



Potentilla wismariensis cinquefoil

The cinquefoil of the Wismar coast

Just a few years ago botanists made a pretty astonishing discovery. The short stretch of shoreline between the coastal towns of Wismar and Rostock hosts a plant that exists only here and nowhere else in the world. The cinquefoil had been overlooked for a long time due to its close resemblance to a common related species. Honouring its limited distribution, the plant was subsequently named *Potentilla wismariensis*. This plant with shiny yellow flowers thrives only in close contact with the seashore. Attentive observers can spot it growing on sea walls and coastal slopes. This cinquefoil's worldwide distribution is confined to the Baltic Green Belt. Such species that exhibit an occurrence to a very restricted area are called endemics.

Unique to the Green Belt

The Wismar cinquefoil is by no means the only endemic of the Baltic Green Belt. Unspoilt spring fens on the Estonian island of Saaremaa are populated by a flashy rattle. Botanists call this rare plant *Rhinanthus osiliensis*, referring to Ösel, the German and Swedish name of the island. The plant is indeed confined to only this isle in the Green Belt, just like a showy marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza*) and a hawthorn species (*Crataegus*). Hawkweeds (*Hieracium*) of Rügen Island chalk cliffs or the *Linaria loeselii* toadflax of the Eastern Baltic coasts are other examples for endemics of the Green Belt.



The rare *Rhinanthus osiliensis* rattle

Sea walls and salt marshes host a particularly rich selection of rare plants. Most of them are not completely exclusive to the Green Belt. But numerous coastal plants of the Baltic region are genetically different from their allies along North Sea and Atlantic and can therefore still count as somewhat unique specialties.



Dune tiger beetle, *Cicindela maritima*

Secret life in salt and sand

An unimpressive black beetle is another great rarity of the Green Belt. The ground beetle *Agonum monachum* populates a handful of very special reedbeds on the Baltic south coast. Regular floodings with brackish water are coupled with extensive natural surroundings in these places. Germany's Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state has a special responsibility for the preservation of this highly endangered insect. Even though the species also occurs at several other sites, the closest of these are at Lake Neusiedl and on the Balkans - far away, but likewise along the Green Belt.

Quite a number of other rare ground beetles are also well adapted to Green Belt coastal habitats. The dune tiger beetle (*Cicindela maritima*) is particularly endangered. This species lives on sparsely vegetated stretches of sandy beaches. Today most of its former habitats are gone because tourism booms in these places. The endangered beetle only survives in a few secluded areas without visitor traffic.

Special guests

Tens of thousands of greater scaups from northern Europe and Siberia collect every year in the bights and lagoons of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern coast. Of all areas, the narrow strip of the Green Belt along the Baltic Sea is the most important wintering area for these ducks and it has a central importance for the conservation of this species in Europe. Myriads of other migrating birds use the Green Belt for major stopovers, among them the famous flocks of grey cranes that rest along the Western Pomeranian lagoon coast.

It's in our hands

The remarkable Baltic Green Belt fauna and flora comprises many thousand species. A notable share of these are rare and endangered and a few are native solely to the Green Belt. They thrive nowhere else in the world but in this narrow strip of special biological diversity. It is in our hands to actively safeguard this natural treasure for future generations.



Getting active

Detailed information on how you can contribute to the conservation of our endangered coastal nature is available on BUND MV's web pages:

www.balticgreenbelt.de www.bund-mv.de

Additional information in English:

www.balticgreenbelt.net



Publisher: Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland / Friends of the Earth Germany
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state branch
Wismarsche Str. 152, 19053 Schwerin, Germany
tel. 0385-521339-0, bund.mv@bund.net / www.bund-mv.de
Text & layout: Jörg Schmiedel, Büro für Landschaftsplanung und Umweltheratung, Rostock
Picture credits: Jan Barkowski p.1; Wikipedia/WikedKentaur p.2; Susanne Schumacher p.3; NASA p.4 (base map); Jörg Schmiedel title page, p.5 / title image: Small pasqueflower
© BUND Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011

This leaflet was produced as part of the INTERREG IV B project Baltic Green Belt utilizing part-financing by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund) and funds of the BINGO! environmental lottery from the North German Foundation for Environment and Development (Norddeutsche Stiftung für Umwelt und Entwicklung).



Uniquely here!

The Baltic Green Belt as a refuge for endemics and rare species



Bund für
Umwelt und
Naturschutz
Deutschland