



When building their nests, cranes look for safe and undisturbed areas of the moor – the little islands in knee-deep water are ideal.

## Cranes in the Mittleres Wietingsmoor

In late autumn, loud trumpeting and calls can be heard in the otherwise quiet moor. At this time each day, thousands of cranes gather on the large green area in the middle of the raised moor on a green that is several square kilometres in size. This is the largest single gathering area for birds in the Diepholzer Moorniederung nature reserve. It is from here that the birds start the journey at dusk to the remote sleeping areas in the moor. There are up to four of these rest areas in the Mittleres Wietingsmoor near Freistatt for the cranes to choose from.

But the moor is far more important than just a resting place: many crane fans and friends already know that there are increasing numbers of crane pairs brooding in the Diepholzer Moorniederung. While the cranes are very conspicuous during the rest period, in spring time they become very clandestine – almost invisible. During the period of brooding and raising their young, the easily disturbed birds retreat into the haven of quiet that are the hidden areas of the moor. The first brooding pair in the Diepholzer Moorniederung nature reserve was discovered in the Mittleres Wietingsmoor in 1999.

Please follow the road signs from the B 214 at Freistatt village. A car park is located in the immediate vicinity of the viewing platform.  
In order to find the location, the following address can be used:  
Deckertau, 27259 Freistatt.



Created within the framework of the EU funded project "Kranichschutz & Kranich erleben I". Funded by the Federal State of Lower Saxony with financial funding from the European Union within the framework of the funding guideline "Natur- und Landschaftsentwicklung und Qualifizierung für Naturschutz"



Niedersachsen



**BUND Diepholzer Moorniederung**

Auf dem Sande 11  
49419 Wagenfeld-Ströhen  
Tel.: 05774/997 87-0 Fax: 05774/1313  
info@bund-dhm.de | www.bund-dhm.de



The BUND Diepholzer Moorniederung is an institution belonging to BUND Niedersachsen e.V.

3rd updated version 2016, realised by the BUND Diepholzer Moorniederung on behalf of NLWKN Hannover and the Naturpark Dümmer e.V.; Photos: BUND-DHM, W. Rolfes; Layout and maps: J.-M. Kühn; 100% FSC® certified recycled paper

# Mittleres Wietingsmoor

Historically something special







# Profile

» **Size:** 1,575 hectares with a 30 cm layer of peat (raised bog size); approximately 4 kilometres in width and length

» **Cutting peat:** peat was cut by hand and on an "industrial" scale here until the 1970s; industrial peat cutting was carried out here until 1995; peat is cut down to a depth of up to 1.3 metres

» **Renaturation:** In 1982, the first measures implemented by the Diakonie Freistatt; 1999 comprehensive measures package with EU funding LEADER+

» **Conservation status:** 1,176 hectares are designated as a nature reserve, 1,140 hectares as a Habitats Directive and 864 hectares as a EU bird sanctuary. The entire western edge does not have a conservation status

## Historically something special

A small road goes through the moor. It has seldom been possible to observe such a variety of different impressions on such a short journey through the relict that is a raised moor. The old banks of peat that farmers cut by hand are now overshadowed by large downy birches. The areas where peat was industrially cut have been rewetted years ago and are covered in a white blanket of blooming cotton grass in May. Other areas were flooded at the turn of the millennium. The remains of the once large birch trees can still be seen and the first successes with the renaturation are obvious as well.

The large open green areas in the middle of the Mittleres Wietingsmoor are one of a kind. Only in very few of these areas was the peat not completely cut away in the 20th century. Today the raised moor green area is extensively cultivated by the Naturschutz- und Landschaftspflegebetrieb Freistatt.

The owner of these and further moor areas in the Mittleres Wietingsmoor is the Stiftung Bethel im Norden (Bethel im Norden Foundation). More than 100 years ago it purchased a large portion of the moor areas in order to provide socially-disadvantaged people with work and a place to live. This is how the villages Freistatt, Heimstatt and Deckertau emerged. For decades, the drainage ditches were dug and the sods of peat were cut by hand. Even with the introduction of mechanised peat cutting in the Mittleres Wietingsmoor from 1924, manual work remained a fundamental aspect of the work colony Freistatt.

**Left:** In the months after the hay has been saved, the robust cattle graze the extensive green area. **Right:** Between the dead birch trees the first green cushions of moor are forming. Peat mosses are the basis for the moor's future growth.

