

The BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany)

BUND is a non-profit, non-partisan, and non-confessional environmental NGO. It is the German section of the international Friends of the Earth network and was founded in 1975. Today, BUND counts more than 490,000 members and supporters. One main focus of the BUND's conservation work is biotope networking. Since this is a truly international task, BUND has a strong interest in initiating international collaborations.



Natural forests are rare in central Europe

Help the wildcat

Help us protect the endangered wildcat and donate for the project:

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www.bund.net/spenden/spendenprojekte

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Wildcat Profile

The European wildcat (*Felis silvestris silvestris*)



Young wildcats have a more pronounced pattern than adult cats

- Appearance:** Similar to a brown-gray patterned domestic cat but it has a bushier, dark-ringed tail with a blunt black tip; coat pattern appears somewhat faded; appears burlier than a domestic cat because of its thick coat, especially pronounced in winter.
- Weight:** Females normally weigh around 4 kilograms, males around 5 kilograms.
- Lifetime:** Around 7-10 years, in captivity 15 years.
- Diet:** Mice, and occasionally insects, frogs, lizards, and birds, depending on availability
- Offspring:** After approximately 66 days of gestation the wildcat gives birth to between one and four (in very few cases six) young, most litters in spring around April to June.
- Character:** Timid and solitary, raises offspring alone, nocturnal, good climber
- Favourite habitat:** Forests with a lot of undergrowth and places to hide, hollowed trees, forest edges, clearances for hunting mice, treetops for basking in the sun.

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For more information about the project visit:
www.bund.net/wildcat

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WILDCAT'S LEAP

Biological diversity through forest networks

Project within the framework of:

leben.natur.vielfalt
das Bundesprogramm

Funded by:

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The territory of the wildcat, *Felis silvestris*, is once again expanding. “Germany’s little tiger” has always fascinated us with its elegance, charm, and its unique, wild character. Its home is the deciduous and mixed forests of central and southwest Germany. These woods must be specially protected if we hope to preserve the biological diversity.



Wildcats were once widespread in Germany

Forest network through the “Wildcat’s Leap” project

BUND has been committed to the wildcat for years. In the areas they feel best – natural or near-natural forests with old hollow trunks and plenty of deadwood – other threatened species can also feel at home, such as the pine marten, the dormouse, and the lynx. However, these forests are scattered and unconnected to one another. Often streets, fields, or building sites isolate the forests from each other. The wildcat & Co can only freely wander, breed, and find new habitats if these forests are reconnected. If this does not happen, there is the threat of inbreeding and the major hazard of crossing the roads.



Habitat: deciduous forests



Volunteers planting trees for a wildcat corridor

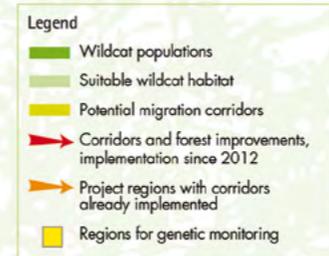
The project “Wildcat’s Leap” is sponsored by the Federal Office for Nature Conservation’s programme Biological Diversity, and has the aim to re-connect these forests all over Germany. BUND plants green corridors using trees and bushes in the regions of Hesse (Rothaar Mountains – Knüll), Lower Saxony (Harz-Solling), Baden-Wuerttemberg (Herrenberg region), Rhineland-Palatinate (Westerwald/Taunus – Rothaar Mountains) and Thuringia. In North Rhine-Westphalia, forests in the in Eifel region are enriched with deadwood, so that the wildcat can also feel at home here.



The Safety Net for the Wildcat

All of BUND’s activities in regards to the wildcat – including the project “Wildcat’s Leap” – are part of a greater vision for the future. The Safety Net for the Wildcat will one day comprise a forest network whose total length equals around 20 000 kilometres. The green corridors bring the forests together in a network and offer the wildcat & Co migratory protection and survival – so that we may preserve biological diversity for the coming generations!

Plan for the “Wildcat’s Leap” project



Lures for Germany’s first wildcat gene database

In order to discover where there are wildcats and how the wildlife corridors should best be created, BUND has been taking stock of the wildcats over several winters and with the help of many volunteers. This is taking place in the federal states with plans for the green corridors, as well as in Bavaria, Saarland, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt. Slightly roughened wooden sticks are put into the ground in particular grid formations and sprayed with valerian – and the lure is finished.

The wildcat is attracted to the lure, rubs itself against it and leaves behind hair. Volunteers check the lures approximately every ten days using a magnifying glass and tweezers. The hairs are then examined genetically at the Senckenberg Research Institute so that individual wildcats and their migrations may be partially determined. An exciting task for everyone involved!



School classes take part as well

Would you also like to get involved or volunteer with the Safety Net for the Wildcat?

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