



Birds can use the small islands in the flat-submerged areas as nesting areas.

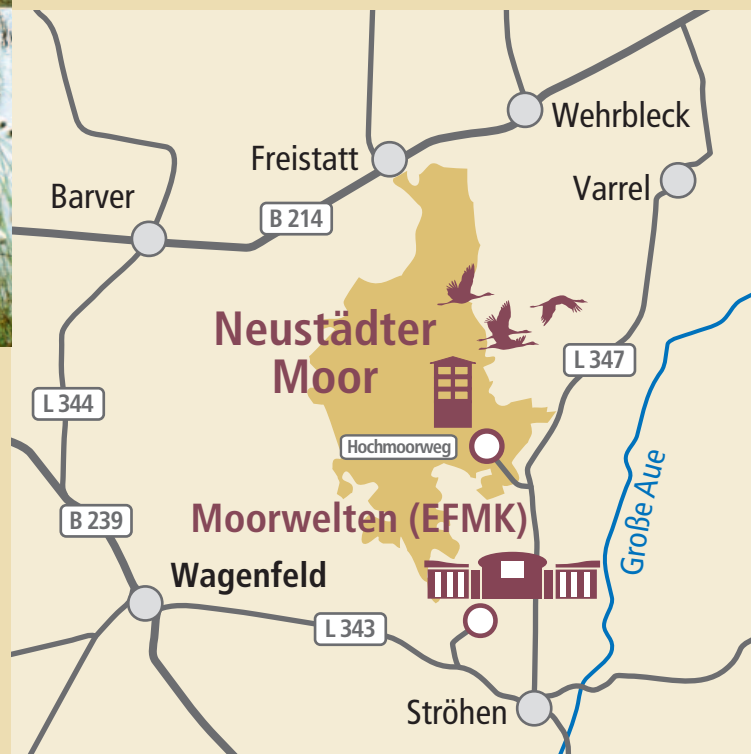
Cranes in the Neustädter Moor

In the autumn, hundreds and even thousands of cranes rest and overnight in the Neustädter Moor. During the day the impressive birds can often be observed in the surrounding cultivated land looking for food. But one and a half hours before the sun sets until shortly before night falls, the cranes fly in groups to the sleeping area. This is far away from all things that could disturb them in the middle of the moor. Some days the birds will make a short stop on a freshly cut field directly in front of the viewing tower.

Cranes also spend time on the Neustädter Moor in spring and summer. From the tower it is regularly possible to observe non-brooding cranes as well as brooding pairs. The moor has been a brooding ground for cranes since the year 2000 and the population is increasing constantly.

Cranes reach breeding age when 3 years old. Shortly after hatching, the chicks follow their parents on the search for food. The young birds are fully-fledged after about 10 weeks, although they do not yet have the typical black-white markings on their heads. Their feathers are more of a brown colour.

The viewing tower is 600 metres on foot from the car park on the Hochmoorweg. Please pay attention to the signs.
In order to find the location you can use the following address:
Hochmoorweg 10, 49419 Wagenfeld.



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BUND Diepholzer Moorniederung
Auf dem Sande 11
49419 Wagenfeld-Ströhen
Tel.: 05774/99787-0 Fax: 05774/1313
info@bund-dhm.de | www.bund-dhm.de



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Neustädter Moor

The Pearl among the Moors





Profile

» **Size:** 1,591 hectares with a 30 cm layer of peat (raised bog size); approximately 5 kilometres in width and approximately 3 kilometres in length

» **Cutting peat:** farmers cut peat by hand up until the 1970s; peat-cutting on an industrial scale up until 1995; peat cut down to a depth of up to 2.4 metres

» **Renaturation:** in 1981, the turning of the sod took place for the protection and development of the raised moor; maintenance measures continue to be required

» **Conservation status:** 1,478 hectares are designated as a nature reserve, a new designation is planned; large parts of what had belonged to the NSG up to now, have been declared a Habitats Directive and EU bird conservation area

The Pearl among the Moors

Until the end of the 1960s, Eurasian Golden-Plover and Black Grouse were still attracting bird watchers to the Neustädter Moor. From a very early stage, it was important to protect the habitat of these and other rare species from further damage caused by peat cutting. The Neustädter Moor became the first seed sown which would ultimately grow into what is today raised moor conservation in Lower Saxony. Many hundreds of hectares of ecologically valuable raised moor could be secured. This meant that the original moor vegetation with its extremely rare and endangered plants have remained well preserved right up until today. Regular floristic studies have confirmed this.

Left: The Eurasian Curlew looking for worms and insects on the wet meadow on the edge of the raised moor. Right: The endangered small moss berries grow only on the raised moor – their blossoms are a vibrant red from May onward.

The expansiveness and openness of the moor is characteristic. This is added to further by the grazing of the moor by Heidschnucken, the white polled heathland sheep, that are protected by a shepherd and his sheepdog. These sheep have grazed the Neustädter Moor without interruption for centuries. In times past the sheep were owned by local sheep farmers – today the sheep graze in order to protect the environment, and so help to maintain the open landscape which the rare bird species such as the Eurasian curlew and the Snipe are reliant on for their survival.

The Moorwelten – EFMK (world of moors) was opened in Wagenfeld-Ströhen in 2014. The Moor Information Centre has a large outside area and a permanent exhibition on the moor and cranes. This is also where the moor train stops and changes tracks. It then continues on to the Naturerlebnispfad (nature adventure path) “Moorpadd”. For those who would like to, there are also guided hikes of the moor.

