

# The Natura 2000 network of protected areas

Natura 2000 denotes an EU-wide network of approximately 26'000 protected areas designed to safeguard endangered animal and plant species as well as habitats, while taken account of the sustainable development of the regions in question.

The legal basis is provided by two EU Directives (the Fauna-Flora-Habitat and the Bird Protection Directives). They commit all the member countries to designating suitable areas with a view to protecting endangered species and habitats throughout Europe and to guaranteeing their preservation by way of appropriate management.

For more information please access <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000>



## Live experience of nature with Naturefriends



From its inception, the Naturefriends movement has considered the protection of nature and the preservation of biological diversity its key concerns. Our activities and campaigns are designed to combine the engagement with nature and landscapes with the transfer of knowledge about the indigenous fauna and flora and with best-practice examples of nature-compatible and environmentally sound recreational activities.

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### Natura 2000 in figures

- Total number of sites: 26'106
- Natura 2000 total surface (incl. marine areas): 949'910 km<sup>2</sup>
- Natura 2000 total surface: 751'150 km<sup>2</sup> (17.5% of the total surface of all EU countries)



As of June 2011; Source: European Union, Directorate General for the Environment



# Natura Trails

## Tracking down Europe's natural treasures



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Natura Trails are theme paths through European protected areas, specially designed for soft-impact recreational activities. They whet people's appetites for close encounters with the indigenous fauna, flora and habitats, they boost people's awareness of the need to protect nature and landscapes and they are Naturefriends' brand for nature-compatible and environmentally sound leisure-time activities.



The local Naturefriends groups are in charge of work on the ground, of spreading the word about the idea behind the nature trail projects in their regions and of organising guided walking or cycling tours to fill them with life.



# Special trails through nature

## From the North Sea to the Black Sea

There are more than 100 Natura Trails, most of them crossing Natura 2000 sites that form part of an EU-wide network of protected areas. The range of trails extends from leisurely walks for families via demanding mountain tours to cycling and canoeing tours, each one offering a live experience of biological diversity in unison with nature protection. The underlying idea is to follow existing trails, carefully selecting routes that bypass highly sensitive areas, such as the breeding habitats of endangered bird species.

Opportunities for eco-friendly access trips, for instance by bicycle or public transport, are also high up on the Natura Trail agenda.



## A fancy for nature!

- ... strike out on your own, equipped with a Natura Trail leaflet, and discover Europe's most beautiful protected areas
- ... join guided tours and get to know the special natural treasures along the Natura Trails
- ... explore nature by mouse click, using interactive maps based on Google Earth at [www.naturatrails.net/multi-media](http://www.naturatrails.net/multi-media)
- ... lay the basis for respectful behaviour in nature and for the protection of biological diversity by acquiring knowledge about the needs of characteristic animal and plant species

