

2023 European Youth in Parks Day Report

Junior Rangers connecting with nature in the Cairngorms National Park. Photo by Will George



European Youth in Parks Day

Imagine a day when all Protected Areas come together across Europe, to involve young people in their Park. Young people are the future leaders, park managers, and local communities, and by connecting them to Protected Areas, we connect them with their cultural and environmental heritage.

Many Parks are already investing in young people, with school programmes, Junior Rangers, Youth+, Youth Committees and more. On the European Youth in Parks Day, we want to celebrate that commitment to the next generation and make visible this labour of love. We hope that as this event grows from year to year, it will inspire more Parks to follow suit.

Lastly, our dream is that the European Youth in Parks Day is also one where young people can take the lead for nature, where they are given the opportunity to co-create the event with their Park. This way, Parks can help build up and empower young people in a safe and supported way, because we are #StrongerWithYouth!

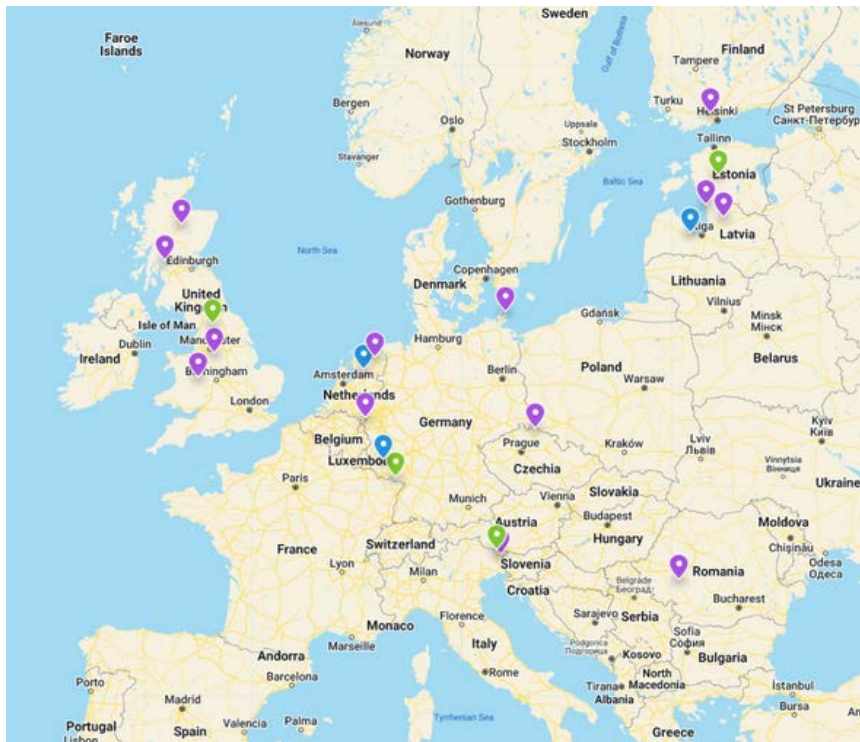
Junior Rangers and young fire cadets create their own videos on fire safety in the Peak District National Park



Participants

We had 20 events (across 10 countries) to celebrate European Youth in Parks Day, with 2 the weekend prior to the 23rd of September. Three additional parks posted about their youth work, in particular the Junior Rangers, on the 23rd of September without running an event. On the map you can see the event locations. These have been sorted by colour:

- Purple: activity with Junior Rangers
- Green: activity for Youth+
- Blue: activity with Junior Rangers and Youth+



The Protected Areas with events were:

- The Cairngorms National Park
- Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park
- The Yorkshire Dales National Park
- The Peak District National Park
- The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Weerribben-Wieden National Park
- Drentscha Aa National Park
- De Meinweg National Park
- Hansrück-Hochwald National Park
- Pfälzerwald-Norvogesen Biosphere Reserve (together with EUROPARC and Nationale Naturlandschaften)
- Jasmund National Park

- Jizerské hory Protected Landscape Area
- Prealpi Giulie Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve
- Retezat National Park
- Nuuksio National Park
- Soomaa & Lahemaa National Park (through Youth+ own initiative)
- North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve
- Gauja National Park
- Kemer National Park

