

# WILD CITIES PROJECT IN GERMANY

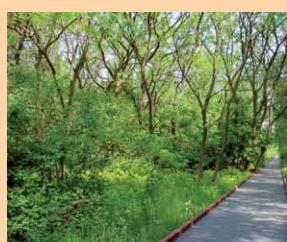
Nature taking over industrial relics (abandoned coal processing plant: Kokerei Hansa, Dortmund, Germany). Photo: Ingo Kowarik



## URBAN WILDNESS

Cities form an artificial, man-made environment that serves primarily to accommodate human interests and needs and, as such, their existence is at odds with the presence of wilderness. Yet urban nature can exhibit wilderness-like characteristics when natural dynamics and development processes are allowed to occur. Urban nature suitable for this includes woods, riverbanks, wetlands and other remnants of pre-urban nature. Undisturbed natural succession also commonly occurs on brownfield sites, which are often prone to abandonment before being reused.

Untamed nature in the Südgelände Natural Park in the middle of Berlin, Germany. Photo: Ingo Kowarik



City people need walking trails of some kind before they use urban wildness (Südgelände, Berlin, Germany). Photo: Ingo Kowarik

## ENCOURAGING URBAN WILDNESS

Cities can foster natural spaces within the built-up area by allowing undisturbed natural development and succession on specifically assigned sites, making urban wildness a component of the natural constituents of the city. This is particularly important for effective biodiversity protection at the local level. Challenges include having the means and instruments for managing sites and protecting them in perpetuity.



The previously channelled River Ruhr has been restored to being a healthy watercourse with natural dynamics (Arnsberg, Germany). Photo: DUH

## URBAN WILDNESS FOR CITY PEOPLE

With the majority of mankind now living in cities, nature must be part of their immediate surroundings, so that people can experience "wild" nature close to home. Apart from providing suitable natural areas, it is necessary to provide target-group-oriented and effective communication strategies, i.e. by means of environmental education.



Pieces of art attract city people into urban wildness (Südgelände, Berlin, Germany). Photo: Ingo Kowarik

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In 2012 and 2013 experts on urban wildness from various cities in Germany, the rest of Europe, the USA and beyond met at DUH's Berlin office to discuss the significance and the characteristics of urban wildness as well as its importance for the people living in the city.



Participants of the international Wild Cities Workshop in January 2013 in Berlin. Photo: DUH

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