



Neckar Country Park Development of areas on the Neckar and its affluents to visit and enjoy nature

The Challenge Less than 2 % of the Neckar is still considered as natural or near-natural. Various habitats got lost due to the canalisation of the river until the mid 1950s as well as the following development of industrial and residential areas and the road construction in the floodplain.

An exemplary collaboration between the German federal state Baden-Wuerttemberg and the districts, municipalities, and communes managed to improve the water quality so much that today some fish species again live in the Neckar (until in the 1970s, foam and acrid stench characterised many parts of the river). However, there is a lot of catching up to do concerning the urgently needed improvement of the ecosystem of the Neckar floodplain.

- The Neckar valley is an important economic centre and transport axis as well as a connection of nature and culture. Above all it is to defend the remaining free spaces as green infrastructure and to connect them between each other.
- At some parts it is possible to renaturate the riverbank and to recreate habitats which have gone lost during the canalisation.

There are no storks in the Neckar valley anymore, and the steeples on which they used to breed are long deserted. But today many species disappear unnoticed, too, e.g. the lapwing, the corn bunting, the corn crake, and the grasshopper warbler. As we usually only protect nature when we know it, a wide environmental education is necessary in order to increase the awareness of the people in the Neckar valley of the environment they live in.

The Project NatureLife-International supports the initiative on the Neckar Country Park which was originally developed by the Verband Region Stuttgart (association of the Stuttgart region), but today is also used in various forms by other regions along the Neckar. Together with local conservationists and heritage, environmental, and fishery associations, NatureLife-International stands up for the creation of new habitats, the management of important parts of protected landscape areas and nature reserves, and for natural monuments along the Neckar and its affluents.

Part of this initiative is to sensitise the people towards the fascinating cultural landscape of the Neckar valley with its characteristic stone walls of the vine terraces.

Measures and Achievements

- NatureLife-International fights against a further landscape fragmentation along the Neckar and its affluents.
- NatureLife-International supports the model project “Zugwiesen” (project to create a fish ladder and spawning grounds) by the city of Ludwigsburg and other partners.



- Management of the nature reserve Neckarparadies (Neckar paradise) with its handicapped accessible and family friendly monitoring platform.
- Connection of different habitats in the Bottwar valley and environmental protection management in the area of the new nature reserve Schäferwiesen near Sinsheim, Kleinbottwar and Großbottwar as well as in the renaturation areas along the upper and lower Heuerbach (Oberstenfeld).
- Promotion of a varied flora and fauna of the vine terraces in the Neckar valley within the framework of the project “Lebendiger Weinberg” (living vineyard).
- Appliance of the results of this project on other flowing waters.

Literature Hutter, Claus-Peter (2007): “Natur- und Kulturerbe Neckartal – Visionen und Aktionen für eine Flusslandschaft” (natural and cultural heritage of the Neckar valley), in: *Der Neckar – das Land und sein Fluss* (The Neckar – the land and its river). Editor Regionalkultur, Karlsruhe (in German).

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