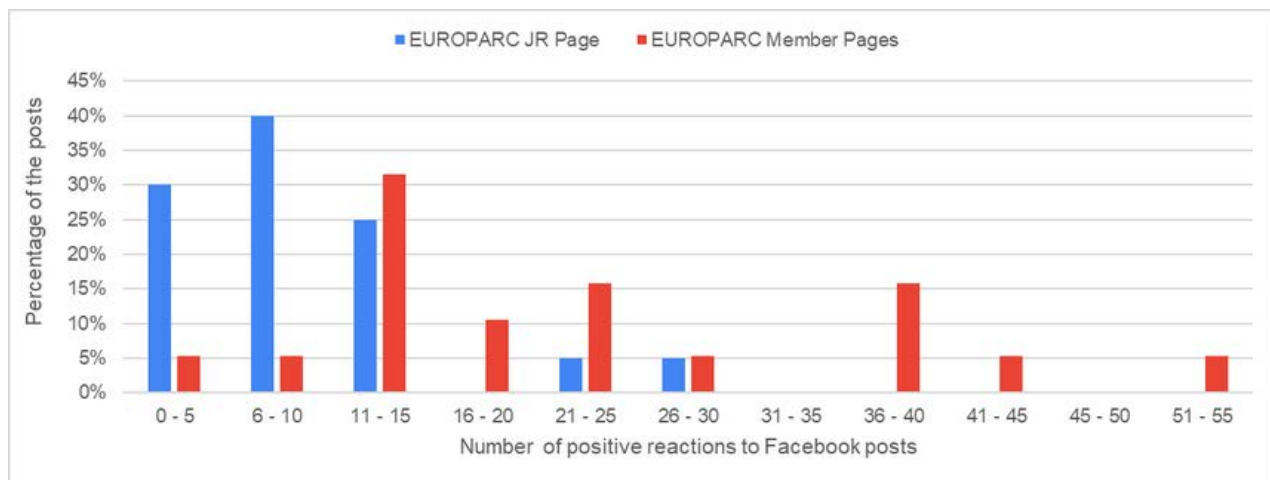
Social media posts only:

- Triglav National Park
- Razna National Park
- North York Moors National Park

Social Media Buzz

Facebook

EUROPARC shared almost every post about the European Youth in Parks Day pilot. This included announcements of upcoming activities (2 posts), photos of the youth event (13 posts), and posts sharing about the youth work done in parks (4 posts).



Date	Description	Positive reactions	Comments	Shares	Impressions	Reach	Engagement	Clicks
8 Sept	Announcement	5	0	0	75	63	9	4
22 Sept	Reminder	27	2	2	386	378	65	26
23 Sept	EUROPARC Activity	8	0	1	248	221	15	3
29 Sept	Photo competition winners	24	2	1	337	326	75	14

In total there were 19 posts made using the #YouthInParksDay hashtag on Facebook and EUROPARC had four original posts which included announcement, reminder, EUROPARC activity on the 23rd of September, and announcing the winners of the photo competition.

These numbers are underestimates as the data was collected 5 days after the event due to the EUROPARC conference coming up.

In general the official park pages had more reactions than the junior ranger pages.

Triglavski narodni park / Triglav National Park
23 September at 06:43 · 🌐

Today we celebrate the youth day in the park for the first time [#YouthInParksDay](#) - a day when parks and protected areas under the auspices of the organization [The EUROPARC Federation](#) together we commemorate the inclusion of young people in nature protection.

🔴 SOS is an international call for help. Nature often calls us for help. Our young people have taken SOS as their slogan: I get to know, I admire, I respect, so that I also Protect!

Connecting young people with our nature and cultural heritage leads to responsible treatment of nature and people in adulthood. The youth world stands [#StrongerWithYouth](#) and these young people are the future leaders, park managers and important stakeholders of the local community.

Since the very beginning, Triglav National Park has been giving great emphasis on cooperation and education of young people, where they belong:

- 🍀 Belar days
- 🍀 The community of schools of the Biosphere Zone Julian Alps
- 🍀 The Young Overseer Program

In 2002, as one of the first four parks, we started the Young Overseer project [#JuniorRangers](#)

This year our young supervisors are:

- 👉 walking to Koča in Krnica
- 👉 We visited the landscape park Pivška crossing lakes and the center of big beasts Dina Pivka
- 👉 Participated at Belarje days
- 👉 Explored the high mountains lakes at the summer camp
- 👉 at the second summer camp we observed the mysterious world of pollinators

Before new candidates can join us on the International Mountain Day in December, we have to visit our neighbors in Rezija and read a book about Max the Lynx.

