



In autumn, cranes searching for food can often be observed on the harvested field surrounding the Oppenweher Moor.

## Cranes in the Oppenweher Moor

The fact that the Oppenweher Moor developed in a way that was favourable for cranes is something that did not remain hidden to them. In autumn, hundreds of cranes use the moor as a place to rest during the afternoons. They spend the autumn days looking for food in the freshly harvested fields south of the nature reserve. From the viewing stand on the southern edge of the moor, the birds can be wonderfully viewed as they fly in to land. Particular in the evening hours, their contours are incredibly detailed against the setting evening sun. Before it finally gets dark, however, the majority continue further north. Here is the Rehdener Geestmoor with its large still flat – submerged areas – a safe place to sleep for the night.

In the spring, the high water level in the Oppenweher Moor means that the situation with places to sleep is more favourable. The cranes then remain overnight more often. Up until now the cranes have only brooded in the Oppenweher Moor rarely. Perhaps this will change in the future and we will be able to observe young birds more often in the future. The right conditions certainly already exist!

From the car park on the road "Im Moor", the viewing point can be reached on foot by walking along the 1,200 metre hiking trail. Please pay attention to the signs. The following address can be used to find the location: Im Moor 17, 32351 Oppenwehe.



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# Oppenweher Moor

A raised bog as border



# Profile

» **Size:** 720 hectares with a layer of peat of at least 30 cm (raised bog size); over 4 kilometres in length and 2 kilometres wide

» **Cutting peat:** the local farmers cut large areas of peat here by hand; no industrial-scale peat cutting took place

» **Renaturation:** following the rewetting and the removing of the birch trees, open raised moor surfaces regenerated excellently; further maintenance measures and grazing with sheep are necessary

» **Conservation status:** 380 hectares in Lower Saxony and 493 hectares in North Rhine-Westphalia have been declared nature reserves, as well as having been declared Habitats Directive and EU bird conservation areas

## A raised bog as border

Raised bogs used to separate different places and communities from each other because they were so dangerous to cross. It often happened that parish, county and even international borders would be established where they were located. The Oppenweher Moor was split in a political sense with the border between North Rhine-Westphalia (Minden-Lübbecke district) and Lower Saxony (Diepholz district). In Dümmer nature park, both parts of both Federal States are reunited again – as they are in nature anyway.

The peat that was cut in this raised bog was only carried out by hand by local farmers, industrial peat cutting never took place. The more decomposed and deeper lying black peat was cut by the locals and used as fuel after it had dried.

Rewetting and renaturation measures have been carried out in the Oppenweher Moor for the past 30 years. The growth of the peat moss in the well rewetted areas where the banks of peat once stood has proved to be very successful. That being said, the dry areas with moor and sandy heathland should be kept open. In addition to this, a local herd of sheep traditionally grazes this area. The mowing and mulching, as well as the removal of the birch trees also goes hand-in-hand with the grazing. The populations of many plant and animal species which were monitored over many decades are the best evidence for the success of the conservation measures implemented in the Oppenweher Moor.

**Left:** In the rewetted areas where the banks of peat have been cut away manually, peat moss serves as a base for a lively raised bog. **Right:** The areas that cannot be sufficiently wetted are kept open by allowing sheep to graze there.

