



# Discover the national parks of Drenthe

Drentsche Aa

Drents-Friese Wold

Dwingelderveld



Drenthe has three national parks - areas of natural beauty where you are free to explore, enjoy and unwind. Each park tells its own story, with a characteristic landscape and unique natural environment.

All sorts of excursions and other activities are organised in each park throughout the year. With specially trained recreational and hospitality hosts you are sure of a warm

welcome. They can provide you with coffee and cake, lunch or dinner as well as information about the park and its environment or an overnight stay.

Get to know the national parks of Drentsche Aa, Drents-Friese Wold and Dwingelderveld.

## The story of the Dutch countryside

The Netherlands has twenty national parks. Together they tell the story of the Dutch natural environment. The parks contain many of the natural landscapes found in our country, including dunes, woods, heathland, fens, tidal waterways, pools and stream valleys. The parks are home to a variety of animals, including exceptional birds, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians as well as red deer, badgers, beavers, otters, boar and seals. Go to [www.nationaalpark.nl](http://www.nationaalpark.nl) for an overview of all the national parks in the Netherlands.

### Colophon

Text: Henk van den Brink

Photography: the three Drenthe national parks

Graphic design: Docucentrum, Province of Drenthe



*Drenthe*



Nationaal beek- en esdorpenlandschap Drentsche Aa



Nationaal Park Drents-Friese Wold



Nationaal Park Dwingelderveld







## Drentsche Aa National Park



### Ancient cultivated landscape brimming with nature

The streams still flow along their natural course. Winding through pristine landscapes where fields and pastures, woodland, wooded banks and heathland alternate rhythmically with villages surrounded by common land. In this area of the Drentsche Aa, thousands of years of interaction between man and the natural environment have created a harmonious cultivated landscape, unequalled in the Netherlands.

The Drentsche Aa National Park is a paradise for walkers. A dense network of paths, dirt tracks and country lanes will take you to a wealth of beautiful locations. But there are plenty of provisions for cyclists too. Explore the network of cycle tracks and discover a surprising new view round every corner. Nature is everywhere here. The area is renowned for its plant diversity. In the spring, the meadows next

to the stream are dotted with the flowers of exceptional plants such as the marsh-marigold, the broad leaved marsh orchis and the black rampion. You will also find the biggest concentration of visible prehistoric monuments in the Netherlands. This includes ten megalithic tombs and over two hundred burial mounds, often in beautiful locations in the historic landscape.

.....  
**Experience the history.** For more information, go to [www.drentscheaa.nl](http://www.drentscheaa.nl) or consult one of our many hosts or hostesses. Their addresses are on the [website](#).



## Drents-Friese Wold National Park



### Boundless enjoyment

The second largest area of woodland and heathland in the Netherlands is located on the boundary between Drenthe and Friesland. You can spend countless hours exploring the mysterious pine woods, discovering windwept sand dunes and pools hidden like gems between the trees.

Whether you explore the Wold on foot, by bike or on horseback, the possibilities are endless. There are plenty of marked routes and there is a metalled family path for wheelchair users near the Outdoor Centre at Appelscha. You also have the choice from no less than three watchtowers to enjoy the wonderful views. The tower near Aekingerzand will show you the source region of the stream the Vledder Aa as well as the shifting sands, while the tower on the edge of the Doldersummerveld looks out over heathland. The tower on the high ground

of the Bosberg will give you a view of the entire area. The Aekingerzand is an active duneland, where sand is still moved around by wind action. The song of the woodlark can be heard here in the spring and it is one of the few places in the Netherlands where the wheatear still breeds. Over the years, these shifting sands are what formed this hilly landscape.

.....  
**Come and enjoy the countryside.** Look on [www.np-drentsfriesewold.nl](http://www.np-drentsfriesewold.nl) for more information or visit the **Drents-Friese Wold Outdoor Centre at Terwis-scha 6a in Appelscha**.



## Dwingelderveld National Park



### Expansive, tranquil heathland

Heathland as far as the eye can see. In the Dwingelderveld you can still imagine how Drenthe must have looked over a century ago. This is the largest expanse of wet heathlands in Western Europe. Flanked by varied woodland with juniper thickets and lots of beautiful pools and peat bogs, it is not surprising there are so many exceptional plants and animals in Dwingelderveld.

Magnificent footpaths and cycle paths will lead you through heathland and woods. Water is never far away. As you cycle from the Lhee radio telescope towards Kraloo a plank bridge will allow you to cross the wet lowlands. Another path will guide you past the heathland lakes of the Holtveen, where there is a viewing wall for you to watch the water birds. But don't forget to visit the bird hide near the Davidsplassen.

With a bit of luck you will see from one of the viewpoints a little grebe or even the red-necked grebe, one of the rarest breeding birds in the Netherlands. The Dwingelderveld is also a paradise for butterflies, such as the silver-studded blue, and for reptiles. All three native snakes - the adder, grass snake and smooth snake - can be found here.

.....  
**Experience the tranquil expanses.** For more information, look on [www.np-dwingelderveld.nl](http://www.np-dwingelderveld.nl) or visit the visitor's centre at Benderse 22 in Ruinen.