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HeidelbergCement Group is one of the world's largest building materials producers and a conservation partner of BirdLife since 2011. By working together we can achieve better protection to biodiversity at mining sites. If carefully designed mineral extraction operations can not only reduce their negative impact on landscapes and biodiversity but create opportunities for rare species and habitats. There are recognition and increasing scientific knowledge about the high value of quarries as special places for biodiversity.

Goals of the Partnership

By working together at international and local levels HeidelbergCement Group and the BirdLife Partnership aim to improve further the biodiversity protection and restoration standards at mining sites. A key tool to achieve this is a joint Biodiversity Conservation Programme (BCP) elaborated jointly and approved by the company for implementation at its operational sites. The BCP is initially planned for three years:

- During the first year, a set of European conservation objectives for target species and habitats will be jointly defined and quarries will be prioritised for biodiversity action. These objectives will be gradually integrated into the standard operational practices at quarry sites via Biodiversity Management Plans. Where necessary and feasible, local and national conservation projects will be jointly implemented.
- During the second year, the BCP will focus on the development of specific projects, which will be formulated locally but in line with the European biodiversity objectives. The local management of the HeidelbergCement companies will be involved, together with national BirdLife partners, to design, implement and monitor the projects.
- From the third year on, the success of the European project portfolio will be documented and evaluated. Possibilities to replicate the programme on other continents will be envisaged.

Background biodiversity at mineral extraction sites

In Europe, where we mostly work with the cement and aggregate producers, the opening, closing and after life of each quarry is a subject of environmental impact assessment and is planned for many years ahead. On one hand, by improved planning the most sensitive areas can and should be avoided. On the other hand ecologically minded quarry managers can promote biodiversity at any stage of operations by ensuring the existence of biodiversity valuable habitats. We promote

the application of the so called [Mitigation hierarchy to biodiversity sensitive mining](#). Finally, as part of restoration new possibilities are opened to return many of the sites to wildlife friendly condition.

Secondly, by (re)creating semi-natural habitats old quarries can not only host rare species, but can play the role of landscape connectors, providing ecological links between areas of preserved natural habitat, which are otherwise lost within agricultural or urbanized landscapes. Finally, the companies of the mineral sector are an important land owner and influential stakeholder with the potential to attract others into local and regional cooperation on land-use planning and sustainable local development benefitting nature and people.

Project factsheets:

- [Restoring Quarry Silt Lagoons for Migrant Waders \(UK\)](#).
- [Habitat Management through Natural Grazing \(Germany\)](#).
- [Restoring ecological networks by habitat restoration in limestone quarries in Lengfurt \(Germany\)](#).
- [HeidelbergCement Species Protection Programme Sand Martin \(Germany\)](#).
- [Dixförda Gravel pits – the most important roosting sites for Whooper Swans in Germany \(Germany\)](#).
- [Restoration of floodplain habitats and construction of a birdwatching tower at the Tovacov Lakes \(Czech Republic\)](#).

HEIDELBERGCEMENT

Birds in quarries and gravel pits

(2013)

Project updates

HeidelbergCement has already implemented exciting projects together with BirdLife Partners in several European countries. In the next years we aim to initiate many more.

Germany

Traditional cattle and horse breeds help maintaining the open grassland around the limestone quarry of Gerhausen in Baden-Württemberg. Owned by HeidelbergCement AG and Blautal Agriculture and Forestry Ltd, these animals will be present at the quarry all year round. Grazing maintains suitable conditions for a large number of threatened plant and animal species, which is why the project receives strong support from

NABU, the German BirdLife Partner. [Download factsheet.](#)

United Kingdom

At the Needingworth quarry, one of the biggest sand and gravel extraction sites in the UK, mineral extraction is planned for the next 30 years. Ecological restoration is already underway and Needingworth will become the UK's largest reedbed - a priority habitat for conservation in the UK. Along with open mires, wet scrub and grassland, a nature reserve of 700 ha will be created. Hanson, the UK subsidiary of the HeidelbergCement Group has teamed up with RSPB, the UK BirdLife Partner to complete this project.

Czech Republic

Formerly numerous in Central Europe, the Common tern, have lost nearly all of its breeding habitats due to the modification of rivers. Thanks to the provision of specially designed concrete floating islands in their sand pits, ?eskomoravský ?t?rk, in partnership with the Moravian Ornithological Society (a branch of the Czech Society for Ornithology), have managed to secure a growing population of Common terns in Moravia. Thanks to these man-made islands, the Common tern will escape extinction until rivers and wetlands are restored to their natural state. [Download factsheet.](#)

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