City of Leipzig

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EXCURSION

THROUGH THE GAMEPARK LEIPZIG

Only for service!
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WILDLIFE PARK LEIPZIG
Pleiße
Wildlife Park Restaurant
Black boar
Hakenteich
High tide channel
1 Domastic animal farm
Main entrance Koburgerstr. Car park
P
"Grünes Klassenzimmer"
Marten facility
3
2
Roe
10 Elk
Virginia deer
Wild-cat
Lynxes
4 Eurasien otter
5 European mink
8 Eurasien Eagle Owl
Racoon
Sportground Playground
• Exhibition Facility
• WC (for handi-capped person)
9
Experience track
6
Raven
Owls
Terrace
Froschteich
Red deer
Follow deer
Moufflon
Sika deer
Fox
Tea-house
Fairytale playground
7 Wisent
Sika deer
South entrance
LOCATIONS
WILDLIFE PARK LEIPZIG
1 Domestic animal farm
2 Lynxes
3 Marten facility in former garden of heather
4 Eurasian otter
5 European mink
6 Experience track in the joint enclosure of Red deer, follow deer and moufflon
7 Wiesent
8 Eurasian Eagle Owl
9 Exhibition facility
10 Elks
LEIPZIG
Gerberstr.
Hbf.
Eisenbahnstr.
Zentrum
Dresdner Str.
Täubchenweg
F.-L.-Jahn-Allee
Antonienstr.
K.-Eisner-Str.
K.-Liebknecht-Str.
Prager Str.
R.-Lehmann-Str.
B2 / B6
Bornaische Str.
WILDPARK LEIPZIG
Koburger Str.
Goethesteig
Leinestr.

Both females are born in 2000. The later gave birth to one calf in 2003. The elk is a solitary individual, but the mother family can stay temporarily together with other mother families.

on region, age and race. Elks can have a palmate antler or a simple antler with or without appendixes.

They are found in forests, wooded grassland and tundras as well as in marsh districts and lake rich areas. It feeds on leaves, shrubs, and bark, herbs, mosses, lichens, mushrooms, and grass, aquatic and marsh plants.

The elk is not often found in zoos and wildlife parks, because of its complicated feeding and the large home range demand. Leipzig's elk enclosure occupies an area of more than 8 ha and visitors have to be patient, if they want to observe elks excluding the feeding times.
All individuals of the wildlife park are born in captivity. In 1998 the one-year-old male was purchased from the wildlife park in "Neumünster", while one female comes from the Zoo in Rostock and the other female was born in Leipzig's wildlife park.

Gamepark
Leipzig-Connewitz

One of the most attractive recreation areas in the immediate vicinity of Leipzig is the wildlife park in the southern part of Leipzig's floodplain forest.
On an area of about 42 hectare 40 animal species are kept.
The wildlife park presents

- species being found in the wild of Central Europe, e.g. roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), wild boar *(Sus scrofa)* and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*);
- species being found here in former times, e.g. European bison *(Bison bonasus)* and lynx *(Lynx lynx)*;
- or immigrated species, e.g. raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), moufflon (*Ovis ammon musimon*) and European mink *(Mustela lutreola)*.

The wildlife park has established facilities that present the animals in a natural setting.The ZOO Leipzig has mainly exotic species, whereas the neighbouring private farm shows domestic animals.
The aim of the wildlife park is to promote the protection of species and habitats. The park provides education about the native fauna and offers the opportunity for research. Last but not least it is a very attractive recreational area.
It is not intended to keep or to promote an idyllic illusion of nature, which is widely disseminated among the visitors.
Keeping the animals under semi-natural conditions and guaranting species captivity as well as a natural behavioural pattern has the highest priority. Visitors are allowed to observe the animals under semi-natural conditions, and it is not intended to use the enclosures, in order to gain an excessive influence on the game and consequently giving up its natural behaviour. These guidelines exclude a non-natural design of the enclosures, a high density and a strong human contact as well as animal training.
The wildlife park participates in breeding programmes, e.g. for European bison *(Bison bonasus)* and European mink *(Mustela lutreola)*.
The exhibition facility and the green classroom provide additional opportunities for an efficient environmental education and information.
It is mostly unknown, that the wildlife park is also used by local authorities for the deposition of confiscated game as well as for the accommodation and rehabilitation of injured animals. But it is not intended to accommodate private animals.

