

International Junior Ranger Camp 2011: “Natuurlijk Gezond”



This article is not just to make those who couldn't attend this year's camp envious, or to bring back nice memories for those who attended. It is also to let the European network know the great results of the 10th international Junior Ranger Camp.

Participants spent seven very intense days together in the Weerribben Wieden National Park (NL) where we discovered the connections between nature and human health. This experience has left us all with great memories, and a lot of new ideas that we would like to develop and promote in our parks.

Being in the Netherlands, in a wetland region, sometimes even below the sea level, (and as also the weather was quite wet), **water** was of course the main focus of our trip. We went canoeing and kayaking long the canals of the park, we analysed the quality of the water and discovered how much wildlife it might contain, we learned the importance of this habitat for so many species and in particular for the reintroduction of the oyster in the region.

Furthermore we also worked hard in the peat-lands, helping the park rangers to build a board-walk over the reed beds which was officially opened at the end of the camp. The names of the parks whose Junior Rangers contributed to this work were engraved into the path-planks: a nice experience, and a good concrete result which will hopefully last for many years.



In a comparison of the **health of nature** in our protected areas, every Junior Ranger presented some pictures of a 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' situation in their home park. As a result we noticed that the main issue perceived as being unhealthy for nature, was the "invasive" presence of rubbish in the environment. The Junior Rangers are not here to complain, but to gain an understanding of problems and to take action. So together with the Rangers, we developed an idea to analyse the possibility of a joint new international communications campaign about rubbish that would improve the awareness of visitors in protected areas.

The camp was of course also a great opportunity for the mentors and Junior Rangers to exchange experiences and ideas. They also looked at how the Junior Ranger Network is progressing in Europe and at opportunities to finance our local and international activities.



To find out more about the many other activities we did, about the excursions, the games we played, the national parks we visited and to discover more of the secrets and details of this international camp, please [have a look on our website](#). You will be able to read comments and press releases we received from some of the participants, see pictures and read the Camp Journal that one of the Junior Rangers published at the camp.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the staff and Junior Rangers of the Weerribben-Wieden National Park and to all those who have contributed to make this camp such a nice adventure for all of us.

More information from [Federico Minozzi](#), EUROPARC Policy Officer