

Whooper Swans chose HeidelbergCement gravel pit to spend the winter

Title

The Dixförda gravel pits south of Potsdam in Germany are a very important night roosting place for the Whooper Swans. Up to 1120 individuals have been recorded, which makes them one of the biggest inland concentrations in Europe.

But what are the reasons for these concentrations? Perhaps it is the good combination of a relatively undisturbed wetland surrounded by agricultural landscape? How do the swans use the lake and the surrounding area? What are the conditions that attract them there and how can these conditions be maintained in the future by the management of the gravel quarry?

To find answers to these and similar questions, [NABU](#) (BirdLife in Germany) and [Heidelberger Sand und Kies](#) are starting a new project which involves:

- The usage of satellite transmitters to study the movements of the swans and to help find answers to specific questions about their usage of the area;
- In order to catch the wintering swans cannon nets will be used in feeding places around the gravel pit;
- The resulting knowledge can be used to improve the protection in nature reserves, which will benefit the Whooper Swans and by implication also other species
- Development of a management measures / management plan for the gravel pits / plant: protection and habitat maintenance measures to ensure favourable conditions for the birds in the long term
- Environmental education actions/public relation (excursions with school classes, the locals community, employees from HC, NABU and Ornithologists; elaboration of flyer/brochure; information materials; presentation; publications etc.)
- Field studies of the gravel pits and around the gravel pits (e.g. mapping, counting, conditions, etc.)

This project is part of the [BirdLife-HeidelbergCement Biodiversity Conservation programme](#).

Read more on our [Partnership with HeidelbergCement Group](#)
