



1 Dwingelderveld Visitor centre
The visitor centre is located at the south side of the National Park. The centre will provide you with information about the heathland, it houses a shop with local products and books on nature, as well as a cosy coffee corner. There is a lot to do for the kids outside! The visitor centre is the ideal starting point for all your explorations of the heathland.

OPENING HOURS: open every day from 10:00 to 17:00 from 1 April to 1 November and during all school vacations. 1 November - 1 April Monday-Tuesday closed. For more information and the current opening hours, please visit our website.
ADDRESS: 22 Benderse, 7963 RA Ruinen; tel. + 31(0)522-472 951



Addresses

SECRETARIAT REGIONAAL LANDSCHAP DRENTS-FRIESE GRENSTREEK,
PO Box 122, 9400 AC Assen.
T: +31(0)592-365555; E: dwingelderveld@drenthe.nl; I: www.nationaal-park-dwingelderveld.nl

STAATSBOSBEHEER, 2a Achter 't Zaand, 7991 NG Dwingeloo. T +31(0)521-596600; I: www.staatsbosbeheer.nl
NATUURMONUMENTEN, 22 Benderse, 7963 RA Ruinen. T: +31(0)522-472951; I: www.natuurmonumenten.nl

2 Natuurpoort in Spier
This is the ideal starting point – with plenty of parking space – for your excursions through the Dwingelderveld. At the Natuurpoort your children can play to their hearts' content. The Boslounge is your go-to for a snack or a drink, as well as maps and leaflets.

OPENING HOURS: Open every day during high-season, you may go to restaurant Van der Valk if closed.
ADDRESS: 12 Oude Postweg, 9417 TG Spier; tel. +31(0)593 564800

National Park Dwingelderveld is part of a network of 20 national parks in The Netherlands.

Twitter about the Dwingelderveld:
Use #Dwingelderveld. Please send any questions or comments to @Dwingelderveld or @BCDwingelderveld



Colophon
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The Dwingelderveld at a glance



Nationaal Park Dwingelderveld



Just imagine, an almost endless stretch of heathland, with at the horizon the medieval church spire of Ruinen. This magnificent heathland area is the largest and most important wet heathland area of Western Europe. Together with its forests and lakes the area was designated a National Park in 1991 and in 2013 it was added to the List of Natura 2000, as part of the European Network of most valuable nature reserves of Europe.

Heath full of life

Erica and common heather are the two most characteristic plants inhabiting heathlands. Erica is pink and predominantly grows on wet soil, whereas common heather turns drier areas purple. The area is also home to rarities such as the marsh gentian and bog asphodel as well as some 220 species of birds, dozens of species of butterflies and almost all Dutch reptiles. The most common species are the crane, the silver studded blue and the common viper.

Pine forests

From the end of the 19th century on, the heathland in the north-eastern part of the current National Park has been a forestland. The pine forests are being alternated with patches of juniper bushes, intimate patches of heath and small tucked-away ponds. Just have a look in the Lheeder and Lheebroeker sand drifts. The ponds, such as the Zandveen and the Diepveen, are home to water birds such as the little grebe and many species of dragonflies.

What is a National Park?

National parks are part of a world-wide network of important nature reserves that received a special quality label. The Netherlands counts twenty national parks. The main task of a National Park is maintaining and developing nature. Not just for ourselves, but also for future generations. You are very welcome to explore the area by bike, using the many cycling paths, by foot or on horseback and to pay a visit to our visitor centres. The area surrounding Dwingelderveld is also astonishing and a perfect opportunity to spend the day.

In the Dwingelderveld, Staatsbosbeheer (Dutch forestry commission) and Natuurmonumenten (Dutch society for nature conservation) work together in close collaboration to maintain the area. The National Park is also part of the “Regionaal Landschap Drents-Friese Grensstreek” (in English: “The local landscape of the border area between Drenthe and Frisia”), which includes the large nature reserves of the National Park Drents-Friese Wold and the Oerlandschap Holtingerveld.

Maintenance

Of course the heaths are home to Drenthe Heath sheep. They eat the grass from between the heath. There are two herds of these sheep roaming the heath together with their shepherd. There is a third herd grazing in a fenced-off area, just like a few dozen cattle. Together these animals help keeping the heath nice and open. This maintenance is supplemented with occasional mowing and removal of the topsoil (the so-called “plaggen”). The management tries to keep the forests as varied and natural as possible. Selective logging facilitates the spontaneous growth of new forest. Farmlands and grasslands are maintained extensively, in a way that is good for the plants and animals that live there. Have a look at the Ruinere and the Anseres and along the Benderse.