Exhibition facility

"Green Classroom"

History of the wildlife park

The wildlife park was originally a little enclosure of fallow deer owned by the mill owner of "Connewitz", who donated it in 1904 to the City of Leipzig. The enclosure was situated in the southern part of Leipzig's floodplain forest, near the "Hakenbrücke" (a bridge). In spring 1904 seven head fallow deer (Cervus dama) were released in the forest area "Der Stempel". The population grow up to 16 individuals until February 1906. The regular floods were every time a danger for the animals and consequently the former district forester suggested a move to the present site.

Gamepark anno 1912 (hist. Picture postcard)

On the 1st of May 1912 a shelter including a bar was opened.This bar offered milk, tea, mineral water and pastries. In 1922 a restaurant was built, which was situated near the present farmyard.
The terrace at the "Froschteich" (a pond) and the "Rübenbunker" (an underground stock of turnips) are located within the common deer park which includes Red deer (Cervus elaphus), Fallow deer (Cervus dama), and moufflon (Ovis ammon musimon).

Gamepark Leipzig (hist. picture postcard)

The Second World War brought the development of the wildlife park to a stand still, and the park was totally destroyed. In 1972 the Leipzig City Council passed the resolution to establish a new wildlife park. The official start of the construction works was on the 1st of January 1974. On the 30th of April 1978 the southern part of the enclosure was finished. The completed area, in its

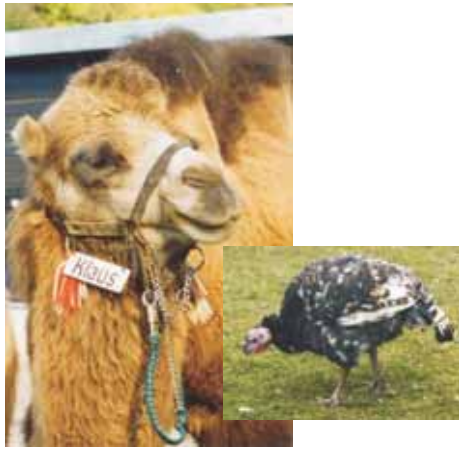
Today the wildlife park is open for everybody, free of charge to get known the native fauna as well as the flora of Leipzig's floodplain forest and surrounding regions.

LOCATION 1

Domestic animal farm

Near the entrance of the wildlife park a well maintained private farm presenting domestic animals can be found. While the wildlife park shows native animals living in the wild, the private farm presents native domestic animals, e.g. horses, goats, pigs and rabbits as well as exotic domestic animals, e.g. camels, llamas, nutrias. Visitors have to pay a small entrance fee.

It is possible to ride on ponies or camels and to organize carriage tours across the wildlife park and the adjoining floodplain forest. Additionally there is a small exhibition of historical agricultural devices. After a telephonic arrangement the owner of the farm is pleased to offer guided tours of the farm (Mr. Bauersfeld, mobile: 01 63/795 88 93).



LOCATION 2

Lynxes (Lynx lynx)

Lynxes follow the wolf (Canis lupus) and the brown bear (Ursus arctos) as the biggest native predatory mammals, and belong to the family of cats (Felidae). Lynxes are found across Europe, Northern Asia (China, Mongolia), North America (northern USA, Canada) and wide areas of the northern hemisphere. The lynx species is subdivided into six subspecies. The lynxes, which are found in Central Europe belong

when the wildlife park was open in 1979. They are, by far, the oldest inhabitants of the park. In the meanwhile more than 25 descendants have been born and sold. But this pair stopped reproducing two year ago for reasons of age.

LOCATION 9

Exhibition facility

It is proved in the past, that the visitors of the wildlife park are interested in nature, forest, animals, game, the Wildlife Park and related topics. The management of the city forest wishes to meet this demand. Furthermore it will give additional information about popular themes and its management system to make measures transparent and understandable.