On European Youth Day in the Park, we want to celebrate the commitment of the next generation and show how young people contribute to sustainable development and preservation in protected areas. Lately, we dream that the European Youth Day in Parks would also be an event where young people could take initiative for nature and have the opportunity to co-create it with their park.

[#YouthInParksDay](#) [#JuniorRangers](#) [#JREurope](#) [#Youthplus](#) [#StrongerWithYouth](#)
[#otrocinarnodnemparku](#)

Social Media Buzz

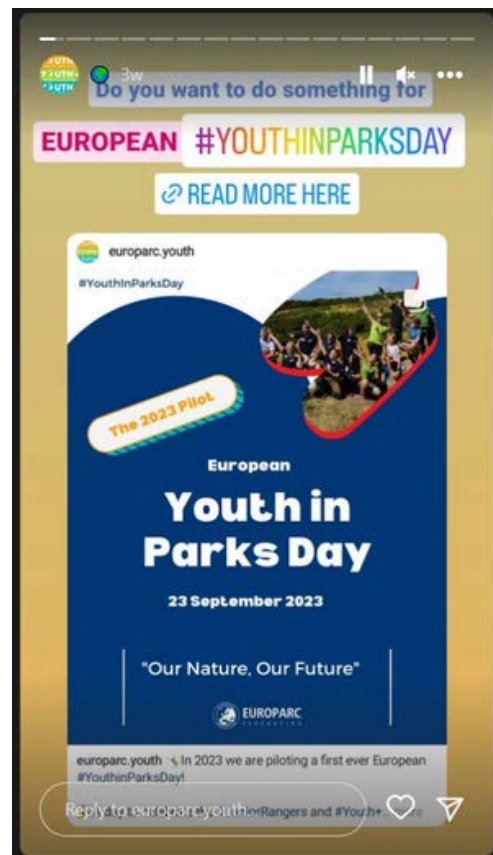
Instagram

Not as many participants posted on Instagram as those that did on Facebook. Each post was shared by the EUROPARC youth page (@europarc.youth) and added to a highlight. At the end of the week a reel was made of all the stories in the highlight.

One of our sections, Nationale Naturlandschaften (EUROPARC Germany), posted about Youth In Parks Day and encouraged young people to go out into nature. 9 Protected Areas posted pictures on Instagram.

Photo Competition

The photo competition had the theme “Our Nature, Our Future” and 6 Protected Areas submitted at least one picture.



The EUROPARC communications team picked the winner considering photo quality and fitting to the theme.

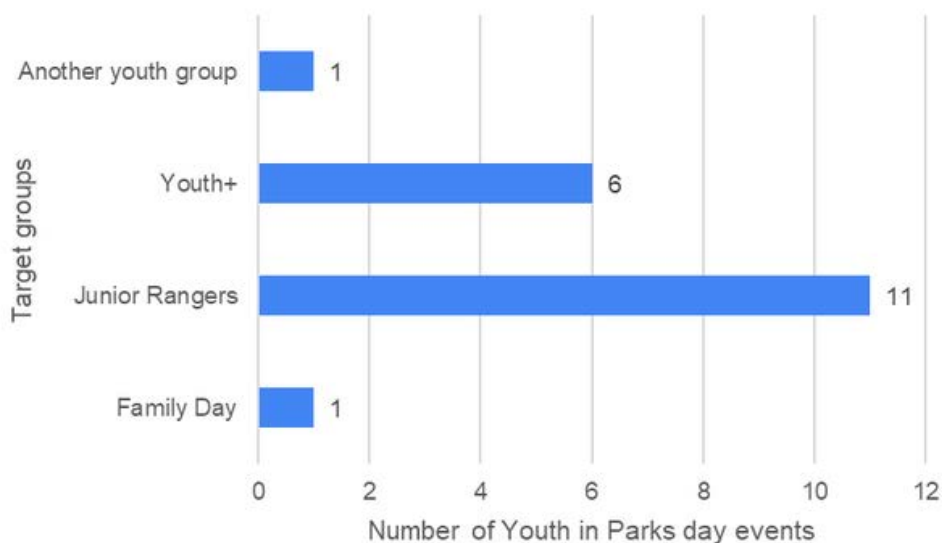
The winning photo is from the Cairngorms National Park whose Junior Rangers spent the weekend out in the park. Photo credit: Will George (Junior Ranger Mentor).

