



A natural heritage of international rank

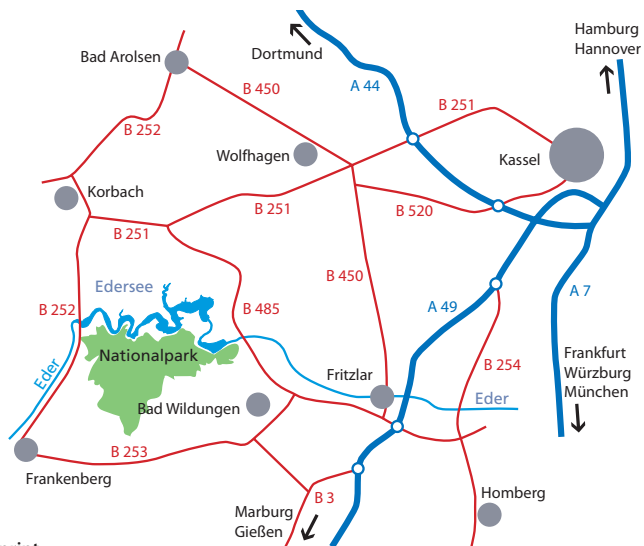
Central Europe would be covered mainly by beech groves by way of nature. Since the red beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is extremely competitive and displaces other types of trees on rocks, boulder fields and in the humid floodplains, Europe is the only place in the world where red beech groves grow. From their original circulation area only approx. 8% remained. Hesse is Buchonia, the land of the beeches, and as such has a special responsibility for the preservation of this natural heritage. The first Hessian national park therefore protects the largest coherent complex of Luzulo-Fagetum beech grove in Central Europe in an area of almost 6,000 hectares.

In the Kellerwald-Edersee National Park nature is allowed to be nature. The forests are no longer used. It is here where our "wilderness of tomorrow" is evolving.



Trails into nature ...

lead you into the solitude of extensive forests and to the treasures of the national park. Our national park rangers will be pleased to show you more. They offer competent guided tours and versatile and exciting adventures throughout the year.



Imprint

Publisher: Nationalparkamt Kellerwald-Edersee
Laustraße 8, 34537 Bad Wildungen, Tel. 0049 (0) 5621 75249-0
info@nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de
www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de
Third edition, March 2008



Photographs: M. Delpho, A. Hoffmann, G. Kalden, R. Kubosch
Editorial and design: cognitio Kommunikation & Planung, www.cognitio.de



IN THE KINGDOM OF QUIANT BEECHES

Fascinating wilderness in the national park



In the kingdom of quaint beeches

The red deer strides majestically through the wide old forests of the national park. Honey buzzard, black and red milan draw their circles above the treetops. Black stork and eagle owl have returned to the quiet forest.

The red beech dominates the closed forest landscape – as seed, tree giant and fallen trunk. The fauna is always adjusting itself to the life cycle of the beeches. Each developmental phase signifies change and spends room for new life. Rare bug species and fungi colonise and decompose the dying tree and the moulding wood. It is the home of six pecker species. At night, bats – among them the greater mouse-eared bat and the Bechstein's bat – leave their crevices and caves and go hunting for insects.



The world of goblins and gnomes

On sunny, rocky slopes the forest fights against drought and barrenness, heat and cold. Trees grow very slowly there. Gnarly oaks and crippled beeches form odd forest images and accelerate the mind. On slopes peppered with boulders, lush canyon and boulder forests with ash, maple and elm trees enhance the national park's forest landscape.



A bright jewel on naked rock

On rough natural precipices towards Lake Eder, the firewitch – a rare treasure throughout Europe – grows in hiding. Its farthest northwest appearance, and the highest as such in Hessen, is in the Kellerwald.

Pulsating veins of life

More than 400 springs originate in the national park. In particular their microbes meet at the interface of ground water and surface water: niphargus, Crenobia alpine and the rare Bythinella dunkeri cavorting in the absolutely clear water.

Channels of the spring unite to form sputtering, crystal-clear forest creeks swaying through the valleys. Larvae of the stonefly, brown trout and bullhead live there. The national park with its extensive forests and clear, cold creeks is a true paradise for the fire salamander.