In 1999 during the 20th anniversary of the reopening of the wildlife park an exhibition facility was inaugurated. This room is used for thematic exhibitions, presentations and book readings. A wide range of brochures and leaflets free of charge are available.

LOCATION 10

Elks (Alces alces)

The elk is the largest deer in the world. The elk ranges from northeastern Asia, east and north of Europe and North America. In Germany the elk inhabited the extensive floodplain forests between the rivers “Oder” and “Elbe” before the second millennium started. The extinction of elk in Central Europe is dated in the Middle Ages. In the eastern parts of Europe it was found in the wild until the 18th and 19th century, e.g. in the western Baltic provinces until 1830. In Saxony the last individual was registered in 1746. At the beginning of the 19th century the elk was only spread in Scandinavia, East Prussia and Poland. Its senses of smell and hearing are acute, while vision is poorly developed. Despite its size, the elk moves silently through the forest, although if frightened they can crash away at speeds up to 50 kmph. This species is an excellent swimmer and frequently wades into lakes and streams to feed on vegetation.
Its impressive antlers vary in shape and size depending

the Bialowieska primeval forest (ssp. Bison bonasus caucasicus). Both populations shrunk during World War I, and the Russian Revolution of 1917 and during the post-war period.
A poacher killed the last wisent from the Bialowieska primeval forest in 1921. Shepherds killed the three last Caucasian individuals in 1926.

Fortunately 57 individuals were kept in zoos, but only one Caucasian bull, owned by a German trader. In 1923, at the initiative of the Polish zoologist Jan Sztolcman, the "International Society for Preservation of the European Bison" was founded in order to initiate an international cooperation to prevent this species becoming extinct and to reintroduce it into the wild.
Despite of some setbacks the number of wisents increased continuously. The first reintroductions into the wild were carried out in 1941/42 in the former East Prussian state hunting ground "Elchwald". This population survived the World War II. In 1952 the wisent was reintroduced in the polish part of the Bialowieska primeval forest and later in the polish "Puszcza Borecka". Little by little new free-ranging herds were found above all in Eastern Europe.
Today this species is saved and a relatively high number are found in the wild. In the International breed book 3.000 pureblooded individuals are registered. Leipzig's wildlife park is involved in the international breeding program. The individuals shown in the park belong to Bison bonasus bonasus subspecies.
The management decided to create a mixture of enclosure in order to preserve the natural behaviour of species. The enclosure were designed with the same ecosystem although small changes to satify different behavioural patters of species, and other species. Since this time wisents are kept together with red deer or sika deer.
Wisent's mating season takes place in late summer and after a gestation period of about 9 months one or two calves are born. The nursing period lasts about six months.
The Wisent is the European bison, species Bison bonasus. After the last ice age the wisent was found across the complete temperate zone of Europe and Western Asia. In Europe and Middle East a second species of wild cattle was found the aurochs (Bos primigenius), who is the ancestor of the domestic cattle (Bos primigenius f. taurus) and became extinct in the Middle Ages.

LOCATION 8

Eurasian Eagle Owl (Bubo bubo)

The Eurasian Eagle Owl (Bubo bubo) is a species of horned owl residing in much of Europe and Asia.
The horned owls are part of the larger grouping of owls known as the typical owls, Strigidae, which contains most species of owl.

The eagle owl is a very large and powerful bird and the only species of Strigidae found in Europe.
Man is fascinated by the eagle owl since the antiquity, e.g. by its deep booming call and its noiseless flight. This nocturnal bird catches its prey using 4 cm long talons and its curved beak. The beak is also used to deter enemies by cracking. The eagle owl is able to hear much better than man. The noticeable threshold value is 15 to 25 db lower than human being's.

The eagle owl feeds on mammals and birds. It is capable of killing large prey items such as hares, badgers and grouse. Consumed indigestible parts of its prey, like hairs, feathers and bones regurgitated.

The eagle owl inhabits lowlands, mountainous regions, forests with cliffs and rocky areas and usually nests on cliff ledges, in hollow trees. And does not build its own nests.

The female owl lays 2-4 eggs from May until June. The brooding period takes 35 days.

