



TOMORROW'S
Wildcat Forests





We transform forests into wildcat forests

Semi-natural habitats, in which wildcats can roam freely have become rare in Germany. This is why BUND (German Federation for Environment and Nature Conservation) is redesigning forest sites in ten federal states. Our aim is to encourage the wildcats' successful reproduction there and allow them to recolonize other areas.

To implement the project, BUND is cooperating with forest users and decision-makers in the fields of forestry, agriculture and hunting as well as with land owners, administrations, municipalities and the church.



Secretive inhabitants of our forests

They sleep well hidden during the day and usually hunt for mice and voles at night. Hardly anyone ever gets to see them: the **European wildcats**. While the wildcat's grey-brown coat pattern is very similar to that of a domestic tabby cat, it is a separate species. Wildcats are not feral domestic cats, but are native to our forests.

Tomorrow's wildcat forests

- are "untidy" forests containing deadwood and scrub, providing places to hide and rear young.
- have structurally rich forest edges and contain open areas with cover for hunting mice and voles.
- are relatively free of potential hazards, thus preventing accidents.

Vital for all:

Not only wildcats benefit from structurally-rich forests dominated by deciduous trees: such forests are better protected against storms, drought and are more resilient to climate change and loss of biodiversity.



The European wildcat

(Felis silvestris)

Wildcat profile

- Appearance:** similar to the domestic grey-brown tabby cat, but its tail is bushy with dark, transverse rings with a rounded black tip; coat pattern rather faded
- Weight:** roughly the same weight as domestic cats
- Life expectancy:** seven to ten years; 15 years in captivity
- Diet:** mice and voles, depending on availability occasionally also insects, frogs, lizards and birds
- Reproduction:** one to four young are born after a gestation period of around 66 days; most litters are born in spring (April to June)
- Behaviour:** shy and solitary, mainly nocturnal, agile and a good climber, ambush predator
- Population:** roughly 6,000 to 8,000 wildcats in German forests; listed in the Red List of Threatened Species

The wildcats' area of distribution in Germany can be seen here:
www.wildkatzenwegeplan.de (website in German)

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Biodiverse forests

Other endangered animal species such as Bechstein's bats, fire salamanders, middle spotted woodpeckers, European stag beetles, hazel dormice and European tree frogs also feel at home in wildcat-friendly forests and forest edges. The diverse habitats are refuges of species diversity.



Further information (in German):
www.bund.net/wildkatzenwaelder

A joint project

The six-year project entitled „Wildkatzenwälder von morgen“ (Tomorrow's wildcat forests) as part of the German Federal Biodiversity Programme is being jointly implemented by the federal level BUND, its youth branch BUNDjugend and the BUND regional associations in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia.



” Together with local volunteers,
we are enhancing forests, forest
edges, clearings and meadows
adjacent to the forests.
We promote biodiversity and
climate-resilient forests. “

Friederike Scholz, Project Manager

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