

What are National GeoParks?

The title “National GeoPark” is awarded by the GeoUnion/ Alfred-Wegener-foundation to a region with outstanding geology. National GeoParks present their geological attractions to the public in an attractive way, promote general knowledge of geosciences and support sustainable regional development through geotourism.

More information on German GeoParks:
www.geoparks-in-deutschland.de

Aims of the Ruhr Area National GeoPark

- › Active protection and conservation of the geological and mining heritage of the area
- › Geology-based environmental education of the public through development, protection, and presentation of selected geosites, presentation of the regional geology and educational establishments
- › Publications on geological information, communication of knowledge and geotourism for diverse target audiences
- › Coordination of the various activities promoting geotourism and sustainable regional development, thereby enhancing the image of the Ruhr Area

The National GeoPark of the Ruhr Area is a registered, non-profit association open to every person or institution interested in its aims!

The GeoPark publishes various literature for geotouristic, educational and scientific purposes. Further information and availability at: www.geopark.ruhr

What are Geosites?

Geosites are sites of geological value worth protecting that provide information about earth's history and evolution. This may be:

- › Geological features: e.g. cliffs, springs, caves or erratic blocks
- › Parts of the landscape: e.g. karst, dunes, fens or moraines
- › Outcrops of rock and fossil-sites: e.g. quarries, road cuts or mining-tunnels



Quarry “Dünkelberg”



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GeoPark
RUHRGEBIET



GEOPARK
RUHR AREA



**Ruhr Area -
Experiencing Geology and
mineral resources**

Ruhr Area – National GeoPark

Why does the Ruhr Area exist and why do more than 5 million people live here? What role does geology play here and where is it visible? What role do coal, salt, sand, gravel and groundwater play?

The “National GeoPark” in the Ruhr Area provides the answer to these and many more questions. It is, by the way, the only GeoPark in a metropolitan region worldwide!

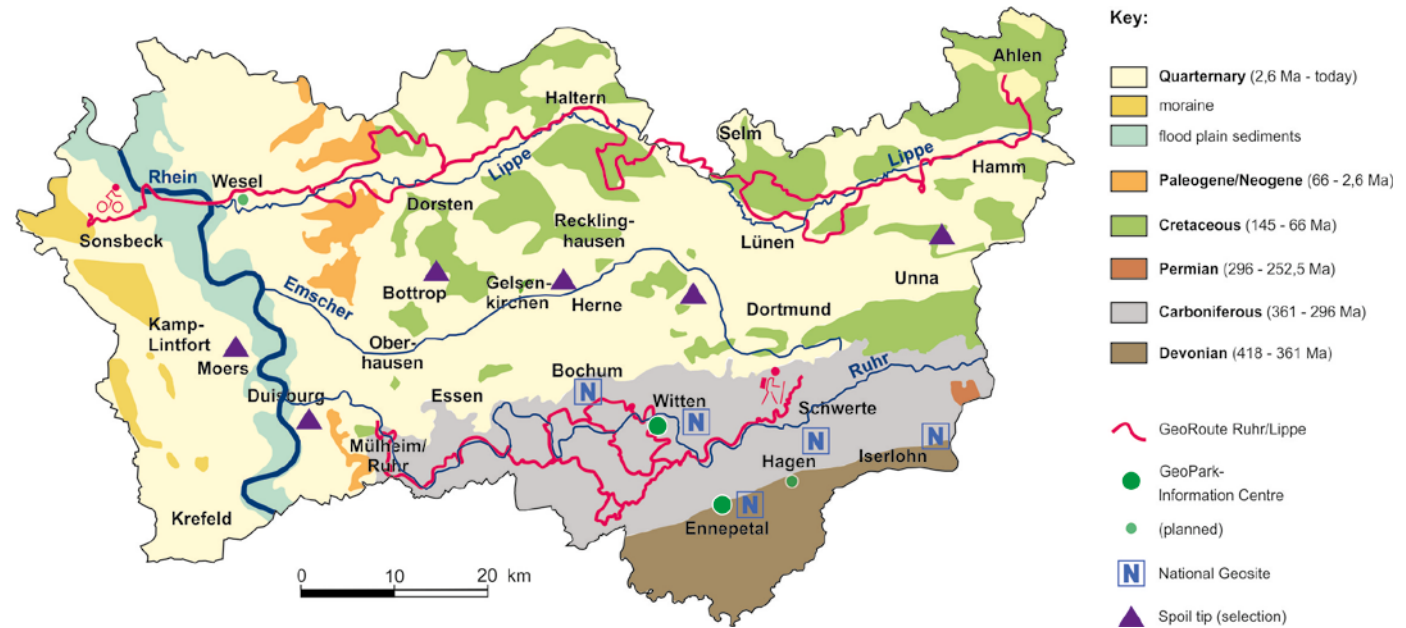
Approximately 400 million years of earth’s history are exposed; from Devonian limestones to Quaternary fluvial terraces. In many places these deposits are exposed at so called Geosites. More than 150 of these sites await your discovery! Five of them have been designated as “National Geosites” by the German Academy of Geosciences:

- › The “**Muttental**” in **Witten**, showing remains of historical coal mining.
- › The **former quarry “Hagen-Vorhalle”** with its spectacular rock folds. Besides, world-famous fossils of the oldest winged insects have been found here.
- › The “**Felsenmeer**” in **Hemer** with a rugged karst landscape.
- › The “**Klutert cave**” in **Ennepetal** with brilliant reef-fossils in its walls.
- › The “**Geological garden**” in **Bochum** with 17 stops documenting earth’s history.

“**Ruhr Area – Experiencing Geology and mineral resources**” is the slogan of the GeoPark, giving credit to the region and its development, as mineral resources have played a significant role since time immemorial:



“Felsenmeer” in Hemer



Coal is the most common, but by far not the only mineral resource in the Ruhr Area: the iron- and steel-industry, salt-mining for food and chemical purposes, gravel and sand for the building industry – they have all played a fundamental role in the development of this area and its characteristics.

Mining of the individual resources has shaped each part of the area in its own way:

In the southern part, the Ruhr valley forms the historical centre of coalmining. In many places, coal seams from the Carboniferous crop out on the earth’s surface. This centuries-old mining tradition can be experienced on various hiking paths, which are all connected by the **185 km long “GeoRoute Ruhr”**. South of the river Ruhr, the oldest rocks from the Devonian can be visited.

Two information centres of the GeoPark invite you to learn and discover. One is situated in the museum “Zeche Nachtigall” in Witten and focusses on coal-formation and the geological history of the Ruhr Area; the second is located at the “Klutert cave” in Ennepetal and focusses on cave-development and karstification. Both information centres are likewise starting points for tourism in this southern part of the GeoPark.

In the central part of the Ruhr Area remnants of the iron- and steel industry are characteristic sights. The **world heritage “Zeche Zollverein” in Essen** is only one example and serves today as a unique event location. Spoil tips are characteristic landmarks and can be visited.

The northern and western part of the GeoPark area are more of a rural nature. While the glacial periods left over large erratic blocks and an end-moraine, e.g. in Ahlen and Wesel, Cretaceous sands are mined nearby Haltern. In the Lower Rhine area, gravel and salt are extracted. On the 310 km long hiking and **biking path “GeoRoute Lippe”**, this part of the GeoPark and its natural- and earth-historical development can be discovered!

The Ruhr Area GeoPark invites you to explore some of your geological past, with Geology and industrial heritage, furnaces and museums, coal mines, nature adventures and cultural events. Come to discover, learn and enjoy it!