

COMPROMISES FOR THE PROTECTION OF RARE SPECIES OF BIRD IN THE STATE OF BRANDENBURG

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With regard to disturbances of endangered animal species, experiences from Brandenburg in the area of air sports to date play a relatively minor role compared with other human activities. Such disturbances are mostly isolated cases which can lead for example to problems at the sleeping places of migratory birds. A special role would seem to be played by balloons, which according to observations of balloonists themselves can compromise wild animals if flight altitudes are too low.

In 1999, to minimize such disturbances in especially valuable habitats of birds and to foster ideas of nature conservation in air sports circles, the Brandenburg State Department for the Environment (Landesumweltamt Brandenburg) published a **nature conservation map with recommendations for air sports in the state of Brandenburg**. The map, on a scale of 1:500,000, is supplemented by a **brochure on the subject of air sports and nature conservation** which was developed with the air sports associations of the states of Berlin and Brandenburg in cooperation with the State Department for the Environment.

The recommendations were developed jointly at numerous training and discussion events by nature conservationists and air sports enthusiasts. The selection of the regions shown in the map is characterized by a compromise line which brings relief for areas that are especially in need of protection, without any disproportionate restriction on flying activities.

- **Conservation areas not the only criterion**

Approaches such as taking all conservation areas into consideration (even those in which no animal species sensitive to air sports activities are found) would lead to a situation in the state of Brandenburg where practically no notable corridors remained for engaging in air sports without the recommended restriction from the viewpoint of nature conservation. The selection of all large conservation areas would be just as disproportionate.

- **Concentration on especially endangered species**

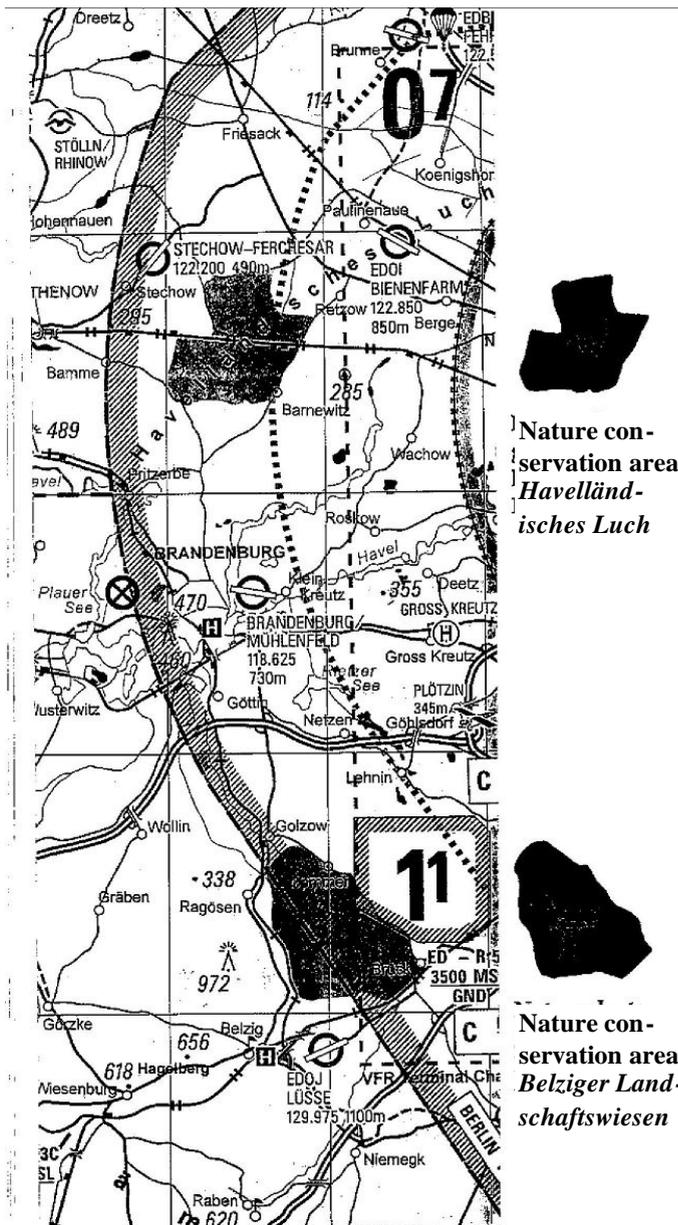
Animals which are potentially sensitive to disturbances but present in very large and widespread populations were not taken into consideration. Otherwise this would have meant in Brandenburg, for example, that the nesting places of over 1500 breeding pairs of white storks, which are distributed almost uniformly throughout the state of Brandenburg, would have had to be taken into consideration. Occasional disturbances can be tolerated here. By contrast, the small population levels of the great bustard and of many endangered meadow breeding species cannot cope with such disturbances.

- **Concentration on untouched areas with low levels of disturbance**

The scattered distribution of the breeding places of the white-tailed eagle, osprey and lesser spotted eagle and also of the black stork made it necessary to focus on selected areas of these species. In the sense of preventing potential disturbances, their occurrence in untouched areas featuring especially low levels of disturbance were taken into consideration, particularly since these areas also serve a protective function that goes beyond species protection, e.g. for recovery. In a similar way, the selection of resting places for migratory birds had to be focused on the particularly important, large resting places, because substantial changes can be observed in locations and individual strengths,

especially with cranes, and numerous smaller resting places are added every year.

As a result, the map shows three distinct categories of areas which are especially worth protecting and which differ in their sensitivity to disturbances from airplanes: i.e. areas for meadow breeders, resting areas for migratory birds and concentration areas for eagles. In a graded system, people engaging in air sports are provided with recommendations as to how they can avoid disturbing the endangered species. These range from avoiding flying over protected areas for great bustards to adherence to the minimum fly-over altitude of 600 m (balloons 300 m) during breeding and resting periods in the spring and autumn. Gliders and balloons should also not be landed in certain areas.



The map closes a gap with regard to highlighting those areas of importance to nature conservation for people engaged in flying activities, because in the pertinent ICAO 1:500.000 aeronautical charts for the state of Brandenburg, the Berlin chart does not show the bird protection symbols that are entered in other charts. The particularly sensitive protected areas for the great bustard, *Havelländisches Luch* and *Belziger Landschaftswiesen*, are shown in attachments to the brochure as transparent stickers and can be affixed to the ICAO chart at the appropriate coordinates.

From the experience of previous cooperation in the state of Brandenburg, it is useful to make sure one focuses on essentials and as far as possible to address real rather than fictitious problems. In the development of possible solutions, it is crucially important to adopt a practical approach and to work out realistic and feasible proposals in order to achieve cooperation.

The experience gained in Brandenburg should provide a basis for developing nationwide recommendations for air sports. To this end, a study group was founded comprising federal and regional authorities and also associations for the purpose of drawing up, amongst other things,

- a better picture and explanation of bird sanctuaries in the ICAO aeronautical charts,

- recommendations for the updating and refinement of demarcation zones at regional level and
- requirements for the publication of teaching materials and guidelines for aviation training on nature and environmental conservation.

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