

## **Erasmus+ Traineeship at National park Kellerwald Edersee**

My name is Jaka, I am a student of environmental studies from Slovenia, and I did my Erasmus+ traineeship in National park Kellerwald Edersee. I wanted to do my traineeship in one of German national parks, because I wanted to improve my German.

Since there were many native German speakers, who did not know any (or much) English, I was somehow obliged to communicate in German language, so choosing National park Kellerwald Edersee was a fantastic idea.

The main job I did there was taking care of camera trap system. From the beginning of the traineeship, which lasted for 10 weeks, until the end, I used an e-bike as my main transportation. Together with the bike, I received a GPS, a map, and a list of coordinates of camera traps positions. My job also included locating these cameras in the forest, changing batteries, calibrating them and later, in the office, checking the photos. Animals that appeared on the photographs were mostly wild pigs, deer, raccoons, foxes and rabbits.

Different tasks were assigned to me by rangers; emptying the insect traps, installing new bat microphones, maintaining the routes in the park, helping in a wood workshop etc. Feeding animals, cleaning after them and looking after the visitors (whether they adhered to park regulations or not) were some of the assignments I got in the animal park.

During 10 weeks living in the beautiful environment of the park, I got really used to living "in the forest". The forest house in Bringhausen offered me everything I needed for my stay, but I spent most of my free time in the forest exploring, observing and taking photos. When it got warmer, I went for a swim in the lake, I even rented a sup!

There was an old fence surrounding the orchard by the house. Breaking the old fence and replacing it with a new one was a task that was not connected to my studies, but I did it with great pleasure. One day, when I return to Bringhausen, I will be proud to point to the fence (hopefully full of sheep) and say: "Look, this is my work."

It was a great enjoyment for me to be a part of National park Kellerwald Edersee team for 2 months and a half. My thanks go to everyone whom I worked with, especially to my mentor Tobias Roenitz, who was always around – in the role of a mentor and an amazing teacher, and also as a food provider and a taxi driver to the shop and back.

Thank you!

Jaka Cesar, Slovenia