Aythya nyroca*), a threatened species, are coming to the area north of the Reichenau “dyke road” for the moulting season. Few studies of this have been conducted, so it should be documented and all potential disturbances eliminated (fishing, water sports, etc.).

➤ **Re. Recommendation 3:**

As in the previous years, the significance of the nature reserve as an over-summering and moulting location for waterfowl is regularly documented within the scope of the extended waterfowl monitoring programme. Since the water levels of the Lake of Constance dropped relatively fast since 24 June 2015, fish trap fishing in the littoral zone had to be terminated early in this year. Apart from some disturbances caused by leisure activities which could be reduced by volunteers at the

conservation and observation station “Netta” and the waterway police, disturbance from the air was a considerable nuisance. Hot-air balloons caused most of the problems whereas the pilots of the Zeppelin NT nearly without exception respected the voluntary agreements in this season.

Recommendation 4:

Throughout the protected area, but especially in the Ermatinger Becken area, an effort is needed to harmonise protection measures by developing co-operation between Germany and Switzerland, for example, as part of the international conference of Lake Constance.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 4:**

Due to the existing inter-state provisions, the cooperation with Switzerland is indispensable. One of the targets of the Round Table talks is to promote a further harmonisation. Contacts between the nature protection administration and authorities in Switzerland with a view to improving protection of the shallow water zone of the Ermatinger Becken area and to harmonizing cross-border cooperation were forged in the framework of the Round Table.

Recommendation 5:

The scheduled road works to improve traffic flow at the entrance of the reserve – B33 and western bypass (Tangente West) – are part of a comprehensive landscape concept and must not be detrimental to the protected area. The compensatory measures necessitated by the work must be implemented as a matter of priority.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 5:**

The most intensive building activities in the period under review took place in the area of the Kindlebild junction and the Southern ramp of the bridge over the railway line. Site fences, anti-splash walls and noise barriers were installed to protect the nature reserve area. Continuous controls carried out by the road work authorities and others to prevent an encroachment of the construction work into the reserve were successful.

The complete relocation of a former cycle path could not yet be achieved since the former line over the existing construction site is still used by some cyclists and its maintenance is requested by a community initiative. Therefore this potential for disturbance continues to exist for the protected area and the green bridge cannot reach its full effect. Hence, nature conservation adheres to the aim of the transfer.

The provided extension of the protected area by 7 ha as compensation, as one of the last measures to be taken in the Eastern section of the B33 extension, could not yet be implemented (see chapter 4), but substantial structural measure were taken in anticipation to connect these areas better to the adjacent bedding meadows of the protected area.

Recommendation 6:

The continued operation of the reception centre in the premises of the former Reichenau railway station is not guaranteed for the medium and long term. This question should be settled as soon as possible.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 6:**

The new building of the Nature Conservation Centre Wollmatinger Ried shall be dimensioned for 10,000 visitors per year. The necessary funding shall be ensured equally by own resources of NABU and a grant given by the state of Baden-Württemberg. The site has been allocated and design variants are being determined in a restricted architectural competition. The start of construction is planned for 2016.

3. SITE MANAGEMENT

No changes as against the 2014 reporting year.

4. BOUNDARIES

Due to the necessary coordination with the city of Constance, the planned extension of the nature reserve by 7 hectares on the West of the sewage plant of Constance could not yet be completed. The ministry is presently examining whether Switzerland is obliged to take part. With the same token no progress can be achieved without the agreement of Switzerland for the extension of the nature reserve provided already in the management plan of the EU bird sanctuary on the water side.

5. OTHER INFORMATION

In spite of its high publicity, the general esteem and the particular protection thanks to the European Diploma, the Wollmatinger Ried is still under pressure caused by a great number of small measures: roads and industrial buildings in the direct vicinity are getting denser and move directly to the border of the nature reserve.

Competing uses (water sports, aviation) still continue to cause problems in the core areas of the nature reserve. All these individual cases together are causing disturbances and disruptions which must be continuously fended off and traced by the nature protection authorities.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.2. Socio-economic context

The constantly rising housing prices in the Constance region have caused an increasing pressure on open spaces near the developments. Therefore it is planned to overbuild in the next few years the airfield Constance which is separated only by the B33 from the nature reserve. This airfield has consisted so far of grassland and was an important refuge for various animal species of the Wollmatinger Ried, particularly at high watermark.

In the planning and approval proceedings, attention must be paid to adopt compensation measures and any measures targeted at avoiding and/or minimizing interventions.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Material informing the public (building, booklets, maps)

The European Diploma together with its logo will be presented in all measures of Public Relation on flyers, maps, in the exhibition of the NABU Nature Reserve Centre Wollmatinger Ried and on all 22 boards along the information trail Wollmatinger Ried. A link from its website to the European Council is provided. The guides will point out to the European Diploma and its importance in all tours.

8.2. Observation facilities

The observation platform and the access path in the Ermatinger Becken were completely renewed in Winter 2014/15 and are now again available for visiting groups and also for monitoring and survey purposes. The total costs amounting to € 110,000 were borne by the Freiburg Government Headquarters.