The only large, stable populations of eagle owl in the Free State of Saxony are found in Saxon Switzerland.
In northwest Saxony some individuals are found near "Wermsdorf", in the porphyry quarries of the "Muldentalkreis".

The last bird of this species was killed in 1920, but it is unknown, if it was the last individual of a resident population or a bird of travelling.
The eagle owl can live more than 60 years in captivity.

competitor hunting profitable game and grazing to the subspecies northern Lynx.
The lynx inhabits rocky and forested areas away from cities. It rests in caves, coppice, abandoned foxholes and badger's burrows. Its density amounts 1 lynx per 1.000 to 1.500 ha under favourable conditions.

Lynxes have excellent eye sight and smell.
Out of the mating season the lynx is an unsociable living being. It avoids areas, which are occupied by wolfs and it do not acquiesce foxes in its district. A nocturnal hunter, the lynx hunts a variety of small mammals, e.g. roe deer, wild boars (shoats), hares and rarely deer calf. The mating season lasts from January until March and after a gestation period of 9-10 weeks the female lynx will have 2-3, rarely as many as 5 kittens.

The lynx was originally common across Germany. But intensive vegetations clearing in the Middle Ages restricted its habitat considerably.
Since the beginning of the 19th century the lynx was intensively hunted, because it was seen as a competitor

hunting profitable game and grazing livestock. The consequence was, that there were no stable populations of lynx in Saxony at the beginning of the 20th century. But it wasoccasionally observed as commuting game coming from Poland and Czechia.Nowadays the lynx is seen from time to time in Saxon Switzerland and the "Zittauer Gebirge" (Zittau Mountains).
In Germany specific measures have been established to create new populations of lynx in the Harz Mountains. In the national park of Saxon Switzerland and other areas near the borderline to Poland and Czech Republic immigrated lynxes form sporadically new populations living in the wild. Are observed additionally populations of lynx are found in the Bavarian Forest, in the "Berchtesgadener Land", in the Black Forest and in the "Eifel".
That means, that the lynx is not technically an endangered species in Germany, but is threatened.

The animals in the wildlife park come from the breeding of several zoos. The management of the wildlife park Leipzig deliberately selected two male individuals in order to avoid a reproduction.

It is surprising, that the individuals in the wildlife park kept their natural instincts, although they come from zoos and their direct ancestors lived in captivity for generations. This is proved, since it regularly happens, that other animals, e.g. foxes succeed in entering the enclosure trying to use the provided food and become torn and gorged by the lynxes.

LOCATION 3

Marten facility in the former garden of heather

The fundamental concept of the wildlife park Leipzig is to present species living in the wild of Central Europe and to keep them under semi-natural conditions. This principle demands a large area and limits the number of accommodated species. Consequently the management decided to specialize in certain families or genera, e.g. the Mustelidae and the Cervidae.

Least weasel (Mustela nivalis), Stoat (Mustela erminea), European polecat (Mustela putorius), European mink (Mustela lutreola), European otter (Lutra lutra), Pine marten (Martes martes), Beech marten (Martes foina), Eurasian badger (Meles meles) and in some areas Steppe polecat (Mustela eversmannii), which has evolved to the domestic ferret (Mustela putorius furo), belong to the family Mustelidae. and are native in Central Europe.

During the last centuries the American mink (Mustela vison) became naturalised in Central Europe through releases and random escapes. The wolverine (Gulo gulo) living in the northern lowland of Germany became extinct in historical time.

Most of the above mentioned species are shown in the wildlife park Leipzig. They are often the favourite ones of the visitors, especially of the children and are relatively easy to keep. Many of the named species are found countrywide living the wild and it is possible to see one in the open country. Therefore it seems to be useful to give some information about species of the Mustelidae.

Beech marten (Martes foina)

The Beech marten (Martes foina) current is the most widespread species of the Mustelidae. It inhabits regions in and surrounding Leipzig, in open country as well as the woodland, but especially allotment parks and built-up areas.
It is naturally found from the south of Sweden to the sparsely wooded Mediterranean countries and to the Ukraine in the east to the Iranian border in the south-east. But is rave in UK and Ireland.

