



Nature protection, landscape conservation and cultivated landscapes

Many biodiversity-rich areas of ecological significance were created by humans. There are many such examples nearby. Around Lake Ammer there are many protected habitats and natural environments with rare species of animals and plants. These include the meadows South of Lake Ammer, between Fischen and Raisting, the Ampermoos area in the North, as well as the Mesnerbichl area in Erling. They are home to rare flowers such as narcissus anemone, marsh gladiolus, bird's-eye primrose, field bindweed, spreading bellflower or gentiana.

Diversity also comes from management

These protected flowers grow on species-rich hay meadows. Sustaining their abundance requires specific soils as well as regular cutting. These areas need to be mown twice a year: the first cut around the time of Saint John's Eve in mid-June is referred to as "Heumahd", and the second in midsummer is called "Grummetschnitt". This is taken care of by the local farmers. They have the necessary knowledge and experience as well as the machinery needed to work on these areas. What they cut is used as fodder or bedding for their animals.

There are other examples of areas of ecological significance which would not exist in this form were they not used by humans, in other regions of Bavaria: from the Rhön biosphere reserve and the Steigerwald and Fichtelgebirge areas right up to the Bavarian Forest and the Alpine foothills. Their significance as a place to experience nature and as a recreational area is increasing. Without the local farmers, regular maintenance of these areas is impossible.

The formative role of livestock farming

Livestock farming is of paramount importance for the maintenance of the Bavarian cultivated landscape. Without agriculture, large swathes of meadows would become overgrown with shrubs. Pasture farming and mowing meadows for ruminant fodder make a valuable contribution to landscape conservation. However, extensive agriculture can be less profitable than intensive use, especially if the cost per hectare is high. This is why a number of public support programmes have been created to provide compensation and reward farmers' landscape conservation efforts.