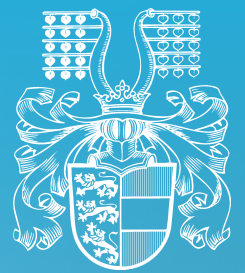


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Exploring Europe's ecological diversity: *Habitats of Europe*

Polona Zakrajšek

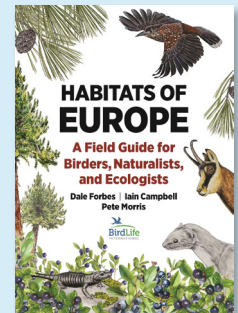
The book *Habitats of Europe: A Field Guide for Birders, Naturalists, and Ecologists*, authored by Dale Forbes, Iain Campbell, and Pete Morris, was published by Princeton University Press in 2026 and presents a comprehensive overview of Europe's diverse ecological landscapes [1]. This 432-page contribution is part of the "Habitats of the World" series, which comprises seven continental books and one global volume. The global book describes 189 generalized habitats, while the seven continental books dive deeper, with a total of 545 habitats across the volumes. *Habitats of Europe* presents 56 habitats in total, covering the following biomes: conifer forests, deserts, temperate broadleaf woodlands, savannas, grasslands and steppes, Mediterranean shrublands, tundra, freshwater habitats, saline habitats, and anthropogenic habitats.

The book serves both as a practical field guide and as a reference for understanding Europe's habitats and the biodiversity they support. It explains the various functions of habitats and how they have developed, where they are found across the continent, and how they support groups of characteristic species. Each habitat is set out in a clear format that combines short ecological notes with visual aids, making it easy to use in the field or at home. Across the book there are 465 color photographs, 52 illustrations, 70 diagrams, and 43 maps, all helping you match what you read with what you see. A key strength is the two-way link between habitats and species: if you can recognize the habitat, you can look for its typical wildlife, and if you know the wildlife you can often read the habitat from it. The text reads like a nature documentary in print, with poetic, emotionally resonant language that stays scientifically accurate.

The first part of the book introduces core concepts that help the reader understand the context and relationships within European habitats. This includes habitat boundary types and ecotones, the Köppen climate classification system, biomes, and useful habitat-related terminology. The regions of Europe are then presented with generalized habitat niche diagrams, illustrating the sequences of major zonal habitat development—following influences of precipitation, temperature, and fire regimes. The descriptions also include anthropogenically dominated habitats, such as European cropland and European urban environments, which are widespread in some regions.

The main part of the book follows the structure of each biome and its habitats. Each is presented with sections that include a brief description, affinities to other global and continental habitats, distinctive plant species, a range map and distribution, and the key biotic and abiotic characteristics. The wildlife section sparks curiosity, making clear links between vegetation and animals. The species are predominantly birds; however, mammals, amphibians, and other vertebrates are also included. Additional information is provided about where such habitats can be observed (e.g., specific protected areas), accompanied by photographs and other graphical materials about each habitat and its associated wildlife.

The book is accompanied by an open-access website (www.habitatsoftheworld.org). Its goal is to provide an overview of world habitats, allowing the reader to search via birds



or habitats to understand their relationships globally. At the time of writing, that search function is not yet available. However, it does provide an overview of the contents of other published books and offers additional services, such as booking birding tours worldwide.

At a cost of about 38 €, the book is an accessible resource for students, nature guides, and protected area staff as an environmental education aid, and for engaged amateurs as a field guide. It is an interesting and educational read from start to finish, and can be used as a tool to easily recognize habitats and their species while in the field or an unfamiliar environment. The book is an inviting gateway to habitat-level thinking and curiosity about the wildlife all around us.

REFERENCE

- [1] D. Forbes, I. Campbell, and P. Morris, *Habitats of Europe: A Field Guide for Birders, Naturalists, and Ecologists*, 1st ed. Princeton, NJ, USA: Princeton University Press, 2026, (Habitats of the World), 432 p., ISBN 9780691245171

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Polona Zakrajšek
UNESCO Chair on
Sustainable
Management of
Conservation Areas
ICEB, CUAS
Villach, Austria
E-Mail: p.zakrajsek@
cuas.at



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