The beech marten feed on small mammals, birds, eggs, fruits and insects.
The mating season lasts from June until August. In March and April the female beech martens has 2-5 hatchlings. During this time there are usually several calls by citizens, who complain the noise and pollution of the playing hatchlings, who often inhabit lofts.

According to § 6 of the Saxon game law the owner or user of land is authorized to catch or to kill the troublemaker or alternatively to put someone in charge to solve the problem. It is not allowed to do this during the raising period.

Pine marten (Martes martes)

The Beech marten (Martes fiona) and the Pine marten (Martes martes) are not that close related as often assumed.
The next relative of the pine marten is the Siberian sabel (Mustella zibellina). Both develop mixed populations.
Pet names of the pine marten generally the yellow spot on its throat and its very fine coat.
In Leipzig's floodplain forest the pine marten was found until the end of World War II. Afterward World War II the Pine marten become very scarce and was not seen in Leipzig Floodplain till the end of the 1990ies, mainly in the northern part of Leipzig's floodplain forest. But there were also physical evidences when some individuals were victimized by traffic. So it seems that this species will spread out again in Leipzig, although the population density of pine marten is decreasing in a nationwide scale.

The pine marten is found throughout Europe, apart from Central Spain and South Spain, Corsica and wide areas of Greece. In the east it is found up to Ob and Irtysh in Siberia. The pine marten requires unlike the beech marten, established semi-natural forests.

The main difference between Pine marten and Beech marten is the other form of the orange-yellow spot on its throat, the fine coat, the more lank and more acuminate head, the black nose and the hairy ball of the foot.
Mating season, gestation period and raising period are similar to the beech marten.

While the specimen of the Beech marten in the wildlife park originate from the wilderness, the specimens of Pine marten are breedings from other wildlife parks.

American Mink (Mustela vison)

The American mink (Mustela vison) is originally found in northern North America. But it was kept in big fur farms in Europe for a long time.
From time to time some minks escaped or were released by self-appointed animal rights activists.
At the beginning of the 1990is many of the fur farms in the New Laender became unprofitable and the owners released the farmed minks in the wild with disastrous consequences. They had limited chance to survive considering the amount of animals.

the increased area demand by the leisure park "Belantis". This has result in a decreased number of fallow deer in Leipzig's floodplain forest.
The best known, stable populations of this species in Leipzig's vicinity are found in the floodplain of the river "Mulde" near the city of Grimma, Colditz and Bad Lausick as well as in the "Dahlener Heide".

The development of antlers peaker at an age of 9-10 years.
The daily requirement of crude protein amounts on average 80 g being equivalent to 12 kg green matter.
Fallow deer will be sexually mature with an age of about 16 months. The main rutting season is in the second half of October. After a gestation period of 33 weeks, one fawn is born. The fawn is already able to escape after 24 hours if an enemy approaches. The nursing period lasts about 11 months.

Moufflon (Ovis ammon musimon)

The moufflon was originally found in the wild of Sardinia and Corsica. As early as the beginning of the 18th century moufflon was kept in zoos in Austria and introduced into the wild. In 1902 it was introduced to Germany in the "Eulengebirge", and in 1903/1904 it was introduced in the "Göhrde" ("Lüneburger Heide"). In 1906-1910 it was introduced into the Harz Mountains (responsible forestry department of Harzgerode), with further introductions occurring till 1928. The next wild moufflon population in the region of Leipzig is found near "Klosterbuch" (responsible is the forestry department of Wermsdorf). The highest population density of moufflon in Germany is found in the free state of Thuringia.
Moufflon live preferably in forest areas. They are able to adapt its food to the respective biotope and feeds mostly on grass, herbs and leaves.
This species will be sexually mature with an age of 18 months. The rutting season takes place between the end of October and December. After a gestation period of 22 weeks between March and May of the next year a lamb is born, who follows its mother as soon as 10-20 minutes after birth. The nursing period lasts about 4-5 months, but the lambs start to browse few weeks after birth.
The moufflon is considered as the parent form of the domestic sheep. Crossbreedings between moufflon and domestic sheep (Ovis ammon f. aries) are possible without restrictions with their offspring being fertile.