Drastic changes

In the past 10 years, major changes have been implemented, aimed at the sustainable recovery of the heathland. The water management policy was designed to stimulate the development of the original, wet moorlands. In the Noordenveld, Kloosterveld and the Anserveld, the fertilised topsoil has been partially removed in order to give the plants and animals of the heathland more space. Currently, marsh gentians and erica are in bloom everywhere. Ponds and grabens that were filled up in the past have been excavated again. The asphalt road that used to run right through the centre of the heath was changed into a beautiful cycling path. This has enormously benefited the peace and quiet in the area. The cranes are happy with it!

Wet area

The National Park is originally a wet heathland. Many paths in the area can be very wet, especially in the fall and winter. You will absolutely need wellington boots or watertight shoes. The visitor centre at the Benderse in Ruinen lends out wellington boots for free!



Public transport

There is a bus connection leaving from the train station of Beilen, passing Spier (stop “Natuurpoort”) and Lhee to Dwingeloo, crossing the National Park. From the train stations Hoogeveen and Meppel you can take the bus to Ruinen. It is a 30 minutes’ walk (2 km) through beautiful surroundings to the visitor centre at the edge of the park. In the summer, there is a bus line from Ruinen to the visitor centre. For more information about public transport, please call 0900-9292, or go to www.9292ov.nl.

Parking

There is sufficient parking space along the main routes leading to the park (see map):

- At the edge of Ruinen – Outdoor centre “De Poort” at the Kloosterweg
- At the visitor centre at the Benderse in Ruinen
- At the Natuurpoort in Spier – close to exit 29 of the A28 highway
- At the swimming pool of Dwingeloo at the Anserpad
- Parking place “Achter ‘t Zaannd” at the Family path and only 300 metres from the sheep pen

Tips

Accessibility

The National Park Dwingelderveld is situated in between the villages of Ruinen, Dwingeloo and Spier. You can access the Dwingelderveld via these villages.

Viewpoints

The cycling paths offers a virtually unlimited 360 degrees view of the heath, without any buildings obscuring your sight. At the end of the road “Achter ‘t Zaannd” in Lhee, there is a beautiful viewpoint that provides a stunning view of the restored Noordenveld (also accessible with a wheelchair). A beautiful lookout tower was built on top of the sound barrier along the A28 highway which offers a beautiful view over the restored graben covered with heath. The tower is situated at 1.3 km from Natuurpoort in Spier and can be reached both walking and cycling.

Walking

- 70 kilometres of circular walking routes have been laid out, divided over 14 routes
- 2 paved walking paths: Family path Spier (2.3 km – start: Natuurpoort in Spier) and Family path Noordenveld (1.5 – 2.5 km; start: parking area Achter ‘t Zaannd)
- Nordic Walking-route of 12.4 km long. Start at visitor centre Dwingelderveld
- Trail run routes starting at the visitor centre at the Benderse (23 km) and the Dwingeloo swimming pool (15 km)

By bike

- 40 kilometres of cycling paths
- ANWB-cycling route from the station of Hoogeveen (41 km)
- Various ATB-routes

With a horse and cart

60 kilometres of signposted bridledways and routes for covered wagons. The other paths are not open for riders.

Birdwatching

- Bird hide at the Davidsplassen
- Bird watching wall along the cycling path alongside the Holtveen

Active in nature

- Nature paper for the areas Dwingelderveld, Holtingerveld and Drents-Friese Wold with accompanying activities (free of charge)
- Detailed cycling path of 30 km (free of charge)
- Annually over 200 nature excursions and activities for children
- Demonstrations of sheep herding

Taking your dog

- In all of the areas: dogs have to remain on a leash. There are three areas where dogs can walk off-leash. In these areas dogs should be well in hand, dogs should not leave the path and shouldn’t swim in the ponds. Always consider other visitors!

Ticks

In the outdoors there are ticks that might carry a virus or bacteria. Therefore do not walk through bushes or other vegetation with bare arms and legs. Use an insect repellent. Check your body for ticks and remove any you might find using tweezers or special tick tweezers.

Visit www.nationaalpark-dwingelderveld.nl for current information about activities and developments.

