



Arriving cranes can be easily observed with binoculars.

Cranes in the Rehden Geestmoor

For migrating cranes, the Rehden Geestmoor is like an international airport during the autumn: a hub in the natural environment of the Diepholzer Moorniederung and well beyond. No other moor in Lower Saxony or anywhere else in Central Europe has recorded so many cranes stopping to rest. Up to 24,000 of the large birds were counted on one evening flying in to land on the moor in the autumn of 2008. Usually it is 10,000 to a maximum of 20,000 cranes. After finding food in the fields which can be up to 10 kilometres away, in the evening the birds fly into the moor to rest overnight. On approximately 600 rewetted hectares, where peat once used to be cut on an industrial scale, areas of shallow water offer favourable sleeping places. In advance of flying to their sleeping places, the birds also like to gather on neighbouring moor heathlands with short grass and on mulched moor dams.

The continuing rewetting measures, the removing of the newly sprouted birch trees and mulch work on dams, as well as the grazing with sheep are aimed at creating and maintaining attractive sleeping places for the birds for the future. The short tour at the viewing tower will allow to experience the moor "live".

A car park is located in the immediate vicinity of the viewing tower. Please pay attention to the road signs. The following address can be used to find the location: Moordamm 10, 49453 Hemsloh.



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Rehdener Geestmoor

Over 25 years of protecting the moor



Profile

» **Size:** 1,370 hectares with a layer of peat of at least 30 cm (raised bog size); 5 kilometres in length and 3.5 kilometres wide

» **Cutting peat:** local farmers cut away the peat by hand at the edge and along the tracks through the moor; industrial-scale peat cutting was carried out in the centre until 1997; the last levelling works for renaturation were carried out in 1999.

» **Renaturation:** following 20 years of rewetting and removing birch trees, a good regenerated open raised moor area exists there today; further maintenance measures and continuing grazing with sheep are necessary

» **Conservation status:** 1,786 hectares have been declared nature reserves, as well as having been declared Habitats Directive and EU bird conservation areas.

Over 25 years of protecting the moor

In the course of a land consolidation commissioned by the environmental protection agency in the Rehdener Geestmoor, between 1982 and 2004, comprehensive renaturation measures were carried out in the moor. On a total of 810 hectares of valuable moor heathland, birch trees were removed, steep peat banks were sloped off, traverse dams and levees erected and ditches dammed. Thanks to these measures the water and light loving water plants were able to recover well and spread. This is particularly the case for peat moss, sundew, cotton grass, cranberries and white beak-sedge.

Left: Peat moss grows on rewetted areas in the raised moor between the dead birch trees. **Right:** The redshank perching on a fence post. It prefers very wet areas in raised bogs.

The fauna that is typical for moors has also developed very positively. Counts of population numbers carried out over the years show the positive development of the brooding bird population. The most conspicuous increase was experienced by the snipe, redshank, teal and spoonbill ducks. Protected by the black-headed gull colony, the rare black-necked grebe has also made the Rehdener Geestmoor its home. Migrating birds are also to be observed occasionally in the renaturated moor landscape. In autumn the cranes are joined by thousands of bean and white-fronted geese.

A unique view out over the Rehdener Geestmoor awaits all visitors to the viewing tower. It is almost 10 metres high and stands in the immediate vicinity of the "Moordamm" road. From there, the open expanse of the moor with its many wet areas can be fully seen and enjoyed.

