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# More wilderness for Germany: Implementing an important objective of Germany's National Strategy on Biological Diversity

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## Abstract

There are numerous reasons for the establishment of more wilderness areas. The issue is becoming more and more important worldwide, considering the increasing natural disruption. This also applies to densely populated countries like Germany. The National Strategy on Biological Diversity (NBS) sets goals for preserving and establishing more wilderness areas in Germany: 2 % of the national land territory shall be designated to become large-scale wilderness areas and 5 % of the forested areas in Germany are to be preserved as permanently unused woodland (areas). There may be partial overlaps since large forest areas of unused woodland qualify for both wilderness targets.

The implementation of these wilderness objectives is achieved within the political framework through public administration activities, scientific work and communication.

As a result of these activities a definition for wilderness areas in Germany as well as quality criteria for large wilderness areas in Germany have been developed. Furthermore, the potential for large wilderness areas was identified on a surface-oriented basis. These potential areas cover approximately 3.5 % of Germany's land territory and can be found in woodlands, watercourses, coastlines, peatlands and high mountain ranges as well as in former military training grounds or mining areas.

To support the wilderness targets, the Federal Government has made 156,000 hectares of federal land available as 'National Natural Heritage'. To date, approximately 0.6 % of the national land territory is protected as large-scale wilderness areas and approximately 1.9 % of the forested area is designated to be permanently unused woodland; however, there is still a gap of 1.4 % (large areas) and 3.1 % (forests), to fulfill the targets of the NBS.

It is shown, that no starting point of the natural state can be defined for "wilderness areas". For a particular area to be classifiable as a wilderness area, natural processes without or with very slight human influence must be ensured.

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