LOCATION 7

Wisent - European bison (Bison bonasus)

The Wisent is the European bison, species Bison bonasus.

After the last ice age the wisent was found across the complete temperate zone of Europe and Western Asia. In Europe and Middle East a second species of wild cattle was found the aurochs (Bos primigenius), who is the ancestor of the domestic cattle (Bos primigenius f. taurus) and became extinct in the Middle Ages.
The last aurochs was killed in 1627. Later the wisent was often confused with the extinct aurochs. After the extinction of the aurochs the wisent is the only European survivor of the Bovidae genues.
Europe's heaviest land animal is close related to the American bison (Bison bison). Wisent (Bison bonasus) can cross-breed with American bison (Bison bison) without restrictions. They generate fertile crossbred individuals, unlike the infertile hybrids of crossbreedings between wisent (Bison bonasus) and the domestic cattle (Bos primigenius f. Taurus).
The wisent was approaching extinction caused by hunting and the limitations of its habitat. In England it was already extinct in prehistoric time. Poachers killed the

last wisent in East Prussia in 1755; the last individuals in Saxony were hunted in 1793. But it is assumed that the later were imported from Poland for hunting purposes.

At the beginning of the 20th century only two geographically isolated populations existed. One population occupied Caucasian ranges (ssp. Bison bonasus bonasus), while the other population inhabited

LOCATION 6

Experience track in the joint enclosure of red deer, fallow deer and moufflon

In establishing the “Experience track” it was intended to increase the attraction of the wildlife, park and to provide an avenue to receive money and donations for the maintenance of the wildlife park. The entrance fee of 2 Euro has to be paid at the revolving door and will be used to maintain the park and to improve its attraction. The track and especially the observation tower offer the opportunity to experience the game and its behaviour in its natural habitat without barriers.

In long-term it is intended to take measures in order to continuous increase the attraction of the experience track, e.g. to establish an enclosure for wolfs.
But the highest priority has the safety of visitors, staff and game. Therefore it is not allowed to feed the animals. For the same reason the track is closed during the mating season of red deer.
Some facts about the species seen during the “Experience track” are provide below.

Red deer (Cervus elaphus)

Elks (Alces alces), Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) and Red deer (Cervus elaphus) were the only species of the Cervidae historically found in Germany. The other species of Cervidae, e.g. fallow deer (Cervus dama) and sika deer (Cervus nippon) were displaced from northern Europe during the ice age. The population in Leipzig's floodplain forest was extinguished in the middle of the 19th century. In 1780-1829 the last registered huntings of red deer took place. The last observations were made in the 1860is in the forest area “Harth”. After the extermination of elk (Alces alces), aurochs (Bos primigenius), brown bear (Ursus arctos) and wisent (Bison bonasus) in the wild

in Germany. Red deer are current found around Leipzig in the “Dübener Heide”, “Dahlener Heide” and Erz Mountains. From time to time some animals are seen in the vicinity of Leipzig, e.g. some years ago an individual was shot at Leipzig's Central station.

The daily nutritional requirement of an adult animal amounts to 130-150 g crude proteins. This amount is much higher during gestation and nursing period. A 150 kg heavy stag can browse up to 20 kg green matter daily to cover this demand. Red deer feed mainly on grass, shoots and parts of bark and foliage. The antler or old and mature deer dislodge in March/April; young deer bring down its antler later. Afterwards the development of a new antler will start and will be finished in August/September following rubbing. At the beginning every new antler is more massive and more voluminous than the previous one. This development culminates after 14 years.

Red deer will be sexually mature with the age of 16 months. The rutting season lasts from the beginning of September until the middle of October and one fawn is born after a gestation period of 34 weeks in the following June. The fawn stays with the hind for 4-6 weeks and feeds on green matter after 8 days.

