



# Wildpferde

## im Merfelder Bruch

### Wild Horses in the Merfelder Bruch

A few kilometers west of the North Rhine-Westphalian town of Dülmen a herd of wild horses has existed since ancient times - the wild horses of the Merfelder Bruch that were first documented in the year 1316.

### Merfelder Bruch

In former times, their habitat included an area of several thousand hectares. The wild horses were, however, further and further pushed back into the area of the Merfelder Bruch because of progressive cultivation and appropriation of land.

In the middle of the 19th century a 400 hectare extended reserve was created by the Family of the Duke of Croÿ - the wild horses reserve in the Merfelder Bruch. This reserve, with nearly 400 wild horses, is the last remaining reserve on the European continent.

### Living Environment

This wide area, consisting of moor, heathland, coniferous forests and oak trees, offers a varied supply of food to the wild horses. In the winter months, the animals are supplied with hay.

With regard to their way of life, the wild horses are left to themselves, follow their instincts and are not only adapted to their food, but also to any weather conditions in their environment. They find shelter in the forests.

Only the individuals who are adapted to this environment can prevail and pass on their genes. Due to this natural selection the Dülmener Wild Horses remain a healthy and resistant horse population.

### Survival of the Species

Today the Merfelder Bruch is a nature reserve with the herd as an essential component.

The primary aim of local nature conservation is the survival of the species of the Dülmener wild horses. This includes the population dynamics of primitive horses (primitive with the meaning of "primordial") and especially the preservation of the environment, because its modification would shape a different type of horse through adaptation. The wild horses preserves as primitive horse the primordial genetic material.

### Wild Horses Capture (Wildpferdefang)

For the preservation of these wild horses, it is necessary to sort out the male yearlings from the herd to avoid rivalries among the stallions. Since 1907 this Wild Horses Capture takes place every year on the last Saturday in May in the Merfelder Bruch. The one-year old stallions are caught by hand and then offered for sale in an auction. They quickly lose their fear of people and get used to their new surroundings. They are said to be smart, good-natured, undemanding, but especially to have a calm character. Therefore they are ideal and popular as riding horses for children or as carriage horses.