The prize was to feature on the cover of this report and be the new background for the EUROPARC Youth Facebook Page.

Feedback

Participants

13 Parks submitted feedback in the questionnaire sent out. They reported involving 171 children up to 18 years old and 28 young adults 18 - 30 years old in their events. Of these, 27 were in a leadership role, either leaders of group activities with younger participants or in a youth-led event.



Media

Of these events, 2 appeared in local newspapers and 5 reported appearing in other official media channels not TV or radio. The Jizerské hory Junior Ranger [website](#) release a short article about the event and linking it to the video compilation created from the Instagram stories.

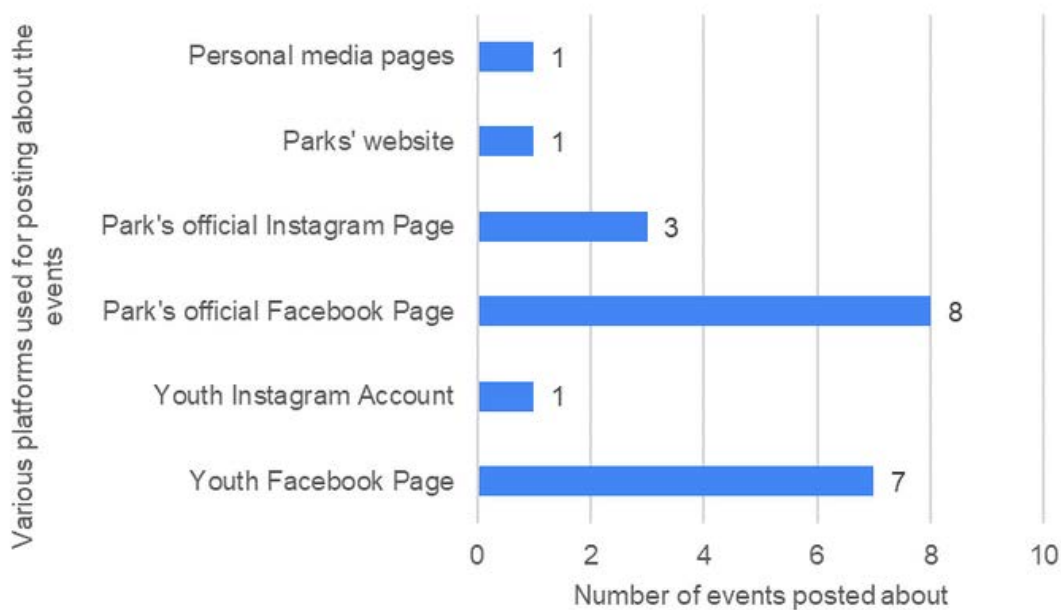


The Junior Rangers in the Weerribben Wieden National Park, published in a local newspaper

Feedback

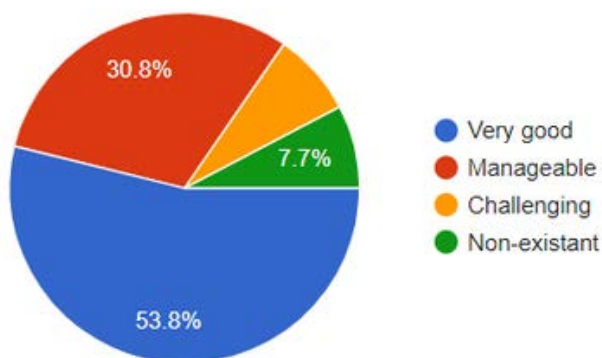
Social Media

The most popular platforms to share the pictures of the European Youth in Parks Day events on was Facebook.



Many parks have additional pages which focus on the work of the Junior Rangers or Youth+ groups specifically. This may be in order to reach a specific target audience, other times it could be because of hurdles when working together with the communication teams managing the official Park pages.

When the organisers were asked about the quality of their cooperation with their Park's communication team, the responses showed that for most it is good but there is a high level of variation.