Fallow deer (Dama dama)

After the ice age the distribution of fallow deer was restricted to Asia Minor. First attempts of reintroduction took place during the antique in the Mediterranean

area. Romans introduced it to England between the 2nd and 5th century. At the beginning of the 13th century fallow deer was introduced to Denmark. The most intensive introduction was in the 19th century, at which time it was introduced into Leipzig's city forest, especially in the south. At the end of World War II more deer were released, and the enclosures of the wildlife park were opened. Additionally some animals escaped from the “Oberholz”, an enclosure in the southeast of Leipzig, and from the wildlife park. Consequently a big population of fallow deer formed in the 1990ies in southern floodplain forest and its adjacent recultivated lignite sites.

In recent years frequent accidents with fallow deer have to be registered and consequently the number of animals has reduced. The further development of the state street S 46 (cycle track and fence) connecting the city of Markkleeberg and the south west of Leipzig separated its habitat and makes a walking tour between the forest area “Lauer” and the “Connewitzer Holz” nearly impossible.. It is assumed that the majority of the fallow deer population migrated further south caused by the increased area demand by the

released. Nevertheless there were enough Individuals to form new populations living in the wild. Therefore the Mink is found in Leipzig and its vicinity. The individuals presented in the wildlife park were found in the forest area “Bienitz” near the Elster-Saale-Canal in the north-west of Leipzig. The local hunting-leaseholder kindly relinquished the hatchlings to the park.

The American mink (Mustafa vision) is not that close related with the European Mink (Mustafa lateral) as often assumed. But both occupy almost exactly the same ecological niche. Consequently it becomes a competitor to the native European mink. High populations of the American mink also coupetes for resources with the native European polecat (Mustela putorius).

The American mink is physically trigger and stronger to the European mink. Both animals feed on the same sources, resulting in the reduction of available the European Mink.
The male American mink will mate with the female European Mink earlier in spring than the males of the same species. But the embryos die throughout the pregnancy due to the genetic differences. Unfortunably the female European Minks do not breed again that season. This has contributed to the decline of the European species as soon as the American Mink forms new populations in the habitat of the European Mink. This clearly illustrates the consequences of misunderstood love of animals. Since the American Mink in the meantime is spread Europe-wide the last wild populations of the European Mink are in decline, and may not be able to survive.
A successful re-introduction of the European Mink will be very difficult, since the populations of American Mink is continous over the landscape throughout Europe.

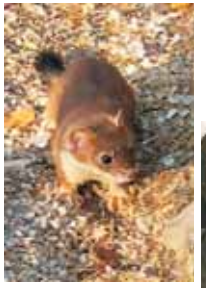
Stoat (Mustela erminea)

The Stoat (Mustela erminea) is found in Central Europe, Northern Europe, Northern Asia and Northern America.
It is also found Leipzig-area in small populations. One of its most interesting features is its coat change. While its summer coat is brown the colour changes to white in winter.

In all seasons it has a pronounced black tip on its tail. In its southern range of Europe the coat is brown all the year, whereas the coat can be permanent white in its northern range and mountainous areas.

The relatively high number of stoats kept in several aviaries in the wildlife park results from its relatively lifespan of about five years both, in wild and in captivity.

Therefore it is intended to keep at least two couples of different ages to guarantee its continued existence in Leipzig's wildlife park.



The stoat is kept in separate aviaries resulting from its unsociable behaviour as all species of Mustelidae.

Ferret (Mustela putorius furo)

The ferret is domesticated from the wild European Polecat in order to catch rabbits.

LOCATION 4

Eurasian otter (Lutra lutra)

The Eurasian otter (Lutra lutra) is found throughout most of Europe. It is located throughout most of Asia and on the northern tip of Africa.

Even at the beginning of the last century the Eurasian otter was found throughout Germany in freshwater habitats like rivers, lakes, ponds, streams from the coast up to 2000 m above sea level in the Alps. But within only few decades it was only found in the north and east of Germany. After extensive hunting by man for the lent, their fur, or to protect fish stocks and the loss of its habitats, resulting from drainage, construction of canals, water contamination, mass tourism and traffic, the Eurasian otter was all but eliminated throughout most of Germany.