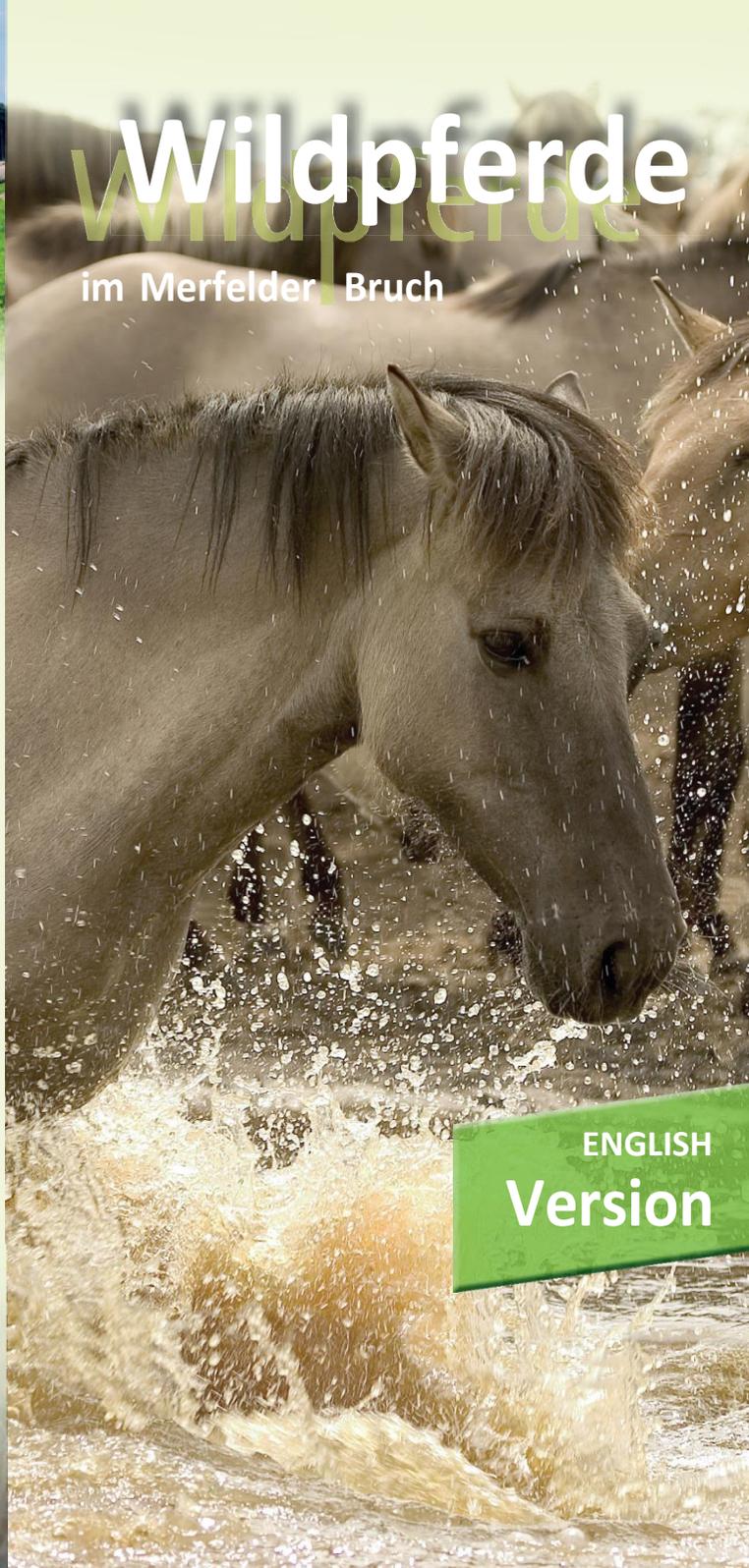
### Ticket Sales

For prices and further information about our event, please visit our website [www.wildpferde.de](http://www.wildpferde.de).

### Admission Tickets

These tickets can be purchased on the day of the event. With these you have the opportunity to enjoy the atmosphere of the event, to see the entrance of the wild horses and the auction. Admission tickets are not a substitute for stand tickets and do not authorize you to enter the stands!





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## Experiencing Wild Horses

March/April (weather permitting) until 1. November

Far away from the hustle and bustle of daily life, visitors can experience a gentle, grazing herd, with lovely foals and young colts in the Merfelder Bruch. When staying longer, the instinctive behavior of the horses in family and herd groups is recognizable.

- Saturdays, Sundays and holidays in NRW
- 10 am to 18 pm

Dogs must be on a leash!

## Guided Tours into the Reserve

March until October

You have the opportunity to observe and experience the wild horses under expert guidance.

- Mondays until Fridays
- Visitor groups (10+ persons)
- Tour takes about 1 hour

## Appointment for Tours

Forstoberinspektorin Friederike Rövekamp  
mobile: +49 (0)170 3478005

Dogs cannot be brought along!

## Travel Information to the Wild Horses

### Access via A31

- Exit Dülmen / Borcken No. 34 Turn towards Dülmen
- Turn to the right after ca. 8.7 km to the wild horse arena (follow the sign "Wildpferdebahn")

### Access via A43

- Exit Dülmen/Coesfeld Nr. 6  
Turn towards Coesfeld / Merfeld
- Next traffic light turn left in direction to Merfeld
- Turn right at the T-junction in direction to Borcken
- Turn left after ca. 5.5 km to the wild horse arena

## GPS Data

Latitude 51° 51' 20.9''

Longitude 7° 07' 46.5''

Not reachable by local public transport

We wish you much pleasure and an exciting day in the wild horse arena of the nature reserve Merfelder Bruch.

Herzog von Croÿ'sche Verwaltung  
Schloßpark 1 · D-48249 Dülmen  
phone: +49 (0)2594 963-0 · fax: +49 (0)2594 963-111  
info@wildpferde.de  
website: www.wildpferde.de

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