

# **Welcome on the homepage of the Forest Reserve Programme**

## **The definition of 'forest reserve'**

Forest reserves are protected forested areas (consist of strictly protected core area and buffer zone) where all human activities are ultimately stopped so that the natural processes of the forest can prevail and thus become easier to recognise and study. In the last few decades such areas were designated in numerous European countries; most of them have a diverse structure, rich and specific flora and fauna and also show natural dynamics. In the 1990's the establishment of a forest reserve network started in Hungary too and in several of these areas research has begun. The Hungarian network includes 63 forest reserves at present.

## **The main aims of the programme**

- Gaining knowledge about the natural lifecycle, varied structure, long-term processes and rich wildlife of the forests
- Establishment and maintaining a network - as part of the European system - of forest stands representing the landscapes and characteristic forest habitats of Hungary
- The presentation and transfer of this new knowledge towards conservation, forest management and other interested stakeholders

A long-term benefit of the programme is that conservation actions and natural forest management can rely more on the natural processes of the forest; e.g. spontaneous regeneration and the natural structure, of which huge old trees, snags and logs, gaps and rare species are as much part of as the timber of high economical value. The reserves are strictly protected areas so in order to enter or carry out research in any of them a written permission is required.