After 1990 the quality of water improved considerably resulting from the shutdown of old industrial plants and the construction of sewage plants. Since the end of the 1990is the Eurasian otter is sporadically seen on the river “Elster” between “Leipzig/Knauthain” and the “Schkeuditz” as well as on the river “Parthe” between “Borsdorf” and “Leipzig/Plaußig”.

In 1993 a female and mate River otter (Lutra canadensis) coming from Quebec/Canada was introduced into the 453 m² wide, semi-natural enclosure of Leipzig's wildlife park. This action was managed by the wildlife park Eekholt in Großenaspe (Germany).

The initial intention of purchasing the River otter was to attract more visitors since it is more active on day, than the European otter, which are mostly nocturnal. The male otter was born in 1987; the female otter was

Born in 1987; the female otter was born in 1988. Its physique is excellently adapted to live in water and on land. They grow to a length of 70-90 cm weighing about 7012 kg. Males are heavier than females.

The tail length is about 40 cm. Otters feed on living creatures in and near water, but no plants making these animals carniverous. The proportion of fish is about 20-90 % depending on the season.

European otters mat at any time of the year. The males will mate with more than one female, staying with each female in her den. An average of 1-3 pups are born after a gestination period of 61-74 days. The pups will stay with their mother up to one year and have a live span of 10-15 years. The only natural enemy worth mentioning is the white-tailed eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla).

LOCATION 5

European Mink (Mustela lutreola)

The European mink (Mustela lutreola) formerly inhabited great parts of Europe. It extended westward into the north of Spain and up to the Ural Mountains in the East. The last individuals of the European mink in Germany were hunted in 1826. The populations of European mink decreased over a long time, but decreased rapidly since the middle of the 19th century. The reasons for its extinction are not in conclusive. But it seems to be a combination of several factors, e.g. habitat loss, intensive hunting, separation of habitats. It is also likely that the species was outcompeted by the introduction of the larger and better-swimming American mink (Mustela vison). This species was kept in big fur farms in Europe for a long time. From time to time some minks escaped or were released by self-appointed animal rights activists. When the fur farms in the New Laender became unprofitable the owners released the farmed American minks in the wild with disastrous consequences. They had limited chance to survive due to the small number released animals.

The American mink is physically pre-eminent to the European Mink. It feed on the same sources and depredates in the stocks of the European Mink. Moreover the American male will mate with the female European Mink earlier in spring than the males of the same species. But the embryos die after some days caused by the huge genetic differences and the female European Minks do not then breed again that season. This has contributed to the decline of the European species. The European Mink is endangered today and has probably no survivable populations in the wilderness today. Last populations are found in the north of Spain, in the west of France and in Russia. The number of the latter is not known and become more and more separated. The European Mink (Mustella lutreola) is one of the most endangered mammals of Europe and deserves to be protected by the EU.

Its next relative is not the American Mink (Mustela vison), but the European polecat (Mustela putorius) and the Siberian weasel (Mustela sibirica).

Nowadays it seems not possible, that the European mink (Mustela lutreola) can survive in the wilderness. Therefore it is breeded to save this species. Since there is only a small number of minks available for breeding a good coordination is necessary to avoid inbreeding.

The aggressive rivalry that the European mink exhibit is an other problem, since a single individual demands about 8 km course of a river.They are usually solitary animals, and keeping them close together is therefore not possible for long periods.

Within the framework of the European maintenance breeding programme a mating station for the European mink (Mustela lutreola) was established in Hilter (near Osnabrueck, Germany). After fertilization, the pregnant female minks are separated, and eventually give birth to young. The young stay with the mother, until a time when they demand there own habitat. Bothe the young and the mother returned to the mating station of Hilter. Some individuals remain in the outstations demonstration purposes.

Since 2001 the wildlife park Leipzig is incorporated in the European maintenance-breeding programme of the European mink (Mustela lutreola). Every year in spring pregnant minks are brought into the wide semi-natural enclosure to give birth to young. At the beginning of the winter the parents and most of the young return to the mating station of Hilter. It is intended to reintroduce the European mink again to the wild to prevent the species from becoming extinct. Attempts are underway to establish a new population of the European species to islands, e.g. in the Baltic Sea too far from the continent for the American mink (Mustela vison) to swim to.