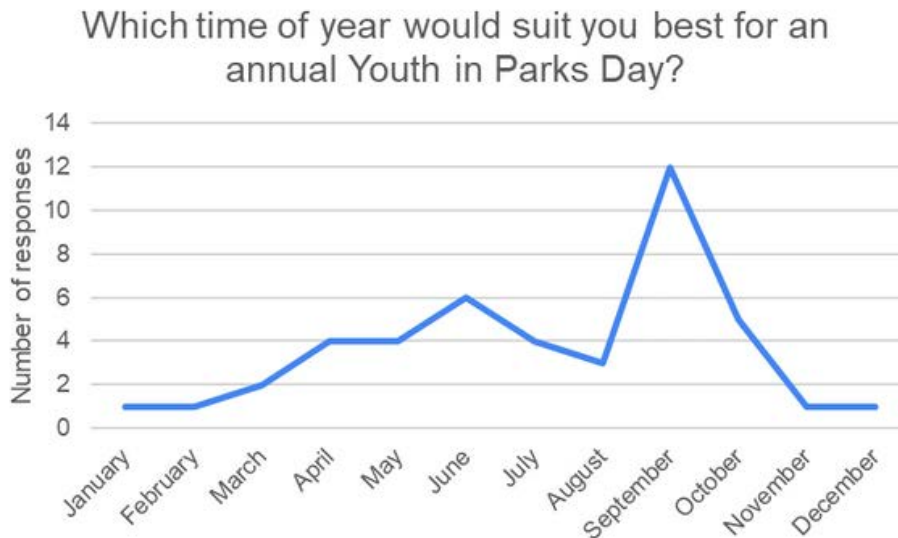


Some ideas for improved collaboration included:

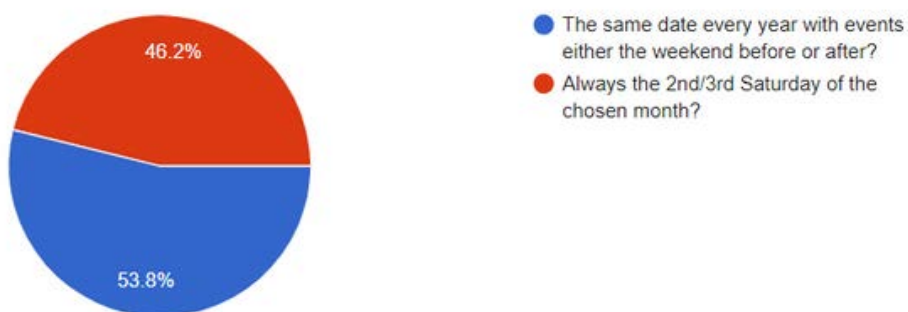
- more reminders
- partnering with the national parks communications team
- adding it to the year's workplan
- inviting them to the event
- social media toolkit made in canva

Planning for 2024

The responses to the question of which months would be suitable for an annual European Youth in Parks Day event, were clear with a preference for September.



The question of preference for a set date or a set time of the year, resulted in a split across the respondents. In 2023, 2 events happened the weekend before the 23rd of September as it was more convenient for the organisers. In one case, feedback was given that a school collaboration could be done if the day fell on a week-day.



The conclusion: **European Youth in Parks Day** will always be the **15th of September** from now on, and events can happen on the weekend before or after the date as best suits the Park.

So put it in your calendars!

Photos

Here are some photos submitted with permission from the European Youth in Parks Day 2023.



Retezat National Park, Romania

Photo credit: Lucia Ursu



Photo credit: Agnese Čamane



Hansrück-Hochwald National Park
Photo credit: Gabriel Wern



Retezat National Park, Romania

Photo credit: Václav Köhler



Kemer National Park

Photo credit: Agnese Balandina



Jasmund National Park

Photo credit: Svenja Groß

We would like to take this opportunity to thank again all participants, the Junior Rangers, the Youth+, the Mentors and the Park Administrations who participated in the pilot European Youth in Parks Day.

We received overwhelming support and encouragement and hope to build this event into one as big as the European Day of Parks.

About the EUROPARC Youth Programmes

The EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme was launched in 2002 and is aimed at young people aged 12-18 who are living within or close to the Protected Area. The programme involves around 50 Protected Areas across 19 different countries, working with ~1000 youth every year.

The Youth+ programme began in 2013, for young adults who want to continue to engage with the Protected Areas after Junior Rangers. It has grown to 17 programmes in 12 countries including ~ 150 youth between the ages of 18 - 30.



About the EUROPARC Federation

The EUROPARC Federation is the largest European network of Protected Areas with more than 400 members from 40 countries. Our members are directly or indirectly managing thousands of National and Regional Parks, Marine Protected Areas, Natura 2000 sites. We are working on different levels to improve the management of Protected Areas in Europe to the benefit of nature and people. www.europarc.org

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